

THE Oracle

West Springfield High School 6100 Rolling Road Springfield, Virginia 22152

Staff member dies in armed robbery

By Nayna Gupta
Oracle Editor

Custodian Charles Edward Galloway died on Monday, December 23 after being shot during an armed robbery. Galloway, who worked at WS for one year, will be remembered by colleagues for his dedication to his work.

"Charles is irreplaceable," said head of custodial staff Rebecca Mullins. "He was a jack-of-all trades who always had something nice to say to everyone."

Galloway was attacked when washing his car at a gas station in Temple Hills, Maryland. Police were unable to identify Galloway's body until December 26 because the gunman took both his wallet and Ford SUV. For three days, which included Christmas, Galloway's wife did not know of the incident or where to find him.

"Both his wife and mother called here [school] that evening when he didn't come home," said Mullins. "They knew how much he loved his work so they thought he may have come up here."

At school, Galloway worked in the foreign language

Storm takes up remaining snow days

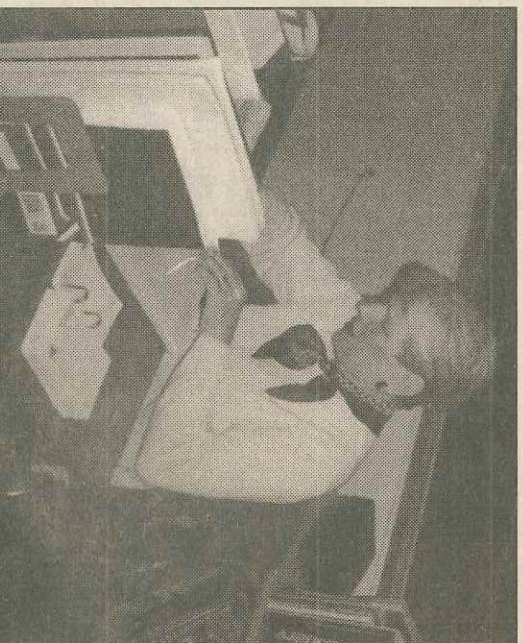
By Emily Miller
Weekend Editor

It's longer than recess, cooler than a two hour delay, and safer than skipping-snow days. This year WS already had three days full of freedom due to the white stuff.

Most students spent their three days traditionally: sledding, getting into snow fights, and drinking hot chocolate. Some took it to the next level and got creative. Senior Jen Znilek took different colored food dye and poured it on top of the snow in her front yard.

"It was really cool; my whole lawn was tie-dyed," said Znilek.

Students are enjoying this winter more than the last due to the excess snow.



Jen Stomacco

Government teacher Connie Peduzzi is the AP Chairperson at WS. She is the liaison between the AP program and students.

and English hallways, honored teachers' requests for furniture and often helped during lunch shifts. Administrators and staff always appreciated his willingness to take on any job.

"When I picked up the radio to ask for something, he'd be the first to answer, and always with a polite 'yes ma'am,'" said sophomore administrator Brenda Aiken.

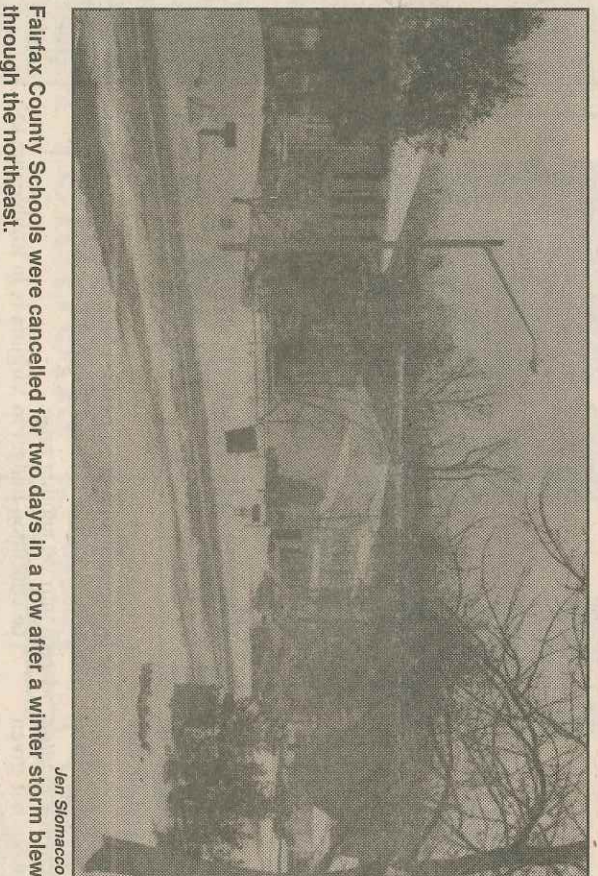
"Most of the time, he'd already done a task before we even knew it was a problem."

Galloway extended his help and care to students too. He often spent time in the gym talking to the boys' varsity basketball team and offering his encouragement to the players.

"During our practices he would talk to us about how we were doing and what we were working on," said senior basketball player Drew Murray. "I think he really loved basketball."

Outside of school, Galloway was the father of three children: a 14-year-old daughter, a 5-year old son and a

See GALLOWAY, page 4



Jen Stomacco

Fairfax County Schools were cancelled for two days in a row after a winter storm blew through the northeast.

"The snow this year has been so much fun because last year it didn't snow," said junior Theresa Ohanian.

But all freedom does come with a cost. Fairfax County only allows three days off without not being made up. After that, days that would be holidays will become make

up days. The fourth snow make-up day was supposed to be made up on January 20, and the fifth will be on January 30, and so on, but the School Board decided that the next snow make-up day will not be January 20th, the Martin Luther King Holiday. See SNOW, page 4

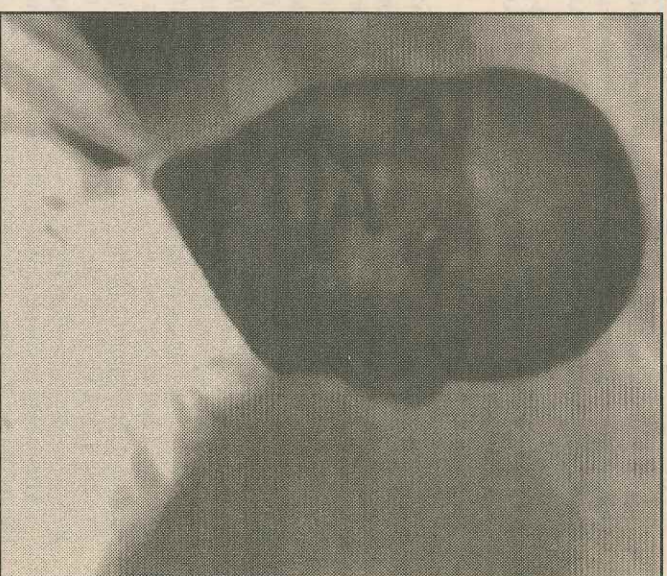
Class of '03 last to receive AP Diploma

By Russ Waddell
Oracle Editor

The Advanced Placement diploma, awarded to students with enough Advanced Placement (AP) credits to meet the College Board's requirements, will be eliminated next year.

Getting the AP diploma requires a three or higher on the exam in five classes, including a math, science, English, social studies, and an elective; information that colleges can get without knowing that a student has the diploma.

"It really meant nothing," said career center coordinator Susan Rexford. See AP DIPLOMA, page 4



Courtesy of Rebecca Mullins

Custodian Charles Galloway died during the winter vacation after being shot in an armed robbery.

Fire marshall visit brings bad news

By Emily Ryan
Senior Staff Writer

Every year all building and schools are subject to a fire inspection. Just prior to Thanksgiving break, it was WS's turn.

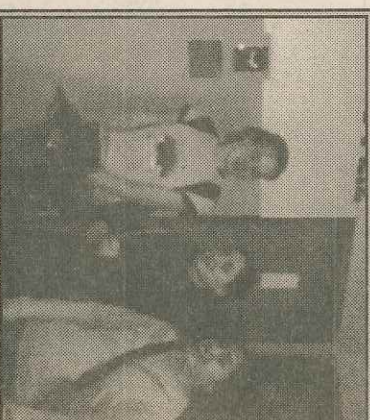
The fire marshal paid the school a visit, during which he noted that certain rooms and fire extinguishers were not up to par and said he would return in three weeks.

Word spread about WS not passing as students told their friends how the school failed.

"I wouldn't say we failed. That's a little harsh. I've been a principal for twelve years...and the fire marshal has always commented on something," said Principal David Smith. "He would've shut the school down if it was a failure."

This year there were fire extinguishers that were outdated and particular rooms that were deemed fire hazards. The English book room was too

See INSPECTION, page 4



Emily Morris

After the fire marshall visit, some classrooms were deemed fire hazards.



6 Students volunteer for a greater good.



12 Oracle's Spa Spectacular!



16 Russ on the cover of "Rolling Stone" magazine.

Two weeks off means more time to enjoy vacation

Fairfax County is not exactly known for its liberal dispensation of days off. In years with heavy winters, all missed days beyond our paltry three had to be made up. If this policy meant tacking the extra days on to national holidays or at the end of the year, so be it. One year, the county's ingenious solution to the problem of extra snow days was to tack an extra half hour onto every day.

This year Fairfax County has a chance to redeem itself. By providence, this year New Year's day falls right in the middle of the week. Normally, if New Year's were to fall on a Monday or Tuesday, we would be forced to go back to school on Tuesday or Wednesday. So considering the precedent Fairfax County has set, school should be back in session on Thursday.

Yet in a surprisingly "un-grinchy" move, the county has gone ahead and given students the rest of the week off too. Last year, having decided a real winter a thing of the past, the county decided to move the last day of school back a few days, figuring no time would be missed from

off now and make up for it later at the very end of the school year. Besides, by that point, it is not like anyone is going to be paying attention anyway. We will be looking forward to summer.

After winter break, the situation is different. January is an easy month, but following the teacher work days at the month's end, there will be ten weeks of school from February to spring break in April, interrupted only by President's Day.

So, it is best to take a breather

County denies calculators to advanced math classes

By Emily Morris
Photography Editor

I doubt that anyone has \$100+ dollars in his pocket right now that he wouldn't mind spending on a calculator. I know I don't.

The past three years, I have been mooching off Fairfax County for my TI-83 calculators. But I can no longer do that and this year, I had to buy my own calculator. And so at the beginning of the year I went on a quest for a TI-83 calculator. It's funny how fast stores sell out of them.

After going to Staples, Wal-mart, and finally Target, I sucked it up and paid the extra 30 dollars for a TI-83 Plus Silver

Edition. I don't see why Fairfax County stopped supporting me in my goal to never buy a calculator.

The rationale that Fairfax County has for not loaning us a calculator this year is the fact that I will not be taking an SOL in the spring for Trigonometry and Math Analysis. But in Algebra courses and Geometry courses, there is an SOL, so the students "need" the calculators.

But in the fall, I was told by my trig teacher that a calculator would be key to surviving the course.

So the county figures that since there is no SOL, we don't "need" the calculator. On the SOL instruction sheet it says we are

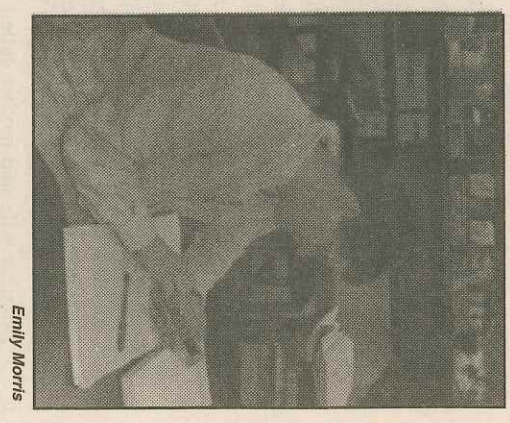
Editorial

school because of snow.

This year, the last day of school has been moved back up to make up for our few extra days off. Actually, it is probably better for students to have a few days

allowed to use a TI-83 graphing calculator. In order for the county to have the best scores on the SOLs they provide us with calculators to use on the SOLs. For math courses without an SOL like Trigonometry, the county figures they do not need to support us. But if the county would just look at the curriculum, they would realize we must have our graphing calculators.

So basically, I feel that for every math course offered by the county above Algebra I, a TI-83 should be offered to all students enrolled.



Junior Dennis Admas uses his calculator. Fairfax County only provides calculators for Algebra II or below.

Democrats squander budget

By Mike Arai
Viewpoint Editor

Injustice has struck again, and, as so often happens, the Democrats on the Fairfax County School Board are responsible.

The school board decided to give Fairfax County superintendent Daniel Domenech another raise and bonus on top of the raise he received last year. Out of the "goodness" of his heart, Domenech said he would not take the bonus he received in the previous year.

The sad fact is that the Democrats on the board have not been playing fair. According to a recent *Washington Post* article, Republicans on the board were not given notice that the issue would come up before the board. What a coincidence.

Domenech has declared that he would have to leave if he did not get the raise or bonus. One word should have been spoken to the superintendent: goodbye.

Some would have it said that Domenech is the best superintendent money can buy, but there is such a thing as overpriced. There are others just as qualified for the job besides Domenech who would most likely cost less.

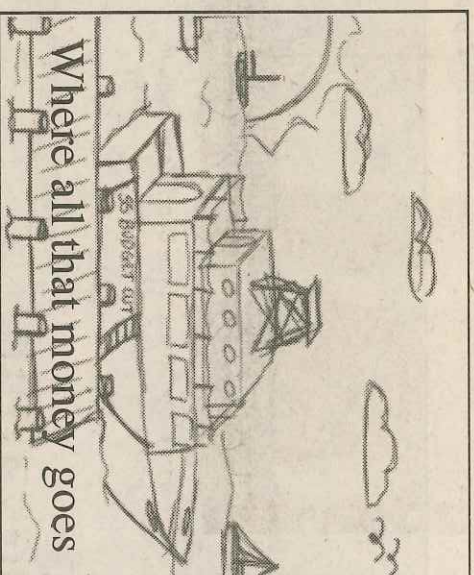
While Domenech gets his raise, however, teachers have been ignored by the overwhelmingly Democratic board. Where are the raises for the real employees of education, the teachers?

There are many other people who are just as qualified for Domenech's position besides him and if he truly felt attached to Fairfax County, he would not black mail the board into yet another raise.

The education budget in Virginia is in trouble due to the cuts that have been made to it as can be seen by students having to pay for their AP exams. This is not the time to give undeserved raises. Why should we waste what precious money we have on someone that can be easily replaced?

It is time to take a stand. It is time for the school board to realize that Domenech does not play an as important role for students as the teachers. As such, the wasted money going to Domenech's bonus should have been given to them.

The school board needs to stop squandering money and start to play by the rules. It is because of this wasteful spending that so many schools are facing budgetary problems.



Adam Buckley

Letter to the Editor Stories require research

Dear Editor,

I was quoted in *The Oracle* (December 9, 2002, page 7) as saying that there was a single, omnipotent deity in Wicca religion, but there are two. There is a god and a goddess.

I did not say that you could practice Wicca without studying. I said that you could study, but not practice, like myself. You can try to practice without studying, but doing so is ill advised. I told your interviewers to research Paganism and Wicca before asking people ignorant questions, and they did not do so.

Also, the "pentagram" is not the "national emblem of the Wicca religion" as quoted in the caption under the pentacle. This symbol is a very meaningful religious symbol.

I do not appreciate your writers referring to the oldest religion as "alternative", and "If it harms none do what you will" is not the motto of Wicca. Yet again, your writers did not look into what they were writing about. If you are going to give your writers any more stories to research, tell them to open a book, or stick to writing about "The New Shoes That We All Must Have."

Matt Griel

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SAGE marks school's first gay/straight alliance

Club educates student body on controversial topic

By Marianne Shaddrix

Managing Editor

We have all heard the story of Matthew Shepard, the 21-year-old college student who was tied to a fence in Laramie, Wyoming, pistol-whipped, then left for dead in the freezing night—all because he was gay.

Now students at WS are taking steps to make sure such a crime like this never happens again.

Senior Lianna Carrera recently formed the Straight and Gay Alliance (SAGE) to break down straight/gay barriers and offer support to those who feel isolated because of their sexual orientation.

Though SAGE is the first club at WS to support gay rights, this is not the first time that students have formed clubs dealing with more controversial issues.

In 1999 several students formed the Prisoners of Conscience club, advocating worldwide human rights. Though that club is not currently active at WS, it proved that even high school students can feel passionately about a particular social issue.

Some may believe that high school is not an appropriate place to discuss an issue like homosexuality, or that students lack the maturity to discuss such a personal and hotly debated subject.

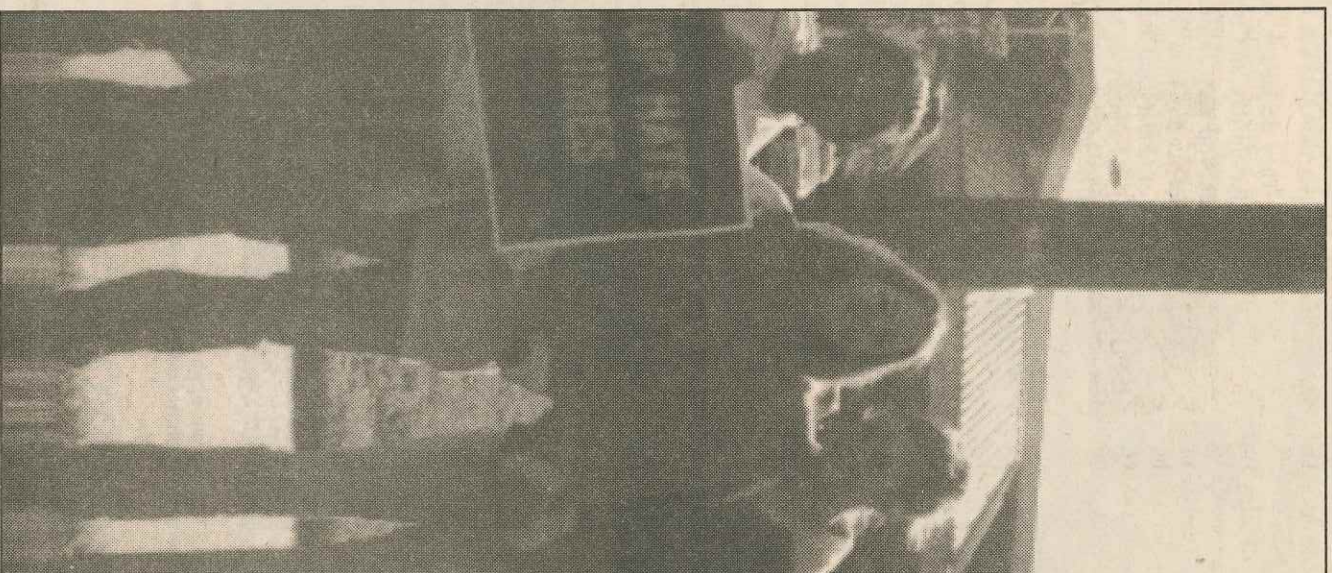
But the high school years are when beliefs on many different subjects, such as homosexuality, are formed and solidified. This makes high school the perfect place for people to try educating others about what homosexuality is, and more importantly, what it isn't.

One of SAGE's goals is to offer support to the gay population at WS. This is especially important since the suicide rate is high among teenagers, especially those who feel ostracized because of their sexual preferences.

In 1999, suicide was the third leading cause of death in 15-24 year-olds—11.4 of every 100,000 persons. For adolescents aged 15 to 19, there were 1,802 suicide deaths among 19,146,000 adolescents. These numbers cannot be ignored.

SAGE is not trying to promote homosexuality, turn you into a homosexual, or take away any of your beliefs.

They are simply trying to break the vicious cycle of homophobia and create a net of support for gay students. Maybe the members of SAGE will be able to prevent a student from becoming another Matthew Shepard.



Seniors Eileen Kim, Lauren Caprio, and Cathryn Broome show support for the gay community.

JD Kalleem

Clubs should not address these issues

By Rachael Wohlers

Inside Editor

The purpose of school clubs is to give students options for expanding on their academic courses, to provide opportunities for leadership and community, and to explore different interests, all within the safe and secure environment without disruption or distractions from the school's primary goal, the education of its students.

Clubs based on issues that divide society are not beneficial to the purpose of the school, and clubs that have a potential to disrupt a school are an unwise use of both school resources and students' time.

This club should stick to its original purpose. If students use it to crusade then we'd have to let other controversial groups in.

Why not have pro and con marijuana clubs? Or pro or con War with Iraq clubs? Or pro or con abortion clubs? WS has no other clubs based on controversial issues. There isn't even a Young Democrats or Young Republicans Club at WS.

Of course, students should respect other students and their individual rights. But that is not the issue; that philosophy is already taught in many forms and by many teachers at WS, including in health class.

There is no need for a separate club on sexual orientation or any of the many other issues that could divide students based on their personal views.

Fairfax County Public School Regulations recognize that the school environment should not be disrupted. Although students do have the right to freedom of expression, the regulations recognize that these rights have limits in high schools.

Issues are very diverse among adults in our country today, it is not appropriate for high school students to address them in the school environment. The Fairfax County School Board Policy itself states that it recognizes the legal rights of public school students "appropriate to their ages and levels of maturity."

Any club that is based on an issues that divides American society as a whole does not need to be addressed by high school students. Our goal in high school is to get the kind of education that will prepare us for higher education or entering the work force.

Indecisive policies mar US-Middle East relations

By Evan Anderson

Senior Staff Writer

The news filtered into America. It was not really a surprise, we knew it was coming somewhere. Yet another terrorist attack, this time in the city of Mombasa in Kenya. The targets of the two-pronged attack were Jewish vacationers, taking time off for Hanukkah.

The bombing of the Paradise Hotel succeeded. Fortunately, the far more deadly missile launcher attack on a commercial jet failed. It appears that those responsible for the attack are the members of Al-Itihaad, a Somali based group with close connections to Al Qaeda.

Weakened, but still strong. This seems to be the situation of terrorism all over the world. In the country where the red, white, and blue of the flag runs strong alongside the green and gold of profits, oil runs far thicker than blood, even if it is the blood of American boys.

throughout the Middle East.

Yet the ordinary citizen of these countries does not see the United States as the enemy, necessarily. Most Middle Easterners tend to look on the United States with a mixture of admiration and infatuation. The one greatest cause of this

infatuation is the hypocrisy of the United States in it's foreign policy.

The root of this evil is that three-letter word: oil. In the country where the red, white, and blue of the flag runs strong alongside the green and gold of profits, oil runs far thicker than blood, even if it is the blood of American boys.

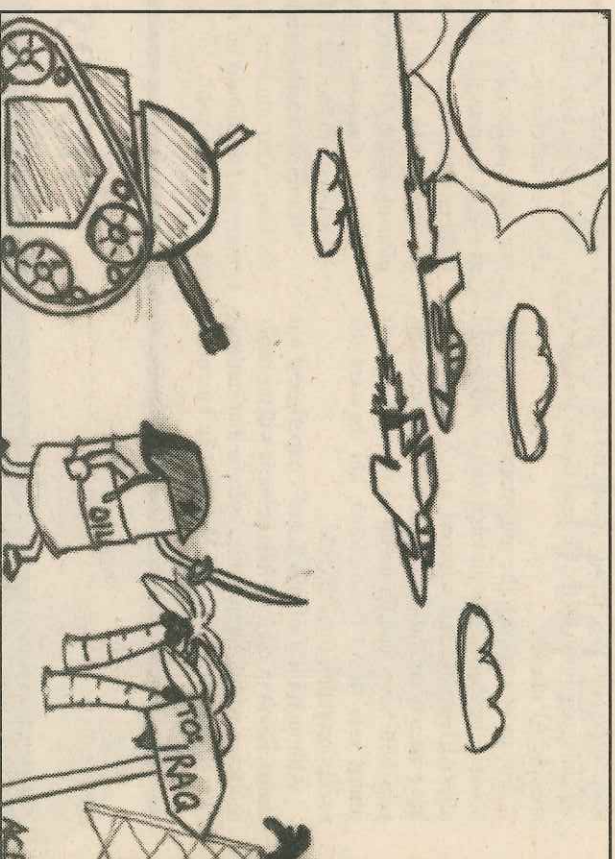
It was not so long ago when Saddam Hussein was a freedom fighter against the evil communist powers of the USSR and their puppet, Iran.

Securing US Oil interests in the area was not far behind defeating communism in the United State's priority list at that time.

And now comes news that many prominent Saudis may have inadvertently or purposely contributed to terrorist organizations. Amongst these is the Saudi Ambassador's wife, Princess Hafsa bint Faisal. Saudi Arabia holds one of the most oppressive regimes in the world, and now comes the news that they are funding terrorism.

I am not saying that we should have regime change in Saudi Arabia, but rest assured that if it had been Iraq who had been found contributing money to terrorist organizations, the tanks would already be rolling up into Baghdad.

Of course, oil is not always the motive behind Middle East conflict. Take Israel. It seems these days the United States is



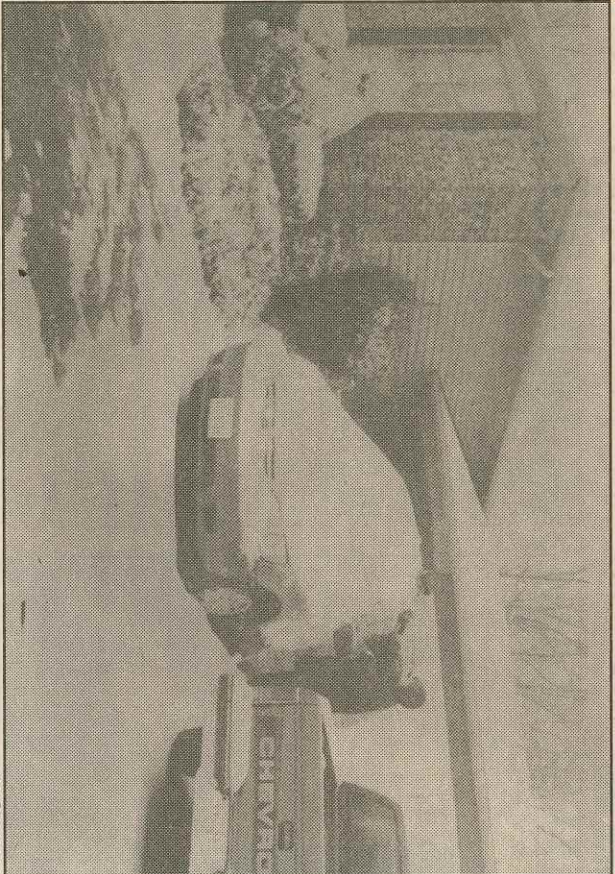
Adam Buckley

or die, and all the "true" Christians will go to heaven.

Switch a few words around and this could be a call for a jihad. Is this the doom of foreign policy under Bush II? To be ruled by oil and religious extremism? For the sake of America, I hope not.



The Middle East has been accustomed to many suicide attacks in the past years.



Jen Stomacco

Although many students spend their snow days having fun indoors or outdoors, others were burdened with chores such as cleaning the snow off their cars.

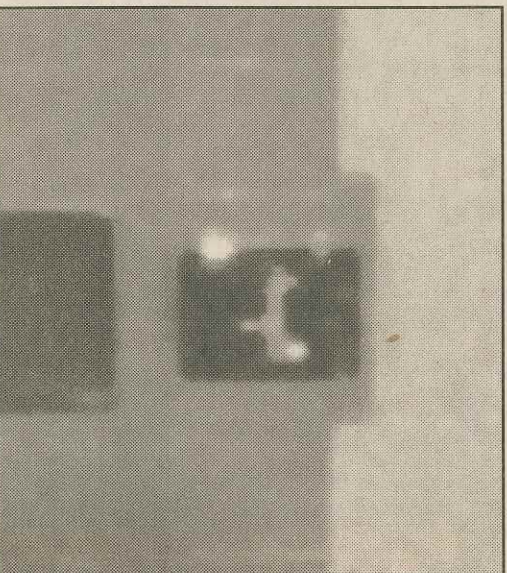
Custodian killed over holiday break

GALLOWAY, from page 1

2-year-old daughter. The staff has donated money to Galloway's family.

Although the gunman who killed Galloway has not been caught, two eyewitnesses have stepped forward. While the police look for more answers, colleagues and students will continue to remember and honor Galloway.

"I have had several kids come to me to express their condolences," said senior administrator Richard Griffin. "Charles was a polite, hard-working, family man. It was a pleasure to know him and to work with him."



Emily Morris

The fire marshal cameback after three weeks to approve of corrections made since his last visit.

School board changes make-up days

SNOW, from page 1

to end.

They decided to skip the fourth snow

"It's not fair because it's no our fault it snows," said Newman.

make-up day and make the next snow

Others, like sophomore George Davis, think it is fair.

make-up day January 30, a teacher

"It makes sense- you gotta make up the days you miss," said Davis.

inservice day. However, if it does not snow

So the future of the school year lies in the hands of the weather. The Farmers Almanac predicts wet snow for January 24-

all of January and then there's snow at the

27. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration says Northern Virginia should just expect rain.

end of February or March, make up days

Nonetheless of what is to come, students are grateful for those already past three snow days.

will be added on after June 22, the last day

"I really needed these snow days," said junior Lauren Frawley. "I got to get some sleep and hang out with my friends."

of school.

Inspection finds code violations

INSPECTION, from page 1

Principal David Smith thinks it is possible the school board could change the schedule, but some things are for certain.

overcrowded and the set breakdown from the fall play

"There's really nothing to say about it," said Aiken.

The fire marshal gave Aiken his list of violations and what needed to be done to fix them. Three weeks later he returned and approved of the corrections that the staff and administration made.

Smith said, "[The inspection] is a good system and it's purpose is to keep us safe."

AP Diploma program ended

AP DIPLOMA, from page 1

discussing alternatives for next year.

Fairfax County and Mecklenburg County in

The end of the diploma doesn't mean WS failed.

North Carolina were pilot school systems for the

"The number of students getting the diploma has expanded, and certain groups of outstanding students have been very successful," said guidance

stop giving the diploma. This doesn't mean an end

coordinator Eleanor Saslaw.

to AP classes at WS, it only means no one will get

The school and student body will likely feel no effects of the change, especially if the school board

special recognition by the College Board for taking

just replaces the AP diploma, which was intended

specific AP classes.

as a goal to meet for students in AP schools. The

For most students, the important part of AP is

College Board was testing to determine if it was

being in the classes. The diploma isn't awarded until

an appropriate award for students reaching the

after AP test scores are returned, which is after most

Even without the diploma, WS will have the

have been accepted to college. Two students this

AP program to provide higher level classes.

year will have enough credit at the end of their

"It's important that students have options," said

junior year to get the diploma, but they are the

Saslaw. "Our students have a wide variety of

exception rather than the rule.

interests and should be able to pursue whatever

Although the College Board's experiment has

dreams they have."

ended, Fairfax County Public Schools will probably

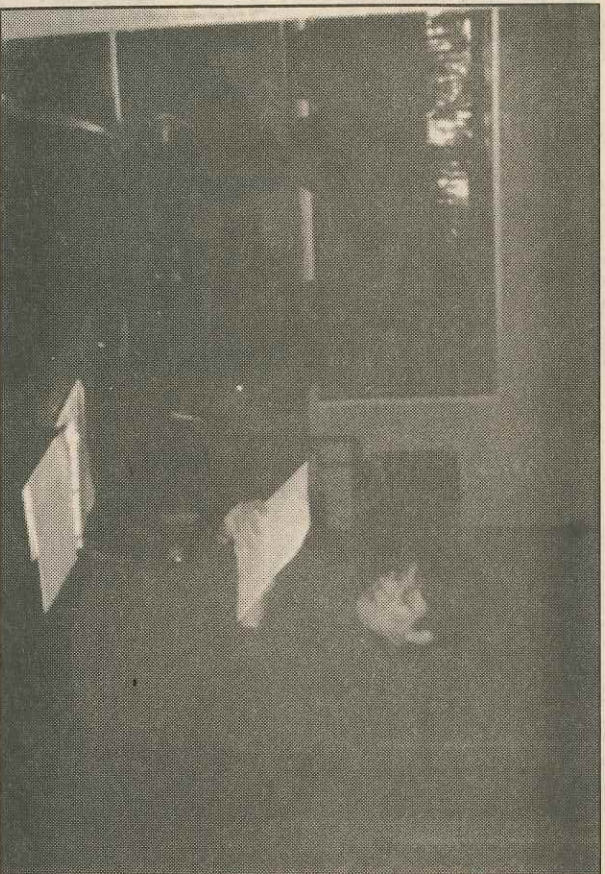
Students who take five or more AP classes next year will not be

replace it with a comparable diploma that students

able to receive an AP Diploma.

can strive for. The school board is currently

Photos of the Issue



Brooke Nelson

Special Education teacher Nancy Brown looks for a place in the school to which she could take her students in the dark during the power outage January 7. In addition to WS, Cardinal Forrest Elementary School lost electricity that day as well.



Brooke Nelson

The hallways and classrooms during the power outage were dark except for the emergency lights that came on that are run by generators. The power outage was from 9:05 AM to 9:36 AM because one of the main switches at Virginia Power went out.

Forms returned minus controversy New incentives employed to encourage on-time returns

By Eugenie Ko
Senior Staff Writer

The annual push began last December when the federal survey forms came out.

Like every year, the required federal survey forms were distributed to students in the hopes that they would be returned in a timely fashion.

The forms are essential for federal dollars that the

county receives for military families that don't have residency in Fairfax County and for federal property in the county. This reimbursement is important for the County's budget.

This year, math teacher Rob Benton headed the federal survey form effort. He, along with other staff members, came up with incentives aimed at encouraging students to return their forms. Dr. Smith arranged for pizza parties for the 5th period classes with the highest percentage of forms turned in by December 13th. The activities office provided for two classes to win basketball tickets to any home game this season.

Whether these rewards were enticing enough to get students to bring their forms in on time were determined in the following weeks.

For some students, the prizes offered were enough to put in the little extra effort to turn in the forms on time.

"Dr. Deu's speech about the pizza party really motivated me to turn in my form," said sophomore Danny Tinsley.

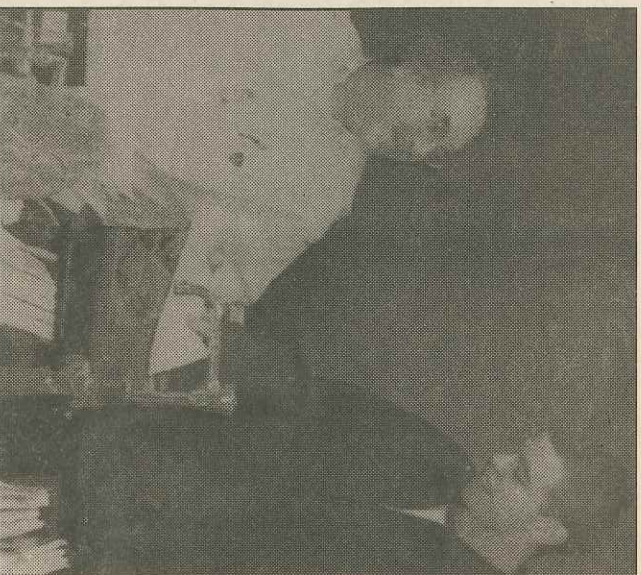
Benton hoped that the rewards weren't the only thing to promote returning the forms on time.

"We'd like to think the teachers are encouraging too," said Benton.

The forms were due to the county by December 20th. In years past, however, WS has not been able to meet the deadline. This tardiness is nothing unusual. Many schools in the area have trouble making the deadline.

"It's harder for bigger schools like ours to get everything in on time because there are so many more students," said Benton.

If WS wasn't able to get all of the forms back, time will have to be spent writing multiple explanations to send to the county. The bigger loss is the federal money Fairfax County will be deprived of.



Kathleen Prevost

Senior Charlie Beekman turns in his federal form to AP Environmental Science teacher Mark Blanchard to give his class a chance to win the pizza party.

are you just crossing your fingers,
hoping you'll be accepted?

**HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET FEEDBACK ON YOUR
COLLEGE APPLICATION FROM AN EXPERIENCED
ADMISSIONS PROFESSIONAL BEFORE YOU SUBMIT IT?**

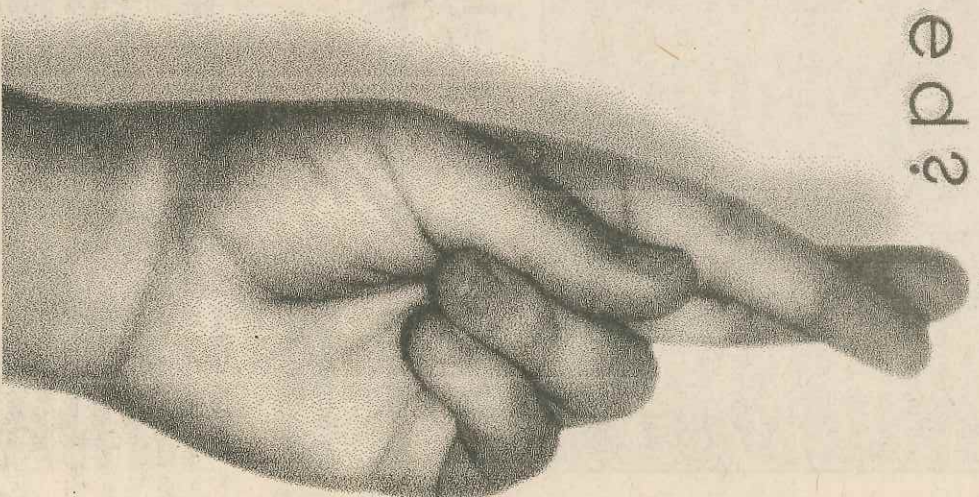
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FEEDBACK



The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce named guidance counselor Carol Belkin the winner of the Public Service Award in recognition of her "accomplishments and contributions to our community."

Geosystems teacher Mark Blanchard was a major contributor to the Great Outdoors, Digital Indooors project. The project brings experimental science and technology together in a way that allows teachers and students to use both in the classroom.

News Bites

The Drexel University High School Photo Contest 2002 results were put on display in Philadelphia on January 4. Out of 985 students and over 2500 photographs, junior Susan Sommerfeldt was awarded one of two honorable mentions for her photo "Distortion."

The WS publications have received recognition by the Virginia High School League Publication Competition. Both *The Oracle & Symposium* (newspaper and literary magazine) have won Trophy Class status, the highest honor possible. The Olympian (yearbook) earned First Place recognition. Congratulations to the students who staff these fine publications and their sponsors Brooke Nelson (newspaper and yearbook) and Trisha Kettler (literary magazine).

—Compiled by Joe Ringwood

features

Students get crazy for snow

Students perform certain "rituals" to greaten the chance of snow and school cancellations

By Lauren Kondo
News Section Assistant

All of the hoping and praying finally paid off. On December 5, 6 and 11, the snow and ice came. So why did it snow? There are a number of reasons.

"I flushed three ice cubes down the toilet," said junior Reetika Sethi. "And every time I flushed one I said, 'Let it snow!'"

Everyone has a unique snow ritual. The day before an expected snowstorm students are busy with their methods.

For most, these rituals entail wearing pajamas inside out. Junior Holly Harben does this with her own flair.

"I put on my special red plaid pants backwards and inside out," said Harben. "Then I throw ice over my back outside. However many inches of snow I want I throw that many ice cubes."

Latin teacher Kathy Jarvis got her classes involved in hoping for snow. All Latin students, including hers at Irving participated in these annual festivities.

It begins by finding the north corner. Next, four flakes are chosen and the special purple one stands in the north corner. The rest of the students next stand in a circle. The student with the coldest hands stands next to Jarvis.

"Sometimes they put their hands out the window to make their hands colder," said Jarvis.

The next step involves the chanting of the Latin word *nirngat*, which means "let it snow." "This chanting is repeated three times clockwise, three counterclockwise, in the center three times, and finally out of the center three times. Then the students have to go

home and wear their pajamas backwards.

"They have to have their heart and soul in it," said Jarvis. "If they think it's full of baloney it won't work."

Jarvis's rituals have become somewhat of a legend in the school.

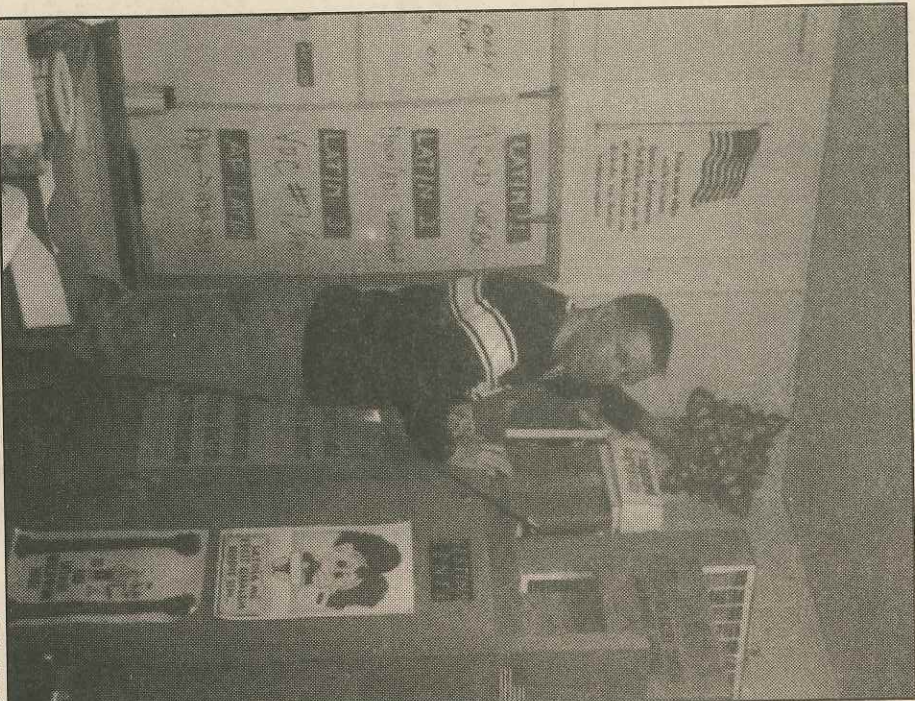
"The teachers come by asking if my classes have done it," said Jarvis.

These have even spread beyond the state. Using the internet to communicate with other Latin teachers, the Jarvis rituals have been repeated in other classrooms over the country.

"Another teacher did it and five minutes later it was snowing in Atlanta, where it never snows," said Jarvis.

So do these methods work? Sethi seems to think so.

"Of course (it did), we did have the days off!"



Emily Morris

Kyle Rogers, a junior in Kathy Jarvis' Latin class, performs "ningat," the Latin word for "let it snow". Students carry a purple snowflake to all four corners of the classroom, wishing for a snowfall.

Students participate in helping homeless

By Emily Miller
Weekend Editor

There are more than 25,000 homeless people in the metropolitan area, and WS is doing something about it. This holiday season, Spartans are helping by volunteering in soup kitchens and food banks.

On January 20, junior Katie Phillips will travel for the second year with her church youth group to Baltimore. Last year she organized library book for kids and sorted donated food.

"I think it's our responsibility to give back to the community," said Phillips.

Martha's Table is a nonprofit organization dedicated to feeding the homeless since 1980. Volunteers serve 1200 people every day through mobile soup kitchens called McKenna's Wagon. Freshman Jenny Hodge is one the 4000 volunteers who helps by making and

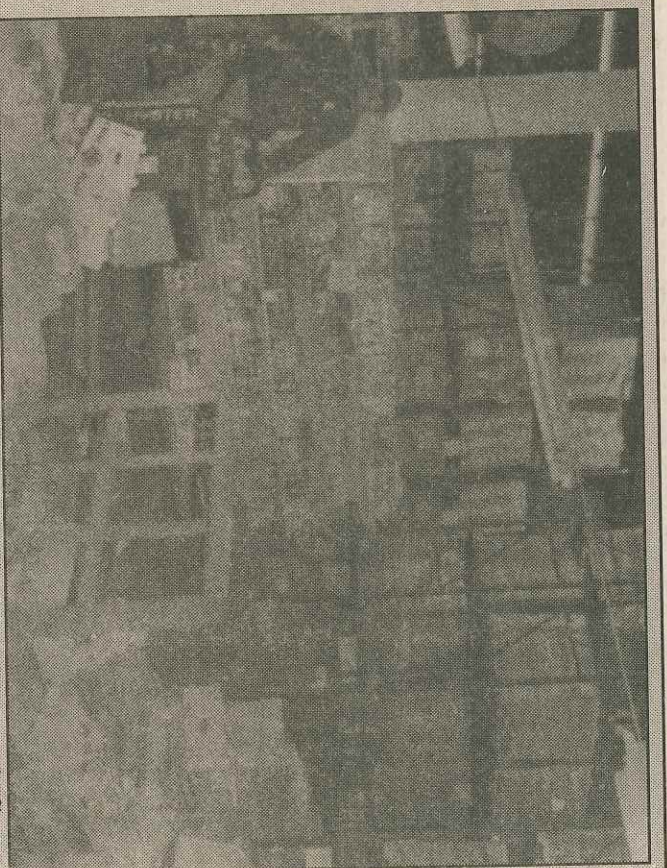
serving sandwiches. "You get really messy when you're cutting and slicing stuff, but it's a lot of fun," said Hodge.

A convenient soup kitchen where students can volunteer is Christ House, located in Alexandria. Unlike most other soup kitchens, Christ House offers health services as well as food. Junior Maria Lee volunteers there during the holiday season.

"You serve people and then you feel good. It's very fulfilling," said Lee.

Junior Katie Baker and her family buys gifts for children of low-income families and puts them under a tree in her church. This program is known as Adopt-a-Family and WS students are also partaking in it, minus the church aspect.

Through Echo, 20 local families will receive presents they couldn't otherwise afford. Faculty member Allison Kopkan took the initiative in this program and is in charge of donations.



Jen Simaroco

A worker in Northeast DC stocks supplies in a food bank, used to store food for soup kitchens. This past December, President Bush came to help out at this food bank.

"The faculty has responded exactly as you would predict, full of enthusiasm and drive to make a difference," said Kopkan. Clubs are adopting families too. The French Club is using all the money made from cafes and Spartan Fest for this project.

"We make a lot of money and it's a good way for us to spend money that we make

throughout the year," said French Club sponsor Laura Bruckmann.

Classes are also enjoying giving for a good cause, like AP Psychology.

"My psych class has taken a family of eight people," said junior Sarah Tate. "I'm going out to buy food and clothes for them."

Creative relaxation techniques settle stress

Candles, classical music, and yoga books help students to sit back and relax

By Eugenie Ko
Senior Staff Writer

Tests, homework, friends, family; with so many things to worry about it's obvious why students find themselves overwhelmed with stress.

While a trip to the local day spa or an hour long massage can be a tad on the expensive side, many students engage in their own personalized methods of unwinding. These methods prove to be even more relaxing, and much less the price.

Scented candles are a favorite among teenagers for a cheap and simple way to set a mellow atmosphere.

"I love to light candles and listen to classical music while I do homework," said senior Betty Soltani. "The candles set up a nice mood and the classical music is great because it's not distracting; it doesn't make you want to sing along like the radio can."

While some enjoy the sheer ambiance of a candle-lit room, others are attracted to the relaxing aroma produced.

"I like the Yankee Candles that smell like Christmas cookies," said sophomore Sarah Mackie. "It makes the whole house smell good."

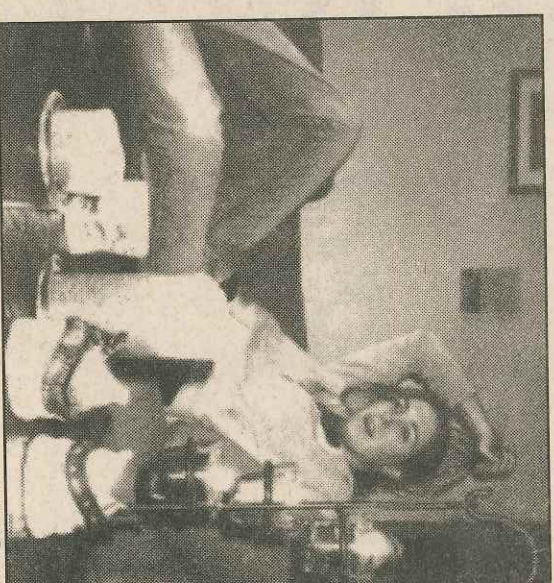
And for some students, the comfort of another is relaxing enough in itself.

"When I'm stressed out I hug my raccoon stuffed animal," said freshman Kim Evans. "It really relaxes me."

When a relaxing atmosphere or a cuddly companion just aren't enough, physical activity can be the answer. Some students find kick boxing classes to be an excellent outlet to release any pent up frustration and relax the mind. Fairfax County offers many classes at local recreation centers. Information can be found in *Parktakes* magazine. Yoga classes are also available and provide a more calming activity. Both classes cost around \$60 for about 8 sessions.

Busy students, however, may find it difficult to incorporate time for such a time consuming activity.

"I have a Yoga book that looks like it'd be really relaxing," said senior Anna Kapuscinski. "I just need to find the time to use it."



Kathleen Prevost

Senior Megan Carter uses a metal octopus to scratch her head while relaxing in a room full of candles.

Winter weather pours down sickness and disease at WSS

Sniffing, sneezing students invade halls

By Priyanka Tandon
Oracle Editor

has a fever over 100, they can't be in school."
Besides fatigue, missing

Smiling, laughing and energetic students walk the halls only to be transformed into sniffing, sneezing, drowsy, aching and coughing students every winter.
"I always end up getting sick," said senior Maureen Greenlee. "Colds just drain all my energy, and I don't feel like I can do anything."

According to school nurse Nancy Albright, cold season starts in early November and runs through the end of February.
"Cold viruses are everywhere," said Albright. "People just need to drink lots of fluids, and get proper nutrition and rest."

The clinic often treats students who come in with headaches, body aches and those who just are not feeling well.
"We seldom get anyone with a fever," said Albright. "If a student

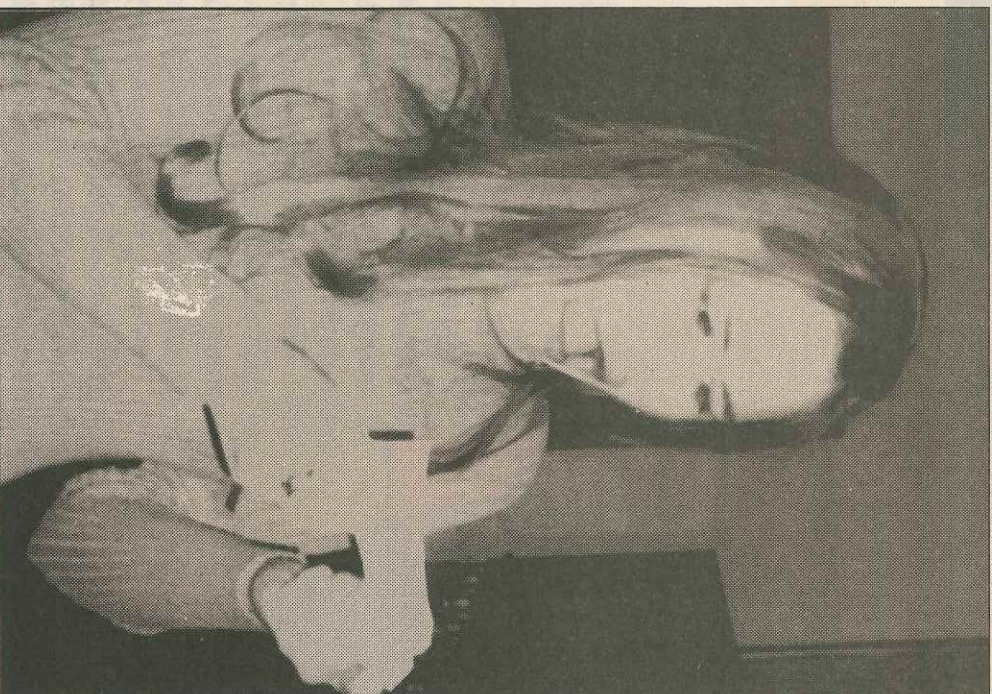


school can be a big burden on students when they get sick.
"I was sick three days this year, and that was a long time

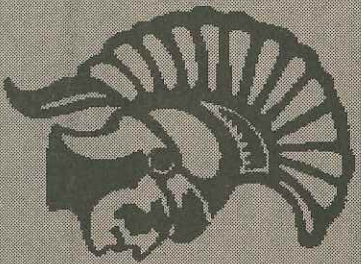
ago," said sophomore Christine Harty. "But I am still behind. I missed a lot of teaching and note-taking."
Although make-up work can be troublesome, some students believe being healthy should take priority.
"I just sit on the couch and eat toast," said freshman Leandra Darden. "Then I just call people up and ask them for the homework, and if I need any help they help me."

Being sick affects more than just the person who is sick.
"I really don't like it when people sit in class and just sniff and sniff, and don't get up to blow their nose," said senior Eileen Kim.

Colds can be a problem, but some students think that it's just another part of life to take into stride.
"You can't really escape it," said junior Brittany Marchant. "I bring out the sweatpants and they make me feel comfortable."



Junior Sara Holcomb stands disgusted after blowing her nose. This winter, coughs, fevers and virii like the flu and strep throat struck students.



Spartan Profiles



Kelly Schloesser

By Erika Kim
News Section Editor

It's hard to move just once. But what's harder is having to move 12 times. Junior Kelly Schloesser takes pride in being an "army brat" and in already having moved from one place to another more times than most people would move in a lifetime.

"The thing I like most about moving so much is the traveling," said Schloesser. "You get to see the world in a lot of different ways."

Schloesser's father is a general in the army, which is why her family moves so much. As her dad is stationed from one place to another, her family follows him.

Schloesser has lived in Springfield for a year and a half. Not only has she moved all around the US, but all around the world. Some unique countries in which she has lived include Kuwait and Germany.

"I liked Germany the best because you get more freedom as a teenager," said Schloesser. "They have more respect for younger people."

"It's hard because you lose a lot of friends, but you know who your true friends are."
—Kelly Schloesser

The most difficult place Schloesser had to live was Kuwait, an Arab and Islamic nation, where a lot of tension exists. Even though she attended an American school where English was spoken, the school required Schloesser to take an Arabic course.

Although it's difficult to move to any school district, moving to Fairfax County



Adam Buckley

As a student from a military family, junior Kelly Schloesser has lived all over the US and in Kuwait and Germany. She enjoys traveling and has learned languages such as German and Arabic.

Schloesser, the different grading scale and the various credits needed were some of the problems that she faced. Because school systems in different areas of the US and the world have different requirements, Schloesser didn't meet some of the standards required in Fairfax County.

"I'm taking classes like Algebra 2 and PE even though I'm a junior because I have to pass the SOLs and I need the credits to graduate," said Schloesser. "But they're really good about transferring my credits."

Schloesser usually doesn't know when and where to move until about two weeks before she has to pack up and leave.

"It's hard because you lose a lot of friends, but you know who your true friends are," said Schloesser. "IM is the best way to keep in touch with them."

Even though there are many negative aspects to moving around often, Schloesser looks at the positive side.

"I would want my kids to have the same experience," said Schloesser. "You just learn so much."

Oktawian Otlewski

By Heidi Stillgo
Features Editor

He's just like any other teenager, but a little more Polish.

Sophomore Oktawian Otlewski, was born in Bydgoszcz, Poland in 1987. His father had already moved to the US to prepare for his family. Two-and-a-half years later, Otlewski and his mother joined his father, who, at that time, was working and living in Maryland.

Although Otlewski occasionally visits his relatives living in Poland, he prefers his current home.

"I like it better here," said Otlewski. "It's really poor over there and the economy isn't doing that great."

Polish was Otlewski's first language. He did not start speaking English until he was enrolled in preschool. Although he now speaks perfect English, he continues to speak Polish at home with his parents.

"When I started going to preschool I didn't know any English. Then I began



Adam Buckley

Sophomore Oktawian Otlewski, born in Poland, is fluent in Polish and still celebrates his culture in his everyday life. He has well-adapted to American life and enjoys common American teenage activities.

"My friends tease me because of my name and because I'm Polish. I don't care, though. They can have as much fun with it as they want."
—Oktawian Otlewski

"I love Polish food," said Otlewski. "If I had to choose between that and McDonald's, I'd definitely pick the Polish food."

On the outside, Otlewski is just an ordinary American teenager. He goes skiing and snowboarding, skateboards from time to time and loves playing soccer. His favorite bands are Green Day, Pink Floyd, and Millinquin. He preters Coke over Pepsi and on the weekends he likes to chill with his friends, despite the Polish jokes.

"My friends tease me because of my name and because I'm Polish," said Otlewski. "I don't care, though. They can have as much fun with it as they want."

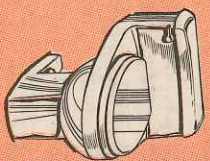
Although he enjoys everything about his life in America, he does have one regret.
"I just wish I had an accent," said Otlewski. "That would be cool."

January

- 1 - Get a Life Day - Make it the number one New Year's resolution.
 21 - National Hugging Day - No longer is it necessary to find an excuse to hug someone.
 On this day, feel free to walk right up to that person, give them a hug, and wish them "Happy National Hugging Day."

27 - Bubble Wrap Appreciation Day - It's fun to pop the tiny bubbles and it's a great way to spend a boring afternoon.

27 - Thomas Crapper Day - Be very thankful Thomas the man invented the weren't for houses would still be popular.



on this day, Crapper was who in-toilet. If it him, out-

Wack

BY

There are set holidays such as Easter and Halloween, but little attention is paid to the many wacky holidays that take place every month.

Few people know that these random holidays exist. Even I had no idea there were so many until I started researching. It is amazing the crazy things people celebrate.

To most, it is a mystery as to how a holiday becomes a holiday. Believe it or not, there is no Santa Claus or Easter Bunny to invent them. The actual creators of these holidays are real people.

It's something to think about. What if I wanted a holiday, a day dedicated to me. How would I go about making it?

Most holidays are based on significant events and people that are often learned about in textbooks - Martin Luther King Day for example. Others are based on religious celebrations. You may have heard of Christmas, a

February

- 4 - Dump Your Significant Other Day - If you day, you can celebrate on the 11th.
 6 - Pay a Compliment Day - Say something nice about all the people you see.
 11 - Satisfied Staying Single Day - It's getting close to Valentine's Day, so for those without a significant other, there's still a reason to celebrate.
 14 - Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Day - More than one type of heart condition is honored on this day.

March

- 4 - International Pancake Day - It's the an IHOP near you.
 5 - Learn What Your Name Means Day - You never know what your name could mean. Maybe it fits you; maybe it doesn't.
 16 - Lips Appreciation Day - Pucker up!
 31 - Bunsen Burner Day - It's an excuse to play with fire.



perfect day to visit

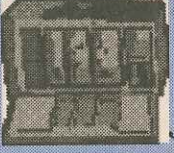


April

- 10 - National Sibling Day - A day to acknowledge siblings, not to appreciate them. That day is May 2.
 12 - National Teens Against Zits Day - Break out the acne wash.
 14 - International Moment of Laughter Day - Can you laugh in different languages? **HA!**
 17 - Blah Blah Blah Day - Blah.

May

- 1 - School Principals' Day - Feel free to tell Dr. Smith what a great guy he is.
 6 - No Homework Day - Teachers most likely don't recognize this day.
 11 - Eat What You Want Day - Be careful, it may become a habit.
 21 - I need A Patch For That Day - What don't they have a patch for now?



July

- 2 - I Forgot Day - um....
 4 - Independence From Meat For all those vegetable lovers out there
 19 - Cow Appreciation Day - out cows, no celebrate
 20th.
 20 - National Ice Cream Day - 31 flavors at Baskin Robbins.



Holidays

popular holiday.

Some holidays were formed by public interest. There was no religious background or world-changing event responsible for starting Mothers' Day. In fact, a woman by the name of Anna Jarvis first started Mothers' Day on the second anniversary of her own mother's death. Ever since, it has spread to be a day to honor all mothers.

Holidays are trends. One person starts recognizing a certain day and their actions spread. More and more people begin to join in and soon enough, everyone knows. Eventually, the holiday is taken to professional organizations to have it officially recognized.

I think it's a great idea that the public comes together to celebrate a common idea. In fact, I'd like to declare my own holiday. Maybe "Emily Appreciation Day." I can see it now.

— Emily Sommerfeldt, *Inside Story* Editor

June

- 6 - Donut Day - Sounds like a great day to have a party in every class.
- 13 - Blame Someone Else Day - It's never your fault is it?
- 17 - Stewarts Root Beer Day - You can visit Stewarts restaurant in Pennsylvania.
- 20 - Take Your Dog to Work Day - Now there is an excuse for man to work alongside his best friend.



is an excuse
work along-
friend.

August

- 1 - Hug a Senior Day - Not a high school senior. Hug that friendly lady down the street.
- 16 - Watermelon Day - Have a seed spitting contest.
- 18 - Stay Home with Your Kids Day - Quality family time. Wooahoo.
- 28 - Race Your Mouse Around the Icons Day - Whoever came up this holiday needs to celebrate the wacky holiday from January 1st.

Day -
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September

- 3 - Do It! Day - Fight procrastination.
- 5 - Be Late For Something Day - Explain this to your teacher when they count you as tardy.
- 13 - Fortune Cookie Day - Everyone go get Chinese food. You will meet an attractive stranger at the restaurant.
- 22 - Hobbit Day- Watch Elijah Wood in Lord of the Rings.



Happy

New

Year!!

2003

October

- 3 - Lee's National Denim Day - Wear only Lee clothing.
- 8 - National Bring Your Teddy Bear to School Day - Come in your pajamas too. And bunny slippers.
- 11 - National School Celebration Day - The only way to celebrate this is by skipping.
- 25 - Cartoonists Against Crime Day- Who came up with this? Don't cartoonists draw crime?



November

- 2 - Plan Your Epitaph Day - Write something good for your tombstone. And remember, only the good die young.
- 16 - Eighteenth Century Threshing Day - We don't understand this either, don't worry.
- 28 - Sink Day - The day a Thanksgiving when you and eat leftover the sink one feels like making a big meal.
- 30 - Stay Home Because You're Well Day - There shouldn't be a set day for this.



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because no

December

- 5 - Bathrub Party Day - Don't get too naughty now.
- 6 - National Pawnbroker's Day - Everyone go pawn something!
- 15 - Bill of Rights Day- Bust out the history book.
- 31 - Make Up Your Mind Day - What are you going to do to celebrate this? Make up your mind!



Mariah Carey returns to spotlight

By JD Kaleem
Features Editor

After an 18-month long vacation for an emotional and physical breakdown and being dumped by her record company, Mariah Carey is back.

Charmed with a new chart-topping album and single, as well as a frenzied media blitz, Carey made appearances on *The Today Show*, *Dateline* and *The Oprah Winfrey Show* to promote her new release.

Her new album, "Charmbracelet," shot up to the number three slot in its first week on the Billboard Top 200. The first single off the album, "Through the Rain," was the 17th most played video during the week of December 2 on MTV.

Even though her album and single appear at the top of the charts, students discount her comeback.

"She thinks she has a singing career, but she seriously has nothing going for her. She can't get by on looks alone," said sophomore Pezey Adams. "I think a hick with a banjo sounds better."

After her hiatus, Carey still holds the title of an early

diva of the pop and hip-hop industry, having gone multi-platinum and being revered for her vocal talent.

"I like her old music from the 90s, but she became such a pop star and started being less original," said sophomore Elizabeth Cole. "She changed her style of music and sounds like everybody else now."

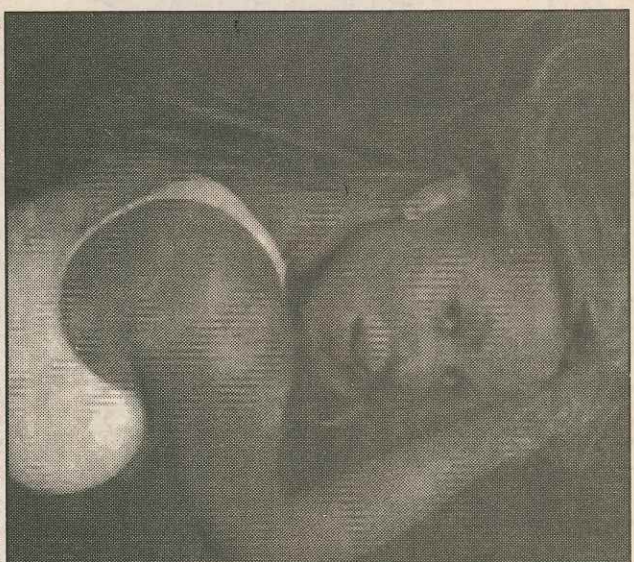
Universal Music, Carey's record label, has sold two million copies of "Charmbracelet" worldwide. Nonetheless, Carey's early success doesn't guarantee a sunny future.

"I think it's awesome that she's coming back. I'm definitely going to buy her album. She need to stick to music, not movies, but she's a great singer," said senior Ashlie Reese. "I think the comeback will last shortly, but she won't be able to go on forever."

Usually singers like Carey don't have a large male fan base, although there are some at WS who appreciate her talent.

"She can sing in a lot of octaves and has a nice voice," said sophomore Dan Buckley.

As "Charmbracelet" continues to climb the charts and new singles are released, Carey's comeback will be on the line.



Div Mar iah Carey was hospitalized last year for exhaustion after the failure of her debut movie "Glitter."

"She may be a nutcase and she may have emotional problems," said senior Lianna Carrera, "but the girl can sing like a butterfly."

Band members dump groups for solo career

By Ruchika Malhotra

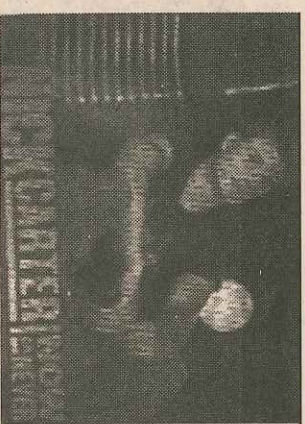
Managing Editor

From boy-bands to girl groups, artists are leaving their roots and their band mates behind to pursue solo careers.

The Beatles, the Fugees, and the New Kids on the Block have all had band members branch off from the hit group. Currently, Nick Lachey is branching off from 98 degrees. His new album has a rock/soul feel, and he hopes to release it early 2003.

Another boy-band baby growing up to go solo is Nick Carter of the Backstreet Boys. In Carter's debut solo album "Now or Never," which was released October

2002, he left behind his bubble-gum Backstreet Boys pop songs for a more 80s



pop-rock sound.

"He's acting too different," said senior Lindsey Waters. "He's trying too hard to

be different and look like he's got a new edge."

One more artist branching off from his boy-band mates is NSync's JC Chasenz. If he's happy with his upcoming work in the studio, then fans can expect a solo album in a year.

Another artist coming off from NSync is Justin Timberlake. His solo album "Justified", which hit stores November 2002, is a racy, experimental dance album influenced by rap and 70s R&B. When band members of a hit award winning group go solo, fans get upset.

"I hate them because they're being very mean to their friends who brought them to

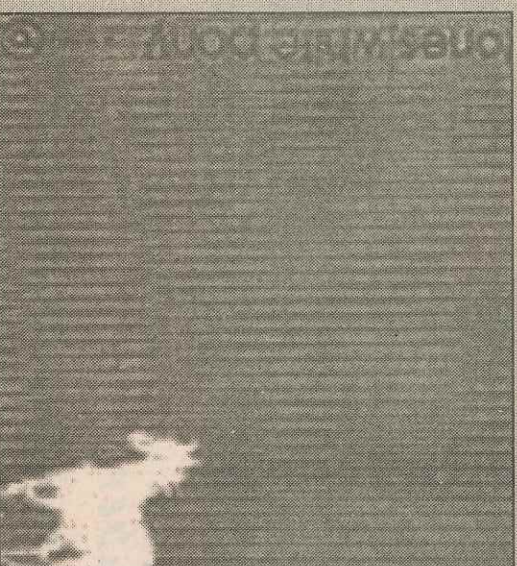
the top," said junior Kathleen Hidalgo. "Justin Timberlake is a terrible man."

Others believe members pursuing a solo career are being more than unappreciative. Not all students disapprove of solo projects, especially if that person was their favorite band member to begin with.

"I think it's better that they're doing their own thing now," said sophomore Marcela Leon. "He [Carter] can stay and do a solo career at the same time."

Whether students care or not about artists' solo projects, the attitude towards a band and solo careers remains the same. "The whole point of having a band," said Blau. "is to stay together."

Deftones 'White Pony'



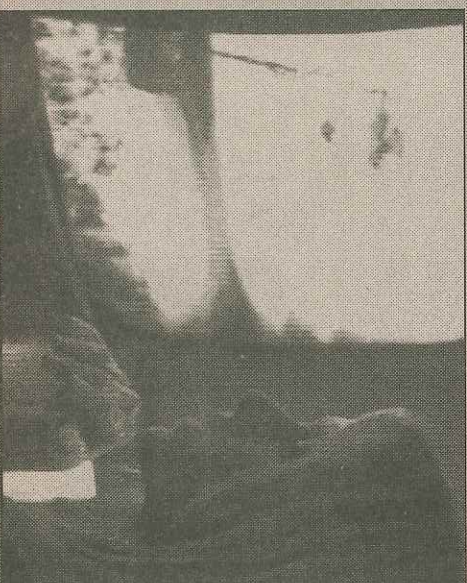
"White Pony" is the third album Deftones have released since their debut "Adrenaline." The album titles show how the band has evolved over the years. "Adrenaline" is filled with heavy music and intense vocals, hence the titles, and on this album calm beats and vocals personify the name "White Pony."

The sounds of "White Pony" commence with the song "Fetters." After "Fetters," lead singer Chino Moreno's vocals transition to a more soothing tone in "Digital Bath." Deftones bassist describes Moreno's lyrics as being "...like a good painting or a good book. I never ask Chino what something means, I want to know what it means to me."

The album features Maynard Keenan from Tool. Keenan co-wrote and sang "Passenger" with Moreno, and together they created a song that's passionate vocals describe a passionate joy ride.

The album's dimensions are immeasurable with many highs and lows.

Oracle Picks



'The Ring'

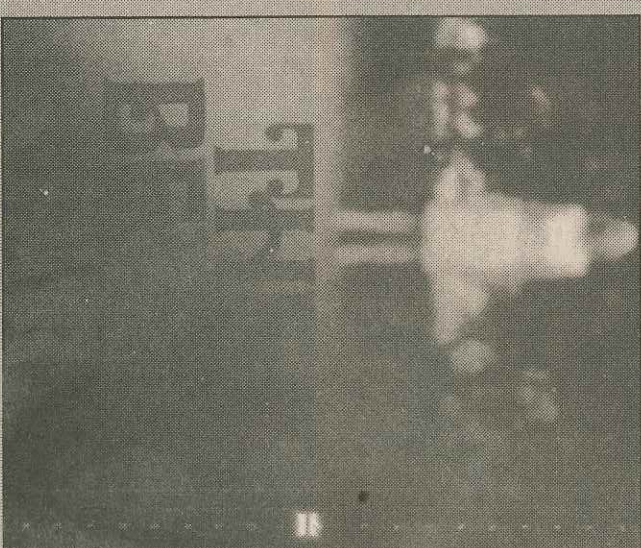
Naomi Watts plays a reporter in the sinister thriller "The Ring," where watching a videotape could abruptly put an end your life in seven days.

Rachel Keller (Watts) takes interest in the lethal tape when her niece's disturbing death cannot be explained. A few of her niece's friends mention the tape and eventually Kelly discovers it in a cottage where her niece had stayed prior to her death. Undaunted by the story behind the videotape, she watches it and finds herself in the midst of a disturbing mystery she must unfold to save herself and the people she loves.

"The Ring" is unique in its category of scary movies because it's not about a gory insane killer; it instead involves a complex story that keeps you enthralled until the last minute.

People in the theaters screamed and jumped together as the plot thickened and their fear escalated.

'The Bell Jar' by Sylvia Plath



Sylvia Plath, who killed herself in 1963, wrote "The Bell Jar," lightly basing it on her own experiences as a young adult.

The book tells a fictional story about a successful college student, Esther Greenwood, whose life seems like it holds endless opportunities and possibilities. After a job in New York, she comes to find she has not been accepted into an elite writing class she had applied for and is bound to live at home for the summer. Over the dull summer, her thoughts fill with suicide. Her gift of writing is lost along with her sleep.

The book allows you to experience and understand her sullen world. The reader follows Esther before, during, and after her breakdown.

Plath's vivid writing enraptures readers in a tragic story of depression.

—Compiled by Camilla Casillas

HBO offers original entertainment

By Jenn Carlson
Managing Editor

offers which deal with topics such as sex, mafia activities and rival mobs.

The wildly popular "Sex and the City" starring Sarah Jessica Parker and award-winning actress Kim Cattrall, usually airing later at night, follows the life of four professional women through the trials and tribulations of love and lust in Manhattan.

Shows like "Sex and the City" and "The Sopranos" are award-winning programming that HBO

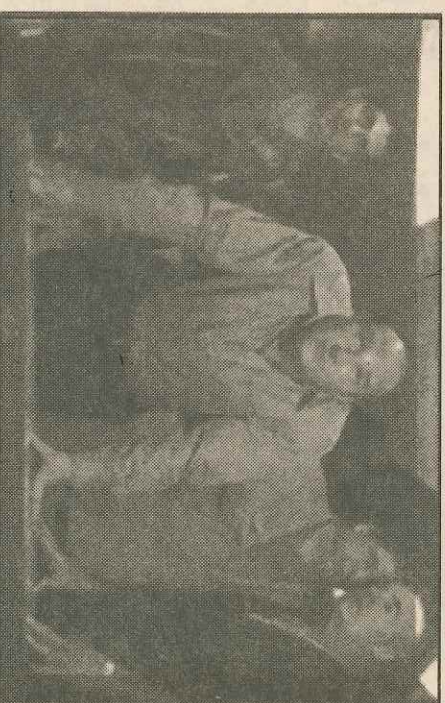
relationships and men with her three best friends Miranda, a successful lawyer, Charlotte, an art dealer and Samantha, a sassy PR person.

The hilarious analysis of their dysfunctional relationships often keep viewers coming back for more, and are weekly the topics of Carrie's column for all of Manhattan.

"It's amusing," said senior Angie Arbia. "I can relate to 'Sex and the City' because it reminds me of WS. Watching the show is the highlight of my day."

Much of the content presented in "Sex and the City" might be too much for public airing, and so HBO is an acceptable option for those who would like to view the show.

"The Sopranos" is another popular program choice of WS students. Set in New Jersey, the show centers around an Italian mob boss, Tony Soprano, played by James Gandolfini and his two



Tony and his other family discuss "business." Dramatic, violent, and often funny, "The Sopranos" draws a large audience.

"I am upset with the finale of 'The Sopranos,'" said senior Brandon Ferraro. "I need closure."

The show will begin production for its fifth and perhaps last season in January when the show will continue following Tony, his wife Carmela and the rest of the cast.

Said senior Derrick Deese, "There needs to be a Tony Soprano in every city."



"Sex and the City" stars Sarah Jessica Parker and actress Kim Cattrall. The show follows the love lives of four Manhattan women.

Band names range from the mundane to the entertaining Clever names bring a laugh or at least raise an eyebrow before listening to music

By Leigh Johnson
Senior Staff Writer

The Dave Matthews Band may be able to fill stadiums with thousands of die-hard fans, but they lack one thing—originality concerning their name. Other groups decided to be more creative.

The guys of the controversial rock band Lynyrd Skynyrd found inspiration in the name of one of their old high school teachers. Physical Education teacher Leonard Skinner was remembered because he gave the boys a hard time in class.

Fans also play a role in the naming process. Bill Medley and Bobby Hatfield were greeted by an impressed fan after a show who commented, "that's righteous, brothers." After that, the duo decided to be known as The Righteous Brothers.

Other aspects of popular culture, such as cartoons, have served as an inspiration to the music industry. Peter Noone, of Herman's Hermits, resembled Sherman from the Rocky and Bullwinkle Show. Noone was called Sherman by friends, but he misheard the nickname as Herman. The name stuck and became part of the band's identity.

The band Three Dog Night chose their name after reading an article about Australian Aborigines. The article mentioned sleeping alongside dogs for warmth on cold winter nights. One of the coldest nights was referred to as a "three dog night."

The state of Michigan holds more than one place in classic rock history. Scotland's Bay City Rollers chose their name by sticking a pin on a map of the United States. The pin landed near Bay City, Michigan. Grand Funk Railroad chose their name after seeing the Michigan landmark, the Grand Trunk Railroad.

For those that lack the creativity of these artists, there is a website. With a mere touch of a button, the site will dispense many possible names for bands. The web address is www.joescate.com/bands and also includes Song-o-Matic which furnishes titles of songs to help uninspired writers.

Thatstrich.com/rockband.htm contains a list of supposed names of real rock bands, such as Honest Bob and the Factory to Dealer Incentives, as well as Cap'n Crunch and the Cereal Killers. The list is not exactly comprehensive, but if it does not bring inspiration it does at least provide a little entertainment.



The band Badly Drawn Boy is one of a multitude of bands with a curious name. Strange album titles can accompany these bands, as is the case here. Odd graphics help to reinforce this image.

Guns 'N' Roses cancels again

By Kathleen Prevost
Oracle Photographer

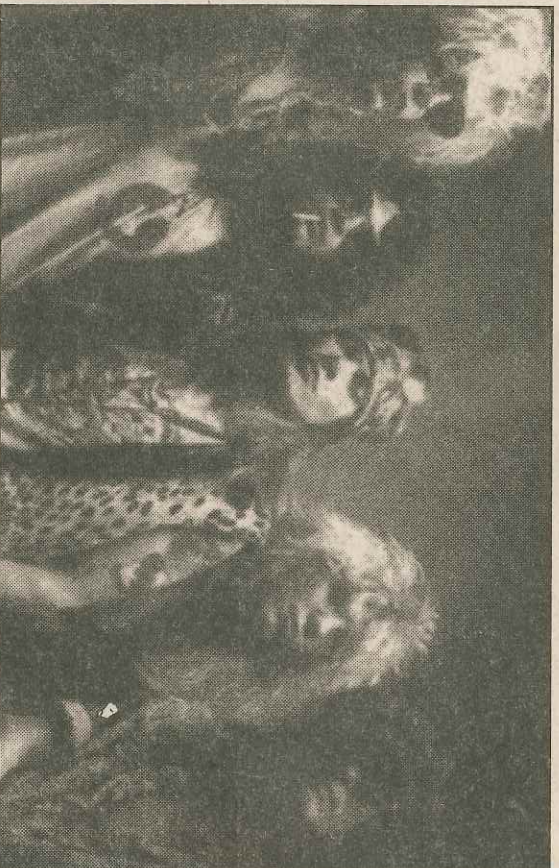
Guns 'N' Roses frustrated fans yet again by canceling their US tour right before they were scheduled to play at the MCI center on December 9. The cancellation should come as a disappointment but not a surprise to Guns N' Roses fans, who have had to tolerate sudden no-shows in the past.

"Although deeply saddened by the sudden cancellation of the long awaited concert, I managed to pick up the pieces of my shattered soul."

—Lindsay Carter, senior

a Philadelphia concert on December 8, and fans waited through opening acts and ninety minutes of nothing before being told the show would not go on; Axel was apparently feeling ill. The group soon announced that the MCI date would also be canceled, and shortly thereafter the other US dates were called off as well.

Senior Lindsay Carter intended to see Guns 'N' Roses in DC, but seems to be recovering well from the disappointing announcement.



Guns 'N' Roses band back in its glory days. Many students enjoy listening to them.

Guns 'N' Roses's album list

Live?!@ Like a Suicide	1986
Appetite for Destruction	1987
G.N'R Lies	1988
Use Your Illusion - I	1991
Use Your Illusion - II	1991
The Spaghetti Incident?	1993
Live Era '87 - '93	1999

—Compiled by Evan
Anderson



Axel Rose at a recent concert, singing as loudly as ever. Apparently he has not been feeling this good lately.

"Although deeply saddened by the sudden cancellation of the long awaited concert, I managed to pick up the pieces of my shattered soul and get out of my house to go to a wonderful Chinese restaurant called Wok n' Roll," said Carter. "On account of strict parenting I would not usually be able to go to DC at 5:30 on a school night, but unaware of the cancellation, my unsuspecting parents sent me on my way to 'the concert.' Being able to get out of the house turned out to be just what I needed to get over the plague of depression caused by the cancellation."

Tonny Styron, another would-be concert-goer, was not as crushed by the lack of events of December 9.

"I was thankful the concert was canceled," said Styron "It spared me a night of musical mediocrity with 'Chubby McFat and the guys that aren't Slash.' I purchased the tickets before I realized that the band is no longer the Guns N' Roses we used to know and love."

Axel Rose is the only original member of the band formed in 1985, and has made no comment on the cancellation of his first US tour in nine years.

Perhaps true fans of the band should look toward ex-member Slash's new band, which contains all the original members of Guns N' Roses except Axel Rose. The band is currently looking for a singer.

When you're feeling stressed, had a hard day at school and need a little pick-me-up, an hour at the spa can make you feel revived and relaxed. In this issue, *The Oracle* reviews and recommends some soothing local spas. In these lists we warn you what to expect in your treatments, plus list many of the pros and cons.

Manicure — Glamour Nails

Pros

1. The chairs were comfortable
2. They allowed payment before polishing so as not to create smudges
3. When my nails were drying, they helped me carry my stuff
4. They didn't make me bleed
5. Appointments aren't necessary and I didn't have to wait long without one
6. It is located right next to Starbucks, so if there is a long wait, you can get coffee
7. They speak English and try to make nice conversation

Cons

1. They spoke to each other in their language the entire time
2. I constantly wondered if they were talking about me
3. The fumes were sickening
4. It took up an hour of my time
5. My wallet is missing \$35
6. They need to sweep their floors of old nail clippings...gross

* Glamour Nails is located in the Whole Foods Shopping Center

—Compiled by Emily Sommerfeldt



Anna Sommerfeldt

Junior Emily Sommerfeldt just finished getting her right hand filled and is beginning her second. She paid \$35 for this treatment at Glamour Nails.

Pedicure — Nail Pro

Pros

1. Feeling of nobility one receives when another human being is crouched at one's feet, filing one's toenails
2. Cheaper than at a official spa place, plus no wait
3. Warm soapy water jetted at your feet
4. Large amount of colors to choose from
5. The soothing hum of fluorescent lighting
6. The offering of a movie as a distraction, so you don't have to watch some guy filing dead skin off your feet

Cons

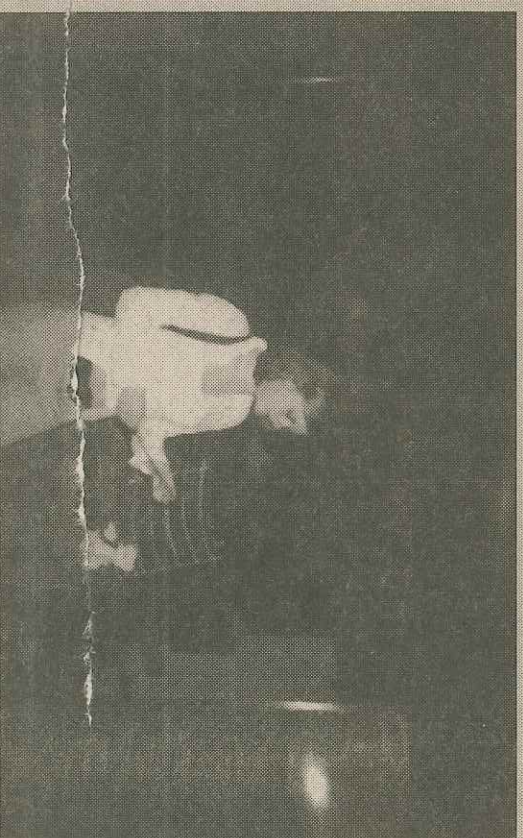
1. Incessant, irrelevant chatter of the lady next to me
2. Exposure to the longest, most repulsive toenails imaginable. Again, the lady next to me
3. Constant inhalation of nail polish fumes
4. The massive amount of colors were all versions of pink and red
5. Choice between a super bad movie I didn't want to watch or staring at my feet for 40 minutes
6. Crippling phobia that the man touching my feet would find them too large

—Compiled by Kathleen Prevost



Kathleen Prevost

A nail artist working for Nail Pro, paints senior Kathleen Prevost's toes red.



Leigh Johnson

Senior Leigh Johnson works her way into the Family Inada Store in Tysons Two. It features four massage chairs available for personal use, a video display, and sale representatives that can recommend which program to use.

Massage — Family Inada Store

By Leigh Johnson
Senior Staff Writer

Almost worst than the holiday shopping season is the post-holiday shopping season. Everyone is in a frenzy to find good bargains and return ugly sweaters.

I've always had a tendency to treat shopping as if it were a challenge, somewhat of an Olympic event. The crowds of people, however, that pour into malls after the holidays are enough to turn even the most high-spirited shopper against the system.

The Shiatsu massage features random variations of pressure and motion to imitate human hands.

After a three-day, four-mall shopping extravaganza, I found myself at Tysons Galleria. I was tired of shopping, and wasn't really sure why I was there, until I found an inviting oasis across from J. Crew. It was the Family Inada store, which consisted of a circle of oversized leather chairs surrounding a wooden display.

A friendly representative invited me to test out one of the chairs. The cost for one chair is 4,000 dollars. Even though

I'm not exactly a likely customer, the woman was still eager to let me enjoy my free Inada massage.

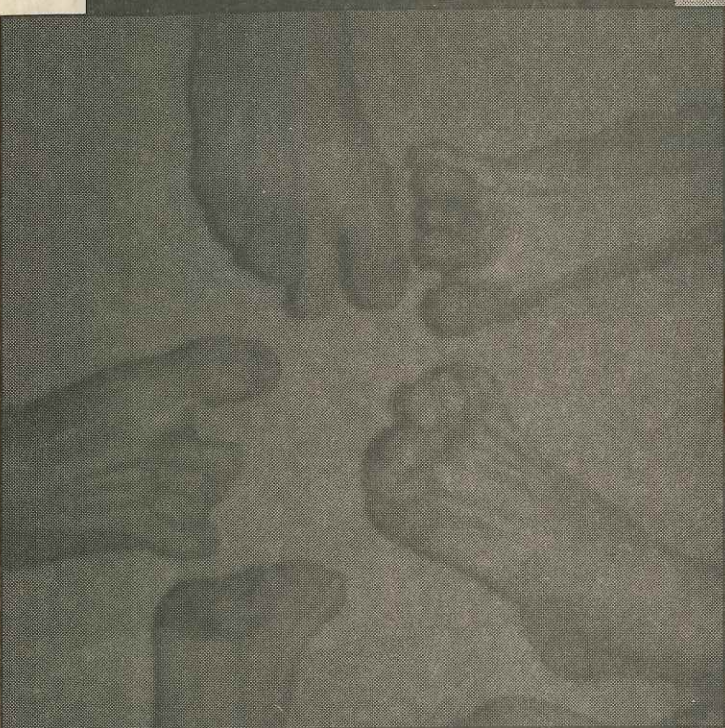
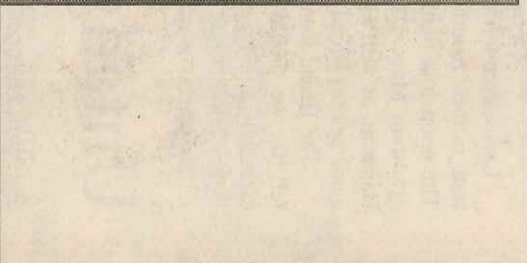
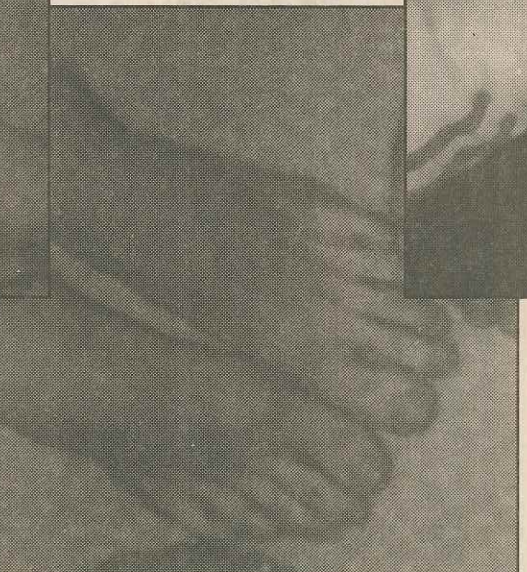
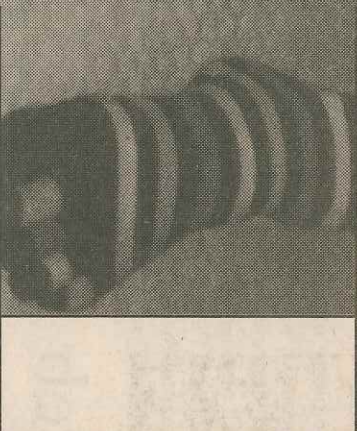
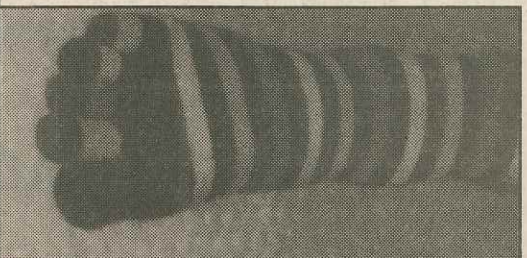
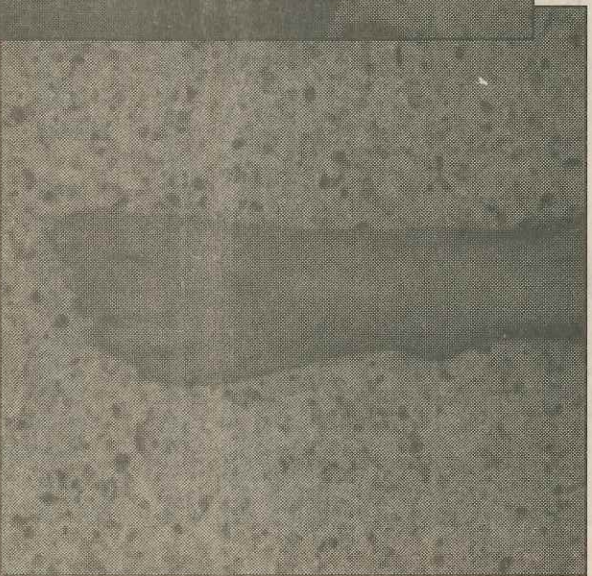
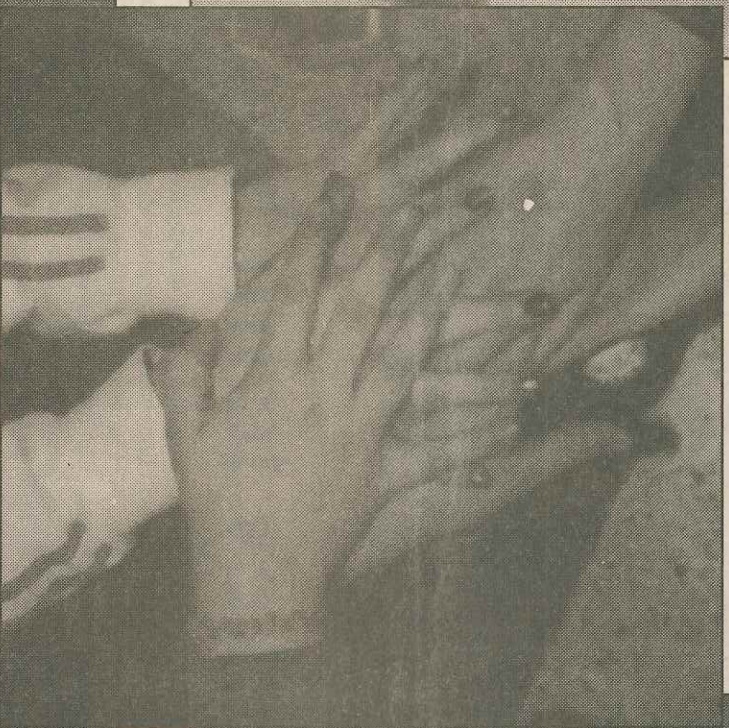
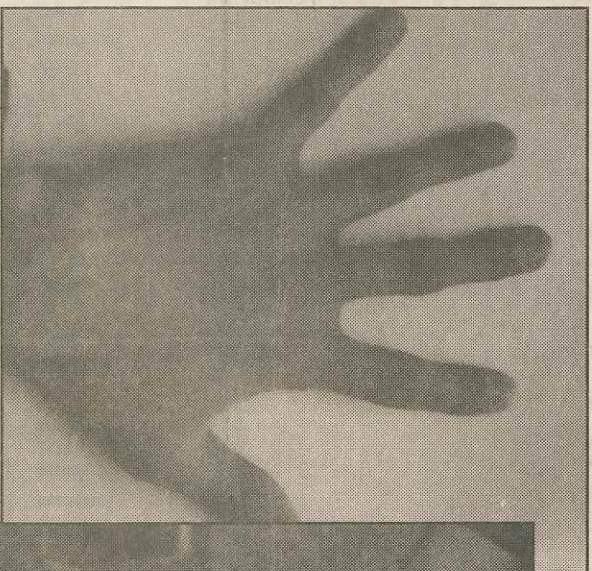
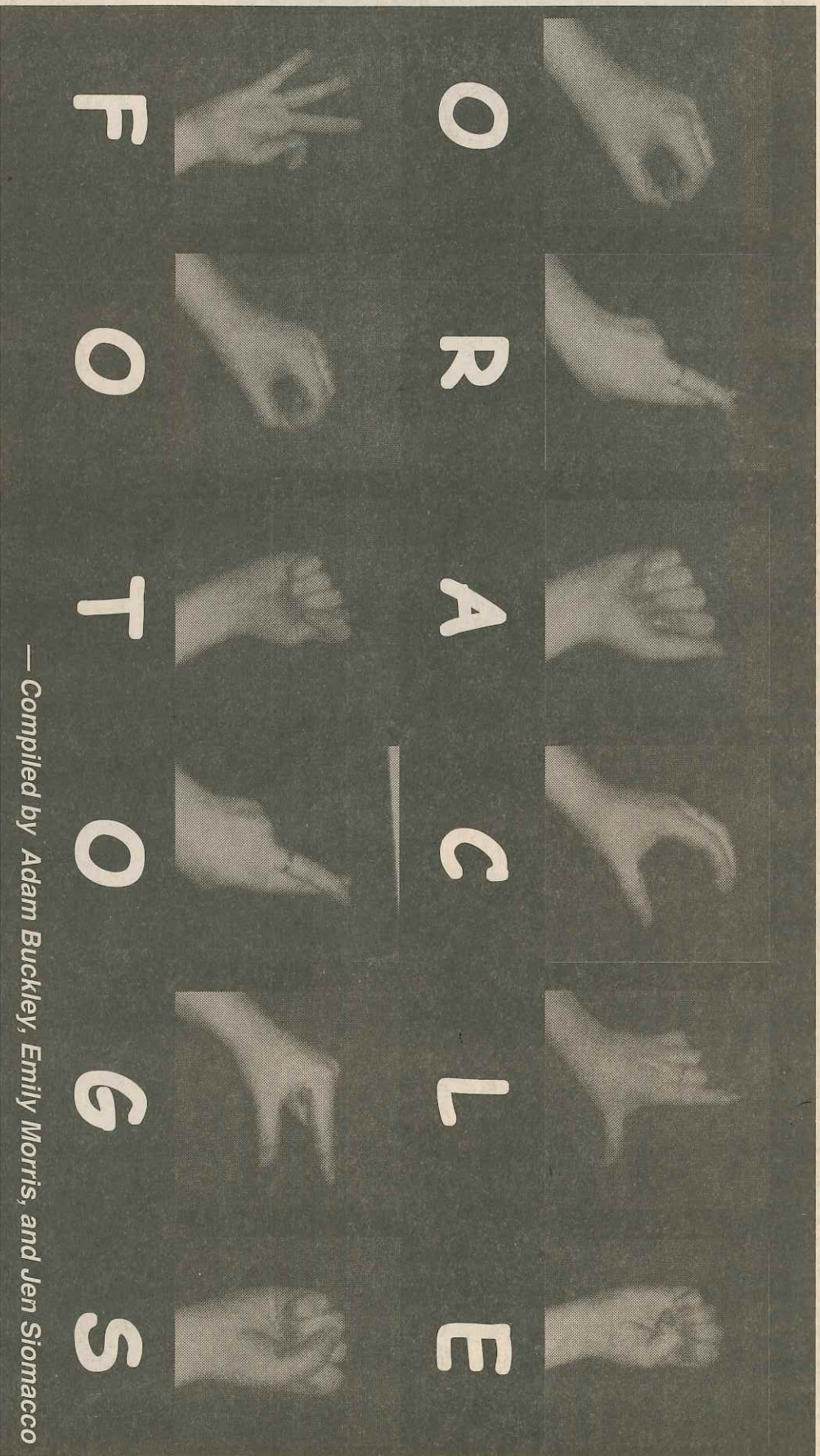
For the next five minutes I experienced the Infrared Pressure System. This cutting edge technology was invented in 2000 by the Family Inada company, which is based in Japan.

The chair scans your body to detect your pressure points, giving you a massage that is tailored to your body. The Shiatsu massage features random variations of pressure and motion to imitate human hands. One of the models also includes a headset that plays relaxing music.

The chair was an impressive piece of equipment and for a moment I did forget that I was in a dreaded shopping mall. However, it was a somewhat awkward experience. Passing shoppers found amusement in watching the chair forcibly shake, vibrate, and gyrate participating bodies.

Since professional massages can cost nearly a hundred dollars, I advise visiting the Inada store when in need of massage therapy. There is no limit on the length of the massage, and when I visited the store I did not have to wait in line, although the store remained busy.

It is slightly uncomfortable considering that the massage takes place in one of the large intersections of the mall. However, it is a time and place where relaxation is greatly needed.



Grapplers go for gold, gear up for season

By Denis Ing
Etc. Editor

The tired sleep and the early birds drink their coffee. The wrestlers are wide awake at school in the locker room dressing out for the early practice on a Saturday morning at 7am. Sweating off pounds of fat and water to get down to the desired weight is the ideal life of a wrestler during the winter season. Some people ask why they do it and most reply, "For the competition."

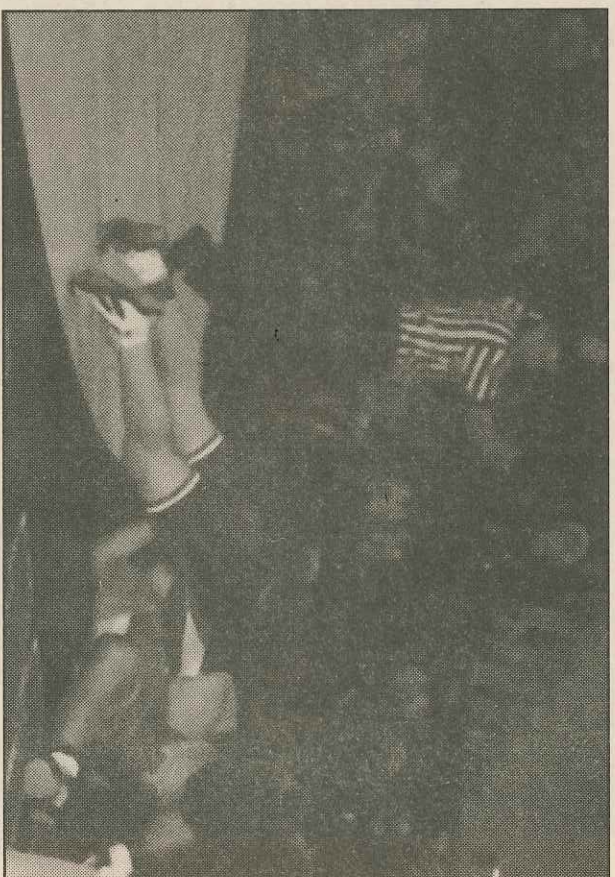
After school everyday, and usually Saturdays, the whole team is there practicing for three hours. Except on match days, before practice comes a three-to-five-mile run (to get in better condition and have the stamina to last the whole six minute match). The team also does calisthenics during the practice such as running walls.

"We start off the season slowly building the strength and conditioning of wrestlers. We mostly focus on instruction in the beginning of the year," said head coach Gary Embrey.

The team has a total of five coaches that help out every day. There are also former wrestlers from the team that come to help out. The more coaches the better, because this way the wrestlers can get more help from many coaches rather than just one. The coaches make their way around the room to critique and help out each wrestler to perfect their moves.

"All the coaches help us out a lot more. With Embrey and coach Gitlin, then coach Matheny, a former head coach at Edison, they all teach us something different to make our moves better," said senior Mike Watson.

After around three weeks into the season the whole team sits down and votes



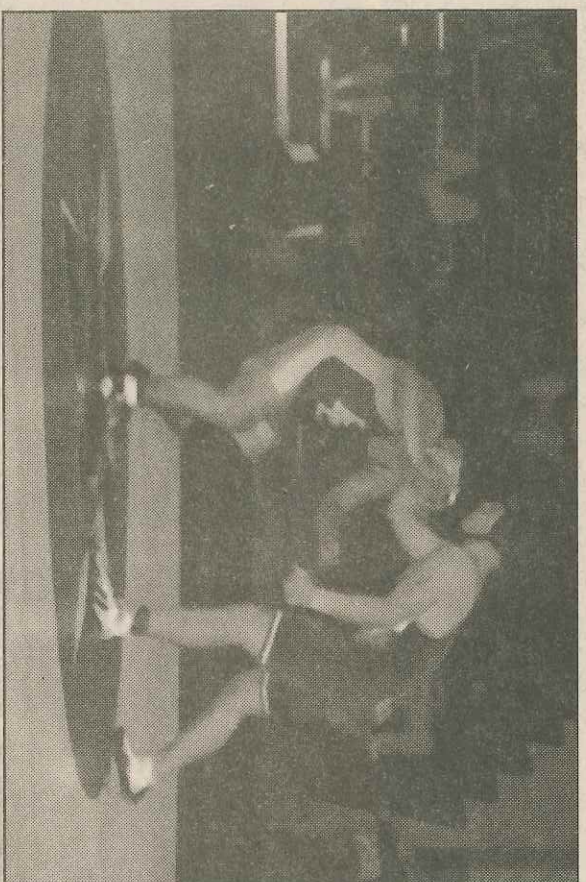
Senior Mike Watson gets called out of bounds; Watson won the match by a pin. Emily Morris

on captains. For this season the three captains leading the team are senior David Gitlin, junior Denis Ing, and senior Mike Watson. These three will have to set the example and help teach the younger, inexperienced wrestlers in winning more matches. The team will need some experience, for the team has seven tournaments this year before district matches. The seven tournaments will be the most in the past ten years.

"Most of the tournaments have mediocre competition and our team should fare well in them," said Gitlin.

This winter season the Spartan wrestler's have a 3-0 dual meet record, beating Fairfax, Oakton, and Washington-Lee in a quadrangular meet. They have also placed 10th in the Nova Classic and won the first ever Spartan Invitational.

There were three first place winners and four second place winners in the meet. 16 Spartans placed in the tournament, which featured seven different teams from around the region. At the Lee-Davis Tournament, first of three over winter break, the Spartans placed 7th out of 20 teams. They had four place winners with David Gitlin and Mike Watson both leading the team by taking second in their weights. Next, they wrestled in the Cavalier tournament at Woodson placing 3rd with nine medalist's, with the team being led by Gitlin, Mostafa Ibrahim, and Paul Lembrick each taking first. The Saturday after that the team wrestled at North Stafford HS to face five other teams in a dual meet tournament. They won three of the five, taking 3rd in the team tournament and making their dual meet record 6-2.



Senior Mike Watson takes on the Lee High School heavyweight. Watson is the captain of the team, along with senior David Gitlin and junior Denis Ing. Emily Morris

Spartan hockey team hits the ice again

By Nick Nelson
Sports Editor

Last season left the WS ice hockey team with a sour taste in their mouths, as well as a need for retribution. The team lost their star goalie and co-captain, 2002 graduate Marc Dudzinski, fellow co-captain Tom Harrison, as well as a heartbreaking Divisional playoff game against Broad Run.

"The Broad Run loss was a huge disappointment. I felt like we should have gone all the way last season, especially against a team like Broad Run," said senior Bobby Surdham.

The team is optimistic about its chances for this season.

"I'm very hopeful about our chances for this season. I know we will find someone to replace Marc [Dudzinski] at goalie," said junior Julie Mathers. Dudzinski is only one of a small number of players who needs replacing this season. Some key players from last season are still with the team, including sophomores Alex Heistand and Ben Zukerman.

They will have plenty of challenges ahead of them besides losing Dudzinski, who was a key instrument in their schemes and strategies on defense. They face a schedule that is full of tough opponents, including Paul VI, Westfields and Forest Park.

"Yeah, I think our toughest opponent this season will definitely be Forest Park," said Surdham.

The key instrument in having another chance at a Divisional run in the 2002-2003 season is team chemistry.

The returning players will certainly help the unity.

"As long as we work as a team instead of relying on one or two go-to players, we'll be fine. Teamwork shouldn't be a problem though, since everyone is friendly and comfortable with each other," said Zukerman.

It will be vital that the players maintain this friendship, community and unity, or else the team will crumble.

The collective rust has cleared, the team's veins have begun to pump with ice and the devastation after the Broad Run loss has finally abated since the end of the season, and the Spartan ice hockey team is ready to bleed blue and orange.

Untangling a coaching web

By Nick Nelson
Sports Editor

When people hear the term "coaching family," it usually brings to mind images of the parent having their son or daughter take an assistant coaching job until the father retires—at which time the son or daughter takes the position of head coach. For instance, Steve Spurrier is the head coach of the Redskins, and his son, Steve Spurrier, Jr., is the Wide Receivers coach.

At Valparaiso University—the little school from Indiana that went to the Sweet 16 with help of Bryce Drew, now a New Orleans Hornet—father Homer Drew recently gave his son Scott the head coaching job. It usually ends after about a generation or so.

Not the case with the WS swim team.

Sec. at WS, the roots reach just a bit deeper. It gets complicated, so please try and pay attention—I really don't have the time or space to explain it more than once.

Malia Cameron—head coach and sister of assistant coach Missy Bell—is married to Blair Cameron, who is another of the team's assistant coaches. It may seem confusing, but according to sophomore Nick Silver, "it is a lot of fun to have coaches that know each other, because then they're comfortable with each other and it's comfortable to be around them. They're always joking and laughing, so they're fun to be around."

Sophomore Sarah Faber agrees, saying that "they're really nice people. I've known the sisters since I was six years old."

The swim and dive teams have three regular meets left this season, against Lake Braddock, Robinson and WT Woodson. If the positive attitude shared between the coaches becomes contagious with the players, then the team will surely be unstoppable, and District and State championship berths will not be out of the question.

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Winter track banks on returning runners

By Jason Gillis
Viewpoint Assistant

As cross country ends, winter track begins. Last season the boys placed second in the district and the girls placed fifth. In the region, the boys placed fourth and the girls finished a respectable eighth.

Track is more of an individual than a team sport. True, the team is placed as a whole in the standings, but individuals help move the team name above the ranks.

A variety of events are ran such as: the four by 800 meter relay, four by 400 meter relay, four by 200 meter relay, 3200 meter race, 1600 meter race, 55 meter sprint and the 55 meter hurdle.

The team practices together after school from 3-5 pm to condition and prepare for the upcoming races.

"We have a lot of returning talent mainly in long distance running," said distance Coach Duke Baird.

On Saturday December 14, the Spartans began their season at Espiscopal High School against teams such as Robinson Lake Braddock, Hayfield and JEB Stuart.

Upcoming meets include Saturday January 18 when the Spartans go to the Fork Union Invitational and January 24-25 when the Spartans attend the Microtel invitational.

"My goal this year is to State qualify in the 55 meter race," said senior Kelly Osbourn.

Even before the district title is awarded individuals can qualify by time to compete in states, which is the goal of many on the team.

With goals in mind the Spartan runners have to focus on practicing for their own individual goals

"I want to run better at the mile and 800 meter," said junior Kyle Hart. "By practicing everyday I can achieve my goal."



Adam Buckley

Juniors Leslie Sherman, Kim Hogan and Robbyn Adams run around the track on a cold day to stretch out their muscles.

Athletes add personal touch to pregame routines

By Adam Rosen
Viewpoint Assistant

Each game day the girls varsity basketball team pounds on the floor to get themselves ready for the game.

"It gets me mentally focused and it makes me excited," said sophomore Laura Haskins.

Other pregame rituals include the varsity boys basketball team and how they freestyle about the team that they are playing. This helps them get physically and mentally ready for the game.

"We get hyper and we sing about the other team," said senior Josh Wilson.

The varsity girls basketball team also goes out to dinner the night before each game. They do cheers before their game while listening to music as well.

Another pregame ritual is how the JV baseball team listens to a joke by head coach John Fulcher. Fulcher does



Fatima Razi

The varsity volleyball teams participates in a pregame ritual the gets them excited for the upcoming match.

this to lighten the team and wants the team to have some fun.

"When Coach Fulcher told us a joke each game it would help me prepare for a game," said junior Matt Gibson.

The cross country girls team and boys team have pasta parties and go out to eat breakfast.

"We would have pasta parties and have breakfast and they are a lot of fun," said sophomore Marilee Greene. The girls relax and stretch followed by a walk of the course to know the conditions of the course at races.

Sports teams do some ritual before each game, whether it is stretching, listening to music or dressing up for a match. Most of the players on each team try to get their body prepared so they will do well. Other players try to concentrate and focus so they can be mentally prepared for a game. Pregame rituals can affect on the way a person plays and can help each person loosen up and relax.

Athletes of the Issue

Laura Haskins
Girls Basketball



Adam Buckley

Laura is the only sophomore on the girls varsity basketball team. She has been the starting point guard since freshman year.

Favorite Food: Pizza

Favorite Class: English with Ms. Howell

Pregame Ritual: Eats a Tootsie Pop

Athletic Highlight: Winning Regionals last year

Favorite TV show: "The Bachelor"

Most Embarrassing moment: Hitting the side of the backboard on a free throw

College: Undecided.

Josh Wilson
Boys Basketball



Adam Buckley

Josh, a junior, started every game last year for the Spartans and was selected 1st Team All-District on defense in basketball.

Favorite Food: Lasagna

Favorite Class: Sports Marketing with Mr. Gibson

Pregame Ritual: "I always write the name of who I'm guarding on my hand"

Favorite TV show: "The Simpsons"

Most Embarrassing Moment: "Getting a technical foul for hanging on the rim after a time-out."

Athletic Highlight: "Catching an 80 yard touchdown pass from Matt Smith freshman year"

—Compiled by Adam Rosen

Russ makes music history

Jazz/metal garage band explores alternatives

By Russ Waddell
Oracle Editor

The Articles of Confederation originated in November of 2002. No, not *those* Articles of Confederation, the *other* Articles of Confederation.

These Articles of Confederation are our fair school's coolest, hippest, and newest jazz/metal garage band. Technically it's more a basement band than a garage band. The band is made up of Brian Gaudino, Danny Trayer, Richard Jones, me, and Elliot Wish (I think).

Jazz and metal seem like a bizzare fusion of styles, but they really fit together very nicely. The possibilities for song titles are endless. So far, we have some great ideas like "Bloody Blue Moon of Death," "Samba of Satan," "Bossa Exploding Hellfire Super Nova of Hell." It's tough to make a saxophone fit into a death metal song, but Ricard Jones is no ordinary sax player.

In our first meeting, Danny and I had a drumoff to determine who could call himself prime percussionist. Danny was displeased that he had to even compete with me. As he said it, if I lost I could play bass, but if he lost he wouldn't have anything to play. I argued that he could play the kazoo if he lost. In the end, it didn't matter at all.

So far, our crowning achievement is recording our first single, which is a cover of some metal song called "Reign in Blood" or something like that by a band called Slayer or something like that. Maybe it was Amniotic Sac.

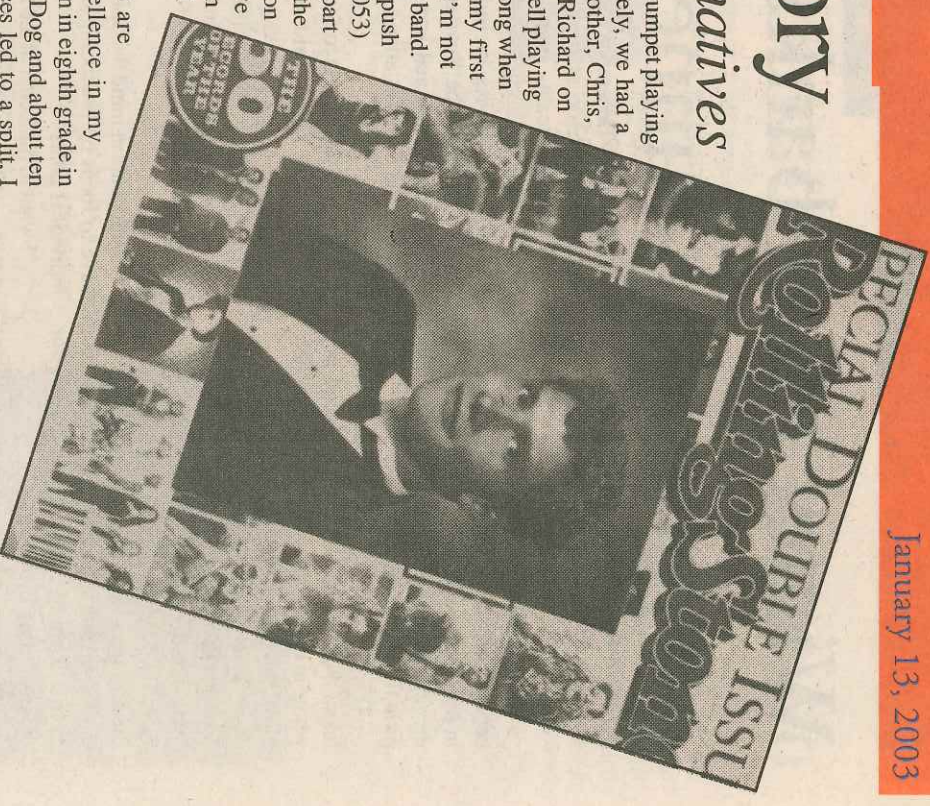
Anyway, we recorded that "Blood" song in Brian's basement using state-of-the-art equipment. We ran into

some problems because Danny, our trumpet playing drummer, couldn't make it. Fortunately, we had a contingency plan. We got Brian's brother, Chris, to play drums. Brian on guitar and Richard on sax sounded great, but I didn't do so well playing bass. I had never actually played the song when we recorded it, so our first take was my first take. Elliot wasn't there either, but I'm not quite sure whether he's actually in the band.

These minor setbacks shouldn't push back the release of the single (July 2053) because we can just touch up the bass part and add computer generated vocals in the studio. I don't think there's any reason to have a band as long as we have computers that can do a better job than real people. Plus, they don't trash hotel rooms and abuse substances.

The Articles of Confederation are continuing a long tradition of excellence in my musical career. It all started with Brian in eighth grade in Distortion, which became Big Furry Dog and about ten other things. After creative differences led to a split, I was picked up by the Monkey Butlers. This band was a commercial success, and you might still be able to spot their t-shirts on some old fans. They're collectors items.

There were about five other names/bands, but listing them would be even more boring than the rest of this article, so I'll spare those of you who even got this far. I'm done for this time.



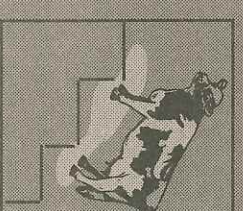
Like Gwen Stefani, Russ left his band once he made it on the cover of Rolling Stone's magazine. Way to go Russ, we all here at West Springfield are behind you. Keep up the good work, Next up a big donation to WS for our music program.

5 ways you 'kept it real' during break...

1. Got a full 16 days off of school.
2. Partied it up on New Years. From 2002 all the way to 2003.
3. Had the time of your, not one day... but 16 and kept it going all the way through...or did you?
4. Got everything you wanted for the holiday, and had fun in the snow on the last day of break, hoping no school would be next...
5. Well how else would you keep your winter break?...I mean we are West Springfield here...we keep it real 24/7.

—Compiled by the Denzing

January/February						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday/Sunday	
Girls bball vs TC 13	Girls bball vs West Potomac 14	6-10pm Junior parent college night 15	5-9pm Gymnastics 16	Boys bball vs Robinson 17	Winter semi-formal dance 18	Caps vs Rangers 1pm 19
Martin Luther King day 20	21	Wrestling vs Robinson 22	Gymnastics vs Herndon 23	Boys bball vs TC 24	Wizards vs T'wolves 7pm 25	Caps vs Rangers 1pm 26
27	Girls bball vs Hayfield 28	Semester ends 29	Student Holiday 30	Student Holiday 31	Wrestling scrimmage @ Woodson 1	Groundhog day 2
Third quarter begins 3	Boys bball vs LB 4	Michael Flatley's Lord of the Dance @ Warner Theater 8pm 5	District Choral Festival 6	Boys bball vs West Potomac 7	Track Districts 8	9
Beginning of a long, long week 10	Girls bball vs Robinson 11	Hump day 12	Girls bball vs TC 13	Wrestling Districts 14	It's the weekend, have fun 15	16



Fact of the issue:
You can walk a cow up the stairs, but you can not walk a cow down stairs.