



The RAACOLE

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West Springfield High School 6100 Rolling Road Springfield, Virginia 22152

Homecoming receives mixed reviews

By Ashley Brigham
Viewpoint Editor

With more than 2,000 students here, pleasing everyone is an impossible feat.

This year for Homecoming, the SGA came up with the spirit days for each day of the week leading up to the big Homecoming win against South County on Friday. And, as with any decision, there was the predictable mixture of views.

Homecoming Spirit Week this year got exactly that reaction: Some loved the spirit days and others hated them.

We started the week out with pajama day on Monday. Although many enjoyed the day of comfortable clothing compared to their usual school attire, senior Samantha Iliff had an opposite reaction.

"My least favorite spirit day was pajama day because I don't feel motivated to work when I'm in my pajamas," Iliff said. "It is just a total slack day."

Tuesday brought class rivalry, with Class Color Day: the freshmen in yellow, sophomores in green, juniors in red and the se-

niors showing their school spirit in black and white. Some people liked it a lot while others complained about the color assigned to their class.

"My least favorite spirit day was definitely class color day because I just really hate the color yellow," freshman Hannah Beale said.

Other students were less worried about colors, and enjoyed the chance to dress up.

"I only participated in two spirit days, but I really liked class color day because I got to dress up and be girly, which I don't get to do very often," says Iliff.

On Wednesday, we were decked out in tie-dye, fringe and leggings for Wacky Tacky The Dye Day. This day is a school favorite, and created a competitive atmosphere of who could dress the craziest. Beale was one of the many that enjoyed this spirit day.

"My favorite spirit day was Wacky Tacky day because of how crazy everyone looked, and how funny it was," she said.

Thursday, we were seeing doubles with the arrival of Twin Day.

See "HOMECOMING" on Page 4.



Lifetouch

Senior Daniel Scolese makes a statement at the Homecoming Assembly. Scolese brought the homecoming theme of "Under the Sea" to a whole new level while performing as Ariel the Mermaid in the Key Club skit.

Mr. Spartan, Queen get nod in new voting system

By Jake Servin
Oracle Editor

This year's Mr. Spartan and Homecoming Queen competitions featured a new voting system, a family legacy and a first in school history.

Nominations for the Homecoming court this year were done through 24/7 for the first time. In the past, they were done on paper in English classes and tabulated by hand. The new system sped up the process and made it a lot easier on the SGA sponsors.

"It was simply looking at a printout of results," said SGA Sponsor John Altkonis, "as opposed to reading 2,200 pieces of paper, each with four handwritten names."

See "QUEEN, MR. SPARTAN" on Page 4.

New after-school rules put in place after altercation

By Monica Evans & Sam Landers
Oracle Editors

New after-school procedures have been put in place after an 18-year old outsider entered school grounds after 2:10 p.m. and participated in an unknown altercation with a student.

After being in the school for a few minutes, the intruder was spotted with what looked like a gun attached to his waistband.

Following student alerts, Assistant Principal Mike Mukai reacted quickly to the situation along with Safety and Security Specialist Mike Ukele.

"Mr. Ukele and I followed him, caught up to him, talked to him and 60 seconds later the police showed up," said Mukai.

The unidentified male had fled the property and made his way toward Rolling Road on foot. This is where, breaking school security policy, Mukai and Ukele followed the intruder.

"I've been told I'm not supposed to do that," said Mukai. Although Mukai may have disregarded security procedures

See "AFTER SCHOOL" on Page 4.



Kevin Pike

New Choral Director Erin Huss takes over from Mike Dombrow. Huss, like Dombrow, is a former Spartan who was a member of the Madrigals as well as the star of the Spring Musical her junior year in high school. "I've been in music my whole life," Huss said.

Once a Spartan, always a Spartan

Huss sang her way back to WS

By Kevin Pike
ETC. Editor

Erin Huss is our new Choral Director, but she's not new to WS.

She is a WS graduate who sang with the Madrigals, tumbled with the cheerleaders and danced with Personality. She was also the lead of the school play and student director of Personality.

One of Huss's high school choral directors inspired her to go into musical production. She knew she wanted to study music after high school, but wasn't sure which field.

"I've been in music my whole life," says Huss. After high school, she went to the University of Tennessee where she received a full ride. She performed at a regional theatre in "Thoroughly Modern Millie" as Millie. She also had regional theatre roles in "Cats" and "The Beauty and the Beast." Five years ago, Huss decided to stop performing and begin teaching.

Huss said, "One of the reasons I was excited for the job was I had been through the program before. I knew where the level of students should be and could be at." She saw coming

See "HUSS" on Page 4.

Lalich transfers to OSU



Gas gets students stressing



Face paint and fall fun for all



The minute difference

That extra 60 seconds seems like no big deal, but we desperately need it back!

It is not uncommon anymore to see students running to class, carrying a day's load of binders and books.

Students must do this to get to class on time because they no longer have time to stop by their lockers.

The admin-

Editorial

istration's fault

in the new schedule is allotting only five minutes for students to get to class. How can they expect students to arrive to class on time?

Just stopping by your locker or using the restroom will make you receive an unexcused tardy.

Maybe the restroom situation wouldn't be so bad if it were another school. Possibly a school like Yorktown High School, which has over 19 stalls in each girls restroom,

or a high school with wide hallways that don't get blocked and crowded so easily. However, this is WS and we do not have such blessings.

In previous years, students have been given 6 or 7 minutes in between classes, and an additional five minutes between first and second block. Although an extra minute or two may not seem significant, it makes a huge difference.

It takes about 3 minutes (fast-paced) to walk down the length of the senior hallway from the foreign language classes to the cafeteria.

Suppose your locker is near the cafeteria. That's three minutes to get there, and three minutes to get back. Already, you have exceeded the time given to you and have re-

The new schedule has affected class time and teachers' lesson plans.

Students have now resorted to leaving class in the middle of instruction time

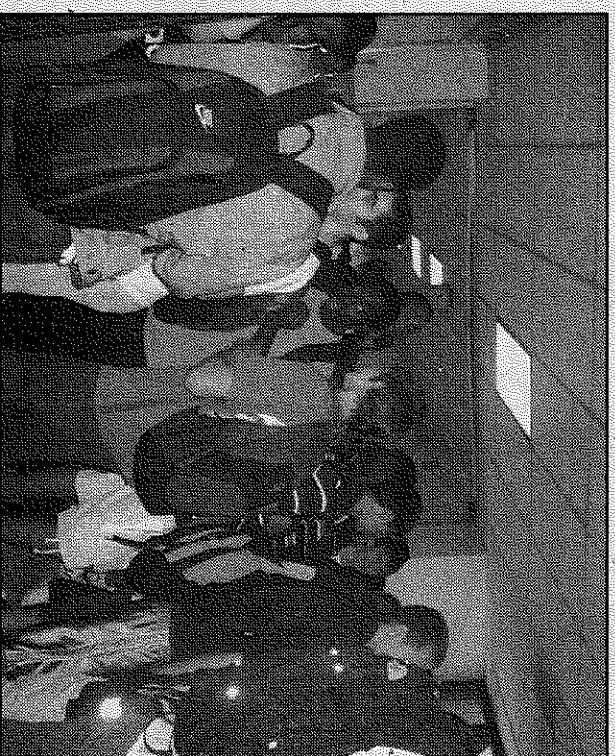
to go to the bathroom.

ceived yet another unexcused tardy. That's not even including the time it takes to get a drink of water, stop and talk to friends, or get past the mobs of students gathered around senior rail.

The new schedule has affected class time and teachers' lesson

plans. Students have now resorted to leaving class in the middle of instruction time to go to the bathroom.

With an increasing amount of late arrivals, more and more students are at risk of receiving nine unexcused tardies and failing the quarter. Don't get us wrong. We appreciate the 50 minutes of Spartan Time given to us on Wednesdays and Thursdays. The new schedule is not completely despised; however, a revision of the time in between classes would be welcomed.



Lauren Sipple

Powerade vs. Gatorade: The Battle comes here

By Kevin Pike
ETC. Editor

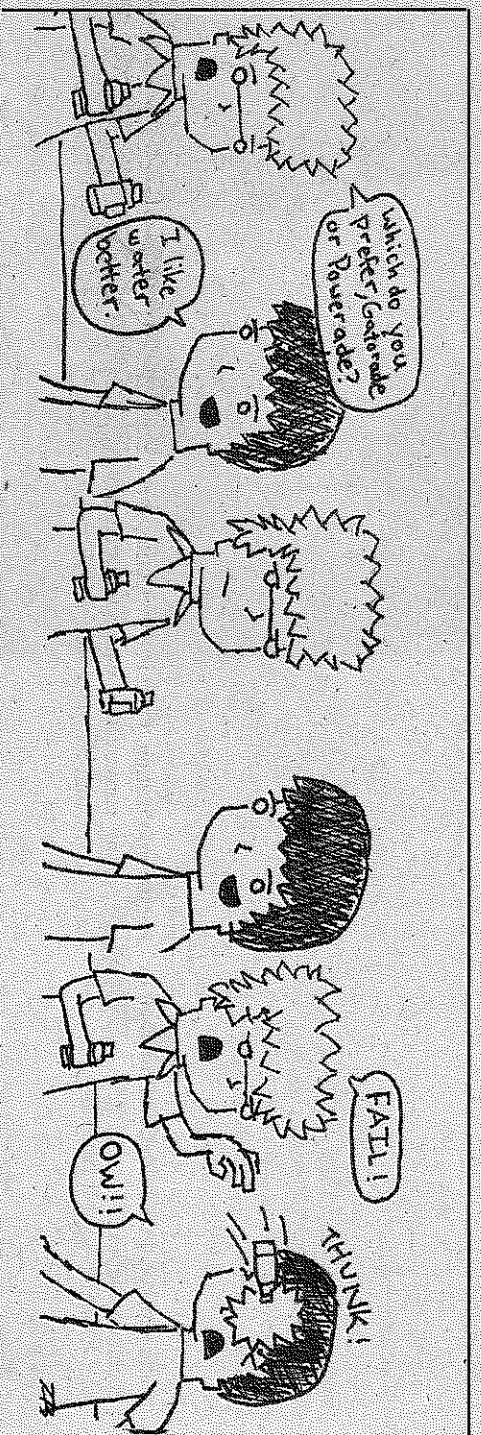
A sport drink battle of epic proportion is going on here. Powerade vs. Gatorade.

Gatorade has been the reigning sport drink for a while. Gatorade's instituted machines all over campus; outside the Auxiliary Gym, by the weight room and in the no-longer-carpeted-hallway, just to name a few. Students find Gatorade's sugary, flavorful goodness irresistible.

Gatorade was the only sports drink offered at school until this year. I discovered this during my first few lunches of the year. I noticed a lot of lunchers chugging down a sports drink that wasn't Gatorade.

I was thrown off guard and had to ask myself, "What in the world are these hooligans drinking?" With a few minutes of suspicious investigation I found the source. Powerade was being sold in all lines of our very own cafeteria.

To any other student, this is just another drink added to the plethora of beverages offered here. Not me, no sir, I wasn't fooled. I see what is really going on here. Powerade and Gatorade are at war. The warfare has fi-



Nelson Bernades

nally made it to WS.

Gatorade is old school and has established itself, outnumbering Powerade three machines to none. However, the new kid is in luck. Since the county has deemed Gatorade unfit for consumption during the school day, Gatorade machines will be turned off during instructional hours.

This is a great advantage for Powerade, which is sold during the school day at lunch.

It has practically replaced milk in student's cafeteria diets. Students will have no choice but to purchase Powerade during the day. This may break the Gatorade addiction and lead students to discover a soft spot for Powerade.

While Powerade has the school day on its side, Gatorade prevails before and after school. Gatorade dispensers are located in prime positions to bring in maximum sales.

This puts Powerade at a vast disadvantage. Nevertheless this disadvantage hasn't stopped students from warming up to Powerade. The seniors like it so much they threw pink Powerade to the juniors at the pep rally for a little taste.

Powerade is going to have to step up and go big to make it in this town. Gatorade is to sports drinks like backpacks are to North Face. Powerade has its work cut out for it.

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The Oracle is a student-run publication designed to inform and entertain the West Springfield High School community. We publish articles written with as little reporter bias as possible. Opinion is expressed in Viewpoint, Forum and ETC., and in reviews and signed columns. Editorialists 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 Schools. 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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Teen pregnancy is becoming commonplace

In case after case throughout our country, this situation is no longer such a shock

By Veronica Adams

Senior Staff Writer

The influence of the media has corrupted the view on teenage pregnancy. Teens getting pregnant used to be more of a surprise rather than a common problem.

The television show "The Secret Life of the American Teenager," is offensive to all teenage girls. The show is about a 15-year-old girl that winds up getting pregnant after a one night stand. Why call it "The Secret Life of 'THE' American Teenager"? This makes it seem that every teenage girl in America gets pregnant.

Yes, teen pregnancy has become an issue but why should we publicize another girl getting pregnant. The popularity of this show makes teens aware that this is an increasing problem but it gives off a negative perspective that this happens to every young girl in America.

If the issue was only shown in that television show it wouldn't be a problem but it's the cool thing now to have a teenage character announcing that they are pregnant. Flipping through the channels, you will see previews for the "hot" new television shows trying to get higher rating by using teenage pregnancy. The sad thing is that the more people talk about teenage pregnancy the more common it will become.

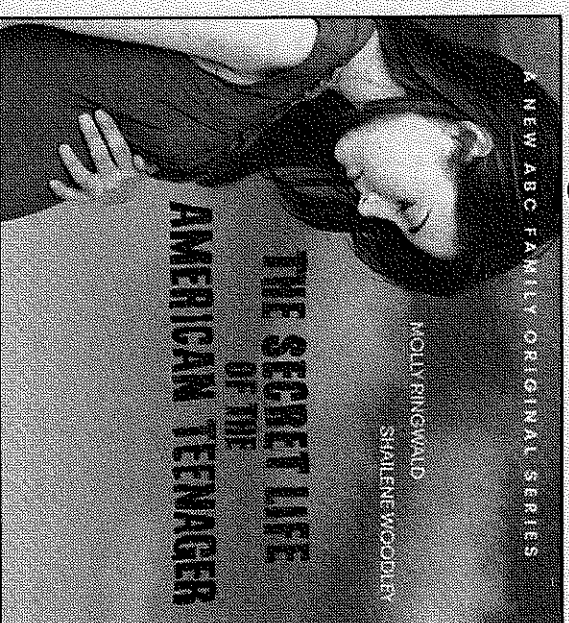
Publicizing pregnancy isn't only occurring on television. The presidential campaign is involving the issue of teen pregnancy through Sarah Palin's 17-year-old daughter, Bristol. In Rick Klein and Jennifer Parker's ABC News article states that Palin "is a 'real' person who has coped with setbacks that average Americans face every day." Has teen pregnancy turned into an every day dilemma?

Magazines love to put out which celebrity is pregnant this week. Celebrities' getting "the bump" has become a fashion statement. To get ahead in Hollywood, young teenage celebrities get pregnant even if it's giving fans the wrong message. The scandal of Jaime Lynn Spears' unwed pregnancy influenced 17 girls in Gloucester, Mass. to make a pact to get pregnant together.

These young girls were no older than 16 years old and because of the media they believed pregnancy was acceptable. It's hard to believe that these young teenage girls were trying to get pregnant and were proud when they succeeded.

Teen pregnancy has become a definite problem and this should be the time that the media should try its hardest NOT to promote it.

Political campaigns, television shows, and magazines have made this matter worse. Pregnancy has become a trend in our society and the media needs to promote more of the



ABC Family's new show, "The Secret Life of the American Teenager," is about a 15-year-old girl who is pregnant. Teenagers so teenagers know that pregnancy isn't supposed to be glamorous.

Divided over Palin

Students debate over VP nominee

By Inderbir Bal

Business/Systems Editor

When John McCain announced his running mate almost no one had a clue of who she was or what she stood for.

A governor of a state with fewer residents than Fairfax County, Sarah Palin advocated her accomplishments, like her "Bridge to Nowhere." She said that she strongly disagreed with the bridge which would connect a small island with a town of 50 people. Palin is being contradictory, because in the 2006 election she supported the bridge and she used it to become governor.

Her daughter, Bristol Palin, became pregnant out of wedlock and it was all over the media a week after Palin's nomination. Yet

Palin is a hypocrite; she is a strong conservative who advocated an "abstinence-until-marriage" education policy, yet her daughter became pregnant at the age of 17.

McCain said that he knew about it all along and tried to act as if they planned on disclosing the information. Palin is a hypocrite; she is a strong conservative who advocated an "abstinence-until-marriage" education policy, yet her daughter became pregnant at the age of 17.

I think that the pick to have Sarah Palin as the vice-president candidate was purely made to help McCain gain support from those extremely conservatives voters and those who were left behind after Hillary Clinton did not become the Democratic nominee. It is unbelievable that McCain is so caught up in being elected, that he would choose someone whose only use is to give him the edge in the election; not because he or she has the credentials to be vice-president. Palin doesn't even know what the vice-president does, so how could she apply for a job when she doesn't know what to do?

She lacks political knowledge as shown in the interview with ABC anchor, Charles Gibson. Gibson asked if she supported the Bush Doctrine, for a moment she froze. She started talking about how Bush has tried to stop Islamic extremists and about how she thinks that America is so great because of national elections.

Do we want this person to be so close to the presidency? If John McCain were to die, considering that he could be the oldest president do you think someone who hasn't governed more than six hundred seventy thousand people can lead a nation of three hundred million?

school gets out only an hour and fifteen minutes later.

Besides being insanely hungry by the time the C-lunch bell rings, it is plain on the verge of being unhealthy. If school starts at 7:30 a.m., most kids eat breakfast sometime before that, if they even eat at all. The kids who have C lunch don't eat until five and a half hours later. The lunch schedule is now interfering with the student's ability to focus and concentrate on school.



Associated Press
Sarah Palin and husband Todd Palin, pictured with their newborn son, Trig Palin. They also have four other children, and their 17-year-old daughter is pregnant out of wedlock.

Is waiting for 'C' lunch healthy for students?

By Monica Evans

Oracle Editor

As if this school year wasn't already confusing, with Spartan Time, this new three lunch schedule is just intolerable.

First things first: C lunch is way too late to be eating. On regular scheduled days, C lunch starts at 12:45 p.m. while on Spartan Days, it doesn't start until 12:52 p.m. I don't know about you, but I don't want to be eating at 1p.m. when

What is even worse than being practically starving throughout the school day, is that the administration is confining students to the cafeteria, the hall right outside the cafeteria and outside to eat their lunches. And I mean confining. There is an administrator at each end of the hall in front of the cafeteria. There are two huge problems with this brilliant idea. First, once students are finished eating their lunch, they tend to go to the hall-

way outside and stand. From one end to the other, the hall is jammed pack. I feel like two administrators are herding cattle; it's ridiculous. Another problem is chronic tardiness that seems to be a symptom of this new "herding" policy. By not allowing students to wait for the bell to ring by the doors leading to the senior or band hallways, it leaves students who have to go to class on the other side of school in a mad dash to make it on time. This is

if they even can make it in the short five minutes allotted to us (a whole other complaint on how five minutes isn't enough to breath). The faculty goes on and on during the beginning of the school year about being punctual and how three tardies equal one unexcused absence, blah blah blah. They set rules, yet simultaneously make it almost impossible to follow them. New three-lunch schedule, two thumbs...down.



Associated Press
Alaska Governor Sarah Palin waves to her supporters while on the campaign trail. She was selected by John McCain to be the vice presidential nominee for the Republican Party.

By Thomas Ariale

Page One Editor

Let's face it, folks. This might be one of the most important Presidential elections in our history.

Our nation is divided, we are at war with Iraq and now we have another choice. Barack Obama, or John McCain. But the attention is no longer on McCain or Obama. The big topic has turned to Vice Presidential candidate Sarah Palin.

Since the Republican Party announced Palin as McCain's running mate, it is all the media has been able to talk about. And with all of this, some people have started to ask, "Does she really have the experience to lead this nation?"

Although she was a mayor of a city only three times the size of this school, she still had to demonstrate leadership, running the town's day to day operations and providing vision for it's future. And now as the Governor of Alaska, she is the chief executive of state, Alaska is also one of the most important states right now, due to our nation-

al energy crisis. Her personal experience and knowledge on the energy issue can be useful insight to help decide if we should drill for oil in Alaska.

Not only that but Palin has single handedly put the Republican Party on the map again. Sure a 72-year-old man is cool, but a 44-year-old woman is way more interesting and all of the media agrees. Since Palin was announced as McCain's running mate for the 2008 election, the buzz about the Republican ticket has been through the roof.

But that's not all, Palin seems like she can do it all. She runs the State of Alaska, has to deal with her family, which includes a recently pregnant daughter and takes care of her youngest son who was born with Down Syndrome. Now, my mom has a hard time dealing with my sister and me, I just can't imagine how Palin does it all. I am not the only one who has noticed either. Palin appeals to the everyday working mother and that has also lead to her rise in popularity.

So when people ask why I like Sarah Palin, I look at them and tell them that she is the future of America.

New rules emphasized after Sports Lobby clash

“RULES,” from Page 1.

in this situation, Mukai said he had the safety of the school was in mind.

“I hadn’t had experience before,” said Mukai. “We [just] wanted to investigate it.”

Even though Mukai took the lead, Ukelele followed him. “I didn’t want to leave Mukai by himself,” said Ukelele. “I’m a retired cop...the more in numbers, the more safe you are.”

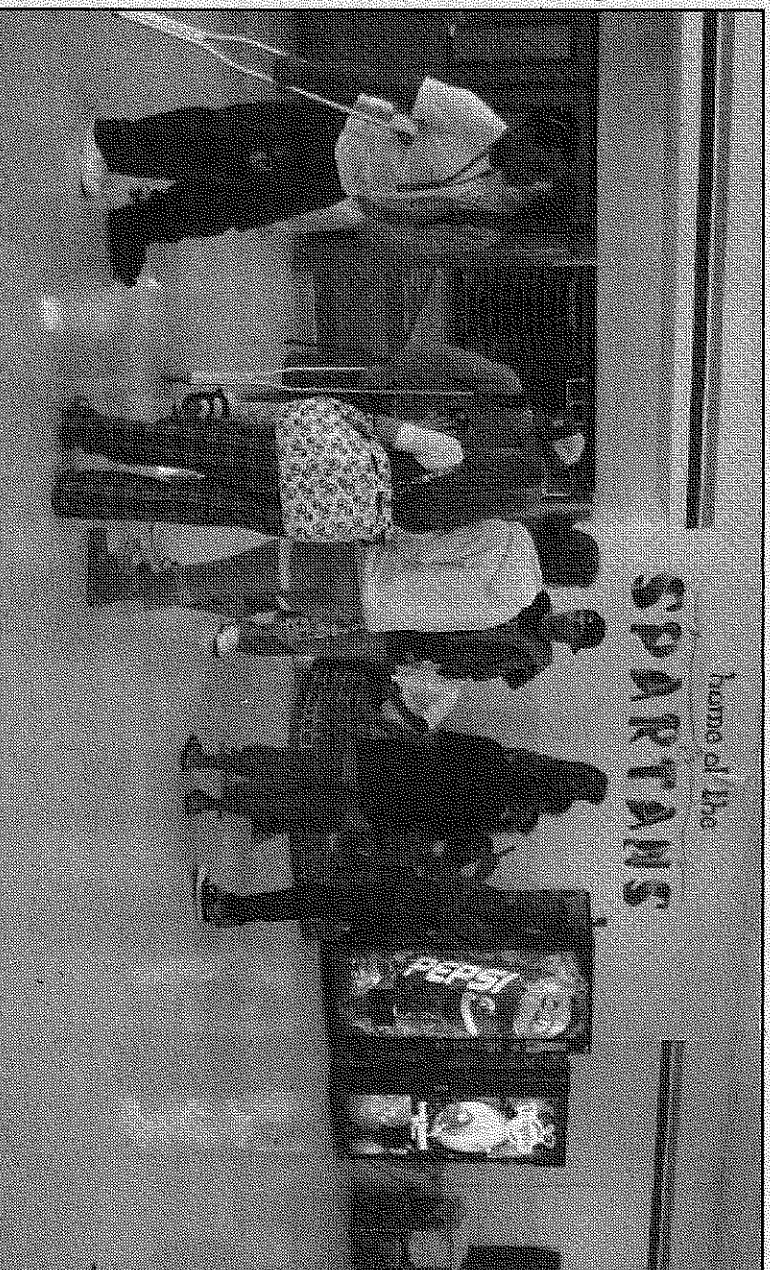
The three police cruisers that responded found the reported “gun” was only a BB gun. Nevertheless, the male was taken into custody and charges are currently still pending.

“In hindsight, we probably learned from this experience we might do stuff a little differently from a safety aspect,” said Ukelele.

According to Principal Paul Wardinski, stricter after-school procedures had already been in place, but now have to be reiterated.

Students in the building at 2:30 p.m. must leave campus unless they are supervised by an adult. Athletes who stay after school are assigned a specific location to wait for practice. The administration aims to protect everyone in the building.

“We want students to stay after school to get help with their academics, participate in clubs, organizations, activities, or sports, but to maintain the school’s safety and security...as well,” said Wardinski.



Students hang out in the Sports Lobby after school. A recent altercation involving a young man who is not a student has caused the administration to review its after-school procedures and specify areas where students can congregate after the final bell rings. The late-September incident resulted in an 18-year-old man being arrested for carrying a BB gun on school property. Both Assistant Principal Mike Mukai and Safety and Security Specialist Mike Ukelele pursued the suspect.

Monica Evans

Homecoming '08 features new procedures, changes

Students select Mr. Spartan and Queen

“QUEEN,” from Page 1.

Senior Austin Hall took the crown at the Mr. Spartan competition, beating out runner-up Hayden Angulo and fellow nominees Robert Martin, Bryn Renner, Andrew Lucchesi and Taylor Silver. For the “sportswear” competition, Hall dressed as superhero Frozone from “The Incredibles.”

Other contestants used props with their costumes as well—freshman Colin Stephenson dressed as Spartan King Leonidas and kicked a folding chair halfway across the stage. Lucchesi’s Michael Phelps poured water over his head.

In the talent portion, music was the theme of the evening. The underclass nominees lip-synched as the Jonas Brothers, with junior Michael Rybinski swooning behind them as Hannah Montana. Angulo and Renner employed back-up dancers from the football team. Martin worked the audience while he sang to Marvin Gaye’s “Let’s Get it On” and Silver played the electric guitar to “Shockwave” by Black Tide.

During the formalwear competition, Hall’s mother, Linda, was

escorted by her second Mr. Spartan nominee Hall’s brother, Tony, WS 2007, won the pageant two years ago. He’s not worried about his little brother stealing his thunder.

“The only problems I can foresee would be both of us turning around if someone were to yell ‘Mr. Spartan’ in public,” said Tony Hall. “He’s more like Mr. Spartan Jr. to me, anyway.”

If there is one thing Austin and Tony can agree upon, however, it’s Frozone. Tony suggested the costume for his brother.

“I really think people are sleeping on Frozone,” said Austin Hall, “he’s probably the greatest superhero of our time.”

History was made Friday when Destiny Sweeney Durant was announced Homecoming Queen. For the first time, both Mr. Spartan and the Queen are African-American. Both Hall and Sweeney take this as a sign that race is becoming less of an issue in America.

“I believe that me and Austin are like the Obamas of WS. We made a change,” said Sweeney. “That is a first and always will be remembered.”



Senior Destiny Sweeney Durant is escorted by Nahum Asmeilash at last week’s assembly. Sweeney Durant was named Homecoming Queen.

Lifetouch

Week showcases spirit, ambivalence

“HC,” from Page 1.

Even a few teachers got in on the act, including Social Studies teachers Leigh Shipman and Laurie Fischer.

Again, however, there were some who didn’t see the point.

“My least favorite spirit day would have to be Twin Day, because I think it was kind of pointless and didn’t really have anything to do with school spirit,” freshman Sean Irvine said.

In a break with tradition, the Homecoming Assembly also took place on Wednesday and Thursday during Spartan Time. The favorite among assembly-goers was the Dance Team performance, featuring orange masks and blacklights.

Friday was Blue and Orange Day, which got a good amount of participation. Irvine changed his mind about Spirit Week then.

“My favorite day was School Colors day because it brought the school together at the end of the week before the big game,” he said.

HUSS returns to WS

As a student, new Choral Director starred in musical, Madrigals, cheer

“HUSS,” from Page 1.

back to WS as a home away from home.

Huss channels the excitement for the job into dedication. Most teachers teach Monday through Friday and have the weekend for free time, but she uses her free time to develop her choral program. She stays until eight or even ten during the week, and puts in weekend hours.

“It’s not just hours to teach, it’s behind the scenes,” says Huss.

She is in charge of musical productions that go on throughout the school year, on top of designing lesson plans. The first concert is coming up.

When Huss was a Spartan, she participated in activities across the spectrum, from cheerleading to Madrigals. She was also the lead in the Theatre Department’s Spring Musical, “42nd Street.” Huss was a junior at the time.

“I’m sure it’s going to be a fun year.”

—Erin Huss,
Choral Director

A perusal of yearbooks from when Huss was a Spartan show an enthusiastic student involved in a cross-section of activities.

While Huss is adjusting to being back at WS, choral students are adjusting to her. The teaching methods of Huss differ from former Choral Director Michael Dombrow. “She has different methods of teaching that we have to get used to,” said senior Steven Zmliek.

Class changes include shorter warm ups and more individual and small group emphasis.

“I’m excited,” says Huss. “I’m sure it’s going to be a fun year.”



New Choral Director Erin Huss was a cheerleader, Madrigal and performer when she was a Spartan. The photo above shows Huss participating in the Homecoming Parade with fellow Spartan Fred Peterbark during her senior year of high school.

Yearbook Photo

2nd Beautification Day sparkles

By Sydney Quigley

Scoop Editor

Two years running and two years raining.

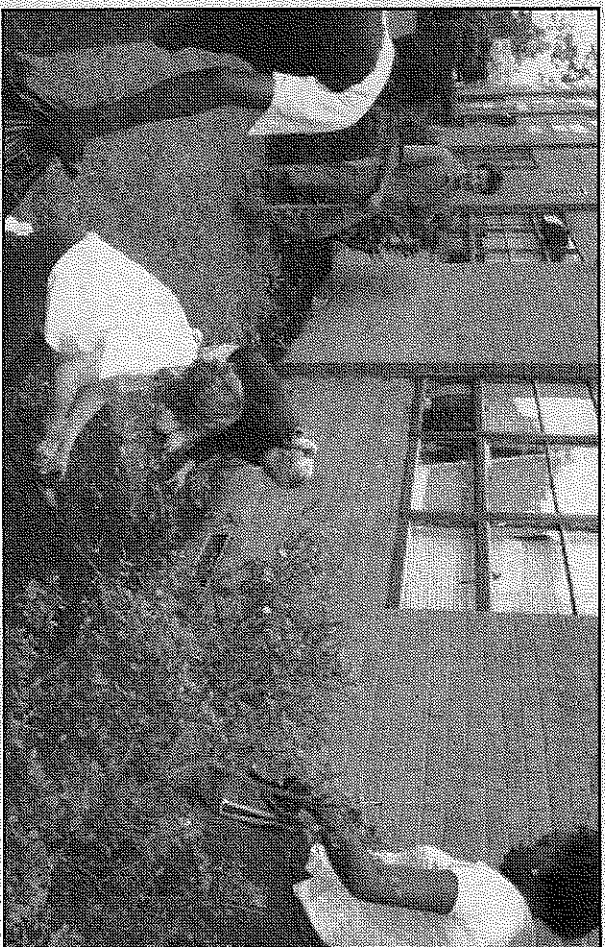
The second annual Beautification Day coincided with some stormy weather, again. Luckily, the rain held off long enough for students, staff, and other volunteers to get a significant amount of work accomplished around the school.

Projects included repairing benches, mulching, weeding, planting flowers and other clean up tasks. Principal Paul Wardinski attended the clean up all day to make sure everything went smoothly.

"I came up with the concept last year and I got the PTSA to help me out," said Wardinski. "We worked out the cost of supplies."

A myriad of groups and clubs came out early Saturday morning to participate such as YOUrity, DECA, FBLA, Science Honor Society, National Honor Society and Key Club.

Each group had their own area of the school to attend to. Science Honor Society cleaned up Spartan Park, while National Honor Society was responsible for the re-



Sydney Quigley

Volunteers trim bushes in front of the school during the second annual Beautification Day.

gion between doors 1 and 10.

"A pretty good crowd came out. Over 200 showed up, which was exciting," said Wardinski.

School organizations were not the only source of volunteers that day. Many Spartan families showed up out of pure appreciation for WS. Senior Jeremy Bullock and his moth-

er dedicated a block of their time Saturday to come out and lend a hand.

"My mom just signed us up," said Bullock. "I did mostly weeding and sweeping for 3 hours."

This year Wardinski wanted to make sure the schoolwide cleanup covered a larger space than it did the first go around. One of the new additions included the flower beds and bushes along Turtle Road at the exit of the school installed by YOUrity. While flower beds were dug there several years ago, weeds have recently choked the area.

Due to the uncertainty of the weather, Beautification Day was delayed an hour just as a precaution. Senior Virginia Thai had to do some juggling while helping out with both Science Honor Society and National Honor Society's projects.

"The one hour delay threw us off a little bit, but we actually finished early," said Thai.

Altogether, the clean up turned out to be an enormous success despite some scattered storms.

"Each year we are going to try to expand our scope," said Wardinski.

DECA has game covered

Woodson, students organize T-Shirt giveaway for first 300 fans to buy tickets for big game

By Kelly Carlin

Oracle Staff Writer

Every year, students get excited when the weather gets cooler and the football season becomes more important.

This year, for the first time, the school handed out free Homecoming T-shirts as a part of the new "Free with Fee" plan. The shirts went to the first 300 fans who bought tickets at the Homecoming game.

The T-shirts giveaway was sponsored by local business people, including Remax Choice agent Celesta Fahey, L.F. Jennings Inc., and Balfour.

"We went out and solicited businesses to participate in sponsored t-shirts for Homecoming," says marketing teacher Vera Woodson. "They're donating a sum and we're putting their logos on the shirt."

Woodson was enthusiastic about the new "Free with Fee" idea. She

and her marketing and DECA students organized the event. The T-shirts themselves were orange and said "There's no place like Homecoming 2008-2009" with the companies' logos on the front and back.

The lucky few who went home with a free T-shirt got a \$12-\$18 valued shirt for no cost.

"We ordered 300-plus T-shirts in orange, so the entire stands will be wearing an orange shirt...we hope," Woodson said of the game.

"I think it's exciting for the people that don't know walking through the door and [getting] a free T-shirt. The purpose is to build school spirit, and for the community to show their support for WS and the education we provide."

The annual Homecoming game is the one that most people around town attend and Woodson hoped the added surprise of getting a free shirt might make people want

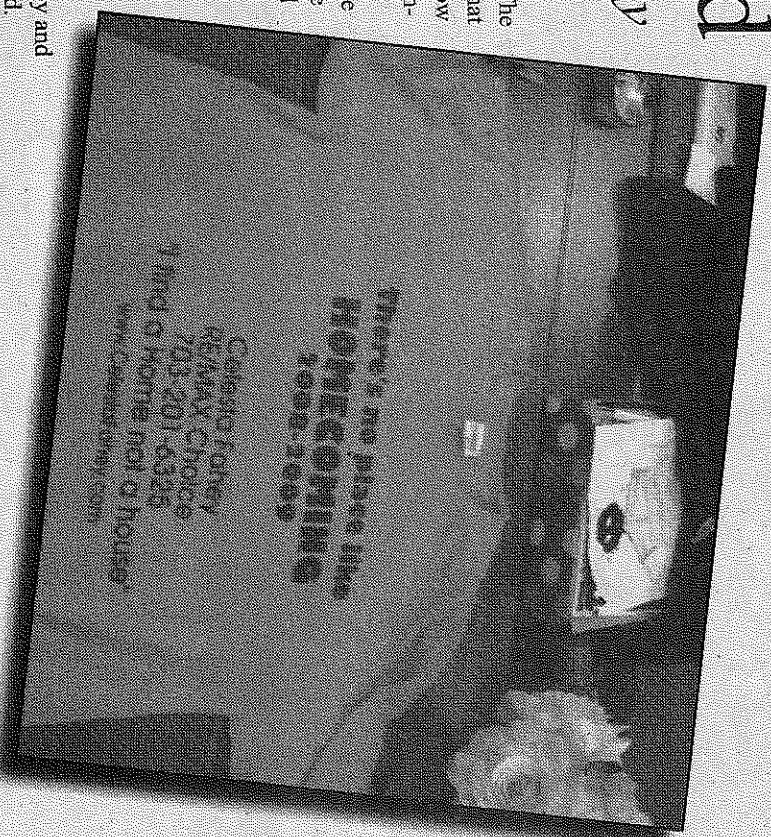
to come more next year. The shirts were also a way that local businesses could show their spirit to the WS community.

This Homecoming game was also the last for the Class of 2009 at WS, and they wanted their last game to be the best and most fun.

"The seniors and officers are extremely excited and are working hard to put together activities and programs that they can enjoy and benefit from," Woodson said.

Woodson hopes that next year, even more companies will get involved, spreading school spirit and support around the community.

"We're hoping more people will donate next year," Woodson said. "Or even during basketball season we could do it again."



Kelly Carlin

"We ordered 300-plus T-shirts in orange, so the entire stands will be wearing an orange shirt...we hope."

—Vera Woodson, Marketing teacher

Group hopes to SOAR above problems

By Sara Blaylock

Oracle Staff Writer

From the mold problems in the Guidance offices to the rusty water fountains that don't work, the disgusting bathrooms with no doors and the leaky ceilings, we all are spending about seven hours a day—and in some cases much more—in a building that could be a hazard to our health.

Spartans Organized for Action on Renovation, or SOAR, is an organization devoted to getting WS the renovation and the help it needs.

The group wants to make sure that WS is included in the FCPS 2010-2014 Capital Improvement Program. The goal is to have completed renovation by 2016, which is also WS's 50th anniversary. SOAR is optimistic about its chances for an early renovation of WS, despite the slowing economy and budget woes.

"I am a huge supporter of SOAR because this building desperately needs a renovation," said counselor Jeff Stahl.

Our school is 42 years old and it shows.

"The bathrooms are disgusting and there's so much junk in the urinal and most of them don't even work," said sophomore Glen Shellenbarger. Not only do the bathrooms need improvement, but the school is overcrowded and students say they are stressed because of it.

"...the windows are so old, that when they are broken, the people have to go to the dump to pick up new ones.

—Jeff Stahl, counselor

Complaints about the condition of the building are not new. Last year, dozens of WS students, parents and teachers testified to the School Board about deplorable conditions in the building. Many can't understand why WS is not on the five-year FCPS renovation list, since it's in such bad shape.

"You look at the buildings that have been renovated and they are beautiful," said Stahl. Other schools that are younger than WS are getting or have already been renovated and SOAR committee members say that situation, the "rip and replace" is intolerable.

"The building does not reflect the caliber of the students and teachers at WS," said Stahl.



Sara Blaylock

Sophomore Paige Babel shows her displeasure with a school bathroom. A group called SOAR is pushing FCPS to renovate the school before its 50th anniversary in 2016.

Freshmen on top

Varsity cheer welcomes two froshies to squad

By Sydney Quigley

Scoop Editor

Out of the 20 freshmen who are part of the WS cheerleading squad this year, only two can say they are varsity cheerleaders.

The two freshmen, Stephanie Wilson and Nicole Brigham, are part of a team made up of 22 girls this year. Although it is not unusual to have freshmen on varsity, these two needed a considerable amount of experience and skill to make it on the team. The WS Varsity Cheerleading team has won the Patriot District Championship the past two years and they don't see this year as being any different.

"Our freshmen this year are exceptional, we can morph them into whatever we need," said junior Caroline Foster and fellow teammate.

Wilson is a flyer for the team's stunts. Brigham is a base, but she is occasionally a flyer depending on what the team needs at the



Sydney Quigley

Stephanie Wilson and Nicole Brigham are the only freshmen on the Varsity cheer squad.

"All the girls are really supportive and nice so everything has gone really well so far."

—Nicole Brigham,
Freshman

time. Both girls had their concerns about how demanding and competitive the team would be, but as Brigham said, "All the girls are really supportive and nice so everything has gone really well so far."

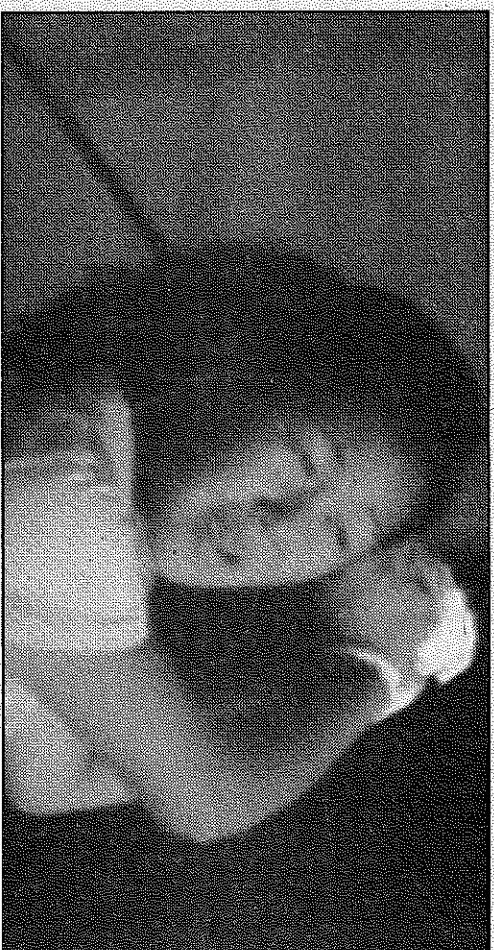
Before making it onto the team this year, Brigham and Wilson had never met, but have become close friends. Luckily, Brigham had some extra support at the start of the season from her older sister, junior Ashley Brigham, who is on the team as well. To some, having a sibling on the same team would be more stressful, but not for Brigham.

"We try to keep cheer life and home life separate and it's going great," said Brigham. For most of the varsity girls, WS cheerleading is the only cheerleading team they are involved in. Wilson, however, also cheers for the all-star team called All-Star Legacy. She has been cheering for an all-star team for six years now, and although she enjoys it she says, "It's a lot of work, and takes up a lot of time."

Entering high school can be a very intimidating situation for many, and Wilson and Brigham agreed that being on the team has made the transition much easier for them.

So far, the pair has done a great job blending with the team, and their Coach Betsy Fawcett has high hopes for them as well.

"They are both extremely talented," said Fawcett, "and I can't wait to see how they grow over the next four years."



Cristina Sullivan

Junior Donna Kim is in her second year as the only girl on the Spartan golf team.

Kim brings back Spartan swings

By Cristina Sullivan

Entertainment Editor

It's her second year playing and she is already an example for the boys on the golf team.

Junior Donna Kim is the only girl on the WS golf team this year, but that has not stopped her from rising to any challenge and proving herself.

"I don't like being the only girl because I feel left out sometimes," said Kim. "I still have fun though, and Coach [Susan] Spatcher helps us out when we're not playing well."

Although Spatcher may have to intercede in order for improvement to continue, Kim has also made progress by herself. This has required daily practice at the range.

"She has a beautiful swing that shows you don't have to muscle it, and I hope the guys will learn from her," said Spatcher. "My goal for her is that she makes it to the girls' zone qualifier since she did last year."

Kim began playing during her sophomore year after she found the sport an entertain-

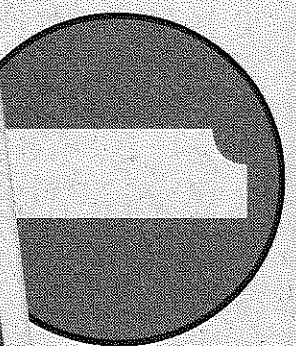
ing hobby to have outside of school. Since August, she and the team have been practicing wherever possible to work on putting and iron practices. Whether they are at the range at South Run, the Springfield Country Club, Potlick, or Twin Lakes, the team has united with hopes of progressing in the upcoming championships.

"I hope that the team individually will do its very best and I believe that many have the potential to go to Regionals after we compete in Districts," said Spatcher. "We have a great bunch, and although it is an individual sport, together they make decisions that affect the entire team."

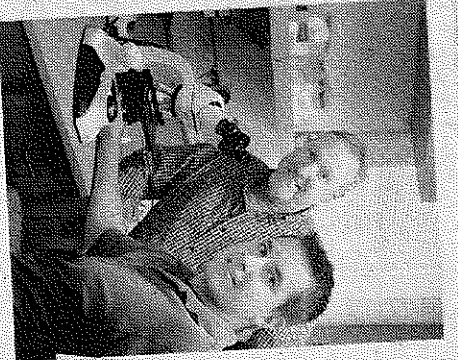
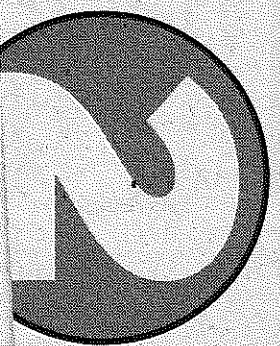
Part of coming together as a team has been adjusting to the fact that there are no seniors this year. That hasn't stopped them from focusing more as they enter the Patriot District Tournament with a record of three wins and four losses compared to that of last year with five wins and two losses.

"My only goal is to get better each year," said Kim. "My best score has been 42, but you have to practice everyday to improve."

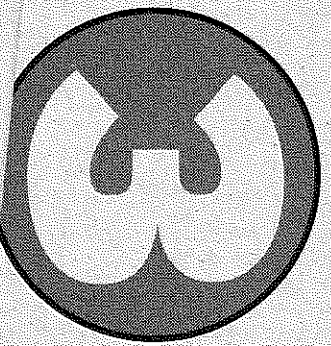
WHY LONGWOOD?



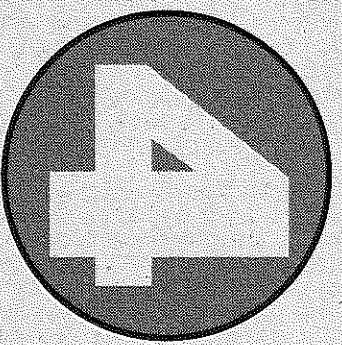
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Clinic is home to a new face

By Kim Langlais

Senior Staff Writer

Students who regularly find refuge in the clinic are skeptic about having a new school Clinic Aid, but Laura Settles knows what she is doing.

Previous Clinic Aid, Lynn Jones, was well known and liked by students who were regular visitors to the clinic.

"She's taking the year off," said Senior Amy Jones, daughter of the greatly missed Clinic Aid. "Most likely, she'll come back next year."

Filling in the position until then, Settles joins our school this year from previously working at Forest Dale Elementary School.

She attended Lake Braddock Secondary School as a teenager. She is a mother of three kids currently attending Washington Irving Middle School, and Orange Hunt Elementary School.

Being familiar with Fairfax County policies has helped Settles train for her position.

"Every school in the county follows the same training program," said Public Health Nurse, Nancy Albright. "Every person working in Fairfax County Public Schools is hired by the Health Department."

Being fully qualified for her own position, do not call Settles the school nurse.

"[Settles] is the Clinic Aid, which is the Nurse's assistant," said Albright. "She is working on protocol, and is doing very well."

Regulars to the clinic think positively about Settles.

"She's nice," said senior Andrea Burkhardt. "She knows what she's doing."

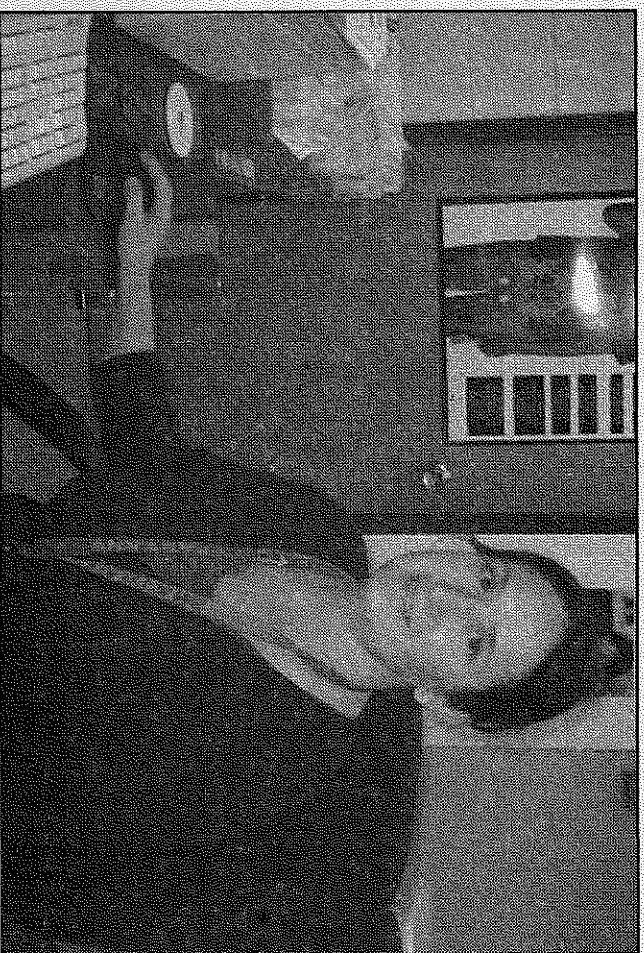
Settles may know what she is doing, but students overestimate her job description.

"Students don't know that we can't diagnose a student's condition," said Albright.

"We can only treat them. But we do communicate with parents and doctors of students with special needs."

With serious conditions, which are common in all high school students, WS students regularly visiting the clinic get to know the clinic personnel, and sometimes go there for advice for personal reasons other than health.

"I want to tell the students that if they have any troubles with snakes, they can come to me," said Settles. "I grew up catching snakes, keeping them for a few days and releasing them. I've had Pythons, Constrictors, and many more."



Kim Langlais

New clinic aid, Laura Settles, has received a warm welcome from the WS community. She is excited about her new job and ready to help the students and staff. Settles replaces Lynn Jones who is taking a year off from being the clinic aid.

WS students should always be able to ask for help when they need it, and Settles is there to lend some care, medically and for

other reasons. "If you're sick, get rest," said Settles. "Take care of yourself."

An early start for crew Rowers start training months in advance

By Josh McNamara

Oracle Staff Writer

The sport of crew is a sport that is unique and not known by many.

"It's fun because it is unique and not like other sports," said sophomore Robert Crumpacker. Most sports use land as it field or court, but crew uses the natural river as it's playing surface.

Crew is a very demanding sport, which puts your body through physical and mental situations. The crew is a spring sport, but yet its players start to train and workout in the fall.

"We start! Now, because you need to know how to row the boat, and you need a lot of power, and really need to be physically fit," said sophomore Jan Sojka.

Since, the rowers start training in the fall, crew gets really intense. They have a set workout for everyday and complete this before going home.

"First, we start by running to the grand

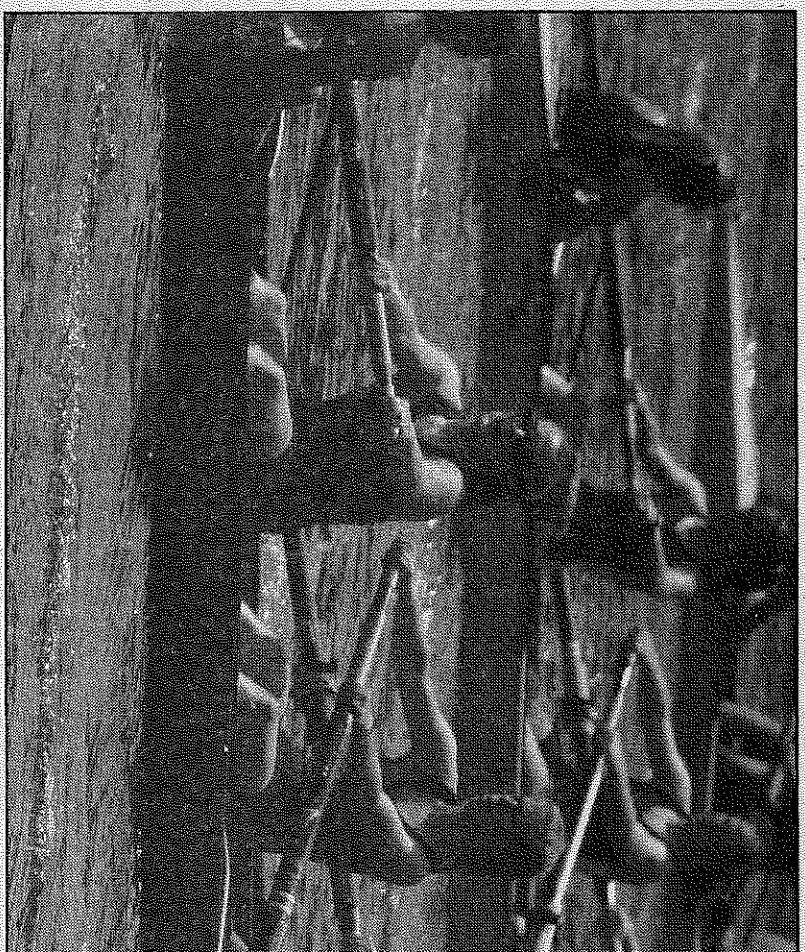
stands, where the parents watch our races, we do about 200 crunches, and run back. It's about a mile. We go on the ergs, [rowing machines] and row a 2k, then go on the river and do drills, until we race 500's at the end of practice," said sophomore Kaitlyn Connolly.

The crew team rows and practices on the Occoquan River. For last year's team the cost was a total of 1118 dollars. This helps the crew team pay for boats, trailers, and Cox boxes.

The team has fundraising from basket bins go to leaf raking. Students such as Ian Stutz will fundraise all of this.

"I was scared to join crew my freshman year because I didn't think my parents would pay over 1000 dollars for me. Since, I have found out that you can fundraise the money, I am going to try crew my sophomore year," said Stutz.

Kids not only gain muscle during crew season but also many friends. "Crew is awesome because you meet new people while staying in shape," said Connolly.



SpartanCrew

Though their season does not start until the spring, the crew team begins training for the upcoming season in the fall.

Britting becomes brownie fan

By Jessica Wohlers

Oracle Managing Editor

Foreigners often have the impression that American foods are only deep-fried or plain boring but for German exchange student, Magdalena Britting, brownies are her new "must have" food item.

Britting left her hometown of Nuremberg, Germany this past summer and flew off to the DC area to spend her junior year. Upon her arrival in the humid month of August, Britting couldn't get over the size of Northern Virginia.

"It's so much bigger than I thought it would be and there are so many people at school," said

Britting.

In contrast to the American high school lifestyle, Britting already graduated from her high school of 900 in Nuremberg this past June and should now be looking for a

job. However, she decided to go a different direction than most other 16-year old students back home. "I'm done in Germany with school but I didn't know what I wanted to do," said Britting. "So, I decided to come to the US to improve my English and see what it was like."

Britting's transitions this school year not only involve living in a new culture but also living in a new home environment. She grew up on her family's farm in Nuremberg

where she was used to helping with

farm chores on a day-to-day basis.

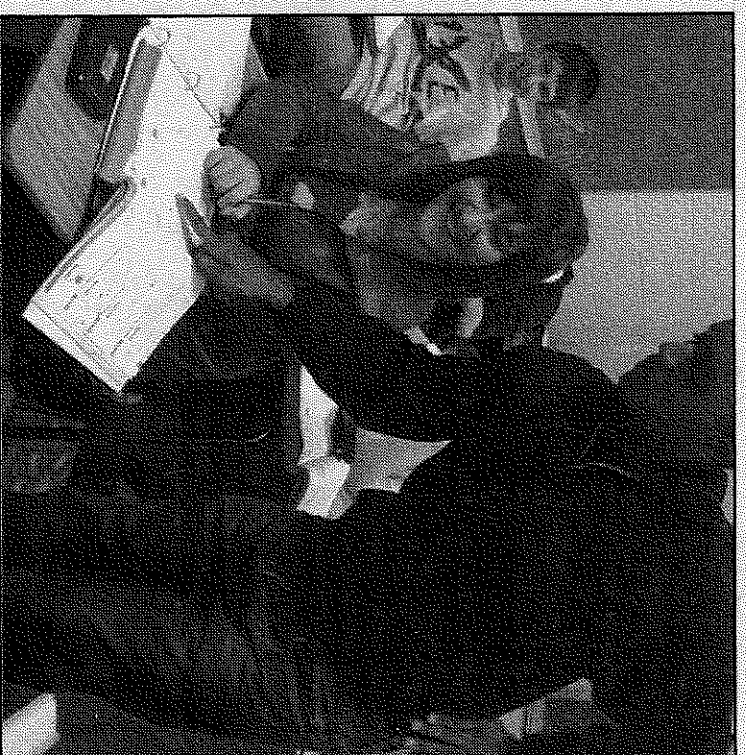
"I would help with the hay and things so it's very different for me living here," said Britting.

Today making a transatlantic move is still a challenge to undertake especially when you move all alone to a country you have never been to before. For these reasons, Britting is thankful for internet access and advanced technology which allows her to keep in touch with her parents and two older siblings.

"I miss them [family] and I really miss my friends," said Britting. "I use Skype and chat rooms and of course e-mail to talk to them."

Britting is ready for spending a year learning about American culture and improving her English skills. So far, WS has impressed Britting and if that wasn't enough, the brownies sure have made her love it.

"They don't have brownies in Germany and now I don't think I can live without them," said Brit-



Jessica Wohlers

Top, German exchange student, Magdalena Britting, works with Nathaniel Yohannes in Algebra 2 class. She said of one the major changes between WS and her school in Germany is the number of students. Left, Britting has lunch with friends, including her American host, Elizabeth Goldberg.

Gas Prices Guzz!

Students, teachers and parents

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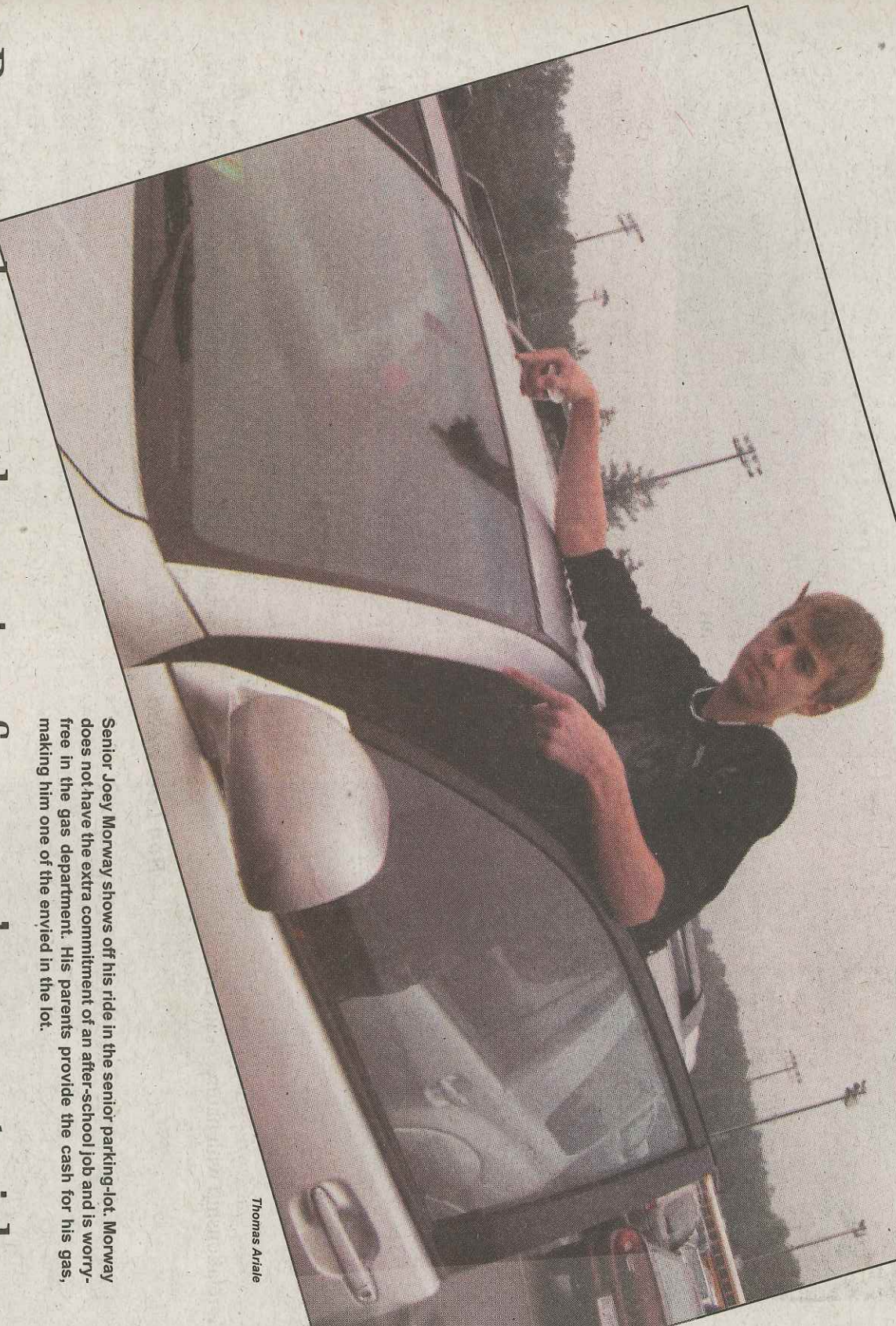
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Thomas Ariale

Senior Joey Morway shows off his ride in the senior parking lot. Morway does not have the extra commitment of an after-school job and is worry-free in the gas department. His parents provide the cash for his gas, making him one of the envied in the lot.

Parentals pay the price for son's sweet ride

With the pressure of paying for gas money, school and sports, WS students are having trouble juggling it all.

Senior Joey Morway manages by ditching the job and getting his parents to pay for gas.

"Seeing as how I have to concentrate on school and sports, they decided that if I do well in those then they would pay for my gas" said Morway "\$25 every week."

Now this deal does have its down sides; if Morway goes over \$25 on gas in a week then he is out of luck until next week. Since it is his parent's money that is being spent, he doesn't think twice about driving out to places that are far away, ending in his tank becoming empty sooner.

"If you had a job you would be more conservative when you drive, but since it's my parent's money I don't feel bad if I drive to Tyson's" said Morway.

Although the free gas is the big seller in this deal, there are other positives besides that. Since his parents give Morway money for gas, he no longer needs a job, which allows him

to do a lot more things after school. Morway spends his time

after school doing one of the things he loves most, baseball.

Even though the season doesn't start until the spring, you can find Morway working out with the team and preparing for his

upcoming season. This probably wouldn't have been possible if he had a job that he had to get to right after school.

Since Morway doesn't have a job to suck away the rest of his time that is not spent at school and after school activities,

he can spend more time studying and doing his homework for the next day, or even hanging out with friends. However, with

the free gas also comes more responsibility

"I do extra things around the house to help my parents since

they are paying for my gas" said Morway.

Even with the extra chores at home, Morway still thinks it is a great trade off.

"It is the best deal I have ever made with my parents" said Morway.

—Thomas Ariale

The Scoop:

While gas prices are now plummeting because of the bad economy, they've been as high as \$4 a gallon in recent months. While are economy is simultaneously falling deeper down the drain. Students, teachers and parents have been getting hit hard and have made adjustments to their daily lives to cope with the added burden.

Some students, like Senior Joey Morway, have discovered the secret trick with the Parental Payment of the gas bill. Junior Brian Pike is one of many students who is not so lucky and pays out of his own pocket for his travels. Physics teacher Ed Linz adds his two-cents on how to ditch the bills and commute for one's health, instead. Spanish teacher Michelle Plummer has learned the costly lesson that travel operators are keeping expensive gas surcharges in place despite the recent dip in prices at the pump.



Above: Spanish teacher Michelle Plummer her advanced level students on the Right: Last year's Spanish 5 class on their international excursion.

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Ben Lockwood

Physics teacher Ed Linz teaks the hill outside of the track to stay in shape. Linz encourages all students to walk it out.

penses, but it will always benefit my health, awareness, and relationship with nature,” said Linz.

—Ben Lockwood

o Puerto Rico is feeling the gas-price pressure

Plummer might have to cancel this year's trip.

“We don't start making plans until late into the second quarter,” said Plummer, “but the prices of gas will be a determining factor.”

The price of the Spanish trip has always been kept under \$600, which the students are solely responsible for paying. If the prices of the plane tickets and rental cars push the total expense to over \$600, the trip will not take place this year.

However, field trips that are local are not as threatened by gas prices. Class trips such as the ones the Applied History classes are taking to Harpers Ferry and Gettysburg, are still scheduled to take place.

“We are not affected, because we're mostly local,” said Applied History teacher Jim Percoco. “Although the rental prices for buses have gone up considerably, students usually don't complain.”

There are also other ways to get around high gas prices. Laurie Fischer's history class goes on field trips to places such as Philadelphia, but they have been able to keep the price cheap. On local trips, she also finds ways to save money.

“We take the Metro and there's lots and lots of walking,” said Fischer.

—Kyle Snyder

Students empty their pockets to pay the price

Pick up friends, school, practice, drop off friends, homework, work, and then home again. These are only a few of the destinations students at WS drive to everyday.

Every gas situation for the students of WS is different. Some students have to pay for their gas out of their own pocket. Junior Brian Pike, driver of a '92 red Celica, struggles to pay for his gas on his own.

Pike works an average of 15-20 hours a week at Quizno's Subs. “It takes a huge dent out of my pocket because the majority of my paycheck goes to gas,” said Pike.

It's a struggle for Pike to work, pay for gas money, juggle a job, while maintaining school work. Pike pays about forty dollars a week in gas, and he is definitely paying more attention to how much gas costs and how much he is driving.

Students typically just fill up and don't look at the cost of gas per gallon, but when the gas money comes from the student's pocket, they become more aware of how much driving they do and how much money they spend.

This runs into the issue of driving passengers and being low on money and whether or not to charge them.

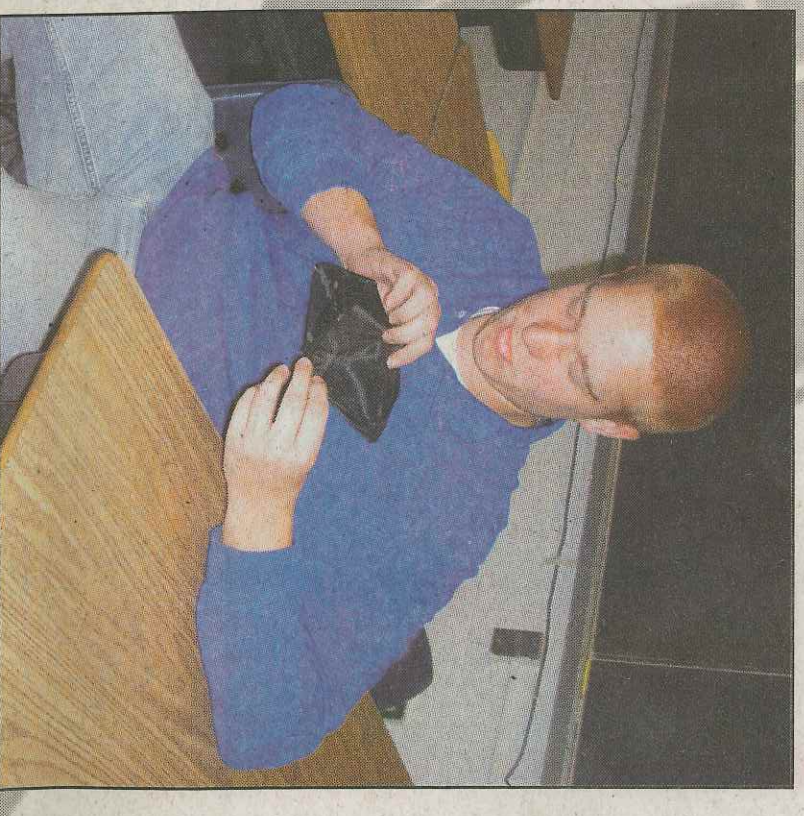
Pike said, “I drive people to school but don't make them pay because it's not out of my way to get them. But if it's out of my way, I make them pay a few bucks.”

Every time Pike goes to fill up for gas it is his money that he wishes could be spent on other purchases. Pike thinks his parents should pay for his gas, because the amount he pays for gas is the same amount they spend on his food and clothes.

The majority of students, including Pike, can agree that their parents should pay for their gas. It would take some pressure off students who have to balance a full schedule and who have to worry about paying at the pump every two weeks.

“I do not want to be a taxi driver for everyone so that I can save gas,” said Pike.

—Sarah Mustion



Sarah Mustion

Junior Brian Pike is left with an empty wallet after paying the price of gas. His jam-packed daily schedule keeps emptying his tank and he does not get much help from his lucky passengers.



Sarah Wink

Plummer takes a hike with annual trip to Puerto Rico. walks down a scenic street



Michelle Plummer

Rascals fall flat in Virginia Beach

Lackluster show with Taylor Swift does not sway loyal fans

By Xavia Warner
Page One Editor

Rascal Flatts is a band that is quickly taking over the country pop music scene. The group, along with show opener Taylor Swift, visited the area twice on their recent "Bob That Head" tour.

The trio is composed of Gary LeVox (lead vocals), Jay DeMarcus (bass guitar, vocals) and Joe Don Rooney (lead guitar, vocals). Their most recent show took place on September 11, at the Verizon Wireless Amphitheater in Virginia Beach. Taylor Swift, another rising star in the world of country music, began the show with songs from her self-titled debut album. She hobbled, shook and belted her way through a capturing performance.

After about 40 minutes on stage, Swift gave way to the night's headliners. Rascal Flatts came out singing "Still Feels Good." The whole performance took place in front of patterned and illuminated LCD panels. The

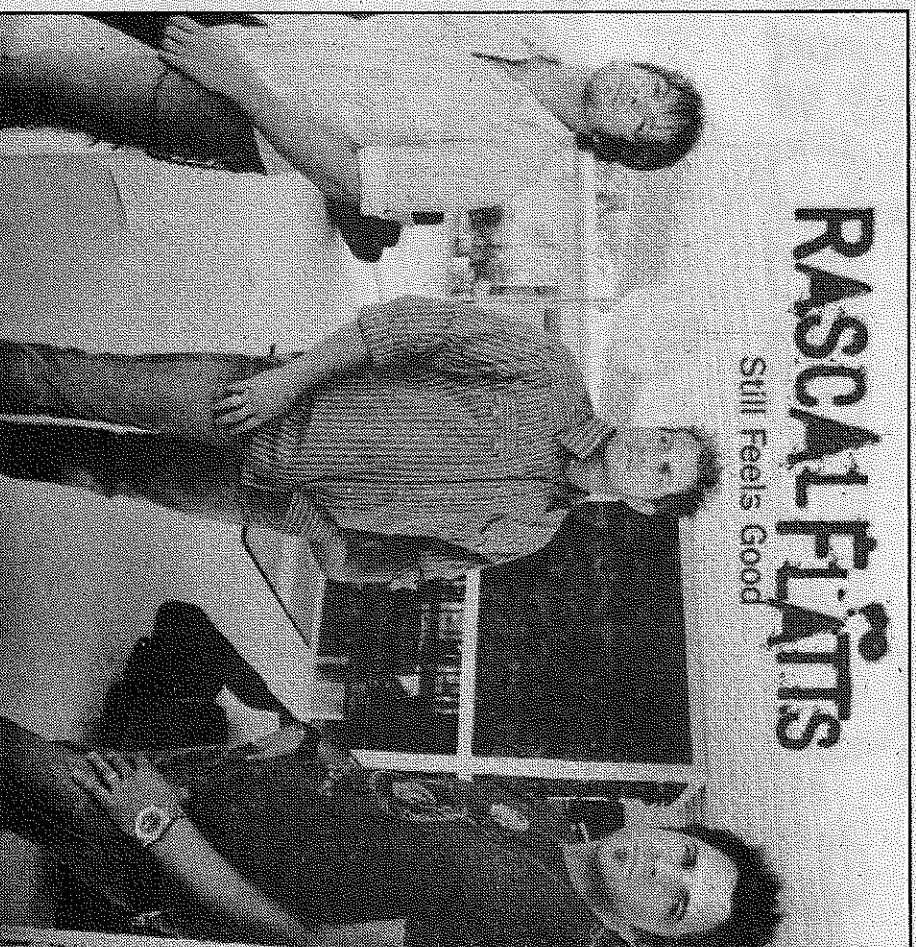
stage jurted out in several places, allowing much of the audience to get a close up view of the band.

The crowd sang along to his like "Me and My Gang," "Blessed Broken Road" and "Bob That Head." The band even managed to garner an encore. Still, despite the singing and shouting, the band fell pretty flat.

Many of the songs seemed as though they were rushed, as if the group just wanted to quickly finish their time on stage. LeVox seemed to lack the emotion needed to truly engage the audience. The show's real main attraction was Taylor Swift.

Swift's performance was genuine and full of enthusiasm. After many songs, like her second top single "Teardrops on My Guitar," she continually thanked the fans and expressed her love for them. Compared to their earlier performance at Nissan Pavilion in July, Swift stole the show.

Earlier this year, on July 28, the band took their tour to DC's Nissan Pavilion. "It was really good, one of their best performances,"



Country music group Rascal Flatts continues to travel the country while on their *Bob That Head* tour. It features their latest released album, "Still Feels Good" and other past songs.

The show had the same stage layout and songs, but this time they managed to deliver a more memorable performance.

"I'm not a big country music fan, but I thought that the lead singer's vocals were pretty amazing," said senior Shannon Smith.

Despite their recent disappointment Rascal Flatts's fans still remain loyal to the group.

"I just like the way they sound, it's so much better than other country music," said Farrell.

MTV's Video Music Awards finish on a good note

By Chloe Gould
Scoop Editor

The inner workings and behind-the-scenes action of the Paramount Pictures cinema sets brought more excitement to this year's Video Music Awards than ever before. A guest list packed with celebrities from across the board and their theatrical performances kept even the biggest stars entertained.

Guests arrived on the red carpet at the Los Angeles show, all with their own unique styles. Members of band Paramore made a statement when they rolled up to the event in environmentally savvy Smart cars.

Briney Spears created a stir with her fresh, made-over look and the Jonas Brothers stole the hearts of thousands of young girls in their dapper three piece suits.

United Kingdom big-shot, Russell Brand, hosted the soiree and kept everyone's attention, especially that of some enraged Jonas Brothers fans. The British funny man cracked jokes left and right, offending many, both in the audience and in front of the television.

American Idol alum, Jordin Sparks, had some choice words for Brand when she stepped up to the stage as a presenter. The young songstress defended the Jonas Brothers and their purity rings, after they had been the target of a number of jokes throughout the night.

Paramount Pictures brought a never-before-seen flair to the musical performances of the night, making each appearance a breath-taking experience. Chart-topper Rihanna brought bone-chilling zombie dancers in to accompany her during her performance of "Disturbia" at the beginning of the show.

Although Spears was the most anticipated comeback of the night, Christina Aguilera braved the stage for the first time since motherhood. Lil Wayne was a fan-favorite of the night with two performances; one next to pal T-Pain and a later appearance with country-rocker Kid Rock singing "All Summer Long."

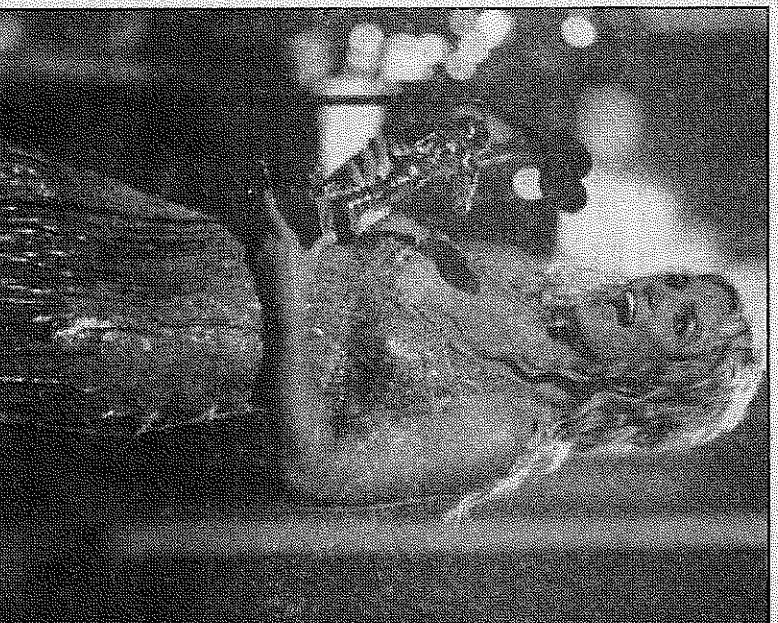
Recently divorced Pink showed her true colors in her bitter yet powerful performance of "So What" on the studio's back lot. Her amazing voice was only boosted by stunts such as sliding down a cotton drape and throwing rocks through town windows. The Jonas Brothers also performed on the back lot, with a frenzy of screaming teens swarming their stage as they sang "Love Bug."

Blink 182 drummer, Travis Barker and celebrity DJ, Adam Goldstein (DJ AM) served as the house band, mixing tunes and adding a little excitement to everything from Oasis to Katy Perry.

Tokio Hotel was a surprise winner of the night in the category of "Best New Artist," but Briney Spears cleaned up with her first ever VMA win. Spears' video for "Piece of Me" received awards for "Best Pop Video of the Year" and "Best Video of the Year."

All the excitement and shockers of the night came to a close with Kanye West's "Love Lockdown" which had the whole audience on their feet with fireworks and tribal drummers.

The night as a whole represented today's Hollywood. Everyone from the Disney Channel to the big screen made appearances at the Video Music Awards and every presenter and performer added something special to the event.



Newly transformed singer Briney Spears appeared at the MTV Video Music Awards on September 7th. She left the event with three awards for her music video "Piece of Me."

Jackson thrills in 'Lakeview Terrace'

Smith-produced movie impresses

By Celine Donohue
Features Editor

Neil LaBute's "Lakeview Terrace" opened in September. It is a thriller about a new couple that moves into the wrong neighborhood.

Hopes were high for what the outcome of this movie about racial tension and prejudice would be, and it definitely met those expectations. The motion picture features Samuel Jackson, Patrick Wilson and Kerry Washington, and is produced by Will Smith.

The film begins by introducing the interracial newlyweds, Chris Wilson and his wife, Lisa, who have just moved onto their new street, Lakeview Terrace. Everything seems fine until their rebelliously psychopathic LAPD cop neighbor, Samuel Jackson), begins acting bizarrely.

Starting off innocently enough but soon showing his mean intentions to his new neighbors, it is hard to determine whether Abel is a nice cop or a racist neighbor with a grudge. We soon find that Abel is dealing with his own family issues, which is certainly no excuse for the terrible acts to come.

With mean and racist scenes, much like the movie "Crash," "Lakeview" sends powerful messages about stereotypes and racism, showing how hurtful even a cop, like Abel, can be.

The movie has you guessing the entire time about what will be the outcome, which I enjoyed. Abel begins to mess with his neighbors enough to jeopardize their relationship; California wildfires approach and burn all around the neighborhood and we discover that this prejudiced cop has his own



Samuel Jackson stars in movie "Lakeview Terrace" among actors Patrick Wilson and Kerry Washington. Produced by Will Smith, the motion picture is an action-packed must-see.

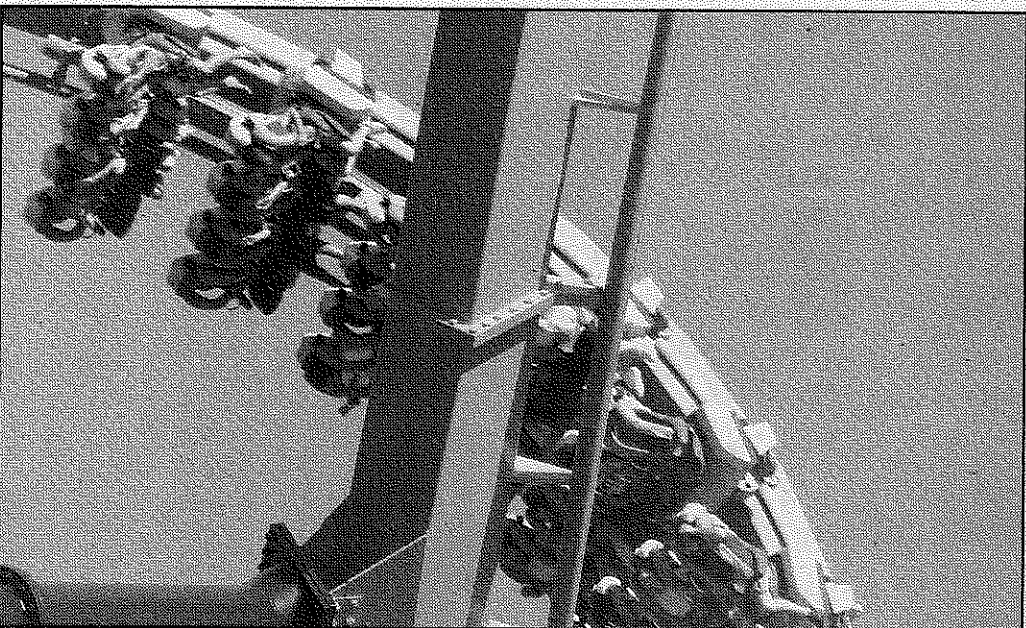
posses of criminals, ready to follow his every command.

The movie peaks with a climactic brawl between Abel and his neighbors, which left my jaw hanging in terror.

"Lakeview Terrace" is a thriller that keeps you on the edge of your seat. I really liked the movie and think that anyone interested in action, current conflicts, and good acting would enjoy it.

New ride dominates theme park

By Josh McNamara
Staff Writer



Kings Dominion

The new ride, The Dominator, at Kings Dominion was a huge success and is popular spot at the amusement park's famous Fear Fest. Fear Fest is currently running and students can continue to experience the thrill until the end of October.

Grey's leaves viewers in the gray

Fans give season premiere of "Grey's Anatomy" mixed reviews

By Susie Cho
Staff Writer

More than 18 million viewers nationwide tuned in three weeks ago to watch the fifth season premiere of "Grey's Anatomy."

The popular show has been capturing viewers since 2005 and they still continue to follow the attracting storyline of medical drama. Some fans looked forward to the premiere because of what happened in the last season.

"I'm very excited for the new season. The last season's finale made it look good," said junior Gloria Yun.

"Grey's Anatomy" is known for its intensity that leaves viewers at the edge of their seats. The show has twists and turns that makes fans wanting more and often leaves them unanswered.

"There were a lot of unsolved relationships," said senior Lindsay Sawyer. "I really want Meredith and McDreamy to figure out their future."

However, one viewer hopes for a better season because the previous season seemed like it lacked drama. There was no resolution for the characters, and the storyline was too flat.

"I think there's gonna be more drama since last season was kind of dull," said senior Melissa Ngyuen.

"Grey's Anatomy" has become such a huge hit because of its medical thrills and appealing subject about doctors. The

The opening of Kings Dominion meant the opening of the well anticipated ride Dominator. Many kids who came to the park all wanted to ride only one ride, The Dominator.

Students would have given it a great review.

"Good ride, extremely overated," said Sean Nickley. Nickley thought that there was too much hype to this single ride and people over-focused on the Dominator.

The Dominator is a world record-breaking roller coaster.

It is the longest floorless roller coaster, and owns the record for the largest loop in the world. Dominator is 4,210 feet long, and the loop is 135 feet tall.

"It was an awesome ride. I rode in the front row twice!" said Sophomore Alex Bauer.

Bauer was not the only person to ride the ride more than once since most of the riders rode it multiple times.

"I really liked the big loop, it felt like we stayed up there for a couple of seconds before continuing the ride," said Alejandro Perilla after going on the Dominator

for the first time.

If you have a weak stomach like freshman Kenny Green, then you won't want to ride the Dominator. "The Dominator was really crazy, so many twists and turns. I nearly barfed the first time I went on it."

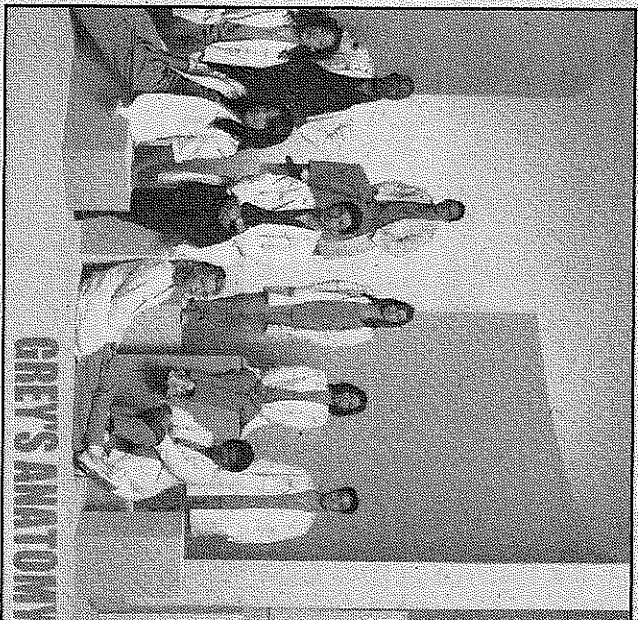
Even though he had a weak stomach, he needed to feel the fear and excitement that he just had felt.

"The wait is perfect, not too slow, and goes by really fast," said Green.

In past years the event was called fear fest. Starting in 2008 the name fear fest is going to be switched to Halloween Haunt.

When students fill the hall once more to start another school year, people will anticipate Fear Fest at Kings Dominion. The Fear Fest or now known as the Halloween Haunt, runs from September 26 through November 1, on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights.

Some don't know what Fear Fest is but Bauer explained "Fear Fest is really scary. People are in really scary costumes and they jump out. You ride rides still but they sometimes wait at the end of the ride and scare you when you get off."



ABC

The "Grey's Anatomy" season premiere received mixed reviews, but the revised cast has proven to keep viewers tuning in each week to keep up with the medical storylines. show also focuses on the doctors' personal lives and zooms in on the everyday conflict they manage inside and outside the hospital.

"I like how there is medical stuff mixed with love and drama," said Yun.

The characters in the show can be compared with people who deal with similar situations, whether it is from rough relationships or family issues.

"It's a lot of drama and you can relate to them," said Sawyer. "It's not just for adults."

The highly anticipated premiere lasted two hours long to kick off the new season. There were mixed reactions about the episode, one of them regarding the time span of the show.

"It was kind of boring and two hours was way too long," said Sawyer. "It was not up to my expectations."

Despite prospects, the show satisfied viewers who got what they hoped for. Characters cleared up their personal issues and relationships are growing stronger.

"It wasn't too dramatic, but I liked how Meredith and McDreamy are working out their differences and moving in together," said Yun.

The premiere may not have been what some fans anticipated, but at least there were the attractive actors the audience looked forward to.

"I don't really follow the show," said junior Dhipreet Kaur, after watching the season premiere. "I just watch it for McDreamy."



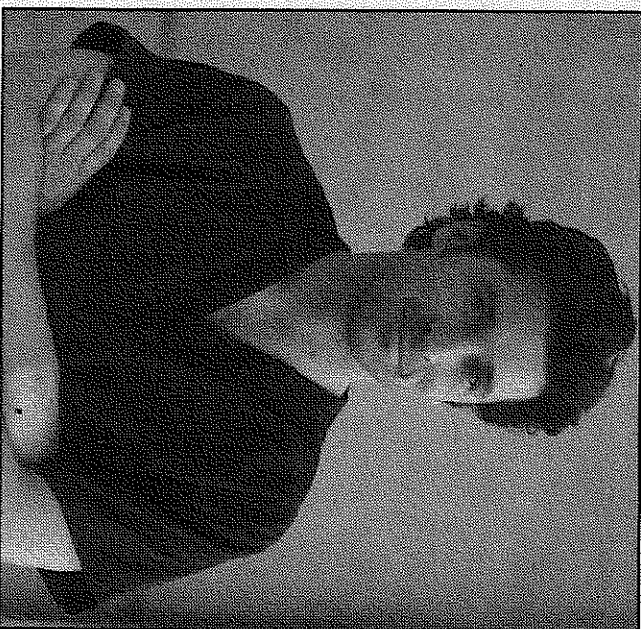
Singer/Dancer

The Plain White T's will be performing songs from their 2006 album "Every Second Counts" on 10/31 at the Patriot Center.

Concerts Calendar

October:

- 10/17—My Favorite Highway w/ Holiday Parade and The Biggerlights, 6:30 p.m. Sterling Community Center
 - 10/18—Misfits, 7 p.m. Jaxx \$25
 - 10/19—T.I. w/ T-Pain, 7:30 p.m. Patriot Center \$40-120
 - Rocktoberfest, 1 p.m. Jaxx \$12
 - 10/20—Jason Mraz, 7:30 p.m. D.A.R. Constitution Hall
 - 10/21—Underoath w/ Saosin, The Devil Wears Prada and P.O.S., 8 p.m. Rams Head Live! \$20
 - 10/21—Relient K w/ This Providence, Ludo and House Heroes, 5 p.m. 9:30 Club \$18
 - 10/23—One Republic, 8 p.m. Patriot Center \$30
 - 10/24—Black Crowes, 8 p.m. 9:30 Club \$45
 - 10/25—Everclear, 1 p.m. Hagerstown Live! Music Festival
 - Trace Adkins and Alan Jackson (American Freedom Festival), 7:30 p.m. Patriot Center \$62.50
 - 10/27—Steve Moakler, 7 p.m. Jammin' Java \$10
 - 10/29—Slightly Stoopid, 7 p.m. 9:30 Club \$25
 - 10/30—Braddigan (from Dispatch), 7:30 p.m. Jammin Java \$15
 - 10/31—Coldplay, 7:30 p.m. Verizon Center \$49.50-97.50
 - Panic! at the Disco, Dashboard Confessional, and Plain White T's (Rock Band Live), 7 p.m. Patriot Center \$29.95-39.95
 - Metro Station, 6 p.m. Sonar
- November:**
- 11/3—The Who, 8 p.m. Verizon Center \$55-205
 - 11/9—The Cheetah Girls, 4 p.m. Verizon Center Chiodos, 6:30 p.m. Rams Head Live!
 - 11/10—Kings of Leon w/ We are Scientists and The Whigs, 7 p.m. D.A.R. Constitution Hall
- Compiled by Chloe Gould



ABC

Patrick Dempsey, who plays Dr. Derek Shepherd on the show, is a new been heart throb thanks to "Grey's Anatomy." Many of the show's faithful viewers watch the show each week simply to view Dempsey on their television sets.

Fall into Burke festival

By Ally Mackin
Senior Staff Writer

It's that time of year.

The leaves are changing colors, people are stocking up on Halloween candy, the long-sleeved shirts are being pulled from closets and Burke Nursery is holding its 14th Annual Fall Festival Pumpkin Playground.

This year's Fall Festival will run through October 31.

"The Pumpkin Playground is a great way to spend time with your close friends. I've already been there three times this October. I always seem to have a great time even if I'm about to be in college. My favorite part has always been the petting-zoo," said senior Skylar Feinberg.

"I love getting to play with the animals," she said.

The Fall Festival's other many activities include a Haunted Hayride, Miner's Mountain Slide, Face Painting and Money Mountain and more. The attractions are open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily.

With so many events and an inexpensive admissions fee of only \$8, students find themselves coming back week after week. Parents love the festival, too, because it's an easy way to keep children running around and having fun for hours.

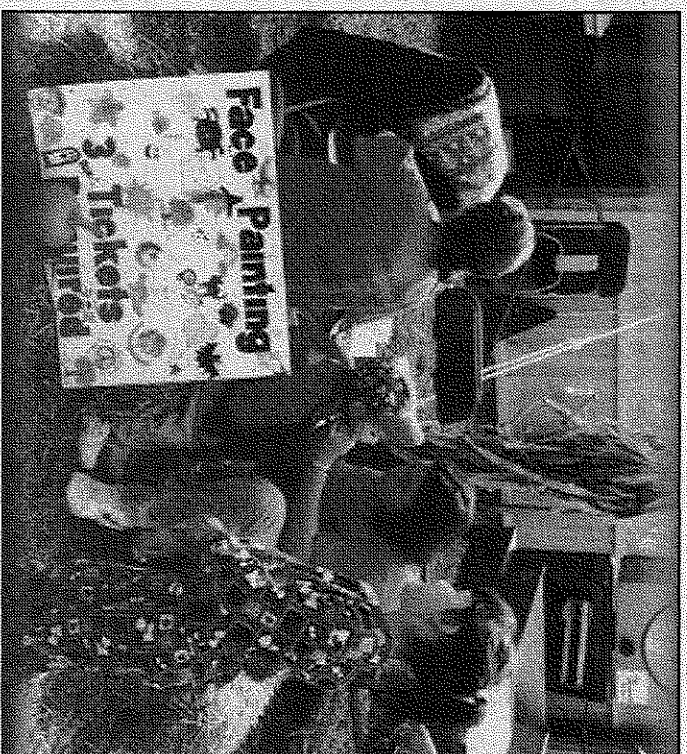
While the kids are having a blast, parents are able to view the pumpkins, gourds, apples cider and other Halloween novelties.

"When I was younger my mom would take me, my brother and my sister all to Burke Nursery and we

would ride the Hayride all day. My favorite part was sliding on pieces of cut-out carpet squares down Miner's Mountain," said senior Lindsay Smith.

"My brother [Iwin Taylor] always loved the Money Mountain which basically was a huge sand pile with prizes hidden for kids to find," Smith said. "I think it's great for any age really, I still go with my friends and it's a good way for babysitters to interact with the kids."

The Burke Nursery is a fun way to spend your Saturday afternoon with or without kids on your hands. Be sure to experience the excitement before it's too late and always remember to pick up your free-with admissions pumpkin before you leave.



Ally Mackin
Burke Nursery is a great place to go in the days leading up to Halloween. Kids of all ages and their parents can have fun with the many activities that are offered through October 31.

Teachers take a break from student life

Faculty members step out of classroom to enjoy various weekend activities

By Kelly Carlin
Staff Writer

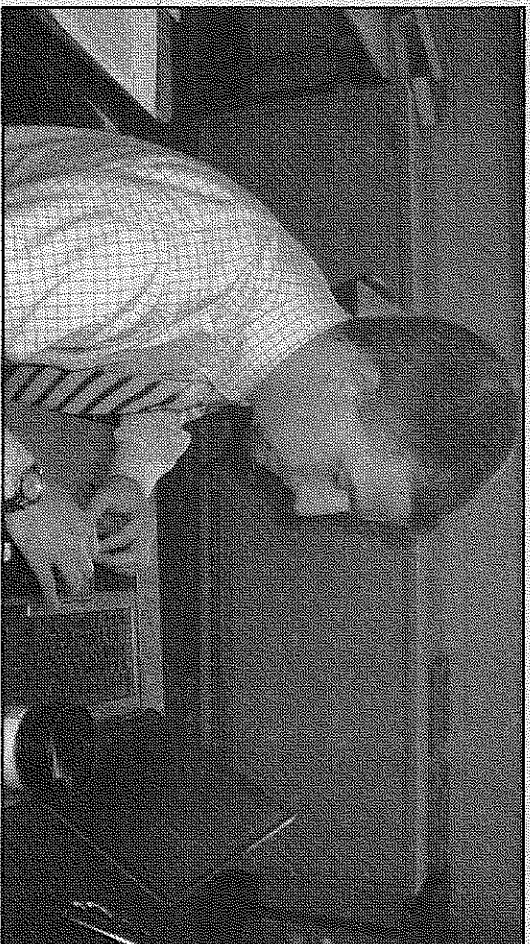
For as long as students have learned and teachers have taught, it's always been a strange experience to see your teachers outside of school on the weekend.

Many students wonder what exactly teachers do when they're not at school.

"I do things most normal people do," said history teacher Brad Swain, who likes to play golf and watch MTV. "I visit presidential grave sites for a hobby. I also play computer games where you make a civilization and try to conquer the world."

Some staff members choose more exciting ways to spend their time when not at school. Since it's the only free time they have, they choose to make it interesting.

"I like to take road trips; I'm a road trip person. It's fun to take weekend trips. I like to just pick a place I've never been before. And if I had money I'd take a plane," said Jeff Stahl, a counselor, who likes to take trips



Kelly Carlin

Burke Nursery is a great place for people to go in the days leading up to Halloween. Kids of all ages can have fun with the many activities that are offered.

same way that students do, hanging out with their families and friends.

"I spend a lot of time with my family. I do

things around the house that need to get done. I occasionally go out with my friends," said PE teacher Denise Cunningham. "I'm pretty boring."

Teachers, like students, have friends and families that they spend time with. Also similarly to students, there are responsibilities around their houses they have to attend to.

History teacher Jason Croston also goes about normal activities. "Right now I'm house hunting. I watch a lot of movies, I have Netflix now, and I do the chores my wife makes me do."

Although teachers do leisurely activities, family tends to be number one. Principal Paul Wardinski takes a big part in his children's lives.

"The number one thing I do is my daughters' activities. Either swim, dance, soccer, Girl Scouts, whatever they're into. This weekend we're going to the Pecto hamster races," said Wardinski. "I also love watching sports, but overall, family is my first priority."

WEEKEND WARRIORS

Athletes as well as band members give up weekend mornings to better themselves and improve skills

Casey Miller
Senior Staff Writer

A student's ideal Saturday includes sleeping in until noon and hanging out with their friends, not coming to school for an early morning practice, but that is what many students do.

Football, marching band and other activity participants are regulars at school on Saturday mornings.

"I don't like coming in on Saturdays because that means I have to wake up early," said freshman band member Jake Everett. "We come to practice for competitions and football games."

Band practice does not usually begin until noon on Saturdays, well after some other sports, but to some noon is still early.

The football team is usually the first to walk the grounds on Saturday mornings.

"It sucks waking up early.

"It is beneficial to come in even if we don't like it."

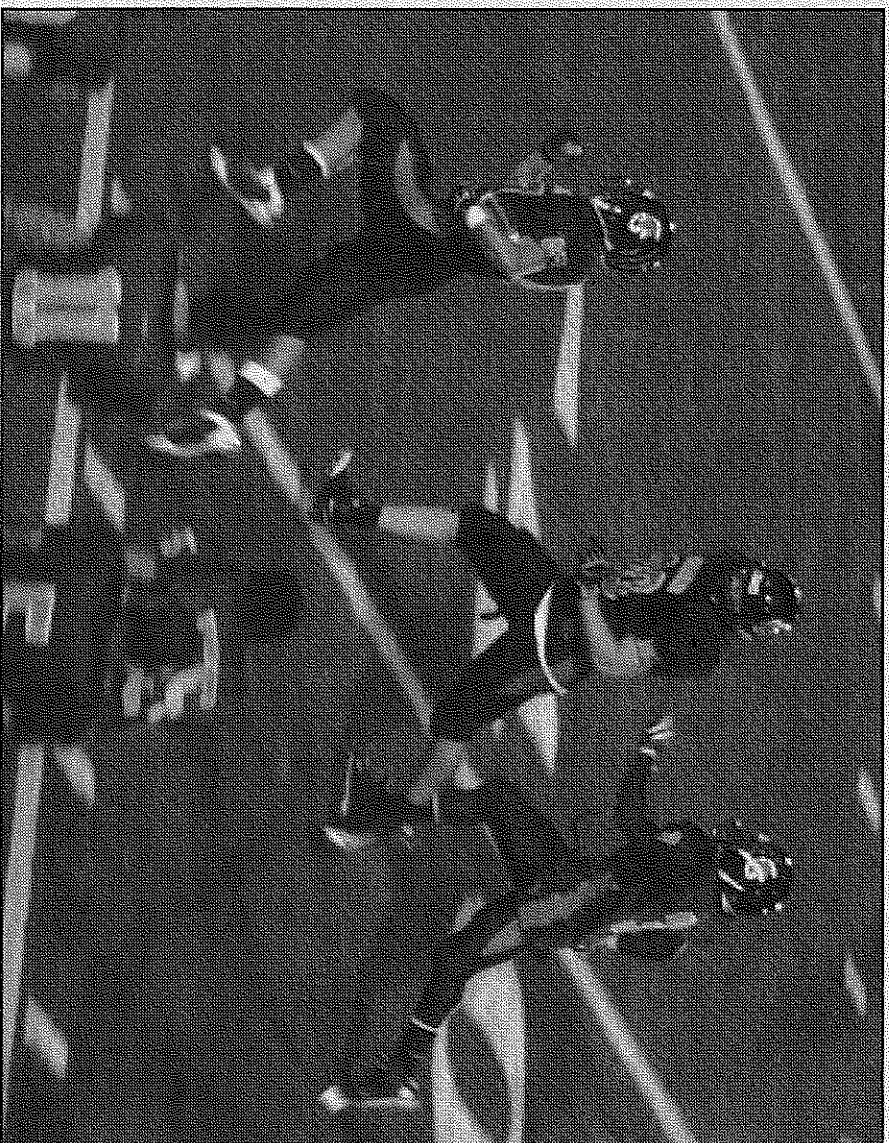
—Ryan Howell,
Senior

Weekends are for sleeping in. We have to come in at 8:30!" said senior football player Ryan Howell. The team practices every Saturday of the season.

Since Saturday is an extra practice, it is not all the same rigorous pace as other days.

"[Usually] we come in, Coach Remner takes role, we go to the field and run, then we come in and lift and watch films of the game," said Howell.

Saturday practices are a way to build team dynamics as well as receive almost immediate feedback on the week's game. This means the entire week's practices can be



Lia Hoch

Students from a number of different teams and activities, such as football, come to school on the weekend to for practice and review. The football team practices every Saturday during the season. "Weekends are for sleeping in," said senior football player Ryan Howell. Saturday football practices, however, often aren't as rigorous.

devoted to improving skills that may have been less than desirably executed during the game.

"It is beneficial to come in," said Howell, "even if we don't like it."

"I don't like coming in on Saturday because that means I have to wake up early."

—Jake Everett, Freshman

New volleyball coach aims for championship

By Inderbir Bal
Business Systems Editor

Varsity girls volleyball is off to a strong season with their new head coach, Stephanie Noriega.

The varsity team has had three coaches in three years and this past summer former Coach Marcus Robinson left his team to create a volleyball program at NVCC. This was difficult for some players, but most of them were used to changes in the coaching staff.

"Coach [Robinson] didn't really help and we wanted [to win districts] really bad," said senior Amy Homer, the defensive specialist.

Last year the team won Districts and some felt it was purely the team's skill instead of a strong head coach. But with Noriega, the team might have a different outlook.

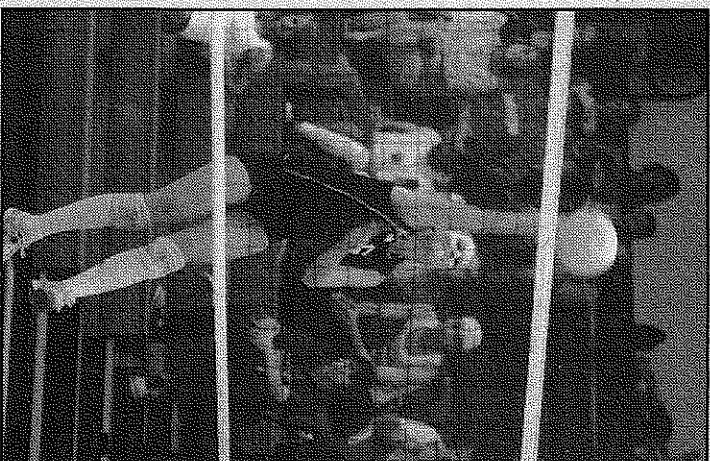
This year the team is back together and Noriega is making practices a lot harder because she wants the players to keep improving.

"We work hard in every practice, the girls are determined and believe in the team," said Noriega.

She wants to make the players smarter on the court, not by using brute force to win games but by using tactics. She talked about how it's not about hitting hard; it's about analyzing the other team's defenses and hitting them where they're weak.

Many of these players are familiar with Noriega because she stepped up from JV, and this made some of the players feel a little bit more relaxed. It's obvious that she cares and works with the players more to help overcome any obstacle.

"Coach Stephanie, she relates to us more. If we're having an off day, she'll help us

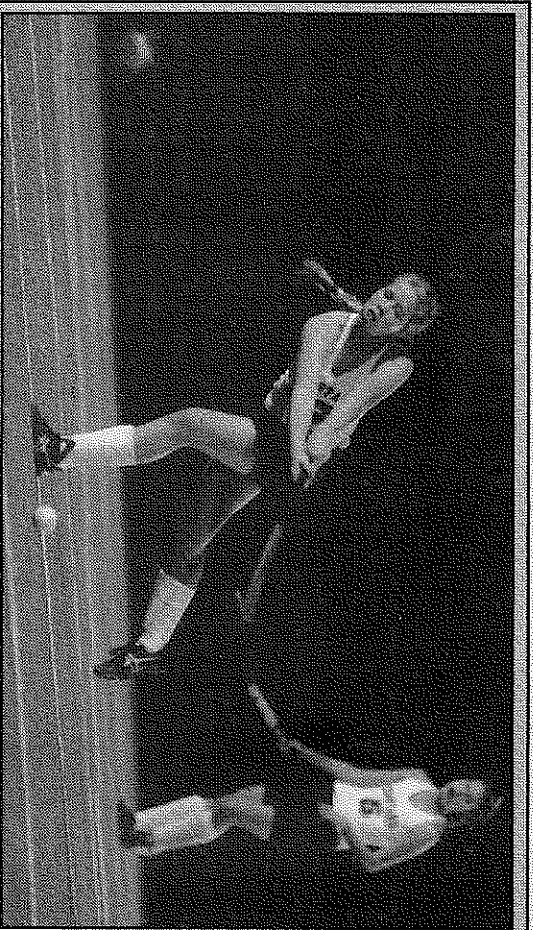


Litroch
Senior Sarah Smith spikes the ball during their 3-0 victory against Hayfield.

through mental blocks," says Homer. "She's just better; I don't know how else to describe it."

Last year the team went all the way to the second round of regional match against Chantilly but lost three to zero. This year they aspire to win Regionals with a strong head coach and dedicated team but, most importantly, the coach says that they also want to have fun along the way.

"A team is made up of both players and coaches," said senior and right side hitter Nikki Anderson, "And it takes both aspects to win."



Litroch
Sophomore Kaitie Leonard hits the ball during the Spartans' win over the Hawks. This year's team has great chemistry and high hopes for upcoming games.

Field hockey sets tone for fall sports

By Celine Donohue

Features Editor

Opponents beware; the field hockey team is on a roll. They started the season off strong and players say that they have been in it to win it from the start.

With a fresh lineup, that has already pun-nieled Edison, Yorktown, Mount Vernon, Jefferson, West Potomac, Hayfield and T.C. the team will surely do great in the championship season.

"I think if we work really hard we will go far this year. I hope we go to finals in the District Tournament," said sophomore Danielle O'Brien.

The Spartans are stronger than last year and have a better record. Sophomore Quinn DeMott believes the team can surpass last fall's season, which might be tough considering the fact the team lost eight key senior players.

"We work together very well and we get

along great outside of practice which translates onto the field during games" said DeMott. Senior Mariah Peters also had good words about the team. "We are much more of a close knit team this year which has helped, there is no cliquing between grades, we're all friends," said Peters.

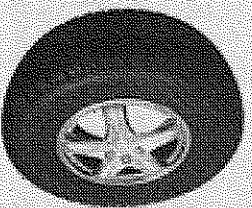
The team lost to our rivals Lake Braddock but that didn't get them down. Next game they came back and crushed hayfield 5-0.

"I, using to Lake Braddock didn't affect the Spartans," said junior goalie Kristen Beyer. "We have a good mentality, so we don't get to down over losing."

WS plans to do well in the remaining games and is looking to do well in the District tournament as well.

"I think well do great, as long as we and the refs do their job," said sophomore Kaitie Leonard.

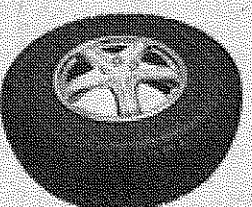
"We will do well, we are a much better team than last year. I hope to excel past Districts, that would be great," said Peters.



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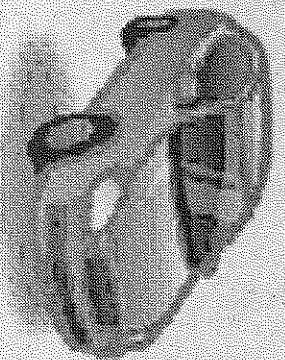
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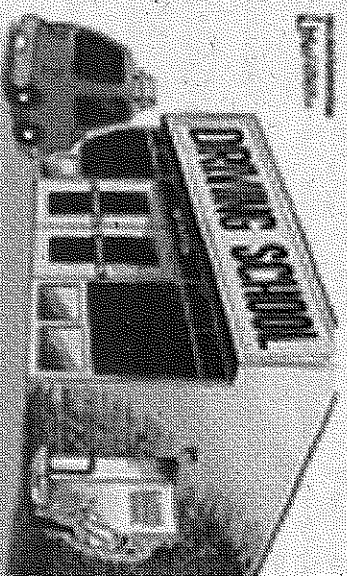
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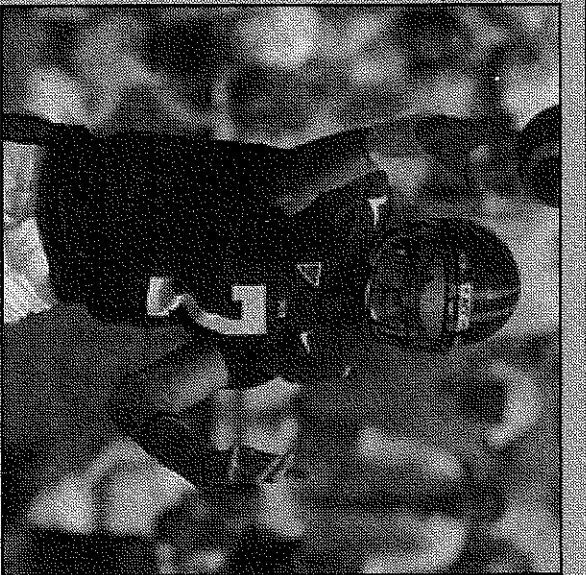
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Associated Press
Former Spartan QB Peter Lalach transferred to Oregon State University after being removed from the UVA team.

Lalach transfers to OSU; will play in 2009 season

Peter Lalach, a receiver-turned-quarterback who played for the Spartans from 2003-2007, has transferred to Oregon State University after playing last season and part of this season for UVA.

The 2007 graduate, who played backup quarterback in his first season at UVA and as a starter in the first two games this season, was dismissed from the team by the UVA Athletic Director after "violating the terms of his probation for underage drinking," according to *The Oregonian* newspaper.

Mike Riley, OSU's head football coach, is friends with UVA Coach Al Groh. The Portland, Oregon newspaper speculated that the friendship could be one reason Lalach ended up at Oregon State.

The Oracle tried several times, via phone and e-mail to contact Todd Lalach, Peter's father, for comment. The elder Lalach did not return messages left by a student reporter.

The Oregonian reported that Peter Lalach wanted to transfer to a college that used the quarter system so that he would be eligible to play sooner.

Riley told *The Oregonian* that he was confident about giving Lalach a shot at playing football for OSU.

"The people I talked to felt like this was a guy who deserved another opportunity, and I feel very good about it. I didn't want to compromise the program in any way, and I don't think we are."

OSU, according to *The Oregonian*, says Lalach must sit out the remainder of the 2008 season, and will have two years of eligibility remaining. He will be eligible for the fall OSU football schedule in 2009, even though he started two games for the Cavaliers this season.

—Compiled from staff & news reports

Upsets in college football

The 2008 season has experienced early upsets

By Ben Lockwood

Sports Editor

This year's college football season is filled with just as many of devastating losses and field storming upsets as last year's.

Even though there are a handful of dominant teams every year, it is still exciting to watch and see which new-comer will rise up to the challenge and prove other concerted sports analysts wrong by upsetting a monstrous opponent. We are early on in the season, but we have been blessed with some magical upsets.

"You'll never know who is going to win, one week they'll shine, the next they'll drop a deuce," said WS senior Andrew Leonzo.

Already, the likes of ECU, coming out of a narrow win first week against the Hokies, and then went on to crush the Mountaineers of West Virginia (who were also defeated by a young Colorado team). But, on the flipside, on Saturday, September 20th, the Pirates met their first and much unexpected loss to NC State. USC's latest loss to Oregon State has dropped them out of their national number one ranking and has challenged their shot at a national title contention.

"The season is different from last year, even though there are upsets, there are still the few dominant teams," said WS junior Tope Ayorinde.

Every year, the competition has been getting tougher and tougher. More players play every year and the college recruitment system has never been better. Most recruits base their col-



Associated Press

Oregon State fans come crashing on to the field as the Beavers upset the Trojans 27-21 at Reser Stadium in Corvallis Oregon. The Beavers ended the Trojans possible undefeated season and it could come back to haunt them in the run for a National Title bid. Other upsets across the country, like this one in Corvallis, have shaped the course of this year's season in college football.

The Rays expected to be a surprise in the playoffs

Cam McCallum

Oracle Editor

For sports fans, rooting your team on to postseason success is the reason many of us watch. Before this season, fans of the Tampa Bay Rays had gotten used to seeing their teams' season end in September with all of the other non-contenders.

After a remarkable turnaround this season, the Rays qualified for Major League Baseball's postseason for the first time in franchise history. In the tough American League East division with the New York Yankees and Boston Red Sox, the Rays had found playoff spots hard to come by. For WS senior Shannon Smith, his Rays clinching a postseason berth was the first reward for many years of watching his favorite team finish in last place.

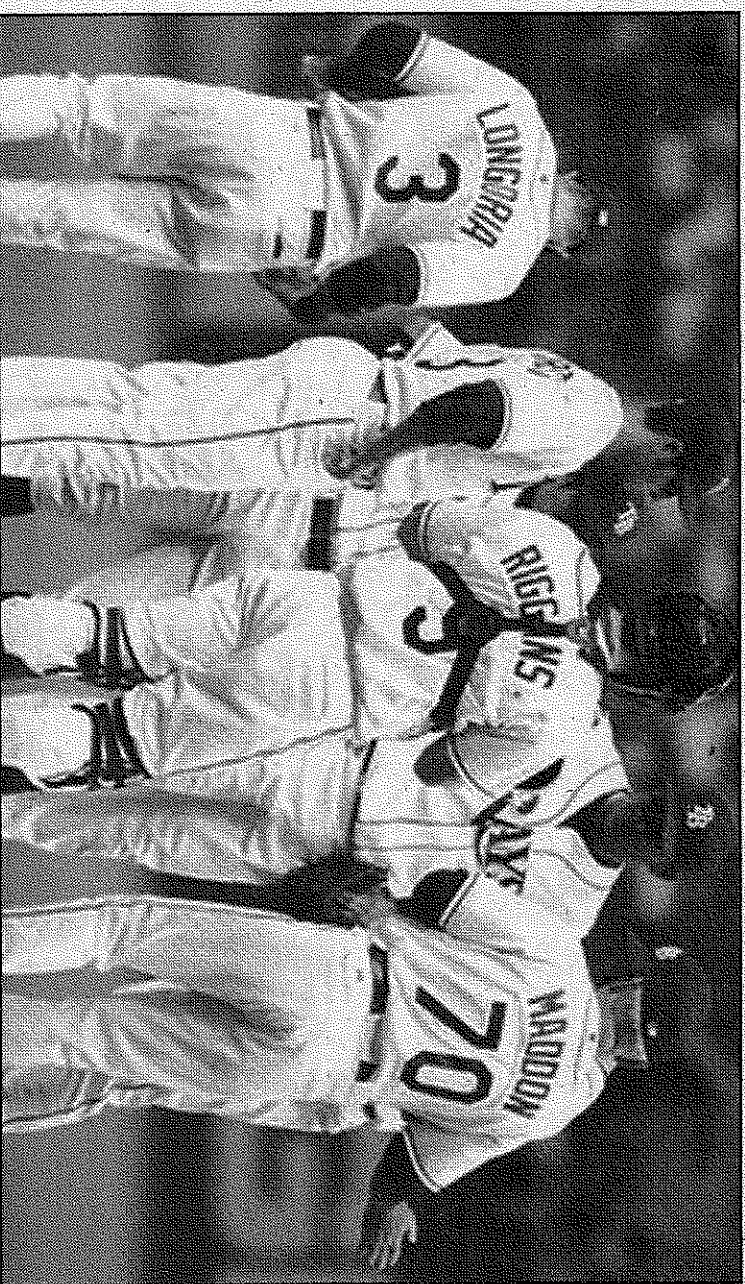
"I've always been a fan of baseball, and grew to like the Rays when I moved to Tampa Bay in 5th grade. Even though they had never been a winning team before it was fun to watch them play," Smith said.

Due to their lack of previous success, the Rays were never a popular team with the casual fan.

"Growing up in Tampa, not many of my friends were even fans of the home team," Smith said. Most of his friends were fans of either the Yankees or Red Sox, and Smith wastes no time bragging to those fans.

"Yankees fans will never hear the end of it from me," Smith said. "It's funny how they choose to ignore the postseason when their team isn't involved."

Now that he's felt what it's like to root for a team in the playoffs, Smith is hopeful his Rays can advance to the World Series. But unlike the fans of other perennially successful clubs, he knows that his team has already accomplished something great.



Associated Press

The Tampa Bay Rays' turnaround this year can be credited to the attitude adjustment forced on by the coaching staff. Fans, like Shannon Smith, can only pray for seasons like this to last. Every year since it's opening year in '98, the Rays have been nothing more than mediocre. This year's record has been almost completely flipped-flopped from previous years for Tampa.

"I know they're very capable of it, but I would not be disappointed if they didn't make it to the World Series," Smith said. "If you asked anyone who knows anything about baseball if the Rays would make the playoffs before the season had started, they would have laughed in your face. For that reason alone, disappointment is unnecessary."

Letters-to-the-Editor: McCain, Obama or neither?

Because of the historic nature of the upcoming presidential election, The Oracle solicited the opinions of members of the Class of 2009 about the candidates and the issues.

The following are letters-to-the-editor written by seniors in US Government classes. We have included as many as we could. The opinions expressed below are those of the authors. More letters will appear in the October 31 issue.

Dear Esteemed Editors of The Oracle:

This election, as we all know, is the most important for my generation. We are or will be legal adults in the next year, and the outcome of this election will be a deciding factor in our futures. So I believe that Barack Obama should become the next President of the United States. He has plans for change. This country needs change, and he will be a leader that can provide that.

Obama is young and creative. He understands that people like me and many of my peers, will need help for college. The economy is in trouble, and as it looks like now, I won't be able to afford college. He can help. More importantly he wants to help. The trickle down theory of the Republican Party and the Bush Administration is not effective for the working class. Electing a Democrat will change how this country is run, and possibly start to repair our sad and sorry economy.

So, I ask myself and others, Change or the same OLD thing? I'm going to say change.

Sincerely,
Hannah Martin

To The Editors:

In the past, I have never paid any attention to politics because I never really thought that it affected me, but this year that changed. Even though I am not going to be able to vote in this election, I have started to take notice of this year's election. I have been watching presidential and the vice presidential debates and I have found that it is all something that interests me. I am glad that the election that I have been watching what is going on in this election because it is going to turn out to be a historic event either way.

I've never categorized myself as a Democrat or a Republican and as of right now I am still undecided on whom I would vote for if I were of age. I'm hoping that the last debate will push me one way or the other because in the previous debates neither candidate has really stood out to me.

Mazie Shipman

To the Editors:

My reactions to the presidential election would be a little liberal, but mainly conservative. Obama, in all of his campaigning, has consistently used earmarks throughout his career, while McCain has never asked for earmarks in his 22-year career. Obama appears to understand/relate to the middle class exceptionally well, with the example of a known family member struggling with medical coverage, while McCain relates more to the upper-class. I get the impression that Barack Obama is promising all this "change", but in the future will fail to stay remote to his ideas, while McCain is noting his political plans without promising anything.

Neither candidate knows what the future has in store with our worldwide problems, so I am opinionated to say McCain and Sarah Palin are existent when it comes to dealing with these crises, without promising something that might not happen. Also with the note of Sarah Palin, being an Alaska citizen I undertake that she is a highly educated redneck, who knows what the majority of America (which is the middle class) is asking for. She is a down-to-earth, strong, woman with excellent political viewpoints on the welfare of America.

Cory Woods

Dear Editors:

I am sure you have heard the slogan, "Rock the Vote." If you have not, where have you been? It has widely been endorsed by various celebrities, to try and get people to register and vote in the presidential election.

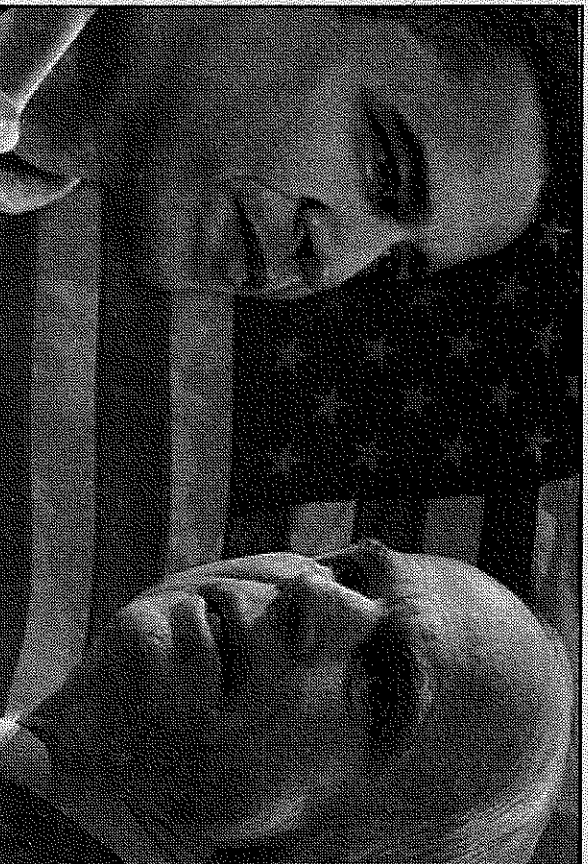
This election is one to go down in history as one of the most historical elections. With either candidate, history will

be made. On one hand, if Obama and Biden are elected, then for the first time in history the United States will have an African American president. If McCain and Palin are elected, then the United States will have one of the oldest presidents and the first female vice president.

Both candidates are saying that it is time for a change. Many issues are being covered such as health care, environment, economy, education, and most importantly the war in Iraq. For most Americans this election will be one of the hardest to vote in. With the government and economy struggling, many Americans are finding it hard to trust the government. The candidate that is better is one that will address all of these issues and will make the change that they talk about. America also has to be open-minded to these changes and embrace them with a new outlook, because it is time for a change.

This election will go down in history. Unfortunately, I am just six months shy of being able to vote in the election. Guess I will not be able to tell future generations about voting in famous 2008 presidential election.

Myra Butt



Dear Editors,
This 2008 election will be an exciting election mainly because there will be the first African American candidate running for president and, like all presidential elections, there is a new batch of "first-time" voters who just turned 18 this year. Unfortunately, I will not be able to vote this year, but if I could I would probably vote for Barack Obama. I would mainly vote for him because I see a great deal of fresh and new ideas that he would bring to the table.

On the other hand McCain, also having great viewpoints, would bring ideas that are focused on war and protection of our country, which is important but shouldn't be the main point of his ideas. Also Obama is more charismatic and lays out his plans of how he plans to fix the economy and protect the environment, focusing more on the people of the United States as a whole.

Also, the debates and advertisements play a big role on how my vote was swayed. I found that in debates and advertisements, Obama talked mainly about his thorough plans on how to help America and how important it is to vote for whichever candidate you want, while McCain focused on bashing Obama's views to make himself look better. I think McCain should have actually explained how he was going to help the soldiers in war or better yet, first help the economy and our United States instead of worrying about foreign issues. I also think it's very important for people to vote because you can't have a say in something you didn't partake in.

Monique Payne

To whom it may concern,

I recently turned 18 and also recently registered to vote. I am both thrilled, but also anxious about the voting process. Will I make the right decision? I hope so. I have grown up in a military home, so whether or not I chose to be I am patriotic and proud of the country in which I was raised. That is why

I choose to vote, to express my opinion and view in this land of the free.

But who is it I will vote for you may ask? Will I vote for the youthful man promising for a change? Or the older, possibly wiser veteran? To me who I vote for is a personal decision and should be between me and my ballot. But I do have my opinions on the candidates. Growing up in a more conservative home has definitely influenced my opinions on political issues. But family aside, I have started to form my own ideas which surprisingly have been more liberal than I expected. So who will it be? The Republican or the Democrat? The black man or the white? The youthful modern or the old-fashioned? I guess you will just have to ask my ballot.

Erin Mackie

Dear Editor,

With the election approaching quickly, I believe it is important to express my opinions with some of the uniformed students at our school. I won't pretend that I know or understand everything that has happened in this political battle. But I feel that neither of the candidates deserves to be in office. However, since we have no other choices, John McCain is the lesser of two evils.

I would like to address some of the ignorant statements I have heard from fellow students: Yes, John McCain is old; however saying that there is a good chance he'll "kick the bucket" while in office, and hand off control of our country to Sarah Palin is foolish. John McCain's mother is 96 years old and still very healthy, so it is very likely that John McCain will live much longer, seeing as he is only 72 years old.

Now, let me focus on Obama; most of the students around our school support Obama, yet when confronted on their views, seem undecided or uniformed, yet they still support him... why? I have observed that it has become somewhat of a fashion statement among younger voters to claim to support Senator Barack Obama. A common phrase I hear from these naive supporters is "Well, he wants change." Change to what? Change to socialism? Change can be positive or negative, and the only way to determine that is to educate yourself by watching the debates, and listening to the news, which teenagers rarely do. Obama has two years of experience as a US senator, compared to John McCain's 21 years.

My point is that, before you claim to support Obama for rudimentary reasons, such as his skin color, charismatic speeches, or age, just learn what values he truly stands for, then determine who you're going to vote for.

Signed,
Sean Knittle

Dear Editors,

I honestly believe that neither of the candidates should be a part of the election. Fortunately, I cannot vote yet because I do not think I would be able to choose who I would want. Our whole economy is going down in history, and I do not believe either one of the candidates is in the position to become our next President.

If I chose McCain, then the stress that comes along with being President will probably kill the old man, and then our lives will fall into the hands of Sarah Palin; and God help us all if that happens.

If I chose Obama, well, let's just say I do not think I can bring myself to do that. I feel as if he is just trying to win over everyone and their votes, but I do not think that he will follow through if he is actually elected. And I am not trying to be a citizen of the United States who discriminates; but "Obama Biden" is just a little too close for comfort for me. And even though I am considered a Republican and I follow their views, I do not believe either one of the candidates is fit for the job.

All of this just to say that I am glad I cannot vote in this election, simply because it lessens my chance of being the deciding factor of who could potentially be the President of the United States.

Mariah Peters

1 out of 4 sexually active teens has an STD *
Are you at risk?

LifeChoices
Resource center

FREE & CONFIDENTIAL HELP:

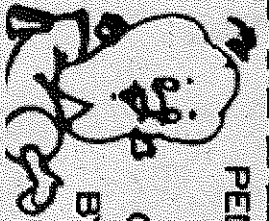
- STD information & testing referrals
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*Source: "Epidemic" by Meg Wecker, MD
STD - sexually transmitted disease

Jake Disagrees

Mission Inedible: One man, a dozen donuts

By Jake Serwin
Oracle Editor

Never tell anyone you're going to eat the whole box of Krispy Kremes, you swear, you'll do it by the end of the period, you're serious you can do it just watch you. Especially if you just ate lunch.

I should know because I did that. The Spanish Honor Society came into my class selling donuts for five dollars a dozen and I got excited and made a mistake. Let me break my thoughts down for you, Krispy Kreme by Krispy Kreme:

Donut One: Man, this is delicious. I can do this no problem. A dozen? At this rate I could do a baker's dozen, easy. I'm a machine. I'm like that Kobayashi guy on TV who eats all the hot dogs but, you know, not Japanese. Not that there's anything wrong with that.

Donut Two: There are only fifteen minutes left in class. Why did I tell everybody I'd eat the whole box? There are a lot of donuts in here, and I double milked at lunch today. I've made a huge mistake. Onward!

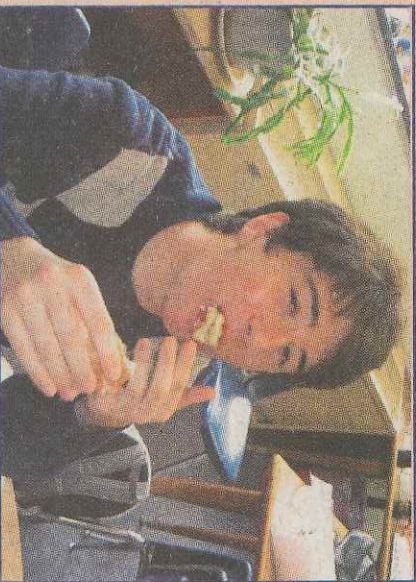
Donut Three: Why is this one so wet?

Donut Four *fat this point Sports Editor Emmie Cleveland started eating my donuts!*: Whoa, wait a minute. Cleveland just ate three donuts in the time it took me to eat one. Calm down, Jake, you can do this. Just beat her eight-four. She's probably bluffing, anyway – girls don't eat more than three donuts in a sitting. Time to power through.

Donut Five: That girl just ate more than three donuts in one sitting. This is bad. I'm also pretty sure I'll come out of this with diabetes.

Donut Six: I've hit the barrier, the point at which the spirit and better judgment battle for control of my donut consumption. It's either quit now or eat them all. Do it, Serwin. Finish this fight, two donuts at a time.

Donut Seven: What have I done? Honestly, did I even win? In some competitions, eating seven Krispy Kremes is the punishment for losing. In either case, I need a doctor.



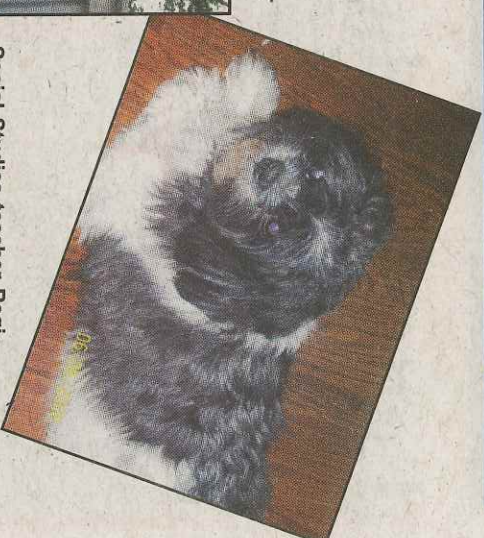
Kevin Pike
Jake Serwin devours the double donut on his path to victory.



Math teacher Beth Roop's labrador, Tucker, with Brennan.



US History teacher Maggie Tran with her cocker spaniel, Baxter.



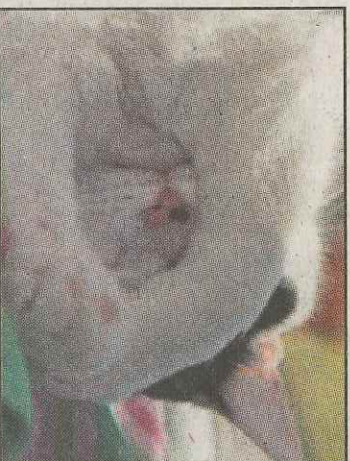
Social Studies teacher Regina Taylor's shitzu, Nigel.

THE ACHIEVERS' PETS

The Oracle is having a contest! Take a look at these photos of the pets of six of our lovely teachers. Then, pick a snap, and *get creative!* We want *you* to come up with the absolutely *funniest caption or dialogue* to go along with at least one of these photos. We will award a \$5 Starbucks Gift Card to the entry we deem The Funniest. We'll also print the winner and some of the runners-up in the November 14 Oracle. So, read the contest directions and get to work!



Government teacher Ellen Pastor's boxer, Charlie.



Journalism teacher Brooke Nelson's kitty mutt, Pepper.



Social Studies teacher Cathleen Boivin's pile of King Charles puppies.

HOW TO ENTER

- Step Number 1: Thou shalt cut out desired picture.
- Step Number 2: Thou shalt create a funny caption or dialogue to go along with the picture.
- Step Number 3: Thou shalt staple caption or dialogue to thy picture.
- Step Number 4: Thou shalt turn in finished product with your name and grade to Room 215, or to seniors Kevin Pike and Sam Tak.
- Step Number 5: Thou shalt turn in thy entry no later than Friday, October 31, at 2:15 p.m.

ORACLE CALENDAR—OCTOBER

Friday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
<p>17 Oracle #3 comes out! Get yours in your 7th-period class!</p> <p>24 Football @ Lake Brad-dock 7:30 PM</p> <p>Sack Lunch in Career Center on The College Q & A Session</p>	<p>20 College Fair @ Hayfield 7 PM</p> <p>Volleyball @ West Potomac 7:15 PM</p>	<p>21 College Visit: Virginia Military Institute @ 8:30 PM</p> <p>Happy Birthday Bill Gates!</p>	<p>22 National Nut Day! Celebrate all the nutty people in the world and the nutrition of nuts.</p> <p>29 College Visit: George Mason @ 9 AM</p>	<p>23 National Mole Day! Chemistry buffs commemorate Avogadro's number.</p> <p>30 Pre-Halloween Checklist: 1. Clean and press costume 2. Prep scary face 3. Fast for maximum candy consumption</p>
<p>27 National Blogger Day! Blog Blog Blog.</p>	<p>28 Happy Birthday Bill Gates!</p>	<p>29 College Visit: George Mason @ 9 AM</p>	<p>30 Pre-Halloween Checklist: 1. Clean and press costume 2. Prep scary face 3. Fast for maximum candy consumption</p>	