

DECEMBER 17, 1999  
VOLUME 34 NUMBER 6

THE

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FROM LAST  
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REIGN



WEST SPRINGFIELD HIGH SCHOOL 6100 ROLLING ROAD SPRINGFIELD, VIRGINIA 22152

## Ring in Y2K but be careful not to crash

By Lauren Decot  
ETC Assistant

On July 23, a teen girl was standing in line at Express in Times Square, New York, clutching a pair of pants that she loved and just had to have. The total came to \$41.86 and she handed her American Express card over to the cashier. As the cashier swiped her card, the check-out system crashed and was out of order for two days. The system crashed because it had encountered a card that expired after 1999.

The year 2000, or Y2K, is the term used to refer to the possibility that computers will malfunction as the 1990s end and the year 2000 arrives.

The basic cause of the problem is that many computer programs, especially those written in the 1980s or earlier, use two digits instead of four to represent the year. Such a computer cannot determine whether a date written as 2/21/50 refers to February 21, 1950, or February 21, 2050.

Until the millennium neared, any two digit year could be assumed to be prefaced by 19, but this is no longer the case. Many possible consequences of this problem exist.

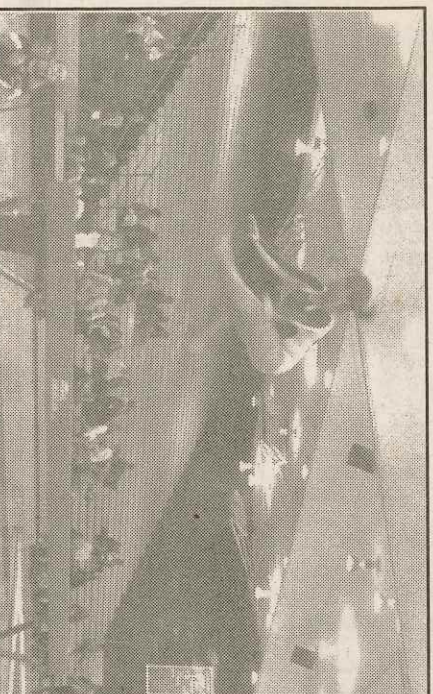
For example, if a computer interprets a credit card expiration date such as 11/00 as November 1900 instead of November 2000, a store might refuse to accept the card.

Many government officials and computer wizards are working hastily to try and correct this problem as 2000 approaches. Within WS, however, concern is not very high.

"My personal computer is Y2K failed. I expect mass chaos. Within the school, however, I think we are safeguarded against any problems," said history teacher Micah Herzig.

Within the school, no specific precautions are being made. On January 1, the superintendent will go around to each of the Fairfax County Schools and see what has occurred regarding the computers.

Dr. Smith and the superintendent will have to come into the school to check and see what damage has occurred. If there has been damage, there is a procedure that he will follow to report the problem. If computers don't comply with the date changes, data could



Tom Stormer  
Gymnast Jenn D'Souza competes on the balance beam as Coach Becky Howery watches her form.

## Finding gymnastics coach a balancing act

By Amy Steed  
Business/Systems Assistant

Tumbling and balancing are normal for a gymnastics team, but having to do this without a coach isn't. But WS girls' gymnastics team was doing just this until new coach Rebecca Howery joined the team right before the season started.

The girls' gymnastics team would normally begin conditioning before the season starts, but not having a coach made this difficult. Many of the girls are members of local clubs so they practiced on their own to stay in shape. While the girls continued to practice independently, the school was looking for a coach.

"We looked for a coach since summer time. There is just a shortage of coaches," said Tod Chappell.

If a coach was not found in time for the girls to participate in meets, arrangements were going to be made for them to practice with Robinson's team.

Most of the girls on the team would have been happy simply to compete, but they still wanted to be their own team.

"I think we might have lost some school spirit," said freshman Mollie Randa, "We wouldn't have had our own identity practicing with Robinson."

Despite the coaching situation, team members remained optimistic about the season.

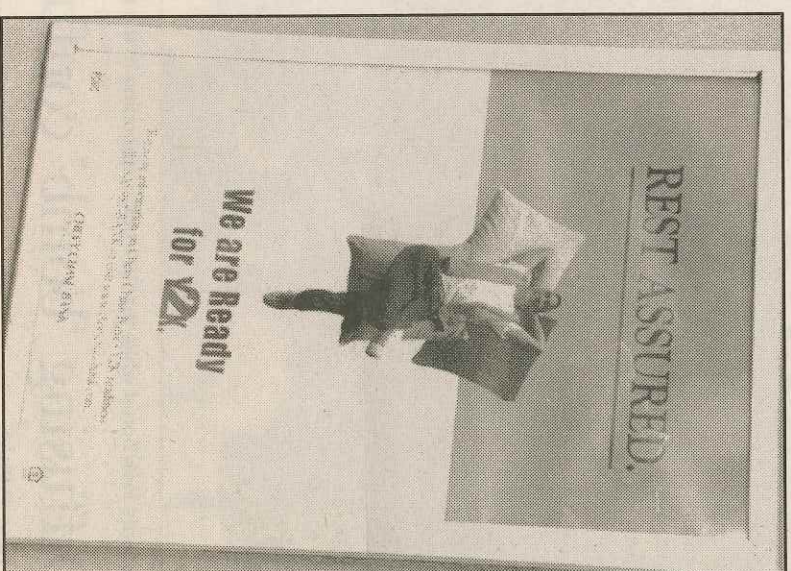
"This year was a little strange," said gymnast Jennifer D'Souza. "But I think it is cool because girls came out and stuck with it even though we were having problems."  
See COACH Page 4

## A department in transition Theater department finishes 'The Crucible' and begins production of 'Damn Yankees'

By Erin Muir  
Managing Editor

The transition from a dark tale of witchcraft and morality gives way to a musical about the World Series as the WS theater department closes "The Crucible" and begins "Damn Yankees."

On November 18, 19, and 20, the WS theater department preformed Arthur Miller's "The Crucible." This classic play chronicles the Salem witch trials, beginning with the hysterical accusations of four young girls. The girls, Betty Paris, Abigail Williams, and two of their friends (played by Meghan



Ellen Waylonis  
Chevy Chase Bank, among other businesses, is advertising that they are Y2K compliant. Customers are wary of the safety of their accounts.

McClelland, Heidi Foland, Alexi Shepard and Mary Warren, respectively) begin accusing themselves from punishment. In the end, it becomes a game. They hold the fate of the townspeople in their hands, and take joy in pretending spells have been cast upon them to convince local judges to convict women of witchcraft.

The play centers around John Proctor, played by Kirk Westwood, who realizes the falsity of the girl's accusations. He has an opportunity to stop the hysteria, but only if he discredits Abigail Williams by revealing that he committed adultery with her. As the plays goes on, more townspeople are forced to choose between morality, and saving themselves.

Overall, the acting was excellent. Peter Thaxter, playing Giles Corey, was a standout as an elderly man trying to save his wife, who was unjustly accused of witchcraft. However, Miller's unwieldy dialogue caused several actors to stumble over their lines.

The theater department began work on "The Crucible" in September. The sets had to be designed and built from scratch, and costumes and props had to be made as well. With little time to prepare, both the cast as the crews worked frantically to finish the play.

"I was afraid until Thursday night," said junior Peter Thaxter. "I feared for the play. But on opening night I was pleasantly surprised with the outcome."

The next story the theater department will take on is "Damn Yankees," by Richard Adler and Jerry Ross. It tells the story of a Washington Senators fan who is desperate to see his team win the World Series. But the New York Yankees are guaranteed to win once again. But Joe Boyd is approached by the Devil, who offers him a deal. If Joe will give the Devil his soul, Satan will give Joe enough talent to lead his beloved Senators to the pennant.



Lauren Edwards  
Ryan Yanovich as John Willard, and Sherril Boone as Tituba, act out a scene from "The Crucible."

# Giving the Oracle props

We're good.

The *Oracle* itself is a fine example of student publications. Sure we make mistakes, but so does the Washington Post. We aren't full-time reporters. We are high school students balancing homework, sports, and friends while producing an award-winning newspaper every few weeks.

But the truly great thing about the *Oracle* is that it gets better each year. The old issues of the *Oracle* are pinned up around the room in a circular design. These paper reminders of *Oracles* past let our eyes witness the evolution of the *Oracle*.

Our eyes start over the doorway, by the pencil sharpener. The colorful newsmagazines from only six years ago may be appealing at first, but a closer look will reveal that there was a lot of untapped potential in those pencil drawn sketches and articles about gossip. And then came newsprint, when the *Oracle* saw its

finest day yet. Newsprint transformed the *Oracle* from a cutesy newsmagazine into a professional, more mature newspaper. And just when you thought it was safe to call the *Oracle* as good as it could be, in came color. Last year the orange and blue theme on the end pages created

## Editorial

a new striking appeal. But the features didn't peak until this year's three-dimensional flag. Of course the occasional printer mishap leaves the *Oracle* frontpage without blue, and produces an effect similar to what the *Oracle* would look like if it had the flu. But even with these inconsistencies, we still received compliments and we realize that change really can be good.

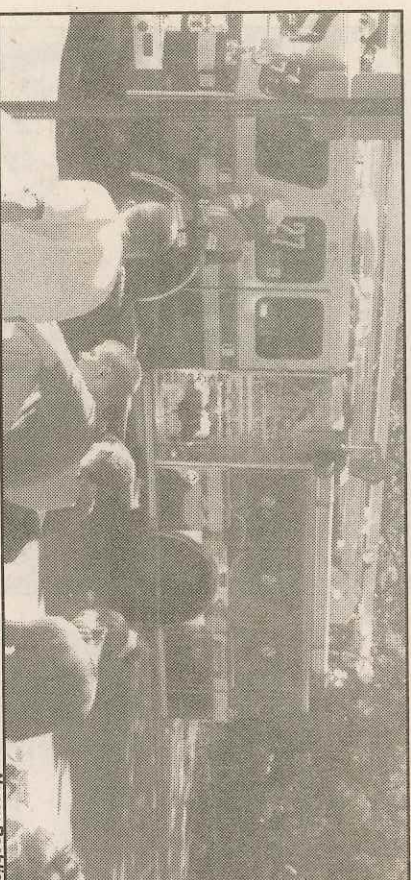


Happy Holidays from the 99-00 Oracle staff. Brooke Nelson

We have gotten more creative, more interesting, and more entertaining. We aren't afraid to take risks in our reporting and stories. Don't be surprised to find the next Woodward and Bernstein on our staff.

So we decided to take a break from challenging school policy, and use this, our very last editorial of the 1900s, to pat ourselves on the back.

Good job *Oracle*, and we can't wait to see what the new year will bring.



Nancy Rachlis

## Students look bored while the firetruck, responding to the bomb threat call, passes.

### Diffusing 'bomb' confusion

Dear Editors:

I am writing to express my dismay about your coverage of the recent bomb threat or hoax that occurred on November 5. Your coverage was irresponsible and betrayed important principles of journalism.

First, your headline "Bomb forces students to stadium" alleges that there was a bomb. There was none and to scare parents and the community with such a headline was irresponsible.

Second, your article challenged the wisdom of moving students into the stadium. You quoted a student saying, "I don't understand why they put us on the bleachers when there could have been a bomb under there and raised the question how "officials were certain that the stadium itself was bomb-free." As a

newspaper you had an obligation to raise that question but also to answer it. Did you ask officials

if the police had swept the area before moving students? Apparently not. In fact,

nowhere in the article is a single member of the police force or a member of the administrative staff quoted.

In sum, when dealing with bomb hoaxes in this era of school shootings, journalists should be extra cautious and more diligent in their work. You, I am sorry to say, failed on both scores.

--James McGrath Morris

## Letters To the Editor

### 2,4,6,8--- cheerleaders don't appreciate Oracle criticism

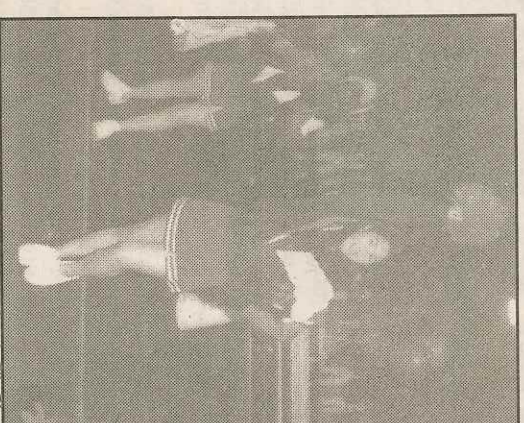
Dear Editors:

In response to Sue Moon's article in the November 22 *Oracle*, let's get the facts straight. Cheerleading was designated a sport in Fairfax County in 1994. Cheerleaders abide by all Virginia High School League rules and regulations. Cheerleading has two purposes at WS. One is to support the football and basketball teams. The second, and most

important, is to represent WS in district, regional, and state cheerleading competitions.

Yes, the competition is fierce.

Cheerleaders demonstrate their strength, skill and agility by performing difficult stunts, tumbling passes, and complex dances. Cheerleading for the football and basketball games is important and fun, but secondary to the cheerleaders' goal of winning a title. The squad starts practicing for district competition in



Oracle File Photo

Varsity cheerleader Nikki Werking smiles at the crowd during a football game.

August. They practice from August until early November three times a week for two to three hours. They also practice once a week for sideline cheers at the football games. Recently, when school was closed for Election Day, the Varsity cheerleaders practiced for four hours to prepare for the district competition. If the squad advances to the state competition in March, these practices continue through basketball season, in addition to regular game practices.

The cheerleaders compete against each school in the district. Points are scored in several categories. The winning team has the highest score and the top three teams advance to regional competition. The stands are packed with fans waving signs and cheering wildly for their team. WS won the district title in 1997, and placed third in the district this year.

If gymnastics is a sport, than surely cheerleading is. Both are judged in a subjective manner and points are earned in several categories.

Not only is cheerleading recognized as a high school sport, but also many universities, including George Mason and James Madison, offer athletic scholarships for cheerleading.

So go ahead and wear those shirts...Cheerleading is OUR sport.

--WS Varsity Cheerleading Squad

## From the Editors

The *Oracle* would like to apologize for our misleading headline in the November 22 issue regarding the recent bomb threat. In the crunch of deadline we failed to catch a mistake that should have been easily detected. There was in fact no bomb, but only a bomb threat, which was clarified later in the article.

We also regret that our research and reporting did not provide the information indicating whether or not the stadium had been checked. After doing further investigation, we found that the stadium had been searched before the students were brought there. We will be sure to check our facts more carefully in the future, especially



in situations as sensitive as this. Again we apologize for any misunderstanding or inconvenience our mistakes may have caused.

--The Editors

# THE ORACLE

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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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c. 1998-1999

# We wish you a merry holiday

By Ellen Waylonis  
Photo Editor

Merry non-demoninational secular occasion. In other words, Happy December.

In this overly-cautious era of Season's Greetings and Happy Holidays, I have found the mother of all generic well-wishings. "Happy December" is the ideal greeting for anyone who isn't quite sure which holiday wish is most appropriate and doesn't want to offend by choosing the wrong holiday. It even works for those people who don't celebrate any holiday at all, but who still want to enjoy the season.

But maybe we shouldn't have to worry about offending anyone. I'm not Jewish, but

I would have no problem if someone wished me a Happy Hanukkah. That's eight whole days of holiday cheer coming my way.

And how about Kwanzaa? I have no idea how many days it lasts, but I'm sure I would enjoy every one of them if someone were to wish me a bit of Kwanzaa happiness. I mean, Christmas and Yule celebrants only have one specified day for being merry. Why not enjoy some of the other (longer) winter holidays?

In this respect, Happy December is the ideal greeting. Instead of enjoying only a few days of celebration, there is an entire month of glee.

But why stop at a month? How about happy winter? Or we could be slightly more specific—in March and April, we could wish one another a Happy Tax Season. Anyone who has

ever stared a W-2 form in the face knows that tax time could use an injection of joy. And then there's that wonderful time at the end of every month when approximately one in every twelve Americans runs to get his car inspected before the sticker expires. Merry Inspection Rush!

But Hallmark might not go for invented holidays. Of course, we could always popularize the less celebrated holidays. We go a day off for a couple of dead presidents, but Rosh Hashana goes by almost unnoticed. An entire season of possible holiday cheer untapped—a travesty if I ever saw one.

But until I can convince the greeting card industry that Merry Sweeps Week cards would be a good investment we will have to stick with what we have. So Happy December.

## A Christmas carol

By Donnie Watkins  
News Editor

For the record, this is a Christmas break column. You heard me—not a winter break column. Not a multi-cultural, pseudo-egalitarian, appreciation of each and every winter holiday—religious, secular, and otherwise—break column. No, this is a Christmas break column and it shall be devoted to the holiday most Americans celebrate—including me.

The paradox? I don't for a minute buy into the whole Christmas story. Not to be shrewd, offensive, cynical, or snide but—and trust me when I tell you—VIRGINS DO NOT GIVE BIRTH. If you doubt this ask yourself a question: have you have seen a nun on birth control? (If you answered yes to that I highly recommend that you consider changing religions.)

Why, then, would I celebrate Christmas? The gifts? Nope. The decorations? Wrong again. Good will towards men? Have you ever read my column? No, I celebrate Christmas because it has the best music.

The first Christmas song was written in 1929. After the Great Crash on Wall Street parents could not afford to buy their children gifts. And so, one clever man (or woman, or ape, or whatever will get you politically correct

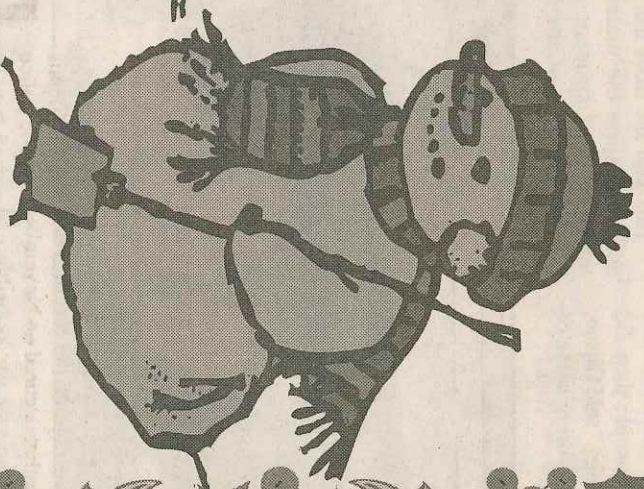
bloodhounds off my back) wrote a now-unknown carol called *Shut up, it's Christmas*. The song was a hit and spawned a whole new musical category: Christmas music.

Many of those first Christmas songs are still popular today. *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*, *Frosty the Snowman*, *Monica the Intern*. Each of these tunes inspire in us that feeling unique to Christmas—the feeling which compels us to lie to children so that it is not us whom they thank for their gifts, but a fat man (or woman, or ape...) who breaks into our homes each year.

Unfortunately, Christmas music has become the latest victim of our politically correct times. Following a ban on a number of Christmas classics (the latest example—*I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas* was pulled from record stores after its lyrics were deemed racist), song writers have become wary of offending anyone.

Today, classic Christmas songs are being altered to conform to modern social standards. Following are just a few examples:

- (a) "Christmas tree, oh Christmas tree," is now, "Tree, oh tree."
- (b) "I saw mommy kissing Santa Claus, underneath the mistletoe last night," is now, "I saw my parent or legal guardian embracing another member of the human race underneath a plant."
- (c) "Joy to the world, the Lord has come," is



now, "Joy to the world, some guy is here."

Now, of course it should offend us when people celebrate holidays we do not—I'm offended by birthday celebrations 364 days out of the year, but I would never ask that people stop singing *Happy Birthday* except on October 7. Because my birthday is April 28.

The point is, Christmas music should not offend those who don't celebrate the holiday. We need to learn to accept each other's differences and respect the fact that Christmas is better than every other holiday—except my birthday.

## Get him—He got the last Furby!

By Erin Muir  
Managing Editor

Christmas is the season where people sing about "Peace on earth and goodwill to all men," and then get in a brawl over the last Furby.

I have decided that this phenomena is not the result of hypocrisy. People want peace and love and joy. When they sing the hymn, they mean it. But after the moment has passed, all they are left with is the unendurable stress the holidays cause. After a month of baking, decorating, shopping, and writing cards while simultaneously trying to keep up with their job, housework and other everyday activities, people are exhausted and cranky. And when the person next to them snatches the last Pikachu toy, it's the final straw.

As soon as Thanksgiving is finished, we are inundated with Martha Stewart moments on TV. A happy family gathers around their 14-

foot Noble fir tree decorated with hand-blown glass ornaments. They happily munch on sugar cookies still warm from the oven, gooey with frosting and elaborate patterns of sprinkles.

Every rational person knows that reality is nothing like that. But when Martha Stewart

**When Martha Stewart makes her own grapevine and pomegranate wreaths, people think they need to do it too. Unreasonably high expectations generally cause people to explode.**

makes her own grapevine and pomegranate wreaths, people think they need to do it too. And when you pile unreasonably high expectations on an already stressed out person, it's only a

matter of time before he or she explodes.

These impossibly high standards are becoming more and more common. Parents want their children to be above average in everything, children want TV-worthy compassion and sympathy from their parents, and everyone wants to outdo their neighbor.

After years of constant pressure like this, people are starting to snap. Everybody remembers the woman in Texas who hired an assassin to kill a neighbor's daughter who jeopardized her daughter's chances of making it on to the cheerleading squad. More recently, a woman in Japan murdered a four-year-old who was accepted into an elite preschool program her own daughter was denied entrance into.

So far, no one has killed for the last honey baked ham or string of blinking outdoor lights, but I would not be surprised if they did. People get so caught up in making Christmas picture perfect that they forget to celebrate it.

## SGA plans year as sponsor anticipates return to school

By Gracy Obuchowicz  
Oracle Editor

SGA member Sean Bury is struggling with a small, inflatable chair.

He drags it to the counter of the biology room that has become the new home of the SGA. When it is properly in place, he hops up on the counter and lies down, using the chair as a pillow.

He does this unnoticed as his partners in SGA, Candace Gilson and Joe Styron, calmly eat their lunches and discuss the current role of SGA and what they want it to be.

"We have all the old scrapbooks from when WS first opened and the people then did so many cool things," said Gilson. "We are trying to bring some of

that back."

Their first attempt at bringing back past traditions was renaming Homecoming Week "Sparta Week."

"Everyone thought that we just left the 'n' off of 'Spartan,' but it was really supposed to be called that," said Gilson.

But they are not discouraged by the misunderstanding. After taking a break after the hectic Homecoming Week, the SGA-run PSAB is planning to have a birthday dance sometime during the winter months to celebrate the birthday of the school.

"We want to keep the school active year 'round," said Styron.

This year the SGA has been active, despite the maternity leave of their sponsor Jenn Owens. Because of the huge

responsibility of Homecoming, the SGA and Owens were in "constant contact," but now they only talk about once a week.

"The [SGA] kids did an excellent job during Homecoming Week," said Owens. "I'm really proud of the job that they are doing."

The extra responsibility of managing themselves has forced the SGA to become more independent. But they have also relied on special education teacher Kathy Pardew who has filled in as a temporary sponsor until Owens returns after winter break.

"[The independence] was hard at first, especially during Homecoming Week, but we got used to it," said SGA member Brianna Butler. "Mrs. Pardew has been a big help to us."

Another challenge of the SGA is finding their own space. Ever since their room was converted to a security office, the SGA has used Owens' biology classroom, but still hope for a room of their own.

"It would be great if we could have a room upstairs so we could be more visible to the school, but it doesn't look like that is going to happen this year," said Styron.



Tom Stormer

Captains Mary Cantu, Kristin White, and Sue Moon prepare for the uneven bars at a Hayfield meet. The team finished in fourth place.

## New coach arrives

From Coach Page 1

Howery is currently a physical education teacher at Sanburg Intermediate. According to Chappell she is impressed with the girls on the team.

"Mrs. Howery is very pleased with the girls in the week or so she has had to see them," said

Chappell.

The girls are thankful to have their new coach and are eager to see how the rest of the season turns out.

"Mrs. Howery is fun and talkative and is just like part of the team," said Randa. "She is tough but makes it fun."

## WS combats Y2K

From Y2K Page 1

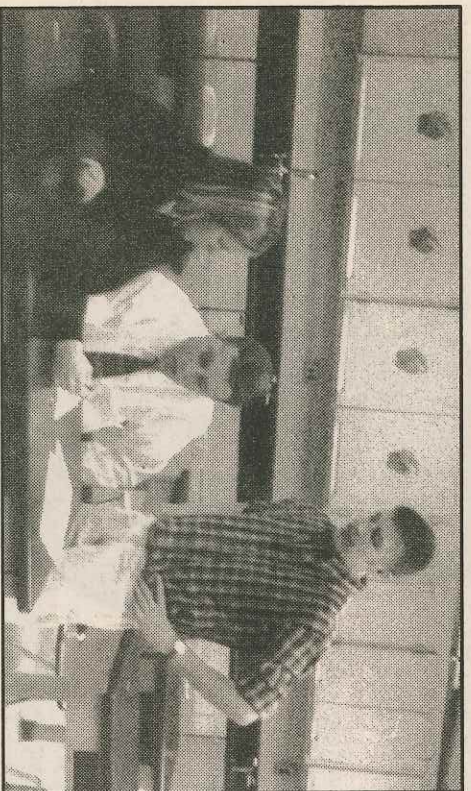
be lost. However, there are things a worried person can do to prepare.

"I received a free program from Microsoft. I downloaded it and it prepares all of my Microsoft programs for Y2K," said sophomore Kon Yi.

It is apparent to some that others are making a big deal out of nothing. There have been articles in magazines and

newspapers that explain how to prepare and what to buy before January 1, 2000. Extra batteries, flashlights, six bottles of water for each member of a family, and canned goods have been recommended to people who are worried.

"There are dumb people running around and buying \$5,000 worth of food and storing it in their basement," said Yi. "Nothing is going to happen."



Bree Vraksto

SGA Officers Jaecque Storm, Joe Styron, and Sean Bury plan future events.

Now Open

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# Farm harvests a happy holiday

By Angela Fiorino  
Update Editor

They all bundled up in their heaviest jackets and surveyed the land for the perfect tree. The family found what they wanted and started chopping down the tree that would soon stand in their living room covered in Christmas lights and ornaments.

Northern Virginia's Christmas tree farms provide busy families with the chance to put a little "country" in their holidays. The farms around the area grow, prune and sell Christmas trees. They also provide special, family-oriented activities to make the experience even more festive.

Krop's Crops of Great Falls grows several kinds of Christmas trees, including Douglas Fir, Norway and Blue Spruce, and White and Scotch Pine. The farm also features a hay maze, a tree house and a bonfire, along with a small petting zoo with farm animals including goats, pigs, chickens and even camels.

"I always look forward to Christmas and I love to play Christmas music for the families that come to cut down trees," said owner Larry Krop. "Everyone is in a great mood and it's a great atmosphere."

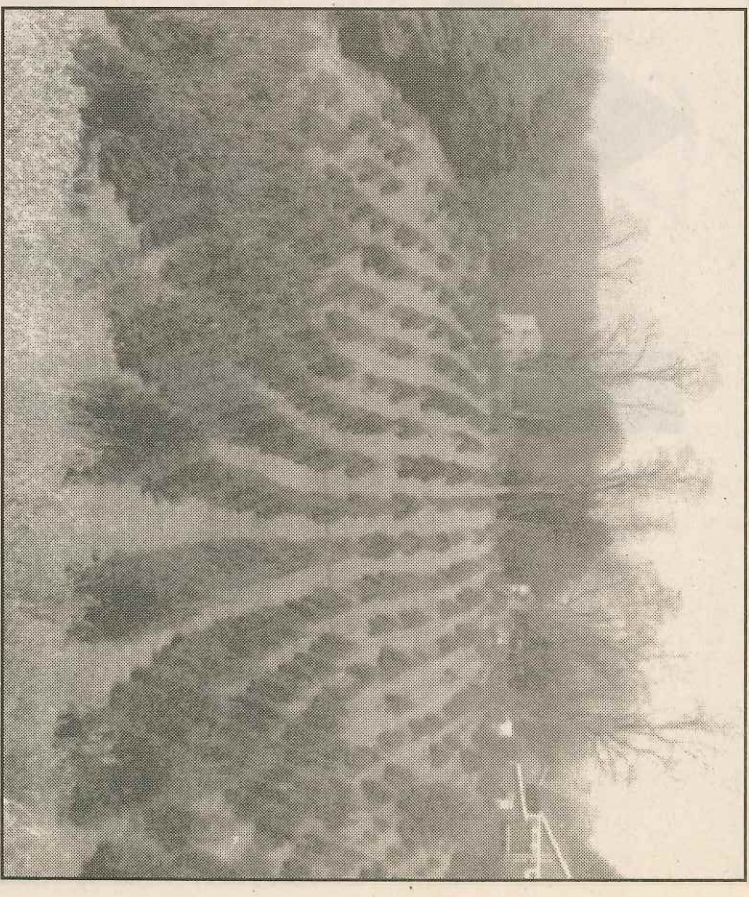
Getting the trees ready for customers is an important part of Christmas tree farming. Making sure that all the trees are in shape and healthy is a job that keeps

the Krops busy year-round.

Krop's Crops also offers garland and wreaths, and they wrap up trees and tie them to your car without charge. The farm is donating a portion of its proceeds to the Optimists Club, to provide services for needy families.

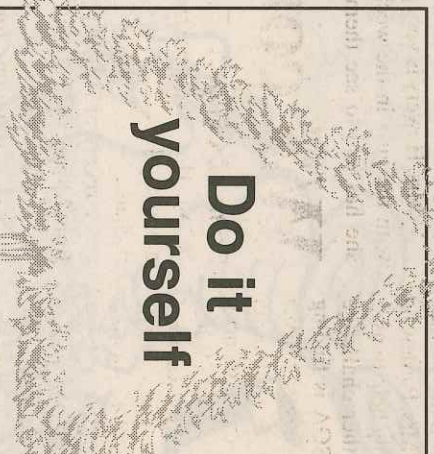
However, Krop's Crops is not the only Christmas tree farm in town. Evergreen Acres in Manassas is open weekends, and offers spruces and pines and also lets you choose and cut your own Christmas trees.

"I had a great time cutting down my Christmas tree," said customer Sue Ellen Wells. "There is such a wide selection of trees and things to do. I love taking my family there."



Krop's Crops offers a do-it-yourself alternative to Christmas tree shopping.

Bree Vinosko



## Do it yourself

**Krop's Crops**  
430-8955  
1110 Georgetown Pike  
Great Falls  
Open weekly 10 am—dark

**Directions:** Take the Beltway to exit 13. Go west on Georgetown Pike. Go eight miles down Georgetown Pike. Krop's Crops is located exactly two miles past the town of Great Falls on the right.

**Evergreen Acres**  
594-3330  
Manassas, VA  
Open weekends

**Directions:** Take I-95 south to Dumfries, Route 234 north. Go eight miles and turn left on Aden Rd. Go six miles and turn left on Fleetwood Dr. Go one-and-a-half miles and turn right on Hazelwood Dr. Evergreen Acres is one-and-a-half miles on the left.

# Update: Just shootin' around

## Careful with the guns

Terrance G. Stafford of St. Paul, Minn., was charged with reckless discharge of a firearm at a gun show. He said he wanted to test a .22-caliber automatic but feared damaging the gun if he attempted to "dry fire" it without a round in the chamber, so he loaded it and fired at the floor. Bullet fragments hit four people, one of whom had to be hospitalized.

## Suck a what?

Stephanie England of Joplin, Mo., complained to school authorities after her son's fifth-grade teacher brought in a plastic bag of cat feces and taped it to the boy's desk for an hour as an object lesson. The punishment went too far, England said, even though

she acknowledged that Preston has a problem, at home and at school, in overusing the phrase, "Suck a turd."

## Just a baby at heart

Police in North Platte, N.H., have been looking for a man who has appeared several times in public since early July wearing baby clothes. The police have named him "The Big Bonnet." He was last spotted October 29, bending over a bench paddling himself.

## I just wanted to feel it

In Sheboygan, Wis., two teenagers were hospitalized with leg wounds after being shot by a relative. According to Sheriff David Adams, the two boys were curious to see what it was like to be shot, so they asked their 34-year old uncle to do it. He was arrested.

## Go ahead, hit me

Thirty-six-year-old Akira Hareruya, whose company went bankrupt, has been working the streets of Tokyo trying to earn money by inviting passersby to put on boxing gloves and take swings at him for \$9 a minute. He promises not to hit back. He averages \$200 a night.

## Actually, I did it

In Toronto, David Oraha got in trouble minutes after being acquitted of assault. As the courtroom cleared, Oraha wandered up to a police officer and asked, "So that's it? It's over? I was acquitted, like O.J.?" After the officer nodded, Oraha said, "Well off the record, it was me." The officer turned him in.

—Compiled by Roberto Garcia

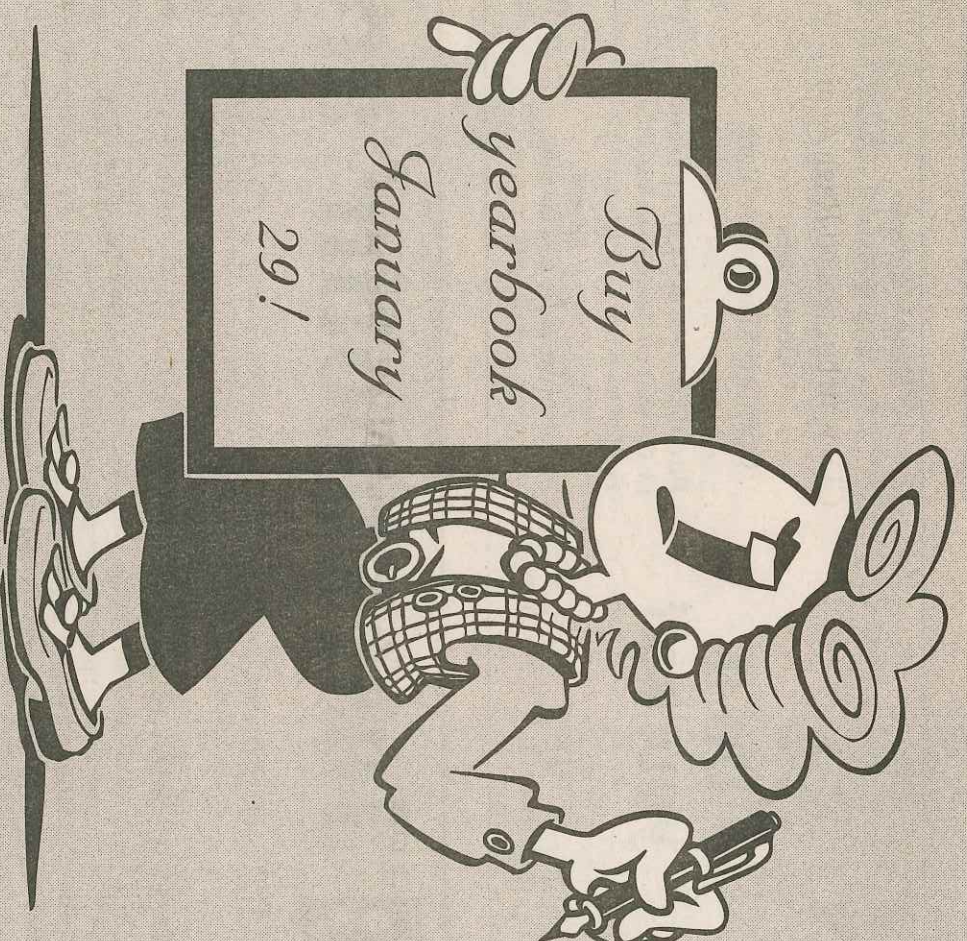


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# LAST CHANCE!



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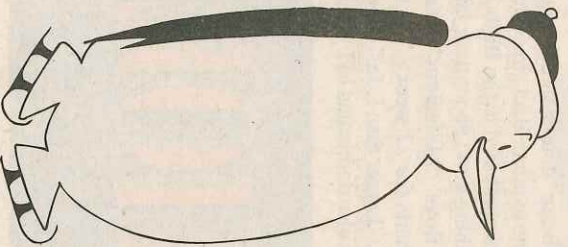
is the season to stuff your face and stuff your little sister's stocking. And since music makes the heart grow fonder, *The Oracle* decided to take a closer look at the popular sounds for this holiday season.

From Rage (Against the Machine) to Recycled Rock Bands (Santana), from swing-inspired pop (Lou Bega) to old women who should know better (Mariah Carey); from 16-year-old rappers (Lil' Wayne), to teen idols who just won't go away (Britney Spears and The Backstreet Boys), *The Oracle* reviews the Billboard Top 10 for the End of the Millennium. We've listened to the CDs from No. 10 (Foo Fighters) to No. 1 (Rage). Six of these selections debuted in the Top 10. Two have been near the top of the charts since spring. And, yes, it's true: The WWF does have a Top 10 CD, while only one of the boy bands is represented.

The bad news: This list is a couple of weeks old. Because of deadline pressure, we couldn't fit this week's in. The good news: We didn't have a chance to pick up Faith Hill's new CD, which replaced Rage Against the Machine as No. 1.

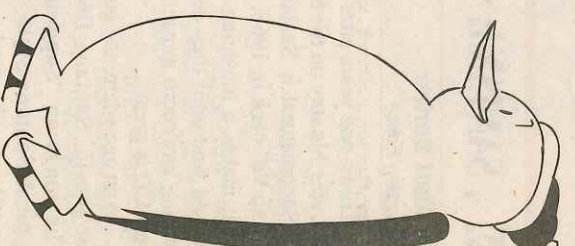
It's time to put on your dancing shoes. Perhaps you'll find a stocking stuffer or two. Or think about Santa sending you the sounds that keep on giving.  
Happy Holidays!

—The Oracle Staff



## BILLBOARD'S TOP 10\*

10. <b>FOO FIGHTERS:</b> "There Is Nothing Left to Lose"	6. <b>BACKSTREETBOYS:</b> "Millennium"
9. <b>LOU BEGA:</b> "A Little Bit of Mambo"	5. <b>SANTANA:</b> "Supernatural"
8. <b>COUNTING CROWS:</b> "This Desert Life"	4. <b>MARSHALLS:</b> "World Wrestling Federation, The Music Volume 4"
7. <b>BRITNEY SPEARS:</b> "...Baby One More Time"	3. <b>LIL' WAYNE:</b> "Tha Block Is Hot"
*November 20, 1999	2. <b>MARIAH CAREY:</b> "Rainbow"
	1. <b>RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE:</b> "The Battle of Los Angeles"



## 10. FOO FIGHTERS: "There is Nothing Left to Lose." Rosewell/RCA.

**By Gracy Obuchowicz**  
*Oracle Editor*

"God bless, what a sensitive mess."

This line in "Stacked Dead Actors," the first track of Foo Fighters' new album, "There is Nothing Left to Lose," sets the tone for the entire record.

Foo Fighters, created from the remnants of Nirvana and members of Sunnyday Real Estate, show that they can still rock as hard as ever, but in a way that is appealing to almost any rock fan. The album is a mess with a screamed lyrics and hard drumlines, but the true musical talent of the band makes it memorable and even beautiful.

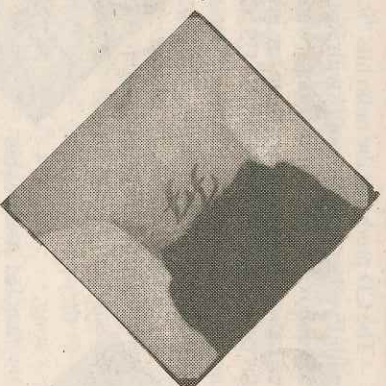
There is nothing complicated about the album. Dave Grohl alternates between singing and screaming his simple lyrics with beauty and dignity. The lyrics "I'm looking to the sky to save me. Looking for a sign of life" in the album's current single "Learn to Fly" are creative and unpretentious. The rest of the

lyrics on this album follow in a similar style.

What is truly remarkable about the new album is Foo Fighters' range of songs. While "Stacked Dead Actors" rocks in the tradition of hard rock, later tracks such as "Ain't it the Life" are slow and almost country. It's clear that Foo Fighters are comfortable enough with their musical style to experiment in a range of sounds.

Besides the lyrics and the range of songs, the other memorable facet of the album is the solid drumming that backs each song. It's almost frenzied in "Stacked Dead Actors," but slows down as the album progresses. It's not overpowering as tends to be the case in today's rock, but instead it complements the songs.

This third album of Foo Fighters proves that they are not just a band riding the coattails of their more famous parent band, Nirvana. Although many Nirvana fans may like this overwhelmingly appealing album, the sound



## 9. LOU BEGA: "A Little Bit of Mambo." RCA.

**By Myles Curran**  
*Entertainment Assistant*

MTV is at it again. They took a bad artist and song, played it on their little show "Total Request Live," and next thing you know, Lou Bega is a superstar.

There is no reason why this man should be a super-star. MTV pushed "Mambo #5" for awhile, and after a couple of days the Backstreet Boys-loving, Z104 listeners decided they liked it and they should buy his album, "A Little Bit of Mambo."

No other reason can explain why this album has sold even one copy. No person in their right mind would buy it if they knew what they were in for: an hour of pure agony.

I don't know how anyone can listen to this without a sick feeling in his stomach. Every song has the same annoying sound to it. The beat from "Mambo #5" is



used for almost every song. I don't even like the song, and that beat gets stuck in my head, leaving the horror of listening to it in my head for days. It's painful enough to listen to the album in the first place.

On top of the songs all being terrifyingly bad, Lou Bega is sexist in all of them. He has a song dedicated to old girlfriends, one about the girlfriends he has stashed around the world, how his girlfriends' tastes remind him of the taste of ice cream, and a song entitled "Can I Tico Tico You."

The lyrics to this song make it even more insufferable. If this album continues to sell, I feel bad for those who are buying it. They really have no idea what they are getting themselves into. After listening to this I felt sad that I would never get that hour of my life back. If I ever saw Lou Bega on the street.... I'd Mambo #5 his face!

## 8. COUNTING CROWS: "This Desert Life." Geffen.

By Melissa Tran  
Oracle Editor

The Counting Crows are back at it again. Their third studio release is surely not to disappoint loyal fans or even those who are just in for a good tune.

"This Desert Life" is a good blend of what lead singer Adam Duritz describes as a "sonic" sound, complete with original keyboard melodies and uplifting drum beats.

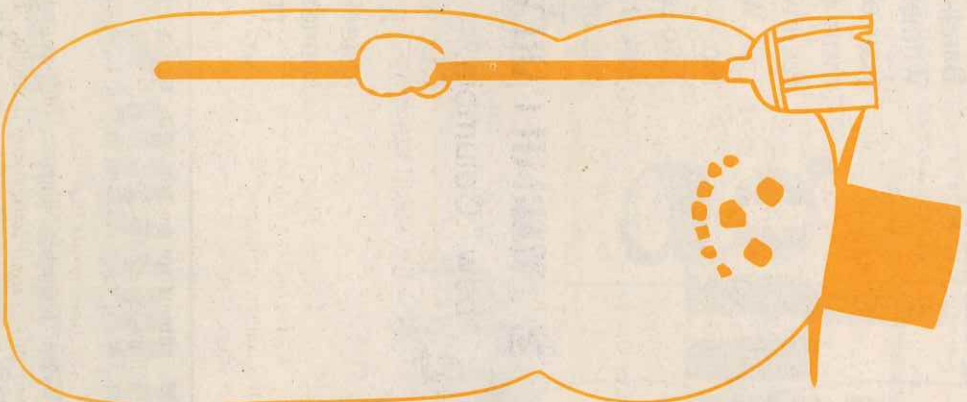
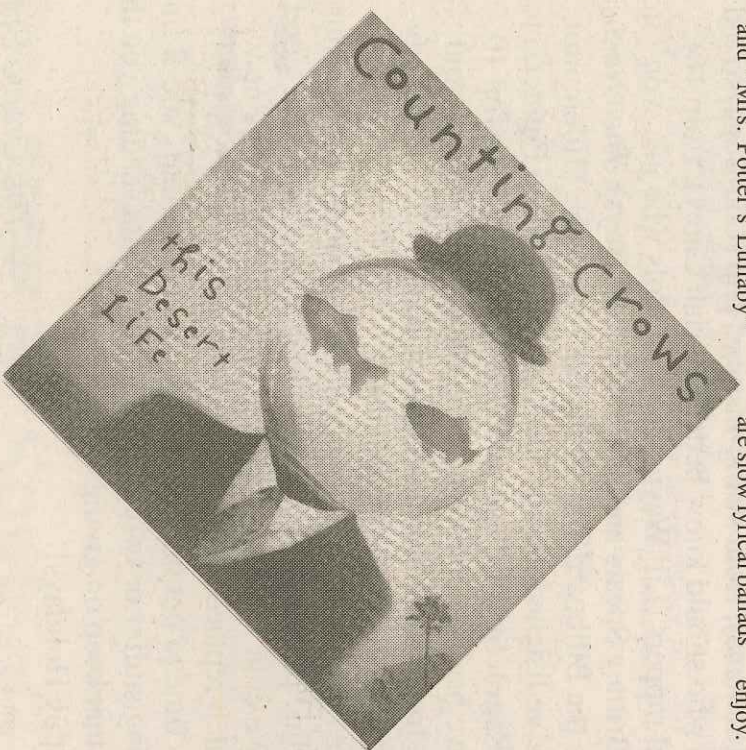
Mixed in with good sing-alongs "Hanginaround" and "Mrs. Potter's Lullaby" are slow lyrical ballads

such as "Amy Hit the Atmosphere," reminiscent of the old favorite "Long December" mellow sound of old, but with a fresh beat and melody all over again.

Duritz and his six bandmates, based in California, form a nice blend of party music with poetic songs of hope and strong emotions at the same time. In addition to the original 10 tracks is a classic rock-sounding hidden track with blues guitar and full drum beats.

Those familiar with Counting Crows will notice a less full and heavy sound than has been heard in their previous "Recovering the Satellites" album, but the new lighter sound should not disappoint and is still strongly reminiscent of the Crows' signature guitar and drum.

So if you're just out on a road trip or just "Hanginaround" with some friends, this is definitely an album to listen to and enjoy.



## 5. SANTANA: "Supernatural." Arista.

By Matt Barker  
Managing Editor

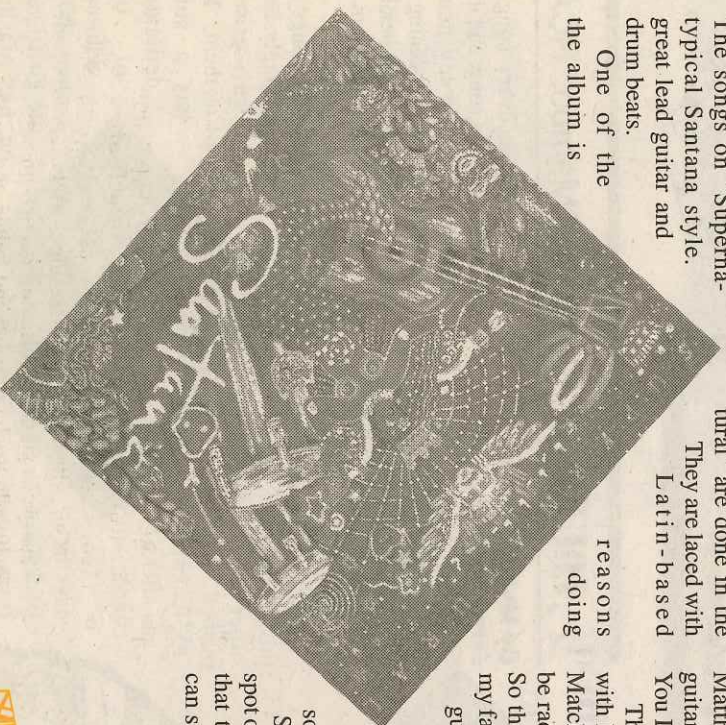
Thirty-one years after his last No. 1 hit, Carlos Santana is enjoying his stay on the billboard charts.

Supernatural is Santana's first studio album since "Oye, Como Va" back in 1968. It was well worth the wait. If age is what makes a musician better, than most of today's bands should wait until they need dentures and walkers before releasing any more music. Santana might only be 50, but the new CD is great.

In an age where the guitar solo is disappearing from popular music, Santana finally brings back some talent. The songs on "Supernatural" are done in the typical Santana style.

They are laced with great lead guitar and drum beats.

One of the reasons doing



They are laced with Latin-based reasons doing

The CD produced the radio hits "Put Your Lights on" with Everlast and "Smooth" with Rob Thomas from Marchbox 20. Most of the songs would probably be radio hits, but some of them are in Spanish. So they might not be hits in the US. One of my favorite tracks, "The calling," features guitar guru Eric Clapton. The two guitarists had never played together, but their paths finally crossed and they played a great song.

Santana deserves his spot on the charts. He proves that the musicians with talent can still be popular.



## 3. LIL' WAYNE: "Tha Block is Hot. Cash Money.

By Ellen Waylonis  
Photography Editor

*Tha Block is Hot*, by Lil' Wayne (featuring B.I.T.Y.mers, Juvenile, B.C. the Hot Boys, Manni Fresh, Turk, the artists formerly known as Prince, the Baltimore Boys' Choir Pokemnon, and the starting lineup of the San Francisco 49ers) has all the elements required for a successful rap CD. The lyrics are full of plays, hos, Rolies Benjamins, and all the posturing and self-importance one could desire.

Lil' Wayne does have a few things going for him though. First of all, his lyrics are understandable somewhere along the line this 16-year-old learned the fine art of enunciation. Secondly, he has a really big, shiny, gold pendant emblazoned with the words "Cash Money."

The CD has fast beats, heavy base, and is oozing with samples and sound effects. My favorite was a sound on the third track, "Loud Pipes," that stirred images in my mind of panting collie dog. In his songs Lil' Wayne raps about his money, his neighborhood, his boys, and the myriad things he has done and is going to do to women. Although the music is fairly polished, the songs lack originality.

The cover art does pose some interest. Lil' Wayne is in the center, surrounded by flames, police cars, and search helicopters. On his boxers (of which about seven and a half inches are visible above his jeans) is a pattern showing the American flag. The possible symbolism is intriguing. Whether it is intentional or just a fluke, I'm not so sure.

## 7. BRITNEY SPEARS: "...Baby One More Time." Jive.

## 6. BACKSTREET BOYS: "Millennium." Jive.

By Angela Florino  
Update Editor

When the phrase "dominating the music charts" is repeated two names come to mind: Backstreet Boys and Britney Spears. Their 62 weeks combined in the Billboard Top 10 show they must be something good about their latest CDs.

Backstreet Boys' "Millennium" came out last May and has been on the charts for 27 weeks. The CD has 12 songs with two hit singles. "Larger than Life," the most recent single from Backstreet, has also dominated MTV's daily countdown, "Toté

# HOLIDAY





Request Live." And who could forget about "I Want It That Way," which was No. 1 on TRL so many times that it was retired from the countdown.

I would have to say that the best song on "Millennium" is either "Don't Want to Lose You Now," or "Don't Want You Back." They are more original than the rest of the songs on the CD and they are fun to sing. The CD is definitely worth buying if you haven't bought it all ready. The songs are upbeat. People may not like to admit it, but everyone has an ear for BSB. And if their recent tour—with two sold-out shows at DC's MCI Center—is any indication,

Backstreet will be around for quite awhile.

On the other hand, instead of a bunch of boys taking the lead, with Britney Spears it only takes one 17-year-old girl. Her first single, "(Hit Me) Baby One More Time," was heard all over the radio, all over the world. Spears' CD, "...Baby One More Time," came out last January and has been on the charts for 45 weeks. The 11-track disc has produced three singles, most recently, "(You Drive Me) Crazy." Spears has made several appearances on shows and in magazines promoting her new there's even a Britney Spears available in toy stores.

When it comes down to it, everyone needs a good song to sing and dance to such as, "(Hit Me) Baby One More Time." However, a lot of people dislike the fruity pop music that starts such as Britney Spears produce. Truthfully, the only songs worth listening to are the ones on the radio. Obviously, a lot of people enjoy CD since it has been on the charts long, but with songs like "E-mail My and "Soda Pop," I wouldn't recommend CD.



the for so Heart," buying the

**4. VARIOUS ARTISTS: "World Wrestling Federation, The Music Volume 4." Koch.**

**By Myles Curran**  
*Entertainment Assistant*

I admit it—I'm a wrestling fan. I've been to a couple WWF shows at the MCI Center and I watch the others on USA and UPN. So, I was expecting big things when I turned on their latest "WWF The Music: Volume 4." Unfortunately, I was left disappointed.

When I'm watching on television, the songs bring much more excitement than they did on the album. The whole atmosphere of the show must add a lot to the song. It also helps that you don't have to listen to the whole song while watching the show. The songs are ultra-repetitive, which makes listening to the whole song unbearable.

In Chris "Y2J" Jericho's theme song, the phrase "Break The Walls Down" is said 14 times. It seems that every other word from the singer's mouth is that phrase. Although the song is repetitive it isn't a bad song; you just can't listen to the whole thing.

That's the way most of them are, actually. They get sort of annoying and aren't as fun to listen to as I thought they would

**2. MARIAH CAREY: "Rainbow." Columbia.**

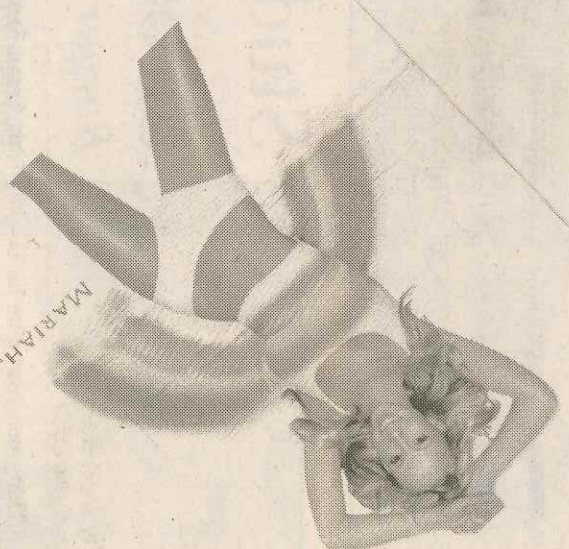
**By Nikki Werking**  
*ETC. Editor*

Why is Mariah Carey's new record, "Rainbow," one of the Top 10 bestsellers in the country right now? It has nothing to do with her singing ability, because it has only gone downhill since the start of her career. It's because the cover of the album features her wearing nothing but rainbow-embazoned underwear.

I would not advise buying this album because it would be a waste of your money. It's horrible.

Four of the tracks, including the "hit" (more like, "I will hit someone if this song doesn't stop") single, "Heartbreaker," feature popular rap artists including Jay-Z, Missy Elliott and Da Brat. The rhythm of these songs was designed to imitate the sounds of TLC. By including these in her album, Carey tried to appeal to a crossover rap and R & B crowd. However, she failed at these attempts with her high-pitched, often shrieky pop singing. The blend of these music genres was not only ineffective, but also displeasing to the ear.

In another four of the CD's 14 tracks, Carey tried to sing slow, inspirational songs of continuing with life after heartbreak. These were just as bad as the ones mentioned before. Rather than being an inspiration to women, the songs were dull and, quite frankly, they lulled me to sleep. I doubt



that was the type of inspiration Carey was trying to create. So, rather than supporting Carey by buying this discordant album, create a fund and donate money to "Clothes for Carey" so that she may buy some clothes for herself. Evidently, there is no room in her multi-million dollar budget for such luxuries.

**1. RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE: "The Battle of Los Angeles." Epic.**

**By Sue Moon**  
*News Section Editor*

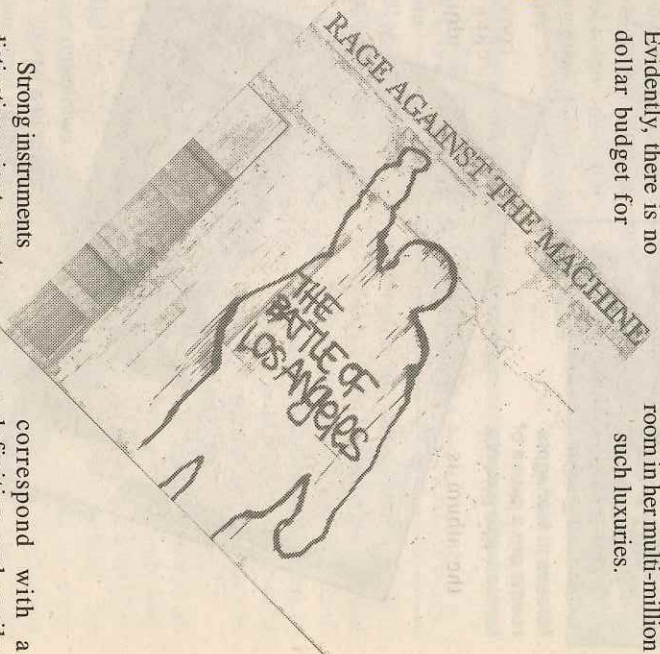
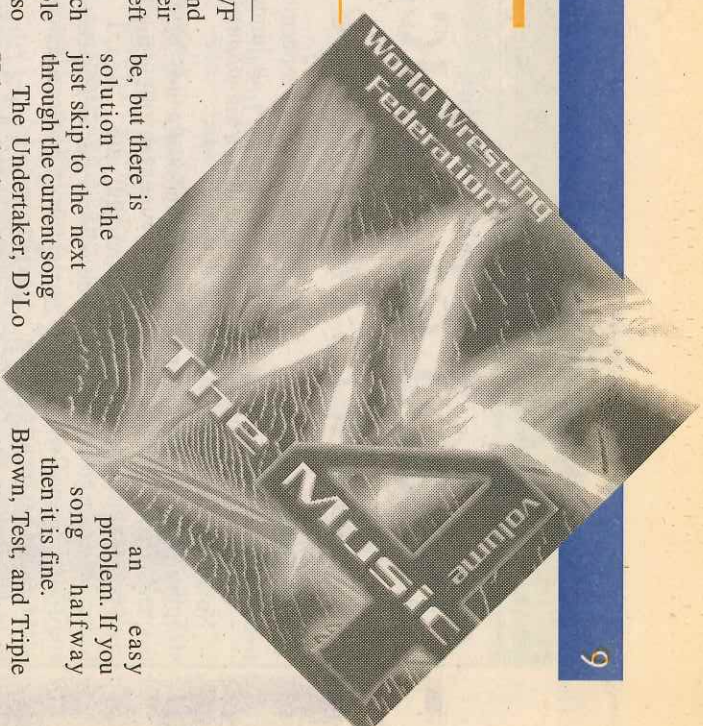
Four hundred and thirty-thousand people can't be wrong. During the first week of its release, Rage Against the Machine's "The Battle of Los Angeles" sold 430,000 copies to debut at the number one spot on the U.S. pop chart.

The success of the album is not attributed to the record sales but to the popularity of the band for its style. RATM belts out fast, hard beats to express its political opinions. They are also active in aiding the struggles of political activists by participating in benefit concerts, such as the Tibetan Freedom Concerts, and using their music to reach the often-ignorant masses.



an easy problem. If you song halfway then it is fine. Brown, Test, and Triple H have the best theme songs on the album. Test has the best on the album, with The Undertaker's a close second. These four songs all have the same beat, but I guess that is what makes them the best to begin with.

This is an average album, so there is really no reason to buy it. You can just watch WWF's "Raw Is War" on USA or "Smackdown" on UPN and hear all of these songs. The songs sound better on TV to begin with anyway. Or, you could always just get them as MP3s on your computer. Either choice is better than actually buying the album.



Strong instruments correspond with a distinctive voice to create a recognizable sound acknowledged by fans. "Guerrilla Radio," the first single off the album, opens with a fast-paced guitar chords and steady drum beats. Lead singer Zach de la Rocha screams and hollers the message of social conflicts in Los Angeles.

The bass introduction for "Calm Like A Bomb" offers a contrast to the previous loud and heavy tracks, but it doesn't lack the innovative sound effects the band members create.

"Born of a Broken Man" is more quiet than the other tracks. The lyrics are almost whispered and the guitar accompanies with softer chords, but the calm is quickly broken by the louder sounds. Throughout the song, the two sound frequencies battle each other back and forth in a pattern.

The guitar and bass complement each other in "New Millennium Homes." The lower and deeper notes can be heard under the layers of guitar, vocals, and drums.

RATM has once again released an inventive disc. Unusual sound effects, strong instrumentals, and one powerful and overwhelming voice make for a new album.

Fans can listen and understand the messages that are in the songs while enjoying the loud, unique tunes.

VARIOUS ARTISTS



# 'Board of Education' startles students

## Teacher's creative use of ax handle creates hall passes

By Janelle Baldwin  
News Editor

No student wants to get caught sleeping in class. Because a teacher's stern warning doesn't always prevent dozing from happening again, government and sociology teacher John McMennamin has found a method to bring sleeping in class to a startling halt.

Resting in place above the chalkboard in McMennamin's room is a large wooden ax handle. If McMennamin catches his students sleeping during class, they are awakened by the crash of the handle, only inches from their faces.

"He scared me at first when he hit people's desks, but I just got used to it," said junior Liz Younts.

Other times, McMennamin uses the handle to prove a point or teach a lesson.

"At the beginning of the year, he all of a sudden pounded on the desk to teach us about instinctive

communication," said sophomore Leah Baugh. "We all jumped back and didn't know what to say."

McMennamin's use of the handle, which he fondly nicknamed the "Board of Education," has inadvertently brought about another tradition in his classroom.

After using his board of education to startle many students, McMennamin accidentally hit one desk so hard that it broke.

"I've never seen him actually break a desk, but he hits them really hard," said senior Gianna Ferraiuolo. "I could see how a desk would break."

McMennamin began to use the tops of broken desks as hall passes. He had three passes and his students decorated a desktop for each graduating class. Each new senior class wiped off one of the old decorations and put on their own.

While it was fun to admire the artwork of each class, some students found it annoying to

carry around such a big pass when they had to leave McMennamin's classroom.

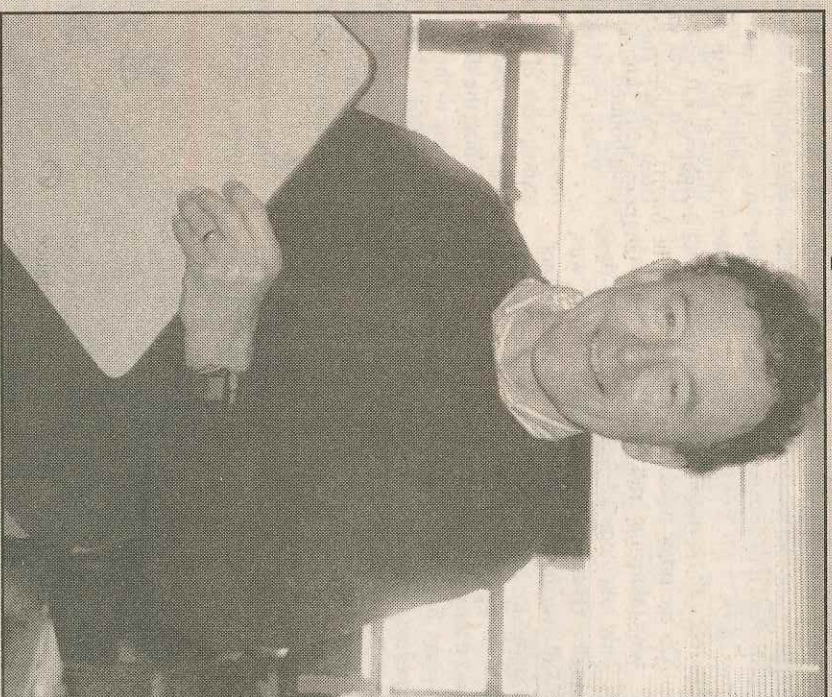
"At first they [the passes] were funny, but once you actually had to carry them around it was awkward," said senior Julie Mullen.

Students who do not like using the large passes may not have to any longer because McMennamin's collection has recently disappeared.

"I think that some students from last year's class took the passes to keep," said McMennamin. "The broken desks were not replaced, so I don't have any extras to turn into passes."

While McMennamin's tradition for hall passes will probably not continue, many students will remember it.

Mullen reminisces about another use for the hall passes. "When we walked out the door he used to tell us, 'Flush yourself down the toilet and when you reach the Potomac, use it [the pass] as a flotation device.'"



Lauren Edwards  
John McMennamin used his abundance of broken desk tops as hall passes until his collection disappeared.

## Students show their individuality

### through their unique bedrooms

#### Burger King hats, Atlanta Braves, and cloud sheets

By Katie Walker  
Features Editor

The mere words strike fear in the hearts of parents everywhere. A teenager's bedroom. With every inch covered; the walls of the bedroom are plastered with posters, junk overflowing from drawers, and clothes strewn all over the floor so that only the most talented of people can walk from one side of the room to the other without tripping.

The word that tends to come to mind at the mention of a teenager's bedroom is "messy." The uncleanness of a teenager's room can often lead to fights between the teenager and their parent.

"I never clean my room. I like it the way it is," said sophomore Alicia Kirsh. "My parents stopped telling me to clean it up awhile ago because it's already a mess again in a week."

Many teens use their rooms as a way to express their individuality, however, some use their room as just a place to sleep. For these people, decorations are not necessary.

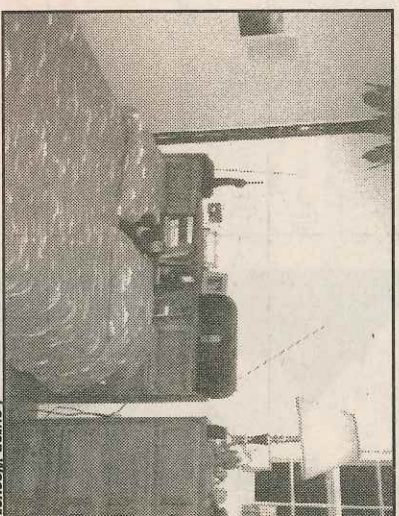
"I think that I have a pretty normal room. There's not really anything special about it except that I have my own computer," said sophomore Mike Roberts. "And my parents and I don't really fight about it either. Except when it's a complete mess."

A person's room can be a good reflection of their personality and interests. Teenagers' rooms are usually incredibly unique.

"My room is decorated with Burger King hats and trays from going there every Tuesday," said sophomore Sheri Haupt.

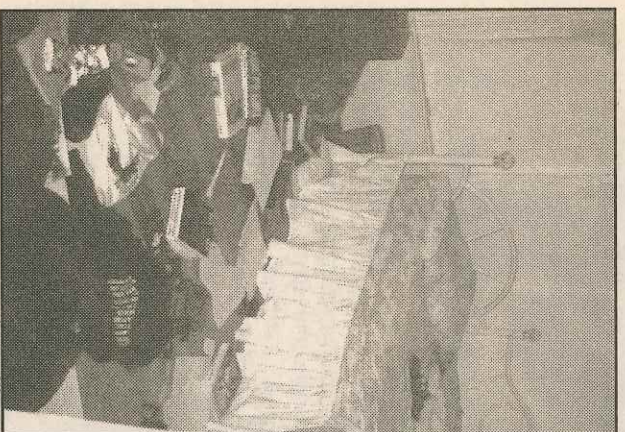
Many people's rooms are home to collections as well, ranging from baseball cards to stuffed animals.

Sometimes they are even decorated with little trinkets or reminders of a person's childhood. "I have shelves all around my walls that are covered with books and other things I collect," said junior Stylie Kachel. "They're filled with little things from my childhood that I've collected and don't want to ever throw away."



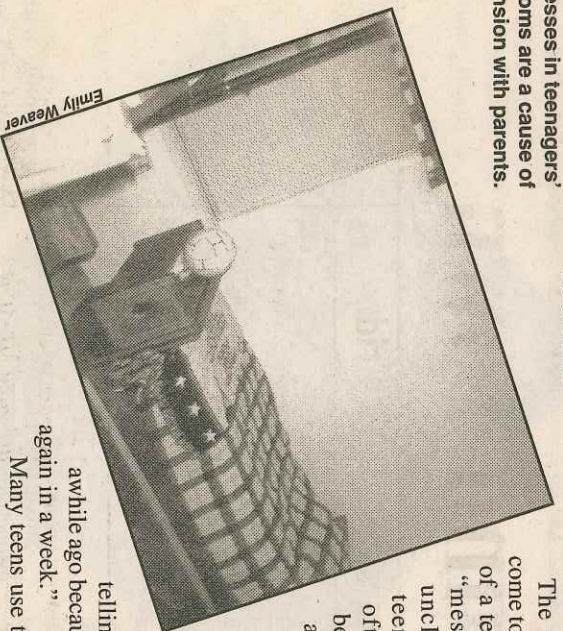
Lauren Weaver

The highlight of senior Patricia Townsley's room is her cloud sheets which she uses "24-hours-a-day 7-days-a-week."



Lauren Weaver

Messes in teenagers' rooms are a cause of tension with parents.



Emily Weaver

While some students' rooms are always messy, others keep their rooms neat.

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Lauren Weaver

Senior Amber Steele shows her love for the Atlanta Braves through her room decorations.

# Kicking your way to exercise

**By Myles Curran**  
*Entertainment Assistant*

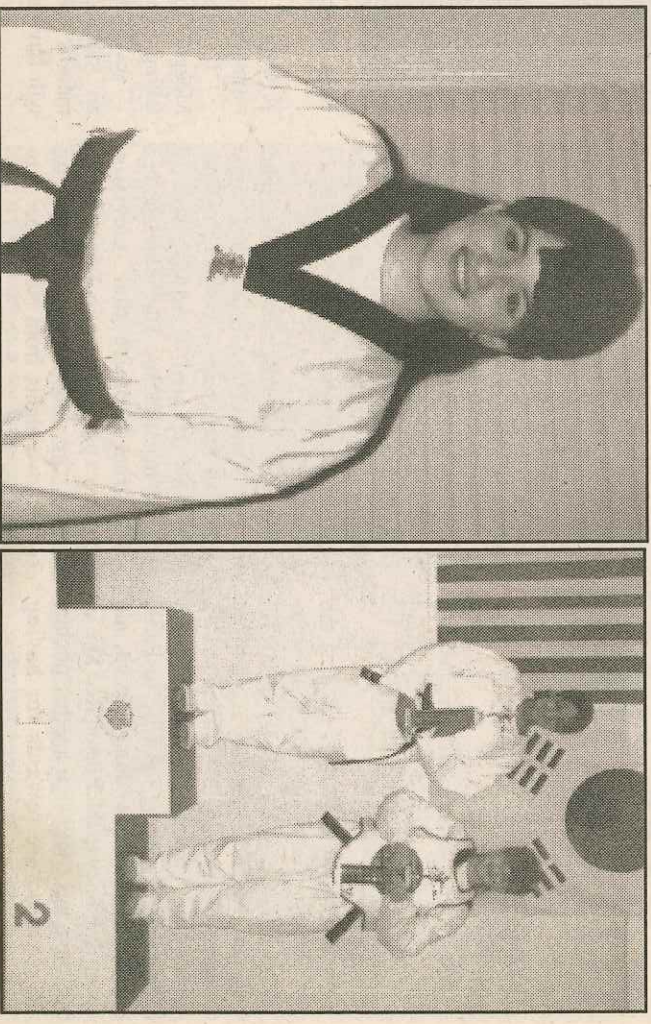
When most people think of martial arts, they think of Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan. But it took those two as long as it does everyone else to get to the level they did in karate, judo, and martial arts.

Judo, which stands for the way of flexibility, is a type of martial art that emphasizes grappling. Judo was developed in 1882 by Prastesar Jigero, and came from certain techniques of jujutsu. The main concept of judo is that "maximum efficiency from minimum effort." With this, judo allows smaller opponents to beat larger opponents by turning the larger one's strength against him. Because of this, balance is a key part to judo, as you need to utilize balance in judo's jumping style of kicks. Judo, unlike most martial arts, doesn't change form as it is taught around the world.

Only slight changes occur. "I don't take martial arts classes, I learn enough from the movies," said sophomore Bryan Witt. "The Matrix and movies like that taught me a lot, I know all I want too."

Karate was first developed on the island of Okinawa located between China and Japan. The farmers on the island used their form of boxing to fight off the Chinese intruders. The art was made to be as violent as possible with no grappling involved. Thus the martial art of karate, which means empty hand, came to be. Karate is an art that emphasizes striking, and is a very strenuous activity. Because of this style of fighting, the object of a match is to dispense of an opponent as quickly as possible. The form of karate-do teaches students about self importance.

Another martial art that emphasizes striking and is most strenuous for students is that of



*John Kirsch*  
**Sophomore Alicia Kirsch is a black belt in karate. She competes in tournaments around the area.**  
*John Kirsch*

tae-kwon-do, which stands for the way of the hands and feet.

"When I lived in Korea, I took karate classes for two years," said sophomore Jeremy

Kapinos. "It was hard work, but it was worth it to say that I know karate to act tough."

There are many schools around the Springfield area that teach at least one or more of these types of martial arts. One is the Mountain Kim Martial Arts school which has two locations in the Springfield area.

## Redskins score touchdowns for Domino's

**By Amy Steed**  
*Business Assistant*

The phones ringing nonstop and pizza orders being taken at a rapid pace is now the normal Monday night surroundings for local Domino's workers.

The company started the Redskins' Dollar Off Deal when this year's NFL season started and that is when the Monday night pizza rush started.

A deal like this has not been seen in this area before. No company has ever risked losing money by offering a deal that they have no control over. If the Redskins ever scored ten offensive touchdowns in one game, all Domino's pizza's would be free. Dennis O'Donnell, a local Domino's manager, does not see this as a threat since it is a highly unlikely happening.

When the area dealers started this promotion, none of them knew how successful it would be or how it would impact their Monday orders.

"They weren't planning on the Redskins being this good," said O'Donnell. "Everyone is surprised by their success."

Despite Redskins' winning this season, Domino's is not losing money.

"When it gets to six or seven dollars off it becomes an animal house, but it is good for us," said O'Donnell.

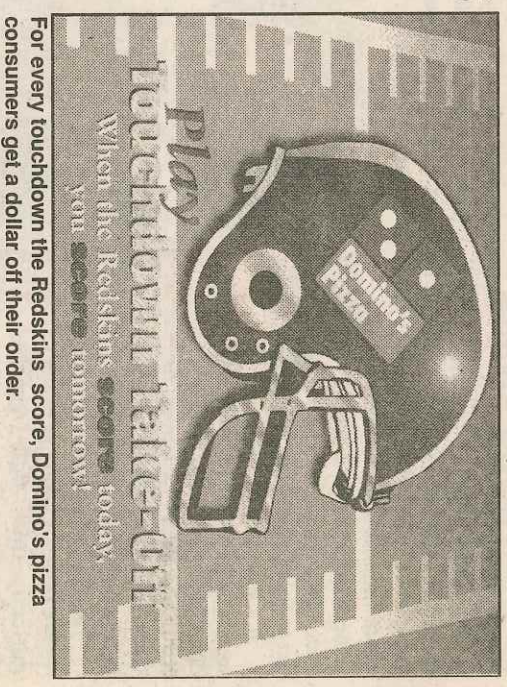
Most Domino's workers don't mind the deal either. They are able to get more hours in since more people are need to control the pizza rush on Mondays. Driver Jene Paulson finds it nice to be able to give something back to the customers. "It makes us work harder, but we like

it," said Paulson. "It's nice to work on the edge."

Pizza lovers also like the Dollar Off Deal. There is not a strict limit to how many pizzas a person can order, but the stores did have to set some limits. Most stores only allow

a maximum order of three medium and five large pizza and the deal good on Mondays.

This deal has made people that don't even like the pizza wonder if they should order just because of the sale price of the



order just because of the sale price of the pizza. "I don't like pizza that much, but I'll eat it on the discount because sale and free are my favorite words," said sophomore Nick Cosby.

## Best of What's Around Town

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					17 <i>Guys and Dolls</i> opens at the Arena Stage. It runs through February 20.	18
19	20	21	22	23 <i>Martin Guerre</i> opens at the Kennedy Center, and continues through January 16.	24 Movies opening, <i>The Talented Mr. Ripley</i> .	25 Movies opening, <i>Man on the Moon</i> , <i>Hanging Up</i> , and <i>Angela's Ashes</i> .
26 <i>The Nutcracker</i> performed by by the Maryland Youth Ballet at Montgomery	27	28	29 Washington Opera presents "I Puritani" at the Kennedy Center through January 25.	30 <i>Holiday-Millennium Celebration</i> performed by the New Dominion Chorale at The Birchmere.	31	1 Happy New Year!
2	3	4	5	6	7	8

# Regis, ABC earn millionaire status

By Mike Waldron

News Editor

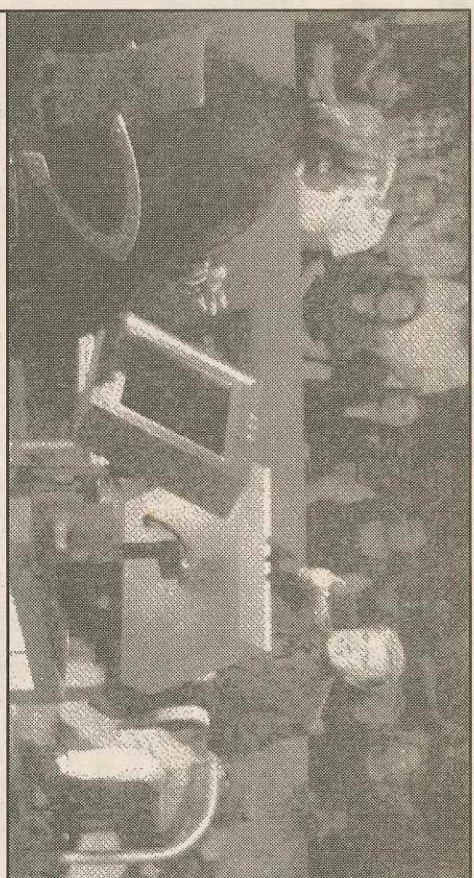
Most people work for a lifetime and still don't earn a million dollars. All John Carpenter had to do was answer 15 questions.

In November Carpenter became the first jackpot winner on ABC's hit show "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire." Carpenter, an IRS Collection Agent from Connecticut, immediately made plans for spending his fortune. Carpenter said that he planned on taking his wife to Paris, giving his brother a wedding present, and donating money to the Boston Red Sox so that the team could sign another pitcher. All of these are rewards for having

answered just 15 questions.

"It's a general knowledge show in the truest sense," said executive producer Michael Davies. "We're not looking for rocket scientists. We want real people with a broad range of knowledge and don't take risks on what they know and don't know."

Early in 1999 ABC acquired the rights to "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire," a quiz show that had great success in England. The show debuted in August with 13 original installments. The show showed such great promise that television executives planned a return. Regis Philbin hosted the show, which aired on consecutive nights from November 7 to



Regis Philbin asks one of the possible millionaires for her final answer.

November 23. It held the top television rating every time.

"It's an exciting show," said sophomore Meggie Godish. "I just think people are taking it too seriously."

As the craze continues, show executives are looking to capitalize. In the coming months "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire" will have an official book, board game,

CD-ROM, and internet site. These features will even have practice questions for people who wish to be contestants.

"I like the show because it gives me hope," said junior Chris Behrman. "I know that if I couldn't get a job, I could always go on the show and win a million dollars."

And yes, that is his final answer.

## The movies that stole Christmas

*Grinch, Rudolph and others shine on TV*

By Lauren Edwards

Oracle Photographer

The other night, I actually forced myself to watch a Fox sitcom. I usually don't have much time for TV, but then I remembered that if I didn't watch the sitcoms, I wouldn't get to for about two months.

It's that time of the year again, when the Preview channel turns into a repetitive list of the same few movies that were on last year and the ten years before that.

Yes, it's December.

For those of you who haven't noticed this odd yearly phenomenon, every winter TV turns into a continual rerun of "classic" Christmas stories and cartoon holiday tales. These are wonderful stories, but when I was four I saw each of them about a hundred times and swore that I'd never see them again.

But, to keep you from having to see them again, here's a quick summary of a few of the greatest:

1) Miracle on 34th Street: There are two versions of this movie. It is the tale of a young

girl who wants a dad for Christmas and asks a Macy's Santa Claus for one. But she picks the wrong one; the man really believes that

it's really funny, if you haven't read the book or seen the movie before.

3)Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer: This is a Gummy-ish, 'claymation' version of the



story we were told as children. A reindeer is constantly made fun of for his red nose and other flaws until Santa claims him as his favorite and the other reindeer realize that he really is okay.

4)Home Alone (1 and 2): In

an attempt to get us all to regain respect for Macaulay Culkin,

networks play this movie. It's about an eight-year-old rebellious boy who, accidentally left alone when his family goes to France for Christmas, has to ward off some clumsy robbers who try to make themselves a holiday with the family's belongings.

If you haven't seen any of these holiday movies, then by all means sit on your couch, turn on your television and watch. But if you have, and want to avoid them for the eighth year running, then maybe it's time to try and make it another Blockbuster holiday.

## Concert Review



H2O guitarist Adam Baker speaks to the crowd during a concert at Nations in DC.

## Bands fight racism through punk

*Bouncing Souls, H2O play at Nation Club*

By Angela Florino

Update Editor

If you are against racism and like punk music, then chances are you would have liked The Bouncing Souls and H2O show played at Nation in DC this past November 21.

The Bouncing Souls and H2O played along with Vision and The Casualties to support the anti-racism fund. The show started at 7:30 and didn't end until 11:30. The best thing about the show was that no one had to wait for more than 15 minutes between each band.

The Bouncing played mostly older songs from their first and second CDs. "The Good the Bad and the Argyle," and "Manical Laughter." There was absolutely no security at the show so most of the time you could find a fan sharing the microphone with a singer from one of the bands. It was definitely a great night with great music and the chance to support a great cause.

## Best of Entertainment 1999

Best Band

1. Dave Matthews Band
2. Backstreet Boys
3. Limp Bizkit

1. Backstreet Boys
2. Limp Bizkit
3. Briney Spears

Best Movie

1. The Matrix
2. Austin Powers 2: The Spy Who Shagged Me
3. Varsity Blues

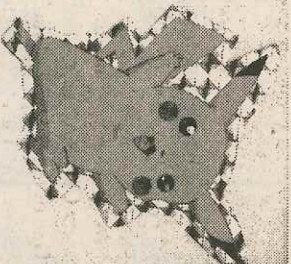
1. The Haunting
2. Blair Witch Project
3. Pokemon: The Movie

Best TV Show

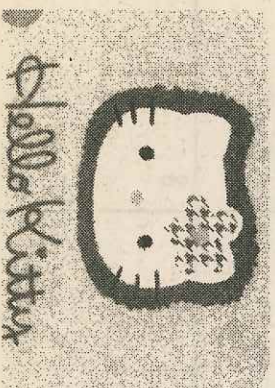
1. The Simpsons
2. Friends
3. That 70's Show

1. Jesse
2. Who Wants To Be A Millionaire
3. Time of Your Life

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Matrix was voted as the best movie of the year, while Pokemon: The Movie was chosen as one of the worst movies of the year.



-Compiled by Myles Curran  
Poll taken of 100 students



Yearbook Photo

From basketball to soccer, many athletes have unique superstitions.

## Superstitions drive athletes to success

By Joey Tinsley  
Oracle Staff Writer

The national anthem has just ended and the baseball players put their hats on and run out to their positions.

What many people may not notice is some of the ballplayers hop over the foul line. Stepping on the foul line is considered by some baseball players to be unlucky. Players in the major leagues, such as Orioles Cal Ripken and Mike Mussina do this in every game.

"I make sure every time I step on the field I jump over the foul line, because it helps me mentally in the field on defense," said junior Chris Wingfield.

Baseball seems to be the most superstitious sport. Wade Boggs, who has played for teams such as the Red Sox and Devil Rays, eats chicken before every game.

Many basketball players have superstitions such as going through the same routine before shooting a foul shot. Karl "the mailman" Malone, is famous for muttering to himself before he shoots his foul shots. Also, the Lady Spartans basketball team bangs their hands on a metal box as they enter the court. This is a long-standing tradition and helps excite the players and the crowd. Soccer players also have their own unique superstitions.

"I make sure every time I step on the field I jump over the foul line, because it helps me mentally in the field on defense."  
-Junior Chris Wingfield

"I used to wet my head before my soccer games, but I have not done that in a while," said junior Jared Okabyash. Although many players have superstitions for their games, some prefer to go without.

"I don't have any superstitions because they make me think too much about them," said junior Peter King. "It's just easiest not to have any so you can keep your concentration."

## Bell spurs on swim and dive

By Jenny Askin  
Sports Editor

As sophomore Mary Holloway approaches the edge of the pool she gazes into the chlorine blue water. She tucks her hair back into her Spartans swim cap. She tightens her goggles and awaits the start of her race. She hears the start and huris herself into the sparkling water.

On December 3, the swim and dive team competed against Robinson in a losing effort.

The swim and dive team is coached by former assistant coach and English teacher Malla Bell. Bell assisted the team last year and has taken over the team since long-time coach Gerry Pannoni departed the position.

"It's fun being head coach, I feel like I have a lot more control," said Bell.

Team members are glad for the leadership.

"I think Ms. Bell is doing a great job, she knows exactly what she's doing, she has a lot of experience. I think we will do a lot better this year with her as our head coach," said senior swim team member Kathryn Van Antwerp.

## Younger team lives on after Lawson

By Laura Robinson  
Sports Editor

Kara. A year ago, this word struck fear into the hearts of all teams opposing WS. Kara Lawson has graduated with five other senior players, but the team doesn't plan on giving up its edge.

"We won 20 games before Kara and we will win 20 after," said Coach Bill Gibson.

The team is on track to do that. With the addition of sophomore Stephanie Hottell and two twin freshmen, Lindsey

### Fast Facts

- The Lady Spartans won 32 straight games before their loss to Mt. Vernon
- They've compiled an 85-3 record since the 1996-97 season
- The team is 2-1 despite losing four of last year's starters

and Meghan Carter, the team hopes to fill the void of departed players. The squad also hopes to overcome their inexperience with team unity.

"We're doing a lot more team stuff this year and less individual, like team dinners," said senior Kathy Wainwright. "Also, we've tried to get to know the



Christine Johnson

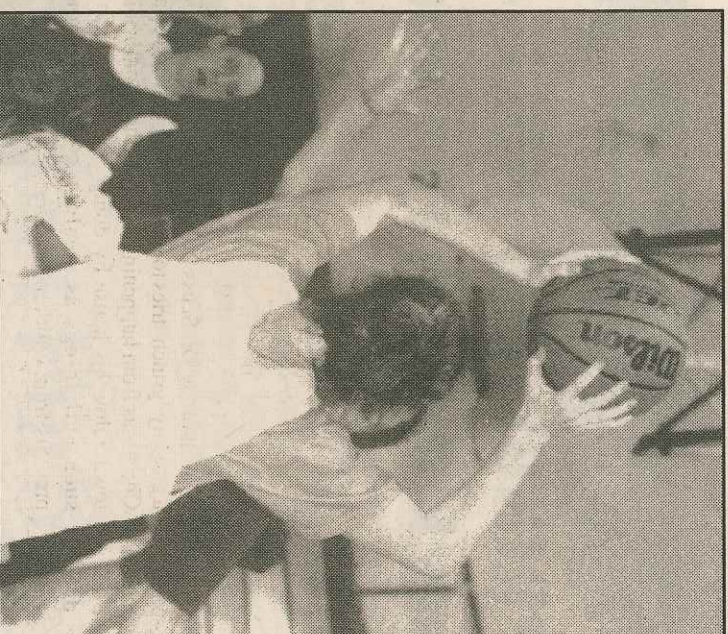
Members of the swim and dive team are impressed by their new coach, Malla Bell.

Last year the girls team, led by seniors Emmy Dougherty and Allyson Hamilton, went to the state championship. The team placed second in the meet which made them the state runners-up.

The boys team also did very well, placing second in districts and advancing to regionals.

"Even though we lost our good swimmers last year we are still going to have a good season," said sophomore swimmer David Panczykowski.

The team practices for approximately two hours daily at Wakefield Recreation Center. During a daily workout, each team member swims more than two miles.



Members of the varsity basketball team have practiced hard to continue their winning tradition.

young players on the squad, say 'hi' to them in the hall, and let them into the club."

The new team members are not intimidated by joining varsity, and are confident that they will help the team be successful.

"We're younger but still good," said Lindsey Carter.

One of the challenges facing the team is their height. Last year, there were three players over six feet, Joanna Jerezal, Lynn Frangipane, and Tracey Mayrant. Unfortunately, two of these three players have graduated and one is not playing. To offset the height issue, coaches have stressed defense and proper rebounding to help players triumph over taller opponents.

This emphasis on defense was evident in the second game of the season against Langley. Their pressure defense forced Langley to shoot only 30 percent and turn the ball over 24 times. With a final score of 49-38, the Lady Spartans increased their confidence and quieted some critics.

This year the team is led by Katie Cosgrove, Gretchen McKeever, Jason Wendling and Jeremy Block. Many swimmers are optimistic about their season and the competency of their captains.

"I think that we will have a great season with these people as our captains," said sophomore swimmer Amy Block.

Every Thursday night the team gets together for a pasta dinner. The team loads up on carbohydrates to fuel their bodies for their next meet. The entire team then has pep talks for the next day.

Freshman Alex Grillo said, "Ms. Bell is very energetic, she really cares about all of the people on the team."

But another problem facing the team is the lack of a dominant scorer. In all games of the season, no one player has scored more than 16 points. Lawson averaged 26.4 points last season. To overcome this, they've tried to find different ways to score.

"We don't have someone who will score whenever they feel like it like Kara could," said Wainwright. "We'll just be more original and work together as one unit."

Coaches are counting on their experienced players to lead the team. Seniors Naguecia Harper, Lisa Leiminger, and Kathy Wainwright are needed to guide the Lady Spartans.

"The seniors have to lead us, they have all the experience and know the other teams," said sophomore point guard Selia Monroe. "As one group we'll make an impact."

Their first game was against Edison, another inexperienced team. Winning by a score of 87-21, the squad worked well together and got major contributions from all of the underclassmen. The team's three sophomores combined for 32 points.

In addition to the regular season, they will be in Ft. Meyer's, Florida for a 16-team holiday tournament. They will be gone for five days and face opponents from Canada and the United States.

"Every one has to step up and we have to continue winning," said Gibson. "You have a lot more things you can do with a player like Kara, but we've got a lot of talent here and we'll just move around our players until everything fits."

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# Indoor track sprints into season

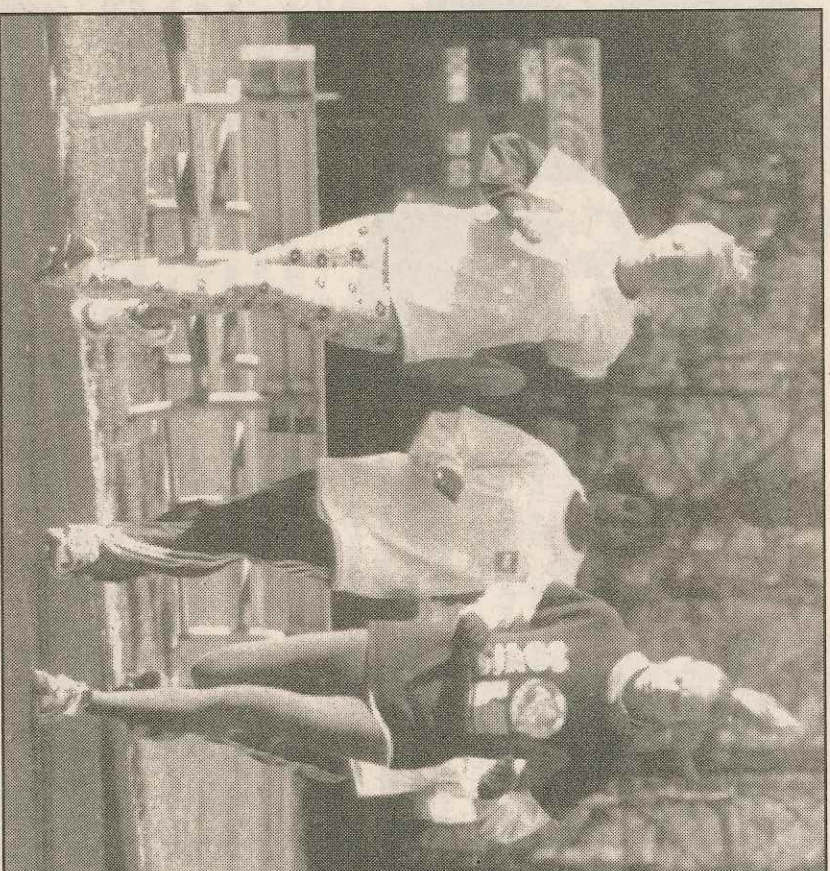
By Melissa Lipman  
Oracle Staff Writer

It was a cold, bright sunny day. There was a biting wind, even a few lone snow flakes were falling here and there. The football field was covered by a couple dozen geese going about their business, oblivious to the students clad in hats, gloves, and warm ups running on the track.

These students are part of the indoor track team, lead by sprinting coach Bernadette Flynn, distance running coach

The goals for the season vary, but they include hopes to reach and win at the district and state levels.

Duke Baird, and field events coach Allen Robertshaw. The team has about 150 participants, who practice every day after school from 3 to 5 pm. The practices incorporate running laps, shorter sprints, as well as practicing for each event. These events include sprinting such as the 55 meter, 55 meter hurdles, 300 meter, 500 meter, the four by 200 meter relay and the four by 400 meter relay. There's also long distance running, such as the 1000 meter, the 1600 meter, the 2000 meter and the four by 800 meter relay.



Indoor track team members Katie Weinberg, Huma Husain and Elaine Giuliani, sprint along the track in preparation for their next meet on December 11.

By Ellen Waylons

jump, triple jump and the pole vault.

Pole-vaulter senior Steve Halla starts practicing for the event with a small pole, and then progressively increases the size of the pole he jumps with. "It's real hard to get used to," said

just being launched into the air."

The team has competitive meets almost every Saturday starting in early December. The meets are generally long; local meets with twelve teams can last about six hours; however, invitational meets with thirty to

addition to this the meets are early in the morning but, "they're fun...you have to get into them," said Maria Barber, a senior who runs the mile and two mile races. The goals for the season vary, but they include hopes to reach and win at the district and state levels. Coach Baird sums up his goals in two simple statements, "I have two goals [for the season]. To make them better runners, and to make them better people."

## Meet the winter track team

### Captains:

Neil Suri  
Collin Campbell  
Melanie Roberts  
Nichole Jackson

### Coaches:

Bernadette Flynn, sprints  
Duke Baird,  
distance running  
Allen Robertshaw,  
field events

Most competitions on  
Saturday mornings at  
Episcopal High School in  
Alexandria

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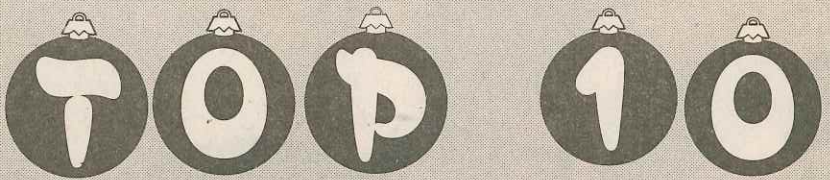
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## Treats to leave for Santa Claus

- 10) Traditional milk and cookies
- 9) A self-esteem book for the elves
- 8) A Y2K compliant sleigh
- 7) Anything but venison
- 6) Old Navy Performance Fleece
- 5) Coupons to Bally Total Fitness
- 4) A bathroom break
- 3) Just for Men hair dye
- 2) A fire extinguisher
- 1) Snack-Well cookies and a glass of Slim Fast

-Compiled by Lauren Weaver



## Reasons to go out of town for winter break

10. Jaxx isn't a real club
9. Be a houseguest and let someone else do the dirty work
8. If you can't have snow go for a little fun in the sun
7. Go somewhere that at least has the potential of looking like a winter wonderland
6. Your friends aren't cool
5. Neither is your family
4. Escape the tacky tinsel decorations put up in every shopping center
3. Springfield Mall turns into a Christmas carnival during the holidays
2. People spend way too much time hanging out at Bennigans
1. Do you really want to be stuck in Springfield for the Y2K?

-Compiled by Kelly Alm

# Top 10

## Things to do to prepare for Y2K

10. Partake in the traditional past times like looting, rioting, and panicking!
9. Enjoy popular campfire songs including "Old McDonald," and "We serve Zork, our New Alien Leader"
8. Take a luxury cruise on the accurately dubbed "USS Not-so-Y2K Compliant"
7. Stock up on Pez. It will be our new currency.
6. Be careful. "Y2K: the Movie" couldn't be wrong.
5. As millennium sponsors, "you'll be forced to eat M&M's and watch "The Late Show with David Letterman." Failure to do so is punishable by a fine of 1000 Pez pieces.
4. Safe-guard your computer against bugs. The world can't operate if your AOL Instant Messenger goes down.
3. Hop into your solar powered hover-car and fly to a party on our 37th Moon Colony.
2. Wait around for the media to find something else to hype. (Y3K?)
1. Party like its nineteen-ninety... nevermind.

-Compiled by Mike Fletcher



## Places to do last-minute holiday shopping

10. Knits Etc. (Yeah grandma!)
9. Dollar Tree (I swear this cost more than a dollar...)
8. Arby's (Christmas glasses are just \$1.99 with purchase!)
7. Ross
6. Library (Uh... I checked these out for you...)
5. Furniture you find on the road (Hey, everyone needs to sit)
4. Oracle office
3. Salvation Army (What do you mean you used to have something just like it?)
2. Recycled gifts (I only wore it twice...)
1. Motel Six Gift Shop

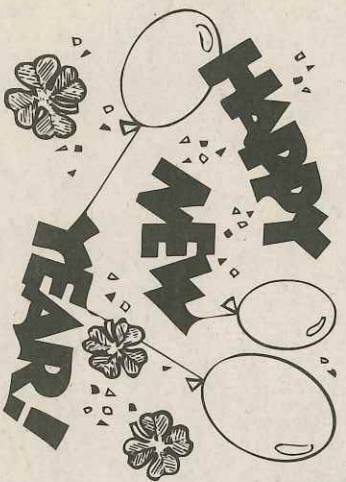
-Compiled by Julie Davis and Caitlin Marvin

# January 2000

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Wrestling Bandits Invitational V-JV @Home 7a.m.
						2 Wrestling- Jamboree JV @Lee 7 a.m.
	3 First Day of Classes after Winter Break Junior Career Unit Begins	4 Boys Basketball @Rob. V-7:30/JV- 5:45/F-4 Girls @Home V-7:30/JV- 5:45/F-4	5 Financial Aid Program-Cafeteria- 7p.m.	6 Gymnastics@Home vs. Cent.PkVw, & LoudValley 7p.m.	7 Swim/Dive vs. Hayfield @South Run 6:30p.m.	8 Wrestling- Jamboree JV @Lee 7 a.m.
	9	10	11 Boys Basketball @Ann. V-7:30/JV- 5:45/F-4 Girls @Home V 7:30/JV 5:45/F 4	12 Financial Aid Program-Cafeteria- 7p.m.	13 Gymnastics @Woodson vs. Mar/Chan 7p.m.	14 Wrestling- Jamboree JV @Rob 9 a.m.
16	17 Martin Luther King, Jr. HOLIDAY	18	19 Junior Parent College/Career Program-7p.m.	20	21 Senior Sack Lunch- Financial Aid	22 SAT Gymnastics@W&L Wash. and Lee Invite 7p.m.
23/30	24/31 24-Exams-2nd Quarter Begin 31-Teacher Workday- Student Holiday	25 Boys Basketball @Home vs. W.Pot. 7:30/5:45/4 Girls Basketball @W.Pot	26 Gymnastics@WS vs. Herm/Mad/ Park View 6p.m.	27	28 End of Second Quarter Swim/Dive vs. W.Pot@LeeDist6p.m.	29 Wrestling- Jamboree JV Ed 9 a.m

# Ringling in the new year

*This survey was taken by 100 WS students, 50 males and 50 females.*



- 1. Do you make a new year's resolution?**
- Yes 58%
  - No 42%

**2. If so, how long do you go without breaking it?**

- Less than one hour 14%
- Less than one day 7%
- Less than one week 28%
- Up to one month 37%
- More than one month 14%

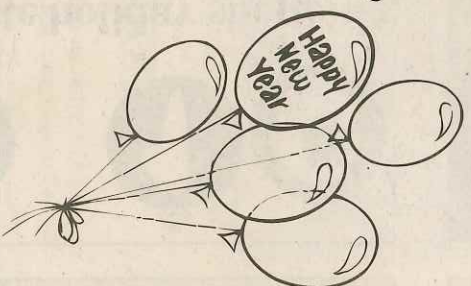


**4. Do you think that Y2K will be the end of the world?**

- Yes 29%
- No 71%

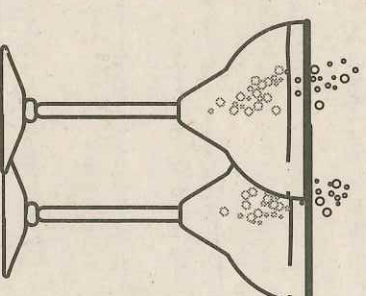
**3. When does the new millennium really start?**

- 2000 34%
- 2001 66%



**5. What will you be doing on New Year's Eve?**

- Partying like it's 1999 65%
- Staying at home 10%
- Going out of town 11%
- Hiding in a backyard bomb shelter 6%
- Other 8%



## News from other schools

### Robert E. Lee High School

The current AP classes will be replaced with a new International Baccalaureate program. For the next three years, the school will be phasing out the AP classes. Lee decided to switch to IB because they were losing students to the IB program at Edison. The IB program is supposed to be even more rigorous than the AP program.

### Annandale High School

Since November 4, there have been six small fires around the school. The latest was in a trash restroom. None of the fires have caused any serious damage or injury. There is a cash reward for any information leading to an arrest.

### JEB Stuart High School

The Marching Raiders received first place in their class at the Virginia Band and Orchestra State Marching Festival. The band was in the AA class and scored straight superior ratings.