



The

RAACORNER

October 20, 2010 Volume 45 Number 3

West Springfield High School

6100 Rolling Road

Springfield, Virginia

22152

What happens at WS stays at WS Students show school spirit at the Vegas-themed Homecoming

By Kelly Carlin
Oracle Editor

Winner, winner—chicken dinner.

This year's Homecoming dance brought all kinds of new thrills with its "Ocean's 11" theme, providing students with a chance to have a good time. Playing card decorations, Blackjack tables and Vegas-themed tickets all contributed to a night that transported students from Springfield to Sin City.



Andy Gholson

Students show school spirit at the Homecoming football game by body-painting in blue and orange. The Spartans won over South County in a 4th-quarter nailbiter.

The dance wasn't the exciting thing about the annual celebration. Spirit Week offered themed days that were also relevant, playing off the names of popular Las Vegas hotels. And while the new Spirit Days were popular a few students missed their chance to be odd.

"I missed Wacky Tacky Day," said junior Isabelle White, who enjoys participating in the festive week. Quite a few students, however, sported togas instead, in a nod to being different.

In another difference this year, the celebrations were extended because of weather. In last Wednesday's Powder Puff games, the seniors and sophomores emerged victorious.

The Mr. Spartan competition let participants show off their talents, too. Senior contestants performed everything from movie scenes to popular song mash-ups, but all the acts had one common theme: dancing. Although the competition was tough, Senior Matt Barrett took the crown with his hilarious and memorable tribute to "Blades of Glory."

"Everyone had such funny skits this year and it was hard to compete," said Barrett, who also performed during his junior year. "The only reason I feel as if I won is because mine was such a different kind of show."

The evening's performances showcased the skills of six senior boys, including Barrett, Lee Gleason, Ali Kazmi, Michael Kim, Glenn Shellenberger and Jake Trump. Even though only one could win, they all exercised their avid enthusiasm and spirit.

"It says a lot to be nominated, but to actually win it has a whole different meaning and all the hard work paid off," said Barrett.



Andy Gholson

Senior Julie Burkhardt and her dad celebrate her new title of Homecoming Queen. At halftime, she received roses from the newly crowned Mr. Spartan, senior Matt Barrett.

With the week's events wrapped up, Friday night brought all devoted Spartan fans into the stadium. Spartan Football played a relatively quiet game until the last forty-one seconds, when we claimed our first points of the game and victory. See "Homecoming" on Page 5.

SPARTAN Time Monthly lessons reinforce program

By Peter Simonson
Senior Staff Writer

The PART initiative expanded this year with the introduction of monthly "Do Your Part" Spartan Times.

Last month, this designated time was devoted to activities designed to show the importance of being prepared, accountable, respectful and truthful.

Another lesson, on bullying and cheating, was featured this week.

The centerpiece of PART is the weekly Spartan Card drawing, designed to recognize students for taking responsibility.

Every Friday, the PART Committee draws one card per grade level. Winners receive prizes ranging from gift cards to Spartan spirit wear and even football game, Homecoming and Prom tickets.

"Spartan Cards and the Do Your Part program help morale. It also helps keep all the teachers on the same page as far as promoting good behavior," said English teacher Jamie Sullivan.

The first special Spartan Time began with



Peter Simonson

Lennon.

The PART campaign was started with a \$3,000 grant from FCPS as part of a three-part plan to improve the school culture.

Sullivan sees advantages in the program, especially as it becomes more a part of school life.

"The goal is to promote positive behavior in students and it's a great way to remind them to be helpful; that's never a bad thing."

a video from last year demonstrating various ways students can do their part, and was set to the classic "Turn Back Time," by Cher.

Overall, the video had a cheesy quality, which prevented students in an all-senior class from taking its message seriously.

"I think it was a good waste of time; my whole class was like, 'are you kidding me?'" said senior Eric Phung.

After the video, students completed a worksheet on how George Washington did his "part" for America.

"George Washington will have no impact on how we behave; why not do a modern day person?" said senior Moira



Assa Dialw

Here comes the sun

For the first time in three years, we celebrated Spartanfest on a sunny Saturday afternoon, allowing school organizations to set up in the back parking lot. YOUrthly sponsor Regina Taylor and junior Briana Smith helped sell out of the group's traditional soul food offerings. Groups did well on the beautiful fall day, including the Muslim Student Association, which will donate their \$770 in profits from food and Henna tattoo sales to charity.

Volleyball
digs deep to
beat cancer.



6

Graffiti sends
the wrong
message.



8-9

No bones about
it: Our science
teachers are
winners.



10

Say goodbye to personal bubbles

Fairfax County is the nation's 13th largest school system, and after squeezing into the jam-packed classrooms, we do not doubt it.

We house over 2,300 students, rivaling the size of some colleges. This, however, is less than our counterparts in Annandale, whose student body exceeds its capacity by at least 500.

There are some benefits to the overpopulation. Increased numbers creates some healthy competition, and if we do not like our friends, we have more people to choose from. But in addition to depriving

us of our wiggle room, it may take a toll on our grades.

Some teachers are requesting that students ask ahead of time to attend their irregular Spartan Time to make sure there is room, which is understandable. But if space is not available

and they are denied access, students may find themselves in a bind. Staying after school is not always an option, due to prior obligations, no late bus, and so forth. If students cannot receive the help they need, that defeats the purpose of Spartan Time.

The increasingly slanted teacher to student ratio may also take away educational opportunities. In a recent study by Adam Gamoran of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, students do better in smaller classroom settings. This is because it makes learning more intelligent, and the student receives more attention from teachers.

Also, the more people crammed together the more rapidly sickness spreads. When we are smushed together with all these snotty, coughing people we can imagine that we'll catch what they have. Plus the effect it has on the bathroom lines is annoying. Especially when at least one stall always isn't working, we think we'll take our chances leaving during class.

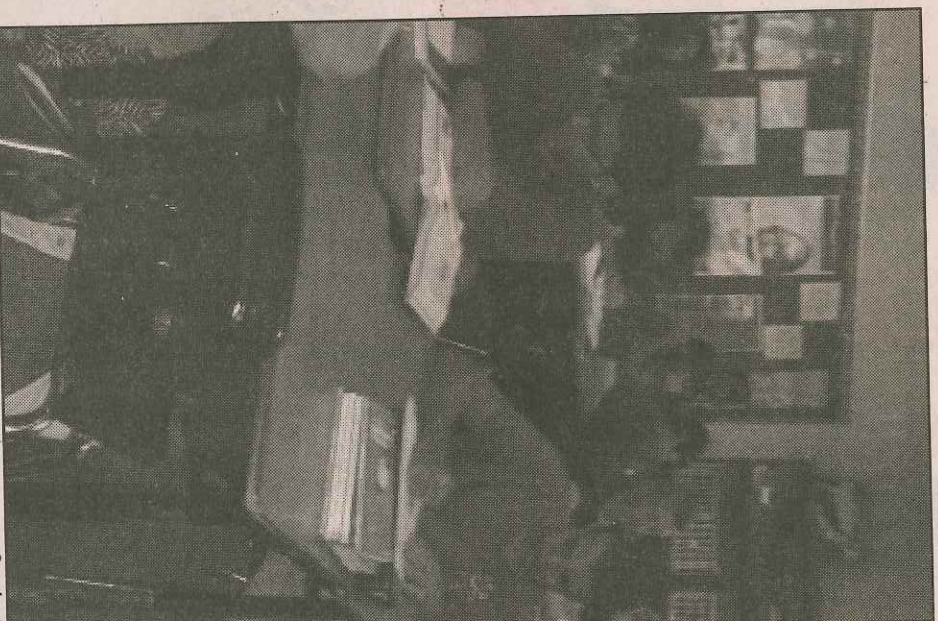
There is not a whole lot we can do. It's not like we can kick out excessive students (nor should we want to). So while the weather is still nice, we should take some classes outside. The Japanese Garden looks like a fine Physics classroom, and the fresh air will cleanse our airways. (Plus, what better place to pick flowers for your date coming up this weekend than the great outdoors?)

So until our school magically grows, remember "the more the merrier". And we might want to say good-bye to our elbow room.



Sara Lepley

The limited space that classrooms are experiencing causes students to have to deal with less one-on-one time with teachers in class and during Spartan Time.



Sara Lepley

The crowded classrooms provide the perfect opportunity for students to create new friendships since students have to become accustomed to the close quarters and see it more as an option for more acquaintances than as overflowing.

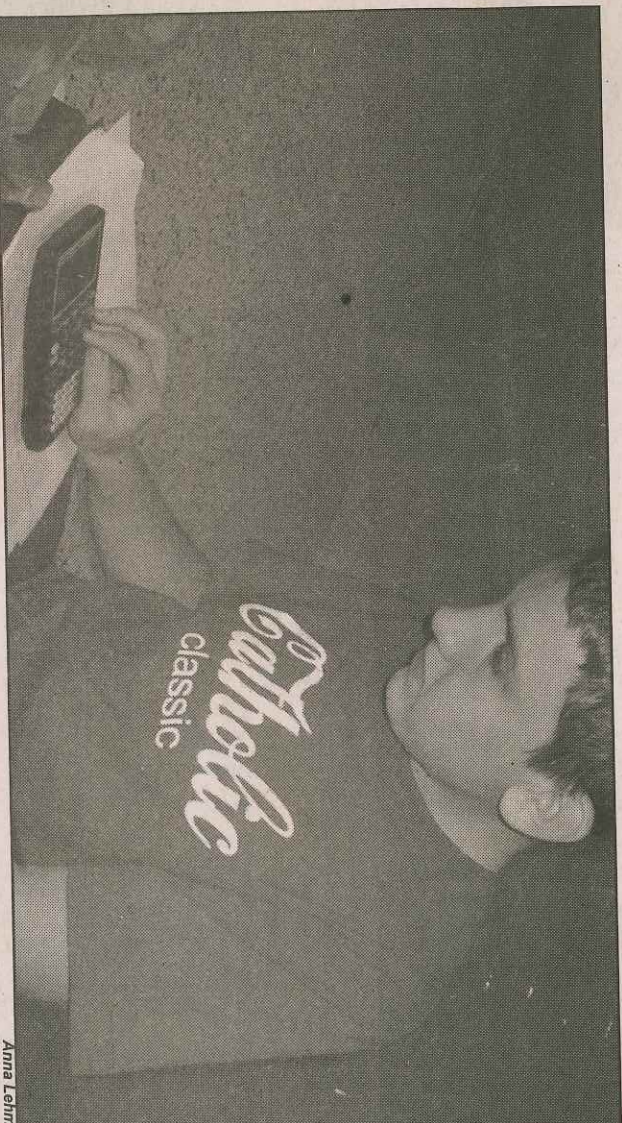
Teens' lack of money affecting studies

Students now face cost of calculators required for their math classes

By Anna Lehman
Entertainment Editor

Money's on the brain, but is it in my pocket?

"Money, money, money must be funny in a rich man's world." Abba was right, it really must be funny to have enough money that you can laugh at it, while the rest of us laugh at the fact that window shopping has become a new hobby or that our parents won't be willing to shell out for that new video game we want. My own parents say that I have to earn my own money. What does that mean, "earn" my money? "Earning money" is not really in my vocabulary, words more like "give me" or "spare ten bucks" are. Alright, I'm being a little ridiculous now, but when the parents can't be the only resort to get money, you have to find a job and get money the hard way, by working. Now that your job is taking up most of your time, school is your only resort to



Anna Lehman

Kyle Burnett, junior, uses his calculator for math daily emphasizing the necessity that students have for their calculators. So students who don't have calculator would have difficulty getting their homework done. But is it? Nope, school involves spending some cash as well. I know

that the current economy is not so hunky-dory, but when families are becoming a little bit tighter on how

much they spend, it's not so grand either. Spending money for school supplies is a given, but paying for

the calculators for math when they used to let you borrow them out, is frustrating. Calculators are needed to finish homework assignments, so it becomes stressful when student do not have access to one. I understand that some people are dishonest and don't always give back their calculators but what about those who are honest? Now some students have to go out and buy their own, when they may not have the money. Going to school, I know, is not going to be free of asking the folks for some cash or maybe even you shelling out some yourself. But if the stresses of paying money for our education clash with our whole high school experience, it can put damper on our spirits. I wish that the world was perfect, where money isn't an obstacle for us. Unfortunately perfection, least in this way, is not possible. So until it is, I'll be earning my cash and hopefully passing math on the way.

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ORACLE

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

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Spartans are 'too cool' for school

We consider ourselves 'chill,' but having to bundle up is pretty ridiculous

By Kelly Carlin

Oracle Editor

What any television, comic book, or movie fan can tell you is this: anyone who lives in an ice-castle is a villain. Just look at Mr. Freeze, the White Witch, and the evil Ice King from "Adventure Time." Being cold makes you mean.

Conning into school every day where, as one of my teachers has said, "penguins could just be chilling," is unsatisfactory. It also leaves us kids in moods as cold as ice.

From September through June, this building holds only two temperatures: the heat of 10,000 burning suns and the icy arctic depths of despair.

In a month where we should be enjoying the crisp, blustery temperatures of fall, we instead are forced to endure frigid chills of winter. And that's only indoors.

Not only does sitting in an ice box make you uncomfortable, it's also distracting. I can't focus on learning anything while trying to keep my body temperature above freezing.



Kelly Carlin

Even though the school's heat has been turned on, many students forced to bring sweatshirts and sweatpants to class to keep their bodies temperate. Some, like senior Lisa Williams, resort to bringing blankets to class to keep them warm.

It's just not possible.

And it's no secret that being cold puts you in a bad mood. School is already a time-consuming task, and spending seven hours in

a freezer is guaranteed to leave you feeling perturbed and outraged. But hey, it's better than snoozing through seven periods.

On the other end of the spectrum, there are the days when the temperatures reach astronomical levels. Dressing for spring doesn't prepare you for the fiery heat wave that hits you the minute you walk in the building.

These two extremes lead me to one question: why can't we just meet in the middle?

Spending the fall with just the amount of heat necessary would be wonderful, while the late spring and summer require nothing but air conditioning. This seems like it should not be too hard to grasp.

This is not the fault of the administration, nor the school, as we only have air conditioning and heat for the designated amounts of the year. But because of this policy, the drastic temperatures are not about to change. Whining won't make it go away either.

So, for now, I'll just have to get used to learning in the Arctic Circle. At least until March, anyway.

Shhhhhhh, we're in the library!

By Summer Claveau

ETC, Editor

In previous years, the only time the library was ever a quiet place for study was when there was practically no one in there.

But not anymore, all you rowdy kids who use the library as gathering place for chat-chat, instead of what it's supposed to be. No longer will you disturb my study time, the new policy prohibits it. No talking, simple and to the point.

Now it won't be impossible to hear yourself think, let alone get any work done, due to all the loud talking from the underclassmen waiting for their after school sports to begin. The runners congregating with each other before practice, the swimmers waiting for their bus and the many others doing "projects" and "helping each other with their

"Already, teachers and students are responding with positive feedback."

—Ché Ferch-Jablonski, librarian

homework," you can no longer take advantage of the space the library provides.

Ché Ferch-Jablonski, one of our fine school librarians, said "Already, teachers and students are responding with positive feedback."

In my four years at West Springfield, I have seen the library treated with same disrespect as a common Borders book store. Any and every library is a sacred place, for book

lovers alike to come and appreciate literature, and should be treated that way.

Though the school library is useful for when you forget to print out your paper or need to make copies of a worksheet, it was never really a very good place for serious studying.

Thank you to the librarians for deciding to make the change.

The first couple days, there were complaints and some restraint from students not following rules. The only thing that the librarians can do to enforce the rules is ask students to leave, which they don't have a problem doing.

Respect for readers and books is the only concern of librarians, not whether or not groups of kids can loudly work on their projects together.



Julie Paris

In previous years, the library has been a gathering spot for athletes after school. Now, library policy encourages students to respect the environment and use it for studying, not somewhere to hang out with friends.

Lunch: No longer our favorite subject

Cluttered lines and lack of food taint our experience in the cafeteria

By Jimmy McMahon & Austin Kaminski

Oracle Staff Writers

The lunch line seems to find new ways to get worse each year.

Not only are they still selling two hot-

dogs in one pack and hamburgers stacked on top of each other (which is sketchy to say the least), but they replaced our beloved Powerade with new Powerade Play, which has less sugar. Of course, "less sugar" translates to "tastes much worse." Powerade was supposed to be the solution to supposed health

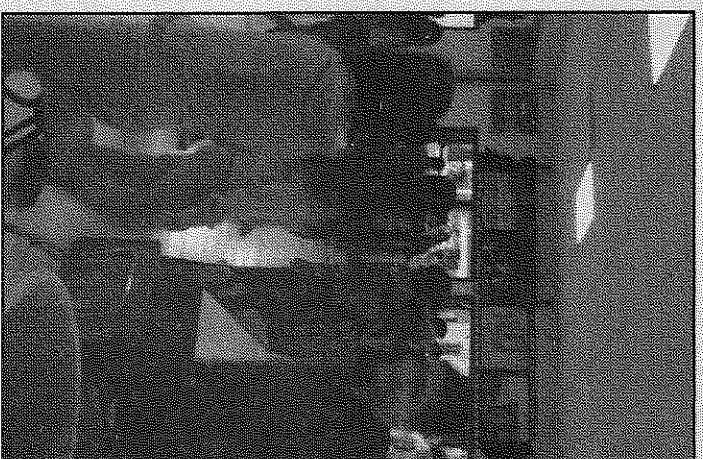
problems with Gatorade. Now we can't even have regular Powerade? Powerade was already placed in the school to replace Gatorade which has a high sugar content. Plus, many students and especially student athletes enjoy drinking Powerade after practice. Now, many will turn to soda, which certainly has more sugar than a Powerade.

The lack of a decent sports drink is just one of the problems with the lunch line. Another common complaint that students have is that there are too few lines, especially at breakfast. Many people spend most of their lunch or breakfast just standing in line waiting for their food.

Although it's easy to blame the lack of lunch lines for the long wait, it's not all their fault. It seems like there's always a few kids that just can't make a decision. Save us all some time and at least have a general idea what you want. That way, the lines can stay moving and we can all get on with our lives.

All the blame can't be put on the consumer though. Many times in the later lunches, popular items tend to run out. The popular cookies and the new Powerade Play are usually gone by the time C lunch comes around, and it can't be because they don't have more, because they put out more of each every day. So unless we're receiving new shipments of each every day, there's no reason to not put out more.

Although there are many bad things about the lunch lines, it's admittedly cool that

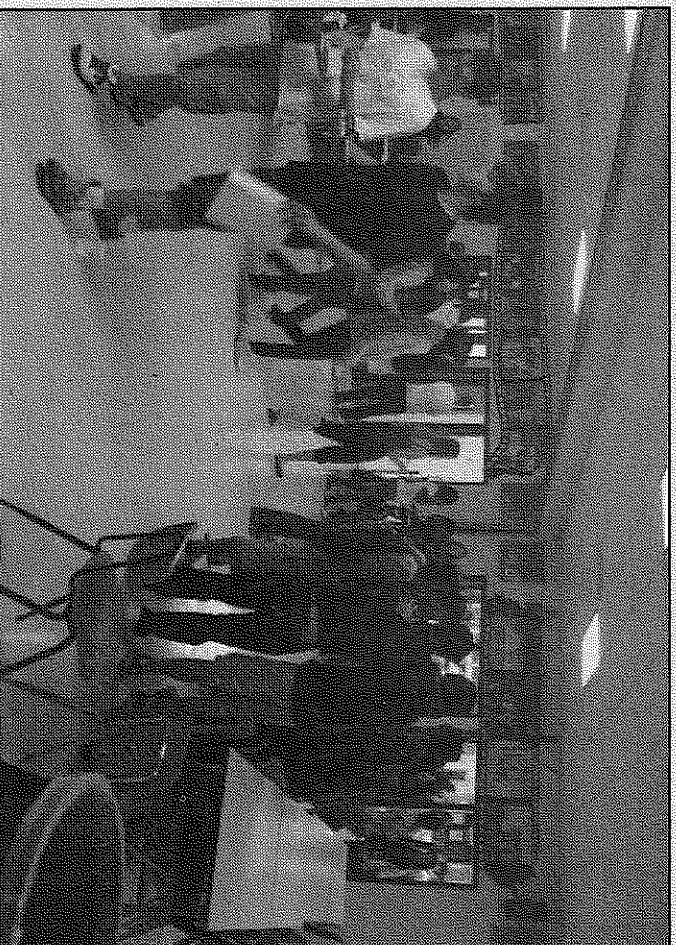


Jimmy McMahon

The lunch line in the cafeteria often is so full of people that it can be seen spiraling out the doors. This leaves the people at the back of the line, and in later lunches, to choose from picked over and less desirable food.

SportsCenter is on while we eat. It's nice to know that on those days when you have a test in every class, you can count on at least thirty minutes of complete freedom from all academics.

The solution to all of these problems? It's out of our control. It comes down to the county wide decision of what goes into our lunches. We'll just have to deal with it until the county decides to change.



Jimmy McMahon

Students in the cafeteria can be seen taking a break from classes as they talk with friends and enjoy their food. New lunch items, like Powerade Play, are upsetting students and making the cafeteria lose its carefree feel.

Parking passes provide problems for students

Invading the neighborhood across the street not an option during school day

By Sam Perlstein
Features Editor

Attention! Illegal parking is no more. Those who live in the neighborhood directly across from the school now need a parking permit to prove they are a resident.

"If you live there, there is a sticker that says you can park," said senior Emily Esposito.

The sticker is for residents only, but there is also a permit that can be given to guests visiting during the school day. One look in the car window is all that is needed. Violators will be fined.

"It just says I can park here legally," said Esposito. To get a permit you have to prove you are a resident, prove you have a registered vehicle and pay a fee. All that trouble just so you can park on the street in front of your house.

"It is a government conspiracy to make more money," said sophomore Ricky Erazo.

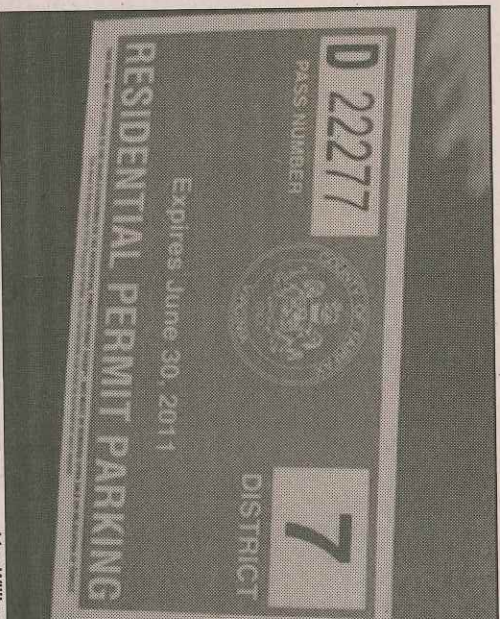
Though it's worth the money for some, not all residents agree. Sophomore Katy Tyler is just out of the permit program's reach. Living over by Cardinal Forest keeps her from enjoying the privileges the parking permit offers.

"It would be so much easier," said Tyler, "it's faster than walking to school, just park and go instead of messing with the senior parking lot."

The permit makes a push for car pools, clearly rewarding those who do. Just pile in one car and all you'll need is one parking permit.

This method would be completely legal unless the driver was under 18 and therefore could not drive more than one person outside immediate family, according to Virginia law.

"I just have my friends park on my driveway," said junior Rick Naramore who lives in the neighborhood.



Lisa Williams

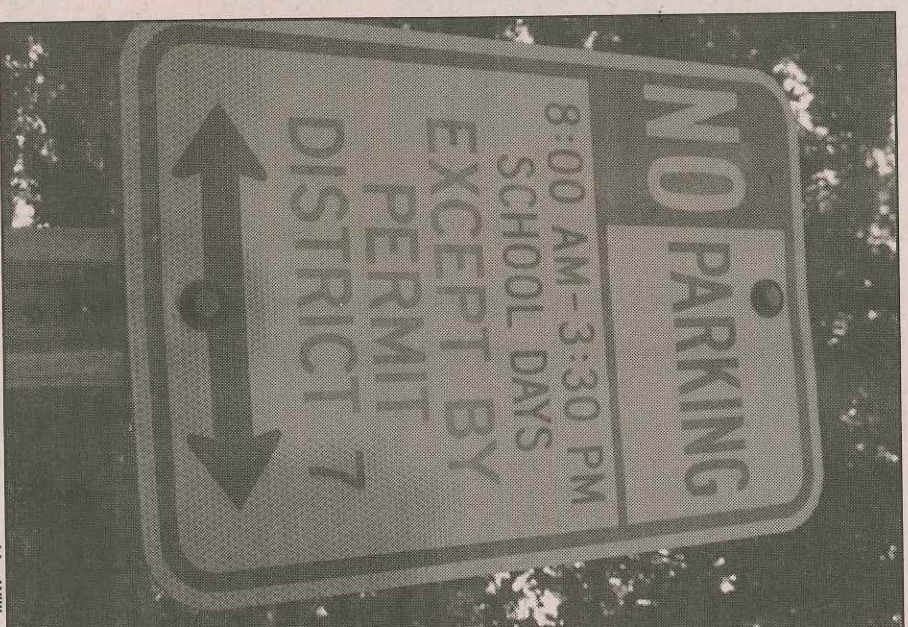
The residential parking permits allow those who live on Griggs-by Road and surrounding streets to park without the chance of being fined by police. This ensures that residents have a guaranteed spot to park and will not have to fight with students over precious street space.

Finding parking near and around the school is a pain. Parking in the neighborhood has always been an issue, and cops would just give tickets to any car parked out front of a house. Now the parking permits make their jobs easier because they can spot those who don't live there much faster.

"They went down our street and found one of our parking permits and said it wasn't valid," said Esposito.

Even with the permits there seems to be trouble. The passes were only meant to make it easier on the police to in force the law and should not be anything to fret over.

"Just ask a resident if you need a pass," said Esposito.



Lisa Williams

Signs all over the neighborhood make it impossible for people to plead ignorance to the no-parking policy.

SAT goes to World Wide Web

By Eleanor Lamb
Features Editor

The trials and tribulations of many high school students boil down to three simple letters: SAT.

However, with a new online-driven prep course, students can be assured that it is not time to start sweating yet.

Many students have experienced and have come to dread the grueling, four-hour courses that eat up precious Saturdays. While this course will be the same length, the idea is that the online spin will hopefully make it more effective way to learn.

Guidance counselor Michaele O'Brien believes this course will be a more innovative and interactive learning experience.

"[Information] is attached to the booklet, Keep in Touch e-mails to parents, also on Blackboard under student services/testing," said O'Brien.

Though students always manage to fill up the cafeteria anyway on those brutal Saturdays, this course has been promoted widely throughout the school.

Students accustomed to the furious scratching of pencils will now have to get used to rapid drum of fingers on keyboards. The use of laptops rather than constant bookwork is the trademark change being brought to this class.

Laptops are being brought in to quicken the pace of practice work, grading, and overall brain-frying.

"The best part is the instant feedback," said O'Brien, "[students can see] areas they're having problems."

While the bulk of the course will be operated on laptops, students will have to endure one day of typical bookwork.

O'Brien sees this kind of training as apropos; it will benefit kids because the test they

are working so hard to prepare for is in this format.

"[Since] the SAT is paper and pencil, I in 4 classes will be paper and pencil," said O'Brien.

A few studious Spartans share O'Brien's enthusiasm toward the new online course.

Junior Drew Mullins agrees that the laptops will help kids figure out problem areas and more efficiently help them overcome those academic obstacles.

"It's better. We can get more done because it's electronic and more fast-paced," said Mullins.

Junior Chris Ludwig harbors a similar eagerness toward the course; the instant grading system and fast-paced laptops will provide the perfect atmosphere for students trying to prepare for university.

"I'm excited," said Ludwig, "I'm getting the college intensity."

NEWS BITES

Oracle and Yearbook staffs win VSHL Honors

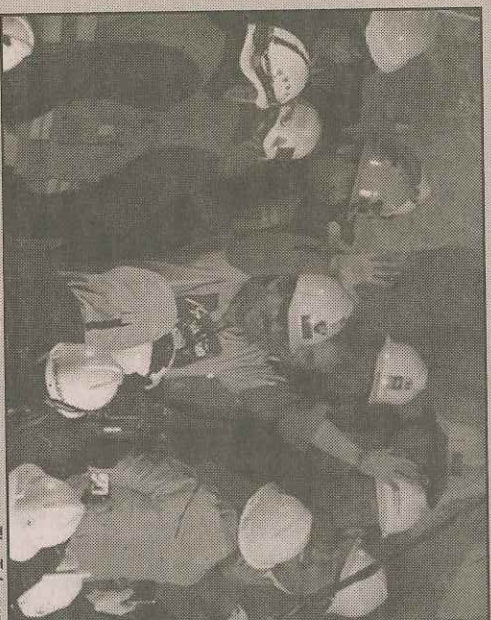
LAST YEAR'S WS ORACLE AND YEARBOOK STAFFS PLACED FIRST IN LAST WEEK'S STATE WIDE VIRGINIA HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE COMPETITION. "THE VSHL RECOGNIZES HOW HARD OUR SPARTAN JOURNALISTS," SAID ADVISOR BROOKE NELSON. "WE JUST STARTED AN ONLINE VERSION OF THE ORACLE, I BET WE WILL SWEEP ALL THE AWARDS NEXT YEAR."

Verizon and iPad team up

VERIZON WILL START SELLING APPLE'S IPAD TO ITS RETAIL STORES ON OCTOBER 28. THERE ARE RUMORS OF THE TWO COMPANIES CREATING A STRONG ALLIANCE, POSSIBLY KICKING AT&T OUT OF THE PICTURE.

O'Donnell's witchy past

CHRISTINE O'DONNELL'S UPSET IN THE REPUBLICAN PRIMARIES FOR THE DELAWARE SENATE SEAT HAS CREATED CONTROVERSY IN THE NORMALLY BLUE STATE. SHE RECENTLY WENT PUBLIC WITH HER IDEALS, EXPRESSING THAT SHE IS IN FACT, NOT A WITCH.



The Telegraph

33 miners rescued in Chile

33 OF THE MINERS WHO WERE STRANDED IN A CAVE IN THE SAN JOSE MINE IN CHILE HAVE BEEN RESCUED. THE MINERS WERE TRAPPED INSIDE THE COLLAPSED MINE FOR TEN WEEKS, BUT HAVE ALL SURVIVED AND ARE EXPECTED TO RECOVER FROM MINOR INJURIES. OBAMA CONDONED THE RESCUE TEAMS IN A STATEMENT.

Walmart's environmentally-friendly changes

IN AN ATTEMPT TO BE MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY EFFICIENT, WALMART WILL START STOCKING ITS SHELVES WITH LOCALLY GROWN PRODUCE, ALSO BOOSTING THE NEED FOR LOCAL AND SELF SUFFICIENT FARMERS.

Westboro Baptist Church heads to the courts

THE SUPREME COURT HAS JUST FINISHED HEARING ARGUMENTS FROM THE WESTBORO BAPTIST CHURCH. A DECISION AS TO WHETHER PICKETING OF FALLEN SOLDIERS GRAVES IS CONSTITUTIONAL OR NOT WILL BE DETERMINED BEFORE CHRISTMAS.

Conan brings comedy to TBS

TBS WILL BE AIRING THE NEW, CONAN O'BRIEN SHOW. MUCH OF HIS TONIGHT SHOW CREW WILL BE JOINING HIM.

—Compiled from local news and internet sources

Homecoming gambled on Vegas theme, and won

“Homecoming,” from Page 1.

tory over the South County Stallions.

Despite the slow start, the crowd was enthusiastic. The student section showed their spirit with body paint, trash can drums, and chants that continued regardless of the score-board.

During halftime, each class float was showed off and judged, and the senior class took the victory over the other grades. It was

also the Class of 2011’s third victory in a row, giving them the title every year they had here.

Halftime also featured the crowning of the Homecoming Queen. Senior Julie Burkhardt took the crown in that competition, and was surprised at the result.

“The usual queen doesn’t participate in activities like Concert Band, Marching Band or Color Guard,” said Burkhardt, who is also responsible for reviving the art of twirling. “So I think I broke some of those stereotypes,

which is really cool and kind of exciting.”

The self-described “band geek” acknowledged that she faced some tough competition.

“I was super-surprised because the other senior girls on court are really pretty and popular and I’m a band geek and baton twirler at heart.”

When the dance finally arrived Saturday night, the students packed into the hot gym. The DJs performed with energy, singing along with popular songs that blasted from

the speakers.

Students were decked out in their fanciest Vegas wardrobes, showing off their classiest clothes. The three hours of the event flew by as students danced the night away. While the music was great and the dancing was fun, the dance offered another welcome perk: No fire alarms went off this year and no one had to evacuate in the rain.

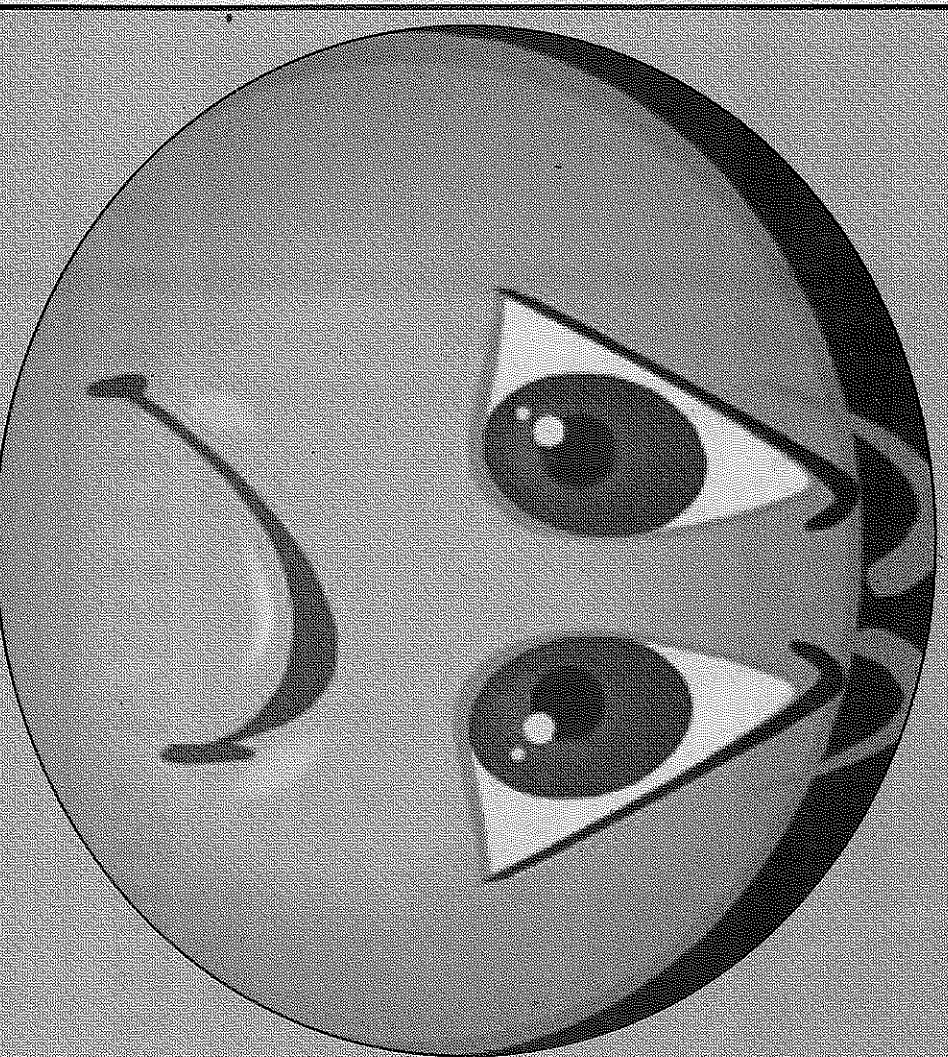
“I liked the DJ better than last year’s,” said White. “The dance itself was really fun.”



Andy Ghossein

The freshmen attempt to shake their groove thing at the Homecoming Assembly, as the sophomores await their turn. The seniors, though, won every competition, from the dance-off to float building to Powder Puff, to round out their last high school Homecoming.

Have YOU ordered your YEARBOOK yet?

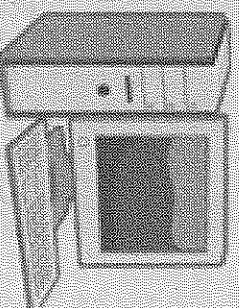


Please check

out Page 11

to find out

how!



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

Just go to

<http://theoracleonline.org>

to check it out!



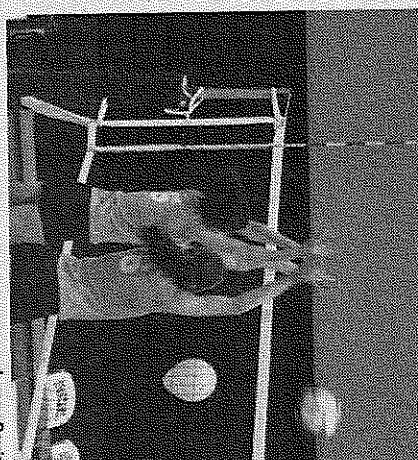
Jeremy Davis

Event organizer Scott Schutzmeyer speaks before all the games, thanking everyone for their support and urging them to donate.



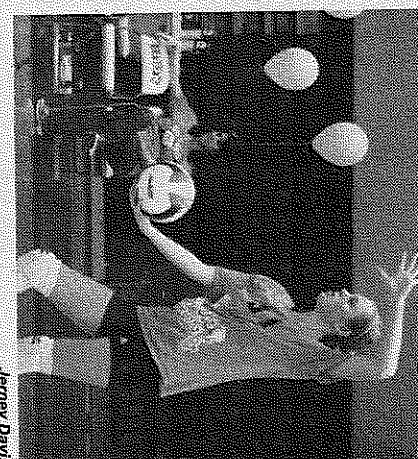
Jeremy Davis

Freshman Sasha Tromasson high-fives a teammate, reminding fans that the game is about fighting cancer through cooperation.



Jeremy Davis

Senior Lauren Scolese and junior Emily Nagel block the ball, contributing to Varsity's win over McLean during the Dig Pink event.



Jeremy Davis

Freshman Jessica Mann prepares to serve the ball while pink balloons wave in the background, reiterating the theme of the event.

Volleyball shows community how to dig pink

By Jordan Miller
Page One Editor

Crushing cancer one game at a time. That's the idea of Dig Pink, an event hosted by the volleyball team on Tuesday, October 12.

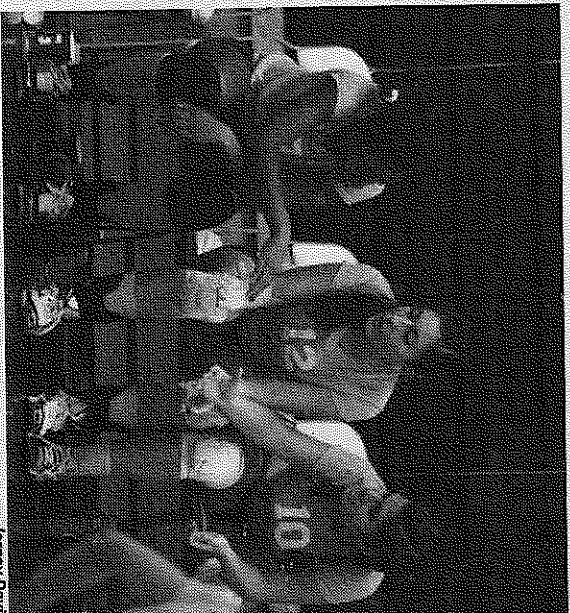
Entering the gym, it looked like a shower for a baby girl. EVERYONE was wearing pink. Pink balloons, pink shoelaces, pink posters, pink socks, pink shirts, pink hair... it was a gym full of pink. But it was no baby shower, it was the annual Dig Pink event.

"Not only does Dig Pink raise money for breast cancer research, it also unites volleyball athletes together in a great cause," said head coach Stephanie Noriega.

The three volleyball teams raised money to support cancer research during the games. T-shirts sold for \$15. They also sold baked goods, pizza, and held a raffle.

"I think it's fair to say we will not only meet our \$2000 goal, but will exceed it. And it all goes to the Side-Out Foundation," said the event organizer Scott Schutzmeyer. His wife, Shawn, has metastatic breast cancer and is currently undergoing a new round of chemotherapy and treatment. Their daughter Savannah plays on the Varsity volleyball team.

"This event is very special to our team for many reasons. We have several girls who have parents or loved ones who are fighting or have fought breast cancer," Noriega said. Varsity player Emily Nagel's mom also battled cancer.



Jeremy Davis

Sophomore Destini Davis sits with juniors Carolina Lopez and Cami Angulo while discussing the game strategies. As members of the Varsity team, they wore customized pink jerseys and spray-painted their hair pink.

Nagel says she understands the difficulties that a cancer can bring to families and enthusiastically supports any event that helps cancer patients.

"I love this event. It was awesome! It was personal to me

because my mom had cancer. Not breast cancer, but cancer," said Nagel.

All the money raised at the Dig Pink event goes to the Side-Out Foundation created by former WS volleyball coach Rick Dunetz.

Dunetz's mom discovered she had stage-four metastatic breast cancer during the 2004 season.

"This gym is where Dig Pink originated," said Dunetz at the game. "The 2004 team [at WS] inspired me to create the Side-Out Foundation."

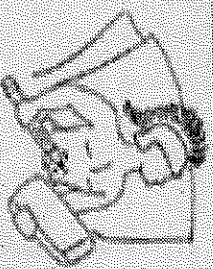
Dunetz's mom lost her battle with breast cancer earlier this year. His efforts to support his mom during her battle with breast cancer led to the successful promotion of Dig Pink, which has grown to be supported by volleyball teams all over the nation.

"It's meaningful for our team to be part of the cure," junior Alexis Lopez said.

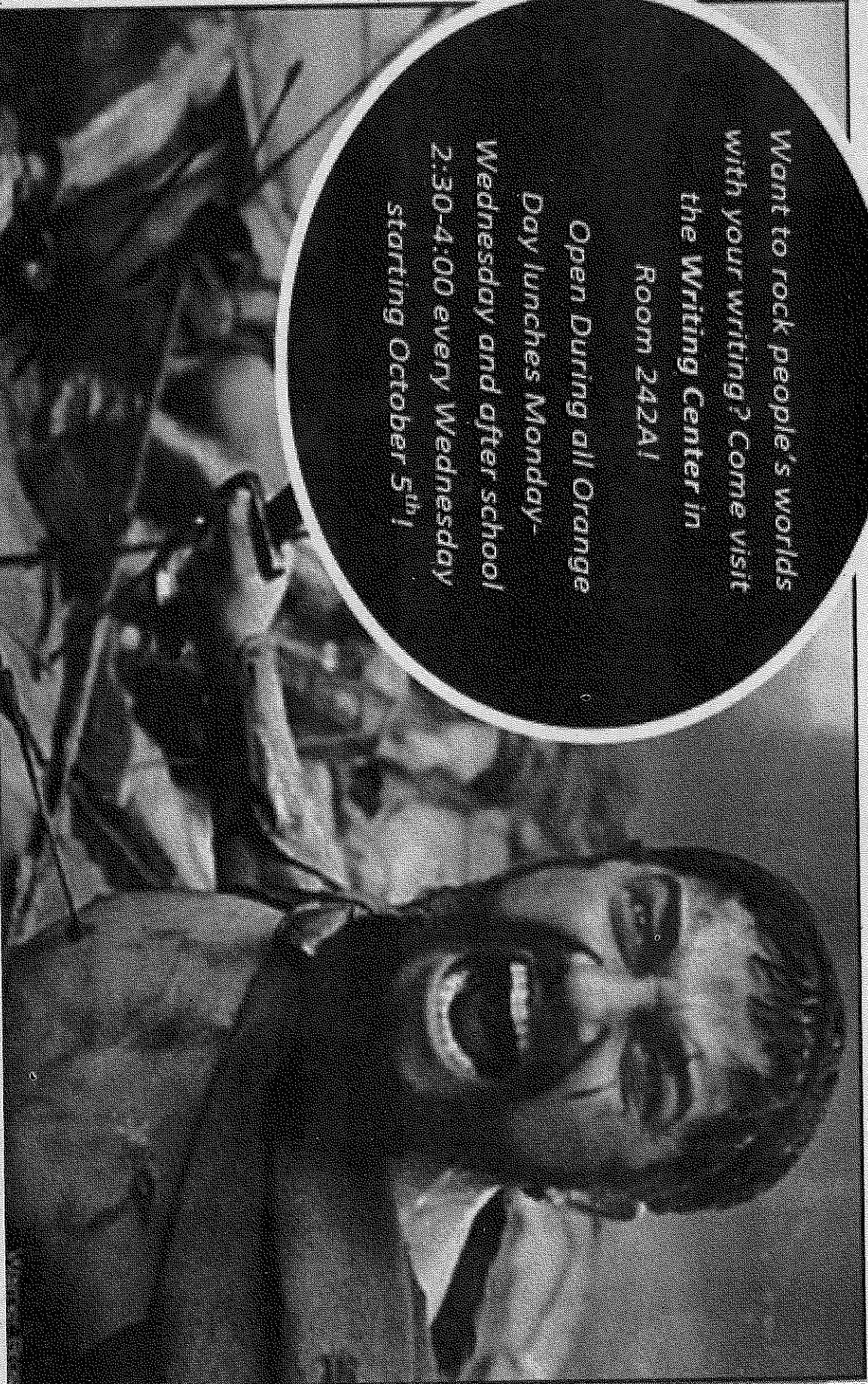
Athletic Director Andy Muir estimated there were 350 volleyball fans at the event. The team really appreciated those fans. Many waved home-made posters and came dressed in pink. A group of male students made a big showing of their support by body painting each girl's jersey number on their chest. It was a fun evening for a good cause for both the teams and the crowds.

"I believe this is a special cause and as a coach I am so proud of my girls when I see them come together for something beyond the normal teenage concerns," Noriega said.

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Four high schools in just four short years

By Karista Giordano
Forum Editor

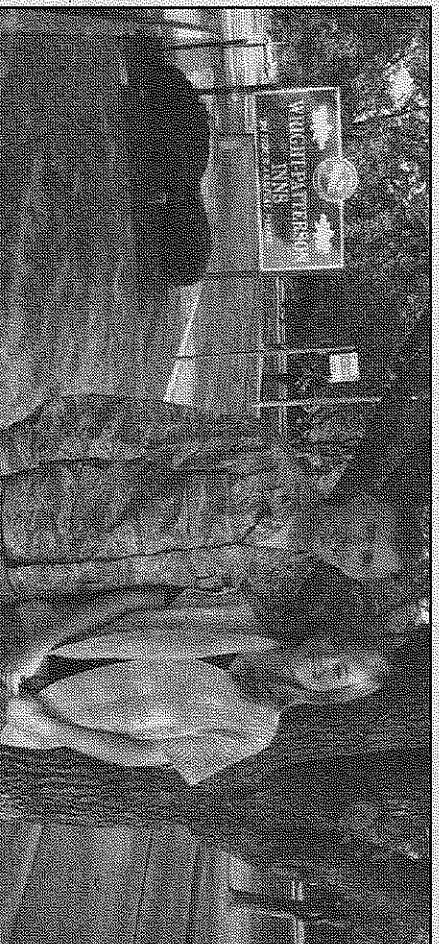
New teachers, new halls, new faces, four new schools.

The only way to even-dream about making it through high school is having friends. For senior Sarah Hyde, this is extremely difficult because in her four years of high school, she has been to four different schools. Having to say goodbye to new and close friends is hard after only being able to spend a year with them.

"It is very hard to change schools every year because you make friends and have to leave them and then do the same thing at the next school," said Hyde.

Academically it has also been hard for Hyde, because every state has different requirements for their schools; classes she thought she would be taking as a younger student she ended up taking as an upperclassman.

"I had to take World History as a Junior.



Courtesy of Sarah Hyde
Senior Sarah Hyde poses with her father in Ohio during her sophomore year. Hyde was already at her second move with two more to go. Hyde stands outside of the high school with her father that is in the military. The military has caused all four of Hyde's moves.

which is a Junior class," said Hyde. "And I am not able to take the AP United States History exam because technically, I have only taken half of the class."

It is incredibly tough to adjust to a new

school every year because all the people and the atmosphere are different. There are always tricks to know how to fit in and personality traits that are necessary to acquire.

A shy and quiet person normally doesn't

survive long in a new high school. A good trick that Hyde learned quickly was talking to a lot of people in her class right before lunch that way she wouldn't get lost in the crazy place known as the cafeteria; lunch is a time that is always spent with friends.

"I had to learn to be outgoing. Once I had it was cool because I was able to meet a lot of new people from all kinds of different cultures," said Hyde.

Making friends isn't the only struggle in a new school. There are bullies in every school that tend to make themselves feel better when they make fun of people, even if they are just joking. Sometimes it is hard to succeed when there is one person who always makes fun of you.

Being nice to them is the best way to make the bullying stop. In Hyde's tenth grade year there was one girl who made fun of her but after the bullying stopped they ended up being best friends.

"First impressions of people are never right," said Hyde.

A crowning moment Pageant brings a chance to win up to \$45,000 in scholarship funds

By Peter Simonsen
Senior Staff Writer

Pageants have always been fiercely competitive, but this year it gets personal. Senior Danielle Mazzuchi is in the running for Miss Maryland Teen USA.

The Miss Maryland Teen USA competition features contestants from all around the state between the ages of 15 to 19. The winner will advance to the national Miss Teen USA competition later in the spring.

"I'm really excited; it's good to open new doors," said Mazzuchi.

Mazzuchi was originally signed up for the pageant on a whim by her mother. Prospective delegates send in their name and a picture after getting a flier in the mail. To her surprise she was called back for a phone interview.

"I'm going into it blindfolded, I've never been to a pageant before" Mazzuchi said.

Mazzuchi will be representing the city of Oxon Hill this year. Her mother's residence in Maryland allows her to compete, while her father lives here in Springfield.

The pageant will take place at the end of October in Bethesda. The 75 selected contestants will be judged in an evening gown, a swim suit and an interview.

It is open to the public, and through audience applause, a "crowd favorite" will be chosen among the contestants.

"I really think this means you can accomplish anything you pursue," Mazzuchi said.

While new to the pageant experience, she is making sure to come prepared.

"Lots of shopping, going to the gym, and my family is helping me the whole time," Mazzuchi said. For the interview, she is prepping for the volley of questions she knows will come her way.

"I've been watching videos of previous pageants, going over past questions and I've attended other pageants to get a feel for it."

While the grand prize is a \$45,000 scholarship and a spot in the national competition, Mazzuchi is feels the real prize will be the entire process.

"It's going to be a once in a lifetime experience, and I'll get to meet a lot of new people who are like me but are also very different."

Mazzuchi is used to hanging out in sweats in *The Oracle* office—the "style" she usually concentrates on is in writing, so the pageant is something new and different.

"I'm not really nervous, more like excited," said Mazzuchi.



Picture People
Senior Danielle Mazzuchi is competing in the Miss Maryland Teen USA pageant and has high hopes for a great finish. She said she is excited about her upcoming competition, but this longtime *Oracle*ite also doesn't take the pageant too seriously. She said she'd love to win some of the scholarship money.

Spartans welcome Szwajkowski

By Rita Zevallos
Senior Staff Writer

Down in the first classroom in the history hallway Spartans are loving their new US and AP US History teacher Dr. Cynthia Szwajkowski.

Szwajkowski is new to the school, but by no means new to either history or teaching. Her Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD degrees are all in history. She has been teaching US History and US Government for the past 35 years in the Fairfax County Public School system.

Recently, Szwajkowski led a federal grant program which worked with teachers to give them practical experience in history. The program was designed to instruct and observe K-12 teachers in settings such as museums and historical sites. Last year, she left the program to work at Fairfax High, teaching AP US Government and World History. And this year, she's here at WS—hopefully to stay.

"She's a really outgoing teacher. She keeps the class fun and interesting," said junior Katelyn Lovan.

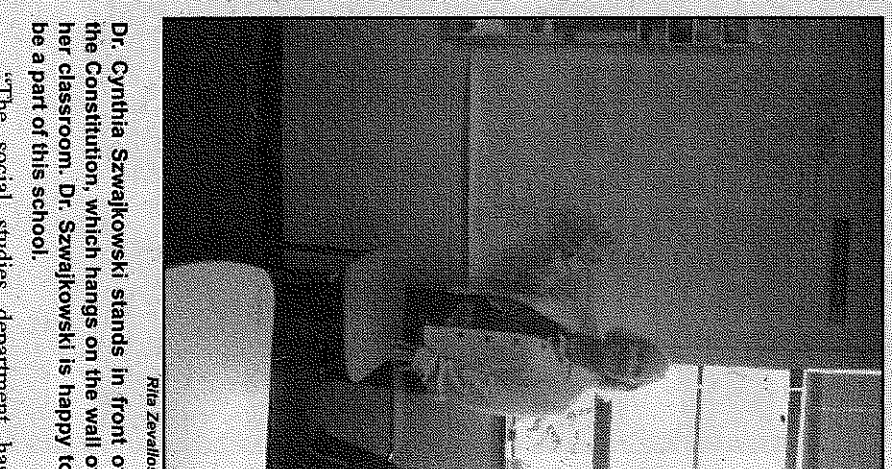
Szwajkowski has settled in well. Beyond the warning aspects (she's covered the classroom walls with countless posters,

"Kids are awesome, hardworking, polite. I really like the teachers. I love the place."
—Cynthia Szwajkowski
US History teacher

including a huge Constitution replica) anyone can see she has already formed good relationships with her students, as well as the teachers she works with.

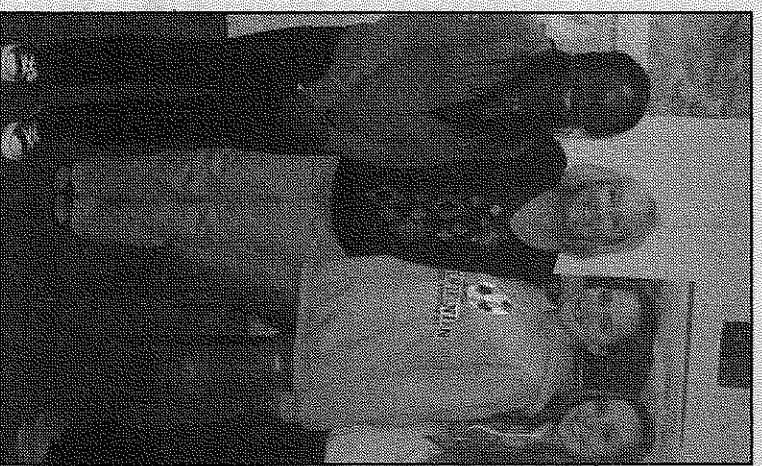
"She is a great leader and a wonderful person to work with; we all really like her. She's a good department chair and an excellent teacher. We're very happy to have her in our department," said World History teacher Cathleen Boivin.

The experience of coming to a new school has its good and bad points. It can be inspiring to be exposed to new students and new ideas, but for Szwajkowski, it does take some time to establish a procedure and determine which teaching strategies are best to help students. Luckily, this transition was easier for Szwajkowski because of a welcoming school community.



Rita Zevallos
Dr. Cynthia Szwajkowski stands in front of the Constitution, which hangs on the wall of her classroom. Dr. Szwajkowski is happy to be a part of this school.

"The social studies department has been awesome; the administration has been welcoming and great. Kids are awesome, hardworking, polite. I really like the teachers. I love the place," said Szwajkowski.



Rita Zevallos
Dr. Cynthia Szwajkowski stands with her junior students CJ Anderson, Hannah Hagy, and Lindsey Rodgers. Szwajkowski is new to the Social Studies Department this year.

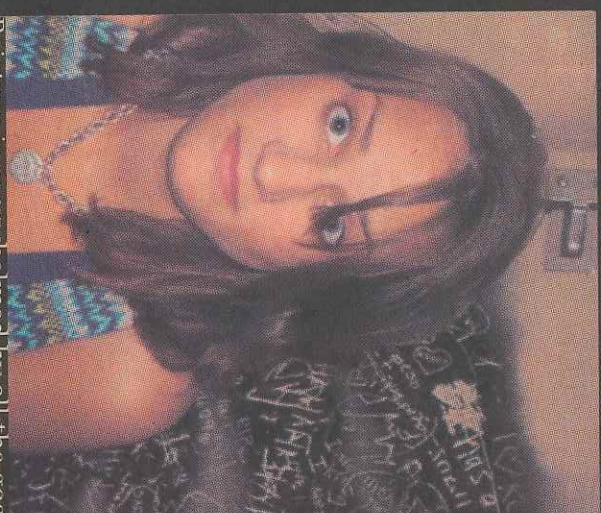
THE WRITING STUDENTS' RESPECT OF

THE ORACLEITES WERE SENT INTO OUR SCHOOL AND TOLD TO GO FIND A STORY. "ORACLE EDITOR JULIE PARISI DID JUST THAT, DISPLAYING HER FINDINGS WITH HER EXPOSÉ ON THE EXCESSIVE GRAFFITI IN OUR SCHOOL'S BATHROOMS."



Senior Gha Reistrup carefully examines one of the bathroom wall's many stories.

Julie Parisi



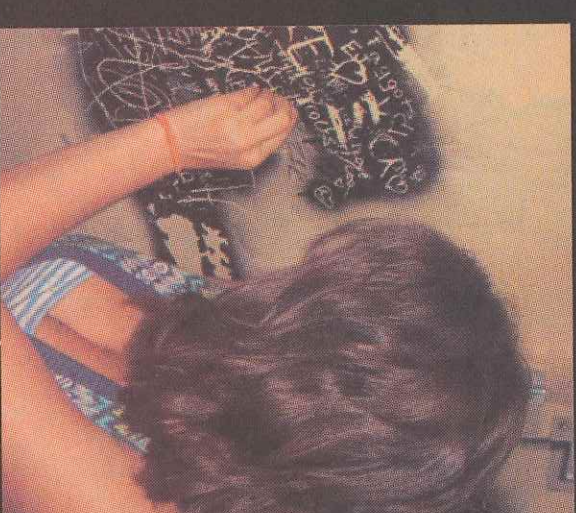
Reistrup is overwhelmed by all the gossipy statements and love proclamations.

Julie Parisi



Reistrup shows intrigue in the writing she sees and finds a piece that she finds interesting.

Julie Parisi



Reistrup demonstrates how many students feel the need to join in on the graffiti activity.

Julie Parisi



Thomas Arvale

A large, nondescript black, white, and blue spray painted blob is just one of our restrooms' many decorations. This graffiti is pointless, meaningless, and distracting.



The Oracle's Sports Editor Lurton in the Foreign Language room in the writings every single day.

By Julie Parisi
Oracle Editor

As Tommy Tutone's sportsrooms have recently begun to express their thoughts to relieve themselves.

"Jenny, Jenny, who can something I can hold on like the others before, a number on the wall."

Most of the writing is at unnamed people, they're pointlessly. Various initials, with people professed for "JB" and "NC."

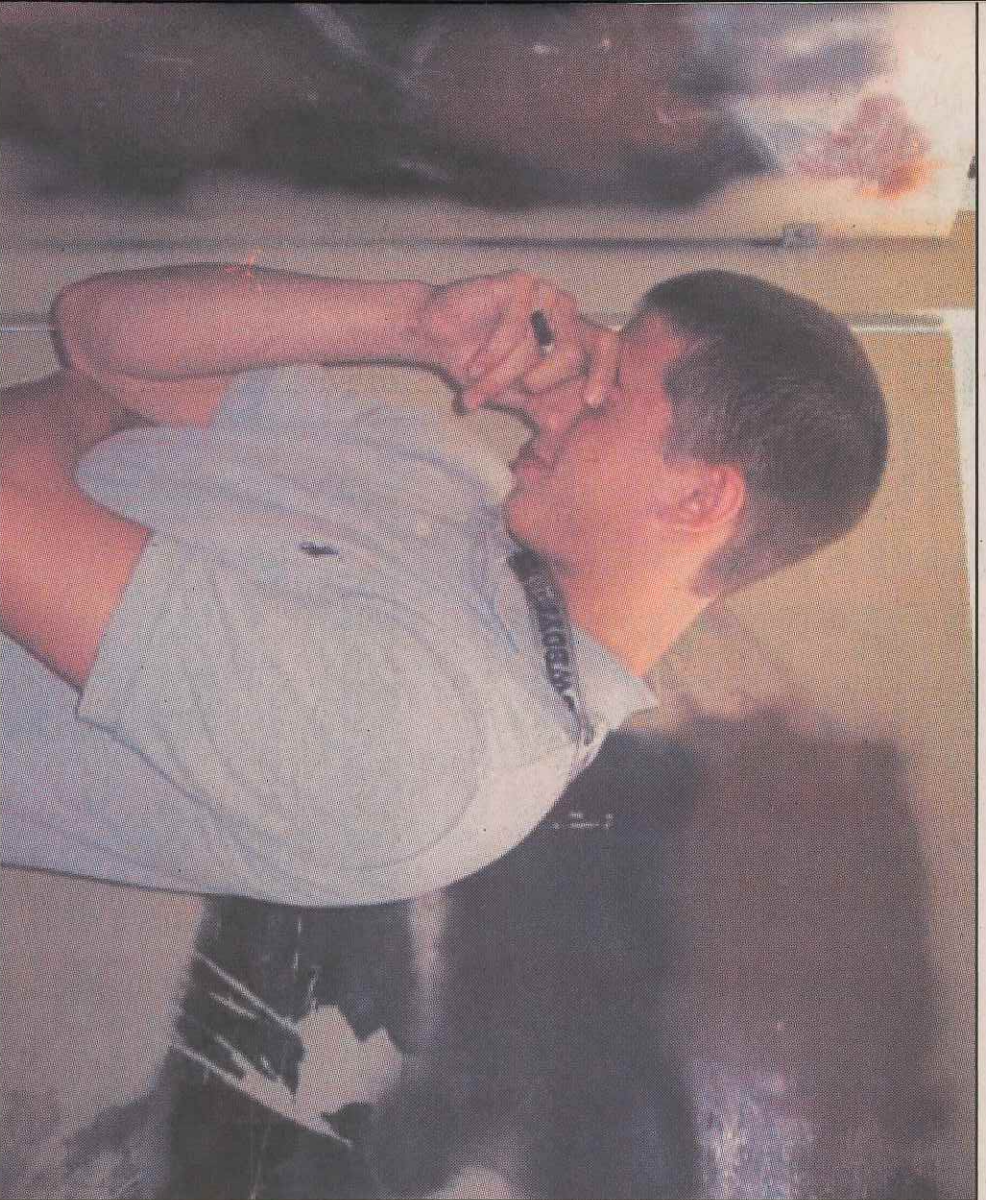
News flash: nothing you don't want anyone to exploits, then don't write however, your goal is figure it out, chances are whoever wrote "tell her you know that whoever ed for will probably never your advice.

"I think it is just a stupid down what they are afraid senior Moira Lennon.

For some unfathomable find pleasure in listing in the school, as exemplified that used to be in the language hall, as well as guys" list in the math hall.

As one student so art said list, "WHO CARES?" "Even though some of

IT'S ON THE WALL THE BATHROOMS HAS GONE DOWN THE DRAIN



Thomas Aratale

Lester shows his shame for the amount of graffiti adorning the walls of the boys' bathroom. Many students, like Lester, are disgusted with the fact that they have to look at the day while using the facilities.

ng "Jenny" suggests, re-
come a place for people
s and feelings instead of

n I turn to? You give me
to. I know you think I'm
who saw your name and
anonymous and aimed
by making it complete-
dials are engraved on the
ssing their undying love

ood will come of this. If
o know about your life's
et in a public place. If,
or a clever classmate to
e this will never happen.
you're a lesbian," I hope
his message was intend-
er see it, let alone heed
d way for people to write
id to say out loud," said

le reason, girls seem to
the most attractive guys
fied by the "hot guy list"
bathroom in the foreign
the "hottest sophomore
lway bathroom.

culately wrote on top of
it is utterly stupid, some

of it is extremely hilarious," said junior Kyle Bur-
nett.

One spiritual student wrote on a sticky note
"You are a Buddhist. I am a Hindu. Let's be friends?
XOXO - Siddhartha."

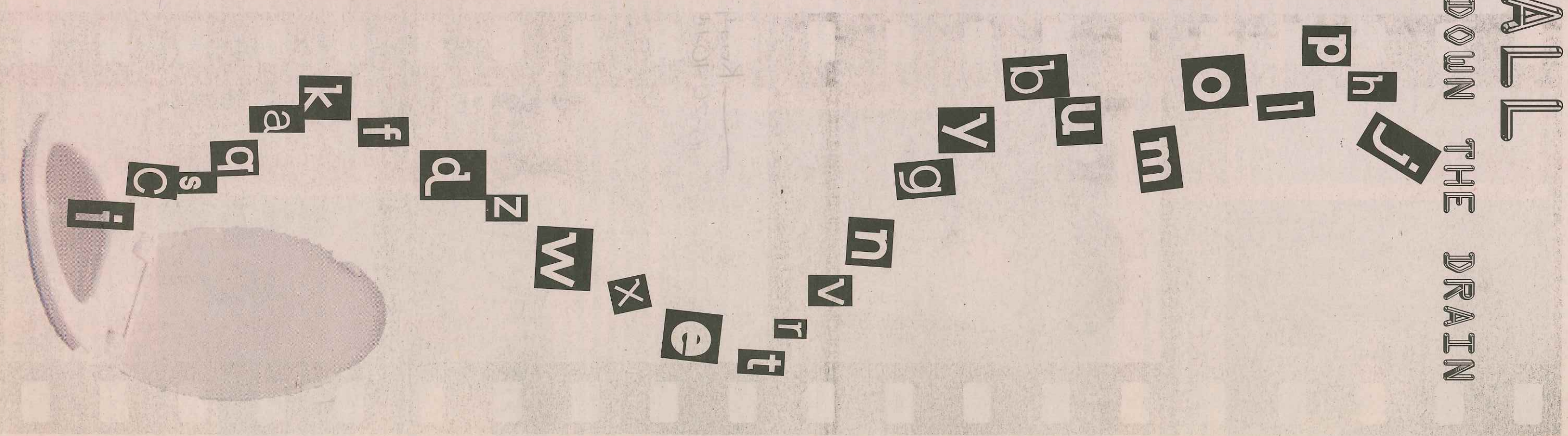
The problem with this message is that not only
is Siddhartha Gautama not a Hindu, he is *the*
Buddha. Unless at some point during his life the
founder of Buddhism decided to denounce the re-
ligion that he spent his entire life trying to create,
there is no reason why he would practice Hindu-
ism. If you feel the need to reference historical
figures, please make sure to do your research be-
forehand.

"It makes the bathrooms more interesting," said
senior Emily Cox. "When I'm having a bad day, I
know there will be something written in a stall
that will make me laugh."

A certain student who believed she had the
power to unleash the school basilisk wrote a word
of caution in no less than three of the girls' re-
strooms, warning students that "the Chamber of
Secrets has been opened."

To any and all enemies of the heir, I advise you
to beware. And try not to hide in any bathrooms
crying about petty insults, lest you be turned into
a gloomy ghost doomed to haunt the toilet plumb-
ing.

While some messages are amusing, please keep
your pen to yourself. It is unnecessary and it
makes our school look bad, not to mention it's
illegal if written directly on the stall. So don't be
like Jenny, and don't write your phone number in
the bathrooms for people to call for a good time.
Just take care of your business, and go back to
class.



Jewell and Kinsley bring biology to life



Kelsey Simpson

Susan Kinsley stands with a lively friend, a skeleton that adorns her classroom, during biology class. Kinsley tries to bring her own love and interest in biology into her classroom to share with students.

By Kelsey Simpson
Oracle Staff Writer

For outstanding work and dedication, two teachers from the biology department, Beth Jewell and Susan Kinsley, received prestigious awards that recognized their hard work in teaching.

Jewell was named Teacher of the Year from the National Marine Education Association (NMEA). Kinsley was nominated the Best Biology Teacher for 2010 by the National Association of Biology Teachers (NABT).

Kinsley described her long nomination process. She was nominated by former West Springfield administrator Mike Mulka, who completed the nomination packet. This packet includes letters of support from an administrator, a fellow teacher, a parent, and a student, as well as a videotape of Kinsley teaching in the classroom.

After this long process, and competing with hundreds of other nominees, Kinsley was named the Best Virginia Biology Teacher of 2010.

"I was shocked. There are so many excel-

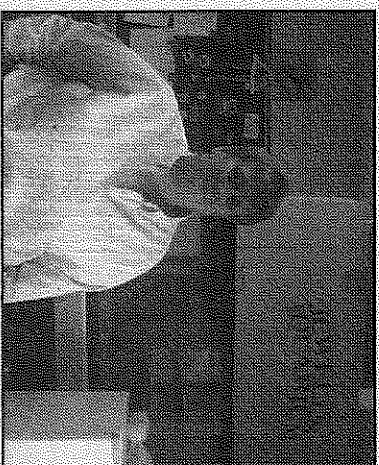
lent teachers out there, most of whom were not even nominated," said Kinsley. "I felt very fortunate to have an administrator who took the time and effort to nominate me."

To celebrate all of the great biology teachers and their achievements, the National Association of Biology Teachers will host a luncheon at their national conference this November. There, each teacher receives a free microscope and one other piece of science equipment.

Jewell was also recognized for her work in biology and oceanography. Jewell started the oceanography program at the school in the early 1990s. Now, she has helped set the standards for teaching the course throughout Fairfax County.

Both awards are a huge success as they recognize only the most prestigious and diligent of science teachers. Both Jewell and Kinsley, but have gone above and beyond the call of teaching.

"I think any teacher needs to love kids, have patience, compassion and understanding and be able to build strong relationships in the classroom...not just student/teacher re-



Kelsey Simpson

Beth Jewell stands in her classroom before her appropriately named aquarium. Jewell teaches not only biology, but oceanography. Relationships, but also student/student relationships," said Kinsley.

Kinsley is the department chairperson and biology team leader which require her to stay after beyond her regular teaching hours. Jewell also dedicates her time by staying after helping students and improving the Oceanography department.

"As far as specific qualities for biology teachers, a love and wonder of the natural world is important," said Kinsley. "I don't display these qualities every day, but I hope I display them more days than not!"

Steffensen is not in Sparta anymore

Junior plans to spend the next year living with a monk in Japanese journey

By Jessica Drago

Features Editor

The best way to learn a foreign language is to be immersed in the culture, which is exactly how junior Greg Steffensen is spending this school year.

For the next year, Steffensen is staying in Japan to study. Steffensen lives with a monk and his family in a Buddhist temple located in Ichinomiya, a small city in Aichi prefecture. Learning as much about Japanese language and culture is the purpose of studying abroad, Steffensen and his peers spend all day every day learning something new.

"The Japanese language is easy to learn, but will destroy you to master," said Steffensen.

School for Steffensen and the other 25 students studying abroad begins at 9 a.m. and ends at 3:45. The focus is put on learning as much about the Japanese language and culture as possible. English is the first class of the day, instead of reading books like *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, students read Japanese classics translated into English. "Speaking Japanese isn't too hard; it's the reading part that gets tough," said Steffensen.

History class is also primarily focused on Japanese history, going back as far as 10,000 years. After Japanese history is pre-calculus and then lunch. For three days of the week students get bento boxes for lunch which are single-portion takeout meals. A traditional bento consists of rice, fish or meat, and more pickled or cooked vegetables.

While American school lunches tend to be less like meals and more like a variety of unhealthy snacks, whereas the bento that Japanese students get is more healthy and nutritious. During the other two days students do not receive bento boxes but are given 500 yen, roughly \$5, and allowed to leave campus in search of fast food instead.

Fast food in Japan is very different from fast food in America. American fast food typically features cheap, poor quality foods mostly made up of meat. In Japan, there is a wider variety of fast food places ranging from an udon noodle restaurant called Nanko that takes your order with a vending machine up front to Mos Burger, a restaurant similar to McDonald's.

After lunch is over, the students return to class for two straight periods of Japanese study. These two periods are intensive and really help the student studying abroad to focus on learning Japanese.

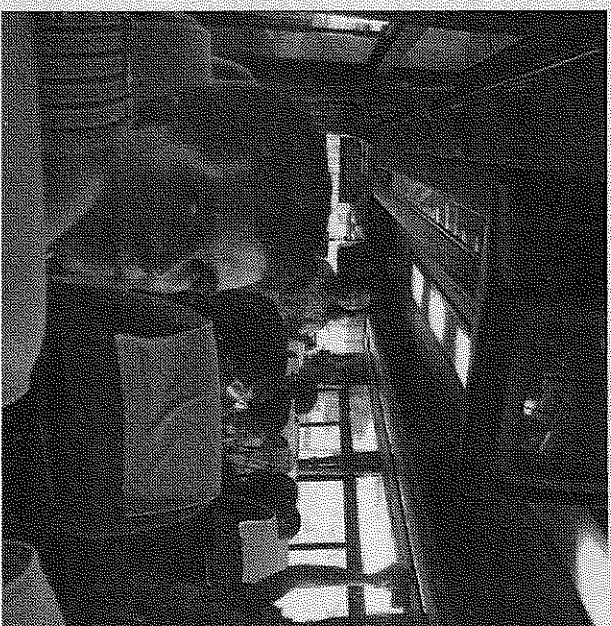
"Two periods of Japanese can get exhausting," said Steffensen.

After school, Steffensen and the other students hang around town and relax.

"Homework loads are pretty low, so chilling around is the top priority," said Steffensen.

The entire experience is not just about school. Steffensen will get a glimpse of a new and different culture, something that most American students never get a chance to do.

"Japan's been wonderful so far, and I still have nine months," said Steffensen.



courtesy of Greg Steffensen

Junior Greg Steffensen rides a tour bus in Japan. Steffensen is spending the year in Japan, learning the language and becoming immersed in the culture. he has been living with a monk and his family and his long classes include history and mastery of the Japanese language. Though his classes are rigorous, Steffensen enjoys the challenge and fully embraces the culture.

On their toes

'Claras' show love for dancing

By Megan Burpo

Viewpoint Editor

Tutus, pretty pink shoes, and their own special hairstyle. Needless to say, ballerinas have it made!

When people think of popular dancing today, hip-hop comes to mind and ballet seems like a thing of the past. For juniors Samantha Skobel and Ammie Sneed, however, dancing has been an integral part of their life.

Skobel has been dancing ballet since her mom signed her up when she was two years old, but for Skobel dancing goes back farther than that.

"My grandma was a ballerina, and I always saw pictures of her dancing and wanted to be a ballerina just like she was," said Skobel.

Sneed caught the dancing bug early as well as she has been dancing since she was three and finds it a very rewarding experience.

"I love the adrenaline rush," says Sneed. Being a part of a program for so long, is hard to believe as most kids skip around to all sorts of sports and activities. Skobel and

Sneed couldn't imagine doing anything else, though they do perform other types of dance such as hip-hop and pointe.

Dancing not only provides discipline and strength, but also offers them with life-changing experiences.

"A few weeks ago for hip-hop class, Jason Cerdá came to teach us, he's been on 'So You Think You Can Dance' and has worked with many famous rappers and has made several music videos, it was pretty cool," said Sneed.

Performing itself can be a pretty daunting task for any ballerina, no matter what part you play. Each dancer is crucial to the ballet, helping to tell the story. However for Skobel, performing isn't always as fun as it sounds.

"I would rather improve technique than improve performing since I don't want to be a professional dancer," said Skobel.

Both girls have similar experiences as their favorite parts include playing roles in "The Nutcracker." While both girls played Clara, that was Sneed's favorite role. Skobel preferred playing one of the Dolls, which she performed twice, once with Sneed.

"Clara was fun but it was a lot of standing and looking gorgeous," said Skobel. "I liked



courtesy of Samantha Skobel

Samantha Skobel plays a memorable part in "The Nutcracker." Skobel loves to dance, and has been doing ballet since the young age of two. Her favorite role in the play was acting as one of the Dolls in "The Nutcracker," although she also has played Clara, the star of the show.

the Dolls because it was more fun to dance and work together with your partner."

Even though dancing is a big part of these girls' life, both have said that they do not plan to be professional ballerinas. Being a professional dancer is a tough lifestyle with the practices and performances—most careers end by the time a dancer in her late 20s.

"I probably won't [be a professional dancer], but it's really fun and rewarding and it helps me meet a lot of cool people," said Sneed.

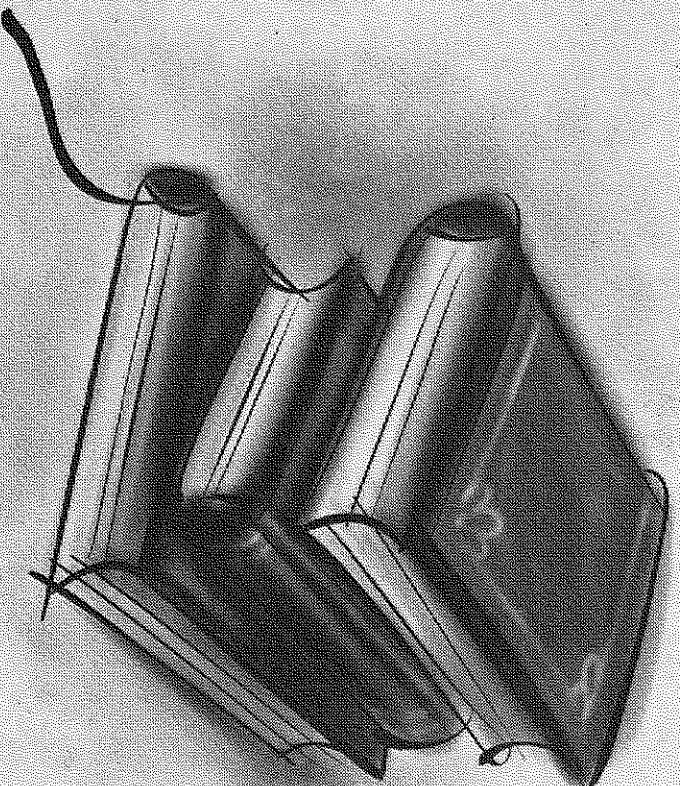
The dancers decided that if they were to go into any ballet-related career, they would want to work with little kids.

"I want to work with mentally disabled children. I believe everyone deserves to dance," said Skobel.

No matter that these two don't plan to pursue this as a career, these two won't be giving up any time soon.

"It's a stress relief and I can't go without it," said Skobel. "I'm hopelessly addicted to ballet."

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A+ for Emma Stone

By Sam Perstein

Features Editor

Sarcastic and edgy Emma Stone, as Olive in "Easy A," steals the show and everyone's hearts.

Quirky teenager Olive Penderghast is average, so she tells some lies and some more lies. Olive gets everyone to believe she lost her virginity and gets paid to pretend to do it with the socially downtrodden.

Olive becomes the real life Hester Prynne. Yep, "Easy A" is just another adaptation to world class English literature, only this time Stone takes the A.

The Scarlet Letter, written by Nathaniel Hawthorne, is a classic that has been made much more accessible through Olive's sarcastic lines and blaring Lady Gaga music.

"Easy A" starts off as one of those "chick flicks," but soon, with the introduction of Mr. and Mrs. Penderghast's strange parenting behavior, it becomes a feel good film taking its rightful place next to "10 Things I Hate About You" in the date night hall of fame.

Just as "10 Things I Hate About You" takes Shakespeare's famous play *The Taming of the Shrew* and sets it in modern times,

"Easy A" takes the theme and essence of *The Scarlet Letter* and drops it into a suburban high school.

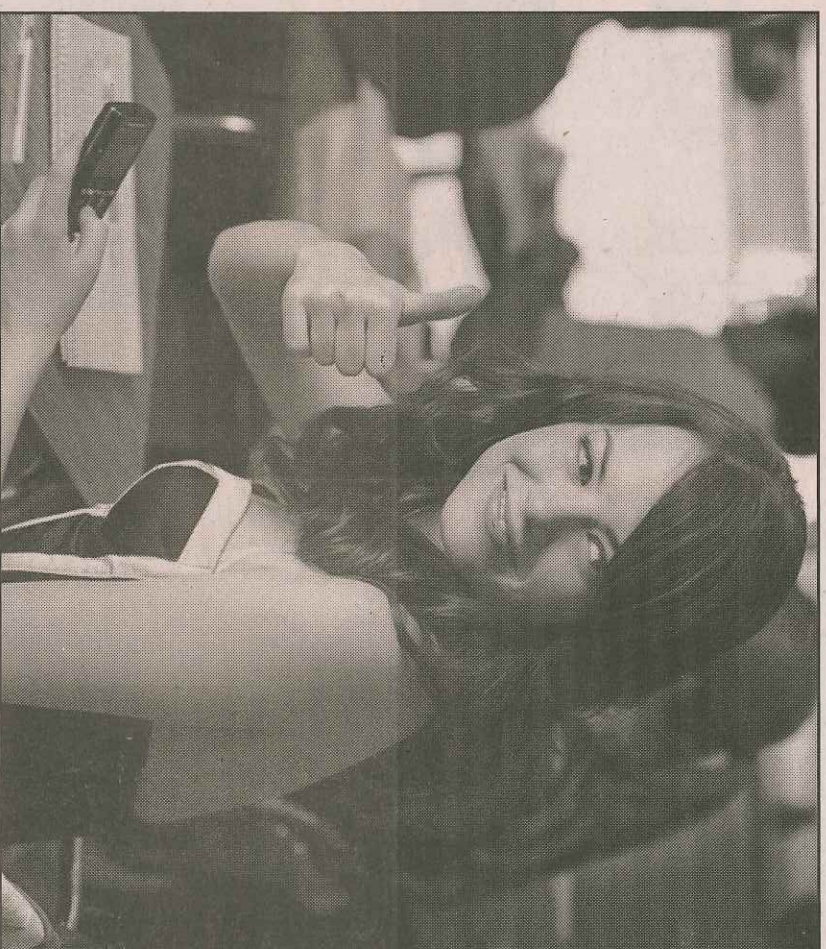
It has Jesus-worshipping mean girls, provocative best friends and a collection of surprising "love" interests all rolled into one movie.

"Easy A" spurs out a whole package of characters, each with their own distinct stereotype and loud personality, who are brought to life by a variety of charismatic actors and actresses. From Amanda Bynes and Penn Badgley to Stanley Tucci and Lisa Kudrow, you don't have go far to see the people you love to laugh with.

With random references to pop culture classics like "Sixteen Candles" and John Cusack's abnormally large boom box, you have to give credit to the ingenious minds behind today's filming industry; they have finally figured out that the 80s produced the best movies and stopped fighting it.

The 80s were when people ditched the books and headed to the theaters, and "Easy A" brought that back for our enjoyment.

Emma Stone made the whole nine dollars I spent to see "Easy A" worthwhile.



Dose

Emma Stone has appeared in "House Bunny" and "Superbad," both famous teen comedies. Adding "Easy A" to her list of roles sets Stone apart as an up-and-coming comedic actress.

Rock on, Betty White

Coming back cooler than ever before

By Kelly Carlin
Oracle Editor

If there's one thing the people of America need to say to Betty White, it's "thank you for being a friend."

The 88-year-old has had a resurgence of popularity in recent years, particularly with young people who were not previously exposed to her career.

Featured in popular movies such as "The Proposal" and the soon to be released "You Again," White's fame has skyrocketed, making her a household name, and providing many new fans.

"She's hilarious and if she were forty years younger, she would be amazing," said junior Daniel Breedlove.

Betty White originally gained fame on the 1970s hit, "The Mary Tyler Moore Show," and her popularity grew even more when she played Rose Nylund on "The Golden Girls." After the conclusion of these television favorites, White's fame was enough to keep her popular, providing guest voice over spots on "The Simpsons" and "Family Guy."

In January, a campaign was started by fans on Facebook that begged NBC's "Saturday Night Live" to feature Betty White as the host. That May, their efforts paid off.

White became the oldest person to ever host "Saturday

Night Live," bringing in the highest ratings in two years. The performance was so memorable that White won an Emmy in the Outstanding Guest Actress in a Comedy Series category. During the Super Bowl, she was featured in a Snickers commercial that won the top spot on the USA Today Super Bowl Ad Meter.

White is an avid animal rights activist. She has posed for a calendar for the Morris Animal Foundation, featuring her posing with various animals. The profits from the calendar went to the foundation, dedicated to help animals in need.

In July, White launched her own clothing line with products featuring her face. The money earned from these purchases was then donated to animal charities she supports.

"She's the epitome of humor," said senior Jessica Friedel. "She's sassy and classy."

Even at 88, Betty White is regarded as one of the funniest contemporary actors today, having a hotter career than starts half (and a fourth) of her age.

Her hit sitcom on TV Land, "Hot in Cleveland," was recently renewed for a season two that commences filming this October. White also appeared in this seasons premiere of NBC's "Community."

"I think she's awesome," said senior Kristine Krieger, "because she's Betty White."

A thousand suns shine on Linkin Park

Band takes new direction with recently released album

By Sam Goldwasser
Managing Editor

"A Thousand Suns," Linkin Park's newest album, is taking the band in a new direction.

The album focuses on nuclear war and other general themes of warfare. Generally known for being an alternative rock band, Linkin Park takes their music to a different place by featuring a few hip-hop songs on their album.

"I like their music. It speaks to me and the lyrics actually have meaning, which is hard to find with music these days," said senior Robert Hutchinson.

It was Linkin Park's goal to make this new album more cutting edge and different. They found their inspiration for it from a quote in the Hindu Sanskrit text, the *Bhagavad Gita* which says: "If the radiance of a thousand suns were to burst at once into the sky that would be like the splendor of the Mighty One."

"We've been used to making a certain type of music and using sounds to accomplish that. So to break out of that and push



Sapru/USA

Linkin Park's new album, "A Thousand Suns," is very intriguing and different. Although it's hard to top their highly rated album "Hybrid Theory," Linkin Park is again setting the bar high. With new serious and intricate songs, Linkin Park is ready to wow the music world.

ourselves to grow is definitely challenging," said the band's drummer Rob Bourdon in an interview with Billboard Magazine.

The band's main goal in producing such an experimental and different album was to sound more organic and less technical.

"Their new album is way different than anything they've done before," said Hutchinson, "it's good, but, you know, out there."

Fans responded well to the band's new album, topping the Billboard 200 chart with 241,000 copies sold. However, as with any type of experimental music, the band received mixed responses from critics with some hating the album, while others raved.

"We wanted to make sure everything was top quality," said the band's singer Mike Shinoda.

The album also features a track with the highly political hip-hop group Public Enemy, and samples of famous speeches, such as Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I have a Dream Speech."

"I am glad they decided to do try something new, it turned out really well," said Hutchinson.

Baby bumps overwhelm daytime TV

We need to see something besides teen pregnancy on the tube

By Sara Lepley
Entertainment Editor

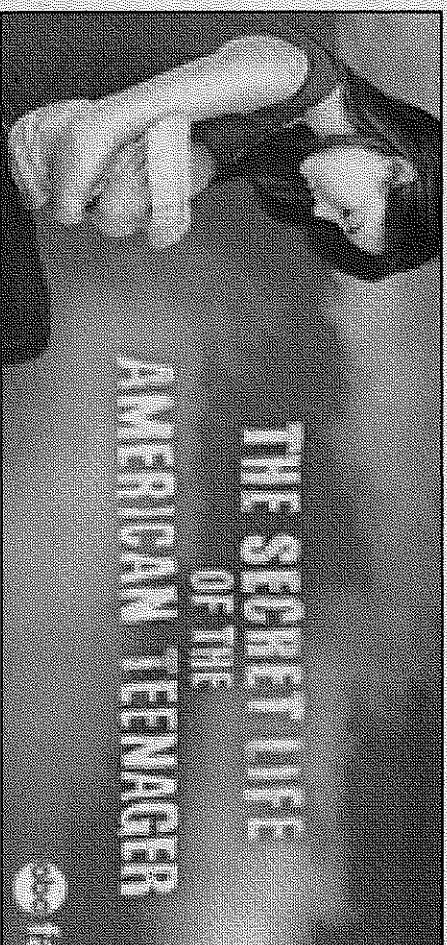
When I flip on the TV and see “Teen Mom” or “Sixteen and Pregnant,” I can barely help my eyes from glazing over. MTV, I expected just a little more from you.

Junio was great. You can’t resist the quirky mommy-to-be with her hamburger phone and quick comebacks. But the teen pregnancy act had its run. Now it’s just banal and clichéd.

Not that “The Secret Life of the American Teenager” did not give a good hard try. The acting was superb and I totally believe that the awkward, stuttering prone Ben knocked up Adrian, the school’s hottest color guard. Now there are upwards of three characters with positive pregnancy tests from the relatively small cast list, two of which are in the same family. It is on ABC Family, so I suppose they were just trying to create a big one.

But “The Secret Life” is not the only to join the trend. Even “Glee” has used pregnancy at least twice in one season to create plot twist, which is disappointing because “Glee” is otherwise original.

I cannot blame today’s TV for using it as



Not everyone is stoked about teen pregnancy—especially the teen mothers, including Amy Jennings, a pregnant fifteen-year-old in “The Secret Life of the American Teenager.”

a plot-device. It creates drama easily, making screenwriter’s jobs fairly easy.

But I can only watch that course of event so many times. The obstacles are basically all the same. Our protagonist deals with let down parents, the baby’s daddy, money and balancing school/work/baby. These movies

and programs rarely offer inspiration.

Sometimes parents claim love conquers all their hardships, but mostly they just complain. Every time that I have tuned in, everyone spends the entire time whining. I would not be surprised if their baby’s first words were a complaint.

Young Money’s Minaj brings in cash

By Anna Lehman
Entertainment Editor

Nicki Minaj, electrifying the world with her talented voice and her vibrantly colored wigs.

A little over a year ago New Yorker Onika Minaj, better known as her stage name Nicki Minaj, was not as well known as Katy Perry or Rihanna, but getting there.

Having her first live performance at the pre-*MTV* show, she mesmerized the audience with her cool style of rapping and singing as well as her very animated performance. The very out-of-the-box lyrics keeps her fans on their toes.

“She’s one of the few female rappers that are good” said sophomore Ayan Ali.

But where did it all begin? In 2007, Minaj released her first CD *Pink Friday*. Over, with

Lil Wayne appearing in the song “Can’t stop, won’t stop,” then in the next year releasing *Sucka Free*.

In 2009, after *Beam me up Scotty* was released, in which Minaj got a lot of attention for her bold songs, she was signed with Young Money Entertainment.

Many artists have also taken notice of her talent, and are pairing up with Minaj. Artists like Ludacris, will.i.am, Sean Garrett, Justin Bieber, T.I., Diddy, Mariah Carey, Christina Aguilera, have all taken notice of the young singer.

Minaj’s voice is just one of the things about her that perks people’s interests, another being her outrageous outfits.

“Her style is very cool and memorable” said senior Lauren Marquez.

Very form-fitting and bright, her clothes

I am going to keep my eyes open for a new, fresh show.

I am not trying to be unsympathetic. I understand the hardships that come with being a young parent are stressful and no walk in the park. It is hard to raise children when you are still a child yourself. But that does not mean I want to witness it all the time.

What really bothers me is that there will be aspiring young girls who think, “If I get pregnant, I might get my own T.V. show” which is not a message we should be sending.

Also, doesn’t it kind of bother you that there are all these cameramen and directors just watching a sixteen-year-old struggle with a crying infant? I get that they signed a contract, but wouldn’t they feel guilty? Maybe a little dirty, making money of the pains of an ill equipped teenager.

If you want to watch another teenager get pregnant, be my guest. As for me, I am going to keep my eyes open for a new, fresh show. Preferably one without child.

show off her wacky style. For example her cotton candy pink wig paired with a purple spandex jumpsuit, or her intense orange wig worn with a floor length white dress, sported at the 2010 Black Entertainment TV awards.

Minaj’s style may be getting a lot of publicity, but so are her amount of accomplishments.

At the BET awards she won Best Female Hip Hop artist, as well as Best New Artist. She also received nominations for the best new artist at the MTV music awards, and Best International Act at the Mobo Awards.

She may have started out as unknown Onika Minaj, but she’s becoming known as the daring Nicki Minaj strutting the stage with her confident voice and wild clothing.

“She’s almost like a black version of Lady Gaga” said sophomore Alison Aguilar.



Donning extravagant wigs and flashy clothing, Nicki Minaj tears through the notorious male-dominated rap and hip-hop music industry.



The Burke Civic Ballet

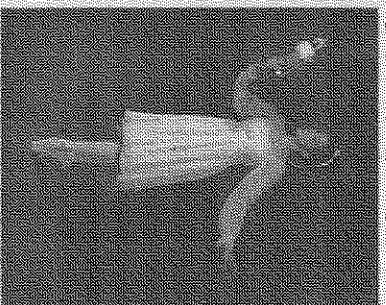
presents

The Nutcracker



Saturday, November 13th 2010 at 3:00pm and 7:00pm
Sunday, November 14th 2010 at 2:00pm and 6:00pm

First Community Cultural Center Theater
Northern Virginia Community College Annandale Campus



Burke Civic Ballet's "The Nutcracker"

Come share in the magic of the holiday tradition! Featuring 3 year old miniature dolls to professional dancers courtesy of Colorado Ballet, this production will enchant all ages. Be mesmerized by a growing tree, magic tricks, leaping mice, toy soldiers, falling snow, authentic costumes made in the Ukraine, seventy-five dancing flowers and delectable confections from the Kingdom of Sweets. Treat yourself and friends to a wonderful entrée to the spirit of the season. Makes a perfect holiday gift!

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Spidey swings onto the Broadway stage

By Kyle Rushton & Lisa Williams

Oracle Staff Writers

First a comic book, then a movie, now a musical?

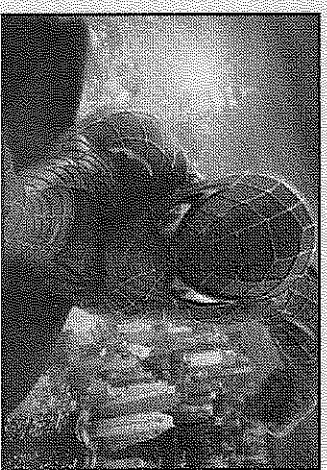
Along with several other movies, Spider Man is becoming a Broadway rock musical. The original comic book series has sparked several spin off comic book series, a successful movie franchise, and many children’s products like clothing and shoes.

Now, Spidey and friends head off to New York City to light up the Broadway stage with their intense battles.

Despite being delayed several times, the new show begins practice on November 14 and opening night is scheduled for December 21. The musical will follow the original plot line, which many Spider Man fans were glad to hear. Many of the actors’ names have been kept under wraps thus far in an effort to build suspense for the long-awaited show.

Another big name affiliated with this production is the director, Julie Taymor, who became famous for her direction of “The Lion King” in 1997. She was the first woman to win the Tony Award for Best Direction of a Musical, therefore bringing experience and skill to the production.

However, getting the original plot line and big names to star in and produce the musical rendition of a thriving franchise doesn’t come cheap. The show is said by New York Times to be the “most expensive show in Broadway.” Tickets will run up to about \$300, which is approximately three times the



Takes from the Firehouse

price of a normal ticket to other shows.

Broadway has titled the show, “Spider-Man: Turn off the Dark,” which will feature music and lyrics by Bono and the Edge, names that may be contributing to the large bill for tickets.

More drama has been circulating in the realm of Spider Man regarding the long-anticipated fourth movie in the series.

Back in 2007, Spider Man 4 had already begun production, and a fifth movie was anticipated. However, just recently, the fourth movie was cancelled when the director withdrew from the production.

This sudden turn of event left many Spider fans in distress over when the next installment would be available for their viewing pleasure.

To allay the fans’ displeasure, a Spider-Man “reboot” is scheduled to hit the theatres in July 2012 in 3-D.

In the meantime, the musical will be available to the most affluent and loyal Spider Man fans.

Ladies take the field

By Amanda Pearson
Staff Writer

Pay back is amazing when you're a senior.

Homecoming 2010 was swept by the seniors, winning the float contest and beating the juniors in the Powder Puff game on Wednesday night.

Everyone looks forward to the Powder Puff game but had to wait another week, all in all it was all worth it.

"I loved it everyone had their part and the coaches got so into it," said freshman administrator Valerie Winter.

The freshmen and sophomore game was a shocker. When the sophomores were up by almost 20 points you could still see the competitiveness in the eyes of the

freshmen and the most important thing was that they had fun. WS always has good participation when it comes to school spirit, for any sport. When the senior body painters walked in and yelled seniors, with the word eleven spelled out on their chests and chanted "scoreboard, scoreboard!" the entire game to the juniors, who became a little bit arrogant toward the middle of the game since the score was tied.

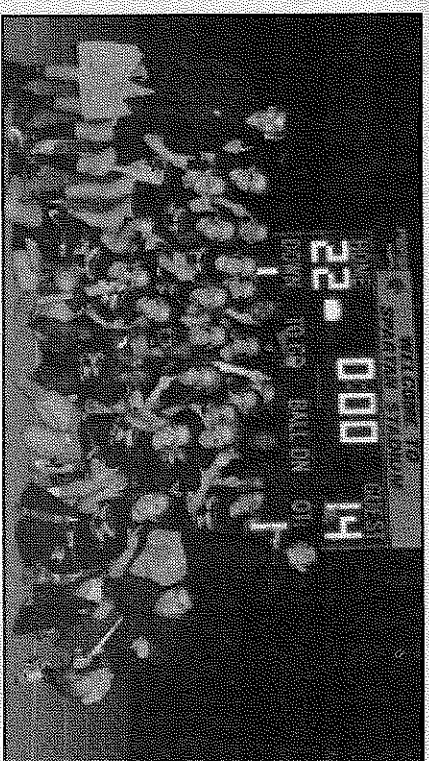
Three was the magic number for senior Paige Babel as she ran for three touchdowns, two in the first half and one in the second. Babel knew exactly what she had to do since her team was struggling on running the ball. Those soccer skills came in handy when Babel ran nearly the length of the field on each attempt to score.

The senior defense, led by Nora Osei, had to stay focused throughout the entire game.

"Honestly I thought it was cute when the juniors stepped on our turf thinking they had a chance to win," said Osei, "but when we were tied 14-14, not going to lie they made me pretty nervous."

After scoring, minus the minor distraction of the juniors jumping up and down trying to throw her off, senior Imani Clayton put the icing on the cake by completing three of her four field goals.

In the competitive juniors, Candance Plaska had a bomb in her leg that night completing nearly half of her attempted field goals, but running on a field instead of a court meant nearly nothing to juniors Logan Battle and April Robinson. Playing both positions, Battle



Michelle O'Brien

The Class of 2011 poses by the scoreboard following their 22-14 win over the junior class. This brings their overall record to 2 wins and 2 losses.

and Robinson switched back and forth between quarter back and wide receiver. Being able to throw the football almost 60 yards, Robinson had many good passes, but the receivers weren't quite able to handle the deep yardage.

With her family in the stands yelling "SHORTLY," Robinson wanted a repeat of two years ago when they beat the sophomores, SENIORS!

Headaches over concussions

By Lisa Williams
Oracle Editor

A simple hit in the head may not sound bad, but for a student-athlete, such an injury can be devastating.

Athletes who have suffered concussions would agree that the ailment is frustrating, leaving them disoriented, dizzy, and nauseous. It can stay for days, weeks, and even months, rendering the concussed person both athletically and academically incapable until the symptoms subside.

"It has prevented me from playing soccer and going to school," said junior Theresa O'Sullivan, who got her concussion during a State Cup soccer game over three weeks ago. "I went in to head the ball and a girl came in early and headed me in the face with the back of her head. I went straight to the emergency room."

O'Sullivan's case may be a particularly extreme one, since it has been over three weeks and, while improvements have occurred, the effects of the concussion are still taking their toll.

"I can't watch TV for too long or read right now or I get really bad headaches and it can set me back from getting better. I

couldn't even go to Homecoming because of this stupid injury," said O'Sullivan.

Unfortunately, symptoms can be more than just your standard headache. Depending on where the brain receives the blow, other consequences can occur.

"I felt like I had vertigo," said senior Quinn DeVot, who received her concussion after being hit in the head with a stick during a Field Hockey game against TJ. "The hit also struck my brain in a certain spot that controls emotions, so I was crying randomly and uncontrollably."

These types of athletic injuries can be very dangerous and have long-term effects. All student-athletes must watch a video at the beginning of each new sports season cautioning them of the dangers of continuing to participate in sports when their brain is injured. This video helps the trainers to be sure that everyone is informed, and hopefully make good decisions. They also help to alleviate athletes once the concussion is in full effect.

"The trainers were really great. They made sure that I was fully healthy to play again, and they gave me great advice on what I could do to feel better," said DeVot. "I just wanted to make the most of my last Field Hockey season before it was over."

Concussions have been a serious problem for high school athletes around the country, as well as here at WS. "All I can really do is rest and try to do things until they hurt me," said junior Theresa O'Sullivan.



Medical Images

Battle commits to Georgetown

By Austin Kaminski
Sports Editor

For most high school students, the college application process is a long and tedious one.

Students will join random clubs and honor societies that they hope will help them be noticed by colleges. This process was a bit different for junior Logan Battle.

Battle recently committed to Georgetown University to play basketball on a full scholarship. Georgetown, located in Washington DC, is one of the most prestigious schools in the country in both academic standards and athletics.

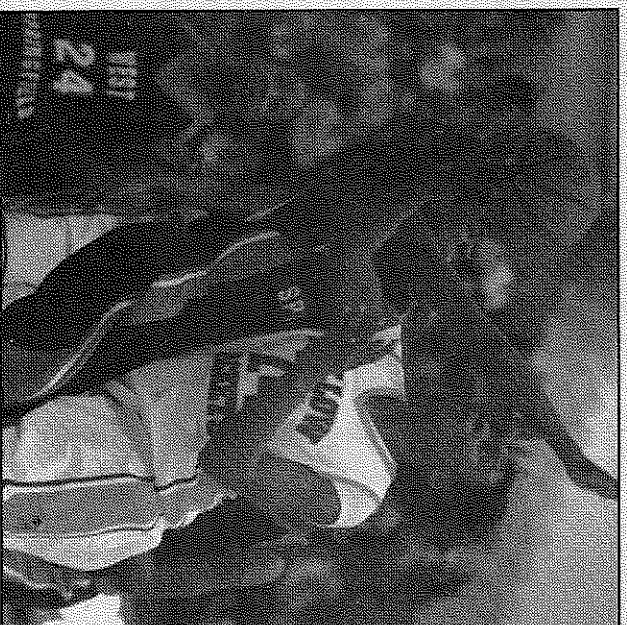
The *US News and World Report* ranked them as the number 21 best academic school in the country. Georgetown's basketball program is also highly successful on both the men's and women's sides. The men's team has reached the final 4 five times and has produced NBA big men Patrick Ewing and Greg Monroe.

While the women's team does not have quite the same pedigree as the men's team, they have enjoyed success of late. They begin the season ranked 13 in the AP poll.

"It's really the perfect school for me," said Battle. "Not just for basketball, but academics as well."

Battle, who has been a starter on the Varsity squad since her freshman season, is accustomed to success as the Lady Spartans have been one of the best programs in the area since her arrival.

But Georgetown plays in one of the best leagues in the country, the Big East, and wins will not be as easy to come by. Perennial powerhouse Connecticut, who also plays in this league, currently has a 78-game winning streak and has won 30 Big East Conference Championships.



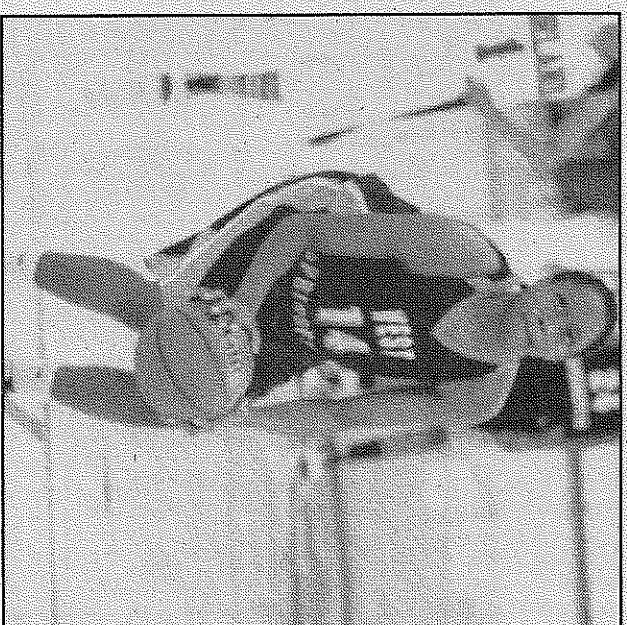
Richard Lipski

Battle shows off her suffocating defense as she blocks a shot against Osbourne Park high school in Manassas.

"It should be good competition," said Battle. "I'm very excited for the opportunity."

For top basketball recruits such as Battle, the recruiting process starts at an early age. Georgetown wasn't the only school interested in her services; Virginia Tech, Clemson and the University of Delaware all were interested in Battle.

Georgetown, who had been recruiting her since she was 12, finally offered the scholarship in August. Battle did not



Courtesy of Logan Battle

Battle prepares to take a free throw against Miami Norland High School during a tournament in Miami.

immediately accept, however. She took a month to step back and evaluate all her options on which school would be the best option for her future.

But in the end, Georgetown offered the best opportunity for her both on and off the court, and her family supported her decision.

"It's a family decision," said Battle. "For my family and I, grades come first and basketball is second."

Everybody do the John Wall

Kentucky phenom has Wizards fans moving forward

By Nicole Brigham

Oracle Staff Writer

What happens when the Wizards hit a wall? They call Wall. The six foot four, 195 pound basketball super star was drafted first overall by the Wizards this year.

Although a gifted athlete, school did not come as easy for John Wall. He attended Word of God Christian Academy for 5 years.

In high school he averaged 21 points, 7 rebounds, and nine assists per game and was ranked the number one point guard in the country by rivals.com and scout.com.

Wall attended the University of Kentucky for one year before being drafted. While in college, he carried his team to many victories including a run to the Elite Eight in the NCAA Tournament.

"He is a big impact on the Wizards, and very fast," said sophomore Apri Robinson, a star on the Lady Spartans basketball team.

In the 2009-2010 season Wall played 37 games. He averaged 16.6 points per game. Wall received many awards and recognitions in 2010. Such as the 2010 SEC player of the year, 2010 Consensus First Team All-Amer-

"I think he is... impressive at slashing through the paint, and he can dish the ball like a champ."

-Ali Kazmi
Senior

ican, and the Most Outstanding Player at the 2010 Las Vegas Summer League.

"I think he is very impressive at slashing through the paint, and he can dish the ball like a champ," said Ali Kazmi, a starter on the boys basketball team.

While generally known for his skills on the hardwood, he is also a well known dancer. His signature dance, The John Wall Dance, became a new phenomenon during his freshman year at Kentucky.

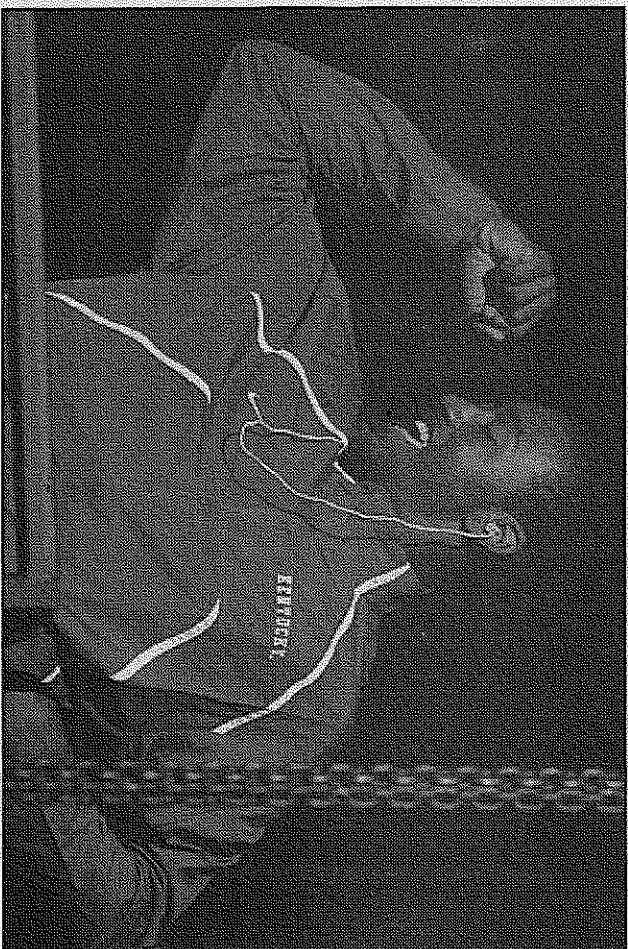
The dance consists of flexing and swiveling his arm while head bobbing. Unknown at the time to him, the dance would sweep across the nation.

"It's funny," said Zach Jarrett. "It's kind of like the Stanly Leg or Jerk."

What would The John Wall Dance be without a song to dance to? Have no fear. Troop 41 has already fixed the problem with their song. Do the John Wall.

"Do it for the City, we do it for the fans, to ball like Wall boy you gotta do the dance," the song talks about Wall's hometown of Raleigh, and instructions for doing the John Wall Dance.

Get ready to watch Wall in action. Pre-season starts October 5, and regular season starts October 28.



Mark Cornelison

John Wall shows off his famous John Wall dance. Wizards fans have a lot to look forward to as Wall was considered by far the best player in the draft. Many experts think that Wall is one of a kind and no other guard can be trained to be as good as him.



Mark Cornelison

The next big thing around DC

By Danielle Mazzuchi

Scoop Editor

The most talked about male athlete since Lebron James and considered by many to be the greatest batting prospect ever, seventeen year old Bryce Harper has begun to make a name for himself in the MLB.

Hailing from Las Vegas, Nevada, Harper paved way for his future by being the first-ever high school sophomore to win Baseball America's High School player of the Year Award. He obtained his GED and enrolled in South Nevada Community College. Skipping his final two years of high school enabled him to be eligible for the 2010 MLB Draft. As a result, he was the prospective number one pick of the draft.

Harper continued his love for the game by playing for the USA's baseball 18 and under team. This was satisfying enough for scouts. However, he stamped a name for himself at the International Power Showcase at Tropicana Field, while recording the longest home run in Tropicana field had ever seen.

Being that Harper is only 17 years of age, it was hard for critics to project the impact he would have on the big leagues.

As a player, Harper is considered to be the best batting prospect the MLB has ever seen. Although most will see his offense as his main asset, Harper is also a solid defensive player at catcher. In his transition to the MLB, however, he will be converting to outfielder.

Although he is clearly one of the best players the MLB has ever seen, Harper is known for his extremely cocky attitude. It's one thing to be

SPORTS ILLUSTRATED

BRYCE HARPER IS THE MOST EXCITING PRODIGY SINCE LEBRON

BY TOM VERDUCCI

BASEBALLS

CHOSSEN

ONE

570 HOMERUNS

96 FASTBALLS

15 YEARS OLD

Sports Illustrated

Bryce Harper, pictured on the front cover of *Sports Illustrated*. At the time, Harper was sixteen years old and as the cover says, "the most exciting prodigy since Lebron." Harper, the number one overall pick in the MLB draft will convert to outfielder in his transition to the big leagues. With the return of Stephen and addition of Harper, the Nationals look to compete for the first time.

confident, but it's another thing to think you're the best thing to ever walk the face of the Earth. Nationals fans will have to hope that Harper does not become the Terrell Owens of baseball.

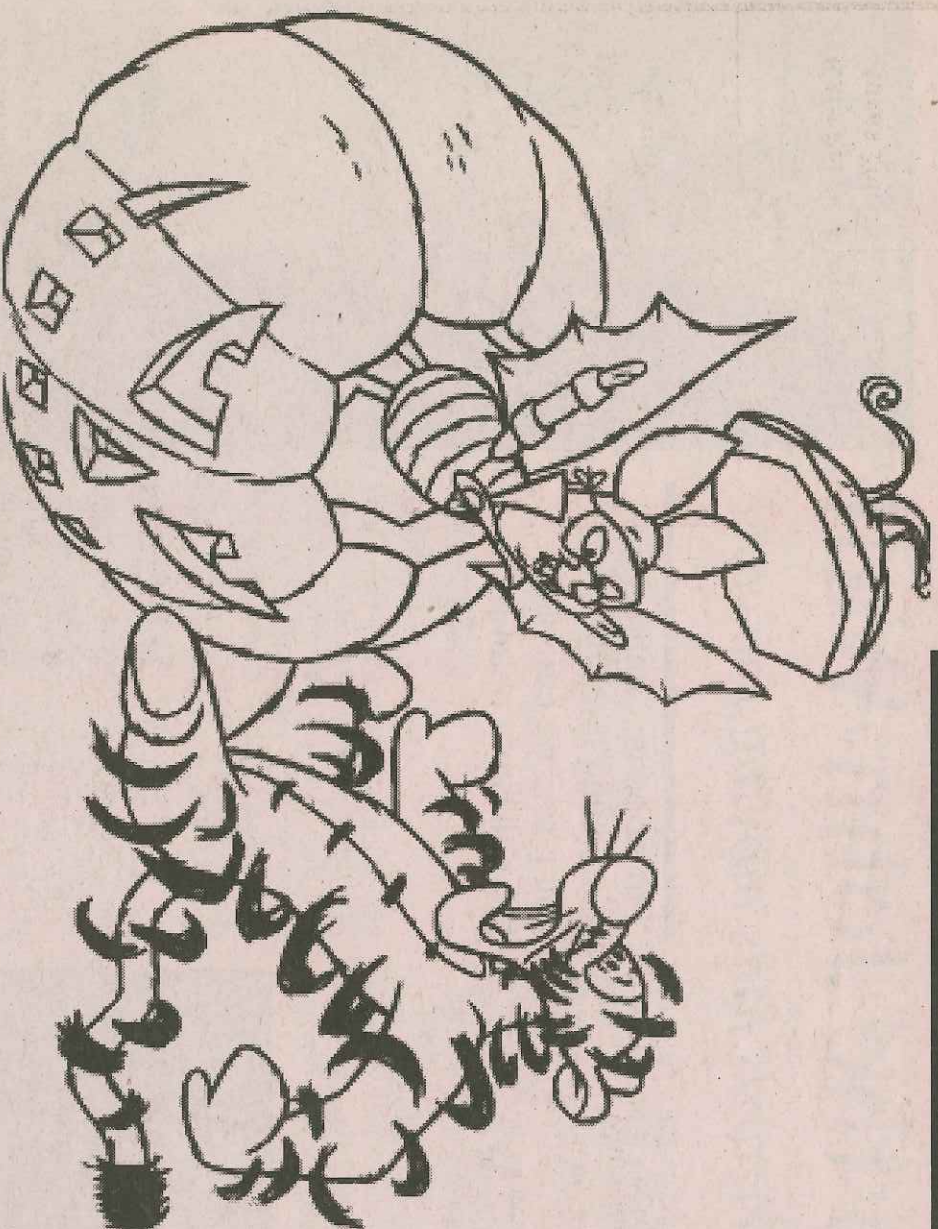
With the aura of steroids still lingering around baseball, the last thing the MLB needs is more bad publicity. "I don't think that Harper should have come out of school early," said senior JT Williamson. "It definitely would have benefited him in the long run." Harper is one of many rising stars of his generation including Wizards point guard John Wall and Nationals pitcher Stephen Strasburg. With the return of Stephen Strasburg and addition of Bryce Harper, the Nationals future continues to look a little brighter every year.



Sports Illustrated



USA Baseball



THE BALL-POINT BOTHER

By Sam Perstein

Features Editor

Either at the bottom of my backpack, or the bottom of my locker, those tricky black and blue pens just want to make my life miserable.

I cannot count how many pens I have had disappear under my watch. Even in the middle of a timed writing, I could be writing away, when my pen will simply slip from my hand and clink on the floor.

Then my pen has the nerve to roll across the floor, till it knocks into somebody's foot. Fortunately, distracted students remain oblivious.

I then have to get up and politely ask that certain somebody to pick it up, then I would have to explain to my teacher the issue. The whole situation causing quite the scene.

In other words, pens simply do not like me.

I know it's not just me, because I see hundreds of lost pens all over WS. I think to myself how lonely they must be, feeling forgotten and unloved.

Then there are the cruel pens that die at random. Their excuse is that they ran out of ink. Yeah right!

I know they are lying. All I do is put the cap on and shake it a bit and it works again. Then, I write another sentence and it dies again, repeating the process.

It makes me want to scream.

Somewhere down there, there must be a pen limbo, where all the lost and dead pens go, while I sit up here, pen less.

I would, if I could, tie a string to my pen and tie the other end to my wrist. Then I wouldn't lose my pen and it could be a pen bracelet, a useful and fashionable accessory.

But I have a feeling my pen would slip from my grasp still, and just dangle there. Yet still, I could jump up and down doing cartwheels and my pen would hang there, ready, at my fingertips.

Where ever I go, my pen would be there like a best friend. I could put a stop to pen limbo. Lost pens everywhere would rejoice for their lives would not end in vain, and I would be a hero.



Wordpress

Many students show their style by writing with pens that express their personality. The problem with these special pens is that once you lose them, they're gone forever.

SUMMERTIME PRESENTS:

Nowhere to go, nothing to watch

By Summer Claveau

ETC. Editor

I sincerely believe that TV has taken a turn for the worse. In fact most entertainment has, but I seem to be particularly picky about this topic. Personally, if I'm going to dedicate my time every week, or even a spot on my TiVo every week, I need something that continually captures my attention.

I mourn the death of "Lost" every Wednesday. A great sci-fi mystery thriller show is due to replace it. Yes, "Fringe" is alright when you're really bored, but everything else just seems repetitive. I don't want to see anymore futuristic men with the power to read minds and in the mean times there a cute love story and a bad home life, blah blah blah.

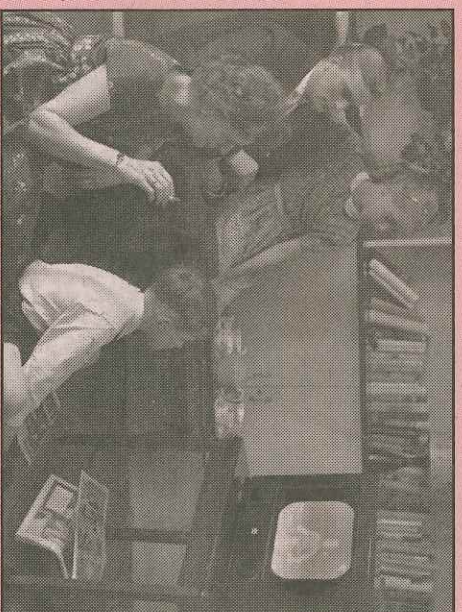
I request some originality. Recycled plot lines are way to common.

Reality TV is also not what it used to be. I blame VH1's CelebReality, particularly Bret Michaels.

Simon Cowell is also to blame. I know this summer we all followed the death of "American Idol". It is now a living zombie, trying to prosper in the entertainment world. But come on, watching American Idol die has been more entertaining than the last couple seasons.

The reality TV fad that has seriously seemed too caught on is one sampled from an actually decent TV show. The fad I am referring to is "Housewives".

Even though "Jersey Housewives" is hilarious, I've come to boycott everything Jersey ever since Snooki hit the scene. My favorite Housewives show is "D.C. Housewives". It's like watching my rich friends parents fight. They also try



Associated Press

Even though this family seems bored, they don't know how good they have it... Lucille Ball and the other TV Land shows offer more quality television.

to plan parties as if they were in the L.A. scene. It's hard to captivate a large audience with so much east coast politics.

HBO seems to be the only channel that has anything worth watching now-a-days. "Entourage" is frequently recorded at my house, but the thing about HBO is not everyone gets it.

Basically this is a small call for all the sad TV watchers out there.

Send letters to your local politicians calling for **SOMETHING NEW!** The people are dying for some quality entertainment here!

| Monday | | Tuesday | | Wednesday | | Thursday | | Friday | | Saturday | | Sunday | |
|--------|----------------------------------|---------|------------------------------------|-----------|--|----------|--------------------------------|--------|-----------------------------|----------|-----------------------------------|--------|--|
| 18 | Field Hockey Districts 1st Round | 19 | English Writing SOLS for Seniors | 20 | Cheer Districts at WS | 21 | Volleyball at Lake Braddock | 22 | Football vs. Woodson @ 7:30 | 23 | Swin and Dive Car Wash Fundraiser | 24 | Bill Wyman of the Rolling Stones turns 74! |
| 25 | Katy Perry turns 26! | 26 | Volleyball vs. South County @ 7:30 | 27 | Governor's School Auditions after school | 28 | Cross Country Districts @ 4:15 | 29 | End of First Quarter! | 30 | Marching Band Competition at WS | 31 | Halloween! |

OCTOBER 10