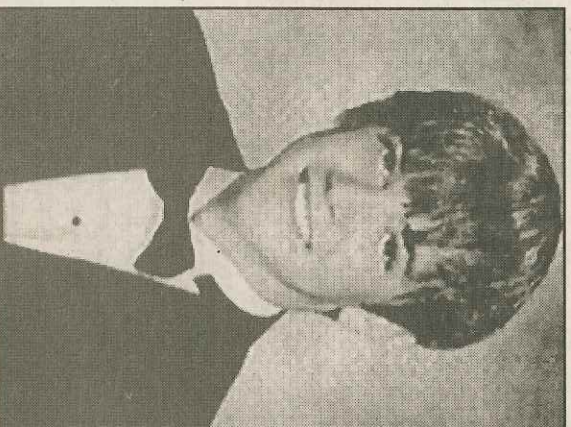




The Oracle

April 8, 2005 Volume 41 Number 10

West Springfield High School 6100 Rolling Road Springfield, Virginia 22152



Yearbook Photo
Senior Adam Foote was remembered as a thoughtful, considerate person.

Crash dampens Break WS loses second senior in two months

By Joley Sullivan
Senior Staff Writer

While many in the Class of 2005 were supposed to be relaxing, friends and family gathered at Kirkwood Presbyterian Church over Spring Break for a tearful service to mourn the death of 17-year-old senior Adam Foote.

"I was really happy to see how many students were there; especially with it being Spring Break, a lot were away," said business teacher Eric Hardman.

Foote died March 22 after suffering injuries in a car crash that afternoon. The

collision occurred around 2:45 p.m., when the Mustang Foote was riding in

crashed into a Ford F650 dump truck at Huntsman Boulevard and Old Keene Mill Road. According to the Fairfax County Police, two other WS seniors, one driving the Mustang and another driving a Camaro, were "engaged in an exhibition of speed."

The accident is still under investigation, so the approximate speeds of the vehicles has yet to be determined, and charges have not been filed. *The Oracle* does not publish the

names of those under the age of 18 who could be charged by the police.

Foote was the second senior to die on the road in the last two months. In February, Sedy Hernandez, 17, died after a Bellway accident in a car driven by her cousin.

"It's a horrendous tragedy, especially for Adam's family and friends," said Principal David Smith. "No parent should have to lose a child; no person should have to lose a friend."

See Foote on Page 4.

Students affected by decision to fingerprint adult employees

By Christian Romeo
Senior Staff Writer

Potential members of the teenage workforce who dislike background checks may want to consider an employer other than the Fairfax County Park Authority.

The Park Authority operates popular recreation centers such as South Run, as well as dog parks, camps, and historic sites. It has recently required that all employees over the age of 18 to be fingerprinted and go through background checks.

"I do swim lessons at South Run," said senior T.J. Landermeier. "I've worked there for six months and now they're doing background checks on me."

Before the heightened safety awareness, only those who needed special security clearances, or who worked with children or were charged with criminals were subjected to fingerprinting.

"We must take proactive steps to ensure those we hire are well-suited to deliver service to our public and we don't hire those whose backgrounds are in conflict with those goals," said Leslie Amiri, Assistant Director of the Park Authority's Human Capital Development and Services.

One reason for the resistance to being fingerprinted is the hassle it puts on the employee. "You go to the Government Center. You have to call and

make an appointment," said senior Lauren Angwin. "It was tough because the hours are between nine and four so I did it during Spring Break."

While the Park Authority does not reimburse its employees for the time they spent being fingerprinted, they

positions where they might do damage, and can help police solve crimes and find lost children.

"I've worked for two years at Hidden Pond," said junior Robert Muir. "The next time I go I'll have to be fingerprinted."

Of course, a clean background is not the only quality the Park Authority looks at when evaluating potential employees.

"Being convicted of a crime does not automatically bar someone from employment," said Amiri. "Several factors are weighed

...to evaluate the appropriateness of the fit in the event someone with a criminal background applies for a position."

The Park Authority's sole condition for fingerprinting, being 18 years old, also concerns students.

"I think it's interesting they only check if you're over 18," said Angwin. "I think they should do it to everyone if they're going to employ them."

The Park Authority has its reasons for not checking into minors' backgrounds, however.

"Records of offenses committed by minors are sealed," said Amiri.

"Conducting these checks would cause us to incur cost without any return on our investment."



Erica Wilkening
18-year-old employees, from life-guards to those at Hidden Pond, need to be fingerprinted because of a new Park Authority rule.

are implementing a new policy for seasonal positions that will correct this.

"Asking candidates to complete this part of the hiring process [being fingerprinted] is consistent with other pre-employment requirements that must be completed prior to the start of employment," said Amiri.

Fingerprinting can prevent people with criminal histories from gaining access to



Erica Wilkening
Peter Kapuscinski "represents" Spartans on one of his infamous campaign posters.

Votes, for a change Student body partakes in SGA election for first time in 5 years

By Adam Rosen
Oracle Editor

And the winners are... Will Cope, Peter Kapuscinski, Ashley Becker, Kim Cosby and Holly Tripp.

The student body selected next year's SGA officers in March for the first time since 2000.

"I think it [the election] goes in waves since I've been doing this for 10 years I'm not sure kids know what they are getting into," said biology and SGA advisor Jennifer Owens.

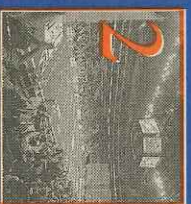
Over the past five years, SGA elections have not been held because only four to five students—the number needed to serve on the SGA—applied. This year, however, 10 students applied for five spots, requiring an election.

"I am glad I won," said junior Ashley Becker. "I want to make next year fun and exciting."

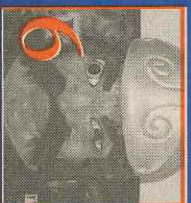
Running for SGA is a complex process. Candidates have to keep a 2.5 GPA, be passing six out of seven classes, and if they are failing a class they get put on probation. But the hardest part of being an SGA officer is actually *being* it. According to Owens if the work is not done and the officers are not prepared to be an officer, "the whole student body suffers."

SGA candidates said they wanted to work on activities that would add some spark to the 2005-2006 school year.

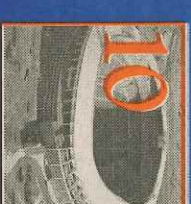
"I'm looking forward to taking part in planning homecoming and pep rallies," said junior Will Cope. "I want to make them more fun and exciting."



2 Arena football
blitzed.



6 Teachers who
were Spartans.



10 Introducing the
Nationals.

Time-out called on Arena football

By Lindsay Burke

Inside Story Editor

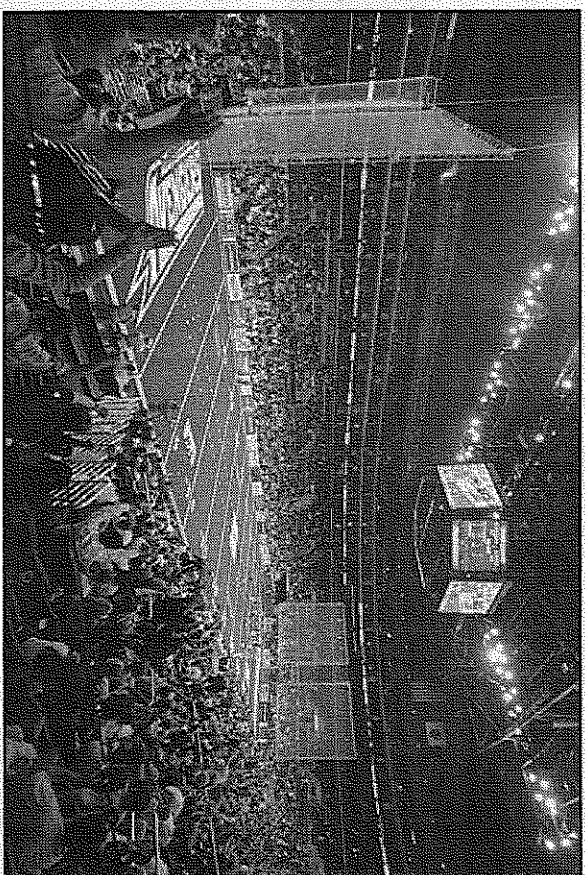
Virtually any sport can be played indoors. Basketball, soccer, lacrosse, swimming, diving, hockey...the list is, unfortunately, endless.

In the early stages when some of the more outdoor-oriented sports began to be played indoors, I convinced myself that surely there would be limits to the indoor insanity.

Then they look football. The one sport that held every outdoor sentimental value possible was stripped away from its home, placed in a box, and named the Arena Football League.

No more making the block of their life in the pouring down rain for these tight ends. No more finding the perfect spot in the snow to plant their tight foot down before throwing a tight spiral to the wide receiver in the end zone for these quarterbacks. No more watching the corner back who was supposed to block the pass slip and fall face first into the mud for these wide receivers.

Instead, these rejected NFL-players play on an indoor field, under lamps shining artificial light across the stadium on a home-grown Astro turf. They picked creative team names like the "Memphis



While some avid fans cheer on the Los Angeles Avengers at an Arena football game, it can also be rejected as an imposter sport. While the AFL was created to make football a faster and higher scoring game, NFL fans think that the fun in football is in the suspense.

Xplorers" and beginning in 2000 the disease started to spread.

Ridiculous rules came about that completely defeated the purpose of football in the first place. In Arena football, a receiver attempting to catch a pass only has to land with one foot in

bounds for the pass to count. Half of the skill in catching a pass is being able to land with both feet in bounds.

Arena football rules were created to make football a faster and higher scoring game. Football would not be any good if it took 20 minutes to watch and ended

Toil and trouble as workload doubles With pressure of difficult classes, students place more emphasis on grades than the learning experience

In the clinic, the nurses often see a correlation between the high barometric pressure that accompanies an impending rainstorm and the number of students who come in with headaches.

Editorial

It is arguable, though, that the kind of pressure that more frequently causes teenagers headaches is related to the stress of rigorous schedules and college application.

At WS and throughout Fairfax County, counselors and teachers are encouraged to promote AP classes to high school students. Students feel required to enroll in honors and AP classes, not because the classes are better opportunity for gaining knowledge, but because they think it will look good on a college application (not to forget the appealing .5 GPA boost).

Stress is not monopolized by the "real world" or the "work force" as adults are so fond of suggesting. High school's purpose is all too often presented as a stepping stone, a preparatory phrase to bigger and

better things. Students resulting mentality focuses on surviving, not embracing learning opportunities.

Cliffnotes barely cover the plot of artfully written literature. AP exam study books replace textbooks as the ultimate resource and long-term projects are ignored as long as possible.

Perhaps if educational emphasis shifted from being a high-achieving student to a highly-inquisitive student, some stress and apathy would be alleviated.

In the meantime, students will continue to treat assignments as punishment. The whimpering and heavy sighing that ensues when a teacher announces an assignment is a noisy example of the negative attitude students have developed because the desire to get good grades is stronger than the desire to learn.

...if educational emphasis shifted from being a high-achieving student to a highly-inquisitive student, some stress and apathy would be alleviated.

High school is a four-year waste of a mind if turning in busy work for perfect scores is a student's main objective. Sadly in the competitive college application world a sub-par grade is devastating beyond the



Students feel pressured to take more AP classes than they can handle. AP classes often have more than one textbook, proving how large the work load really is.

appropriate scope. Living up to nearly impossible expectations is not worth the tears, headaches (of the non-barometric pressure induced variety), panic attacks and maybe even a case of premature gastritis.

The Oracle

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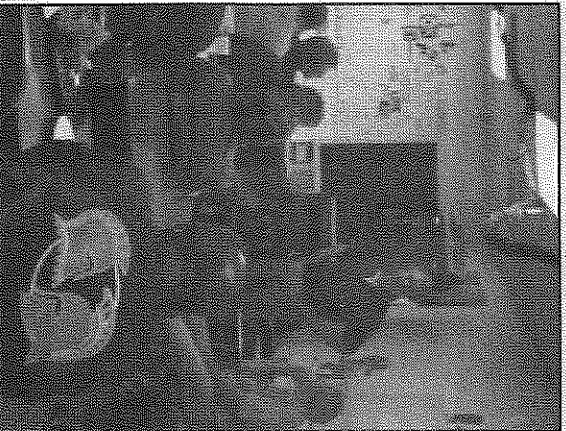
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In Tribute to Adam,

I told them repeatedly I never wanted to be here again. I'm the teacher. I'm supposed to have all the answers. But for this there are only tears and hugs. I see pain etched deeply on wrinkle-free faces. Reality hits hard in the spring of their greatest hope. His mother said he gleamed. He was a shooting star of dazzling brilliance. Please, I never want to be here again. I hear my parting mantra echo down the school corridor, "Go slowly and wear your seatbelt." Because I never want to be here again.

—Mrs. Graf

Elizabeth Graf, a long-time WS science teacher, subs here. She spoke with Adam the Friday before he died.

Foote remembered as thoughtful, caring

FOOTE from Page 1.

Foote was known among his friends and teachers for his selfless nature and cheerful disposition. He was also an organ donor.

"He was so considerate of other people; never thought of himself first," said sophomore Kat Mackin. "I'm not surprised he was a donor."

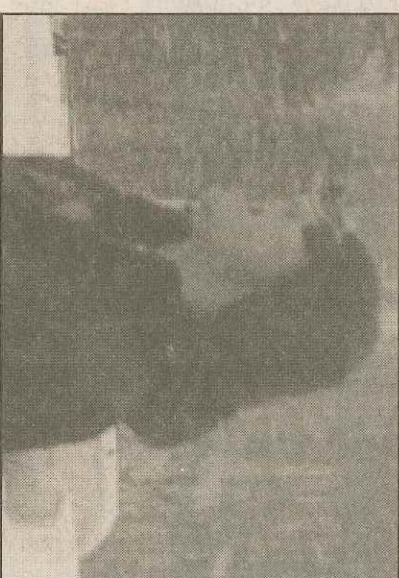
Foote's liver was transplanted immediately following his death to save a life, and his heart was transplanted in the days following the accident to save another.

Aside from donating organs, Foote contributed smaller things during his life, which many others wouldn't even think to do.

"He was actually concerned about someone not having a binder for a project, so he donated an extra for anyone to use," said Foote's eighth-grade science teacher, Anne Woodring. "He had a keen sense of the needs of others around him."

Foote's teachers relied on his impeccable compassion and happiness to make their day brighter.

"Adam was a great person to have in class. He was very engaging and helped make the class enjoyable; he will be sorely missed," said government teacher Brad Davis.



Erica Dublois

Adam Foote shown here at Timberline Ski Resort enjoyed snowboarding.

No matter where Foote went, he brought laughs and smiles to those who knew him.

"One or two times he tried to do dishes on his knees because he kept hitting his head on the cabinets; he was goofy," said Mike McAdoo, general manager of Chesapeake Bagel Bakery, where Foote worked for a short time. "Adam was always just an easy-going guy; he had a good attitude."

Smith urged the WS community to reflect on Foote's death, as well as other losses—of both current and former WS students—suffered during this school year.

"We all have had plenty of demonstrations of loss this year. I just hope that having seen what can happen, people will make good decisions," said Smith.

Irving students need not fret wearing pink and black

By Jessica Benjamin

Senior Staff Writer

Suspension threats were issued to boys for wearing pink. Detention for girls wearing all black.

These rumors have traveled around Washington Irving Middle School. But it turns out that they are completely erroneous.

"There is absolutely no truth to it whatsoever," said Irving administrator Elisabeth Franklin. "I don't know how that rumor mill got started."

There is one guess as to how this rumor began, and it starts with the police.

Police alerted Franklin to the fact that boys were seen wearing pink to school

and then changing before they got off the bus to go home.

"Some of the more recent gang members have been identified by wearing pink," said Franklin.

The boys did not want to be seen as being part of this gang for fear that rival gangs would single them out.

It is assumed that somehow word of this got out to the students and by word of mouth, got transformed into the rumor of boys wearing pink and girls wearing black were against school policy.

Students were worried they would be sent to detention or even issued a suspension.

The rumor which has been circling the school has finally started to fade out.

but it is not entirely gone. Students still think it is a rule.

"It's worn off but it's still frowned upon, bottom line," said seventh grader, Madeleine Jennings.

But Franklin adamantly denies the rumor.

"I went to all the P.E. classes and told them that there is no truth to this," she said.

Had there been an actual rule against girls wearing all black or boys wearing pink, it would not have been issued by Franklin or any other member of the administrative staff. It would have to have been decided by the school board.

"We don't make this stuff up on our own," said Franklin, who continues to

Contrary to rumor, students wearing pink and black at Irving Middle School will not face punishment.

Erica Wilkening

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The black and white photo masks the vibrant royal blue coloring of junior Chris Gilbert's hair. *Leah Vanatta*

Hair color to dye for

Students reveal their true colors with the use of hair dye

By Andrea Maxwell
Weekend Editor

The invention of hair dye has made it possible to change a person's hair color.

The ancient civilizations in the Middle East developed a system to dye their hair. The color of a man's beard told where they were from. Men from Babylon had black beards while Vikings and Celts had bleached beards. As time continued, hair dying became much less popular.

The custom of dying hair was revived in 1907. Eugene Scheller, a French chemist, invented a concoction of chemicals that could be used to bleach hair. This new company was named L'Oreal. In the 1930's, Lawrence and Joan Gelb improved the formula and marketed it under the name Clairol.

In the early 20th century, dyes existed to either bleach hair or coat the outside of the hair strands. Since the development of the first formulas, the market has dramatically increased.

There are colors of hair dye for every natural color imaginable. A plethora of shades of brown, blonde, black and red adorn the shelves of local stores. People habitually

"I think that if you

dye your hair

blonde and you're a

brunette, you

should dye it

enough that people

can not see your

roots."

—*Jessica Lawrie,*
sophomore

desire to have different color hair.

"I think that if you dye your hair blonde and you're a brunette, you should dye it enough that people can not see your roots," said sophomore Jessica Lawrie.

Colors do not only exist for natural colors. There are dyes in a variety of shades for every color in the rainbow. People use these colors as a way to express themselves.

"The craziest thing I ever saw was a lot of colors together," said freshman Evi Andreades.

It is possible to dye hair at home using an inexpensive kit from the drugstore. Other people choose to pay more and have it done professionally at a salon.

It is significantly more expensive to have it done at a salon but the color will turn out exactly right. The most common types of hair dye are permanent and wash out. Permanent hair dye must be retouched as roots grow in, otherwise it does not go away. Wash out hair dyes last a designated amount of washes. They are useful if one wants to try a new color that they are unsure of.

"I think it [dying hair] is fun and original," said sophomore Matt Warden. "It shows personalities of the individual. It is the way they speak out."

To chew or not to chew

Students take advantage of the fact that not all teachers embrace gum chewing policy

By Cam Rushton
Business/Systems Editor

Different teachers believe that it can impede the learning process. Educators say that monitoring it wastes their time.

No, the teachers are not making sure that students are abiding by the honor code; rather, they are monitoring gum chewing. A look around school proves that a good portion of WS favors the chomp, chomp, chomping of gum, but many teachers frown upon it.

"It is too time consuming to police it," said physical education teacher Sue Spatcher.

While some teachers dislike gum chewing, there are always some who do not mind the constant chewing of gum in their class.

According to the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook, if a student is caught chewing gum in class, he/she can be punished at the teacher's discretion. On the other hand, a pair of UK psychologists determined that

chewing gum improves memory and knowledge during tests.

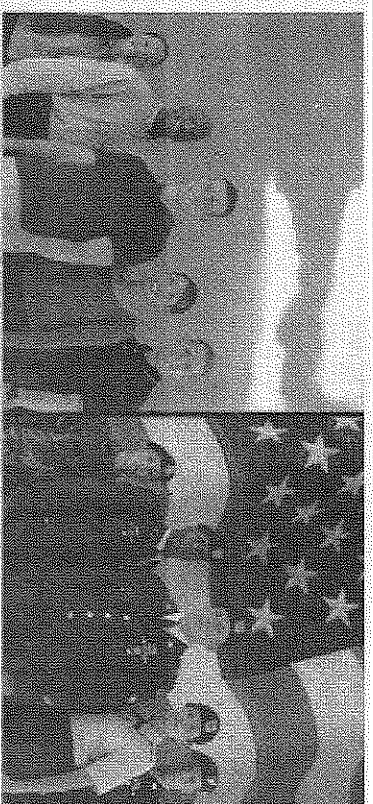
There is a diverse range of companies and plentiful flavors, but some students still choose not to chew gum in class. "I generally don't take the risk, but I sometimes chew gum when I'm in a class where the teacher doesn't care," said junior Eric Baldrighi. There are also students who chew gum when the teacher is not looking, but stop when he or she is staring right at them.

It seems that students find gum just too irresistible to resist and have to chomp on it in class.

Either way someone looks at it, gum chewing is an addictive hobby that many students enjoy, while plenty of teachers frown upon it.

The only thing that is bad about it is when you find more gum on the bottom of a desk than you do in other people's mouths.

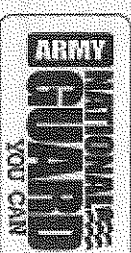
"That's the thing that really makes teachers angry," said Baldrighi.



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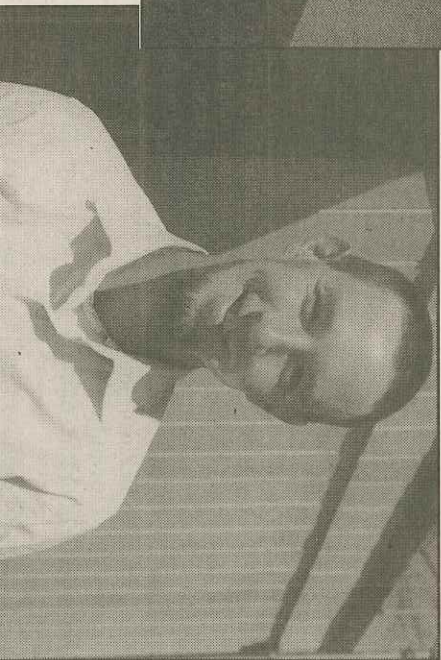
The Grads Who WC

Not everyone is ready to up and leave WS at the end of his or her high school or college years. In fact, some people don't leave at all. These WS grads have all returned to work at WS, and they shared why with *The Oracle*. From their favorite high school memories to their view of high school now, find out what was happening with all those steadfast Spartans, back in the day.

What is your Favorite high school memory?



Kevin Hauser, Class of 1997, is now a special education teacher at WS. His mother, Sharon, is also his co-worker as a WS math teacher. "It is nice to be able to see her on a daily basis, and it was especially helpful with being a new teacher and with everything that has happened this year to have someone you're close with to talk to."

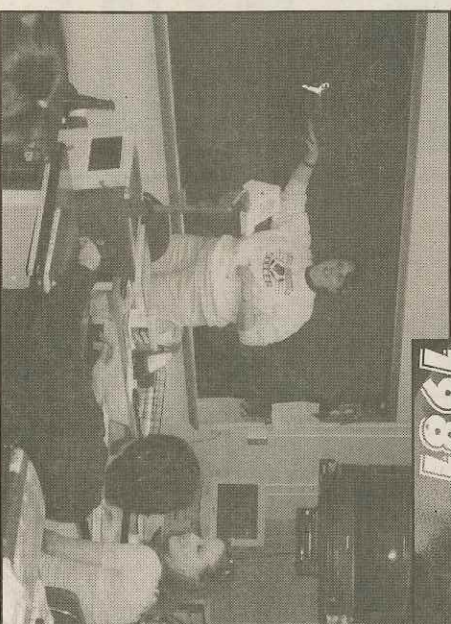


Has your view of high school changed?

"I loved being in high school and I still enjoy it. I think overall we were more serious students and behavior was not much of an issue. We did not have the pressure students have today. There were no SOL tests on the minimum competency exam, which was a joke. We did not have as many AP classes to choose from so the pressure was not there to take so many high school classes."

—Terri Stirk, math

Terri Stirk, Class of 1981, is now a math teacher at WS. She liked the Friday night football games and Wednesday night band rehearsals on the football field. Stirk especially remembers when the football team came in second in the state football tournament her senior year. Today, Friday night football games are still popular with students.



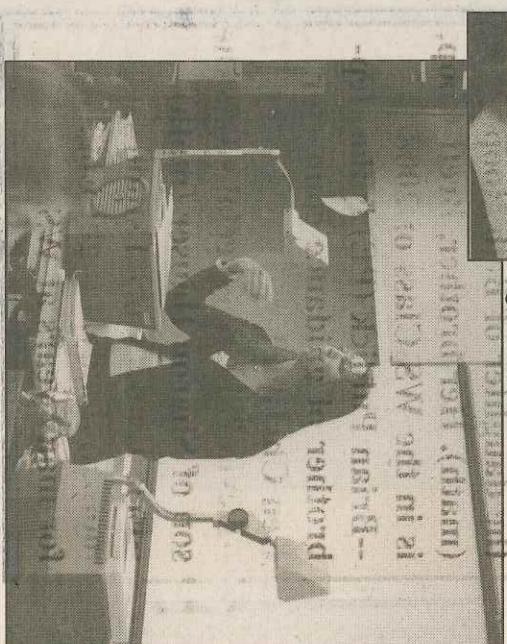
Did any of your high school teachers inspire you to teach?

"Yes, Mr. Deegan, my Calculus teacher, as well as my mom (Beth Roop), who also teaches here."

—Shannon McIlwrath, math



Shannon McIlwrath, Class of 1997, has been teaching math at WS for the past four years. Math was always her favorite subject [in high school] and she did well in it. She played varsity basketball from her freshman year all the way through her senior year—in high school.



Were you good at th

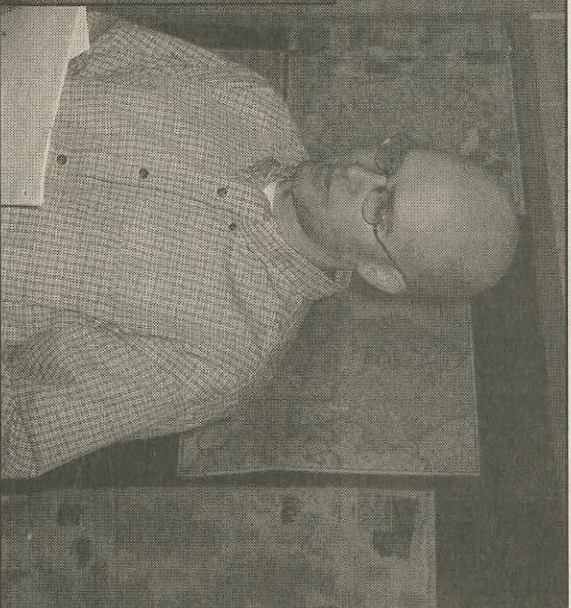
"I'd like to think so. I really enjoyed my English classes in high school. I took AP Literature and Comp, but not Language, since that was an AP Journalism class then."

—Malia Cameron, English

Why come back?

"I began working in Fairfax County as a substitute, and after getting experi-

Erik Lind, Class of 1987, is now a social studies teacher at WS. His view of WS hasn't changed a bit; he says he loved it then, and he loves it now.



ence subbing at most of the county schools, I came to see that WS was one of the best places to work."

—Erik Lind, social studies

The List

- Mark Blanchard (science)—1970
- Catronia Stavropolous (Spanish)—1973
- Pete Sherwood (security)—1978
- Terri Stirk (math)—1981
- Erik Lind (social studies)—1987
- Brad Davis (social studies)—1987
- Duke Baird (math)—1990
- Brian Puhlick (PE)—1990
- Malia Cameron (English)—1991
- Kerry Keith (English)—1994
- Mike Dombrow (music)—1994
- Kevin Hauser (special education)—1997
- Shannon McIlwrath (math)—1997
- Kevin Gallagher (social studies)—1999

Don't Graduate

"Mrs. Roop, Mr. Benton, Mr. Natale, and Mr. McMenamin."

—Brian Puhlick, PE



Brian Puhlick had Susan Spatcher for PE freshman year and got an A, which, he claims, "not too many people can say."



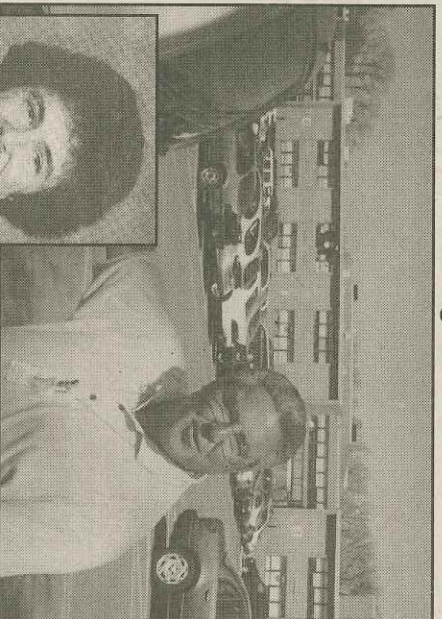
Fun faculty facts

- Shannon McIlwraith (math) is the daughter of Beth Roop (math). Her brother, Brett Roop, is in the WS Class of 2008
- Brian Puhlick (PE) is the step-brother of guidance counselor Ken Christopher.
- Kevin Hauser (special ed) is the son of Sharon Hauser (math).
- Eric Lind's (social studies) mother, Sandy, taught English for many years at WS.

How would you compare WS now and then?

"The students are remarkably similar to when I went here. They deal with the same issues, complain about the same things, and (dear God, why?) wear the same fashions which, are now coming back."

—Kerry Keith, English



Peter Sherwood, Class of 1978, is new to the WS scene as it is his first year working as a security guard at WS.

Are any of your high school teachers now your co-workers?

"Of the teachers I had, I know there are a few still hard at work at WS. Mrs. Spatcher and Mrs. Sirrot were teachers of mine. Mr. Percoco and Mrs. Roop were sponsors of SGA and the class of '94 respectively."

—Mike Dombrow, music teacher

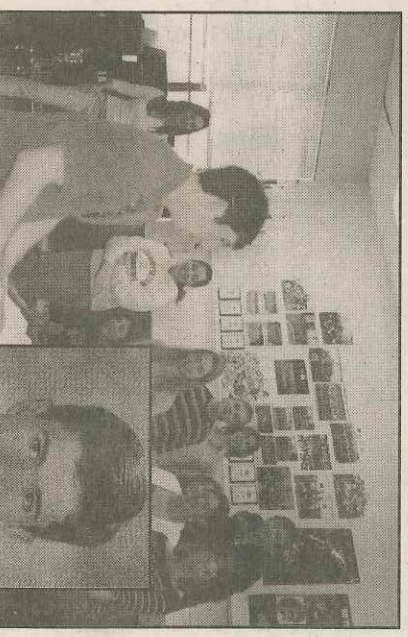
Brad Davis, Class of 1987, is now a government teacher at WS. He always did well in government class at WS, and his teacher even told him that he knew more about government than she did.



How did the students back then compare to now?

"[They're] still a mix of the over-achievers and the students who decline to take advantage of their time here."

—Peter Sherwood, security



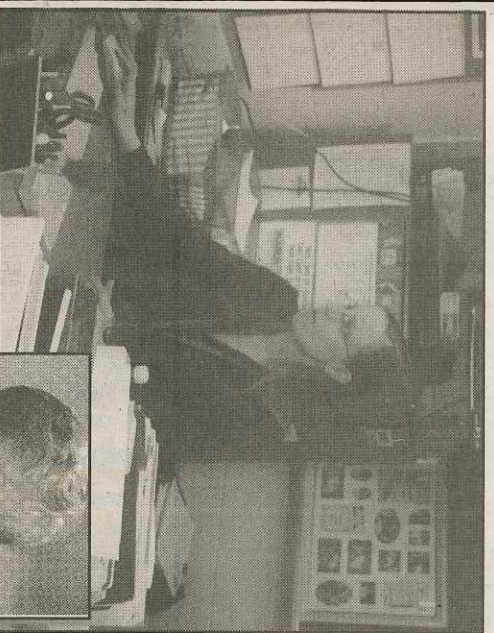
Mike Dombrow, Class of 1994, now works in the WS music department. One difference that he has noticed between now and the time he graduate was that passing notes used to be on paper. Now it's called text messaging.

What activities were you involved in at WS?

"[I was involved in] football, track and field, National Honor Society, Latin Club, FGTA (Future Government Teachers of America). [While working at WS] I coached both football and track and field."

—Brad Davis, Government Teacher

What subject you teach?



Malia Cameron, Class of 1991, teaches AP English Language and 9th grade English. She also coached eight season of swim team. She was captain of swim team her senior year. A favorite memory? The boys' swim team beat Woodson by .01 seconds in the last relay at Regionals.

—Compiled by Christina Araj

—Photos by Erica Wilkening

Oracle Picks

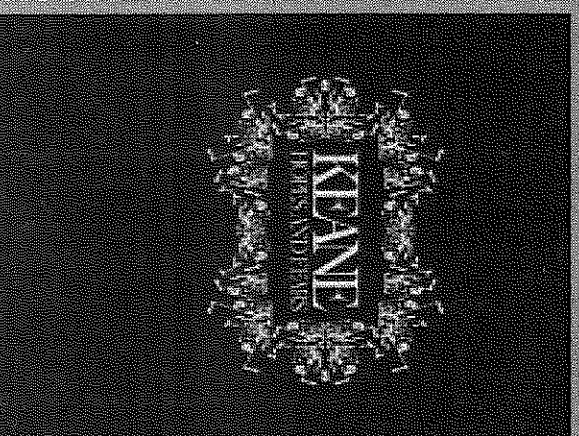
Ballet Shoes

Ballet Shoes, by Noel Streatfeild, is a tender story of three little girls living in London in the early twentieth century. The girls, who were orphaned as babies, vow to "make a name for themselves" and enter a school of dance to further their dream and help pay for the boarding house their benefactress, Sylvia, runs. Patsy, the youngest is a natural ballerina who could stand on point before she could string sentences together. Petrova despises dance and theatre, only doing it out of gratitude for Sylvia and would prefer spending her time working on cars with their driver. Pauline, the oldest, does not fancy dancing but acts as well as Patsy pronesies. Though the book is intended for much younger audiences, its poignant story is the once-upon-a-time, childlike ambience that brings out the little girl in everyone.



'Finding Neverland'

Finally Hollywood produces a film rooted in morals and innocence. Based upon the play, "The Man who was Peter Pan," the film recreates the summer James Barrie (Johnny Depp) spends with a widow (Kate Winslet) and her four boys who serve as the inspiration for Barrie's next play, "Peter Pan." Through his preening and adventuring, he brings the boys who are locked in the bitter reality, wrought on by the death of their father, to the fantastic Neverland Barrie envisioned. It is a remarkable tale of the power of the imagination and is an enchanting portrayal of the origins of "Peter Pan."



'Hopes and Fears'

Keane has been compared with The Beatles, but their songs in "Hopes and Fears" have immitable unnering atmosphere and unique range of instruments. The entire album is centered around the theme "hopes and fears." Through their soft-spoken tunes, the soothing comfort of the never-ceasing, melodious piano empowers the abandoned and misunderstood. The lyrics are bewildering but beg for interpretation exclusive to each listener.

—Compiled by Liz Weiderhold

Todd Lalich and Associates

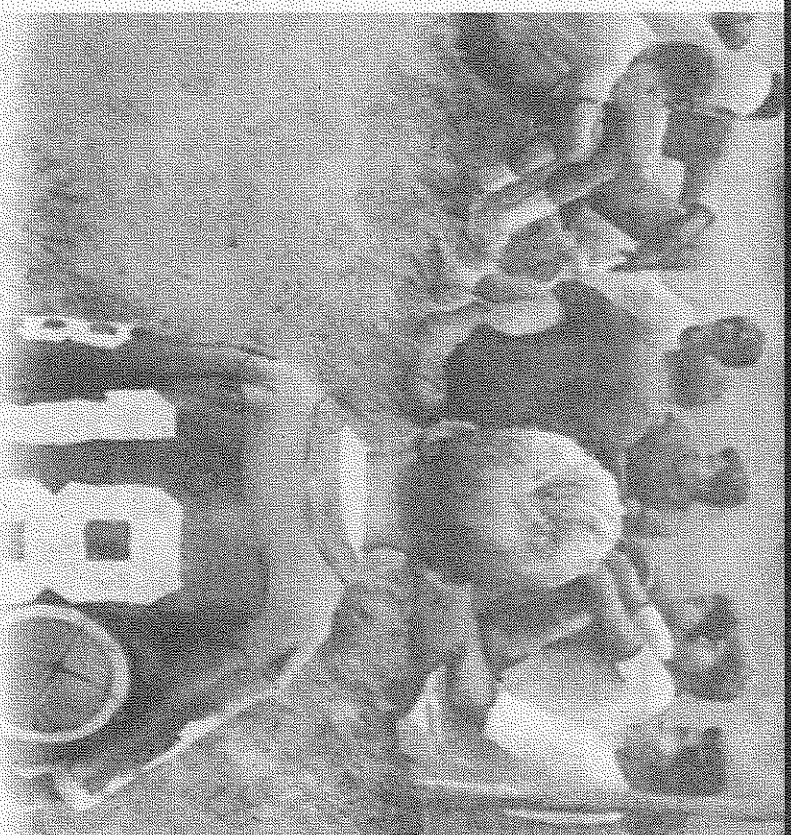
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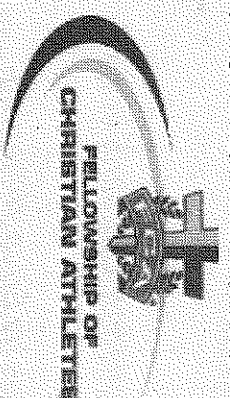
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Spring into DC and enjoy sights

By Emily Boiling

Senior Staff Writer

Ah, spring in DC. Cherry trees blooming, fountains flowing, and tour buses clogging up the city's streets. Thank goodness winter is gone!

The National Cherry Tree Festival is a staple for DC in the spring. Even for those who do not like trees or festivals associated with them, there is a lot for them to do in the DC area this spring.

"There's a big festival the 9th of April at the Carlisle House in Alexandria that's dealing with the French and Indian War. And a special exhibition at the National Gallery of Art, paintings by Gilbert Stuart who did the portrait of George Washington that's on the dollar bill," said Applied History teacher James Percoco.

The John Paul Cultural Center has Michelangelo's model for the Vatican on display until May. DC standards like the American History Museum and Museum of Natural History often have new exhibitions. The Museum of the American Indian is becoming a familiar backdrop on the Mall.

"Arlington House is full of flowers right now," said senior Sarah Mackie, who has an internship at the Arlington National Cemetery site for Applied History, "and we have a lady who is the great-granddaughter of Robert E. Lee coming to sign her family historycookbook. Come to Arlington House!"

The most famous of Washington's celebrations of spring is the Cherry Blossom Festival. The festival began the Saturday before Easter and continues with the parade and street festival tomorrow on Constitution Avenue. A free International Drumming Showcase will even take place tonight, April 8, near the Kennedy Center.

"I like getting out in nature, and there's not usually a lot of that in DC," said junior Kate Magin.

The Cherry Blossom Festival is as big a deal as the turning of the leaves in the Northeast during the fall. Much more reliable than Puxatawney Phil or the robins (which arrived during warm weather in January), when



Arlene Carter

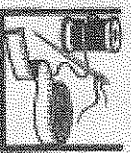
Blossoming cherry trees surround the Tidal Basin in DC. Tomorrow's Cherry Blossom parade is worth checking out on Constitution Avenue, followed by a big street festival. Other popular spring sights are Arlington House at Arlington National Cemetery, the Washington Monument, which just reopened last week, and the World War II, FDR and Lincoln memorials.

the cherry blossoms come, spring is here to stay until summer. Prime locations for blossom watching are the Tidal Basin and Hains Point and the World War II, FDR and Lincoln memorials. The grounds of the US Capitol are also alive with spring blossoms.

"I think it's because the cherry blossoms are unique, no other city has that, it announces the arrival of spring," Percoco.

A great way to take in all of DC's spring sights is the top of the Washington Monument, which reopened last week after being closed for security upgrades. But the cherry trees are the prime attraction.

"I've never gone but I want to go this year," said Mackie. "It's a fun thing to do in the spring and I want the chance to see it...on something besides on a postcard."



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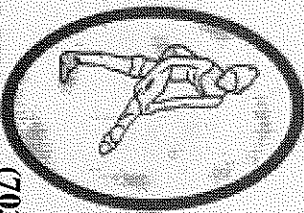
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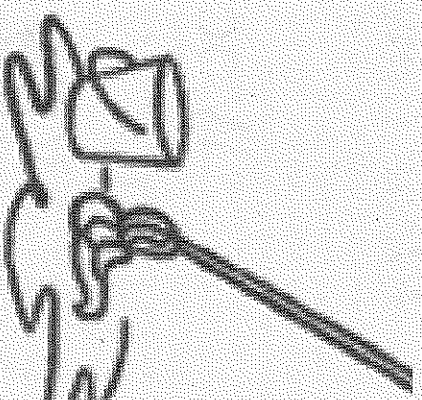
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O'Keefe's Beef on sports

Familiar sports in a foreign place

By Tim O'Keefe
Sports Editor

When I travel to a new place, I always expect to experience something new. My experience was no different when I traveled to the Dominican Republic, or DR, over spring break. I was unsure how much the DR would resemble the US. To my surprise, sports still remain strikingly similar to what we experience here.

I went on a trip with 13 other teenagers, and four leaders. Our day consisted of working at the ARK, an orphanage organization for the children in Jarabacoa, DR. We came as a youth group from The Falls Church with the mission of building houses and serving the children at the ARK.

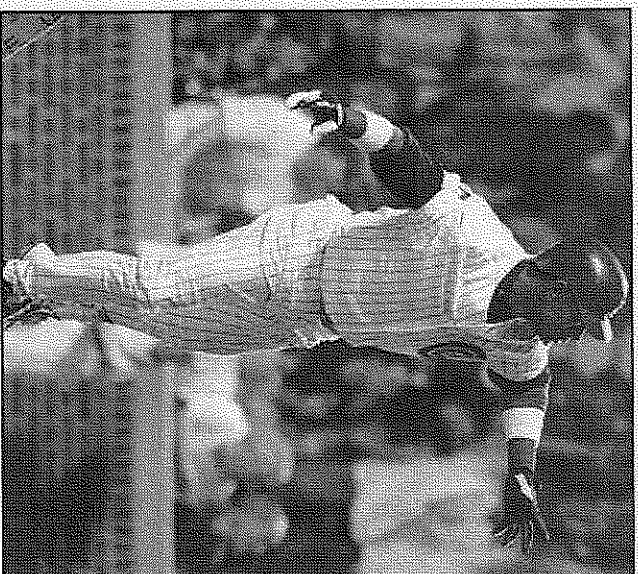
The central part of the day was a large basketball game. Under clear skies and 80-degree heat, we played defense, called fouls and talked trash. We did not understand what the kids were saying, but we understood what was going on. One of the leaders at

the ARK who played with us, Tony, liked to chant American phrases like, "O.K." and "Boo-Yeah." With his limited knowledge of American sports, Tony even called me the "White Michael Jordan."

The next day we played baseball at the ARK. The kids would imitate the batting stance of their favorite Dominican player, Sammy Sosa. The teams were mixed between Spanish speaking DR kids and English speaking Americans. Amazingly, the language barrier was not a problem.

After playing basketball and baseball, I felt that we came together as a group. We talked and joked around with each other. For me, sports was something I felt comfortable talking about in Spanish.

In the end I still learned about a vastly different DR culture. I experienced a vivid image of poverty, that no one in Northern Virginia can relate to. I spent time with people who have so little, yet hold so much joy. But through all the differences, sports remain a common denominator; they bring us together.



Kids in the Dominican Republic look up to native baseball star Sammy Sosa, and his batting stance.

The magic of baseball returns to RFK

By Sean Hogan

Eric Editor

People thought baseball was gone forever from DC when Bob Short moved the Senators to Texas in 1971. The Washington Nationals kicked off their inaugural season on April fourth, discrediting any doubts about the team being lost forever.

The move happened 34 and a half years ago (12241 days exactly). What seems to be the question, however, is if there is still a market in the DC metropolitan area for baseball. Most students already have pledged their allegiances to popular teams such as the Boston Red Sox, New York Yankees, Chicago Cubs, and of course, the formerly most local team, the Baltimore Orioles.

"I think it's exciting and all," said sophomore Alanna Coyle, "but my loyalty still lies with the Red Sox and Cubs."

Interestingly enough, Baltimore's owner Peter Angelos has already reported drops of ticket and merchandise sales.

As of late March, the Nationals had already sold 1.8 million tickets, while the Orioles, with their bigger, newer, and better-suited-for-baseball stadium and higher paid players, sold 1.5 million.

"There are no real baseball fans in DC," said Angelos last year. However, the move of the Montreal Expos to the Nation's capital has left him squinting. The Nats' have the O's beat in the radio broadcasting of their games, being only the second major league team with an FM flagship station for the majority

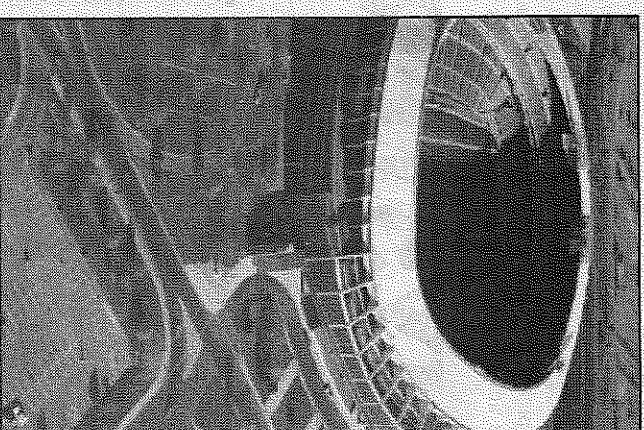
(120) of their games, Bonneville International-owned Z104.

"I'm not overly excited, but I know I will be going to games," said sophomore Daniel Pedersen.

Nationals games will be played at RFK stadium in southeast DC. To get to RFK by metro, take the blue or orange lines to the Stadium-Armory station.

Tickets range from \$7 in the outfield (both lower and upper decks) to \$90 behind home plate for season tickets and from \$7 in the outfield upper deck to \$45 in the lower infield box seats. While food prices have not been set in stone yet, officials expect a hot dog and a soda (or beer for those over 21) to be around \$12.

"I'm excited about the start of a new season," said senior John Keiran. "I'll try to go to some games."



The Nationals will play their home games at RFK stadium. Washington has not had baseball in 34 years.

Rugby team roughs it up

By Carlin Sherrill

Senior Staff Writer

Soccer, wrestling and football all combined into one rough sport.

Rugby has been around WS for awhile and is gaining in popularity. In the sport of rugby, two opposing teams go head to head and try to score the most points. By carrying, passing, and kicking, the two teams battle it out to win the match.

The WS rugby team is not school-sponsored, but they are becoming more popular among the students. For a small fee, WS men practice hard and play rough on the rugby field. Although WS

only has a men's team, women are also playing rugby around the nation.

The WS team practices on Tuesdays and Thursdays in "the ditch," located off of Hoos Road.

"The practices are pretty rough," said senior captain Sean Felix.

The hour-long practices are where the team works on their skills from kicking, passing and wrestling, in order to have a successful season.

The team plans on working hard to win all their matches this year and emerge victorious.

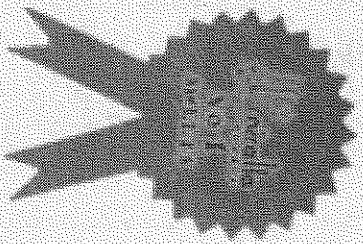
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Oracle File Photo
Rugby is not a school-sponsored sport, but is gaining in popularity.

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Rain, rain, go away

Don't come back another day

By Sean Hogan

Etc. Editor

I really enjoyed my 10 inches of snow during the last weekend of February. The two weeks they cancelled school, they were pretty fun.

I distinctly remember hearing, "Northern Virginia is going to have six to 10 inches of snow...maybe more, maybe less." Wow, thanks for the heads up, buddy! My pet duck Ferdinand could tell me that we could have more or less than six to 10 inches of snow, if he could talk.

I hate weathermen with a passion. Over the summer, they will call for sunny and 80 and we'll get rainy and 65. That is acceptable. As much as I love warm sunny days, my life does not revolve around the weather during the summer.

However, when they call for almost a foot of snow and school cancellations for the impending apocalypse, I expect the amount in full in my front

yard. Seriously, what do these 'meteorologists' have to do to achieve their positions? Send in UPC's? Wear hats with propellers on the top? I know they do not have to know anything about the weather.

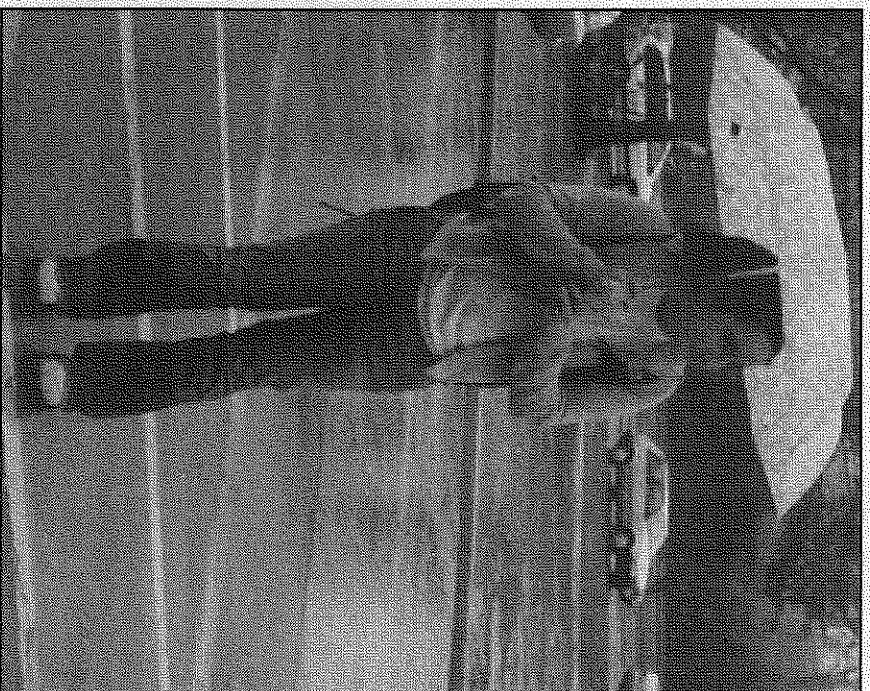
Sorry if anyone wants to become a weatherman. It's not very hard. Pretty much, you need good hair and a keen ability to point. All TV meteorologists do is rip their forecasts from the National Weather Service. I bet the NWS puts up the wrong forecasts just so they can make fun of those idiots at the water cooler the following day.

"Hey Marty, did you see that guy on channel 5?"

"Yeah, what a moron. We told him it would be sunny and 90. I bet he was surprised to find Norway in his backyard this morning."

If I was doing the dirty work for those vaguely good-looking primates, I would screw up their forecasts too.

Do not fear. Hoagie has answers. The answers are



Junior Meredith Seiarretta stays dry even in rainy weather. Erica Wilkinson

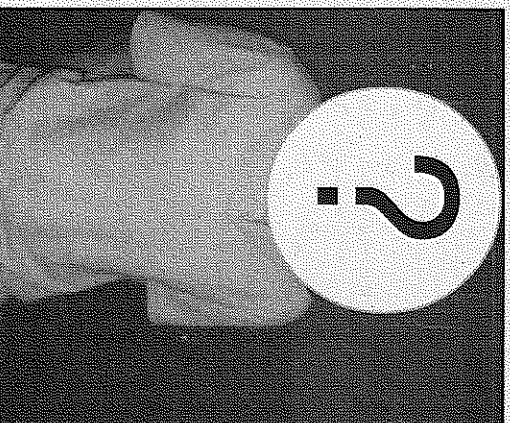
MYSTERY PERSON

Can you guess who this student is?

By Stevie Fiorino
Etc. Assistant

This athletic WS student can be seen everyday after school running on Carleigh Parkway with the track team. She runs on the team as a distance runner. When she is not running with the track team, you might see her running on her own time around Lake Accotink Park. Sometimes, however, she takes a break from all that running and you just might see her walking around the neighborhood with her German Shepherd, Kaiser.

Monday through Thursday, she can be found playing her bass guitar with the WS jazz band. She also plays the



Leah Varatta

upright bass in the orchestra. With all of her running and bass playing, she still finds time to complete her homework from all of her honors classes.

After her busy day, she finally has a chance to sit down and relax. She likes to unwind by listening to Sarah McLachlan and catching a few z's.

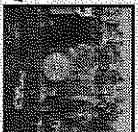
Do you know who this person is? Good for you! Write down the name of the WS Mystery Person on a piece of paper along with your name and grade and get your name printed in next issue's mystery person. Submit your paper to room 215 by April 20. The name of this mystery person will appear in the next issue, so don't fret.

Facts The Oracle knows that you don't

1. Hostess Twinkies are 68% air.
2. According to a poll by Progressive Insurance, 63% of Americans talk to their cars.
3. There are 24 flowers on each Oreo cookie.
4. Barbie has a last name—Roberts. Ken's last name is Carson.
5. Bozo the Clown wore size 83AAA shoes.
6. There is one slot machine in Las Vegas for every 8 inhabitants.
7. —from Uncle John's Unstoppable Bathroom Reader

APRIL

"We don't like their sound. Groups of guitars are on the way out!"
—Decca Records, denying the Beatles a record deal



Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
8 Baseball @ Annandale 7:00	9 Chicken Little Awareness Day	10 National Siblings Day	11 Girls' soccer home vs. Hayfield	12 Baseball home vs. West Potomac 6:00	13 Blame Someone Else Day	14 End of third quarter
15 Teacher Workday	16 Scuderi Track Team Challenge @ West Potomac	17 National Blah Blah Day	18 Baseball home vs. Robinson 6:00	19 Boys Lax home vs. Lake Braddock 7:15	20 Softball @ TC Williams 6:00	21 Boys Lax home vs. Robinson 7:15
24 Report cards distributed	24 Allen Johnson Track Invitational @ Lake Braddock	24 Passover	25 Boys Tennis @ West Potomac 3:30	26 Girls soccer home vs. Jefferson 7:00	27 Girls Lax @ Lake Braddock 7:15	28 Boys soccer @ Robinson 7:00
Baseball game home vs. Amandale 7:00						

Ways to spend a rainy day

1. Push people into puddles as you walk by them
 2. Watch the splashes that cars make when they drive through puddles
 3. Dance the polka
 4. Spin around in circles while playing the kazoo
 5. Jump in puddles with your underpants on your head
 6. Stay inside and invent a game involving socks, a digital clock and broccoli
 7. Ride in a car with the windshield wipers set on high and make yourself dizzy by watching them move back and forth
 8. Sing show tunes while playing on monkey bars
 9. Ride in a car with the sun roof cover open so you can see the rain drops fall on the glass
 10. Walk your dog while doing the macarena
- Compiled by Jordy Serwin and Sean Hogan

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