



The RAACOLE

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West Springfield High School 6100 Rolling Road Springfield, Virginia 22152

Seniors help to pick president Obama wins in US Government poll

By Mia DeSantis

Senior Staff Writer

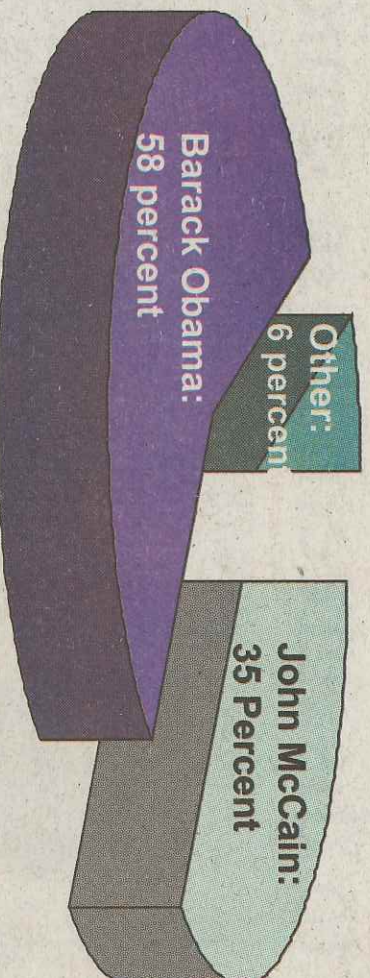
Turning 18 is a big step; students gain many new rights and privileges. This includes one of the most important responsibilities: voting.

"It's both your first election and it's important to exercise the right given to us," said senior Jen Tran.

The 2008 election will forever change our future, with either the first-ever female Vice President or the first-ever African-American President.

In an *Oracle* poll of senior US Government students, Democrat Barack Obama beat his opponent Republican John McCain, 58 percent to 35 percent. Six percent of the 390 seniors polled picked "Other" as their choice, voting instead for candidates such as Independent Ralph Nader.

Seniors who are excited to vote



—Compiled by Ryan Miller

believe they are making a difference. "I'm voting because I care about the future and don't want it to fall in the wrong hands," said senior Andrew Gray.

Some seniors said it is imperative for those who are eligible to vote.

"I don't have the right to complain about the future if I just sit around and do nothing," said senior

Erin Mackie.

Mackie, along with many others, is what is known as a "swing" voter, agreeing with what one candidate on some issues, while siding with the other candidate in other circumstances.

The trouble that some students have found is with the vice president selections made by each candidate.

"Before it was easy, I knew who

I was going to vote for and then the vice presidential [nominations] took place and I feel that is kind of influencing my opinion," said Mackie.

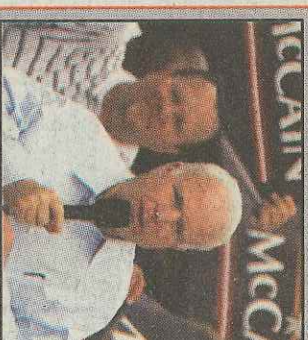
Some seniors say they are torn between the two candidates, and no one can really say whether Obama or McCain is going to win for sure. Some students, however, are more passionate about their candidate. "I hope the candidate who will make the most change, not dropping any names, will win," said senior Mustafa Gardizi.

The *Oracle* poll results do not mirror professional political polling, and several students believe that McCain will close the gap in the waning days of the campaign.

"It's going to be really close, so I believe one vote could make a difference," said senior Paul Schmidt.



Associated Press



Associated Press

Seniors who have already turned 18 will have input on who is the next president. For more election coverage, please turn to Forum, on Pages 4, 5, 8 and 9.

Sophomores enter AP arena this year

More 10th-graders take plunge

By Julie Parisi

Weekend Editor

AP classes here are primarily made up of juniors and seniors, but here at WS, sophomores are now entering the AP arena.

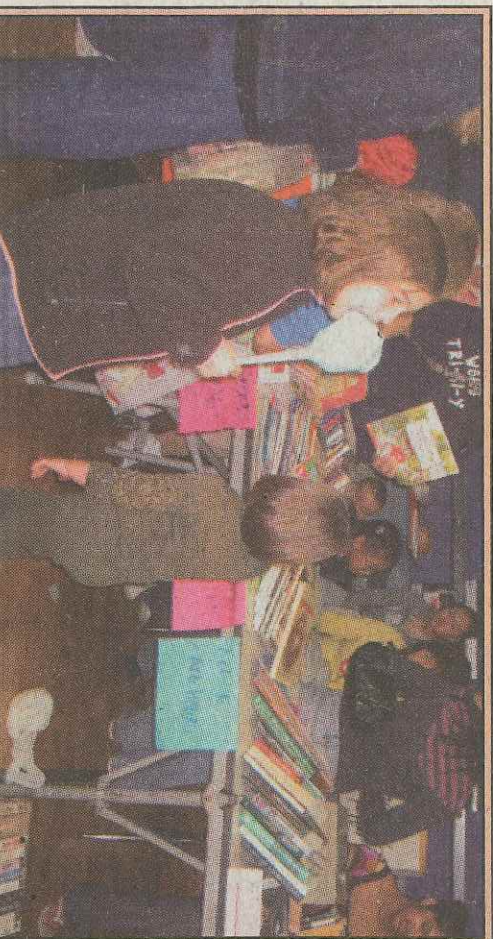
Different students are motivated by various factors when choosing an AP course. Some do it for the challenge, others to improve their academic record. Either way, sophomores seem to be taking the initiative themselves and making the choice on their own.

"I'm taking [AP World History] because it's hard and school is generally easy, so I wanted a challenge," said sophomore Philip Rowley. "And it's a college credit."

Rowley is taking both AP World History and AP Human Geography.

Sophomore students are already thinking ahead and focusing on making their college applications look better with advanced classes and many credits.

"I just wanted to get ahead," said sophomore Ana Zaragoza. "If it's going to boost



Sydney Quigley
Cotton candy, lollipops, sno-cones and fudge were popular this year at Spartanfest. The annual event, which raises funds for school organizations, was held inside this year because of the weather.

Spartanfest turns soggy Weather into indoor fun

By Katie Kinzel & Amelia Simpson

Oracle Staff Writers

Even though the weather didn't cooperate, Spartans celebrated fall with an indoor Spartanfest on Saturday.

Thirty-eight clubs and organizations gathered throughout the school to raise money in an annual event that has become

a tradition here.

Organization officers, for the most part, were encouraged by both the turnout and the money they raised.

"Last year, we didn't do too well," said sophomore Mary Walsh about her class's previous fundraising effort. "This year, we had a really creative idea, and we were able

See "Spartanfest" on Page 6.

Seniors to Hershey Park.



McCain vs. Obama.



James Bond mania.



Student votes make a difference

Voters the age of 25 and younger have been notorious for slacking when it comes to voting, be it a Presidential, Congressional or local election. This apathy is no longer acceptable. It is time for students to get out to the polls and vote on November 4.

If you're turning 18 before the election then there is nothing stopping you from voting. There is no excuse for not registering. It is easy to do. Government teachers, post offices, libraries and the DMV all have the forms. You just have to fill them out and mail them in.

The only wait you should expect in the effort to vote is the few weeks it takes for the state to mail the certificate you can put in your wallet.

During senior year, Government

teachers take on the duty of stressing civic responsibility and the importance of participating in the presidential election as well as local ones. You already have to stay informed for the class,

Editorial

so if you can vote why not use that information to cast a ballot?

If even after all of the commercials and mail outs sent by candidates you're still not into going to the closest public school to vote, think of it as a game.

The voting places are quiet and almost secretive, you get to push little tabs on the computer screen and to top it all off, at the end you even get a sticker proclaiming that

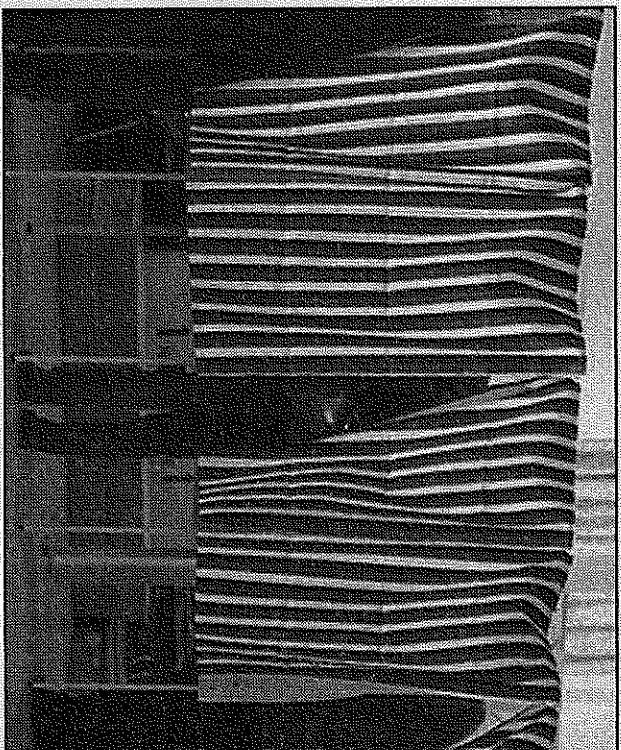
you had a say in how our government is run.

All of us have opinions and many voice them. If you have the option to

vote and don't take advantage of it then there is really no reason for you to voice your opinion. If it isn't important enough for you to make a difference on one day you actually can, then there was no reason for us to write up this list.

This November will mark one

of the biggest elections in history. With big ticket issues like immigration, foreign policy, the environment and the economy, students need to take a role in voting.



Associated Press

Seniors who turn 18 before November 4 have no excuse not to step behind the curtain to make their voices heard by voting in this year's presidential election.

PSAT day leads to disagreement in senior class

Seniors debate the best use of their time on the annual day off.

By Rebecca Naramore

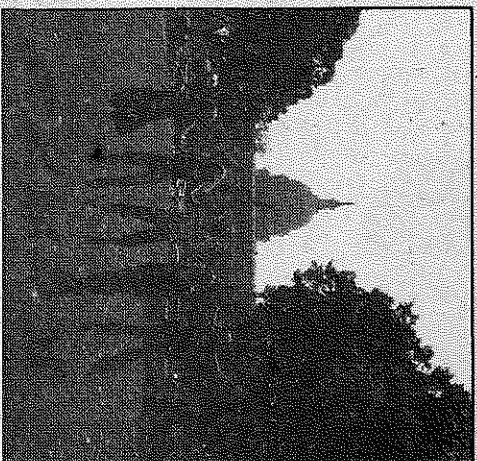
Oracle Editor

PSAT day separates the underclassmen from the seniors. While freshmen, sophomores and juniors tudge off to school in the early morning to take a three hour long test, seniors have the luxury of staying in bed. Instead of messing up your internal clock in the middle of the week there may be a better option.

Other high schools such as Madison have school for seniors on PSAT day. The soon-to-be graduates spend the day on a field trip in DC. Even though it is technically a school day students get to spend the entire time with friends in a hard-back setting. Going on a field trip is a better alternative than having an actual day of sitting through classes and it is an activity that everyone can enjoy.

Sitting at home all day can seem relaxing but that carefree attitude can turn to boredom just as quickly. Waking up at noon or later can make anyone feel refreshed but after calling a few friends to find out they're still asleep, the rest of the day seem pretty dismal.

Going on a field trip keeps everyone occupied and there is no real work involved. All you have to do is get on the bus, find a seat next to your friends, and enjoy the ride. Spending time in DC can offer great expe-

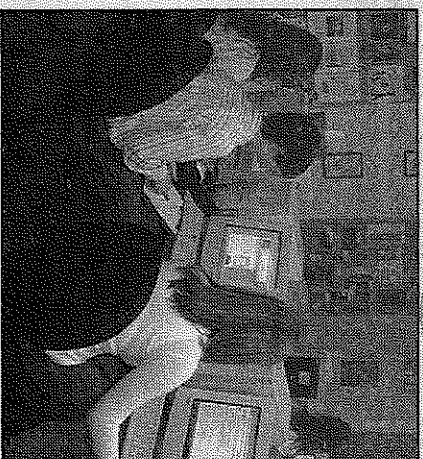


Kelly Murphy

Seniors from Madison HS spend PSAT day touring around DC in a laid back environment.

riences even if you are with your school. Seeing the different monuments or walking around to the many museums is much less tedious than sitting at home and praying for something good to finally pop up on the TV screen.

Everyone likes a day to just sit around and relax, but going on a field trip on PSAT day would offer a fun experience without having to worry about missing loads of work from the classes that you would have missed.



Flickr

The PSAT day is supposed to be a day for seniors to work on their college applications.

By Stephanie Maxwell
Managing Editor

Just 227 days until Graduation. Sixty-one days until most regular decision applications are due. One hundred and eighty-one days until students must choose which college they will be attending. The list goes on and on.

PSAT day, a free day for seniors, is a much needed catch-up day because important days are coming fast. Many schools, however, use the day for a senior bonding experience. They organize a field trip for their seniors while the underclassmen take the exam.

Although a field trip is entertaining, it is just a way for the school to say they did something for the seniors while actually providing little benefit. The real benefit that PSAT day has the power to bring is the amount that can be accomplished while the rest of the school is getting a glimpse of what future tests will entail.

If seniors devote just the 6 hours normally given to school to scholarships, applications, essays, or simply organizing everything they need to apply to college, the day will be much more productive than if it were spent in DC or at the zoo.

Even after the short time I have been a senior, I have realized that this year is going to be busy. Your neighbors, teachers, parents, or even a person you meet at Starbucks whom you have never seen before are all curious as to where you are leading your life once you break free from high school. For me, and many others I am sure, I have only a vague idea. PSAT day is a much needed hiatus in the middle of a random week in October for me to try, once again, to find an answer to that common question.

Although a field trip for seniors would be a great idea, it is not a good idea in October. At this point in the year, seniors are still trying to plan their future and any free days are invaluable to this process.

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The ORACLE

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. Editorials represent the opinion of at least two-thirds of the staff and do not reflect the views of the adviser, the administration or the Fairfax County Public 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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Seniors won't be only ones to say goodbye

To the Editors:

How does one move on? How does one pack up their belongings and move to a new home? I now realize more than ever how the graduating seniors feel every year.

In June 2009, I will be packing up my classroom and moving to Ann Arbor, Michigan. Many of you know how much I have been anticipating this move north. However, reality is

Letter-to-the-Editor

beginning to hit and hit hard.

Since 1989, when I taught two sections of government, to 2008, as I teach five US History classes, I have established community. You may not realize how important that community is to you, until you get ready to leave.

During this year's Homecoming Assembly, it really hit

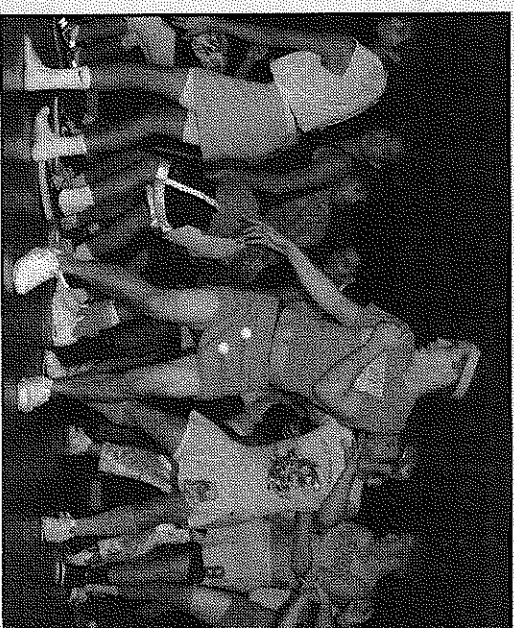
me. I stood on the sidelines and marveled at our Dance Team. I envied the moves and precision of Dynasty. I finally "got" the Key Club skirt. I was proud to see the beauty and grace of the fashion show, the zainness of the Male Drill Team—and it hit me—this is it! This is my last Homecoming.

Your school spirit this year has been inspiring. I do not know where I will be working in the fall of 2009. I hope to be teaching in a Michigan high school. But, it will not be WS.

I am affectionately referring to this as my "Senior Year." I hope to share my observations with you on a regular basis. I am experiencing my high school life in a very new way. I am seeing life differently. I look at my students in a new light.

I have always enjoyed my job. I love teaching. But this year is bittersweet. Perhaps it is because I realize what this year offers? Is this the beginning of the end?

Laurie Fischer
Social Studies Teacher



Like the seniors, this was the last Homecoming Assembly for Social Studies teacher Laurie Fischer.

Letter-to-the-Editor

New clinic aid is here to stay

A note to the Editors:

While I enjoyed reading the article, "Clinic is home to a new face," I would like to clarify one fact: Mrs. Setches is not filling in until I return. I am sure she plans on serving the students of WS for many years to come. When I made the decision to not return to WS for personal reasons (and to have some time off), it was done with great thought and not with out some sadness. I miss the staff and students of WS very much but am enjoying working as a substitute Clinic Aide. My daughter's statement, "most likely she'll come back next year," should be taken as next year I will probably take a full-time clinic aide position in another available school.

Thank you,
Lynn Jones



A Lifetouch employee assemble the sets in the auditorium. This year the company added new features to their package, including four new poses.

Not so picture-perfect

By Bridget Crowley
Features Editor

As students in high school, we are constantly dishing out money for all sorts of things: homecoming and prom tickets, parking spaces, lunches, etc.

In the halls, chatting with friends, and even here at *The Oracle* we sometimes find ourselves complaining about these expenses, but one in particular has seemed to go by every year unnoticed and unacknowledged.

I'm talking about school pictures. Every September the underclassmen are asked to bring home that familiar Lifetouch packet which includes everything to get you on your way for picture day.

Immediately, Lifetouch receives our parents by featuring all of these amazingly happy and incredibly debonair-looking model samples on the front. In all honesty, how many of us underclassmen are actually are happy with our school pictures, let alone look like models in them?

Lifetouch has a monopoly on our pictures. They're the only company we buy from to do student portraits, so it seems they have no hesitation in jacking up the prices. Also, they

add on all of these other features to boost the prices, too. They offer retouching, copies of various sizes, different backdrops and recently four new poses. All of these gimmicks are reeling in our eager-to-see-their-beautiful-children parents and getting yet another unnecessary and unwanted check made out to Lifetouch.

All I want is to get in and out of the auditorium as fast as possible while trying to look somewhat presentable so my peers don't remember me as the kid with hair in her face or in mid-sneeze.

I suppose this is what we must go through as part of the underclassmen experience. I say this because I do actually applaud Lifetouch on their senior pictures. At least the seniors look good, as they should since it is likely for most of them that these will be their last pictures ever to be in a school yearbook. A sad thought, yes, but not as sad as how embarrassing it will be once your future children find your freshman yearbook and see what a "dweeb" you looked like.

Either way, there's not a lot we can do about these expensive pictures and the parents that HAVE to have them. I guess we just have to stick it out with a big fake smile.

School security gets mixed reviews

Is the tight security making students feel too sheltered?

By Krista Pedersen
Oracle Editor

When I was four years old, I ran away from preschool. It was easy to do in those days, before schools became paranoid. But with recent occurrences, my typical unhappiness about WS security has become more irresolute.

Though the chances of a potentially dangerous situation are small, it's nice to know that we'll be safe should one arise at WS. I don't stress because I know that Officer Joseph Plazio and Co. are walking the beat, and will be around to protect us.

During my freshman year, school was much more open. Skippers would enthusiastically wave to administrators as they climbed into their vehicles and drove off during the middle of second block. This is no longer possible. It is much safer now, with the secondary entrances locked during the day. The bee gun incident earlier this month proved that the school's security staff is capable and reliable at nullifying any potential situations, and with the recent shooting scare at William and Mary it is good to know that our school is prepared should anything bad happen.

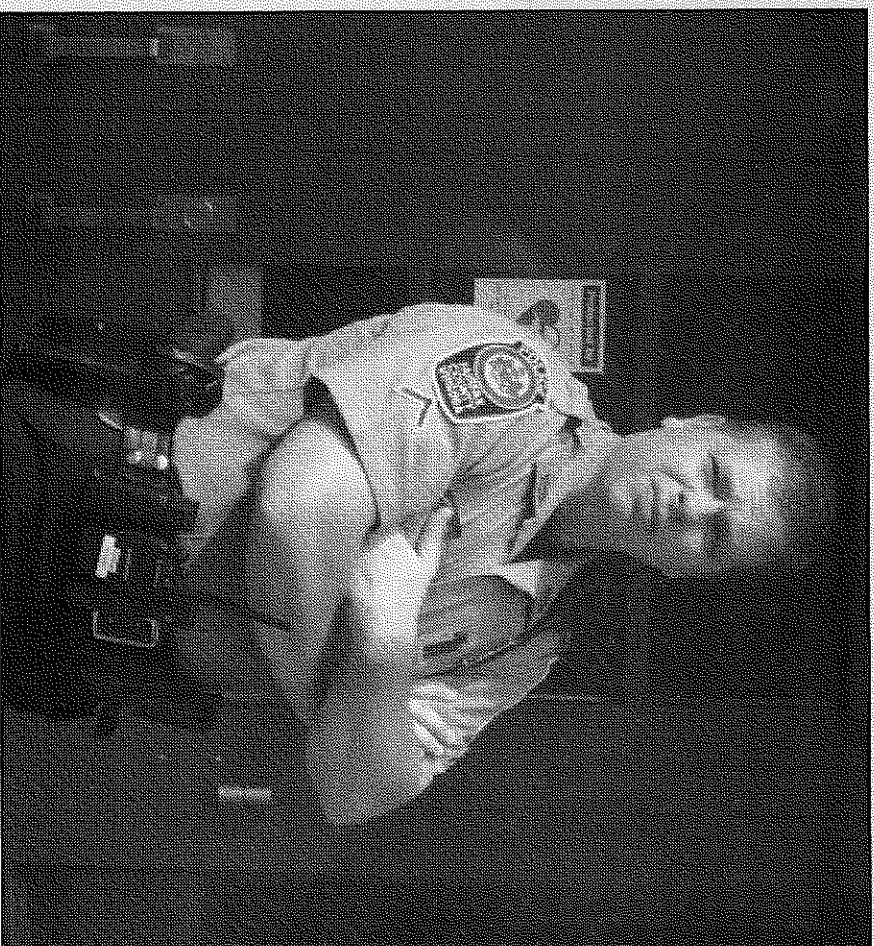
I have to wonder though, if WS isn't too sheltered. Is it really necessary that students eat lunch only in one crowded hallway and loud cafeteria? I think it's great that everyone is always accounted for, but if I couldn't take

Though the chances of a potentially dangerous situation are small, it's nice to know that we'll be safe should one arise at WS. I don't stress because I know that Officer Joseph Plazio and Co. are walking the beat, and will be around to protect us.

being babysat in preschool, how can you expect me to take it in high school?

A greater sense of trust in students would be appreciated. If we can't eat in the senior hallway anymore, why can't we at least eat in the hallway outside of the Auxiliary Gym? I think most teenagers are mature and responsible enough to clean up after themselves. I don't see the point in restricting the entire student population to one small area, where cafeteria haters are repeatedly stepped on in the crowded hallway and forced to sit next to historic freshmen.

All in all, I admire the effort the administration has given to ensure that we are all safe and accounted for. I just wish they had done so without sacrificing our old privileges.



Student Resource Officer Joseph Plazio stands outside of the school by Entrance One. Although he is new to WS, he has done a good job of making students feel safe.

Krista Pedersen

Students voice all sides of debate

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 tried to include as many letters as we could, and apologize for leaving anyone out. The opinions expressed below are those of the authors.

To The Oracle Editors:

My point-of-view on the upcoming election is who has the most experience to run our country and handle foreign policy. I have come to a conclusion and my stand is on the Republican side.

For the first time I will be able to vote in a general election. Although my guy is not ahead in the polls, I feel I am making the right choice. Here is why: There are many dangerous trouble spots and issues presently taking place in the world such as Iran's nuclear threat, Korea's nuclear threat, the Iraqi war and when should we withdraw, Al Qaeda, Jihad extremists, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Russia invading another country, China becoming a super power, Israel and the Palestinian war, Chavez' threats towards us, our nation's dependency on Arabs for oil, and many, many other dangers coming out every day.

There is only one person running who has actually fought for us and that is John McCain. He has been in a war for our country, fought in it and lived in a cell as a captured prisoner of war (POW) for five years. As a POW, he was offered his freedom early because of the position his father held. While being physically and mentally tortured, it would have been so easy to cave in. However, he showed his honorable reputation when he declined because in captivity, our code is the first one in captivity comes out first. John McCain said while being physically beaten, he considered the offer, but then he thought of his fellow prisoners and knew the right thing to do. So, he stayed several more years in that small cell, half-starved, beaten, deprived of basic life necessities, just to remain honorable.

He is a true American Hero, which there are few of them today. He has earned my trust. He has the skills and knowledge to lead our country and be Commander-In-Chief of our Armed Forces. He has been in the US Senate for over 20 years. He will honestly try to make the right decisions for our country.

On the other hand, I do not see strong character in Barack Obama. I wonder what he would have done if he had been a POW and the early freedom release had been offered to him. He has very little experience, with only 146 working days in the US Senate (before announcing his candidacy), and none in the military. To get elected, he is offering a lot of things he cannot financially deliver. He talks a good talk that everyone wants to hear because right now they are tired of George Bush. However, Americans should really "listen" to all his "talk" and understand exactly what kind of "Change" he is talking about.

Al Lazarte

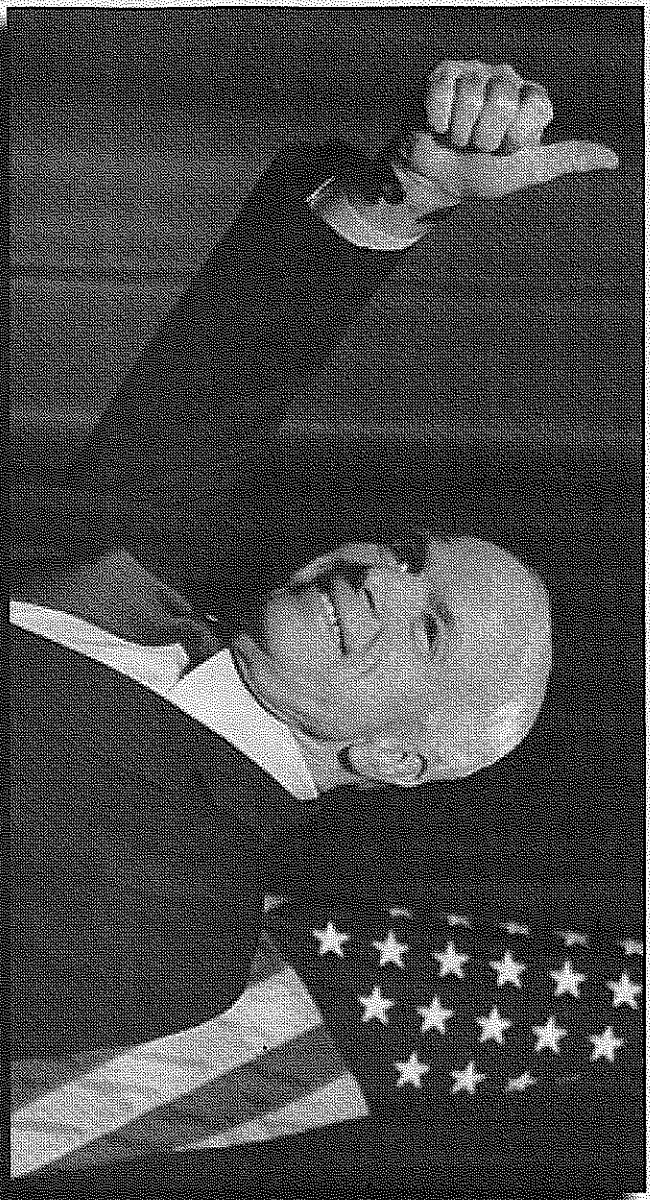
Dear Oracle Editors,

I truly believe that this year's election is one of the most important elections we will ever have. For instance, Senator Barack Obama is the first African American to run for the position of the president and Senator John McCain's running mate, Governor Sarah Palin, is the second woman to run for vice president. Though both candidates are special in their own way, I agree more with one over the other.

If I was old enough to vote in this election, I would vote for Senator Barack Obama and his running mate, Senator Joe Biden. I love listening to Obama's inspirational speeches and am pleased with his selection of Biden for Vice President. For instance, during the second presidential debate, I thought that Obama was confident and reassuring to all of America. When he countered points made by McCain, he did so with eloquence and poise. Meanwhile, McCain seemed to be a descending old man reminiscing about his past. He focused entirely on the military and his pastimes as a soldier in the war. Yes, he was captured and held captive for a long while. But I don't need to constantly hear about how honorable and perfect he is just because he was in the Army. McCain's run-

ning mate, Governor Sarah Palin, makes me want to avoid him also. I just can't picture our vice president as this beautiful pageant contestant who can't resist winking and winking at the camera. Her constant use of colloquialisms and slang doesn't help much, either.

In conclusion, I would obviously vote for Senator Barack Obama and Senator Joe Biden as the President and Vice President of the United States if I was able to. I am eager to see



Associated Press

what changes they have in mind and what plans they have to fix our country and make it the best it can possibly be. Thanks!

Maureen Clinton

To The Editors:

Although I cannot vote this election, I would definitely vote for McCain. I am a Republican and believe in the values he and Palin believe in. The country's future does not look good and I am scared to see it fall under Obama. He says he is a citizen of the world. I think any president of the United States should be a citizen of our country first. I want a candidate who will support our troops, not give money to anti-war, anti-American groups in our country.

Never have I seen an election, (in all my 17 years) where people just rip apart the other candidate. I see this more from the Democrats against Palin. I cannot believe other women,

I also recognize that Obama is young and new to the world of politics, and I have to wonder how he rose to such prominence so quickly. Though I can not vote, I would vote for Obama if I could.

Megan Talley

Dear Editors,

Regardless of who is elected in November, it must be noted that the vice presidential candidate are of equal importance to the presidential candidate, more so in this election than in almost any previous one.

While we have a free country with a fair democratic system, we are also a country that allows people to present any opinion, regardless of offensiveness or hostility. This is good in terms of keeping a free country, but it does have downfalls, such as forcing the states to allow demonstrations by neo-Nazis in addition to interest groups. Though they are not the norm, America does house people with those political views. I will be very surprised if an attempt is not made on Barack Obama's life should he be elected.

However, as long as the Secret Service and bodyguards do their jobs, I would not be altogether too worried about the presidency, and even if there was cause to be worried, Joe Biden would make a decent president. He might not be the president America wanted, but he would be able to run the country.

Frankly, it is the Republican ticket that worries me. John McCain would not only be the oldest president yet, but he comes from a family with a history of heart attacks around age 70. John McCain is 72. Enough can happen in a presidency to give a far younger man a heart attack. Honestly, I would not be sure if McCain would live through all four years.

Which brings me to his choice of running mate, Sarah Palin. Even if you like McCain, who is honestly comfortable with the idea of Palin running the country? I know I'm not. I'm not being sexist; I'm a girl and I would love to see a woman president or vice president—but only as long as that woman were competent. Voting for Palin simply on the basis of gender is even more sexist.

I believe—it isn't treating her equally to any male candidate. Any man with Palin's credentials and lack of experience would never be considered. She knows next to nothing about the economy—Tina Fey wasn't exaggerating—and the economy become the big issue. And while dodging questions or changing the topic might pass in debates, it isn't going to work on the global stage. And Palin seems to suggest taking liberties with the office that are not granted to the position anywhere in the Constitution.

And no, I don't relate to her at all. My parents were the first in their families to graduate from college, and they did it in four years so as not to increase the financial burden on their families. Palin graduated from college through five colleges and six years. She entered the race with a newborn son with Down Syndrome and I have to wonder how she expects to have time to be the kind of advocate for him and give him the time and practice he will need to succeed. I know exactly the time commitment that entails, having grown up with an older sister with Down Syndrome. Also, she has lived in one of the more remote areas of the United States, and claims we need more input from "Washington outsiders." I've lived my whole life just outside DC, and I know that more than half the people there are, in fact, "Washington outsiders."

Maybe I'm wrong; maybe McCain would survive if elected. But I don't want to take that chance, and I don't want someone to wish so little knowledge of the area, foreign policy (because, I'm sorry, being able to see Russia from your house does not count) and the parameters of her office in power. If you can vote in the upcoming election, please, be mindful of all of the people you are electing.

Sincerely,
Cindy Holden



Associated Press

Picking one, the other or neither

Dear Editor,

I am writing you this letter to inform you of my interests in the presidential candidate Barack Obama. I support Mr. Obama because he represents diversity. He is half African American like myself. I can relate to him and we have something in common.

Also, I support him because he wants to keep health care affordable. Mr. McCain wants to tax your health benefits. This would not be to our advantage because employers might no longer offer health care benefits. My mom is an accountant and she has explained to me the tax costs involved with Mr. McCain's health care plan. My grandfather has a pre-existing condition and he would be affected by this change.

I have reviewed Mr. Obama's Web site and I stand with Mr. Obama on improving education with early childhood education, K-12 reform, no child left behind reform, expand early education, support college credit initiative and address the dropout crisis in America. I hope he wins.

Sincerely,

Andrew A. Holmes

Editors,

The 2008 presidential elections are around the corner but it's still tough for the people to bestow their trust upon the two candidates when they are on the verge of going into another Great Depression.

I believe Barack Obama is more capable of managing the disaster than McCain. Amidst the criticism of him being inexperienced, he has proven himself to be determined and competent. His policies seem to be better than McCain's policies. He wants to provide \$50 billion to jump start the economy and prevent one million Americans from losing their jobs. He also plans to provide tax cuts for working families. Creation of new jobs and investment in sciences is also one of the major parts of Obama's plan. Obama also plans on creating a Universal Mortgage Credit.

With all these policies, this promising star looks capable of handling the appalling and dreadful economy with his plans.

Akanksha Kaushal
Dhruv and Harshvi

Dear Editors,

My views on the presidential elections this year are reasonably on the fence. I wouldn't mind having either of the candidates as the president of our country. I believe Congress has more power and say in the United States than the president since Congress has the power to declare war on any other country, and is in control of health care, etc. But if I were to pick a candidate running for the presidency, I would proudly vote for Senator Barack Obama.

Senator Obama's ideas for putting the economy back on track seem to make a lot more sense than Senator McCain's ideas. During the presidential debates, Senators McCain and Obama both kept pointing fingers in their moment of time. This is mostly why I'm neutral on the presidential elections.

Sincerely,

Bashir Isa

Dear Editors,

This year the presidential election is being decided not on what the candidates say they will do, but by what they have already done. It is too easy to say one thing and do another. Thus I take the past as prologue for the future.

John McCain, despite his self-employed "maverick" moniker, has voted with the Bush administration too much to be ignored. Supposing that he did vote independently on every issue, this would imply that he is not controlled by the GOP, but embodies its opinions. He has voted with ideas that have been proven inefficient and has not changed his opinion with respect to new information.

That is why I am supporting Barack Obama in this election. What has been criticized as "flip-flopping" on issues was actually an appropriate response to new developments. I don't want to see another commander-in-chief "stay the course" despite intelligence supporting the contrary.

Jared Hagenow

Dear Editors,

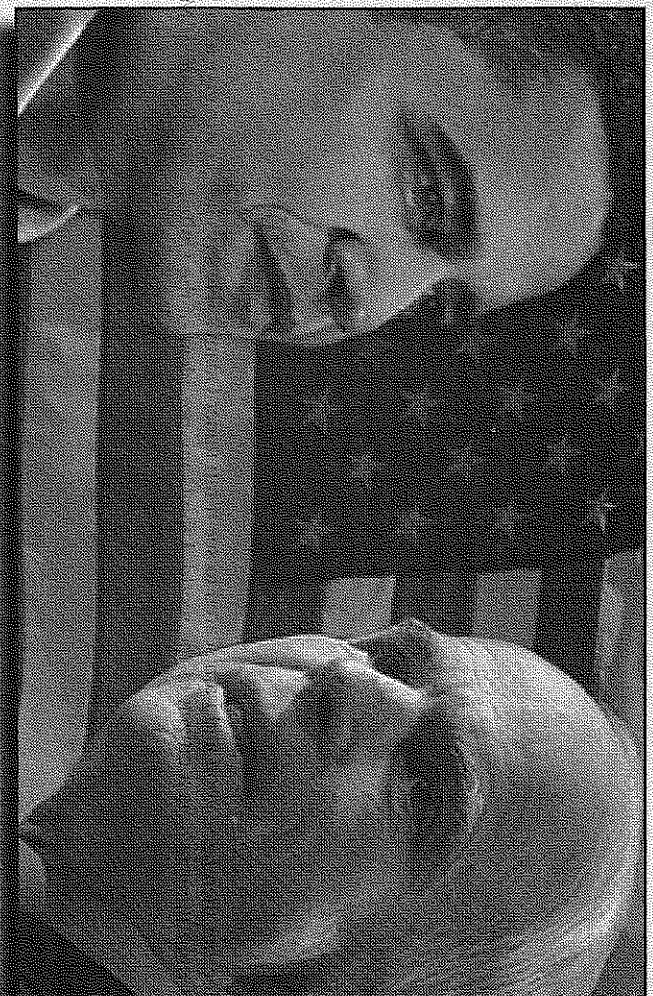
After observing the presidential candidates for several months, I reached this conclusion. I support of Senator John McCain. He is respectful of Barack Obama, he sticks with his arguments through his campaign and he has proven experience.

Throughout the campaign, some voters have been very negative toward Obama because of the color of his skin. But, McCain is respectful to his opponent. For example, during a town hall forum in Minneapolis, McCain took the microphone from a woman who was saying she didn't like Obama because he is an "Arab." "No ma'am. No ma'am," McCain

said, "He's a decent family man, a citizen who I just happen to have serious differences with on fundamental questions." It is important to have a President who is respectful. It demonstrates McCain's moral character. If he shows this type of respect to his opponent, then he will show this respect to other US officials and foreign leaders. McCain wants to win the election based on his position on the issues, not the negative comments about Obama.

During their campaign, both candidates have had many opportunities to share their views on what they would like to do when they are elected president. However, Obama has changed his position to sway people to vote for him. Obama said he wants to increase foreign aid, but his running mate, Senator Joseph Biden, said a campaign promise to double foreign aid might have to be "slowed down." This statement suggests that the Democratic ticket is waffling on this issue. McCain, on the other hand, stays consistent with what he plans to do when he gets elected.

McCain has been in the Senate for 22 years and he served in the Vietnam War. He has the personal experience with working with the legislature. His experience with the Senate helps him because he knows how to negotiate and make compromises. Also, he has leadership from serving in the Vietnam War. Because McCain is a veteran, he knows what the soldiers in Iraq are feeling. He will support them and help them get the tools they need to achieve victory.



All in all, McCain is the best choice to become the next leader of the United States.

Linze Gregg

To the Editors:

Senator John McCain is obviously the better choice over Senator Barack Obama. McCain has clearer ideas as to what he is going to do in the White House, whereas Obama enjoys simply saying he wants to save money.

Obama is unable to pinpoint his funding that will be cut. His wording comes very sugar-coated but has nothing underneath, while McCain is able to say he will be cutting funding on this and giving more money to these people. McCain is accountable with his money. Obama simply is not.

In a time where money is very important, I think it is important to have a leader who knows where the country's money is going. As for Obama's views on the Iraq War, I disagree. The enemy he wants to fight in Afghanistan is the same enemy we are fighting in Iraq.

Mark Schissler

To the Editors:

As of right now I actually don't know who to support in the election. I lean more in favor of Senator Obama but looking at all the presidential debates I did not get a clear answer from both of the candidates.

I know there are a lot of topics to discuss during the debate but now since the economy is doing badly, people are much more interested in economics than any other topics. Both of the candidates should come up with more clear answer to provide "comfort" for those who are frightened by this issue. This is my personal opinion, but I think Senator McCain hasn't given us anything so far. All he's trying to do is to get away from the hot spot and think he speaks less to avoid any other issue that would drown him. It is true that Senator Obama didn't give us clear answer either, but at least I think he is trying to make a plan.

Patricia Kim

Dear Editors,

In reviewing the presidential candidates for this year's election, I have come to the conclusion that Senator John McCain is the stronger candidate. I like John McCain's foreign

policy because he has more experience in war and foreign relations. In addition, John McCain has personal experience serving in foreign lands, not to mention he was a prisoner of war for five years. I am worried that Barack Obama's plan to pull the troops out quickly will cause unnecessary consequences to occur, such as terrorist attacks in America.

However, I am kind of skeptical of McCain's financial plans for our country because I am not confident that health insurance and benefits should be taxable. I do, however, like how McCain's plans will not tax the middle- and upper-class as much as Obama's tax plans.

William Mallon

Oracle Editors,

I know everyone is on the edge of their seat to find out who the next president will be. Will it be John McCain, or Barack Obama? Personally, I couldn't care less.

Let's look at it: We have a man who hasn't been in politics long enough, and one who's been involved for too long. Everyone hails either candidate's plans, but we feel that realize that presidential powers are limited, and some things that they promise, such as tax cuts, are Congressional powers. I think we need to take a moment to compare and contrast our views with them. Is it right to have one person represent an estimated 300.5 billion people? I don't agree with either of them on everything, and see only false promises and disgusting attack ads. I want a candidate who will tell me what HE will do, not what the other guy will. I don't think we'll ever get a president that America needs, unless we the people step up to the plate. I hope for that day.

Chris Airgood

To the Editors:

After watching three presidential debates, I have decided that I would vote for Senator John McCain. There are many reasons, but for one, I feel that president Obama is not ready to lead.

First off, Senator McCain was and is more readily informed about our country's crisis and status than Senator Obama. Obama is a very deadly orator with words, but behind that mask, there is no substance or real basis for his plans of our economic crisis, the tax cuts, the climate change and the health care system. Senator McCain also has more details of his plans for America and he has a better understanding of what America needs, which is deemed agreeable with the middle-class and college students.

Second off, Senator Obama viciously attacks Senator McCain with his associations with the Bush administration, which would produce a worse image of him. This plan did work to an extent; however, McCain dispelled that plan during the third debate, when he announced that if Obama cared so much, he should have run against President Bush four years ago. This shows that even though McCain is not a good orator or a smooth talker, he has the determination to lead our nation and change it.

Third off, Senator McCain cleverly chose Sarah Palin as his running mate, a decision that would put him in the welcoming arms of millions of lower-class citizens and parents of special needs children. Obama's choice of Senator Joe Biden, however, would appeal more to those who actually pay attention to politics.

Finally, I would vote for Senator McCain because he is a true maverick who is ready for a change, and that's what we need: change. We are a strong and powerful nation, but we are afraid of change. Our nation is in a crisis. We are at war, our economy is plunging and our energy dependency is poorly conducted. What we have been doing so far obviously has not worked and it's time for a change. The best person in my opinion to deliver that change would be Senator McCain.

Larry Tran

To The Editors:

Of the six possible presidential candidates, I have chosen to support Pastor Chuck Baldwin of the Constitution Party. During the Republican primaries, former candidate Ron Paul revealed many truths about the government and brought forth realizations about our country in which no other candidate had even spoken about. These realizations include the unconstitutionality of going to war under UN resolutions, the federal income tax, the Federal Reserve System and legislation that has been passed by Congress among many others.

Senators McCain and Obama have voted for the Patriot Act, more government spending, and no real solutions to our economic crisis, which I cannot support. Although Congressman Paul is no longer in the campaign, I have chosen to support the candidate who has the political views most similar to Mr. Paul's and has also been endorsed by the Congressman himself, who is Pastor Baldwin.

Daniel Garcia

Spartanfest considered a success

Even though event moved indoors, a good time had by all

"SPARTANFEST," from Page 1.

Walsh said her class raised more than \$500 with their new, improved tie-dye effort.

Technical Drawing teacher Scott Settar, who organizes Spartanfest every year, said setting up the school for an indoor event was a hassle, but ultimately worth coming in the night before to set up.

"It's difficult to ensure that all groups are prepared," whether Spartanfest is held inside or outside in the back parking lot, which is its usual location. "The benefit of it being inside [this year] was that everyone was closer together."

While Spartans were busy raising money for their groups, some did express disappointment that Spartanfest was moved indoors this year.

"I wish it wasn't inside. It was hot, and you couldn't run around," said freshman Marta Zewdo, a member of the Ethiopian-Eritrean Club.

When Spartanfest is held inside the school, Settar and others have to make quite a few more preparations. Festival organizers came in Friday night and laid down mats on the main gym floor, and set up tables in the Sports Lobby and in adjacent hallways. Settar likened setting up for Spartanfest with Homecoming preparations.

Perennial favorites such as Personality's jailhouse and the Forensics pie-throwing booth, attracted lots of festival-goers, as did the Tri-Hi-Y used-books sale.

"Despite all the heat and working long hours," said Class of 2010 Historian Stephame Duran, "I think Spartanfest was a success."



Sydney Oulley

Tri-Hi-Y sponsor Mary Bailey helps get the club's used-book sales booth organized during Spartanfest last Saturday. Even though the annual event was held indoors this year, most of those who participated said that they had fun and made money.

Announcements leave students uninformed

New PowerPoints may result in clueless kids

By Michael Stablen

Page One Editor

The end of day chaos in recent years at WS has included the anticipation of leaving WS and the energetic and often goofy announcements by the senior SGA representatives.

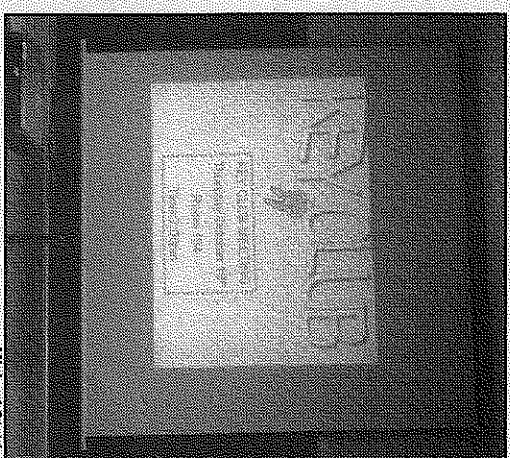
This year however, the announcements have been removed from the words of the SGA representatives and placed on the flat projection screens that can be found in every WS classroom. As students have probably realized the new system of announcements hasn't been delivering the constant reliable messages that are sometimes very important to students to hear. Teachers often forget to put on the silent PowerPoint show that delivers the announcements in spite of a reminder by Senior SGA representatives. This often results in students missing college visits, sports interest meetings, and more.

"One time my teacher didn't put on the announcements and I almost missed my soccer meeting," said Sophomore Fernando Ayala who played on the boys' JV soccer team last year.

While the reason for the change may have appeared to be to grab student's attention, the purpose actually involved the new bell schedule.

"With the revision of the bell schedule we needed to utilize every minute in the school day in order to meet our 140 seated classroom hours in every period of every day," said Assistant Principal Becky Brandt. "We needed to take a few minutes out of the time given for announcements."

Regardless of the purpose of changing the



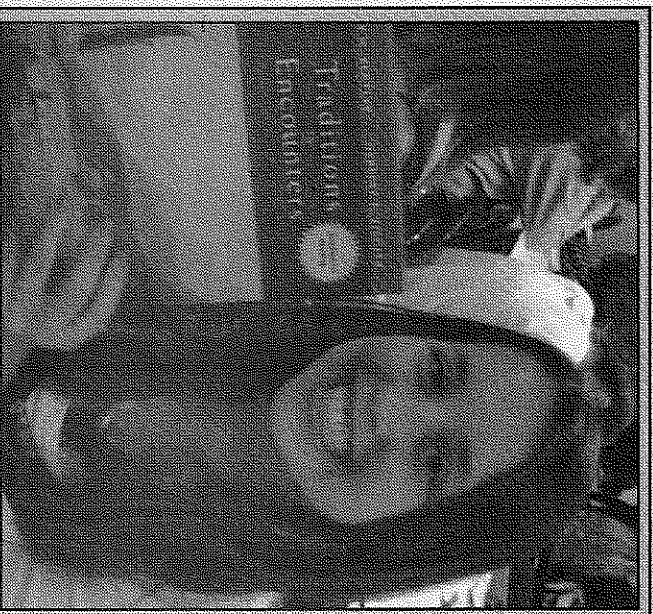
Michael Stablen

The silent PowerPoint that displays announcements this year is often forgotten by teachers and students often miss important dates and information.

announcements, there are students who prefer the system from last year.

"I like last year's announcement system. It got me more interested because the silent [PowerPoint] you don't hear [or remember]," said Ayala.

Probably the most opinionated on the change was Senior SGA Representative Austin Hall who still comes on to the intercom everyday, but for a brief time as opposed to last year's representatives who conducted the announcements in their entirety. "I wouldn't mind doing announcements for the benefit of the students" said Hall "because teachers sometimes don't turn on the TVs when they are told."



Julia Parks

Sophomore Megan Dumond holds up her AP World History book. Dumond is one of many sophomores in an AP class.

Sophs seize AP opportunities

Younger students say taking APs in 10th grade isn't hard if they keep up with the work

"APs" from Page 1.

There is also a much heavier workload that comes with being in an AP class. Although it sounds intimidating, it helps the students prepare for the future and manage their time well.

"There's a lot more work, but as long as you keep up with it, it isn't extremely difficult," said Bakke.

From a teacher's perspective, it is more enjoyable to reach both AP and regular.

"It's pretty much the same subject, but taught in different ways," said Henitz. "It keeps it from getting repetitive."

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New HP Club bewitches fans

By Casey Miller
Senior Staff Writer

Between athletics, language and academic clubs, few people here cannot find at least one club to join, but there is a new club this year that could interest the student body.

Juniors Sri Benn and Brianna Lynn co-founded the new Harry Potter Club.

"We were joking around and just said, 'Hey let's get a Harry Potter Club [started],'" said Benn.

The first meeting was a success, with about 35 students in attendance. Students of all classes except freshman attended.

One of the juniors to attend was Sean Nisbet. "Some [who came to the meeting] were casual Harry Potter fans, and some were die hard. There were some people who haven't read all the books," said Nisbet.

Sophomore Brianna Lau was enthusiastic about the turnout.

"A lot more people than I expected [came] and there was a lot of variety. That's one of the things I love, is that so many different people love Harry Potter," said Lau.

With a club based around a fantasy world, there is much room to use your imagination when planning club goals and activities. At the first meeting, participants each took a quiz to determine the House each student would belong to, had

they gone to Hogwarts.

"The majority of members belong to the Ravenclaw and Hufflepuff houses," said Lynn. "Sri and I are both Ravenclaws."

Not only did each member of the club take the test, but they also came up with ideas for fun activities to do throughout the year. Suggestions ranged from trying to play quidditch to making potions.

"One suggestion was dressing-up as Death Eaters and parading around the school," said Benn.

An item on this year's agenda is a petition. Not to petition author J.K. Rowling to continue the series of books, but to petition against the release of the new Harry Potter film earlier.

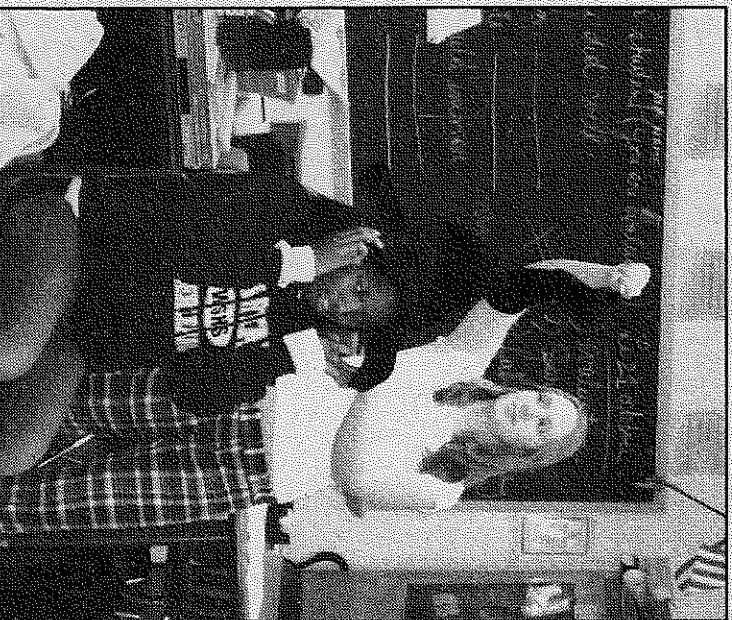
"Warner Bros. did not want the Harry Potter movie and *Twilight* movie to overshadow each other, so the studio chose to push back Harry Potter's release," said Lynn.

Turning to the brighter side of their reasons for creating the club, Benn and Lynn shared their favorite parts of Harry Potter.

"I love Dobby!" said Lynn.

Club members plan to brew up a lot of fun this year, incorporating different parts of the series as they go.

"I love Fred and George, but what sucks is, in the movie, they cut out all of their really funny parts," said Benn.



Casey Miller

Co-founder Brianna Lynn places the Sorting Hat on Junior Tracey Johnson in order to find out her Hogwarts House. Johnson was placed into the Gryffindor House.

Seniors excited about trip to Hershey Park Students hope costs don't outweigh opportunity for fun

By Katie Harrison
Sports Editor

Before the senior class buckles up and heads down for Beach Week, they'll be strapped in roller coasters taking a ride on the wild side.

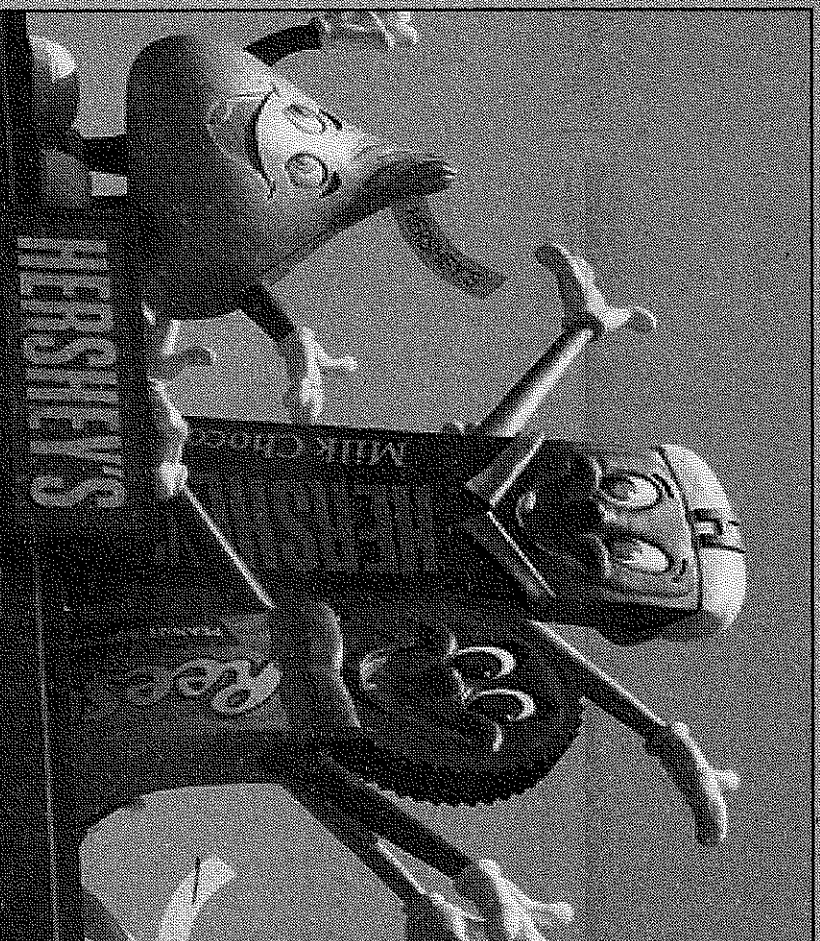
A new and hopeful tradition, which originated in Melcan High School, has now been brought alive for seniors here. Principal Paul Wardinski, along with Senior Class Sponsor Vera Woodson and class administrators, have planned one last trip for the Class of 2009, the chance to gallivant around Hershey Park for a day. The date and cost aren't yet determined, but the excitement and expectations are certainly present.

Students are hopeful that the cost won't be too great.

"I was excited when I found out," said senior Nahum Asmetlash. "First thing I wanted to know was how much it is. Because of the economy, I can't just go throwing out hundreds."

Although, there were many suggestions sent to Woodson via e-mail, such as going to Virginia Beach, King's Dominion, California, Florida and Williamsburg, Hershey Park came out on top due to various reasons, making Hershey even more appealing.

"Hershey Park was a park that wasn't the



Hershey Park

Seniors are looking forward to a trip to Hershey Park at the end of this school year, in spite of rising gas costs and traveling distance.

same ol' park, so it was something different. Now they have [1] roller coasters and a water park, plus non-ride stuff too," said Wardinski.

Another problem with going to the hackneyed amusement park is traveling time and distance. Traveling down I-95 could possibly waste time that could be spent in the park.

Besides, the costs, travel time and the date, there are many hopeful students and teachers looking forward to the trip.

"I hope to come home alive and not stripped to the top of the bus," said Woodson. "No, I really hope that this is a lifelong memory for the class of '09."

Seniors are excited to share this one last experience together.

"It'll be fun because it will be another opportunity for us to be together as a class one last time," said senior Jenny Oh.

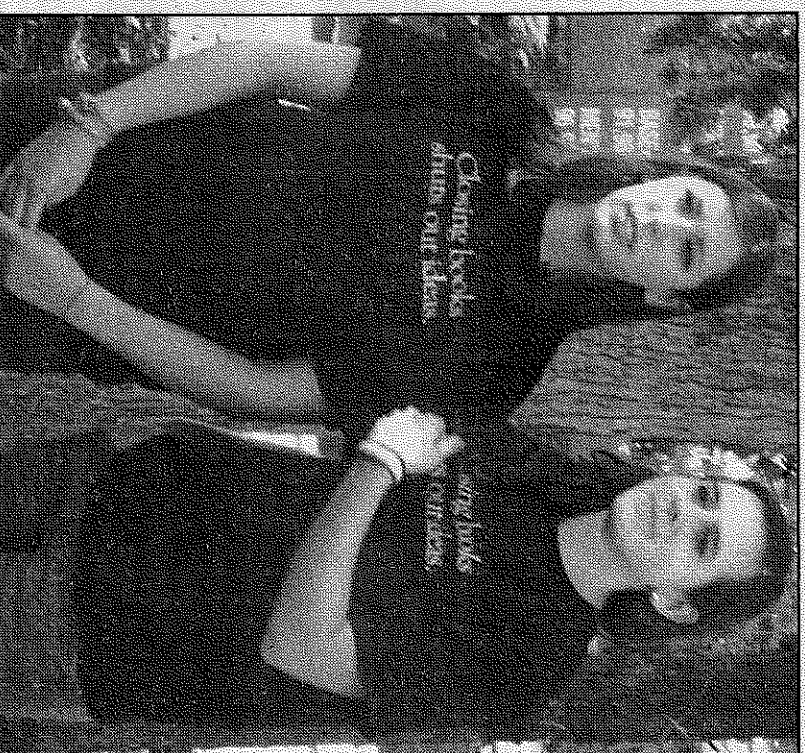
Hershey Park is just one addition to the seniors' final activities. Currently, WS is in the planning stages for Senior Family Night at Noodles & Company in November. And there is also, possibly, another grand surprise in the spring that is being kept secret.

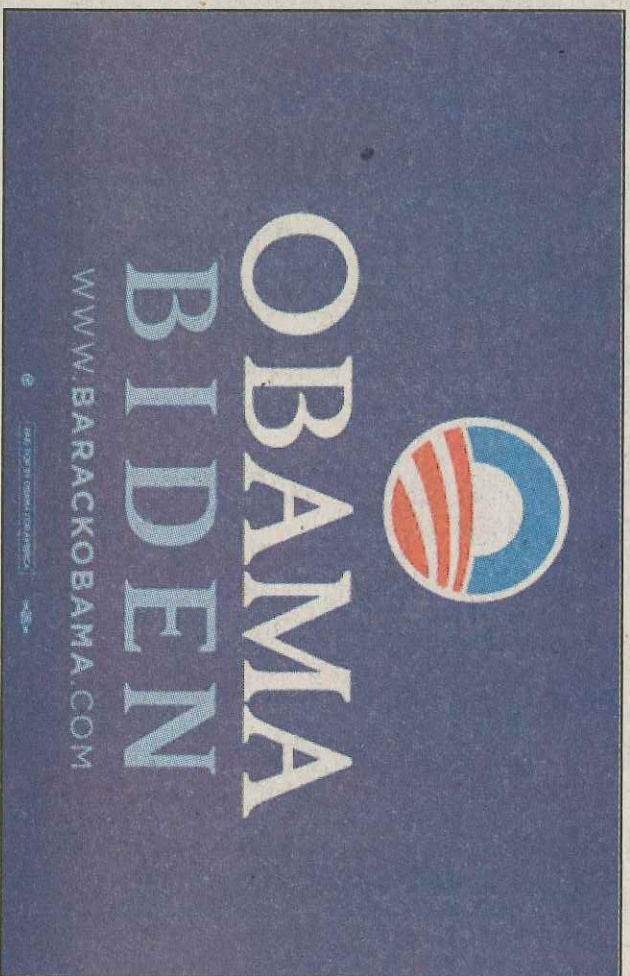
As the year winds, seniors will be given the chance to make the most of it. "The class of '09 is unstoppable," said Woodson, "and I am so excited and honored to be a part of the magic."



Brooke Nelson

A group of Christian activists, sponsored by Focus On the Family, protested in front of school in early October. Senior Liz Bognanno, near right, and Lauren King, from Woodson, joined others such as Annandale senior Tim Heburn, above, in the crowd of about 40 protestors, which spoke to local media. The group says it tried to donate books that express their points-of-view about homosexuality to FCPS libraries, but that their contributions have been rejected. An FCPS spokesman said the donated books did not meet school district standards. "I don't understand their reason," Bognanno said. "They intruded on our personal freedoms." The group wore T-shirts saying, "Closing Books Shuts Out Ideas," and they were surrounded by TV and newspaper reporters. Several of the students made statements to the media. Six Fairfax County Police Officers stood near the protesters. Administration officials said they had been warned that 300 people were supposed to show up for the demonstration.





In 2004, I and a great many other Democrats supported John Kerry simply because he wasn't George Bush. This time around, it's "anyone but McCain," but luckily for me (and the rest of America) that alternative is Barack Obama. And he's awesome.

No matter how tired his "Change We Can Believe In" slogan gets, it's still very true: Obama is exactly the sort of total reversal from the Bush administration that America needs. While he's been accused of inexperience, radical Islamist views (he's not even Muslim, let alone radical) and sexual perversion (something about teaching Sex Ed to kindergarteners), at least nobody is worried that he'll be too much like Bush.

America is headed down a very dangerous path, and if we don't take drastic efforts to do something about that, we won't be a superpower much longer. Much of the world is pretty unhappy with the United States right now. The next man in the Oval Office should be someone who can change the image of this country back to one of dignity and intelligence. We need somebody who will sit down and talk with world leaders without preconditions that stifle discussion and mutual respect.

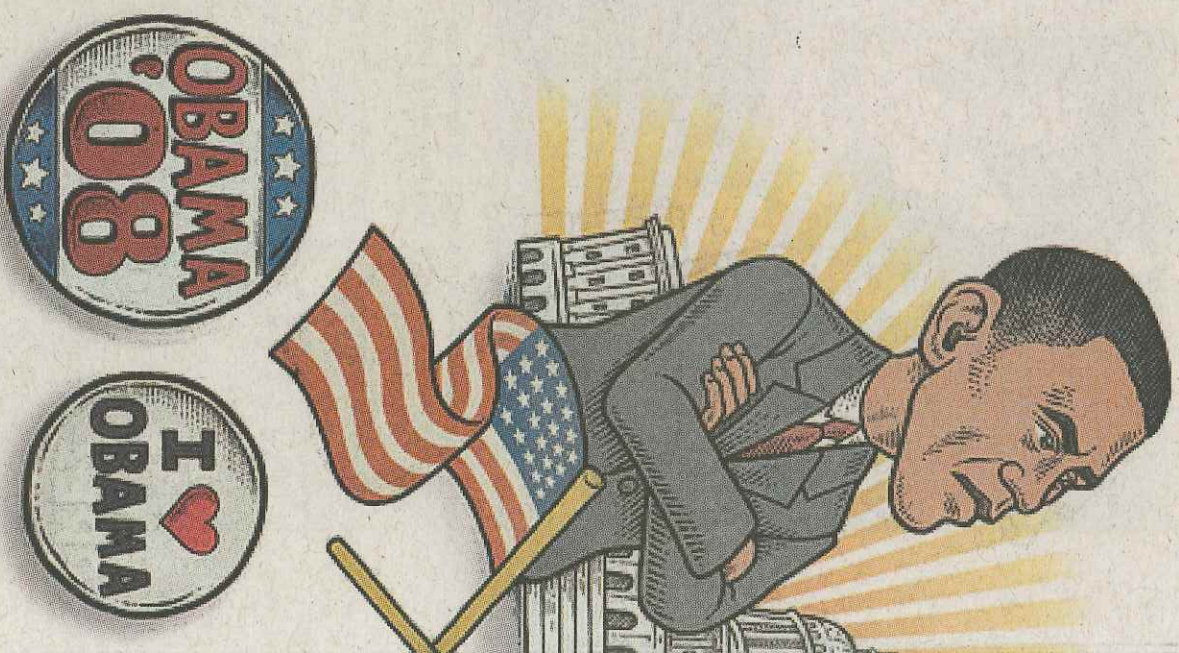
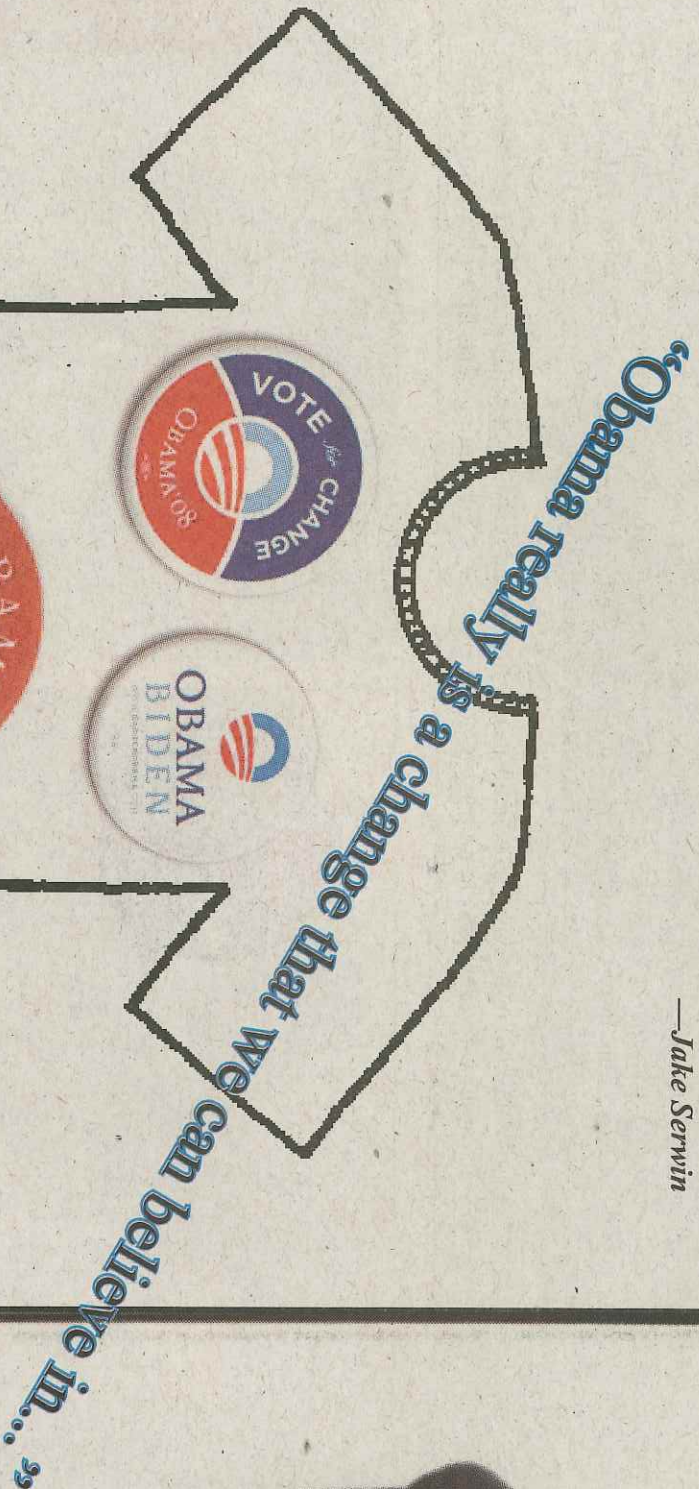
Too often Obama supporters are written off as spellbound by his charisma. But our next president needs to be one who can conduct himself in front of foreign dignitaries and convey that dignity and intelligence we've lost in the eyes of the world. It will take some convincing to get America's respect back, so charisma is what our 44th president desperately needs.

Obama is also realistic. He acknowledges that the Bush administration has dug America into a huge hole that won't be easily filled. Meanwhile, John McCain says he can balance the budget in his first term while making tax cuts that would have expired in 2010 permanent. Obama appreciates that the Iraq War was a mistake and promises to have all combat troops back home in 16 months. John McCain has made no such proposal.

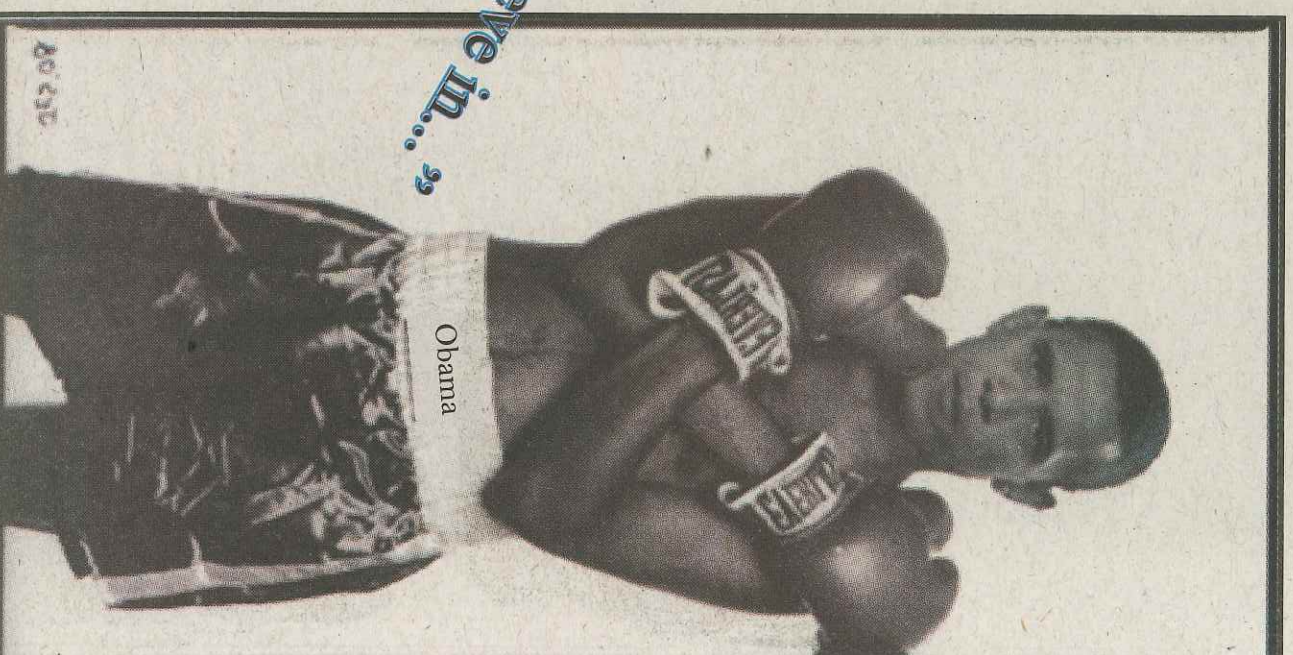
Beyond all of that, Obama is cool. McCain has a reputation as a hothead, someone who is temperamental, someone who loses his cool. The man with his finger on the trigger, the man who may face off with major world figures with nuclear capabilities, needs to keep his cool. Obama's proven that he's the coolest guy running for president this election—he's so cool Kareem Abdul-Jabbar has pledged his support.

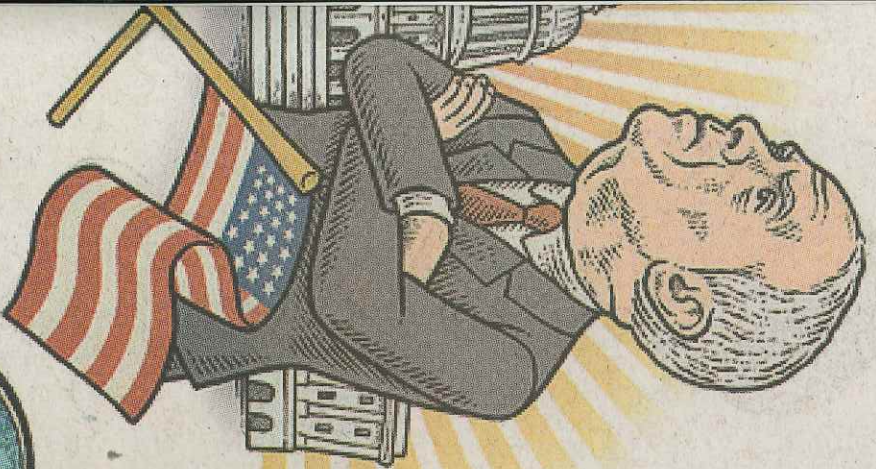
So while it may be trite to say so, Obama really is a change that we can believe in and a change that we desperately need.

—Jake Serwin



ELECTIO





Mario Zucca

ON 2008



I'll admit I got caught up in the "Pirates of the Caribbean" craze. I can honestly say I'm not ashamed to have seen the third one a grand total of six times in theaters during July alone. But as the hype settled down and summer became a memory, the shocking realization hit me: These movies weren't all they were cracked up to be. Just like Senator Barack Obama.

Stadiums of people chant his name. Celebrities wear his campaign buttons. Graffiti artists grace walls with his face. He's up there with one-named icons like Elvis and Madonna. Senator Barack Obama is a rock star with the fan base to back him up. On the other hand, Senator John McCain is no pop idol, and with his injuries from time spent in a POW camp I doubt he could even lift his arms in the famous "Superstar" pose. He has a temper and he's made mistakes and it makes him human: not some unattainable facet of greatness.

But I digress. The problem with this election is that it's not about the issues. I don't think it ever was. Democrats and Republicans have traded hateful words back and forth for awhile now and frankly I'm sick of it. It's time for, as John McCain would say, "some straight-talk."

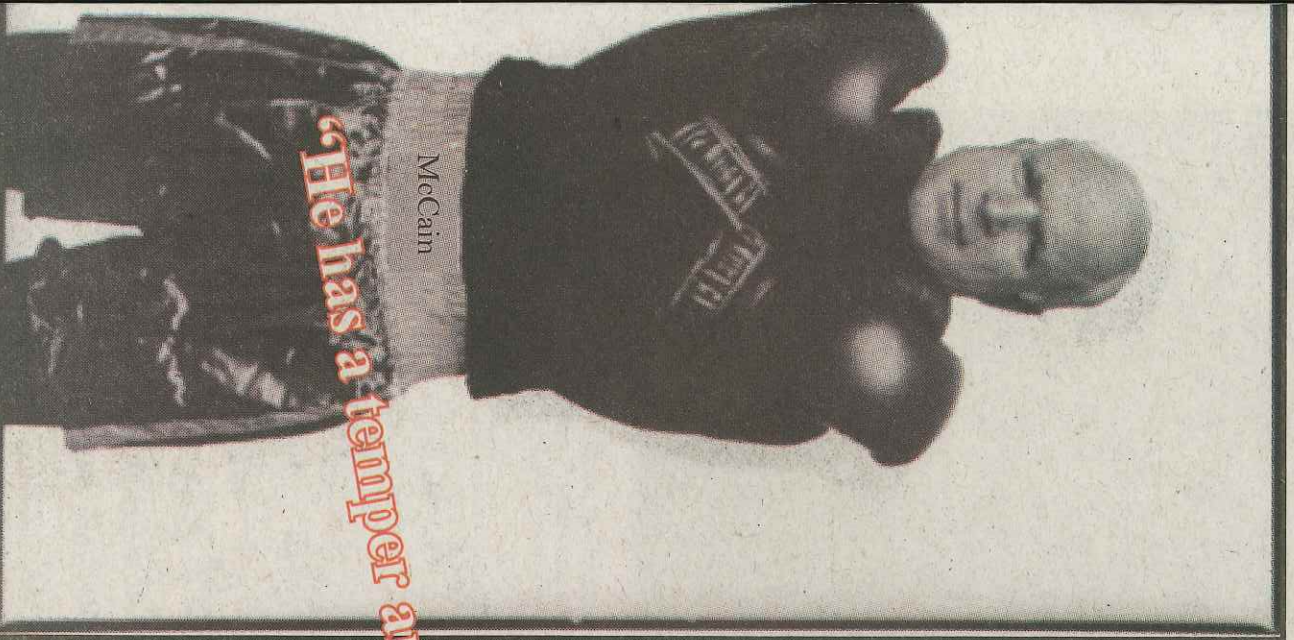
I can't get out of this article without justifying Governor Sarah Palin as John McCain's Vice Presidential candidate; perhaps the fact that she has more executive experience than Obama, Senator Joe Biden and McCain combined will make a difference. The Governor of Alaska has more executive experience than the other candidates? You betcha! Neither Obama or Biden have held an executive position, which is shabby when compared to her eight years of experience. (Six years as a mayor and two as Governor.)

While I'm on the topic of experience, Obama has little to note when it comes to that in foreign policy. He's served on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for a few years, lived in Indonesia for four years, and recently visited Russia. He claims that "foreign policy is the area where I am probably most confident." If that is an impressive record for foreign policy then I'm qualified to be the president. Actually, my 12-year-old brother is just as qualified as Senator Obama. In a global world, it's important to have someone who has worked with other nations. McCain has been in the Senate for four terms and taken many Congressional tours abroad.

Our economy is going down in flames and the bad news is neither candidate has a successful solution. Obama claims he will get the troops out of Iraq as soon as he is elected and yet has no military experience. His military aide? General Merrill McPeak; you can Google that flip-flopper yourself. McCain wants to extend Bush's tax cuts and Obama wants to raise them to pay for his universal health care. His plan is to raise taxes for those in the higher tax brackets, which includes both big companies and mom-and-pop businesses alike, as long as they fall in that \$250,000 + range. Sounds like redistribution of wealth to me. They earned it they shouldn't be taxed off 50 percent of it. And how does taxing an already floundering economy help create new jobs? Last time I checked, Bobby Joe down the street who makes \$25,000 a year isn't really expanding the economy.

What it all boils down to is that this election, no matter the outcome, is going to be unlike anything we've ever seen, and that's not necessarily a good thing. Just like "Pirates of the Caribbean."

—Amelia Simpson



McCain

John Sadowski



John McCain



McCain

2005 grad climbs her way to WTOP



WTOP

WS 2005 graduate Ashley Linder makes a name for herself as a traffic reporter for News 4 WTOP.

Ramadan-a-rama Muslim students exhibit fasting in a month-long religious holiday

By Jenny Nguyen
Oracle Staff Writer

Ramadan is not only a month long religious holiday, but also a spiritual pilgrimage to reconnect with the soul.

It is always on the ninth month of the lunar calendar, when the Koran was revealed to the prophet Muhammad. During this Muslim holiday many fast, pray and donate to become more spiritual and devout.

"Fasting is one of the Five Pillars. The reason we do this is to understand how poor people feel," said junior Nealofar Panjshiri.

Muslims who fast have to wake up before the sunrise to eat, then wait to eat again after sunset. Throughout the day they do not drink water or have any snacks, instead they pray for forgiveness of sins, guidance, and purification.

"Fasting is kind of hard, but it's definitely something you have to get used to," said junior Sohana Waqar. "We pray and fast because it's something you're expected to do."

Ramadan is a month-long process of accommodating the goodness back into the soul and re-examining yourself as an improved person.

"You want to change yourself for the better, re-center yourself, and be really pious and religious," said Panjshiri.

During Ramadan many travel on a once in a lifetime pilgrimage to Mecca which is the most holy and sacred city of Islam.

The hajj is the Fifth Pillar and attracts millions of pilgrims each year to experience the wonders of the famous city. Besides making a trip around the world to be blessed, going to the local mosque is the common way to

By Lacey Woolf
Viewpoint Editor

When you think of NBC4 you don't always notice the traffic reporter, but this won't be the case anymore for WS students.

Class of '05 graduate Ashley Linder has made a name for herself in the world of broadcast journalism, working on radio for WTOP, and on television for NBC4 doing traffic reports. "She sounds incredibly professional [on WTOP], and I think she will have a great future in broadcasting," said history teacher Ronald Maggiano.

While she was in high school, Linder participated in activities that put her in a position of being in front of other people. These experiences helped spark her interest in broadcast journalism.

"I knew that whatever I did in life, it would have to be in the communications field," said Linder.

Her participation in the theatre department during high school has helped Linder with her job on WTOP.

"Everyday I get on air, I assume a role. My character? Ashley Linder belway Barbie," said Linder.

Linder began her radio work at WJFK 106.7 FM when she was nineteen. She started there as an intern for the Junkie Morning Show, and worked her way up in the ranks. As an intern she did commercial work for the station.

"I would read different spots for McDonald's, WJFK promotional events, Wendy's, Mattress Discounters, you name it, I have a spot recorded for it," said Linder.

While working at WJFK, Linder was informed by a co-worker about a job opening with Metro Traffic. Although she had no experience, Linder went out on a limb and applied for the job.

"Simply put, I was in the right place at the right time, had the right sounding voice, and I knew the right people," said Linder.

The hours at her new job were not great at first, but within five months she moved up to a full-time position.

At WTOP, Linder's co-workers are 20 and 30 years older than her, but this has not discouraged her.

"It's nice because it forces me to work ten times harder to prove to them that I belong and can do whatever is set in front of me," said Linder.

Her age also became a factor when she started doing afternoon news on NBC4. On television, age is credibility, and to appear more credible, she must appear older.

"While I am proud of my age, I try not to make it an issue," said Linder.

Having experienced work on radio and television, Linder says she like both, but for different reasons.

"When I'm on radio, I feel very much at ease. It's just me and the microphone doing our 'traffic dance'," said Linder. "Television is a different feel. Its such a rush, like a wave of accomplishment."

Linder hopes to be even more successful, and continue her upward climb in television.

"I have a passion for my work, and I know passion is key in this industry," said Linder.

feel sanctified.

"My mom influenced me the most. When I was little my mom would take me to the mosque after school and we would read the Koran for two hours," said Panjshiri.

The Koran is described as mostly a religious text that is required to read, but there is a deeper appreciation for it because it is said to be the same since it was first written.

"The beauty of the Koran is that nothing has been changed or altered since Muhammad. It was purposely kept only in Arabic

"You want to change yourself for the better, re-center yourself and be really pious and religious."

-Nealofar Panjshiri,
Junior

and not translated into any other language so that it can remain the same," said Panjshiri.

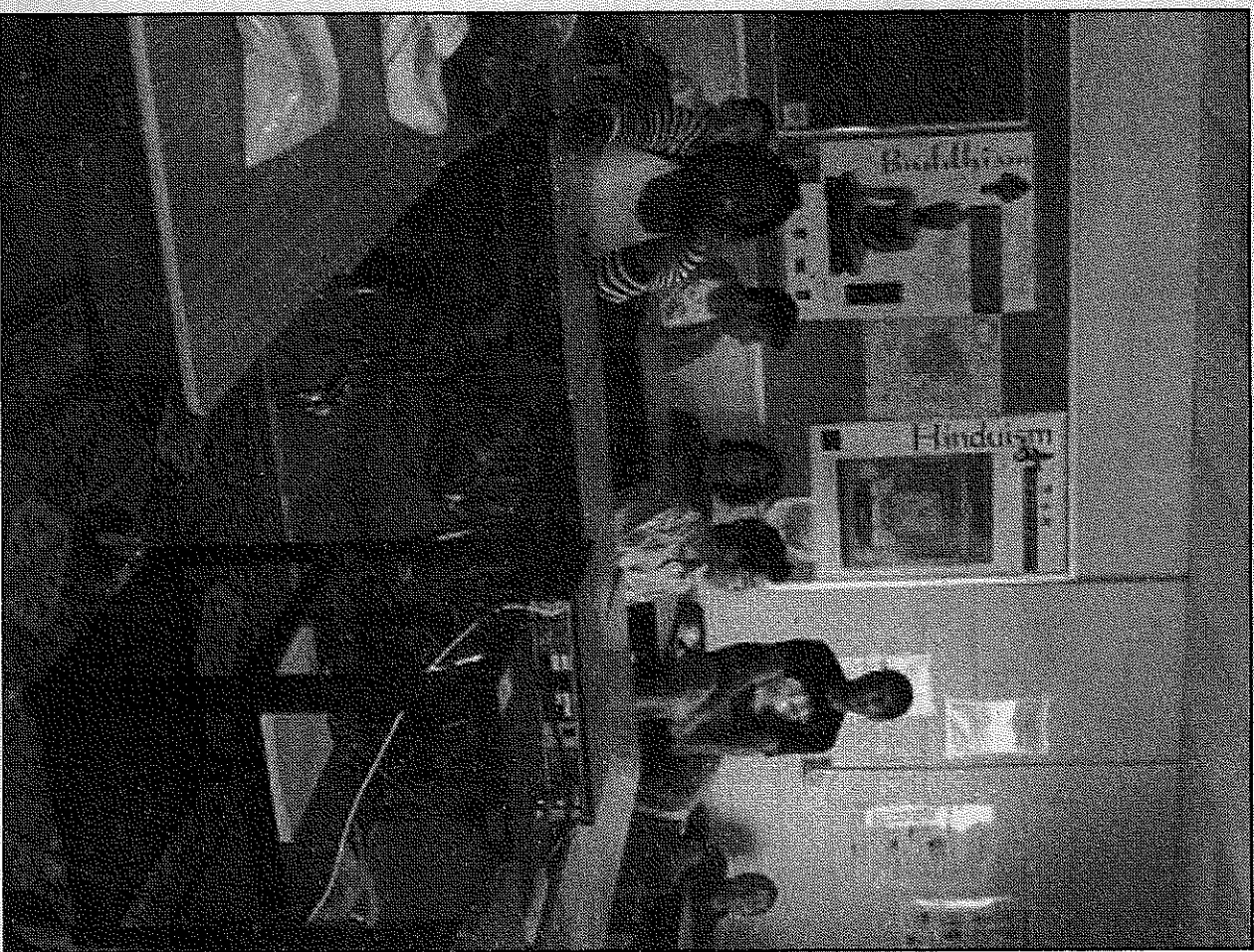
At the end of Ramadan, Muslims celebrate the holiday Eid-Al-Fitr which marks the end of the holy month and fasting period.

Banquets are made and people rejoice with festive decorations.

"During the celebration your family gets together and do activities, henna, and eat a lot," said Waqar.

Already Islam is spreading rapidly and people are converting almost instantly. It is the fastest growing religion and the second largest religion in the world.

"Islam is a simple religion and we reject that God is divine, God is just one," said Panjshiri.



Jenny Nguyen

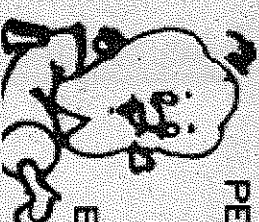
There was a great turnout for the Muslim Students Association club this year. Many Muslim students came and enjoyed a pizza party one day after school. They share many similarities including their religion and are able to support each other during the month of Ramadan when fasting during the day can prove to be a difficulty.

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WS offers a new home for students

By Katie Kinzel
Forum Editor

Every summer kids are picked up and forced to move to Springfield from unusual places all around the world. Each new student has adjustments to make, but adjustments are especially hard when the student previously lived somewhere so different.

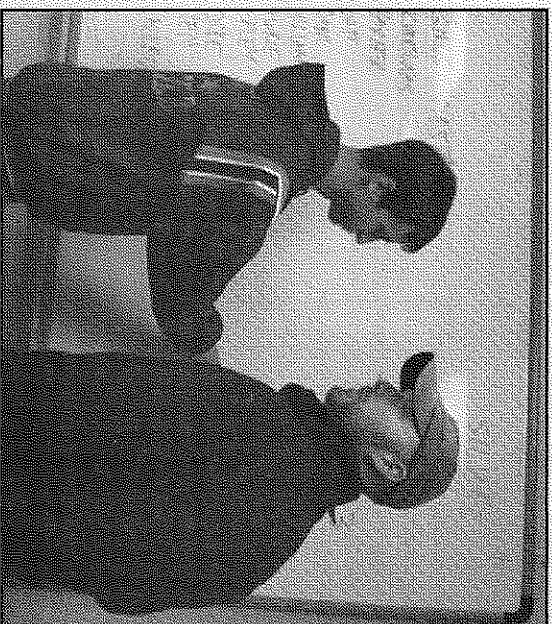
Sophomore Kim Boeckmann moved to Springfield this summer after living in Germany for nine years. "I visited here in the summer but most of what I remember is in Germany," said Boeckmann. In her old town of Bonn, Boeckmann attended a small international school, which according to was less the size of WS.

The grading system in her school was very different; they went by numbers, not letters.

Because it was an international school, Boeckmann got to travel to different European countries to play sports. The trips were even paid for by the school.

"I got to go to Paris for a competition, and my class went to London for our class trip," said Boeckmann.

Even though some of those trips are not available here, Boeckmann is embracing the benefits of living in the US, especially the shopping.



Junior Joe Eustace enjoys the greater variety and safety, which is a change from his old school at Guatemala.

Katie Kinzel

Since Germany is on the Euro, clothing is much more expensive there.

"I didn't like the exchange rate," said Boeckmann "Shopping is way better here. It's so expensive there."

Other students are also reaping the benefits of living in America. Junior Joe Eustace moved to Springfield from Guatemala this year after four years of living there.

"Guatemala got boring, but I miss my friends," said Eustace.

Eustace attended a private school in Guatemala with only about 300 students in it and three sports to choose from.

With more selection in the US, Eustace is running cross country and plans on trying out for soccer and winter track.

Eustace is also enjoying the safer atmosphere here.

Because of its high crime rate, Eustace had to take precautions in Guatemala to stay safe. Every house had a fence around it.

"Just walking out of your house, there is a high chance you could get robbed," said Eustace.

Even with all the crime, Eustace still got out on the weekends to hang out, with choices of going to the movies, painting, or go-carting.

"Guatemala was interesting, way different than the US," said Eustace.

Dynasty stomps the yard Step Team steps up their swagger indefinitely

By Julie Parisi
Weekend Editor

Walking out of entrance three after school yields the sight of about 20 students stomping and clapping in a rhythmic beat.

This year, the step team will experience some changes and become more competitive under their new sponsors, marketing teacher Vera Woodson and family and consumer science teacher Thomas Prassa.

"It's actually a legit team this year," said sophomore Nshira Turkson. "Changes are for the better."

The first of these changes are new uniforms consisting of navy blue t-shirts that say "DYNASTY" on the front and "STEP TEAM" on the back in orange with a pair of matching shorts and white shoes.

"I think this is one of the best performance teams at the school and they deserve to have a professional appearance," said Woodson. "My goal was to make it a school sport."

Although the uniforms received mixed reactions, most of the team seemed to appreciate the new look.

"I like the uniforms because they make us look more organized," said freshman Bria Bass.

This is the first year they will not be wearing jeans and a t-shirt, and a few team members want to stay with the tradition.

"We should just stick with jeans and a t-shirt because I don't want us to turn into a bunch of cheerleaders," said sophomore Inami Clayton. In addition to the uniforms, the

team will be joining competitions outside of school, something they never did in previous years. The first competition will be at Washington and Lee on November 1, and there will be another one in March. While the team is being judged on a strict rubric, there are no cold feet.

"I'm excited for the competitions so we can show people what we have to offer," said junior Shantice Jackson.

Going places outside of school and competing against other teams will get the step team more recognition and help spread the word.

"We just did stuff at the school last year, so [the competitions] get us more involved with everything else and put our rep at a higher level," said Clayton. "We're gonna stomp the yard!"



Julie Parisi

Practices in the Japanese Garden can become grueling with every precise motion. If not correct to the tee, steppers have actually done a lap around senior parking lot to step up their stamina as well.

JROTC offers students money, pride Junior takes an alternative path to college and beyond

By Sam Tak
ETC. Editor

While most students prepare for college by taking AP classes and filling out their transcript request forms, the students in JROTC are taking an alternate but rigorous course.

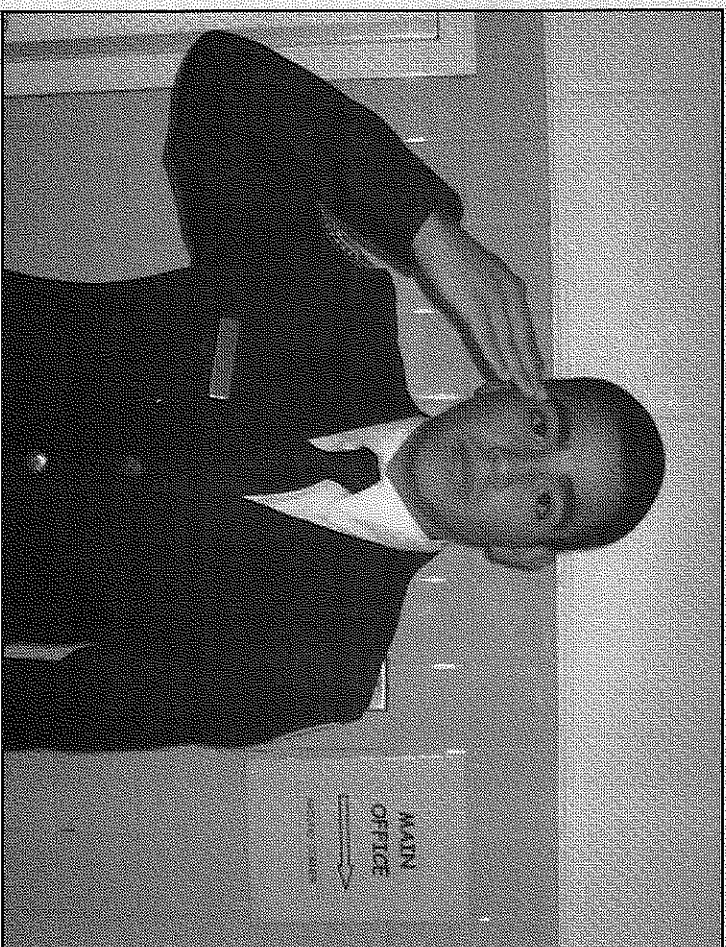
Students like Junior Miguel Martinez are taking the very strict military prep classes called Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps.

JROTC is an Army-sponsored class that prepares high school students, who are considering a military profession in the future. The JROTC class was created to expose students to the strict regiments and leadership skills that will be necessary when they go to a military career after high school.

The aspects of JROTC appeal to students like Martinez because they provide benefits such as free college tuition, apt discipline and leadership skills unlike anything else.

"ROTC pays for college and that's why I'm doing it," said Martinez.

While most of us stay in school for our classes, Martinez and other JROTC students have to travel sixteen miles to Chantilly high school, where the JROTC classes take place, during their third and fourth period classes. Like the tight bus schedules for academy classes, the bus schedules for Chantilly are very timely, requiring JROTC students to



Julie Parisi

Junior Miguel Martinez shows his respect by giving a salute to the Air Force. In hopes of pursuing this career, Martinez has begun to show his dedication at a young age to his country.

leave their first period, go to their locker, chat with their friends, and arrive promptly at the bus stop within five minutes.

"I go to first period and I leave at 8:55,"

said Martinez. "I have to quickly go to my locker because the bus leaves at nine and we go to Chantilly High School."

Martinez aspires to become a pilot in the

Air Force and he believes that the JROTC classes will help him reach his goal. These students choose to sacrifice their time in order to learn the precise marching techniques and military commands that will prepare

JROTC prepares students who are considering a military profession. "ROTC pays for college and that's why I'm doing it..."
—Miguel Martinez, junior

them for the military.

The JROTC class is very different from the more lax classes here. From the very start of class, students have to answer with "yes sirs" and "no sirs," just like they would in the military.

They have to go through many different and precise commands.

"The beginning is really formal how you speak," said Martinez.

However, the class does offer some downtime. They ease off into a more relaxing atmosphere towards the end of class and Miguel and his fellow cadets can chat about football, school and their aspirations to become officers.

A section about nothing

"Seinfeld" can best be described as a show about nothing.

The simple program, which survives through re-runs 10 years after going off the air, features the misadventures of four friends: Jerry, Elaine, Kramer and George. "Seinfeld" lasted nine seasons and 180 episodes. When it came to a close, 70 million people viewed the finale.

The show was based on the life of Larry David, Seinfeld's director. Its funny humor and random conflict included Jerry's pickiness, George's random freakouts, Elaine's constant failures and Kramer's odd personality.

As the main character, Jerry Seinfeld is often the rational one in the group. Barling in and out of relationships sometimes for odd reasons, the standup comic—on the show and in real life—offers his advice to his friends.

George Costanza is the lovable loser. George is a cheap man who never really

"launched," he demonstrates this by living with his parents for a while. George has a habit of always clinging to his girlfriends. He is unemployed for most of the seasons, but eventually hits it big when he gets a job with the New York Yankees.

Cosmo Kramer, or just Kramer, works as the comic relief. Kramer slides through Jerry's front door many times during the series. He is known for his goofy and weird behavior as well as bizarre reactions to situations.

Elaine Benes could be considered "fake" by many people today. She is self-centered, always trying to find Mr. Right but failing. She previously had a relationship with Jerry, but now turns to him for dating advice. Elaine works in various jobs, including for *Pendant Publications* and the *J. Peterman Catalog*.

—Info. on both pages compiled by Divya Goel & Luis Lester



MV Fox Auslit

Top 10 Seinfeld episodes

10. The Marine Biologist (Season 5)—Jerry meets an old classmate, who asks about George. Jerry lies and says George is now a marine biologist. Kramer is struggling with his golf swing in the bunker, so he takes 600 golf balls to the beach to hit into the ocean. While at the beach, George is called upon to use his "marine biologist" skills to save a whale that's washed up onto the beach. George, who's terrified, goes to look at the whale only to figure out that he's having trouble breathing. He looks into the blow hole only to find a golf ball, which was hit by Kramer.

9. The Parking Garage (Season 3)—The four friends are stuck in a parking garage looking for the car after Kramer purchases an air conditioner and Elaine buys a goldfish. Kramer, who's been carrying the air conditioner for a while, sets it down behind a car and Elaine starts to worry that her fish will die soon in her plastic bag. Jerry and George both have the urge to use the bathroom, so they take Kramer's advice and just go there in the parking garage. A police officer spots them separately and fines them. Finally, George, Elaine, and Jerry find the car, but have to wait for Kramer to find the air conditioner, which he has misplaced. Kramer finds them and just as they jump into the car and are about to leave they realize the car's out of gas.

8. The Puffy Shirt (Season 5)—Elaine arranges for Jerry to be on the "Today Show" to promote a charity. However, the night before, while he is at dinner with Kramer and his "low-talking girlfriend," he misunderstands her and agrees to wear an unbelievably ridiculous, pirate-looking, puffy shirt on the show. Since he promised her, he wears it on the show and becomes a laughing stock throughout the city.

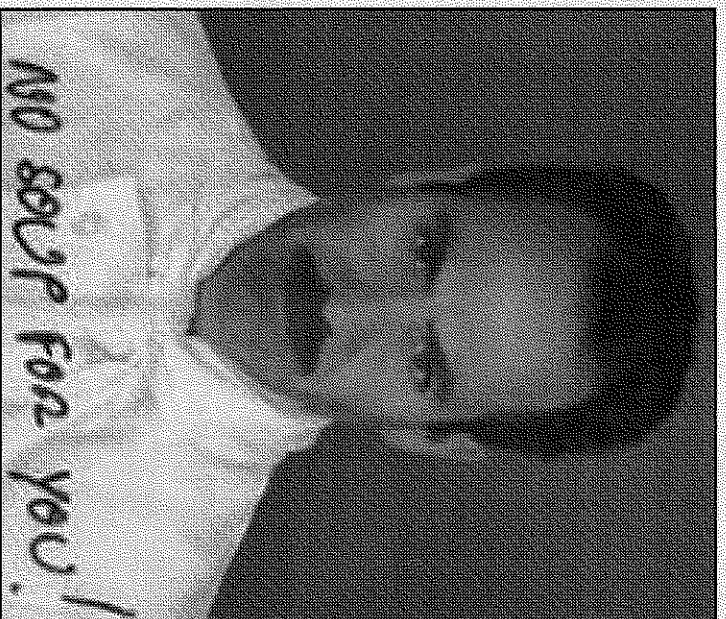
7. The Bubble Boy (Season 4)—Jerry, George, Elaine, and George's girlfriend, Susan, are on their way up to Susan's parents' cabin. On the way up, the father of a boy confined to a plastic bubble asks Jerry to come to his house and talk to his son because he idolizes Jerry. Jerry agrees but gets lost on the way there. Meanwhile, George and Susan go to the Bubble Boy's house and George plays a game of Trivial Pursuit with the Bubble Boy, eventually getting into a fight with the Bubble Boy. George accidentally pops the Bubble Boy's bubble, killing him. Jerry and Elaine give up on going to the house and stop at a coffee shop, where a waitress asks for a picture of Jerry to put on the wall. Jerry is unhappy with how the picture looks and tries to take it back, ending in a physical confrontation with the waitress.

6. The Voice (Season 9)—Jerry and George start to mock the sounds that Jerry's girlfriend's stomach makes during the night. Jerry bets Elaine \$50 that she will go back to her long-time boyfriend David Puddy. Throughout this episode, she breaks up and gets back with Puddy a total of five times. Kramer decides to hire an assistant, Darn, to help him out with his new business "Kramerica." Meanwhile, George's boss has realized that George really isn't handicapped and is fired from his job at "Play." But George ignores all the signs they give to leave, which included getting cursed at, shutting down his bathroom and locking him out of his office. At the end of the episode, Jerry tells his girlfriend about the voice they made for her stomach and she gets upset and tells him that she has to choose her, or the voice. Of course, being Jerry, he chooses the voice.



Alternative Real

Jerry, Kramer, and Elaine wander aimlessly around the parking garage after forgetting where they parked.



Sports Online

The "Soup Nazi" refused to give George his bread and raises the price specifically for him.

5. The Junior Mint (Season 4)—Elaine visits her ex-boyfriend at the hospital, and wants to date him again because he has lost a lot of weight. Kramer and Jerry get the opportunity to view Elaine's ex's surgery from the viewing gallery at the hospital, after a conversation with his doctor. During the surgery, Kramer and Jerry have an altercation involving a junior mint. Kramer keeps offering Jerry a mint, and Jerry keeps declining. Kramer accidentally drops the junior mint into the body of Elaine's ex-boyfriend. After the surgery the doctor says that there was an altercation during the surgery, and it was like something fell out of the sky.

4. "The Soup Nazi" (Season 7)—George, Elaine, and Jerry hear about a popular soup shop from Kramer but are warned that the server, "the Soup Nazi," is very strict and that there is a specific procedure for ordering soup. George follows the procedure exactly, but just as he is about to leave he notices that he didn't receive any bread. Ignoring Jerry's advice to just forget about the bread, George complains to the Soup Nazi, who furiously tells George that the bread is \$2. George then complains that everyone else got bread for free and then the Soup Nazi replies by raising the price to \$3. George hesitates and the Soup Nazi yells "No soup for you!"

3. "The Opposite" (Season 5)—George, fed up with the lack of success he has had in life, tells Jerry that every decision he's ever made has been wrong. He decides that from now on he will do the opposite of what he normally would do. Almost immediately, this very attractive girl approaches George and says they've ordered the same meal. Continuing with his sudden success George moves out of his parents' house and acquires a job with the New York Yankees, by saying what he wouldn't have normally said to owner George Steinbrenner. Kramer appears on "The Regis and Kathy Show" promoting his new invention, a coffee table book about coffee tables. That was supposed to be his first of many promotions for the book, but while on the show Kramer spits coffee all over Kathy Lee, which quickly ends his tour.

2. The Hamptons (Season 5)—The four friends make a trip to the Hamptons to visit one of Jerry's friends who just had a baby, which turns out to be the most hideous baby they've ever seen. While George goes out to the store, Jerry and Kramer witness George's girlfriend topless before he does. Kramer finds a filled lobster trap out by the beach and not knowing it is a commercial trap, he takes the lobster back to the house to cook. Elaine is thrilled when an attractive doctor calls her "breathtaking." She then becomes worried when he calls the ugly baby "breathtaking." Rachel, Jerry's girlfriend of the moment, walks in on George, sees him naked and starts to giggle. George, embarrassed because he just came out of the pool, tries to explain "shrinkage" to her. The next morning George gets revenge on her by putting lobster (which isn't kosher) in her eggs. At the end of the show, Kramer is arrested for stealing commercial lobster and his punishment is picking up trash on the side of the road.

1. The Dinner Party (Season 5)—The gang is on their way to a dinner party, but Elaine suggests stopping to buy a cake and wine for the party. Jerry and Elaine go to a pastry store to buy a chocolate babka, but forget to take a number, so they lose the cake and are forced to get a cinnamon babka, which is a "lesser babka," according to Jerry. George and Kramer set off to the liquor store to buy wine, but George only had a \$100 bill, which the manager won't accept because he doesn't have change for it. To break the \$100, George buys Kramer a *Clark Bar*, a *Penthouse* magazine and some gum from a newsstand. When they buy the wine and try to leave the store they realize that someone is double-parked in front of them. Because of the cold weather, Kramer refuses to wait outside so they wait in the store. As they are about to depart the store, George accidentally knocks over a wine display because of his enormous Gore-Tex jacket. The four friends finally arrive at the party, but are so tired they just drop off the babka and the wine and leave.

Top 10 Best 'Seinfeld' quotes

The Dinner Party

"The thing about eating the Black and White cookie, Elaine, is you want to get some black and some white in each bite. Nothing mixes better than vanilla and chocolate and yet somehow racial harmony eludes us. If people would only look to the cookie all our problems would be solved." —Jerry, making philosophical references relating race and a black and white cookie.

"You telling me that wine is better than Pepsi? Huh, no way wine is better than Pepsi." —George, angry that Elaine wants to take wine and cake to a dinner party rather than Pepsi and Ring-Dings.

The Hamptons

"Is it me, or was that the ugliest baby you have ever seen? Boy, a little too much chlorine in that gene pool." —Jerry, after the gang saw a baby, who turned out to be extremely ugly.

"It's like I'm Neil Armstrong. I turn around for a sip of Tang, and you jump out first!" —George, after Kramer tells him that the whole gang had seen his girlfriend topless before he did.

The Opposite

"Bald men with no jobs and no money who live with their parents don't approach strange women." —George, when debating with Jerry about hitting on a woman.

"Get yourself some vitamin C with rose hips and bioflavonoids." —Kramer, offering medical advice.

The Soup Nazi

"No soup for you!" —The Soup Nazi, after George complains about not receiving bread with his soup.

"You better decide, sister. You're on deck." —Jerry, telling his girlfriend, Sheila, to decide what she wants before the Soup Nazi gets angry.

The Junior Mint

"Who's gonna turn down a Junior Mint? It's chocolate, it's peppermint—it's delicious!" —Kramer, offering Jerry a junior mint while they are sitting in on a surgery being performed.

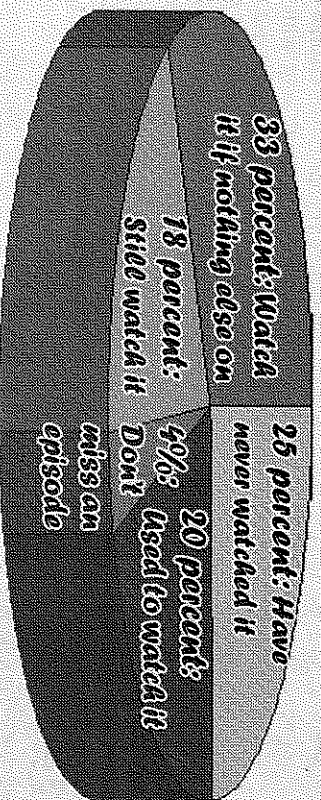
"Produce section. Very provocative area. A lot of melons and shapes. Everyone's squeezing and smelling." —Jerry, ex-



Jerry and Kramer discuss their choice of outfits as a coming together of racial harmony to Elaine.



Jerry declines Junior mint, resulting in Kramer accidentally dropping it into a man's body during surgery.



Random poll of 100 students by Chelsea Schuster

Say What?

"I like it because it's funny, i like Jerry because of all his jokes,"

—Jeremy Corn, freshman

"I've never really been interested in the show, it seems kind of boring."

—Alex Ledere, junior

"I don't watch it as much as I used to but I love Kramer because he cracks me up all the time."

—Todd Johnson, Chemistry teacher

plaining to George how he met his girlfriend at a grocery store.

The Voice

"Breaking up is like knocking over a Coke machine. You can't do it in one push. You gotta rock it back and forth a few times, and then it goes over." —Jerry, offering advice to George on how to break up with his girlfriend.

"Mr. Seinfeld went to the restroom, at which point Mr. Costanza scooped ice out of Mr. Seinfeld's drink with his bare hands, using it to wash up." —Darren, telling Jerry of George's actions at the house, which George denied.

The Bubble Boy

"I'm sorry. The card says 'Moops.'"
"It doesn't matter. It's the Moors. There's no Moops!" —George and the Bubble Boy, while playing Trivial Pursuit a card had a misprint on it, leading to a physical altercation between George and the Bubble Boy.

The Puffy Skirt

"You're going to be the first modern-day pirate!" —Kramer, making fun of Jerry's puffy, pirate-looking shirt.
"George, would you like some Jell-O?" "Why do you put the bananas in there?" "George likes the bananas!" "SO LET HIM HAVE BANANAS ON THE SIDE!" —Mr. and Mrs. Costanza arguing about George putting bananas in his Jell-o.

The Parking Space

"Man, it's the nineties... It's Hammer time!" —Kramer, encouraging George and Jerry to urinate in the parking lot.
"Nobody drives like me. I'm doing things in this car, you have no idea they're going on." —George, bragging about his driving (George was notorious as an aggressive driver).

The Marine Biologist

"A hole in one, huh?" —Kramer, after George reveals a golf ball found in a whale's blowhole after he was driving golf balls into the ocean.
"The sea was angry that day, my friends—like an old man trying to send back soup in a deli." —George, describing his experience rescuing the whale while he was pretending to be a marine biologist.

Where are they now?

Jason Alexander (George), and Michael Richards (Kramer) both attempted to start their own series. Alexander's and Richards' failures are sometimes attributed to what is called the "Seinfeld Curse."

Richards, who also appeared on TV shows including "Cheers" and "Miami Vice," has also appeared in featured films "So I Married an Axe Murderer" and "Problem Child." He attempted to start his own sitcom, "The Michael Richards Show," but it was cancelled before the first season was finished. His success as Kramer on "Seinfeld" may be forgotten after an incident in which he made racially tinged comments to a heckler at one of his stand-up comedy acts in 2006. After the incident, he made many public apologies and has recently announced supporting roles in many movies including "Pretty Woman."

Alexander has received supporting roles in many movies including "Pretty Woman," "Shallow Hal" and "The Producers."

Julia Louis-Dreyfus (Elaine) has had the most success on television with her own series, "The New Adventures of Old Christine," which has just begun its fourth season. Jerry Seinfeld continues his career as a stand-up comic.



—Compiled by Divya Goel & Luis Lester

Leveraging Ideas

Back-to-back PDC team left coachless

By Danielle Mazzuchi

Features Editor

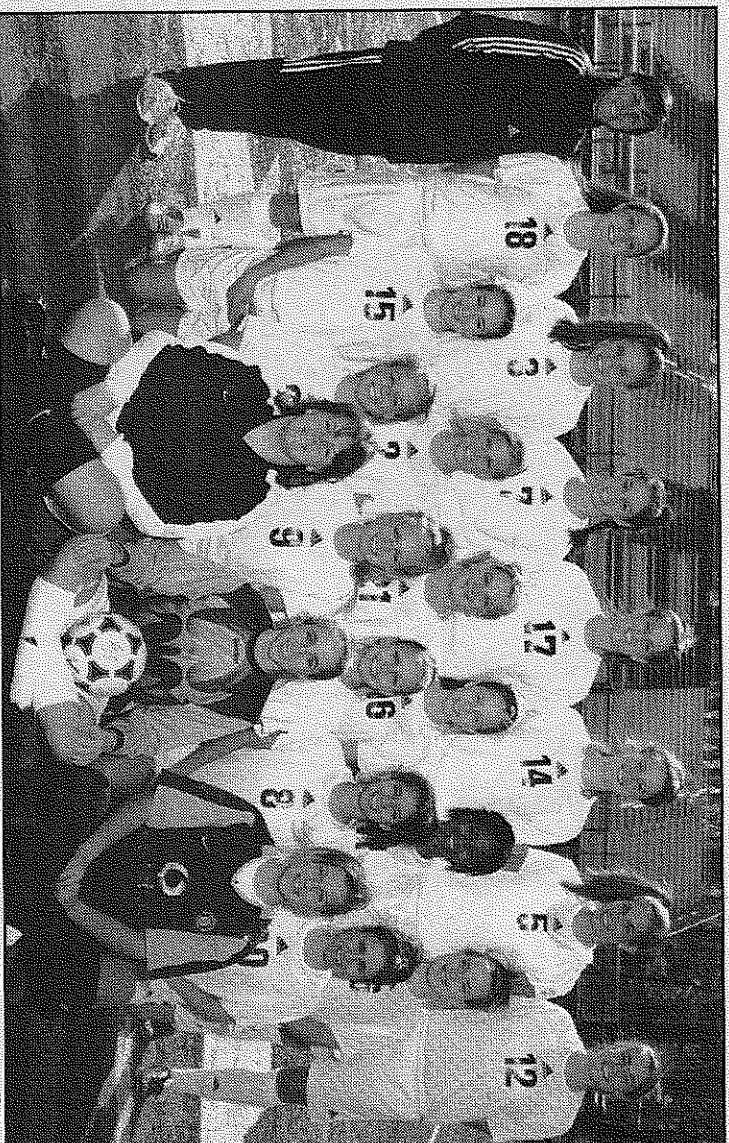
Every successful team beats with one heart. The rhythm, however is controlled by the coach. With the Varsity girls soccer team lacking a head coach, the new obstacle may be difficult to come to terms with.

The team won Districts two years in a row and fell under the pressure of a regional title. Five months before their final season, four-year returning seniors Katie Scanlon, Amalya Clayton, Katie Harrison and Jessica Gonzalez have come to the conclusion that replacing long time coach Kellie Mastrodonato will be a hard task.

"There were rumors going around that she was leaving," said Gonzalez. "But it was something we had to accept."

Not only was this hard for the players to grasp, but it was an even harder decision for the eight-year coach and mentor to tell them.

"This was the hardest thing I have ever done," said Mastrodonato. "I barely slept the few nights



Lifetouch

Mastrodonato, back left, smiles for her last team picture with the Varsity soccer team last spring season.

before the meeting with them."

"Ms. M was a good coach," said Clayton. "She connected with us not only as learners of the game

but as young adults too." "Mastrodonato was an all around idol that the players not only admired, but respected.

"For the person replacing Ms. M, I would hope that they have some soccer experience because that was the only thing she was missing," said Scanlon. "I would

want this upcoming leader to match her motivational speaking."

The seniors have decided they want to have input on who Director of Student Activities Andy Muir chooses as their new coach.

"We have to go through two stages with the coaching position," said Muir. "With the anticipation of the upcoming season, there have been many candidates for the job."

To coincide with the absence of a coach, the reputation of the soccer program is prominent award-winning.

"The colors blue and orange will slowly fade from my wardrobe, but the orange and blue will always mean something very special to me," said Mastrodonato. "I have a special place in my heart for them and for all of the girls who played under my tenure."

To start the preseason without a coach seems might cause a negative outlook for the some teams, but this has not downed the emotional level of the Spartans quite yet.

"Regardless if we have a coach or not, we have a team with potential to win states," said Scanlon.

Improved track brings relief to athletes' needs

By Lisa Williams

Viewpoint Editor

While students were off at the beach and hanging out with friends this summer, construction workers were busily putting a patch job on the track.

The track had previously been worn down to the hard surface underneath, and had potholes and cracks in many places. Then, for a week in July, it was under construction, and it came out smooth, nice and pothole-free.

The bad conditions of the track had been a big problem for the cross country and track teams. The track caused an epidemic of shin, knee and ankle injuries. In fact, last year it was shunned by the Patriot District and the team could not host a home meet, which in turn lost the school money from entrance fees and concessions.

"We're very happy it was resurfaced," said track and cross country coach Matt Kirk. "They also redid the pole vault runway and the high jump apron, so it's safer for the athletes."

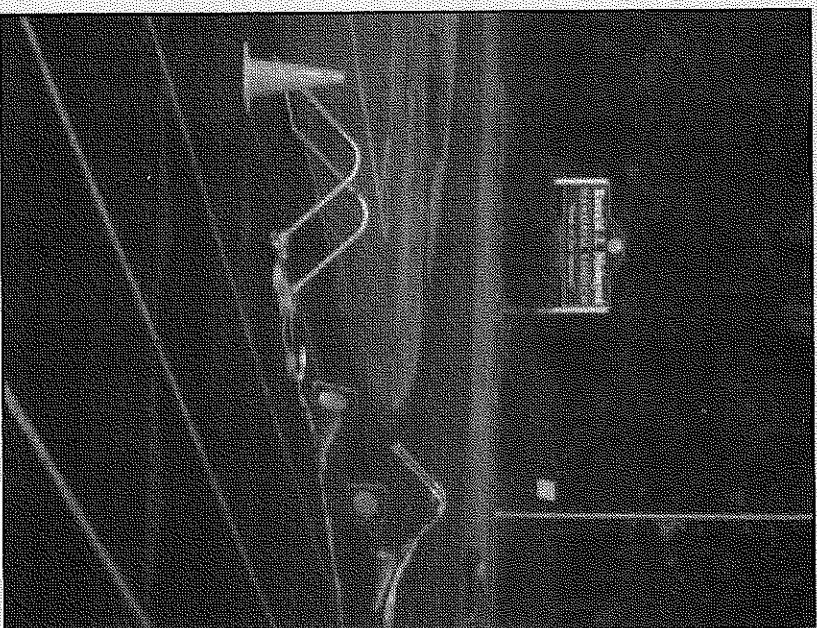
Before, the pole vault runway was so worn down that the athletes couldn't practice in their spikes because they might have injured the athlete's legs. The high jump apron was only half-paved, making for an awkward transition from grass to paving when the athlete goes sprinting towards the sand pit.

"The pole vault will definitely be easier on my knees now," said senior Sam Hiff, who had surgery on both her knees two summers ago.

This patch job will not completely fix the problem, however, since some cracks and bubbles still exist even through the new top layer.

"We all run in lane one so it's wearing off fast," said Hiff. Overall, the team and its coaches are happy with the results of the patch job and are hopeful that it will be a good, even if only temporary, fix for the problem.

"I like to think of it in terms of a car. You can keep replacing parts, keep repairing it, but at some point you need a new car," said Director of Student Activities Andy Muir. "And basically, the decision at this point is when, in the next few years, to get the new car."



Lisa Williams

Although runners had to deal with the cone obstacles during the improvement, they are thankful for the safer track.

Young golf team calls for attention

By Divya Goel

Business/Systems Assistant

Fore! Golf continues to be an underrated sport which does not attract much attention from the student population. But this does not apply for a select group of eight students, whose 2008 season has included trials, tribulations and triumphs.

"We only had eight players, five of which had prior tournament experience," said Coach Susan Spatcher, who has coached golf for 16 years.

"Because we had six juniors, one sophomore and one freshman it took us a while to mesh together," Spatcher said.

The golf team started out relatively young and inexperienced according to junior captain Scott Lopez. But these factors did not stop them from performing respectably. The team earned a 3-4 record, placed third in Districts

and sent sophomore Bobby Bradshaw to Regionals.

"I thought I did pretty well this year and I'm really excited about Regionals. My best score was a one under par," said Bradshaw.

Despite a 0-2 start, the team is very happy with how they ended their season. Improvement was key for the team. The highlight of the season was lowering their score by six strokes on the second day of Districts with a combined score of 329, as compared to their first day score of 335.

"When we came together as a team we did very well, especially on the last day of the district tournament when we beat out Hayfield and West Potomac to place third," said Spatcher.

The goal of the team for next year is to expand their horizons. Spatcher hopes that golf will catch on here, attracting some new girls and more boys to come out, and hopes to



Lifetouch

Coach Spatcher advises sophomore Bobby Bradshaw on his next shot during a match.

avoid having a senior-filled team next year. "We didn't do as good as last year but I'm still happy with the way we played," said junior Donna Kim, the team's only girl. "I've been happy playing golf these last two years, and I hope we do better next year."

Taylor aiming to improve Varsity boys basketball

By Luis Lester
Business/Sports Assistant

Dunking a ball with jeans and a pair of flip flops on comes almost too easily to new sophomore Jordin Taylor.

At almost 6'4, Taylor is the newest addition to the basketball program, and is hoping to help them improve from last season.

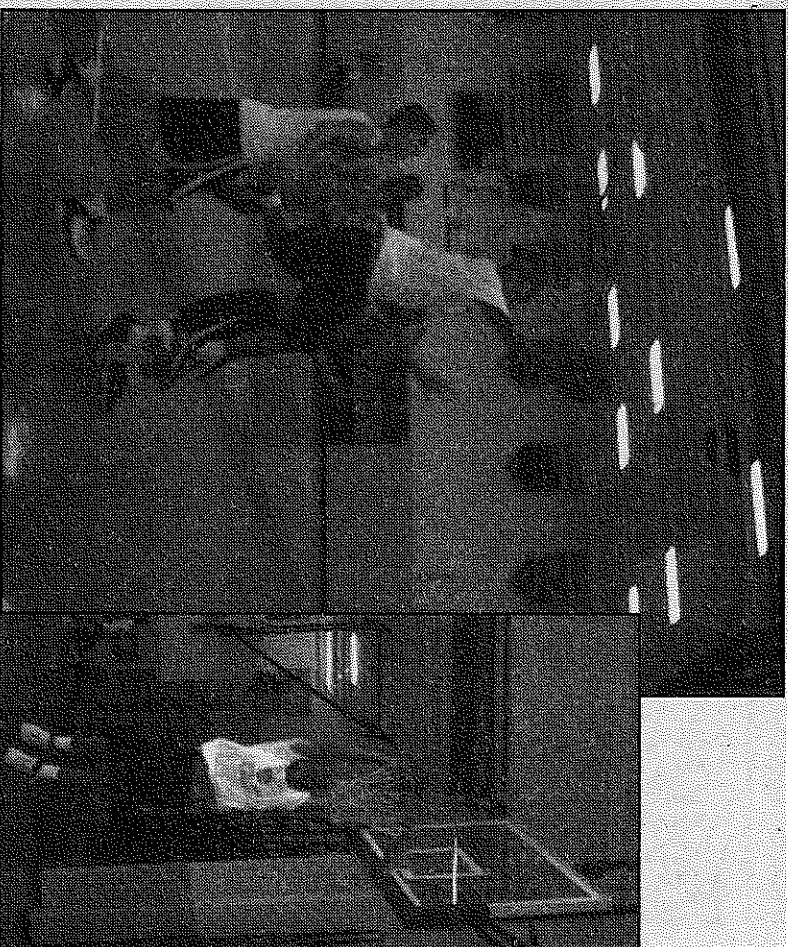
"I know ya'll had a rough year last year, and I hope I'll be able to help out and contribute to the team this year," said Taylor. The coaching staff is excited to have a new threat in the program.

"He's got great potential and could be a great addition to the team," said freshman coach Todd Johnson. Taylor attended TC Williams last year, but transferred here over the summer. At TC he started on the Varsity team in the beginning of the year as a freshman, which is no easy accomplishment at any school. But it's especially impressive when that team won the State Championship.

"I was on Varsity team last year, but I moved myself down because I was getting no playing time," said Taylor. "I don't really regret not staying on the team. It would've been a cool experience to go to states, but I still think I made the right decision." Last year WS' Ali Kazami was also a freshman on the Varsity team and is glad to now have a sophomore counterpart on the team.

"He's gonna be a great addition to the team. He has played at a higher level and understands what it takes to win," said Kazami. Even though Taylor is an amazing basketball player, he has had trouble maintaining the grades needed to play. "That was a little problem last year, but this year I think I got it all figured out and it shouldn't keep me from playing," said Taylor. For this season to be a successful one, Taylor will have to become a team leader, and put the team on his back.

"Right now, I think he's the best player in the program," said new assistant JV coach Marc Mazzuchi.



Above, TC transfer, Jordin Taylor participates in the basketball sessions held during open gym once or twice a week.

Luis Lester

Luis Lester

Spartans sporting their spirit

By Emmie Cleveland
Sports Editor

With the obnoxious trashcan banging, screams so loud you lose your voice and bodies covered head to toe in orange and blue, football games define school spirit.

This year, though, girls couldn't put on a sports bra and splatter their body with paint. Some adults thought the girls' sports bras revealed more than just their Spartan spirit.

Senior administrator Becky Brandt had to tell girls wearing sports bras at football games they needed to put a shirt on.

"It sucks because we can't express our true love for the school and our Spartan spirit," said senior

Bonnie Laitch.

Girls aren't the only ones not allowed to show their sports bras, either. In the fall pep rally senior Andrew Gray wore a yellow sports bra when presenting class colors for Homecoming week.

"I had like three different teachers or administrators tell me to put my shirt back on," said Gray. "I was just trying to liven up the pep rally."

Although students wanting to paint their bodies complained, the loudest voice was the cross country team.

"Girls from the cross country team talked to me and said it was just ridiculous," said Brandt.

Usually in August and September, the girls run in their sports bras

to beat the heat. They even have customized sports bras that say Spartan XC on them. This year their coach told them they were no longer allowed to run in just their sports bras.

"It seems so much hotter because we're so used to running without our shirts," said freshman cross country runner Andrea Hamilton.

While the cross country team deals with the newly enforced rule, the painted football fans are generally happy. Before the Homecoming game, Brandt decided to allow sports bras as long as they are appropriate.

"If it's a moderate, reasonable sports bra, I'm okay with that," said Brandt.



At the fall pep rally, senior Andrew Gray shows the freshman class color for Homecoming spirit week by wearing a yellow sports bra.

Michael Newhall

Three cheers for three District titles WS wins third consecutive District championship

By Emmie Cleveland
Sports Editor

Twenty-one girls, one boy, six days a week, 110 percent dedication and three Patriot District titles: the Varsity cheerleading squad has defended their District title for another year, giving them their consecutive third title.

The team puts blood, sweat and tears into their competition routine, with hopes to dominate and win it all. A couple weeks after tryouts, the team went to Speed Camp, where they learned the stunning material they'll use for the year. After Speed Camp, a choreographer came in to teach the routine to the squad. For the next two months they spent two to three hours, six days a week perfecting their routine.

"Winning feels so rewarding because of all the hard work we put in," said freshman Stephanie Wilson.

When competition time nears, nervous jitters fill the wrestling room during warm-ups. To calm their nerves, the team listens to music, dances and jokes around.

"When I'm freaking out I do my homework to totally take my mind off cheer," said senior Hillary Jet.

Once the routine begins, a lot of the nervousness leaves as habit takes over.

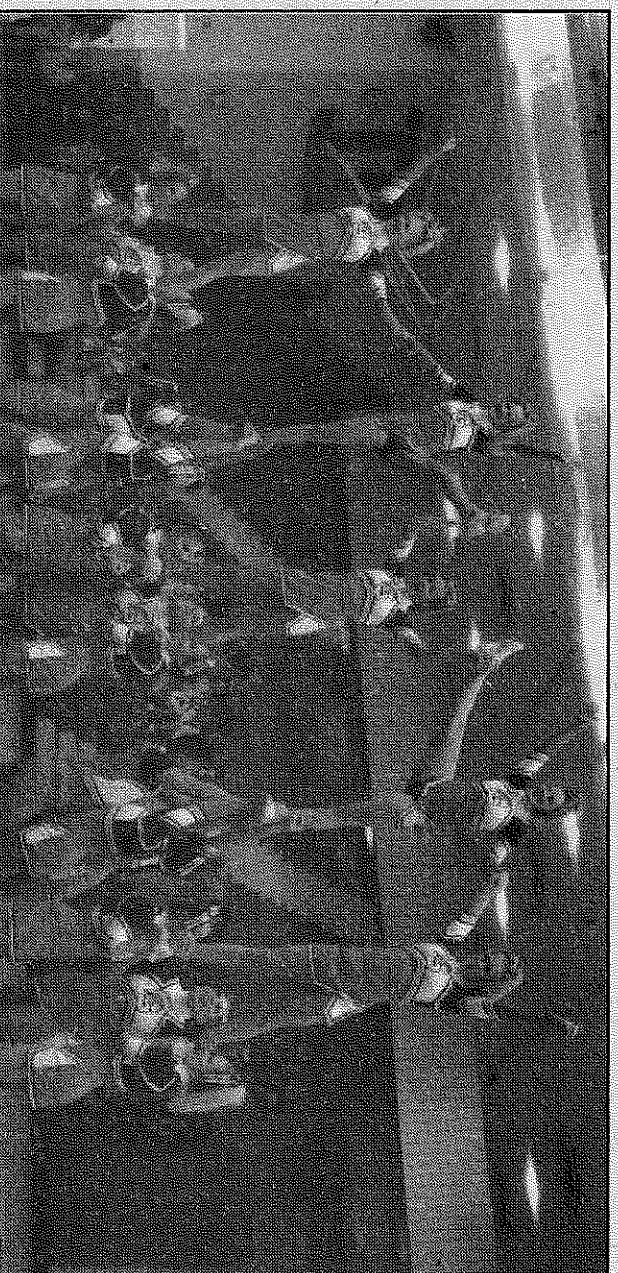
"You've done it so many times you don't even have to think about it," said junior Julianne Baker.

Like in any sport, mistakes are made, stunts fall and motions don't hit. Recovering can be difficult but the cheerleaders manage.

"When you mess up you have to try 120 times harder for the rest of the routine," said Wilson. "You don't want to let the team down."

As imaginable, it's hard for head coach, Betsy Fawcett, to watch.

"As a coach I want to take bits and pieces of each time they do it and put it together," said Fawcett.



Digital Sports

Cheer performs their routine at District finals. Regional finals are hosted by Robinson Saturday November 1st at 5 pm.

Once their routine has been completed, there is nothing left to do but watching the other teams perform.

"I'm usually comparing them to us, seeing how they stack up," said Fawcett.

As the judges calculate their scores, the mat is filled with anxious cheerleaders sitting in circles with their team. They play games and sing and dance to the DJ's music. When the results are in, the gym quiets with anticipation.

"After they announced South County [got second place] a big jolt just goes through your whole body because we all know we won," said junior Carli Perrin.

In District finals, WS beat runner-up South County by 17

points, out of a total of 300. Third place went to Lake Braddock, who fell from their second place seed, with the suspension of seven members.

Though it is agreed the competition would have been closer, the Spartans don't second-guess their victory.

"Braddock had their full team last week [in District semifinals] and we were able to win," said Fawcett.

For some of the girls it was their second or third time winning districts, and for some it was their first.

"I'll never feel like the first time, but it's a really great feeling knowing we can defend our title three years running," said Perrin.

Two cousins come together in ETC.

Remembering Stevie

By Summer Claveau
ETC. Editor

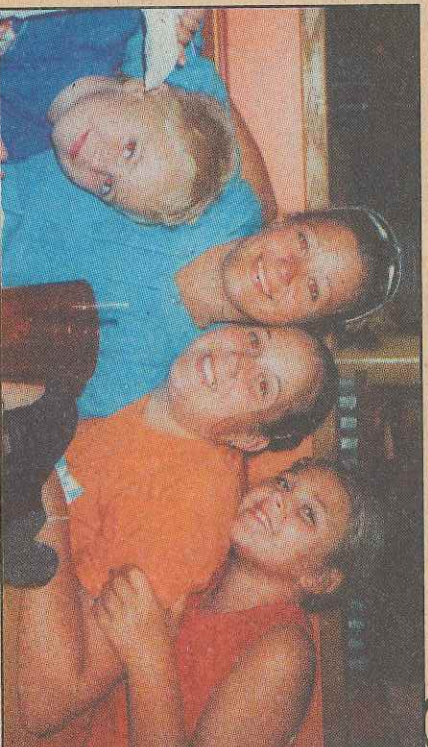
This year, most of *The Oracle* issues that have come out have included a story either about Stevie Fiorino or one that she wrote herself.

I'm sure most of the students in the school have read the stories and laughed, but still don't really understand Stevie, and how her influence will remain with her friends and family for the rest of our lives.

Some of the seniors and maybe juniors may remember Stevie, who graduated in 2007, as the girl who liked to walk around in her trenchcoat and dark sunglasses, but always had a smile on her face.

Some teachers might remember her as the funny girl who always had something to say. But I remember her as Stephanie, my silly, happy, goof-ball of a cousin who taught me more things in my 15 years than anyone could in an entire lifetime.

So many things remind me of the fun, interesting and sometimes frustrating times I had with Stephanie. I think of her every time I listen to the Grateful Dead, the Doors or the Beatles, and so many other bands that meant so much to her and my family. I think about her every time I see someone



Sue Ellen Wells
The Fiorino-Wells cousins, Trevor, Angela, Stevie and Summer, at a Family get-together at Austin Grill in 2002.

walking his dog. And I think about her every time I step into the Journalism room.

Ever since Stephanie was a sophomore and I was in sixth grade she and her sister, Angela, told me to take Journalism. I never really thought about until this year, but I often used to talk to Stephanie about her stories she wrote for *The Oracle*. The one I remember talk-

Summertime

ing about the most was "Masters and their Miami Me's."

At first my mother and I thought that it was dumb, and that people only looked like their dogs in cartoons. But after Stephanie told my mom and me more about her story, and showed us pictures she found on the Internet of people resem-

bling their dogs, we started to see where she was coming from. After much discussion we all came to the conclusion that none of us looked like our dogs, but we had similar characteristics.

Stephanie always knew the best way to say something. When she told me that my dog and I had the same "goopy, bulgy eyes," I know she meant it in the nicest way possible.

And now that Stephanie's gone, and I'm writing this story in past tense,

which could possibly be one of the hardest things about dealing with a death, there's one thing that'll never be in the past, and that is that I love her, I miss her and will never forget her.

And Stephanie's infectious laughter, and love for life will always live on.

From The Best of Stevie, an ongoing memorial to Stevie Fiorino, Class of 2007 and an Oracleite in good standing. It was published her sophomore year.

By Stevie Fiorino
ETC. Editor 2004-2007

I was walking my dog after school the other day, and as we rounded a corner, approaching us was a hippie-looking woman with long, straight blond hair, walking an Afghan, which is a hippie-looking dog, with long, straight blond hair.

At first I just wanted to laugh because it looked so comical. This is when I began to realize that this was not the first time I had noticed a dog resembling its master.

I stopped for a minute to think, as I walked my St. Bernard: Do I look like a St. Bernard?

I decided I would delve a little deeper into this phenomenon. It just so happened that the Westminster Dog Show was replaying on ESPN that night.

As I watched each handler present his dog in the ring, it became glaringly apparent that owners and their dogs do resemble each other.

One of the first dogs to show was an Old English Bulldog. The wrinkles and jowls on him mated the wrinkles and jowls on the older gentleman guiding him around the

Stevie's Story

October 22, 2004

San Diego proved that it is true. But do they initially look alike, or do they grow to look alike?

Researchers took 25 photos of dogs and 25 photos of their owners. They then asked 28 students to match the pictures of the dogs to the pictures of their masters. Out of 25 pictures, the students correctly matched 16 and missed nine. They concluded that dogs and their owners do not grow to look like each other, but the similarities are there from the start. And it is prompted by vanity.

Bonding with Pedersen

By Krista Pedersen
Oracle Editor

The first step to my rehabilitation is to admit I have a problem. A fascinating, frustrating obsession, if you will. I am a Bond-aholic.

It all started in third grade. My Dad, who is notorious for creative (read: random) gift ideas, brought home a CD of all the James Bond movie theme songs through "Tomorrow Never Dies." Along with the CD came a little booklet with a summary of each film and commentary on the evolution of the James Bond franchise.

Keep in mind that when I discovered Bond, I was living on the tiny island of Okinawa, Japan, which is rich in culture but doesn't offer much in the form of recreation. During the two years I lived there we rented almost all of the films from our sorry excuse for a Blockbuster.

Now, nine years later, I consider myself as well-versed in Bond trivia as a female, non-sci-fi geek can be. I know why

Sean Connery wouldn't return for "On Her Majesty's Secret Service," and I remember that George Lazenby and David Niven also played Bond. I know how Pussy Galore became a cult favorite, and I've read most of the Ian Fleming novels. I am even the quasi-proud owner of the DVD boxsets, because my parents couldn't think of any better birthday presents.

The Bond series has had a great impact on this country, from inspiring countless other movies and television programs ("Get Smart" or "Indiana Jones," anyone?) to providing roughly 90 percent of the jokes in the Austin Powers trilogy. The Pierce Brosnan films, awful though they are, can be excused for their dreadfulness simply because they are Bonds.

Since the films strayed so dramatically from the books during the 1970s to the 1990s, I think it's great that the producers (actually, the original producer's daughter) brought the series back to its roots with "Casino Royale." How else will the new generation of Bond fans appreciate the superiority of Vesper Lynd, or understand how the "shaken,



Krista Pedersen
Krista's James Bond collection includes DVDs, tell-all books and novels, mostly gifts from well-meaning parents.

not stirred" vodka martini was born? It's important that these newbies know that there is more to 007 than simply making things blow up.

With the upcoming release of "Quantum of Solace," I thought I should finally come clean about my fixation. Maybe then I could enjoy the new film (preferably at midnight, if showings are offered) without interrupting everyone in the theater to give background information. But I'll probably still do that.

NOVEMBER '08

Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
31 Varsity Football vs. Lee, @ home, 7:30 p.m. 4th Oracle of the year comes out	1 Varsity Cheer Regional Finals 5 p.m. @ Robinson SAT, not at WS	2 Dance Team, Home 8:30 a.m.	3 Teacher Work Day	4 Teacher Work Day Election Day—please vote!	5 "Phantom of the Opera" star Hugh Panaro presents an entertaining evening 7:30 p.m.	6 Saxophone Day!
7 Varsity Football, Regional Quarter Finals 7:30 p.m. Report Cards Distributed	8 Varsity XC State Championships, TBA Varsity Cheer State Finals 3 p.m. @ VCU	9 First Issue of <i>Rolling Stone</i> was published in 1967	10 Nick Lachey's Birthday!	11 Three-Hour Delayed Opening For Students—Parents come to school for "Touching Bases" mini-conferences	12 Ryan Gosling's Birthday!	13 World Kindness Day!