



PARADE

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West Springfield High School 6100 Rolling Road Springfield, Virginia 22152

Beach gets nod for her abilities

Longtime English teacher nominated for prestigious County, Metro-area awards

By Jordy Serwin
Oracle Editor

Shortly before Thanksgiving, English teacher Jennifer Beach received news of her nomination for the Fairfax County Public Schools Teacher of the Year and *The Washington Post's* Agnes Meyer Outstanding Teacher awards.

The county's prestigious honor is awarded each year to one teacher who, according to FCPS, instills a desire to learn and achieve in their students, fosters cooperative relationships with colleagues and the community and demonstrates outstanding leadership among other exceptional qualifications. *The Post* honors 20 area teachers each year for their accomplishments.

Beach has taught English for 14 years. While she now teaches AP Literature and Expanding Literacies, her resume includes English 9, English 9 Honors and Journalism 1. She also spent two years as the county's high school English coordinator and this week, Beach earned her PH.D. from the University of Maryland.

Beach, who teaches in an upbeat, enthusiastic style, was surprised to hear she had recognized.

"It's a very flattering thing to be nominated," she said. "Tons of people here would also make good nominees."

English teacher Mary Moriarty and 11th Grade Administrator Richard Griffin submitted Beach's nomination. Both find her more than deserving of the award.

"[Ms. Beach] has done countless positive things for our students, teachers and parents," said Griffin.



Colin Embrey

English teacher Jennifer Beach was nominated for the FCPS Teacher of the Year and *The Washington Post's* Agnes Meyer Outstanding Teacher Award.

"[so it] was a natural choice for me to nominate her." Moriarty echoed Griffin's sentiment, reflecting upon Beach's qualifications.

"Her expertise and depth of knowledge on [her] subject matter is so great," said Moriarty.

Students also agree with Griffin and Moriarty's decision.

"I definitely think she's deserving of the award," said senior Richie Hartz. "She's one of the most enthusiastic teachers I've ever had and uses that enthusiasm to help her teach."

Others also acknowledge Beach's passion and fervor for her craft.

"She's so spunky and no other teacher has as much energy [as she does]," said senior Lauren DeGiorgi.

Competitions throughout the county will refine the list of nominees. A screening committee will then ultimately assemble one, final group. These individuals are then interviewed by the FCPS Leadership Team, and then the Superintendent, who will make the final decision. Winning aside, nomination brings considerable recognition.

"[Those who are nominated] are the kind of teachers we all want to be," said Moriarty.

Students make a difference in the community

By Sam Landers
Sports Assistant

'Tis the season to give to family, friends, and the community. This year, WS is demonstrating the act of giving rather than receiving. Several clubs, sports teams, and honor societies are giving back to their community.



Christen Gibson

The Boys and Girls basketball teams are participating in the special experience of Kristi's Christmas. This year is the 20th annual Kristi's Christmas event in which Sophomore Kaitie Harrison students from WS volunteered at Kristi's take a less fortunate Christmas and took needy child from Fairfax children shopping.

County to Target and shop for clothes, supplies, and toys.

"Seeing how happy the little kids are when they get their gifts is the most rewarding part," said sophomore Christen Gibson, who attended Kristi's Christmas last year.

The Science Honor Society is also participating in the act of giving by hosting Clean Fairfax. This event includes cleaning Spartan Park and restoring all of the broken benches. The Science Honor

See **HELPING** on Page 4.

Off the air, for now

SGA officers, sponsors find their differences aren't at all 'yummy'

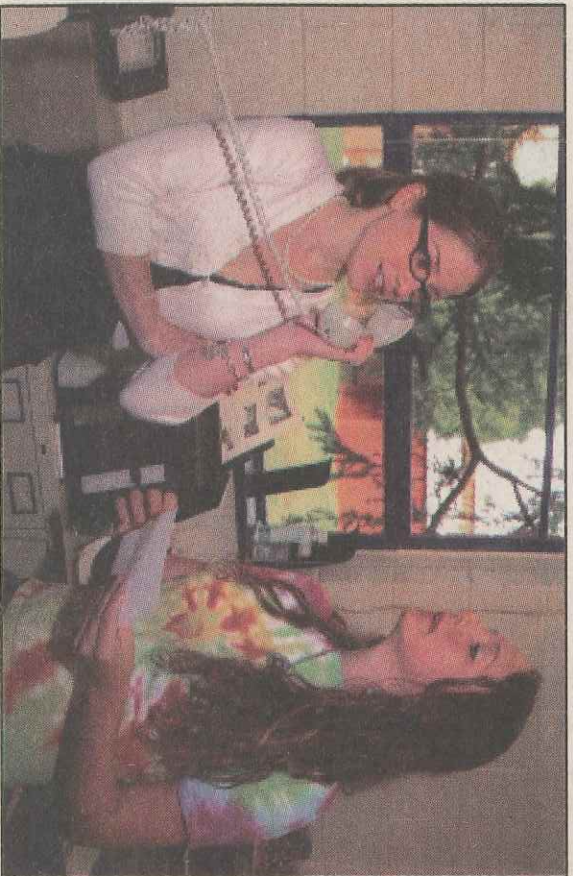
By Krista Pedersen & Christina Sohn
Oracle Staff Writers

Two weeks ago, the announcements returned to basics. The improvisation disappeared, the banter vanished and the food was no longer "Yummy!"

Because of complaints by both staff and students, SGA sponsors Marianne Razzino and Simon Schatmeyer decided to streamline the twice-daily PA broadcasts. To make the announce-

ments more clear and professional-sounding, the sponsors asked the five SGA officers to sign a written set of guidelines that detail how to read the club, sports and administrative messages on the air. Unless the five seniors agreed to sign, Razzino and Schatmeyer told them they could not continue announcing each morning and afternoon.

"None of it was new information; it was definitely the way we started the See **ANNOUNCEMENTS** on Page 4



Lifetouch

YUM! Seniors Julie Frost and Lissa Black broadcast the afternoon announcement during happier times.



Winter vacation
cut short
this year.



4-5

Students
break
stereotypes.

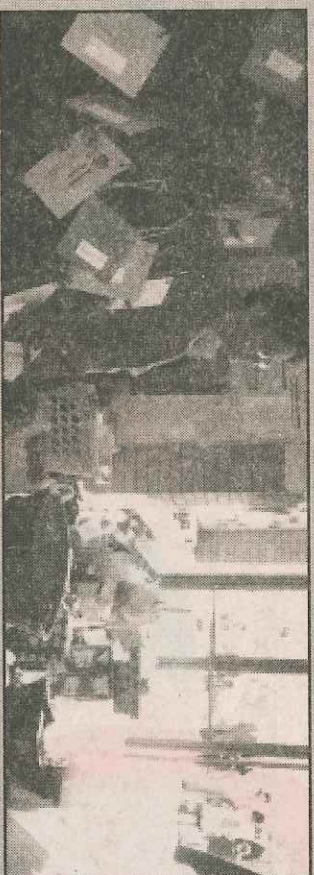


Local band
gives rockin'
concert.

Students spread spirit of season

Back Friday, wish lists, toys and feasts are all material goods of the holiday season that overshadow the true meaning of the season: giving without the expectation of receiving. Along with the frigid air and holiday cheer comes an aspect of the season that we often overlook: those less fortunate. With the anticipation for the break growing, it's more than possible that we will forget about children and families whose holiday season will be plagued with unfortunate events and untimely misgivings.

To aid these people, it is



Sarah Alvarez

The tree at St. Bernadettes is full of cards that give ways to support needy people. This is a prime example of how one can give back to the community.

unnecessary to wallow in their misfortune or poverty, but it is necessary to eagerly lend a helping hand. You might say you do not have time or money or you might make other excuses, but in a time of cheer, everyone should be able to feel the merriment. No matter what the reason, lending your

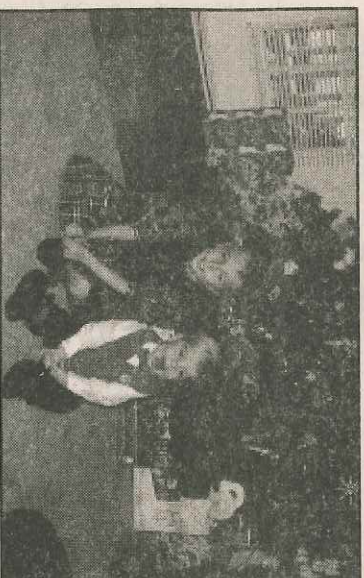
Editorial

teachers that is both appreciative to everyone. Right here in WS an apparent effort

Make winter break longer for families' sakes

By Beth Stinson
Viewpoint Editor

This Thanksgiving I was reminded that I have very little time to spend with my family. My relatives are particularly difficult to assemble in one place at the same time. But when we are all together, we party hardy.



Beth Stinson

Beth and Michael sit in front of their Christmas tree in an apartment in Atlanta, GA. Even in warm weather, Beth and her family relished the holiday spirit.



Beth Stinson

Beth, shown here with her brothers, Matthew and Michael, and her mom and grandma celebrate Christmas. When Beth was six, she had plenty of time to spend with family.

So on the rare occasion that both sides of my marvelous family are together for Christmas, I have little more than a week to spend with them. From December 24 to January 2, us "Virginia Stinsons" struggle to have a relaxing 10-day vacation while completing all of the required Christmas activities.

My family gathers in Greenville, South Carolina, where much of my motley clan has settled. We usually leave for South Carolina as soon as school is out on the 23, and we arrive late that night. We are tired and weary travelers. We just want to take a break. But not! There are presents to be wrapped and food to be cooked and preparations to be made and things of this nature. Crazyness everywhere. By Christmas day we are exhausted. Five anxiety-packed days later it is my

to give back to the community is in effect. DECA, a student organization at WS has taken responsibility for the collection of coats for people in need. Students at WS can make this greatly appreciated contribution and fulfill their responsibility to "take care of yourself, take care of each other, take care of this place" as the school motto asserts. Spanish Honor Society has adopted a family and History Honor Society has taken on the role of wish-maker as they are collecting certain items for a group of children in need. Participation in these collection drives is a simple way to participate and contribute to the prosperity of the community.

Some local agencies such as ECHO and Lorton Community center are constantly in need of donations of time and goods. In the spirit of the season, independent of your religious affiliation, volunteer work is both fulfilling to you and your community.

brother's birthday and New Year's Eve. New Year's day we are on our way back to Virginia, groggy and tired and ready to be thrust into another year of school drudgery.

If I remember correctly, winter break used to be longer. For some reason it has been trimmed down to only 10 days.

The argument can be made that not all people celebrate Christmas. I am aware of this. I will not attempt to bring religion into this because if I do I will be beaten and harassed. However, regardless of denomination, everyone needs the opportunity to debrief over winter break. It's important to give students a chance to spend time with their families. This is a chance that will become increasingly scarcer the older they get.

In addition, many students have to travel cross-country to visit relatives. Some even go overseas to be with their loved ones for the holidays. An endeavor of this magnitude certainly requires lots of time and effort. And a longer break.

There are various days that could be shaved off our school year to make room for a small extension on our break. We could get out a few days later, or have one or two fewer teacher workdays. There is plenty of wiggle room.

And as the holiday season approaches, we would do well to make some wiggle room in our own lives and straighten out our priorities.

The time students have with their families is time that can never be replaced. It shapes our character, and builds us into the parents and leaders of tomorrowland. And come on, everyone needs a chance to party hardy with their kin.

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The

ORACLE

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

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Letter to the editors: Bathrooms create student-teacher conflict in class

To the Editors:

GIVE ME A BREAK!

Picture this, the bell rings, kids come to class, drop their backpacks and ask, "Mrs. Woodson, can I go to the bathroom?"

As I raise my perfectly groomed brow, I have the look of "why can't they get it together" on my face. Well, the question should have been, "May I go to the restroom" or, "Relief is needed, please."

This is a daily occurrence in the classroom, and it is definitely getting worse. Now the game is changing to avoid the unexcused tardy.

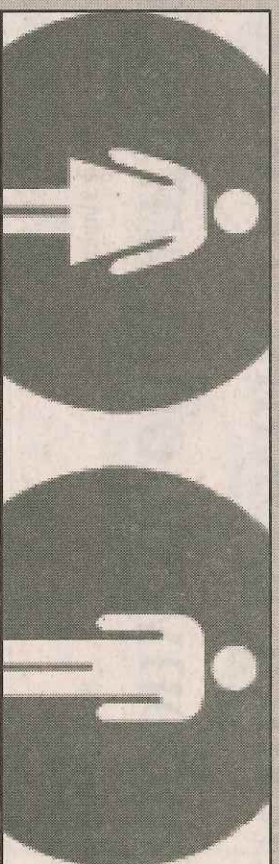
Students sit for five minutes, interrupt instruction and ask to take a "bathroom" break in the middle of the opening dialog or during the directions for the assignment.

I can only imagine the horror on a current student's face when they need to sit through a boardroom meeting at age 25 with an important client, but can not control their bladder. Oh, what to do? Purchase a bag of Depends maybe?

A thought always comes to mind when I hear the request for the "bathroom". Is it code word for "covert operation to roam the halls" of WSHS? Maybe it is a way to get out of listening to the information regarding college or job opportunities that I share with students on a DAILY basis.

The same students ask for recommendations when it is time to apply for college admissions...hmm, is there a box I can check that says "needs potty training"?

I am sure those "exceptional" students arrive in the morning at least



Woodson questions students' motives for frequent bathroom visitations. 15 minutes before first block to prepare for instruction (as if the miracle occurs) and are able to go to the restroom. Or maybe after first block during the regularly scheduled break? Additionally, there is a lunch period when students have the option for personal relief. How about after school when they have at least 30 minutes of stress free time for lounging and relief? I am repeating the schedule in case some students missed it from day one.

I just can't figure it out. I didn't learn of this high school potty behavior in graduate school, so I guess I am not a "highly qualified teacher". This may be the reason I keep telling myself that once I am certified as qualified, students will decide that the information I am providing is worth using. Oh boy, I can't wait! Then I can remove the bathroom pass completely and students will kneel at my feet in awe of my wisdom. Until then I am hoping that No Child will be left behind, because I dare say "No". Who needs that kind of publicity? We have bigger issues like

for frequent bathroom visitations. how we are going to solve the trash left on the floors by our future leaders in the hallways after lunch.

I always speak about "home training" in the classroom, because for some students it does exist. They are caring students who are here at WSHS to gain knowledge and understanding of self and the world in which we live. They think of the time wasted when other students take advantage of the relief system. A little secret is that one will definitely be working for the other after graduation. Then again, one may invent the potty ring tone that silently tells your bladder when it is appropriate to request relief. Maybe it can be controlled from a parental computer?

I guess the question remains—To pee or not to pee, that is the question. Only time will tell, and the college recommendation that goes along with it, or NOT!

Vera Woodson
Fashion Marketing

Sports practices request grounds for equal schedule

By Sunnie Ko

Senior Staff Writer

Girls will always be girls.

For our whole lives, we have been treated to some extent like porcelain dolls. In our society, women have always been seen as "fragile" in the big picture.

We fight for equal rights, we try to break the stereotypes of what "women should do," but in the end, girls will always be girls.

This same principal goes for where and at what time girls get to practice their respective sports.

During the spring, the boy's lacrosse and soccer team hold their practices at other locations than WS. The lacrosse team 'travels' to Irving while the Soccer team goes to Cardinal forest. One of the most important reasons for this decision of practice location is simply safety. We learned during non-violence week that women are 10 times more likely to be sexually assaulted. It only makes sense to have the boys team travel.

Men always try to convince us that they are bigger, tougher and more capable of defending themselves than women so of course the boys teams are required to travel, if you can even call it that; both locations are within a half of mile of the WS campus.

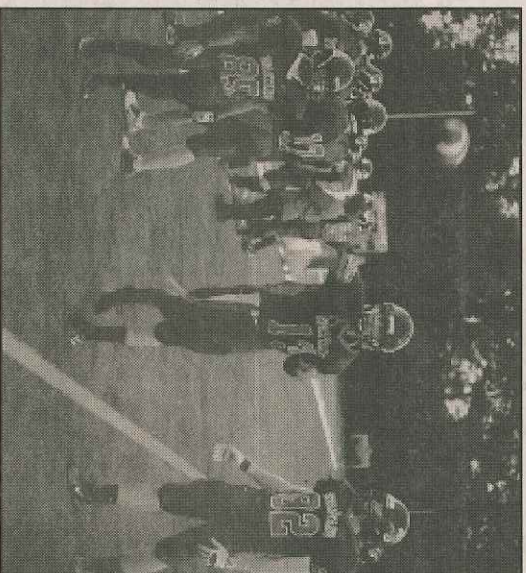
WS only have two practice fields, and one game field (which can now be used for practice because of the turf) and we have eight spring sports team that require a field. This requires sacrifices of practice space and when you put the safety of the students into part of the equation, it just makes more sense for the boy's team to be relocated.

During the winter, gym space is the greatest conflict between the boys' and girls' basketball team. So far, this year, the Girls Varsity basketball team has the gym space from three to six while the men go from six to nine. Of course, the three to six gym time is ideal but there is a simple reason that can not be refuted: coaches availability.

The boy's basketball team has the later slot because of their coaching staff's availability. One of their coaches also coaches a football team that has made the playoffs and therefore cannot make a practice until a later time.

Yes, the girl's teams at WS get the better of the practice times and places, there is not any doubt about that, but the reasons for this isn't simply just 'because.'

This is merely a message to all of the whining men out there; If you're going to act macho around school, you can deal with a five-minute walk to a different school or a later practice time.

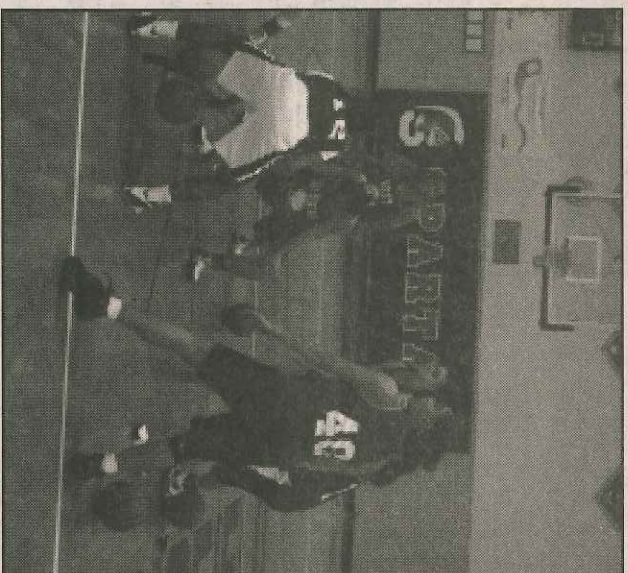


Literouch

The football team did not have to fight for priority use of the turf field for practice time during their season, unlike the boys and girls basketball teams.

The Oracle asks:

Why do girls always get priority practice time?



Sam Landers

The varsity girls basketball team practices in the main gym every weekday. Some boys players are disappointed with a lack of priority in their gym time.

By Jimmy Bradshaw

Senior Staff Writer

Under Title IX, which is the fairness through gender equality in sports, Title IX states that both girls and boys should be given an equal opportunity in sports.

As a result of Title IX, rather than being an equalizer in sports, is playing a reverse effect.

Now it seems that girls are being given every little opportunity, at WS this translates into girls having better and more convenient practice facilities.

The issue is that the girls sports teams get usage to the on-site practice fields and receive priority practice times, starting directly after-school.

The boys on the other hand, have to come back to the school or travel to an alternate practice site to attend practice.

During the winter, the boys freshman basketball team has to travel to Irving, while the freshmen girls basketball team gets to practice right after the JV girls team in the auxiliary gym.

Even worse, the boys JV team aren't able to practice directly after the girls JV team, instead, they have to wait to practice after the girls Freshman team.

As a result of Title IX, rather than being an equalizer in sports, is playing a reverse effect.

The least WS can do is let the boys teams have an equal opportunity to use the auxiliary gym, and alternate the times of practices for the basketball teams. During the spring the girls teams evade the practice fields at WS.

Both the boys soccer and lacrosse teams have to travel to other off-site practice locations, while both girls programs, have direct usage of the practice fields. Due to the boys not being able to practice at WS, it puts them at a disadvantage.

This disadvantage is because there is no home field advantage when they play home games.

When the boys teams don't even get a chance to practice on the fields they going to play their games on, then how can they get the upper hand against their opponent?

WS should look into having a method, that better allocates the practice fields, so that both boys and girls have an equal opportunities to practice on WS fields and have more convenient practice times.

Senior looking forward to an unconventional winter holiday

By Jenny Taylor
Sports Editor

After an exhausting 20 hour plane ride, dozens of bags of peanuts, and a serious case of jetlag, one may not exactly be in the holiday mood.

But this December, a few WS students will endure these grueling conditions and travel across continents in order to visit family and reconnect with their roots. One such student, senior Kavika Dilawari, will spend her winter vacation in India. For those with relatives that reside outside of the country, visiting often proves challenging.

"The rest of my family has gone there [India] within the past two years. I haven't been there for eight years, so I'm excited," said Dilawari.

Since 9,000 mile trips rarely come along, extensive

planning is usually necessary to make the most out of a visit.

"I'm primarily going there [India] to visit family, but my sister is also getting married in May. Some of our extended family will not be able to come to America for the wedding," said Dilawari. "So, the rest of my family and I are going there to do all of the Indian [wedding] shopping, and to host a small event for all of the people that will not be able to come to the wedding."

With two way flights lasting nearly two days, one week of winter break is seldom enough time for students traveling overseas. This coming winter, when Christmas falls on a Monday, a short vacation is leaving students with only six days off from school.

"I liked it when we had two weeks for winter break, because it's a lot easier to plan family vacations," said Dilawari, "and there are a few places, like India, that are better to visit in the winter."



Allison Campbell

Senior Kavika Dilawari flashes a peace sign in the parking lot. Dilawari is leaving for India during winter break to visit her family. This will be her first trip to India in eight years.

Dilawari is looking forward to three relaxing weeks in India. In terms of missed classes, however, she is looking at ten days of makeup work.

"I plan on completing much of my work ahead of time," said Dilawari, "and I'll probably be doing a lot of homework there too."

Senior SGA officers want creative announcements

ANNOUNCEMENTS from Page 1

year. Now it's just in writing," said Razzino.

All five SGA officers initially went along with the new rules. But two of the announcers, seniors Lissa Black and Julie Frost, thought about what they were being asked to do and decided to stop doing the announcements in the name of creativity.

"Last year, it was so boring [the announcements] never caught my attention," said Black. "We wanted to make the school more exciting for everyone. Why do you think I did that rap last year [for the video election speeches]?"

Over the past three months Razzino and Schatmeyer say they have received abundant complaints from staff members and students about the new style and energy of the announcements.

"On an almost daily basis, I was informed via e-mail and personal contact that the announcements were becoming a distraction and a nuisance," said Schatmeyer, who responded to Oracle questions via e-mail because he was out of the building on personal business. "Numerous faculty informed me that [the officers'] playful banter was causing the announcements to run over the time allotted, which became intrusive on classroom instructional time. I also received several complaints that announcements were frequently unclear and important information was not being responsibly disseminated to faculty and students."

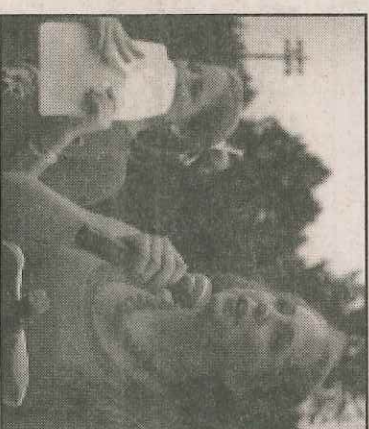
Frost has been known to sing some announcements, since she is a member of school performing groups. Both she and Black have told jokes, played music, given shout-outs and offered birthday wishes on the air. And the entire school always knew when an after-school activity featured food, by Frost's signature "Yummy!"

Principal David Smith also relayed some of the faculty's complaints to the SGA sponsors.

"It is true that I set certain guidelines. I did say not to do birthday shout-outs," said Smith. "It's also true that with an audience of almost 2,500 people, different people will hear the same thing and react to it differently. There needs to be a consciousness about the announcements."

When writing the announcement rules, Schatmeyer said he tried to focus on appealing those who had complained.

"The guidelines included implementing more prudent timing, restricting improvisation and personal messages, careful enunciation, adopting an appropriate tone and limiting the length of time music could be broadcast," said Schatmeyer.



Sarah Wink

Senior Julie Frost and Lissa Black speak at the pep rally. They are no longer permitted to give announcements.

Senior Brianna Gays, an SGA officer, thinks that the situation could have been handled differently.

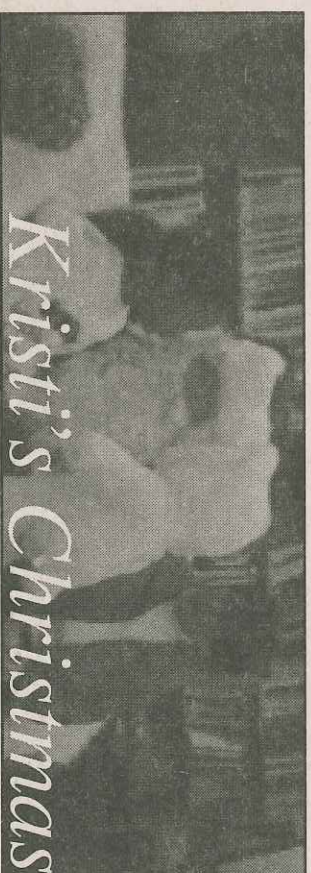
"What has been done [on the announcements] at this school has never been in black and white," said Gays. "[The problem] has nothing to do with our sponsors: [it has to do] with the faculty giving us little or no credibility. [The faculty and SGA officers] should be able, as a democracy, to sit down and talk about this."

Black and Frost insist that their improvisational style was meant to draw attention to the news. And Frost believes that there will always be a portion of the school population that finds fault in the SGA's way of doing things.

"From day one, people were complaining. But people are always complaining. Last year people were complaining that it was too boring," said Frost. "[This year], they've said that we're offending people, but it's all to get people to get more excited about the announcements."

Although Black and Frost initially signed the contract, they have decided to declare their signatures null and refrain from announcing under the new guidelines. Black, however, made an exception on Monday afternoon because no one else was available to broadcast. Frost is determined to boycott the announcements unless changes are made to the guidelines.

"I will come back to the announcements if we can negotiate the contract, but until then, no," said Frost. "I don't really want to be a part of it if there isn't any room for creativity."



Kaitie Harrison

Kristi's Christmas money will buy clothes, gift certificates and necessities for needy families.

HELPING from Page 1

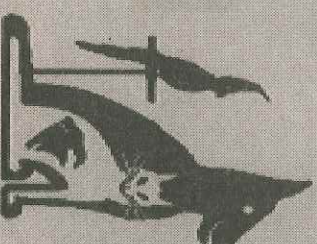
Society is also posting a program where you can sign up to become an organ donor.

Along with many sports teams and the Science Honor society, the Spanish Honor Society had a contest between all of the Spanish classes. The contest started on December 1 and lasted for two weeks to determine which class brings in the most money. This money will go toward buying clothes, gift certificates and necessities for five

needy Hispanic families in our community. The class that brings in the most money will receive a pizza party to reward the students for contributing to this event.

Even though these organizations are sponsoring all different events, they are all for the same cause: to help our community.

"Actually, seeing the smile on their faces when they you bought them things [is priceless]," said senior Brandon Allen.



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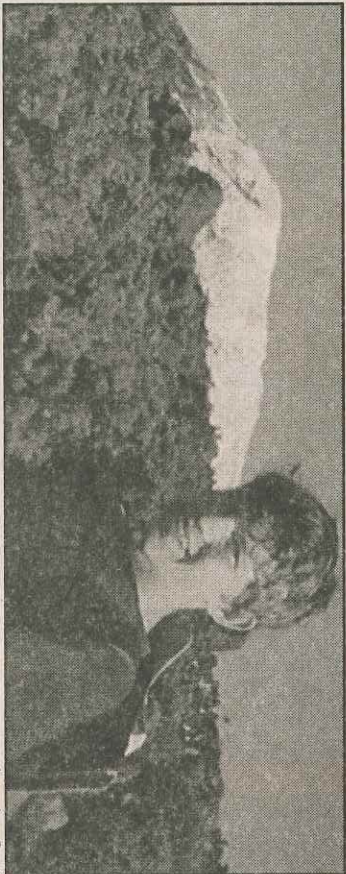
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Must present coupon. Not valid with any other offer

OFFER EXPIRES ON

12/31/06



Lorraine Scott
Scott visited Mt. Kilimanjaro, located in Tanzania when he was in 9th grade.

Senior Matt Scott spends four years in South Africa

By Nicole Simpson
Entertainment Editor

As if senior Matt Scott's fun and enthusiastic personality is not interesting enough, he has an out of the ordinary past to add onto it as well.

Unlike the majority of other WS students, he was not born and raised in Springfield. After living in Springfield, Scott moved from his typical suburban home to live in a much different place, the capital of South Africa. From 2000 to 2004, Scott got the chance that not so many students get before their senior year in high school: to experience a completely different culture outside of the U.S.

"I got the chance to do so many more things there than here," said Scott. "I got to go scuba diving and bungee jumping. They didn't care too much about safety standards; it wasn't real dangerous but it was thrilling."

One of the common characteristics of high schools are the cliques. The typical goths, nerds, and preps, are something a lot of teenagers would love to get away from for once.

"There weren't any cliques," said Scott. Along with the absence of cliques "I liked my school [in South Africa], it was really diverse," said Scott. "Only about 38% were Americans."

There are inevitably other differences between living in North America and South Africa, weather for instance, can be an odd thing to adapt to. Since half of Scott's campus was outdoors, rain affected them more there than here. Although major rainfall only occurred once or twice a year in Africa, Scott got to replace his occasional "snow days" with "rain days."

"One day it rained eight or nine inches," said Scott. The students got to leave early since the school was flooded, "because they thought there was color in the water."

The nature in Africa is obviously bound to be different than that in America as well. Aside from the normal squirrels and chipmunks, other animals, like antelope, could be spotted occasionally as well.

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Sophomore Taylor Silver performs a grab while leaping down the two sets of stairs on the hill behind the stadium. "Roll for life," said Silver.

Sophomore pulls 360 on 'skater' stereotypes

Taylor Silver zooms past prejudices

By **Ayssa Horton**
Features Editor

When people see a teenager skateboarding or rollerblading, they are automatically labeled as a "skater." The stereotype of a "typical" skater is that the person is lazy and in most cases a pothead. But sophomore Taylor Silver breaks this stereotype, even though he does skate.

Silver does not fit the stereotype of a skater at all. He is not even remotely lazy, as he fits in time for dive practice, soccer practice, and homework for his honors classes. He also does not smoke marijuana. "I don't see any point to [marijuana]," said Silver.

Silver's hobby of rollerblading began six years ago when a friend of his had a ramp and Silver decided to try it.

"[Rollerblading] looked like a lot of fun and it just escalated from that," said Silver. "I usually rollerblade for about half an hour each day, but then I do it more on the weekends."

Other hobbies that occupy Silver's time include diving for WS, playing soccer and playing the guitar. He has been playing the guitar for three years and prefers electric

over acoustic. Of his three hobbies though, soccer has been a part of Silver's life for the longest amount of time.

"I've been playing with the Friendship League for about ten years. I play in the fall and spring and I've been with the same guys for a long time," said Silver.

Some of Silver's teammates include sophomores Ross Clapsaddle and Steven and Kevin Znilek. Clapsaddle's dad coaches the team.

"He [Clapsaddle's dad] is really cool," said Silver. "We all have a lot of fun, even though we get red cards sometimes."

Silver, like every other teenager, has to focus a lot of his time on his schoolwork. He is taking all honors classes and is not sure of his GPA but knows that he has "nothing below a B." History is his favorite subject and next year he wants to take two or three AP classes.

"I really like history and my teacher [Cathleen Boivin] is so tight," said Silver.

Silver's classmates seem to like him, seeing as he was nominated for Homecoming Court this year. They appreciate his laid-back attitude, friendliness and sense of humor that is evident while talking with Silver.

Mr. Jones goes to Washington

PE teacher looks to our first president for inspiration

By **Sean Hogan**
Oracle Editor

He has 170 books on George Washington. He visits Mount Vernon every year on December 14, the day of George Washington's death. He is not a history teacher, though. He is Physical Education teacher and football coach Jim Jones.

Jones' interest in George Washington was first sparked when he walked into an antique store.

"I saw this old book about George Washington and I picked it up and read it," said Jones.

Jones, instantly fascinated, started grabbing more biographies on George Washington.

Now Jones owns 23 first edition biographies, a 39-

volume set of biographies published in 1932 and one biography published in 1804, just five years after Washington's death.

Jones does not use his knowledge about Washington as examples to motivate the football players he coaches or the students he teaches.

"I keep [my interest in Washington] quiet," said Jones. "At the end of the [football] season, I get out of that loud environment. I go to Mount Vernon where it is quiet."

Jones said that his favorite time to go to Mount Vernon is December 14. It is difficult for him to concentrate with hundreds of fourth graders running around on their tours, and generally the site is empty in the winter months.

"I keep [my interest in George Washington] quiet. At the end of the season, I get out of that loud environment. I go to Mount Vernon where it is quiet."

—Jim Jones, PE teacher

"It's usually cold and rainy," said Jones, which leaves him alone to walk around peacefully.

Jones was not interested in the life of George Washington when he was a baseball player at Shepherd College. He minored in

Senior refuses to put herself into any corner

By **Josh Lipman**
Oracle Editor

When I first met senior Helen McCarthy I wouldn't talk to her. I was convinced that this goth-looking girl with dyed hair, torn pants and uniform black clothing was some kind of tormentor.

That was six years ago, before she eventually drove me out of silence by hurling pig Latin phrases at me, and before we began having regular, two-way conversations. I have just recently learned that Helen's dress style never had a thing to do with scaring me.

"Do you know how hard it is to keep colored clothes clean?" said McCarthy. "All of my wardrobe gets covered in paint."

Helen paints theater sets not only for the WS techies, but also for her Academy Classes and community theaters. Her talents as a paint head, which is a paint crew supervisor, and as an artistic designer have earned scholarship offers from Radford University and West Virginia Wesleyan University.

Far from the goth girl I thought she was when I first met her, Helen is a Renaissance woman in every sense. She is as likely to be found listening to Peter, Paul and Mary as she is to be found listening to Metallica. She follows the news and reads books whenever she has time. It's not illegal substances she's concerned with but the food at local grocery stores.

"I just read *Fast Food Nation* and I can't eat beef anymore," said McCarthy. "It's horrible." Helen has a passion for politics and will debate all challengers willing to defend their ideals. She describes herself as an independent with an affinity for knowledge.

"I love arguing, especially with people who don't agree with me," said McCarthy. "I'm a firm believer in being open to the truth, whatever source it comes from."

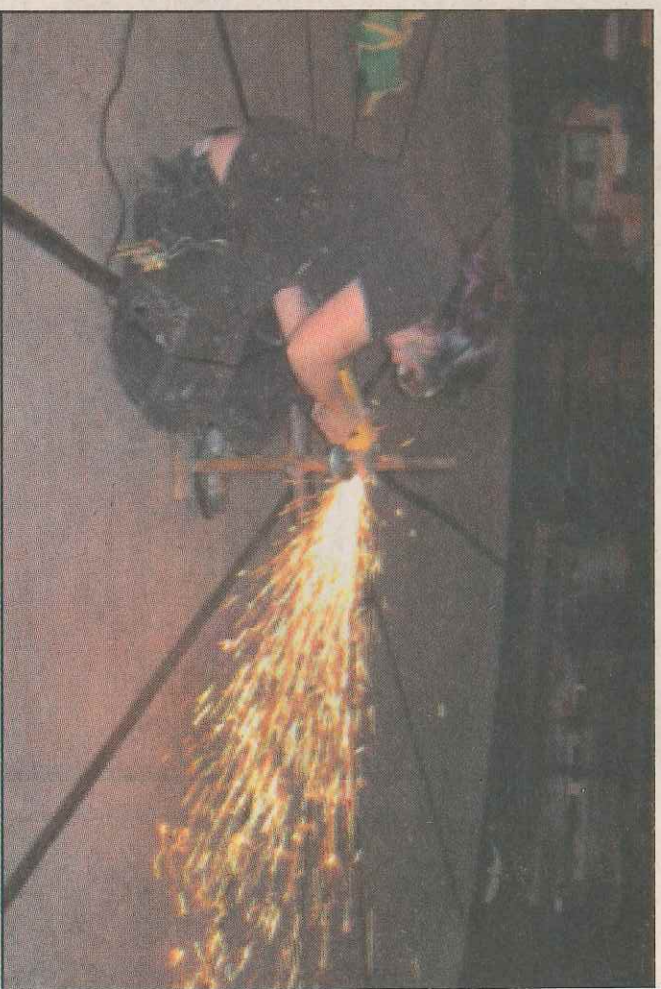
Helen also does activist work, not for political parties, but for humanitarian causes. She spent Thanksgiving in Christian, Mississippi, helping hurricane

Katrina victims. There she collected the wreckage, to someday use in staging of Tennessee classic New Orleans "A Streetcar Named Natchez."

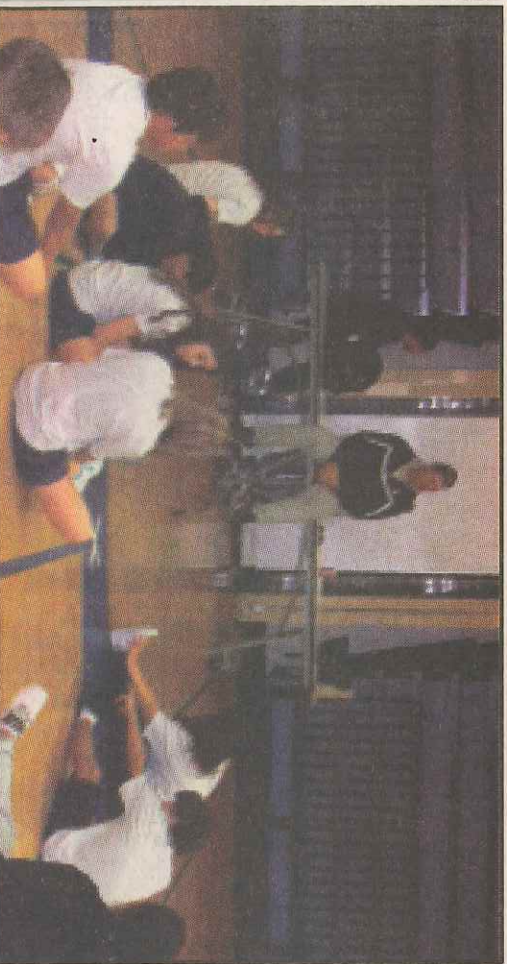
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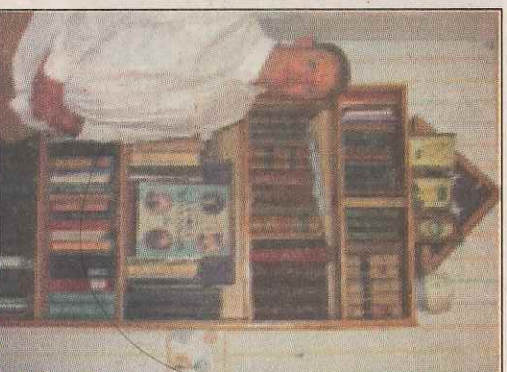
"I love my painting McCarthy. "It ma



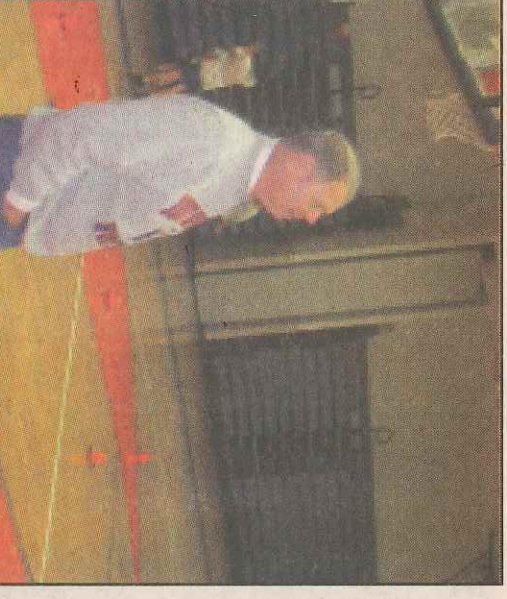
Senior Helen McCarthy uses a blow torch on the rotating stage for the Drama department. "Les Misérables—School Edition" last spring.



Sean Hogan



Bafo Jones



Molly Cushing

Jones speaks to the freshmen in his 5th-period gym class, left, and relaxes at home with his Washington books.

Corrective Therapy and English and double majored in Public Health and Physical Education. Instead of having students concentrate on only one subject, Shepherd wanted to mold their students into well-rounded people before they left college. They did this by requiring all students to take nine hours each of art, music, English, humanities and

business besides their other classes. Jones said that taking a range of classes helped him teach across curriculum because he can relate athletic things to academic things and vice-versa. "I can relate football to business terms," said Jones. "But I hated having to take art. I had to identify a painting called 'Spilled Milk on a

Mahogany Table.' If that was worth \$1 million, why didn't I think of it first?" PE teachers have to have health knowledge because it involves things that can happen in a school environment. "Most [college PE] courses are pre-Med," said Jones. "Lots of them are classes with nurses. There is an unfair stere-

otype that PE teachers are "dumb jocks." In his first few years of teaching, Jones used to wear a tie to school every day because he was afraid people were stereotyping him. "PE teachers are well-rounded and interesting," said Jones. "If every one could teach like we coach, we would have a better education system."

PE teacher Jim Jones watches as his students run laps around the Main Gym. Jones is an avid reader of George Washington biographies. He says he likes to visit Mt. Vernon when the tourist crowds have gone home.

Blonde Stereotypes

People aren't always what they seem. In other words, you can't judge a book by its cover. Yet we critique what someone wears, doesn't wear, what he talks like, what she talks about, who he talks to or what she acts like. It's just the way we are. Some of us, though, could care less what others think or what is expected. We live in a society of labels: rich kid, teacher's pet, nerd. In this issue you will meet four people who bend the rules when it comes to stereotypes.

Being a blonde is no joke

Sophomore shows she is more than a hair color

By Jake Serwin

ETC. Editor

Amanda Miller is a smart blonde, but you won't hear that come out of her mouth.

Miller, 15, is a fair-haired sophomore with a 3.5 GPA, "at least," she says.

When she was younger, her hair was bright blonde, and it has since darkened to a sandier shade.

Most non-blondes see her as clearly blonde. While her friends all agree on her hair color, Miller does not. "I'm not blonde," Miller said, flashing a slightly-dimpled smile.

She does not mind her (disputed) blondeness, however. Either due to disbelief or tenacity, she is not affected by others' insistence that she is blonde. Miller even has a sense of

humor about it.

"I tell dumb blonde jokes," said Miller. "It's kind of mean."

Blondes, females in particular, are stereotypically seen as less intelligent or possessing less common sense than those of other hair colors. By either good fortune or indiscernible hair color, Miller has experienced little discrimination.

"I never get looked down upon, that I know of," Miller said.

Regardless of her actual hair color, Miller receives good grades and is by most accounts intelligent. Her English teacher, Nonia Gay Jones, attests to her intelligence.

"She got the second-highest A in the class," Jones said. "The two top

grades first quarter were made by blondes."

As with her blondeness, Miller disputes others' assertions that she is smart. This is probably due to her high standards for herself.

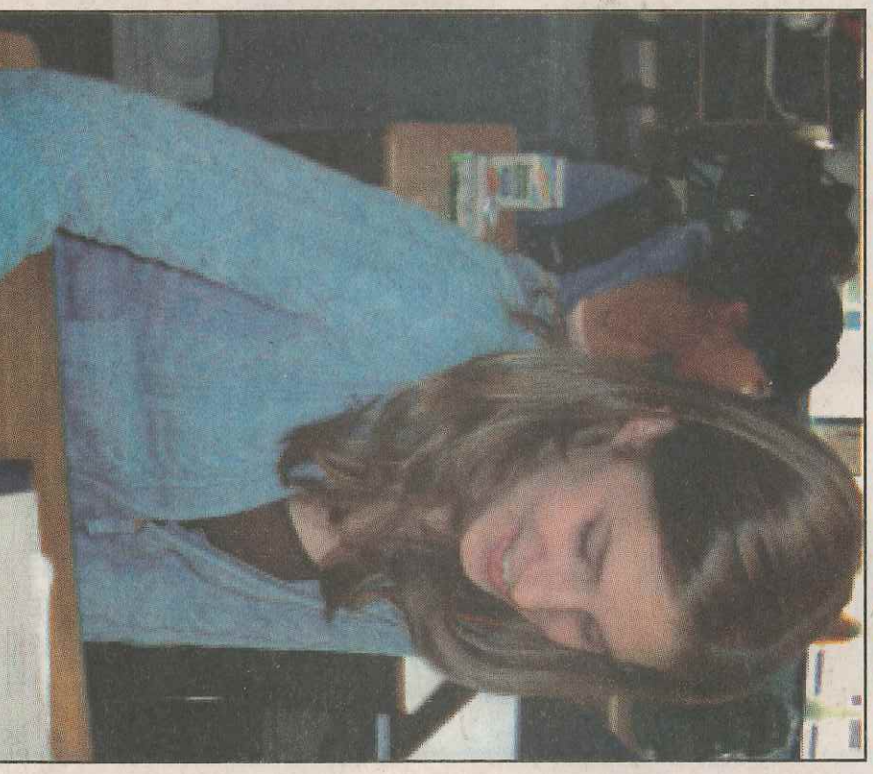
"I have a bad GPA," Miller said, "bad [PSAT] scores."

Her friends disagree yet again.

"She says she's not smart, but she is," said sophomore Erin Bartle. "It's a total lie, I don't know what her problem is."

Modest about her intellect and in denial about her hair color, Miller is comfortable with her status as a stereotype-shatterer. That said, she's still up for a change.

"I want to dye it purple," Miller said.



Jake Serwin

Sophomore Amanda Miller smiles at an assignment in Nonia Gay Jones' English class.

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Carl Cantrell

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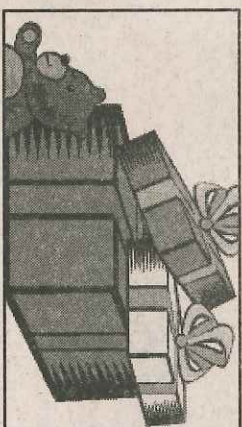
'Tis the season for gifts!

Yup, it's true. The holiday season has arrived and its time to give and get gifts! This holiday gift guide tells what's inside the latest in stores today.

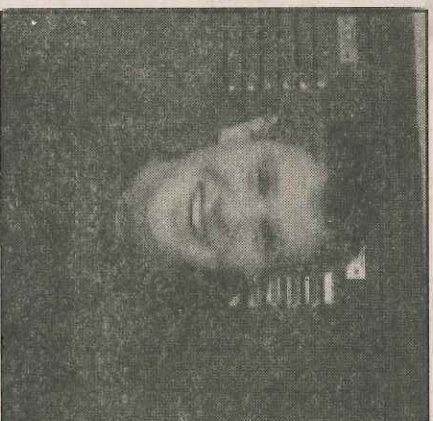
- Playstation 3
 - Nintendo Wii
 - Xbox 360
 - PSP
 - iPod (nano and video)
 - new games for video game systems like "Red Reel" and the "Madden" series
 - Nintendo DS Lite
 - Clothes from stores like Hollister, American Eagle
- Even, if these gifts are popular it means nothing if you can't buy the

presents. Great bargains make shopping easier for you and your wallet (or your parents').

- Best Buy and Circuit City have great deals on electronics
- Stores that like Macy's and Kohls have great sales like early bird and clearances up to 80% off



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Molly Cushing

WILL JONES, 11

"I'm pretty sure I'm getting a PS3, because I mean, I [already] have a PS2 and it [a PS3] seems cool and fun"



Colin Embrey

AMALYA CLAYTON, 10

"I'm looking forward to giving hugs because I don't have any money"

—Compiled by **Monica Evans**

Local band puts on rockin' show

By **Kelly Sipple**
News Editor

When Dave, the lead singer of "My Favorite Highway," made his way to the keyboard, I knew what was about to happen and I began screaming. The rest of the band joined in and performed "You're Making It All Come Alive," and sounded just like they do on their new CD.

Six of my closest friends and I went to the November 17 concert of our favorite band, "My Favorite Highway." Decked out in our t-shirts from previous concerts and new band shirts we bought at the venue, we sung at the top of our lungs to the seven songs off their CD, "Anywhere But Here."

The band is made up of four guys between the ages of 20 and 22, with a set of brothers and a set of cousins. Dave performed with intensity and had a powerful voice. Alone on stage, he sang a personal song he had written the day before. We all thought it was amazing and showed the musical talent he had.

The best part about the band, (other than their good

looks,) is their lyrics, which are inspirational and have relevance in a teenager's life. Their themes range from bad habits to broken relationships.

With the talent every band member has, they came together to put on a stellar performance. All of them were very personable and took pictures with fans after the show. They stuck around for over an hour, signing anything and everything that was shoved in front of their faces, making the night memorable for all their diehard fans.

I've been to concerts at big arenas like Nissan Pavilion, FedEx Field and the Patriot Center, but this concert was at Jammin' Java, and I found it more appealing than any of the sold-out arenas. Unlike the big arenas, we were within ten feet of the band members, and were so close that when my best friend screamed "I love you Will!" he waved and smiled back.

When I pulled up to the strip mall I was skeptical such a small place could hold 200 people. Thankfully, I was wrong, as there was plenty of standing room to jump around and belt out every word song after song. Jammin' Java had an amazing sound system that left



Kelly Sipple

"My Favorite Highway" released their new CD, "Anywhere But Here" on November 17 at Jammin' Java.

my cars ringing for the rest of the weekend.

After the show, we were able to lounge around in comfy chairs while waiting for the band to come take pictures. There was a wide variety of food available to purchase and decorations like white Christmas lights, futuristic bar stools and florescent blue lighting around the bar, creating the perfect atmosphere.

In the end, I had a lot of fun and on a night filled with my favorite friends and my favorite band.

ROAD TRIP

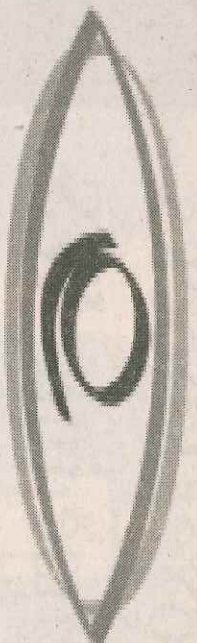
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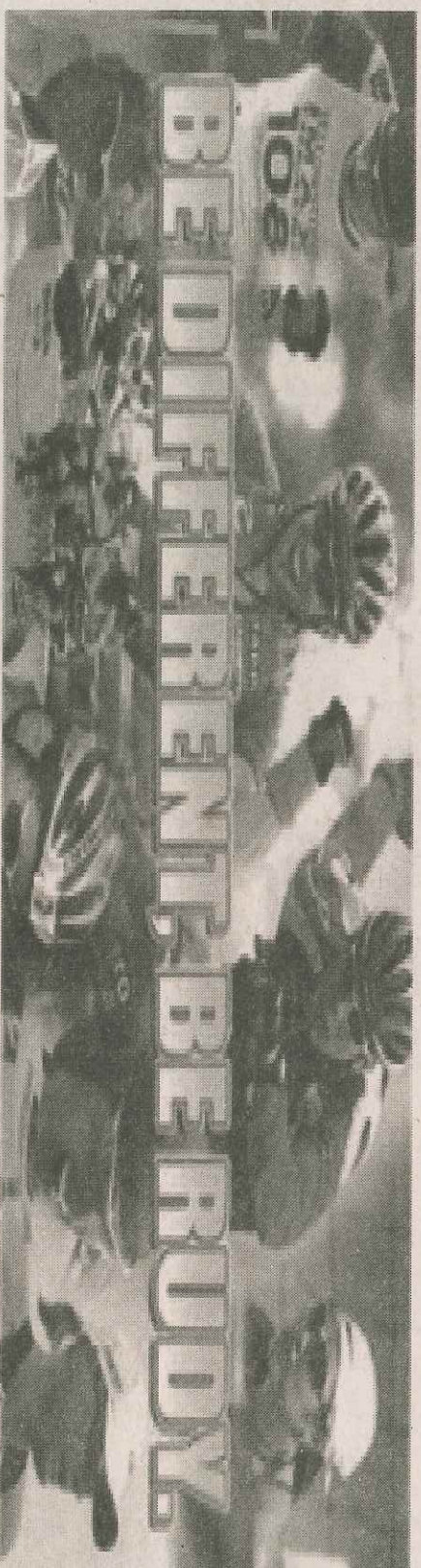
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Boxer knocks Sense into WS

By Sunnie Ko
Senior Staff Writer

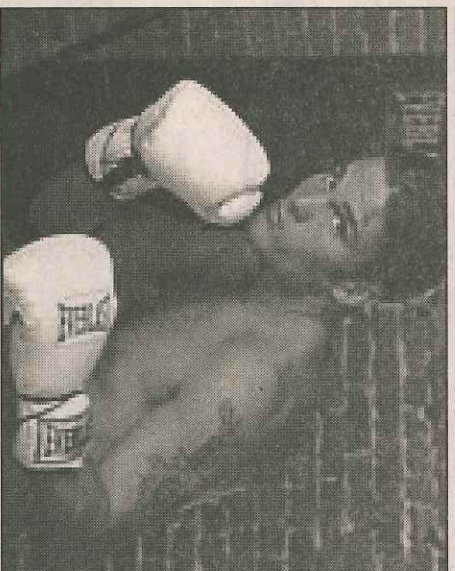
It was not about the ring, the gloves, the fame or the fortune. It was about life.

On Friday, November 17, professional boxer Jimmy Lange came to WS to deliver something more than a fight.

30 year old Jimmy Lange has been boxing for the better portion of his life. He has trained for more than 20 years, boxed against dozens of top ranked boxers and was even on the reality show "The Contender."

The message he gave was not focused solely on the sport. His message was about achieving goals. "Prepare for the unexpected," said Lange. "Prepare everyday."

He said that in boxing, he must adapt to what his opponent is going to bring. Lange paralleled a fight to



Professional boxer Jimmy Lange visited WS before competing on December 9 at the Patriot Center.

life and how every day is going to be a new challenge, that every day will throw a different punch.

"Not everyone is going to believe in you," said Lange. "That's a shame, but it's true."

As a boxer, Lange has come across people who have doubted his skills. This became another obstacle he overcame in achieving his long term goal of being a professional boxer. The pressure of using performance

Gymnasts raise the bar

By Erika Gleason
News Editor

The gymnastics team is more than spandex leotards and perfectly curled hair. This year's team has dreams of greatness, and has begun its journey with a third place win.

The team is composed of 12 girls and four boys. Having this number of boys competing is moderately new for the team.

"[It's] definitely awesome to have all the support [from the boys]," said senior and captain Amy Sullivan. "Plus it's fun to do all the tumbling with them."

The four events gymnasts practice are floor, beam, bars and vault.

"I love the team and the coaches and I like tumbling," said junior Anna Yantz.

"[My least favorite event is] probably beam, because doing the jumps scare me because I could land badly."

The first competition the team faced was at Robinson on November 29.

Each team member receives points based on their performance in one of the four categories. The points are then tallied and this determines the team's placement.

"We want to make it to states," said Sullivan. Sullivan was sidelined because of a hamstring injury she sustained during one of the team's two hour practices, but she still managed to compete in the vault category.

"[My favorite part of gymnastics are] the competitions, definitely, because that's when our team comes together," said Sullivan.



Spartan Sports

The varsity gymnastics team poses for a picture before their first competition.

Some of the team is relatively young and inexperienced, but some members, such as juniors Sara Flory, Breanne Boyle, and Caitlyn Heine are viewed by teammates as gifted leaders.

"The girls who've done it before are really good," said Yantz. "I think last year a few of them went to regionals, and maybe more this year-maybe even states."

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Spring sports get in shape for the season

By Nicole Simpson
Entertainment Editor

Spring sports like lacrosse, baseball, softball, crew and soccer are among the most competitive sports at WS and involve some of the most extensive year round training. Winter training features long practices, exhausting sprints, agility drills and agonizing weekly lifting are required. They are considered to be a mean opponent.

Some teams are on an easier preparation schedules than others.

"You can pretty much decide whatever you want to do," said sophomore lacrosse player Ben Myers. "There are indoor leagues in the winter and in a little

while we are going to start lifting and running three days a week, and start captains' practices." Girls Varsity lacrosse practices are similar to the boys'. The amount of weekly practices may vary from two to four days a week, but the effort put forth is ultimately the same.

"For the second year in a row we're doing conditioning two days a week for two hours," said girls' Varsity lacrosse coach Brian Puhlick. "We consistently conditioned last year and saw remarkable improvement and very few, if any, injuries."

Lacrosse is not the only hard-working team out there. Posted outside of Coach John James' office are the baseball teams' current plans to get ready for their season.

"All of our returning players and any student who is interested are lifting three days a week and doing sprints and agility drills two days week," said James. "We lost of a lot of seniors last year so adjustment from the younger guys have yet to be seen. How they adjust to varsity will go far in seeing how well we do."

Most of the spring sports teams are preparing endlessly for their approaching season. The crew team is practicing through the winter on rowing machines at the school. Both the boys and girls soccer teams are training and practicing intensely, trying to make up for their loss of essential players.



Sara Kotail
The crew team gets in shape on their rowing machines this winter for their upcoming season.

"Normally, there's a program that both boys and girls take called Velocity where you run and train like mad. Velocity was very hard from what I heard. People would actually break down and cry," said junior JV soccer player Erika Peterson. "There's also house soccer games where anyone comes out and plays after school for an hour. I know varsity lost seven key players but if everyone pulls it together I know they'll do great."

Every year WS sports teams says good-bye to key players on their teams giving younger players a chance to show off their skills on the field.

"I think we'll have a very good season. I don't want to make any predictions, but I think preseason conditioning is critical in our team's success," said Puhlick

Eckenrode socks it to England

By Aaron Snow
Senior Staff Writer

In the world of professional soccer, few teams are more dominant or more respected than EPL (English Premier League) powerhouse Chelsea FC. In an effort to maintain their prowess, Chelsea recruits young people from across the globe to play on its youth team, where they develop the skills necessary to play for the club in the future.



Molly Cushing
Kai Eckenrode was invited to try out for Chelsea FC's youth soccer team in England.

Among this year's possible recruits is junior Kai Eckenrode, who has been afforded the opportunity to try out for the youth team.

"I went to a camp and they invited

people from the camp to try out in London," said Eckenrode. "I got picked along with like four other people to go."

Just receiving an invitation to try out is no small accomplishment. Only the most gifted athletes are permitted to compete with other top young players for a spot on the team. Eckenrode remains modest, however, about his chances.

"There is basically like a zero percent chance that I make the team," said Eckenrode. "It will be more of a sightseeing trip to London."

With such a high level of competition in Europe, Eckenrode looks on his trip as a rare chance to play against the best players youth soccer has to offer.

"Some of these 16-year-olds already have their own agents," said Eckenrode. "Soccer is so big in Europe." Eckenrode has vowed to enjoy his

trip regardless of how he measures up to the other players. One opportunity Eckenrode finds particularly inviting is

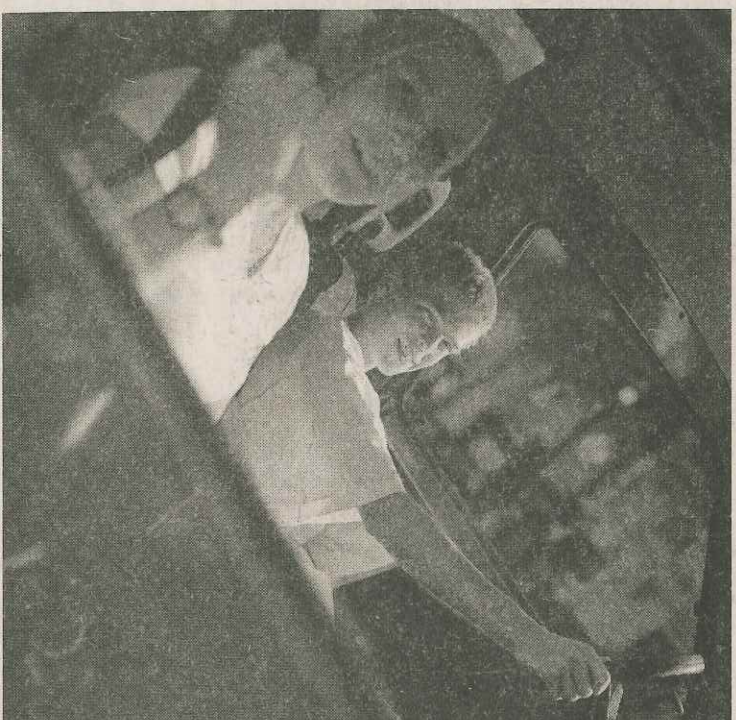
"I went to a camp and they invited people from the camp to try out in London. I got picked along with like four other people to go."

— Kai Eckenrode
the chance to meet some of the Chelsea players.

"We train on a field right next to where the Chelsea players train," said Eckenrode. "There is a chance we might meet some of the players who come over to join in on our practice."

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OVER THE TOP CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

By Stevie Fiorino
Etc. Editor

I do not hate a lot of things. The things that I have great feelings of hatred towards, however, are the outrageously obnoxious inflatable reindeer, snowmen and Santa's people place in the middle of their front lawns.

The concept of using ridiculously large blow up figurines as decorations is unfathomable to me. When I think of traditional Christmas decorations, pretty white lights, fresh green garland and a nice wreath with pine cones pops into my head. Over the years, I have noticed that people keep getting more and more elaborate with their decorations.

I remember as a child my mom and I would drive around and look at everyone's dazzling lights, now you can barely even see the darn lights because the

gigantic and somewhat frightening snowman takes up half of the lawn.

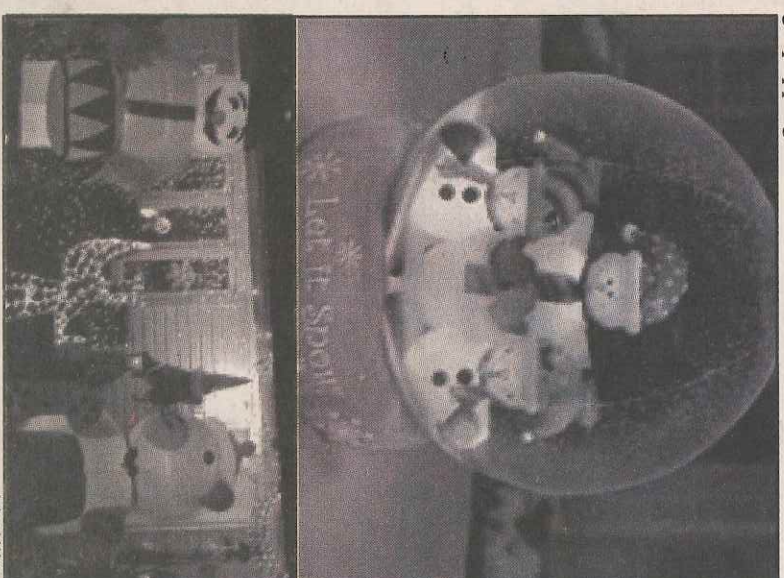
What makes me wonder the most is what can possibly be going through these people's heads. What are they thinking when they are blowing up the abnormally big Santa? Do they actually believe that it looks good? "Well now Darlene, I think that this here gi-normous reindeer will win the trailer-park Christmas decoration contest, no doubt!" I just do not understand.

Inflatable decorations really push my buttons, but what really gets me is when people leave them up for months and months. Driving down the street on a February night and still being caught off guard by a huge, blow up replica of Santa and his sleigh really perturbs me. Most people take down their decorations the day after New Year's Day.

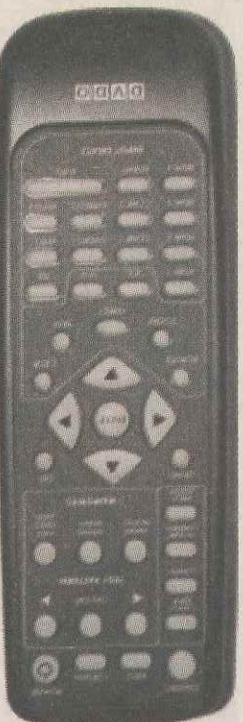
No one really has a legitimate excuse as to why they leave their decorations up for an extended time. "I just never had no time to take down 'ol Santa 'cause I was too darn busy stuffing all my deer heads." Everyone can spare twenty minutes to take down their lights and deflate those darn oversized snowmen and store them away until next year. It is not a difficult task.

It is not even the beginning of December and I have already come across quite a few inflatable figurines. Everyone is starting to feel the holiday spirit and joy. They say, "'tis the season to be jolly." I say

(as I go around with my safety pin), "'tis the season to go popping."



Hand Watch



How I would "click" through life

By Sean Hogan
Oracle Editor

After watching the Adam Sandler film, "Click," I wondered to myself what else I could use the all-controlling remote for. After hours of deep thought (ok, I fast-forwarded through them), I came up with a list of things I could use it for.

Play: In the snow, the drums and "Guitar Hero 2."

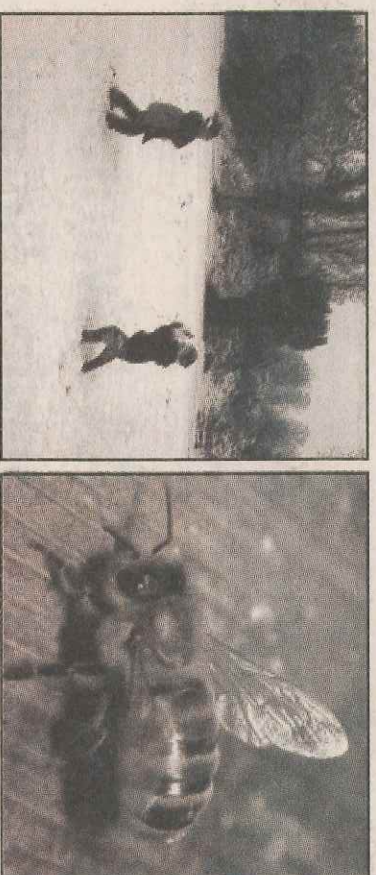
Delete: Angry and/or inept customers at Subway, bees, the time I was picked last in the team gymnastics unit in 5th grade gym, politicians, schoolwork, the Baltimore Orioles and freshmen.

Fast Forward: Core classes, Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, cleaning my room, the boy band phase, the last five minutes before I can leave work, commercials during "24" and the nine months before I go to Virginia Tech.

Skip: 7th period on Fridays, Spanish, lines at Chipotle, SR&R, anyone saying anything about "High School Musical" and the weeks after the Redskins lose (I might have to skip every week).

Mute: "Dominate, Dominate, Dominate."

Pause: Snow days, my shotgun throws (anything to add an extra two or three feet), Mr. Schameyer walking through the halls wearing the mascot head, winter and spring break and right before I'm about to run over a small animal with my van.



▶ **PLAY** ✕ **DELETE**

DECEMBER/JANUARY'06-'07

Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
15 ~Interims ~Drumline 3-6 p.m. ~Hanukkah begins	16 Napalm Death with Dead To Fall, Animosity and Screwtape @ Jaxx, 6 p.m.	17 Trick Daddy - Back by Thug Demand CD is released	18 Personality and Pizzaz Performance at Reston Town Center @ 7 p.m.	19 Boys Basketball @ West Potomac at 7:15 p.m.	20 ~Winter Concert Auditorium 7:30 p.m. ~"Rocky Balboa" with Sylvester Stallone premiers in theatres	21 Locals Only Live @ Jaxx at 8 p.m. (\$10, \$7 under 21)
22 "We are Marshall" with Matthew McConaughey premiers	23 ~Drumline 2:30-5:30 p.m. ~Hanukkah ends	24  Christmas Eve!	25  Christmas Day!	26 "Notes on a Scandal" with Care Blanchett opens tomorrow in theatres	27 "Perfume" with Dustin Hoffman premiers in theatres	28 "The Dead Girl" with Brittany Murphy opens tomorrow in theatres
29 Track FTT Invitational @ PG County at 8 a.m.	30 Soulive @ 9:30 Club at 9 p.m. \$35	31  New Year's Eve!	1  New Year's Day! *~2007~*	2 ~Boys Basketball v. Annandale at 7:15 p.m. ~Back to school	3 Gymnastics v. Fairfax, Chantilly @ Robinson at 7 p.m.	4 Washington Capitals v. Montreal @ Verizon Center at 7 p.m.
5 Girls Basketball v. South County at 7:30 p.m.	6 Fear Nuttin Band, John Brown's Body & Soldiers of Jah Army @ 9:30 club at 8 p.m. \$20	7 High Fives Happy Endings & Len Bias at the Black Cat at \$5 backstage 9 p.m.	8 ~PSAT return and review ~PTSA Board meeting 7 p.m. Spartan Hall	9 PSAT return and review	10 ~PSAT return make ups ~PSAT program for parents - Cafeteria @ 7 p.m.	11 The Ambitions, The Hall Monitors and The Breakups @ the Black Cat \$8 backstage 9 p.m.