



# The ORACLE

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West Springfield High School 6100 Rolling Road Springfield, Virginia 22152

## Students suspended, tryouts extended Varsity baseball players picked up for intoxication; must serve 30 days

By Heidi Sfiligoj  
Oracle Editor

Because of substance abuse suspensions stemming from an incident at a January home basketball game, WS is extending Varsity baseball tryouts this year.

Four senior boys, three of whom played on the Varsity baseball squad last year, were picked up for public intoxication at the Annandale game. The boys each received a five-day suspension from school and a 30-day suspension from school activities.

The latter suspension, however, interferes with baseball tryouts, which begin February 23. Varsity coach Ken Munoz decided to extend tryouts, which would normally end March 3, in order to accommodate three of the players. The boys have a good chance of earning starting positions on the team this year.

"The [players] deserve another chance," said Munoz. "They'll be a bit behind, but I will make the overall decision when everyone is around."

Fairfax County Public Schools regulations state that after a student's 30-day activity suspension, the coach can decide whether or not to take further action.

"The coach has to figure out a way to be fair," said Activities Director Mike Dobson. "One option is to

extend the tryout period."

One of the boys suspended after the Annandale game was not asked to try out this year because of past infractions. Munoz said, however, that he was surprised by the behavior of the other three players.

"I got a call from one of the players, who told me everything," said Munoz. "I was completely shocked."

"The [players] deserve another chance. I will make the overall decision when everyone is around."

—Ken Munoz, Varsity baseball coach

Principal Dr. David Smith views the problem as an error on the students' part.

"It's a matter of poor judgment," said Smith. "You all know the rules. It's not a matter of the coaches not saying them. It's what we as a school system stress every year."

Though the players violated the rules, other potential teammates say the boys should try out because of their experience and talent.

## Strippers steal show Broadway act receives standing ovation

By Jen West  
News Section Assistant

The day after the Grammys, students packed into the auditorium for a night filled with music, dancing and cheesy dialogue. Monday night became the Grammys, WS style.

"I liked it," said junior Anna McDevitt. "It was a variety of acts."

The music ranged from rap to

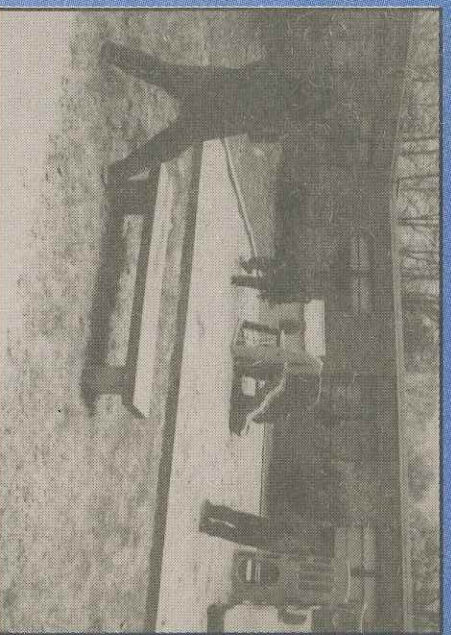
a rendition of Metallica on the strings to classic oldies. Meanwhile, the dancing ranged from tap dancing to belly dancing to a mini strip tease.

"I thought that there was more variety and that the preparation was fantastic," said teacher Allison Kopkan, one of three judges. "We pushed the envelope with some of the behavior."

The behavior that Kopkan makes reference to are the backup

dancers who flipped up their short skirts to spell out "respect" with their butts, the backwards BEER sign flashing in the background during Traffic Jam Marmalade's performance along with their reference to a bong and the unexpected guest that jumped on stage and started to dance in the background, and of course, the rappers grabbing their crotches. Most people, however, didn't

See TALENT on page 5.



Susan Sommerfeldt

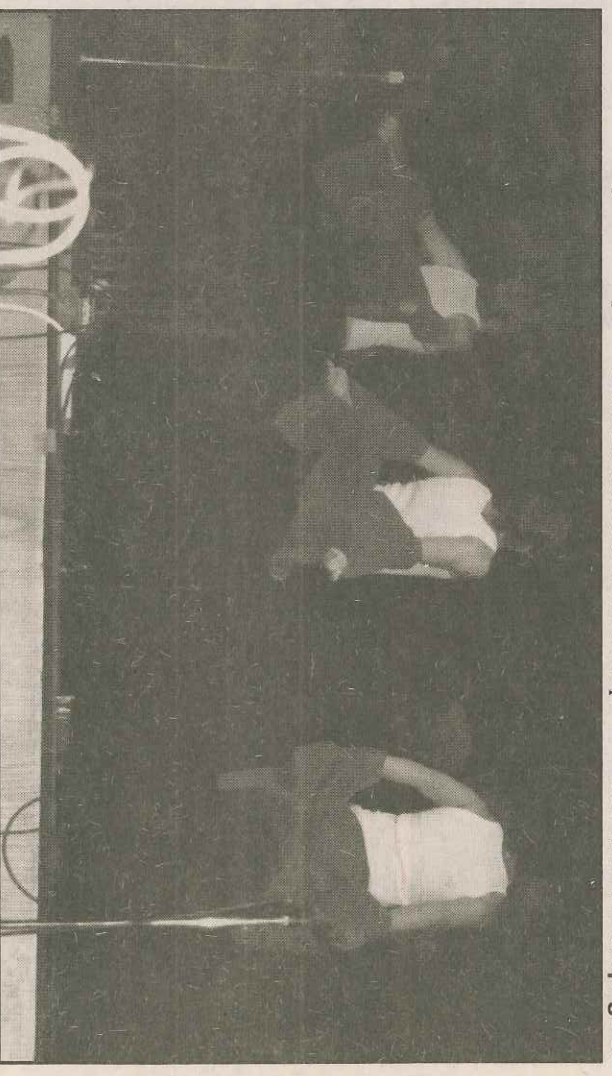
Seniors Mike Hodges, Jacob Woods and Kelly McElhenny enjoy one of many snow falls this winter.

## Let it snow?

By Rachel Wohlers  
Oracle Editor

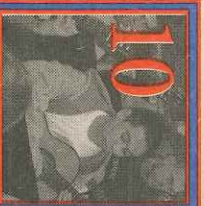
Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow. At least that's what all the seniors are saying. In response to the recent school cancellations, Fairfax County has posted a make-up schedule for the remainder of the year. Presidents Day and the April 2 teacher workday have been taken away in order to make up for the past two school days missed on February 3 and 6 due to snow/ice/rain. However, any future snow days that cause a school cancellation have already been scheduled to be tacked on to the end of the school year, beginning June 21. To make up for lost days last year, the county chose to add an extra half hour onto the end of the school day, extending each class by ten minutes. This only caused conflicts with the schedules for after-school activities as well as problems for working parents so it is unlikely the same decision will be made this year.

"They have already approved the [make-up] schedule for the See SNOW on page 5.



Susan Sommerfeldt

Junior Dan Plehal, senior Jared Timmons and sophomore Andrew Seve impressed the ladies and the judges with their rendition of "Let It Go."



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## Viewpoint

## Feelings of security fill WS halls Despite local shootings in area high schools, WS still manages a feeling of safety and piece of mind.

We have a School Resource Officer, a safety and security staff, varying prescribed plans for anything ranging from a hostile person entering our school to fire and bomb threats and training programs for the Administration and staff.

Yet the shooting at Balou High School, which resulted in the death of one student and injury of another raised the question as to whether or not we are really safe.

After a long discussion with principal Dr. David Smith, we were reassured that if anything were to happen, the school is prepared, and the administration will do everything in its power to keep us safe.

There have been no new rules enacted in Fairfax County or WS as a result of the Balou High

School shooting, but it's become clear that we have very advanced security throughout our school.

We practice fire and tornado drills. Our school has access to temporary cameras that could be posted anywhere with specific

### Editorial

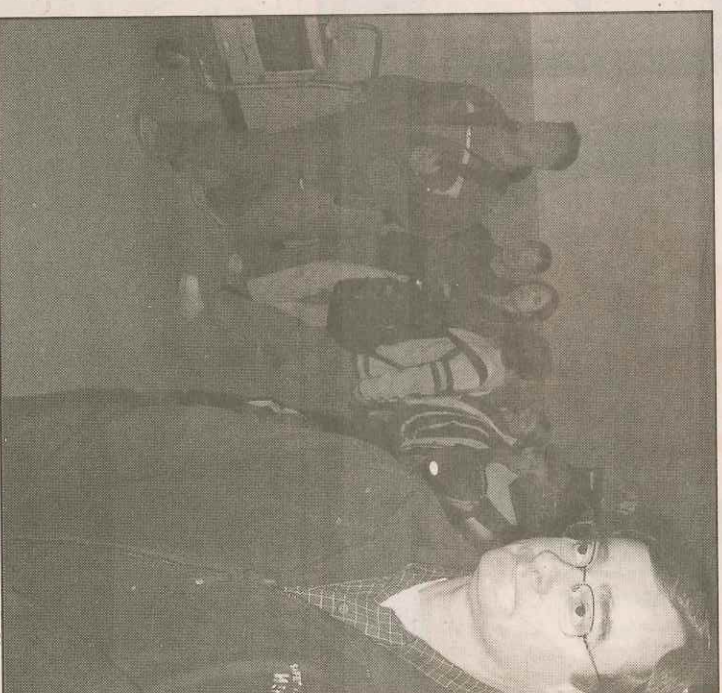
cause at anytime without any notification of the student body so that the security officers can be more objective on events and prosecute rule-breakers more effectively. There is even serious ongoing discussions on whether to mount permanent security cameras outside of school. However, this is still in the

country-wide discussion phase. There is dissention on whether this would be an invasion of privacy or an improvement on security measures.

A recent example of an addition to security by Fairfax County was due to the mercury spill in Balou High School. Schools immediately tried to remove all mercury from their buildings, an effort that is still going on to this day.

The school even keeps our safety plans safe. At one point, the security plans were published on the web, but they were taken down due to the potential for any person to gain access to these plans.

These rules, these plans and these officers are not here to punish us or to invade our privacy but to protect us. There is always



Chris Shannon

Security guards, like George Parry, can often be spotted overseeing hall activity, giving WS students some piece of mind that they are safe in their school. The staff is trained and ready to respond to a variety of threats that could occur.

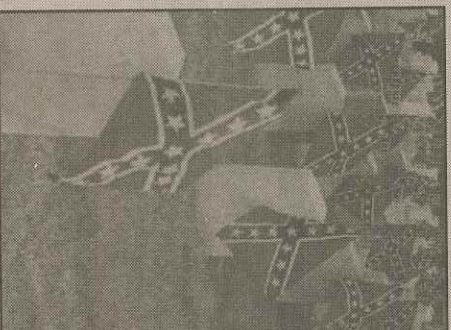
The possibility for something to happen and the reassurance of a little easier after having yet another tragic slaying this close to our own school.

## Letters to the Editor

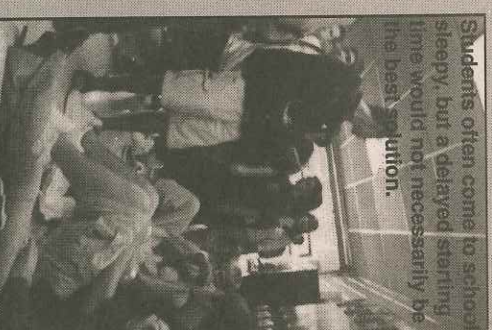
Dear Editor,

I have spent the last 24 hours discussing and reading articles based on the Confederate Flag. I have heard many valid and unsubstantiated arguments. It has prompted me to respond in my own opinion. First of all I would like to recognize that many students are right in referring to the rebel flag as a part of our history. However, it represents a time in our history when racism and overall cruelty to our fellow man rode rampant. Rest assured, the issue is not about slavery, but of racism. The former South knew that slavery of a people was wrong and inhuman. This is proven by one of their main arguments against *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, in which they questioned Mrs. Stowe's accuracy of the horrible beatings and overall treatment of slaves; considering she had never been to the South. The leaders of the South argued that enslavement of blacks was alright because they were "inferior" to whites. This is the basic foundation of racism. The only reason the South fought for states' right is that they wanted the local not federal government to decide if slavery should be legal. The flag itself is not an evil symbol in itself, just as the swastika, originally a Wiccan symbol, held no meaning of anti-Semitism until used by the Nazi party. My point is, while the physical flag is not racist, the memories it represents are of that, death and war. The great thing about our country is that you can have your entire house done in Confederate Flags without consequence because that is part of your personal life. To have a Confederate Flag on your person is exposing the public of your support of this symbol and exposing yourself to untrue rumors, unprovoked violence and perhaps causing distress of your fellow classmates. If you are unruffled by this, then by all means wear the flag, but it is certainly the more sensitive, caring, considerate and politically correct thing to just avoid that loaded debate until you are off school grounds.

—Rachel Wax, junior



Students often come to school sleepy, but a delayed starting time would not necessarily be the best solution.



Dear Editor,

My letter is in response to a letter written by Alison Campbell, a freshman.

In it, Alison talked about how WS students need more sleep. Now, although this is a noble idea, the implications of it are tremendous.

If we move the starting time back, our end time gets pushed back. It's something called "Cause and Effect."

Now all you kids who whine about staying up until all hours of the night, it will only get worse. Instead of being able to start at 3:00, (which I'm sure you all do) you will have to start at five or six o'clock, (which I'm sure you all do) you will have to start at five or six

o'clock. Sound like fun yet?  
Now all you kids who whine about staying up until all hours of the night, it will only get worse. Instead of being able to start at 3:00, (which I'm sure you all do) you will have to start at five or six o'clock. Sound like fun yet?

Wait, it gets better. Ms. Campbell forgot to think about how getting out later would affect work and extracurricular activities you would have to end up starting at six or seven o'clock. And last. The big clincher!

Once you are finished with school, nobody cares if you're tired. If you're "sleepy" tough luck, get your priorities on line. You aren't going to be able to tell your boss what hours you are going to work... Wait, you could, but then he would fire you, and you would be hanging out with your cat.

—Brandon Palekas, junior

## The Oracle

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# Go on, get out and do your part

## Politics not just for activists

By Heidi Stillegoi  
Oracle Editor

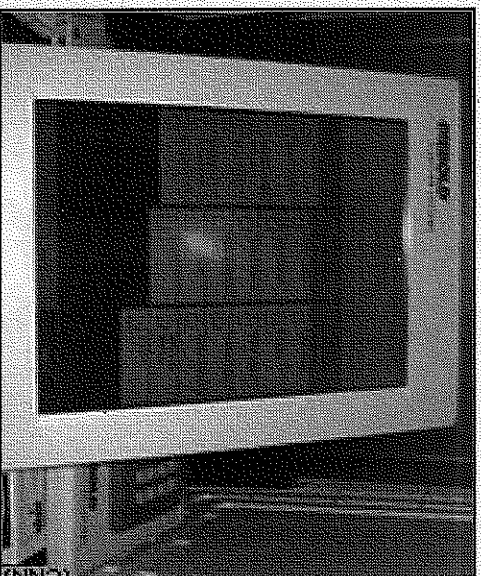
"Politics isn't my thing" is a statement I often overhear in classroom discussions. Some students feel that politics doesn't affect them. But it does. It affects everyone, teenagers included.

The country is in the midst of choosing a presidential candidate. Most of the senior class will have reached the age of 18 and will be eligible to vote. I am filled with excitement knowing that, this year, I can make a difference. Taking time to watch the news, read the paper and follow the campaigns should be of importance to citizens, including students. Unfortunately few of us students make an effort to educate ourselves on what's at stake. I've been making an effort to educate myself, but in doing so I often feel alone.

America's youth is not as active in politics as it could be and should be. In the 2000 election, young people ages 18-24 made up 9% of the population. In this youngest voting demographic, 67% did not vote and 54% were not even registered. In presidential years between 1972 and 2000 the national youth voter rate has declined by 13%.

Voting is a right, and we should not abuse it. We should take pride in our vote, loyalty to our country and satisfaction in ourselves. We should be excited and at the same time, educated. The candidates take time out of their campaigns to speak to our generation, but we must be willing to listen.

One issue, for example, that students must face is that of college costs. College is expensive and students and their parents struggle to pay for the total tuition. In his budget for 2005, President George W. Bush plans on increasing overall higher education spending while



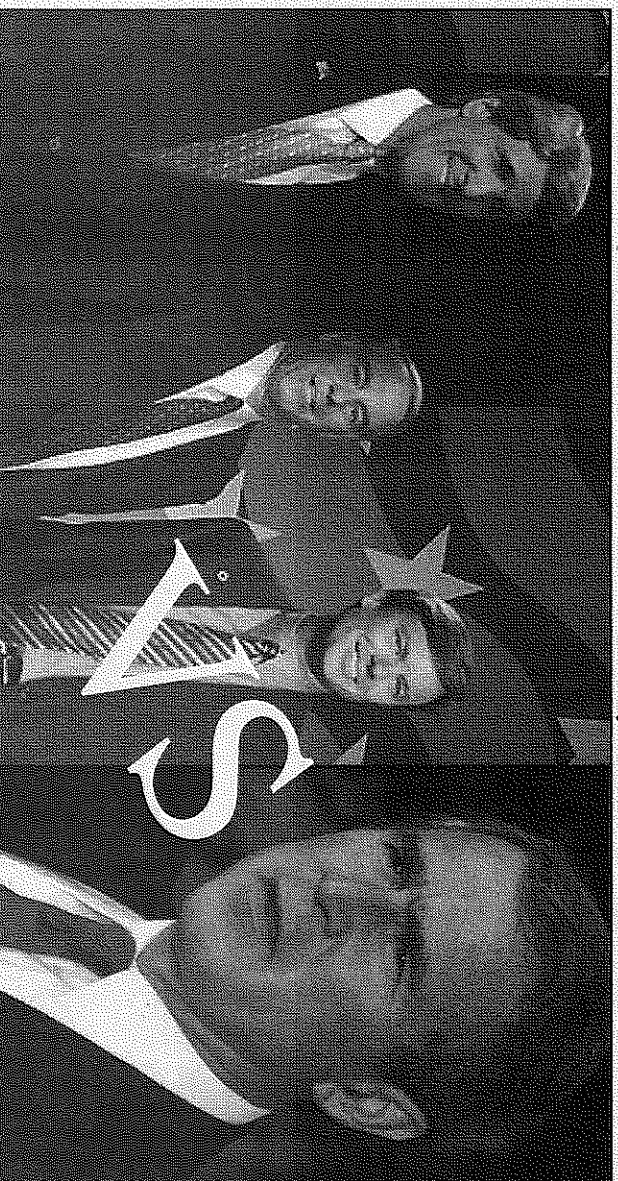
It only takes a few moments to make your selection and vote for any candidate running for office.

keeping the current Pell Grant maximum at \$4,050. Democratic candidate John Kerry proposes a plan where students would receive four years of public college tuition in their state in exchange for two years of public service. His challenger, John Edwards, has a similar plan in which he offers one free year of college, who in return, performs 10 hours of community service a week. These propositions from these candidates, if proven successful, may cut the high price of further education, benefiting us.

Our generation is also affected by war. While both Kerry and Edwards agree with Bush's authority to use military force in Iraq, both believe he lacked in gaining international support for the US-led war. Each candidate, if elected president, plans to strive for international cooperation in postwar Iraq.

I always hear of the benefits that come with turning 18. It is the age at which it becomes legal to buy cigarettes, porn and property. To be 18, is to become an adult, to attend college or to move out of mom and dad's house.

But what excites me most about turning 18 is that I am now eligible to vote; able to help in deciding our country's future. As Franklin D. Roosevelt said, "The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a President and senators and congressmen and government officials, but the voters of this country."



All that kept Al Gore from beating George W. Bush to the presidency was 537 votes. Voting matters and the teenage population needs to get out and make a difference. Politics matters to everyone.

# February 14—a time for love, apathy or nothing at all

## Valentine's Day always brings a multitude of emotions, especially for teenagers

By Danny Tinsley

Junior Staff Writer

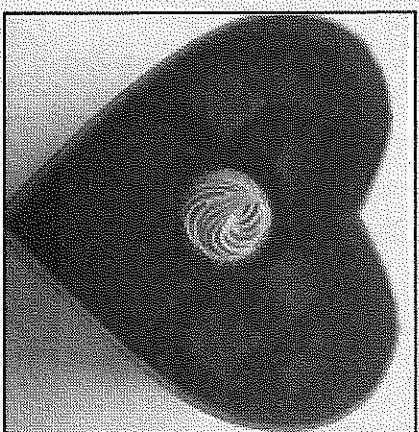
For many, Valentine's Day is the time for romance; for some, it is a day of broken hearts; to others, it is merely a day like any other. For myself, however, Valentine's Day has both its up and downs.

groups of V-Day people:

First off, there are the way too excited kind, usually rose-bearing girls, that carry elephant-size, heart-shaped balloons that swallow the hallway and stop the flow of student traffic. They sport nifty red and white sweaters, which, when activated,

light up like the Rockefeller Christmas Tree, complete with matching socks. Coincidentally they light up too.

Then there are your more serene holiday lovers that go about the day in their own red and white sweaters, no they do



A box of Russell Stover assorted chocolates is the only thing anyone needs on Valentines Day.

really intend to mean, "Hope your boyfriend dumps you tomorrow." But nonetheless, they secretly enjoy the day of cupid's and conversation hearts.

Lastly comes the V-Day Rebels, who can be characterized as those who have an inner hatred for the love-fest Hallmark

### Letter to the Editor

To the Editor:

Over the past years of my life, everyone has told me how magical senior year is and all of the fun I'm going to have. So, that leaves me with one question: When does the stress fade and the fun begin?

Don't get me wrong. I laugh and enjoy life, but I never anticipated the stress that came into my life this year. The good thing about it is that I've learned so much about myself. Most importantly, I found out that heartbreak can come from other things besides a girl I was head over heels for.

No, there's a heartbreak much worse than that. I discovered the pain of feeling like you're less, or that I'm different, or that I'm dumb, stupid, ignorant... all of which is new to me. I decided that, as someone who has the ability to speak for others, that I would confront an issue head-on. I did so and tried to be politically correct and not offend a soul. Instead, I ignited a school to divide upon the issues of the Confederate flag and racism, or the Confederate flag and southern pride. I felt guilty, I felt rejected, I felt confused.

Were my views really wrong? Did I really have no right? First off, my opinion isn't known to most who read what I said. All I simply stated was that the flag offends some blacks, including me. Instead, I was told I shouldn't be offended, and that it was dumb or inappropriate (to express an opinion). Ouch. As I read these strong words, tears were brought to my eyes. Yes, right at this moment I experienced a new heartbreak. It was new and different from anything else. I felt bad for my tears; my tears burned because I scorned them.

Everywhere I went, I had someone tell me something about my opinion. Right when I needed some help, I felt friends drift and nearly leave me alone. I had the few who stuck by, but a lot of people treated me differently. I felt my heart break further.

At this point, I decided to read about and research my history, so I could understand everyone's point-of-view. I learned more than I would've imagined. I watched an amazing movie on the desegregation of the public schools; I read books on the history of this great nation; I talked to adults of all nationalities. I learned that all different nationalities have been persecuted and the past haunts more than just black people.

Slavery ended over 100 years ago but Jim Crow didn't. Slavery discriminating against me because I'm black didn't. There are beautiful women in this school I will never date because I'm black.

The Confederate flag doesn't just remind me that my ancestors were held in captivity, but it reminds me that my son may not be able to play with Corey, or Billy, because he's a black child. We were created equal by God and each person will have opinions, but no one knows my personal heartbreak. No one may know the reasons I defend people who are offended by the flag. But I know of the tears I've shed because my classmates hurt. I know the disgust I felt because my peers told me I was wrong, and I know that my outlook will never be the same.

When I can't date a certain girl because she's not attracted to black boys, it'll hurt a bit more, when I see our generation focus on differences instead of striving for equality, it'll hurt a bit more. But I think as each day goes by, and we begin to accept each other as one race and one nation under God, our struggles will be less. I thank all those who have helped me grow and helped me learn.

Frederick Douglass once said that without struggle, there will be no progress. Well, WS faced its struggle, and we came out strong. Let's understand one another and enjoy the last half of our school year. I'm ready to smile again, so anyone who reads this with a burning desire to enjoy one another rather than put down, let me know and we can smile together.

—Desmond Brazziel, senior

holiday. They sport their black sweaters, which when activated release a chemical that instantly kills roses, and plot to destroy the widespread happiness. When wished a happy Valentine's Day they quickly respond with nothing more than "Hope your day sucks as much as mine". Using an assortment of writing utensils as pins, they "accidentally" pop the oversized balloons, which to their surprise, still does not shatter the incredible mood of V-Day fanatics.

Now that Valentine's Day will fall on the weekend, and schools will thankfully be closed, the various groups of V-Day will be enjoying their days separated from their fellow counterparts. I, myself, will be celebrating the cheery holiday on the couch watching romantic reruns of the Newlyweds and eating my box of Russell Stover assorted chocolates (which for some god forsaken reason does not include a pictorial listing of the placement of different types of chocolates.)

A box of Russell Stover chocolates  
Loveable teddy bear—\$15  
2 dozen roses—\$24  
Making an impression on the one  
you aspire to be your valentine—  
priceless.

Usually V-Day consists of the same routine. After waking up, at an ungodly hour of the morning, I venture off to school. It is there that you meet three major

not light up, and cast fake smiles upon their could-not-care-less faces. They issue many "Happy Valentine's Days" to their extremely overexcited peers, which they



# Celebrities stoop to desperate measures

By Besty Miller  
Senior Staff Writer

Janet Jackson has a new CD coming out. That tidbit of information is exactly what she hoped the public would gain from something else that recently came out—her breast from her shirt during the MTV halftime show of this year's Super Bowl.

There is supposedly no such thing as bad publicity. Even if a celebrity's behavior is crass and inappropriate they remain noteworthy as the public anxiously awaits for someone to act out, exploiting bad behavior to boost album and movie sales instead of their abilities.

"They should get attention because of their talent, not their bodies or otherwise," said freshman Caitlin Grace.

Many celebrities never learned basic playground mantras regarding "bad attention." Much like the kids in preschool that were stared at when they peed their pants, some of our nation's most revered public figures have achieved fame from their more profane stunts. Thousands watched Nicole Richie and Paris Hilton's

"The Simple Life," the third-rate reality TV show exploiting the alleged humorous side of social inequality, merely because they have proved themselves to be glorified porn stars.

"Her TV show made her look frivolous and cheap for a person with so much money," said senior Amelia Andersen.

Ironically enough, her "home videos" shared with ex-MTV VJ Simon Rex accomplished the exact same thing.

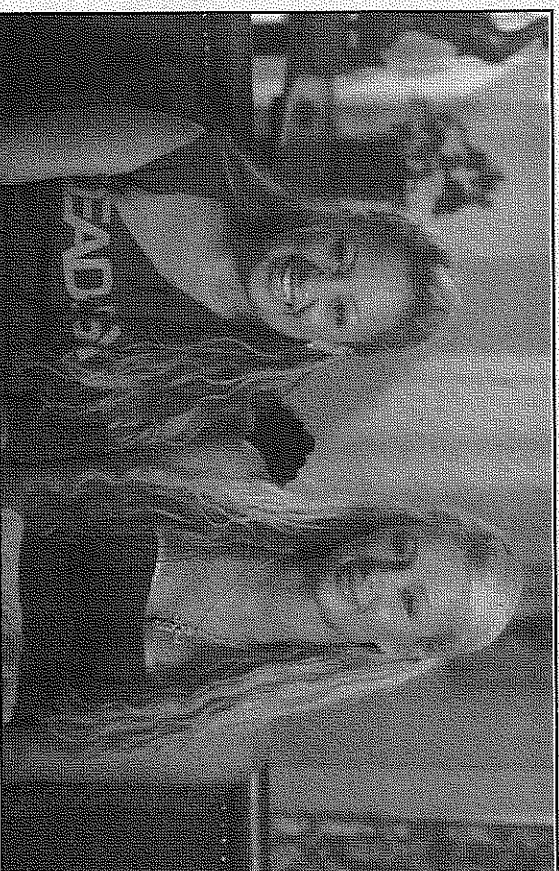
Much of the glorification of celebs behaving badly stems from the growing confusion between notoriety and fame.

"At the turn of the century, a person was considered notorious for committing some reprehensible act, like robbing a bank," said government teacher James Morris.

"Now notorious individuals enjoy the same publicity as those who earn attention honorably."

Morris's assertions are represented through the public's subconscious service to the misbehaviors.

America is currently in an uproar over the exposure of their virgin eyes to Jackson's offending breast, and yet as people failed to give the time of day to co-



Paris Hilton and Nicole Richie starred in "A Simple Life" earlier this year, and proved themselves to be "glorified porn stars."

performer Beyonce, who managed to both sing and keep her top on during the event. It is illogical to complain about the notorious shenanigans of offending celebrities if we as viewers perpetuate those same acts by providing the recognition that they seek.

Without invoking an overabundance of potty humor, consider how we treat the aforementioned child who pees his pants. We don't choose to let the child wallow in their own mess for weeks, but clean up his mess and hope for a more positive exhibition from the offender in the future.

# The sober truth Partying anytime, anywhere has its consequences

By Camilia Casillas  
Managing Editor

No matter how much parents, teachers and administrators want to deny it, the reality of high school is that many students drink alcohol or have at one point, experimented with an illegal substance.

There are a variety of reasons teens attempt to justify partying. One of them is that there is nothing else to do in Springfield, and another is it's just a fun, social activity. Either way, it's still illegal. Sitting around, drinking beers or smoking with some friends seems so normal, and many students are very oblivious or forget about the consequences that come with being caught.

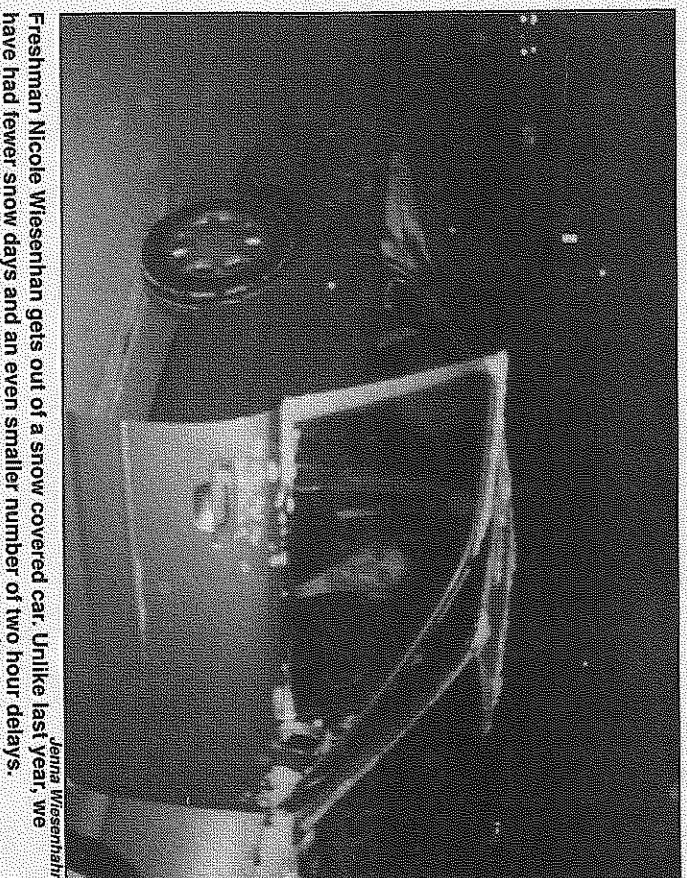
Even drinking one beer and driving, or not even drinking at all but being present at a party is still against the law. A lot of students have become very numb to all the strings attached to drinking or smoking. Students, especially seniors should think twice the next time they head to the next party.

For seniors, this is the time they are applying to colleges, saving up for "beach week" and preparing for prom. All of this

could be ruined in one night. If the cops show up at a party, and there is underage drinking and smoking, someone you know can literally be handcuffed, arrested and even charged with a crime. Is one, careless night worth parents and the school being called and notified of the situation? It's bad enough when your parents are angry with you, but when the school is involved things can get very serious.

Students are automatically suspended for a minimum of five days to a maximum of ten days the first time they are caught. After that, depending on the extensivity of the situation, students can be recommended for expulsion. Being expelled senior year could mean being sent to another school and graduating without your friends or not graduating at all. It means being forbid from school activities, including sports, that a student may have been depending on to get them a scholarship. Seniors who have been busy filling out applications, know that many colleges ask if you have ever been charged with a crime or been expelled or suspended from school.

The next time someone is having a party where drugs or alcohol will be present, think of the consequences and be careful.



Freshman Nicole Wiesenhan gets out of a snow covered car. Unlike last year, we have had fewer snow days and an even smaller number of two hour delays.

—Nicole Wiesenhan

# Two hour delays equal shorter days

By Jon Nylan  
Business Systems Editor

Four times this winter as students' alarms go off, their parents stick their heads in the door to let them know that there is a two hour delay. The students go back to sleep for two more hours, wake up and go to school.

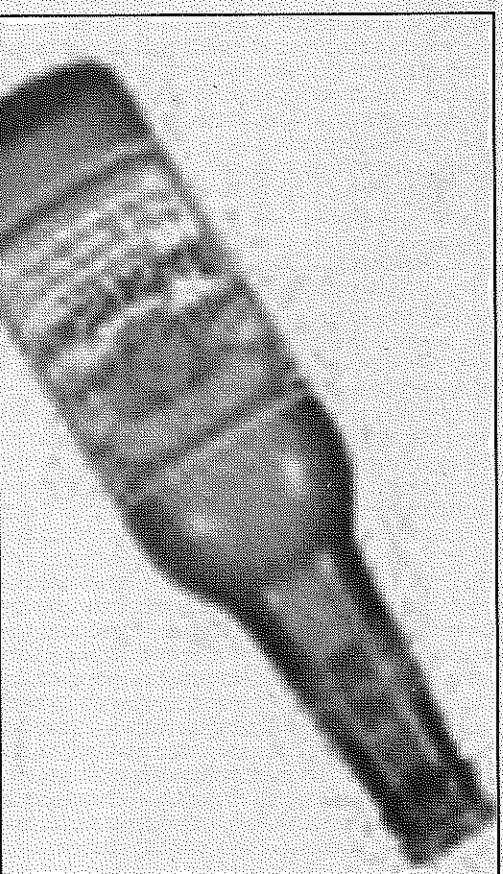
Once at school, classes are shortened to a bearable length and teachers rush to get things done. Classes run for about 55 minutes and teachers who might normally hand back papers and take attendance for 10 minutes now frantically get the students learning and take attendance on the fly.

Meanwhile, students reflect the teachers' anxiety about getting things done and work quickly leading to everyone being more efficient. Which in turn, makes the casual observer ask the question why do they not do it like this everyday? If they can get just as much done in 50 minutes why do they go to class for 90? Is it the shorter periods, or the extra sleep everyone gets that morning? If it's the shorter classes why do we go to school for 33 hours and

45 minutes every week instead of 23 hours 45 minutes?

One reason for not having short periods is AP classes who need every minute they can get in order to cram information before the big test in May, also science classes who need more than 50 minutes to do a laboratory experiment keep the 90 minute blocks in demand. On the other hand, many AP classes seem to do just fine on a two hour delay schedule, and it is possible to cram in an experiment in 40 minutes, it simply takes more effort than normal.

So why not start school later? The extra sleep certainly puts everyone into a better mood, in addition to increasing classroom efficiency. Many scientists and educators are now beginning to notice the fact that teenagers work better in the evening than in the morning. When school does start early there is a drop in grades and an increase in irritability and relationship problems. If this is so, why does school start so early when it is more harmful than beneficial? What is so important about starting so early in the morning, this is an issue that Dr. Domenech or his replacement must soon address.



Many students resort to drinking alcoholic beverages for a "fun" pastime, failing to think of the harmful consequences it can cause to one's body, not to mention what happens if one is caught.



# Talent shines through dance and song

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view that as a problem. "The biggest problem every year are the mics," said Kopkau. "I'm never happy with AV."

The mics were muted while the acts changed, however, getting them to turn back up during the performance was the hard part; the AV techies had a tough job.

"A lot of the acts changed during the performance," said backstage manager senior Mike Warren. "If they wanted it done they should have done it during the rehearsals."

The last minute changes threw more than just the acts off; it threw the audience off. When they couldn't hear, they started to get loud.

"I thought the show was fantastic," said junior Peter Adams, "except that there were extremely rude people in the audience."

The MC's of the night, senior class officers Theresa Ohanian and John McFarland, had to deal with technical difficulties and the comments shouted out by the audience.

"I was incredibly impressed by Theresa Ohanian's improvisation and ability to keep the night calm during the technical difficulties," said Adams. "Plus, she's gorgeous."

After being introduced by the MC's, the acts went on and were judged on a rate of 1-5. They were judged on raw talent, preparation, presence on stage, and the affect they had on the audience. Unlike the rumors in the hall, all acts have a chance of winning; the seniors are not

the only ones that win.

Although the envelope was pushed, only one act was disqualified. Traffic Jam Marmalade was disqualified for their reference of a bong. However, they still have a good attitude about the show.

"I had so much fun, like a ridiculous amount of fun," said the band's lead singer, junior Nick Melas.

"Except, we're playing at Caribou Coffee on February 27, and that's where we play the real stuff."

Melas has yet to make a decision about being in next year's talent show. Although Melas didn't feel bad about being disqualified, others felt that the judging was unfair.

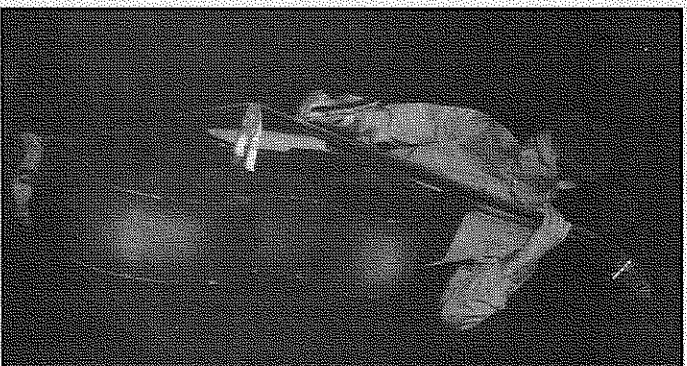
"I don't feel [personally] gyped," said senior Kyle Haines. "But there was definite gypage."

At the end of the night, the awards were given out. The Bass Cleff Quartet tore it up with "The Unforgivin" by Metallica and placed third with a prize of \$25. Belting out "RESPECT" like Aretha Franklin got Sara Holcomb and her back-up dancers Ashley Linder, Sarah Chickenberd, Jill Haines, and Allison Smith second place and \$50.

The first place prize of \$100 went to Jared Timmons, Dan Plehal, and Andrew Seve for their strip tease to *The Full Monty's* "Let it Go."

"We were threatened, not actually, more like warned, by Griffin to not pull our pants down [backstage before the act]," said junior Dan Plehal. "We were just doing it for fun, we never expected to place."

Although the males in the audience



Susan Sommerfeldt

Junior Courtenay Eccles, plays away on the bass as a vital member of the Bass Cleff Quartet that won third place at this year's talent show.

may not have enjoyed the stripping, the females went crazy.

"I even saw some of the moms stand up and scream," said Kopkau. "That scared me a little because they're 40 and the boys are only 17."

One of the younger girls in the audience expressed herself too, even after the boys had left the stage. In a Brooklyn-type accent, the girl yelled, "Hey boys, shake ya tail featha!"

In the end, the talent show was a huge success, bringing in approximately \$3000 for the senior class, which will go towards prom.

"It was a fantastic show, three years in a row now," said Kopkau. "Keep it going."

# Beloved choral teacher ties the knot in appropriate setting

## Dombrow weds in Disney World after seven-year courtship

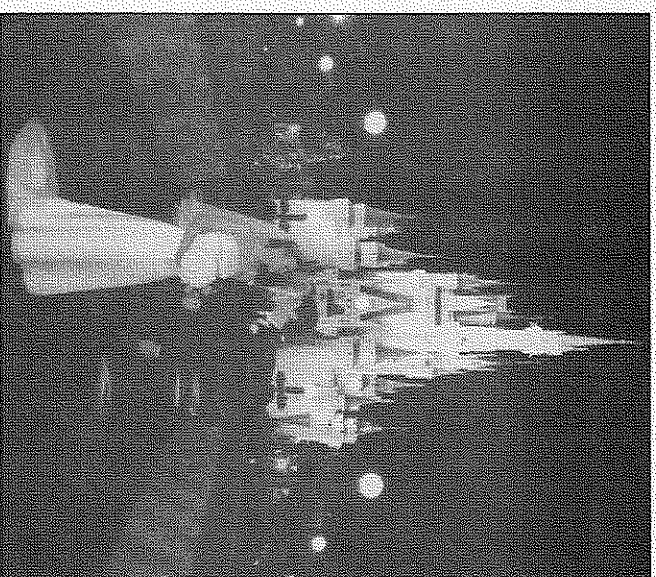
By Susan Sommerfeldt

Photography Editor

It's a fairy tale ending in the wonderful world of Disney, or in reference to recent events, the wonderful world of Dombrow. Choral director Michael Dombrow finally said "I do" to longtime girlfriend, Colleen, on January 17, in Disney World. After returning from their honeymoon, the newlyweds were surprised with a reception in early February at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, organized by the choral parents just for students and their families to offer congratulations to the couple.

"He's such a Disney freak," said junior Christine Park. "It wasn't a big surprise [the wedding was there]."

Dombrow combined two loves on his wedding day: his new wife and his child-like fetish of Disney, which



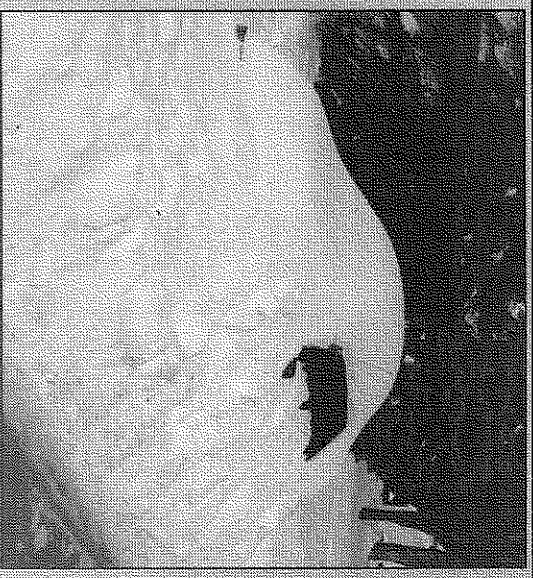
Choral director Michael Dombrow and his new wife, Colleen, celebrate their first day as a married couple in Dombrow's dreamland, Disney World.

# Seniors hope for more snow

**SNOW from page 1**

remainder of the year] so they are likely to stick to that," said Principal Dr. David Smith. "The extra half hour didn't make a whole lot of difference."

Due to the fact that the date for graduation is already set, seniors will not have to attend any days after that date that could be added to the year to make-up time for any future snow days. Underclassmen, however, will be forced to sit in the school building a few days longer, unless the number of days missed passes 10. Any days following ten, the county will make special allowances and forgive five of those days so they do not need to be made up, which is what happened last school year. Any more days of snow could mean that on June 16, the graduates will be partying while the underclassmen will be crying.



Brooke Nelson

Last year, after an endless line of snow storms that lefts students and cars trapped, FCPS had 11 snow days.



## News Bites

Congratulations to US and VA Government teacher James Morris, who recieved a positive review on his most recently published book, *The Rose Man of Sing Sing*, when it was reviewed on January 24. It was reviewed by *The Washington Post's* Bookworld.



The English Honor Society offers free tutoring to all students every Thursday.



The History Honor Society provides free tutoring as well every Wednesday.



The new traffic pattern has been changed for a second time, and to the hope of many, the last time. In addition to being able to drop of students in the front of the building, parents are now allowed to drop their kids in the back by the sports lobby after all the buses have already arrived and departed.

—Compiled by Christina Aral

Colleen shares:

"You always want your wedding day to be picture perfect and no one knows how to do that the way Disney can," said Dombrow. "We also have a bizarre obsession with Disney animated films."

Neither of the couple expected the reception, but it was a nice surprise since only 72 close friends and family members attended the wedding. At the reception, students had a chance to visit with Dombrow and his bride and presented the couple with a \$500 American Express gift check. The Dombrows plan to use the money on various moving needs.

"We just moved into our apartment," said Dombrow, "and the money will help make our home more homey."

The reception also gave the students a chance to meet the girl Dombrow had been engaged to for a year and had been talking about since he came to WS in the fall of 2002.

"I always thought she was really cute and I finally got to meet her at the reception," said senior Catherine Seve.

"She's really sweet and the cake was really good, too." Most students felt that after seven years of dating it was time to tie the knot and Dombrow agreed. After meeting in college through Colleen's roommate, they were separated when Dombrow lived in New York and had to continue the long distance relationship. The two withstood the test of time and an engagement was expected.

"It's like what they say," said Dombrow, "'You'll know.'"

With the location ideal, the couple devoted to each other, and friends and family in support, all the pieces fell together for the perfect recipe to live happily ever after. However, Dombrow recognizes that although the location couldn't be beat, friends and family are what really count.

"We've both been to Disney World so many times it's like a second home," said Dombrow, "but a nice reception like that was a reminder that your real home is with friends and family."



# 'I feel happy when...' the results come in

**By Hilary Heincer & Jennifer West**  
*Senior Staff Writer & News Assistant*

It's award season for the arts at WS and students are being recognized both inside the school and nationally. The winners of the school-wide Reflections contest and the Regional Scholastic Awards have reason to be proud.

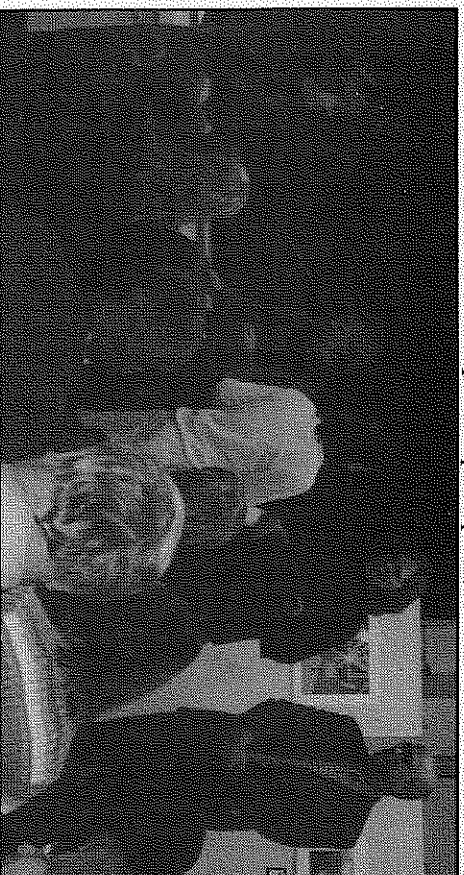
This year the topic for reflections was "I am really happy when..." Students responded to this through literature, photography, music composition, or visual arts. The Reflections contest, sponsored by the PTSA, held a reception and award ceremony to honor the participants and winners on February 4th. Attendees had a chance to walk around Spartan Hall and look at the entries. Aside from the pride,

encouraged to submit their works by their teachers. Photo teachers required students to enter into the competition while English teacher Kerry Keith gave participants extra credit for entering, however she did not have the pleasure of reading them.

"I couldn't read the entries because I most of the people turned them in last minute so I rushed them down," said Keith. "I'm very excited [about Emily Sommerfeldt's entry winning 3rd.]"

Discovering that they won was even more of a shock for some students.

"I'm suprised," said junior Taylor Maxfield. "Ms. Swaggard put it in for me." For this reason, the students aren't the only ones who feel proud. Teachers are estatic that the students not only participated, but were chosen as winners.



*Sarah Drabkin*

(top) At the Reflections awards reception, PTSA board members Lois Kurth, Diane Bursely, and Kathy Wood, and principal David Smith present junior Chelsea O'Keefe with her award. (right) First place winner for literature junior Laura Kurth looks over a table of art entries for the Reflections contest.

The awarded student went away with some pocket money.

Many of these students were

"I am honored," said English teacher Brooke Nelson, teacher of both Laura Kurth

## Regional Scholastics Award Winners

### Gold Key

Holly Harben  
Susan Sommerfeldt

12 Design: Graphic  
12 Photography

### Silver Key

Ryan Waple  
Ana Lojanica  
Mari Fray  
Christie Pedder  
Rebecca Bond  
Katie Rippy

12 Mixed Media  
9 Mixed Media  
11 Design: Graphic  
12 Design: Graphic  
12 Photo Portfolio, Photo  
12 Photo Portfolio

### Certificate of Merit

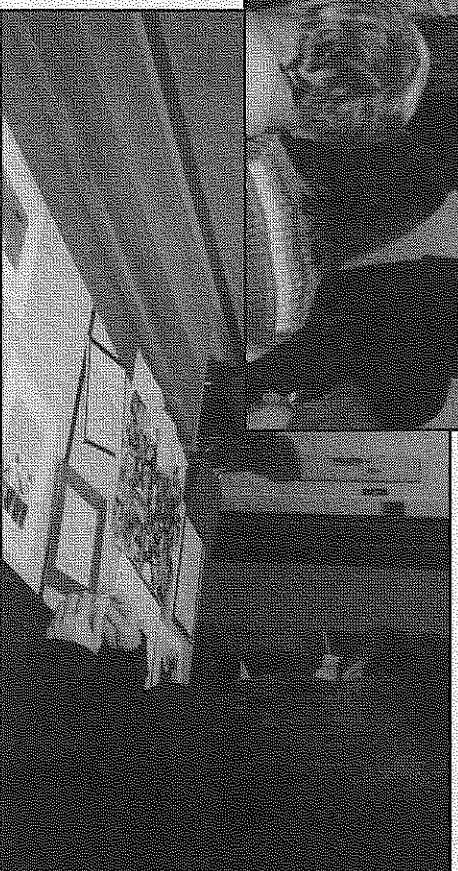
Steven Bonheim  
Hye Young Kim  
Hye-in Kim  
Raymond Baccari  
Christine Cwalina

11 Painting  
11 Painting  
10 Painting  
12 Computer Art  
12 Photography

### Chief Academic Officer's Award

Katie Rippy, 12

American Visions  
Award  
Susan Sommerfeldt, 12



## 2003-2004 Reflections Winners

### Visual Arts

1st: Jason Kaplan, 11  
2nd: Kristin Kutch, 11  
3rd: Alexa Caskey, 11

1st: Leslie Sherman, 11  
2nd: Colleen Sciarini, 12  
3rd: Taylor Maxfield, 11

### Honorable Mention:

Raymond Baccari, 12  
David Kim, 12

### Honorable Mention:

Kim Buckles, 12  
Angelo Johnson, 12

### Literature

1st: Laura Kurth, 11  
2nd: Chelsea O'Keefe, 11  
3rd: Emily Sommerfeldt, 12

### Music Composition

1st: Sarah Tak, 11

Honorable Mention:  
Laura Kurth, 11

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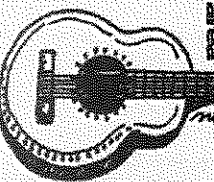
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and Chelsea O'Keefe who took the top prizes for literature. "It is both a privilege and a pleasure to teach these students." Reflections entries were judged by professionals, however they weren't as competitive as the Regional Scholastic Awards.

Regionally, 14 students from WS were given the Scholastic Art Award. These awards range from a Certificate of Merit to the Gold Key award. Two of the students were awarded the latter, seniors Susan Sommerfeldt for photography and Holly Harben for graphic design. It has been several years since a WS student won a Gold Key for an individual event, and this year WS had two. Although Sommerfeldt won a Silver Key last year, the Gold Key award is a first for both Sommerfeldt and Harben.

"I've never won any awards in art before," said Harben.

The Silver Key is another level of award, between the Certificate of Cert and Gold Key, that seven of the students received.

"I won the Silver Key," said senior Katie Rippy. "I

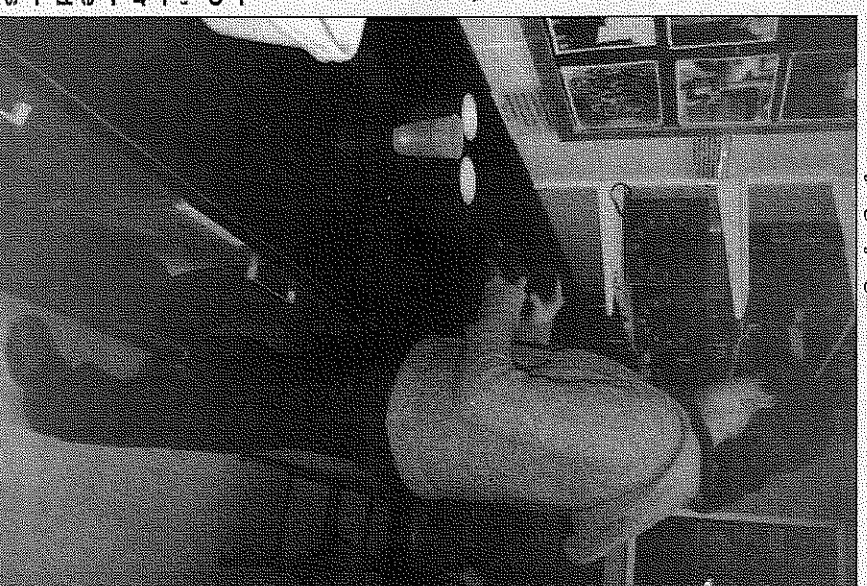
Senior Kim Buckles develops film for her Portfolio Prep class. Her teacher, Dorothea Swaggard, requires her students to enter a portfolio into the Scholastics competition. Before submitting, Swaggard and other art teachers had one-on-one critiquing sessions for the students.

get a certificate, a silver key, and my work will be displayed at NOVA for a month or so."

All Portfolio Prep (Photo 3) students were required to enter their portfolios while select students in Photo 2 were chosen to enter with individual prints after the teacher's critique. However, each of the four art teachers were only allowed to send in 12 individual entries. The entries included paintings, mixed media, drawing, photography, computer art, and graphic design. The 48 entries were competing against 1500 others, so getting a judge to look at an entry for more than 10 seconds was good.

"It's huge," said photography teacher Dorothea Swaggard. "It's truly overwhelming and my students truly deserved it."

The Gold Key and Silver Key winners of the Scholastic Art Award were part of an exhibition at Northern Virginia Community College until February 19. A celebration to honor the winners took place. The Gold Key entries will then be sent up to New York for a second judging. "I wish I could have been a fly on the wall," said Swaggard, "watching the judges judge."



*Susan Sommerfeldt*



## A literary waltz with Jane Austen

### *Pride and Prejudice* dances across the page

By Samantha Lee  
Senior Staff Writer

People falling in love, then falling out minutes later. Sisters fighting over the new kid. No, this isn't a soap opera. This is Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

The story takes place in the early 1800s and centers around Elizabeth Bennet. This heroine is one of the only few smart girls in the story, who decides to believe in love and sense rather than money and wealth. She is approached by many different men, begging for her hand in marriage, but she isn't satisfied with any of them. Although she is definite in her refusals, her thoughts and ideas change throughout the novel as she travels through England.

*Pride and Prejudice* is a rollercoaster of a book. In one chapter, things are all going well for Eliza and the other Bennet sisters, but then a page turn brings everything crashing down. These constant

twists and turns make the story more complex and interesting. Without them the story would be a linear bore.

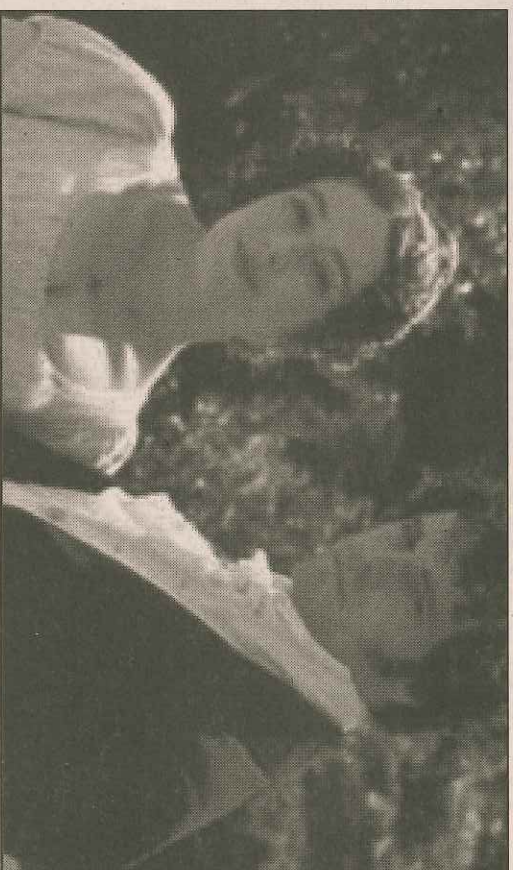
Another element that adds to the story as a whole is the constant subplots that are everywhere. Even though the main story is still the most important, these under currents make the story more believable. Life doesn't center around just one event and neither does this book.

The characters in this book are also very believable. They aren't all perfect but they all aren't bad people either. Everyone has their flaws. Their relationships with each other are also explored throughout the book. The interesting part is seeing when these relationships end or begin and how the characters try to hang on to them through the rough times in the book.

*Pride and Prejudice* is a great book that explores themes that are still relevant today. Even though the book is over a century old, the story is timeless.



Jane Austen, author of *Pride and Prejudice*, uses intrigue and subplots to entertain.



### Actors Jennifer Ehle and Colin Firth provide eye candy for the realistic adaptation. A&E's "Pride and Prejudice"

#### brings the classic novel to life

By Emily Miller  
Managing Editor

Strip Colin Firth out of his geeky reindeer Christmas sweater from "Bridget Jones's Diary," strap him into a 19th century tweed suit, and gawk at the dashing gentleman on the TV screen for the next six hours. The movie version of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* is six hours long. So to captivate and reward viewers for enduring such a time consuming task, it features eye candy, such as the handsome Firth. However, if Firth's beauty is not enough to sustain a fleeting attention span, there are other satisfying, more substantial aspects to the movie.

The Bennet family is just as humorous and well defined as the Greeks in "My Big Fat Greek Wedding." Each member of the family adds to this comical romance story in his or her own way. Lydia, the youngest of the five sisters, keeps the audience on their toes with her promiscuous ways, not to mention their loud snorty laugh. Mary is self-righteous, Kittle is jealous, and the three of them bicker incessantly. The main

character, Elizabeth, is rebellious and witty, while the eldest Jane is sweet and kind. The mother's screeching voice will compel you to leap off a bridge, and the father is sarcastic and teasing, yet still noble.

"Pride and Prejudice" takes place in 19th century England so another fun facet is the different culture and language. Everyone haughtily talks about society over tea and at ballroom dances. In every scene that involved champagne or any other alcohol, there is the same one drunk whose only line is to repeat "Capital! Just Capital!"

More seriously, this movie is drenched in themes and debacles like matrimony for love vs. money, the real character of a person, and all the disillusionment associated with love. As in any good love story, truth, character, misunderstandings, lies, fate, love and all other such romantic notions are addressed gracefully and dramatically. Although finishing the movie in one sitting can be an indomitable feat, Jane Austen's classic tale of Elizabeth Bennet's tumultuous courtship with Mr. Darcy is brought to life.

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<b>Libra</b> Sep. 23 - Oct. 22	<b>Scorpio</b> Oct. 23 - Nov. 21	<b>Sagittarius</b> Nov. 22 - Dec. 21	<b>Capricorn</b> Dec. 22 - Jan. 20	<b>Aquarius</b> Jan. 21 - Feb. 19	<b>Pisces</b> Feb. 20 - Mar. 20

### Looking to the sky, the future

By Samantha Lee  
Senior Staff Writer

What's your sign? Throughout WS, students read their horoscopes daily to see what lies in front of them for the day.

The zodiac is separated into twelve different signs for a certain time of the year. These signs are named after star constellations. People then just look up their sign to see what the stars predicted for them. These predictions are not all make believe, because they are created from specialized star charts. Some WS students believe in them whole heartedly.

"They can be really accurate," said senior Luisa Gonzalez.

Some horoscopes are not always specific and they need some interpretation. The idea of horoscopes is to predict what will happen in general and then the reader can meld it to fit their own life and experience. Instead of telling people they will fall a test or that their pet frog will die, they

say, something sad is going to happen. However, their vagueness does not deter people from believing.

"They normally reflect something that is going on in my life and they normally end up being true," said freshman Kristin Garrett.

Although many feel that horoscopes are at least some what right, there are still some students that don't believe in the power of the zodiac. They have a hard time believing that they way the stars are position have some effect on the way they live.

"They're poo," said junior Samantha Baer. "I read them once, and I thought it was just so stupid."

Even though there are some non-believers, people can not deny human fascination with the future. Until time travel is created, people will always thirst to know the unknown. Said senior Alyssa Lee, "Horoscopes rock!"



# Analyzing subconscious actions from head to hand

By Grace Jo  
Features Editor

The brain influences all different aspects of life from dreams to the writing on an English assignment. Dreams and handwriting, the blueprints of the brain, give insight to the subconscious.

Dream interpretations are published in books or can be found on-line. Dreams have been studied extensively. They provide a window into a person's desires

or fears. Certain significant dreams may have specific meanings, a subconscious play out of a person's concerns and dominant emotions for that day.

Traumatic events have shown to influence the vividness and intensity of dreams, sometimes transforming them into recurring nightmares. Studies of pre 9/11 dreams compared to post 9/11 showed a decrease in the surreal dreamlike quality and an increase in intensity. This

showed that dream intensity is related to emotional arousal.

"Dreams usually show what happened in your day or something you want," said sophomore Alyssa Zhu.

Students who firmly believe that their dreams have certain significant meanings enjoy studying their own dreams.

"You're supposed to write down your dreams every night," said Zhu.

Many sources are available for study ranging from dream dictionaries to articles on the progress of dream research.

"My mom is really into it," said freshman Jared Hornady. "She gets these dream dictionaries but usually those don't really help me understand my dreams."

Some students don't research into dream interpretation but do believe that dreams hold certain powers.

"I think you can see your future in your dreams," said freshman Matt Norwood.



Dreams are usually a replay of people's days, their emotions and their desires.

handwriting, is also an indicator of a person's mind. It is even a major that is offered in colleges.

Graphologists provide aid in criminal investigations. They have the ability to tell of someone's personality, just by a few samples of their writing.

Handwriting is a physical representation of a person's personality. It reveals whether a person is lying, stressed, sick or mentally deranged by the slant, margins and shape of the letters.

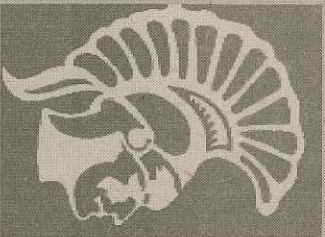
Graphologists study similar handwritings to find specific characteristics. Studies have shown a majority of psychotic people have been found to have a backward slant on their d's. This indicator can be used to help determine potential criminals.

Graphology books that are available teach people the art of analyzing handwriting. Much of the information is common sense and easy to learn. For example an upward baseline in a person's handwriting shows a positive attitude while a downward one shows a negative one.

"Handwriting isn't really about the subconscious, it's more about personality," said Zhu. "I do [graphology] with my friends. They just give me samples of their handwriting."

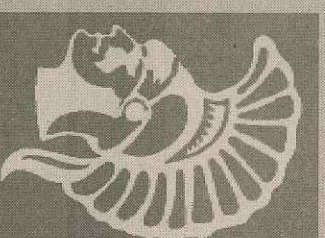
The practice of dream interpretation and graphology help students find out more of their own subconscious, or it can also just be a fun way to pass the time.

"I study that [graphology] because I love those kinds of things," said Zhu. "I think it's good for your mind because it exercises your subconscious."



Samantha Castor

## Spartan Profiles



Spencer Horner

Graphologists analyze handwriting by using different aspects such as slant, pressure, size, margins and baseline. This sample handwriting has a very upright slant. People with vertical slants are associated with diplomacy and properness. The level baseline shown in this sample where everything is straight indicates great control.

YESTERDAY MORNING I HAD OATMEAL I MIXED TH WITH THE STRAWBERRY ONE FOR LUNCH I HAD MY USUAL YOGURT AND GRAPES. AND I HAD SOME OF THE CRESS FROM THE BAGEL BAKERY AND SMUGGLED IT INTO MY DRESS FROM THE BAGEL BAKERY AND SMUGGLED IT INTO THIS MORNING I HAD CAPTAIN CRUNCH CEREAL.

Jason Gillis

still malls and stuff."

Though the shopping may be similar, she says that the biggest difference in Bahrain is the religion. There are large loudspeakers that announce the times to pray towards Mecca. Even though Castor isn't Muslim, she still didn't wear anything above her knee and she had to have sleeved shirts.

"It's just out of respect for their culture," said Castor.

The weather is another difference that she encountered when she lived in Bahrain. The temperature would top 110 degrees, but the heat index would reach 130. Air in Bahrain is also very dry and it may rain twice a year at most.

"That was the thing I missed the most," said Castor. "I missed all of the rain, but I really didn't miss all this snow."

Even though Castor moved to Bahrain because of the military, she didn't live on base. She even went to a special private school for American children, but she said that half of the people that went there weren't American.

"My sister went out with the Crown Prince's son," said Castor.

TV was another thing that Castor noticed a change in. There were a lot of British channels but she still wasn't able to see some of the biggest American shows.

"I did miss a few things on the TV," said Castor. "I'm really upset that I missed the first American Idol."



Ashley Hughes  
Sophomore Samantha Castor lived in Bahrain for two years, having an exciting cultural experience.

By Sam Lee  
Senior Staff Writer

Bahrain is a country full of hot weather and kind people. Though most WS students would not even know where in the world Bahrain is, sophomore Samantha Castor got the chance to live there and see it first hand.

Castor resided in Bahrain for two years because her mom serves in the United States Navy. Though it is a twenty hour plane ride away, she says the life there is not too different from life in the States.

"The clothes are a little more expensive," said Castor, "but there are

By Jason Gillis  
Managing Editor

Even when it's freezing, senior Spencer Horner will show up wearing shorts and a t-shirt.

"I'm a hard-core short wearer," said Horner.

The outspoken senior will always say what is on his mind, even to *The Oracle* staff.

"For once in the Spartan Profiles people will actually look at the picture and even know who it is," said Horner.

For senior superlatives, he was voted Most Spirited and wants everyone to buy a yearbook to see his picture. He is very humble about receiving that recognition

from the senior class.

"I'm glad people know who I am," said Horner.

Horner also wants to have his own column on *The Oracle*. He wants his column to be "a conversation between me and you—except on paper," said Horner.

Getting through his outgoing personality, Horner is involved in many after school activities. He participated in cross-country. Along with swimming freestyle and breaststroke, he also plays basketball and is a defenseman in soccer.

"Soccer is my favorite sport because it's cross country except instead of kicking people in front of you, you get to kick a ball," said Horner.

During lunch Horner spends time working on editing videos in his 'office' in the sports marketing room. He plans on going to Towson College in Maryland and he wants to study video production.

After all of his numerous school activities, Horner is still not finished. He is an avid computer enthusiast, and he is an admirer of Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple computer.

"Jobs does what he needs to do and doesn't care what anybody else says," said Horner. "He does his own thing."



Ashley Hughes  
Senior Spencer Horner was awarded the senior superlative for Most Spirited.



# Oracle Personals

Adam Thaxter is a stupid Ukrainian.

**Love, Your favorite seniors**

Matt, Not a day

Congratulations,

Go, seniors! Only

Pat Klutz—He melts in your mouth, not in your hand! :)

Hey, Salmon! have a fantastic day!  
Holler!

goes by where i don't think of you, where the blood doesn't rush from my head, where i don't get that special feeling. Love, Bobby

Winter Guard, on not getting last place!  
The season is off to a great start!

74 more days of classes!  
AAAAAAAAAAAA

YAOYILI—Me

*Let 'em play, or I don't play. You know what I'm talking about.*

Bobby

*Woodstock, Snoopy loves you.*

Want to buy an Oracle Personal?

Happy Sweet 16, Liz!! Much

3lets—i kno u luv 2 cher so heres ur ad

Only 1 dollar a line! Grab an Oracleite or stop by Room 215!!

# IT'S

(NOT)

# TOO

# HAWK!

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AGAIN IN MAY FOR \$65!







# Composition We Writing

write a TV screenplay at the end of the year.

"Like 'Seinfeld'," Nelson said. "If George and Jerry can sell a script about nothing to NBC, so can we." She also hopes the class will get into heated discussions about what they have read and written, especially since the presidential election is coming up.

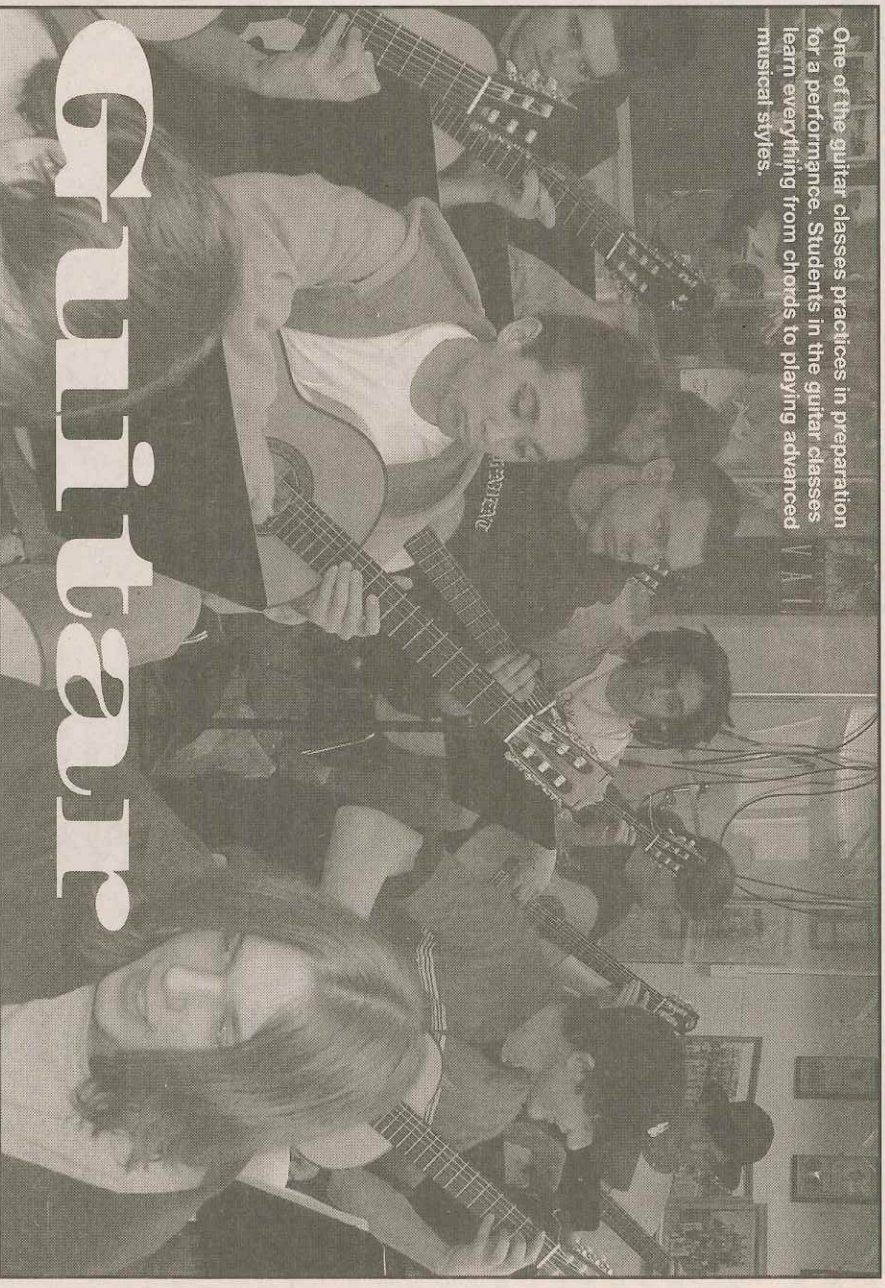
Creative Writing, taught by English teacher Patricia Kettler, takes another approach to writing. Kettler, who has taught this English elective for 5 years now, said the class is low-key, but students will get a lot out of it.

"We write short stories, poetry, plays and do an independent study during the year," said Kettler, who sponsored WS's literary magazine, *Symposium*, for 5 years.

"Creative Writing is a great opportunity to write with structure and to get started," Kettler said. "It also gives students the freedom to expand their writing in different directions."

If you're still wondering about which class to take to fill up that empty period, consider the "flip side" of English class. That "fun" period in the day could go a long way toward balancing out the stress caused by quadratic equations.

One of the guitar classes practices in preparation for a performance. Students in the guitar classes learn everything from chords to playing advanced musical styles.



Jon Nylen

**By Emily Miller**  
Managing Editor

Anyone with natural rhythm, unkempt hair and an appreciation for music has a home in the WS guitar department. The beginners learn chords, the intermediates polish their technique, the advanced explore unknown territories in funk and jazz and the super-advanced rock the TV screen. Keith Owens, guitar instructor, teaches five levels according to skill, all the while motivating WS's rock stars to love that golden guitar they're playing.

"The bottom line is to make each individual student the

## Peer Helping

**By Camila Casillas**  
Managing Editor

Peer Helping is all about having fun while helping others. Students get involved in a long list of activities including community service.

During the first quarter, Kellie Mastrodonato taught the peer helpers to tutor and mediate.

The peer helpers have the opportunity of hearing many guest speakers from a variety of programs, like the Northern AIDS Ministry and MADD. A representative from each group comes in, informs them about the subject and encourages them to get involved. As a result, peer helpers passed out red ribbons in the winter to make the students aware of the dangers of drunk driving.

The students in peer helping also go on more field trips than most electives. The peer helpers go to Hemlock and visit

best guitarist they can be," said Owens.

Students have their own personal reasons for picking up the guitar. Freshman Haley Schitz wanted to "know the theory behind it," senior Adam Thaxter "needed a musical outlet," and senior Jay Hurst "was jealous of [his] sister's guitar-playing ability."

The unifying characteristics that tie these students together, despite age or grade, is the desire to learn more and a need to create the music that moves them.

"It's fantastic," said senior Thomas Planert. "There isn't another program that can offer countless opportunities for creativity."

area elementary schools.

"We go to Hemlock together so we can become closer as a class," said Rimm.

Second quarter each peer helper is assigned an elementary student that has troubles at home or school. The peer helpers leave school once a week to talk with them and often help them with their homework.

Peer helpers also help out students within our school. They work with the FLEX kids, and they help new WS students during their first few days here, showing them to their classes and offering to eat lunch with them.

Peer Helping is unique compared to the other electives offered at WS. The class encourages students to reach out to other students, and they receive hands on training.

"I love the group discussions," said senior Elina Khaykin. "I enjoy expressing feelings and hearing feelings of others on other topics."

## PHOTOGRAPHY

**By Grace Jo**  
Features Assistant

The smell of chemicals, the click of the camera and the eerie red glow of the dark room appeal to students who wish to express their artistry through pictures.

Photography, taught by teachers John Adams and Dorothea Swaggard is a class where students can express their creativity through different ways. It's a class where students learn through hands-on activities that can be used outside of the classroom. Adams teaches Photo I while Swaggard teaches Photo I, II and III.

"I like hands on stuff and I really like the teaching staff," said junior Steven Bonheim. "They're awesome. They allow me to express myself."

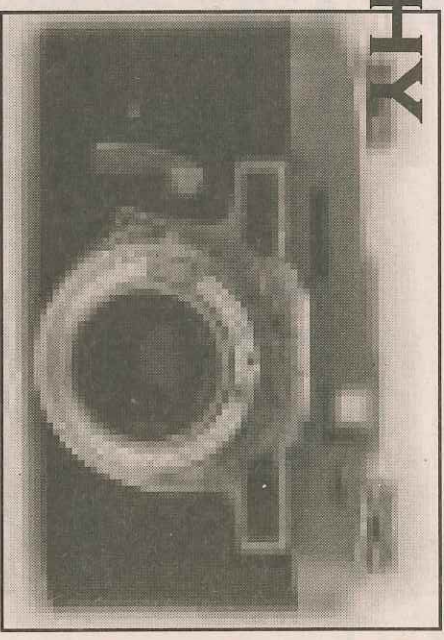
Many current students decided to take photography in past years as their elective because of the creativity that they can bring into the photography and the freedom that comes with the class.

"There's a lot of freedom and I love going into the dark room," said junior Kathryn Strandell.

Students work on the different processes of photography using their own equipment. The class combines both the technical and the artistic aspects of taking pictures.

"In Photography, we not only learn to take interesting photos, we also learn how to process our own film and our own prints," said Adams.

Photo I focuses on fundamentals of the entire photo



developing process. Students work with different techniques in the dark room and light design for a variety of effects.

"I got a digital camera and started taking really good pictures," said senior Angelo Johnson. "I thought I might as well home that down in this class."

While students are not taught to use digital cameras, they can still apply what they have learned in Photography.

As students progress to the higher photography classes, they begin to study specific styles and special effects. They also begin their portfolio.

The combination of technology and creativity within Photo I appeals to a wide variety of students.

"It [the class] is interesting because it has a technical side and a creative artistic side so it gives everyone the opportunity to succeed," said Adams. "Plus, it's just plain, good ol' fun."

# Course '05 Action

Classes to take to fill in  
the Oracle samples nine  
ing school year.

## & Sociology

and are studied in depth," said senior Emily Allen.

Sociology is equally captivating. It studies human social behavior, especially in the origins, organization, institutions and development of human society.

"Sociology is open to interpretation," said Sociology teacher John McMenamin. "It describes trends and tries to break open certain ways of thinking."

Students have also really enjoyed the class. They are often enlightened when they discover different viewpoints.

"It's really interesting. I've learned a lot about myself," said sophomore Andrea Goetzhius.

Many people take the two classes together because they believe they are connected when they are actually very different. Psychology focuses on the way an individual thinks while Sociology studies how groups of people interact.

Even though they are not connected, it is still a very popular choice to take both classes in the same year, one each semester. They are both very interesting classes that most students would like.

"I think they can improve a person," said Fernandez. "It provides a different view which can lead to a different way of thinking."



# Entertainment

## Some things are better classic

By Emily Miller  
Managing Editor

Romance movies can either be your best friend or your worst enemy. Combined with a pint of strawberry ice cream, they can be a soothing remedy for a crushed heart. But when sentimental holidays come around and you're still single, they're enough to make you throw your shoe at the TV screen. Nevertheless, the film industry is never short on romantic movies, whether they're classics, chick flicks, or remakes.

Some of the most famous love stories, like "Casablanca," are sepia-toned, giving off an authentic feel. Others are remembered for the unforgettable characters like Scarlett O'Hara in "Gone With the Wind."

Most importantly, the best classics feature the best actors and actresses of all time, like Audrey Hepburn in "Breakfast at Tiffany's," "I like the older movies," said senior Whitney Fezter. "They're classic and not cheesy, it's not skanky fake love."

The contemporary romance stories of today, a.k.a. chick flicks, are dismal in comparison. The typical chick flick is defined by dull, predictable scripts and mundane performances by untalented, skinny teenagers.

By Katherine Hutton  
Inside Story Editor

"It's the season of award shows.

The Golden Globes took place on January 25, the Grammys just passed by on February 9, and the Academy Awards will once again be held at the Kodak Theatre on February 29.

The airing of these shows causes some students delight at seeing their favorite celebrities rewarded while others don't see the point of showing them on TV.

"They're stupid, pointless, and a waste of time," said senior Casey Clausen.

The Grammys is the biggest award show in the music business. The big winners this year were Beyonce, who won five Grammys, and Outkast, who won three.

"It's interesting that in the last decade that the majority nominees have changed from rock to R&B



Classic romance "Casablanca" is still outranks most modern romantic films even after 52 years.

"Crossroads," "Down with Love," "Maid in Manhattan," "Two Weeks Notice," and "A Guy Thing" are all prime examples of the dim-witted nature of love stories today.

"I despise lovey-dove and mushy stuff," said sophomore Jessica Peterson.

The worst thing about these mindless movies are the girls who like them are not keeping their passion for them to themselves. They diffuse the suffering to innocent victims by dragging their boyfriend's to go see them as well.

"I took my ex-boyfriend once to go see 'Legally Blonde 2' with me," said junior Sarah Salvaita. "He didn't really like it because he thought it was too girly."

Thankfully, there is still hope for today's love stories. Salvation lies in remaking aged love stories with a modern twist. The first of these was the 1996 version of "Romeo + Juliet" starring Claire Danes and Leonardo DiCaprio. After this box-office hit followed "Shakespeare in Love" with Gwyneth Paltrow, "A Midnight Summer's Dream" with Kevin Kline and Michelle Pfeiffer, and "Elizabeth" with Cate Blanchett. Junior Frances Correa said, "It was a modern approach to [R + J]."

and hip hop," said senior Dan Steger.

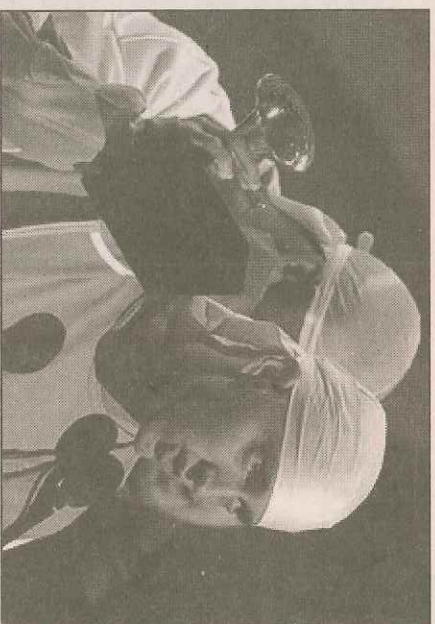
The Grammys also always have a number of performances to fill the time in between presenting awards, something that acting awards lack. This year included pop kids Christina Aguilera and Justin Timberlake, rappers Outkast and Sean Paul, country crooners Vince Gill and Martina McBride, and rockers Sting and Dave Matthews.

"I like the performances because they mixed the genres like Sting performing with Sean Paul," said junior Elizabeth Bush.

Meanwhile, Oscar predictions are under way. Determining who will the top awards such as Best Actor, Best Actress, and Best Picture, is a popular game.

"I want Johnny Depp [to win] because he really studies what he's acting," said sophomore Ashley Corum. "He goes in depth."

The favorites among WS students this



Popular rapper Eminem reflects a growing interest in rap with his win of two Grammys.

## Rap storms music scene

By Danny Tinsley  
Junior Staff Writer

Music has undergone many changes in its long history; even the earliest men found joy in the soothing sound of song. From the classical days of

Beethoven to the rock generation of Elvis, from the pop era of Michael Jackson to the rap of today, rap is the sound of choice playing in the headphones and cars of most teenagers all around the nation.

The mesmerizing beats of the rap genre keep teenagers dancing and humming them long after they have been heard.

"It's all about the beats," said junior Sam Hoefert.

Like Hoefert, many other students at WS feel the same way.

"Hip-hop is now something that everyone can relate to," said junior Harold Yegezu. "And the beats and rhythms are exactly what makes it." Such current stars like 50 Cent,

Eminem and Ludacris dominate the radio world with their rap sound. "I love 50 Cent," said junior Lindsay Smith. "I aspire to become his future partner 49 Cent."

There are those students, however, that are not as intrigued by the rap industry. To them, the beat and rhythms are nothing more than an annoyance.

"Rap rhymes with crap for a reason," said junior Sean Tew.

Even without the respect of the whole populace, rap is the dominating sound in the music industry.

"Some people don't respect rap as music," said freshman Hillary Clinkenbeard. "But making the lyrics flow with the rhythm takes talent like any other style of music today."

At the Grammy Awards, rap was featured in its own category and accounted for six awards.

"Rap is really more of an art form," said Yegezu. "It's the highest form of poetry."

## Films, music honored in onslaught of award shows

year seem to be Johnny Depp for Best Actor in

"Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl" and "Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" for Best Picture. The Best Actress category, however, seems to be up for grabs according to the student population. According to the results of the Globes and the nominations for the Oscars, however, Bill Murray ("Lost in Translation"), Charlize Theron ("Monster"), and "Lord of the Rings" seem to be the heavy favorites for Oscar wins. The last installment of Peter Jackson's trilogy received 11

Oscar nominations and will probably sweep the awards. "They [award shows] are fun to watch," said Corum. "It brings Hollywood into your house."


### Who should win the Oscar for:

## Oracle Poll




Best actor?	
Johnny Depp ("Pirates of the Caribbean")	77.5%
Bill Murray ("Lost in Translation")	9.0%
Jude Law ("Cold Mountain")	5.5%
Sean Penn ("Mystic River")	5.5%
Ben Kingsley ("House of Sand and Fog")	2.5%
Best Actress?	
Charlize Theron ("Monster")	36.5%
Diane Keaton ("Something's Gotta Give")	28.5%
Naomi Watts ("21 Grams")	15.0%
Keisha Castle-Hughes ("Whale Rider")	12.5%
Samantha Morton ("In America")	7.5%
Best Picture?	
"Lord of the Rings: the Return of the King"	71.0%
"Seabiscuit"	11.5%
"Master and Commander"	6.5%
"Lost in Translation"	6.0%
"Mystic River"	4.5%

Poll taken out of 200 WS students

—Compiled by Katherine Hutton



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# SEX SELLS

*A social commentary on sex in the media from Janet Jackson incident to Madonna's kiss*

**By Adam Rosen**  
Sports Editor

Sex sells, America. Sex sells. Over the past couple of years audiences have seen Britney and Madonna's kiss and Janet Jackson's breast. A new form of television has been brought to America's youth. The TV networks seem to think that they have to do something to give them that edge, even if someone's clothes are ripped off.

"I really think celebrities are embarrassing themselves on TV by doing what they're doing," said junior Craig Hudson.

**"I thought it was smart what Janet did, because she will probably make millions for her album."**

—Matt Oliver, sophomore

The youth has been exposed to an abundance of questionable behavior condoned as appropriate for all age groups. The Super Bowl and award shows once were a time when family got to spend time feasting on snacks and goodies watching the tube together. Today, it's a time to see outrageous behavior and risque scandals. Over these past couple of months celebrities who the students idolize have been pulling publicity pranks in order to get fan support. Britney, Christina, Madonna, and Janet are all responsible for being a part of this.

"I think the whole Janet Jackson thing is overrated," said senior Mary Leonard.

The Janet exposure incident coincidentally took place the same time she is releasing her new CD. Although it's not conventional advertising, some speculate her prank may raise the number of album sales.

"I thought it was smart what Janet did, because

she will probably make millions for her album," said sophomore Matt Oliver.

The MTV Video Music Awards is another big event that causes controversy, not to mention confusion. Last year, Madonna kissed Britney, and then Madonna kissed Christina. Students were shocked to find out what people were doing to attract attention. Whether it's someone's clothes falling off or the use of provocative language, there will always be something.

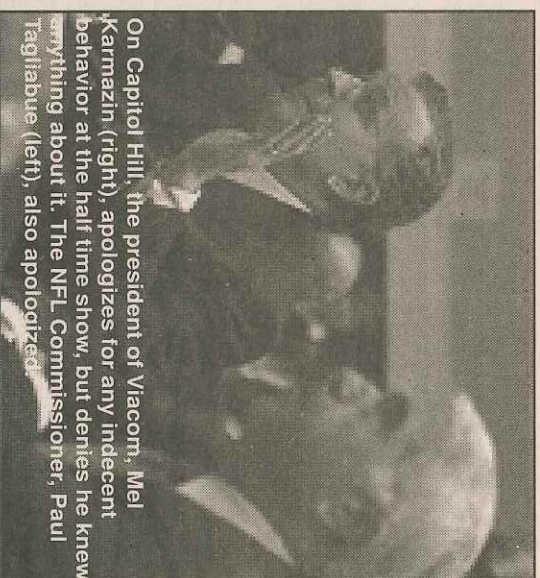
"TV amazes me nowadays," said junior Justin Atkinson. "You never know what's going to happen next."



Janet Jackson tries to cover up after Justin Timberlake ripped off part of her wardrobe at the Super Bowl.

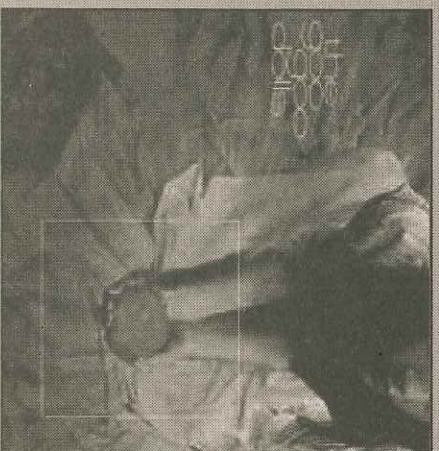


Monday February 2, Jackson released a statement apologizing to the "audience, MTV, CBS and the NFL" for offending anyone.



On Capitol Hill, the president of Viacom, Mel Karmazin (right), apologizes for any indecent behavior at the half time show, but denies he knew anything about it. The NFL Commissioner, Paul Tagliabue (left), also apologized.

## "Gutterflower"



Listening to "Gutterflower" by the Goo Goo Dolls is like going on vacation to a whole new world. The lush sounds of the guitars and soothing voice of lead singer John Rzeznik can lift any listener's spirits, no matter how bad his or her day has been.

The CD, named after a Chilean poem, is overflowing with beautiful lyrics that cover topics from a harsh break up to living in L.A. Though the words have deep meaning, they aren't hard to understand or decipher. The world that the Goo Goo Dolls create with their lyrics is one of deep passion and disgust of egotistical stars.

Another standout on the CD is the richness of the guitars. The Goos are known for their rich open chords which are further expressed on "Gutterflower." Their resonance blends with Rzeznik's intense voice to create a sound that no one else can replicate. This blend is the base for my love of the Goo Goo Dolls because it makes me feel like maybe the world isn't as crazy as the news portrays it.

## Oracle Picks

### Way Side School

*Way Side School* is the most hilarious book series ever. Though the series is originally written for a younger audience, it can still be appreciated by an older one.

The book is about the class on the thirtieth floor. The school, Wayside School, was supposed to be one floor with 30 classrooms, but the construction workers got a little confused and made a school with 30 floors with one classroom on each level. The class constantly gets in trouble and every student has their own identity, such as Todd who always has to go home on the kindergarten bus.

What makes this book unique is the plethora of funny characters. The principal is the funniest because he always conceals the stupidest plans, such as installing two elevators and then saying that one would only go up, and the other would only go down. They worked once.



**LOUIS SACHAR**

**SIDEWAYS STORIES FROM WAYSIDE SCHOOL**

Illustrated by Julie Benstock

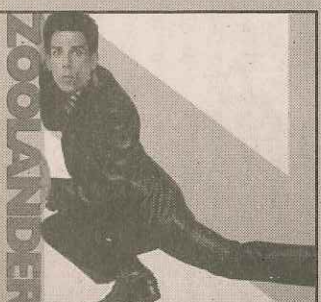
### "Zoolander"

If you have ever gone to a 'daiye' spa or been in a freak gasoline fight incident, then "Zoolander" is just the right movie for you.

The movie follows Derek Zoolander, a famous male model, as he is trying to cope with losing the Male Model of the Year award to up and coming model Hansel. To discover himself, Derek travels to New Jersey where he meets with his dad and brothers. After working one day in the mines with them, he leaves to make a school known as the School for Kids Who Can't Read Good and Want to Do Other Things Good Too. He then discovers an evil plot to kill the Prime Minister of Malaysia and does everything in his power to stop it.

The characters in this movie are unforgettable and their portrayals bring them to life. Jacobean Mugatu is the best part. He, along with his dog and assistant Todd, tries to brainwash Zoolander with a video. It's the funniest thing in the world. Just picture Will Ferrell as a school boy named Cleudus and laughter is sure to follow. Owen Wilson, who plays Hansel, is also a star in this movie. He is so stupid that it makes me feel like I'm a genius.

This movie literally makes me laugh every time I think about it. There is never a moment in the movie where something funny isn't happening.



—Compiled by Sam Lee



# Knit to be tied

Scarves, hats, gloves fly off student needles

By Jen Siomacco

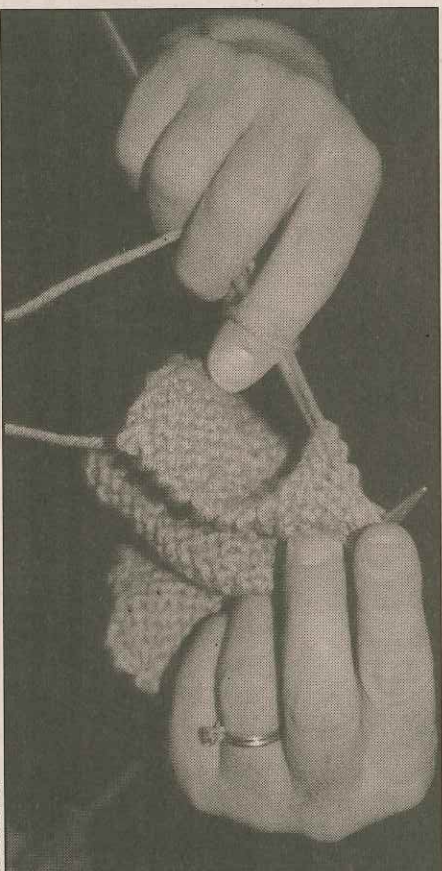
Oracle Editor

Winter is synonymous with gloves, caps, sweaters, scarves and an endless line of other multicolored and stylish outerwear pieces. They all have one essential thing in common, other than the obvious fact that they hold magical cold-blocking powers: they are all knitted.

The glory of these wonderful accessories is that they are simple to make after the basic skills are mastered. Once taught in home economics classes across the nation, knitting is a valuable skill. It is not just for women and homemakers, but for anyone who enjoys making things on their own to save a little cash. It's also a fun and enjoyable pastime.

"I was in rehearsal for a show," said sophomore Kaiti Jones, who learned to knit in December, "and one of my friends was knitting and she taught me how."

The knitting process isn't difficult. There are dozens of different stitches, such



Knitting has become a way to express fashion creativity. In the past the activity was associated with older enthusiasts.

as the pearl stitch most commonly found on gloves and scarves. All that is needed to create a scarf, however, is the basic stitch.

The knitter needs simple knitting needles to start. The size and width of the

needles will determine the size of the stitch.

The bigger the needles, the looser the stitch; the smaller, the tighter. Next grab a ball of yarn. The color of the fiber doesn't matter, though there are hundreds of different yarns to choose from.

Within about an hour and a half of her

## The hidden

## slopes of Springfield

who do not find it quite so much fun.

"I don't like sledding because you crash into fences and trees and other things that hurt," said sophomore Vincent Lamar.

Some of the most popular and well-known sledding hills include Huntsman, Irving and Hunt Valley. Huntsman is several hills of different sizes and slopes that are good for little children as well as daredevil teenagers. Both Irving and Hunt Valley are long, gently sloping hills that provide a good, long ride.

"I like sledding at Hunt Valley," said sophomore Diego Siova. "It's flat after the hill so you can keep going for a long time."

There are, of course, some good unknown sledding hills. One spot is the golf course on Rolling Road.

"I sled at the golf course. There are a lot of hills there," said Zimmer.

Good sledding can often be found right at home.

Many WS students

enjoy sledding down their driveways or in their backyards.

"I'm a hardcore sledder," said senior Andrew Seegers. "I build a course in my backyard when it snows. There's a ramp that goes over my fence. It's like a bobsled course. All my friends come over. I have a maneuverable sled, so it's a lot of fun."

Besides trying different hills,

additional thrill can also be added by sledding at different times of day. Many WS students enjoy sledding at night.

"Sledding at night is more fun because it's icier so you go faster," said Zimmer. "Also, you can't see where you're going."

Sledding is still as much fun in high school as it was in elementary school.

"Sledding is a lot of fun," said Siova. "I love the thrill."

# CRUNCH CRUNCH CRUNCH

Refusing to let Starbucks monopolize biscotti as well as coffee, students bake it in their own oven

By Lauren Kondo

Features Editor

At Starbucks and other coffee houses the display of bakery goodies is filled with cookies, muffins, and a crunchy Italian treat: biscotti. While some establishments charge just as much for the biscotti as the coffee, the cookies can be made at home for much less.

Biscotti has become coffee's partner because of the crunchiness. This crispiness comes from baking the cookie twice.

"I love it because it's crunchy," said sophomore Elyse Ritter. "It adds more flavor to the coffee."

Another reason for its appeal is its broad, flat, wand-like shape that makes for a good grip when dunking into coffee, tea, or wine. The cookie must be immersed for a couple of seconds before it starts to absorb the liquid.

"I love to dunk it," said freshman Anne Sloan.

The name derives its meaning from the Italian word for *twice baked*. It was an Italian baker who originated the cookie during Columbus's time so he could have something to accompany his wine. At first they were made with almonds because they were readily available.

"My grandfather sends it," said Sloan. "He usually adds almonds."

Now biscotti have expanded to include much more than almonds. A search on the internet for the perfect recipe comes up with endless possibilities. Many extras can be added including dried fruits, chocolate, nuts, seeds,

and spices. Among the countless recipe varieties are brownie, chocolate cherry, cranberry, anise, lemon poppy seed and pistachio. They can also be topped with chocolate and nuts.

And for those meticulously counting their carbs, there is even a version Dr. Atkins himself would indulge in. In addition to low carb biscotti, there are other recipes to satisfy dieters: whole wheat, fat free, sugar free, sodium free, low-calorie, and gluten free are all choices. Kosher and vegan biscotti can be made as well.

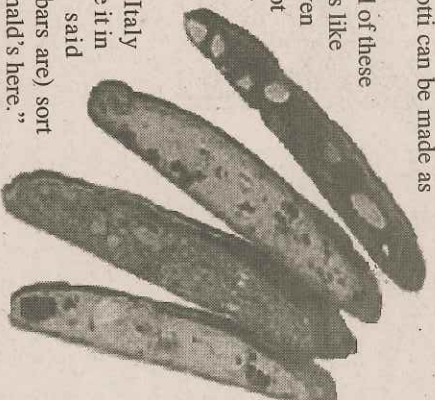
Even with all of these recipes, students like

sophomore Steven Woody prefer not to make their own because they can't bake.

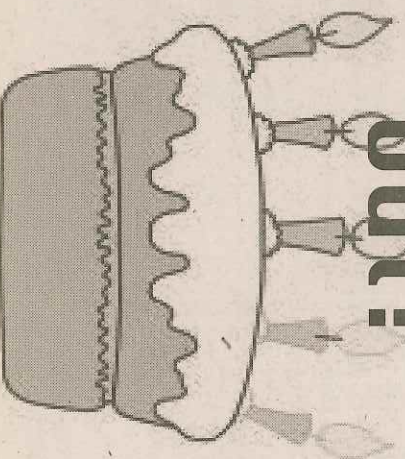
"I lived in Italy where they have it in every bar," said Woody. "(The bars are) sort of like a McDonald's here."

Even those that can bake shy

away from baking biscotti because of the time element. "My mom makes it, but it takes forever to bake it," said Ritter. "You have to bake it like four times."



Dear LIZ,  
Happy  
Sweet  
16!  
Peace  
Out!





## Bargain shopping saves cash

By Jen Siomacco  
*Oracle Editor*

Right now, I've got \$5 in my wallet. I'm in dire need of a new pair of shoes and need to save every penny I can. What it comes down to is finding the things you need, not at the overpriced market retail value of stores like Abercrombie & Fitch, but at the bargain prices of the clearance racks and secondhand clothing stores.

The art of bargain shopping is usually frowned upon but that's mainly because cheap prices brings to mind items that are cheaply made. This is not the bargain shopping that I'm talking about. Every item I've ever purchased has been of top quality. I've found a hat from the slightly overpriced Urban Outfitters in perfect shape but sitting on a clearance rack for one dollar. Vintage necklaces from thrift stores can be bought for a few dollars at the max, while replicas are sold in retail stores at the hiked up price of \$20-30. Plus, there's really no point in buying a knock off at a higher price when the original can be found with a much less severe cut in a high schooler's limited budget, especially

an unemployed student like myself.

The consumer really isn't the only benefactor from bargain shopping. Several corporations have been formed for the precise purpose of offering reduced priced quality items. Wal-Mart, Kohl's, Ross, Marshall's and TJ Maxx are just a few stores that offer designer labels, along with store brand clothing, at up to practically 90% off the original value.

Not to mention that hundreds of small businesses saw the profits in the past from offering reduced price secondhand items. Stores that offer used CDs, such as the CD Warehouse in Georgetown, which mixes used items in with new ones and imports, are raking in the benefits every year. So are used book stores and the countless number of thrift stores and consignment shops like Classy Consignments on Backlick Road.

Not every member of this student body has an unlimited supply of money, nor are they all able to hold a job for extra spending cash. The art of bargain shopping has nothing to do with sacrificing quality. Instead, there are just a few simple things



Many WS students take the challenge and climb "the wall" at Galyan's sporting good store. There are many indoor wall climbing facilities in the Northern Virginia area. Climbing is a skill of mental toughness and brute strength.

## Reaching high heights

Students find thrill in rock climbing

By Tim O'Keefe  
*Sports Assistant*

Rock climbing is probably not a sport for your grandma. It takes strength, endurance, flexibility, and determination. In the U.S., more than 100,000 athletes have taken to rock climbing. Some WS students plan weekend rock climbing trips around the area.

"It's very challenging," said senior Dan Phan. "It's just you and the rock."

Phan says that he also likes to go on weekend rock climbing trips once in a while to vast sceneries in parts of Virginia and West Virginia.

Locally Galyans provides a huge indoor climbing wall, as well as a vast array of sporting goods, athletic shoes, and camping gear. Even with the huge climbing wall, some WS students feel it does not provide the same experience as the real thing outside.

"It's just not the same," said sophomore Andrew Burland, "when you go on real rock climbing walls you have to plan your

route out, and there are not those convenient climbing grooves, like at Galyans."

Galyans is open everyday. The rock climbing wall is open between five to nine on Monday through Friday, twelve to eight on Saturday, and twelve to six on Sunday. The rock climbing wall costs two dollars.

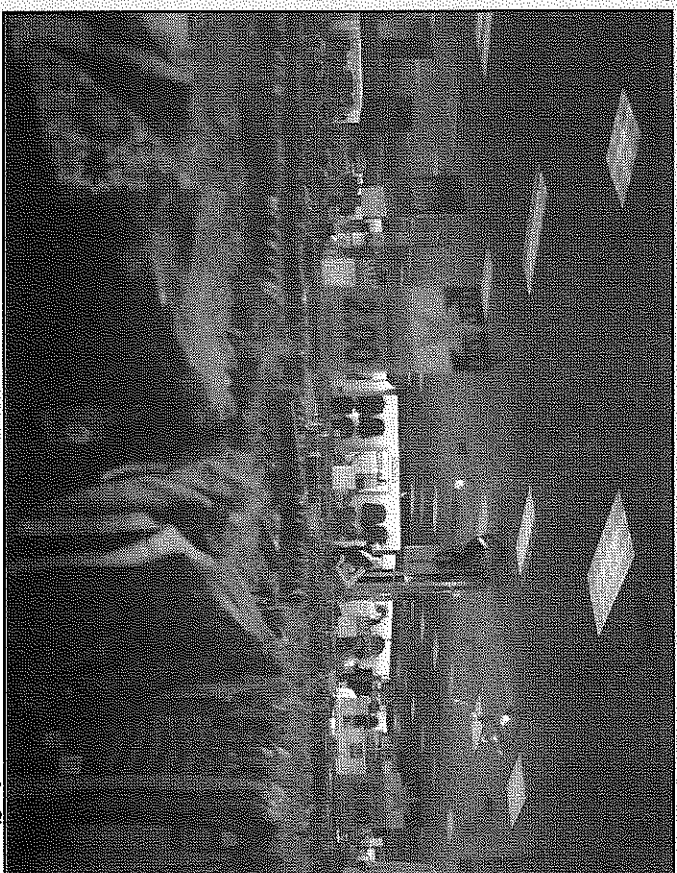
When going outdoor rock climbing plan to come prepared. Plan on bringing: a rope, bilyayer (a climber managing rope), and a harness. You also may want to bring shoes, tight fitting clothing and a helmet.

Safety is also a concern, the higher one climbs the higher the risk can potentially occur.

"Although falls and accidents do occur, they are rare," said [www.lifesessentialsbyzee.com](http://www.lifesessentialsbyzee.com).

Other students enjoy when all the hard work is done, and they can just sit back and soak in the scenery.

"There is no real substitute to real rock climbing," said Burland. "I enjoy climbing high, and looking down."



Sale signs, like those above, litter such bargain stores like Kohl's and Ross. Jen Siomacco

that can transform a spontaneous shopper into a wise and conscientious consumer. Keep an eye open, examine every item carefully and always ask yourself "Is this really worth it?"

So, as I was standing at the Ft. Belvoir Thrift Store, gazing at the women's shoe rack, I decided that those three dollar barely worn red mary-jane styled clogs really might be worth my hard earned cash.

## Student's adventures in the art of laser tagging

By Sarah Drabkin  
*Junior Staff Writer*

Shadowland Laser Adventures in Chantilly has taken the once thought hi-tech world of laser tag to the extreme. Only 45 minutes away, Shadowland offers a two-level game room, great group packages, private rooms for parties, and an arcade to play video games while waiting for your "adventure" to begin.

When you enter the black-lit, dimly glowing rooms of Shadowland you sign up and create your alias. Once you and your group have munched on snacks and chugged soda you are taken into the briefing area where one of the "adventure guides" gives you a 15 minute lecture on all the gadgets and details you must use during your mission.

You are then equipped with a body suit and an "Infrared laser guided beam gun." The gun has a window in the back, which shows the energy, ammo, credits, lives, points, and rank of the player.

When entering the smoke-filled room you see "gems," or game enhanced

modules on the walls that can tag you or give you special powers such as invisibility, rapid-fire, and thousands of others.

There are also four different games you can play. There is a basic team vs. team game where you compete to see which teams scored the most points. There is a territorial game where each team guards a gem while other team tries to capture it. There is a game called "BORG" where all of your team's energy, credits, and powers are shared so when a team member gets hit the whole team is effected. The last game is on a time constraint where you race against the clock to survive.

After the sweat-dripping game is over you are led to the debriefing area (the party room) to receive score cards with a list of everyone you shot and who shot you, the powers you got and your rank on your team and as a whole.

For groups there are many party choices to choose from.

Shadowland is a great place for a mind boggling, hi-tech good time.



Of the few laser tag arenas in the area, Chantilly's Shadowland Laser Adventures is a great place to go with a group of adventure-seeking friends. Party rooms (above) are available for party renting.



# Special Olympics basketball game brings fun

By Katie Bourget  
Weekend Editor

By four o'clock on a Wednesday afternoon, it is not uncommon for WS students to be in a comatose state starting at a TV screen while munching on potato chips and sipping down soda. However, some WS students are highly active after school and this stereotype can not be applied to them. Among these athletic and energetic individuals are the young women and men of the Functional Life Experience (FLEX) program who participate in the WS chapter of Special Olympics.

Currently these 14 students are participating in a winter basketball league organized by the Northern Virginia Special Olympics.

To prepare for their Sunday games, the team practices every Wednesday. With the help of their PE teacher, Kellie Mastrodonato, their classroom teachers, Deborah Ruldolph and Mark Morbeto and WS peer helpers, they dribble, pass and shoot for an hour in the auxiliary gymnasium. Practicing instills concepts of the rules and strategy.

"You pass to your team so you can shoot the basket," said junior Cristina Bilal, an enthusiastic member of the team.



Courtesy of Michael Ryan  
The WS Special Olympic team after a weekend basketball match against the Chargers.

Among the four or five Peer Helpers who are consistently involved in the program is senior Michael Ryan. Although the peer helpers do not play in the game, they still enjoy participating.

"I think it is self-fulfilling [to help]," said Ryan.

## Comeback players are ready

By Lauren Kondo  
Features Editor

After hearing the crack of a bone, the devastation sets in for athletes injured on the field. Like any good warrior, they fight back and work up to full strength in order to return to the fight.

Senior Kimmy Murdock tore her ACL last April playing soccer. Since then she had surgery in July and went to rehab working to return to the game. As of now the Varsity player hasn't played in a real game. She's mostly been playing indoors and practicing on getting her touch back.

Having broken her ankle freshman year and going through two surgeries, the injuries have affected her approach to the game.

"I'm more hesitant than before," said Murdock. "It does affect you mentally."

Similarly, senior Sarah Flanagan tore her MCL while playing in a basketball game this past January.

"It wasn't too bad," said Flanagan of her injury. "It's wasn't as bad as breaking a bone. It just hurt when I was

Throughout the winter there are four tournaments. So far the team has played in half of the games, and they were victorious in their last endeavour on February 8 here at WS.

The team has a strong sense of spirit and like to cheer before games.

"We put our hands out and say 'Go Spartans,'" said Bilal.

The rules followed by the Special Olympic team are slightly different than the conventional rules. Three players are on the court at a time, and to keep the game at a high tempo, only half the court is required for a Special Olympic game. The Spartans are confident of their skills and the team's ability.

I'm not worried about any of our opponents."

—Jonathan Wright, junior

"We're probably the toughest team. I'm not worried about any of our opponents," said junior Jonathan Wright.

Even, though they are confident, the players refuse to forget the real importance of the game and are respectful and courteous even against competitors. Wright said, "It's important to be a good sport."

walking."

She got her brace off on the 14 and started practicing again on the 17.

To regain her strength, Flanagan has been in rehab for two hours every day.

She has been training on balancing to strengthen her knee so she can be back on the Varsity team.

"The ligament will heal on it's own," said Flanagan. "I'm working on every muscle around it."

Like many injured athletes, Flanagan anxiously awaits approval from her doctor and to be deemed healthy enough to play again.

"I'll hopefully be cleared," said Flanagan. "I haven't done any lateral movement yet, but I hope to be back."

Previous injuries have conditioned Flanagan to the mind set of returning to the game.

She doesn't see herself becoming any more timid or any less aggressive come game time.

"I don't think I will be hesitant," said Flanagan. "I hurt my ankle this summer and it wasn't bad getting back mentally. I've been injured before, it won't be too hard."

## Start your engines

By Jason Gillis  
Managing Editor

New name, new season, new drivers, and new sponsors. The first NASCAR Nextel Cup season is underway.

Dale Jarrett was the first come from behind winner of the season when he won the Budweiser Shootout, an all-star race just for pride and money.

The new body style's of the Chevy's seemed to hinder defending champion Dale Earnhardt Jr., who usually is always at the front of the field at Daytona, but he redeemed himself winning one of the two Gatorade 125 qualifier races.

After the Daytona 500, usually called the "Super Bowl" of racing, Dale Earnhardt Jr. has the first official win of the Nextel Cup and is almost \$1.5 million richer. The race was held on February 15, and now the season is in full swing.

After 20 years of elusion, Earnhardt Jr.'s

father finally won The Great American Race, but then was tragically killed at that race track three years later. Now, Earnhardt Jr. can claim victory just like his late father.

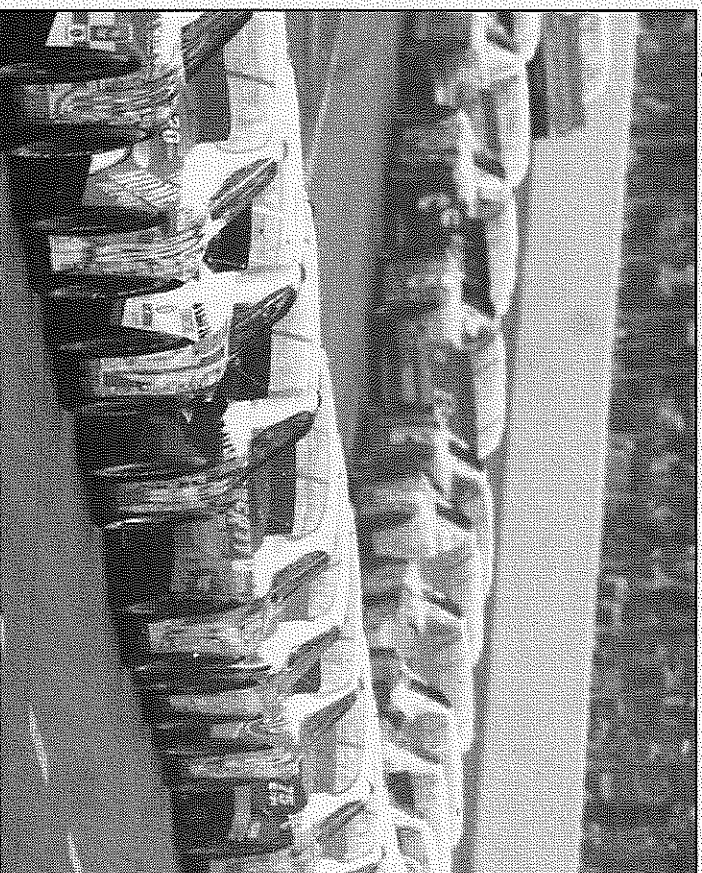
Along with the new sponsor, the series has changed its rules. Instead of having a point system throughout the 36 races, the Nextel Cup will offer a playoff system. Finishing in positions will still be awarded

Primary sponsors spend upwards of \$5 million to have their decals on the 2,000 pound automobiles.

points, but with 10 races to go, the top ten drivers in the point standings will start all over again at 0 to compete for the title.

Also, officials will start using hand signals to give penalties to teams during the race.

The suffering economy has shown its effect on NASCAR this year. Jeff Burton,



Dale Earnhardt Jr. won the Daytona 500 the first event of the NASCAR season.

a seasoned veteran, has his season in limbo. He lost his primary sponsor, Cigco, and is trying to find a sponsor or else his season is finished.

Primary sponsors spend upwards from \$5 million to have their decals on the 2,000 pound automobiles.

Also partially retiring Bill Elliot only has the sponsorship lined up for two races this year, far less than he wanted to participate in. This season brings in new rookies with high expectations. Scott Wimmer surprised all by having the best rookie finish in Daytona, taking a respectable third place finish, while Vickers was involved in a horrific crash that led to Michael Waltrip landing upside

down.

The most popular sport in America has also had its effects on people outside the racetrack. The estimated 75 million fans have had their impact on the country. President George W. Bush flew over the racetrack in Air Force One before landing and giving the command to start the Daytona 500. Also Earnhardt Jr. started in two Super Bowl ads this year. Joe Gibbs is back to the Redskins along with owning two highly competitive teams in NASCAR.

The Nextel Cup has changed, but the fans have not. Millions watched the Daytona 500 and over 180,000 attended, were you one of them?

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## BIG

## SPLASH!

**By Emily Sommerfeldt**  
News Section Editor

Laura Galway on placing ninth in the girls' 200-MR.

Senior John Hutchison and sophomore Kim Case captured state swimming titles last weekend at George Mason University.

Hutchison, who swam into first in the 200-IM, and Case, who swept the 100 breaststroke, also placing first, led the Lady Spartans to a sixteenth place finish and the men to ninth place in the state meet.

The boys' 400-yard free relay of Hutchison, junior Ryan Newmeyer, senior Justin Leddon and sophomore Matt Collier also swam well, placed second. The same boys placed tenth in their 200-yard relay. In the 100 fly, Hutchison placed eighth, with Leddon coming in not too far behind in tenth. Newmeyer placed sixth in the 200 free; in the 500 free, he placed ninth.

Congratulations also goes out to Case for her second place ranking in the 500 free, and to Case, freshman Melea McCreary, and juniors Roberta Nitzberg and

"We do better as the season progresses," said coach Mahla Cameron. "They should be happy, not surprised [about doing so well]. We had a very solid year and a good combination of people putting effort into [the team]."

While conditioning and training probably gave the swimmers the ability to vanquish their foes, both girls and boys alike shaved their bodies to give themselves that extra edge.

"I use men's razors, not women's, but I do use women's shave gel," said Hutchison. "It works better than men's."

Even with shaving, the team outdid its own expectations of themselves. After losing talented swimmers like 2003 graduate Scott Darwin, the other swimmers were unsure of their skills.

"We shocked a lot of people at States," said Case. "We lost a lot of swimmers from last year. I didn't expect us to be that good, but we got some talented freshmen this year."



Jon Mylen

Coach Blair Cameron coaches WS swimmers before regionals. Senior John Hutchison and sophomore Kim Case won States in their individual events. The Spartans did much better in the state meet than they had anticipated.

## WS wrestling keeps pinning opponents to the ground

**By Nina Moses**  
Senior Staff Writer

The wrestling team has wrangled their way to another amazing season.

The guys have broken last year's team records and have set new records for themselves. Under the leadership of team captains Mostafa Ibrahim and Dennis Ing the guys are sending 10 members of the team to regionals, a new team record. The guys have a good chance of doing well this year.

"They have been solid all year," said wrestling coach Gary Embrey.

The seniors on the team and their coach, Embrey, have noticed a definite improvement in their skills and feel that they can attribute this to the time spent on the sport.

"It takes a lot of devotion," said senior Sean Andresen.

## Brian Carroll accomplishes a few more goals

**By Anna Sommerfeldt**  
Inside Story Editor

Brian Carroll, 2000 WS graduate, made the U.S. Olympic men's soccer team. Carroll got an early start playing soccer and has been moving up the ranks ever since. He played soccer all four years at WS, playing on the Varsity team as a sophomore.



Ryan Waple

After graduating from WS, Carroll moved on to Wake Forest University in North Carolina. He was a captain of the soccer team his first year there and started all 21 games of the season as a top scorer on the team.

Still captain his sophomore year at Wake Forest, he again started all games and helped lead the team to one of their

best seasons ever.

Carroll left Wake Forest his junior year to play soccer for DC United, a national team. He played on the Under-18 team, the U-20 team, and was eventually called up to play at the U-23 level.

This year Carroll was picked for the U.S. Olympic team. Unfortunately, the team will not be going to Athens, Greece in 2004 because of their loss to Mexico earlier this month.

His family is excited and happy for him, as are students and teachers at WS.

Soccer coach Randy May recognizes the importance of this achievement.

"I think it's a tremendous honor for the school to have a student athlete of Brian's caliber to be recognized as one of the top players in the country," said May. "To have a WS student who is not only an Olympic player but also in professional sports is very unique."

While the team does not get the chance to go the Olympics, it is still a great opportunity for Carroll. His sister, Sara

The team has individual members who have ranked high in the state. Ibrahim ranks third, and Ing ranks sixth.

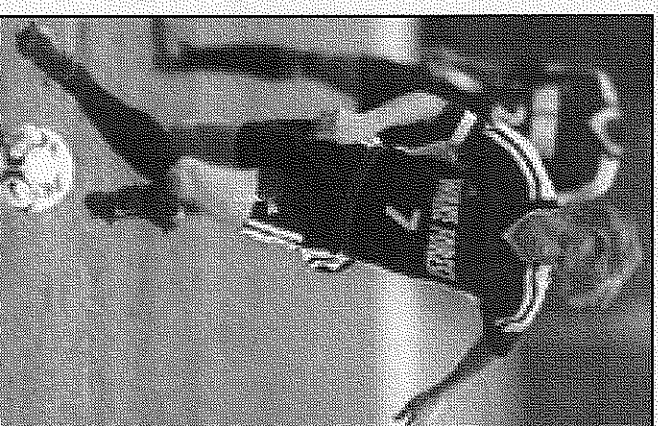
Embrey felt confident at the beginning of the season that this year's team would become the powerhouse it has proven itself as.

Next weekend Dennis Ing, Mostafa Ibrahim, Daniel Gitlin, Sean Andresen, Wes Askin, Matt Benton, Mike Campbell, Juliano Valencia, Matt Griel, and Chris Wilson are all competing in regionals and hope to beat last year's fifth place.

"I think we could win it," said senior Dennis Ing, "or get in finals."

The team captains have proven that they deserve their title. Ibrahim holds the highest rank by not losing a single match and Ing has earned 36 wins during tournaments. And the captains don't just prove themselves on the wrestling mat.

"They work as hard as everybody else," said Embrey.



Brian Carroll dribbles the ball up the field. During his college career at Wake Forest Carroll achieved many honors.

Carroll, agrees.

"I'm excited," said Sara. "[The team] does well and it's good [for him]."

*It's that season again:*

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**“She bang, she bang, oh baby,  
when she move, she move,  
I go crazy. ‘Cause she look like  
a flower, and she sting  
like a bee...”**



*William Hung knows what he's talking about.  
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starting May 3, for \$65.*



# Sex in the field

*You're going out, but are you really going anywhere?*

**By Betsy Miller**  
Senior Staff Writer

I had a truly wicked pair of braces up until midway through my freshman year—complete with rainbow colors and hooks for my head gear. My teeth look decent now but I definitely missed out on one of life's most

**The Oracle introduces a new column, "Sex in the field," which will explore the intricacies of love, sex and relationships in high school.**

formative activities: sucking face in the bus zone at Irving, for all of the world to see.

Middle school relationships were distinctly characterized by getting your flavor of the week in the most disgusting lip lock ever. Thus, when I reached West Springfield, my whole outlook on the nature of relationships was rocked. There seemed to be a number of happy couples who had the composure to keep the PDA to a minimum, although who knows what they did when they got in their cars and drove home.

So about sophomore year I realized that the fuel of relationships was the same gasoline that fired up Dad's old Corolla. Love acquired a V-8 engine about the term "going out" turned into "dating." When you're "going

out" you many be going

somewhere, but not any where over about a mile's hike. The word dating, though, has an elusive connotation of sultry nights spent out on the town drinking fine wine, or, at the very least, humid nights spent in someone's basement drinking warm beer. But one day midway through this year I realized that the person behind the wheel might take you out, but you're still alone when he drops you back at your doorstep.

The actual relationship is a product of reality—not symbolism. In accordance to the Valentine's Day season, don't get caught up in all the things that stand for love and lose sight of its more tangible qualities. Chocolate melts, flowers die, but people stay the same.

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## You know you're talented when...

**By Betsy Miller**  
Senior Staff Writer



**1. You only feel talented when:**

- a. it's flu season and your nose sounds like a trombone.
- b. you can identify what a trombone sounds like.
- c. you're such a good trombone player that WS drops the football team and people come just to hear you play on Friday nights.

### QUIZ!

**2. Your first dance recital was impressive because you:**

- a. didn't wet yourself.
- b. busted out a couple of original moves.
- c. had the director from the New York City Ballet follow you to Denny's after the show (and you still didn't wet yourself).

**3. When it comes to your status as an athlete:**

- a. well, you tried out.

b. you played a little JV ball and then "took some time off to get your grades up."

- c. you're just so sick of getting offered scholarships. Kobe Bryant went straight to pros; why can't you?

**4. As far as your singing voice goes:**

- a. about the only thing it's good for is

... you dance at parties, and sometimes people mistake your moves for a mild seizure and try to stick spoons in your mouth.

### QUIZ!

fun of the mispronunciations of the native speakers.

**6. When you dance at parties:**

- a. sometimes people mistake your moves for a mild seizure and try to stick spoons in your mouth.
- b. you can usually manage to not trip, and if you do, you just blame it on your partner.
- c. you make dance enthusiast Jared Timmons look like an amateur.

**8. If you were to die tomorrow your obituary would say:**

- a. not too much. Maybe a nice picture would be sufficient.
- b. you were "just beginning to realize your full potential."
- c. "this story will be continued on pages 10 through 15," after the first five pages.



*Poor Liz's Almanac* proudly presents:

# Somewhere between 16 and death



**Liz Weiderhold**

*Etc. Editor*

One of the worst things about turning 16 is coming to the horrible conclusion that you are no longer:

- a) To handle Barbie Dolls
- b) Wear your hair in a side ponytail
- c) Listen to the Spice Girls

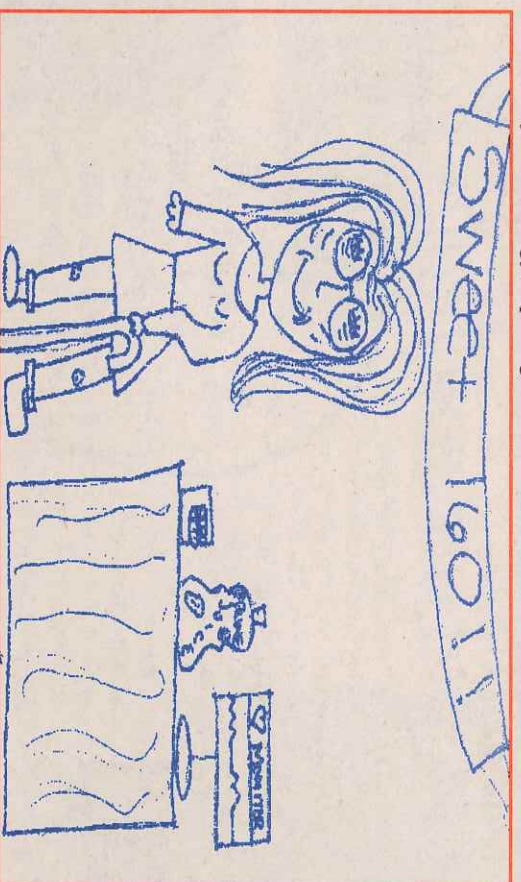
If you are a guy, these things have been stamped out of you since birth, but for girls this type of release of childhood is very distressing. You also see yourself in a new light. You look at yourself as a more mature and sophisticated person, though in reality you are none of these things.

I turn 16 today (in reality, I do NOT turn sixteen today but for the sake of this article I will). This thought scares me and raises important questions: What happened since I was wearing saddle shoes and a Barney shirt? What happened to my childhood after I was done playing "house"? Why would my mother let me go out into the world wearing saddle shoes and a Barney shirt?

Chances are, that in 16 more years I will be 32. That is a little too close to middle age to be perfectly comfortable. My chaotic years will be behind me then and I will be holding down a steady job at the office (HA! Me? A steady job! IN AN OFFICE!)

I will have a husband and my adopted Chinese baby girl. You might be asking yourself at this point: "Liz, are you adopting because you do not want to subject the world to the continuation of your genes?"

Yes, of course, because my child shouldn't have to be stuck with many of my genes. That is not the only reason. I have also seen "The Miracle of Birth" videos last year in biology, depicting child



Liz Weiderhold

birth as what could only metaphorically be described as a stealth bomber going full speed through an inner tube. My most important reason for adopting is simply that these girls need me.

But, back to aging. Yes, at 32 I will be enrolled in permanent aerobics classes. I'll be wearing straight leg jeans and tucking in my shirt and looking remarkably less of a my younger years and resemble more of a prune.

"Old Age" has unfortunately come knocking on my door already. I have recently lost all traces of common sense and have never remembered more than 20

names at any given time and constantly apply the same name (Jeremy) to any person (gender is of no importance) to anyone that I may forget. Essentially, this means that, to the best

of my knowledge, perhaps 96% of our school is named Jeremy, including, sometimes, myself.

Even more recently I have lost my *entire* memory. For example, I come into algebra, having studied for an hour and a half the night before, knowing not only what inverse functions are but also how to *find* them. My teacher would then hand out the tests and as soon as I see the words "find" and "inverse functions" I react with a distinct "huh?" This causes some stress-related problems in my life, let me just tell you. I have no appearance of a receding

hairline, one facet of aging that I am very confident that won't be a problem for me.

Also, maturity is something I won't have to deal with. I lack some component that allows normal humans to mature past age 12. In actuality I have only a second grade maturity. I base this on the fact that I recently broke a rib laughing from the old jokes from this grade. My favorite is easily:

Bob: Spell I Cup and say "funny colors" at the end.

Carla: I-C-U-P funny colors....

Bob: *laughing cruelly* Eww, you see me pee funny colors. You have cooties!

Amazingly, I share my birthday with George Washington, in which, as you know, his name can be rearranged to spell "No, I want Greg E's hog."

On a side note, an interesting fact not many people know is that he was the first elected leader of our country. I feel this downplays my own birthday because I now have to live up to George (yes, we are on a first name basis). But I deal with this by making very subtle intimations such as "HEY STUDENT BODY! LIZ WEIDERHOLD, TURN 16 TODAY! WOO HOO FOR ME!"

I have the mind of a 93-year-old and the maturity of a seven-year-old so, what do I have that normal 16-year-olds have? The answer is: homework, hormones and the word "sixteen" being the response to the question, "How old are you?" This also applies to the grades I've been getting on tests, the amount of cash I have in my wallet, and the number of names I currently remember that are NOT Jeremy.

## TOP 10 REASONS YOUR CLOTHES MIGHT COME OFF IN THE SUPER BOWL

10. YOU ARE STANDING NEXT TO A CERTAIN SOMEONE WHO HAS THE INITIALS J.T.
9. STREAKING ACROSS MID-FIELD IS YOUR INNER SATISFACTION.
8. YOU JUST LOST A HUMILIATING BET TO YOUR FRIENDS.
7. YOU ARE SEEKING A SPOT ON THE 11 O'CLOCK NEWS.
6. YOU SPONTANEOUSLY DECIDE TO BECOME A MEMBER OF A NUDIST COLONY.
5. YOU WANT TO SHOW OFF YOUR NEW "SECRET PIERCING".
4. YOU MIGHT BE PUBLICIZING YOUR NEW CD, WHICH IS DEBUTING THE FOLLOWING DAY.
3. YOU ARE IN SOME WAY RELATED TO THE JACKSON FAMILY.
2. THE SONG TO WHICH YOU ARE DANCING TO COMMENTS YOU TO GET "NAKED BY THE END OF THE SONG".
1. "WARDROBE MALFUNCTIONS."



Associated Press

—Compiled by Adam Rosen

February		March	
National Wild Bird Feeding Month		Youth Art Month	
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
International Dog Biscuit Appreciation Day 23	Mardi Gras 24	Ash Wednesday 25	Traopt at the 9:30 Club 26
National Pig Day 1	Dr. Suess's Birthday 2	National Anthem Day 3	Johnny Appleseed Day 4
8	Barbie's Birthday/Panic Day 9	Jen Siomacco's Birthday 10	Girl Scout Day 12
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8	Barbie's Birthday/Panic Day 9	Jen Siomacco's Birthday 10	Girl Scout Day 12
15	Everything You Do Is Right Day 16	St. Patrick's Day 17	First Walk in Space 18
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