



The

RAACORNER

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TTTANS WE CAN'T HEAR YOU! Lady Spartans defeat TC for both District and Region Championship titles

By Peter Simonsen

Oracle Staff Writer

The Lady Spartans Basketball scored another victory at the Northern Region Finals on Monday against the TC Williams Titans. After winning their Regional semifinal game last Friday, the Spartans moved on to defeat the Titans 46 to 41 to win the Northern Region.

Both teams had faced each other 10 days before in the Patriot District game, which the Spartans also won.

"It's hard to play the same team over and over, but we worked hard and pulled it through," said junior April Robinson. A pattern emerged quickly in the first

half, as the Spartans' continuous driving and passing held a consistent lead over the Titans, who maintained a strategy of three-point attempts. Coordinated passing and shooting, particularly from Robinson and junior Logan Battle, helped the Spartans keep the edge. Fouls were common in the first quarter on both sides, and sinking the penalty shots accounted for most of the points in the beginning of the game.

Among the starters, senior Nora Osei sprained her ankle in the first quarter, but was eager to re-enter the game.

"I went back in anyway. I'm a senior and it was the regional finals, so I just decided to do it," said Osei. Osei managed to

rejoin the game for the second half.

The Lady Spartans were backed by an impressive wall of 300 orange-clad student cheerleaders, who dominated the acoustics. For the players, the crowd was just as essential to winning as training.

"I feel like we couldn't win without them. When they're there it feels like we have home-court advantage," said Robinson.

Freshman started Amy Bergland agreed. "It's like having our own cheerleaders," said Bergland, for whom the crowds chant "She's a freshman," whenever she scores. TC regained ground in the second half.

The Titans made several three-point shots

and garnered the lead, but by the fourth quarter the Spartans were back on top.

"We knew we had to show more heart than we were, if we were going to come back and win in the second half," said junior Jordan Miller.

Robinson made several key plays as point guard; superior ball handling by her and Battle made way for the multiple layups, which allowed the Spartans to regain the lead.

After their victory at Regionals, the Lady Spartans move on to the first round of the state finals. Their game against

See "Basketball" on Page 5.

Forensics carries on tradition

By Kelly Carlin

Oracle Editor

Monologues, memorization, mastery.

The close-knit group of students on the Forensic team has learned these skills in an intense process that involves lots of practice.

Through their hard work, they've earned a renowned reputation: Patriot District Champions. For the fifth year in a row, the Forensics team has taken the title.

"I'm proud of us for working hard, we do work hard. We practice twice a week," said senior and captain Claire Thompson.

Thompson, who placed first in the Poetry Interpretation category at Districts, is just one of the many team members who competed at both competitions. She takes pride

in the fact that Forensics isn't an activity that students participate in every day.

"I like that I do something that's more academically focused and that most teenagers wouldn't appreciate," said Thompson.

The rest of the team also realizes that their Forensics skills aren't something that will fade out throughout high school or provide no contribution to future career prospects. Forensics improves students' ability to speak proudly and have confidence while doing so.

Jessica Friedel, another senior Captain, also placed first in her category; Dramatic Interpretation.

"I'm glad we were able to keep our streak of winning alive," said Friedel. "I'm glad we were able to live up to people's expectations."

After winning the District competition, the team moved on to Regionals on the February 23, where they took another important victory. Landing first place ratings at both competitions makes them the favorite to carry their winning streak into States.

"It's been great to see how students grow in their time working in this activity," said English teacher and Forensics coach Madeleine Delee. "[My favorite part is] watching students realize how much they really can do, especially when they start off thinking that they can't."

The team has put a lot of effort into their performances, which in the recent competitions, has paid off.

At Districts, 19 team members placed, including 13 first place vic-



Jordan Clinkenbeard

Seniors and Forensics Captains Jessica Friedel and Claire Thompson practice their speeches for competitions during a meeting. Both girls placed first in their events at Districts.

tories, six second place winners, and one third.

Next up on the road to success is the state competition later in March, where the team was victori-

ous last year.

"This year, I want to be State Champions again," said Thompson. "I fully believe the team we have this year can do it again."

Counselors get all shook up

By Jordan Miller

Page One Editor

The counseling office is making changes to better serve our students.

Already students are being informed that counselor changes are being made for next year. Although some are worrying over the effects the changes will make, a new organization of assignment for students and their counselors will benefit WS. The new system will be beneficial to both students and counselors. Rather than assigning counselors to student by grade level, it will now be organized alphabetically.

"I think the decision will help the office run more efficiently. Overall, it will help [counselors] and students," said guidance counselor Alex Gorman.

This year and in the past it has been especially difficult for counselors to give their students all the help required before leaving high school. Each of the counselors is responsible for around 300 students. Ideally, they would be able to sit down

and discuss every student's concern whenever asked of them, but currently time with individual students is limited. Besides helping students, counselors have spent a large amount outside of their offices providing informational units on things such as college.

"This new organization will allow [counselors] to keep more current and updated on what is happening at every grade level, again allowing them to provide better services to their students," said Principal Paul Wardinski.

Other benefits of the new system include that rather than only two counselors writing college recommendation letters for one entire grade level, all eight will take part in the process, increasing the focus counselors give to each essay. The system will also benefit the families of students who have more than one child at the school. Currently, it is possible that each child would have a different counselor, which can be frustrating for parents.

See "Counselors" on Page 5.



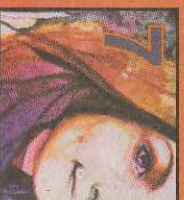
Jordan Miller

Guidance counselor Jeff Stahl chats with one of his new students for next year. The new system makes it so that one counselor would be responsible for students in every grade whose last names begin with a certain letter.

Lesole's Dance Project teaches African history.



SPARTans get recognized in national competition.



Concert creates memories and awareness.



Spartans select when to show support

Certain sports receive more recognition than others from peers

The stands are filled with Spartans as the football team makes a touchdown, the basketball team shoots a

Editorial

shot, and the basketball team hits a home run. But when the field hockey team scores a goal, the swim team wins a race, the stands are filled with just a few supportive parents.

The recognition that some sports receive over others is unfair to say the least. Each team works just as hard as the next in practices, yet when games and races come around, only the huge spectator sports are thanked for their hard work.

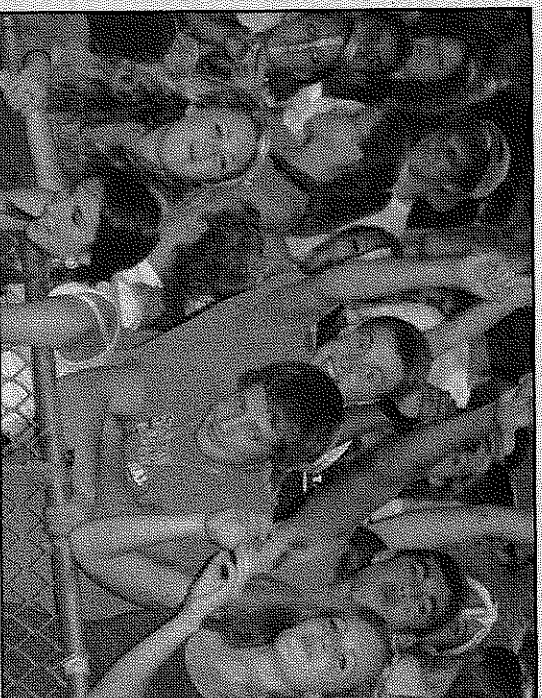
Some sports are recognized more than others because they are introduced to kids at a much earlier age. In elementary school, all the kids would join club soccer, football, baseball, and lacrosse. Nobody had ever heard of field hockey, crew, or cross country until they entered high school.

Lately, more and more sports have tried to introduce middle school students to these newer high school sports to begin improving their skills. Since seeking out prodigious athletes is an up and coming strategy for coaches, the impact it has on the popularity of the sports is still not evident.

While some may argue that the amount

of support correlates to the team's success in their games or races, I do not agree. The WS football team does not rank among the top teams in the state, however Spartan spirit has never failed to fill the stands.

On the other hand, more than half the

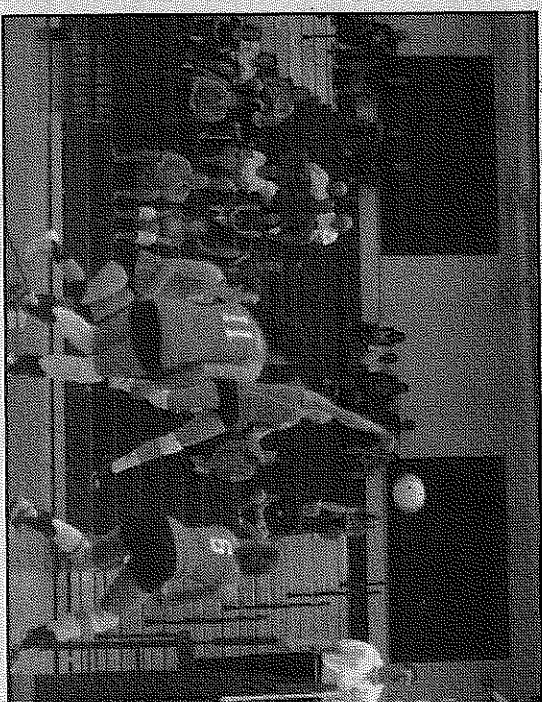


Lifetouch

Several students attend a football game to cheer on the Spartans. The stands are filled with these supportive fans decked out in orange and blue.

school is unaware of the victory for the Spartan runners, who have made it to Nationals. I know that the National competition is too far for any Spartan to go and watch, but who's to say that their school should not at the very least know of their achievements? I am not saying that the football team is undeserving of their support. I am merely suggesting that

the other teams be given similar treatment. The lack of support for some of the Spartan teams is one of the many indicators of the lack of Spartan spirit. Over time, hopefully, WS students will step up and show their Spartan pride, for each of our Spartan teams, and not just for those that are most popularly known.



Lifetouch

A few parents and friends attend the Spartan volleyball team's games, hardly filling the stands. These stands resemble the majority of the games of many teams.

Early start to SAT prep

By Sam Perstein

Features Editor

The years get whipped past in waves and suddenly a year of just relaxing and enjoying high school turns into yet another stressful push for the final goal: college.

It feels like it was just yesterday when I first learned of the requirements needed to get into college. At the time, I was only in middle school and was still trying to learn how to properly open my locker. The idea of college was scary and foreign, but it was so far away.

Then freshman year came and I thought all I needed to worry about was getting good grades and participating in school activities. I was told the real work and worrying came junior year.

I couldn't have been more wrong. Among the many requirements needed for college is the SAT. Some students don't take the SAT until their senior year and many decide to take it in the spring of their junior as well.

The studying and hard work is supposed to begin during junior year, but that is slowly being pushed forward.

In early February, the school offered their first session of SAT prep, and at least half of the participants were sophomores.

Isn't it bad enough that most students spend half of their four year high school experience preparing for the next four years of college? High school is supposed to be an experience in itself and shouldn't be spent stressing over your next big move.

Ninth grade is an adjustment year with its own share of horrors. The only hope is that you will spend your sophomore year in ignorant bliss before you have to plunge into the following year of APs and college prep.

Tenth grade is no longer the time to kick back and take off your shoes. Sophomores now feel pressure to start reviewing their Algebra and scribble flash cards for numerous SAT words that make no

If you spend nearly your whole high school existence stressing over SATs you will miss important experiences.

sense. They feel like they have to get ahead of the game and are starting to take multiple practice tests and scheduling appointments with SAT prep classes outside of the school.

With all the preparation and anxiety, I ask you this: is it really worth it to get ahead?

If you spend nearly your whole high school existence stressing over SATs, the you will miss important experiences. If you miss that, you will never be truly ready mentally for the world outside of high school.

Being prepared is a good thing, but so is spending time just being a kid.

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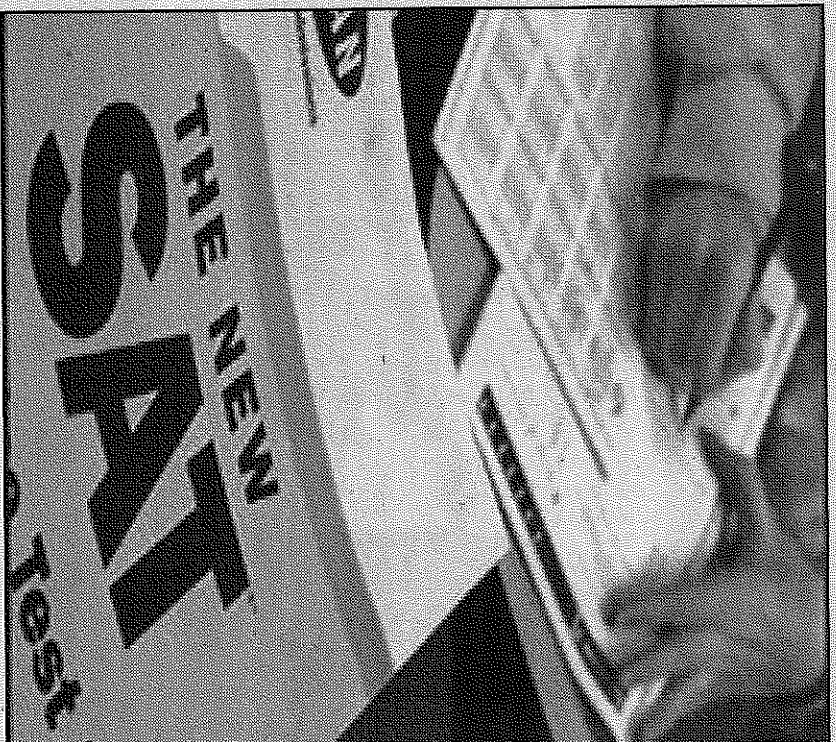
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Best of No

Students begin their long preparations for the SATs during their sophomore year. The SATs were once a burden just for juniors and some seniors, but now the stress of getting into college has caused people to start the process a year earlier.

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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 will be considered for publication, but could be edited for grammar, spelling and space.

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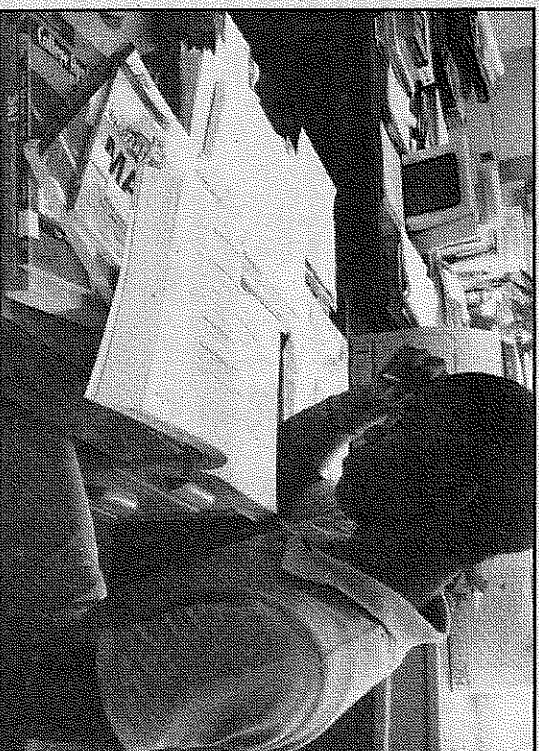
The road to college is filled with speed bumps

By Megan Burpo

Viewpoint Editor

College, stress, fear, same thing! Going to college brings a feeling of excitement about life away from home and a newfound independence. What people tend to forget is that getting there is a nightmare.

When people said that junior year is the most difficult year of high school due to the combination of SATs, college trips, more AP classes and still trying to maintain that perfect GPA, they weren't kidding. Some students might be able to handle the stress better than others, but if anyone tells you they were never once stressed, then they were lying. It's impossible not to have at least one freak out as college and class schedules are becoming a regular part of everyday conversations, whether it's with students or teachers.



Megan Burpo
Junior Tramel Raggs studies SAT books to prepare for his exam. Junior year is said to be the most stressful as students try to juggle AP classes and SAT prep.

Though the administrators only want to prepare us and cause less stress, the opposite approach has

It's not the prospect of working hard that worries most, but wondering where they will go. Though we would all love to go to the most prestigious schools, let's face it—not everyone can get in. Which goes back to the essential question, where do the rest of us go?

As I started to write down the list of colleges I want to go to, I noticed they were a combination of reach schools, extra reach schools, and “wow, my arm hurts from reaching so far” schools.

Colleges have become increasingly more competitive in the past years, as what were once “safety schools” now take an above-average GPA to get in to. George Mason, for example, used to be a backup school where not many wanted to go for its poor reputation and its close proximity to home, but today an acceptance from them would be welcomed and respected.

The fact that providing money has become a struggle for families, causing students to stay in state, accounts for the increase in competition for colleges and fills up many spots. This lack of safety schools has created a widespread panic in some, while others just hope that their arm will reach far enough to grab them a spot at UVA.

Of course, getting creative in choices is always an option. As unbelievable as it may be, there are more than six colleges in Virginia and researching the lesser known universities might just lead you to find the perfect school for you.

Though the lack of safety schools does present one more hurdle to jump over, it's not the end of the world. Save the hyperventilating for a time when it's really needed, like when you have to figure out what to write about in all those admissions essays.

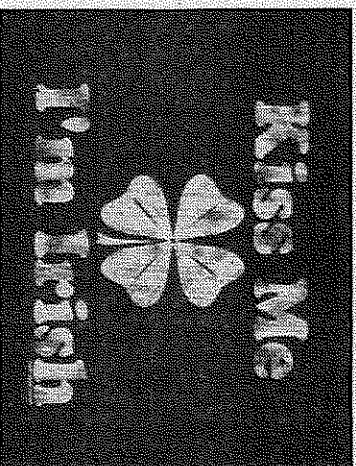
It's the luck o' the Irish!

By Kyle Rushton

Oracle Staff Writer

Irish it was St. Patrick's Day.

Most families are overly enthusiastic about traditional holidays such as Christmas and Easter. My family, however, sports their green long before March 17 even comes around the corner. For those of you who aren't Irish or may not be familiar with the famous date, this is St. Patrick's Day: the day to wear green. And in my family, lots of it.



Wear Your Best

On March 17, many wear green in hopes of not being pinched. However, there is more to this holiday than dressing up; it is a day to honor St. Patrick, the patron Saint of Ireland.

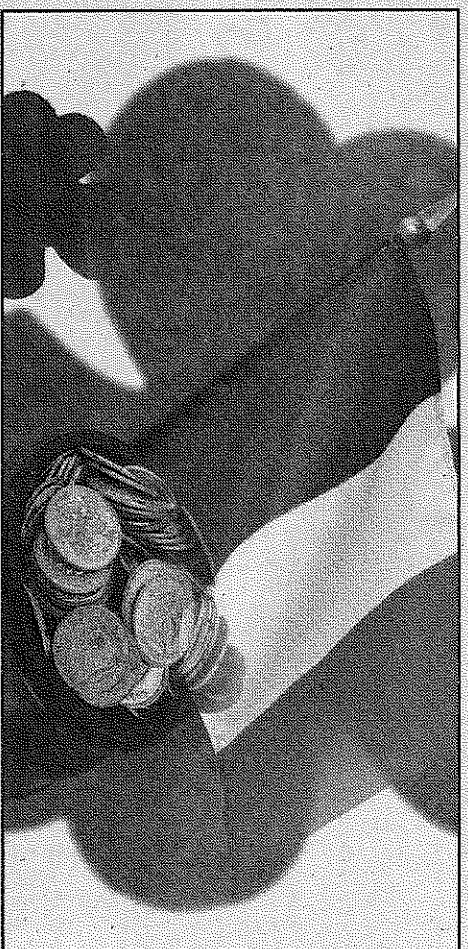
Around the time of St. Patty's Day, my house can be easily spotted with its green spot lights and decorations scattered about the outside. I try to convince my parents to wait just one more week to put up the lights, but it seems that every year the lights go up one week earlier than the previous.

No member in my family would even come close to getting pinched on St. Patrick's Day, for everyone wears at least one shade of green.

This fervent spirit has grown with me since I was young. I grew up hearing my dad's famous words, “Next to Christmas, St. Patrick's Day is the second best day of the year.”

Like any holiday, my family has traditions to appreciate St. Patty's Day. Every year we host a party in which we invite family and friends to celebrate with plenty of food and “appropriate beverages.” We accumulate an increasing amount of decorations each year so the house is coated in all green.

For as long as I can remember, on the morning of St. Patrick's Day, my brothers and I awake to our ransacked bedrooms with chocolate gold coins scattered everywhere. We were always convinced that the tricky



Travel VHS

St. Patrick's Day is celebrated by many, Irish and non-Irish alike. Wearing green, attending parties, and partaking in traditional Irish festivities are all part of the annual activities.

The evening of St. Patrick's Day, my family works to prepare a traditional Irish meal while listening to Irish music. The delicious food always includes corned beef and cabbage, and soda bread.

Contrary to popular belief, the holiday isn't solely about wearing green and decorating with shamrocks. It is also about carrying on traditions and learning backgrounds.

In Ireland, St. Patrick's Day is a national holiday to celebrate Saint Patrick as the patron saint of Ireland. He spread Christianity throughout Ireland and is believed by many to have rid the snakes from the area, as there are no serpents in Ireland. This holiday is one of the most enthusiastic days of the year for the Irish, and I plan to one day spend it in Ireland to experience the festivities.

Although some people simply have competitions of who can be the most spirited or dress in the most green, the holiday is more than just a silly contest for my family. St. Patrick's Day is a way for my family to join together and proudly celebrate our background with our friends and family.

Spring fever has sprung

Second semester causes students to lose focus

By Lisa Williams

Oracle Editor

Spring fever will soon become an epidemic.

Every time March and April roll around, everyone loses focus. It doesn't matter if you're a senior, freshman, four-year-old, big-time CEO, or little old lady. The warm weather beckons and nobody wants to be working. Everyone would rather be outside, enjoying the increase in temperature.

Spring is a hard time for me. It's harder to concentrate on school when I'm being distracted by the fact that summer is approaching.

My “school-is-almost-out” mindset kicks into high gear and I feel like I can't be bothered with working. I know nearly everyone else feels the same way I do.

The worst part of the spring season is the fact that AP classes end, and for a month, we will be doing nothing of grade importance.

Quit the springtime whining about how much you wish you didn't have to be at school.

Without our grades and the AP exams looming over our heads, we have little or no motivation to continue to make an effort at paying attention.

I have yet to figure out a good way to beat this terrible condition. In previous years, I have been able to give myself a good pep talk and say, “This still matters because I want to get into a good college.”

Not this year. Wanting to graduate has the serious side effect of not being able to regain my motivation to finish out the year. Waking up and dragging my tired self to school will be a battle every morning this spring.

It's not just because of the seniors, though. People suffer from spring fever every single year of their lives, due to the fact that the birds chirping and flowers bloom-

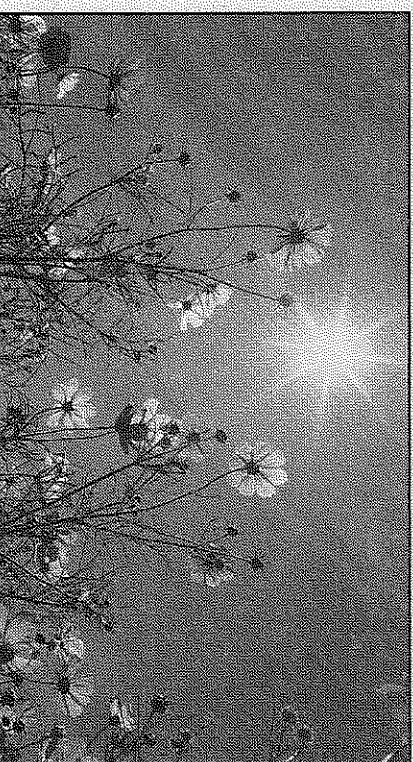


Lisa Williams

Junior Jonathan Goldstrom plays a game during class, illustrating that he has lost focus on the task at hand, as many students do.

they'll be rough. Students and teachers, I challenge you to finish out this year correctly. Quit the springtime whining about how much you wish you didn't have to be at school.

I know it'll be hard for me and everyone else, but I'm confident that if I stop complaining and just try to enjoy the rest of the year, it'll fly by much faster than if I spend the time grumbling.



Fresh Coat

During the spring, warm weather tempts students to blow off their studies and enjoy their time outdoors. This problem creates a “Ferris Bueller” attitude in many students and their good grades begin to dwindle.

FCPS to pay for AP exams

By Peter Simonsen

Senior Staff Writer

Fairfax County Public Schools will be footing the bill for Advanced Placement exams once again after a ruling by the state Attorney General declared the measure illegal.

Last year to compensate for a \$203.4 million lack of funds, Superintendent Jack Dale placed a \$75 fee per AP test for students. The fees were part of wide effort to raise money for FCPS; over 32 thousand AP tests are administered every year, which ends up costing the county over \$2 million.

The measure to raise revenue has been controversial. The not-for-profit organization Collegeboard requires an \$87 fee per test to pay for graders and production.

Many school systems in the country, including Los Angeles Unified School District and the New York Department of Education, pay for student AP tests. However, several smaller districts forward the costs to the students.

In Fairfax County, students are required to take the AP tests and will not receive credit for the course, including the 1.0 weight added to their GPA, if they refuse to take the test.

On January 28, Virginia's Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli II wrote a ruling in which he declared that Fairfax County cannot require students to pay for AP tests. Cuccinelli wrote that powers granted to Fairfax County do not allow it the power to charge students for the exams.

"No statute authorizes a local school board to impose fees for the taking of tests," wrote Cuccinelli. "Because the Advanced Placement Examination test is the required end-of-course examination, it cannot reasonably be viewed as a service or program for which a fee may be levied."

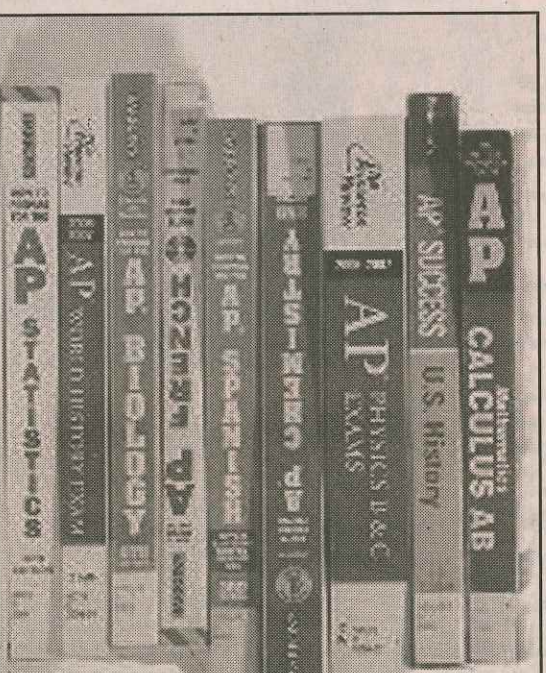
Cuccinelli's decision was based on the powers allocated to Fairfax County and not the actual question of whether students should pay for the tests.

It is likely the money will either be returned to the students, or the County will make AP tests optional.

However, the debate on whether these tests, which can be used as full college credits at some schools, should be paid for by the students has seen a variety of opinions.

Because some colleges accept passing AP test scores as credit for classes, some argue that the \$75 fee now is minuscule compared to the price of taking a real college class. Others argue that they are such an integral part of the high school curriculum that they should not need to be purchased.

"The thing is that most people don't take AP exams for the college credit," said senior Mustafa Mokhtarzada, "most kids take them because they're trying to get into college, and they look good on



USA Today

Virginia's Attorney General declared that Fairfax County cannot require students to pay for AP exams. This ruling is based strictly on the powers given to the county; the debate on whether it makes sense for students to pay for these tests is still going on.

transcripts. Fairfax County is such a competitive area with so many kids trying to get into good colleges that they need to take [AP exams]. AP tests are a necessity for most kids to get into college, and so I think that they should be part of the public school budget."

Superintendent Dale is sched-

uled to meet with the School Board in March to discuss what to do with the collected fees.

It is likely the money will either be returned to the students, or the County will make AP tests optional this year. Although having already paid for the tests, turnout is not expected to go down.

Drama finds success at VHSL One Acts

By Sara Lepley

Viewpoint Editor

Issac Camard deनाव्दा snoiatutargnoC For those who didn't take part in the VHSL One Act Competition, that was "Congratulations Advanced Drama Class," for their top-tier performance of 'Slasvevr neves' or Seven Reversals in Regionals.

The play, written by Alan Hachnel, reverses certain elements including blocking and lines.

"I was in a scene where it was like 'Clue,' except everyone was trying to prove themselves guilty instead of innocent," said junior Molly Keeter.

The script was harder than most because the actors had to memorize abstract lines and use a different process of thinking. The plot and even some of the words run entirely backwards, so the performers had not only the task of understanding the play, but ensuring that the audience understood it as well.

Other schools, such as Lake Braddock, also had the advantage of a fully-equipped stage.

"[We had] limited spotlights, differences in the stage, and apparently their techs communicated telepathically," said senior Kent Kachejian.

If anything, the lack of advanced equipment helped the cast by pushing them to fully embody their talent and charisma.



Sara Lepley

The Advanced Drama Class placed second in Districts and fourth in Regionals with their performance of "Slasvevr neves," a play that reverses certain essential components.

While the complaints about the production were practically nonexistent, the cast members still felt a measure of nostalgia for time and sleep.

"We gave up Friday afternoons," said Kachejian. "I missed Friday afternoons—a lot."

The combination of lack of sleep and lack of free time did not deter the cast from pulling forward. Some schools started preparing months before ours did, so leveling the

playing field meant not only working during class, but also spending hours after school sifting through and rehearsing the convoluted script.

"To be honest with you, I do not even know how long we rehearsed," said senior Kathleen Barth. "It all felt like a blur."

The cast was not alone in their pursuit. Drama teacher Jo Levesque, the Theatre Department's booster parents, and of course the tech crew helped transform the production

Marketing software imitates deals Computer simulation provides real-life application

By Andy Gholson

Oracle Online Editor

Thousands played, few won, and the rest learned new skills and had fun.

During the latter half of the second quarter, students in Advanced Sports Marketing classes participated in a computer simulation program called Virtual Business – Sports (VBS).

While students were learning lessons in class through the program, they were also competing against their peers across the nation. The program tasks students with running all of the advertising and marketing that is required for an NFL franchise to succeed.

"It's like you're managing a virtual football team and you have to do promotions and stuff and license your name to businesses," said junior Jake Ray, who ranked fourth in the state at one point.

Some people might balk at students learning through game; however, it is much more.

Through the game, they learned things like how to handle promotion, develop ticket-pricing strategies, evaluate stadiums and city locations, control stadium operations and staff-

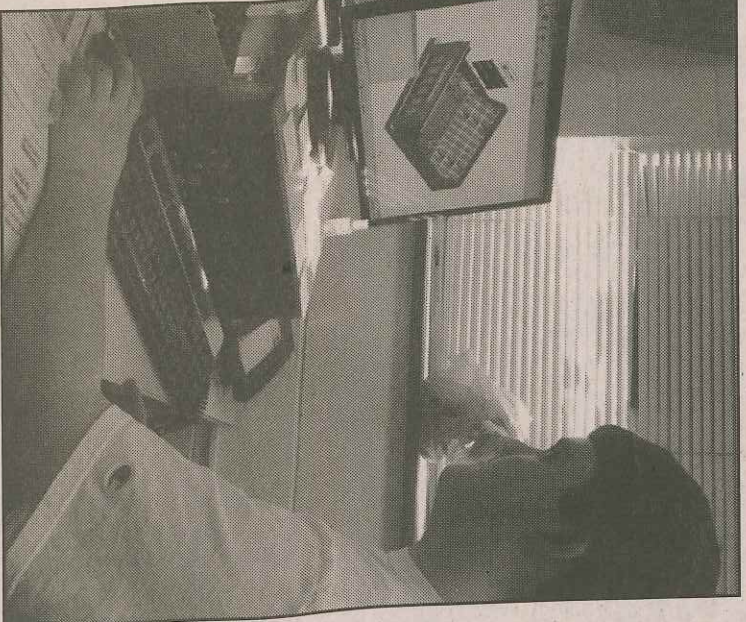
ing, find sponsors and licensing deals among other things. The game mimics real life and show what happens when you implement different policies over an accelerated period time.

"[The kids] have fun doing it, but at the same time they're learning a lot," said Marketing teacher Vicki Peibon. "They see what happens when you get rid of security and how that start to get really crazy, or how if you don't have enough people staffed in the parking lot accidents will start happen [amongst other things]."

The point of the game is to minimize costs, while maximizing profits. Like real life, the right balance is often found through trial and error.

"I don't really know how we [did so well]. We kind of just experimented a couple times. We did poorly at first then figured out how to do well and kept going off of that," said junior Andrew Koenig, who at one point was third in the state and allows them to enjoy learning.

"It was pretty fun. We still sometimes play occasionally when we have free time in class, even though we're not required to," said Koenig.



Andy Gholson

Junior Jake Ray, a student in Advanced Sports Marketing, takes part in a simulation program that teaches the different aspects of running an NFL franchise.

NHD sends students back through history

By Anna Lehman & Sam Perlstien
Oracle Staff Writers

Teaches, prepares, and inspires: the motto of National History Day.

On February 25, students piled into Spartan Hall to await the announcement of who would place and move on to Regionals. Only first and second place winners of each category whose exhibits showed both creativity as well as extensive research would move on.

"This is a national program," said coordinator, history teacher Cathleen Botvin. "It is also a US-wide initiative, tied to National Council Studies Curriculum."

For NHD, students choose related topics to an annual theme and conduct primary and secondary source research. The theme for 2011 was Debate and Diplomacy in History: Successes, Failures, Consequences.

"At first I thought it was going to be a rigorous process, but I enjoyed it," said Ben Koses, the first place winner for performance.

Koses wasn't the only one who managed to create an impressive project. Like other winners sophomore Christian Taubenberger who won first place for his historical paper



Anna Lehman

AP World History and World History II Honors classes submitted projects for National History Day. Participants with the best projects were chosen to move on to the next level, and a chance to have their projects compete at Nationals.

on the Treaty of Paris, as well as sophomores Jared Vallejos and Sam Gadway on their documentary on the Versailles Treaty. The Congress of Vienna and the Revolutions for the 19th century was a website created by Alex Moree and Patrick Keally that took first

place.

In the categories of individual and group exhibits winners Abbie Walker, for her 1980'2 Olympic Boycott as well as Alyssa Debra, Danielle Hafler and Andy Chen winning for their exhibit on the Melting Pot.

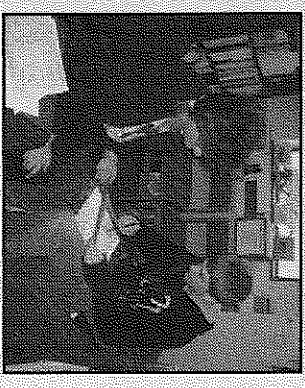
Reassigned, again

Students to have new counselors next year

"Counselors," from Page 1.

"I still don't think it's fair because then your counselors don't know you as well. When they try to help you for the future, they won't understand all your interests," said junior Emily Colon.

Aside from the advantages, many students are worried about having to create a new relationship with their counselor. Many have gotten to know and trust their counselor, and to them a change means more stress.



Thomas Arise

"I understand it's hard as a senior to get to know a new counselor, but the new system will help in the long run," said Gorman.

Lady Spartans advance to States

"Basketball," from Page 1.

of the state finals. Their game against Woodside is tonight at Robinson Secondary School. If they win tonight, they move on to the State semifinals at VCU.

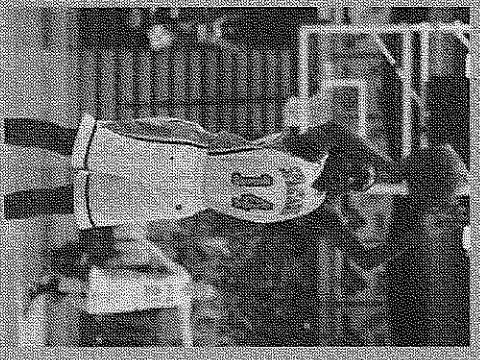
"It's really exciting, we finally got it this year," said Osei.

The preparation is intense for the next game—footage of the opposing team has been uploaded to YouTube, and the Lady Spartans are watching it to gain a tactical advantage. Beyond that, they're going back to the basics.

"We're just looking to take it to the rim," said Robinson.



Dave Seminare
The Varsity basketball team poses with the Regional Championship poster after the game on Monday.



Andy Gibson
Junior Logan Battle lines up for a free throw during the District



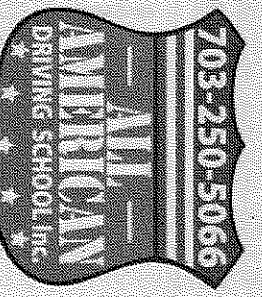
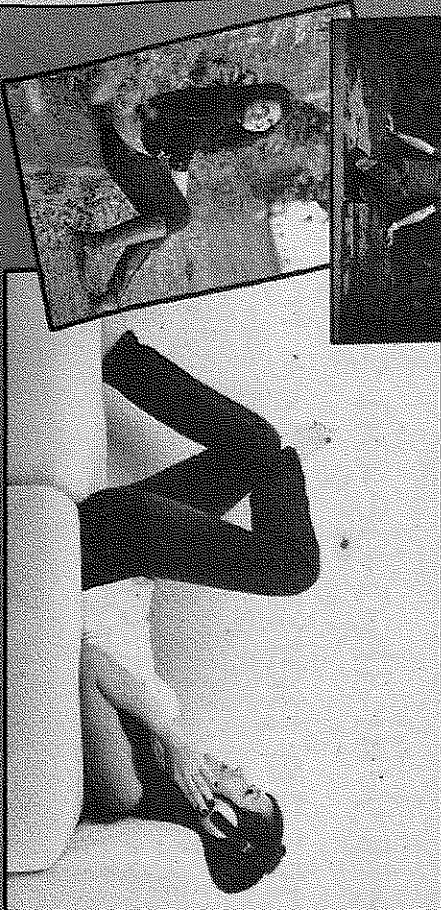
Seniors {2011}

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The Madrigals sang the National Anthem at the beginning of the Irving Invasion program to welcome in the 8th graders as the prepared for their orientation.

Irving invades for second year in a row

By Rita Zevallos

Senior Staff Writer

Welcome, Class of 2015!

Although first semester has only just ended, Washington Irving eighth graders can now call themselves "incoming freshmen."

The future Spartans have already begun signing up for classes, choosing their sports, and—in an event dubbed the "Irving Invasion"—spending a morning at WS.

"We want them to get acquainted with West Springfield, from what electives to take, to what to get involved with," said Assistant Director of Student Activities Betsy Fawcett, who coordinated Irving Invasion along with Activities Director Andy Mair.

First, the eighth graders went to the Auxiliary Gym to learn about the elective classes WS offers, and to the Main Gym for clubs, sports, and other activities.

WS students worked tables for the activities they participate in, talking to the eighth graders about the different advantages and commitments involved. Irving students had the opportunity to sign up for emails from the clubs and sports they were interested in.

"I don't think it was well organized," said rising freshman Sarah Ehtisham. "It was really confusing, and some kids got lost."

After the electives and activities information sessions, the eighth graders went on tours of the school, led by SGA students from the leadership class. They explored the hallways, library, cafeteria, and classrooms.

"It was good that they had a student leading them around who could give them

helpful hints like, 'Maybe you shouldn't go up senior rail,'" said senior Emily Esposito, who led a tour.

Irving Invasion ended with a musical performance in the auditorium. The Madrigals opened with the national anthem, followed by performances by the chorus department, band department, Personality, jazz guitar ensemble and dance team.

"The dancing was the best part," said Ehtisham. "It was really cool! I wish I could get into dance."

Finally, the Irving students were each given a "Class of 2015" t-shirt, and they returned on the buses to Irving. The freshman orientation process will continue throughout the rest of the school year and the summer. It will include counselor presentations, information sessions for parents, and an official orientation day during the summer in which freshmen visit each of their classes and find their way around the school.

"We want them to be comfortable with the transition. Being a freshman can be scary; we're trying to ease some of those fears," said Fawcett.

Undoubtedly, the beginning of freshman year is always difficult. Freshmen not only have to deal with tougher classes, but also with being in a school with four grades instead of two. Making sure they at least know their way around can only make the experience easier.

They seemed excited and nervous, which is good because you don't want them to have a "milk-the-school" attitude, but you also don't want them to be scared," said Esposito. "I think they'll have fun. High school is fun."

Lesole's spices up assembly

Dance company teaches African history

By Lisa Williams

Oracle Editor

Our Black History Month assembly got a new and exciting twist this year with the addition of the Lesole's dancers.

This group was brought in as senior Briana Beale's Capstone project to provide a new aspect for the student body and perhaps help students relate more to the idea of Black History Month.

"I decided to change it up this year and focus more on the culture," said Beale. "I think African culture is so much a part of our culture, so it's good to understand our culture's roots."

Instead of the usual skit displaying a brief summary of Black History, Lesole's Dance Project took over the assembly. They showed dances of different cultures centering around South African dances. The reason they agreed to do the assembly was to promote education about African culture.

"I was always interested in dancing," said Tianna Ross, one of the dancers. "[This event] was about educating everyone about the differences of Africa."

There are four members of the group, all of whom have been dancing for a long time and truly love it.

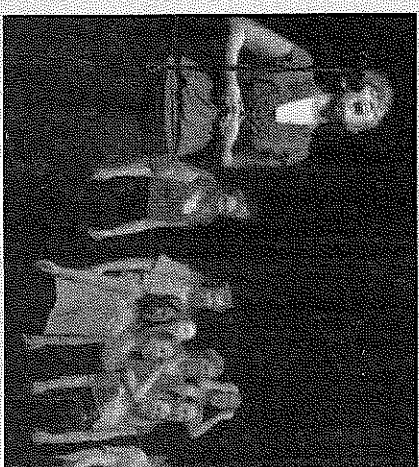
"Lesole [Maine, for whom the group is named,] called me to get me involved, because I love to dance," said Thaka Basadi, a dancer.

Part of what brought the group together was their individual dance experiences. They particularly cherish the South African tribal dances because they have roots that go back to South Africa.

"I've been dancing since I was 11. I always wanted it to be my career," said Valerie Branch, another one of the dancers. "I was recommended to the company because of my South African culture and decided to join."

The dancers showed the student-filled auditorium dances native to South African tribes, and led them in creating rhythms similar to those that would be the background beats to these dances. Beale thought that this group would be able to grab high schoolers' attention more than the normal assembly.

"I thought it would be entertaining in that



Brooke Nelson



Brooke Nelson

Above: Junior Maeve Nash belts out a solo during the opening performance by Personality and Beth Clapsaddle join the Lesole's Dance Project group on stage during the first of their two presentations.

aspect, and it would engage [students]," said Beale.

Overall, students felt more connected with the culture than usual, and the change in the program sparked interest for many. The goal of creating a new understanding of Black History Month was accomplished for many kids.

"For me, I think it's not only about Black History Month. It's about the knowledge and letting people know we don't just dance," said Maine. "It also goes back to the history of our culture. This is about bringing different cultures into the country and identifying with countries and tribes and their dances."

The History Honor Society
is presenting a performance of

The Capitol Steps

in the WSHS Auditorium

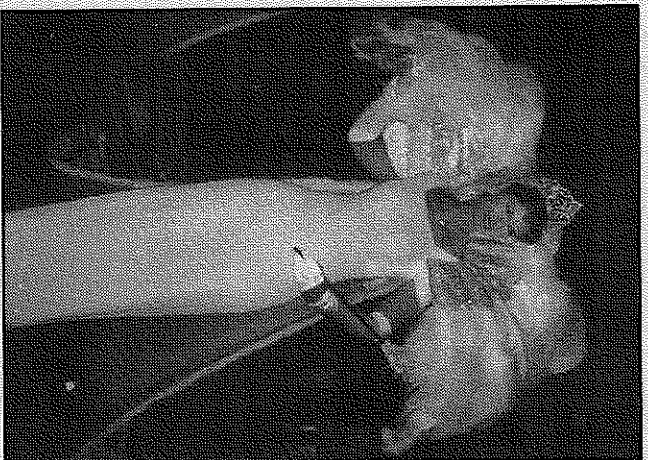
at 7:30 pm on Friday, March 11!



Pre-sale tickets are available from HHS members or in Room 263 for \$25 each.

Tickets will also be on sale the night of the performance for \$30. Checks may be made payable to WSHS.





Courtesy of MaryLove Wynne

English teacher MaryLove Wynne was the Mardi Gras Queen of CAMAN her third year living in New Orleans, and continues to go back every year to reconnect with friends.

All hail Wynne, Queen of Mardi Gras

By Jerrey Davis
Photo Editor

When one hears about Mardi Gras, usually, three things come to mind: beads, boozes, and booze.

This is a big misconception, however, and English teacher MaryLove Wynne is one example. Every year, she participates in a family oriented, fun-filled event in the heart of New Orleans itself.

This contagious Mardi Gras atmosphere infected her fourteen years ago when Wynne moved with her husband to a naval base in New Orleans.

As the wife of a military officer, she went to the officers' wives meetings on base. Their first meeting concerned the annual formal CAMAN (Coast Guard, Army, Marines, Air Force, Navy) ball for Mardi Gras.

"The CAMAN ball is what really got me started," said Wynne. "It's a blast to be able to get all dressed up every so often while surrounded by friends."

Wynne became very involved, and as such became the Navy Princess of CAMAN her first year there, and a Queen of CAMAN on her third year. This high honor has been one of her many drives to come back to New Orleans to reconnect with all her old friends and fellow queens.

"The CAMAN's ball is a huge, fun game," said Wynne. "Even the Senators and Congressmen that came to the ball had to bow down to me, as if I was really their 'queen.'"

Mardi Gras is a week-long event that is treated like more like a holiday than most others throughout the country. It runs from January 6 through the day before Easter, and is composed of constant parades. Schools are even cancelled for these massive events, and the entire town celebrates loudly, filling the streets with laughter, family, and music.

"The Cajun music and food is what I grew up with and love," said Wynne. "Just recalling the sounds and tastes bring a smile to my face."

Amongst these parades are amounts of beads beyond comprehension. The popular saying "it's all about the beads" sums it up perfectly. All in the fun of Mardi Gras, beads have a unifying friendly effect, though it's a competition to see who gets the most, in the end it's a game of parvning them off on people.

"The beads are so sought-after that once, during a parade, a thrower was offering a huge bag of big beads," said Wynne. "Everyone, including me, chased down this float in an attempt to be given that prize. I scraped my knee and became a little hoarse from yelling, but I got the bag!"

These traditions and a family-like atmosphere is what Mardi Gras means to Wynne and what keeps her coming back.

"People are genuine, very laid back and find any excuse to have fun," said Wynne. "They are so family oriented and lively with music everywhere, it simply feels good to be a part of them."

Taking the martial arts to a new level

Junior uses knowledge to instruct children in Tae Kwon Do

By Eleanor Lamb
Features Editor

Most students have trouble tackling homework; junior Daniel Willson, however, slashes through his schoolwork and also manages to pursue an active involvement in Tae Kwon Do.

Through the TopKick Martial Arts Center, Willson has mastered Tae Kwon Do. He started when he was ten because his mother encouraged him to do it, so he signed up and came to enjoy it. Putting years into his work, Willson started to rise through the ranks.

"It takes two or three years to get your first degree black belt, and it takes two years to get your second degree," said Willson. "I'm testing for mine later this year."

Achieving this unique level did not put an end to Willson's involvement in TopKick. While he pursues further training of his own, he decided to bring his experience to others. Currently, Willson works with Top Kick's A+ After School program, a service which picks up elementary school kids and teaches them the activity.

"They play games, like dodge ball, and take the class every day, as well as having a chance to finish all their homework before they get home," said Willson.

Despite his schoolwork and role as president of the Class of 2012, Willson manages to cut out time for TopKick. He takes between three and four classes a week, and even teaches younger kids Tae Kwon Do on Mondays and Fridays.

"It's amazing not only to teach the kids Tae Kwon Do, but to get to know them, know what they do outside of school and TopKick, find out what interests them," said Willson.

Willson feels privileged to be able to provide guidance to kids who are working through the ranks of Tae Kwon Do. He loves seeing his own pupils succeed and enjoys the respect and responsibility that come with working as a coach at TopKick.

"All of the students call me 'Instructor Daniel,' which I love," said Willson.

He has built a deep rapport with both the employees and the kids. The TopKick community is very tight-knit, and Willson has come to consider the members a second family. The staff diligently focuses not only on teaching Tae Kwon Do, but also on instilling moral values.

"Tae Kwon Do is simply the vehicle in which we teach kids focus, discipline, integrity, respect, and confidence," said Willson.

Willson loves his job at TopKick, and plans to continue working there throughout high school. He thrives in TopKick's positive atmosphere, and takes pleasure in instilling the values of the program into his pupils. These kinds of values are applicable in all aspects of life outside of Tae Kwon Do, and help to develop good character in the children from a young age.

"It's fun and educational," said Willson. "We work Tae Kwon Do discipline into everything we do."



Courtesy of Daniel Willson

Daniel Willson, pictured in the middle in white, poses with his fellow Top Kick classmates. Willson devotes most of his time and effort into teaching and practicing Tae Kwon Do.

Talented Spartan artists paint their way to the silver and gold

By Sara Lepley
Entertainment Editor

Fluorescent blues and vibrant greens stain the fingers of seniors Catie Kitrinos and Johanna Hoque, visible evidence of a day consumed by painting.

Anyone looking for the girls knows to head directly to Room 279, the Art Room, which now proudly displays a sign signifying all that time, paint brush in hand, well spent.

The two recently received the ultimate award in art at a high school level: the coveted Silver and Gold Keys at the National Scholastic Competition in New York. The prizes didn't just fall out of the sky—a massive amount of time, energy and precision went into creating the masterpieces.

AP Art is set up so that the students spend

the year creating their portfolios, or collections of art that follow the individual's focus.

"[It is a] big personal statement," said Katherine Rehm, the Studio Art and AP Art teacher.

Rehm has watched the girls develop and nurture their own artistic style. Hoque brings portraits to life by incorporating written words, outlining images of her favorite subjects: her best friends.

"Whatever emotion I'm feeling, I put into the picture," said Hoque.

Personal, movie and book quotes as well as song lyrics have been in her artwork, capturing her subject's personality. Hoque doesn't just decide to paint certain people, but waits for inspiration to come to her.

"If I see a picture or pose I really like, I'll

paint them," said Hoque.

While Kitrinos also enjoys capturing her friends in her art work, she uses the theme of masks as her concentration. She often gives her subjects deeply shaded backgrounds decorated with bright lights that give the picture a mystic allure.

"I wouldn't say fairy dust because [Kitrinos] would kill me," said Rehm. "But it does give it another world sort of feel."

While Rehm has a high opinion of both girls in and out of the classroom, she offers more than just praise. She helps to direct the girls while allowing them independence.

"I spend the majority of my day in the art room," said Hoque. "I was in there first period, Spartan Time, lunch, and I am going back for seventh. It's like home."

Kitrinos also spends her fair share of time in the Art Room. When she's not there, she can be found decorating the Spanish Hallway with delicate strokes of paint, or slipping away at the end of cross country practice to retreat to her art class at Junior Studio. Needless to say, both girls are dedicated to art—and the finished product speaks for itself.

The girls hope that placing in the contest will be just a step towards a life filled with their passion. Hoque desires to incorporate her talent into Art Therapy and Kitrinos hopes to create a balance by entering Biomedical Illustrations. No matter what, they are willing to sacrifice in order to keep art as the key element in their busy lives.

"I would sell my soul to keep painting," said Kitrinos.

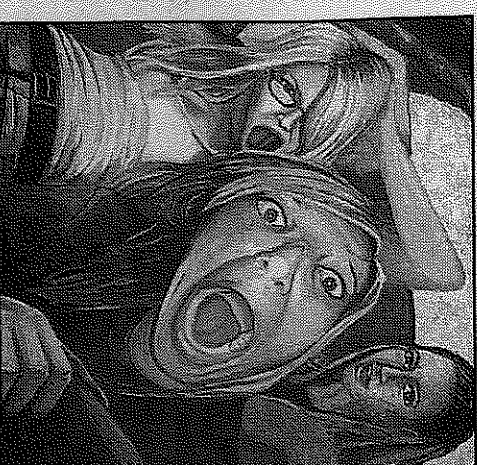


Courtesy of Johanna Hoque



Courtesy of Catie Kitrinos

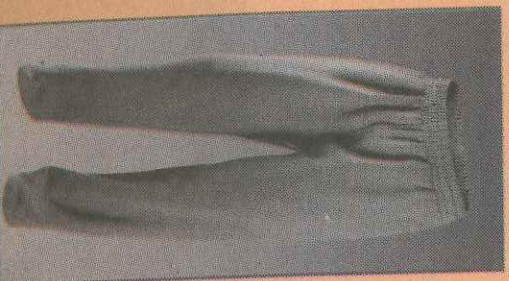
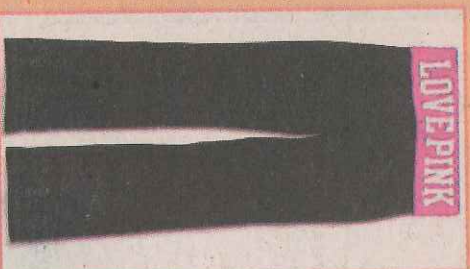
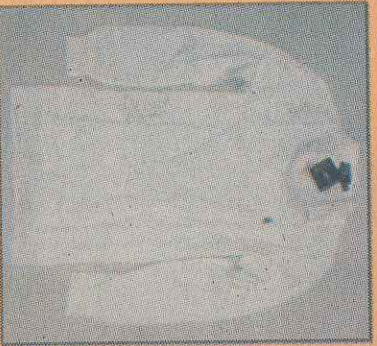
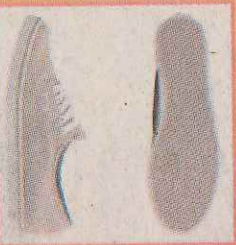
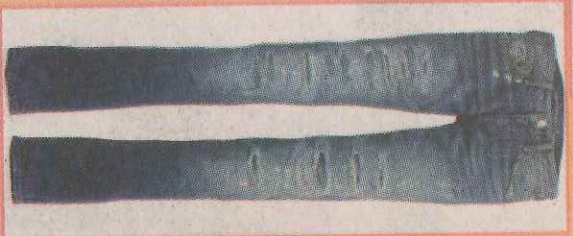
Kitrinos and Hoque are winners of the Silver and Gold Keys at the National Scholastic Competition in New York, which is the highest award at the high school level. Both are committed to art, and plan on pursuing careers that allow them to use this passion.



Courtesy of Catie Kitrinos

Recent Trends AUTUMN

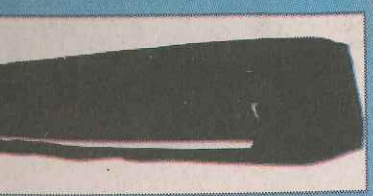
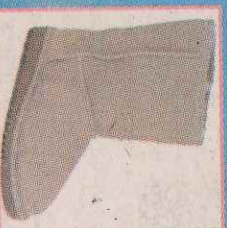
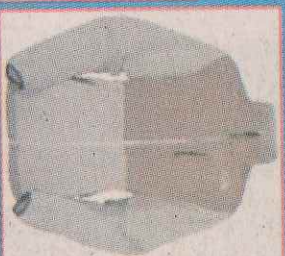
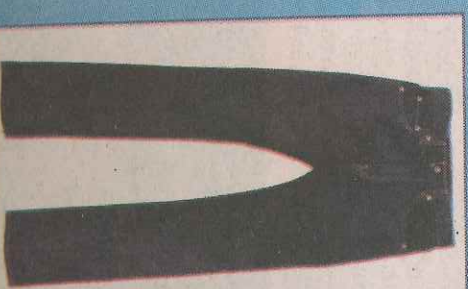
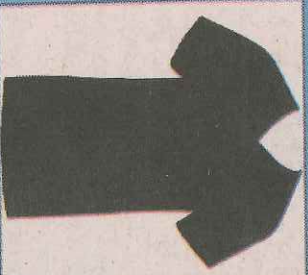
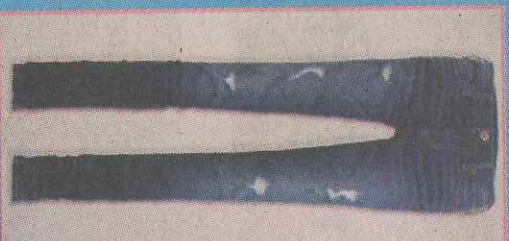
Girls Fall trends range from ripped jeans, polos, and Vans to sweats and yoga pants from the P.I.N.K collection by Victoria's Secret.



Boys Fall trends range from Polo T-shirts to cargo shorts pants to Vans and on the sports side all Nike... Everything!!

Recent Trends Winter

Girls Winter trends range from ripped jeans, polos, and Vans to sweat and yoga pants from the P.I.N.K collection by Victorias Secret and light pink girly shoes.



Boys Winter trends range from V-neck tees to jeans and converse to Nike basketball sweats and Nike slides.

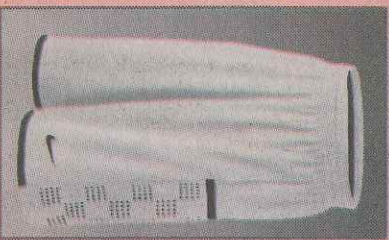
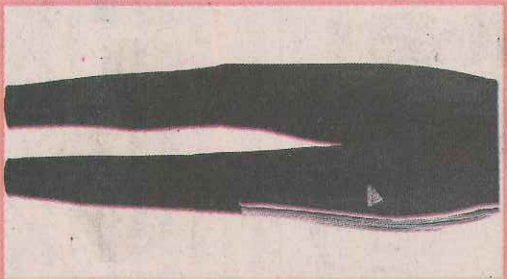
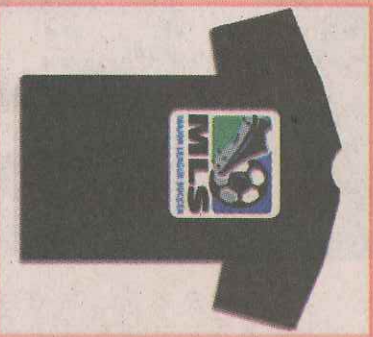
Style means something different for everyone, you can buy, but for me it means looking and feeling personal touches that make you, you. When I know that it is me because I dress quirky like I do hairpin. Sometimes it is all about finding the o wear. With spring fast approaching many people tops. I think that in the spring, floral patterns many different kinds of florals out there so as you be afraid to stick out from the crowd. It wasn't from everyone, I wanted a North Face jacket and buy all of my clothes from American Eagle and to look like the masses. It is important to dress other people will find it to be. Chances are the r your style.

By: Jordan Chinkenbeard
Yearbook Staff Member



Recent Trends Spring

Girls Spring trends range from fitted shirts and waist high mini skirts and flip flops to soccer or any kind of sweats sweats during the soccer season.



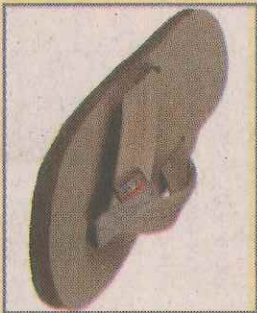
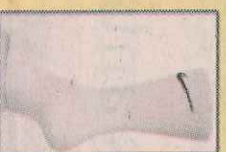
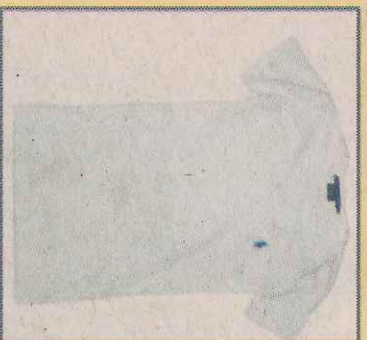
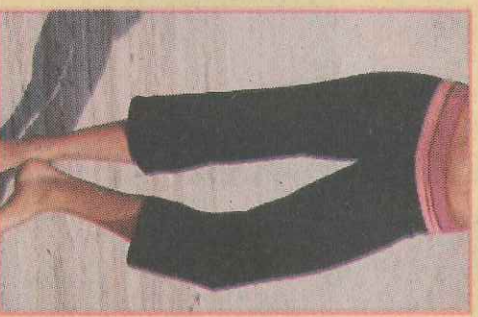
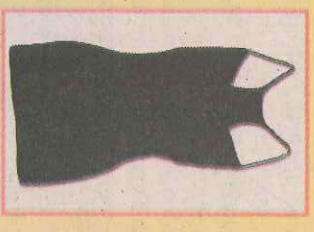
Boys trends range from Polo T-shirts to cargo shorts pants to Vans and on the sports side Nike EVERYTHING!

For some it means having the fanciest clothes being your best. It is all about adding those per-walking down the hallway, I like for people to o. I wear skirts and long socks, or I wear a weird ne accessory you could fit into every outfit you ple are going to break out their shorts and tank are going to become quite prominent, there are u won't look like everyone else at school. Don't too long ago that I was afraid to dress different and I wanted to have boat shoes and I wanted to Abercrombie but then I realized there is no need how you want to no matter how odd you think isk will pay off and people will want to emulate

ONE FASHIONISTA'S ALTERNATIVE

Recent Trends Summer

Girls Summer trends range from tank tops and short shorts and Old Navy flip-flops to racerback sporty tank tops and capri yoga pants and Reebok Ree-zigs.



Boys Summer trends range from a T-shirt and cargo shorts or swimming trunks with Rainbow flip-flops to the decked out lacrosse gear with Nike Air Max's... Flow?

Turnmoil overseas strikes Spartans near and far

Springfield native and family are evacuated from Egypt due to growing political strife

By Nisreen Sumraan

Features Editor

The revolution in Egypt affects more than just the Egyptians in close proximity.

Sophomore Thayne Price knows that first hand, after he was forced to leave Egypt for a mandatory Evacuation. Price's dad works for the State Department in Cairo, serving for embassy security, where he has been living for the past two years.

Price lived in Maadi, Egypt which is right outside Cairo. Maadi is known for being the area where many other embassies from various countries are located. Including those of America, Peru, Mexico, Japan, Mongolia and Argentina. Price was in Egypt when entire hospitals and shopping centers were looted by everyday civilians.

"There was a tank about 100 yards from our house," said Price. "There was a mall near our house that was barricaded and burnt down after it was looted, they even looted a children's cancer hospital."

Price was asked to leave, and gather all his belongings within 24 hours, because the government was afraid that his family and other United States citizens would be stuck in Cairo and put in harm's way if the airports were shut down.

"The embassy in Cairo ordered an immediate evacuation, they were afraid that the airports would shut down and there would be no way to get us out," said Price. "We had 24 hours to gather our belongings and leave."

Price and his family arrived in the United States at the beginning of February, and Price started his time at WS on February 7.

However, Price is not a stranger to the suburbs of Washington DC. Prior to his move to Cairo two and a half years ago, Price he used to live in the Springfield area, inside the WS district.

"I went to Cardinal Forest and Irving before my family moved to Cairo," said Price. "It's good to be back."

Price has so far enjoyed being

"The embassy in Cairo ordered an immediate evacuation. We had 24 hours to gather our belongings and leave."

—Thayne Price, sophomore

back to the area, especially the fact that there are many more choices of food here, but misses his friends and life back in Egypt.

Price suspects he won't be living here for too long however. Usually, when a family is ordered to leave for a mandatory evacuation, it is obligatory to leave for at least 30 days. Price has not heard word yet on when he will be allowed to go back, but he hopes it will be soon.

"I am not really worried about my house being destroyed. I am just worried because all my stuff is there, and I want it back," said Price.



Barbara Price, second from left, perches on top of a camel with his family. Price formerly resided in Egypt due to his father's job. However, his family recently had to be evacuated out of Egypt due to the political revolution.

Fishing Club is a reel catch

By Nicole Brigham

Page One Editor

Hook, line, and sinker, the Fishing Club is a real catch.

Thanks to the creative thinking of brothers, junior Alex and freshman Matt Pastino, WS welcomes a new creative club for fishing enthusiasts. The brothers came up with the idea over the summer as a way to get other students involved with something they are passionate about.

"I grew up fishing, and I love it and it also looks good on college applications," said freshman Matt Sharp.

The brothers put a slide on the TV announcements to spike interest with students. The club held its first interest meeting on February 11th and the announcements slide must have worked because over 15 kids showed up to see what the hype was all about.

"We won't have as many members as other clubs because it's new," said Ryan Sharp. With over 150 lakes in Virginia, and 3 right around the WS area, it is easy to see why the fishing club sparked so much interest.

The meeting got off to a great start, and the members ratified the bylaws of the Fishing Club, and voted for officers. Alex is the

president, Matt is the vice president, Sharp is the secretary, and Junior Perry Shands is the historian. The club's adult sponsor is Susan Kinsley from the science department.

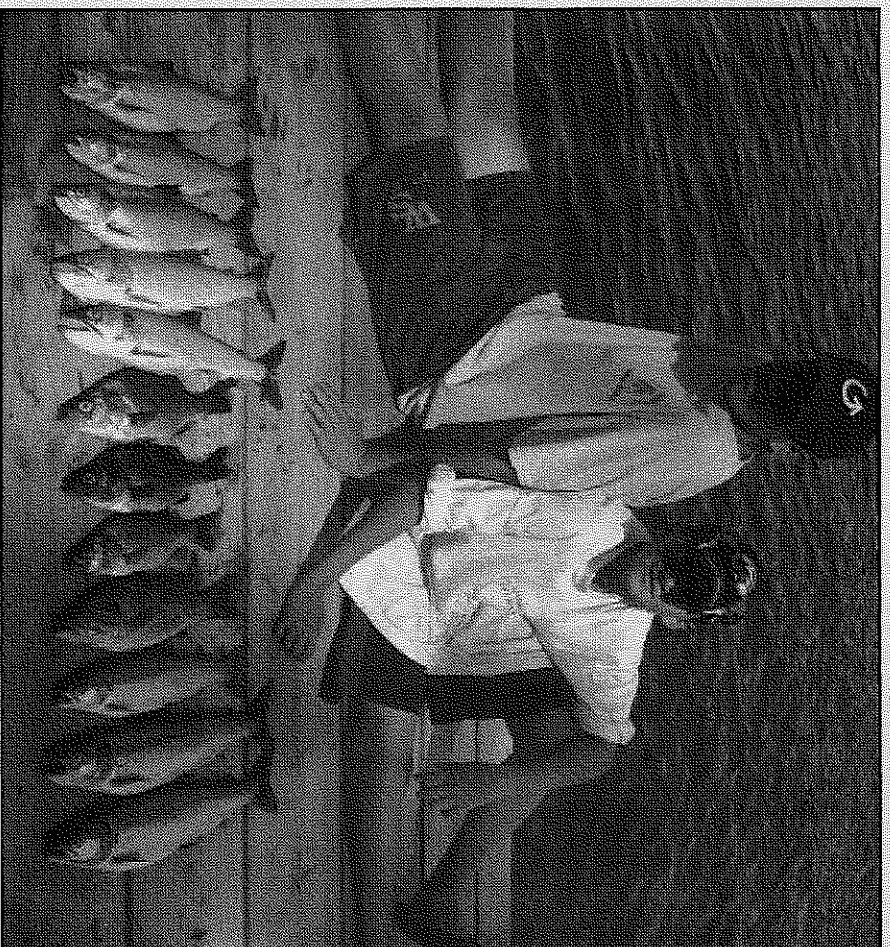
"My little brother and I fish a lot, and we thought this club was a good idea," said Alex. With leaders in place, the club had more important things to talk about.

Unfortunately, the Fishing Club is not allowed by Fairfax County regulations to meet outside of school for fishing as a school sponsored event.

But these crafty brothers wouldn't let this get in the way of their fun. As long as the school is not responsible for the event, the club can meet outside of school in their free time.

As for in school Fishing Club events, Alex is trying to get professional anglers to attend some of the meeting and give presentations to the members. The club is also working on getting fishing and sporting stores to sponsor the club so they can expand the club. With one successful meeting under their belt already, the Fishing Club is sure to grab the attention of many WS students.

"We hope to inform people about why we love to fish, and to get people interested in fishing," said Sharp.



Courtesy of Alex Pastino
Brothers Alex and Matt Pastino sit proudly by their catch after a day of fishing. They founded the Fishing Club as a creative outlet for Spartans who love to fish. The club has garnered much popularity within the student body, as seen in the much-attended interest meeting.

Junior revives antique automobile love

By Sam Perlstien

Features Editor

It is a blessed few who can say they own a car, but even fewer can say they own a piece of history. Junior Alex Seals is proud to own his 1978 Triumph Spitfire.

Seals never planned on owning an antique car, but when he went to the London Auto dealership with his father, the Spitfire was there. Seals' dad knew the owner of the dealership because that was where he had bought his first car.

The old owner of the Spitfire had left it at the dealership, and Seals and his father were able to get it at a cheaper price. The only problem was that it needed a lot of work in order to

get in running condition.

"I wanted to work on something, it ended up being a car just to tinker on," said Seals.

Seals and his father bought the car in August and had it running by September. They were working on it together and were planning to sell it when Seals decided to buy it for himself instead. It still needed some more work but Seals decided to do the rest of it himself.

"I liked how it looked," said Seals. Seals enjoyed working on his Spitfire and was able to find out many things about it. The car was red but he found that the previous owner had painted it white and maybe orange at some point. Beside the total appearance of the car there was a lot more to it that Seals had to worry about. Among other problems under the hood, Seals also found another major issue.

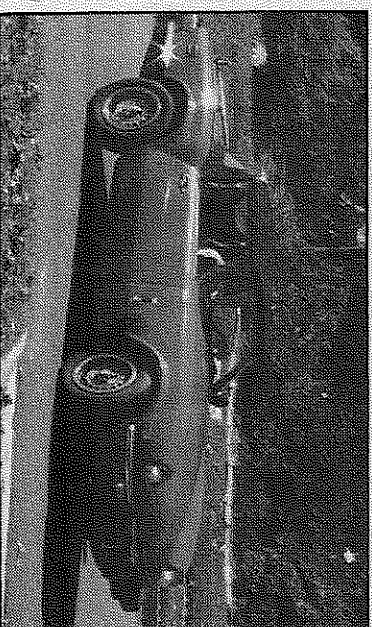
"It didn't have a top on it," said Seals.

At first he didn't think this was much of a problem. It wasn't till his was out running errands when it suddenly started to rain. He had to drive back on I-95 with the rain in his face.

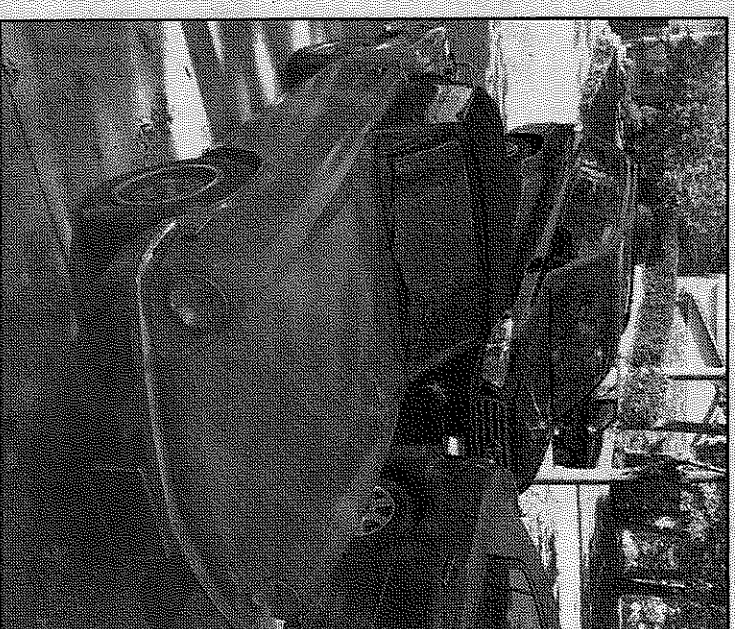
"It was nice and dry when I left," said Seals.

Since Seals walks to school he just drives his antique car around when he can. Seals is proud to say, though, that he has it up and running.

"It doesn't need anything else but gas," said Seals.



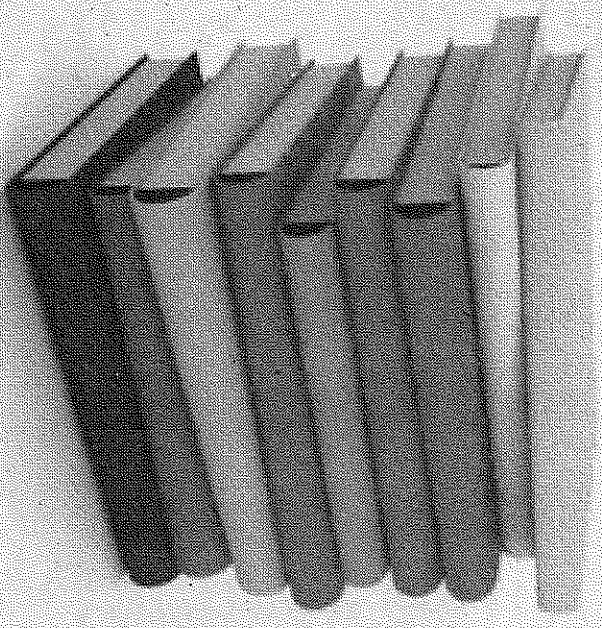
Courtesy of Alex Seals



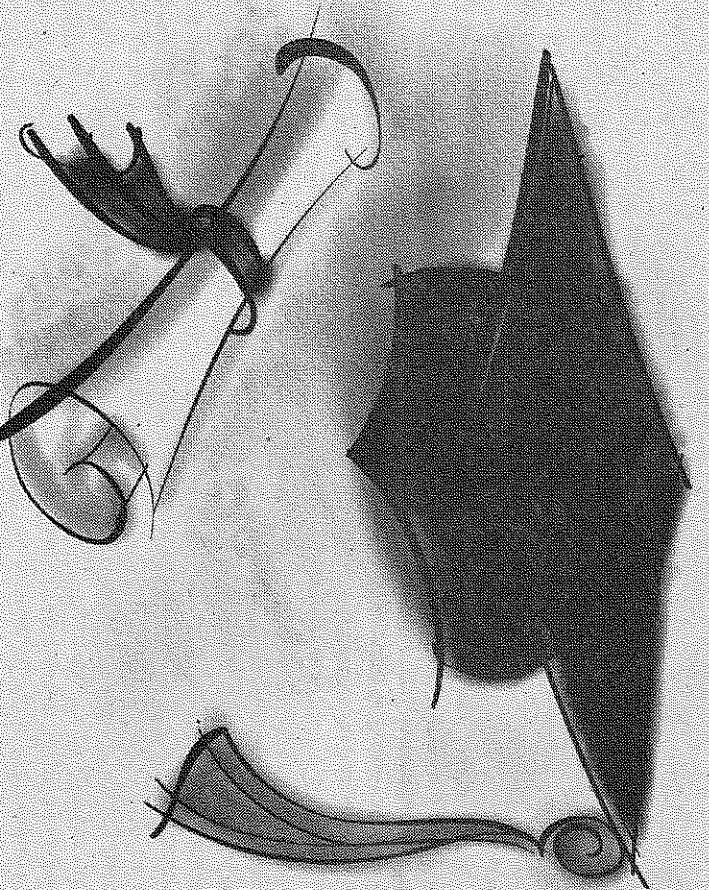
Courtesy of Alex Seals
Alex Seals takes pride in his 1978 red Triumph Spitfire. Although the car needed many adjustments and was quite dated, Seals managed to restore it to its full potential and now drives it happily.

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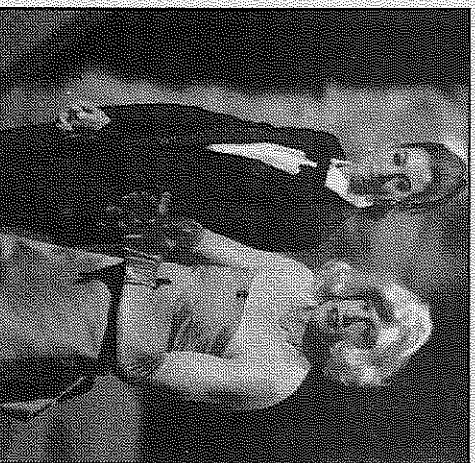
Oscars fall short on laughs

By Anna Lehman

Entertainment Editor

The Oscars may not be on Comedy Central, but it's troubling to me how the highlight of the comedy was Melissa Leo, Best Supporting Actress winner, dropping the f-bomb.

Every year I try to watch the Academy Awards, and I personally find the comedic part to be very important part during the three hours I have watch people I don't know being awarded.



Hollywood Gossip

Actors James Franco and Anne Hathaway hosted this year's Academy Awards.

Last year's Oscar show was not that great, but I at least the hosts, Alec Baldwin and Steve Martin, were funny.

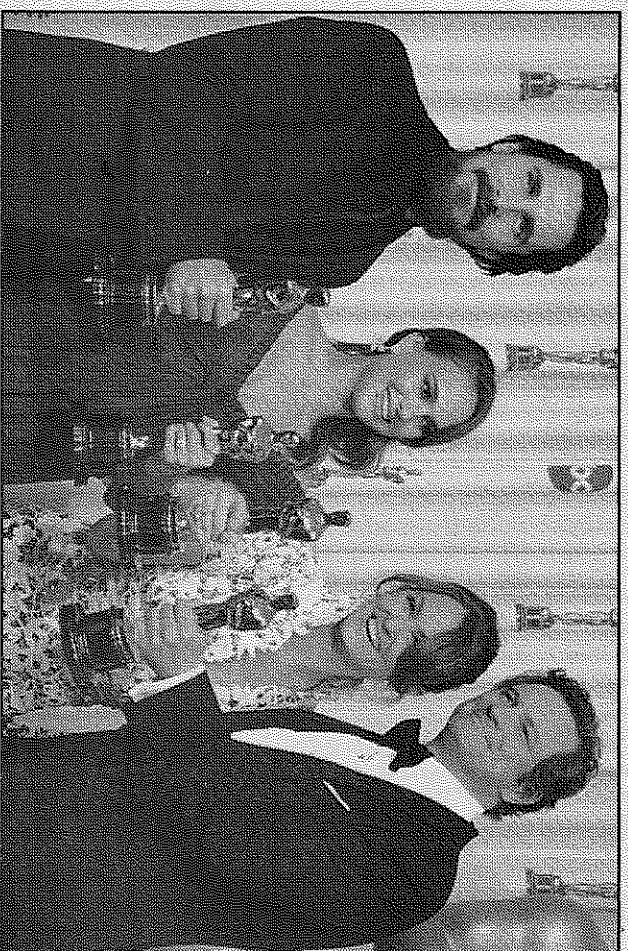
Anne Hathaway is beautiful and we all grew up watching her in "The Princess Diaries," but she really isn't funny, unless she's in a nude scene (which she mentioned multiple times throughout the Oscars).

It's hard to peg co-host, James Franco. Yes, he is extremely gorgeous and I felt light headed when I found out he was playing James Dean in a movie, but could he at least have not acted so stiff up there on the stage? Atrocious hosts aside, I did find the opening movie montage with Hathaway and Franco appearing in the nominated films and "Back to the Future."

Besides this, the only thing I laughed at was Leo and Kirk Douglas's jokes over Leo's use of the f-word, but what I find most troubling is that I found a 94-year-old man, Douglas, who had just recovered from a stroke, to have been more entertaining than everybody else.

"The King's Speech" and my personal favorite film, seemed to be the most awarded film of the night as well as "Inception," "Alice in Wonderland," and "the Social Network."

While there were multiple winners, "Win-



Buzz Net

Above are the winners for the categories Best Actor and Actress as well as best supporting actor and actress. Christian Bale won for "The Fighter," and Melissa Leo who was also in "The Fighter." Natalie Portman won best actress for her superb role in "Black Swan." The winner of best actor was Colin Firth, for his part in "The King's Speech."

ter's Bone." "True Grit" (which I personally thought should have won Hailee Steinfeld an Oscar for best supporting actress) and "127 Hours" got robbed. I thought "127 Hours" had the most original song but the award was snatched by "Toy Story 3's" "We Belong Together."

In the end, 24 awards were given while those who did not win at least had the satisfaction that they were nominated. This year was not have been a total failure. I went to bed happy that Colin Firth had won best actor, Hathaway's mishap while announcing Sandra Bullock on stage "Fuh! Drink at home" and thinking that Kirk Douglas was the man.

Guitar uses gigs to rake in cash

By Summer Claveau & Jessica Drago

Oracle Staff Writers

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Guitar program, and as the end of this year approaches, we can expect a lot to come from our award winning program.

The most recent Guitar Coffeehouse fundraiser was very successful, with at least one hundred people passing through. Coffee, sandwiches, and jam sessions for all.

Coffeehouse is one of the many ways the Guitar program supports it's artists; not only does this event raise much needed money for the program, but it also gives students a chance to express themselves outside of class and play songs everyone will enjoy and be familiar with. Some students even played songs they composed themselves. Junior Mikdyas Negussie performed his original piece dubbed "Jazz Odyssey."

All money collected that night went directly to the Guitar program. WS only pays for the guitar room and Mr. Owens's salary, so the task of raising money falls on Guitar students and their parents.

They try to get in as much funding as they can to pay for equipment, music, and trips, none of which are cheap. Up-keep and maintenance of each individual instrument is a job in itself. Needless to say, participation in the fundraisers is

very important, as well as the Guitar boosters. Volunteers and fundraising are the backbone of the program, but more than that, the dedication of Keith Owens and 20 years worth of students.

For many students, music is what keeps them sane in school. Keeping the arts and music alive in such a stressful environment, such as the closing semester to another busy school year, helps to balance plenty of our peer's lives. Though all of our musical programs are award-winning and struggle with the same funding issues as guitar, we find each program individually important and character-building.

Guitar continues to fundraise through their frequent McGuitar nights. The winning combination of French fries and music is something we should all enjoy at least once.

Coffeehouses are anticipated to continue in March as well as many big upcoming performances for WS Guitar including Austin Grill performance, Spartan Jam, Spartan Jam Alumni Fest, and of course the infamous Spring Trip. This year's spring trip brings our students to Festival Disney in sunny Orlando, Florida.

We should expect a lot of available entertainment to come from the Guitar program, check out they're website for specific dates.

Forget me not, a Capstone to remember

Seniors' benefit concert raises money for Alzheimer's research and awareness

By Rita Zevallos

Senior Staff Writer

5.3 million Americans have it. It is the seventh leading cause of death. It costs 172 billion annually. No, this illness is not breast cancer, heart disease, or AIDS; it is Alzheimer's disease.

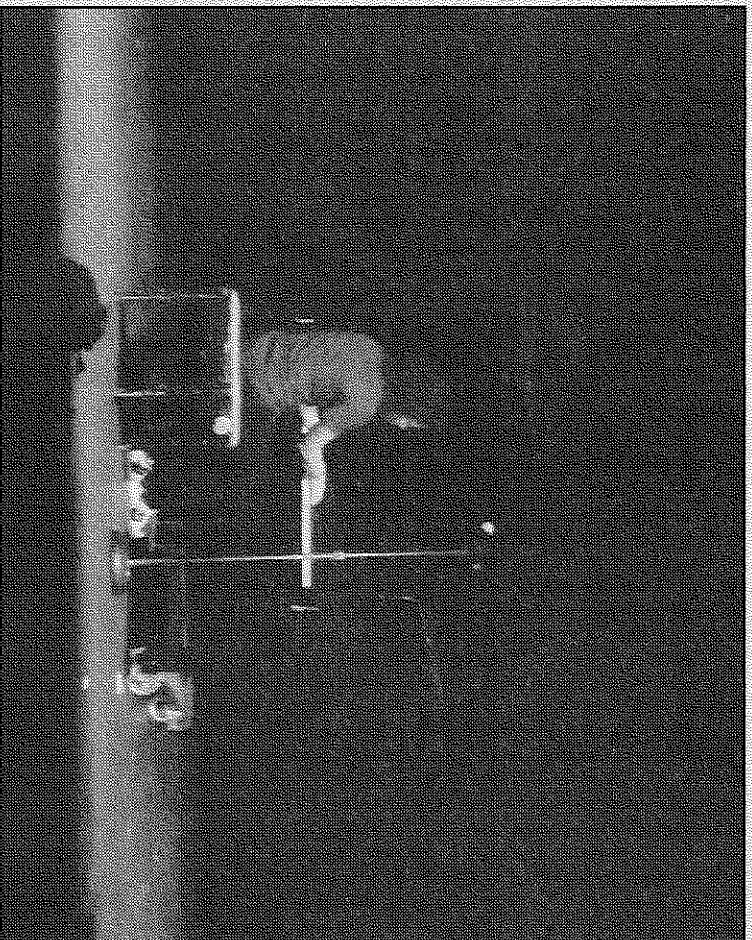
"If it were more widely known about and understood then we might be closer to a cure," said senior Talia Lagerberg.

Often considered the common symptom of old age, Alzheimer's is actually a dangerous disease that does not have to exist. There is current and anticipated research in drug treatments, earlier diagnosis, and prevention. Seniors Joseph McGoffin, Talia Lagerberg and Kimberly Hodgdon decided to focus their Capstone project benefit concert on Alzheimer's in order to do their part to raise money for both research and awareness.

"We knew a lot of people who were affected by [Alzheimer's], so we decided to donate money for research," said Lagerberg.

The group spent the months before the concert finding performers, finding out from theatre techs how to use the sound and lighting in the auditorium, as well as advertising. Eventually they found their performers, including several WS students.

"It was hard, but it was worth doing," said Lagerberg.



Talia Lagerberg

Morgan Ortan plays piano for 'Forget Me Not', a great cause. While many people choose to give back to the local community for their Capstone projects, these talented students give back to those with Alzheimer's. Although many did not attend, these students were able to donate 200 dollars for more research into this crippling disease. While many may not know anyone who has Alzheimers, the affect it has on a family is terrible.

The hour-long concert included the WS dance team and several individual vocal, piano, and guitar performances. McGoffin and junior Christian Tran had an acoustic performance, and junior Daniel Willson played the fiddle.

"[We] helped people and learned how to put on a concert at the same time," said Lagerberg.

Unfortunately, not many people attended the concert because of weather conditions; McGoffin estimated only twenty in the audience. However, the group did raise about 200 dollars at the event, and received more donations afterwards, amounting to 300 to 400 dollars total raised. They donated the money to Alzheimer's Association, an organization whose main purpose is to increase research on prevention and cures for the disease.

"By raising money we can help families and loved ones [impacted by Alzheimer's]," said McGoffin.

The money will undoubtedly be used well. Alzheimer's Association funds go to support groups, education programs, scientific research for a cure, and disease advocacy, working to pass legislation to increase research.

"Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's disease" is Alzheimer's Association's motto.

Baddest underground since Harriet Tub

By Amanda Pearson
Scoop Editor

Onika Tanya Marj, who is known to most of the world as Nicki Minaj, was born December 8, 1984. As a native of Trinidad and Tobago, Minaj had to teach herself to dream big and always try to be her best. She didn't have as many positive images and role models in her life, but one thing she understood was that she loved to write and create music.

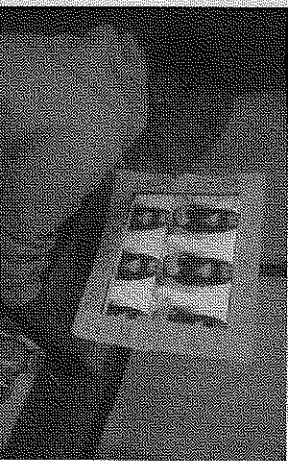
With the excitement of music Minaj strives to write the best lyrics anyone has ever listened to. She speaks the truth and never holds back, one of the reasons I love her! At the root of Minaj's career she released three mix tapes: "Play Time Is Over," "Sucka Free," and "Beam Me Up Scotty" (which is my personal favorite) which showed her true talent and got her recognized by certain people especially me, but it was almost as if you had to search for her.

When introduced to Minaj's hit "Icy Biggy Piggy" last year by Muffin Brassfield, I fell in love with her voice and lyrics.

Lil Wayne, Minaj's male role model, got a hold of one of her mixtapes and showed it to the Young Money Entertainment producers. They were very impressed with the young

woman whose musical instinct is truly original. She first saw fame when she signed a record deal with Young Money Entertainment, and then later with Cash Money Records. Almost immediately after signing with Young Money, Minaj began working on her first CD entitled "Pink Friday," which is truly amazing and was released in 2010.

"After a much anticipated release, as the result of Minaj's extensive featured appearances on the singles of other artists, 'Pink Friday' debuted at number two on the Billboard 200 chart with first week sales of 375,000 copies," from Billboard. Can you say amazing? With approximately 1,035,000 copies sold worldwide Minaj's success is just beginning to sprout. Minaj became the first



Danielle Mazzuch

artist ever to have seven songs within the Billboard Hot 100 at the same time.

This 26-year-old Hip-hop and Rap artist has begun to promote her imaginative "pink world." With our favorite color at hand, Minaj tweets on Twitter and thanks all her fans for supporting her and helping her get to this point. Just recently did her album become platinum and her song 'Moment 4 Life' became number one on 106 & Park Top Ten Countdown.

I personally love Nicki Minaj because she speaks her mind and she doesn't care what people say about her. In her interview on MTV called My Time Now, Minaj expresses her true emotion and proves to the world that she indeed is a real person with real feelings.



Minaj

What really seems to get to me is the fact that people judge her and accuse her of being fake and not genuine, when she is still just as normal as you and I. She has surpassed all the hate and criticism and has done her own thing. Minaj is known to have extravagant outfits and costumes and hair to match it, literally. Minaj tries her hardest to match the color wig she wears with whatever outfits she is sporting that day, if my mom would let me do that I think I would too.

My all time favorite was her decked out leopard print dress, gloves, and boots she wore to the Grammy's, not only because she wore it but probably because I love leopard print too! That's just one more thing that I can add to the list of the things that we have in common. I honestly think that this woman could be a serious role model for anyone who wants to make it and they have doubts about what will happen in the future. Despite her past, all you really have to look at is where Minaj is right now. And if you choose to hate on her remember what you're doing as you read this and see if your anywhere close to recording an album that sold millions and working for one of the best greatest Hip-Hop and Rap Record labels in history.

BGR revitalizes burger love

New restaurant provides hang out, delicious food for students

By Sam Goldwasser
Managing Editor

Unless you have been living under a rock, you've heard of Burger Joint.

Great food, cool soda machine and awesome milkshakes right? That's what we have all been told. Right when I walked in I was immediately met with the wonderful smell of fries and burgers being made.

I was excited to see that the soda machine that everyone was talking about met my expectations. I had never seen so many flavors of soda and the touch screen was a nice touch. The food looked absolutely mouth-watering and I couldn't wait to finally try the burgers that everyone has been talking about. I was in pure food heaven until I got the bill. Eight dollars for a burger with nothing on it, plus a dollar for cheese, four dollars for fries, and let's not forget that five dollar milkshake, the total for my meal came out to be about eighteen of

my hard earned dollars.

I was shocked. I mean don't get me wrong, I still bought and thoroughly enjoyed my meal, but I couldn't stop thinking that I had just dropped almost twenty dollars on lunch.

Another issue I have with BGR is that it is very small; when I walked in I almost slammed into someone eating their delicious Burger Joint burger. And I also got stuck waiting in an extremely long line for about twenty minutes. Which is about how much money I spent on my meal.

After I finally ordered, I had to find a table. Most were already taken and I had to squeeze between families with screaming children and other high school students to get to a table wedged in a corner where I wanted another twenty minutes to get my food.

Don't get me wrong here, between the atmosphere, music, and amazing soda machine, Burger Joint was awesome. But I'm not sure I'm willing to spend so much money - or time - on lunch that often.



Courtesy of Luis Lester

BGR, or The Burger Joint, offers a burger weighing over sixteen pounds. The challenge: to finish it all, or pay the price.

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Managers take care of business off the field

Some athletes and spectators don't appreciate work behind the scenes

By Megan Burpo

Venpoint Editor

We see the players score the points, the coaches direct the plays, hear the band play the fight song, but we never stop to think about who makes it all possible.

No matter the reason for being a manager (whether it is due to an injury, time commitment, or a desire to be part of a team and help out) managers are a big asset to keeping the team on track.

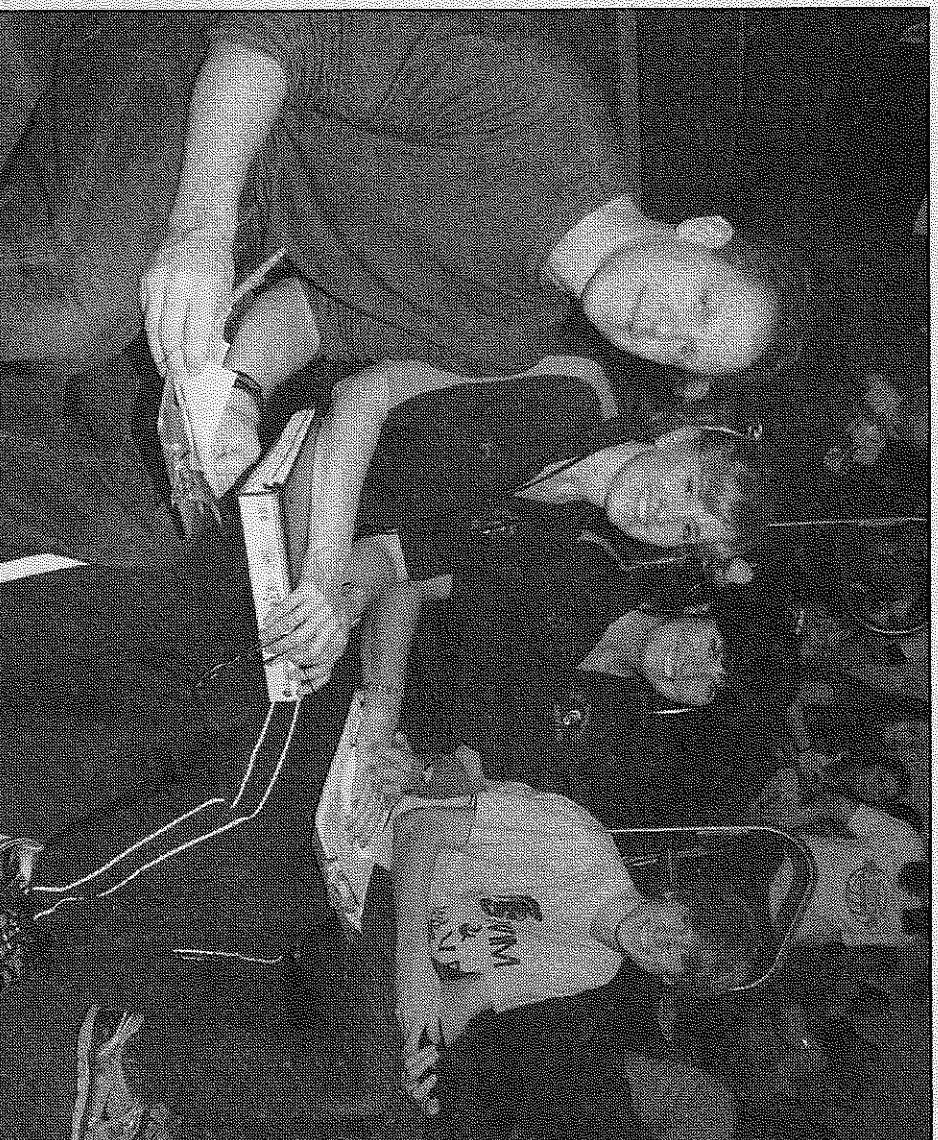
For senior Imani Clayton, playing field hockey this season was no longer an option.

"My mom wouldn't let me play so I could concentrate on grades, but I still wanted to be part of the program, so managing was the best way," said Clayton.

Some sports need managers more than others, as keeping score is important. Or, like football, the team is so large coaches simply cannot do it themselves. This was the case this fall, as junior Izzy Zarr-Roque, a sports medicine assistant, was asked to sub for a manager as the team lacked a full-time manager.

"I agreed because I want to eventually go into medicine and it seemed like a good opportunity to observe a field of medicine and interact with the players," said Zarr-Roque.

Most understand that managers work to help the team, but not many athletes or spectators stop



Courtesy of the WS Swim and Dive team
Junior Alex Seals (far right) sits with the swim coaches during a meet. Seals was the Spartan Swim and Dive manager this year and helped the coaches with various tasks during meets, practices, and other events that the team participated in.

to appreciate all they do for the players. Though attendance is not mandatory for every practice for most teams, two to three hours can

be spent at practices and the hard work really comes into play on game night. As a Field Hockey manager,

Clayton had to keep score of the game, shots on goal and keep track of the time. For junior Michael McCormick,

who was specifically asked by Coach Brian Publick to manage girls' Varsity Lacrosse, preparing for game night is a little different. Most of the preparation for the spring season actually occurs in the fall.

"I record all the games so the players can review and analyze the footage and I also keep the time, and record the score," said McCormick.

Coaches and players share a large role together and need to cooperate to make their team successful.

"I meet once a week with Coach Publick to discuss and plan," said McCormick "I really like being here to help out and make sure everything goes smoothly."

There are definite perks that come along with being manager. Though there is time commitment and it can be less rigorous than actual practice, there is still the team mentality around.

"Getting spirit wear was one of my favorite parts," said Clayton.

No matter the reason for being manager, it's safe to say that it's the best of both worlds.

Students and players alike should stop to take a minute to appreciate the correct score that is displayed, the filled water bottles, and moral support.

"You feel a part of the game and you are with the players every step of the way," said Zarr-Roque.

Gearing up for LAX

By Jimmy McMahon & Austin Kaminski

Oracle Staff Writers

At WS, lacrosse is one of the most well-known sports.

The team is preparing to fight for this year's district title, but many players will participate for the first time in their lives wearing a Spartan uniform.

Despite being one of the best teams in the area, many WS lacrosse players have no prior experience. Some just show up at tryouts and are able to make the team.

"It's a fun sport to play," said junior Nick Becker, who picked up lacrosse for the first time last year as a sophomore on JV. "It seemed different [from all the others]."

Although lacrosse is similar to football in that many players can be on the team and see playing time, lacrosse does not offer a freshman team. This means that all freshman that wish to play have to tryout for the JV team.

However, it isn't that uncommon to see freshmen on JV or Varsity. For example, freshman Jake O'Connell made the JV lacrosse team this year.

"I like that there's only JV and Varsity," said O'Connell. "It gives you a chance to play with the older guys. If you only play with freshmen, you might be better than them but you won't be better than any of the older guys."

Many players in sports like basketball, football, and soccer talk about how they have played their sport since childhood. Although there are lacrosse leagues for younger kids, many choose to try playing for the first time in high school. The rich tradition of WS lacrosse helps attract new players to tryout for the team.

"I like the competitiveness of the sport," said freshman Ben Armstrong, who is playing lacrosse for the first time this year. "And we're one of the best teams in the nation."

WS is indeed one of the elite teams in the nation. The team finished its season ranked thirteenth in the state and in the top three-hundred in the nation.

"I like the competitiveness of the sport and we're one of the best teams in the nation."

—Ben Armstrong, freshman

"I've played lacrosse before and I wanted to try to play in high school," said O'Connell. "I knew we had a good team so I tried and I made it."

Although "top three-hundred" may not sound that impressive, bear in mind that this is including every public and private school in the country that has a lacrosse team. This amounts to hundreds of teams in every state. This year's team has similar expectations for success.

"It's fast paced," said Becker. "It's like all the things I like about other sports put into one."



Courtesy of Dan McDonald
Junior Dan McDonald joined the JV lacrosse team as a sophomore, despite never playing the sport before. This has become a trend among students at WS.



Spartan Sports

WS has had a great deal of recent success in recent years, including winning the Patriot District in 2009 and being one of the highest ranked teams in the state at the beginning of the season. The team this year will hope to repeat their championship.

Just keep rowing

By Jimmy McMahon
Sports Editor

In the back hallway, people can be seen working out on the rowing machines almost all year. These aren't just regular people, these are the members of your WS Crew team.

Although the team doesn't actually compete on the water until March (March 26th is the Polar Bear Regatta competition) the team has been holding regular workouts since early November (their first workout was on November 9). Last year, the team was better than average, but the team feels that they are ready to be one of the elite teams in the area this year.

"We were okay last year, but we'll be better this year," said senior crew member Brandon Corbett. "We have the potential to do very well this season."

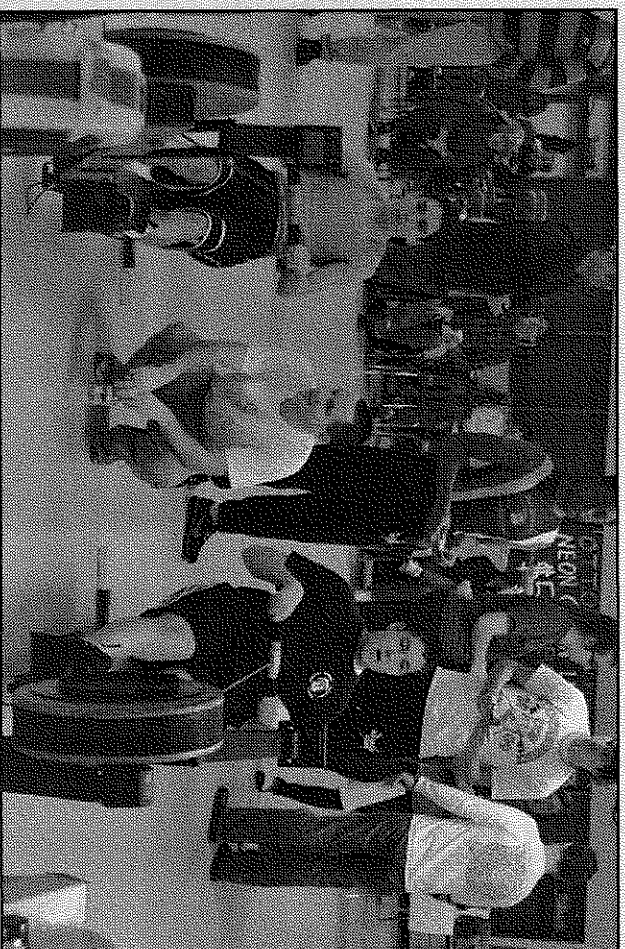
Crew competitions (known as Regattas) are not unlike track competitions in that all of the boats do not row at the same time. Different boats will row separately and compete

for the best time. "We have heats," said Corbett. "Say for example we have three heats with six boats each and the top two boats from each heat go to the finals."

After working out all year in preparation for the season, these athletes are finally ready to hit the water for in-season practicing. The team started practicing on the water on February 21 and will practice Monday through Friday and on Saturday mornings. The season goes through late May and could go longer depending on how well the team does in their competitions.

Although the team has not competed against other schools on the water yet this season, they did compete against the Langley Saxons in the annual Saxon/Spartan "Ergathon" (an Erg is another name for the rowing machine).

Basically, the two teams compete to see how can row the farthest combined distance on the machine (the machine can calculate how far the rower would have rowed if they



Jeremy Davis

The WS Crew team participated in the "Ergathon" against Langley this year. The Spartans won again this year and took home the coveted "Seat Trophy". The Crew team is ready to hit the water for competitions after working out since early November.

were on the water). The WS team had the honor of taking home the coveted "Seat Trophy" for their victory. The team will look to continue this success into the season.

"We're better prepared this year," said Corbett. "We're a much stronger team."

West End Rugby returns

By Danielle Mazzuchi
Scoop Editor

Possibly one of the most unrecognized sports at WS is rugby. With a 2010 state title under their belts, they set the standards high for this new season.

SYC Rugby has had its breakthrough this season last year. The team for this area is called "West End." Winning the state title has opened many more doors for students in the district.

"SYC is something anyone can sign up for from any school," said senior Joey Synchronala.

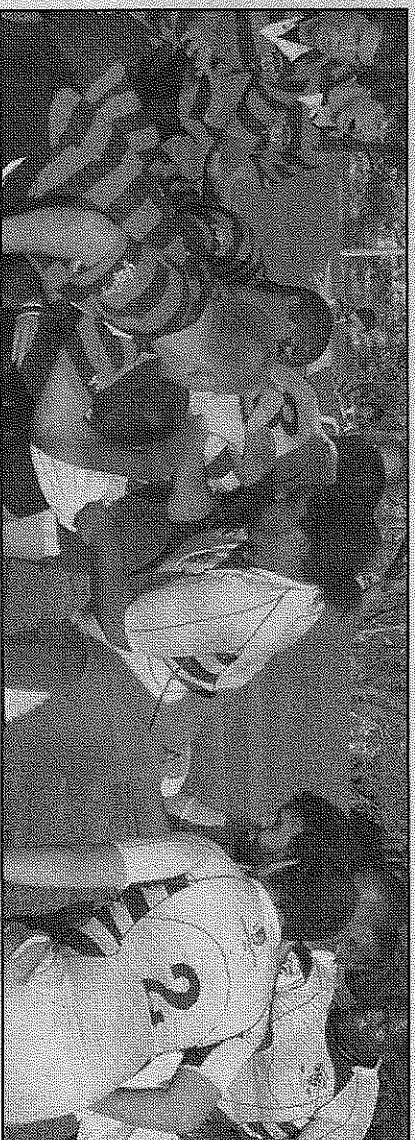
Students ranging from grades eight to twelve have the opportunity to join a team, as well as play with older players, giving them friends from other grades and hope-

fully, a memorable experience.

To those who are not in the loop with rugby: tackling, throwing, catching and kicking are all incorporated in the sport, which mixes soccer and football. The physical contact and hard work are all in a day's work for the players of this intense sport.

"I like playing rugby because I enjoy hitting people," said senior Cody Cashman, who also was an offensive lineman on WS's Varsity Football team. "I also had a lot of friends who played, who wanted me to play."

Seniors can act as role models on and off the field, and also as friends. Besides the camaraderie of the seniors, underclassmen join for other reasons. For example, junior



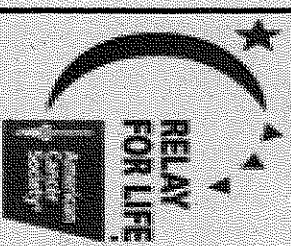
Jeremy Davis

The West End Rugby team won the State championship last year. This year, the team is both nervous and excited to face the expectations set by last year's team. They graduated a lot of seniors last year, but are looking forward to proving themselves.

Michael Tobias decided to follow in his brother's footsteps. "Both my older brothers played," said Tobias. "I wanted to have something to do [in the spring] besides playing football."

It is common that in off-seasons, student-athletes will participate in a complimentary sport to enhance and maintain their athletic skills. For the West End Rugby team, practices will be tougher this year, in order to live up to the standards last year's team set. The boys are ready to take on the challenge.

"We are a young, but experienced, team and will be good for years to come," said Synchronala.



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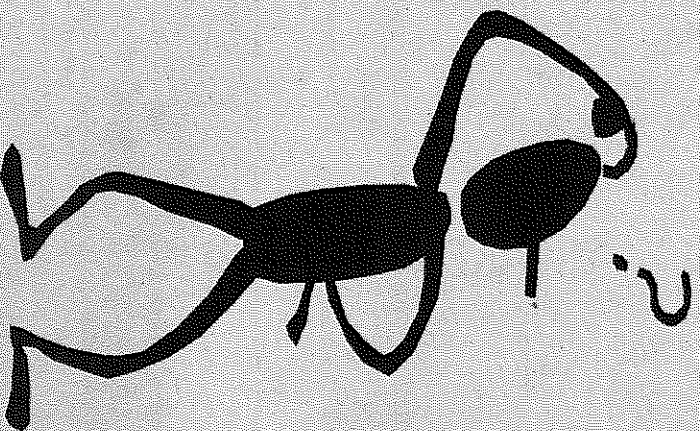
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How to solve a problem like Maria: let's get PSYCHIC

By Maria Scaptura

ETC Editor

My recent obsession with the television show "Psych," is unhealthy to say the very least.

But it leads me to write this column: how to become a psychic.

So in case you have not seen the show, it's about this guy, Shawn (James Roday), who starts off the series by getting arrested but manages to get out of this minor jam by telling the detectives he's a psychic.

Which is a complete and utter lie, and like all lies, which grows bigger and bigger. It escalates all the way up to Shawn and

his lifelong friend, Gus (Dule Hill), decide to open a detective agency called, yep, you guessed it, Psych.

There you go, I just gave you the basic overview of my latest fixation. But what does that have to do with a monthly advice column you may ask? Well, I'm going to give you the secrets and steps to becoming a spectacular psychic.

El primer paso (step one). Get actual psychic skills. It's easier said than done, trust me. To get people to believe you're psychic, try having slight spasms and shout about "the spirits" and how "they're calling you." It works every time. Then of

course, you have to predict something that always has about a 50/50 chance of actually being right, but that's neither here nor there. The main point is getting the style down.

El segundo paso (step two). You have to get the fingers-to-the-temple move down perfectly before you can start showing it off with your new psychic skills. The way I personally do it is by using two fingers and squinting in one eye to make it look like I'm having a very important psychic vision. It's all in the wrist action, try doing it in a mirror a few times before you test it out.

El tres paso (step three). To channel the spirits you also require

an awesome sidekick: one that can fill in the gaps that your psychic babble usually leaves. If you cannot find a trustworthy sidekick, I suggest you get new friends.

De cuatro pasos (step four). Make obscure references to shows and movies that practically no one has seen in order to sound like you know exactly what you're talking about, and after awhile people will just drown out everything you're saying all together.

So there it was, your intellectual guide on becoming a psychic, it may not be glamorous, it may not be pretty, but at least you get to look super-cool while doing it.

TALKING 'BOUT MY GENERATION

By Peter Simonsen

Senior Staff Writer

Where were you when Kennedy was killed? Where were you when the Berlin Wall fell? Where were you when Nixon resigned? These are all questions that any adult would be proud to answer, but here's one for high school students: Where were you three weeks ago?

There are some events that will clearly be major milestones in history, markers which will take up the page of a future textbook, and those who experienced them can proudly proclaim they were profoundly shocked when they happened. For our parents, and their parents before them, we can ask them where they were and what they were doing during the Moon Landing, or when John Lennon was shot.

But what about our generation? September 11th will surely come up in the conversation, but as a child, how much did that really impact you?

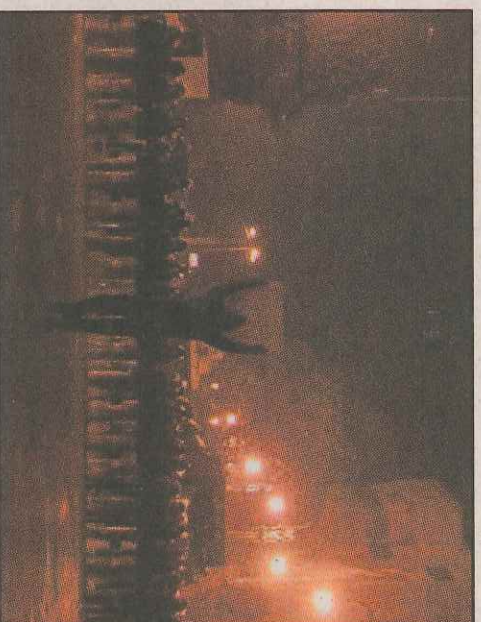
Recalling historical events first hand gives everyone a sense of belonging, an idea that they themselves are a part of history, but to experience this you must comprehend the implications of what has happened. With 9/11, certainly we knew we were attacked, but as 3rd graders, how much did we really understand? Like the Baby Boomers who went through Kent State and Vietnam, what happens to the world now, while we are young adults, is what our generation will get credit for experiencing.

Two dictators of North Africa and the Middle East have fled their countries within the span of a month. Protesters in six countries have taken to the streets in the wake of repressive regimes and terrible economies. As we, the youth of America, watch as the youth of another country throws out their dictator, the question on everyone's mind should be if this will have an impact.

Certainly these momentous occasions will find a healthy place in Tunisian and Egyptian history textbooks, but what is uncertain still is whether the world will forever changed by what has happened here. Will these be seen as "flash in the pan" rebellions that were quickly swept away by time? Or momentous victories for the common people that will reshape the world?

We don't know how history will remember these events, but as we take an occasional glance at a news report about the courage of Libyan protesters, let's make sure we realize that that newspaper article might just be what your grandchildren will ask you about.

While most of the headlines in the newspaper will be



The Week

During the revolution in Egypt, a protestor in Cairo holds a sign telling the riot police to "Leave Mubarak." It was a monumental day for Egypt when former President Mubarak stepped down from office and handed control to the military on February 11, 2011

hard pressed to get attention tomorrow, the fact is that history is being made all around us. These sweeping revolutions in Egypt, Tunisia and perhaps other countries may be one of those things that our generation will be able to brag about remembering.

If Billy Joel's "We Didn't Start the Fire" were to be rewritten 20 years from now, which among the events we've experienced would make the list? The destruction of the Space Shuttle *Columbia*, the 2008 financial crisis, and President Obama's election are all likely candidates, but how many of those will you be able to say you remember, let alone follow?

Ask yourself, if Forrest Gump were a real person, having experienced every major world event first hand, would he be in Libya right now? Would you?

Perhaps the early months of 2011 will be glossed over in a sentence or two by historians. But if they become something more, if they become significant, if they mark a turning point against tyranny in the Middle East and around the world-- when I'm asked about my generation, I'm going to say I watched as the world cheered for Egypt.

As Ferris Bueller once said: "Life moves pretty fast, if you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it."

BRAIN TEASERS!

Distract yourself from the monotony with these effective and challenging BRAIN TEASERS

a.) This is an unusual paragraph. I'm curious how quickly you can find out what is so unusual about it? It looks so plain you would think nothing was wrong with it! In fact, nothing is wrong with it! It is unusual though. Study it, and think about it, but you still may not find anything odd. But if you work at it a bit, you might find out! Try to do so without any coaching!

b.) Can you name three consecutive days without using the words Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, or Sunday?

c.) A murderer is condemned to death. He has to choose between three rooms. The first is full of raging fires, the second is full of assassins with loaded guns, and the third is full of lions that haven't eaten in 3 years - Which room is safest for him?

1. sfaes ehq eq pnow
2. noij ehq hjim wooraqh 'pooj tnouhiw sreak
3. eeahj jaej peep are suoj ehq buimnsse ('o
4. moolowol pue 'yappol 'yeparsesA ('q
5. ebanguel qhijlguj ehq uj jettej
6. nouwwoj tsow ehq 'e, jettej ou si areh ('e
7. :srawsuv

MARCH 11

Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
4 Girls' Basketball State Quarter Finals. GO SPARTANS!	5 241 Anniversary of the Boston Massacre	6 The Beatles released "Let it Be" in the UK in 1970.	7 Guitar at Austin Grill 5:00 pm	8 English Writing SOLS	9 English Writing SOLS	10 English Writing SOLS
11 Indoor Track Nationals in New York City	12 Happy 63rd birthday to James Taylor!	13 Daylight Saving Starts--SPRING forward!	14 Soccer Game vs Stonebridge 6:00 pm	15 LAX Game vs Hayfield 5:30 pm	16 Soccer Game vs Stuart 6:00 pm	17 St. Patrick's Day!