

THE OPAQUE

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West Springfield High School 6100 Rolling Road Springfield, Virginia 22152

Grace remembered

Social Studies teacher loses battle with cancer

By Sarah Alvarez
Viewpoint Editor

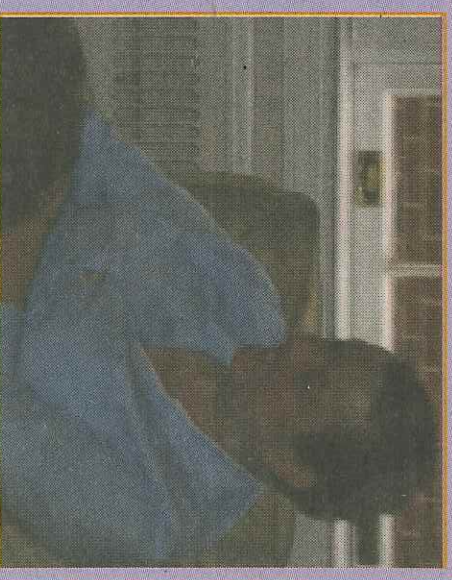
Social Studies teacher Carolyn Galeher Grace died Tuesday at home after a determined fight with breast cancer. Grace, who arrived here in 2002, left the WS community overflowing with memories of optimism, humor and love.

Her friendly face and amiable disposition accompanied Grace's keen sense of humor in creating a blend of traits that made her a popular teacher. Rarely without a smile on her face or chuckle in her voice, Grace lit up the hallways and classrooms of WS. She is remembered for her humility and daring sense of humor, which harvested a sense of admiration from all of those who knew her.

"She was a role model, someone that every one could look up to," said history teacher and friend Tami Ogden.

In the face of adversity, Grace remained positive, optimistic and determined to come back to WS. With a notable sense of humor, she often laughed and joked about her illness, which was diagnosed three years ago. Making her plight humorous "is a hallmark of character," said history teacher Cathleen Boivin. Grace never took herself too seriously or wore a fretful look. With a boisterous "Oh, please" attitude, she recognized reality and found the "amusing side of anything," said Boivin.

Grace, 42, was not simply a molder of young minds, but remained unknowingly didactic in the way she



Tami Ogden

Grace died Tuesday after a breast cancer battle.

"She taught us a lot about ourselves and about living," said Social Studies Department Chair Maggie See GRACE on Page 5.

Students slip in icy mess

By Zohra Alnoor
Senior Staff Writer

Students woke up before the sun even rose, and turned their TVs to their local news stations, patiently waiting to find out if school was closed due to snow. To their delight, it was.

On Wednesday, February 13, students were given their first of what ultimately added up to six days off of school, including the President's Day holiday.

"It was the best break I've had in all of my high school career," said junior Rana Zamani.

With snow turned to ice, students' and teachers' lawns became their own personal ice skating rinks.

"My friends and I took a bunch of trash can lids and went sledding down a hill in one of our friends' backyards," said senior Nahid Jahed.



Heather Campbell

Junior John Gooch attaches cables to his Jeep to help pull his friend Junior Giovanna Pino's car out of the melting snow and ice. Students still encountered problems over a week after a wintry mix paralyzed the Springfield area.

Trying to get to work or getting home from a day of sledding at Irving Middle School, the roads were a complete mess for any driver, no matter how experienced. With the slippery roads,

See SNOW on Page 4.

History and culture collide

Baltimore group delivers unique experience

By Krista Pedersen
Scoop Editor

Something was different. Students piled into the auditorium in two parts, and each group realized on their own that the people they were viewing weren't a part of them.

The Black History Month assembly, held this year on February 12, featured

an Angolan performing group from Baltimore instead of YUnity members. The International Capoeira Angola Foundation performed this year, in lieu of the students that were featured in last year's assembly.

"[The performance] was on par with our high standard of quality, and I would seriously consider making arrangements See ASSEMBLY on Page 5.

Track brings home District championship

By Sean Hogan
Oracle Editor

The boys' Track and Field team edged out South County and Lake Braddock to win Districts. For the first time since they won regionals in 1998, the team won a major championship, capping a storybook season that would make Disney jealous.

"If you don't want it for yourselves, win it for these two," said coach Duke Baird to the team on the bus before the first night of the meet on Friday, February 9. The two Baird referred to, coaches Chris Pellegrini and Jeff Michaelis, came to the meet with things other than track on their minds. Pellegrini's mother died about two weeks before the meet and Michaelis is moving to Gainesville, VA after the indoor season concludes.

The night before the meet, Baird totaled the points that would be given if everyone in the entire meet finished in the order they were seeded in, resulting in a tie between WS and SC. Things didn't go according to plan, as the team got points from unexpected places but also failed to secure what were thought to be automatic points. The biggest surprise of Friday night was senior Andrew Hurst's first place finish in the triple jump, where he was seeded eighth.

See TRACK on Page 5.



Molly Cushing

The International Capoeira Angola Foundation performs for students as part of a celebration of black history.



Seniors share their college essays.



Musicians make hobby a job.



Dysfunctional family amuses viewers.

Snow days are a no-go

People who are not from Virginia often complain that we don't know how to drive when snow falls; we go too fast, we follow too close to the car ahead of us, we slam on the brakes, we close our eyes and go into the fetal position. This statement is probably very true, but that's who we are.

On January 21, we saw our first snow fall of the winter season that was forecasted to be "the worst snowstorm since the blizzard of 1996." In the beginning, the snow touched the ground and instantly turned back into its liquid form.

Several minutes later, the temperature dropped and the water became a thin sheet of ice that was quickly becoming layered with snow. The thin layer became treacherous when both drivers and pedestrians began to underestimate the slickness of the pavement. Soon, the whole of Springfield became an accident waiting to happen.

Although cars were in ditches, going in the wrong lanes and just not going

anywhere, we had smiles on our faces knowing that school would be cancelled the following day.

Clearly, we knew just as little as our meteorologists did.

A two hour delay was issued, but did little good for anyone. Many side streets had still not been salted or plowed and were covered in ice, snow and slush. The senior parking lot was virtually empty as parents would not let their kids drive, as

Editorial

late as their bus had some type of automobile difficulties. The fact is, January 22, brought unsafe driving conditions and yet, we somehow still ended up at school.

Where were the counties' priorities? The county does not base their decision about school days on what is going to happen, but what is happening at that very moment. At that very moment on January 21, the roads were bad and yet we still



Sara Kotlari

It seems the county only allows snow days when the entire ground is covered; they didn't take the student's safety into consideration when the roads and sidewalks were icy and extremely dangerous.

had to find some way of going to school. Cars were driving slower than the speed limit and were still finding themselves not staying on the designated road.

Insurance companies stated that more accidents had been filed on January 22 than several days combined on a normal day.

On February 7, the county tried to redeem itself giving us a snow day on a day that wasn't exactly "snowy." The once slushy roads melted in a two hour period and going to school was possible, yet we were all at home doing... whatever we wanted.

Once again, on February 13th, the school made what we believe to be its first respectable decision, closing schools two

harness the genius of our citizens not for making weapons, but for building better communications, curing disease, combating hunger, and exploring the heavens.

- Bill Clinton



Click every day - it's free!

By pressing one of these buttons, people are able to give back a little to those in need without any expense to themselves.

specified amounts of aid such as 1.1 cups of food. I click these buttons every day, but I don't pay a cent. Instead, sponsors pay for everything. All of the money sponsors spend to put their ads on the sites goes toward the charities as well. The money gets distributed by nonprofit groups like the National Breast Cancer Foundation.

Site soothes students' needs to give back

By Josh Lipman

Oracle Editor

They cover cyberspace: "Click for a free iPod." Instead of wasting time on that unobtainable iPod, spend 30 seconds on the Hunger Site pages to fund charities. It's the easiest way to use other people's money.

The Hunger Site is a nonprofit webpage, founded in 1999. Every couple of years since then a new affiliate page has started up. The Hunger Site, the Breast Cancer Site, the Child Health Site, the Literacy Site, the Rainforest Site and the animal Rescue Site let users make donations to the sites' respective causes. Each features a daily clickable button, which provides for



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Stevia Florino

West Springfield High School

6100 Rolling Road

Springfield, VA 22152

(703) 913-3952

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It's a girl thing

By Alyssa Horton

Features Editor

I am a girl so I understand that almost all girls wear make-up and constantly worry about their appearance. Certain girls, however, need to take care of their personal hygiene at home.

We have all crossed paths with "that girl," the one who sits at her desk in class and applies mascara on top of the mascara she is already wearing and puts on

five pounds of foundation.

Girls who apply their make-up during class negatively affect their classmates. Sometimes the foundation or blush powder will fall onto another student's desk. It is a nuisance to have to clean up a mess that you did not create.

Most girls wear the standard mascara, foundation and some chapstick. It should only take about five to 10 minutes to apply make-up each morning if a girl uses these three basics plus eye liner, eye shadow, or blush. I also do not see why girls cannot wake up early enough to put on make-up, perfume, and other products.

Perfumes and lotions are perfectly acceptable to use; no one wants to smell bad. It is especially important to use these things before and after PE for you freshmen and sophomores. But it is quite annoying to be walking down the hall and then all of a sudden you get the taste of gardenia or vanilla sprayed into your mouth.

Not only do I have an issue with girls who apply make-up during class but it



Maddy Hiestand
A girl practices good hygiene by washing her hands and throwing away the paper towel afterwards.

Girls who apply their make-up during class negatively affect their classmates...It is a nuisance to have to clean up a mess you did not create.

also bothers me that some girls wear way too much make-up. There are so many girls at this school who have astounding natural beauty but they cover it up with layers of foundation and black eye liner. I wish some girls would realize that they are much more beautiful when they limit the amount of make-up they wear.

Girls, all I am asking is that you try to wake up a little bit earlier so that you do not have to disturb your peers as you tend to your personal hygiene and that you cut back a little on the amount of make-up that you use.



Maddy Hiestand
Sophomore Mary Ellen Spooner washes her hands in the bathroom during break.

Students' get testy as a result of SOLs Basing curriculum around the test is not a good idea

By Andreaa Maxwell

Managing Editor

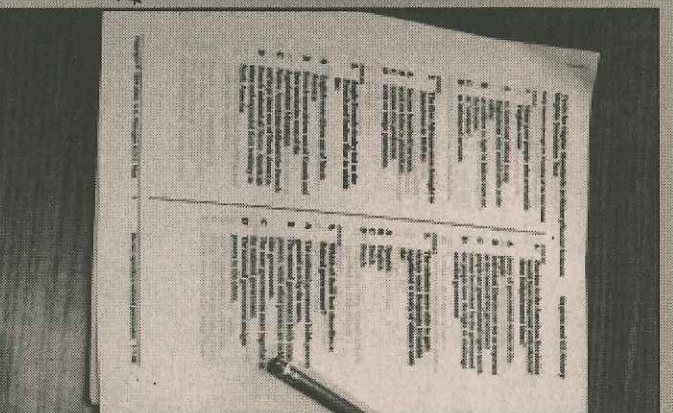
The end of May brings only one thing: SOLs. The teachers' knowledge has shown off their students' knowledge has arrived.

The teachers have painstakingly filled our brains with every question that could possibly be asked. This cramming process may seem like a good idea, but it usually just ends with teachers telling later students just how many kids got a perfect score. That appears to be the mission of all teachers; to have their entire class receive perfect scores on their SOLs or, to at least pass advanced.

Passing advanced is indeed something for all students to try to achieve, but school should be about something more than a score on a test.

While at school teachers are not only obligated to teach the curriculum but also to help students acquire knowledge that will help them later in life. By teaching to the SOLs, the latter of these obligations is greatly ignored.

Grade-schools should offer an opportunity for students to learn not only the curriculum but also different ways of learning. Being able to learn in many different settings allows students to broaden their horizons and become immersed in new areas.



Colin Embrey
Students start taking SOL practice tests as early as February.

The basis behind the SOLs is a good idea. Schools need to know what is the minimum expectancy for the students. There has to be some standard to ensure all students in Virginia learn the same subjects.

Because the SOLs are the standard, teachers believe the only thing reflecting how they teach are their students' scores. As students who have attended these types of classes, we can assure you that even the best teachers will not guarantee you a perfect score on the SOLs. The most they can promise is that you will have a good understanding of the subject.

The SOLs are not the same year after year; they ask the same types of questions but their wording or content may differ. Teachers spend all their time teaching what has previously been on the test which can almost always be guaranteed that they will not reappear.

The SOLs are a good idea in that they give Virginia public schools a standard to base their curriculum upon. The way in which they are emphasized, however, should be altered so that students are learning more than just the minimum requirements.

Student E-mail gives no room for excuses in turning in assignments

By Andreaa Maxwell

Managing Editor

The days have ended when misplaced assignment notebooks students must call everyone in their class to find out what they needed to do for homework.

Today's technology has replaced the pencils of the past and we are heading into the future of education.

WS has invested time and money into finding the resources available in an attempt to make assignments, teachers and high school in general more accessible to students.

These include student email and blackboard, which have had a significant amount of emphasis placed on them this year.

Every teacher and student was issued an email address through Fairfax County at the beginning of this school year; these addresses are uniform, thus making communication easier.

This additional email address serves as a professional address in which students are expected to email their teachers from and use in any other situation in which sunkissedexybabeb@hotmail.com is just not appropriate.

The simple first name, last name address supplied by the county allows the recipient to know who sent the message before even opening it and brings a sense of professionalism to the entire email communication system. Seniors may even find it useful to use on their college applications so as to separate their school-related and everyday mail.

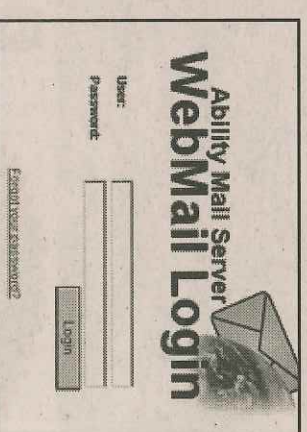
Teachers made it clear that student email would be the only mail accepted this year and in many cases would serve

as a source of constant communication between teachers and students. I have learned that when used correctly, student email is an asset to the entire learning experience of senior year.

The almost daily emails from some teachers give helpful hints for studying for upcoming tests, extra credit opportunities and even reminders about assignments.

It is obvious that the teacher is interested in our success.

The ability to email a teacher at any time of day creates a much less intimidating situation in which students



Teachers use e-mail to give assignments over breaks and snow days can ask questions and voice their opinions.

This new found technology at first glance is perfect. It adds professionalism and actually helps students when used correctly.

The key word is correctly. Unfortunately, student email is unreliable. It is frustrating when it is down, thus it is impossible to see if a teacher has responded to an email or sent out additional assignments. Basically, if student email is used by teachers and students equally it is a helpful tool; otherwise we should stick with the assignment notebook and a pencil.

Hoax results in suspension and misdemeanor for player

By Christina Sohn
Managing Editor

The police came quickly, prepared and alert. Eleven police cars carrying more than 20 officers surrounded WS. More police officers and a helicopter would have been sent had the anonymous 911 call not been determined a hoax.

"Someone made a 911 call on Friday [February 2nd] a little after 6:00 p.m.," said principal David Smith. "It brought a pretty strong police response because the caller made a reference to a shooting."

The call was made from the pay phone located in the lobby in front of the main office. The police arrived at the school at around 6:10 p.m. They soon realized that the phone call was a false report as all was relatively normal and peaceful in the building, which was sponsoring four evening activities.

The officers then began to question school officials, narrowing down the suspects to members of the Boys

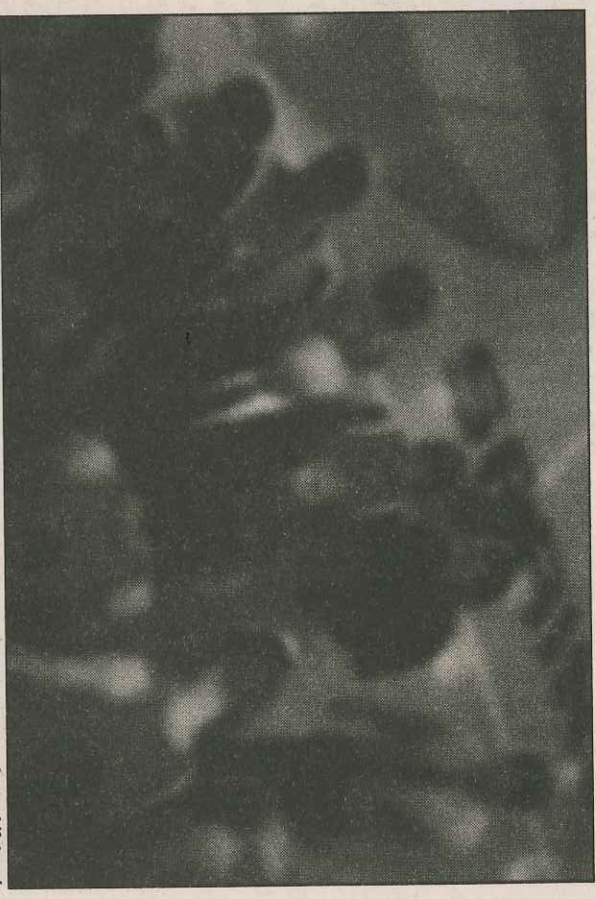
basketball team, which had occupied the lobby at the time of the phone call.

"Any time you see a team go to a team event, most of the time they congregate [in the lobby], waiting for the bus," said Smith. "It wasn't a stretch to surmise that a member of the basketball team that was waiting to go to an away game might have been involved."

The bus arrived at WS to pick up the team for its game at Lee High School just after the first couple of policemen were entering the building. Administrator Richard Griffin left WS at 6:20 p.m to follow the bus to Lee, where he was assigned to administrative duty that night. A team of police officers had also left to go to Lee after learning of the hoax.

"I was about 10 minutes behind the team bus," said Griffin. "And when I went [to Lee] was when the police told me [about the call and investigation]."

The team was slightly delayed in getting out to warm-ups because they were being questioned by the police. The



This blurred photo shows members of the basketball team. For the regional semifinals, they were missing a player who was suspended from school for ten days and recommended for expulsion after making a false 911 call from WS.

policemen soon came to the conclusion that a particular member of the team was the sole perpetrator of the Class 1 misdemeanor. The alleged caller did not play with the rest of the team that night.

"[The alleged caller] made a few mistakes," said senior Tony Hall, a member of the team. "But he went out like a thug."

In addition to the charge of misdemeanor, the senior male also received a ten-day suspension from school and a recommendation for expulsion.

"There was no reason why he did it; [he was] just being silly," said Griffin. "[It was] a prank that went wrong. No one saw anything silly about it."

Wintery mix gives students brain freeze

SNOW from Page 1.

"I was driving home from my friend's house and I drove over a huge chunk of ice. My car started to skid and I almost ended up in someone's yard," said senior Diana Clanor.

"Thankfully, there was no one

else in the road or else I could've have gotten hurt, or hurt someone else. I was lucky."

While students forgot about school for the next six days and enjoyed their chilly paradise, the WS Orchestra were unlucky when it came to the snow days.

"We had planned on selling roses on Wednesday for Valentines day, we sell them every year, but unfortunately we had to cancel it," said Clanor, president of Orchestra.

The Orchestra lost money, instead of gaining it when their yearly fundraiser was canceled.

Students were more than excited about the school closings, despite the road conditions, fundraising cancellations, and all the other headaches.

"As long as school is closed," said Jahed, "I'll be happy."



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WS gambles with dance theme

SGA hopes to draw crowds to Winter Formal dance

By Erica Wink
Junior Staff Writer

Las Vegas is known to shine most brightly at night and this year's Winter Formal dance did just that. The school's cafeteria was lit up to resemble a night in the rowdy and upbeat Nevada town. Decks of cards and lots of "shiny sparkly stuff" served as dance decorations in order to really bring the city to life.

The SGA, who coordinated the dance, came up with the theme during a summer retreat.

"The theme! was voted on at the Summer Leadership Retreat by the students who were in attendance. The

Spartan Council, the SGA Officers, and all the Class Officers are invited to attend the retreat," said math teacher Mariamne Razzino, SGA co-sponsor.

"I think the theme is interesting. I hope people pay attention to it," said junior Lexi Ramage.

Hand-painted signs and printed posters were seen on the walls promoting the dance. Many students, however, argue that the dance could have been better advertised.

"I only heard about it through friends," said freshman Kathryn McCallum.

While the SGA hired a DJ for the girls-ask-boys dance, students were able to make music requests online.

WS remembers

GRACE from Page 1.

Tran. To her fellow educators, Grace was sharp and competent, yet never arrogant and always humble. She helped teachers and students grow as individuals and professionals.

"She was extremely helpful in guidance in my professional ups and downs," said Social Studies teacher Brad Swain, who has been teaching Grace's classes during her absence. Her love of life was evident in her extreme care for the people around her.

Driven by her love for teaching and a sharp wit that could make a whole room giggle, Grace remained an integral part of the school community even when she was not in the classroom. She was a National Honor Society co-sponsor, along with Ogen, and was a prominent Advanced Placement teacher in Fairfax County. Grace made an extensive effort to "support the Social Studies department and support all her students—she was always there," said Boyvin. Grace also was a constant devotee



Laurie Fischer

Social Studies teacher Carolyn Grace on a New York field trip last year.

to her students and their successes.

"She was a teacher for her students; they are what motivated her. She really loved her job and I think that is contagious," said Ogen.

By teaching several levels of history, Grace was able "to impact a wide group of students," said Boyvin.

Staff and students celebrated Grace's life at a Spartan Hall reception following her funeral on Saturday. Those who cherished her humorous disposition and her strong personality wanted to commemorate her contribution to the WS community.

"Knowing her has made me a better person," said Ogen.

Spartans run straight to the top

TRACK from Page 1.

"I knew I could upset a few people, but if I told you I was trying to win it would be a lie," said Hurst. "I was trying hard not to think about anything at all. Too much thinking can offset your mind."

The first place finish by the 4x800 meter relay team and other point-scoring performances by seniors Andy Adell, Derik Bell and Hurst led the team to a four point lead over SC as they boarded the bus back to WS on Friday night.

"We were supposed to be fifth," said Baird. "The seedings are just a piece of paper. You have to go out there and win the points."

WS stayed near the top because SC, LB and West Potomac kept switching off with their top performances. WS entered the 1600 meter run in third place, but within striking distance. Senior Mike Spooner won the race, followed by



Lifetouch

Senior Anthony Trueheart placed fourth in the 1,000 meter run and was a part of the 4x800 m relay team that won Districts and the 4x400 m relay team.

"It's a good idea. It prevents an uprising in the masses," said junior Lindsey McGuinness.

A new rule was implemented for the dance. Students had to pick up a guest form from the main office, Room 15, or Room 213 if they planned to bring a non-WS guest with them to the dance. The form had to be completed before a ticket could be purchased.

A few students objected to the restriction on guests.

"If you are paying for a ticket you should be allowed to bring anyone you want. It's a hassle to fill out forms," said junior Matt Ballev.

Students predicted a larger Winter Formal turnout than in years past, when

YOUnity succeeds

without practice days

ASSEMBLY from Page 1.

for the group to come back," said club sponsor Regina Taylor. "We wanted to put a little spin on it, so we had our Madrigals, we had our Dynasty do our step, and our powerpoint."

Taylor added that the step team numbers were deliberately reduced due to time restrictions and fear that Dynasty would distract from the main event. The performances also lost important rehearsal time due to the snow day on February 7, when YOUnity was scheduled to have a four-hour practice after school.

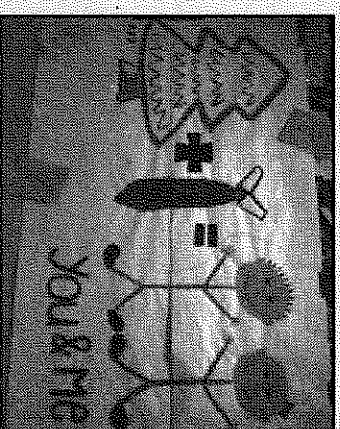
"We were going to have interpretive dance, and since we missed that meeting we didn't have that so we subbed interpretive dance with powerpoint," said YOUnity president Sara El Saied. "We didn't have the

seniors Leo Walker in third and Alex Martis in fifth. This put WS back into contention for the top few spots. When junior Bobby Tillet snuck in a point with a sixth place finish in the 300 meter dash, Baird knew they had a chance.

"The sixth place finishes were just as important as who won," said Baird. "If Bobby doesn't get sixth, we tie."

Seniors Walker and Anthony Trueheart both placed in the top five in the 1,000 meter run, which set the team up for the 3,200 meter run, where they had three runners in Spooner, Martis and junior Loring Ross who could potentially place.

Baird told the runners that if they could score fourteen points (ten from a first place run by Spooner and four coming from a fourth place finish by either Martis or Ross), they would be in very good shape coming into the last event, the 4x400 meter relay.



Kelly Sibbie

Creative methods like the sign above were used to ask people to the Winter Formal dance. Junior Amy Biers made this poster to ask senior John Todd.

attendance was low or ticket sales so slow that the event had to be canceled. They also anticipated that with a Las Vegas theme, almost anything could happen.

"It's kind of funny, I bet someone's gonna go as a Playboy bunny," said freshman Hannah Scott.

auditorium until the day of."

YOUnity had trouble finding time to rehearse. When Taylor went to book the auditorium in September, she found that the entire month of February was already booked. El Saied said that for the performing group, A assembly was practically a rehearsal and B assembly was the performance.

"They had a better performance at the second assembly because they didn't have time to rehearse [but] overall they surprised us, we thought they would be more rugged," said El Saied. Although the planning was rushed, YOUnity is satisfied with the performance. Their first and foremost goal was always to draw the interest and educate the student body.

"Every year we try to do something different," said El Saied. "I think a lot of people got a lot out of it."

Spooner won the 3200 after being challenged until the last lap by a runner from TC Williams, but Martis ended up sixth and Ross followed in seventh. After Baird told them that the 4x400 team needed only third place to clinch victory, Spooner and Adell called the boys team together between the 3200 and the 4x400, telling them that the team did not come this far to lose it on one race.

"No matter how I was feeling, I had to do my job and get points," said Spooner. The 4x400 team got fourth place, but after mental number-crunching by the coaches, they figured out that SC finishing first was the only way a fourth place finish wouldn't be good enough.

"The initial reaction was that we [had] been aced out of the title," said Hurst, "but some of the rough math done by the coaches gave us something to hold on to."

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Clinton White House Photo

Jordy Serwin, then six years old, and his mother, Meghan Flanz, met President Bill Clinton through the Make a Wish Foundation in 1996. Serwin, now a senior, was diagnosed with Leukemia at age two and credits stem cell research with saving his life.

'The reel world,' 'I beat cancer'

By Jordy Serwin
Oracle Editor

I can still remember the glossy paper shimmering under the fluorescent lighting of my hospital room. I was six years old, sick with leukemia, and bored out of my mind at UCLA's Mattel Children's Hospital when by happenstance I received an autographed head-shot of actor James Cromwell, who played "Farmer Hoggett" in the movie *Babe*. That photo was the spark that ignited my unquenchable passion for filmmaking.

This was actually my second battle with leukemia (I was first diagnosed when I was two) and I'd spent so much of my young life in the hospital that I became desperate for any entertainment to take my mind off the stark sterile walls and the scary rattle and hum of medical equipment. My room's ancient TV only received three channels on a good day, so I was forced to look elsewhere for amusement.

Movies turned out to be my escape. In the hourly intervals that the pediatric wing loaned out its one VCR, I watched anything I could find. Pushing the limits of the hospital's tiny film collection, I watched *Babe* for the first time. The scary white walls and the growing anti-infection air purifier faded as the film's whimsical music and golden Technicolor images flickered over my fixated eyeballs. At the time, these brilliant phantasms of light and sound seemed utterly distant and unreachable from the real world of sickness and pain.

My enchantment did not go unnoticed by the hospital volunteer who brought me my films and sometimes kept me company while I watched. She also worked at Universal Studios and used her connections there to procure Cromwell's head-shot, signed by the actor and sealed in an official Universal envelope. Much as Charlie Bucket tore open a Wonka Bar and found a golden ticket, I opened that envelope and discovered the link between film and reality. Realizing that a real person had posed for that head shot and had penned "Dear Jordy, Be Strong, James Cromwell" across its white margin, I was suddenly struck by the thought that real life actors and crew members and cameras were at work at that moment, not far from where I lay, creating the dreamy images I so delighted in. From that moment on, I knew I wanted to make movies, and that dream not only helped me get well, it made me who I am today.

Today I don't just watch movies, I make them. A computer in the corner of my room labors under the weight of screenplays I've written and short films I've shot and edited myself. I approach any challenge as a director, organizing my thoughts like a storyboard and refining the project until it isn't just finished, but perfect. I pursue every opportunity to learn more about people, my audience, so I can share in and influence their desires, fears, and aspirations. Most of all, I see the world as a giant movie set, full of potential just waiting for me to shout "action."

Jordy Serwin has been accepted to Loyola Marymount University and Christopher Newport University. He is waiting to hear back from the College of William and Mary.

Fitting 'me' in a box

By Larissa Cookson
Special to The Oracle

Black White Other:
Which do I choose? Whom do I forget?

Everyone has taken a standardized test where he or she was asked to identify race with the check of a box. For most people, this part of the test doesn't require much thought. For me, the situation is more complicated.

My mother is African American, my father is Caucasian, which makes me what, a mulatto, a mixed person, a mutt? Other biracial students attend my school. Somehow we all have a connection stemming from a common dilemma—how to identify ourselves.

Now, let's go back to the information sheet on my test. Checking "black" puts me in a minority, giving me benefits such as affirmative action in the college application process. This seems to be the box to pick.

If I select "white," I am recognizing my father's side of the family. At the same time, I'm denying half of myself, putting myself in a category that I don't physically resemble or fell apart of.

The final choice is "other." But why is it that I must check a box that puts me in a random category, one with students who don't have anything in common besides the face that their identity does not have a common name.

The front sheet of the test booklet is not the only place I face identity problems. In every high school, most students can be put into a group—the jocks, the cheerleaders, the smart kids, the gothic kids, the stereotypical black

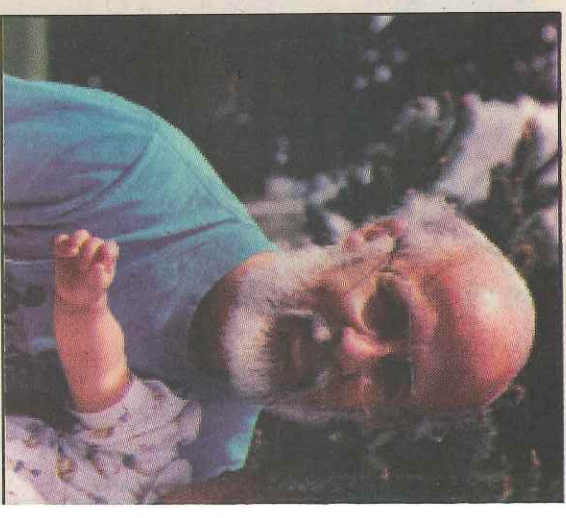
kids, the preppy white kids. Fitting in is hard enough. My high school is predominantly white; my group of friends is also predominantly white. Therefore, I either stand out as the black girl who doesn't hang out with the rest of my race, or the white girl who doesn't fit in perfectly with the rest of my friends.

I am not expecting there to be a box to check that makes a perfect fit. I am a serious student, a determined athlete and a photographer. I am committed to my family, am a loyal friend and volunteer my time to community and service organizations.

I am more than a box. All of us are actually "other," a combination of many boxes. As a biracial person, I feel the questions and decisions that I face can do nothing but help pave my way to creating my own mark on the world.

This is who I am. It's your turn to check a box and tell me—do I fit with your university?

Larissa Cookson applied to JMU, CNU, the University of Maryland and ODU. She was accepted at CNU and UMD. She will attend UMD in the fall.



Larissa Cookson and her father Kermit celebrate her grandparents' home shortly before her photo. Now a senior, Cookson used her biraci



In her father's arms, three-year old Cookson photo. Now a senior, Cookson used her biraci

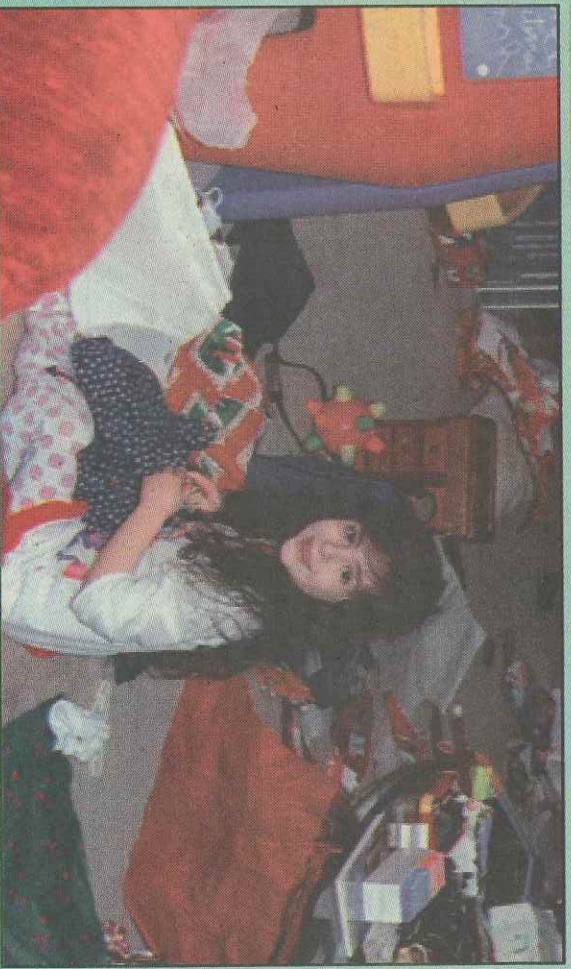
Pressu

By Gauri Khanna
Scoop Editor

While I stand in the kitchen making a sandwich, I hear the door open. It's four in the afternoon and could mean only one thing: I turn around and there is a disconcerting look on her face.

I try to get away to the kitchen to watch some TV, when Mom says, "We have to talk." I sit down, wondering what I had done. As experience tells me, in that tone are never follow news. I slowly turn around and what's going on, and it's not what most parents would be happy to hear.

It was the second week of this incident happened and I realized, my mom had called me a calculator teacher to oblige a report. I had a 91% in that class and wasn't good enough for her placement class, especially since the school year, wasn't going to be a problem. Growing up in an Indian family, I have become quite demanding. Although times have changed, I recognize that my parents are on my brother and I. Grandparents were on their own and values they grew up with were major impact on us. We were work hard, respect our elders, and example for our siblings in the family, and never set in the family, and never set but the best. My parents' our lives instilling those values in us trying to make us better. We are always expected in school; any grade lower than absolutely unacceptable. I was major punishment. While we were enjoying their middle school was taking SAT classes acceptable score by my set. Of all my cousins, I am



Brihan Costello

On Christmas Day 1993, five-year old Katie Costello opens her present, an American Girl Doll outfit. This photo was taken shortly before she had her first haircut.

Long hair knot a problem

By Katie Costello
Oracle Editor

They cascaded to the floor without making a sound. With every snip of the scissors, a cluster of brown curls dropped to the gray tiles below. Wide eyed, I looked in the mirror, as the hairdresser had the difficult task of giving me, a squirmy five year old, her first haircut. At the same time, she consoled my mother as she watched her little girl's locks fall.

For months I had been asking my mom for a haircut. Finally, she relented. No more hiding under the bed when I had to wash my hair; no more losing barrettes in the forest of knotted curls. I was going to be a new woman.

My mother was taking it pretty well, making small talk with the hairdresser, until a woman with heavy make up walked by and said, "You're cutting off those beautiful curls?"

My mom's chuckle turned into sniffles, then into tears. The woman apologized awkwardly before hurriedly scurrying

toward a client that seemed more emotionally stable.

Looking back, it wasn't just pretty hair my mother was having trouble parting with. It was the fact that I had made my first real decision. It was hair now, but soon it would be more difficult choices—what to believe in, who to be friends with, how to handle the challenges I would inevitably face.

Thirteen years and multiple haircuts later, I have made choices that have both helped and hindered me, but they have all shaped me. My mother will unquestionably be misty-eyed as I leave for school, just as she was when I got that first haircut. But we both know it's just another small step toward becoming a strong and independent person that can comb through even the toughest knots.

Katie Costello was accepted to Christopher Newport University and East Carolina University. She is waiting to hear from James Madison University, George Mason University, Elon University and Belmont University.

A little slice of life

By Molly Cushing
Photographer

I have never been so insulted by a complete stranger in all my life. He said it in that tone that could cut through your self-esteem as if you were made of paper, but I decided the second I saw him, I wouldn't let him make a tear. I simply smiled politely and said with a genuine voice, "I'm sorry sir, I didn't mean to cause you an inconvenience."

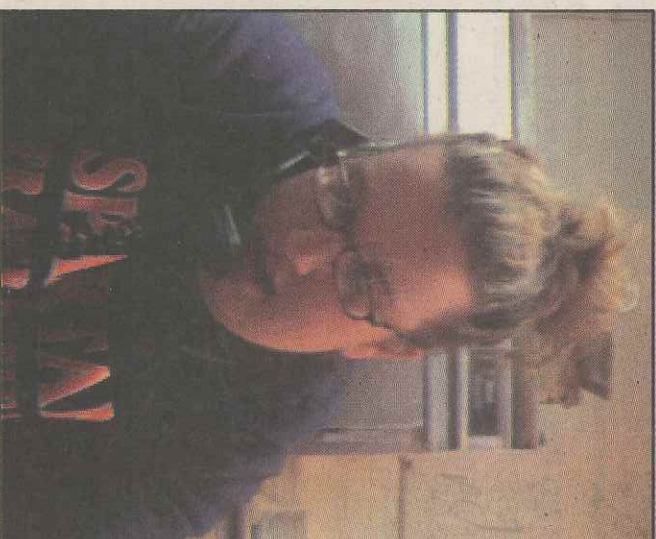
In reality, he wasn't inconvenienced at all. I was just a new cashier at the pizza diner unable to revalidate his ticket after he handed me more money to get the change he so desperately wanted. Apparently I had ruined his day. As a peace offering, I gave him two more containers of salad dressing, which seemed to do the trick. He was off on his merry way with no more comments. Before him, I never realized how money or salad dressing affected so many people. But what do I know? I'm only making minimum wage.

In this small diner I have seen every type of personality known on earth. And I have learned to treat every one with the same smile. I can sweet talk the grandmas, joke with the grandpas, talk about planning the future with the soccer moms, and get straight to business with the high paid

I can sweet talk the grandmas, joke with the grandpas, talk about planning the future with the soccer moms, and get straight to business with the high paid executives. I accomplish whatever Victor's Pizza Diner presents to me.

executives. I accomplish whatever Victor's Pizza Diner presents to me. In life I will deal with people just like that man. I will face the grandmas, the grandpas, the soccer moms, and executives with the same smile. Although the process may be painstakingly difficult at times, the rewards will be worth it. But what do I know? I'm only making minimum wage.

Molly Cushing used this essay to apply to George Mason University, Virginia Commonwealth University, Radford University and Old Dominion University. She's waiting to hear from her schools.



Cushing family photo
At Victor's Pizza Diner on Old Keene Mill Road, senior Molly Cushing takes a pizza order.

The
White
Essay

Applying to college these days is tough. Finding a way to make yourself stand out is even harder.

Deciding between being serious or funny, focused or broad can cause serious writer's block.

It's hard to sum up who you are in 500 words, but it's harder to get a college to want you in 500 words.

Here are some seniors that used their personal experiences to show colleges that they have "the write stuff."

re to be perfect pays off

therefore, my family has always expected me to be a role model for them. I am mindful that I don't argue with my parents in front of them, or "act out." I have to act responsibly and teach them responsibility.

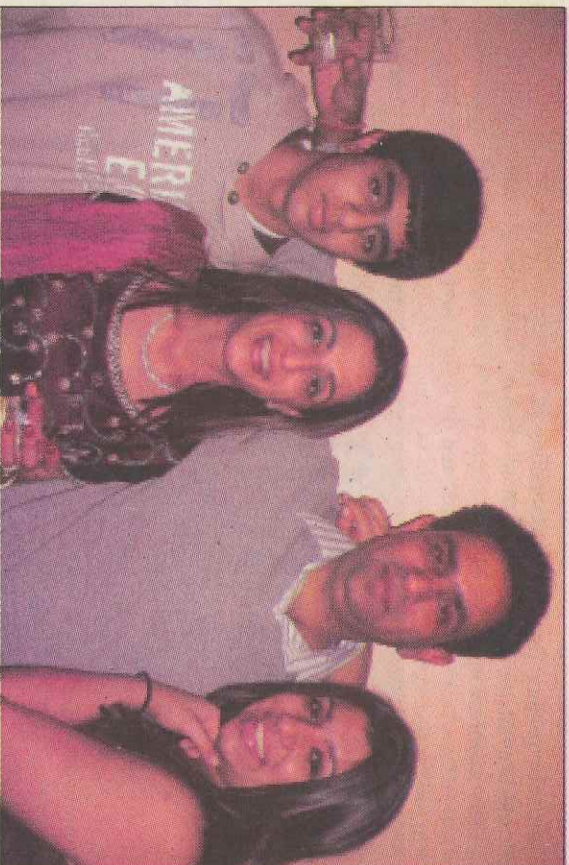
I never understood why my parents cared so much about perfection. Perfection is everything to them. "If anything is worth doing, it is worth doing well," my dad has always believed. Sometimes I just want to be like a normal family, where it is alright to have average grades and be in average classes because being average is easier.

But the irony of it all is that I know I'll be just like my parents when I have kids of my own. I will want them to have top-notch grades so they will get accepted into the best colleges and have a good life and career. I will want them to have the same values and morals that I grew up with and I want to teach them about respect, responsibility and integrity. Because the fact of the matter is, all parents want the absolute best for their

children.

I now acknowledge what they worked for all my life and why they've aspired me to do well in school. A wise man once said, "Reach for the moon because even if you fall short you'll land among the stars." If I aim for the best, I may turn out to be average, but if I only aim to be average, I could turn out to be lower than that, and then what kind of future could I expect? It is because of the principles and morals my parents have instilled in me that I have learned to work hard at whatever I do, aim for perfection and not settle for second best.

Gauri Khanna used this essay to apply to George Mason University, James Madison University, the University of Maryland at College Park, American University, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, and George Washington University. She was accepted at George Washington and will attend there in the fall.



Khanna family photo
On New Year's Eve 2006, senior Gauri Khanna poses for a photo with her brother Gaurav and parents Bobina and Sanjay at a party.

Senior Chrissy Regelski was an avid reader of Francine Pascal's *Sweet Valley* High series during her childhood.

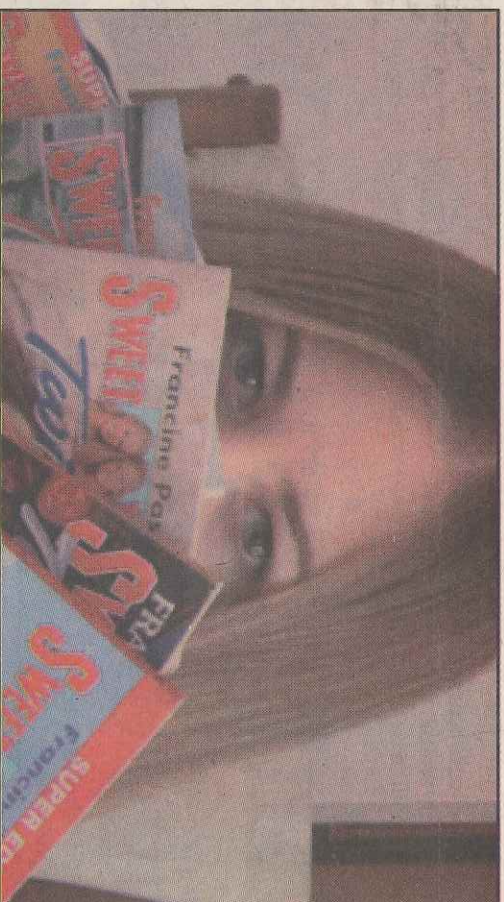
One sweet role model

By Chrissy Regelski
Oracle Editor

I could delve into Dostoyevsky's unsettling examination of conscience in *Crime and Punishment*, Shakespeare's tragic perusal of doubt in *Ohello*, or another classic literary work that affected my perspective. Instead, the work that really challenged me can hardly be classified as literature, needing actual artistic merit to be considered so. Regardless, the *Sweet Valley High Twins* series led me to form the aspirations I have today.

Francine Pascal's books chronicle the lives of two twins, Jessica and Elizabeth, who are identical in appearance, opposite in personality, and still the best of friends. When I was a fifth grader, I was much less concerned with quality and depth than I am today and never noticed the formulaic plots. I never dreamed that my own high school decisions would be effected by such fictitious fluff.

Elizabeth became my idol. She was smart, quiet, and loved to read and write-almost my mirror image. My best friend and I were almost identical too, and coincidentally, her name was



Greg Regelski

Jessica. What we did not have in common, though, was our age and our opinion of writing. Elizabeth was in high school and the editor of her school paper, constantly writing and editing stories. I never cared for writing, but Elizabeth put an idea in my head. Maybe, just maybe, writing was not all that bad.

Sweet Valley had now presented a challenge and it inspired me to make myself a better writer. I worked harder on every book report that was thrown at me. I realized I actually liked writing and, the more I liked it, the better writer I became. When the time came to pick courses for my first year in high school, I remembered Elizabeth and her passion for journalism. So I gave it a try.

Six years after my *Sweet Valley* days, I am the an editor of my own school newspaper and a recipient of a national writing award. For the first time, Elizabeth and I are completely opposite. While she is sitting on a dusty bookshelf, I am actively preparing for a fresh beginning in college and a new future.

Chrissy Regelski has been accepted to the University of Georgia and the University of South Carolina. She's waiting to hear from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and UVA...

an family can be at times. I'm more lenient than my parents, the customs I still have a were taught to be a good person. I've spent all my life for anything that people value. I'm the best of my peers and results in school years. I to ensure an older year. the oldest and



Chandra Cookson
ate Easter in 1990 at her first birthday.

Chandra Cookson
poses for a birthday photo in an essay.

Senior year entails steep price tag

Students in Class of 2007 face new expenses in 12th grade

By Zohra Alnoor
Senior Staff Writer

Every student waits eagerly for the first day of their last year of high school, at which time they can finally call themselves seniors.

Being the oldest students at the school and being more "superior" compared with everyone else are just two of the advantages senior year brings.

Seniors have access to convenient parking spots and no school on PSAT day. But even though there are many perks radiating from this joyous year, seniors have a lot to worry about.

The financial costs of senior year soar way above those of any other year in high school. All-Night Grad Party tickets cost \$50. Parking spots cost a whopping \$150. Seniors with low paying jobs or little-to-no allowances have to choose which costs are necessary and which aren't.

"All together I spent \$600 on college applications," said senior Sloane Lipkin, who applied to 15 colleges. The money she spent didn't even include the costs of sending transcripts or SAT test scores.

Seniors must constantly decide what constitute "must" expenses, like as college application fees, and what are

"want" expenses, like an expensive prom dress.

"I found my [prom dress] online for \$400. I was just looking online one day, and I was like, 'That's so pretty, that's the one,'" said senior Trish Friederich.

"I have two things that every senior should do. Number one: Every senior should be filling out the Financial Aid form. Number two: Once a week, I send seniors an e-mail on new scholarships. Seniors need to look for scholarship dollars."

—Susan Rexford, Career Center Specialist

If seniors think they're paying a lot now, they will likely be in for a surprise suddenly in a pile of debt.

"I have two things that every senior should do. Number one: every senior

One of the many expenses of being a senior, the All-Night Grad Party is advertised throughout the school as being a worthwhile night for \$50. Other expenses include \$60 for senior dues, which includes renting the Patriot Center, diplomas and other graduation costs.

should be filling out the Financial Aid form. Number two: once a week, I send seniors an e-mail on new scholarships. Seniors need to look for scholarship dollars," said Career Center Specialist Susan Rexford.

Instead of sitting around and playing video games, seniors are starting to get up and help their parents with their senior finances.

"I don't like putting that financial stress on my mom. I'm getting a job to help her out with all of this," said Friederich. Getting an after-school job can make the biggest difference in the end and help parents out amazingly. If students get so stressed out and can't take spending their own dollars anymore, there are other routes they could take.

"We could graduate from the [football] stadium or have prom in the gym, but students don't want that. We

want [students] to have these opportunities," said senior administrator Mike Mulkai.

We all watch 80s movies and see students graduating in the sun on a field of grass, throwing their hats in the air, but WS students don't care how happy those 80s students looked.

"[Mulkai] makes a good point. I don't think people want their All-Night Grad Party to be in the school," said Friederich. "In terms of prom, everyone wants it to be in a nice place."

When seniors are forced to choose to have prom in school or a nice hotel it's obvious that they'll choose the hotel. Students think prom should be a special night from the music to the ballroom. But all in all, the "wants" of senior year come at an expensive price.

"I don't feel like I'm in a public school," said Friederich. "Public schools are technically supposed to be free."

Sing, sing a song

A capella group goes pro with release of CD

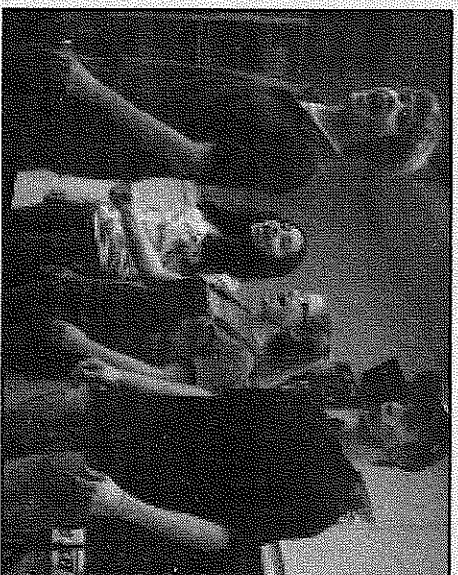
By Sarah Alvarez
Viewpoint Editor

What was once simply a fun idea has turned into a group of talented young students performing like professionals. Senior Julie Frost's ingenuity is at the back bone of the new singing group, Take Four.

"[It] seemed like something fun to do," said Frost. Frost asked sophomore Cooper Allen and senior Travis Blair to be in the group. Chorus teacher Michael Dombrow auditioned the alto junior Chelsea Reba. Frost sets up a lot of their recording activities and all the members practice at her house. The group sings a cappella and recently recorded their first CD.

"I felt so professional," says Reba discussing the excitement of recording their first CD.

The music on the album is from Dombrow's collection including favorites like "Crazy Little Thing Called Love," "I Feel Good" and "Wonderful Tonight." The group even performs a Bulgarian song called, "I di maj lato." The money from the 10-song CD goes to



Sara Kofalt

Allen, Reba, Frost and Blair rehearse for a gig. the choir department student account to pay for expenses on trips. The CD is \$15 and is available for purchase from Frost or any of the other members upon request.

Take Four performs for a wide range of audiences but find enjoyment in one specific aspect, "the pleasure of people listening to what we've got," said Allen. One of their first performances was for a wedding rehearsal dinner in September. With anxieties running high a name for the group was in high demand from the wedding party and they quickly came up with Take Four.

"[It was] the cutest name we could think of," said Reba.

Decked out in Ralph Lauren for most performances Take Four has sung at such popular restaurants as Maggiano's Little Italy for a board of psychologists. They have had great successes so far and look forward to more. All the members have their own reasons for pursuing this endeavor.

"Doing it for fun" said Blair is the overriding factor for participating in this group.

Other members have similar ideas for singing in Take Four. The best part is, "getting paid to hangout with my friends and do what I love to do," said Reba.

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Timberlake comes around

Former N*Sync star puts on stellar performance

By Jenny Taylor
Sports Editor

Seven years ago, I stood mesmerized in the depths of the MCI Center, surrounded by fellow 10-year-olds chanting the lyrics to "Bye bye bye."

The poppy sound of N*Sync was at its peak on their "No Strings Attached" tour and it was evident even in the year 2000 that Justin Timberlake was beginning to steal the show. Therefore, it came as no surprise when he embarked on a solo career and soon blossomed into a mature and talented performer.

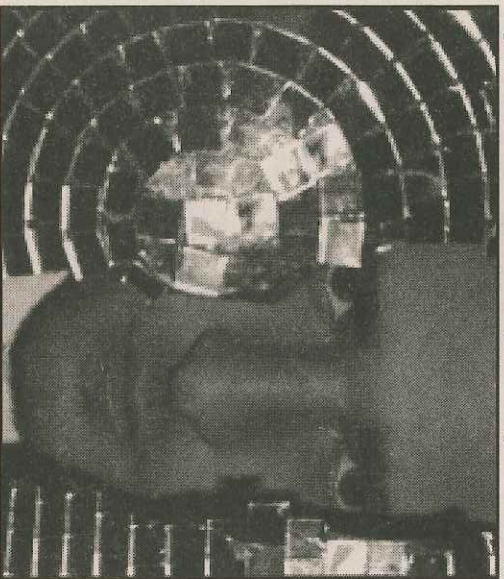
On February 2, I once again found myself in the newly remodeled Verizon Center, expecting to feel a tinge of déjà vu as the notes of "Future Sex Love Sounds" first crept across the speakers. But the times had clearly changed. 25-year-olds consuming several cups of Budweiser took the place of poster-toting

artist. The concert opened with the track "Future Sex Love Sounds", sending the audience into a frenzy from which they would not recover until the encore. Several of Timberlake's older hits such as "Senoria," "Like I Love You," "Gone," "Rock Your Body" and "Cry Me a River" were sprinkled throughout the show. Timbaland's unexpected arrival during the single "Chop Me Up", however, was the highlight of the night.

During intermission, Timbaland transformed into a DJ and blended pop hits "Over My Head," "Since You Been Gone" and "Billie Jean" with hip hop beats while the crowd awaited the return of Justin. In the second act, Timberlake performed his newest single "What Goes Around..." with the help of a personal video camera that he could have done without.

Unsurprisingly, Timberlake and Timbaland ended the night with their biggest radio hit, "Sexyback." Although I had grown tired of its constant overplay, the two cleverly remixed the single into a refreshing gogo track.

It isn't often that musical careers last seven years, especially when they start in the form of boy bands. Timberlake, however, has defied the odds and grown into a respectable and refined artist.



Justin Timberlake, former N*Sync member, went on his second solo tour to promote his "FutureSex/LoveSounds" album with surprise guest Timbaland, at the Verizon Center.



Justin Timberlake put on a lively show at the Verizon Center that kept the crowd undoubtedly impressed.

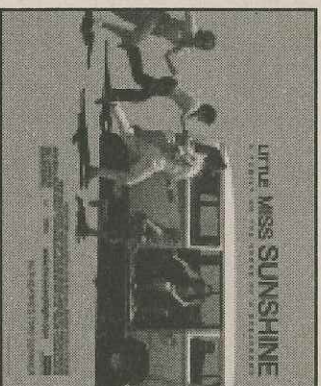
Hoovers shine on screen

By Erika Gleason
News Editor

I had high hopes when I sat down to watch "Little Miss Sunshine", which, ironically, is what all of its characters lacked.

The story is centered around the Hoovers, a little family with a myriad of issues. These issues include everything from a grandfather's drug addiction to a father's failed self-help regiment.

The incredibly simplistic plot is the family making it, in their dingy VW van, to the Little Miss Sunshine beauty pageant, in order for 7-year-old Olive to win the coveted crown. Comedy ensues as the van breaks down, family members are accidentally left behind, and hilarious family fights get out of control.



"Little Miss Sunshine" received a number of awards, as well as Oscar nominations, including the Oscar for Best Picture.

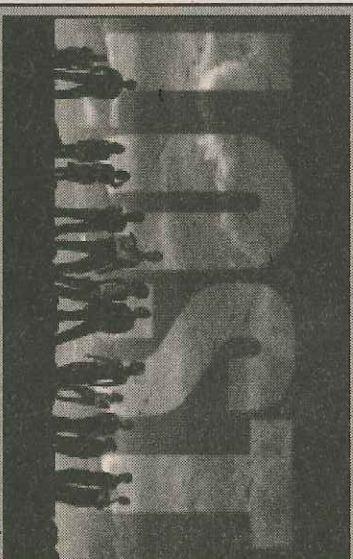
This movie, however, is not just another feel-good "Napoleon Dynamite-esque film, it is so much more. The most memorable scenes are not only funny but they also offer a vivid portrayal of the real lives of a struggling family. They each have their own problems and have

to deal with them in their own (and incredibly misguided) ways. This movie is not only funny, but shows you the painful reality people face on a regular basis as they come to terms with their issues.

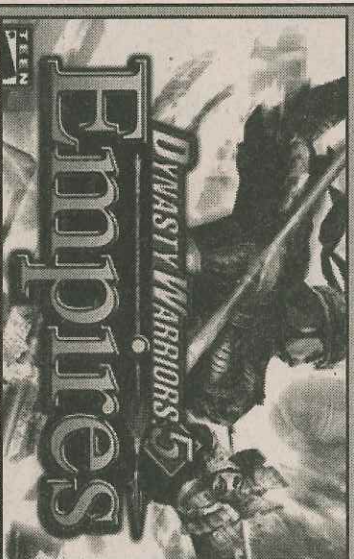
"Little Miss Sunshine" has won a number of awards, including a Screen Actors' Guild Award for best ensemble, which is well-deserved. The film boasts actors such as Steve Carell, Toni Collette and Abigail Breslin.

It has also been nominated for the Oscar for Best Picture. Granted, it would be a miracle if it wins against its competitors such as "Babel" and "The Departed", but just as the characters learned in the movie, it's not necessarily about the outcome, but the process of getting there.

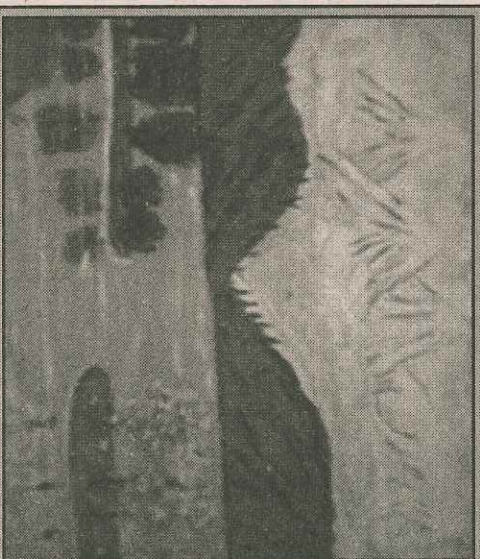
Oracle Anti-Picks



Lost is not for those who may miss some episodes because it will leave you confused. There are a lot of twists in the plot and each character has flashbacks which end up just being really boring. One of the twists is that now on the island, where their airplane crashed, is that they share the island with people called "the others" and they somehow have guns and a ship but they don't try to leave the island because they think they have some society which to me sounds pretty dumb on their part. I would prefer to watch something that makes a little more sense. I think they had a good idea when the show began by having people crash land on an island but now they have added way too many twists to the original plot.

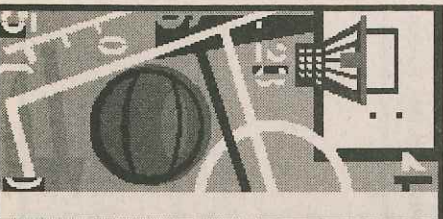


Dynasty Warriors 5: Empires is made by Koei and is just like its predecessors and it is still as boring as the others because you get lost a lot when fighting and it gets repetitive. The concept of the game is to extend your empire by traveling around huge battlefields trying to capture the enemy base and you will get lost along the way. New features include capturing the enemy's base and you can plan a little bit by having lower officers that help you fight but they usually just say "Capture the enemy base!" You have to hack and slash your way through hordes of soldiers, which is very repetitive but you also get new weapons and characters. It will set you back around forty dollars, and is a waste of your money. It also does not have Xbox Live so you can't play online with you friends which was available for previous Dynasty Warriors games.

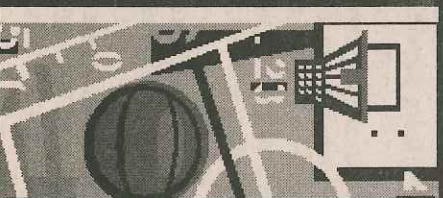


This piece of art by Laevia Carson shouldn't even be called art and I think that people who go to see art for entertainment would agree with me. Nothing is going on in this art and it doesn't even look that great. I might not be interested in art but by looking at this it doesn't even look like an actual artist made it. There doesn't seem to be a lot of effort put into it because there are no animals or any thing other than plants, hills, and mountains. A better artist would have put some wildlife into this landscape or had some people hiking in the background. What is this artist trying to portray with this boring art?

—Compiled by Inderbir Bal



Congratulations Girls basketball on a wonderful season!



Dance, dance, revolution!

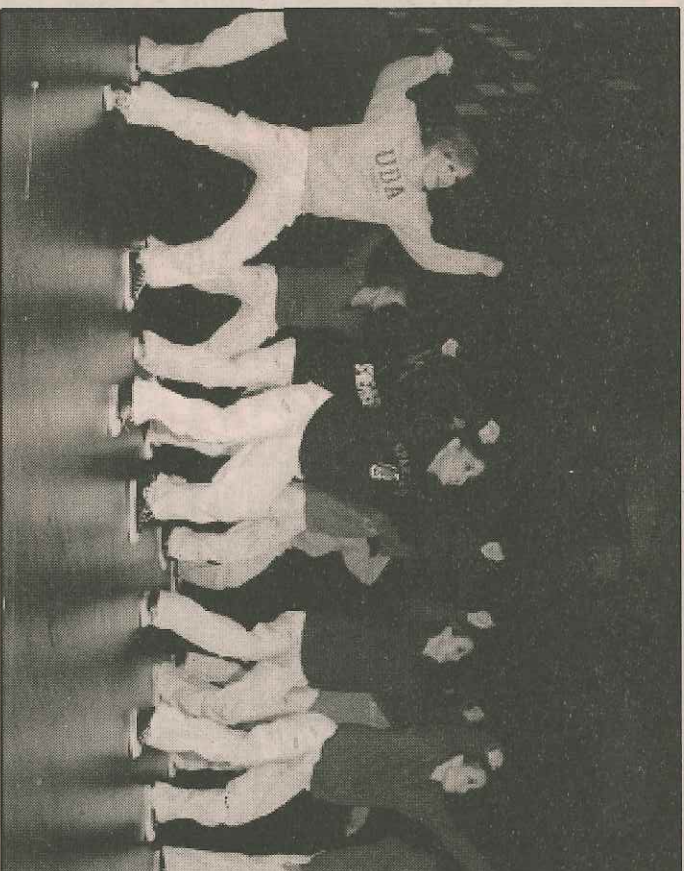
By Nicole Simpson
Entertainment Editor

High school dancing is more than the sweaty mess that occurs at school events and in teenagers' basements.

Students, particularly at public school dances, bring an inappropriate name to teenage dancing, but for the WS dance team, it's an art.

Our dance team, which goes to Nationals March 1, continuously manages to bring chills to its audience at pep rallies, but the dancers' passion reaches outside of school, with extra practices and events.

Inspired to dance by her older sister, sophomore Claire Percoco, a part of the dance team, also dances on her own time for three hours a day every day of the



Lifetouch

Several members of the WS Dance Team also participate in tap, jazz, hip-hop and ballet classes at local dance studios throughout the school year.

week at the Metropolitan Fine Arts Center.

"I do everything: Tap, jazz, hip-hop, ballet, lyrical and modern," said Percoco.

After nine years of dancing, Percoco doesn't plan on giving it up anytime soon. After high school, she has goals to minor in dance in college, while she

pursues a degree in Psychology. Not all dancers that attend WS participate in the dance team such as junior Sami Milani. Milani has been dancing outside of school for fourteen years.

"I don't dance for WS because I don't have any time with all the dancing I do with my studio and on top of all the school work we get, plus I work at my studio," said Milani.

Like Percoco, Milani also does a wide variety of dancing, but mainly concentrates on ballet, tap and jazz. Milani also has goals to keep dancing in her future.

After college, she hopes to open her own dance studio or become the next owner of the dance studio she's a part of now, Swan Ballet Dance Studio.

"I started [dancing] young, like when I was three," said Milani. "My parents put me in it and I liked it."

Milani follows a similar, but slightly less strict dance schedule than Percoco. She normally practices four days a week for at least two hours.

"[I plan to continue dancing] but as a side hobby," said Milani. "I'll basically continue to do it for the rest of my life."

Soccer players set alarms for 6 a.m.

By Sam Landers
Sports Assistant

For the past five years the girls varsity soccer team has been getting ahead of the game. Arriving in the gym at 5:50 AM is no easy feat, yet all of the returning players manage to get up and do it.

With every season the weather never fails to be a problem. To take full advantage of WS' resources Coach Kelly Mastrodonato has one week of 6 AM practices in the main gym.

"It's important to maximize your time [for tryouts] because it gives us more time to evaluate the girls," said Mastrodonato.

At morning tryouts the girls run sprints and do conditioning drills. Afternoon tryouts mostly consist of ball skills, scrimmages and game like situations.

Aside from the fact that weather has become a problem for tryouts, Mastrodonato says that early workouts not only test the players physically, but also

emotionally, and physiologically.

"[Mastrodonato] wants to see how committed we are and if we want it," said sophomore Jessie Gonzalez.

Besides the physical benefits, these early morning tryouts allow the players to unite and form strong relationships, even when the girls have not yet made the final team.

"The best thing we get out of these early practices would probably be our bonding," said junior Britany Klippstein.

Senior Laurel Pastor agrees with Klippstein on the bonding benefit of early tryouts, although she did note that 6AM practices don't leave the girls much time to get ready for the school day.

"Some girls get ready in the locker room, but I just walk over to Joanna [Ayala's] house because I feel more comfortable," said Gonzalez.

Whether these 6AM tryouts leave the girls sleepy, energized, annoyed or happy, in the long run the team might actually benefit from the mere fact of working hard and being together.



Kim Jones

Each February, girls varsity soccer players endure two tryouts per day. The morning session is held at 5:50 am, before most WS students are even awake.

Top schools offer simple admissions to top athletes

By Monica Evans
Viewpoint Assistant

In high schools across the country there are countless guidance counselors and teachers who basically shove the idea of college in students' faces every day. There are a small number of students who are in situations that allow them to bypass part of the stressful process of applying and getting accepted to college.

Senior Dale Warden was involved in one of these situations with Brown University. Warden has played on the Varsity football team for three years and was looking to pursue the game at the college level. Brown was also interested in Warden's football aspirations and asked him to play for them. The university even told Warden that they would waive the application essays if he decided to attend their school. Warden said he will not be going to college there due to academic reasons.

"Brown was interested in me for football but...I would fail out so fast," said Warden.

Although Warden won't be attending Brown University this fall, he does have high hopes for attending college somewhere.

"I applied to 12 schools and I've

already got into Shenandoah," said Warden.

Warden hopes to get accepted into Gettysburg, which is his top school. He looks to play football there and major in business.

Another student who gets to circumvent the application process a bit is senior Peter Lalich. The University of Virginia has been interested in Lalich's football ability since he was a freshman. Lalich signed to play football with them on February 7 at 7:00am at the Alexandria Velocity facility where he works. This date was National Signing Day for college football, and is known for the catchy phrase "February 7th at 7."

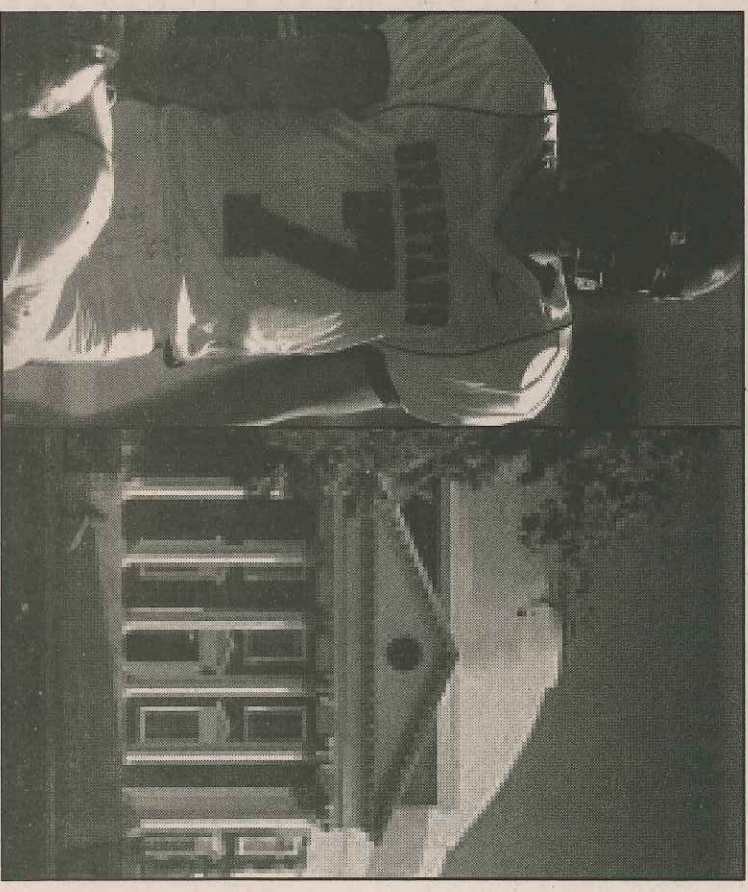
Lalich is aware of the advantage his football playing has brought him.

"I have around a 3.0 and most kids who go [to UVA] have around a 3.9," said Lalich.

In addition to his slightly lower GPA, Lalich also did not have to do any work on his application except for the necessities such as information, but there was no writing, such as essays, involved.

Though many may think this absence of academic issues is unfair, Lalich has his own opinion.

"Yeah, I think it's fair," said Lalich, "because the football team brings in money for the college."



Lifetouch

Senior Peter Lalich was exempted from writing the required essays on UVA's application, because he was awarded a scholarship to play football for the school.

University of Virginia



PHILIP P. GARRETT, D.P.M., F.A.C.F.A.S.
Fellow, American College of Foot & Ankle Surgeons
Diplomate, American Board of Podiatric Surgery

Landmark Professional Building www.landmarkfootandankle.com
5249 Duke Street, Suite 212 Tel: 703-370-2313
Alexandria, VA 22304 Fax: 703-370-2490

From the street to the slopes

By Gauri Khanna

Scoop Editor

Snowboarding and skiing have become popular winter sports among teenagers. Some just find them fun, but others take them more seriously and enter competitions and contend against other snowboarders or skiers.

Because there aren't many slopes in the D.C. area to choose from, skiers and snowboarders must travel quite a distance to find fresh powder. The closer ski resorts include Wintergreen Resort in central Virginia near Charlottesville, Whitetail Resort in Pennsylvania, and Canaan Valley, Snowshoe Mountain, Winterplace and Timberline resorts in West Virginia. Although these are all quality resorts, the temperature is usually



Ben Street

Ben Street performs a trick as he snowboards off a jump. He enjoys his visits to local resorts such as Whitetail and Wintergreen.

not low enough to maintain real snow year round. Often, these resorts can only offer fake snow.

The further west you travel, the more ski resorts increase in quality. According to *Forbes Travel Feature*, the top three ski resorts are as follows: The

Little Nell in Aspen, Colorado, Inn at Beaver Creek in Beaver Creek, Colorado and Fairmont Chateau Whistler in British Columbia, Canada.

Senior Ben Street believes that the best slopes are in Utah, where there is always real snow. Because he goes snowboarding almost every other weekend, he can't travel to the west coast as often as he would like to, so he frequently goes to either Whitetail Resort or Wintergreen Resort.

"[My favorite part of snowboarding is] the freedom of how you can out there all alone and still have fun [and the scariest part is] when you're going so fast that you almost lose control," said Street.

Street has been snowboarding for six years and has landed several injuries. He would tell you that snowboarding and skiing aren't the safest sports. These sports, while they are fun, they can cause serious injuries.

"Last year, I hurt my back and had soft tissue damage, and three bulging discs in my spine," said Street.

WS Playoff Results and Stats

Boys Basketball

1st round of Districts:

vs. Amandale Won 64-58

2nd round of Districts:

vs. Lake Braddock Lost 50-56

1st round of Regionals:

vs. Edison Won 68-57

Girls Basketball

1st round of Districts:

vs. Hayfield Won 66-40

2nd round of Districts:

vs. South County Won 58-48

District Finals

vs. T.C Williams Lost 43-53

1st round of Regionals:

vs. Yorktown Won 55-45

Girls Indoor Track

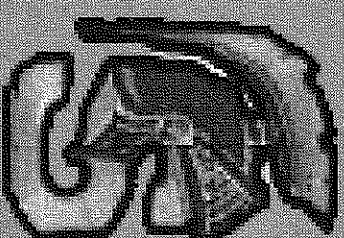
The girls got third in the district this year under West Potomac who finished first and Lake Braddock who finished second. Senior Trish Friederich won the 300 meter dash. Junior rosemary Barber won the 500 meter dash. And the girls 4 by 400 meter relay also got first place.

Gymnastics

This year the girls won the Patriot District. The girls scored a 136.15 which broke the school record. This was the first time in sixteen years that the gymnastics team has won districts.

Boys indoor track

The boys team won districts by 1 point over South County and 1.5 points over Lake Braddock. Andrew Hurst got first in the Triple Jump. Mike Spooner got first in the 1600 and the 3200 meter runs. The boys 4 by 800 meter relay team also won first place.



—Compiled by Samantha Landers

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Hoagies World

Principal Jack Bauer takes over

By Sean Hogan
Oracle Editor

Dr. Smith is not going to be our principal forever.

One day he could decide that he's finished confiscating cell phones and taking care of himself, each other and this place. He could retire to the Pennsylvania countryside. He could be whisked away into being a principal at another school closer to home (or with a better dental plan).

The question remains: if Dr. Smith left, who would replace him? There are always in-house candidates like the four assistant principals. The job, however, could also go to someone outside the walls of WS. Maybe all the way to the Counter Terrorist Unit in Los Angeles.

Okay, so I know that Jack Bauer is a fictional character. But admit it. You've always imagined what it would be like to have him as our principal. Thus, here is

how the year would go if Jack Bauer were principal of WS.

Day 1: Bauer starts the day by visiting Mr. Mason and setting up satellite surveillance of the school grounds.

Day 2: McDonalds loses 85 percent of its lunch sales.

Day 14: Suck-ups are seen carrying olive green messenger bags, copying Bauer.

Day 22: Bauer falls through a vent while doing a "routine" checkup on the English Department.

Day 37: Mr. Gallagher tells Bauer that he doesn't like 24.

Day 38: Gallagher's in-school security clearance goes from five down to one. After already losing access to YouTube, Gallagher loses access to Google Video and Wikipedia.

Day 57: In a routine sit-in during an AP Lit class, the animated Bauer tells the class, "We're running out of time!"



Jordy Serwin

Jack Bauer (with his head placed on Dr. Smith's body), would definitely make some pretty extravagant changes at West Springfield.

Day 78: After a student pulls the fire alarm to avoid taking a final exam, Bauer interrogates the teacher giving the test.

Bauer tells the teacher, "If you don't tell me what I want to know, then it'll just be a question of how much you want it to

foods department has brick oven pizza made right in front of your eyes and a bistro section where you can order steak and cheese sandwiches, macaroni and cheese and much more.

No matter what mood you are in, I am almost positive that this Whole Foods can satisfy all of your hunger needs. After dinner you cannot forget to stop by the espresso and gelato bar to get a scoop of the freshly made in house gelato or sorbet. Not in the mood for ice cream? No problem, you can choose a specialty chocolate from the chocolatier's selection. Easy to get to, plenty of parking, friendly and helpful employees and all of the excellent food you can imagine. I can't see any reason why you wouldn't want to check out the new Whole Foods Market in Fair Lakes.

When you do decide to stop by, I suggest you give yourself a few hours, because you're going to be there for awhile. It's so exciting and intense you'll never want to leave.

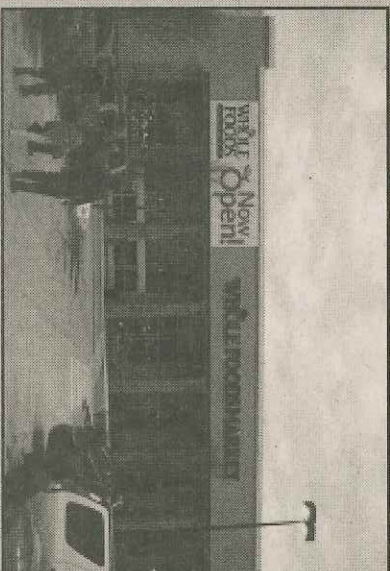
Stevie's Story Grocery shopping taken to a 'Whole' new level

By Stevie Florino
Etic Editor

Whole Foods versus Wegmans, the ultimate grocery store battle. With the newest Whole Foods located in Fair Lakes, Wegmans doesn't stand a chance.

Have you ever heard of a grocery store with a restaurant inside? Well, now you can say you have. Being the largest Whole Foods in the region, the Fair Lakes location has a full Italian restaurant, a sushi bar, a smokehouse, an upstairs wine room, a seafood bar, an espresso and gelato bar and a specialty cheese bar.

The produce department has a fresh squeezed juice bar with extraordinary juice drinks. They juice everything from watermelons to plums. The prepared



Colin Embrey

With the new outstanding Whole Foods in Fair Lakes, business for competing grocery stores is sure to decrease.

Oracle

Fun Facts

100 people choke to death on pens every year.

The most productive day of the work week is Tuesday.

Half of all Americans live within 50 miles of their birthplace.

The most common name in the world is Mohammed.

The most frequently used letter in the English alphabet is E, while the least used letter is Q.

Almost 50% of all bank robberies happen on Friday.

Cats sleep between 16 and 18 hours per day.

—Compiled by Sean Hogan

Each year, there are more than 40,000 toilet-related injuries in the US.

More than 2 billion pencils are used in the US each year.

In an average hour, there are 61,000 people on airplanes in the US.



FEBRUARY/MARCH '07



Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
<p>23 Junior Sack Lunch/ "The Number 23" with Jim Carey premiers in theatres/ Hypnosis the show 7-9 p.m. \$8</p>	<p>24 Baseball 3 p.m. - 11 p.m.</p>	<p>25 Crew's CRASH-B World Indoor Rowing Champs in Boston/ Dance team performs at GMTU Basketball game</p>	<p>26 Feb. 26-March 2 Registration for rising juniors</p>	<p>27 African American Read In at elementary schools</p>	<p>28 Attrus C. Fleming Music Scholarship due (\$1000)</p>	<p>1 District XI MS & HS Band Festivals @ WS Esther Z. Page Service Scholarship Application due</p>
<p>2 Interims/Boys Soccer Scrimmage @ McLean at 7 p.m.</p>	<p>3 Scrimmage @ Fairfax 2 p.m./ DECA Field Trip to NYC leaves at 6 p.m.</p>	<p>4 DECA Field Trip returns to WS at 9 p.m.</p>	<p>5 5-8 SOL English Writing Test/ 5-9 Registration for rising sophomores/ Young Writers Workshop @ UVA Application due</p>	<p>6 Chess Club meets in Room 264 after school</p>	<p>7 Girls Lacrosse Citrus Sale Forms due today to Brian Publick</p>	<p>8 Boys Lacrosse Scrimmage @ St. Albans at 4 p.m./ Girls Soccer Scrimmage v. Westfield at 6:30</p>