



The

RAACOLE

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West Springfield High School 6100 Rolling Road Springfield, Virginia 22152

For cash-strapped seniors, \$109 ain't fine *Sponsors package all expenses together to make payment convenient*

By Veronica Adams

Oracle Staff writer

The class of 2009 has to pay \$109 for senior dues and the students are not pleased.

"I think it's an unnecessary amount to put on the students and the students should have more of a say in the matter," said senior David Dunham.

The dues pay for the cap and gown, diploma cover, the Patriot Center, panoramic picture, security, buses and the graduation speaker.

"We (the sponsors) put everything together so parents only have to write one check," said senior sponsor Vera Woodson.

Putting everything in a package is a better deal than buying everything separately. Prom is about \$25,000 so students need to understand how much money goes into

making their senior year memorable.

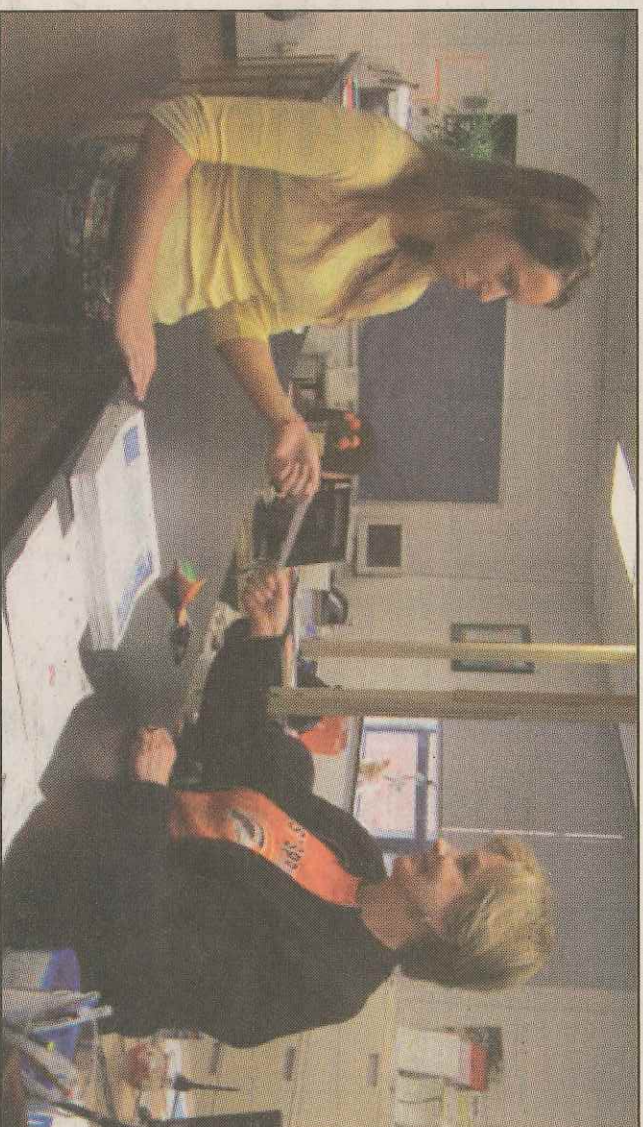
Every year the senior class must pay for major expenses, starting at the beginning of the year. The sponsors and class officers have to make sure the class has all the bills paid ahead of time so there won't be stress when graduation and prom comes around.

"From my experience with class of 2007, I don't think there will be a problem financially," said senior class sponsor Todd Johnson.

With prom and graduation being so expensive, the sponsors and class officers are working hard to negotiate costs to make sure seniors are getting fair prices.

"This year is a lot more work because we have to make up for the past three years," said senior officer

See "Dues" on Page 3.



Senior Regina Hechinger turns in her dues to Office Assistant Nancy Wood. Many are upset due to the cost.

Veronica Adams

Spartan Time now features reward time

By Sam Tak

ETC. Editor

As we transition into the second quarter and grow accustomed to Spartan Time, rumors have sprung up about drastic changes to the study period.

The administration has implemented Spartan Time changes for second quarter, but they pretty much mirror the original concept for the Tuesday and Wednesday time period.

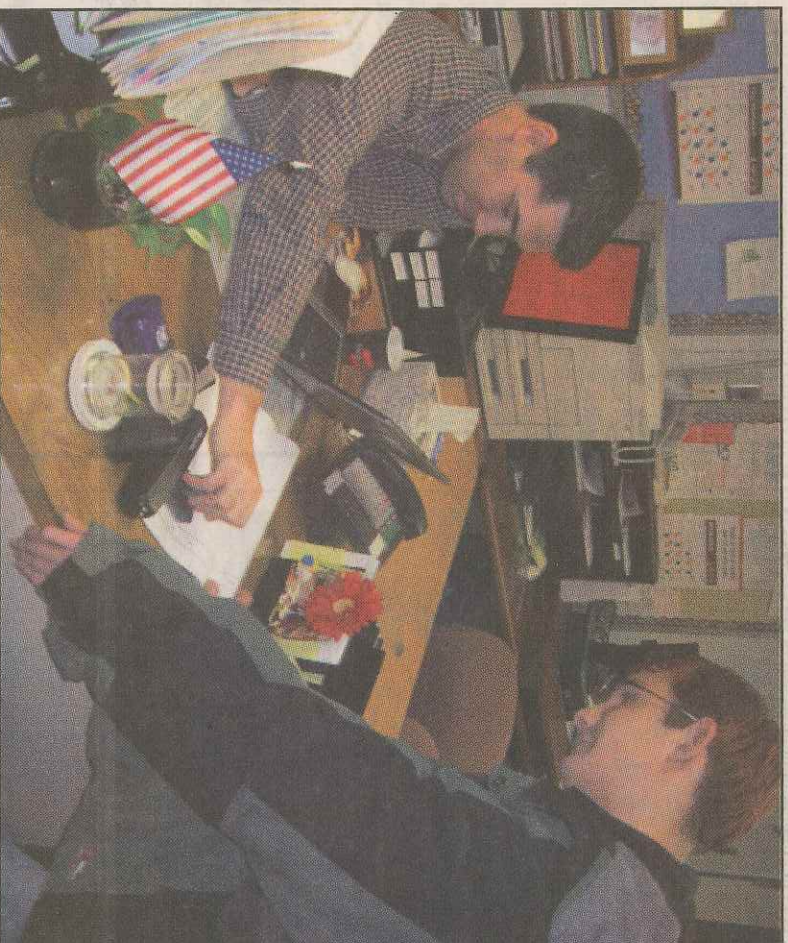
Spartan Time initially was conceived as a mandatory assistance time for failing students, with a cafeteria free-time option for those on the A-B Honor Roll. Now that the first quarter has ended, administrators know who is failing and who got all As and Bs, and so they're implementing their original plan.

Some welcome this new system as a way to streamline Spartan Time.

"It's got some good things, but I think it needs to be tweaked," said Calculus teacher Joseph Rogers. "We need to create more time and space for those who need help instead of squeezing everyone who doesn't need help and those who need help."

Students who need help (those with Ds or Fs) will get first priority in classrooms, and Honor Roll students can go to the cafeteria instead of crowding into teachers' rooms.

A rumor has circulated that Spartan Time will now be held on Tuesday in addition to Wednesday and Thursday. While there are no



Sophomore Andrew Gower-Anderson gets his agenda stamped by counselor Alex Gorman.

Xavia Warner

formal plans to implement this change, students and teachers have already taken sides.

The shortening of class time to accommodate Spartan Time cuts down on instructional time, particularly for seventh-period classes. Government teacher Ellen Pastor, who teaches a seventh period, worries that Tuesday Spartan Time would only make this worse.

"If it were three days a week, we would have less instructional time," said Pastor.

Academy students who leave for their off-campus classes during Spartan Time also have to cope with scheduling conflicts and

the possibility of being late to class. Adding more time to Spartan Time would only add to their troubles.

"Spartan Time already makes me 30 minutes late to Academy classes," said senior Naghmahna Kauser, "and adding more time would make me more late."

However, the rumor that Spartan Time was going to be changed to three days a week has recently been debunked when administrators announced that only initially planned changes

See "Spartan Time" on Page 2.

SGA sponsors show different face this year *Fawsett, Alukonis take over student government with a few new ideas*

By Megan Winslow

Features Editor

With a new year, comes a new schedule. With new classes, come new books. And this year with new Student Government Association officers, come new sponsors.

Betsy Fawsett and JT Alukonis have taken over the jobs as SGA sponsors previously held by Simon Schatmeyer and Marianne Razzino.

"I enjoy working with kids and I'm also the cheerleading coach so I have a lot of school spirit and enthusiasm," said Fawsett.

Both sponsors are focusing on making improvements for WS to make a better environment for students and teachers to work in.

"I wanted to be involved in helping make the school a better place," said Alukonis. "Things needed to be done around the school and I think I can do a good job helping the students."

Last year, the SGA took part in purchasing the plasma TVs for the school. Now the SGA has two major improvements on their list.

"This year we have two big goals: improve

See "SGA" on Page 2.

Non-traditional
Thanksgivings



8-16

We say
goodbye
to 'TRL.'



11

Brothers
knead same
surgery.



14

Snatched while shopping

Springfield Mall kidnapping causes some to stay away

By Sam Landers

Oracle Editor

After several stabbings and a recent abduction of a 61-year-old woman, Springfield Mall has become a dangerous place.

Because of safety concerns, local residents have decided to spend their shopping dollars elsewhere.

Two male teenagers abducted Barbara Bosworth at Springfield Mall and proceeded onto a high speed chase toward Woodbridge in Prince William County. In Woodbridge, the boys and Bosworth stopped at a PDQ Mart where a bystander became suspicious.

The man hugged the woman, pretending to be long-time friends while actually exchanging information that help was needed. After the three left the mart, the man called the police who immediately acted on the situation. The abduction ended in two fatalities, as the driver lost control and crashed into a tree. Unfortunately, one of the

deaths was Bosworth, who died at the scene. The two teenagers were rushed to a local hospital where the passenger died. The driver is still in critical condition at the local hospital.

Though there have been problems in the past, some were still unaware of the dangers associated with the mall.

"I never thought anything bad would happen [at Springfield Mall]," said senior Sally Kim.

The recent abduction will affect many people in the Springfield community. With past stabbings and now this crime, students may feel going to Tysons or Fair Oaks are safer options.

"I think that Tysons, Fair Oaks and even Pentagon City are better options because you don't ever hear about crimes there," said senior Hillary Jeti.

Others are not as affected by the potential dangers at the shopping center.

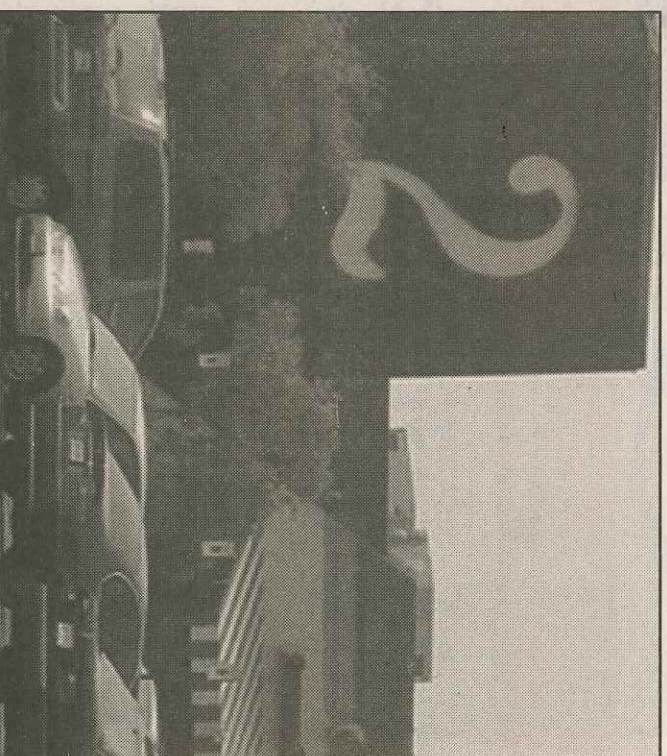
"I pray every time I go to the mall...but I still gotta get my Auntie Anne's."

—Matt Barrett
Sophomore

"I pray every time I go to the mall," sophomore Matthew Barrett says with a giggle, "but I still gotta get my Auntie Anne's," he said, referring to the well-known pretzel stand.

Although the abduction of Bosworth did scare the community, it is an impossibility that people will stop going there all together. Shoppers of all ages, sizes and sexes should travel in groups and be aware of their surroundings.

"I think [the recent abduction] it is very sad and I would say to people who are going to Springfield Mall to be careful," said sophomore Andrew Gower-Anderson.



Associated Press

A series of dangerous incidents at Springfield Mall, including the kidnapping and death of an Alexandria woman, have caused residents to think twice before venturing to the local shopping center.

Spartan Time=flex time

A/B students have cafeteria option, while others get special schedules to pull up grades

"Spartan Time," from Page 1.

to Spartan Time would be implemented.

"Kids who got an F last quarter are assigned special time schedules and they will be assigned to go to that teacher for that half of the quarter. For kids on the A&B Honor Roll, we'll open up the cafeteria for them so they can do homework, socialize, and play games," said Suzanne Taber, Principal Paul Wardinski's administrative assistant. "It's sort of their reward."

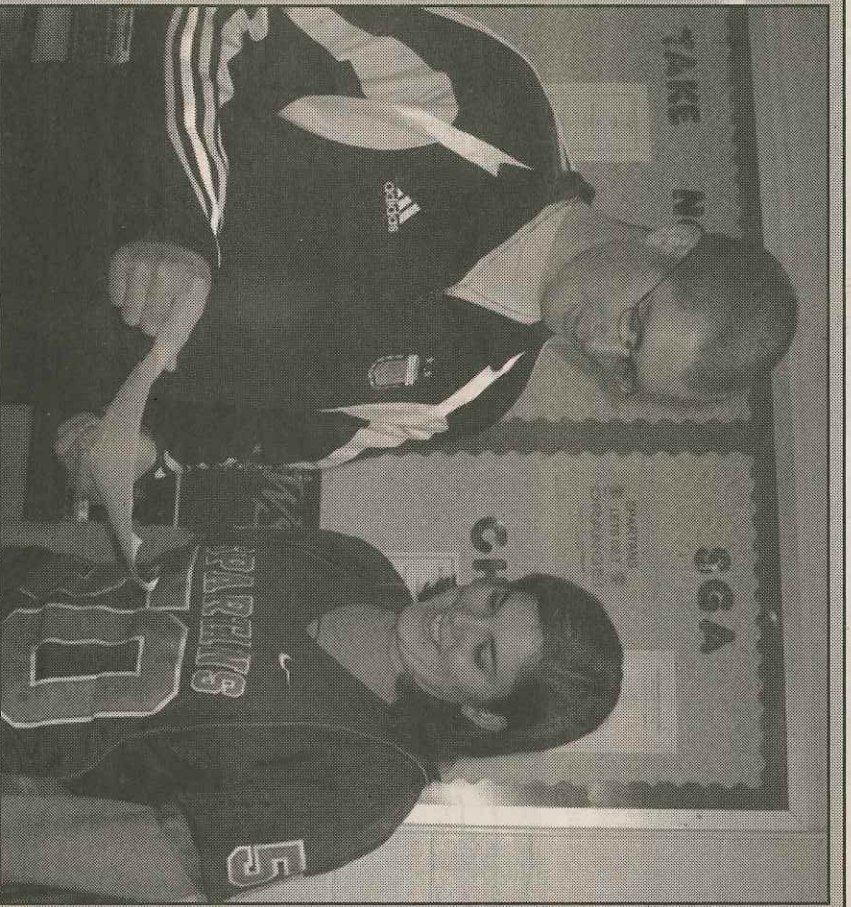
Scheduling students who are failing a class to go to that specific teacher for help while students on the A&B Honor Roll can relax in the cafeteria should solve the overcrowding problem in classes during Spartan Time. Though this scheduling isn't universal-

"For kids on the A&B Honor Roll, we'll open up the cafeteria for them so they can do homework, socialize and play games. It's sort of their reward."

—Suzanne Taber
administrative assistant

ly popular, reactions to the study time itself are still positive.

"Spartan Time is helpful but it needs some improvement," said junior Glenn Feinberg.



Megan Winslow

New sponsors John Alukonis and Betsy Fawsett have big plans for the SGA this year.

Change could be a good thing

New SGA sponsors considering new stadium speakers

"SGA," from Page 1.

the speakers in the stadium or raise money to help purchase a new sign for Rolling Road," said Alukonis.

The SGA is responsible for organizing all school sponsored events outside those run by other clubs. This includes all Homecoming week events such as Mr. Spartan, the spirit days, the parade and the dance.

"We [the SGA] think of themes and organize school activities," said sophomore Paige Babel.

Fawsett and Alukonis are not planning on drastically changing the SGA.

"I don't anticipate any major changes, but if the student officers want change, we're open to it," said Fawsett.

Last year's sponsors were a good example for Fawsett and Alukonis to follow and this year's officers are ready to live up to it.

"They left us with everything from the last two or three years, so it's easy to take everything already done," said Alukonis.

"What makes it worth doing is we have a great group...to work with."

—John Alukonis
New SGA co-sponsor

"It's not going to be perfect. We've never done it before, but we'll help where we see places that need change."

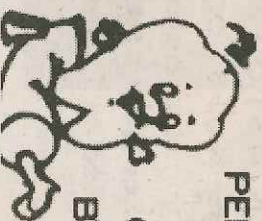
As the name implies, the SGA is mainly run by the students. Each year the student body votes rising seniors to act as SGA officers. "The officers are calling the shots and right now we're winging it, but it's going good," said senior and SGA officer Kara Crumpton.

In the end, the SGA is run by students for students. Fawsett and Alukonis are happy to work with them.

"I think what makes it worth doing is we have a great group of kids to work with," said Alukonis.

CAROL WOODDELL, D.D.S.

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A few students express fear for Halloween SAT test date

By Susie Cho

Oracle Staff Writer

Halloween is an event of dressing up in costumes and trick-or-treating for candy. For seniors, the night of Halloween was a time to prepare for the SATs.

The fall SATs took place on November 1st this year, the day after Halloween. This unfavorable circumstance left students stranded at home and feeling anxious the night before the big test.

"I couldn't do anything for Halloween," said senior Summer Bishop.

Students' parents were concerned that Halloween would affect how well students take the test.

"My mom wouldn't let me stay out late the day before the SATs," said Bishop.

Students who stayed up too late woke up too exhausted in the morning to take the test.

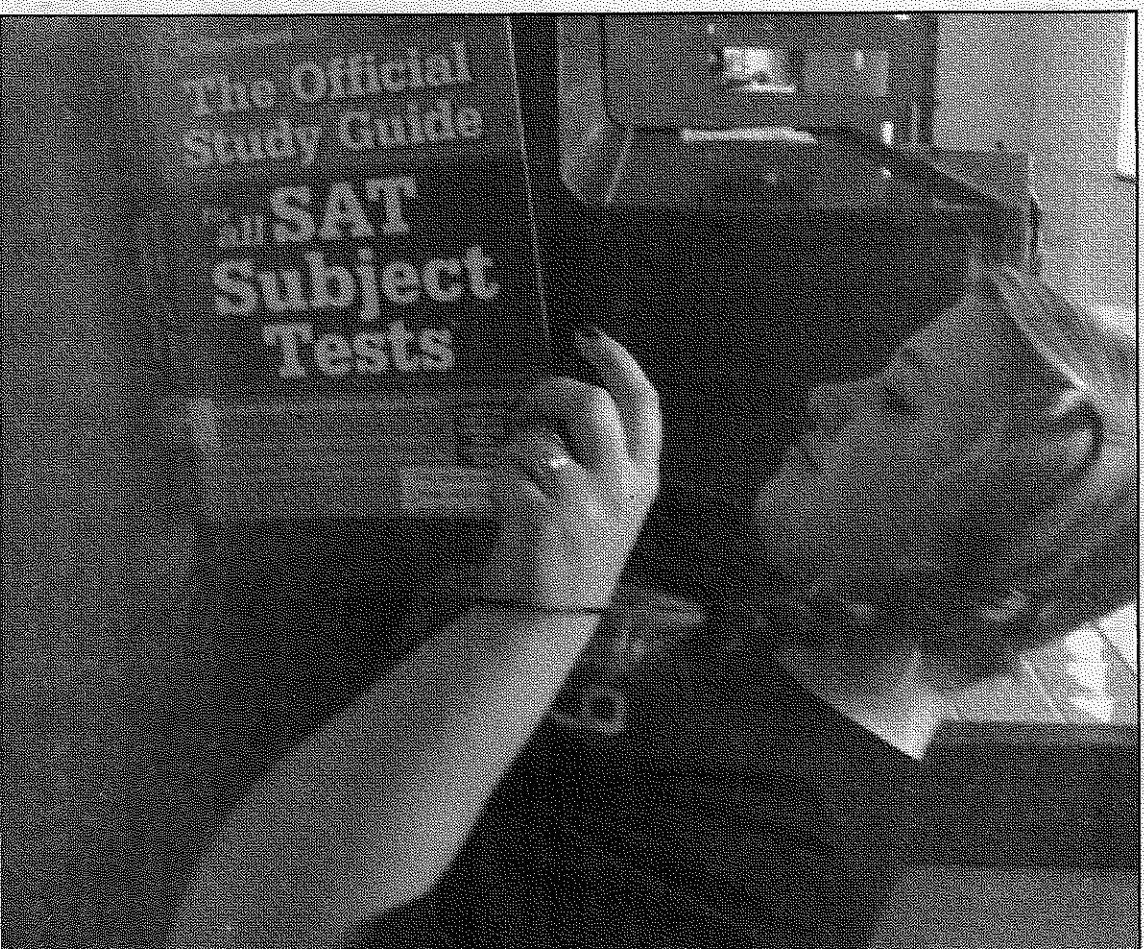
Partying, eating candy and going out all night could result in poor test taking the next day. Students had to face the responsibility of knowing when to save the festivity for another night.

"They'll be too tired to concentrate on the test," said Bishop.

Widely celebrated holidays like Halloween can distract students from studying and doing their best on the SATs.

A more important factor of how well one takes the test is how well he or she prepares for it.

The SAT is an extensive test that requires prior preparation and study time before it is taken. Students get themselves ready by taking practice tests and even prep courses to study beforehand.



Susie Cho

Senior Summer Bishop reviews before taking the SAT November 1, the day after Halloween. "Halloween should not be a big effect because you're supposed to study for the SATs all year long," said senior Caroline Kocabay.

The SATs are taken seriously as colleges determine which students are qualified for acceptance. Rushing at the last minute as an attempt of studying will not result in a desired outcome.

The timing of this year's fall SATs dawned as a burden to Halloween celebrating stu-

dents, but with the right time management and preparation, waking up the next morning to take a test was not as disappointing as it sounds.

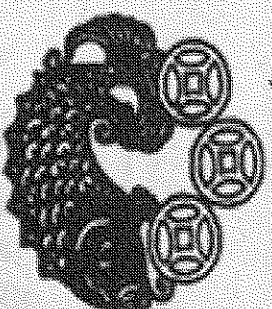
Aside from being worn out from staying out too late, students could have struggled on the SATs if they did not study.

"If you didn't know the information by then, cramming won't do anything," said Kocabay.

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Seniors shell out for dues in package

Officers plan additional fundraisers to help defray 2009 graduation costs

"Dues," from Page 1.

Jen Tran

The senior officers say they have had to work really hard this year because there weren't many successful fundraisers during freshman, sophomore and junior year.

The senior dues won't cover all the expenses of the year. To raise funds they sold two types of T-shirts, food at Spartan fest and worked at the school on Election Day by selling Chic-fil-A sandwiches and muffins to the voters.

The senior class representatives aren't done yet, they plan to have a fundraiser at Noodles and Co. on November 19 for students to bring their friends and family.

Senior year is the most expensive time of the high school experience, and the class wants to help pay for all the costly events that take place during this final year. The representatives are trying to make prices fair and allow the seniors to have an enjoyable year.

"As long as Prom and graduation are successful, all the hard work this year will be worth it," said senior Lindsay Smith.

Senior year is the most expensive time of the high school experience, and the class wants to help make things fair.

Silent Announcements keep students uninformed

New system for announcements is ineffective for informing students of school events

Editorial

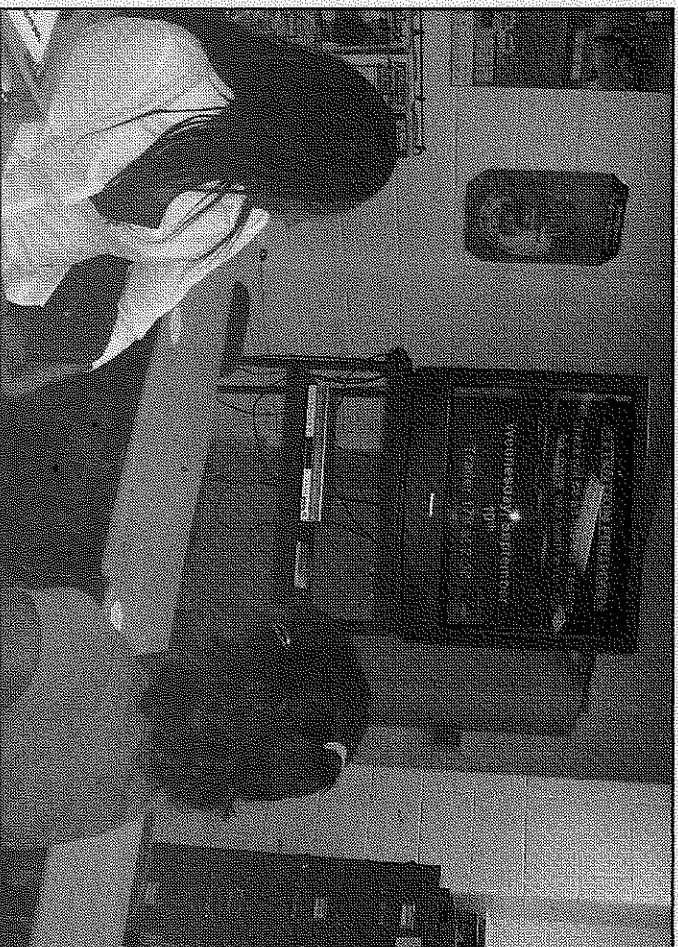
Crucial information is no longer easily obtained.

Club sponsors are growing more and more angry this school year because students are missing more and more meetings and club activities. It's not entirely the students' fault; they just don't have an efficient way to stay informed.

The silent announcements have way too many flaws. Can the administration really trust students to sit quietly and watch the announcements on a boring PowerPoint slide-show?

That is, of course, assuming that there are no technical difficulties that day, and that the teacher was able to get the TV turned on and hooked up in time (if there is in fact a TV in their room.)

What's to stop the teachers from teaching through the announcements anyways? Many teachers don't understand the importance of the announcements and force students to complete class work during that time. One could make the argument that if the



Lena Nelson and Mykela Graham watch the silent announcements on one of the many televisions throughout the school. It now takes a long time sitting in front of one of these televisions to stay informed about club meetings, sports practices and other school events.

Jen Laming

teacher neglects to turn on the TV, then it is the student's responsibility to view the announcements on the other TVs around the school. Although this may be true, the only students able to do that are the few standing at Senior Rail and crowding the hallway during break and before school. Only a few students get informed about what is happening around our school from these TVs.

The next step advised would be to observe the flyers around the school. This method is also becoming increasingly ineffective since clubs and societies must only place posters on the few new and inconvenient bulletin boards in the hallways. Flyers are no longer allowed to be hung on the walls and are therefore less viewed by the student population.

More students would probably stop and get informed by the TVs placed around the school if there was more time allotted between classes and we weren't pressed for time.

PA and video announcements, once beloved by our student population, may have flaws of their own, but we believe they were much more effective, not to mention more entertaining.

Subs parking perturbs seniors

Substitute teachers are told to park in reserved spots

By Ellie Greene

Photo Editor

Every morning, sleep-deprived seniors wake up, get ready, and head off to school. Dreading the day ahead, the only upside to the morning is seeing all the juniors parked on Rolling and Hillside, sitting in their cars or walking to school and knowing that they've been sitting there for at least a half an hour already. Feeling only too happy to be a senior, they pull into the senior lot.

Being a senior myself, I fully enjoy the privilege of having my own senior spot. Being able to wake up later than the crack of dawn is a refreshing experience for someone who is definitely not a morning person. However, to my dismay, I arrived at school one morning to find a silver Toyota parked in my purchased spot. Not knowing what to do, I parked in one of the visitors' spots alongside the baseball field. Figuring it was some misunderstanding, I decided not to report the car parked in my spot and walked into school extremely annoyed.

Right after the dismissal bell I quickly went to my locker, walked into the parking lot, and waited by the car in my spot to see who it belonged to. When a middle-aged woman start-

ed heading in the direction of the car, I quickly got myself together and approached her. The woman was a substitute at the school that day and didn't know where to park. When she called the school, they told her she could park in any spot after the number 60. My spot, being above the number 60, ended up being the lucky spot she chose to park in. After the conflict was resolved, I headed over to my car.

On my way home, I wondered to myself why the school would tell the substitute that she could park in any spot above the number 60. The parking lot is equipped with visitor spots all along the baseball field and the whole first row in the parking lot. It's not fair that seniors pay for their parking spots but that they are also free game for anyone visiting the school. When I bought a reserved spot, I was under the assumption that the spot was reserved for me and me only. It's extremely unfair that the school, which sells the reserved spots to the seniors, would openly tell people they could park there. When someone calls the school asking where to park because they are a visitor, the school should direct them to the numerous visitor spots that are not already reserved to other people. It's not fair to offer up spots that seniors paid for to people that have not paid for them.



100

Ellie Greene

Substitute teachers are directed to park in the senior lot, taking the spots that senior students pay for.

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Barack Obama is in the House

After long anticipation, the US finally has a president-elect



Thomas Ariate

On their way to the polls this past November 2nd, voters found themselves swarmed with candidates' advertisements in order to have a secure vote. Surely, these ads had an effect for the election of the nation's newest president, Barack Obama.

By Thomas Ariate
Page One Editor

Change, change, change.

It's about the only thing I have heard over these last two years. Low and behold the master of change himself, Barack Obama, has been elected into the Oval Office. After two years of campaigning, it's all over. Now the big question on everyone's lips (except the liberal media) is whether or not he will be able to live up to all the "change" that we have heard so much about.

Now that Obama has Congress under his command I see no reason why he wouldn't be able to change everything that is wrong with our government. We should be able to stop the crashing stock

After two years of campaigning, it's all over. Now the big question on everyone's lips is whether or not he will be able to live up to all the "change" that we have heard so much about.

market and help out our good friend, Joe the Plumber. There is one ray of light at the end of the tunnel, and that is: I no longer have to listen to people saying everything is Bush's fault. I understand that Bush is not the smartest person that was ever put into the White House, but he was not a bad president. People say that all of the recent events are his fault, but what they fail to realize is that for the past two years the Democrats have had the majority in Congress. On July 16, 2008 Congress (with Democrats in majority) had the lowest approval rating of 14%. So even though Democrats are the current powerhouse in Congress this political party doesn't seem to be doing anything right. Now that Obama is the president elect and Congress is still Democratic, nothing bad that happens can be blamed on our nation's favorite scapegoat, George Bush.

Another positive from this election, besides the fact that we have the first African American in the White House, is the turn out of voters that we saw throughout the US. This was due to the fact that so many people were informed about this election, after a two year campaign everyone should know all about the candidates.

Now we have four years of new leadership, and for all of our sakes lets hope all this change is as good as it sounds.

Please, and thank you

By Jessica Wholiers
Managing Editor

Not meaning to brag, but I would say I am a polite person. But I have found that the wording of my title, "high-schooler," makes a difference; remember, high-schoolers are supposed to be impolite, rude and nonchalant about the way they treat their superiors.

That said, just because staff members may have the title of "adult" that does not give them the green light to pull out their rude attitude and show students disrespect. How can they expect us to say things politely and with a smile when some of them treat us first with a snobby attitude when all we did was pleasantly ask a question or

ask for assistance?

I'm not talking about Oracle interviews or when a student raises her hand in class and asks a silly question. I am focusing on the part of this school that interacts with the public: the "face" of WS.

Politeness is a two-way street, where age differences between two people should be disregarded.

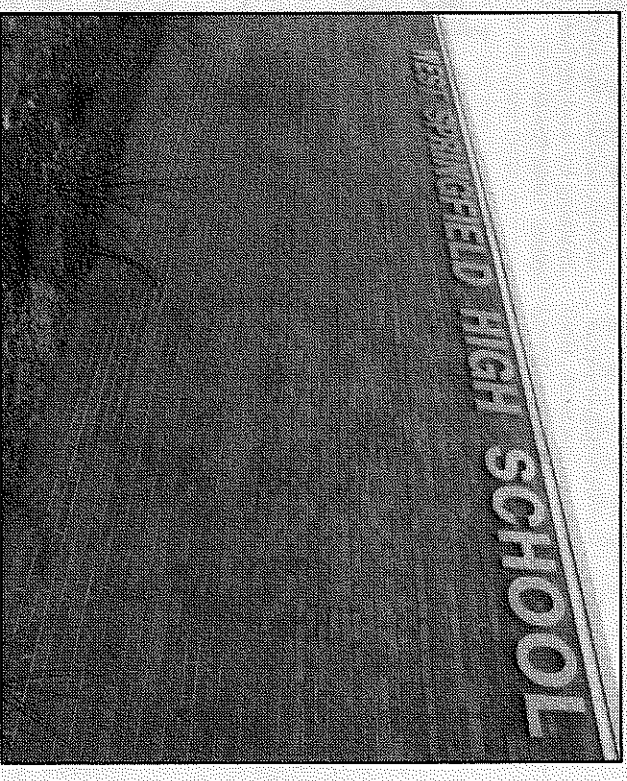
If I address an adult here with respect, then I expect to be replied to in a tone similar to the one I used. When staff members come across as impolite and like they have simply no time to squeeze me into their busy day, I feel like I am wasting their time.

In reality my question needs only a 30-second response. It only takes one rude statement to forever

put a bad spin on that particular office or staff member. Unfortunately, first impressions do matter.

Last year the school fixed our name on the front of the building, by adding the needed "R" to the sign. Beautification Day was also implemented as a yearly event to improve the appearance of WS to the public eye. If we spend this much time revamping the outside, I think as just as much time should be invested in an Internal Beautification Day. In my opinion, the "face" of our school could use a lift.

I am honestly not asking you to like me or to become a best buddy or BFF for life. Just please be pleasant and I think you will be happily surprised that teens can be pretty nice after all.



Jessica Wholiers

We beautified the outside of our school, but why not the inside? If the school had a Beautification Day, in which the school surroundings and name got fixed, we should beautify the inside as well by being nicer people.

Seniors go too far

Juniors get '09' written on their cars parked on Rolling Road

By Kyle Snyder
Sports Editor

One day after school, juniors who parked on Rolling Road saw that their cars had been marked with orange and blue paint.

It was a senior skip day, and some seniors decided to show their class spirit by writing slogans such as "09" and "seniors" on the windows of the juniors' cars.

Many juniors were shocked and upset when they discovered what had happened. In most cases, the paint was only used on the windows.

The seniors went too far in one circumstance, and there was damage done to the paint of a car. The bumper sticker on the car of junior Bri Lyn which read, "My pig is smarter than your honor student" had the words, "We ate your pig" on it.

"It's my car, you don't touch my car," said Lyn, "I was very angry."

"They skipped school, bought paint, and actually spent the time to paint the cars, which was reversed in three minutes' time. The seniors may have thought this was a worthwhile prank, but in reality it immature and not funny."

Not only was "'09' written on the windows of cars, but inappropriate words were also drawn on the windows in orange and blue paint.

Besides this bumper sticker being destroyed, the paint was easily removed from the windows. In for example, easily took the paint

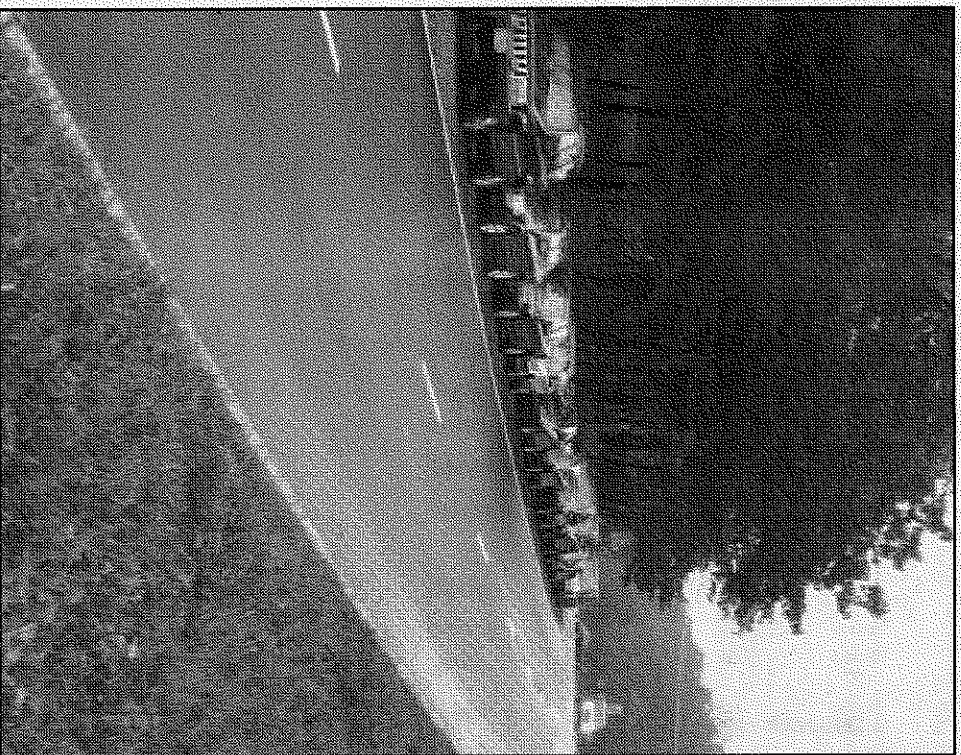
off the windshield, and then went home and cleaned off the rest of the windows in less than five minutes.

This made me think. The seniors that did this put a lot of effort into a prank that wasn't very funny or creative at all. They skipped school, bought paint, and actually spent the time to paint the cars, which was reversed in three minutes' time. The seniors may have thought this was a worthwhile prank, but in reality it immature and not funny.

In addition to all of this effort, they risked putting themselves in legal trouble if some of the paint got on the body of the car.

"It's not serious because there was no permanent damage done to the cars," said Student Resource Officer Joseph Plazio, "If there was any damage done, there would have been criminal charges."

Was this prank worth "of this trouble"? No, I think not. Those seniors who wasted their valuable senior skip day on this prank, the joke's on you.



Kyle Snyder

During this year's traditional Senior Skip Day, juniors received a not so friendly gesture. Seniors showed their pride by writing "09" on the car windows of juniors' cars that were parked along Rolling Road. Juniors saw it as an offense, while seniors thought it would be a hilarious prank. If the writing had gone any further, seniors would have gotten criminal charges.

Senior says so long in January

Camacho finishes high school before family moves to Guam

By Megan Winslow
Features Editor

By the time their final year rolls around, many seniors are ready to leave high school behind. For one senior this moment comes a little sooner than most.

Like so many other WS students, Hannah Camacho has a parent in the military. Her step-father is in the Navy and has received orders to move to Guam in February. Instead of being the new kid at school in a new country half way through her senior year, Camacho decided to take online courses to get all the credits she needs to graduate before she moves.

"This way I don't have to start at another school," said Camacho. "I take government and English 12 online."

In order for Camacho to finish her online courses by January, she is supposed to take twenty to thirty hours of online work a week. This doubles the amount of time Camacho spends doing school work.

"I try to do five hours a night. It's a lot of work, but it's easy," said Camacho.

Other than being able to e-mail teachers questions, Camacho is completely independent when it comes to her online work. Both Camacho and her parents think this will help

her later in life.

"I think she is learning more because she has to study harder than if she were in a traditional classroom," said Camacho's mother, Dawn Blade.

Though she will finish her high school classes in January, Camacho will still graduate with the rest of her classmates in June.

"It's not considered graduating early because graduating early means finishing high school in three years or less," said counselor Jeff Stahl.

After what will feel like an endless summer, Camacho still plans to go to college in the fall. Though her high school situation is uncommon, it will not affect her college application process.

"If there are reasons you do the things you do and the colleges know the reasoning, they are understanding," said Susan Rexford. "Overall colleges are more understanding than we think they are."

Not only is Camacho gaining from the material she learns, she is also receiving the opportunity to learn life lessons with her online courses.

"I hope Hannah will gain a better feeling of responsibility and know she can achieve anything by working hard and having discipline," said Blade.

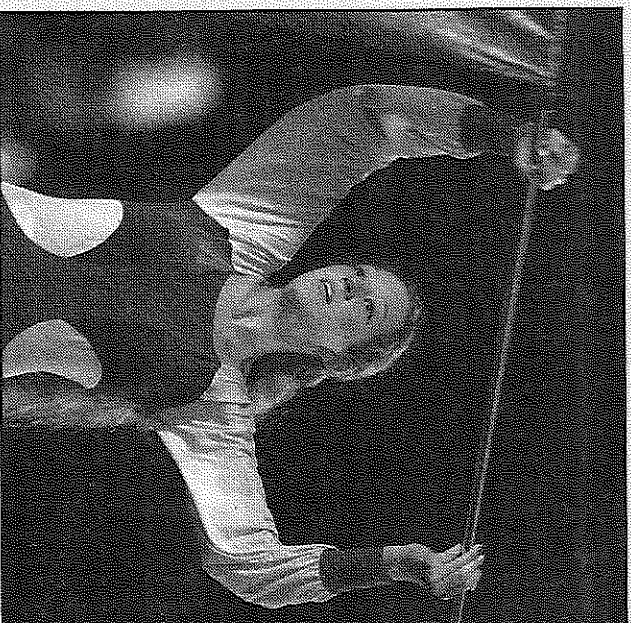


Megan Winslow

Senior Hannah Camacho spends twenty to thirty hours every week taking online courses in order to receive her high school credits by January, doubling the amount of school work she has. "I try to do five hours a night. It's a lot of work, but it's easy," said Camacho.

New coach shows her experience to Color Guard

Schmitt shows team how hard work, practice and a little bit of fun can make all the difference



Liaetouch

Though new to coaching, math teacher Karilee Schmitt is no stranger to Color Guard and baton twirling. She was the captain of her own high school Color Guard team and has been twirling since she was three years old. "Everything she brings is a unique style and different," said sophomore Britany Beim.

By Sara Blaylock
Oracle Staff Writer

Going from inconsistent practices and no show coaches to winning the "AIA" (winter/indoor league) championships the next year, the Color Guard has been making a huge comeback.

The team this year practices run on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, followed by games on Friday and competitions on Saturday and Sunday which usually last all day.

New as of last year, Math teacher and baton twirling/Color Guard coach Ms. Karilee Schmitt has brought her experience and it shows.

Since she was captain of her own high school team and has twirled since she was three, Schmitt knows what she is talking about.

"She was a dancer so she helped out with Color Guard and helped with the baton too," said sophomore Nicci Bazan, who was on Color Guard last year as a freshman.

Schmitt not only helps the team to improve their skills, she also does it in a way that keeps her team motivated.

"She's such a great coach" said sophomore, Julie Burkhardt. She's the best thing ever and she makes our practices fun. She not only coaches the Color Guard well, but the encouragement she gives pushes the team."

Two years ago, Coach Phlehel was not around every practice and was coaching solo. This year is taken a lot more

"She's the best thing ever and she makes our practices fun."

—Julie Burkhardt
Sophomore

seriously and with two coaches, Phlehel for flag work and Schmitt for dance and baton and the chances of always having a coach at practice are better.

The Color Guard won 3rd place in Championships November 1.

"We worked really hard for this," said sophomore Britany Beim.

Starting with going to band camp with the band in August and having occasional practices in July, the Guard worked hard for this fall season and ended it with a kick.

With their season now over, the Color Guard is now focusing on and looking forward to getting ready for their indoor competitions.

"I've never been an instructor before last year" said Schmitt.

With all her personal experience, Schmitt knows what's best for the team and she makes it unique and fun. Her passion and love for the competition has caused the Color Guard to improve and enjoy their fall season.

"Everything she brings is a unique style and different,"

Sophomore brings on the pings

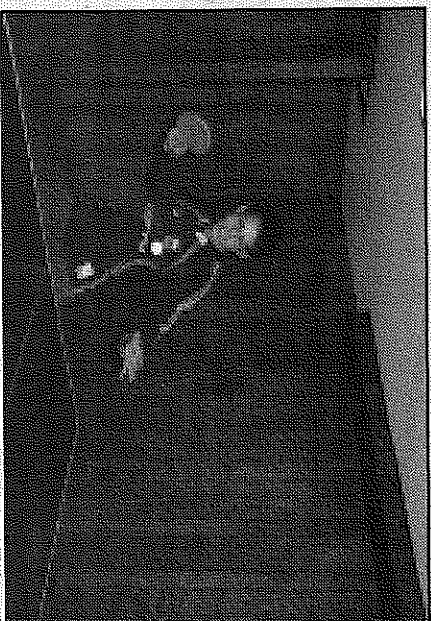
By Cristina Sullivan
Entertainment Editor

Ping pong isn't your typical high school sport. The average person would probably envision an intense game of it in the summer Olympics, or two teenagers leisurely playing it in their basement. Sophomore Fernando Ayala has a different opinion of the sport and wants to bring it to WS.

Although he plays on the boys' soccer team, Ayala is beginning a ping pong club. No meetings have occurred yet, but students have made verbal agreements and become members of the growing facebook group to pledge their support.

"I wanted to start something new and fun," said Ayala. "I've played with friends in houses before and a lot of people like the idea of it."

School counselor Jeff Stahl was recently asked to be the sponsor and accepted the invitation. A group of his sophomores took up leadership roles and came up with the plan



All Yearcoobi

Sophomore Fernando Ayala plays ping pong in a friend's basement after school. Ayala plans to add ping pong to the long list of WS clubs. "I wanted to start something new and fun," said Ayala.

for it.

"I've never really played ping pong but the students have looked up rules and competitions online," said Stahl.

Not only is the head of the club aiming for success, but so are the other students who are expected to join. They are looking to hold their meetings in the main gym at least three times a week if it doesn't conflict with basketball and compete with schools in the surrounding area.

"Fernando has paper work, so hopefully we will start soon," said junior Bradley Sanford. "It is a sophisticated sport that can help me get into college."

Once the club commences its meetings, the group anticipates ample participation so that it can continue all year long. The students also hope to receive donations from the community or obtain equipment from Craigslist on the internet.

"It sounds like a lot of fun," said Stahl. "We are looking to bring the great sport of ping pong to the forefront of Fairfax County."

Gibson's fashion-forward

By Josh McNamara
Oracle Staff Writer

Creativity can be expressed in many different ways. Junior Taylor Gibson makes a statement by designing clothes.

"My grandma got me into designing," says Gibson. "She bought me my first fabric. She inspired me to work hard."

Gibson started to make her own clothes about two years ago. As any modest designer would, she does not wear her designs. She relies on her family and teachers to sport the fashions and spread the message.

"I noticed she had a T-shirt on and asked her where she got it," said Spanish teacher Anne Wymne. "She said she made it and that she would make one for me. I spread the message because I thought the shirt was very cute and fashionable."

Thanks to Wymne, people can see Gibson's designs and she can gain support as an upcoming designer. In fact, people are already beginning to wonder how she got into designing.

"My grandma gave me a mannequin and I create clothes using that," said Gibson.

She uses magazines and fashion news to create the trendiest clothes possible.

"I think [her designs are] cool. I would wear her clothes," said junior Christie Fabish, one of Gibson's close friends.

To advertise her up-and-coming fashion designs, Gibson created T-shirts that show off the line. She uses customink.com to show off her label, since none of her other creations show a name.

"You can play with color and fonts [on Custom Ink]," said Gibson. "But most of my stuff doesn't have a logo; they're just regular clothes."

Gibson lists her inspirations as her grandmother, Mrs. Woodson, and designer Cristobal Balenciaga.

"[Balenciaga's] clothes are just so amazing. I don't design my clothes after him, but they're just so amazing," said Gibson.

Gibson didn't just pick up a passion for fashion when she got into high school.

"I have always loved clothes since I was little," said Gibson.



Josh McNamara
Junior Taylor Gibson displays a shirt featuring the logo she designed for her line of clothes. Gibson designs clothing in her spare time using a mannequin her grandmother gave to her.

A win for Wong!

By Ally Mackin
Senior Staff Writer

If understanding the individual needs of students, encouraging their talents and fostering their self-esteem are just a few of the qualifications for the Washington Post's Agnes Meyer Outstanding Teacher Award, then WS teacher Ann Wong has got it in the bag.

As an AP Academic Coordinator and well-known Biology teacher, Wong displays a strong and positive outlook each and every day. She was first informed that she would be PTSA Teacher of the Year and the school's nominee during spring of last year.

With students presenting different learning styles teachers have to

accommodate their instructions to all different types.

"The one thing that I try is to be consistent with my enthusiasm and positive energy with all my classes," said Wong.

Getting an early jump into teaching was Wong's main goal. She first started teaching right after graduating from Virginia Tech in 1994 with a major in Biology, minor in Chemistry and a VA teaching license. She was then quickly appointed as a teacher at a middle school for three years before coming to her senses and becoming a Spartan in 1997.

Accepting this nomination by the school was extremely flattering to Wong. The many qualifications for being nominated include demonstrating an outstanding leader-

ship, representing a through knowledge of the subject matter as well as the ability to share it with students effectively, instilling in students a desire to learn and achieve and produce cooperative relationships with colleagues and the community. For Wong, the love of teaching comes naturally from her students.

"My students inspire me daily; I know I am lucky to be in a profession that I truly love and enjoy," said Wong. "I enjoy coming to school, sharing my knowledge of my subject and hopefully inspiring my student's capacity, whether it's opening their eyes to how great Biology is or just getting them to reach their full potential as students as well as responsible community members."



Ann Wong Photo
Biology teacher Ann Wong, seen here with Physics teacher Ed Linz on Halloween, has been nominated for the Washington Post's Agnes Meyer Outstanding Teacher Award after winning PTSA Teacher of the Year.

MacRae's memorial Capstone set in stone

By Jennifer Nguyen
Oracle Staff Writer
Marker built to honor fallen Spartans

WS graduates who gave their lives in the Armed Services are finally getting the tribute they deserve.

Senior Corey MacRae decided to do a military commemorative stone for his Eagle Scout and Capstone projects. His Capstone is a community service project in which all seniors are required to participate. Students have to devote ten hours to a community service and do a follow up on their experience.

"It's a memorial for the graduates that died in the act of duty. Mr. O'Reilly gave me options for a project and I chose this one," said MacRae.

The main reason behind the memorial is to honor the hometown heroes who sacrificed their lives to keep America safe. The project helps students remember and relate to the soldiers who died because they either came to the memorial because they knew a person who had passed away or simply came out of respect.

"I learned that it's always good to honor the deceased," said MacRae.

The tribute is planned to take place outside in the courtyard where a marker is placed

"I did this to complete the Capstone project and to honor the Armed Services... I learned that it's always good to honor the deceased."

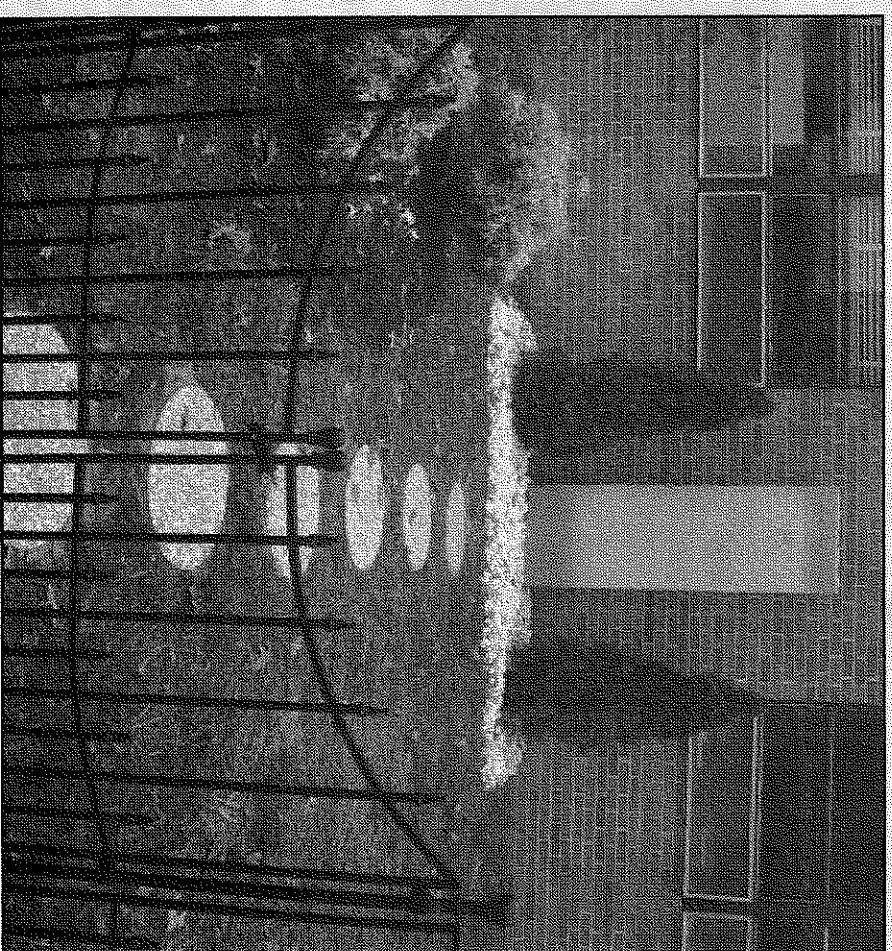
— *Corey MacRae, Senior*

with engravings of the deceased's names. Two-foot-high fences and swinging gates surround the marker making a bordering landmark.

Students, faculty, and the community are welcome to visit at their convenience. The difficult aspect of the project was making the list of all the departed graduates, but MacRae had assistance from his friends over the weekend when he did his project, which sped up the process.

"Ten people came and helped. We had to research online records, talk to teachers, and the Veterans Affairs (VA)," said MacRae.

For such a complex memorial to occupy school ground for a long time, the budget was expensive and the arrangement was time-consuming. The school gave little aid to



Celina Donohue

Junior Taylor Gibson displays a shirt featuring the logo she designed for her line of clothes. Gibson designs clothing in her spare time using a mannequin her grandmother gave to her.

MacRae, so he raised most of the money and did all of the work himself.

"I planned out the design. The school paid for a portion and I fundraised," said MacRae.

The memorial is designed to recognize and admire the sacrifice of Spartans in the past while it also salutes those who died in

the line of duty. MacRae is proud of his achievement and glad that he got to do some good in the community through his assignment.

"I did this to complete the Capstone project and to honor the Armed Services," said MacRae.

A tantalizing twist on Thanksgiving

Families step away from the turkey and televis

Sanford savors the Italian style

A not-so-traditional meal shakes up Thanksgiving tradition

Most of us are attacked, squeezed, and smooched by very cuddly yet clingy grandmothers and aunts. This gradually begins to take a toll on us through the day. Junior Bradley Sanford, unlike other students attending WS, has a very exciting (which is rare) Thanksgiving.

As we fill our tummies with our savory Thanksgiving meal, we begin to nest under the spotlight of the TV and watch some good, ole' fashion, traditional Thanksgiving football. The rest of the day is made up of gossip between our parents and their siblings and the awkward meetings of new cousins.

As for Sanford, he travels out with his close family to his Uncle's 10 acre estate in Pennsylvania.

"My uncle has ten acres of land that he owns," said Sanford. "He has a bunch of ATVs we ride around on at his place, sometimes we paint ball while driving them."

Sanford's uncle is a police officer and is licensed to have guns, allowing Sanford and his other family members take a little hunting detour around his property.

"Since it is very outdoorsy at my uncle's place, we usually sleep in tents outside and dress up as Indians when we go hunting with my uncle," said Sanford.

International interest inspires

Pierce gets some unexpected attention

It is very unusual for someone young to become famous in another country, just because of being an American and celebrating the culture of the United States. Senior McKenna Pierce experienced being well known in Australia just for celebrating the holiday of Thanksgiving. While living in Australia as a child, due to her father's job with the US Embassy, Pierce's family experienced becoming famous from something that to them is typical of being American. The Australian press caught onto the family and found it unique to have people in their country that celebrate an American holiday.

"I thought it was strange for caring too much," said Pierce.

The reporters came over to the Pierce's house, took pictures and interviewed while they celebrated Thanksgiving.

"They almost came off as being obsessed with us and this holiday of Thanksgiving, that was foreign to them," said Pierce.

However, the family took the attention well and did their best to share the American celebration.

"The Australians just thought it was neat to have people celebrate a holiday that they don't celebrate, and wanted to know more about it," Pierce said.

"And we listen to the bang of the wolves at night."

On the day of Thanksgiving, the family, of about 30 or so members, gets together at a very simple dining room table and feasts. Sanford's family, who is mainly Italian, sings an old Italian prayer before eating the Thanksgiving dinner. The family then eats a very unique Thanksgiving meal. Pasta, lamb, turkey, cranberry sauce, and traditional Italian food are canvassed around the dinner table.

"It's really great that my big Italian family is there and people are cooking all different types of Italian food," said Sanford. "My Nonna (Grandma) makes awesome Italian food."

After dinner, the family rambles outside to either throw the pig-skin around with the boys or play some mud volleyball with the girls.

Sanford plans on staying at his Uncle's 10 acre home for the rest of the weekend, continuing to not have a dull Thanksgiving like other students. He even plans to attend a religious play with his Nonna and the rest of his family.

"After we were done eating Thanksgiving we just party the rest of the weekend," said Sanford.

—Ben Lockwood



Senior McKenna Pierce enjoys her Thanksgiving meal while her family was stationed in Australia.

The family had an article written about them in the local newspaper called *The Consulate* in Melbourne, Australia, along with photos of the families' tradition on Thanksgiving.

"I was confused on why there were so many cameras and people at my dining room table when it was usually just family," said Pierce.

Since the article was written, the Pierce's have learned the real meaning of Thanksgiving.

"My dad wanted to show them that it wasn't just about eating turkey and pie," said Pierce. "But, it was a tradition of saying thanks for remembering our country's history and why we are all American's today."

—Sarah Mustion



Junior Bradley Sanford and his family get-together during a holiday.

Hispanic h

Parades, Pilgrims and the idea of a traditional America is such a diverse sophomore Jenny Gomez is traditional.

Gomez's family is originally from a small town in Every year her whole grandmother's house to have found ways to blend with American ones.

"We eat traditional American side dishes," said Gomez.

The whole thing is like Aunts and uncles each They bring foods like empanadas, and El Salvador family also puts their own recipe, that is used every prepared along with the recipe.

"Not everyone in my family likes to eat Gomez. "So we also do a c Everyone contributes to to prepare the birds, usually make something teenagers attempt more addition to helping with the

Thanksgiving traditions

Spicing up the season

Spicing up the season

Pumpkins, leaves, turkey, stuffing, gravy, traveling, family, these are the things that pop into freshman Nikki Yohe's mind when she thinks of Thanksgiving.

The usual routine of Yohe might be similar to yours. She travels to her Aunt's house for the holiday that all started with the pilgrims and Indians.

"I watch the Macy's parade," said Yohe. "My whole side of my dad's family goes there and we eat and eat and eat the turkey and the good stuff."

While at her aunt's huge house, Yohe makes sure to bring her lacrosse stick for when she gets bored.

"All the kids play sports outside, the moms cook and the dads watch football," said Yohe. Yohe loves teaching her younger cousins how to throw and catch and helps them improve their lacrosse skills.

This may sound like a typical Thanksgiving holiday trip, but it's what the Yohe family does after their big feast that is somewhat unusual.

"We make pies," said Yohe, "We all do, it gets crazy."

Yohe and her family have a competition with their pie making skills and see who can make the best pie.

"My grandma is the judge and she tells us who the winner is after she tries a bite of everyone's."

Heritage and old-fashioned family fun

Heritage and old-fashioned family fun

Like other families they begin the meal with a quick prayer. Her family is so large that they don't even fit around the table. Instead of dealing with the trouble of finding extra seating, they usually eat around the living room area.

"We all sit around and watch the Thanksgiving football game while we eat," said Gomez.

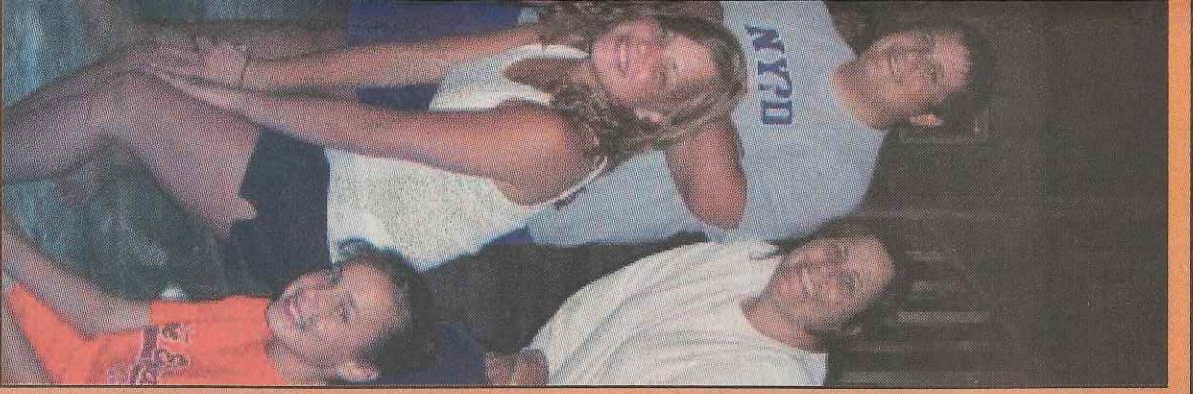
Gomez's Thanksgiving has all the traditional values of a conventional American Thanksgiving: family, food, and togetherness. The Gomezs are just like the scores of other WS families who have melded their culture with this American holiday.

"America is full of so many different cultures, that I think people should combine their traditions," said Gomez.

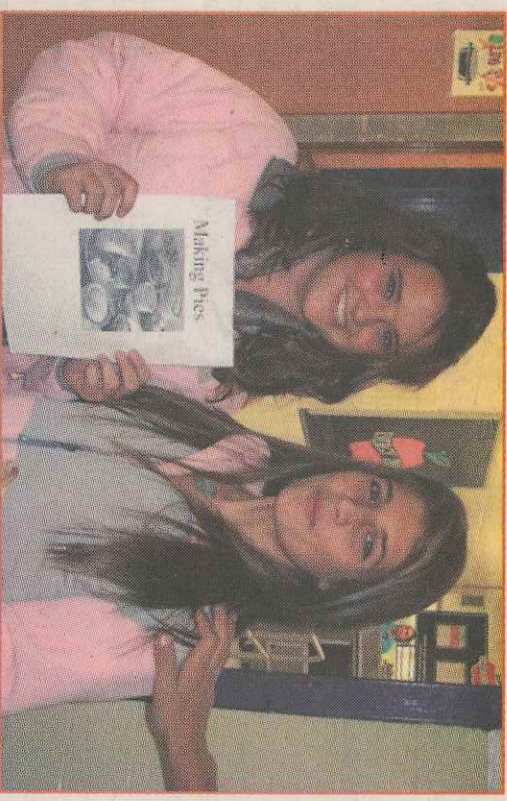
—**Xavia Warner**

"America is full of so many different cultures, that I think people should combine their traditions."

—*Jenny Gomez,*
Sophomore



Bradley Sanford poses with his family during Thanksgiving.



Sara Blaylock

Freshman Nikki Yohe shows her love for her Thanksgiving tradition of pie making.

At the end of the pie making competition a winner is chosen and they get to wear the special hat all day or for as long as they want.

"I've never won all these years, but I really want to this year. I have a feeling I will this year."

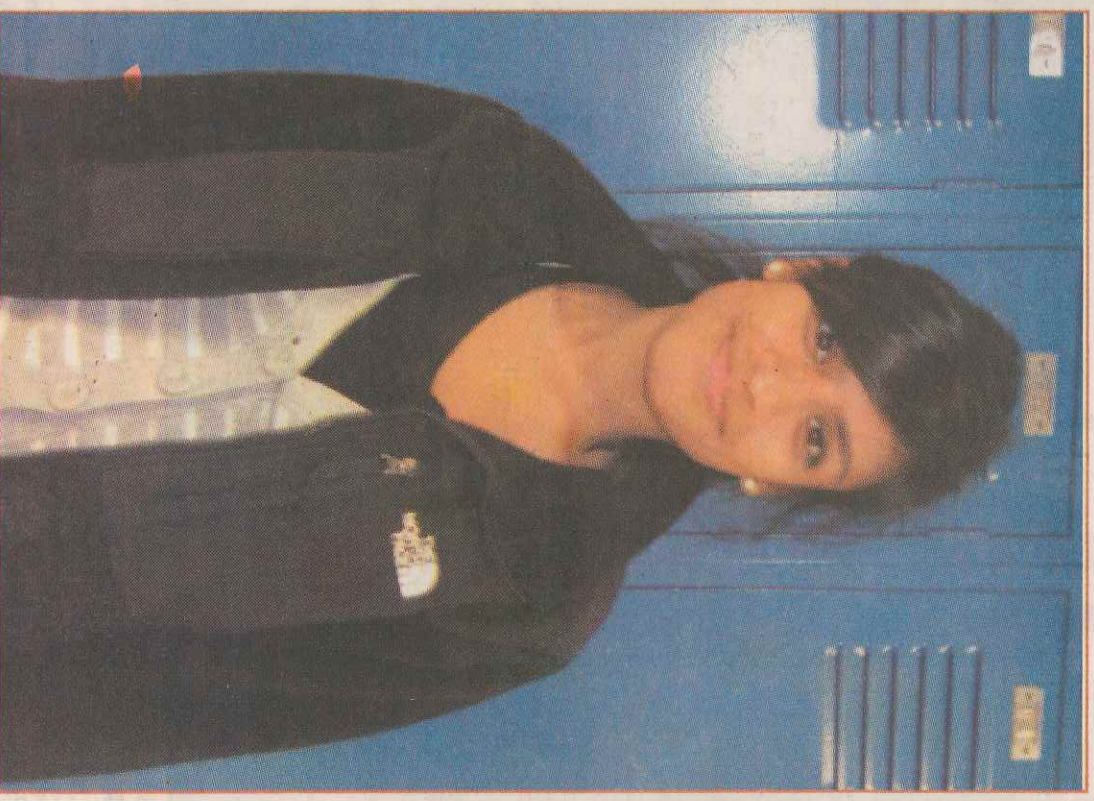
Yohe has been preparing for the contest a lot more this year by looking up recipes and trying to create new flavors to spice up her pie.

People usually think of a lot of food and food when they think of Thanksgiving but the Yohe's show a creative side of their family.

"I'm so excited for Thanksgiving, its coming fast and I'm so ready!" Maybe this turkey day will bring luck to Yohe as she bakes her pie.

"I know it's kinda corny, but it's a lot of fun and I love it."

—**Sara Blaylock**



Xavia Warner

Sophomore Jenny Gomez is counting down the days until the Thanksgiving holiday, when she will be able to celebrate with her whole family.

Heritage and old-fashioned family fun

Heritage and old-fashioned family fun

'High School Musical 3' hits theaters with a bang

Returning actors of the series make loyal Troy and Gabriella fans come back for more

By Sara Blaylock
Staff Writer

The cliché "Third time's the charm" is what you could say about "High School Musical 3: Senior Year" and the returning characters Troy, Gabriella, Sharpay and Ryan.

The third installment hit theaters with a huge bang. "HSM3" is appropriate for all ages, is occasionally very funny and, Newsday says "it's sweet enough to give you diabetes." The best thing about "HSM" is that it uses the same characters in all the movies and it's exciting to see them return.

Troy, played by Zach Efron, was breathing as usual and Gabriella played by Vanessa Hudgens, fashioned her sweet smile the whole movie. In the picture there were also newcomers. The witty remarks of "Rocket Man," played by Jimmie Zara, added a comical component to the movie.

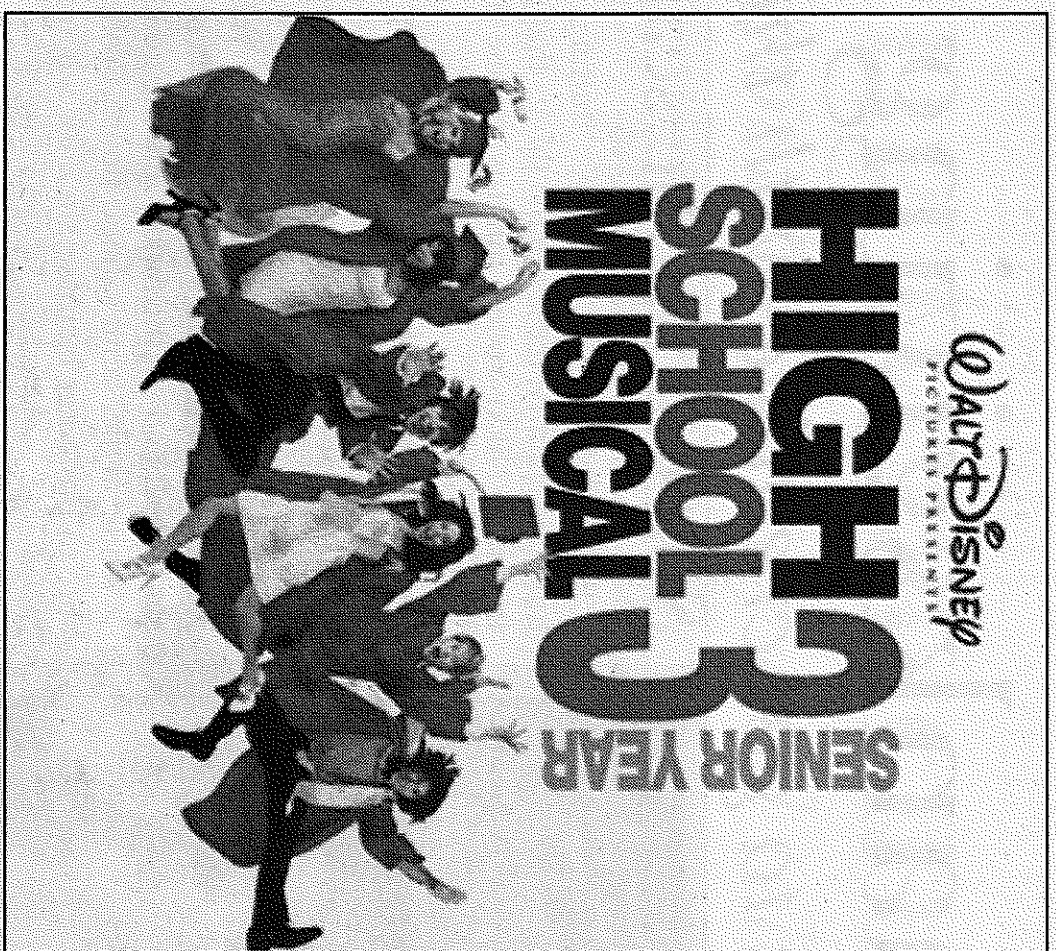
The beginning is suspenseful and leaves the audience kind of clueless and wanting more. It starts out with a close face shot of Troy, sweating and breathing hard. Then the audience hears the music begin to play and

the camera zooms out to the Wildcats State Championship game as they break out in song and dance while they play their game. The beginning was my favorite part and it was a really great attention-getter and hook.

Throughout the movie each of the main characters is faced with challenges about making their parents proud, planning for prom, deciding about college and trying to create the perfect last high school musical for senior year.

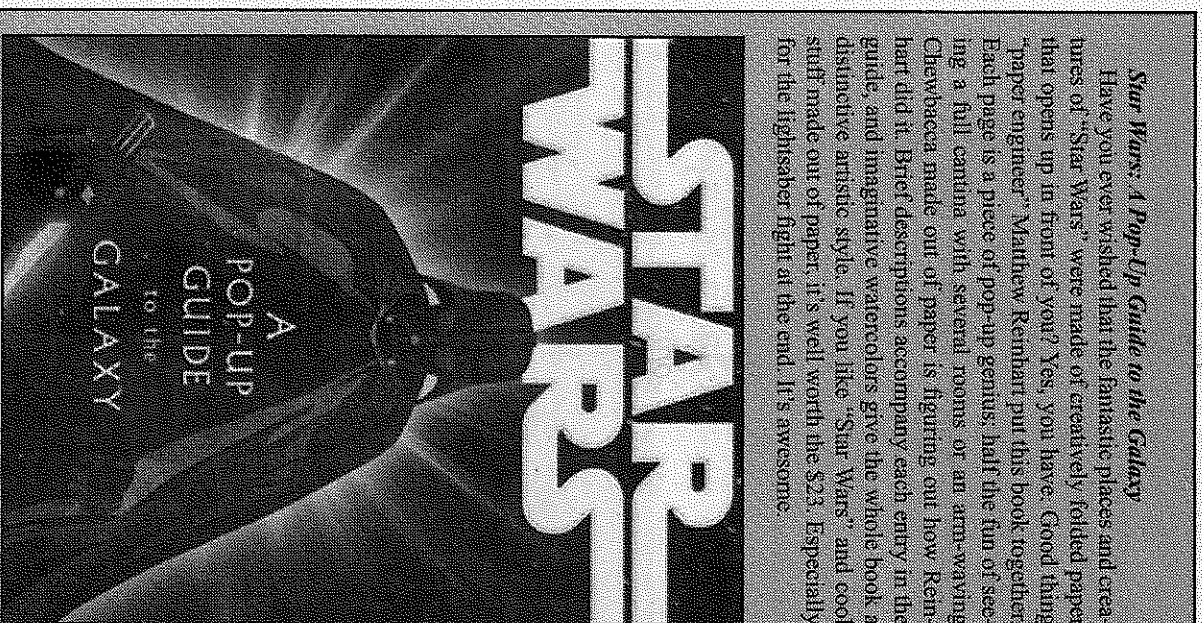
The music in the movie is just as good as the first two. There are more than 20 songs in "HSM3." The songs are about ongoing romance, everlasting friendship and the struggles of Troy doing what he wants. The lyrics are so enjoyable they make you want to stand up and dance and sing.

The gorgeous returning smile of Troy, the picture perfect couple made up of him and Gabriella, the snobby attitude of Sharpay, Sharpay's twin brother Ryan wanting it all, and Chad the basketball lover, make "HSM3" better than ever. This movie was cute, witty and just makes you feel good. It is a show that all ages can enjoy.



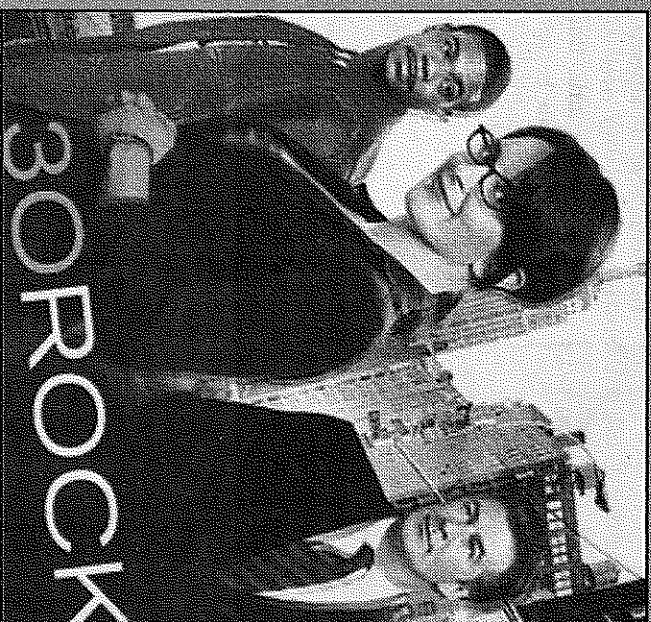
Associated Press
Recently released "High School Musical 3: Senior Year" takes the audience through the characters' decisions about college and their futures.

Oracle Picks



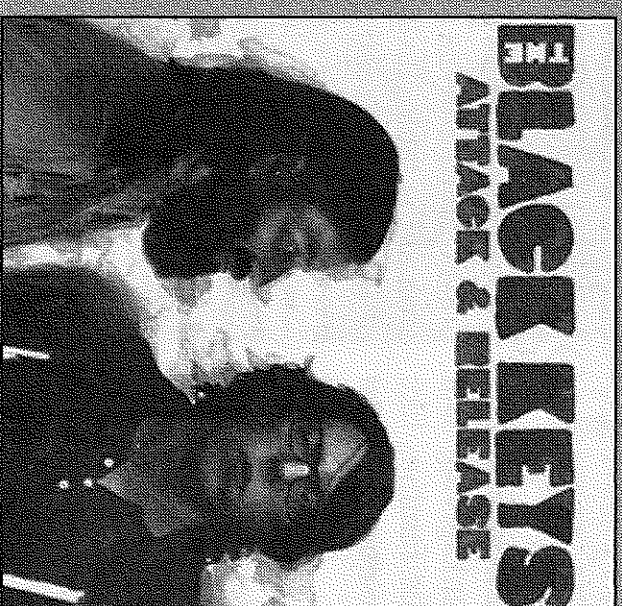
Star Wars: A Pop-Up Guide to the Galaxy

Have you ever wished that the fantastic places and creatures of "Star Wars" were made of creatively folded paper that opens up in front of you? Yes, you have. Good thing "paper engineer" Matthew Reinhart put this book together. Each page is a piece of pop-up genius; half the fun of seeing a full cantina with several rooms or an arm-waving Chewbacca made out of paper is figuring out how Reinhart did it. Brief descriptions accompany each entry in the guide, and imaginative watercolors give the whole book a distinctive artistic style. If you like "Star Wars" and cool stuff made out of paper, it's well worth the \$25. Especially for the lightsaber fight at the end. It's awesome.



30 Rock

This show, from former "Saturday Night Live" head writer and Sarah Palin impersonator Tina Fey (she also wrote "Mean Girls"), is ostensibly about a sketch comedy show only slightly more ridiculous than "SNL." But as the show begins its third season, it has turned itself into a brilliant, wacky, too-smart-for-its-own-good sitcom that sometimes dabbles in social commentary. The only problem with being the smartest show on television is that not everybody gets it. "30 Rock" has been plagued by low ratings from the start. The next time you watch "The Office," just leave the TV on when it's over. I promise, it's a thousand times better than "Two and a Half Men."



BLACK KEYS
ATTACK & RELEASE

'Attack and Release'
While modern rock and roll, if you can even call it that, journeys further from its roots toward whiny, overproduced nonsense, the Black Keys' two guys (just guitar and drums) from Akron, Ohio keep it real. Their fuzzy, frantic, bare-bones blues rock goes straight back to the source: old bluesmen like Son House, Howlin' Wolf, and John Lee Hooker. On this most recent album, they've ventured out somewhat from the occasional flute intro to the excellent "Lies," produced by Danger Mouse of Charlie Barkley. They've fleshed out their bare bones, and it's clearly worked, as the single "Strange Times" was featured in Grand Theft Auto IV. But the Keys haven't forgotten their roots: songs like "I Got Mine" and "Remember When (Side B)" are classic Black Keys. "Attack and Release" may very well be their finest album yet.

Associated Press
—Compiled by Jake Serwin

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TaTa to 'Total Request Live'

The popular MTV music show, 'TRL,' hosts its final episode

By Kim Langlais
Oracle Staff Writer

MTV's "TRL" (Total Request Live) ends its ten year ailing streak on November 16, leaving viewers in distress.

"TRL" was created in 1997 as a place where musicians, actors and other celebrities could go to promote their work to teens across the world.

studio, it blew up to become the threshold for popular artists such as Britney Spears, Justin Timberlake and the Backstreet Boys.

Since then, "TRL" has exploded into a teen favorite. The daily countdown of the top ten videos is based on votes, charts, ring tones, downloads, radio airplay and streams by fans of the MTV show.

Throughout the years, "TRL" has gone through numerous changes: a new studio

in Times Square, new hosts coming and going, focusing more on celebrities and a huge internet response where viewers can vote and blog about how they feel about videos or the show.

All over the site and W/S, viewers are upset about the ending of the show.

"I really liked the show," said sophomore Josh Smith. "They had a lot of good guests on."

Overall, students enjoyed watching the show. How-

ever, there were particular parts students found irritating, such as the video plays, the cut show length, and the brief interviews of guests.

Typically, guests on the show are only on the air for about 15 minutes, while about 30 seconds of each music video is played.

"I hate how they only play half of the music videos," said senior Casey Donohue. "They don't really focus on music anymore. But I did love to watch for Hilari Burton!"

Despite MTV standing for Music Television, the channel has focused on reality shows and it looks as though it is losing its focus.

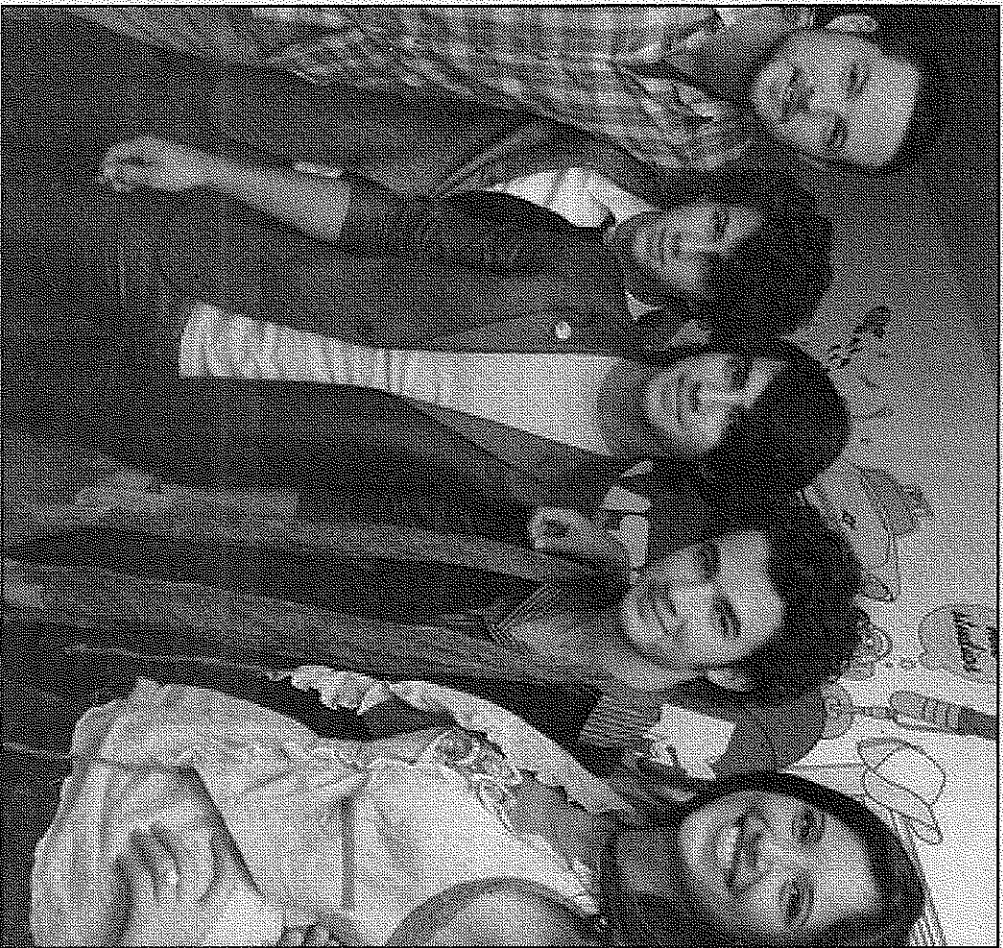
"TRL" is one of the few music based shows on the channel. Without it, viewers aren't sure what is going to happen to MTV.

Some aren't distressed about the show. Instead, they worry about the hosts.

"I used to like the old "TRL", but now it's boring," said junior Amy Newman. "The only reason I watch it now is for the host, Damien. He's so cute and funny!"

Overall, "TRL" will be missed, but there will be no major difference in student life because of its absence. There will be no river of tears, no wailing girls. But there probably will be another fashion or reality show in its place.

"It's not supposed to be about how some new artist has the best shoes or who can tell the worst joke," said senior Rachel Perry. "But then again, MTV is massively corrupt anyway."



"TRL" hosts Damien Fahey and Vanessa Minnillo pose for a picture on the show's set in Times Square in New York City with the The Jonas Brothers, who have made many appearances.

Fans 'Line-up' for Sunday cartoons

By Celine Donohue
Features Editor

"Fox 5, the most powerful name in local news," By tuning into Fox on Sunday nights you will find that Springfield news and election updates are not all channel 5 has to offer.

Prior to football season Fox runs "The Simpsons", "King of the Hill", "Family Guy" and "American Dad", all in one sitting, 7-9:30, letting cartoons take over their Sunday prime time.

These shows are enjoyed by all types of people, and can make anyone laugh. They are called the FOX 5 Line-up. Surprisingly, this courageous change was good for their ratings. Conning out over The CW, and ABC, for views, and of course football has only made those go higher.

It was obvious at the time that many teens and others enjoyed watching cartoons to start off their week.

"I like watching "The Simpsons" on Sunday night because it usually helps to break my Sunday night blues by making me smile and laugh," said Junior Austin Barbera.

Compared to other channels, Fox has more teen focused shows. Other channels should consider doing this because it seems that teens are the ones watching the most TV at this time.

Sophomore, Madison Ide said, "I watch 'Family Guy' to laugh since school and everything else is very stressful and I just want to relax."

These funny shows lighten the mood after most students are cramming for that Monday morning test or finishing projects and homework.

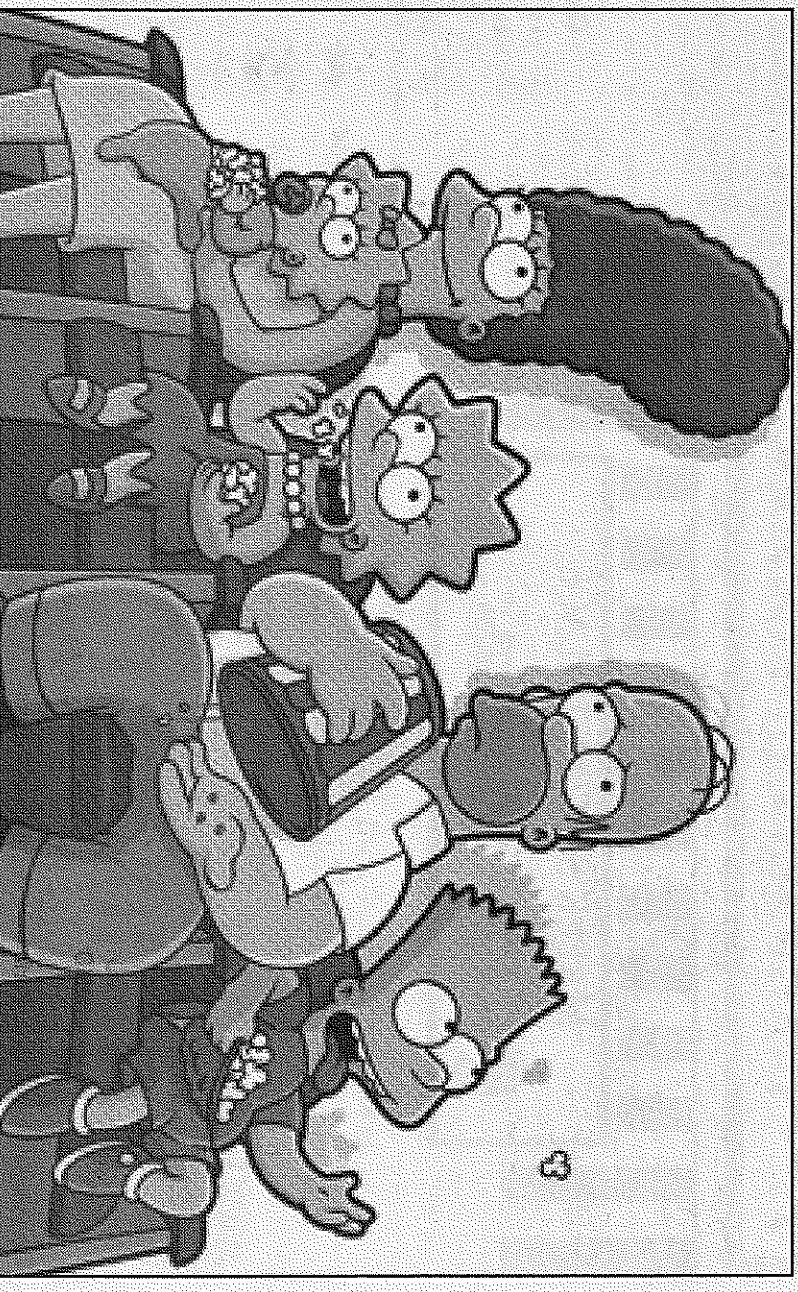
Sophomore Nina Sanzi enjoys watching Fox on Sundays, to get some laughs and end her weekend well.

Now that football season is at its prime, most viewers are tuning into those games but I think many will enjoy when the cartoons start again.

Once they begin again, I'm sure the cartoons will begin

to bring in the same viewers again and be very successful as they previously were.

"Who wouldn't like to see Bart cracking jokes after a stressful, hardworking week?" said Sanzi.



"The Simpsons," now in its twelfth year, runs alongside other popular comedies in the FOX 5 Line-up on most Sundays.

HAWTHORNE HEIGHTS

Hawthorne Heights has been on the 2008 Never Sleep Again Tour, and come to the Recher Theatre on November 28.

Concerts Calendar

November:

11/23 & 11/24—AMWAY GLOBAL presents an evening with Tina Turner, Verizon Center

11/25—Ingrid Michaelson 7:30 p.m. Birchmere Music Hall
Shiny Toy Guns 7:00 p.m. 930 Club, \$20

11/26—B.B. King 7:30 p.m. Birchmere Music Hall

11/28—Hawthorne Heights, Recher Theatre

December:

12/2—Crash Boom Bang w/ The Hint 7:00 p.m. Jammin' Java

12/5—The Kennedys 7:30 pm Jammin' Java

12/6—Tyler Hilton full band show 7:30 p.m. Jammin' Java, \$15

—Compiled by Sam Landers

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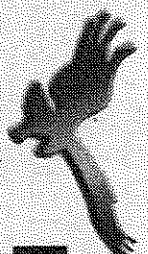
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*Source: "Epidemic" by Meg Meeker, MD
 STD - sexually transmitted disease

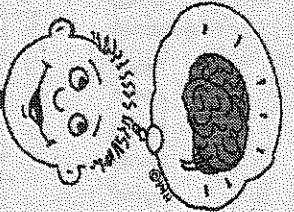
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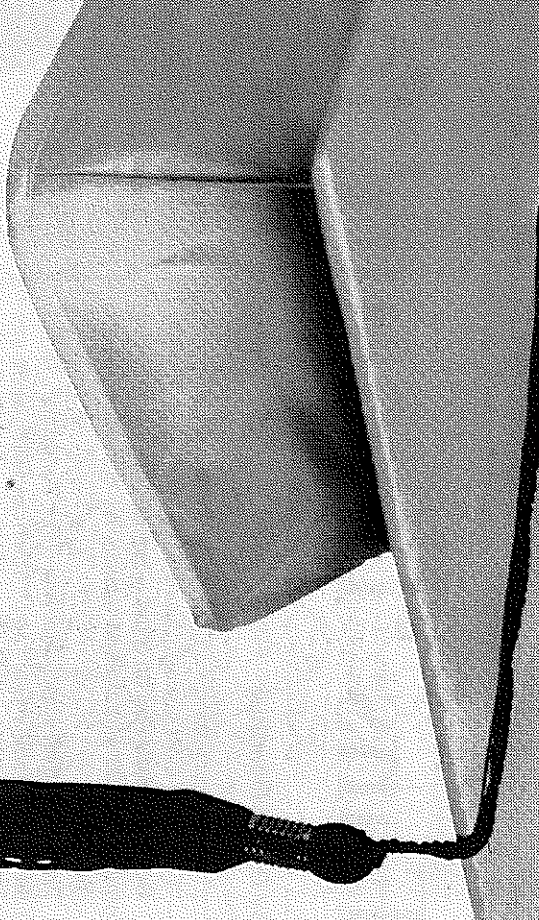
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'09 undefeated in PowderPuff

Seniors maintain perfect record in come-from-behind win

By Gianna Baiges
Viewpoint Editor

The class of '09 is undefeated. Winning every PowderPuff game since their freshman year, the senior girls managed to once again take home the gold at this year's match.

The seniors beat the juniors with a score of 32-30. Throughout the first half, the class of '09 was losing by 24 points. The juniors were commanding the field. But by the second half, the seniors managed to bounce back and pull off an amazing comeback.

"At halftime, we were like 'come on guys, we can't lose!'" said senior Sarah Davis, who scored the winning touchdown. "It feels so cool [to have finally won] and I just feel proud to be a part of it."

The seniors could not have been happier, but to the class of '10 it felt like they were in a nightmare. The juniors were dominating the game, but suddenly they lost to the seniors.

In another long-time tradition, the juniors contended that the seniors cheated to pull out their come-from-behind win.

"It's ridiculous, man," said ju-

nior Melanie Todd, explaining the seniors' victory. "[The class of] '09 was running the clock. If we had a rematch, we would kill them."

The seniors were scared to lose their shot at being undefeated during their last year in high school.

"It was scary at first [to think we were going lose], because we've won every game and we didn't wanna come down," said senior Maggie McGavin. "We all tried to fire each other up to win and we all came together because we wanted to be undefeated."

Team unity has made the Class of 2009 victorious all four years in



Ashley Brigham

Senior girls (and Vincario Nguyen) after their 32-30 comeback win over the class of 2010. They are the first class in to be 4-0 in PowderPuff of high school. The seniors believe they can serve as a prime example that success is possible.

"It's [Our winning record] amazing," said McGavin. "It just proves that '09 is the best."

Brothers kneed surgery together.

By Ashley Brigham
Viewpoint Editor

Some brothers play sports together, others play video games together, but freshman Nick Novalis and junior John Novalis get surgery together.

Both brothers tore their anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) playing WS football. Nick in the freshman game and John in the JV game. The ACL is a ligament in the knee that attaches the femur to the tibia. The injury is usually caused by dislocation, torsion or hyperextension of the knee. It is the most common knee injury among athletes.

"I was tackling a guy and I got hit by another player and my knee got twisted," said John.

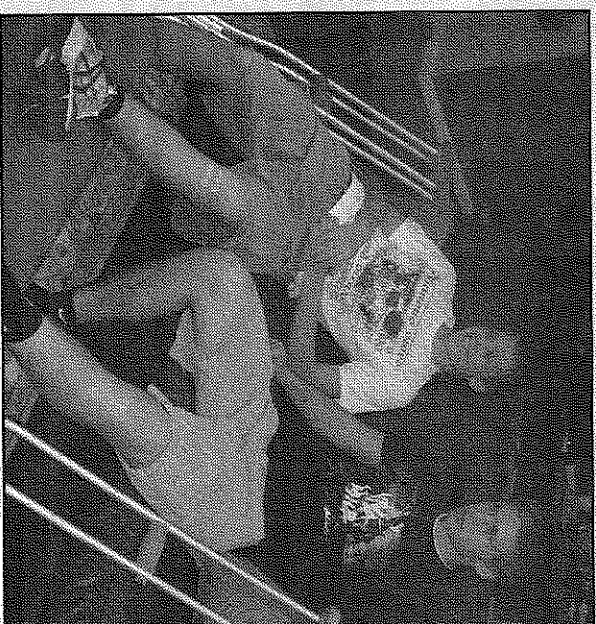
Nicks injury was slightly different, but had the same outcome of a torn ACL and a lot of pain.

"I got tackled by another player and while my leg was planted in the ground someone else hit my knee out place," says Nick.

The brothers both had surgery on October 27th.

"We were out of school for a whole week from Monday to Friday, and we will not be able to play sports for at least six months," said Nick.

The worst part about getting the surgery for the brothers is not the surgery itself, but the amount of time they will be out for sports and other activities.



Ashley Brigham

Brothers Nick and John Novalis both tore their ACL on the same day playing football. "It's helpful that you share the experience with someone at the exact same time," said John.

"When something like this happens you think about stuff

further down the road. We won't be able to swim, run track, or play baseball so its more than just the surgery, it's a change of life style for a period of time," said John.

Although the boys have the same injury, their surgeries will be different. John will be getting a hamstring graft. There rehab exercises will be the same which makes the experience a little easier.

"I think it will be more fun doing it with my brother because the rehab will be less boring since we have the same exercises and stuff," says Nick.

They both were a little nervous about the surgery but were glad they went through it at the same time.

"The most significant thing about the whole thing was that it was the same knee, same injury, same night, same field. It was crazy!" said John.

"I've never had surgery before so it's a big deal for me," says Nick who got his surgery first at around 7:00 closely followed by John at 10:30. The brothers stayed over night and returned to their house on the following day.

They both have positive outlooks, and are glad to be going through it together.

"It's helpful that you can share the experience with someone at the exact same time, in the exact same way," said John.

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Spartans required to take a seat or stand at games

By Monica Evans

Oracle Editor

In a school year that has been full of changes and new rules, it comes as no surprise that traditional football games are also different.

Instead of the normal, chaotic mix of students and community, the new Director of Student Activities Andrew Muir, implemented the "Standing Spartans" and "Sitting Spartans" sections.

"The student body was spread out over the stands," said Muir.

According to Assistant Director of Student Activities Stephen Fox, the school was receiving many complaints that at football games students were standing everywhere and many people could not see the game.

"We created two separate sections," said Muir. "For those who wanted to see the game without their vision obscured."

Although the idea seems logical, it has been the subject of disagreement. Many students are against the new bleacher sections because they feel restricted.

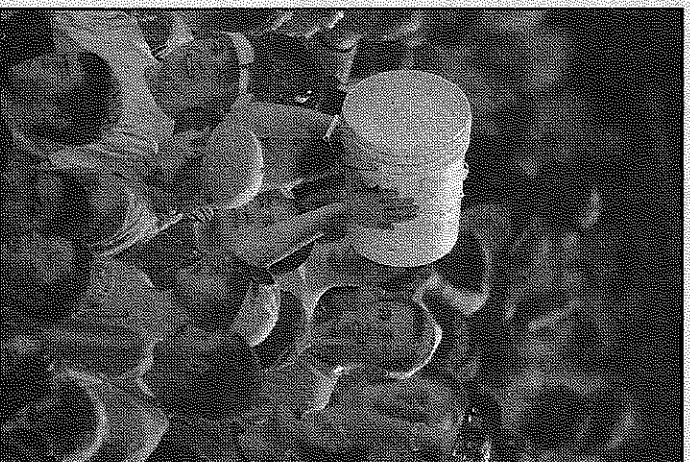
"I don't like it," said sophomore Rachel Lowry, "because people want to sit and stand at different times."

Not only are students unhappy because they feel constrained; they also feel it is their basic prerogative to sit or stand as they please.

"I don't know why there are different sections," said senior Sally Kim. "You should be able to do what you want to do. I mean you paid to get in."

All together, the basic reaction of the students has been negative. The general consensus has been that our cheering sections have been condensed down to a small area where students may feel less inclined to cheer because they might be bothering those in the "Sitting Spartans" section.

"Personally I don't like it because it takes



Lifenouch

The new sitting and standing sections were met with opposition from many students.

"You should be able to do what you want to do. I mean you paid to get in," said Kim.

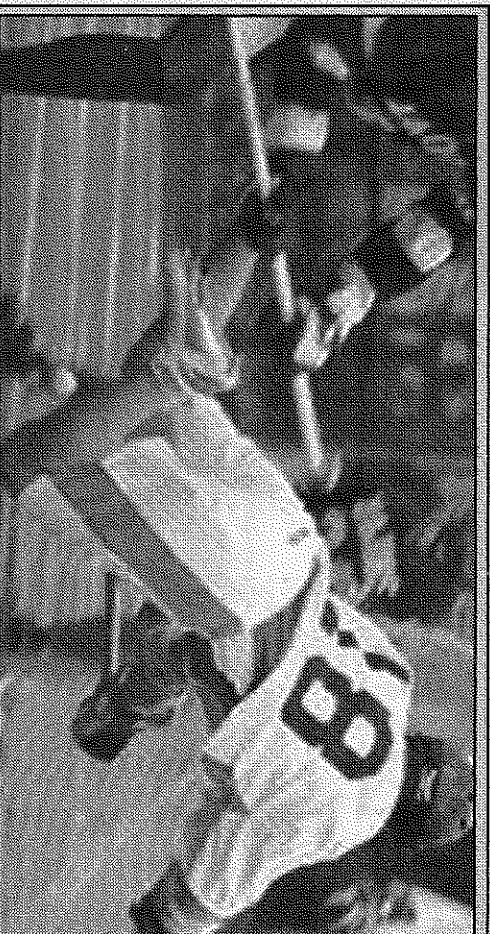
the fun out of the football games – people sitting to my left, to my right, not having a smile on their faces makes me not want to cheer," said junior Byron Giudiel.

While some students find the change unwelcome, others (like the creator himself) find it efficient.

"I think its working out very well," said Muir.

Whether the implementation of the "Sitting" and "Standing Spartans" sections are liked or not, what can be agreed on is the clear evidence of school spirit.

"I would just like to congratulate the student body," said Muir. "There has been a lot of support and spirit this year. We just want to make everyone's experience a positive one."



Veronica Adams

With our relatively new field, many sports teams, including boys LAX, hope take home field advantage by hosting District tournament championships.

Spartans hope to host

By Veronica Adams

Oracle Staff Writer

Hosting the District games would not only provide an advantage for our sports teams but also a quality field for athletes of all schools.

However, our school rarely gets to host District games even though our field is the best to play on. For spring sports such as boys and girls Varsity lacrosse, there are advantages and disadvantages of playing away. Practicing on a turf field is considerably different than playing on a field with uneven grass, rocks and dirt patches.

The reason our school never gets to host Districts is because the first round of Districts is held at the school whose seed is placed higher that's still standing in the competition. It comes down to the sport's performance on whether they can play on their home turf for the big game.

"Last year we hosted the district hamburger for softball, baseball and soccer," said Steve Fox.

With Districts, there is an old system of how things work. This is based off the host-

ing school and its decision to hand off the opportunity to have home field advantage to another school.

The Directors of Student Activities (DSAs) from each school come together and decide who will be hosting the upcoming season's tournament.

Different coaches have various opinions on being able to host Districts. Girls Varsity lacrosse coach Brian Puhlick doesn't believe that hosting Districts makes a difference.

"I don't care where we play; we should beat anyone, anywhere, any place," said Puhlick.

An opposing view believes that hosting Districts could potentially help the spirits of the athletes.

"Home field crowd is a major advantage," said boys Varsity lacrosse coach Scott Setter.

Championships are at predetermined sites and the DSAs are working on trying to put WS ahead since the field is in better condition than other schools in our district.

The old system might change since Districts have had to be postponed for rain in the past. Since the school has a turf field now, Districts can be played, rain or shine.

NO Friday night lights at TC

Agreement with neighborhood near school means that Alexandria school can't host evening events

By Kim Langlais

Oracle Staff Writer

World in the halls of Hollywood and Vine is that a football game held at TC Williams High School is impossible due to fights between the two schools, but this is just fuel to a fire.

Most fights start with talk, and teenagers like to talk. So when one person created the notion that fights are the cause of Saturday football games at TC, it was only expected that rumors would spread. As conflicts were created, nobody thought about the lights.

"When the school was built there was an agreement with local residents that the stadium would not have lights, so as not to impact their neighborhoods," said Assistant Superintendent, and past TC principal John Porter. "Efforts to now try to install lights have been met with a negative response from members of the community, due to the continued concern for the number of events that may take place in the stadium with lights and thereby disrupt local neighborhoods."

TC is hoping to be able to host sports events regularly on Friday nights, but with opposition from the Alexandria community, and an upset economy, installing these lights are close to impossible.

"Many people at TC Williams would love to have Friday night games," said Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, Sandy Hudnall. "There has been discussion over the years about building a city stadium that would make that possible."

Separate from the lights issue, both of the TC superintendents deny any hostility between students. Porter, principal from 1984-2006, denies any kind of fights or altercations between TC students and WS students.

However, personnel at WS remember a different story to why there has been a delay in installing the lights needed to host games.

"TC Williams does not have home Friday night football games because of the potential for large crowds getting out



Kim Langlais

Many students believe the reason TC can't host Friday night football games is because there have been fights there. However, residents near the stadium have prevented the lights because they are afraid they would "disrupt local neighborhoods."

of control," said Varsity Football Coach, Stuart Carter. "Yes, there have been physical altercations. No, it does not have any thing to do with WS specifically."

With different points of view come different explanations. Jumping to conclusions only causes trouble. In this case, unnecessary fights. Hopefully, no further conflicts will arise and TC will finally get their stadium lights after 15 years, even if it is a city stadium.

"The Mayor recently voiced support for looking at this again," said Porter, "which may give it some new life."

Thanks, but no thanks, Thanksgiving

By Kevin Pike & Samuel Tak
ETC. Editors

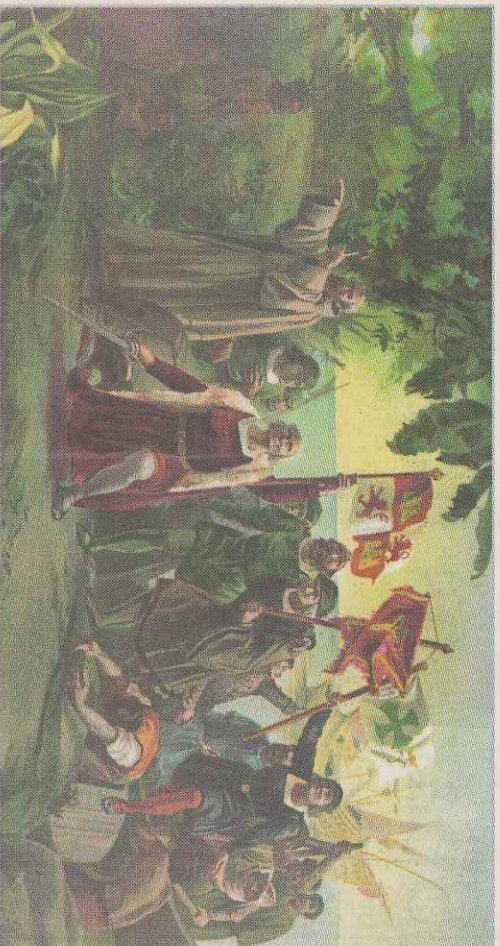
There are two holidays which we celebrate every year without knowing the factual origin. I'm taking it upon myself to expose the truth.

On October 13th, we took a day off from school in honor of Christopher Columbus. Since elementary school we've been taught that Columbus was a swell guy for accidentally finding, what was an already discovered, America and that the Europeans who ate with the natives were actually good peace loving people, with absolutely no intent of taking

their land, ravaging their food, and creating a small genocide of the indigenous people.

But in reality none of this actually happened and the supposedly truth that was taught to us in elementary school is actually a fallacy created about the true nature of Columbus and the Europeans who celebrated the first Thanksgiving.

You see, Columbus was a greedy imperialist. He raced across the Caribbean Islands in search of gold, while killing and enslaving the natives. He is too ruthless and greedy to be labeled as a courageous and noble explorer. But in elementary school, our teach-



That's Right Nate
Christopher Columbus is oftenly mistaken for discovering America. But as illustrated by the Indians on the left, he certainly does not deserve the recognition.

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

By Stevie Fiorino
ETC. Editor, 2004-2007

Food, football and shopping. Thanksgiving and the winter holidays are almost here. The time for stuffing your face, lounging around and running frantically through the mall is just around the corner.

The beginning of the holiday season is always an exciting time. Once Thanksgiving hits, you can start browsing around in stores, on-line and in catalogs for Christmas presents. You start constantly feeling happy and joyous and merry. November through December has got to be one of the best times of the year. The holidays, however, definite-

Stevie's Story November 17, 2006



Engadget

ly have their downfalls. The day after Thanksgiving, AKA Black Friday, is a frightening day. This is the day when over-stuffed people

wake up from their food comas and enter the world of shopping. You will be lucky if you can get from Old Keene Mill Road to Braddock Road in one hour. The

roads are in complete gridlock until at least 11 pm.

The malls are packed to the brim with hot, sweaty and irritated people. Hard-core soccer moms arrive, ready to fight for the new edition punk-rock Barbie, no later then 5 a.m. If you get between an irritated mother

and her Barbies, things will not be pretty.

I never understood why people go so gosh darn early to the stores on Black Friday. I know that they are trying to beat the rush, but if they really want to beat the rush they should just shop online. Ebay, Overstock and Amazon are just a few of the many online stores. Online shopping is, at least in my opinion, extremely convenient and easy, and it doesn't involve the possibility of being trampled by a herd of mothers on a mission to wipe the shelves clean of everything.

Well, with that said, I hope that the beginning of your holiday season is stress-free, safe and cheerful. Just watch out for those hard-core soccer moms.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER '08

Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
21 Oracle #5 comes out!	22 WS Alice & Wonderland Play @ 2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.	23 National Cashew Day	24 Blood Drive Donate your blood today	25 Varsity Wrestling @ Scrimmage 3:30 p.m.	26 Two hour early release for students	27 No school Thanksgiving Holiday
28 Happy Birthday Mark Twain	29 King Tut's Tomb Opened in 1922	30 Stay At Home Because You're Well Day	1 December 1 George Mason University scholarship application due	2 Happy Birthday Britney Spears Grand Theft Auto IV (PC) released	3 International Day of Disabled Person StarCraft 2 released	4 JV Wrestling @ JV Jamboree 6 p.m.

