



The RAACIE

March 12, 2004 Volume 40 Number 9
West Springfield High School 6100 Rolling Road Springfield, Virginia 22152

Students vote for Prez Voting seniors express political opinions

By Jason Gillis
Managing Editor

The year 2004 continues the war on terror, the economic woes and the presidential campaign. The Democratic nomination process started last year and continues to bring headlines, even though the field of nine has been brought down primarily to two.

The recent Virginia primary gave some seniors the chance to vote for the first time. The open Virginia primary allows anyone to vote because Virginians do not register with a certain party.

"I voted for [Wesley] Clark because I wanted to pull votes away from [John] Kerry," said senior Kim Buckles.

Pictures, sound bites, debates and harsh allegations skyrocket across front pages and evening news, but not everyone chooses to pay attention

"I want to learn more about it in school and also be able to vote before I start paying attention," said sophomore Sara Crawley.

Other students become more active in politics due to their personal beliefs and also pay attention because it is required in class.

"I have to watch the news for a requirement in my government class, but I always enjoy watching it and expressing my feelings to others," said Buckles.

Some seniors enrolled in government follow the current events surrounding the election topics, along with analyzing the outcome of the primaries. Students learn about different ways to participate in government.

organ donors and decided to do something about it. The SHS will be recruiting organ donors outside the cafeteria the 16th and 17th of March during both lunches. Students do not have to be a particular age, but have to fill out documentation to become donors.

"You're signing a card that says if something does happen to you, your organs will be donated," said Linz. More than 83,000 patients worldwide currently are waiting for donor organs. And every day, approximately eight people die waiting for an organ tissue donor. 2001 was the first year in which the number of living donors exceeded the number of deceased donors.



See DONATE on page 5.



Courtesy of Hilary Heineer
The Applied History class and teacher, James Percoco, stand outside of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, AL. This was one of five towns where the class learned about the history of civil rights.

Historical movement drives Percoco south

By Hilary Heineer
Senior Staff Writer

After six days and 42 hours on a bus, students from the Applied History class were glad to be home. They had just experienced a whirlwind trip throughout the South, making stops at Civil Rights memorials and sites along the way, led by history teacher James Percoco.

"I do the trip because I feel it's important to understand the sacrifices people made [in order to win] rights we take for granted," said Percoco. "I want them to understand the emotional aspect of history."

This is the fourth annual Civil Rights Pilgrimage made by the class and next year the

trip will be made during the 40th anniversary of Bloody Sunday, that took place in Selma, Alabama.

The journey gave the group a true glimpse of how Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. lived and who he was. The class visited his childhood home in Atlanta as well as his first church, both run by the National Park Service. King grew up in an affluent black neighborhood called Sweet Auburn.

"[His house] looks really small on the outside," said senior Robyn Adams. "Inside it's so big and pretty."

The trip to his childhood home ended with a look at a See TRIP on page 5.

Put a heart toward saving Science Honor Society finds recruits to donate organs

By Sarah Drabkin
Junior Staff Writer

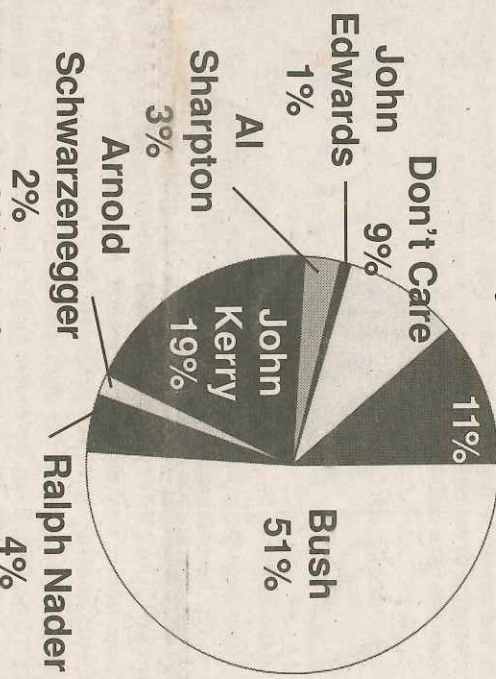
Signing up to be an organ donor is important. Just ask Physics teacher Ed Linz.

"Raising awareness is the most important thing you can do," said Linz, who received a donor heart on September 9, 1994. "It can happen to anyone. Go home tonight and tell your family what you want to happen if something happens to you."

The Science Honor Society, sponsored by Chemistry teacher Ann Bogar and Barinder Deu, noted the need for

Who do you think will be elected president in 2004?

Anyone but Bush



—Compiled by Tim O'Keefe

government if you didn't vote," knows yet who will win.

"At the moment Bush is ahead because he is the incumbent, but Kerry still has six months to solidify his platform," said senior Dan Phan.

Even with seniors learning about their governmental system firsthand, underclassmen show their apathy toward the whole political process.

"I can't vote yet and it's pointless because I don't think the president does anything," said junior Patrick Newhall. "It's all of his advisers."



10 AP Lang students copy Mark Twain's satirical style



14 Spend a day in Chinatown



17 Lady Spartans claim regional title

See DONATE on page 5.

Viewpoint

Students Lack proper candy etiquette

Sweet tooth cravings resulting in a gradual disappearance of Mary Halfhill's candy stash

Everyone has a sweet tooth, and by the looks of the low candy supply in guidance secretary Mary Halfhill's candy bowl, her desk in the guidance office is the place to go to satisfy that midday sugar craving.

Students and faculty alike take their share of bite size Reese's cups, Milky Ways, Tootsie Rolls and Kit-Kats throughout the day. And as they do so, the bottom of the candy bowl begins to show through. This barren state doesn't last long. When Halfhill notices the stash getting lower, she opens up her cabinet and refills the container with a wider variety of sweets than before. This ritual occurs three or four times a day, each time using candy paid for out of Halfhill's own pocket.

It's entertaining to watch people as they indulge in the treats, paying attention to the candy-grabbing methods that take place daily. First, there are those with no business in the guidance

office at all, who walk right up to the desk, grabbing multiple pieces to eat along their way. There are also those confident enough to stand in front of the bowl, sometimes even digging around to find that perfect combination of tastes. But not everyone is as bold.

Most common are those who try to take a treat in the most

Editorial

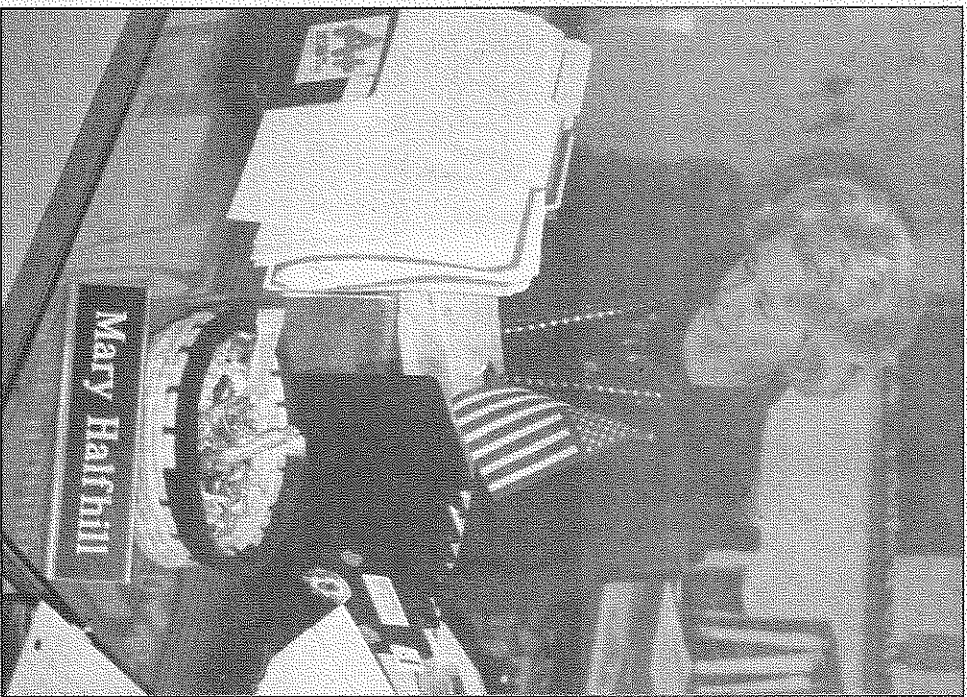
inconspicuous way possible. There are two variations of this. First, there are those who will stand on the corner of the desk where the candy lies and start a conversation with Halfhill about this and that. Meanwhile, their hand slowly creeps up, grabs the candy, and slowly creeps back down. All the while pondering, "Do you think anyone saw that?" The not so dramatic version of

this being those who slow down their pace so they are able to keep walking while secretly grabbing a piece without being noticed.

The candy is there to be eaten, but not devoured as if eating an entire meal. Handfuls should not be taken to act as a pocket filler, a breakfast substitute or as a dessert after eating lunch.

Don't constantly raid Halfhill's candy bowl. Try supporting WS's clubs who walk the halls with candy. Or donate to the guidance candy fund. The fund is a new development, started through this article, to thank Halfhill for her sweet donations to fill everyone's candy cravings.

Halfhill deserves all the thanks she can get. Every time there is a new selection of candy in her candy bowl, thank her for being so willing to share. And when dropping by the guidance office and grabbing a quick snack, show how grateful you are by taking one piece at a time.



Susan Sommerfeldt
Mary Halfhill, the guidance secretary, generously leaves a basket of varied sweets on her desks for all to enjoy. Many, however, take advantage of the offer by taking excessive amounts of sweets when the have no business of being in the guidance office.

Letters to the Editor

To the Editors:

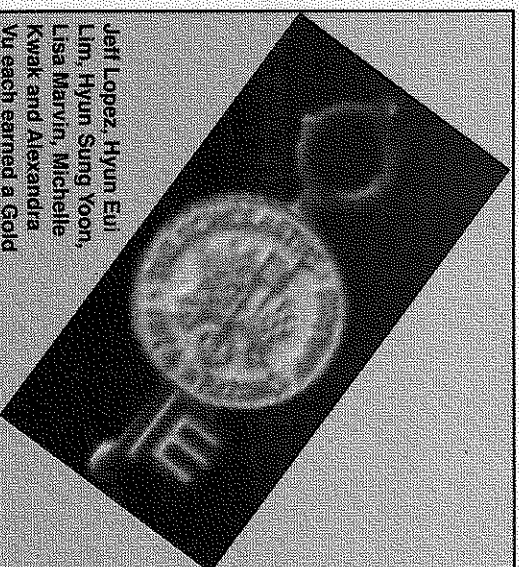
Although the letters concerning the Confederate Flag issue are becoming a bit overwhelming and tiring, I feel I am obligated to express my views. If not to be published, to provide insight for you, the paper and administration. I come from a very diverse background. My immediate family consists of White, Black, Hispanic and Asian. Although I can not, and do not intend to speak for everyone, I feel I may have more insight where others do not, but feel they do. In response to the letters in the February 4 issue, I do believe that their opinions are quite ignorant. They are correct in some of their facts about the civil war, however not documented. I feel as if they felt they could speak on behalf of the people that fought in the Civil War. As we have fought in the Civil War. As we

We live in such a diverse nation that unless we are able to be in the shoes of others, we may not know how others feel. So, instead of claiming ignorance of one another, or throwing around facts, lets try to understand first.

have fought this recent war now, the president says the main reason is to free Iraq. As this may be true, who is to say it does not affect every nation so much deeper? The

Confederate Flag, though only a piece of fabric has many different meanings for all individuals. In one letter it was stated that if "that girl" was upset enough she would have written herself. First, I do not believe Desmond was writing only to speak of the incident. And second, not everyone has a bold or outgoing personality. So as Desmond cannot speak for her, nor can you on how she would respond. Liz Weidertold said in her reply to Desmond that she walks through the halls oblivious to the "talk" in the small groups around here. Well, I listen, and I have heard the belittling racial and religious jokes that come from many different groups. People are bold enough to make the joke but rarely in front of someone who it may pertain to. The purpose of this letter is not to put down anyone, or their opinion, but to ask everyone to understand that we cannot say what everyone's feelings are on certain issues. When we do not know or do not want to know...that is ignorance. So, do not claim someone else is ignorant just because you feel another way. I feel that all the responses to Desmond's letters have been made up of some facts, opinions and some insensitivity to people's feelings. We live in such a diverse nation that unless we are able to be in the shoes of others, we may not know how others feel. So, instead of claiming ignorance of one another, or throwing around facts, let's try to understand first. All of us are ignorant to some extent; it's when we fail to overcome that ignorance that it becomes a problem.

Candice Merryman, senior



Jeff Lopez, Hyun Eui Lim, Hyun Sung Yoon, Lisa Marvin, Michelle Kwak and Alexandra Vu each earned a Gold Key in Scholastic for art.

Letter to the editor:

Last year SIX students, Jeff Lopez, Hyun Eui Lim, Hyun Sung Yoon, Lisa Marvin, Michelle Kwak and Alexandra Vu, earned Gold Keys in Scholastic for art. Furthermore, from 2000 through 2002, eighteen Gold Keys have been awarded to WSHS art students. (Names are available upon request). Therefore, the statement in a recent newspaper article that "it has been several years since a WS student won a Gold Key" for an individual event" is incorrect. Thank you for providing me with this opportunity to set the record straight regarding WSHS outstanding art students and its department.

Mrs. Mercedes Saffron, retired WS art teacher

The Oracle

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

Editors

Heidi Shilgoj
Jen Stomacco
Rachel Wohlers

Managing Editors

Camilla Casillas
Emily Miller
Jason Gillis

News Section Editor

Emily Sommerfeldt

Viewpoint Editor

Christina Araj

Inside Editors

Katherine Hutton
Anna Sommerfeldt

Features Editors

Grace Jo
Lauren Kondo

Weekend Editor

Katie Bourget

Sports Editor

Adam Rosen

Etc. Editor

Liz Weidertold

Photo Editor

Susan Sommerfeldt

Business/Systems Editor

Jon Nylan

Adviser

Brooke Nelson

A student-run publication to inform and entertain the students and staff of West Springfield High School and the Springfield community. We publish articles, written with a little expertise but as possible. Opinions expressed in Viewpoint and its reviews and columns. Editorials represent the opinions of its features. Parts of the editorial Board and do not reflect the views of the Adviser, the administration, or the Patrick County Public School System. The Oracle reserves the right to reject advertising deemed inappropriate. Signed letters to the editor and personal correspondence will be considered for publication, but could be edited for grammar, spelling, and style.

Keep the grass

Turf is cheaper to maintain, but the consequences outweighs the determinants

By Tim O'Keefe
Sports Assistant

Within the next year, 22 Fairfax County high schools may install artificial turf on playing fields, at a grand total of \$500,000. The same artificial turf has been infamous for serious injuries in sports. Implanting artificial turf into WS's stadium would not be the best decision. Artificial turf causes much more harm than good.

Ever since 1965 when the Houston Astros built the Astrodome, the question has arisen: Is Astro turf, or artificial turf, more dangerous than natural grass? I say "yes."

Artificial turf is generally harder than grass, so injuries probably will be more prominent on the tougher, harder surface, especially in contact sports.

In 2000, NFL players Rob Moore, Joey Gallaway, and Olandas Gary all had season-ending injuries because of artificial turf. And all three occurred without contact. Could these injuries have been prevented if they had played on natural grass? No genuine studies have proven the point either way, but there is a good possibility that grass could have prevented them.

Also, without natural grass, the game just does not feel the

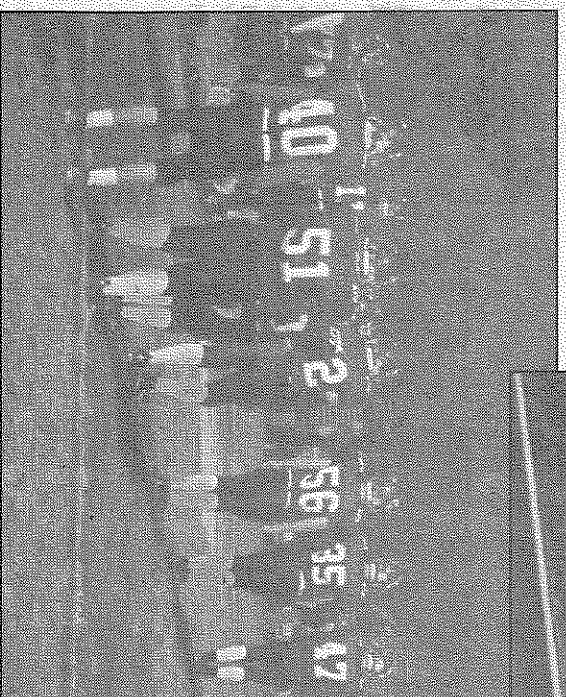
I want to play on a surface that I'm comfortable on. When WS puts in the artificial turf, they will only put it in on the playing fields, not the practice fields. I would imagine that this would cause some discomfort to a player.

same. I could not imagine Lambeau Field in Green Bay with artificial turf. Or watching a high school football game in the rain without seeing the thick mud smeared all over the players. The natural look and feel of grass are better than artificial turf.

As an athlete, there are so many things I must do or react to perform well. And I don't want to be thinking about the increased probability that I may get hurt playing on artificial turf.

Then, there is the whole maintenance issue. I know it must be a pain to pamper and fix the field because of inclement weather. And in the long run the school system might save money on less maintenance. But, I want to play on a surface that I'm comfortable on. When WS puts in the artificial turf, they will only put it in on the playing fields, not the practice fields. I would imagine that this would cause some discomfort to a player.

Artificial turf is the turf from hell. The risk of injury, the discomfort, and fakeness, greatly outweigh any positives such as finances or maintenance. WS and all of Fairfax County can't be blind to all the risks. They are making a grave mistake.

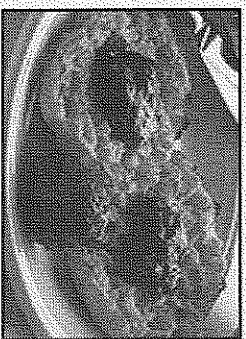


(Above) The grass needs to stay for the mindset and atmosphere for all. (Top Right) Bishop Ireton, a private school in Alexandria currently has Astro turf on their playing field.

WS: New Astro turf

Smooth Astro turf would benefit all athletes on the playing field

By Katie Bourget
Weekend Editor



Astro turf would help eliminate the "English muffin" look that the current athletic fields show.

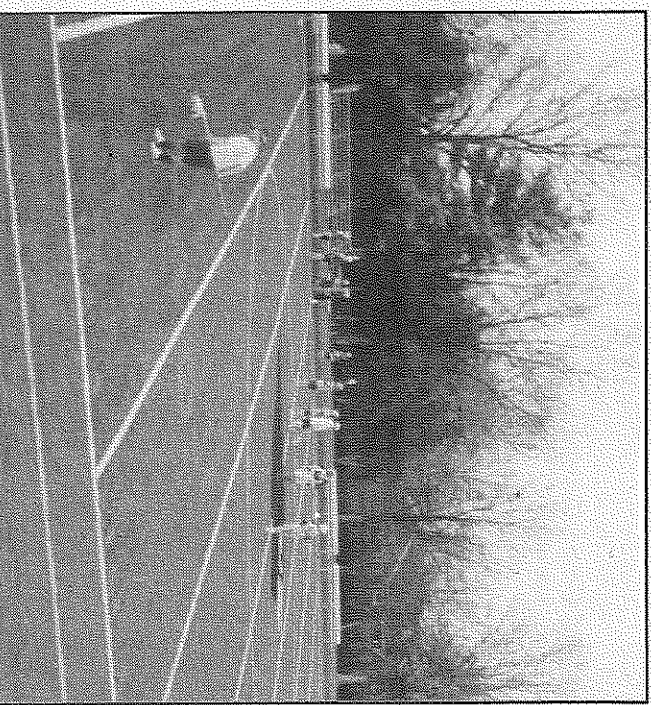
Anyone who has fallen down in front of people is aware of the embarrassment that ensues, especially when the people observing the stumble have paid money to watch you fall.

This is what playing outdoor sports at WS and other local stadium fields is like, constantly

the near future if Fairfax County administration decides to install Astro turf. With this artificial grass, games would not be cancelled as frequently due to field conditions, and injuries and falls would also decrease.

Early Astro turf surfaces gained a poor reputation because of frequent cases of turf toe and other ailments, but the more modern version does not have a cement base. Instead underneath

Playing outdoor sports at WS and other local stadium fields is like constantly trying to avoid stepping in a ditch or the improved kitty litter-filled holes.



Jon Myer

trying to avoid stepping in a ditch or the somewhat improved kitty litter-filled holes.

I am not suggesting the athletic department does not attempt to keep the field in top condition, they put forth extraordinary effort. In fact, last year after an afternoon rain shower, the members of the athletic office went out to the field and drained it with buckets. Tarp also have been placed over the field, excessive use by PE classes is discouraged and, on wet days, kitty litter is put down to prevent athletes from slipping.

These maintenance restrictions could be alleviated, if not completely lifted, however, in

Money doesn't buy everything,

especially for the New York Yankees

By Heidi Stillgoj
Oracle Editor

Inside the heads of die-hard Yankees fans, the wave is forming in the nosebleeds, the smell of cold beer is floating through the stadium and the crowd is going wild. For a team that has won 26 World Series titles, it's hard to expect anything but victory, and this year it is supposed to taste a little sweeter.

After acquiring superstar Alex Rodriguez for a ten-year contract totaling over \$100 million, the New York Yankees and their owner, George Steinbrenner, have the baseball world cursing them yet again. With their payroll expected to reach \$180 million this year, they are being accused of "buying" the team and perhaps another World Series win.

But before someone else points the finger and before Yankees fans go out and celebrate A-Rod's presence on the team, the flaws must also be taken into consideration: the flaws that could make this the fourth consecutive season in which the Yankees do not carry home the World Series title, the one they are supposed to have in the bag.

The pressure is on manager Joe Torre, who faces several issues concerning players and their preferred

positions. One big unanswered question: Who's the starting center fielder? The popular Bernie Williams or newcomer Kenny Lofton?

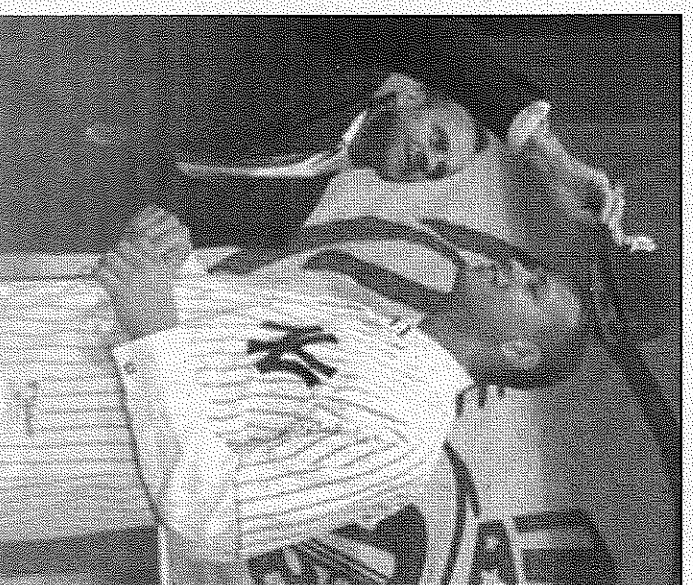
The Bronx Bombers also lack in pitching after losing two starters to the Houston Astros. While it was expected that Roger Clemens would leave the Yankees, the departure of Andy Pettitte came as a surprise and fans will be missing him every fifth day.

Alonso Soriano, the starting second baseman, was the player traded in exchange for A-Rod, who is likely to play third base, drawing another question: Who's on second?

One question that will always be raised, but maybe never answered, is who's a better shortstop, the veteran Derek Jeter or A-Rod? The latter, a former Texas Ranger, was the starting shortstop on the team and has often been labeled as "the best shortstop in baseball history." Jeter, the Yankees captain, has already won four World Series in his nine years on the team. He is rewarded with one of the largest paychecks on the team.

But promising paychecks for the players doesn't mean a promising season for the team, much less for the fans.

Spring training is underway in sunny Florida, and these money machines are preparing for another season full of wins, while fans are busy anticipating them.



The newest member of the Yankee's team, Alex Rodriguez, will add \$24 million a year to the payroll.

Though it would be disappointing, the excitement over A-Rod may prove to be nothing but pre-season hype. And the promise of victory may once again turn into bitter defeat.

Rich candidates cannot represent 'common man'

By **Betsy Miller**
Senior Staff Writer

My mom used to want me to go to school at Georgetown University until she found out that she'd have to kill my dad for insurance money to finance education and living expenses in that part of Washington. Pretty much everything is pricey there. The stores are expensive, the houses are expensive and you won't be able to buy a bagel for less than three dollars. Parking for a day will cost you as much as it takes to live for a month in some parts of the US.

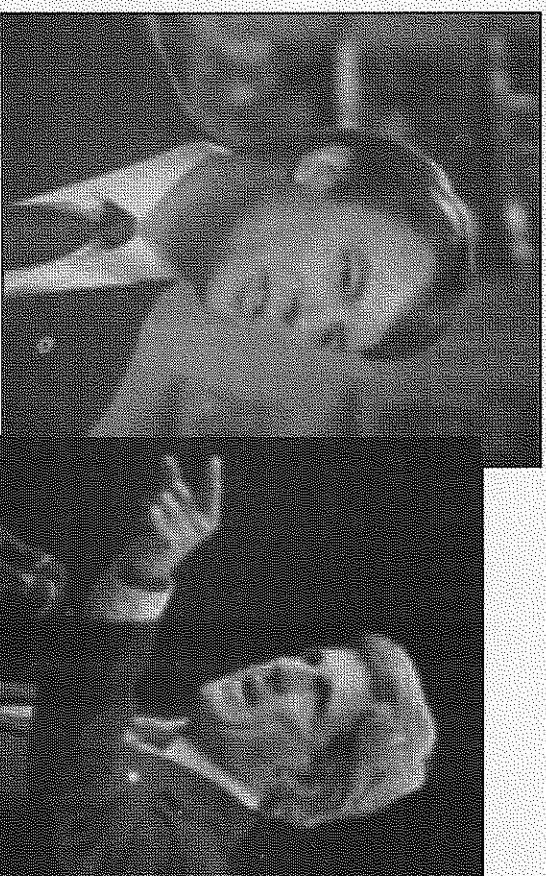
But nothing is too good, or costs too much, for our nation's lawmakers. It turns out that those who make the laws tend to

"make bank" as well. Democratic presidential candidates John Edwards and John Kerry live about a block apart in Georgetown—a distance short enough to run over and borrow a cup of sugar,

provided that either of them happened to be lacking the funds to buy enough sugar to fill the MCI Center. Ironically enough, both candidates claim to be spokesmen for "the common man," a term derived to describe the plight of the middle to lower class American incensed by perpetual frustrations of the nation's informal chase system.

As I gaze at an Internet photograph of Kerry's \$4.3 million real estate trophy on O Street NW, I find myself questioning whether the common man can be appropriately represented by someone of such financially uncommon proportions. If he really cares about the common man it seems like he could let me set up shop in one of his 23 bedrooms.

But at least Kerry's honest about his wealth. He has to be since there happens to be tangible proof of his millions in the form of the stately ketchup heiress he calls his wife. Teresa Heinz Kerry is valued at over \$550 million, but Kerry himself



Presidential candidate John Kerry and former candidate John Edwards both live in luxury houses in Georgetown, yet claim to represent the common man.

comes from aristocrat school, having attended an expensive boarding school that doesn't exactly mirror the bourgeois grounds of WS.

John Edwards, Kerry's main rival for the Democratic nomination, tends to be somewhat more evasive regarding his patrician status. Edwards often cites his roots as a "humble mill worker's son" as grounds for his election as the people's advocate. If he really wanted to advocate for the people he could begin by inviting all of them to stay in his \$3.8 million Georgetown home. I guarantee you could fit most of the members of the AFL-CIO

into all 13 rooms.

In a famous 1996 debate, former President George Bush Sr. was put to shame in contrast to his comparatively indigent opponent Bill Clinton when he floundered in response to a question regarding the current price of a gallon of milk. Political scientists across the nation study this particular debate when contemplating whether millionaires can truly know, or more importantly, care "how the other half lives." A gallon of milk is just a few dollars, but the knowledge of how to run the federal government with a far and benevolent hand is priceless.



Kerry currently resides in the Bodisco House, owned by his wife Teresa Heinz Kerry.

Letter to the Editor

The Editors:

I am writing this letter, not as a "hurt" black kid, or as a "proud" southern sympathizer. I am writing this as a disappointed WS student. I am proud to say I will soon be a WS graduate, and I've had a great time here, but I've seen the very foundation of this school being torn apart. Being the brother of the author that "started" the confederate/southern pride debates, I have seen and heard both sides of the argument, and frankly, I'm sick of both. There are a couple issues now since the beginning of the debates, and when I open the *Oracle*, I still see kids talking about this. I'm ready to put it to rest, for GOOD. While I must say the Confederate Flag is offensive, I realize that as an American, we were given that right to don the flag! Our troops are out today fighting for the very rights we take for granted. I find this black/white, southern pride/confederate supporter/ racist argument, whatever you would like to call it, very

stupid. Why do we have to take sides and become so divided? Why can't we see past the human race, and unite under one banner, the stars and stripes. We worry about a war fought a 100 years ago when we should worry about the war going on today that continues to kill our finest young soldiers. When I say the pledge, and I recite: "one nation, under god, INDIVISIBLE, with liberty and justice for all." I believe these values of a true American society, not this constant bickering over who is right or what is wrong. What I'm trying to say is, we need to love one another for our differences, as much as we do for our similarities. "I'm proud to be an American, where at least I know I'm free. And I won't forget the men who died, who gave that right to me."

—Derrick Brazel, senior, your future first African-American President of the UNITED states of AMERICA

Golden silence violated Moment of mediation exists for prayer, not assignments

By **Rachel Wohlers**

Oracle Editor

In the spring of 2000, then-Virginia Governor James Gilmore signed the bill that allowed the moment of silence in public schools. The Students Responsibilities and Rights (SRR&R) handbook states that the moment of silence is a time for the students to exercise "their choice to meditate, pray, or engage in any other silent activity."

I have had some teachers who take the time to enforce the minute-long silence and others who occasionally forget why it is there. What is interesting to me is that I have had one teacher who strictly enforces silence among the students in the classroom, yet at the same time forces me to take a test or write an essay during the moment. This I have yet to understand.

Yes, the moment of silence does mean students need to remain silent. However, the whole point of them sitting quietly for a minute is so they do not disturb those who do choose to pray or meditate during that time. But when the

teacher throws some form of work at me and tells me that it will be collected in three minutes for credit, I really have no choice but to ignore my moment for collecting my thoughts in silence and instead speedwrite my test corrections.

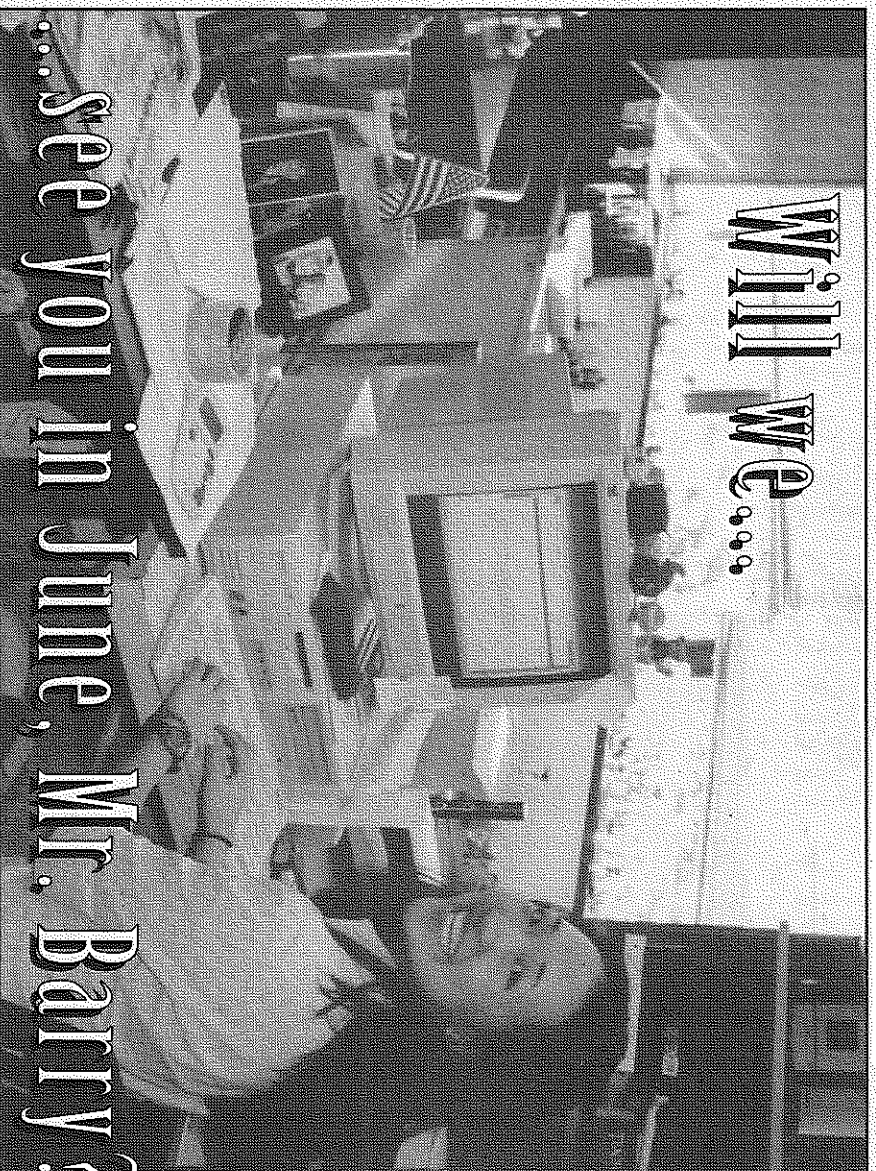
This defeats the purpose of making students be quiet, which is so they can meditate or pray. Making students sit in during break because they spoke during the moment of silence and possibly disrupted the meditation of others may make a point and cause students to sit quietly in the future, but then making them write an essay outline during the moment contradicted the whole reason for making them stay in during break in the first place.

While not everyone may want to pray or meditate, or teachers feel they may need more time in a period, they should still respect those who do want to participate in the moment of silence by allowing them that time to pray, meditate, doodle, write notes or sleep. After all, it is only one minute. How much of a difference does it really make?



Seniors Jacob Woods and Elizabeth Ford respect the moment of silence by sitting quietly as they wait for the morning announcements and class to begin.

Susan Somme field



Will We... See you in June, Mr. Barry?

Jenna Wesselman
Oracle staff writer Christie Kim writes a letter to comedian Dave Barry in hopes that he will speak at the graduation ceremony. Kim now awaits a response, crossing her fingers that Barry accepts her invitation.

By Christie Kim
Senior Staff Writer

As senior year rolls past that halfway mark, many of us drift into our official senior slump; we begin to think about things like warm weather, Spring Break plans, maybe even how much you're going to miss the little assignment books you get for free each year.

But I have been hard at work trying to convince a 55-year-old man to speak at graduation. He's not just *any* 55-year-old man; he's a *famous* 55-year-old man. He is Dave Barry, and I have asked him to speak at my graduation in June.

Now, because he was so kind and considerate enough to send us a token of our "friendship," it sparked my stalker instincts. I immediately decided to write him a letter thanking him for the photo and to ask him a big favor. "Since we are now officially best friends, I would like to ask a dear favor of you. Since I, Christie Kim, am a senior this year at West Springfield High School as well as the Senior Class Secretary, I would absolutely love to have you speak at our graduation on June 16—for free," I said.

Now, as much as I love Dave, there's only so much money I can offer him. My parents wouldn't let me. "But I have been hard at work trying to convince a 55-year-old man to speak at graduation. He's not just any 55-year-old man; he's a famous 55-year-old man. He is Dave Barry, and I have asked him to speak at my graduation in June."

mortgage the house (I already asked), so that idea won't work. But never fear, Class of 2004, I offered Dave my entire basement with unlimited amounts of Cheez-Its (his favorite snack), and even my car, which we can use to explore Springfield. It's an offer he won't be able to pass up.

"In all honesty, if you spoke at my high school graduation it would be the biggest thing to ever happen in this town. Lifelong residents of the area recall a traffic light going out as the groundbreaking event of the century. We need you Mr. Barry — Davey," I said.

In the event that Dave puts a restraining order on me, it was a good experience to write to him all the same. I hope he will write me back, but more importantly, I hope he speaks at graduation. It would be in papers everywhere, and it would go down in history that *the* Dave Barry spoke at WS's Class of 2004's graduation. And later, it will be reported that a small high school Asian student was put in handcuffs for public disruption at the sight of him. But, you and I know, it would be worth it.

History tale of five cities

TRIP from page 1

vacant lot where King and his neighbors, both black and white, played baseball. This was just one of several things learned about King's life.

While in Montgomery they also learned another secret about King; he was a chain smoker behind closed doors. This revelation came at his parsonage that is run by his former church there.

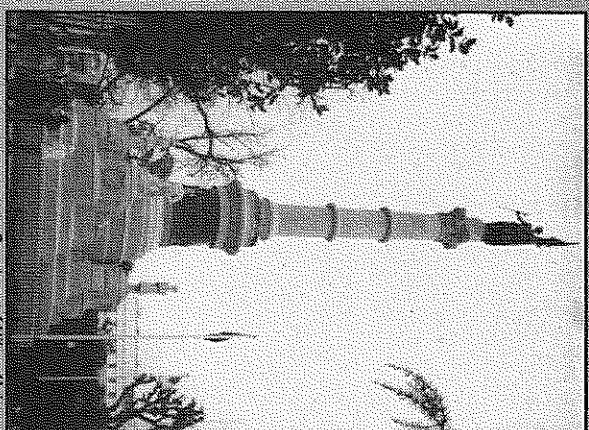
The museums on the trip were unique and unlike those found on the Mall. The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute pulls visitors into segregation and highlights the inequality that existed. It then takes them from the Civil Rights Movement to give them a worldly perspective on the

civil rights struggles going on all over currently.

"I really enjoyed the Institute," said senior Christine Wridrig. "It's the best I've ever seen."

In Selma the class visited the Voting Rights Institute, a small museum that was created by those who actually marched or had some connection to the march from Selma to Montgomery or Bloody Sunday. They actually talked to a participant of the march.

"[The museum] wasn't huge or elaborate," said senior Atya Jordan. "It was a small museum with little funding, made personal by the people [who created it]. It brought a different perspective on the



Courtesy of Hilary Heninger

events of] Bloody Sunday.

After visiting the museum, the students walked across the Edmund Pettus Bridge, the starting point of the march from Selma to Montgomery to bring attention to the injustices the African-Americans faced due to segregation, racism, and the inability to vote.

The fourth annual Civil Rights Pilgrimage ended but the memories and lessons learned by the students will always be with them.

Perhaps the biggest revelation came as the students stood next to the state Confederate memorial, located right next to the State Capital and down the street from the National Civil Rights Memorial.

The Confederate Memorial in Montgomery, AL was one of the places the class visited to learn more about civil rights.

Save lives, donate organs

DONATE from page 1

The most recent organ donation effort is an extension of the SHS recruiting begun at Spartanfest in the fall. Linz also autographed copies of his book, *On Death Row*, during the fall campaign. In his book, Linz detailed his and his family's quest to find a heart donor and his recovery from transplant surgery.

"In 1994 I was on the brink of death due to a rare heart disease. I was hospitalized for three months and every time I heard a helicopter [flying over the hospital] I thought that I might be saved," said Linz. The SHS hopes to reach out to the student body.

"We want to get as many people as we can signed up," said president, junior Angie Lee.

Linz encourages people to sign up because of his life-defying experience and the possibility of others helping patients like him survive.

"It's the greatest gift one can give to another," said Linz. "I received a heart from a 34-year-old woman named Monica and today I am alive and teaching because of [organ donation]."

CAPITAL SOCCER

A Premier Soccer Specialty Store
All Major Brands

**HOURS: M-Fri 11:00 AM-8:00 PM
Sat 10:00 AM-5:00 PM Sun Closed**

West Springfield Center
6230 I Rolling Road
Springfield, VA 22152

Telephone 703-866-4625
Fax 703-866-4272
capitalsoccer@verizon.net

Now open in Springfield

6230-I Rolling Road
Springfield, VA 22152

**Right next to West
Springfield H.S.**

SOCCER
A PREMIER SOCCER SPECIALTY RETAILER!
703-866-GOAL

Black history assembly travels back in time

By Erika Werking

Entertainment Editor

Swing dancing, story telling, and time traveling set the mood at last month's Black History Assembly. The new twist on a WS tradition received mixed reviews—some students enjoyed it while others didn't.

"I was disappointed," said junior Jackie Wilson. "Last year's [assembly] was awesome, but this year it was broken up and unfluid. It was distracting."

Those planning the assembly experienced difficulties due to the snow. Preparations began in January, but not much could be done with all the days off. Some of the performers felt the pressure.

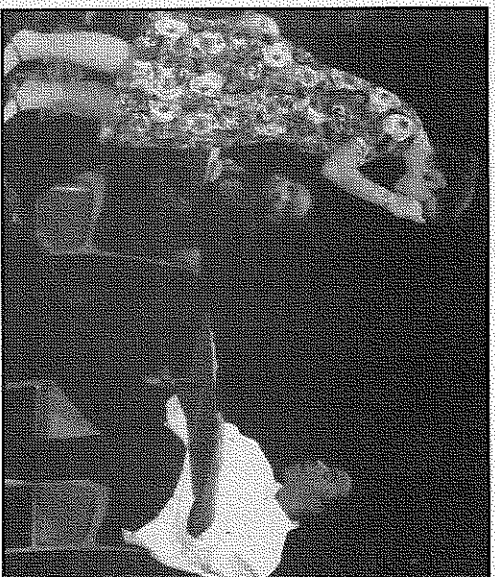
"It could have been better organized," said senior Lina Pachon, one of the dancers. "There wasn't a lot of time to practice."

Despite the setbacks, juniors Candice Lewis and Bryan Roberts worked alongside senior Aiyra Jordan and WS teacher Daria Johnson to put together the best assembly they possibly could.

"We wanted to get attention for the importance of black history in a fun and interesting way," said Jordan.

The assembly started with the Madrigals singing the National Anthem. It then moved on to a skit about an African-American student who traveled through time and visited different points in black history.

"We wanted to cover the main events in black history and a skit seemed the most logical way to present it," said Jordan.



Susan Sommerfeldt

During the Black History Month assembly, students put on a skit where a black student travels back in time and visits different periods in Black History after falling asleep in class.

Next, Lewis delivered a passionate narrative from the point-of-view of a young girl who witnesses a KKK attack while visiting her grandparents. The assembly ended with a hip-hop dance number.

This year's assembly was different from the normal format in years past. Popular performances that have been a part of the assembly were missed this year.

"I was looking forward to watching the Step team,"

Counselors keep class selection options secret

By Emily Sommerfeldt

News Section Editor

High school is said to be the best four years of someone's life, but guidance counselors and teachers have succeeded in keeping one thing about those four years hidden. The four fabulous years can become three.

Graduating in three years is a possibility, but counselors discourage it, which explains why the option is not openly presented. They have the students' best interest in mind, and graduating early isn't for everyone.

"For some students, it is an excellent way to complete their academic requirements and move on," said counselor Jerry Jackson.

"It's a second chance for some students. [Graduating early is perfect] if you've gotten behind and need to make up a course." Reasons for getting behind may be related to illness or family issues, but the rationale to wave goodbye to a fourth year of high school incorporates much more thought. A long list of factors goes

into deciding if a shortened high school career is the right choice for a student.

"It's not for everybody because it can be stressful at times," said early-graduating senior Jessica Lincoln. "It requires a lot of planning and commitment."

She took two classes in eighth grade that carried high school credits, as well as summer school for two years.

The small percentage of students, like Lincoln, who have a combined junior and senior year, have many options for meeting the state's credit requirements to graduate - 20 for the Standard Diploma. Night schools and summer schools are available to get the necessary credits, but students may run into

problems with social studies and English classes, since both diplomas require four credits of each. It is possible to double up on social studies classes, taking two in one year, but English is a different story. Since doubling up English isn't an option, English II can be taken during the day

and English 12 at night.

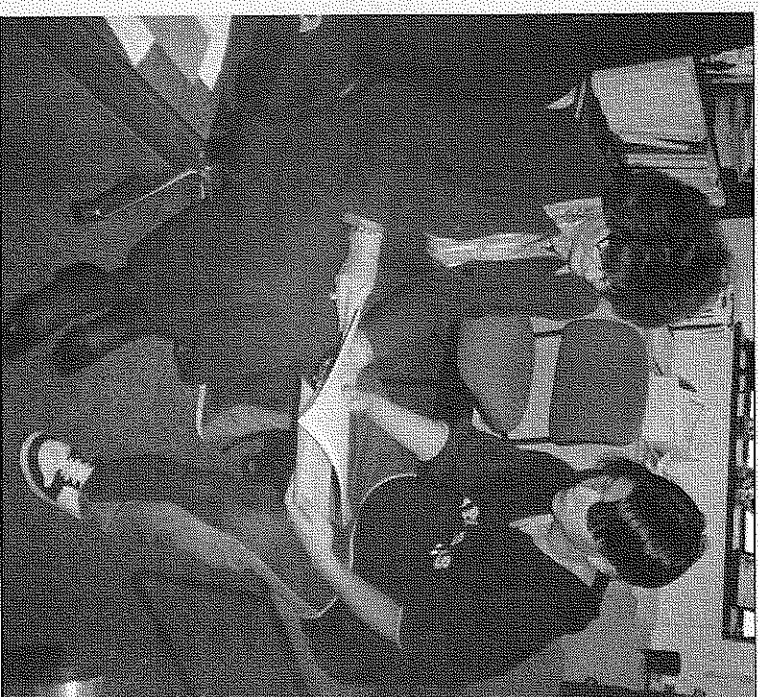
"The problem with taking two at the same time is the amount of writing and reading," said English department chairperson Mary Moriarty. "It's too much for the students to handle."

English II may also be taken during the summer becoming a cliff-notes version of the 183 day school-year. Summer classes don't allow enough time to analyze the subject in depth.

The students must consider that they may miss out on senior year activities, take summer classes, graduate without classmates, and some colleges don't look favorably on the decision because less classes were taken in high school.

While students have the option of taking classes at colleges in the area, admissions board members from schools like George Mason or Northern Virginia Community College might be curious about the reason a student chose to take a college class when the high school offers it for free.

"Colleges question why



Ashley Hughes

Counselor Esther Pincus guides freshman Jung Woo Hung in deciding his classes for next year. Graduating a year early or taking classes in college through dual enrollment is something students need to think about as early on as freshman or sophomore year.

you're leaving high school early," said Career Center specialist Susan Rexford. "They look at it with a more discerning eye, trying to figure out why the student is doing it. They might ask, 'Is there an agenda we're not seeing?'"

Seniors tend to be more mature, which tends to correspond to the reasoning used when students want to dual-enroll, taking some classes at their high school and some at a local college and receiving credits from both.

"It requires a lot of responsibility because the students are attending college," said Jackson.

Some students, however, use dual-enrollment to take classes that WS doesn't offer.

"I decided to move onto the next level of American Sign Language at NOVA because they only offer three levels here and I finished them all," said senior Sara Alcorn.

After filling out multiple forms and talking to the counselors at NOVA and here, Alcorn's dual-enrollment was

arranged.

"They don't make it easy," she said. "There's a lot of communication problems that occur between the two schools."

Classes that high schools offer can also be taken at local colleges, if this is what the student wants. Junior Eddie Copeland plans on doing this next year. He will take an elective course at WS and three classes at NOVA: chemistry, English, and government.

"I just want to get out of high school. I'm sick of it," said Copeland. "I'd much rather be out of this building than with the senior class."

Ultimately, the decision to graduate early or dual-enrollment is up to the students and their parents. Counselors will discourage it as they see fit, but they cannot act for the students. "If students want to do this, they need to have a good reason," said guidance counselor Ken Christopher. "You'd need to be able to explain it to a college through a personal statement, essay or interview."

Guitar Lessons

By professional guitar instructor and performer

Beginning through advanced levels.

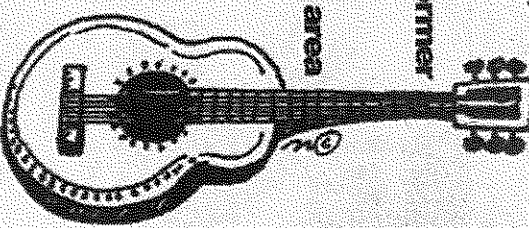
Teaching privately in the Northern Virginia area

For the last 15 years

B.M. - Berklee College of Music

Call John Sessums today at

703 - 472 - 5206



Students with empty pockets and stomachs fill on samples

By Ashley Hughes
Photographer

In the busy life of a teenager, many find themselves digging into empty pockets. After whirlwind days filled with the physical demands of practice, the dragging hours of school, and the monotony of work, sometimes it's easier to answer the growing stomach with a quick stop by Whole Foods Market for their famous free samples.

Whole Foods is a specialty food market that caters to those on special diets due to food allergies, weight concerns, vegetarian preferences or other personal needs. Because of their rarity, the average price of products at Whole Foods is higher than that of more common stores such as Giant, Shoppers or Food Lion. By taste testing the food, customers are more inclined to purchase cheese for seven dollars.

Senior Beth-Ann Dick, a cashier's assistant at Whole Foods, sees people come in to eat the samples all the time. "They come in for a nice little snack," said Dick.

A three-and-a-half-year veteran of "cart pushing," Dick has seen many people enter the store for a taste without buying. At times entire sports teams will jog to the store and nibble on the many plates of fruit, bread, and cheeses. How does the management feel about this?

"They really don't care," said Dick Junior Laurain Hackett agrees. She worked as a cashier for Whole Foods for three-and-a-half months this summer. "They're really into serving the customers," said Hackett.

In addition to the many samples they have for display throughout the store, patrons can, with permission, taste from the unopened containers. Most people, however, are drawn to the seemingly unlimited supply of samples.

Kristeen Cook observes this "trying without buying" every day. A member of WS's Class of 2001, Cook currently works in the bakery department of Whole Foods. While telling customers about the differences in their specialty breads, Cook has a chance to witness the effectiveness of these samples. She says that the biggest problem isn't



Ashley Hughes

Junior Leslie Sherman and senior Spencer Horner try the many dips at Whole Foods. with the teenagers, but with the little kids trailing behind their parents.

"They'll run around and put food back into the containers," said Cook. "That's when we have to say something."

Employees are trained to avoid limiting people's tasting. The only times they are permitted to stop customers is if they are obviously stealing (for example,

eating from the salad bar or filling containers with free samples) or if they are hurting other customers (if the consumption is unsanitary.).

"We have asked people to leave before," Cook said.

Otherwise, customers are encouraged to try the different tastes Whole Foods has to offer.

Pens, stickers earn good grades

By Lauren Kondo
Features Editor

The inevitable dread of receiving a test score or an essay grade can be alleviated by a carefully placed sticker, stamp, or smily face. It can also be heightened by seeing a certain color of pen or a frowning face.

It's never easy getting back a certain letter that can lead to the sinking of your stomach. However, seeing comments in certain pen colors scrawled across the page can either lead to more sinking, or floating.

"Red is a stop sign," said sophomore Machi Shields. "It signals you did something wrong."

Red seems to be universally accepted as a color to avoid. Traditionally, it was used by teachers in grading because it stood out from the student's work. Now, it signifies strong emotion which can be taken in a negative way by the students.

"I hate red," said freshman Drew Lisowski. "It has a bad connotation. It's like you have to

correct something—like you got an 'F.'"

On the other hand, brighter colors like blue and green tend to work better. Scientific studies show that green is the color of creativity.

Aside from choice of pen shade, stickers and stamps can boost a student's self-esteem.

"It's always reassuring to have a sticker or smily face," said freshman Libby Bursley.

Cuing from this correlation, French teacher Joelle Torreele has a system with stickers that she has been doing for 10 years. She got the idea from when she was a student teacher. This self-proclaimed "Sticker Queen" has a pencil case brimming of stickers for every occasion: smiles, snowmen, French-themed and apples, just to name a few.

Every time any of Torreele's French students gets an "A" or works well in class, they receive a sticker to put on their sticker card. Once they get nine stickers plus a stamp, they can redeem their card and drop their lowest grade. The cards work once a

quarter and are good for the whole year. When students turn in their cards, Torreele records this in her grade book as an "S". After computing the grade, if it helps bump the grade, she'll use it; if not, she'll save it as rollover for the next quarter. Regardless, the effort is never lost.

"Grades are secondary," said Torreele. "Learning is my main objective. Language is cumulative with a lot of vocabulary."

The big question surrounding this issue is the effects. Do stickers really help a student learn or feel better?

"It motivates and gives a little more control [to the students]," said Torreele. "It's a gimmick. It stimulates them. If I discontinued I'd have a lot of students upset about it."

Still others don't want stickers. They don't want green pen corrections. They don't need check marks. For them, constructive criticism works best.

"I'd prefer comments," said Lisowski. "I like 'Super Job!'"

What was lost now has special place to be found

By Christie Kim
Senior Staff writer

Losing personal belongings happens to everyone. It's especially common for teenagers; it's as if high school students are incapable of buying something and keeping it for more than several months without having to crawl under beds and search trash cans.

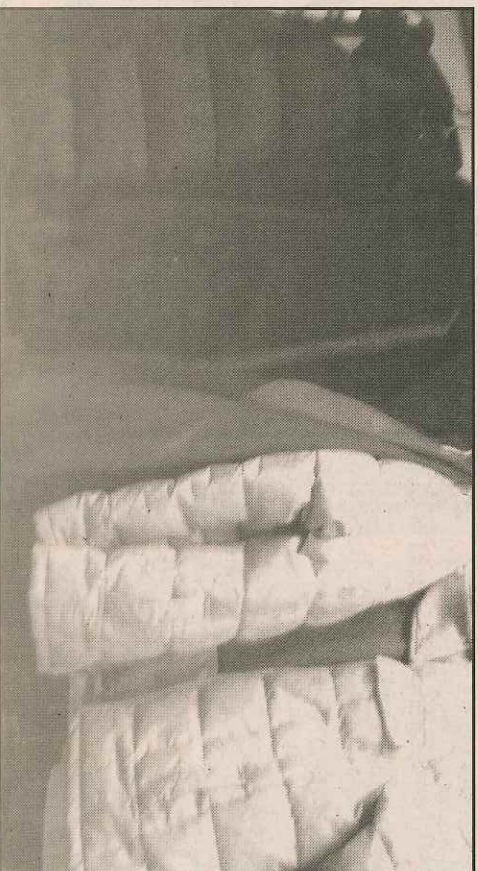
There's a good chance that if you've misplaced something around school it will be in the lost and found. A recent trip to the attendance office, where the lost and found is located, proved shocking. Hanging up behind the door on the coat rack were at least five unclaimed jackets along with items as large as backpacks to ones as small as pencil cases. A box held around ten pairs of eye glasses, keys, and keychains—all unclaimed.

The majority of belongings come from the music and theater departments, or the library, but the lost and found houses

stranded items found all over the school. "If the belongings aren't picked up, we donate them all to Good Will or the Salvation Army," said attendance officer Sue Burow. "Students must check the lost and found from time to time if they're missing something because there are so

many items that are left unclaimed."

Certain items, such as school text books or calculators, will be returned to the appropriate teacher. But personal belongings, like car keys and watches, will be left in the attendance office until the end of the school year where they will later



Ryan Waple

The numerous jackets hanging at the Lost and Found are proof of its obscurity.

meet their demise at Good Will.

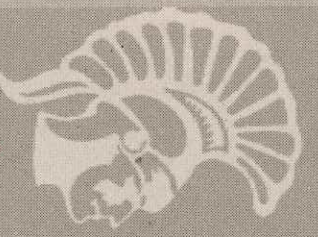
"I lost two calculators sophomore year, but I didn't go to the lost and found because I didn't know there was one," said senior Patrick Klutz.

Many students don't know the school has a lost and found. It may not have its own room to store misplaced items, but a quick glance into the attendance office and you will be sure to notice the mounds of clothing and objects yelling your name.

The lost and found, however doesn't guarantee whatever you lost will be there, because there will always be those certain people who will take things and not return them. That doesn't mean, however, that it won't be amidst the piles of other people's stuff.

"I lost my CD player, but it wasn't in the lost and found," said sophomore Will Richardson.

So make sure and check the lost and found; it will save you enormous amounts of money as well as time lost to searching in cars and dirty closets.



Spartan Profiles



Brian Pearsall

Melissa Leonard

By Danny Tinsley

Junior Staff Writer

Being a lifeguard can be a stressful job:

There are swimming children to watch over, intense scrutinizing of the pool's many chemicals and the hourly washing of the deck. All that must be done while still maintaining the "Baywatch" composure of an "all together" lifeguard. But managing all that is no problem for sophomore Brian Pearsall.

Pearsall is a one summer veteran at his lifeguard job at Walden Glen swimming pool.

"It's easy and it pays good money," said Pearsall.

Lifeguarding, however, is not the only activity that keeps Pearsall occupied. During the cold winters, when the pool's refreshing water is hidden beneath a thick sheet of ice, he enjoys a good game of basketball and playing the guitar.

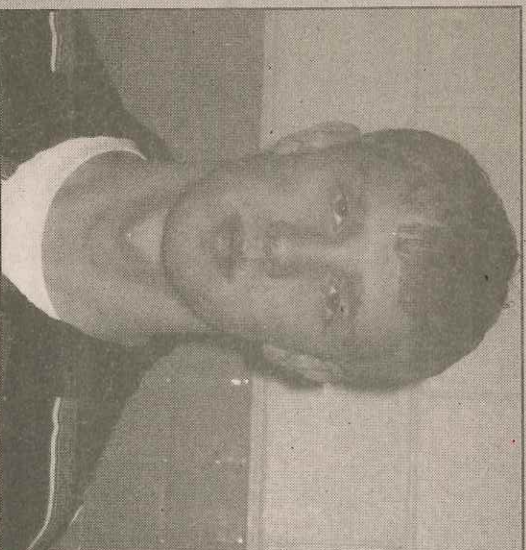
"I taught myself how to play the guitar," said Pearsall. "I enjoy playing rock and alternative."

On the weekends, as a young eligible bachelor, Pearsall enjoys chillin' with his friends for an exciting night at the movies or simply "kickin' it back" at his house.

playing his guitar. Being a military brat, Pearsall has lived in such locations as Saudi Arabia and New York.

"New York City was definitely my favorite place to live," said Pearsall.

"There is always something to do there." Pearsall lives at his Springfield home with his mother, father, and older sister. So to all you lucky bachelorettes out there seeking the David Hasselhof type, Pearsall can be found—ready to save your life—at his summer location: Walden Glen swimming pool.



Ryan Waple

During the summer, sophomore Brian Pearsall works at the Walden Glen swimming pool as a lifeguard. In the winter, he enjoys playing the guitar and playing basketball.

By Jen Siomacco

Oracle Editor

Adjustments are never easy, and senior Melissa Leonard knows this well. Just like any Army brat, Leonard has made her way around the entire world. Throughout her 17 years, she has moved eight times to five of the US's 50 states, including Kansas and Alaska, and also to Naples, Italy, and Heidelberg, Germany.

Moving can be a difficult experience for any young person, but Leonard tried to make the most of her stays abroad.

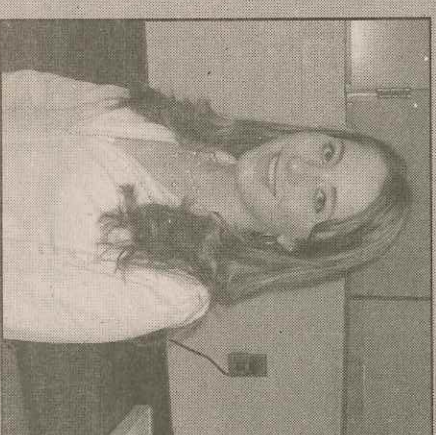
"It's so different [overseas]," said Leonard. "I can't even explain. I'm so glad that I had that experience."

For Leonard, her years in Europe were the best times of her life. Her family would travel to other countries to see different cultures.

The hardest adjustment that Leonard has ever had to deal with was her move to Springfield last summer from Fayetteville, NC. She lived there for four years, the longest she has ever lived anywhere consecutively.

"Moving up here was hard," said Leonard, who hated to be plucked away from her home at the beginning of her senior year, "but my best friend from North Carolina comes up to visit and I go down there."

To deal with the change, Leonard found comfort in participating as a member of the WS Varsity cheerleading squad. She



Chris Shannon

Senior Melissa Leonard has lived in places all over the world.

has been cheerleading since sophomore year, and after a year on the Junior Varsity squad at her old high school, she moved up to the Varsity level.

"If it weren't for cheerleading I might not have been able to make friends here," said Leonard. "People aren't as accepting the older you get. They already have their cliques."

Being around others is one of Leonard's favorite things. She plans to attend Kansas State University in the fall and major in public relations. Her love of people makes not only her social interactions enjoyable, but also gives her an enhanced incentive at her job at Journey's in Springfield Mall.

"I like dealing with people," said Leonard. "I'm excited that I get to be around people [at Journey's]."

Boredom belongs somewhere else Springfield proves to be a city rich in history and nature

By Grace Jo

Features Editor

Springfield isn't a place that stirs emotions of excitement and adventure, yet the community that WS rests in is rich in history. It is a community that takes pride in preservation of nature and history.

Many students find Springfield to be boring and have difficulty finding activities.

"There's not that much in Springfield to do except maybe go to the mall," said sophomore Lisa Sherman. Students describe our community as a place that lacks in activities for them to participate in.

"I think Springfield is boring because I like the city," said junior Sarah Chu. "In the city, there's parades and stuff but not in Springfield."

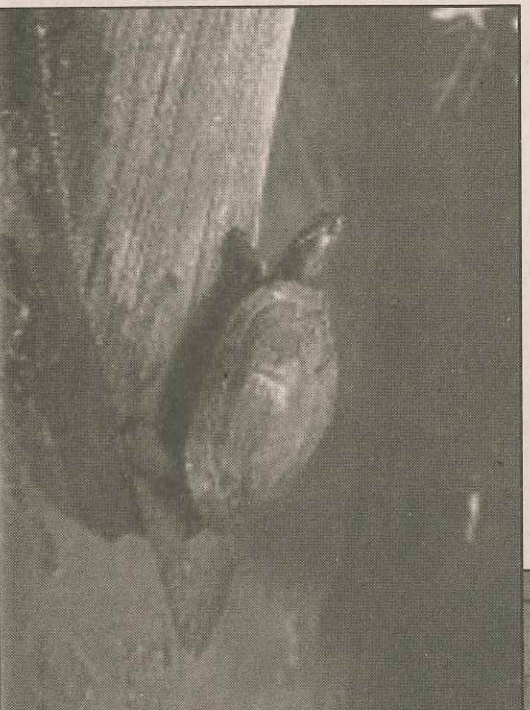
Springfield is not just hills and houses though, it is a community of history. Even the roads that many students recognize have a story behind them.

"I don't know much about [Springfield history]," said senior Sam Jones. "I know that Old Keene Mill has been around for about 400 years, but that's about it."

Not only Old Keene Mill Road but familiar roads such as Rolling and Braddock Road have significant meanings. In colonial times, barrels of tobacco were rolled down hills to nearby ports, thus the name Rolling Road.

The famous Braddock Road was named after General Edward Braddock from the French and Indian War. Historians are not sure that he actually travelled along today's Braddock Road, but legends say that a cannon full of gold was buried along the way, somewhere in Fairfax County.

Another more modern legend is the Bunnyman murders people have researched and speculated about. Springfield is known for its preservation of nature. Even the oak trees that surround were placed through



efforts of Springfield nature advocates. There are parks and recreational centers in Springfield, places where people go to relax and enjoy the nature, such as Lake Accotink, Hidden Pond Nature Center and Pohick Creek.

The South Run Rec Center provides a multitude of activities including a earth-floor field house that can be rented for horseback riding and soccer or lacrosse games. Springfield was the last city developed within a 12-mile zone of DC. It borders Old Town Alexandria, a place rich in historical culture.

Those interested in history and nature have much to do. Springfield is much more than just a busy place with traffic.

67 days until
graduation. Go
Class of 2004

Mark Twain

AP students model Twain's works by highlighting the ups and

Disclaimer: These are humorous articles. Read

WS's disgraceful bathrooms

By Mike Campbell

Special to The Oracle

High school is such a fantastic place; with all the wonderful learning going on, I cannot wait to quench my thirst for knowledge each day. But each day my enthusiastic quest is brought to a halt: whenever nature calls, I have an immediate sense of dread. This is true and I will say that upon entry to any one of the great men's bathrooms, anybody will share my feelings of fear.

It all started when I was a defenseless little freshman and had no idea of the ways of high school. I made my first venture into a bathroom near the football locker rooms only to discover that the doors of all the stalls had been torn from their hinges and the paper towel dispenser appeared to have been viciously attacked by some wild beast. After many similar experiences, I am now convinced that there is a hysterical crackpot out there determined to strew the contents across every inch of floor space possible. I can only hope that we do not have a fierce confrontation in the future.

Perhaps they have some past grandeur that I am unaware of, but I can say that at least for the time that I have been at WS, the bathrooms have always been an incredibly unsanitary mess. If the Centers for Disease Control found out about the conditions of the men's bathrooms here, I am certain that the bathrooms would be quarantined and there would be an evacuation of the school for an indefinite period. Apparently they are not informed at this time.

Some corners of the bathrooms are totally inaccessible due to the accumulated grime left behind by people. It seems nobody told me that the men's bathrooms are official dumpsites for toxic nuclear waste. I would not be surprised if a colony of mutated beemoth rats emerged from the depths of these corners and devoured half the school population. I hope I am not

Anytime someone flushes a toilet, a deadly game of "Russian Roulette" begins; no one knows which toilet will be the one to overflow and attack the innocent bystanders with the splash of death. I must always remember to make a swift retreat from the scene of destruction.

The only person aware of the fate that may await us.

On top of all the other deficiencies, there is one ever-present and even more dangerous aspect of the bathrooms. This covert threat is one that can almost never be detected but is the most dreaded of all. Anytime someone flushes a toilet, a deadly game of "Russian Roulette" begins; no one knows which toilet will be the one to overflow and attack the innocent bystanders with the splash of death. I must always remember to make a swift retreat from the scene of destruction. I just cannot understand why people are unable to suppress their diabolical impulses to shove toilet paper down the toilet to ambush some unsuspecting student.

I know the bathrooms may always be a frightful place, but the users need to do their part to keep them cleaner. For the hooligans who get their jollies by decimating paper towel dispensers, leaving waste everywhere, and clogging toilets, I pity them. Yet it is necessary to fight the urge and I ask that whoever these phantoms are that for the good of the people, please stop this senseless tomfoolery. Until then, I will be dodging the "Russian Roulette" toilets.



Faculty

By Mike Gemmer

Special to The Oracle

SCHOOL PERF

Attn: all f

CURRENT: Within the past 1.1 and calculations, I have observed the smile on its face. This is completely many of you have forgotten our po keep these hoodlums as depressed days I will be performing random cl who are causing the excess of happi will receive a drug test and a manda

OVERALL: Congratulations to School Rankings are in! FCPS assign in "Overall Pointlessness of Materiat very proud of all of you for your cont However, in the category of "Numbt Ridiculous Homework Assignment After serious consideration, I have due to the increasing number of stud not to do their supplementary assign to my calculations, as long as 35% the next year, we will attain the ran Also, I am proud to announce a n police to make everything fun illegg possession of a hacky sack will be must be done to help combat the t rule, I have pondered and come up v and posted them in the hallways and doing an excellent job of wasting th

Once again, thank you for your t for Five," because at the end of the to go insane, FCPS will buy you a g America.

*- unless student is a minority (W time).



Christie Kim

Revisited

and downs of high school in satire.

for entertainment purposes only.



Highlights of high school dating

By Karla Sakas
Special to The Oracle

"You hang up first."
"Aw, no, you hang up!"
"No, you!"
"Okay, both of us at the same time?"
"Wait... so you want us to end the conversation?"
"What? That's not what I meant!"
"Becky told me you were an insensitive jerk!"

Click.
The course of true love never did run smooth—especially in the case of teenage romances. For every undying love confessed in the hallways, another heart is broken over French fries in the cafeteria. To successfully navigate the emotional roller coasters of adolescent affection and obsession, one must equip him or herself with a few pieces of valuable advice—and a heart of unbreakable plastic. Let us follow Archibald, a typical lovelorn highschooler, on his quest for *amore*.

First, Archibald must choose his object of affection. This is perhaps the most difficult part of his journey. The hallways are teeming with prime young ladies, most possessing astonishing levels of coherence and vital signs! Archie must carefully narrow down his search, thoughtfully considering the most important aspects of character: personality, moral standards, zodiac sign, and hotness in a short skirt. The latter choice demonstrates why love seems to bloom with the most enthusiasm during the warm weather months.

Next, Archie must catch the attention of his lover-to-be. We'll call her Rachel. Rachel, like most teenage girls, has viewed more chick flicks than

the Surgeon General has deemed healthy. From these films she has learned exactly how her admirers must woo her. At the same time, however, she is sympathetic to the teenage budget and does not expect galloping horses, windswept beaches, or dazzling sunsets. She'll settle instead for a hand painted sign hanging over Senior Rail, one that professes Archie's love for her in large, grammatically correct letters—let's hope. Archie can also leave flowers for her in each of her classes, along with mysterious notes and poems. It is best mentioned, however, that if the freshest flowers he can wrangle are his neighbor's dandelions and his poetry rivals only that of a newly-literate kindergarten, he is better off just making the sign.

Fast forward one or two weeks, a nervous phone call or instant message later, and the love connection has been made. Now either Archie or Rachel must make the first move in asking the other out. The first date can be a nerve-racking ordeal—which is why most couples cancel at the last minute and skip ahead to the second date. The movies are a popular destination for a variety of reasons: In the dark, Archie won't see the enormous zit on Rachel's forehead, and Rachel won't notice the spinach caught in Archie's front teeth. It also doesn't matter that both are sweating nervously and can't think of any witty remarks or swoon-inducing compliments—the Hollywood couples onscreen can do all the talking for them.

This is when true love begins to take shape. We can pinpoint exactly when strong feelings of affection start to make their butterflies-inducing judgement—the minute the two return to their separate homes after the first date. Archie looks in the mirror, *you stink, you*, and realizes that he may just have found his soulmate. His other half. His goddess of love and beauty to love and cherish for all eternity. He can only wonder if she is thinking the same thing...

Do you think he'll notice if I ask out his friend Bobby instead?

memo

ROMANCE ANALYSIS
faculty members

9 hours, after numerous observations at 3.09121% of the student body has a unacceptable. I am disappointed that so they here at school that is necessary to as possible, at all times. In the coming classroom walk-ins to detect the teachers' business. As for the happy students, they tory 10-day suspension.*

all employees: The results of the FCPS ed our school a ranking of 10 out of 10 . This is a new record for us, and I am nued efforts to teach absolute nonsense. er of Hours Wasted by Students Doing s," we earned a modest 9.5 out of 10. decided that the .5 point that we lack is ents who smoke marijuana and choose ents. This is excellent news! According of these drug addicts quit or die within k of 10 that we desire.

major development in our quest with the l. Beginning now, any student found in handcuffed and shot in the foot. This happens epidemic. In addition to this with a new list of rules and punishments classrooms. Altogether though, we are e time of children.

me and efforts. And remember, "Strive month, if you have caused five students ournet county meal. (Expletive) bless

e would like to avoid legal cases at this

By Adam Rosen
Sports Editor

Adam's graduation speech

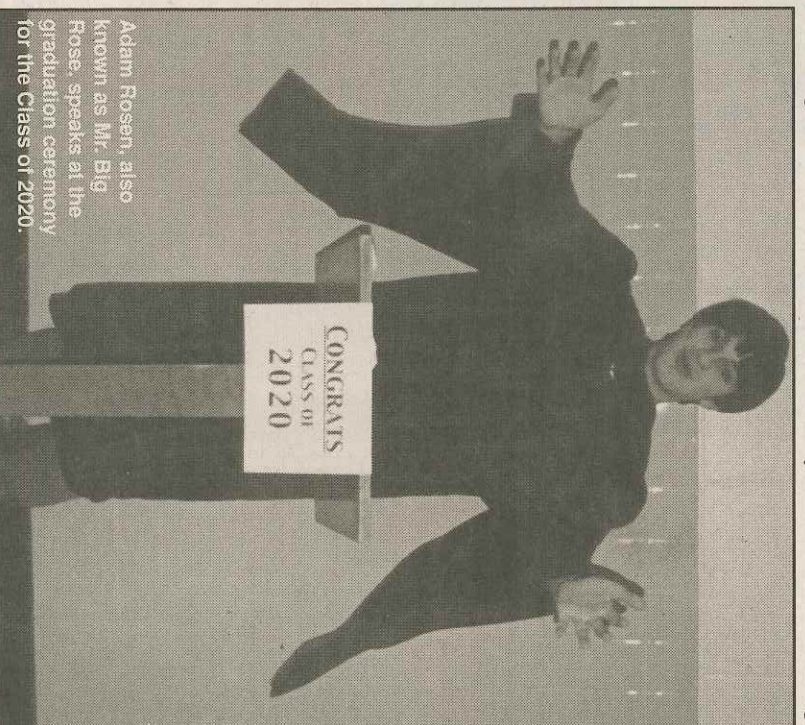
Dear Class of 2020,

First of all, I wanted to thank the students, parents and the faculty for allowing me to speak to you today. I'm honored to have the chance to pass some of my knowledge on to the student body. I hope you students achieve your goals and fulfill your destinies, like me. I graduated from this school in 2005 on the B.D honor roll. This distinguished performance has led me to a successful occupation: a male stripper. All you ladies out there are probably 18; so, stop on by. If you want a little dance at the club, ask for Mr. Big Rose. But, this is not about me. It's about you students. I wanted to read you something that I wrote to my English class when I was a junior. I had a teacher named Mrs. Nelson (is she still with us?) who taught me how to write good, I mean well.

Do not smoke weed. Smoking can kill you and it leads to emphysema. So, sell it to your friends for a good price to make yourself richer and healthier. You're not the one smoking it, so everything should be well.

Never steal. It is wrong to steal because if you are caught you will get in trouble. Make sure you steal from a place where you can't get caught, like 7-Eleven. The people who work there don't speak very good English, so you will have less of a chance of getting caught. When they try to turn you in, they'll have trouble speaking with the officer.

Do not sneak out. Make sure you devise a plan before you sneak out. When sneaking out, take certain precautions so the plan can work perfectly. If you crawl out of the window and your parents find the window open, just



Adam Rosen, also known as Mr. Big Rose, speaks at the graduation ceremony for the Class of 2020.

tell them, "I'm just getting some fresh air." If you have an alarm system, like me, then you're in bad shape. First, pretend you're getting drinks out of the garage. When you open the door to go in the garage, open the other door to throw off the alarm system. Leave the other door (the door you're going to sneak out) open while closing the garage door. I know this sounds complicated, but these procedures must be taken seriously. If caught, keep apologizing and make sure to find out how they caught you so you can learn from your mistakes. If sneaking out continues not to work, sneak people in.

Never have sex unless it is with a condom. Better safe than sorry. If you or your counterpart do not have a condom, drive as fast as you can to CVS. If you have no money, well then face it, "you're screwed" and you missed another golden opportunity. But there is always other stuff you can do with her.

Do not drink excessive amounts. As long as you don't drink too much then you're fine. The last thing you want is one of your friends cleaning up your throw up while you're not passed out. A night getting drunk can always be a special night in one's heart.

I know all of you are seniors and probably know your way around town. You can use my information for summer and college, but most importantly of all you can pass this knowledge on to your kids and, if you're still alive, your grandchildren. If you don't have kids, then go buy some so you can teach them what I said. Please take my thoughts seriously, because this is a once in a lifetime opportunity. You have the privilege of listening to me speak and not someone like Gerald. I'm giving you good advice. I hope you take my thoughts into consideration. I'm doing my best to act as a friend to you. A Ralph Waldo Emerson one said, "A friend might be well reckoned the masterpiece of nature." I'll let you ponder on that.

Susan Sommerfeld

Hero is complete zero

Why is America hung up on Hung?

By Erika Werking

Entertainment Editor

It's almost a "Cinderella" story. The quirky loser who captured America's hearts has ended up becoming "American Idol 3's" biggest celebrity. William Hung, the 21-year-old civil engineering student, became an overnight sensation with his hip-grating, out-of-tune rendition of Ricky Martin's "She Bangs." Not only has his hilarious performance earned him the nation's admiration, but also his classy response to judge Simon Cowell that "I already gave my best,

and I have no regrets at all." His 90-second tryout has merited him instant stardom, but while he is a stand-up guy, people seem to be forgetting that he's not talented at all.

Being this season's most notable loser, Hung is entitled to his 15 minutes, but it's starting to reach ridiculous levels. He has appeared in a slew of TV interviews including on MSNBC, "Entertainment Tonight," and "The Ellen DeGeneres Show," and was even invited to perform at the MTV Asia Awards. A plethora of fan sites was created overnight, the first of which (williamhung.net) received four million hits in its first week. And what happens when you enter "William Hung" on eBay? There are over 50 different items that bear Hung's image, from caps and notebooks to T-shirts, which people are actually bidding on.

But perhaps the most shocking of these incidents occurred in mid-February. Hung had just finished another classic performance of "She Bangs," complete with his own sextet of backup dancers, at a UC Berkeley volleyball game. He was approached by Fuse Music Channel and Koch Entertainment, the same label that has signed such stars as Ringo Starr and Tupac Shakur, and offered a \$25,000 check and a joint record and music video contract. Although Hung hasn't accepted the offer yet, he would make



William Hung shakes his bon bon while performing Ricky Martin's song of that name on "The Ellen DeGeneres Show."

a short six- to eight-track album, which he plans to title "White Dragon," to be released within the next few months.

This raises the question of why anyone would want to advance in "American Idol." Performing poorly is all that's necessary to win the same fame and record deals of those who have actually won the competition, even though Hung's fame is sure to be short-lived. And his "fans" are just being cruel by creating the false hope that it won't be. They say they admire him, and maybe they do, but for his attitude, not for his singing. From listening to his interviews and reading articles about him, it is blatantly obvious that Hung thinks he has a real future in Hollywood after he gets his degree. And why wouldn't he? He's received record deals, movie offers,

and has millions of fans from around the world. He has even started taking vocal lessons with the Goo Goo Dolls' coach Eric Yerro and reading Cowell's book about becoming a pop star.

But the fact is Hung is an awful singer and dancer, and his acting probably isn't any better. His fame now comes from his genuine nature, but that will only take him so far. To make it in Hollywood, it takes real talent, not a sweet disposition.

So far, online petitions to get Hung back on "American Idol" have received more than 70,000 signatures. Unfortunately, he has no potential in Hollywood. He does, however, have a future in civil engineering. So while it's OK to admire Hung's character, leave him to his studies and stop provoking hope for continued fame.



For the bargain price of \$34.95, you too can own a talking William Hung action figure that actually sings his infamous rendition of "She Bangs."

Stewart laughs at life

By Hilary Heincer

Senior Staff Writer

Jon Stewart has been creating a lot of buzz. The host of "The Daily Show" mocks the media nightly on his news program. The question, however, is can he be funny without the cameras and the scripts?

The answer to that question is both yes and no. In his recent show at Constitution Hall, Stewart hit the mark while discussing current events, but lulled when joking about more everyday subjects.

Much of his material offered great insight into what is really going on in the world today. His comments went straight to the heart of many matters and he was able to see the silliness in any big controversy. The audience was left with both laughter and understanding.

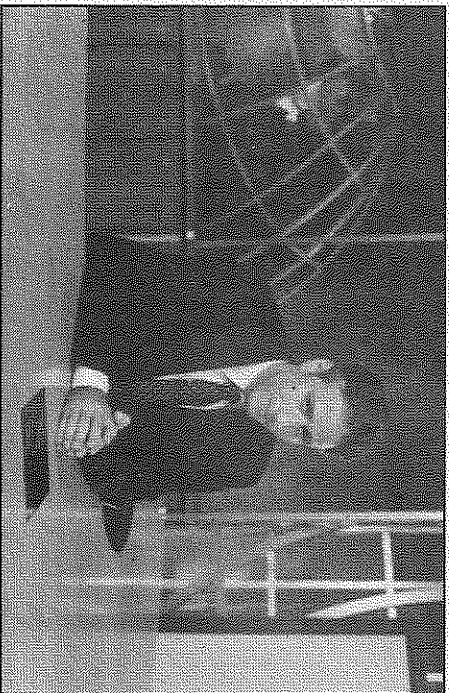
The liberal audience gave a cheer when Stewart called Bush a moron. He sensed his audience's views and further forayed into politics and the war. Stewart was able to improvise steadily.

The jokes that got the most

laughs came from the recent controversy over gay marriage. They wanted to be able to get married, join the military, and join the Boy Scouts. They have such horrible goals, Stewart joked. However, there were occasions when Stewart failed to be funny. He attempted to entertain his audience with bad jokes about his dogs' digestive habits and offended car people by calling them worthless. He was also very repetitive, making the same jokes several times. They were funny the first time, but not after that.

Stewart's continual cursing proved unnecessary. He is not a person who can get away with excessively using foul language. It doesn't fit his cleaner image on "The Daily Show." It seemed forced and, at times, ruined his jokes.

During his hour and a half, Stewart started and finished strong while occasionally dragging in the middle. The experience left the audience with the feeling that Stewart is at his best as the host of his own show, discussing current issues of today.



Jon Stewart is hilarious when mocking the media but lacks when it comes to making jokes about everyday subjects.

www.virginiafirearmnationalguard.net

HEROES NEEDED



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

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

more benefits. It only takes 30 days a year to become a hometown hero. Call today.

SFC Doug Osterman

(703) 518-8190

Virginia



Disney and Pixar suffer messy divorce

By Grace Jo
Features Editor

Disney, the creator of beloved movies such as "Finding Nemo," may be floundering instead of swimming.

There's been a burst of activity from the Walt Disney Company: First, there was the sudden break up with Pixar, then the Comcast merger proposal, and finally the purchase of the Muppets.

Disney's troubles began when negotiations between Disney and Pixar over the future productions ended with Steve Jobs, the founder of Pixar studios, terminating the partnership. Disney still has rights to the two current projects "The Incredibles," and "Cars," but they've lost the talents of John Lasseter, the genius behind the animation of the recent hits "Toy Story," "Monsters Inc.," and "Finding Nemo."

"I think [Disney] was really stupid to break up with Pixar," said senior Christy Buzan. "Pixar animation has created some of the best and amazing animation out

there."

Pixar productions have been the mainstream money makers for Disney during the past years. Due to the failure of Disney's individual productions of "Lilo and Stitch" and "Treasure Planet," the studio hasn't been making much money on its own.

Now Disney has approximately two years to create an animation team that is up to par with the already successful Pixar team.

"I think it [the breakup] was a bad move because, without Pixar, Disney won't have any movie people will like," said sophomore Alaina Harriman.

After it's messy and abrupt divorce with Pixar, Disney went into conflict again. This time, it was with the large cable company Comcast. Comcast attempted a merge with Disney, offering them \$54 billion. Eisner rejected this offer as too low. Disney and Comcast now have been battling each other. Disney claims that Comcast undervalued Disney, while Comcast



Disney and Pixar have collaborated in making blockbusters like "Monsters Inc." and "Toy Story." "Finding Nemo" recently won the Oscar for Best Animated Film.

declares their offer generous according to Disney's prospects.

After the attacks on Disney for its incompetence in business management, Disney got a boost when it succeeded after a 14-year effort to buy the Muppets. Now Kermit the Frog and Miss Piggy will reside with Mickey and Minnie Mouse. Disney plans on using the Muppets for new television shows, movies and products. This purchase has helped cheer up the

company after being under fire for the break with Pixar. This may give Disney some hope for prospects for the future, but some Disney fans still long for the great productions that came out of the Disney-Pixar duo.

"I think they [Disney and Pixar] were a great collaboration together," said junior Lisa Son. "Pixar with the 3-D stuff and Disney with the cartoon animation were really good together."

Comedy central gives gay men makeover

By Emily Miller

Managing Editor

Rob, Billy, Kyle and Curtis are four straight men on a mission: converting homosexual males to the heterosexual lifestyles. Comedy Central's "Straight Plan for the Gay Man" is a spin-off of Bravo's "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy."

"The gay guys can have their say in turning straight guys gay, so why can't the straight guys turn the gay guys straight?" said freshman Peter Abelman.

Jonathan was once a Gucci wearing, teacup collecting, Bette Davis quoting homosexual, who volunteered on "Straight

Plan" to become an "unfabulous" straight man for a day. Although he just wanted to test out the hetero waters, his entire life unraveled on screen with the expertise of the four guys.

"I think it's a bloody waste of time because who cares?" said junior Brian Roberts. "Let him be gay."

The primary goal of the show is for Jonathan to go undercover into a job and pass as a straight man. The job varies with each show, but Jonathan's task involves the meat-packing industry. To prepare Jonathan for this ultimate test, the unfabulous four tear apart his home, upgrade his wardrobe, and even teach him



Comedy Central has hired their own "Fab Four" to help gay men learn the secrets of a straight man's life.

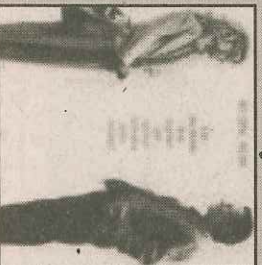
how to walk. Soon enough his apartment is reupholstered in plaid, empty beer cans replace his teacups, and his chandeliers are excavated for a glowing neon Selsun Blue lamp.

"I liked it because they make the gay guy's apartment funny," said sophomore Aaron Cooper. "They made it all plaid."

The show stereotypically divides the

men, but it still had its funny moments. In one scene, Rob, Billy, Kyle and Curtis introduce Jonathan to a .44 magnum in the shooting range. Before each one fires, they all quote hard-core movies, like Samuel Jackson's rant in Pulp fiction. Jonathan, however, quotes Gone with the Wind and before he pops a cap he says "Frankly my dear, I don't give a damn."

"When Harry Met Sally"



A friend once told me that I am the worst kind of high maintenance: I don't know that I am. I immediately denied this, which just supported the original statement even more. And eventually I saw the movie that my friend had alluded to: "When Harry Met Sally."

From the start of the movie, I laughed at the younger Meg Ryan and Billy Crystal (their clothes and their quirky personalities). Though the movie is almost all dialogue, I am never bored when watching it. In fact, I am captivated by the progression of Harry and Sally from strangers to the best of friends.

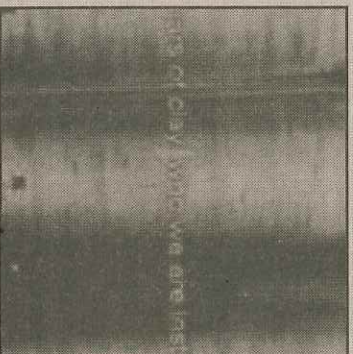
The story is about uptight Sally and eclectic Harry, who ride up to New York together where they go their separate ways, never expecting to see the other again. With intervals of years, the two bump into each other, and the third time they meet, become friends.

I never get tired of watching the two with their completely different personalities and opinions become good friends, all the while maintaining the lightheartedness and comical mood of the film. The ridiculous disputes never fail to entertain me. And on top of the comedy is the sentimental feeling it brings of two opposites coming together, the yin and yang, and realizing how perfect they are for each other.

"When Harry Met Sally" is a great story about two best friends who were meant to be together.

Oracle Picks

"Who We Are Instead"



For music that I know I will enjoy no matter what my mood, I always pop Jars of Clay's "Who We Are Instead" into my stereo.

I've always enjoyed this Christian band, but their newest CD is without a doubt their best yet—and my favorite. The group stayed close to their typical musical style, but this album is much more acoustic and even more mellow than the stuff they have done before. While soothing, the music is still upbeat and I can't help but sing along to the catchy melodies.

Some of my favorite songs include the cover song, "Lonely People" (originally recorded by America) and "Amazing Grace" (not the hymn), which has an almost gospel feel.

The group was supposedly influenced a lot by country music legend Johnny Cash. Now for those who dislike country, don't let me discourage you. "Who We Are Instead" is far from the stereotypical "twang" in country music. Just think soothing guitar, great vocals and harmonies and meaningful lyrics.

Jane Eyre



Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte is a refreshing change from typical romance novels with a beautiful woman and handsome, wealthy man. In contrast, Jane Eyre is a plain schoolteacher and Mr. Rochester is wealthy, but he is also twice Jane's age and not particularly attractive.

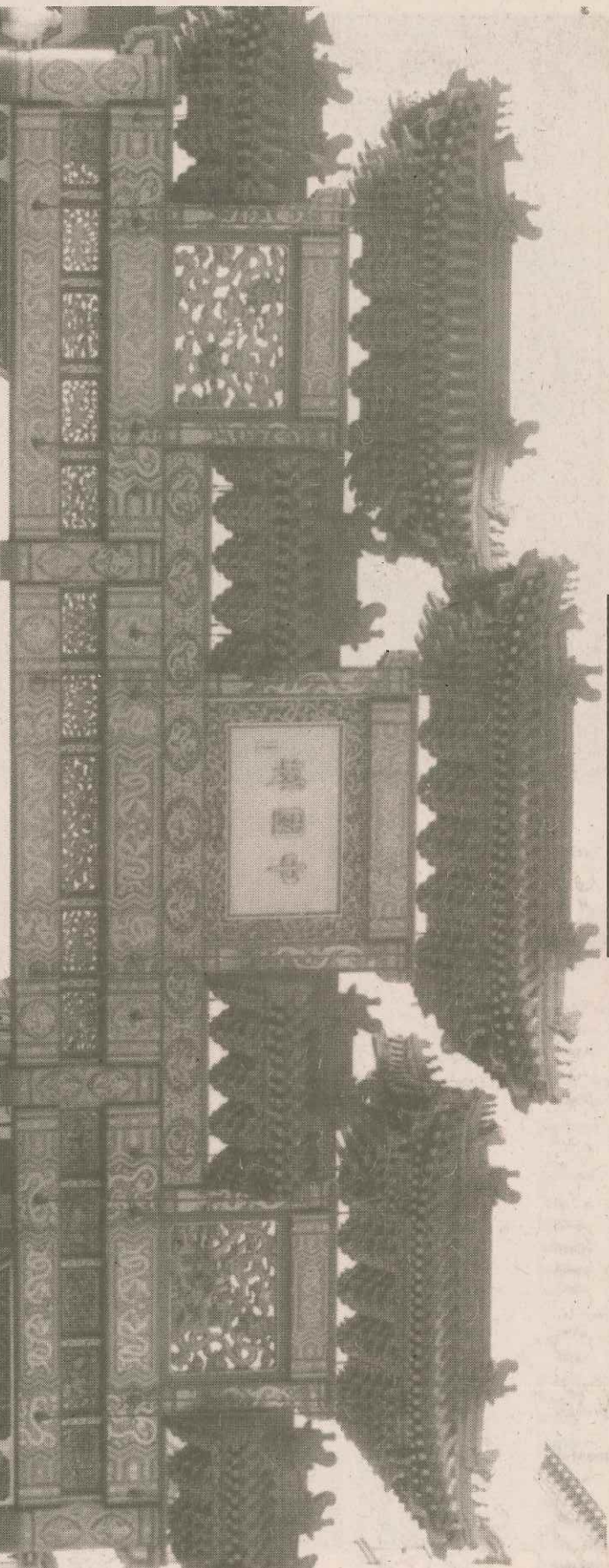
After reading the first chapter, my heart immediately went out to poor orphaned Jane. The book starts with describing Jane's younger years to provide background information about her miserable circumstances along with her schooling. Most of the novel takes place after Jane goes to work for Mr. Rochester.

The two fall in love, which seems typical enough, but the book is far from over. With caution not to ruin the story, I will not reveal what happens, but Jane and Mr. Rochester go separate ways.

Parts of *Jane Eyre* are quite depressing for a romance novel, but they make the ending that much better. My heart continues to ache for Jane who must fight her conscience and her heart.

The book shows not just, but a genuine love despite the shortcomings of each. Jane and Mr. Rochester demonstrate how all love should be and it is a nice change from society's perception of love today.

—Compiled by Anna Sommerfeldt



Chinatown blends culture, cuisine

East Asian traditions diffuse with Western capitalism

By Jen Siomacco & Heidi Stilingoi
Oracle Editors

At first sight it would appear to be a diverse haven for city dwellers of Chinese descent, but at a second glance, it's evident that it is instead a diffusion, not just of Asian culture, but of the fruits of American capitalism.

Immense growth has sprung up in the blocks surrounding 7th and H Streets—the heart of Chinatown. New restaurants and places of interest are gaining popularity and status, and popping up more rapidly every year. The MCI Center, built in 1997, brings locals, tourists and profits for conventions, concerts and sporting events. The newly opened DC Convention Center and the recently renovated City Museum, located a short walk down 7th Street, are also enticing new crowds consistently.

Chinatown, since its renewal, has been praised as a hot spot for weekend outings and social gatherings. While it may be gaining a more hip and trendy reputation, its authentic

The Chinese arch near the intersection of 7th and H Streets rests in the middle of an onslaught of Americanized commerce, surrounded on all sides by Starbucks and Fuddruckers, with Hooters, McDonald's and Chipotle right around the corner.

international restaurants, residences and shops that gave Chinatown its base no longer stand as the main attraction for drawing in customers and tourists. The Chinese arch near the intersection of 7th and H Streets rests in the middle of an onslaught of Americanized commerce, surrounded on all sides by Starbucks and Fuddruckers, with Hooters, McDonald's and Chipotle right around the corner.

Profits are not pouring into the original Chinatown as they should be; instead, companies owned by corporate heads in

Seattle, Washington, but simply adorned with signs written in Chinese characters, are what are reaping the benefits of this highly acclaimed tourist district.

Only after turning off of 7th Street and venturing on H, the real Chinatown can be found. Several high-class restaurants and markets are left, however, that truly do live up to the standards of cultural cuisine: they simply are not as publicized as much as the food chains that line the other blocks.

Delicious Chinese food can be found on H Street for just a few dollars or, for the cost of a slightly higher check, exquisite cuisine is served up to those whose tastebuds favor the Orient.

The China Inn is an inexpensive restaurant that offers up a variety of Chinese foods found in different regions of China. Hunan Chinatown offers Hunan cuisine at a slightly higher, though not extremely high price.

Tony Cheng's Mongolian Restaurant delivers the best in Mongolian meals, even though the prices can be as high as \$40. It is among the most prized locations in the area. Upstairs, above the main restaurant, Tony Cheng's Seafood sells fish, crab and a multitude of other items.

These restaurants not only serve up a variety of food but provide for a cultural experience. Diversity can still be found down 7th and H Streets. Behind the fast-growing symbols of America, the diversity that just may remind DC folk a little of China.




Jen Siomacco




Chinatown, an area of DC that is diverse in cuisine and entertainment, houses several ethnic restaurants like Chopsticks. While authentic international restaurants are outnumbered by chain fast food stores, a true cultural experience is still available.



Jen Siomacco



West Springfield Center
(703) 451 - 7600

<p>\$1.00 OFF</p> <p>\$1 OFF any Footlong sub or \$0.50 OFF an 6 - inch sub or salad</p> <p>Offer expires 6/30/04</p> <p><small>One coupon per person per visit. Not good with any other offer. Offer good at participating stores only.</small></p>	<p>DOUBLE DEAL</p> <p>2 Regular Footlong subs for \$7.99 with purchase of a 21 oz. drink</p> <p>Offer Expires 6/30/04</p> <p><small>One coupon per person per visit. Not good with any other offer. Offer good at participating stores only. Not applicable with double meat.</small></p>	<p>TRIPLE PLAY</p> <p>3 Regular Footlong subs for \$10.99</p> <p>Offer Expires 6/30/04</p> <p><small>One coupon per person per visit. Not good with any other offer. Offer good at participating stores only. Not applicable with double meat.</small></p>
		

Red Robin: a full nest of unique hamburgers

By Camilla Casillas
Managing Editor

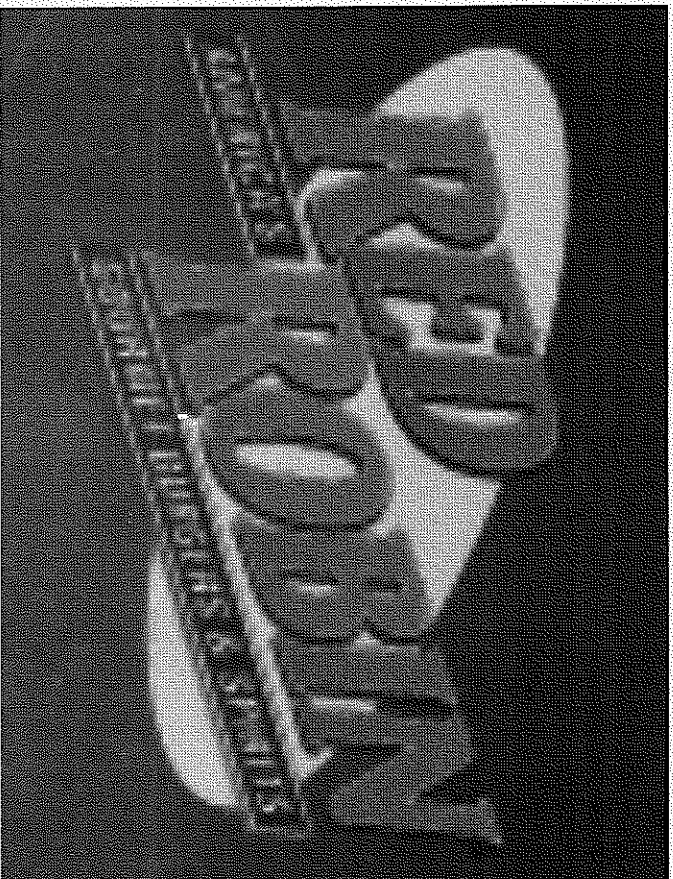
Located near Fair Oaks Mall and inside the Fair Lakes Shopping Center, Red Robin Gourmet Burgers and Spirits is a casual and delicious place to eat.

Since the restaurant first opened in 1969, Red Robin has continuously won awards for "Best Burger" and "Best Family Restaurant." Red Robin offers a variety of unique burgers, including a Pot Roast Burger, Banzai Burgers which includes pineapples, Honey Mustard Burger and a Parmigiano Chicken Burger. They offer 22 kinds of gourmet burgers including a classic cheeseburger, and each burger comes with a basket of bottomless steak fries.

Red Robin's menu includes more than just burgers. Their other entrees consist of seafood and Mexican dishes. They have

straight-from-the-skillet, make your own fajitas. The waiter brings four tortillas, a plate of steamy chicken or steak strips, and small bowls of toppings including cheese and sour cream on the side. The seafood platters include Clamstrips and a Cajun Spiced Shrimp. Red Robin also has food for the healthy conscious, including a salad menu and veggie burgers.

After the main dish, Red Robin offers vanilla, chocolate, raspberry, strawberry, banana, peach, and java milkshakes with a "refill" tin on the side similar to Silver Diner's shakes. They only offer three desserts, which are Mountain High Mudd Pie, Apple Crisp, and a Hot Fudge Sundae. Red Robin dares to be different with their unique gourmet burgers and a fun, casual atmosphere. They have at least one thing on the menu that will satisfy each person you're dining with.



Red Robin, established in 1969, has a great atmosphere and greater food. Gourmet burgers include chicken burgers, veggie burgers and burgers with pineapples.



"The Passion" is an accurate depiction of the gruesome last hours of Christ.

'The Passion' grabs audience

By Jen West
News Section Assistant

Can you handle blood, heart wrenching reality and subtiles? If you think you can, watch Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ" which focuses on the last 12 hours of Christ's life.

Five days after opening on Ash Wednesday, "The Passion" grossed \$117.5 million, landing in second place in the five day figures for a movie released on a Wednesday and with a R-rating.

"I liked it, but it was too much [gore]," said junior Esther Lee. "I had to hide away from it."

Many scenes in "The Passion" are very graphic in nature. If the violence was toned down or even taken out, the movie would not be a true depiction of the events that took place. Being beaten and crucified is not pretty. In the end, the audience is either emotionally involved or detached.

Due to the topic, "The Passion" isn't meant to be entertaining. It is a drama that includes the pain and suffering of a man knowingly marching towards his death.

"I think that if people didn't like it they didn't like the book [the Bible]," said junior Kathryn Strandell.

Gibson researched Jewish eating rituals and culture of the time and took the movie straight out of the Gospels in the Bible for authenticity. For two hours the audience reads subtiles while the movie is spoken in Latin, Aramaic and Hebrew, more

details for authenticity. "I thought it was very true to the Bible," said sophomore Mimi Oo. "The actors weren't fluent in Aramaic so the pauses made it easy to read the subtiles, [which] made it genuine."

Different youth groups encourage members to see the movie and many went together.

"I'm going with my youth group," said senior Sara Wolner. "I think it could be a good tool [for witnessing], but people need to keep in mind it's just a movie."

Although it is "just a movie," it has the ability to pull on heartstrings and can lead to a spiritual revival.

"I sobbed uncontrollably," said senior Kim Buckles. "I strongly recommend bringing tissues."

Although not everybody cried or even teared up, many still were touched by the movie.

"I didn't cry, but I'll never be the same person again," said senior Derrick Braziel. "It helps you further realize what Jesus went through for the cleansing of our sins."

Before the movie's opening concerns about antisemitism were sprouting and its apparent controversy was being discussed and the true theme debated.

"It's not antisemitic at all," said counselor Ken Christopher. "I made me think about myself more than anyone else, because in my belief, he was dying for my sins and to see it was powerful."

Looking to the sky isn't just for birds

Students flock to Hidden Pond Nature Center to see what kind of birds fly by

By Katherine Hutton
Inside Editor

I'm a lot of things, but I'm not a nature girl.

I visited the Hidden Pond Nature Center recently and did a bit of bird-watching. I admired the pretty red one and the lovely light blue ones as they flew by the windows.

See? I'm not a nature girl! Luckily, that's not a requirement for bird-watchers. Hidden Pond provides a reference sheet with pictures and names of birds that are commonly seen. A good thing for ignorant people like me.

"We have a handful of people come to see the birdfeeder," said freshman Sean Hogan, who works at Hidden Pond.

A couple of birdfeeders hang outside for visitors to see.

After checking the reference sheet, I discovered that the red bird was a Northern Cardinal and the blue birds were Blue Jays. I already felt smarter.

The employees at Hidden Pond also keep a sort of inventory of the birds that pass the park.

"At Thanksgiving, employees watch for birds to see what kinds go by," said junior Joanna Cassano, another WS student that works at the park.

A lot of stereotypes go along with bird-watching that aren't necessarily true.

"Intellectual people like bird-watching," said senior Laura Gumkowski. "And hermit people who have nothing to do."

Bird-watching is one of those activities that requires focus and concentration, but

can be exciting.

People can also visit the Accotink Wildlife Refuge and see Bald

Eagles.

"At the end of every day," said Hogan, "my boss calls in an owl to the nature center and that's cool."

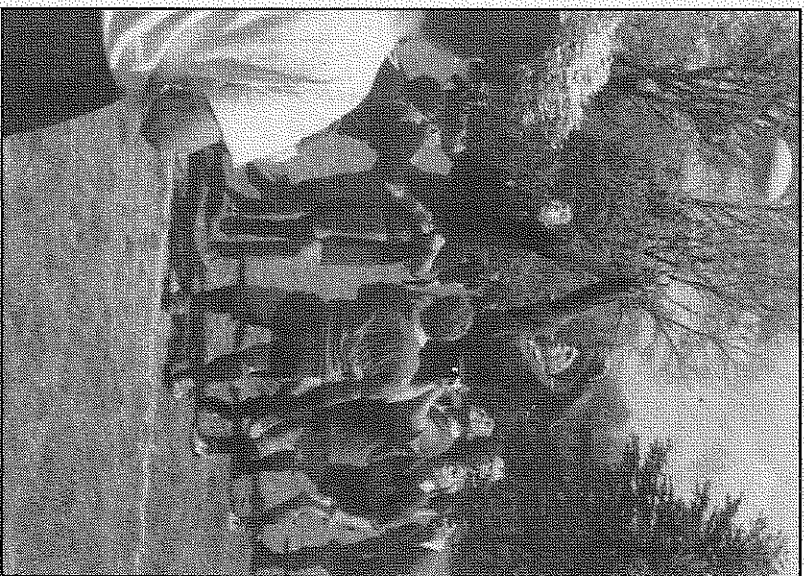


Ashley Hughes



Ashley Hughes

(left) The Hidden Pond Nature Center offers a great view to watch the birds that pass by. Students can also learn about other animals, such as the amphibians that also inhabit the park. (above) An unlikely bird-watcher, Katherine Hutton, watches as the Blue Jays and Cardinals fly by the window. The center offers a reference sheet that includes pictures and names of the birds to make a bird-watching experience even better.



Jay Spaeigel

No pain no glory to play rugby

By Sam Lee

Senior Staff Writer

Bruises gained by football and basketball can not compare to the battle scars gained in rugby. Without padding, players tumble for the ball with raw animal instincts. Little by little, rugby is becoming a popular sport that has such perks as conditioning for another sport and great friends.

Rugby is played without any pads and involves a lot of running. The game begins with a kickoff and the ball is run down the field and can only be passed backwards. When a player scores, it is called a "try" and then the team kicks the ball into the posts, like in football.

"It's sort of like soccer with a little bit of football," said junior Miguel Carillo.

Although there are some hard knocks in rugby, the game is more about strategy and team effort.

"It's not only a force game," said junior Jordan Gates.

"It's also a game where you have to think."

Rugby is not sponsored by WS and students have to join an outside boys team, called West End. This team includes students from WS, Lee, Robinson, and Lake Braddock, and is one of the oldest youth rugby teams in the DC metro area. Their rivals include several private schools. Last year they didn't have a winning season.

"because the team is constantly full of rookies. Since WS doesn't have its own team, the games aren't played on a home field. Instead, the games are normally hours away, such as Baltimore and Kensington, Maryland.

"It's really annoying to drive all the way out to the different games," said sophomore Justin Moore.

Many rugby players do so to keep in shape. During the summer, SYC sponsors coed rugby teams that many students take advantage of.

Not only does the summer program keep players in top condition, it also adds a lot of fun and friends to the game.

"It's sort of like soccer with a little bit of football."

—Miguel Carillo, junior

"There is so much fun," said sophomore Anna Ing.

"I've had a lot of good times."

Though rugby may not be a school sponsored sport, the benefits can last a long time, especially the adrenaline rush when a try is close.

"It's such a rush," said Gates, "running down the field knowing you're about to run over someone."

Pedram Rastegar fights his way to the Olympics

By Danny Tinsley

Junior Staff Writer

By the looks of him, Pedram Rastegar is like any other high school junior at WS. He does his homework, attends his classes and follows the school's rules and regulations.

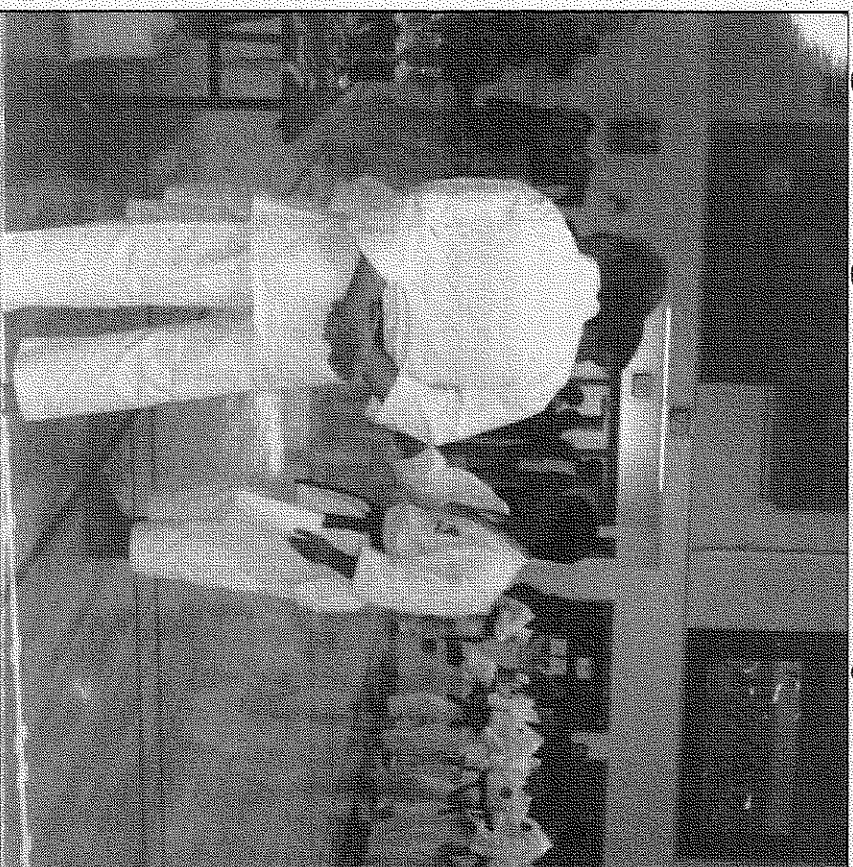
Yet not every "normal" high schooler is also the captain of the US Karate Olympic team for 2004. He's ready to compete and show what's he's got in the Olympics.

As captain, Rastegar will proudly bear the American Flag at the Game's opening ceremony, as well as be the first to compete for the US team. Pedram has been practicing all his life to be the best at Karate.

Rastegar first began his successful journey in the art of Karate at the young age of five, at the urging of his parents. They wanted him to be able to defend himself, which is something the 3rd-degree Black Belt does every night at his training facilities in Fairfax and Tyson's Corner.

As an advanced 16-year-old, Rastegar competes in the eighteen to forty-five year range.

"It's tougher competition but I like the



Courtesy of Pedram Rastegar

Here Pedram Rastegar wins another event and hopes to go far in the Olympics.

March brings madness

By Adam Rosen

Sports Editor

"It's awesome, baby." Yes it is, Dickie V, -college basketball is getting more exciting year after year and proves to be one of the best sports to watch on television again this year.

Every March, 64 teams compete for the NCAA basketball championship. Over the course of the NCAA tournament students are tuned in to the television.

Some run home to watch the end of the game and others stay after school for the finale.

"Many students are thinking about a future education, college basketball gives them insight to one aspect of different colleges, and that's why I allow it to be watched after school," said engineering teacher Scott Sedder.

The last few minutes of a game determine who moves on to the next round. In March

Madness there's always a buzzer-beater, a last minute defensive stop, or a game-tying shot to send the game into overtime.

This year's college basketball season has been like a roller coaster. One week a team is number one and next another team is number one. Six teams have been ranked number one this year. UConn, Florida, Duke, Stanford, Kansas, and Kentucky

have all been on top. Last year,

Well qualified with

experience to be your realtor.

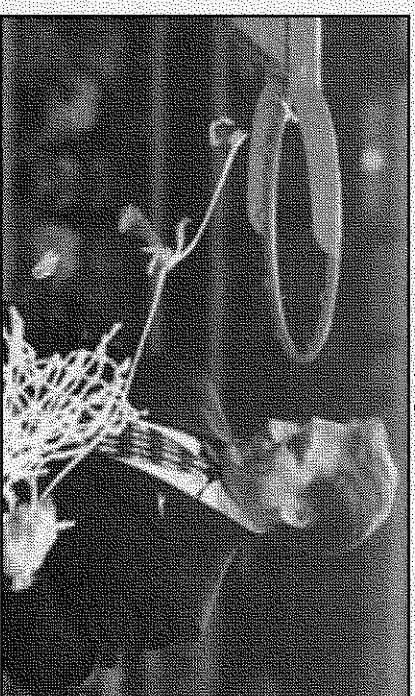
B.S. Engineering

M.S. Business

(703) 798-4527

tonyaraj@mr.is.com

Tony Araj
Realtor



Michigan State is one of many teams that hope to go far in March.

Marquette made the Final Four, proving how unpredictable college basketball really is.

"The school can't regulate how we spend our money."

—Brian Tate, junior

There is one key reason that students pay attention to these games. Sure, they are great to watch and students love to root for their favorite team, but normally pools are up. No, not swimming pools, but betting pools, where students put money

feeling of a challenge," said Rastegar. In between balancing his history homework with his math, Rastegar practices days a week for two hours each night.

"Karate has taught me incredible discipline," said Rastegar. "So when I get home from training I immediately begin my studies."

Rastegar has competed in some of the world's most fascinating sites, against the world's most talented fighters.

He has traveled from the paradise islands of Hawaii to the snowy landscapes of Alaska.

This summer, before leaving for the Games, he will attend a competition in Japan.

"It will be tough-very tough," said Rastegar. "I feel confident in myself."

Competing around the world has given Rastegar many titles.

He is not only captain of the Olympic team but for the World Team, the US National Team, and the East Coast Team. The Olympic Games will be held this coming September in Greece. This is the birthplace of the prestigious competition.

After eleven years of competitions and titles, Rastegar is not intimidated to fight at the Olympics.

down on their brackets. Stakes get higher after every round. One game can decide it all.

If someone has Duke going all the way and Duke loses in the second round, most likely he or she will not win, unless a miracle happens and miracles don't normally happen in our society. In some of these pools, pots can reach up to \$500. Gambling is not condoned at our school, yet it still happens.

"I think it's ok because it's our money to spend," said junior Brian Tate. "The school can't regulate how we spend our money."

Astroturf installation under consideration

By Christina Araj
Viewpoint Editor

Fresh goose droppings, murky mud and grass stains that often adorn WS athletic jerseys may soon be a thing of the past.

The Fairfax County School Board is currently debating the option of installing new Astroturf fields in High School stadiums. The subject, however, is still "under speculation," and the final decision will not be made until June 1.

For anyone unacquainted with Astroturf, it is a carpet of fake, plastic grass, over a hard base. If the decision is made to install the new fields, a new type of Astroturf will be purchased. The older version of the turf is infamous for its injury-provoking and pain-inflicting concrete base. The new version, however, will have a base constructed of sand and pulverized rubber.

The new type of year round field has been changed for the better in many students' opinions. It will provide athletes who fall with a cushion, which the old grasslacked. Concern among the student body still remains, however.

"It kind of hurts and grass is more comfortable," said sophomore football athlete, Brandon Carter. "You could get turf toe."

Unlike real grass, the artificial turf will not rip if an athlete's foot were to get caught, which holds potential for injury.

"You may see a slight increase in significant injuries," said athletic trainer Matt Redman. "You would see an increase in cuts."

The Student Activities Director, Mike Dobson says the new grass, if purchased, will be much more forgiving.

"It will be like falling on the beach," said Dobson. "It's much safer than falling on our field

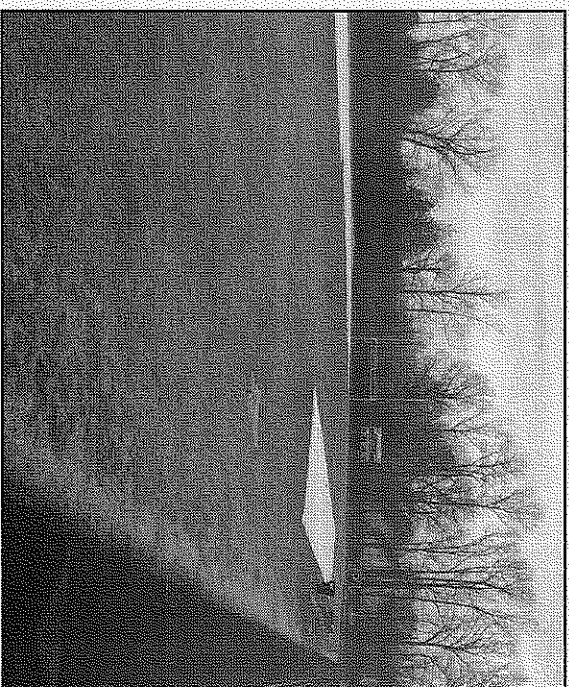
now."

Another perk of installing turf is the fact that it is virtually indestructible and requires low maintenance work. Unlike the constant seeding, cutting and watering the fields require now, the Astroturf would simply need an annual raking so that the sands stay evenly distributed. The factor of excessive goose droppings will be eliminated as well.

As with every piece of good news, comes the bad. The artificial turf would be expensive, costing \$500,000 for each field in a 22 high school district. This more than \$11 million expense would come from the county's education funding, and ultimately the taxpayers' pockets.

In the long run, however, the field will be an investment, because the school will be able to rent the field to youth sports groups, like SYC, for \$200 an hour.

"Astroturf is a lot of money," said Dobson, "but, if you look at



Chris Shannon

Natural grass at WS may turn to Astroturf, a \$500,000 project.

the big picture it's cheaper." but there is still hope, and as the The decision-making process has been temporarily hindered due to the ongoing search for a new school district superintendent. As a result, the county may not vote to start installing the new fields this year.

price of Astroturf continues to decrease, chances of purchasing turf increases. "I think inevitably this is what will happen," said Dobson. "I think eventually Astroturf will be the norm."

A-Rod to play in pinstripes

By Emily Miller
Managing Editor

In the beginning, Babe Ruth was drafted to the New York Yankees when the Boston Red Sox couldn't seal the contract. On February 11, Alex Rodriguez was drafted to the New York Yankees when the Boston Red Sox couldn't seal the contract. Rodriguez's lucky number, 13, is unavailable for him to wear this season because it was retired in honor of former Yankee Babe Ruth.

"It's interesting because Babe Ruth was pitcher but when he came to the Yankees he switched to the outfield, and A-Rod was shortstop but coming to the Yankees he's moving to third base," said senior Jamal Mahboob.

While the Yankees gloat about their newest recruit, the Sox fans are vexed that the curse lives on, jinxing any chance of a winning season. The Sox had the chance to claim Rodriguez as their new shortstop, but the deal fell through due to salary differences. Immediately, the Yankees pounced on A-Rod, fixed the contract within 72 hours, and now Rodriguez will don the pinstripes at third base.

"I think he'll be a good addition to the Yankees because then they'll actually have a third baseman that can win it

for them," said freshman Josh Brown.

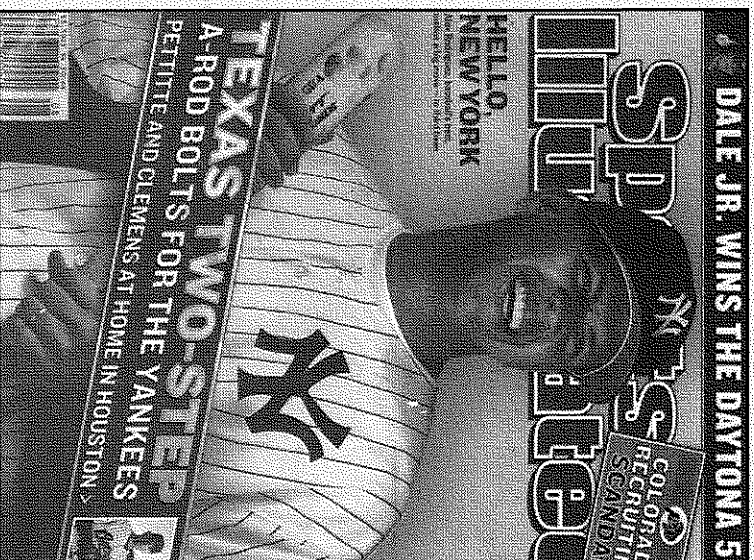
The new deal isn't air tight, however. The resolution that A-Rod agreed to is that he will play third base and Jeter will stay at short. Some students think that A-Rod should be bumped to shortstop while Jeter plays third.

"I think [Alex Rodriguez] should play shortstop because I think he's got a lot more talent [than Jeter] at short," said junior Brendan Bell. "I don't really see him at third base."

The Yankees are stocked with talent and this year they will be unstoppable. They have arguably the best lineup in Major League Baseball, and more importantly, nine solid defensive players in the field. Some students don't think it's fair the wealthy Yankees can afford all the best players, like \$250 million Rodriguez.

"It's not fair because it's like a monopoly in baseball," said junior Leslie Sherman. "There should be some kind of laws against it."

Despite financial issues, position controversy and long-lived rivalry, the more substantial matter at hand is that now Rodriguez is granted a chance to do great things for the sport of baseball that were not possible before. A-Rod has the opportunity, means, and potential to become a legend, maybe even Babe Ruth.



Perennial all-star Alex Rodriguez, poses for Sports Illustrated in his new Yankee uniform. He will earn \$112 million dollars over seven years.

Lady Spartans advance to states

By Katie Bourget
Weekend Editor

Two State Championships, five Regional titles and nine District wins will gain you a reputation.

"In the region there's rivalry and we're the team to beat," said assistant coach Chip Delee.

This year the Lady Spartans have battled their way to a 28-1 record, coming up short in only one game, over winter break against St. Johns, a private school from Maryland.

With tough regional competition, WS has not had an easy route to the championship game. In the Region quarterfinals, excellent defense by junior Laura Haskins held Jasmine Thomas, the Northern Region player of the year to 14 points, six points less than her average.

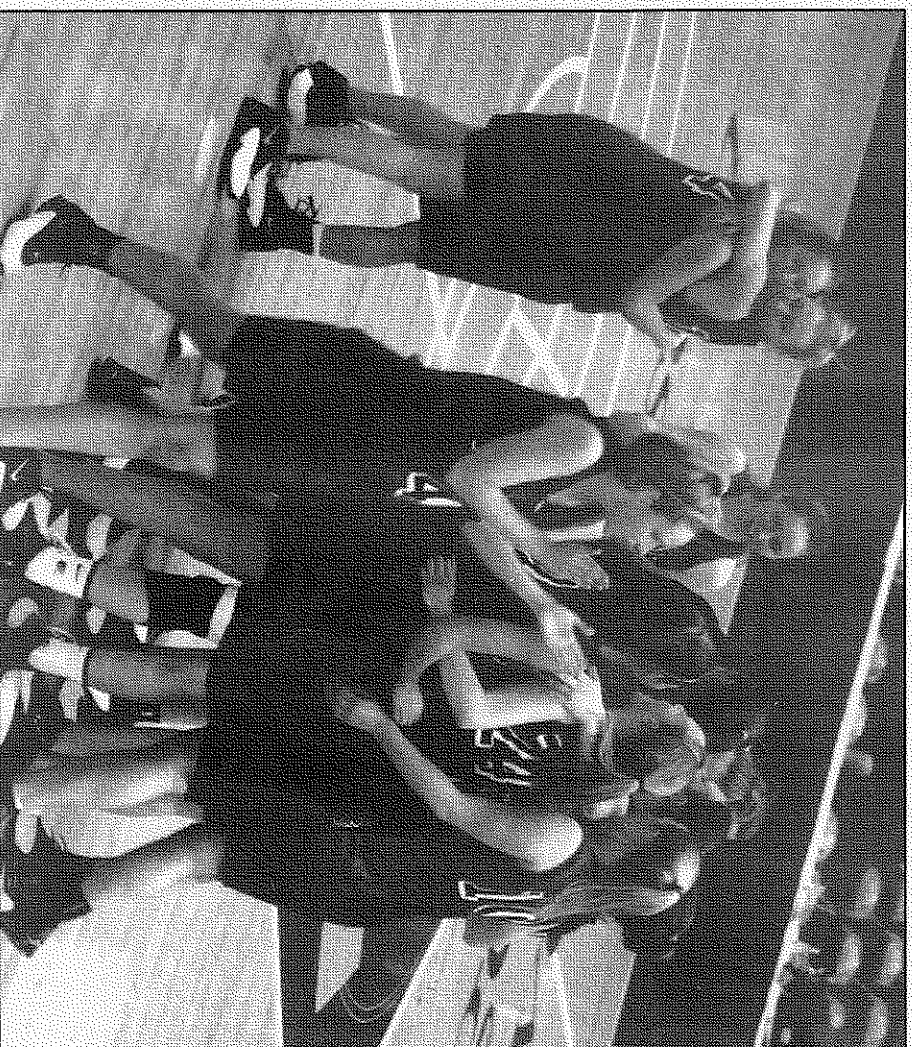
The, two nights later in the

seminals, WS pulled out an overtime win against WT Woodson. An exciting ending to regulation, that included a one-and-one free throw opportunity for freshman Triana Harris to win the game, lead to the thrilling overtime win. Senior Sarah Carey-Prock scored 24 points in the effort.

"It's a bigger atmosphere at the Patriot Center, it's a lot different than here at WS," said Harris.

The team then beat Madison in a hard-fought battle at the Patriot Center 46-43. Most recently they took on George Washington of Danville to advance to the state championship, the second chance for Flanagan and Kunzman who finished as runners-up in 2002.

Kunzman said, "Since we didn't win as sophomores, it's exciting to have one more shot at the state title."



Courtesy of Brooke Nelson

Sarah Flanagan, Laura Haskins, Sarah Carey-Prock and the rest of the Lady Spartans celebrate after they beat Madison in the regional final. Junior guard Laura Haskins was named tournament MVP.

JEWISH LEPRECHAUN SAYS 'BAH, HUMBUG' TO ST. PATRY'S DAY

By Adam Rosen
Sports Editor

When I think of the holidays, I think of a big turkey, lots of fireworks and a dreidel and menorah. Then there's St. Patrick's Day, a day of leprechauns and shamrocks. What a worthless holiday.

On March 17, Americans celebrate one of the stupidest holidays there is: A day where if you're not wearing green you're physically abused by multiple Irish people and a day where the dirty leprechaun haunts all. Leprechauns, midgeets who wear nothing but green, equal pretty scary. Even the guy from TV is pretty scary. "I've got my lucky charms and they're magically delicious."

On St. Patrick's Day I intend not to wear green. Yes, that's right—I am going against the holiday and don't pinch me. I am going to wear a big Star of David T-shirt and I'm going to love it. I'm going against the so-called Irish day and going to have my own holiday.

This is America, not Ireland. If we intend to celebrate St. Patrick's Day let's celebrate all holidays. Let's celebrate Cinco de Mayo and Mardi Gras.

But as for you Irish people, you can show off your Irish pride if you want to. It will not bother me as long as you know that your holiday is trivial and that you should celebrate it in Ireland.

Do not be offended all you Irish people. I have many Irish friends. When I decided to write this article I talked to people about what I thought about St. Patrick's Day. The students that I happened to talk to were Irish, so that didn't work out so well. They looked at me and laughed and probably thought to themselves, "Shut up, you dumb Jew."

Every single holiday can be considered important in many ways. Valentine's Day can be a day where presents and cards are

exchanged, but most students have been rejected or had a bad experience on Valentine's Day, like *Oracle* business and systems editor Jon Nylen. Nylen wrote a letter about his problems with girls in the homecoming issue.

The patron saint of Ireland was Maewyn. What sort of family would name their kid Maewyn? I sure wouldn't. I would name my kid a normal name like David,

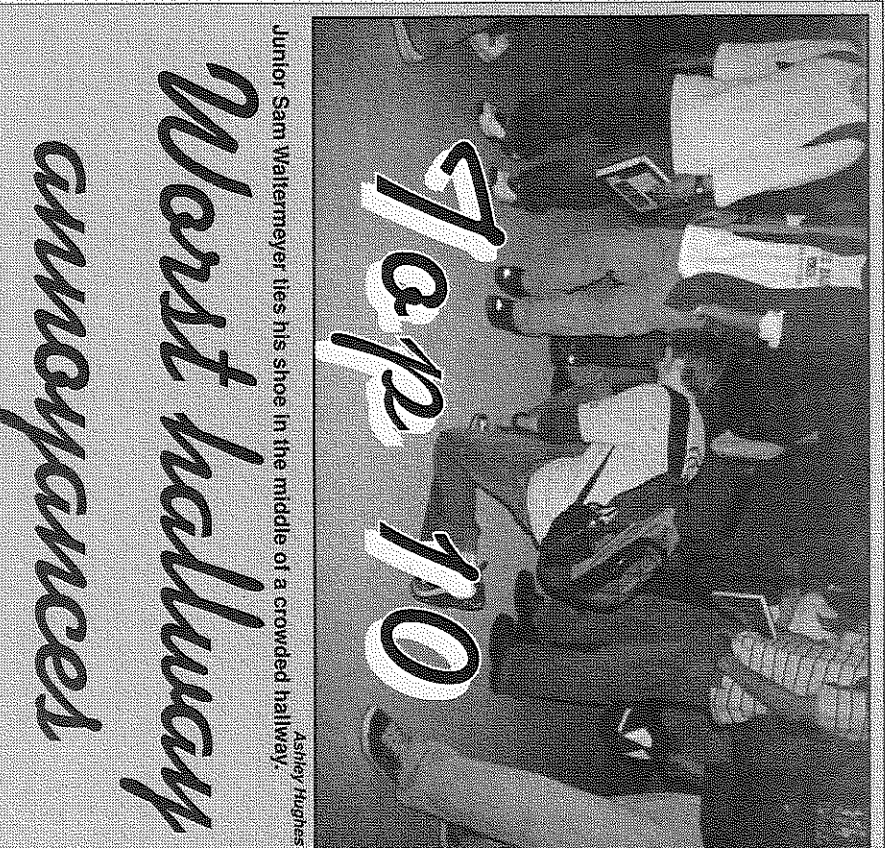


Joshua, Abraham or Moses. That's normal.

Some people say that Patrick raised people from the dead. That is pretty weird. This St. Patrick guy doesn't seem much like a Saint. He seems more like the devil.

I hope all of you Irish people have a great Ireland Day. Please do not be offended by what I write, because I mean no harm. Everyone has their own opinion and mine happens to be right. So if you want you can send a letter to the editor, but no one will care. I'm going to keep voicing my opinions for the next couple of issues and get used to it.

As for all you Irish people, keep the leprechauns, shamrocks, pot of gold, potatoes and beer (well maybe not the beer) at home.



Worst hallway annoyances

10. The huge people who block the hallway and walk slower than snails.
9. Roller backpacks. Is it really that heavy?
8. Large bodies of human mass that just stand and collect in the middle of the hall.
7. The PDA couple. Valentine's Day is over, save it for later, kids.
6. The loud cacklers. Nothing is ever that funny.
5. That person who is walking toward you and when you try to go around he always steps the same way as you.
4. When people grab your backpack and shove you to the side like you don't exist, just so that they can move an inch forward.
3. Those large groups of underclassmen who feel like it's OK to step on your feet even though it's not.
2. People who run to class when the halls are really crowded and you still have 10 minutes before class starts.
1. When people bump into you, but during their miscalculated sidestep end up actually copping a feel.

—Compiled by Nina Moses

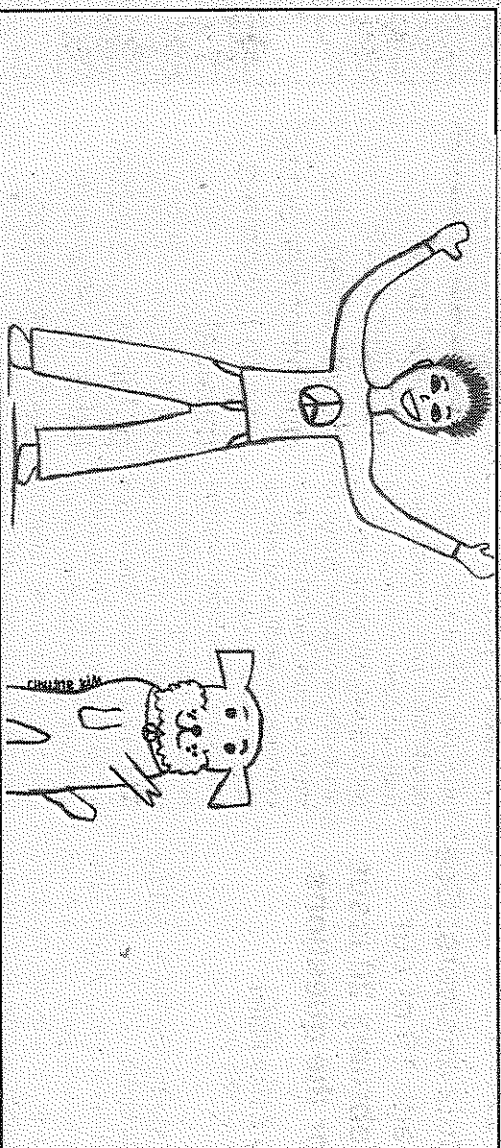
What were they thinking? More weird news

By Christie Kim
Senior Staff Writer

Do you ever just sit around and think, "What are some cool new things I could teach my dog?" Well I do, and I don't even have a dog. But that's not the point. Obviously someone else in the world has, and he lives in Berlin, Germany. A 54 year old man was caught in public not too long ago shouting "Sieg Heil" in public while displaying an Adolf Hitler T-shirt and, if that wasn't enough, he also taught his dog the Nazi stiff arm salute. The Berlin police official who came across this peculiar behavior gave the man a thirteen-month suspended sentence (I'm not quite sure what this actually means) for his acts.

I thought little girls who adored Christina Aguilera had it bad, but clearly someone has proven that there is, in fact, a worse role model in the world.

His dog, who has learned to perfect the salute, will raise its right paw on the owner's commands of "Do the salute." All you dog owners out there have to slap your forehead of never thinking of such a brilliant trick. Just think of how much your faithful companion (animal, not intimate other, although it's really up to you) is deprived having never learned it, and think of all the lost potential crazy looks you would get from strangers as your dog



A man trains his dog to make the "peace" sign. This is a takeoff on a rude gesture taught to a man's dog in Germany recently.

Christie Kim

performs in public. The man's disruption proved to be very offensive for obvious reasons, and extreme consequences are strictly enforced for portraying Nazi-like behavior in Germany. But fear not fellow readers, we are not in Germany. Thankfully, we live in America, where we have the freedom to say whatever we want and teach our dog all the offensive, crazy tricks we want. This is the life.

On another weird-news note, across the globe in San Jose, California someone has recognized a potential new national holiday: Square Root Day.

This occurred on 2/2/04 where the numbers of the month and day both represent the square root of the last two digits of the year. Ron Gordon, a 58-year-old high

school teacher decided to celebrate this new found day by making his students drink root beer in square shaped mugs. The madness didn't stop there. He shipped four pounds of radishes, yams and other types of roots to a groundhog in Pennsylvania, and also plans to call Hallmark to try and promote this day for special occasion cards.

The next square root day will be 3/3/09, so this leaves substantial time to prepare yourself for the special event. "Hey math can be fun," said Gordon in response to why he thinks Square Root Day is so special. "I think it's a cute, funky, hi! Yes, he said "hi" day."

Ladies, if we could all be so lucky to snag such a fellow, the world would, alas, be perfect.

Sex in the field

Scoring on and off the football field

By Betsy Miller
Senior Staff Writer

One of my guy friends is famous among his peers for physically commemorating his love for his girlfriend on the 50-yard line of the football field.

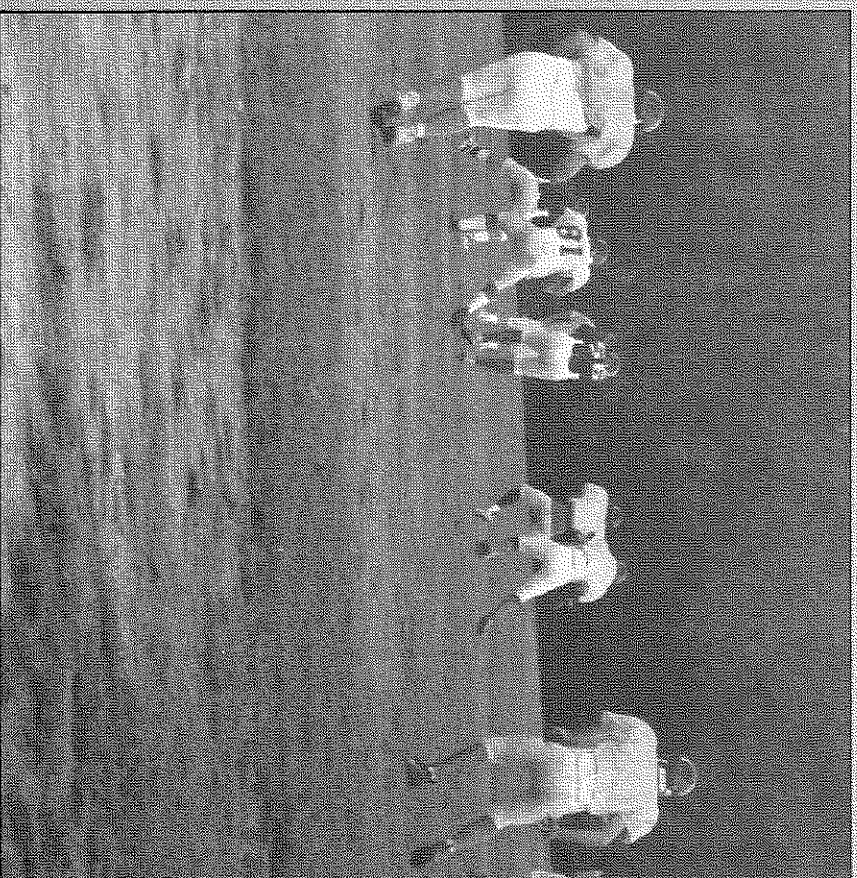
The first time I ever heard this story I asked the aforesaid individual why he did not choose somewhere more special or symbolic, like a bedroom or just the indoors in general, to commit such an act.

He responded, in the most matter-of-fact way possible, "Because the end zone was too muddy."

I guess I wasn't too terribly shocked. Some women would find the proposition of sex on the 50 yard line to be presumptuous and crass, while others would find it intriguing. So, I found myself questioning exactly what it means to be considered sexy in our society. Does one have to have sex on the 50 yard line to be sexy? Or wear lingerie? Or even engage in any type of illicit activity at all?

When I think of all the "hottest" girls I know, I don't tend to think of beautiful faces or toned bodies, but the essence of confidence in a tangible, human form. To truly be sexy is to be comfortable in one's self. It sounds cliché to say that you have to love yourself before anyone else can really love you but often times knowledge of one's self is important in finding happiness with another.

When I look back on all of the heinous relationships I've had, one sticks out in my mind as being particularly meaningful. I claimed that this guy never



Oracle File Photo

One can't always depend on getting down and dirty to reaffirm his love.

made me feel sexy, meaning that he often failed to tell me that my eyes shown like sapphires or whatever lines I guess I wanted to be fed. Now, looking back, I realize that it wasn't his lack of compliments that kept me from feeling sexy, but my lack of confidence in myself. By the same token, I don't think many

women realize that every time they ask their significant others if they look fat in a certain dress, they minimize the amount that their male counterpart wants to see them out of that dress by the tenfold. This is not to say that no one should have insecurities or that women should care more about the affirmation of men

than emotional expression, but often that love stems from respect, a respect that can only be gained from self-assurance in both parties.

When I think of all the "hottest" girls I know, I don't tend to think of beautiful faces or toned bodies, but the essence of confidence in a tangible, human form.

I respect a lot of people, even some who are of an excessive weight or not aesthetically pleasing. I respect them because they transcend looks or actions to convey a deeper meaning in life.

The point of any relationship is for one to gain a stronger sense of self or greater enlightenment of the surrounding world we live in from the love of another person. If one can gain that sense of self from having sex on the 50-yard line, by all means, do so (outside the time span of seven in the morning until about nine at night), but do so with the knowledge that the act itself is far your personal benefit and not to meet any kind of standard of alleged sexiness. Individual pleasure can only be derived from coupledom if the sanctity of the individual's personal convictions is upheld. Sexy can be sweat pants or bad breath or stupid jokes; sexy is respect.

Are you talented?

Don't quit your day job if you answered 'B'

Quiz answers: See page 19 of our February 20 issue for the questions.

By Betsy Miller
Senior Staff Writer

Mostly A's: You've still got your health.

I'm not going to lie—it's just not looking good. You're never going to win an Oscar, a Grammy or even a talent show (unless you take your clothes

off). But just like really ugly people have great personalities, really untalented people can smell really good. My mom says that not every one can be pretty, or smart, or rich, but pretty much everyone can smell good. All you need to do is invest in a high quality bar of deodorant soap and invest the necessary amount of time in showering. Cologne or perfume can also add to the positive effects. Then when everyone else is working up an odiferous sweat being talented, you can sit back, relax and smell your sweet scent.

Mostly B's: Don't quit your day job.

All right, so maybe you're not completely embarrassing yourself singing or dancing or whatever it is you do. But people like you usually tend to do one specific thing well, so don't try to be a renaissance man/woman. Just keep it simple, stupid. Do whatever it is you do well and cut your losses. Look at poor Jennifer Love Hewitt when she quit all of her acting jobs to become a musical sensation—the public would rather listen to Howard Dean's scream than her voice.

Mostly C's: Show me the money.

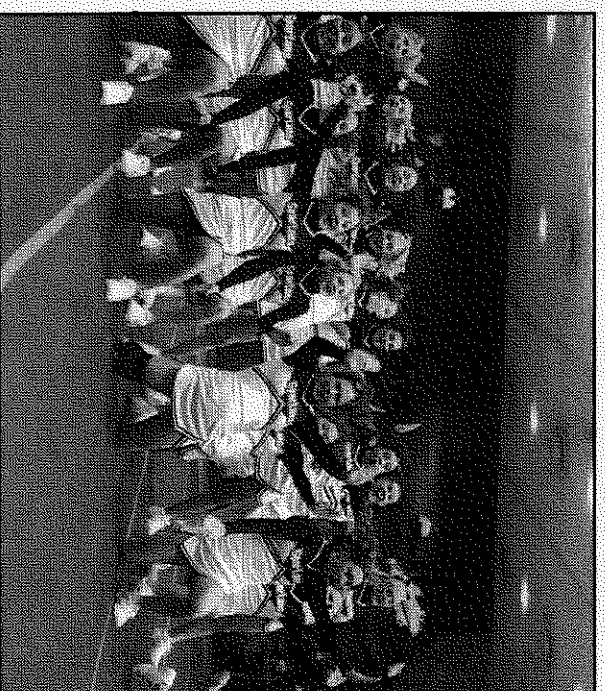
So you've got the skills. You're more talented than the bucktoothed girl in a beauty pageant. So here's my advice to you—don't get cocky, get wealthy. Too many people these days let their talents go to waste by getting lazy or conceited, but you're definitely above all that. I mean, who wants to be lazy when you could put in a little more

effort and just be greedy? Good luck to you and remember to go for the gold, particularly in terms of your signing bonus.

Don't get cocky, get wealthy. Too many people let their talents go to waste by getting lazy, but you're definitely above all that.



Howard Dean, call your agent! You might never win a Grammy.



Seagal/Magistic

The Spartan Cheerleaders should go for the gold with all that talent.

would rather listen to Howard Dean's scream than her voice.

Mostly C's: Show me the money.

So you've got the skills. You're more talented than the bucktoothed girl in a beauty pageant. So here's my advice to you—don't get cocky, get wealthy. Too many people these days let their talents go to waste by getting lazy or conceited, but you're definitely above all that. I mean, who wants to be lazy when you could put in a little more

effort and just be greedy? Good luck to you and remember to go for the gold, particularly in terms of your signing bonus.

Don't get cocky, get wealthy. Too many people let their talents go to waste by getting lazy, but you're definitely above all that.

Poor Liz's Almanac proudly presents:

Watch out, pedestrians, Liz is on the road!

Liz Weiderhold
Etc. Editor

Disclaimer: All jokes made against my father are for the sake of the column. My father abides by every law, including ones not enforced in the US. He never goes over any speed limits and does not currently take any anti-anxiety medication to treat the alleged "road rage." He has never intentionally or unintentionally led me into any danger on or off the road. Additionally, he listens to Beyonce religiously and we have meaningful conversations every day, for hours on end.

Having your license is a privilege, not a right. Having your permit, however, is a punishment. Most teenagers, if they have parents who love and care for them, want to get away from these parents as quickly as possible. The best outlet for this retreat is driving. The sensation is seemingly unbearable: The freedom of the open road, wind blowing through your hair, the exhilaration of speed, and cigarettes getting pelted in your face from the car ahead of you when your window is rolled down.

Getting your permit is not a step towards this freedom, but actually a step in the wrong direction. Allowing your parents to forcibly sit in a car with you at the wheel, at the risk of their own lives, and critique your inability to maneuver a car is not the best way to get that freedom. It certainly assures *my* parents of the extremity of my idiocy, at least.

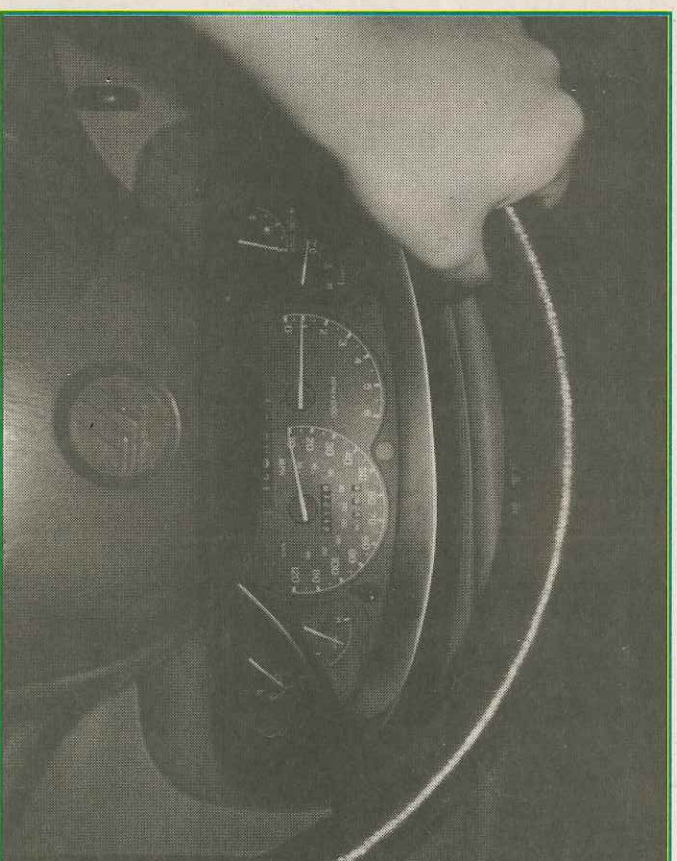
Traveling in a car with my dad, whose road rage is so severe that it is now being treated with Prozac, is an unmitigated

disaster. He and I will fight incessantly over any trivial thing that has a connection to driving, even about whether a car we may see is aquamarine or turquoise in color. This fighting will escalate to loud, explicit language from my father, and me in tears crying, "FINE. IT'S AQUAMARINE. ARE YOU HAPPY NOW?"

We also fight over the music. I finally found that jazz, my newly found genre, would make him tolerant of my music. ("At least it's not that Boy-Niece woman," he would say.)

If we do fight, my mom will generally solve the problem. She will fight with us for perhaps a short while until we all decide to compromise. This is achieved by listening to something we all hate, namely "After Hours" with Glen Hollis or classical music composed by people I have never heard of with names like the German "Von Stragunbergenweihenheimer" or names that will take every amount of my concentration to pronounce, so I make an attempt and it comes out sounding like "Susususususus."

Why don't we just turn off the music and have a meaningful conversation? My family avoids meaningful conversations. We need the music to distract us from asking things that could lead to the "Birds and the Bees" talk. This conversation was once attempted and my parents learned never to discuss that with me again. Not only because I plugged my ears and sang the first song that came to my head (coincidentally "The Birds and the Bees" by Jewel Akens), but also because I tried



Sarah Drabkin

The frightening view of the road from directly behind the wheel. to pull a fast one on them later by telling them I was pregnant. Don't do this. It's not funny.

I may not be very "respectful" to my parents, but I do like to respect the speed limit. It's something that appeals to me probably because it's safer, legal, and really annoys people like my dad, who treat speed limits as recommendations rather than the law. If I am driving on the Fairfax County Parkway, my father will notice that I am only going 49 mph. Furious, he will say, "Speed up Liz. Keep up with the flow of traffic." So I sped up 1 mph.

"Liz, you're falling behind," he says, literally one microsecond after I have reached 50 mph.

"Dad," I say, "I'm going exactly the speed limit."

He replies furiously, "Nobody goes the speed limit on the parkway. Go 60, at least." So I slow down.

I am beginning to hate driving with my parents. Maybe it's that I cop an attitude when I'm driving because I don't want to be responsible for killing anyone. Maybe it's that my dad tells me to "go" while I am

waiting to make a left turn and I am distracted by changing the radio and when I hear him say "go," I do what the word *means*, when, in all actuality, what he means by his version of "go" is not doing what I did, which is look at the green light in front of me and "go," which inevitably led me into a flow of traffic from the opposite direction.

My mistake: Going. The light should have a left green arrow in order for me to legally make that left turn into oncoming traffic, not a green circle. My dad's mistake: He should have said "If you turn to the left now you will crush us into the pavement," instead of "go."

If you do not yet have your permit, please be warned, it is not enjoyable. You are not cool when you have your parents sitting next to you controlling the radio. You are not going to have fun with the prospect of death looming every time you put the keys in the ignition. Most importantly, you cannot plug your ears to avoid "the talk," because both hands, at 8:00 and 4:00, must be on the wheel at all times.

March		National Peanut Month		April		National Humor Month	
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	
15 Everything You Think is Wrong Day Boys Lacrosse@Centreville 7:15	16 National Bubble Week and Crochet Week ST. PATRICK'S DAY	17 Girls Lacrosse @Oakton 7:15	18 Supreme Sacrifice day	19 Poultry Day Boys Lacrosse@WS 7:15	20 Extraterrestrial Abductions Day Crew@Ocoquan 9:00	21 Flower Day	
22 National Goof Off Day	23 Toast Day	24 Chocolate Covered Raisin Day Baseball@WS 5:00	25 Waffle Day Boys Lacrosse@Stuart 7:15	26 Make Up Your Own Holiday Day Baseball@WS 6:00	27 National "Who" Day Crew@Ocoquan 9:00	28 Something on a Stick Day	
29 Smoke and Mirrors Day Boys Lacrosse @WS 7:15	30 Take a Walk in the Park Day	31 National Clam on the Half Shell Day	1 April Fool's Day Baseball@WS 6:00	2 National Peanut Butter and Jelly Day	3 Find A Rainbow Day Crew@St. Andrews 9:00	4 Hug a Newsmen Day	
5 Rubber Eraser Day	6 Daylight Savings Time	7 World Health Day	8 Draw a Picture of a Bird Day	9 Winston Churchill Day	10 First Day of Spring Crew@Ocoquan 9:00	11 Eight Track tape Day and Babershop Quartet Day	