



The ORACLE

June 20, 2005 Volume 41 Number 13

West Springfield High School 6100 Rolling Road Springfield, Virginia 22152

Caps off to actors

Playwrights also rewarded by seeing works performed on professional stage

By Carlin Sherill
Weekend Editor

A Cappie is the highest honor one can receive in a high school theatre department.

Each year, students are selected as nominees for a Cappie for their outstanding performances for that year's drama productions. This year, five WS students were nominated, and one took home an award.

Zack Moody won the Best Featured Actor in a Musical for his role as the real Zangler in *Crazy for You*. He was competing against five other actors from different Fairfax County Schools. He was awarded at a ceremony at the Kennedy Center, where more than 2,400 people gathered for the Cappies.

"I did not expect to win [the Cappie], it was really cool," said Moody.

Crazy for You was so well-performed that four other students were nominated for Cappies. Seniors Emily Levin and Sara Rogers were nominated for the best Choreography. Senior Dan Plehal was chosen for Male Dancer and sophomore Nathan Taylor was nominated for the

Male Critic Cappie. Although they did not win, a nomination itself, is a tremendous honor.

Selected drama students are also being honored in a big way-on a professional stage. Senior Karla Sakas and junior Jack Powers were selected as two of eleven winners from nearly five hundred entries in the Arena Stage Student Playwrights Project 10-Minute Play Competition.

Their plays were performed at Arena stage, and Karla's play, *Dysfunctionally Ever After*, was also performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC.

"It was really exciting to see how professional directors and actors interpreted my words on the stage," said Sakas.

Jack Powers' play, *An Errand*, was a surprise win for the author.

"I wrote it in two nights for drama. I did not expect to win," said Powers. WS is very fortunate to have such a excellent drama department, with such talented actors and actresses. This year has been very successful for WS productions, as well as ones outside of the school.



Liz de Saussure

Quartet reigns Supreme

Juniors Dave Earle (left), Tommy Beekman (right) and Dean Christesen (in background behind drumset) perform at the Battle of the Bands on May 20. The Supreme Quartet, who classify their music as "jazz-funk-fusion" beat out six other bands for first place. The other band members are seniors Jared Bookbinder and Court Eccles. Second place went to Traffic Jam Marmalade, who won the competition in 2003 and 2004. Flatulance, a band comprised entirely of freshmen, earned the third place spot.

Teachers leave school along with 2005 class

By Lindsey Burke
Viewpoint Editor

Teachers dedicate time, effort, and love to all of their students. They stay after school to help with hard problems, they repeat things 40 times to make sure everyone understands, and they look after students throughout the school day.

Several of the teachers we love will be leaving WS at the end of the 2004-2005 school year. Among them are: Robert Jones, Catriona Stavropoulos, Gloria Parker, Joanna Stokes, Marietta Bradinova, Jeannette Allen, John McMenamin, James Morris, Jenn Owens, Beth Jewell, Ersilia Ash, Colleen Branche, Mark Morbeto, and Brenda Cox.

All of these teachers will be remembered for all of the things they have done to contribute to education at WS. They have spent countless hours grading papers, listening to students complain, and preparing upcoming assignments for us to learn.

Only one teacher out of these is retiring at the end of the year: John McMenamin, more commonly known as "Mr. Mac." He has spent over 40 years in the classroom and has many favorite memories of WS.

"My first year here I had a girl who'd lost her leg to cancer and refused to wear a prosthetic one. Her attitude was what-you-see-is-what-you-get and we became friendly. At the end of the year I asked her what it was like to not have a leg. She wrote eight pages about it," said McMenamin. "My funniest memory was when I told my kids they had a term paper



John McMenamin is retiring after more than 40 years of teaching.
Sara Kofall

that had to be in on time or else they would fail. I told them I didn't care if their house burned down, they had to get it in. A student's house ended up burning down, and while it was burning he ran back inside and got the paper!"

The teachers and students have worked hard as a team this year, and extra pressure has been added from tests, SOLs, and colleges.

"I think our kids faced a lot of challenges [this year], and the teachers did, too," said Principal David Smith. "I am always impressed, frequently amazed, at what teachers and students can do together."

Another successful year has been produced at WS due to the work of teachers and students. The work of teachers who are leaving will be cherished and appreciated throughout the years. Thank you for all you have done, and keep inspiring the ones who need it the most.

Former student charged with involuntary manslaughter

A former WS student has been charged with involuntary manslaughter due to his involvement in the car crash that claimed the life of his passenger, Adam Foote, in late March.

The former student was the driver of a blue Mustang that crashed into a dumpster truck at the intersection of Old Keene Mill Road and Huntsman Boulevard after traveling at high speeds.

Although the driver is 18 now, he was 17 at the time of the incident and will be charged as a minor.

His family placed him in a residential center for troubled teens in Alabama for rehabilitation. The Jackson County Police Department, on request from Fairfax County police, arrested the driver at the center.

He was brought before the Jackson County district court on May 26 and was allowed to post a \$20,000 bond and return to the center.

He will not be formally charged until he returns to Virginia, which, according to his father, may be in as long as a year.



4 Make the little things in life count



6-7 Freshmen give last words before the year ends



12 Liz is BACK!!!

Play first, pay later

Scattered student holidays push summer to late June

When we see student holidays on the calendar we think of them as blessings, but we can also think of them as a week less of summer vacation.

November 1, November 2, January 31, February 1, April 15, June 3 and June 6 are the seven student holidays/teacher workdays we have had this year.

Summer vacation is seven days shorter this year than last year and we got less than a week of vacation time in June this year.

Vacations seem short enough as they are without cutting days off them. Besides, winter break was three days shorter this year than last year so we do not need a shorter summer break too.

Seven random days off are not better than an extra week of summer vacation. Where can we go on an off day in the middle of the week?

There is no such thing as a one day vacation to Hawaii in the middle of April. If there was such a thing, it would be something like this, "Hey kids, I can almost see the coconut trees! Whoops, look at the time we

have to go back to school now!"

There is not a whole lot we can do on a teacher workday outside of sleeping in or hanging out at a friend's house.

Oh wait, we almost forgot, we can do all the extra hours of homework teachers give us to compensate for the time off.

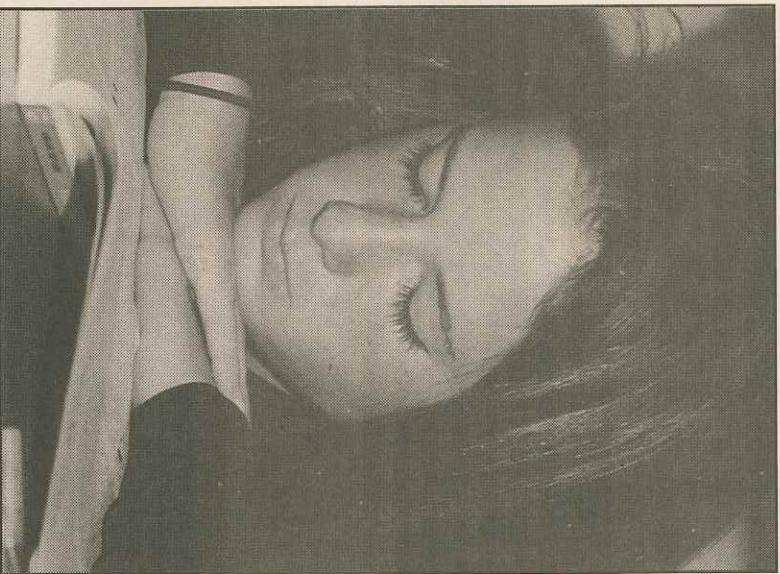
Editorial

It's almost like not having the days off at all, which is good because who wants to have the yucky aftertaste of a fun weekend when they get back to school? The excuse we get for student holidays is to give teachers a chance to file grades on time.

Yet since teachers can go back and change grades after the quarter is over, it does not really matter how fast they are filed.

Nothing terrible would happen if report cards came out a week or two later.

It is definitely a close competition, but we will take a week off in the summer with no strings attached over seven student holidays dotting the calendar with extra homework.



File Photo

Sophomore Emily Lambert falls asleep while reading in class, dreaming of how she could be out of school if there had not been random days off during the school year.

Admission fees discourage fans

By Sunnie Ko
Inside Story Editor

According to a poll taken by 100 students, 88 percent of them agree that ticket fees for sports admission are too high and that they would attend more often if the price was lowered.

Hurdling fences, avoiding parent volunteers and dressing in camouflage are sad techniques used to avoid paying the fee for a sporting event. The regular season admission price for all sports is four dollars.

Now, that might not seem like a very hefty amount for some, however, to others those four dollars could be used on more vital things like food or paying library fees.

This is not to say that sporting events aren't vital, however when it comes down to it, those four dollars will most likely be used on food, an essential part of living.

I'm not naive enough to say that the fee for admission should be diminished. According to assistant activities director, Mike Mukai, the money raised in district games is necessary funding. The money brought in through ticket sales is split half and half with the

The sports teams that receive this money need to sacrifice something so spectators will keep cheering them on.

visiting teams. The money then goes towards new uniforms, equipment, field seed and everything except the lights and the referees.

It is important that these teams receive quality equipment in order to perform to the best of their abilities, however the "give and take" ratio needs to be more evenly balanced.

If ticket sales were lowered even one or two dollars, the funds would be drastically lowered however, your average student would be more willing and able to attend the games. Right now, the four dollars helps get new uniforms for teams every three years, sometimes even every two.

Do not get me wrong, I like new uniforms more than anyone, however I hate paying this four dollars whenever I want to attend a game. I would without doubt be willing to wear a uniform for longer than three years. These uniforms are used for three months and in sports such as basketball and soccer they are not being brutally torn or abused.

The sports teams that receive this money need to sacrifice something so spectators will keep cheering them on. The regional playoff ticket fee was recently lowered from six dollars to five. I am satisfied knowing now that there is an extra dollar in my wallet. School spirit



File Photo

School spirit is an important part of high school. Students might be more inclined to attend games if the entry fee was lowered.

is an important aspect to the high-school experience. Lowering these fees would increase attendance and school spirit. If not for the hungry broke student, do it for the spirit.



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The Oracle is a student-run publication to inform and entertain the students and staff of West Springfield High School and the Springfield community. We publish articles written with as little reporter bias as possible. Opinion is expressed in Viewpoint, Inside Story, ETC., and in reviews and columns. Editorials represent the opinion of at least two-thirds of the staff and do not reflect the views of the adviser, the administration, or the Fairfax County Public School System. The Oracle reserves the right to reject advertising deemed inappropriate. Signed letters to the editor and personal commentary will be considered for publication, but could be edited for grammar, spelling and space.

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A Message from Keith

Dear Students,
 I would like to thank each one of you for allowing us to serve you. I can only hope that your experience with us has been as rewarding and gratifying as our experience with you. I also want to thank so many of you for your concern for my recent illness.

As you may know, with the help of Senator Jay O'Brien and many other good friends in Richmond, we have been able to pass several bills that have been brought to legislative order thereby becoming law, enhancing the driver education program and the quality of instruction administered to the first year driver. Virginia has some of the best first-year teenage drivers in the country - mainly because of the program and the care which this program is administered, especially through Keith's Driving School.

Despite what you hear from some media, portraying teenage drivers as being the worst drivers, this is not true. They don't bother to separate states and tell you which bill or law is what. They want to send the spin the way they want it to sound. It doesn't work that way. Go to the stats. The media might portray things without telling you or breaking down state by state as to which one does and does not have these types of laws or legislation restricting first year drivers.

These laws allow us to eliminate some driver education establishments that are not concerned about administering the proper driver education nor the safety of your child. This also makes the driver education industry better. I have always done everything I can to educate the public, the students and parents, on the Virginia driver education laws.

Speaking of parents, I have taught some of you to drive. This past year, five of you searched me out to teach your children. You don't know how good that makes me feel and I wish I would be here to teach their sons or daughters, but that is a bit of a pipe dream.

In every ad you will see my Virginia's license number and the Virginia State requirements. Look at other ads and you don't see those things. It is my way of saying that we at Keith's Driving School do care and are concerned about driver education and your sons and daughters. Parents must know they are going to get the correct type of training that their son or daughter needs at Keith's.

Our instructors are professionals. That is what we do for a living. We teach people to drive and try to help them survive. Though we cannot win them all, we do try very hard. It's true, we charge quite a bit more than some driver education institutions, but this is because we give you so much more. We pick up; we drop off. We are on the road, not on a parking lot. The last time I checked, the death toll in Virginia on parking lots amounted to 1/2 of one percent. That is not a stat that warrants parking lot instruction. Virginia eliminated parallel parking in 1971 to concentrate on more important areas because parallel parking is not a life threatening maneuver. Though we teach parallel parking, we don't concentrate on it.

Our students average 125 miles on the road, with all kinds of traffic situations. Some will drive more than that based on the sparsely populated areas. But in the densely populated areas such as Springfield, Annan-



dale, Falls Church, Fairfax, Tyson's, and McLean, they average is about 125 miles. This along with 40 hours equates close to 1,000 miles of experience before students go out by themselves. This is so important.

Senator O'Brien and myself fought for six years for the bill along with the documentation of the mileage. Nobody really wanted that, but Senator O'Brien had the wisdom to get it passed in a really good bill.

There is really no one in the industry I take second to. We are the best. I ask your indulgence and patience. Enroll your child early to get their program going even before they start their 40 hours or halfway through their 40 hours. You **DO NOT** have to have the 40 hours completed before enrolling.

We at Keith's are all about teaching driving. Give us a call early. We have some of the best teenage drivers in the country in Virginia and the death toll for first year drivers has been steadily dropping since Keith's Driving School opened. There is proof of that.

I wish we could teach everybody, but we can't. I wish I could be the guardian who rides around with them after they get their license but I can't.

However, I assure you that our instructors will instill safe driving habits, defensive driving habits, accident avoidance and evasive maneuvering habits in your sons and daughters. Please bear with us, summer time is coming and we all want to have a happy summer. Thank you so very much and may God bless and keep every one of you safe.

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Keith's also offers the 5 Point Driver Improvement Program

Worry not of what to wear

By Liz Buccheister

Photo Editor

My decision of what to wear in the morning is more often than not made based on what's most comfortable and also clean.

To tell you the truth I'm not all that concerned about how I look. As long as I'm comfortable, I'm happy.

There's no one for me to impress, so why get all dolled up for seven hours of the torture they call getting an education?

I'm aware that some people genuinely enjoy getting all dressed up for school. My question isn't necessarily directed at them, but honestly, who are we trying to impress?

The other people in the school are, for the most part, the same people who saw you miss the ball during kickball in 4th grade or break your wrist chasing a friend during steal the bacon.

So how is a skirt that's so short you can't sit in it going to impress anyone?

The shoes that mark you look like an Amazon, skirts that barely cover your butt and shirts you're continually adjusting just don't strike me as comfortable or necessary for school.

For guys this shouldn't be a problem (unless you lost a bet) so I guess you all are excluded from this article.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not one of those "YOU MUST OBEY THE DRESS CODE" people. Personally I think it's stupid to have one since it's rarely enforced.

Isn't school torture enough without having to make sure you don't twist you ankle walking down the stairs or have to duck and cover as Ms. Galdi walks by?

I just don't see the point. I don't wear short skirts or dress up or am even in the least bit stylish, so maybe I just shouldn't talk.

However, I still manage to have incredibly awesome friends, who wouldn't care all that much if I showed up in a trash bag. They'd still be friends with me. I can't be the only one with friends like that, so why all the hype of dressing up? It's only high school after all.



Lindsay Burke

Sophomore Leo Walker reaches into the vending machine to retrieve his extra Oatmeal Cream Pie after getting two for the price of one.

Little moments make a

BIG impression

By Katie Bourget

Oracle Editor

"It's the little things that count/matter/make you happy" (depending on who you are talking to). The phrase is obscenely cliché, and I desperately wish it weren't—mostly because it holds so true.

For the students who spend September through June grinding pencils into eraser-less nubs writing notes, and whose who haven't touched a writing implement since elementary school—small moments have a disproportionately powerful impact.

That impact can be either positive or negative, but since it's the end of the school year, I choose to focus on happy ones.

Let's start in the car. For me, on top four wheels the happy-moment possibilities are plentiful. Although I can't say for sure, I'm pretty sure that turn signals originated as a safety device rather than a percussion instrument.

Magically, the blinker will, upon occasion, *click-clock* perfectly on beat with the song on the stereo. While this affect can be created intentionally, the inadvertent variety is far more satisfying.

Another mini-euphoric moment happens when I can make two right turns and the turn signal stays on for both. Why does this make me happy? I have no idea.

My final car-related joy occurs when a song ends precisely at the instant

when I reach my destination. It brings a sense of closure.

Like the rhythmic blinker, this can be achieved deliberately, but then the magic is lost.

While "car" generally has a positive connotation for me, "school" does not. Believe it or not, even inside educational institutions, simple pleasures sit patiently, but latently—just waiting to be discovered.

That vending machine in the Sports Lobby really wants to malfunction and give me two Oatmeal Cream Pies for the price of one.

That door into the math hallway really wants to stay open just long enough for me to sneak through before it latches shut.

Unfortunately, (ha!) school's almost over, so I'll have to find some alternate pleasures this summer when the school corridors are unavailable.

I suggest the day when a painful, red sunburn turns into a golden tan, catching the re-run of that "OC" episode you missed while you were studying for AP exams or catching that first whiff of salty seawater as you approach the beach.

Maybe none of these things appeals to you—they are my idiosyncratic loves after all.

I'm convinced though, the little things put that oomph in each day and make it worthwhile.

If nothing else, we would be lucky to realize that peculiarity escapes none of us, but could bind all of us in universal appreciation.

Summer, interrupted

By Andrea Maxwell

Inside Story Editor

We, the students of WS, have completed an abundance of standardized tests over the last month.

Enormous amounts of time have been spent reviewing for these tests in order for their students to be well prepared.

The Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs) are administered to all required classes in the English, history and math departments.

Relief has finally reached us because these tests are completed, thus the school year is virtually over.



Carmie DeCiant

Scott Carlisle takes a final at the end of the year. Most classes require a final exam that is given at the very end of the year.

The pool has opened and students as well as faculty have become distracted by the much anticipated summer.

Students, however, must not relax. During the last week of school, final exams are given.

These are not like any other tests; they have a much greater impact upon a student's grade.

When teachers determine a student's final grade, they must incorporate each quarter grade as well as the final exam.

As freshmen, quarter grades account for 8/9ths of the final grade, the exam is weighed as 1/9th.

For all other grade levels, both quarter grades and the final exams are weighted the same, 1/3rd of the final grade.

Throughout the school, freshmen, sophomores, juniors and even seniors are held to the same standards. Why are final exams any different?

Final exams are major source of controversy. There is not enough unity among teachers and their final exams.

Personally, I do not think one test should play such a major role in ones final grade, which appears on their transcript.

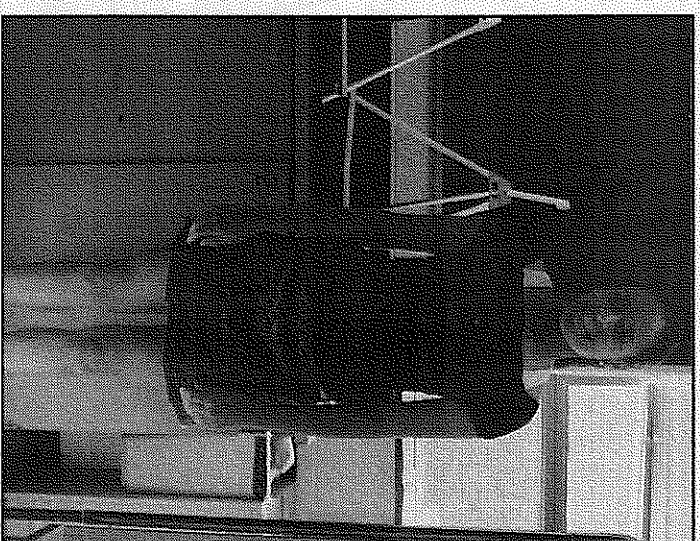
If final exams really are necessary, guidelines are necessary in order to regulate the types of questions on the tests.

For example, some teachers do not require students to take the final exam if they earned an "A" every quarter.

This is a wonderful idea; unfortunately this is only enforced by some teachers.

This policy should be adapted by every department and teacher. When a student works hard enough to earn four "A.s", their hard work should be appreciated. I think that final exams at WS are desperately in need of a change. It is obvious however, they do provide some useful information. There needs to be more unification among tests in each department and teachers.

Also, policies involving students not being required to take an exam because of their GPA, needs to be adapted by the entire school. With these changes, finals would be less stressful, provide a better testing experience and give students a greater opportunity to excel.



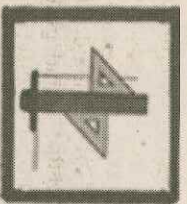
Carmie DeCiant
Larissa Cookson shows off her dressy style at school.

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**Exchange students say
'Aufwiedersehen'**

By Jenny Taylor
Sports Editor

As the school year comes to a close, not only will WS bid fond farewell to seniors, but several exchange students as well.

On June 26, juniors Darinka Trubtschek, Marianne Ochs, and Stine de Lange Koberstad plan to travel back to their homes in Norway and Germany. The girls originally arrived on August 12, 2004 and have lived with host families in the Springfield community since. They came to the US on high school exchange programs, which allow participants to complete a year of study in a foreign country.

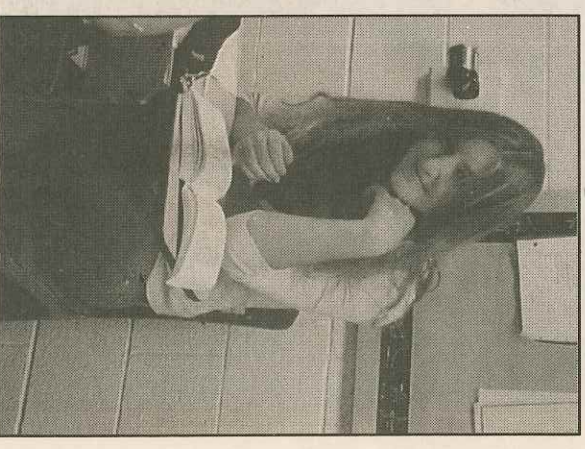
Spending nearly a year experiencing another culture has left these students with many memories. Extracurricular activities, such as sports, are rarely offered in Europe and made quite an impact on the exchange students.

"Playing on the tennis team was the best part of the year," said Ochs. "I got to meet so many new people."

Not only did the students partake in athletics, they also endured challenging courses. Norwegian Stine Koberstad even tackled the task of learning a third language during her time in America. German teacher Christine Bonheim taught Koberstad throughout the year.

"She has given my students lots of insight on how different life is in another culture and how it is living in a different country and learning that language," said Bonheim.

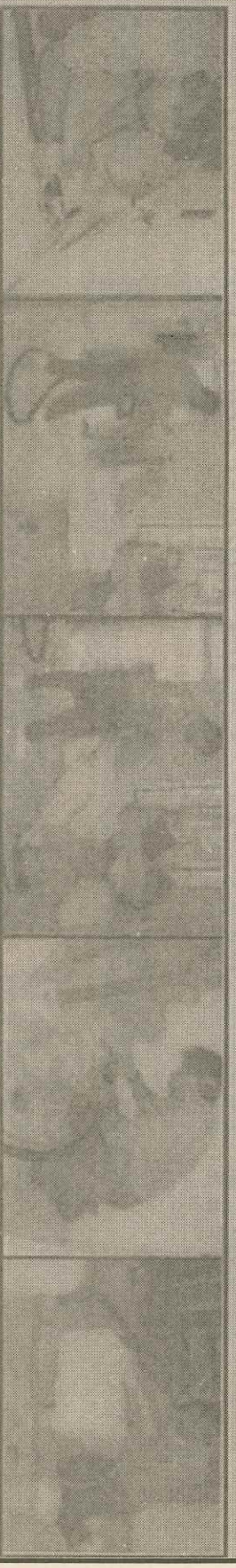
Bonheim supports the exchange program and has seen the benefits. "The advantages [of the program] are



Erica Wilkening
Junior Marianne Ochs enjoyed her time at WS but admits she got homesick over the holidays.

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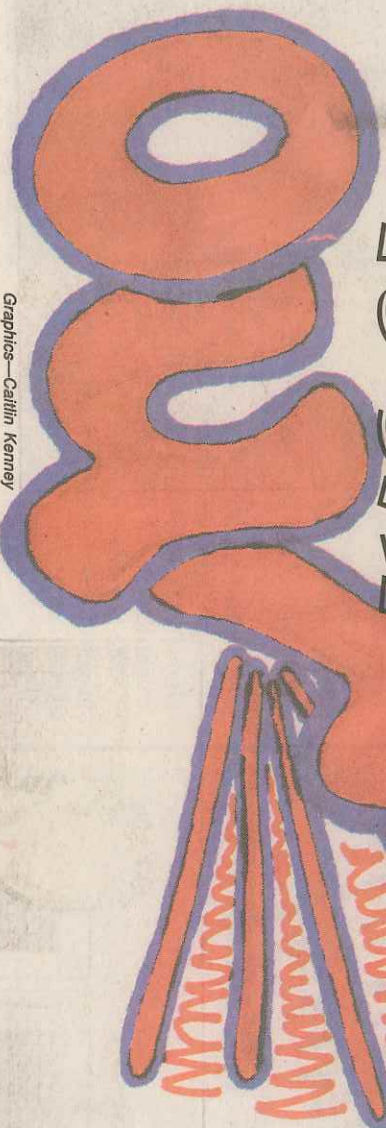
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SOMETHING

TO SAY



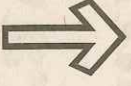
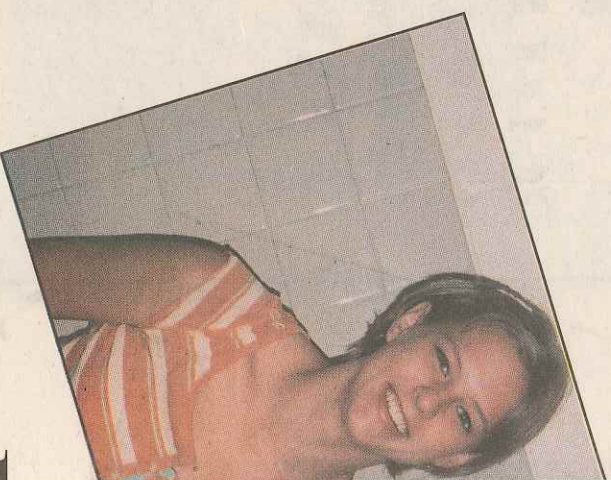
Graphics—Caitlin Kenney

Caitlin Kenney

—“Making it to Regionals in the surprise.”

—“I would like to give a shout friends, pumpkin eaters and c eats squirrels, so watch out. F in the summertime and I was the crazy people.”

—“Keep it real dude, just keep



—What’s your best memory from freshman year?

—Shout out!

—Any advice

for Mr. Griffin?

—“Playing JV so
—“I wouldn’t hav
without you—to r
Katie.”
—“He really conr
students—he’s d

Vicky Davis



—“Going to States for speech & debate... that was [awesome].”

—“My step-mom...she’s really strong; [I am] really proud of her for caring for young kids by herself.”

—“Don’t deny his football past. We all know it [we, being the freshmen].”



Tina Wejda



ne two mile... it was
out to my squirrel
razy friends. A dog
umpkins are rotten
normal before I met
o it real."



*The yearbook seniors went
on a mission—to find
a freshman who would talk
to them, and actually make
sense. Our intrepid
reporters found
six relatively fluent frosh,
and here are their
reflections on the first year
of high school.*



Katleyn

Pray

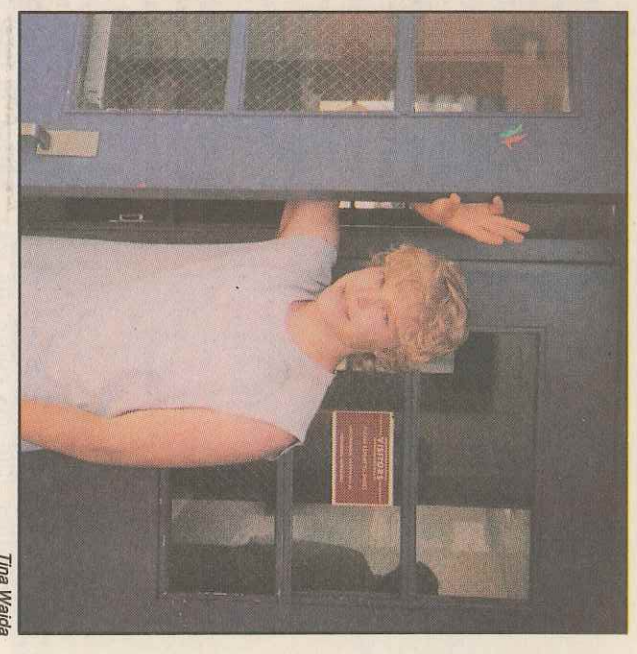
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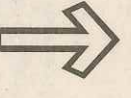
—“Making the varsity soccer
team.”
—“Jesse Vanatta—Hello!”
—“Give me my cell phone back.”



Austin

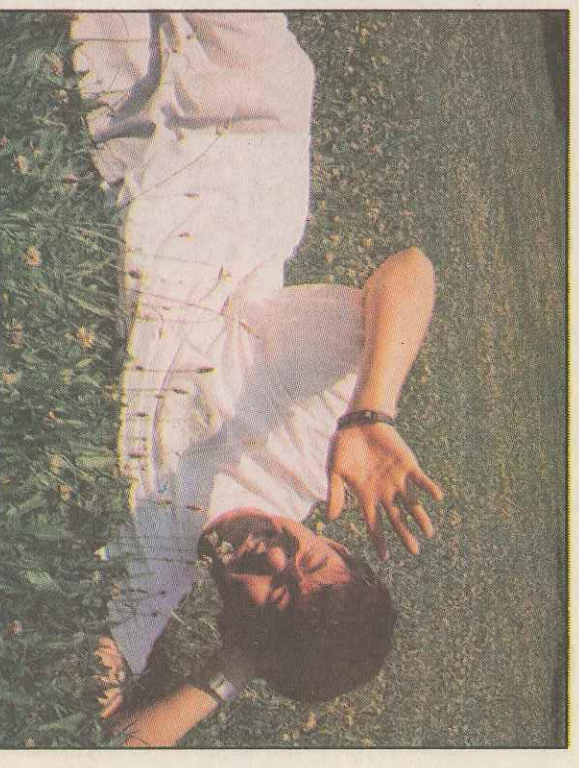
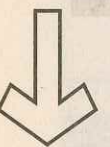
McNair

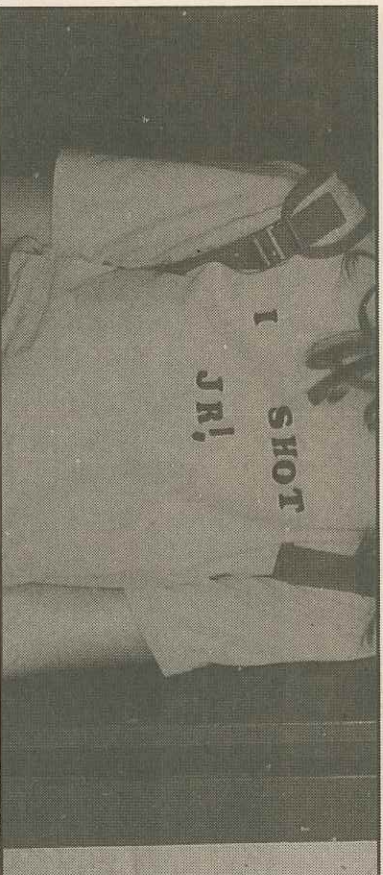
—“Captain for the
football team.”
—“Britney Lemons—I
love you.”
—“Stay pimpin’.”



David Bae

—“Looking into the mirror every day
before going to school.”
—“To Janice, because
she’s really cool.”
—“Be cool, follow the rules and stay
in school.”





Junior Bryn Veditz proudly displays a homemade t-shirt referencing the classic TV show "Dallas." Erica Wilkening

Kids create clothing to

combat conformity

By Beth Stinson

Business/Systems Assistant

The clothes Katie Eargle, Alysia Jordan and Maia Sanders wear cannot be found at retail stores, even if they look like designer-quality ensembles. They make their clothes themselves.

Crafting your own fashion may sound like an extraordinary feat, but for some students, it is what comes naturally.

"I do it because clothes that you buy at stores are so un-cool," said freshman Katie Eargle, who sews creative designs and patches to her clothes.

Eargle's outfits are always colorful, creative, and sometimes unusual.

"I don't really get reactions," said Eargle. "People mostly just stare and think it's cool."

She uses fabric paint, bleach pens, and the ever-useful pair of scissors to personalize her otherwise conservative garb. Other students adore the way Eargle expresses herself through her clothes.

"She has a very unique style," said freshman Alysia Jordan. "I love her stickers and the patches she sews on to things. She's just crazy."

Other students, like freshman Maia Sanders, make skirts and dresses from scratch to satisfy their artistic styles.

"I make my own clothes because I don't want to spend the money to buy

expensive designer clothes from other countries. Plus, I don't really like American clothes," said Sanders.

Sanders makes skirts by hand for a much smaller price than ordering a designer skirt online, and alters much of her store-bought clothing.

Sophomore Tiffany White makes her own tube tops, drawstring shirts, and handbags.

"I make them because I want to be a fashion designer one day, and I love having my own style," said White.

Her go-get-'em attitude and love of fashion lead her to create truly impressive ensembles.

"Her outfits are up-to-date and unique," said freshman Autumn Gilliam. "they stay with what is new, but Tiffany adds her own touch."

Students like freshman Meredith Bermudez profit from their fashion sense. Bermudez makes tote bags and sells them to girls who enjoy her simple, yet creative purses. In fact, she has already made over \$100 and plans to continue making the bags for anyone who is interested.

Girls, and sometimes boys, are crazy for these unique and handmade items, and they instill a sense of awe and wonder in those not accustomed to the world of fashion.

"I think that the people that make their own clothes at our school make better clothes than people that get paid to do it," said Freshman Byron Renoll.

Mind your own business

Self-made student tycoons make their fortunes

By Caitlin Kenney

News Assistant

Creativity is a key factor in the real world. The term "dog eat dog" even applies to student entrepreneurs.

Junior David Eargle shows his originality after school with his snow cone fundraiser for WS's guitar program.

"Snow Caps is dedicated to creating the finest Hawaiian-shaved delight on this side of the Mississippi. If the heat's ever getting you down, or depriving you of your rights, then our snow cones are the perfect way to strike back and say... 'Lay off me...I'm snow cone cool,'" said Eargle.

Sophomore Andy Adell used his money, from mowing up to 12 lawns a week these past two years, on a Jeep. High school kids (who can drive) are faced with the expensive gas prices at local gas stations.

"I'll be lucky if I'm able to survive gas and car payments at this rate," said Adell.

New experiences are often learned when it comes to having to work hard for the money.

"Before I buy something I think of the cost. The value of the dollar I guess," said Adell.

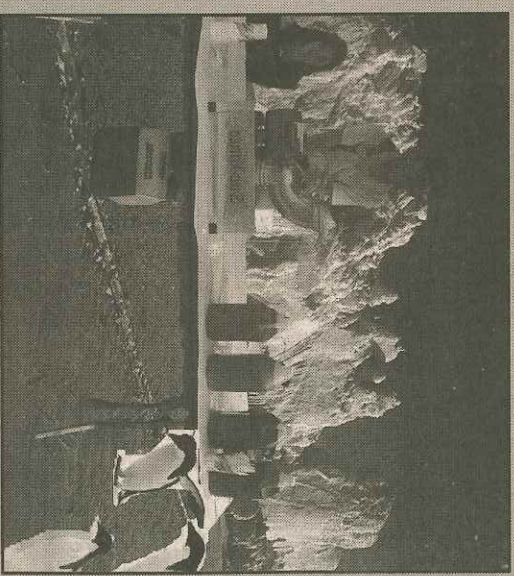
School priorities come first, but the business is a close second.

"It's hard for me to balance [making purses] with sports, but somehow I find time to make them."

said freshman, Meredith Bermudez.

Once students work hard for their cash they find it difficult to part with it. They sometimes stray from buying typical clothes and gadgets.

"The money that I make personally after all is said and done--I'm saving it. I need a large chunk to help pay for the mission I will serve for the Church when I am 19," said Eargle.



Junior Dave Eargle runs his snowcone business in Antarctica thanks to the magic of Photoshop. While he likes to serve penguins, he also uses the business as a fundraiser for the guitar program.

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Fierce film war rages among top video tycoons

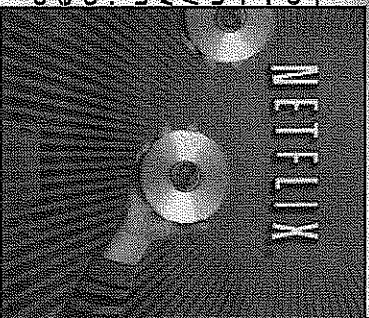
Blockbuster challenges Netflix's online video program

By Stevie Florino
Etc. Editor

For a long time now Blockbuster has pretty much had the monopoly on video rentals. Now, there is a new kid on the block. DVD rental upstart, Netflix Inc., has moved into Blockbuster's territory.



Blockbuster, not used to competition, remodeled their video policies to keep up with their rival, Netflix. They also added a new online rental system similar to Netflix's. Some students opt to rent their videos online and some prefer to pick them up.



Associated Press

Netflix's appeal to the public is that movies are rented online. The president of Netflix, Reed Hastings, a Silicon Valley software executive, came up with the idea for Netflix in 1997, after having to pay a \$40 late fee to Blockbuster for a long-overdue rental of "Apollo 13."

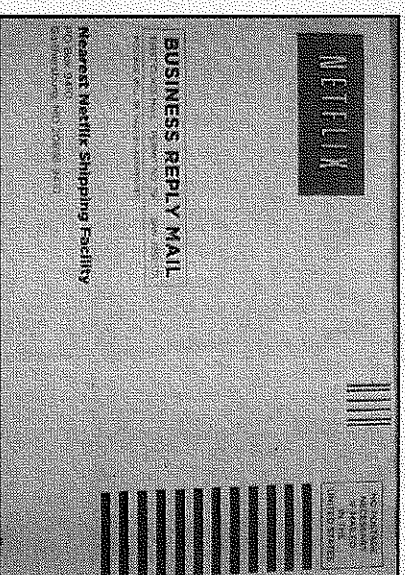
"I like having Netflix because we used to get two movies a week at Blockbuster for ten dollars and Netflix is twenty dollars a month. I think it's a lot better deal."

— Angel Yeepun, freshman

Netflix works like this: Customers pay \$17.99 a month to rent an unlimited number of DVDs, keeping up to three movies at a time. They make their picks online from a list of more than 40,000 titles. Movies are delivered by U.S. mail and customers can keep the flicks for as long as they want. They return the DVDs using postage-paid envelopes and are immediately sent the next available movie on their list.

"I like having Netflix because we used to get two movies a week at Blockbuster for ten dollars and Netflix is twenty dollars a month. I think it's a lot better deal," said freshman Angel Yeepun.

Blockbuster now finds itself in a position they are not used to being in; they are currently battling Netflix for the online video rental market. Blockbuster has decided to start an online video rental program and



Liz Bucheister

Many prefer Netflix because videos are sent right to your door for a fixed monthly fee.

has recently opened eight new distribution centers from which they mail out the movies. That gives them 30 facilities overall. This expansion puts Blockbuster in line with Netflix's program.

In a competitive move, Blockbuster decided to underprice Netflix by \$3.00. For only \$14.99 a month you can rent all the movies you want. Blockbuster's online program works the same as Netflix's. Blockbuster also decided to throw in the "no late fee" policy." However, some students found a flaw to the policy.

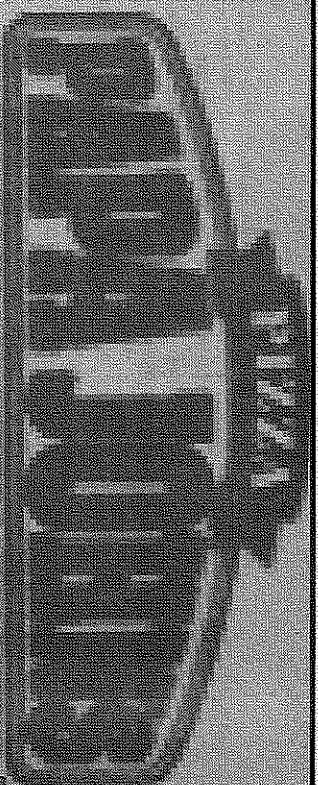
"I used to have the Blockbuster program and we ended up paying a lot of overdue fees even though they said there were no late fees," said sophomore Emily Wolford.

Many students prefer to keep it simple and stay with the program called, "go to Blockbuster and rent a movie."

"I'd rather just go to Blockbuster because it's more convenient and you don't have to wait for the movie to come in the mail," said sophomore Melea McCreary. Living close to a Blockbuster comes in handy especially when you do not have your license yet.

"Blockbuster is easy to use because it's right down the street from my house and I can walk to it," said freshman Kelly Williams.

In a move to keep the competition close, Netflix signed an agreement with Wal-Mart to take over their online movie business. For Netflix, this means one less competitor and more subscribers.



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Happy campers head for fun summer experiences

By Sarah Alvarez
Sports Assistant

The time of year is approaching when students flee Springfield and excite themselves with activities other than school.

Heading off to a summer camp is a way students add an edge to summer. Over the years, camp has evolved into more than a summer retreat for students weary from school but a place where students practice a sport and take on new endeavors.

In-state camps are attended by students seeking challenges in sports. Local universities such as James Madison University, University of Virginia and Virginia Commonwealth University are attended by students playing field hockey, basketball, and football. Meeting new players and improving skills are highlights for students at sports camps.

"I want to go because at camp it makes you concentrate on what you are doing because you can't really go anywhere else," says freshman Brittany

Klippstein. Concentration and focus on the sport guarantees improvement and sharpens skills as something campers hope to do. Klippstein prefers overnight camps to day camps because being constantly immersed in the sport will improve her focus.

Students do not always travel solo; whole teams travel to camps together. The field hockey team is headed for James Madison University in July, and the boys JV basketball team is going to Virginia Commonwealth University.

Through their experiences teams will be able to bond and that will help the players win during the season.

But not every one attends a sport camp. Junior Michelle Brannon is a nine-year camp veteran of Rim Rock horse camp in West Virginia and now attends the camp as a counselor but with the same excitement about sleeping in the screened cabins and tending to the horses.

George Mason University also offers an all arts and science camp that freshman Alysia Jordan attends. She



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takes pre-pre medical courses in addition to forensic science. "Trust me it's not like a educational summer school camp; it's more fun than it seems," says Jordan.

Everyone has different preferences concerning day camp versus sleep away camp, sporting versus retreating. One commonality between all campers though is the desire to have fun.



Liz Warden/Oracle
Junior Vicky Ragan enjoys standing in front of the mountainous scene at Camp Varsity, where she will be attending this summer as a camp counselor.

To Varun Harjani, the best part of camp is "Meeting new people, playing, with the team, and just having fun."

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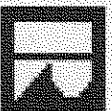
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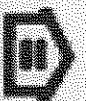
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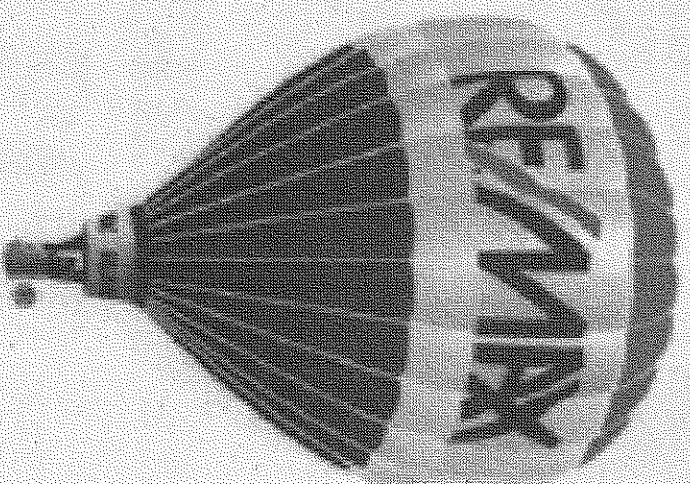
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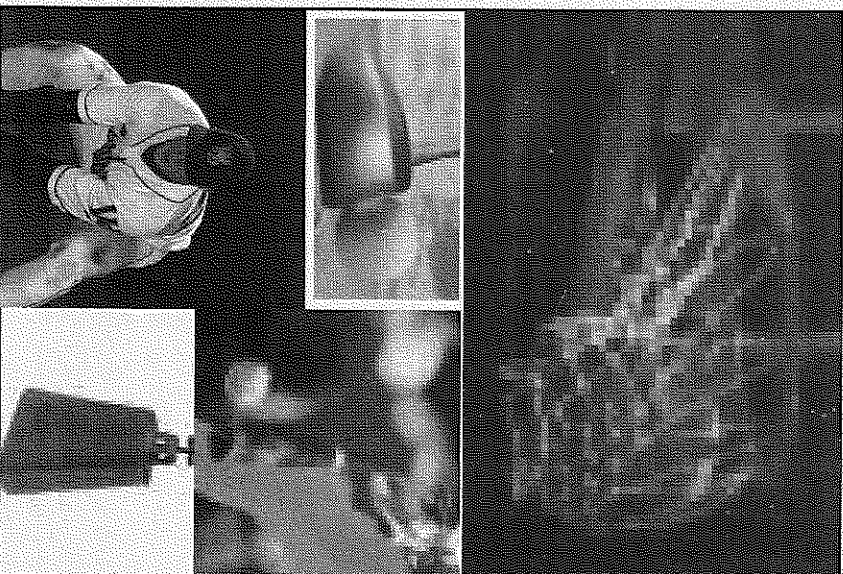
Bringin' the noise

Sounds of sports make the game fun for fans

By Tim O'Keefe
Sports Columnist

From the squeaking shoes during an NBA game to the "crack" of a baseball hitting the "sweet spot" of a baseball bat, the sounds of sports are crucial to the experience.

Successful organizations in sports media use the nostalgic tactic of music and sound. NFL films use symphonic masterpieces as background music to bring emotion to the picture. The passion, the feeling, and the intensity is portrayed through the music. Trying to mute the volume next time you watch NFL films. It is not the same.



Associated Press
Sports sounds leave lasting impressions on fans even after the game is over, no matter what game.

The voices of sports triggers memories as well. The legendary voice and poetic commentary John Facenda reminds me of the rich NFL history. The slow and mundane voice of Pat Summerall reminds me of numerous intense NFL playoff games (mostly Packer games). The classic voice of Bob Costas reminds me of watching the Braves losing numerous World Series and the Bulls winning the NBA Finals year after year.

I miss the intro theme song to the NBA on NBC. Besides the fact that the intro brings back memories of the video game, the music reminds me of the agony over Michael Jordan's jumper to beat the Jazz in the 1998 NBA finals (I wanted the Jazz to win). It reminds me of

O'Keefe's Beef

the excitement when New York Knicks guard Allan Houston hit a running, game-winning jump shot against the Heat in 1999. It reminds me of my childhood. Maybe I just have a keen memory, but the music brings it all back.

Cowbells instantly trigger memories of WS football games (they also trigger the image of Will Farrell's SNL skit). Next time I go to a farm I will remember high school football.

The power of music hits in the center of the soul, and the sounds we hear everyday are etched into our mind without realizing it. It reminds me not to forget the past.

Running home as district champs

Varsity baseball proves worth in districts

By Cam Rushton
Sports Editor

Most teams were wrapping up their seasons towards the end of the . Some continued into the postseason, such as lacrosse, softball, and various track athletes. No team was as surprising in the postseason as the varsity baseball team.

Led by seniors Kierman Whitworth, Sean Lampley, and Roland Thiele, the varsity guys came back in districts as underdogs and clinched the district title as a result. They were on a hot streak until they were ousted in the second round of regionals. In the district semifinals, they beat Robinson 3-1 and went on to beat Lake Braddock 4-2 in the district finals, both of which are rivals and were undefeated.

"Braddock and Robinson thought they could beat us," said sophomore infielder Brian Deering, "but it feels awesome to beat them."

The district championship win was their first in seven years, when coach Ron Tugwell headed the varsity team.

"[Winning the district championship] was the pinnacle of achievement."

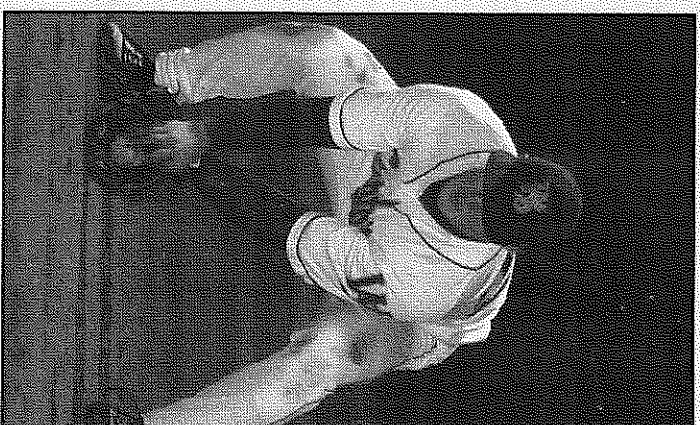
— Daniel Pedersen, sophomore

Winning districts and advancing to regionals was just the beginning; all the athletes on the varsity team agree that their major goal for next year is to win it all.

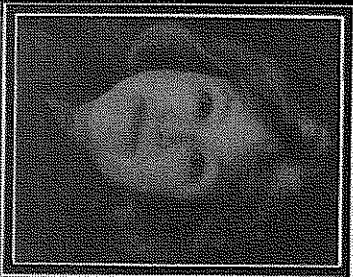
"We need to win districts again and go farther in regions," said sophomore pitcher/first baseman Daniel Pedersen.

The varsity boys seem to have given the fans a preview of what to expect next year. Their dedication has allowed them to drastically improve. This hard work will eventually pay off even more, with either regional and/or state championships in the many seasons to come.

However, for the time being, the district championship fits well with the team. The district championship was "the pinnacle of achievement" said Pedersen.



Special Message
Sophomore Brian Deering scoops up a ground ball during a crucial game. His efforts, along with his teammates, helped win the district championship.



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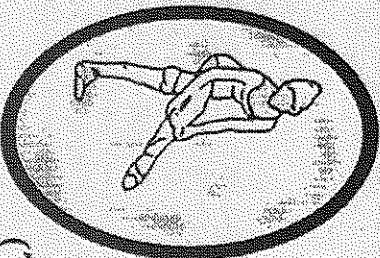
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Poor Liz's Almanac

From barracudas to birth control

By Liz Weiderhold

Oracle Editor

San Diego: Home of the Padres, of strong naval defense and of drunken hippies.

I recently visited this ravishing city with my father, and although I could have died about eight or nine times, I still managed to have a pretty fantastic time.

Even flying to San Diego brought a bundle of fun. I was seated in the front row where I was just close enough to see first-class get their coffee, cakes, assorted chocolates, steak dinner and ice cream sundaes but far enough away so I wouldn't have to eat any of that crap. And while I was munching on my three complimentary mini-pretzels, Claudette staggered in.

Claudette was a pseudo-blonde business woman who suffered from an ailment called "being born French." I don't mean to be making generalizations but even if an Asian lady was driving her while Suzuki on the wrong side of the road at 11 MPH she wouldn't fulfill her stereotype as well as Claudette did.

I think she had absolutely no knowledge that there were other people on the flight with her. For example, she demanded to be "zeated" in first-class and was shocked to find that people had already filled it up.

Then when she was physically forced to sit in a coach seat (God forbid), she sprawled the contents of her purse throughout the row so that the man sitting next to her had to curl up in a little ball on his seat, whimpering, because she had left no room for him.

When we finally arrived in San Diego, we visited Sea World, the San Diego Zoo and Petco Stadium. You may be asking yourself,

"Did you decide not to go to the beach because you were afraid of sharks?" and I would answer,

"No, I'm not an idiot, it was because of the barracudas." I realize that I probably wouldn't die from a barracuda, but I would die of a heart attack associated with seeing the barracuda.

But I don't mind seeing barracudas and other life-threatening animals when

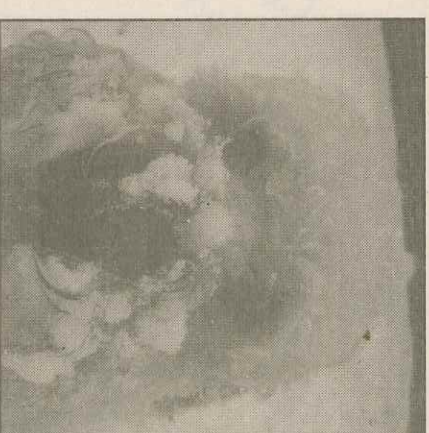
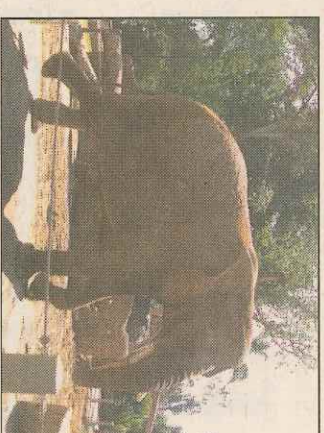
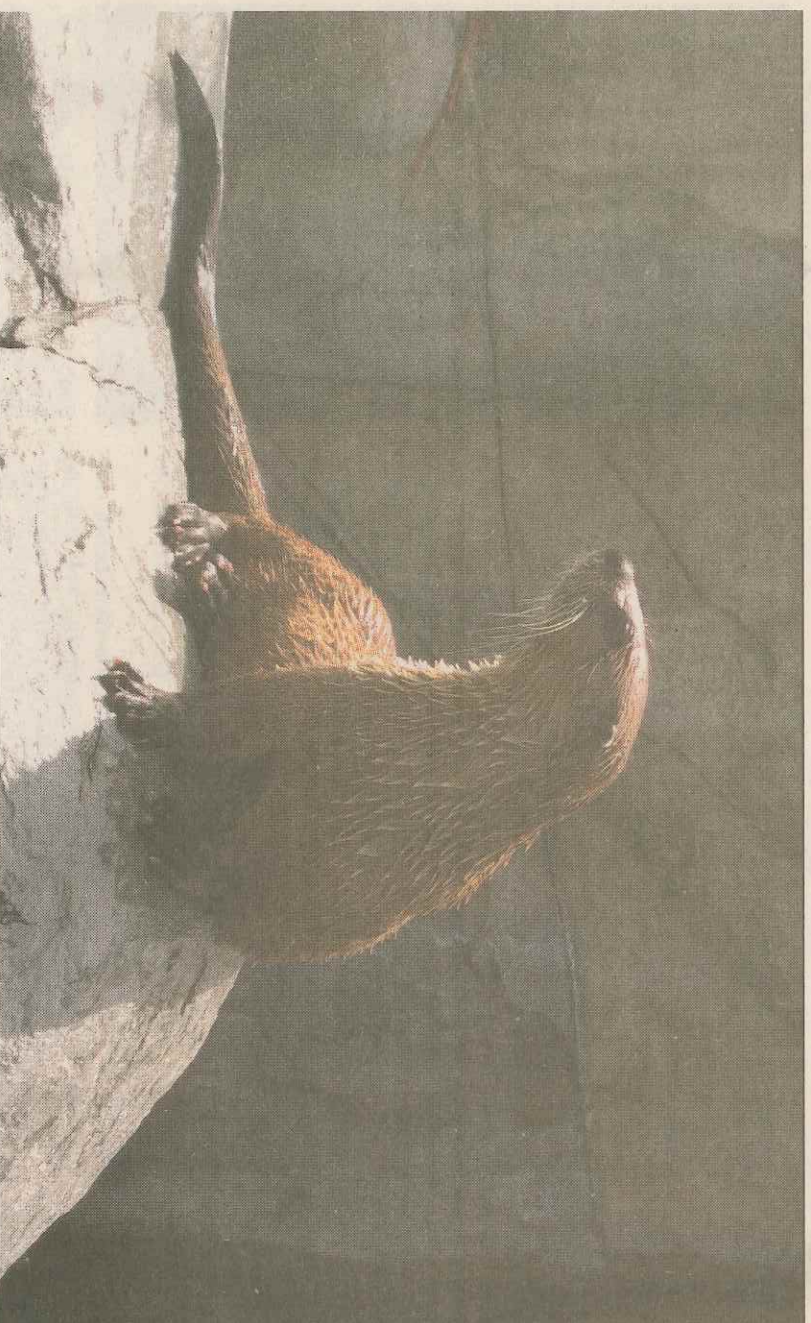
they are behind a 900-volt electrical fence. This is why the San Diego Zoo and Sea World appealed to me. I could relish in the fact that five inches of solid glass separated me from a 5,000-pound killer whale while still being able to marvel at its fat and barnacles.

In fact, the only animal I petted was a dolphin. This is essentially the same as petting a wet hot dog, except the hot dog doesn't try to bite anchovies from your hand.

And while I was innocently feeding Fibbia, my dolphin, 30 elementary school children wheedled their way to the edge of the pool, scaring Fibbia away.

After seeing hundreds of children whining in their fractured English, I decided I never want a child of my own. Maybe Sea World should market itself as birth control rather than the home of Shamu.

So that was my trip. No sun bathing, no surfing, no sandcastles. Instead I enjoyed American commercialism at its best and even had some fun elbowing four-year olds at the polar bear exhibit.



Hoagie's World

Seanfeld's much ado about nothing

By Sean Hogan

Features Editor

Jerry Seinfeld inspired everyone who has ever watched his hit show. In addition to motivating the show's numerous enthusiasts, he has motivated me to write a column about nothing in particular, like his show was.

The Barber (Season 5)
The crazy lady holding the shears attacked me last week. My beautiful curly hair was about three-and-a-half inches long and was shaved like a turkey to an inch-and-a-half. An example of the dialogue:

"How much you want off?"

"An inch"

"Three inches? Ok!"

"NO! Only an inch!"

"Oh, I'm sorry, I be more careful with the scissors"

"MY

"Yes, eez beautiful!"

"EEZ-GONE!"

The Mom (Season 6)

Recently, I was told by my parents to clean my room, which included my closet, which hadn't been touched since 1997. While digging through the dead bodies, dirty magazines and heroin needles (or my beanie babies, Lego magazines and hero action figures), I found tons (literally) of interesting stuff. Among my

closet's contents: the coral-colored polo shirt I wore for my second grade school picture (my older sisters are still fighting to the death for it as we speak), a wooden sword from Medieval Day in fourth grade (I'm keeping it in case a monster, or even worse Michael Jackson ever ends up in my room), a Pokémon game (I'm still glad to be the world's best trainer. My motto: Run away before my little monsters Pikachu! Your likely motto: Hoagie is the biggest geek ever, and he makes horrible Pokémon puns.), and a Hanson CD (I'm so ashamed).

The Pitch (Season 4)
The newest team to the area, the Washington Nationals are atop the standings of the NL East, despite being picked to finish last in almost every respectable baseball publication, including *Street and Smith* and *The Daily Shopper* (with coupons for free borscht).

They have done this despite playing only 15 games versus teams actually on a Major League level, above .500 (as opposed to the Orioles, who have played 35 against bottom feeders such as the Devil Rays and the Royals, whose teams consist of players that roughly have the talent of a spazzy elementary school student (without Ritalin).

The Apology (Season 9)

Finally, I would like to apologize for all of the bad jokes and puns I've made in the past year. Also, to my older sister Kim for everything mean I've said and done



Nothing is the theme of "Seinfeld" and this article.

TBS
to her in the years we've lived under the same roof. I meant most of it, but I apologize nonetheless. She will be going to college next year, and I will be an only child. If I wanted to be spoiled and wanted attention, this would be great. But I won't be spoiled because I'm no "princess" and any attention from your parents at this point in adolescence is probably bad attention (sorry Mom and Dad). In conclusion, I'll end by her favorite adage: "You're funny but looks aren't everything."