



RAACLE

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West Springfield High School 6100 Rolling Road Springfield, Virginia 22152

Percocco go-goes

History teacher makes history on his trip in China for Professional Ambassador Program

By Lauren Adams Senior Staff Writer

On his first trip to China, history teacher James Percocco made history himself.

Invited by the People to People Professional Ambassador Program, he was one of 40 educators to participate; the first time teachers ever were included in the program.

Percocco led a delegation of American History educators to Beijing in December. The group of more than 300 included history teachers, public historians and university professors.

The idea behind this conference is to allow American educators and Chinese educators to share thoughts, because the Chinese hold learning at a high standard.

"When a teacher leaves, they are asked to ring a great Chinese bell, to symbolize the diffusion of knowledge".

With a packed schedule, Percocco managed to speak to high school students, while still sightseeing, which included visiting the Great Wall of China.

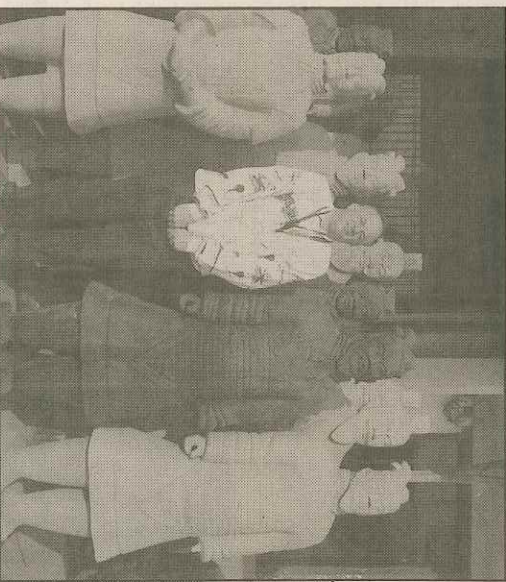
For two days he attended conferences and visited Beijing Normal University, and then visited Peking Academy, a magnet public high school. Percocco found the school to have a more traditional environment, observing the students unique uniforms resembling track outfits.

He found that even though "international travel broadens your perspectives" it's always interesting to find a school that resembles the same trends as American schools.

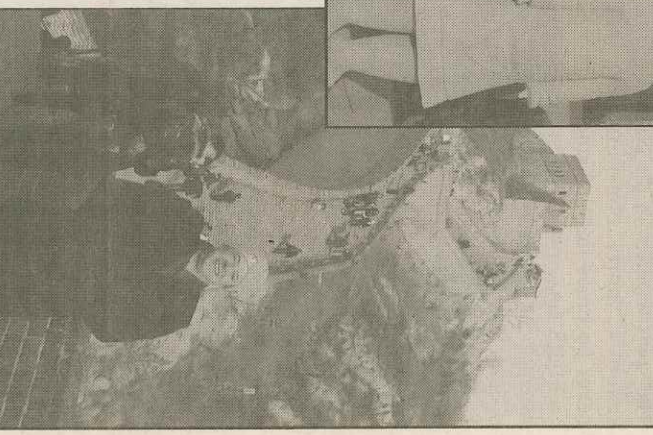
Percocco also spoke at Beijing #80, a high school which resembled more of the American high school, with promotional videos welcoming visitors. Each student is required to learn English, and were very eager to try it out on Percocco. Students also spoke of their knowledge of President Abraham Lincoln, holding great reverence for him and his world unification movements.

"Out of respect, I gave the principal of Peking a coffee mug of the Gettysburg Address, and he immediately recognized it was Lincoln."

China is not the first international place



(Above): Percocco makes friends with Terracotta warrior replicas outside a Chinese gift shop.



(Below): Percocco was able to make time for sight-seeing despite his busy schedule. The Great Wall of China was one of the sights he was able to visit.

The writing on the wall Vandalism discovered on multiple murals

By Bethel Habte News Section Assistant

The name, written with a sharpie marker, blended in well with the others. Though, it didn't seem right that "Willy Nelson" was one of the artists of the Journalism mural in the English hall.

English/Journalism teacher Brooke Nelson could be seen attempting to erase this vandalism, one of several recent incidents, with a tube of white-out.

"They didn't even spell 'Willy' right!," said Nelson.

Down the hall and around the corner, the famed country singer graced the history hall with another "autograph".

Cathleen Boivin, history teacher and head of the History Honor Society, believes that the vandalism was petty but was

happy that it was not obscene or offensive.

"I'm not sure what statement they were making but teenagers will be teenagers," she said.

"I'm not sure what statement they were making but teenagers will be teenagers."

—Cathleen Boivin, history teacher

The Japanese garden also endured some roughing up when a lantern post was "knocked into several pieces," according to Safety and Security Specialist Mike Ukele.

"It may have happened during the day, but after talking to several teachers, we now think it may have been at night," said

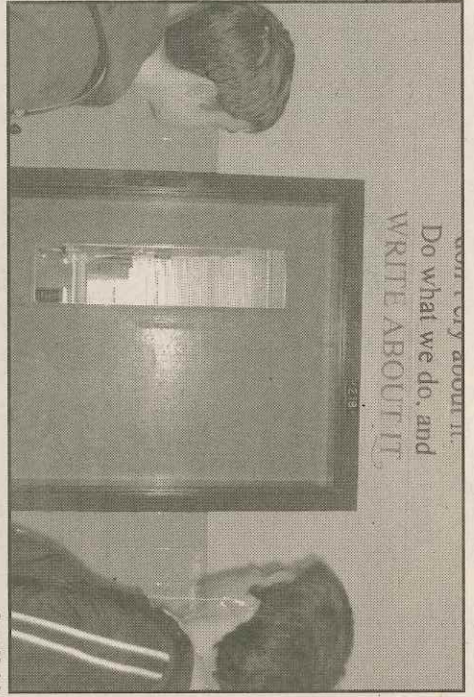
Ukele. There have been no suspects or witnesses.

"But as far as damage, it was kind of easy to fix," said Ukele.

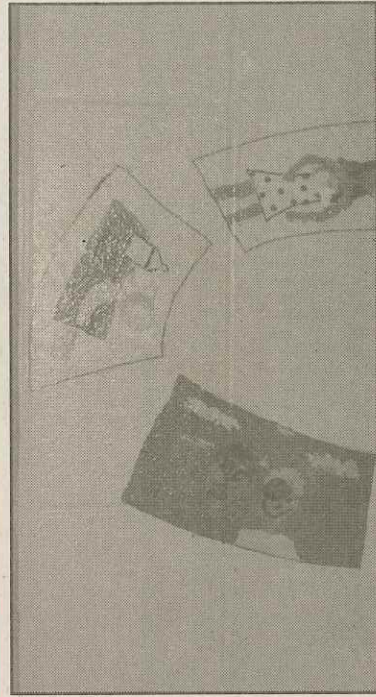
Unlike other courtyards in the school, the Japanese Garden can be approached from the outside and is more vulnerable to vandalism. But Ukele says that there haven't been many cases of vandalism at WS this year. There have, however, been talks of installing outside cameras at school. Hayfield and Annadale feature these surveillance devices, but the money to install them came from a portion of their budget after renovation.

Ukele says that cameras are expensive to put up and maintain and will not be installed anytime soon.

"They'll install them when I'm too old to chase kids around," Ukele said.



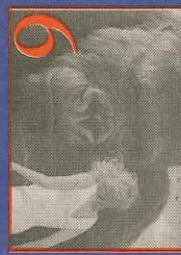
Juniors Kyle Mosher and Brent Wickline notice the blotted out graffiti above the journalism room door. "Willy Nelson" signatures and drawings have been spotted around WS.



Students give to Locks of Love.



Seniors share their defining moments.



King Kong conquers heart of viewers.

Drop the puck, FCPS

School system should sanction ice hockey

The WS ice hockey team has not scored an official goal this season. According to Spartansports.org, they don't exist. At least the website is honest.

An FCPS School Board decision leaves the "unofficial" hockey team in a ridiculous and unfair limbo between a club and a sport. They can wear the Spartan logo, but they are not officially sanctioned. Every hit, poke check, powerplay, faceoff, breakaway, assist, great save and penalty shot the team gets is "unofficial." A goal happens enough to be featured on the announcements, but not enough so that team members can letter for their efforts. In effect, ice hockey is a ghost of WS. The sport wanders in the corners of our school's sports consciousness but never becomes fully opaque.

FCPS has made WS into a fair-weather fan, cheating the team when it does well and ignoring it when it doesn't. In fact, WS is worse than a fair-weather fan because at least the fickle fan

occasionally pays the price of admission.

Whether the school board will admit it or not, hockey is a great game and deserves the full respect of being an officially sanctioned school sport. Hockey is a speed game full of skating,

Editorial

passing, shooting and, perhaps most importantly, bone-crushing checks.

For those unfamiliar with the game, ice hockey can be likened to a mix of football's force, basketball's quickness and soccer's free flowing ball (in this case puck) possession.

A player's shot can ring off the post in one moment and in the next moment an opposing player can be streaking down the ice with the rebound on a breakaway.

"[FCPS] will not recognize hockey because of Virginia High School League regulations and legal liability," said Director of Student Activities Mike Dobson.

FCPS' argument comes down to two factors: safety and money. FCPS does not believe ice hockey is safe. The school system does believe, however, that football is perfectly safe. In ice hockey, fully equipped players body check each other to separate a player from the puck. In football, players without as much equipment as ice hockey players tackle each other until the player carrying the ball is tackled or that player's team scores.

Football carries just as much of an injury risk as ice hockey, if not more. The only other violence in ice hockey is fights, which only happen with any sort of frequency in the professional levels of the sport.

The second factor is money. FCPS does not want to pay for coaches, athletic trainers, equipment and ice time.



WS Senior hockey player Robbie Phillips goes for the puck.

Carmo Pictures

Yet Fairfax County is one of the richest counties in the entire country. There are poorer counties all over the country which officially sanction ice hockey. The school system would like people to believe that it can afford to sanction every sport from football to lacrosse, except for ice hockey.

Despite the school board's argument, it is an insult to the team and to hockey in general for hockey not to be an officially sanctioned school sport. Ice hockey is every bit as much a game as football. It is time for all of FCPS to recognize ice hockey. It is time for all of FCPS to drop the puck.

Letter to the Editors

Dear Editors,

I am writing to comment on the article that appeared in the December 14, 2005 issue of The Oracle entitled "Subs don't Qualify." The title of the Viewpoint piece suggested that the author would be sharing her frustrations about Substitute Teachers. While that subject comprised the majority of the piece, nearly as much space was devoted to the writer's perception that the absent teacher was unfair. That secondary line of thought was in my opinion a thinly veiled and unfair attack on that Chemistry teacher.

I would of course prefer that every teacher is in his or her classroom every day. Life is not like that. There are times when teachers must be out either for a day or two or for a longer period of time. The teacher in question was absent for three of the classes on which the author based her article. The teacher had personally taught or at a minimum introduced all of the material that was covered on the referenced test. Other

Chemistry teachers came into her classes in her absence in order to give students the opportunity to seek clarification and ask questions. The test was announced to the classes well ahead of time on the course syllabus and was referenced on Blackboard. In addition, the other Chemistry teachers made themselves available to these students for help after school. After her return, she reviewed the material before the test and told the students that if they were not happy with the results, they could stay after school to get extra help and then retake it. Only a few of the students took advantage of that opportunity.

Yes, it would have been better if the teacher had been able to be in school on those days. She could not be there. In her absence she did everything she could to ensure that her students had the chance to work with other teachers, gave them plenty of notice about the test and an opportunity to retake it and improve their grades. This teacher did not "bomb" her students. She did everything she could under the circumstances to ensure that they had a good opportunity to learn the material initially, relearn it if necessary and improve their grades. That is as it should be and very, very fair.

The author's view point on the substitute question in general is valid and could be the subject of much more discussion. Suffice it to say that it is much easier to find substitute teachers who are well qualified in their fields for long term jobs than for short term teacher absences.

I commend that staff of The Oracle for the quality of their work in general. While I recognize that the piece I have responded to was a View Point item, it was in my opinion unfair. Thus, I have responded with my View Point. As always, I look forward to the next issue of The Oracle.

David Smith, Principal



West Springfield High School
6100 Rolling Road
Springfield, VA 22152
(703) 913-3952

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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Christmas Stephenson-Style

Senior distributes unique t-shirts as holiday gifts



Senior Craig Stephenson displays the shirt he designed with his friend, Junior Caroline Rabil. The shirts were given as Christmas presents to certain lucky students who are good friends of Stephenson.

Sean Hogan

By Sean Hogan
Features Editor

The choice between an XBOX 360 with several games and 75 T-shirts with a hand-drawn face on them would be an easy one for just about any student. The choice was an easy one for senior Craig Stephenson as well, but he didn't choose the XBOX.

Stephenson's shirts cost about \$460 out of his own pocket, raised over the summer by lifeguarding. Instead of giving his friends Christmas presents, he gave them himself on a piece of clothing.

"It's a very Craig thing to do," said senior Julie Robert.

The shirts came in six "natural" colors: red, light green, light blue, tan, gray and "safety green."

"Safety green is natural if you live inside the sun," said Stephenson. While red may not seem natural, the same logic about the safety green shirts could be made with red, a natural color inside a volcano.

During the rush made by others to grab a shirt, Stephenson made sure to save a couple for himself.

"I have three of them. That way I can wear one every day and people won't look at me weird," said Stephenson.

While they may not look at him weird for wearing the same shirt every day, he's still wearing a shirt with his own hand-drawing on it.

"I think they're really stylish," said junior Daniel Pedersen. "Craig is really handsome."

Identifying the bearded face was very easy for some students, but difficult for others.

"I don't think it looks like him that much," said junior Lauren Stephenson, Craig's sister.

Craig Stephenson handed the shirts out in the hallways before school during the final week before Winter Break. Only a small percentage of students got a shirt. Some regret not trying harder to acquire one.

"I wish I had one," said Pedersen.

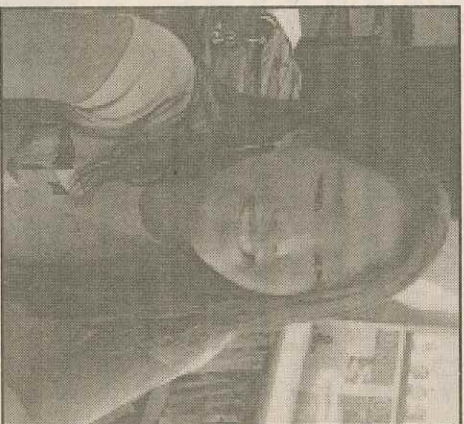
A Cut above

the rest

By Sunnie Ko
Inside Story Editor

"Let it be, let it be, let it be, let it be, whisper words of wisdom, let it be."

The words to a favorite Beatles song rang on around me as I watched 10 inches



Allison Campbell

Junior Sunnie Ko is featured before and after her donation of 10 inches of hair to Locks of Love. Locks of Love was started in 1997 by Madonna Coffman.

of my hair fall to the floor. What took around three years to grow was gone in a matter of a few rough snips.

"Did you cry?" My friends asked that a lot.

No, I didn't cry. Why would I? I knew what I was getting myself into, I knew I



Sean Hogan

looked awful with short hair from a previous experience (my uncle took me to get my hair cut when I was five—I told him I wanted to look like sonic the hedgehog, huge mistake). But it didn't matter. I wanted to do this, and I did. My hair would grow back fast.

My "struggle" to cut my hair is nothing. Plus, some kid somewhere will

now have some incredibly good-looking hair.

Impulsive, yes, is a good word to describe my drastic change, but I did have some logic in cutting my hair. I've always wanted to donate my hair to Locks of Love, a non-profit organization that takes donated hair and makes it into wigs for financially disadvantaged children with long-term illnesses. So one snow day, I thought "What better time than now?"

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your sexual health matters
make informed decisions—know the facts

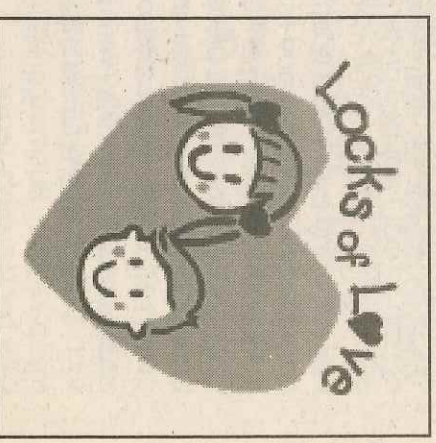


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Locks of Love

Donating my hair was a decision I definitely do not regret. Some child somewhere is fighting a difficult battle; one many of us will never understand. My "struggle" to cut my hair is nothing. Plus, some kid somewhere now has some incredibly good-looking hair.

With senior pictures a good seven months away as well as my disinterest in impressing older guys, I made the final decision. With one of my best friends, Kathy, alongside me, I traveled to The Kindest Cut Spa Salon, where they would cut my hair for free if I donated a minimum of 10 inches. They told me it was going to be short; very short, and almost persuaded me to wait awhile longer. But my mind was made up, and within a matter of seconds it was done.

Locks of Love was founded in 1997 by Madonna Coffman, a retired cardiac nurse. When Coffman was in her early 20s, she developed a disease which later caused the loss of her hair. Dealing with her hair loss was hard, but it was even harder to watch her four-year-old daughter, who inherited the disease, fight the same struggle. Coffman devoted herself to helping children like her own. Locks of Love is now one of the most well-known charity foundations.

Donating my hair was a decision I definitely do not regret. Some child somewhere is fighting a difficult battle; one many of us will never understand. My "struggle" to cut my hair is nothing. Plus, some kid somewhere now has some incredibly good-looking hair.

Opportunities & Voices:

Personal narratives of higher-education hopefuls

The college essay: a test of wit, or a reason to wamble. Some dread it. Some embrace it. Some cry their eyes out and find inspiration in the reflection of their tears. Whatever technique they follow, the college essay is a defining moment in a senior's life. These pieces, voluntarily submitted at the recommendation of proud English teachers, are a reflection of each author's personality and ambition. The college essay might be a requirement, but in practice, it can also be an art.

"I won't reveal how many points I scored, only that they can be counted on two hands and at a mere five-foot one, I was the shortest girl on every team for which I played."

I hate long walks on the beach, candlelight dinners, and puppies. Just because I can't put the above descriptions on an online dating ad doesn't make me any less of an interesting person. Well, not everyone finds me interesting, but then again, not everyone likes peanut butter, either.

So what is intriguing enough to talk about? I'm afraid of spiders. I had a bad experience leading to my hatred of Coca-Cola, and baked beans make me sick. While those all make for amusing anecdotes, they don't paint a clear picture of who I am as a person. At seventeen, it is difficult to really know one's self, so while I can't entirely explain who I am, years of misadventures have shown me who I am not. I am by no means a girly-girl. This trait was first seen at four, when my mother forced me to model frilly blue dresses on a stage in front of what seemed like hundreds of strangers. After seeing a rather embarrassing video of myself modeling, I refused to participate in that humiliating ritual again. But my mother triumphed when I was seven by signing me up for cheerleading. I enjoyed it at first, as all I had to do was memorize rhymes and jump around. However, as the years passed, I found that I no longer fit in with the other girls; so after four years of wearing the same red and white jumper and flailing cheap plastic matching pom-poms, I quit. If I am not girly, then surely I must be athletic. At least, that's what I thought, until I had my dad sign me up for basketball. I spent the next four years dashing back and forth along the court, merely creating the illusion that I was playing. I won't reveal how many points I scored, only that they can be counted on two hands and at a mere five-foot one. I was the shortest girl on every team for which I played. Suffice it to say, I was not the most valuable player. When basketball failed, I finally accepted that I was never made for sports- or any activity that involves running, jumping, swimming, and/or sweating.

All through elementary school, however, I loved reading and writing. I often dreamed of becoming a writer or a poet. One author in particular, Edgar Allen Poe, had a lasting effect on me. His stories and poems, while dark, contain meanings that I never understood or appreciated until I was a teenager. One story that affected me, The Masque of the Red Death, holds the underlying message that, try as we may to hide from reality, it will always find us. That is what I had been trying to do as a kid; I was hiding from the fact that I wasn't athletic or girly by doing what everyone else my age did. When I reached the intimidating halls of high school, I stopped pretending and did what I wanted to do. I signed up to be a staff member of the school literary magazine and even had a poem published. With the help of classes like AP Language and creative writing, I once again found the love that had lain dormant for so long. While writing this essay about who I am not, pieces of who I am started to shine through. I can now say that I am someone who freaks out over getting a C on my report card, owns The Complete Works of Shakespeare and actually reads it, collects classic horror books, such as Dracula and Eranckenstein, and writes sixty-page stories in my spare time. But most of all, I can say that I am me.

—Rachel Vetterlein, senior

"I have one such mirror whose name is September."

When I peer into a mirror, it reflects only my physical appearance. It does not reflect, my emotions, nor does it reveal my character. Nothing is seen but the surface. But if mirrors could display one's character instead of one's build, I wonder how many people would run like hell.

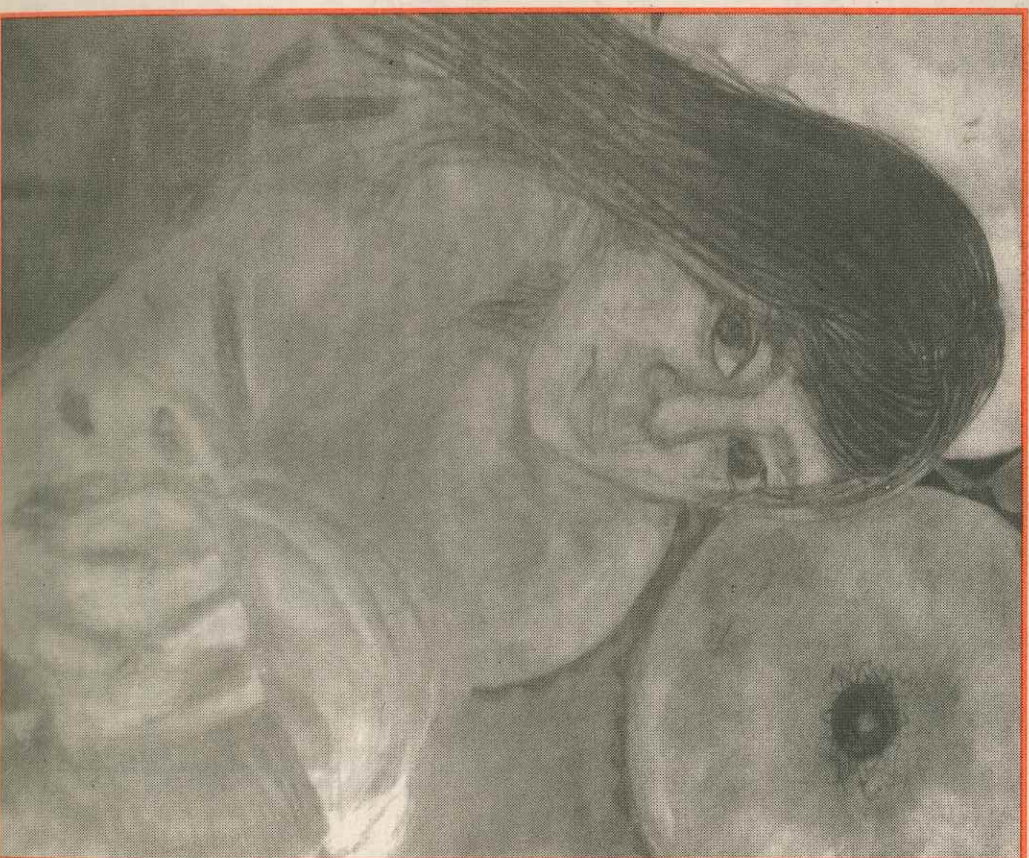
I have one such mirror whose name is September. If I talk to her for two hours, she'll parrot back to me everything that I am, without diluting me with stories of herself. When I first met her, I thought, "Surely, she is God."

By piercing my most viscous guises, she managed to shape my spirit like an expert glass-blower. Yet I cannot say that she was the nice person one might think she must be. Conversationally, she was convincingly cordial; it was in those long exchanges of hide-and-seek, analyzing my words for my flaws and my strengths, that she showed me my reflection. And it wasn't one of those fun-house mirrors or cloudy glass mirrors that show just enough to imagine what one wants to see. It was cut crystal, so beautiful that anyone's reflection appeared tainted and lackluster in comparison.

In that precious stone, I saw every scar I'd ever hidden. I saw every pair of dagger eyes I ever gave. Every grin in every award I never appreciated. Every memory I chose to forget. Through her, I saw myself as I had never been seen before. She shattered my past and drove me to direct my life into a new path, which she provided for me, free of charge: Taoist principles, passion, feeling over reason. But above everything was art. There, I told her she would be the death of me. She replied, "No. I will be the birth of you."

If I were to point my finger at any single person for who I have become, it would undoubtedly be her. But then I would only be pointing at myself.

—Jason Buchanan, senior



—Ana Lojanica, senior

“Yes, I am curious about windmills and wooden shoes....”

When asked the question, “Where are you from?” my most common response is a deep breath before listing the countries from which I proudly hail. Dutch, Cherokee Indian, Irish, Canadian, and American are titles I often give myself; I am not, however, defined by these regions alone.

Yes, I am curious about windmills and wooden shoes, passionate about the color green, respectful of the earth and its natural beauty, fascinated by the phrase “ay,” and magnificently proud of the red, white, and blue. However, I’m not limited to those alone. I long to smell fresh curry, taste Belgian chocolates and feel the hot Arabian sun beat down onto a sea of white sand. My tenacity takes me places and introduces me to new experiences that lend me new titles and further broaden my knowledge.

My trip to Amsterdam, so magnificent at the time, can now be equated to an evening two doors down. My neighbor, whose husband is an active member of the foreign service, has travelled all over the world, bringing back with her beautiful Greek art, recipes from Lebanon, and friends who have travelled to America to share in her stories. The evening, aside from being intellectually stimulating, opened my eyes to what is waiting to be discovered.

One culture does not define me, nor can a culture simply be defined; it’s to be discovered, sought after, appreciated. In reply to the question of where I am from, I say it is impossible to tell; my journey isn’t over and my personal culture is forever evolving.

—Rachel McCrocklin, senior

“Alex joked that we were entering the ‘raptor paddock,’ as though I wanted to think about Jurassic Park at a time like this.”

The silence broke like my patience of waiting.

“Keep looking down!” Alex exclaimed to me like a seasoned explorer.

I was lying down looking through a metal grate on a bridge hovering about twenty feet above a set of train tracks snaking through the suburban haven of our neighborhood. Even the tracks seemed out of place; they careened through what seemed to be an endless forest, but only if you were to suspend your disbelief of the single-family communities closely surrounding it.

Getting to the bridge was a different experience in itself. About one hundred yards onto an asphalt path it seemed you were thrust into a portal, a portal to some unknown time and place. As awkward as it sounds, your world seemed to completely change as you neared a massive black metal rectangle, the entrance to the bridge. Alex joked that we were entering the “raptor paddock,” as though I wanted to think about Jurassic Park at a time like this.

“Do you see it?” he asked me rhetorically. Of course I could see it, idiot, that piercing white light cutting the yellowish night in two, right in front of us. Fear? I wasn’t exactly afraid — more of an excitability mixed with the uneasy feeling of being on a bridge at night, as girly as it may sound.

“Here it comes!” Alex cheered like a child.

Then it passed.

“That was so awesome!” Alex shouted.

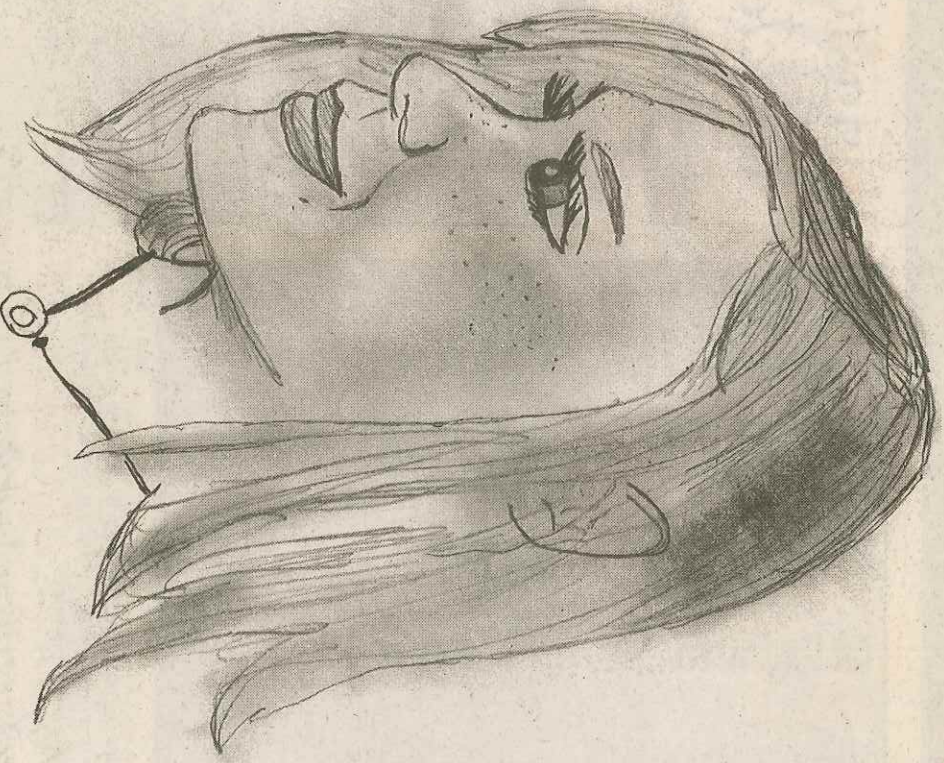
Yeah, it was awesome; it was awesome until it happened so quickly. Eighty six cars. Yes, I counted. After the first few it got slightly boring because you hear the same click-clack over and over and over again. It’s almost soothing, how violent it seems. An object is not meant to travel that quickly, nor people meant to withstand such a long train, such shaking for such a long time.

It was a fantastic event, but the building action was in the end better than the result. I had imagined in my roving mind the bridge being turned endwise like some hellish roller coaster programmed to go off only at even intervals, like when trains come.

If you were to experience God, I think this is closest to what it would feel like. A brilliant white light all around you, and you having absolutely no idea what was going on until the moment passed. We could see the last of the train snake around the last bend and away from the bridge, shaking less now, seemingly becoming one with the forest — moving through it like the deliverer of some ASAP marked package.

The train bridge isn’t about the train; it’s about the experience — to scare yourself into doing something that does not scare you at all, to be transported to another place without leaving your neighborhood, to share an experience few have ever shared before, but at the same time an experience that you would reluctantly choose again.

—Tommy Beekman, senior



—Caitlin Kenney, sophomore

“Unfortunately, his first words were, ‘Your freckles!’”

I always thought I had sunbathed under a pasta strainer. Judging by the lack of freckled faces in my family, this was the only logical reason my eight-year-old mind could conjure for the little spots on my face. As ridiculous as this idea was, my freckles seemed even more foreign to me. I tried every remedy I had ever heard of to rid myself of these dots, from bleaching them with lemon juice to applying sunscreen to each dilemma, I went to my mother for further help.

My jaw dropped when I heard her reaction. She loved my freckles and told me how jealous she was that I had been genetically blessed with little “angel kisses” all over my face. I couldn’t believe that she had once even tried to draw freckles on herself! It sounded as if my freckles were not terribly ugly, but in fact something to be desired! Then why had I always been teased with “freckle-face”, or “ginger-speckly-freckly”? Freckles made me different, but at eight, I didn’t want to be.

Nine years later, at an age when fads and trends mold all teenagers into one stereotype, I began to comprehend the value of my freckles. I had something that distinguished me. The average girl didn’t need to wear 30 SPF sunscreen on a daily basis (starting in February) to prevent the brown spots from connecting into one big splotch.

After one extremely rushed afternoon, I headed off to practice without realizing I had forgotten my vital daily ritual. On my way home I glanced in my rear-view mirror. To my surprise, I noticed an incredibly speckled face staring back at me. My heart sank as I remembered my date later that evening. I quickly decided that I would brave the date and hope that true love was indeed blind. As he walked into my house, his eyes lit up and he smiled. I hoped it was my new outfit that had caught his eye, rather than my freckle-covered face. Unfortunately, his first words were, “Your freckles!” My spirits began to plummet just as he exclaimed, “They’re beautiful!”

The combination of these comments and my desire not to be just a stereotype made me realize that this peculiarity was truly a blessing. My face will never be plain or copied. I am covered in a pattern as intricate and complex as the starry night sky, yet I would not have it any other way. There is only one word to describe my freckles. Not “mottled.” Not “splotchy.” Not “unattractive.” Just “me.”

—Julie Robert, senior

Kingstowne provides a royal time *Oracleite finds shopping and sugar high*

By Stevie Florino
ETC. Editor

Whatever it is you need, I'm sure you can find it in Kingstowne Shopping Center. Kingstowne provides everything from shoes to furniture. Especially with a new movie theater, Kingstowne has become the ultimate shopping center and hangout.

You can occupy an entire Saturday at Kingstowne. Start off the day with a double tall, sugartee, vanilla, skim, no foam latte, or whatever overpriced complicated drink it is you like at Starbucks. Then, head on over to catch the 12:40 showing of "Walk The Line," which, by the way, is an amazing movie.

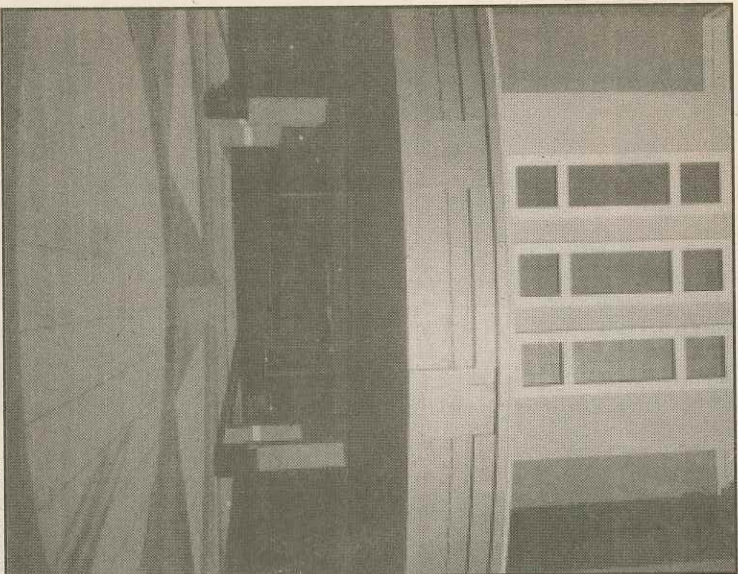
After the movie, you feel your stomach start to growl. No worries, you can grab a soup or sandwich or salad at Panera. Craving something sweet? Walk on down the "line," or sidewalk, to Kaleidoscoop's, which is located almost right next to Panera, and grab a triple banana split loaded with gummy worms and caramel sauce.

Need to do some last minute shopping for the fam? Not a problem. You can pick up a nice, brand new digital

camera at RadioShack for Dad, a video game or two at EB Games for your little bro, a cute little trinket at World Market for Mom and a warm wool sweater at TJ Maxx for Aunt Delilah. Did you forget about Uncle Wilson? That's OK. Stop in Payless Shoes and pick up some cool, hip brown loafers.

Craving something sweet? Walk on down the "line" or sidewalk to Kaleidoscoop's, which is located almost right next to Panera, and grab a triple banana split loaded with gummy worms and caramel sauce.

With the brick roads and vintage street lights, Kingstowne presents an incredibly comfortable and peaceful atmosphere. The only thing missing is the horse and carriage rides, which are soon to come.



Erica Wilkenling

Kingstowne Shopping Center's brand-new movie theater is a great place to enjoy a movie comfortably and at a reasonable price.

'Narnia' proves enchanting

By Caitlin Laverdiere
Managing Editor

Narnia: an enchanting world "that lies between the lamp post and the great castle of Clair Paravel on the Eastern Sea..." A land of endless winter, magical creatures and a mystical prophecy that governs all who live within its realm.

The newly released film based on CS Lewis's highly acclaimed children's novel "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" tells the tale of four British children who are forced to stay in their uncle's enormous countryside mansion to escape the bombing of London during World War II. Through an old, seemingly abandoned wardrobe they find themselves immersed in a wintery wonderland of fawns, centaurs and talking beasts.

After slight prodding by the Narnian creatures aligned with Aslan, the four siblings embark on a journey to free Narnia from the white witch's spell and fulfill the prophecy that two sons of Adam

The film has outstanding special effects that bring the talking beasts and magical creatures to life, making the fantastic realm of Narnia real for all.

and two daughters of Eve will assume the four thrones in the castle Clair Paravel.

The story is full of Christian motifs and mythological allusions. The lion, Aslan, is viewed as a Christ-like figure who

sacrifices himself for the redemption of the mystical land and its creatures. His resurrection symbolizes the greater power of good over evil and the capacity for love to prevail.

There is a strong element of forgiveness entwined throughout the story underscoring the important elements of mercy in the Christian faiths. The story is vibrant enough, however, to be read purely for enjoyment – consequently the novel has remained timeless with children and adults, Christians and non-Christians for decades past.

The movie follows the story line of the novel closely, recapturing the magic of Lewis's most popular work. The film has outstanding special effects that bring the talking beasts and magical creatures to life, making the fantastic realm of Narnia real for all.



Wikimedia

In the new movie, "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," Aslan, the heroic lion, is a figure of hope for the Pevensie children in the world of Narnia.

'King Kong' conquers

By Zohra Alnoor
Junior Staff Writer

"King Kong," also known as the Eighth Wonder of the World, has been a classic movie since 1933 when it was first made and directed by Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack. The second version was made in 1976 and was directed by John Guillermin followed by a sequel in 1986 also directed by Guillermin.

Now in 2005, the new "King Kong" remake has arrived and, in my opinion, it's so much better than any previous versions.

With modern technology, the "King" looks as realistic as any "normal" 25-foot ape, complete with the grunts and growls a normal primate would make, courtesy of actor Andy Serkis who also plays the voice of the creepy little Gollum in the "Lord of the Rings." Coincidentally, "King Kong's" director, Peter Jackson, also made the "Rings" trilogy.

The action/adventure movie, set in the 1930s, begins in New York City, where overambitious filmmaker Carl Denham, played by the hilarious Jack Black, is determined to film a masterpiece. But when he is rejected

by his studio, he runs away with his film crew and boards a ship sailing to what everyone thinks is Singapore, but in reality is an uncharted land named Skull Island.

Amateur actress Ann Darrow, played by Naomi Watts, agrees to star in Denham's movie only because her "hero" Jack Driscoll, played by Adrien Brody, is writing its script. Driscoll and Darrow instantly fall in love and when the ship reaches Skull Island, Darrow is captured by the island natives as a sacrifice for none other than King Kong. Driscoll forms a search party and bravely heads into the island's unknown territory, which is full of raptors, Tyrannosaurus Rex's, and lots of nasty, huge, slimy bugs.

During these "bug" scenes I squealed in disgust until my sister, who was unfortunately sitting next to me, got so annoyed that she pinched my arm. It hurt, a lot.

This movie kept me at the edge of my seat, I didn't want to miss any of it (even though I unintentionally missed five minutes in the beginning due to "Christmas shopping traffic"). I had to go to the bathroom for two out of the three-and-a-half hours of this movie so badly, but I refused to, just to see what would happen next.

You see Peter Jackson, I would risk peeing in my pants just for your movie.



Yahoo!movies

King Kong looks deep into the eyes of his love, Ann Darrow (Naomi Watts). The movie boasts amazing special effects, first-rate acting and an exciting storyline.

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Tony Florino
General Manager

JV Basketball coach resigns midseason

By Tim O'Keefe
Sports Columnist

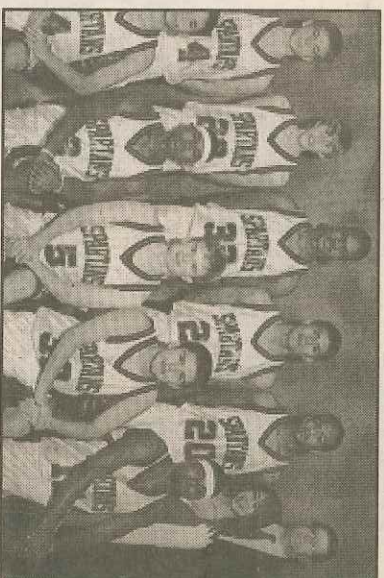
Our hearts raced, our minds focused on the basketball game at hand, we visualized defeating rival Robinson in front of our fans.

Junior Varsity head coach, Jay Tulloch, walked in front of our team, adjusted his tight-fitting belt with his shirt and tie tucked in.

"We have 12 starters on this team, bar-none!" said Tulloch, "I love you guys."

It was typical Tulloch: emotional, from the heart and utilizing his favorite term—"bar-none." We went out and defeated Robinson to finish with the best record in the patriot district. Tulloch was the driving force of our success.

Tulloch, who recently left WS after two-and-a-half years, was more than his unconventional coaching methods, his long pre-game and post-game talks, and



Litkoach

Former JV and freshman basketball coach, Jay Tulloch, resigned before district play this season.

even his stories, sometimes far fetched, that he told during practice. To me and others on our team, he was a mentor and a friend. It is not often you can say that about a high school coach.

For one, Tulloch persuaded to keep myself and two other juniors on JV, rather than just cutting us from the Varsity team. Those two other players are now playing Varsity. I decided not to play, instead focusing more on school.

"Sideline, baseline trap! I want five bull dogs! Weak side box," said Tulloch from the sideline, referring to the defensive set. Tulloch passionately coached every second of the game.

Tulloch's demeanor was never humiliating, demeaning or vulgar. Instead of individual scoring, he

preached about team statistics like the number of foul shots we took. He rewarded players who worked hard and played hard. He played to win, but with the bigger picture in mind.

From the first practice, I could sense his unconventional, yet personable ways. He started every practice talking for nearly 20 minutes about the previous game before, or who we were going to play, or other relevant information. Saying Tulloch liked to talk was an understatement. His typical line was "just ask TP" referring to junior Thomas Powers who played for him freshman year.

Tulloch preached that we had 12 starters. At first, I thought the statement was hot air, but as the season wore on, he proved the statement true. Our starting lineup changed more than Donald Trump changes

O'Keefe's Beef

The unconventional strategy not only made every player feel like he was contributing, but it also kept everyone fresh throughout the season.

To Tulloch, people were more than tools to win a basketball game; they were human beings to truly care about.

Tulloch made the game enjoyable. He built up our team, rather than tearing it down. He did things his own unique way and proved to be successful. Jay Tulloch is one of the best coaches I have ever had, "bar none."

Students tackle multiple sports

By Christina Sohn
Weekend Editor

Free, relaxing moments are rare in junior Julia Repa's hectic life.

While some students stare at the television or chat online after school, Repa is at track practice, persevering through "speed" or "sprinter endurance" workouts designed to condition students into the best sprinters they can possibly be.

While others bask in the luxury of sleeping in on Saturdays, Repa is at a seven-hour track meet that begins at 6 a.m. To top it all off, the next day, she competes in an indoor soccer game as well as an indoor lacrosse game.

Repa is one of few students who participate in more than one sport in each season. In all four seasons, she plays various combinations of soccer, lacrosse, field hockey, and track.

"I love doing multiple sports at once because there is never a dull moment," said Repa.

Though participating in sports may be exciting, it is also extremely time-consuming.

"I really don't have enough time to study as I would like. I don't get as much sleep as I want either. A lot of mornings I wake up and find myself falling asleep in classes," said junior Sean Newmeyer, a soccer player and swimmer.

Junior James Kim thinks that playing one sport a season is difficult enough. He says that while being a

member of the football team in the fall, he is actually playing two sports: "Football and time management." Repa, however, believes that she has now mastered the art of time management.

"Over the years, I have learned how to plan my time out and make sure that everything gets done. I have also learned to turn down opportunities of going out and having fun because I know that if I don't take time out of my schedule for schoolwork, I will not be able to get good grades. Right now I maintain a 4.0 GPA," she said.

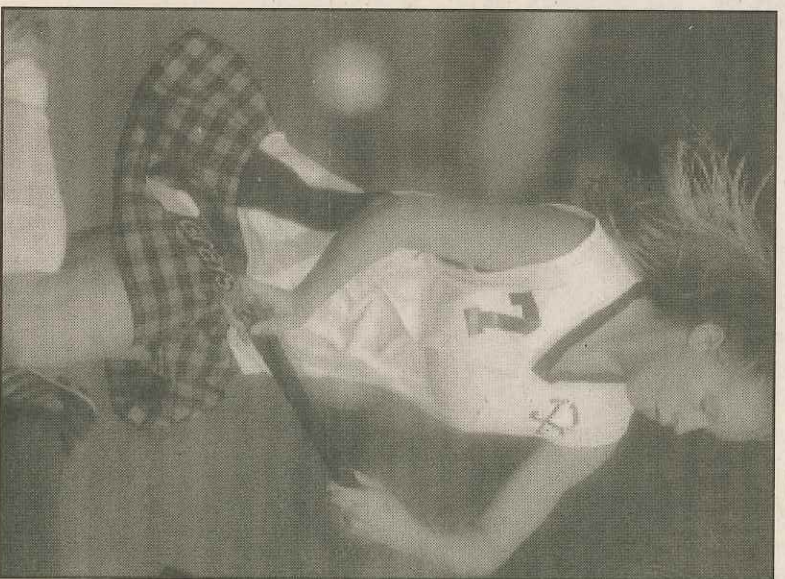
Not only do these students have to manage their time between schoolwork, but they also have to decide which sport to attend when practices or competitions are in conflict.

"For most of my decisions, I usually look at what sport is 'in season' at the time. For instance, in the winter, track is the main sport that is 'in season.' Soccer and lacrosse are being played 'indoors' to help maintain skill, while track is heavy competing," said Repa.

Conflicts mean that playing multiple sports involves sacrifices.

"I missed a meet for a soccer tournament last week and I'm supposed to go to swim practice every day [but I only go on Tuesdays and Wednesdays]," said Newmeyer.

Despite the sacrifices, sleepy mornings and lack of time to spend with friends, most students who play more than one sport in a season believe that it is a



Litkoach

Junior Julia Repa participates in four sports during the course of the year and maintains a 4.0 GPA.

great way to get in shape and compete in the sports that they love.

"Well, I love all of the sports I play, or else I wouldn't be working so hard at them," said Repa. "When I'm not active, I get extremely bored and lazy."

Birthmothers . . .

In response to the need for an effective support system, Birthmother Ministries, Inc. (Birthmothers®) was founded. This Christian nonprofit organization is dedicated to providing nonjudgmental assistance to any woman facing an unplanned pregnancy—regardless of age, race, religion, income, or marital status. Birthmothers® is neither a crisis pregnancy center nor an adoption agency—it complements, rather than replaces, such organizations.

A single phone call for help is all it takes to initiate the support process! In response, Birthmothers® addresses a woman's need for information about, and access to, existing community resources necessary to make a life-affirming decision, especially one of adoption.

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A Message from Keith

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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* 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

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