



The RAVEN

March 18, 2005 Volume 41 Number 9

West Springfield High School 6100 Rolling Road Springfield, Virginia 22152

Murder behind the school Former student shot; another charged

By Christian Romeo

Senior Staff Writer

Friends, faculty and family will remember Brendan Tash as a man who loved life but whose life was ended abruptly early one Sunday morning.

Tash, who attended WS during the 2001-2002 school year but then transferred to another FCPS school, was at a party at a friend's house on Cardinal Book Court behind WS, on the night of March 5.

According to a Fairfax County police spokesman, another group showed up at the party around 10:30 p.m. and an argument broke out between

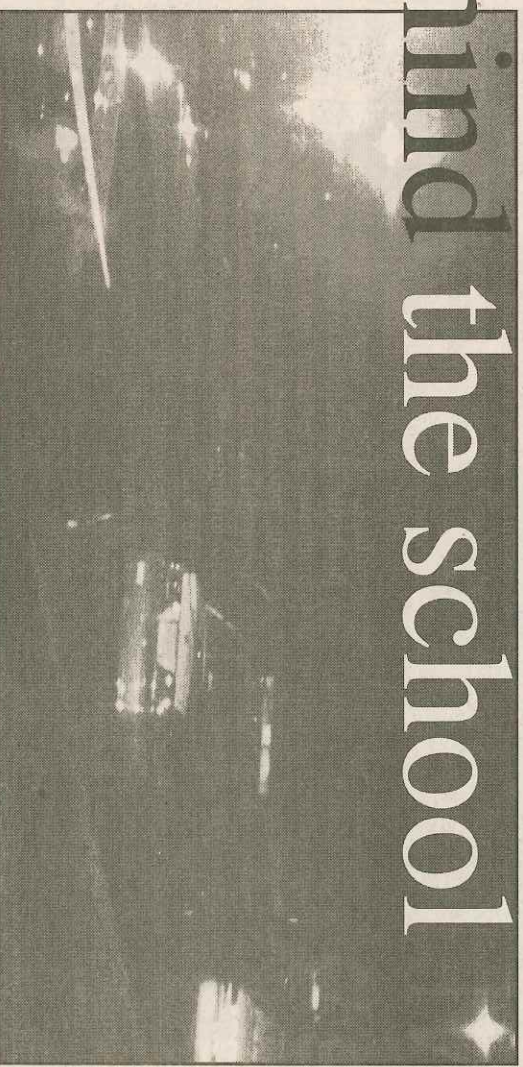
the two groups.

Durrell Pretzy, who attended WS during the 2002-2003 school year, allegedly fired five to seven shots in the street outside the house, hitting Tash with what appeared to be a stray bullet. He then fled the scene.

Hours after Tash's funeral, Pretzy was arrested at the new Wegmon's near the Fairfax County Government Center, and charged with homicide.

Senior Kathryn Strandell was in her house when she heard the shots and witnessed the chaos that erupted afterward.

"It was early Sunday



Police cars line the street at the house where Brendan Tash was murdered on March 5.

Jordy Savin

morning around 2 a.m. when I heard five gunshots distinctly," said Strandell. "At first I thought it was firecrackers, but then I heard a metallic sound and knew it was gunshots and I called the police."

Seven police cars, one ambulance and one fire truck arrived at the scene. Tash was

airlifted to Inova Fairfax Hospital where he was pronounced dead.

Pretzy last attended WS in 2003, but it appears that Tash and Pretzy were not acquainted with each other.

Tash was remembered as a young man who had a sense of humor, loved to play piano and

Applied History celebrates Civil Rights anniversary

By Sarah Drabkin

Photo Editor

Twenty-one students and 10 teachers and chaperones rode their own "Freedom Bus" this month on their quest to learn about the Civil Rights movement.

Their adventure was different from the Freedom Riders of the sixties in that they were not attacked and intimidated, but embraced and inspired by the history they learned and took part in.

During the Birmingham portion of the trip, students participated in interactive demonstrations and visited the 16th Street Baptist Church, where four girls died in a bombing one Sunday morning while changing into their choir robes.

"I'm always struck at the church, because the faith community continues today. While the bombing of the girls is part of the story of the church, it has not assumed their role as a house of worship," Applied

History teacher Jim Percoco said.

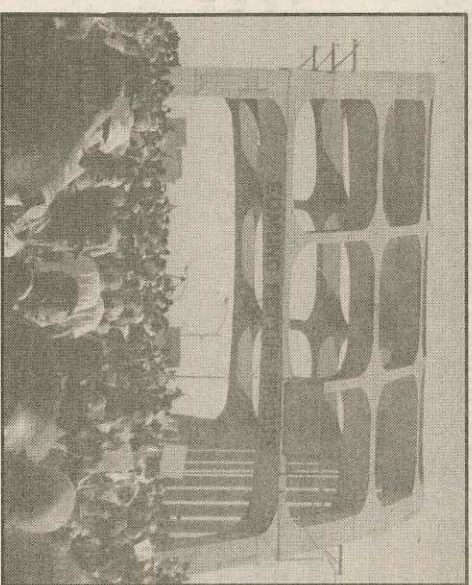
WS's "Freedom Riders" also journeyed to Montgomery, the state capital, where they took tours of Rev. Martin Luther King's home and visited the Rosa Parks Museum.

The next morning the WS group woke up in the Selma. Riders met many "Bloody Sunday" survivors such as Amelia Boynton, and congressmen and women such as John Lewis of Georgia and Maxine Waters of California, who were in town to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the march from Selma to Montgomery.

"I learned most from people you don't normally hear about, like the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth; common people who led the movement," said senior Bryan Lees.

The next day they lined up outside of the Voting Rights Institute. Virginia senator George Allen and

See CIVIL RIGHTS on Page 5.



Sarah Drabkin

About 10,000 people, including the WS group, walked across the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

Forensics team wins regional championship

By Emily Bolling

Senior Staff Writer

There is only one sport at WS that requires the competitors to wear suits or skirts: the Forensics team.

This year, the WS Forensics team, coached by English teacher MaryLove Wynne, won the regional championship. The team has not advanced this far in the previous three years that Wynne has been coaching.

Forensics may not be considered to be a true sport, but it is a VHSL-sanctioned sport, and the team members practice for three to eight hours a week, depending on the category. The areas of competition are as diverse as extemporaneous speaking, humorous

interpretation, story-telling, or poetry.

"The whole team is the regional champions. The whole team makes it based on their points, and the first through third place winners advance to States," said junior Aisha Toor.

Like wrestling and track, the best individuals will advance to States on April 8, instead of the entire team like soccer. The emphasis remains on the team accomplishing a goal that all of the members have strived toward.

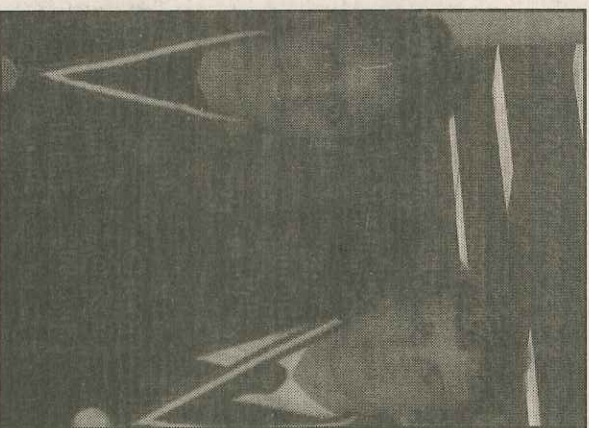
"My ultimate goal is to help the team," said sophomore Richie Hartz.

Hartz maintains this objective even though he individually competes in humorous interpretation because he likes making people laugh.

When students first join the Foren-

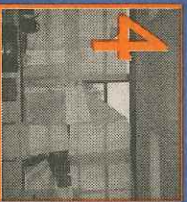
sics team, whether in the speech and debate class or as an extracurricular activity, Wynne emphasizes the same elementary concepts.

These include presentation, gestures and movement, eye contact with one's audience, and how to appeal to an audience on ethical, emotional, or logical arguments, depending on the topic. Some details are so minute that beginning students think they do not matter, but the difference between winning and losing may be when the competitor looks at his or her audience. "I like the people on the team," said sophomore Sloane Lipkin. "I like seeing myself improve, I like being able to capture an audience through different techniques, even the little details."

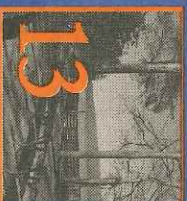


MaryLove Wynne

Juniors Aisha Toor and Richie Hartz display their championship medals.



4 Classrooms in decline.



13 Burke Lake the place to be.



16 Hoagie hates Maryland.

Students from all over the nation come together and march for AIDS awareness

By **Sunnie Ko**
Sports Editor

Math time. Every day 15,000 people are newly infected with HIV/AIDS. Add this to the 42 million people who already are infected. Now subtract the 8,000 people who die every day due to the disease. The answer: a global epidemic.

Out of the 15,000 people who are infected daily by HIV/AIDS over half of them are young people ages 13-24. With our future in the hands of this deadly disease, we need science-based prevention programs and inexpensive, lifesaving, generic AIDS medications.

On February 26, I, along with thousands of students from all over the country, marched from the White House to the Capitol in attempt to awaken the Bush Administration and open its eyes to the to our future which is being lost to AIDS.

Fourteen million children around the world have been orphaned by AIDS. In South Africa, 15 percent of woman and five percent of men are infected. With such disastrous statistics, the Student Global AIDS Campaign (SGAC), in partnership with Africa Action and Advocates for Youth is determined to end AIDS. To do this, there are several concepts the United States Government needs to grasp.

The Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria has been proven to be one of the most effective ways fight the diseases.

In the past years, the Bush Administration has failed to fully fund their share to the organization. The amount that should be donated estimates to be \$1.5 billion. That is demand number one: fully fund the Global Fund.

Funds towards the prevention of HIV/AIDS which

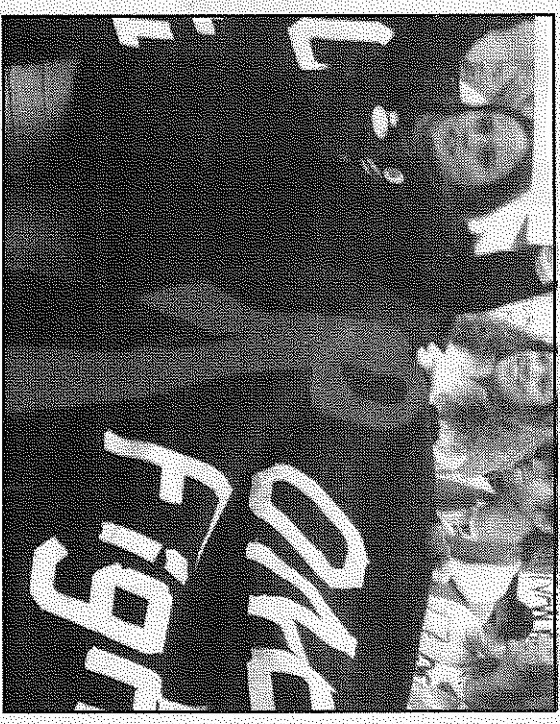
students are taught in school are restricted by political pressure, not scientific evidence. Abstinence is not the only way to prevent AIDS.

Demand number two: end the "abstinence-only prevention program", and provide education to help people decide when, where and with whom to have sexual relations with.

Residents of third world countries are denied clean water access, good health conditions and a place to live. Besides having to endure these horrible living conditions, the residents must live with the burden of debt.

It is estimated that 19,000 children could be saved every day if the money being used to pay off debt was used to improve social conditions. Demand number three: drop the debt.

The Ryan We CARE Act is the largest federal source of funding of programs treating



Sunnie Ko
While marching from the White House to the Capitol, students hold signs and banners aloft to prove their points about AIDS to the government.

AIDS. On September 30, however, the organization is due to expire. Demand number four: reinstitute the Ryan We CARE Act and fully fund it.

The majority of people living with AIDS do not have access to any health care.

This means the chances for these people to survive is almost nothing. Demand

number 5 is to obtain access to affordable and effective AIDS medication.

With these goals in mind we, students, children, daughters, sons must press forward a new chapter in stopping the AIDS epidemic. It is our future; it is our responsibility to preserve what is left and build a new for the future that follows.

Vending machine restrictions deposit students' anger

Cutting off access to supposedly unhealthier food invades students' snacking rights

Every morning at 7:30 a.m., half of the school's snack machines are shut down.

Machines that vend soda and candy are automatically turned off, while those peddling snacks like fritos and donuts remain in operation throughout the school day.

Supposedly, keeping candy and soda out of students' hands during school provides a healthier, more productive work environment at WS. The irony, however, is that most of the snacks allowed during

Editorial

school — potato chips, snack cakes, cookies — are just as unhealthy as the forbidden soda and candy.

For example, VeryFine-brand fruit juice drinks are touted as a "nutritious" alternative to soda, but a can of VeryFine fruit punch actually contains *more* sugar than a can of Coca Cola.

Hence, the argument that making soda and candy off limits will keep students healthy is invalid. Closing machines that sell this "junk food" is a pointless measure that treats high school students like children unable to make their own decisions.



Eggs Marketing
If a student thirsts for a caffeinated beverage during the school day, they are unable to obtain one because the machines are turned off.

...VeryFine-brand fruit juice drinks are touted as a "nutritious" alternative to soda, but a can of VeryFine fruit punch actually contains more sugar than a can of Coca Cola.

The FCPS Food and Nutrition Services promise that "every student will have the opportunity to choose nutritious foods that will prepare students to learn," according to policies outlined on their website.

If they want to keep their word, all vending machines should remain open during the school day and truly healthful snack options should be made available alongside the Snickers and Fritos.

The Oracle

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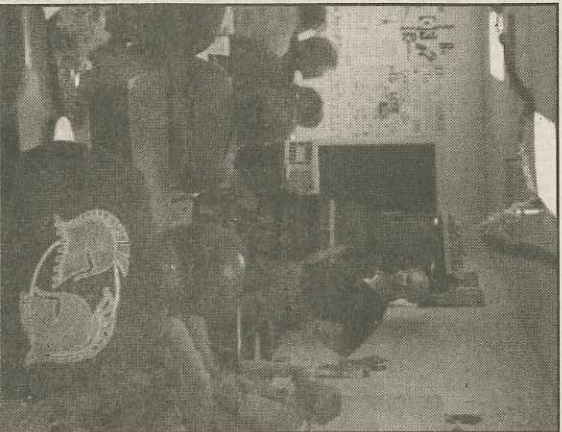
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A rainbow of color controversy

Why should we celebrate Black History Month?

By Sarah Drabkin

Photo Editor

Why should we celebrate Black History Month? There are too many answers for this question. Many people argue that whites have no history month for themselves. To them I say, "look around. Every day is White History Day." Every day a student goes into a history class and learns another fact about white people making history, whether it's the Treaty of Ghent or the first man in space. We, by learning, celebrate that person's accomplishments.

It was not until I took Applied History that I learned about the nameless faces of the Civil Rights Movement. John Lewis was and still is not important enough to be put in AP US textbooks, but without him and the struggle of thousands of other black citizens, 13 percent of our population would still not be protected by law to vote.

At the heart of the American psyche still lies inner racism and hatred. It may not be obvious, like the cops at the end of the Edmund Pettus Bridge who gassed and clubbed men, women, and children marching peacefully for voting rights, but that hatred is still there. And I can conclude that one reason why that is, is that many people have no idea the strides the black community has made or the contributions they have made in and to our society. Without John Lewis and Amelia Boughton we may still today have continued to be a repressive and racist country. But many people, including me until two months ago, did not know that John Lewis and Boughton were clubbed and tear gassed, as they marched for freedom.

Lewis suffered a concussion and was hospitalized for what he called "something we were ready to die for." Boughton, a woman whom we met in the lobby of a hotel in downtown Selma, is someone whom I would not have even noticed if it weren't for the knowledge I gained about the movement.

How can we not celebrate that?

I know that after learning just some accomplishments and courageous things that blacks did for America, I wanted to learn and celebrate even more. I think it is ignorant for us not to be open to something we are taught so little about. For all the people out there who dismiss the month, I encourage you to learn a little about black history—the history of America.

But I will say to the people who oppose the concept of Black History Month that they are right in one respect. It is not history. Black history is ongoing and will never end. Let us respect and celebrate what this part of the American population has done so far. And let everyone remember that by celebrating one culture, the other is not degraded.

Black History Month is founded on a perceived need to balance out history textbooks that only address white history. What they miss is that the textbook does not go into detail about other ethnic groups' histories, either.



Katie and Erin are polar bears

Sarah Drabkin

To the people who oppose the concept of Black History Month: It is not history. Black history is ongoing and will never end. Let us respect and celebrate what this part of the American population has done so far

Rooms lose their class

We probably don't need Martha Stewart, but our school really needs a makeover!

By Jenny Taylor

Entertainment Editor

Known as one of the richest areas in the country, we are often called privileged to live in Fairfax County.

Our schools have a yearly budget of nearly \$11,000 per student. We have some of the newest and most expensive technology available and enjoy many of the best teachers in the region.

Despite these facts, there are still countless improvements the county can make to our schools. Each morning in English, my class endures the sunrise without any blinds.

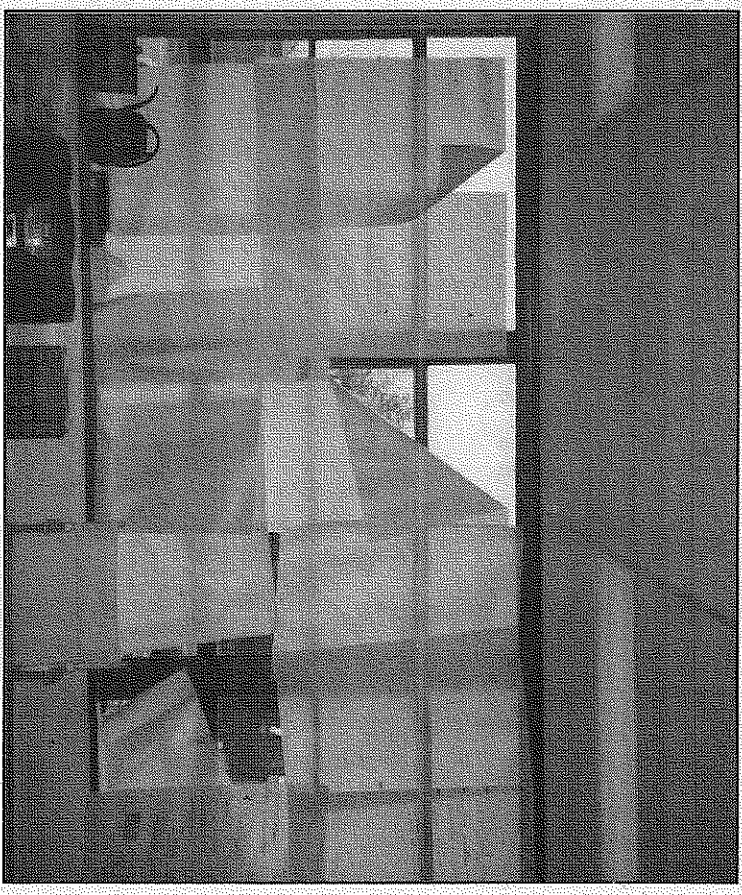
While this may seem miniscule compared to other problems around the school, it can easily be prevented. For now, we must spend at least ten minutes a class attempting to construct makeshift blinds simply to keep the sun out of our eyes.

Our teacher complained to the administration more than five months ago and still nothing has happened. Imagine that, a county regarded as one of the wealthiest in the nation cannot fork over less than \$100 for blinds.

Maybe it is not the county who is to blame, but our own school. It has been five months, and we have yet to receive a single update about our blinds from the administration.

This same classroom also struggles with wobbly and broken chairs, which were probably made when WS was founded. The old desks complement the even older chairs and boast memorable phrases for all to read.

While these messages can serve as entertainment during an especially boring lecture, they also tend to be a bit offensive. My teacher did not consider complaining to the school after the hopeless situation with the blinds.



This English classroom is protected only by paper over the windows.

Sarah Drabkin

I realize that there are more important problems in the county and our school that deserve to be fixed. Taking longer called richest counties in America cannot afford to take care of their basic needs.

Students gain appreciation for history

By Jessica Benjamin
Senior Staff Writer

Essays, performance pieces, documentaries, and exhibits: all the ingredients for the 2005 National History Day competition.

Students entered in these categories and created their projects to depict this year's theme, "Communication in history, the key to understanding."

Entries featured a broad range of topics.

All students currently enrolled in World History II Honors classes at WS were assigned this project in order to develop their researching and creative skills.

"Some of them really get into it. [You] learn how to pace yourself, organize your time, and cite yourself properly," said World History II teacher Cathleen Bolvin.

The teachers gave out a list of

suggested ideas but the students were not bound to it.

Sophomore Nathan Taylor picked a more individual idea. His project was a historical paper entitled "The Precursor to Aerial Surveillance." Nathan earned the third place title in the WS competition.

"I was told to pick something that interested me and the Civil War always has," he said. "When researching the types of communication used during that period, ballooning and aeronautics seemed the most interesting."

At the school competition, the top two projects from each category moved on to the regional competition, which took place at George Mason University.

At Mason, there were middle and high school students from all over northern Virginia, including students from Chantilly, West Potomac, and Westfield. Here they were judged on a

common rubric.

Sixty percent of the score was based on historical quality. Relation to the theme and clarity of presentation each represented twenty percent of the score, and there was an extra section based on compliance to rules. After all of this was taken into account, a final scoring of superior, excellent, or good was given.

A lot of students agree that the presentation portion of the project was not as difficult as the the research to create it.

"All you had to do was click a button," said sophomore Chris Chini, who took first place at WS's competition for individual documentaries.

The preparation for the competition was more involved.

"A lot of research over the internet and using my knowledge of computers and putting it all together," said Chini.

Senior Bryan Lees made it through



Lee Bolvin

World History II Honors teacher Cathleen Bolvin presents sophomore Matthew Miller with his award in the school level of competition.

the rigorous judging process at the regional competition and will move on to the state competition in Williamsburg, which will take place April 30.

There he will present his project, "Trading Our Sorrows: Trans Atlantic Civil Rights."

DECA conquers state conference

By Joley Sullivan
Senior Staff Writer

The finest and most innovative members of the Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) recently met for the annual State Leadership Conference in Norfolk, VA, including WS's very own talented students.

"I competed in an individual event called Marketing Management Series," said junior Richard Walsh. "I had to take a test and participate in two role-play situations with a judge in which I had to deal with customer complaints, employee morale, or anything dealing with marketing management."

Competing at the state level requires a great deal of work on the student's part and is usually achieved by winning district events. In some cases, there are not district events available to qualify through, and thus a sponsor nomination is required.

"I competed with Shaun Henson in the International Business Proposal event where we had to draw up a business plan for exporting fertilizers to India," said

senior Stuart Farrand. "In my case there wasn't a district event for International Business Proposal so Mrs. McDowell picked us to go."

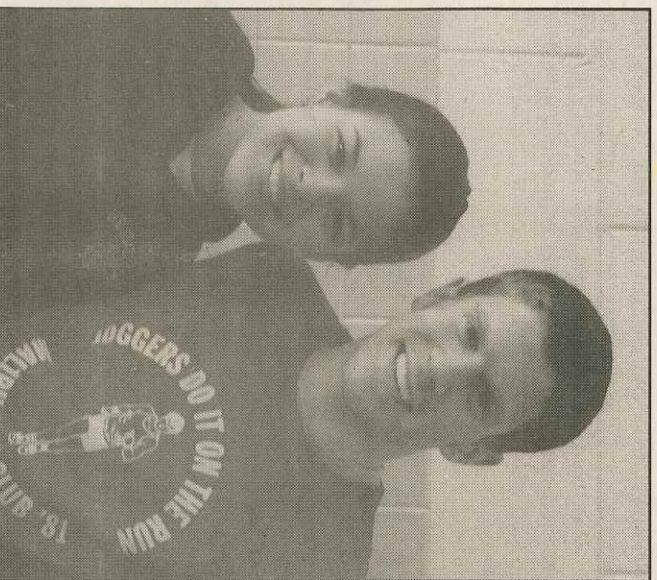
Aside from individual and team events, DECA offers events in writing, team decision making and also opportunities for students who are not competing.

"They can be selected to participate in workshops or act as voting delegates. DECA really makes its conferences open to many of its members from all over," Walsh said.

Competitors who place first or second in their events qualified for the International Career Development Conference (ICDC) to be held in Anaheim, California. Other WS DECA members, Yillie Thamvongsa, Charra Rijos, Samantha Donnelly, Anna Ing, Allison Mueller, Fran Chavez, Melissa Mascelli, Caroline Chang, and Walsh will compete at ICDC.

Most of the DECA competitors had positive comments about the State Leadership Conference.

"It's a lot of fun; you can meet people after you compete," said senior Meryl Cox. "It's fun to see how WS is in front of other schools."



Erica Wilkening

DECA members Anna Ing and Richard Walsh competed with other students in the DECA state conference.

News Bites

Junior Maggie Seegers and sophomore Jasmine Mahboob both had their Cappie's Critics review published in *The Washington Post*.

The Black History Forum Team, sophomores Justin Mithaul and Kasha Adoteye, and senior Candice Lewis, took first place in the recent competition held at Madison HS.

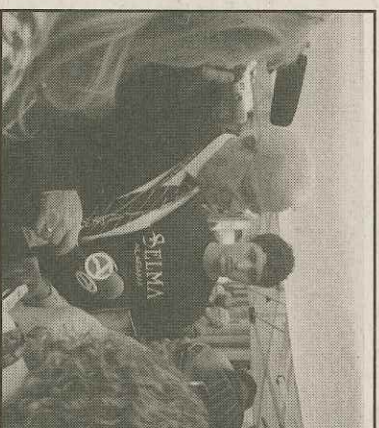
The District XI Band Festival was held at WS March 3-5. Wind Ensemble and Symphonic bands received a superior rating. The Concert Band was rated excellent.

WS played host to seven other schools in the district for the District XI Orchestra Festival from March 10-12. Symphonic Orchestra received superior ratings. Concert Orchestra was rated excellent.

Seniors Karla Sakas and Andrew Bentley, and junior Jack Powers, were part of the professional production of "Romeo and Juliet" held at the Cramer Center in Manassas. Powers and Sakas played "Romeo and Juliet." Bentley played the dual role of Gregory and the watchman.

At the District XI Choral Festival, held at Westfield High School on Friday, March 11, both Madrigals and Ladies Select Choir received superior ratings.

—Compiled by
Jessica Benjamin



Sarah Dabkin

Gordon Peterson from the Channel 7 news interviews senior Candice Lewis about her experience.

Students experience

Civil Rights history

CIVIL RIGHTS, from Page 1.

Georgia congressman and Civil Rights leader John Lewis spoke to them. About 10,000 people, including the WS group, walked across the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

The last stop for the freedom riders was Memphis, where they visited the National Civil Rights Memorial, located in the Lorraine Motel, where Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in 1968. In addition to teaching students about history, the trip also garnered news coverage. The WS riders were interviewed by Gordon Petersen and shown on Channel 7 news; senior Enzo Ochoa appeared nationwide on CNN in clips of Coretta Scott King's.

"I am happy to be able to be apart of a remake of history; change can really start from everyone. We can all change the world," said senior Amy Gilbert.

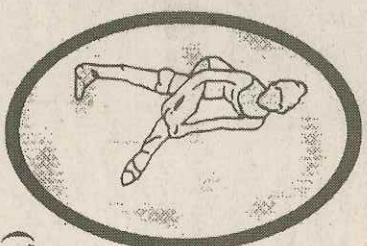
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Thinking outside the bottle

Tap and purified water battle for our affections

By Christian Romeo

Senior Staff Writer

While "water, water everywhere nor any drop to drink" was true for the Samuel Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, it is no longer applicable in today's world of choices.

Though the bottled water movement seems to be a recent development, it actually dates back to the 1850s when people began bottling cold spa waters in France. Bottled water first crossed the Atlantic to Brazil in 1890, and now it is an international trend.

"I drink purified water because it cleans out my digestive system."

—Kelsey Williams, junior

Purified water boasts an ability to increase energy levels, promote beautiful skin and sharper vision, and improve the drinker's immune system and brain and body functions. It also has the benefit of tasting good. "I prefer purified water because it tastes better," said junior Lauren Stokowski.

Municipal water, which is essentially the water that comes out of the tap, accounts for about 25 percent of the bottled water, though it usually undergoes

processing to remove bacteria and other minerals before it is bottled.

Popular bottled water brands that come from municipal sources include Aquafina and Dasani.

"I really do like Dasani," said junior Kelsey Williams. "But Deer Park is the best."

Bottled water is one of the most heavily regulated food products by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

If a bottle has the word "spring" on it, as does Deerpark, then it must come from a spring, according to FDA regulations. "Glacial" water must come from a glacier. "Artesian" water must flow above the water table, and "naturally sparkling" means the water comes from a naturally carbonated spring.

"I drink purified water because it cleans out my digestive system," said Williams.

Since purified water is free of dissolved minerals, it is able to absorb toxic chemicals from the body. Some even advise bathing in tap water to reduce skin problems. Unfortunately, due to its ability to absorb chemicals, the more purified water that is drunk, the more acidic the consumer's body becomes.

Also, cooking with purified water tends to pull the minerals out of food and lowers its nutritional value.

"Tap water tastes rough," said senior Connie Paik. "I even give my dog purified water."

Students go on 'International' visit

By Jessica Benjamin

Senior Staff Writer

Last week, students traveled around the world, thanks to the International Festival.

A whirlwind of cultural performances echoed through the auditorium. Audience members enjoyed dance, costumes and music ranging from the mountains of Afghanistan to the rain forests of South America.

"Everyone likes International Night," said performer and audience member, sophomore Zohra Alnoor.

The festivities, sponsored by Latinos United, opened up with a tribute to senior Sandy Hernandez. Hernandez died in a Bellway crash on February 6.

"We didn't want to miss Sandy in this important International Night because she was part of Latinos United, too," said junior Fiorella Salazar. "She was part of family for us. She will be in our hearts forever."

The mood changed from somber to upbeat, however, with the help of festival MCs Salazar and junior Jaime Mercado.

The audience dove right into the rhythms of a samba, "As Meninhas," featuring

sophomore Jenny Pabón, sophomores Yirka Yacca and Vanessa Martinez and senior

Marcela León.

This year was the first time that the newly named club, Latinos United, sponsored the event.

"I thought it went fantastically well," said club sponsor Susan Lampazzi. "There was definitely a lot of enthusiasm from the performers, as well as the audience."

The celebration suffered only one glitch, when the Dynasty Step Team had to cancel its performance due to the rescheduling of the event. Dynasty already had a practice scheduled for that evening in order to prepare for the North Stafford Step Competition.

"I wasn't anything big, it was just so we could practice," said senior Andrea Gibbs.

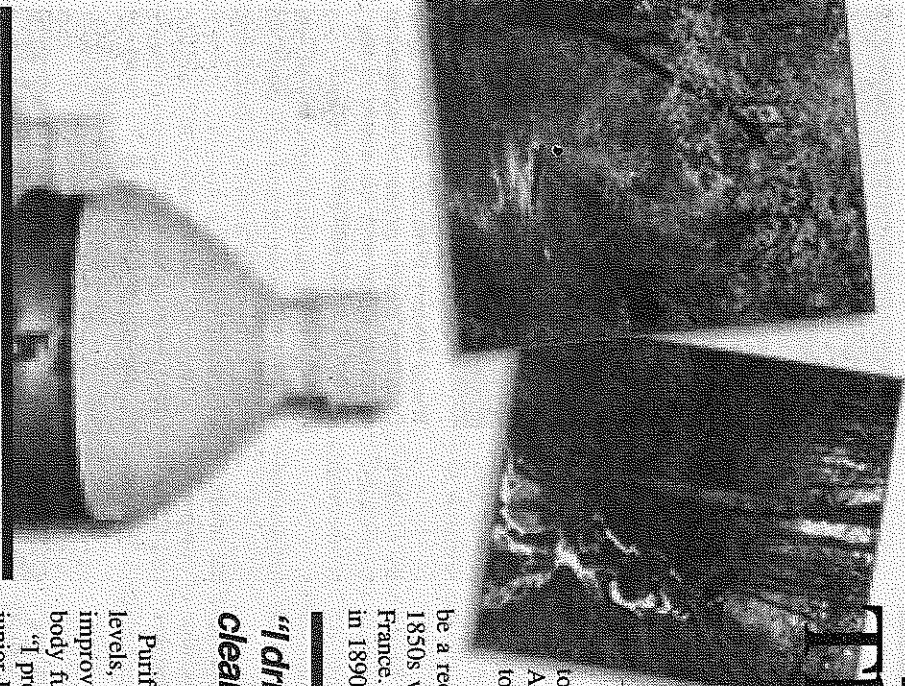
The festival featured salsa and other Latin dance performances, and a peek at Afghan dress and culture, in a dance piece entitled "Rahkse Zeyba."

Students performed to music that reflected their own heritage, as well as their national anthem, dressed in intricately beautiful traditional clothing.

The audience enjoyed a look at American culture through freshman Nestor Ider's solo performance of Creed's "My Sacrifice."

WS's round-the-world voyage was delayed one day by a surprise snowstorm, but travelers said the trip was worth the wait.

"There were three groups of partners and they did the Candy Shop Dance. Then these two guys came out and did flips," said Alnoor. "It was cool."



Deer Park

Purified water is suppose to increase energy levels, however, many Americans do not like paying for expensive water.

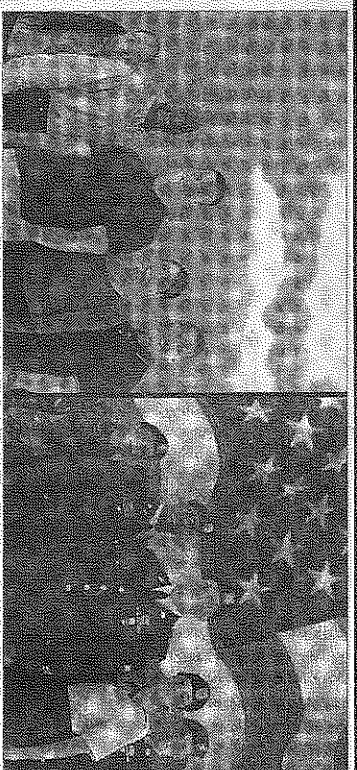


Susan Lampazzi Proudly

Sophomore Zohra Alnoor and freshman Zoe Naweed display their cultures at the International Festival.

"I thought it went fantastically well. There was definitely a lot of enthusiasm from the performers, as well as the audience."

—Susan Lampazzi, Spanish teacher and sponsor of Latinos United



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Sizing up *The Oracle*

Students have contrasting views when it comes to evaluating whether WS's student run newspaper is worth reading

By Stevie Florino
Etc. Assistant Editor

People fear rejection, and newspapers are not much different. Occasionally, *The Oracle* gets curious about public opinion and investigates the views of its readers.

A number of students feel very strongly about *The Oracle*, while various students do not have an opinion. Junior Jeff MacDonald, who started *The WSI (West Springfield Independent)*, said, "It's a fine establishment and it has improved over the last three years dramatically, but the back page distracts from the professionalism of the newspaper. But I do like that it is on the back so it doesn't distract from the insightful stories in the center."

A great part of the student body usually reads *The Oracle* only if they are given time in class.

"I'll read it if I'm bored in class, like after a quiz or test," said sophomore Eric Highfill.

"I think it's good to have because if you're not up on all of the current events of the school, you're not going to know anything."

—*Emily Wolford, sophomore*

English teacher Leslie Simmons thinks that *The Oracle* is a valuable contribution to WS.

"It provides a tremendous amount of information to the student body. I think it keeps kids in tune to

what goes on in school."

Without *The Oracle*, students believe that they would be left in the dark.

"I think it's good to have because if you're not up on all of the current events of the school, you're not going to know anything," said sophomore Emily Wolford.

There are many contradicting views about *The Oracle*. Some students think that it is fun and entertaining while others believe that the topics reported on are not appealing.

"It displays valuable information to the general public of the school," said sophomore Matt Warden. Knowing different students' viewpoints about a certain subject is important to students.

"I like hearing students different opinions about issues involving the school," said senior Bernadette Gaston.

Students would like to be updated on the hot topics of the school more frequently.

"I like it, but sometimes I wish it would come out more often," said junior Jessica Mulqueen.

A number of readers of *The Oracle* enjoy the stories but sometimes wish to hear more about WS.

"I think it's a good paper, but I think there should be more articles about the school," said freshman Sara Flory.

However, a large piece of the student body feels that *The Oracle* could, well, improve.

"*The Oracle* needs to stop writing about hookah bars and drugs," said sophomore Deborah Wilde.

The Oracle has become irrelevant to quite a few. Sophomore Elliott Ferguson said, "It's fun to read about what no one is talking about."

Certain students only read *The Oracle* if they get



Eric DeBilis

Senior Adam Foote diligently reads a recent copy of the Oracle during some down time. Quite a few students like to read the Oracle to be updated on current events that involve the school.

something in return.

"Unless they give me coupons for free food, I won't read it," said sophomore Sam Saddler.

Whatever your opinion of *The Oracle* may be, you can be sure that the newspaper staff welcomes reader's comments as a means to seek ways to approve and appeal to a diverse group of people.



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Confessions of C

A COLLECTION OF AP ENGLISH LANG

How to get straight As

By Liz Weidenhold
Managing Editor

I have met many disappointments in life. Disappointments that I collectively refer to as "school." As such, I have developed an almost foolproof method of enabling you, the student, to receive high test scores while maintaining your normal social life during the seven hours of our day that most refer to as, "The Arm pit of My Life."

Firstly, suck up. Generally regarded as petty and disdainful, I believe sucking up is an effective tool in getting what you want from a teacher, which, in cases other than those of sexual perverts, is an A.

Don't do drugs. Refrain from using any mind-altering substances, unless you are a moron, in which case I strongly advise the use of the hardest drugs on the market, such as cocaine and heroin.

If these are not readily available (given the current prevailing morals of our student body, I'd guess that this is impossible), I will either direct you to my dealer or suggest that you buy a bottle of Robitussin from CVS and "robotrip," in which you essentially down the whole bottle and hallucinate for a little while. Why will it help to robotrip? Because I figure if the way you are thinking now is not getting you the grades you want, than *anything* that alters your thinking might help.

Always do your work. Never do *more* work than you are supposed to do. This medium is essential in maintaining any friendships, both made up and real that you might have, and to get the grade you want without jeopardizing

your sanity. Take me for example. I was a perfectly normal child until I started doing more work than I was supposed to. Now I am heavily medicated, undergoing serious therapy and because of all this, my invisible friend won't even talk to me.

When in doubt, never choose C. Especially if the test is not multiple choice. C is never the answer, because that's the one you *want* it to be. C is *only* the answer if that happens to be the correct response to the question. Easy enough!

Always tell your friends that your grades are worse than they actually are. No one wants to be friends with a smart person. That's nerdy.

Also, if you have or want a significant other, trust me, they don't want to be with someone who is smart. A truism that I think even appears in the Bible states, "The number of males attracted to oneself is directly proportional to one's bra size." This applies to men as well.

Take easy classes. Whatever your counselor said to get you to take AP Language and Composition is B.S., because it is not "rigor of curriculum" that will get you that A you want... it's mindless classes like Journalism and Yearbook.

I hope this advice will help you raise your GPA while alternately decreasing your number of "Lord of the Rings" figurines and increasing the number of tangible friends.

I only wish someone was there to tell me these things because now all I have to show for myself is a failed midterm (all answers: C; this was an essay test) and an exact replica of Frodo Baggins.

How to drive in style

By Katie Bourget
Managing Editor

Brakes are for losers. Touching the pedal is a sign of defeat. You will be socially ostracized for the rest of your miserable worldly existence if you slow down on curves, or stop at red lights and stop signs. Pretend you are an angry beasis in a corrido. Charge at anything red with reckless ferocity.

Buckle up? What a silly concept! Put on that seatbelt and you might as well be strapping yourself onto a rocket launched straight towards Dorkville. Seatbelts are pointless anyway- why else would we have airbags? Plus, if all else fails there is always the windshield. Glass is practically indestructible, right?

Never forget, there is no point in having the radio on if it is not at maximum volume. It is your civic duty to introduce the passengers in the car behind you to the latest Snoop Dogg single. Bass is cool, and cool means more friends.

Speaking of friends, it is important to pile as many as possible into your car. Oh, it looks like one of those miniature, economic European cars? Well, that is no problem at all. If your friends are of the "popular" variety, they are probably skinny, so pack 'em on in. Compared to your backseat, a sardine can should seem roomy. Those dudes in the Seventies had it down when they stuffed all those people into a VW Bug. Try that at home, or on the road, as the case may be.

Still, if your car is the size of a microorganism, you have bigger issues. You are going to need a luxury SUV. I mean, as a hip high school student it is a complete necessity to be cruising around suburbia in a fancy ride. If your parents are skittish about relinquishing the keys, that is absolutely no problem.

None of the exciting parties happen until after they are asleep anyway! Just nab the keys on your way out at two. If somehow a bad driver happens to hit you when you sail

through a red light, just leave the car, dispose of the keys and walk home. Then in the morning you can commiserate with your parents about loony teenagers and their impulsive and destructive joyrides. You completely escape any blame if you wear gloves while you are driving; fingerprints would spoil the whole scheme.

With all those old fats driving around with their wrinkly hands on ten and two, the road is a boring place during the day. All those lame sedans and mini-vans doing the speed limit need some excitement. All American roads are the Autobahn; speed limits are just there for those worrywart slowpokes.

That reminds me-why do all those stupid people think that rain means you should drive even slower? Inclement weather is a vacation opportunity for your car. Wet roads are the closest you will ever get to water skiing on wheels. What kind of owner are you to deny your automobile that kind of thrill?

Probably the most exhilarating location for driving is parking lots. At amusement parks you have to pay to play bumper cars, but in parking lots there is no charge. Plus, unlike with those little cars, there is no time limit being enforced by a disgruntled park employee. As an added bonus, the damage done is actually visible. Seeing the real dents and dings brings a stronger sense of satisfaction than pretend accidents.

Driving can be fun sometimes, but it is also important to keep the dangers in mind. Turn signals for example- what a safety hazard! Whose genius idea was it to flash fluorescent lights into drivers' eyes?

Fine, be a ninny and put on a seatbelt, be a prick and drive alone, but whatever you do, never let your pinky reach out and touch the death threat that is your turn signal. If the blinding light does not cause a morbid accident and a painful death, ridicule from your peers, the future traffic court offenders, certainly will.

TAKE CARE OF
TAKE CARE OF
TAKE CARE OF

How to the school

By Alan Thomas
Special to The Oracle

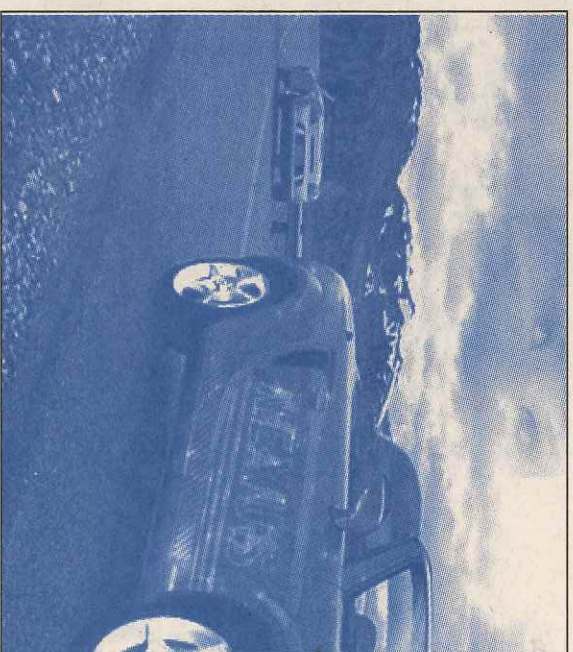
When I was told that I was to give away my valuable advice, I figured that I would do so to the group that would be the most likely to forget. So I have chosen you, new students of the "Illustrious" WS, as you have the most to remember and thus the smallest chance of succeeding.

To begin with, allow me to inspire you with our beloved school's motto: "Take care of yourself, take care of each other, and take care of this place." Dr. Smith was the first person to say this phrase. So, new students of WS, I will now illuminate to you the deep meaning behind this saying as a way to aid your success in this truly wonderful school.

"Take care of yourself." This is a very sensible saying. What it really means is "You're on your own, pal." In a school with a student body directly proportional to the human population, it is necessary to follow a strict "Me, first" policy, lest one find himself even lower on the totem pole than he already is. We as a whole feel that it is our right to do whatever we want, so get out of our way.

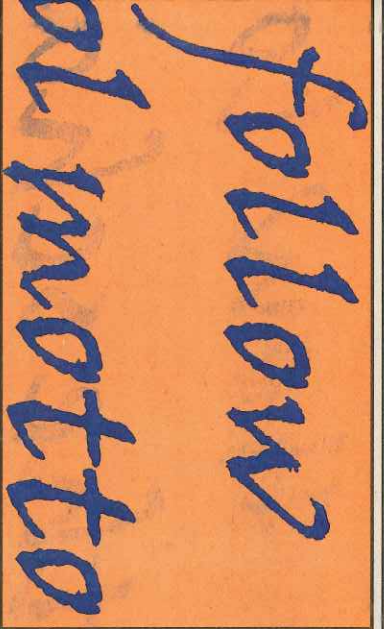
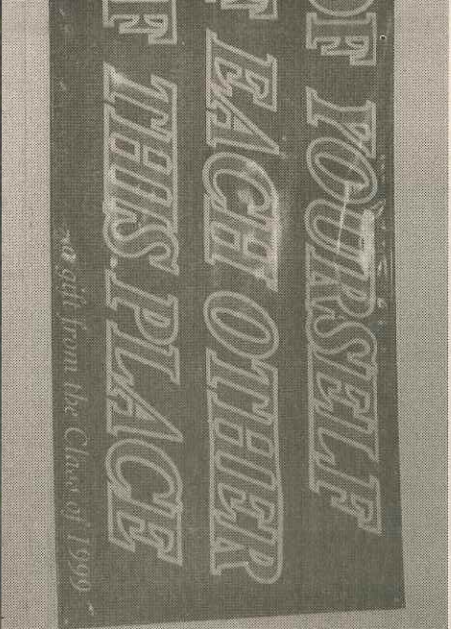
"Take care of each other." This part deals with your new family: the entire student body. We take pride in the way we can enjoy ourselves without having to laugh at anybody's expense.

WS is also renowned for our great student activities. Prime examples are the incredible TGF parties sponsored by the senior class. These not-to-miss events are held every Friday at the Third Floor Pool. The Pool is accessible only by using the elevator, and to use that one needs to acquire



Teenage Twain

LANGUAGE STUDENTS' SATIRICAL ADVICE



Poise is not an acquired trait. It is born with a person, perhaps given to him or her through genetics, determined by the adenines and the guanines and the phenylalanines in his or her deoxyrhinoctic acid.

The whole concept is quite complicated, but not so much for brilliant individuals (namely, me). Despite my busy schedule of kissing babies, getting interviewed by Oprah, and winning the award for World's Coolest Asian in the History of Humankind, I have taken time out to bestow upon my readers my wise words regarding teenage females and how they can, like me, be "cool" and survive high school.

One may say that his or her biggest fear in life is failing, but I whimper in trepidation at the sight of little girls who wear skimpy clubbing outfits to school, or, even worse, BIG girls who wear skimpy clubbing outfits to school.

My main point is, wearing clothes that cover an entire collection of stomach rolls can demonstrate class, gain one respect from others, and imply the presence of morality in one's life.

Or, at the least, it will not generate any shocked or disgusted stares along Senior Rail. Besides, the worst thing to wake up to at 7:30 in the morning is a pair of undeveloped freshman boobs.

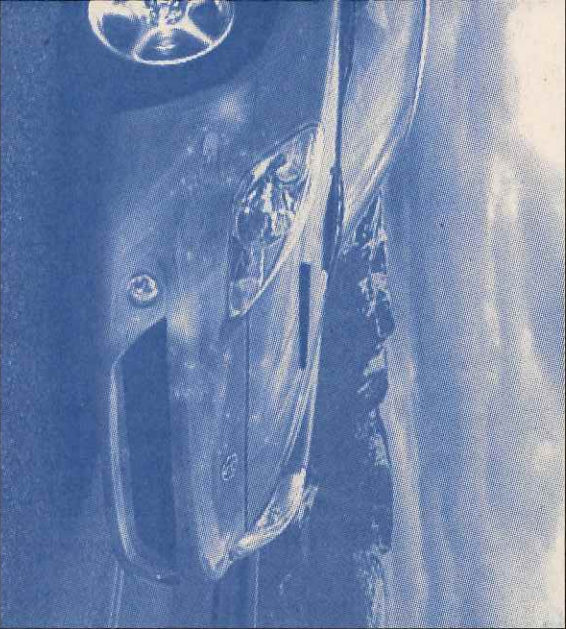
I may not have the token gay guy-pal at my side to tell me this, but even a heterosexual girl knows that fashion blunders can, like most air ventilation dilemmas, be solved with a little duct tape.

Ladies, you need not search for style tips in the most recent issue of *Vogue* or even "Hoagie's World" in *The Oracle*. One can simply walk down the hallways and get inspiration from our "individualists."

One can make a jump suit, a sweater, a prom dress or, yes—even a Brazilian thong—out of duct tape. Simply put, duct tape has the potential to do wonders—for you *and* for the rest of us. Love your body. Embrace your body. Respect your body. Hide your pale and pasty butt crack.

Amidst the daily monotony of walking to class, complaining about a certain, hairy physics teacher, digging into wedgies in unflattering PE shorts, and thinking about Valentine's Day, a girl can get a little lonely. "The OC" and "One Tree Hill" have ingrained into the adolescent girl's mind that having a boyfriend (or girlfriend—your preference) will give you the happiness that television characters have with their high school sweethearts.

Brooke Nelson's 4th and 6th period AP English Language and Composition students practiced writing Mark Twain-like satires in class. You, too, will learn how to be a cool cat if you take advantage of these words of advice. From poise lessons to perfect grades, the critical advice of these students is at your convenience. Please pay close attention—if you miss a step, it could be lethal to your reputation, your grades, and your friendship with Dr. Smith.



Girls dream of companionship, a shoulder to cry on, a person to laugh with, romantic surprises, and the warmth of love as components of a romantic relationship in high school. I have been lucky enough to have that dream come true, but for the rest of you, my friends, don't expect much from the eclectic pool of possibilities here in Springfield. Instead, resort to driving out your feelings. Hop into your car and race, promenade, gallop, or ka-chug down Rolling Road (depending on how "pimped-out" your ride is).

If you don't have a driver's license, have your mom drive you in her 1990 mini-van, because that's cool, too. Alone or together with your mother, take note of the beautiful landscape of luminescent Shell gas stations, Hively Indian bars, and, if you're lucky, the man who flashed an obscene gesture at me for driving 13.625 mph in the fast lane. Clearly, he didn't realize that he was yelling at an Asian woman behind the wheel of a car.

In all sincerity, I believe that the true key to success in high school, and ultimately, in life, is to be who one genuinely is. My friends, embrace your unique traits, celebrate the differences between you and your peers and elders, and try to live each day as if you were being evaluated on your ability to be happy. You have the liberty to pick all the wedgies that your behind may meet, groan when you don't like an assignment without the threat of being fired from the job, and step into each classroom with a teacher willing to bore you for an entire hour-and-a-half. Embrace the fact that homework and tests are your main problems in life.

There is great deal of wisdom to be spread throughout the young folk of modern world, but I can only share one more point. Originally, I had stated that I really knew what "poise" was. Other than being a popular brand of sanitary napkins, I am not sure quite what it is.

The fact is, I am still in the developmental stages of my adolescence. Every day I learn something new about embracing my individuality and the benefits of hard work, assertiveness, and personal respect. I cannot give you the answers.

Therefore, as you go in search for someone who can really tell you what true poise is, I shall depart to pick my bellybutton lint, study extremely hard, discover a new use for Chapstick, or something of the like... you know, "cool people" stuff.



Longevity in the TV biz

Long-running TV shows still hold following

By Caitlin Laverdiere
Entertainment Editor

"The Simpson's", "Law and Order", "JAG", "South Park", "7th Heaven", "Real World"...all so different, yet sharing a single commonality — network television spots for nearly ten seasons.

The wit, humor, real-life situations, and excitement of these shows have kept their viewers tuned in for close to a decade, and according to many students, they just keep getting better.

"7th Heaven" shows problems that are actually happening now," said sophomore Lauren Lawson. "Every episode has a different theme."

Students have watched the Camden family evolve over the seasons and feel like they have grown up with them. The values and messages the show exudes appeal to many of its viewers, and the up-to-date episodes help students relate to the characters and situations in their lives.

"7th Heaven" covers real issues going on like the election, the war in Iraq and the crisis in Sudan," said sophomore Maria Vela.

"South Park" is another favorite long-running show that is popular among students.

The characters and the slapstick humor has glued its viewers for several seasons with more likely to come.

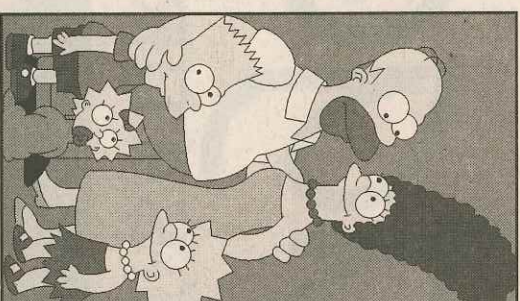
"It's funny as heck," said freshmen Will Jones.

"The Simpson's" is another popular syndicated TV show that continues to poke fun at society and its stereotypes, keeping loyal viewers laughing at Bart and the rest of the Springfield community.

"It's different; they make fun of everybody," said freshmen Austin Blake.

For some students, these shows have become part of their daily routine.

"The Simpson's" are on at six and that's right before dinner," said



Notions
Bart is still a 4th-grader after all these years.



Notions
"7th Heaven" attracts viewers with its portrayal of current events and real-life situations.

sophomore Jessica Laurie. "It works out nicely."

MTV's "Real World" is a hit among students and has been running for over eleven seasons. The humor and drama of the show make it entertaining, no matter how unrealistic it might be.

"It's people just like us living real lives with other people," said senior Sean Felix.

"That's what we're all going to be like."

These long-running TV shows captured the attention of viewers when they started and continue to entertain their loyal fans. WS students stand by their favorite shows, hoping they'll remain on the air for a while longer.

Sean Felix said, "I'm going to be on [Real World] someday."

Tell me why Backstreet's back all right

By Carlin Sherrill
Features Editor

Backstreet's back, all right!

Yep, that's right, the backstreet boys are trying to get back on the charts and heating up the hearts of millions of teenage girls around the world.

The teen hotties vanished from the pop music scene in 2000 after their album "Black and Blue" was released. They announced in 2004 that they were reuniting and coming back with a new album and tour. Although the band has not revealed its new album name or the first single, they contend that this new album is going to be a shock to everyone.

On March 18, the Backstreet Boys' new single will be released to the radio stations nationwide. Some students are not as excited as the die-hard fans might be.

They're so old and their songs are meaningless," said junior Erica Dorsch.

Many WS students would prefer that the Backstreet Boys remain out of the spotlight. The boys, however, believe that they can make a successful comeback this summer. Not only are they excited about their

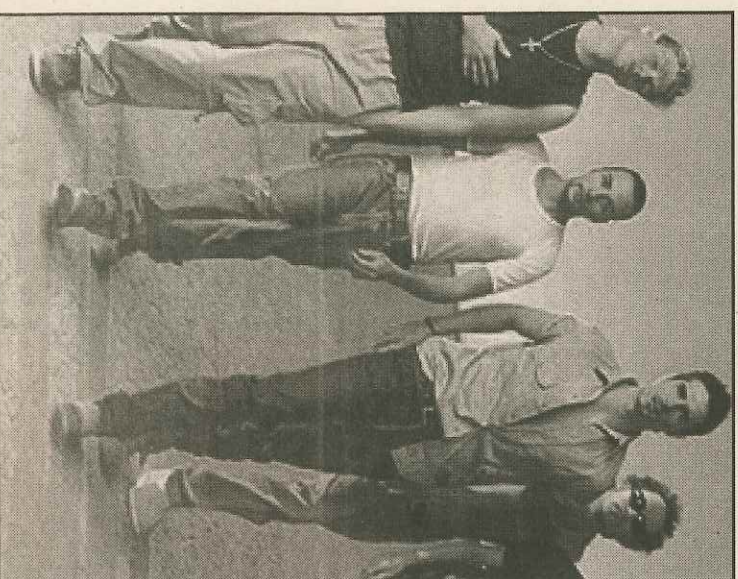
album release, the boys are also eager to start their club tour this spring. They plan to hit up the hottest clubs around the nation, playing their new songs and showing off their new vibe.

The boys were popular back in the late 90s, but now that the popular music styles have changed, many believe the chances of them making a successful comeback are slim. Their teenybopper pop music might not fit in with the R&B and rock that is well-liked today.

"As long as they put a little Indie Rock [in their album] I will be happy," said junior Vicky Pistochini. Pistochini, along with other students, wouldn't mind them coming back into the spotlight if they brought along the sounds of the music that is popular today.

Although some girls might not mind the Backstreet Boys, the boys are not so excited for them to return. Numerous boys believe the Backstreet Boys are not destined to come back onto the pop music scene.

"Why?" said senior Ryan Kelly, "It's a bad idea." Although the Backstreet Boys are back and ready to make a victorious comeback, it is all up to their loyal fans and the hearts of girls around the nation.



Amusement!
The Backstreet Boys are making a comeback this year with a new single coming out on March 18.

Now, That's Entertainment!

A satirical look at the entertainment industry

Alternate realities?

Re-evaluating today's favorite series

By Karla Sakas
Senior Staff Writer

America may love its reality television, but with many of our beloved shows in their umpteenth season, it's time for a change in the lineup. By preserving the main concepts of a series while adding updated twists, we can continue to enjoy these primetime favorites for many seasons to come.

Here are a few ideas for jazzing up today's popular shows:

The Simple Life 4: Cloistured

This rewrite of the hit series "The Simple Life" follows the lives of two up-and-coming young nuns, Sisters Mary and Gertrude. Paris Hilton and Nicole Richie have nothing on these two sassy ladies, whose daily pastimes include doing

charity work, meditating, and counting beads. We'll give you a behind-the-scenes look at the fast-paced and exhilarating world of the convent.

Real World: Marmuth, ND New York City, Chicago, London. MTV's famous reality series has been all over the map. This show takes it where no

twentysomething hipster has ventured before: Marmuth, North Dakota. This quaint town boasts a lively population of 140. Local attractions include the Dakota Dinosaur Museum and the Pioneer Trails Regional Museum. We're sure our seven cast members will have a wild time in this bustling town.

The Apprentice: Texaco Donald Trump's "Apprentice" was a smash hit, but after two seasons audiences are tiring of Trump's

tacky toupee and cheesy catch phrases. To spice up the next season, I recommend setting the show at a rustic Texaco station, where contestants must compete for the coveted position of Assistant Station Manager.

Newly-Divorced Everyone knows Jessica Simpson and Nick Lachey's marriage is headed for the rocks. But considering the success of their "Newlyweds" television series, doesn't it make sense to have the cameras rolling when Nick serves up the divorce papers?

The show will follow the pair through the trials and tribulations of a divorce, from the custody battles over Jessica's Louis Vuitton to the child support payments for little Daisy, their Maltese.

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Blink 182 shocks fans with break up plans

By Tina Wajda
Inside Editor

Since 1992, the pop-punk band Blink 182, has provided us with humorous music videos and a profusion of Billboard hits.

Recently, the band declared that they are going on an indefinite hiatus, which is not an official break up. The band, however, has no plans for getting back together. A statement from the band management reports that Blink 182

Those people wreck concerts with intolerable behavior

By Caitlin Crowley
Senior Staff Writer

Whether it be the Backstreet Boys, Dave Matthews or Jay-Z, most of us have been to a concert at some point in our lives. Our parents finally said yes, we entered their credit card info on TicketMaster.com and arranged rides home with our friend's parents.

These and other traditions like blasting the music of the band you are about see on the way and putting your new concert tee on over your other clothes are fairly common, no matter what genre of show you go to.

Along with these fun concert happenings, there are always *those* people at shows. Everyone has seen

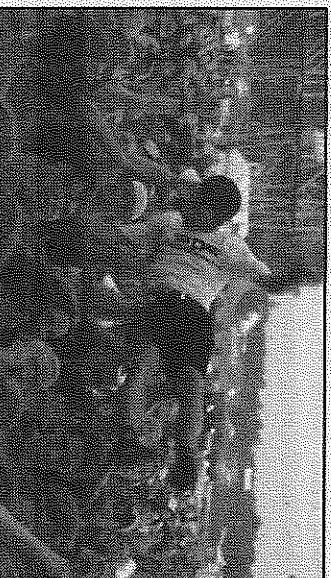


Associated Press
The future of the infamous punk-pop trio, Blink 182, looks uncertain after the band recently announced that they will be taking a break from the spotlight.

would like to "spend some time enjoying the fruits of their labors and loved ones." "I think it is OK because they need some more time with their families," said sophomore Lizzy Flowers.

Although Blink 182 may not be every WS student's favorite, the break has brought back vivid memories.

"I learned my first cuss word from them and I'm going to miss them a lot,"



Associated Press
Students who often attend concerts know that an obnoxious fan can ruin even the best performance.

some form of them or another like the overly-loud talker or the guy who keeps pushing you, even when there is not any music. Here is a quick guide to identifying those to avoid.

The Edger: The "Edger" is that sneaky guy or gal who thinks they deserve to be at the front of the show no matter what. Even if you got there an hour before them to earn your place, they have no problem gradually taking steps forward and positioning themselves for the best view. Keep a careful eye on potential "Edgers" and make sure to watch your footing because before you know it, your awesome spot will be stolen.

The Shouter: The "Shouter" comes in several different forms. First you have got the preteen girls wearing their handmade "I Love [Lead Singer]" shirts

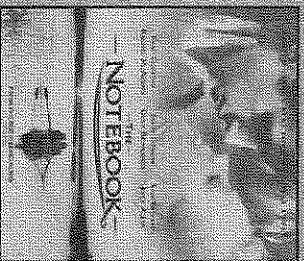
screaming proposals to their dream man. Like they are going to get a response. Then there is the song requesting type of the breed. They came to this show expecting to hear a favorite tune and by George, they are going to hear it. At every break in the action the Shouter and maybe even a group of his buddies yell what they want to hear. The band usually has a planned set list, so if the song is not on it, they usually do not play it. Besides, by the 15th time they shout it, the rest of us are particularly annoyed.

The Inappropriate Mosher: "Inappropriate Moshers" are one of the worst types of concert fairs. They are the ones who kick their legs and throw out air punches like nobody's business while paying no attention to the world around them. A ballad could be playing and they will still be thrashing around like it was a Metallica show. Many innocent concert-goers have been on the wrong end of a clenched fist, resulting in a black eye on an otherwise enjoyable night.

These are just a few of the folks seemingly determined to get on your nerves. Of course you have the line of ten girls holding hands, weaving their way through the crowd while all stepping on your feet. Or the guy who drank to much and thinks he is everybody's best friend. Despite their best efforts, *those* people cannot ruin your magical musical evening unless you let them, so just keep on keeping on and try to position yourself as far from them as possible.

Oracle Picks

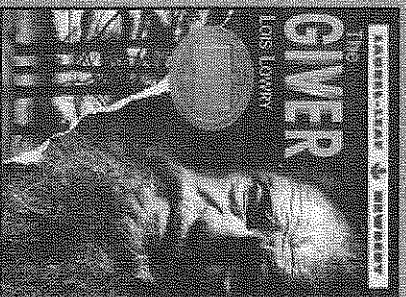
'The Notebook'



In "The Notebook," director Nick Cassavetes brings to life another Nicholas Sparks best-seller in a poignant tale of undying love.

"The Notebook" follows two lovers from two very different worlds as they find one summer's romance into one of the most touching love stories. The movie follows the two characters Noah and Allie (Ryan Gossling and Rachel McAdams), through two points in their lives. The film addresses real-life topics such as the devastating effects of Alzheimer's while providing hope and belief in the power of love.

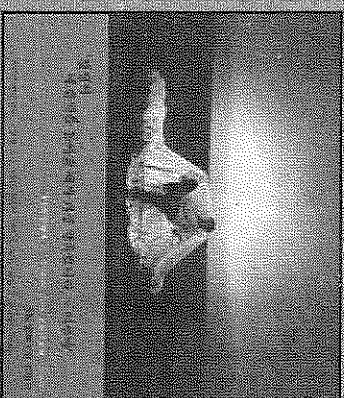
Although it may be mistaken for just another sappy, cliched chick flick, guys will appreciate the sincerity of bitter-sweet first love. Enjoyed by young and old alike, "The Notebook" is definitely a tear-jerker so do not forget to bring your Kleenex or that special someone.



The Giver

In *The Giver*, by Lois Lowry, the reader follows 12 year-old Jonas, who lives in a world with no crime, no pain, no color, and no choices. Echoing the haunting message of George Orwell's 1984 *The Giver* focuses in a utopian-like society where people have given up their individuality and humanity to gain stability and structure. Young Jonas is chosen to bear society's burdens of the past and with the guidance of the Giver, he slowly learns the true pain and pleasures of life. Lowry provides a subtle yet powerful message about the responsibilities of society and the individual.

'From the Yellow Room'



Whether you are in the car, doing your homework, or just want to relax with some soothing music, pianist Yiruma's third album is perfect for any occasion. "From the Yellow Room" provides a beautiful selection of piano instrumentals that include such hits such as "Kiss the Rain." Although not yet very well-known in mainstream American music, Yiruma has quickly gained success in international charts with his striking mix of Western classical music with a refreshing Asian style. "From the Yellow Room" is a must-have for lovers of modern classical music but can be as thoroughly enjoyed by anyone, no matter what musical preference.

—Compiled by Christine Park

Political parties produce priceless memories

The campaigns and offices require help throughout the entire year

By Jordy Serwin
News Editor

Every school year, Spring Break is the most anticipated event. There are as many ways to enjoy the holiday as there are people who participate in it.

Going to the beach is a traditional yet pleasurable way to spend the week. Alternatively, theme parks or movies always lead to fun. If neither of these sound appealing, there is always the option of staying home and having fun. Volunteering at the offices of political parties is an option to consider.

"I wouldn't volunteer for a political party. I don't care that much about politics," said junior Erik Kellogg.

More closely examined, however, volunteering at the headquarters of political parties is a way to get involved in the community. Whether you're Republican, Democrat, or Libertarian, political offices are always looking for people to help fuel campaigns and programs.

"I would not volunteer my time for a political party. I still have a few years before I can vote," said sophomore Margaret Heine.

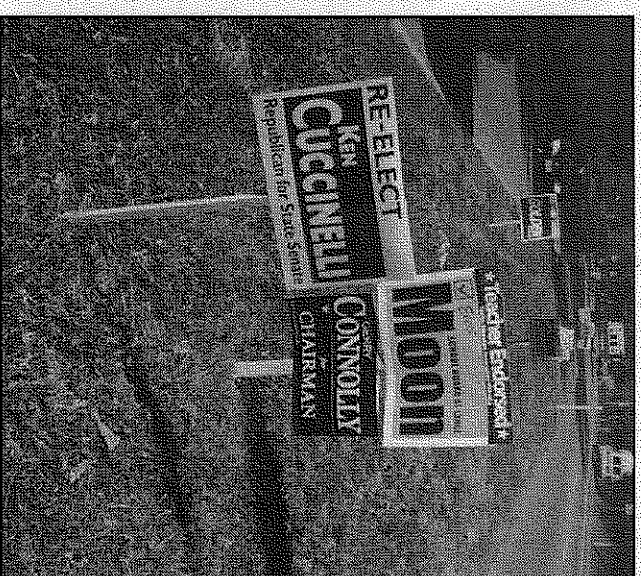
Those more politically conscious will be glad to know that most of the offices have flexible hours for volunteers, and are glad to have help regardless of any time constraints. They are also flexible as far as

what type of jobs you prefer. The Fairfax County Democratic Committee headquarters, for example, asks applicants if they have any job preferences from a vast array of occupations including door to door campaigning, distribute flyers, post signs, office work, computer work, mailing, phone bank, press work, research and fund-raising.

Similarly, the Republican headquarters is interested in anyone who can make phone calls, go door to door, put up yard signs, host an event, hand out material at Back-to-School nights or work polls on Election Day. Like the Democrats and Republicans, the Libertarian Party headquarters is looking for volunteers to run booths at local fairs, music festivals and conventions. All three parties make it very easy and convenient to apply for a volunteer job.

"I volunteered at the Republican party headquarters. I thought it would be fun to help," said sophomore Ana Aysanoa.

Their web sites contain numerous contact information, applications, and useful tips. Democrats who would like to volunteer their time over spring break should do so at the Fairfax County Democratic Committee Headquarters, located at 7245 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 205, Falls Church, VA 22042. Republicans should contact the Republican Committee

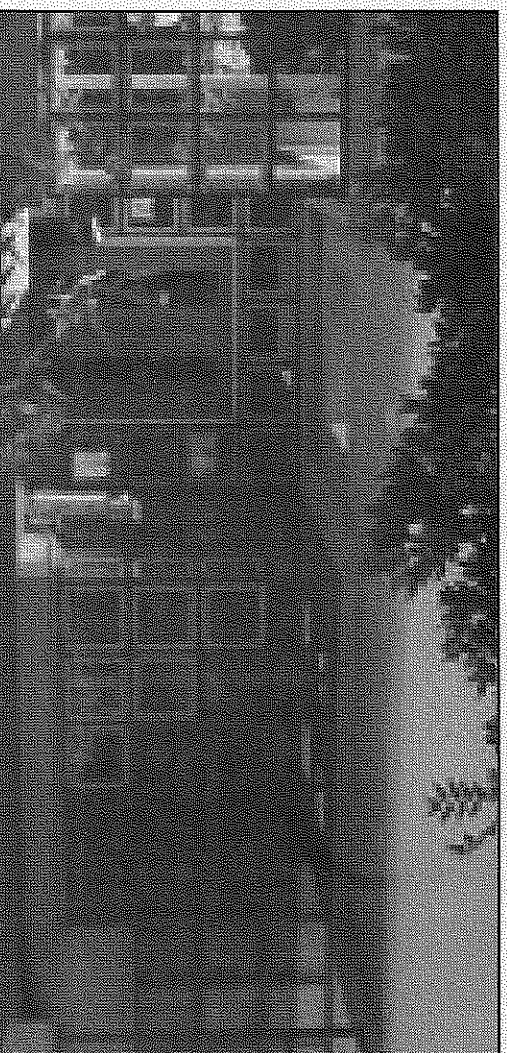


Oracle File Photo

Volunteering on political campaigns is a good way to become involved. There is lots to do, regardless of one's party affiliation.

headquarters, located at 4246 Chain Bridge Road in Fairfax.

Those interested in volunteering for the Libertarians should contact the party headquarters located at 4201 Wilson Blvd, Suite 110-164 in Arlington.



Fairfax County Animal Shelter

Animal shelters are located across the area. Volunteers must commit to work for at least three months. Working with the animals allows one to gain valuable work experience.

Fairfax has its own 'animal house'

By Joley Sullivan
Senior Staff Writer

Those big fuzzy paws, those enormous brown eyes and not to mention that sweet button nose are more than enough to compel one to volunteer at Fairfax County Animal Shelter this Spring.

Volunteering at the shelter is a groovy way to keep one busy after school while parents are at work slaving away on things that teenagers could not possibly comprehend.

Not only will you get to play with cuddly animals for free, but you will gain experience and gain a skillful sense of pet care.

So, when a 98-year-old neighbor asks you to pet-sit for all 22 of her cats, you will be fully prepared.

These sweet animals need all the help and attention they can get. Some of the animals are strays and runaways, some have been abandoned by their former owners and some have been abused by their owners.

Working at the pet shelter will not only be fun for you, but it will allow these cuddlesome creatures to have a little fun of their own.

If you think you would be interested in helping out over this Spring Break, give the shelter a call at 703-830-1100. The shelter is stationed at 4500

West Ox Road in Fairfax, Virginia. It is open from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday.

The shelter is closed on Mondays and Sundays. Please note that you must be at least

You must be at least 16 years old to work at the shelter.

16 years old to work there. Also, you have to commit to work eight hours a month for a minimum of three months.

"The animal shelter is always in need of volunteers. You can help the animals by donating your time at the shelter in a variety of ways. Come join our team by becoming an Animal Shelter Volunteer today!" said the Animal Shelter's website.

The application deadline for the Spring season is April 10, 2005. They are looking for dog walkers, kennel assistants, grooming assistants, cat handlers, small mammal assistants, front office assistants, administrative/multimedia assistants, events/tours assistants, and adoption counselors.

To find out more about each of these positions, visit them online at <http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/ps/ac/volunteer.htm>.

Applications are available on the website.

From bunnies to St. Bernards, there's more than enough love to go around at Fairfax County Animal Shelter.

If you fall in love with an animal and your family applies to the adoption guidelines, you can adopt a dog or a cat for only \$20.

Mission possible

The Spring Break alternative

By Jon Nylan
Oracle Editor

Students spend their spring breaks at the beach, hanging around Springfield and enjoying days off.

A growing trend, however, is students volunteering their time to go on mission trips.

Mission trips are a chance to go to someplace else, but most importantly it is a chance to volunteer and do something meaningful over break.

"I'm going because I feel like I haven't done enough at church, and I'd really like to give back to the community," said senior Erik Roed.

Roed is participating in a movement called Urban Plunge, which includes students going into cities and helping underprivileged families.

"I'm going to spread God's

love," said sophomore Meredith Benson.

Although some students are staying close to home on their missions trip, senior Debra Holcomb is going to Mexico. The mission is located just across the border from Brownsville, Texas.

"I love working with the kids down there," said Holcomb. "They show you so much love."

Mission trips, however, require months of planning.

"We're spending spring break building a gazebo in order to practice, before we go to Jamaica this summer," said senior Kristin Lanser.

A student can also choose to make a difference this summer, or even next year.

"This is my fourth year of Urban Plunge helping out underprivileged and needy people," said Roed.

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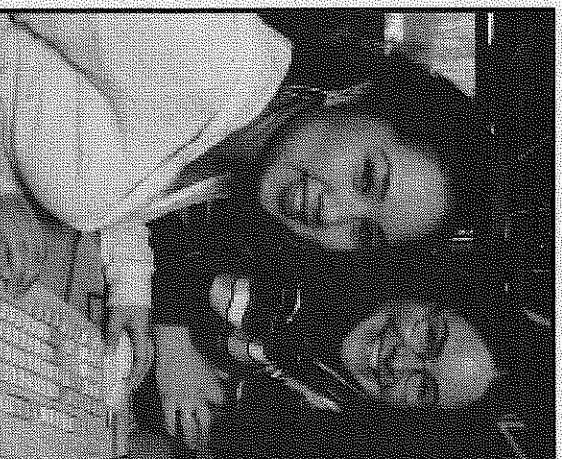
Summer registration starts April 20.

Classes start May 16 and June 27.



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Students
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Chitissy Regelski/Weekend Assistant
The plenty area at Burke Lake Park has a scenic view of the water and is close to the pier. Boating is a popular activity among students.

Burke Lake Park has nature-packed amusements

By Chitissy Regelski
Weekend Assistant

Teenagers usually don't jump with excitement when they hear the words "nature" or "park." Burke Lake Park, located in Fairfax Station on Ox Road, has attempted to change that.

Perfect for spring days, Burke Lake has plenty of activities to keep a person busy. One of it's most appealing features is it is free for all visitors that come in a vehicle registered in Fairfax County. Also, a sparkling lake adds to it's appeal.

"It's pretty," said freshman Kelly Kenefick. Scenic picnic areas are available and are equipped with grills and overhead coverings.

"We go on family outings for picnics," said junior Aisha Toor. Surrounding the lake, there is a 4.5 mile trail that is open to hikers and cyclists. Along the trail, there are multiple horseshoe pits and a Frisbee golf course. For those that don't want to walk the trail, there is a small train, which opens in mid April, that travels around the park.

While swimming in the 218 acre lake is not permitted, fishing and boating are popular activities at the park. "I had ducks and went fishing with my dad," said Kenefick. Burke Lake Park provides boats for rental but also allows personal motorized boats out on the lake.

"Sometimes my friends and I go for a run or go in the boats during the season," said Toor. Flocked to by many for its large population of largemouth bass, Burke Lake is an ideal fishing spot that sells its own bait and tackle.

Golf fans would also enjoy spending time at Burke Lake's 18-hole golf course that's open year round. For less intense players, there is a new mini golf course that's only six dollars per person and opens in mid April.

When you are finished with your hiking, fishing, or golfing, there is an old-fashioned ice cream parlor and a snack bar for refreshment.

Unearthing Hidden Pond

WS neighbors a serene Virginia forest and nature center

By Joann Cassano
Senior Staff Writer

Hidden Pond Nature Center is where all the cool foxes hang out.

Open from 9 am to 5 pm Monday, Wednesday-Friday. Open 12 pm to 5 pm Saturday and Sunday.

A rare thing to come across in Fairfax County is a piece of land that has not been industrialized. Thankfully for students, 8511 Greeley Boulevard is only three minutes away.

Beginning the journey in the parking lot, the first thing one comes across is the pond.

"It's quiet there," says sophomore Tori Prohoda.

The asphalt path branches off to the left and down a steep hill. At the bottom lies the newly dredged pond with a brand new fence. Down at the pond there are a few docks where visitors can walk out to take a closer look into the water or to go fishing (with a license of course) and to go netting (which you can borrow for free from the nature center). Benches line the path around the water. If one just sits and watches one can see

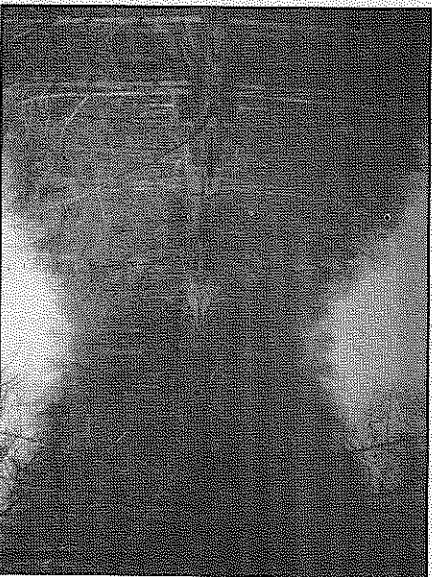
geese, frogs and an array of water turtles sun bathing on the logs.

The next stop along the path is the nature center itself. Less than a year ago the entire inside was gutted out and renovated. Beautiful and lively exhibits line the walls. The animals on display range from toads, salamanders,

are always willing to help and give suggestions on the best places in the park.

The last stop along the path is none other than the woods. Hidden Pond Nature Center and its woods are a part of the Pohick Stream Valley.

A visitor has two choices when entering



Emily Boling
The still pool in Hidden Pond reflects the scenery.

and snakes to turtles (land and water), newts, and a giant catfish.

"They have weird spiders in cages," says Prohoda. "It's cool to look at them and know they can't get you."

The volunteers who work there (many go to WS) and the staff are warm and friendly. They

no asphalt to lead the way. The route is nothing but dirt. Trees fill the woods with colors and life. Animals are not only heard, but occasionally seen.

Within the past few months many owls and foxes have been seen by volunteers, staff, and visitors. The path brings a person right up to the Pohick Stream, and follows right along the side of it for miles. The scenery is beautiful and the mood is serene.

"It's quiet, but it's scary at night with all the frogs and trees creaking," says senior Sarah Faber. "My ex-boyfriend took me to a bench on our first date, and that was our spot. We looked up at the stars."

Hidden Pond does not have anything exciting. No carousels, mini golf, or a train. Hidden Pond is living proof that one does not need fancy attractions to enjoy a visit. Just take a stroll with some friends in the woods. Who knows, maybe visitors will see a certain Senior Staff Writer working behind the scenes.

Park it at Accotink

By Emily Boling
Senior Staff Writer

One mile away from WS lies a fifty-five-acre lake surrounded by a forest and visited by migrating waterfowl. Not many know of this peaceful place which encompasses 493 acres, but those who do certainly enjoy the calm waters.

No, it is not some ethereal land of Avalon that is so close (sorry, King Arthur fans). Instead, Lake Accotink Park, which has one of its three entrances on Carleigh Parkway, welcomes all, royalty or not.

Accotink Trail runs the circumference of the lake, a total of roughly four miles. Runners, hikers, mountain bikers, and dogs take advantage of this quiet trail. Not only do individuals use it, but WS teams practice there as well.

"It is such a great resource for the cross country and track teams," said junior Richard Walsh. "I can't imagine what the other schools do, because it's better to run on trails, because it's more scenic and you don't have the exhaust and cars."

Even someone who detests running and hiking, can find Accotink Park's many activities appealing. The lake has many birds that live and visit it, plus people can rent canoes and pedal boats from the boathouse for five dollars. People of all ages can appreciate the miniature golf course, and how long has it been since you rode an antique carousel?

"We also have a doggy costume parade in the spring and haunted boat tour for Halloween," said senior Lauren Angwin who has worked the past two summers at Accotink Park.

These special activities occur at different times throughout the year and are popularly attended. The Cardboard Boat Regatta in May has been a hit for the past few years, and is gaining popularity since it was covered by Channel 5 news last year. Night hikes allow visitors to discover the nocturnal forest animals.

Some students visit Accotink Park often, whether special events are going on or not. "I play with my little brothers there," said freshman Meredith May. "We go at least once during the weekend."

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Wrestlers pin down Regionals

By Adam Rosen
Oracle Editor

Opponent after opponent was pinned until the time when the WS wrestling team claimed its first regional championship in 25 years. The Spartan wrestling team was led by seniors Mike Campbell, Julian Valencia, Chris Wilson, Dan Gitlin and Wes Askin. Junior Mostafa Ibrahim and freshman Dan McCluskey also had strong performances in Regionals. Gitlin, Valencia, Ibrahim and McCluskey all captured first place in Regionals.

"I was excited to win my second title," said Ibrahim. "It was great to see our team win Regionals for the first time in 25 years."

This year's team was coached by psychology and geometry teacher Gary Embrey and assistant coaches Jeff Payne and Matt Morbito. Embrey has been teaching here at WS for 11 years and has coached wrestling here for 12 years. For these 12 years Embrey has never had a losing season or even a season in which his team has had the same amount of wins and losses. For 31 years, between coach Robert Benton and Embrey the wrestling team has only one losing season.

Embrey takes pride in that his team wrestled as a team and not as individuals.

"Each of them tried to make their practice partners better," said Embrey. "It takes 14 individuals to make a team."

WS prepared for Regionals by practicing Monday through Friday three to six o'clock. On Saturdays they either had a match or practice. At the beginning of the year, wrestlers went through intense conditioning. Towards the end of the year the wrestlers perfected their skill for the postseason.

Schools such as Annandale, Langley and TC Williams practiced with the team to prepare each other for Regionals. They would perfect their moves, learn the opponents moves and help keep the team conditioned and prepared for states.

"Each of them tried to make their practice partners better. It takes 14 individuals to make a team"

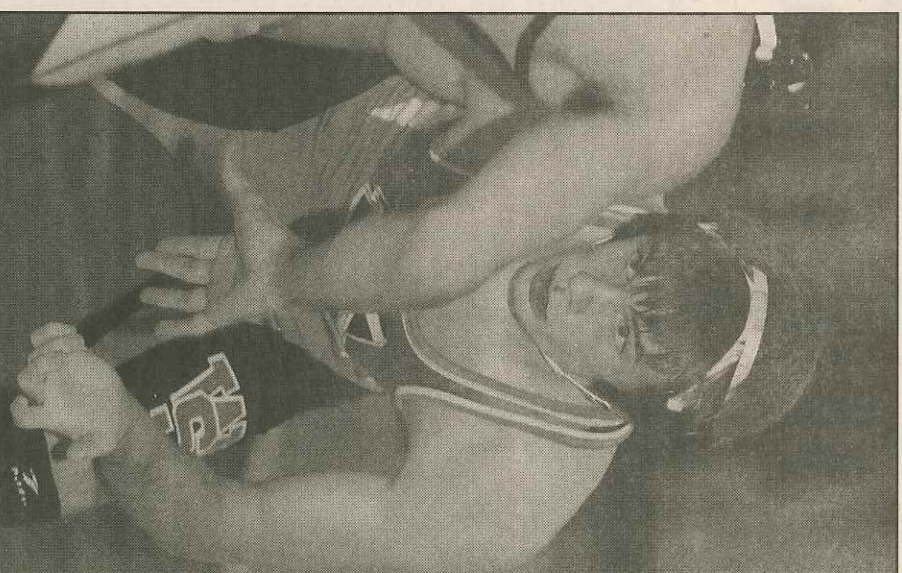
—Gary Embrey, wrestling coach

"It was pretty cool getting the experience with other teams and seeing new moves which prepared you for states," said Mike Campbell.

After Regionals the Spartans traveled on to States. Ibrahim and Campbell both finished fifth in states, while McCluskey received seventh.

There was something special about this team according to Embrey.

"They fact they wrestled as a team and not as individuals," said Embrey.



Segall/Majestic
Junior Dallon Cochran helped the wrestling team in their first Region Championship in 25 years.

Softball seeks revenge

By Josh Lipman
News Editor

The Varsity softball team is looking to avenge its defeat at last year's District tournament.

Although it went 13-6 during the regular season, the team was eliminated in the first round of the 2004 District tournament by West Potomac in an extra-inning game, 1-0. WS won both District tournaments in the two years prior to last season.

Six of the nine starters from last season are returning this year. The other three members of the 2004 team graduated last year: pitcher Becky Bond, center fielder Sarah Bahrami, and catcher Emily Miller, who also led the team in batting average and slugging percentage last season. Miller was hurt during the district tournament.

Last year's starting second baseman, sophomore Devon Buckley, thinks the team will be fine despite the loss of the players who graduated.

"[It is] not really that big of a deal," said Buckley.

The 2005 team has only five upperclassmen out of the 14 players on the team so far.

The center fielder, senior Diana Massie, is not worried about the lack of older players.

"We have a young team," said Massie, "I don't think that will be a problem."

The sophomore right fielder, Lauren Hidalgo, does not see the small number of upperclassmen as a disadvantage either. She believes the upperclassmen who are coming back show a lot of leadership abilities.

Coach Margaret Gibson listed Robinson and Lake Braddock as the main two threats to WS this season. "Robinson is a powerhouse due to the size of the school and the select players," said Gibson.

The roster is not entirely set yet, but Gibson rated the team in its current state.

"I think we'll do pretty well. We have a young pitcher [and] we're still sorting out who's going to play what positions in the infield, but we have a sound outfield," said Gibson.

She has the team aiming to win this season's district tournament, which will be held at WS.

"That's our number one goal," said Gibson. "[but] it's gonna be a challenge [with] this lack of stability."



File Photo

The young Softball team has good feelings about the upcoming season.

Lady Spartans finish strong

With young core, team looks to next season

By Collin Embrey
Sports Assistant

The success this past season for the Lady Spartan basketball team gave WS fans exciting prospects for the future of the program.

The girls started out the season with a loss to St. John's in the first round of the opening DC Metro Challenge tournament. The Lady Spartans struggled through the first half of the season and by the midpoint they were 9-5. They made strides to improve on the postseason stretch.

"A lot of players took big steps to improve and that really helped the team," said Coach Bill Gibson.

The Lady Spartans bounced back from a rough start and improved their record to an impressive 21-6.

"I think we got a lot better throughout the season," said senior Laura Haskins. "We improved our court chemistry and everything just started clicking further into the season."

The two starting seniors, Haskins and Katie Chesley led the team to victory game after game during the entire season, and topped it off with a district championship.

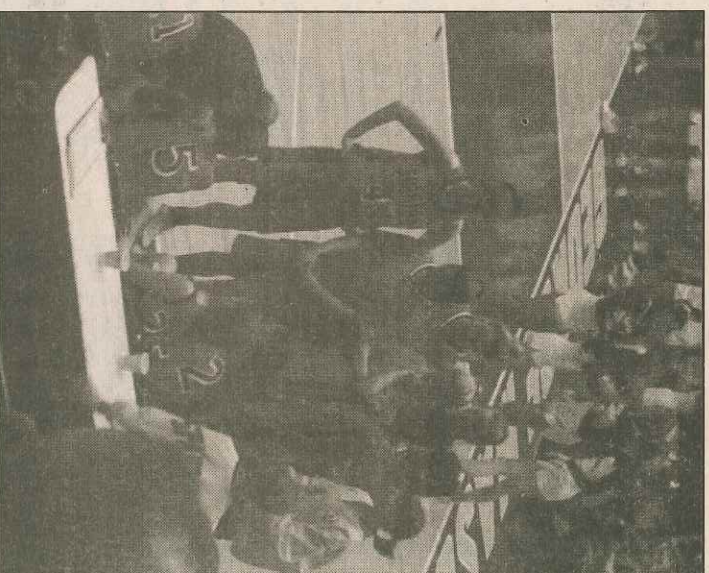
"[Winning districts] proved a lot of people wrong who doubted us," said junior Sara LaPorta. "It was a rough ending, but we certainly got farther than anyone thought we would."

Sophomores Kiara Williams, Triahna Harris, Sunnie Ko and Caroline Nicholson are the young core of the team for the future. They all have hopes for a successful season next year and want to improve on what they did this year.

"All in all it was a good season," said LaPorta. "We can definitely build on it for next year."

The Lady Spartans want to pick up where they left off and keep working on things they've been striving for.

"The team will still be young, but from the past season all of the younger players have certainly matured," said LaPorta.



File Photo

The Lady Spartans had another strong season.

Maryland

=

Canada?

By Sean Hogan

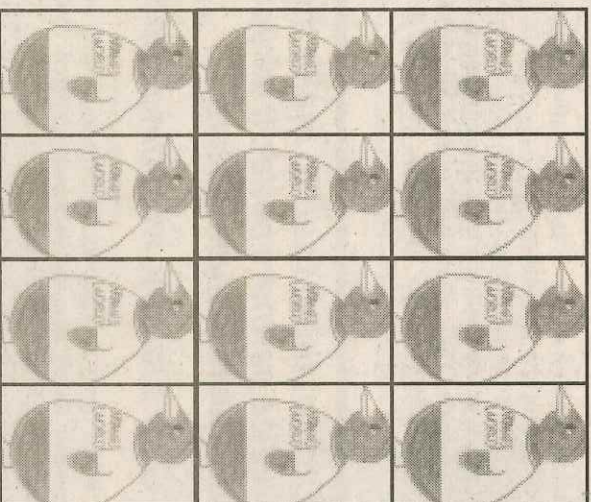
Etic Editor

"Maryland: Virginia's Canada" reads my favorite shirt that doesn't belong to me. Seeing it on the Internet made me squeal (OK, giggle) with excitement.

I hate Maryland. I've hated Maryland ever since the day Barney the Dinosaur died in a hit-and-run on Rockville Pike. Maybe that really didn't happen (100 percent false), but I still have an intense dislike for the state.

I find the people of Maryland (many of whom are related to me by blood) very nice. This happiness and overall feeling of brotherhood is thrown out of the window once I hit the road. Each Sunday as I travel to my church in Rockville, I tend to hide under the seats of my van when we cross the Potomac River.

Marylanders drive like psychotic blind race car drivers. Red lights, turn blinkers, speed limits and threats of insurance increases are merely suggestions. Once a traffic signal turns red, there is always room for



Sean Hogan

about 17 (and a half) extra cars to pass. Fifty mph lane changes that cut off people going 75 mph are common everywhere. It might not sound too bad, but in Maryland, these occur in 25 mph zones.

Stoplights are arranged so only one lane at an intersection can pass through. The lights last for a minute, so we're talking a three minute wait, minimum. The small wait might not sound bad, but I'm very impatient. When having an emergency splenectomy, I woke up from the anesthesia and asked the surgeon, "Are you done yet?" (This occurred in one of the six years I resided in Maryland, the six worst of my life).

Truthfully, my six years of residence in Maryland were pretty decent. Still, many qualities (or lack thereof) belonging to the state tend to perturb me. They have horrible roads (covered in potholes and bumps), strange light-changing systems (green lights for one way for two minutes), and are the home state of my least favorite sports team ever, the Baltimore Orioles. Still, I love the people of Maryland. But Virginia is still 198 times better on any given day.



Tie your Reeboks tight, kids, we're going to the club!



By Liz Weiderhold
Managing Editor

I have a pretty good idea of what hell looks like.

While I was supporting the Weiderhold name (which is a very embarrassing thing to do) by cheering on my cousin and his band-mates at this gig they had at a place called Nation, I realized that hell doesn't have to have fire and Osama Bin Laden. Hell just needs to have

people who wear chains and spike their hair and wear black. People that I am the antithesis of.

But I have nothing against this group of people. They are different and unique and probably go home and watch Dr. Phil and munch baby carrots and I am just being a bigot or

something like that. However, collectively, they scared me.

When I am in a dark warehouse in DC surrounded by anonymous people who are enjoying music that frankly a person like me would need mind-altering drugs to enjoy, this type of thing can happen. I find myself *different* and *wrong* and *ugly* and a few more italicized adjectives.

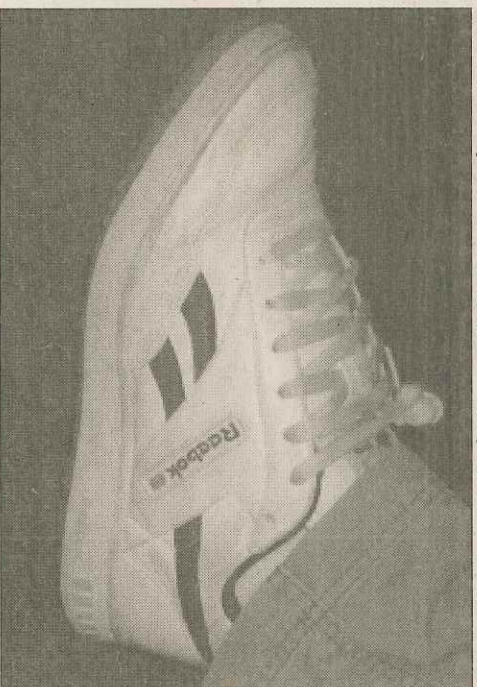
So I thought to myself: "Liz, you are lucky you don't stand out as much as your aunt and uncle, who are the nicest, most God-fearing people you have ever met. And here they are, wearing Reeboks, supporting their son, who is much better than the bands that came on before him that just burped angrily into the microphone..."

I was judging again. I couldn't stop myself.

I wonder how many STDs I have now? I wonder how many minutes of my life I lost from

second-hand smoke? I couldn't stop. Because to me, this was hell. I realized, however, it was only *my* hell.

They didn't want to kill me



Liz Buchheister
Be afraid when your aunt and uncle go clubbing in Reeboks.

Like I initially thought just because they have an affinity for scowling. But they might want to kill me if they heard the mean conversation I was carrying on with myself, labeling them as Adderall-addicted anti-conformists. The fact is, they could not hear this conversation (too much Adderall, I guess) and therefore wanted nothing to do with me. They just wanted to listen to their "music," in their "sanctuary" and be left alone from people like me who even use quotation marks to emphasize how judgmental I am. Although I knew that I was only judging because I didn't want to be judged, I was thankful. I had left my Reeboks at home.

WARREN

"We're going to turn this team around 360 degrees."

—Jason Kidd



Associated Press

Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
18 I Can Say Crochet Day	19 Caitlin Crowley's B-Day	20 Spring Break! Spring Break! Spring Break! Spring Break!	21 Spring Break! Spring Break! Spring Break! Spring Break!	22 Spring Break! Spring Break! Spring Break! Spring Break!	23 Spring Break! Spring Break! Spring Break! Spring Break!	24 Spring Break! Spring Break! Spring Break! Spring Break!
25 Spring Break! Spring Break!	26 Make up your own holiday day	27 Easter Sunday	28 No Ideas For The Calendar Day	29 Boys @ Baseball Chantilly 5 p.m.	30 NO SCHOOL! (class of 2004 only)	31 Bunsen Burner Day
April 1 Good Friday	2 WS Spring Formal	3 Don't Go To Work Unless It's Fun Day	4 Inaugural Game, @ Philly, 3 p.m.	5 9th grade sexual harassment unit (No touching, Freshmen!)	6 Track @ Robinson 5 p.m.	7 Joann Cassano's B-Day
Girls 8 Lax vs. Hayfield 7:15 p.m.						

Things to do during Spring Break

- Hook up with your friend's brother at the beach...or your brother's friends...whichever works.
- Make the gourmet breakfast you have always dreamed of: cinnamon toast crunch, refrigerated Domino's pizza and homemade chocolate cake.
- Go hang out at another school for a week.
- Watch the soap opera "passions" all day long.
- Stay out past your curfew each night and come home around 10.
- Take road trip to exotic place...i.e. Prince George's County.
- Go to the beach and play Shark Attack with a custom-made ceramic fin.
- Go down to the hippest place on the east side: Virginia Beach!
- Enjoy an intimate dinner for two while watching medieval jousting.
- Dance around your house in your underwear.

—Compiled by Joann Cassano