



THE

RACCLE

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West Springfield High School 6100 Rolling Road Springfield, Virginia 22152

Gas hikes bite into lunch

By Kelly Sipple
News Section Assistant

Gas stations are not the only place where the WS community will see their wallets bleeding. The students and faculty of WS can expect to see an increase in the price of cafeteria lunches.

This school year, students will be paying \$2.00 for a standard lunch instead of last year's price of \$1.80, an 11.25 percent increase. Several different factors played a role in the county's decision to increase the price of standard lunches, reduced price breakfasts and lunches, and adult lunches.

Reasons for the price increase in the 2005-2006 Fairfax County Public School's budget are rising labor, benefits, fuel, and food costs, all associated with the rising cost of crude oil.

Higher oil prices contribute not only to higher costs to produce cafeteria food but to greater bus transportation costs. The FCPS plans to help cover these rising fuel costs with the lunch fee increase. FCPS officials estimate that its budget will require an additional \$1 million to run the school system's 1,570 buses this year.

Not all students agree that raising lunch prices is



Erica Wilkinson

The gas prices, shown before the huge price increase, have caused a rise in school lunch prices.

The right place? Breaking boundaries to learn here

By Kelly Sipple
News Section Assistant

Recent graduate Eric Davis' parents faced a huge dilemma his junior year. Their dream house was located in the Hayfield District, so Davis would not be able to graduate with his class if they moved. The solution was pupil-placement.

"I chose to have my son pupil-placed at WSJ his senior year since I wanted him to graduate with his class. We didn't move until we knew he was eligible for placement," said Karen Davis, Eric's mother.

Pupil-placement is defined by FCPS as "student assignments to schools outside of the student's neighborhood school boundaries."

Sophomore Molly Plummer was pupil placed at WS her freshman year because her mother is a teacher here and thought that this school was better than Hayfield, but switched this year.

Another common reason for students being pupil placed at WS is because the school offers AP programs.

In order to be pupil-placed, parents must complete an application form that is reviewed by the student's base school.

Recommendations form the neighborhood school and the requested

school's principal are forwarded to the respective FCPS student services office.

"I was pupil-placed at WSJ because my mom didn't like the conditions at Hayfield at the time," said junior Julia Reppa.

In the future, it may not be as easy for students to be approved for pupil-placement.

"I'm taking a very restrictive approach on new pupil-placement requests because of overpopulation problems," said Principal David Smith.

Concerns over WS boundaries have brought renewed interest in pupil-placement due to boundary change. The school's population has increased by more than 40 students this year because of boundary shifts.

In the past, WS has come under fire because some perceive that pupil-placements have been made because of sports, specifically girls basketball and both soccer programs

The fact remains, however, that dozens of students attend WS because of other reasons.

"If there was an option given to me, I would definitely choose pupil placement," said junior Elizabeth Jans. "I can really not like our school sometimes, but it is way better in a lot of things than the other schools."

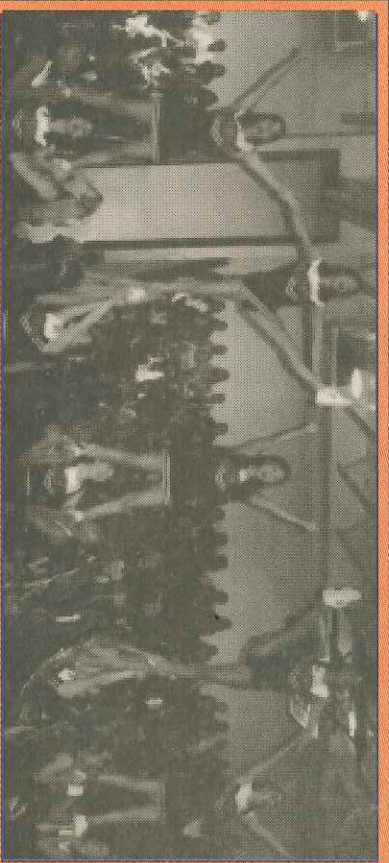
the best way to deal with the county's shortfall in money.

"I think they [FCPS] should find another way to make up for the lack of money this year. They should increase the price of everything such as sports and many other things," said Attendance Secretary Sue Butow.

Other local counties are also increasing the price of standard lunches. Montgomery County, for example, increased the price of standard lunches 10 cents to \$2.05, five cents more than the new price set by FCPS. "Since I don't ride the bus, I think it's wrong for me to pay more for lunch. Even though fuel isn't the only reason for the increase in price [of lunch], that is probably one of the main factors since fuel is so expensive these days," said sophomore Meredith Berndez.

Students acknowledge that with today's economy, the price of lunch was bound to change.

"I think it's a double-edged sword, so to speak," said junior Molly Cushing. "If we didn't raise the money somehow, we'd probably have to cut back on the bus transit and that would mean overcrowding buses more than they already are. I don't think it will be too much of a problem for people to pay an extra twenty cents."



Oracle File Photo

The SGA is relocating this year's fall pep rally from the gym to the stadium.

SGA aims to boost spirit

By Bethel Habte
News Section Assistant

The Student Government Association has a new face and a new approach designed to boost student participation and school spirit.

Students should notice a difference right away with the elimination of the Back-to-School Dance and the scheduling of the fall pep rally in the afternoon and holding it in the stadium instead of the gym.

Math teacher Marianne Razzino and English teacher Simon Schatmeyer are at the helm of a newly structured SGA.

The decision to call off the dance this year was made by the Senior Class Council.

"They voted against it. We don't have to have one because it's just an activity," senior class council member

Rence Newsom said.

The dance will be replaced by a winter formal. Turnout at the back-to-school function has been low in years past.

The SGA, with the help of the Student Council, puts together Homecoming, pep rallies and Spirit Week and wants to boost school spirit.

"Student Council is a big part of running student government because five (SGA) officers can't do it all," Razzino said.

Razzino and Schatmeyer will help students organize traditional activities.

"We're a team," Schatmeyer said. He also teaches the leadership class.

The sponsors agreed that students needed to be more involved in their student government.

"Make it your school," Razzino said.



3 Myspace takes over the internet



4.5 Students share back to school thoughts



7 Fall Sports Preview

FCPS budget supersizes lunch prices for students

Fairfax County is one of the richest counties in the United States, but even the wealthy are having trouble making ends meet. Starting this year FCPS is raising the prices of school lunch by 20 cents, to \$2.00.

The rising costs of providing those cute milk cartons, stringy French fries and greasy pizzas are causing the county to reach deeper into its pockets to shell out a few more bucks.

Students and faculty are being forced to shoulder this heavy burden.

Exorbitant gasoline prices are at the root of the school-lunch hike. High gas prices contribute to increased

transportation costs and even higher costs for the farmers who grow the food that eventually ends up on our Pepto

Editorial

Bismal-colored cafeteria trays.

To add insult to injury FCPS hopes to try to balance its budget on the backs of its students and teachers.

Diesel fuel prices are going up, forcing the county to spend an additional \$1

million for bus transportation. The school lunch increase is supposed to help keep the buses running, too.

Forcing students and teachers to shoulder this burden is unfair.

We haven't taken a poll recently, but one can make an educated guess about the number of students who ride the bus to school every day.

And add to that equation the teachers, who don't ride the buses at all, and the math just doesn't come out right.

Students spend most of their time in school learning lessons. This economics lesson, however, is a little, if not extremely, hard to swallow.



Etika Wilkenning

Students crowd in the cafeteria to eat lunch. Lunch prices in FCPS have been raised to comply with the new budget.

Rising gas prices lock down teenage freedom

By Lindsay Bruhn
Viewpoint Editor

Before a teenager turns 16, he starts to think about getting a driver's license. Increasing gas prices, however, make it difficult for students to enjoy this thought of freedom.

At the end of the 2004-2005 school year in June, gas prices were at a reasonable \$2.11 a gallon; now, after a little over two months, the price has risen to \$2.74.

This price increase, however, will hurt us the most. Yes, older drivers will have a hard time adjusting, but we're the ones with the fewest resources.

The fact of the matter is that not all students have jobs, and those of us who do rarely make more than \$8 an hour. And because students can't work full-time, they can't make much money.

Of course, we don't pay rent, or pay for any of the other expenses adults face. \$35 a week for gas cuts into funds that must cover all the little "extras"—fast food, movies, clothes and school functions.

Some students have an even skimpier budget, because they have to help pay for car insurance and other necessities.

In order for us to be able to maintain a healthy social and academic life, there is some driving that must take place.

Some of us could ride the bus to school, but that still leaves the problem of how to get to work, practices, and the mall.

High gas prices will eventually affect our daily lives and cause great problems with simply getting from place to place.

There is no easy solution. If 16-year-old drivers were allowed to drive more than one person, then car pooling would be possible.

This environmentally friendly solution would cut down on the cost for students.

While the president, Congress and other officials argue about the high cost of doing business, we teens will still have to suffer.



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

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Internships offer

new opportunities

By Libby Bursley
News Editor

The job as an intern no longer consists solely on fetching coffee and donuts for superiors.

Modern interns are doing more work than ever because a variety of work places have opened their doors to high school and college students. Seventeen.com includes a feature on internships in every state and city, provided by the website WetFeet. There is also an option where the search can be narrowed down according to the area of study students may be interested in, such as health care and teaching. The teen magazine CosmoGirl offered a job as an intern for their own staff, as a stringer—a teen journalist.

Other internships, however, are found closer to home.

“I was a page at the Senate last summer. We were basically the senator’s servants, we set everything up at the beginning of the day. We also delivered anything that was needed,” said recent

alumnus John Kieran.

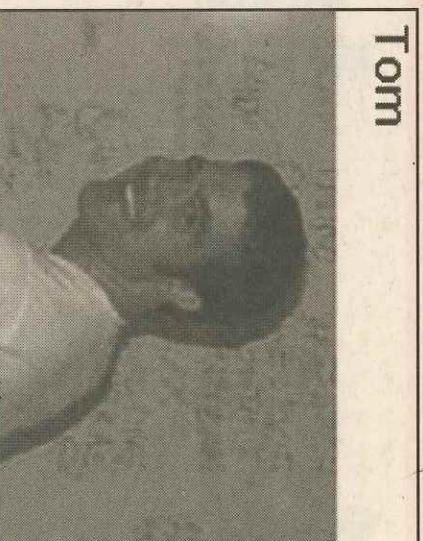
A few interning jobs, such ones on Capitol Hill, can help you and change your outlook on life for the better. They can help you understand politics and our world. The only problem can be getting the job. Knowing someone helps, but not everybody can have a special contact. Kieran was lucky, and found a chance with barely any work. “My dad just gave me the opportunity, and I took it,” said Kieran.

If you do not have unlimited resources, there is still hope. You can find an internship for every interest and every ability. Calling, emailing and visiting websites can all help, but the best way to get the job is to go in person to make the best impression. The biggest incentive for students to go out and get an internship is to gain experience for your future.

“It looks good on your college application,” said Government teacher Kevin Gallagher. “That is the greatest thing about getting an internship.”



Corporations, including the magazines *CosmoGirl* and *Seventeen*, offer internship options for students.



Tom

":-)"

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29 years old

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CALIFORNIA
United States
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Myspace creator Tom Anderson has his own personal Myspace page. myspace.com

Students need their space

By Linnette Lam
Senior staff writer

Modern communication continues to make advances, so much so that today’s mental picture of a little grandmother consists of her arm hanging out the window of an SUV, punching in digits on her Motorola video phone.

Amongst the juicy brains of modern inventors, however, the big “new thing” has come from the normal brain of a twenty-something guy named Tom. He decided to create a website built on the closet principle that people do not like to get to know each other by doing such things as, say, conversing. In fact, according to Tom’s revelation, real-life interaction may not be necessary anymore because all of the information that one may need to know about someone is plainly displayed on his or her Myspace site.

Myspace is popular among our students as well as people across the entire U.S. Summer months passed as friends corresponded through Myspace, writing blogs on their sites or dropping comments on others’ sites.

Some people use Myspace to keep in touch with family and close friends, but others use it to maintain contact with

acquaintances and meeting others with similar interests. “Sometimes you find people that you haven’t talked to in a long time,” said junior Triahna Harris.

Long-lost friends, estranged lovers and people looking for someone to cuddle up with on a cold, winter night in front of a computer screen can settle their queries in the pop-up ad infested world of Tom’s Myspace bloggers.

There are still some who have chosen not to have their “space” for various reasons. Many do not want to publicly post personal information, and some do not want to (or know how to) maintain a site. Without a Myspace account, one may do such things as read entries and comments, view identification photos and read message boards, but anything beyond that is restricted to those who are logged in with a username.

Senior Spencer Allen does not have a Myspace but finds interest in looking at pages when he is idle.

“I don’t have anything against Myspace, but if people want to find out stuff about me, just ask,” said Allen.

Whether or not one chooses to partake in the blogging craze, one thing is sure—even the most unpopular person can find a friend on Myspace.



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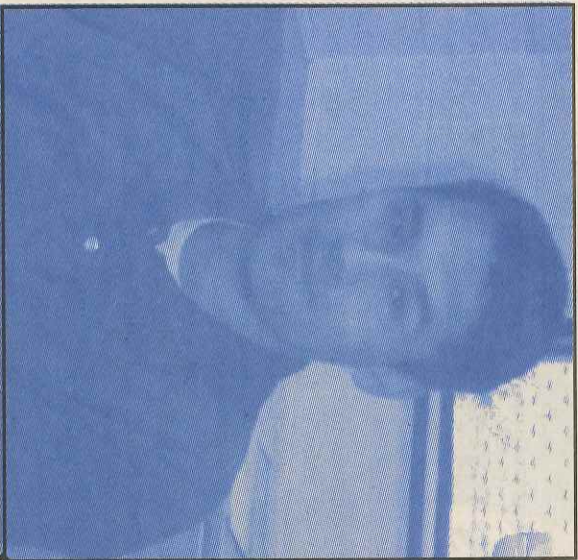
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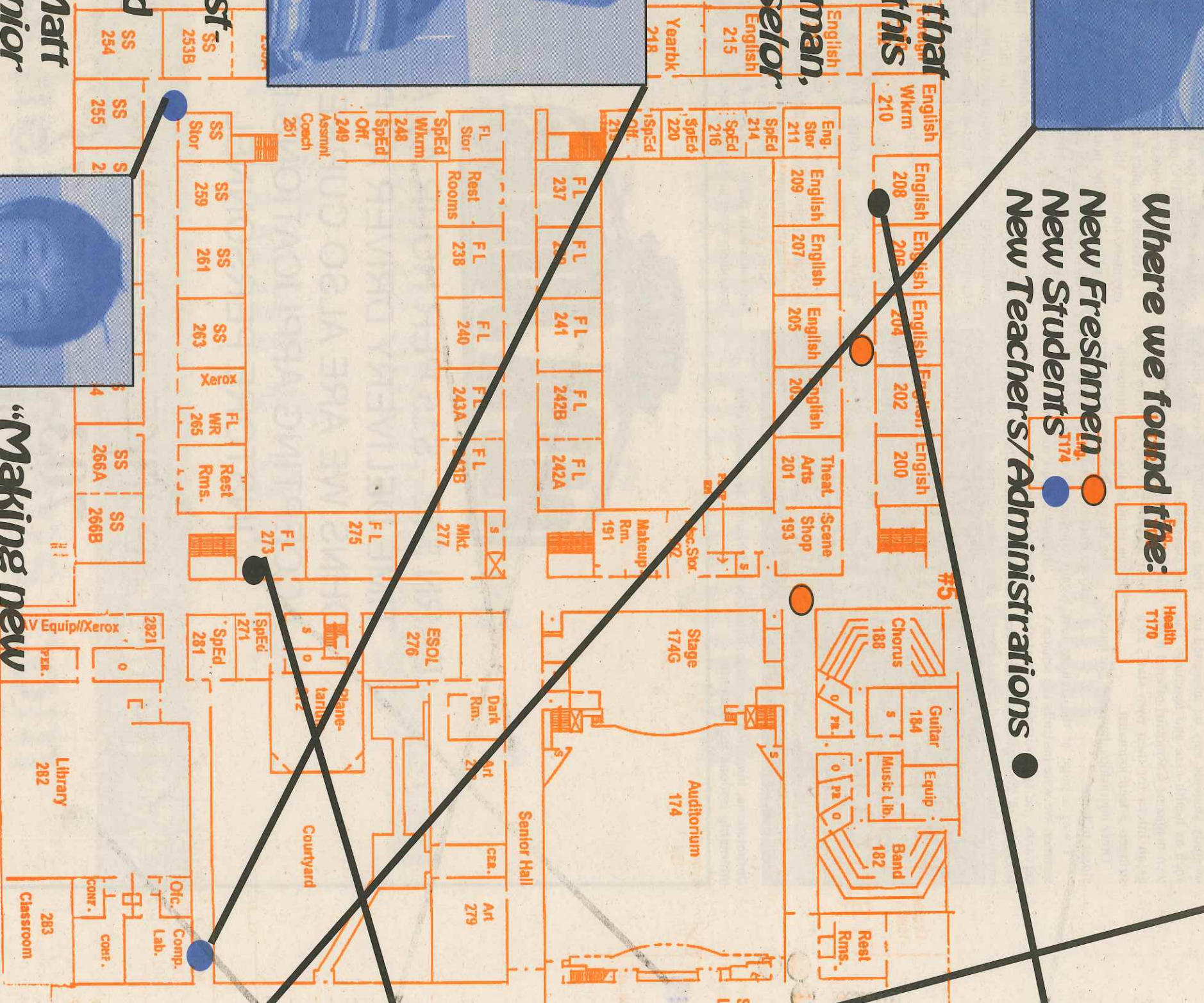
"Learning that goes on in this school."
—Alex Gorman, counselor



"Getting lost- it's bigger than my old school."
—Matt Garrett, junior



"Making new friends."
—Bo Bae Lee, freshman



Don't Fear Brick

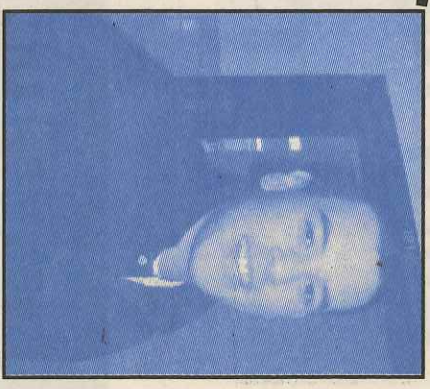
Don't Fear 'Brick'



"Getting lost in the school, it's pretty big."
—**Kathleen Majorovsky, English**



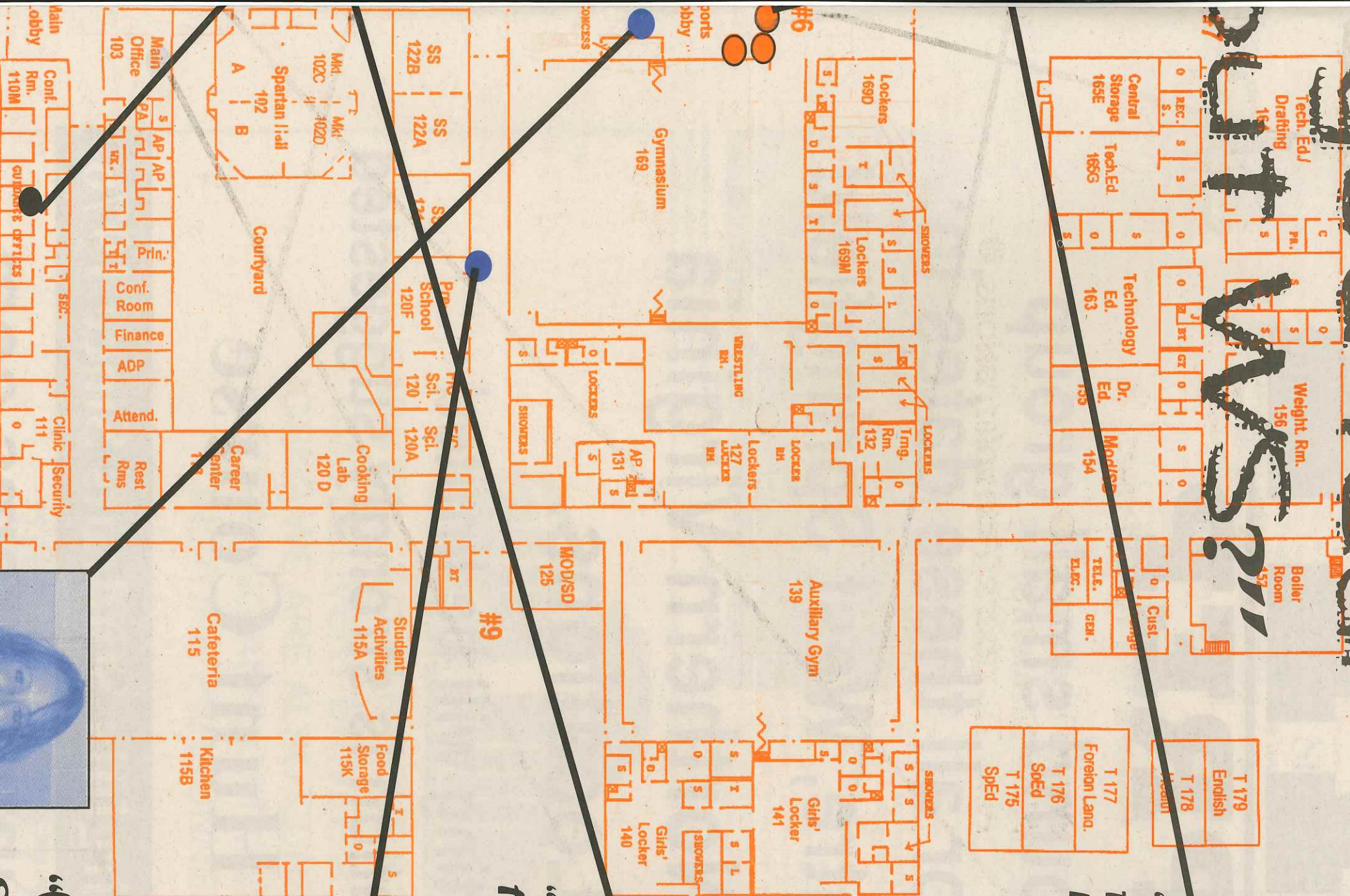
"I have nothing to fear but fear itself."
—**Eddie Hutchinson, biology**



"What am I supposed to be scared of?"
—**Scott Juhl, junior**



"Not being able to meet everybody."
—**Lissa Black, junior**



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Athletes fall back into sports

By Colin Embrey
Sports Columnist

In an outstanding athlete exists a drive pushing them past their limit day after day to do more, work harder, and be stronger. Dedication and commitment are the fuel for the drive.

The fall sports season is dawning on WS and athletes have prepared themselves for their team's biggest challenges. During the summer, athletes playing Football, Field Hockey, Cheerleading, Cross Country, Volleyball, and Golf decided to improve their game by practicing weekly. Some teams, such as Crew and Track, train year round, especially during the summer.

For the football team, anticipation for the upcoming season is overwhelming. After a long summer of weight room workouts and regular strongman routines—hauling tires and chains across the football field, pushing sleds, sprinting with ropes tied to their backs as resistance—and gut checks, the team has high expectations for this year. "Now that Robinson has left, it's a great opportunity for us to take the bull by the horns," said assistant coach David Murray.

Runners on the boys and girls cross country team are just as excited for their season. Both groups have had unofficial "captain's practices" since July 5th.

"The boys have a legitimate chance of winning state's this year," said coach Duke Baird. On the girls side, junior Katie Barber hopes to lead the team past

the girls of 2001 who placed 2nd in the district, won the region, and took 3rd in states.

The Golf team is full of dedicated players who worked all summer to improve their game. With a new transfer from North Carolina, Scott Juhl, and a female, Lauren Stephenson, the team has a good feeling about this season.

"There is a higher level of energy that I haven't felt since 1998, when we went to regions," said coach Sue Spatcher.

Preparations began over the summer for the cheerleading squad with camps, and weekly practices.

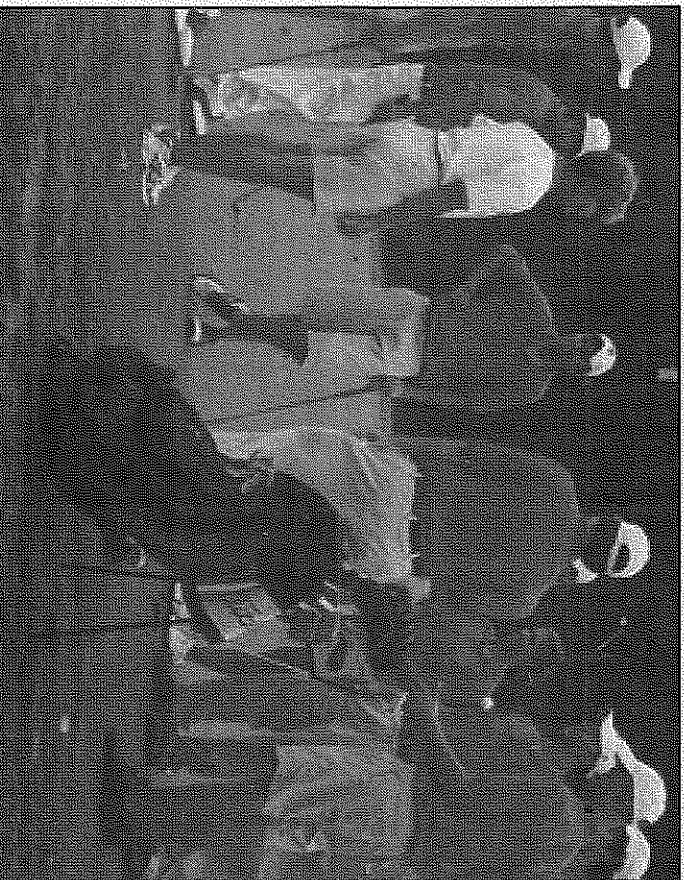
"We're a team, and if one person is not there, it throws off the whole practice," said junior Luisama Carrera. "If you can't make a practice, then you can't make the team, because everybody makes sacrifices to be there."

Coming back from a very successful season, the girls volleyball team has worked hard over the summer to unite their team.

"Bonding is the key to team success," said junior Amanda Pyon. The girls hope to win all of their home games and pick up where they left off last year, winning in the semifinals.

The Field Hockey team, coached by Shannon Matheny, have done a lot to prepare for this season.

"We do a whole lot of running to get ready," said Senior Leann Spinosa. "I could be doing other things, but I choose to play because it's fun and keeps me in shape and busy."



Last Year's

The golf team gets a pre-match talk from Coach Sue Spatcher. The team is 5-1 since the beginning of the season, thanks in part to junior Scott Juhl.

Uncovering a new diamond in the rough

By Lauren Adams

Senior Staff Writer

With four matches under their belts, the WS golf team looks promising. With an undefeated record, the team's goals of taking Districts and beating rival Lake Braddock are slowly becoming more of a reality.

One asset that has helped not only to improve the team's morale, but also their winning record, is junior Scott Juhl. Juhl became interested in golf at the age of five, and has been extremely dedicated ever since. Juhl has played golf competitively since he was about six, and has even gone as far as playing every summer for the American Junior Golf Association, which is an elite tournament for talented golfers under the age of 18. Scott just moved here from North Carolina, but his presence is warmly welcomed.

"With Scott joining the team this year, we feel much more encouraged to do well," said senior and co-captain Adam Brunderman. Brunderman hopes that their team will

be able to achieve what he felt they were robbed of last year: winning Districts. In order to achieve this, the team has been putting in more hours of unofficial practice, and staying closely bonded. He hopes that with Juhl's notoriety, more

"With Scott joining the team this year, we feel much more encouraged to do well."

—Adam Brunderman,
Senior

students will become interested in golf and support the team.

Juhl hopes to eventually get a scholarship for his talent, although he is focusing right now on his more immediate goal of winning states. The team's success, Juhl admits, is not due to him. He feels that it is more due to "great leadership, and an abundance of talent!"

Spartan Spotlight

The lone female tees off

By Christina Aral

Oracle Editor

Sophomore Lauren Stephenson is the third girl in the history of the WS to join the historically male golf team.

Traditionally, golf has not appealed to WS female population, but with this new arrival, the Golf Team's coach, Sue Spatcher, hopes Stephenson will spark a new interest.

"I think Lauren can really be one of those people to break the ice," said Spatcher.

In an attempt to create more interest, Fairfax County offers countless scholarship opportunities to female golf athletes. And due to the lack of competition, Stephenson, and others like her, have a great chance of earning them, no matter how much experience they possess.

"Girls need to be coming out here for the scholarships and it's just ridiculous for all that money to go to waste," said Spatcher.

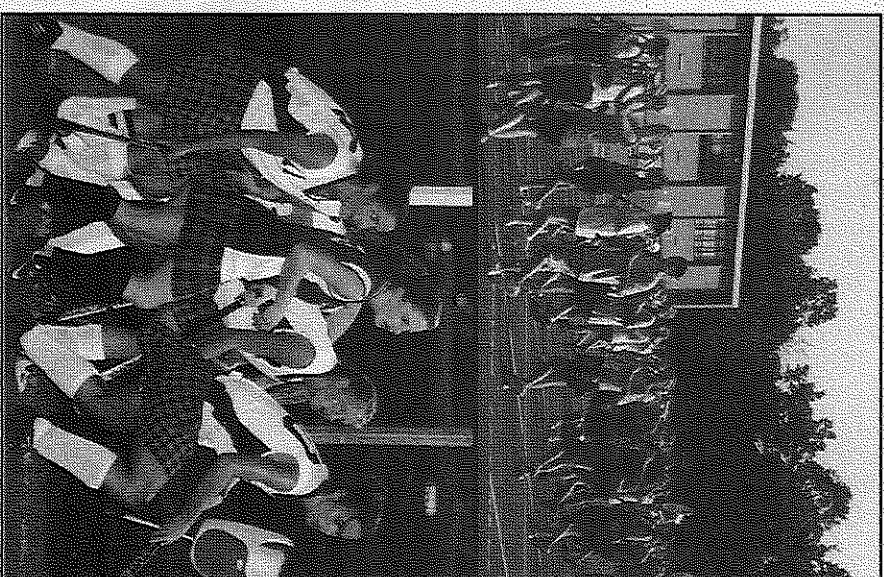
Stephenson's interest in golf was sparked by Spatcher's golf unit that she teaches in PE, in the hopes that it will persuade students to come out for the team.

"I needed a sport to do in the fall, and I played in gym in Ms. Spatcher's gym class and then tried out," said Stephenson. "I've never played golf before I started a month ago."

Being the only girl on the team has its share of perks, as well as disadvantages.

In golf, the top six performers score for your team, and while anyone's score can count guy or girl, the playing field is not exactly sloped in the female's advantage. There are, however, a number of female only tournaments during the season.

On a more social note, golf is a bit



File Photos

Fall extracurriculars, such as band and field hockey, prepare for their seasons during the summer, and sometimes throughout the year.

different than field hockey on cheerleading, due to predominantly male showing.

"It's really fun, the guys are nice [but] it's a lot different than girls teams because they don't make t-shirts or have team sleepovers," said Stephenson.

There's no arguing, however, that by being the only girl Stephenson receives a fair share of attention from the guys, good or bad.

"Sometimes they treat me like one of the guys, and they'll take me out to Wendy's a lot," said Stephenson. "[but other times] they pick on me a lot, but in the end—they love me."



Last Year's

Sophomore Lauren Stephenson practices her drive.

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A Message from Keith

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

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

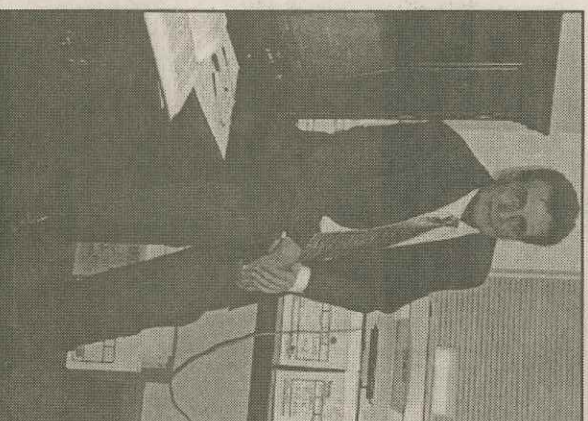
Despite what you hear from some media, portraying teenage drivers as being the worst drivers, this is not true. They don't bother to separate states and tell you which bill or law is what. They want to send the spin the way they want it to sound. It doesn't work that way. Go to the stats. The media might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

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

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

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

Our instructors are professionals. That is what we do for a living. We teach people to drive and try to help them survive. Though we cannot win them all, we do try very hard. It's true, we charge quite a bit more than some driver education institutions, but this is because we give you so much more. We pick up; we drop off. We are on the road, not on a parking lot. The last time I checked, the death toll in Virginia on parking lots amounted to ½ of one percent. That is not a stat that warrants parking lot instruction. Virginia eliminated parallel parking in 1971 to concentrate on more



important areas because parallel parking is not a life threatening maneuver. Though we teach parallel parking, we don't concentrate on it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Safe Driving is Everyone's Business



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* 7 - 50 minute periods of observation

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LAWS

Keith's also offers the 5 Point Driver Improvement Program