

THE ORACLE

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West Springfield High School 6100 Rolling Road Springfield, Virginia 22152

Spartanettes dance straight to the top

By Alyssa Horton
Features Editor

While the rest of the student population slept at 2:15 a.m. a couple of weeks ago, Coach Tara Perez woke up the Spartanettes so that they could leave for NDA Nationals in Florida.

"We were all so exhausted because we really didn't get any sleep," said junior Raven Sellers.

A year's worth of preparation paid off, however, as WS scored fifth overall in

the national competition.

After two days of practice and touring in central Florida, the team headed to Fear Factor Live Auditorium at Universal Studios for preliminaries. The girls were in eighth place after prelims and qualified for finals.

For finals the next day, the dance team competed at the Hard Rock Live and nerves were high as the Spartanettes kept seeing great performances from the other teams.

See DANCE on Page 5.



Kelly Mustion

The Spartanettes stop for a photo outside the Hard Rock Cafe in Orlando where they took fifth place in the Pom category and eighth place in the hip hop category.



Kelly Stipple
Students and faculty battled on the court in the first annual Student vs. Faculty basketball game on Wednesday. Despite being cheered on by other faculty members including Brad Swain, Hollie Wolter and Jim Perocco, the students were victorious with a 48-34 win.



And the beat goes on... Drumline wins every competition this winter

By Ariane Irvine
Senior Staff Writer

WS Drumline recently won first place at regionals, as well as winning in their most recent competition at Edison HS.

"It was intense," said junior Josh Walker. "We walked in with a good attitude and did the best we could and then we won."

One of the favorite parts of these competitions is exciting the audience, according to several members of Drumline.

"[It's] probably the energy," said senior Meredith Berson. "We're really good at connecting with the

audience."

The Drumline's program, called 'Bach, Paper, Scissors', is a mix of songs by Bach and Led Zeppelin. One part of this program entails having the floor painted to look like paper to go along with their theme. "I am particularly proud of the fact that they perform[ed] with such energy," said director Larry Elinus.

In the past year, Drumline has won all three of the competitions it has competed in, including the Winter Guard International (WGI) regional. In their latest competition at Edison, they competed against 12 other teams.

See DRUMLINE on Page 5.

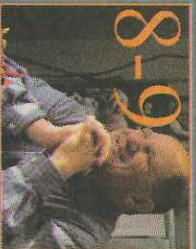


Nancy Baldino

WS Drumline performs at Edison HS on March 10 where they finished in first place at regionals.



Students crash during slippery winter.



Alumni return to WS as teachers.



Photos illustrate trip to Africa.

Rexford has the knowledge for college

Down senior hallway, past the sports lobby and across from the cafeteria, sits a small room filled with computers and pennants known as the Career Center.

Walking into that room makes one feel like there are no limits to what his or her future holds, and Susan Rexford does her best to preserve those feelings.

In that room one can do anything from searching for the perfect college to sitting and eating a quiet lunch.

During the 22 years that Rexford has been with WS, students have had the luxury of using her wisdom and experience to help them during the

college application process.

Both morning and afternoon announcements include a segment called "Career Center News" which provides information about college visits, scholarships and sack lunches. She makes sure that students fully understand any unclear issues about admissions trials.

One of the most important decisions that we students make is where we go to college. It is also one of the most expensive decisions that we make.

Rexford sends every scholarship opportunity that enters her office to our student email addresses so that we are exposed to what is out there.

Besides all of the impersonal aspects of her job, Rexford is willing to work with you by reading and critiquing college essays, showing you informational college websites and even helping you determine the best schedule for the upcoming school year.

In high school, students have heard more than our share of college warnings and lectures. Even if it may seem like you can't take much more, Rexford has been on college tours and gotten to know admissions officers personally, so her advice is worth taking.

Seniors Coles Ide, Amy Zinicola, Julia Repa, Kat Macklin, Brianna Gays, Ryan Yohe, Lauren DeGiorgi and junior Cori Inman pose for a quick picture at winter formal.

Walking into the career center makes one feel like there are no limits to what his or her future holds.

So next time reality hits and you start freaking out about future life-altering decisions (and you will), you now have the directions, so take a trip down to the career center. Mrs. Rexford will point you in right direction.

Editorial

Winter formal wins over students

By Alyssa Horton

Features Editor

After Homecoming I was a little skeptical about attending Winter Formal. I did not want to go to another dance with bad music, lights on and faculty monitoring our every move.

I am glad that I decided to go though because Winter Formal was awesome. Out of the five school dances that I have attended it was possibly one of the best. I give the SGA a round of applause for their planning and execution of Winter Formal.

The big playing cards on the walls and other decorations added to the Las Vegas theme. I was also happy to see that only one light was on in the cafeteria and it was covered with a blue transparency, making it

less bright.

Another major plus at Winter Formal was the music. People really took advantage of their ability to request music ahead of time on the DJ's website. The DJ kept things going by interacting with us, and even though he went a little over the top when he mentioned the basketball game we had recently lost about five times, it made the dance more interesting. The main reason the music was so great was because the staff did not tell the DJ what he could and could not play, like they did at Homecoming. Thank you so much.

The glow sticks thrown to us while we danced definitely boosted the energy in the room and everyone went crazy. It was fun to see everyone jumping up and down and spinning glow sticks above their heads.



Colin Embrey

It was also great to dance without interruption from the faculty, since at Homecoming they were patrolling through the dance floor.

After the dance, while my friend and I were walking to the car, we both agreed that Winter Formal was the best school dance we have ever been to.

I hope that SGA will continue to plan future dances just like this one, because if they do, everyone will go home happy and satisfied.

Bathrooms are unbearable

By Jordy Serwin

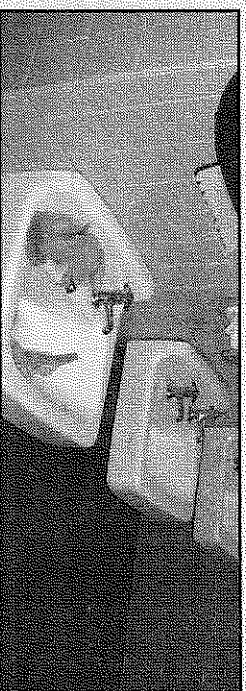
Oracle Editor

FCPS is one of the most highly regarded and well funded school districts in the country and parents fight hand-over-first to get their kids into WS. If only our school bathrooms reflected such prestige.

Students' disregard for cleanliness and personal hygiene when using WS's latrine facilities undermines all that our school represents. I tend not to

worry about the bathrooms' cleanliness because the janitors do quite an excellent job picking up after those individuals who ought to pick up after themselves (you know who you are). It is the bathrooms' functional disrepair that is of far greater concern.

Too often, I encounter bathroom fixtures and devices that don't perform their intended functions. For example, a lock on a stall door won't work or is missing entirely. A toilet or



Colin Embrey

Students disregard manners when it comes to restrooms. Paper towels aren't thrown away and in turn flood the sinks. Urinal fails to flush or flushes too much. The toilet paper dispenser jams. The sink only drizzles freezing-cold water. The paper towel dispenser is completely devoid of towels. A visit that should take two

minutes ends up taking the better part of five.

It's unreasonable to expect a high school bathroom to be free of graffiti and other defacing marks on most available surfaces. I don't think it's

unreasonable to expect my bathroom to work. I've visited roadside bathrooms at gas stations with working sinks, dispensers, trash cans, stalls and toilets that make those at WS seem like a wad of wet toilet paper.

I don't mean to suggest the school should purchase gold toilets (the seats would get oh so cold), but it would be nice to actually use one with an intact flusher lever, or a urinal that doesn't overflow. Nothing would benefit more students and faculty than upgrading WS's pathetic bathrooms.

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Junior Packets create comfort, confusion

Pro

By Sean Hogan
Oracle Editor

The movie “300” nearly disproves my thoughts.

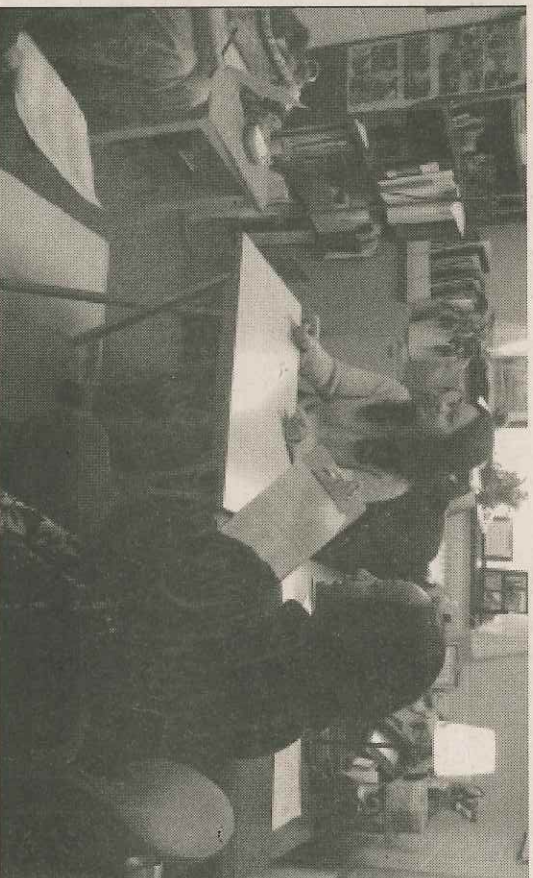
Just as it’s impossible for an army of a few thousand to defeat an army of a few hundred thousand, it is almost impossible for nine counselors to know 2200 students personally.

The premise for the “Junior Packet” is that they help counselors get to know their students well enough to write a reference letter that is good enough to send to colleges along with their transcripts.

I can use myself as an example. My counselor, Esther Pincus, had in writing how I felt about myself and my high school career, how my parents describe me and how two of my teachers felt about my contribution to their classes.

As a supplement to a 30-minute interview, the junior packet is an excellent source of information for counselors to base a reference letter on. The packets give counselors an edge when writing recommendations because they can reference the information at their convenience. That way, no details are overlooked when formulating a recommendation.

At the very least, students can figure out what they want to do after high school while filling out their packets. There are thought provoking items inside of the packet that make students think about who they are as people and what they can do to improve their talents.



Molly Cushing
Counselor Vicky Campbell assists her students in class registration. She is also responsible for writing college recommendation letters.

The packets give counselors an edge when writing recommendations. No details are overlooked.

The idea of a junior packet is an effective way for counselors to make their jobs easier, and at the same time improve the quality of college recommendations.

Without these packets, counselors would interview students with little previous knowledge of their academic histories other than their transcript. Even if the packets seem like a nuisance for juniors to do, they provide beneficial information to counselors so they can advise students during their post-high school preparation process.

Con

By Sunnie Ko
Senior Staff Writer

This is Sunnie. She says she is kind, caring and a hard worker. Please admit her into (insert college name here). Thanks.

The Junior Packet is a burden on every student who has to fill it out.

Although the packet has been revised (removing such Myspace-ish questions such as “what is your favorite book and why?”) it is still an informal and inefficient way for counselors to write a quality recommendation.

The packet requires you to “self-assess” yourself which is ultimately asking you to say how awesome you are, how awesomely hard your life has

been and how awesome you are at school.

I would have to say that in my senior class there are a handful of people I would consider amazing students, meaning they work hard, study and do their homework...at home. So for those of us who are trying not to lose our minds in the chaos of college, what are we supposed to write for answers to questions like “Describe your academic strengths?”

“I’m really good at doing my second period homework during fourth period and staying awake when I’m working on three hours of sleep.”

There are a limited number of questions in the packet aimed toward finding out anything about character or who you are which is what your recommendation is supposed to highlight. Colleges already know what kind of student you are by your grade point average and SAT scores.

An average student on paper could be superior in person.

The Junior Packet also, in a way, suggests that it is OK for counselors not to get to know their students better. I understand that it is almost impossible for a counselor to meet and get to know every student, but the packet is no substitute for a handshake or an occasional “hello.”

It might as well be allowed for students to write their own recommendation and submit it to their colleges, which they already do in the form of an essay.

I may not be the best student in the world, but I have tons more to offer than my knowledge in equations and literary terms.

School security increases for the sake of our safety

New measures a good idea

By Kelly Sipple
News Editor

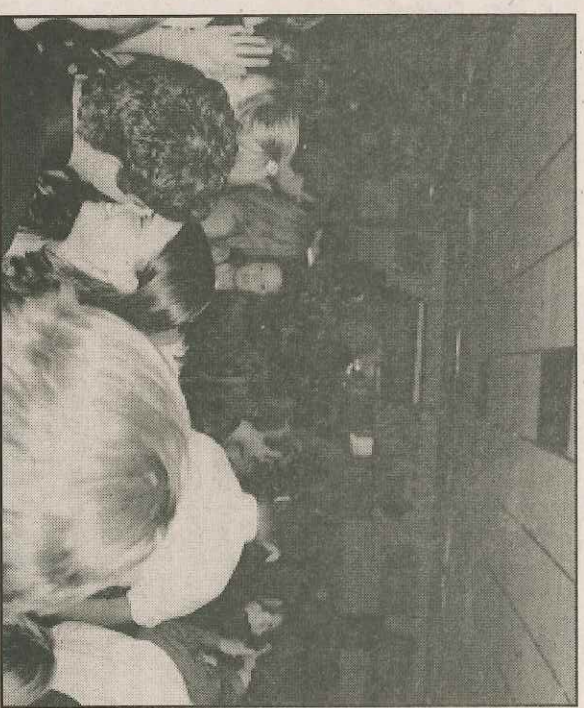
Security has noticeably increased at WS over the last several months.

This increase was evident at the most recent pep rally when administrators, teachers, and other faculty members stood at every door, making sure students did not sneak out of school early.

Though this measure is unfortunate for students trying to leave, it was necessary given the high number of students who tried to duck out early.

Another example of the increased security occurred at the Winter Formal where there was not only WS security was present, but also Fairfax County police officers at the door, in the parking lot and on the streets surrounding the school.

Walking into the entrance of the Las Vegas themed dance, there was a female police officer on the right, undoubtedly smelling for alcohol, drugs, or any illegal substances and standing



Sarah Wink
During the Homecoming dance the lights were left on to avoid questionable behavior, a method ensuring student security.

guard in case anything got out of control. More than anything else, the police officer and other security personnel served as a warning to students to be on their best behavior.

For those who break the law, this hindrance may seem like an invasion of their privacy. But, school dances, sporting events, and after-school programs are not the place for illegal activity and for the sake of the rest of the student body, and it is commendable that the administration is not only

taking care of this place, but looking out for everyone.

The administration has performed lockdown drills so WS would be well prepared for any emergency. These drills will hopefully protect students and faculty from harm, while also easing some fears of disaster.

Until a brick wall surrounds the school and students enter through metal detectors, the school cannot possibly be 100 percent safe. However, it is nice knowing that every measure possible is being taken to protect those at WS.

Some sports get picked dead last

By Aaron Snow
Senior Staff Writer

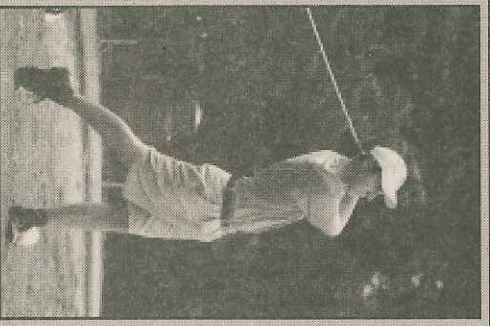
A few weeks ago as I was gazing down the long line of eager students ready to purchase final four T-shirts, I felt a certain degree of resentment that we were perhaps disrespecting the accomplishments of other sports teams.

By putting extreme emphasis on the achievements of more popular sports like football and basketball, we undermine the hard work and effort that other sports put into having successful seasons.

I understand that the basketball team playing in the regional semifinals is a great achievement, but other sports have accomplished more this year and received far less recognition.

The boys cross country team, for instance, finished sixth in the state with Mike Spooner taking first place individually. The main focus of the school at the time, however, seemed to be on the football team winning a meaningless game at the end of a poor season.

Sports such as track, gymnastics, golf, and swim



Molly Cushing
The golf team went to regionals, yet did not receive the same kind of recognition as other varsity sports.

and dive consistently have excellent seasons but we hear very little about them.

It is not a matter of one sport being better than another. I certainly don’t expect to see fans lining up to attend a golf match. I know that 90 percent of students find golf boring. I would simply like our team to be treated with respect equal to that of other teams. If we advance to the region tournament that should be equally as noteworthy as any other team advancing to regionals.

The work all our student athletes put into their respective sports is astounding, thus when any team performs well it is the culmination of that hard work that deserves appreciation regardless of the popularity of the sport.

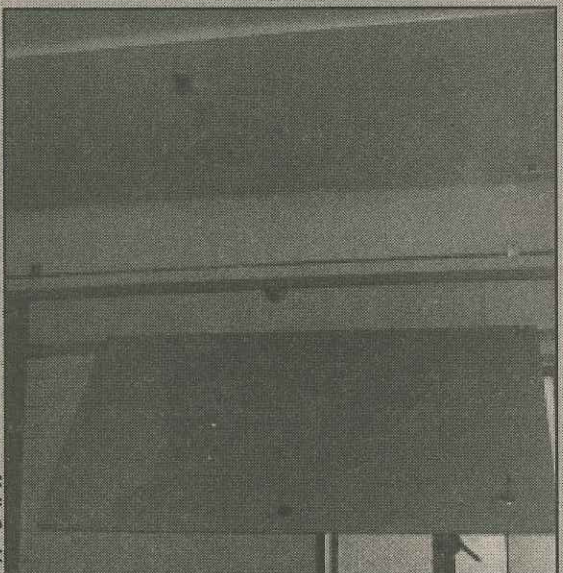
A fund-raiser could fuel building improvements

Here's a journalistic tidbit for you: An editorial expresses the viewpoint of the majority of the newspaper's staff. That's why it doesn't have a byline, and uses the personal pronoun "we" instead of "I." The following is an editorial that expresses the viewpoint of this year's Journalism I class.

At WS, the plumbing leaks, the floors are literally caving in, the heat and air conditioning are hardly functional and the vents ooze an unidentifiable substance.

The plumbing is more than 40 years old. In almost every bathroom, the water pressure of the faucets is either full blast or a trickle. It's not rare to see water spraying unnecessarily from toilets trying to flush. The boys bathroom downstairs in the math hallway floods regularly. And upstairs, the boys bathroom in the Sports Lobby backs up—into their locker room.

It's safe to say every student, teacher and staff member here is warm-blooded. This means we don't have the ability to adjust our body temperature to our surroundings. This is unfortunate, because the heat and air conditioning systems seem to fail us frequently. Switching classes can be similar to traveling from Antarctica to an inferno. The air conditioner in the gym doesn't even work.



Molly Cushing
In a building more than 41 years old, many of the bathroom stall doors don't shut properly.

Has anyone noticed kids falling down in senior hall? It's not just because the seniors are tripping them. There's a two-inch dip at the corner of Hollywood & Vine where the floor is sinking. The administration in-

Editorial

sists that it's not hazardous, and will be fixed over the summer.

We never can be sure, however, what "this summer" really means. In the past, it has meant the summer after this summer, and sometimes even the one after that.

More plans for summer improvements also optimistically include new visitor's side bleachers, widening the track from six to eight lanes and replacing the sun-bleached scoreboard.

WS is not on the FCPS renovation waiting list for the next five years. The juggling of building and renovating elementary, middle and high schools can understandably be difficult, as well as expensive. But WS is more than 40 years old, and we're not getting any younger.

We're not saying WS needs to be a palace, but it'd be nice if we didn't have to worry about dodging a mysterious slime dripping from the ceiling. A simple fund-raiser might gather a significant amount of money, especially if the students knew it was going toward bathroom doors that actually shut.

Pass the trans-fat

Ready-to-eat culture stuffs us all with the wrong attitude

By Valerie LaPointe
Special to The Oracle

AP English Language students were asked to write an opinion piece, modeled on those they have read in The Washington Post, The New York Times and Newsweek. Here is one offering.

When you're cruising down the aisle in your local grocery store searching for your next meal, you will find no shortage of prefab processed food items that make home-cooked meals more processed than ever.

From cake mixes, to 10-minute rice, pre-made cookie dough, cake icing in a can, frozen lasagna, microwaveable TV dinners, hot cereal mix and Pop Tarts, there is never of shortage of easy alternatives to real meals made from scratch.

But before you load your place up with frozen lasagna, to be followed by a slice of Duncan Hines rainbow confetti cake topped with chocolate icing from a can, how about some food for thought: Did you know that what you are eating is bad for you?

While this may seem like a half-baked question, it would appear that the answers many Americans would give you would make you choke on your ramen noodles. Yet, when trans-fatty acids started making headlines nationwide as being the prime ingredient of some of America's favorite mealtime pleasures, people were shocked and even appalled that their favorite processes delights were, in fact, putting them on the fast track to heart disease, diabetes and obesity.

The recent scare over trans-fat has finally given Americans the push they have needed for years to cut processed and fried foods out of their diets, and has given major food suppliers as a big incentive to make reforms.

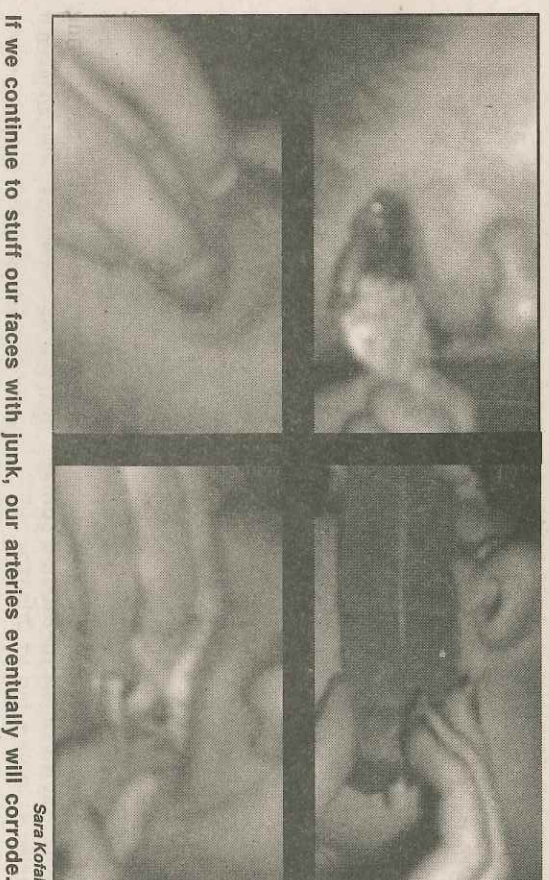
All in all, however, very little will change as a result.

Here comes the surprise of the century, the big secret that Mrs. Crocker and the little white doughboy never wanted you to know: Processed foods and ready-to-bake anything isn't good for you. While we wait for your heart rate to get back to normal, here's something else

you should probably know: Trans-fats are found in nearly all fried foods that come out of fast food restaurants. TV dinners, cake, brownie and cookie mixes and most other fried items like doughnuts and potato chips. If only these delectable items didn't have the deadly killer trans-fat, then obviously you could eat them without fearing for yourself or your coronary arteries, right? Wrong.

In case you missed "Super Size Me" or *Fast Food Nation*, allow me to fill you in on the not-so-well-kept secret: These foods would be bad for you with or without the trans-fat. Yes, it's true that the levels of trans-fat in these foods make them unhealthy, but what about the regular fat, saturated fat, sugar, cholesterol and calories you are stuffing down your throat and into your heart valves with every bite?

Fortunately for the very plump American public, the whole controversy over trans-fat has turned enough stomach-acts



Sara Khalil
If we continue to stuff our faces with junk, our arteries eventually will corrode.

from health-conscious consumers do not want to broadcast that their products contain trans-fat, so those sneaky, knife-wielding capitalists lower the serving size on the label. The small numbers start to add up, and before you can say "Can I get that supersized?" you have already ingested far more than the safe daily amount of trans-fat, which, like the nutritional value in a Ho-Ho, is zero.

Ideas are even being tossed around to ban trans-fat all together, which I think would

Did we ban Peeps once it was discovered that they had absolutely no nutritional value? Absolutely not, and have Hostess, Little Debbie, McDonald's, KFC, Burger King and countless other organizations like these go out of business? Of course not.

Obviously, Americans have a death wish. But I say, let us have it. The foods that rid themselves of trans-fats will still be unhealthy, so why bother fixing a small leak in a roof that's already causing your house to flood?

The public should be informed, and labels should be placed on foods containing the fats, but if you choose to eat them anyway and only live until you are 25 years old, more power to you.

If Americans haven't figured out by now that their favorite chocolate-covered, creme-filled doughnut from Krispy Kreme is not helping them to elongate their lives, and is actually only helping to widen the size of their eventual coffin, then Darwinism prevails. Only the fittest will survive, and I doubt you will find them eating at McDonald's.

If Americans haven't figured out by now that their favorite doughnut from Krispy Kreme is not helping them to elongate their lives, then Darwinism prevails. Only the fittest will survive, and I doubt you will find them eating at McDonald's.



over at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that they have instigated a policy that requires all products to be labeled as such. While this is taking a bite out of the problem, though, it is not solving it all together. Many companies, under pressure

are in a lot of foods we consume, and yes, they offer no benefits other than they are cheap ingredients and extend the shelf-life of a product, but did we take Twinkies off the market once someone figured out they were bad? No.

WS art student receives prestigious scholarship

By Sarah Alvarez
Viewpoint Editor

of art and architecture which he drew himself as in one of the award-winning acrylic paintings.

Aspiring artist, senior Rae Kyu Park won a prestigious scholarship for his outstanding achievements in the Virginia College Savings Plan Poster Competition. This is not his first encounter with prize winning accomplishments he has won gold stars in past competitive evaluations. The competition was a great opportunity for his developing interest in the field

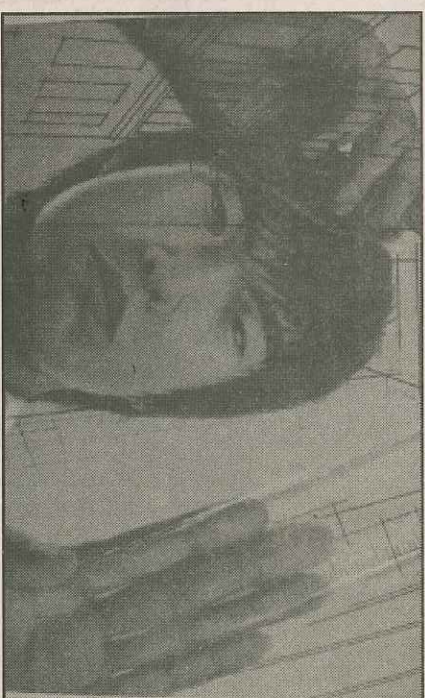
His curiosity and motivation led to statewide success earning him \$36,000 in a college savings account. Park heard of the poster contest through his three art classes. With no certain artistic inspiration, he worked industriously to create three masterpieces that are on display in the main lobby.

Kathleen Rehm his *AP art Portfolio* teacher describes

Park as, "tuned in and focused," said Rehm, "he's lovely to work with."

Park painted and drew most of his drawings in the comfort of his home and with the creative shelter of JR studios. The magnitude of Park's ambition is staggering. He worked on Saturdays for as long as 8 hours for two months.

The importance of the scholarship to Park kept him awake for more than a day, "I didn't sleep for two days for it," said Park. Because of



Erica Gleason

Above is part of the painting which won senior Rae Kyu Park an impressive \$36,000 scholarship from the Virginia College Savings Plan Poster Competition.

Syracuse, MICA, and School of Art Institute of Chicago, his motivation was constant and all the while he does what he loves because, "it's fun," said Park.

Dance finishes amongst the best

DANCE from Page 1.

"All of the teams really stepped up their game this year," said senior captain Sara Kofalt.

When it was time for awards, the girls walked onto the stage and sat down among the other teams. They held hands and waited nervously for their team name to be called as the NDA officials announced higher places and gave bigger trophies. The fifth-place finish cemented the Spartanettes' reputation as one of the best high school dance teams in the country.

All work and no play makes a Florida trip quite dull, so team members made sure to include visits to a couple of well-known Orlando-area attractions during their trip. Several of the girls had taken it upon themselves to make tie-dye shirts,

hair ribbons and flip-flops for the team to wear while they were in Florida, so everyone was synchronized in blue and orange for their day at Disney World.

"We thought it would be really cute if all of us matched," said sophomore Lisa Howard. "Plus, it makes you look more intimidating to the other teams."

The dance team also went to Universal Studios and wore matching pink tie-dye shirts with black shorts this time. While at Universal the girls went on The Mummy about five times. On this ride there were two men on stilts dressed in Egyptian outfits standing outside, looking very intimidating.

Later on, when the dance team headed back to The Mummy after lunch, sophomore Claire Percoco and senior captain Michelle Feinberg walked into

the building and were surprised by one of the "Egyptian men." Feinberg and Percoco both screamed and fell to the floor laughing.

"That was pretty much the scariest thing that's ever happened to me," said Feinberg.

Nothing could have been as scary, however, as waiting for the results after the competition was over. The coach knew that waking up so early that Thursday morning had been worth it. "I'm so proud of all of you," Perez told the girls after they walked off the stage.

After landing at Dulles and coming back to school, all of the girls wanted to do one thing.

"I want to go back to Florida right now," said sophomore Tia Green.



Kelly Musilion

The Spartanettes stop for a photo on their way to Universal Studios during their victorious trip to Orlando.

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Amy Zinicola

Senior Ben Trump is comfortable doing anything from being a Forensics state championship to dressing in drag for a WS winter pep rally.

Trump stars in documentary made for European audiences

By Krista Pedersen
Scoop Editor

Ben Trump will be a superstar. At least, he will be in the world of British educational documentaries made by third-party filmmakers. The senior has been shadowed off and on since last summer by Jonathan Levitt, the American founder of the Stanford Film Society who moved to England in 1999 to pursue film. Levitt's newest film will record the lifestyle of high school seniors.

"I went to Boys State over the summer, and in Boys State you're divided into cities," said Trump. "[Levit] was there filming and said I was the best speaker. He's based in England but [the documentary] is intended for audiences in England, Denmark and Norway."

Trump has been a standout student at WS, competing in Forensics and Boys Volleyball. He is a founding member of WSSSAAA, and was a state champion in Foreign Extemporaneous speaking for Forensics last year. While its not quite dressing in drag and donning a blond wig at pep rallies, public speaking is still something he's quite good at.

"[Ben] is of course exceptionally bright, he's very articulate, he's a very strong leader, he has been behind the success of things," said senior class administrator Mike Mukai. "I'd like to see [this documentary]."

Trump expects the documentary to be done in the fall. Since it is based on the high school experience, his part will be over after June.

"[Levit] is coming to graduation basically to film," said Trump, "but its specifically veered to senior year high school."

Forensics team dominates its competition

WINNERS from Page 1. Freshman Justin Strickland, who won first place in poetry. "I related to that and found other [poems about monsters under the bed]."

The speech team now heads to the state tournament in Harrisonburg on March 31, while the debate team will compete in its regional tournament at Yorktown. Wynne brought in Hagy to become coach debate after meeting her while Hagy was working her fulltime job as a nurse.

"Debate is about three things: Research, writing and speaking," said Hagy. "We concentrate on each area."

Tournaments feature three categories: Policy, Lincoln-

Douglas and student congress, however student congress goes straight to regionals. The team totaled 15 points to win by seven

"If one person fails you can lose the tournament as a whole."

—Sloane Lipkin, senior

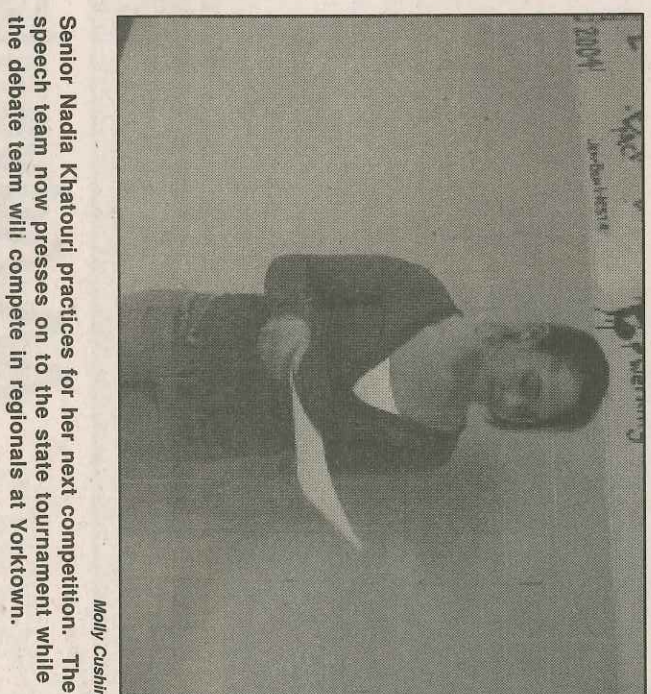
with each student competing in four rounds.

"You see all of these people in suits going through research," said senior Lincoln-Douglas captain Sloane Lipkin. "There's

pressure on you to make the team look good because if one person fails you can lose the tournament as a whole."

While the Lincoln-Douglas category switches topics every two months, the policy category maintains the same topic throughout the year. This year's policy topic is national service programs, which each policy debater spent days collecting information about. Junior policy captain David Bae alone has filled three plastic tubs with 70 pounds of paper. He does try to avoid pretentious notions about himself though.

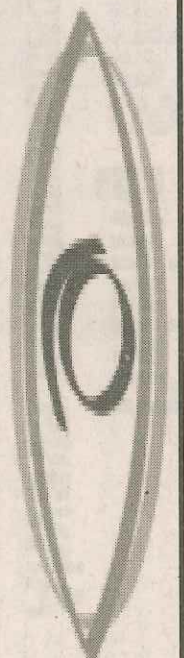
"I just like to screw around in debates," said Bae. "I debate so I can have fun, that or I sing a song."



Molly Cushing

Senior Nadia Khatouri practices for her next competition. The speech team now presses on to the state tournament while the debate team will compete in regionals at Yorktown.

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Students slide to disaster

Inexperienced drivers struggle in icy weather

By Erika Gleason
News Editor

Screaming tires, slick roads, and two very frazzled teenage drivers are all ingredients for a disaster.

Teenagers are notorious for getting in car accidents. Sometimes alcohol, illegal substances, and distractions are involved, but in some cases accidents are not preventable. The likelihood of a teenager getting in an accident is incredibly high. While sometimes the drivers are to blame, other times it is just a lack of experience or confidence in driving ability that teenagers can only overcome with practice.

Junior Ina Gonzales was a passenger in a minor car accident while traveling to school on Thursday, March 8th. The senior who was driving the car hit a patch of ice at the intersection of Rolling and Greeley and slammed into another car about to turn.

"I was shocked," said Gonzales. "It was so sudden."

Drivers' Ed teacher Sue Spatcher has a lifetime of knowledge about the rules

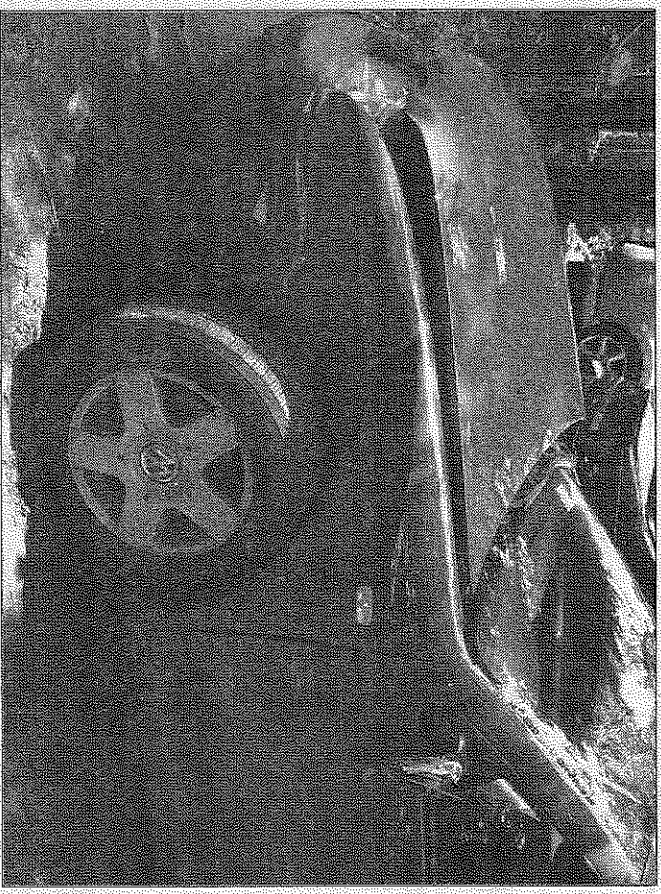
of the road and, even more importantly, how to drive safely.

"There's nothing you can do about ice [on the road]," said Spatcher. "Kids should not be driving in those conditions. That's why they have the big yellow cheese [bus]."

So while not all accidents can be prevented, it is important for young people to know beforehand what to do. "[In case of a car accident, it is important for drivers] to have a 'cheat sheet' with them," said Spatcher. "It doesn't matter if [they're] 116 like me or 16, [they're] going to be scared."

In high-pressure situations such as these it is common for drivers to draw a blank and forget to obtain valuable information such as the other driver's name, insurance information, and phone number. A "cheat sheet" serves as a reminder of what to do in case of an accident.

Spatcher also suggests taking pictures of the crash either with a camera or regular camera to show how the accident looked before the cars were moved.



Sara Kiehl
A student suffers the consequences of being a distracted driver. Wintny mixes created treacherous roads that made it difficult for inexperienced drivers.

And it is not just accidents that present problems for new drivers. Changing tires and jump-starting dead batteries are very dangerous to perform and require that the driver know exactly what they're doing. In this situation, the best thing to do to call a parent, AAA, Spatcher, "and pray for the best to or someone with previous experience."

Variety of acts dazzle show

By Katie Costello
Oracle Editor

From electric violins to Mortal Kombat fighting, the participants of the 2007 WS Talent Show unveiled a multitude of hidden talents in front of an eager audience.

The night began with exciting moves from seniors Ben Kirsch and David Nelson, as they modeled "Mortal Kombat", complete with flips, kicks and the breaking of a board over Kirsch's head gave an impressive ending to the act.

Duets took much of the stage including a performance by seniors Lauren Hidalgo and Molly Cushing that caused the audience to sway their cell phones in the air, as well as a theatrical duet from the play, "Popular" that lived up to its name.

"[Freshman] Meghan Fraedrich wanted to do the song and she needed [the character] Elphaba so she said 'Lauren, you're doing the talent show with me,'" said freshman Lauren Brown.

Senior Carlo Canlas performed in a duet, group and solo act using his electric violin and technology that gave his performance and unique sound.

"I was using a loopstation," said Canlas. "It allows you to record and play a layer of music."

Much of his solo act was surprisingly done on the spot.

"I had a completely different act," said Canlas. "Two nights before the show I came up with a whole new act and ended up improvising a lot of it."

A dance performance by the Fresh Boyz was one of the few group acts and caused as much enthusiasm from the audience as its original group, The Fresh Five, did in last year's talent show.

"Two of the boys from the Fresh Five left so we had to change the name," said freshman Kobbie Turkson. "This is my first year."

The complicated dance moves and energy between the dancers led the Fresh Boyz to second place.

"I was happy [we won]," said Turkson. "We were all happy."

All of the acts were introduced with humorous openings by MCs, seniors Lauren Hidalgo, Ryan Yohe and Amy Zinicola. They had everything from corny bar jokes to the Macarena.

The winner of the Talent Show was Canlas, his 11 years of playing the violin leading him to a third and first place award.

"I was surprised," said Canlas. "I wasn't expecting to win."

Whether it be a whimsical duet, a lively group or going solo, WS showed that its students are not limited in their abilities.

"I enjoyed all of it," said Canlas. "There was a lot much talent in each of the acts."

Drumline keeps winning record

DRUMLINE from Page 1

"It's fun," said junior Kelsey Clinton. "It's exciting to see people from other schools, because we're all interested in the same thing."

The Drumline members were all pleased with their performance.

"It made it seem worth it," said junior Stephanie Zok. "[But] we're only halfway through the season, so there's definitely room for improvement."

The next competition, on March 24, will be held in Coatesville, Pennsylvania.

"[The best part is] performing [and] playing, because it's the only thing I like to do," said Walker. "It's what I love."



Nancy Baldwin
WS Drumline, here in a competition at Edison HS in March, has not lost yet this winter season.

Different cultures collide during International Night

By Stephanie Aguilar
Features Editor

The auditorium was packed with culture and energy along with lively presentations that depicted the home lands of many WS students. Costumes adorned the stage and a burst of an ethereal mood was vented off to the audience.

On March 8, the annual International Night was held by the Hispanic Heritage Club.

The success was big, with 232 tickets sold. One of the biggest differences from last year was that it was held at night, unlike last year where it was in the afternoon, and was one of the primary reasons they believed contributed to the high level of

attendance this year at International Night.

"It was a really good idea to have the show at night because people definitely came out more," said sponsor of HHC, Susan Lampazzi.

The focus of the special night is to depict the different cultures that revolve around WS and its students. It's also a chance for ethnic students to show off unique talents on stage.

"We try to invite kids at this school that can bring their home cultures and not make it just a Hispanic cultural show," said Lampazzi.

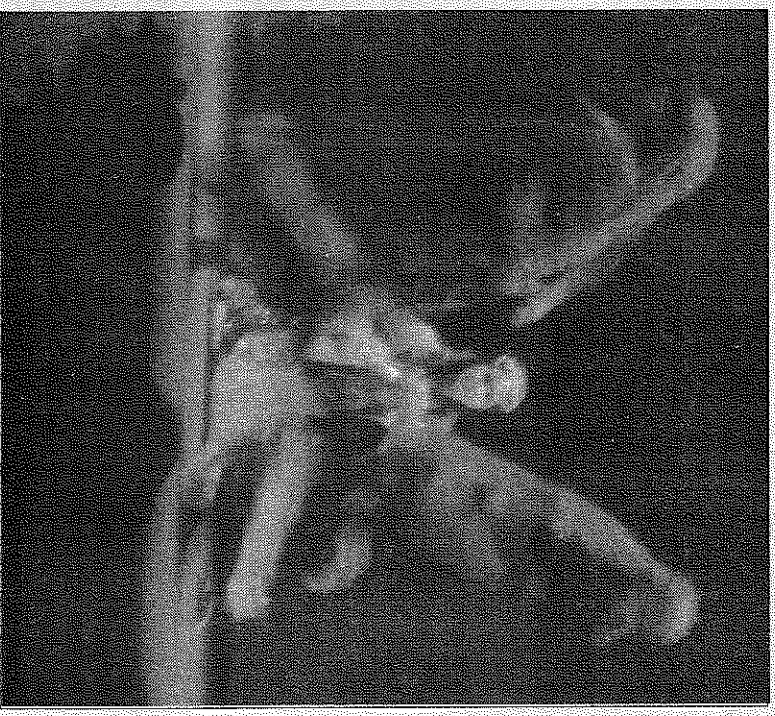
There was a total of seven presentations, ranging from a folkloric Bolivian dance,

Caporales, to an Attan and Afghan freestyle group, called Goodigats.

"One thing that was different was that we didn't have as many groups as last year but the quality was excellent," said Lampazzi.

After the performances, there was food being sold by the Spanish Honor Society and a North African group called Habesha. The money went to their separate fundraising group. Lasting for about an hour, the show was a complete success.

"I think that this is the start of a really introduced international night at WS," said senior C.C. Castro, president of HHC.



Sara Kiehl
Junior Rana Zamani cheers on WS graduate Alla Kazani and junior Wida Razaq as they perform a traditional Afghan dance at International Night.

New teacher on the Block

By Ariane Irvine
Senior Staff Writer

Some students might find it disturbing to have their teacher reminisce about attending WS.

Amy Block's students don't think so.

"[She talks about it] all the time," said senior Margaret Heine. "She [has] told stories about pranks on teachers and about falling down the stairs freshman year."

Block, who teaches English 10 Honors and English 12, graduated from WS in 2002. She says that her experiences in high school made her want to become a teacher.

"My favorite class was Early Child Care," she said. "It set me up for what I'm doing now."

After graduation, Block attended Capital University in Columbus, Ohio, where she double majored in English and Education. Then she came back to Fairfax, even though when she applied, she wasn't specifically looking for a job at WS.

"I came back to the county because I love Fairfax," said Block. "It was pure chance that I got into WS, but of course I said yes. I like the way the administration runs the school, and I like all the people that make it West Springfield."

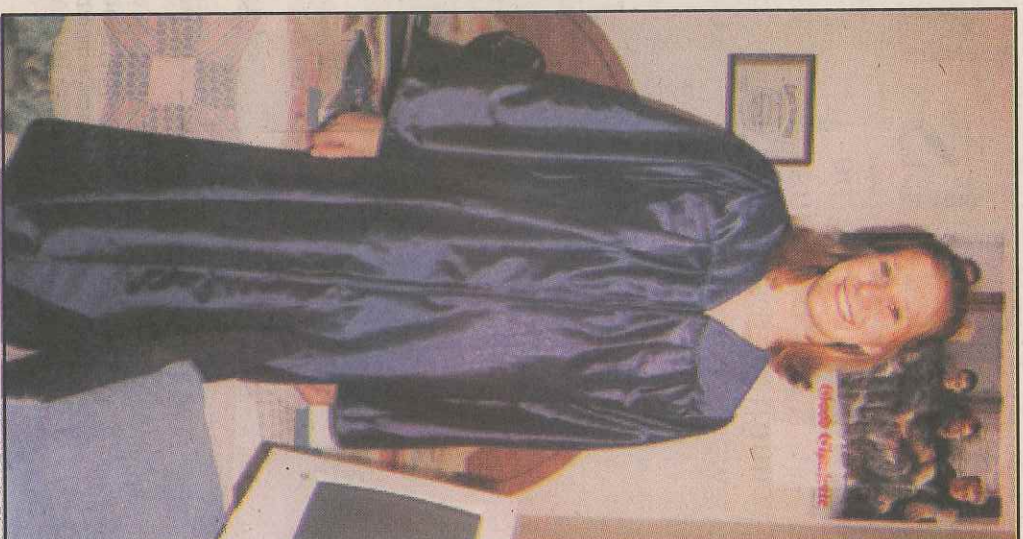
Several teachers who taught Block still work at WS, including Jennifer Beach, who was her freshman English teacher.

"She seems pretty much the same, but grown up," said Beach.

Her students think that the fact that Block has gone through the same experiences that they have helps her relate to them.

"It's a lot of fun," said sophomore Erin Battle. "It's a lot more fun than any other English class I've had recently. She talks a lot about the teachers she used to have here."

Students also like Block's youthful style of teaching.



Block Family Photo

Before her high school graduation from WS, Amy Block poses for a photo. Block graduated from WS in 2002 and after getting a degree in English and Education at Capital University, teaches English at WS.

"It's lively," said senior Patrick Bass. "We always have something to talk about. She always puts in her own two cents."

Block tries to keep English and the books the students read for class interesting to her students by making it relate to them and to their lives.

"They are still important today," she said. "People are still interested in the same things."

"Even if I'm not in New York writing, I'll always be a writer," said Dombrow. "Even if I'm not in West Springfield being a teacher, I'll always be teaching. Changing careers never really changes who you are."

When Dombrow came back to teach at WS, he found the school just as he remembered it — almost.

"The building looks exactly the same," he said. "[Except] there's more wall art that actually makes it more inviting and less like a hospital."

Even if Dombrow did want to seclude himself in his office, he would have a hard time escaping his students. During his lunch, there are usually several chatting with him or using his supplies to finish their homework. His walls are covered with head shots of former and current students as well as group pictures of his performing groups.

"He's not your conventional teacher because he's really young," said senior Jasmine Mahboob. "He really just kind of

goes with the flow. He's not afraid to be friends with his students."

Dombrow hopes his classes will show his students the importance of music.

"[I want my students] to keep an open mind to what music is and as performers to always take risks because it's risks that will always make you a better performer in the end," said Dombrow.

He believes that the classes he took in high school helped him to be the person he is today.

"While I don't use calculus in my day to day, classes like that helped me to be a better problem solver and critical thinker in all walks of life," said Dombrow.

Always one to cherish and take advantage of his surroundings, Dombrow says he still has the same Spartan spirit that he had as an SGA officer.

"You have to [have school spirit]," said Dombrow. "What's the point of not loving where you are?"

Better shape up! PE teacher helps kids stay fit

By Erika Gleason
News Editor

Brian Puhlick is used to wandering the halls of WS, not only as a teacher but also as a student.

Between fall of 1986 and summer of 1990, Puhlick himself was a Spartan. He then went on to Longwood University, where in his sophomore year he decided to major in Education.

"I changed majors like three times," said Puhlick.

He didn't originally plan to come back to his alma mater to teach PE.

"It was my first job offer, so I took it. I was thrilled to come back to WS," said Puhlick.

He was even a former student of PE teacher Sue Spatcher.

"I got an 'A' in her class, I love sports. We got along great. As a colleague, it was a little weird at first, [but] it's been great," said Puhlick.

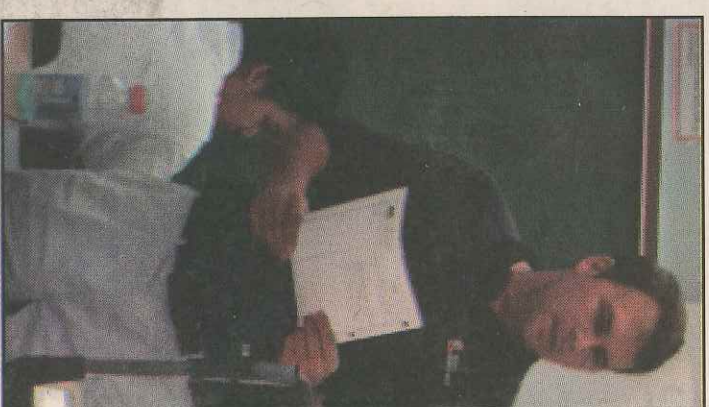
A love for sports was not the only thing Puhlick further developed during his years as a WS student.

"I found that taking three years of French was useful," Puhlick said.

As a PE teacher, it is often hard to grade students based on their athletic ability because people are talented in different areas. Puhlick recognizes this and grades his students accordingly.

"I put a lot of emphasis on effort," Puhlick said. "I grade on improvement, not how 'good' they are. If the person gives an honest effort, I can work with them and help them improve in some area."

Puhlick is also the head coach of



PE teacher Brian Puhlick teaches a lacrosse player in the '06 season, Puhlick assists La

Dombrow shows his range

By Christina Sohn

Managing Editor

Choral director Michael Dombrow's office could be the perfect place for a recluse. The small room is filled with two desks, a refrigerator, piles of paper and a large white computer.

But Dombrow is not the type to confine himself to a small space.

Instead, during the school day, he can be found directing Madrigals, Ladies Select or Spartan Choir in the chorus room or leaning against the vending machine in the sports lobby as he watches Personality sing and dance energetically.

After school, he may be in the auditorium with the cast of "Annie" or at home writing a new song, play or musical. This year, he has traveled with his students to perform at the Epopt Center in Orlando, Florida and various country clubs.

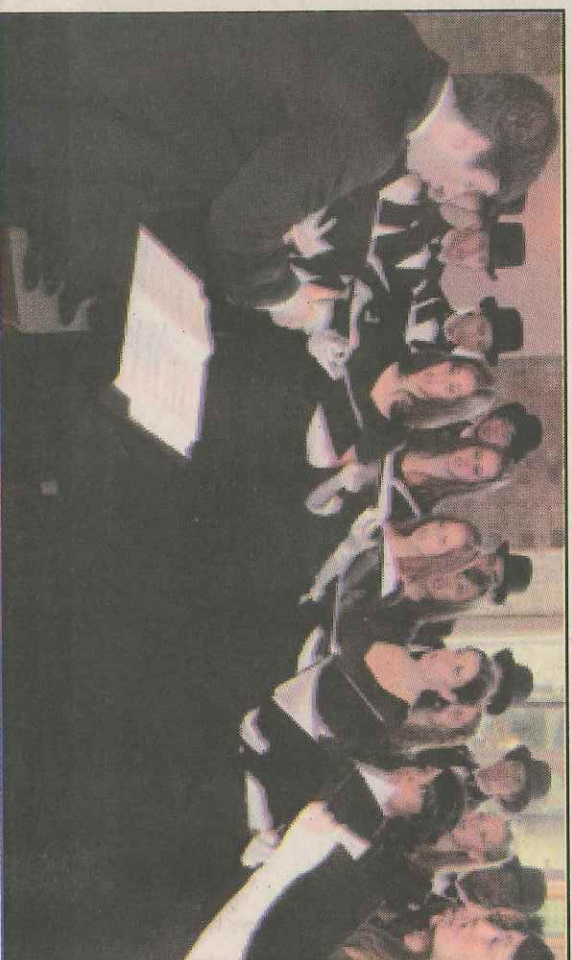
Even in his years as a student at WS, Dombrow was almost everywhere in the school, participating in a wide variety of extracurricular activities. In addition to being an SGA officer, he participated in track, cross country, choir, theater and peer helping.

"I just tried to do everything that I could. I didn't want to pigeonhole myself into one clique," said Dombrow, who graduated from WS in 1994.

After majoring in theatre, music and education then going to two years of graduate school at UVA, Dombrow transferred to NYU graduate school to experience the city life.

"[New York City] is the greatest city in the world," he said. "I spent time writing musical theater works while I was up there."

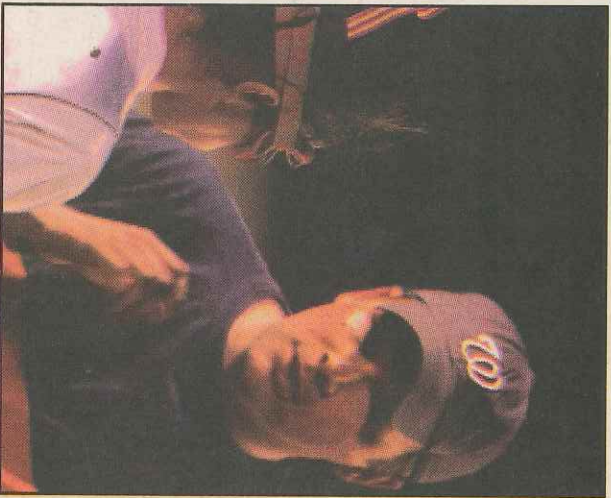
He returned to WS in 2002 to fulfill his dream of teaching. He has not stopped writing, however.



Betsy Frost



At a meet at TC Williams his sophomore year, Dombrow graduated from WS in 1994. He leads the Spartan Choir in a performance at



Litelouch

Benton hits home run

By Erica Wink
Junior Staff Writer

Math. To some, just the simple utterance of the word causes major anxiety and distress, while to others, math is their favorite subject.

This was the case for Robbie Benton, who had a more of a French language phobia than a math one.

Benton, a former Spartan, attended WS when it was only just being built.

"When I first went here we went to Lee with the split shift. WS wasn't ready yet. The first class started at 10:30, [and] we didn't get home until 5:30," said Benton. "The cafeteria wasn't done yet, the fields were still mud, the math wing wasn't open yet."

After graduating with the Class of '69, the future math teacher attended Davidson College in North Carolina where he played baseball his freshman year and wrestled all four years.

"Once I graduated I liked the idea of being a coach. [But] you can't go into teaching just to be a coach or you're in trouble," said Benton. "I had to enjoy the

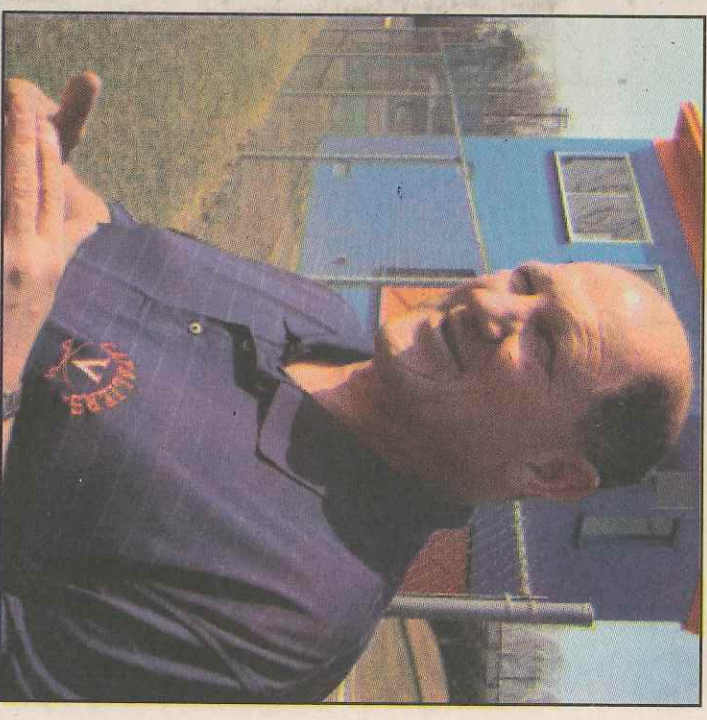
"Everyone can be successful if just might take more work on your part..."
—Robbie Benton, math teacher

teaching as well as the coaching."

When Benton graduated in 1973, he returned to the halls of WS to begin his teaching career for the 1973-1974 school year.

"At the time I knew the principal, I also wanted to coach wrestling," said Benton. "They had openings. It's easier to go some place you know rather than venture into the great unknown."

During his time at WS, Benton sponsored the Class of 1980, acted as the Keyette sponsor for more than 12 years, coached wrestling for 19 years, coached the girls' tennis team for 10 years with fellow teacher/counselor Ron Trugwell (whom the baseball field is named after, in honor of his coaching years), and coached the softball team



Sarah Wink

Standing on the softball field he helped create, Math teacher Robbie Benton, above, counts out on his hands how many family members are WS grads. In WS' 41 year history, there were only two years Benton did not have a relative attending WS. In all 17 relatives graduated from his alma mater.

for 20 years. Benton helped build the softball field, which was later named after him.

"The field that's there, Mr. [Bob] Little and I built," said Benton. "We built the dugouts, put up the fence, put the score board up, the sheds, and ran the electricity that's there."

Throughout his teaching career his goal has remained the same.

"You hope that [the students] understand the material and that they are successful," said Benton. "You hope that what you're doing works well for them."

Math is not just a class that every high school student is required to take to graduate, it holds a more meaningful purpose than that.

"I understand the frustration some people have, but if you think about it there is a certain logic involved that helps you understand," said Benton. "Occupations require the math background. Colleges and business require the calculus

for you to know what you're doing."

Benton is a teacher who is willing to put in time to help students if they are willing to, too.

"Some people have a math phobia that parents sometimes start for them. People are gifted in different areas," said Benton. "What's hard is to see someone doing something very easily when you can't. I would tell people that the worst thing you can do is to compare yourself to other people all the time.

Everyone can be successful if just might take more work on your part and you have to be willing to put the work into it."

Each teacher has a reason for teaching their subject, for Benton it's a personal sense of accomplishment in helping a student reach his or her own personal goal.

"What's rewarding to me," said Benton, "is getting someone who wasn't successful to be successful, maybe not A's but they feel competent in what they are doing."



Sarah Wink

health class. Top: During a Lacrosse scrimmage
rissa Cookson, now a senior.



Sarah Wink

Benton, below, has been a math teacher for 34 years at WS. "You don't find out what you've done for [the kids] until later on, maybe 17 years later," said Benton.

No Teacher Left Behind

WHY THE HECK DO I HAVE TO TAKE ALGEBRA II AS A PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR?????

At one point in our high school careers, we all have found ourselves wondering why certain classes are mandatory. Some teachers seem to have the answers.

Once WS students themselves, these four teachers explain why their course relates to their students' lives and why it's important regardless if they become a cop or a professional babysitter.

Dombrow Family Photo
15, Mike Dombrow, above, prepares to run a
and now is the Choral director. Left: Dombrow
the western themed Chili Supper in 2006.

Martha Lee: Einstein of design

By Zohra Alnoor
Senior Staff Writer

Across from Aldra Sirott's computer graphics classroom is a window display of some of her most talented students, including a senior who has a lot to say about the fine arts.

Senior Martha Lee is known for having an amazing eye for photography, drawing and fashion.

"She's a great designer and has a good sense of space. She's a natural," said Sirott. Lee's computer graphics teacher, who wrote a number of Lee's recommendations to several different schools such as Marymount and Drexel University.

Lee hopes to study computer graphics or step into the world of fashion.

"I really want to work at Elle Magazine," said Lee. "I love fashion. Ever since I started working at Express, I got introduced to it and now I love it so much."

"She's a great designer and has a good sense of space,"

— Aldra Sirott,
art teacher

Despite the fact that Lee is a pro at looking outside the box and knowing what looks good or bad when it comes to art, she says that drawing and painting just aren't for her.

"I don't really like doing art that much. I appreciate



Molly Cushing

Senior Martha Lee works on a computer in her Portfolio Prep class. Lee is working with a team to design the booklet given to attendees of the spring musical, *Annie*.

design the booklet for the WS spring musical production, *Annie*," said Sirott.

Even though painting and drawing may not be for Lee, design is something that comes naturally to her and that she enjoys very much.

Lee loves all types of fine art and takes an art history class with Kathy Rehm who teaches her students different types of art.

"In design, everything is given to you and you have to use your artistic eye to put things together," said Lee. "You use more eye rather than imagination and inspiration."

"There's great artists like DaVinci and Van Gogh. I love art and I love appreciating it," said Lee. "I can't even believe that people have done those paintings."

Anyone can see what Lee means when they view her work. Her work ranges from photography to drawing, to designing for projects outside of school.

Lee focuses on her goal of a career in fashion and design and hopes for the best as she waits for an answer from her fashion focused schools. "I love appreciating art," said Lee. "It's so beautiful. Sometimes it even makes me tear up."

Snow days cause

problems for blue days

By Jenny Taylor
Sports Editor

February's short length plays a critical role in exam preparation for AP teachers. Unfortunately, February 2007 was also riddled with icy storms and several snow days. This year's weather was unusually volatile and occurred mostly on blue days. Last month, FCPS cancelled school twice and shortened classes three more times on even days as a result of severe weather. The loss of blue classes due to snow days is still evident in some AP courses.

"I'm probably four or five classes behind schedule in my AP Comparative course," said government teacher Kevin Gallagher. "More snow days on blue days has definitely left me with less instruction time."

In addition to the delays and cancellations, blue day teachers suffered. WS chose to reschedule its staff development time for a blue day morning, even though it was originally intended for an orange day.

"The rescheduling of the staff development day to a blue day rather than an orange day has compounded the problems caused by inclement weather," said Gallagher.

Before the county was frozen with ice storms and academic process slowed by late night snows, WS was scheduled for a lockdown drill in the last week of February. Coincidentally, the 15 minute drill was planned for the morning of the three hour staff development delay and was still practiced despite the loss of blue days.

The sun of all the county's drills, delays, and days off has forced AP teachers to adapt their lesson plans.

"I'll have to hold a couple after school sessions to make up time," said Gallagher. Other veteran teachers have taken preemptive steps to avoid the effects of snow days.

"I knew there'd be interruptions in February, because there always are," said AP US teacher Andrea Schlegel. "So I had already planned for them and now I'm just adjusting the speed at which I teach. I would say I'm right on target."

March 30, initially a student holiday, is now a mandatory school day that the county hopes will make up for lost time. The school has designated this to be a blue day, to the satisfaction of teachers affected by the recent inclement weather.

"It's only fair that the school is making March 30 a blue day," said Schlegel. "It seems like a logical choice."



Sean Hogan

Government teacher Kevin Gallagher tries to catch up his AP Comparative Government class that only meets on blue days.

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Locked up on screen

Juives teaches valuable life lessons

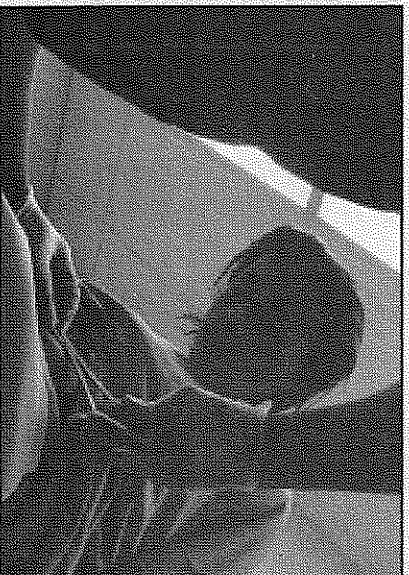
By Gauri Khanna
Scoop Editor

MTV has been coming out with a plethora of reality shows lately and while most of these shows are in relation to dating and relationships, one of the newest ones is more about the criminal justice system.

"Juives" premiered on MTV on February 1, 2007 as a reality show that depicts what happens to first time offenders in the Indiana Juvenile Justice System.

Each episode follows two kids from their arrest to their trial where Court Judge Mary Beth Bonaventura decides whether the kids are allowed to go home with their parents or to keep the child detained for a longer period of time.

While watching this show, I couldn't help but think MTV has seriously run out of ideas for shows. The "m" for "music" in MTV has disappeared, they should probably consider renaming the channel RTV, "r" for "reality". The episode started



After being brought to the Indiana Juvenile Justice System, Kashmere is told that she will be forced to stay in her room for her entire stay if she does not remove her piercings.

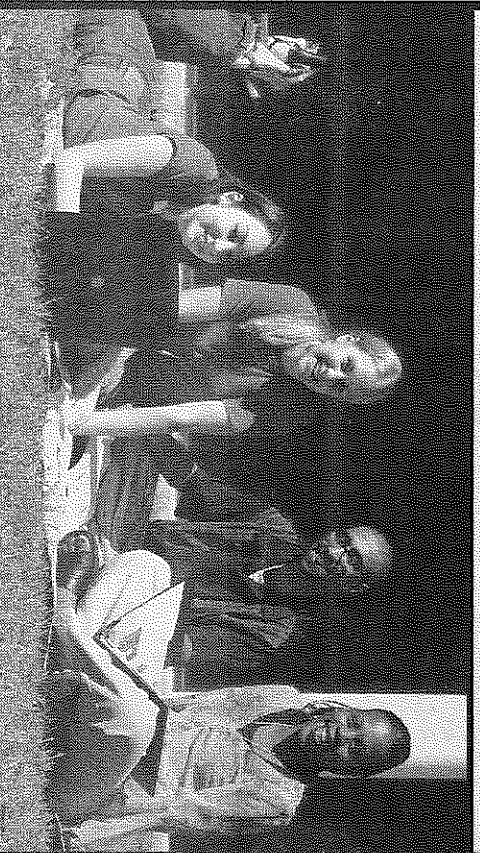
with a 17 year old boy through their attempt to named Steve getting sneak out of the window, drunk at a party in a hotel they were caught and room and trying to run when the cops came, but arrested by the police.

This show definitely has a lot of flaws, but it teaches a good lesson at the end. Watching what other people are going through and how rough life is in jail should make teenagers realize that some things aren't worth getting in trouble for and should be considered carefully before action is taken.

Juives has several returns throughout the week, a new episode airs every Thursday at 10 pm.

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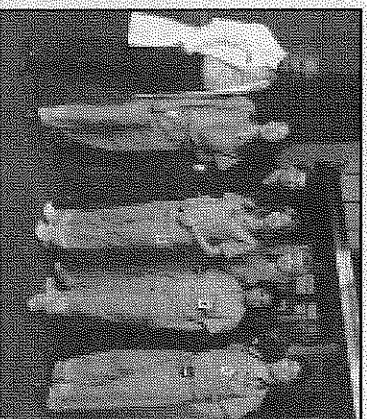
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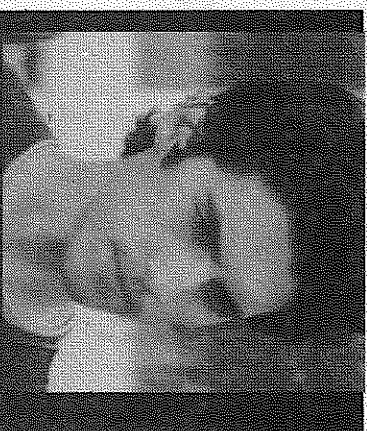
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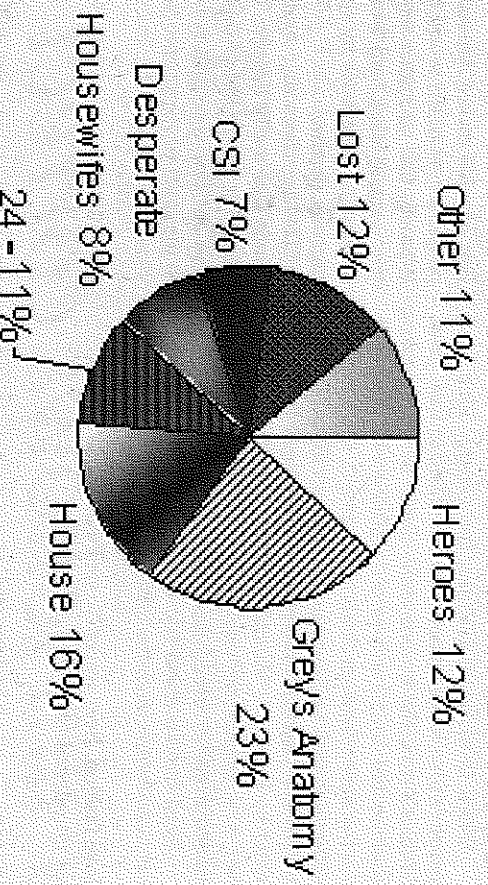
Grey's Anatomy Insider

Ansha Goel, 12
"My favorite show is Grey's Anatomy, because the people in it are so hot."



Answers

Kienn Harrigan, 11
"I like Heroes. My favorite character is Peter Petrelli because his power is to absorb everyone else's."



- Heroes
- House
- Desperate Housewives
- Lost
- Greys Anatomy
- 24
- CSI
- Other

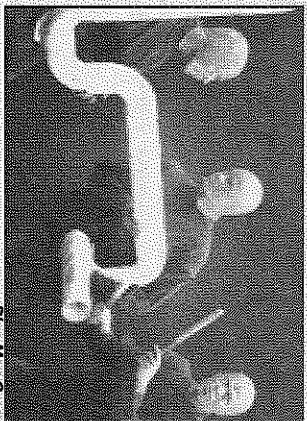
—Compiled by Aaron Snow

The invasion of the Blue Men

By Beth Sinson
Viewpoint Editor

Their concerts are unusual, their costumes are intriguing, and their audiences are rarely left unsatisfied. Two weeks ago at the Patriot Center, I saw Blue Man Group for the second (and possibly most awesome) time.

BMG was the brainchild of Chris Wink, Matt Goldman and Phil Stanton, who began performing on the streets of New York City painted blue. Creating percussion instruments out of PVC pipe and kitchen spoons, their popularity grew, and their first full-length show, "TUBES" opened in 1991 at the Astor Place Theater. Several appearances on *The Tonight Show* propelled them to stardom.



Blue Man Group

The Blue Man Group recently put on an impressive and unusual show with marshmallow sculptures and paint drums.

The Blue Men now have long running theatrical productions in New York, Boston, Chicago, Las Vegas, Berlin, London, and Amsterdam. In 2003 the BMG went on their first tour, *The Complex*, named for their second and most popular album. The tour, unlike the theatrical productions, was more rock-like and included vocalists—a once absent element of BMG's previous shows. September 26, 2006 marked the premiere of their second and latest tour, *How to be a Megastar 2.0*, and on March 10, they came to the Patriot Center.

The premise of the show was, as its

name suggests, a series of acts illustrating methods and movements commonly used by successful rock stars. DJ Mike Reim opened for the Group, performing *The Blue Men's* "Rock Concert Movement #15: Bringing out an opening act to warm up the audience." Thoroughly loosened, the Blue Men appeared and the audience learned the first of numerous motions, "Rock Concert Movement #1: The basic head bob." The following motions became more involved and complex, and included "The One-Armed Fist Pump," "The Up and Down Jumping Motion," "The Upward Arm Thrust with Yell," and "The Behind the Head Leg Stretch."

The various acts featured vocalists, new and innovative instruments and covers of well-known rock songs. Veteran fans appreciated the BMG's classic acts, including paint drums, TV-screen heads, a marshmallow sculpture, and large projections screens used as humorous news-tickers.

Blue Man Group also held fast to their classic techniques of audience involvement. New to the tour was a short piece about Global Warming, which featured the voice of a woman pointing out Earth's closest exits, and this was ironic because there are none. BMG also included a 9-11 tribute, a montage of pieces of paper that fell from the World Trade Center near Blue Man Group's headquarters. The act was somber yet respectfully mild. The show also featured a "Fake Ending," after which the band and the Men played a unique cover of The Who's "Baba O'Riley." For the real ending an audience member was chosen at random to introduce the band.

The cherry on my whipped cream ending came when we were braving the post-concert crowd to reach our car. Not unlike salmon spawning, we charged upstream, passing an elderly man, "Rock Concert Motion #91," he said, "finding your friends."

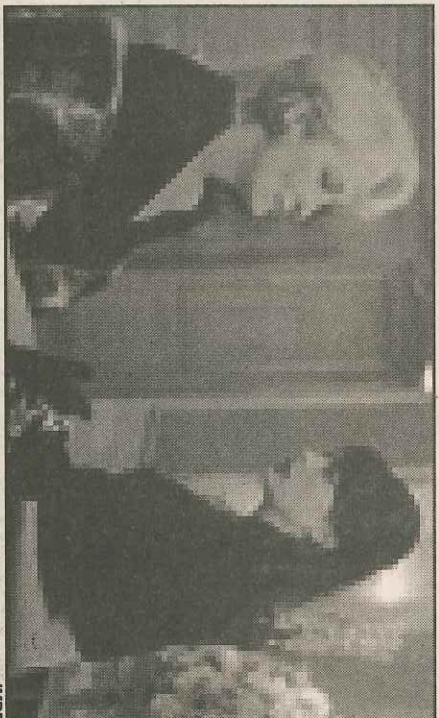
'The Devil' is fashionably evil

By Kat Davies
Journalism 1

The name of the film suits the actress. Meryl Streep has to be the best choice for a high-class, Prada-wearing devil who runs a fashion magazine. Anne Hathaway is most remembered for her innocent role in "Princess Diaries," but she comes out of that shell in the cute, yet realistic, "The Devil Wears Prada," a movie about working in the fashion business.

When thinking of fashion, the general idea is of people with a lot of money who can afford to look good. Well, it's true. But no one really thinks of what it takes to share that ridiculously priced clothing with the world. As the main character Andy (Hathaway), finds out, it's difficult to make it big without a few sacrifices. The first to go: her "normal" clothing, which keeps her unnoticed by her boss, Miranda Priestly (Streep). Quickly, her new appearance causes her to become disconnected from her friends and family.

Most movies about life usually show the optimistic side and how wonderful life is after getting a new job.



Meryl Streep and Anne Hathaway in "The Devil Wears Prada."

Part of what makes this movie so great is that it opens people's eyes to the world behind the glam and sparkle. It proves that no matter where you want to get or what you want, it takes hard work; even if that hard work is impressing your boss by succumbing to her every outrageous demand.

The sacrifices that Andy makes along the way are things that really happen. Her personal life is affected when her boyfriend (Adrian Grenier) and her friends find out that she can't seem to work without stooping to the level of the people who she used to make fun of. That is, consequently, the idea behind Miranda. She is

The Journalism 1 class continues reviewing favorite movies, with a look at "The Devil Wears Prada," "Frequency," and "Smokin' Aces."

willing to do whatever it takes to stay in the business, because that is what she has done to get there. Andy has to choose whether to follow in Miranda's footsteps and lead a miserable and unhappy life like her boss or to kick off the stiletto heels and work for someone else.

Anyone who wants to laugh while seeing what it takes to be on top would enjoy this movie. Each character and lifestyle is portrayed to a "T." But be careful. The choice of clothing is going to make you want to spend the ridiculous dollars it takes to look as good as them.

Film follows correct frequency

By Veronica Adams
Journalism 1

If you like an exciting, on-the-edge-of-your-seat thriller, then "Frequency" should be first on your list.

The lead role is John Sullivan (Jim Caviezel). In the movie, Sullivan's father (Dennis Quaid) dies in a fire when his son is very young. This emotional effect shows the passionate father-son connection and how important this relationship is.

When a phenomenon of nature opens a channel to the past, Sullivan is able to speak with his father, who has been dead

for 30 years. Not only does this give an emotional appeal to the audience, but the idea of speaking to a dead loved one is something people only dream about. Quaid and Caviezel make this situation believable because they are two very strong actors.

The best part of this movie is the twist about changing the past. When Sullivan changes the past, he corrupts the future and unsolved murders increase, putting his mother in danger of being the next victim. This riveting plot will keep you glued to your seat throughout.

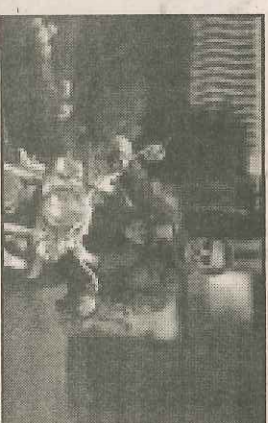
When the father and son figure out the twist involved in altering the past,

we are able to watch the two work together to solve the case before it's too late.

The genius who directed "Frequency" is Gregory Hoblit, who casts extremely talented actors who fit these characters perfectly.

Quaid is a heartwarming father who makes the audience love him. Caviezel's character makes an astonishing change throughout the movie. At the beginning, he is a sad workaholic, but after making contact with his dad, he becomes a loving, sensible man.

There is never a dull moment in this movie. The climax of this film will amaze



Dennis Quaid plays a father who bridges a gap of 30 years in "Frequency."

you and you will not be able to take your eyes off the screen. Not only that, but the end will make you want to watch this film over and over again.

Hoblit gets two thumbs up for this spectacular thriller. If you are looking for an intense movie that will entertain you the whole time, watch "Frequency."

Cast delivers smokin' performance in 'Aces'

By Joe LaCroix
Journalism 1

Action, drama, gore, comedy, more drama, a foreseeable plot twist and much, much more gore. Take that and add a truly star-studded cast, and you've got a movie that will keep audiences planted in their seats. You've got "Smokin' Aces."

The term "star-studded" is thrown about fairly liberally in review of promotion for a movie, yet films with such a billing usually yield a disappointing three of four big names surrounded by "has-beens" and B-list "wannabe's". Not so in this film. "Smokin' Aces" delivers recognizable face after recognizable face, verging on the edge of excess.

The film manages to steer away from overcrowding itself, however, by keeping part within reason. While there may be tons of different stars throughout the film, they take a back seat to those essential to the story.

In a big-budget action flick such as this, one would not expect the acting to be of the highest caliber. Yet "Smokin' Aces" gives its actors a chance to show their skill in between the barrage of gunfire and blood.

The biggest surprise is without a doubt the protagonist, FBI agent Richard Messner, played by Ryan Reynolds. While a gunslinging, dark comedy does not require the biggest leap of faith for a comedic actor to



Andy Garcia is one of many familiar faces in "Smokin' Aces," which is entertaining all the way around.

make his debut in a serious role. Reynolds shows that he's matured with the addition of some grungy-looking facial hair.

Reynolds' character seems like a down-to-earth person, and is the only of the sort found in the entire film. The remaining characters follow the path of every other aspect of the feature: over the top. Jeremy Piven plays a wound-up, strung-out, druggie with a million-dollar bounty on his head. He does the role exceptionally well, and single-handedly makes entire audiences collectively wish for a bottle of eyedrops.

Quick appearances from actors who could headline their own films, such as Ben Affleck, Jason Bateman and Andy Garcia, only add to the quality of the production.

The most noticeable factor, however, is not the acting. The editing of this film is phenomenal, and is the obvious input of a relatively unknown director named Joe Carnahan. The quick pace and flashback style is reminiscent of films such as "Oceans 11" or "Fight Club," but on steroids.

Sadly, the weakest part of the movie is its plot. The basic premise is simple and entertaining (nothing wrong with that; movies are meant to entertain). Multiple hit men, one target, a million-dollar reward, and a few cops thrown into the mix, trying to stop it all from going down. It's simple enough to follow, and it can be assumed that most people will catch one of the plot twists halfway through the movie. Yet, at the very end, perhaps in an attempt to not seem predictable, another twist comes flying in out of left field, which really adds nothing to the overall end result.

Plot twists aside, this movie is entertaining in every sense of the word. While the blood is a bit overdone (and isn't as funny as the filmmakers thought it was), it fits with the style of the film, and isn't too much of a deterrent. It's worth the ticket price just to see all the big names, not to mention a solidly entertaining, even if somewhat mindless, joy ride of a film.

Easter 2007

PAGEANT PERFORMANCES ON

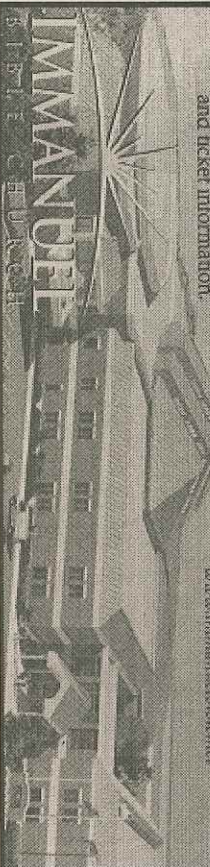
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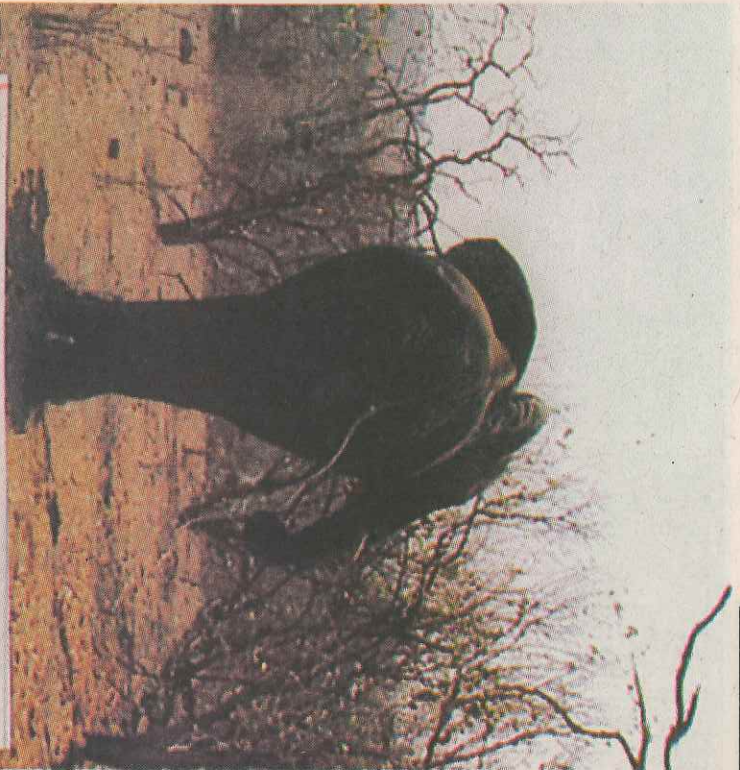
IT'S TOO LATE

to order a yearbook!

Yearbooks go on sale after school May 1

in Room 215!

Photo Essay



Truck broke down.
In the Kalahari Desert.

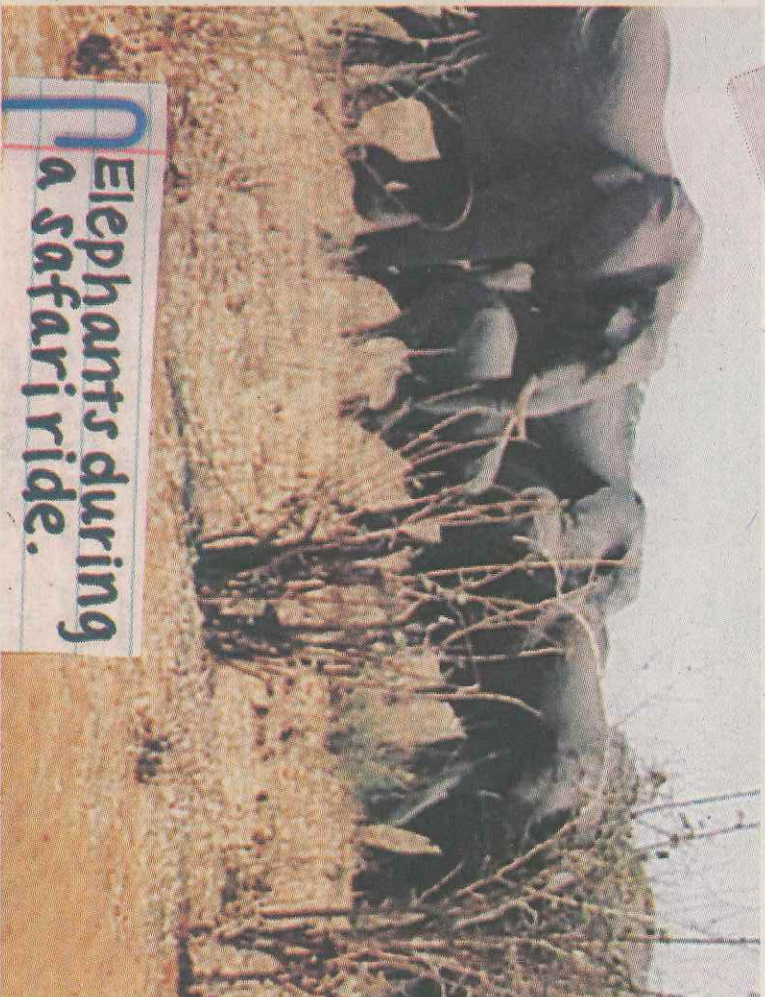
My Trip to Africa
Summer 2005
Kristin McCreger



Samaritan's Purse



Victoria Falls
at border of
Zimbabwe &
Zambia.



Elephants during
a safari ride.

Sports get their money's worth

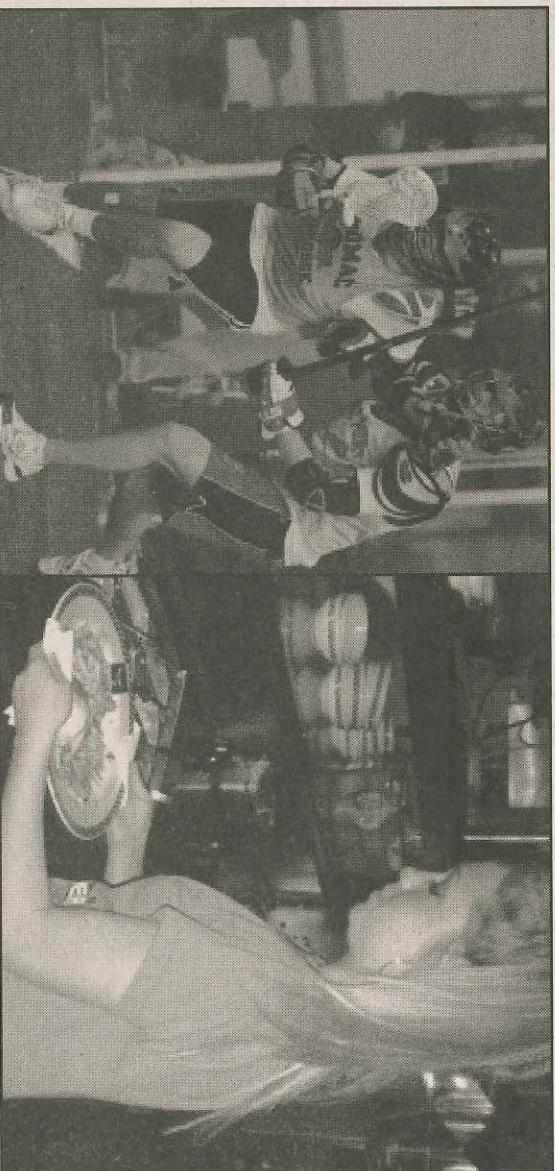
By Nicole Simpson
Entertainment Editor

Sports teams require more than mere athleticism and plenty of participants. Uniforms fade, equipment gets out of date and money must be raised for team necessities.

Teams are switching out the typical car wash and bake sales, in favor of more creative fundraisers. Among these new more creative fundraising styles is used by the boy's lacrosse team. The boys have started hosting pasta dinners in the cafeteria and silent auctions in which lacrosse items are offered.

"We did silent auctions at the pasta dinners too, people made and brought stuff to auction like pictures and lacrosse stuff," said freshman lacrosse player Eric Shauder. "A lot of people showed up."

The crew team has also begun using more creative fundraisers. On March 3 they held a Texas Hold 'Em Tournament at the Burke Fire Department. They are also sponsoring a "Spring Lily Sale." The lilies will be available for pick up on April 4, just in time for Easter. For every plant the crew team sells, they will earn a five dollar credit towards a rower's fundraising. The cost of Easter Lilies range from \$15 - 19.



Dave McGregor

Lifelouch

Team fundraisers like soccer's Silver Diner Night, crew's Texas hold 'em tournaments and lacrosse's pasta dinners have helped to buy new uniforms and equipment for nearly every WS athlete.

"We are selling pizzas, cookies, and Easter lilies. We're also doing basket bingo and car washes," said sophomore crew member, Mallory Palmer. "We are trying to raise money for new boats, boat repairs, away regattas, things like that."

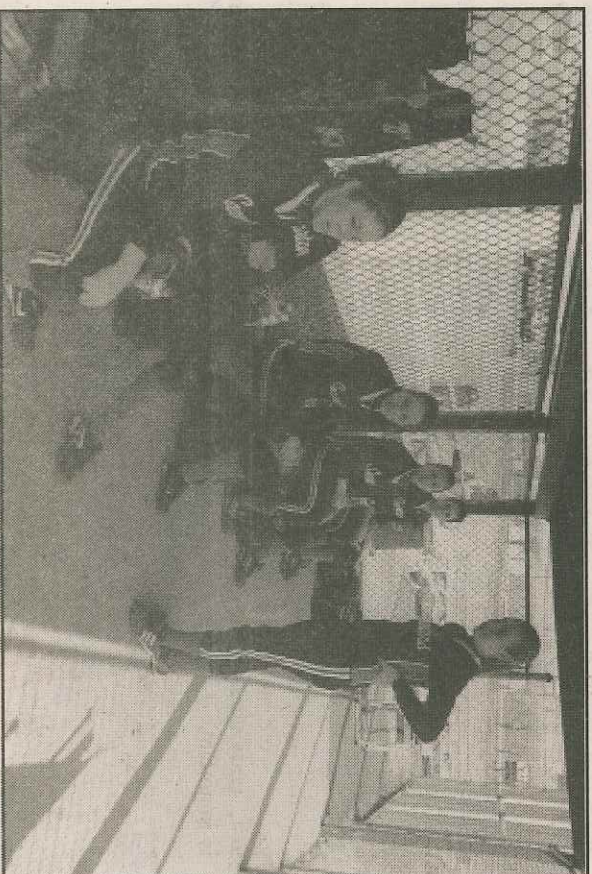
The girl's lacrosse team hosted a citrus sale to raise money. Just as they had last year, the girls walked door to door from 9:30 am - 2 pm, every Saturday since January and turned in their final orders on March 5.

"Each person is required to sell about \$200, everything above that goes to them for their Florida

trip over spring break," said junior lacrosse member, Elise Shellenberger.

The girl's soccer team hosted a fundraiser at the popular restaurant Silver Diner on Feb. 28. The fundraiser was a success and the girl's varsity team recently bought new uniforms with the money they raised.

WS' dedicated sports teams continue to find inventive ways to raise money for their team and it's necessities, and always manage to get other students and members involved.



Lifelouch

The varsity softball team, which returns eight of its nine starters from last season, hopes to once again dominate the Patriot District.

Softball team returns to reclaim district title

By Jimmy Bradshaw
Sophomore Staff Writer

The WS softball team hopes to begin the season the same way they left off 2006, by winning the Patriot District tournament, but adverse weather conditions have left the softball team practicing indoors.

The team's Patriot District championship marked the first time since 2003 that they won the district championship, defeating the defending Patriot District champions, West Potomac Wolverines, 3-2. Despite winning the district tournament and earning a number one seed in the Northern Regional tournament, the team was upset in the first round of the tournament by W.T. Woodson 1-0. Despite the setback, it was still a banner year for the Spartans. The team went 15-5 in the regular season, finishing with a 17-5 overall record, which was their best season in nearly a decade. *The Washington Examiner* ranked the girls #10 in their final standings.

The softball program believes that they can be even better this season as they only drop one senior from a year ago, and add key players who didn't play last season. The team is led by star

pitcher junior Jessica Thomas who was awarded to the All-Met Honorable Mention, named the Patriot District Tournament Most Valuable Player, and was a member of the All-Northern Region Team.

"Jessica should be one of the premier players in the region," said varsity softball coach, Margaret Gibson. "Hopefully we can all step up with her and have a great season."

The team's only loss was third baseman Elyse Ritter, but the rest of the infield and all of their three outfielders remain. The Spartans major competition in the district this year should be the Lee Lancers, but South County may also be competitive.

Despite possibly high aspirations for the team this year, the weather has been the team's biggest adversary, preventing the team from using the field a full two weeks into the season.

"The weather has been frustrating for us, it gets slow and boring after a while in the gym," said Margaret Gibson, "we'll be happy when we'll finally be able to get outside."

"With a lot of us returning from last year, and some of the teams losing their better players, we should be very competitive this year in the region," said pitcher Jessica Thomas.

Feeling hopeless?
You're not alone

37% of 12th graders in Fairfax County Public Schools have feelings of depression

For resources on how to get help or to find out more about the Fairfax County Youth Survey, please go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/esh/youthsurvey.html

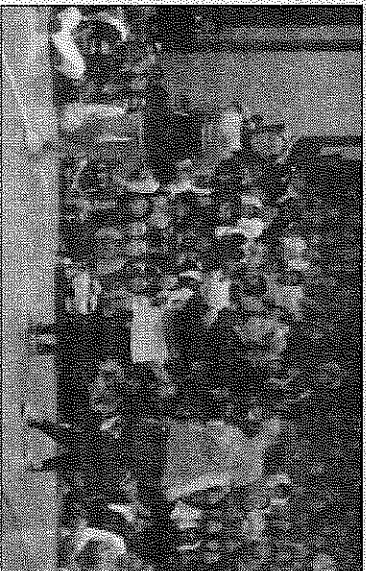
This message created by FCPS students

WS battle of the sexes intensifies

By Monica Evans
Viewpoint Assistant

Throughout history, there has always been a battle of the sexes. Here at WS, some believe that the competition between males and females still exists. Sports have always been a focal point at this school but boy's sports have been more popular. Every year the community comes out in hordes for home football and recently boy's basketball games. Some believe that equality between girls and boys has not really been an issue and has lately been very fair between the two Varsity levels.

"I feel like in the past [favoritism towards boy sports] has been the case but it's becoming more equal," said assistant athletic director Steve Fox.



Amy McGregor

SGA officers Luisanna Carrera, Julie Frost and Lissa Black pump up the crowd for the boys basketball team for the final tour of regions.

This year, the girls Varsity basketball team was runner up in the district tournament and made it to the second round in the regional tournament. Though the number of fans has slightly decreased since the days of Kara Lawson and Laura Haskins, the support has always been strong boys Varsity basketball team made it to the final four of the regional tournament. Though

they lost to Wakefield, they were not in short supply of support.

Before the big game, the entire school was hectic with energy. In fact, a pep rally was put into effect solely in honor of boys basketball. According to Fox, it was Dr. Smith's idea to have a pep rally and with the support of fellow administrators and the urging of the team, the pep rally was set for that Friday.

Also, in honor of boys basketball limited numbers of t-shirts were made that stated "2007 Final Four." The idea to make and sell these shirts for the big game was credited to Cheryl Curcio in the activities office.

Though the school was happy for the boys team, some did wonder why there was so much excitement when the girls' team makes frequent visits to the regional tournament.

Senior Kiki Williams, a member of the girls Varsity basketball team, also has her opinion on all the hype. "Well, I think girls basketball have made it to regionals almost every year," said Williams. "Boys basketball almost never makes it but when they do, [the school] throws them a pep rally and makes them t-shirts."

Students hit club SYC

By Inderbir Bal
Business/Systems Editor

Springfield Youth Club fails to be as competitive as high school sports Springfield Youth Club offers many sports like basketball, soccer and football but students say recreational sports are more fun than competitive.

"It's more laid back because you aren't playing for anything like tournaments in high school," said sophomore Jared Hagenow, who agrees that SYC basketball is more fun than WS sports.

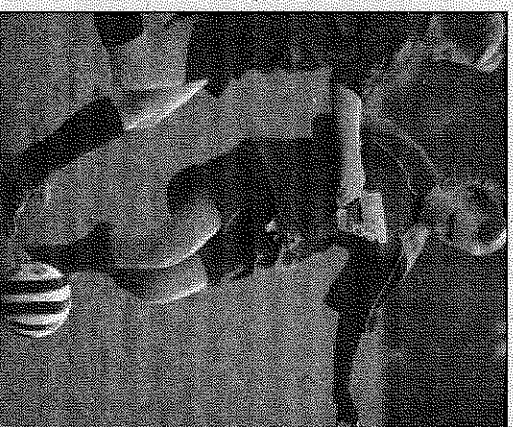
The big difference between WS sports and SYC is the level of playing is different. There are people of all skills and everyone gets a minimum amount of playing time.

"SYC is like the D-league of high

school sports," said senior Soml Gulati, who plays SYC basketball but also used to play football.

Practices are very different between the two. In SYC, the coaches make you do drills and scrimmages and there isn't

"It's more laid back because you aren't playing for anything like tournaments in high school."



Dave McGregor

—Jared Hagenow, sophomore

as much running involved, whereas in WS you have practice everyday and there's lots of running.

BRVC player senior Tori Prohoda keeps the ball from an opponent.

"You only have one practice and game a week and you don't have to go to it," said Gulati. People don't think SYC is important.

"SYC is a joke; most people don't take it serious," said junior Katie Blaylock, who plays SYC soccer.

There are good things about SYC like that it doesn't take much effort, also the coaches are understanding and nice.

"A lot of seniors are on my team and it's a lot of fun," said Blaylock.

Some players take the games seriously, but most people are just there for the enjoyment or they feel it's the only thing to do over the summer.

"There's nothing to do over the summer, but it's better because it's a little bit better because it's more competitive then winter basketball," said sophomore Sung Ho Na.

Players also try to improve their skills so that they can either join the high school team next year, or so they don't lose their edge.

"It's fun and it's the next thing to the NBA," said Gulati jokingly.

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Hoagie's World Ready, Set, Wikipedia!

By Sean Hogan
Oracle Editor

Forget freeze tag. Move over, Monopoly. There's a new game in town.

The only materials needed for this game are two friends and a computer for each person. Whether it is called "Wikispeedia," "World War Wikipedia" or something somewhat less dumb, the game remains the same:

- 1) Go to any person, place, thing or event's page on Wikipedia.
- 2) Find your way using only your mouse to a completely unrelated person, place, thing or event's page. In most cases, the combinations should make absolutely no sense, such as going from Wayne's World to Tiannamen Square or Duct Tape to Fu Manchu moustache.
- 3) Rinse, repeat.

While the game doesn't sound as appealing as, say, sticking your finger into an electrical socket, it's

actually a good way to pass time in settings where there are multiple side-by-side computers.

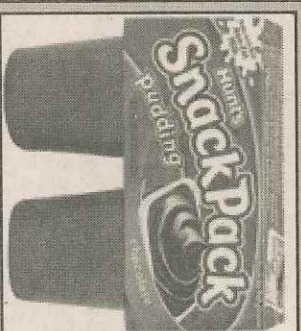
Wikipedia racing actually is a good game for the brain. Players must make advanced associations such as Miles Davis to Alton, Illinois to Illinois to Agriculture in Illinois to maize. But the key association is that of Davis to Alton, Illinois (his birthplace) to get to crops from Illinois. The random knowledge of knowing Davis is from Illinois makes it easier for the Wikipedian to finish the race faster than the other Wikipedians in the room.

Because of all of this, I am declaring Wikispeedia the official online game of the United States. Sure, we may have better things to do (schoolwork, volunteering, painting the foyer or learning to play the ukulele) but Wikispeedia both builds skills to be used in useful settings such as being on Jeopardy but also in jobs such as foreign intelligence or episode creator for "Family Guy." The game also could build resistance to carpal tunnel. At the same time the game bears risks, such as being yelled at by your teacher or a loss of friends due to too many wins (and the bragging that follows) or too many losses (and punches that follow).

Wikispeedia is a game that could either change the world or ruin it depending on your opinion (and creativity). Now when you hear about two obscure things, try to connect them. Maybe someone else is as crazy as me.

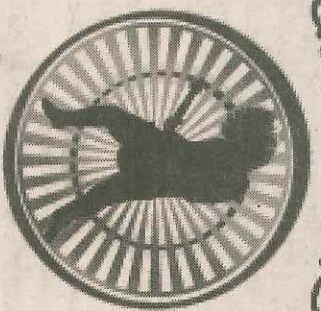


Can you go from Ken, (as in Ken and Barbie), to Snack Pack, (those awesomely delicious pudding snacks)?

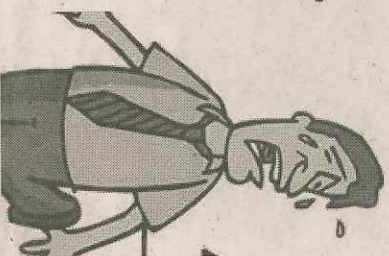


Stevie's Story

Classic Rock



Music



Classic rock fans were left crying in the dust when 94.7 turned modern and put an end to playing classic rock bands.

Classic rock cancelled

By Stevie Florino
Etc. Editor

After 99.1 WHFS was taken off the air and replaced with El Zol, we were left with only a couple of decent classic rock/alternative radio stations. Now that 94.7 classic rock has transformed into 94.7 The Globe, dedicated classic rockers are left in the dust.

Over the past year, 94.7 has become increasingly worse. They lost track of their classic rock roots and slowly began playing late '80s and '90s music. For a while, no one really thought much of this change. What really shocked people was when The White Stripes, Green Day and Death Cab For Cutie were commonly heard on what was supposed to be a classic rock station.

In the beginning of 94.7's change, they didn't bother changing their name. They continued to call themselves classic rock even though they only played real classic rock like The Beatles, The Doors and The Allman Brothers every few songs.

Finally, to complete their change, what was once classic rock 94.7 The Arrow, became 94.7 The Globe. This angered people, as 94.7 was the only station you could tune into and enjoy an entertaining blast from the past. Even Big 100.3 is slowly beginning to transform. Before we know it we will be left with not even one decent classic rock station.

If you are one of the many out there who object to these changes, do something about it. Send an e-mail or a letter or call 94.7 and give them a piece of your mind. The fight to save classic is about to begin.

94.7 THE GLOBE WORLD CLASS ROCK

Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
23 Waldron Scholarship due to Ms. Rexford /Baseball @ Annandale at 6:30 p.m.	24 District Festival for Madrigals and Ladies' Select at 2-4:15 p.m.	25 Third quarter exams (March 21-29)	26 Girls Soccer v. Annandale at 7 p.m.	27 Boys Lacrosse v. Annandale at 7 p.m.	28 Practice sessions for spring auditions (singing and dancing) 5-9 p.m.	29 Junior Packets due to counselors/ Girls Lacrosse @ Annandale at 7:15 p.m.
30 Boys Lacrosse @ West Potomac at 7 p.m.	31 Crew Walter Mess Regatta at Sandy Run Occoquan at 10 am	1 April Fools Day TEACHER WORK DAY! not	2 SPRING BREAK! Washington Nationals v. Florida Marlins @ RFK at 3:30 p.m.	3 Washington Capitals v. Florida Panthers @ Verizon Center at 7 p.m.	4 Washington Wizards v. Charlotte Bobcats @ Verizon Center at 7 p.m.	5 Jammim' Java: Patrick Park, Chris Trapper, Sam Shaber @ 8 p.m. \$10
6 "The Reaping" starring Hilary Swank opens in theaters	7 Crew - St. Andrews Regatta in Delaware	8 EASTER!	9 Boys Lacrosse v. Lake Braddock at 7 p.m./First day back from break!	10 Boys Soccer v. Herndon at 7 p.m.	11 Jammim' Java: The Alternate Routes + Sons of William at 8 p.m. \$10 in adv, \$12 at the door	12 Girls Lacrosse v. West Potomac at 7:15 p.m.

MARCH/APRIL'07