



The

# ORACLE

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West Springfield High School 6100 Rolling Road Springfield, Virginia 22152

## Aiken moves on to South County HS

By Adam Rosen  
Oracle Editor

Brenda Aiken will not be walking down the hallways and enforcing rules anymore at WS, but at South County. Along with working at a new school she will be undertaking a new position: Vice Principal. She has been administrator for the class of 2005 for three years.

"At first it bothered me to not see my seniors graduate," said Aiken. "But it's a tremendous career development piece for me."

At South County she will be working with Dale Rumberger. This is the second school Rumberger has opened. He was the former principal of Westfield.

"I'm real sad to see Mrs. Aiken go, because she was such a great administrator," said senior John Keiran.

South County is opening in 2005 and could affect students from Thomas Edison, Hayfield, Robert E. Lee and Lake Braddock. South County has not been officially named yet.

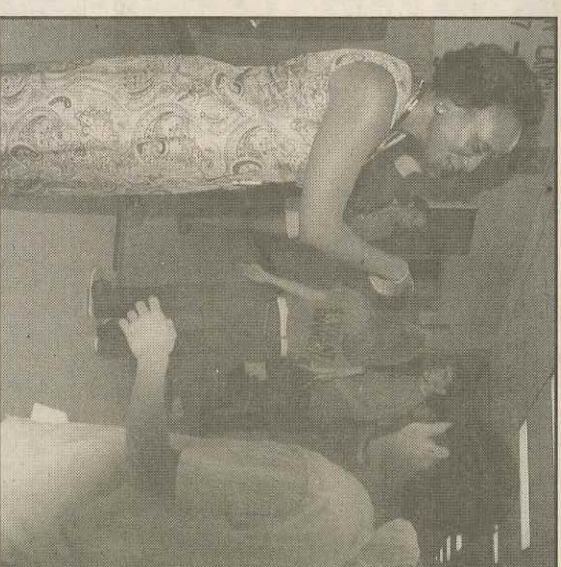
There is no mascot name as of right now. It is located in Lorton, VA. South County will be a secondary school, meaning middle and high school students will attend.

As Vice Principal Aiken will have a closer connection to the principal and will be more involved in the decision process.

"I'm very excited, I already sense the energy," said Aiken. "The energy level is already at the ceiling charged up."

Aiken described WS as being a, "caring community," especially when she was diagnosed with cancer.

"There was an out-pour of love," said Aiken. "It was a tremendous eye opener."



Oracle File Photo

Brenda Aiken starts a new job in South County HS.

## Freshman orient themselves to WS

By Jon Nylan  
Oracle Editor

Hundreds of freshman crammed into the WS auditorium and silently watched in awe as Personality and Pizzazz sang across the stage, but when it was time for the informational portion of freshman orientation, noisy chatter filled the air.

After several pleas from Dr. David Smith, the freshman class finally stopped talking and started listening to various speakers, many of which echoed each other in telling the freshman to get involved in school activities.

"They kept on saying get involved. Like every speaker said it, it was really repetitive," said Freshman Anisha Rihwani.

Freshman Football, Cheerleading, Volleyball, Cross Country and Marching Band members were asked to stand, and were applauded for their activities, however, a few miscreants who were not involved in any activities stood up to be recognized, and Dr. Smith challenged those few specifically to get involved in activities. Richard Griffin, assistant principal of the freshman class, encouraged students to have self control and discipline, and advised freshman to keep their grades up.



Sarah Drabkin

Students roam the halls at freshman orientation.

## Juniors face conundrum choosing between AP or regular

By Libby Bursley  
Viewpoint Editor

When students at WS reach their junior year, they are faced with a major decision about their upcoming English class. Unlike the past two years of English, there is no honors class available. The two classes offered are regular English 11 and composition.

This choice is sometimes a difficult one. Students are torn between a class that may be too easy, and one that might be too much work.

AP students have to read two books, *A Walk in the Woods* by Bill Bryson, and *The Color of Water* by James McBride.

These two books will be worked into the curriculum of the class later in the year, and students will have to prove

they read the books by participating in a timed writing.

Meanwhile, the students in English 11 picked one book out of a choice of four. In September, they will discuss the book with their class and assess it. Neither class distinguishes itself in terms of difficulty of summer reading.

Senior Bryan Lees, who took AP Language last year, said, "The change from honors to AP was not difficult for me personally. There is a lot more reading, analysis, etc. and the work load is larger. There is a greater responsibility placed on you as a student."

A higher percentage of Juniors than last year seem to think that they should go into the AP class.

This is proven by the fact that since they would usually take honors, some students are just going with the more

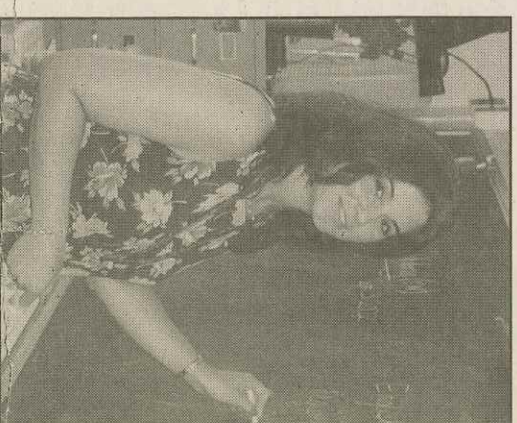
challenging class, just as if there was only honors and regular English. Whether they can accomplish their goals in this course will remain to be seen.

It takes motivation and work. Some students might view the fact that there are no honors classes as unfair, but that is the reality.

Said Lee, "I wouldn't use the word fair. Any change into an AP class takes a quarter to adjust to."

Just think of the AP class as an honors class with a little more pressure on you to do well.

"Lots of kids get discouraged because for first quarter they may get a C or B instead of a B or A-. But as you become accustomed to the new work load and challenges, your grade will reflect it."



Oracle File Photo

English teacher Meredith Rocketfeller is teaching AP Lang this year as a result of high enrollment.



New American Idol



Theatre at University Mall



Summer Pranks



# Celebrities push politics

By Sarah Drabkin

Photo Editor

P. Diddy says it's cool, so it must be. That's right, voting is cool.

And if you not a fan of P. Diddy that's okay because a list of other top celebrities and television networks agree.

MTV has attempted to make voting cool for years through the Rock the Vote Campaign, started in 1990. Through colorful commercials, lively concerts and street teams (groups of youth who help voters register in selected cities). Rock the Vote has in its own words tried to "harness cutting-edge trends and pop culture to make political participation cool."

Since its beginning, Rock the Vote inspired youth more and more to see the advantage, necessity and duty that is voting.

Undaunted by the simple fact that "In 2000, only 42% of 18-24 year old citizens voted," according to The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement, MTV trudged on creating a new campaign that promotes 20 million loud in the 2004 presidential election.

The "Choose or Lose" campaign is another attempt by MTV to increase young voter participation. This year they have gone to great lengths to push

## Editorial

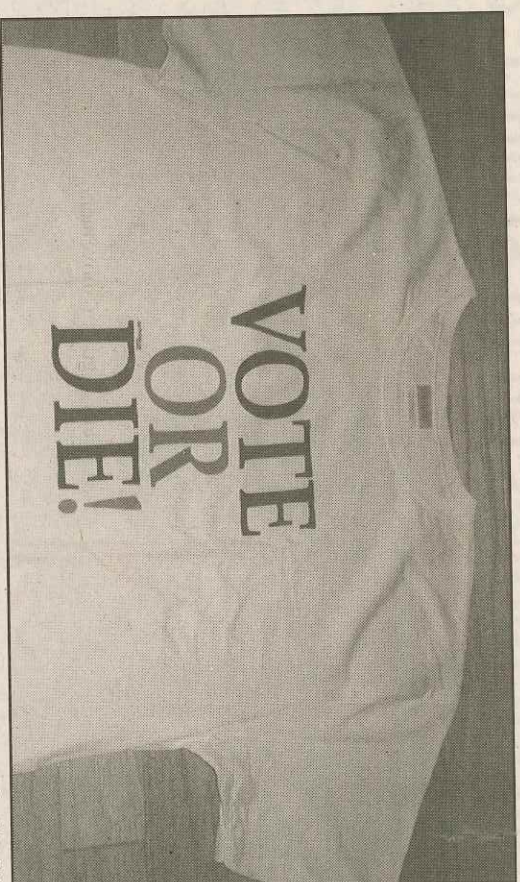
both politicians platforms into the eyes of their viewers.

Celebrities have been pushing their political ideals on the entire population for years, but this year has made the difference. Voting has become fashionable. Voting has become the new fad because voting is now glamorized on t-shirts and become new not only for young people but for celebrities themselves.

P. Diddy and other rap artists including Queen Latifah, Missy Elliot, and Fifty Cent have lately been sporting t-shirts saying, "Vote or Die!" Andre 3000 from the rap group Outkast has announced that he has never before voted but plans to this year.

At the VMA's both Kerry and Bush's daughters declared that voting is a must no matter their political affiliation. Some say that it is simply the fever of the campaigns and the urgency by both sides that this will be an election remembered.

is important when they are directly affected. In November the nation will find out whether voting was cool enough to persuade the younger generation to vote. Many say that this election could curtail the best voter participation for the 18-30 year old age group in years. If so, the results could be dramatic.



The shirt that P. Diddy and other celebrities wear to encourage young voters.

## Kings Dominion Law denies AP students equal exam review

By Katie Bourget

Managing Editor

"Hold on tight and enjoy your ride" is the cheerful advice delivered by Paramount's Kings Dominion theme park employees before anxious thrill-seekers embark on roller coaster adventure. The advice also applies to high school students in Northern Virginia who are strongly encouraged to take a rigorous schedule filled with AP classes but given two weeks less to prepare for the exam than their peers across the U.S.

In Virginia, a state law was passed in 1986 that requires school districts that wish to start school before Labor Day to receive a special waiver. The law is commonly referred to as the "Kings Dominion Law" because the theme park has given frequent and generous donations to Virginia politicians' campaigns. The monetary hand-

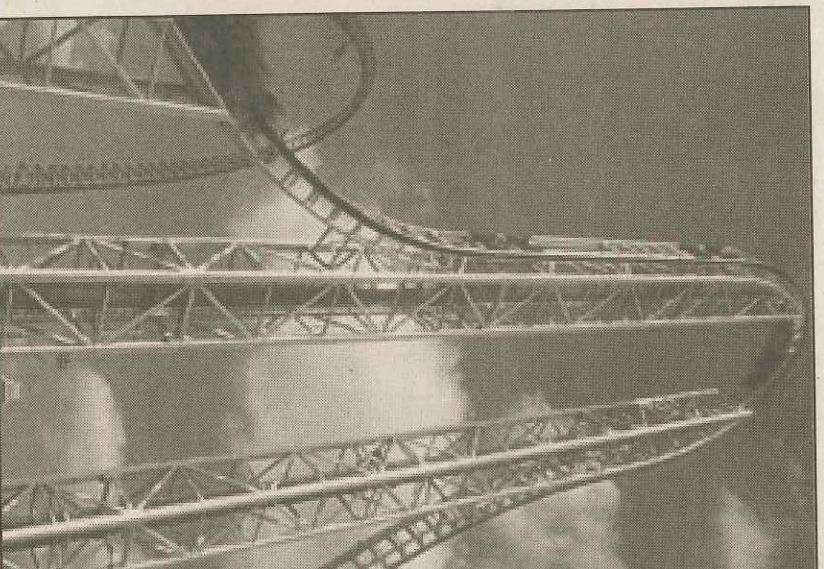
**"The way I see it, if school started earlier, Labor Day might actually seem like a holiday..."**

outs initially help to establish the law, and today they keep the rule alive.

Richard Saslaw, a Democratic representative from Fairfax and a member of the Virginia Senate Education

**Kings Dominion contributes money to promote the Kings Dominion Law, which enables students to ride thrill rides, but delays the start of AP classes.**

and Health Committee was given a \$4,500 contribution for his 2000 election campaign from Kings Dominion. A delayed opening for schools is beneficial to the park and others in the tourism industry because they



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## Marching band plays it cool Songs bring swing to the bleachers

By Katie Costello

Features Editor

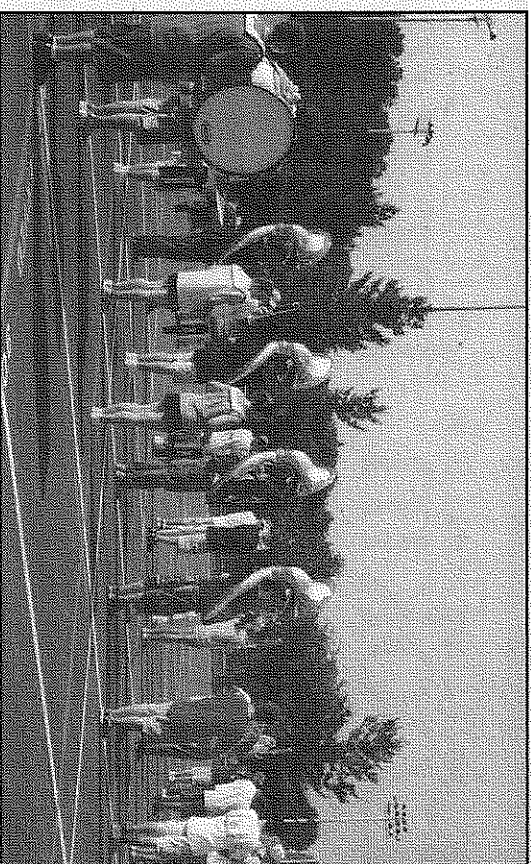
"Play it cool boy, real cool." This is great advice from Ice, a character in "West Side Story", from which this season's music is based upon for WS marching band. The band is doing just that as they prepare quite a show. They are playing everything from love songs to swing, it's sure to keep students at the edge of bleacher seats at this season's football games.

"West Side Story" is a Romeo and Juliet tale set in New York City. Two gangs, the Jets and the Sharks have a bitter rivalry between each other. The Jets' leader, Tony, falls in love with Maria, the sister of the Sharks' leader, Bernardo. Sadly the story ends the same way Romeo and Juliet does, but the amazing musical numbers throughout the 1961 film lighten the mood of the movie significantly.

The marching band this year is bringing those songs to life here at WS. From the bleachers all we see is an amazing show, but few know how much hard work and dedication is required to produce it.

Marching band camp often times seems to resemble a military boot camp. It includes long hours that start three weeks before school begins, sometimes even ten-hour days. The students begin with exercises and a run (in step!) around the school. Then the real work begins.

The day is spent staying in rhythm with the drum major's hands. Keeping the tempo is a must. Everyone is required to keep up, and if you attend the rehearsals you are bound to hear "Let's move!" and "You guys are a statue!" Moving a muscle is at their own risk, as they are required to stand *completely* still for as long as they are told to do so. Attentive eyes scan the marchers for any signs of movement.



Sarah Drabkin

**Marchers practice for their show, "West Side Story," in the senior parking lot.** "Socially, you meet a lot of new people and make a lot of great friends, and it improves you as a person, too," said Sophomore Elizabeth Waring, a second year marcher. "It teaches you discipline and control."

Slowly and diligently the marching band has been piecing together the makings of a great "West Side Story" show. "The show is really coming together," said sophomore Kelsie Snyder, slightly out of breath after just returning from a taxing rehearsal. "It's going to be great."

Despite the disagreements between the Sharks and the Jets, they would both have to agree on this: The West Springfield marching band is practicing hard to impress the football fans at halftime.

## A new year of clubs brings new opportunities for involvement

By Josh Lipman

News Editor

WS allows students to get involved with their school in a variety of ways. To get involved students have to pick groups, find time in their schedules, and find out where their clubs are meeting. There are



File Photo  
Sophomore Paul Cohn practices his skills during Juggler's Club after school.

clubs for almost everyone and a full list of clubs to join can be found in the school's main office.

Students interested in computers can join The Computer Club, which is co-sponsored by Ellen Dubin and Barbara Martin. Last year students in the computer club engaged in a variety of activities, such as participating in a Thinkquest competition, which is an international website building contest.

The computer club teaches students how to use computer techniques that they would not normally learn in classes.

"We've done some work on how to do a Powerpoint presentation and how to do digital movies," said Dubin. "We'll probably do that again."

Additionally, the school supports academic clubs such as the Bibliophiles and the forensics and debate teams.

Bibliophiles is a club where book lovers can get together and discuss books they have read.

"The only things we're going to have are welcome meetings and book discussions," said Carol Dandy, one of the club's sponsors. "We always have a good number of freshmen who join but it's not a big number because a lot of them don't feel like they can take on any more reading than their courses require."

The forensics and debate teams are for people who enjoy public speaking and litigating. These teams offer students many opportunities. For example, they

let students earn a letter in their freshmen year. Last year two freshmen won state debate medals and one went to the national tournament in Philadelphia.

**"If anyone's interested in joining the forensics and debate teams they should come out right away. [Students] can meet a lot of kids...we have a very diverse group on our team. It also improves their skills to be more successful in their high school courses."**

—Mary Love Wynne

"[Students] can meet a lot of kids...we have a very diverse group on our team," said forensics team sponsor MaryLove Wynne. "It also improves their skills to be more successful in their high school courses."

All of these clubs are open to all students and sponsors are eager for new members.

"If anyone's interested in joining the forensics and debate teams," said Wynne, "they should come out right away."

## Guidance Department lends helping hand to seniors

By Christian Romeo

Senior Staff Writer

For students at WS, school is stressful enough as it is.

They have to be here at seven-thirty in the morning, five days a week (unless school is canceled for rain), and then they have to deal with the school's unique climate, annoying pep rallies, lockers inhabited by malevolent spirits, and avoid anyone who might throw them into a trash can.

In the midst of all this, a guidance counselor's office is a safe haven. Unless of course, their guidance counselor vanishes suddenly during the summer, as it happened to hundreds of returning students this year, leaving them stranded.

Guidance counselors play an important role in every high school student's life.

They can change a student's schedule, aid a student with their problems at home and at school, and perhaps most importantly, they can help students get into college with their letter of recommendation.

Although there is no standard format for the counselor's letter of recommendation, counselors rely on their past relationship with the student and also draw upon information from the college planning packet students complete in their junior year to help them write the perfect letter.

"It won't be hard for students to get letters of recommendation," said Ken Christopher. "Students just need to be assertive and get to know their new counselors. It's like getting to know a new teacher."

With such authority, it is understandable that students may be unhappy at the disappearance of their counselor, but other students disagree.

"I'm kind of glad my counselor left," said senior Andre Cianor. "But your counselor needs to know you senior year to write your recommendation."

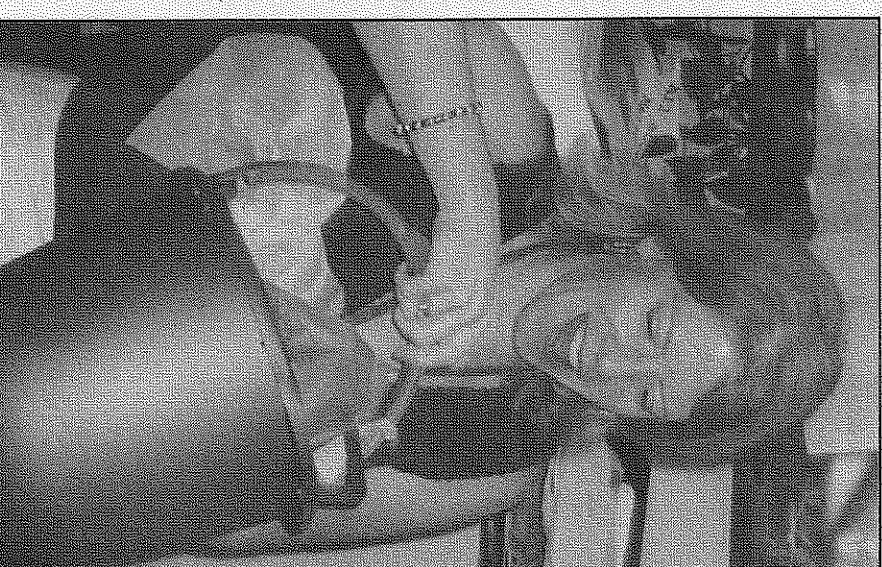
**"It won't be hard for students to get letters of recommendation. Students just need to be assertive and get to know their new counselors. It's like getting to know a new teacher."**

—Ken Christopher

Junior, Michelle Joy found out she had a new counselor a month after her old one left.

"It bugs me that he left without even telling me," Michelle said.

While it is may be inconvenient for students to try to connect with their new counselors, especially for seniors, some do not feel that having a new counselor will hurt their recommendation. "I don't think it will really affect me," said Kim. "It won't be hard to get to know my new counselor."



Sarah Drabkin

Jennifer Reynolds receives a basket made for her by the senior class, which made baskets for all the new counselors who came to WS this year.



# Lookin' for work

The adventure often is more fun than landing an actual job

By Catherine Rupp  
Special to The Oracle

I like many of my enthusiastic peers, was in the market for a summer job at the end of the school year. I wasn't interested in tying up a Bagel Bakery apron or basking in the sun as a guarder of lives.

So I went on an adventure with a good pal of mine in search of an occupation that would probably not be the choice of a white, young (and single) woman.

"I think that there are a lot of stereotypes that go along with certain jobs, so that's sort of like a limit on where kids want to work," said my good pal, senior Evan Dalrymple.

After finding little success at the Dunkin' Donuts and Barbeques Galore, I drove over to Springfield Mall and stepped into Fancy World. I wondered if it could be possible to break the racial labels associated with this Asian-dominated store. After asking for an application, I was directed to the information desk, where a list of openings for any store in Springfield Mall was located. Unfortunately, I was not qualified to be a bridal consultant or a nail technician, so away I went, empty-handed.

But not everyone around here is interested in working at the Mall. "If I were to get a job [at Springfield Mall]," said sophomore Alesha Bell, "I'd want to be someplace I felt safe and actually liked working. The Mall would be a last resort for me."

Next stop: Safeway. This equal opportunity employer informed me that my job

chances were limited by one pesky detail—my age. Being 17, I would not be able to hold such positions as cashier, butcher, or general manager. But that did not deter me! I had not "been convicted of a crime within the last seven years." (Although if I lived in Hawaii I would not have to "respond to the question at this time.") And I have never been fired from a job. Perhaps this is because I have never technically had a job, but that is beside the point.

"One of the hardest things about being hired for the first time is not having any past work experience. I'm not sure how great that looks to the employers, but



Sarah Draklin

Although senior Catherine Rupp went in search of an exotic—or at least out-of-the-ordinary—job, some students prefer the predictability of "normal" employment. Senior Ashley Linder and junior Jennifer Gorham are Rolling Hills lifeguards; junior Michael Cooper works behind the counter at the Chesapeake Bagel Bakery on Old Keene Mill.

Our founder, Colonel Harland Sanders, knew that treating people right was the key to running great restaurants. That's a tradition that we are proud to continue today through the Customer Maniacs that work in every KFC store. They are the people who put our customers first and keep them coming back.

And a great Customer Maniac's energy and enthusiasm gets noticed by everyone in the restaurant including your co-workers. So when you do a great job, you'll get the recognition and rewards that you deserve!

When you work at KFC, you're part of our CH.A.M.P.S. team — a team of five Customer Maniacs who are committed to an all-out effort to exceed customer expectations.

CH.A.M.P.S. is the smile on our face, the cheer in our voice and the YES attitude to 66 million. It takes to make our customers happy.

**CH.A.M.P.S.**

**Cleanliness**  
The best environment for you and our customers.

**Hospitality**  
Friendly, courteous service keeps customers coming back.

**Accuracy**  
Making sure customers get exactly what they ordered.

**Maintenance**  
Well-maintained facilities keep us looking and feeling good.

**Product Quality**  
The same dining experience you expect when you eat out.

**Speed with Service**  
Food delivered hot, fast, and fast makes KFC's customers happy.

**APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT**

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

PERSONAL INFORMATION

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EDUCATION

HIGHEST GRADE OF SCHOOL ATTENDED: \_\_\_\_\_

RECORD OF U.S.A. MILITARY AND RESERVE SERVICE

DATE OF ENTRY INTO U.S.A. MILITARY SERVICE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF ENTRY INTO U.S.A. RESERVE SERVICE: \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT SCHOOLS HAVE YOU ATTENDED?

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO AT KFC?

Full Time  Part Time  Desired Wage/Salary: \_\_\_\_\_ Per Hour  Annually

How did you find out about KFC? \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMPLOYER'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

you've got to start somewhere," said WS grad Heather Sikes.

My last stop was at the business formerly known as Kentucky Fried Chicken. The possibility that I could rise to be a Customer Maniac ("a person with energy, talent, and a desire to make valuable team contributions in a fast-paced and fun environment") just blew my mind. Heck, I could even obtain medical insurance or a savings plan, not to mention a few friends and fun.

It's not for everyone, though. "I would never work at a fast-food place," said junior Dan Jones. "Honestly, I don't think I've seen a non-foreign person work there."

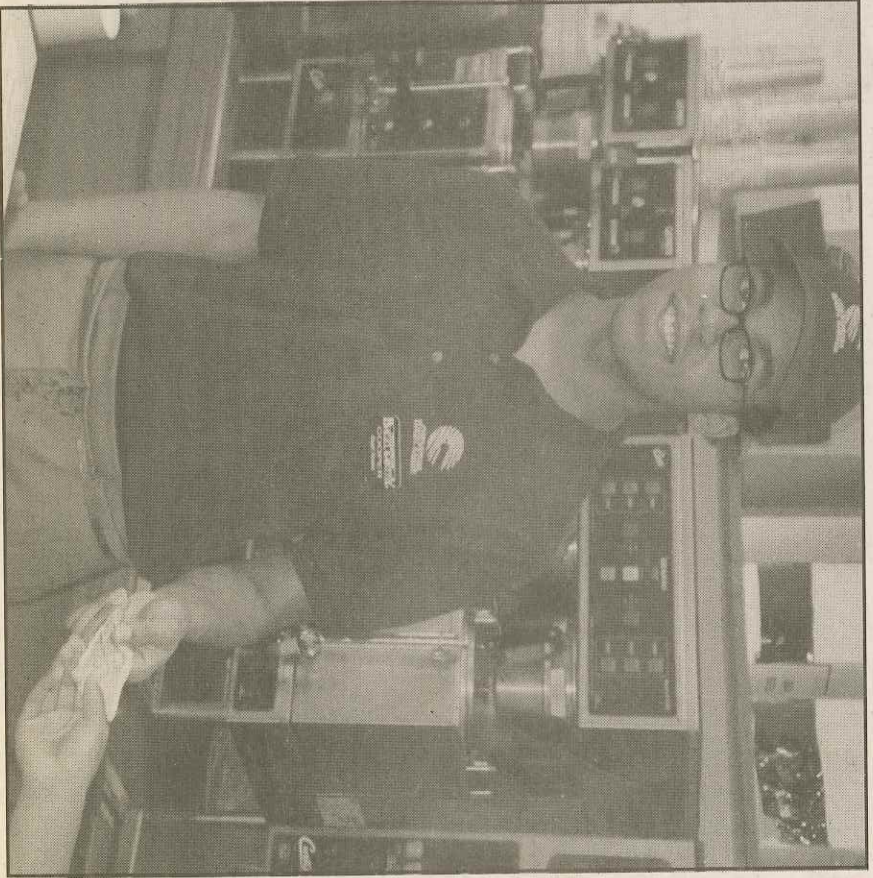
Jones brings up a good point. According to Northeastern University's Center for Labor Market Statistics, there have been more than 2 million immigrants filling jobs in the last couple of years that traditionally would have gone to teens. Part of the

reason for this, though, is that many teens refuse to work at fast-food joints.

Back to my quest. A couple of hours and a quarter-tank of gas later, I had discovered a vital fact when it comes to the job search process: The phrase "Why don't you come back tomorrow?" equates to "Why are you asking? Please leave because we would clearly never hire you." But really, a lot can be learned by just getting out into the field.

"One of the most important things a teenager can do when looking for a job is have a resume," said Career Center Specialist Susan Rexford. "Also, dress appropriately and be polite."

So, if you need a little cash, don't limit yourself to a certain field because you never know what experience you'll gain. Even though 7-11 might not be your dream career, at least you'll be able to have as many free Slurpees as your heart desires.



My last stop was at the business formerly known as Kentucky Fried Chicken. The possibility that I could rise to be a Customer Maniac ("a person with energy, talent, and a desire to make valuable team contributions in a fast-paced and fun environment") just blew my mind. Heck, I could even obtain medical insurance or a savings plan.



# Sounds of summer fill the DC metropolitan area

By Lindsay Smith

Senior Staff Writer

Summer is a fun, carefree time, and there's no better way to spend a hot summer night than by going to a concert.

Dave Matthews Band, Usher, 311, and Maroon 5 are just some of the music industry's hottest artists that made their way to D.C. this summer to entertain their loyal fans. While artists like Usher performed inside at the MCI Center, other concert events, such as the Warped Tour, were held outdoors so that the audience could enjoy both the music and the humid night air that is so common to this area during the summer.

An especially popular concert event was the Warped Tour, an outside concert that featured numerous punk bands that came to the D.C. area in early August. The concert lasted all day, and audience members could go to different stages to watch bands perform.

"The Warped Tour was awesome," said senior Brian Tweed. "It was cool to be able to go around and see different bands perform."

For the fans of country music, Kenny Chesney and Rascal Flatts were popular concerts that attracted many people and whose tickets were quickly sold out.

## 'American Idol' comes to our area

By Carlin Sherrill

Features Editor

Another season of "American Idol" is coming to Fox this fall, but this is different from all the previous ones. This "American Idol" held auditions in Washington, DC. More than 9,500 people showed up to show off their singing skills to Paula, Randy, and Simon.

The auditions in DC were held in early August. Many "destined" individuals camped outside the Convention Center just so they could get a number and sing for the judges.

The crowd of singers intimidated many of the inspiring singers, whether they could all sing well or not.

## 'The OC' must learn to share the spotlight

### The hit show on Fox is moved to the prime-time spot of Thursday night at eight

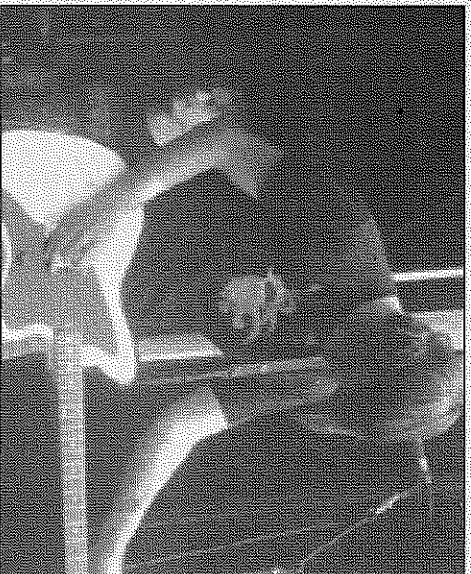
By Jenny Taylor

Entertainment Editor

When the second quarter starts up this year, so will the second season of one of Fox's most popular shows ever: "The O.C." After a six month break between seasons, Ryan, Marissa, Seth, and Summer will return to feed the addiction of millions of fans. However, "The O.C." will have some tough competition this season since Fox has moved it to the premiere time slot of Thursday night at eight p.m.

The rich teens from California will have to fight with the "Friends" spin-off "Joey" and the reality hit "Survivor" for viewers. In an attempt to attract a bigger audience this November, "The O.C." creators are promising that couples will be broken up and old characters may return to the show. Despite these new promises, "The O.C." is sure to draw millions of old fans back for a second time around.

Many people who have never seen "The O.C." cannot understand why it has become such a phenomenon, but to

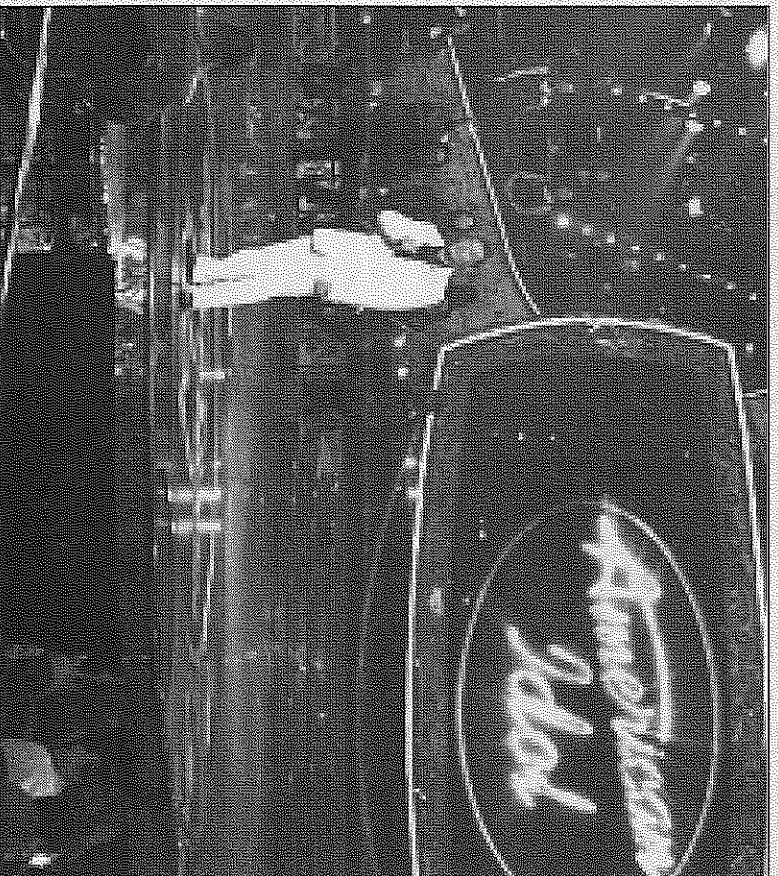


Finch guitarist performs on stage at Warped Tour.

"My friends and I went to the [Kenny Chesney and Rascal Flatts] concert," said junior Lauren Stokowski. "We all got matching cowboy hats to wear and decorated my car. The concert was so good!"

Another popular concert at which many WS students could be found was the Dave Matthews Band concert, held at Nissan Pavilion.

"I'd been wanting to go to a Dave Matthews concert since my freshman year, and the concert was so



Ryan Seacrest introduces the next potential "American Idol" during season three.

amazing that the wait was definitely worth it," said senior Meghan Coffey. Concerts are generally popular events, but the carefree summer atmosphere draws in more crowds than ever. Even if students were unable to attend a concert this summer, they could still relax, pull out a beach chair, and listen to the radio outside for the same effect...well, almost.



Usher was one of the various artists who performed in the DC area this summer.

"My friend Liz auditioned for this years show. It's cool they are finally in our area," said senior Jackie Wilson.

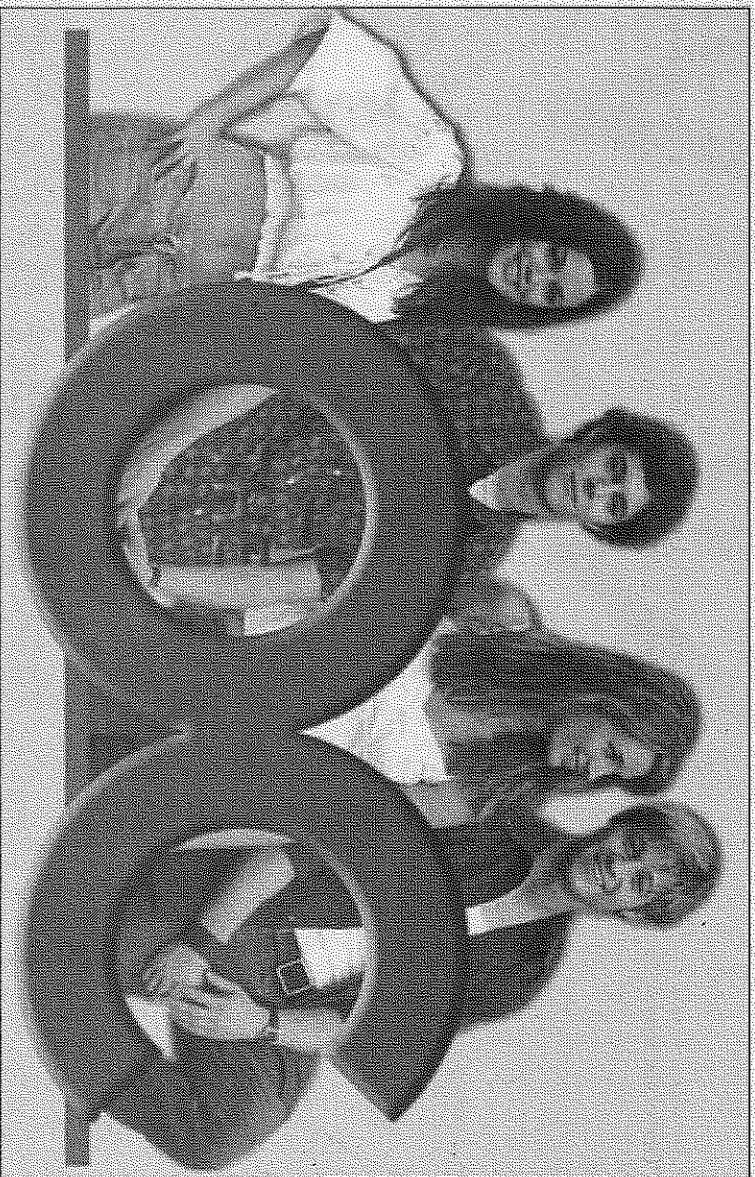
In the first season of auditions in Washington, only 117 singers made it to the third round of the show. The hopefuls that did not make it were devastated. Many of them came out of the audition room in tears saying how Simon was so rude and had no reason to say that the hurtful things he said.

**"... It's cool they are finally in our area."**

—Jackie Wilson, Senior

"I don't like watching 'American Idol', but I do like that Simon guy," said sophomore Lauren Stephenson.

Many people in the Washington area are anxious to see how our locals did at the auditions and if they go on to the show. This "American Idol" season is scheduled to be aired sometime this coming fall.



The second season of "The OC" will mean the return of Seth, Marissa, Ryan, and Summer every Thursday night at eight.

those who anticipate its arrival every week, "The O.C." provides unparalleled entertainment.

"I think "The O.C." is so popular, because its addictive," said sophomore Allison Campbell. "Although some parts of the show may seem exaggerated and unreal, I think it appeals to some real life situations that teens encounter."

This teen soap does provide many situations that high school students seem to encounter, from teen pregnancy and substance abuse to cheating boyfriend and tough breakups. The show also creates a dream world that adolescents long

to be a part of where kids are filthy rich, parents are rarely home, and the fun times are endless.

Despite the cruel conditions of "Survivor" and the funny one-liners from "Joey", "The O.C." appears to be unstoppable. It is up to date with the latest fashion trends, music, and technology. The show's writers never quite run out of ridiculously dramatic situations to put our four favorite teens in.

"The show is great," Allison Campbell said. "As long as it still has all the drama, I'll be happy to watch!"



## College-bound seniors set out to find their collegiate destination

By Tim O'Keefe  
Sports Editor

On the brink of WS student's junior and senior years, college is just around the corner. The summer and weekends provide good opportunities to visit potential colleges.

Senior Brian Tweed took full advantage. He visited six colleges over the summer and weekends, including Roanoke, Longwood, Radford, Christopher Newport, and Virginia Tech. Tweed hopes to play soccer at the next level in college.

"It was great to check out the colleges," said Tweed. "Right now I liked Radford, Virginia Tech, and Longwood the best."

Another opportunity for high school students is to stay with a friend on campus. Junior Graham Shellenberger spent his last spring break with a friend at UVA. His friend was In ROTC, so Schellenberger woke up with him at 5:00 am every morning.

"Staying at UVA was a great time," said Shellenberger. "I really got a feel for what student life is like on campus."

Although summer provides the best opportunity for students to visit, it does have its downsides. Senior John Keiran visited James Madison University over the summer.

"I could not get the feel of what the students were like," said Keiran. "That was a little disappointing."

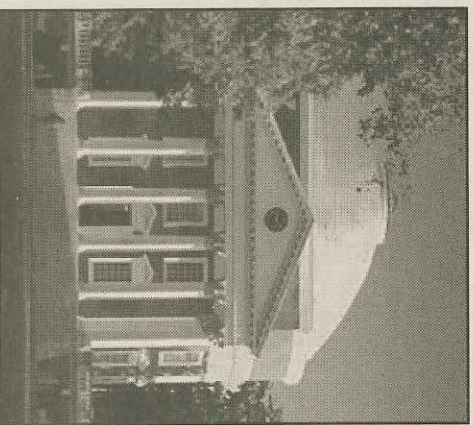
There career center organizes college visits and information on desired

colleges. Also some websites, like [www.campusdirt.com](http://www.campusdirt.com), offer good ways to research and compare different colleges. Campusdirt.com specifically compares various universities based on 15 different categories, from social life to food.

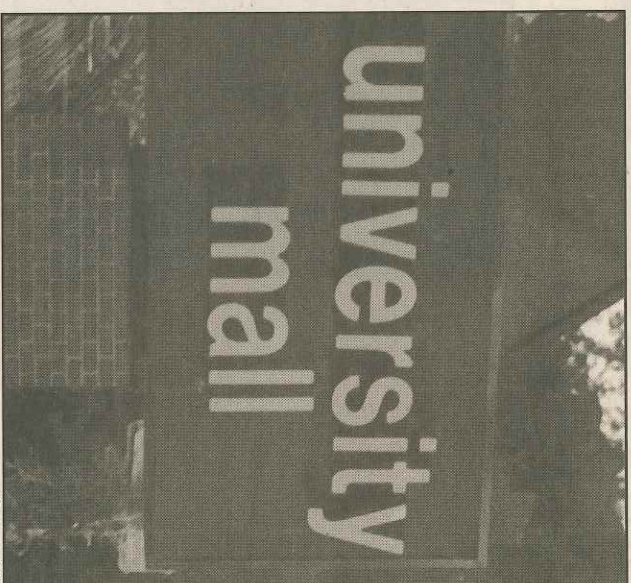
Parents also play a role in the college search. Their pushing to go on visits is a key to visiting as many as possible. According to the Washington Post, parents sometimes push too hard.

"80 percent of questions I asked were answered by the parents," said Georgetown University tour guide Georgia summer on [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com).

"My parents definitely wanted me to go on these visits," said Tweed. "It's real important to them."



The rotunda at the University of Virginia is a tourist attraction for potential students on college visits.



University mall is the home of University Theatres where it is not necessary to empty your wallet to see a movie.

## A movie alternative worth the wait

By: Chrissy Regelski  
Weekend Assistant

Usually by the time a jobless teenager is able to scrape up enough time and money to go see a movie (and maybe even afford some M&Ms), the film is no longer playing in the theater. You end up having to wait another six months for it to come out on DVD and, by that time, you forgot you ever wanted to see it in the first place.

When high school students do manage to make it into those stained and gum covered chairs for two hours of (occasional) quality entertainment, the cinemas at Springfield

Mall have undoubtedly been one of the most popular places to go. Preferred by some, because of its close distance, Springfield usually gets a lot of business, but lately, the cinemas' prices have been rising and their featured movies are being played for an even shorter period of time.

That is why University Mall Theatre, located in Fairfax along Braddock Road, has become increasingly more popular. Complete with a spacey carpet and \$1 popcorn, *Sarah Drabkin* University plays movies that have recently left the other mainstream theaters, like "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban" and "Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy" so you get a chance to see what you thought you missed. Also unique to University, there is a special showing of "The Rocky Horror Picture Show" at midnight every Saturday.

You have to wait longer to see a movie but University only charges \$4 (\$2 on Tuesday's) compared to Springfield's \$6.50. "I like University better than Springfield because it's cheaper and it's not scary," said sophomore Caroline Nicholson. So is paying less worth the wait? To sophomore Ben Trump, it is. "It's okay that the movies are older," said Trump, "because it's cheaper."

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# Cross Country team runs through the daylight

By Sunnie Ko  
Sports Editor

Before the sun is completely over the sky, the runners of Cross Country are still rubbing the shock of morning out of their eyes.

"When I first get up, I just want to go back to sleep," said sophomore Trisha Friederich. "But once I get to practice, I wake up and I actually feel great after running."

While waiting for a few delayed runners to arrive, the team huddle in packs, which is how they can be described in its entirety: a pack.

"We are a closer team this year compared to last years," said captain Brad Adams. "It's a very good thing said Adams. Along with Adams, junior Kris Benton will also lead the team."

On the girls side, seniors Robbie Nitzberg, Kim Hogan, and Andrea Delgado will take control. With

*"We practice hard as [heck], but we know it'll help out in the end."*

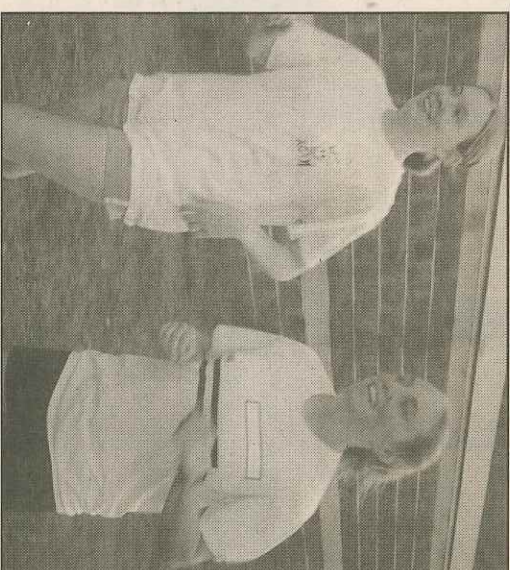
—Andrea Mueller, Junior

their goal still set high to win states, the boys and girls teams are geared up and determined.

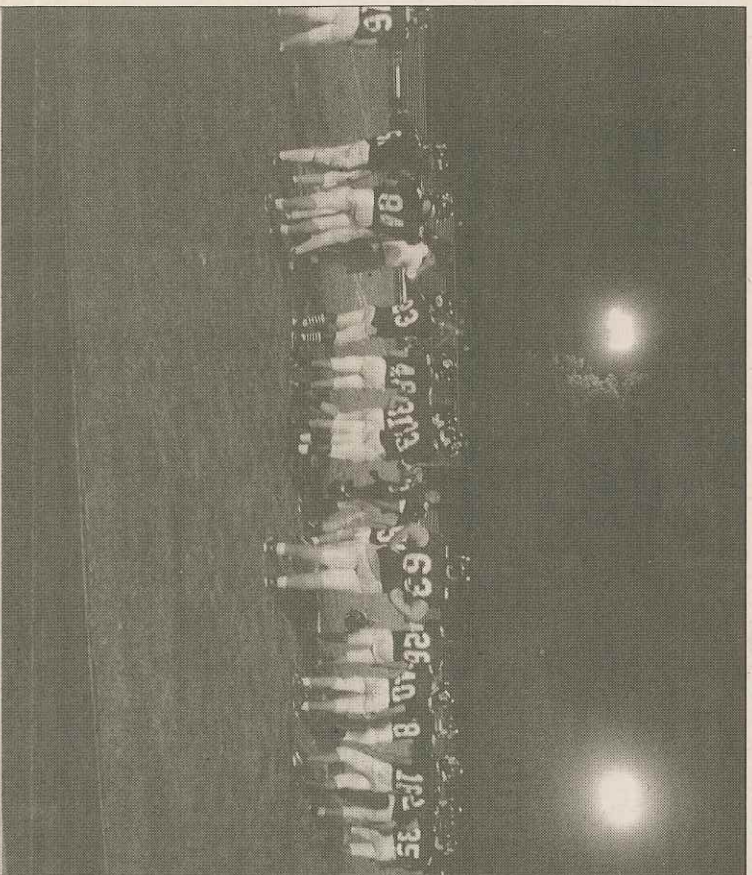
During the summer, both the boys and girls teams headed up to Cacapon, a four day trip for the top 14 runners of each team, where they complete a series of difficult and diverse trails. By taking extra steps towards their training and the potential that the runners hold, spectators should expect great things.

"We practice hard as [heck]," said junior Andrea Mueller. "But we know it'll help out in the end."

With the extra work, dedication and passion of the runners, they hope to get a leg up on the competition.



Sarah Drabkin  
WS cross country runners enjoy their morning run.



Sarah Drabkin  
The WS football team watches on the sideline, waiting to make a difference.

## Spartain pride travels to Florida

WS football team gears up for the season.

Expectations high after months of preparing

By Caitlin Crowley

Senior Staff Writer

With the first football game only days away, the Spartans are training just as hard as ever for what they hope to be their best season yet. After last season's disappointing finish, the team has intensified their off-season workouts.

"We lost a lot of close games last year," said senior Jason Langley. "We

practice and scrimmage against one of the toughest teams in the state. Though they did not win, the team felt that this trip was beneficial and brought them closer together.

"We got exactly what we wanted out if it," said Bill Renner.

The trip was not all sweat and dirt, however. The players got to enjoy some of the amusement parks and a little relaxation as well.

Team dynamic is expected to play a big part in this season as well. Many of the players have been on teams together since elementary school, thus creating a strong bond.

All team members agree that they have the potential to win both districts and playoffs. In the meantime, the team will continue to build strength and endurance as well as lasting friendships and memories.

"The chemistry is great this year and we've been spending more time together as a team," said senior Scott Price.

*"The chemistry is great this year and we've been spending more time together as a team,"*

—Scott Price, senior

felt that they were our mistakes so we're doing our best to correct them."

Along with a rigorous weightlifting program aimed at improving the team, the players took a trip to Florida to

## Volleyball sets up for success

Christina Arai

Managing Editor

While the rest of the school was in a deep summer break slumber, the WS Varsity Volleyball team was working rigorously to perfect their game while setting up for a promising season.

"I think we have more experience [than last year's team]," said Captain Diana Masse, "and we work better as a team."

The beginning of their season has already taken off with success. The Varsity team gained their first victory against Oakton High School with a three game to one triumph in the first game of the season. They also won their second game against Chantilly High School, who they lost against last year.

With that momentum, the team went on to compete in a Labor Day tournament in Richmond that consisted of the top teams in the state. Despite solid performances, they only placed 14 out of 16 teams.

*"Our goal as a team is to win districts."*

—Cameron Mayer, coach

"We played extremely tough considering the schools we played," said Varsity Volleyball head coach Cameron Meyer.

Their placing in the tournament did not reflect the promising potential this year's team has, however.

"This team's better [than last year's team]," said Meyer. "We're more experienced and athletic than last year."

One of the reasons for their substantial improvement is their vigorous practice schedule.

The team practices Monday through Saturday, anywhere from two to three hours each day. That hard effort has certainly paid off.

"Our offense [is very strong]," said junior captain Jessie Mojinengo. "We have a strong middle and outside attack."

The team also has other advantages over the competition other than experience and compatibility.

"We're a good blocking team," said Meyer. "Were the top blocking team in the region and we serve pretty tough, too."

With any luck, the team will be able to triumph over this year's most challenging rivals: Robinson and West Potomac.

Last year the Lady Spartans finished fourth in Districts and lost in the first round of Regionals to Madison High School. This year, however, they beat Madison in an early season scrimmage.

"Our goal as a team is to win districts," said Meyer. "We have a chance to win districts if we keep improving."

Together, with the tremendous talent, flow, and new practice habits of the team, they have hope in achieving their goal.

"We are competing more in practices," said Meyer, "and since I think this is one of the top teams in the region, we play one of the top teams in practice everyday."



Marni Maree  
artist

www.MarniMaree.com  
www.loftGallery.org  
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mmaree@cox.net



Sarah Drabkin  
The WS volleyball team prepares to set up for a spike. The team practices rigorously Monday through Saturday two to three hours a day at WS.



## Hoagie's World Prank or be pranked: The story of my life

Sean Hogan  
Etc. Editor

As we enjoy the last few days of doing nothing substantially difficult at school, we must think back to the wonderful days of summer. What can you think of that can include a can of shaving cream, underwear, makeup and gummy bears? Doing personal hygiene in the bathroom while eating breakfast? No. How about playing dress-up with your candy? Nuh-uh. No, you silly people. I am talking about pranks! They make silly times sillier. They make happy times happier. Pranks make fun times...um...more fun. Pranks really keep the world from spinning in circles (What? It already does?).

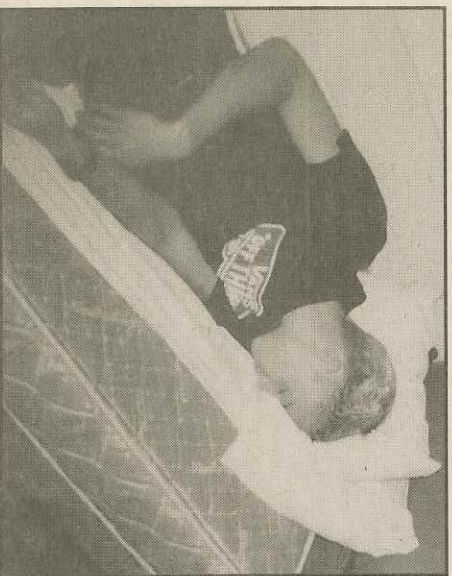
This summer, I both gave and received many pranks, some small, some bigger than Ruben Studdard. I played very small pranks, ones that were easy to clean up and funny. My roommate at church camp played very cruel and inhumane jokes on me. I tried to be as cruel and inhumane back as I could, but for those of you who know me, I'm more of a teddy bear than a grizzly. So I poured 11 multicolored pixie stix in his heavily-gelled hair right before dinner, so he did not have time to wash his hair. Needless to say, I was not bothered by my roommate for the rest of the week.

The whole story has not been told, so we will go back to the night before, when I was sound asleep. My

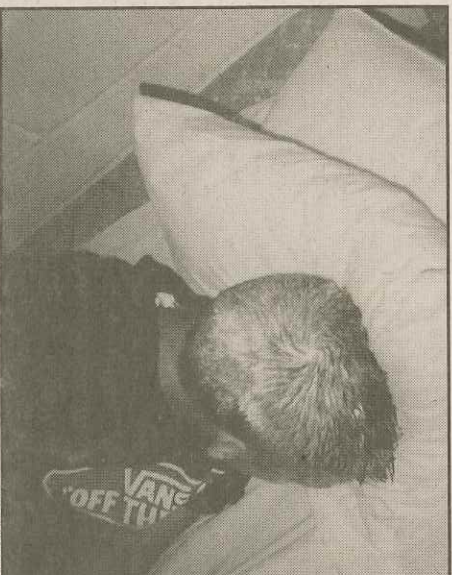
roommate (who will remain nameless, even though his

real name is Jimmy) came in with one of my youth sponsors (who is a surgeon's assistant). They saw that I was asleep so my youth sponsor, "Frankie," brought in a small cup of the blue dye used during surgeries (indicating where to cut), used a medical dropper, and dyed my face. This made me very angry, because I woke up during the process. I jumped out of bed and chased the two culprits away for the time being. I stayed up for another hour or so, and as my roommate had not returned yet, I involuntarily fell asleep again at about 3:45. They returned a few minutes later and repeated the process of painting my face and I woke up again. So, thinking hard, I concocted a plan: Go back to sleep and make Jimmy cringe in the morning. They came back and hit me again, but this time I woke up and chased them into Frankie's room. This ended the madness.

Pranks can be both harmless and very, very cruel. Personally, I like to give them at a level between these two, not harmless like short-sheeting beds, and not cruel, like giving someone ex-lax and then saran-wrapping the toilets. I like doing things along the lines of putting Kool-Aid in the showerheads, which temporarily (for about a day) dyes hair. This story was true, except for the names used, and even this last statement: I lack intelligence when it comes to pranks.



Sean Hogan  
Jimmy learns not to put blue dye Hoagie's face.



Sean Hogan  
Hoagie's fast anger is why Jimmy's hair is covered with Pixie Stix.

## Door Liz's Almanac Liz's Freshman survival guide

Liz Weiderhold

Managing Editor

Welcome, and welcome back, to West Springfield, West S-Field, WS, DubyaEss, Home of the Mighty Spartan. It's great to be back in "The Armpit of Springfield," as I congenially heard it referred to recently. I mean, there is only so long I can sit on a beautiful beach, daydreaming and soaking up the warm sunlight, before I am saying to myself, "Man, I wish I was back in cheap plastic chairs of my poorly ventilated high school learning logarithmic functions!"

But alas, this year is already an improved year than the last. We have many changes within our curriculum as well as within our legal rights that greatly affect our learning environment. For example, according to Health Code Regulations, we students may not eat other people's leftover school food. I know this comes as a hummer to the huge percentage of our student body that ate from other people's forgotten trays. I wish to stress, however, that this is so our school doesn't break out in raging cases of dysentery again.

But the biggest and most noticeable change is the 400 new, nervous students who are roaming our halls that have replaced our persnickety seniors who are finally off doing what they had been whining to do all last year: Namely, drinking beer more often and in larger quantities than before.

This arrival of new freshmen inspired me to write this article informing these "younglings" how to survive the system. No longer will poor freshmen be roaming

the halls at all hours of the night looking for their class. No longer will freshmen wonder: "What's 'The Cave?'" and "Do you think its physically possible to get shoved into my locker, despite the fact that I can only fit four of my books inside of it, right on top of the other, so when I try to get a book out that's holding the rest up, the three other books topple on me and I am late for class because my history book gave me a severe concussion and I am passed out on the floor of the school?"

Fear not, dear freshmen, I am here to help you through it all. I have therefore developed a comprehensive dictionary of WS jargon that may be unfamiliar to you entitled:

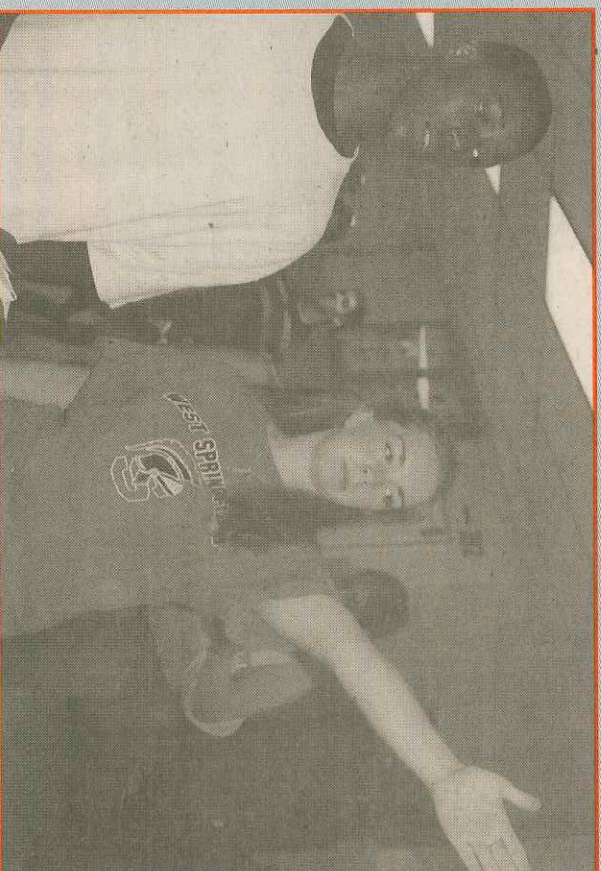
### LIZ'S DICTIONARY OF WS

**Senior Rail:** A staircase actually owned by the United States Government located at Hollywood & Vine. It gets its name from the select seniors, the ones generally around it, acting as a very effective roadblock, and throw things at the underclassmen.

**The Cave:** A place frequented by students who dress in primarily black. It is located in the science hall at the bottom of the staircase and *politely* not in the way of people who are trying to get somewhere.

**Third Floor Pool:** A swimming facility located on the roof of WS. It is only visited by people willing to use a ladder to climb through the useless sunroof outside of the sports lobby while it's raining or otherwise be drugged up enough to see it.

**The Secret Hallway:** A hallway that is located parallel to the math hall. It's not a "secret hallway" as much as it is just a "carpeted hallway."



Sarah Drabkin

Senior Jackie Wilson directs freshman David Cosby at the Freshman Orientation. Despite the student government aiding the freshmen in finding their classes, some students still managed to miss the 5 minute "practice" class.

**Freshmen Hallway:** A hallway running perpendicular to the math and science halls, where the line of minuscule freshmen lockers lie.

**ADVICE:** If you have an older sibling or a tenacious bully at this school and are concerned that you might end up shoved in your locker, please make an effort to shove yourself in there first as a "practice round" then proceed to make appropriate provisions to avoid such bullying.

I wouldn't worry anyway because if you are getting shoved into your locker, Joan Galdi is sure to be there, even if she was presently in Hong Kong, literally a nanosecond after the infraction has occurred to cankisk the delinquent to her office so she can first recite every rule your offender broke verbatim from our SR&R manual and then come up with the adequate course of action in finding a suitable punishment.

- Top ten stories that Missed the 5<sup>th</sup> Just Save*
- 10) Oregon Bear Discovered Passed Out in Residential Woods Surrounded by Beer Cans
  - 9) Smelly Man gets Scrubbed by Sickened Neighbors after Going Unwashed for Ten Years
  - 8) Couple "Raise" Cabbage Patch Doll as Son
  - 7) Robbery Suspect Loses Wallet at Crime Scene and Shows up to Claim it at Local Police Station
  - 6) CHINESE COUPLE DISCOVER THEIR SON IS NOT A FEMALE AFTER 15 YEARS
  - 5) WIDOW PURCHASES FOOTBALL STADIUM SEATS AS DECEASED HUSBAND'S GRAVESTONE
  - 4) Man Sues Doctor for Surviving Cancer Longer than Expected
  - 3) Michael Phelps Wins Eight Gold Medals in PS2 Game "Athens 2004"
  - 2) Cow and Bull Marry in Indian Wedding
  - 1) New Carpets Replace the old in WS Library

—Compiled by Cam Rushton

**MOREADVICE:** Do not repeat the mistake last year's freshmen made of standing in the middle of this hallway, inhibiting all other students from getting through.

You are not going to get away with it like the seniors do. People do use extreme force. And no, a simple "excuse me" will not work.

Well, freshmen, your mouths may be gaping I horror right now at what a dog-eat-dog type of school this is, but I'm not going to sugar coat it. You are in for a rough ride this year, so buckle up.

I did the best I could in cushioning your inevitable fall back to reality. I wish you only the best and hope that you take this advice to heart... so if I see you eating off of my food tray this year, expect a very angry call from the Heath Department, buddy.