

## Winter Musical, *Newsies*: Worthy of the Headlines

By Julian Duvivier '22, Arts and Technology Reporter

Breaking news: the Friends' Central Upper School Drama Program's adaptation of *Newsies* will debut at 7:00pm on Friday March 1, followed by two performances on Saturday March 2 at 2:00 and 7:00. *Newsies* is a well-loved Broadway production inspired by the real-life Newsboys Strike of 1899. The play follows New York Newspaper Delivery Boy Jack (Benny Flora '20) his comrade Davey (Thad Bashaw '20), as well as their fellow newsies— poor, orphaned, and homeless youth— in their protest against the unfair distribution prices of newspaper tycoon Joseph Pulitzer (Alejandro Lopez '20). Throughout its many musical numbers, tap dances, and fight scenes, the play explores protest and the power of standing together through hardship.

The brilliance of the performance lies in the play's cast of characters, its choreography, and the incredible energy of its musical numbers. The play's thematic strengths are multifaceted. Actor Ben Miller '20 shares, "[*Newsies*] has its

*'Newsies' COTD. on page 2*



Silly Seniors in Their Habitat  
(Julian Brenman)

## FCC Reading Room: A Senior Lounge?

By Ivy Epstein '19 and Liam Sullivan '19, Contributors

With the end of our four high school years in sight, the senior class scrambles for a place to call their own: one last place to be together, to stress over the college process and socialize as a group. It's a tradition not only at Friends' Central, but also at every other high school. Seniors grapple with their impending departure by clustering into one space, and in our case, it ended up being what might be the smallest room on campus. The problem with the FCC Reading Room isn't that it's been known to be the senior hang out spot; the problem is that other grades don't have their own. "I think that a solid space for every grade to bond with one another as well as work together should be available," one senior states.

While the Reading Room is technically open to all grades, it is known school-wide to be the senior hangout spot. There are other spots on campus like this, such as the front left side of the meeting room, or even "the Ledge" in the old Shallcross

*'Reading Room' COTD. on page 2*



*Newsies* Rehearsal  
(Lydia Varcoc-Wolfson)

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Cafeteria. The issue with the Reading Room, however, is that the room was originally designed for other purposes: it's the home of college meetings and the FCC printer and was intended to be used as a quiet reading space for all students. The Reading Room has developed into something entirely different; two fish tanks and a wall of embarrassing photos have turned the room into a much more social environment. Although the fish have been a topic of concern to many faculty members, Nora Wadsworth says, "The fish in the Reading Room represent a sense of community established through the senior class. They help practice stewardship and consideration for others. They've become a centerpiece to the class of 2019 in the most simple way."

To some, the room feels open and inviting to all. Max J. Cohen, '19, says, "Not only is the architectural construction of the Reading Room absolutely perfect, but lighting from the grand ten-foot tall windows is so enlightening to all who enter, from those in the middle school all the way to those in the 12th grade! [The Reading Room] is like a library and classroom all in one, but better." Some students are very invested in the tradition behind the Reading Room. Senior (and Student Council President) Nathan Levitties adds, "This tradition of the room can then be passed down from class to class as something to look forward to in the future."

The Reading Room has also brought a sense of comfort to many seniors, especially Valeria Fraga, who only started at FCS this fall. She says, "As someone who is relatively new to the community at FCS, it is nice to have a designated space where I can be sure I will find people in my grade. Rather than having to search for people who I could spend my free blocks with, I was able to go directly to the Reading Room and know that I would be fine to spend my free blocks there in a space with my peers." By this logic, it makes sense that each grade should have their own lounge, as this would allow for students to feel the comfort in knowing that they will always be able to find their peers in one spot.

Some teachers and students don't find the room to be so promising. One senior says, "At times the Reading Room can be a bit intimidating to those who are in 9th and 10th grade. The Reading Room is heavily used by seniors which is an overwhelming sight for anyone walking into that room to use the printer or any other daily usage." Sophomore Luke Cooper says he is "against the Reading Room being all seniors because it creates a divide between grades and gives off a [negative] vibe to the younger students who look up to the seniors."



So, what do you think? Is the Reading Room serving the right purpose? Are the seniors allowed a room to not only socialize alone, but also keep their beloved pet fish? Should every grade have their own designated lounge?

You decide for yourself.

***'Newsies' COTD. from page 1***

musical theatre aspects and songs, but it also has its more dramatic scenes... It changes between many different themes, and can go from a fight scene, to an economics discussion, to a tap dance." In these ways, the FCS version of the play matches the strengths of a Broadway musical: it features extraordinary energy and style, paired with moments that can fill you with wonder and woe or make you jump for joy. Things to watch out for in *Newsies* include the creative props and settings throughout the show.

Whether throwing newspapers or tap dancing on tables, the set is constantly active. This energy is particularly highlighted in "King of New York," a song that sits as the crown of the entire performance and is currently the show's best-rehearsed number.

The strength of the play is credit to the writers, but, just as importantly, to the cast, which in our case includes 46 student-actors from grades nine through twelve. Stage Manager Ankitha Gundala '22 mentions that this year's cast is uniquely "assorted from different grades" and has many varied talents, as reiterated by Ben, who mentions that "some people are primarily actors, some sing, and others dance but we have all become a cohesive bunch and learned from other's strengths." This diverse group of students has been cast in the roles of poor orphans, New

York citizens, a businessman, a notable New York governor, and many children speaking out about their rights for fair pay. They have spent these past months preparing and, according to Stage Manager Nicole Gilliland '20, it has been "great getting to know everyone's character's backgrounds, stories, and personas." As many have witnessed before, the Friends' Central Drama program is filled with talent and personality that shines through in each and every one of their enthralling performances.

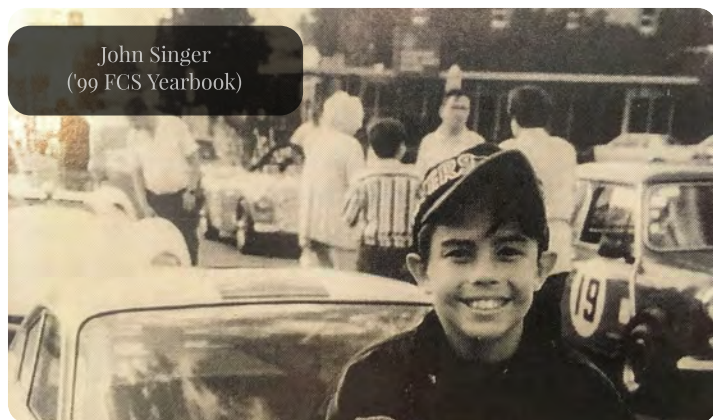
The work done over the past few months has begun to come together into what will be three incredible shows at 7:00pm on Friday, March 1st and 7:00 and 2:00 Saturday, March 2nd. *Newsies* promises to excite and engage us in the captivating story of the weak standing against the strong, presented with bravado and style from the talented cast. The efforts of the entire drama program have gone into this show so come for an opening night of passionate performance.



## John Singer Table Tennis Tournament Runs for 21st Consecutive Year

By Vicky Liu '20, School News and Features Reporter

As February draws to a close, the annual John Singer Table Tennis Tournament starts its first match in the Rex Gym on Feb. 25. A great number of students, faculty members, and staff have been having fun in the single-elimination tournament over the years. In this competition, any player has the opportunity to win if they have competitive strength, a bit of the “luck of the draw,” and a good feel for ball-handling on the day of the game.



John Singer  
(’99 FCS Yearbook)

The significance of the annual event goes beyond rackets and balls, though, as the tournament is named for John Singer, a former student at Friends’ Central who sadly passed away at the end of his freshman year here in 1998 due to cancer. The competition is run by Mr. Kennedy, the Assistant Upper School Principal, who was John’s English teacher here and is also a participant in the tournament. Besides cherishing his beloved former student and athlete, Mr. Kennedy hopes the tournament serves to bring relief from stress and a sense of relaxation to the community. He expresses, “It is a fun tournament. It is open to everybody [at FCS].”

Having been John Singer’s 9th grade English teacher, Mr. Kennedy shares some information about his former student: “[In his 9th grade year,] John wasn’t able to come to campus so often, so his teachers taught him at his house.” During Mr. Kennedy and John’s in-home sessions, they became book friends. Mr. Kennedy reminisces, “While he was undergoing his treatment, which was almost as bad as the disease, I would go over and talk to him about the English curriculum. He loved *A Catcher In The Rye*. It was his favorite book. He always wanted to go back and hold especially the funny parts of the book. He loved humor and comedy.” During Mr. Kennedy’s recollection of his student, he never hesitates to admire John: “Teachers who taught him got attached to him

and were very fond of him. He was an incredibly smart, funny, brave, sweet kid.”

Mr. Kennedy recalls that Mr. Jon Harris, who had been the principal of Friends’ Central in 1998, started the tournament to provide John Singer the opportunity to come on campus and reunite with his friends. With the accompaniment of his parent, John Singer attended the first John Singer Table Tennis Tournament final.

While the tournament will always retain its spirit of friendly competition and commemoration of John Singer, several changes have been made to this year’s proceedings. Mr. Kennedy notes, “The opening round is going to be during community block so that we can get people who have sports after school and people who have rehearsals. Also, John Singer’s parents will come.” Additionally, Mr. Kennedy encourages more young women to participate in the tournament this year.

Last year, the ping pong champion was Adam Serota, and the runner-up was Justin Rubin, both of whom were 9th graders at the time. Will either of them be awarded the trophy again this year? Let’s check out the unpredictable result in the Rex during community block on Monday, Feb. 25.

### Across

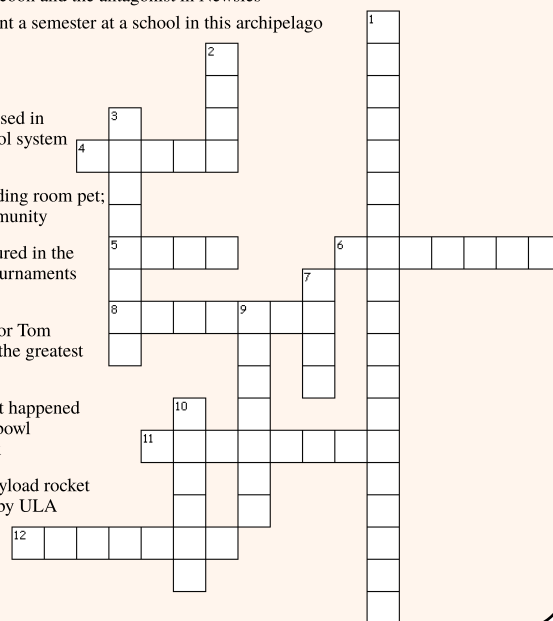
4. The school attended by student Savannah Lopez
5. Most effective tactics available in a competitive game
6. The primary goal of the Friday eSports tournaments
8. A student spent a semester at a school in this city
11. Newspaper tycoon and the antagonist in Newsies
12. A student spent a semester at a school in this archipelago

### Down

1. A rocket fuel used in reactionary control system (RCS) engines
2. The senior reading room pet; a symbol of community
3. The game featured in the Friday eSports tournaments (Edition Name)
7. The acronym for Tom Brady’s status as the greatest player
9. Everything that happened during the Superbowl according to Max
10. The heavy-payload rocket being developed by ULA

### Crossword Time!

Figure out this puzzle with hints from this issue’s articles!



## “Island Girl” Returns to FCS

### Lyla Forman ‘20 Reflects on Semester in Bahamas

By Sophia David ‘21, Reporter and Leah Anderson ‘21, Guest Contributor

Imagine scuba diving instead of math class and sailing trips instead of English papers. These outdoor experiences and many more were part of Lyla Forman ‘20’s everyday life at The Island School in the Bahamas where she spent her fall semester. The Island School is a unique educational center where students spend a semester of high school immersed in nature as they learn. The School’s mission is to develop a sense of place in students, model sustainability in individual lifestyles, and create an international community. It does all of these things through experiential learning, focusing on hands-on work and new experiences. Lyla originally discovered the school online. As soon as she read about it, she said that she knew she “would be really happy there.”

Sustainability is one of the key aspects of The Island School’s identity. Not only does the school itself strive to be self-sustaining, but much of the curriculum centers around this important topic. Lessons about sustainability are shown outside of the traditional classroom. In order to enhance the students’ appreciation and understanding of sustainability each semester, the school has a pig slaughter. Everyone gathers to watch a pig get killed, and then they eat the pig.

Caleb Florence is a former math teacher at The Island School. He taught a course called applied mathematics, which, among other things, incorporated calculations about the schools’ water system. While teaching students important algebra and statistics skills, he also raised their awareness of the importance of preserving water reservoirs. When asked about



The Island School

the pig slaughter, Mr. Florence explains that, although attending is optional, it is highly encouraged. This pig slaughter is a graphic and sad experience, but it teaches students where their food comes from, which leads to consciousness of wasted food and efforts to waste less. Lyla mentioned this event as one of the most important ways that the school taught her about sustainability.

Attending The Island School also gives students the opportunity to learn more about themselves. Mr. Florence said he was drawn to teaching at The Island School because he loved to “help students pursue their passions and things that they were interested in.” He said that this in turn would “help them to develop their sense of self and sense of worth as they find a place in the world.” The Island School certainly had this effect on Lyla, who said that, after her time there, she figured out a lot of what she wants to do in life, including traveling, being in the water, and learning experientially.

Time at The Island School is not without challenges. Lyla explains that she was not allowed to use her iPhone or laptop. She was only allowed one twenty-minute phone call per week, and letters to and from home would take weeks to be delivered. Since she was living so far from her family, this was especially difficult. However, this lack of technology is crucial to the successful building of the tight-knit community. Mr. Florence and Lyla both remark on the quick rate at which close communities are built at the Island School. At the school, there is a constant turnover of students each semester, and one might assume that this could make it difficult to build up a strong sense of community. Yet, Lyla explained this was not the case, because due to the fact that no one has his or her phone, everyone’s free time is spent talking with one another, and friendships are formed quickly. She also remarks that her short time at The Island School was one of the things that made it so special.

*‘Island School’ COTD. on Back Cover (p12)*



Lyla and her “Island Sisters”  
(Provided)



## Savannah Lopez '20 Reflects On Semester In Canada

By Sophia David '21, Reporter

In early February, Savannah Lopez '20 returned from a semester spent in Toronto, Canada, with her family. There, she attended Blyth Academy. I recently had the opportunity to ask her some questions about her experience. Our conversation is transcribed below:



**Focus:** What made you want to go to Canada?

**Lopez:** That's a hard question. I think the opportunity came up, and it seemed cool to get out of my daily routine and experience a new culture. A lot of people think that Canada and the US are similar, but there really is a big difference.

**F:** How did the opportunity come up?

**L:** My family and I were looking for a change in our routines. My dad is from Spain, so we originally wanted to go to Barcelona. They thought it would be way too chaotic because Spain is so far away. We have family friends who live in Toronto. We went to visit a first time, and I didn't really like it, but when we visited a second time and I sat in on a school, I loved it.

**F:** What were some of the biggest differences?

**L:** Generally, people on the street are so much nicer than they are in America. You can really see a big difference in how they care about each other. In terms of school, I was going to an interesting school where you have two classes for eight weeks for two and a half hours. You are very immersed in the subject. For the first week, I would get home and be so tired. It's an interesting way to learn because it's a lot at once, but I find that you can learn better that way.

**F:** What were some of your favorite things to do in the city?

**L:** It was really fun living in a city in general because here I live in the suburbs. There were always different events going on. When it was warmer, in the fall, the streets would be blocked off, and you could rent bikes and ride them. The

public transportation system was really good. We would take the subway to go anywhere.

**F:** What's the biggest change coming back to Friends' Central?

**L:** Schoolwise, it's weird having so many classes. It's also just been crazy to adjust to seeing so many familiar faces again. Its nice, but there's a bittersweet feeling coming back. Honestly, the biggest thing is the keycards. Overall, I am really excited to see all my friends again.

**F:** Is there anything else you would like to share about this?

**L:** For anyone who is thinking of doing something out of the ordinary that seems scary, they should do it. Good experiences come when you're not expecting them, and it's important to step out of your comfort zone.

Though Savannah had an enriching experience in Toronto, we at Friends' Central are so happy to have her back. *Welcome home, Savannah!*

*–The Focus Staff*



Savannah Lopez  
(Lydia Varcoc-Wolfson)

## Black History Month

### Message From The Editor:

In addition to being widely recognized as an accomplished student leader, Student Council Vice President Kalila Jones '19 is an extremely talented graphic artist. Last year, Kalila designed a poster that features drawings of 53 influential black artists and historical figures. This poster became an instant hit and remains on display on the walls of many classrooms on our campus. This year, Kalila has built on this success and drawn a new picture every day this month of a black female artist, author, or activist. To celebrate Black History Month, *Focus* invited Kalila to publish some of this work, with the goal of educating our readers about these important figures and giving all of you the privilege of viewing her stunning creations. In addition, we asked members of the community to share what Black History Month means to them. You can read their responses in the quotes surrounding Kalila's work. Enjoy this feature, and happy Black History Month!



Kalila's drawing of Amy SHERALD, a portrait

*"Black History Month means giving a space to and centering a history that has been diminished and marginalized. Putting that at the center and privileging that history that has historically been dismissed."*

*-Ms. Kelleher*



Kalila's drawing of Audre Lorde, who described herself as: "black lesbian, mother warrior poet."



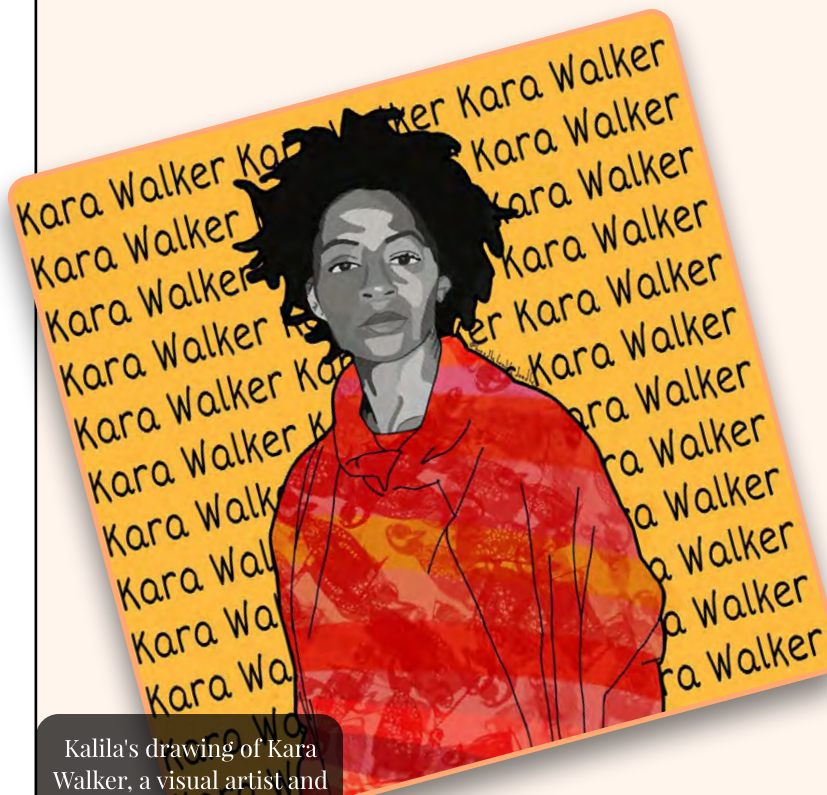
## Focus Celebrates a Legacy of Greatness

*"Black History Month is a celebration of culture that isn't always recognized or talked about or brought to attention by normal people in their regular lives. It's just a celebration."*

*-Blayre Walters '21*



Kalila's drawing of Yara Shahidi, an actress, model, and activist.



Kalila's drawing of Kara Walker, a visual artist and filmmaker.

*"To be honest, Black History Month doesn't really affect me whatsoever. I didn't even know it was Black History Month. I think all races should be focused on every month, and it's sad that doesn't happen and that there is a need for Black History Month. African Americans aren't focused on enough in society. It sucks that we need a month, but it's better than nothing. Hopefully, we'll get to a stage where we don't need a month because everyone's culture will be reviewed equally and fairly. I will say that Friends' Central does such a great job at covering African American history, but I'm not sure about other schools because this is the only school I've been to."*

*-Anonymous Student*

## What the Heck Is a Penalty Anyway?

By Max Marinelli '22, Sports Reporter

This year's NFC and AFC Championships have many fans, players, and coaches grasping at straws when it comes to knowing what the heck is and isn't a penalty anymore. Before I start this article, I'd like to disclose that I am not biased against any of these teams, except maybe the Patriots, yet that's not the point of this article. I believe the wrong team won both games on Sunday, Jan. 20.

Kickoff for the NFC Championship was at 3:30pm that day. The Saints jumped ahead to an early lead, coasting into the fourth quarter, until the Rams tied the game 23-23 on a clutch 48-yard field goal, made by Greg Zuerlein. Also, Johnny Hecker had yet another beautiful fake-punt conversion this game, further cementing why he is undoubtedly the best

punter in the league. However, the controversy all started just a minute or so before this. Drew Brees was leading what seemed to be shaping up for yet another impressive fourth-quarter pull-ahead touchdown. Keep in mind that if he scored, the Saints would've, more than likely, stopped the Rams from scoring a touchdown, therefore winning the game. The game-tying field goal at the end of regulation was only possible thanks to a terrible "no-call" on what was clearly pass interference and helmet to helmet contact by Rams' defensive back Nickell Robey-Coleman. The game would end up going into overtime, where the Rams would force a turnover, and Greg Zuerlein would blast a beautiful 57-yarder, that could've been good from 65, for the win. The terrible call that set up Zuerlein for his amazing game should not overshadow it.

Back to what is being called the "most horrendous no-call in football history." The Saints were on third-and-10 from the Rams' 13-yard line. The game clock was at 1:48. A first down

and then touchdown, or even just a touchdown, had a 99% chance of sealing the game. Drew Brees threw an out route to Tommylee Lewis, who, before the ball even reached him, was decked by Robey Coleman of the Rams. This was not just a normal pass interference, but also helmet-to-helmet contact on a defenseless receiver, yet neither instance was called, and, although most people were immediately outraged by the effect on the game, the NFL should be worried that they didn't throw a flag for a personal foul regarding player safety. Nevertheless, the ball had no chance of being caught, and the Saints were forced to kick a field goal, as it was fourth-and-10. This opened up a window for the Rams to win

the game, as I mentioned earlier in this article.

The outcome of this game already had a half-million signatures on a petition for a rematch of the game on just the following day. I seriously do not know if I have ever seen a post-game interview during which a coach was asked about a loss and the call was so bad and so crucial that he blamed the loss on a blown

call. That is not a shot toward Saints' coach Sean Payton in any way. I respect him a lot, and he is usually very collected, but even he couldn't look past the call. In fact, he seemed to be in tears after the loss.

Many players have already released tweets complaining to the NFL about the call, and not just Saints players. That is when you know it is really bad. The Texan's Star Defensive End J.J. Watt released a tweet pleading, "There needs to be some form of accountability. NEEDS to be." Nickell Robey-Coleman himself was shown the replay of his hit on Tommylee Lewis for the first time and promptly responded. "Oh, h\*ll yeah," he admitted, "That was PI." It is still currently unknown what the NFL plans to do in response to what they admitted was a blown call, if they even plan to reconcile it at all.

Point being, the word "penalty" better have a stricter definition attached to it soon, or I predict we'll find ourselves in more of these sticky situations.





## GoPhilly

### The “Sucker Bowl”: Marinelli’s Review of the “Big Game”

By Max Marinelli '22, Sports Reporter

The Sucker Bowl. That's what everyone's calling the football game that occurred in Atlanta on Feb. 3. Well, not everyone. Mainly just me. However, if you listened to any sports radio outlet within days of the Super Bowl, you would have heard a multitude of similar negative reviews and names used to refer to the “Big Game.”

This “Big Game” was full of punts, 14 to be exact, with eight consecutive punts to end possessions by Johnny Hekker for the Rams. This “Big Game” was full of records, all of which showed how terrible the game was. This exciting Super Bowl broke records so incredible, including, but not limited to: lowest score, most consecutive punts, fewest touchdowns, and fewest kickoff returns. Plus, I have to mention Brady, as he basically cemented his G.O.A.T. (Greatest of All Time) status forever. Brady now has the most Super Bowl wins of any player in history, tying the Patriots with the Steelers for most Super Bowls played. I hate the guy personally, but at a certain point, as a football fan, one has to admire how long he has been able to preserve this dominance. Unluckily for the rest of the AFC, Brady confirmed that there is a zero-percent chance of his retirement, announcing his goal is to play until age 45. At this point, you may as well expect the Pats to be back in the AFC Championship for the 9th straight time, which would break another record they already hold. If I am going to be honest, I'll say that you can pretty much expect to see the Patriots back in the Superbowl. I don't say this because I am a Patriots fan, but because Tom Brady is seemingly just not aging.

This should be the part of the article at which I would normally highlight the most crucial and exciting points of the game and maybe break them down. Yet, in this case, I won't be doing that, as **nothing** happened. This year's Super Bowl was not hyped in the first place, yet millions of Americans still turned on the old TV to watch. These people are now demanding their three hours back. I am, however, going to outline Brandin Cooks' lowlights from the last two Super Bowls. In last year's Super Bowl, Super Bowl LII, one of the most-exciting Super Bowls possibly ever, Brandin Cooks



played for the Patriots against the Eagles. He needed only one yard to get the first down, setting the Patriots up for a nearly-guaranteed touchdown, which would have changed the whole game. He had a nearly-free first down, yet decided to go for a hurdle, which he was not able to execute and was thrown to the ground for it. Thank you so much, Brandin; the whole city of Philadelphia thanks you! (Insert sarcastic, snarky emoji.) Boston would end up getting the last laugh, though, as Brandin Cooks had two dropped touchdowns in this year's Super Bowl for the Rams, effectively losing the game for the Rams and handing Tom Brady his sixth ring. In last year's Super Bowl, Brandin Cooks ended up being knocked out on a vicious hit from Malcolm Jenkins and missed the rest of the game. So, hey, at least Brandin finished this last Super Bowl on the field. Baby steps, Brandin, baby steps.

Though this year's game was anything but exciting or substantive, and I genuinely feel the NFL is moving in the wrong direction, I suppose we can still hope for a better game next year.

#### GoPhilly Bonus Feature!

My go-to outlet for sports information is the radio station, 94.1 WIP, hosted by Ike Reese and Jon Marks. These guys are entertaining and knowledgeable on all things Philly sports. I listen to them every day on my way home from school, and highly recommend tuning in sometime between two and six on Monday through Friday.

## GamingFocus

### Naim Saleem '19 Starts eSports Tournament at FCS

By Jerry Yu '19, Technology Reporter

As live streaming and eSports have been gaining traction in recent years and are becoming widely accepted by society, FCS students are actively taking part in organizing events which allow groups of peers to enjoy these activities together. For this issue of *GamingFocus*, we talked with Naim Saleem, a senior at FCS, to learn about his current and future plans for creating a community of enthusiastic gamers at school to enjoy streaming and eSports together. Naim's assemblage of peers, which he calls "Fyuri Smash Champs," has been meeting on Friday afternoons in the Lecture Hall. Here is a reiteration of the thoughts he shared:

"My goal is to raise money for charity," Naim told *GamingFocus*. He added, "I also wish to prove that eSports can be enjoyable." In order to make his dream a reality, Naim plans to improve the ways his content is delivered with his digital editing skills. Currently, he is "learning and exploring tournament systems" and "doing trail runs," all the while perfecting his weekly tournaments. By implementing a full-fledged tournament system with two casters analyzing and commenting on live gameplay for viewers, Naim said he hopes to "improve professionalism in games."

Naim and many others working with him believe that eSports are genuinely a kind of sport – akin to chess and math modeling. According to Naim, "anything that requires practice, mental fortitude, and strenuous training is a sport." When it comes to streaming platforms, Naim believes that live streams already have gained, and will continue to gain, more popularity. For example, Twitch.tv, the platform of Naim's choice, has a user base focused on young players, and it is

these players that have shaped the platform into what it is.

As of now, Naim's tournament focuses on Nintendo's *Super Smash Bros Ultimate*, a fast-paced action game, because it is "popular among peers," is "enjoyable to play," and has an "enthusiastic community." Naim is also looking into other games like League of Legends or Hearthstone, but he told *GamingFocus* that he wants to perfect his *Smash* tournament before expanding.

During his interview with *GamingFocus*, Naim also shared a few big ideas about the gaming industry as a whole: "I hope more companies would implement streaming software into games," as, with the technology currently available, he has to manually control the camera with external software.

Additionally, whether to implement competitive play is the designers' decision: "Not all games are suitable for eSports. Most multiplayer games have good potential," Naim explained. Commenting on game balancing, Naim believes that "the META (most effective tactics available) should be controlled by the player base, unless it goes against the company's design philosophy."

Currently, Naim's tournament involves 16 competitors and is played in the FCC Lecture Hall every Friday at 3:30pm.



Naim Saleem  
(Lydia Varcoe-Wolfson)



## TechFocus

### The Overlooked Workhorse in Space: United Launch Alliance

By Jerry Yu '19

It's Q1 of 2019, which means we have reached the one-year anniversary of the first successful Falcon Heavy launch and landing by SpaceX. Thanks to the marketing machine that is Elon Musk, the name of this innovative aerospace company is known across the US and the world. However, many people have started to overlook one of the most prominent competitors: the United Launch Alliance.

The United Launch Alliance was created in 2006 as a joint venture between Boeing Integrated Defense Systems and Lockheed Martin Space Systems, carrying their legacy of over half a century condensed in two rockets: the Delta IV and Atlas V. Despite their prominent figure in the industry, the public tends to overlook their presence and ambitions.

SpaceX created history with its Falcon Heavy Rocket by landing it on land or ships and created even more disruptive plans—the BFR, a completely-reusable rocket that has a massive load and full reusability. However, according to ULA experts, they need a better accountant—the team at ULA believes that with their innovations to the next Vulcan rocket, they can easily make their price more advantageous against SpaceX by taking smaller strides. "We've each made market forecasts, and if we're right, our solution will be economically advantageous," Bruno told CBS News in March. "If I'm wrong and they're right, then theirs will."

*Here are two key features they have put their bid on:*

#### 1. ACES, or Advanced Cryogenic Evolved Stage

Vulcan will feature cryogenic oxygen and hydrogen fuels instead of RP-1 kerosene that will be used in SpaceX's Raptor engines. LH<sub>2</sub> and oxygen fuels are more resilient in space, making them less likely to freeze in space. This means that the new upper stage can stay even in standby in space, refueled, and put to work more than once, while the second stage of the Falcon Heavy becomes space junk after one use. The new upper stage is designed around this fuel selection: they use this fuel for generators and newly designed reaction-control systems, effectively decreasing the number of batteries and other types of fuel required, while the older designs will have to deal with other fuels like Monomethylhydrazine used in RCS thrusters (small thrusters that adjust the rocket's attitude).

#### 2. SMART reusable engines: Sensible, Modular, Autonomous Return Technology.

SpaceX rockets don't last forever. In fact, they have to be significantly refurbished after every single launch to stay in shape and avoid terrible accidents, especially around their grid fins responsible for controlling the rocket in the atmosphere. ULA hopes to work around this by only reusing rocket boosters—the most costly part in a rocket. Meanwhile, only reusing boosters means a lower research cost and risk factor for ULA since, compared to an entire rocket, the re-entry of rather light boosters means they can fully utilize existing technologies like inflatable aero shells to protect boosters. In order to avoid weight wasted to carry landing legs and additional fuel, ULA plans to use a parachute and a hook to "land" the booster. Or, more precisely, utilize a helicopter to pick up the slowly-dropping boosters after the parachute is deployed.

With these plans, ULA hopes to create an affordable and sustainable way to launch heavy payloads and mine asteroids. However, SpaceX is not giving in—Musk would rather eat his hat "with a side of mustard" than have a national security spacecraft before 2023."



Vulcan Concept Image

**'Island School' COTD. from page 4**

Returning to Friends' Central after her time away was an adjustment for Lyla. She describes the classes at The Island School as "not being very structured and including a lot of learning outside." As a result of the school's environment, the students were able to learn in ways that would not be possible elsewhere. For example, for a history paper, Lyla took a "down-island" trip to study how tourism shapes a community. Although many aspects of The Island School are dependent on its unique environment, some of their sustainability practices could be implemented in the urban environment of Friends' Central also.

Overall, Lyla had an amazing experience at The Island School, and she encourages others to look into it too, saying, "If anyone is interested in The Island School, they should definitely apply."

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Coffee House Fun  
(Sevag Yepoyan)



Lookin' fine, friends!  
(Sevag Yepoyan)



Lunar New Year Assembly  
(Lydia Varcoe-Wolfson)