



# THE RACCOLE

WEST SPRINGFIELD HIGH SCHOOL 6100 ROLLING ROAD SPRINGFIELD, VIRGINIA 22152

## Students get two more days to play

By Ruchika Malhotra  
& Priyanka Tandon  
Oracle Staff Writers

Two unused snow days will be put to work. On April 11 the Fairfax County School Board (FCPS) voted to amend the school calendar by ending two days earlier.

"I think it's great. I'm sorry they can't give teachers the raise they deserve," said Principal David Smith.

Exam schedules are adjusted so senior exams start on June 6 and end June 11. Underclassmen exams are from the 10-13. FCPS superintendent Daniel Domenech proposed this plan in February because he was unable to provide

significant teacher raises.

"If we can't provide more financial compensation for them, we need to look for alternative ways to let them know they are appreciated," said Domenech.

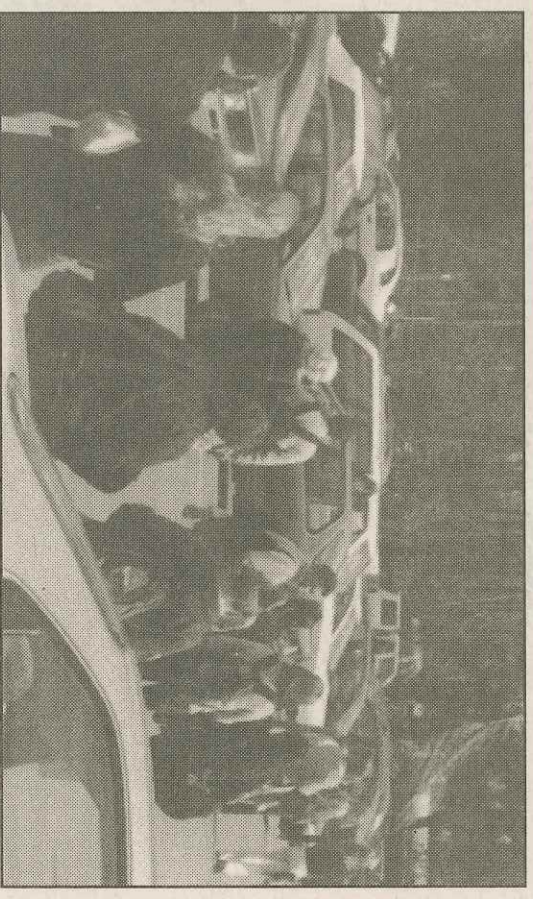
Teachers recognize this effort and commend it.

"I think it's a great way to improve teacher morale," said history teacher Margaret Mey.

Some at WS have mixed feelings about the change.

"I would've liked a couple extra days added to spring break," said counselor Kristin Hienstra.

Many students are thrilled that the school year is ending earlier.



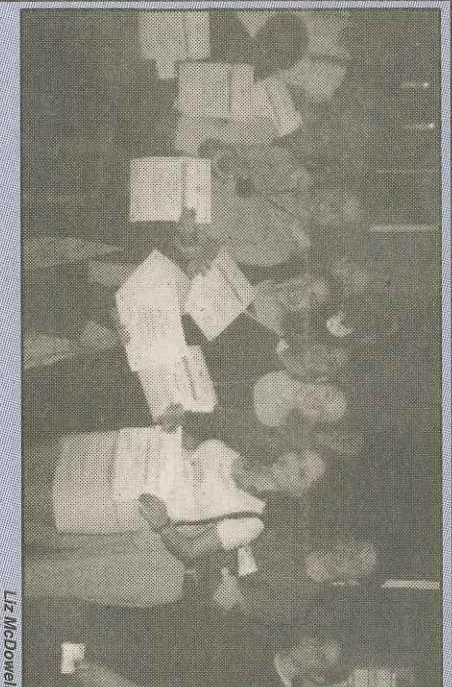
Tasha Rimm

FCPS students and teachers will be getting out of school two days early this year. "I'm really excited," said junior Matt Ash. "I was cheering for this positive outcome and so now I'm really a happy about it."

The Fairfax County Public School

Board voted Thursday night to give the days back to the students. Senior exams at WS will be moved up, allowing the Class of 2002 a couple of free days before graduation on June 17.

## Potter makes WS proud Senior goes to DECA nationals



Liz McDowell

Senior Jess Potter, third from left, will represent WS at DECA Nationals in Salt Lake City.

By Melissa Lipman  
Oracle Editor

At the recent DECA State Competition in Richmond, WS's chapter was honored for its involvement in September 11 relief efforts. "We had been working with

people who had been affected with the disaster at the Pentagon," said DECA sponsor Liz McDowell. "We were also

recognized for a Virginia DECA day activity [we did]. We had an employee-employer luncheon [where] students recognized their employers."

At the regional level, every category has 36 to 45 competitors, compared to 20 to 25 at the district level, with the first place winners from each district competing advancing to regionals. The competition is most difficult at the state level.

"A lot of work goes into this.

Within the parameters of the project [the students] have a lot of creativity," said McDowell. "Students do all kinds of things, it's what they're interested in."

Senior Jess Potter competed in the restaurant marketing competition, which consists of a 100-question multiple choice test and two role-playing scenarios

"It's going to be really hard, but I'm excited."

—Senior Jess Potter

where competitors must pretend to be a restaurant manager. She placed in the top 10 in that competition.

"I wasn't really prepared and I was really nervous. I think it was luck that I won," said Potter. "I made it to nationals. The top six go, and I was seventh, but one person cancelled." Potter will attend the national

competition in Utah.

"It's going to be really hard, but I'm excited," said Potter.

14 DECA members attended the competition and Potter, Sonali Kripalani, Charra Rijos, Andrea Terrazas, Michelle Bailey and Sonia Carpio received Proficiency Certificates for their work.

For all the hard work and studying, DECA members also had fun.

"I didn't think it would be fun, a school trip on the weekend. I was kind of skeptical," said Potter. "But we had a dance with a DJ. It was a lot of fun."

## Players benched after Spring Break party

By Melissa Lipman  
& Laura Robinson  
Oracle Staff Writers

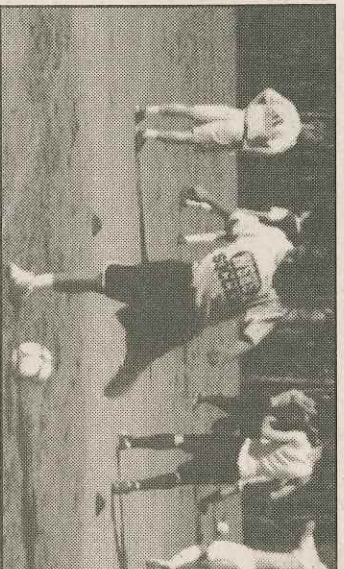
Two weeks ago 18 members of the WS boys soccer team spent the first and second games on the bench rather than on the field—and not because they played poorly. Eleven members of the girls' team did the same.

Twenty-nine soccer players from both teams received one and two-game suspensions after police broke up a Spring Break party. Some players were drinking, and when police arrived, they took down the names of the soccer players, four WS boys lacrosse players, one man over age 21, some Lee and Robinson high school students and several WS graduates over the age of 21.

Although the party-goers were not arrested, the administration punished them anyway. Athletes caught drinking received two-game suspensions, while non-drinkers got one-game suspensions. All must do 10 hours of community service. Boys soccer coach Randy May, girls coach John Kenney, Student Activities Director Todd Chapell and Principal David Smith gave the punishment.

"There is an expectation that those who are involved in extracurriculars will conduct themselves in ways that don't have potential to be harmful," said Smith.

All WS athletes must sign the Extracurricular



Katita Rice

Freshman Juan Manuel Gomez Pabon got to start for the varsity because his teammates were benched.

Participation Policy, which outlines the consequences for violating the FCPS alcohol and illegal drugs policy.

"[The form] isn't quite as precise as the SR&R, but there are some places where there is a range of response," said Smith.

Smith cited several reasons the punishments were not harsher. The police filed no charges, released all students to their parents and broke up the party early in the evening.

Non-drinkers at the party were also punished. Smith and May thought that simply being there showed a lack of understanding of responsibility and leadership.

"Once they saw what was going on they should have shown the presence of mind to get up and leave. Nobody showed the leadership to say, 'Maybe we shouldn't be doing this,'" said Smith.

One result of the punishments was that several players who normally ride the bench were able to play in the soccer season openers, and in the following game.

Many players now think the party wasn't worth it. "I regret the stuff we had to go through; it was hard. But we're all closer and we've grown from it," said senior Emily Baskin.

Many teachers have commented the punishment of the students. "It meant more to teach these kids a lesson than to win a few games," said government teacher John McMenamin, a former coach.

Other coaches hope to prevent similar situations among their players. "I talk to the players about making good decisions and hope that they do that," said baseball coach Ken Munoz. "If they don't do that, they know the consequences will be severe."

May and Smith anticipate that these punishments will teach the students a lesson.

"I hope there are long-term gains about understanding leadership and responsibility," said May. "The kids have a lot of expectations in themselves. I believe in [their] character."

# WS should designate clear alcohol policy

High school students drink. Yes, it's illegal and possibly dangerous, but it's hardly shocking. With such widespread student alcohol abuse, one would think that WS would have a clearly defined policy.

The WS Extracurricular Participation Policy, often cited to punish student drinkers, does not explicitly state the consequences for athlete substance abuse. According to the policy, the minimum punishment is either suspension from one game or 20 percent of the remainder of games that season, whichever is less. This means that if there are only four games left in the season, the athlete may not face any suspension at all.

On the other hand, the maximum punishment includes suspension from all games in the season. So in effect, the policy states the athletes may be suspended from zero to all remaining games.

Sure, it's good to leave some things open to interpretation. After all, certain circumstances may warrant harsher

punishment than others. But this broad policy leaves absolutely everything open to interpretation. Under the current policy the entire decision of punishment is at the discretion of the coach or advisor. This could result in biased decisions. With such an ambiguous policy, the dangerous

## Editorial

possibility of prejudicial decisions is heightened.

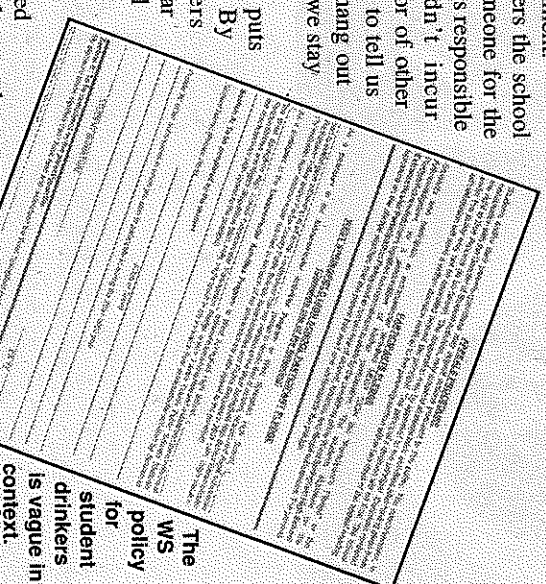
With a teenager's decision to drink comes a reasonable expectation of punishment. However, there is no reason for non-drinkers to get in trouble for attending a party where others are drinking.

By merely attending a party where alcohol is involved, non-drinkers are not in violation of the school policy. They have upheld their pledge to "remain free of alcohol, tobacco and illegal substances,"

and shouldn't to face punishment.

By punishing non-drinkers the school is essentially punishing someone for the acts of others. Each person is responsible for himself and shouldn't incur punishment for the behavior of other students. Who is the school to tell us where we can and cannot hang out on the weekend, so long as we stay within the law?

Punishing non-drinkers puts students in danger. By discouraging non-drinkers from attending parties for fear of punishment, the school has basically reduced the number of designated drivers. Without designated drivers, intoxicated students will put themselves and others at risk. The school is essentially saying that if you're a designated driver, you will be punished.



The WS policy for student drinkers is vague in context.

## Set the facts right about hate crimes

Dear Editor,

This letter is in response to the editorial "Don't Legislate Thought," written by Emily Morris. Although it is a Viewpoint article, it is only fair that both sides of the argument be shown in the paper.

It seems that Ms. Morris only has some of the information regarding most hate crime legislation. First, she states that harsher punishments and more legislation against hate crimes are not the way to go. Her reasoning lies in the fact that since hate crimes still exist, what good are these laws? However, to assess the value of a law based on whether or not it's adhered to is ridiculous. Should such a theory be applied to other laws, such as robbery or murder, then these would also be useless, since people still commit these crimes. Laws are not only in place as a deterrent to crime, they also serve to punish those who infringe on another citizen's rights.

So then comes the question, why have harsher punishments based on motive? Hate crimes are not ordinary crimes. In fact, they are heinous, to commit a crime based on prejudice is just plain bigotry. Any hate crimes which are an assault on someone's very identity. Thus, the penalty needs to be higher.

Yet Ms. Morris also has a complaint regarding the extent to which the HCSA and HCSEA are effective. On the surface, it would seem that legislation which simply pushes the recording and documentation on hate crime statistics is not helpful or even necessary. However, part of the problem is the sheer newness of the acts. Since the HCSA has only been around since 1991, its data is still inconclusive. What is known, though is cited by many credible sources. The American Psychology Association reports that hate crimes "are not necessarily random, uncontrollable, or inevitable" and that it is possible to "intervene to reduce or prevent many forms of violence... including hate-induced violence." Basically, this reliable source is saying that hate crimes are preventable. Yet without the research that the HCSA and the HCSEA output, hate crimes prevail and there is no way of predicting them, even in the slightest. By identifying patterns among hate crimes, it'll, in time, be easier to enact legislation that more directly attacks the root of hate crimes.



Matthew Shepard was a victim of an awful example of a hate crime in America.

To further enhance the effectiveness of the aforementioned acts, Congress is seeking to expand federal jurisdiction to make a uniform way of dealing with these actions. If we were to take away these acts, the effects would be grave; the lack of uniformity in state legislation would make it impossible for there to be any conclusive data about hate crimes. States define hate crimes differently, some choosing to include, say, the disabled as victims, or placing hate crimes alongside crimes like arson, not in their own category.

Just because the work of the HCSA and HCSEA is not tangible does not mean it is not working to rid our country of these horrible atrocities that target not just individuals, but entire groups of people.

As far as Matthew Shepard goes, it's safe to say that his is a unique case. His murderers were found, tried, and convicted. But what about all the other victims? All those to see murderous bigots brought to trial, let alone convicted. Most hate-crime victims do not even report their crimes because there is little in the way of legislation to protect them. The HCSA and HCSEA are only small steps in the way of giving a voice to these victims, but they're steps nevertheless. Abolishing hate crimes completely won't happen overnight, if it happens ever. But getting rid of the minimal legislation we have won't solve the problem. Baby steps may be, but at least they're in the right direction.

Thank you,

Emily Finerrock, senior

and shouldn't to face punishment.

By punishing non-drinkers the school is essentially punishing someone for the acts of others. Each person is responsible for himself and shouldn't incur punishment for the behavior of other students. Who is the school to tell us where we can and cannot hang out on the weekend, so long as we stay within the law?

Punishing non-drinkers puts students in danger. By discouraging non-drinkers from attending parties for fear of punishment, the school has basically reduced the number of designated drivers. Without designated drivers, intoxicated students will put themselves and others at risk. The school is essentially saying that if you're a designated driver, you will be punished.

## Fill your weekend with wholesome fun

Dear Editor,

The following twelve activities were prompted by the phrase that I heard as a parent and I still hear as a teacher. When I tell my students, "Have a good weekend. Stay safe," they often reply that Springfield is boring and that there is nothing to do. This list could be from any one of the many concerned parents and teachers.

1. Have a pasta and pizza party and ask everyone to bring their own toppings.
2. Brush up on your etiquette; set a proper dining table with more than two eating utensils; learn how to ballroom dance.
3. Write a letter on pretty stationary. Send it to someone special.
4. Pretend you are European—walk, run, or ride a bike to all your destinations for one week.
5. Get down and dirty; plant a victory garden (research history to find out what this is).
6. Learn a new board or card game and teach it to three of your friends.
7. Take the metro to DC and explore all the free museums, exhibits, displays and festivals.
8. Clean your room and then read a novel to classical or jazz background music.
9. Promote and participate in WS extracurricular activities.
10. Volunteer for a worthy cause; work in a soup kitchen; go on a church retreat.
11. Enjoy an old friendship; invite someone new into your circle of friends.
12. Have a heart-to-heart conversation with parents or guardians; make it longer than 20 minutes. No arguing allowed.

Thank you,

Mercada A. Saffron, teacher

# THE ORACLE

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

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

Roberto Garcia  
Melissa Lipman  
Katie Walker  
Editors

Jenny Askin  
Lauren Decol  
Laura Robinson  
Managing Editors

Mike Argy  
Business/Systems Editor

Amy Mckeever  
Entertainment Editor

Angela Fiorino  
ETC. Editor

Emily Morris  
Marianne Shaddix  
Features Editors

Erika Kim  
Emily Miller  
Inside Story Editors

Priyanka Tandon  
News Section Editor

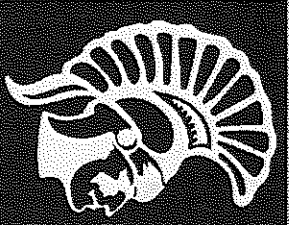
Maggie Ateberry  
Russ Waddell  
Photography Editors

Camila Casillas  
Dennis Ing  
Sports Editors

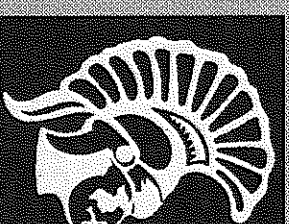
Nayna Gupta  
Viewpoint Editor

Jen Berne  
Jenn Carlson  
Weekend Editors

Brooke Ramey Nelson  
Adviser



# Spartan Profiles



## Aaron Knight

By Emily Morris  
Features Editor

It takes a lot of talent and experience to be League MVP one season and player with the most goals the next. For senior Aaron Knight, after playing ice hockey for 13 years, these are his greatest accomplishments.

"My dad used to play hockey and introduced it to me," said Knight. "I just really enjoyed it and have kept playing." Knight has joined Prince William's ice hockey team since he moved here. Last season he scored the most goals in his league, which was approximately 40 goals.

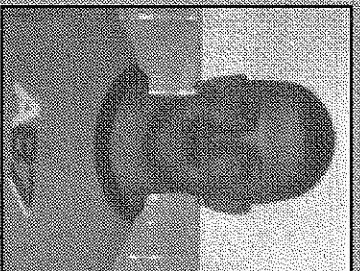
Amazingly, Knight has never lived in a town that does not have an ice hockey team. His dad is in the military so he has lived all over, including New Jersey, Georgia, and North Carolina. His dad was even stationed in Germany for awhile.

"I have been lucky and have always lived where there is an [ice hockey] team," said Knight.

Though his father's career has caused him and his family, which includes two older sisters, to be uprooted several times, Knight is a living example of "like father, like son." In January Knight

enlisted in the Army. He leaves in August to report for duty.

"I went alone. I enlisted," said Knight. "It was fun, the guys were informal and nice."



Emily Morris  
Knight has enlisted in the

Knight Army faces the possibility of being sent overseas to fight in the war on terrorism. But in return for his services, he has been promised \$50,000 for college tuition.

"I joined the Army because of the challenge it offered," said Knight.

Joining the military and playing ice hockey aren't the only ways Knight's father has influenced him. Knight's father bought an old 1970 Mustang for the two of them to restore together.

"When we first started working on the car it was nearly destroyed," said Knight. "We have replaced the whole interior, but the engine is original."

"My dad has taught me everything I know," said Knight. "Most importantly, he taught me never to give up."

## Ashley Linder

By Marianne Shaddix  
Features Editor

When most students are making their way towards the parking lot at the end of the day, freshman Ashley Linder is getting ready to spend hours after school rehearsing for the Spring musical. On the weekends when most students are relaxing, reveling in the weekend freedom, she is back at school for more rehearsal.

Being a part of any school production is time consuming. But Linder wouldn't have it any other way.

"[Like [being in the play], it's a lot of fun. I don't mind the commitment at all. I actually enjoy it," said Linder.

*Anything Goes* is the first play Linder has been in at WS. At Irving she was an extra in the production of *Broadway Cafe*. Linder's interest in music parallels her happy-go-lucky outlook on life.

"What I feel like listening to really depends on the mood I'm in. I like everything except religious and classical," she said.

Linder has lived in Springfield her whole life. Although she has moved once, it was only to a different house down the block. Because she hasn't had to frequently reestablish herself in new states, Linder has been able to form a tight circle of friends.

When she's not busy devoting her free time to play practice, Linder enjoys spending time with them.

"I go Alison's house and see the Dawgs," said Linder.

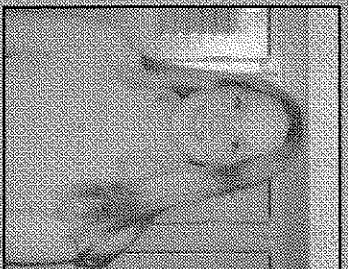
As for life after high school, Linder has thought a lot about what she'd like to do with her future.

She plans to go to college in state, at either Mary Washington or William and Mary.

"I've thought about having a career in theatre, but it's very difficult breaking in. The business is very structured, so I don't see myself having a future in acting," she said.

Instead, Linder would like to have Judge Judy's job.

Linder may have her future planned out at the moment, but Linder works hard for the



Katie Rice  
she's still got WS theater department. A few years left to decide. It seems like now she's just busy enjoying just living for the moment.

# Hurry, Hurry, Hurry! Carnival!

## Springfield Mall

April 18 to 28

**Advanced Sale Tickets Purchase Now until 4/17/02**

**45% SAVINGS with Pre-sale**

**SAUE \* \$2.00 OFF COUPON \* SAUE**

**FAMILY FUN AMUSEMENT DAYS**

**SPRINGFIELD MALL - Beside JC Penney Auto Center**

**\$12.00 - UNLIMITED RIDES - \$12.00**

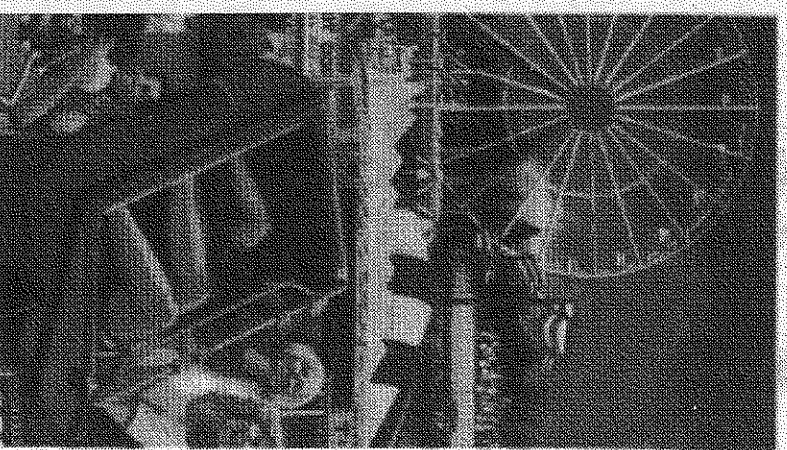
**APRIL 18 through APRIL 28**

**REGULAR PRICE \$14.00**

**GOOD MON. TUES. & WED. APRIL 22, 23, & 24**

Present this coupon and \$12.00 per person at ride coupon box for unlimited rides as often as desired - day or night - Adult or Child, Good Mon., Tues. & Wed. April 22, 23 & 24

**SAUE \* \$2.00 OFF COUPON \* SAUE**



**United We Stand with Special Olympics  
Carnival at Springfield Mall**

# Forever College Bound

## Planning for college puts extra stress on juniors

**Erika Kim**  
Inside Story Editor

Junior year. The mack daddy of them all. All your counselors, teachers, and parents have stressed over and over how important junior year is, and after living through three quarters of my junior year, I have concluded that not only is it an important year, but that it may also be the hardest.

I started out my junior year knowing that it was an important year and knowing that I had to work hard and do well. What I didn't know was that I would have to do so much in preparation for college even though college is still a year and a half away. It scared me a little because I hadn't realized just how near college really is.

The fact that I should really start preparing for college hit me when the counselors started pulling juniors out of class to talk about what we should be doing in preparation for college. Juniors met with their counselors at one time and were given information about college admission programs, how to find the right college, transcripts, and a planning calendar that had a list of things juniors should do each month in preparation for college. Among the list of things to do were registering for the SATs, going to college fairs and doing college searches at the career center.

They also gave us a required college application packet to fill out, which asked

for information like SAT scores, GPA, colleges you want to apply to, extracurricular activities, the works. It also asked you various questions like "Who is your hero and why?" and "If you had a motto to live by, what would it be and why?" and had a page of questions for your parents to fill out. These packets will help the counselors when they write letters of recommendation for you when you start applying for colleges.

A few days later we were taken out of class again, except this time, to meet with Career Center Specialist Sue Rexford in the Career Center. She showed us how to use the college search program to find colleges that were right for us and we signed up for a required college search either during lunch or after school. The program allows students to save their search so they can come back whenever they want to add or delete potential colleges to your list that will be helpful when deciding which colleges to apply for.

Another major part of junior year is taking the SATs for the first time which can be nerve-racking. To do your best on the SATs, preparation for it should start long before junior year. SAT prep classes, sample tests, SAT questions of the day and taking the PSATs a couple times is highly recommended. Collegeboard.com will become your new best friend.

College visits and junior sack lunches are also a great way to get more

## Freshmen in denial delay college

**Emily Miller**  
Inside Story Editor

Think you've got a four year buffer from college? Think again. Many freshmen blow off their first year of high school thinking it is insignificant because they still have three more years left. Even though junior year is considered the most important, colleges do look at your earlier years.

"I don't think about college at all. It seems so far away," said freshman Katie Chesly.

Many upperclassmen regret not doing better in their earlier years in high school. Junior Lauren Khair expresses her remorse for not taking advantage of the easy classes she was in.

"You don't realize how important

keeping your GPA up is until you get to your junior year," said Khair.

Even though college hits closer to home for the sophomores, they still have a hard time focusing on college. It is easily forgotten between balancing friends and extracurricular activities.

"I'm so busy with my job and friends, college doesn't seem real yet," said sophomore Alyssa Buldoc.

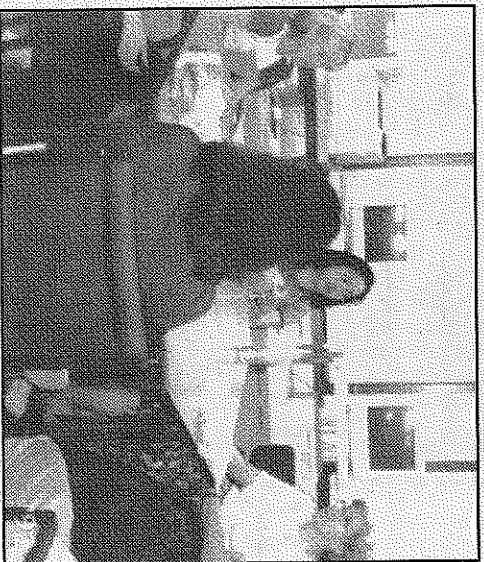
However, there are steps underclassman can take to prepare them for college. Talking to your counselor can help define what you need to do to get into the college of your choice.

Guidance counselor Joe Chulew advises students to "take the most challenging classes that are available." Guidance Counselor Ken Christopher sits down with students and shows them exactly what grades are

expected for certain schools. Also, the Career Center provides helpful information about colleges like catalogs and videos. College fairs help give you a better feel for the colleges you're interested in. Visiting the actual colleges helps you better understand what college life is really like.

"I'm trying to find colleges that have the major I'm interested in," said sophomore Susan Thornton.

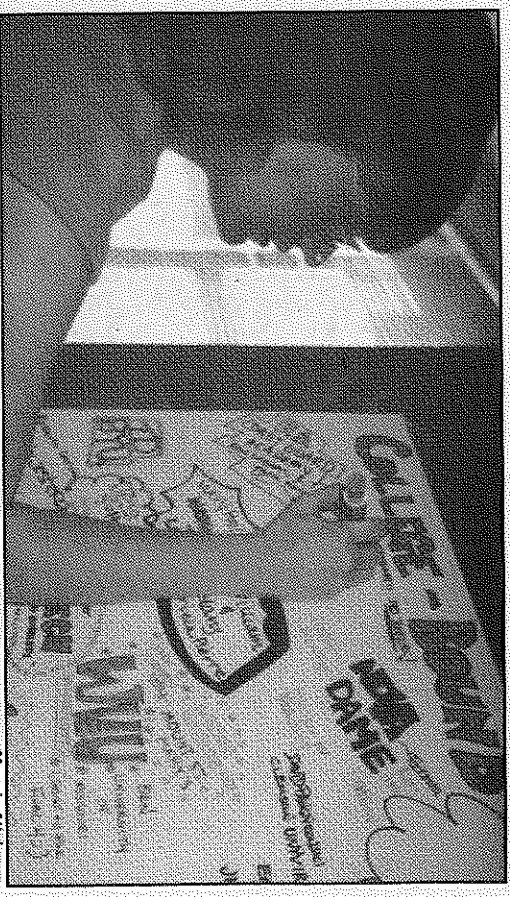
Although college seems distant now, take the advice of your elders and prepare now for your future.



Jason Kang  
Sack lunches are a good way to get information about the college process.

"Thinking about what college you want to go to shouldn't start junior year. To get into the college you want now, you have to start working freshman year."

—Jason Kang, junior



Maggie Atteberry

Senior Lauren Decot signs the college bound poster with the college of her choice.

information about the college process and prepare for college. Many juniors also like to visit college campuses during vacation time, especially spring break. Visiting colleges can give you a closer look at college life. Talking to your counselor often is also a good way to make sure that you're on the right track and that you are doing what you are supposed to be doing.

"I wish I would have prepared more for college. Now that it's coming up, I'm regretting all the time I've wasted," said junior Alex Park.

Beginning preparation for college in addition to the AP classes, the extracurricular activities, and all the other

things that look good on a college application may be a little overwhelming, but it will all be worth it in the end when you get into the college you want.

College preparation doesn't just start junior year. It actually begins the moment you enter high school, but junior year can either make or break you. It can help you get into a good college, or it can keep you from going to the college you want. It can't, however, make up for years of slacking.

"Thinking about which college you want to go to shouldn't start junior year," said junior Jason Kang. "To get into the college you want to now, you have to start working freshman year."

## Seniors impart wisdom before final farewell

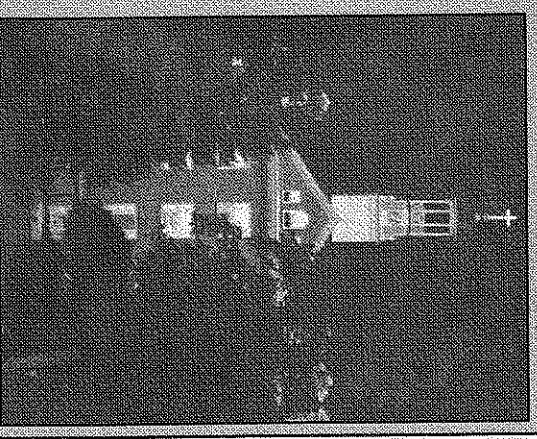
**Laura Robinson**  
Managing Editor

I was one of the lucky ones. I found a school I liked right away, applied early and got accepted right away. Unlike many other seniors, my situation was much less stressful or time-consuming.

Of all the advice I can give, the most important would be to go on as many college visits as possible. Hearing about schools from your friends, taking "virtual tours," or talking to college representatives are all great, but nothing compares to actually going to the college. Once at the college, you can talk to professors, students, counselors and financial aid counselors. You get the feel of the college, which is the most important.

There are five major things I can recommend. Two applied to me directly: don't be afraid of small schools and don't be afraid of schools you've never heard of. Also, don't worry about going to "the best" school. Go to a school where you feel comfortable and you know you'll be able to learn and have fun. That may mean you won't go to UVA or William & Mary, and that's okay. Lastly, take advantage of any scholarships you can. Apply for all scholarships—ones that are \$500, \$1,000 or higher. Every little bit helps, and the Career Center and Fastweb.com are all you need to find as much financial aid as possible.

I'm going to Mount St. Mary's College, which is a small college in Emmitsburg. Maryland. I knew I wanted to go there on my first visit, and each time I go back I like it even more. It's very small—smaller than WS—and more like a



Mount St. Mary's College is a small college in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

miniature community than a college. Everyone there was very nice, the land is beautiful and the dorms are clean and personable. I can't wait to go.

Preparing for college shouldn't be stress-filled but it often is. For me, money was the biggest issue. Figuring out your financial situation as soon as you begin your college search is a very good idea.

Whenever you have a free weekend, go down to a college. You can go with your friends or your parents, but make sure to pay attention to all the details. Ask yourself how you feel—are you comfortable while you're there? Does it make you excited? Are all the students and staff nice and willing to help you? Do they take the time to know your name? Don't go to a college because it's easy or your parents want there or you've heard from friends that it's fun. Don't listen to what other people say about your school. Just go because you really love it, and you know you'll get the full college experience there. As Susan Rexford always says, "There's a college for everyone." I'm glad I found the college for me.

# Movie review: 'We Were Soldiers'

By JD Kaleem  
Business/Systems Assistant

The Vietnam War was nothing more than death, flying guns, explosions, charred faces and even worse gruesome violence—nothing but nonstop fighting.

At least this is what director Randall Wallace's latest effort "We Were Soldiers," would make people believe.

Based on the historical narrative account *We Were Soldiers Once...and Young*, by Hal Moore, the film tells the story of Moore, a Lieutenant Colonel (Mel Gibson), who led 400 American soldiers of the Seventh Cavalry into the first battle of the Vietnam War in the Ia Drang valley in 1965.

It starts off with a prologue showing the ambush of French troops in the valley in 1954.

Then, a decade later, it cuts to Fort Benning, Georgia, where Moore's wife (Madeline Stowe); Sergeant Major Plumley (Sam Elliott) and other soldiers and their wives are introduced.

There is one seemingly out of place discussion about blacks in the military by the soldiers' wives at a social meeting before all the bloody death scenes. If there is any sign of how life at home was during the war, it's this and the myriad of death notices the soldiers' wives wives must deliver to widows at home in the US.

Cutting back to the war, it's hard to follow the battles. For somebody who isn't a military-buff, the frequency of terms such as "flanks" can be confusing. It's hard to

battle instead of watching the movie.

Besides this, Wallace does create some heroic characters like Moore, who adds an emotional and patriotic element to the film.

One theme throughout the movie is the great bond held by the soldiers and also relationships with their families.

Slow motion battling and blood splattering all over the screen and the camera lens—there's a lot of it—adds an element of shock to the movie. There is a chilling and emotional soundtrack that gets viewers thinking about war.

But the extensive battle scenes can get annoying—it goes on and on for a while and I remember asking myself, "Is this movie about anything but gruesome battle scenes?"

Considering the historical accuracy of "We Were Soldiers," the geography shown of the battle is incorrect. The producers of the film failed to show parts of the Ia Drang valley that influenced the battle most: five-foot-tall elephant grass that greatly limited the soldiers' visibility and huge anthills that provided cover.

Audiences don't learn many new facts about the war or get a deeper insight into its cause but audiences do get to see into the life of a few great soldiers.

History buffs may not enjoy this movie—it's just a lot of fighting, but maybe military buffs will. The average person can enjoy it, while not loving it, and still come to appreciate the lives and efforts of all soldiers that have ever fought, not just those in the Vietnam War.



Choreographer Darrin Henson teaches 'N Sync some moves for one of their music videos. Henson also has a dancing video out that teaches fans his choreography.

## Dancin' with Darrin

By Jenn Carlson  
Weekend Editor

"Dance it out."

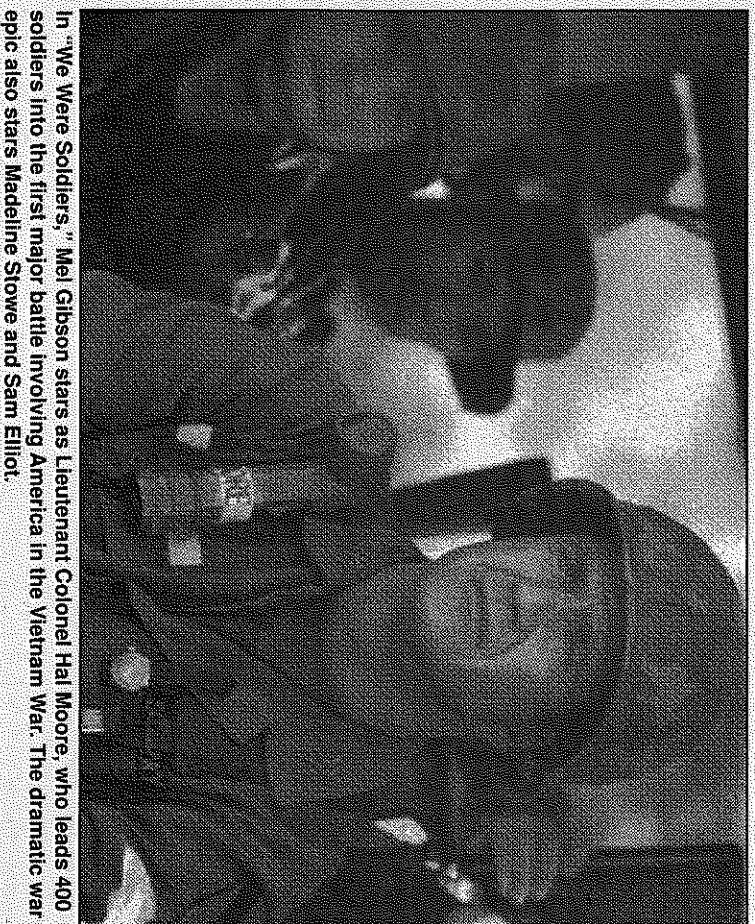
When junior Brin Lukens and seniors Rebecca Weiner and Katie Kovar decided to try "Darrin's Dance Grooves," one Sunday afternoon, they couldn't help but notice the 'N Sync choreographer's overuse of this line.

"It was the cheesiest line in the whole movie," said Lukens.

This video, which can be bought through the numerous TV commercials that often hit the airwaves of stations like Nickeloden and MTV, features Darrin Henson and his choreography for popular songs.

"It looked like fun when I saw it on TV, so I decided to buy it," said Kovar.

Henson has choreographed for artists like 'N Sync, Jordan Knight and Britney Spears. The video demonstrates and teaches each entire routine step-by-step that accompany Top 40 hits such as



In "We Were Soldiers," Mel Gibson stars as Lieutenant Colonel Hal Moore, who leads 400 soldiers into the first major battle involving America in the Vietnam War. The dramatic war epic also stars Madeline Stowe and Sam Elliott.

tell even where the battle lines lie; considerable brain power is spent trying to understand the physical terrain of the

"Crazy" by Spears, "Bye, Bye, Bye" by 'N Sync, and Knight's "Give It to You."

The video also includes the choreography to another 'N Sync routine, "Digital Get Down" and Henson's new creation, a pop and lock routine. It was first released to the world on this video, and the technique of pop and lock Lukens described as a style of dance quite similar to breakdancing.

"I don't pop and lock, but it's cool for people for who can," said Kovar.

While the video does fulfill its promise of teaching the steps to popular dances and songs, there is one major problem that will slow down the learning process.

"It was really hard because he never went back in any of the dances, so you just had to rewind every time you got confused," said Weiner.

"Darrin's Dance Grooves" turned out to be a fun activity, even though the tape moved too fast at times and became confusing.

"It was fun, though," said Lukens. "It would be neat to be able to do it at a party."

## Drum and Bass beats out other styles to be the trend of the decade

By Mike Stilloji

Special to The Oracle

What was the biggest phenomenon of the past decade? Each of the past contemporary decades had its own phenomenon. The 60s is remembered for rock and roll, the 70s for disco, the 80s for punk. The past decade had Electronic music.

Truth be told, the coolest part of life is youth. Kids have been and always will be what is the epitome of cool in any particular time period. Kids meaning those interested in the freshest, newest and most original music available. DJs have taken the throne that instrument-playing rock stars have stepped off of. But just how did the Electronic music scene evolve? It evolved out of a mixture of many things. Hip Hop, with its breakdancing, graffiti, DJs and MCs certainly deserves credit for helping to shape Electronic music. Skateboarding and skateboarders also

contributed to the scene in a big way. Europe and America, particularly in the big cities, can be credited with truly defining the culture, which is inevitably urban.

But what is happening in our current decade, what is evolving into the next big thing? One may look to Europe, which has traditionally been at the forefront of innovation (rock and roll and punk both started there). Drum and Bass music seems poised to step in to the next position. This dance music for the 21st century originated in Bristol, UK. A mixture of breakbeats, looping sound effects and other electronic sounds, drum and bass is hip and fresh. Often accompanied by MC's, singers who freestyle over the music, drum and bass DJs usually keep the beats fast and deep. Sometimes referred to as Jungle, drum and bass can have junglistic breaks and funky breaks.

So as we roll in to the future, Drum and Bass seems to be the leading form of cool.

"A Fine Salon"

*Burst & Co.*

Hair • Skin • Nails

(703) 644-4600

7227 Commerce Street  
Springfield, VA 22150

**Modern Image**  
Prom Special Going on Now  
**\*Bring in this ad and  
get 15% OFF!!!!**

(703) 313-8700

Located in Springfield Mall on the second floor near  
Entrance 2

\* 15% only applies for students

# Film festival flaunts French culture

By Roberto Garcia  
Oracle Editor

A teacher, her husband, and a group of teenagers packed into an RV. Sounds like a roadtrip.  
It was actually French teacher Joelle Torreele's trip to the 10th annual VCU French Film Festival. Along with her husband John, she chaperoned six WS students and me on the two-day spring break trip.

We left Friday, March 22 from the Torreele's house in Fairfax. Seniors Amanda Littlepage, Lia Ovelar, Omar Yacoubi and I rode in the Torreele's RV, while seniors Amy McKeever and Khanh-Vi Nguyen and junior Julie Johnson drove down in McKeever's car.

We got to Richmond just in time to eat dinner and watch the movie "Laissez-Passer." The movie followed two French film directors in Nazi occupied France, showing how they quietly resisted the Nazi movement. Although the storyline was good, the movie was interminably long. For example, when one of the film directors would ride his bike over 200 miles to visit his family, you felt like you were riding the entire 200 miles with him.

The following morning, most of our group slept in, but Torreele and McKeever made it to the early movie "Les Portes de la Gloire." It was a story about a man named Jerome, who finds himself as a door-to-door encyclopedia salesman. The movie portrays his experience and the lessons he learns along the way.

Later that same morning, we watched a series of short films. After each one of these films, its director would come into the theater and take questions from the crowd.

Of the three short films we saw, most everyone agreed that the best was a documentary about French children going through kidney dialysis.

"I loved the short films, especially the one about kidney dialysis," said Johnson. "Those children's reactions were very moving."

The next two movies were "Le Franc Tireur" and "Betty Fisher et autres histoires." The first was a film about a region in the French Alps and what it's people went through when surrounded by German troops during World War II. The second was the story of two women whose very different lives unexpectedly come together.

During these two early afternoon movies, Littlepage, Ovelar and I took a detour to a little eatery down the street from the theater. We were surprised to see that they sold a fried chicken and fried rice combination, and at a very low price. When we tasted the chicken and the rice, however, we understood why it was so cheap.

"The fried chicken and fried rice incident was my favorite part of the trip," said Ovelar.

The last movie we watched was titled "Qui, Mais." It was the comedic story of Eglantine, a 17-year old girl dealing with divorcing parents, an alcoholic mother and a budding sexuality. The story is told from the point of view of her unorthodox psychiatrist. Although we were initially surprised by the nudity content in this film, we agreed it was the best of the feature films we saw.

"The last movie was easily the best," said Ovelar. "It was good to see that people from different cultures are creative in different ways."



Amy McKeever  
Road trip? No, it's just John Torreele driving six students to the VCU French Film Festival in Richmond.



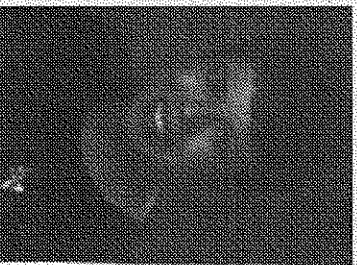
Amy McKeever  
RVs are the best way to travel. That's why seniors Leia Ovelar and Amanda Littlepage look so pleasant.

## Relocating? Buying? Selling?

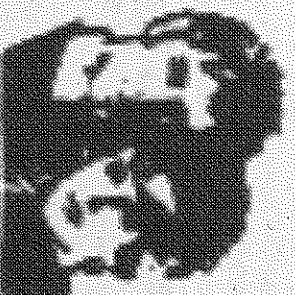
Your local Spartan Realto is here to help.  
Give me a call and I'll help you find the way home.

Eileen C. Ing, ABR

Military Relocation Specialist  
Re/Max Horizons  
703-824-4800, Office  
703-912-9929, Residence



Mention this ad and I'll donate \$500 from my commission to USHS sport or club of your choice! Go Spartans!



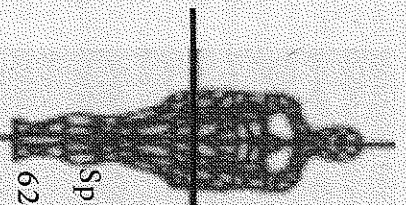
Hair Styling for  
the Whole Family

STAR  
BARBER & STYLIST

M - F 10 - 7 (703) 913-0627  
Sat 9 - 5 6345 Rolling Rd.  
CLOSED SUNDAY Springfield, VA 22152



Located at Hayfield Shopping Center  
7527 Telegraph Road  
Alexandria, VA 22315  
(703) 719-9315



DR. L. ANDREW SMITH

[www.thevillagebacksmith.com](http://www.thevillagebacksmith.com)

Springfield, VA 22152 (703) 912-7882  
6230-T Rolling Road

### PREVENT. DETECT. CORRECT.

1st in Virginia with OPTOS 2000

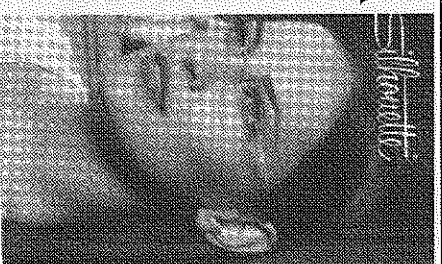
System without dilation

Virginia Eyecare Center is delighted to be the first in the state to bring the OPTOS 2000 System (Optomap) Exam to our patients!

Dr. Michael Caplan  
Dr. Ally Stoeger  
Dr. Anne Meccariello

(in the Rolling  
Valley Profes-  
sional Center)

703.569.3131



Virginia  
Eyecare  
Center of

Doctors of  
Optometry

The Right Prescription. 9314-A Old Keene  
The Right Look. Mill Rd., Burke, VA  
Right around the Corner.

members of the select  
Vision Source! network

[www.virginiaeyecare.com](http://www.virginiaeyecare.com)

Mention our ad and we will  
make a donation to the school  
team or club of your choice.

Consistent Care & Quality at the Right Price

\*The most complete Eye Examinations for Children, Teens and Adults.

\*Treatment of Eye Disease and Disorders

\*Contact Lens Specialists: from Simple to Complex.

\*Laser Surgery Services

\*Large Contact Lens Replacement Inventory

\*No Coupons Needed Our Patients Receive Preferred Pricing!

\*Extensive Frame Selection from Budget to Exclusive Designers.

\*State-of-the-Art Lab.

\*Insurance Accepted and Processed.

\*Sat. and Evening Hours.

# Girls lacrosse wins tournament, shoots for district title

By Denis Ing  
Sports Editor

With a loss in the first round of last year's regionals, the Lady Spartan lacrosse team's season ended. Minutes later, a new season began.

The team had meetings during the off-season and started early on offseason workouts. Along with drills, the team also ran to get into top condition.

"The team is in such good condition that it comes to show at the end of games. The offseason workouts really helped," said head coach Brian Publick.

Since the start of the season, the Spartans practice five days a week. They drilled hard and practiced hard everyday to find the girls that could play for this team. The team has high hopes for this year.

"I think we will do very well. We had the disappointing loss to Mount Vernon, but down in the Florida tournament our team bonded very well. We play really well together even though we have a young team," said senior Jesse Freer.

While everyone else was wasting time away for spring break, the lady Spartans went down to Florida for eight days. They spent 14 hours on the bus then team had some free time after games and practices which they spent together either at the beach or tanning by the pool. They

bonded so well that they won the tournament and came home 2-0. Then their first game back, they played well but came up just a little short, losing to Mount Vernon 7-6. The last shot hit the post and bounced away.

"The team is playing very well so far this year. After the heartbreak to Mount Vernon I think we should do well. We should be undefeated. This is one of the best teams I have coached in six years at WS," said Publick.

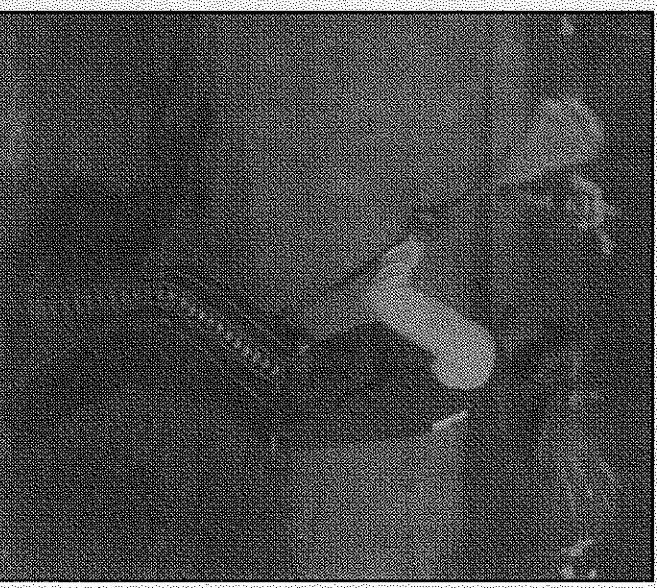
The team is one of the best that WS has produced. One of the many goals the team has this year is to be arch-rival Robinson. Robinson beat WS last year in the district finals. Yet this year, WS is gunning for them.

"Our team is very optimistic for the season. We need to keep focused and make sure we do the little things," said Publick.

The team has had a very productive year so far. They previously beat Jefferson 10-4 in their last game. That puts their record up to 4-1 with six regular season games remaining.

Their next game is Robinson on April 16. The Spartans are hoping to dethrone the Rams which beat the Spartans in the district finals last season. WS finished second in the district.

"I think our team has a really good defense and attack. We really have a strong team," said freshman Emily Tomlinson, "Our goal is to win districts."



Ross Wadden

Senior captain Jesse Freer gets ready to catch a pass from a teammate. The team practices everyday at Irving from 3:45 to 4:30.

## Softball hopes to pitch it up far into the post season

By Camilia Casillas  
Sports Editor

With a record of 1-2, the softball team hopes spending more time together on and off the field will take them to districts and then to regionals.

Spartan softball starts their season off with an experienced team. They only lost one starter from last year.

The Lady Spartans played teams from all over Northern Virginia, during the spring vacation. The team lost two games and won two.

"We did okay over spring break. There were about 30 to 40 teams there. We weren't playing as well as we can play," said senior outfielder Kirby Bevis.

They won April 5 23-6 over TC Williams, then lost 3-0 to Annandale, and then lost last Wednesday to Hayfield.

"We've out-played all the teams we've played so far. Everything will come together really soon," said sophomore Theresa Ohanian.

One of the team's main goals this season is to beat Lake Braddock.

During practice, the players do infield and outfield drills, and they also go through game situations. For physical fitness, the players run the bases in order to improve their speed for their competitive season.

"The captains warm everyone up. We do warm ups on our own because we know what the coach wants us to do," said Bevis. "Our hitting is going to be really good this year. We've been working on that."

Another one of the team's goals is to advance into the post season.

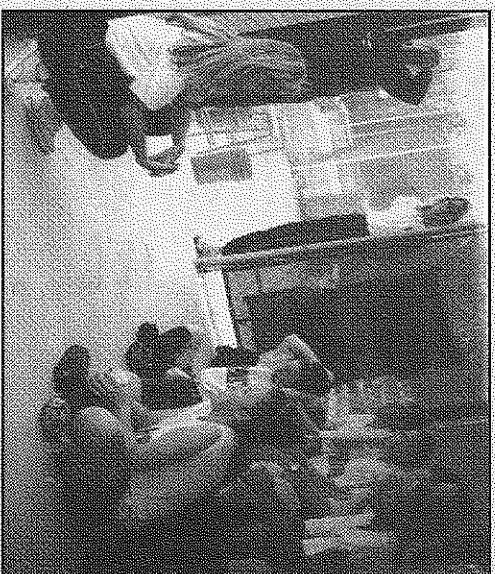
"We can win districts. We have to play as best as we can. We have to play to our level not just go to the other teams level," said Bevis.

The team has shown its spirit at school by dressing up or dressing down in their orange and blue softball gear. During games they are constantly rooting each other on.

"We do certain cheers before the games. We cheer during the games to encourage our teammates," said junior Cassidy Doane.

The team has already had one sleepover to get to know each other better. The captains plan on having pasta dinners once a week to improve team bonding.

"The more the team bonds," said Bevis, "the better they play together."



Maggie Atcherry

JV softball coach Margaret Gibson gives some words of advice to the team before the play Hayfield. The Spartans won the game 5-2. The girls softball team has a current record of 1-2 and their next two upcoming games are on the April 20th and 22th against Robinson and Jefferson.

# NVCC

Northern Virginia  
Community College

\*Get a head start on your college career at NUCC! **703-523-3000**  
www.nvcc.uccs.edu

\*Choose from more than 150 programs of study! **NUCCinfo@nvcc.uccs.edu**

\*Fine convenient campus locations! **Enroll now for summer classes!**

\*Both 12-week and 6-week sessions available! **Register today**

\*Summer sessions start May 20 and July 2 **and make your summer count!**

Alexandria \* Annandale \* Loudoun  
Manassas \* Woodbridge

# SUBWAY

West Springfield Center

(703) 451-7600

DOUBLE TRIPLE

DEAL

PLAY

2 regular Footlong subs for \$7.99 with purchase

3 regular Footlong subs for \$10.99

offer expires 6/30/02

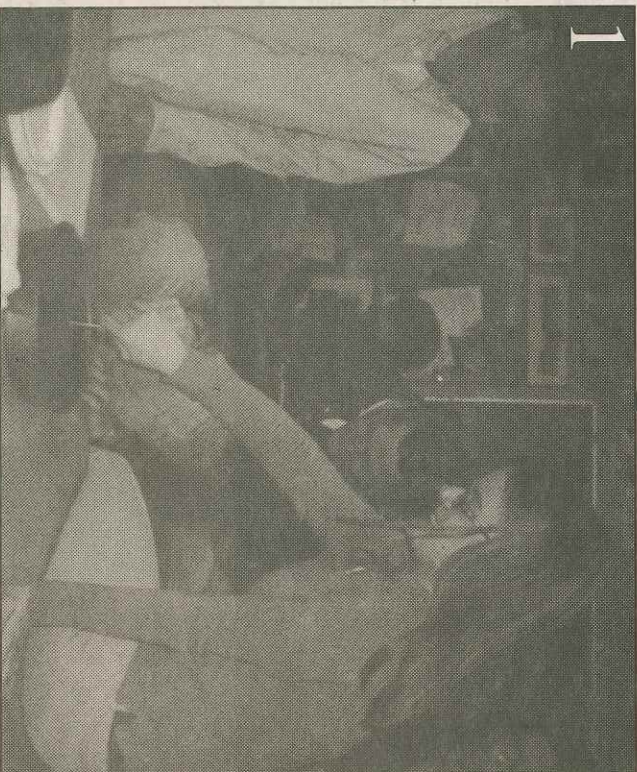
offer expires 6/30/02

One coupon per customer per visit. Not good with any other offer. Offer good at participating stores only. Not applicable with double meal.

One coupon per customer per visit. Not good with any other offer. Offer good at participating stores only. Not applicable with double meal.

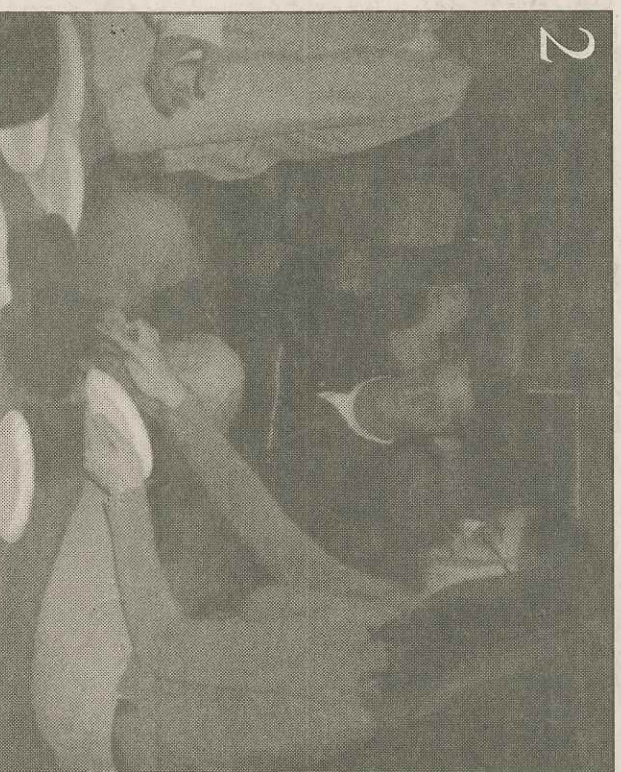
SUBWAY SUBWAY SUBWAY

## Wanna go on a cake walk? Follow the numbers...



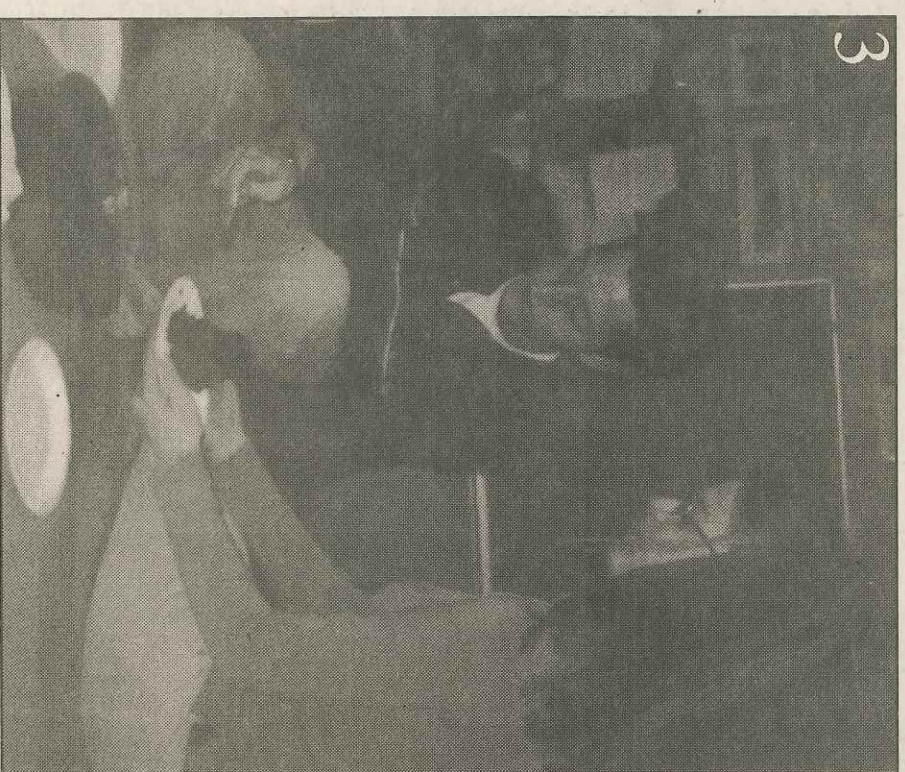
Amy Brown

**1** Scott Lawler hates women and he thinks Leigh Johnson can't cut the cake herself, so he insists on helping her along with the process. Other Yearbookies, Sam Jung and Monique Patwary look on as the two seemingly cut their "wedding cake." We really have no idea why the Yearbook staff was allowed to have a party with a chocolate cake but whatever, we're not bitter, we're funnier.



Amy Brown

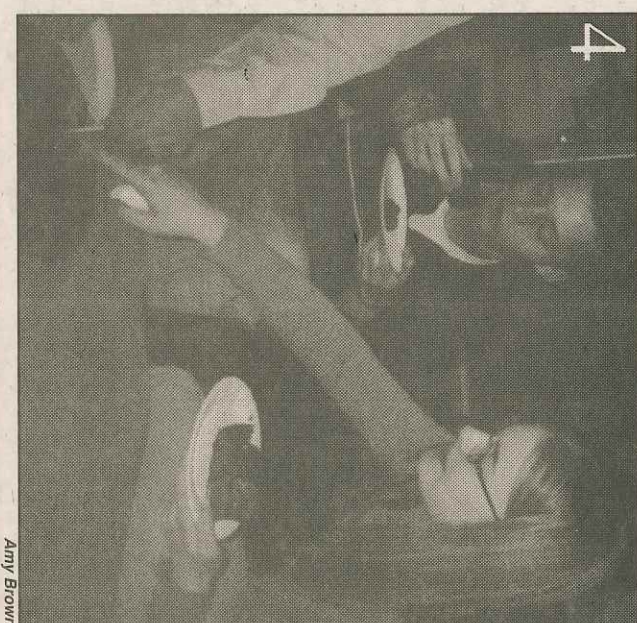
**2** Leigh must think that there's strategy in touching the chocolate cake with only one finger, like it will lower the chance of getting germs on it. Apparently, Scott thinks that Leigh needs help getting the piece of cake on to the plate. Fortunately for them, the photographer didn't catch Scott dropping the cake onto the floor, but they ate it anyway, it's the same piece that Scott is wolfing down in picture number 4.



Amy Brown

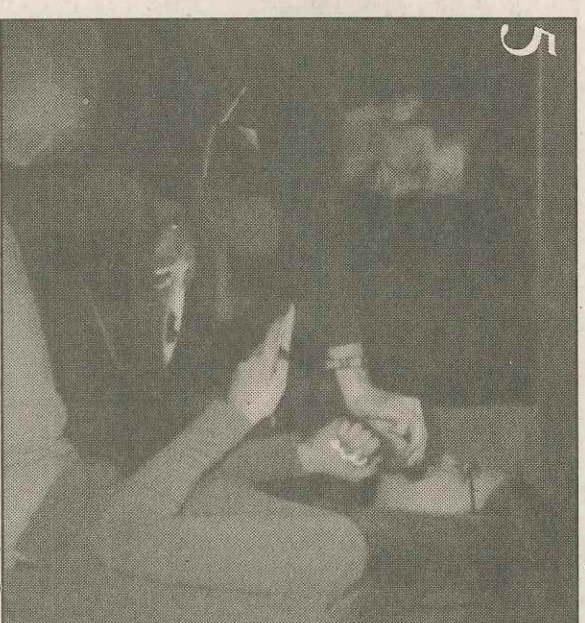
**3** This is where Scott makes sure that Leigh gets every little last crumb that went with her piece of cake. It looks like she left a little behind when she dished out the portion. Maybe it was because she was so concerned with using only one finger that a few crumbs got lost in the transport.

Scott is really concentrating on eating his piece of cake. If you look closely, you'll notice that right behind him, there is a huge yearbookie brawl, but those involved with the cake, fail to notice. Even though Scott seems to be enjoying the luscious chocolate, he is clearly forcing his mouthful into his left cheek like a chipmunk. I'm sure the pastry chef who baked this masterpiece would be very offended if he got their hands on this picture. Once again, Leigh thinks it is important to touch the cake with only one finger in order to avoid those germs. To the left, Sam reaches his arm in to "get a piece." Leigh looks like she's helping him.



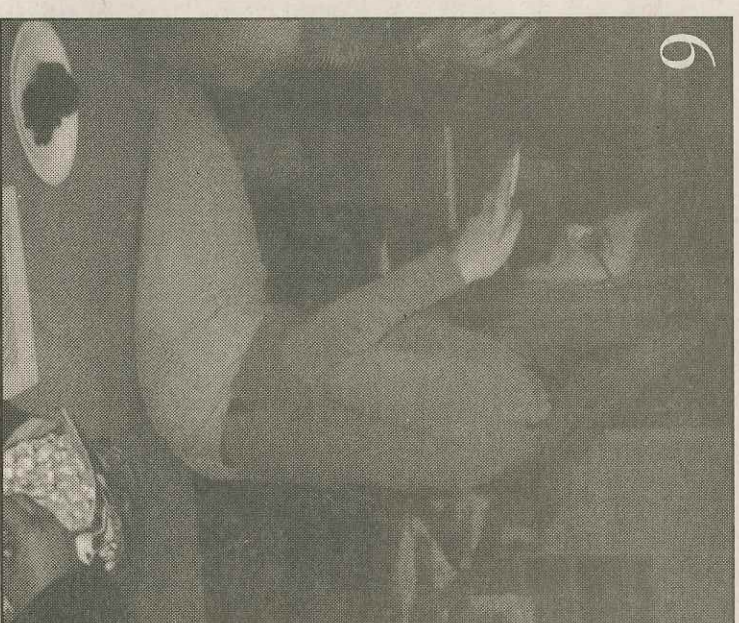
Amy Brown

Once again, Scott and Leigh are pretending that this is their wedding cake, except their arms aren't locked. It kind of looks like Leigh is crying, rather than laughing. Maybe Scott is being evil and is really demonstrating how much he hates women. Leigh sure does look like she is getting the cake forced into her mouth unwillingly. Hopefully the cake was soft so she didn't get any inner-cheek damage during this cruel and highly unusual punishment. She's about to bring her arm up to stop him but her fist is clenching a napkin so that probably won't help.



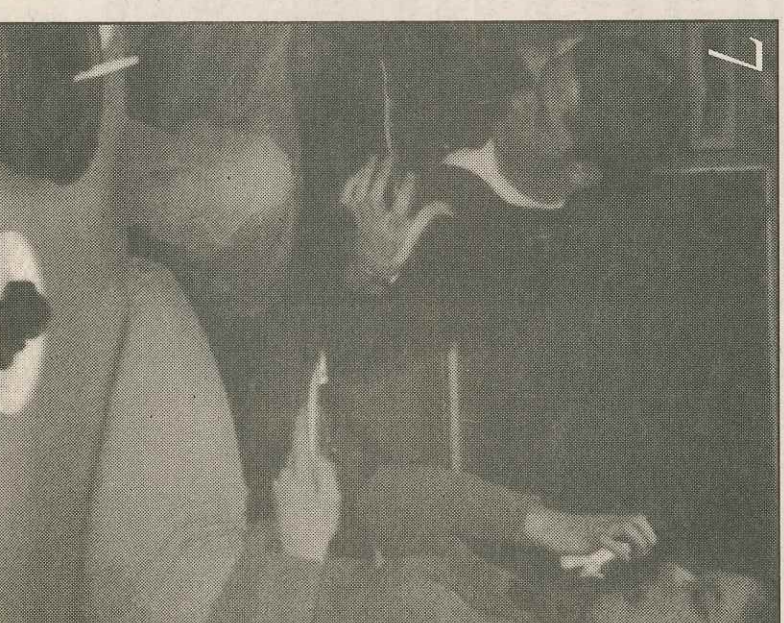
Amy Brown

Just more proof that Leigh really doesn't want to get her hands on that cake. What could possibly be on Leigh's hands that makes her so worried with getting germs onto a cake? Whatever it is, she is so concerned with transferring germs onto that beautiful fluff of a cake that she uses the plate to feed herself. It would be a major bummer if she wasn't paying attention and she accidentally bit the styrofoam instead of the cake. Maybe she wouldn't have noticed the difference. Notice to the left another Yearbookie is sticking their hand into a bag full of popcorn. What is this? They really are a bunch of pigs.



Amy Brown

Well it took Leigh a real long time before she realized that the cake was crampin' her style, or crampin' her taste buds for that matter. The latter is more correct, judging by the look on her face. It looks more like the cake is crampin' the style of Scott. He must have gotten it on his pants or something. What is he looking at? Poor Leigh, I hope the baker doesn't see this picture. It's quite offensive. I guess when she was getting it stuffed into her mouth by Scott, she couldn't really taste it, she probably was in a state of shock. Well so much for the yearbookies party with the cake. They had their cake but I don't think they liked eating it too.



Amy Brown

—Photo essay and captions compiled by Ang Fiorino