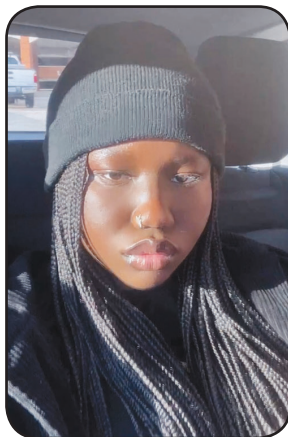


Senior Goodbyes

Fanta Dabo - Co-Editor-in-Chief

George Washington University



Throughout the entirety of my school career, a strength and passion of mine that has almost come to be second nature is writing. With every English class taken and essay assigned in it, the appreciation I had for what a combination of words could produce only grew. What was lacking in these text-based courses, however, was the ability to stimulate the creative side that I knew I possessed, but was rarely able to reveal.

As the number of electives taken increased with the years, I knew that I needed to balance out my junior year core classes with ones that I would genuinely enjoy - hence taking Journalism 1. Uncertain of what to expect, I am now aware that Journalism is a class of growth. Whether to improve writing skills, find a creative outlet, or simply gain exposure to amateur journalism, each student made personal growth taking this course. Every piece written, interview done, and podcast made taught me to embrace the power of my words, while pushing me out of my comfort zone to reach my full potential. Now, a senior in Advanced Journalism and co-editor-in-chief among four other talented students, I reflect on my time in *Mainstream* with a sense of appreciation for being an escape from the endless worries of school. I can also say that I am proud of each piece my name is attached to, as they were all written with great sincerity.

To Mr. Woodward, thank you for making every student that enters your classroom feel as special as they should. You are the sole driving force behind every article, podcast, and print issue published. I think I speak for us all when I say without your unwavering support and patience, *Mainstream* would just be an unpursued idea. This class has changed the trajectory of my entire high school experience for the better, and for that I am beyond grateful. It has been an honor being a part of *Mainstream*, and I can't wait to witness what the future of it looks like.

Andrea Gill - Co-Editor-in-Chief

University of Maryland



I joined journalism my junior year because I wanted to improve my writing skills. It was between this class or creative writing, but after doing research I felt that journalism had more structural techniques that could be utilized. I have never really enjoyed writing and I knew it was one of my biggest weaknesses as a student, but I'm glad I took the class because of the creativity I was able to bring out of myself.

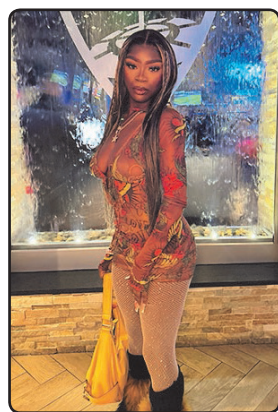
One of the things I cherished most in the class was the freedom we had. For as long as I can remember, every English class I took made me write in a closed box. In journalism, though, I was able to write about whatever topic I wanted. It was a free and open space and it made writing less burdensome. Opinion articles were originally my favorite article type, since I could write about topics that were prominent in my mind--but nothing could beat podcasts. Podcasts were the best, most fun assignments I've ever gotten to do in school. I would sit with my co-editor Fanta Dabo and together we'd set up the recordings, constantly working to restrain ourselves from talking for hours.

I came back my senior year for advanced journalism, where I started to get into layout and design for *Mainstream*. Even though I tried to like writing, what I liked most in the class were the other ways that I could be involved. The amount of time and communication it took to complete a layout and the need to have an artistic approach to constructing layouts were unimaginable.

I'm thankful for the safe space the class gave me. I always felt relaxed in the journalism office and would find myself going back, even after hours. Mr. Woodward had to put up with a lot, so I appreciate how he was always laid back when I would procrastinate or joke around with him. A teacher can really change how you view a class, and I couldn't imagine anyone else taking his place.

Naomi Kyei-Asare - Co-Editor-in-Chief

Howard University



Room 3301. A room I've laughed in, cried in, been yelled at in, been loved, and even been kissed in. When I first walked into this corner room my junior year, my expectations were low. I had been placed into journalism as a mix up with my schedule and had really no prior knowledge of writing with purpose. I remember telling my older sister, "I never picked this class." Little did I know that, two years later, even though I didn't choose this class, it chose me. My heart will always be so grateful that it did. I never expected that journalism would not only become a favorite class to me, but also a family--from our school dad, Mr. Woodward (who honestly has been one of the most impactful teachers in my life) to our little editors family. Mr. Woodward taught me what it means to expect greatness from yourself in the little things and the big, to take pride in what you make, and to always, always revise your work--lol. Jokes aside, he taught me what it means to be a writer, to have something to say, and to create the proper environment and to find the correct words to articulate it. He helped me see what it means to really write--through the good times and the bad, because they are both part of being a writer. Lastly, he taught me to never ever ask him for a snack because most likely it's gonna be some elderly snack adults indulge in. I know when he saw his class two

years ago, he never would've imagined what crazy kids would turn out to be the head of the newspaper; but I like to believe he's glad we did.

To all my fellow Advanced Journalism editors, I'd like to thank you for the laughs, silly class parties, and community. I hope people will take just a little joy and comfort from my writing. Whether it's a silly article on high school romance or a heavier topic like losing a loved one, it was one thing to know my work touched me, but to know it touched others sometimes still feels surreal. In every new, colorful issue and article that we published, I'd like to believe that this class of journalism really changed the PB *Mainstream* legacy for the better. To those who never considered journalism as something to invest in, I'd say try it, you won't regret it.

Senior Goodbyes

Jordane Branch - Co-Editor-in-Chief

Kennesaw State University



It feels like yesterday when my counselor was signing me up for classes via Zoom for my junior year. I couldn't decide on a class that I found interesting enough to take for an entire school year, which was discouraging. Somehow, my wonderful counselor, Ms. Whipple, found the class for me: Journalism 1. I never had any real experience in journalism in school before; but needless to say, the class became one of the favorite classes I've ever taken. In fact, it has been one of my best experiences in school. I've been in journalism ever since and I have learned so much. I published my first article as a high school junior, and in my time here I've had the opportunity to write about many of my interests - of course, with some guidance from my teacher, Mr. Woodward. I've done an opinion article, interviewed notable alumni from PB, participated in podcasting, written about my experience in traveling, and even made the front page for leading the school at a town hall meeting in



March. As a young girl, it was important to me that someday I would be a positive influence on people through sharing my experiences; and I am extremely grateful that I was able to live that dream through journalism. Aside from achievements and experiences working with the staff of *Mainstream*, our PB newspaper, I met some amazing people. From my fellow co-editors-in-chief to the rest of the journalism team from both years, everyone has contributed to the feeling of having an extended family at school. Lastly, being in journalism has challenged me to be better not only in school, but also in life by pushing my tolerance for fatigue and teaching me important lessons on time management. Journalism has also allowed me to really feel like I have a voice that can be heard. The icing on the cake has to be when I see the school community being engaged in the material we put in the paper, and hearing the feedback and encouragement from my peers and teachers. Journalism has aided me in being more active in the school community and I will always be grateful for that.

Lan Huynh - Staff Writer

Montgomery College



Listening to bossa nova is how I would describe my year with *Mainstream*.

It was new and different, and it put me out of my comfort zone. Journalism had always been something I was interested in, but had never signed up for until now. I realized that I should have signed up for the class much sooner in my high school career. For sure, the one thing I'll miss the most when writing for *Mainstream* is the interviews that I would conduct for my articles. Hearing different people's opinions and experiences was amazing. While writing for *Mainstream*, I was able to create a podcast, which quickly became one of my favorite projects, as I was able to simply have a conversation with friends. Photojournalism came in a close second, as I was able to do fashion photography. I've not only made some great friends while being in journalism. But one skill that I've improved on while in journalism is my writing skills. Especially if it means I can make someone smile, for example,



when I conduct interviews I crack a joke to make my interviewee feel comfortable. Working for *Mainstream*, if there was a story you wanted to tell, you had the freedom to do so. That is what I'll miss the most.

Finally, to the one and only Mr. Woodward: I appreciate your dedication to all of the *Mainstream* staff, making sure to check in on each of us once in a while and giving us a place to stay during lunch. Being a part of *Mainstream* will forever be one of my highlights of high school. I just know in the future I'll be proud to say, "I wrote for my high school newspaper."

Sania Ross - Staff Writer

Montgomery College



Senior year can be a bittersweet time of life. Prom, deciding whether to go to college or take a gap year, choosing a college, and preparing for the real world are all part of this. For me, though, senior year has not been bittersweet. I consider it to be the best year of my life because I'm finding my passions and what I need to do for the rest of my life. I'm getting to experience amazing opportunities and grow.

One of my favorite opportunities that I got to experience this year was journalism. I really enjoyed journalism, especially writing the articles I did. I got to express my creativity, and have my stuff published, which brought recognition from some teachers who shared their thoughts about my writing. I also got to advocate for specific topics that are really important to me. I really enjoy journalism and I would recommend it to any student.



Looking back on when I first started journalism, I was scared to speak my mind on certain topics. Yet, I've been able to conquer that fear of speaking my mind all the way. Also, having the freedom to write about what you want and be able to cover school events was one of my favorite parts about taking the class and being a part of my journalism team. Another aspect I really enjoyed was creating multimedia. In fact, that was my favorite part of my overall journalism experience. It was a great opportunity because it made me realize I wanted to do media production for an associate's degree. Overall, this journalism year was awesome!