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THE PARTHENON

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Club sports allow students to get involved



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Independent TEDxMarshallU event to include range of topics



PHOTO COURTESY OF HANNAH PETRACCA

Speakers and Marshall faculty and students pose after last year's first TEDxMarshallU event.

By AMANDA LARCH
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

A TEDxMarshallU event, the second of its kind, will focus on bringing together different subjects, with six guest speakers at 5 p.m. March 14 at Huntington's City Hall auditorium.

Hannah Petracca, student lead organizer of the event, said she is looking forward to the speakers sharing their stories. The speakers, including Woody Williams, will discuss topics ranging from extra terrestrial science to healing from natural disasters, Petracca said.

The talk will be published through TEDx a month after for the event, and "will be available for the world to see," Petracca said. "It's awesome to be a part of something worldwide."

Student tickets to the event will be free and

available in the coming weeks, Petracca said, while public tickets for individuals are \$30 and \$50 for two.

Petracca hosted the first TEDx event at Marshall last year as student body vice president, along with former Student Body President Hunter Barclay. She worked with an education professor, Brian Kinghorn, who is this year's co-organizer along with Petracca.

"TEDx events are independently organized events hosted by universities or local organizations all over the world," Petracca said.

Petracca said she is working with a talented group of students, as well as Kinghorn, who are making the event possible.

"I'm thrilled to be a part of this year's event and feel very lucky to be the student lead," Petracca said.

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Marshall faculty address mental health issues, train students

By RALPH MAY
THE PARTHENON

There are CPR and other set procedures for the treatment of physical injuries during a crisis. The same is being made for a mental health crisis by two Marshall University faculty.

These faculty members are some of multiple who are addressing mental health crises by changing the stigma around crises and training students how to react and assist in these situations.

"A mental crisis may be a time that someone has a diagnosed or possibly undiagnosed mental health disorder that is severely impacting their life and ability to go about their daily activities," program coordinator of Marshall Women's and Gender Center Claire Snyder said.

Snyder said these crises could also be brought about by an emotional struggle and it is important that the situations are treated with the same urgency as physical.

"Emotional and psychological struggles can be just as impactful to someone's daily life as physical struggles," she said. "We are really good as a society about taking care of people who are injured or have an illness, and we should be just as understanding and supporting with mental illness."

These crises are addressed through mental health first aid, which Snyder said takes a similar approach to traditional first aid.

"Just like we think of first aid CPR for physical emergencies, mental health first aid is that first response to someone who may be in need of support for mental health," she said.

She said the goal is for people to notice signs of mental illness, equip them with tools to have a conversation and be able to direct them to appropriate resources.

Another aspect of this issue is changing the stigma of mental health illnesses, Michelle Biggs, student advocate and success specialist, said.

"We need to work together to decrease the stigma around mental illness so we can better recognize this issue happening around us," Biggs said.

Snyder said she thinks this generation of students fiercely support each other and feel an immense amount of responsibility for one another which is commendable, but that can cause an immense amount of stress.

//
We need to work together to decrease the stigma around mental illness so we can better recognize this issue happening around us."

— Michelle Biggs

"We really want students to know what's out there to help them and the people they care about and to feel comfortable connecting their friends to those resources," Snyder said.

Students and faculty can reach out to either Biggs in Student Affairs or the Women's and Gender Center for



RALPH MAY | THE PARTHENON

Claire Snyder, program coordinator of the Women's and Gender Center, providing training for students.

more information about these resources, Snyder said. Students can also make appointments with the Counseling Center.

Ralph May can be contacted at may178@marshall.edu.

Peter Pan origin story soars into the Keith Albee

By **EMILY HAYSLETT**
THE PARTHENON

"Finding Neverland," the musical about how the character and story of Peter Pan came to be, is coming at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 20 to the Keith Albee Theatre as a part of the Marshall Artists Series.

"It's best described as the story of how Peter became Pan," said Mark Bacon, the actor who plays J.M. Barrie in this national tour of Finding Neverland. "There was a writer (J.M. Barrie) who met this widow and her four young boys, and it's a story about how they inspire him to use his imagination in order to write the story of Peter Pan."

The musical that ran on Broadway from April to August 2015 is based on the 2004 movie, "Finding Neverland," starring Johnny Depp and Kate Winslet.

The story, based on true events, tells about the life of J.M. Barrie, the man who created the character Peter Pan.

This national tour of the production will travel all over the United States and has performances set for Vancouver, Canada. Bacon said the production moves at a fast pace.

"We are hitting 55 cities in three months, most of our dates are one night only and then we are on to the next city," he said. "Sometimes I wake up and I don't know what city I'm in."

Bacon said that once the show hits the road, there isn't much time to rehearse. Once the cast gets to the venue, only two hours before showtime, there is time for microphone checks, to run two or three songs and time for a lift check for the actors that are on wires. Then, Bacon said everyone puts their wigs and makeup on, then they are performing for the audience.

For the national tour, the team rehearsed last July and a little at the beginning of 2020, but for the most part, actors have to be responsible for knowing their parts

and having them perfected before going on the road.

Bacon has played roles in productions of "Mama Mia," "Cabaret," "Rent" and "The Heathers." He said that his role as J.M. Barrie has been able to give him the most exposure because of the coast to coast performances, but he also likes the creativity.

"I love bringing a sense of fun to him (J.M. Barrie)," Bacon said. "After all, he is a creator and at the end of the day, his inspiration comes from those four young boys. That's what I really like diving into is that sense of childlike wonder and play."

Tickets can be picked up 12 p.m.-4 p.m. Monday- Friday at the Joan C. Edwards box office. Tickets are free for full-time students with a student ID and half-price for part-time students. Tickets may also be purchased by calling the Joan C. Edwards box office.

Emily Hayslett can be contacted at hayslett12@marshall.edu.



ZACHARY HISER | THE PARTHENON

MU SPEAC aims to provide suicide awareness training

By **TALOR BENNETT**
THE PARTHENON

The Marshall University Suicide Prevention Education Across Campus organization works to inform people about suicide and suicide prevention.

"One life lost to suicide is too many, and it is all of our jobs to care about each other, to take care of each other and to be kind," Katelyn Fowler, grant coordinator for MU SPEAC, said. "I believe by having this program it will help people be more confident and competent when it comes to dealing with someone in a crisis or helping someone who is reaching out."

Fowler said the group tries to raise awareness and help change policies.

"We conduct training as well as hosting free events. We get out on campus and in the community to try and help raise awareness for suicide prevention," Fowler said. "Also, we advocate for policy change if that is needed and just try to help educate people on the topic of why people choose suicide and how we can help save lives."

Fowler said MU SPEAC was created and funded through a national grant called the Garrett Lee Smith Campus Suicide Prevention Grant, created after a senator's son completed

“

Everybody goes through stuff, but it just takes a moment to talk to that person and care for them.”

— *Katelyn Fowler*

suicide. Marshall is one of multiple campuses across the nation that receive three-year funding for the program.

MU SPEAC puts on QPR training and one-hour Gate Keeping Training, which is not limited to mental health

professionals. Fowler said if a student cares about people and wants to be more educated on how to help others, MU SPEAC encourages anyone to attend and get involved.

"We have had many feedbacks from people after they have taken the course," Fowler said. "They explain that they feel like they understand a little better, and they know how to talk to someone and know many resources that they can connect that person to if they are struggling and in need of help."

Fowler said MU SPEAC wants to help make an impact to those on campus. She said this year is focused on promoting connectedness on campus by helping host events for students and others in the community to come out and engage in connection with other people.

"It just takes a moment of kindness and caring to really pay attention to someone and pay attention to their behavior as well as what they may say to you," Fowler said. "Everybody goes through stuff, but it just takes a moment to talk to that person and care for them."

Students seeking more information on how to get involved may contact Katelyn Fowler at fowler106@marshall.edu.

Talor Bennett can be contacted at wilkerson32@marshall.edu.

Marshall faculty pleased with POST results

By **CARSON MCKINNEY**
FOR THE PARTHENON

Faculty within Jenkins Hall said they are pleased with ongoing results from the POST, a student tutoring service located on Marshall University's campus. The POST, or Praxis or Student Tutoring, can benefit students within the College of Education and Professional Development, Mikalyn Murphy, one of the student tutors, said.

Murphy said the program specifically determines strengths and weaknesses of each individual student and works towards the main goal of passing all three sections of the Praxis, an exam all students within the COEPD must complete and accomplish in order to move forward with their degree.

"All students need to pass these tests in order to get into the program, so it provides a great deal of stress," Murphy said. "I think our tutoring is most helpful for students that have really struggled with the content. They can come here and learn that there are people who really care about them personally and wish for them to succeed."

The Praxis tests measure the academic skills and subject-specific content knowledge that educators need.

While the Praxis test consists of reading, writing and math, the POST highlights each subject in regards to each student and their personal difficulties.

“I think our tutoring is most helpful for students that have really struggled with the content. They can come here and learn that there are people who really care about them personally and wish for them to succeed.”

—Mikalyn Murphy

"Math is definitely the subject we help with the most," Murphy said. "It seems there is a constant mental block when it comes to students and math. For most, the struggles with math reflect what they learned in their early years of education."

Depending on whether or not the student has previous test scores, Murphy said tutors can begin by deciphering what needs worked on within each specific category.

"I normally begin by giving them a study guide that I have made and then follow with a practice," she said. "This is the first step in figuring out their strengths compared to their weaknesses."

Murphy said tutors like herself may also incorporate practice tests that mimic how the real Praxis exams will appear, allowing students to get a proper feel of what they will be experiencing when testing.

Following each tutoring session, students are encouraged to continue practice and work on their own time to better enhance what they have been taught.

Murphy said studying outside of tutoring can greatly affect test results.

"I think it depends on how much work someone puts in," she said. "If the student is coming consistently and working outside, I've noticed that scores drastically go up."

Murphy said the POST continues to help students daily with achieving their goals within the education program, and the program could encourage future educators to help their students.

"Our main goal is to help them to see their own successes," she added. "One day when students have their own classroom, they can take a struggling student and give them the same encouragement."

Carson McKinney can be contacted at mckinney129@marshall.edu.

Teays Valley Regional Center provides opportunity for the area

By **BRITTANY HIVELY**
ONLINE EDITOR

Since 1997, the Marshall University Teays Valley Regional Center (TVRC), has been bringing opportunity to the community in a more quiet manner.

Though the center has been operating for more than 20 years, few know of its existence.

"We have not had an identity," said Bonnie Prisk, director of the branch. "We're in all different places. In one semester I had classes at six different places."

The campus has an office located in Teays Valley, but classes are currently in both Hurricane High School and the Seville Professional Building next to Charleston Area Medical Center, as well as offering dual credit classes in both Putnam and some Kanawha county schools.

TVRC offers 50-60 classes each semester with roughly 800 students.

While enrollment varies, class sizes stay around 12-15 students per class.

The campus has offered opportunities to a variety of students from freshmen to people looking for a career advancement or even a career change.

"We have also served industries, like Flexis closed and they actually invited us over to talk to people about what they could do with their education," Prisk said. "So, we would have people that would come in and sign up to start taking classes."

Prisk said they have helped been able to help several

times when businesses have had to close or make cuts.

"If they wanted to stay here they had to find some other job, so they had to go back to school and get some other classes," Prisk said.

At one time the Charleston fire department had to make cuts and TVRC was able to help them obtain a new degree.

"They came to us because they had so much training and background and they signed up to get nursing degrees," Prisk said.

TVRC offers all prerequisite classes for the nursing program. Prisk said they are constantly working to build the programs and bring new things to the center.

The campus does not currently have their own building to house offices and classes together, but they are hoping that will change in the future.

Prisk said a building would help bring relationship opportunity with students as well as the opportunity to make their presence a little more known.

"We like that community relationship," Prisk said.

Currently TVRC classes mostly run in the evening when they are able to get into one of the buildings, but Prisk said it seems to benefit students who work in Charleston and Huntington.

"A lot of our students who are working... they come home and they go to class," Prisk said.

They do hope to have some day time classes in the future, but Prisk said they work for now.

One thing Prisk said she has been fortunate with her instructors.

"Some Marshall people (faculty) live in this area, but also we have a really educated population as a whole here," Prisk said. "They have a lot of experience and background."

TVRC welcomes a variety of students from traditional freshmen starting college to the nontraditional students looking for a change or working on a new step in their career.

Brittany Hively can be contacted at hayes100@marshall.edu



BRITTANY HIVELY | ONLINE EDITOR

Initiatives encourage college graduates to stay in state

By **RALPH MAY**
THE PARTHENON

Initiatives to keep and support graduates in West Virginia as well as technological ventures to stimulate the economy are working through the West Virginia Legislature with the assistance of Marshall University and other state organizations.

“At least 50% of Marshall graduates leave the state and we would like to see more stay in the state,” Marshall President Jerry Gilbert said.

The journey to keep more graduates in the state begins with assisting them during their college career with a new student funding initiative being proposed in the West Virginia Legislature, Gilbert said.

Gilbert said these Business Promise Plus Scholarship allows a business to support a local student with a scholarship and that businesses can get a tax credit for supporting a student.

“Students can compete for these additional dollars that will go on top of their Promise Scholarship,” he said. “That is something that has gotten some support this year and

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Marshall graduates
leave the state and we
would like to see more
stay in the state.”

—*Jerry Gilbert*

we think that it might actually pass.”

Other bills will allow graduates to receive tax benefits after they pay off their student loans.

“One of them says if they (students) pay off student debts, they can get a state tax credit for the money that

they pay off for student debt,” Gilbert said. “The other gives them some other tax incentives. The idea is to try to encourage graduates to stay in West Virginia.”

Also in the House of Representatives and Senate is legislation that encourages advancements in the financial technology, or fintech, industry and development of high-wage jobs in the state, Gilbert said.

The fintech industry includes products and companies that employ newly developed digital and online technologies in the banking and financial services industries, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

Gilbert said the bill will make adjustments in the state laws to assist in the development of these businesses in the state.

Additionally, there is a bill to give more freedom to the Development Office to offer high-wage job creation in the state, he said.

These initiatives are joint effort between West Virginia University, West Virginia Forward and Marshall, Gilbert said.

Ralph May can be contacted at may178@marshall.edu.

US surgeon general to visit Marshall

By **BLAKE NEWHOUSE**
NEWS EDITOR

The U.S. Surgeon general will discuss his role as “the nation’s doctor” when he visits Marshall’s campus Thursday at 4 p.m.

Vice Adm. Jerome M. Adams, became the 20th surgeon general of the United States in 2017 with the motto, “better health through better partnerships,” according to the Department of Health and Human Services.

As the second African American male to hold the position in U.S. history, Adams oversees the operations of approximately 6,500 uniformed health officers who serve in nearly 800 locations around the world, pledging to lead with science, and facilitate locally led solutions to the nation’s health problems, according to the Department of Health and Human Services.

Adams has already addressed prominent issues such as the opioid epidemic, oral health, and the links between community health and both economic prosperity and national security.

In his article, “Achieving Better Health for Mothers and Babies: Taking Action, Saving Lives”, published on the department’s website earlier this year, Adams addressed the issue of child birth in the U.S., and proposed solutions for hospitals throughout the country to improve maternal health in 2020.

“We need to redouble our collective efforts to eliminate the preventable causes of maternal mortality and morbidity and to dismantle the foundational factors that result in health disparities,” Adams said. “Empowering mothers and their families to speak up and

listening to them as partners in their care are important steps in our journey.”

Adams is also the former Health Commissioner of Indiana, where he oversaw the state’s response to the largest ever HIV outbreak in the United States related to injection drug use, according to the Department of Health and Human Services.

The event is sponsored by The Carter G. Woodson Lyceum, which was created in 2017 to address critical issues involving education, freedom of expression and race/ethnicity.

The public is invited to attend Adams’ presentation in the Joan C. Edwards Performing Arts Center.

Blake Newhouse can be contacted at newhouse19@marshall.edu



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Vice Admiral Jerome M. Adams, U.S. Surgeon General (right), is the second African American male to assume the position. Adams will be giving a speech on campus Thursday at 4 p.m. in the Performing Arts Center.

Black History Month Events

- **2020 Black History Observance with Vice Adm. Jerome M. Adams, U.S. Surgeon General** 4 p.m. Feb. 13, Joan C. Edwards Performing Arts Center
- **Community Brunch & Panel Discussion** 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Feb. 15, Kopp Hall, School of Pharmacy
- **The Ebony Ball** 7 p.m. Feb. 15, BE5 in the Student Center
- **Annual Diversity Breakfast** 7:30 a.m. Feb. 28, Don Morris Room

Marshall women's hoops begins two-game homestand Thursday



Sophomore Lorelei Roper dribbled the ball down the court against WKU.

By SPENCER DUPUIS
THE PARTHENON

The Marshall University Thundering Herd women's basketball team comes home to play host to the University of Texas-San Antonio Roadrunners at 6 p.m. Thursday and the University of Texas-El Paso Miners at 1 p.m. Saturday.

The Herd is entering the week with a 9-13 record (4-7 Conference USA) after a split on the road last weekend. The Roadrunners are entering the contest with a 6-16 record (2-9 C-USA) after a 67-47 loss to Charlotte Saturday. The Miners are coming into the game Saturday with a 13-9 record (6-5 C-USA).

Thundering Herd Head Coach Tony Kemper said that although his team will have the home court

advantage, consistent play is key.

"Me as their coach, I would like to see them play more consistent at home," Kemper said. "That starts in Thursday with UTSA, you've got a log jam in the conference, at least right in the middle of it. The key is we need to find the energy, the guts, the shot making it takes to win two at home."

The UTSA Roadrunners come in tied for last place in the conference, and Kemper said the other team at the bottom of the conference, FIU, came in and took one from the Herd.

"There is no margin of error for us," Kemper said. "FIU is also down there (in the standings) and they got us in (the Cam Henderson Center) because we weren't ready to get after it. There are good teams in

this league, and we've played with some at the top and we have played with some at the bottom."

The UTEP Miners are tied for sixth in conference play and Kemper said the Miners have made a big improvement this season.

"I think they finished 12th in the league, and obviously they got us in the tournament," Kemper said. "They've had a good year. They won a lot of games in non-conference and got hot early. They're unique, they press and are very long at the guard spot. They are very different in a lot of teams that we play because of their persistence in their press play."

Evening tipoff is at 6 p.m. on Thursday and 1 p.m. on Saturday.

Spencer DuPuis can be contacted at dupuis@marshall.edu.

Herd men's basketball prepares for Texas two-step road trip

By GRANT GOODRICH
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Looking to improve its ranking in Conference USA before pod play begins next week, the Marshall University basketball team will travel to Texas for a two-game road swing this weekend against the University of Texas at San Antonio and the University of Texas at El Paso.

Marshall is currently tied for sixth place in the Conference USA standings at 6-6 while UTSA is tied for ninth at 5-7 and UTEP sits tied for 11th at 4-8.

Marshall will need some help in order to get into pod one even if the team gets two victories on the road this weekend.

Coming up first for the Herd is the UTSA Roadrunners on Thursday.

Despite its losing record, UTSA has the highest scoring offense in the conference at 79.0 points per game. Offsetting its high-octane offense, the Roadrunners defense is the worst in conference, allowing 77.8 points per game.

Leading the way for UTSA is junior guards Jhivvan Jackson and Keaton Wallace. Jackson is the conference's scoring leader at 27.0 points per game while Wallace is in second place with 19.0 points per game.

Jackson and Wallace also pace the league in three-point field goals made with 93 and 70 respectively.

In its wins, UTSA has shot over 45% from the three-point line on average, and in its losses, the team has shot less than 33% on average.

The second and final matchup for the Thundering Herd will be the UTEP Miners on Saturday.

The Miners and Roadrunners split in their matchups this season with UTSA taking the first one, 80-77, and UTEP taking the second one, 86-70.

UTEP has a 12 point better average scoring defense than UTSA, which also makes them better than Marshall by about seven points.

Offensively, the Miners are tied for 11th in conference, scoring only 67 points per game.

Leading the way in scoring for

UTEP is redshirt junior forward Bryson Williams, who is third in the conference in scoring 18.7 points per game. Williams also ranks fifth in the conference in rebounds per game with 7.1.

The Miners will come into the game with the Herd after three straight losses.

The basketball team will take on UTSA at 9 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 13, and Marshall will wrap up its road swing against UTEP at 4 p.m. Feb. 15.

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Taevion Kinsey lined up his shot during a home game at the Cam Henderson Center.

Ultimate frisbee provides opportunities to get involved in club sports

By **ALEXANDRA WARRINGTON**
FOR THE PARTHENON

Ultimate frisbee is one of the ways to stay active and meet new people at Marshall University without the grueling, physical contact of most sports, said Nicholas Aprea a student who said he found his home away from home when he joined the Ultimate Frisbee club.

Aprea, a four-year team member, expressed his gratitude toward the Ultimate Frisbee Club.

“What I love most is that anyone can play and that there’s always opportunities to play,” he said.

Ultimate frisbee, better known as Ultimate, is a culmination of multiple sports; soccer, basketball and American football. Ultimate is a non-contact sport played on a large rectangular field with seven players on each team. In order to score, the teams have to pass the frisbee to a teammate who must catch it in the endzone.

The only catch is that players cannot run with the frisbee in hand. When someone receives the frisbee, they have to stop and throw it, or pitch, to another player to advance down the field. If the frisbee hits the ground, gets intercepted or even knocked down, the other team takes over with possession. If one makes contact during play, it is a foul and the possession is turned over to the other team.

Aprea said he has been involved in ultimate frisbee since his middle school days. Aprea went on to start the Ultimate Frisbee Club team at his high school. Playing in the Pittsburgh High School ultimate league, his team made it all the way to the semifinals during its first season.

Aprea said he hoped that when he came to Marshall, he would find a chance to continue playing the sport he was so fond of.

“Once I got to college, I went to Rec Fest at the beginning of the year, like most freshman do, and there was a table set up with the Ultimate Frisbee Club team”, he said. “Once I got connected and added into the GroupMe, I have been part of the club ever since.”

Some students join a club sport to escape the day-to-day stressors faced, but Aprea said he joined because this sport is a bigger part of him, one that will never grow old.

“This is a game I can play anywhere and everywhere until I get old, it’s something that I’ll always be able to compete in”, he said. “The other day, I played in the rain for no reason ‘cause a few people were just out there throwing around.”

Alexandra Warrington can be contacted at warrington4@marshall.edu.

“

What I love most is that anyone can play and that there’s always opportunities to play.”

— *Nicholas Aprea*

Athlete of the Week: Mikel Beyers, men’s basketball

ABOUT MIKEL BEYERS:

Position: Forward

Class: Junior

Height: 6’9

Weight: 215 lbs.

Hometown: Houston, TX

RESULTS OVER THE PAST WEEK:

6 points, 2 three-pointers vs. Southern Miss (72-58, W) 24 points, 6 rebounds, 6 three-pointers vs. Louisiana Tech (83-79, W)

After a career best performance against Louisiana Tech on Saturday, junior forward Mikel Beyers has earned athlete of the week honors.

Although his game against Southern Miss on Thursday was a solid performance in its own right, his 24-point outing against the Bulldogs was on another level.

Not only did he obliterate his previous career high in points, 13, but he also helped fuel his team to a victory against a top conference opponent.

The obvious fuel that he added to the Herd’s comeback victory was his 6-for-9 shooting from three-point range, but no moment was bigger than the one that occurred near the end of regulation.

After junior guard Jarrod West missed a potential game-tying jumper with 10 seconds left, Beyers scampered to collect the offensive rebound. As soon as he possessed the ball – not knowing the time left on the clock – he faded away toward the Marshall bench. The ball arced high in the air, and when it came down, it swished its way through the net with five seconds remaining.

His shot was enough to send the game into overtime, in which Marshall never trailed again.

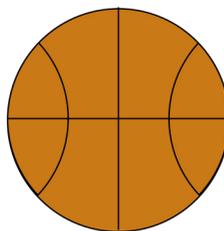
Beyers was taken out of the starting lineup at Toledo after starting the first seven games of the season. Interestingly, after being benched,

he was able to put together a pair of season best performances with 13 points in each.

Nevertheless, in the subsequent weeks, he saw his minutes dwindle to a season low, and he was not awarded the opportunity to do much of anything on the court.

But when freshman big-man Goran Miladinovic was a no-go for last weekend’s games, he was gifted an opportunity that he was able to take full advantage of against Louisiana Tech.

Coming into Saturday’s game against the Bulldogs, it is doubtful that anyone pegged Beyers for a 24-point explosion, but it seems safe to say he will be in the forefront of many people’s minds going forward.



RICHARD CRANK | THE PARTHENON

Mikel Beyers pulled up for a mid-range jump shot against LA Tech.

THE PARTHENON

The Parthenon, Marshall University's student newspaper, is published by students Wednesdays during the regular semester and every other week during the summer. The editorial staff is responsible for news and editorial content.

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"Factual errors appearing in The Parthenon should be reported to the editor immediately following publication. Corrections the editor deems necessary will be printed as soon as possible following the error."

THE FIRST AMENDMENT | The Constitution of the United States of America

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people to peaceably assemble; and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

EDITORIAL

W.Va. needs gun reform



MANUEL VALDES | ASSOCIATED PRESS

Students at Roosevelt High School take part in a protest against gun violence in March 2018, in Seattle. It was part of a nationwide school walkout that calls for stricter gun laws following the massacre of 17 people at a Florida high school.

In a country where nearly 700 people die of gun violence every week, West Virginia's gun violence problem is anything but an anomaly, but the state's lack of safe laws and regulations to prevent such deaths is unacceptable.

The 2020 Annual Gun Law Scorecard, recently released by the Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, reveals that West Virginia ranks 9th worst of the 50 states in the category of gun death rates. The report states that West Virginia's gun death rate per 100,000 citizens is 18.6.

The report also reveals that West Virginia exports guns later used for crimes at the second-highest rate in the country. The state is one of 21 across the U.S. that received an "F" rating on the 2020 Giffords Law Scorecard.

The other states with the worst ratings and highest gun death rates in the country include Alaska with 24.5 per 100,000, Alabama with 22.9, Montana with 22.6, Louisiana with 21.6, Mississippi at 21.5, Missouri at 21.3, Arkansas at 20.2 and Wyoming at 18.7.

Earlier this week, the Charleston Gazette-Mail reported that West Virginia experienced 347 firearm deaths in 2018, the most recent year with available data. 2018 marks the third straight year that firearm deaths in the state have surpassed the number of motor vehicle deaths. 2016 was the first year this had ever occurred.

In addition to some of the worst gun death statistics in the country—and the world—West Virginia also ranks 34th amongst the 50 states in the category of gun law strength.

Of fourteen potential regulations regarding gun ownership that the Law Center measured, West

Virginia implements just one, which is the prohibition of gun ownership for citizens with domestic violence misdemeanors.

The report suggests several reliable methods and steps the state could take that have proven to reduce gun violence significantly in other states in the U.S. and countries around the world. These steps include requiring comprehensive background checks and waiting periods before each gun purchase and repealing the state's carry law that allows citizens to carry loaded, concealed weapons without a permit.

Additional measures not implemented in West Virginia include gun dealer licensing, firearm owner licensing, firearm registration, lost and stolen firearm reporting, mental health reporting to federal databases, bulk firearm purchase restrictions and several others.

Regardless of one's opinions on the right to own guns or the 2nd Amendment, West Virginia's gun violence and gun safety problem is undeniable. The U.S. is experiencing a gun violence epidemic unlike any the world has ever seen, and West Virginia is in the middle of it. We must remind ourselves this is not normal. This does not happen elsewhere in the world, and we must demand better for ourselves.

Equally as undeniable is the reality that clear majorities of citizens—at least nationwide—already support commonsense regulations on gun ownership that would almost certainly decrease levels of violence if implemented.

For example, a 2019 poll conducted by PBS NewsHour, NPR and Marist showed...

see REFORM on pg. 10

Ebony Ball: Dressing up, dancing, celebrating Black History Month

By SARAH INGRAM
COPY EDITOR

Ebony Ball gives Marshall University community a chance to get fancy and celebrate Black History Month, 7 p.m. Feb. 15 in the Memorial Student Center.

Shaunte Polk, the administrator for the Office of Intercultural Affairs, said the event is open to all and she encourages everyone to attend.

“We want everybody to celebrate black history as much as we do,” Polk said. “This is just a fun time and we’re trying to show that. All are welcome, but ‘ebony’ just highlights the beauty of what it means to be African American or black and we want to symbolize it, but even though we are talking about that word, it’s still meant for everybody.”

Polk said the event will bring good food and good time to anyone who participates.



Designed to celebrate Black History Month, the Ebony Ball will be at 7 p.m. Feb. 15.

“It’s just an event that we can have fun, and everyone is welcome to dress up, listen to good music, eat good food and just mingle,” she said. “There are so

many things throughout the year, through college, where anybody can dress up.” This is the third Ebony Ball at Marshall, and Polk said she invites alumni members to the event as well. Tickets can be picked up at the door of MSC BE5 on the night of the event. Single tickets are \$7, and couple tickets are \$10. Polk said the Ebony Ball, like the other Black History Month events scheduled, is for anyone who wants to learn about black history. “I’m trying to make sure I drive the point home that please don’t get caught up in the words or the text of any events that we do because it’s still meant for all of you, it’s still a learning experience,” she said. Sarah Ingram can be contacted at ingram51@marshall.edu.

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Saturday 4:00 pm-4:25 pm
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GINGER'S GUIDE TO: Valentine's Day COLUMN: Our digital facade

By AMANDA LARCH
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Valentine's Day: for some, a day of love, romance and the color pink. For others, a dreaded day, the worst one on the calendar. Luckily, though, Feb. 15 calls for half-off candy sales, and I think we can all benefit from that.

But in all seriousness, a happy Valentine's Day doesn't have to be defined by whether or not you're in a loving, healthy relationship with a significant other. Think about all the other relationships in your life; chances are you have families and friends you can show your love to this Friday. You can even show your pets a little extra love, because they certainly deserve all the treats and belly rubs imaginable.

Give your mom her favorite flower, or your grandpa a box of his favorite chocolates. I am in a relationship, and Valentine's Day is special to me in its own way because of my boyfriend, but I enjoy any and all other aspects to this holiday, and I encourage everyone to as well. If you're single, I understand feeling depressed or even bitter, but reclaim the holiday and give it your own meaning. Love isn't just defined by a boyfriend or girlfriend; there are so many wonderful kinds of love in the world.

One of my favorite valentines memories are the fruit baskets my grandma used to give to my brother and I. (Of course she included



some chocolates in them, too.) My wonderful mother never fails to give me little gifts on Feb. 14. Now that I'm older, I like to do the same. Everyone deserves a valentine, whether to show love, gratitude or appreciation. And let's not forget Galentine's Day is an official holiday now as well. It's all about getting together with friends. I've never actually celebrated Galentine's Day, but I hope one day I can.

What I'm trying to say is, don't let being single or away from your significant other put a damper on your Feb. 14. If you want to be alone and watch romantic comedies, do it. That's your thing. But, if you feel like you have no option but to do that, I hope you'll reconsider. Yeah, I know, I'm the girl in a happy relationship preaching to you, but I haven't always been.

see VALENTINE on pg. 10

By MARK WILLIAMS
THE PARTHENON

It is widely accepted that the "highlight reel" phenomenon on social media can combine with our inherent social comparison mechanisms to make a pretty spectacular mess of our self-esteem and mental health. Only posting the good stuff creates a glossy front built on half-truths and image insecurities. This phenomenon is greatly exaggerated on artist pages, where nothing bad ever happens and all is going exactly as planned. I am guilty of this. We all are to some degree. So in an effort to deconstruct my carefully curated digital facade, here's a heavy dose of behind-the-scenes reality...

I have been fortunate over the years to release my music and video work through many avenues such as record labels, film festivals, and websites. When I post about this, it undoubtedly appears as though I just snapped my fingers and made it happen. What I fail to share is the countless rejections I receive each time I want to release something. My newest album is approaching 10 rejections from record labels. I paid 15 different film festival submission fees

last year, only to have my music videos rejected by all of them. The label and film festival rejections pale in comparison to the number of rejections I get from press websites and premiere platforms. Even still, if I added up every rejection email I've ever received for all of my numerous projects and ventures, the total would be miniscule compared to the number of submissions that never get a reply. Literally thousands of them sit unanswered in my "sent" folder. Many will say this is par for the course, but it does not get easier, at least for me. In fact, it gets exponentially more frustrating every time. I will admit to feelings of depression, self-doubt, and anger. Many times I've wanted to give up and focus my energy elsewhere. I am constantly second-guessing my abilities, and rejection just fuels that flame.

This is (my) reality, despite how it may look when perusing my pages. If you're an artist or a writer, you've likely experienced similar trials, and you probably aren't posting about your failures either. The reasoning behind keeping things positive and shiny on social media is understandable.

see FACADE on pg. 10

COLUMN: W.Va. kids come first

By STEPHEN BALDWIN, AMANDA ESTEP-BURTON AND LISA ZUKOFF

As state legislators, we are often asked what can be done to stop people from leaving West Virginia, to keep our best and brightest at home. We hear about it on the news, in the grocery store, and in our church pews – people are leaving West Virginia at an alarming rate and they are not coming back.

As Democrats, we believe that to stop this exodus we must do a better job of taking care of the ones that still call West Virginia home, especially the most vulnerable among us, our children.

More children have been placed in foster care in West Virginia than in any other state, per capita. More than 6,500 kids are in foster or kinship care, according to the Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR). Twenty-five percent of our kids live in poverty. More than 10,000 students in West Virginia are homeless. For every 1,000 live births, 50 babies are born with neonatal abstinence syndrome.

The numbers are staggering, tragic and unacceptable. Yet Republican legislative leadership

continually prioritizes corporations and tax cuts over West Virginians. We must learn that our future depends on how we care today for our children and families.

Recently, Dr. Jeffrey Coben, MD, Dean of the School of Public Health at West Virginia University, addressed our Public Health Caucus. He said that a child's Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) score is "more important than your cholesterol or blood pressure." ACEs can include poverty, substance abuse, parental separation and neglect. Dr. Coben urged a multi-pronged approach that prevents future trauma, while caring for our traumatized children.

West Virginia should follow the lead of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to make prevention and treatment of ACEs our priority. ACEs impact brain development of small children and have lifelong health effects. Research shows ACEs can negatively impact education, employment and earning potential. Early screening for ACEs is important to determine if treatment for trauma...

see KIDS on pg. 10

Parthe-Pet



Cinder is a 7-month-old bearded dragon who loves to eat fruit, veggies and BUGS! She'd easily say her favorite snacks are hornworms and bell peppers! She loves all things warm, meeting new people, and going out in town for a new adventure, often popping up somewhere on campus!

Interested in featuring your pet in the paper? Use #ParthePet on social media or contact harding26@marshall.edu with photos and a short bio.

Cupid's Corner:

Lori Thompson &
Kristen Vannatter

By **MEG KELLER**
SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER

It is true, distance does make the heart grow fonder, for two Marshall University faculty members, that is.

Married in 2016, Lori Thompson and Kristen Vannatter have been nearly inseparable since they met 16 years ago, until this past summer. As a generator mechanic with the 150th Armor Brigade in the West Virginia Army National Guard, Vannatter was called up for a deployment to Kuwait in August 2019, putting her life in the Information Technology Department at Marshall on pause. Lori, archivist and digital preservation librarian at Marshall, said adjusting to her wife's absence has been tough.

Thompson said not doing routine activities, such as eating lunch together every day like she and her wife did prior to deployment, has been one of the most difficult changes to acclimate to.

"I have been very blessed to have some colleagues, students, and friends who join me for lunch," Thompson said. "I don't always grab lunch away, but I try to get an hour away from my desk and so that was always that time, so not having somebody to share it with...I have made friends."

"You don't realize how much you do share with somebody until they're not here. She's my best friend."

- Lori Thompson

Thompson said another difficult aspect to manage, aside from maintaining their household and taking care of their two cats, has been missing out on sharing moments together. "You don't realize how much you do share with somebody until they're not here," she said. "She's my best friend."

Thompson said she wants to share her day-to-day activities with Vannatter like she



PHOTO COURTESY OF LORI THOMPSON

Married in 2016, Lori Thompson and Kristen Vannatter also work at Marshall University.

once did, such as going to Marshall softball games together.

"This is our season," she said. "We are big sports fans and Marshall softball sports fans, so the holidays were hard, but open day of softball is harder."

According to Thompson, also a U.S. Army veteran, her wife doesn't always have the energy to talk at the end of her workday because she is "always at a heightened sense of awareness of her surroundings" throughout the day, which can be physically and mentally exhausting.

Due to her own experience as a soldier, Thompson said she understands when communication between she and her wife is sparse or vague.

"I am appreciative that I know some of that day-to-day rigor, so that I respect that she can't always talk," Thompson said. "She's tired. It's emotionally draining even though she might not physically be doing things because I remember those days and nights, pulling guard duty."

Although being apart from one another has been challenging, Thompson said it is also very rewarding.

"I think (the deployment) has brought us closer in a lot of ways," she said. "It's much easier now to recognize the little things that partners do for each other."

Thompson said she is now more aware and appreciative of all the tasks Vannatter helped her with when she was home. Their emotional bond has also been strengthened through the distance between them, according to Thompson.

"Because we do spend so much time together at work and on campus and driving back and forth, we are very close, so it's not made it harder, I think we just appreciate each other more," she said.

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