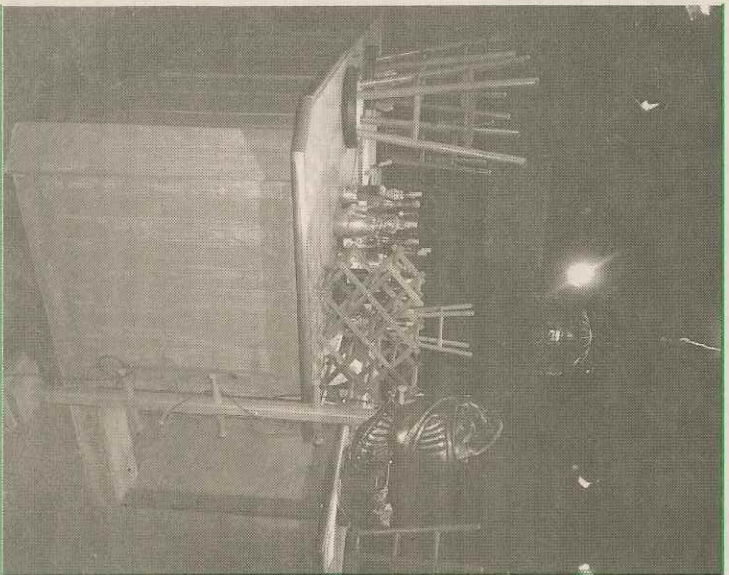




# THE

# RACCLE

December 14, 2005 Volume 42 Number 5  
West Springfield High School 6100 Rolling Road Springfield, Virginia 22152



Carrie DeClark

On the set of the latest school play, "Picasso at the Lapin Agile." In this production, the audience sat on the stage right near the actors.

## 'Picasso' play is a work of art Drama department interprets Steve Martin production

By **Christina Aral**  
Oracle Editor

Filled with drunken brawls, scintillating screen play, and dynamic characters, this year's fall play, "Picasso at the Lapin Agile," combined humor with an innovative set and seating arrangement.

"I liked that it had a good sense of humor," said sophomore Ana Yildirim. "It was funny] because of the way the actors were able to interpret their characters." "Picasso" is a comedy written by Steve Martin, which centers around a fictitious meeting of two geniuses of the day.

Albert Einstein and Pablo Picasso, both on the brink of fame. Albert Einstein (juniors Dan Westbrook and Brendan McEnerney) and Pablo Picasso (senior Jack Powers and sophomore Matt Grogan) engage in witty dialogue on subjects of life, ranging anywhere from science to sex.

"I wanted to find something new and challenging and something that hasn't been done a gazillion times," said drama teacher Mary Jo Levesque.

Picasso has been performed by colleges and professional theaters, but very few high schools have

tackled the script.

Besides the screenplay itself, another unique part of play was the way it was presented. A bar served as the only set, while audience members sat on all four sides of the stage, allowing actors to interact with guests.

"You have to bring the comedy so it's right in front of people," said Levesque. "I wanted to make it more personal for the audience and more challenging for the actors."

Not only did the on-stage seating enhance the comedic effect, it was also practical because the play does not require changed settings or an entire stage.

"That theater requires really good actors. You can hide mistakes in a great big theater, but you can't hide mistakes when they are right in front of you," said Levesque.

A particular reason for this choice of seating was also due to the tightly scheduled auditorium time. Homecoming dates were set in stone, so time to rehearse on stage was limited. To accommodate for this, Levesque decided to do a play that could be rehearsed just about anywhere.

See **PICASSO** on Page 7.

## Community lends a helping hand

By **Linnette Lam**  
Senior Staff Writer

Amidst the festive tunes resonating through the radio waves, various Santa Claus sightings in local malls, holiday parties and the rush to find the best gifts before December 25, those who need the most help—the people who often see the holiday season in a totally different, less enchanting light—can easily go unnoticed.

There are people to be helped all the days of the year, but the holiday season is a popular time for many organizations and individuals to reach out to the less fortunate.

Last month, the Fannie Mae Foundation sponsored the 18<sup>th</sup> annual Help the Homeless Walkathon in DC. The program attracted people of all ages to participate, whether by walking the actual course or sponsoring someone who did. It was founded to raise funds to prevent and end homelessness, sponsoring programs to help homeless people return to independent living.

The SOME organization (So Others Might Eat) sponsored its fourth annual Thanksgiving Day Trot for Hunger in November. Also held in DC, this five-kilometer run allowed families, coworkers and individual runners to raise money for others who would have had no provisions



Kristi's Christmas

A collage of pictures of children and teen volunteers who have participated in the program Kristi's Christmas. The students are paired with needy children, and spend the day having fun with them.

on Thanksgiving if it were not for the help of others.

Even closer to the WS's heart, Kristi's Christmas went into its 19<sup>th</sup> consecutive year at Terra Centre Elementary School in Burke on December 3. Founded in memory of Kristi Brown, a WS alumna who died in an automobile accident in 1987, the program is full of the love for helping others that was so characteristic of Kristi, according to participants and sponsors.

The student volunteers who participated spent one morning with financially needy children. They ate breakfast with them, helped them select merchandise at a local Target store and watched them open presents from Santa Claus.

"After the morning was over, I realized that I learned more about myself and how lucky I am," said senior Sara LaPorta, who has participated in Kristi's Christmas for the past four years with the girls' basketball team. "Not only did it open my eyes, but I also made a new little friend."

Physics teacher Ed Linz, who knows the Brown family, encourages his students to participate in Kristi's Christmas. He sponsored an afternoon after school of wrapping presents for the children. Volunteers wrapped school supplies, toothpaste and other essentials that were donated by the program's generous sponsors.

"I know Mr. and Mrs. Brown very well and I know every cent and every ounce

See **VOLUNTEERING** on Page 6.

## Friends await word on Iraq hostage

By **Katie Boungel**  
Oracle Editor

Tom Fox, a former Springfield resident was taken hostage in western Baghdad on November 26.

Fox, a member of the Christian Peacemaker Teams, and three other members were kidnapped by the Swords of Righteousness Brigade, a previously unknown insurgent group.

Fox, 54, worked as the assistant manager at the Whole Foods Market in the shopping center at the intersection of Old Keene Mill Road and Rolling Road until two years ago.

He was concerned about the U.S. reaction to the September 11, 2001 attacks

and left his job to be trained as a peacemaker and moved to Clearbrook, Virginia, a small town near Winchester, for a change of pace.

Fox understood the risks of his peacemaking efforts in a war zone. In his online blog, Fox shared that if he were captured he was "not willing to sacrifice his dedication to the Iraqi people for any American armed assistance."

Originally, the captors threatened to execute the men on Thursday, December 8, but the deadline was extended to Saturday.

Still as of Monday, Fox's family including his two college-aged children await word of their father's fate.



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Santa Claus.



9 Showing off his  
crazy sides: Ziggy  
exposed.



15 The "Real  
OC" draws in  
obsessive fans.

# Parallel parking presents pesky placement problems

*The Oracle* would like to congratulate all those driving schools for giving licenses to a new generation of teenagers who can parallel park like it's their job.

Every morning, without fail, 40 eager students pull up to the side of Rolling Road and attempt to parallel park, a feat so difficult that even some grown adults prefer parking miles away to avoid the total embarrassment and frustration of doing the aforementioned task.

But not WS.

We do it our way. The first car to arrive (at around 6:15 a.m.) just drives into the spot closest to his locker, completely disregarding the fact that 40 other students now have to maneuver around him. Then the wave comes where 20 students take up the entire right lane of Rolling Road and wait for each other to make the first move.

After someone decides to actually park, the other 19 students fill in awkwardly behind or in front or even next to him, all the while making sure they are nowhere near that very first car.

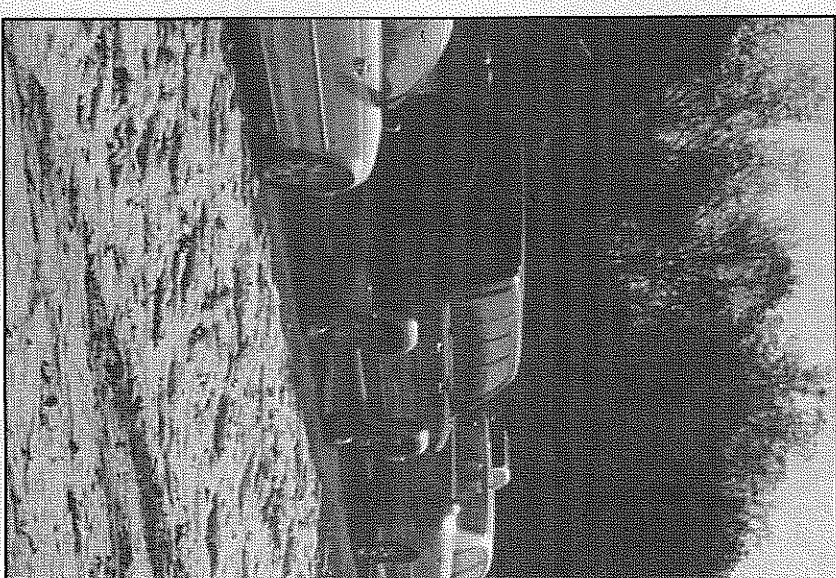
## Editorial

Finally, the people who actually have to parallel park come. They know the process. Drive halfway up next to a car, turn your wheel to the left, reverse, and turn your wheel to the right and even it out. Only, this process is somehow translated into a weird zigzag movement that puts them exactly back where they started. So naturally they try again. And again and again and again until they

are, yes ladies and gentlemen, somewhere on Traford Lane.

Eventually, they manage to get in that spot because *no one can make them park on Hillside*. They would rather have their front end sticking out into oncoming traffic than park on Hillside, which actually happens. People are so desperate for a spot on Rolling that they pull in perpendicularly, neglecting to realize that they could a) fall in the ditch or b) kill themselves.

And that's how it's done at WS. Once they have secured their spot, by whatever sick means, they can now wait for 45 minutes for school to start.



Erica Wilkening

After many attempts, students parking jobs on Rolling Road are rarely something to be proud of.



By Sunnie Ko

Inside Story Editor

I am a mean person.

"Hey, Sunnie." That's what all my friends say to me when I get to school. I don't usually respond. They are insulted because they fail to see the reason for my silence. I have fallen asleep against a locker.

I blame my "meanness" on Fairfax County. It's that simple. Forcing me to wake up at 6:30 a.m. is a cruel and unusual punishment for being a

# The early bird sleeps in class

*Students cannot keep themselves awake during the early hours of harsh school mornings*

teenager. It is not my fault I was conceived 16 years ago and therefore am now forced to go to school.

My happy cousin Ally, who is seven years old, wakes up on her own at 6 a.m., runs around for an hour, picks her nose, eats her breakfast, eats her boogers, gets dressed and still has an hour to kill before she gets to school.

She voluntarily wakes up that early. She also (although not voluntarily) goes to bed at 8 p.m.

So why, you ask, is my cousin Ally happy? It's simple. She gets to sleep a comfortable amount of time.

I, on the other hand, am forced to work six hours and 40 minutes at school, play three hours of basketball after school

and do a kabillion hours of homework on only six hours of sleep

I consider myself lucky compared to some of my peers.

To my lady friends: I know you wake up at 5:30 a.m. to apply makeup, curlify hair and get ready.

I know you were up until 1 a.m. getting your optics portfolio done for physics. I know you're tired.

To my manly friends: I know you were up until 2 a.m. doing a combination of who knows what.

I know you were studying for a vocab quiz. I know that on the way to school, we'll almost die four or five times because you are trying to memorize cosine and sine

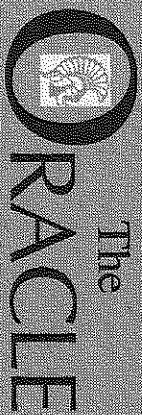
formulas while looking for your calculator for pre-calc second period, while you drive.

Some may say "You chose to take the AP's deal with it." Is it my fault I'm so smart?

But all joking aside, I do want to get into college and am encouraged by many to do so. Since that is that case, why not make it easier on everyone, and push school start times later?

To all my friends: I'm sorry if I'm crabby all the time. I'm sorry if I blatantly ignore you in the mornings. Just know, I love everyone at heart.

Side note: I wrote this story on 4 1/2 hours of sleep. Please excuse how cynical it is.



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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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# Coming up short

By Beth Stinson  
Business Systems Assistant

Hello my name is Beth Stinson and I am 4'11."

I would like to put the rumor going around school about me to rest. I am not a legal midget.

You have to be done growing before you get that kind of title. And even if I was done growing, which I am *not*, I would like you to know that being small is both harder and easier than it looks.

If you astute *Oracle* readers remember from last year, someone or other person wrote a story about students who roam the halls with backpacks that could serve as substantially useful surveillance satellites.

To you, oh winney viewpoint writers who are not me, I would like so say "Big deal." For most of you, this backpack problem only comes up to your midriff. But for an illegal midget, it is a problem that results in concussions, black eyes, and bloody noses.

You short people know what I'm talking about. We've learned to weave,

duck, dip, dodge, and dive hallway traffic via our small and nimble bodies, as to prevent backpack-to-face trauma.

And of course, Devoted *Oracle* Devotee, remember the innumerable complaints from *Oracles* and Letter-to-the-Editor Writers alike, about the sheer disregard for the dress code, otherwise known as "Cleavage, Stomachs, Butt Cracks, and more Cleavage" clause.

Yes, for many of you it is unpleasant to behold the wonders of the human body that are thrust before us each day. And yes, to many people, exposed rolls of fat oozing over from the 3-sizes-too-small low risers are not very attractive.

Again I say to you winney big people who probably wear clothes like that anyway, "Big Deal." Try being face to face with every tall girl's anatomy.

For me, being a girl myself, it's not too pleasant. I can't speak for the other gender because I'm only one, but I would guess that even guys have to draw the line somewhere. I mean come on, have some respect for yourselves ladies and gentlemen.



Excuse me? Sepideh Aghajani gets stuck behind Eduarda Silva's backpack in the hall. Maneuvering through the hallways proves to be an amazing feat for short people.

And along with all this, there is the fact that people of average to above-average stature just flat out can't see you. In some cases, we are mowed down like bowling pins.

I've seen it happen. You bowling balls just bulldoze through the halls, parting the children like you are Moses or something.

It's funny to watch from afar, but it's not funny when you are watching from under a mass of smelly Spartans.

But I digress, it's not all that bad being 4'11". For instance, hiding in the back of the class to sleep becomes as easy as dodging backpacks that are

fastened to rocket-propelled spinning teenagers.

People think you're adorable, no matter what you do. You're like the cute little kid who eats frogs but still gets the resounding "Awww!!" from his relatives.

Crowd surfing is our favorite pastime. You get carried places, helped up when you are pushed over by big kids, and complemented on your congenial and most-times permanent size.

Next time you're bulldozing kids in the hall, make sure you only push the normal kids over. The midgets will appreciate it.

## The middle drops out

Junior and senior schedules lack Honors classes

By Lindsay Burke  
Viewpoint Editor

Honors classes offer us an alternative to regular classes freshman and sophomore year, before Advanced Placement classes overwhelm us. They prep us for the expected upcoming AP courses, or next year's Honors courses if you're a freshman.

Junior year, however, all of that changes, and one may no longer take an Honors course for most classes. There is AP and regular, and a world of difference in between.

I am a recent dropout of AP US History, and I am only slightly regretful. I do not regret dropping the course because I miss the class; I regret dropping it because the regular class I am in now is not enough of a challenge for me.

If there had been an Honors alternative, though, I would have taken it faster than the class stuck up can remind the teacher that we did, in fact, have homework last class.

Balance in high school is hard to find. Once you realize your strong suits, though, you tend to take harder classes according to what you are good at and what you want to major in if you go to college.

when an inexperienced substitute is in front of 26 students, explaining the law of conservation when the chapter is about ions, the kids are helpless. For once, they're wishing that their teacher would come back to help them pass the test with a decent grade.

Another solution to this chaos can be that the absent teacher give a heads-up to their class and possibly change the test date to a later time. It would do her and her class some good.

It's only human to take these easy and rational steps instead of killing the students with hard-core studying and listening to a chattering substitute.

Maybe the administration wouldn't have iPods and love notes so much if they had picked the subs better.



headroom.net

Only a few classes junior and senior year offer an Honors level. Students who appreciate learning but do not want the AP workload should still have the opportunity to work in an in-depth environment.

## Subs don't qualify

By Stephanie Aguilar  
Forum Editor

For the two weeks, my chemistry class had been passing love notes, doing homework for other classes and listening to their infamous iPods while our naive substitute babbled on about the chemical properties of mercury.

Once the two weeks were over, our original teacher came back and bombed us with a 150-point test and left us with our jaws hanging to the floor.

There are many red-pen mistakes in a situation like this. Let's start with the fact that our teacher was in no way, shape or form present to teach the material we were going to be tested on. We couldn't get our questions answered or even



Liz Buchheit

Long term substitutes are not always up to the task or qualified for the subjects they are teaching on, but substitute Mary Ann Hughes, in place of Malia Cameron, has been teaching English for years.

# Divided We Stand

## On the right track to road of success

By Scott Babcock

Senior Staff Writer

I all too often turn on the news and hear slander against the president and the current war in Iraq. It makes me sick. The war is not wrong, and neither is our president.

The United States of America was founded on a basis of equality and freedom, best summed up in the words of the *Declaration of Independence*: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

We have been blessed in America. Our system of government provides for these inalienable rights. Many governments, however, still have not granted their people these rights.

I believe that the phrase in the *Declaration*, "all men," is meant to include all people around the world. It is with these notions that I have come to the conclusion that the war in Iraq is right.

Bush is not fighting for oil, or land, but to bring freedom and equality to a land long deprived of those gifts.

Bush is fighting for the future of the world, not just the nation, a fact that seems to have been overlooked by many Americans.

I think it is selfish to think that the rights that have been granted to us are strictly reserved for us.

On the news and in the papers Bush is criticized for his efforts in Iraq. The media claims that the war is wrong and freedom can never be brought to Iraq.

Democracy does not just spring up over night. If the media would do a little homework they would know this. Before and during the American Revolution many colonists were still loyal to the crown. In fact it was the decisions of a few very brave men that committed them to war in the first place.

While not all of the people agreed with the war, these men did what they thought in the long run would be best for all of the people.

The war lasted six years, ending in 1781. It was not until 10 years later that the nation as we know it today was born.

In the case of the Iraq war, Bush is the brave man making the decisions that are unpopular with the people.

He is looking ahead and doing what he thinks is best for the future. It may take 16 or more years before stability is brought to Iraq.

Our nation will not be in Iraq for 16 years. I believe that the American troops will only stay long enough to ensure that the democratization of Iraq is on the right track.

Bush should be hailed as a hero. Not every man has the strength to go against popular opinion to do what he thinks is best, and to stand by those decisions no matter what the circumstances.

## The future of politics lies with the people

### Immersion in political campaigns gets students involved in community

By Laura Byland

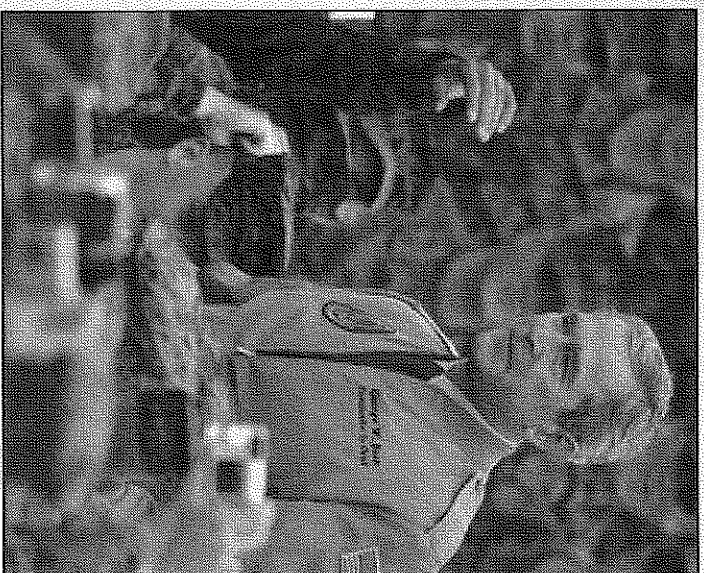
Senior Staff Writer

Local government. It is often ignored in the shadow of the looming force of national politics and government, but it has a larger impact on people's lives.

After all, we do not receive the majority of our education funding from the national government. Our local politicians are the ones who try to solve the transportation woes of community, and it is our local government who comes up with tactics to combat crime problems of our area.

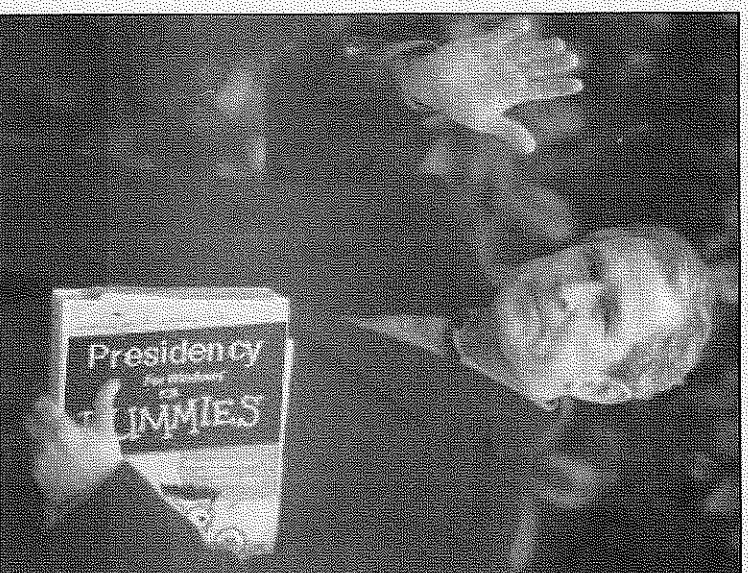
National politicians are enigmatic figures that we rarely become well acquainted with. They are merely the grim-eyed men and women who we see on the screens of our TVs and on the front of our newspapers, but our local politicians live amongst us and can be seen participating in community events.

When I chose to become involved in politics, I first headed to a national



George W. Bush seen here in Iraq, took pictures with the troops and offered his support.

What is at stake here is nothing more than what it means to be a democracy.



People who do not like Bush fabricate photos of him on the internet to degrade his intellectual capacity.

campaign to make a splash. I volunteered for a few days at the Kerry Edwards headquarters. There I was just a face amongst hundreds of other faces. The experience was impersonal and lackluster. I had idealistically pictured myself having thought provoking discussions with John Kerry, but I did

**Not everything was particularly mesmerizing but I felt I was contributing something.**

not even have thought provoking discussions with one of his minions.

The next time I decided to dabble in politics, I was determined to do it differently. I headed to local politics and volunteered my time with the Marsden Delegate campaign. Working with the Marsden campaign could not be more different. I became acquainted with fellow volunteers, his campaign workers,

## Bush apparently wears no "clothes"

By Aaron Snow

Staff Writer

A famous tale tells of an emperor who was convinced by his tailor that he was wearing a magnificent outfit that was invisible only to him, and beautiful to all the rest who beheld it.

The emperor traveled across his kingdom completely and utterly naked, but none of the villagers had the courage to tell the emperor that he did not have on any clothes. They complemented him on his beauty and taste until, one day, a young peasant, acting on his childhood innocence, informed the emperor of his terrible mistake. The moral of this story is that people in positions of great power can be misled unless they encourage dissenting points of view.

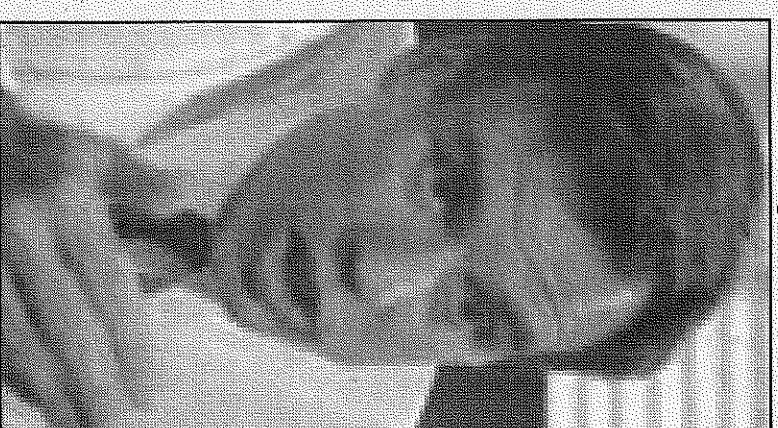
He may not be an emperor, and we may not be loyal subjects, but figuratively speaking, President Bush could use a pair of pants. Bush lives in a bubble of "yes-men" who consistently protect him from opposing ideas. I can almost see Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Rice now, saying, "Yes, Mr. President, Harriet Myers is highly qualified," and, "Don't worry, Mr. President, Katrina will probably just blow over." Not to mention the Iraq debacle, threatening to veto the McCain Anti-Torture Bill and reducing Medicaid benefits for the poor while cutting taxes for the rich, to name a few recent examples.

Bush has completely surrounded himself with people who share his viewpoints down to the smallest degree. In essence, in a Republican controlled Congress President Bush has become "our king." The voices of dissent are drowned out amidst a flurry of "yes sirs," and those who disagree are labeled as unpatriotic. Whatever President Bush demands is almost certain to occur.

What is at stake here is nothing more than what it means to be a democracy. Dissent and skepticism are the foundation of a free and democratic society and have been virtually eliminated by the current administration. Even President Bush's town-hall meetings are nothing more than a gathering of people who just confirm that he is doing a great job. If you want proof, show up at one of these "open" forums wearing a pro-Democrat T-shirt and explain to the security guards that you're just validating a statement you read in your school paper as they escort you out of the building.

Or perhaps, viewing footage of the "sample of unbiased" soldiers reading through a rehearsal of what was billed as President Bush's unscripted conversation with the troops is proof enough. All the American people are permitted to see is a carefully planned TV show that we are made to believe is reality.

A veil has been placed over our eyes, and we are only now gaining insight into what really goes on inside the White House. With only a 35 percent approval rating, perhaps someone has finally pointed out that the President is wearing no clothes.



Governor Mark Warner hosted a party to endorse Dave Marsden and his campaign for Virginia State Delegate.

# Orchestra receives top honors

By Christina Sohn  
Weekend Editor

About a month ago, 45 symphonic orchestra students woke up in the wee hours of the morning, knowing that in a few hours they would be performing in a concert that they had prepared for about five months.

It all started back in the end of June, when orchestra director Steven Fraser submitted a recording of the group's end-of-the-year concert to the Virginia Music Educators' Association.

Each year, two of the top high school orchestras in the state are chosen to play at the VMEA state conference, a concert where the selected participants perform simply for entertainment and the joy of making music.

"We found out that we got in at the end of last year. Ever since

then, we've had rehearsals through summer and the beginning of the school," said junior Naomi You, a violinist. As a result of new and frequent rehearsals, plus the extra individual practice required to master the music, some members had to make sacrifices.

"I missed the entire week of spring tryouts because we had orchestra rehearsals that week," said senior Justin Cardinale, who plays the violin.

Another violinist, junior Chris Benedict, was surprised at the amount of practice required to prepare for the conference.

"I quit football because of APs. But all those after-school rehearsals were kind of like a sport," said Benedict.

After hours and hours of rehearsals and practice, the symphonic orchestra was finally

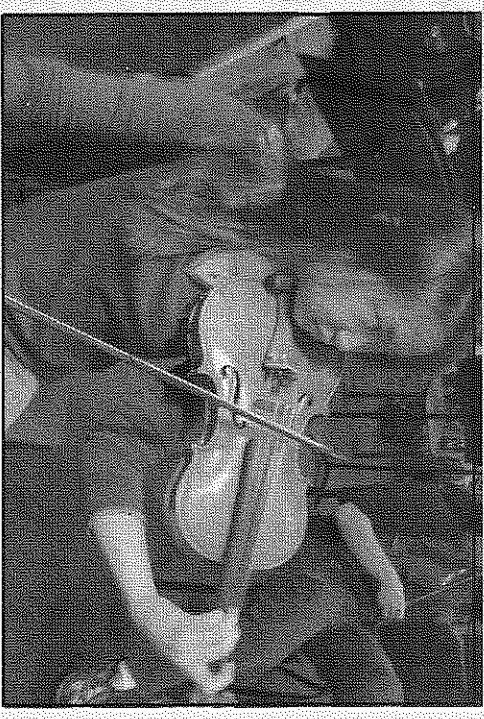
ready to perform in mid-November. After waking up around 4 a.m., students took buses to a Marriott hotel in Norfolk. At around noon, they performed their pieces for hundreds of Virginia music teachers.

"Since they were all music teachers, they would know if we made mistakes. There was a lot of pressure to play well," said You.

Despite the nervousness some players felt, their music had an emotional impact on the crowd.

"I think Mr. Fraser said we made some people cry," said You. Senior David Eargle, a guitarist who played in one of the songs, was another person who was very enthusiastic about the performance.

"We basked in the rays of joy of the musical experience," said



Sunghae Bae

Naomi You plays her violin class. The orchestra was chosen to perform at the VMEA state conference, something they prepared for months.

Eargle.

Apart from the performance, there were other benefits to taking a day off from school.

"The fun part was that you got to see everyone outside the classroom. We got to know them better as a person than by their

musical abilities," said You.

For other musicians, the day off was a great chance to get away from the stress of homework.

"No AP/US notes. Yea, it was a good, relaxing day," said Benedict.

# Familiar faces run marathon

By Bethel Habte  
News Section Assistant

With a schedule filled with meetings, sports events and baby-sitting half-grown kids, Dr. David Smith still found time to train for a 26.2 mile marathon.

The Marine Corps held its 30th annual marathon in October that 30,000 people participated in. WS's principal finished the race in five hours 38 minutes and 42 seconds.

"Most runners were the people like me trying to prove to themselves that they can run a marathon but others were really outstanding world class runners," Smith said.

That's where PE teacher Kellie Mastrodonato comes in. Popularly known as 'Mrs. M', she has run the same Marine Corps Marathon six times. Her best time was three hours and 49 minutes. Mastrodonato has been an athlete since high school, but got more serious after she got out of college. Running was not only

"Most runners were the people like me trying to prove to themselves that they can run a marathon."

—Dr. David Smith, principal

According to Mastrodonato, getting ready for a marathon takes months of training, mental preparation and discipline.

"It really means four or five months before then (the marathon) and also incorporating long-distance on weekends and speed work during the weeks so I can go faster, longer," she said.

a way for her to stay in shape, also it fit very nicely into her schedule.

"It's something that works very well for me," she said.

Her long career as an athletic competitor has only left her with one regret.

"If I was more aggressive and more assertive I would have been a much better athlete," she said.

"For some people, winning is the most important thing, but I didn't really want the spotlight."

Mastrodonato believes that physical education teachers are role models and should play the part. Her goal setting and achievements have proved her an even greater role model.

Sophomore and former student of Mastrodonato, Alexa Czajkowski, didn't find it surprising that Mastrodonato undertook so many marathons.

"Especially since she made us run everyday," she said grudgingly. Later hoping Mrs. M wouldn't be mad at her.

"I would never ask my students to do something that I wouldn't be able to do myself," she said. "The problem is, I can do a lot."



Marine Corps Marathon

Smith finished the marathon in slightly more than five-and-a-half hours.

# Jolly old man brings smiles to area children

## Santa Dave provides insight into his 'other' life

By Kelly Sipple  
News Section Assistant

Santa Claus has come to town! In all the area malls, men dressed up as Mr. Claus are posing with paying patrons, mostly children.

"The oldest person we've had come take a picture with Santa was probably 60 years old," said Bridgett Beard, one of "Santa's helpers" at Springfield Mall.

On November 22, Beard was taking photos of Santa and a young family. A 9 year-old boy named Alexander posed with his younger sister Olivia and hysterical baby sister Maria. Beard tried to soothe the youngest girl by waving a Pooh bear, while Santa reached out a hand. It wasn't until Maria's mother and father got in the picture with her that she calmed down.

According to the Santa at Springfield Mall, who refused to divulge his entire name, kids rarely cry when they pose with him.

"Not a lot of kids cry when they sit on my lap," said Santa Dave. "I think it's because I have a natural beard and the kids can sense that. Most kids know someone with a beard to relate to."

Meanwhile, 3-year-old girl named Tiffany climbed under the red rope fence to come say to Santa Dave, defying her aunt's orders.

"Hello there!" said Santa Dave. "Toys," said Tiffany, very timidly before Santa Dave even asked what she wanted.

Again this year, Barbie appears to be number on kids' lists.

"This year Dino Raptors, a toy I think is a robot dinosaur, is asked for a lot by the little boys along with cars and trucks," said Santa Dave. "Brais are asked for often by the girls but Barbie is still the most asked-for toy."

During the holiday season, Santa Dave will see hundreds of kids, something he has been doing for the past 12 years.

"I started doing this when I was working for a construction company, which is my regular job. My friend said his sister was in charge of a photo company in Chicago. She got together with friends and kids to let me try out being Santa Claus. Both the kids and I loved it and I have been doing it ever since," said Santa Dave.

Not only has Santa Dave posed with kids in the US, but he also traveled to Germany, where he dressed up as Santa.

"I went to an international celebration in Germany," said Santa Dave. "Santa's only found in America, so I was the only one. All the other countries celebrate St. Nick and Germany also celebrates St. Martin."



Kelly Sipple

Santa Dave unsuccessfully attempts to get a young girl named Maria to sit on his lap while working at Springfield Mall. Maria only posed with Santa after both her parents joined her. Santa Dave has posed with children in the US, as well as in Germany.

While Santa Dave talked, a boy, about 7, stomped off screaming after finding out that day was not the day he would be able to take pictures with Santa. Even though that occasionally happens, Santa Dave says he just wants to bring joy to the kids.

"Being Santa is a lot of fun and I love the kids and making them smile."

# McGrath is way more than math

By Alyssa Horton

Forum Editor

This man was a Navy SEAL, flies helicopters, drives buses, umpires for softball games; the list goes on and on. Everyone here, however, knows him as math teacher Tom McGrath.

McGrath's first accomplishment among his long list was serving as a Navy SEAL and fighting in Vietnam. He joined the navy in 1968, went through field training in 1970 and was in Vietnam for six months in 1972.

"Navy SEALs are supposed to do things in a clandestine way," said McGrath. "You're supposed to go in and get home before anyone knew you were there."

McGrath spent his time in a diesel submarine, which operates on batteries, so there was very little oxygen. If he was not on watch he had to go to his bunk to conserve energy. There was also very little water so the crew could only use it for drinking.

"We couldn't take showers. Let me tell you, it smelled pretty bad," said McGrath.

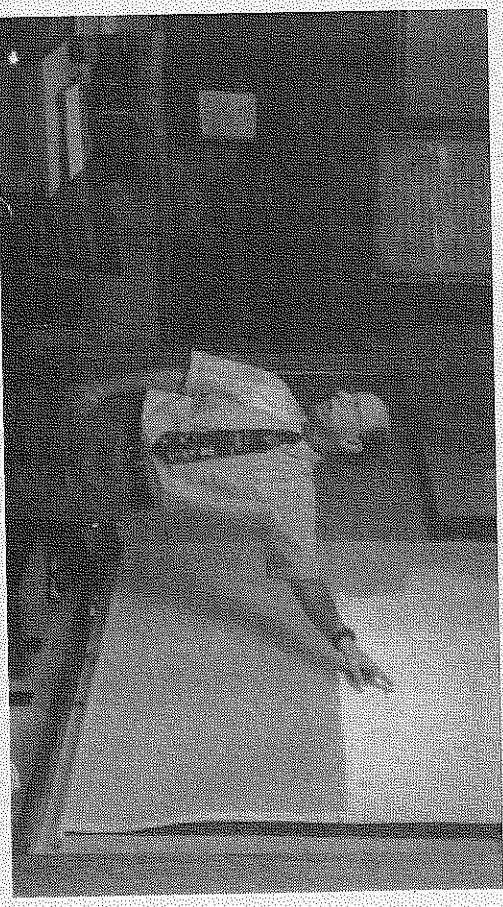
While in the Navy McGrath decided to get a pilot's license.

"Everybody's always looking for something else that rocks their boat," said McGrath.

McGrath served in the Navy for 30 years. After reaching the rank of captain he realized that he wanted to do something else with his life outside the Navy.

"As a captain it is your primary responsibility to teach young people," said McGrath. "So I figured, why not teach?"

McGrath attended Cornell University, the University of Southern California, the Naval Post Graduate School and Marymount University, where he received a Bachelor's degree in general agriculture, two Master's degrees in computer science systems management,



Carrie DeClark

Tom McGrath is a man of many experiences, from bus driver to Navy SEAL, and his teaching certification requirements.

McGrath teaches geometry and Algebra 2 honors, and has developed a good reputation.

"Mr. McGrath is a cool guy. He gives us lollipops," said sophomore John Murdock.

The other two jobs that McGrath holds on the side are driving school buses and being a softball umpire. He has umpired for 18 and under national championships, allowing him to be on

ESPN and travel around the country. He got his bus driving license in college as a part-time job and continues to drive students to sports games and other activities when he's needed.

"Kids couldn't get to their activities and I like driving stuff," said McGrath. "I did that to try to help meet a need."

With all of McGrath's activities one would think that he'd get stressed, but McGrath enjoys it all.

"I like teaching teenagers, I like flying and driving, I like to umpire. It's all just stuff that I like to do."

## Farmer's Almanac predicts a harsh winter for East Coast

By Laura Byland

Senior Staff Writer

Spartans, get out your cable knit sweaters and down jackets because The Farmer's Almanac, friend of many an amateur weather forecaster, is predicting the East Coast is in for a chilly winter.

The almanac says in the US the winter will be bizarre.

"Mother Nature seems to be in the mood for some amusement this winter. The Farmer's Almanac, long-range weather predictions are pointing to such fluctuations in temperatures that many may be reminded of riding a roller, or in this case, a 'polar coaster,'" says the almanac. "If you live in eastern parts of the country, be prepared for unseasonably cold conditions for much of the winter."

True to the almanac's predictions, Springfield received its first flurries of the year the night before Thanksgiving.

If the handy almanac is right, winter will begin in earnest this month.

Springfield already got a dusting of snow on Monday December 5. Although it was only a few inches, it was enough to prompt a two hour delay. The almanac was slightly off in its predictions.

It did not call for snow from the 4 to 7 of December, but it did report for December 8 to 11, "Light snow." In the Northeastern states December 28 to the 31 will feature, "Heavy snow, Mid-Atlantic states, up to a foot," says the long-time weather prognosticator, which made its first predictions in the early 1800s. At the end of January when the benefits of winter

vacation have worn off, more flakes might make an appearance.

From January 20 to the 23, "Major storm along the Atlantic Coast," says the almanac, and then from January 24 to the 27, "Snow," the Farmer's Almanac says simply.

Luckily for weary students, wintry weather should continue into February. There is a possibility of a wintry mix from February 8 to the 11, and of snow from February 24 to the 28.

Most students predictably are ecstatic about the possibility of a snowy winter.

"I heard that we are going to have a white Christmas from the almanac," said sophomore Katie Dias.

"I think it is going to be pretty accurate."

The almanac is not predicting a white Christmas, but it is predicting a white Christmas break.

"I hope we get ten snow days. Then it is 'an act of God' because we don't have to make them up," said junior Nicole Bolte.

Snow days give students an unexpected chance to indulge in their hobbies, catch up on homework, or to just relax.

"Snow lets me stay home and read in front of the fire," said senior Michelle Joy.

People go to great lengths to ensure that they will get the chance to spend a lazy day in bed. Snow rituals are a celebrated element of winter.

"We do a snow dance in Latin," said senior Raquel Drummond. "It usually works. Mrs. (Kathy) Jarvis stands in the middle around the people with the coldest hands."

## W.S. students volunteer to better community

Continued from page 1

"I know Mr. and Mrs. Brown very well and I know every cent and every ounce of energy put into Kristi's Christmas goes to helping others," said Linz.

The National Honor Society, German Honor Society and History Honor Society have teamed up in efforts to support ECHO families. They made donation boxes and placed them in each history classroom.

"I donated to ECHO through my history class, not really for the extra credit, but to help others in need," said junior James Kim.

ECHO families are kept anonymous, because they could be families in our community who have communicated their need to the ECHO organization. Through the generosity of others, they are supplied meals and other provisions that are especially needed during the cold holiday months.

In the giving spirit of the season and of the National Honor Society, the organization continues to seek new ways to lend support to those in need.

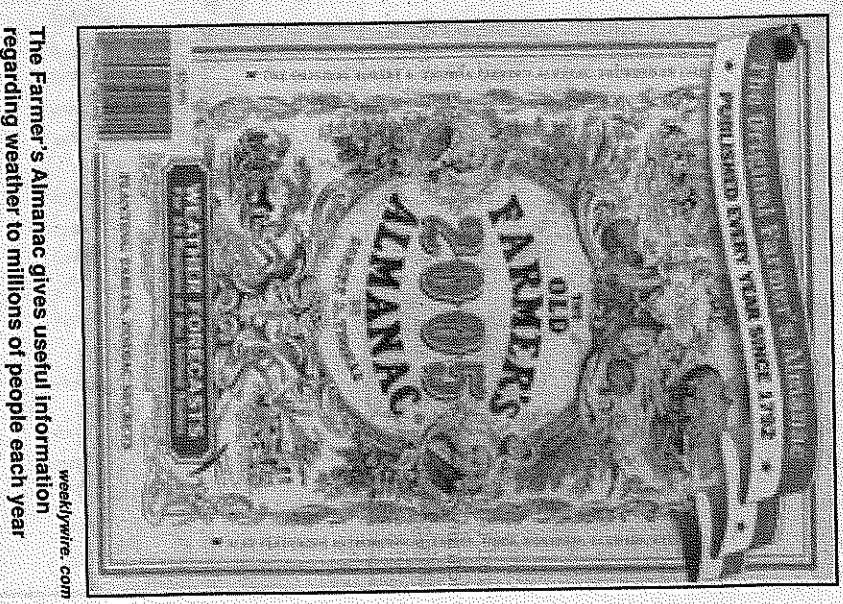
"We also wrote COSTCO a letter in the attempts to get them to donate books to needy children," said NHS co-president

Rob Patrick. NHS will also sponsor a day of packaging holiday shipments to troops on December 10<sup>th</sup>.

Volunteering at soup kitchens, donating clothes and food to service organizations and helping others through church-sponsored programs are only a few more options to extend a helping hand to others.

Senior Alyssa Zhu, who worked at Greenspring Village over the summer, plans on volunteering at the retirement home this Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

"I'm going to play Christmas carols on the piano, read to the elderly and play



weeklywrite.com

The Farmer's Almanac gives useful information regarding weather to millions of people each year. Unfortunately, snow days do have repercussions. Teachers are forced to cover the necessary material in a smaller amount of time. Sometimes this means giving extra homework or by skipping lessons that are not crucial.

"I want snow days so that we have no school," said senior Sonya Halseth, "But I have gotten annoyed making up days."

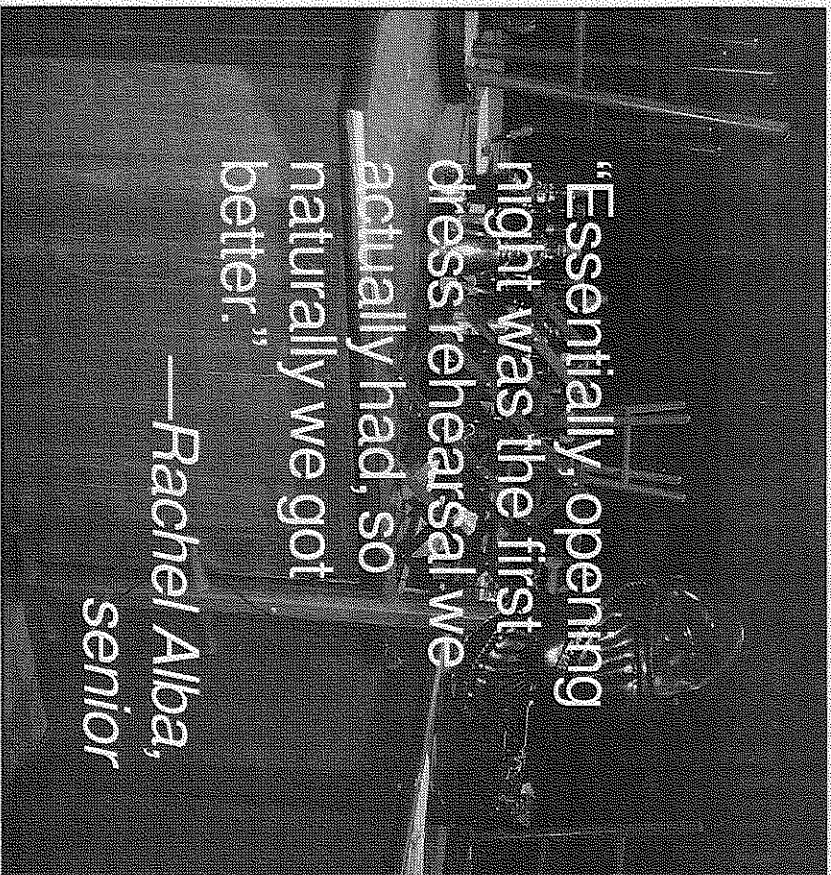
After all the predictions and expectations, some are skeptical more snow will arrive.

"Even if it does snow, it probably won't be enough to shut down school," said senior Andrew Chang.

hymns during the prayer hour on Christmas," said Zhu. "I did it last year, and it was fun."

The holiday season is lonely for many, and the impact that a few kind acts can make on someone else's experience is substantial in a time when warm family and love are played up in the publicity of the holidays.

"I never thought I could make much of a difference before, but I've realized that a few hours of my time can really help others," said junior Kat Pham. "The community gives a lot to you, so it's only right to give back."



Came DeCaro

**“Essentially, opening night was the first dress rehearsal we actually had, so naturally we got better.”**

**—Rachel Alba, senior**

## Latest school production generates new experience

Continued from page 1

“A play needs four weeks in all and I was given eight or nine days to do the whole thing,” said Levesque, “so I’m limited in what I can do.”

In addition to the challenges of getting auditorium time and learning how to perform a taxing script, the cast also had to cope with other

unexpected problems, jumping onto the bar with Before opening night, the a broken collar bone. cast received some news Despite a few that one of the actors difficulties, all seemed to be playing Einstein broke his solved in the end.

collarbone. “Essentially, opening Westbrook look over night was the first dress the roll for one night for rehearsal we actually had, McEnerney. By the so naturally we got better,” second performance for said Rachel Alba, who cast two, however, played Germaine, a McEnerney braved his waitress. injury and performed “By the end of the week daunting tasks, such as we were good.”

## News Bites

Junior, Mike Spooner, senior, Chris Benton, junior Alex Martis, and junior Leo Walker, led the boys cross Country team to their Patriot District Championship victory with respective 1st, 3rd, 5th, and 6th place finishes

Librarian, Stephanie Byrnes, has announced plans to begin a knitting club with the Tri-Hi-Y. The club will meet one to two times per month and knit scarves and other garments for the less fortunate

WS welcomes a new Building Engineer, Dave Pyle. Pyle will take over for retired Building Engineer, Mr. Jim Burke

The English Honor Society is hosting skill workshops on Wednesdays from 2:20 to 3:20 for students to work on their SOL verbal skills and on the first Thursday of every month from 2:20 to 3:20 for essay writing, both held in room 202

Disney World’s EPCOT Center will welcome WS’s Madrigals in the Candlelight Processional on December 16<sup>th</sup>

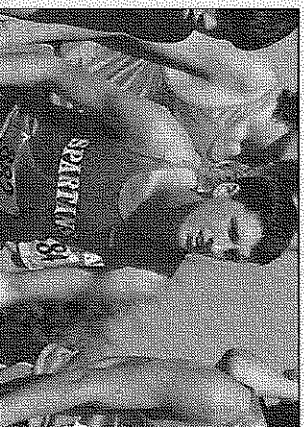
The Virginia Association of Speech, Debate, and Drama Coaches awards Mary Love Wynne, who teaches English and is the Speech and Debate coach, the honor of Speech Coach of the Year

The American Historical Association’s Beveridge Family Teaching Prize was awarded to the American History teachers Laurie Fischer, Ron Maggiano, Maggie Tran, Tami Ogden, and Jim Percoco in honor of their ‘excellence and innovation in secondary history teaching’

Students Katie Zavaack and Justin Cardinale have been ranked 2006 National Merit Scholar Semifinalists

Bobby Hundemer and Hayley Mazzella have been selected into the 2005 Virginia Honors Choir, the most prestigious auditioned choir

Seniors Lindsay Jones and Jesse Molinengo received the Donna DeVarona award and the Sportswoman of the Fall Season award during Fall Sports Awards Night



Spartan Sports Juniors Mike Spooner and Leo Walker contributed to the Patriot District Championship win for cross country.



Liz Bucheister Teacher Tami Ogden was one of the five US History teachers to receive the Beveridge Family Teaching Prize.

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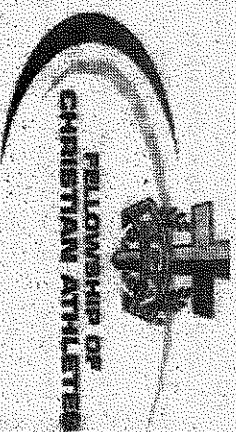
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## Teen Commandments

1. Don't let your parents down; they brought you up.
2. Choose your companions with care; you become what they are, or they will master you.
3. Treasure your time; don't spend it; invest it.
4. Stand for something, or you'll fall for anything.
5. Select only a date who would make a good neighbor.
6. See what you can do for others; not what they can do for you.
7. Guard your thoughts; what you think, you are.
8. Don't fill up on this world's crumbs; feed your soul on the Living Bread.
9. Give your all to Christ; He gave His all for you.

It's also about student leadership in schools for Christ! The National Capital FCA covers the greater Washington Area and we want to see God work through and in you by being involved. Call 703-278-3970. email va@fca.org or go to [www.novatca.org](http://www.novatca.org) for weekly program updates and ways you can get involved

- Encouraging, equipping and casting a vision for athletes, coaches, and all whom they influence!



## Dogs serve as teachers' best friends

By Caitlin Laverdiere  
Managing Editor

The search for that special companion can often seem never ending — one who willingly listens as you bemoan the day's stresses, never talks back when disciplined and, most importantly, provides you with that obscure concept of unconditional love.

The above description may be unattainable when it comes to a human companion, but our canine friends easily fit the mold.

The faculty is full of die-hard dog fans. Little and Jennie, two Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, belong to history teacher, Cathleen Boivin. The breed originated in England and were trained to be ladies' lap dogs.

"They're historical," said Boivin. "They were very popular at the court of the Stewart monarchs."

Cavalier King Charles Spaniels are small and very friendly. They also do not need a lot of exercise, so they make good companions for people with busy schedules.

"I call them my velcro dogs," said Boivin. "because wherever I am they are."

Sally, a black lab mix, is one of the dog members of Mike Mukai's family.

"She's basically part of our family," said Mukai, assistant director of student activities. "We hang out. She sits with me and does whatever she wants to do."

Contrary to popular thought, Mukai's NACL Dog license plate has nothing to do with his fondness for the canine members of his family. Mukai is a chemistry

"They're very loyal. She's a real faithful dog."

—Mike Mukai, assistant director  
of student activities

teacher and the compound sodium chloride makes salt. The license plate reflects the old saying, "a salty dog."

"I'm an old salt," said Mukai.

Rinz, Bruce and Woodie (two German shepherds and a dachshund) belong to English teacher Meg Duchelle.

"They're really cool dogs," said Duchelle. "I just love them."

Duchelle trains her German shepherds in Front Royal at local, regional and national competitions.

"They do obedience and tracking," said Duchelle. "Rinz has an obedience three and a tracking one."

These six canine companions represent a much larger dog fan club, notable among the WS faculty, as well as students and other people across the globe.

"They're very loyal," said Mukai. "She's a real faithful dog."



Susan Oblinger  
Math teacher Susan Oblinger recently adopted Lucy, a nine-week-old border collie mix from the Animal Welfare League of Arlington.

## Promising to deliver

Junior Katie Page shares her life-long dream of becoming an obstetrician

By Kristin McGregor  
Junior Staff Writer

Through a series of heaves and huffs a baby is pushed into the world. After months in the womb, the baby takes its first breath of life. At the same time, the obstetrician takes her first breath of relief after the delivery.

When junior Katie Page was three years old, her mother told her she was pregnant. Every day, Page and her mom would watch TLC's "A Baby Story" in preparation for the big day. "A Baby Story" is a documentary show featuring moms-to-be. While squeamish people and freshmen in biology class tend to find giving birth disgusting and the labor process hard to watch, Page found the whole experience fascinating.

"I think that is amazing," said Page. "It is yours and is a part of you."

Page decided she wanted to go to college, attend medical school, become an obstetrician, get married and have seven children.

"This is when I knew I could not wait to be pregnant and have seven children. I wanted to work with something I loved every day, so I wanted to be an obstetrician," said Page.

Page has also witnessed a baby story off the screen. Her brother's best friend's mom is a midwife and has seven children. Page said that every time she saw her, she was pregnant.

"I saw her life and basically it had what I wanted," said Page.

In order to become an obstetrician, Page has to attend a four year college and get a Bachelor's Degree in Bio-Medical. She is preparing for college by stacking up on challenging courses. She plans on taking AP Biology her senior year. Page said that she is doing it to make herself look good to colleges. She must attend medical school which could take as long as six years. After which, Page will receive a PhD and become an obstetrician.

"I will be going to college with my grandchildren," said Page jokingly.



Katie Page has been fascinated with the childbirth process since age three.

Leah Varatta

## Backpack trend proves unwieldy

By Tim O'Keefe  
Sports Columnist

The warning bell sounds and I start to walk to my 4<sup>th</sup> period Spanish four class. As I turn the corner from Senior Rail, someone rolls over my foot with their gargantuan and cumbersome rolling monster, also known as a roller backpack. The pain tingles in my toes for a minute, then disperses. Rolling backpacks are not annoying and silly but painful for unsuspecting feet as well.

There are only a few reasons why a student would want to use a rolling backpack. One, is their books and binders are too heavy. No one can argue that a backpack full of three hard, large, and hard-covered books put a strain on the back. But please, the pain is not that bad and roller backpacks can oftentimes cause pain to other students. Instead of placing all the books in the backpack, just take one book out and carry it by hand.

Some try to make fashion statements by using rolling backpacks. In elementary school, rolling backpacks were the thing. Kids roll their mini monsters down the hall and gloat over their keen fashion sense. Unfortunately elementary school has passed us by,

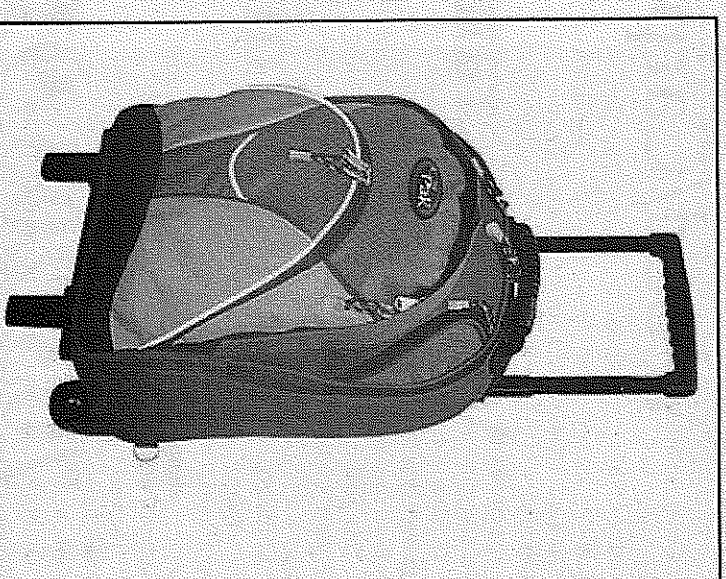
and so should the rolling backpacks. If using a rolling backpack as a fashion statement, try to make a statement some other way.

Rolling backpacks are as proportional to normal backpacks as Dr. Evil is to Mini Me. Their immovable frames make them hard to carry around school. I do not understand why anyone would want to buy a backpack that they can not fit in a gym locker.

Going up and down the stairs also poses a problem for students with these backpacks. WS is not an airport that has escalators, instead we have stairs. It must be annoying to lug this rolling monster up the stairs. It may not be so bad for juniors and seniors, because their lockers are upstairs. But for freshman and sophomores, this is a nightmare seeing as they have to travel up and down the stairwells between almost every class.

Of course, I understand if anyone has some sort of disability or situation that the must use rolling backpacks to move around. If this is the case, I totally understand and sympathize.

Usually technological inventions make something easier. But in the case of rolling backpack, it makes life harder. They are also are annoying to the people around them.



Associated Press

Backpacks like this one shown above disrupt hallway traffic and make it difficult to get to class.



# Woah, Horsey!

## Freshman gets to ride horses in Springfield

By Kristin McGregor

Junior Staff Writer

Springfield is the ninth place freshman Kaitlaine Homer has called home. Last June, Homer moved here from Japan after living there for three years.

"I am a very open-minded person," said Homer. "By the second year I am ready to move anyway. I cannot stay in one place too long."

A military kid, Homer has lived all across the United States and in Panama and Japan.

"I miss Japan," said Homer. "I come here and it was social shock. Japanese [people] would never think about showing you and you come here and all you do is get shoved."

Homer said that the crime rate in Japan was much lower. In Japan, she was not scared about somebody coming at her with a knife.

"[In America] you really have to be careful about where you go, who you're with and what you do," said Homer.

While living in Japan, Homer's father went to Pakistan for six months.

"I missed him," said Homer. "People would come up to me and ask if I still agreed with the war after my dad had been over there and I said 'absolutely.'"

Coming to WS, Homer was overwhelmed with the crowded hallways and amount of students.

"I am not a city person so I don't really enjoy all the people," said Homer. "This is the biggest school I've been at."

Math is her favorite subject this year mainly because Duke Baird is her teacher.

"I love a lot of the teachers," said Homer. "I learn a lot here. There is so many clubs and opportunities to get involved in."

### Fresh Meet

#### A new column about interesting freshmen

Homer rides at Tamrack Stables in Lorton. In her first year of riding, Homer has been in two competitions, receiving first place in both.

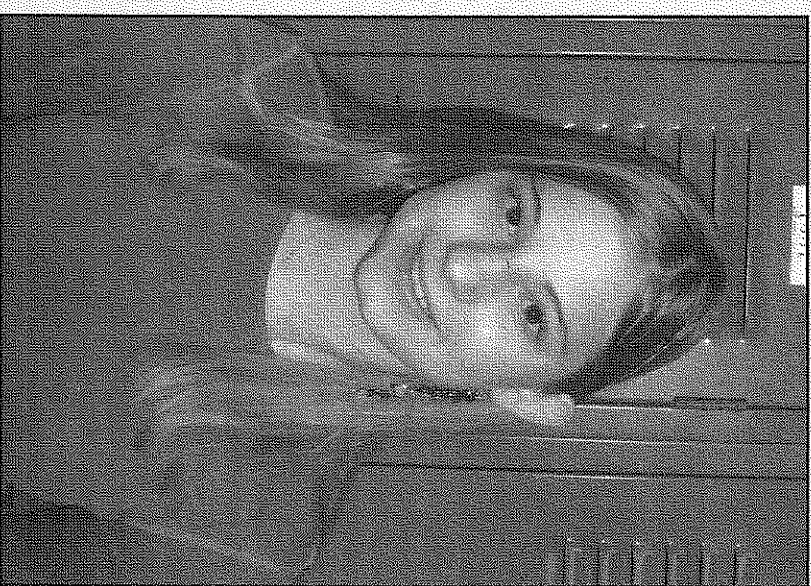
On Saturdays, Homer volunteers at the stables helping kids with disabilities ride horses.

"[I help] people who can't really control the horse on their own," said Homer. "Some have a hard time understanding [the horse]."

Riding horses is good for the children. Homer said that if the child can't walk, it helps strengthen their muscles.

An advantage of living in Springfield is that Homer has been able to pursue her passion for horseback riding.

"I haven't lived in a place so long where I could take lessons," said Homer.



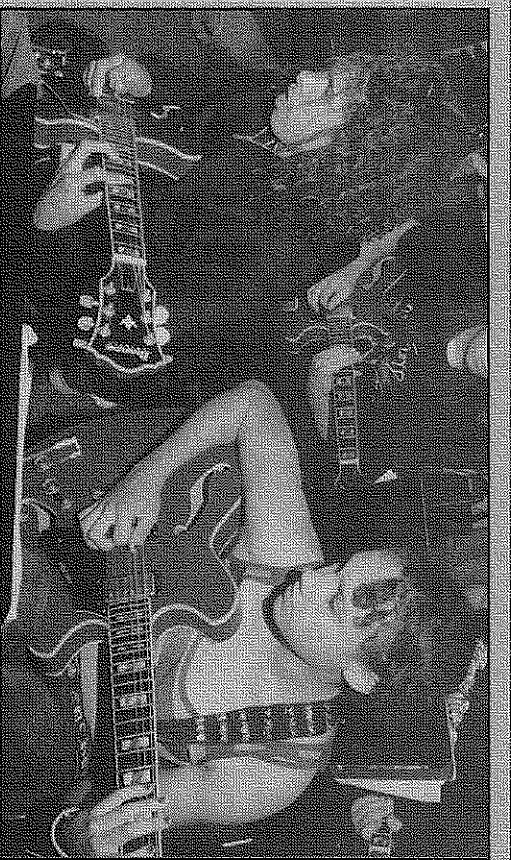
Garrie DeCark

After living in eight other places, most recently in Japan, freshman Kaitlaine Homer's family settled down in Springfield last June.

"It's therapeutic," said Homer. "It teaches them control over a potentially dangerous animal."

After high school, Homer wants to attend Penn State University and get a degree in Equine Studies, the study of horses.

"I am planning on having a ranch in Pennsylvania," said Homer. "I want to breed and train famous racehorses."



LifeTouch

Seniors Ziggy Rodriguez and Emily Webster jam on their guitars during Guitar 3.

## Ziggy: Puerto Rican

### Pokemon master

By Caitlin Laverdiere  
Managing Editor

Certain individuals stand out from the rest at WS because of their distinguishing personality traits, including unique clothing styles and unrivaled charisma. One of these individuals is Alejandro Rodriguez, more commonly referred to as Ziggy or "the crazy Puerto Rican man."

"I want to be the very best like no one ever was," said Ziggy. "I want to catch all the Pokemon."

This goal is not a typical aspiration for most students but one that shows Ziggy's one-of-a-kind personality.

Students who look forward to football games because of the abounding opportunities they present for soliciting personal attention, may relate to Ziggy's Spartan-football-enthusiasm.

"The best part of games is definitely all the chances I get to run out and make a fool out of myself," said Ziggy.

Other WS students may perform silly acts when given new attention, but none of them can relate to running into the football goal post and breaking their face in four different places — he's

got everyone beat there.

Ziggy enjoys "deep, riveting, moving, beautiful, fascinating films, like *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, which are best when accompanied by his favorite food," "super duper movie theater popcorn." He also enjoys playing "Say You'll Be There" by the Spice Girls on his guitar because someone needs to keep those classic '90s hits alive.

Ziggy's zeal for being unique stems from his childhood.

"I'm no different than I was ten years ago," said Ziggy. "I was the crazy kid with the 'fro.'"

While he admits that he "sticks out like a sore thumb" he believes everyone has their own crazy side, even if it is not outwardly noticeable.

"Everybody's different and there are extremes of how people are different," said Ziggy.

Exciting, yet still down to Earth, Ziggy is a well-known character among WS students and faculty. But as famous as he is, he has one talent that has gone unnoticed by most of his peers.

"I can cook pancakes like nobody's business," said Ziggy.

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# Don't stop belieeeewings!

By **Katie Costello**

Features Editor

Santa is appearing on fewer and fewer rooftops as the WS generation enters their teens.

As students grow older, their childhood beliefs of Santa shimmying down the chimney to deliver presents become a faint memory.

"I stopped believing in Santa Claus when I was seven," said senior Nicole Calderwood. "My parents sat me down and had this serious talk. It was this big serious meeting about Santa Claus."

For certain students, the memory of Santa Claus is much more vivid.

"I believed [in Santa] until yesterday," said junior Matt Norwood. "My dad sat me down and told me the history of Santa Claus. It began back in the early 1800s with the English."

Disappointed students who did not get what they asked Santa for Christmas vowed never to believe in again.

"I asked Santa if I could adopt Rudolph and he said no," said junior Meredith Berson.

The belief in an overly obese man in a red fur suit with presents was what made Christmas Christmas. Disheartened grew disappointed to hear that the jolly old man was a fake.

**"I asked Santa if I could adopt Rudolph and he said no."**

—**Meredith Berson, junior**

"It was traumatizing," said Calderwood.

"It killed me inside."

A shattered belief in Santa Claus can be devastating for anyone no matter how old. Heartbreak does not discriminate with age.

"A long-lasting childhood memory was distorted really bad," said Norwood. "The

presents marked as Santa won't mean as much to me."

The excitement of Christmas has been replaced with different expectations. Students know that it is their parents doing the work that the alleged "Santa" was suppose to be in charge of.

"I feel like it's too predictable," said Calderwood. "I know that the milk and cookies we leave out are eaten by my parents."

Perhaps showing this article to parents, will convince them to keep the dream alive in their younger children, so that they will be spared the heartbreak of finding out that old St. Nick is just an old myth. Students who still believe have been able to keep their views of Christmas unaltered and unabashed.

"They [my parents] used to tell me there was a Santa Claus, but now they're trying to take all the credit for it," said junior Nadia Khatouri. "But I know it's not true. He's my hero."



Another small child suffers from Santa Claus related trauma, just like junior Nadia Khatouri did when she found out the truth about Santa.

## Democracy in action! Lousy laws lampoon our legislature

By **Lindsay Burke**

Viewpoint Editor

Legislatures enact laws for good reason. They are there to try to keep people safe from themselves and others. Some state laws, however, have been passed with seemingly no thought process whatsoever. Thankfully, not all of these are still used today.

In Alaska, moose may not be viewed from an airplane. I feel for the guy in the window seat who was stuck next to a cop on the plane as it landed right over a herd of moose.

In Alabama, it is illegal to wear a fake mustache that causes laughter in church.

"That's the kind of thinking that makes it impossible for the separation of church and state. It is not constitutional for the government to enforce a law that affects how a person can act in a religious institution," said junior Sam Peck.

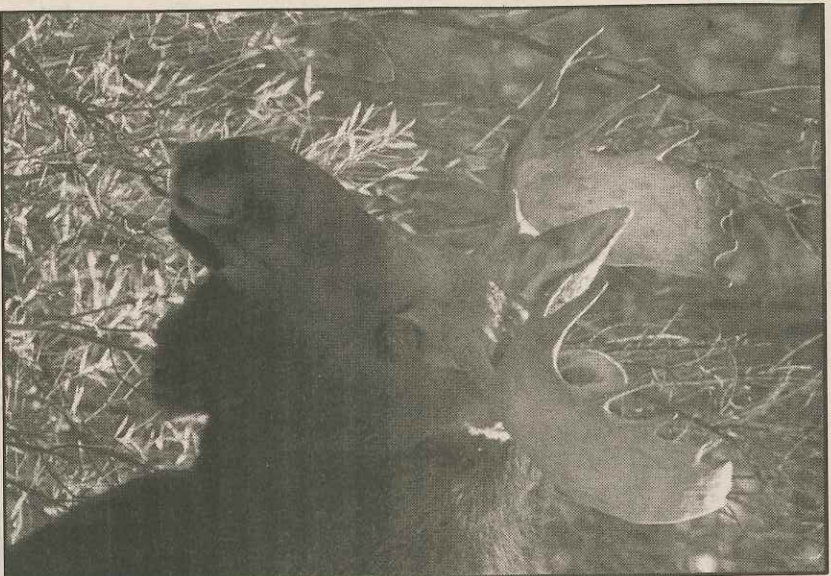
Louisiana declared it was illegal to rob a bank and then shoot at the bank teller with a water pistol.

"If I'm going to rob a bank I reserve my right [under the Second Amendment] to shoot the bank teller with whatever I feel like," said senior Graham Shellenberger. West Virginia is one state where more than one nonsensical law has been passed. You cannot whistle underwater, but you can take roadkill home for supper. It is also legal for a male to engage in sexual intercourse with an animal, as long as it weighs less than 40 pounds.

"I think [no whistling under water] is a pretty stupid law. It's not like you can hear yourself whistling under water, so why would you do it in the first place?" said sophomore Kyle Reed.

Texas also has theories of its own. It is illegal to milk another person's cow and to shoot a buffalo from the second story of a hotel. At least the animals are being protected.

All 50 states have, at one time or another, passed an unnecessary law. To check out more ridiculous ones, go to [www.dumbblaws.com](http://www.dumbblaws.com), and find out that in Iowa you can't kiss for more than five minutes at a time, or that you can't lasso a fish in Tennessee.



All-Creatures.org

Although the majestic moose is highly respected in Alaska, it is illegal to view them from an airplane.

## Walk Elliot walk! Moore goes from WS to Burke on foot daily

By **Sarah Alvarez**

Sports Assistant

A popular landmark, Wendy's on Burke Centre Parkway, is how senior Elliot Moore knows he is close to home.

Moore has an interest in doing something that even his friends think is a little crazy. He walks home from WS to Burke every single day.

Walking is not a punishment for Moore; it's a pleasure.

Moore simply enjoys walking on the weekends and likes going for long walks.

Now that Moore's father has retired he gives Moore rides to school in the morning occasionally.

Since freshman year, Moore has walked to and from school under most circumstances. Moore explains that being pupil-placed for him was a hassle, so instead of relying on a car he simply relies on his feet.

Moore explains that people from school often see him walking on Rolling Road and offer him rides home, but more than likely he'll say no and choose to walk.

"Everyone passes by my corner," said Moore with a smirk on his face.

Cars zoom by on Rolling Road but nothing stops him from walking, not the weather, not fatigue, not becoming bored, not anything. Moore keeps himself occupied by listening to music while he walks.

Such distractions can cause trouble; Moore found this true when he had a startling encounter with a dog.

"It bit me in the calf," said Moore.

The dog came from behind and bit his leg and ripped through his pants. He struggled to pull and throw the dog off him. He succeeded and the dog wandered off. The dog didn't have rabies but the experience was still mildly traumatic. Even after the that incident Moore continues to walk home. "Just surprised me," said Moore, "I wasn't hateful to the dog."

Moore stands next to the doors leading from the cafeteria hall to the Sports Lobby during lunch with a group of four or five friends who speak to him with a certain admiration.



Erica Wilkening

Trekking from Burke to WS every day, Elliot Moore enjoys his long walks and loves jamming to music on his enormous headphones.

"He has a dedication to walk home," said senior Andrew Chang, referring to what he thinks is cool about his friend.

Determination is exactly what it took for Moore to walk up to the school once a week every week of the summer.

Moore is a curator of the Japanese

garden and as a curator he mowed the garden lawn once a week. Moore didn't drive to the school or ride a bike he walked. He walked in the 90-degree July heat.

"He's a lunatic," said senior Chris Richards.

# WHY



**are these people  
so excited?**

**Please turn to Page 21 to find out!**

# GEEA, ZBRAWSMUTIE, BONJOUR, ODZIE KU, HELLO

## It's all Greek to Harry

By **Jordy Serwin**  
Business/Systems Editor

Few people can confess to living in multiple countries before they get to high school. Junior, Harry Andreades, who was born in Adelaide, Australia and has lived in four countries, three continents and two hemispheres, is such an outlier he's not even on the chart.

Andreades was born in Australia, then moved to Greece, Canada, back to Greece, then to the US.

"It's different in Australia because winter is during summer over there," said Andreades.

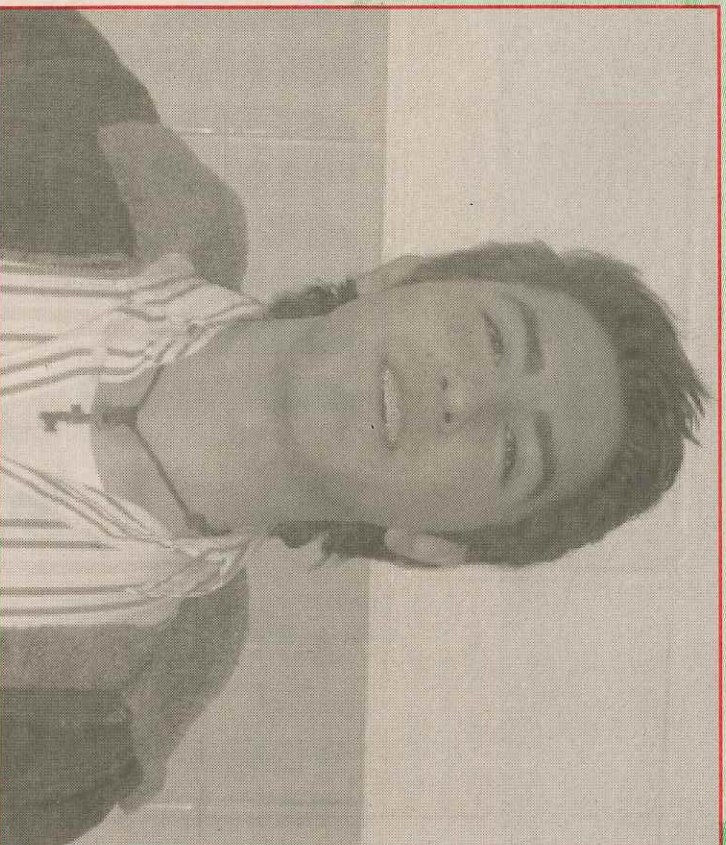
Though he left the Down Under when he was only 5 years old, Harry, who is of Greek ancestry and whose formal first name is Charlampos, most remembers the different types of Australian wildlife.

"I liked the kangaroos," said Andreades.

After leaving Australia, Harry and his mother and two older sisters moved to Athens. Of all the places he has lived,

Harry enjoyed Greece the most.

"There is a lot more freedom to do what you want in Greece," said Andreades.



Athens, Andreades remembers, has no curfew for minors.

"You could go out any time you wanted, say 11 at night, and not come back till like noon the next day," said Andreades, "and no one would care."

With lax societal rules, fun in Greece was very different than in the United States.

"You basically hang out with friends or go out for coffee or clubbing," said Andreades.

Nonetheless, Andreades and his family lived there for three years. He felt Canada offered less freedom than Greece but still more to do than he has found in the U.S.

Andreades and his family left Canada to go back to Greece, then came here to Springfield when he was 13 and in the eighth grade and has lived here ever since. He found the US to be quite different from the places he had lived before.

"There are a lot more blonde people here" said Andreades.

He also found the curriculum and structure of US schools to be easier than schools in Greece.

"You had to take like 15 courses throughout the week in Greece," said Andreades.

The US is also larger in scale than other places he's lived.

"Everything was bigger, like cars, roads, everything," said Andreades.

He also finds that he is more unique here than he was among other Greeks in Athens.

"A lot of people just say that you're Greek," said Andreades.

In the end, after all this change, Andreades remains calm.

"It wasn't really traumatic for me," He said. "It's good to experience different cultures and you learn a lot of languages and you get a different perspective."

By **Carlin Sherrill**  
Weekend Section Editor

Junior Kevin Pons moved to the United States from France when he was 8 years old. His mom had recently gotten married and his stepdad, an Army Ranger, was stationed in DC. Coming here, he did not know what to expect in the States. Now when he visits France each summer with his family he is always surprised at the differences between Americans and the French.



"Americans are much more uptight than French people. The French tend to be more chill; there is a huge mentality difference between the two," said Pons. French people are, however, more judgemental than Americans, said Pons. When walking down the street, he always notices people criticizing him on what he is wearing and how he is acting.

"When I'm in France, I always notice people judging me, even if they don't know I'm from here," said Pons.

Not only is there a difference between Americans and French, there is a significant difference between northern and southern France. Pons is from the south of France, and has a different

### Greece

Population: 10,668,354

Land Area: 131,940 sq km

Language: Greek (official), English and French

Estimated Literacy Rate: 97.5%

### Ghana

Population: 239,460

Land Area: 60,656,178 sq km

Language: Akan, Moshi-Dagomba, Ewe and English

Estimated Literacy Rate: 74.80%

### South Africa

Population: 44,340,000

Land Area: 1,219,900 sq km

Language: IsiZulu, Afrikaans, Sepedi, English

Sesotho, Xitsonga, Ndebele  
Estimated Literacy Rate: 65.5%

# Nana from Ghana

By Sean Hogan

Features Editor

Not many people can say they moved overseas 5,000 miles at one point in their lives. One person who can, however, is junior Nana Owusu. Owusu came to Falls Church to stay with her parents in 2000 after living with her aunt in Ghana. The 2005-06 school year is her second at WS.

"Education is easier here," said Owusu. "Schools here are bigger."

Owusu believes she has a learning advantage over students who grew up attending schools in the US because, "you don't have to rely on [technology]." The lack of computers and calculators in Ghana compared to the abundance of tools that make work easier in the US made the learning curve considerably easier for Owusu because she doesn't have to rely on them.

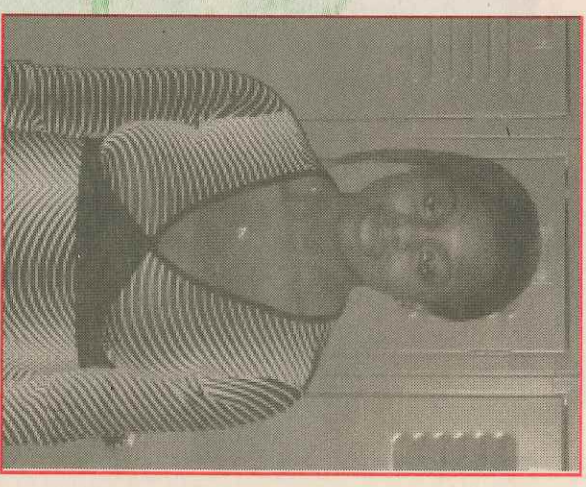
Owusu is lucky that she feels academically prepared because her schedule is loaded with challenging classes. She takes two Advanced Placement classes

as well as two honors classes, French 3 and an academy class. Owusu's academy class is in Medical Health Tech, which she took to begin the pursuit of a career in medicine, particularly gynecology.

Ghana's lack of technology, compared to the abundance of tools that make work easier here, made the learning curve easier for Owusu.

"[Med Health Tech] helps a lot," said Owusu. Similar classes likely would not be offered in Ghana because of the size and budgets of schools.

The cultural change from living in Africa to living in the US would be a difficult one to make for most people, but once again, Nana Owusu is not like most people.



Sara Kofalt

"[The move] was smooth," said Owusu. "[Coming from another country] makes you more prepared."

## From South Africa to Northern Virginia Sophomore Megan Hislop grew up inside a regular neighborhood, enclosed by 10-foot walls

By Stevie Fiorino

ETC. Editor

WS is a very culturally diverse high school. Students at WS come from all around the world.

Sophomore Megan Hislop was born and grew up in South Africa.

"I lived in South Africa until I was eight and a half. I loved living there because that's where I grew up; it's where my home is. My background is there," said Hislop.

Hislop lived in a wealthy city. Her house was surrounded by ten foot walls to keep the non-wealthy inhabitants out. Even though America has achieved equality, South Africa is still very segregated.

"We've been segregated for so long in South Africa, so everything seems normal to both the blacks and the whites, and the wealthy and the non-wealthy," said Hislop.

Moving to America and adjusting to the new culture was not that hard for Hislop. "It wasn't hard for me to adjust to the



Sara Kofalt

American ways because South Africa and America are really similar," said Hislop, "the clothing is the same. We speak different though. People say we have an English accent because South Africa was colonized by the British and the Dutch."

Hislop, however, lost her accent two

common, but they also differ in many ways. "Here [in America], everyone has houses. There [in South Africa], only people who live in the cities have houses, and as soon as you go out of the city, everyone has little huts. It's a lot more rural," said Hislop, "also, in South Africa, you see a lot more poor people on the streets."

The cuisine in South Africa is slightly different than in America.

"We ate English food like scones and tea, but we also ate American food as well," said Hislop.

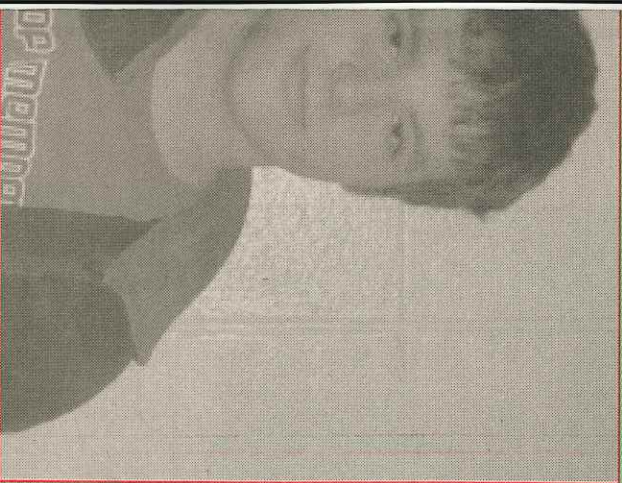
Another difference between the two countries is the education.

"If you can afford it, everyone goes to private school in South Africa," said Hislop.

Here in America, going outside to play a quick game of tag or to ride your bike is nothing to worry about. In South Africa, however, you have to be very cautious when going outside to play.

"Here [in America], kids go out in the neighborhoods and play, in South Africa you would never see that because it wasn't safe because you might get robbed," said Hislop.

Hislop has lived in America for almost six years now and she has fully adapted to the American ways. She does from time to time feel homesick and miss her family and friends, but she is beginning to adjust to the fact that America is her home now.



Sara Kofalt

American food he lives with most of the year. "The thing I miss the most about France is the cheese and bread and all the wonderful food there," said Pons.

So where would he rather live, France or the United States? Pons has pondered this, and has come to the conclusion that each country has its ups and downs.

He likes each for different reasons, and dislikes them for others. There is, however, one good thing about being a French in the United States: girls.

"Being French has helped me get more attention from girls here. They are always interested in France and always asking me questions about being French, which is definitely good," said Pons.

### France

Population: 60,656,178

Land Area: 551,500 sq km

Language: French, English

Estimated Literacy Rate: 99%

### United States of America

Population: 295,734,134

Land Area: 9,631,418 sq km

Language: English 82.1%, Spanish 10.7%, other Indo-European 3.8%, Asian and Pacific island 2.7%, other 0.7%

Estimated Literacy Rate: 97%

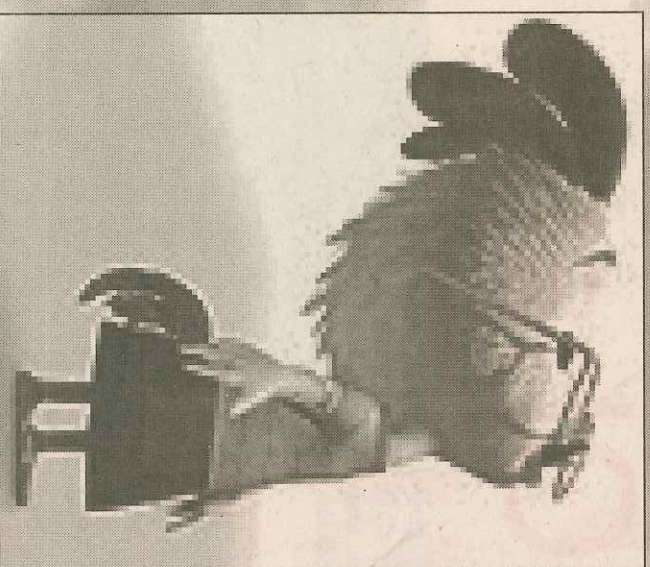
ca

4,136

12 sq km

, IsiXhosa, Afri-  
glish, Setswana,

Rate: 86.4%



The Clay Man  
Chicken Little, the famous pint-sized hero, makes his first appearance on the big screen in "Chicken Little."

## 'Chicken Little' lays rotten egg

By Caitlin Kenney  
Viewpoint Assistant

The sky is falling!!! Oh, wait, that's not a piece of the sky. It's a chunk off an alien spacecraft that visits annually to gather the finest acorns in the country.

The classic fable that has enriched many generations has taken a modern twist with the new movie "Chicken Little." Director Mark Dindal shows some creative slack with this new movie compared to his internationally beloved movie, "The Little Mermaid."

Chicken Little has a reputation in his little town of Oak Oaks as a crazy loon. He wreaks chaos and destruction by ringing the town hall bell to alert the community of danger that doesn't exist. He claims to have a piece of sky fall on top of his head. Shame and humiliation were bestowed on Chicken Little's father who never quite forgives Chicken for his actions. The town blames his lunacy on an acorn falling on his head while under the big oak tree. Who would believe a scrawny chicken was telling the truth?

The plot of the movie consists of Chicken Little's struggle to win back his father's love and to be accepted within his school and community. After he makes his father and town proud, something unthinkable happens. The sky falls yet again. This time the aliens leave behind their child. An angry army of tripods start to take over the world in search of their son, a cross between a Furby and an orange-haired Troll.

Side effects might include but are not limited to drooling in the lower jaw and slitted eyes.

In the end, Chicken Little falls in love with the Ugly Duckling, peace is restored to Oak Oaks and Chicken Little is an intergalactic hero. Viewer discretion is advised unless previewing the movie with a younger sibling. Side effects might include but are not limited to drooling in the lower jaw and slitted eyes.

## Cent to the big screen

50 Cent's autobiographical film impresses viewers

By Scott Babcock  
Senior Staff Writer

Excellent is the only word that can be used to describe 50 Cent's new movie "Get Rich or Die Tryin'."

The movie is an autobiographical depiction of the rapper's life. The movie, which 50 Cent claims is 75 percent true, is not only entertaining but moving. Nothing about this movie glorifies being a gangsta. The deep dialogue and great acting depicts a harsh and sad lifestyle. It would be hard for a viewer to leave the theater feeling unsympathetic for anyone who lives as 50 Cent once did.

The movie starts in the early '80s when 50 Cent, whose real name is Curtis Jackson, is eight.

After the death of his prostitute, drug dealer mother, young Jackson dives into a life of drugs and violence. By the time he reaches his teens he has already made a name for himself in the underground world. Aside from selling drugs, Jackson also begins to peruse his dream of rapping.

The path to becoming a star rapper was not easy for Jackson. Only after spending time in the slammer and getting shot nine times would he finally achieve his goal.

The main character of "Get Rich or Die Tryin'" is played by

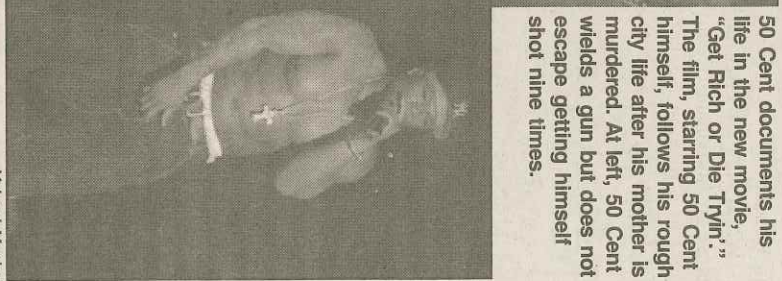
Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson himself. The rest of the cast is comprised of unknown actors. It is doubtful that they will stay anonymous for long, since their acting is above par.

Every scene in the movie is interesting and entertaining. The only scene that viewers may be able to live without depicts a prison shower fight. One naked dude is one too many to show in a movie, let alone five. But the scene was included for a reason; it is during this time that 50 Cent meets his future manager.

Naked dudes aside, "Get Rich or Die Tryin'" is an all around good movie, which is worth watching.



50 Cent, at right, goes from the street to the stage as his new movie follows his challenging rise to fame.



50 Cent documents his life in the new movie, "Get Rich or Die Tryin'." The film, starring 50 Cent himself, follows his rough city life after his mother is murdered. At left, 50 Cent wields a gun but does not escape getting himself shot nine times.

## The Kite Runner soars high

By Christina Araj  
Oracle Editor

*The Kite Runner* reveals the paradoxical turmoil and beauty that is Afghani culture. After the tragedy on September 11<sup>th</sup>, and the horror that unfolded afterward, few Americans came to realize that Arabs were just as much a victim to terrorism as they were, if not more so.

Although a fictional novel, the plot line centers around the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, followed by the take over of the extremist regime many know as the Taliban. Just as American's lives were changed forever after 9-11, so were the daily joys and lives of the Afghani people.

It is sad today to find that these extremists have tarnished the name of Islam, as well as the Arab race. Few realize that these extremists took over peoples' home.

The novel tells the story through the narration of an Afghani boy named Amir, who grew up during these life-altering times, and eventually escaped to America.

This of course, is only one of the underlying themes of the novel. The novel also reveals the true meaning of regret and redemption through the friendship of Amir and Hassan, who is his family's servant. He has nothing but unwavering loyalty and respect for him. But when it comes time to test Amir's loyalty, he fails. This single act of cowardice has drastic consequences for not only Amir, but also the entire future of Hassan and his family. Amir's tragic regret follows him into adulthood and his new life in America. Twenty years later, he gets his chance to redeem himself.

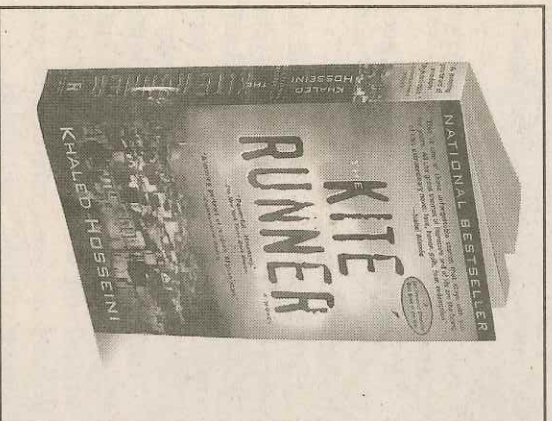
Khaled Hosseini's dynamic characters and artful imagery come together in a mosaic masterpiece of story telling. Through his crafty word choice and fluid descriptions, he successfully captures every raw feeling and sensation, providing for a true emotional roller coaster from start to finish.

The scintillating plot makes *The Kite Runner* an easy read. Underneath the plot, however, lies deeper meaning and symbolism, brought to the readers through the annual kite competitions Amir and Hassan participate in.

Once the Taliban invades, however, all the fun is over. Kite flying competitions are banned, freedom is oppressed and hope

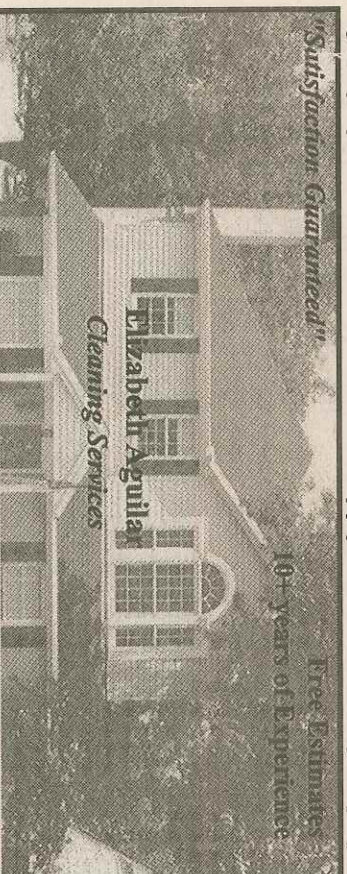
Through [Hosseini's] crafty word choice and fluid descriptions, he successfully captures every raw feeling and sensation, providing for a true emotional roller coaster...

takes a permanent hiatus. Until one day, a long time thereafter, when hope flies triumphantly once more.



Barnes and Noble

In *The Kite Runner*, author Khaled Hosseini accurately captures the lives of Afghani people.



"Satisfaction Guaranteed!"

Free Estimate  
10+ years of experience

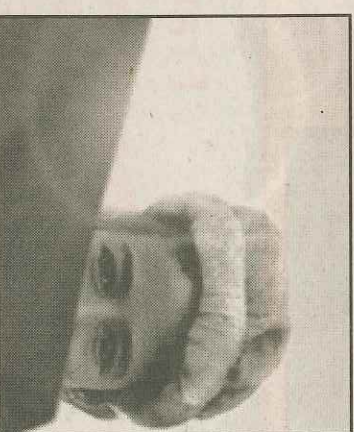
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Afghan Magazine

*The Kite Runner* follows the friendship of a boy and his servant as they struggle in Afghanistan under the Taliban. Their relationship struggles under the difficult decisions they are forced to make.

# 'Laguna Beach' lives large

By Chrissy Regelski  
Entertainment Editor

"Let it wash away my sanity," pleads Hilary Duff in the title song of MTV's "Laguna Beach." Though Duff is talking about ram, Laguna Beach has answered her call and taken it upon itself to claim the minds of millions of its obsessed viewers.

Set in none other than sunny California, "Laguna Beach" is a reality show that follows a group of high school teens through their makeouts, fall outs, dances, dates and battles. "Laguna" first focused on seniors Steven, LC Dieter, Talan, Lo and then the juniors of the first season, Kristen, Jessica, and Taylor, for the second year. Now in season three, the familiar "Laguna" faces are ready for college, so the show will concentrate on the life of LC's little sister. Fans will also have MTV's new show, "The Hills," a spin-off of Laguna that stars LC in LA, to look forward to.

"[Laguna] is] pretty real, like any high school," said fashion and marketing teacher Vera Woodson who is from "the other LB," also known as Long Beach, California, which is thirty minutes away from Laguna Beach. "The only difference is that these people live in paradise."

Woodson not only enjoys the show because it's close to home but because of her occupation here.

"I'm a fashion teacher," said Woodson. "[Laguna] is] fashionable. The episode where LC was shopping

with a big, white, leather handbag for spring proves it's all the rage."

Style is not the only appeal of "Laguna," but fans focus on the rivalry of the different characters. Seniors Carly Dodson and Jackie Altamirano even wear Hollister's "Team Kristen" T-shirts in honor of their favorite reality star.

"[Laguna] is] pretty real, like any high school. The only difference is that these people live in paradise."

—Vera Woodson, fashion and marketing teacher

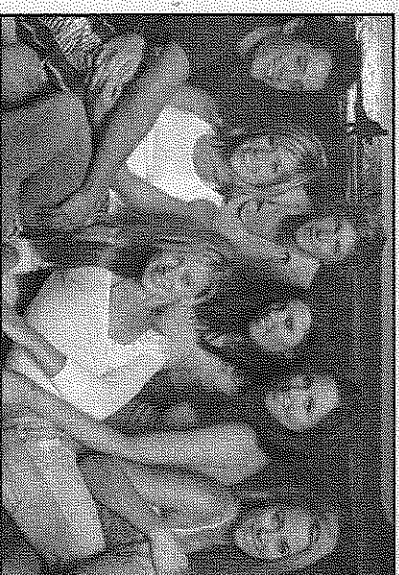
"Kristen's perfect," said Dodson. "People say she has drama but to me she is the drama of real life."

Though revered by some, Kristen is not the favorite with all "Laguna" fans.

"Kristen *thinks* she's hot," said sophomore Erika Gleason.

Some "Laguna" fans prefer the casual characters as opposed to those who attract sometimes exaggerated drama.

"Lo [is my favorite]," said Woodson. "She is the typical California girl. She is fun-loving with really no drama."



Emily Rucker

Before the season came to an end, "Laguna Beach" watchers tuned in weekly to see the "real life" CA high school drama. LC's little sister will star in the third season when former stars go to college.

In many cases, the fact that "Laguna" features real teens with real problems is what attracts viewers to the show as opposed to fictional series.

"It's not fake drama like 'The OC,'" said Gleason. "It's stuff that can actually happen."

Many controversies, however, have risen over the accusations that "Laguna" drama is fake and the lines are scripted. Many die-hard fans realize this possibility but still hope the rumors are not true.

"We like to think [Laguna] isn't scripted," said Altamirano.

No matter its uncertainties, "Laguna" has proved to be television-worthy by one simple truth:

"It's addicting," said Dodson.

## Midnight movies mean business

By Libby Bursley  
News Editor

Falling asleep is not an option.

It is not, at least, for the students who choose to go to a midnight movie. While other teens would never consider giving up their precious sleep time, just to see a movie early, some students are the exception. I was one of them.

When going to a midnight premiere, the atmosphere is what makes it special.

The people there are genuinely excited about the movie they are seeing. Spirit abounds, and some moviegoers actually express their devotion through elaborate costumes and waiting in line for hours.

Everyone is hyped up from the

anticipation, whittling away the time until 12 a.m. by snapping pictures, playing cards, or just talking animatedly.

Once the movie starts, the theater becomes completely silent. This is common courtesy at midnight movies because people are here for the movie, not just for fun. There is no incessant giggling from groups of preteen girls like

there seems to be at every other movie. There are no crying babies and no toddlers kicking the back of your seat.

All you can hear is the movie and concentrating on it helps fulfill the night.

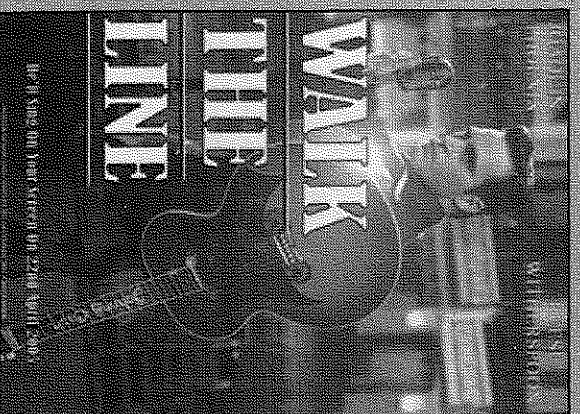
There are not that many movies out worthy of making a trip out so late,

especially on a school night. So it is

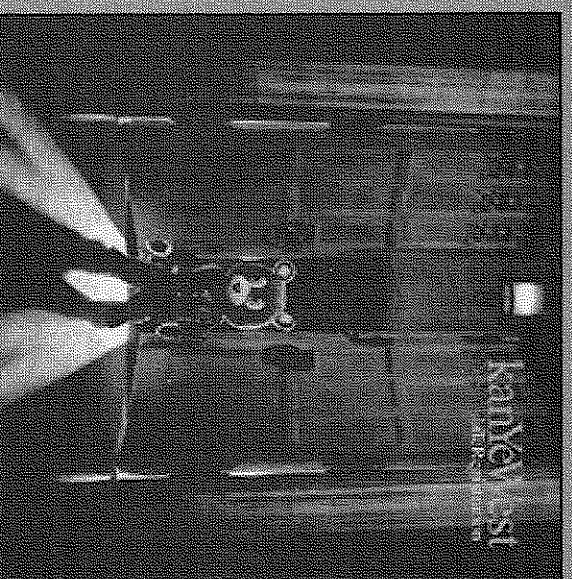
## Oracle Picks

### 'Walk the Line'

Based on the life of country music legend Johnny Cash, "Walk the Line" will capture your emotions from start to finish. The movie begins with the tragic death of Cash's older brother, whose life is cut short when Johnny is only 12. From then on, Johnny (Joaquin Phoenix) overcomes a poor relationship with his father to become the next big thing in the music industry. While on tour, Cash meets and falls in love with country singer June Carter (Reese Witherspoon), even though he is married at the time. Their heartbreaking love affair is masterfully portrayed through the incredible on screen chemistry between Phoenix and Witherspoon. "Walk the Line" blends music and love in a superior combination that is not to be missed.



J-f-design



kanyeofficial.com

### 'Late Registration'

Kanye West's sophomore album, "Late Registration," has secured a place at the top of the Billboard charts since September. His most popular track, "Goldigger," features Academy Award-winning actor and comedian Jamie Foxx, whose soulful voice provides a catchy background to West's rap. Most of the songs on "Late Registration" however, are not primarily focused on money and sex like "Goldigger." Another hit from the album, "Diamonds Are Forever," describes evils of the diamond trade in Sierra Leone. An integration of new beats and socially charged songs makes "Late Registration" the ideal follow-up to his hit debut album "College Dropout."

### A Million Little Pieces

This *New York Times* best-seller follows the life of a drug addict struggling along the path to rehabilitation. *A Million Little Pieces*, based on the life of author James Frey, is an autobiographical account of his attempt to rise above substance abuse and create a better life for himself. The harsh realities of drug addiction become painfully obvious to the reader as Frey describes his intense cravings and discouraging setbacks throughout his journey to become clean. Frey's unique honesty and writing style leaves the audience with a lasting impression of drugs and their dangerous ability to ruin lives.



lashofion

—Compiled by Jenny Taylor

## 'Joynt' satisfies burrito cravings Burrito Joynt serves delicious food at great bargains

By Lauren Adams & Leah Vanatta  
Senior Staff Writer & Photographer

Burrito Joynt, shadowed by the popular name of Chipotle, is widely unknown to the world of WS. Located on Franconia Road, it is more in Edison territory and to the outside world appears to be a hole in the wall. Yet, once you amble up the gravel drive, your stomach grumbling more than the sounds of tires pulling up alongside you, you'll be thankful you decided to stop by.

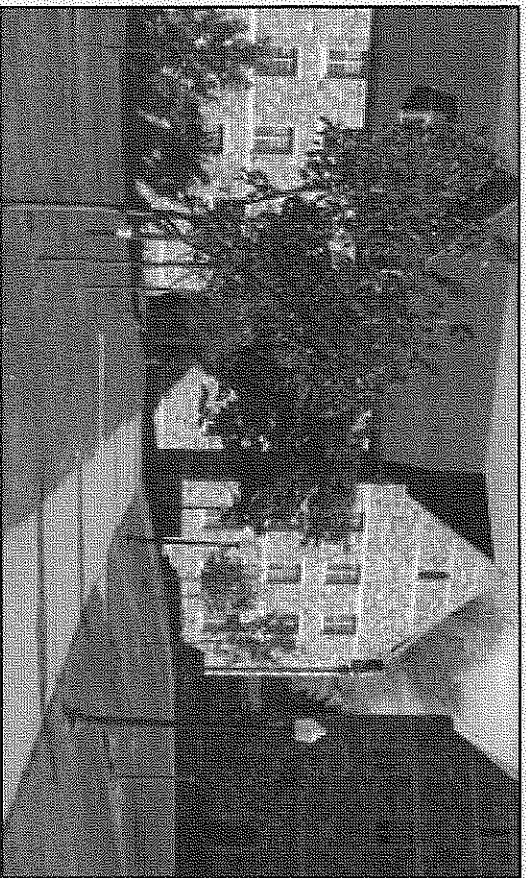
The prices between Burrito Joynt and Chipotle's burritos do not vary much, yet there are much more than just burritos to choose from for your price range at Burrito Joynt. Burrito Joynt is great, especially if you're not in the mood for a big stomach-filler, but still want to get the most for your money. Finishing a whole burrito at

Chipotle is a near impossible task, while Burrito Joynt's can be finished with a satisfying breeze.

A step above Taco Bell, yet right below Chipotle, Burrito Joynt's burritos fit comfortably in between for the average eater. Also, to add sugar to honey, Burrito Joynt generously includes free tortilla chips, and the side of nacho cheese can be purchased for under a dollar. Quite a bargain.

Don't judge a book by its cover, though, because despite the camouflaged exterior, the inside facilities are clean and festive, with salsa music filling the ears of hungry eaters. Even on a weekend, it's not very crowded, providing fast and efficient service.

If you're looking for fast food, and don't mind the easy 15 minute drive down the parkway, Burrito Joynt is well worth your time.



Wmagazine

Virginia Tech is one of the more popular colleges in the state and a place where students can visit to get a good look at college life. Some go beyond the standard college tour and experience dorm life, parties and sports games.

## College hopefuls try out the real university experience

By Beth Simson  
Business Systems Assistant

Good-bye, Boring College Tour, hello, Party Town! Students are abandoning conventional college tours to visit their older, wiser and "well-behaved" siblings. Students choose the visit to their older brothers or sisters over the traditional campus tour for a number of reasons.

"I learned about different buildings, programs, and places to go. I also went to a sorority banquet, where I saw a lot of fine looking specimens."

—Chip Horan, junior

"I chose to visit my sister at Virginia Tech because I wanted a better feeling of student life and I figured she'd know a little more about it," said junior Emily Lambert.

It is obvious that an actual student attending a college-of-choice would know more about student life than anyone else. "I found out about social events, and how students relax," said Lambert.

Junior Dani Lawson visited a friend at Longwood.

"She's taking the same classes as I want to take, and I thought it would be better

for her to show me around. Plus, it's nice to visit her," said Lawson.

There are a multitude of advantages to visiting a sibling or friend at the college one would like to attend.

Getting an inside look at student life, activities, and organizations is an important to all university aspirants.

"I was able to see what they do in their spare time, and I got to go to some classes with her," said Lawson.

Sophomore Devon Grimes visited her sister and experienced college life for the first time. "The dorms are really small. You have to learn to get along with a whole lot of new people and you have to make a lot of new friends. It's a lot like high school, but you live there and you have more freedom," she said.

Other students enjoyed some of the rich college social activities.

"There's a lot of partying, but everyone knows that. I went to a football game with my sister, and that was a lot of fun," said junior Chip Horan, who visited a sister at Virginia Tech. "I learned about different buildings, programs, and places to go. I also went to a sorority banquet, where I saw a lot of fine looking specimens."

But after it's all over, the college hopefuls leave with a better idea of what college will be like, and a renewed determination to go to college. "It was a lot of fun visiting my sister," said Horan. "I want to go to Virginia Tech more than before."

## DECA members hope to become 'wizards' in marketing

Field trips to basketball games are  
exciting and educational experiences

By Aaron Snow  
Junior Staff Writer

DECA club students are getting the chance to study marketing in the real world. By taking trips to Washington Wizards games, club members hope to gain more than just an exciting experience.

DECA, the Distributive Education Clubs of America, is a professional organization for students in the marketing class. It teaches students marketing skills and even allows them to compete for scholarships. The games that DECA students will attend were set up by the organization's state supervisor, Mr. Kozlowski; he contacts the Wizards and opens it up to all DECA students.

First year fashion marketing teacher Vera Woodson sponsors the DECA club. Woodson goes to the Wizards games with her students and recognizes the educational value of these trips.

"The Wizards game is an opportunity for students to study marketing in the sports field," said Woodson.

Last year, in one of the two games DECA attended, the club received a basketball autographed by the players. In addition, students get to listen to a guest speaker, have the chance to meet one of the players and even participate in a possible scavenger hunt. These trips give students a hands on experience that can only be achieved outside of the classroom.

WS DECA is not the only DECA club in attendance, however. Over 2,000 other DECA students also attend the games from other schools. This opportunity is not solely a WS affair.

Though students recognize the educational value of the games, they have a great time as well.

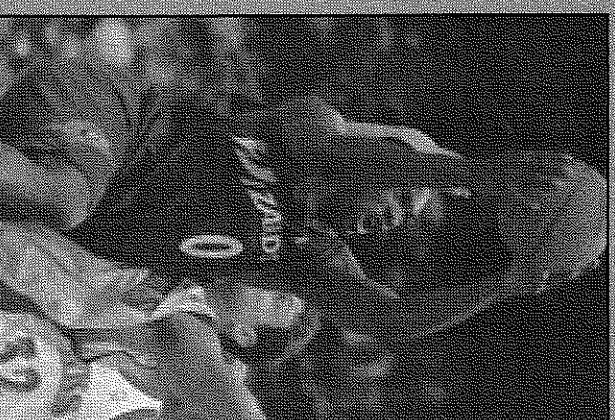
"I really enjoyed the ride over there and getting to watch the game," said junior Jocy Ibanez.

"You learn a lot by looking around the stadium and seeing what kind of marketing tools are being used."

—Joey Ibanez, junior

are looking to earn a high place this season. This all makes for a great opportunity for students in the DECA club.

"You learn a lot by looking around the stadium and seeing what kind of marketing tools are being used," said Ibanez.



ds161

DECA members get a chance to see basketball superstars like Gilbert Arenas up close and in real life.



# Stick to Afghan Kabob

*Afghan Kabob gives its guests great cuisine, a friendly environment and warm hospitality.*

**By Linnette Lam**  
*Senior Staff Writer*

Situated behind the Mobil gas station down Rolling Road in West Springfield Plaza, Afghan Kabob Restaurant's warm service and delicious food are tucked away from plain sight, as if they were treasures waiting to be discovered.

The restaurant's exterior holds secret the elegant, culture-rich and inviting atmosphere nestled inside. Promptly greeted by a welcoming host and mood-setting music, my guest and I were seated at a nicely-set table. A golden curtain adorned each window in the restaurant, the walls displayed murals of Afghan landscapes and all around the restaurant various golden ornaments contributed to an ambience that is atypical in the Springfield area.

Our waiter, sophomore Himanshu Kakkar, suggested that we try the most popular dishes served at Afghan Kabob.

One of the restaurant's top appetizers, Sambosay Goshire, a fried pastry stuffed with ground beef, chick peas and herbs, is comparable to a pterogi or a fried dumpling. The potato-like insides have a melt-in-your-mouth effect upon first bite. Boofawne, another top appetizer, is a clay-oven baked pastry stuffed with scallion, potato and herbs. With a crisp outside over a soft and hot filling, in addition to the sides of yogurt sauce and a spicy chutney, this first wave of food was a tasty prelude to a wonderful dinner. Amid the list of soups and salads on the menu, we were served Aush, a noodle and

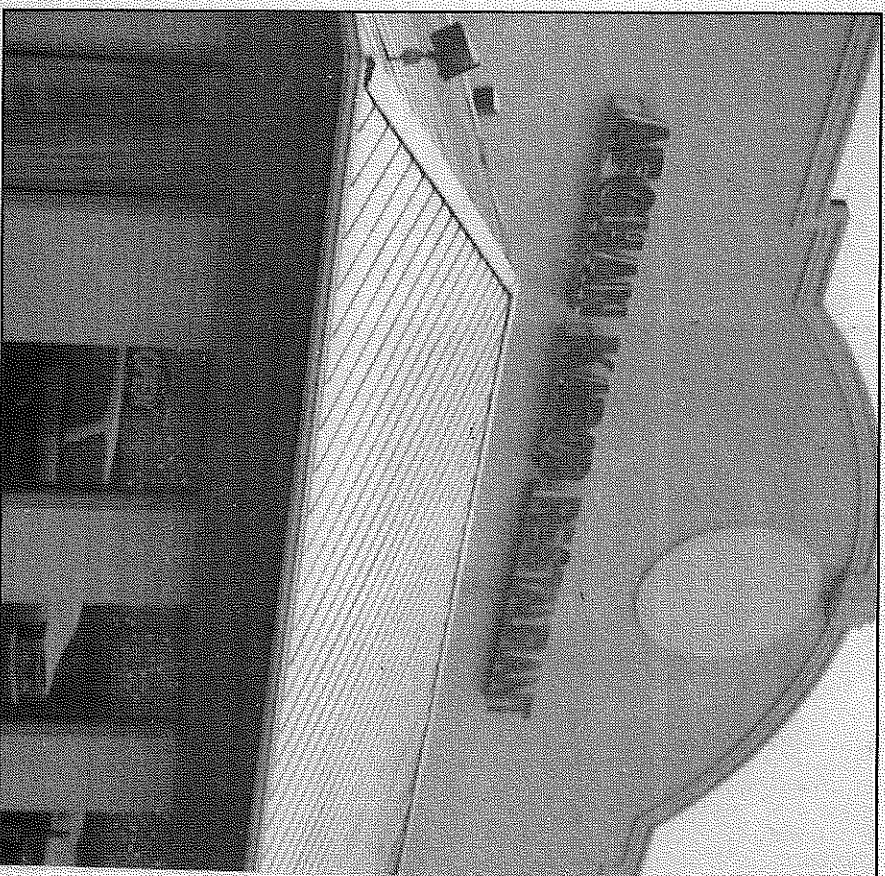
vegetable soup with spicy yogurt and ground beef. The mixture with tomato puree, peas and carrots was a regular noodle soup with a spicy twist.

Afghan Kabob's top dishes are proudly displayed in the restaurant menu in vivid photographs. The depiction of Qaabih Patau, a generous heap of seasoned rice, raisins and sweetened carrots atop tender pieces of lamb, looked and tasted like a unique dish. The mix of sweetness, meat and rice may be unsettling to some who do not expect sweets until dessert, but surprisingly, the different components nicely complemented each other.

Faithful to its name, the restaurant's Superdish is one of its most popular

**Families, friends and people on dates all occupied the dining room, relishing the warm and friendly environment in a covert, special getaway from the norm in Springfield.**

entrees. With three skewers of chicken, lamb and shami kabobs atop Chalan (white rice), a portion of Qaabih Patau and Qurna (a beef-stew-like meat sauce with lamb), it exceeded my cravings for a classic kabob dish. Of course, the ever-essential bread, Nan, accompanied the entree, topping off the savory dish with its warm, baked perfection.



*Erica Wilkening*  
Afghan Kabob is not a typical restaurant you would find in Springfield. It's unique cuisine, paired with it's wonderful service, makes it a place of its own.

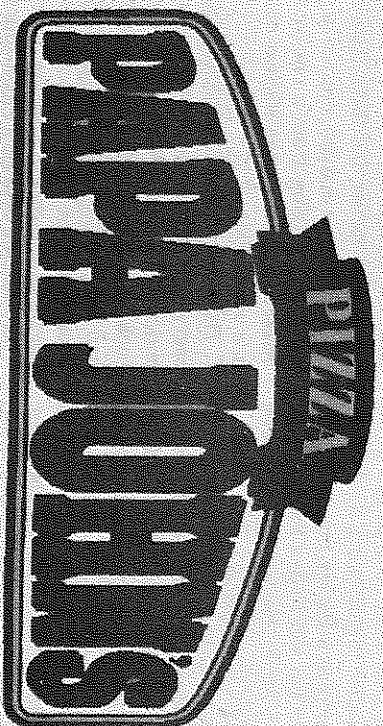
No memorable dinner can conclude without a satisfying dessert, and Afghan Kabob delivered in this area as well.

Finnee, a cornstarch pudding with pistachios, was light in flavor and could serve as a palate cleanser, but I will never forget the Baqlawa, a crispy pastry soaked in sweet syrup, filled with walnuts and topped with ground pistachios.

Throughout the entire meal, Afghan Kabob owner Hashim Refahi visited each table in the restaurant, offering warm welcomes and sparking conversations with his customers. Families, friends and people on dates all occupied the dining

room, relishing the warm and friendly environment in a covert, special getaway from the norm in Springfield.

Along the walls, amid the many pictures of congressmen who proudly endorse Afghan Kabob, the restaurant's mantra welcomes and bids farewell to each person who walks through its doors. It says, "Food is essential for life, therefore it must be good." Afghan Kabob's performance is true to that ever-valid statement. The restaurant has tasty food and also good hospitality. Those that find their way into its unassuming doors down Rolling Road are bound to agree.



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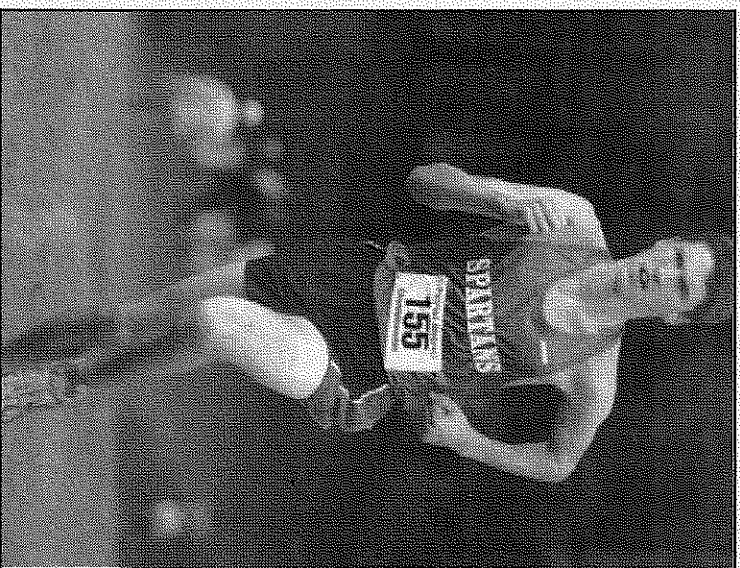
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*LifeTouch*  
Junior cross country standout Mike Spooner won both Patriot District and Northern Region titles.

## Spooner strides into first place

By Andreaa Maxwell

*Inside Editor*

Junior Mike Spooner captured the Patriot District and the Northern Region title for the cross country team this season, capping off an all-around great year for the boys team.

"Our goal almost every year is to qualify for the state meet and on the boys side we did it. In the state meet we finished seventh, which was pretty good," said social studies teacher and cross country coach Vic Kelbaugh. By many of its members, the team has been described as having enormous potential. This fall, the boys team was able to use their talent and secured a victory at the Patriot District Championships in October. The district win allowed the team to advance to the Northern Region and even the state meet.

The work of individuals has undeniably paid off. This year the team was led by Spooner. With a time of 14 minutes 58 seconds Spooner was crowned the Patriot District champion and won the Northern Region with a time of 15 minutes 5 seconds.

"I think the season went all right. Winning districts was definitely the highlight. Each of the team wins were an accomplishment," said Spooner.



*Milliesia*  
The boys team took seventh place in the VA State meet.

## O'Keefe keeps up tradition

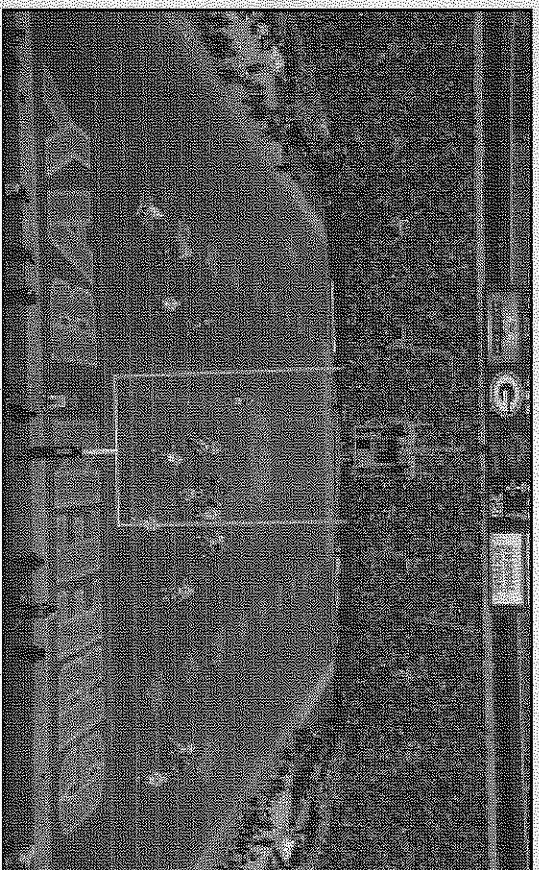
By Tim O'Keefe

*Sports Columnist*

During my first pilgrimage to Lambeau Field in Green Bay, Wisconsin, I did not know what to expect. Only eight years old, I had heard my father go on and on about the legendary Lombardi power sweep, about Bart Starr's quarterback sneak in the Ice Bowl and about the times his father, a salesman, would drop him off at Green Bay Packers training camp for an entire day in August to get a close look at his football heroes.

As we drove down Lombardi Avenue, I pressed my nose against the window of our family's minivan. Then I saw it, a gargantuan, mystical, forest green shrine to football tradition.

Tradition focuses on the positive, respects the past and enlightens the present. The best traditions are like



*Stadiums of the NFL*  
Lambeau Field is home to the Green Bay Packers of Wisconsin and holds 72,000 fans.

heirlooms, cherished gifts passed down from generation to generation. It's why my grandfather was a Packer fan, my father is a Packer fan and I am a Packer fan. I am sure my future son or daughter will be a Packer fan, too.

That first trip to training camp began what has become a yearly ritual for my father, my young brother Kenan, and me. More importantly, I started to realize the importance of tradition.

On a hot August day nearly 10 years ago, my dad parked in the Lambeau lot. We walked to metal bleachers that hovered over a freshly-cut practice field of

Kentucky bluegrass. It was, weeks before the season opener, but there were about 3,000 fans there that day, dressed in green and gold, ranging from a one-year-old infant in a stroller to an 80-year-old man in a wheelchair.

They roared at every nice catch and every exquisite tackle but they also took notice of obscure details, like a running back making his block on a blitz pickup. I had just arrived, and was barely old enough to know my multiplication tables, but I was already catching the fever.

My fingers clawed a chain-link fence separating the fans from the players when

## Sports clips bestowed upon media marketing classes

By Josh Lipman

*Managing Editor*

The sports clips on the Friday announcements will play to a new tune with the change from the fall to winter season.

Bill Gibson's media marketing class will take the clips over from seniors Danny Kiros and Tom Barth. Media marketing, which includes the clips in its curriculum, will also edit the footage for the spring sports season.

Kiros and Barth used Charlie Scudder's engineering classes to put the weekly video montages together throughout the fall sports season.

"I [enjoyed] being recognized for something other than just school," said Kiros. "I'm kind of sad leaving it now."

The Friday announcements are allotted 10 minutes total for normal announcements, student-produced commercials and other items such as Spartan profiles. The sports video fills whatever time the rest of the productions leave behind.

Since the boys Varsity football team taped every one of its games, that team received more coverage.

"If the boys basketball team gives us video we'll do clips from it. The video has to be provided by the team and then we edit it."

Only school-sanctioned sports get featured because there is a limited amount of time for sports so unofficial WS teams who play sports like ice hockey do not usually get coverage.

"If we give them [video] and they don't take it I'd be pretty upset," said senior hockey player Robbie Phillips.

Both the ice hockey and rugby teams may still get time in the spotlight. Senior Brian Decol, who is working on the new clips, plans on including video from both teams.

Barth and Kiros edited the clips from footage taped and donated by coaches and parents on a computer program called Edius.

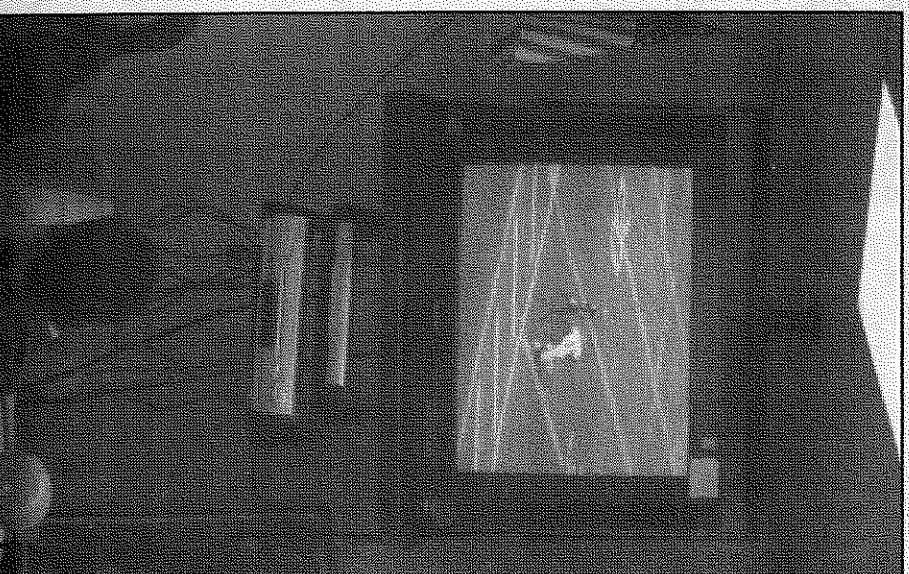
"It's the same thing people use [to edit] in the movies," said Kiros.

After editing the video, they overlaid handpicked music from CDs.

"[We used] whatever fits with the sport," said Kiros. "For example we used something mellow for golf."

Kiros wants Gibson's media marketing class to be creative when editing the sports footage.

"Use every resource you can find," said Kiros.



*Sara Kotari*  
Changes are coming to the Friday morning sports clips this winter, when marketing classes will take over.

# Girls gone sporty

By Cam Rushton  
Sports Section Editor

Three weeks ago, the Miami Dolphins pulled off an upset against the Oakland Raiders, winning 33-21. The next day, no one here was excited about the win, because the next day was a tedious, mundane Monday.

No one, except for junior Amy Zinicola. She displayed support for her favorite team by dressing head to toe in the Dolphin's team colors of teal and orange, and let everyone at school know what team she roots for on Sunday afternoons.

College and professional football do not normally attract a large female crowd, especially fans as devoted as Zinicola. When most people think about dedicated football fans, they think of the stereotypical overweight male slouched in his Lay-Z Boy on Sunday afternoons with refreshments by his side and the television clicker not far out of reach. A

change has occurred to that image in the past few years, though, as football, along with other sports, has attempted to reach a wider audience. According to NFL.com, almost 45 percent of their audience consists of females, a 66-percent increase since the 1998-1999 NFL season.

"I just like the competition between both teams, and especially the hard hits when they [the players] tackle," said junior Alex Flammia, an intense fan of the New England Patriots.

Apart from high school football games, there is the band, cheerleaders, and enthusiastic fans and students.

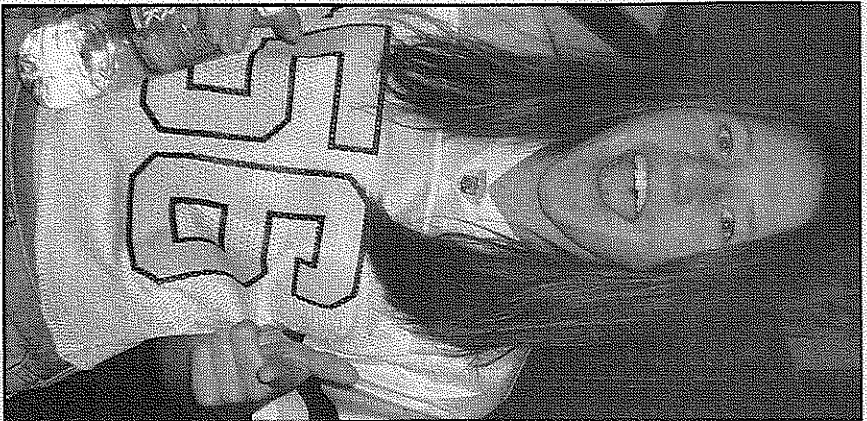
The entertainment offered by football of all sorts has attracted a wider variety of fans everywhere. Aside from the hard

hitting on defense and the exhilarating plays on offense, pro football has amusing commercials during the Super Bowl and entertainment during half time. Even more personal is college football, with the camaraderie of alumni and students at the universities. Plus, apart from high school football games, there is the band, cheerleaders, and enthusiastic fans and students.

"The band is *the* best part about football games," said junior Bryan Bolik, who plays the saxophone in the Marching Spartan band.

With the growing attraction toward the NFL (and all football for that matter), some girls have even considered trying to play. Meggie Goddish, now a senior in college, started as a kicker for the Varsity football team during her junior and senior years.

Then there are girls like Flammia: "For a split second, I considered playing linebacker," Flammia said, "but then I was like 'Nah!'"



Senior Allison Silver shows off her football jersey and her sporty spirit. Football is becoming so popular with girls that some have even started playing the sport.

# Sports knock out stress for students

## Sports provide therapy for hectic lifestyles

By Colin Embrey

Sports Columnist

For sports-loving students, taking a break can be intense.

When arriving at the house after a long and strenuous day at school, there is nothing a student wants more than to stop and relax.

Homework and extracurricular clubs add to the daily stress, and students look for any way to make it easier to get through the week.

For me, weekdays are stocked with homework and club meetings. So when I get home, the only way to stay sane is to do something related to sports.

Whether it is watching "Sportscenter," going to soccer practice or going to a football game, it is always an escape from working nonstop.

Everyone has a different way of escaping the hectic workload of school, and mine is sports. School is a major burden and sports are what keep us happy.

As weird as it sounds, sports are therapeutic for me. Not the Sleep Number Posture-pedic kind, but the kind

that slows things down and makes everything okay.

I have this weird condition that converts all the intensity of sports like boxing and football into a soothing, calming and relaxing blend of free time.

Everyone has a different way of escaping the hectic workload of school, and mine is sports.

Even when I go from one to the other, both sports and schoolwork go hand in hand. When I write papers and read, sports tie in somehow.

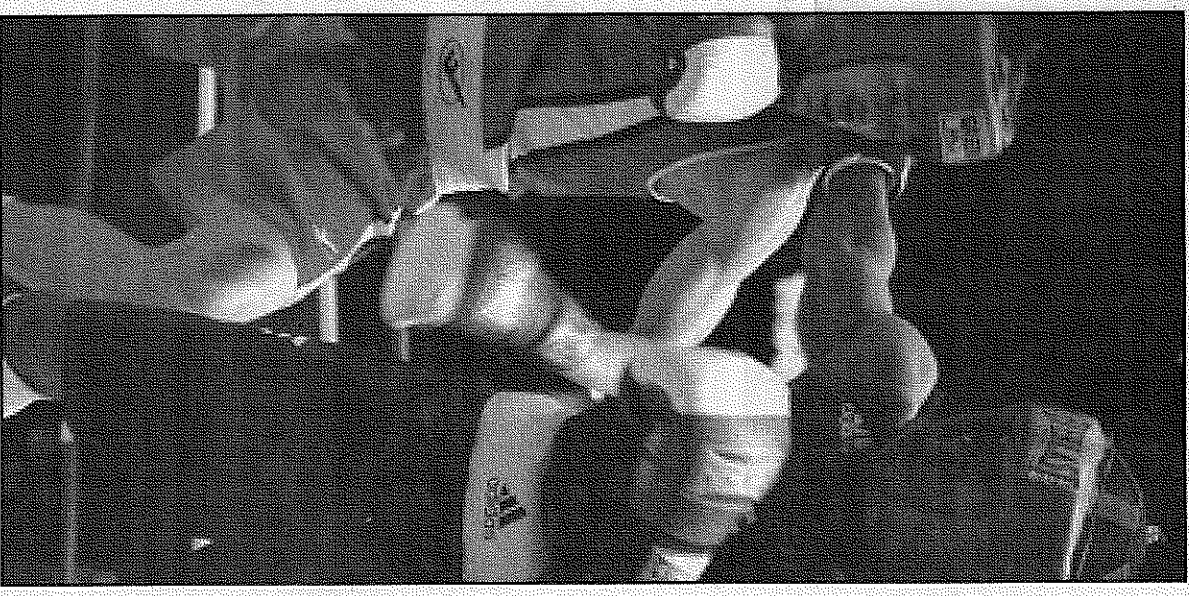
Not to say I spend time calculating the equations for the velocity of a soccer ball kicked at 16 meters from the goal, but just to show its easier to learn when you have something to apply it to.

## Colin the Shots

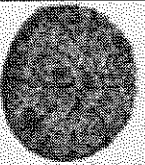
For almost everyone, school is a major burden and sports are what keep us happy. I know that when I come home after school, I normally would rather be doing something sports related than sitting around reading. So I would probably go for a jog or throw a football with a few friends before getting down to my homework. That's why the school sports seasons are so much fun, not only because they keep us busy, but also because they take our mind off of school.

In the typical situation, I will take an insanely hard test and after I finish I will have in mind that teachers like to go crazy with homework on the weekends, so I will look to my Redskins, my Hokies, my Spartans and I'll say: "Save me." That does it for me every time.

For some, intense contact sports like boxing provide an outlet from hectic daily routines. Sports can provide a break from everyday problems for both homework-loaded students and professional boxers.



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# Weight room poses dangerous risks

By Colin Embry  
Sports Columnist

No Horseplay: one of the lessons learned in elementary school P.E. that could save a lot of frustration.

When junior Daniel Pedersen walked in to the weight room for a routine workout, he did not think he would end up unable to walk out.

Among other athletes working to better themselves for their respective sports, he hoped to get done what he came in to do: get stronger. In the end, an error in judgement on two sides led to a broken leg and a controversial regulation.

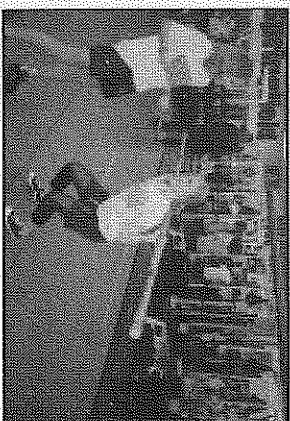
A former student and wrestler at WS,

Josh Hanna was working out alongside Pedersen, and they started to joke around. Hanna challenged Pedersen, saying that he could pin him in 10 seconds.

When Pedersen disagreed, the roughhousing ensued. Minutes later Pedersen was on the floor with his leg broken in two places.

As a safety measure to prevent unfortunate injuries like Pedersen's, coaches are now required to be in the weight room with their players. Student athletes who go to the weight room have varying opinions about the rule.

"What they've done makes it hard for kids that aren't in a sport to lift and use the school facilities," said senior Graham Shellenberger. For those



Freshmen girls getting involved in the weightlifting scene after school.

students training for sports outside of school, coaches are unable to be in the room, so they will have to find another way to work out.

Other students think having coaches in the room would help.

"It's probably the appropriate course of action," said Pedersen. "Sometimes it does cut down on the rowdiness in general." When coaches are there, they work with students and supervise to make sure they are doing exercises the right way.



Football players lift weights while balancing on a ball to target both arm and abdominal strength.

Football players lift weights while balancing on a ball to target both arm and abdominal strength.

still go maintain the workouts they were following before.

"I guess I understood," said Woolf. "It's just really inconvenient."

# Basketball does double duty

Players sacrificed mornings and afternoons for tryouts

By Zohra Alnoor  
Junior Staff Writer

Excruciating suicides, difficult plays and monotonous foul shots were just some of the obstacles of the winter basketball tryouts.

For five days in November, players would have to go to morning tryouts from 6 a.m. to 7 a.m. as well as after-school tryouts from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

"It's exhausting," said junior Kevin Kilday, who made the varsity team. "I'm always asleep in class." The two-a-days, along with difficult drills and lots of running affected schoolwork and kept some players from their homework as well.

"There's a lot of running, we're overplayed," said Kilday.

But hardwork was only part of the equation.

"My favorite moments [after making the team] are the bus rides because we get to act like guys," said sophomore Kenan O'Keefe who made the junior

varsity team. Having eight new players on the varsity basketball team might affect how the team does this year, but some players think otherwise.

"I think we're a much better team overall this year. We have better players and we can play multiple positions," said junior Tony Hall who plays both center and forward.

The four seniors on varsity look forward to their last year on the team.

"I'm probably going to miss it but I'll still play basketball," said Brandon Carter.

The varsity boys lost their first game of the season against Fairfax High School, with a score of 54-57.

"I was surprised because I thought that they'd go into overtime," said freshman Lindsay Smith.

Despite their loss, the boys still have confidence in having a good season and they plan to persevere.

"There are a lot of nervous players," said Carter. "But we have potential to be a good team."



Leah Vanatta

Egger basketball players run through shooting drills in the auxiliary gym during the five days of tryouts that started on November 14.

# To the 265 Seniors who volunteered on my campaign this fall:

Amanda Albert	Brad Bunch	Alia Dah	HeeJo Han	Angela Kim	Jessi Mellinger	Karin Omlie	Jan Trejty
Laura Adams	Chayton Bender	Matt Dehner	Kristin Harlan	Kevon Kim	Elise Moore	Vicky Ream	Haley Triple
Rachel Albe	Ken Byrwick	John Ditts	Ariella Harshbain	Wendie Kilo	Joe Moran	Will Richardson	Pavel Tronchits
Ken Alford	Nicole Calderwood	Carina Dillon	James Harrell	Kyung Min Kim	Nancy Morgan	Vincent Rivers	Justin Tori
Ashley Amerson	Calli Dorman	Jodie Dahan	Ashli Hanchett	William Helle	Cliff Morgan	Acquiline Rivers	Jan Trumbore
Jacy Amerson	Laura Campbell	Andrew Dohler	Christi Hansen	Shawn Hansen	Jess Mulgrew	Julie Robert	Jason Tross
Amara Ayla	Emily Carlson	Chris Douglas	Cheryl Dornan	Joel Kueper	Jon Murray	Will Roubal	Rachel Trivedi
Scott Babcock	Brandon Carter	Raquel Drinnon	Josh D'Souza	James Harney	Mike Murray	Macie Rogiers	Chae Urganov
Joel Baker	Eryn Cartwright	Nathan Curver	Zamara Dean	Christina Hopken	Chelsea Madal	Nancy Ross	Randi Urbanak
Eric Belding	Nathan Curver	Dave Eemple	Avery Ekstrand	Ashley Hoppe	Carrie Mackay	Lauren Rybinski	Lauren VanWert
Marcus Belling	Kim Case	Arsha Ehsani	James Gao	Stephanie Hughes	Bessam Nafel	Jessamine Sobhani	Rachel Vanortem
Chris Barnes	Arsha Caseman	Stefania Caser	Stephanie Fuchsberg	Christina Fernandez	Megan O'Connell	Kate Solinger	Reagan Voss
Eric Barth	David Chang	Andrew Chang	Lee Pfeiler	Lee Pfeiler	Suzie O'Neil	Kyle Schmitz	Chelsea Walsh
Danielle Bean	David Chang	Andrew Chang	Christina Fernandez	Christina Fernandez	Blair O'Neil	Meredith Scleretta	Tina Wajda
Ashley Becker	David Chang	Andrew Chang	Christina Fernandez	Christina Fernandez	Blair O'Neil	Sean Scott	Jahn-Mark Walker
Tommy Beckman	David Chang	Andrew Chang	Christina Fernandez	Christina Fernandez	Blair O'Neil	Sean Scott	Jahn-Mark Walker
Andrew Berglund	David Chang	Andrew Chang	Christina Fernandez	Christina Fernandez	Blair O'Neil	Sean Scott	Jahn-Mark Walker
Matt Bilis	David Chang	Andrew Chang	Christina Fernandez	Christina Fernandez	Blair O'Neil	Sean Scott	Jahn-Mark Walker
Seranna Bishop	David Chang	Andrew Chang	Christina Fernandez	Christina Fernandez	Blair O'Neil	Sean Scott	Jahn-Mark Walker
Kristin Blomberg	David Chang	Andrew Chang	Christina Fernandez	Christina Fernandez	Blair O'Neil	Sean Scott	Jahn-Mark Walker
Jennifer Bodhoki	David Chang	Andrew Chang	Christina Fernandez	Christina Fernandez	Blair O'Neil	Sean Scott	Jahn-Mark Walker
Joseph Boe	David Chang	Andrew Chang	Christina Fernandez	Christina Fernandez	Blair O'Neil	Sean Scott	Jahn-Mark Walker
Philip Boole	David Chang	Andrew Chang	Christina Fernandez	Christina Fernandez	Blair O'Neil	Sean Scott	Jahn-Mark Walker
Yvesse Bouarri	David Chang	Andrew Chang	Christina Fernandez	Christina Fernandez	Blair O'Neil	Sean Scott	Jahn-Mark Walker
Bryant Boyle	David Chang	Andrew Chang	Christina Fernandez	Christina Fernandez	Blair O'Neil	Sean Scott	Jahn-Mark Walker
Jason Brand	David Chang	Andrew Chang	Christina Fernandez	Christina Fernandez	Blair O'Neil	Sean Scott	Jahn-Mark Walker
Mikhael Branson	David Chang	Andrew Chang	Christina Fernandez	Christina Fernandez	Blair O'Neil	Sean Scott	Jahn-Mark Walker
Rubin Brant, 4th	David Chang	Andrew Chang	Christina Fernandez	Christina Fernandez	Blair O'Neil	Sean Scott	Jahn-Mark Walker
Justin Brooks	David Chang	Andrew Chang	Christina Fernandez	Christina Fernandez	Blair O'Neil	Sean Scott	Jahn-Mark Walker
Max Brooks	David Chang	Andrew Chang	Christina Fernandez	Christina Fernandez	Blair O'Neil	Sean Scott	Jahn-Mark Walker
Kristen Brown	David Chang	Andrew Chang	Christina Fernandez	Christina Fernandez	Blair O'Neil	Sean Scott	Jahn-Mark Walker
Adam Brundeman	David Chang	Andrew Chang	Christina Fernandez	Christina Fernandez	Blair O'Neil	Sean Scott	Jahn-Mark Walker
Liz Buckleiser	David Chang	Andrew Chang	Christina Fernandez	Christina Fernandez	Blair O'Neil	Sean Scott	Jahn-Mark Walker

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Delegate Dave Albo

WSHS Class of 1980

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# HOLIDAY FUN PAGE

## Top Ten Holiday Gifts of 2005

1. iMac G5
2. iPod Nano
3. Xbox 360
4. TiVo
5. Digital camera
6. Concert tickets
7. Gift certificate
8. Homemade cookies
9. Mixed CD
10. Homemade card

### Classic Gingerbread Cutouts

#### Servings: 24

**Ingredients:** 1/2 cup butter (softened), 1/2 cup brown sugar, 2/3 cup molasses, 2 eggs, 4 cups all-purpose flour, 1/2 teaspoon baking soda, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1/2 teaspoon ground all spice, 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves, 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon, 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger, 1 pound confectioners' sugar, 1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar, and 3 egg whites

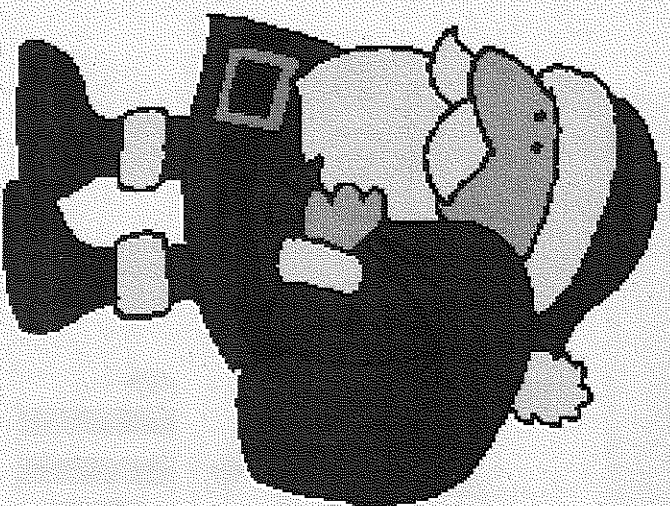
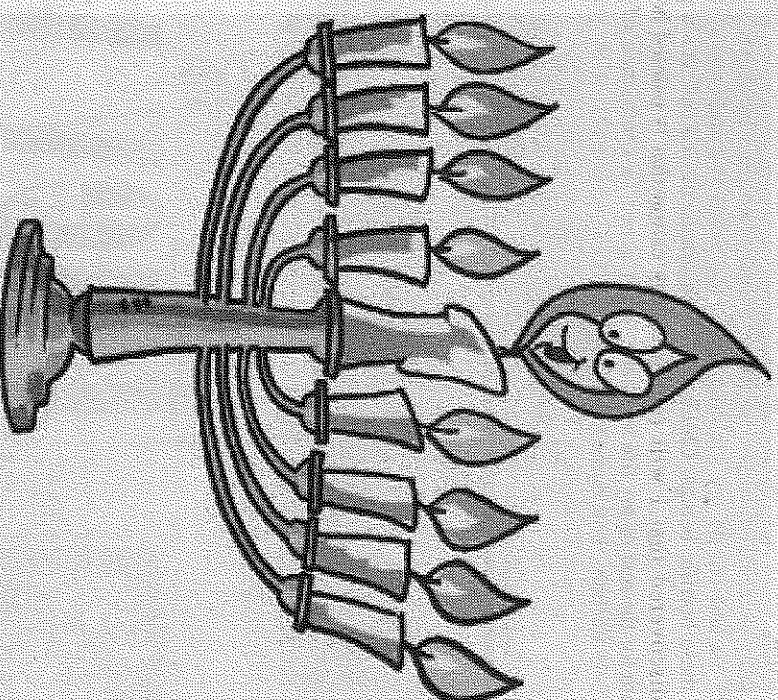
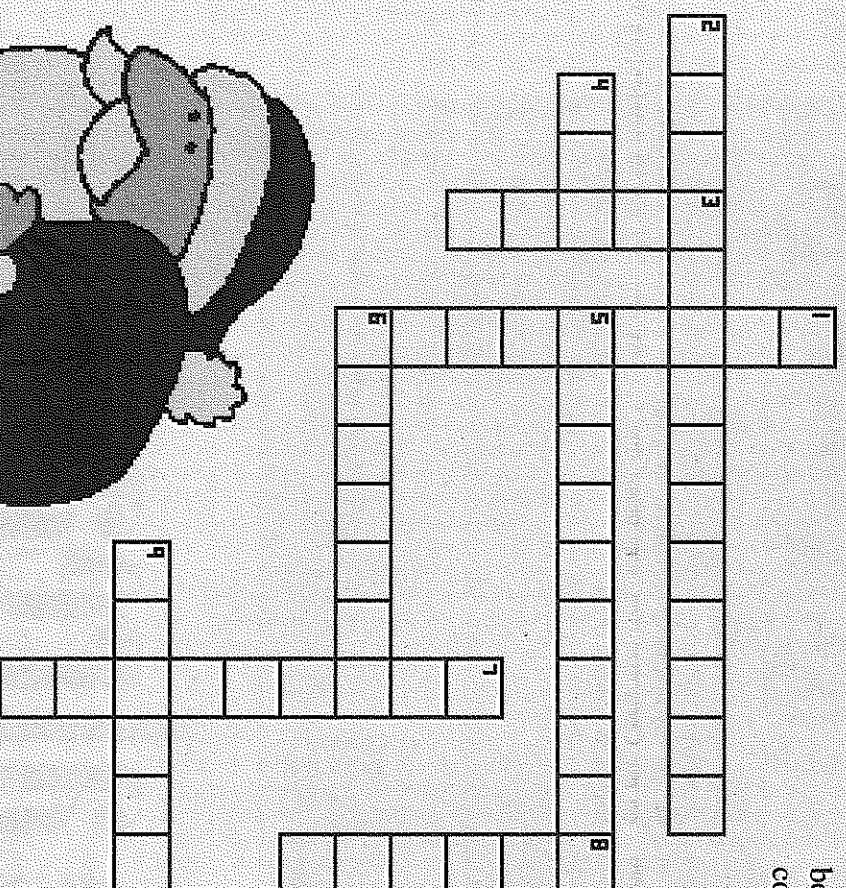
**Directions:** 1) Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).

2) In a large bowl, cream together the butter and brown sugar until smooth. Stir in the molasses and eggs. Combine 1 1/2 cups of the flour, baking soda, salt, all spice, cloves, cinnamon, and ginger; beat into the molasses mixture. Gradually stir in the remaining flour by hand to form a stiff dough.

3) Divide dough into 2 pieces. On a lightly floured surface, roll out dough to 1/8 inch thickness. Cut into desired shapes using cookie cutters. Place cookies 1 inch apart onto ungreased cookie sheets.

4) Bake for 8 to 10 minutes in the preheated oven. Allow cookies to cool on baking sheet for 5 minutes before removing to a wire rack to cool completely.

5) In a medium bowl, sift together confectioners' sugar and cream of tartar. Blend in egg whites. Using an electric mixer on high speed, beat for about 5 minutes, or until mixture is thick and stiff. Keep covered with a moist cloth until ready to frost cookies.



### ACROSS

2. A cute little cookie-man made out of flour, sugar, butter and ginger.
4. One of Santa's little helpers.
5. The personification of the spirit of Christmas, usually represented as a jolly fat old man with a white beard and a red suit, who brings gifts to good children on Christmas Eve.
6. A figure of a person made from packed snow, usually formed by piling large snowballs on top

of each other.

9. Usually the coldest season of the year, occurring between Autumn and Spring.

### DOWN

1. A Christian feast commemorating the birth of Jesus on December 25th.

3. Something mysterious that is given to you from someone you love and most of the time kept under your Christmas tree until Christmas morning.

7. Something that decorates or adorns your Christmas tree. Usually a painted glass ball.

8. A flying vehicle belonging to St. Nick which holds the people of the world's gifts and is drawn by magical flying reindeer and led by the famous Rudolph.

—Compiled by **Zohra Alnoor & Laura Byland**

Stevie's Story

# Turkey Tales

By Stevie Florino  
ETC Editor

Thanksgiving was going to be perfect. The house was decorated and the table was festively set for 12. I got up at 6 a.m. to help my mom prepare the stuffing and a very large turkey.

Around 10 a.m., I mentioned to my mom that the house didn't have that wonderful roasted turkey aroma. She told me to check the oven. I did and the oven was cold! It wasn't working. What now? I looked at my mom and I thought she was going to cry. My relatives

were all coming in just three hours and we had to have that turkey ready.

We have a very large microwave and it was our only hope. We put the bird in the microwave, slammed the door shut and prayed for the best.

After our family arrived, we took the turkey out and the whole top was sunken in and the skin was very dark and crusty. I made sure that nobody could come into the kitchen and see this grotesque lump.

My mom carved the turkey and set out platters of sliced meat. With a silent prayer we served the dinner. Everybody remarked how tasty the turkey was, moist and delicious. We were very thankful! It was a huge success!

Then it was time to try the corn pudding. My mother had found a new corn pudding recipe and was excited to try it. Luckily, she had made it the night before the oven broke. She gave me and all the cousins a healthy spoonful on our plates. We all went to the "cousin table" in the back room, and that is where the trouble started. There are no words to describe how awful that pudding was. So the main topic of conversation at the "cousin table" was how to get rid of this disgusting

soggy mess of pudding. Some time during the meal, my sister, who should have known better, discovered that the pudding could be flung out of the open window with a spoon right from the dinner table. We all armed our spoons and started flinging.

After dinner, one of the little cousins let it slip to my mom where all that corn pudding really went. Needless to say, we all had cleanup duty!



This is not my family's actual turkey, but this is what it basically looked like, just worse.  
*Martina Bolton*

## Poor Liz's Almanac

By Liz Weidenhold  
Oracle Editor

It's happened again. Children. They are back.

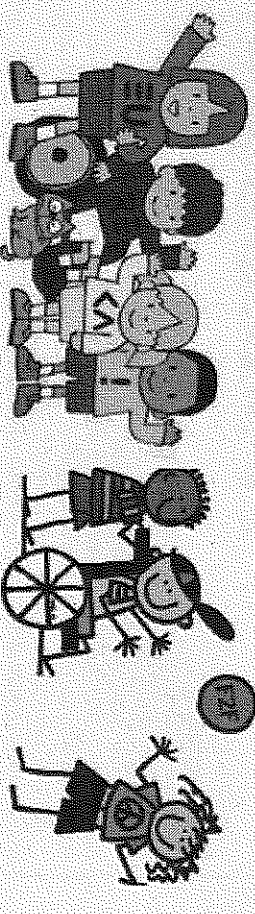
This past year I have successfully avoided making eye contact with them, talking to them or even acknowledging their existence. This was the first time I was able to stick to my New Year's resolution, so it has been a pretty successful year. But then the holiday season hit and out of my nightmares came these horrific beings. Children.

I discovered that I will remain celibate for the rest of my life as I held a 7-week-old baby boy named Ben in my arms for a good 30 seconds. It cried, obviously and I cried, obviously. The parents yelled at me, however, as they

tried to remove it from my half-nelson. Apparently, corporeal punishment isn't used until later in life.

But I also discovered another horrific fact: I used to be a child. As I was hanging up Christmas ornaments I came across an ornament I thought my dog had regurgitated. As I was about to yell at Coco, I looked closer, and written in tiny letters was "Liz, 1991." The dog had not regurgitated it; I had made that with my bare hands as a child and claimed it was an ornament. It's not. It's a piece of an egg carton that is painted hot pink and hot green (a semblance of Christmas colors, perhaps?) with gold glitter basically dumped on it.

I was horrified. My mom wouldn't let me throw it away because to her it was


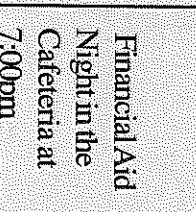


These kids might look sweet and innocent, but they are actually evil urchin's. "beautiful" and I could not for the life of me get my dog to eat it. There, hanging on my Christmas tree, was proof that I had been one of them.

Another thing I discovered is that this Christmas, I am actually celebrating the birth of a child. "It is the night of our dear Savior's birth," says the song. "O

*"You do not merely want to be considered just the best of the best. You want to be considered the only ones who do what you do."*

~Jerry Garcia

DECEMBER / JANUARY		Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<b>12</b>	National Bingo Day!	Financial Aid Night in the Cafeteria at 7:00pm	The anniversary of George Washington's death in 1766	National Bill of Rights day	Swim meet against Lee at Lee District Park at 6:00pm	Quad Meet for the indoor track team 7:30am	
	<b>13</b>	Girls Varsity Gymnastics meet at Robinson at 7:00pm.	Boys basketball game at home against West Potomac at 7:30pm	Humbug Day!	International Language Day!	Winter Vacation begins!	Christmas Eve!	
	<b>14</b>	Tell Somebody They're Doing a Good Job Day!	Merry Christmas and Hannukkah begins at sundown	National Whiner's Day!	Friends of Indoor Track Invitational at PG County 9:00am	Most Dubious News Stories of the Year Day	Boys Basketball Tournament at Chantilly, time TBA	
	<b>15</b>	Happy New Year!	Patriot District Championship @ Lake Braddock at 7:00pm	School is back in session	Gymnastics meet against West Potomac, Lake Braddock and Annandale at WS at 7:00pm	National Oatmeal Day!	The Junior Orange Bowl Tournament for the Lady Spartans Basketball team in FL	
	<b>16</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>05/06</b>	

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*"Keith Has Been Serving Northern Virginia for Over 40 Years"*

# KEITH'S

ONE OF THE STATE'S LARGEST & BEST FULL SERVICE DRIVING SCHOOLS

## 250-3333

★ ★ ★ Sign-up EARLY ★ ★ ★

More information at [keithdrivingschool.net](http://keithdrivingschool.net)

### 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.

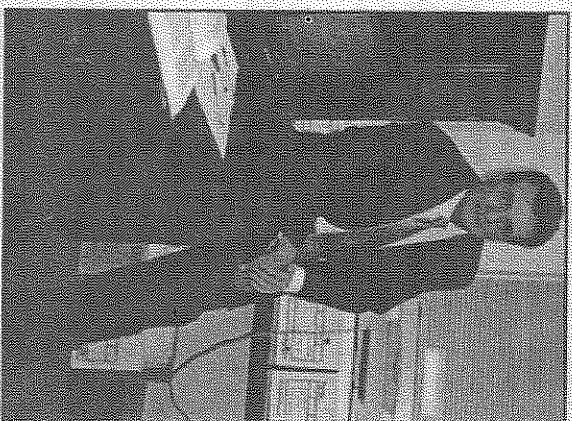
These laws allow us to eliminate some driver education establishments that are not concerned about administering the proper driver education nor the safety of your child. This also makes the driver education industry better. I have always done everything I can to educate the public, the students and 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 1/2 of one percent. That is not a stat that warrants parking lot instruction. Virginia eliminated parallel parking in 1971 to concentrate on more important areas because parallel parking is not a life threatening maneuver. Though we teach parallel parking, we don't concentrate on it.

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



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

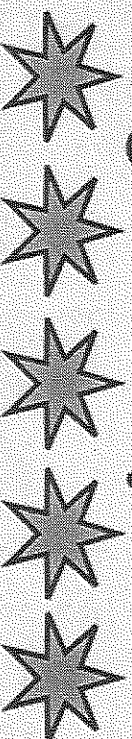
Senator O'Brien and myself fought for six years for the bill along with the documentation of the mileage. Nobody really wanted that, but Senator O'Brien had the wisdom to get it passed in a really good bill.

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

We at Keith's are all about teaching driving. Give us a call early. We have some of the best teenage drivers in the country in Virginia and the death toll for first year drivers has been steadily dropping since Keith's Driving School opened. There is proof of that. I wish we could teach everybody, but we can't. I wish I could be the guardian who rides around with them after they get their license but I can't.

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

### Safe Driving is Everyone's Business



#### Driver Improvement 5 Good Points

- VA STATE LIC #15030000304 - BONDED - INSURED
- VIRGINIA TEEN LAW REQUIRES
- \* 7 - 50 minute periods of Behind-the-Wheel
- \* 7 - 50 minute periods of observation
- \* **MUST BE GIVEN ON 7 SEPARATE DAYS**
- \* Classroom requirements are 36 - 50 minute periods

**WE  
DO  
IT  
RIGHT!**

**WE OBEY  
VA STATE  
DRIVER ED  
LAWS**

Keith's also offers the 5 Point Driver Improvement Program