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## The Parthenon, February 21, 2024

Evan Green

Matthew Schaffer

Sarah Davis

Joseph DiCristofaro

Victoria Ware

*See next page for additional authors*

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## Authors

Evan Green, Matthew Schaffer, Sarah Davis, Joseph DiCristofaro, Victoria Ware, Abigail Cutlip, Rafael Alfonso, Scott Price, Baylee Parsons, Emma Gallus, and Luke Jeffrey

## SGA Expands Campus Food Pantry

By **EMMA GALLUS**  
VIDEO & AUDIO PRODUCER

The Marshall University Food Pantry will increase the amount of product it can hold due to an upcoming expansion, the pantry's student manager said.

"With this expansion, we'll have more space for everything," Eva Rhodes said. "We could double, triple the amount of stuff we have in that space now."

This is the second expansion the pantry has gone through since it first opened in 2017 in Marshall's dietetic

department in Pullman Square.

The space will grow to be about 3000 square feet—including a larger waiting space and shopping room—Student Body Vice President Callia Yang said.

Along with a larger area, Student Body President Walker Tatum said

they would also like to add hours to when the pantry is open instead of only the two days a week it is currently.

Adding more days to the pantry's hours would allow for days only available to Marshall students, faculty and staff while keeping the current hours it has open to the community. The goal is to have the pantry act more as a convenience spot for students to stop by when they need. To add to this feeling, the thrift store will move from its current location in Holderby Hall.

"Holderby Hall is already on the docket to not be there forever," Tatum said. "Our plan was to move it across the street and move it in with the pantry so that we have both the food pantry and thrift store in one lo-

cation with one another that's more of a concrete place for them both to be at."

He said the focus on the pantry is in part due to students not eating the amount of meals that are recommended.

"We saw a huge amount of students that are not getting enough meals that they need and the nutrition that they need to focus on their academics," Tatum said, referencing a survey sent to the student body. "As students ourselves, we know how important this is."

**Food Pantry**  
**Continued on Page 2**



Pantry manager Eva Rhodes and assistant pantry manager Eli Patterson prepare food.

Photo by Luke Hamilton

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# Marshall Takes Steps to Revamp FAM

By **KAITLYN FLEMING**  
STUDENT REPORTER

Graduate school waivers and re-vamping the Friend at Marshall program were on the agenda for discussion among Student Government Association members and Provost Avinandan Mukherjee on Tuesday, Feb. 13, in the Memorial Student Center.

Participants gathered for the second meeting with the provost of the semester, and Mukherjee began with sharing positive university updates.

“We had a great showing at the Marshall Day at the Capitol,” Mukherjee said. “I think it went very well.”

Mukherjee went on to share other

positive aspects, such as metro enrollment being on the rise.

Likewise, Carl Mummert, the assistant provost for Graduate Studies, said a significant initiative of the university is the One of the Herd graduate tuition waiver.

“Marshall students who begin a master’s degree in Fall 2024 and receive an undergraduate degree in spring or summer of 2024 will receive a \$500 waiver for their first semester,” Mummert said.

Mummert went on to say the Doctor of Philosophy program for engineering is gearing up and is the first doctoral program in the College of Engineering and Computer Sciences.

Meanwhile, students had the op-

portunity to converse with Kateryna Schray, the director of the Center for Student Success.

Schray gave members of the SGA an explanation of the FAM program’s goals for Marshall students. “There are students who come to Marshall that don’t have the confidence, skill-set or background to thrive,” Schray said.

Friend at Marshall is a program that matches students with an upperclassman to help them adjust to campus through several different avenues, Schray said.

Several initiatives are underway to enhance the program, such as pairing first generation students with first generation FAM, Schray said.

Beyond this initiative, Schray

looked to the members of the SGA for suggestions to improve the FAM program.

Michael Borsuk, SGA senator for the Lewis College of Business, said FAM could be improved through an option for students to “opt-out,” if they don’t require FAM’s services.

“I believe the intent behind FAM is great,” Borsuk said. “However, I feel as if though if people wanted to opt out of the messages, then this would allow FAM to focus on students who truly need their assistance.”

This appears to be a potential solution that may be helpful for the program, Schray said.

“I struggle to find ways to reach the kid who never leaves their dorm room without bugging fifty other

students,” Schray said.

In addition, several attendees suggested a FAM request option, where students could receive a FAM in their respective college.

“If my FAM was in my college, I probably would have reached out to them more,” one attendee said.

Meanwhile, Student Body Vice President Callia Yang said one lack of FAM is face to face connection.

“I know I had a great connection with my UNI 100 mentor,” Yang said. “If there was a way to overlap UNI 100 mentors and FAM, I think that would be beneficial.”

Schray said she is grateful for the input of the SGA and plans to put their suggestions into consideration.

## Food Pantry Continued

By **EMMA GALLUS**  
VIDEO & AUDIO PRODUCER

“The answers that they gave were super powerful in terms of you never really understand how unfortunate some people have it in terms of access to resources,” Tatum said. “We want to do everything in our ability in our positions because we have a seat at the table, and we have connections, and we have pull in terms of who we’re working with.”

The expansion is one way the Tatum/Yang administration is addressing food insecurity at Marshall. There is also an ongoing fight at the state level with Senate Bill 292, also known as the Hunger Free Campus Act, passing the West Virginia State Senate on Monday, Feb. 19, 2024 following testimonies to the Senate Education Committee by Ta-

tum and Madison Santmyer, West Virginia University’s student body president.

According to Wrap Up, the official blog of the West Virginia legislature, the bill would “provide grants to higher education institutions to aid in alleviating food insecurity for students on campus.”

If passed by the state House of Delegates and the governor, the bill said campuses would be required to have a staff member available to help students in need enroll in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP benefits; additionally campus stores that meet federal nutrition standards would have the option to use those benefits, the release said.

The bill also calls for campuses to have food pantries, which Matt James, an advisor of the Student

Government Association, said is not a coincidence.

“For this act to also pass at the same time, it just seems like these things are coming together,” James

said. “I think things are destined to be and it’s just really cool to see all of these things moving at the same time.”

This upgrade is coming at a much

needed time as storage space runs out, Rhodes said. The extra room would allow for more refrigeration units and freezers.



The outside of the food pantry is located on 6th Ave.

Photo by Luke Hamilton



# Local Churches Provide Students Lunch for a Dollar

By **ELLA BUMGARDNER**  
STAFF REPORTER

The Campus Christian Center at Marshall University hosted the first “Lunch for a Buck” of the 2024 spring semester on Tuesday, Feb. 13.

The center hosts Lunch for a Buck every second and fourth Tuesday of the month from 11 a.m. - 1p.m. Students can buy lunch for \$1 in support of the Campus Christian Center.

The event is open to all students on campus as it helps to raise support for the center. Students can eat lunch in the center or take it to-go.

Tatum Bock, the office administrator of the CCC, said, “Local churches from the community provide lunch as a way to communicate and get involved within the lives of students.”

Bock helps to coordinate the

event as a fundraiser for the Campus Christian Center. Bock explained how the event typically generates around \$75 each time to go toward funding the center.

The first lunch of the semester was provided by Highlawn Presbyterian Church. The upcoming lunches will be on Feb. 27 from 5th Ave. Baptist, March 12 from New Baptist, March 26 is to be determined and April 9 from Pea Ridge Baptist.

Throughout the week, the center hosts multiple ministries including Vespers, UKirk, BCM and Wesley.

The Campus Christian Center is located off 5th Ave. and 17th St. in Huntington. For more information regarding the center or partnership, contact Bock at [campuschristiancenter@gmail.com](mailto:campuschristiancenter@gmail.com).



Lunches will be provided periodically through the beginning of April.

Photo by Ella Bumgardner

# Drag Performers Collaborate to Donate

By **BAYLEE PARSONS**  
COPY EDITOR

Drag performers showcased their talents to collect donations for a local shelter at the Queens for a Cause event on Tuesday, Feb. 13, in the Marco's room of the Memorial Student Center.

Attendees of the event, hosted by MU Got That Beat, donated one non-perishable food item for entry to the event; the donations will go to Huntington's Branches Domestic Violence Center.

“We needed to have a reason for people to come out,” said Paige Noss, vice president of Got That Beat, “because, yeah, people do come out to drag shows, but I wanted it to be something that could be good for the community.”

This Tuesday marked the club's

second Queens for a Cause event, with the first taking place in Oct. 2023. While the club has donated to Branches for both shows so far, Noss said they plan to rotate non-profits.

“Next time, I have on my list a no-kill animal shelter,” Noss said. “We were going to donate to the Trevor Project, which – don't get me wrong – is a great project, but that's like a global thing, and we wanted to see change here.”

Inspired by the LGBTQ+ Office's Queens Against Cancer event, Noss said the club now plans to host a show every semester.

With the performances being non-profit, Noss also said, “We did it because it would give LGBT students on campus a resource to practice their performances, get their names out there and

do what they love.”

The event has already grown from what it was in October, said Paige Rinschler, drag artist and president of Got That Beat.

“There's so many people on campus that are interested in this,” Rinschler said. “Actually, we got three new performers that got to see our performance in October, so it kind of gets a lot of people inspired to do it.”

While the performers, like Rinschler, were mainly members of Got That Beat, the club recruited special guest performer Trixxx Taylor from Stonewall Nightclub as well.

Also a Stonewall Nightclub performer herself, Rinschler encouraged fellow students to interact with and support local performers.

“It's entertainment, like everything else,” Rinschler said. “Basically, it's another stage, another theater production.”

“How they get to interact with the audience and things like that – there's a whole different variety,” she added. “It's not stagnant, and that way people can decide they also want to do something similar to this or even perform.”

Each performer prepared two songs to lip-sync, sing or dance, and several of the artists' performances involved audience participation.

Audience members also had the opportunity to win raffle prizes provided by Got That Beat. The club raffled a pride flag, a date night basket and a LEGO rose bouquet in honor of Valentine's Day.



Cordelia performing to help raise funds for Branches.

Photo by Baylee Parsons



# Student Organizations Connect With Campus

By **NOLAN DUNCAN**  
STUDENT REPORTER

On Valentine's Day, numerous student organizations ran tables in the Marshall University Memorial Student Center to fundraise and spread cheer.

A member of Omega Phi Alpha said table events like Valentine's Day are important to support the fraternity.

"We're fundraising to put the money that we earn back towards our service projects," said Riley Henderson, the leadership and diversity chair for Omega Phi Alpha. "That's where almost every bit of our money goes to is our service projects."

Henderson said tabling events are important in making the campus look alive. She said through the student center looking more alive, some students may find it easier to socialize.

John Calger, a member of Sigma

Tau Gamma, said events like Valentine's Day are great opportunities for groups to reach out beyond their standard demographic. Being a fraternity, Calger said his frat is only interacted with by male college students interested in joining. The frat's Valentine's booth allows the group to be more involved and present on campus.

For the Japan Club, Valentine's Day is a chance to get more exposure on campus, Club President Ben Gorby said. He said the event is a great way for the club to spread its message around campus. He said the club wants to be able to help others learn and find new things about Japanese culture to appreciate.

"Just seeing people come up and ask questions, not necessarily about what we're selling, but about the Japan Club and what we do helps quite a lot," Gorby said. "It gets people that are helping with the booth encour-

aged and helps them feel like they're doing something that matters."

Patrick Ringhisen from Marshall University's Athletic Training program said his group's booth is focused on making the day brighter for others.

"It's Valentine's Day," Ringhisen said. "Maybe even help a couple of guys who might have forgotten a gift for their girlfriend."

Ringhisen said it is important for campus organizations to have a presence in the community. He said organizations need to show their community why they are important and why they are there. He said organizations need to be able to show they are there for their communities.

"If there's no outreach to the community, the community doesn't even know you exist," Ringhisen said.

"Then, they don't even think you're worth their time of day."



The Japan Club tabled at the Memorial Student Center to get their name out on campus. Photo by Nolan Duncan

## UKIRK Celebrates Ash Wednesday

By **REAGAN CLAGG**  
STUDENT REPORTER

As churches around the world celebrated Ash Wednesday, Marshall's UKIRK campus ministry kicked off the season by putting a more positive spin on the tradition.

"Many Christians, at least historically, have given up something for Lent," Marshall's campus Presbyterian pastor, Rev. Chris Bailey, said. "We've tried to put a more positive spin on it, so, rather than giving something up, it's become more common to take on an additional spiritual practice."

UKIRK alum Em Rau said Lent is the period of time leading up to the death of Jesus, and Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Lenten season.

"Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent," Rau said. "Lent is the season as we begin to lead up to Jesus' death and his resurrection on Easter."

Traditionally, Catholic and Protestant churchgoers use Ash Wednesday to step into the reflective period of Lent. Bailey said UKIRK and other Presbyterian ministries use the day to reflect on oneself.

"Presbyterians specifically- and at least UKIRK- we use it

as a time to be self-reflective, especially just acknowledging how we are complicit in the suffering of others," Bailey said.

Rau said the service associated with Ash Wednesday is a way for participants to reflect and shift focus going into Lent.

"We have a service where we lay the ashes across our forehead as a reminder of how we are ash, and, to ash, we will return," Rau said. "It's a chance to reflect and turn your focus to something more specific or rigid."

According to Rau, some Presbyterian churches will hold a full service on Ash Wednesday, but UKIRK held an abbreviated

service.

"Some Presbyterian churches will have a full service with hymns and a message, like a sermon," Rau said. "But we gave a short prayer, and we had a little time to reflect, and then we did the ashes part. So it was just an abbreviated service, basically."

Rau said the typical ash used in the service is, at least in theory, from palm leaves used in the previous year's Palm Sunday service.

"There's just the regular ash which is usually, at least in theory- I don't know if they technically are all the time, but the ashes are from the palms

from the previous Palm Sunday," Rau said. "Palm Sunday is the Sunday before Easter where we're welcoming Jesus into what eventually will be his death."

A unique part of UKIRK's Ash Wednesday celebration is the inclusion of glitter ash, a way to signify one's queer identity or allyship in conjunction with their Christian faith.

"You can have just regular ashes, but we also have glitter ashes that have glitter in it," Rau said. "And it's sort of a small signifier for how you are either LGBTQ or an ally to LGBTQ+ people, but also a Christian."

# Couples on Campus: The Peckhams

By KAITLYN FLEMING  
STUDENT REPORTER

Romantic love finds a home within the literary passions and pursuits of two members of the Marshall English department.

“Have you tried unplugging it and plugging it back in,” Dr. Rachael Peckham, English professor and author, asked. Playfully, she said, “I play secretary sometimes.”

Dr. Joel Peckham, English professor and author, successfully established a connection due to Rachael’s suggestion—a testament of the pair’s kindred spirits.

“Rach has a lot of patience,” Joel said. “I knew I needed Rachael to survive.”

The pair met during their time at Hope College, Rachael said.

“I was a bit intimidated by him and his classes,” Rachael said. “Rumor was they were difficult.”

Rachael and Joel’s relationship sparked after Rachael reached out to Joel following a violent car crash. “She got my attention,” Joel said. “We developed a relationship from there.”

The duo married in 2007, a day Joel said was otherworldly due to the lack of pain flare-ups from lingering injuries from the accident. “Right before the ceremony, the pain just went away,” Joel said. “It really was just magical.”

Likewise, Rachael said what she remembers most is the overwhelming support the couple received in correlation to attendees at the wedding despite the rampant snowstorm.

However, not every moment was pure ethereal bliss, Joel said.

“Rach and I were out for dinner in Athens, and I had cut her a piece of chicken, and it fell in her water glass,” Joel said. “I was not suave.”

Nonetheless, Rachael said she found the incident endearing.

“He was trying to be nice, so it was like half a chicken breast,” Rachael said. “The water splashed.”

Beyond that awkwardly amusing date, the pair now lean more towards domestic activities. The couple spends their evenings decompressing and watching shows together—for the most part.

“I wait for Rach to go to sleep to watch anything fantasy,” Joel said. In addition to watching television, Rachael and Joel like to cook and genuinely enjoy each other’s company.

“We are just generally happy to share the same space,” Rachael said.

Both Rachael and Joel said marriage presents its occasional challenges and requires work.

“If you’re lucky, it is the most fulfill-

ing work you can do,” Rachael said. One key aspect of a successful marriage is respect, which is especially

important in regards to the couple’s work, they said.



Rachael and Joel Peckham are both professors in the English department at Marshall.

## Amicus Curiae Returning to Campus

By SARAH DAVIS  
NEWS EDITOR

The United States’ Civil Rights Movement is the topic of an upcoming lecture on campus this week.

The Amicus Curiae Lecture Series on Constitutional Democracy will hold its first event of the semester on Thursday, Feb. 22, with the presentation, “The Blinding of Sgt. Isaac Woodard and the Igniting of the Modern Civil Rights Movement,” by speaker Judge Richard Gergel.

Following a nomination from former U.S. President Barack Obama, Gergel now serves as a federal judge at the J. Waties Waring Federal Judicial Center in South Carolina. He earned his undergraduate degree, as well as his law degree, from Duke University.

Patricia Proctor, professor and founding director of the Simon Perry Center for Constitutional Democracy, said the parallels present in the movement’s story are particularly interesting.

“Judge Gergel’s excellent book describes how this terrible event led President Harry S. Truman to create the first presidential commission on civil rights and ultimately to desegregate the U.S. military by executive order,” she said. “It also tells how the federal government stepped in to prosecute a heinous crime when local authorities wouldn’t and the impact of the resulting trial on a South Carolina federal judge who became a champion of civil rights. So, the story has many facets, each

of which is compelling in its own right, and several of which involve well-known Americans who impacted our civil rights trajectory.”

Proctor went on to say that Gergel’s appearance on campus—as well as his experience and background—is profound.

“It is such an honor to have Judge Gergel come to Marshall,” Proctor said. “He has lectured all over the country, including at Harvard Law School, been interviewed by major media outlets and written a highly-

regarded and well-reviewed book that is so interesting that it inspired a PBS American Experience documentary.”

She went on to say, “I am very hopeful we will have a great turnout for this important lecture.”

The lecture, which is sponsored by the Simon Perry Center and the West Virginia Humanities Council, will begin at 7 p.m. in the Brad D. Smith Foundation Hall.

A book signing will follow the presentation.



# Swim & Dive Take Home Gold



The Herd had 34 all-time top-10 performances this season.

Courtesy of HerdZone.

## By JOSEPH DICRISTOFARO SPORTS EDITOR

Capping the weekend off with four gold medals, Swim and Dive wrapped up the Sun Belt Conference Championships on Saturday, Feb. 17, in Orlando, Florida.

"The staff is incredibly proud of this team," head coach Ian Walsh said. "We had 34 all-time top-10 performances, six conference champions, three NCAA Provisional Standards, two school records, two NCAA Zone Cut and one conference record."

The Herd's four gold medal finishes came from Paige Banton in the 200 Breaststroke, Eszter Laban in the 1650 Freestyle, Madeline Hart in the 200 Butterfly and Alaina Laster in the platform.

Banton continued her record-breaking weekend on fire by win-

ning the 200 Breaststroke, finishing at 2:13.62 and wrapping up the contest with 56 points, tying her for third among all swimmers at the Conference Championships.

Hungary native Laban finished the 1650 Freestyle in 16:41.68, five seconds shorter than her previous best and third best in program history to solidify her gold medal finish and second place spot in points among swimmers at 57.

The 200 Butterfly tandem of Hart and Molly Warner demolished the competition winning gold and silver respectively. Hart set the third-best time in program history at 2:00.64, and Warner at 2:01.42, the fifth fastest.

In the platform dive, the Herd filled the podium, with Laster taking gold, Larissa Munksgard with silver and Gabrielle Grace taking

home bronze. The performances of the trio rank second, third and sixth best in program history. Grace Kelsheimer came in fourth with a score of 175.20 to give her the spot of eighth best in program history.

"The final session proved to be our best, winning four of the seven events tonight. Eszter, Madeline, Paige and Alaina all walked away a conference champion. It was a special night for the program. We've laid a great foundation to build upon in years to come," Walsh said.

With conference play in the books, Banton, Laban and Warner will begin to prepare for the NCAA Preliminaries and Kelsheimer for the NCAA Diving Zones.

# Women's Basketball Dethrone the Monarchs

## By WADE SULLIVAN STUDENT REPORTER

Marshall Women's Basketball remains at the top of the Sun Belt following a 89-75 victory over the Old Dominion Monarchs on Saturday, Feb. 17. The game was the second in a stretch of four away matchups.

The win, which is Marshall's 13th in conference play, granted the team a double-bye in next month's conference championship tournament in Pensacola, Florida.

"Happy to get out of there with a win. That's a really good team," head coach Kim Caldwell said about her team's performance. "They're playing really well right now. That was a very tough environment."

In the first half, the Herd forced 16 Monarch turnovers and shot 51.9% from the field on 14-for-27 shooting en route to a 33-31 halftime lead. Old Dominion had 8 turnovers in both the first and second quarters.

The third quarter was huge for Marshall as they outscored the Monarchs 32-12 to go into the fourth quarter up by 22 points. That same domination would continue for the rest of the half.

Senior Breanna Campbell scored 10 of her 13 points in the third quarter. She shot 100% from the field making all three of her shots. Campbell was also perfect from the free throw line in the third, going 4-for-4 from the line.

Sophomore Meredith Maier led

the Herd in scoring 16 points on 75% shooting. She went 6-for-8 from the field on Saturday, with four of her shots being three pointers.

"Meredith was big; she got frustrated early but didn't blink, and she had a great second half for us as she usually does," Caldwell said. "Someone with her size that can do what she does, it's really special to see at this level."

Second half scoring runs of 13-2, 13-0 and 8-0 saw the Herd turn a two-point halftime lead into a 28-point lead early in the fourth quarter.

Along with Campbell and Maier, the Herd saw three more players score in double-digits: sophomore CC Mays, grad student Abby Beeman and junior Aislynn Hayes.

Mays had 11 points on 5-for-9 shooting with one made three. Beeman had 15 points on 7-for-11 shooting with one made three. Hayes had 15 points on 4-for-10 shooting, with 12 of her points scored in the second half.

The win keeps Marshall at the top of the Sun Belt, at 19-6 overall and 13-1 in Sun Belt play.

Old Dominion, however, drops to 18-7 overall and 9-5 in Sun Belt Play.

The Herd finishes its final away games of the regular season with matchups against Texas State and Louisiana Monroe on Feb. 21 and Feb. 24, respectively.



# Chanticleers Curb the Herd



The Herd has dropped three consecutive games.

Courtesy of HerdZone.

## By BEN COWER STUDENT REPORTER

Marshall Men's Basketball took its third consecutive loss this weekend after being defeated 74-67 by Coastal Carolina on Saturday, Feb. 17, in Conway, South Carolina.

The loss was also the third straight loss on the road for Marshall, and their fifth straight loss on the road in Sun Belt Conference play.

Marshall was down 35-33 at half-time, only to be outscored by five in the final 20 minutes of regulation. In the second half, the Herd shot 38% from the field, whereas the Chanticleers completed 62% of its shot attempts. After a late

17-5 run by the Herd to make the score 64-65 with 4 minutes and 16 seconds remaining, Marshall only netted one of 10 shots down the stretch.

"We had 20 more shots than they did," head coach Dan D'Antoni said postgame. "We have to start knocking some shots down."

The Herd completed 24 of 72 total shots from the field on Saturday, with the Chanticleers sinking the same number of shots on only 52 shot attempts.

Marshall's shooting percentage on Saturday, 33.3%, was only slightly better than that in their last conference, 32.8%.

Team-leading scorer Obinna Anochili-Killen spent only 15 minutes on-court without foul trouble and netted only two points. Four games ago in Huntington, Anochili-Killen notched a career-high 30 points versus the Chanticleers.

Kevon Voyles led the Herd in points scored for a third consecutive contest with 15 but shot 6-17 from the field. Nate Martin had a team-leading 37 minutes on-court but shot 1-7 from the field for four points. Kamdyn Curfman was also 5-16 for 13 points.

"You can't shoot 20 more times like we did," D'Antoni said. "We're just not making shots, and

we've got to make them."

It's apparent that Marshall can, in fact, shoot the ball 20 more times than an opponent. However, shooting the ball more and creating scoring opportunities isn't translating to success for the Herd; a game ago versus App State, from the field, Marshall shot the ball 10 more times than the Mountaineers and lost the game 73-58.

Shooting the ball less from the field hasn't translated to success in scoring, either. Two games ago, Marshall attempted 16 less shots from the field than Troy, and the Trojans outscored the Herd 82-66. "We just don't have that swagger

right now that you got to have," D'Antoni said. "Hopefully we can get it before we get to the [Sun Belt] tournament."

Marshall now drops to a 12-15 overall record and 3-7 record on the road this season. It's the Herd's second 3-game losing streak this season in conference play, totaling six of its seven losses. The Herd ranks seventh of 12 teams in the Sun Belt standings with a 7-7 conference record.

Marshall returns to the court at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 21, when the Cam Henderson Center hosts the Herd's rematch of the James Madison Dukes.

# Racial Diversity on Campus is Essential and Should be Celebrated

By **VICTORIA WARE**  
OPINIONS & CULTURE EDITOR

Racial diversity is a concept that provokes strong contention regarding its importance and value.

As a biracial Black woman who frequently inhabits predominately white spaces, the concept of racial diversity is quite important to me. Diversity is not simply a tactic to appease harbingers of “wokeness,” but, for people of color, racial diversity is something that can genuinely affect their emotional well-being. It’s a unique

experience to be the only person of color in a room. At times, it can be disheartening—not because of any animosity or perceived racial bias from others but because of the innate desire to feel represented.

A lack of diversity can affect a person of color’s self-esteem and perception of their own features. It can make them view themselves as an outlier—not fitting the standards that have been inadvertently set around them. Many are the tales of women of color not feeling as if they fit the conven-

tions of beauty and developing internalized self-criticism and loathing.

Representation may be just a buzzword to some, but, to those who directly face the concept of race on a daily basis, it is something that they long for. To me, racial diversity is based upon the desire to simply be seen and see myself in the world around me.

The prevailing issue is that inclusion has become overly politicized. Some view efforts to foster diversity and inclusion as unimportant, performative actions that serve only to disrupt the way that society naturally flows.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis signed a bill in April 2023 that bans public colleges and universities from spending money on programs dedicated to diversity, equity and inclusion. The following month, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott signed a similar bill. Legislation of this nature exemplifies the culture war surrounding diversity.

Curtailing inclusion is not simply accomplished through slashing funding to equity programs but also through the shockingly ongoing practice of book banning and restriction. What was claimed to be an effort to keep obscenity out of the hands of students has resulted in proposals to remove classic books and books that deal with race. After a Miami school required students to receive a permission slip to read books about Black history, DeSantis on Thursday, Feb. 15, announced he is calling on the Florida legislature to reform the system of challenging books. He said that books like “To Kill a Mockingbird,” should

not be challenged, contradicting his previous position on the issue last year.

The problem with these arguments about diversity is those in opposition are most likely people who are surrounded by others who look like them. Dismissing diversity in academic settings and not seeing the point in showcasing Black stories is egregious.

People who are against inclusion are only able to see the world from their perspective. They don’t put themselves in the mindset of a student of color who is questioning their self-worth and beauty compared to their white classmates. They don’t allow themselves to think about Black students who have an internal and ancestral yearning to hear their history and the accomplishments of their forefathers. To understand diversity, one must tap into empathy and see the world from the eyes of a young person of color grappling with their identity and where they fit in within broader society.

Black people, in particular, have so many negative stereotypes and misrepresentations they must combat to gain traction in academic settings. Therefore, there is an innate desire within us to simply see others on campus who look like us. It sounds incredibly trivial, but it’s true. It’s difficult to put into words, but, as a Black woman, there is an internal sense of empowerment or security when I see other people of color on campus or when I get to be in class with another person of color. It is simply the act



Photo by Abigail Cutlip

of seeing someone like me—someone who has probably felt the same emotions that I have as a person of color. For so long, people of color were shunned from education, so being able to be in an academic environment with those who look like us is uplifting.

Efforts to spur diversity on college campuses are essential and should be encouraged. In an ideal world, the color of a person’s skin wouldn’t be given a second thought. Cultural differences would be celebrated rather than scrutinized. However, as a whole, we are not at that point. Racial diversity is needed because of the history of racism and subjugation people of color have had to endure. On college campuses, inclusion is important because the environment should be representative of the world around us.

The Parthenon, Marshall University’s student newspaper, is published by students every Wednesday. The editorial staff is responsible for news and editorial content.

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Follow The Parthenon on Twitter and Instagram @MUParthenon  
109 Communications Bldg

Marshall University | One John Marshall Drive  
Huntington, West Virginia 25755 | parthenon@marshall.edu  
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## THE PARTHENON’S CORRECTIONS POLICY

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.



# Students Produce One-Woman Show

By **BAYLEE PARSONS**  
COPY EDITOR

For the first time in 20 years, the Marshall School of Theatre and Dance presented an entirely student-led production within the walls of the Joan C. Edwards Performing Arts Center.

"Every Brilliant Thing," which ran Feb. 19-20, tells the story of a young girl who begins writing a list of all the most wonderful aspects of life in response to her mother's depression, only to find that this list transforms her outlook on life through adulthood.

With the play being a one-person show, only three students worked together to bring the production to life.

"The three of us have done every bit of this," stage manager Seth Cunningham said. "We cultivated every prop; we focused the lights; we hung stuff; we set up every bit of the technical process."

Director Jimi Lee pursued this project to contribute to his capstone. Having been in several shows himself, this was Lee's first time directing a show at Marshall.

"I knew I wanted to direct a piece," Lee said. "There were a couple of shows I was interested in, and this one just made the most sense. It was subject matter that I thought was relevant and necessary for us to produce a piece on."

With the play having themes of suicide and depression, narrator and lone actress Gabriella Bellomy said she and the crew had to broach the topics with sensitivity.

"We tried to separate our individual selves from it enough to where it wouldn't be mentally damaging," she said. "We wanted to be sensitive to the topic and add the nuance into it that I thought was necessary."

As for the message she wanted audience members to take away from the play, Bellomy said, "There's always some



Gabriella Bellomy "Every Brilliant Thing."

Photo by Baylee Parsons

reason to keep living, no matter what stage of life you're in."

"Things may not always get brilliant, but they get better," Lee added. "It's about showing people that there are other people that have had these feelings, there are other people that have fought this fight, and we're here to support you."

While its overall message remained the same, the team had to make some changes in order to fit their vision.

Originally a one-man, British-based show, some stage directions and lines were adjusted for it "to be both a female-led show and also relevant to this region," Cunningham said.

"A lot of that comes from just trying to be as truthful as we can with this piece," Lee added, "because that's what the audience is going to connect to: that sense of genuine nature and truthful experience."

With an audience capacity of 50, the black box theater—which Cunningham

is typically used as a classroom—allowed Bellomy to interact closely with audience members.

"You feel just, like, enveloped in the space," Cunningham said, "and like, 'I'm doing the show now; I'm part of the show.'"

The production team accredited Bellomy with much of the play's creative liberties, despite this being the largest project of her career thus far.

Previously playing minor roles in shows, Bellomy said, "I knew that this was a challenge, but it was a great challenge for me."

With the play only having one actor, Lee said good casting was "more paramount than ever."

"We took a risk on Gabby," Lee said, "and we would do it again in a heartbeat."

Baylee Parsons can be reached at [parsons406@marshall.edu](mailto:parsons406@marshall.edu)

# Critically Acclaimed Writer Cyrus Cassells Visits Marshall

By **CYD COLLINS**  
STUDENT REPORTER

Critically acclaimed writer, translator and poet Cyrus Cassells was the featured guest for the first reading in the A.E. Writer's Series of the year on Thursday, Feb. 15.

The series was founded in 1989 by Art Stringer, a former English professor of Marshall University. Bringing in six to eight writers every year, event coordinator Sara Henning said having writers visit Marshall's campus creates an environment that encourages creativity and learning in students.

"Not only can a student fall in love with a writer's words from afar, they can come to understand the flesh and blood of the person who created them," Henning said.

Cyrus Cassells is a Black LGBTQ poet born in Delaware but raised in the Mojave Desert in Texas. Cassells has worn many hats, including actor, film critic and teacher. His work primarily tackles themes of identity, religion/spirituality and human rights issues in his various travels. His work is punctuated by his personal experiences throughout his career, as well as the individuals he encounters.

During his visit to Marshall University, Cassells shared excerpts from his publications, including his new book, "Is There Room for Another Horse on Your Horse Ranch?" and his translation of Salvador Espriu's poetry titled, "To The Cypress Again and Again: Tribute to Salvador Espriu." Between readings, Cassells discussed where he was during the creation of his books.

When he was translating the work

of Espriu, his mentor informed him she believed Espriu was going to pass away soon. She told Cassells he needed to visit him in Spain before he passed, which he did during his last few days on his trip. After their meeting, Espriu died four months later.

"I only saw him in the last couple days I was there, so there was that kind of weird pressure. I think my translation story is the most dramatic one I've heard, actually," Cassells said. "And then, he did die. So, I gave him the translations, and he said to me that he thought the English translations were the best ones."

Ash Williams, the student appointed to introduce Cassells at the beginning of the reading, said, while nerve racking, it felt right to announce someone with so many similarities in terms of identity and being a fellow poet.

"I think poetry for me is definitely about being able to connect with people kind of like how we used to, you know, tell our stories by word of mouth. I feel like poetry is, in a way, a little more accessible," Williams said.

Cassells said he's always had a passion for writing ever since he was a child. He has involved himself in the arts since then, even in terms of his acting career. Cassells said he has memories of wanting to add his own novel to the Encyclopedia Britannica some day.

"I remember being a child and thinking I was waiting... waiting for someone to give me permission to write... I've only wanted to be a writer and an actor my whole life," Cassells said. "I've never wavered from the other people that go through a process, and, for me, it's been unwavering."

# BeyondMU: W.Va. Legislature Continues Slew of Controversial Bills Despite Opposition



By **MATTHEW SCHAFFER**  
MANAGING EDITOR

West Virginia's House of Delegates passed the controversial HB 5243, also known as the "West Virginia Women's Bill of Rights," on Wednesday, Feb. 14, despite strong opposition, with more controversial legislation on the way.

The West Virginia Women's Bill of Rights seeks to legally define gender based on an individual's assigned sex at birth, creating legal definitions for "man," "woman," "boy," "girl," "mother" and "father" while deleting the term "gender" from state law, replacing it with "sex."

This bill has largely been seen as an attack on LGBTQ West Virginians, with the bill delegitimizing the terms "third-gendered" and "nonbinary." The bill passed the state's supermajority-Republican house in an 87-12-7 vote along party lines despite a strong showing of opposition in the bill's first public hearing.

The goal of these changes is to restrict access to single-sex spaces such as locker rooms, bathrooms, athletic facilities, rape crisis centers and domestic violence centers to those now legally defined by their assigned sex, with the bill also

stating the "equal" does not mean "same" or identical" regarding equality between sexes.

It also creates provisions that require all data collection on an individual's gender, whether it be from schools, organizations or agencies within the state to only acknowledge the options "male" or "female."

The legislation has already garnered public support from Gov. Jim Justice, who will likely sign the bill once it passes the Republican supermajority in the state Senate.

This bill has garnered criticism from West Virginia's Democrats and civilians, who have vocally opposed this piece of legislation.

"That's what this bill is all about: unifying people against a perceived threat," Mike Pushkin, D-Kanawha, said. "But the problem with it is, it affects real people, real constituents of ours, real West Virginians."

"It is an insult to purpose a bill that only serves to push a hateful agenda," Kryss Smith, Marshall student, said in the public hearing. "It's no surprise to me that this bill doesn't address violence, menstrual healthcare or breastfeeding equity, nor does it care about protecting incarcerated women, immigrant women or women of color."

Despite these strong words against the bill, it did pass the House with the only approved amendment proposed by Democrats being the provision that revokes protection of the spouse in sexual abuse cases despite several proposals such as equal pay and a reduction in famine hygiene tax.



W.Va. Capitol Building

Courtesy of Zach Frank/Adobe

HB 5243 is not the only piece of controversial legislation that has passed in recent times, with Justice signing Senate Bill 10, or "The Campus Self Defence Act," just last year. That bill would allow concealed carry on college and university campuses across the state and is set to go into effect this July.

Similarly to HB 5243, the majority of those who came out to speak on SB 10 were in opposition to it, with 37 of the 39 people who took to the podium citing the possible increase of violent crimes on campuses due to the passage of the legislation.

Meanwhile, several other pieces of legislation target transgender and nonbinary people in the state with

Sen. Mike Azinger introducing three pieces of legislation to the Senate last month that seeks to ban "transgender exposure" near schools in SB 197, "transgender exposure in performance" in public or establishments that are not 18+ and SB 194 that would ban gender-affirming care for anyone under 21.

Another bill coming from the House is HB 4654, which would seek to ban all material deemed "obscene" from West Virginia's schools, museums and public libraries. This bill, like many others that have swept the nation, has vague wording regarding what qualifies as "obscene."

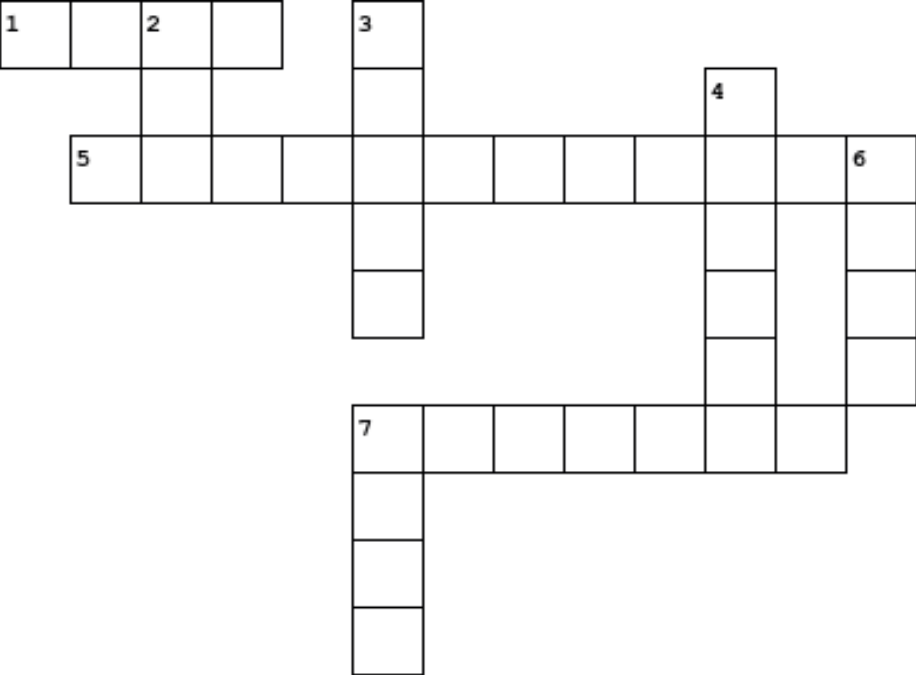
"The vague definition of the bill opens the door for attacks and

legal challenges on any exhibit, program, lecture, publication or other project that some member of the community may not agree with," the West Virginia Association of Museums said in a statement on Sunday. "The threat of legal prosecution will only serve to limit or erase the ability of West Virginia's museums to continue centers of history, culture, education and community."

With the state's current supermajority in both the House and Senate, Justice's conservative legislation, mimicking the likes of other red states, will likely continue as the 2024 election looms in November that will determine both state and national leaders.



Parthenon Puzzle: Crossword #14



Down

2. Wednesday saw celebrations of this, regarding the burning of the palm ashes
3. Student Body President
4. The last name of this judge who will be the speaker of the next Amicus Curiae Lecture
6. Acronym for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
7. Senate Bill representing the Campus Self Defense Act

Across

1. Performers dress in this to raise funds through Queens for a Cause
5. mascot of Coastal Carolina who defeated Marshall's mens basketball last week
7. Swim and Dive won this conference championship

Crossword answers can be found on page 12

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# COS Students Get to Know New Dean

By **SCOTT PRICE**  
CHIEF COPY EDITOR

Intended to introduce students to Dean Wesley Stites and Associate Dean Anna Mummert while conversing over Dunkin' donuts and coffee, the Student Government Association collaborated with First2 Network on Thursday, Feb. 15, to host the College of Science's "Donuts With the Deans" event.

Student Body Vice President Callia Yang organized the event, and First2 Network provided the refreshments. First2 Network which helps first-generation, underrepresented and rural students in STEM by providing resources and stipends for research.

Yang said the motivation for the event came after a town hall meeting

in the College of Science, where they realized many students were intimidated by the new dean.

"When you think of the dean, you think of, 'Oh, you're in trouble,' or something like that," Yang said. "Our goal is really just to break that boundary and help students connect with faculty, associate deans and deans."

Stites became the dean of the College of Science on April 11, 2023, and he assumed his post on July 3, 2023. He previously came from the University of Arkansas, where he served as associate vice chancellor for research and innovation.

"He's a really, really nice guy, and he's very passionate about helping students," she said. "But, you know, he's new, so nobody knows what he looks like."

Yang is also the co-chair for First2 Network and said Donuts With the Deans was its first event expanding outside of the established members.

"Last semester, we did a faculty network dinner," Yang said. "Our First2 students sat down with some faculty in the College of Science and the dean and the College of Engineering dean. We all had dinner and had a lot of fun, and the conversations were just flowing. Everyone was surprised about how nice and how open the faculty and the deans were, so I thought, 'Let's expand this and have everyone in the College of Science come.'"

More events from First2 will be planned for the future, Yang said, but no details are set for them yet.



Student Body Vice President Callia Yang dished out donuts.



Dean Stites talks with students.



Photos by Scott Price

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