



The RAVEN

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West Springfield High School 6100 Rolling Road Springfield, Virginia 22152

The last dance

Long-time SGA sponsor says family comes first

By Erica Wink
Journalism 1

Ninth-grade biology teacher Jennifer Owens has declared this her eleventh and last year teaching at WS. Her last year of interims, report cards and Homecoming.

The veteran teacher says she wants to spend more time with her children, Lidia, Mason and Nichole.

WS has been a special place to Owens. Looking back, Owens, who has spent almost a decade as SGA sponsor, recalls some unforgettable events from over the years.

When students in the class of 2008 were only about five years old,

Owens began teaching here. She remembers dissecting frogs for the first time out of college.

"We were having trouble locating the testicles of the frogs. Finally, a boy named Joey found them. So I said, 'If anybody can't find their testicles, Joey will show you his.' Of course, nobody let that one go," said Owens.

Owens says she will take many memories with her when she leaves. Some of these memories will be sad.

"One year I lost a student to a car accident. I'll never forget that," she said.

Owens has been busy at work, planning Homecoming, since this summer.

"We start in the summer, getting ideas for the theme, so that students can vote for their favorites," Owens said. "My favorite part about Homecoming is the result."

When the annual celebration rolls around next year, the school definitely will feel Owens's absence.

"She's like our god, and has an answer for everything. I'm going to miss her so much," said SGA officer Meryl Cox.

Many students and teachers will remember Owens as a huge Disney fan. As soon as one walks into her classroom, the Minnie Mouse pencil on her

desk or class handouts with a Disney font are visible.

When freshman Alex Knabe found out that this was Owens's last year, she protested. "NO! We need our Disney!" Knabe is one of Owens's biology students this year.

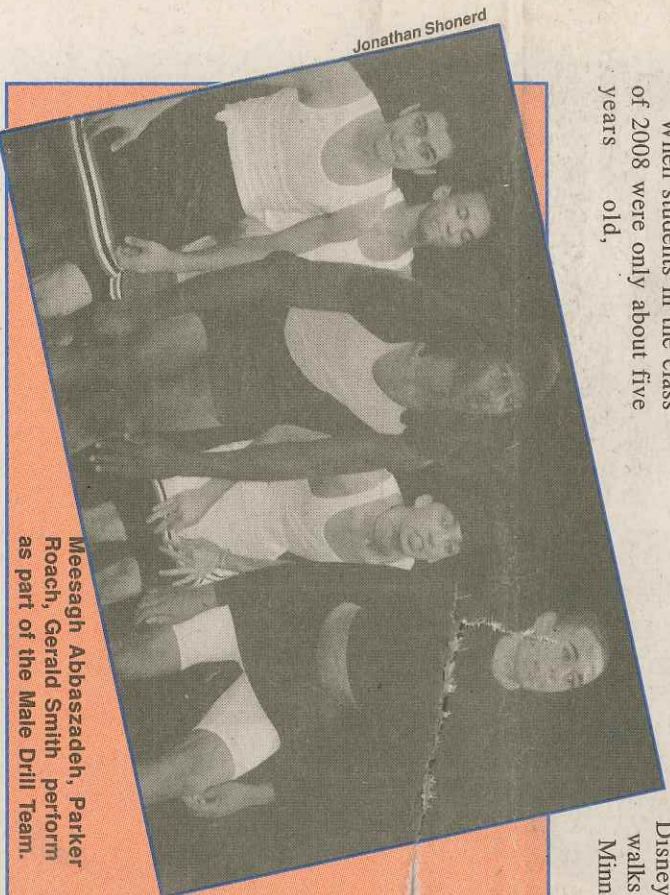
Owens's personal life will always be tied to WS. On February 21, 1998, Owens married her husband, Guitar teacher Keith, in the school's auditorium. Since

See OWENS on Page 6.

SGA sponsor, biology teacher and Disneyophile Jennifer Owens plans to spend more time with her family.



Oracle File Photo



Meesagh Abbaszadeh, Parker Roach, Gerald Smith perform as part of the Male Drill Team.

Jonathan Shoner

18th Spartanfest dawns tomorrow

By Jon Nylen
Oracle Editor

Cotton candy, candied apples, and just plain candy. The WS community will be able to get its sugar fix tomorrow at the school's 18th-annual Spartanfest, from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m.

Spartanfest is a chance for clubs throughout the school to fundraise and let the community know what they are about.

"I have to go because I work the thespian booth. [But] I also go to see my friends play on stage," said senior Kacey Myers.

Clubs, classes and community crafters who wanted to have a booth at Spartanfest had to register with the activities office. Spartanfest is put together by veteran Spartanfest organizer and teacher Charlie Scudder.

"We want to try to get the community involved in the school, so they know what's going on over here at WS," said Scudder. Scudder who has organized Spartanfest for the past 10 years enjoyed putting

Spartanfest together. "We do it for the kids," said Scudder.

Spartanfest is also a chance for various student groups to perform, including alumni bands, guitar classes, Pizzazz and Personality.

During this year's Spartanfest, students will enjoy themselves while a few of their peers languish in a testing room taking the ACTs. This conflict will not be as bad as in years past, when the SATs were scheduled the same day.

At Spartanfest this year the Crew Booster Club has arranged a climbing wall, while the Spartan Booster Club is bringing in a moon bounce.

The decision of whether or not to allow the always popular dunk tank is still pending. Guitar plans to sell chili and cornbread, while some of its students perform. Chorus students will dress up as Cupid and sing love telegrams. The Art Honor Society will help Spartanfest-goers design a baby pumpkin, and will offer button making and a floating duck game.

Homecoming '04

By Joley Sullivan
Senior Staff Writer

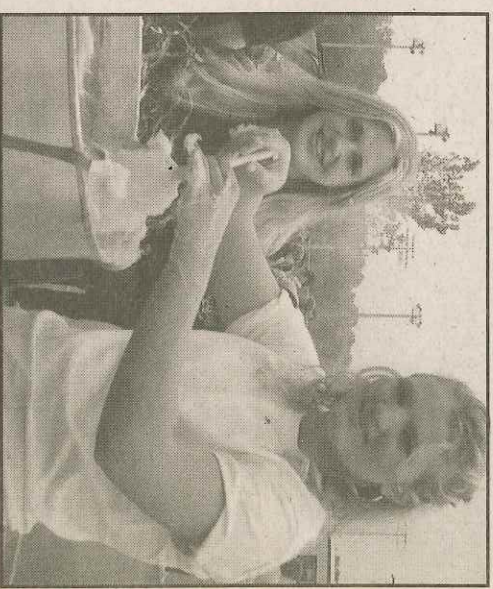
Four decades flashed before our eyes, a blond won the queen's crown for the first time in years, and Christina Aguilera became Mr. Spartan last week.

This year's annual Homecoming week

was themed "Flashback in Time." During Decade Day, the freshmen dressed in styles from the '50s, the sophomores the '60s, the juniors the '70s and the seniors the '80s.

The well-attended Powder Puff game kicked off the week, where the sophomores dominated the game shutting out the freshmen 38-0. "It was just so fun," said sophomore Tyanna Castellano,

See HOMEcoming on Page 6.



Oracle File Photo

Lauren Fawcett and Kristen McLain work for the class of 2005 at last year's Spartanfest.

"It's more a social event [for the kids] than it is a fundraiser," said AHS sponsor Kathy Rehm. "It's going to be interesting, and the baby ducks will be new for us... it will be fun."



Text me.



Pick your pumpkins.



Pet look-alikes

Minors unfairly muzzled by US electoral traditions

Politically active teens deserve to be enfranchised

Although it would be slightly overdramatic to do so, minors in America could claim to be victims of taxation without representation. A portion of all paychecks is withheld for taxes and another portion is contributed to social services. So in fairness, teens under 18 should also have some say in the government that controls these funds.

The argument against lowering the voting age is that most 18-year olds choose not to vote. It is likely that younger, and less-educated peers would also ignore the right to vote.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2002, about 62 percent of teenagers were employed during the month of July. These teens, that are having their salaries withheld by the government, are displaying responsibility by choosing to work. Their proactive nature is a sign that they would be responsible and self-motivated enough to make the trip to the polls.

Additionally, the charge that 16-year olds are substantially less educated than their two-year-older counterparts, is rather ridiculous. By 16, teens have already studied Civics, American History and World History. As a result of class discussions, many students are even more aware of current events than parents who are probably registered voters.

Editorial

Regardless of education, by 16, new responsibilities and rights become motivation to vote. Sixteen-year olds are granted the right to drive, but are not invited to take part in voting about rules of the road or road improvements. They can have a job, but have no say in the labor laws that decide how many hours they can work.

This conflict between granting teens more rights, while still denying them their suffrage is currently being addressed across the nation. Last May, California's senate passed a bill that would lower the voting age to 14. The bill proposes that 14- and 15-year olds would get a quarter of a vote, and 15- and 16-year olds would get half a vote. While partial votes are not entirely fair, the bill addresses the fact that lowering the voting age would encourage more interest in the process.

Groups are popping up throughout the U.S. in support of lowering the voting in. For this year's presidential election, teenvote.org has organized nationwide protests in support of lowering the voting age.

Granting the right to vote to high schoolers may seem preposterous or even pointless, but based on the number of teens who exercise their rights to work and drive, it seems logical if they could, they would sport the red, white and blue "I Voted" sticker on November 2.

Hola, tu hablas español?

Some Spanish 2 students apparently learned everything wrong last year

By Lindsay Bruhn

Viewpoint Editor

While sitting in SPANISH 2 in the first week of school, I listened to the normal beginning-of-the-year speech of class policies and the recurring Honor Code. The teacher then asked us which teachers we had last year for Spanish 1. When we raised our hands, she cringed at the sight.

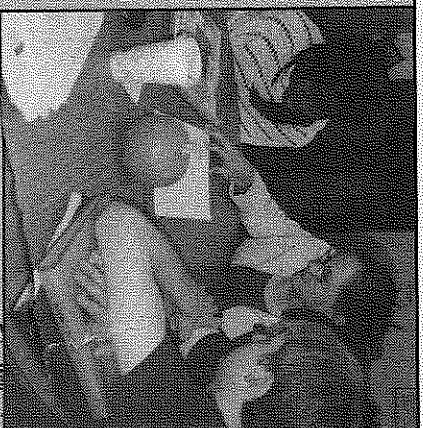
We were told that these teachers had done us a great injustice. We were taught poorly, to say the least. The few verbs we learned were incorrectly conjugated and the Spanish 2 teachers had witnessed it.

If the problem was in plain view, I am a little concerned that this issue was not addressed before I had potentially wasted my elective. These teachers were hired by Fairfax County, yet they were not up to par. That is not a good thing.

My Spanish 2 teacher told the entire class that if we got a C+ or lower in Spanish 1 (for a specific list of teachers) then we would not likely pass Spanish 2. This announcement unnerved me a little, because I had planned on obtaining at least a B this year, which is what I gained last year. And to say that those who earned C+'s would not even pass put a damper on my goal.

My current teacher advised us that if we felt we did not have a good grasp on the material then we should go back to Spanish 1, or switch to a different language. The possibility that one of my electives last year was a waste of time didn't sit well with me, and having to take the same class twice wouldn't look so good on my college resume.

I walked down to my guidance counselor's office, where I immediately asked to be switched. I did not want my grade point average to suffer because of a previous teacher's mistake. The



Erica Wilkerson

Spanish Honor Society student tutors Spanish 2 students who were inaccurately taught by former Spanish teachers and are now struggling.

counselor was very helpful, and everything went smoothly except for one small issue. All the other languages I wanted to take, or would even be of use to me, were full. The issue had been sprung on us at an inopportune moment. My stress level rose as I realized I was stuck.

Though I am still in Spanish 2 and getting by, I think that the issue was presented to the students in a poor fashion. I am also wondering how WS hired teachers of such unfortunate quality. In spite of this, I am very grateful for the help that is now being offered to those of us who had the inappropriate teachers.

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Halloween; when a kid can be a kid

By Liz Weiderhold

Managing Editor

I have been a ladybug, a pumpkin, a genie, a pirate, Harry Potter and a dirty baker of laundry, but I still want to be a clown, an elephant and Albert Einstein. I am sixteen years old, I have an avid imagination and I think I deserve to have the privilege of Trick-or-Treating.

It is always teens that are oppressed by our cultural norms. Too young to vote, too old to trick-or-treat. No wonder teenagers are such little brats. I figure that since we cannot change the voting restriction, we should be allowed to spend Halloween night just being kids without snippy comments from neighbors who want to give the candy to the smaller kids.

We are not stealing the candy by trying to exercise our inherent freedom of childhood innocence. We are as entitled to have the candy as that four year old who dresses up as Charizard the Pokemon. We are kids too.

This is as much *our* America as it is the whiny Elementary School kid's. If our parents still make tax deductions because our age labels us "dependents," we better be allowed to deduct the cost of our costume with some fun-size candy bars and a night of good ol' Halloweening.

So I say, ring strangers' doorbells valiantly on October 31, dressed in asinine costumes resembling Mickey Mouse. Boldly recite the famous lines "Trick or Treat." Stand up, fellow teenagers, against this obsolete tradition of giving candy to ONLY the ones who look cutest in their costumes. Be a kid once again and be proud of it.

The Oracle

West Springfield High
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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 reporting bias as possible. Opinions expressed in Viewpoint and in reviews and columns. Editorials represent the opinion of at least two-thirds of the Editorial Board and do not reflect the views of the advisor, 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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Certain students get Blackboard[®] bored[™]

Blackboard not helpful to students

By Christian Romeo

Senior Staff Writer

The creators of Blackboard.com had good intentions. But then, so did the creators of communism. Neither of which actually works.

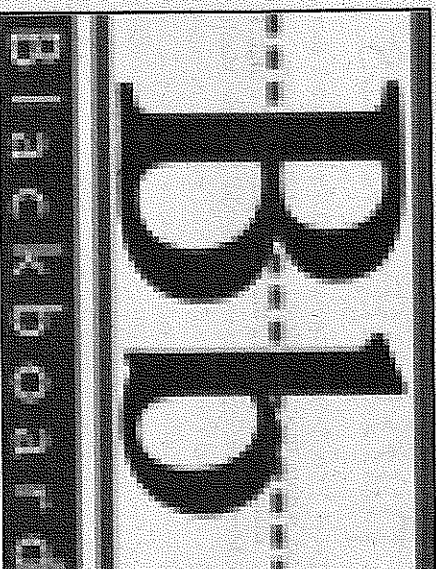
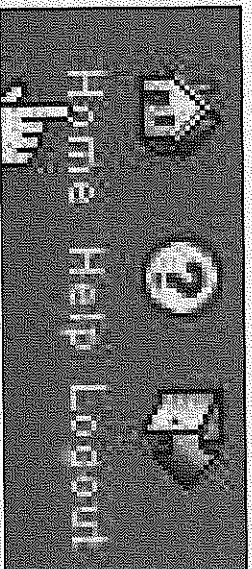
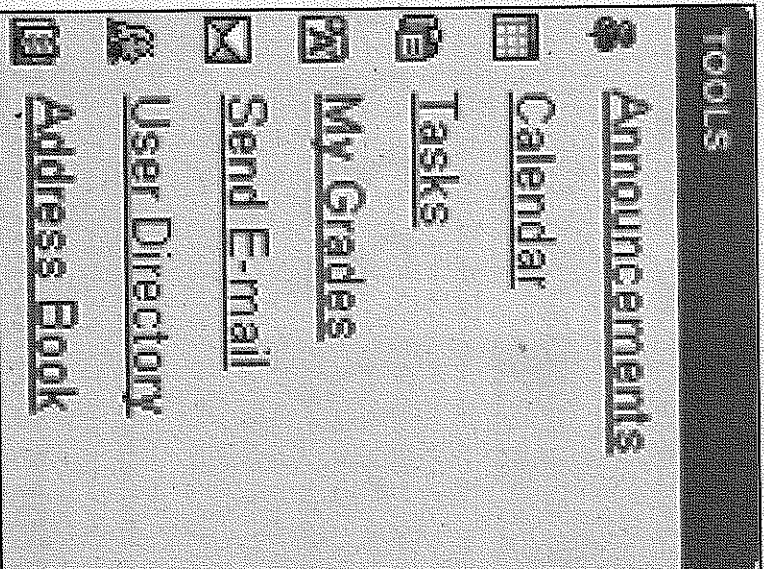
Well, that is very nice and idealistic, but it is impossible for humans to learn 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. I have enough trouble with our allotted 7 hours, 5 days a week.

It is also impossible for some students to access the site. Once logged on, it is not unusual to see classes that were taken in middle school listed on the front page along with current classes, giving the unsettling feeling that Blackboard.com operates in some sort of spiraling time warp, blending the past, present and future in one large, homogenous mess of scheduling. According to my Blackboard.com account last year, I was enrolled in three 5th period classes and was taking two different math classes simultaneously.

Teachers also have their share of frustrations with the site. They complain of the long time it takes to upload documents onto the website, and even when documents are up there, very few students actually look at them or print them out since homework is usually handed out or announced in class. Those who try to coerce students into using Blackboard.com by assigning them questions to respond to are not much more successful since not everyone has computers or Internet access.

Unfortunately, not all teachers use the site. I was recently on a college visit and missed my classes that day. I tried to find out my assignments by logging on to Blackboard, but sadly, only one of my teachers had posted any homework. Even if the other had, it is doubtful I would have been able to find it since the buttons on the site are not very descriptive as to where they lead and it usually takes me anywhere from five to twenty minutes to find what I'm looking for, or to figure out that it doesn't exist.

Owning and maintaining such large pieces of cyberspace real estate is expensive and time-consuming, time and money that could be better spent on resources for our teachers and students. Fairfax County is the second richest county in America. I find that hard to believe when middle school students are constantly having to purchase supplies for teachers. Communism failed when the Soviet Union collapsed. As for Blackboard.com, it is only a matter of time.



These Blackboard logos symbolize a site where homework is posted, therefore making the school-issued assignment books not crucial for the completion of assignments.

Students appreciate online homework

posting

By Adam Rosen

Oracle Editor

I'm a student that likes a teacher when they go out of their way for me. So when teachers post information on Blackboard I'm pleased. We live in a technological world where the Internet is king.

Blackboard has been around for about three years and has been used by students, faculty and parents. It is a great way to find out homework and find out what's going on in class. Each year Blackboard is adding something new to the website, whether it be a calendar or a course list.

I'm the sort of the person that forgets to write down the homework. I don't always put my homework in my assignment book. I'm lazy. I would honestly rather go home and check blackboard for what assignments I have. It's easy, and if you have DSL, it's quick. The Internet is a tool that students should use not only for papers and research but also to check their grades and make sure they're prepared for class. Copying down everything in class can be tedious and most of the time the Internet is easier.

A few teachers even go to the extent of putting notes on Blackboard, to me that shows a lot. They want us to succeed and by reinforcing concepts whether it is in class or on the internet.

So when teachers post information on Blackboard I'm pleased. We live in a technological world where the Internet is king.

It's a great idea, because if I missed something in class I can always check Blackboard for what I missed.

It's helpful even though we should be responsible by copying down the notes or homework in classes. But Blackboard can also be used for finding out grades, for adding tasks and looking at calendar. Blackboard is an assignment book that is on the computer and should be used by all students of all ages.

Remember what I said, "Internet is King."

Letter-to-the-Editor

Dear Editors,

I just moved from a country where the legal driving age is 17, and since I am only 16 I haven't actually even gotten around to getting my permit. Even though every day on my way to and from school, while I am trying to mounthfully along in the cold as other kids my age speed past me in style and comfort, I have not really been struck with the desire to drive until yesterday.

I was walking (what else?) home from the Giant when I saw a high schooler go shooting past me up the road. His car made the most excellent roar as he

If I were being attacked by a squirrel or a badger, per se, I would much rather be with a man who had a car loud and ferocious enough to scare them off.

Few by, and I must say I was impressed by the sheer manliness of the speed, let alone the sound. I honestly believe that there is almost nothing more awesome than going twice (why not three times, if you can manage it?) the speed limit up and down Rolling Road in your mother's tricked-out-hand-me-down Honda with two bumper stickers on the back

that read "Proud Parent of a Cardinal Forest Elementary Honor Roll Student" (hers) and "Slayer RULES!" (yours).

I have a bit of a secret to share; every day after school I troll Rolling Road (which I believe "Klock and Rolling Road" would be a more appropriate name for, given the circumstances) with my eyes peeled for the slickest, dopest, fastest car on the road. This is because I am single and can think of no better criteria to judge a man than by his car. If I were being attacked by a squirrel or a badger, per se, I would much rather be with a man who had a car loud and ferocious enough to scare them off than be with a guy who drove a quiet, reliable, and boring sedan, no matter how many Slayer stickers were on it.

And more importantly than the car's appearance, I would rather walk in sub-arctic temperatures wearing only a coat made literally of ice for the rest of my life than be seen in a car going less than 80 mph, no matter what other slammir accessories the car had.

I've heard often enough people asking why car manufacturers make the speedometers going up to 160 miles per hour (sometimes more) if the speed limit (outside of Germany) is never that high.

This is a very valid question. It is a common assumption that speed limits are set to make sure fools like me who walk everywhere are not flattened as they sprint for their lives across roads they've got no right to be on in the first place. The correct answer, of course,



Students walking on Rolling cannot help but examine the speed and style of cars that pass them.

is that speed limits were thoroughly established keeping in mind the adolescent's need to attract a mate before they reach the wrinkly and disgusting age of 30.

As anyone who has ever attended high school will testify, there is no better way to demonstrate to the world what a hard-rocking, wild-child revolutionary you are than by dedicating your life to the thrill of "cruising" at 70 miles an hour in suburbia. Bonus points for making as much noise as possible doing it.

—Lis de Saussure, Junior

AP testing made free to all

By Josh Lipman
News Section Editor

Money will not be an issue this year for students in AP classes. The FCPS school board has decided to pay for all AP testing in the county because of extra money left over in the budget. The decision is the latest in a series of changes concerning whether or not students have to pay for AP tests.

When the AP program started, students paid for their own tests. Then FCPS decided that it would pay for the tests itself, but changes in the budget forced it to have students pay for them again. FCPS has been paying \$25 to \$50 of the average \$85 fee per an AP test.

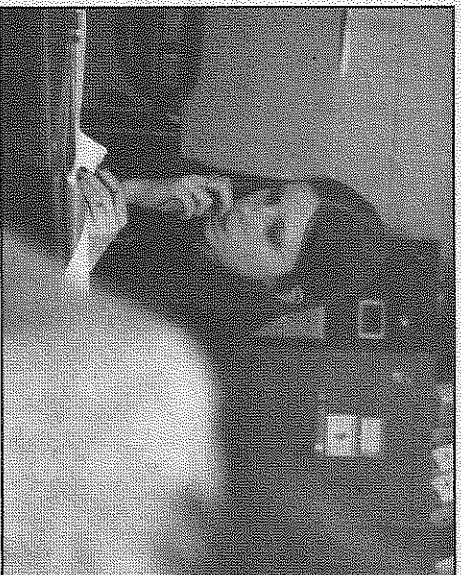
"The county believes that everybody who takes an AP course needs to take the test, but you can't force somebody to pay for a test. So, if you're going to make it a requirement [for students to] take the test, the county has to pay for it," said WS AP Coordinator, Jamie Morris.

He said that the county will continue to pay for AP testing unless it has to make budget cuts.

"At WSHS it probably doesn't make that much difference, socioeconomically this is a very affluent part of the county. It makes an enormous difference at other ends of the county like at a school with a large number of poor kids because what in a sense it's doing is it's encouraging them to try their hands at a college course, one of which they may get credit for. That may empower more of them to end up going to college than would normally go to college," said Morris.

The decision to pay for AP testing does not come without consequences. It could take money from other FCPS funded programs.

"The point is you're talking about \$100,000 dollars in this building alone. Are we saying that \$100,000



Brooke Nelson

Students can be relieved that they will no longer have to pay for the stresses of AP testing.

can't be better used for something else in the county? That's the question," said Morris.

Morris believes AP testing is important. "It's like running in a trackmeet: you know they're not just running against kids in their own room with an arbitrary judge, meaning me. They're running in a national trackmeet with a good stopwatch," said Morris.

Students in AP courses responded to the news with varying degrees of enthusiasm.

"It will affect me for the fact that I'm taking two AP courses this year and that's awesome [that the county is paying for AP testing]," said senior Kristen Mitchell. Senior Debra Geary likes the decision because it will save her parents money.

Other students found the school board's decision less consequential.

"Aside from it being a kind of inconvenience for me to have to pay my own money to do it, it's mandatory and I'm going to do it either way," said senior Georgia Cowley. "It's just nice that they're finally [making] themselves pay for it."

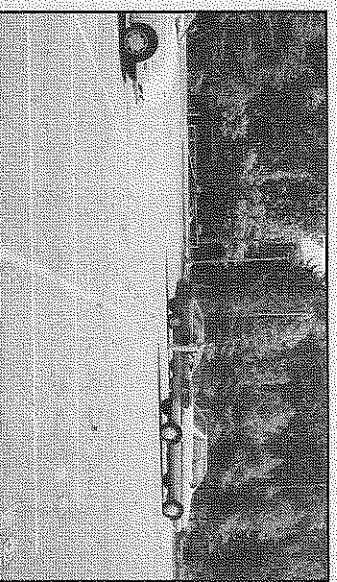
39 Juniors receive parking spaces

By Jordy Serwin
News Section Editor

What was once restricted to seniors has temporarily opened to others. Thirty-nine juniors were given parking spaces in the great expanse of pavement and flaking white paint, otherwise known as the parking lot, to use for the 2004-2005 school year.

"We had a surplus of parking spaces," said WS safety and security specialist Mike Ukele. "We thought that we would open up parking spaces to juniors as a courtesy."

At the start of the school year, a smaller number of seniors had purchased parking spaces. According to Ukele, there were over 50 empty spaces in the parking lot that were not being used. These empty parking



Susan Sommerfeld

39 juniors were selected by lottery to receive spaces in the WS parking lot.

spaces were sitting waiting for students to park their cars within their weathered, white, painted lines.

Instead of auctioning the extra spaces to the highest bidder or placing them in McDonald's Happy Meals, WS Principal David Smith approved a plan to offer the spaces to juniors through a lottery.

Like the requirements for seniors who want to purchase a parking space, the requirements for juniors who wanted to participate in the lottery were rather strict: only students that had their driver's licenses, and had no fines against their licenses were eligible. From this elite group, 39 were chosen. These juniors were allowed to get their very own 9 foot by 19 foot plot of asphalt to stow their transportation devices during their hours of occupation at our fine educational institution, or, in layman's terms, they received a parking space.

"Having a parking space definitely makes life a lot easier. I have a religious class in the morning before school and I can just come to and park my car at school instead of having to park in front of a friend's house and walking to school," said junior Jessi Molnengo. "I run cross country after school so it made transportation a lot easier for that. I know that my car is there whether I need it or not," said junior Richard Walsh. Unfortunately for those who did not win the parking space lottery and will not be seniors next year, the access to a parking space will be exclusively a senior concession next year.

WS recognized in Washingtonian Magazine

By Libby Bursley
Viewpoint Section Editor

Students are often heard in the hallway expressing their dislike of WS, but recent statistics prove there is much to be proud of, including the fact that WS is ranked sixth in academics in high schools throughout Virginia. This news came in the form of the October issue of the *Washingtonian* magazine. Many readers, including Dr. Smith, saw the magazine in their mailboxes adorned with the huge headline "Top High Schools", and were curious to read on.

WS did well in most of the categories that were scrutinized, also placing high in sports achievement. In other

groupings though, the school didn't add up, missing from the list of top SAT scorers. Test scores, though, is not all that ranking should be based on.

"There is no single best measure for basing a rank on. Test scores are a pretty fair measure, but lots of things go on in schools. We want the students to be comfortable in school, not to dread it, and be happy and well-focused. Those qualities are valuable," said Principal David Smith.

Compared to other schools in FCPS, WS appeared to be above average in many categories, including average verbal and math SAT scores, and the graduation rate, including those graduating with an advanced diploma.

In other noncompetitive groupings, however, WS was usually right about in the middle. We are not a large school (though the school is overcrowded), and we are not considered a "melting pot" school, as 67% of the students are white.

Though proud, teachers rarely passed the information to their students. Few students had heard about the article. While teachers seemed pleased with the news, students didn't seem to care about what the school had achieved.

"I'm extremely not interested," said sophomore Harry Andreades. This may be the case, because students don't normally pay attention to the percent of students taking AP tests and the average score on the SATs.

Students head to the polls Seniors prepare to vote in 2004

By Christine Park
Senior Staff Writer

Surrounded by an array of issues and controversial topics, the 2004 Bush-Kerry election is closer than ever to the few seniors who are finally of age to take part in this year's election.

"As a new voter and a member of America's youth, I feel it is important that I be involved in the voting process because stats have shown that America's youth is not voting," senior Peter Adams.

According to a survey taken from WS seniors, of the 46 eligible to vote, 29 are planning to. The reasons for these low numbers ranged from not being a citizen, to not liking the candidates, to not knowing enough about the candidates.

Government teacher Kevin Gallagher explained, "They don't realize that their vote does matter and from the 2000 election, we see that every vote counts." The biggest reason that seniors are not voting is that they missed the registration.

Senior Nick Perilla is voting because he wants "to be part of the minority that has an affect on the nation's course."

The close Bush-Gore election of 2000 served as a great reminder to all Americans that every vote counts. Spartan seniors have taken the muddled workings of the past election to heart, for almost 63% of those old enough are planning on voting.

Many who are voting feel that it is important to help make a decision about who will be leading their country. Others want to support their candidate and help them win. Others want to prevent one candidate or the other from obtaining the office.

Of course, there are some students who have their own unique motivation.

"I think it's really important to voice your opinion and I want the stickers," said Laura Fawcett.

Whatever their reason, on November 2, 2004, 29 seniors will step into their first election booth to cast their vote for the candidate they hope will win the election. Whether they vote for Bush, Kerry, or Nader, each of these seniors can take with them the knowledge that their vote may help give one man the title of President of the United States.



Jiang

Senior Peter Adams holds up a voter registration card.



Jiang

Teacher Ron Magliano displays the *Washingtonian* issue featuring WS.

Even if it isn't a big deal to students that we ranked, remember that some schools didn't even come close to ranking. And the standing of the school reflects the actual environment.

"I think this rating is an accurate measure of WS," said Smith.

“It’s Academic” and it’s on TV

By Joann Cassano
Senior Staff Writer

The light shines down on top of the heads of the students. Eight seniors and one junior prepare themselves for the competition ahead. Senior Dhruvap Bezboruah looks out into the audience. His eyes are drawn to one of the signs in the audience.

“WSHS. The school with the warm hearts and the cool kids.”

He shakes his head, why did his father have to bring that sign?

On Saturday, October 2, three of West Springfield’s brightest students appeared on the game show “It’s Academic”, hosted by Mac McGarry. Seniors Dhruvap Bezboruah, Emily Boling, and Captain Michael Call competed against teams from Osbourn Park High School and Walter Johnson High School.

The opening round begins, and every correct answer starts with the letter ‘A’. The questions fly by. McGarry could not get in a full sentence before Walter Johnson buzzed in with all the answers. The other schools had no chance. The opening round finishes and Walter Johnson has 200 points.

“It’s hard because you are always second guessing,” says Call. “you can ring in whenever you want but you also want to hear more of the question.”

Walter Johnson practically won the show in the first round, but the other teams never stopped trying. The Osbourn Park cheerleaders and West Springfield’s Guitar Ensemble performed their best to energize their peers and keep their spirits high. When the show ended, 365 points went to Osbourn Park, 370 points went to West Springfield, and 705 points went to Walter Johnson.

“We knew all the answers,” says Bezboruah, “but our problem is we didn’t buzz in fast enough.”

Although West Springfield cannot compete on the game show again this year they will still be competing locally. In February, at Edison High School, schools from FCPS will be gathering to have their own competition. “It’s like football championships,” says Bezboruah. “The schools in the Patriot District compete with one another. The winner from the Patriot District then competes against the winners from the other districts.”

Sandra Novak, the “It’s Academic”

coach, has already made a list of the things they need to practice. “We will be working on how to buzz in faster and practicing category rounds,” says Novak.

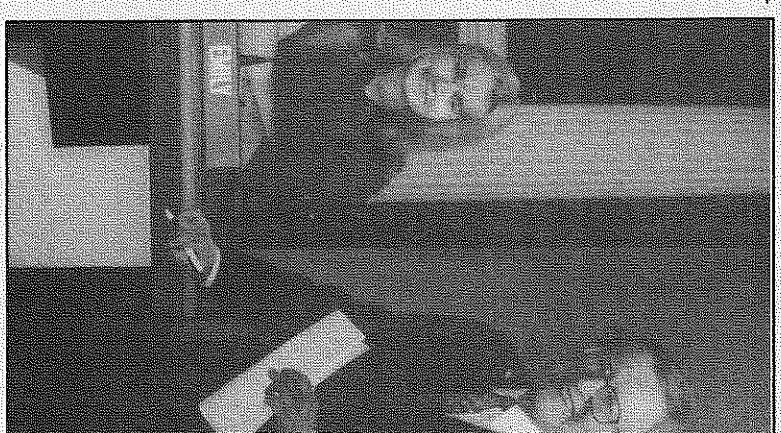
Every Tuesday, and after November 12th the time will be changed to every Wednesday, the “It’s Academic” team meets in Novak’s room from 2:15 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. A few desks form a table. The teacher opens a book full of all the questions one could possibly imagine and begins firing.

“We’re a good group of friends, we get along well, there are a lot of inside jokes” said Call. “The great thing is you learn an assortment of things. Last year, I learned a lot of things from It’s Academic that I also learned in AP US. We learn while having fun!”

Novak hopes that as the year progresses, more students, preferably freshman, sophomores, and juniors, will show an interest in the program.

“Our team is made up of seniors this year,” said Novak. “New members are always welcome to come!”

Standing on stage with the lights shining down can also add to the already stressful situation of being on a game show.



Oracle File Photo
Senior Emily Boling competes at an “It’s Academic” competition.

“It’s kind of weird,” Bezboruah said. “Weird as in people are sitting in front of you, cameras are all around you, and you can see yourself on the screen. It’s kind of tense. It’s nervous every now and then.”

Owens prepares to move on from SGA

OWENS continued from page 1

Owens loves Disney, the wedding had a Mickey and Minnie theme, from the wedding invitations to the cake. She says more than 700 students attended the ceremony, which is why the couple decided to hold the wedding in the auditorium.

“I had my nails done for the occasion, they had Mickey Mouse’s face on them. Our wedding cake also had a Mickey Mouse ears topper. We kept that part.”

Owens said that she is leaving because her five-year old son, Mason, will be starting kindergarten next year.

“I want him to be able to make friends,” Owens said, “and I want to be there for him.” Owens’s mother, who used to watch the children, now lives too far away to drive and pick Mason up from school every day.

Owens also has a daughter, Nichole, who is almost 21 months old, and an 11-year-old stepdaughter named

Lidia, for whom she would also like to be home.

“Since my mom lives in Alexandria, and can’t pick them up from school every day, they would have to go to day care and other places ‘til I get home. I don’t want them to go through that each day,” Owens said.

Once at home, Owens hopes to become a biology tutor. She said she is already “training to be a medical transcriptionist” as well.

“I have to pick up textbooks, do all sorts of exercises, and once I do all that I have to complete a final exam,” she said. As soon as she gets certified she will work a minimal amount of hours so she can still be home with her kids. Owens said WS never will be far from her thoughts.

“Who knows, I could be back here in a year or so if things don’t work out,” she said. “We have lots of ideas; it’s just a matter of piecing them together.”

Dancers bust loose on lino-learn at Homecoming dance

HOMECOMING continued from page 1
anonymous, thong-clad WS male who streaked down the track and into the woods eliciting a tremendous roar from the audience.

On the following night was Mr. Spartan, which included everything from cross-dressing to Blue’s Clues impersonations. Danny Tinsley broke out his smoothest dance moves while singing along to a medley of Michael Jackson’s best times, which along with his earlier female attire and body shake, that according to some audience members would make Beyonce jealous, earned him the Mr. Spartan crown.

“It was a lot of fun getting to be a part of Mr. Spartan,” said Tinsley. “I was very surprised when I won, because all of the other guys put on a good show too.”

Many felt that Tinsley was deserving of the crown, especially the WS ladies whom he won over with his striking performance.

“Tinsley worked for it; he danced his butt off,” said senior Lisa Bafiacco.

“The booty shake got me going.”
On Friday, the parade through the neighborhoods was cancelled due to rain and the “Guitar-B-Q” only suffered minor interruptions, still providing

wonderful music from WS students

and food catered by Red Hot and Blue. The night continued with a commanding win of 42-6 by the WS football team against West Potomac, bringing the team’s record to 5-1 with no district games lost so far.

“We killed their running game,” said junior free safety Vince Coppola. “It was harder to run and cut well because of the weather though.”

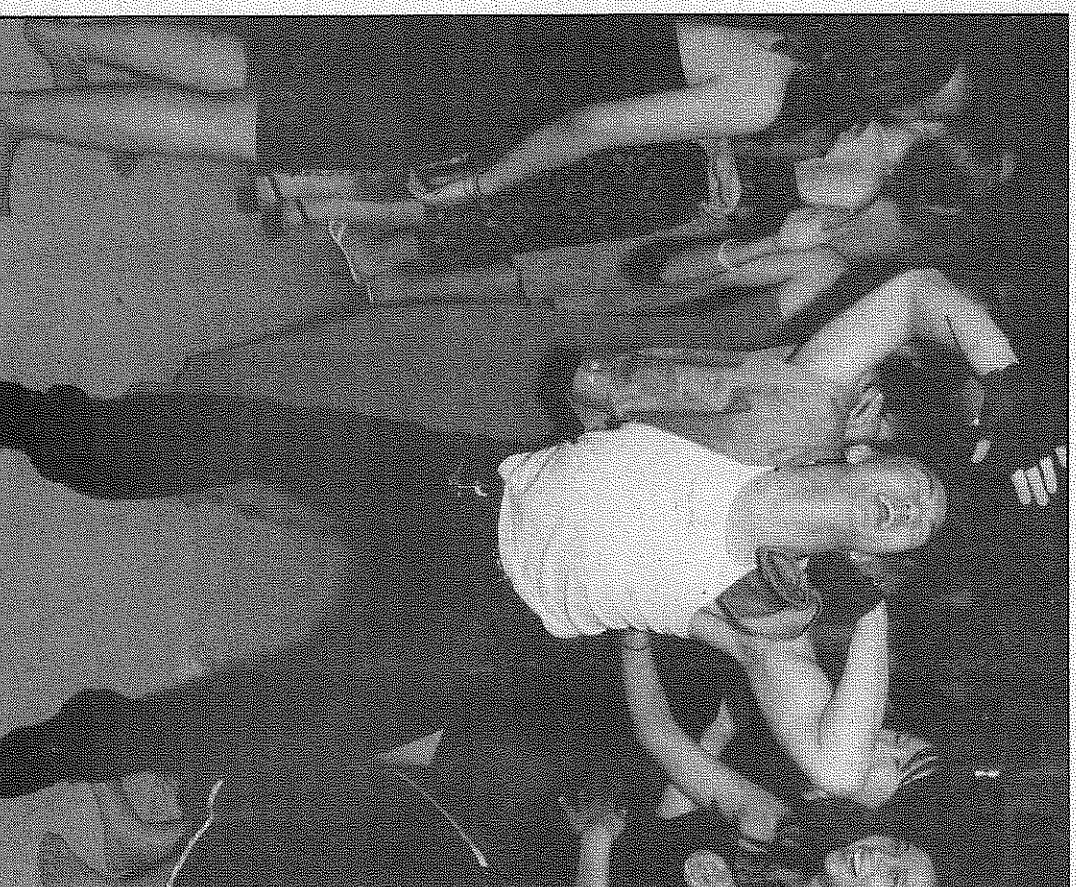
One of the most memorable moments of the game was when another anonymous male trotted onto the field between quarters, dressed as a yellow chicken, and ran between the players.

The anticipated dance Saturday night was paired with drizzle and chilly weather. The music selection spanned several decades which brought mixed feelings. The good news this year though, no power outages.

“Personally I think it kind of sucked,” said senior Brandon Deloro. “It just wasn’t as much fun [as in past years].”

Many had more positive opinions of the dance despite the music.

“I think the music definitely could have been better, especially when they started repeating songs,” said junior Emily Grossman. “But overall I still had a great time.”



A student gets his groove on at the Homecoming dance.

Segall/Magestic

Students join the cell phone texting 'clique'

Texting in class becomes popular habit

By Jenny Taylor

Weekend Editor

During fourth period, you hear a strange sound. Then the backpack across the aisle starts to slightly vibrate. You can't help but wonder what is going on. Finally, the owner of the backpack quietly zips it open and takes out their cell phone, which is vigorously flashing. They push some buttons on the phone and began to laugh. That is when you realize what just happened. The kid across the aisle received a text message. This new fad has become enormously popular among WS students over the past several months.

Cell phones were first allowed in school after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 as a way to communicate with family in times of urgency. According to the FCPS rules and guidelines, cell phones must be kept off and out of sight during school hours. However, this right is being continually abused by an alarming number of students.

A couple of years ago, passing notes meant tossing folded pieces of paper back and forth to one another. It also meant eventually getting caught by a teacher who would read the most

embarrassing sentences out loud to the whole class.

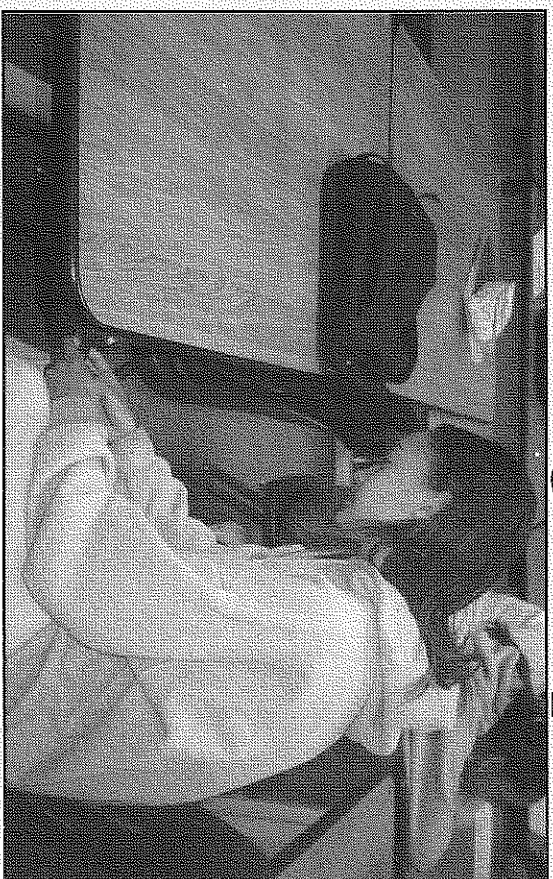
So, it is no wonder why students are taking advantage of the newest way to communicate with friends during school. Text messages are becoming a hit with teenagers across the country. "It's really hard for me to go one day without texting," said sophomore Caroline Nicholson.

Perhaps the most convenient feature of texting is that it is almost completely silent. It is extremely difficult for teachers to know when you have received or sent a message. This has posed a major problem for teachers during tests.

"I wouldn't be surprised [if students were texting during tests]," said US history teacher Laurie Fischer. "I always get up and look around during tests."

Instead of hiding in bathrooms while talking on phones, students can simply hide their cell phones in their desks while texting. In order to prevent this, several teachers have turned the desks in their classrooms around, so that the open side faces the front of the room.

"If the desks are turned around, I just use wear my sweatshirt that has front



Ji Jang
Sophomore Sydney Morris texts her friend despite the risk of confiscation.

pockets so I can text in there," said Nicholson. "Sometimes I just act like I'm looking for something in my backpack."

Despite what students may think, the WS faculty is cracking down on text messaging. "The number of students sending text messages does concern us. We are doing what the school board says, which is telling students to turn them off and keep them out of sight," said Principal Dr. David Smith. "We are

trying to get the word out to parents too. My website actually talks about not using phones during school hours."

As technology advances, so does the way we communicate. Text messaging may be the best way to talk now, but new phone features are quickly becoming popular. "Have you seen those picture phones?" said Dr. Smith. "I'm worried about those, just think of what students could do with them."

Thinking outside the ketchup bottle

By Chrissy Regelski

Weekend Assistant

No one can deny that ketchup, the sweet ruby red concoction found in 97 percent of kitchens, is among some of America's favorite condiments. Topping everything from hamburgers to scrambled eggs, many believe ketchup adds flavor to various foods.

"I like ketchup because it tastes good and what else would I put on my fries without it," said freshman David Bae?

While a stereotypical American may sit down to the World Series with a handful of ball park franks smothered in ketchup it isn't as "American" as it is thought to be.

Originally called *ke-tsap* (meaning 'brine of fish'), ketchup was made out of pickled fish and resembled a soy sauce. It became an outlet for creative experiments where everything from oysters to walnuts were used as a base. The first recipe for ketchup, printed in 1727, called for anchovies and a lemon peel, but in 1812, American James Mease published the first recipe for a tomato based ketchup. Tomato ketchup began being sold at 30 to 50 cents per bottle but didn't become successful until 1872 when HJ Heinz announced his ketchup line. In addition to his pickle products, at a fair in Philadelphia, Heinz's original formula has never been changed but that didn't stop the prosperous company from forming new ideas for ketchup to fit today's society or from having a little fun.

Even though a "Grade A" ketchup has to ooze only three to seven centimeters in 30 seconds, many became frustrated with having to wait for the thick condiment to ease out onto your food or having to smack the branded 57 on the side of the glass bottle. "I try to hit the bottle and it doesn't come out," said sophomore Colleen O'Connell. "I sometimes stick a knife in it to get the ketchup out and it works. It annoys me though."

For those in pursuit of healthier snacking, Heinz has developed a new type of ketchup called One Carb that, naturally, contains one gram of carbohydrate per serving compared to the original's four grams. It's not just the nutrition label that's changing but the actual ketchup itself. Though they are not currently in production, supermarkets were once flooded with neon Easy Squeeze bottles that didn't contain just boring, old red ketchup. Heinz attracted kids with its new green and purple ketchup; the company also makes "mystery colors"—customers don't know if they have teal, pink, or orange ketchup until they got home.

"I like the color red for ketchup because red is the color of a rose and a rose is a symbol of love," said Bae. "I am a lover not a fighter."



Erica Wilkening

Expanding ear piercings have become a popular trend for WS students.

Hole-ly earlobe! Piercers expand horizons

By Stevie Fiorino

ETC Assistant

Belly-button piercings, nose piercings, tongue piercings; now these former fads have *expanded* into expanding ear piercings.

This is a process by which a regular ear piercing is expanded, or widened, by inserting a larger gauged earring stud or post into a pierced hole in your ear. Students have found a variety of ways to express themselves and their independence by sporting tattoos, wearing the latest fashion in clothes and dyeing their hair the color of the month, which could be blue, red or green.

But why would someone want to go through the pain of enlarging an ear hole?

"I did it because it looks cool and hot" said sophomore Keely McClary.

"It only hurt when I skipped three gauges and blood was spilling everywhere."

Most of the students who make the decision to go through the "expanding process" get a friend to do it or just do it themselves.

"My girlfriend Sam Williams did mine," said sophomore Jason Low.

The most frequent regret voiced by students who go through this process was that they made the mistake

of not going to a professional. And most students agree that they should not have let a friend perform the procedure.

"My piercer, Peter, did mine," said McClary, who thought this was the right decision.

Trends such as body piercings are permanent and are difficult or impossible to undo.

"Kids need to be informed about the medical piece of it and think through to when they're in their elderly age and what kind of ramifications their actions are going to have on them," said guidance counselor Michelle O'Brien.

A student may also find that they can face social rejection, but in many cases this may be one of the reasons a student wants the piercing, to be different. Eleventh grader Nadja Obradovich, is not so fond of expanding ear piercings.

"People need to stop putting big holes in their heads. And if you already have a hole, why make it wider?" said Obradovich.

Like all the other trends that hit the high school set, most students believe expanding ear piercings are just another passing fad.

"Eventually the "expanding" fad is going to die out because kids are going to realize that it doesn't look good," said sophomore Emily Wolford.

Frisbee golfers aim for basket in one

Frisbee golf club improves their throwing skills by practicing after school at Burke Lake on Wednesdays

By Caitlin Laverdiere
Entertainment Editor

If all the clubs at WS seem to conflict with your busy schedule, join the frisbee golf club at Burke Lake, you're guaranteed not to have any meetings from 3:11 to 4:20 on Wednesday afternoons.

"It's a lot of fun," said junior Amanda Hill. "It's really cool to go to Burke Lake and practice."

There's no pressure to be the best; WS students like to go just to hang with friends and improve their ultimate Frisbee and Frisbee golf skill.

"I'm horrible, but it's fun," Hill said.

Other students join just to have something to do, and Burke Lake is their destination on Wednesday afternoons.

"It's better than going home," said senior Marvin Lopez.

At each match, the members compete against each other, and the player with the lowest number of points wins. On the club's October 7 match, Nick Melas won in an overtime battle with -7 points.

Currently the club members only compete against each other, but they're hoping to eventually get involved with other Frisbee golf groups.

"We're hoping to start competing against other schools soon," said captain Nick Melas.

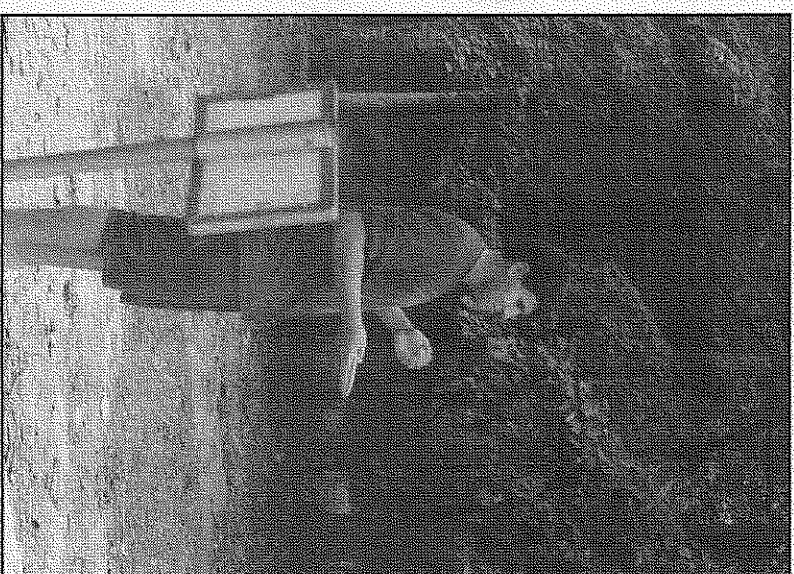
"We're hoping to start competing against other schools soon,"

-Nick Melas, Senior

As the group gets more known to the students at WS, the sport is getting more popular. The group has grown, and their skills are also improving. They practice afterschool at Burke Lake and work hard on improving their frisbee golf skills.

The new club has gained increasing popularity among WS students. As it continues to expand, the current members are hoping more students will join.

So whether you're a pro, it's the only thing you're good at, or "you're horrible," come out and give the Frisbee golf club a try.



The frisbee golf team practices and plays their matches at Burke Lake Park.

Erin Deblors

Cars can't kill the music

The Marching Spartans' practices are interrupted by the cars that are parked on their field after school

By Andrea Maxwell
Weekend Editor

Cars are not only a threat on the road, now they endanger members of the marching band. The WS marching band practices or plays together five days a week. Practices on Tuesdays and Thursdays are held on the practice field, on Fridays the band plays at the football games, on Saturday there are band competitions. The situation is ideal, except of course on Wednesdays. Due to the many sports teams and extracurricular activities held every afternoon, space is limited. Every Wednesday, the marching band has to practice on the parking lot located just outside the sports lobby and band room.

"I understand why people want to park there, but everyone has to share space. It makes an unsafe environment," said sophomore Sarah Barrack.

Despite the signs posted around the building that cars need to be moved after school, some cars still park there. Announcements were made but some of

the cars remained. Regardless of whether the cars or moved, practice continues.

Even with the parked cars, the 100 members of the band gathered in the parking lot at three o'clock. While the band rehearsed and marched through the parking lot, the cars were in the way and a few people ran into the cars. Fortunately, the cars were not damaged and the kids were not hurt.

Parked cars are not the only threat to the band members. One day a car sped dangerously through the upper parking lot and through the band. Kathy Thaxter said, "Our instructor got really mad and yelled at her [the driver]. Apparently she went home and cried. Her mom complained to the school the following day."

When announcements are made and signs are posted, listen to them. When the advice of these signs is not followed, the safety of the marching band members is jeopardized.

"They should move it [the cars] because we ask twice a day. It's annoying," said freshman Amanda Norwood.



The marching band's practices hard to perfect their show, even if cars are in the way of their practice.

Seniors becoming 18 and free

The seniors at WS are starting to turn 18, facing the challenges that come from becoming an adult citizen

By Lindsay Smith
Senior Staff Writer

Eighteen. The age of freedom. The age of responsibility. The age where you can go out and do whatever you want... well, sort of.

For most seniors, turning eighteen is a milestone in their life. They are finally considered "adults," they are eligible to vote or be sent off to war, and they can, yes it's true, change their names legally—the ultimate dream of most eighteen-year-olds.

However, unlike most eighteen-year-olds on their birthday, Alison Mueller did not wake up happy. She was not overjoyed at the concept of being able to vote in next month's presidential election, or the fact that she could go to the 7-11 on Rolling and buy cigarettes legally, even though she doesn't smoke. Instead, Mueller woke up crying.

"My first thought was 'I can go do whatever I want,'" said Mueller. "But soon after thinking that, I just felt old and sad."

A rare feeling on one's eighteenth birthday, Mueller reacted the way that most parents do when their babies turn eighteen—sad, and wondering where the last eighteen years have gone to.

"I just felt like an adult and that I could never be a kid again," she said. "I wish I could just go back and play with Barbies and be a little girl."

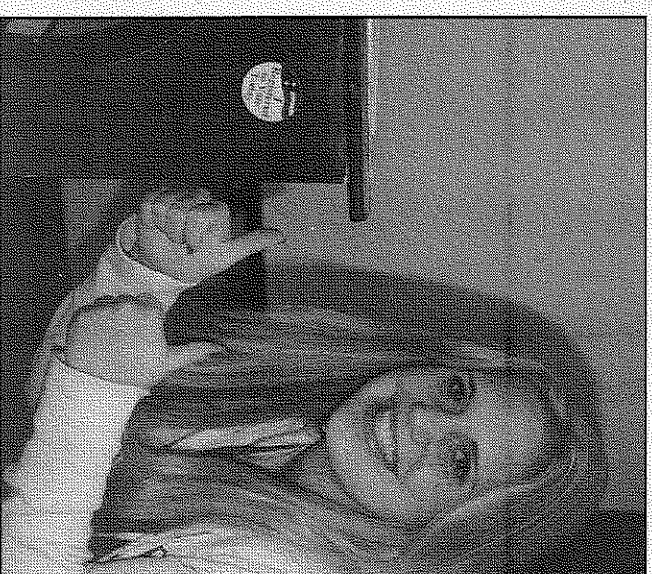
Instead of playing with Barbies, Mueller plans to spend her time taking advantage of her newly earned rights. The day before she turned 18, she had already

"And even though I can't go back to being a little kid again, I've still got another eighteen years ahead of me to look forward to."

—Alison Mueller, Senior

registered to vote. And, while she is still technically considered a teenager, she is gradually getting accustomed to adult life. In the long run, Mueller thinks she will enjoy being eighteen, it's just going to take some time.

"I think it's liberating [to turn eighteen] and you have a lot more opportunities," she said. "There are fewer restrictions on you."



Senior Laura Fawcett shows her excitement that she gets to vote in this coming election now that she turned 18.

Etica Wilkening

While seniors throughout WS will be celebrating their newly acquired rights on their birthdays this year, Mueller will spend some time getting used to a new concept: adulthood. She is still getting use to the new rights she has as an eighteen year old.

"You only turn eighteen once," she said, "and even though I can't go back to being a little kid again, I've still got another eighteen years ahead of me to look forward to."

Back in the (former)

USSR

By Alyssa Horton
Journalism 1

Six high school history teachers sit together on a plane, unsure of what awaits them.

They're excited, nervous, but most of all they're looking forward to sharing their teaching abilities with students and teachers of Baku, Azerbaijan. Tamara Ogden of WS is one of the history teachers who will be going on this trip during Spring Break.

This group will be led by Kurt Waters, a social studies teacher at Centreville High School.

"The team hopes to foster a more student-centered learning environment in their classrooms," said Waters.

The teachers will be working

with a nonprofit organization called Student Law, and the project is called the Deliberation and Democracy project.

Ogden said, "Unfortunately, these people don't have the educational resources that we have."

Since Azerbaijan is an ex-Soviet block nation, democracy is an entirely new concept in that country. These FCPS teachers say their main teaching method will be to encourage classroom discourse about liberty and democracy.

"The end goal is that we are working toward a capstone lesson where students from Fairfax County can discuss specific topics related to liberty and democracy over an on-line discussion board with students from Azerbaijan," said Ogden.

School officials of Azerbaijan are hoping to use American teaching methods in their programs. They are sending six of their teachers to observe some of our history classes at WS.

"They're sending their teachers to see how we engage with our students," Ogden said.

Education is becoming increasingly important to this small country, located northeast of Iran. Misir Mardanov, the minister of education in Azerbaijan has said that, "We want our young people to become more educated so that they can do greater things than we could."

The American teachers hope the trip will help them improve their teaching methods through sharing with those less-fortu-



LT Buchneiser

History teacher Tamara Ogden plans to travel to Azerbaijan over Spring Break as part of a project to study democracy.

"We have so many amazing students, opportunities, and resources in FCPS. I thought it would be great to share that," said Ogden. "I'm really looking forward to this opportunity!"

Romance precipitated Toreele's journey from Belgium to America

By Stephanie Aguilar
Journalism 1

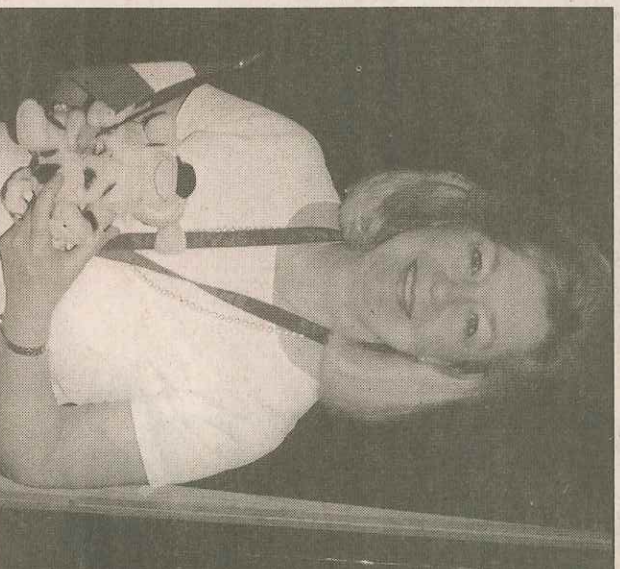
He was a senior and she was a freshman. Love is what kept this fairy tale couple together for more than four years when letter-writing was their only form of communication.

French teacher Joelle Toreele, was driven all the way to the US by her love for her then boyfriend.

"I am very privileged to come here, not for money, not to escape a war, but for love, Toreele said." As for Toreele's romance, it all started when she entered high school as a freshman. That's when a senior, her future husband, barged into her life.

After the couple was together for one year, Toreele's boyfriend, John Toreele, left for an American college. Toreele was devastated and she worried that a college boy would quickly forget about his young girlfriend. Then the unexpected happened.

John Toreele came back for two weeks when Joelle was a junior in high school. He stayed at her house for two weeks and that is when the romance bloomed.



Oracle Staff Photo

French teacher Joelle Toreele moved clear across the Atlantic because of love.

John proposed to her after his visit and they were officially engaged. Eventually, but it was time for him to return to college.

"It was the hardest thing to let go," said Toreele. Yet they wrote to each other every day, sending a total of 850 letters across the Atlantic.

"I am very privileged to come here, not for money, not to escape a war, but for love... My parents were really sad to see me go, but they were also happy for me."

—Joelle Toreele, French teacher

Two years later, Joelle graduated and broke the news to her parents: She was going to the US to see her John.

"My parents were really sad to let me go, but they were also happy for me," Toreele said. Before she left Belgium, she and John married. It was in a cobble stoned church built in the 1100s.

"It was a beautiful sense to know that I was stepping on something where people have been a long time ago," said Toreele.

Her students who are familiar with Torrele's love story can see the effects of her romance on her disposition.

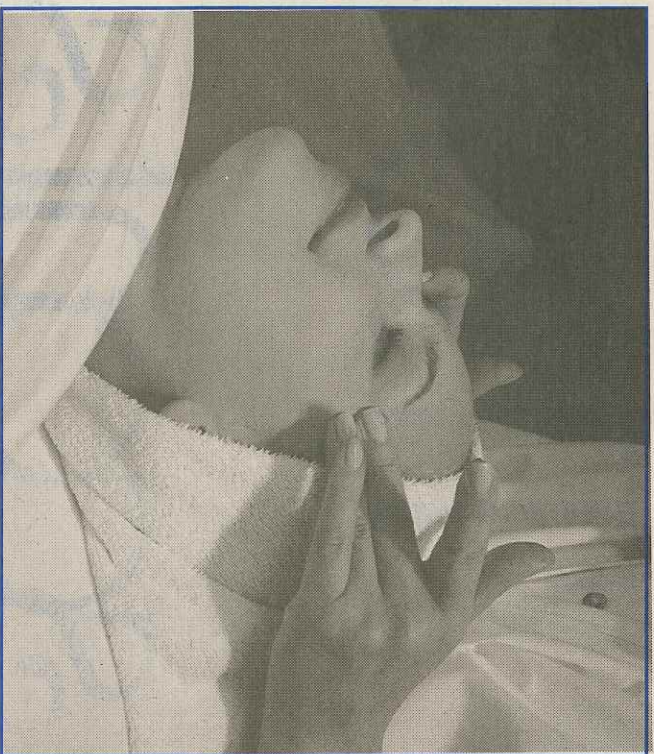
"I think this had a big affect on Mme. Toreele because every time I see her, she's always in a really good mood," former Toreele student Sam Peck says. Toreele says that John was her one and only and her best friend.

"I'll never regret moving to the US because that's where my life didn't just change, it had just begun."

Order your Yearbook!

after school, November 11, Room 215—\$60!

Air out with



Face masks

With the right ingredients, aromatherapy face masks are fun and easy to make. By combining essential oils and other natural products, one can make face masks for everything from basic acne treatments to rejuvenating facial scrubs.

Check out recipes online or at a local bookstore for ideas.

Moisturizing Mask

- 2 drops Frankincense
- 2 drops Rose
- 2 drops Neroli
- 30 mL apricot oil
- 1 tsp clear, melted honey, mixed with enough finely ground almond to make a soft paste

By Caitlin Crowley, Karla Sakas
& Joann Cassano
Senior Staff Writers

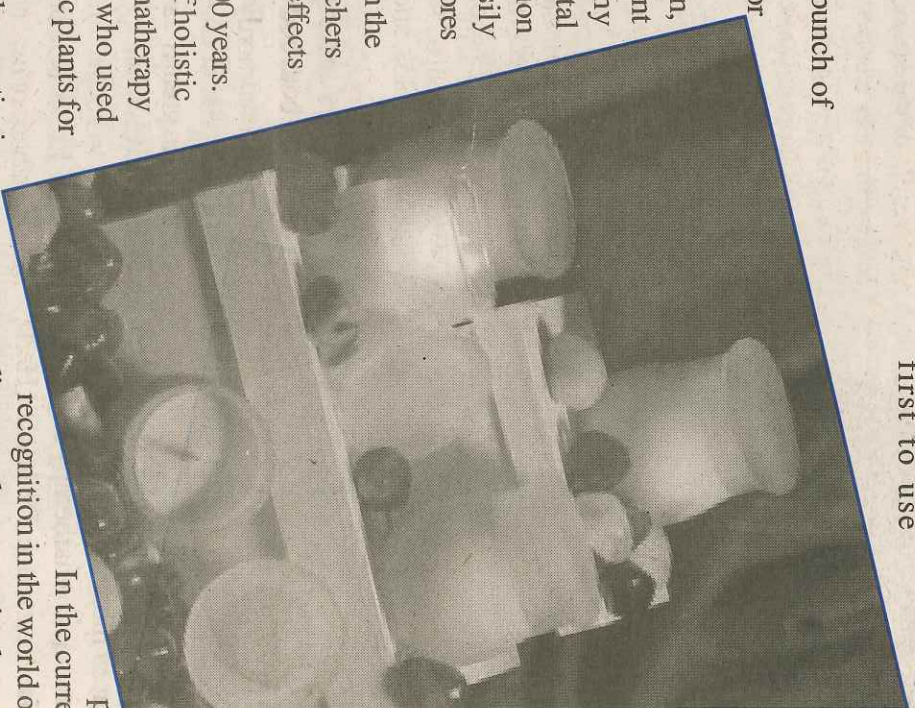
Aromatherapy isn't just a bunch of sickeningly sweet scented candles or weird-smelling incense.

This form of healing and relaxation, which has gained popularity in recent decades, can produce noteworthy improvements in physical and mental health. Scents can ease every affliction from nausea to stress, and are easily found everywhere from health food stores to home gardens.

Aromatherapy is gaining respect in the scientific community, where researchers are currently studying the soothing effects of scents on the brain.

Aromatherapy dates back over 5000 years. It has long been used as a method of holistic healing. The earliest records of aromatherapy come from the ancient Egyptians, who used infusion to remove oil from aromatic plants for medicinal and cosmetic purposes.

Chinese civilizations also employed aromatics in healing procedures, as well as in religious ceremonies. They



In the current recognition in the world of aromatherapy, researchers have discovered a connection between

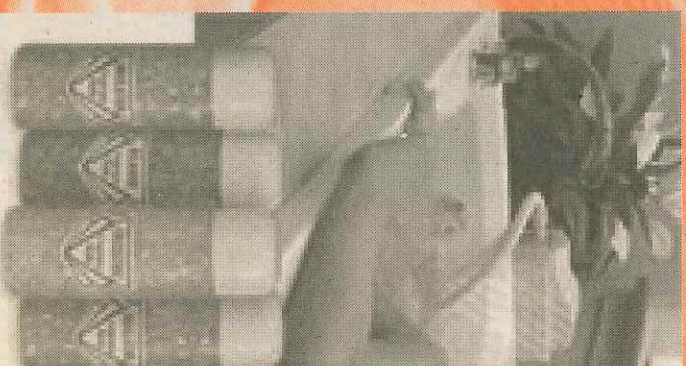
burned incense and wood to scents that is still practiced today. The Greeks were the first to use

Do-ity

Most forms of aromatherapy are simple enough to do in your own home. Many bath and beauty supply stores sell essential oils in various scents for a reasonable price. Here are a few easy ideas for at-home relaxation remedies.

Oil Bath

Ideal for muscle relaxation and easing tension, oil baths are the most luxurious of home remedies. Choose a scent or two that suit your needs and add a few drops to a warm bath. Soak for at least twenty minutes, ensuring not to get the bathwater in your eyes. Light a scented candle for an enhanced effect.



Aromatherapy

how respect for their gods, a ritual

of smell, and the brain. Above all other senses, the sense of smell evokes the most powerful, emotional memories.

The emotional response is traced to the limbic system, lying in the middle of the brain. The limbic system controls emotions, hunger, thirst, perception, body temperature, and cognitive ability. Inside the limbic system is the odor memory bank. When a familiar scent reaches the tip of the nose, the olfactory sensors send a message to the limbic system. Memories related to the smell then begin to flash through the mind, creating an enjoyable sense of nostalgia.

When stressed, the body responds physically. Acute stress drains a person of energy and can lead to anxiety attacks. Chronic stress takes hold when acute stress is not taken care of properly. Chronic stress affects the body in a slow but gradual process.

Once the body becomes accustomed to stress, an array of problems rise. A person can experience anything from headaches, colds, and asthma (physical symptoms that hide the underlying problem) to heart disease and ulcers.

There are dozens of aromas with hundreds of uses to revitalize both body and mind. The following are some of the most commonly-used scents. A visit to the aromatherapy counter at a health food supermarket or a specialty store will offer an even greater variety of scents to choose from, for every condition imaginable.

It is best to keep in mind, however, that aromatherapy is not a substitute for professional medical advice, and that one should seek the advice of his or her doctor before making any significant changes in his or her medical regimen. People with nasal allergies should avoid aromatherapy altogether.

The

scents

Basil—A sweet and spicy herb that is uplifting and stimulating. Good for decreasing migraine pains.

Ginger—A warm, spicy root that helps calm upset stomachs. Also thought to alleviate arthritis pain.

Lavender—A calming, soothing floral scent good for relieving tension. Two drops of undiluted lavender essential oils, applied to the temples and the base of the skull can ease headaches. Adding a couple drops to bathwater can also calm nerves and promote sleep.

Lemon—A sharp, refreshing citrus scent that boosts energy and alertness. Direct contact of citrus essential oils with skin should be avoided.

Sandalwood—A woody, relaxing scent that reduces stress.

Peppermint—A potent, fresh scent. Stimulates the mind, clears congestion, and enhances concentration. Eating a mint candy before a test can actually improve one's ability to focus.

Rosemary—A fresh, herbal scent. Eases muscle pain and the symptoms of colds

Tea Tree—A cleansing, refreshing scent. Fights infection and boosts immune function. Good for cuts and scrapes.

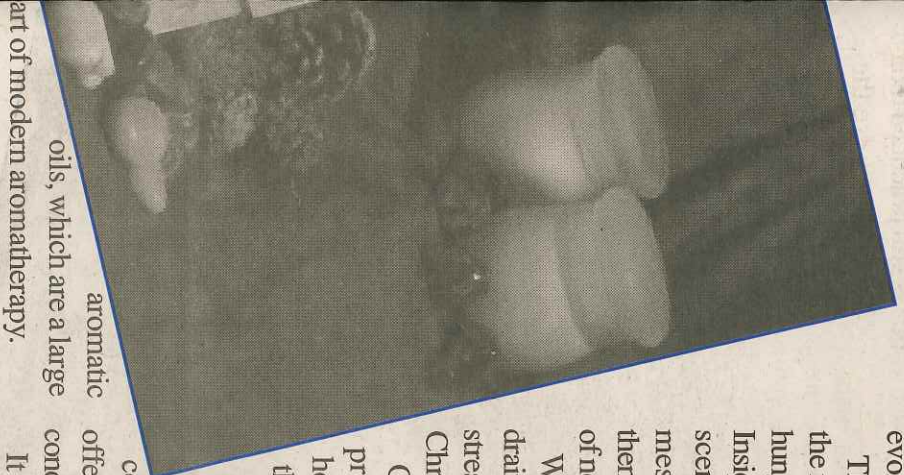
For Yourself

For a relaxing and calming bath try:

- 2 drops Lavender
- 2 drops Bergamot

For an energizing bath:

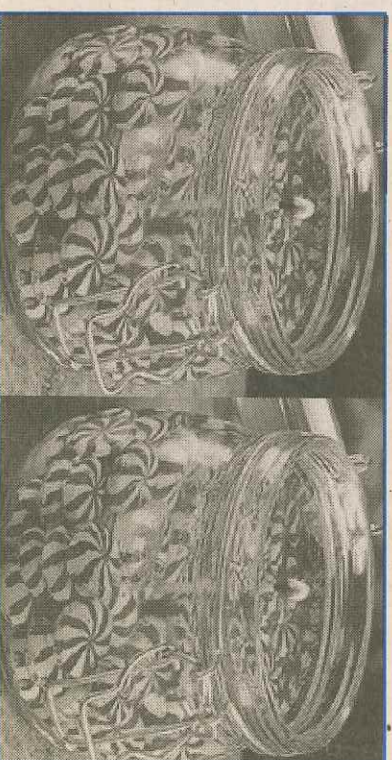
- 3 drops Rosemary
- 2 drops Lemon
- 2 drops Frankincense



aromatic oils, which are a large part of modern aromatherapy.

ant era, aromatherapy is gaining neuroscience. Dr. Rachel Hertz

pen the olfactory system, the sense



Forgotten heroes now remembered

Box Office hit "Ladder 49" reveals the true lives of today's heroic firemen

By Caitlin Laverdiere

Entertainment Editor

Heroes — the ones who lay their lives on the line every day. They come in all shapes and sizes — the firefighters on September 11th, our soldiers fighting in Iraq — all inspiring and instilling a sense of awe and gratitude.

One group of heroes, the fictional firefighters of ladder truck 49 in Baltimore, are climbing the box office charts in "Ladder 49". So far, the movie has brought in over six million dollars in ticket sales and remains one of the top five movies in the country.

The movie portrays the men as real, everyday guys who fight fires and save lives for a living. Jaquin Phoenix plays Jack Morrison, a firefighter trapped in a burning building, ready to collapse at any moment. His life flashes before his eyes, revealing his journey



John Travolta stars as one of the many firemen risking their lives working for the Ladder 49 crew.

Favorite top 10 "Saturday Night Live" moments



Chris Kattan plays Mango the stripper.

- 10. Coffee Talk** (Mike Myers)Linda Richmond (Mike Meyers) hosts a television show with appearances by special guests.
- 9. Celebrity Jeopardy** (Will Ferrell)Alex Trabek (Will Ferrell) hosts a parody of the game show Jeopardy with a panel of unintelligent celebrity guests including Sean Connery (Darrell Hammond) and Burt Reynolds (Norm Macdonald).
- 8. Church Chat** (Dana Carvey)The Church Lady (Dana Carvey) hosts an array of "sinful" guests on her talk show in a church.
- 7. Chris Farley Show** (Farley)Chris Farley criticizes himself while interviews his celebrity guests.
- 6. Opera-man** (Sandler)Opera-Man (Adam Sandler) delivers the news in a musical interpretation.
- 5. Mango** (Kattan)Mango (Chris Kattan) is a flamboyant male stripper who is loved and sought after by all.
- 4. Schmitts Gay** (Chris Farley, Adam Sandler) Two friends (Adam Sandler and Chris Farley) are bored at home, until they open a can of Schmitts Gay beer...
- 3. Waynes World** (Mike Meyers, Dana Carvey)Garth Algar and Wayne Campbell hosts a T.V show in the basement of their home.
- 2. Motivational Speaker** (Farley, Hartman)Matt Foley a destructive and noisy motivational speaker helps out those in disparate need.
- 1. Behind the Music [More Cowbell]** (Walken, Sanz, Fallon, Kattan, Parnell, Farrel)Producer Bruce Dickinson (Christopher Walken) demands on of the members of the Blue Oyster Cult to use more emotion in playing the cowbell.

Pepsi secures fame for Fairfax band

By Lindsay Burke

Inside Editor

Upon first seeing the Pepsi commercial, mouths immediately began to dry out, queching for an ice-cold Pepsi. Simultaneously, the song in the background of the commercial caught your attention too, but minds drew blanks when trying to think of who played it. "First you say whoa, then you say yeah, get your hands up, throw your hands in the air!" the song proclaimed.

The band is called Sev, and happens to be from nearby Fairfax, Virginia. At the moment, they are composed of four members: Danny Schools (vocals), Max Alley (guitarist), Phil Clayman (also vocals), and Matt Waller (bassist). In the past, their drummer and original bass player decided to quit in order to continue with other goals in life. They consider their music to be a mix of hip hop and rock and roll. The song "Alright By Me" has a very rock beat but the lyrics sound hip-hop.

Sev had their debut album release in 1996. It was not until 2002 that they released another CD entitled All These Dreams. The second track on the CD, "Same Old Song" became an instant hit. Pepsi signed them



Sev originated in Fairfax County and has performed at local bar, Jaxx, in Springfield on Rolling Road.

for a Pepsi Blue commercial and soon the song was being played all over local radio stations. "We didn't really care about what [the commercial] was for. We just knew that we were getting our music out there," the band members said in an internet interview at www.bitmezzine.net/Archives/SEVInterview.htm.

Although the band didn't take much notice to the commercial themselves, others did.

"I liked the [Same Old Song] because it was repetitive and catchy. A song is easy to sing along to when it's easy to remember," said sophomore Amy Zinicola.

Since they aren't signed by a big label, it's hard for them to travel around a lot. Many of their shows can be caught locally. Their first show was at the small bar Jaxx, which is right down the street on Rolling road, and hopefully they will be playing there again on November 8th for their 7th year anniversary.

Thirty years of laughs and still going strong

By Sunnie Ko

Sports Editor

Saturday nights calls for a few must-have necessities: sour patch kids, caffeine (in any form), lots of friends, and high-quality entertainment.

The candy and sodas are readily available at your local grocery store, friends can be accumulated at school, and entertainment can be seen on Saturday Night Live of course.

Created by Lorne Michaels in 1975, Saturday Night Live (SNL) has been an extremely popular and entertaining show for over twenty years. The show is built upon unforgettable casts and well-written comedy sketches.

"Will Ferrell has inspired cow-bellers everywhere to pursue their dreams," said senior Ryan Kelly.

Although the show is currently in its thirtieth season, many agree that the show has lost its comedic flair. "I liked the older episodes,"

as a rookie, fresh from the academy, to an accomplished fireman. His flashbacks divulge his growth as a fireman and the path of his life from his happenstance meeting with his future wife, Linda, to the birth of his family, the death of a friend, his suffering, his happiness, and everything in between.

"Ladder 49" is packed with intense action, strong morals, and unsurpassed bravery.

The men of crew 49 personality true heroes; their courage and strength shape the community around them and enkindle a sense of pride in all those who meet them.

"The firemen were fine, and the movie was really intense," said junior Michelle Aguilar. "There were lots of good morals and values."

The movie is not about the glorifying aspects of being a hero; rather, it embodies the character of each fireman, risking his life to save the life of another. It reveals the pain and hardships that accompany the job, as well as the gratification from helping others.

"I didn't know it would be so sad for people married to firemen," said sophomore Ruth Hickey. "It was really good."

"Ladder 49" is an all around good movie, epitomizing the heroes of today. Its powerful message and moving drama stays with you and gives you a greater appreciation for the real heroes of the world.

said sophomore Kathy Thaxter. "The new ones are kind of lame"

Aside from the original cast which made SNL a hit show, the 1993 season also had an "all-star" cast with David Spade, Adam Sandler, Chris Farley, Tim Meadows, and Jay Mohr.

Certain sketches such as Mango and Celebrity Jeopardy stand out from the rest.

"I love the Spartan cheerleader skit," said junior Lauren Cafferky. "Cheri Oteri and Will Ferrell are hilarious."

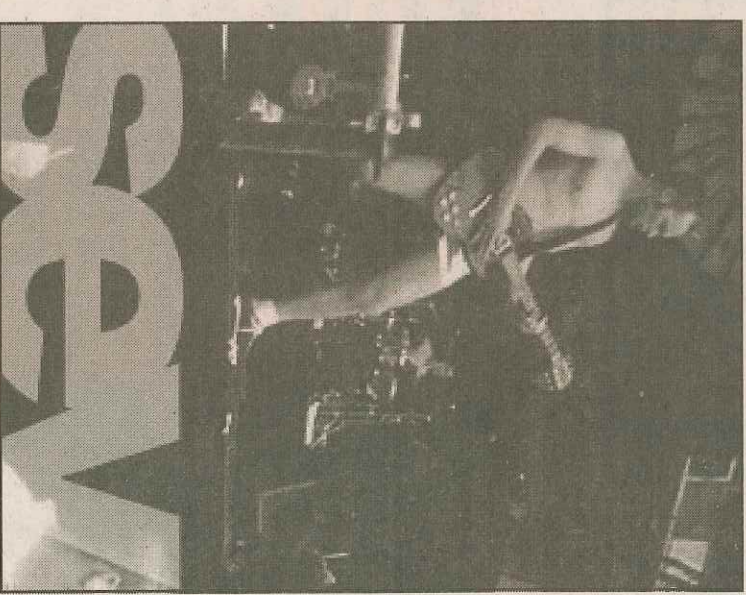
Besides having hilarious scenes, the show also features musical guests ranging from 50 Cent to Kid Rock.

The show airs live every Saturday night from 11:30 pm to 1:00 am.

A few of the sketches have been made into movies due to their popularity. "Wayne's World"(Dana Carvey and Mike Meyers) and "Superstar"(Molly Shannon) have all hit the big screen with great success along with "Ladies Man"(Tim Meadows) and "A Night at the Roxbury"(Will Ferrell, Chris Kattan) have also been made into movies.

From comedy to music and much more, SNL has it all.

Next time boredom knocks upon your door, turn on your TV, grab your junk food, and get ready for a good time.



In 2002 Sev performed at the annual 99.1 HFS Festival. Sev is still optimistic towards becoming much bigger in the music world.

"We're up for a few tours, and that is pretty much what we hope to be doing for many, many years to come. We want to be able to go out and play."

'Trading Spouses' finds its new rival

'Wife Swap' premieres on ABC

By Carlin Sherrill
Features Editor



'Wife Swap' is one of the many successful spouse trading shows airing on reality television.

Over the past few years, reality television has gotten trashy. Although many people never thought that it would come to this, this fall ABC is showing a new reality show called "Wife Swap."

After everyone thinking that TV couldn't get any worse, this new show came along.

"Wife Swap" is based on a hit British show in the UK. It consists of two opposite families, who trade their wives for ten days. In the first five days, the new wife has to go by her new household rules. She does everything that the original mom would do, whether she agrees with it or not. The next five

days, the new spouse gets to make up her own rules and run the house her own way. In the end, the families get to meet and discuss what happened in their ten days living the other's life.

Fox had a summer show with the same theme called "Trading Spouses." Although I think this idea of trading families is stupid, the families each got 50,000 dollars to spend the way they wanted to for the other family. In "Wife Swap," the families that had to suffer with the others' mom do not get anything.

Some students at WS think it would be fun to switch mom for a few days.

"I think it would be fun to see how life is for a while with a new mom, but I would miss my mommy after a while."

said sophomore Matt Van Dao.

ABC thinks that this show has an honest look inside a true American
"I think it would help them see things from another person's perspective...it would make you appreciate your parents more."

—Laura Fawcett, senior

family. Seeing how people react with one another shows how we really act.

"I think it would help them see things from another person's perspective," said senior Laura Fawcett. Although she would not mind switching families, like Matt, she would miss her mom.

"I think it would make you appreciate your parents more," said Fawcett.

Even if parents need to get more appreciation, trashy TV shows with stupid gimmicks are not the way to go.

However, for those people who enjoy watching these tacky reality shows, "Wife Swap" airs on Wednesday at 10 pm on ABC.

Oracle Picks

Monty Python and the Holy Grail

If hilarious, laugh-out-loud, random humor is your preference "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" is the movie to pick. This extremely low-budget film follows King Arthur and is loyal round table knight's journey to find the Holy Grail. In order to reach their goal, however, they think it best to split up. The story follows each of their conical journeys. Eventually they all meet up again for the climax. Before that can happen, however, each must go through weird challenges and fatal temptations and not to mention a couple of random musical numbers. The obvious lack of money forces the movie to be extremely creative with plot, props and characters, which make the picture even more entertaining.



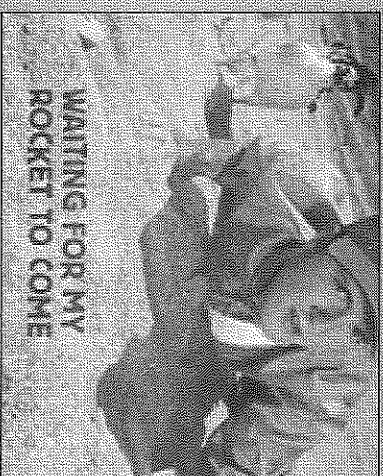
Ella Enchanted



Ella Enchanted is not like other common fairy tales. Sure, it is a children's book, but it is just as enjoyable now than as it was during grade school. Not to be confused with the recent movie, this masterpiece is about a young girl who is "blessed" with a gift from a fairy at birth with a spell that forces her to be obedient against her will. Obviously, this causes many problems, especially after her mother dies and her father marries an evil lady with, yes, you guess it, two evil daughters. Shortly after her father ships her and her sisters off to finishing school, she decides to run away in search of the fairy that placed the spell on her in order to ask her to lift it. Just like any classic fairy tale she meets dangerous and magical creatures along the way and by the end lives happily ever after. What makes this different from any other fairy tale is the way the plot blends elements from all the classics into its very own unique plot and style. There is no other book that is touching and funny, comical and heartwarming, and makes you double up with laughter and sob uncontrollably all in one story. It's really that good.

Jason Mraz "Waiting for my Rocket to Come"

I've purchased a large collection of CDs throughout my years and there are very few that I actually listen to all the way through. Jason Mraz's *Waiting For My Rocket To Come* is one of those few. Mraz's soothing and talent voice takes you through a perfect 45 minutes. There is not a song I dislike, either. What makes this album work is the careful layout of the tracks; the songs are in a perfect order of slow and upbeat tracks. There's a perfect flow of beat and mood; before you know it, it's over. The best time to listen to this CD is when you are in a calm, mellow mood. It works well when doing homework, reading, surfing online, driving in the car, before bed or waking up. Just about any time can be Mraz Time.



—Compiled by Christina Araj

Just wings it at Glory Days

Bring friends and have fun every Wednesday at Glory Days wing night

By Christina Arai

Managing Editor

Music blasts in the background, televisions blare, and the aroma of burgers, fries, and most of all, wings, lots and lots of wings, fills the smoky air. This is just another typical Wing Night at Glory Days Bar and Grill.

Dinner at Glory Days, every Wednesday has become a permanent ritual for students at WS. The unique atmosphere and cheap wings lure broke, hungry teens, not only from WS, but surrounding high schools as well.

"I love the sports atmosphere," said senior Matt Tang. "I can kind of fit in because I'm a jock."

Glory Days features ten-cent, which has helped attract a great deal of customers. It is not unusual to find the sports bar packed to capacity with teens. It's become a regular hangout spot, but do not be deceived. Adults enjoy the advantage of cheap wings and good music just as much.

"It's festive; it's wild; it's crazy," said freshman Vice Principal Richard Griffin.



Erin Danlow

Sophomore boys enjoy a feast of wings at Glory Days wing night.

"I like to observe that; I don't participate, I observe."

Fierce wing-eating competitions are a common sight and the cheap price sets

no limit. Students have been known to eat anywhere from 25 to 60 wings in one sitting and that's not always because of competition so much as hunger.

"Sometimes, when I'm hungry, I eat 25 wings," said sophomore Corinna Strickland.

The saucy wings are no the only incentive. In fact, not everybody who attends this eating fest goes for the wings; they are only half the appeal. The mere social experience is enough to entice students.

"It's fun, it's cheap and I hangout with my friends," said sophomore Jackie Tucker. "It's more of a social event."

The restaurant also has increasing popularity among the various team sports. The laid back and tranquil mood provides a perfect place to relax and satisfy a post-game hunger bout.

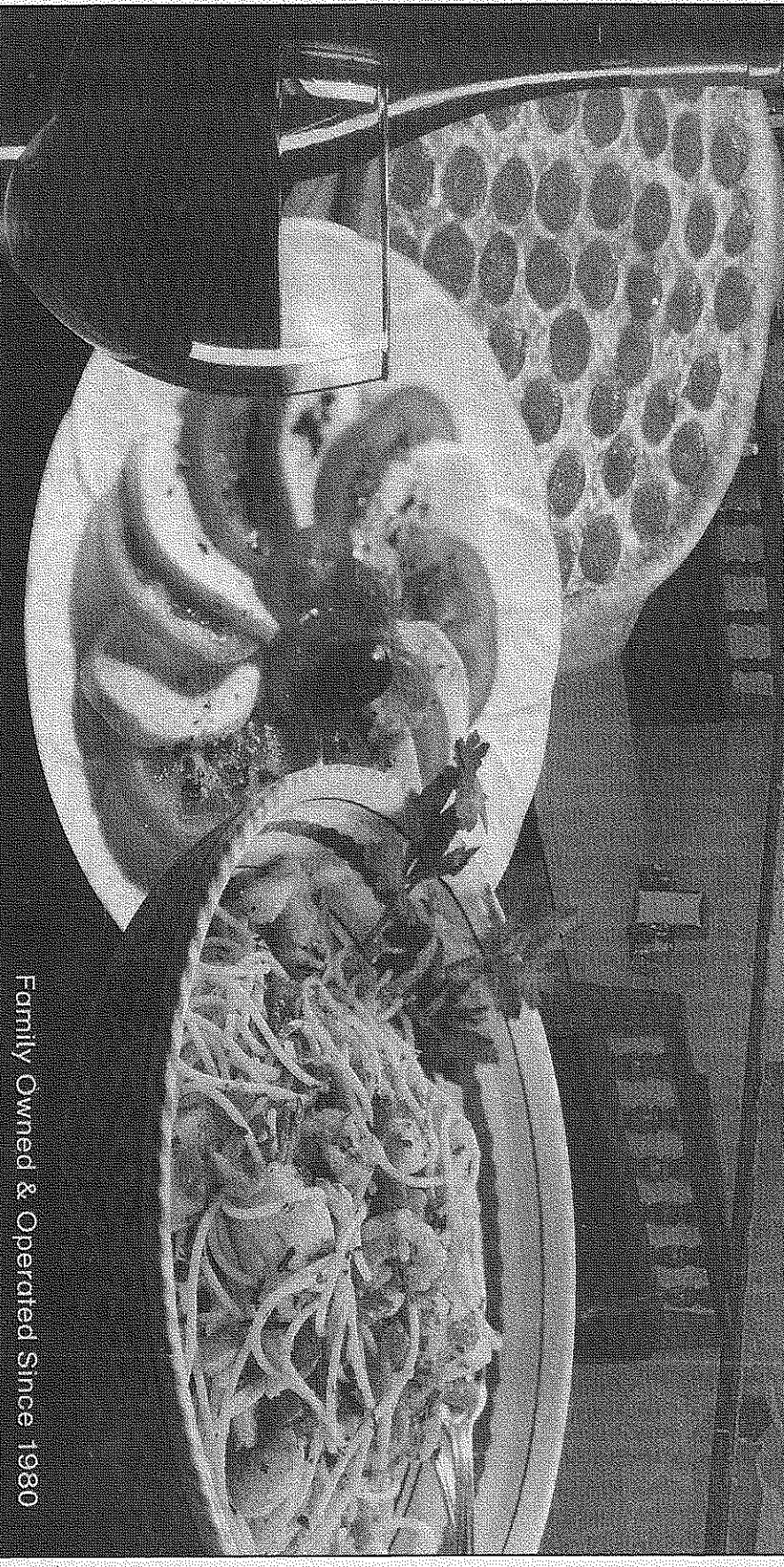
"I go for the football groupies," said senior football player Corey Parton.

If loud music and hot, inexpensive wings is a must, Glory Days Wing Nights is the one to trust.

"It's so fun and so laid back," said sophomore Melea McCreary. "The people at the bar are entertaining to watch, too."

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Pick your pleasure at the pumpkin patch

By Jessica Benjamin
Senior Staff Writer

Boring, boring, boring. One adjective that is bound to be used when describing Springfield is boring. The only fun things to do here become massively irritating from overuse.

Now there is a new event that is only in town until the end of the month. From October 1st to the 31st there is one place guaranteed to be fun, exciting, and unique.

The Pumpkin Playground, conveniently located at Burke Nursery and Garden Centre on Burke Road, has many entertaining activities for a chilly October day.

Events range from a rope swing, to the caterpillar tunnel, to the Native American presentation.

Admission is extremely affordable on weekdays costing \$7 per person, and on weekends rising to \$10. With the admission price, a small pumpkin and a hayride are included.

The Pumpkin Playground appeals to a variety of interests. If the desire is for a quiet ride, then the Iron Horse Railroad awaits. For those who are more historically inclined, a traditional walk-through



Eric Dahlberg
You can choose from bunches of pumpkins while enjoying the festivities at Burke Nursery.

Burke Nursery and Garden Centre's Pumpkin Playground has many entertaining activities for a chilly October day.

Jeep is set up in the middle of the pumpkin patch. The Money Mountain is also available for those willing to dig for hidden treasure.

If there is a search for some cheap thrills, they look no further than the Pumpkin Playground. A balloon animal can be purchased for a dollar, a few moments on the moon bounce for two dollars, and the pony ride for three.

If there is a weekend free in October, then the Pumpkin Playground offers even more exciting events. Some of these are face painting, clown and magic tricks, and even a pumpkin balloon house.

October is a time for dressing up, getting candy and drinking apple cider. Visiting a pumpkin patch cannot be excluded from this list of October musts. Burke Nursery's Pumpkin Playground has it all, whether it's enjoying the day with family or friends,

Cherry Hill harvests apple experience

By Andreaa Maxwell
Weekend Editor

In the suburbs of D.C., there is the hustle and bustle of downtown, but there is another choice just twenty miles away, in Clinton, Maryland. A few moments after crossing the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, the scenery is no longer urban. It's as though you are in a completely rural area, instead of ten miles from Washington, D.C.

Cherry Hill Farm & Orchard is located at 12300 Gallahan Road in Clinton, Maryland. Throughout the year, there are countless things to do at the farm. In the spring there are rows upon rows of strawberries. The orchard has peach trees that must be harvested in the summer and in the fall there are apple orchards.

The specialty of Cherry Hill is, they open their orchards to the public so you can pick your own fruit. There is also a wide selection of fruits and vegetables that can be purchased in the market, if you would rather someone else do the picking.

To begin the adventure of apple picking, it is necessary to go to the market. The manager will give directions to the nearest apple orchard. Once you reach the orchard, the attendant will give out baskets to put the apples in. As the path winds throughout the trees, the only things that can be seen are an abundance of beautiful red apples.

"The atmosphere is fun, especially with friends," said sophomore Ben Trump. After enough fruit has been picked, it is weighed and then priced. At the orchard, only cash and checks are accepted.

Throughout the month of October, the Halloween Harvest Festival is held. There are many activities including hayrides and slides, which are included in an affordable entrance fee. There are over 500 scarecrows placed around the farm and orchards. During the Halloween Harvest Festival there is also the option of selecting your own pumpkin from the pumpkin patch.

More information about Cherry Hill Farm and Orchard is available at <http://www.cherryhillfarm.net>.



The market at Cherry Hill offers fresh fruit.



An orangutan poses for the camera at the National Zoo. Along with zoo exhibits, there are treasure hunts and pumpkin painting for guests to enjoy.

Lions and tigers and scares live at the National Zoo

By Katie Costello
Features Editor

Trick-or-treating can finally take on a wilder turn. "Boo at the Zoo," an annual event the National Zoo holds around Halloween, gives people the chance to appreciate wildlife and receive excessive amounts of candy at the same time. It was introduced six years ago and has been a hit every year since.

Families come to the National Zoo decked out in everything from bumblebee to Harry Potter costumes. Often costumes worn resemble that of the animals themselves.

Kids are not the only ones dressed up, because the volunteers also dress up in outrageously outlandish costumes. There are activities for everyone to participate in.

"This year, we have a number of new 'haunted trails' and other spooky activities that will provide unique educational experiences for kids in keeping with the Halloween theme," said Jackie Vimek, Partnership Marketing Manager at the National Zoo.

Animal exhibits along the trails as well as exciting animal encounters make the night even more exciting. Traditional Halloween animals like bats and spiders are there.

It is the exotic animals like the pandas and orangutans that give the fall holiday that extra panache. For those that are more interested in the sweets than

the animals, there are over fifty candy and food stations scattered all throughout the park. There are "Boo treat maps" that guide trick-or-treaters to the best spots for candy. The night ends with a bag full of chocolate and goodies from whole Foods.

"Boo at the Zoo" has a goal of raising people's awareness of the zoo and its animals.

"One of the main goals of all of our special events is to educate and inspire the public.

With that in mind, most of our public events, including Boo at the Zoo, feature interactive displays, hands-on activities, special keeper talks and animal demonstrations, and other activities that we hope will not only teach visitors more about animals, but inspire a connection between them and the natural world," said Matt Olear, Media Specialist/Writer for the National Zoo.

Coming to this Halloween event not only makes for a fun time, but gives people the chance to support the zoo. "Boo at the Zoo" raises funds to support Zoo programs.

"Last year's Boo at the Zoo raised about \$189,000 in support of these programs," said Olear.

"Boo at the Zoo" starts on October 22 and ends on the 23. The festivities go from 5:30 PM to 8:30 PM and the tickets are \$23.

Boo at the Zoo is a fun event for families and is a great way to celebrate Halloween outside of your natural habitat.

WS sports rank second in *Washingtonian* poll

By Tim O'Keefe
Sports Editor

The October issue of the *Washingtonian*, WS sports earned the number two ranking for schools in Northern Virginia. The ranking was mainly based on state championships, which WS had two last season in cheerleading and soccer.

"It's a tremendous honor for our school," said WS girls basketball coach Bill Gibson. "The coaches here put allot of extra time into their teams."

With the combination of great academics, I think we have a good atmosphere overall."

The only team ranked higher than WS is rival Lake Braddock. The high ranking is mainly due to the perennial indoor track state titles.

Director of student activities Mike Dobson thinks we should not boast about our ranking.

"I don't think we need to go around telling other schools that we are better than them," said Dobson. "This could set up some unwanted revenge."

The WS soccer team has received the most praise over the years for winning states, three out of the last four seasons. Senior Brian Tweed, who was on the stated title soccer team last year, enjoys the praise.

"The coaches here put a lot of extra time into their teams."

—Bill Gibson, girls basketball coach

"It feels good to be recognized," said Tweed. "We work pretty hard to stay on top."

As well as recent state championships, the consistency of the vast majority of teams is something to be proud of.

"Every year it seems like our cross county, basketball, baseball, football, volleyball, are good," said Gibson. "At WS, we don't have down years very often."



Jenna Weisenhahn

WS is ranked second in the *Washingtonian* due to our sports program.

The dedication to excellence, hard work by players and coaches, and dignity towards other teams is what makes Dobson proud. "I'm very proud of all our players and coaches here," said Dobson. "They have represented their community so outstandingly."

Baseball hits a home run for DC

By Sean Hogan

ETC. Editor

September 30, 1971 was the worst day of my father's life for the last 33 years. This was not because of a job loss or a public embarrassment. This was because of a death. The death of the Washington Senators.

The team was moved to Arlington, Texas by the former treasurer of the Democratic National Committee, Bob Short. The Senators were shipped away because they had the third-worst attendance record in the American League and were perennially bad.

Fortunately, my father will mourn no more. The Montreal Expos, currently owned by the 29 other teams in Major League Baseball, are coming to D.C. Our new team will need to make some major changes after going 67-95 in 2004. Currently, the Expos' best offensive player is third baseman Tony Batista, an Orioles reject.

Having him on your team is like picking up a random bum off of the street and making him the CEO of your company. Jose Vidro is the only Expo who will ever have a chance of making the All-Star team, but he is injured at the moment.

Also, the Expos are ownerless. Soon, you'll be able to send in UPC's for the whole starting lineup.

Plus, what are we going to call our team? "I've heard (the) names of the 'Grays' and the 'Nationals,' but I'd rather have them be called something out-of-the-ordinary," said sophomore Matt Greene.

I've come up with a few suggestions: Senators (the classic name).

Nationals (the official name of the Washington baseball club until the 1950s).

Metros (D.C. has a good mass transit system?).

Interns (thanks to Mr. William Jefferson Clinton for this one).

Banana Slugs (we can steal it from the University of California at Santa Barbara).

Multicultural people that hold hands and skip (hey, at least this name isn't offensive!)

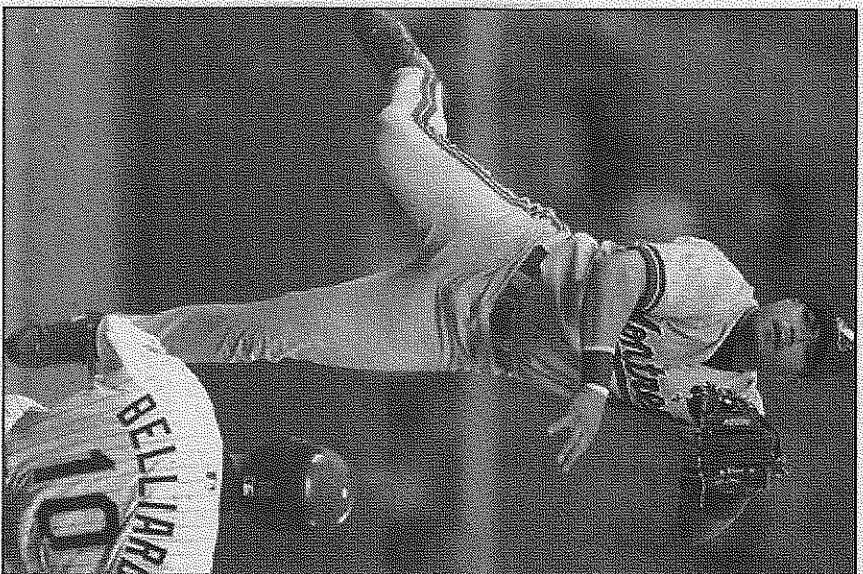
Fredom Fries (submitted by loyal fan, Mr. George Walker Bush)

And last but not least,

Political Correctness (who can be offended by this one?).

So come out and support your Washington (name to be announced) at RFK stadium in 2005.

Or don't go to games, like sophomore Tommy Crompton, who said, "I don't care (about the Expos). I don't even watch baseball."



Expos' Jose Vidro brings solid defense, leadership, and name recognition to baseball in DC.

Pow! It's Powder Puff!

Seniors, sophomores victorious in games

By Elizabeth Cole

Special to the oracle

I stare at the plastic wrapping of the mouth guard. \$100 per broken tooth.

Why am I doing this? There's a reason I don't play contact sports. This is it.

Okay, so maybe I'm no future Heisman winner, but why not try

Powder Puff Football? It is my senior year, we're almost guaranteed to win... what's the worst that could happen? I can live without a tooth or two.

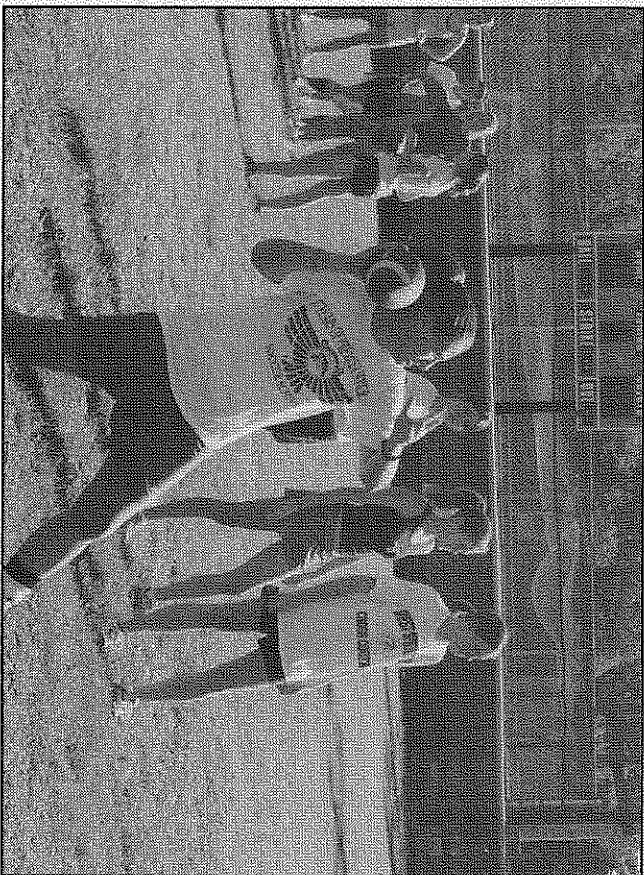
When Homecoming week rolls around, a few brave girls trade their dresses for annual rivalry between the classes. This year I decided to join them under the lights. After a 10 year ban on the sometimes tough sport, Powder Puff Football returned to WS last year. Students flock to the stadium to watch two games: freshman versus sophomores, and junior versus seniors. The girls wear flags to eliminate tackling.

Any girls are eligible to play, and class sponsors coach the teams with the help of teacher volunteers. Profits from the games benefit mostly the senior class, who retain 70% of ticket and food sales at the game. The under classes each take 10% of the remaining revenue.

At the first of three practices, I'm relieved to find I'm not the only one feeling less than coordinated. "Go five and five" Coach Gibson tells me. I guess my blank stare conveyed my confusion.

The seniors are supposed to win, and I'm still hoping this year won't be an exception.

More nervous than I anticipated, I open my car door to hear the dim roar of fans cheering on as the sophomores crush the freshman in a 38-0 victory. Nearly half the bleachers are filled with spectators. *Who am I kidding? Why did I get myself into?* Fear sinks in. Warmed up and pumped up, we confidently jog to the field. The game has a bleak beginning, with the juniors



Leah Varatta

Powder Puff girls practice throwing the football on the WS softball field.

scoring a touchdown early in the first quarter. Megan Taylor salvages our score with a touchdown. With two seconds to go, we tie up the first half.

Unfortunately the senior boys couldn't match our courage and lost the tug-of-war against the junior boys. The nearly secured.

Rivalry follows Lawson to the WNBA

Former WS superstar hits nothing but net in professional career

By Tina Wajda
Inside Editor

To fulfill a dream can be one of the most rewarding feelings. Kara Lawson, WS Class of '99, achieved her dream. In her second season of professional basketball, Lawson helped the Sacramento Monarchs make it into the WNBA playoffs.

Lawson joined WNBA (Women's National Basketball Association) team in 2003, after graduating from the University of Tennessee. She was a standout for the Volunteers during her four-year career.

The professional world of basketball has definite pluses for Lawson.

"There's nothing better than the 'Cinderella' element of playing in front of 34,000 people on TV," she told *The Oracle* last year when she visited her alma mater.

This year, Lawson renewed an old rivalry. In the WNBA's Western Conference playoffs, Lawson, a point guard, was pitted against her old nemesis, Seattle Storm guard Sue Bird.

"The two were AAU rivals, a highly selective select basketball league," says Girls Varsity Basketball coach Bill Gibson.

Both Lawson and Bird are both remarkable players, receiving various awards and recognitions during their

careers. The two, who played each other throughout elementary, middle and high school, also were rivals in college. Bird played for national champion Connecticut before going to Seattle.

Bird and Lawson bring different talents to the game.

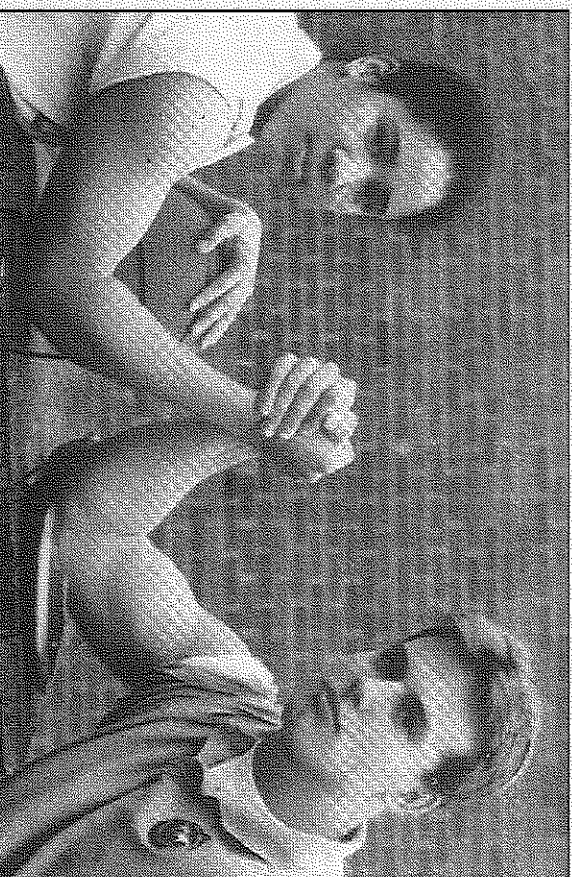
"Sue Bird is faster but she is also older and has more experience than Kara," said junior Sara Laporta. Lawson's ball-

Lawson is known for coming back to WS to visit teachers, friends and helping with the girls basketball team practice.

handling skills and presence on the court help her keep control of the offense.

Lawson spent three years as a Lady Spartan, helping to bring home two state trophies. After graduating Tennessee, she was drafted by the Detroit Shock. In April of 2003, she was traded by Detroit to her current team, The Sacramento Monarchs. While Seattle eventually went on to defeat Sacramento in the Western Conference playoffs, Lawson and the Monarchs are expected to perform better next season.

Lawson is known for coming back to WS to visit teachers, friends (math



Yearbook Photo
"There's nothing better than the 'Cinderella' element of playing in front of 34,000 people on TV," said '99 grad Kara Lawson, pictured above with Nick Welthozky, who also was voted "Most Athletic" by the senior class.

teacher Shannon McIlwrath played on the Lady Spartans with her) and helping with the girls basketball team practice.

"She motivates us all to be out best," says Laporta, a Lady Spartan. Lawson is known for her determination. Losing the playoffs probably doesn't signal an end to Lawson's basketball career.

"She is an inspiration," said junior Ginny McMechon.

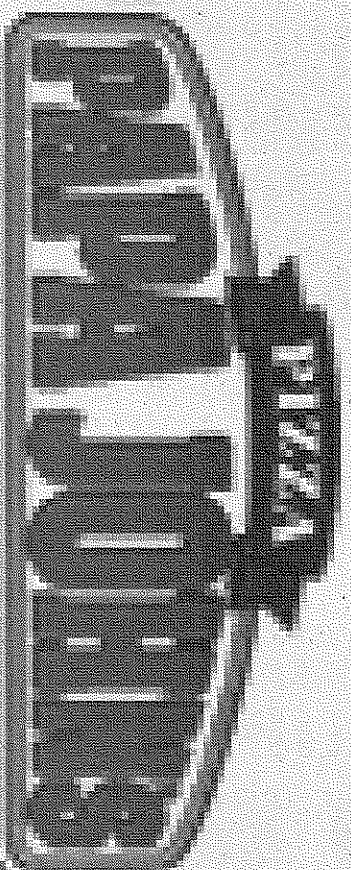
Lawson spent three years as a Lady Spartan, helping to bring home two state trophies. After graduating Tennessee, she joined the pros.

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Is that a real sport?

By Chrissy Regelski
Weekend Assistant

WS offers a variety of team activities but the trouble is deciding which ones are sports and which ones are not. It all depends on whether you stick to dictionary definitions.

"It's based on your definition of a sport," said coach of WS girls' basketball team Bill Gibson. "When two teams compete can you call it a sport or entertainment? Is a competition when two people have contact or two groups that have skills compete? Cheerleading is then a sport when they compete and entertainment at a football game." Though there are many activities that require teams, some students believe they are not all sports.

"There is a difference between extra curricular activity teams and sports teams. Sports teams are usually stereotyped as after school activities that require physical endurance and extra curricular activity teams, like the Forensics and Math teams, require more mental actions," said sophomore Naomi You. Different students agreed that a

team has to be involved in physical activity to be considered a sport.

"I don't think the Math team is a sport because it's not physical," said sophomore Christina Matthews. "It's just thinking."

Unlike Matthews, some students don't believe in calling certain activities sports just because it calls for physical effort.

"Crew shouldn't be considered a sport because it doesn't involve skill. It only involves exercise," said sophomore Miles Sisson.

Others agreed that an activity should require ability and not just strength.

"Ultimate Frisbee is not a sport because it's pointless," said sophomore Jessie Elwood. "It doesn't involve as much skill as other sports."

Some regard certain teams as entertainment rather than sports.

"Colorguard goes along with marching band and it is just a halftime show," said freshman Andrew Furch.

Former Colorguard member junior Cameo Haralson has a different outlook on the "sport."



Erica Wilkening

Sophomore Mike Biallas plays the self-proclaimed sport wall ball. It is one of the many "sports" that creates dissension on whether it is genuinely a sport.

"I definitely think that Colorguard is a sport. If you look at Colorguard there are several aspects that people don't take into opinion. One aspect is having to remember every step, direction

change, spin, catch, and dance move. That's the mental aspect of it. If you think about it, it's like football. Players have to remember plays like Colorguard does or there is no show," said Haralson.

Lampley and Gemmer swing and miss in regionals Team leaders do their best in their last competition

By Tim O'Keefe
Sports Editor

On a bright and crisp October morning, senior Mike Gemmer tees off. His two other teammates watch silently as Gemmer hits the sweet spot slightly off the green. Senior Sean Lampley embarked on the regional golf tournament at Fairfax National Golf Course. On the 18 hole course, Gemmer and Lampley competed against 46 other golfers from various schools in the region. Unfortunately, their results were not as they wished.

"Fairfax National was a target course it was very difficult; you had to hit it perfect."

—Mike Gemmer, senior

"Fairfax National was a target course," said Gemmer. "It was very difficult; you had to hit it perfect."

Gemmer and Lampley did not qualify for states. Lampley especially was frustrated with his performance. He was disappointed, mainly do to his accuracy.

"Accuracy was a problem," said Lampley. "Everything was left and right. I could not put the ball where I wanted to put it."

Although the regional tournament was not what Lampley and Gemmer expected, the district tournament

was a positive experience. Regional tournament qualifications were strictly based on the district tournament scores at Twin Lakes. Gemmer thought he played well, and expected to make the regional tournament. Lampley was ecstatic with his performance.

"I played out of my mind in districts. I was hitting the greens, putting well, and playing with confidence."

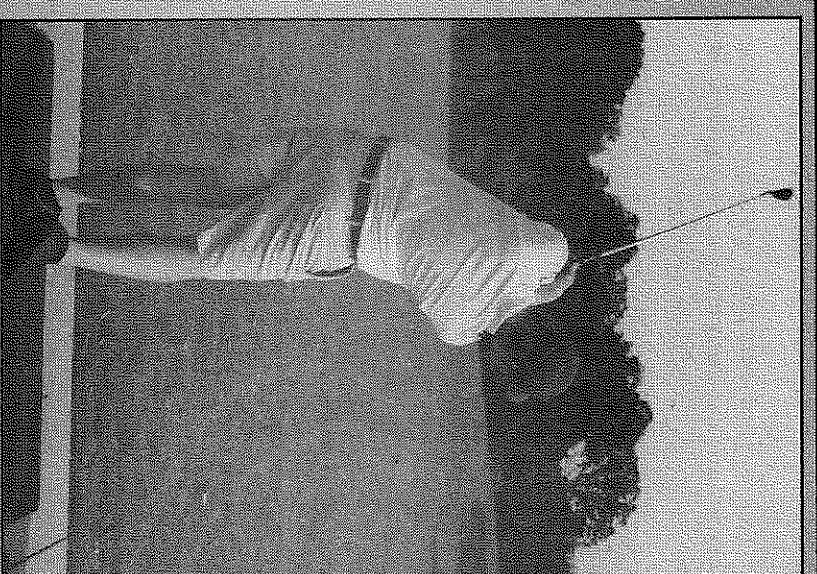
—Sean Lampley, senior

"I played out of my mind in districts," said Lampley. "I was hitting the greens, putting well, and playing with confidence."

Overall the golf team provides good camaraderie and relaxed atmosphere to the players. They practiced at the Springfield country club every day after school.

Freshmen Andy Adell enjoyed the play of Lampley and Gemmer throughout the season.

"Lampley and Gemmer probably are our best players," said Adell. "During practice they like to mess around and have fun. It keeps the atmosphere lively and comical."



Leah Vazaris

WS's Sean Lampley swings through in practice.

Although he season is over, Lampley feels it's been worth his time. "I have had a good time overall," said Lampley. "I think we have had a good season."

Baseball coach brings new hope

By Lindsay Smith
Senior Staff Writer

The leaves have just started to fall, and the refreshing smell of autumn has just started to fill the air. Fall is in full bloom and while the seasons of many fall sports teams at WS are coming to a close, baseball season is just beginning.

At first, it might have been strange to see baseball boys out on the track conditioning so early in the school year. This has not been known to happen at WS. In years past, the boys have done strictly weight-training programs, which did not begin until the winter months.

However, it is only appropriate to begin a new training program, as a new face has entered the WS baseball scene. This year, WS welcomes John James, a former assistant baseball coach at Robinson, who is assuming the position of head baseball coach, and PE teacher at WS.

James has begun a rigorous training schedule for the off-season to help get

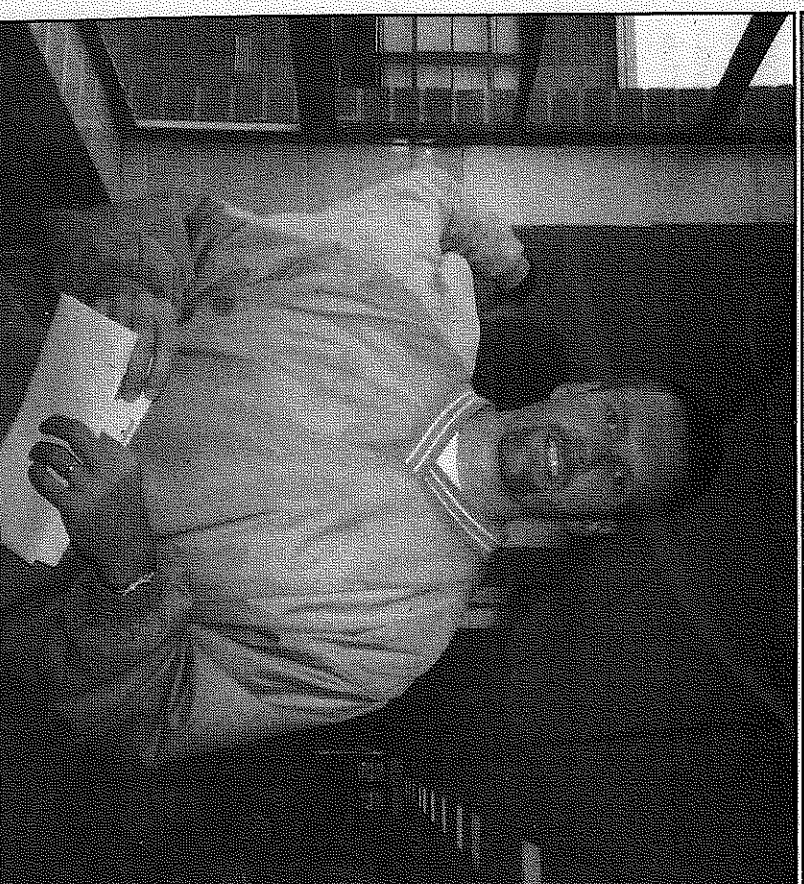
the team into shape. "He has a very effective program for the off-season that will hopefully build us stronger not only as a team, but also as individuals," said senior Danny Tinsley.

The prospective players are currently on an everyday workout schedule in which they go outside and condition on the track for two days of the week, and the remaining three days are spent in the weight room.

Under James and his new training methods, the boys are optimistic about the upcoming season. "I'm looking forward to a better season than last year... and hopefully we'll win more games," said senior Sean Lampley.

As the fall training continues after school, the boys have high hopes for the season up ahead. The team has already started to bond throughout the training sessions and with James heading the team this year, the Spartans are ready to dominate.

"John James," said senior Kierman Whitworth. "What a guy."



Erica Wilkening

P.E. teacher John James replaces Kenneth Munoz as the new baseball coach.

Masters and their Mini Me's

By Stevie Florino

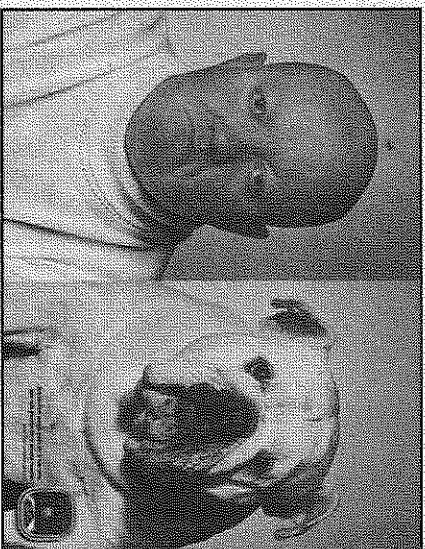
Etc. Assistant

I was walking my dog after school the other day, and as we rounded a corner, approaching us was a hippie looking woman with long, straight, blonde hair, walking an Afghan, which is a hippie looking dog with long, straight, blonde hair. At first I just wanted to laugh because it looked so comical. This is when I began to realize that this was not the first time I had noticed a dog resembling their master. I stopped for a minute to think: as I walked my St. Bernard, do I look like a St. Bernard?

I decided I would delve a little deeper into this phenomenon. It just so happened that the West Minister Dog Show was replaying on ESPN that night. As I watched each handler present their dog in the ring, it became glaringly apparent that, owners and their dogs do resemble each.

One of the firsts to show was an Old English Bulldog. The wrinkles and jowls on him matched the wrinkles and jowls on the older gentlemen guiding him around the ring. Next up, was a Greyhound. His tall, thin body and long face was almost identical to his master's tall, thin body and long face. As the winner was announced, a large Newfoundland, by the name of Josh, was brought front and center by a rather large and stocky woman with shaggy black hair just like his.

I am sure that when people go to buy their dogs, they are not consciously thinking, "I'm going to find



Many owners strongly resemble their canines, a dog that looks just like me." So why do people end up with dogs that look like them?

A recent study does confirm, that yes, people do look like their dogs. A pair of psychologists from the University of California at San Diego, proved that it is true. But do they initially look alike, or do they grow to look alike?

They went to a local dog park and took 25 photos of dogs and 25 photos of their owners. They then asked 28 students to match the pictures of the dogs to the pictures of their masters. Out of 25 pictures, the students correctly matched 16 and missed 9.

They concluded that dogs and their owners do not grow to look like each other, but the similarities are there from the start. And it is prompted by vanity.

Halloween Costumes: A Ghoul Tradition

By Cam Rushton

Business Systems Editor

Do not be alarmed when a horde of pint-sized ghouls go scampering around your neighborhood on October 31. They are not out to take over the world; they are just little children in costumes trick-or-treating and celebrating Halloween.

There might be a ghost, or a dinosaur, or even a Power Ranger. Sophomore Pierre Phan dressed as Kermit the Frog when he was a youngster and junior Dan Ragen went as a herd a few years back.

Whatever costume you can think of, someone has probably exploited it to their advantage to obtain a pillowcase full of treats. Plenty of people do not shop for costumes and improvise at home with whatever is in sight.

White bed sheets, cardboard boxes, and a little imagination can be a candy-seeker's best friend when Halloween rolls around. If your parents do not want to loan you fifty dollars so you can buy the most



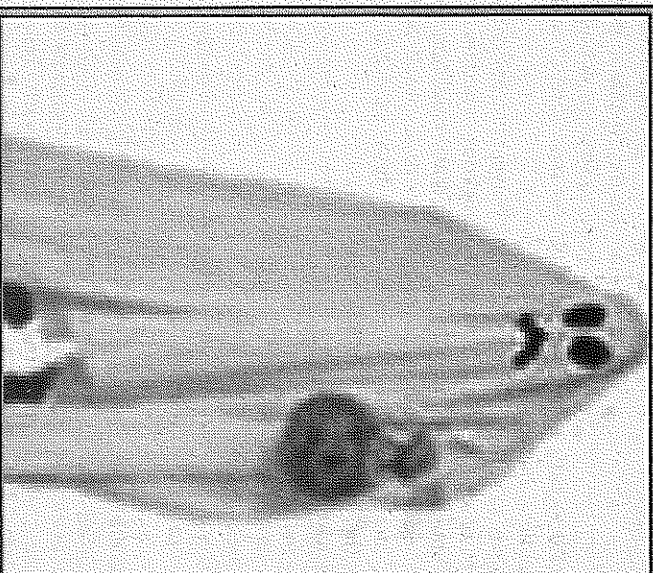
Power Rangers are not just for little kids; costumes designed for teenagers and grown ups are sold in halloween stores all over.

fabulous, most awesome costume in stock, wing it and use what you can find.

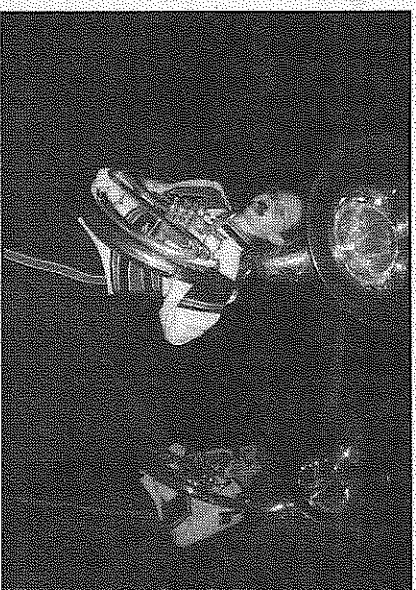
A bed sheet can turn you into a ghost, an ugly person trying to conceal their face, or Charlie Brown, simply by folding the sheet and cut one big hole through it. Your imagination can really take off if you use a cardboard box, in which you can inform your neighbors that you are a life-size T V, a Gameboy, or a wild animal breaking free from its weak FedEx packaging.

One inspirational story about homemade costumes comes from my father, John Rushton, who was part of the Sigma Nu fraternity at Virginia Tech: "I dressed up as a house plant for one Halloween party, and my friend went as a reading lamp. We tried to get my roommate to don an end table costume, but he decided to go as a devil.

So, instead of wasting precious time thinking about schoolwork these next few days, consider what attire you want to use on Halloween night. Make it good, too, because the better the costume, the more candy you receive. And Halloween is one of the only times throughout the year you can get all the free candy you crave.



Just draping an ordinary bed sheet over yourself, can transform you into a scary ghost.



Exhausted, marching band members walk off the football field after a hardcore performance.

Oracle File Photo

You Know You're a Band Geek if...

By Emily Boling
Senior Staff Writer

You can identify fairly accurately which instruments people play simply by their personality. It bothers you when the turn signals of the cars ahead of you aren't in time with each other.

Or when your own turn signal is at a different tempo than the music on the radio. You can play the fight song but had no idea that it actually has words.

You listen to music and start conducting and don't even realize what you're doing. Your boyfriend is in band. Your dates during marching band season include watching a movie together on the bus en route to a competition.

You can complete the line "This one time, at band camp..." with a true story of your own. Your goal is to become drum major. You have at least tentatively considered being a band director.

The only dance you know is "Drummer's Rap." You walk down the hall with your band friends, and you are all in step. You can play other people's music in the correct key on your instrument.

Your friend tells you to work on your tonguing, and you do not even consider that other people might take this in the wrong connotation. Your band geek friends vote you "The Ultimate Band Geek."

You are the band manager, woodwind captain, and black sticks of death section leader. You know that the black sticks of death are really the clarinets.

The brass rubs off of your trombone and leaves a greenish mark on your neck, and your mother wants to know who gave you the hickey. You take it as a compliment when people call you a band geek.

You show up at 10:00 Saturday morning and don't get home until 3:00 Sunday morning on competition days.

And you would do it all over again the next day because you love it so much. You hang out in the band room before school, during break, during lunch, during other classes, and after school, simply because you don't know where else to go.

Band is your social life. You spend the last 102 hours of your summer vacation marching around on blacktop.

Your boyfriend asks you to homecoming, and you (accidentally) leave the flowers in the band office, but you don't feel too bad about this because you spend more time in the band office than you do at home so it actually makes perfect sense.

Your captain wrote this. You understand all of this, and you're laughing.

Hoagie's World Columbus Day, GO AWAY

By Sean Hogan
Etc. Editor

"In 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue." We all know the song and recited it 4,618 times in first grade alone. Fortunately, we now know that he a) was a complete idiot, shooting to land in Asia and landing in the Caribbean (that's like building a skyscraper, but accidentally making it with toothpicks), and b) killed lots of people, and did not ever serve his time in the time out corner. He did not even discover the United States of America. Amerigo Vespucci did that. He discovered the great lands of the Caribbean (motto: We have hotter pirates than you!). Therefore, he is undeserving of his holiday that takes place on the 2nd Monday of October every year.

Basically, I have stated Columbus' unworthiness of his own holiday. Who will take his place? Some likely candidates are Amerigo Vespucci, Ferdinand Magellan and Regis Philbin. Amerigo already had the most prosperous country in the world named after him, so I don't think he needs any more acknowledgments. Plus, America Day would sound a bit tacky.

Regis Philbin? C'mon people! He's not even hosting *Millionaire* anymore. He might as well move to Florida and get a head start on the Early Bird Special for tomorrow: Chicken with rice, mashed potatoes and some strange green substance (only \$3.95 at your

nearest geezer restaurant). So going through the three most likely candidates, we have absolutely nothing going for us.

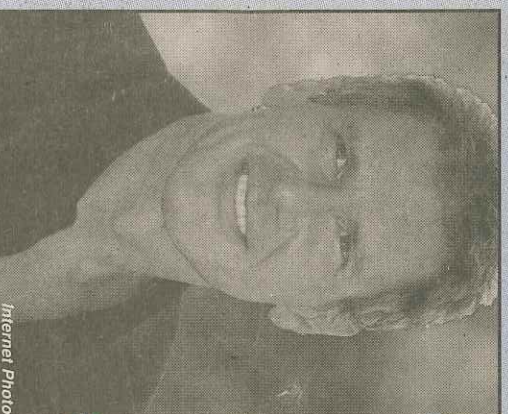
And Magellan died on his voyage. He didn't even get home. What a loser.

After a lot of thinking (giving me endless headaches), I've decided on a perfect candidate for a personal holiday replacing Columbus Day. *DRUMROLL PLEASE* Hoagie Day! This is a day of being carefree and doing absolutely nothing. As always, no school is another great incentive for a holiday.

People need a break from work and school. According to www.mydailyplan-it.com, November 30th is already Stay-Home-Because-You-Are-Well-Day, so give the fine people of America a break. Give them a Kir-Kat bar and the day off for Tuesday, November 30, 2004. They'll love you forever. They'll give you a hug. Maybe even a kiss. How can you beat that? It's better than a personal ad! So if you can't get any loving, this November, just make November 30th National Hoagie Day!

Note to Readers: I am extremely sorry for the mental angst caused by the incorrectness of last issue's calendar. It is my fault, so therefore you may send angry letters and dye my face blue while I am sleeping. Thank you, and please come again.

Top Ten TV and Movie Presidents that are better than Bush and Kerry



Internet Photo
Harrison Ford was a good president in "Air Force One," but we'd rather have Dave Barry as the Commander-in-Chief of the United States.

10. Harrison Ford- "Air Force One"
9. Chris Rock- "Head of State"
8. Bill Pullman- "Independence Day"
7. Martin Sheen- "The West Wing"
6. Dennis Haysbert- "24"
5. Morgan Freeman- "Deep Impact"
4. John Travolta- "Primary Colors"
3. George H. W. Bush- "The Simpsons"
2. Will Ferrell- "Saturday Night Live"
1. Dan Hedaya- "Dick"

—Compiled by Adam Rosen

Poor Liz's Almanac

Test-taking strategies to guide your way

By Liz Weiderhold

Managing Editor

This is a test. Please take out a number 2 pencil and answer the questions as best you can. The answers are directly after the question and provide some advice for how to attack each question.

1. After working in the mine all day, I became ill with

- a. The flu
- b. Syphilis
- c. Pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanokoniosis
- d. All of the above

The correct answer is C. This is the longest and most "knowledgeable" answer so you should choose it because you don't know what it means. This is the scientific word for "Black Lung Disease," but whoever made this test chose the scientific word because he or she *wants* you to fail.

2. The necromancer conjected a _____ from a kaffiyeh.

- A. Rabbit
- b. Sequestration
- c. Putsch
- d. Allocation

The correct answer is A. In the event that you only recognize one word and the rest don't make any sense, like in this case, don't choose C, because it's wrong (unless C is the right answer). The test makers like to make the actual sentence so indecipherable that you would be tempted to choose the one with the most consonants. This is so they can make fun of you if you chose the answer that they *know* you don't know.

The actual sentence, translated into normal English, is "The magician made a rabbit from a hat."

3. JAPANESE is to RICE as GEORGE W. BUSH is to

- a. Vociferous
- b. Saddam Hussein
- c. Strategy
- d. All of the above.

The correct answer is D. The relationship is that the Japanese *cannot pronounce* the word "rice" just as George W. Bush cannot pronounce any of the words listed above, probably including the phrase "all of the above" ("heckovalota them above ones").

4. How should you prepare for November 2?

- a. I don't know because Hoagie screwed up last issue's calendar and I no longer know what day it is (see the October 1 calendar for evidence).
- b. TiVo "Dawson's Creek" so I can sleep in.
- c. If I am a Citizen of The United States of America and of Legal Age, I Should Register To Vote and Stop Using Capital Letters.
- d. All of the above

The correct answer is D, for obvious reasons.

By the way, I am sure Hoagie is sorry he screwed up the rest of your life by putting Homecoming on a Holy Sabbath Day. Feel free to write him angry letters explaining how your whole night was ruined because you showed up at WS on the 17th in a lavender taffeta gown, pounding in vain upon the cafeteria doors, only to be met with the echo of your lonely knocks. Explain how you sobbed silently into the cold night air, muttering his name with vengeance. I know I'll never forgive him for that.

October 22- November 12

Friday, October 22	Varsity Football @ Lake Braddock 7:30
Saturday, October 23	Spartanfest
Sunday, October 24	National United Nations day
Monday, October 25	Boys Volleyball home vs Dakton 7:30
Tuesday, October 26	National Mule Day
Wednesday, October 27	Cranky Coworkers Day
Thursday, October 28	Cross Country Patriot District Championship @ Burke Lake 4:15
Friday, October 29	Varsity Football home vs Robinson 7:30 Senior Night!
Saturday, October 30	Varsity Cheerleading Patriot District Championship @ Hayfield 1:00
Sunday, October 31	Halloween
Monday, November 1	Teacher Workday
Tuesday, November 2	Election Day- No school! Our best wishes go to Dave Barry!
Wednesday, November 3	Boys Volleyball home vs Langley 7:30
Thursday, November 4	Cross Country Northern Region Championship @ Burke Lake 3:15
Friday, November 5	Report Cards distributed
Saturday, November 6	Send angry letters to Hoagie for messing up the last calendar day
Sunday, November 7	Day 1 of National Split Pea Soup Week
Monday, November 8	Cook Something Bold and Pungent day
Tuesday, November 9	Day 9 of Cozy cuddles for kids month
Wednesday, November 10	Forensics NovAFL 2 @ WS
Thursday, November 11	Veterans Day
Friday, November 12	Varsity Football @ Westfield 7:30

—Compiled by Jenny Taylor