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PLAY?  
THEY'LL  
TELL  
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WHY



WEST SPRINGFIELD HIGH SCHOOL 6100 ROLLING ROAD SPRINGFIELD, VIRGINIA 22152

## Taxing experiences

### Responsibilities of a paycheck, taxes an added burden

By Janelle Baldwin  
News Editor

High school. It's the time between the innocence of childhood and the harsh realities of adulthood. It's the time for having fun while being gradually introduced to new responsibilities.

First comes driving. Then you realize that it's hard to pay for gas and your share of the insurance bill using the meager allowance your parents give you each week.

So you get a job. And you're proud that you make a little more than minimum wage. But you get your first paycheck and there's a big chunk missing. And then you remember...TAXES.

These are the same taxes that stress out your dad this time of year as you hear him mumble "1040" under his breath like some kind of slur. April 15 is circled in red on the calendar in your kitchen and "tax day" is scratched in big, red letters.

But it isn't until students get jobs of their own that they begin to realize how much taxes really take from a paycheck. "It's disappointing seeing how much money you lose," said senior Andrea Fisher. "But it's an obligation that everyone has to do."

Not everyone who earns an income pays taxes. A dependent who earns a total income (wages, salaries, and tips) of at least \$700 will have a considerable amount

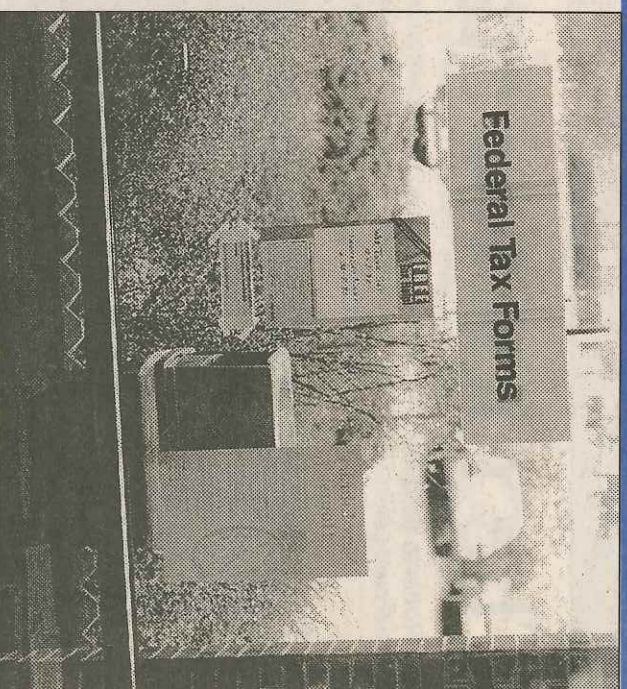
of their earning transferred to the government.

Students usually fill out the 1040 EZ form because they make less money than the amount for filling out a traditional 1040 form.

"You just copy the information from your W-2 form to your 1040 EZ," said senior David Suh. "It's pretty simple."

Many students don't even realize what these are until they have to fill them out for themselves. Some even have their parents fill them out.

"My dad fills out my forms for me," said senior Joann Walker. "It doesn't take very long though because I don't owe much money."  
Once out of high school,



Tom Stormer  
Tax forms are easily accessible at any of the county libraries such as Pohick, where a sign is posted in the front to notify citizens.

students may not have their parents to help out with the responsibility of taxes. But some are just taking advantage of the extra help while they can.

## Spring rains down on class attendance

### Students inticed by warmer weather and face consequences

By Donnie Watkins  
News Editor

Perhaps the most popular school activity skipping is school.

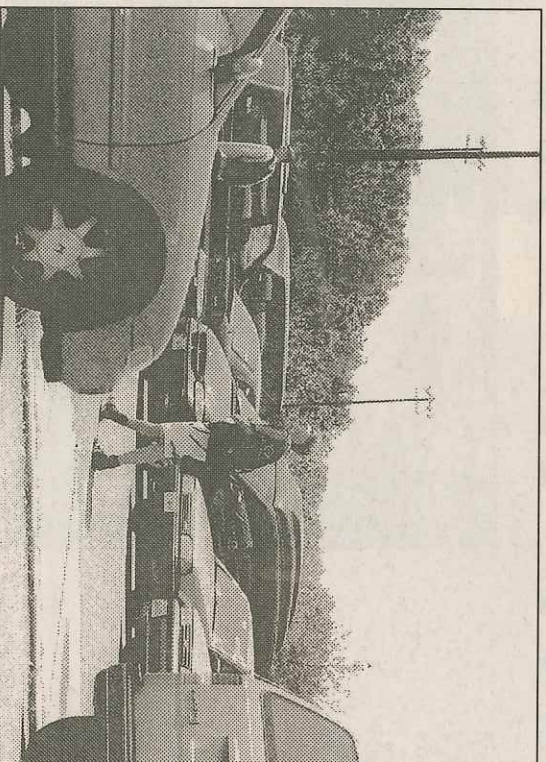
"We've had a mixed bag [of students who have skipped]," said attendance secretary Edna Coyne. "It's not mostly the seniors or the trouble makers who skip. It used to be, but not anymore."

Every year, as the weather improves and exhaustion increases, more and more students reful by leaving school, or by never showing up in the first place.

"I usually just leave for the whole day," said senior Sophie Barekzi. "There's no reason to stay for certain classes. I mean, would you rather be at home or in class?"

But, along with the obvious desirability of a few moments away from school, comes the repercussions of getting caught.

"Many times I'll be looking for a student on a matter completely unrelated and they won't be in their class," said senior administrator Martha Chandler. "It's Murphy's Law at work."



Oracle Staff Photo

Students find it easy to leave school grounds during lunch, whether they have an excuse or not. The repercussions of getting caught for skipping, which involves informing parents and imposing Saturday School, are strict.

Students who are caught either skipping school or leaving for lunch are automatically given Saturday school, and their parents are notified.

"I wouldn't skip," said senior Jeromy Block, "because I'm too scared of getting caught."

In order to avoid getting caught, students forge notes, call in sick as their parents, or simply leave for lunch and hope that no administrator is waiting in the parking lot when they return.

"You can't make it obvious," said Barekzi. "But really, you won't get caught unless you come back after you leave."

But, as some students have observed, lunchtime at WS is virtually open campus.  
See SKIPPING Page 4

## Congratulations State Representatives

**Boys State Representatives:**  
Aaron Branley Mike Waldron  
Andrew Revetta John Whitworth Jr.  
Juston Rose

**Girls State Representatives:**  
Virginia Horner Jessica Martin  
Kay Lu Karlana Sakas  
**Girls State Alternatives:**  
Tanisha Woodard  
Erin Smith

## WS marketing success skyrockets

### Two students reach national level of competition in Louisville

By Lauren Decot  
ETC Assistant

WS has not sent any students to the Marketing State Competition in seven years.

However, this year, WS has shattered that statistic by sending 14 students to States. From States, two WS students will participate at Nationals to be held in May at Louisville, Kentucky.

At the National Competition, seniors Austin Eickman and Megan Pinnell will each be presenting their project in front of a judge for 10 minutes and then take questions for another five minutes.

However, to get to Nationals, Eickman and Pinnell first had to come up with a project.

Eickman devised a business in which apples are grown in Washington State and are shipped to Japan. Pinnell created a learning device to help children living in India learn to read.

"There is child labor in India, and the public schools are bad," said Pinnell. "A self-taught reading program would help children learn to read on their own."  
Pinnell's idea consists of a self-taught book in which there are approximately ten chapters with a test at the end, and depending on their score, the child would



Amy Whipple

After a seven-year dry spell, WS sent 14 marketing students to states. Their success is on display in the front office.  
know if they were ready to move on to the next chapter.  
See MARKETING Page 4



## Oops!

*In the last issue of The Oracle, we made a mistake. Instead of Katie Walker's Viewpoint story, we accidentally placed Kelly Alm's St. Patrick's Day one. We apologize to anyone involved with this mix-up, and also to the readers.*

**Theresa Rupp**  
Viewpoint Editor

## Spring Break is not quite right around the corner

We're in limbo. That time between Winter Break and Spring Break lasts forever. By mid-February the weather is already summer-like, and when March rolls around all our college friends are going to exotic places like Cancun for their spring break.

### Editorial

Meanwhile, we endure a full month of school without any holidays, and our last teacher workday is stripped from us. This leaves us slowly counting down the days until Spring Break, it being the only thing to pull us through the end of the quarter and to shoot us into the final stretch.

To make matters worse, our college friends have already been home to taunt us with their early Spring

Breaks. Not to mention that by the time they go back there are only two months left in their college schedule.

Our school biorythms are telling us that we need that precious week off to heal our frayed nerves from the ever hectic third quarter. We need that week to build up the courage and strength to face

that last quarter with brave faces.

Our love especially goes out to all the seniors. It's dragging now, but it will all be over before you know it. Keep in mind, high school is truly unique. You can never recreate these memories, so enjoy them as they happen. We're in this together guys. Just stay strong and remember, each day at school is just one day closer to summer.

## The race for attention

**By Roberto Garcia**  
Entertainment Editor

Most schools do it, and it's no surprise why. A few lucky athletes in privileged teams are given all the support, all the attention, and eventually all the glory. At the same time, all other lesser known sports are left to compete in half-empty stadiums, with old uniforms, and no school-backing.

Certain sports have always gotten more attention than others. I see WS students fill the seats in the stadium to watch the football team endure another crushing defeat, while only a few proud parents show up to see the girls swim team or the boys cross country team consistently win.

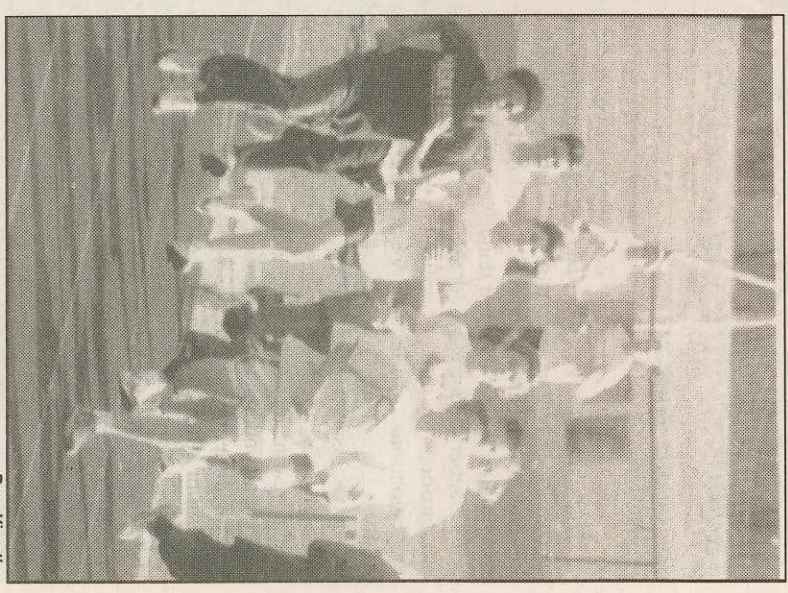
If you stand back and take a good look at WS athletics, this pattern can easily be seen. Teams such as tennis, the swim and dive, or the crew draw minimal crowds, while students flock to watch the more popular teams. A few people don't even realize that some sports exist, and most people don't know when or where these teams compete.

But these popular teams are not only receiving more student support—the school seems to also support them more as well. Just in the last year, the football team has gotten new helmets and a weight room, and the boys

soccer team received still more uniforms. At the same time, the swim team has to search for transportation to their practices, half the track team goes without warmups, and the softball team pays \$65 out of their own money for warmups.

True, watching a football game or a basketball game on a Friday night might seem more exciting than driving out to Alexandria on a Saturday morning to see a track team or watching the golf team drive towards a green, but this doesn't mean all athletes don't deserve the same recognition. It seems unfair that some teams draw a crowd of thousands, while other teams beg students to come watch them. It has gotten so bad that the field hockey and cross country teams have actually given away free meals at Malek's Pizza Palace to people who attended their competitions.

WS, as well as every other high school, will continue to support certain sports more than other sports. But we should remember that just because a person plays a less-known sport, he or she still deserves good quality uniforms, equipment, and most of all, respect. After all, these athletes train, play, and perform just as hard and just as well as anybody else. Everyone is always complaining about how little there is to do at WS—Maybe going out to support one of our teams might be a good way to pass the time.



Could the track team could run faster with new uniforms?  
Bree Virostko

# Letters to The Oracle

## \*Nstulted by \*NSYNC fan

Dear Oracle,

As I was reading the March 17 edition of *The Oracle*, I noticed there was an article about \*NSYNC. Now, at first, I was very excited to see my favorite group actually got noticed. But as I read, I was disappointed to see that there were mistakes in what was written. Being the huge \*NSYNC fan that I am, I too attended the same concert as the writer on March 19, 1999 where I had the best night of my life. But, it is implied in the article that \*NSYNC opened their show with "I Want You Back" which is not true. \*NSYNC's show was opened with a song called "Here We Go". It was also stated in the article that Chris Kirkpatrick was a "Washington DC native" which is also wrong. Chris was born and raised in Clarion, Pennsylvania. Although I like to read articles about \*NSYNC, I don't like to read misprints about them. If you are going to write about something like that, maybe



The new \*NSYNC CD came out March 21.

the information should be reviewed by a true fan next time. If you claim to be an \*NSYNC fan, you better get your facts straight.

Christine Flood  
Junior

## Religious Request

To the Editors,

I am writing in reference to Donnie Watkins' article in the December 17, 1999 issue of *The Oracle*.

Watkins states he does not want to be offensive, but "virgins do not give birth." But his comments regarding the virgin birth are exactly that, offensive.

If Mary was not a virgin when she gave birth to Jesus, then he was not God's Son. He was just one more man and there is not reason for Christmas. To ridicule the virgin birth is to ridicule Christianity.

Watkins is entitled to his opinion, but I don't think public ridicule of another's faith in a school newspaper is appropriate.

I appreciate you taking the time to read this letter.  
Sincerely,

Maria Daugherty  
WSHS parent0

## THE ORACLE

West Springfield  
High School  
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A student-run publication to inform and entertain the West Springfield High School community. Opinion is expressed in Viewpoint and in reviews and columns. Editorials represent the opinion of at least two-thirds of the Editorial Board, and do not reflect the views of the adviser, the administration or the Fairfax County Public School System. *The Oracle* reserves the right to reject inappropriate advertising. Signed letters and personal commentary will be considered for publication, but could be edited.

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West Springfield High School



# Racism lurks behind established program

By Donnie Watkins & Ellen Waylonis  
Oracle Staff Writers

A Montgomery County high school student wanted to transfer from his current school to a math-and-science oriented magnet school. The school board said "no."

He was denied this opportunity because the students at the school he was attending are predominately black and Hispanic, and this student was white. For the sake of keeping his high school racially integrated, the student was told he had to stay where he was.

His parents sued, and won. The school board appealed the case, and eventually the case landed at the feet of the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court refused to hear the case and the original decision stands. The student will go to the magnet school.

Education is not to be sacrificed to the cause of racial integration, one of the many outgrowths of affirmative action.

This case is just one example of the trend of employers and high school and college admission boards giving special treatment to minorities and women.

First, an understatement: racism is a vile injustice. At the same time, this injustice is being enforced by law in the form of affirmative action.

The origins of affirmative action were rather innocuous. The term "affirmative action" was first used by President Lyndon Johnson when he issued an executive order requiring federal contractors to "take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin."

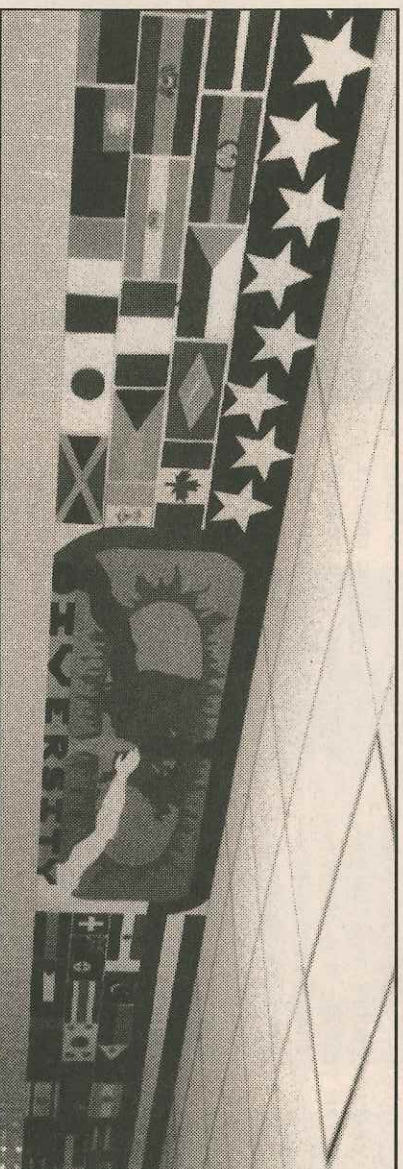
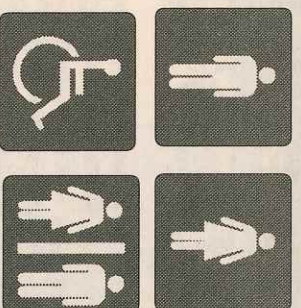
Since then, however, the positive intent of affirmative action has been lost in a mire of racism. The present-day incarnation seeks to impose on schools, colleges, businesses, and government agencies a reflection of the country's "racial diversity."

It is based on the premise that, since many minorities were treated unfairly in the past, minorities today are entitled to reparations.

Thus, race has become an essential factor in the hiring and recruitment for businesses and higher education instead of the unimportant factor that it truly is.

Those who preach the value of affirmative action ignore it is unadulterated racism. Racism is not, fundamentally, the belief that one's own race is superior to any other. Racism is the false belief that a man's character is determined (in part or in whole) by his racial lineage.

Affirmative action cashes in on this belief - no matter what actions a person has taken, or what ideas a person



Ellen Waylonis

holds, if that person is white he has been guilty of mistreating minorities; if he is a member of a minority group, he has been mistreated and is therefore entitled to reparations.

In other words, affirmative action swaps the usual form of racism—"you are worthless because you are a minority"—with a new form of racism - "you are good because you are a minority." But racism is racism, no matter what its form.

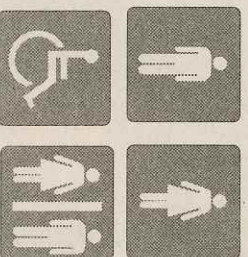
As Ayn Rand wrote: "A genius is a genius, regardless of the number of morons who belong to the same race - and a moron is a moron, regardless of the number of geniuses who share his racial origin."

Note the fact that many successful black men and women are accused of "acting white" or "selling out." One's race says nothing about that person's character, nor does it entitle him to anything. Affirmative action rewards some minorities because of their skin color or lineage.

Worse yet, affirmative action casts suspicion on those many people in minority groups who truly have earned their success.

Instead of admiration and respect, their virtues are doubted as people whisper, "they only made it to the top of their profession because of a helping hand." It is an unequivocal insult to men and women of minority groups to assume they need such help to succeed.

Affirmative action, then, is not the solution to racism; it is the problem. We as Americans—as individual human beings—must reject the idea that an individual is nothing but a member of his racial group. We must judge men according to their words and actions, for better or for worse.



# Founders sought end to racial bias

By Andrew Baskin  
Special to the Oracle

I am a white male and have nothing against affirmative action. Shocking, isn't it?

Yes, I agree that affirmative action is skewed and is veering off the course Lyndon Johnson imagined when he sparked the move to institute it. Affirmative action, in law, states that employers holding federal contracts (and now, in practice, many other employers) must only ensure that they are not discriminating on the basis of race, creed, national origin, religion, etc. It says nothing about quotas, "reverse discrimination," or anything else that hurts any applicant's chances of getting that dream job or admitted to Harvard. Simply, affirmative action was meant to ensure that racism (and yes, there is racism in this wonderful country of ours) is countered by government measures.

Affirmative action, in essence, is meant to be an equalizer for those whose economic and social circumstances may, in effect, prevent them from some opportunities granted to those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. In some cases, Ivy League schools, which are among the most expensive in the nation, see the advantage of admitting students to whom they will not have to offer financial assistance. So, they admit students whose daddy graduated from the school and can afford to pay Junior's tuition. Affirmative action is meant to say "We don't care who your parents are or what your color your skin is. If you are rich but still underqualified, we will not give you precedence!" The same goes for workplace hirings: economic and racial background do not matter, and neither does gender. But qualifications do.

Still, despite the allegedly distorted state of affirmative action today, a recent report from the Washington Post indicates that minorities and women, the would-be recipients of the supposed inequities in hiring, are "in vastly lower paying jobs and still face active discrimination." You know, for such a hideous unfairness affirmative action is supposed to be, white males, as a group, are in higher-paying jobs than their minority and female counterparts.

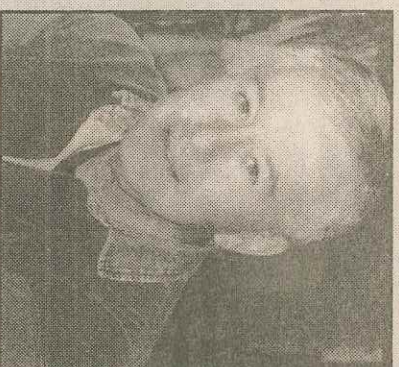
As a white male, I would be the clear target of the alleged discrimination affirmative action initiates. But I am all for affirmative action in its original sense. It is not an unfair initiative punishing members of certain groups; nor is it saying that minorities and women cannot earn jobs and university admissions on their own. It is simply a measure directed at righting the discrimination of some employers and admissions officers at universities. It may have its flaws in its current state, but to quote an eminent leader of our nation, "Mend it, don't end it."

# Spartan Spotlight WHY?



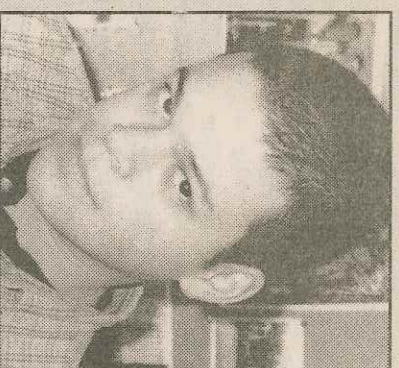
"Why not?"

-Sara D'Andrea, Senior



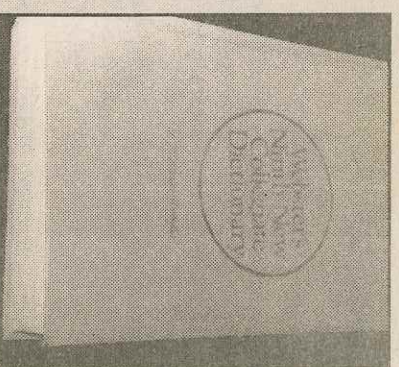
"Because it's a part of God's plan."

-Robert Nelson, Teacher



"Human nature entails curiosity and elaboration on the occurrences of such caprice."

-Pedro Seminario, Junior



"(conj.) 1: the cause, reason, or purpose for which 2: for which: on account of which"

-Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary

—Compiled by Ellen Waylonis



# Sophomores wage war over pennies

By Jenny Braudaway  
Inside Story Editor

There are car washes, candy sales, and T-shirts. And then there are the penny wars. This year the sophomore class is continuing the popular fundraiser it started last year, appropriately titled the sophomore penny wars.

The basic idea of the penny wars is for sophomores to bring in as many pennies as they can and place them in the buckets located outside of sophomore sponsor Ann Lam's room, room 27. The "war" part of it refers to the competition between the boys and the girls to see which gender can score the most points.

"Last year the girls barely won. Each day the lead went back and forth," said Lam.

"This year the guys were in the lead first, but now the lead is with the girls."

Pennies equal points, and silver/paper money placed in the opposite gender's bucket can subtract points from that side.

This year the girls have been placing a lot of silver money in the boys' bucket, which takes away points from their side, and has helped place the girls ahead.

The idea originated with class president Jenny Askin and vice president Marisa Nomi, who heard of it at a student council camp in sixth grade.

"We heard that other schools had had success with it, so we decided to try it," said Askin.

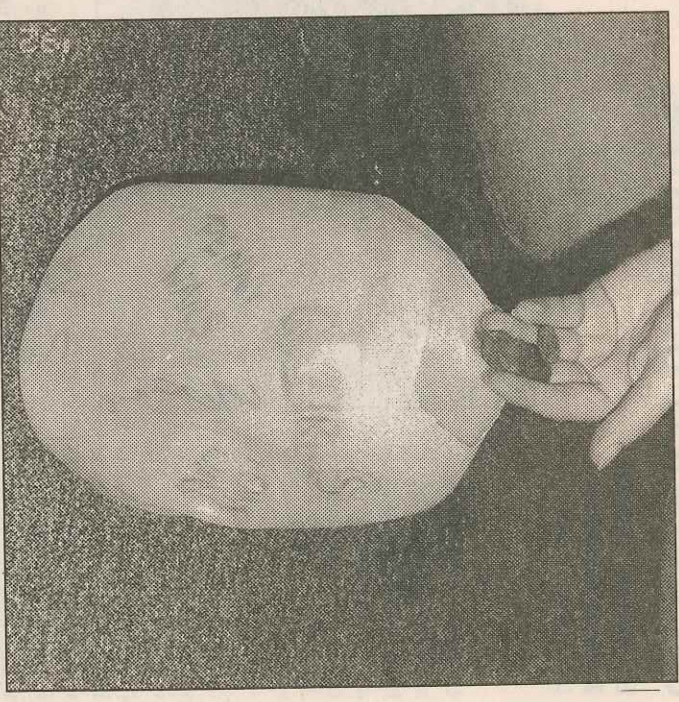
The officers participate by going around with buckets during break and asking sophomores for their money. Also, during lunch and after

school they go to work counting and rolling the massive amounts of pennies that they acquire daily. The daily score is posted up outside of Lam's room.

"This fundraiser is better because there are no precons. Only income," said treasurer Sam Jung. "It's basically just a lot of volunteer work."

Last year the penny wars raised \$250, and this year the class is hoping to raise even more. The fundraiser started March 6 and will end on March 24, making it a three-week long fundraiser. The class officers plan to make it an annual event.

"It's really just something easy to do between fundraisers, kind of like free money," said secretary Mary Holloway. "We've been doing it once a year and we'll probably stick with it."



Bree Virostko  
The class officers spent their lunches counting loose change that the sophomores dropped into the milk jugs.

## Bagel Bakery, Mickey D's on spring agenda

From SKIPPING Page 1

"No one gets caught during lunch," said junior Rabeeta Farooque. "I've never skipped but there are days when I want to."

Whether or not it is enforced, it is important that schools protect themselves that comes from the liability of having an actual open campus policy. So long as the facade of punishing students for leaving campus is retained, those students who may become involved in accidents after leaving cannot claim that the school was responsible.

But, whatever the case, it is unlikely that any measure could stop students — exhausted from school, and aching for a break — from leaving.

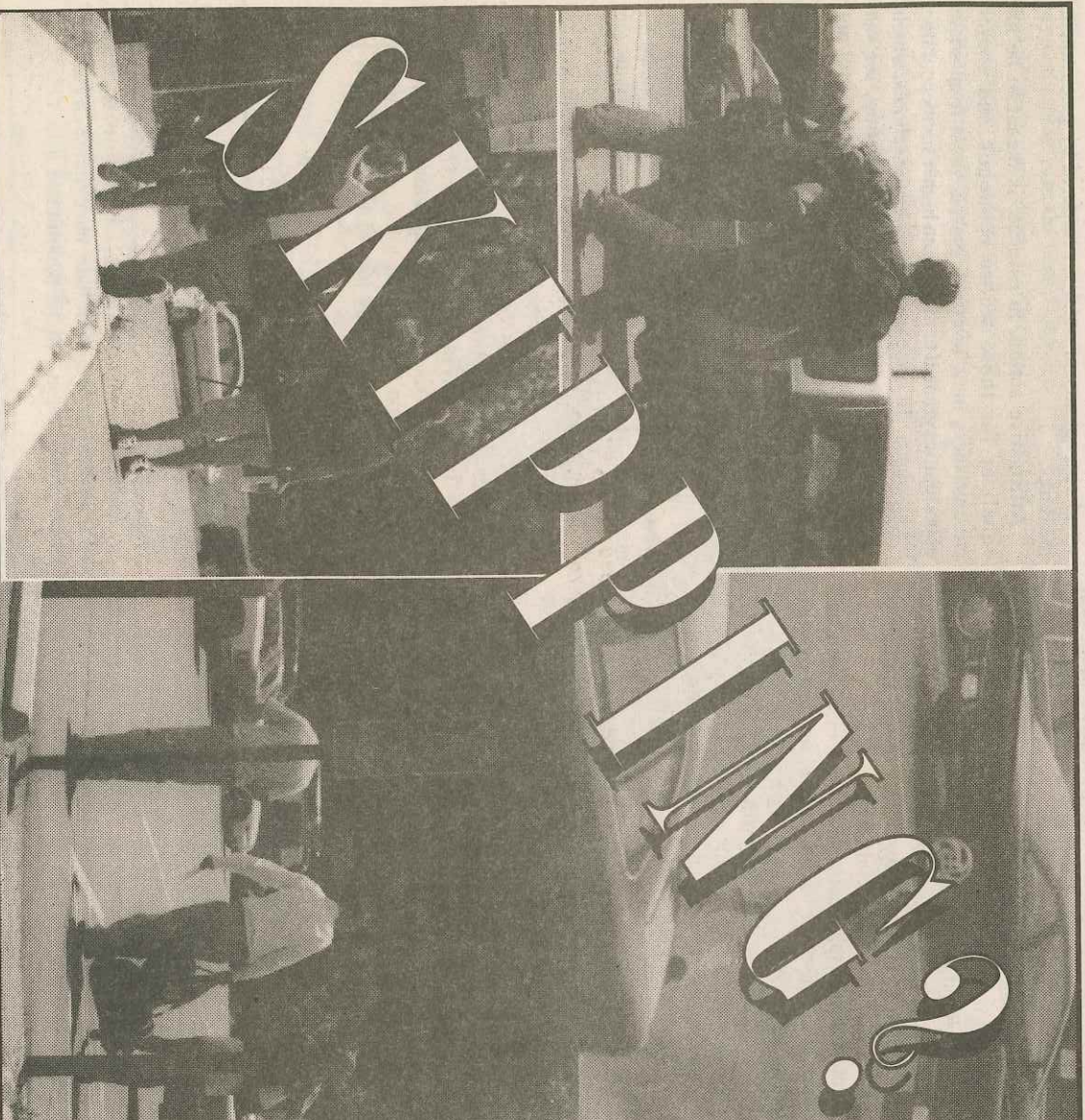
"You skip," said Barekzi, "but you make sure you don't get caught."

### What happens when you skip?

Every time you skip = one unexcused absence.  
Three unexcused absences = fail that class for the quarter.

### What happens when you're late?

Everytime you're late = one unexcused tardy.  
Three unexcused tardies = one unexcused absence.  
Nine unexcused tardies=three unexcused absences.



Ellen Waylonis  
Oracle Staff Photos

# Future business leaders get busy

By Caitlin Marvin  
Ads Manager

Limousines will pull up as the red carpet is rolled out. Celebrities like Joan Rivers along with the National Officers of FBLA will make appearances in July at the National FBLA Awards in California.

"It's a huge deal," said accounting teacher Donece Johnson. "It's just like the Academy Awards but with students from all over that have done very well in the competition."

On March 11, business students competed in FBLA Regionals at Oaktown High School. They competed in different areas of business including Accounting, Desktop Publishing and Principles of Business.

Four students placed in Regionals. Senior Monica Dilawari won first place in Advanced Accounting, senior Lee Huttenbach won second place in Accounting, sophomore Chris Chipman won first in Introduction to Business and senior Elizabeth Mundy placed first in Business Communications.

The competition, depending on what area of business,

consisted of a production test or a written exam. The production test instructed students to take documents and reproduce it in a certain time. The written exam tested students on material they covered all year.

"The students volunteered to take the competition," said FBLA leader and business teacher

"It's a huge deal. It's just like the Academy Awards but with students from all over that have done very well in the competition."  
—Business teacher Donece Johnson

Jennifer Sewell. "Or we chose students who we thought could do well in the competition."

The annual competition is a stepping stone for States in April. Two representatives from each state and from the Department of Defense schools will then go on to Nationals in Long Beach.

"We're all going to States," said Mundy. "And I hope some of us go on to Nationals but if not, it's

been a great experience."

Some of the students who placed first in Regionals receive cash prizes for their success depending on whether or not that test is sponsored by a business.

"I was the only one to receive a \$100 savings bond even though two other students won first," said Chipman. "But that is because my test was sponsored and theirs weren't."

If students win first in test areas that are sponsored by businesses in April, they will receive money to help out with the expenses of the trip to California for Nationals.

"At Nationals, the students receive a plaque and a lot of prestige," said Johnson. "It teaches leadership skills and it's a very maturing experience."

In the last four years, three students from W/S placed at Nationals in Principles of Business.

"Even if they don't win, it's just a great opportunity to compete against the other kids with the material that they've been learning all year," said Sewell. "It's an excellent thing to put on resumes and it does so much for the person."



# Update: Manholes blast DC

## Manhole Investigation Closed

Officials have closed the investigation into the mysterious exploding manhole covers in Georgetown. At 1 p.m. February 18, biasis sent three manhole covers shooting into the air. The flying covers broke shop windows and caused the closing of businesses and roads. Investigators have not been able to determine the cause of the explosions. Five other manhole covers have exploded throughout DC since the Georgetown eruptions.

## Too much Parking

Fairfax County supervisors have decided that there is "too much" parking at area malls. Tysons Corner Center, Fair Oaks Mall, and Springfield Mall together have 1,500 surplus parking spaces according to new standards.

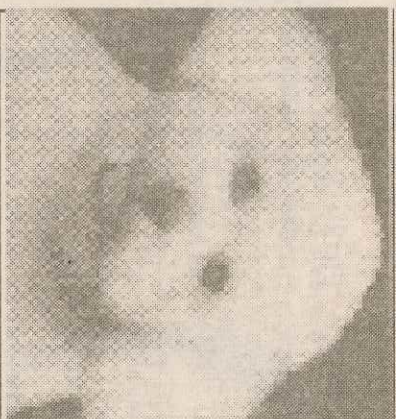
Previously, the county required malls to have six spaces for every 1,000 square feet of retail space. Now the number has been reduced to the national average of just under five spaces. The new standards mean that Tysons Corner could add a movie theater complex or a hotel and Springfield Mall and Fair Oaks Mall could each add a new department store without adding a single parking space. Some customers' question the supervisors' math skills.

## Paintball Police

Police are beginning to use the technology behind paintball to fight crime. A new PepperBall weapon shoots little plastic balls filled with the active ingredients of pepper spray. As with paintball, PepperBall causes a sharp sting and explodes on impact. It is highly accurate when shot up to 30 feet away, and it allows police to target specific individuals without the outside contamination of conventional pepper spray. Police in San Diego are currently testing the guns, and Fairfax County is considering their use.

## Pet murders

A Virginia man is wanted for murdering a pet dog on February 11 near the San Jose Airport in California. After Sara McBurnett bumped the man's vehicle on a crowded highway, the angry driver approached her car. When McBurnett rolled down the window, the man grabbed her pet dog, Leo, and tossed him into the busy road. The 18-pound dog was struck and killed. The reward from an initial \$5,000 to more than \$40,000 because of pledges from dog lovers across the country.



Associated Press  
Sara McBurnett's bichon frise, Leo, was killed after being thrown into traffic.

## Shooting art

An art teacher at Marunasco Hills Elementary in Woodbridge is facing charges for bringing a gun to school. A teacher discovered the gun when she found an unattended backpack in the school. The gun and the identification for Deena Esteban, the art teacher, were inside. Esteban has a license to carry a concealed weapon, but this does not include on school property. She faces one to five years in prison if she is convicted.

## Going to school on-line

A Northern Virginia billionaire has proposed the creation of an on-line university that would give anyone in the world a free, quality education. MicroStrategy CEO Michael Saylor envisions the university to include lectures from the best teachers, leaders, and geniuses in the world. These lectures would be taped in a studio near Washington and broadcast on the Internet. Saylor has already contributed \$100 million as a deposit on his project. The idea for a cyber-university has also drawn interest from businesses and some senators.

## Assisted Suicide

The Anne Arundel County teen who had been charged under Maryland's new assisted suicide law was released on home detention to await his April 17th trial. The boy's girlfriend, Jennifer Garvey, 15, shot

herself after her boyfriend allegedly made a suicide pact with her saying that he would shoot himself immediately after Garvey shot herself. The boy was the first person charged under a law to prevent assisted suicide.

## Lost Documents

A fire which destroyed thousands of documents at a National Archives storage center in Suitland may have been intentionally set, the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, said. The fire destroyed records such as patent and veterans affairs. Investigators have not yet determined a motive and are still calculating the number and value of the documents lost in the fire.

## Expensive Water

James N. Robey, a Howard County Executive, has submitted a proposal to the County Council to raise water rates during the summer to encourage conservation. Robey has not determined the exact increase in rates, but he expects at least an 8 cent increase to be enforced. Robey said that the reason he encourages the enforcement of the higher rates is to prevent a drought. The proposal will be formally introduced April 3rd.

**-Compiled by Lauren Weaver & Lauren Decot**

# Marketing Students advance to Nationals

*WS students receive top honors at States and continue on to Nationals*

**From MARKETING Page 1**

Eickman and Pinnell each took their ideas to Districts, where they competed against other students only within the district. From Districts, they advanced to States with 12 other WS students.

"At States, I talked to the judge about many aspects of my project, such as how I'd grow the apples, how much growing

the apples would cost, and how much advertising the apples in Japan would cost," said Eickman.

Pinnell didn't even expect to get to Nationals. In fact, during the awards ceremony at States, the announcer was butchering the last names of the participants. Pinnell didn't even realize her name was called until a friend sitting near her told her so.

"Julie Mullen was like 'Megan, your name was just called!'" said Pinnell. "I was so surprised."

Currently, Eickman and Pinnell are perfecting their projects by adding suggestions given to them by the judges at States.

Eickman said, "I am using suggestions from the judge and I am also making visual aids."

"Our best game was definitely Slow Motion Commentary," said senior Sean Bury. "Three members of the team had to act out the scene in slow motion while the other two members narrated at a normal speed. Our variable was that we were at the pogo stick jumping championships."

After making it to the final round and receiving high marks on their games, WS was decided as the winner of the competition. As the first place team, WS received a medal and a big trophy.

"Our prize," said Bury, "was an embarrassingly large trophy which we get to display at the school until June."



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# Briggs retires after memorable career

By Gracy Obuchowicz

Oracle Editor

I find Sandy Briggs in the English workbook, grading papers. I suggest that maybe we can find a better time for our interview, but she insists that she has time. She smiles at me and organizes her papers.

I remember that smile. Mrs. Briggs taught me English in ninth grade and Film Study in 10th. I've learned a lot from her. She told me that I was a talented writer, and I hadn't really heard that before.

We enter into her cozy classroom. There is a television in the corner and stacks of books and papers. Posters of animals cover the walls. When we begin talking, Mrs. Briggs seems more interested in hearing about my life than our interview.

We talk about her teaching career; the many years she's taught (16) and the range of grades (seventh through 12th). Freshmen tend to be her favorite.

"Every age has something unique, but I love the energy and enthusiasm of the freshmen," she says.

Then Mrs. Briggs admits that after 16 years of teaching at four different schools, she needs a change. She will be retiring from teaching this spring so she can pursue a career in real estate with her husband.

"I was ready for a change, and I just love houses," says Briggs. "My husband has been in the real estate business for 27 years. We'll have fun together."

But she will miss her students. When she speaks of seeing her old students in the hall, her face brightens.

"I will miss the kids. They keep you young," she says.

My face breaks into a smile as I remember my rowdy freshman English class. We certainly kept her young.

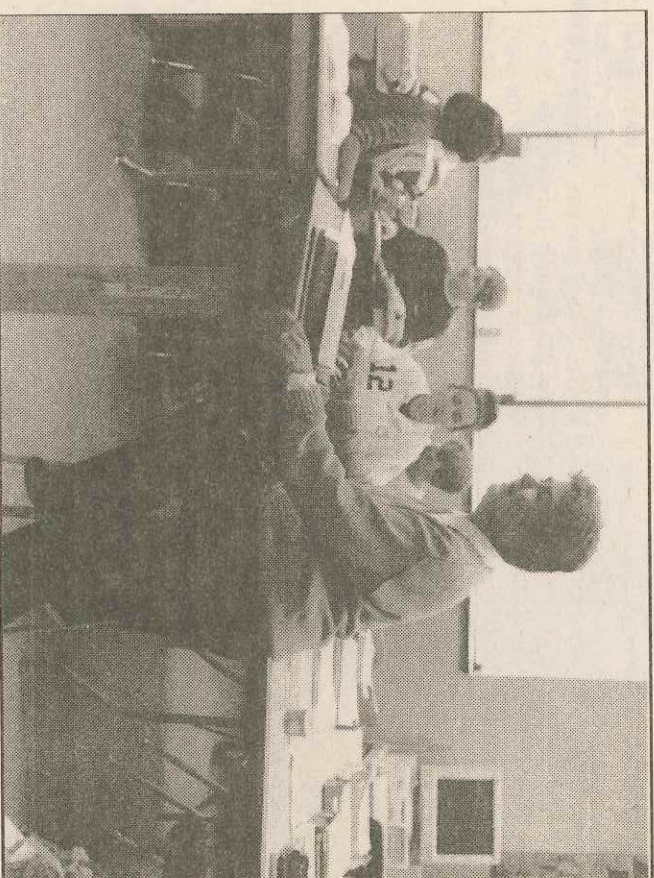
I ask Mrs. Briggs about Film Study. She tells me that when she began teaching the class in 1995, she knew almost nothing about film.

"The best way to learn anything is to teach," she says. "I took some classes at McLean High School and NOVA and I've learned so much each year."

When I took film study my sophomore year, I thought it would just be an easy class. But I actually learned about film techniques and how to analyze a good movie. Mrs. Briggs introduced me to great directors like Chaplin and Hitchcock that tend to be forgotten in popular culture.

She smiles when I tell her this.

"Exactly! I've taken it from the



Tom Stormer

English teacher Sandy Briggs will retire this spring after a 16 year teaching career. approach of how directors tell a story and what techniques they use," she says.

Our interview is almost over, so I ask her what she'll miss about teaching, about WS.

"[I'll miss] the kids, but also the other English teachers. Coming to work just

feels like coming home," she says and pauses, looking around her room. "This room feels like home, this school feels like home. I will really miss it all."

I leave the room and all I can think of is how she has it confused. It's the school that is going to miss her.

## From the runways to the hallways of WS Animal-inspired designs dominate Spring fashion

By Kelly Alm

Managing Editor

Hot on the heels of this spring's fashion is animal print. From leopard and zebra to tiger and snakeskin, spring's love of animal-inspired designs are everywhere.

Ranging from the runways at Prada to the hallways of WS, animal prints can be seen in pants, capris, skirts, shirts and accessories.

"I bought my leopard print bandana in Georgetown. I just thought it was cool looking and I hadn't seen anybody else with one" said junior Hollis Alexander.

Although these wild

creations originated in fashion centrals such as New York, they can easily be found in the WS area.

"I just bought a pair of Zebra print capris from Nordstrom. They're wild," said senior Diana Luk.

In addition to Contempo Casuals, stores such as the Gap, Guess, Express, and large department stores such as Nordstrom and Macy's all carry assortments of animal-print ensembles.

Senior Jessica Stamer, who has become renowned for her leopard-print decollage said "I started wearing animal print as a freshman. I wear leopard mostly, but also zebra,

snakeskin, and dalmation. I enjoy it because it is wild."

As well as wacky animal prints, this season's fascination with American Indian styles has brought a love of leather. The hides being shown are the soft buff of Native American moccasins.

However, these skins aren't as accessible as the faux animal prints, and they aren't cheap either. They also require great care.

"I have a pair of leather pants, but if they get dirty they're so hard to clean," said senior Jackie Davis. "I would definitely stick with the animal print. It's more practical and definitely fun."



Bree Virostko

Juniors Nicole Blume and Mike Keller stop and pose at the WS fashion show. The show was a great opportunity to see the latest fashions for spring.

## University Mall offers discount ticket prices

By Laura Robinson

Sports Editor

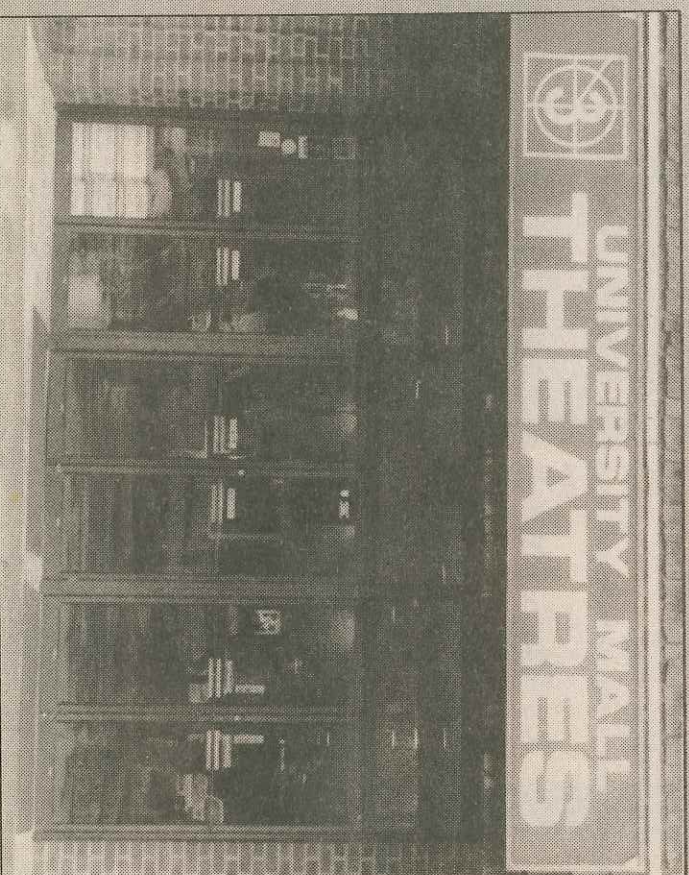
With prices for movies rising to an unbelievable \$8.50 at Springfield Mall, students and adults alike have searched for an alternative.

The answer for discount-seekers may be University Mall Theaters, which is located at the corner of Braddock Road and Rt. 123.

The price for general admission is only three dollars while children's admission and seniors only pay two dollars. Tuesdays offer a better bargain; all shows are half-price at a dollar fifty.

"I love half-price Tuesdays because I can see a movie for really cheap and buy something with the money I've saved," said sophomore Maggie Miller.

There are three theaters with seating capacities ranging from 168 to 248. Currently, "The Insider," "The Sixth Sense," "Angela's Ashes," "Being John Malkovich," and "Stuart Little" are



Tom Stormer

University Mall Theaters has discount general admission prices of only three dollars.

available. Movies showing at University Mall usually come up about two months after their premiere in major theaters.

Everyday, a special feature is offered called "Tea Time." At 5 PM, one theater is designated to show a foreign or classic film.

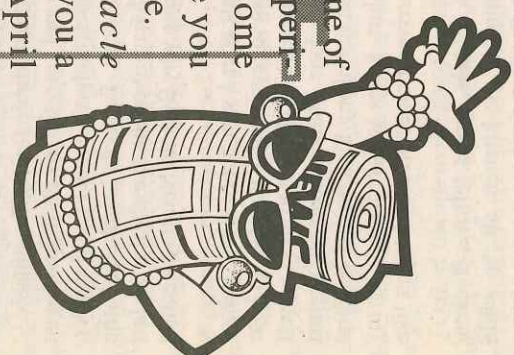
Concession stand choices are also more affordable than those found at larger theaters. Popcorn ranges from two dollars to three-twenty-five, drinks range from two dollars to two-fifty, and candy costs a dollar-fifty or a dollar-seventy-five. Cookies, hot chocolate and ice cream are also offered at cheaper rates.

Overall, University Mall Theaters offer a cheaper movie-going experience. Although movies are not the most recent, going is still entertaining.

"I could waste nine bucks, go to Blockbuster's, or go to University Mall," said sophomore Maggie Miller. "I figure if I can watch a movie and go have fun for cheaper, why not?"



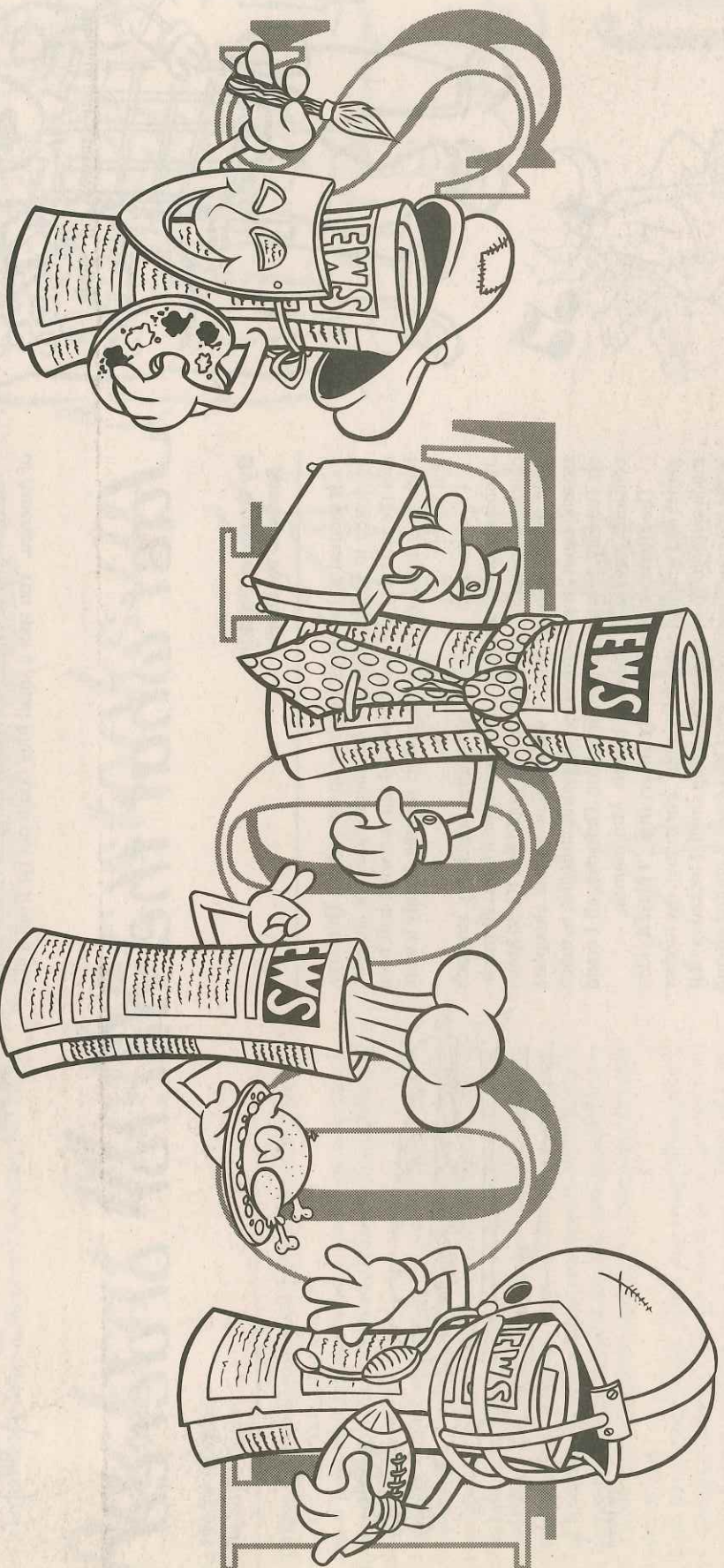
# Expect the unexpected...



Welcome to *The Oracle's* Inside Story. You know what you love it, you read it. This year for the April Fool's issue, we decided to spice things up. Nothing life-changing, but just enough to keep things interesting. And at this time of year, we all know we need something interesting.

This issue features stories written by students in AP Journalism. Your peers, these people you see walking down the hallways of WS, are putting you into their personal experiences. They focus in on that special slice of life. You know, the embarrassing moments, crazy parents and untold secrets. This is the good stuff that you don't normally see.

Read it, laugh out loud, but just don't use it against them. You never know when one of your past experiences will come back to leave you red in the face. *The Oracle* staff wishes you a Happy April Fool's day. Do something wild, and let this year be crazier than the last.



## Bugs are abuzz in the Storm house

By Jacque Storm  
Special to the Oracle

I am a procrastinator. I admit it. Whether it is homework, chores, errands or projects, I always put it off. Recently, I found out the hard way that some things shouldn't be delayed.

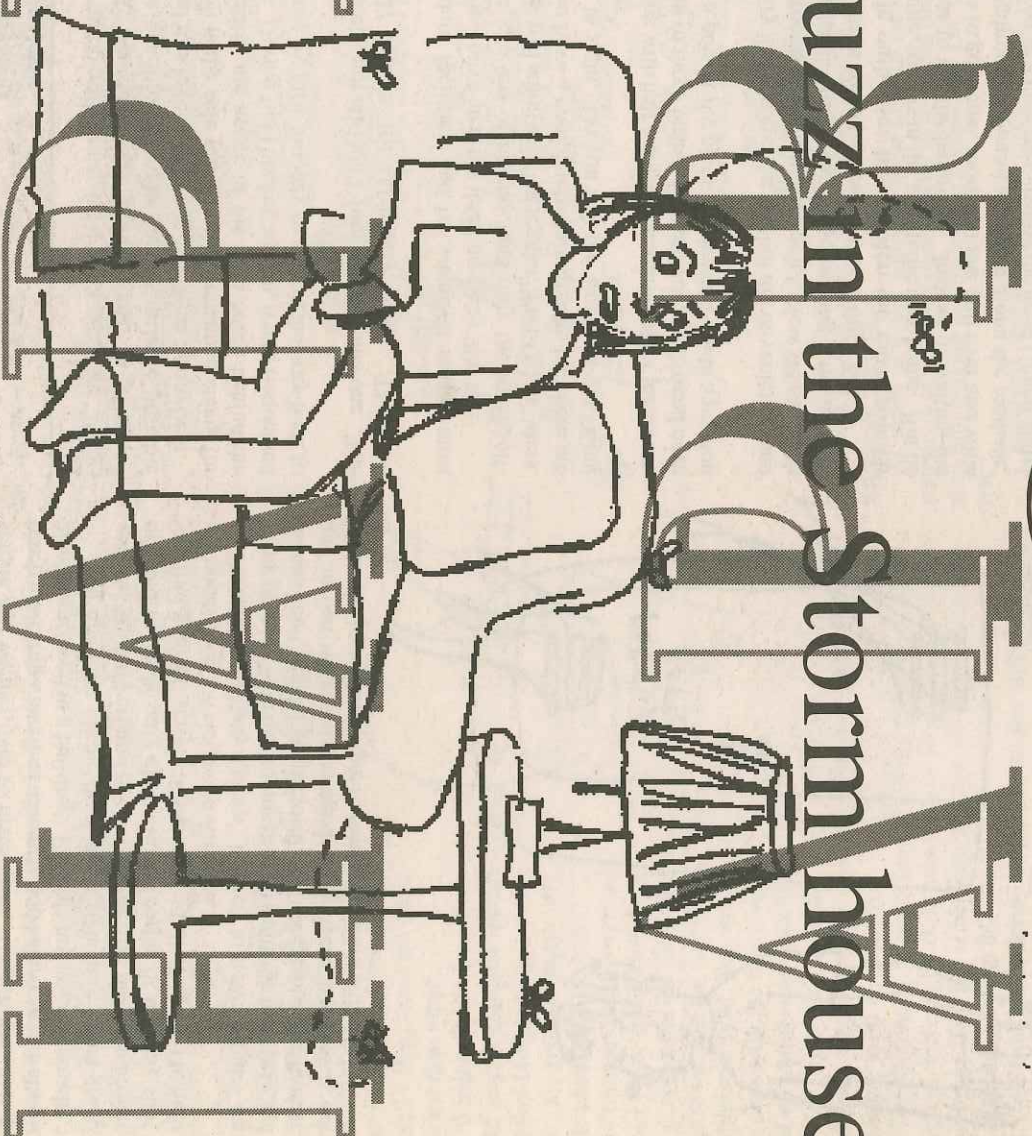
Two months ago, after months of avoiding it, I decided it was time to clean out the refrigerator in my room.

I found all sorts of little treasures. Carrots, candy bars, crackers—all left over from June. The real treasure, though, was the apples. They were rotting away in the corner, all brown and gooey. I threw away the entire contents of the refrigerator, proud of my accomplishment. It was probably two weeks after I cleaned out the fridge, when I noticed little bugs flying around the kitchen. It was really annoying. They started getting into the cupboards and cabinets.

When I asked my mom what was up with all the bugs, she told me that since it was getting colder all the bugs were coming inside. Funny, I never noticed them coming inside last winter.

Another week went by and it was insane. Absolutely intolerable. Every single room of my house had bugs swarming in it. When people came over, they had to swat bugs out of the way. Pretty embarrassing. Even the basement, which was where I'd sought refuge the week before, had swarms of the little pests.

My mom was ready to call Terminex and have the place fumigated. She laughed as she swatted some bugs on the cabinets. "Maybe you should clean that room of yours. 'I'll bet that's their hideout!'" Ha, ha. Very funny. It was then that I remembered my refrigerator.



I ran up to my bedroom. I looked at the huge pile of trash festering underneath my desk. I opened one of the trash bags and screamed in horror. The entire inside of the bag was covered, wall to wall, with bugs.

Oh, but they weren't just any bugs, they were fruit flies.

I tied the bag and ran down to the garage and threw it inside the dumpster. When I talked inside my mom asked me why I was hurrying to take out the trash. I managed

to know when one of your past experiences will come back to leave you red in the face.

*The Oracle* staff wishes you a Happy April Fool's day. Do something wild, and let this year be crazier than the last.

some shaky answer about just wanting to get it done. I also managed to talk my mom out of calling Terminex. I told her that we should give it more time. Sure enough, a week later, the little flies started dwindling until there were none.

My mom still doesn't know what caused the little bugs to live with us for a month. Well, at least she didn't know until she reads this article. Sorry mom, I've realized that there are just some things you can't delay.



# America's porta-potties answer the call of nature

**By Jenny Neyland**  
*Special to the Oracle*

Some of my favorite names for a porta-potty are "Potty-Queen," "Tilly-the-toilet," and "Port-O-Can." In all my 17 years, I have encountered only one respectable portable bathroom, and it is here at our very own West Springfield.

Its location is the sole reason it has remained clean, for very few students are aware of the little booth behind the batting cages. During field hockey season, it was frequented at various times by girls too lazy to run all the way back to school.

Unfortunately, not all Don's Jons are like this one. The remaining 27 billion are extremely crude. They are everywhere.

All outdoor facilities, and for whatever reason most indoor facilities, have an array lined up every 200 feet.

Using one is a test of bravery, and only the most self-assured people will admit to being regular "Port-O-Jon" users. Suddenly, you have a completely natural urge but there are no buildings in sight. Do you risk the woods or the "King Toilet" nearby?

Any person with half a brain heads straight for the forest. Just be careful of those bushes beneath you. My friend once encountered a poison-ivy plant. We haven't made a pit stop for her since.

Our country has become the symbol of convenience, and portable bathrooms were the turning point. Now we can teach our children that having to wait for something is not natural. For example, little Johnny (Coincidence, I think not).

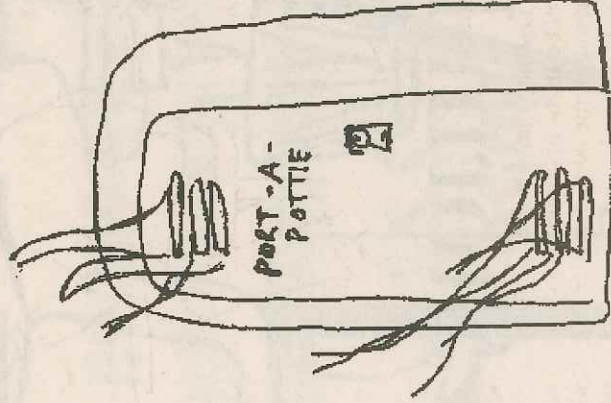
These vile outhouses have stolen the most popular American name, too.) is in the car on the way home. But he realizes he has to use the bathroom. Instead of waiting the few moments to get home, mom can just pull over and voila and instant bathroom is bound to appear along the roadside.

Imagine you're a foreigner visiting the great United States of America. You spot a small blue booth not far from a gas

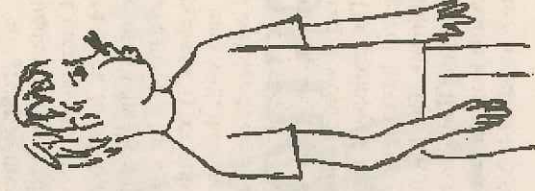
station and wander over to investigate. (In Europe, class is much more important than necessity, and bathrooms are almost always enclosed in a building. Portable toilets are a novelty.)

You open the plastic door and a stenching sauna greets you. As you turn around to discover the lock has been broken off, and the door only closes three-fourths of the way shut, you find yourself staring down at a bin full of...well, I believe it's understood. Welcome to America.

Perhaps the "Potty-Queen" has led to new attitudes for many people. With bathrooms in plain sight, the most personal human habit is no longer personal. It is acceptable to be human, and in fact widely encouraged. Now, your business is our business; just don't forget to supply your own tissue.



Sue Moon



# Just what the doctor ordered

**By Andrew Baskin**  
*Special to the Oracle*

It seemed so harmless. I'd wake up the coming Thursday, be driven to Fairfax Hospital, be unconscious for an hour, and the next day the doctors would tell me what had been bothering my stomach for the past six months. If only it were that simple.

I was to have a colonoscopy, after which my stomach troubles could be diagnosed. In preparation for this stomach-churning operation (pun intended), I would fast for 36 hours prior to my hospital visit. I wolfed down some chocolate frozen yogurt, as prescribed by the gastroentologist, as lunch on Tuesday. From then until lunch on Thursday, all I could consume was Jell-O and clear liquids. Mmmmmmm.

The afternoon went by fairly uneventfully. I played video games and watched some television. "For dinner, my mother made salmon. To avoid the tantalizing smell, I locked myself in the basement until my parents had eaten. I goofed around for a while more, and went to bed. So far, so good.

When I woke up Wednesday morning, I padded downstairs to the kitchen and got out the Rice Chex. Ooops, none of that this morning. So, I read the paper without my customary bowl of cereal, but felt only a mild hunger pain in my stomach. I could still manage this.

As the day went on, my hunger worsened. I had to keep myself from thinking about food. I slept on the couch for an hour or two, and woke up ready for lunch, but greasy grilled cheese sandwiches were not in my future. I bit my tongue and headed to my room, where I could escape the kitchen smells.

The afternoon passed slowly. When I watched television, I could swear Pizza Hut ads were specifically taunting me with the gooey cheese, hot tomato sauce, and soft, fluffy dough. That evening, I had to go outside and shoot baskets while my parents ate dinner. Even a whiff of the roasted chicken was enough to make my stomach rumble and my mouth salivate.

That night, I had to take curiously strong laxatives to clear my digestive system. They performed their hideous magic every hour on the hour, and I slept fitfully, if at all. At that

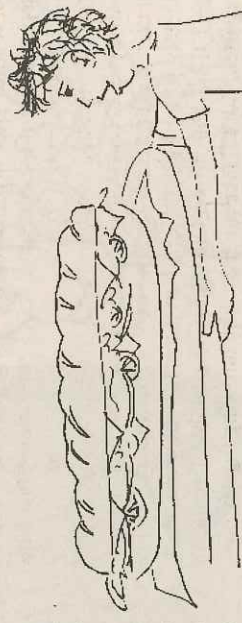
point, I just wanted this medical adventure to end.

After rising Thursday morning, I had three tasks to complete: wake up, shower, and administer myself an enema. Now, a word of advice for those who have not had to do this—don't—it is the most uncomfortable feeling imaginable.

I arrived at the hospital, and I greeted my gastroentologist with a fake smile and as much enthusiasm as I could muster, considering the circumstances. I shook hands with the anesthesiologist, and after I was given the anesthesia, the last thing I remember is wondering why Richard Nixon was eating a taco on the ceiling.

About an hour-and-a-half after I was put to sleep, I arose from my slumber, and began to regain my bearings. An hour after waking up, I was discharged and allowed to dress myself and go home. Easier said than done. I balanced myself against the bed and dizzily changed out of my high quality hospital gown into jeans and a t-shirt. I was whisked away by my sympathetic parents and arrived home, prepared to eat like I'd never eaten before.

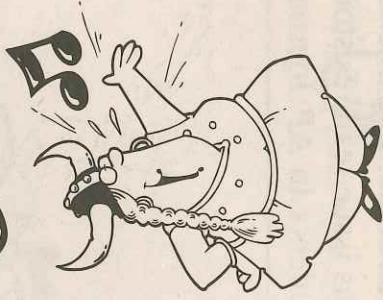
Nothing was safe. Chips, cookies, apples, leftover chicken. I ate anything and everything in the kitchen, all the while smiling. Mmmmmmm, food. Glorious food.



Sue Moon

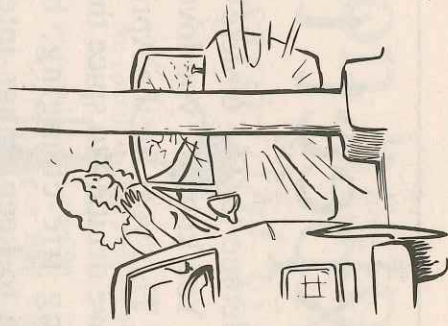
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# An average Friday at the bar

## Picking up more than just tips from customers at work

By Tammy Cloyed  
Special to the Oracle

It's TGIFRIDAY'S Restaurant, where every day feel like it's Friday. Did they forget to mention- "where everyday is a grueling competition"? That is, a competition between men. Although this is a welcoming family establishment, it is a especially known for its wide variety of alcoholic beverages and entertaining bar.

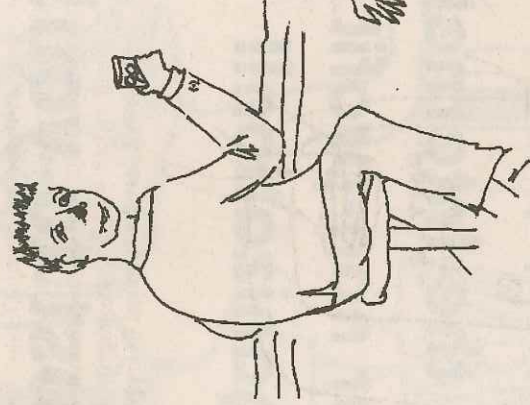
Come on, who could resist the alluring subliminal labels, such as "Hollywood Nights," and "Malibu Surf," or the ever so popular "Sex on the Beach." Hey, some are more modest than others.

Whether it is a long neck cold beer, or elaborate liquor, alcohol brings in the crowds. As a group, men are redundant in their visits.

Common are the typical "Red Neck Joes," but those guys aren't the the guys who amaze me. It's the suave and impressive type. You know, the ones with the fancy suits and cellular devices attached and cellular devices attached at the belt. It's initially charming, they way they waltz in unflawed. Mind you, the operative word is, "initially."

The prolonged minutes pass and they indulge in all the magical beverages that make them lose their precious inhibitions. The fun is beginning. Little do they realize how entertaining they can be.

Aside from the tempting aroma of whiskey and Old Spice, there is an unstable balance in the crowd. Laughter fills the bar



Sue Moon

and sporadic stumbles and falls emit an uproar. However, the best are the catcalls, and how subtle these experienced boys-I mean men-appear.

My favorite would have to be the thrown whistle. I can almost expect it. There she is, the target-a cute, proportional young female walking susceptibly past a group of drooling men. (Yes, it is drool; despite their attempts to pretend it's beer.)

I can't forget the legendary pick-up lines. Just last week, I was working happy hour at our "family" bar. The family consisted of our daily regulars, clustered like pigs in the conerners.

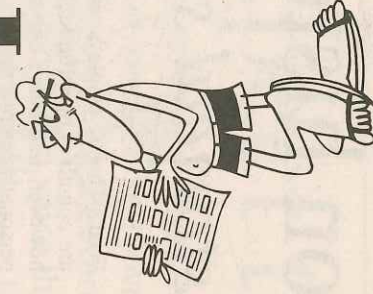
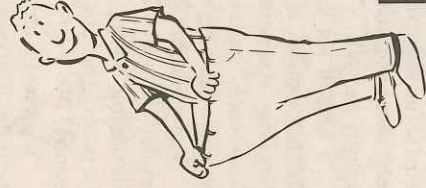
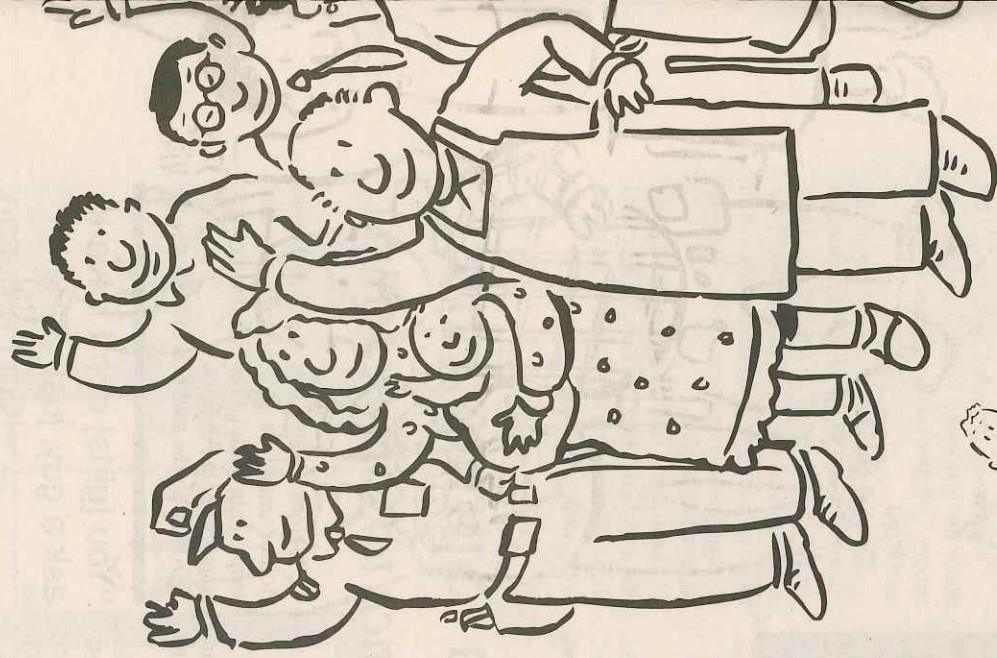
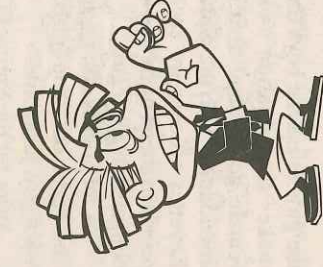
How bold one young man must have been. There he was, waltzing down the aisle, as if to ask for a dance or my hand in marriage.

He blinked twice, licked his lips and out come his invitation. "Baby! Are you from Tennessee? Because you're the only Ten-I-See!"

Obviously my outburst of petty laughter wasn't satisfying enough. He continued. "You must be a parking ticket! Because honey, you've got FINE written all over you."

As much as I was enjoying these tasteful tactics I had to restrain myself from falling madly in love and running away with him-leaving my underpaid hostess job. Oh, the agony I felt.

I survived, eventually; and lived to see many more inebriated men, with many more "fine" lines to tell.



## Packrat Mother stocks up

By Maria Barber  
Special to the Oracle

Twelve cans of soup, eleven jars of jelly, ten boxes of pasta...and a partridge in a pear tree.

No, it's not your favorite holiday song gone bad. This is only a partial list of the contents of our home cellar. Or should I call it a grocery store?

I love my mother very much, but she has this obsession with stockpiling. Our house is overflowing with food, papers, and oodles of useless junk that "we may need someday." You're absolutely right, Mom. When I'm a world-renowned artist, maybe I'll be able to see that crayon scribble I made in kindergarten. But I'll take my risks with throwing it away now.

Let's take a tour of my house (museum?). We'll begin in the basement. Beside the cellar stocked with enough food to feed a small army for several months, we have approximately 20 piles of junk.

Each has its own unique shape and composition-papers, toys, magazines, letters. There are also boxes of clothing from the early eighties, which I refuse to open for fear of being blinded by the hideous neon colors

.As we travel up the stairs, be careful not to trip. That stack of two-year-old magazines can be pretty slippery, you know.

Ah, we have safely made it to the kitchen. There are counters under all those papers, I swear. Rumor has it that the counters are beige, but we may never know.

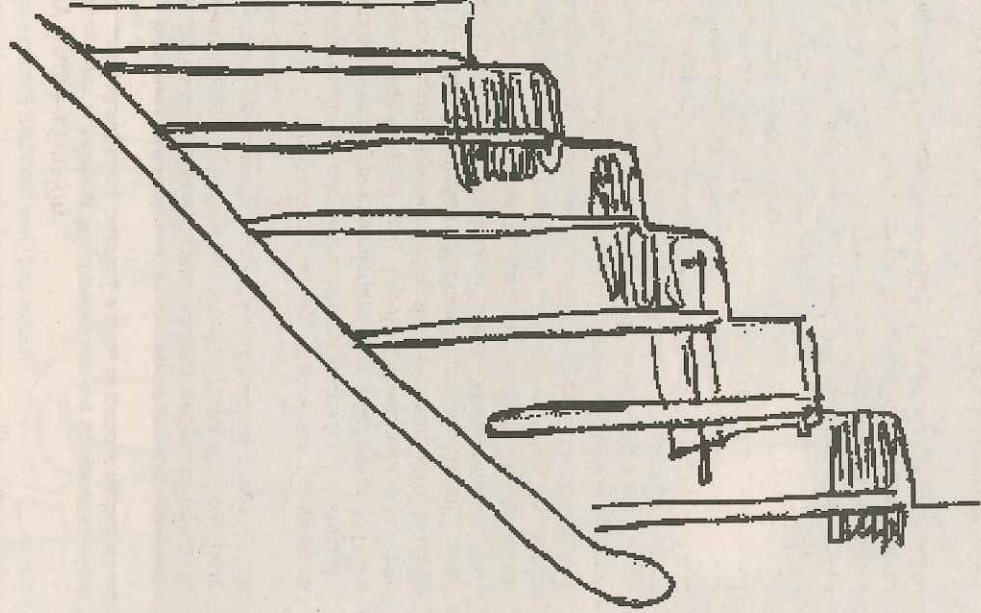
Open the refrigerator and you will find now fewer than four dozen eggs. Yes, we even have our own hen house.

In the kitchen cabinets you will find all sorts of surprises-a mixer from the early 1950s, thirty cake and brownie mixes, and various other treasures. Now that we have had our fun in the kitchen, why don't we travel upstairs?

Surprisingly enough, my mom's room appears nearly junk-free at first glance. Perhaps this anomaly is due to my trash-can-friendly father.

But please do not risk your life by opening Mom's closet door. The inside is so packed that you can't see either the wall or the floor.

Quick! Escape to the guest room before the pile topples! I sure pity any guest who must stay in that room-he or she will be swallowed whole by the mountains of my outgrown clothes that have been awaiting sorting for the past eight months.



Sue Moon

The grand tour is now complete. Please let me know if you ever need a fluorescent green sweater from 1985 or the paper I wrote on panda bears in second grade. I'm sure we can accommodate your request.

# from The Oracle Staff



# Unique class highlights hands-on history

## Applied history students intern at local historical sites

By Melissa Tran

Oracle Editor

Every other day 30 seniors leave school before seventh period, but not to cut class or sneak a late lunch break. These students are a part of Jim Percoco's Applied History class, and during second semester that involves an internship for each of them.

The class was created in 1991 by Percoco as a hands-on study and opportunity for students to learn about what they were studying in the classroom. Over the years the class has become a popular elective selection among students, and space has become limited for enrollment because of the high demand.

"[In the spring], I conduct an application and screening process where about 25-30 seniors are selected to be in the class," said Percoco.

During the first semester, students are involved in different projects and activities in the classroom, and second semester each student ventures out into the workforce. In December, speakers come into the classroom representing different places around the area where students have the chance to work. The students then select where they want to work and the places accept a certain number of students as interns.

"[The students] give tours, work with collections management, or do other various jobs related to the mission of the



Ellen Waylonis

Senior Chris Plehal shows a tourist around at Ford's Theatre. Because of the popularity of this site, only five students are employed at the theatre.

particular site," said Percoco.

Some of the more popular and well-known places to work include Ford's

Ford's Theatre employs only five. There are countless opportunities for students, however, and some choose places that personally interest them.

Senior Megan Hall works at the Alexandria Black History Resource Center as part of the museum staff. There she helps set up new exhibitions and learns not only about the history, but the museum industry as well.

"I helped set up their new Maroon Cultures exhibit, and I got to attend the Virginia Association of Museums Conference," said Hall. "It was a lot of fun, but a new learning experience as well."

Senior Heather Roed works at the Lee-Fendall House Museum in Old Town Alexandria, where she gives tours. The site is an old historic house built in the 18th century.

"It's a really fun job. I'm learning a lot about the history of Virginia and how to become a better public speaker as well," said Roed.

Since all of his students are out of the classroom for half the year, Percoco takes time to visit with his students at their different worksites and to find out what they are discovering. It is important to him to maintain the purpose of the class as originally intended.

"I wanted to find a way to teach history out of the box," said Percoco. "[This class] allows students to get personally involved in the study of history."

## Keyettes plan 'Spring Fling' Sadie Hawkins dance takes a new twist

By Sue Moon

News Section Editor

It's time to give the guys a break and have the girls ask them out for dates to the Keyettes' annual Sadie Hawkins dance.

This year, instead of having Sadies during the fall, after Homecoming Week and the Homecoming dance, the Keyettes are organizing the dance with a "Spring Fling" theme appropriate for the season.

"We had a vote and most members wanted it [Sadies] in the Spring, not after Homecoming," said co-president Kathy Plimpton.

Since this year's theme takes place during the spring season and not the fall, all new scenery must be constructed. Every Thursday after school until April, the Keyettes are making and painting new scenery.

"They've created four to six murals to adorn the cafeteria," said sponsor Joann Sevel.

This new approach to the dance is in response to the factors that have contributed to a low turnout in past years because the dance is usually held right after Homecoming.

"Before, Sadies was two weeks after Homecoming. It just popped out and people didn't want to go," said senior vice president Kim Ferguson.

Although the tradition of Sadies is for

**"You [girls] don't have to ask a guy, just come."**

**—Kim Ferguson,  
Keyettes officer**

the girls to ask the boys for dates, it often makes the situation awkward for the female gender and also results in low attendance. For the Spring Fling, the Keyettes officers are encouraging more people to attend by having the girls not feel obligated to ask a guy.

"A lot of girls don't want to ask guys," said Ferguson. "You [girls] don't have to ask a guy, just come."

Attire for the Spring Fling is casual or semi-formal, whatever people want to wear. The dance will be held in the school cafeteria from 8:30 to 11:30 p.m. April 8. Tickets for the Spring Fling will cost \$4 per person.

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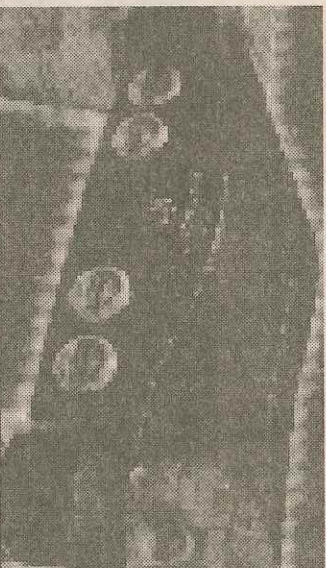
# As times change, so do video game systems

By CJ Stewart  
Oracle Online Editor

Most girls don't understand them. Parents usually don't like them. And quite a few guys spent a good chunk of their childhood enjoying them with their brains set to simmer.

They are, of course, video games. The students going through West Springfield now are part of the first generation that has never lived without them. For most of us, they have been a constant part of our lives, either as background noise or center of attention.

It all started back in 1972, when Magnavox



In 1996, Nintendo replaced the first Nintendo and Super Nintendo with Nintendo 64.

introduced the Odyssey, the first game console. This promptly fell on its face, and so most people think that the Atari game "Pong" introduced three years later is the first.

With "Pong" storming the market, more and more systems were introduced, culminating in the release of the original Nintendo system in 1985. With an 8-bit processor and color graphics, it was the cutting edge of technology, and included such classic games as "Tetris" and "Mario" (the first one).

Time marches on, and so does technology. Sega Genesis, the first 16-bit system, was introduced in 1989, as was Gameboy. Now not only could time be spent

worshipping the flickering light of the TV, but also squinting at the small, gray screen that fit in your pocket (albeit a rather large pocket....).

The types of games available began to widen with the introduction of Super Nintendo, a competitor to the Genesis. Fighting games became more and more popular, as Wolfenstein made its mark as a first-person shooter. With the influx of blood and gore into the electronic kingdom, more and more concerns were raised, although studies show that levels of aggression are lower in competitive games than in cooperative.

And then in 1995 Sony Playstation hit, with games on CDs and graphics that were better than most computer games. In 1996 N64 came out, and 3D polygon rendered graphics came into their own as games began to sport more and more absorbing environments.

In September last year, with much hoopla, Sega Dreamcast was introduced in an attempt to increase their flagging market share. The fantastic realism and graphics of the system has recently been surpassed by the recent introduction (although only in Japan) of Playstation 2, which is not only a game console, but a connection to the internet and DVD player. And so the progression continues, with ever more graphically stunning and complex games to play with that small chunk of plastic and silicon sitting on the TV.



A police officer subdues a criminal in "Cops," one of the longest running reality TV shows on Fox.

# When Reality TV Attacks

FOX shocks viewers with real-life thrills

By Melissa Lipman  
Oracle Staff Writer

As the credits for "When Animals Attack 928540" roll on a TV in the aftermath of "Who Wants to Marry a Millionaire," many people are asking just why it is that these shows are so popular.

FOX network has begun to show more and more of these "reality"-based television shows in recent years. The network has aired specials that started with the secrets behind magic tricks and has now moved onto animal attacks, car chases, and most recently, real live TV marriages.

In the wake of the success of "Who Wants to Marry a Millionaire," many other networks, including CBS, have begun to plan for similar shows. According to economist

Robert H. Frank and professor of public policy Philip J. Cook, the shocking types of shows have become more popular because television and movie producers have "trained consumers to accept progressively lower standards of acceptable behavior."

In their book, Frank and Cook said that by pushing the limits, the writers, producers and networks which create and air such shows are able to stand out from the rest of the media.

For FOX this means that by airing such specials it's guaranteed to benefit more than it could lose out, as high ratings and profits are more important to networks than avoiding negative publicity.

These programs also appeal to the masses because they are "reality" based.

"I think they're popular because they're not just fake scripts that have been written up. It's actual, real people, not just actors," said junior Bethany Owens.

However, while these "reality" based programs do appeal to many people, it's possible that it is the shock and disbelief that such shows can actually be aired draws the large audiences.

Many students disapprove of the shows. "I really don't find it entertaining to delight myself in the pain of others," said sophomore Emily Finerfrock.

A lot of other students share this opinion. Sophomore Adrienne Trinka, voiced her feelings.

"I think it's kind of gross when they try to sell people's misery."

# The Best of What's Around Town

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
April 2 Dracula at the Kennedy Center.	3	4 Luke Dube at the 9:30 Club.	5	6 Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young at the MCI Center.	7 James Brown at Nation.	8 Rollins Band at the 9:30 Club.
9	10	11 Filter at the 9:30 Club.	12	13	14 They Might Be Giants at the 9:30 Club, through April 15.	15
16	17 Surf guitarist Dick Dale at the Birchmere.	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25 Listen for the Metallica single off the "Mission Impossible 2" soundtrack.	26	27 Comedian Margaret Cho at Warner Theatre.	28 Smashing Pumpkins at the Patriot Center.	29 Equality Rocks Tour with Melissa Etheridge at RPK Stadium.



# GITASSTING?

## Music could be dying with rock remakes

By Lauren Edwards  
Oracle Photographer

In 1973, Don McLean's "American Pie" was a song about sadness and the tragic loss of Buddy Holly, the Big Bopper and Richie Valens.

Today, a video of a new rendition of the song shows Madonna rubbing herself in front of an American flag.

But Madonna is not the only one taking cues from past musicians. Recently, there has been an upsurge in remakes. In all music genres, people are finding a way to incorporate their own music styles into the classic originals.

"It's a travesty that idiots remake wonderful, intellectual pieces of music and art," said senior Sandi Phillips. "And what's worse, people actually enjoy this."

But some of these re-done songs have been written with good intentions. Elton John, for example, rewrote his song

"Candle in the Wind" for drama teacher Mary Jo Levesque. "I think it destroyed the way it was. It's too techno for my tastes, and I'm too old to like techno."

Though Don McLean has said

"It's a travesty that idiots remake wonderful, intellectual pieces of music and art. And what's worse, people actually enjoy this."

—Sandi Phillips,  
senior

tribute, he took a Police song and wrote the words to fit his situation.

"I think it's cool that he wrote the words for his friend, but it's not cool that he couldn't write it himself," said junior Nicki Peyton. "Write the music, Puff!"

Though some students are opposed to the remakes, many adults are also annoyed.

Senior Hal Newman likes the remake of A-Ha's "Take on Me" by Reel Big Fish. "It's newer, and more upbeat," he said.

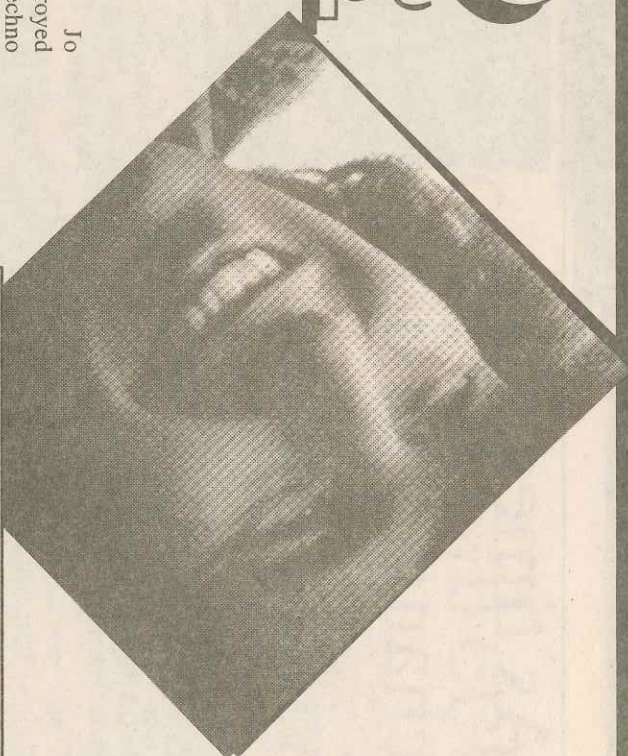
"I think that one purpose it's all served is that it brings the

he enjoys Madonna's version of his song, many people believe that the remakes are degrading to the original artists.

But some enjoy the remakes and find them to be more modernized.

Senior Ryan Yanovich. "I think that one purpose it's all served is that it brings the songs back to the foreground of America's music," said junior Ryan Yanovich.

Don McLean (above) wrote "American Pie" as a tribute to dead rockers Buddy Holly, the Big Bopper and Richie Valens. Today, some question the validity of Madonna's remake.



Which is better:  
original or remake?

"American Pie"	71%
By: Don McLean	29%
By: Madonna	
"American Woman"	
By: The Guess Who	47%
By: Lenny Kravitz	53%
"A Little Help From My Friends"	
By: The Beatles	42%
By: Joe Cocker	58%

Poll of 200 students  
Compiled by Myles Curran

**TOPPINGS**

Pepperoni	Jalapeno Peppers
Extra Cheese	Pineapple
Ham	Black Olives
Bacon	Anchovies
Onions	Italian Sausage
Green Peppers	Sausage
Banana Peppers	Ground Beef
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## Track team depends on relays and seniors for strong season

By Angela Fiorino  
Update Editor

As the new spring season rushes in so does the WS track team.

This year the track team has high expectations and plans to go for the gold. This winter season the team was successful with the girls placing sixth in the region and the guys placing tenth.

"For this upcoming year I'm hoping the team can place well at districts and regionals and I hope that we will improve," said Carly Estes, a junior member of the four-by-one team.

This spring the girls four-by-one team has set high expectations for themselves because they have the same talent returning from their winter season.

Other strong events will be girl's sprinting and boy's distance running.

"I am expecting a good boys distance team because we have runners returning from cross country that will really help us. I am hoping that we will score points all the way through states," said senior captain Neil Suri.

This year's senior team captains include Katie Weinberg, Nicole Jackson and Melanie Roberts and Eric Callender, Chris Callaway, Neil Suri, and Steven Holla.

Another successful winter event was the boys four-by-eight relay that finished sixth in the state. They are expected to be a very strong part of the track team throughout the spring season.

Along with the girl's distance team that is lead by senior Maria Barber and sophomore Maureen Hagan.

This year's shotput team is also a very strong part of the track team. The team is strong and has strong participants but is using the 99-00 year to rebuild.

"This year we are hoping to throw farther, be more unified as a team and to improve our technique and scores at all of the meets," said junior Terra Causin. Overall, the team looks at the spring season as an opportunity for improvement



Bree Vioshko

The track team is depending on the long distance runners for a good season.

and a chance to do well in meets and end of the season tournaments like states and regionals.

However it doesn't just come to them without any hard work.

"Track is a lot of hard work but the coaches are always there to help you and make you better runners," said freshman Emily Hatch. "We should do really well this season."

## Row, row, row your boat, but not so 'gently'

By Gracy Obuchowicz  
Oracle Editor

It's not the racing that made me do crew for four years.

Our races last less than six minutes, but they feel like hours. No matter how pumped and ready you feel before the race, you get one minute into that race

and the pain is intense. Lactic acid fills your muscles and your heart feels like it's going to burst. All you want to do is stop, but

there are other people in the boat counting on you doing your best. So you don't stop—you keep going and when that race is over you're glad you did your best.

The worst part is it never gets any easier.

I also dislike crew because of the fundraising. I don't get excited about waking up early on snowy winter Saturdays to deliver phonebooks. I don't



Segali Majestic

Gracy Obuchowicz, second from left, complains about crew a lot. But deep down inside, she keeps on coming back.

like pressuring my neighbors to buy pizzas or raffle tickets.

I don't do crew because I love rowing in the rain or freezing cold. I don't like giving up my afternoons or spring breaks.

I don't do crew because I love running up that huge hill beside the boathouse.

So when people ask me why I row, all I can think of is the noises. I do crew because I love the noises. The single click

of eight oars turning in unison and hitting the water together—it's not something I can easily describe in words, but it's just a feeling of doing well.

There's a crew shirt that pinpoints exactly how I feel about crew.

"You know it will never make you rich. But you risk everything! Some people will never understand. Some people already do."

## Publick brings his lacrosse experience to coaching post

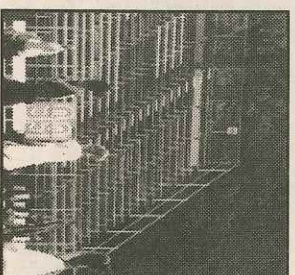
By Joey Tinsley  
Staff Writer

Ten years ago when PE teacher Brian Publick graduated from WS he knew that he would soon be back.

After graduating from high school, Publick attended Longwood College in southern Virginia. He majored in education, with his concentration in physical education.

"I just couldn't see myself sitting behind a desk working from 9-5," said Publick. "So I went into physical education."

When he went to Longwood, there was no men's lacrosse team, but the women's lacrosse coach realized his talent one day when he was tossing a ball around with a friend. Publick was then asked to become the assistant coach. He coached the team for two years. One season he helped coach them towards an



Lauren Edwards

impressive 12-0 record.

During the 1995-96 school year, he was a substitute teacher at Woodson and coached their JV lacrosse team.

Publick returned to WS as a PE teacher and as a girls lacrosse coach during the 1997-1998 season.

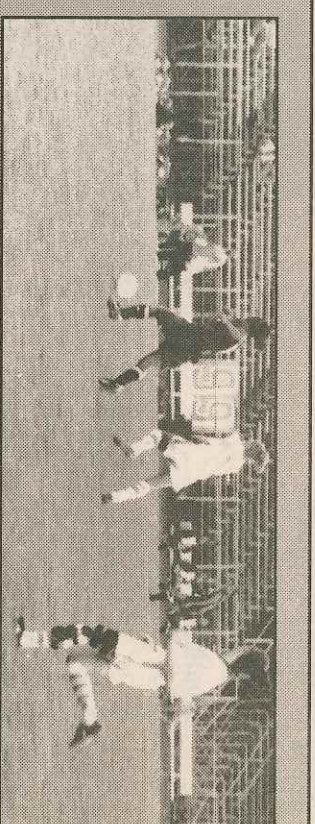
"I'm competitive, and my playing days are over, so I coach," said Publick.

This year's squad is looking to improve upon last year's 8-6 record. Unfortunately, they have lost many of their offensive starters.

However, the team still has a very solid lineup of players for this season.

Publick is currently studying at George Mason University part time. He's working toward earning his Masters Degree in education leadership.

"I plan to coach as long as I can," said Publick. "But I'll take it one season at a time."



### Which spring sport will you go see?

Vote Percentage

Team	26%
Girls Soccer	19%
Baseball	19%
Softball	10%
Boys Soccer	10%
Boys LAX	8%
Girls LAX	5%
Track	3%
Boys Tennis	

Survey of 200 students: half male, half female. Ten teachers were also polled.

—Compiled by Jenny Askin

## Spring sports 2000 Calendar

**Baseball:**  
MAR 31 vs LBraddock home 7  
APR 4 vs Annandale away 6  
APR 7 vs Hayfield home 7

**Boys tennis:**  
MAR 31 vs LBraddock home 4  
APR 4 vs Annandale away 4  
APR 7 vs Hayfield home 4

**Girls Soccer:**  
APR 3 vs Chantilly away 5:30/7  
APR 5 vs Langley home 5:30/7  
APR 11 vs Robinson home 5:30/7

**Boys Soccer:**  
APR 3 vs Chantilly home 5:30/7  
APR 11 vs Robinson away 5:30/7  
APR 13 vs LBraddock home 5:30/7

**Softball:**  
MAR 31 vs LBraddock home 7  
APR 4 vs Annandale away 6  
APR 7 vs Hayfield home 7

**Track and Field:**  
APR 1 Iggard Relays at Cent  
APR 5 TCW, Rob at TCW 4:30  
APR 8 Saxon Classic at Langley

**Boys Lacrosse:**  
MAR 31 vs Lee away 5:45/7:15  
APR 4 vs Jefferson home 5:45/7:15  
APR 6 vs Robinson away 5:45/7:15

**Girls Lacrosse:**  
MAR 31 vs Lee home 6/7:15  
APR 4 vs Jefferson away 6/7:15  
APR 6 vs Robinson home 6/7:15



# Personal essays: Why do you play? Soccer, basketball: making the team, managing my time

**By Kathy Wainwright**  
*Special to the Oracle*

Every day after school, the parking lot at WS empties as students go off with their friends or go to work. Yet unlike them I don't leave. I go to practice.

I have never had what most people call a "normal" high school life. On weekends I've played both soccer and basketball games while after school I have gone from one practice to another in the same day. However, all of the time put into sports has paid off in several ways.

Not many people get to meet their role model. People look up to athletes, musicians, movie stars, but few actually get to meet them. One benefit of sports has allowed me to meet Jackie Joyner-Kersey.

My sophomore year, the Lady Spartan basketball team went down to Raleigh, NC to participate in the Glaxo-Wellcome basketball tournament over winter vacation.

The tournament was played on the floor which the N.C. State men's and

women's teams play. Now whenever I see a game on TV it is strange to think I played in that same gym.

The team won the final game and later we were told to go into a room for a surprise. Once we sat down, Jackie Joyner-Kersey walked into the room.

As a girl and an athlete with asthma, it is amazing to see what she has done with her condition. After us, everyone took a picture with her and got an autograph.

Besides the small benefits that sports has brought, athletics have caused me to learn certain lessons and change my life.

The most important thing that I have learned would be how to manage my time. With having daily practices throughout the year and games each weekend there is little time to spend with my family, friends, and do schoolwork so I effectively learned time management.

I have missed out on a lot of high school activities and lost time to spend with my friends and family, but I would rather miss something than miss a state championship.



**Senior Kathy Wainwright is a veteran soccer player who wants to play at the college level.**

However, with the ability to manage time I have found time for everyone, even if it is not always enough.

Sports have brought me both highs and lows, from state championships to injuries, yet I have learned that the benefits outweigh the losses.

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## Lacrosse lures newcomer

**By Tommy Matthews**  
*Special to Oracle*

I started playing lacrosse during my junior year of high school encouraged by a friend of mine, Kyle Hoyt, who was a life long "lax" player himself. I joined the junior varsity lacrosse team, (usually reserved for lower classmen but in this case, I was special enough for them to take exception to this rule) and found myself reaping the rewards of inexperience.

I entered my first lacrosse practice having to borrow a lacrosse stick from Kyle since the one I had purchased was too short and intended for kids much younger than myself.

With this new stick in hand, I attempted one of my first passes during a drill in the auxiliary gym. The ball left my stick and managed to miss the intended teammate by about ten feet. It continued to bounce once and then disappeared into a deep crevice in the wall used to house the sliding wall that separates the gym into two large rooms.

Everyone stopped and stared with the unspoken conclusion that whatever dark abyss I had managed to throw the ball into would not be relinquishing it anytime soon.

To make matters worse I had to wear what was called a "box" helmet. A much older version of lacrosse helmets no longer worn by anyone who is serious about the sport. Everyone else had a "cascade" helmet, which made me stand out like a clown at a funeral.

The words "box helmet" were almost synonymous with "newcomer." I



**LAX is new to senior Tommy Matthews, center, second row, a member of the cross country team.**

wore it like a crown testifying to my lack of skill so that all my opponents would know that I really had no idea what I was doing.

Game day soon approached and my opportunity to score manifested itself. I cut to the right, let loose with a horribly uncoordinated underhand shot, and watched as the ball dribbled harmlessly to the goalie's feet.

I turned around to see just about the entire varsity team erupt in a near harmonizing cry of, "Overhand Tommy! Overhand!" I left the game with this valuable piece of information firmly ingrained in my memory.

I left a lot of games with memorable experiences that I can look back on and laugh at. And the more I look back on my first year as a lacrosse player, the more I realize how many things I have learned and how far I have come. Come to think of it, I better get practicing!

## Looking for a summer job?

*Test These Waters*

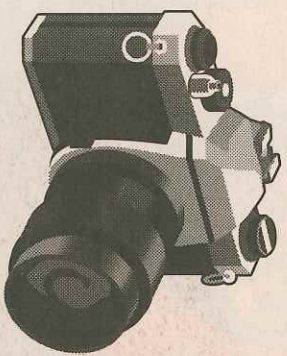


If you are energetic, reliable, spirited, like working with kids and are interested in becoming an assistant coach for Orange Hunt Sharks Swim Team, please contact Karen Wilson at [Wilsonsons@cs.com](mailto:Wilsonsons@cs.com)

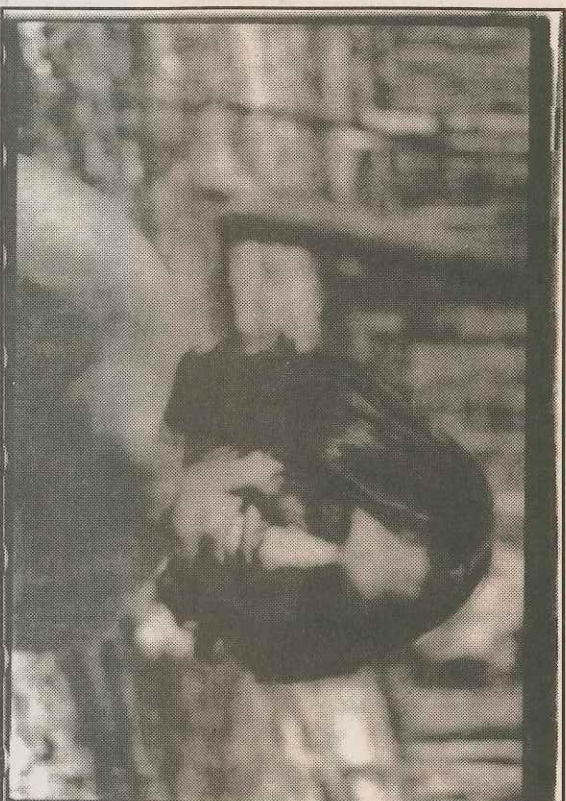
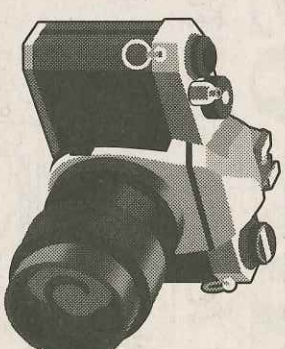


# And now for something completely

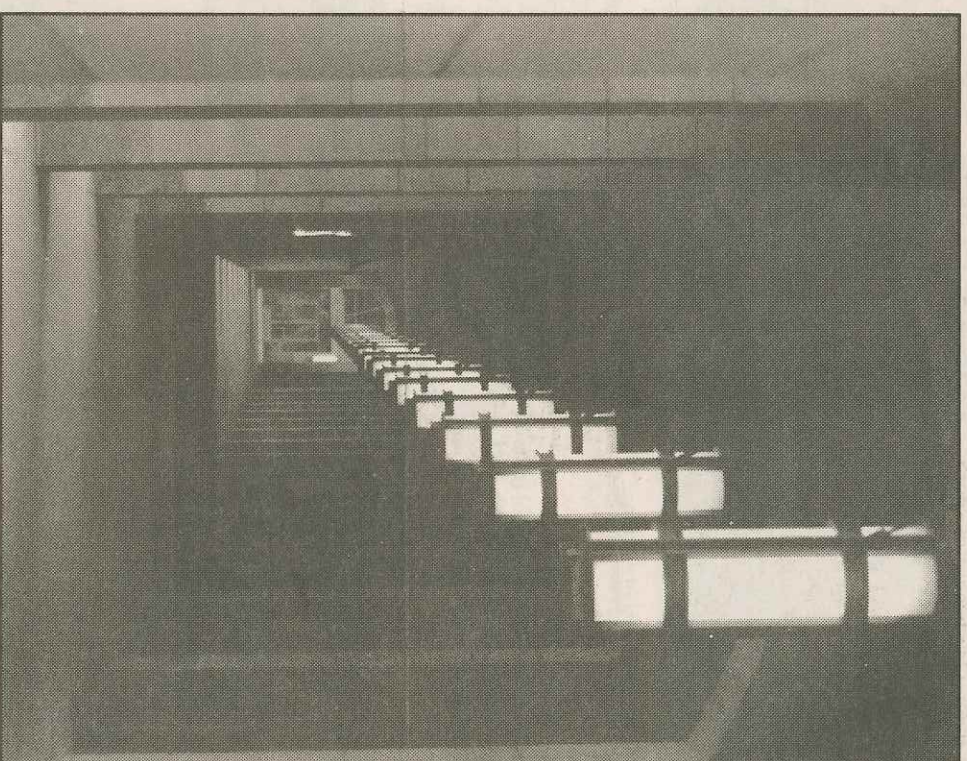
## different



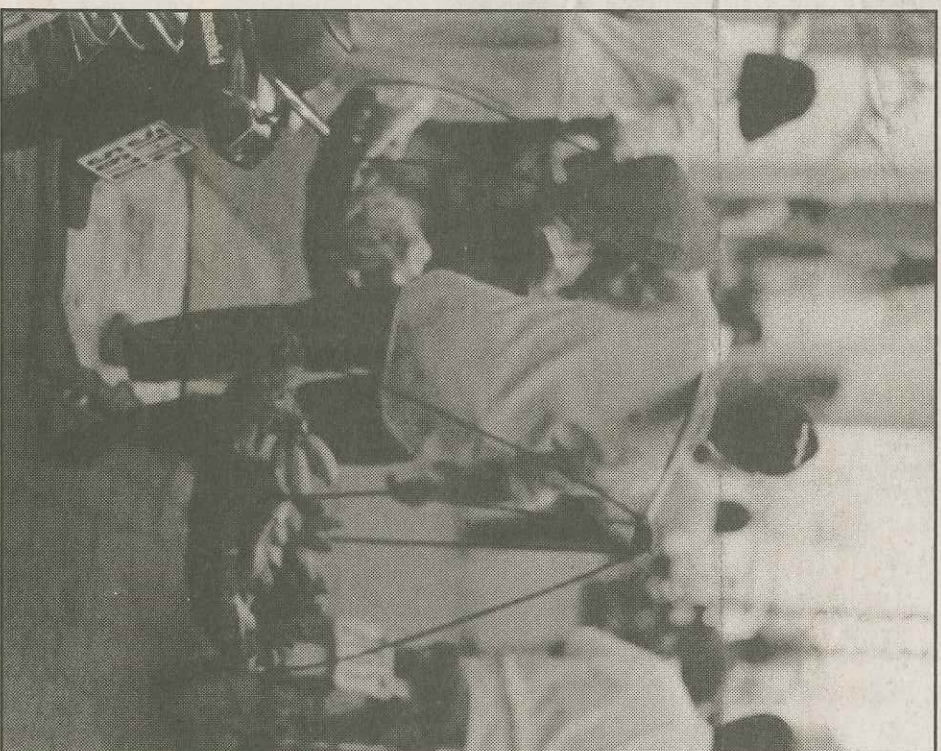
a photo essay by *Oracleites* with bylines that do not read photographer



**"An Unguarded Moment"** by Gracy Obuchowicz  
I printed this picture with a linen filter so that it would look grainy—like a dream. It was so cold that day, but Mike (the model) was nice enough to play the part of the hippie and take off his shirt. He offered to take off his shoes too, but I said he didn't have to. I'm not that cruel.

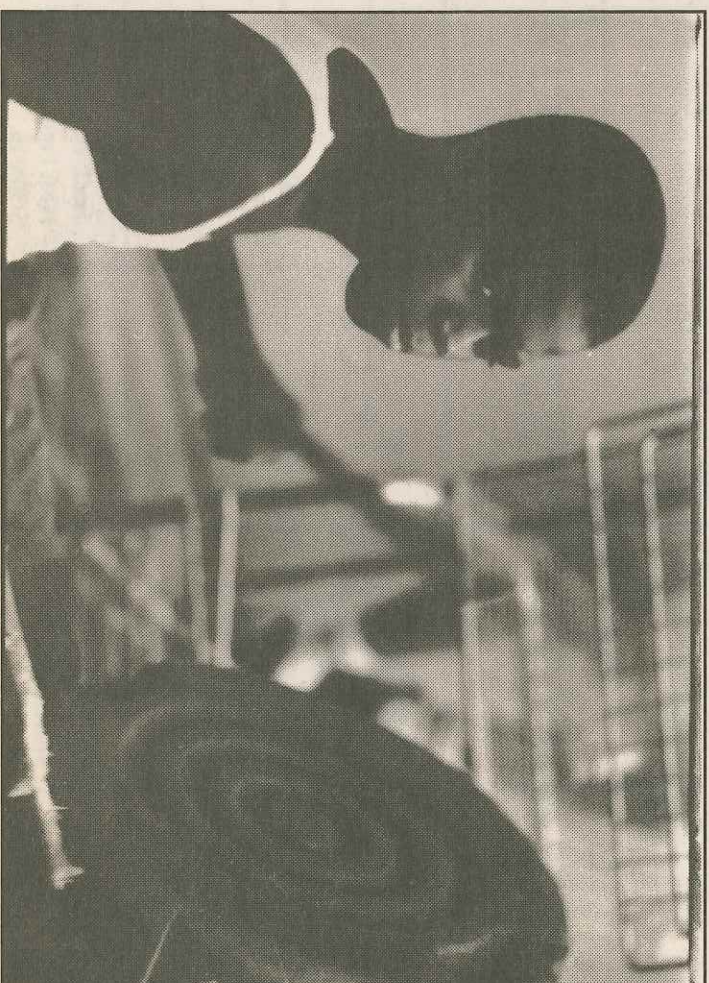
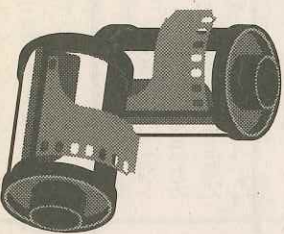


**Untitled** by Matt Barker  
This is a picture I took while in DC. I like how all the lines begin to converge in the distance. At the very end of the hallway, there's a door, which could be symbolic of something. But I don't feel like being deep right now, so I'll leave it at that.



**"Bananas"** by Melissa Tran  
I took this photo on a busy street in Vietnam. I like how the photo is rather blurry; it shows the hustle and bustle of these people's lives. Everyone was just going about their own business, and I turned to see a lady making her living selling bananas. I snapped the photo, then ran after her to sample some of the delicious fruit.

**Untitled** by Kelly Alm  
I was in Old Town and I saw these kids playing drums on the street for money. I asked them if I could photograph them, and then I bought them sandwiches.





# Horoscopes



**Virgo** (8/23-9/22): Bob and Ray love you, but we don't.



**Libra** (9/23-10/23): Mourn the loss of the Silver Diner's milkshake man, a fellow Libra.



**Scorpio** (10/24-11/22): Virgo doesn't love us, will you write our English research paper for us?



**Sagittarius** (11/23-12/21): Seek out your love of string cheese. Pisces and Leo involved.



**Capricorn** (12/22-1/20): See what happens when you try to curl up inside the school's satellite dish outside the library to take a nap.



**Aquarius** (1/21-2/18): Take up a new "safe" hobby like snake-charming or lion-taming.  
**Pisces** (2/19-3/20): Spend all first period trying to twist yourself into a pretzel. Spend all of third trying to untwist yourself.



**Aries** (3/21-4/19): Invest in clothing. We don't want to see you naked.



**Taurus** (4/20-5/20): Go to the school library and sit in the middle of the floor. When the librarians complain, say "At least I'm not talking."



**Gemini** (5/21-6/21): Try to console Libra with a chocolate milkshake. Make him pay for the dry-cleaning bill when he chucks it on your suit.



**Cancer** (6/22-7/22): Build your own school. Lock yourself out of it.



**Leo** (7/23-8/22): After tearing all your hair out, glue it back on. Tear it out all over again over stress from your English research paper.

-Compiled by Nikki Werking and Amy Whipple

## Top 10 Pranks to pull on April Fools' Day

10. Announce school is getting out early.
9. Put Super Glue on the lacrosse team's stick handles.
8. Put baby oil in your sister's shampoo.
7. Put Nair on a guy's legs while he is sleeping.
6. Set your brother's alarm clock an hour behind.
5. Put Saran Wrap over the toilet seat.
4. Smear Icy-Hot all over the toilet seat.
3. Send a fake virus to all of your IM friends.
2. Put vinegar in your dad's mouthwash.
1. Put itching powder in the baseball team's jock straps.

-Compiled by Bree Viroshko

## Your worst pranks

- Patricia Townsley, Nona Spain, and I Cheered Mr. Natale's room. We stashed them in his closet, file cabinets and in different desks. We then wrote Happy April Fools Day, in Cheerios, on the chalkboard."  
-Rachel Dubin, 12
- "I convinced my entire fifth grade class that it was my birthday and nobody had remembered by singing 'Happy Birthday to Me'."  
-Peter Thaxter, 11
- "My favorite April Fools Day prank is when my kids called my wife and left a message to call a Mr. Fox. She used to work for the government and had a lot of messages. The number was for the National Zoo. She actually called."  
-Jamie Morris, social studies teacher
- "My mom took a Hostess Cupcake, cut it open and took out the cream filling and put in cotton balls and put it in my dad's lunch."  
-Sara Streiner, 11
- "I wrote this thing about how NASA had received these [latent] signals and would interpret them at 5 p.m. I put it on AOL News, so people believed it. I got in a lot of trouble."  
-Ted Leonis, Owner of the Washington Capitals and AOL executive

-Compiled by Erin Mair

# April 2000

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 Drama Candy Sale	3 PTSA Board Meeting Spartan Hall 7p.m.	4 Boys tennis away @ Annandale 4 p.m.	5 Track @ TCW vs. TCW and Robinson 4:30 p.m.	6 End of the 3rd Quarter	7 Softball vs. Hayfield JV- away 6 p.m. V- home 7 p.m.	8 Sadies Spring Fling Cafeteria 8:30-11:30 p.m.
9 Prisoners of Conscience candy sale	10 Girls Lacrosse vs. LB JV- away 6 p.m. V- away 7:15 p.m.	11 YADAPP meeting Spartan Hall 2:15-3 p.m.	12 Baseball vs. TCW JV- home 6 p.m. V- away 6 p.m.	13 Soccer vs. LB G-away 7 p.m. B- home 5:30 p.m.	14 Boys tennis home vs. West Potomac 4 p.m.	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	1	2	3	4	5	6

Spring break



National Youth  
Service Day  
7:30 a.m. - noon

PTSA Board Meeting  
Spartan Hall 7p.m.

Boys lacrosse- home  
vs. Herndon 5:45-7:15  
p.m.

Track vs. LB and  
West Potomac  
5:30 p.m.

Spring Musical  
"Damn Yankees"  
May 4-6

Baseball vs. Hayfield  
JV- home 6 p.m.  
V- away 7 p.m.

SATS @ WS

Booster Meeting  
Principal confer-  
ence room 7 p.m.

Softball vs. Robinson  
JV- home 6 p.m.  
V- away 6 p.m.

Track vs.  
Annandale and  
Hayfield 4:30  
p.m.

All-State chorus

Spring pep rally  
main gym  
break

National Youth  
Service Day  
7:30 a.m. - noon