WHAT'S MINE-D IS YOURS
Local jeweler mines, cuts and polishes Virginia gemstones with support of Shenandoah Valley community

RED VS. BLUE
Harrisonburg’s Democratic wave stands out among a largely Republican district

CONTROVERSIAL COVER
Esquire’s feature on a white male’s privileged experience received backlash in the media for highlighting ignorance

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By MARY HARRISON  
The Breeze

Within the Republican counties that make up Virginia’s 6th Congressional District lies a blue inkblot that has become more visible with each election: Harrisonburg. The gap between Harrisonburg and Rockingham County’s voting patterns has deepened to over 30 percent, rendering an unusually stark contrast between a city and its surrounding counterparts.

Over the past two decades, the city of Harrisonburg has consistently voted Democratic while Rockingham County has always been skewed Republican. In 1996, the average difference between city and county votes cast for the Republican and Democratic tickets was just 9.5 percent, but in 2018, the divide rose to a 34 percent difference between the city and its encircling county.

In the 6th House District, Ben Cline (R) won by 147,957 votes compared to Jennifer Lewis’ (D) 113,113 — but in Harrisonburg, Lewis beat Cline, 9,130 to 4,562. Because the 6th Congressional District voted Republican, it didn’t matter that the most concentrated part of the Valley voted Democratic.

“Within Harrisonburg politics there’s been a shift to make sure that it is more inclusive,” Cathy Copeland, a political science professor and 26th district candidate for the Virginia House of Delegates, said. “We’ve seen that the more voices that we have within Harrisonburg, the better that we are able to represent all of the people here.”

Changing demographics and the economy are leading contributors to Harrisonburg’s shifting voting patterns, which has outpaced the region in growth rate of total population. But when considering how a region or even a city’s political system has evolved, one must regard the context of the larger ecosystem.

“The partisan divide between the city and the county has widened, and that sort of thing has been happening across the country,” David Jones, a political science professor, said. “Rural voters have become more Republican, and urban dwellers have become more Democratic.”

According to Rob Alexander, a political science professor, Harrisonburg’s political development can also be driven by waves of immigrants and refugees, a change in leading industries and evolution of the broader American society. But ultimately, 90 percent of people vote within their party lines, according to Jones.

“Harrisonburg is just part of that mostly Republican district,” Jones said. “It’s going to be very difficult for a Democrat to win that congressional district unless that district is redrawn in a way to include more Democratic geographic areas.”

Devout party loyalty isn’t new to the Valley — nor to an overwhelming majority of the regions in the 6th district. In 2008, Barack Obama was the first Democratic candidate to campaign in the Shenandoah Valley since 1860. Prior to that election, Virginia voted Republican in every presidential election for 40 years.

In 2006, it was estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau that 8.85 percent of Harrisonburg’s population was Hispanic or Latino, and the population was estimated to have grown to 18.2 percent in 2018. Rockingham County is 8.9 percent white. A Pew Research study displayed that 69 percent of Hispanic voters chose the Democratic candidate in the 2018 midterm elections.

This year, Deanna Reed and Sal Romero became the first African-American mayor and Hispanic vice-mayor to serve together in Harrisonburg City Council history. Romero, the first vice-mayor from the city’s growing immigrant community, is the first Hispanic city council member.

With a population of 54,224, Harrisonburg is the largest city in the Shenandoah Valley and includes two universities within its city limits. While student growth has certainly propelled population growth, the “Friendly City” is responsible for considering the needs of potentially marginalized community members.

Most recently, there have been efforts within the city of Harrisonburg’s local government to help the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed population — a group of households that make up 39 percent of the city and silently struggle financially on a daily basis because they don’t fall beneath the poverty threshold.

In data gathered from the 2016 exit polls, statistics show that 67 percent of those who make less than $100,000 a year voted for the Democratic candidate. The 2013 per capita personal income in Harrisonburg-Rockingham MSA was averaged at $34,166.

Within the city, JMU and Sentara RMH Medical Center are the two largest employers, and both have experienced explosive growth over the past 30 years.

A 2017 census gauged that there was over a 10 percent difference between Harrisonburg residents over the age of 25 who had a bachelor degree or higher versus their same age Rockingham County counterparts. According to Alexander, the city of Harrisonburg’s higher rates of education and potentially higher rates of income “tend to be aligned with a more expansive view of the world or ideology.”

In the 2018 election, student voter turnout at the Convocation Center went up by 47.6 percent compared to the previous year. Both Jones and Alexander believe many JMU students are motivated by specific issues, such as the noise ordinance and mass outdoor social gathering laws.
“College students have weaker ties to the community, so they’re going to be less acquainted to the individual candidates by name,” Jones said. “The local issues that really motivate long-term residents are just not going to be as salient for college students.”

The Dillon Rule, adopted by the Virginia Supreme Court in 1896, limits local government’s powers to those granted by the General Assembly. This legal principle prevents autonomy for local governments like Harrisonburg’s to establish or moratorium on rezoning land or, most recently, not have the authority to prohibit tobacco at public parks.

What people expect from local government and, considering the Dillon Rule, how much they can expect are two determining factors when observing how and why individuals vote. Alexander believes the issue of a potential second high school has galvanized local voters and longtime city residents within the past few years.

In 2013, 685 people within Rockingham County classified themselves within the agriculture and forestry industry while only 211 people in Harrisonburg did. In 2007, it was estimated there were 2,204,950 farms in the nation. By 2016, there was 1,444,950 less farms across the country.

“Rockingham County has experienced a drop in the total number of full-time farmers,” Brian Shull, the economic development director of Harrisonburg, said. “As population continues to grow within our metro area, the demand for more residential land — particularly close to Harrisonburg’s borders — continues to climb and therefore more agriculturally zoned land will be targeted for rezoning to allow residential uses.”

Between 2007 and 2012, the number of farms within the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Statistical Area declined by 68. In the same time span, the tourism industry increased by over 38.5 million dollars. As the city has become a more popular destination to visit and live, Harrisonburg’s makeup has grown vibrantly.

In 2013, Kai Degner, a 2016 congressional candidate and JMU’s director of professional development for outreach and engagement, posted online, “After I was elected in 2008, the Canadian Broadcasting Company called me to do a story on the, ‘culture wars of America.’ I asked them why they were calling me, and they said a demographer in Texas told them that of anywhere in the United States, there were no two adjacent jurisdictions that had as divergent presidential election results than Harrisonburg and Rockingham County.”

In six of the eight midterm elections between 2000 and 2014, there was only one major party option on the ballot for the House of Representatives: incumbent Bob Goodlatte (R). The previous two elections, 2016 and 2018, are the first in which a Democratic candidate has ran for office consecutively. Alexander suspects outrage from the 2016 election may have prompted a more prominent local involvement in politics.

“I think it’s healthy and important to have choices on the ballot,” Alexander said. “We need people to stand up and come together and say, ‘Hey, these are the things I care about.’ Because if we’re not talking about the issues and then voting on the issues, then we’re not moving forward in terms of how we’re developing our community.”

In 2016, Harrisonburg became the birthplace of the tri-colored sign that reads, “No matter where you’re from, we’re glad you’re our neighbor.” While Copeland acknowledges the polarity between the city and county over issues such as the 2nd Amendment, she advocates for a collaborative spirit between the adjoining jurisdictions.

“The polarizing idea of politics intends on trying to divide us,” Copeland said. “That can very easily happen between the city and county division. But if we look at what draws us together, the fact that we’re living in a smaller area in the Shenandoah Valley… I really see us as being friendly and working together in a lovely way.”

CONTACT Mary Harrison at harri4mj@dukes.jmu.edu. For more coverage of JMU and Harrisonburg news, follow the news desk on Twitter @BreezeNewsJMU.

Deanna Reed (right) and Sal Romero are the first African-American mayor and Hispanic vice mayor combination, and they’re both Democrats. This year, Harrisonburg elected two Democratic city council members, and no Republicans ran for a seat.
**Student contemplates legal action against The Retreat**

The Retreat towed a disabled student's car Dec. 8 and 9 after the individual informed the apartment complex of his disability and needed accommodations. A full refund was offered after his car was towed.

By CONNOR MURPHY
The Breeze

A JMU student registered as an individual with disabilities is considering legal action against The Retreat, an off-campus housing complex in Harrisonburg, for allegedly mistreating him in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Gregory Mather, a senior psychology major, experiences chronic pain due to a neck fracture and requires accommodations to include a handicap parking spot and parking for his family and friends who assist him with basic tasks within the confines of his apartment.

Mather, who cites specific instances dating back to September, has been in contact with JMU’s Office of Off-Campus Life as well as a lawyer to discuss his situation. JL Towing & Recovery, the towing company for The Retreat, towed Mather’s car from his designated handicap parking space on Dec. 8 and 9. According to Mather, he’d been in contact with The Retreat to inform it of his disability. Additionally, Mather claims he asked for a second parking decal in October. He eventually received one, but not until after his car was towed twice.

According to a spokesperson for Landmark Properties, Mather was incorrectly towed on Dec. 8 and Dec. 9 from his handicap parking spot because he was parked next to his handicap spot. This is due to the fact that someone else had parked in his designated parking space. The towing company was immediately contacted and offered a full refund to Mather, which he later accepted. Prior to Dec. 13, Mather only had one parking decal, meaning his designated caretaker would be unable to park outside his property. In turn, Mather had to transfer his decal to his caretaker’s to avoid wrongful towing.

According to Mather, he’s the only one allowed to park in his handicap spot, but his neighbors repeatedly parked there despite the painted handicap symbol. Mather was instructed by Whitneey Nauman, resident services manager for The Retreat, to “just call and have them towed away so you can have your spot back,” over email.

Mather’s car contained materials needed for his doctoral application, and according to him, the car’s absence was the reason he was unable to submit his application by the deadline. Mather now has to wait until next year to submit the application.

According to a spokesperson for Landmark Properties, the maintenance team created a handicap spot for Mather in front of his property within 48 hours of being made aware of his disability. The spokesperson also claims a handicap sign was placed at the

head of the parking space three weeks after the request for a handicap parking spot was made; however, there’s not a sign present.

“We place great value on the everyday living experiences of residents in our community, and we’re disappointed that Mr. Mather has been dissatisfied during his time at The Retreat,” a Landmark Properties spokesperson said over email. “Since his initial outreach, our resident support team has been working closely with him to quickly respond to his requests. We take these concerns seriously, and we will continue to do our best to meet Mr. Mather’s needs as a resident in our community.”

Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits private places of public accommodation from discriminating against individuals with disabilities. Establishments included in this clause involve hotels, restaurants and similar facilities.

“There’s not any direct action we can take other than providing advice,” Jeremy Hawkins, assistant director of OCL, said. “Whenever a student, parent or anyone interested in is a change in policy.”

According to Mather, the regional manager for The Retreat ignored his communication efforts for over a month until he got a lawyer involved. He notified The Retreat of his decision to seek legal assistance and explained he had a claim under the ADA. He heard back from the complex almost immediately afterward.

“She said she wanted to have a dialogue regarding how to ‘make things right,’” Mather said. “Which I had been trying to do for quite some time. I had reached out to her boss, the managers under her, and I only got leeway when I talked to a lawyer. I told her what I want, which is first and foremost a change in policy so it doesn’t happen again.”

Mather was offered a gift card reimbursement for gas, the Uber’s he took to retrieve his car and his legal fees, which exceeded several hundred dollars. Despite the restorative efforts, Mather was adamant that there needs to be a change in how The Retreat handles its residents with disabilities. As of now, Mather has declined the gift card.

“The only thing that would help me at this point is a time machine,” Mather said. “No amount of money will open my doctoral applications back up and give me my books when I need them. The only thing I’m interested in is a change in policy.”

According to Mather, Anita Arnold, the regional manager from The Retreat, went back on her initial arrangement to instate a policy change that Mather and the regional manager had agreed upon. Instead, Mather was offered a “review of the correspondence” between himself and the towing company. Furthermore, Mather was also asked to comply with an “extensive” non-disclosure agreement. He decided not to sign the proposed non-disclosure agreement because The Retreat offered no policy change.

“They don’t believe me,” Mather said. “I walk. I don’t look disabled. I spent many years in physical therapy to get here. The person who towed my car called me a liar. There’s a disconnect between what they see and the documentation I’m providing them from the state of Virginia and from my doctor, clearly outlining cervical fractures and five surgeries. They can’t see chronic pain.”

CONTACT
Connor Murphy at murph2cj@dukes.jmu.edu. For more coverage of JMU and Harrisonburg news, follow the news desk on Twitter @BreezeNewsJMU.
Effects of enrollment

JMU’s class registration process differs from some Virginia universities, plays role in graduation rates

By CARLEY WELCH

The imperfections of enrollment processes at JMU and universities statewide have prevented students from graduating on time because they may miss out on classes they need. With enrollment right around the corner, other public universities in Virginia believe they have systems that work more smoothly.

Graduation rates and student-to-professor ratios play into how enrollment processes function at universities across the U.S., including JMU. The National Center for Education Studies uses a six-year graduation rate as its reporting standard. This reporting standard helps many incoming college students decide where to go to college and is often compared to graduation rates.

JMU uses the online portal MyMadison for enrollment and organizes enrollment dates by the number of credits earned.

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ENROLLMENT

Differences in enrollment processes among Virginia universities may affect graduation rates

from page 7

As of 2017, JMU has an 83 percent graduation rate for those seeking bachelor's degrees. According to the university, the percentage of students in 2018 who graduated from JMU in four years is 67 percent. This is higher than the national average of 59 percent for public universities in the U.S. JMU also reported a student-to-professor ratio of 16:1, which ranks 410th among universities in the country.

JMU organizes its class enrollment times based on how many credits a student has; the more credits a student has, the earlier that student can enroll. This has created problems such as students not getting the classes they need to graduate on time, which sometimes leads to them having to stay an extra semester or year.

"I know the academic unit heads will bend over backwards and really work hard to make sure that our students do stay on track," said Caitlyn Read, the associate director of communications at JMU. "I would point to that in the evidence of our graduation rates. Our graduation rates would not be among the highest if our students were not getting what they needed.

Another large university, the fifth-largest in the state, is Virginia Commonwealth University. As of 2017, the percentage of students who graduate within four years at VCU is 45.3 percent while the percentage of students who graduate within six years at VCU is 67.4.

According to Tom Gresham, the director of news operations at VCU, the average student-to-professor ratio at VCU in 2017 was 17:5:1. Similar to JMU, students class enrollment is dependent on how many credits their students have completed. Class enrollment is done through an online portal called e-services, similar to MyMadison.

The percentage of students who graduate within four years at the University of Virginia is 89.4 percent as of 2018, however this graduation rate rises to 94.2 percent for students who graduate within six years. Laura Hawthorne, the associate vice president and university registrar at UVA, said its student-to-professor ratio was reported to be 15:1 in 2018.

UVA facilitates class enrollment differently than both JMU and VCU. At UVA, class enrollment times are organized according to the year of the student; fourth-year students enroll first and first-year students go last. However, class enrollment still takes place online using a system called Student Information Systems.

According to Read, the individual academic unit heads are responsible for class enrollment. The unit heads are those who decide where, when and how many classes are offered. She says the Office of the Registrar has tried to move class enrollment appointments to times that students aren’t in classes, so it’s easier for students to enroll at the appropriate times. However, Mackenzie Bosco, a sophomore geographic sciences major at JMU, has experienced otherwise.

"My enrollment appointment was during an exam, which caused me to enroll late and most of my classes were closed or waitlisted when I went to sign up," Bosco said. "I was really mad."

Eric File, department head of the School of Communiversity at VCU, said his department ensures that a certain number of seats aside for incoming freshmen taking the SCOM general education course. However, they don’t set aside seats for first-year students taking SCOM 240 and 241 for entry-level classes for communiversity studies majors because the major takes two to two-and-a-half years to complete, so they want to leave room for sophomores and juniors who have less time to complete the required courses.

File said that one reason classes fill up so quickly is because JMU favors smaller class sizes. He feels smaller class sizes can often be beneficial for certain types of learning.

"It's tough to balance the large classes, which do enable more students to get in and it puts them further towards graduating on time, with the small classes like our capstone classes that really need to be that way for more individualized learning," File said.

According to Maggie Tolan, the associate vice provost for student success at VCU, most students have gotten the classes they need because of an intricate system VCU has created a system that calculates how many seats should be left open at certain times during enrollment. For instance, if the registrar’s office knows the number of incoming freshmen who’ve declared a certain major, then it will leave that many seats open for those freshmen during their enrollment period.

The same goes for sophomores, juniors and seniors for the requirements they must fulfill.

Through this system, taking a fifth year or an extra semester has been minimized, Tolan said. If a student has to take an additional year or semester because they didn’t get the classes they needed, it’s usually because other students had to retake those same classes after they failed them.

"If students would pass their classes the first time, more seats would open up for other students who need those classes," Tolan said. "Our perfect math gets thrown off when we have to repeat students."

Tolan said VCU picks students’ schedules for them for the first two years they’re at VCU. This process began two years ago to certify that students were on track from the very beginning of the time they began at VCU. According to File, JMU doesn’t participate in this system of picking students’ schedules for them because “it feels almost too restrictive”.

Hawthorne said that because the way UVA’s enrollment system works, she hasn’t heard of many students being unable to enroll in the classes they need to graduate on time. She said the system ensures fourth-year students don’t lose the classes they need to first-year students who came in with many credits. The majority of students who have to take a fifth year usually don’t graduate on time because of an unexpected life event, such as an accident or illness, according to Hawthorne.

"We really push all of our students to finish in eight semesters," Hawthorne said. "The students who have less time left at school get to [enroll] a little sooner."

Some students at UVA. don’t get the classes they want, Hawthorne said, but they get the classes they need for the most part. Hawthorne said there’s a range of class sizes at UVA, because some classes are better taught to a large number of students while others are better with a smaller number. This can play into how many seats are available for each class. Yet even with UVA’s high graduation rates, Hawthorne believes no class enrollment system is perfect.

"I think [this system] gives them the best chances of getting the classes they need to graduate," Hawthorne said.

Compared to VCU and UVA., JMU’s four-year graduation rate is about 20 percent higher than VCU’s, and about 20 percent lower than UVA’s. File feels that JMU has a “really good” record in getting students out on time, but he can only speak for his major. "If all of the reasons aren’t [get students to graduate on time] is because we do have really good major advising checklists that we use," File said. "They’re very clear and if students follow those checklists, they will be fine. If there are errors [in the checklist] or errors that are on our part, then we do our absolute best to fix those."

CONTACT Carley Welch at welchcw@dukes.jmu.edu.

For more coverage of JMU and Harrisonburg news, follow the news desk on Twitter @BreezeNewsJMU.
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There are simple things students can do to help save the environment.

Recycling, ditching plastic and investing in reusable cups and straws are just a few things people can do to be eco-friendly.

Overconsumption and wasteful behaviors have sent Earth into a downward spiral toward self-destruction. In recent years, climate change has gone from a conspiracy theory to an all-too-real threat to ecosystems around the world.

As greenhouse gas emissions increase and the hole in the ozone layer widens, the Earth continues to heat up with the help of humanity’s harmful practices. Various steps have been taken to promote reusable bags and cut down on the use of plastic straws. However, the danger of global warming is an imminent danger and will take more than a few trips to the recycling plant to prevent.

Every conscious effort to combat climate change helps, and everyone should be doing their part to help save the planet.

The National Climate Assessment released on March 1 outlined the specific effects of climate change will have on different areas in the U.S. by the year 2050. The assessment reports that rising temperatures will cause more deaths per year due to extreme heat, a decrease in food supply including crops and fish, increased health risks and rising sea levels. Something must be done, and it must be done soon.

There are three simple ways to change everyday lifestyle habits into life-saving acts:

Reduce, reuse, recycle; carpool or use public transportation; and buy local plant-based foods.

There are 270,000 tons of plastic in the ocean. By 2050, the mass of plastic in the ocean will exceed the mass of all fish. Plastic is eaten by sea birds, turtles and whales and is killing marine life at an alarming rate. By using reusable containers, utensils, straws, bags and water bottles, these species might have a chance. Bring bags to the grocery store, carry a reusable water bottle, straw and utensils around all the time. Say no to Ziploc bags and yes to washable Tupperware and fabric bags for food storage.

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Overconsumption and wasteful behaviors have sent Earth into a downward spiral toward self-destruction. In recent years, climate change has gone from a conspiracy theory to an all-too-real threat to ecosystems around the world.

As greenhouse gas emissions increase and the hole in the ozone layer widens, the Earth continues to heat up with the help of humanity’s harmful practices. Various steps have been taken to promote reusable bags and cut down on the use of plastic straws. However, the danger of global warming is an imminent danger and will take more than a few trips to the recycling plant to prevent.

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There are three simple ways to change everyday lifestyle habits into life-saving acts:

Reduce, reuse, recycle; carpool or use public transportation; and buy local plant-based foods.

There are 270,000 tons of plastic in the ocean. By 2050, the mass of plastic in the ocean will exceed the mass of all fish. Plastic is eaten by sea birds, turtles and whales and is killing marine life at an alarming rate. By using reusable containers, utensils, straws, bags and water bottles, these species might have a chance. Bring bags to the grocery store, carry a reusable water bottle, straw and utensils around all the time. Say no to Ziploc bags and yes to washable Tupperware and fabric bags for food storage.

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Transportation makes up 28 percent of the total greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. According to Rideshare, every car emits its own weight in carbon dioxide each year. The U.S. uses 26 percent of the world’s gas but only produces 10 percent. The average household uses 1,143 gallons of gas per year. The overuse of private transportation and overconsumption of fuel plays a major role in the declining health of the planet. Instead, carpooling or taking public transit is an efficient, low-cost mode of transportation. Better yet, walking or riding a bike can benefit not only the environment, but personal health.

Animal agriculture produces huge amounts of greenhouse gas emissions, consumes massive volumes of water and causes heavy pollution. Veganism is widely regarded as the only fully sustainable diet for humans. So, consider eating less meat.

Recycling and composting have been campaigns for ages but can make a huge difference in the health of the environment. Buying fresh produce or animal products in the local area can also benefit local economies and cut down on the emissions caused by mass farming.

There are many ways JMU is working to combat the decline in the planet’s health, and students should be doing all they can to take advantage of these resources and opportunities. JMU buys a majority of its produce and animal products from local farms to support the community economy and promote the idea of buying local. JMU is also committed to reducing the amount of inorganic and food waste produced. All the dining halls compost and recycle.

As long as students are careful about putting the correct items in each bin, the waste created by the JMU community can be reused. Cupanion, a reusable water bottle company, is an easy way to get rewarded by filling up a reusable water bottle on campus at dining halls. A new reusable container incentive has been in full force this year. Personal reusable containers are accepted for food and drink at all dining halls, including Starbucks and Dunkin’ Donuts. Starbucks will even offer a 10-cent discount on any drink bought using a reusable container.

These are just a few of the ways the school is working toward turning this world around. It’s the responsibility of JMU students and citizens of the world to educate themselves about the ways they can be a part of the change.

Ryann Sheehy is a sophomore theatre and media arts and design double major. Contact Ryann at sheehyr1@dukes.jmu.edu.
Imagine reading the sentence "Student frequently engages in a teamwork-building software that simulates real-time spatial awareness exercises that enhance system 1 thinking." In other words, the student plays Fortnite.

This style of writing is an example of what can be found largely in academia, whether it be in an English lecture or a history textbook. Other places include LinkedIn profiles and college essays. It's characterized by high-brow vocabulary and long-winded phrases to describe simple things. Its most common use is to deceive the reader by making it seem like the author has more to say than they actually do.

The school system appears to encourage this by setting word count requirements on essays and grading papers that use simple language more harshly.

Writing as if one has swallowed a thesaurus is ineffective, pretentious and tedious to read. Historically, there are many examples of groups using elitist language to keep themselves above the so-called masses and take advantage of them. When French was injected into the English language after the Norman conquest, the lords of England used the exclusiveness of their language to hold themselves above the English-speaking commoners. There was absolutely no need to learn it, but it was a requirement to get by in administration, education, literature and law.

Comparably, the Catholic Church in mainland Europe used to conduct services in Latin, a dead and unintelligible language to everyone except those who studied it. When Martin Luther translated the Bible into something everyone could read, it caused a huge societal shift because it made people realize that the church was using predatory tactics to cheat regular folks out of their money.

As a general rule, if something has to be looked up for people to understand without context, it should generally be avoided. Unfortunately, the school system has taught students that this is the correct way to write. If the average person has difficulty reading a piece of writing because it's full of spelling mistakes and incorrect grammar, then most people agree it’s bad writing. If it’s hard to read because it uses fancy words and is excessively wordy, then people are far more reluctant to criticize it because they have been trained to think this is the standard. It shouldn’t be the standard because the purpose of language is to communicate. Anything that detracts from that goal is a waste of time. I’m not advocating that we start speaking like Kevin Malone from "The Office," but I’m saying that schools should focus a lot more on teaching students about the importance of understandable language and conciseness when writing effectively.
A crackle of gunfire slices through the silence suspended over Baltimore’s streets — a silence that’s perpetually scarce in a world replete with drugs, corner boys and the screeching wall of sirens venturing off to another bust. When the smoke recedes and the audience is met with the sight of a dead teen, blood coating his AC/DC T-shirt, one is left to wonder what our nation’s war on drugs ever did to counter such a harrowing act.

While our country is brimming with ideas and devoid of any genuine solutions, the HBO classic, “The Wire,” is a piece of art we can all learn from. It demonstrates a keen eye for identifying the problems we tend to overlook in our societal discussions and showcases an America often forgotten by the smiling faces professing empty promises behind red, white and blue speckled podiums.

“The Wire” initially aired on HBO in 2002. Created by former police reporter David Simon, it was conceived as the antithesis to conventional cop dramas with a level of realism unparalleled at its time. The show concentrates on Baltimore’s warring streets from the perspectives of the highest ranking police chief to the lowest corner slinger, conveying just how superfluous the war on drugs is.

Something revolutionary “The Wire” does to excel beyond your run-of-the-mill police drama is focus its seasons on an individual institution of our society. Like an onion, the show peels these layers as it progresses through episodes until the audience watches the rotting carcass of the American dream with no directions on how to provide resuscitation.

The show beautifully displays the validity behind both ends of the political spectrum. It demonstrates that even though crime and murder decrease exponentially as a result of this experiment, it still viscerally shows the detrimental effects brought on by consistent drug use without police intervention. This includes addicts overdosing in the streets and kids getting hooked.

“The Wire” differentiates itself from other shows by forcing the viewer to sympathize with dealers on the streets. It shows how selling drugs is the only thing dealers have in order to rise in their world, which is long forgotten by a government that only pays them mind when they’re busted for doing the very thing that feeds them. The U.S. has had this preconceived notion that any man who dares to defy its laws and sling drugs is a menace who should be shut away from purified society. In actuality, a vast majority are trying to financially make their way through a disheartening environment they didn’t ask to be born into.

Through Baltimore’s imposing police force, “The Wire” shows that the drug war incarcerates young adults at a rapid-fire rate to the point that only 7 percent of modern prison inmates are violent offenders. This suggests that people herded into prison with nonviolent mindsets are released in a worse state than when they came in, putting a dent in the prison system’s promise for reformation. While the show came to a conclusion 11 years ago, its echo is still heard in modern day.

Ian Welfley is a sophomore media arts and design and communication studies double major. Contact Ian at welfleim@dukes.jmu.edu.
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Who is Pete Buttigieg?

Democratic presidential candidate is youngest in the race and an underdog

Ellie Shippey | eleanor, tell me more

When Pete Buttigieg walked onto the stage at "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert," he wore a button-down shirt and tie with the sleeves rolled up. He wasn’t wearing a blazer. He didn’t look like the traditional politician being interviewed about their decision to run for president.

Buttigieg looked like a newly hired professor who had everything to prove but wore a relaxed and composed expression that suggested he was ready to confront anything. He looked as though he didn’t expect anyone to know who he was but knew people would believe in him after he told them.

Buttigieg is the mayor of South Bend, Indiana. He’s a 37-year-old Rhodes Scholar and Afghanistan War veteran who won his first election for mayor when he was 29. Buttigieg came out as gay when he ran to be re-elected as mayor of South Bend, during a time when now-Vice President Mike Pence was governor of Indiana. Buttigieg is now running for the Democratic nomination for president of the U.S.

There are many reasons Buttigieg will be an underdog candidate in the upcoming election. A big factor is, should he win the presidency, he’d be the youngest president in history, younger than Theodore Roosevelt, who gained office at age 42. People tend to associate experience with age and thus have good reason to doubt Buttigieg would have enough experience for the job.

That being said, Buttigieg argues that his youth shouldn’t disqualify him. There was a reason the Founding Fathers put a system in place that’d allow him to win at his age. Furthermore, he claims that if people are worried he’s not experienced enough, they should understand that his tenure as mayor provided him with plenty of executive experience. He claims this exposure to leading and overseeing people is founded in work that’s “close to the ground.”

The odds of Buttigieg running a successful Democratic presidential campaign aren’t great. He’s running against at least 30 potential contenders for the presidential title, some of whom have a great deal more experience working in government. Moreover, candidates like Bernie Sanders and Kamala Harris have been in the spotlight for much longer. This means the American people may feel a greater sense of familiarity and devotion toward these candidates, and it might be harder for Buttigieg to win these people over.

While Buttigieg’s race is certainly an uphill battle, it doesn’t mean great things can’t come out of his running. There’s a symbolic aspect to Buttigieg. It’s the fact that he’s running in spite of people thinking that being a mayor isn’t enough experience, in spite of the fact that he’s a gay man from the same state as homophobic Pence and despite the fact that he’d be the youngest president if he were elected at 37 years old. Symbolically, Buttigieg’s race would inspire others who come from similar backgrounds — if not a more persecuted background — to run in the future.

Ellie Shippey is a senior media arts and design major. Contact Ellie at shippeeb@dukes.jmu.edu.
Undeserving front page

Esquire's newest cover story exemplifies toxic masculinity with an insensitive and problematic piece

While Morgan seems to buy into several different gender generalizations, the article concludes with this statement, “[Morgan] doesn’t think there are too many reasons it would be better to be a guy than a girl — unless you’re from the Middle East or maybe the inner city.” Morgan ultimately disproves his own point by showcasing ingrained ideas about gender stereotypes, which in turn can be harmful to everyone, creating social expectations. Not only does he contradict his own viewpoint, but he also neglects and undermines the oppression women face in several different cultures, such as the lack of access to feminine hygiene products in South Asia and Saharan Africa.

Morgan describes himself as conservative-leaning and has opinions on gender, foreign policy and welfare. He says he doesn’t know exactly what the #MeToo movement is or why so many school shooters are white males. In an article that’s supposed to show a perspective on relevant social and political issues, the content doesn’t offer a strong, educated stance to the dialogue of them. The views that Morgan holds aren’t supported with reasons or rationalizations, which could also be the fault of writer Jennifer Percy.

In a statement to CBS News, Percy expressed that the presentation of her story was “misleading,” and she explained that her intention was to showcase the necessity of educating teenagers on privilege and the progress that needs to be made in that regard. She didn’t approve of the cover layout and text and thinks it made her intentions unclear. The editor of Esquire posits that Morgan’s story is just the first in a series that will feature teens growing up “white, black, LGBTQ, female.”

Esquire showed life through the eyes of one boy. Ryan Morgan is a typical American boy — young, human and a product of the culture he’s been raised in. He’s not at fault for the poor response of the article, as the editorial staff of Esquire should’ve been clearer about the intentions of the piece or offered the platform to someone who could contribute more eloquently to the conversation. Morgan says, “I guess that when you’re a teenager, you don’t really have anything important to say.” Yet, activists like David Hogg or philanthropists like Marley Dias would’ve offered more to the equation.

Diana Witt is a freshman theatre and media arts and design double major. Contact Diana at wittdr@dukes.jmu.edu.
John Grisham will host Alice McDermott, a *New York Times* best-selling author and National Book Award winner.

Admission to the event is free and open to the public.

Visit [www.jmu.edu/grisham](http://www.jmu.edu/grisham) for more information.
By JULIAN DENIZARD
The Breeze

On Feb. 25, the University Program Board announced that rapper, singer and producer T-Pain will be performing at JMU’s spring concert on April 16. As a staple of hip-hop culture during the mid-to-late 2000s, T-Pain came into the rap scene with a unique auto-tuned style and delivery that’s influenced artists such as Travis Scott, Young Thug and Future. In case you haven’t heard any of his hit songs, or just haven’t heard anything of his in a while, here’s a list of essential hits to get in the concert spirit.

**Buy U a Drank (Shawty Snappin’)**

Arguably his most popular song, T-Pain’s “Buy U a Drank” is a smooth-sounding tune thanks to his slick flow and catchy beat. The song’s chorus is a true anthem of the mid-2000s and remains iconic to this day. The subject matter of the song is based on the idea of meeting that special someone in the club and proving yourself worthy of their attention. Combined with a nice Yung Joc feature that features a raawer, more raspy voice to contrast T-Pain’s auto-tuned tone, this song is one everyone should be familiar with.

**Bartender**

Despite being one of his more heartfelt and emotional songs, “Bartender” is also a song about the idea of finding love in the club. T-Pain sings about being wooed by a bartender at the club after having his heart broken by his past significant other. T-Pain used his manipulated vocals in a way that conveys a sense of true admiration for the woman. The silky production also fits well with this feeling of love. Akon has a brief feature near the middle of the song, but it doesn’t compare to the chemistry between T-Pain and the beat.

**I’m N Luv (Wit a Stripper)**

The story of “I’m N Luv (Wit a Stripper)” comes from T-Pain’s little brother seemingly falling in love with a dancer at a strip club after she danced on him. The grander message of this song can be seen as the idea of developing feelings for someone who isn’t interested in a relationship. The standout part of this track is definitely the production, which includes acoustic guitars and glitchy high notes. T-Pain’s vocals — which aren’t auto-tuned — and lyrics aren’t nearly as interesting, but the Mike Jones feature early in the song is delivered pretty well. While being one of his earlier, messier songs, it’s still worthwhile to give a listen to.

**I’m Sprung**

T-Pain’s vocal layering and emotional distress both reach a peak with “I’m Sprung.” In this true breakup song, T-Pain finds himself conflicted regarding whether his lover is a good fit for him, but he’s so lovesick that he can’t get over the idea of having her all to himself. The production on this song includes some tasteful harp sounds that fit well with the vibe of the track along with T-Pain’s vocal layers. This adds more power to the strong emotions of love and confusion he conveys on the track. Overall, this song is a fine example of how T-Pain’s voice can carry a whole song and not wear thin.

**Up Down (Do This All Day)**

It’d be surprising if T-Pain didn’t perform this iconic party anthem at the spring concert. “Up Down (Do This All Day)” is about what goes down at the club and feeling like the star of the night. T-Pain’s voice seems explosive and energetic during certain sections of the track, making it even more exciting. The beat isn’t as experimental as his previous hits, but it doesn’t have to be. It’s a banger that’s not only one of his newest songs, but one that anyone can enjoy at any party or concert.

**Best Love Song**

T-Pain and Chris Brown share a similar sound in terms of their vocal delivery, so “Best Love Song” is a successful collaboration between the two artists. The overall sound is triumphant and expressive with touches of pianos and electric guitars. It’s an interesting take on the “love song” music trope, considering it’s so upbeat and light-hearted. As an artist, this proves that T-Pain can take his production abilities down many paths.

**T-Pain Mashup**

"T-Pain Mashup" is a reimagining of his previous hit single “Buy U a Drank (Shawty Snappin’)” and features production contributions from Kurt Hugo Schneider. It takes the original song and moves it in a more slow jam/R&B direction. For the most part, this effort is somewhat clumsy in terms of both T-Pain’s singing voice and the song’s piano parts. The beat is well executed, but T-Pain’s vocals don’t exactly fit with the stripped-back approach Schneider takes for the track.

If you’re looking for an idea of how T-Pain sounds today, he recently dropped a project with Lil Wayne titled “1UP.” Whether you’ve been a longtime fan of T-Pain or you’ve never heard a single song by him, he has a lot to offer when taking a listen to his past hit songs.

**CONTACT** Julian Denizard at denizajs@dukes.jmu.edu. For more on the culture, arts and lifestyle of the JMU and Harrisonburg communities, follow the culture desk on Twitter @Breeze_Culture.
JMU students repurpose thrifty clothes to support sustainable, inclusive fashion through Well Clothing Co.

By TRACI RASDORF
The Breeze

On a typical afternoon between classes, Alex Balbontin and Abbey Chaplain head to Mercy House or Goodwill to scour the racks looking for the best thrifty finds. The duo recently created Well Clothing Co., using the Instagram handle @wellclothingco on Instagram as a platform, to sell chic, edgy repurposed clothes. They have their first clothing launch Wednesday.

Balbontin, a junior dietetics major, has been distorting her own clothes — ripping and bleach dyeing them for a flare that no one else knew was wearing — since she was 14 years old. Ever since, she’s had a dream of starting her own clothing company. Balbontin partnered with Chaplain, a sophomore media arts and design major whom she met through a mutual friend from JMU over the summer.

Chaplain is a media arts and design major who she met through a mutual friend from JMU over the summer. Both of them have loved fashion and clothes since childhood, and they've always wanted to start a clothing brand to sell their own clothes. They decided to team up and start their own clothing brand.

The founders say the most rewarding part of the experience so far has been watching the outpouring of support and interest from their followers. They have received many messages from people who are interested in their clothing line and want to support their mission.

The founders also want the style choices of Well Clothing Co. to be as inclusive as possible. They want the style to support ethical clothing or want to support us,” Balbontin said. “We do the fun, hard work in sorting, finding, trying on, matching, distorting, cutting to whatever style we think our customers are going to like.”

Chaplain finds it efficient to post a picture of each clothing item on Instagram, such as a pair of denim jeans or a long sleeve blouse, so customers can easily see all the options for that launch.

Then, the first person to direct message them inquiring about the jeans or blouse will get first dibs to buy it. The two prefer to speak through direct messages versus the comments so they can protect the privacy of their customers when handling addresses and delivery options.

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Kildea added to the concept of community and the two realized they shared a passion for sustainability in this community and this world, and they create their own clothes using what we've already created. They used the content in their portfolios.

Jeff Kildea, a sophomore media arts and design major, was a model for Well Clothing Co. and edited the promotional video for the launch. With the use of local band Strong Water, Kildea added to the concept of community inclusion to set the tone for the video. 

“Alex, she’s just incredible,” Kildea said. “She’s super passionate about this. I think it’s a great vision, and I’m excited to see where she can go with it and where that ambition is going to pay off.”

The duo says it shops strategically, finding the best deals possible at thrift stores to avoid spending too much. This allows Balbontin and Chaplain to sell repurposed clothes for reasonable prices.

Once they collect the pieces, they’ll decide whether they think they’re perfect the way they are or if they want to alter them. Cutting rips in the bottom of pants or wearing them out or bringing in an artist to paint on the back of a jacket are ways in which they revamp clothes.

“We’re the middleman for people who want the style to support ethical clothing or want to support us,” Balbontin said. “We do the fun, hard work in sorting, finding, trying on, matching, distorting, cutting to whatever style we think our customers are going to like.”

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“We’re the middleman for people who
Shogan, a sophomore history major, has come a long way since then. He was among the top 25 in the 2018 Yu-Gi-Oh! Championship Series of 3,000 people, nationally ranked as the 22nd seed and even beat his idol, Patrick Koban, who despite his retired status is regarded as one of the best players to ever play the game.

“I was in high school coming from a middle-class family and traveling is really expensive,” Shogan said. “It’s splitting hotel rooms six and seven ways and gas five ways and barely having enough. Like, I wouldn’t eat for the whole weekend because there wasn’t enough money in the budget.”

What stemmed from watching the animated TV show on Hulu became a pastime with his friend, Daniel Vincent, who later convinced Shogan’s mother to buy him a starter deck for his birthday. Vincent died in a car accident in 2015, which has led Shogan to dedicate his wins to him as someone who served as the catalyst for his love of the game. The support of his friends — in addition to his drive to keep improving — allowed Shogan to become more serious and move up from local and regional tournaments to premiere ones. For larger events, players can travel close to 15 hours and play against crowds from 1,500 to 3,000 people.

Shogan has competed as far north as Canada, as far west as California and as close as Waynesboro. He’s established a friend group that spans the country, whether it be through traveling to events, testing with people on the online platform DuelingBook or hotel stays.
Alex Soler, a professor at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, has known Shogan since playing with him at a card shop in Greensboro, North Carolina, two years ago. They’ve since become great friends, with Soler saying his determination is inspirational.

“He’s taught me what somebody who maybe didn’t have the best means can succeed in,” Soler said. “He’s truly had to bust some butts to get to the events, to get home, back to school, to make ends meet. He really works hard.”

And it shows. Over JMU’s spring break, Shogan traveled to Charlotte, North Carolina, for a tournament, then back to JMU on Saturday to leave Sunday morning for another one in Pennsylvania. This routine is one that Bruce Kendrick, an incoming freshman at Bridgewater College and hometown best friend, says Shogan does religiously. They met back in 2014 at a local park in Danville, Virginia, a city so close to the state border that Shogan says he can walk to North Carolina from his house. They traveled to the closest tournaments — which were at least an hour away — every Sunday. According to Kendrick, he tests on Duelingbook every night, practices theory to enhance his playing ability and always looks for the next challenge.

“He’s definitely one of my best friends. I probably wouldn’t still play this game if it weren’t for the friends I’ve made,” Kendrick said. “Beyond Yu-Gi-Oh! we don’t have as much in common, but that’s where we find the middle ground.”

In his starting days, Kendrick’s family helped him pay for expenses. Along the way, he’s come across sponsors willing to offset the costs of traveling. As he continued topping more tournaments, he’d look for bigger supporters, joking that he “took [his] talents to South Beach.”

Shogan stresses preparation and understanding card theory, which includes card advantage, or having more cards than your opponent; tempo, or how many plays you’re making and philosophy of fire, or card advantage in regard to opponents’ life total.

“It’s this theory of everything,” Shogan said. “It’s really helpful. What I try to think about a lot, thinking about how to manipulate my opponent into the worst position for them. But there’s other stuff, like where I’m going to eat tonight.”

What he loves most is that the game continues building on itself — well, that and getting his name called out when he tops a tournament. There’s always something new to learn, people to meet and a community that keeps him going.

He feels it’s important to dispel the nerd stereotype that comes with loving Yu-Gi-Oh!, saying players are just like everyone else, putting their pants on one leg at a time.

“I sometimes get asked, ’When are you going to quit?’ And my answer is always the same,” Shogan said. “I will quit when I’m the best ever or when there’s nothing left for me to learn from the game. It’s much more likely that I quit because I become the best ever because there’s always something new. That’s what makes it so incredible.”

CONTACT Sabrina Moreno at thebreezeculture@gmail.com. For more on the culture, arts and lifestyle of the JMU and Harrisonburg communities, follow the culture desk on Twitter @Breeze_Culture.

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PHOTOS BY TRISTAN LOREI / THE BREEZE
Stuart Mercer gently holds the gemstone against the 220-grit sanding wheel, rotating it periodically to ensure all sides are uniform. Water drips off his hands into the base of the machine — a Star Diamond Lapidary grinder — occasionally splattering onto his leather apron. Hanging around his neck is a three-tiered necklace with a variety of gems he made: a Colombian emerald, a Larimar from the Dominican Republic and a blue quartz from Madison County.

The electrical sounds from the belt touching the gemstone covers any ambient noises from the street right outside the window. Leah, Mercer’s shitzu who accompanies him in the store, handles the noise well, lying quietly on her bed in the window sill. A minute or two after, he met a man working in the same career that Mercer is now. He spent two Saturdays with him and his wife learning how to do basic silver work and cut a cabochon.

After that, Mercer immediately began selling his jewelry in consignment shops. He did this throughout college until graduating with a geology major in 1975. Then, he got married and began a career in contracting to provide for his family. He was a licensed roofing contractor until he retired when his daughters graduated college.

"When my girls moved out of the house, I moved equipment into their bedrooms ... and started doing this full time," Mercer said. "I did craft shows for 12 years. Then, the store became available ... It was a good spot and awesome location on South Main Street, but has chosen to stay where he is due to the location's proximity to the Water Street parking deck. Mercer is located directly next to the deck, allowing customers easy access to his store when they arrive or stumble upon it while walking past. One customer, Jean Gerber, found him by frequently visiting Downtown Books next door to Mercer.

"I brought in a stone that I got at the Shenandoah Valley gem and mineral show and [Mercer] put a ribbon on it for me," Gerber said. "It was very satisfying. We took a while to choose which ribbon, and it was very nice. It's very nice that it's local with local stones."

Creating one piece of jewelry typically is a day’s work for Mercer, taking anywhere from five to eight hours. Around his workspace, Mercer has dozens of gemstones he deemed marketable product. This attention to detail and perfectionism allows him to maintain the level of quality in his jewelry. "They’re nice, they’re good, they’re probably sellable, but they’re not perfect" Mercer said, emphasizing the word “perfect.” "And, it’s not my work, it’s just the rock itself. It’s got a fracture, a cleavage mark or a flaw in the stone itself."

"We first started out just purchasing his items and finding out a little about his rocks," Koontz said. "Then from there, my wife found some of her own rocks, Unakite Jasper, which ... and turned them into jewelry, which adds an extra meaning to it. You can find a lot of polished gems, but if you just look at his, [they] have that little extra detail to them."

Many customers come in for custom orders and repairs. People will bring in their own gems, like Koontz did, or with a specifically shaped gem in mind. Mercer will often do repairs for people who want gems to fit old pieces of jewelry. "We often have people who want to pass them down to their kids or someone else whom they are close to. Mercer is happy to do repairs and maintain the sentimental value of the piece."

"I get complimented all the time for following my passion and making it a reality," Mercer said. "I’m kind of lucky that what I want to do is also a marketable product. This is what I wanted to do since childhood, and I’m doing it, and I’m very happy."
MARCH 18 | GET THE SCOOP
SSC 1075 | 12-2 p.m.
Grab a spoon and get your free ice cream (or Cheerwine float) as we kick off I ♥ JMU Week! Drop by SSC 1075 anytime between noon-2p to get a scoop, learn some JMU facts and tell us why you love JMU.

MARCH 19 | SDK SKILLS CHALLENGE
UREC | 3–7 p.m.
Join the Student Duke Club at UREC to test your skills! Grab your friends and compete for prizes throughout the day as we celebrate I ♥ JMU Week and gear up for Giving Day!

MARCH 20 | I ♥ JMU TEA TIME
Madison Union | 4–5 p.m.
Take a mid-week break and stop by Madison Union to get some snacks and hot beverages. Bring a friend, check out our photo booth and celebrate what you love about JMU!

MARCH 21 | GIVING DAY
All Day!
It’s time to get unleashed for Giving Day 2019!

MARCH 21 | LATE NIGHT BREAKFAST
Festival | 10–midnight
Don’t miss Who Let the Dukes Out @ LNB at Festival as we close out Giving Day 2019! UPB will have all the free food (tots!), giveaways, mechanical bull, DJ, and more! And, if you make a gift to JMU on Giving Day, you can pick up your free I ♥ JMU Week tank, too!
After 29 games and 25 wins in 18 weeks, JMU women’s basketball is three wins away from its first conference championship under head coach Sean O’Regan. JMU will put a 13-game winning streak to the test Thursday in Newark, Delaware, as the No. 1 seed in the CAA tournament. The Dukes are experienced and battle-tested in hostile environments and have won nine of their past 10 road games.

“I don’t believe in nervousness,” junior guard Kamiah Smalls said. “It’s either you’re ready or you’re not. I think we’re very prepared and more than ready. We just don’t want our excitement to overpower our will for the win.”

JMU has entered each of its past six seasons as the preseason favorite to win the CAA but lost to Elon in the tournament in both 2017 and 2018. After the Phoenix lost their four leading scorers over the offseason, the defending CAA champions appear to be a non-factor as the No. 8 seed at 9-20 (4-14 CAA). The Dukes now have a chance to reclaim the title, which would be their fourth in six seasons.

“I don’t think it’s a surprise to anybody that we’re here,” O’Regan said. “My expectations are pretty high … I’ve always believed in this team, so being in first place and in the driver’s seat is a place I really hoped we’d be at this point.”

The Dukes came into the season with the pressure of high expectations and a challenging non-conference schedule. After a 3-0 start to the season, JMU went 3-3 in its next six games before winning 19 of 20 to close the regular season. As expected, it took time for players to adjust to new roles and the team to feel comfortable playing with each other.

“Not having a preseason with them was a little hard for me,” redshirt junior guard Jackie Benitez said. “They got a little more time to play with each other. At this point in the season, we’re just all really clicking, and it’s a great time to start clicking.”

JMU wrapped up the regular season with a 25-4 (17-1 CAA) record and its first undefeated season at home since 2015-16. The Dukes have beaten every conference foe at least once, with their one loss coming to UNCW 66-63 on Jan. 18. JMU is 25th in the nation in RPI — the next-highest CAA team is Drexel at 63rd.

“The only way we don’t come out on top is if we’re not playing somewhere close to our best,” O’Regan said. “It’s not the result we’re going to be focused on. It’s the process of getting better and improving. If we’re doing that, I don’t think there’s anybody that would beat us.”

O’Regan said in a postgame interview on Jan. 13 that while Smalls has been a consistent scorer throughout the season — she ranks fifth in the CAA with 16.6 points per game — junior guard Lexie Barrier is the offense’s X-factor who may determine JMU’s ceiling.

“As Smalls put it, the Dukes are working on becoming ‘great at what you’re good at.’”

O’Regan said he doesn’t foresee making any changes to his team’s style of play, pace or rotation in the postseason, believing his system was “good enough to win the conference tournament.” Foul trouble and fatigue may be factors, in which case he plans to use the team’s depth to its advantage. He said if the team is healthy and out of foul trouble, the rotation “might stay tight.”

Unless JMU leads by 20 or more toward the end of the game, O’Regan isn’t planning on giving his starters extended rest. Lower-seeded teams are fighting for their postseason lives and already have a game under their belt while the Dukes will be rested, but potentially rusty.
“Look, you’re going to be tired regardless, so whether you play 38 minutes or you play 34 minutes, to me, you’re going to be tired,” O’Regan said. “Get your body ready to play 120 minutes. Kamiah Smalls, she should be ready to play 120 minutes ... That’s the mentality.”

JMU will lean on its stars to set the tone, play heavy minutes and take the Dukes back to the conference championship. Veteran leadership from Smalls, Barrier, redshirt junior center Kayla Cooper Williams and senior guard Logan Reynolds has kept JMU near the top of the conference all season and will be just as valuable in the CAA tournament.

“We better stay hungry,” O’Regan said. “What I’m starting to learn about the maturity of Kamiah and Kayla and Logan and Lexie is that they’ll take care of that for me. Those four kids have been through everything. They know what it takes. They know that, come Wednesday, we’ve got to get down to business and turn the page.”

CONTACT
James Faris at farisja@dukes.jmu.edu. For more basketball coverage, follow the sports desk on Twitter @TheBreezeSports.
Will Golden State win the NBA Finals this season?

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Five NBA All-Stars, two MVPs and the second best 3-point shooter of all time make up Golden State’s starting five. The Warriors are stacked and have the best starting five in NBA history. It’s clear why many think they can’t lose. However, with a dose of luck and the right matchup, there are a few teams that could beat Golden State.

The most obvious answer is the Houston Rockets. Last year, in the Western Conference Finals, Houston managed to push the Warriors to seven games. It’s often said among fans that if point guard Chris Paul doesn’t get injured in Game 5 or if the Rockets don’t shoot historically poorly in Game 7 (with a record-breaking 27 missed threes), the team would’ve made the finals.

While indulging in hypotheticals is pointless, last year’s Rockets demonstrated they were capable of beating Golden State, and despite some roster changes this year, the team has continued to show the qualities that stifled the champs past post-season: an isolation and pick-and-roll style that slows the pace. Center DeMarcus Cousins, a weak link in the Warrior’s defense alongside point guard Stephen Curry, now offers another target for Houston’s fleet-footed guards to exploit.

Outside of the Western Conference, the teams most likely to beat the champs are the Boston Celtics and Milwaukee Bucks. These two teams are among the best in the league at defending the three-point shot — which the Warriors have continuously excelled in.

In Boston’s case, it’s the length, athleticism and excellent defensive rotations that allow the Celtics to guard the perimeter better than most teams. With defensive studs like guard Marcus Smart, forwards Jaylen Brown and Marcus Morris and center Al Horford, the team boasts the personnel to make Curry, guard Klay Thompson and forward Kevin Durant’s lives difficult in a seven-game series.

Likewise, Boston’s length makes it possible to attack passing lanes and disrupt the Warriors’ ball movement. For a team that’s already turnover prone, that’s worrisome.

Similarly, the Bucks possess length, athleticism and depth akin to Boston, but their strategy for defending the three pointer is unique. Of all the teams in the league, the Bucks allow their opponents to shoot more three pointers than any other team.

With the three-point revolution, teams have realized the value of the three ball. Common wisdom says that an open three is better than an open two. However, this implies that the threes are being made at a rate greater than 33 percent. Sinking 50 percent of field goals and 33 percent of three pointers both yield one point per possession, so to make the three pointer statistically more valuable, the shooter must shoot better than 33 percent. As a result, the Bucks realize that an open shot taken by a poor shooter is a waste of a possession.

Due to that, the Bucks will drop back on pick-and-roll coverage, drop off poor shooters and help generously on drives to the rim. The Bucks aren’t afraid to let their opponent’s take bad shots if it means they can eliminate the opportunities for good ones. To that end, they’ll concentrate on protecting the paint and hounding the opponent’s best marksmen.

This is particularly troublesome for the Warriors. One of Golden State’s weaknesses is its top-heavy shooting. Outside of Curry and Thompson, the Warriors have few floor spacers. When one of the two struggles, especially Curry, the Warrior’s offense grinds to a halt, hence why the Bucks’ strategy is so effective against them. Moreover, the Warriors seem to have very few answers for forward Giannis Antetokounmpo.

The Warriors are proven champions. Their coaching staff and players know what it takes to be the best; however, all dynasties come to an end. While their decline is not a certainty, the Rockets or Bucks pose serious threats to Golden State. Should the Warriors lose this year, it’ll most likely be to one of those teams.

Smalls, Barrier and Young have other teams they’d rather see win the NBA Finals but think the Warriors have the best shot.

For many members of the JMU women’s basketball team, the Warriors are the pinnacle of the sport. They personify the phrase “the beautiful game.”

The team’s ball movement, selflessness and fundamentally sound style are awe-inspiring. While the Dukes don’t attempt to mimic Golden State’s style, the players do try to embody the togetherness the NBA champs demonstrate on a nightly basis.

Due to the talent and philosophy the Warriors have, many players don’t see the Warriors losing anytime soon. To them, the real threats to the Warriors are sparse.

“Maybe the [Houston] Rockets,” junior guard Lexie Barrier said of the Warriors’ competition. “Before the beginning of the season, I think everybody would’ve said the Lakers, but I just don’t see that anymore. With LeBron, I feel like they have a chance to make the playoffs.”

Barrier believes the Rockets are the most credible threat to the Warriors’ championship aspirations, possibly having the chance to bump the Warriors from the playoffs before the final series. Last postseason, in the conference finals, it took the champs seven games to finally defeat Houston. Despite a rough start to the season for the Texas-based team, the Rockets’ ability to climb back to the third seed and several monster performances from MVP candidate James Harden demonstrate they’re just as dangerous as they were last year.

For some on the team, even the Rockets don’t stand a chance. Their game isn’t team oriented. Rather, they focus heavily on isolation basketball — inferior to the beautiful, flowing style of Golden State.

“[James Harden] plays one-on-one basketball,” senior guard Aneah Young said. “That’s not basketball. One person goes off a pick-and-roll and scores every possession. That’s not basketball, it’s pick-up. It’s not fun to watch. There are five players on the floor. Use all five players and play real basketball like Golden State.”

To Young, the Warriors are the spiritual successors to the 2014 San Antonio Spurs. The coaches and players’ philosophy is what drives the team’s success. It’s not just their substantial firepower — it’s the principles behind the team, which will allow them to win this championship and many more.

However, the Warriors aren’t universally adored. Some Dukes, like junior guard Kamiah Small, despise the team. Although, even she admits the team is the favorite to win the chip this year.

“As much as it boils my blood, yeah, they’re up there for sure,” Small said. “The Boston Celtics, if they get it together, [could beat the Warriors]. They can’t stop Jayson Tatum. Jayson Tatum is a problem, and Kryie, on top of that, [is too]. If they come together, Golden State’s got some problems.”

Michael Turner contributed to this report.
By BLAKE PACE
The Breeze

When JMU lacrosse’s first win of the season came to a close, the Dukes held a comfortable 13-8 lead with under two minutes to play. A win would seemingly remove the sour taste in the players’ mouths from an 18-7 loss at UNC just four days prior and would be the first of six straight victories for the defending national champs.

That winning streak, still in place, wasn’t the only streak to begin that day. Slowly improving game by game, Fox would have her coming out party in a rainy contest against Canisius. Fox led the Dukes with four points off two goals and two assists — all of which were career highs — and was named CAA Player of the Week just days later. More important than the accolade, she had found her role — in short time, too.

She’d score again in the following game against UConn, and then again against High Point on Feb. 23. The 5-foot-4 athlete also fed senior attacker Hanna Haven for her first career assist against the Panthers.

“Overall, just her work ethic and attitude was noticeable right off the bat,” junior midfielder Halle Duenkel said. “You see it every day on the field, you see it in the weight room, you see it even in the classroom. She works hard in everything she does and I think it’s starting to pay off for her.”

Fox’s tenacious and successful effort has been in place since her days as a high-school phenom. Attending North Rockland High School, Fox was an all-league selection from eighth grade through senior year, a team captain on both her field hockey and basketball teams, and she made Principal’s List every quarter of high school. She also has lacrosse in her bloodlines, as her father, Brian, played collegiately at St. John’s and her sister, Jenna, plays at Dominican College in New York.

“Lizzy is one of those players who I admire as a junior,” Duenkel said. “She’s an underclassman, but a force to be reckoned with. It’s her first year, but she’s playing as a seasoned veteran. I think being able to play alongside her has been a privilege.”

While Fox didn’t attempt a shot in the Dukes’ 11-9 win over Penn State — ending her scoring streak at four — she earned her way to her first career start Sunday against Rutgers. She resumed her scoring marks yet again, finding the back of the net for her sixth goal of the season. Her 10 points rank fifth on the team, and the starting nod suggests expanded opportunities for the young talent.

“I just think that we have a really competitive pool in the midfield and we want to keeping pushing each individual to continue to be the best version of themselves,” Klaes-Bawcombe said. “I’m excited for this team that we have a freshman coming in who’s willing to push the starters before her and shake it up a little bit.”

With a start under her belt and a new scoring streak underway, Fox is ready to expand on her already impressive debut season. While it wasn’t the role she expected to have in Year 1, it’s hard to say she has any qualms with turning her multifaceted skill set into wins for the Dukes.

CONTACT Blake Pace at breezesports@gmail.com. For more lacrosse coverage, follow the sports desk on Twitter @TheBreezeSports.
IN BRIEF

BASEBALL

Kelly’s pitching honored in weekly CAA awards

Junior pitcher Kevin Kelly was one of two players selected as the CAA Pitchers of the Week. The Springfield, Virginia, native gave up only two hits in eight shutout innings in the Dukes’ matchup with High Point on March 9. Kelly faced 25 batters in the game and didn’t give up a walk on the way to a 2-0 win for JMU. The junior sits at 3-1 on the season and boasts a 1.16 ERA.

SWIMMING AND DIVING

Zhang picked for NCAA National Championships

Junior freestyle swimmer Bonnie Zhang became the third swimmer in program history to be invited to the NCAA National Championships. Zhang will compete March 20-23 in the 50, 100 and 200 m freestyle. The Canberra, Australia, native is ranked at No. 25 in the 100 m, No. 50 in the 200 m and No. 55 in the 50 m freestyle. During the 2018-19 season, Zhang was named CAA Swimmer of the Week four times and broke the CAA record in the 100 m freestyle.

LACROSSE

Dougherty claims defensive player of the week

Redshirt sophomore goalkeeper Molly Dougherty nabbed her fourth-career CAA weekly honor after being named the CAA Defensive Player of the Week. She was selected as the CAA Rookie of the Week three times last season. The Alexandria, Virginia, native helped lead the Dukes to two wins last week over No. 19 Penn State and Rutgers. Dougherty recorded 28 saves between both games, giving up only 16 goals.

SCOREBOARD

WOMEN’S BASKETBALL

(25-4, 17-1 CAA)
LATEST SCORE
Win vs. Delaware 56-51
NEXT GAME
Thursday vs. Hofstra
PLAYER OF THE WEEK
Jackie Benitez — 36 points, 6 rebounds

SOFTBALL

(11-5, 0-0 CAA)
LATEST SCORE
Win vs. Lehigh, 12-3
NEXT GAME
Friday vs. St. Joseph’s
PLAYER OF THE WEEK
Logan Newton — 2 home runs, 5 RBIs

LACROSSE

(6-1, 0-0)
LATEST SCORE
Win vs. Rutgers, 10-7
NEXT GAME
Saturday vs. Temple
PLAYER OF THE WEEK
Hanna Haven — 4 goals, 4 assists

MEN’S TENNIS

(10-4, 1-1 CAA)
LATEST SCORE
Loss vs. Elon, 7-0
NEXT MATCH
Saturday vs. Delaware
PLAYER OF THE WEEK
Alvaro Arce — 8-2 in singles

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