THE OCCASIONAL SLATER

VOLUME 5 - NO. 1 | Some Of The News, Some Of The Time | April 2026 Edition

Spring Is in the Air!

Off the Bench: Sports and Balances



Jack Purdy competing at a Cross Country event earlier in the school year (photo credit: Randy Shutter).

Many athletes find emotional regulation and well-being in their sports, but get this: some don't. Some are just participating in sports to stay fit, or because their parents made them join the team. A lot of times, being an athlete can feel like wearing a mask; people just assume that it's your personality, but there's more to you than the sport you play. It can also be hard to balance sports life with hobbies. It is not uncommon for coaches to dissuade athletes from taking time off to do things that they would otherwise like to do.

Being an athlete can feel overwhelming. On one side of the coin, you have your hobbies, and on the other, you have sports, and you have to choose. It is annoying when people tell you to "just quit." You may not want to be seen as a quitter. Did that occur to the person who told you to quit? Clearly not.

It's mildly upsetting when people try to convince you to do things that you avoid for many reasons.

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Is Early College Right For You?

I know there are a million things that you want to do senior year. I also know that you want to prepare for college the best way you can. There is a way you can do both! Most people have heard about the Early College Program by now. If you haven't, it is where you can do your freshman year of college during your senior year of high school, for FREE. I don't know about you, but I will take anything that is for free. That does not mean doing high school AND college classes, it means doing college classes INSTEAD of high school classes. You might be thinking, "Why would I do that when I could just have a couple of classes and get to sleep in?" Well, you can also do that in Early College. You get to pick your class schedule. You can schedule late morning and afternoon classes or only morning classes and have the afternoons off. You won't even have the same classes every day. You could even make your schedule to have a day off during the week for a study day. Let's discuss 4 major things to consider if you want to participate in the Early College Program. First, what forms can your classes take? Second, what classes/majors/credentials are available? Third, does the college you want to attend accept those credits? Fourth, what resources are available to you?

Now, Early College is not for just any college you want to attend. Many colleges do offer Early College, but our high school only partners with the Vermont State University in Castleton and the Community College of Vermont in Rutland. This partnership allows you to do college instead of high school, not both at the same time. Though that is possible, it can put a lot of pressure on you. CCV or VTSU may not be your first pick, but they can be your first college experience. You could

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Farewell Froshmore?



For those of you who don't know, "Froshmore" is a dance FHU holds almost every spring for Freshmen and Sophomores. Froshmore is nice because underclassmen get to have a dance towards the end of the year while upperclassmen have the prom. However, last school year, there was no Froshmore. There wasn't even an announcement to let people know that Froshmore wasn't happening. People were just waiting for the date of the dance to be announced, not knowing that there wasn't even going to be a Froshmore in 2025. During the end of the school year, when it was apparent that there would be no Froshmore, I heard several students expressing discontent. Students were excited for Froshmore, and were disappointed to realize that the dance just wasn't happening.

I had to learn that Froshmore wasn't happening upon my own inquiry. I also learned that the previous year's froshmore lost money, which is the reason there was no Froshmore last school year. I think that reason is absolutely ridiculous. School dances are not for raising money; they are for promoting a sense of school spirit, excitement, and connection amongst peers.

What's even more absurd is middle schoolers have three dances. My class was in 8th grade the first year the middle school was at the high school, and we only had one dance, towards the end of the year.

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Hallway Talk

What is your opinion on the new cell phone policy?

Abbygaile Gero, 8th: "In my opinion I agree with my school's phone policy because it helps students stay focused in class, but at the same time it doesn't always feel fair. Even though phones are supposed to be put away in lockers, some students still keep theirs with them and don't face any consequences. It's frustrating because when other kids actually do get caught, the teachers sometimes ignore it or let them off because they don't want to deal with the situation. This makes the policy feel uneven, even though the idea behind it is good."

Gage Hetrick, 9th: "Unnecessarily strict, they should up punishments for using them in class and remove restrictions on using them outside of class. I should be able to look at my phone while walking through the hallway. Who am I distracting?"

Anonymous, 9th: "I understand not having it in classes because that makes sense, but I think that as long as you are in a class like study hall or during lunch, and in the halls as long as you make it to class and are not taking too long [you should be able to use it]. I also think it should be teacher's classroom, teacher's choice."

Anonymous, 10th: "Cell phones in school are huge distractions and reduce face-to-face interactions, but the new policy doesn't fix anything. They should be either 100% allowed or 100% not allowed. For example, during lunchtime, everyone is looking down at their phones and disconnected from everyone else, because it is the one time that students are allowed to use them."

Anonymous, 10th: "I don't see the point on phones being so restricted because I need to be able to check my phone when my parents are texting me and most students aren't being distracted by them. Simply discipline the students who aren't using them correctly."

Elizabeth Bishop, 11th: "I think the new cell phone policy is both good and bad. It's good because it helps people pay attention more in class and keeps everyone focused on their work instead of scrolling on their phones. But at the same time, I feel like once the work is done, we should be allowed to have our phones out. Sometimes we finish early, and it would be nice to listen to music or check messages as long as we're not distracting anyone. It's all about balance — I understand why the rule exists, but I think there should be a little more trust and freedom when students are being responsible."

Anonymous, 11th: "I think the cell phone policy is quite restricting; if someone wants to not pay attention let them, because it's only affecting them and their education. Phone usage is a personal responsibility and the phone policy affects everyone; basically I think it's stupid."

What is your opinion on the new bathrooms in the highschool?

Anonymous, 9th: "They are nice but they don't have paper towels and I like paper towels. I also miss the bigger mirrors/full length ones, and I am confused why the bathrooms by the music room have locks on the outside and have not been undone."

Abigail Young, 11th: "The new bathrooms are really nice, except for one thing. Instead of paper towels, there are hand dryers. This is just a personal opinion, but I despise hand dryers. They are extremely loud and never work well for me. They also mean there are no available paper towels for students in the bathrooms, which are helpful for cleaning up a spilled drink in class or used as a tissue or a napkin in a pinch."

Olivia Paige, 12th: "I think the new bathrooms look great! It is a touch to our school, especially the ones down in the lobby where everyone uses those bathrooms for sporting events and other events that take place within our school. Last year there was a ceiling tile missing in the girls bathroom and at one point there was a bucket hanging. I don't think that particularly looks good for other people using our bathrooms. I think updating the bathrooms was a great touch to our school."

What is your opinion on the new dress code?

Anonymous, 8th: "It's really sexist toward girls. I understand that some girls dress in ways people might consider inappropriate, but if someone gets distracted by it, that's their issue, not ours. Personally, I think if their body parts are covered, then they should be fine. Plus, they don't even make clothes for middle or high school girls the way they want them. Also, in the dress code, we were told that if any undergarments are showing, we get dress-coded, but boys walk around with their underwear showing and nothing happens. It doesn't make any sense."

Henry Young, 9th: "The new dress code is mostly good, but why do we still allow hats indoors? Are we uncivilized?"

Evelyn Stevens, 9th: "I think that it's weird. Teachers are more worried about how the students are dressed instead of worrying about actual learning. Especially girls. Yes, some girls wear stuff that is revealing but sometimes they take the dress code too far. They pull students out of core classes because of something they are wearing. Most of the time what the students wear isn't bad. I got dress-coded for shorts I wore last year and had no problem with. They were athletic shorts with built in leggings under them. On the other hand some people were wearing skirts that showed their butt. Teachers are paying attention to students whose clothes aren't distracting at all."

Anonymous, 12th: "It feels very unnecessary. We've never had a dress code before. Clothes in general were never a problem. Just punish the kids that are showing up in things that aren't appropriate instead of sending every girl that wears shorts to the office. Most shorts that are made for women are going to be short. That's the whole point."

By Anna MacKay, staff writer

"Farewell Froshmore?", continued from page 1

But now middle schoolers have so many dances that they can't even look forward to dances at the high school. Some middle schoolers are already sick of dances because they had so many in middle school! Back to my point: why do middle schoolers get to have three dances when highschoolers can't even have Froshmore?

I think there are many ways we could've made Froshmore more budget-friendly. We could've held a fundraiser specifically to raise money for the dance. Even having a bake sale during the dance is an idea. We could've had families donate the food and beverages that are normally given out during the dance. While some may disagree, we don't necessarily need a DJ. Instead, a playlist of songs could be made ahead of time, and students could send in requests to be added to the playlist. This also ensures that music is played that students actually want to hear. Additionally, a less desirable idea would be increasing the price of the tickets to Froshmore if we were that concerned about losing money.

What does it matter if we lose money at a dance, as long as people have a great time? Does the absence of Froshmore last school year mean Froshmore will no longer exist at FHU? That hopefully isn't the case. Froshmore is an event many students look forward to. Froshmore strengthens the bond between peers and creates a sense of community. I hope this year's Freshmen and Sophomores get to have the Froshmore that last year's didn't have. Ultimately, Froshmore is a positive event at FHU and I would hate to see it leave.

By Anna MacKay, staff writer

"Is Early College For You?", continued from page 1

be 17 or 18 and already going to college! Castleton offers a plethora of classes in person and online. If you want to do online classes through them, the University prefers you to do a combination of in-person and online. CCV also has that choice, but there are only a few classes in-person. However, they offer many different course types. These include hybrid, flex, hyflex, synchronous, accelerated, online, and in-person classes. You could do a combination of these different classes or just one kind. That depends on what you want to study. When choosing which school to attend through Early College, it is essential to incorporate that into your consideration process.

It is important to know what your college offers. Of course everyone looks at the majors available at a college. However, as an Early College student who may not be looking at these colleges to finish their college degree with, you may want to take early college for specific classes. For example, you might want to take all the core classes needed for your degree now and focus on the fun classes for your later years in the college you end up attending. Or maybe you want to explore different topics to help you find your college interest. Look closely at the classes offered and specifically look at the interest in those classes. If it's not a popular class and there aren't enough sign ups for that class it may get canceled. Look into the popularity and classes of interest for each of your college options.

Third, does the college you want to attend accept those credits? The great thing about CCV and VSU is that once you finish your two years at CCV you can easily transfer to VSU because your transcript is in the same system. So if you prefer CCV for a while, and want to change later, that is simple to do. However, try to start looking into your desired college well before you need to. Look into all the classes and majors available and the flexibility there is in those schedules. If you aren't planning to attend your Early College choice after high school, then look to see if the school you do want to go to accepts any of the courses you want to take. They may accept some or none but make sure you check that so you aren't wasting your time.

Fourth, what resources are available to you? Vermont is a very education-focused state so there are many resources available to us Vermont students, including this Early College Program. If you are eligible, check out Gear-Up or VSAC and other financial aid programs and grants you qualify for. These programs are an incredible resource to potentially pay for your college after high school. They can pay for you admission fees, textbooks, and give you so many other resources for high school, Early College, and college prep. Also, apply for as many scholarships as you qualify for. These options could give you free money or give you less expensive or free education.

STUDY TIPS:

Here are a few study tips for any learning you may be doing, especially college:

Environment: Your environment can significantly affect how you study. Keeping your work space clean helps your mind stay clear and focused while you study.



Top Row (left to right): Rosie Hohn, Izzy West, Elizabeth Purdy, Laila New, Henry Young, Ollie Benson, Burton Pelletier, Anna Charon, Anaya Provost, and James Shorey (ducking down in back)
Front Row (left to right): Akeelah Rheaume, Bailey Fowler, Addy Crowley, Elaina Allard, Abby Young, Elisabeth Rockwell, Anna MacKay, and Charmaine Mullins

Murder Ahoy

This year's first drama production was called "Murder Ahoy". It was a murder mystery and a comedy. The show was about a 30th high school reunion on a cruise and we interacted with the crowd by asking questions, having them sing along and making them feel like they were at the reunion. The drama production was on November fourteenth. There was a fundraiser from 5:00 to 6:45 p.m. and the play started at 7:00. There were a few short intermissions. There were about ten student actors and there were four crew members (plus anybody in the crowd who interacted). There were times when we would walk out into the crowd or talk to the audience to interact and get the audience to feel as if they were at the reunion. The drama club was happy to see that everyone in the audience participated and liked the show that we had put on for them. There was the senior King and the senior Queen along with a DJ, a cheerleader and the librarian. There were some good tunes and jokes. The drama club thanks you for attending the show and enjoying it.

By Laila New, staff writer



Left: Mrs. Adams directs the FHUMHS Band at the Winter Concert (photo credit: Zainab Hussnane, staff photographer).

FHUMHS Band Goes On Tour!

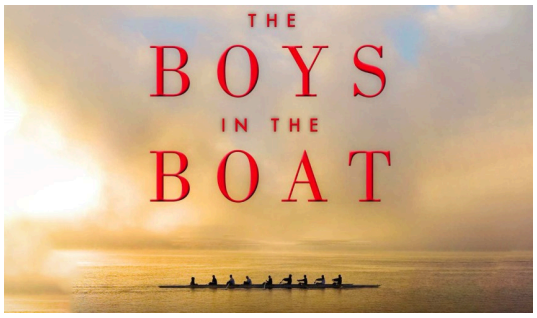
In 2027, band students from grades 9-12 will be performing in Orlando Florida at Universal Studios. This performance will be much like the concerts we have at our school, just held in a different location. Samantha Adams, the FHUMHS band teacher, has organized many different fundraisers to make this trip possible. She has organized things like bottle and can collections, coin drops, and special gatherings. Help and participation by any volunteers is greatly appreciated!

Month of April - Spring Sports Concession Stand - FHUMHS
Month of May - Candle Sale - See a student or order online
May 2nd - Loyalty Day Parade - Rutland
May 23rd and 24th - Memorial Day Parades - Castleton, Fair Haven, Orwell
May 23rd - Spring Fling - Fair Haven Town Green
June (tentative) - Coin Drop

By Zainab Hussnane, staff writer

***The Occassional Slater* staff:**
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Book Review: *The Boys in the Boat*



The Boys in the Boat, by Daniel James Brown, is a non-fiction book that follows the story of Joe Rantz and his journey to become an Olympic oarsman. Growing up in Washington state during the Great Depression, Joe had a difficult childhood.

All alone on his family's farm, he got a job cutting down cottonwood trees in town and singing on the street for spare change. Joe also taught himself to forage for edible plants, and hunt salmon along the surrounding rivers. The skills Joe learned in his time alone were a means to survive; little did he know his childhood experiences would one day lead him to Olympic gold.

Years later, at the University of Washington, Joe joined the crew team to get a part time job that would help fund his tuition. After the first few practices, it was clear to the freshman coaches that Joe was a natural oarsman. In 1934, after landing a spot on first crew, Joe along with his eight teammates won two major races: the Pacific Coast and Poughkeepsie Regatta. By the time sophomore year rolled around, Washington was already on the map for sending a team to the Olympics, but Joe's crew seemed to be losing their stride out on the water. Across the ocean, Germany began preparations to host the 1936 Olympics, in what they hoped would be a display of German superiority to the rest of the world. The only question was, would Joe's crew get their confidence back in time for the Olympic qualifications?

In Joe's sophomore year he began to struggle with his rowing, and when he returned from summer break he found himself demoted to the third boat. Joe's background in manual labor gave him an edge in the physical aspects of rowing but he struggled with technique and to connect with his teammates. He would have continued on a downward trajectory if it weren't for George Yeoman Pocock. George, an expert craftsman of racing shells, knew about Joe's knowledge of logging and invited him into his wood shop. George and Joe formed a bond over constructing racing shells, and later George's mentorship became the key to Joe's success. Along with telling George's story, the book features many accounts of Joe's coaches, wife, and teammates. While much of the detail added to the book, it did result in long chapters and some writing that could benefit from being edited down.

The nature of rowing is unpredictable; sometimes Joe's varsity team would soar through the water and the next they could barely beat the JV. Every oarsman is looking for the elusive "swing", a rowing term for when each member of the team is rowing in perfect sync. Many of my favorite parts of the book were when Joe's team would find their swing, especially at a race. Like the memorable 1936 Poughkeepsie Regatta, the race that would make Joe's team national champions and qualify them for the Olympics. The historical setting and detailed examination of the sport make this book shine. If you are someone who likes sports, history, or an interesting story I would recommend it.

By Shira Hertzberg, staff writer

Editor's Corner

Welcome to the 2026 Spring edition of *The Occasional Slater!* This issue is the result of many months of work by our staff. We want this newspaper to be the voice of the student body here at FHUMHS and a forum for student opinions, accomplishments, and concerns. We can't do that without input from you! Currently, we are specifically looking for, and in desperate need of, students to join our full-time staff who are interested in providing photography services, working on web design and maintenance, and doing the layout work for both the website and the print version of the paper. We are also seeking any artists who would be interesting in creating an original comic strip that could run in each new edition of the newspaper and on our website. We greatly appreciate your support of our endeavors and we welcome your feedback and suggestions. If you are interested in joining us or contributing, please contact me in room 211 of the high school or email me at mbruce@svuvt.org. We hope you all enjoy this edition of *The Occasional Slater*.

Michael W. Bruce, editor & faculty adviser

"Is Early College For You?", continued from page 3

I can't say this enough: changing where you study can also incredibly help you. Changing locations can help you stay motivated and inspired. When you really need to focus, have a specific place to do that every time. This will make your brain know when it is time to lock in. When you are studying for an exam or something else try to study in or near the place where that exam will be taken. Again this will associate the information you study with that environment and will help on exam day.

Study Breaks: If you need to take a break (after a long study session or you know you just can't focus on the information) do something productive! Don't scroll or watch TV. Do something productive or calming like cleaning your room, going for a walk, or eating a healthy snack. This will get your mind off of the study topic but keep it engaged enough to be unconsciously or consciously thinking about it. You'll come back stronger. I encourage you to take breaks. Not a lot of them but taking a break can help you! Every 25 to 50 minutes take about a 5 minute break.

Audio: I know that not everyone likes reading (sadly), but even more so no one likes reading textbooks. I totally get it. I love reading; it was my job! Textbooks are still hard to read AND understand AND focus on. Solution: Don't rely on just your eyes to read the textbook. Depending on where your textbook is from there are so many ways to get audiobooks on them. Some places have audiobooks built into the ebook textbook. Look up your textbook on YouTube, Spotify, Speechify, or Audible. There are many free options out there; you just have to look! I understand and learn so much better when listening to non-fiction instead of reading it, even though I love to read. Everyone learns differently. Try to find your learning method early on so you don't struggle for so long.

Scheduling: LOOK AT YOUR SYLLABUS! I know that it is easy to ignore the syllabus (whoops!). If your teacher has the due dates (most do!) or it spreads out by each week of the semester, look ahead and put them in your calendar or set reminders. This can save the stress of making up all your work across all your classes the last week of the semester (or year with everything else going on). AND you don't have to try and remember if you missed an assignment or not. This helps create a less stressful semester. Even with that schedule, make sure you have room to take a day off. Not all the time, though you don't want to burn yourself out. This could lead to poor quality work and burn-out making learning hard.

STUDENT DISCOUNTS:

That student ID is useful for more than your college. Many stores, websites, restaurants, and streaming services give students discounts. Websites like myunidays.com can help you explore those discounts. Take advantage of what you can to get cheaper and free experiences. Clubs and events at your college can also help you out with this.

REMINDER:

Make sure to be scheduling weekly meetings with your counselor per the early college agreement. MAKE SURE TO ASK WHAT CREDITS YOU NEED TO GRADUATE! Some classes you take could count as a credit towards English, for example, without you realizing. This could be the difference of you graduating with your class or not.

Make sure to have fun! Early College is to help you learn and get a head start on your college career. But you can take fun classes and learn about random things you're interested in too. Don't be too serious all the time. The fun is what can get you through.

By Erica Stoliker, staff writer

"Off the Bench: Sports and Balances", continued from page 1

Some people avoid sports due to toxic sportsmanship. For example, some people stop sports because they have spotlight syndrome going on. It's sad that an activity advertised as something for everyone can be so toxic.

Then again, for certain people sports are the opposite. For them, sports are therapeutic, especially if they are playing with their friends. The bullying culture that can be so common in sports may not be present for them.

Sports are often person versus person, meaning there are emotions associated with either the opponents, or your teammates. This can mean that players new to a particular sport – or who started a sport later in life – can get disheartened. It can be upsetting, and can often lead to quitting.

Admittedly, activities that aren't sports can be that same way. For example, during my first year of marching band, I was one of the only girls in my age group, meaning that I had issues with socialization.

People can be cliquey, and the cliques may have issues with other cliques – this leads to social barriers. It's human nature, though, and there is not much that anyone can do about that. Some cliques are also in place for a reason. Certain people can tolerate things that others can't, and also have different ideals and beliefs. Overall, sports can be a beautiful thing, but that beauty can become toxic in the snap of a finger.

By Elizabeth J. Purdy, staff writer