



# The RAVEN

January 9, 2004 Volume 40 Number 6  
West Springfield High School 6100 Rolling Road Springfield, Virginia 22152

## Five students with drugs up for expulsion

*Out of eight expulsion recommendations written this year, five due to possession and distribution of marijuana*

By Heidi Stillgoi  
Oracle Editor

A student has control over his or her education, but that freedom can easily be taken away as the result of just one choice.

Since the start of this school year, WS principal Dr. David Smith has written eight recommendations for expulsion. Five students were found in possession of marijuana, two with the possession of knives and one with a misuse of a knife.

"A violation for possession is serious," said Smith. "But a violation involving distribution is very serious."

Four of the five drug violations were related and ranged from 9th to 12th grade. In the group, some were accused of only possession while others were also caught for distribution.

"What caught my attention

was that the five [marijuana] violations came in rapid succession," said Smith.

After Smith learns of a serious violation, he starts the process that could lead to expulsion. He first talks with each student to hear his explanation and contacts the parents. Those found in possession of marijuana

**"When you're talking about forcing a student to decrease their education; that's serious stuff."**  
—Dr. David Smith, principal

principal

automatically receive a minimum 10 day suspension along with a recommendation for expulsion.

"It's not true that a student isn't allowed to make up his work

during his suspension period," said Smith. "He is encouraged to do work and is wise to do anything he can to prove that he's a good student."

Smith does not have the authority to actually expel a student, only to write a recommendation, which means a hearing must be held to determine whether or not the student deserves to be expelled.

"An expulsion recommendation isn't a death penalty," said Smith. "It tells the students they are no longer in control of their education."

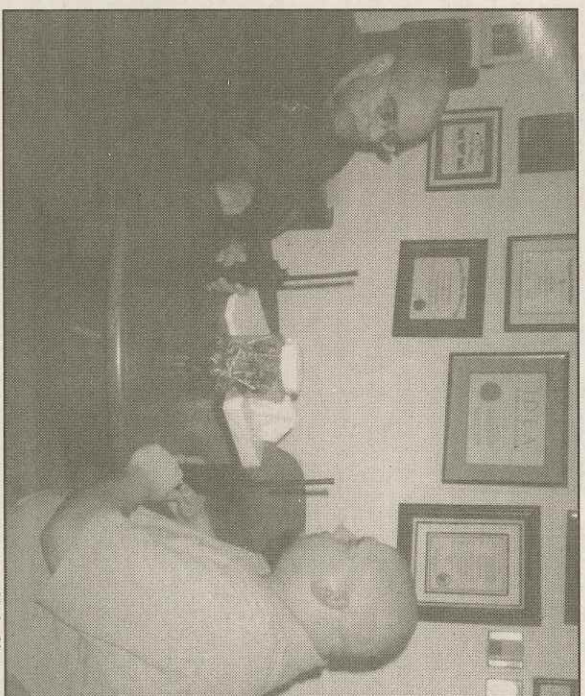
The student is required to attend his expulsion hearing at the Burke Holder Center in Fairfax City. Smith, or another administrator if he is unavailable, is also required to be there. The hearings are usually held on weekdays and last about an hour and a half.

"I try to go to them all," said

Due to the number of expulsion recommendations, principal David Smith and the school officers have had to meet with many students. The students they have a meeting with the schoolboard, who has the ability to finalize the expulsion.

Smith. "When you're talking about forcing a student to decrease their education; that's serious stuff."

Fairfax County school system hearing officers are responsible for running each hearing. At this level, a student can not be fully expelled from the school system. If a case is decided to be serious enough, however, the hearing officers will move it forward to the schoolboard where a second hearing must be held to determine expulsion. Two cases require a second hearing with the



Chris Shannon

## WS traffic faces new morning routine

By Jen Stomacco  
Oracle Editor

On the morning of January 5, for the first time this year, the traffic triangle out front sat empty. Parents were not sitting for thirty minutes waiting to exit the parking lot, and the buses dropped off students in the back parking lot by the sports lobby.

The new traffic pattern has been the topic of much controversy during the past week and throughout the last few weeks prior to winter break. For months, the parents and students were able to enter the campus at any point they wished, causing severe back ups and inconveniences.

Now, however, specific traffic routes have been assigned for buses, parents and students. Seniors are to drive down Turtle Road and enter the senior parking lot from the bottom entrance near the baseball fields. Buses and faculty enter where the crossing guard directs traffic and go around the back of the building to the

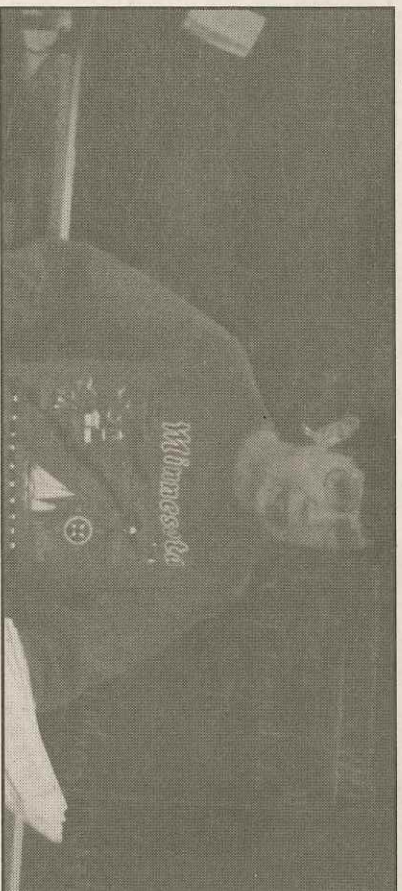
faculty parking lot and drop off at the sports lobby entrance. Parents will also be able to drop off students at entrances 1, 2, 3 and 4. Parents are discouraged from dropping off students at entrance 10, which is the entrance near the cafeteria, because it causes more congestion and back up on Rolling Road.

"When it's all backed up and there's no one moving there were lots of complaints," said security officer Mike Ukele. "The buses were coming in late and all the parents [were complaining from having to wait at the traffic triangle]."

The idea was originally conceived about two months ago when the school solicited help from the office of safety and security to alleviate problems during arrival time.

"A team and I came out from our office and stationed a number of times at the school lot," said Ken Campo, a safety inspector for FCPS. "We noticed

See PARKING on page 5.



Susan Sommerfeldt

Long-time English teacher Judy Harris will retire at the end of January.

## Two A+ teachers retire

By Sarah Drabkin  
Junior Staff Writer

One will spray you with a water gun, throw your binder out the window and make fun of you, while the other is such a lady that she probably doesn't even know what a Super Soaker is.

Ninth grade English teacher Sara Schwarberg retired at Thanksgiving, after 44 years of teaching high school students. WS legend Judy Harris, a staple of tenth grade English for 17 years, plans to leave our hallowed halls at the end of January, after a 42-year career.

Schwarberg felt that her time was

needed more at home with her husband and dog. When she left, she was replaced by Simon Schatmeyer who said, "It was the hardest decision she ever had to make." Schatmeyer also said, "Her students absolutely adored her."

Former students were sad to hear about Schwarberg's retirement.

"I'm so sad. She always said hi to me in the hallways. She signed my papers as 'your biggest fan.' She boosted my self esteem," said senior Christine Rini.

Taking over a position so highly regarded by both the staff and students was not the easiest task for Schatmeyer.

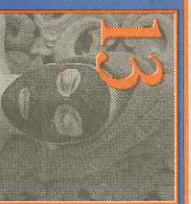
See TEACHERS on page 5.



7 Males not afraid to get in touch with feminine side



8 Big in 2003: Look at the year in review



13 New Years' changes for body, mind and soul

## Can't we all just get along?

Everyday all 2,236 of us students are forced to come to school whether we like it or not. In order to make these four, long, hectic years a little smoother, one of the most important things we can do for each other is to be more tolerant with one another.

There are more than eight ethnicities that make up our student body. That's more than seven different faiths, cultures and languages. Seventy-one of us are

without a single "Excuse me" isn't rare. It has come to the point where it is more surprising to see acts of kindness than acts of cruelty in the hallways.

Of course, in our imperfect world not everyone is expected to get along, but it's not a lot to ask to be civil towards one another. It's not okay to push through a crowd of friends standing in the middle of the hall just because you don't associate with them. It's not okay to shut someone else's locker on him while

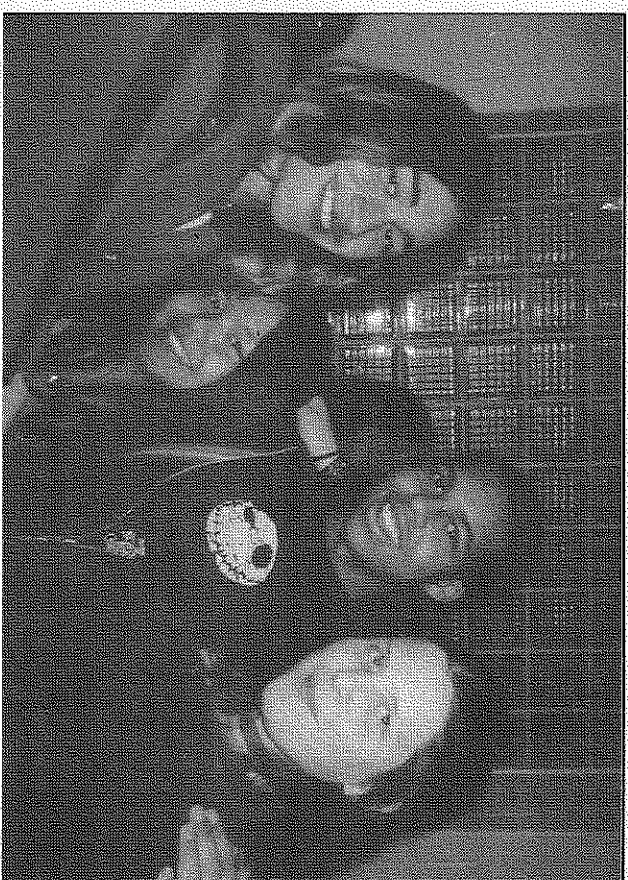
multiracial, which means some students balance more than one culture in their house hold. It's sad to see other students making other student's lives miserable because they look, dress, or speak differently. Recently, students at our school have been making rude remarks towards their peers very openly.

People pushing in the crowded halls

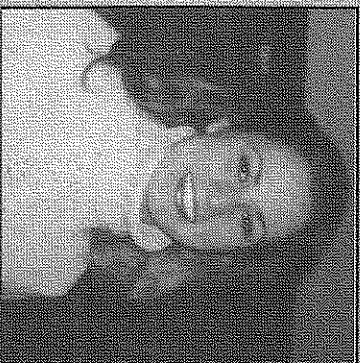
he is trying to gather his books. Sometimes the smallest offense can have the biggest impact on a person. Most of the students at our school only have a few friends that they keep up with, so we really don't know what our classmates may be going through at home, school or work.

It would make the school day a lot easier for students, teachers and

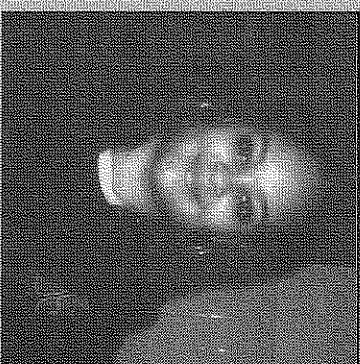
sophomores Jason Buchannon, Mimi Oo, Mike Cooper and Kaylan Reis enjoy each other's company despite their ethnic differences.



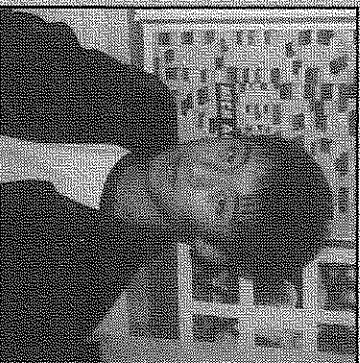
## Editorial



"The traditional food my mom still makes."  
—Margo Teutler, 12



"Every new year's we put pink plastic wrap over a quarter for good luck."  
—Tisha Sherman, 12



"Our language is so unique. We have our own style that no one can duplicate."  
—Dong Heun Kim, 12



"I'm from Africa. We do everything ourselves; we don't use machines to do it."  
—Kadiatu Konteh, 11  
—Compiled by Camilla Casillas

## Spartan Spotlight

What is special about your heritage?

## So many books, so little time

Emily Miller

Managing Editor

There are some things I'd like to see disappear at WS, but reading is not one of them. Boggled down with heaps of extracurricular activities, AP classes, clubs, and honor societies, students like myself hardly have the time to sleep, much less read a book.

For those who enjoy reading, not doing so is frustrating and stressful. My ideal time to catch up on some contemporary literature is late at night, when I'm lying in bed waiting for sleep to make its ascent. But lately my eyes have not even skimmed past the first chapter because I'm so exhausted from late night cramming sessions and other various school assignments. It used to be my only opportunity to read for my own personal pleasure, and since its recent oblivion I've lost a valuable coping mechanism and stress outlet.

WS vainly tries to fill the reading void by offering challenging English classes and even a book club, but the majority of the students don't even bother to read the books required of the class because there are more efficient alternatives like Sparknotes and Cliffsnotes. Other easily accessible and less time consuming options include movies that are a parody of the book, like "10 Things I Hate About You" which is a spin-off of Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*. Even if students want to read the book assigned in class, the majority of them don't because it takes less time to get the gist of the book from the internet or movies.

Mark Twain once said "Don't let school get in the way of your education," but unfortunately lack of time due to schoolwork and the school's disappointing attempt to promote reading can make this an unrealistic goal.

We live in a fast paced disposable society where reading is abandoned for new technology and is lost among MP3s, DVDs, and Playstation. Books cannot compete with the growing technology and are becoming more and more extinct with every generation.

## The Oracle

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

**Editors**  
Heidi Sfiligoj  
Jen Siomacco  
Rachel Wohlers

**Managing Editors**  
Camilla Casillas  
Jason Gillis  
Emily Miller

**News Section Editor**  
Emily Sommerfeldt

**Viewpoint Editor**  
Christina Aray

**Inside Editors**  
Katherine Hutton  
Anna Sommerfeldt

**Features Editors**  
Grace Jo  
Lauren Kondo  
Weekend Editor  
Katie Bourget

**Entertainment Editor**  
Erika Werking

**Sports Editor**  
Adam Rosen

**Etc. Editor**  
Liz Weidenhold  
Photo Editor  
Susan Sommerfeldt

**Business Systems Editor**  
Jon Nylan  
Adviser  
Brooke Nelson

A student-run publication to inform and entertain the students and staff of West Springfield High School and the Springfield community. We publish articles written with as little regard for bias as possible. Opinions expressed in Viewpoint and in reviews and columns. Editorials represent the opinion of at least two editors of the Editorial Board and do not reflect the views of the school. The Oracle reserves the right to reject advertising deemed inappropriate. Signed letters to the editor and personal commentary will be considered for publication, but could be edited for grammar, spelling, and space.

# Muhammad sparks controversy

## Right decision made

By Jason Gillis

Managing Editor

On Tuesday November 25 convicted sniper John Muhammad was sentenced to the death penalty. This allows a sigh of relief for victims of the snipers and their families.

For three weeks, the convicted duo terrorized the DC metropolitan area and killed 10 people. Their first trial was held in Virginia because the death penalty was an option for the jury to select instead of just life in prison without the possibility of parole, which is Maryland's harshest punishment.

Some people believe that the death penalty is immoral, but for extreme cases such as these, it is necessary to have such a punishment available to deter others from copying this act.

Some might say that there is no proof that deterrence works, but the media only takes note of when things don't work the way that they are suppose to. It is like the police force, the media reports only when the police do something wrong, not that they caught a person before he could murder an innocent victim.

The idea of prison is rehabilitation. A person with the mindset of random killing and terror with no hint of remorse will not be rehabilitated. If the death penalty was not an option Muhammad would just sit and relax in prison, getting a free ride for the rest of his life watching MTV and living off taxpayers.

Muhammed was the first person to also be sentenced to death under a new Virginia law. The law says if a person commits a murder with the intent to cause terror then they can be eligible for the death penalty.

I agree with the decision to put Muhammed to death. He has shown no remorse and has not apologized for his actions. A jury of his peers who decided his fate were far enough away from DC that they had an impartial view on the issue.

The worst thing that could have happened is if he had been sentenced to life in prison.



**On Tuesday November 25 convicted sniper John Muhammed was sentenced to the death penalty. He was convicted of taking 10 peoples' lives.**



# Cut it out!

## A lack of common courtesy found in the cafeteria

By Betsy Miller

Senior Staff Writer

The atmosphere of our school's lunch line is reminiscent of the kind of stampede that ensues when a group of aging bridesmaids compete for a bridal bouquet. The duration of time spent, along with the amount of disrespect one receives while in line, are not dictated by grade level, social status, or any of the other universal decrees which determine one's quality of life in a public high school. One's lunch

**At WS, line cutting is quite an art form, with cutters ranging from the skilled actors who pretend to see their friends calling out to them in the front of the line, to the large individuals who simply use their brute strength to force their way forward.**

line experience is based solely on a strict "survival of the fittest" policy.

I am a senior at WS and until my recent

encounters with the lunch line, I thought suffering through four years here would result in a few perks.

"Whatever happened to the senior line, anyway?" said senior Katie Rippy.

While in line, I also found myself wondering why I could not share a line with older, less abusive students. Not only was I not receiving the respect I've always hoped my senior status would glean, I was being pushed and shoved like a nine year old water boy trying to board the bus with the football team.

I guess I can't complain too much about my lack of distinction as a mature member of the student body, though, since I recently realized that I continue to cling to much of the same doctrine I observed in kindergarten, particularly concerning "line etiquette." In my formative years of elementary school I believed that those who cut in line would one day show up as international terrorists on "America's Most Wanted." I've since come to learn that those who cut have not become terrorists, they have just continued to cut with increasing experience and finesse. At WS, line cutting is quite an art form, with cutters ranging from the skilled actors who pretend to see their friends calling out to them in the front of the line, to the large individuals who simply use their brute

## Life in prison viewed as better solution

By Sarah Drabkin

Junior Staff Writer

John Allen Muhammad was recently recommended for the death penalty by a jury in Virginia Beach on Monday, November 17. Muhammad was found guilty of killing 10 people and injuring three people during the sniper killing spree in the DC area in October of last year.

He and Lee Boyd Malvo started their spree on October 2 killing James Martin, 55, outside a grocery store in Wheaton, Maryland.

Then on October 3 Muhammad and Malvo killed four people.

Prem Kumar Walekar, 54, was killed while filling up his gas tank in Aspen Hill, Maryland.

Sarah Ramos, 54, was killed while sitting on a bench outside of a post office in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Lori Ann Lewis-Rivera, 24, was killed at a Shell gas station in Kensington, Maryland.

Pascal Charlot, 24, was also killed on that day on a street corner in DC.

On October 4, Carolyn Seawell, 72, was shot outside of Michaels Craft Store in Fredricksburg, Virginia, but was released later from Inova Fairfax Hospital.

On October 7, Iran Brown, 13, was shot after being dropped off in front of Benjamin Tasker Middle School in Bowie, Maryland. He was also released from the hospital after weeks of recuperation.

Dean Harold Meyers, 53, was killed on October 9, at a Gas station in Manassas, Virginia.

Kenneth Bridges, 53, was killed on October 11, at a gas station in Fredricksburg, Virginia.

Linda Franklin, 47, was killed on October 14, while loading groceries into her car with her husband in Falls Church, Virginia.

Jeff Hopper, 37, was shot on October 19, in a parking lot of a restaurant outside of Richmond, Virginia.

Their last victim was Conrad Johnson, 35, on October 22, who was shot while

boarding his bus in Aspen Hill, Maryland. He devastated all the lives of the family members of the victims. For now on they will be reminded of the terror that he placed on their families and the beautiful lives he took away.

That is why he should live.

Too many people automatically say "you did something to me; I'm going to do the same to you." This solution is too easy for many reasons. One the person who hits back gives no thought to this action only emotion. The result is a bloody nose and no sense of satisfaction. The person could also hit back harder or punch the person more than the previous had. But then you are left with a defense that is unequal to the offensive and the defender will be blamed for taking too harsh a reaction. The best solution, as both your mother and I will tell you, is to walk away. This way the defense is left with a feeling of superiority and the offender is left with a sense of guilt that he so deserves.

I implore this same situation in any case dealing with the death penalty.

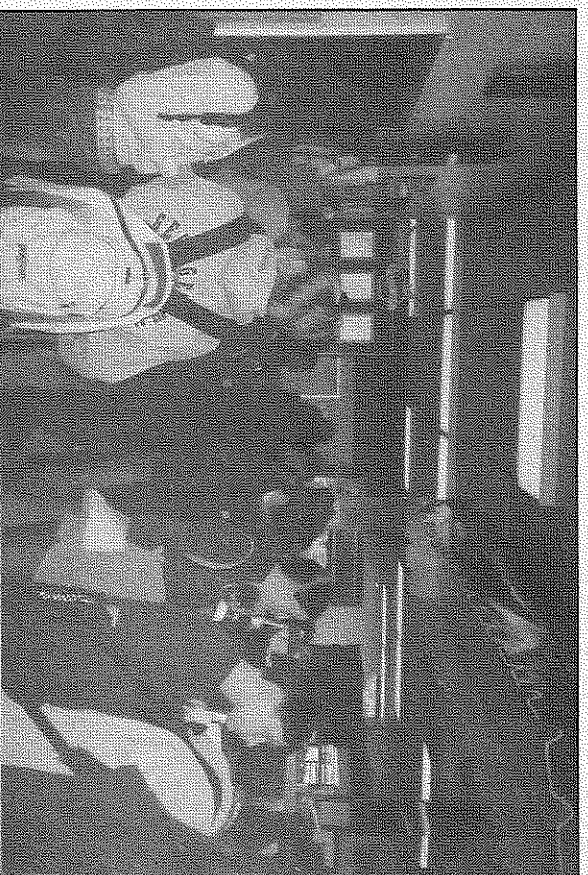
Muhammad is a terrible man. He is a very sick man who has had his brain warped and finds some surreal sense of accomplishment from killing people.

And, again, I do believe he is sick and awful but that is why he must live.

He must live because everyday families must be reminded of the hurt he caused. They deserve to also know that every day he is in a worse place than they or their loved ones will ever be.

He deserves to live knowing that he has broken up these families; knowing that he has broken up his own family and that his children will forever be ashamed of being related to him. He will always be remembered as a horrible man, never as a father or religious man. He will forever be remembered as the sniper and this he must remember for the rest of his life.

My one hope is that, if he is killed, he will not become a martyr for the terribly insane out there. Because if we kill him, according to the code of action reaction, who kills us?



Ryan Waipie

**The senior lunch line, a privilege reserved for seniors only, has vanished which leaves lunch lines overcrowded. Students push and shove vainly in attempt to speed up the process of buying food, and many end up with little time to eat lunch and talk to friends.** strength to force their way forward. Cutters seem to be the only individuals who are pleased with the current WS lunch line system since they are about the only ones who are not forced to inhale their lunch whole. Some would say that school lunch would be more easily consumed if inhaled, without the prospect of taste, but that is a different subject entirely.

I'm frankly beginning to think cutting is the wisest way to attack the fortress of the lunch line. Unfortunately, pretty soon everyone will realize the effectiveness of this tactic, and instead of lines we will have one mad dash for food every day that will result in only blackbells and gang members receiving any type of nourishment. On the

chip muffins.

When considering ways to mend the madness of the lunch line, students hope that maybe lunch won't deteriorate into one big free for all, but, in line with my own wishes, WS administration with eventually observe maturity differences by eventually implementing lines inherent to grade level.

"They should have a separate line for each class," said junior Ryan Newmeyer. "Kind of like they had the senior line last year, just for all the grades."

# Good morning, Mr. President

## Mom handles the president, her two kids as she makes ends meet

By Joann Cassano

Special to The Oracle

He's smart. He's powerful. He's the leader of our country. And he's sexy.

This attractive man owes his looks to one woman. Because of her magic fingers, George W. Bush goes on television without a flaw on his face. But who is the woman behind the brush?

The woman behind the brush is Lois Cassano. One might think that putting on makeup is simple, but there's more to this story than meets the eye. In order to be the first makeup artist ever put on staff at the White House, you have to do more than just play with make up.

Cassano takes on three jobs in her life. The first job is, of course, a makeup artist. With her brush, Cassano does her magic and within a few minutes the president is ready to face the world.

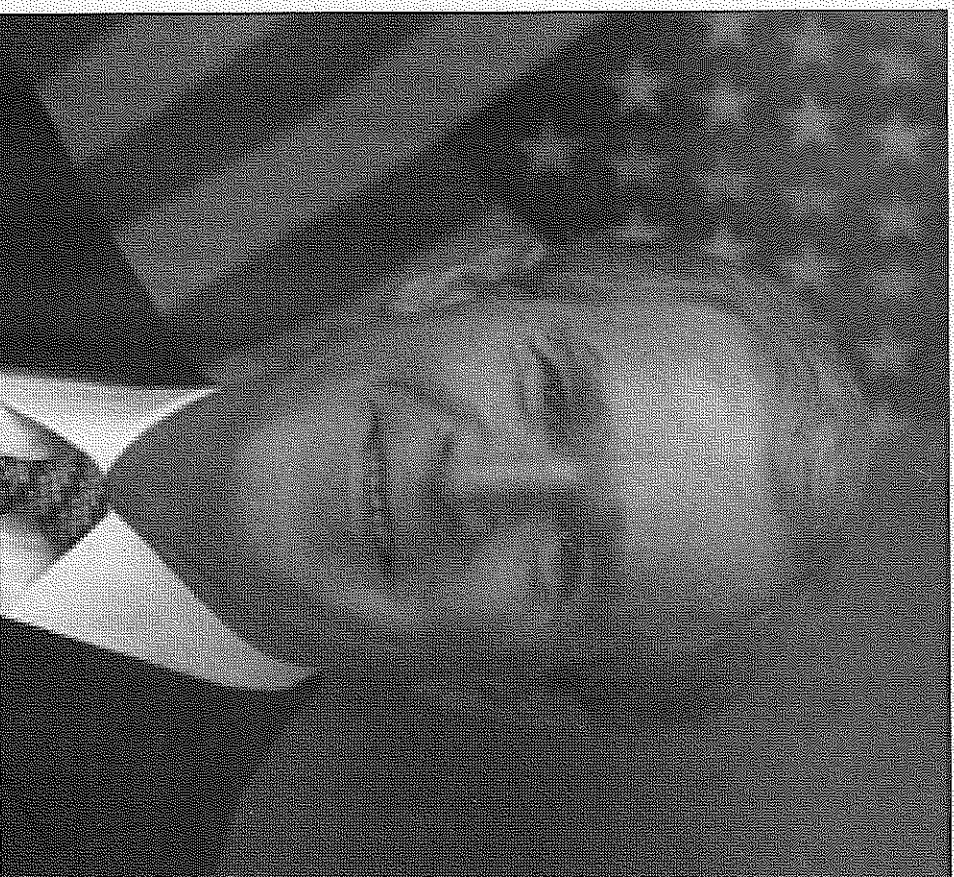
"[She has the] coolest job ever," said her son Jeremy. "One of the few jobs that gets to touch the president."

It is indeed cool to be able to touch the president's face, but he doesn't need makeup all the time.

In her down time, Cassano practices her second job—working in the Lower Press Office in the White House.

"In the Press Office I coordinate press movements and help with their needs," said Cassano. "The hours are sort of long, 12 to 14 hour days can be rough, but I love it. It's a huge privilege and honor to work for the president."

When she's not working in DC, Cassano takes on her third and favorite job:



Cassano gives President Bush the look that has made him so appealing to the public mother.

"The president always says the hardest job is being a single mother and our children always come first," said Cassano. Not only is she proud of her domestic

job, but she does the best she can, and it shows. Her children and their friends always talk about how great she is. "Who is the coolest mom in the world?" said Andy France, a family friend. "Your

mom! She makes me food and feeds me whether I'm hungry or not. She's a wonderful person, she's made me part of the family."

Cassano never thought her life would turn out the way it did.

"I went to school and majored in radio and television. Now I wake up every morning, get onto the Metro, and do not know what lies ahead of me," said Cassano. "Am I going to see the president today? Am I going to deal with some jerk

"Am I going to see the president today? Am I going to deal with some jerk reporter? I never know."

—Lois Cassano,

mother of Joann Cassano, junior

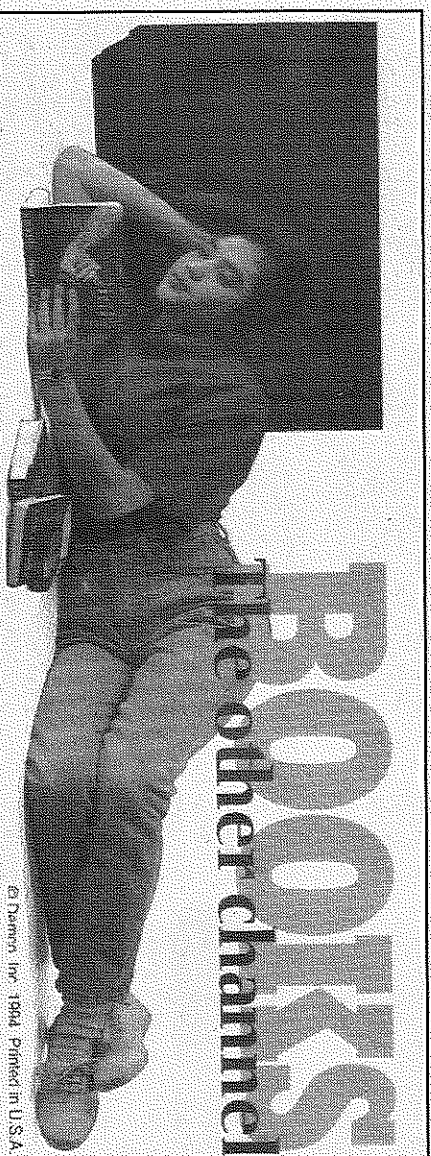
reporter? I never know."

"I find it funny actually," said Jeremy, "that my mom majored in one thing and pursued another. It's also kind of funny that when she was in high school she was the editor of the yearbook. She went from high school reporter to working the press off-

[It's] funny how things work out."

A person would think that carrying on three jobs at once would be hard, but Cassano is living proof that it's not.

"She is one of the strongest people I know," said France. "She works very hard to make her small family beautiful."



© Damron Inc. 1994. Printed in U.S.A.

Teens find that entertainment does not only come from television. The biggest adventures can be found in books.

## Nothing can compare to reading a really good book

### Teachers find they're wrong about teenagers today

By Robbie Nizzberg

Special to The Oracle

Teachers are wrong about teenagers. They stereotype us into a group of stupid, television-watching, magazine-reading dolts, who do nothing productive once they get home from school. We are not like that.

I don't read magazines and I don't watch television. I admit I have done both before, but I feel it is unfair when Mrs. Nelson accuses all of the students in her class of always watching bad television shows and reading degrading magazines. I do neither.

When I was younger, my parents wouldn't let me watch TV, and my only entertainment was books. My parents also didn't buy me subscriptions to magazines such as *Teen People* or *YM*. I didn't even know some of these magazines existed until my middle school years. Maybe my parents are crazy.

During elementary school I always thought they were, as I jealously listened to my friends discuss last night's episode of *Friends* or the new music video on MTV. All I

had to share was my great love for *The Chronicles of Narnia*, but I kept my mouth shut so as not to embarrass myself.

My friends would have thought, "Reading? Who reads for fun?"

Today, I tell people that I like to read. I'm not missing out on anything by not watching TV; in fact, I'm probably doing myself a favor. TV is a waste of time. Parents shouldn't let their children "veg" the day in front of the TV. A book is more educational, and it can be fun. (Trust me, it *will* be fun if you have no other option.)

If I really wanted to, I could watch TV and order myself magazines now that I'm older, but I have never felt the inclination to do so. TV is not a part of my life, and it never will be.

I think I'm smarter because of this. I don't think my life would be any better if I came home from school and watched hours of television every day.

Maybe Mrs. Nelson is right about most of her students watching too much TV, but it's wrong to criticize all teenagers for their habits when they're all different.

## Reality bites

By Evan Dalrymple

Special to The Oracle

America is doomed. Hundreds of thousands of guilty Americans tune into weekly garbage television shows that have been deceptively labeled Reality TV.

These programs range from talent competitions like "American Idol" to nausea-inducing displays of foolish courage like "Fear Factor." Add to this the mass of shows where dozens of women take true love with the hope of winning a wealthy husband, as well as the pathetic home-remodeling programs, and there's the fall television line up. With this kind of fifth surrounding us, it is no wonder people are getting lumber.

I can't possibly be the only person who has noticed that reality TV is the furthest thing from real life. What are the real world chances of being given a mansion where people's only job is to lie to beautiful, brainless

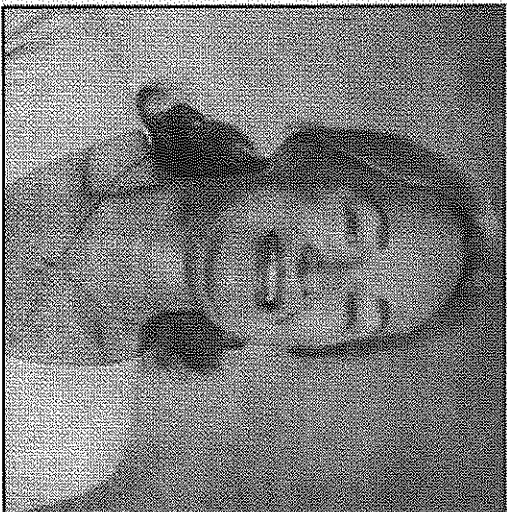


women about how rich they are? And when was the last time a celebrity crashed your house and completely redecorated it with designer furniture? Not only is the term "Reality TV" misleading rubbish, but the content itself is horrible.

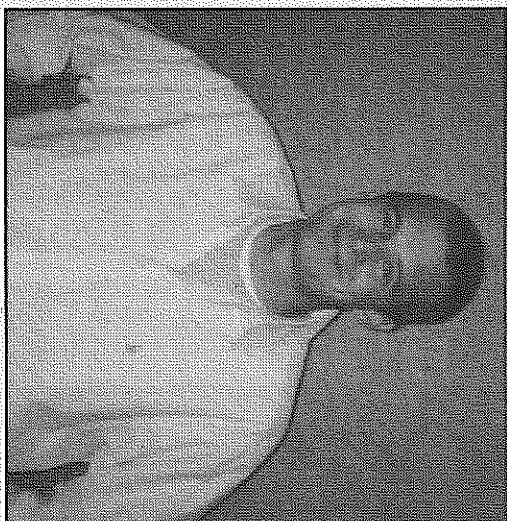
Corporate America has really done a number on us this time. These kinds of programs were designed for the shallow, for anyone who thrives on seeing other people make fools of themselves. Luckily for television executives, apparently half of the human race lives for exactly this. Perhaps it's easier for people to see how others live than to actually leave the comfort of their own couch and make something of their own lives.

Society would be much better without Reality TV. TV was bad before, it's only getting worse. Everyone should cut his or her cord and move away from the pull of addicting contests of human stupidity and go about their own lives. We should turn off the TV and make an effort to improve ourselves, especially our tastes.

Don't give into the lure of mindless entertainment; you can do it; all it takes is a good reality check.



Yearbook photo



John Nylen

English teacher Sara Schwarberg relived at Thanksgiving after 44 years of teaching. Schwarberg was known for her sweet nature and ultimate patience with freshmen. Simon Schatmeyer, right, took over Schwarberg's five freshman classes. He comes to WS from the Shenandoah Valley.

## End of year for some, beginning for others

TEACHERS from page 1

"The task of filling such a well-respected teacher's position is an ambitious one," said Schatmeyer. "I hope I can live up to her reputation and standards."

University.

"It didn't take long to get settled in. The connection was easy because I think they enjoy having a teacher that is spirited and energetic," said Schatmeyer. Harris has been teaching

"The task of filling such a well-respected teacher's position is an ambitious one."

—Simon Schatmeyer, teacher

But adapting was no challenge for Schatmeyer, who comes from teaching British and American Literature at Central HS in Woodstock. This will be his third year teaching after graduating from James Madison

order, and maybe join a rock band." She also began her career with the intention to retire before she lost her sense of humor. "I still have a sense of humor but I feel it going, so I want to leave before it goes away," Harris said.

Harris came to WS as a sub and that is when she knew she wanted to teach here because she felt it to be the best school in the area.

"I always had the freedom to do what would best serve my students," she said.

She often made English 3-D by acting out plays and just being dramatic.

## Traffic designed to move new

### way, yet complications arise

PARKING from page 1

consistently, the way the cars and buses were moving together, that there wasn't enough move onto Tuttle Road, and once the cars backed up, the buses were blocked from getting through."

The combination of cars and buses would become blocked all the way into the crossing guard entrance. There were even instances of buses arriving to campus on time, but not being able to get to the drop off points until after the late bell had already rang.

"We knew we had to do something," said Campo. "It was an absolute mess."

Then, after several meetings with the department of transportation and the Fairfax Police Department the final plan

was devised.

The next step was then to eliminate the faculty parking spaces along the tennis courts to insure that there would be ample room for the buses to move in and out from the back parking lot.

"We anticipate some opposition, but the faculty [already faced] it from parents coming up into the parking lot [to drop off at the sports lobby entrance]," said Campo.

This will no longer be a problem, however, because the gate at the bottom of the ramp will be closed to prevent this exact issue. The gate set up at the traffic triangle will also remain closed and will only be opened under certain conditions of inclement weather to prevent any problems coming uphill on Tuttle Road.

To reduce confusion among parents and students alike, officer Rodney Barnes and Ukele both stood out in the streets directing traffic.

However, when January 5 came, the wait for parents to drop off their students was anywhere from 10 to 15 minutes from the entrance of the campus to exit back onto Tuttle Road.

Hundreds of complaints have come in from parents that the new system has failed, while seniors, faculty, and buses are experiencing little to no difficulty entering the school grounds.

Parents may soon be allowed access to the Sports Lobby entrance after all the buses have dropped off students and exited the grounds, cutting down the

## Drug expulsions reach extreme high

EXPULSIONS from page 1

—Dr. David Smith, principal

"Sometimes they decide to stay [at their new school] if they are doing real well there and stay away from what tempted them here."

Smith recognizes that it is easy for a student to be tempted and that they have important decisions to make.

"I think kids in this generation are flooded in opportunities hurtful to them."

"I think kids in this generation are flooded in opportunities hurtful to them, but a lot are successful in avoiding these opportunities," said Smith.

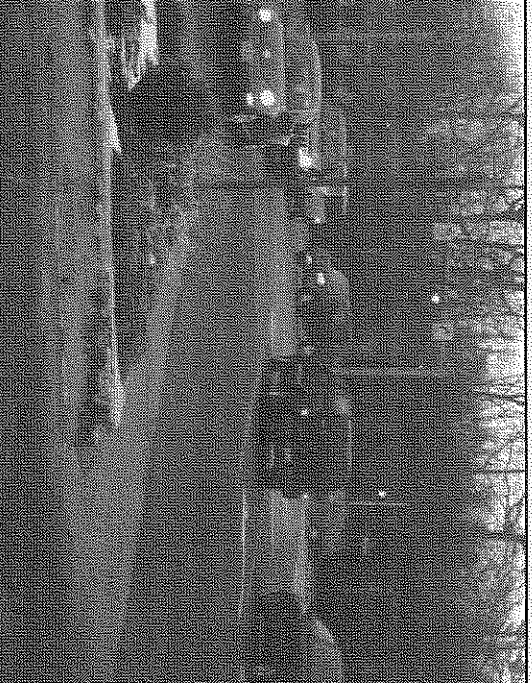
"What I go back to is take care of each other and your friends," said Smith. "Students need to hear if they choose to come to school with this stuff they can get caught and chances are real good they won't ever come back here."

While it is not possible to fully prevent each and every student from engaging in activities that could undoubtedly get them into trouble, Smith tries to get out the message.

"I think kids in this generation are flooded in opportunities hurtful to them, but a lot are successful in avoiding these opportunities," said Smith.

Unfortunately, Harris does not know who will be replacing her. But she said that whoever that is should "have a good sense of humor and like crazy tenth graders."

Harris and Schwarberg leave with a bittersweet feeling. They will both love travel but they will miss the joy of teaching. As Harris says, "It's one step from heaven."



Susan Sommerfeldt

Upon returning to school after break, students, parents, and teachers were welcomed with the new morning traffic pattern. Unfortunately, the pattern didn't work as well as planned. There have been many complaints as a result of the change. "We're always going to have traffic problems," said security officer Mike Ukele, but some alterations may be made to the new pattern to try to improve the situation.

waiting time slightly. If this new pattern continues to be a problem, more alterations may be made. "We're always going to have

traffic problems," said Ukele. "The school isn't designed to handle 500 cars at 7:20 in the morning."

## English 11 Honors eliminated from student enrollment

By Rachel Wohlers

Oracle Editor

This spring when rising juniors meet with their counselors to choose their classes there will be one less option.

After much thought and deliberation, WS made the decision to drop honors as an option from the course list.

The main reason for dropping English 11 Honors from the list of class choices came from last year's decision to make AP Language and Composition, a class open to both seniors and juniors in the past, available for juniors only.

"The need for honors English is not as apparent [now]," said English teacher and department chair Mary Moriarty.

Other schools in the county realized there was less of a need for the honors class last year and it wasn't offered

this year at some. This decision is similar to one made several years ago to drop English 12 Honors as a choice, since AP Literature was a seniors-only class and English 12 was also available.

Another thought is that graduating sophomores are afraid to sign up for an AP class their junior year, even if they have done well in English during previous years.

"Those who would profit from the experience of an AP class take honors, even though they are well-prepared because of freshman and sophomore English classes," said Moriarty.

Junior year has a reputation for being the most difficult year of high school when it comes to the work load and especially with students being able to sign up for more AP classes. Students are afraid of giving themselves a work load they can't handle.

"I took [honors English] mostly because I didn't want too strenuous a schedule because I'm taking AP US History," said junior Leslie Sherman.

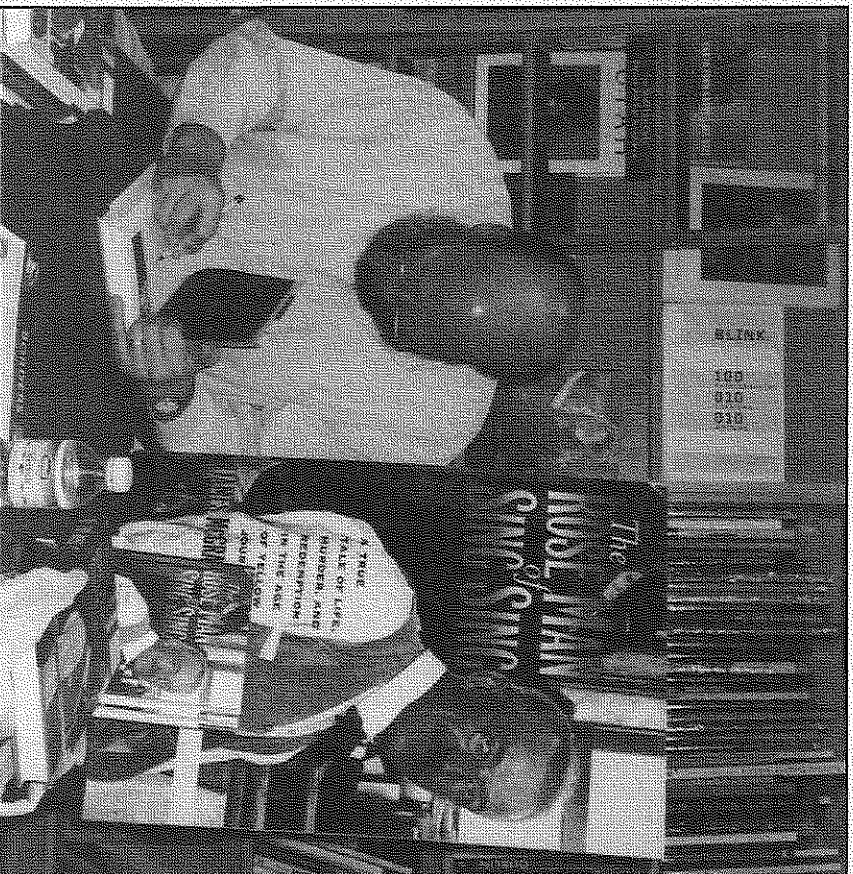
A problem with honors English is that it is somewhat misleading, giving students the idea that they are signing up for a challenging class, yet without quite the work load of an AP. However, the curriculum varies very little between honors and regular. After a few months in the class, students question the real difference between honors compared with AP or regular.

"We do a lot of the same things [as regular], like what books we read. It's really nothing different," said Sherman. "If I could go back, I'd have taken AP Lang."

Students aren't the only reason honors English was dropped.

"There is also the issue of staffing," said Moriarty. "Some classes are so small we might have to collapse a class and that would mess up all the students' schedules." Overall, the decision to drop was made with the intention of helping, not hurting, students.

"Letting it go works out better," said Moriarty. "Offering kids two choices is just better for them."



Sarah Drabkin

WS Government teacher, James Morris, leads a double life as an author. He recently had a discussion followed by a book signing at the Springfield Borders. His fifth book, *The Rose Man of Sing Sing: A True Tale of Life, Murder, and Redemption In the Age of Yellow Journalism* has lead Morris to appear on numerous talk shows such as *NewsHour* with Jim Lehrer and has received rave reviews from the *New York Times*.

## WS teacher leads double life

By Emily Miller  
Managing Editor

Murder, love scandals, prison and roses. Welcome to the life of Charles E. Chapin, dead 73 years, but recently resurrected by government teacher James Morris. On November 3, 2003, Morris' fifth published book, *The Rose Man of Sing Sing: A True Tale of Life, Murder, and Redemption In the Age of Yellow Journalism*, was released to the public in efforts to bring Chapin's legacy back alive and kicking.

Chapin was an accomplished journalist of the early 20th century. As a boy, he earned money delivering papers, and as a teen he published his own newspaper and monthly newsletter. He was a cold-blooded ruthless reporter for the *Chicago Tribune* unmaking gruesome murder stories as a young man, and by 29 he became the city editor of one of the most prestigious newspapers in Chicago.

Chapin's success in the news realm was short-lived. He shot his wife and was sentenced 20 years to life in Sing Sing, a New York state prison. But instead of repenting for his sins, he devoted himself to his new hobby: growing roses in the prison garden, which Morris concentrates on later in the novel.

Morris felt compelled to write Chapin's biography because he wanted to share his true story with the public, who might otherwise never learn of it.

"He is mostly referred to in a mythological fashion," said Morris. "My book separates myth from reality."

Morris began writing Chapin's account in the early '80s and since then has spent innumerable summer and winter breaks researching his life. Morris went to great lengths to finish his book, even abandoning his family for two weeks to join a writers colony where he could focus 24 hours a day on the "architecture of the book." He went on Sherlock and Holmes-like adventures and road trips. Morris and his 16-year-old son, Ben, traveled to Colorado and Kansas in attempt to narrow down the places where Chapin used to live.

"It's a blast," said Morris. "All my kids helped in some way."

Morris is currently advertising his book by going on "book tours," by talking about his book on the radio, television and in bookstores. One of his most prized accomplishments is being reviewed by *The New York Times*, *Publisher's Weekly* and excerpted in *Entertainment Weekly*.

"I'm ecstatic because most books are ignored," said Morris. "The worst fate an author can suffer is to be ignored."

## Farewell, auf wiedersehen, adieu Dr. Domenech resigns after 26 years as FCPS Superintendent

By Rachel Wohlers  
Oracle Editor

On Wednesday, December 3, Dr. Daniel Domenech, the superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools, announced his intention to retire. For the past six years, Domenech has been in charge of school closings, promoted school productions and attended performances, and worked to increase student achievement overall. He became FCPS superintendent in 1998, having previously held similar positions across the state of New York.

Although successful now, life was not always easy for Domenech. He came to the U.S. from Cuba when he was nine years old, not knowing any English. He worked hard over the years and earned a B.A. degree from Hunter College and a Ph.D. from Hofstra University, both located in New York. He began his career as a sixth grade teacher at a public school in Queens and then gradually moved up until he became the superintendent for the South Huntington School District, which he held for 13 years.

Having been a superintendent for the past 26 years, Domenech is ready to move on, for both personal and professional reasons.

"My priorities are changing," said Domenech in his

letter of resignation to the School Board. "I miss seeing my children and grandchildren who are growing up in the New York metropolitan area. I also have two aging parents on Long Island who are becoming increasingly dependent on me."

Another reason for Domenech's retirement is a job opportunity in New York, provided by the publishing company McGraw-Hill Education, where he will be their Senior Vice President of Urban Markets.

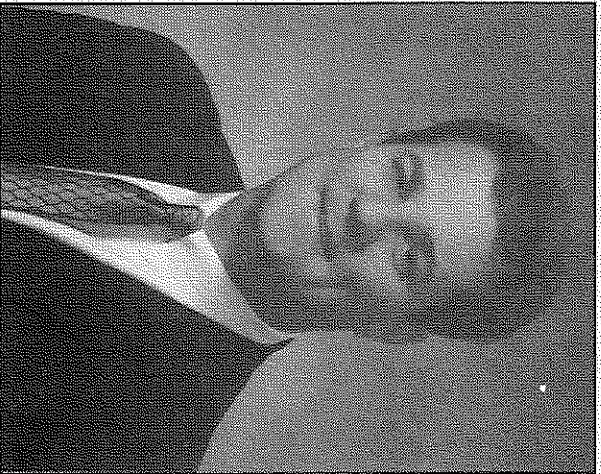
"His departure is a huge loss for us all," said school board chair Ivis Castro in a FCPS press release on Domenech's retirement. "We are losing a great educator. He knows what it takes for children to learn and what teachers need to be able to teach. He understands how to work with the whole community."

Although Domenech's time here in Fairfax County will in the middle of the school year, he isn't leaving us hanging.

"When I was hired, my mission was to keep this wonderful school system moving forward and to build on its excellent quality in spite of the changing demographics and adverse economic conditions," said Domenech. "I leave with the confidence that that mission has been accomplished."

**"Thanks to all the WSHS  
students who helped out  
on the 2003 Republican  
campaigns."**

**—Delegate Dave Albo**



**Dave Albo, WSHS  
Class of 1980**

Paid for by Delegate Dave Albo for Delegate



## News Bites

On January 9 and 10, Sunghee Baem, Leoncarlo Canlas, Emmar Harton, and Jasmine Lee will perform with the District Honor Orchestra at Fairfax High School.



Tune it to It's Academic on January 17, 2004 at 10:00 a.m. on Channel 4. The team of seniors Adam Boldt, Simon Gammache, and junior Emily Boling won their first round match.



Later this year, junior Amy Lacrosse will sing with The Master Singers of the Fairfax County Choral Society.



Congratulations to the following Fall Sports First Team All Regional Honorees: Derry Steer (Cheer), Kris Benton and Steven Tobin (Cross Country), and Desmond Braziel (Football).

—Compiled by Lauren Kondo

**Albo** State Delegate

## Giving your mouse a workout Shopping at your fingertips is just a click away

By Lauren Kondo

Features Editor

Click Done. No more standing in atrociously long lines. No more dealing with rude cashiers. No more fighting off other customers for the last item on the shelf. Online shopping gets rid of many of the hassles of mall shopping.

As the holiday season wrapped up, some students chose to purchase their gifts from the internet.

Popular sites included amazon.com and ebay.com.

Amazon offers practically everything under the sun: clothes, books, toys, appliances; they sell it all. A special feature is the wishlist, which permits users to check off items they desire. Friends and family members can consult the list to get the perfect gift.

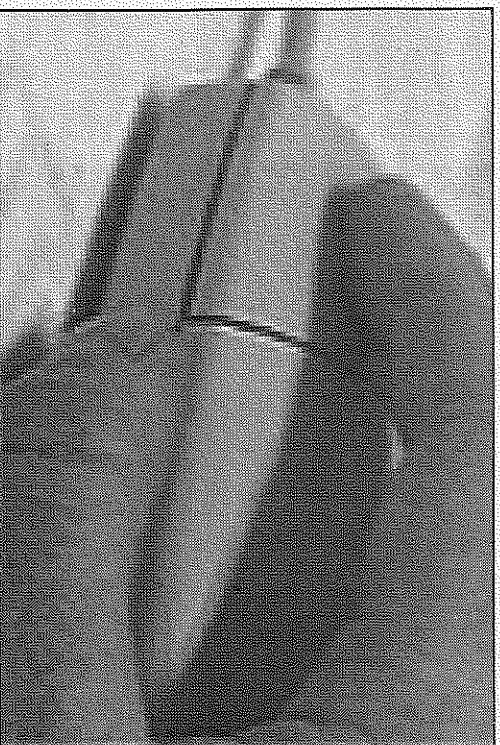
Other sites offer some stranger things. Grocery shopping can be delivered to your door by sites like peapod.

Medicine, glasses and contact can also be found online. Also, tickets to movies, concerts and plane and train rides can be

Online shopping is also better when looking for novelty collector items.

Freshman Jocelyn Ott is a frequent online shopper.

"I actually recently bought some 'Lord of the Rings' memorabilia, some books and a



bought with an easy click.

Online shopping has numerous advantages. Shoppers

cloak," said Ott.

But online shopping also has its downsides.

"I don't like having to give out my credit card number," said senior Christie Buzan.

Questions of safety discourage some students from buying items online.

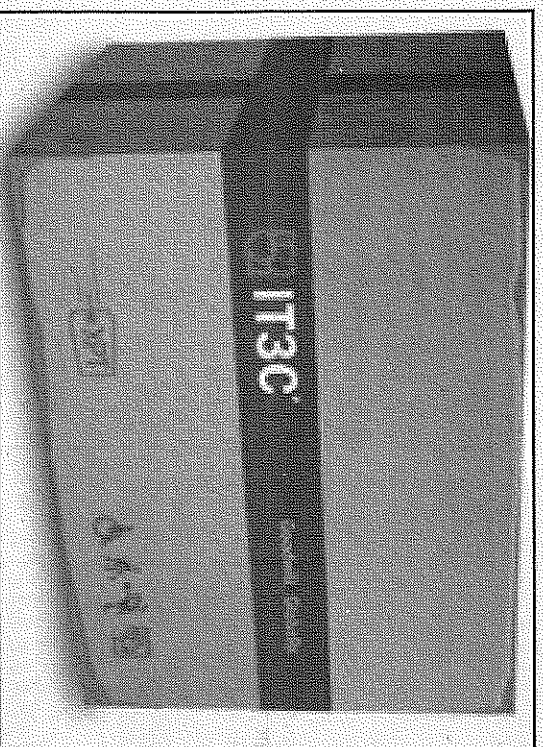
"It would be easy to cheat somebody," said Ott. Also buying clothes can be problematic because of the inherent disadvantage of not being able to try on things like shirts or shoes.

"I wish I could look at the stuff, like clothing," said senior Lesti Baum.

Some students disregard such problems and buy clothes online anyway.

Sophomore Kim Cosby bought shoes from finishline.com. "It was easy finding shoes," said Cosby.

So, say goodbye to frustrating lines at the mall and say hello to your mailbox.



Ebay offers items to buy on the spot or bid on. The usual stuff can be found, as well as unusual knickknacks unique to the site. It offers updates on auction times that can be sent.

can browse clothing racks or book shelves from the comfort of their home. Sites like Amazon offer comparable sales and discounts found at department stores like Macy's or Hecht's.

## Metrosexuals take a boys' night out at the salon

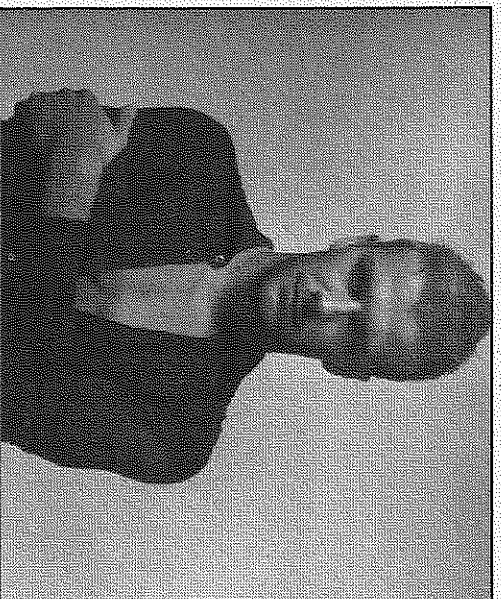
By Betsy Miller

Senior Staff Writer

Due to the recent Massachusetts Supreme Court case regarding gay rights, homosexuality has reached its peak in popularity. More open acceptance of gays throughout the decades has not only led to society's increased tolerance of homosexuality, but acknowledgement of all behavioral differences, including the increased "feminization" of many straight males.

This season's popular television show "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" has served as a definite catalyst in a movement that has been building since first introduced by British writer Mark Simpson in 2002—"metrosexuality." Metrosexuality serves as tangible proof of the manner in which gay pride has aided straight males in their realization of the importance of personal grooming habits and style. A metrosexual is defined as a straight man, living in an urban, metropolitan environment who is in touch with his feminine side.

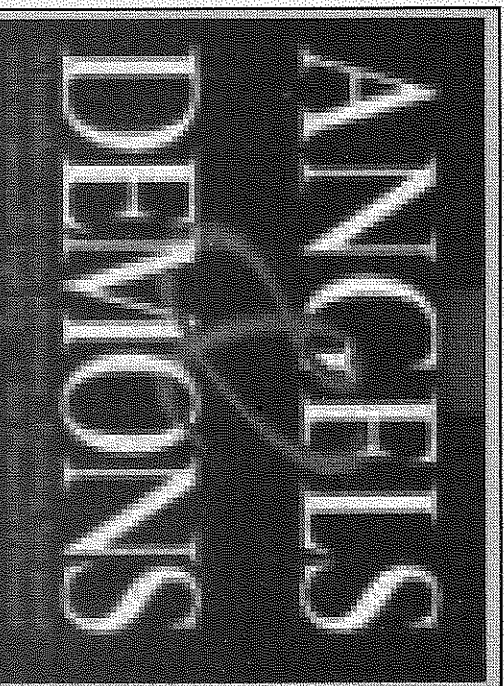
"I would like to be a metrosexual because they get more girls. Look at David



Soccer sensation David Beckham is the quintessential metrosexual who kicks back at the spa and the mall.

Beckham," said senior Shaun McGahan, in response to the new "girly" phenomenon.

McGahan has a point. Madrid Real soccer player David Beckham, the widely accepted poster boy of metrosexuality, relaxes in spas and enjoys manicures after particularly taxing practices. Beckham rivals the shopping expenditures of his wife, Victoria (more widely known as Posh Spice), while scoring great designer finds



## Angels and Demons

By Hilary Heincer

Senior Staff Writer

Dan Brown became a success with his book *The Da Vinci Code*, a sequel to *Angels and Demons*. While extremely well written, *The Da Vinci Code* cannot hold a candle to the previous novel.

Robert Langdon, a symbolologist, is awoken in the middle of the night with a phone call. After he hangs up, he is faxed an image of a dead body branded with a symmetric symbol that spells out "Illuminati."

So begins a fast paced novel that follows Langdon as he travels first to Belgium, then to Vatican City throughout the next 24 hours. After being flown to a scientific laboratory, he meets with the head of the company as well as the daughter of the victim, Victoria Vetra.

Langdon is pulled into the age old battle between religion and science. It appears that a secret society, the Illuminati, thought to have died out over 500 years ago, has reappeared, placing a new, dangerous biological weapon at the Vatican which is in the process of choosing a new Pope.

Throughout the next 24 hours, Langdon and Vetra must stop the Illuminati before it's too late. They dash about Rome trying to follow the hidden path

to the secret Illuminati lair. What they discover along this path challenges everything they believe in.

Brown's novel contains an intense amount of information. It is all woven so well together that readers have trouble figuring out where non-fiction ends and fiction begins. The physics in the beginning can be a bit overwhelming, but in the end it is clear that anti-matter is a destructive weapon that should not be put into the wrong hands.

Brown keeps the twists coming throughout the novel. Whenever it feels that it is coming to a conclusion or dragging, readers are taken on a new unexpected twist or turn until the very end. It's impossible to guess the ending until it actually comes.

The chapters are short; they keep readers wanting more. It's easy to just sit down to read a chapter or two in those spare moments of down time. The only trouble is when the story comes to a point where the reader will refuse to put it down. It's likely that he or she will stay up rather late just to find out what happens next.

It's refreshing to find such a story in the midst of all of the manufactured, predictable stories written today. Brown's story is intriguing as well as informative. It deserves to be read.

on the racks of Britain's it stores. Though a select few accuse Beckham of being "girly" or "a fairy boy" most of the women in the Western Hemisphere would beg to differ.

"Even though he spends a lot of time on himself, he still looks good," said junior Erin Cartwright, who introduces the question of whether guys with supposedly more effeminate qualities get more girls.

Thus, while many say "the clothes make the man," attire explicitly defines the seasoned metrosexual. Metrosexuals are not only aware of all of the latest trends, they can wear them without looking ridiculous, a feat that can be difficult when the season's latest couture borders on the flamboyant (think velvet sweat suits). However, the tried and true metrosexual often attempts to feign carelessness in regard to his flawless wardrobe.

"These clothes weren't dirty," said senior Brendan Carter about his innate sense of style.

And even though metrosexuals do receive recognition from the female front for their impeccable appearances, many claim that they dress for themselves alone. Much like "women of the new millennium" dress to fulfill their own sense of self, not a man's vision, the sophisticated metrosexual utilizes his style as an

important social tool, not a sexual ploy. Although some claim metrosexuality is an extension of society's obsession with appearance, the refined gentlemen in question are proving that their fastidious is simply an extension of their own particular route to self-enlightenment.

## Hollywood blockbusters

### Lord of the Rings

The third installment of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy finally arrived in theaters December 17. The journey continues with Frodo, Sam, Aragorn, Legolas, Merry, Pippin, and the rest of the fellowship as they fight the forces of evil and try to destroy the ring. The first two movies grossed over \$653 million and the final one has already earned over \$222 million.

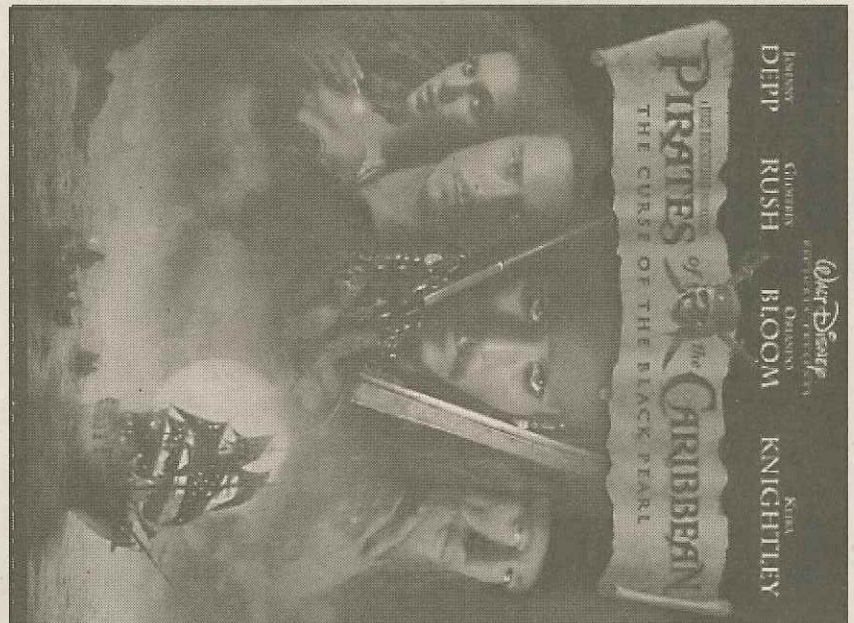


### "The Matrix" Trilogy

Fans of the movie *The Matrix*, released in 1999, had a long wait until the release of its sequels, *Matrix: Reloaded* and *Matrix: Revolutions* this year. The first film in this trilogy was a hit and viewers eagerly anticipated the much promoted second in the series. *Matrix: Reloaded* was a success at the box offices as well. These two movies together grossed almost \$1.2 billion worldwide. *Matrix: Revolutions*, which opened in November, grossed approximately \$50.2 million the first weekend. Some were disappointed by the third and final movie, but overall the trilogy had a lot of fans.

### Pirates of the Caribbean

The swashbuckling summer blockbuster hit the silver screen with a bang. Theaters filled with people wanting to see Johnny Depp and Orlando Bloom fight cursed pirates, drink rum, and save the girl. The movie grossed over \$305 million just in the United States. Not bad for the first PG-13 film made under the Disney logo. Savvy?



### Finding Nemo

*Finding Nemo*, a film released in May by Disney/Pixar, proved to be enjoyable for children and adults alike. The movie follows a scatterbrained fish named Dory, and Marlin (also a fish), Nemo's controlling father as the two search for Nemo. Nemo is trying to gain independence from his father when he is kidnapped by a scuba diver and put in a fish tank in a dentist's office. This movie is full of adventure and humor and keeps the audience laughing constantly. *Finding Nemo* has a domestic gross of about \$339 million in the theaters.

## Environmental happenings

### February Snowstorm

WS doesn't usually close for President's Day, but this past February was a different story. The weekend of February 15-17, a massive snowstorm hit the DC metro area. Schools closed for days as students enjoyed up to 28 inches of snow. 28.2 inches fell at BWI, breaking the record set in 1922. Unfortunately, FCPSS decided to add a half-hour to the school day, which made the snowstorm a bittersweet event.

### Hurricane Isabel

Hurricane Isabel hit the East Coast of the US on September 18. Virginia and North Carolina declared states of emergency. The

hurricane caused destruction of whole houses and power outages and no water in parts of Northern Virginia. The high wind speed (maximum 105 mph) caused most of the damage.

### Virginia Earthquake

Residents in Richmond and surrounding areas experienced two earthquakes on December 9, at 3:59 pm. The quake's epicenter was located approximately 28 miles west of Richmond, three miles under the earth's surface. The tremors registered at 4.5 on the Richter scale, lasting only a short period of time. The rarity of earthquakes in Virginia gave residents a reason to panic.

## Reality tv shows take over

### American Idol 2

In May, Ruben Studdard won the title of the second American Idol. However, the competition wasn't over. Runner-up Clay Aiken proved that he wouldn't be second best, his first single, "This is the Night" reaching number one on the Billboard charts while Studdard's "Flying Without Wings" was only number two. Looks like Aiken beats Studdard in the real world where sales, not votes, matter.

### Punk'd

"Punk'd" is the new show where celebrities are pranked instead of normal citizens. For two seasons, Ashton Kutcher has led a team of people that catch celebrities on camera for MTV. Britney Spears, Halle Berry, Frankie Muniz, and even Kutcher himself have all been pranked for the hit series. Eliza Dushku "caught" stealing? Now that's a prank.



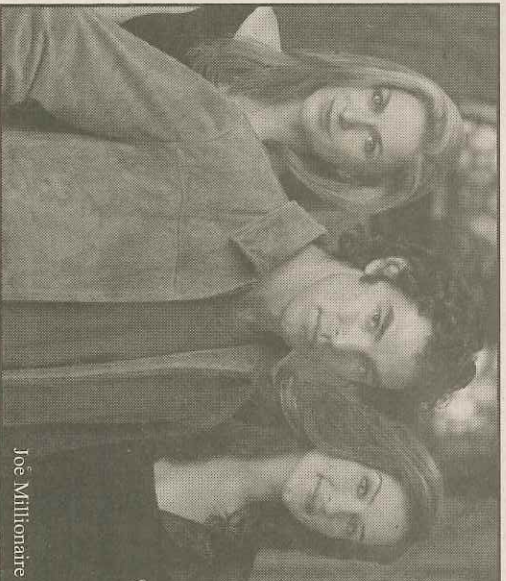
## Gadgets galore

### iPod

iPod is Apple's newest digital music player. The compact iPod is surprisingly light, but can still hold 10,000 songs. It can be used with Mac and Windows. The iPod also has features such as a voice recorder, digital picture storage, games, an alarm clock, and a note reader, not to mention a design perfect for one-handed operation and high sound quality.

### Gay TV Shows

Bravo introduced two reality series that involved a rarity on TV, homosexuality. "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" is a self-improvement show, five gay men helping one another with heterosexual man's style and way of life. "Boy Meets Boy" was the first reality dating show involving a man searching for... a man. Bravo really came out of the closet with these successful shows.



### Joe Millionaire

The most popular reality dating show of the year was "Joe Millionaire" with construction worker Evan Marriott pretending to be a millionaire searching for love. With 40 million people tuning into the finale, it was a hit. Unfortunately for Fox executives, their attempt of "The Next Joe Millionaire: An International Affair" with cowboy David Smith flopped.

## Look back & see

### Top news

—Compiled by

### War in Iraq

President Bush's address to the nation on March 20 was the beginning of the continuing fight against Saddam Hussein and his regime. The late days of March and first days of April were devoted to pushing toward Baghdad. Hussein's rule over Iraq collapsed along with his statue on April 10. Major combat operations ended on April 15, after the seizure of Hussein's hometown, Tikrit. The war lasted altogether for twenty-seven days.

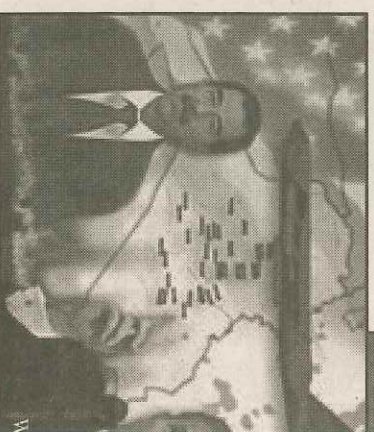
### Saddam Hussein Captured

December 14 brought some success for the hardworking troops in Iraq. Saddam Hussein was captured. Hidden in a spider hole on a farm near Tikrit, troops discovered the former dictator after assistance from suspected members of his network.

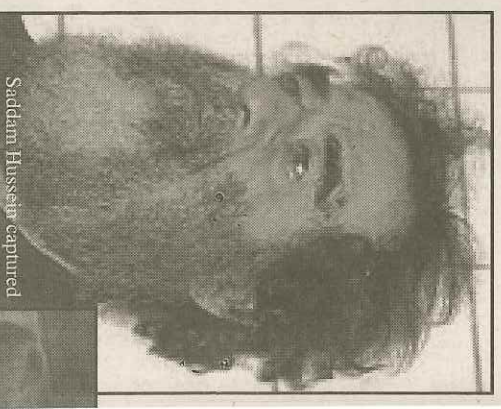
His capture marks the end of "a dark and painful era," according to President Bush.

### Sodomy Laws

In November, the Supreme Court struck down a Texas state law that banned sex between two members of the same sex. Thirteen states have sodomy laws, also invalidated by the Court's ruling. The ruling stated that the law was a violation of the due process clause (14th Amendment). The court's decision reversed an earlier case, *Bowers v. Hardwick*. The decision is highly controversial.



Sniper rifle



Saddam Hussein captured

### Camera Phones

Camera phones are the next must-have gift. TV ads glamorize these phones by catching funny moments, but some people fear that they are the newest invasion of privacy. Perfect for the times when a camera isn't handy.



# 2003

by Katherine Hutton and Anna Sommerfeldt

## Headlines

### Uday and Qusay Hussein Killed

Uday and Qusay Hussein, the two sons of Saddam Hussein, were killed in a raid led by American troops on July 22. The six-hour operation took place outside a house in the northern city of Mosul in Iraq. They resisted the coalition forces and were killed in the gunfight that followed. The men's deaths were seen as one step closer to getting their father as well.

### SARS

Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) was first reported in Asia in February. When the infection started, it was not controlled and spread quickly through the community. Infection control procedures were tightened and campaigns were made to educate the public of the symptoms of the disease. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 8,098 people were infected and 774 died. There were a few cases in the United States.

### Sniper Trial

In Fall of 2002, Lee Boyd Malvo and John Muhammad, more commonly known as the snipers, struck fear into the hearts of Washingtonians.



In July of this year, the Virginia Circuit Court moved Muhammad and Malvo's trials away from the Washington DC area, where they are accused of terrorizing. The trials were moved to Virginia Beach to ensure fairness.

### Gay Marriage

The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court passed a ruling in November allowing gay and lesbian couples to marry. The court gave the state legislature six months to rewrite the marriage laws to include gays. The governor said he would work for a constitutional amendment to reverse the decision. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger criticized the decision saying that "marriage is a sacred institution between a man and a woman."

## Highly publicized people

### Ashton and Demi

These two were the biggest May-December romance of the year. Ashton Kutcher's boyish charm and Demi Moore's sexy maturity work separately, but many people don't understand the attraction. Moore certainly made waves at the *Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle* premiere, showing up with her children, current boyfriend Kutcher, and ex-husband Bruce Willis. Considering Kutcher should be the heartthrob of Moore's daughters, their relationship is a bit strange.

### The Hilton Sisters

Paris and Nicky. Their names are now synonymous with crazy publicity stunts. All of a sudden, the wild hotel heiresses were on the Hollywood red carpet. Their antics and outfits have earned them fame worthy of all the top entertainers. However, their publicity took a turn for the worse when a videotape was brought to the public's attention showing Paris involved in actions better left in the bedroom.

### Michael Jackson

Popstar Michael Jackson has often been the subject of shady rumors, and many of which have been involving the molestation of young children. Guests of Jackson's Neverland tell conflicting stories about the happenings at the ranch, some suggesting that Jackson shares a bed with some of the children and even the existence of a secret room, while others deny this and simply acknowledge the amusements Neverland has to offer. Detectives have searched his ranch. Jackson was charged with nine counts.

### Elizabeth Smart

Elizabeth Smart disappeared in 2002, but her miraculous rescue happened in June 2003. As Americans learned of her terrifying story, they were shocked by the amazing details. Her tale was so huge that a TV movie and an Oprah special were produced only a few months after her rescue. It was one time when the media enabled, instead of hindered.



Elizabeth Smart

### Britney/Madonna Kiss

The MTV Video Music Awards had another outrageous event this year, when Britney Spears, Madonna, and Christina Aguilera shared the stage. That's not all that they shared. In the middle of their performance, Madonna bestowed kisses upon the two younger girls, supposedly passing the torch from pop queen to pop princesses. Couldn't they have chosen something a little more tasteful?

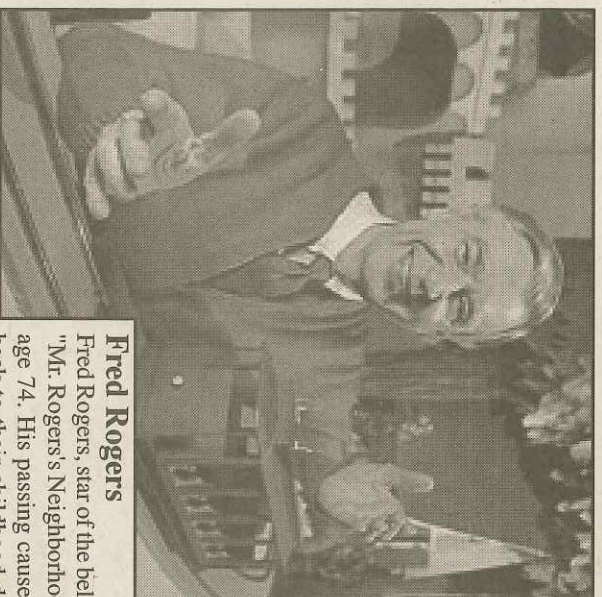
## A final farewell to...

### Katharine Hepburn

The winner of four Oscars (and twelve nominations) died quietly on June 29. She starred in such classics as *Bringing Up Baby*, *The Philadelphia Story*, and *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*. She also had an infamous affair with Spencer Tracy and preferred pants over skirts or dresses. She is often called the First Lady of Cinema.

### Bob Hope

Bob Hope died on July 27 at age 100. Hope is often referred to as "The King of Comedy," a name he earned from years of performing. The comedian made people laugh on the stage (vaudeville and Broadway), movies, and even on television. He also performed for the military during World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf War. His family acknowledges his love for making people laugh, a gift he used throughout his life to make peoples' lives seem a little happier.



### Strom Thurmond

Strom Thurmond, former Senator of South Carolina, died at age 100 on June 26. He is known for his long time service in public office and also for his stance on civil rights. Thurmond used to be opposed to civil rights, but later abandoned this view. He retired from the Senate in 2002, making him the oldest person to serve in Congress. He was respected by fellow politicians.

### Johnny & June Carter Cash

Music legend Johnny Cash died at age 71 from diabetes complications on August 28. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1992 and his music is appreciated by many. He has been honored in many music magazines throughout his life. His wife, June Carter Cash (also a country music singer), died a few months earlier on May 15 at age 73. June wrote one of Johnny's biggest hits, "Ring of Fire."

### John Ritter

On September 11, actor John Ritter

died at age 54. Ritter is best known for his role on the sitcom "Three's Company," for which he won an Emmy. He

### Fred Rogers

Fred Rogers, star of the beloved children's program "Mr. Rogers's Neighborhood," died February 27 at age 74. His passing caused many people to think back to their childhood days of singing along to "Won't you be my neighbor?" and watching King Friday and all the other characters from the neighborhood of make-believe. The show was the longest running PBS program, running from 1968.

also starred in the ABC series "8 Simple Rules for Dating My Teen-age Daughter." His last role was in the film *Bad Santa*. Apart from these, he played a variety of other roles. He is remembered fondly by family, friends, coworkers, and fans.

## Potter's back



### Harry Potter

The long awaited sequel in the Harry Potter series finally arrived in bookstores June 21. Fans had been lined up for hours before midnight, longing to get their hands on the 870 page book.

# Scouts focus on getting gold

## WS's boy and girl scouts work hard to get the highest award

By Sam Lee

Senior Staff Writer

Students at WS that participate in boys and girls scouts have one goal in mind: to either get the Gold Award or to become an Eagle scout.

Achieving the Gold Award is not an easy task. The whole process takes a grand total of four years. This excludes the time it takes to get the Silver Award, a requirement needed in order to receive the Gold. Not only does the girl scout have to create 6 interest projects, she has to also complete career exploration, which includes creating a resume and working with local business leaders. Luckily, the scout has a project advisor to help her keep up with multiple tasks, and they don't all have to be completed at once.

"It may seem like a lot to do," said senior Laura Gunkowski. "But it's broken up into little parts so you work on it really hard for a while but then you get like a little break."

Becoming an Eagle Scout requires a lot of work, as well. For a boy scout to be promoted to an Eagle Scout, he must achieve 21 merit badges. He must also create and fulfill one service project. This project has to help the community, and the scout is required to devote over 120 hours to working on it. The scout also goes through

quarter reviews at each rank and must hold leadership positions.

The Girl Scout's Gold Award and Boy Scout's Eagle Scout is a highly regarded



Courtesy of Kendall Wangsgard

other applicants."

Even after the awards have been awarded and the pins are given out, these hard working individuals still have their job cut out for them. Not only do they have to continue being a scout, but they also have to

achievement that impresses colleges.

"I really want the Gold Award for college," said senior Alyssa Lee. "It will make me stand out among all of the

"I really want the Gold Award for college. It will make me stand out among all of the other applicants."

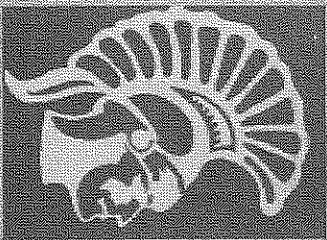
—Alyssa Lee, senior

help younger scouts by becoming a good role model as a mentor or leader.

"After you become an Eagle Scout, you have to mentor a lot," said senior Kendall Wangsgard.

But through it all, these students shine on and continue to help the WS community. Don't think these awards are just to help them now.

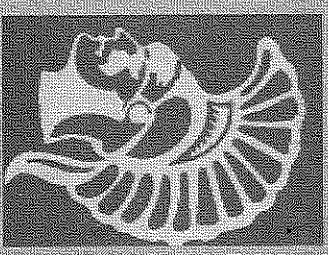
Said senior Dan Phan, "It's something good for the rest of my life."



Jackie Wilson

# Spartan Profiles

David Supola



career at WS as the Drum Major for the Spartan Marching Band. She is also a member of the wind ensemble and Personality Show Choir.

"It's easier for me to be involved and active because it keeps me more organized," said Wilson. "If I'm not doing something I feel like freaking out."

It doesn't stop there, however. Wilson is also the class secretary for the class of 2005, was on homecoming court, manages the guy's lacrosse team in the spring and is trying out for indoor color guard as well. Wilson definitely has a craving for involvement, which she considers to be a prudent part of life.

"I think it's important to be active in high school because it gives you a better picture of life outside of high school," said Wilson.

Hopefully, for Wilson, outside of high school will contain something to do with the musical arts. Wilson aspires to continue music in her future career.

"I want to be a professional composer," said Wilson.

As her busy high school adventure rushes on, band and music will remain an important part of her life not only because of her love for music but because of the life long friendships made along the way.

"The people in band are like a big happy family," said Wilson, "and because of music, share a special bond."

The ice hockey team has been very successful over the last few years. The team was undefeated in the 2001-2002 season, and it usually one of the best teams in the district.

"Ice hockey is going real good. We have a few practices a week, but we mostly play games," said Supola.

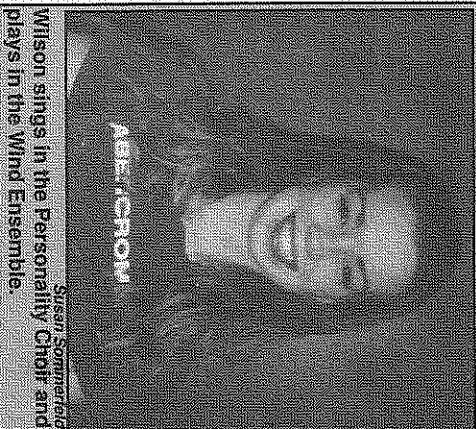
On December 16th Supola underwent surgery on a broken wrist during a recent game. But this does not hinder his spirit.

"I really enjoy hockey," said Supola. "I enjoy scoring goals, and when fans turn out and cheer for us."

Supola also tries to hit the books in school. He takes three AP classes: AP environmental science, AP calculus, and AP computer science. Supola is aspiring to go to college at either Virginia Tech, VCU or George Mason. Supola thinks that he could possibly get a scholarship to Virginia Tech, but realistically thinks he wants to get into George Mason.

Lately the WS ice hockey team has been getting more attention and the fans are showing their support.

"It's awesome when we get some fans to attend our games," said Supola. "There were times in the past when we did not have anyone in the stands, except the parents."



Christina Aral

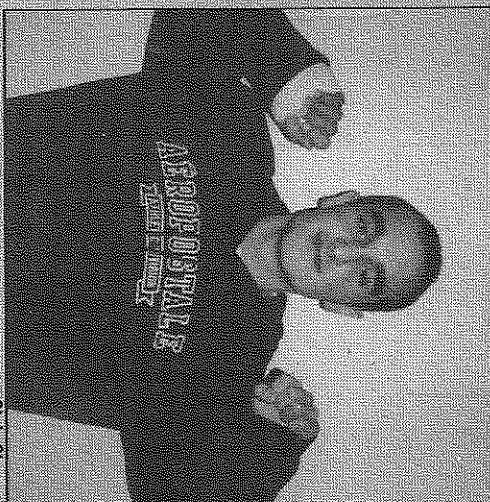
Senior Staff Writer

Music is a part of life; for some more than others, however. For junior Jackie Wilson, music is her life.

As an active member of the WS music department, music has always been an important aspect for her.

"I was always interested with music," said Wilson. "I started to dance and I ended up learning that I liked the music portion better than the dance part."

Ever since the young age of 12, Wilson began playing the clarinet. It became evident that she had a knack for the musical arts, early on, which would eventually lead to a promising musical



David Supola is an important member of the WS ice hockey team.

# The Greatest Albums of ALL TIME

1. "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," The Beatles
2. "Pet Sounds," The Beach Boys
3. "Revolver," The Beatles
4. "Highway 61 Revisited," Bob Dylan
5. "Rubber Soul," The Beatles
6. "What's Going On," Marvin Gaye
7. "Exile on Main Street," The Rolling Stones
8. "London Calling," The Clash
9. "Blonde on Blonde," Bob Dylan
10. "The Beatles," The Beatles
11. "The Sun Sessions," Elvis Presley
12. "Kind of Blue," Miles Davis

## Rolling Stone's greatest albums of all time

13. "Velvet Underground and Nico," The Velvet Underground
14. "Abbey Road," The Beatles
15. "Are You Experienced?" The Jimi Hendrix Experience
16. "Blood on the Tracks," Bob Dylan
17. "Nevermind," Nirvana
18. "Born to Run," Bruce Springsteen
19. "Astral Weeks," Van Morrison
20. "Thriller," Michael Jackson
21. "The Great Twenty-Eight," Chuck Berry
22. "Plastic Ono Band," John Lennon
23. "Imaginations," Stevie Wonder
24. "Live at the Apollo (1963)," James Brown
25. "Rumours," Fleetwood Mac

By Jen Siomacco

Oracle Editor

The battle for the spot for "the greatest album of all time" brought fierce competition, not only among popular music magazines, but also among WS corridors.

In *Rolling Stone Magazine's* January issue, a formal list was released of what the magazine deemed the top 500 albums of all time. Between artists like The Beatles, The Jimi Hendrix Experience, Eminem, Bob Marley, Jay-Z and dozens more, the list includes an eclectic mix of some of the most prominent musical talent from throughout the past century.

Considering the diverse musical tastes among students at WS, *The Oracle* decided to move out into the halls and find out just what students considered the greatest albums ever recorded.

Of the dozens of students asked, almost as many different responses were given. Surprisingly, a large percentage of students' choice albums made it onto *Rolling Stone's* master list. Even if the album wasn't featured, the artist given usually had at least one of their other albums on the list.

"Nirvana's 'Nevermind' [is the greatest album]," said sophomore Matt Jones, one of seven students to answer with this album. "It started a revolution."

"Nevermind," home to Nirvana classics such as "Smells Like Teen Spirit," "Lithium," and "Come As You Are," made it to number 17.

"[I think the greatest album is] The Rolling Stone's 'Greatest Hits,'" said senior Amanda Linkow. "The Rolling Stones were a band before anyone our age was ever born, and people our age still think they're great. There's almost a song for everyone."

The Rolling Stone's "Greatest Hits" didn't make it on to the magazine's list, but ten of their other albums did, including "Exile on Main Street," which placed at number seven.

An array of other albums from *Rolling Stone Magazine's* list were repeated among WS students. Michael Jackson's "Thriller" (number 20), Pink Floyd's "Dark Side of the Moon" (43) and "The Wall" (87), AC/DC's "Back in Black" (73) and The Jimi Hendrix Experience's "Axis Bold as Love" (82) were all named as favorites.

Despite all the debates over what stands as the greatest compilation of songs by a single artist of all time, The Beatles win the top spot with "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" at number one, and claim nine other spots on the list.

"Their music is so real, not stupid like music is now," said senior Kim Buckles. "They are the original."

"Nirvana's 'Nevermind' [is the greatest album]. It started a revolution."

— Matt Jones, sophomore

## Blink sells big with new sound

Band's eighth album leaves fans short of "Feeling This"

By Erika Werking

Entertainment Editor

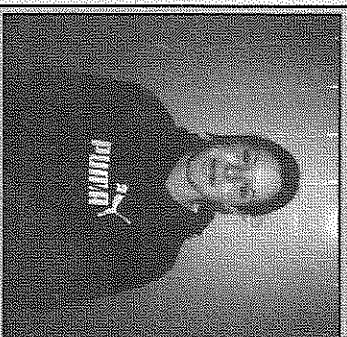
It looks like Blink, it feels like Blink, it will undoubtedly sell like Blink, but it doesn't sound like Blink. Blink-182's new self-titled release throws all the old formulas out the window to produce a highly experimental album.

They're still delivering familiar Blink songs and lyrics, but where their previous records were simple plug-in-and-play affairs, the new album goes well outside the box. In their first single off the CD, "Feeling This," Travis Barker's fiery drumbeats are flanged through tape machines — very vintage. And in the tenth track, "Always," bassist Mark Hoppus brought out four basses for a very '80s influenced sound.



Spartan Spotlight  
What

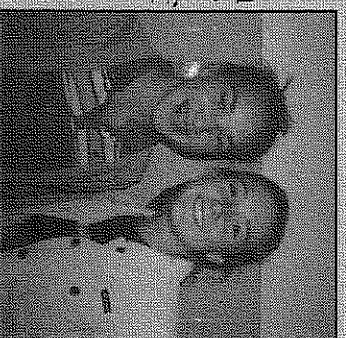
is the greatest  
album of all  
time?



Jen Siomacco

"The Red Hot Chili Peppers' 'Greatest Hits.' It's a collection of their greatest songs and it's really cool."

— Katie Quesenberry, 11



Jen Siomacco

"The Beach Boys' 'Sounds of Summer.'"

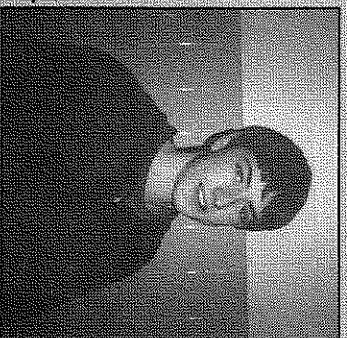
— Leah Vanatta & Chelsea Moore, 10



Jen Siomacco

"'Wednesday Morning 3 am' by Simon and Garfunkel."

— Mike Hodges, 12



Jen Siomacco

"The Beatles' 'Magical Mystery Tour.' The Beatles are the greatest rock band of all time."

— John Dias, 10

— Compiled by Jen Siomacco



Jackson hit the air waves when he was arrested on November 20.

## Michael Jackson back on the tabloids

*His dramatic life changes from past to present in the spotlight*

**By Emily Sommerfeldt**  
*News Editor*

Michael Jackson - he started out as a young African-American child, singing lead in his family's musical group, the Jackson 5. But through years of scandal and media attention, he has become one of the most publicized people ever.

With the most recent child molestation accusation made against him, newspapers and tabloids alike report on his every move, just as they have been for years.

In the late '60s, Jackson joined the singing group that his three older brothers formed. The group became a hit. Jackson's singing talent and James Brown dance moves helped the group's popularity.

"I like his old music like 'Thriller,' 'Billie Jean,' and 'Smooth Criminal,'" said sophomore Kristen Hughes. While in the Jackson 5, the

group made singles such as "ABC," "The Love You'll Save," "I Want You Back," and "I'll Be There," which reached the top of the charts.

Jackson received more recognition in 1979 when he released his first solo album, "Off the Wall." The album was a huge hit, but Jackson still remained a part of the Jackson 5. When he left the group, he was in the media with the release of his second album, "Thriller."

"His early songs were cool until he turned weird," said senior Justin Laddon.

"Weird" is just a word used to sum up the opinion people may have of all of the changes Jackson has made in his life.

"He's highly disturbing in everything he's done to himself and other people," said senior Kendall Wangsgard.

With all of the rumors of his many plastic surgeries, his true gender, his alleged affair with

Elizabeth Taylor, and his sexual preferences, Jackson no doubt, falls under a category all by himself.

"He's just a little different," said junior Sam Wallemeyer. Different or not, Jackson still gets away with more than he should. His nonconformist image tends to be an excuse for many of his unique actions.

"Too many people sympathize with him, but that doesn't disguise that he's still a pervert," said junior Elizabeth Cole.

Despite his so called perverseness, Jackson is still a well-known name in the music industry. The common opinion is that his older music is better than his more recent releases, but perhaps his talent is still there, only hidden behind his processed looks and trash actions.

"That guy has to get his priorities straight," said sophomore Dean Christesen. "He used to be a good musician."

## Junior music talent brightens

**By Christie Kim**

*Senior Staff Writer*

With all the familiar faces around school, no one would ever suspect to be in the midst of potential future musical sensations. You may have heard of him, you may not have, but junior Harold Yegezu has been the victim of the latest gossip.

Yegezu is known for his excellent freestyling abilities. He recently released his first CD called "Get um Drunk" on November 25. He sold over one hundred copies in just two days for the bargain price of five dollars. This CD is the product of many hours of hard work that he and others put in during the summer.

He and a group of friends got together in a group to start on the 16 track CD. The other members that have contributed to "Get um Drunk" are sophomores David Brewer and Jahid Mojaddidi, and juniors Vince Johnson, Hugo Duran, Tony Stackhouse, and Jarold Russell.

Yegezu feels passionately for freestyling just as any athlete feels towards

their sport.

"This is what I want to do," said Yegezu. "It's the first stage to get into the music industry."

Along with all of the sales and attention the CD has received, there is a possibility it might get professional recognition as well.

"One of my friends gave a copy to an intern at Def Jam Records so we're all excited to see what happens," said Yegezu. The possibility of a professional music star among the student body will definitely keep mouths running for the rest of the year.

He's not the only one who's excited to see what happens next. Many students enjoy listening to Yegezu's work and anticipate another CD which he is currently working on.

"When I free-style, I enjoy the recognition I get," said Yegezu. "This is my sport and my talent."

Another school-wide band loved by many, Traffic Jam Marmalade, has a demo prepared but is holding out on making any



Junior Hugo Duran manages for Junior Harold Yegezu who is a new WS music talent.

CD's. Their Dave Matthews like mixture of different sounds catches the attention of many students and won them first place in Battle of the Bands.

"We're just trying to improve our songs and become tighter as a band in order to perform better," said junior guitarist Jared Bookbinder.

They plan on performing at the talent show, and once the weather begins to get warmer in several months, they will play

often at Starbucks just as they did a few weeks ago.

With the loss of their bass player, they haven't been able to make much progress with any new work, but don't worry Jam fans, they hope to make a CD before the school year ends.

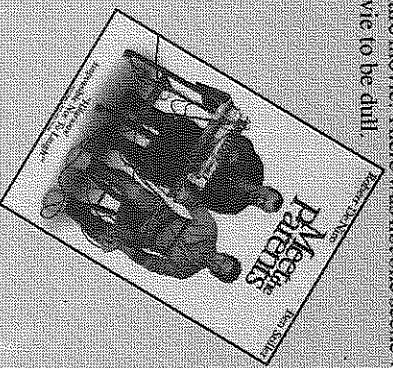
Junior saxophonist Mayank Tandon said, "We're still working on our music, but we just enjoy chilling and having fun right now."

## "Meet the Parents"

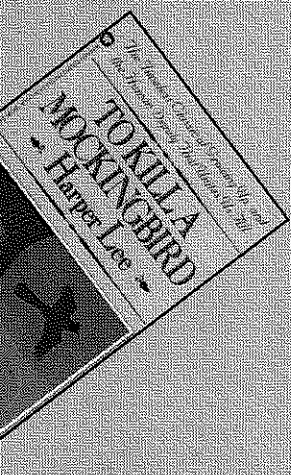
As students get ready to lay down on the couch and kick back to relax, "Meet the Parents" is a great movie to watch. It is a fantastic movie where everything goes wrong for Gaylord Focker, played by actor Ben Stiller. Stiller is an actor who can make students laugh at every moment of the movie. He also stars in "Zoolander," "There's Something about Mary," and "Keeping the Faith."

In "Meet the Parents" he plays a male nurse who is trying to marry Jack Byrnes' (Robert De Niro) daughter Pam Byrnes (Teri Polo.) De Niro is a former CIA officer who runs practically everything for Stiller. First, he makes fun of his occupation and name. Then, Stiller does one embarrassing thing after another, like breaking vases, hurting people, lighting things on fire, and creating all kinds of chaos that is very comical.

De Niro and Stiller create a one, two punch for making people laugh. Together, they are hilarious and make the movie so much better. I liked it because it kept me laughing the entire movie. There was not one scene where I found the movie to be dull.



## Oracle Picks



### To Kill a Mockingbird

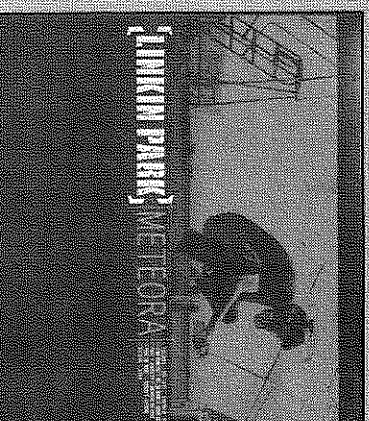
It is sin to kill a mockingbird. Mockingbirds do no one harm and they bring music to our ears. *To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee, is one of greatest books that I have ever read. The story is told by a child by the name of Scout. Her brother, Jem, and her father, Atticus, are two important people that impact her life. Throughout the story racism is main focus of the plot. The book is set in Maycomb County, Alabama.

I liked it because it made me think about symbolism and it showed the rights of passage for young people. It was a great overall book that I loved. It is one of those books that is hard to put down. Once one chapter is done, I couldn't wait to get to the next.

### Linkin Park

#### "Metemora"

Linkin Park is one of the great rock/trap bands that I have ever listened to. Their most recent CD "Metemora" feature single such as "Don't Stay," "Somewhere I Belong," and "Faint." I think this is a great CD because it has a good beat and sound to the music. The lead singer is Mark Wakefield, rapper Mike Shinoda, guitarist Brad Delson, DJ Joseph Hahn, and drummer Rob Bourdon, and "Phonemix" Farrell is the bassist. Linkin Park music is a mix of all kinds of music. Some are slow and some are fast. Some are rap and some are rock. While some are mix of one or the two, I think this is a great CD that is well worth the money to spend. If I didn't have this CD, I would definitely put this put this on my Christmas, Hanukkah, or Kwanzaa list.



—Compiled by Adam Rosen

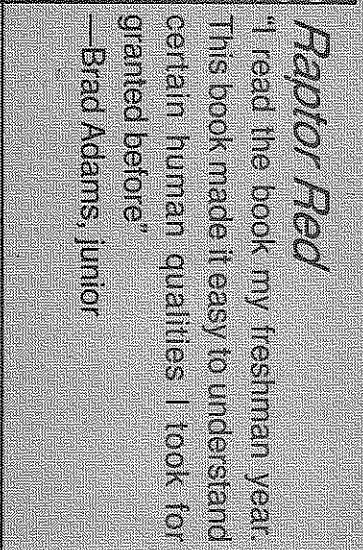
# Revive for the New Year mind, body and soul

## Books for the mind



### *The Good Earth*

"It's a great book because it opens your mind to other cultures. It's about how in China the girls aren't treated as well and how a poor farm family tries to make a better life. The [title] relates how they think how well the family will do depends on the land."  
—Jodi Sanford, Junior



### *Raptor Red*

"I read the book my freshman year. This book made it easy to understand certain human qualities I took for granted before."  
—Brad Adams, Junior



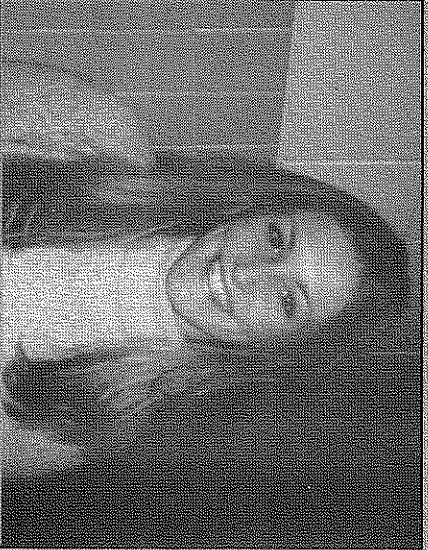
### *Watership Down*

"The book was about these rabbits trying to find a new home. I was young when I read it and at the time I thought life was Candyland. It made me figure out life isn't going to treat you fair. People betray you, but you have to triumph in the end."  
—Missy Jenkins, freshman

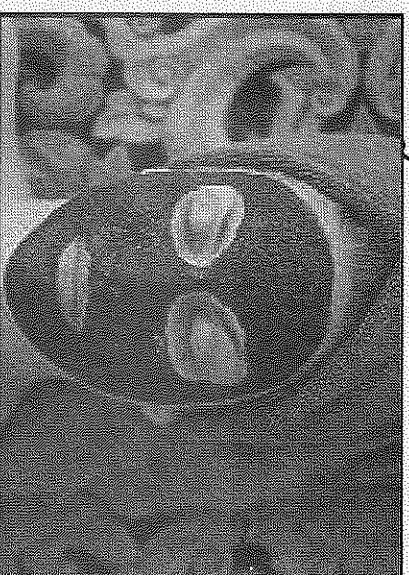


### *The Bible*

"It told me how I could have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and how to give live a purposeful life. Through the Bible, God has totally taken hold of my life and opened my eyes to His freeing, fulfilling and comforting truths."  
—Makenzie Williams, Senior



—Compiled by Katie Bourget



Stressed out students are prime candidates to enjoy spa treatments like massages and facials.

## Escape from

## midterms at a spa

By Camilia Casillas  
Managing Editor

Projects, midterms, what to wear and college applications are some of the issues that stress students out week after week. Relax! It's just high school. Some students receive gift certificates or save up to experience a day at a professional spa.

"For New Year's last year, my boyfriend got me a gift certificate to Kay Spa in Georgetown," said senior Alyssa Bolduc.

The ideal day of relaxation would begin with a day at a spa. Topped with a professional Swedish massage, a stop at the sauna and a perfume steam bath. Some spas offer thirty-minute stress relieving treatments. A half hour that purely pays special attention to a person's pressure points, neck, shoulders and scalp.

"I think some people at certain times need a day to relax," said senior Madina Bram. "People get so bogged down with stress, they need it to relieve their minds."

Lets get real though. Most teens can't afford a \$60 massage everytime they stress out. Most students have simpler methods to relax.

"Shopping," said sophomore Lisa Sherman. "When I feel like crap, I have to get something new to make myself feel better."

Other students avoid the angry, crazy drivers in Springfield and decide to stay home. Watching comforting movies, drinking hot tea or just some good sleep does the trick.

"I like talking to people that make me feel good," said Bram. "Or watch a movie because they make me forget about problems and take me out of my life for a little while."

Some people take hot baths or if they're lucky take a dip in their own, personal hot tub. Above all, whatever way one chooses to kick back, the most important factor is that they do.

"When there is a day that I can relax," said sophomore Corey Nichols, "I stay inside, drink hot chocolate and watch Christmas movies."

## Revamp tired, old, furniture for comfortable living in 2004

By Hilary Heincer  
Senior Staff Writer

It happens every year like clockwork: I look around my room and realize I need a change.

Being a high school student, I have little or no money at any given moment. Usually I resort to simply rearranging my furniture.

"I like to move my furniture around about every three months," said Junior Jessica Saravia.

However, sometimes this simple change does not work. More needs to be done. The problem every designer in training must solve is how to bring big changes without the

big bucks. When senior Jamal Mahboob redid his basement this summer, the biggest change came with the smallest pricetag.

"We painted the walls and added a border in the middle," said Mahboob. "It made it a lot more spacious."

Painted walls do not have to be boring and plain, there are many faux painting techniques.

Among these include sponging, which layers the paint so it is not all even, or marbling, a technique that brings the look of expensive stone to the walls. Many websites or books give step by step guides of how to do many of these techniques.

If such a large change or project seems daunting, or if there

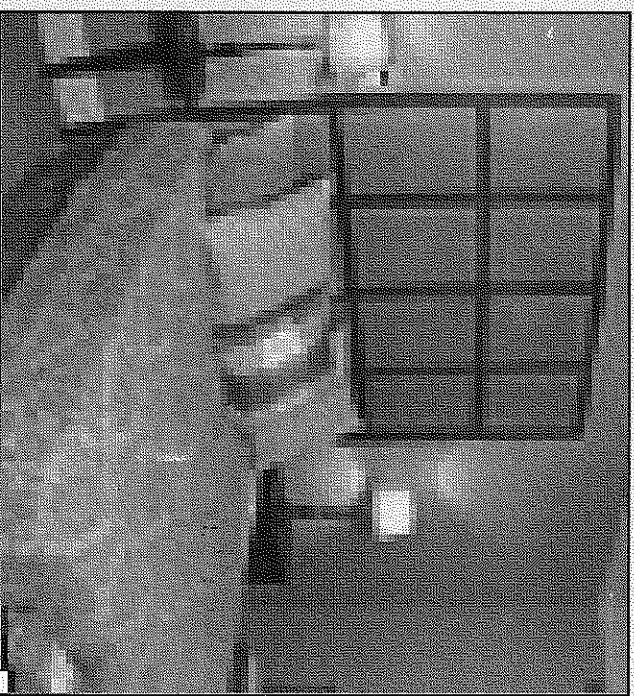
is not time to complete it, there are more options to bring about subtle changes.

Upholstering or even slipcovering is an option for furniture with worn out cloth.

Also, repainting wooden furniture gives it a brand new look. Stores like Ikea sell cheap, wooden furniture that can be painted to give it a unique look.

For more options that cost less, painting a small mirror or picture frame brings a change into the room. Another small project is making pillows. All that requires is fabric, stuffing, and a needle with thread or a sewing machine. For a higher price buy new bed furnishings.

Redecorating is a game.



New bed linens and a padded headboard, like this one designed on TLC's "Trading Spaces," give old furniture a new life.

Imagine being on a show like "Trading Spaces" or "While You Were Out." Better yet, recreate her friend's room.

"We painted the walls and brought in new furniture," said Pedder. "Now it's all bright."

# The cheerleading team is at it again

By Erika Werking

Entertainment Editor

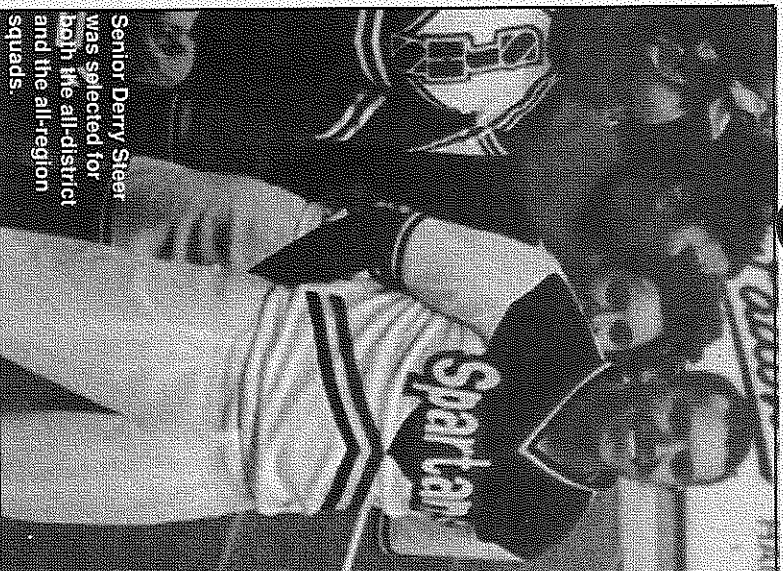
When thinking about the great WS sports, girls basketball, softball, cross-country, and soccer often come to mind, and now cheerleading should too.

"Our squad has a lot of talent coming in from outside squads and this year we really proved that we are one of the school's best sports," said senior captain Ali Dodson.

Cheerleading has indeed proven itself by coming in second in both the district and regional competitions and winning the state title for the first time in the school's history.

This is not, however, the only way the cheerleaders have distinguished themselves. Winning competitions honored the squad, but this year individual WS cheerleaders have also been honored for being exceptionally talented.

For the first time, the Virginia High School League (VHSL) cheerleading program has created all-district and all-region squads composed of cheerleaders deemed to be the best all-around from different schools. Coaches nominated cheerleaders on their squad, made video tapes of them, and submitted the tapes for coaches to watch. The coaches from the different schools voted on which cheerleaders were best. Representing WS, seniors Kelly Beyer, Christy Gudely, Meghan Bannwell, Derry Steer, and sophomore Shannon Ingersoll were chosen to be all-



Senior Derry Steer was selected for both the all-district and the all-region squads.

Courtesy of Lynne Steer

district cheerleaders. Steer was also selected as an all-region cheerleader.

"I was really excited to be an all-district cheerleader," said Bannwell. "I've never been nominated for anything like this before, so it felt really good."

WS distinguished itself on the all-district squad because, with five cheerleaders, there were more cheerleaders from WS on the squad than from any other school.

"That's cool because we really deserved it," said Beyer. "It shows just how much skill and talent our squad has."

The squad, however, was disappointed that only one WS cheerleader was selected for the all-region squad.

"I was really honored to be both an all-district and all-region cheerleader because I've never won anything, but I was hoping there would be more cheerleaders from WS on all-region. We have a lot of great cheerleaders," said Steer.

Contrary to popular belief, all-district and all-region squads are just an honor. They do not actually compete, but it is still quite an accomplishment. This year has been a great one for WS cheerleading. The squad has done better than they ever have before and deserve the school's recognition.

"The cheerleaders have always been overlooked for some reason," said Steer. "We have a lot of talent and are one of the best sports in the school."

## A new season is underway

By Christie Kim

Senior Staff Writer

The winter season brings about the culmination of runners, swimmers, and gymnasts alike to compete in these indoor sports.

The track team looks forward to their season led by their captains seniors Ashley Hughes, John McFarland, Italo Leva, Steven Tobin and juniors Andrea Delgado and Jason Langley.

Despite the cold weather, the track team practices every day after school in hopes of doing well this winter.

"We're working hard even though we run in the snow, there is a lot of talent on the team," said Hughes.

Coach Mark Campbell anticipates a small number of competitors at the state level this year.

"I can see a few members doing really well, but our team is very young with three-fourths consisting of freshmen so this is a rebuilding year," said Campbell.

The swim and dive team hopes for a successful season even though they are experiencing the same turnout as the track team.

They are led by seniors Jenna Hatley, Mandy Johnson, Justin Leddon, and Robert Everson.

"We've lost a lot of good members, but we have a lot of underclassmen this year which is good," said senior Lauren Trinka.

The gymnastics team began their season when they placed third at a competition at West Potomac against four other schools in the beginning of December.

The win boosted the team's morale and motivation for the rest of the winter.

Junior captain Jackie Stader and senior co-captain Esther Kim expect to have a successful winter season with the exciting new turnout of members.

"We have a lot of new members this season, so I think we'll all do well," said Stader. She also placed second individually all around and third place on the beam and bars.

The gymnastics team practices every day after school at Capital in Burke, but every Monday they practice at the school.

This winter hopes to be a successful one for all those who are participating in winter sports.

But even though many talented athletes have graduated, the future looks bright for the rest of the teams that consist of mostly underclassmen.

Campbell said, "The huge turnout of freshmen this year will be promising for the team in the years to come."



Chris Shannon

Winter track practices everyday afterschool no matter what the weather conditions.

www.virginianationalguard.net  
**HEROES NEEDED**

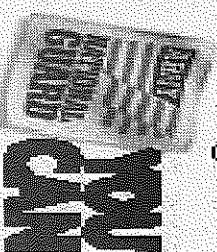
SERVE  
WHILE  
STILL IN  
HIGH  
SCHOOL

It's during times of crisis when you need a hero. Someone who has the training to rescue and protect during disaster, and the heart to weather the storm for the things you cherish most. You can depend on the Army National Guard to be there, giving a helping hand and peace of mind.

Joining the Guard is a good way to protect your future as well. If qualified, you can receive a tuition waiver to any Virginia state college or university, a steady part-time income, and many

more benefits. It only takes 30 days a year to become a noncommissioned officer today.

SFC Doug Osterman  
(703) 518-8190  
Virginia





Susan Sommerfeld

Senior Gaelan Whitworth throws down a two handed dunk during the December 12 pep rally. Whitworth and senior Mark Mazzuchi are the boys' team captains.

## Basketball teams' hopes for the new season soar high

By Tim O'Keefe  
*Sports Assistant*

The WS varsity basketball teams will have high expectations after last season solid performances. The boys lost in a heartbreaking overtime to Herndon, while the girls lost to Lake Braddock. Both games were in the regional playoffs. The new season offers a fresh slate to improve of last years results.

"I think you always want to do your best," said senior Gaelan Whitworth. "This is a new season."

Seniors Mark Mazzuchi and Whitworth, the team's captains, along with seniors Derrick Brazel, Desmond Brazel, and Pat Carol, will provide good senior leadership to the new crop of young, untested juniors and freshmen (there are no sophomores on varsity).

"I think we have real potential to be good this season," said

junior Julian Pharr. "We have great senior leadership."

The majority of the varsity players have been playing together in spring, summer, and fall leagues ever since last season ended. The pinnacle of the competition comes in July when WS basketball players travel to Virginia Commonwealth University for one week. Teams compete against some of the best teams in Virginia.

The girls varsity will be lead by junior point guard Laura Haskins. Haskins, a starter since her freshman year, is expected to make a big contribution. Haskins was selected as "All-Patriot District" in *The Washington Post's* season preview.

"I think we are going to have a real good team," said junior Megan Taylor. "We have good leadership and good outside shooting."

Both teams face the challenge of replacing stars from last years

teams. The boys lost guard Justin Baker, and the girls lost center Janelle Dods. Dods made *The Washington Post's* "All-Met" team, and Baker was an "All-Met" runner up.

WS students are also excited for the upcoming season.

"The boys team is going to be awesome, I just can't wait for this team to dominate everyone," said senior Jeff Coratolo.

Even the team managers, junior Ashley Wise and junior Andrea Gibbs, feel strongly on the upcoming year.

"I think that both varsity teams will do well this year," said Wise. "But of course the success from the boys comes straight from the managers."

The season will tell how well these teams will do, but many feel that they will do well.

"I think this team is best," said freshman varsity player Peter Latich. "We're going to win districts."

## NHL teams gear up in anticipation of playoffs

By Sam Lee

*Senior Staff Writer*

As the NFL regular season winds down and the playoffs begin to pick up, the thought of becoming the Champions of the World is on the mind of some of the league's best.

The Philadelphia Eagles are heading for the playoffs with high hopes. The beginning of the season slump ended with the revival of their quarterback, Donovan McNabb. Although McNabb is the apex of the team, he can be very inconsistent. He can either propel the team deep into the playoffs or leave them high and dry in the first round.

"McNabb helped them top the NFC East," said senior Justin Leddon.

Kansas City has been proclaimed as the best team in the NFL, but with closer looks at their losses, anyone can see that their invincibility is only an illusion. Teams that aren't afraid of the Chiefs back field can overcome the elusive running back, Priest Holmes. If teams don't pay too much attention to Holmes, but still give him respect can stop the Chiefs, because he is the spark that starts their offense. Opponents should be aware of Dante Hall, who can blast anyone's special team out of the water. Even if Holmes can be contained, Dante's inferno can still heat

the whole team.

The New England Patriots are the surprise of the season. Although everyone knows of their talent, no one could predict how far they would go. They faltered at the beginning of the season, but got a playoff berth after defeating their division rivals, Miami Dolphins. The win continues a nine game winning streak. This streak may be the momentum that gets them another Super Bowl ring.

"The team may lose some of their key players but they

Who do you think will win the Super Bowl?

Steelers	3%	Patriots	10%
Bengals	6%	Eagles	11%
Redskins	8%	Chiefs	13%
Cowboys	9%	Other	14%
Those who don't care 23%			

—Poll taken out of 241 students

—Compiled by Jen West

"They don't all have to be phenomenal players because they work together to make a phenomenal team."

—Meghan Kelleher, 12

his predecessor did, by emerging from a second string to stun the world with terrific starts. After he started, the team lost only two games and the new revival of this team may get them to the Super Bowl for yet another Championship.

As the players perfect their end zone celebrations and as quarterbacks take more snaps, the NFL will keep us guessing until the final two minutes on February 1st.

Said sophomore Scott Shoemaker, "I can't wait 'till the Super Bowl, especially if my team makes it."

## Crew members train heavily to win big this year

By Nina Moses

*Senior Staff Writer*

Walk down the wrestling hallway after school and most likely you will have to watch out for the all the Ergs (that's ergometer for all you who are crew illiterate).

The crew team is ready for another outstanding year, despite the loss of so many seniors last year. Both the guys and girls' crew team have been doing winter training since November 14 in preparation for the spring season.

The teams have been training Monday through Thursday for two hours in the afternoon and evening in hopes of doing as well as they did last year.

The guys varsity eight placed

2nd at States and Districts, while the girls placed 3rd at districts. Both teams had a boat go on to finals and the Stotesbury Cup.

The teams have also had to deal with the daunting task of last year's losses, but training has proven to be the antidote.

"A lot of the guys have been working very hard," said senior and co-captain Adam Bolik.

After school the returning members have been training on the Ergs to get ready for the spring season. Both teams are excited about the new year and don't feel losing seniors will hold them back in competition.

"It opens up more opportunities for me to get into the varsity boat," said sophomore Allison Silver.

The captains have noticed a definite improvement in those



Tom Nyffen

Seniors Jen Young and Casey Clausen and sophomore Allison Silver work hard in one of their many training sessions. This year both the boys and girls will attend the Stotesbury Cup.

who have been attending the winter training sessions. It is also an opportunity for those new to crew to learn the ropes, or the oars. Freshmen guys and girls have been training for as long as the returning members, though they are training separately.

During their two hours after

school the teams have been running, erging, and weight training. This is all in hopes that they will be a strong fighting force in the coming season. The captains seem to think that all their hard work has paid off.

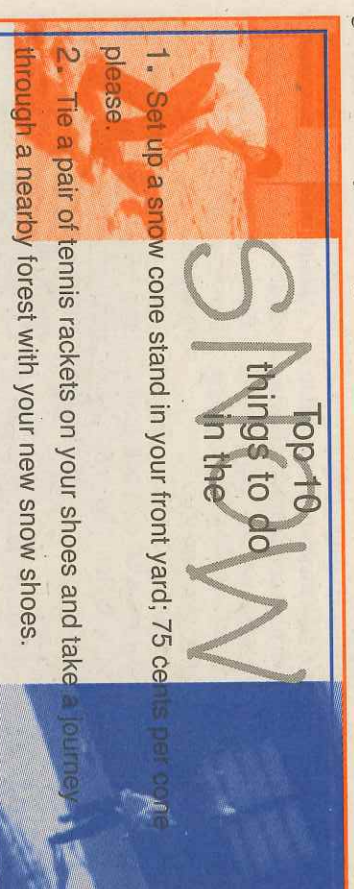
"There's definitely been improvement" said senior and co-captain Beth Ann Dick. The teams have until the end of February to get ready, and with the way training has been going it seems like both teams will be back for another amazing year. "I think we're going to have a strong season," said Dick. "We've got a lot of potential."

# 'Symbols' raise racial tension in WS

Hey Liz, What's going on? I want you to know that as of right now I am really upset with a lot of the things going on around me in West Springfield. Sadly, the mood of this letter will not be energetic and upbeat, it will be very serious. As I walked into my fifth period class today, a fellow student who happened to be African American approached me in tears because of a student going up to her with a confederate flag and throwing it in her face. She told me that kids all over school are walking around with the flag on and claiming southern pride and things of that sort.

Although we have all tried to be understanding and not be upset about them trying to be supportive of their heritage, some of these people are now opening wounds and breaking hearts. I realize more and more every day that there are still strong racial issues even in WS. If someone can wear a confederate flag to school and be draped in it, then something has got to be wrong. That flag is a symbol to millions of African American people as a symbol of racism and slavery that many of us are still hurt over. Even through some wear it as a symbol of southern pride, others wear it for the wrong reasons. So who is to know, who is wearing it for pride, and who is wearing it to oppress?

There was an article in the last paper about being ghetto and how some people dress ghetto. How do you dress ghetto? How do you act, dress or talk black? My entire life



1. Set up a snow cone stand in your front yard; 75 cents per cone please.
2. Tie a pair of tennis rackets on your shoes and take a journey through a nearby forest with your new snow shoes.
3. Be a musher for a day. Harness your dog to a sled and let him pull you away to the remote "Alaskan Tundra" of your neighborhood.
4. Build a snow family, inside a snow home, sitting at a snow table, drinking snow tea from snow teacups.
5. Make some snow devils.
6. Lick a metal pole and see what happens.
7. Have a snow shoveling contest. The winner gets to have the prize snow piled behind their car.
8. Let your artistic side shine. Build some homemade, gigantic cookie cutters and cut out some pretty shapes in the snow.
9. Snuggle up on the couch, drink a cup of hot cocoa, watch the news about the snow, and talk about the snow...all day long.
10. Dance your special snow dance. Have everyone participate. Maybe there won't be school tomorrow.

—Compiled by Grace Jo

# January for National Snow Month

# Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

# HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Gymnastics against Vernon/Lake Braddock/Robinson at WS 7 pm	Girls b-ball game vs. Hayfield— Frosh: 4 pm JV: 5-45 pm V:7-30	Junior Parent College/Career Program in the cafeteria 7 pm	"Champion of the month" Day	Girls b-ball game vs. TC Williams 4:30/6:00/7-45	Winter Track meet at Episcopa HS 7:15 am	Winnie the Pooh Day
Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday NO SCHOOL	Second Quarter exams begin	Varsity wrestling match at Robinson 7:30 pm	Gymnastics at Lake Braddock 7 pm	Swin and Dive meet against Robinson at South Run— 6:30 pm	Winter Sports compete in the Montgomery Invitation—PG County 9 am	Step in a puddle and splash your friend day
Teacher Work Day—NO SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS!	Teacher Work Day—no school	3rd quarter begins	Gymnastics at Mt. Vernon 7 pm	Boys basketball game vs. Annandale—4 p.m./5:45/7:30	Varsity Wrestling vs. Spartan Quad at WS 1 pm	A Room of One's Own Day

people have told me that I dress, act and talk white. It's not possible to act or dress a color and it's getting to be too much that all these people around heretry and tell other people they're trying to be another color. If someone wants to wear things they see from a hip-hop video than why is it a big deal as long as they are comfortable.

If someone who is black wants to shop at Abercrombie then why is a big deal if they feel good? And then you have someone in the background throwing up a gang sign that has a lot to do with people still being shot around the country today. I don't know, Liz. I don't even know if you can do anything about this issue that we are having today in our school but I thought that if I wrote you and told you that a lot of the kids around our school are hurt each and every day when kids put this flag in our face, misuse the "N" word, or do other things that are borderline between offensive or not. Everyone black, white, blue, orange, or yellow maybe has made a comment that is offensive, but all I am trying to tell people is to be conscious of the things they say and who is around them because it hurts people sometimes. I am trying to promote unity in our school and this time, Liz, I'm asking for your help as well as those in the newspaper. Thanks.

Desmond Braziel

Dear Desmond:

I have the deepest sympathy for your friend, because she did nothing to deserve that. I can't understand why this person would wear such a symbol and throw it in this girl's face when I am sure he knew the symbolism. It may be OK, legally, to don the confederate flag, but to some people it's not just a piece of fabric, and it doesn't mean the same thing to everyone. Anyone who wears this doesn't need to wear it as far as I am concerned, especially if it's affecting someone negatively.

I am horrified to hear that things like this are going on in our school. I am assuming I have not been aware of it because every day my goal is to "get through school" as I rampage obliviously through the halls, murmuring that exact quote to myself. Your letter has helped me open my eyes and raise my consciousness, after previously being so suburban and sheltered. Your words have moved me. They have alerted me to a problem that I not only feel strongly about, but I think everyone should feel strongly about.

Something is wrong. Unfortunately, we have been shaped by a society that sees things by race rather than by individualism. We have been shaped by a society that sees voting districts rather than neighborhoods. We have been shaped by a society that has leaders lying to us. We have been shaped by a society that has pornography pop up every time we go on the Internet, violent rage every time we turn on the TV and ideals based on self preservation rather than humanity. At least our school can be changed, but I can't say that I've done much to change it.

Desmond, you and I are each one person, and all I have are words. These words might say a lot, but I doubt they will do a lot. I lack the influence and the eloquence to carry off something like that. I am ready to help. Our newspaper staff has also made an attempt to address this issue, but writing about it will only make some aware of the problems. People need to care, be inspired (as with your letter inspired me) and then be willing to contribute their ideas and hands toward something to help the situation. However, this must all start with understanding.

We need to work on a common appreciation for other people's feelings. We need to stop looking at things as black and white, yellow and red. We need to respect people for who they are and start thinking a little less about our pride. We need to speak our minds and let our voice be heard.

Liz Weiderhold