



The RAVEN

October 1, 2010 Volume 45 Number 2
West Springfield High School 6100 Rolling Road Springfield, Virginia 22152

Murder stuns community

Local man shot, killed over speed hump disagreement

By Sam Perlestein
Features Editor

Little kids play in neighborhood yards, running into the street; cars speed by, oblivious to the children. Perfect conditions to install a speed hump in the neighborhood.

Stephen Carr thought that and he petitioned the County to put cement hump to slow traffic down on Fieldmaster Drive. But one neighbor, who lived around the corner from Carr, disagreed. And Carr lost his life because of that disagreement.

Two weeks ago, David Patton, who lives in the neighborhood, went to Carr's house and shot him dead in his home.

"It's completely irrational to get angry over a speed hump," said sophomore Carrie Wogaman, who lived across the street from Carr and heard the screams the night Carr was murdered. "The traffic committee did a study and said that it was needed and I don't think we need to argue with that."

People living in the Fieldmaster area had been honking at Carr's house ever since Carr petitioned for the speed hump and fed Patton's anger.

See "Murder" on Page 5.



Danielle Mazzuchi

Honoring the fallen

A young boy and a bagpiper lead the parade remembering the victims at the conclusion of the 9th Annual Arlington Police, Fire and Sheriff 9-11 Memorial 5K run at the Pentagon.

We feel pretty, oh so pretty!

Students and faculty work together to put new face on an old campus

By Sam Goldwasser
Managing Editor

On most Saturdays, the school stands empty, silent and untouched, but on Beautification Day students and faculty swarm the school, ready to work—and work hard.

Beautification Day is the one Saturday every fall that students and faculty work together, side-by-side, to maintain, and "beautify," the school grounds.

"All the hard work we put in on Beautification Day really paid off, the school actually does look so much better," said senior Jaemin Yoo. "There's so much less debris and everything is neat and clean."

Besides making the school pretty, Beautification Day gives the students the unique experience of seeing—and working with—their teachers outside of the classroom.

"It was cool to see that teachers are so dedicated to the school that they would come in on a Saturday and actually do work. It was awesome," said senior Kristen Halverson.

Students and faculty worked to clean up Spartan Park and even Physics teacher Ed Linz's garden, which resides outside his basement classroom. There were also a few parent vol-

unteers who worked at planting new flowers and navigating backhoes. Also, as always, Biology teacher Beth Jewell's Japanese Garden was buzzing with students, working to build and maintain the unique place.

Volunteers knew they would have to work hard. They didn't just pick up trash and sticks; some students even hauled giant tree limbs across the school grounds.

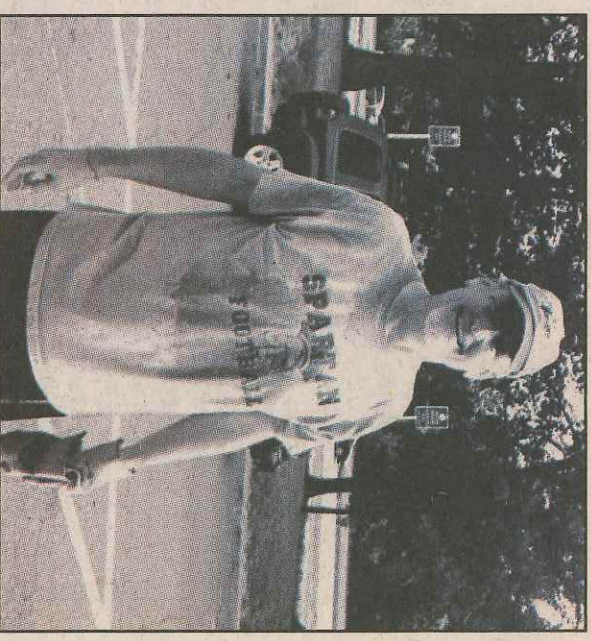
"It was surprisingly a lot of physical labor. I actually got sweaty," said Yoo.

Beautification Day is a day full of opportunities, not only does the school benefit, but students are able to get service hours for a myriad of classes and honor societies.

"Community service is important. It's nice to get hours, but I wasn't really concentrating on that," said senior Vicki Knabe.

Students, teachers, and parent volunteers, grabbed shovels, hauled wheelbarrows, and watered plants in an effort to give our campus—built in 1966—a fresh new look.

"Beautification Day is a great way to give back to our school. Instead of complaining about how are school looks, get out there and give back," said Knabe.



Sam Goldwasser
Principal Paul Wardinski gets to work on Beautification Day.

Griffin finds 2nd time's a charm.



Should Juniors be allowed to graduate?



I'm just stuck on you!



iPods are no crime in our Spartan Time

With every new school year, come new changes. Most adjustments are for the better, but there are some for the worse.

We have a few new positive alterations that have been installed for this school year, including new attendance policies, senior privileges such as a lunch line, and additional changes that have been made to all different aspects of the school.

Editorial

One important change made this school year is the new privileges during the A/B honor roll Spartan time, provided for the qualified students in the cafeteria.

"This incentive is basically the same as last year, except we will have a mobile lab available for the students to use, a cafeteria line open, the students can use their iPods, and like last year, the TVs

will be on," said Assistant Principal Richard Griffin.

The Student Rights and Responsibilities states that all electronics should not be on or used during the school day, causing some confusion about how iPods can be allowed.

"We can alter the SR&R whenever we want to," said Griffin. "The student being able to use their iPod is just an incentive for them to come to the cafeteria."

Although not popular in the past years, the admin-

istration hopes that these new additions will prompt the A/B honor roll students to go to the cafeteria and free up space in the classroom.

"I went once my freshman year and no one was there, so I never went back," said junior Emily Nagel.

The administration is pushing to



Thomas Athle

Only students who are on the A/B honor roll are allowed to go into the cafeteria to either work or just hang out and talk with friends. A lunch line is open so they can go and get food if they are hungry.

make this reward more attractive to the students, and would like to see more participation. They are looking to have the students who really need help from the teachers to have

more personal time with the teachers during Spartan Time. So, if you make the A/B honor roll, we at the Oracle personally advise you update your iPod with benefits.

100 big ones for student athletes

Jocks are now required to pay a fee to play their desired sports

By Kyle Rushton

Staff Writer

High school sports are getting too expensive. Equipment, spirit wear, and uniforms are expensive enough, and now a new policy that every athlete involved in a sport pays \$100 per season has been instigated.

Personally, I feel this is unfair to both the athletes and the parents of the athletes.

Most parents will pay the fee for each season their child is involved, placing a burden on them financially. Families with financial issues can apply for the federal program in order to receive benefits and to be waived.

However, other parents will require their son or daughter to pay the fee themselves. Some athletes, those who don't have enough money or don't think the fee is worth it, will be discouraged from playing the sport.

What happened to Fairfax County enforcing physical activity for sixty minutes per day? The new fee to play sports could deter athletes from being involved.

Athletic talent could also be lost due to the fee, and an athlete that no longer plays in high school could very well lose the interest of colleges for an athletic scholarship.

Though every athlete is required to pay the same fee, not every athlete is guaranteed playing time. Therefore, some athletes are benefiting more than others.

This policy is part of a contribution to the new budget system, where the money collected from the fees will support the student activities and athletics program. While all athletes are required to pay the \$100 fee, clubs and other activities are not. The money paid by the athletes will be used to support activities that are not required to pay.

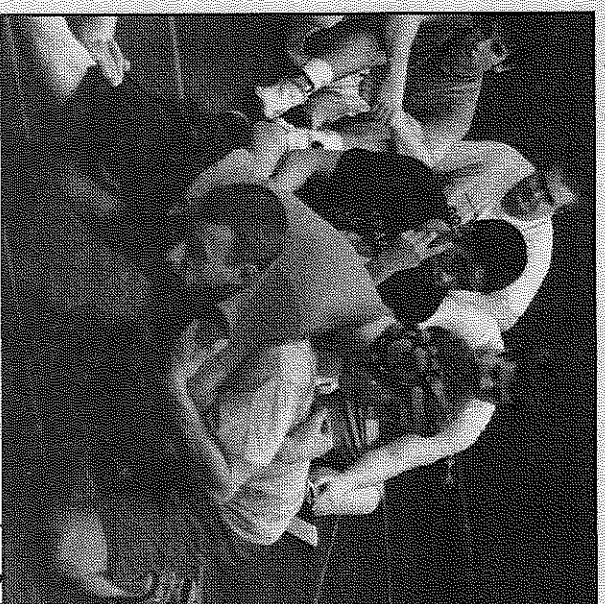
For example, an athlete who plays football, basketball, and baseball will end up paying \$300 by the end of the year, not including personal equipment and other expenses. The \$300 that the athlete has paid will be used towards the ac-



Jeremy Davis

Junior Jordan Miller sinks a 3-point shot at home against Robinson to help the Spartans take home a win. This year Miller won't have that chance unless she pays to play.

"Some athletes, who don't have enough money or don't think the fee is worth it, will be discouraged from playing the sport."



Jeremy Davis

Senior Mark Regan is having fun at wrestling practice with some friends. This year they all have to pay to wrestle.

activities of other students, such as marching band, that are not required to pay the fee. While it may help the county, the new fee of \$100 per season does not help families suffering in the weak economy.

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The Oracle is a student-run publication designed to inform and entertain the West Springfield High School community. We publish articles written with as little reporter bias as possible. Opinion is expressed in Viewpoint, Forum and ETC., and in reviews and signed columns. Editorials represent the opinion of at least two-thirds of the staff and do not reflect the views of the adviser, the administration or the Fairfax County Public Schools. The Oracle reserves the right to reject advertising deemed inappropriate. Signed letters to the editor and will be considered for publication, but could be edited for grammar, spelling and space.

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Special privileges both excite and disappoint class of '11

By Lee Gleason
Sports Editor

Patience is a virtue... unless you're a senior.

With senior year comes Senioritis, senior parking spots, senior skip days, and now, senior lunch lines.

The senior lunch line besides the senior parking spot is far and away one of the greatest senior privileges this year. It's a great feeling walking to lunch a bit late and knowing there won't be any line to wait in.

The new senior lunch line easily cancels out the debacle that we call our orange/blue senior rail.

Not only does the lunch line benefit those seniors who buy school lunch, but it benefits those who bring a sack lunch as well.

Being a sack lunch carrier pretty much every day, I find it way less of an emotional scar to have the people at my lunch table who buy lunch spend 2 minutes in the lunch line instead of the 15 minutes it took to wait in the past simply because it spares me from having to spend 10 minutes eating my lunch alone.



Seniors stand in line at the newly proclaimed "Seniors Only Line," in the cafeteria. The seniors fully appreciate their privilege to a line specifically for them, since they spent the past three years waiting in lines to purchase their lunches, leaving brown-bag people to eat alone.

Which brings me to our other senior privileges. It is almost comical to call a three minute early dismissal a privilege.

Leaving three minutes early on Fridays is barely enough time to even get to the lockers, and it seems as though each year the time to leave early gets less and less. 2009 seniors got to leave ten minutes early, 2010 seniors got to leave five minutes early and now 2011 seniors only get three.

Even though this year's senior privileges aren't as up to par as the class of 2011 would like, being the first class to have its own lunch line makes this year that much sweeter.

On the other hand, nothing exemplifies the top of the food chain more than a senior lunch line. When everyone else is waiting in ten to fifteen minute lunch lines the seniors are already sitting down enjoying their lunches. It is essential for the class of 2011 to make this year as enjoyable as possible.

Seniors have so much on their plate with college apps and capstone projects that the little time we get to relax is extremely important, even if it is just an extra ten minutes at lunch.

Budget cuts limit building renovations

By Peter Simonsen
Oracle Staff Writer

It can be an easy assertion to make that our school's budget is mismanaged: a 40 year old AC system that takes temperatures to the hot and cold extremes and crumbling restroom facilities make it seem obvious that funds are being applied poorly.

However what can be overlooked is the fact that school administration has few controls over the budget, and has to focus on improving academics before they can think about allocating money anywhere else. In an environment where a school's test scores and statistics are given enormous weight, there is simply no room for any sort of improvement to the building itself.

"Every year school expectations and accountability go up while school funding goes down," said Principal Paul War-dinski.

While the school is in dire need of renovation, the fact is that improving grades comes first and improving the building comes second. Blaming the administration for putting extra fees on sports and AP tests is unfair; the school is simply left with no other choice and needs these fees to supplement their ever-increasing expenses.

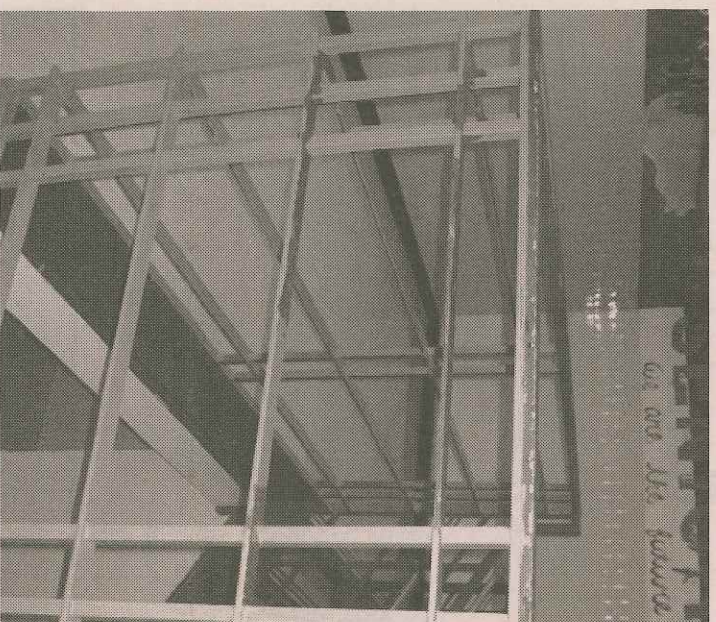
The administration has little to no control over what ex-

actly their funding can be spent on, and even extra money from grants carries very specific instructions on how it can be spent. While this doesn't mean that the entire budget is being appropriately applied, what it does mean is that school officials have very few options otherwise.

The more excessive parts of this school have been paid for by grants allotted for specific purchases, such as a sound system in the cafeteria, and more recently \$3,000 to pay for the Spartans Do Your Part campaign launched last year.

It is true that this school is in desperate need of a renovation; WS is on the list of Fairfax County schools that have gone the longest without a one, but that wouldn't improve the school in the short run like many students would like. The county is making long term decisions to complete entire renovation projects rather than kick a little money every which way for minor building improvements. Thus, even if our school wins the possible 2013 bond for renovation, the conditions for the next four years will worsen with torn up hallways and certainly trailer classrooms.

In the end, the school and the county remain caught in a whirlwind of decreasing funding and an environment where only our grades matter even if we're unhappy with conditions. Where preparing us for our future is more important than living in a broken down school for the present.



The newly "painted" Senior Rail adds to the already run-down look of some parts of the building.

Painful expectations

New attendance policies may restrict student drivers and prevent fake doctor's appointments

By Sara Blaylock
Managing Editor

As much as it kills me to face the fact that summer is over, it is more excruciatingly painful to deal with the new attendance rules: the very rules that remind me the season is dead.

School always makes me grit my teeth; these six letters of agony bring thoughts of homework, lectures and the worst part, being trapped along with roughly 2,300 other students who mutually don't want to be here.

The administration must not feel our pain; hence, the newer, stricter attendance rules this year. Maybe cracking down will work, but initially the changes bring anger and I feel even more ready to break free.

Keep in mind that we don't have a choice to go to school; the government compels us, so I know school isn't made to be fun. The three things a school cares about are education, safety and attendance.

This school, however, seems to have the biggest and best clever tricks to twist the minds of the Young. So, let's take a look at the "crime" and punishments we could face this year.

Seniors can have their parking passes taken away if they are tardy to class three times or more. While the thoughts of unfair punishment might arise, the administration argues that this penalty is totally reasonable because kids will strive to get to class on time and

This school however, seems to have the biggest and best tricks to twist the minds of the young. So let's take a look at the 'crime' and punishments we could face.

they will thrive.

Yet we are forgetting the main points—if a parking spot is taken away, this will make it tough to get to school and therefore the student could have even more trouble. It's potentially the start of a vicious cycle.

Another complaint I have is the blasted \$200 each student must pay for, what, a 5x11-foot piece of cement? But I digress.

Another new portion of the attendance demands that students must bring a doctor's note if they have an "appointment"; if they don't bring one when they return to school, even with a parental phone call, the absence will remain unexcused.

OK—so some students have probably faked a doctor's appointment in the past, but the fact of the matter is that this is another annoying ploy to keep us in school. So I suggest you make sure you ask your doc to write that note, and don't forget it.

Lastly, if a student is more than 15 min-



The Attendance Office works hard to make sure that every student is accounted for every day of the school year. With the addition of the new tardy and absence policies, they will be seeing a lot more doctor's notes—or issuing a lot more unexcused tardies.

utes late to class and it's an unexcused tardy, the "UNT" will turn into an unexcused absence.

Now, realize the situation here: Once a student receives an unexcused absence, teachers will record a "zero" in their grade books. Three of those unexcused absences means the student's parking pass will be taken away permanently.

No one wants to be stuck on this merry-go-round of problems and "corrections" that increased enforcement will surely bring.

Being on time, providing evidence of an appointment and considering possible loss of privileges are now all connected together. So, when you are tardy or absent, you risk losing a bundle of things rather than just an hour-and-a-half's worth of knowledge.

It's Time to Order

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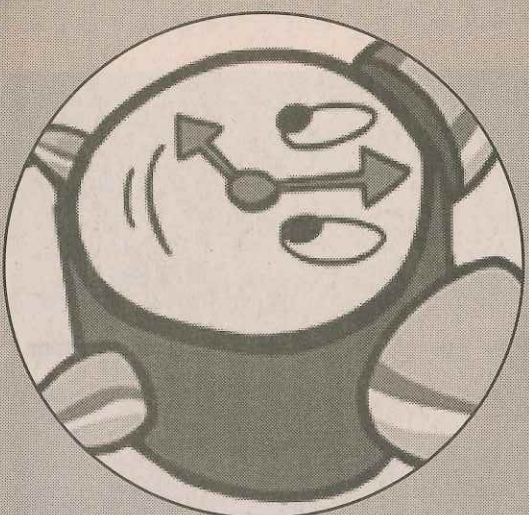
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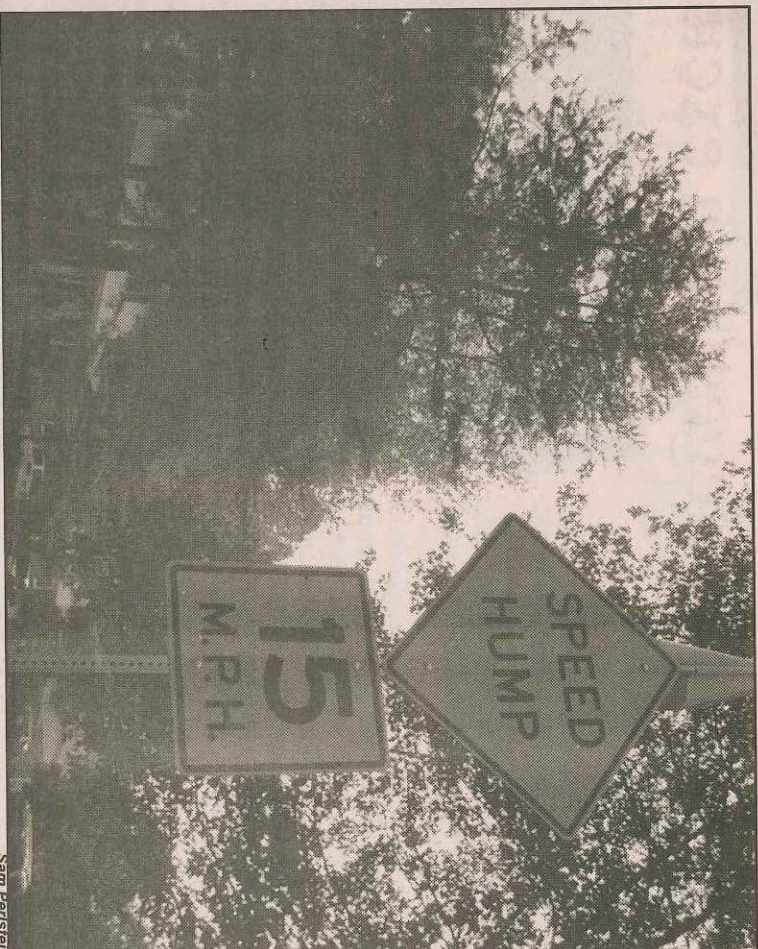


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Speed humps are designed to help slow drivers down and make the road safer for the local residents. When Stephen Carr put in the petition for the speed hump he was only trying to make his streets safer; however, his efforts apparently ended tragically.



Sam Persim

A neighborhood murder

Feature designed to save lives takes one

"Murder," from Page 1.

"There are children living on that street and people were going way too fast and it was dangerous," said Wogaman.

Sydenstricker is a busy street and cars speed through into the neighborhood as people rush home from a busy day of work, just ready for the comforts of home.

"We have a whole lot of people in a small space," said Driver's Ed teacher Craig Hamilton. "People get frustrated."

Frustration is a hard emotion to handle, and experts say the best thing to do is not to act on that anger. Patton, though, apparently

He went to Carr's house late at night with a gun in hand, allegedly tying up and then shooting Carr.

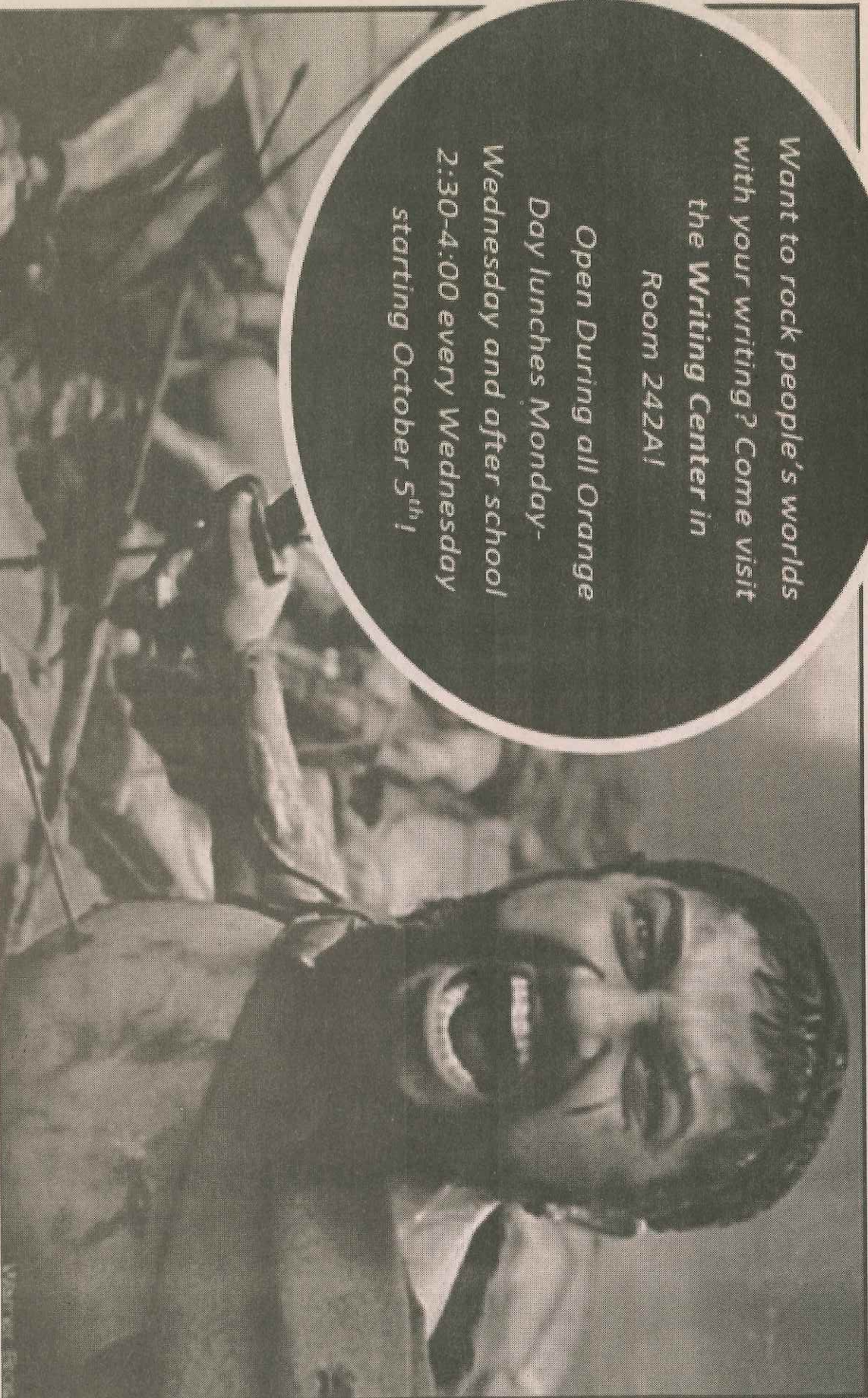
"It happened to the wrong guy," said Wogaman.

Carr's roommate came home and saw Carr's body and ran to get help. Patton was outside Carr's house with the murder weapon still in his hand when the police arrived.

Speed humps are there to keep people safe—unfortunately, one seems to have been the cause a death in a local neighborhood.

"If you drive safe and follow all rules and laws, nothing bad will happen and that speeds things up," said senior Jaymz Cervantez.

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New budget reality: 'pay to play' could be with us to stay

By Sara Lepley
Entertainment Editor

Spartan athletes may have to dig deep in their pockets—a whopping \$100, non-refundable price tag has been placed on every athlete, whether they play at the freshman, JV or Varsity level.

"You know you're going to have to pay," said freshman Cameron Woods. "Just look at our school." Woods is playing football this fall, one of the many who willingly fork over the cash.

Money is no object because "you love the game," said junior Riley Anderson, also a football player. For most athletes, nothing can keep them from doing what they love.

"Sure, kids will use it as an excuse," said senior James King. "But not run, especially cross country? No way."

Athletes with more serious financial issues will be exempt from the payment, so long as they are applicable for the reduced-meal program or federal free. Also, the fee will be charged after the roster is posted. Those who are out with injury, however, will have to suffer the "non-refundable" rule.

"It's unfair. If you get hurt, not only is your whole season ruined but you paid \$100," said sophomore Lindsey Mares. But the process of returning all the money would be unfeasible.

"It would be a nightmare," said

"It's unfair. If you get hurt...your whole season is ruined..."

—Lindsey Mares, sophomore

Betsy Fawcett, cheerleading coach and assistant director of student activities.

With other economic strains such as the boosted senior parking pass price and the AP exam fee, this year will be very expensive for smart, athletic seniors.

Fawcett pointed out that the "pay to play" plan was not the administration's idea.

"It's through the County," said Fawcett. The money goes directly to FCPS and all VHSL sports.

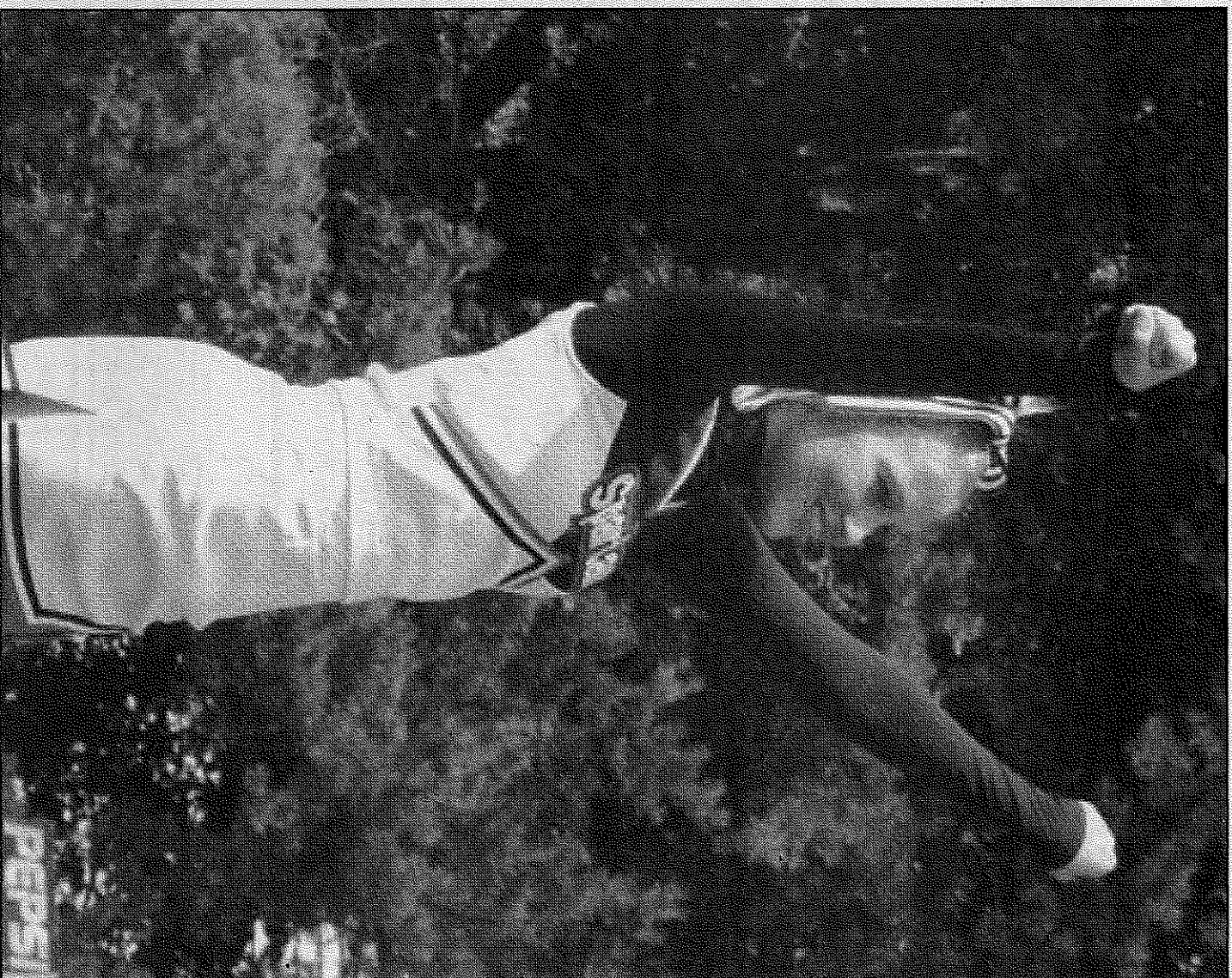
"In a perfect world, of course, I don't want families to have to pay," said Fawcett. "But unfortunately, we did not get a say in this."

The added costs do not affect the students so much as their parents.

"It's not fair to parents," said Mares. "They already have to pay for spirit wear and it all adds up."

This year will be especially hard for those who play year-round. Include \$60 worth of spirit wear per season, tack on \$100-\$300 for equipment. Now add a \$300 year-round fee, and you have one expensive athlete.

"It is a privilege to play, but a right to play for free," said junior Cody Jarrett.



Jenny Davs
The \$100 "pay to play" fee applies to all VHSL-sanctioned athletes, like freshman cheerleader Jenny Davs. The fee was imposed by FCPS to help raise funds in a tight budget year.

Golden Nails

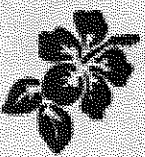
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AP fees mean big bucks for some

"AP" from Page 1.

Fortunately, enrollment in AP classes has not dropped noticeably, according to Principal Paul Wardinski. Most people are able to meet the new cost, and still find taking the AP exam worthwhile, since passing the exam has its advantages.

"It better prepares you for when you go to college," said Krieger.

Financially, taking the AP exam is still a bargain, even with the \$75 fee—provided you pass. Getting a 3, 4, or 5 on the exam can make you eligible to be placed out of a college class, saving thousands of dollars. The fee necessitates a more dedicated

commitment to passing the exam, which may even be a good thing.

"It makes sense because a lot of people take AP classes without anticipating how hard they will be," said junior Annie Sneed. "It makes it so they can't just back out if they get frustrated."

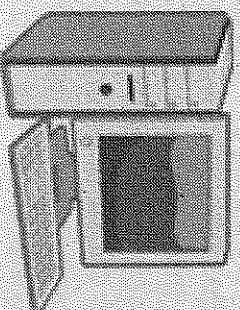
Maybe this budget cut, instead of dissuading people from taking challenging courses, might make students more focused and dedicated in the classroom.

In the end, while nobody is excited about the fee, most people think taking the AP exam is still a good choice.

"If I want to get credit, it is necessary," said senior Kazumi Ashton-Hughes.

The Oracle is going online!

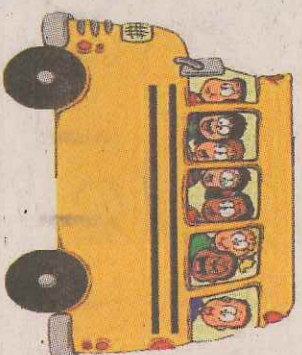
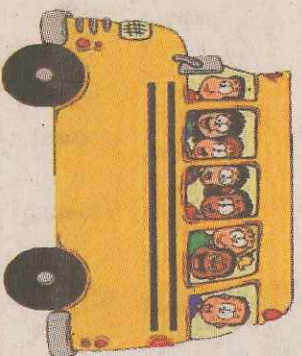
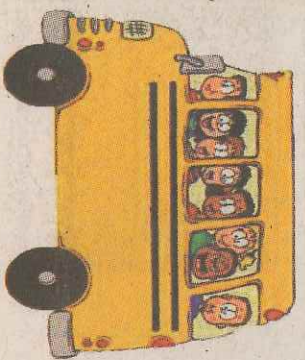
You can now read the school newspaper on the Web, along with special extras. Send the link to family and friends!



<http://theoracleonline.org>

Should senior year be

In response to the fact that they are 700 million dollars short this year, the state of Utah has left no stone unturned in search for budget cuts. In February, Utah Senator Chris Butters suggested the state get rid of the senior year of high school. He argued that senior year was not beneficial to students, who end up spending the year slacking off, and that the removal of senior year will save the state sixty million dollars. Senator Butters eventually revised his idea, by proposing senior year be optional for students. While Utah students currently have the option of graduating early, Butters hopes to offer incentives to students who take advantage of the opportunity. This proposal and law is causing controversy all throughout the nation between those who feel that senior year is a waste of time and those who think that senior year is preparation for heading out to college.



Diploma

awarded upon completion of 11th grade

By Sara Blaylock
Managing Editor

Senioritis – a communicable disease consisting of little to no desire to care about school; referring to seniors; in some cases others can catch this earlier and easily; high risk of the following symptoms: lack of interest, laziness, fatigue, heavy appetite, irritability and stress.

Having “senioritis” since freshman year makes me not so keen on the fact that students are going to school for a year that is not needed or wanted.

Senior year is supposed to be fun and hypothetically the best year in high school – the year everyone can’t stop talking about. But let’s keep one thing straight, teachers crack down on these fourth-year-returns because they know none of us want to be there, making the fun go away. Seniors are expected to not only be aware of, but know the school rules by heart. We are held at the highest standards in this school and you better not get too excited and have too much fun, because the school has control of contacting your future college and letting them know about the “too much fun” you really had.

Kids who are going to mess around senior year, not care, skip class, and come late are probably

the students who aren’t going to any prestigious college or maybe they are taking a gap year. Honestly, senior year is viewed as the “joke year” and do schools really want to be responsible for having a whole grade of “jokes”? Senior year is known for its blissful activities yet these could be a major distraction for those students who want to continue being students for the next four years.

Keep in mind that those few seniors who are actually serious about their work are taking five or more AP classes, which are essentially college credit, so would it not make sense to let those seniors go to college early and get the real head start they have already attempted to get?

Please disregard the fun times and traditions that keep a senior year alive because those “traditions,” like a picnic, a car wash, an all night party, can be done anywhere else at anytime.

I don’t know which is better, a year where schedules are filled with meaningless electives and easy classes to fluff up a resume and pass the time without too much stress, or a year where kids are stressed with Advanced Placement classes and college apps while being distracted from the other kids who aren’t as serious about school? You decide and ponder the fact, but perhaps a senior year is just not for everyone.

Optional nationwide?



Michelle Henry

THE COMMON APPLICATION

CELEBRATING
35
YEARS
1975-2010

By Lisa Williams
Oracle Editor

Senior year. It's the culmination of all thirteen years of public schooling we've been forced through. It's a year for relaxing before heading out into new communities and the real world. And where would we be without this year of preparation before we depart into the big bad world?

Deleting senior year only rushes children out of the home and out on their own. Frankly, I know very few teenagers who, after junior year, are mature enough to go off to college on their own.

It's like a kitten being pulled away from its mother too soon. It can't fend for itself. It can't even feed itself. It hasn't properly adapted to the world yet and it can't handle the. This is comparable to sending out children fresh off their junior year. They're young and still too immature for this. They're barely old enough to work and not be violating child labor laws. In college or in the wild, they would have to support themselves with much less help from Mommy and Daddy, and many children just aren't prepared for such responsibilities.

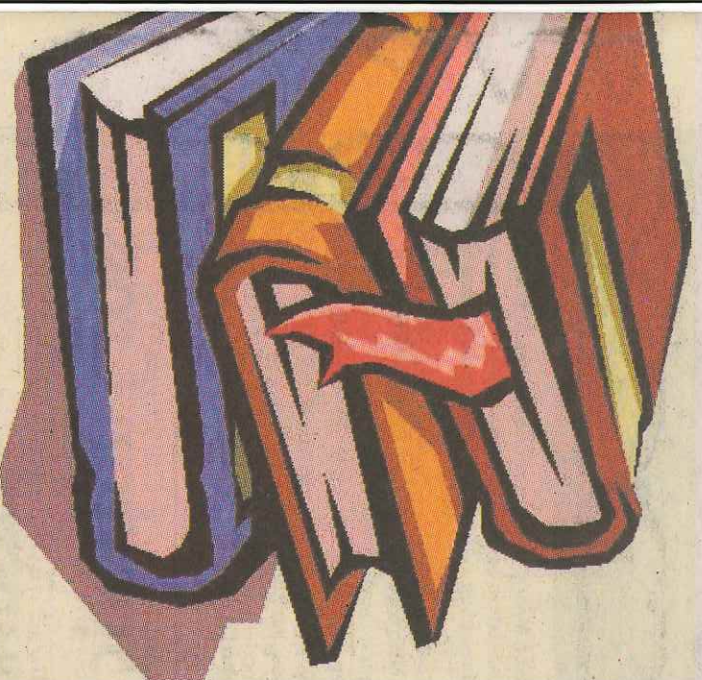
I personally want my year of relaxation. It's a year to decide what I want:

where I want to go to college, what I want to study in college, what I want for the rest of my life. Senior year allows for young adults to really formulate where they're going in life.

It's also the culmination of all the fun of high school. Students get to do all the stuff they've been waiting for since they were in eighth grade and drooled over the idea of high school. There's prom, All Night Grad Party, getting out of taking the PSAT, leaving school three minutes early, and finally, graduation. I understand that in theory all of these fun activities would be available to the juniors should there be no senior year, but waiting another year for the excitement makes it all the sweeter once you finally make it to the end.

Senior year is the light at the end of the tunnel. You still have to finish driving through the tunnel and getting ready to be out from under the shelter of the tunnel, but you can see the end.

All getting rid of senior year does is push all of the stress and necessities—taking a thousand standardized placement tests, applying to college, applying for scholarships, the works—back to junior year. It'll make junior year, rather than senior year, the joke year. It will create mass laziness and unparalleled indifference. Thus, the creation of "junioritis."



St. Michael's High School



—information compiled by Allie Colella and Karista Giordano

Thorson is 'Mastering' education

By Rita Zevallos

Oracle Staff Writer

For John Thorson, government teacher, the beginning of the school year did not only mark the return to WSHS but also to weekly night classes on the path to a doctorate in education.

This semester, he is taking three night classes at George Mason University. All three classes focus on the study of educator philosophy and different methods of education. "There's Education 800, which is called Ways of Knowing; it's basically a philosophy class," said Thorson. "Education 805 is a research class, affectionately named 'Prof on Parade.' Education 851 is teacher education."

According to Thorson, these classes are somewhat different to those he took while on the path to a master's degree.

"The expectations are different. There are very few assignments, but you have to read about 150 pages for each class," said Thorson.

It is mainly this demanding reading re-

quirement that makes taking three classes seem somewhat overwhelming.

"It is affecting my free time," said Thorson. "I didn't expect having to read four hundred pages. Next semester will be better."

Some have questioned why Thorson would take time out of his life when he already has an established job.

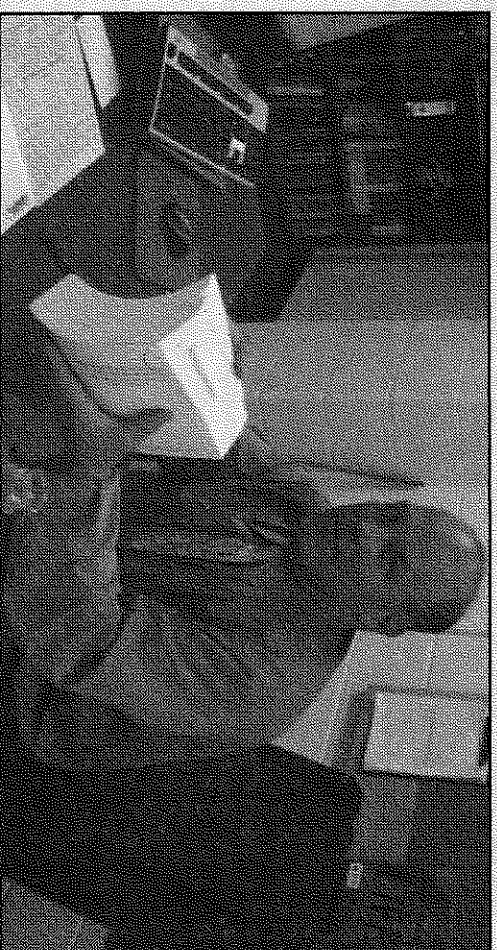
"Well, I'll get a raise," he said.

He hopes that having the doctorate will open up employment opportunities in teacher education and administration. People employed in these areas include principals, assistant principals, school district administrators, all county employees who specialize in training teachers, and college professors.

A Ph.D. in education can be extremely valuable.

"I found it very helpful because the focus is on policy and research, so you have advanced training in how to interpret statistics and test scores," said Dr. Jennifer Beach, who has her doctorate degree in English education.

Whether in the government classroom,



Rita Zevallos

Government and World Religions teacher John Thorson is excited to study for his teacher education class. "This is only one of the six textbooks I have, it's 1300 pages," said Thorson, leading a teacher workshop, or at a principal's desk, all the hard work pays off to make the doctorate student better as an educator.

"Being in grad school while teaching makes you stay up to date with all the best practices in teaching," said Beach. And, at the very least, it provides a new perspective on teaching practices.

"If makes you question what you believe," said Thorson.

Fresh face in biology classes

Students welcome new biology teacher, Erin Mears

By Nicole Brigham

Oracle Staff Writer

During that dreaded time of year when you take that first step into the science hallway and get a nice whiff of dissection preservative, it will no longer be coming from the room of Ann Wong, but rather from the classroom of a new edition to the Biology staff—Erin Mears.

Wong is now part of the school's tech program. While we will all miss our favorite Milken Award-winning teacher, Mears has come all the way from North Texas, where she taught at Coppell High School.

She is adjusting well to this new endeavor even though her time here has been short.

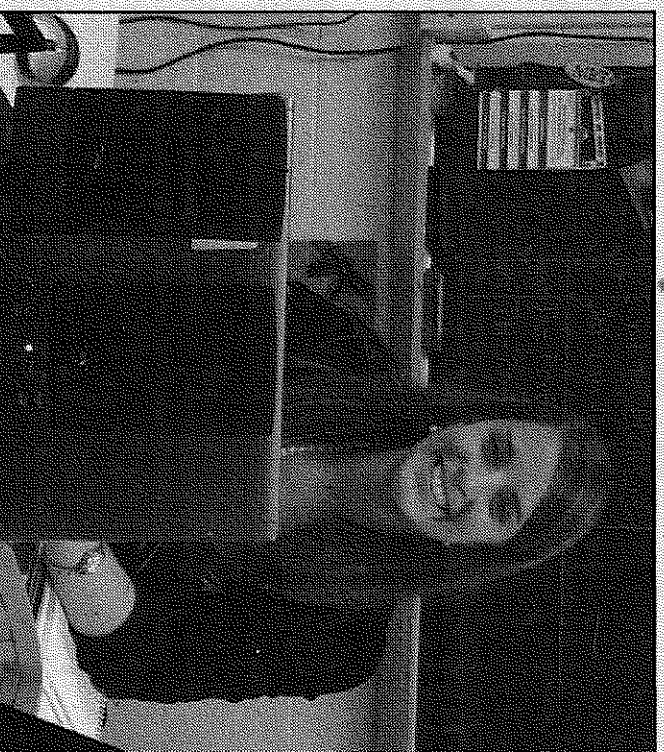
"The students and staff have been very friendly and helpful," said Mears.

Although the new surroundings may take a little getting used to, the job is one she is happily familiar with.

Mears has taught Biology for five years now, and knows what methods to use so students stay interested in the subject. She has always wanted to be a

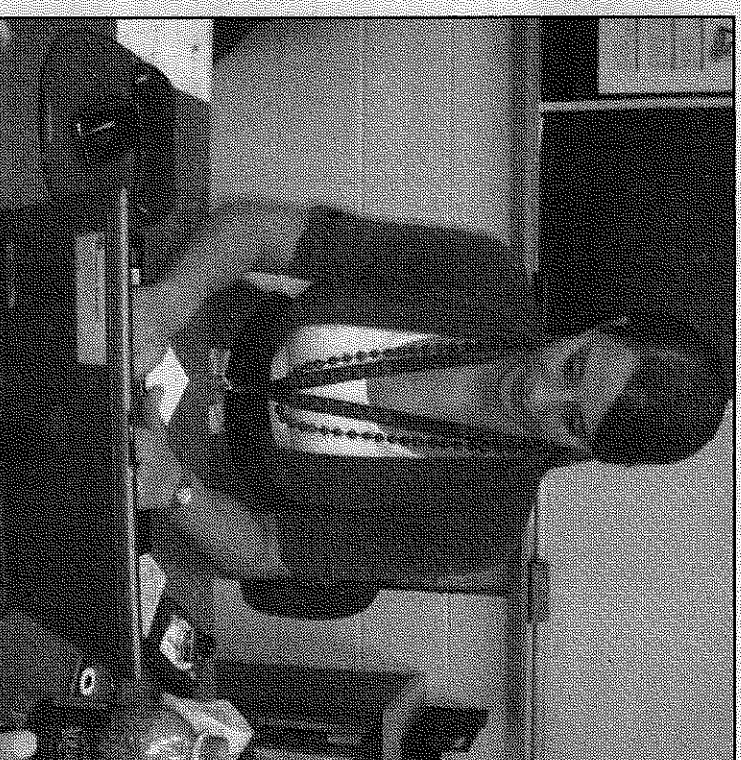
teacher and biology is her niche. She is interested in how things work and likes the fact that Biology allows her to pass along this interest to students. Working with students can be a

very stressful job, but it can also be very rewarding when students need someone to talk to or to look up to. "I like giving the students hands on activities," said Mears. "The students also have the opportunity



Nicole Brigham

Biology teacher Erin Mears is optimistic for the new school year. "West Springfield is smaller than Coppell, said Mears, "and is a little more laid back."



Nicole Brigham

Dedicated teacher, Erin Mears, spends her down time planning classes for the next day. Her transition to WS has been easier than expected. "The students and staff have been very friendly and helpful," said Mears.

to design their own experiments."

Working with students can be a very stressful job, but it can also be very rewarding when students need someone to talk to or to look up to.

"I like being a teacher so I can be a positive role model and interact with my students," said Mears. [WS] is a little more laid back."

Second time is a charm

Griffin steps in to guide the Class of 2011

By Kelsey Simpson

Oracle Staff Writer

Goodbye Mukai, Hello Griffin. The new school year brings a new administration for seniors. Richard Griffin, the class administrator for the class of 2010, has shifted from administering the graduated class, to this year's seniors, the class of 2011. Griffin is not new to the school, but since it is his first time administering this year's seniors, new challenges arise.

The task ahead for Griffin is an arduous one, as he is expected to know over 500 new faces. And with every new face comes a unique personality and a personal record, all of which Griffin hopes to become familiar with.

The challenge for Griffin is a daunting one, but he doesn't seem too worried.

"My personality allows me to meet the students," said Griffin. "One of the things I always tell them is that they have to get to know me."

Seniors agree with Griffin and would describe his personality as approachable.

"He's always around, so it's easy to come up and talk to him about anything," said se-

nior Mai-Vi Nguyen said.

Still, this situation seems a little reminiscent of freshman year; just without the small, dinky lockers, the crammed, noisy buses, and, well, all the other joys of being a freshman.

It is reminiscent that, the administrators, as well as the students, must make it a priority to get to know one another. Not knowing one another although does have its advantages.

"They all get to start with a clean slate," said Griffin.

Let's face it: Some of us could use a clean slate with our administrators.

It also helps that Griffin has experience with administering seniors, so he has an idea of what students are going through this year.

"He's a good administrator because he has so much experience," said Nguyen.

To the class of 2011, Griffin has high expectations and positive outlook for the upcoming year.

"My goals for the students are for each one to stay academically focused," said Griffin. "Have a good year, graduate, and have a good time—a time they won't forget."

Good Luck, Spartan Cross

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Weezer missed you

By Kelly Carlin

Oracle Editor

The word Weezer is just what it sounds like: a band that has risen to fame despite their truly nerdy roots.

On September 14, Los Angeles's Weezer released their eighth album "Hurley." The disc is the band's third new release in the past three years, ending a songwriting run that puts younger artists to shame.

On the new album, Weezer channels their inner (and outer) nerd with a cover featuring nothing but a picture of Jorge Garcia's character "Hurley," from the recently ended, massively popular drama "Lost." Despite their recent pop-orientated sound, on "Hurley," Weezer returns to the rock and roll sound that fans know and love.

From the time they burst onto the scene in 1992 to their present successful years, the band's sound has evolved many times throughout their career.

Since their self-titled "Blue Album," Weezer has gone from performing with a grunge sound, to a pop-punk sound, to a mostly pop

sound on 2009's "Raditude." With "Hurley," they commemorate their early years in the 1990s by paying homage to the tunes that made them famous.

The debut single and opening track "Memories" is a catchy number with lyrics that remind fans of the "Blue Album" days. Front man Rivers Cuomo wrote the track, which discusses the band's experiences up until this point, including everything from listening to techno songs on the tour bus to lying to journalists who were covering the band.

"Hurley" also features some familiar faces showcasing some not so familiar talents. A track titled "Hang On" features indie-nerd hero Michael Cera on backup vocals, while "Memories" includes chanting and screaming courtesy of Johnny Knoxville, Steve-O and the rest of the "Jackass" gang.

The late 2000s left many hardcore Weezer fans disappointed, but 2010 finally delivers. If "Raditude" was 2009's tribute to "Make Believe," "Hurley" echoes the moods of 2001's "Green Album" which pleased fans



NY Daily News

Weezer frontman Rivers Cuomo poses with Jorge Garcia, whose character in "Lost" is the namesake of Weezer's new album, "Hurley." with tracks that found the perfect harmony between pop and rock such as "Photograph" and "Island in the Sun."

Weezer is the band that brings nerdy Dungeons and Dragons fans hope for being what every person wishes they were, a rock star.

"Hurley," while different from the moods of their previous two albums, returns to what all true Weezer fans love them for: upbeat rock jams with smart lyrics worthy of any Vulcan.

Very Much Annoyance

Fans of other artists outraged upon witnessing Lady Gaga's dress and overwhelming victories

By Tiffany Clark
Entertainment Editor

Lady Gaga won everything. Well, not really, but that's what it seemed like to viewers of MTV's 2010 Video Music Awards.

The unique, relatively new artist, dressed head-to-toe in meat, won eight out of 13 nominations including Best Female Video, Best Pop Video and the most coveted award, Video of the Year, for "Bad Romance." Eminem, Florence + The Machine and 30 Seconds To Mars were also nominated, and while they may not have received the highest VMA honor, rest assured that none of them were left out of the winner's circle.

30 Seconds to Mars accepted the award for Best Rock Video for "Kings and Queens" and Florence + The Machine took Best Art Direction for "Dog Days are Over."

Besides providing a crowd-pleasing opening performance with surprise guest Rihanna for "Love the Way You Lie," Eminem also won Best Hip-Hop Video and Best Male Video for "Not Afraid" even though he wasn't there to accept them.

Of course, we can't forget about another notable winner who proves that a hair flip, a smile and subpar dancing skills can go a long way. Naturally, Justin Bieber won "Best New

Artist" and supplied a performance that inflicted every girl from age two to 62 with 'Bieber Fever.'

But awards weren't the only reason people tuned into MTV on September 12. Chelsea Handler was the first female host of the VMA since 1994. She was rude and crude and offensive and, if none of that bothers you, hilarious. She poked fun at Lindsay Lohan's stint in rehab, Lady Gaga's outrageous fashion choices, Bieber's lack of physical maturity, and "Jersey Shore's" grimy reputation for having multitudes of house guests.

Two of the most anticipated appearances were Taylor Swift and Kanye West. In "Innocent," a song about losing your way, Taylor Swift mentions that "32 is still growing up now/who you are is not what you did." And in addition to apologizing to Swift via Twitter before the show, West performed "Runaway" in which he teased 'scumbags' among others.

While not as intense and Swift and West, other artists did not fail to impress: including Usher, Drake, Linkin Park and a medley of "Beautiful Girls," "Airplanes," and "The Only Exception" featuring Bruno Mars, B.o.B, and Paramore.

While not everyone may have been impressed by the results, all in all, the VMA's were a success.



Carina Adly Mackenzie

Lady Gaga, winner of eight out of 13 VMA nominations, raised eyebrows with her outlandish dress made entirely of meat.

Long time rapper still doesn't get old for fans

Eminem recovers career and revives fanbase with new album, 'Recovery'

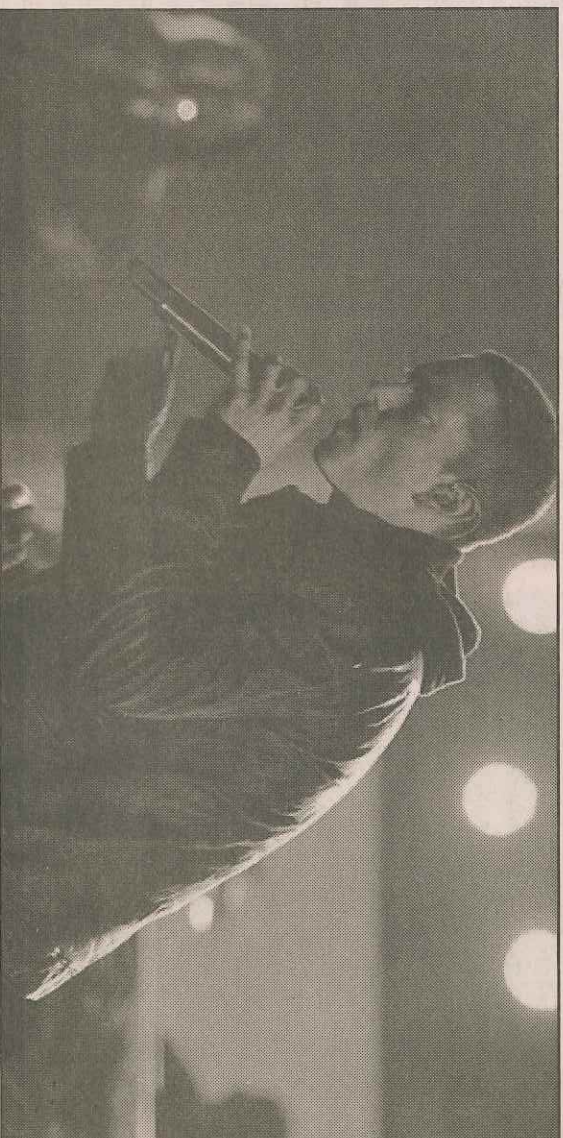
By Luis Lester
Sports Editor

He's back!

The rapper, who in the early 21st century took everybody by surprise with his hysterical lyrics and obscure sense of humor, has made a comeback into the rapping game with a bang.

Marshall Mathers, otherwise known as Eminem or Slim Shady, regained the love of his fans with his summer album release, "Recovery." The title of the album is appropriate to what's been going on in his rapping career as of late.

At the beginning of his career, Eminem had fans eating out of the palm of his hand with his enthusiasm and honesty. But for the past five or six years he's faded away from that comical side that he once portrayed himself to be and transformed into a dark and hateful rap-



MTV

Eminem made a huge comeback this year with the release of his new album "Recovery." He performed "Love the Way You Lie" at the VMA's and his hit song "Not Afraid" won Best Hip-Hop Video and Best Male Video.

"His music used to be so funny. It changed and his music was kind of scary." At the end of last year the artist released "Relapse," his first CD in three years which received less than satisfactory reviews from his critics and fans.

"It was just awful, it wasn't the same music he was making before. To be all excited and them so disappointed made me lose respect for him," said senior Haley Cook.

However, the new "Recovery" CD has received nothing but praise. It has sold over two million copies and features two #1 hit songs.

"It's vicious, you can't pick a favorite song, they're all good," said senior Kara Crennan.

To add on to Eminem's attempt to salvage his fan base, he will be going on tour all over the world. Eminem has recently performed in his home town of Detroit, and preformed the first concert ever at the new Yankee Stadium. He will be making a stop here at the nation's capital in November.

"I think he's going to come out with a lot of excitement, because it's going to be his first tour in a while," said Cook. "I think he's going to make it up to his fans by giving a really strong show."

New coach, new year, new expectations

By Lee Gleason
Sports Editor

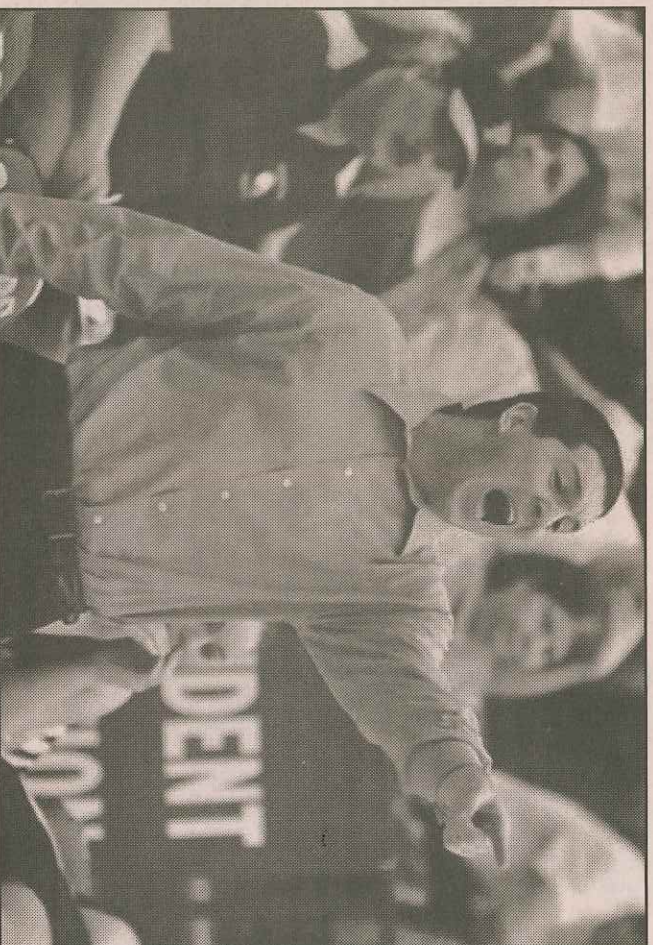
The retirement of long time head boys' basketball coach Dick Wickline made way for a new era beginning this winter.

The newly hired head coach, Jason Eldredge, brings a fire and passion for the game of basketball that has this year's team excited for the upcoming season. From their grueling offseason workouts to their intense open gym scrimmages, Coach Eldredge is displaying to his players that hard work and dedication will lead to a better result on the basketball court.

"I came in with a non-biased attitude," said Coach Eldredge. "The harder you work, the more you will succeed."

What has players and students so excited about this new acquisition is without question Coach Eldredge's past accomplishments. He is a two-time state champion as head coach at Freedom High School and he hopes to bring that kind of success to West Springfield as well.

"I want the school to be excited for this team," said Eldredge. "The kids in this school are spirited and as a whole care about



Courtesy of Jason Eldredge
Coach Jason Eldredge looks to bring the same effort and enthusiasm he used at Freedom to the boys basketball program in an effort to turn it around.

their sports teams."

It is safe to say that in the last few years

the boys' basketball team has not had nearly the amount of success that they would have

liked. Despite finishing last in the Patriot District for the last two years the combination of this year's talent and experience along with a new basketball coach has already brought in a host of new players and a new positive attitude.

"I want to create an environment that has us [looking] forward to Tuesday and Friday nights," said Eldredge.

At last year's tryouts only about 20 players tried out for the Varsity team. There are already about 40 players attending the basketball team's off season workouts. The basketball team's hard work is on display on a daily basis. They can be seen running stadiums over and over again with Coach Eldredge following closely behind iPod in hand and screaming words of encouragement. Coach Eldredge's participation in the offseason workouts with his players makes it obvious to his team the dedication and devotion he already has to this program.

"Coach Eldredge is going to put us in the right direction," said senior shooting guard Divya Goel. "He brings his experience from Freedom and that will help us win a lot of games."

MLB playoff preview

By Jimmy McMahon
Sports Editor

It's October, and for sports fans, it can only mean one thing.

It's time for the MLB playoffs. Unlike years past, 2010 is the year where powerhouse teams like the Yankees are just fighting to stay alive. Teams like the Tampa Bay Rays who have waited for years for the opportunity to shine are finally getting their chance.

One of the biggest stories of the year is emerging star Joey Votto of the Cincinnati Reds. The 2010 All-Star is batting .323 and under his leadership the Reds look to be serious contenders for the first time in years. Despite playing well this year, the Reds have failed to change

the minds of most baseball fans. "I think the Rays could do it," said sophomore Lake Howard. "But I think the Rangers could do some upsetting."

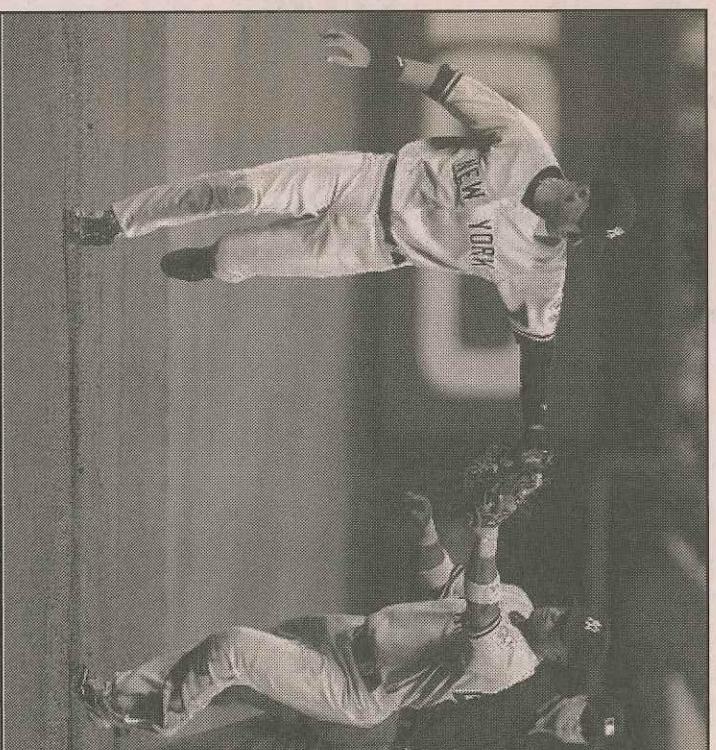
The Rangers are definitely a team to keep an eye on as the playoffs get under way. All-Star Josh Hamilton leads the way with a tremendous .361 batting average. The Rangers have been bringing in win after win down the final stretch of the regular season.

Unfortunately, optimistic Washington fans watched as the Nationals continued to struggle throughout the season. Although Stephen Strasburg was the supposed "savior" of the franchise, fans watched in disbelief as the star injured his arm and will now be out twelve to eighteen months recovering from

Tommy John surgery, a surgery where a ligament from another part of the body is used to replace an injured one in the elbow. One shining ray of light in the dark cave that is the Nationals season is catcher Ivan Rodriguez.

Even though baseball used to be the sport to watch in October, a new generation that is used to instant gratification doesn't have the patience required to watch baseball. Instead, kids are more into the fast paced hard-hitting game of football during the Fall. In the Northern Virginia area, local fans are more interested in watching new coach Mike Shanahan's offense fall into place.

"Baseball? What's baseball?" said junior Sean Irvine. "I'm rooting for my Steelers right now!"



The World Series defending champs, the New York Yankees, look to repeat in this year's playoff series.

Going for the fifth

By Allie Colella
Forum Editor

Holding a district championship title four years in a row is like walking around with a huge target on your back.

Over the past few years, the West Springfield Varsity Cheerleading team has become the team to beat; a pressure that has only increased as the years go by. For those who joined Varsity this year, the level of intensity is drastically different from the lower levels.

"[The pace] is a 1,000 miles an hour, but it is really pushing us to do better," said new varsity member, sophomore Val Rosenau.

It isn't just the legacy of the district titles adding stress. Last year twelve seniors left, leaving big shoes to fill.

"The seniors we lost brought a lot to the team," said senior Erin Bradley. "We had people last year to look up to and now we are the people to look up to."

"[The pace] is a 1,000 miles an hour, but it is really pushing us to do better,"

—Val Rosenau,
sophomore

In terms of numbers, last year's team was cut in half, leaving space for newcomers, including four freshmen. However, the team has experienced turnover years before, and has still gone on to win Districts during those years. The returning members dedicated their time and energy to help the new girls, who rose to the challenge and worked tirelessly to catch up.

Although the biggest thing on the team's mind is getting ready for Districts, they are also anticipating a shorter year. Due to budget cuts, they will no longer cheer during the winter season; we lose them at basketball games and they lose valuable practice time. The change is bittersweet.

"As seniors, it's kind of nice to have a break. We're so tired after competitions, but it will be sad because our season is so short," said senior captain Erika Nielsen.

For the younger girls who have a few more seasons of cheer ahead of them, the long term effects can be daunting, a long off-season without practice means more time spent in the fall reviewing. But they will also have the chance to expand their horizons during the winter months, and will no doubt be fresh and ready for the new season.

While next year will most likely bring its own changes, the team has coped quite well with the current changes and their chances at Districts look better than ever.

"I'm not worried," said Coach Betsy Fawcett.



Allie Colella
The Varsity cheerleading squad practices in the Auxiliary Gym after school to prepare for the Varsity football games. The cheerleaders look to continue their dominance in the Patriot District as they go for their 5th straight district title.

They got the magic stick

By Kyle Rushton
Oracle Staff Writer

The Varsity Field Hockey team found victory "Under the Lights."

First place medals were presented to the team at a tournament on September 11. The team participated in the "Under the Lights" tournament along with eight other high school teams, including West Potomac, Lee, Fairfax, Stuart, Falls Church, Woodbridge, Hylton, and Garfield.

The tournament was played at Lee High School in Franconia. The WS team played a total of four games, two games on Friday and two games on Saturday. The Spartans also won a different tournament last year, the "Bull Dog" tournament, and this was their first year playing in the "Under the Lights" tournament. Nonetheless, they made a great impression among the other teams in the district and the region.

After winning the early games and working hard throughout the tournament, WS defeated Lee in the championship game on Saturday. The final score was 1-0, with the winning goal made by captain and senior Liz Keast. Early in the game, she scored on a strike against the Lee goalie. In the first game, the

Spartans crushed Garfield 8-0. The following game was played against Fairfax, which ended in a tie, 1-1. The third game played by WS was against West Potomac, resulting in a 2-1 win. Finally, the Spartans earned their way to the championship game against Lee, and it resulted in glory.

"It was not a very hard game, but they had one good player and we put Sara Blaylock on her," said Head Coach Rosie Pannoni.

Katie Leonard, a senior who has been playing field hockey since her freshman year, suffered a drastic injury during the tournament. During the last four minutes of the championship game, Leonard was hit in the eye and later received seven stitches.

"An opposing teammate lifted the ball into my eye and it just started bleeding," said Leonard. "Sara Blaylock came over and tried to stop the bleeding."

According to Pannoni, Fairfax High School was the most challenging of the teams played by the Spartans in the tournament.

Fairfax had recently defeated Woodson High School in a regular season game, and Woodson is expected to be one of the top teams in the region.

"The Fairfax game was intense," said junior Alma DeMarri, "but it was a blast."



Mag Demco

The field hockey team poses with their first place medals after winning the championship in the "Under the Lights" tournament.

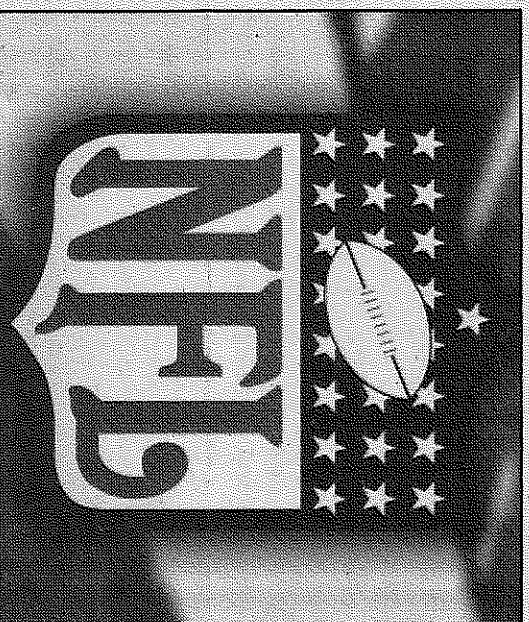
2010 NFL season brings new contenders

By Jake Trump

Viewpoint Editor

Among all of the buzz and rumors of the fall season, the NFL always seems to be the talk of the town. Every day, without fail, you will always seem to find a group of students talking about who got hurt, who got traded or who broke out and had a big game. This season, there have been many big trades and surprising stories that have shown that the 2010-2011 NFL season will be promising.

Despite not making it to the Super Bowl last year, the New York Jets seem to be the team to beat. They have the returning number one defense in the league and under second year head coach Rex Ryan the team is constantly improving on both sides of the ball. During the offseason, the team added a few superstars to give some fire power on both offense and defense, such as RB L'Damian Tomlinson, CB Antonio Cromartie, and DE Jason Taylor. The team was designated this year to be the subject of HBO's weekly TV series "Hard Knocks." The show gave insight into the Jets' offseason



Waltchreiner

The 2010 NFL season from a fan aspect won't disappoint.

Offense takes steps in different direction

By Austin Kaminski

Sports Editor

Head-smashing, gut-wrenching, smash-mouth run-it-down-your-throat, hit-you-in-the-mouth football.

This is the style of football the Spartans will look to play this year after being a predominantly passing team past years. Spartan fans may have gotten used to the air-it-out-offense run by Peter Lalich and Bryn Renner the last few years, but this year the Spartans will look to control the clock better by running and playing solid defense.

In their first game against Edison, the Spartans ran for over 300 yards led by senior Moeq Kamara and sophomore Jonathan Dunn.

This year, the Spartans were devastated by the losses of graduation and have several sophomores playing significant minutes on varsity.

With such a young team, it would be expected that there would be some growing pains at first as the younger players adapted to the faster pace of varsity.

However, in the first game against Edison the Spartans inexperience did not show as they pulled off the upset, beating the Eagles 29-14.

The next game against heavily favored Oaktown, the Spartans lost a heartbreaker 14 to 13. After a long touchdown run by Jonathan Dunn, WS attempted a two point conversion that would have taken the lead. But kick holder Zach Hart was stopped just inches shy of the goal line and Oaktown was able to run out the clock.

While the move did not end up working,

"If we play up to our potential, we could definitely contend in the district."
—Holt Barrineau, senior

one can't help but respect coach J.T. Biddison for going for the win.

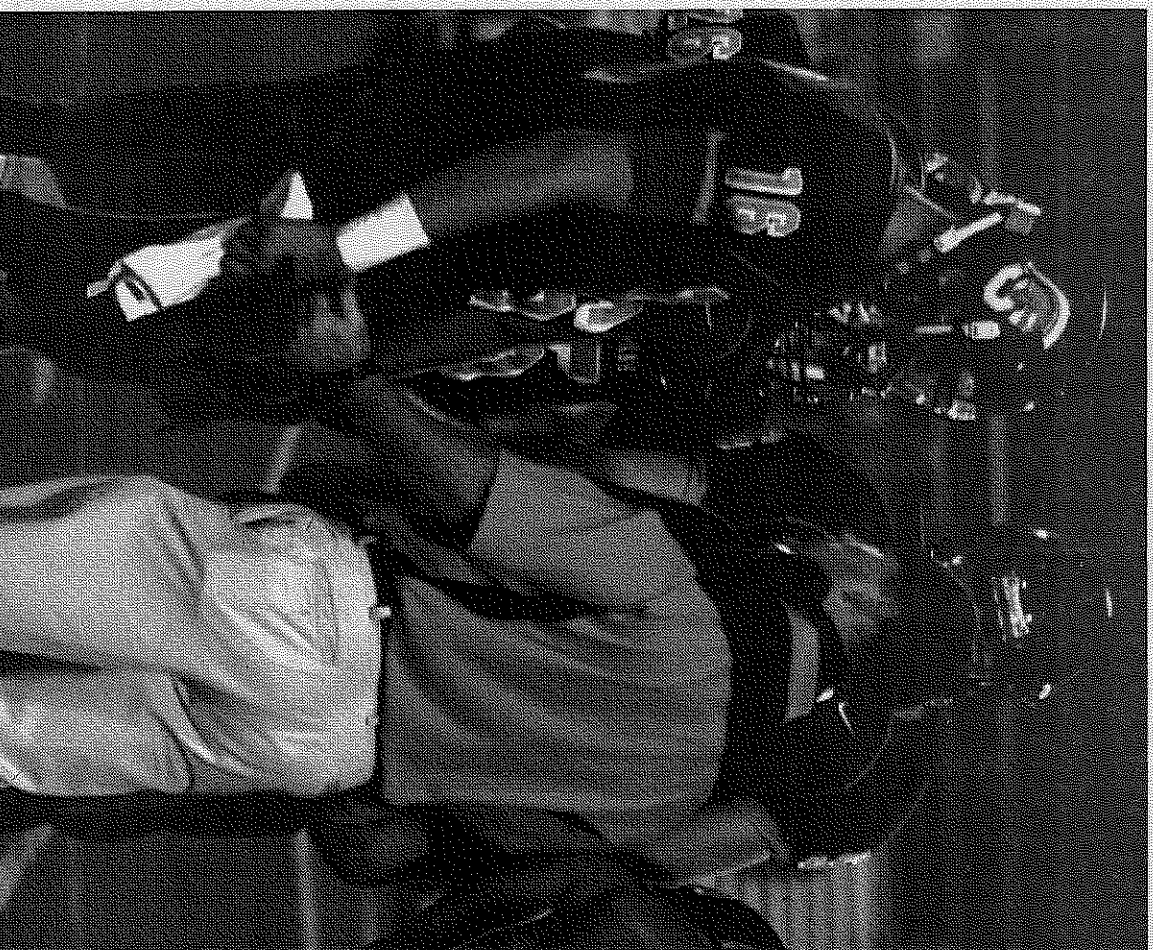
"Obviously, I was disappointed that we didn't make it," said junior linebacker Cody Henson. "But I think it was the right move, considering we were supposed to lose by a lot."

With the loss of 37 seniors, it is not a surprise that teams would underestimate the Spartans. Even the Washington Post gave the team a lowly one star rating in their football preview, the only team in the district to get such a grade.

"We use it as motivation," said senior Holt Barrineau. "I think it helps us become more motivated."

Picked to finish last in the district, Spartans went against their odds and proved to be an aggressive pack that is not afraid of higher ranked teams. They will look to earn a post season bid after barely missing out last season.

"If we play up to our potential, we could definitely contend in the district" said Barrineau.



Jeremy Davis

Coach JT Biddison directs the offense with the game plan during a time out.

CARE FOR a PAWDICURE?

LATELY TAKING CARE OF YOUR PETS HAS BEEN TAKEN TO THE EXTREME

By Maria Saptura
ETC Editor

I'm positive that the word "pawdicure" can make everyone smile inside.

Pets seem to be getting the V.I.P. (very important pet) treatment lately including spa treatments, bakeries with personalized cakes, and "bark" mitzvahs.

All of these things sound so absurd and comical for everyone who hears about it. For example, "Happy Tail Ale," an alcohol-free drink made just for dogs. It sounds like one of those products that is a spoof of an already existing product or one that should be sold for only \$19.95, but wait, if you call now we'll throw in a free order of Gimzu Knives.

Now, I understand that dog is man's best friend (along with other pets too!), but when you send your pet to a spa to "relax" from all that "hard work" they've been doing, doesn't

that cross some sort of line?

I do think however that your pet deserves some type of pampering every now and then, like a new toy or a bath, maybe even a bacon and cheddar bone (tasty).

Some of the products on the market are quite humorous, such as dog treats shaped as squirrels or some shaped like mailmen. But creating a birthday cake with your pet's picture on it is pushing it.

Simply put, pets are not children, or human for that matter, so we should not be dressing them up with pretty bows and crazy little outfits as if they are human. I draw the line at studded collars.

In the end, all our pets' want is love and affection from you, and the crazy stuff you do or don't buy for them won't matter as long as you give them love (and a treat now and then). Now doesn't that make you feel all warm and fuzzy inside?



People get a little crazy and treat their pups like royalty. Here a bulldog is in a ballerina outfit.

Maybe we should all just agree to disagree about our pets being spoiled but I think we would all see eye to eye that dog-a-dog yoga or a pet Jacuzzi, is taking it a few tail-wags too far.

Bumper Stickers Represent

When you are driving down the road, you can almost always expect to see a car absolutely plastered with bumper stickers ranging anywhere from promoting political campaigns to advertising a place visited or a place to eat. Some of these bumper stickers are actually quite hysterical, while others sometimes can offend a certain person or group of people.

Honestly, I personally love seeing backs of cars loaded with all kinds of bumper stickers that have different slogans or sayings from different places. Some can be a little bit vulgar, degrading, and sometimes hurtful, but they aren't meant to upset the person driving behind them, just merely to amuse them.

In all reality, bumper stickers are just another way to openly express ourselves and

our beliefs in any form or type of language we like. Think of it sort of like "badazzling" the back bumper of your car with just the right kind of things you want. Bumper stickers show character, personality, and views on certain issues.

The best example is the decals that the student athletes, actors, singers, band members and any other participant of and after school activity slaps on the back window of their cars. Their biggest reason? Pride.

All of the students who decide to use one of these bumper stickers do so because they are proud to be who they are and do what they do. That's really all bumper stickers show, they're a profound way to describe who a person is.

- Jake Trump, Viewpoint Editor



Pictures taken by Summer Cleavan

OCTOBER 10

Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
1 Second Oracle of the year. Check out our new Oracle Online: theoracleonline.org	2 Spartanfest! Come and enjoy the fun and crafts. Varsity football @ TC Williams 1:00 PM	3 Gwen Stefani turns 42!	4 Special Spartan Time schedule Field Hockey @ South County 6:15 PM	5 Mr. Spartan 7:00 PM Cross Country vs. Annadale, South County, Lee 5:00 PM	6 YUnity meeting 2:30 PM Hispanic Heritage Club in room 241 2:30 PM	7 Field Hockey @ Lake Braddock 6:15 AM Volleyball @ Annadale 5:00 PM
8 Homecoming Parade 4:00 PM Varsity Football vs. South County 7:00 PM	9 Homecoming Dance 8:00 PM-11:00 PM	10 Google bought YouTube.com for \$1.6 billion in 2006	11 Columbus Day!	12 Field Hockey @ West Potomac 6:15 Sketch and Photo Trip to Lurray Caverns 7:30 AM-2:00 PM	13 Chorus Concert 7:30 PM PSAT Day 7:30 AM-11:10 AM	14 Dance Team Try-outs 3:00 PM-7:00 PM