

THE ORACLE

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Civ cancelled because of SOLs

By Amy Steed
News Section Assistant

American Civilization, a course that combines eleventh grade English and US history, will not be offered to students next year. This status of this class has been the topic of debate for years, but the decision to end it was not made until November.

"There were several reasons we decided to end the class," said Principal David Smith. "It is not as good a fit with the SOL climate as it was when it was formed, and honestly it is just hard to teach a class of 55 to 60 students."

American Civilization has a curriculum that integrates English and US history into one class. The course has two teachers, meets each day, and is double the normal class size. For years the administration had

questioned the merits of the class. The final decision to cancel the class was handed down by Smith, Guidance Director Eleanor Saslaw, History Chair Connie Peduzzi and English Chair Mary Moriarty.

"We did not compare American Civ SOL scores to those of regular US history," said Martha Chandler.

Because the class follows the SOL format in an untraditional manner the administration is troubled. This in itself is ironic because geosystems is given the Earth Science SOL, when that is not what the class material covers.

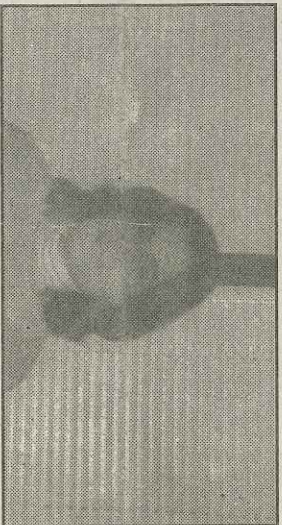
American civilization has now been a part of WS' curriculum for 14 years. While the team that cut the class is satisfied with its decision, others see the different options that were available. Many other schools in the county continue



Maggie Atteberry

American Civ teachers Laurie Fischer and Faye Bousel are disappointed with the decision to remove the class from WS' curriculum.

to offer American Civ classes. See Civ, pg. 4



Jenae Ellermann

"They provide a safe environment where people feel comfortable talking about the issues. They don't take sides, they just help to generate ideas."
—Psychologist Janis Johnson

Peer Mediation solves WS problems Students work together to improve atmosphere

By Katie Walker
Production Manager

When a student is having problems with a friend, WS offers a helpful program. Peer mediation aids students with difficulties they have with other people at school.

About 25 students act as mediators at WS, and between them they handle a few mediations a month. Students can request peer mediators by going to their counselors. Problems usually relate to friendships. Only one mediation this year has been the result of a physical fight.

"Students usually request mediators if they're having problems with a friend, with rumors, or if someone is making fun of them," said senior Hillary Palmer.

Psychologist Janis Johnson and Counselor Beth Cohen sponsor the peer mediators.

"We get a referral and then we have a small information gathering," said Cohen. "We find kids available to mediate during a time that is good for all the parties involved."

The job of the mediators is to help students come up with ideas on how to resolve the problem.

"The mediators act more as facilitators," said Johnson. "They provide a safe environment where people feel comfortable talking about the issues. They don't take sides, they just help to generate ideas."

Peer mediation is sometimes offered as an alternative to punishment so students can work through problems.

"Sometimes counselors offer peer mediation as an alternative to suspension," said Johnson. "We prefer the students to request the mediations because they really want to do it, not just so they don't get suspended. Peer mediations only work if both sides really try to work things out."

Choral groups spread holiday cheer to area

By Melissa Lipman
Entertainment Editor

"Twas the season to be jolly and WS singing groups helped many people around the community do just that.

WS choral groups did a myriad of performances for different parts of the community during the holiday season. The Madrigals, directed by WS chorus teacher Meribeth Puckett, were one of the most active of the groups. They gave shows at places ranging from Nordstrom's to the White House. During some weeks in December, they were doing a performance almost

every night.

"The holidays are the busiest time of year for us," said senior Elizabeth Wilcox. "But it's really fun. That's one of the main draws of Madrigals."

One of the season highlights for the Madrigals was a show at the National Cathedral in DC.

"That was so awesome. It was the most beautiful thing I've heard," said junior Katie Kovar. "I would love to do that again."

Another WS musical group, Personality, a singing and dancing performance group, did their annual Breakfast with Santa show for the children of the community in December. They

performed a medley of Disney songs while dressed as the Disney characters.

"They're [the kids] so cute," said junior Rebecca Weiner. "They really do think that you're the Disney character. They ask for your autograph."

After the show, performers talked to the kids who have Mr. and Mrs. Claus waiting for them along with breakfast in the school cafeteria.

"We're the real thing to them," said senior Boone Clayton. "They're really excited about it, and it makes us excited too." Pizazz, WS's all-girls show

choir, performed at several holiday shows too, singing carols at retirement communities in the area. Additionally, all the choral groups, including Spartan Choir, Men's Chorus, Women's Select, Pizazz, Personality and Madrigals, did a holiday concert at school December 3.

"The number one thing is the commitment that these students have to the programs and their community," said Puckett, director of all WS choral groups.



Donna Covey

Choral members enthusiastically perform at a local event.

"They bring a lot of joy to the community."

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4 SEE HOW WS REACHED OUT TO THE COMMUNITY.



7 FLASHBACK TO YOUR YOUTH!



10 IS MUSIC TOO VIOLENT?



Redskins must make wiser choices to win

By Myles Curran
Sports Editor

If Daniel Snyder wanted this years Redskins team to win, he should've bought a time machine to come alongside the new players.

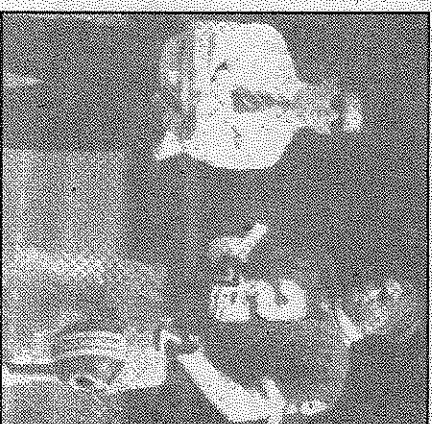
His prized quarterback, Jeff George, had his best years with Atlanta in the early nineties. Bruce Smith was great with the Buffalo Bills, but is long past his prime. Adrian Murrell was an 1,000 yard rusher with the Jets, but he has since been a backup on the lowly Cardinals. The always flashy and obnoxious Deion Sanders has never known how to tackle and cares only about his bank account.

There is a reason Snyder found it so easy to sign all these "marquee" free

agents this offseason...no one else wanted them. Snyder was the only owner who wanted these overrated headcases. Every one of them had worn out their welcome with their prior franchises. None of the teams the free agents signed on made any attempt to re-sign the player.

Snyder can win a championship with money, he just needs to spend wisely. Wayne Hitzenga proved it can be done with the 1997 World Series champion Florida Marlins. Hitzenga went out and basically bought out the free agent market, much like Snyder did. Only Hitzenga spent his money on winners not losers.

Money doesn't win, the players do. Unfortunately, the Redskins are a team full of full-time losers. George had a career winning percentage of 33 coming into the season, and has since won one of six as



Deion Sanders has an 8.4 million contract with the Redskins.

Redskins starter. Smith lost four Super Bowls in a row. Murrell was the Jets starting running back when they went 1-15. Mark Carrier was on an underachieving Lions team for years.

The Redskins can be winners, but only if Snyder becomes a smarter spender. Maybe he should take some tips from the Baltimore Ravens who seem to know how to spend wisely after an 11-5 season.

Community service serves its purpose

By Amy McKeever
Inside Story Editor

I truly believe that WS students serve our community not only because of club requirements, but also because they want to be helpful. Then again, I have always been somewhat of an idealist.

WS has many clubs and honor societies, some of which require a certain amount of community service hours from members. National Honor Society is the most visible and perhaps most demanding of these groups, requiring members to perform at least 10 hours of community service a semester.

I am aware that there are people in our school who complain about the contradiction of "mandatory volunteering." They think that it is wrong to force students to do any kind of service for the community against their will—and still call it volunteering. I admit, the

words "mandatory" and "volunteering" are quite contradictory, but then again, is volunteer work for clubs really mandatory?

No one has to join clubs or honor societies. Sure, it looks good on college applications, but that's not what life should revolve around. Most people do these extracurricular activities because they want to. They often know about any service requirements before they even get involved in an activity. For example, the acceptance letter for National Honor Society, whose ideal qualities in potential members are scholarship, leadership, character, and service, clearly states that "[Membership] incurs a responsibility and an obligation to demonstrate those outstanding qualities that resulted in your selection."

Knowing that the society has strict requirements for service, WS students still apply to NHS in droves and those accepted generally end up joining. This says to me that people in service-oriented clubs and

societies are genuinely interested in assisting the WS community—or that they are at least willing to do so without complaint.

Personally, I have joined clubs with the sole purpose of having an easy way to serve my community. I think that it is sometimes hard to find a service project on your own, and I know that it is always more fun and less scary when you have friends along with you. I may not have a lot of service on my resume, but the point is that I intend to. And I want to.

There will always be people who do not want to participate in service activities. Also, there will always be people who genuinely want to help others.

But I think that any person who does any kind of service for their community, even in the smallest ways and even against their own will, still leaves a significant impact on the community.

several episodes of *King of the Hill*.

Mr. Owens, Ryan Houston, Brian Wit, Matt Oster, and I were honored to be part of the stage band that performed with Skunk as he gave a *clinic* (there was no concert—only a few songs used to showcase Skunk's incredible musicianship), sharing musical insights, advice, and encouragement with approximately 200 students from the guitar program.

Those in attendance were certainly aware of the significance of this event, and I am certain that I do not stand alone when I say that the lack of attention it received was appalling. While it is typical that events such as the Third Floor Poolside Cafe, or the Jazz Guitar Ensemble's winter concert are consistently overlooked by *The Oracle*, perhaps the next time a musical legend visits our school, *The Oracle* will give that individual the respect deserving of a legend.

Letter to The Oracle

Dear Editor,

As much as I enjoy *The Oracle*, I must say that every once in awhile an occasional oversight of an important WS event is enough to make me cringe. In the last issue of *The Oracle* I was disappointed to see that several mistakes were made regarding events concerning the WS guitar department.

On November 29, 2000, the guitar department was fortunate enough to receive guitarist Jeff "Skunk" Baxter as their guest. Unfortunately, *The Oracle* in it's three-sentence blurb about this extraordinary event, managed to publish several mistakes. This blurb read as follows:

Jeff "Skunk" Baxter, from the Doobie Brothers, came to WS on November 29 along with musician Steely Dan. Baxter is a guitarist and gave a concert with

students in jazz guitar classes. Dan talked to students about his music career.

I know that the vast majority of students at WS probably don't even know who Steely Dan or the Doobie Brothers are (we weren't born until years after the groups disbanded), but I would hope that the smallest amount of research might be performed prior to publishing any article containing any information with which the author is not familiar.

Steely Dan was the *band* with which Skunk performed prior to joining the Doobie Brothers. Since Steely Dan was a group of people, not a single person, "he" would not have had the chance to talk about his musical career. Skunk spoke about his involvement with two previously mentioned bands as well as several of his most recent endeavors, including writing movie soundtracks and scoring music for

Gil Nelson, 12

More chairs needed in school

You're sitting in class, and the teacher asks a question. And you have no idea what the answer is. So you sink down in your chair, maybe the teacher won't notice you this time.

And then the most amazing thing happens: The teacher really doesn't notice you.

How on earth did this happen? Teachers are psychic! Ever since the

Editorial

fourth grade they've never failed to call on you every single time you didn't know the answer to the question.

Well, it's very simple. You're hidden among a sea of almost 30 other heads. All right, so this probably doesn't sound so bad. After all, it's a big class and an easy place to hide, easier to get away with sleeping in class, and talking to.

But just suppose for a minute that you're interested in the class. Or better yet, suppose that you're failing and you really need a teacher who can focus on you and help you out. The problem is, the teacher can't help! He or she is too busy trying to control rowdy students while giving a lesson to spend time during class with a failing student.

This is all too common at WS, where only SOL and base-level courses are capped. Right now, required English courses are stopped at 24 students, and SOL classes are filled at 28 students. All other elective, upper-level, and AP classes can go as high as there are students who want to take them. The *Olympian* section of journalism has 40 students in the room, 16 more people than there are seats.

This is an especially big problem in AP courses, which have more information. Also, AP English and social science classes tend to lend themselves to discussions, which are hard to have in larger classes, many of which have around 30 students in a class.

The larger the class, the harder it is for the students to learn. It's also harder for teachers to get a sense of whether or not their students understand the material in the classroom.

If educators, school officials and politicians expect students to learn, if they want to raise the bar in the classroom, they have to implement maximum numbers for all classes. If that means hiring more teachers, then it needs to be done.

After all, it's rather hard to learn standing up.

THE ORACLE

West Springfield High School
6100 Rolling Road
Springfield, VA 22152
(703) 913-3953

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West Springfield High School

Adopt-a-Bathroom raises a stink Program hits the bull's-eye

By Mike Waldron
Oracle Editor

By Amy Whipple and Nikki Werking
Oracle Editors

Since many students complain about the condition of the bathrooms, the SGA and other organizations plan on creating an Adopt-a-Bathroom program, which will call on students to decorate and monitor the bathroom assigned to their organization. And judging from one organization's response to this wonderful program, the idea is right on target—literally.

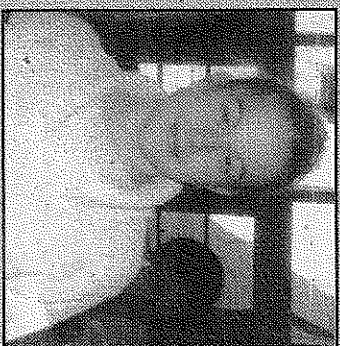
Most organizations plan on decorating their bathrooms around a certain theme. At a recent Key Club meeting, some of the ideas included a circus, a jungle, and a pirate ship. But the one that got the strongest reactions—both good and bad—was the idea of a pool hall theme, which would have included painted pool tables on the walls, and painted dart boards on the toilets. Needless to say, this idea was shot down in favor of the less-repulsive jungle theme.

But since organizations such as the Key Club can come up with their own themes (as long as they do not include painted dart boards on the toilets), the program is generating a great deal of excitement, which will then generate better bathroom conditions.

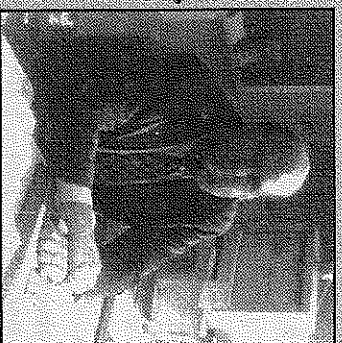
Once the organizations decorate their bathrooms, the real work will begin—the dirty work. Students assigned to monitor the bathrooms will check for supplies, and also make sure that they are clean.

At the Key Club meeting, the students came up with an interesting method for monitoring their bathroom. They decided to have bathroom cops, who could enforce strict rules, and bathroom helpers, who could pass out magazines and paper towels (and then wait for tips).

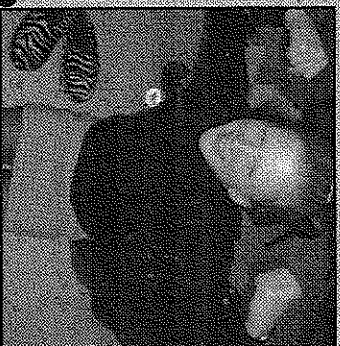
These ideas are a little looney, and some people believe that it should not be the students' responsibility to keep up the bathrooms. But if they will improve the condition of the bathrooms a little bit, and also make the bathrooms "fun" places, they will be good for much more than just a laugh.



"To make more friends,"
—Cindy Underwood, senior



—Mr. James Morris, teacher



"To get a back handspring and to get more muscles,"
—Erica Evans, sophomore



—Jason Havinga, junior

Spartan Spotlight

What is your New Year's Resolution?

—Compiled by Bree Virostko

"To put more fun back into learning and make sure I don't forget when teaching, that learning is fun."

—Mr. James Morris, teacher

"To have our 4 by 8 relay win the states and to play the guitar better than Nikki."

—Jason Havinga, junior

Read-and-wipe *Oracles*. Coming soon to a bathroom near you. *The Oracle* has great plans for the new Adopt-a-Potty program at WS. Yes, that's right, we're one of the richest counties in the nation, and we're fixing our own bathrooms. This new program is designed to make the lavatory a more enjoyable place to visit. WS clubs and sports teams can participate by adopting a school bathroom and maintaining its cleanliness. They are encouraged to decorate the walls with murals as well as pick used paper towels out of the sink. We would now like to propose the perfect *Oracle* bathroom.

First of all, it's not the *Oracle* bathroom; it's the *Oracle* restroom. We're much too high-class to refer to our lavatory as a "bathroom." How middle-class. A full-size photograph of the staff will be projected onto the wall for your viewing pleasure. Surely the lovely view will encourage users to place paper towels in their proper receptacles: the sink. And, as in all WS restrooms, the stall doors will not lock. We endorse freedom of the press, not the right to privacy. Besides, how will you be able to see our picture with the door shut? That defeats the purpose of bathroom murals.

The *Oracle* restroom will be the first to feature the hottest new item in lavatory products: Read-and-wipe *Oracles*. Since some fifth-period teachers have a tendency to not pass out *The Oracle* to students, we're cutting out the middle man. Rather than being printed on traditional newspaper, *The Oracle* will now be printed on pillow-soft, lint-free Charmin toilet tissue. Now you can read while sitting on the commode, just like you do at home, only this is better. You get to flush your reading material when you're finished.

This new trend in journalism is catching like wildfire and spreading like rabies. We expect to feature Read-and-wipe *Washington Posts* and Read-and-wipe *New York Times* soon. Read-and-dry *Springfield Connection* paper towels will be available upon request.

How will you find this paradise of a restroom? We'll make it really easy for you. A blinking neon sign will hang above the doorway flashing "Oracle Restroom—Go Here!" Signs posted around the school will point you in the right direction.

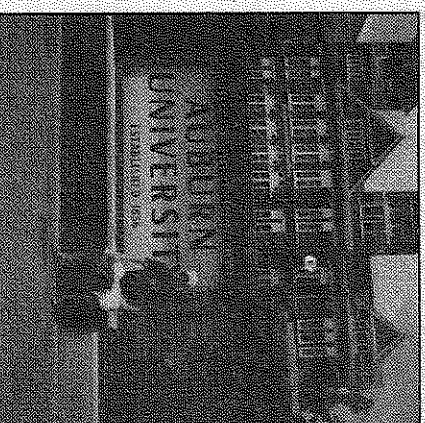
VA colleges exclude their own flesh and blood

By Lindsay Congleton
Special to the Oracle

Fairfax County, Virginia, a nationally recognized county across the country for an outstanding public school system. Most students attending Fairfax County public high schools should easily be able to get into a good Virginia state college, right? That used to be a given. Back in 1970 when my father graduated from Madison High School in Vienna, any high school graduate in Virginia was guaranteed admission to a Virginia college. Now it seems as though it is more heard of getting into an Ivy League or other top-notch school more so than a public Virginia institution.

Let's take my friend Allen Hemmelin who graduated from Chantilly High School in 1998, for example. He graduated with a 3.8 GPA, 1430 SAT's, was the captain of several sports teams, captain of the debate team, NHS member, Interact Club president, a member of the student advisory council, as well as an intern for a member of the House and coached for a youth basketball league. He did not get into the University of Virginia. Yet, he was accepted to the Naval Academy, Duke, and Princeton. How can a student so well-rounded get into three of the hardest universities in the country and not his own state university? It was apparent he had the credentials. So what was the factor that gave him the denial of admittance? It was most likely the fact he was a Virginia resident.

According to figures provided by the State Council for the Higher Education in Virginia, 37% of the freshman class this year at William and Mary were out-of-state students. Why are all of these out-of-state students being admitted into our state colleges? Virginia colleges are what our parents' pay taxes for, the colleges that are actually affordable for us all, because of our residency. At other state colleges, the percentages are incredibly different. In-state students at the University of Florida take up 95% of the population, at



Kyle Hoefert sits in front of Auburn University on an out-of-state college visit.

the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, the in-state students take up 85%.

In October, the Fairfax County School Board invited admissions officers from six different Virginia state Universities. These were their pathetic reasons for admitting an overabundance of out-of-state students: "it gives our university more diversity." And being a resident of Northern Virginia isn't a completely different world from living in the Shenandoah Mountains of western Virginia? And "Out of state alumni contribute more money." If they only want money from out-of-state alumni, why don't we cut the taxes that our Virginia parents pay for us not to go to Virginia colleges.

Jay O'Brien, representative from the 40th House District in Fairfax proposed a bill to the assembly on three different occasions, asking for a lower out-of-state percentage cap, bringing the out-of-state student percentage down to at least 33%. The four most applied to schools in Virginia: William and Mary, the University of Virginia, Virginia Tech, and James Madison would have been affected. His proposal has been shot down time and time again. Said O'Brien, "Virginians must make their voices heard if there is to be an increase in resident enrollments at our state schools." This is true. We all need to express our voices. It is our future that we are fighting for.

Kristi's Christmas Child brings WS together

Lauren Decot
Viewpoint Editor

Nineteen eighty-six WS graduate Kristi Brown died in a car accident one year after graduating. However, through "Kristi's Christmas, her memory lives on.

"After her death, her mom found her diary and she had written how much she enjoyed working with underprivileged children," said senior Erin Smith.

Brown's parents decided to start Kristi's Christmas. This year about 50 needy children from schools all around Fairfax County participated. The event happened December 10 and students from various groups at WS participated, including boys and girls basketball, peer helping, and Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

"In most cases, two students shared one child for the day," said senior Katie Hammerer.

Students from WS met with the

children at Terra Centre Elementary School and ate breakfast together.

Afterward, the children went to the Burke K-mart. The Rotary Club, and K-Mart donated money and each child had \$100 each that they could spend.

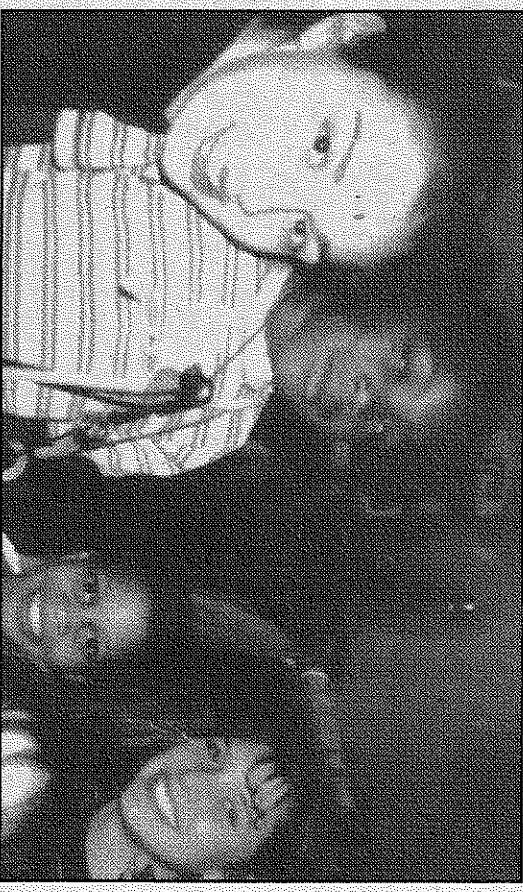
"Toys were off-limits. We bought winter clothing and shoes," said Hammerer.

After shopping, they went back to Terra Centre and they met Santa. Santa gave each child a gift bag filled with a sleeping bag, a back-pack, a toothbrush, and other goodies.

"Some of the kids are living in hotel rooms or cars," said senior Megan Ogilvie.

Kristi's Christmas has become an annual event. Each year, Kristi's mom sends an E-mail to schools in the county. The counselors get back to her with a list of 12 or so names of needy children.

Kristi was also active in National Honor Society, Tri-Hi-Y, Class Council,



From the right: Katie Hammerer, Rachael Zukerman, Molly McFerran and Amanda Jones shopped with their children for they day.

Cheerleading, and Soccer.

"Kristi devoted so much of her time to helping underprivileged children in our community," said senior Ginny Homer a Kristi's Christmas participant. "She was so happy about being able to help."

Officer Ukele enforces school rules

Jenny Askin

Production Editor

As hungry WS students walk toward the cafeteria they often pass a small office across the hall. This office is not used by the Administrators or the Secretaries, but rather a police officer. This man is responsible for the safe environment here at WS.

Officer Michael Ukele can be seen daily patrolling the halls of WS and the neighborhoods surrounding the school. Ukele is the WS Resource Officer, he has worked at both WS and Annandale during the past 5 years.

Ukele grew up in Colorado and attended college on a football scholarship. He then moved to Germany where his father worked for the Embassy. As a teenager Ukele was a talented athlete, playing both football and basketball. Ukele played for an Olympic Development basketball team along with WS Lady Spartan basketball coach Bill Langlosh.

After returning to the United States, Ukele finished his last 2 years of college. He became interested in the police force when a friend talked him into taking a police exam.

"It happened on a whim, I didn't plan on being a police officer," said Ukele.

As the Resource Officer for WS,

Ukele has many responsibilities in order to ensure the safety for

all the people in the building. Ukele works as a liaison between the school and the Police Department.

"I receive all the reports that concern students here at WS. I then have weekly meetings where I can

notify the Administrators," said Ukele.

Ukele not only works inside the actual school, he often patrols the outside grounds. Specifically in the neighborhoods where many WS students park and often smoke.

"Residents call me quite a bit because of the smoking," said Ukele. "Smoking is my biggest headache at WS because I get several calls because the residents don't appreciate the trash that the students leave behind."

Ukele often can be found working in his office, adjacent to the cafeteria. In his office Ukele keeps a collection of cigarettes and lighters that have been confiscated. He keeps all the confiscated items in a large bag, and empties it monthly.

As a member of the Fairfax County Police Force, Ukele participates in a program that helps get kids off the street and into



Laura Robinson

Officer Ukele is often found at Sherborn and Grigsby catching students smoking off school grounds, but still under school rules.

activities. Ukele distributes free tickets to Georgetown Basketball games, along with Wizards and Caps tickets. Anyone who is interested can stop by his office to pick up a few tickets.

In his free time Officer Ukele likes to spend it with his wife and his two children. He has been in the Fairfax County Police Department for 21 years, including a few years working in the gang unit. For the most part, his career has been involved with the schools. Ukele thinks of himself as a laid back person who wants to help whoever he can. As high school students become more familiar with drugs like Ecstasy commonly known as E,

Ukele worries about the students. "I have an open door policy, anyone can come by for help, but keep in mind I will put my two cents in," said Ukele.

College students visit WS

The Career Center held a lunch for rising college students on January 5. Former WS students came to talk about their college experience.

Financial aid program

A meeting for parents and students was held in the cafeteria at 7 pm on the 10th. Financial options were presented to families. The discussion is held yearly to help out the families with students going to college.

WS Update

Key Club blood drive rescheduled

The blood drive scheduled for December the 20th has been moved to February the 22nd. A snow day caused the delay, but arrangements have been made for 2 RV's to be at WS to receive blood. The Key Club normally expects over 100 people to participate, but they hope the number will increase since more people have had a chance to turn 18, the minimum age to donate blood.

George Mason opens its doors

A technology internship fair for college and high school students at George Mason January the 5. Positions were available for the surrounding area.

Administration cancels Civ

From page 1

Both Oakton and Centreville high schools now offer Civ as an AP class.

"The SOLs can be matched in Civ, it is the best approach," said Jim Petroco, who first started American Civ with Susan Latour.

The removal of Civ at WS has disappointed those teaching it. History teacher Laurie Fischer and English teacher Faye Bousel are able to see the benefits that American Civilization has to offer. With a class meets everyday, students can become more comfortable with their surroundings. It allows them the chance to learn in different ways. A visual learner often thrives in this class because of its setup.

"I understand the decision. I just wish I had been invited to be more active in the process," said Fischer.

This decision had not only disappointed Bousel and Fischer, but also other faculty. Counselor Nancy Wright is sad to see the class go. Her son took the class under Bousel several years ago.

"I love the idea of combining history and English," said Wright. "It allows students to see the connection between events in history and the literature of that time period."

A faculty E-mail dated December 5th addressed concerns involving Civ and the SOLs. The top portion of the E-mail states that after looking at American civilization in terms of the SOL's standards it was decided that dropping the class was the best solution.

US history scores are low countywide, but WS has been improving. The 95 percent passing rate at Thomas Jefferson may make WS 57 percent look low, but when compared to schools such as Hayfield, Annandale, and West Potomac high schools, WS is doing quite well. Oakton has steadily dropped six points in the last three years, but yet they still keep their American civilization program.

While the faculty E-mail said "students with less maturity would not be as likely to fall through the cracks," Civ teachers say students performance is not lower in their class.

"A bad student will do bad anywhere," said Fischer.

According to Smith it is not likely that the decision to cut American civilization will be withdrawn, but Bousel and Fischer say they will "make it the best year possible." Next year they both will continue to teach at WS in their separate subjects. Both intend to keep their unique teaching styles despite losing some of the atmosphere provided by Civ.

"I'll teach history the same as I do now," said Fischer, who is known for dramatizing history for her students. "I will cover my standards of learning as I do now and always have."

Four Seasons serves first ladies' recipes

By Jennifer Schonberger

Features Editor

With the grueling and seeming never-ending election over, DC is gearing up for the 43rd presidential inauguration. The Four Seasons Hotel is also joining the celebrations.

The prominent hotel at 2800 Pennsylvania Avenue NW will be celebrating the occasion with afternoon tea featuring recipes from those of the past first ladies. Tea will be served in the newly renovated Garden Terrace Lounge.

"The last time I went to tea I was 9 years old," said senior Elizabeth Younits. "I loved it and would love to try it again. This sounds like a great time to try it again."

The Four Seasons celebration began January 8 and runs through February 4. Tea will be served Monday through Saturday between 3-5 PM and

from 4-5:30 PM on Sundays.

"I think it's a great idea," said sophomore Monica Bernudez, "I would love to attend and have



over the party David a n d chef Doug incorporate new regular tea menu Betty Ford's banana-blueberry bread, Nancy Reagan's Venetian chocolate bars, and Barbara Bush's chicken salad. "Having tea is old-fashioned like the presidential

inauguration," said senior Aaron Brantley. "It's a great way to keep the history going, but it's not my cup of tea."

The chefs are also including creations from their predecessors going all the way back to Dolly Madison's caramel layer cake and Martha Washington's cherry short bread.

"I think it's a great way for the hotel to celebrate the inauguration," said sophomore Angie Abba. "In a way it gives us a glimpse into the private lives of the first ladies."

Reservations will be required for tea, which is priced at \$25 per person. The tab also includes a booklet of the ladies' recipes.

"I think it's a really cool idea," said junior Pauli Lee. "It would be interesting to taste the different recipes. I bet they're great cooks. I'm getting hungry just thinking about it!"

Personal beliefs and interests start clubs

By Nayna Gupta

Inside Story Editor

Frustrated with the lack of recycling at WS, seniors Sara Benjamin, David Glazer, and junior Jesse Freer decided that they wanted to start a new club. Like the founders of the Recycling Club, students interested in Middle Eastern and South Asian culture have worked hard to maintain interest and involvement in their club.

"Starting something new is hard," said Benjamin, "especially at such a big school."

After history teacher Allison Kopkau agreed to be the sponsor, the cofounders set up a back-to-school-night booth, explaining the club's mission and goals. At their first meeting, club members decided on fund-raising ideas and drew up a club constitution.

"At first, not many people showed up. We wanted to draw in as many people as possible, so we decided not

to have club dues," said Benjamin.

In an effort to start new recycling programs at WS, members of the club plan to paint trash cans advocating recycling and a clean environment. These trash cans, to be used for recycling aluminum cans, will be emptied by students. The emptied cans will be donated to the fire department, who will then use them to raise money for burn victims.

The club also plans to spread its message to the community by starting outreach programs in elementary and middle schools. These programs are intended to help spread awareness and encourage more students to recycle.

A challenge most new clubs face is finding the money they need to support their plans. The Recycling Club made \$120 by selling hemp necklaces at Spartanfest. Another new club, the Middle Eastern South Asian club (MESA), made \$390 by selling food and painting Henna tattoos.

Like the recycling club, MESA officers found it hard to increase

participation.

"It is hard to bring everyone together and get them involved. You have to work together as a team," said President Priyanka Sarafi.

Two years ago, a few students created a club called the Indian Heritage Club. The club, unsuccessful then, has now been brought back under the new

name MESA, and with chemistry teacher Dr. Barinder Deu as sponsor.

"A lot of people thought it was just for Indians, but with the new name we have broadened it. It is not just limited to people from Asia though. It is for everybody," said Sarafi.

The club's goal is to help new students who come from foreign countries in the Middle East and South Asia, and to also spread culture throughout the school. The club plans

to use its money to help a needy family and put together a cultural show.

Both clubs, Recycling and MESA, plan to overcome the challenges of starting a new club, to achieve their goals and spread their messages.

"I saw a definite need for the this club [recycling] in our school. I am truly excited about the level of involvement and dedication shown," said Kopkau. "We're going to do great things this year."

Mashed potatoes for the soul

People find comfort in different foods

By Caitlin Marvin

Managing Editor

A heaping pile of mashed potatoes. Hearty beef stew simmering away on the stove. Cold macaroni & cheese stuck to the bottom of the bowl. Vanilla ice cream covered with rainbow sprinkles.

Comfort foods take us back to when life was easier, when someone else made the hard choices and when nobody was obsessed with calories.

Comfort foods provide a link to happy times for the eater.

"When I'm feeling down, I open my freezer and dig into a pint of Ben & Jerry's Cherry Garcia," said senior Michelle DiFilippo.

Johanna Burkhard, the author of *The Comfort Food Cookbook*, studied the comfort food phenomenon.

"What I found is that we make our food choices early in life and our likes and dislikes are formed at a young age and carried through into our adult lives," said Burkhard. "That's why we tend to like the wonderful dishes like stews or a comforting bowl of soup because there is a familiarity around them."

Comfort foods differ by gender. In a survey of 1,005 consumers, men and women both selected ice cream as their favorite comfort food, but then



Bree Vioshko

women named chocolate and cookies as their second and third favorite choices and men named soup and pizza and pasta.

These foods also differ by age. People the ages of 18 to 34, preferred ice cream and cookies, those aged 35 to 54 preferred soup and pizza, and those older than 55 named soup and mashed potatoes. Although there are a number of reasons why



Bree Vioshko

certain foods became comfort foods, two reasons stand out—past associations and personality identification. For example, because a person recalls their father liking green beans or always getting ice cream after their baseball team won a game, they are more inclined to eat those foods.

People are also drawn to food products which are seen as consistent with their self-image.

"I love mozzarella sticks. I get them every time I go out to eat. They are very comforting," said sophomore Johnny Styron. "I like to think mozzarella sticks bring out the best in me."

Although comfort foods tend to be high in fat content, it doesn't stop people from consuming or enjoying these meals. Ice cream sundaes, mashed potatoes and Whoppers can't satisfy like the simple, old-timey foods.



Military students make their rounds

By Angela Florino

ETC. Editor

Moving is what they do best. They live in many places over the course of a few years and hardly ever get a chance to settle in one place, make friends or get to know their surroundings.

"I really don't know any other way of living because the longest that I stayed in one place was three years," said sophomore Lisa Marvin who has lived in Springfield for 5 years. "And when I moved it wasn't weird because everyone else on the base was moving too."

It's not an easy thing to move a lot because settling in one place then having to pack up all your stuff again and move somewhere entirely new is not fun. However there are some people who enjoy leaving an old place and going somewhere new.

"I really didn't mind the whole moving part of it all, as in packing all our stuff up because I liked starting over and going to a new place," said senior Sarah Anderson.

To some, moving all over the place may not be the ideal life-style but there are others who actually enjoy it. Moving around and seeing different places all around the

assignments are called remote assignments and they are not usually given to married officers with families because of the lack of the facilities needed for children such as schools, medical and dental care. The regular assignments that are given to officers with families are usually three years long and most of those assignments are in Europe but they can also be in places in the US or Korea.

"I am glad that I have finally settled in one place," said Marvin. "I think if I moved now it would be harder since I have been here for about five years and made so many friends. I enjoy traveling but I'm glad that I am settled in one place."



Maggie Attebery

Senior Sara Anderson has lived in Hawaii and Korea.



Maggie Attebery

Junior Jasmin Wilkons throws her hands up. world is intriguing for some. A lot of times teenagers get to experience different life-styles and cultures in high school especially if they move overseas.

"I really enjoy moving and seeing new places and meeting new people but I really don't like the part when I have to leave all the friends that I made," said junior Jessie Kulp. "This summer I am moving to Portugal and I am kind of scared because it is a whole new culture and life-style and I don't know how people will act. Plus I don't know any of the language."

There are several different military assignments and some can be as short as one year. The one-year



Maggie Attebery

Sophomore Steven Lewis has moved a few times to different places.

Students make waves

WS expresses talent through the Internet

By Priyanka Tandon

Business Systems Editor

As the page opens on a computer, a familiar name of a WS student appears on the screen.

Several students have their own web pages. For some students, their sites provide a creative outlet. Each site has a personal meaning and style.

Junior Jessie Chesnut operates two websites. One is her own personal page that includes messages to her friends and is updated more often than her other page. Her second site is for movie buffs like her.

"I love movies. I do reviews and have eight different genres on it like old, new and kids," said Chesnut.

Another student, senior Will Stunkle, maintains his own page. Stunkle's site is updated about two to three times a week and reveals his poetry and religious beliefs.

"I was bored and I just wanted something to let out my creativity," said Stunkle.

While some students have their own sites, junior Nick Clapsaddle has a family site. The website has no specific purpose; it just has pictures of his parents helping in the community and other family photographs.

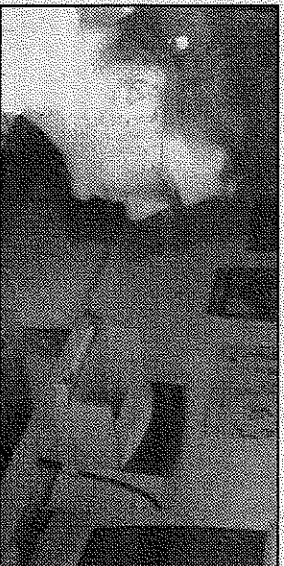
"I think my dad just made it to keep up with the Internet trend," said Clapsaddle.

For junior Meredith Galemore, expressing her creativity is not the only benefit she receives from her website.

"My site has my photography portfolio and writing, but I've also made lots of friends through it," said Galemore.

Similar to students' websites, physics teacher Ed Lintz maintains a website which allows people to write his own obituary for free. The site has personal meaning because Lintz had needed a heart transplant, which he received just in time.

"After my transplant I was lying in bed one night, when



Lauren Sherfield

Senior and web sener Will Stunkle looks at his website to update it for his friends to check out.

I shot up and said, 'What if they don't get it [obituary] right?' That was my inspiration for obitnow.com," said Lintz.

Obitnow.com has been running for a few years. In addition to writing their own obituary, people can express their last wishes, burial location, whether or not they want to be an organ donor or be cremated. This information can be password protected if the user wishes. Writers can also have a picture of themselves with a charge of \$20.

Websites can be a business with personal meaning, offer a way for people let the world know about themselves, and also provide a place for people to release their creativity.

Learning history the applied way

By Julie Davis

ETC. Editor

Applied History teacher Jim Percoco designs his own curriculum. He has no guidelines to follow and no standardized test to give—and his students love every minute of it.

"The material learned is more in depth," said Percoco. "I change the course a little bit every year, and I decide what to include and exclude."

Applied History is far different from any main stream history class. It is a one-of-a-kind class, found only at WS. To be admitted to the class, an application is required at the end of junior year, along with a recommendation

from the students' history teacher. There is only one class of all seniors, so that only leaves room for approximately 30 students.

"I think it is a wonderful class," said senior Mike Crochet. "The application process was long, but it's a very intense course—it pays off to be in it."

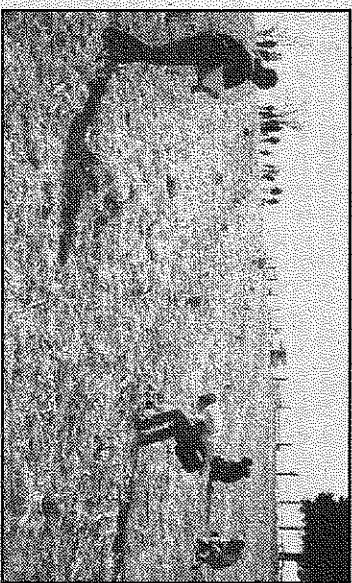
For the first semester, students reviewed selected pieces of history, wrote about taboo history topics, made group photo essays, and went on various field trips. New this year is a Civil Rights memorial competition and an extensive paper on the Civil Right movement.

"It helps me learn about the time period in an unconventional, interesting way," said senior Rebecca Sewczak. "There is a big difference between US history and this class."

The second semester is the one most anticipated by the class members. They intern at various historical sites, including Ford's Theatre and Sally Plantation.

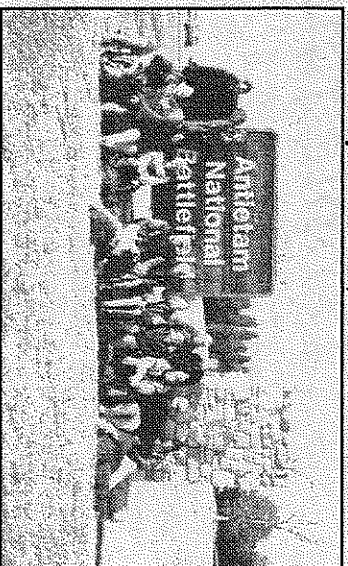
Christine Peters, a 2000 graduate of WS and freshman at Mariam College in Maryland, remembers her internship as one of the most incredible experiences of her life. She worked at the Octagon Museum in DC. There, she helped preserve and filed antique photos. She also helped with setting up exhibits.

"I worked a lot with famous photos," said Peters. "The most memorable though was when I saw and handled the first photos ever taken of Egypt."



Amy Whipple

Applied history students explore the field for artifacts.



Amy Whipple

Applied history students pose during a trip to Antietam battlefield.

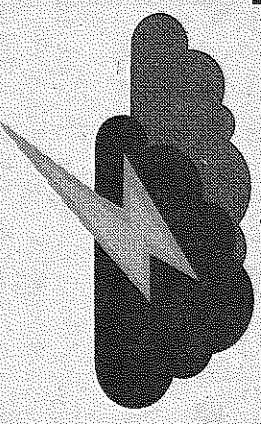
Applied History promotes a different type of learning. Senior Deanna Tobin enjoys the class because she can benefit from the way the material is taught.

"You learn for yourself, not for a textbook or a teacher," said Tobin. "Mr. Percoco is an incredible teacher. He makes the course so much fun because he is very enthusiastic and loves his job."

This year, the class has visited Gettysburg, PA and toured various battlefields. In Antietam, MD, the class got the opportunity to participate in the Antietam Illumination ceremony, in which 23,110 candles were lit for every soldier wounded or killed in that battle.

"Driving through the dark, seeing the light from the candles made me realize how many people died," said senior Alyson Olivar. "It was like a never-ending ocean of candles."

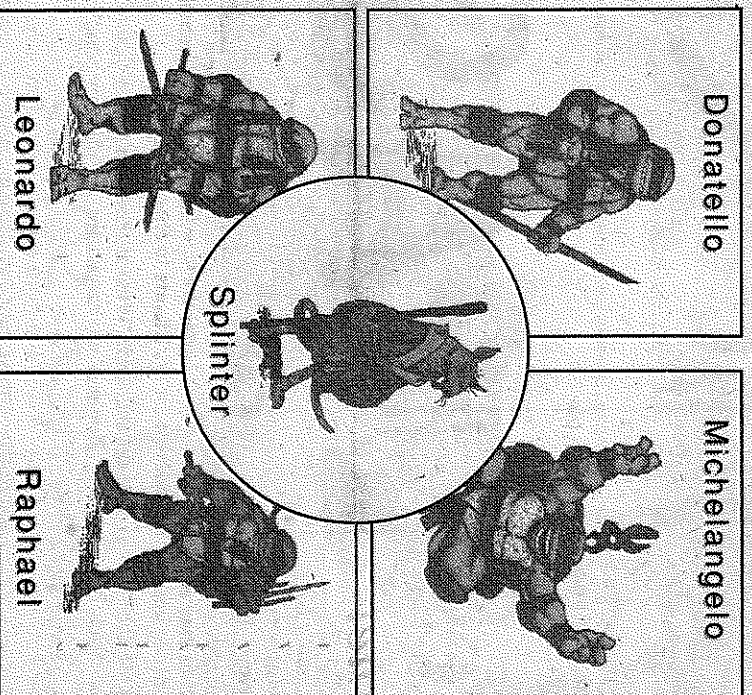
FLASHBACKS



Replaying the old hits

With the start of 2001, The Oracle could not help reminiscing about our childhood memories from the late '80s and early '90s. Saturday mornings full of cartoons and radios tuned into the latest teenie bopper phenomena...these were the good old days?

Take a closer look at the best and the worst of our childhood...COWABUNGA DUDE!



Turtles and teenagers

By Emily Morris

Features Assistant

Red, purple, blue and orange. Their colors fit up the televisions of little kids everywhere. They were turtles and for many years the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (TMNT) not only ruled the sewers, but the lives of our younger versions.

For those who were not big fans of the show, or cannot remember that far back, here is a refresher course: There were four turtles: Donatello, Michelangelo, Leonardo, and a rat named Raphael. They were turtles that were poisoned and grew up to be human-sized. They then lived in a sewer with a very wise rat, named Splinter, who was also human-sized. They had only one human friend, a newscaster named April. Their evil enemy was Shredder.

The turtles not only crushed evil, they also fought the challenges of ordering a pizza. Since they lived in a sewer it was difficult, but they managed to do it.

The turtles had their own cartoon, and enough merchandise

to fill many toy stores and play rooms and bedrooms.

"I had the toy blimp and pajamas, Michaelangelo was my favorite," said senior Nick Pizzo.

Not only toys, but clothes were also very big. Pajamas, Halloween, T-shirts, hats, and shoes were also available to any die-hard TMNT fan.

"I had their videos, and I still do. But I do not watch them anymore," said sophomore Sherri Boone. "Back then, it was the cool thing to do, and Michaelangelo was the best."

With fame surrounding TMNT they moved from cartoons to the big screen. The turtles then came out with another movie while their cartoons continued to soar to success.

Then their diehard fans grew older and TMNT grew out of style.

"I really liked the show because of the sarcasm and how the enemies were always beaten and then ran-away," said senior Aaron Wilkins. "But then it was time for new cartoons like Batman and Robin, and TMNT faded away."

By Katie Walker

Production Editor

The names New Kids on the Block and MC Hammer bring back memories for WS students. These musicians were some the artists of their youth who most WS students loved to listen to in the late '80s and early '90s.

The most popular of these groups was probably the New Kids on the Block. The five member boy band consisted of Joey McIntyre, Jordan Knight, Jonathan Knight, Daniel Wood, and Donny Wahlberg. The group combined pop and rap to produce a number of hits in the late '80s and early '90s.

The NKOTB hit the Top 10 with "Hanging Tough," "You've Got it (the Right Stuff)," "I'll Be Loving You (Forever)," "Please

Don't Go Girl," and "Cover Girl." "Step by Step" was their most successful single.

"I loved the New Kids on the Block," said junior Amanda Littlepage. "They were cute and had cool dance moves and clothes. 'Step by Step' was the best song."

In 1994, the NKOTB split up to pursue solo careers. McIntyre is still singing and recently came out with a new CD.

Another artist that was popular when WS students were young was MC Hammer. His big album was "Please Hammer Don't Hurt 'Em," and "U Can't Touch This" was played nonstop on the radio. Hammer has spent the last few years as a preacher.

In the early '90s white rapper Vanilla Ice hit number one with "Ice Ice Baby." He is still

rapping, and released a new CD, "Hard to Swallow," in 1998.

Formerly Marky Mark of Marky Mark and the Funky Bunch, Mark Wahlberg quit his singing career and is now a well-known actor, starring in many films including "The Perfect Storm." His debut album, "Music for the People," achieved platinum sales in 1991, and Marky Mark became famous for his rapping and pants dropping on stage.

Other popular artists included Paula Abdul, Ace of Base, and also Criss Cross whose signature was to wear his clothes backwards.

"It's funny to look back now," said junior Laura Ogborn. "You hear the music and you're like 'I actually used to listen that?'"



The New Kids on the Block captured the hearts of many girls during the late '80s with their teenie-bopper tunes.

Big hair and Keds; not dressed to impress

By Caitlin Marvin

Managing Editor

In the late '80s, I thought everyone was cool. The teenagers hung around the malls, throwing around classic phrases like "gag me with a spoon" and "tubular".

The girls with their checkered high tops and slouch socks, the guys in their British Knights and Swatch watches, and everyone in pegged jeans. I, on the other hand, at six years old, could only dream of being so fashionable.

I attempted to copy the teenagers by wearing t-shirt clips and slap bracelets. I wore layered socks and black Keds. And of

course, I had my Debbie Gibson Electric Youth t-shirt. I had a teal jean jacket covered in pins and lined with polka dots. The only thing I had to perfect was my hair.

Guys (and sometimes girls) had mohawks, buzz cuts, and rat tails of all colors.

The most memorable hairstyles on girls were the wild perms and mile high bangs. I never could get my bangs to stay up no matter how many cans of Rave I used.

However, I did get the perm. My mom, wanting to make sure my hair would take the perm, suggested I just get my bangs permed. It turned out horrible but I did get

mile high bangs- mile wide too. After a few months, the perm worked itself out and I returned to the '80s bob.

I continued to listen to Debbie Gibson and wear neon green skirts until I traded it all in for stirrup pants and Ace of Base.

The '80s are long gone. And although that decade has provided me with hours of laughter, reminiscing over the styles, I'm glad it's over.

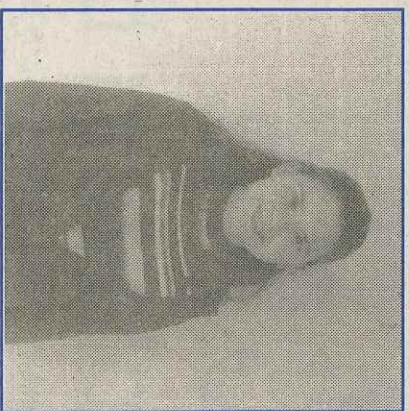
Just thinking about some of the not-so-tubular things we wore, makes me think, gag me with a spoon.



Future WS students and friends display their early '90s clothing style as they rest from raking leaves.

Gigi McKeever

What was your favorite part of the early '80s and late '90s?



Bree Virostko

'New Kids on the Block. I had a Jordan Knight Barbie Doll.'

—Melissa Lattomus, 11



Bree Virostko

Parachute pants were the greatest in the world

—Tyler Christensen



Playing with the Past

By Theresa Rupp

Managing Editor

The kids growing up in the 21st century are missing out on a lot—slap bracelets, My Little Ponies, roller skates, Transformers, the list could go on. Arguably, no other decade produced as many cool toys as the '80s. You needed to have something to play with while wearing your Gianno tight jeans and slouch socks, right? The toys we played with as kids were as fun as the crazy stuff we wore.

Remember slap bracelets? This unisex (yes, I saw guys wearing them) accessory was actually a piece of venetian blind covered in neon-colored fabric. I had about 10 different ones and wore them all the time. That is until the big lawsuit came out (slap bracelets can easily poke your eye out, as one kid discovered) and my mom made me throw them all away.

For the guys, Transformers were the big thing. I remember watching hundreds of commercials showing those big plastic robots that turned into a jet or an animal at the push of a button. Hey, two toys in one, you can't beat that.

Roller skating, too, has sadly gone "out." Who needs Roller Blades with all that safety equipment when you can just tie up your roller skates and stop safely with the big rubber "brake" on the toe? And no '80s birthday party would be

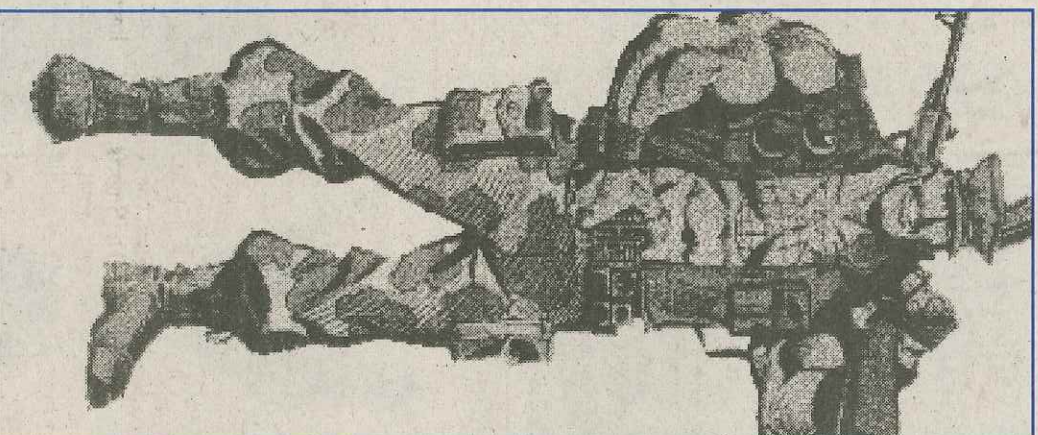
complete without a trip to the roller skating rink. Nothing says fun like a good old fashioned dance of "hokey pokey" in the middle of the rink...you might even win a free hot dog at the concession stand!

Barbies and My Little Ponies, as well as My Buddy and Kid Sister, have also become less popular today. Too bad I had about 30 Barbies and 50 My Little Ponies when I was younger. The Barbie ice cream parlor and dream house that I played with for hours at a time are now unused and the pony nursery and corral have been abandoned for years.

So what are kids playing with now? Cabbage Patch Kids? Nope. Power Wheels (now you're driving for real)? Nope. Play-doh? Nope.

Today it's all Pokemon and Beanie Babies. And don't forget the computer games. I didn't even know what a computer was until I was 9. Now, 3-year-olds are playing "Blue's Clues" games on the home computer.

So what has happened to the Family Double Dare home game, the Simon (high-tech electronic color test of memory), or the Where's Waldo books? Well at my house, they are all just sitting on a shelf getting dusty in a closet. Oh sorry, but I have to go now...Pokemon is on TV and I have to finish my Harry Potter book by tomorrow. Please, priorities today, people.



GI Joes were not only characters that we watched on TV, but they were also traditional toys of our youth.

'80s FOR THE PAST

Ann M. Martin's great idea...and then some

Remembering the original Baby-sitters Club

By Amy Whipple

Oracle Editor

A few weeks ago, I was shopping for my little sister's Christmas present and I found something that brought back about a thousand memories: The Baby-sitters Club.

My little sister has been reading these for several months now, so I figured a few books would make a nice gift. I was racking my brain for the ones we already have when I saw that the club disbanded in November 2000. I bought the last book for myself, figuring if I own the first, I might as well have the last.

It has come to my understanding that these books are not as popular now as they were in the '80s. The series, started by Ann M. Martin in 1985, didn't enter my life until I was 6 years old. By that

time, book #41, "Mary Anne vs. Logan" was new and HBO had started a TV series based on the books. I thought this was the be-all, end-all of books. I guess there is something more exotic about Harry Potter than there is about seven girls who babysit all the time.

But still, what could be better? I know countless people, me included, who thought that they, too, could have a babysitters club of their own. What a moneymaker! The thing is that it doesn't work that way in real life, especially since Springfield is nothing like Stonebrook.

Even if my club never got anywhere besides my mind, I'm still impressed that an original four-part series mushroomed into 213 books, an actual movie theater movie, a game, a fan club, and

has been translated into 19 different languages.

I'll never understand why a bunch of parents would let their 13-year-old daughters go to Europe, California, the beach, and who knows where else alone. I'm not really sure why I feel a little empty inside when I found out that Mallory went off to boarding school and Dawn moved back to California for good. And I would like to deny that I ever wanted to dress like Claudia, but that's another story altogether.

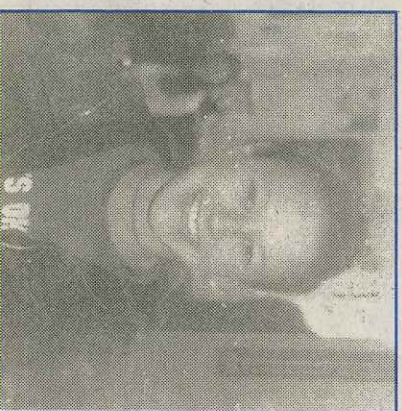
There's something about the '80s encapsulated in books like The Baby-sitters Club. There's so much innocence and creativity among the four girls in the original books that just makes me want to wear my hot pink Spandex. OK, not quite, but still didn't like in

Stonebrook seem perfect? They didn't even have "real life" issues until much later in the series. Even those had the sugary sweet everything-works-out-in-the-end plot. Isn't life so much better when things work out that way?

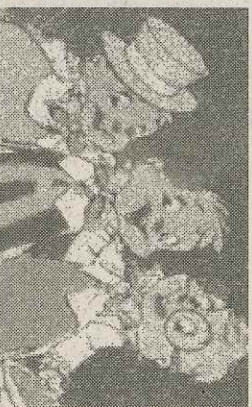
The books may be long gone from my life, but there's still that little piece of my heart that remembers when my life used to have those same sugar-coated endings.

Since I'm sure none of you plans on going out and reading the last book, the club dwindles back to its four original members, and, yes, they are finally getting out of the eighth grade. Only with the end of their middle school days means the end of the most popular club to ever hit the '80s. But it's one club that we all could be a member.

Which '80s or '90s cartoon character would you be?

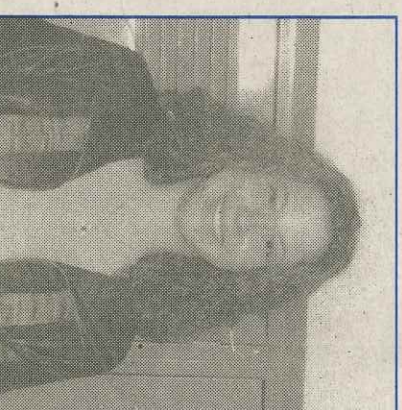


Bree Virostko

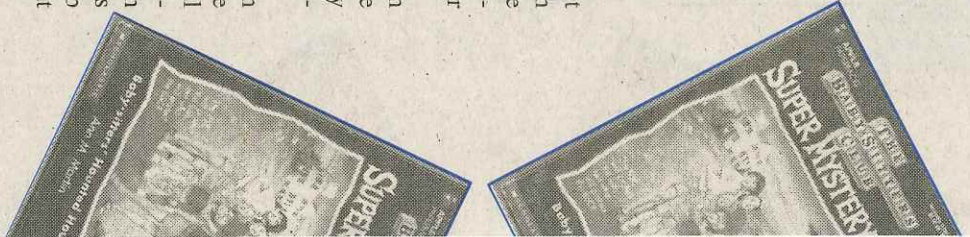


"Alvin and the Chipmunks because they could surf in the bathtub."

—Courtney Uram, 10



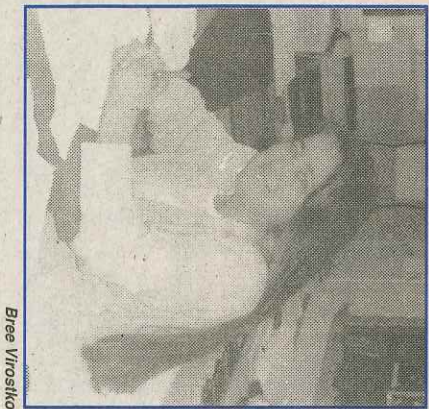
Bree Virostko



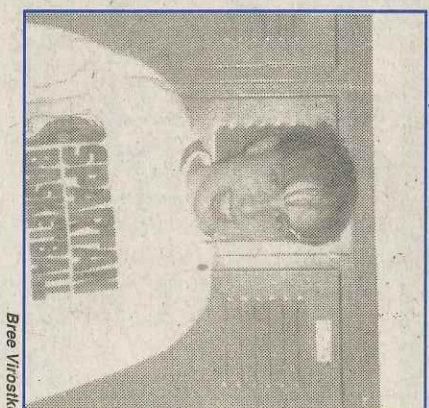
"Jem from 'Jem and the Holograms' I could change to a rock star"

—Maggie M

nts. They
atest invention
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stensen, 10



Bree Virostko



Bree Virostko



“‘The Breakfast Club’ and ‘Sixteen Candles’ because I think Molly Ringwald is a super actress.”
—Rachael Zukerman, 12

Saturday morning favorites

By Angela Fiorino
ETC. Editor

We all watched them when we were young but most of us don't like to admit that we dressed up like the characters, had their lunch boxes, religiously watched the shows every Saturday morning, and knew every word to the theme songs but we all did.

There were lots of cartoons that we watched when we were kids and they have stuck with our generation all through high school. Some classes at WS have even chosen some of these characters as their mascots.

The juniors have Scooby Doo and the seniors have Space Ghos, two of the popular cartoon characters that were famous when we were young. We all remember Alvin and the Chipmunks, Rainbow Bright, Inspector Gadget, Ninja Turtles, Thundercats, The Smurfs, and of course “Sesame Street.”

“I watched David the Gnome

everyday and Nickelodeon was my favorite channel,” said junior Jocelyn Reed. “I used to want a fox just like Swift.”

These cartoons were what spiced up our childhood days and we had them to look forward to on those Saturday mornings when mom was still asleep or when we had nothing better to do.

We liked to pretend we were Inspector Gadget, Superman or any of the other superheroes from these cartoons. We played with our dogs or dressed up our dolls and pretended to save the world.

“I used to be a hard core ‘X-Men’ fan and I used to pretend like I was Jean Grey,” said sophomore Heather Strobel.

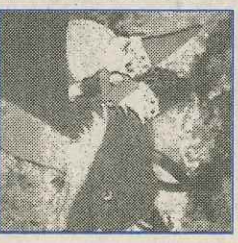
We all remember the days when all we had to worry about was what kind of snack mom was going to give us while we watched the Saturday morning lineup. Those days were fun and unfortunately now we have more important things to worry about

like when our homework is due or when we will be able to study for those tests and rarely is there any time to watch our good old cartoons.

“I am still infatuated with cartoons and I watch a lot of the Japanese cartoons such as Evangelion,” said sophomore Ivan Collich.

It is still fun to kick back, relax and take a peek back on our childhood. Whether or not we still watch these cartoons at least we will have them to always look back on and help us remember how much fun our childhood was. Even though most of us can't find time to watch these shows anymore, a lot of teenagers still have a lot of the memorabilia from these shows like the dolls, the “Tickle-me-Elmos” or the posters.

“I still have a collection of smurfs in my locker and I have a lot of the action figures from Spiderman and other cartoons at home,” said junior Ryan Nicholas. “Toys are fun.”



90S GOS TITLE

How rude! Cut it out! Have mercy! Owscreeam?

Thinking of memories, laughter, and good times of a ‘Full House’

By Jenny Askin
Production Editor

In the olden days, you know the '90s television was chock full of television that entertained us. During the early to mid '90s “TGIF”, “Full House”, and “The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles” were the “coolest” shows to watch. This time period was when TV was not full of violence, sex and drugs.

“When I was younger, TV was more positive, I loved watching the cartoon ‘Transformers’,” said senior Cara Abruscato.

A show on the ABC network featured a fun-loving family from a town in San Francisco, who always found a way to make us laugh. The Tanner family, complete with their golden retriever Comet were the stars of primetime television’s “Full House”. Many of the female WS students had a thing for the heartrob of the show: Uncle Jesse.

“I used to have the biggest crush on Jesse, I thought he was so cute,” said junior Marisa Nomi.

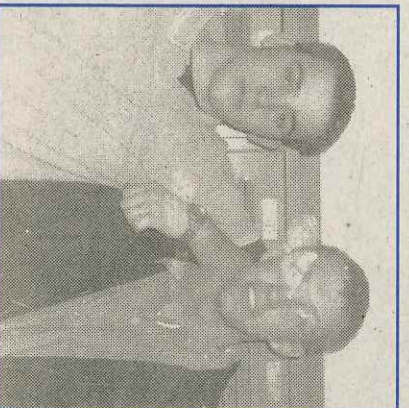


Michelle Tanner, played by Mary Kate and Ashley Olson, eats spaghetti. ‘Full House’ was a favorite show of many in the early '90s.

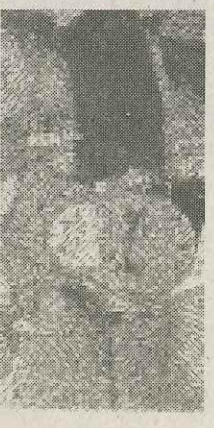
The show's series finale aired in 1995, leaving fans of the show upset and stunned. Some of the stars of the hit show have continued their television career, for example actor John Stamos' television movie “How to Marry a Billionaire” aired a few weeks ago. Also,



“I would like to be Bert from ‘Sesame Street’ because he dances like a pigeon.”
—Emily Allen, 9



Bree Virostko



“The Thundercats were the best. Thundercats, Thundercats, hooooo!”
—Mark Borcharding & Will Freakley, 12

em and the
because she
from normal
iller, 11

Students take advantage of music technology

By Amy Steed
News Assistant

It has rocked the music world and turned it upside down. The Internet has changed the face of music, and how listeners find entertainment.

Music has moved from records, eight tracks, tapes, and CDs to MP3s and rerecordable CDs. The Internet boom has led to a new world of music.

Radio is now broadcasted live on internet sites, such as SonicNet.com, Spinner.com and NetRadio. These types of stations allow listeners to pick their own music styles and combinations.

"Listen to the radio on the net just to have something playing when I am on the computer," said sophomore Stephanie Morris.

Concerts once too far away or too expensive for fans to attend can be watched from home for free thanks to the Internet. This past November, Madonna had a record breaking 9 million people tune into her show online. Madonna was in London singing in front of 3,000 people with the average cost to see the show averaging over \$2,400. However, with the help of Done and Dusted, a

production company in London, the concert was aired on the net allowing fans worldwide to see her in a 29 minute set.

Madonna is not the only artist using the Internet to her advantage. The Backstreet Boys have put out a single only available on the Internet. A song entitled "Thank You"

was available to their fans up until the day of their release of "Black and Blue," their latest CD. Also online with the song was a music video of "Shape of My Heart."

The Internet has not only allowed music lovers to see concerts and create their own radio stations, but has also enabled fans to stay on top of their bands and new music.

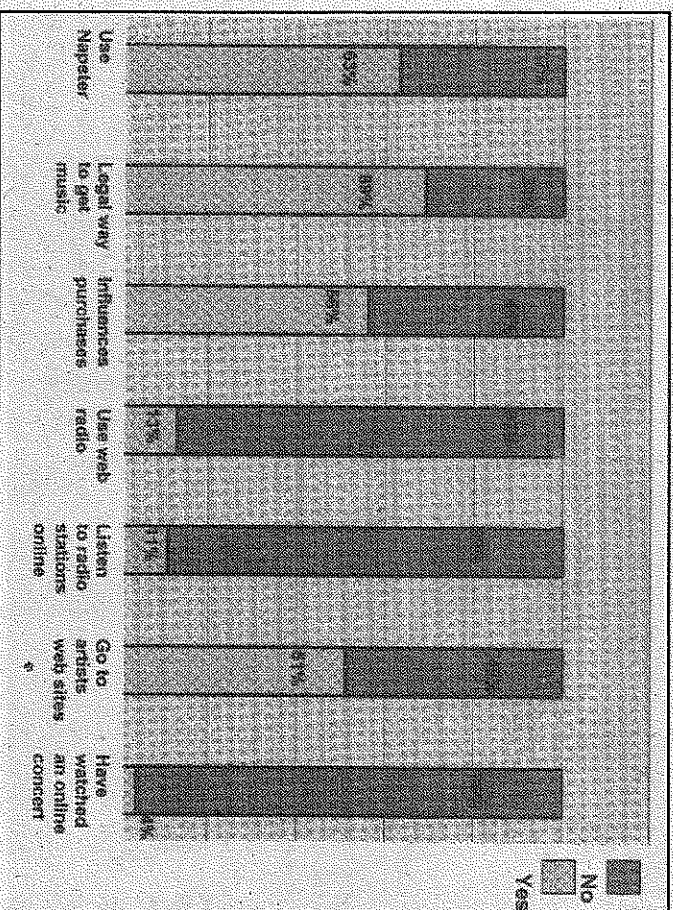
CDNow.com allows its viewers to check out the latest CDs through short music clips and online reviews. With the aid of sites like this, listeners learn more about the music they really enjoy.

"I go to CDNow and sometimes I see a CD I didn't know was coming out and get excited," said junior Emily Finetfrock. Sites like Napster and Scout have also changed the way listeners get music. Both offer MP3s for free. Although Napster has been involved in several controversies, it is still the fastest growing music site.

"I use Napster a lot," said junior Tejas Singh. "I get live stuff and music that isn't available on CDs."

Burning a CD has become a common way to get music. Whether it is due to a shortage of money for music or the love of only one song, listeners have a way to make their own CDs from home.

"I do it if I only like one song from a CD," said Finetfrock. "I don't want to waste money on something I don't like."



Rock arms itself with violent lyrics

By Roberto Garcia

Production Editor

Fans have always imitated the actions, styles, or lyrics of their favorite music stars. From Elvis impersonators to the Britney Spears "school-girl" look, some fans like to impersonate these stars.

However, there some people who admit and imitate something a lot more serious in their favorite music stars—their violent lyrics. Recently, two members of the music world have been the target of harsh criticism concerning their lyrics. Rock star Marilyn Manson and rapper Eminem have taken the heat from critics, who say that the violence in their music has serious effects on their listeners.

"Some teenagers are insecure and very impressionable," said WS teacher Ann Lam. "Today's media and music can have a dangerous impact on students who are unstable."

Manson first got serious criticism in 1999 after two teenage gunmen, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, shot and killed 15 students, including themselves, at Columbine High School outside Denver. Shortly after, reports surfaced that the two were avid Manson fans. In response, Manson cancelled a show in Denver and

issued a statement concerning the shooting.

"It's tragic and disgusting anytime young people's lives are taken in an act of senseless violence. My condolences go out to the students and their families," said Manson.

However, the criticism didn't end there. By refusing to change his lyrics, Manson believes he has been forced to become a recluse by the media.

"It's become hard for me to go anywhere because people are still wrapped up in the post-apocalypse of Columbine, and I'm getting blamed for everything that was violent in the world," said Manson.

Within the last few months, rapper Eminem has received more criticism than Manson. His latest album, "Marshall Mathers LP," is filled with lyrics supporting rape, murder, and the defamation of homosexuals. In a hearing before a Senate committee investigating how violent imagery is presented to young people, Lynne Cheney, wife of vice-president elect Dick Cheney, attacked the rapper saying his lyrics "promote violence of the most degrading kind against women."

Cheney specifically emphasized on the lyrics of Eminem's track "Kill You."

"He begins by describing the

satisfaction of raping and murdering his

mother and then goes on to imagine the joys of murdering any woman he might come across," Cheney said. "'Wives, nuns, s---,' whoever 'the b---' might be, he will kill them slowly, leaving enough air in their lungs so their screaming will be prolonged. He will paint the forest with their blood. 'I got the machete from O.J.,' he shouts. 'B---, I'm a kill you.'"

Senator Joseph Lieberman also testified in front of the Senate committee, saying that the entertainment industry is engulfing young Americans in a "culture of carnage."

Despite the potential violence that this type of music is being blamed for, both artists have had continuing popularity. Both have had impressive record sales in the past year, and Eminem even received for Grammy nominations.

"Eminem's lyrics might be controversial but at least he's speaking his mind" said junior Ryan David. "It's cool to see an artist who doesn't care about the critics, but is just interested in the music."

On the other hand, some argue, music is just music. Many believe that teenagers just use violent lyrics as an excuse for their actions.

"People need to take responsibility for their actions and stop blaming musicians

enabled fans to stay on top of their bands and new music.

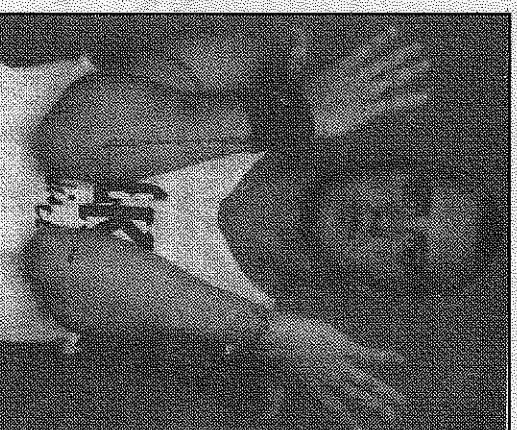
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Eminem continues to cause controversy over his violent rap lyrics.

for everything," said senior Stephanie Cramer.

Whether or not violent music can have an effect on a teenager's actions is still being debated in Congress. While most agree that teenagers do idolize stars, it has been difficult to prove that a simple song can drive someone as far as murder.

"In Columbine, for example, those two boys were going to kill whether they had heard Marilyn Manson or not," said junior Casey Cross. "No musician's work is so influential that it could result in such a terrible crime."

'Unbreakable' mirrors modern times

By Eunice Han

Staff Assistant

"Unbreakable" is a modern day movie starring Bruce Willis and Samuel L. Jackson. This movie is written and directed by M. Night Shayamalan, who also directed "The Sixth Sense."

In "Unbreakable," Willis plays the role of a security guard named David Dunn. He is married to his college sweetheart, physical therapist Audrey (Robin Wright Penn), and thinks of leaving her and their 12-year-old son Joseph (Spencer Treat Clark).

Dunn wants to end a certain sadness he experiences daily and thinks that a divorce would take care of it. As he travels back from a job interview in New York, the train derails. Dunn is the sole survivor, the other 131 passengers die. He doesn't even have a scratch on his body.

Elijah Price (Samuel L. Jackson) is Dunn's opposite. He was born with two broken legs and spent years of his life in hospitals.

He suffers from osteogenesis imperfecta: his bones have very low density, he "breaks" easily. In his childhood, kids called him Mr. Glass. Dunn never broke

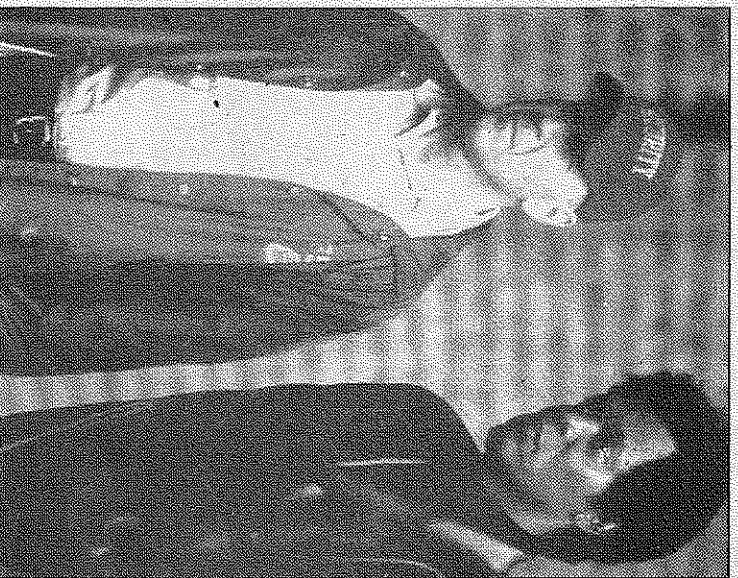
a bone. Price is obsessed with the phenomenon of sole survivors of accidents and believes that there are people who are "unbreakable."

Whatever gave him that idea? Comic books. Price believes that superheroes exist and he's determined to find one. Hence, he visits with Dunn, asks him questions, and ultimately makes him understand his gift and place in society.

Shayamalan opens the film with statistics about comic books; how many are sold each year and so on. Price starts to read and collect comic books (something that Jackson has in common with his character) as a kid and never gives it up. As an adult, he owns a gallery that sells limited edition comic book art. The role was written with Jackson in mind and the actor plays the obsessed Price with great intensity and sensibility.

Willis once again shines in the role of a parental figure. He is amazing as the reluctant hero with everyday problems, who shares his secret with his son.

Unbreakable fits well with the dark, more introspective time of year. For once, you won't find lines like "We need to talk" or similarly overused fillers. As Price points out, "We live in mediocre times." Well, there's hope. It seems that creativity and subtlety isn't dead after all.



Bruce Willis and Samuel L. Jackson star together in "Unbreakable."

Hollywood lights up drug and alcohol use

By Jenny Braudaway
Weekend Editor

Hollywood is known for its glorification of drug use. As pointed out by Bob Doles' 1996 anti-drug campaign, movies such as "Pulp Fiction" and "Trainspotting" glamorize the lives of drug users, and make it appealing to an easily influenced pop culture.

But in recent years the entertainment industry has cleaned up its act, creating films that show the true nature of drugs and alcohol, such as the fairly recent film "Requiem for a Dream," that depicts the ugly and tortuous life of a heroin addict. In real life, however, drugs, ugly side and all, continue to pose a problem among Hollywood talents.

"I think it's stupid," said sophomore Angelique Davis. "They're not setting a good example, and little kids who watch them could follow in their footsteps."

Even after memorable drug-related deaths of such great artists as River

Phoenix and Chris Farley, drugs are still very much associated with the Hollywood crowd.

The most recent case was that of Robert Downey Jr. who was released in August from Corcoran State Jail, in Corcoran, California, after a year-long sentence for drug possession. After his release, he seemed to be getting back on his feet with a stint on "Ally McBeal," a film in the works to be directed by Mel Gibson, and a cleaned-up image. However, in November he relapsed and was arrested after being found in the Merv Griffin Resort with nearly five grams of cocaine. "The public was stunned with the news.

"He's one of the best actors, and it's too bad drugs are destroying his career," said senior Maggie Hoban.

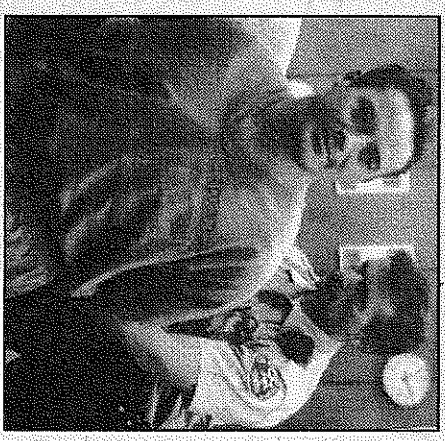
Downey's case was highly publicized, but only one of many in Hollywood. Other recent cases have been that of "Newstradio" star Andy Dick and actor Eddie Furlong. Dick, after spending time at Promises, a famous drug rehab clinic in Malibu,

retreated to his old ways as well, getting arrested for cocaine and marijuana possession in May of 1999. Furlong, known for his party-going ways, checked himself into the same clinic this year after being told by his agent, his lawyer, and his publicist that he needed help.

Other stars who have had drug and alcohol problems in the past include Martin Sheen, his son Charlie Sheen, Michael Douglas, Tim Allen, and Christian Slater, a clear example of the prevalence drugs have in the Hollywood lifestyle.

"I think it's sad that people who are supposed to be our role models aren't the perfect people they are portrayed to be," said junior Judith Pulman. "It's also sad that after all the money they've made, they have to resort to that."

Whether the lifestyles of these stars affect their audience or not is sketchy. Downey brought rave reviews and higher ratings to "Ally McBeal," and it's doubtful Furlong's shady background will affect the success of his upcoming film, the long-



Robert Downey Jr. was arrested again for drug use.

awaited "Terminator 3." Furthermore, such lifestyles have made legends out of stars like Phoenix and Farley, and the findings of drug use connected to already-made stars, such as Judy Garland, have not affected their legend-status.

"We go to the movies to see people's acting," said senior Matt Nelson. "It's disgusting, but we don't care about their personal lives, as long as they're entertaining."

Playstation2 promises big fun and new graphics

By Mike Arai
Sports assistant

The stores crowded with many people, the long lines, and the near empty shelves as a flood of shoppers rummage through the stores for the most popular items for the holiday season.

Like many items this year, the new Sony video game system, Playstation Two, is becoming scarce and hard to find.

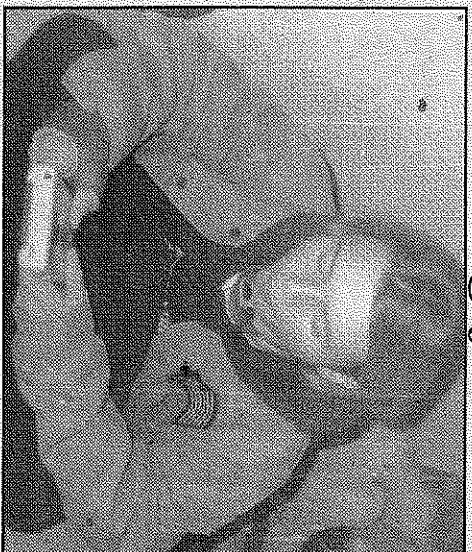
Playstation Two has a speed of 300 megahertz, and can also play compact discs and DVDs. Another unique feature to the new system is that the Playstation

One games are compatible with it.

The system is also capable of working like a central processing unit. However, many places sell the system from \$455 up to \$899 online due to its low supply.

Playstation Two is increasingly popular for many reasons. "I think it's [becoming popular] because it's the new craze, the best of the best [right now]," said Donlin.

Many students, though,



Fuss Wadell

are still hoping to get the new system despite its ever high demand. "[It has good] games and it's also a DVD player," said freshman Vincent Lacasamana, who is hoping to get a Playstation Two. "The graphics are tight." However, many people are waiting for a newer Nintendo system, Game Cube, speed and better graphics," said Donlin.

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Doing time for others

By Jenn Carlson
Viewpoint Assistant

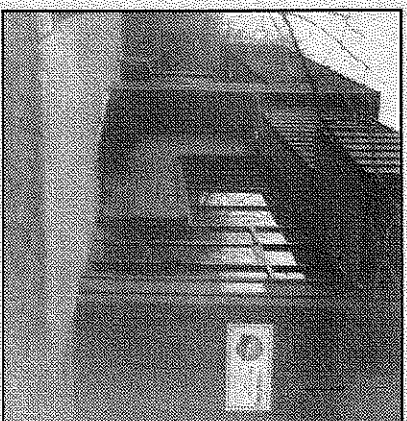
Volunteers get a special feeling that only they know.

It is a feeling mixed with satisfaction, confidence and a sense that someone in need has been helped by that person's efforts. Volunteers have found this feeling to be addicting.

"I felt really good after working with the kids at Eddie's Club," said sophomore Alex Grillo.

Organizations such as Eddie's Club has attracted many people willing to help special needs kids over its four-year life span. Eddie's Club meets on select Sunday afternoons and offers activities such as basketball, other sports, game rooms, computer labs and arts and crafts. Each volunteer is paired up with one of the 200 special needs kids who attend Eddie's Club and that volunteers works and plays with the child. This one-on-one basis gives the kids self-esteem, a sense of belonging with their peers, a way to learn communication skills and experience a long-term friendship. Visit www.eddiessclub.org for volunteering information.

Miriam's Kitchen is also an organization established for the well-being of others. The Kitchen does not only feed the homeless but it runs several other services such as Miriam's Closet, which provides clothing every Tuesday and Thursday morning. An outreach program also run by volunteers and sends workers out to find homeless people on the streets



Jenae Eilermann
United Way helps serve the community.

that are in need of the breakfast and invite them to attend. For more information and tips on how to help out homeless on your own, visit www.miriamskitchen.org.

Another helpful organization in need of volunteers is Ecumenical Community Helping Others (ECHO). Volunteers help needy people in the community by distributing donated clothes, food, and offering financial assistance in emergency situations. Volunteers are always needed for sorting donations, laundering dirty clothes, transporting food for the Meals-On-Wheels service or interviewing new clients. For more information, visit www.needsyou.org/echo.htm.

There are many different organizations out there in need of volunteers. Visit Washington Needs You at their website www.needsyou.org/communit.htm#a for a complete listing of community services to volunteer for.

Top 10 Things to do on a Snow Day

- 10) Measure how deep the snow is.
- 9) Start a snowball fight with your friends.
- 8) Watch cartoons and catch up on soap operas.
- 7) Impress your crush with your hot sledding moves.
- 6) Sleep in after 12p.m. and then go out and make snow angels.
- 5) Make snow ice cream shakes (beware of yellow or brown snow).
- 4) Dig tunnels in the snow to your friend's house.
- 3) Share hot cocoa with your crush by the fire with soft music.
- 2) Warm your mittens in the microwave and your buns in the oven.
- 1) Make prank phone calls to people claiming you're the abominable snow-man.

-Compiled by Jenae Eilermann &
Lauren Sheffield

Group work adds more helping hands

By Laura Robinson
News Editor

This is the season of giving and many charities and civil service groups in our area are looking for volunteers.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)- PETA sets out to stop animal testing, animal abuse and the sale of leather and furs. To join PETA's Activist Network, go to www.peta.org/cmp/action.html.

Once you become a member, you will be informed of upcoming events in this region. For further information, call 757-622-PETA.

Amnesty International. The goal of this organization is to protect human rights worldwide. They are anti-death penalty, and work for fair trials worldwide and to free prisoners of conscience. Becoming a member involves a 15 dollar fee and you can join by calling 1-800-AMNESTY or registering at <http://ssl.charityweb.net/amnestyusa/>

Red Cross. The Red Cross provides medical and disaster relief to people worldwide. The nearest chapter is located in the District of Columbia at 2131 K Street NW. The website is www.redcross.org/dc/nec. To receive a volunteer application form, call (202) 728-6431 or contact the DC chapter at (202) 728-6401.

Salvation Army. This international association sets out to help those in need. Their national

headquarters are in Alexandria and representatives can be contacted by calling (703) 684-5500. The website for our region is www.salvationarmysouth.org. American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) - The ACLU intends to "protect the civil liberties of all Americans" and anyone can become a card-carrying member by filling out their online questionnaire and giving 20 dollars. Their website is www.aclu.org.

group brings families and communities together by building houses for those in need. The nationwide website is www.habitat.org and the two nearest chapters are in Arlington (703) 521-9890 and the District (202) 610-2355. To find the perfect volunteering job for you, go to www.volunteermatch.org. Put in the type of work you'd like to be doing and how far you're willing to travel and you will be given over H000 choices.

Three cheers for museums

Student realizes museums aren't so boring

By Jen Schonberger
Features Editor

It's funny how something you used to hate all of a sudden turns into something you love. A meat dish that grandma used to make, a book you had to read, or place you didn't like to go.

For me it was going to the museum almost every Sunday. Ever since I was 7 my mother dragged me downtown. On Sundays mom ordered me to the museum and I would kick and scream all the way there. The person who understood how I felt was my dad—he had drive us discriminating, any

museum would do. As long as I would get my "cultural experience" in one of the eight Smithsonian galleries. One Sunday it was the Grant Squid. Another Sunday it was the airplanes that flew in World War II and yet another Sunday it was the National Archives. Why would an 8-year-old be interested in standing in line to see a yellowing piece of paper under glass called The Declaration of Independence?

In summer of 1997, when I turned 13, things got worse. The local museums were not enough. I had to go out of the country to go to the museum! I went to France.

I saw the Louvre and Musée D'Orsay, (the old train station in Paris) which houses the various Impressionist paintings by Claude Monet, Edward Manet and Auguste Renoir. The colors were vibrant and the scenes were sunny. I began to tolerate the museums I had once loathed.

After visiting France, we went to the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. That was the first museum experience I enjoyed. Perhaps my mom did have a good idea. After that I decided that Van Gogh was my favorite artist and he still is. He's my mom's, too. After I returned, I was strolling through Old Town

one afternoon with my parents and I came upon an art shop that housed many paintings that I had seen in Europe. I started to see the difference. The Paintings did not compare. I realized what my mom took me to see and what she had done for me. I suddenly had a longing to see the Impressionists. At 13, I see what the world values as masterpiece.

Later that year, I learned that the National Gallery of Art in DC was going to showcase Van Gogh. For the first time I wanted to go. After my new tolerance for the museum, my mom decided that we would go



Through the artwork of such greats as her favorite, Van Gogh (above), Schonberger developed an unexpected appreciation for art.

to Italy in the summer. I who used to loathe museums, assumed the role of tour guide. With book in hand I dragged my mom and dad to different museums and pointed out different art pieces. The Vatican in Rome, and the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, with its statue of David, were wonderful. In Tuscany I practically stayed in a museum—the summer villa of Pope Julius II. I saw the Pope's bedroom, which contained artifacts that the proprietor said the Smithsonian would like to acquire.

Although I did not see any paintings by my beloved Van Gogh, I came back with an even greater appreciation for art. I visited the National Gallery of Art over the summer to see an exhibit on the Impressionists at Argenteuil, a town located on the Seine in the outskirts of Paris. The Town inspired the Impressionists to paint Museums, have a special place in my heart. In a museum I find beauty and peace; where I feel a presence between mom and me.

Jenny Brundaway

Member Editor

My friend senior Deanna Tobin and I decided to take a road trip to the District. Since DC is so vast and we had only an afternoon/evening to spend, we narrowed our trip down to Capitol Hill and Georgetown.

First Stop: Capitol Hill
Directions: From the Springfield-Fairfax Metro station take the blue

line to the Eastern Market metro stop on Capitol Hill.
Money: \$5 for the metro, \$5-\$10 for dinner, and \$10 to spend at the flea market or thrift shops.

We visited Capitol Hill, motivated by an extra credit assignment for our AP English class. Here we walked the cozy neighborhoods down C Street, Jth Street, and through Gessford Court, taking pictures and making observations (for the assignment). Then we walked further down 7th Street, observing the people and stopping periodically in stores, one of which was an adorable little antique shop

inside the antique shop were stacks of junk we could have sorted through for hours. We eventually each purchased something we thought was interesting. The store owner, a cheerful old dude offered to let us pay with Christmas cookies if we lived in the neighborhood, but as we did not, we sadly declined. Later, however, we vowed to return some day with a batch of cookies for the friendly

man. He informed us that every weekend there is a huge flea market that fills the streets of the area, something that appealed greatly to me.

We then visited Eastern Market, an old-fashioned, old-city market that looked like just a long red building from the outside. On the inside, however, there was a bustle of activity with vendors

bring the wares, selling everything from fresh fruit to pigs feet.
Next Stop: Georgetown
Directions: (our route) Hop back on the metro. Take the Orange line to the Rosslyn metro stop, and walk across the bridge, right onto W Street.

Money: Use the same metro card. \$2.10 if you get on the bus instead of walking across the bridge, \$8.20 for dinner, depending where you eat, and plenty of spending money.

By the time we got to Georgetown (5 p.m.) it was dark and the city was lit up beautifully. We walked down M Street,

entranced by the busy, exciting atmosphere. We wandered into the many shops, including a poster shop that sold a wide selection of wall posters and handproud to pick which tattoos we might get one day. We also went to the Program Republic, where a resident crazy old lady sat outside, holding up one of many

random and curious signs of cardboard (this one said "Give me a dollar I'm eight billion short, the humans hurt Rodney King").

We continued on through the J Crew store, only to find ourselves in a hidden mall (Georgetown Park Mall, which was decorated beautifully for the holidays. My personal favorite store though was Urban

Outfitters, an incredible place that has clothes for every imaginable style, not to mention tons of other random and interesting products (such as Marx Brothers mustache kit, spiked light bulbs, and leather/denim-bound diaries), as well as an in-store DJ. After looking around for about 45 minutes and soaking in the atmosphere, I purchased some excellent Christmas presents. By then it was time to go home, so we took the blue line back to Springfield, relieved to sit and rest in a Metro seat for the 30-minute trip back.

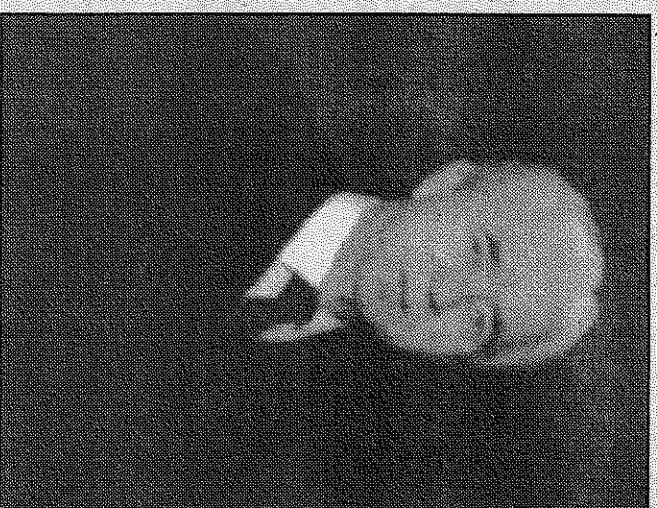
Deanna Tobin and Jenny Brundaway

...pose on the beautiful Gessford Court.

Judge Lewis Morris Journalism Award

The family of Fairfax Circuit Court Judge Lewis Morris announces the establishment of an award in his memory to recognize scholastic achievement in the field of high school journalism. All students of West Springfield High School are eligible to submit one original nonfiction composition not exceeding eight hundred words. Submissions must be received by February 15, 2001 and should be mailed to:

The Judge Morris Journalism Award
 P.O. Box 3582
 Alexandria, Virginia 22302



Each submission shall include the author's full name, grade level and signature certifying the entry was composed by the student.

An award of three hundred dollars will be made to the student whose composition is deemed superior in content, relevance and grammatical accuracy. Four entries will receive honorable mention designation and an award of seventy-five dollars each. Recipients will be announced in the March 2001 issue of the Oracle, at which time the awards will be distributed.

Gymnastics team tumbles down the rebuilding road

By Jenn Carlson
Features Assistant

For the gymnastics team, 2001 looks like a promising year, and for returning members, nothing has really changed.

The team will be preparing four days a week at Capital Gymnastics, for two hours a day, so that it can attend the same competitions the team went to last year. The team consists of about the same number of members, and that is the flaw in the team that will block the gymnasts from the level of

success they hope to achieve.

"We're doing very well so far this year, although the team is so small," said assistant coach Adrienne Caravan.

Size is a disadvantage. Only six of the team members compete regularly. That means two girls will compete in each event while other schools will send four to six girls for the event. Although scores have been very high, there are not enough scores to threaten other teams' chances. The team's success is very similar to last year's.

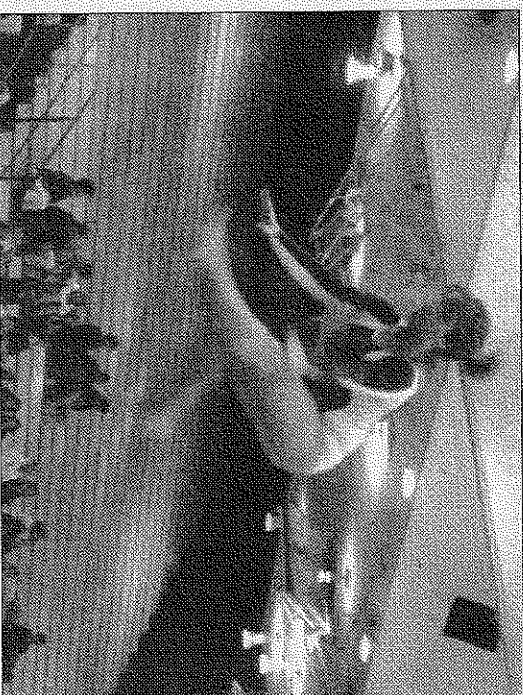
But the gymnastics team is not

doing poorly. At a past meet, senior co-captain Emily Smolen brought in a score of 9.5 on the beam. That is the highest score that can be achieved. Despite its small size, the team is working hard and representing WS at meets.

There is something else that strikes some, specifically sophomore Mollie Randa, as different from the past year.

"There are a lot of new people on the team, so we have lots of fun," said Randa.

The season is not over yet, but Caravan, who is new to the team



Oracle File Photo

Senior Jennifer DiSouza has helped lead the depleted gymnastics team in a rebuilding year.

this year as assistant coach, is still recruiting new faces for next year.

"We're always looking for new people for next year," said Caravan.

Spring teams use winter leagues to gear up for seasons

By Clint Crossler
Business/Systems Editor

During the winter, spring sports teams have a difficult time practicing because of bad weather, including snow and low temperatures. Also, because it becomes darker earlier in winter, visibility can be poor and prevent a team from practicing.

Many of the WS spring sports teams head indoors for practice during the winter season. Winter track, which practices outdoors, has all of its races indoors at various facilities.

"I'm glad we run indoors



Oracle File Photo

The varsity and junior varsity lacrosse teams have begun playing in a winter league to get ready and stay in shape for the spring season.

because I think I'd quit if I had to run in my short track shorts outside in the cold," said sophomore Brian Carter.

Winter track is an excellent way to stay in shape during the long haul of winter, and without the indoor facilities, it would become a very uncomfortable sport.

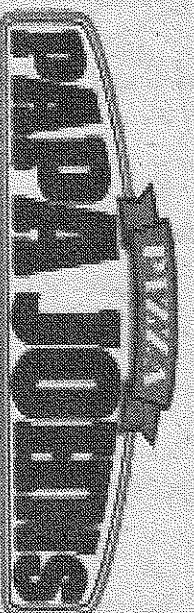
The boys lacrosse team has started playing in a winter lacrosse league. WS fields two teams in the league. The two teams play their games on Sundays in the fieldhouse at South Run recreational center.

"I enjoy playing in the winter

league with the lacrosse team because it helps me practice my skills and stay in shape all year long," said junior James Chapman.

The varsity and junior varsity baseball teams take batting practice and participate in sessions at Northern Virginia Baseball Academy in Springfield. The sessions are centered on developing skills to help pitchers, fielders, and batters.

The indoor practices during the winter are especially good for players who need to constantly practice their sport to keep up at a competitive level.



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Wrestling team hopes to keep up good season

By Matt Kaitz
Staff Assistant

"Go Hard or Go Home" is the wrestling team's motto, and going hard they are.

Beginning the season 2-1, with wins over Fairfax and Washington and Lee and its only loss to Oakton, the wrestling team has looked impressive so far.

"I think that we are going to have a pretty successful team this year," said junior Edward Gattis.

"We have very motivating captains and great underclassmen wrestlers this year, and I think we could be one of the best teams in the district."

In its first tournament this year,

WS placed 15th out of 32 teams in the 2000 NOVA Classic. Although none of the wrestlers finished in the top four, the wrestlers still had high hopes for the season.

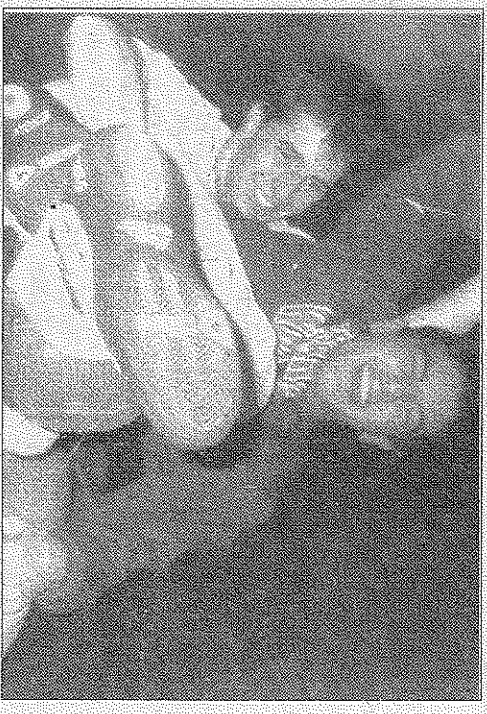
"After the NOVA Classic some of the guys on the team were a little down," said junior Dan Ing. "But with the Statesman Invitational coming up soon after, we believed we could bounce back and show people what we could really do."

And bounce back they did. WS placed first in the Statesman Invitational, defeating Marshall and Chantilly by more than 40 points. Sophomore David Giffin and senior Brian McLain led the

team, placing first in their respective weight classes. Seven other wrestlers also finished in the top four in their weight classes.

The next challenge for the wrestling team was the Cavalier Invitational, which took place on December 27 and 28. WS placed second among seven other teams in the tournament.

"I think that the Statesman Invitational was a big step for us," said senior Pack Landfair, who is being recruited by Division I schools. "The win gave us much-needed motivation and gave us momentum going into the Cavalier Invitational. I think this could turn out to be a great season."



Russ Waddell

Senior Charlie Sciarini and sophomore David Giffin wrestle. The wrestling team currently has a record of 2-1.

English teacher coaches swim team after a family of records

By Laura Robinson
News Editor

The Bell family made its mark on WS and one member of that talented family remains involved as a member of the faculty.

English teacher Malia Bell

"She encourages getting better and having fun over winning"
-Emily Ryan

and her siblings were very successful swimmers during their high school careers.

"My sister and my brother both have records here. Missy's record was in 1997, Dave's in 1994, and mine was in 1991," said English teacher Malia Bell. "We all started swimming summer league in 1980 and it just took off from there."

Bell's sister went on to set swimming records at the University of Tennessee and her brother Dave set his own record at the University of Miami in the 200-meter relay. Bell went on to swim at James Madison



Bree Wroble
English teacher and swim coach Malia Bell sits at her desk. She and her family have set past swim records at WS.

University while she worked toward a Bachelor's degree in

work than people realize," says Hammond. "We have to make up the routines and push every girl to do her best. We are the main motivators for the team."

The team practices every Monday and Thursday from 4 to 6 p.m., and they cheer at the games on Tuesday and Friday nights.

"At practice Kidwell makes sure we work hard and stay on task," says Sawyer. "She critiques our routine and tells us what we should do differently to make it look really good. Our big goal is to make sure we are all in sync and our motions are tight."

One way to support the varsity cheerleaders is to come to the basketball games, but an even better way would be to take a trip

Water," said senior Ryan Lazisky.

So far this superstition has worked, because the boys basketball team is off to its best start in quite a few years.

But the boys are not alone in creating team rituals. The Lady Spartans have a few rituals of their own. One of them includes going out to eat at Outback Steakhouse before games.

"We go out to eat at Outback," said senior Meghan Ogilvie, "and then before we come out of the locker room we do team cheers before every game. I'm not sure that it helps us win, but it's something fun to do as a team.

Cheerleaders look forward to state competition

By Theresa Rupp
Managing Editor

They cheer, they flip, and they've worked so hard this year that they are going to the Virginia state competition. For the first time in WS history, the varsity cheerleaders made it to the second round in their regional's and are now off to Richmond, on March 24, to represent the school against the entire state.

The cheerleaders won third place in district's, just behind Hayfield, who got first, and Robinson, who took second. The next big step was doing it all over at regionals. WS received third place once again, with Chantilly getting first place, and McLean taking second. This third-place

finish meant a lot to the team, and to its coach, marketing teacher Kristen Kidwell.

"Just the fact that we are going to Richmond is amazing," says senior cheerleader Jaime Sawyer. "No matter what happens there, our goal of doing our best has already been met."

The varsity team of 20 girls consists of seven returning seniors. Two more girls, senior Julie Guttmann and sophomore Katie Bell, have been added to the team for the basketball season, but will not be competing in Richmond with the team. Seniors Alle Clark and Kelly Hammond are the captains for the squad, and are they especially looking forward to the upcoming events. "Being a captain is a lot more

work than people realize," says Hammond. "We have to make up the routines and push every girl to do her best. We are the main motivators for the team."

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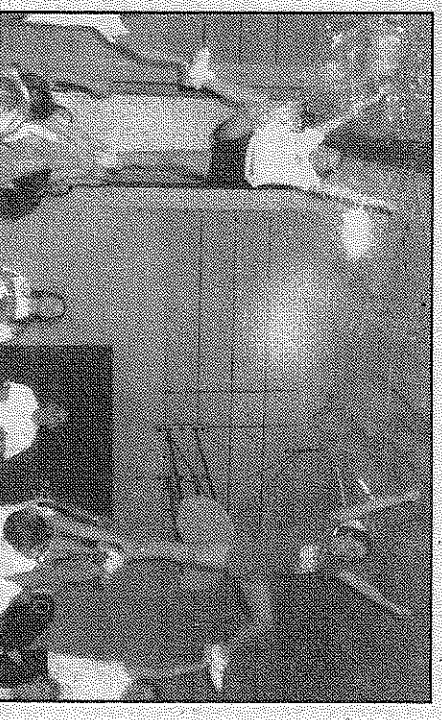
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Maggie Atteberry

The cheerleading team practices in the gym. The team earned third place in the districts with Hayfield winning first place.

Guttmann. "I will not be competing with the girls, but I am an alternate and I sure am going to be there cheering them on."

and it helps our team unity."

Before a wrestling meet, Coach Gary Embrey goes in the locker room and gives his boys a pep talk, but his boys think that is not the real reason for their success.

"Coach Embrey gives us good pep talks before meets," said senior Dan Pallister, "but I think the real reason that we win is because we listen to 'Rocky' music before we go out."



Lauren Sheffield

Junior Edward Gattis and the other wrestlers listen to 'Rocky' music.

Teams use pre-game rituals for good luck

By Joey Tinsley
Staff Assistant

Throughout the course of a season some teams develop team rituals.

These team rituals stick with the team for the rest of the season. Part of the reason that teams do this is because it gets them in a routine, and when they feel good before the games they can play better.

The boys basketball team is a

team of many rituals. Before their games team members listen to the coach and then they get pumped by listening to the Wu-Tang Clan in the locker room. Finally, just before warm-ups, they are led in a song performed by two of the junior varsity players. This started at the VCU team camp over the summer, which the Spartans won.

"Right before we run in, Marshal [Ausberty] and Josh [Wilson] sing 'Wade in the



Laurie Fischer poses in front of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Learning extends beyond the classroom

By Angela Fiorino
ETC. Editor

Every year the American Civilization classes take a trip to historical Philadelphia to take a peek at America's past.

This year, two charter busses packed full of juniors accompanied by Civ teachers, Faye Bousel and Laurie Fischer along with several chaperones, rolled out of WS on the morning of November 17 headed towards America's first capital.

After arriving at a visitor's center and becoming familiar with our ground, the classes split up into several different groups.

Each group was led by a tour guide dressed up as a figure from the past. These guides mapped out the heart of the city where all the historical sites were, stopping us at all the significant places.

Such places consisted of one of America's first printing stores, the booths where the guards would sit at night while they watched over the town, old buildings where important meetings took place, the actual house where the Continental Congress met which made decisions that made America what it is today.

We also visited the Liberty Bell right before we stopped for a lunch of Philly cheesesteaks at the Borse, a large office building with a miniature mall and food court on the bottom floors. After lunch we stopped at the Rodin museum and visited his sculptures and then finished our day with the best part of all, The Philadelphia Museum of Art.

"The art museum was definitely my favorite part," said junior Katelyn Murdock. "The whole trip was great. It was really worth going."

Top 10

New Year's Resolutions of 2001

- 10) Actually stay silent during the "moment."
- 9) Look at your parking spot everyday to make sure there are no dead leaves in it.
- 8) Do everything you can do to help keep the bathrooms clean.
- 7) Be the only person in the talent show with talent.
- 6) Go to a crew regatta and cheer the "lost" athletes on.
- 5) Actually read the *Oracle*, don't just look at the pictures.
- 4) Buy a salad instead of three cookies for a dollar.
- 3) Figure out why certain classrooms are colder than others.
- 2) Recycle all the papers from first semester but make sure you put them in the right trash bin.
- 1) Do your homework

—Compiled by Theresa Rupp and Caitlin Marvin

Clubs update

What's going on with extracurricular activities?

By Jen Berme
Weekend Assistant

The **Future Business Leaders of America** have been busy with its Project "Ask" collects coloring books, crayons, and items like travel games to give to children in the hospital. After school, members compete in a stock market game. This game involves choosing stocks and waiting to see how well each one does in the market. Every so often they check to see whose stock has done the best and the winner receives a cash prize.

"I enjoy getting involved with a club and having the ability to help people, especially with project Ask," said junior Emily Finerfrock.

The **French Club** hosted its third cafe on January 11 in room 273. Members served crepes, croissants, and hot chocolate. Toward the end of the month, they plan to watch the movie "La Haine" after school.

"One of our best fund raisers is the cafe. People really enjoy the music and the food," said sophomore Emily Mishoe.

DECA was busy collecting items for ECHO over the holidays. Members collected such items as canned goods, clothing, toys and games. This month, DECA will hold its monthly chapter meeting and prepare for the district competition, which will be February 1.

"Helping families in need can bring you such a joy especially during the holidays," said senior Christine Cantu.

The **Key Club** has stayed consistent in helping with this year's citrus sale. Members also raised money for the Salvation Army, and picked up trash off Old Keene Mill Road.

"Key Club provides me with the opportunity to help the community and people in need," said freshman David Hebba.

The **Science Honor Society** offers tutoring to any student who needs assistance in a science class.

This year members want to start a scholarship program for science students, and there are a few speaker meetings planned for the upcoming months.

"Ms. Noun is a big help. She has been in charge of Science Honor Society for years now and she really knows what she is doing," said senior Laura Cole.

The **Keyettes** go to Keene Mill Elementary School every weekend to spend time with mentally challenged and learning disabled children. They've heard a few speakers, including one woman whose child developed Shaking Babies Syndrome from an abusive baby-sitter.

"Keyettes is fun and it is a good way to get involved in the community," said junior Kirby Bervis.

National Honor Society inducted its new members earlier this month. They plan to participate in several community service projects for the remainder of the year.

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2001

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
15 No School <i>Martin Luther King Jr. Day</i>	16	17	18 Boys Bball v. TC-4:30, 6, 7:45 Girls Bball @ TC-4:30, 6, 7:45	19 No School <i>Inauguration Holiday</i>	20 Indoor Track @ Episcopal-7:30 Inauguration Congrats Shrub!
22 Community of Caring-Spartan Hall Guitar Club Candy Sale	23 Boys Bball @ W Pot-4, 5:45, 7:30 Girls Bball v. W Pot-4, 5:45, 7:30	24 Gymnastics @ Louden Valley-7 Nurse Appreciation Day	25 Guitar Coffee House 3:30-8:30	26 Swim/Dive @ Mt. Vernon-6:30	27 Track VA Tech Invit. Var wrestling @ Langley-1 SATs (not at WS)
29 Teacher Workdays No School	30 Canada Ski Trip Ends	31 Wrestling v. Rob.-6, 7:30 DECA district competition @ Springfield Mall	February 1 Virginia Literacy Testing	2 Boys Bball @ Ann.-4:30, 5:45, 7 Girls Bball v. Ann.-4:30, 5:45, 7	3 Swim/Dive Patriot Dist @ Lee Dist. JV Wrestling @ W Pot-9
4 Valelines Loligrams Class of 2002	5	6 Boys Bball v. Hayfield-4, 5:45, 7:30 Girls Bball @ Hayfield-4, 5:45, 7:30	7 Boys Dive Regionals @ Oak Mar	8 Girls Dive Regionals @ Oak Mar	9 Wrestling Patriot Dist. (Var)-4 Regional Swim @ Oak Mar