



The RAACOLE

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'03 graduate's legacy Carrera tries to make it big as a comedian

By Nora Osei & Danielle Mazzuchi
Oracle Staff Writers

Dubbed the new up-and-coming Ellen DeGeneres of comedy, WS alumnus Lianna Carrera has captured her viewers with the authenticity in her jokes and her charisma that will light up a room.

Born the daughter of a Southern Baptist Minister and a deaf mother, Carrera had the spiritual challenge already at her plate. "Coming out" to her family has allowed her to progress as a young adult.

"My father has always emphasized the importance of living your faith rather than talking about it,"

said Carrera.

Meanwhile, her father encouraged her to worship in the affirming congregations of LGBT, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender, to reveal the acceptance in the church community.

"He wanted to show me I wasn't expelled from the church because I'd chosen to be honest," said Carrera.

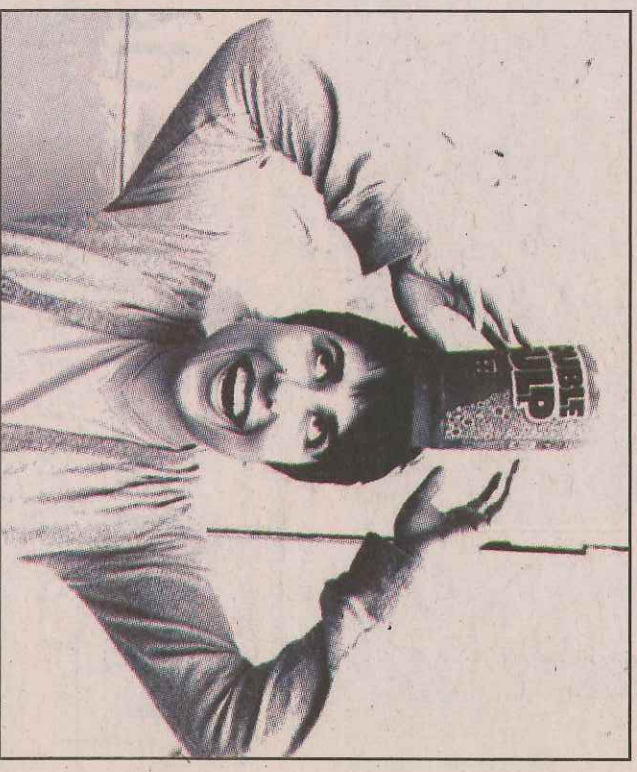
Coincidentally, honesty is what has enabled Carrera to make such a dynamic career out of staying true to herself.

In society today, onlookers believe as many judgments as they can to break one's morals. Yet Car-

rera, who graduated from WS in 2003, does not see this as an obstacle she cannot surpass.

"Don't make apologies for who you are," said Carrera. "And don't let anyone make you feel like you're different or weird just because you see the world in your own unique way."

Coming from the senior "Class Clown" herself, this comedian walked the halls of WS as an SGA officer, which gave her the lead role in the Homecoming Assembly and at pep rallies. Carrera also planned the September 11 Memorial service in Spartan Stadium. See "Carrera" on Page 5.



Duck Duck Collective
Lianna Carrera, a 2003 WS graduate, is making a name for herself by writing stand-up comedy and television scripts. Though lots of people compare her to Ellen DeGeneres, Carrera doesn't let it get to her head.

To switch, or not to switch

By Lauren Giery
Page One Editor

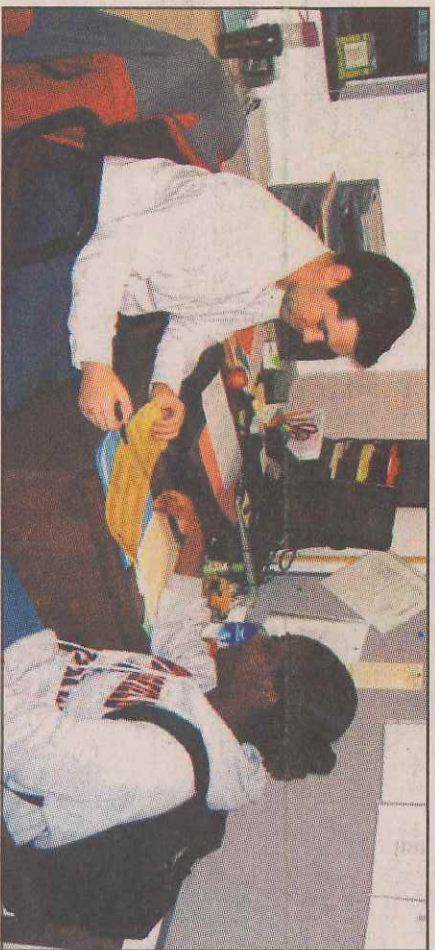
It's not out of the ordinary for counselors and AP teachers to experience an influx of transfer students from AP to regular classes at the end of the first quarter.

The golden rule for AP transfers has remained the same year after year: students can't get out until the first quarter grades are already in. Teachers are constantly encouraging student only to take AP classes if they're prepared for the work, and counselors try to enforce how much tougher AP's can be over the regular and honors classes students have previously been introduced to.

Teachers even give recommendations to students who they believe have the ability to take on an AP class in the subject, but unprepared students still end up in the class despite the fact that some AP's aren't for everyone.

"I think switching out [of AP Lang] was the right choice," said junior Maddie Lothar. "Regular English class is less complicated than the AP class."

The reason most people choose to attempt AP classes is because they look good when applying for college. It's not just taking the class that counts though; anyone can sign up for an AP, the hard part is passing the class. See "AP Classes" on Page 5.



Lauren Giery
Junior Martina Tsihu-Gyan discusses possibly switching classes with Guidance Counselor Alex Gorman during Spartan Time. Many students find that the AP workload is too much to handle, but they must wait until the second quarter if they decide to drop it.

Raising money to rock 'n' roll all the way to Disney

By Jessica Drago & Lisa Williams
Features Editor

It's that time of year again; pizza kits are being delivered, wreaths are being hung, and the last vestiges of lollipops are being eaten. This may seem like a random, unrelated list of items, but is in fact a list of the items offered through fundraising for the guitar program here.

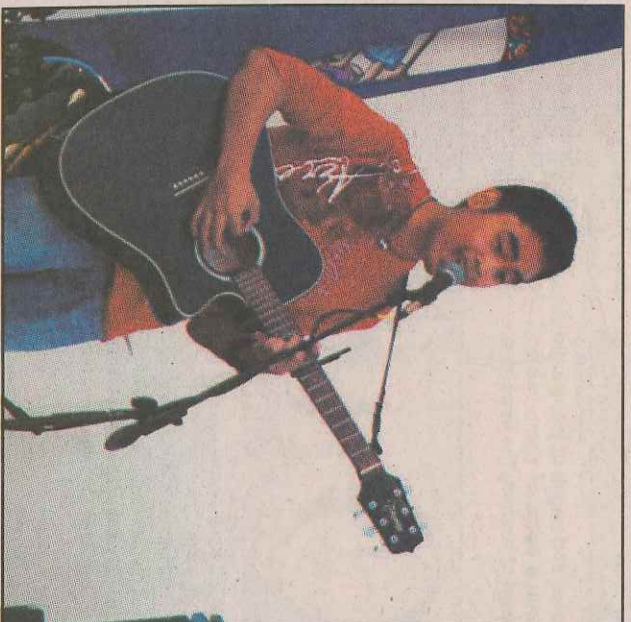
The guitar program has been an active part of school for twenty years now, and it is still going strong.

"Anyone can play guitar," said guitar teacher Keith Owens. "I'm so glad we can offer this program to students and get them playing. It's not only fun, but also one of the best programs [of its kind] offered in the nation."

The program offers classes for every level of guitar player, ranging from an introductory course called Guitar 1, which teaches students the fundamentals of guitar, to courses for more advanced musicians such as Jazz Combo or Guitar 3.

As with every other musical program, a large part of time is spent performing. Every single spring for the past 15 years, guitar students have taken trips around the country to perform the music they've learned, participate in clinics and workshops to improve their playing, and generally have a good time.

These trips that the guitar students take tend to focus mainly on music, as that is the main purpose of the trip; students



Jessica Drago
Junior Lorenz Cruz performs a guitar solo at our school's annual Guitar-B-Q on October 8 as a part of the Homecoming festivities.

have taken clinics with professional musicians, traveled to colleges to meet other musicians, and visited the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.


This year, the guitar program's spring trip will take them to sunny Orlando, Florida, and to Disney World, for about a week. The students in Jazz Combo attending have the opportunity to perform in front of a live audience, and the Guitar Ensemble and Guitar Orchestra will be performing the classical pieces they've learned this year for a panel of judges at Festival Disney. And of course it goes without saying that, in their down time, the students will enjoy the park and the many rides it offers.

"Spring trip is the highlight of my school year," said senior David Tobul.

Trips like this are not cheap; students must pay mainly out of their own pockets in order to attend them. As students, they usually do not have enough personal money to afford the entire cost of the trip.

This leads them to fundraise as a group, selling seemingly unrelated items such as Little Cesar's Pizza Kits, Holiday Greens, Ozark Delight Lollipops, and also food from Schwann's. These fundraisers are essentially the backbone of spring guitar trips for some, without which students would miss out a fantastic experience. See "Guitar" on Page 4.

Christmas decorations come too soon. 

Newest Harry Potter movie hits theaters. 

PDA runs rampant on school grounds. 

Spartan tradition

Welcome to West Springfield, home of the Spartans, and open to all.

We are all blessed to be able to live in a community with such a diverse, yet inviting society of West Springfield citizens.

We would be bluffing if we told you that there was absolutely no tension or problems with culture, beliefs or ethnicity, but as a whole we are a very tight-knit group of Virginians. Especially during school, you will find it very easy to talk to just about any person or group in the school and expect a welcoming invitation into the conversation or activity.

If you were to take a walk down the hall of WS you are guaranteed to find very mixed groups of people with different ideologies, clothing styles, and hobbies. What you will also find is that those very same people all tend to get along with each other because of our Spartan unity.

After the snowstorm last year that left the school campus completely covered in snow and ice, members of the community pooled

their efforts to help shovel. Even those who did not attend WS nor had any relatives there were out in the freezing cold to clear off the parking lots and sidewalks.

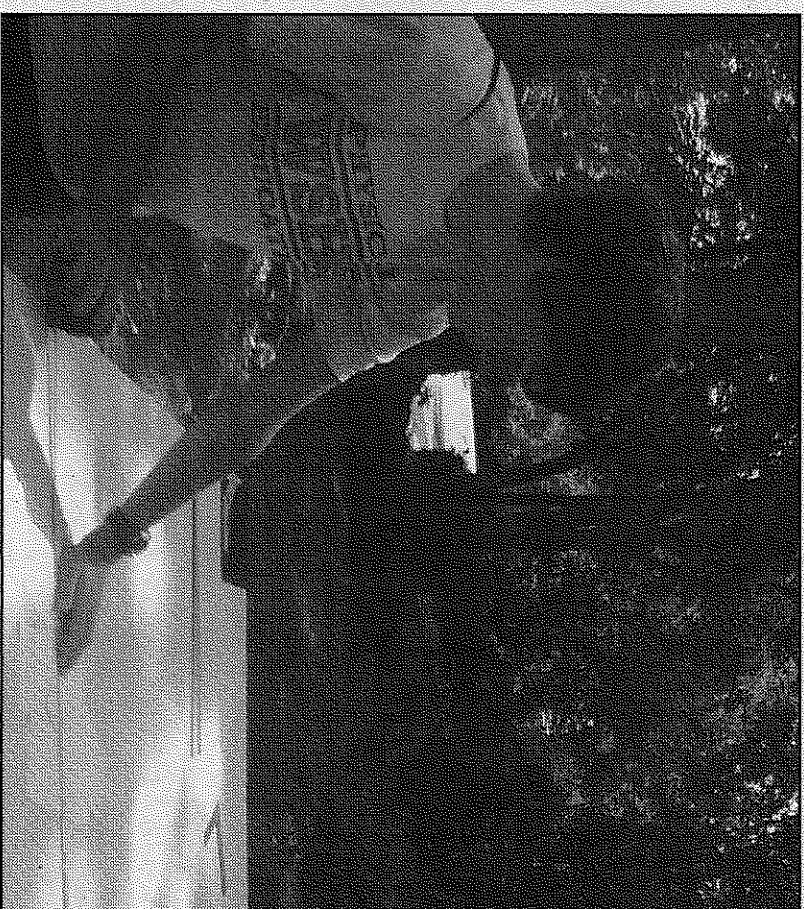
Also, the tall-tale sign of our great camaraderie as Springfield residents is our great sense of Spartan Spirit.

You are always bound to see parents, siblings, relatives, and lots of other WS faithfuls at sporting events, school functions, and class fundraisers. Our spirit also stretches farther than that, where you are almost guaranteed to see a person or people with various Spartan sport and activity apparel.

We are definitely proud to say that we are part of such a wonderful community and a great group of friends and acquaintances, because they give that great sense of an extended family that you can always rely on.

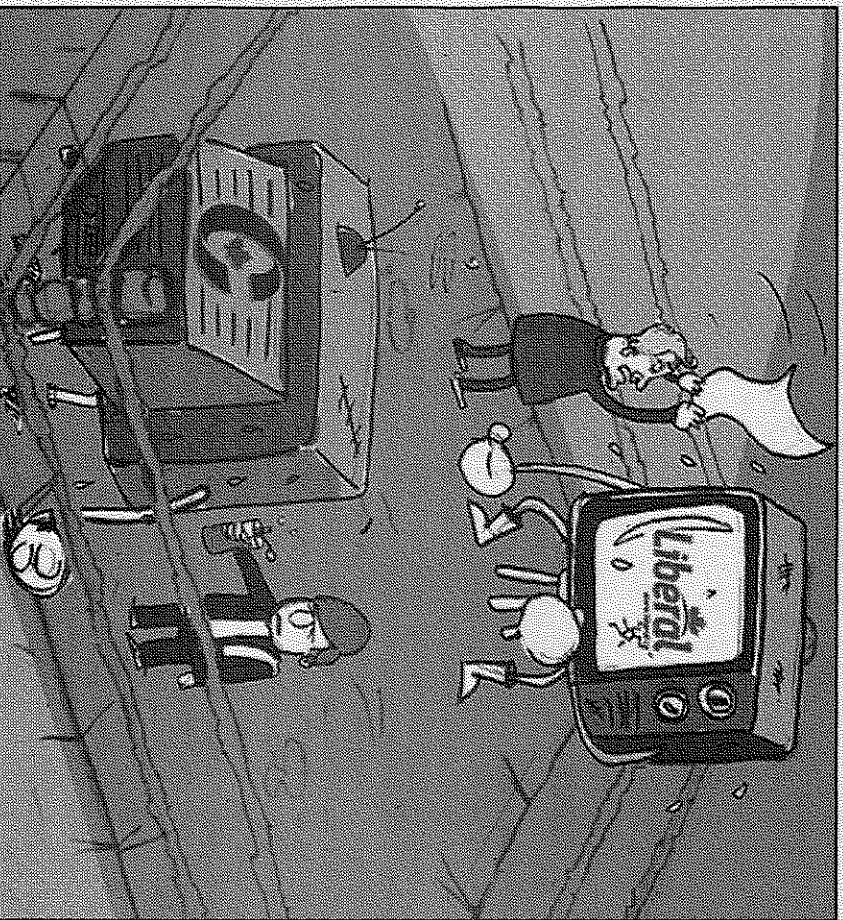
Especially since we are living in a very difficult time period, having the great community we have provides us with a feeling that wherever we go, we will always have our family back in WS.

Editorial



Junior Jacob Martin works on the Class of 2012 float for the Homecoming parade. Float building is one of the many ways that students can show their class pride and school spirit.

Political ads do not address the issues Campaign commercials cause controversy across the country



Political Humor

By Nisreen Sumrean
Features Editor
Gerry Connolly looks like a mouse, so he should not be elected. Vote Keith Fimian for Congress.

Okay, so maybe election commercials were not that bad, but this year they took a turn for the worse: campaigns have become more negative and unethical than they have ever been.

Shouldn't election ads be about the issues? Shouldn't they tell us why the candidate is the best choice?

Instead, they are focused on why the other candidate should not be chosen, in a very dramatic manner.

At the end of almost all the Connolly commercials, they would play dramatic music fade into black and white and then a booming voice would say "Keith Fimian: too extreme for Northern Virginia."

Well, that may be true in some aspects, but as an uninformed citizen I had no idea how or why he was too extreme.

Maybe giving the public some insight into how Fimian is too extreme would have proved a job well done. Connolly should actually say something about himself other than "I am Gerry Connolly and I approve this message."

In an ideal world, a candidate would make a television ad where he or she would talk about the issues. Imagine that!

"In actuality, negative ad campaigns turn voters away from that candidate—but that piece of information seemed to have slipped the candidates mind."

Talking to the American people about what we should take our time out to vote for him or her instead of telling us irrelevant information about their opponents, would be great.

I, for one, would like to know about a candidate's stance on the real issues. How about telling us what they think about health care or the economy? Their stance, not their opponents exaggerated and dramatized stances.

In actuality, negative ad campaigns turn voters away from that candidate—but that piece of information seemed to have slipped the candidates mind.

This has not deterred candidates one bit they have actually increased the use of negative ads in their campaigns. It could be because even though voters realize it is an hominem fallacy, they still retain the information.

There are many Americans out there that are very unaware about the issues that affect us all, so a little help from the people that are supposed to be in charge would help.

This campaign between Gerry Connolly and Keith Fimian got heated and began to lose sight of the issues. Instead of focusing on the platforms, it turned into a battle of name calling. Political ads should represent what the candidate stands for instead of bashing the opponent.

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

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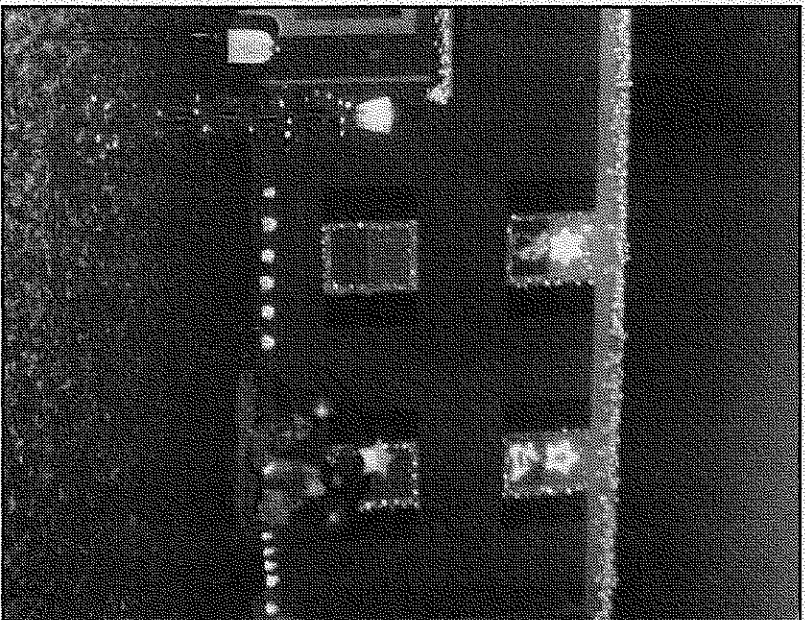
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Lee Gleason

Many families start to prepare for Christmas and Hanukkah and other gift-giving holidays before counting their blessings at Thanksgiving or even dressing up for Halloween.

Holiday spirit starts too early Decorations shouldn't go up months in advance

By Lee Gleason

Sports Editor

Not a creature was stirring, because it wasn't even December yet.

Christmas time is arguably one of the greatest times of the year, but it gets a little excessive when decorations for Christmas, or excuse me, the holiday season, are going up in stores before Halloween has passed.

I consider myself a pretty tolerant guy, but don't forget to throw Squanto and an unknown pilgrim onto the shelves of Giant and Wal-Mart. When I see the likes of Santa Claus and Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer alongside Casper and Count Dracula, my excitement for the Christmas—I mean, holiday season goes down a little.

Nothing quite beats the combination of lights, Christmas trees, music, and lit-up Santa Clauses. However, when that combination comes before the month of December and before major holidays like Halloween and Thanksgiving, it begins to lose what makes it so special. Too often do people get caught up in the materialism of the holiday season. The very fact that people begin to decorate for Christmas in the middle of October displays the material-based ideology of the society in which we live in. Recently, people have begun to overlook Thanksgiving, a

holiday based on family and giving thanks for the blessings in our lives, by instead concentrating on a holiday that people have turned in to a day that is solely based on materialism and getting as many things as they can.

Don't get me wrong, presents are a great thing, but when the idea of presents and out-doing the neighbors in holiday decorations begin to consume our everyday lives, the sentimental value that is supposed to be at the core of each and every holiday slowly begins to be pushed out of the picture completely.

Too much Christmas spirit too early in the year takes away from what makes Christmas such a special holiday. People tend overlook the Thanksgiving Holiday to focus on Christmas instead. Even Black Friday, a day set aside for Christmas shopping and the best sales, falls on the day right after Thanksgiving. Before the tryptophan has even set in, people are trampling each other in the Wal-Mart parking lot for the new Call of Duty Black Ops game (which I realize might be a game worth trampling someone for). People need to enjoy Thanksgiving for what it is, and then they can proceed to the Christmas holiday.

Christmas is a great holiday but its significance pales during the month of December when decorations have been up since before Halloween.

Festive feasting: fattening or fun?

By Allie Collela

Forum Editor

The mouth-watering, delectable food of the holidays is irresistible: the turkey and mashed potatoes and the pie are impossible to pass by. However, equally hard is realizing in January that you went up a couple jean sizes.

Obviously, we blame the calendar for our overeating during the holiday season. Whose bright idea was it to put two huge holiday seasons back to back? We hardly get through our leftovers of turkey and pumpkin pie when the Christmas trees and Menorahs get pulled out and it's time to eat again. Plus, don't forget we are required to speed through our Halloween candy, lest it grow stale.

Unfortunately, the calendar issue is non-negotiable, hence the reason we try to convince ourselves that there is ample time to work off the extra food after the holidays.

In fact, the necessity of having to exercise and eat healthy in January sets us up with a perfectly legitimate New Year's resolution. So why not add another piece of pie to the plate?

But that's not such a good idea after all. Binging during the holidays and taking your stomach on a roller-coaster ride over a period of four months can be very detrimental to your health. Your body gets in the habit of taking in and dealing with all the holiday food and it takes a while for it to recover, making the process of resuming normal eating patterns that much harder.

The vision of an immediate return to healthy eating hardly ever becomes reality. Overeating affects enjoyment

"Your body gets in the habit of taking in and dealing with all the holiday food and it takes a while for it to recover."

of the holiday. The classic argument that turkey contains a chemical, tryptophan, which makes you sleepy is quite true, but turkey does not contain enough of the chemical to be the only cause of drowsiness.

In reality, the huge meal that always goes along with the turkey is what makes you sluggish and tired. Whatever the cause, lying around on the couch for the afternoon leaves one unsatisfied. You are ultimately left with an empty feeling at the end of the day, dampening the season's excitement.

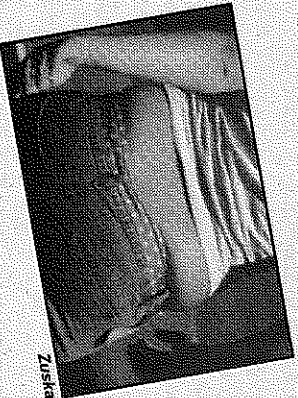
However, it's one thing to talk about abstaining from overindulging. Actually resisting the apple pie and Santa-shaped peanut butter cups is another story. It's not easy, especially during a season Americans relate to indulgence.

Here are a few points to help you: remember that the food will still be there tomorrow (you don't have to stock up all in one day), eat little snacks throughout the day before the big meal so you will be less inclined to eat a lot, and make yourself make the healthier choice once in a while -- go for the Tall Peppermint Mocha instead of the Venuti or pick the thinner slice of pie.

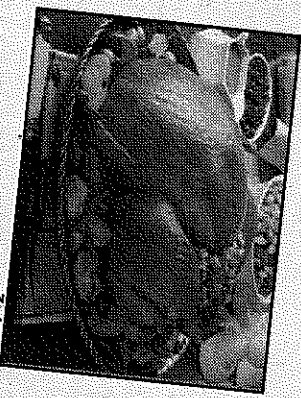
So enjoy the various treats of the holidays, but to truly enjoy the spirit of the season, try to eat in moderation.



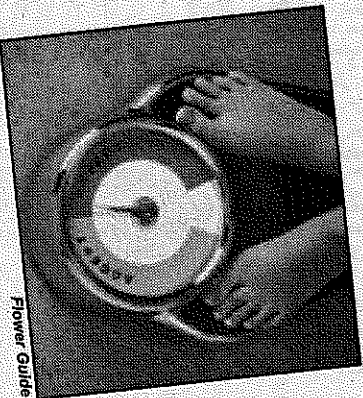
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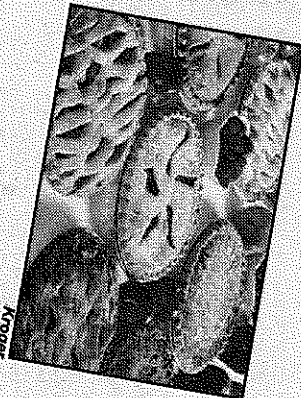
Zuska



Zedonna



Flower Guide



Krogger

By Maria Scaptura
ETC Editor

Pumpkin pie, turkey and candy canes, oh, my!

There is a lot to love about holiday foods, especially how every one of the seasonal colors mixes with joy-inducing tastes like cinnamon or peppermint.

I get jolly just thinking about them, and get an over-whelming urge to start singing holiday tunes. The biggest and grandest holiday for eating is Thanksgiving.

This day includes all of the delicious foods you gobble up until your waistband bursts: cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, pumpkin pie (don't forget the whipped cream), stuffing, and of course, the main event, the turkey.

Last, and definitely not least, would be the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. It's a must see on this ravenous holiday.

There's always something about winter holidays and food that make a perfect combination. It's almost as if the food feeds your soul and your holiday spirit at the same time. Now, yes, I know you can get all these foods anywhere and anytime in the year, but I believe there's a little something special about eating a huge turkey with your entire family, or sucking on a candy cane while decorating your Christmas tree.

Foods, when during the holiday season, simply taste better. I don't know if it's just because we're all

"There's always something about winter holidays and food that make a perfect combination. It's almost as if the food feeds your soul and your holiday spirit at the same time."

genuinely merrier during this time of the year or if there's some sort of secret ghost or spirit that fixes our food when we're not looking to make it taste jolly good (my bet's on Jack Frost).

Not to mention, the warmth of the holiday's goodies seems to counteract the cold of the outdoors, sort of like a Snuggly. Nothing's better after freezing your butt off in the snow for hours than a hot cup of cocoa with marshmallows spilling out of it.

But on a broader view, holidays are the time to see your crazy aunts and uncles, your sugar-crazed cousins and your oldest relatives for a good time.

Is there a better time than eating gingerbread cookies with your unconventional family? I sincerely doubt it.

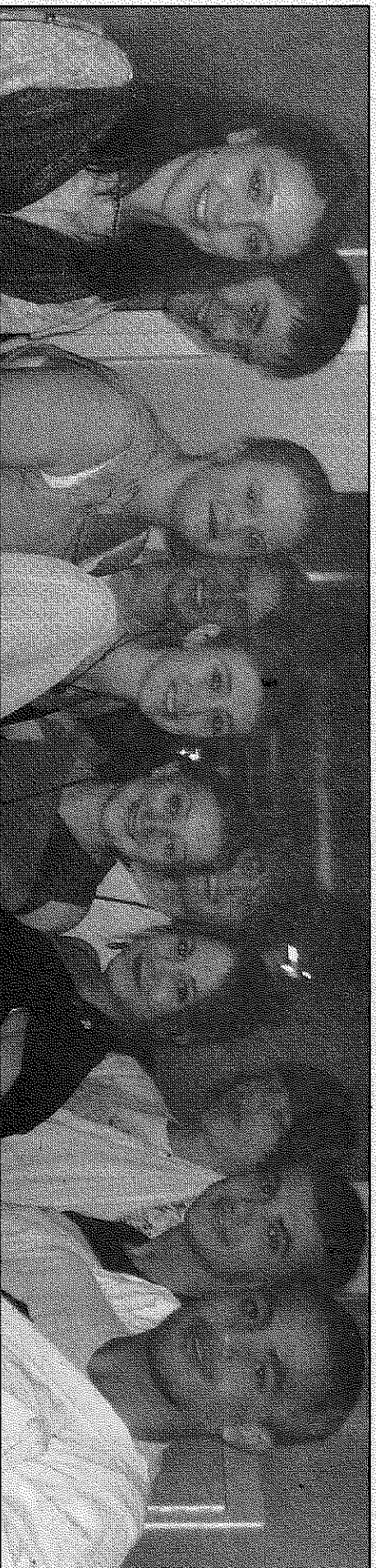
Simply put, the foods of the holidays make the world seem more joyful and merry. Which is certainly what our world needs.



Jodi Nibir



Robopy



Latin teacher Whitney Slough poses with senior Josh Hamilton, junior Maddy Spencer, senior Alice Fuller, juniors Julia Staron and Tricia Goldberg, freshman Stuart Pratchuk, senior Eli Perez, sophomore Aaron Calkins, and juniors Matt Greene and Jonathon Lopez Mejia, who all competed in Latin Convention in many various categories. WS won big, taking home awards in Ink Drawing, Art and Architecture, Lower Level Textiles, and more.

Courtesy of Whitney Slough

Latin students win big at Convention

By Allie Colella

Forum Editor

Veni, Vidi, Vici: I came, I saw, I conquered.

Seven Spartans returned from the Virginia Junior Classical League Convention, which was attended by a total of 1600 Latin students from the state, with 12 awards. The Latin Convention, held at the Greater Richmond Convention Center, required its attendees to participate in contests and tests centered on ancient Rome during the two-event. Spartans submitted their Roman mosaics, storybooks, and textiles, recited myths and passages in Latin, and sat with hundreds of other students to take tests on Latin grammar, vocabulary and culture.

“Convention actually went really well. I enjoyed it. It was nice to see the students win when they didn’t expect it,” said Latin teacher and Latin Club sponsor Whitney Slough. “There were 14 West Potomac [High School] kids and seven Falls Church [High School] kids and they only won two awards.”

Seniors Alice Fuller and Josh Hamilton, juniors Julia Staron and Tricia Goldberg and sophomore Aaron Calkins competed in the costume contests. Fuller and Hamilton participated in the Upper Level Pairs contest. They were required to dress up as Jupiter, King of the Gods, and Io, his girlfriend who was turned into a cow by Jupiter’s jealous wife. Calkins dressed up as Charon for the upper level boys’ contest and Staron and Goldberg,

competing in the upper level girls’ contest, each dressed up as the blood-thirsty Agave. “My mom and I made the toga and we followed the Crete style. We took red food dye and stained it so it was like blood. Then we wove ivy through my hair,” said Goldberg. WS also competed in the Arts and Crafts competitions and did particularly well. Freshman Stuart Pratchuk won first place in Lower Level Textiles for his tapestry. Pratchuk used a machine to sew the pictures and symbols of the 12 major Roman gods and goddesses onto the pillowcase sized fabric. Junior Maddy Spencer won first place in Ink Drawing and eighth place on the Art and Architecture test, and senior Josh Hamilton won first place for his illustrated children’s book

“It was called Latin Lads Inferno. It was about a little kid who goes into the Underworld,” said Hamilton. “I liked getting to see all the kids who entered the art contest.”

But Convention wasn’t all work. On the first day, schools waved their banners and chanted in Latin during the huge assembly before starting their day. That night, a banner was given to which everyone was required to wear a toga. In between the activities students attended lectures given on Roman life and history or snuck in rest time together before rushing off to their next activity.

“Honestly [my favorite part] was sitting around with that group of people playing cards. It was just being around those people,” said junior Maddy Spencer.

Class combination creates problems for teachers

Language courses now have to deal with the issue of insufficient enrollment

By Rita Zevallos

Senior Staff Writer

For three teachers, instructing two classes at once is now just another day on the job. Foreign language classes are now combining in an effort to make classes available to as many students as possible.

For years, the Latin, Japanese, and French teachers have had to combine classes because of insufficient enrollment. The Japanese 5 class, for example, has only seven students, so it has been combined with Japanese 4 in order for the school to still offer it as an option for students who have reached a high enough level to be eligible.

“It’s better than not having a Japanese 5, given that option. But having two classes meeting simultaneously is not as good as each of them having their own time. It’s not my ideal,” said Japanese teacher, “Sensei” Karen Tripp.

Tripp, in an effort to give the two classes as much attention as possible, gives one group a project or review activity while she turns her attention to instructing the other group, then switch back and forth. Unfortunately, such a system is inevitably inferior, since neither group gets all of the teacher’s time.

“Sometimes more time is spent on one class than the other and the other class feels neglected. We definitely learn things slower,” said senior Meagan Delaney, a Japanese 5 student who is dealing with her class mixing with Japanese 4 this year. “The teacher is really stretched thin because she has to teach two classes.”

Latin teacher Whitney Slough, who teaches Latin 3 and AP Latin in the same period, faces the situation with optimism for the future. For the first time, there are two Latin 1 classes, so she hopes that over the years the program will grow to the point that there are enough students enrolled for full classes. But until then, both students and teachers need to be patient with the disappointed classroom.

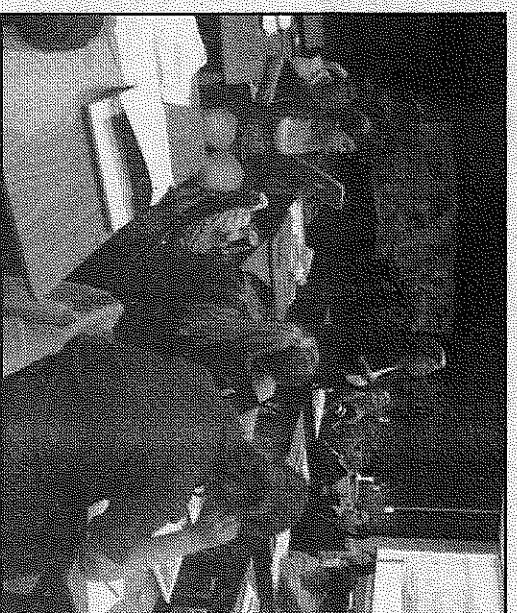
“It’s a headache to keep track of them and give them my undivided attention. It would definitely make my life easier and it would give the students a better education if we could split them up,” said Slough.

The combined class is necessary because not enough people were previously in the program to fill the two most advanced classes. With two beginner classes, an abnormally large number of students for the Latin program, she hopes to push them through the Latin program so they will fill the advanced classes.

But for French teacher Joelle Torreale, who teaches French 5 and AP French in the same period, it is a different situation. The two groups of students can be compared to a regular class and an honors class, although one is more advanced than the other, they are covering the same material so can be taught together as a class.

“French 5 and AP [French] are the best and logical combination because we can teach at the same level. They are arriving from the same foundation, so it makes it possible to have common activities,” said Torreale.

The AP level mixed with French 5 is no problem since



French teacher Joelle Torreale works through the combination of French 5 and AP French into one class easily, since the classes come from the same French 4 base.

they come from the same French 4 classes. Both classes still take the same PALS Writing and Speaking exams. The main difference is that, after the middle of the second quarter, AP students begin having more homework and more difficult class assignments, improving their language structure and vocabulary so that they are adequately prepared by the time the AP French exam rolls around in June.

“They become separate groups more and more as we go through the year. It happens to be an excellent group. I feel very fortunate. In spite of the fact that no one wants a combined class, the kids make it worth it,” said Torreale.

Lollipops, pizza, and wreaths, oh my! Guitar program continues fundraising to get to Florida

“Guitar,” from Page 1.

miss out a fantastic experience. “Fundraising is essential for some students, because the trips are just too expensive for most to pay,” said senior Ryan Lugo.

So while the lollipops may seem disruptive to some teachers, they’re essential to the guitar program’s members’ ability to gain valuable experience in the music world by attending spring trip. They aren’t just addictive snacks; they’re a way for students to participate in the most anticipated event of their school year.

“We’re doing the most fundraising we’ve done since I’ve been in the program, the fundraising saves the students a lot of money, so parents really like them. Plus, a lot of

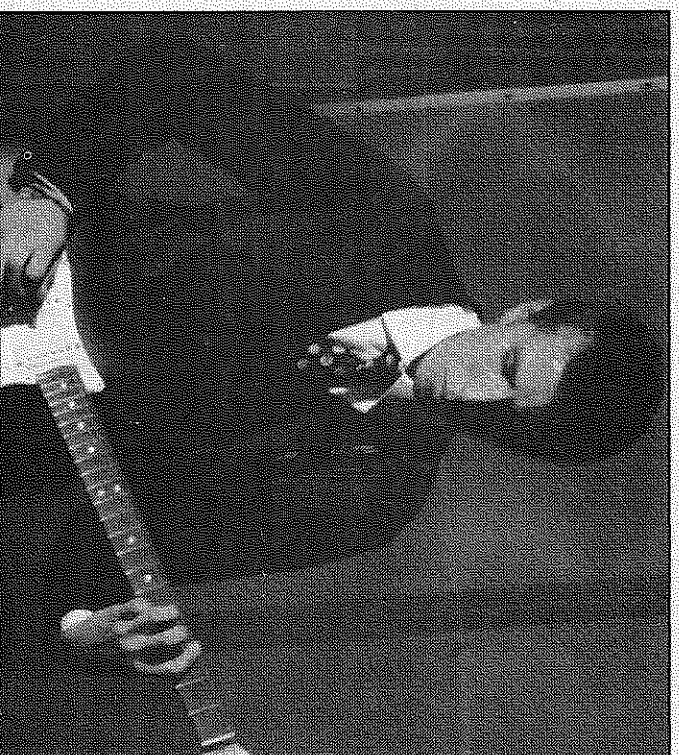
the products sell themselves,” said senior Niko Swad.

Since they are so easy to sell, guitarists appreciate the fundraisers and readily participate in them. The trip will cost each participant around \$660. This is because the trip is really big this year to accommodate the large guitar classes; a majority of the members of the program are seniors. The trip will not be as big next year due to the large number of graduated guitarists, so they are celebrating the group this year.

The fundraising can be a daunting task, with a price this high. Some students, however, manage to raise enough money to easily cover their entire portion of the trip cost, something that these students find completely worth the work. “Fundraising can be difficult times, but it’s worth it once the trip comes around,” said senior Brita Dias.

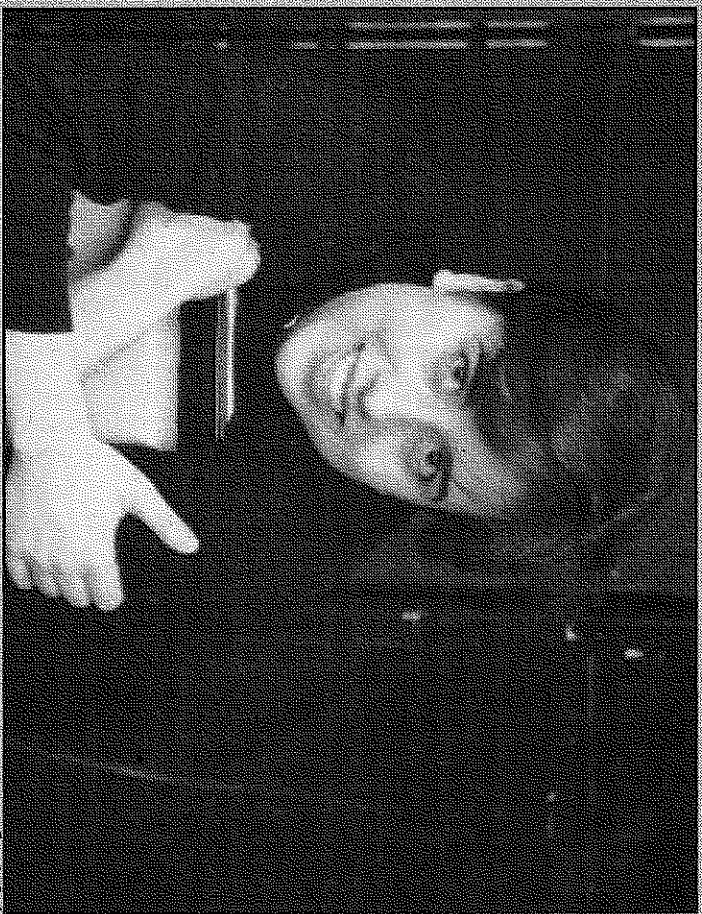
The selling of these miscellaneous items is a big hit among students and their families, which is really good because they can use the trip to further their music training. But they look forward for more than just its guitar-related value. They also enjoy all the fun other things that are planned for the group during the week.

“Mr. Owens always loads the trip itinerary with really good food stops, and we’re also going to the new Harry Potter park. I’m really excited for the trip,” said senior Jason Fry.



Senior Richard Hunsinger, a four-year member of the guitar program, performed at Guitar-B-Q, one of the guitar program’s many fundraisers.

Jessica Drago



Genderport

Spartan graduate Lianna Carrera is a comedian who tries to remain true to herself.

Former Spartan takes the spotlight

“Carrera,” from Page 1.

To add to her extracurricular activities, Carrera played Varsity basketball and lacrosse.

“She was very bubbly and outgoing,” said PE teacher and lacrosse coach Brian Puhlick. “She was a captain her senior year and was a great athlete.”

Carrera’s outgoing attitude contributed to her leadership qualities and made her well-liked by both students and faculty. She organized a candlelight vigil in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks. A Spartan parent died in the Pentagon attacks, and Carrera felt strongly that he and his fellow victims should be remembered.

Carrera also founded the Gay-Straight Alliance and was an active SGA officer.

“All of those experiences laid the groundwork for what I’m doing now,” writ-

ing stand-up comedy, TV scripts and the like,” said Carrera.

While traveling the world to make a name for herself, Carrera has embraced her uniqueness as a gift, while also being compared to DeGeneres. And Carrera has remained modest about her talent.

“I’ve been compared to Ellen here and there,” said Carrera. “Ellen is a great example of a comic who never apologizes for who she is. She walks into a room and brings with her a playfulness and zest for life that infects others with joy.”

Fortune and fame have not gotten the best of Carrera, as she remains true to herself and to her art.

“Folks can sense if you are putting something on, so I strive, whether on stage or otherwise, to be myself,” said Carrera. “If I can make them laugh, even better.”

New rule makes it hard to drop AP students have hard time switching to regular classes

AP Classes,” from Page 1.

When applying to college, the universities can see what classes you took on your transcript. While they see your weighted GPA with the AP point added on, they also see the final grade without the point.

Therefore, that D you got in an AP class may be added into your weighted GPA as a C, but colleges still see that the original grade was a D.

Still, many teachers are passing students to reinforce the message that they should keep striving for success and not give up after a rough start because usually it does get better.

“I felt like writing wasn’t my strong point,” said junior David Kim. “However, I didn’t switch out because my writing was improving and I want colleges to see I can handle an AP course.”

In the end, there’s no shame in taking a less challenging course. Being an A student at grade level is much better than failing on the AP level.

That being said, students still need to weight their options carefully because even though they can drop the AP class, they can’t drop the grade they got.

“It was very hard and time consuming on top of AP Lang,” said junior Makeze Javid, who switched from AP Psychology into Art 1. “My first quarter wouldn’t have been so stressful if I’d been able to switch out earlier.”

Then again, if so many students (69, to be exact) switched out of AP classes after the first quarter, many people wonder why the school still makes students wait.

If students were allowed or encouraged to drop difficult classes, it could lead to staffing problems and a drop in class size. Besides, it’s not the faculty’s fault; this is a state mandated regulation.

“The purpose is to keep them in the class,” said Director of Student Services Jennifer Ferrara. “The number of students we get in the spring of who’s taking which classes tells us how to staff our classes.”

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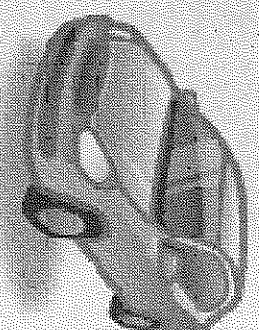
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BACKPACKS VS

When polled, 99 out of 100 boys use a backpack; 68 out of 100 girls use a backpack; 23 out of 100 use a tote bag.



By **Kyle Rushton**
Oracle Staff Writer

Yes, tote bags may be more stylish or put the finishing touch on a cute outfit, but in reality, who wants to have a broken shoulder by the end of the day?

When carrying a tote bag around school, the weight of all your books is supported by only one shoulder, causing pain and discomfort. Walking through the hallway with it is without a doubt much harder than it would be with a normal backpack; everyone has to dodge the protruding tote bag as opposed to swiftly walking by an average North Face or Jansport backpack. Navigating around these obstacles, however, doesn't always work. They almost always lead to a painful and unexpected bump in the hallway.

Many people treasure using a backpack because it prevents constantly stopping at lockers and carries everything for about half the school day. Less pit stops to lockers means more time to socialize with friends during the short breaks between classes. With the use of tote bags, frequent locker stops are needed because they can carry no more than a class worth of papers.

"I don't like using a locker, so I appreciate using a backpack," said senior Michael Hess. Of the students who enjoy using backpacks, North Face, Addidas, Jansport, and Nike are some of the most commonly seen backpacks. They don't need to be the stereotypical, massive backpacks with a million pockets, one for each item.

"I really like how there aren't a ton of pockets, but it's easy to keep organized" said sophomore Maddie Wittich, who uses a North Face backpack.

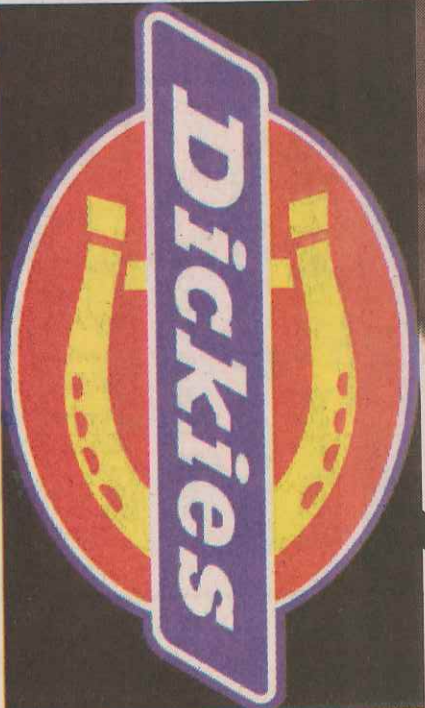
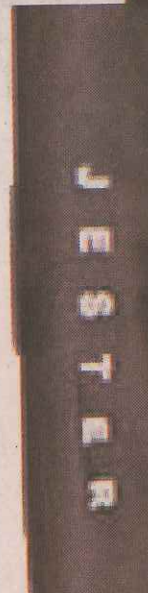
Many people find that an enormous backpack isn't necessarily needed for good organization, and that an average backpack will do, while an undersized tote only provides inconvenience.

"My [Jansport] backpack holds a lot, but it doesn't look big," said junior Anna DeMarr. Students at WS should be thankful that we are permitted to carry backpacks. Other high schools in our state and nation do not allow their students to carry backpacks throughout the school's hallways. For example, Wissahickon High School in Montgomery County, PA, requires their students to use clear or mesh backpacks, or no backpack at all. This policy is instilled in an effort to improve the safety of their school and to eliminate an easy way for students to steal from each other. Other schools implemented this rule in order to reduce congestion in the halls and cafeterias of their large school. As a freshman, coming to WS from Irving is a change in every aspect, including the backpack rule.

"I like it better than Irving where we weren't allowed to carry backpacks," said freshman Rachel McEntire.

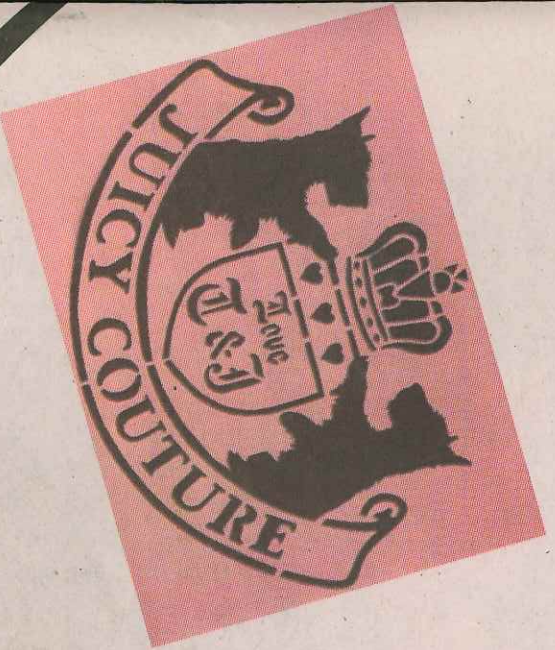
Most everyone could agree that high school is a thousand times better than middle school, and this is just one of the few perks. Many students use unique backpacks with patterns or designs that display who they are and show their different personalities.

"My backpack is a bright, light blue color," said McEntire. "My friends like it because they can always find me."



HANDBAGS

Backpack, one person chose a drawstring bag. **9 OUT OF THE 100** chose both.



Abercrombie & Fitch
TRADEMARK SINCE 1892

By Lauren Glery
Page One Editor

The monumental question that torments every teen: what to wear, or in this case what to carry.

Not everyone wakes up in the morning feeling like P. Diddy. Most of us roll out of bed and do the grab-and-go, running out the door before the sun even rises. So what's easiest and most comfortable? For some the first choice is the more traditional backpack, while others prefer the fashionable tote bag, and then the option of slacker's choice: nothing at all. Personally, I think it's all a matter of preference and there's really no way to see which is in first place at our school.

Besides backpacks, bags are another popular choice: big bags and small bags—we've seen them all. Ever since tote bags hit the shelves at Hollister Co., Abercrombie and Fitch, American Eagle Outfitters and other popular brand name stores, they have been an undeniable trend in middle and high schools. We only have five minutes to get from class to class, sometimes having to make the trek from one end of the school to another, filling up oversized totes and messenger makes repeated locker trips not necessary. Therefore, the average tote-carrying individual has less locker trips resulting in less tardy slips. Despite having the ability to fit everything one could possibly need during the school day and still remain stylish, these bags can also cause health issues. Oversized bags of all sorts cause major stress on the shoulders, resulting in poor posture and soreness after long periods of use.

Although there aren't any health problems relating to not using anything, it's not too common of a choice. With all the AP classes students are taking, along with the enormous books and binders we're supposed to carry, the slacker's choice of carrying nothing at all isn't too helpful. Our arms can only carry so much, therefore, having nothing to put your many books in can cause problems getting from class to class. With your arms already laden with books, a bag- and backpack-less student would have to visit their lockers between nearly every class to transfer books and binders for each class. Then again, it could help avoid the stress that bags and backpacks cause on your backs and shoulders.

Whichever you choose, between bags, backpacks, or nothing at all, it's all a matter of choice and style. So take your pick and enjoy, hopefully it makes your life and homework load a little higher-to carry at least.

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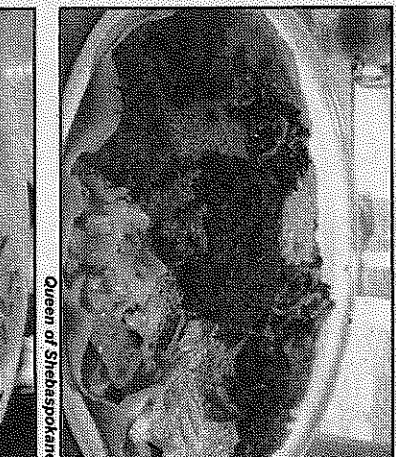
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Ethnic food helps kids remember their roots

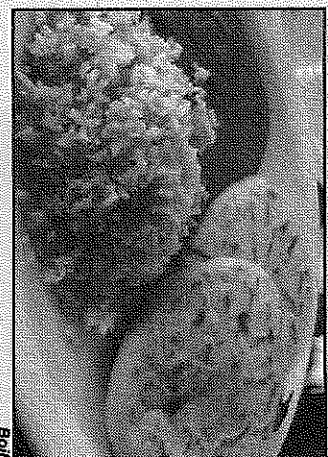
Students enjoy preparing and dining on food from their heritage

By Rita Zevallos

Oracle Staff Writer



Queen of Shebopokane



Beif

During Spantafest, students from the Muslim Student Association to the Spanish Honor Society sell food from the ethnicity or language group they celebrate in order to raise money but many students cook ethnic food at home almost every day.

Junior Brenda Cañas is from El Salvador, and cooks dinner every night. Normally, the dinner includes tortillas, rice, beef, chicken, or shrimp with the signature Salvadorian flavor.

"I grew up eating Salvadorian food, so I was always interested in learning how to make it," said Cañas. "As I got older, my mom taught me how to cook."

On special occasions, she cooks tradition-

al foods that are eaten often in Salvador.

Pupusas, which among the foods Cañas' family often eats, are thick corn tortillas that are stuffed with cheese or pork; nuegados are made from the yuca root, and are fried and chewy; pasteles can include a variety of fillings which are covered with dough that has been folded over.

"Salvadorian food has a variety of good flavors, and I recommend everyone try it," said Cañas.

Senior Escete Negussie also cooks food from Ethiopia a few times a week, usually for dinner.

"[Ethiopian food] is super flavorful," said Negussie. "There are a lot of spices. Ground red peppers are the main ingredient in almost everything we cook."

Her favorite Ethiopian food is the equivalent of American steak. Called tips, it consists of beef cut up into bite-sized pieces and sautéed with onions, tomatoes, and jalapeños.

"We tend to have a mix of not spicy and really, really spicy," said Negussie.

Senior Lisa Eichhorn cooks German food, which can include sausage, beef, or pork. Her family makes wiener schnitzel from pork, a cutlet covered with breadcrumbs.

"Whatever it is, there's always meat. [The Germans] love meat," said Eichhorn.

Other dishes include Kartoffelkloesse, or potato dumplings, and green beans with spaetzel.

"You always want to go into a food coma after you eat it. It's not light food. It's very heavy," said Eichhorn.

Pilgrimage enhances students' beliefs

By Peter Simonsen

Senior Staff Writer

It's difficult to imagine a place so important that 1.5 billion people turn and pray toward it five times a day, but senior Abdul Osmanzada and sophomore Madinah Osmanzada have been to this place.

Both made a pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, as part of the Umrah, a journey to the holy city of Islam that Muslims are encouraged to make once in their lifetime.

"Our dad really wanted to go and we had a chance over the summer so we went," said Abdul.

One of the five pillars of Islam states that every able-bodied Muslim must make a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lifetime. This is called the Hajj, and it must be made during the final month of the Islamic calendar.

"The Umrah is a lesser pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, and it's like the Hajj but it's not required and you can go anytime," said Abdul. "We flew out, and on the plane we had to change into a certain white cloth that you have to wear when you arrive in the city as part of the pilgrimage."

Once there, the 13 million annual visitors venture inside

the Masjid al-Haram, the largest mosque in the world where only Muslims are permitted. Inside is the Kaaba, a cube shaped black building in the center which all Muslims must face when they pray every day.

Mecca is the center of the world's second largest religion, and unsurprisingly, the crowds are so enormous that its name has come to mean any place where huge crowds congregate.

"We went straight to the Haram, and we started walking around the Kaaba," said Abdul. "There was a huge crowd, and a few people died while we were there."

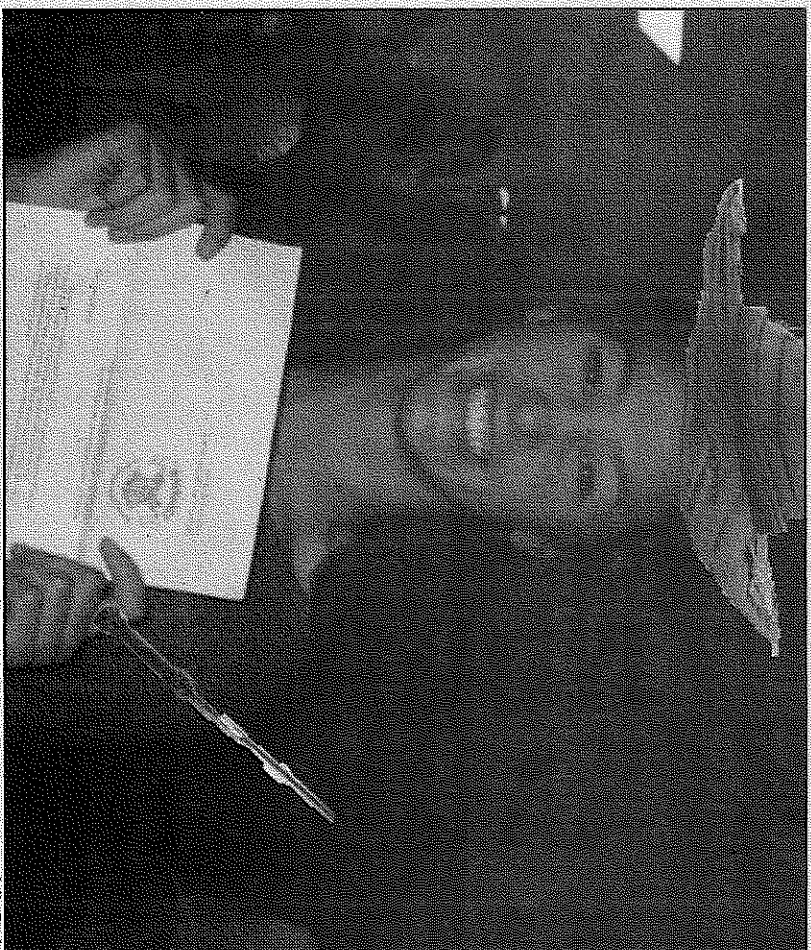
Those attending must walk around the Kaaba seven times, and with hundreds of thousands of people, incidents are common. The Osmanzadas still enjoyed their experience despite the heat and the droves of people.

"It was a great experience," said Abdul. "It really got me to think more about my religion."

Abdul also added that because he only performed the "Lesser Pilgrimage," he will return to Mecca in the future to fulfill the pillar.

"It's still required that I make the Hajj pilgrimage," said Abdul. "It will be really rewarding to go again."

Dear Readers, you've been accepted!



Julie Paris

By Julie Paris!

Oracle Editor

"We are pleased to inform you that you have been accepted at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry!" are the words that almost every child dreams of reading; and for seven lucky students, this dream has become a reality.

They have all received replicas of a letter that was sent to Harry Potter in the first book of JK Rowling's *Harry Potter* series notifying him of his acceptance to this highly-esteemed wizarding school. The students, chosen randomly by an unidentified dispatcher, were pleased but also taken aback by the sudden news.

"I was very surprised," said sophomore Callahan Brown, who discovered her letter on her front porch. "I looked all around my street for some wizards."

Each copy is complete with the Hogwarts seal in the upper right hand corner and is allegedly signed by the deputy headmistress, Minerva McGonagall.

Attached to a brief outline of rules and expectations is a list of uniforms, books, and other equipment that is necessary for the school year.

"I thought it was pretty hilarious even though I don't really like Harry Potter," said senior Caitlin Ameson. "A lot of people were

jealous that I got one and they didn't."

This harmless joke is an exciting break from the monotony that normally plagues students during the school year. Not knowing who is sending them or who will get one keeps people on their toes as they hope to be next to find a letter in their mailbox.

"Personally, I am outraged that Professor McGonagall forgot to send me my Hogwarts letter," said junior Isabelle White. "I just don't understand how someone possessing the amount of magical talent that I do could be overlooked. Regardless, I am still just as committed to becoming a first-rate witch."

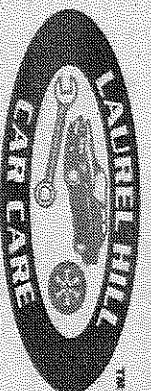
Those who have already received letters were amused by their creativity.

"I couldn't stop laughing," said Brown. "It was definitely a clever, original thing to do."

While students have played random jokes on people in the past, these Hogwarts letters are especially relevant because they were sent so close to the premiere of "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows" on November 19.

Though there is some speculation on who is sending the letters, most would rather preserve the anonymity of this person because it makes the situation more entertaining.

"I have an idea of who sent it," said senior Paige Babel, "but I like the mystery behind it all."



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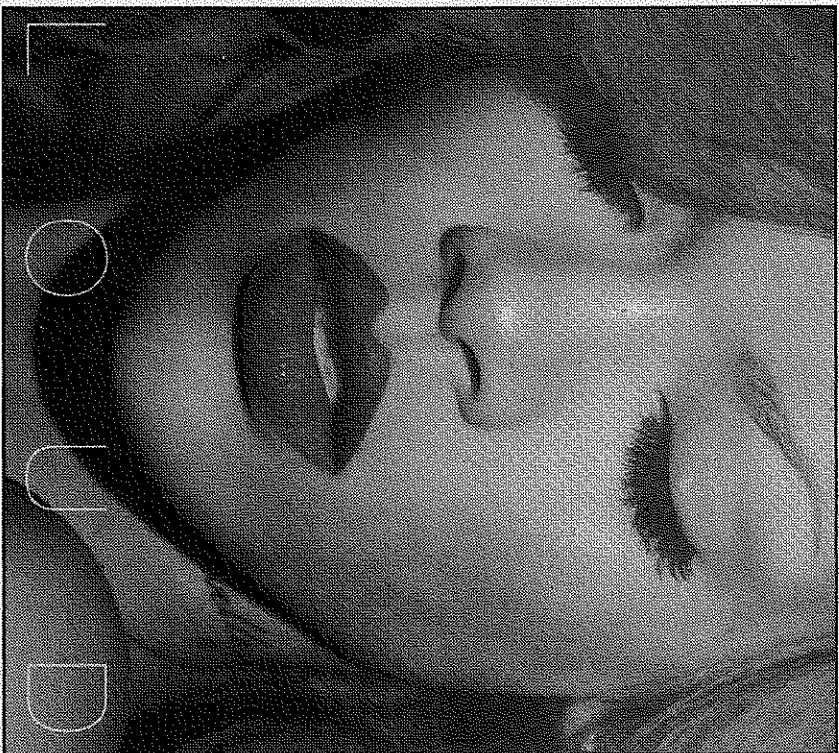
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R&B Music Blog

Rihanna's new album, "Loud," marks her comeback from last year's unsuccessful "Rated R" and her return to the top of the charts.

Rihanna tops the charts

By Amanda Pearson

Scoop Editor

Four months after releasing an album that flopped, Rihanna has caught the public's eyes with her new album, "Loud."

With hits like, "What's My Name" and "Only Girl in World," Rihanna has made it so her audience knows that everyone has their ups and downs, and if you believe in yourself, you can bounce back from anything.

The talented singer was able to maintain top hits for up to 13 weeks; over the summer, her number one hit "Love the Way You Lie" featuring Eminem remained on the Billboard top 100 charts for 24 weeks. She later released "Love the Way You Lie Part 2" which explains the girl's point of view of this song. Both parts will be remembered because of the intense, haunting lyrics and featuring of rapper Eminem.

When an artist features another artist, particularly a multi-platinum

recording artist, it will undoubtedly give the song a lot of leverage.

Her new CD has an innovative but savvy feel to it. With a hip new hairdo, Rihanna has combined both rock and pop into her songs.

LA Times calls her "strobe-thumping new album" definitely her comeback to be back on top. Once she makes the top 50 hip-hop and pop charts she remains heard for up to months.

"I'm overwhelmed by the quality of each song. [It] brings its own flavor to the near perfect CD," said popular critic Michael Burke. "She's back with an anthem, club staple and power ballad."

The excited, upbeat sound of Rihanna's new album suggests that she is now past the depressed stage that she went through recently.

The music world has always been competitive, but it has gotten harder over the years with the many new faces who are now new producers and artists.

"...Rihanna has made it so her audience knows that everyone has their ups and downs."

In running with Lady Gaga, Katy Perry, and Ke\$ha, Rihanna has made her name known as the more experienced and catchy of them all. Competing with her voice is no problem for Rihanna, but her everyday outfits and show time wardrobes are truly competitive with Gaga's and Ke\$ha's fashion styles.

After the allegations with Chris Brown, she went through a stage where all she sang about was being beaten up or sad. That stage is now over, and an upbeat version of Rihanna is back on top of the charts.

No matter what she's gone through, her music will never drop and she will always be on top.

Potter film exceeds expectations

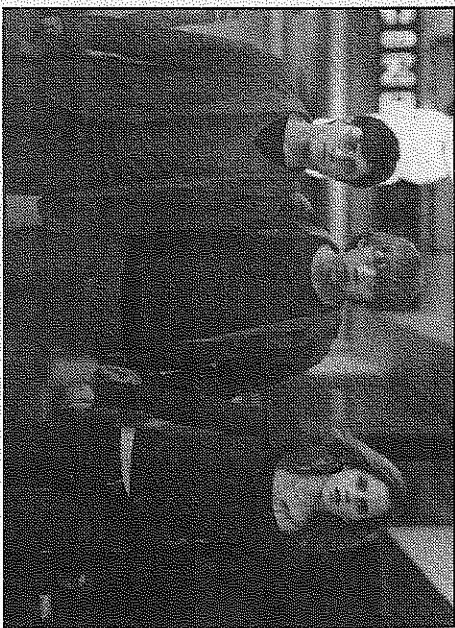
By Tiffany Clark

Entertainment Editor

I was, as I always am before viewing a new "Harry Potter" film, excited but skeptical. And with the exception of the first two (thank you, Chris Columbus), my skepticism has been rational as none of them have quite lived up to my expectations.

This is mainly due to the fact that it's extremely difficult to fit hundreds of pages into a two-and-a-half hour time frame. Luckily, filmmakers decided to split this movie into two parts and I am pleased to say that this was a success.

"Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows" was triumphant not only in its box office earnings, \$125.12 million during its opening weekend, but also in satisfying loyal book readers like myself.



Collifer

David Yates, the director of "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows" pleased fans of the series by sticking with the book better than any other director since Chris Columbus.

Hawaiian singer breaks into music industry

Bruno Mars' soulful melodies make him a promising new artist

By Jerney Davis

Oracle Staff Writer

Whoosh, all of a sudden came a sensation of music that's out of this world.

Amongst the thousands trying to make it big in L.A, he came out of nowhere at the top of the Billboard charts featured with B.O.B.'s "Nothin' on You" and Travie McCoy's "Billionaire."

His name, though innocent and childlike sounding, is of seemingly extraterrestrial origins and his rise to fame came so fast that in a blink it would've been missed. For Bruno Mars, however, the lift off into global recognition was a long process of testing his original music.

"I love his lesser known hit called "The Lazy Song," said sophomore Sarah Kerndt. "His melody is so carefree that it becomes the perfect song to listen to with the windows open and the breeze blowing in."

Originally from Honolulu, Mars began entertaining for anyone who would listen—a whirlplash to the present where millions of teenagers are begging for him to keep singing.

Though not quite known as the music capital of the world, Honolulu is rich with diverse music from all over the globe. Uniquely, the city combines its music from rich traditional sounds, including reggae, rock, and folk music, as well as the

While it was primarily a set up for Part 2, it still held its own as a film. The acting, on everyone's part, was noticeably better than in any of the others. It also continued maintained the thrill element and the special effects were still impressive. This is especially evident in the excellently done scene when Harry (Daniel Radcliffe) and Hermione (Emma Watson) visit the woman they believe to be Bathilda Bagshot but is actually (spoiler alert) Voldemort's snake.

The comic relief and aspect of romance were both amusing and entertaining in addition to giving a light-hearted feel to an otherwise dark story. Other scenes that I thought were done really well were the death of faithful house elf Dobby and when Xenophilius Lovegood told the story of the three deathly hallows.

In general, I thought the movie was fantastic. Although, I was thoroughly uncomfortable while Ron (Rupert Grint) opened the locket and Harry and Hermione appeared metallic, lacking clothing, and kissing, but I appreciated it because that's more or less what happened in the book and keeping to the original plot was something this movie did an almost impeccable job of.

Of course, there were still missing elements. Most were only minor such as beginning the story at the Durleys' home where Dudley tells Harry that he was not a waste of space, that Voldemort's name was a taboo, and the presence of the picture of Phineas Nigellus.

The only thing I was genuinely upset about was that Peter Pettigrew was only stunned in the cellar at the Malfoy Manor and he didn't kill himself. That was really a great part because Dumbledore told Harry in *The Prisoner of Azkaban* that Pettigrew owed his life to Harry. But, I digress.

The ending was abrupt and perfect, confirming that this movie was, in my opinion, the best "Potter" film yet. latest pop hits. This reaction of music cultures created this soulful-pop powerhouse.

Jon Carmanica of *The New York Times* calls him "one of the most versatile and accessible singers in pop, with a light, soul-influenced voice that's an easy fit in a range of styles, a universal donor."

Right out of high school to pursue his musical career, Mars moved to L.A. However, instead of being in the spotlight, he worked behind the scenes and created the Sneezingtons, a songwriting/production team he founded with Philip Lawrence and Ari Levine. Together they crafted major hits for a diverse roster of talent, including Flo Rida's "Right Round," Travie McCoy's "Billionaire," Brandy's "Long Distance," and K'Naan's "Waving Flags."

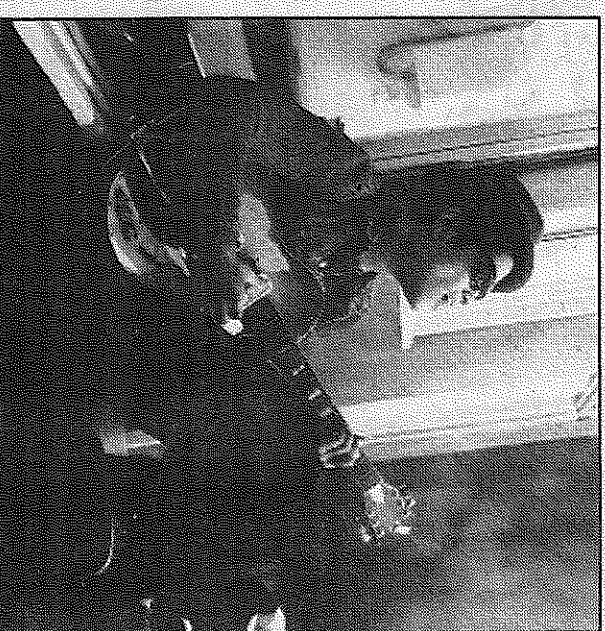
He was still known though as only a "featuring artist" for these songs rather than the main performer. Yet, his time behind the scenes was very important to his development as an artist.

"I realized that you have to go into this industry as an artist with a clear vision and understanding of who you are. Being so young when I was first signed, I never really had a sense of who I wanted to be," said Mars on his official website. "Now things are really working out because everything that I'm singing, writing and composing is really me."



The Hot Hit

The first movie installment of the seventh *Harry Potter* book brought in \$125.12 million during its first weekend, earning positive reviews from most critics.



Hip Online

Bruno Mars has suddenly risen to fame in the music industry after being featured on several hit songs with artists such as B.O.B. and Travie McCoy.

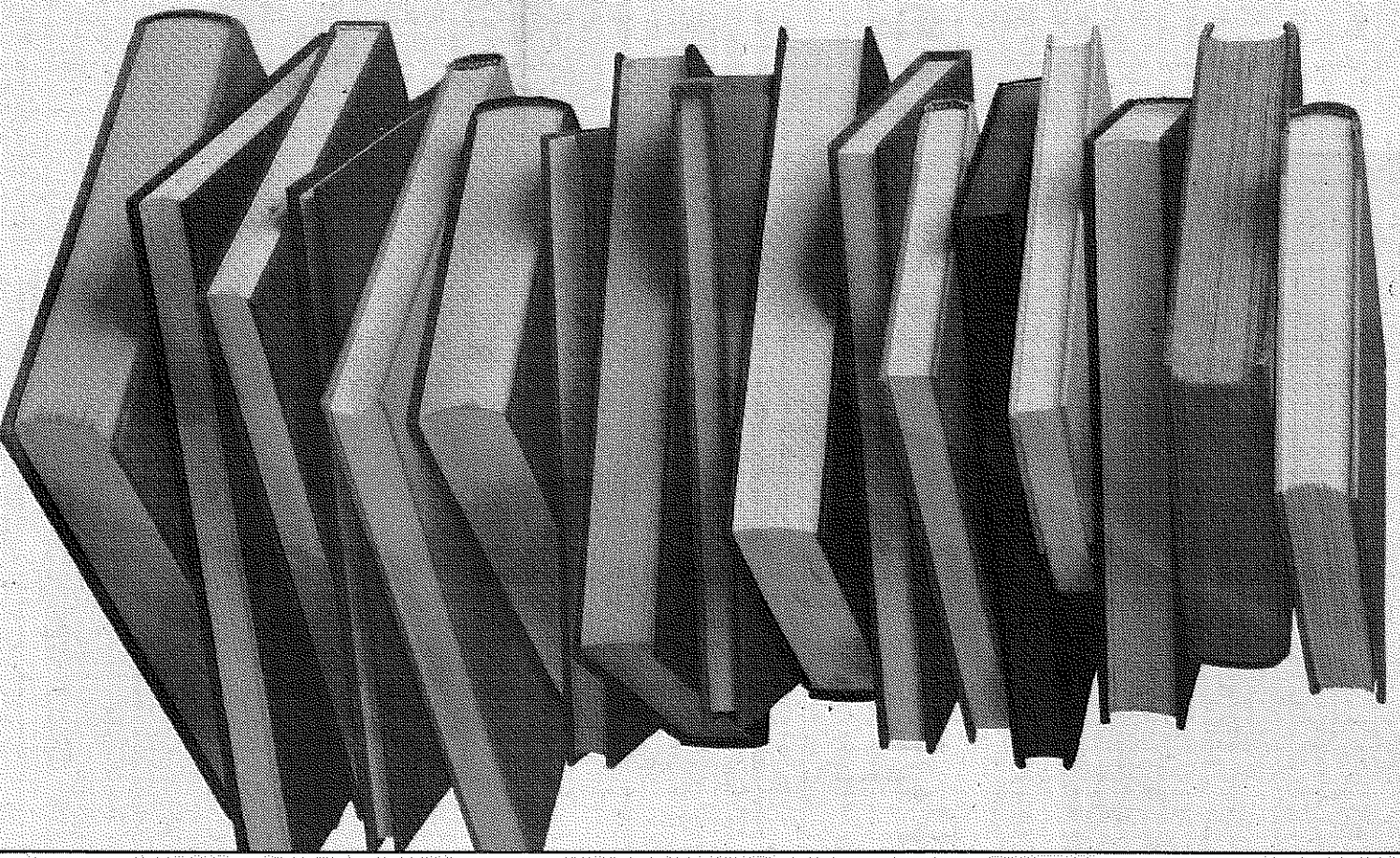
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Giordano jumps to new heights

By Sam Goldwasser

Managing Editor

November means the changing of leaves and Thanksgiving—oh, and the Virginia Horse Show Association (VHSA) finals.

Every year, senior Karista Giordano makes the trip down to Lexington, Virginia to participate in the competition. This year, however, was more difficult due to the fact that her horse, Standing Ovation (also known as Jazz), suffered two jaw abscesses.

"He was out for three months and I only had three and a half weeks to work with him before finals," said Giordano.

Getting a horse ready for something as big as Lexington is hard enough without having to recover from being out for three months. Not only did Giordano have to work on her horse, she also had to stay in shape herself.

"My coach, Melynnda, let me ride some of her horses," said Giordano. "I was able to stay in riding shape, but it wasn't the same as working with Jazz."

To get Jazz ready for finals, Giordano and her coach worked non-stop riding him every day, lessons every week, and taking him to shows almost every weekend.

"Since he hadn't been to a show in three months, it was important to get him back in

the ring immediately," said Giordano.

Going to shows got Jazz back in the right state of mind and revealed a pleasant surprise for Giordano: Jazz, who had always been an energetic thoroughbred, wasn't acting like a baby anymore.

"I was amazed at the change in him when he returned from his injury," said Giordano. "It was like he had finally grown up and calmed down, it was amazing."

All the hard work put in by Giordano and her coach paid off when the time finally came to go to Lexington. The show attracts a large number of riders, from six-year-olds with their ponies to older adult amateurs, and everything in between.

"There were so many people there. They even had to split some of the divisions up," said Giordano.

With so much going on and having to think about her horse's recent recovery, it was important to stay focused, especially in the show ring. After years of riding and showing, Giordano is quite adept at this.

"I just kept looking forward and thinking positive," said Giordano.

Even with all the distractions, Giordano stayed strong and kept her focus. She earned first place in the Children's Hunter Division.



Courtesy of Karista Giordano
Senior Karista Giordano and her horse, Standing Ovation, clear a jump in their warm-up for her first division. Giordano is very proud of her horse and how far he has come after injury.

Her first place came with no money, but a good amount of points. Scoring is all based on a point system in the horse world.

"I was so happy and proud of Jazz. The class had 39 other people in it, so this was a huge accomplishment," said Giordano.

OMGGPOP provides fun games for all

By Sara Blaylock

Managing Editor

After logging into our school's computers, the first thing students look to do is click on Internet Explorer and navigate to the popular gaming site OMGGPOP.

Rated five thumbs up by Gamelosophy, OMGGPOP is a website that is open to anyone who wants to play a variety of online multiplayer games with their friends.

OMGGPOP is not your average gaming site; it can almost mirror a social network where players can create a screen name with a profile, upload their own pictures, chat with other buddies online and collect points.

I went into the site thinking I wouldn't be impressed, but I stand corrected. OMGGPOP is better than other sites of its kind because it offers a feature that has become very uncommon these days—it's free.

I was shocked to find that such a detailed and entertaining site doesn't charge its users. The process of becoming a member is quick and easy; just enter your email and make a password and you're good to go.

The only thing OMGGPOP asks for in return is a promise to fol-



Junior Sean Irvine and sophomore Timmy Rice play Pool on OMGGPOP during Spartan Time. Many students like Irvine and Rice spend their free time playing games on this popular website, which also offers Checkers, Hover Kart Racing and Balloono.

low the rules: Be nice, don't curse, don't give out personal information, don't cheat, and have fun.

"Everybody in my class plays," said senior Soobin Lee, who has spent time on the website during school hours.

This is not a website where you

log in, play some games and find out after the fact that you have an email inbox full of spam. OMGGPOP works hard on spam blocker to protect its members and assure that you are truly having fun without the hassle.

With several games to choose

from, players and members become addicted quickly. Pool seems to be the most popular, but students also enjoy playing other games.

The website offers Booyza, which simulates the card game Uno, as well as other traditional games such as Checkers and Scrabble.

Balloono consists of a maze that users navigate while trying not get hit by water balloons, and there is also a game that resembles picture called Draw Your Thing.

Players can even enjoy Hover Kart Racing and Hover Kart Battle, which are very similar to the Mario Kart video game.

Users receive points every time they play, win or just log on, which is an incentive for them to keep checking their account. If players accumulate enough points, they can purchase items to make the OMGGPOP experience better.

Even though this website is fun for students, it causes concern as most only play it in school. Playing games is not against the rules for some teachers, and it should be this way in every class as long the game is not interrupting something important.

"I saw other people playing it," said junior Sean Irvine, "and I thought I'd try."

OMGGPOP is spreading fast in our school, so hurry up and become a member so you can play against your classmates.

"I'm not going to lie," said senior Dominic Savoia, "It's addictive, but so much fun."

Crew rows to domination

By Celine Donohue

Entertainment Editor

Keep rowing, Spartans! The crew team is soon to row their way into the upcoming season and are preparing for success.

Fall workouts started at the beginning of November and will continue through February. Until the official season begins, the team holds off season workouts after school from 4:45 to 7:00 to stay in shape.

"We are working solely on cardio by running and lifting," said senior Dustin Davis, a member of the crew team.

The offseason workouts are very intense and consist of running, weight room activities, and erging, which is using a machine that simulates rowing. Over two hours a day of these grueling workouts can be extremely difficult, but keeps members in shape.

"By the end of practices we do a good ten miles worth of work including running and erging," said senior crew team member Hunter Biggs.

This year, eight senior rowers make up the Varsity boat, compared to their sole se-

nior rower last year. This will hopefully bring some more power to the boat and allow them

to at least as well as in previous years. The future is looking bright for the team, and all are enthusiastic for the season to begin.

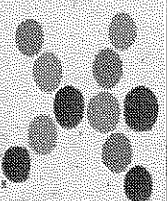
"We are aiming for nationals this year," said Biggs. "We went [my] freshman and sophomore year too."

Although the winter allows for many workout sessions, the real crew season doesn't get going until the spring.

"We have been working extra hard at practice, outside of practice, and during our free time," said Davis.

The season will be from February to May, with races on Saturdays. It might not seem like a huge time consumer, but the crew team works hard on a daily basis in practices that last well beyond two hours, in both the off season and scheduled competing season. The intense work will definitely pay off for the team and hopes are high for the quickly approaching season.

"We are hoping to win States and move on to the semi-finals at nationals," said Davis.



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Summertime Presents:

By Summer Claveau
ETC. Editor

I Have a new obsession.

An obsession with something commonly overlooked, but almost as important to the common "youth culture" as the first reality TV show. 1920's slang. Yes, everything from flappers to prohibition slangs is the origin of today's American teenager's vocabulary.

1920'S SLANG: USE IT OR LOSE IT

Here are some of my favorites:

- Tomato** - a female
- Whoopee** - To have a good time
- Spoon** - to neck, or talk of love
- Moll** - A gangster's girl
- Pill** - (1) a teacher (2) an unlikable person
- Hood** - hoodlum
- Handcuff** - an engagement ring
- Glad rags** - "going out on the town" clothes
- Flat Tire** - a dull witted, insipid, disappointing date.

- Fire extinguisher** - a chaperone
- Fish** - (1) a freshman (2) a first timer in prison
- Drugstore Cowboy** - a guy that hangs around on a street corner trying to pick up girls
- Dick** - a private investigator
- Dapper** - a Flapper's dad
- Bearcat** - a hot-blooded or fiery girl
- Balled Up** - confused, messed up
- Beat one's gums** - idle chatter
- Bimbo** - a tough guy
- Egg** - a person who lives the big life
- Hayburner** - a gas guzzling car

I'm giving you these new additions to your vocabulary so you can switch it up over the winter break. When you're visiting your family and friends, be sure to make use of these new words. For example, "Wow, is cousin Mary ever going to grow out of her bearcat stage?" or "Uncle Eddie is still a drugstore cowboy?" But whoever you visit during the break, have a happy holiday and make sure you share all of your newly discovered slang with your favorite Guys and Dolls!

Public display of affection, oh dear! Has our school's array of affection become too much?

By Kyle Rushton
Oracle Staff Writer

Turning the corners and running into a couple blatantly making out is not an uncommon occurrence.

Many students feel that the Public Display of Affection (PDA) level at W.S. has gotten disgusting and out of hand, and that couples are taking it too far. A simple hug in the hallway (okay) has gone to an extensive make out session for everyone to see (not okay). A great deal of the affection portrayed by couples has become inappropriate for school and has created an unacceptable learning environment.

"Save it for out of school," said freshman Jessica Simmons. "No one else wants to see that."

Although the school day may seem like it drags on for hours without end, couples should practice self-control and wait until they are in private to display their affection for one another. School is for learning, not for displaying your love for everyone to witness.

"The teachers need to let students know what is okay and what isn't," said junior Liz Mott. "Right now the line between what's okay and what's inappropriate is a little foggy."

Too much PDA creates awkwardness and becomes an inconvenience to everyone else walking in the same hallways and sharing in the same space.

"One time a couple was kissing in front of my locker,"

said sophomore Kate Donovan. "I needed to get something but I just walked away because it was too awkward to interrupt."

PDA, however, doesn't solely occur in the hallways. Couples have also been seen showing their fondness in the classroom. Students find this very disrupting during class, preventing a healthy learning environment due to the distractions created by the couple.

Not only is every student in the room subjected to the blissful couple's engrossment in each other, but the teachers spot it as well.

"The teachers could look at them differently, and act more awkward around them," said freshman Bryan Lepley.

It is understandable that couples have strong feelings for each other, but not everyone wants to feel like they are in the relationship, too. A short and sweet hug or kiss goodbye will do the trick, without hands all over each other.

"Couples at school can show their affection in other ways, such as holding hand, walking together, and just talking," said Donovan.



Sometimes PDA comes off as just a thirst for attention and for people to notice the pair as a couple. Well, a passionate make-out sure will get them noticed, but not necessarily in a good way.

"I think most couples show PDA so others know that they like each other," said Mott, "but they go too far."

25 THINGS TO DO BEFORE WINTER BREAK

25. Volunteer at a soup kitchen.
24. Shop. Enough said.
23. Make Christmas cookies.
22. Enter a snowman-building contest.
21. Do the snow dance.
20. Make some hot cocoa with your birds.
19. Get ready for the 2nd semester!
18. Decorate your house for holiday cheer.
17. Go caroling.
16. Write a letter to Santa Claus.
15. Watch "How The Grinch Stole Christmas"
14. Make a gingerbread house.
12. Snowball fight!
11. Rock out to Christmas music.
10. Donate to Salvation Army.
9. Finish off the rest of your Halloween candy.
8. More snow angels.
7. Kiss under the mistletoe.
6. Trade in flip-flops and shorts for jeans and sweaters.
5. Count down how many days until Christmas. (22 left!)
4. Work off your Thanksgiving weight gain.
3. Kiss under the mistletoe.
3. Watch "A Christmas Story"
2. Watch "A Christmas Story"
1. Get ready for a new year! 2011 here we come!

DECEMBER: 10

Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Staff vs. Students Basketball Game 7:00 pm	SAT at WSHSI	Dance Competition at American University	Winter Sports Pictures 2:30 pm - 6:00 pm	NHS Meeting 2:30 pm	Gay/Straight Alliance Meeting Rm 73 2:20 pm	Key Club Meeting 2:30 pm
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Basketball vs. TC Williams 4:30 pm	Breakfast w/ Santa 9:00 am 	Dance Competition at George Mason University	Cheer Clinic 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Winter Guitar Concert 7:00 pm 	Softball Interest Meeting in cafeteria 2:25 pm	Gymnastics Meet 6:30 pm