



The

RAACOLE

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Alice wasn't late for her debut *Drama Department wows crowd despite constraints*

By Summer Claveau
ETC. Editor

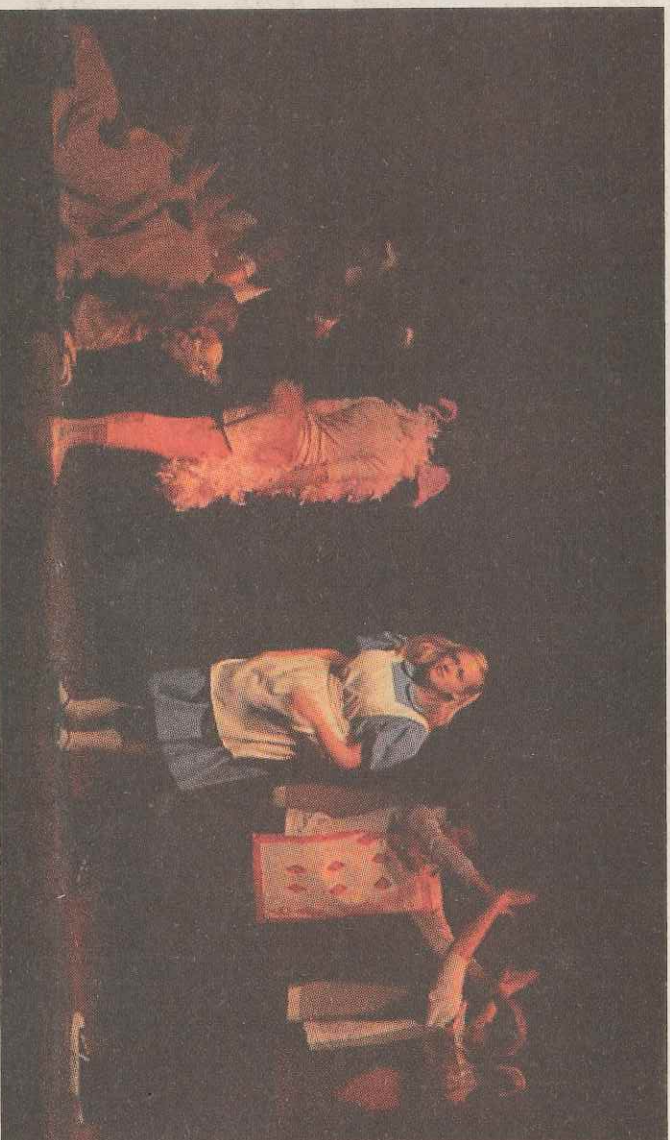
Author Lewis Carroll's White Rabbit is known for being late.

Fortunately for the Theater Department, although the famous words, "Oh Dear, I'm very late..." applied to some production elements of last week's production of "Alice in Wonderland," the show came together seamlessly.

The department's actors and technical crew often feel rushed, but the performance of "Alice" felt particularly pressed for time because of the limited amount of auditorium space.

"One of the reasons for the short time was because Hugh Panaro visited and the orchestra concert," said Drama teacher Mary Jo Levesque.

Panaro, who appeared on Broadway in "Phantom of the Opera," performed in the school's au-



Summer Claveau

Junior Siri Benn starred as Alice in the Theatre Department's production of Alice in Wonderland. The play drew a large crowd and amazed audiences despite the limited amount of time to prepare.

ditorium the week before "Alice" was scheduled to open, limiting rehearsal and set-building time.

But even with limited space and time, the department's technical staff was able to create different set pieces that fit the play very nicely.

The play came together because the crew and cast committed to "working hard and long hours," according to sophomore Steven Cox, who works as a Techie.

The mushroom, which the Caterpillar sat on and the gigantic tree on the corner of the stage were both elaborate pieces that had to both support an actor and look the part.

The mushroom not only spun around, but it lit up at the bottom, and looked quite comfortable to sit on. And the huge tree that Cheshire Cat laid on looked like a real tree.

The actors also less time to learn

See "Alice" on Page 3.



Lifenouch

Softball Coach Margaret Gibson, back left, takes a team picture with the 2008 Spartan softball team. Gibson recently resigned after 10 years in the softball program, and multiple District titles.

Gibson says farewell *Softball coach resigns after 10 years*

By Katie Kinzel
& Amelia Simpson
Forum Editors

All high school teams have to deal with the transition of new talent and the loss of players. This year, Spartan Softball team has an unexpected obstacle: a new coach. Margaret Gibson had been a part of the Softball program for over 10 years. She

informed the remaining Varsity players as a group of her decision to leave.

Returning team members recognize the hurdle they face.

"It'll be hard without our coach and difficult getting used to the new one," said junior Amy Founney.

The Director of Student Activities, Andy

See "Gibson" on Page 2.

Students anticipate Winter Break of '08

By Casey Miller
Senior Staff Writer

Winter Break is the time to relax and gear up for the upcoming semester. The break is usually quite short, so there is barely enough time to celebrate New Year and recuperate from the festivities before students have to get back to schoolwork. This year, however, there are twelve days to kick back and relax or take a vacation with your family.

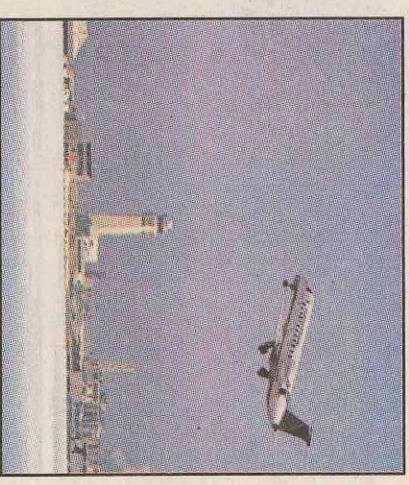
Many families have found this extended break to be just enough time to travel and spend some quality time bonding.

Junior Maya Halthore's family, for example, is taking a vacation to New York City and Long Island to visit friends and family.

"Since we had extra time," said Halthore, "my parents thought it was worth the money to go since we could stay for more than a few days."

Not only does this long break provide the opportunity to see family members far away, there is also time to take a mental health day, or week, in the nearby Shenandoah Valley for some skiing fun, like sophomore Mykela Graham.

"It's a getaway from life," said Graham.



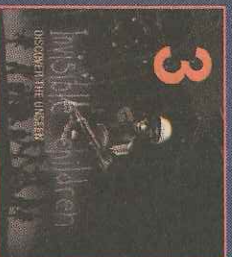
Associated Press

An extended Winter Break gives students a chance to travel farther and longer.

The lengthened break also allows time to prepare for the chaotic third and fourth quarter. With AP and final exams, not to mention the agonizing college acceptance process for seniors, the long break offers the opportunity for students to prepare themselves for what is sure to be a busy spring.

"I'm very excited because the third and fourth quarters are really hectic," said Halthore, "and it's nice to have a break to relax."

'Invisible Children' brings tears.



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Go Army, beat Navy.



8-9

Alukonis steps up.



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Key Club wants your blood

Organization adds members to serve community

By Stephanie Maxwell
Managing Editor

Clubs are great organizations to be a part of, when everyone participates.

In lots of clubs, people line up to write their names down to say they are part of it, but then back away and pretend like that was somebody else when they are asked to do anything service-related.

Key Club, however, is turning out to be quite different.

"We are happy with the direction the club is going this year," said Key Club Sponsor John Alukonis. "We are doing about the same as last year but we have more people involved."

Some of the activities Key Club is involved with are Eddie's Club, trick-or-treating for UNICEF, the Special Olympics, and the blood drive at our school.

"There are so many activities it is hard to decide which is the most benefi-

cial," said Key Club Sponsor Matthew Kirk, "but I think the blood drive is because the blood goes directly to saving lives."

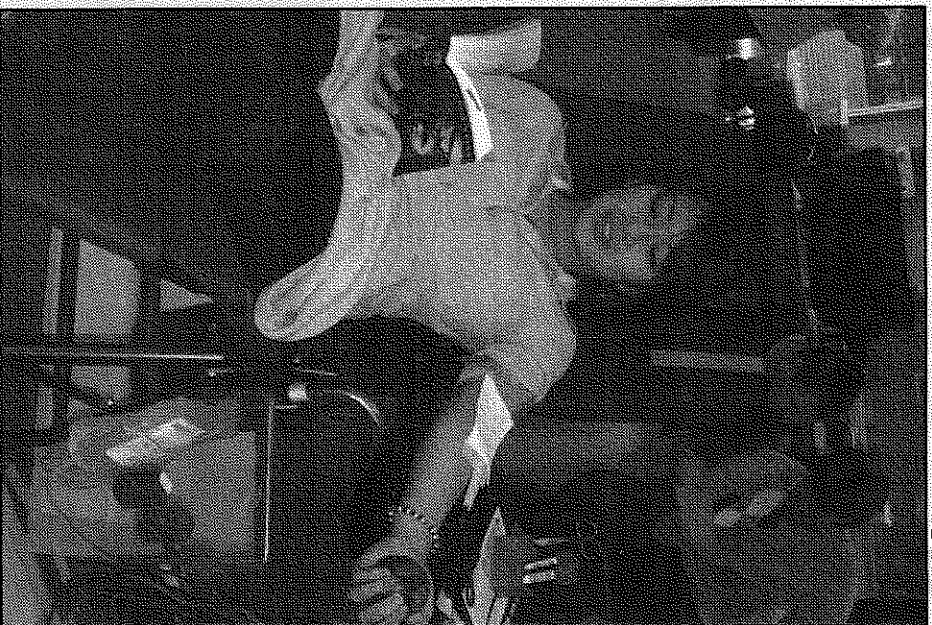
Among the members of the club, however, was another overwhelming favorite: Eddie's Club.

"I enjoy Eddie's Club by far the most because working with kids and teens in general is just an enjoyable experience for me," said senior Danny Scolese. "I have fun and they have fun, plus you learn new things from them and, to an extent, you learn some worldly values."

There are many reasons to join Key Club. It looks good on a college application, you get to be involved in a number of activities to help the community, you are introduced to a variety of different people and because

Mr. Kirk convinced you to.

"Coach Kirk tried to recruit everyone," said senior Joe Dolan. "I didn't even know what Key Club was when he told me to join."



Krista Pedersen

Senior Jen Tran reads *Twilight* and tries to relax while waiting for her blood to be drawn. The drive provides Inova Fairfax Hospital with much needed blood.

From not knowing what it was, to getting involved in all of its activities, to becoming one of the officers, Dolan, and others to a lesser extent, have learned from the

experiences Key Club has provided them.

"It is a fun way to help out people," said Dolan. "It expands your horizons and opens your eyes a little bit."

Students choose sleep over holiday shopping

Black Friday shopping not a priority

By Kelly Carlin
ETC. Editor

After enjoying a relaxing Thanksgiving holiday, some brave shoppers endured a dangerous trip to the mall on Black Friday. The stores opened before dawn, the prices were miraculously low, and the people went to extremes.

Prices are usually very low on Black Friday because it is the start of the holiday shopping season, and some agreed that these cuts were worth it to do all of their shopping on that day.

Some students were willing to take the early trip to the mall to get what they needed while sales are happening.

"It's a family tradition. My whole family goes to the mall," said sophomore Neb Zewdie.

The current recession might also play a part in whether or not students went shopping. With the state of the economy, some people are avoiding spending a lot of money, or just skipping the trip altogether.

"You have to consider other expenses, like gas, especially when you want to go somewhere far," said Zewdie.

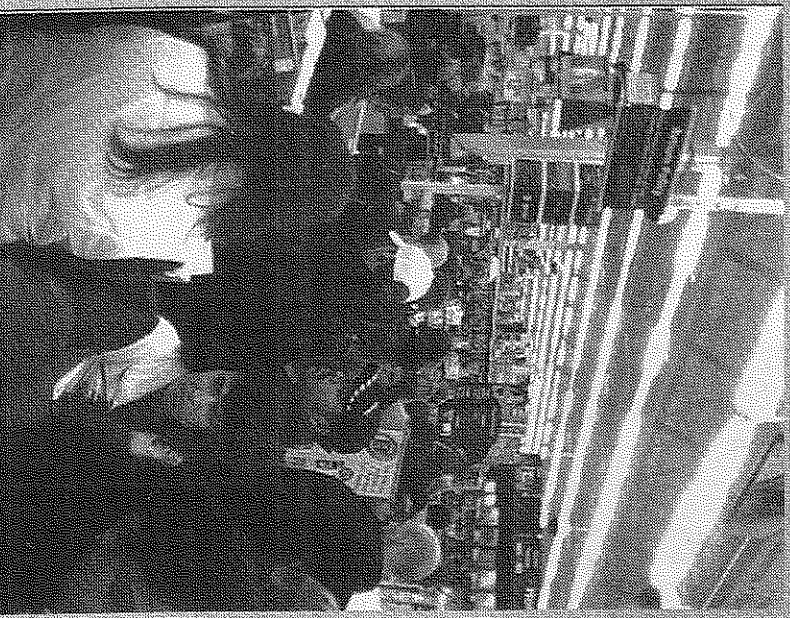
Since many of the stores opened as early as 4 or 5 a.m., you shoppers had to be there very early to get some of the best deals offered. Some students weren't up for that.

"I'm not much of an aggressive shopper," said junior Siri Bern.

Other students had the same approach. Since it was Thanksgiving break for students, some were not willing to get up earlier than they needed to for school to go to the mall. For some, it just wasn't not the prominent activity of the day.

"I'm seeing a play with my family and before that I'll probably go shopping because I need clothes," said senior Elisabeth Heavinga. "[The recession] doesn't affect me personally, but it probably will affect my parents."

Black Friday is considered the busiest shopping day of



Associated Press

Millions of shoppers across America rushed to stores to get doorbuster deals. Many stores opened as early as four a.m. the year, and besides fighting off competitive shoppers, traffic is usually bad, lines in stores can be unbearably long, and shopping malls are ridiculously crowded.

"I've always wanted to go shopping but I never have," said sophomore Jennifer Butts. "Maybe this year will be the year."

School blood drive a success

By Krista Pedersen
Oracle Editor

The Key Club held the first of its two annual Blood Drives last week in Spartan Hall. Representatives of Inova Fairfax Hospital accepted donations from students aged 16 and above.

Many upperclassmen were seen sporting colored elbow wraps during the day. Blood drives at high schools are productive ways for the hospital to boost supplies. Due to the great success last year's blood drives experienced, Inova sent out extra workers for this drive.

"[Inova] has no blood," said Key Club senior Joe Dolan. "All the blood that they're collecting today will be used today."

Students donated in 15 minute increments. Some particularly muscular boys were given the option of donating through the Alyx machine, which removes blood, separates red blood cells from the other contents, and reinserts plasma and platelets back into the blood stream. The process takes much longer, but gives two units of blood instead of one. There were only two Alyx machines available however, causing a backup of potential donors.

"They just asked me if I wanted to get out of class longer," said senior James Cumpacker, who donated through the Alyx machine. "This is my first time giving blood. Saving lives feels good."

To kill time while donating, students joked and talked. Seniors Karlynn Simmons and Danny Scolese even held a competition to see who could donate one unit the quickest. Simmons beat Scolese by a minute, but both agreed that donating was a good experience.

"[Donating blood] is something that my family does," said Simmons. "Now that I'm old enough to do it, I want to join them."



Becky Hundemer

Coach Margaret Gibson poses with the 2007 softball team on senior night.

Longtime coach departs

"Gibson," from Page 1.

Andy Muir, commented on Gibson's decision to leave as well. "She had commitments outside of coaching and she couldn't do both. Coaching came second," said Muir.

Despite losing their coach, the girls have stayed true to the game by continuing with their winter conditioning in hopes of making it to the District finals again this year. For the past few years the girls have played in District finals and there are concerns aside from the lack of a coaching staff when it comes to achieving this goal again.

"We're hoping to get there again but a lot of the older girls left last year," said junior Becca Leddon. This season the girls will start having lost several power hitters, a third baseman, a shortstop and a pitcher.

Muir is heading up the search for the new coach. "We've already put an ad in the Super-gram and then we'll move on to local papers and *The Washington Post*," said Muir.

While the girls are understanding of Gibson's decision it doesn't make the transition any easier.

"I think it's bad timing, no one wants a coach change on their senior year. We don't know who the coach will be and it's tough," said senior Sydney Button. "It's up to the seniors to hold the team together this season."

No matter the obstacle, the girls are putting up a strong front and hope to come out on top again this season.

"It's great that we go to finals but I don't really care," said Button. "I just play because I enjoy the game."

Senior Capstone seeks to help African children

Bognanno inspired by plight

By Danielle Mazzuchi
Features Editor

In high school, typical students are busy worrying about getting their homework done or passing a class. This however is irrelevant to senior Liz Bognanno: in helping the children of Africa's story becoming recognized.

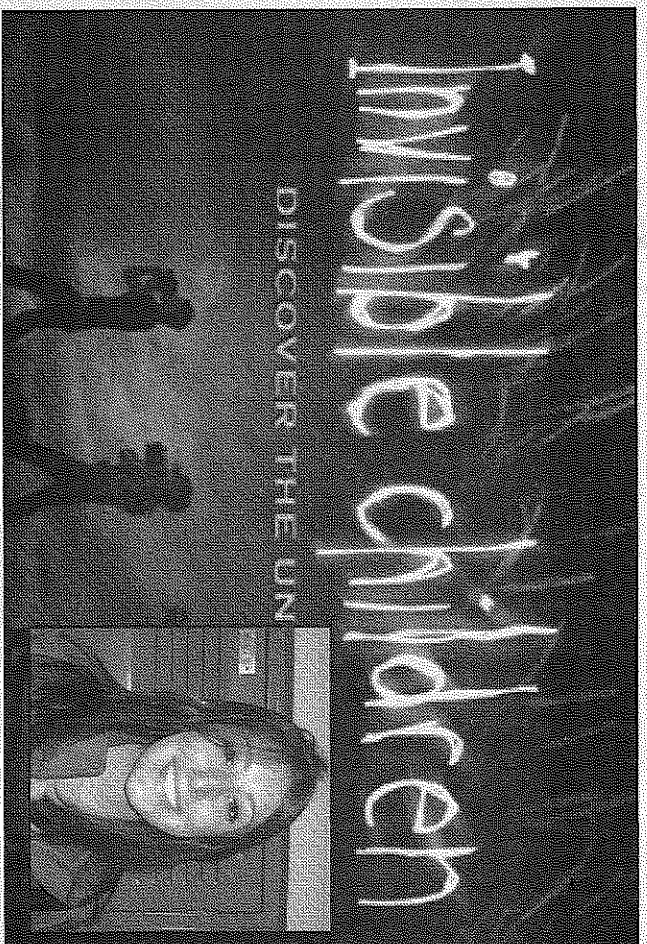
"Invisible Children: Rough Cut" is a film that three young filmmakers created. This documentary reveals the hardships that the children endure and how they are not only victims, but murderers too. In the spring of 2003, the young reporters began a journey to Africa in search of a story.

What they discovered, conversely was the opposite of the reason they embarked on the trip. In hopes of finding a lovely paradise, they entered a dangerous and cruel world. Exposing the harsh realities of northern Uganda's routine nights, the child soldiers are fighting.

"Some spokespersons from the group came to my church and preached about 'Invisible Children,'" said Bognanno. "I like their cause and inspired me to help them."

The film was originally shown to the family and close friends of the group members, but has now spread all over the world. Millions of people have watched the film. This is what children in our generation experience.

"There were over 100 people that came



Katle Kinzel

Senior Liz Bognanno was inspired by a visit to her church by spokesperson from "Invisible Children," who wished to spread the word about the disturbing realities occurring in Uganda. Bognanno incorporated this inspiration into her Senior Capstone project.

during Spartan Time," said Bognanno's sponsor Vera Woodson. "This was sponsored through DECA and every person in there was crying from the film."

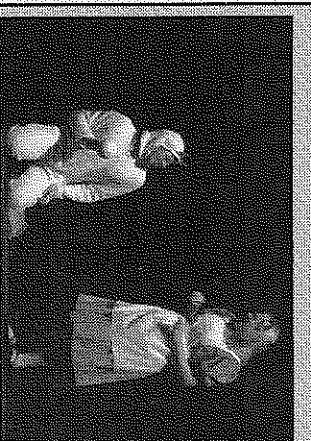
The response encouraged Bognanno.

"I wanted the group to come to our school and let people know what is going on," said

Bognanno.

Group members addressed the situations that are going on around the world, which some may be oblivious to.

"This group was formed to make a change," said Bognanno. "I'm just trying to spread the word."



Summer Cleaveland

John Barbados and Siri Benn in last week's production of "Alice in Wonderland."

'Alice' delights young and old

"Alice," from Page 1.

their lines and rehearse. But the length of "Alice in Wonderland" helped them prepare.

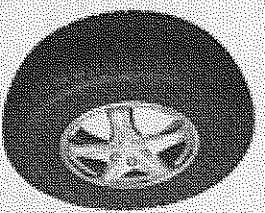
"We're doing a slightly shorter play; we've always done slightly shorter plays [in the Winter Season]," Levesque said. "But we have a good group [of] kids... who realize how important rehearsal and time is. We just have to work harder and smarter."

The long monologues and intricate wording of the play didn't seem to bother Junior Siri Benn, who played Alice and senior Dan Dick, who played Humpty Dumpty.

"We talked about having extra rehearsals and staying longer than planned," Benn said. "We definitely tried to get as much in as possible in our little time."

Benn said the appeal of "Alice in Wonderland" to both young and old alike helped make the play enjoyable.

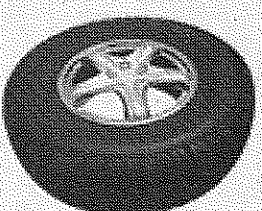
"A lot of little kids are going to be there...so that should be a lot of fun," Benn said.



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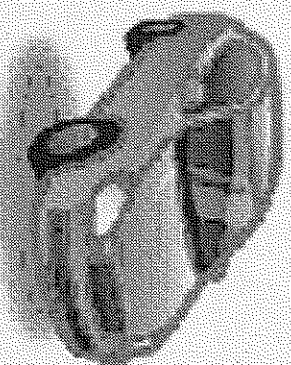
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Longer winter break brings bliss

When students think of December there are several words that immediately come to mind. Snow, relaxation, family and holidays are just a few of them. A word missing from that list is school.

Last year's winter break was brief to say the least. Students received only 10 days off for our winter vacation. Let's take a trip down memory lane to the year

2003. That was the last time students received two full weeks off for winter vacation. This happened because New Year's Day fell on a Wednesday. When New Year's falls closer to the end or beginning of the week, winter break is shorter.

As many students look forward to winter break and make plans for the time off on the calendar, they will notice that they have a longer vacation this year. This year's winter break will be 12 days long, begin on Wednesday, December 24, and extend through the weekend of January 4.

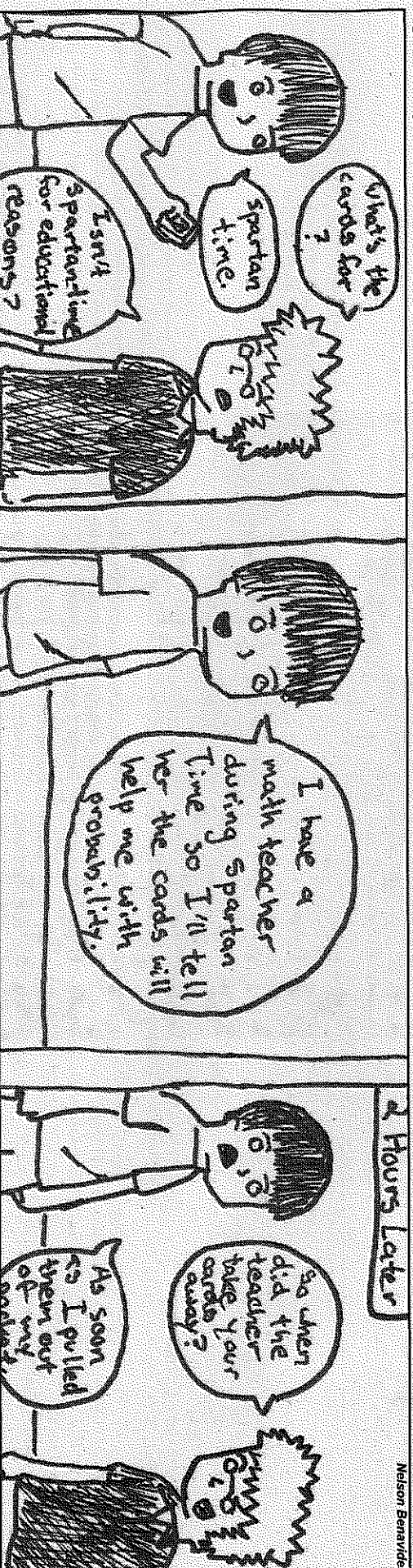
We feel that a substantial winter break is necessary for teenagers. Many FCPS students have older siblings in college. Although university students get a month off for a se-

mester break, the FCPS winter break is typically brief. The short winter break makes it difficult for siblings to spend time with each other because students are in school for a long period of time. December brings one of those rare opportunities to spend time with them and maybe even reconnect.

Another reason we believe a lengthy winter break is beneficial is that students need time to recharge their batteries. Winter break comes after a uninterrupted first quarter that is grueling, and takes place in the middle of a seemingly endless second quarter. Students need time away from school to remember that while school is important, family life should always come first without exception.

But the most important reason for a long winter break is that students need ample time to enjoy and finally break all of the cool new stuff they'll receive over the holidays. FCPS will reap the rewards of the long break on January 5 when students return from winter vacation well-rested and focused. We applaud you FCPS, for giving students 12 days off from school.

Editorial



Nelson Benavides

Spartan Time proves to be rewarding

By Bridget Crowley
Features Editor

I'm not partial to change, so when Spartan Time was first introduced I vehemently opposed it along with many others. We verbalized our objections and lashed out through Facebook groups and online petitions before we even really tried it out. Although I was skeptical at first, Spartan Time has proven itself useful and I look forward to the middle of the week.

Students with grades high enough to make the A & B Honor Roll will now be able to take advantage of the new Spartan Time

Rewards Program. The Rewards Program allows these students the extra option of spending their Spartan Time in the cafeteria.

They can go to talk to their friends or work on homework instead of sitting quietly in a classroom. Also, the cafeteria plans to keep food lines open during this time so students can pig out and be merry while celebrating their amazing grades.

Unfortunately, the same can't be said for us naughty children who don't have as impressive a transcript. Now, the brand-new "Spartan Time 'F' Schedules" are making it mandatory for those who have failing grades to spend Spartan Time with whichever teach-

er whose class they're failing for remediation.

I'd say these are pretty fair ideas: getting rewarded for good grades and mandatory remediation for unspectacular ones. At least this will provide more incentive for us to get better marks.

Now it is in the works that Tuesday will also be a Spartan Day because of all of the positive feedback from both faculty and students. The administration had the department heads poll the teachers from each department on whether or not they agree with adding a new day. Some of the staff was opposed to it on the basis that it makes seventh period

shorter than it already is, which could be very hard on AP teachers that need to get their full lesson plan into a 45 minute period.

I have really utilized the time we're given during Spartan Time to get work done, study, finish up projects and even type this article. Without it, I'm sure my grades would dwindle even more than they already have, and I know I'm not the only one out there in the same position.

I now feel dumb for opposing Spartan Time when I first heard about it; so even though I said I'm not fond to change, I think this new addition to Spartan Time will be a welcomed change.

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The Oracle is a student-run publication designed to inform and entertain the West Springfield High School community. We publish articles written with as little reporter bias as possible. Opinion is expressed in Viewpoint, Forum and ETC., and in reviews and signed columns. 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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Mike Stablen
Students are excited for the longer winter break this year. There will be more time for students to recharge their batteries.

Fischer will miss fun field trips

What I will miss most about...
...the field trips.

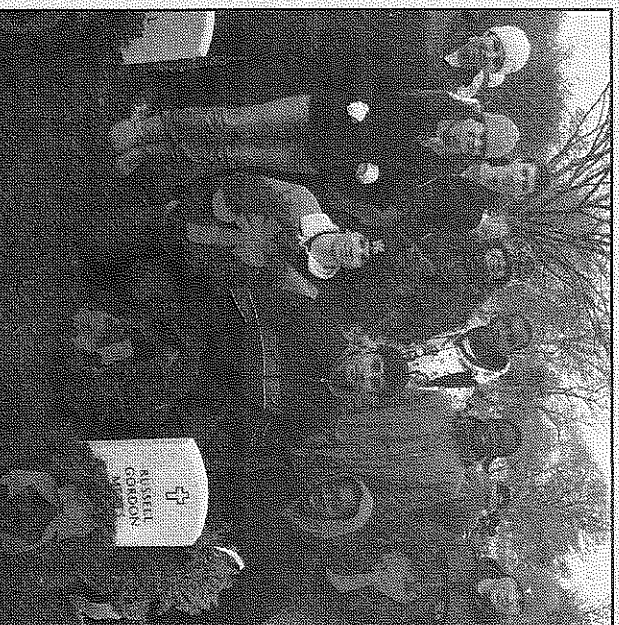
To the Editors:

You haven't experienced life until you've taken 109 juniors on the Blue Line Metro at 7 a.m. during rush hour. You haven't really experienced life unless you've spent the day with those same 109 students in Arlington National Cemetery. I wish I knew how many miles I've walked on all those trips. Cemeteries are fun! I tell my juniors that on the first day of school. They think I am crazy, good! I'll never forget when we were smack dab in the middle of the cemetery and Peter Offen (Class of 2007) said, "Wow, there are so many graves!" The reality of our past hits home on those special trips to Arlington National Cemetery. When my classes gather under the shade of the Marine Corps Memorial for the group photo, I am proud to be living in the United States. When we gather at the top of the hour for the Changing of the Guard ceremony it is Silence and Respect.

Letter-to-the-Editor

The group photo at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier from the Revolutionary War in historic Philadelphia is humbling. Tucked in a small park behind Independence Hall, you realize you are on sacred ground. But, when you line up at the foot of the Rocky Steps and yell, "One, Two, Three, Go!" what an awesome sight. Even after a day of walking our nation's past, it is exhilarating to race up the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art! When we pose at Rodin's "Thinker," I feel at peace with my juniors. And, when we devour Philly steak and cheese from Lorenzo's, we are in Heaven.

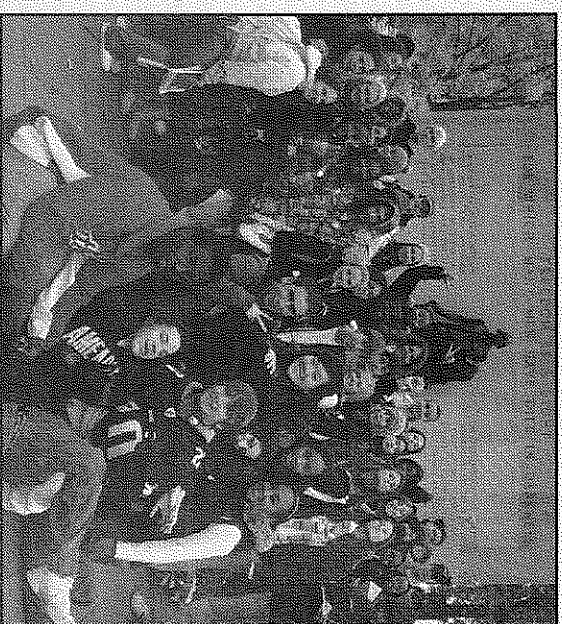
"What happens in New York, stays in New York." I proclaim every January. However, I must share some of those special moments. Racing Joseph Walsh (Class of 2008) around the ice-skating rink at Rocketteller Plaza makes me realize how fortunate I am. Taking a group of juniors to the Majestic Deli for mouthwatering cheesecake is divine. Riding



Fischer's classes visit Arlington National Cemetery last year.

the four-story Ferris wheel in the Toys R Us at Times Square and we are all 11 again. Sitting in the Days Inn hallway at midnight eating Mama Leone's pizza and talking into the wee hours with over 30 juniors/seniors is bonding. Trying to locate 30 juniors at 1 a.m. only to realize there is an awesome Mario Kart Tournament in Room 419—fighting, yet fun! Walking the Brooklyn Bridge at 9 a.m. on a blustery winter morning and all is well in the world. Standing silently at Ground Zero, priceless. Back room-shopping for the real Coach bags with Isha, Nessarret, and Nicole in Chinatown, illegal.

There is history in Cleveland, Ohio??? Yes, parents and colleagues, history is in every American city, not just DC, Philadelphia and Boston. It is this seven-hour journey to Northeastern Ohio that is especially powerful. Our year culminates at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in downtown Cleveland. It is only fitting to finish a year of in-



Fischer's US History students last year went to Philadelphia.

spirational music in this town. And of course, it doesn't hurt to indulge in the all-you-can-eat BBQ buffet at Jacobs Field. But, when Kent State protest organizer and survivor, Alan Cantora takes our group of 50 to tour the historic site from May 4, 1970, it is then that I realize why I teach history. History is Alive!

History surrounds us daily. Our textbooks are valuable resources, our four walls engulf knowledge but outside this building is reality. Young people need to experience life. I have been fortunate to be known as the Field Trip Queen of WS. It is a title that I cherish because I know that I have offered my students the world. Offer your students the world. Take them beyond the textbook and your classroom. Bilbo Baggins said, "I think I am quite ready for another adventure". Begin your adventure today!

Laurie Fischer
Social Studies Teacher

'09 wants more time Seniors should get out at least five minutes early on Fridays because we've earned it

By Chelsea Schuster
Entertainment Editor

This year many seniors would agree when I say that we don't feel like seniors.

Last year, being in class with seniors made me so excited for becoming one because of all the fun things they were able to do, like painting the bleachers, and getting out of class early on Fridays. When it was finally my turn, all the anticipation that built up for my senior privileges was simply a waste. We didn't get to paint the bleachers, and now we only get out three minutes early?

Three minutes is better than nothing, don't get me wrong, but three minutes hardly lets us accomplish anything. I think the point of seniors getting out early is so they can get to the parking lot and leave school faster. Three minutes is barely enough time to walk to our lockers from class and open them and get our stuff. Plus, we need at least two minutes to stand at the rail and show the underclassmen who run this school.

In previous years, I remember the seniors walking around in the halls at least five minutes before the bell. Now, with some teachers, it's a struggle to get out even a minute early. I

We have already devoted three long, full years to this school. We should at least get a five minute grace period at the end of the week.

don't think it's fair that if you're a senior and you're enrolled in seventh period with many underclassmen you don't get to participate in senior privileges. Even if that senior is in a junior class, I think they still deserve to be dismissed three minutes early.

Rumor has it, that the reason we don't get out as early is because parents started to complain that they are paying taxes to support the school system, yet they are releasing us early, putting their tax dollars to waste. Personally I think this is silly because it's not like we learn anything in the last five minutes on a Friday anyway. We have already devoted three long, full years to this school. We should at least get a five minute grace period at the end of the week. Besides, how are we supposed to get the school pumped for the game if we are still stuck in class?



Chelsea Schuster

Seniors want more time to hang out at Hollywood and Vine after school after seventh period on Friday. With an extra couple of minutes, Seniors will be able to feel more like Seniors.

Government teachers applaud student input

To the Editors:

While some people may say that the future of the country is predicated on which candidate won the presidential election, they are shortsighted in their analysis. Our country

has been

Letter-to-the-Editor

enraged by this contest. People are involved to a greater extent in this election than in any race in the past 40 years. This was evident all over our school.

in this election was exceptional. Student involvement ran the gamut from the casual observer of the race to those who volunteered on the congressional or presidential campaigns. Spartans were involved.

Across the nation, the significance of

the race produced record numbers of viewers for all four presidential and vice presidential debates. New voter registrations rose across the country; over 300,000 additional people registered in Virginia alone.

Voter turnout on November 4 challenged the 63 percent who voted in the 1960 election versus the paltry 50 percent of 2000.

Yes, Americans are taking an increased interest in our government, and that can only be a good thing for our future.

Sincerely,

The WS Government Team
Carolyn Beale Young, Jason Croston, Kevin DeJee, Elizabeth Jackson-Petline, Barbara May, Carrie Myers, Ellen Pastor, Carol Tuweddell, John Thorson, Steve Yager



Students all over the country showed support for their favorite candidates.

A different kind of Christmas holiday

By Lacey Woolf

Viewpoint Editor

While students embark on a new adventure in the second quarter, Social Studies teacher Maggie Tran will be starting a new chapter in her life.

Tran left earlier this week for Vietnam to meet and pick up her new baby. She and her husband are adopting a son that they will name Emmett Mey Tran.

Although they did not know the exact date of their trip until recently, the Trans had been preparing for this trip for a long time.

"There are just a lot of pieces that have to come together for us to know when we're going," said Tran.

Tran and her husband have been working on this process for almost two years. The US government has accused the Vietnamese of baby-trafficking, and has recently cut off all adoption agreements with Vietnam.

Tran and her husband were one of the last families to be assigned a baby by the adoption agency.

"It's been really frustrating for me not to know," said Tran. "Not knowing is really hard."

Before the baby can be picked up, a DNA test must be arranged to determine the paternity of the baby and make sure that the baby has not be a victim of trafficking.

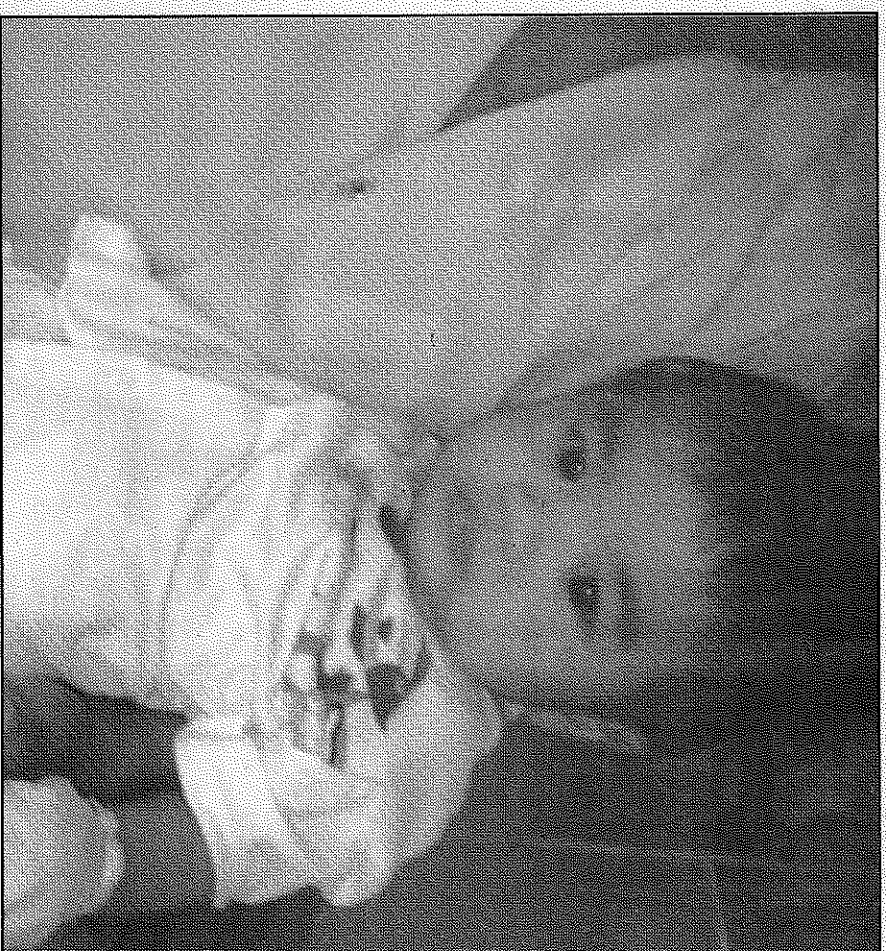
Tran is waiting for the test results to get to her adoption agency in the US so she and her husband can go pick up their son. Tran and her husband chose to adopt from Vietnam because her husband is of Vietnamese heritage.

"I know domestic adoption is so tough, so it seemed like a good option for us to bring in [my husband's] heritage," said Tran.

The Trans will fly into Ho Chi Minh City first where they will head to a small resort town Phan Thiet. They will end up arriving in the city of Hanoi with their baby to sign more paperwork.

Although the whole process of adopting a baby has been very stressful, Tran is excited to go see her son and bring him home.

"It's so expensive and so emotional, so we say one step at a time," said Tran.



Tran Family Photo
History teacher Maggie Tran's soon-to-be adopted son Emmett Mey Tran waits in Vietnam for Tran's retrieval. He shares the same heritage as her husband.

Field trippers travel across the country

By Jennifer Nguyen

Oracle Staff Writer

At the end of the semester, students will not only have the option to relax and unwind, but also to visit Arizona.

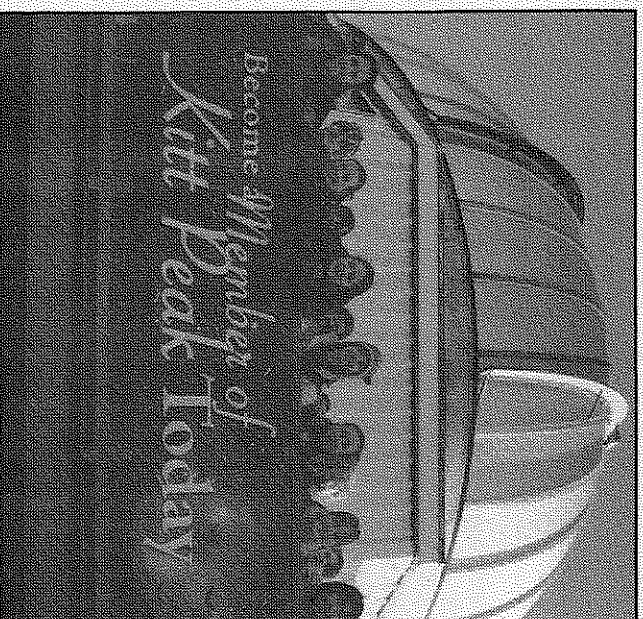
Students in the Science Honor Society are offered a chance to visit the Grand Canyon and sight-see while in Arizona.

"We're going to Kitt Peak national observatory, the Grand Canyon, and Tucson, Arizona," said physics teacher Ed Linz. "We also go to a lot of museums and the trip gives WS students a chance to work directly with professional astronomers."

The other co-sponsor of the trip is Dave Hinchey. Both have dedicated a minimum of 16 to 20 hours planning the trip before announcing it to the public. The difficult part was trying to get a discount for the trip, but they finally settled on a bargain for an estimate of \$350 per student.

"By getting advanced airline reservations and group discounts on the hotel we were able to put this whole trip together," said Linz.

While in Arizona, students will go to the Grand Canyon to see the height in the winter with snow on the ground, an once-in-a-lifetime experience. They also will visit the outdoor Arizona Sonora Desert Museum and engineering/physics facilities at the University of Arizona to experience real



Ed Linz
The Science Honor Society enjoyed a field trip to Kitt Peak, posing on the National Observatory in 2005.

life science. Senior Bryan Terezas, the president of the Science Honor Society, finds the trip very beneficial towards his future and believes it will give him a true view of the world.

"I'm head of the club and I'm going on the trip because I want to major in Astrophysics," said Terezas. "The trip will also provide me with some insight from a real expert."

The trip isn't only about having fun it is suppose help students view science in an interesting way.

"The trip will also provide me with some insight from a real expert," said Terezas.

Besides watching and exploring the science realm students get to do a lot of hands on experiments.

"Students will get to use professional equipment that is the best in the world," said Linz.

There are huge telescopes much larger than the ones in the school planetarium that allow kids to see galaxies past the Milky Way. So far the trip will only take about 16 or 17 students and priority is given to seniors.

"I had some students describe it as the highlight of their high school career and they loved it," said Linz.

With air fair, hotel, and free sightseeing in a bundle it seems that the \$350 is well worth it. Science Honor Society kids are fortunate to have this opportunity presented to them.

"The whole idea of the trip is to experience science in action," said Linz.

Strike a pose

Modeling offers unique opportunities outside of school

By Divya Goel

Business/Systems Assistant

Some are camera shy, but models tend to be the exact opposite, striking poses in front of the camera.

Junior Tyler Vitello has recently modeled skate clothing for aploomb-clothing.com.

"They noticed me skating one day and asked me to take a few pictures. It ended up being over 100," said Vitello.

Vitello is no rookie to the skating lifestyle. He has been skating for over three years and entered many competitions such as the Skatefest '08, which he placed third in the mini ramp and best trick and second in street course for under 18 year olds.

"I've been skating for about three years, and I hope to model more in the future," said Vitello.

Sophomore Amanda Pearson, also models for the company "New

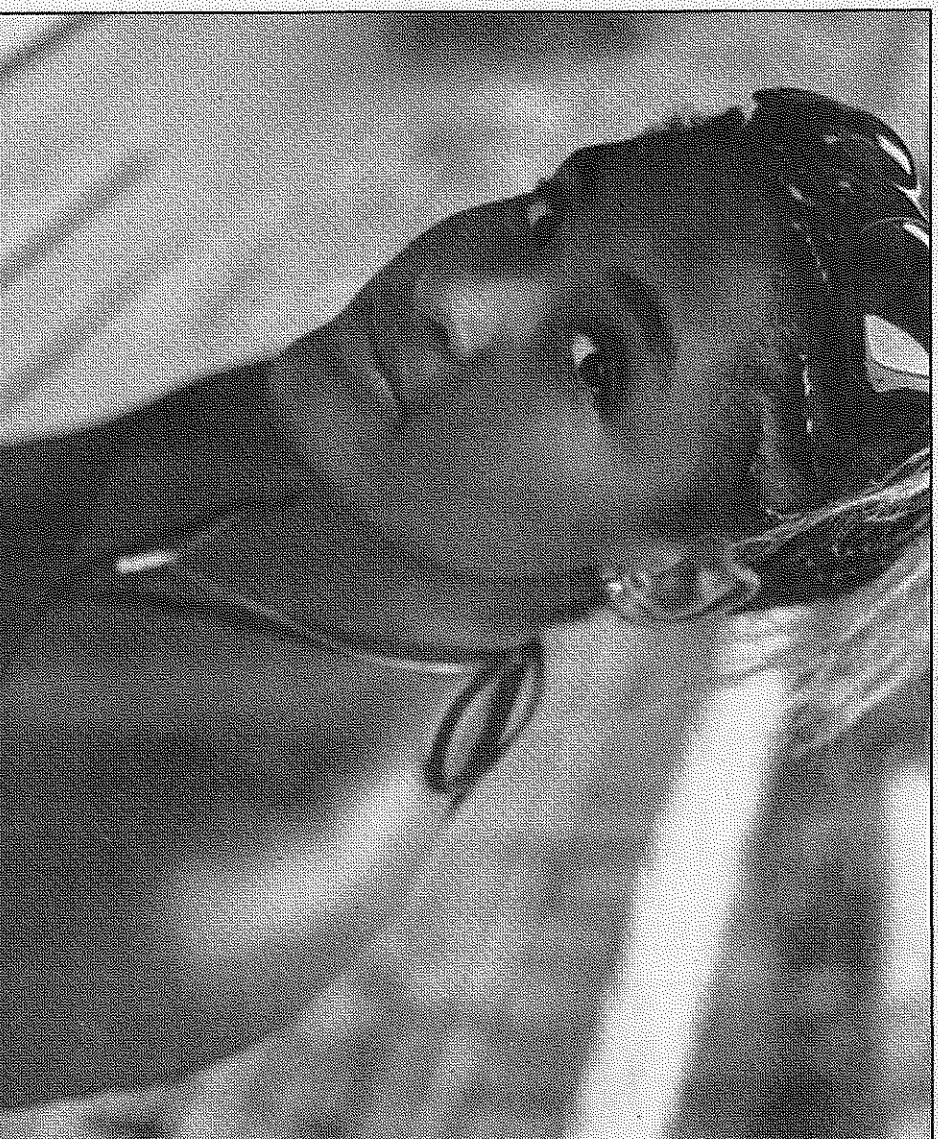
Faces". Pearson has been modeling for over two years, and has loved every minute of it.

"It's a lot of work and commitment," said Pearson. "But it's all worth it when you see the finished product."

Pearson also plays JV basketball, in addition to maintaining her grades. Modeling has made her a very well-rounded person. Teaching her to balance her time and has given her talent in more than one field.

Modeling has become one of the fastest growing industries in the country. Shows such as "America's Next Top Model" have popularized the profession to the fullest. Most companies have also stayed away from the tall skinny stereotypes of a model as well, expanding their horizons to all shapes and sizes.

"It's a good experience," said Pearson. "And it also gives you a lot of self-confidence."



Joe Ensey

Modeling for over two years, sophomore Amanda Pearson is currently striking poses for a company called New Faces. Although modeling keeps Pearson from other activities she enjoys, it is well worth the effort in order for her to see the poses as a finished product.

Eddie's Club leaves counselors satisfied

Sense of accomplishment felt by the volunteers serves as an invaluable reward

By Lisa Williams
Viewpoint Editor

Teenagers are often portrayed as selfish idiots, too caught up in their own actions to care about anyone or anything else. This stereotype has been proven false by the Key Club, which helps kids with special needs through a program called Eddie's Club.

The club runs from October through March, taking place one Sunday a month at Irving Middle School. The program was designed to give people with disabilities aged four through 21 a place to hang out and just be kids. They try to give kids a normal life by pairing them with volunteers who spend their Sundays playing board games and sports with them.

"It's a very good experience. You learn new things and kind of connect with your inner child," said senior Danny Scolese, who frequently volunteers with Eddie's Club. Most recently, Scolese was paired with a child with extreme ADHD. They did activities together such as basketball, wiffball and just running around in the hallways.

Sophomore Lauren Blackburn also volunteers monthly with the program. She tries to

get a different buddy every time she works there so she gets a variety of fun experiences.

"I like helping out kids with different physical and mental disabilities," said Blackburn. "The kids are cute and it's a lot of fun."

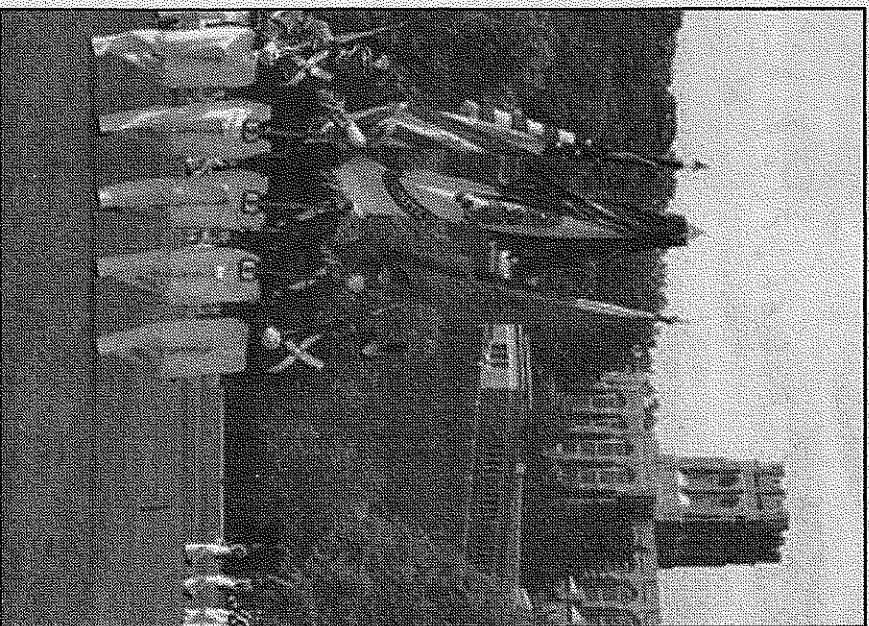
Volunteers give up a portion of their Sunday afternoons to work with children with any type of disability, whether mild or severe.

The only requirement of the volunteers is that they sit through an hour's worth of training to become familiar with possible dangers that could arise.

"I don't mind giving up time from my weekend, because I know it's the right thing to do," said Blackburn. "Every time I leave Eddie's Club, I feel really good."

Eddie's Club also has permanent adult workers, who help out when the program does other things for the children, like taking them to sporting events, shows and a monthly Wednesday program they can attend with their parents.

"Eddie's Club is a great way to give back to the community," said sophomore Marlena Allen. "And to take the time to help the kids that need it the most. I love spending time with them."



Encyclopedia Britannica

Senior Alex Stieracki is heading off to the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York in the summer.

Far away is the new fad

By Krista Pedersen
Oracle Editor

After living and going to school in Virginia for years, some seniors are ready for a change. Although the majority of the senior class will attend college in-state, some are hoping to get away. Far away.

Senior Elias Saljuki hopes to attend either San Diego State University or the University of South Carolina. He says he is attracted to the prospects of getting away from home, and has family in these locations.

"I like the warmer weather," said Saljuki. "There are a lot more things I can do [in California]. I can snowboard during the winter and go to the beach during the summer."

Saljuki is also considering JMU, Virginia Tech and the University of Mary Washington, however, as he recognizes that going out-of-state will be expensive.

"[Cost is] the only problem why I may need to go in-state," said Saljuki. "I'm waiting for the Financial Night. My parents and I are going to go to that and see how it turns out."

Senior Melanie Fish is also looking to possibly leave Virginia, taking schools in Pennsylvania, North Carolina and California into consideration.

She is not worried about distance, and says she will not factor in cost until she has received admission decisions.

In addition to her out-of-state possibilities, Fish is considering "two or three Virginia schools."

"[Cost] is the only problem why I may need to go in-state...I'm waiting for the Financial Night."

—Elias Saljuki,
Senior

"I haven't been too concerned about distance," said Fish. "I don't mind long car rides."

Senior Alex Stieracki is already set in her college choice. She is leaving Virginia in early July for the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York.

A swimmer, Stieracki was first approached by USMA in January at the first Districts meet, and committed September 28. She said that the academy's reputation and proximity to New York City helped to influence her.

"My education is free, it's a well-known place [and] it's not too far away," said Stieracki. "It's only an hour away from NYC. Throughout the cadets' years there a lot of them will go to NYC. It's easy."

Given the long distances and tuition hikes that out-of-state students must endure, many students may ultimately decide to remain in Virginia for at least another four years. As Fish puts it, "they have really good schools here."

"There's really no need for me to go out-of-state if I can get in here," said Fish.



Your Neighborhood Sports Store

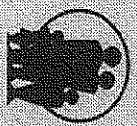
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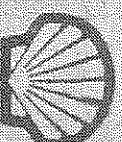
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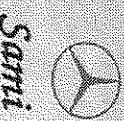
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HISTORY

Every year the Cadets at West Point and highlight of the year : the Army-Navy football game, it is certainly the longest run game is still highly watched by those in the end of the game the important part is that off the field and walk onto a field of combat the other popular rivalries like Alabama vs years are up for the guys down in 'Bama world. The men and women at West Point zones spread far and wide. The guys who the game, not the chance at NFL stardom. America's game.

ARMY

It is a bitter cold day in the Hudson Valley, and the Air Assault team is gearing up for a demonstration. Clanking metal treads carry Bradley tanks down civilian streets, their turrets explore the faces of children who sit in amazement upon frosted curbs. A great bonfire is being prepared on a small parade field. The Superintendent, Lieutenant General Daniel Christman, is shaving an "A" in his chest hair to match the painted haunches of Trooper, Raider and Traveler, the three Army Mules. Black Hawks appear in the skies to drop hundreds of yellow foam tanks with black lettering that reads "Go Army, Beat Navy!" These are the days at West Point before the 2000 Army-Navy game.

Tradition is not taken lightly at the United States Military Academy. I know this first-hand. My dad is a 1987 USMA grad, who returned to West Point ten years and three children later to teach Systems Engineering. I had the rare privilege of living on-post (and by extension on-campus) for almost four years. Tradition is not only drilled into the heads of around 1,000 plebes (freshmen, in civilian terms) each year, it surrounds and pervades the lives of the families near the Academy, much like the Force.

At six in the evening, the flag at Trophy Point came gracefully down, and everyone who could hear a lonely trumpet singing "Taps," would stop what they were doing. All at once hundreds of hands would cover hundreds of hearts, and hundreds of salutes would meet the brims of hundreds of caps. Tell me that isn't tradition. I shall be hazed for saying so, but you'd be hard-pressed to find that kind of crowd participation at the Naval Academy.

Then there's the hat-toss at graduation, another great tradition that *started* at USMA, and was later *stolen* by other academies. In May, a thousand newly-graduated and commissioned second lieutenants throw their white spring uniform hats in the air. About a hundred children descend upon the football field as a kind of clean-up crew. As a reward, they get to keep the hats, which sometimes have money or wisdom attached to them.

But this story isn't just about how great West Point is. It's about how much better West Point is than the Naval Academy. That means no matter how many football games we lose, cadets will always be better than midshipmen, and mules will always be better than goats. (Can I get an "On Brave Old Army Team" up in here?)

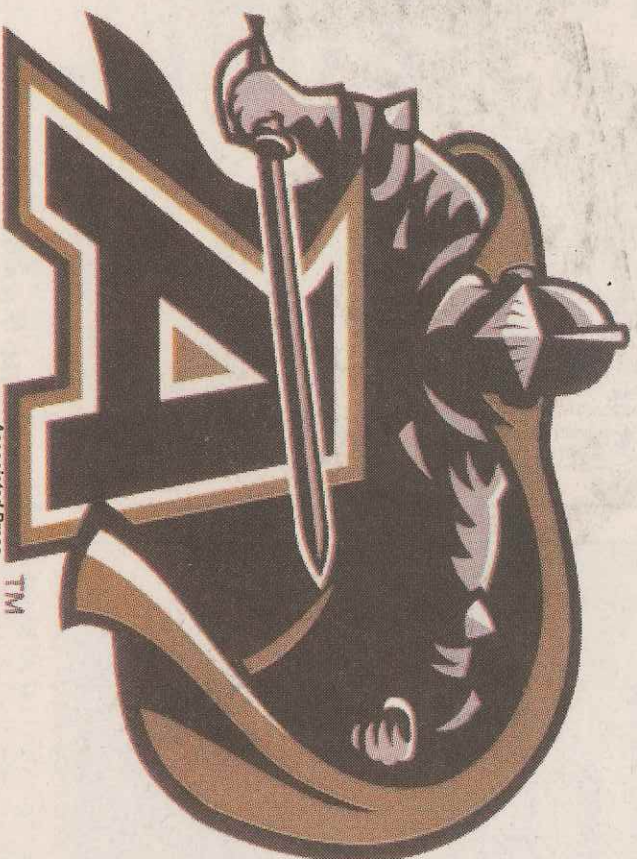
Consider the statistics. West Point has given academic birth to 33 legislators, 16 ambassadors, most of the Civil War Generals, 20 WWI heroes (including Douglas MacArthur, and George Patton), 59 WWII leaders (including everybody from WWI plus Eisenhower and Omar Bradley), almost every Army Chief of Staff since 1861, 76 Medal of Honor recipients, 25 engineers and inventors, 25 business executive and entrepreneurs, 14 well-known athletes and two US presidents (Ulysses Grant and Dwight Eisenhower). If this isn't clear enough, an unofficial motto of the Academy is "Much of the history we teach was made by people we taught."

Let's take a look at some really awesome people and find out where they went to college. I bet you'll notice something similar about all of them:

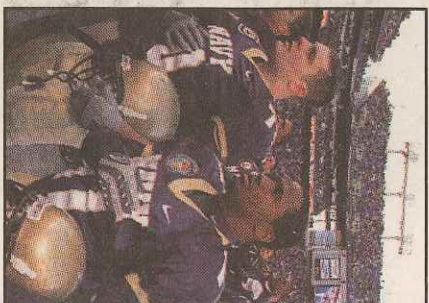
Ahner Doubleday, who, while exploring the thick jungles of Cooperstown in 1893, discovered baseball, went to West Point. Mike Krzyzewski, the winningest active coach in mens college hoops, went to West Point. Apollo 11 astronauts Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins went to West Point. Leslie Groves, chief engineer of the Manhattan Project, went to West Point. Edgar Allan Poe, the Gothic poet and writer, went to West Point.

I think I've made my point. I know you Navy people are up in arms over such trivial things as "Hey! We've won the last (Oh I forget the number) Army-Navy games." Listen, we could get into that whole weight limit scandal but today we won't. Let me end in simply saying that no matter what, we will continue to burn effigies of your mascot in a ridiculously large bonfire. We will continue to repel out of Black Hawks to deliver said effigy. And we will continue to stand and put our hands over our hearts *every* time we hear the Star Spangled Banner. We do this because we have something much more important than giant football players, and that's *tradition*. HOOAH!

-Beth Stinson



Associated Press
TM



OF THE GAME

The Midshipmen in Annapolis gear up for the football game. Possibly the biggest rivalry in College service and out. Tensions are there but at the they're on the same team. They're able to walk at as fellow servicemen. The difference between Auburn (Roll tide roll!) is that when the four they go off to graduate school or into the corporate and the Naval Academy head off into combat play for the service academies play for the love of And that's what makes it so great to watch. It's

NAVY

I'm not from Virginia. To be honest I didn't even know what a Hokie was until I moved here last year. Until last year I had never lived in the suburbs of America. I had always lived on a military base, Army and Navy alike. Because of this my life has been consumed by the first weekend in December for as long as I can remember; the Army-Navy football game.

The US Naval Academy is the training ground for future officers in the "Ain't Ready for the Marines Yet". Because let's face it the guys up in New York aren't ready to join the ranks of the Few and the Proud just like they aren't ready to suit up in the blue and gold for a football game. (Marines aren't a separate branch, they're a part of the Navy thus they play on the same football team).

I'm not Navy by choice, I was born into this life. Every two years I pick up and move whether it be to a new state or a new continent. My dad was a California-Sunshine kid who applied to one college. And that was the USNA. He graduated in the class of '82 and went on to marry my mom and have three great kids whom he then dragged around the world.

I've always had a lot of fun with the game. I usually come to school decked out in my Navy spirit-wear and ready to debate anyone who wore that hated "Go Army" button. When I lived in Korea, on an Army base, my mom and her friend drove around and stuck "Go Navy, Beat Army" signs on all the Generals gates. In Stuttgart, Germany, another Army base, I ran down the street every time Navy scored a point: even though there was a good two feet of snow on the roads. Never has the game been more fun to watch, win or lose, then when I've lived on Army bases. Especially when we win. Especially when we win for the sixth year in a row.

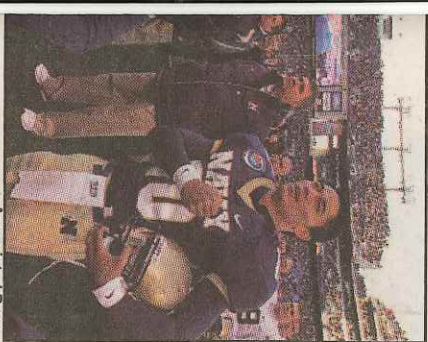
It's kind of a big deal. Don't try to tell me it's not. I've been to their games and I see the heart each and every one of their players puts into the game. The same drive that pushed them to go to the Academy is the same drive that pushes them to give each and every game their best effort.

Let's get back to the statistics. Army and Navy have been duking it out for 108 total games. As of right now Navy is ahead of Army with 52 wins to Army's 49. Navy has the longest-running winning streak in the history of the game.

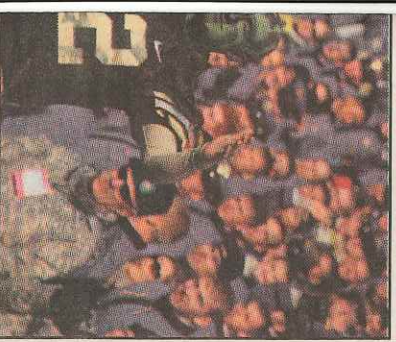
Why is this? Being in the Navy is the real deal. It doesn't matter if we're 'technically' at war or not. Navy guys get deployed all the time. Deployments typically last nine months and they're never a one-time deal. When it comes to technology it's the Navy who's always coming out with the newest thing. They're the ones keeping the networks up and running. We are the service that deals with air, land and sea. We have ships, we have ground troops, and we have the best fighter pilots in the world. Striving for excellence on the field or off, they don't settle for anything less than the best. Don't believe me? Take a look at the scoreboard on that cold December day in 1890. It was a home game for Army. Navy - 24, Army-0. Zero ladies and gentlemen. The first game of the whole series and Army didn't even put up a fight.

This year on December 6 turn the tube onto CBS. The 109th Army-Navy game will be taking place and I know where I'll be. Sitting on the couch watching my Midshipmen rack up the points. The only better sight than a man in Navy whites is an Army spank-fest. A seven-year Army spankfest.

-Amelia Simpson



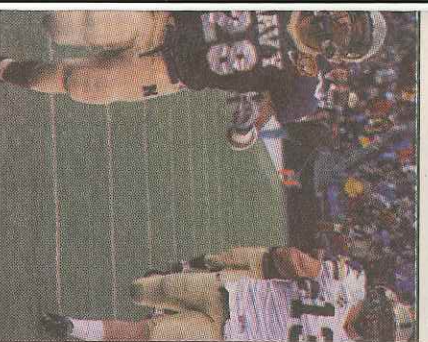
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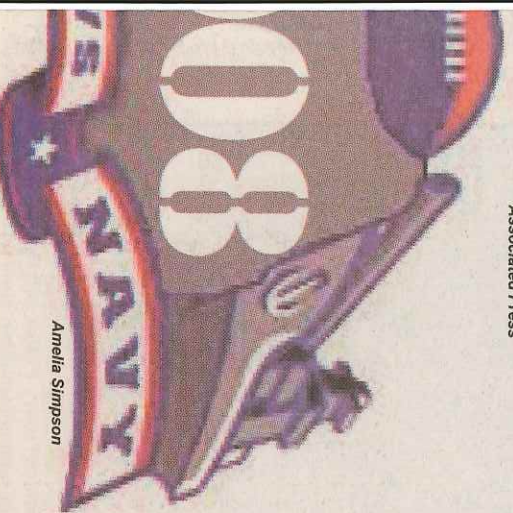
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Old bands, new sound

By Rebecca Naramore

Oracle Editor

They used to just be the bands your parents listened to. But now, older groups have put out new albums and even made tour dates in hopes of appealing to a younger audience. To some students, however, these new attempts are not working.

"[AC/DC] is pretty good," said senior Steven Toney. "It's better than whatever they had 10 years ago." But like some other students who have listened to the new music, he believes there is much to be desired.

Some students do like the new music put out by groups that could be considered their "parents' music." They, however, may not get the chance to see them live.

"I wanted to [go to the concert]," said senior Darryl Fetz. "I'm poor; I don't have enough money to go." Some have opinions that since older bands have already made it big their concerts are more expensive to attend.

High ticket prices are not the only reason that students are less inclined to flock to the new albums which are being released.

"AC/DC's new album sucks," said junior Erik Rasmussen. "They're old." Rasmussen said that older bands should not be making the same types of music that they did earlier in their careers.

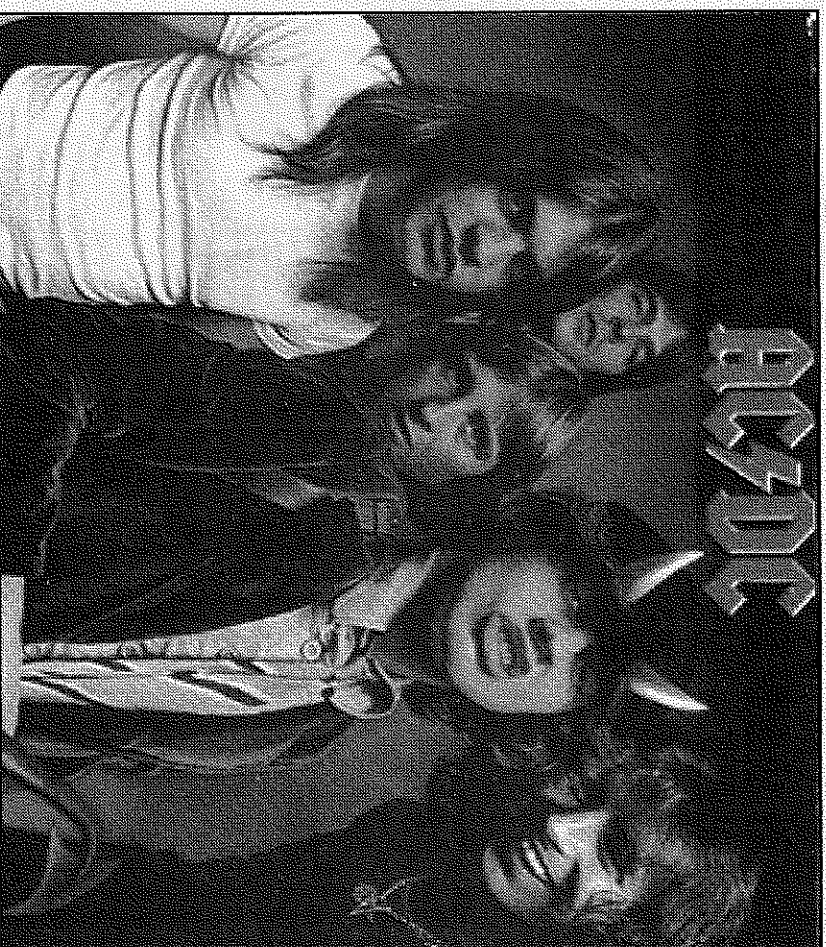
"Neil Young is old but he's making old people music," said Rasmussen. "His music changes with him."

This opinion that the music should grow along with the artists is not held by all. Some, in fact, believe that the music has changed and not in a way that compliments the band.

"I like AC/DC's old stuff better," said Fetz. "When you think of AC/DC you think of that older sound."

Bands such as Motley Crue, Metallica, AC/DC and Guns N Roses have all come out with new sounds and started up tours to rejuvenate their careers. But the attempts made by older generations to connect with the youth have been shot down, either from the changes or similarities in the music, or the make up of the band members.

"I like Slash and he's not part of the band [Guns N Roses] anymore," said Fetz. "He was my favorite part."



Paul Djansezian/Books
AC/DC recently released a new album called "Black Ice" which received mediocre reviews. The Aussie band went on tour to promote their new album and sound.

'Twilight' takes over ticket sales and teenage girls Movie based on popular novel series becomes smash hit at the box office

By Casey Miller

Senior Staff Writer

The lines were long at theaters around the country on November 21, as girls of all ages waited to see "Twilight."

The people waiting in lines not only included chattering, middle school girls with parent chaperones, but many high school girls with reluctant friends and boyfriends in tow.

While not all those eagerly awaiting the movie have read the popular book series by Stephenie Meyer, the majority of viewers were devoted fans. Many of these fans were unimpressed by the movie, saying the casting was awful, the acting abysmal, and the overall translation from page to screen unimpressive. Those most loyal to Meyer, however, had low expectations upon hearing of the film's imminent release, and were surprisingly content with the film.

Even with the mixed reviews, "Twilight" grossed over \$129 million in ticket sales by November 30. It also set a record for most money grossed on opening day for a non-sequel and non-summertime release at \$35.7 million.

Harry Potter pushed back

Vampire film takes wizard's release date on screen

By Julie Parisi

Weekend Editor

The "Harry Potter" movies are known to earn millions of dollars in the box office. To maintain this reputation, "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince" will hit the theaters in the summer of 2009, eight months later than the original date.

Warner Bros. decided that another summer release would yield the best results after "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix," which was released in July 2007, became the second-highest grossing film of the franchise.

"A lot of people went last year," said junior Ryan Schlobach. "I think it's because students were out of school so they had more time to do things."

Films released during the summer months often attract more viewers than those released during the school year because students have more time for leisure activities and are able to go to the movies when they otherwise wouldn't.

Some even end up going to the same movie multiple times. This, may be the case for "Half-Blood Prince," whose devoted fans would have gone any day of the year, and pay ten dollars each viewing.

"It's such a big movie that I think the same amount of people will go either way," said sophomore Jacqui Mula.

"The Dark Knight" (also produced by Warner Bros.), released this past summer, set the standard for successful films. It broke many records including the highest amount



Robert Lake
Hearthrob Robert Pattinson and lovely Kristen Stewart capture the hearts of girls everywhere, but not critics.

grossed in the opening weekend and on the first day. By releasing "Half-Blood Prince" in the summer, it is possible to duplicate these results or do even better.

The original release date for "Half-Blood Prince" was November 21, just one week after "Quantum of Solace" and three weeks before "Twilight" was to hit theaters on December 12. The close proximity of three popular movies was not ideal, so "Half-Blood Prince" was pushed back and "Twilight" was bumped up to take its spot.

"I'm upset because I don't think "Twilight" will be good at all but I think the "Harry Potter" movie is going to be really good," said sophomore Jason Fry.

Although "Harry Potter" fans were disappointed by the news, most "Twilight" fans were excited when they heard that their long-awaited movie was moved up almost a month.

"I'm a bigger fan of "Twilight" than I am of "Harry Potter" so I was glad when it was moved up because it's closer to my birthday, so it's like a birthday present for me," said Mula.

Others, however, support the date change not because it gives "Twilight" the opportunity to move up, but because they don't want strife between the "Harry Potter" and "Twilight" fans.

"It was probably a good idea to move one of the movies back because then "Twilight" and "Harry Potter" fans won't compete," said sophomore Jenn Britts. "It could have gotten out of control."



Shutterstock
Harry Potter fans were disappointed to hear that the film for "Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince" was postponed to a May release so it would not face competition such as "Twilight" and "Quantum of Solace."

After the disappointing shortening of every Harry Potter book in the movies, it was only to be expected that much of "Twilight" would also be cut. All of the "Twilight" books are so detailed that rendering an exact adaptation would be impossible. The director had to convey the book's feeling and action in an incredibly short span of time. So, given the wonderfully detailed books, I think the writer and director did a good job of hitting the high points.

It is true that the characters of Edward, Rosalie and Carlisle could have been better cast, but overall the casting director did a decent job. The biggest complaints were that Edward needed to be better looking, buffer and a better actor, that Rosalie needed to be far more beautiful and that Carlisle's white skin was too fake and unbelievable. But the character of Bella was clumsy, cute and altogether pretty close to Meyer's description of her in the book.

So even if the casting was not everyone's idea of perfection, lines full of first time and repeat spectators still continue to form outside theaters at least thirty minutes before show time.

Businesses get the boot

Students seek self-employment opportunities

By Susan Nguyen
Page One Editor

As the school week progresses, there is only one thing on everyone's mind: the weekend.

It is a time for students to unwind from the past week and to prepare for the approaching one, where they will get assigned more homework and become more stressed, only to repeat the entire process over again. And this isn't taking into account the even busier schedules of those students who have jobs.

But it helps when the job is something that you love to do.

Such is the case for junior Michael Marino, who has been performing magic since the sixth grade. Marino is a self-employed freelance performer, who mainly books jobs through word of mouth.

"I started out as a hobby," said Marino. "It's like I get paid to go to parties."

And get paid he does. Marino could easily charge one hundred dollars an hour depending on the situation.

"That's actually not that much for a performer," said Marino.

Marino is primarily hired for social events such as dinner parties or retirement ceremonies, where his routines typically include card tricks, coin tricks, rope tricks, and impromptu magic. Although Marino has been performing for a long time, he admits that he does occasionally mess up.

"When stuff like that happens, you just play into it. Pretend you meant for it to happen," said Marino. "Have an out if you mess up, something to fall back on."

Throughout the demanding school year, Marino books fewer jobs because he is already busy trying to balance his personal and school life. Marino is not only the president of Jugglers Club, but also a member of Jazz Ensemble, chamber orchestra and Madrigals.

But for Marino, who wants to keep his talent a hobby, this suits him just fine.

"I'd like to keep doing it for a while, but not as my main source of income," said Marino. "I don't want to go professional because then it becomes your work, not fun."

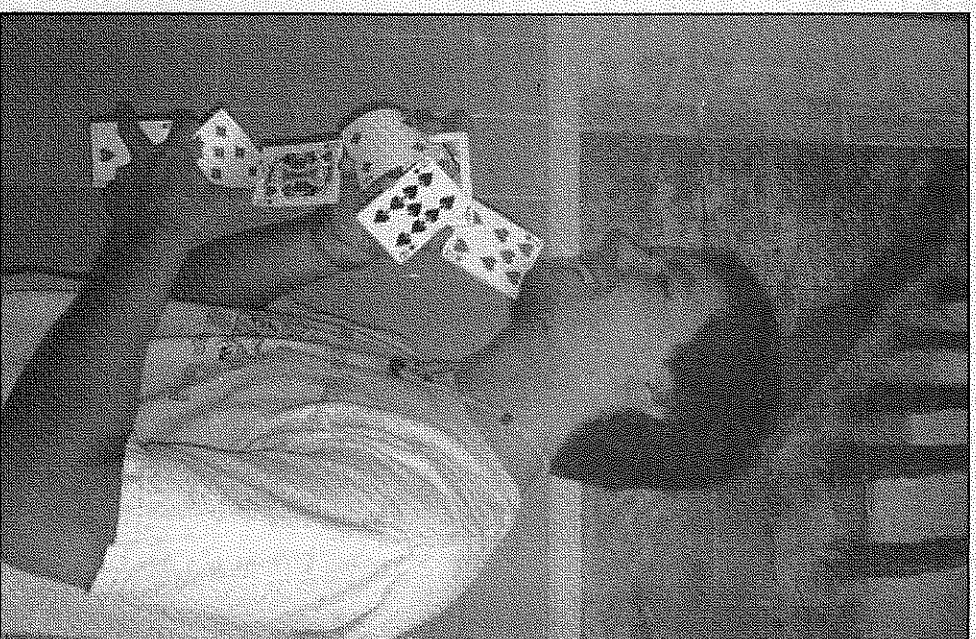
Marino is not the only student in the school with an interesting job that pays well.

Junior Katherine Scheetz is also a self-employed performer, but instead of doing magic she plays the harp, mainly at wedding ceremonies.

"My grandma from Texas plays, and he has this gorgeous harp," said Scheetz. "When I was six, I was like 'I want to play the harp!'"

Scheetz also must deal with balancing her personal life with school and work, so she only plays once every two months on average. Luckily for her, Scheetz' job is also a hobby first and foremost.

"There are moments when I just want to throw [the harp] in the fire and light a match," said Scheetz. But in the end, "it's really worthwhile."



Susan Nguyen
Junior Michael Marino shows off his card trick skills. Instead of working for a company, Marino is a self-employed magician.

Same great sounds for less

Smaller venues satisfy concert-goers for less cash

By Kelly Carlin
ETC Editor

A lot of adults like to say that teenagers do nothing but listen to loud music. And sometimes, it seems to be true.

Students seek out concert opportunities whenever they can get their hands on tickets, but prices can be an issue. Small clubs in the area have cheaper tickets for concerts, usually ranging from \$15-40, while the cheapest seats in the large arenas are most likely in the \$30-50 range. Better seats can cost up to thousands of dollars.

"Big arenas are overwhelming," said sophomore Jennifer Butts. "Small clubs are better because they make you feel closer to the bands."

Clubs and bars where bands play are accessible for kids because Springfield is so close to DC. Students can take the Metro, bus or drive easily. Inside the city, places like 9:30 Club and the Black Cat

bring acts that are slightly less famous than the bands that come to larger venues. There are also many clubs in the Baltimore area including Rams Head Live, the Recher Theater and Fletchers Bar. The only issue is whether or not students are willing to drive an hour or so out of the way.

"I like small clubs because it costs less and you are closer," said sophomore Jason Fry.

Although the prices greatly affect the ability to get tickets, students have an opinion on which type of environment they like to see bands perform in.

"It depends on the band. If it's a local band I don't mind going to a club. But if it's a more popular band I'd rather have it at an arena because the more people come, the bigger the place should be," said sophomore Batul Rizvi.

If they're willing to go to see a more famous band, Nissan Pavilion and Metriweather Post Pavilion are

"Big arenas are overwhelming."

—Jennifer Butts,
Sophomore

great venues to enjoy an outdoor concert experience. Indoor arenas where big bands play include the Patriot Center at George Mason University and the Verizon Center in DC.

"If it's a band I really want to see at an arena, then I don't mind, but cheaper prices are better," said Rizvi.

Since students are young and only some have jobs, it can be hard to pay the ticket prices and fees that go along with buying them, but many students are willing to pay the price.

"It's usually pretty worth it," said junior Bri Rinaldo. "I've never been to a concert that wasn't worth my money."



Chris Gould

For cheaper prices students can go to venues such as the 9:30 Club, Black Cat and DAR Constitution Hall among others. These arenas offer different artists and genres in a smaller, up-close setting.

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Take center stage, right at home, too

By Ally Mackin
Senior Staff Writer

It's time to bring out the inner rock star in you.

October 26 marked the date when future rockers stood in line at their local Best Buys and Wal-Marts as well as other promising venues. The new game, Guitar Hero World Tour, provides a whole new realm of entertainment to quench every superstar's thirst for rock.

Along with adding 450 new songs, the game resembles Rock Band, featuring a drum set and a high performance microphone. The game's products can be purchased either in singletons (one guitar, one microphone, one drum set) or in a bundle.

This game differs from Rock Band, however, because unlike Rock Band, Guitar Hero 4 now allows people to personalize their rocking experience by creating new unique characters, customizing their gear and designing their own band logo and cover art.

"The game is a whole lot of fun," said senior Sam Freeberg. "It's a lot different than Rock Band than most people think. Instead of playing planned songs, you're able to cre-

ate your own music." The simulator gives the entire musician effect by offering the ability to compose a record at the music studio then edit your work to polish your tracks. After the process is finished you can then share your talent online.

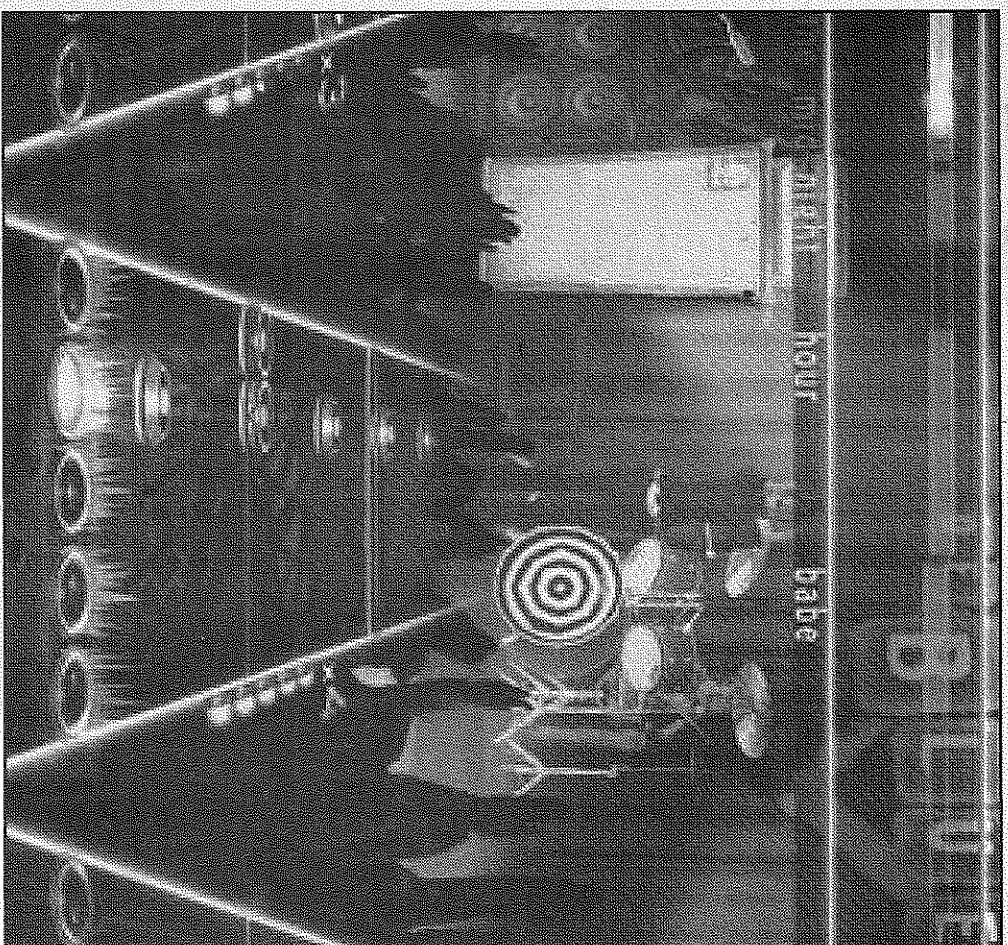
The new game includes artists from Nirvana, Lenny Kravitz, System of a Down, 311, Foo Fighters, Bon Jovi, Sublime and other legendary performers.

"Hands down my favorite song on Guitar Hero 4 is 'Beat it' by Michael Jackson," said sophomore Wais Ansary.

Activision, the publisher, has really outdone themselves by taking last year's Guitar Hero III: Legends of Rock to the next level. Guitar Hero 4 will even get your parents on a "natural high."

Because the songs range from generation to generation, you shouldn't be surprised to see Mom and Dad busting in the room, rocking out to AC/DC's Shook Me All Night Long.

"Whenever I'm playing alone my dad and sister both weasel their way into playing along with me," said senior Bekah Adams. "The rule in our house is that no matter what never let dad in charge of the singing."



Associated Press

With 450 new song choices, Guitar Hero 4: World Tour, gives even more options than its predecessors with added instruments to the game as well. Don't be afraid of boredom of this game either, with song choices that range from generations.

Great hangouts, just add vehicle

Old Town offers great experiences within close proximity

By Jennifer Nguyen

Oracle Staff Writer

Tenggers are constantly on the search for new hangouts and activities to do. Something that is upbeat, fun and loud to keep their short attention span.

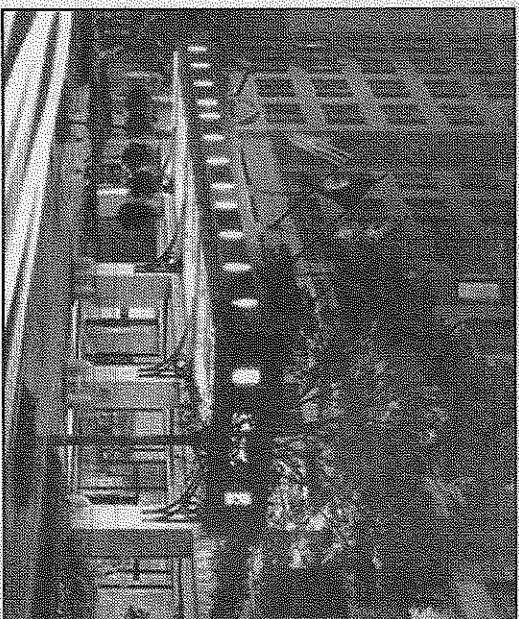
Years ago, Springfield mall was the place to be until of its atmosphere change to the current beat and rundown status. Now most are herded around Tysons, Kingstowne, and Fair Oaks, but the crowd has divided and bored kids are out on other endeavors trying to find another perfect spot.

"Georgetown and Old Town is more fun because there are lots of unique shops and restaurants," said junior Tiffany Anderson.

Maybe the mature tone and classic culture is more appealing than the ordinary indoor mall and fast food takeout. To really enjoy the experience, however, you need a big left wallet to afford the expensive costs.

"It's really expensive to go to Georgetown, but most people who go there already have jobs," said Anderson.

Though Georgetown may be the new trend others prefer to



Associated Press

Although it's a bit of a drive, Georgetown offers experiences that can't be found at local places like Kingstowne and Tysons.

stay close to home.

"I don't go to Georgetown because it's too far away and it takes a lot of time, I'd rather stay here. It's also pretty expensive," said junior Dilpreet Kaur.

Both locations offer historical sights which keep the beauty and uniqueness of the spots. To access Georgetown, taking the metro is the easiest route because parking is impossible. The strenuous journey to Georgetown is clearly worth it since students keep coming back.

One of the aspects of Georgetown an Old Town that draws in more people is the distinct setting and aura the historical towns give off.

"There is definitely a different kind of atmosphere, fresh out of college students go there and more of older mid-twenties," said Anderson.

Even though it is a lot of fun most students can not afford the high costs of traveling to either Old Town or Georgetown. Roundtrip gas price may sway others into sticking with the local malls and theaters.

"I don't go to Georgetown all the time because it's really expensive, but it's good to visit," said Anderson.

'Skins fans, unite!

By Luis Lester

Business/Systems Assistant

No matter if it's 80 degrees and humid in the beginning of September or 10 below freezing in December, people will still dedicate their Sunday to go watch their home team, the Washington Redskins, "fight for old DC."

FedEx Field, the home to the 'Skins, holds over 91,000 people and is the largest stadium in the NFL, a sure sellout every week.

This year it's especially popular because the 'Skins seem like they're well on their way to making the playoffs.

In a Sports Illustrated poll the 'Skins fans and the wild Hogget's were voted second best fans, only bested by the crazy black and silver Oakland fans.

"It's a good atmosphere. Almost all the fans are 'Skins fans, so you're surrounded by people with a love for the same team as you," said sophomore Alex Phillips.

YOUnity, which is a club made up of mostly young African-American women, took their group members to a 'Skins game this year.

"We were outside selling merchandise,

but the atmosphere was great, and everyone was ready to cheer for their team," said junior Marie Ndaye.

People gather around hours before the game just to hang out with their friends and family in the parking lot which could be more fun than the actual game itself.

"Me and my family got there a couple hours before the game and we just threw the ball around and relaxed," said freshman Brad Uhlman. "I don't think that the game would be the same without the tailgating."

With a new coach and competition from in the hardest division in the league, the expectations going into this year weren't particularly high.

But as the middle of the season rolls around they're sitting atop in the playoff race.

"I think [Jim Zorn] has done a really good job putting this team together," said sophomore Greg Hoochhaak.

So as long as the burgundy and gold stay in DC they are going to be recognized as having one of the most enthusiastic fan bases in the NFL.

"As long as I'm alive I'll always be a Redskins fan," said sophomore Trevor Snook. "Hail to the Redskins!"



Associated Press

Thousands of fans gather at FedEx Field to cheer on the Redskins. With a large contingent of Redskins fans here at WS, watching the home team is a popular activity for many students and their families. The stadium is located in Landover, Maryland, and can be reached by car or by metro.

Spartan ice hockey skates under the radar

By Susan Nguyen

Page One Editor

WS is home to many popular and prominent sports. However, ice hockey isn't one of them.

Cheerleading, football, cross country, dance team and field hockey all make appearances on Spartansports. But ice hockey is nowhere to be found. With such little hype, it is no wonder that this sport is paid such minor attention.

The hockey team has not played on Varsity this year or even last; instead they have been playing in the Junior Varsity league. Yet it is not a lack of skill, effort, or dedication that is plaguing this team. It is a lack of people.

"It's not because we're a bad team. We're a good team," said junior hockey player Brian Bodling. "It's not because of a lack of effort. There's just not enough people. Hockey isn't a popular sport."

The hockey team is certainly lacking in numbers. A typical high school hockey team should have around 17 people on it, whereas The Spartans are missing about 5 of those much needed team members.

One reason that the hockey team may be so limited in terms of players is the expensive cost that each participating

member is expected to pay.

"[Hockey is] not a school sport," said sophomore hockey player Danny Langlais. "[It's] a club sport, so it's expensive and we have to pay for it ourselves."

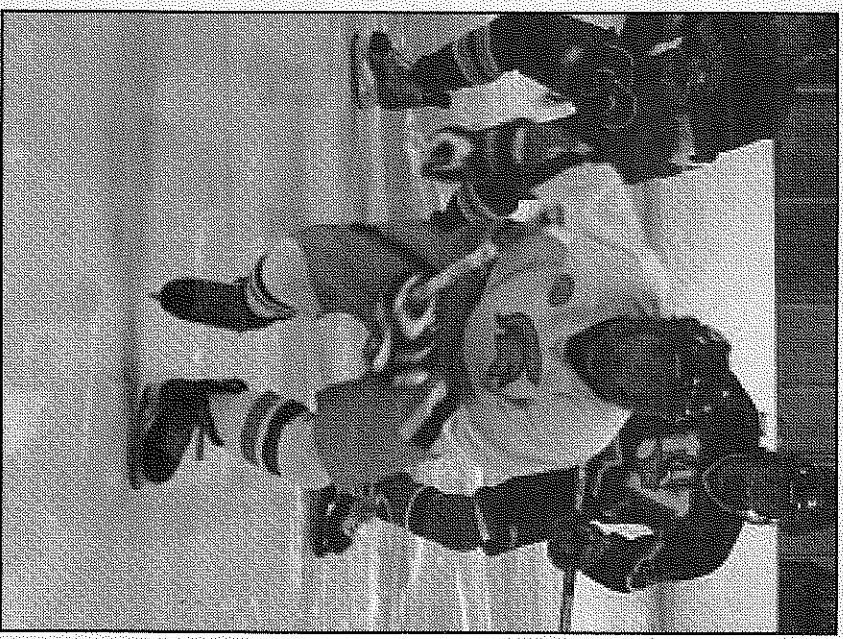
The hockey team is so low on numbers that they have even combined with a different school's team in order to gain new members. In this case, the Spartans have joined with Stonewall Jackson's one hockey player in order to secure a goalie for the team, and is thinking about possibly combining with another school's team.

In spite of all of this, what the hockey team lacks in numbers, it surely makes up for in hard teamwork and commitment.

"We've gotten a lot better in the past years," said Bodling. "We are an amazing team."

Indeed, WS' hockey team certainly proved itself in the recent Frederick Cup Hockey Tournament, running from November 7 through 9 where they beat their opponents and ended up leaving with not just the win, but the Frederick Cup.

"The reason we don't [always] play as well is because we don't have people coming to games, cheering us on," said Langlais. "So come to our games!"



Susan Nguyen

Because it is a club sport, ice hockey does not have the same support and funding as other school sports.

Spartan Football sees the end of an era

Oakton defeats WS in Regional semifinals in Renner's and Jones' final season

By Kaitie Harrison, Ben Lockwood, & Cam McCallum

Oracle Staff Writers

As it got closer to game time, students got ready to witness another memorable play/off change, without knowing there would be major changes to the Varsity football coaching staff afterward.

Head Coach Bill Renner decided to step down this week after 10 seasons with the Spartans to follow his son Bryn's college sports career at the University of North Carolina. Renner made the decision partly because he didn't believe he could make a full commitment to the football program at WS.

"The players need a coach that is going to be there 100 percent of the time," Renner said, "I could not make a commitment to the job. I didn't want to get caught in a bind of coaching a game or going to see Bryn play."

Spartan Football will also be without Jim Jones next year, who is moving on after 10 seasons as defensive backs coach. Jones has taken a coaching job in another county to be closer to his family.

"My decision is about what my family needs," Jones said. "This is the perfect place for coaching football, there's a phenomenal weight room and field. I think this will be an easy transition for the program."

Players did not find out about the news until after their Regional semifinal game against Oakton. The semifinal was a game for the ages, and a good sendoff for Renner and Jones, who are credited with a Renaissance in Spartan Football. The coaches are credited with taking a losing program and turning it into a Patriot District champion two years in a row.

Down 49-22 at the end of the third quarter, the Spartan offense caught fire late and was able to cut the deficit to 49-43. Having multiple attempts to tie or take the lead at the end of the game Oakton's defense held up strong and stopped the WS offense.

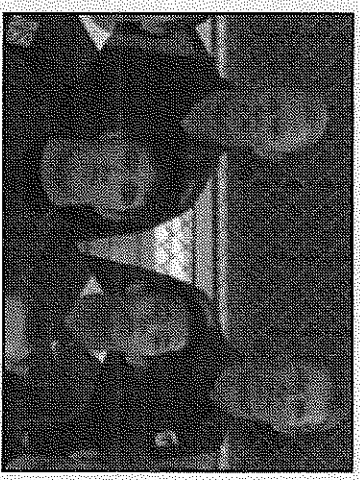
"It took a lot of effort to make a comeback like that," said Renner. "I was not disappointed with our performance because we left everything we had on the field."

Players will remember Renner for his intensity and leadership, and many are sorry to see him go.

"I hate to see him leave, he's a good coach," said junior Peyton Davey. "I'll always remember the crazy halftime speeches. I will definitely never forget his last one."

For the 30 seniors on the team as well as Renner, the game against Oakton will be the last time ever they'll ever suit up and take the field as Spartans. Despite his departure, Renner believes the program won't miss a beat and the players will continue to excel next year.

"They [rising seniors and juniors] shouldn't think that they can't get better and improve the program," said Renner. "What I've learned is that in high school sports there's always someone out there that wants to step up."



Spartansports

Spartan Football will lose head coach Bill Renner as well as defensive backs coach Jim Jones, both of whom are moving on after 10 seasons.

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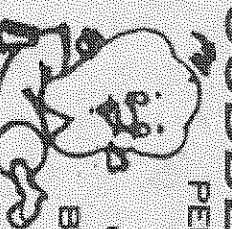
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Spartansports

The 2008 Spartan football team accomplished a lot, winning their second consecutive Patriot District championship and advancing to the regional semifinal game. Although they will lose 30 seniors to graduation, hopes are high for another successful season next year.

Remner takes season off for surgery

By Mia DeSantis
Entertainment Editor

Football, basketball, and baseball all have something in common: senior Bryn Remner.

Recently Remner disclosed he will undergo surgery on his shoulder. This surgery will cause him to sit out his last season of Varsity basketball.

"I feel horrible that I can't play because I have played basketball all of my life," said Remner. "I love playing so I'm going to miss it."

While the team feels losing Remner is a loss, they are hoping to learn from this difficulty. Although they will be missing a key player they are hoping to gain confidence in each and every other player.

"He is a great player and we will miss him, but now we won't have that go-to guy, we will have to come together as more of a team," said senior Jordan Massey.

Boys Varsity basketball has faced challenges before, such as losing eight seniors after the 2006 season, and having no seniors on the team last season. That was one of the

reasons that the team struggled. This season, however, will hopefully have a different turn out.

"Sophomore year was the best season. We had eight seniors who had the Varsity level experience," said Massey. "Last year we had no seniors and not that many returning players. A problem other teams are going to face this year is that last year they lost aspects of their team."

The team is looking forward to the season, but knows they are going to have to work for it. It's going to take time to find the right

chemistry on the court.

"We will see where the season takes us, but we have a core group of guys who will play together well," said senior Austin Hall.

Not only will this affect Remner, it's also going to affect the team.

Some may think the team is worried about not having Remner out on the court with them, but Remner has a different outlook on his absence from the team.

"The team is going to do great this year, they have a lot of leadership to carry them to a successful season," said Remner.

Alukonis steps up to lead girls soccer team

By Ryan Miller
Business/Systems Assistant

Girls Varsity soccer looked like it might be in trouble as the season approached and they were still stranded without a coach, after head coach Kellie Mastodonato resigned earlier this year.

The team was supposed to be starting their off-season conditioning and without the assistance of a coach they ran into some problems.

The senior team members stepped up and did their best to keep the team together. They tried to set up the preseason conditioning but soon encountered some difficulties.

"It's hard, because Ms. M set up

all our preseason stuff," said senior Jessica Gonzalez.

Gonzalez and three other seniors, Katie Scanlon, Katie Harrison and Amalaya Clayton all took charge. But the four senior girls were not the same as having a real coach.

"I would rather have a coach here pushing us," said sophomore Paige Babel. The team sees that they are doing their best but it's just not the same.

Luckily J.T. Alukonis has recently taken the head coach position. Alukonis is one of the tech teachers and has been involved with the school's soccer programs for a while now.

"I felt like I was ready to be a head coach," said Alukonis. "The

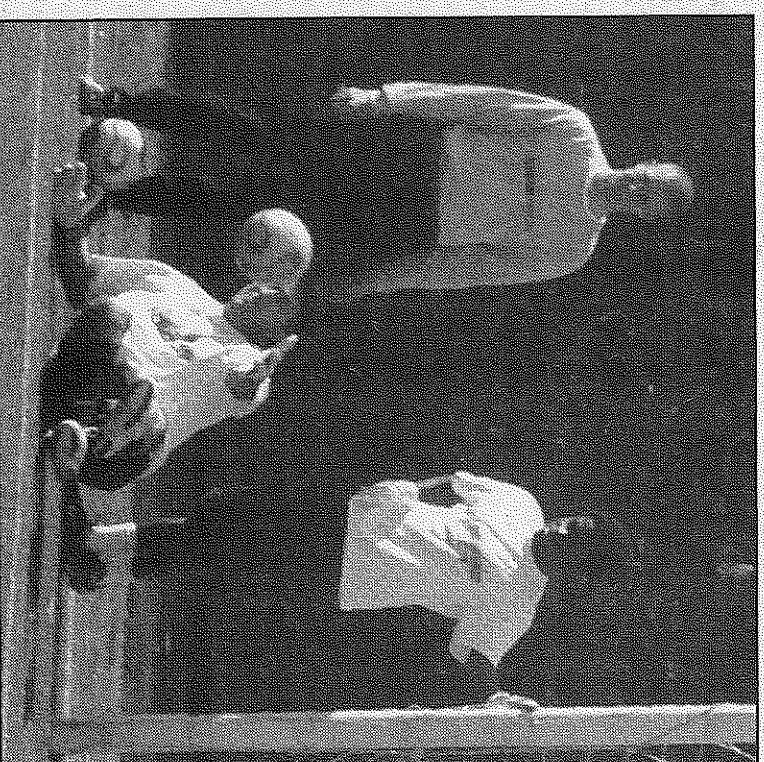
position was available at the school and I know the players. It was a great opportunity."

The girls were relieved when Alukonis was appointed to the position.

"Setting up all the conditionings put a lot of responsibility on us," said Gonzalez. Even planning the conditionings had become a tiresome task. "We all have different schedules so it's hard to set up practices," said Gonzalez.

The team is finally complete. Now with the addition of a head coach nothing can stop this dominating team.

"I'm excited about a change for the team," said Clayton. "It seems like he has some good ideas for the team."



J.T. Alukonis, left, was the assistant coach for the boys soccer team. This year he'll step up as the head coach of the girls team. The Lady Spartans have won the District title for the past two years.

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Lennon's legacy leaves a lasting impact

28 years after his death, Beatle's work still matters

ETC. Editor

My parents always tell me that I was born in the wrong decade. My fascination with the culture of the '60s has proved them to be right.

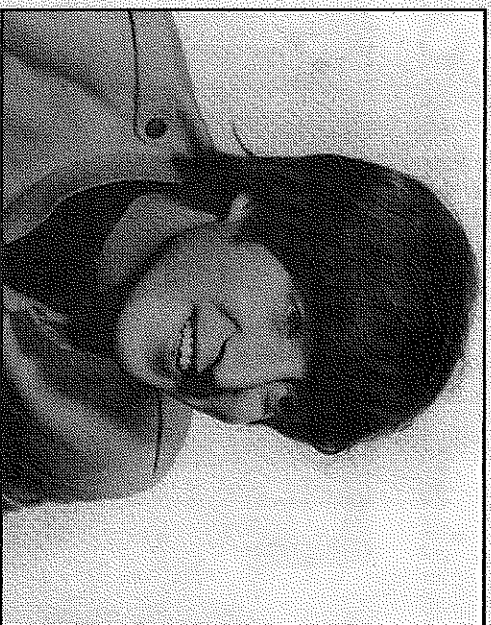
When I was five, my mom bought the "Beatles 1" CD for my sister, and we'd play it over and over in the car. At 12, I rediscovered the Beatles' music and it changed my life.

During that year, with the help of my sister, I acquired each of their 13 albums (not including anthologies), all five of their films, and every piece of information that I could get my hands on. I have never encountered another band whose music is as powerful or important to me and many others.

In 1964, the Beatles came to America from England and forever altered music and pop culture. Now, in 2008, two Beatles live on and two have died. Each year, as December 8 approaches, I think about John Lennon and the great songwriter that he was.

In 1980, Lennon was shot and killed on a New York sidewalk. A three-acre memorial, Strawberry Fields, is dedicated to Lennon in Central Park near where he died.

John Lennon was a musician and an activist. His music with and after the Beatles expressed his feelings about the world and showed his political interest. He wrote songs about his life and the world that most people



A young John Lennon, during the filming of the Beatles' second film, "Help!"

Associated Press

It's always fascinating to me to see how many people still care about John Lennon, and the Beatles. There are still books being published, movies being made, and tributes taking place that show and tell the literal mania that surrounded the Beatles when they became popular.

Kelly's Beat

Lennon was half of the main force behind the Beatles, and his collaborations with Paul McCartney are considered some of the greatest songs in the history of music.

His involvement with political activism was a big deal, and he was nearly deported. Even if you're not a fan of Lennon's music, he's impact is impossible to ignore. One of his most powerful songs, "Imagine", is still as influential as it was when he wrote it.

So, as December 8 gets closer, I take the time to play a few albums. To me, it's important to appreciate John Lennon for the musician he was and the influence he still has.

At the time they called themselves the Quarrymen, but they did not think that name was catchy enough so they came up with The Beatles.

Twenty-five years later—even though they had to "Let It Be". The Beatles are still very much a household name.

Stevie's Story

November 12, 2004

Their great success and fame, was soon to take a toll on them.

Your parents listened to The Beatles, most likely you listen to The Beatles (or at least know one or two of their songs), and chances are your children will listen to The Beatles.

In 1964 The Beatles got a "Ticket to Ride" and came to America to perform on "The Ed Sullivan Show." Beatlemania took off. They were considered the best rock 'n' roll group ever.

They inspired many young kids to "Come Together" and to be influenced by their extraordinary musical style. Even though they enjoyed immense success they also found this sudden burst of stardom to be a difficult lifestyle.

"A Day In The Life" of John, Paul, George, and Ringo consisted of early-morning meetings, newspaper, television, and radio interviews, then performances in the evening with thousands of screaming teenagers—making it a very "Hard Day's Night."

The Oracle randomly interviewed students to find out who's got what it takes to be...

A Super Hero!



"Coach Jones...that man has done everything. He tells a new story" every day. I heard he even wrestled two bears.

—Emily Esposito, sophomore

"Ms. Myers...she's the Psych teacher, so she can probably read minds."

—Stephanie White, freshman

—Becca Yantz, junior

"Mr. Cohen, 'cause no one would ever expect it, and he's a got a good alternate identity. He's like Peter Parker."

—Sean Phelan, senior

"Mrs. Eamson, 'cause she always does the right thing....She can also see through desks, and find your cell phones."

—Alex Peavy, junior

—Compiled by Summer Claveau

Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
<p>5</p> <p><i>The Oracle</i> comes out! Swim and Dive vs. Annandale @ South Run, 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Girls Varsity Basketball versus Good Counsel. 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>67th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Financial Aid Night-Cafeteria 7 p.m. RIP, John Lennon</p>	<p>9</p> <p>National Pastry Day</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Human Rights Day</p>	<p>11</p> <p>JV Wrestling 6 p.m. at Yorktown High School.</p>
<p>12</p> <p>Transcript request deadline for January 15 applications</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Varsity Wrestling 9:00 a.m. at Park View High School.</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Monkey Day!</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Adam Brody's Birthday</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Teacher inservices. Early release for students at 11:10 a.m.</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Varsity Wrestling 6 p.m. at Mt. Vernon</p>	<p>18</p> <p>JV Wrestling 6 p.m. at Chantilly.</p>

DECEMBER '08

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Be There are a lot of driving school to choose from. The following are some of the things you should look for when choosing a driving school.

Careful
Are They:

- Licensed by Virginia State Department of Motor Vehicles
- Teaching in the State of Virginia only. (some states do not meet Virginia requirements)
- Experienced, how many years?
Should be at least 15.

When
Choosing

- A driving school (-or-) a licensing program
- Teaching on a parking lot (-or-) actually on the road with traffic

A (How much of either)
Less than 1/2 of one percent of the death toll takes place in parking lots)

Driving
School

- Scholarship oriented
- Members of the Better Business Bureau
- Member of Professional Driver Educators of Virginia Association (PDEV's)
- Member of the National Association o Driving Schools(DSAA)

!!!

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