



# The ORACLE

December 17, 2010 Volume 45 Number 7  
West Springfield High School 6100 Rolling Road Springfield, Virginia 22152

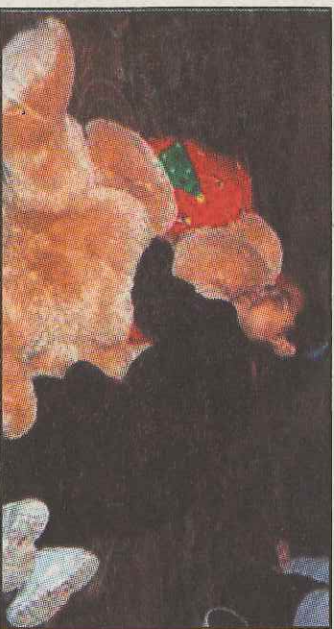
## Kristi's Christmas brings cheer to children

By Jordan Miller  
Page One Editor

It was the most special morning of their lives.

Two weeks ago, the 24th annual Kristi's Christmas changed the lives of over fifty underprivileged children from Fairfax County schools. Kristi's Christmas gives high school students the opportunity to use their time to help children who come from poor homes, or who have no homes at all. Students from all over the area, including a great number of WS students, participated.

"It felt amazing to know that I was helping other people and making a difference in their lives," said senior Caitlin Arneson.



Larry Leonard  
One of the children who participated in Kristi's Christmas shows her appreciation for her new stuffed animal.

In 1987, the first year of the event, the WS girls Varsity basketball coach, Bill Gibson, joined ranks with Kristi's Christmas, and the two groups have been working together ever since. The program works by partnering each volunteer with one of the underprivileged children, making them the child's "buddy" for the day.

After a delicious, filling breakfast, the buddies head over to Target to shop. The children get to pick out and keep up to about \$115 worth of necessity apparel: socks, shirts, pants, undergarments, shoes, etc.

Following a quick snack in Target's mini-restaurant, the buddies get the chance to meet with Santa and receive another present consisting of school supplies and blankets, and a cuddly teddy bear that is larger than some of the children themselves.

The children form sibling-like bonds with their high school buddy, and the joy on their faces as they receive love and attention that may not be given to them at home, is one of the most rewarding parts of the entire event.

"That is what Christmas, to me, is all about... you are giving to someone less fortunate," said Karen Brown, the founder and organizer of Kristi's Christmas.

Brown began the tradition of Kristi's Christmas in honor of her daughter, Kristi Brown, after her death. Kristi had helped needy children as a teen, so Karen designed the event as a way to remember her daughter.



Jordan Miller  
The Lady Spartans pose with Santa and some of the children who took part in Kristi's Christmas.

special person... I feel she is looking down on this project with a huge smile and is very pleased," said Karen.

The money to support Kristi's Christmas is provided by charities, businesses, church groups, and the Rotary Club, just to name a few. One-hundred percent of the money goes for the cause; not one cent is spent on anyone or anything but the needy children and their special gifts.

"It was very rewarding. You don't realize how much the little things matter to you until you've seen them given to underprivileged children," said Arneson.

## 'Incomplete' briefly replaced 'failure' Local high school made waves by eliminating 'F's on report cards

By Peter Simonsen  
Senior Staff Writer

The sixth letter of the alphabet has garnered a certain dread in students for as long as there have been grades, but recently the letter "F" took a brief leave of absence from the grading scale of West Potomac High School.

Instead of allowing the failing grade to present itself on fall report cards, school officials chose to replace it with an "I," for incomplete.

Additionally, the school changed its disciplinary policy on students caught cheating. Rather than giving a zero to cheaters, the West Potomac administration would simply allow a retake of the test. The idea was not to institute academic penalties on a disciplinary

matter, students would still face the full consequences of academic dishonesty but their grades would remain intact.

Peter Noonan, a Fairfax County assistant superintendent, told *The Washington Post* that the concept behind the change was to make sure all students were not penalized on the same scale because some had a more difficult time learning the material.

The reaction to the change was almost universally negative. Students, parents, and especially teachers from West Potomac and throughout the county believed the measure was would not adequately prepare students to face real world consequences.

"In college, if [the students] don't do their work, they will fail, but if they aren't given

any 'F's, then they don't need to do their work. So West Potomac is preparing them to fail," said junior Claire Cuddily.

Teachers also felt the policies were unfair to themselves as well as the students, and were meant to encourage teachers to give better grades, allowing for students who put in less-than-satisfactory effort to pass.

"I was so angry, I wrote a letter to the editor of *The Washington Post*," said English teacher Marilyn Harriman.

Five days after the changes were announced in an article in *The Washington Post*, West Potomac withdrew its new policies on failure and cheating, and reinstated their old grading scale. School officials sided the swath

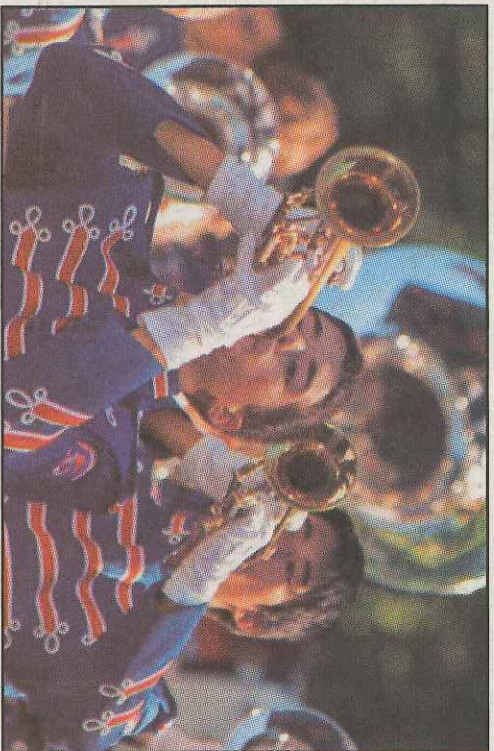
See "No 'F' Policy" on Page 5.

## Band brings home the bacon School program wins big in this year's competitions

By Thomas Ariale  
& Nicole Brigham  
Oracle Staff Writers

You know it's time for the school year to start when you can hear the marching band practicing in full swing in the student parking lot from all over Springfield.

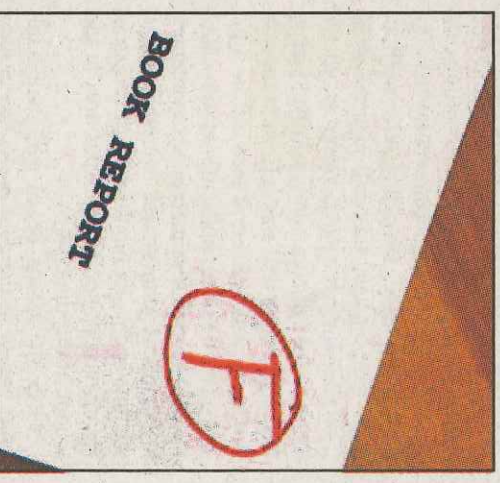
We watch in awe as they take over the football field for halftime performances with perfect synchronization. We hear their fight songs cheering on the Varsity football team from the bleachers.



Lifenouch

The Marching Spartans have won a lot of awards this past season, including coming in 12th out of over 100 groups at Marching Band Nationals.

West Potomac High School tried to change their grading policy so that no students would receive failing grades, but quickly changed back to their old policy after the new one caused a lot of controversy.



The Star

This isn't an easy feat; the marching band members put in long, hard hours before the school year has even begun. This is in addition to the grueling hours they spend once school is in session.

You can see the marching band practicing their formations late at night in the practice field long after other sports have gone home. The dedication shown by the members of the band is all building up for the competitions they perform at.

"The long hours after school, and during the summer were all worth it because we gave a great show," said junior Kelsey Oppler.

"It was a lot better than last year because of the great student leaders, I felt like we were a more close knit unit."

The Marching Band attended six competitions this year. Out of the five where they were scored, they took first place at four.

One of the biggest accomplishments they had this year was

See "Band" on Page 5.

College spam  
turns into a  
hassle.



Love  
knows no  
boundaries.



Staff beats  
students in  
annual game.



# Hidden costs deter customers

Long gone are the days where "calling someone" meant standing in your kitchen attached to a phone cord. With the progression of cell phones, this generation heavily depends on them.

Surely, we all have suffered a time where we have lost that shiny piece of plastic that enables us to connect with our BFFs and frenemies alike.

Whether it's only for an hour or for a month, that time that we are without our phones is excruciating.

Not only can you not text your pal to ask where you are meeting for lunch, you can't use the clock to check the time. Besides, what's the point of going to a restaurant if you are without your handy dandy tip-calculator?

Not surprisingly, phone services are aware of this, and use our dependency to their advantage. What is this, you say? Verizon and AT&T actually want to make money?

Yes, it is obvious that they want to extract as much cash as they can from their customers, but it is beginning to get ridiculous. The most prominent scheme at the moment is data packages.

Verizon and AT&T both require a minimum \$15 dollar data package for all smart phones. Customers, especially teenagers, are lured by the fancy and increasingly commonplace features, like touch screen and full keyboard. But are parents really willing to spit out \$15 per child a month on top of all the other cell phone charges?

This dilemma results in every middle-class student at WS having the Samsung Intensity, one of the few nice phones that

does not require a data package.

If you are searching online for a phone, it is very unclear whether or not it is considered "smart" or not. You have to go to each phone individually to find out if it requires the data package, and there is no way to filter out the restriction in the search engine (although Verizon finally dropped this, and now you have a choice of "smart phones" and "feature phones").

## Editorial

This way, the companies try to grab a customer's attention with a nice phone, hoping they will still buy it when they find out it requires a data package.

If your parents decide to foot the bill for the data package, this does not entitle you to unlimited web access. You actually only have about 150 MB, which some people use up in a day. Between Apps, Facebook and even advertisements, data gets used up pretty quickly.

For anyone prone to "butt dialing," we strongly suggest changing your shortcuts. Phone services preset shortcuts so they take you to the internet, which can cost a lot if you accidentally connect.

Verizon users: if you know what "My Account" is, please come find us. No matter how many times we click it, it just says "Accessing the Wireless Web." Curiosity keeps bringing us back, but we have starting to think it really is just the internet.

Also beware of "unlimited." For some companies, unlimited stops at 100,000, landing some text-happy users with extremely costly bills (over \$500).

We would also like to complain that although some of us have Verizon, we do not have an army of Verizon technicians

# Spartans are in much need of more school spirit

To the Editors:

In June of this year I was offered a position here to teach Spanish and lead the boys basketball program. When I received the offer from the administration here, I immediately accepted without reservation. In the days that followed I could barely sleep, eat, or rest due to the excitement I felt in knowing that I was returning to the county I grew up in (Fairfax), as well as the opportunity to coach a boys team at a school that my memory recalls, as being one of the brightest possessions in the FCPS system.

One of my initial goals in starting this season was to install a "pride" drill in the team and the athletic community here for the winter season. We call it "Spartan Pride Drill." We engaged this drill with the wrestling program in the padded room in order to foster a sense of community spirit and pride. No surprise, the drill was an instant success. Both programs seemed to feed off the high-energy environment in the pre-season, which the drill works to reinforce. My excitement to begin this journey was overwhelming at the time and really reinforced all the reasons for my acceptance into this position, in this school, at this time.

Once the season began we brought this same energy to the gym every day, in practice and in early season contests. The difficult part was that all of our beginning games were on the road and we couldn't feed off the energy that usually takes hold of a team in the home setting from the fans and community.

You can imagine my personal excitement when the time finally came to open the season at home. What better way to start than to open with the high powered, much maligned TC Williams Titans.

In the locker room before we stepped onto the court, I had planned an entire opening about what it means to be a SPARTAN. What the legacy of this school has brought to the community over decades of competition and success (well before I was even born), and what it has meant to so many over that span of time. One of my assistants even had a "300" Spartans Poster (catered specifically to basketball) made that hangs over the entrance door to the gym as a reminder of this prideful representation of a warrior-like mentality. You can imagine the adrenaline that rushed through my body on taking the floor for the first time with my team.

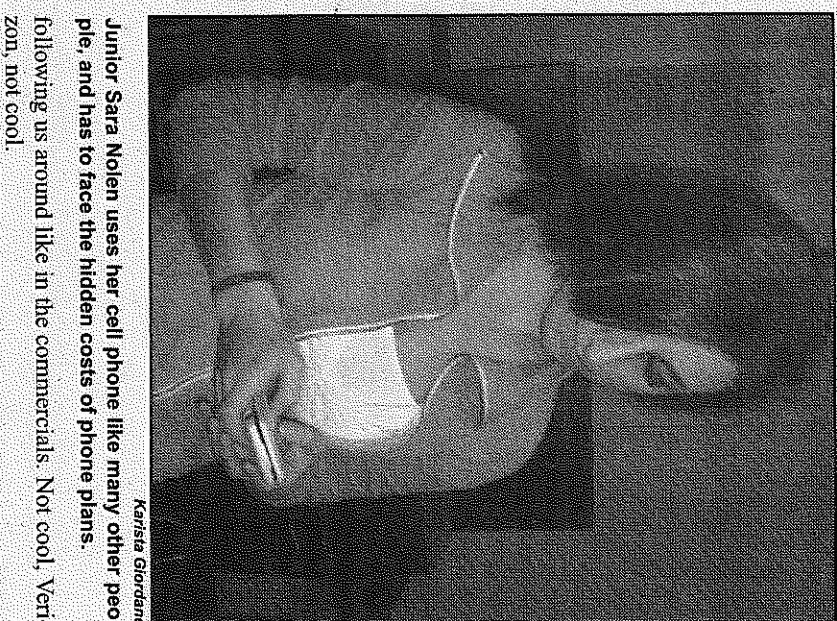
What proceeded to occur over the next 90 minutes is something I wouldn't wish on my worst enemy, and I couldn't have envisioned in my worst nightmare. The opposition crowd, which came in solid numbers, camped right behind our own home bench and unleashed a furious verbal assault on me, my staff, the team and the home crowd, which almost broke the prideful spirit that we had worked so hard to instill over the previous four months. Verbal profanity, individual name-calling and slanderous remarks, and even guest appearances in our home huddle were just a few of the examples that we en-

dured on our own side of the floor. It was difficult at times to even disseminate necessary information both on and off the court due to the crowd noise and heckling that ensued for the duration of the game.

Through all of this, our team fought back down 20 in the first quarter to close the gap to just 12 at the half, holding the high-powered Titans to just two field goals over the entire second period. In an attempt to salvage any kind of emotion out of our own fans, I ran to the home crowd and pumped my arms and yelled desperately to get the fire started for us on our home floor. These attempts (yes more than one) were met with an uncomfortable silence that you would normally feel and witness when you meet the parents of your girlfriend (or boyfriend) for the first time.

The emotion and intensity that I had envisioned from this environment was non-existent and I angrily stormed in the locker room with a feeling of rejection from my own family. The egg that I felt washing down my face from my intense emotion in the pre-game led to embarrassment as I attempted to address the team.

The second half of the game was met with equal disdain as the opposition's fans circled the waters like a group of sharks about to partake in a feeding frenzy off of their helpless prey. It ended with the opposition's fan base parading around our own Sports Lobby chanting "THIS IS OUR HOUSE" with the intention of disrespecting everything sacred that surrounds this institution, its history



Karissa Gioiardo  
Junior Sara Nolen uses her cell phone like many other people, and has to face the hidden costs of phone plans.

following us around like in the commercials. Not cool, Verizon, not cool.

Even the most tech-savvy users can be thwarted by the world of cell services. As long as you are aware of the tricks and do not go overboard with texting and Facebook stalking on your cell, you should be fine. Happy texting.

and its current community involvement. It was a shameful display of unsportsmanlike behavior from our opponents as well as our own ability to show pride and support for the team, student body and the adults that encompass the WS community.

I graduated from Fairfax High School in the early '90s. During my tenure there, WS stood for something proud and respectful, and was known as a place that opponents NEVER wanted to compete at because of that prideful existence.

In my short few months here, I have to ask, where has that Spartan pride gone? How can we, as the WS community, expect any improvement of the current conditions if we don't try to be part of the solution instead of being part of the problem? It is very defeating and humbling to witness your own home (one that we spend so much time in) become a serious disadvantage to the accomplishment of the goals and spirit that our boys (and myself) want so much for this school and its community. On Friday we fought two opponents, a battle that the "300" Spartans of history couldn't have overcome on their best and most valiant day.

We will soon be wearing T-shirts around the school outlining what I hope is a "rebirth" of Spartan Pride. I pray we are not alone in this endeavor.

Jason Eldredge  
Spanish Teacher  
Boys Varsity Basketball Coach

### Blue Staff Editors

Thomas Arrate  
Julie Parisi  
Managing Editor  
Sara Blaylock

### Entertainment Editors

Tiffany Clark  
Celine Donohue  
ETC. Editor  
Mara Scappura  
Features Editors  
Jessica Drago  
Nisteen Sunnean  
Page One Editor  
Lauren Griey  
Forum Editors  
Karisa Gioiardo

### Page One Editors

Allie Colletta  
Sports Editors  
Lee Gleason  
Luis Lester

### Viewpoint Editors

Nora Osei  
Jake Trump

### The

# 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.

### Orange Staff Editors

Kelly Carlin  
Lisa Williams  
Managing Editor  
Sam Goldwasser  
Entertainment Editors  
Anna Lehman  
Sara Lepley  
ETC. Editor  
Summer Claveau  
Features Editors  
Eleanor Lamb  
Sam Perlstein  
Page One Editors  
Nicole Brigham  
Jordan Miller  
Seop Editors  
Danielle Mazzuchi  
Amanda Pearson  
Sports Editors  
Austin Kaminski  
Jimmy McMahon  
Viewpoint Editors  
Megan Burpo  
Momo Sullivan

### Both Staffs

Staff Writers  
Kyle Rushion  
Peter Simonsen  
Kelsey Simpson  
Rita Zevallos  
Adviser  
Brooke Ramsey Nelson

Business Editor  
Claire Merenda  
Oracle Online Editor  
Andy Gholson  
Oracle Online Assistants  
Claire Merenda  
Mara Surti  
Photo Editor  
Jerrey Davis

# We wish you a Merry Christmas...and a happy birthday

By Eleanor Lamb

Features Editor

Birthdays are meant to be the one day of the year where friends and family can celebrate just one person: you.

However, when your birthday is overshadowed by a major holiday, it can be a little hard for others to distinguish one festivity from the other.

I understand that inconveniently-timed birthdays are not many people's problems and absolutely no one's fault. Still, having a birthday consumed by a large holiday makes one feel like just a speed bump along the road to something better that everyone is pinning for.

My birthday is December 23, just two short days before Christmas. Throughout grade school, the same people repeatedly could not show up to my party because they were always in the same place visiting the same relatives for the same holiday. The friends that did manage to show up simply saw my birthday as practice, a warm-up for an even better celebration just a couple of



Crain/flickr

Having to share a birthday with a major holiday causes people to feel unimportant and overshadowed, as they are forced to have turkey dinners, and many try to give combined presents days away.

Another annoying aspect of having a birthday that's near a huge holiday is that the

birthday loses its identity to the holiday that shares its proximity. Although my parents do try to give distinction to my birthday, I can't

## Ending the yearly struggle New Year's resolutions should be more realistic

By Megan Burpo

Viewpoint Editor

Five...four...three...two...one...Happy New Year!

Every year on December 31 people gather to watch the ball drop, to start off a New Year with family and friends, and to make resolutions for the New Year...that they will all inevitably break the next day.

We all do this, set impossible goals for ourselves and expect to accomplish them right off the bat. Now don't get me wrong, making resolutions is an excellent idea. People take the time to see what they need to work on and improve in their lives and make an effort to change, but sometimes I think instead of a goal it becomes a wish.

For example, I'm pretty sure gym membership sky rockets after new years, as half our country

vows to lose weight. Most will head straight to the gym, hoping to go home two sizes smaller after spending a mere 30 minutes on the treadmill.

Similarly, the aisle full nicotine patches and gum will be looking rather sparse as many smokers go to CVS vowing this to be the year they will quit. While these are all excellent resolutions, the point is people expect to change in three days and don't want any hard work. By January 7 half our country has gone back to their old ways and don't even know what the word resolution means, which leaves me to ask, why even go through the trouble in the first place of pretending to follow and make a resolution?

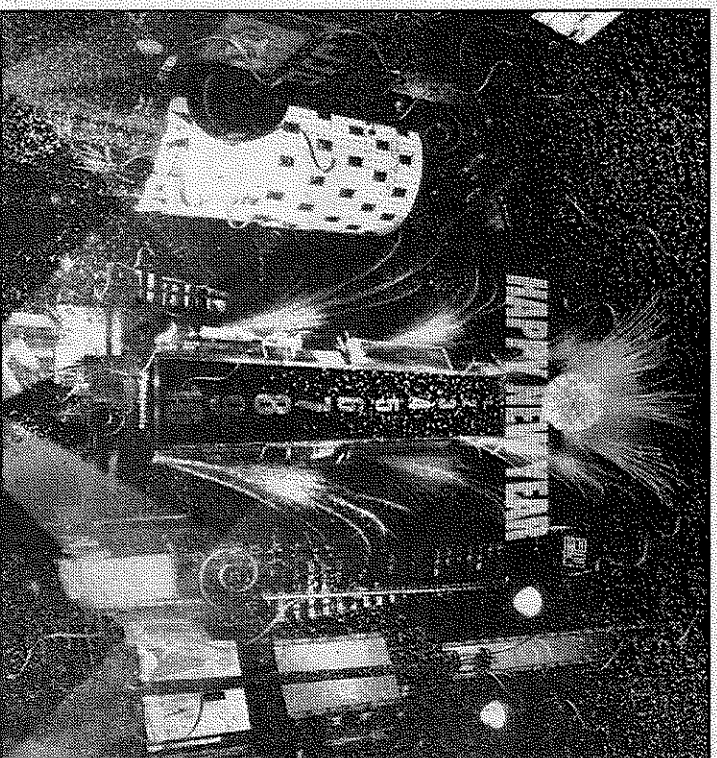
Why not just make a simple one that is possible to follow. I personally am a culprit of making crazy

resolutions and going back to my old self a week later.

So instead of attempting to drop 100 pounds in a week, or be able to run a marathon with no training before hand, we should create small resolutions to build to the lifestyle we want. After all, they say slow and steady wins the race.

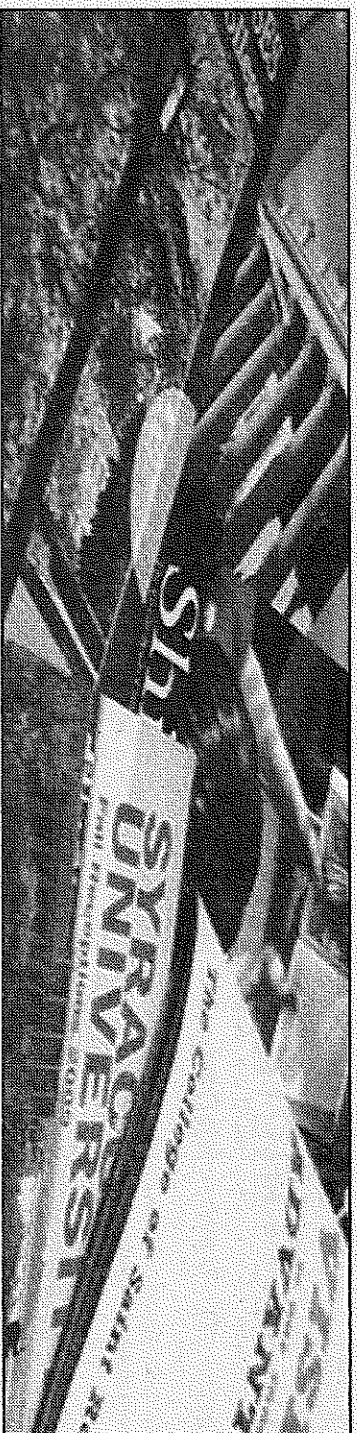
As students, I know we could try to go to sleep earlier by not spending two late night hours before bed looking at everyone's pictures on Facebook. It would also be beneficial to school performance to try to finish homework at home instead of in the car on the way to school or at the lunch table.

So this year I am challenging you to go small and stick with it. Making resolutions is a great tradition, but keeping them would be an even better one.



ABC

Every year, people make resolutions that they never keep. Resolutions may last a week if you are strong willed, but people get tired of trying. This year we should work to make smaller resolutions that we can actually keep. Making reasonable resolutions still can change your life for the better, and allow you to feel pride that you managed to keep one.



Times Union

Colleges waste time and money sending emails and pamphlets to potential students instead of putting it toward better use for the school.

## Excessive college mail sparks anger in students A senior's request to stop the bothersome spam from universities

By Lisa Williams

Oracle Editor

"Elizabeth, come chat with us" No thanks.

I assume that most of the recipients of emails such as this react the same way I do: by pressing the delete button. There is nothing I hate more than people, and especially large institutions such as colleges, pretending they know me when they don't. I understand that they're trying to persuade me to "join the class of 2015!!!!!" at their university, but the

calling me on my home phone and the emailing me once a week is excessive. The emails aren't even the worst part. I can handle an overload in my electronic inbox, but when my real mailbox starts to fill up with gigantic packets full of information about random universities and colleges, the environmentalist in me gets annoyed. Colleges spend countless hours promot-

ing how "green" their campuses are becoming, and yet they spend many thousands of dollars sending out postcards telling students

such as myself to SAVE THE DATE and come visit them in New Mexico for a two hour presentation before making the 2000 mile return trip. Understandably, they are trying to recruit a diverse student body from all parts of the country; however, I assume they know that most residents of Virginia will not make the voyage. I always wonder why they waste so much paper when they know we won't pay attention to it. Actually, even if someone did want to trek all that way, they would still end up throwing away the postcard. So regardless of outcome, all that paper wasted by the 4000+ colleges in the United States ends up in various trashcans scattered across the country.

Another thing that confuses me is where colleges are getting the money to print all of

these glossy lookbooks and "formal" letters, and to pay for their postage. I assume they get it from alumni donations and other general

university funds. What doesn't make sense to me is that almost all colleges charge each student upwards of \$15,000 a year, which goes towards the running of the university, but then they frivolously waste thousands of dollars on pointless fliers.

Why not save the future of America some money and put these large printing costs towards the cost of the facilities and professors? The money could instead be used towards these things, lowering tuition costs and making families and college students much happier.

It would also make all teenagers in the college-bound age bracket much more satisfied, because they would no longer have to spend their afternoons emptying hoards of college mail out of their mailboxes.

## Spartans' generosity helps provide happy holidays for all

To the Editors:

Every year the National Honor Society helps to organize a holiday adoption program for less-fortunate families. This year, with the help of a Fairfax County social worker, we were able to match up a variety of groups with over 22 families who need support during these difficult economic times.

The generosity and compassion that the WS community has shown is truly inspirational. Families were "adopted" by individual teachers, academic departments and the administration. The student body also adopted families through various organizations including: Ethiopian & Eritrean Club, Forensics, History Honor Society, Key Club and the Thespian Honor Society. Additionally, a special recognition needs to be made for the Class of 2012, which not only adopted the largest family, but tripled the donation request. In total, WS donated over 300 gifts and gift cards totaling over \$1,600.

It is an incredible sight looking at the volume of donations that this school has made to benefit people anonymously. Fairfax County Public Schools has a goal of creating "good citizens," which WS truly embodies. In this season of celebration, please accept our thanks for the celebration that you have spread. Your donations will greatly enrich our community and for that we say our most sincere thanks.

S. John Davis  
Chapter of the National Honor Society

# School replaces phone after confiscation goes awry

By Amanda Pearson  
Scoop Editor

Cell phone policy has been a hotly debated topic within our school for quite some time now. Recently, an incident has added to the controversy of what to do with phones that get confiscated during the school day.

Teachers are required to confiscate the students' cell phones if they see them being used during class time, and turn them over to school security personnel. After their phones have been confiscated, the students have the option of asking a parent to retrieve the phone, or waiting until after school Friday to pick it up themselves.

Sometimes, however, the handoff from teacher to security staff member is not fully completed. This happened recently when a new cell phone randomly went missing from a teacher's desk.

"[When a phone is stolen,] we look for it, and if it isn't found, I report it to risk management," said Safety & Security Specialist Mike Ukele.

A teacher had confiscated senior David Thompson's iPhone 4G because he was tex-

ting in class. But the phone disappeared before the teacher could turn it in to the proper office.

No one was more surprised about what happened than Thompson, who tried to pick up his phone the same day it was confiscated.

"I came in with my mom to get it back right after school," said Thompson. "First I went to Mr. Ukele and he said that [the teacher] had not turned it in yet. Then we went back to the classroom and [the teacher] wasted no time telling me that someone had taken it from his desk."

Teachers have worried before about the school's cell phone policy since they don't want to be responsible for losing students' valuable possessions. Once a teacher has taken the phone, the school is responsible for its safe-keeping, so any incidents that occur are the responsibility of the school as well.

"[To prevent anything from happening,] the teachers call the security office or the main office and someone usually comes to bring it down to the office," said Ukele.

After it became clear that Thompson's phone had been stolen, his teacher offered a



Senior David Thompson poses with the new iPhone the school bought for him after his old one was confiscated and then stolen.

## Calderwood breaks records, stereotypes

By Eleanor Lamb

Features Editor

Alyssa Calderwood, a 2009 WS graduate and professional video game player, is a master at tackling obstacles in both the real and the online world and is always ready to face hard work and persevere.

Calderwood developed her interest in video games at a young age. Her first video game was Super Mario Bros., which she played at the tender age of seven on a Nintendo.

"I got into video games in general because it was something cool to do, but it got competitive at 11 when I started beating all my friends at Halo," said Calderwood.

Although she kept busy with her online games, Calderwood made sure not to let them consume her entire life. She also participated in multiple other activities such as soccer, football, and show choir while at WS. However, as her talent in gaming developed, she did have to make some sacrifices in her social life.

"Most [of my] eighth and ninth grade weekends were spent playing Halo 2 on xbox Live for at least twelve hours a day, usually from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m.," said Calderwood.

Her intense commitment did pay off, as Calderwood gained much experience and improved to a level in which she was able to participate in many gaming tournaments. During her sophomore year, she started attending gaming tourna-

ments hosted by the Major League Gaming, or MLG, for the popular online xbox Live games Halo and Halo 2.

"The MLG tournaments gave me the best and most useful tournament experience," said Calderwood.

Because her position as a female gamer is so unique, Calderwood has been met with a slew of reactions by members of her community.

Her family proudly supports her: they play and practice with her as well as help her out financially when it comes to gaming equipment and travel expenses. However, Calderwood has been met with her fair share of adversity as a female gaming minority.

"Freshman year I was stuffed into a trash can because of it [great gaming abilities]," said Calderwood.

While it was sometimes difficult, Calderwood won the respect of her peers as she, and her gaming ability, grew. She eventually garnered the nickname Master Chief, who is the main character in Halo.

Calderwood was encouraged by most, but occasionally faced antagonism from egotistical boys who were annoyed that a girl could beat them all at an activity mostly pursued by guys. Calderwood refuses to be intimidated, and just keeps playing the games that she has grown to be an expert at.

"Personally, I just play because I love it," said Calderwood, "but it's certainly a bit empowering."

'09 graduate Alyssa Calderwood now professionally plays games such as Halo. She goes to tournaments hosted by Major League Gaming, which usually are male-dominated.



Christina Gacharna

## Ding dong, bells are ringing

### New tones confuse many students, help few

By Rita Zevallos

Senior Staff Writer

BBBBBBBBBBBBBBP. We've been up-

graded. Students and teachers alike were surprised Monday morning when the five-minute warning bell sounded less like a bell and more like an office tone, and even more so when, at 7:29, came a distinctly different bell with a trilling sound. The whole system, including the bells, PA system, and classroom clocks, has been revamped overnight.

"The county just showed up and said they were putting in the new system," said Principal Paul Wardinski.

The main distinction is the different tones. The old bell system only had one sound, which could cause confusion between warning bells, tardy bells, lunch bells, and the seemingly-pointless bell between first period and Spartan Time. Now, the school can choose to make different tones for different bells, such as the newly implemented one-minute-warning bell. It gives to those still loitering after the five-minute-bell, another warning to quickly get to class.

The school also plans to create different tones to start B lunch and C lunch. Currently, with bells ringing almost every five minutes during fifth and sixth period, it is very confusing for people who haven't memorized the schedule to figure out when they are to go to lunch. Once the new change is put into place, they must only listen to the unique sound that

starts their lunch. However, some think it will only make things worse.

"In all, it sounds like a good idea, but when you put it into practice, all the different sounds are going to throw people off," said senior Briana Beale.

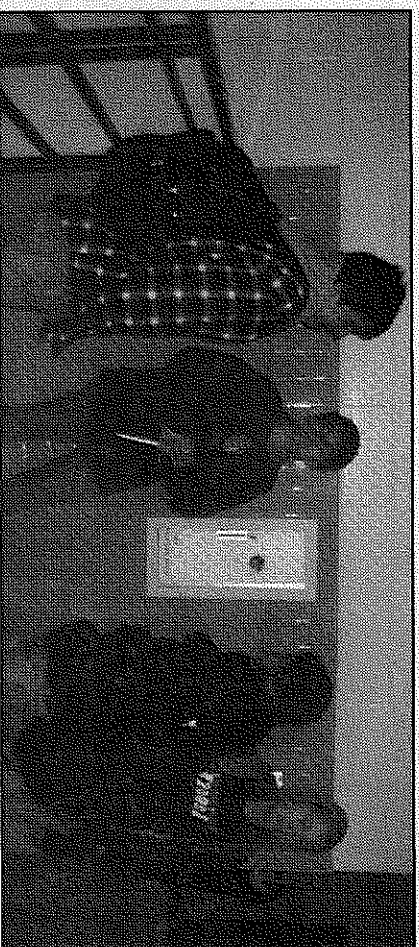
Another major change is that a classroom or section of the school can be shut off from the system. This will prove most useful during the PSAT, SOLs, or AP tests, when PA announcements and bells would be the most disruptive. Similarly, the office can now call down to specific rooms by PA, so a summons to the office no longer needs to be broadcast to the entire school or brought by student runners to the classroom.

Many students complain that the new bells are confusing because they are not consistent, but hopefully soon they will become more regular. The main complaint, however, is not the fact that there are more bells, but the headache-inducing way they sound.

"It's ear-piercing and it's way too long on the ears," said senior Ben Laubacher.

The school's consensus: the main bell resembles a heart monitor flat lining in a hospital, while the warning bell sounds like either Chewbacca from "Star Wars" or an alien invasion. Neither makes any attempt at sounding like a bell.

"The old bells were comfortable, 'high-school-y' sounds. The new ones sound like an obnoxious office building is invading West Springfield," said junior Sean Garrison.



Students stand up after the new one-minute bell rings, signaling them that they have to get to class. The addition of a one-minute warning bell has been confusing to many students this week, because they were not made aware of the changes, and mix it up with the late bell.

## ALL NIGHT GRAD

is selling

### COMMITTEE

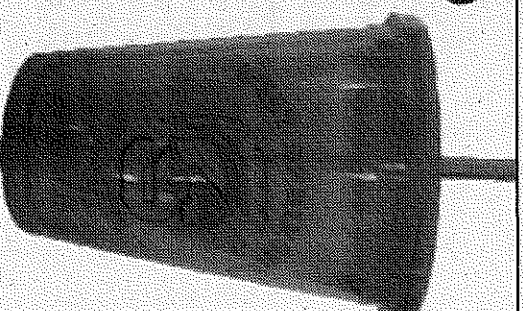
### INSULATED CUPS with STRAWS & INSULATED COFFEE MUGS!

Just in time for holiday shopping!

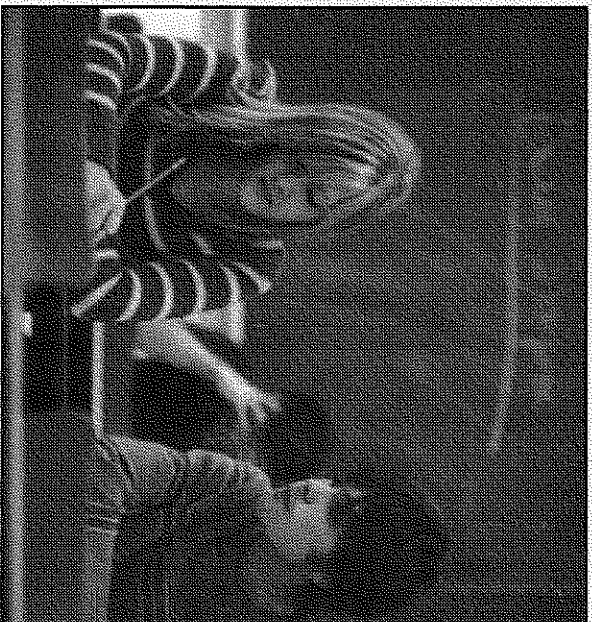
Both the cups and mugs are in school colors, with a Spartan logo.

They will be for sale during lunch through Monday the 20th in front of the Career Center.

**\$8 for one piece**  
**\$15 for two pieces**



Questions? E-mail: [brenda.fish1@verizon.net](mailto:brenda.fish1@verizon.net)



All Voices  
Another attempted policy change was allowing those caught cheating to retake the assessment, but this was overturned.

## Decision driven by grade inflation *WP tried to change policy to make students more competitive*

**From "No 'F' Policy," Page 1.**

A swath of negative reactions by parents and teachers as the main reason for the switch back.

The measure is defeated for now, however the aspects of artificially raising grades have been creeping up in the school system for years. Fairfax county lowered the intensity of its grading scale last year, albeit to conform to the standards of schools around the country.

Grade inflation has also been attributed to rising college acceptance standards, with much more students applying with straight "A's." The extra point added to grade point averages by Advanced Placement classes, and half point by Honors classes, has also lead to ambiguity in deciding Valedictorian, many schools, including WS, are simply choosing 10 or 12 students rather than selecting a single person to receive the honor, as it has been traditionally done.

The question becomes how much schools should be cod-

ding their students, and if making every child appear to be above expectations is actually beneficial. Teachers around the country have expressed displeasure with the rise in grades, and have sided the stigmatization of any other grade besides "A," as contributing to the process.

The grade of "Satisfactory" was meant to be represented by a "C," but with a lack of "F's" it may be difficult to believe that those with straight "A's" truly "exceed expectations." Once all these protected students enter the job market, they may find that the effort that earned them "A's" in high school may not pay off.

Grade inflation is still advancing, but the catastrophe that ensued will likely keep the "F" around for now. The ill fate of the measure was nicely summed up by US History teacher Brian Heintz.

"[This decision was] an odious bargain with sin," said Heintz.

## Spartans march their way to success

**From "Band," Page 1.**

Receiving the highest rating at States. They also placed twelfth in their class at Nationals, which is a whopping seven places higher than last year's score.

"[Nationals] competition was like the Super Bowl of band competitions," said senior Stephen Dillon. "Compared to the past, we've done a lot better than we normally do."

Each competition has about 15 bands competing, except Nationals which had over 100.

"This band did the absolute best they could possibly do, I am so proud of them, this is the best band I have seen since being at WS," said band director Larry Eimmis.

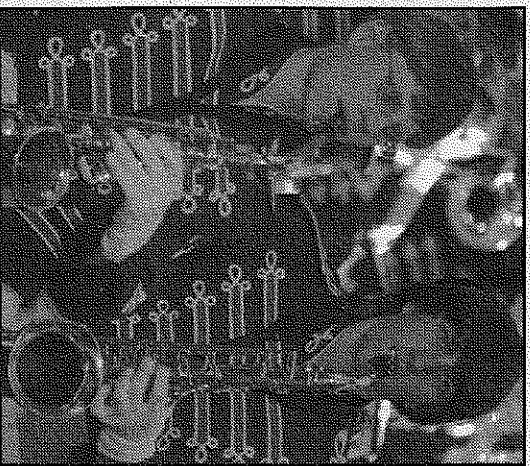
This wasn't the first time the Marching Spartans have visited Nationals, which is held in Annapolis, Maryland. Over the past ten years the band has performed at the national level twice.

"We set goals at the beginning of the season," said Dillon. "This year, student leadership worked harder to get to where we wanted to get."

To get prepared before a performance the marching band members stretch, run, and get their lines organized. They go through a mental and instrument warm ups followed by a rehearsal.

"We went to Nationals last year and this year Nationals is a huge experience for us because it was completely different," said senior Meredith Zetlemoyer. "We practiced three to four days a week with four hour rehearsals."

The senior band members also enjoy a few perks. They get to ride their own bus to



Lifetouch  
Seniors Chris Wink and John Gilbertson play their alto saxophones in the Homecoming Parade.

competitions since there are 27 seniors this year. They also have a little fun with the rookies by waking them up ungodly early at band camp for a bright and early practice.

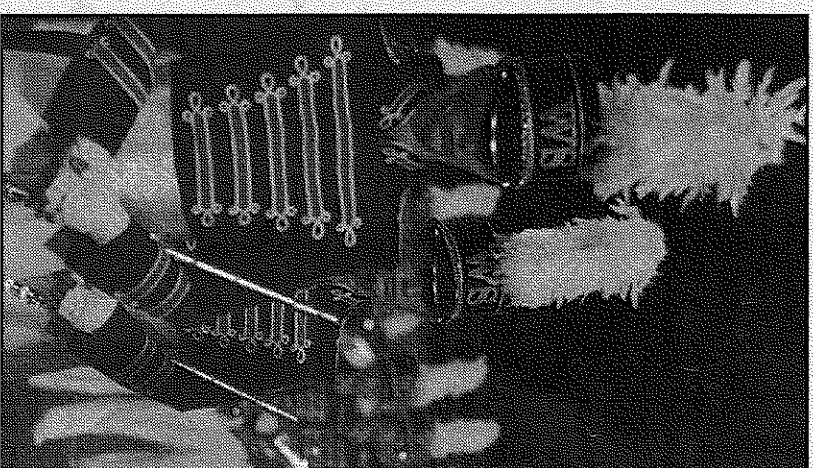
"It is a tradition we have that we wake up the freshmen, run them through a couple of exercises, then feed them breakfast," said senior Ryan Shannahan. "It is sort of a graduation for them, they are no longer rookies after that morning. They are part of the band."

The new freshmen this year learned what it took to be part of such a talented group of musicians. It is more than just walking in motions while playing notes. You must be in sync with the rest of the band, walk complex motions while you play your notes at a rapid staccato all while making it seem effortless.

"I loved it. It is the most rewarding thing I have ever done, hard work, but rewarding," said freshman Amelia Wheaton.

Anyone who has watched the band perform this year can see how well they work together. From the music to the footwork, you can tell the effort they put into it. Their strong work ethic paid off when it came to competitions.

"We all put aside our differences this year. We had a good group of hard workers," said Shannahan.



Lifetouch  
The Marching Band plays during halftime to show off their skills to the school community. The group also won four of their five competitions this year, placed 12th at Nationals, and overall had an exceptionally successful season.

## STOP BY THE BARBERSHOP/BEAUTY SALON OR CALL TO MAKE AN APPT.

sharpest shape ups in the area

Mohawks. Designs. Fades

Domblow outs. Perms. Relaxers

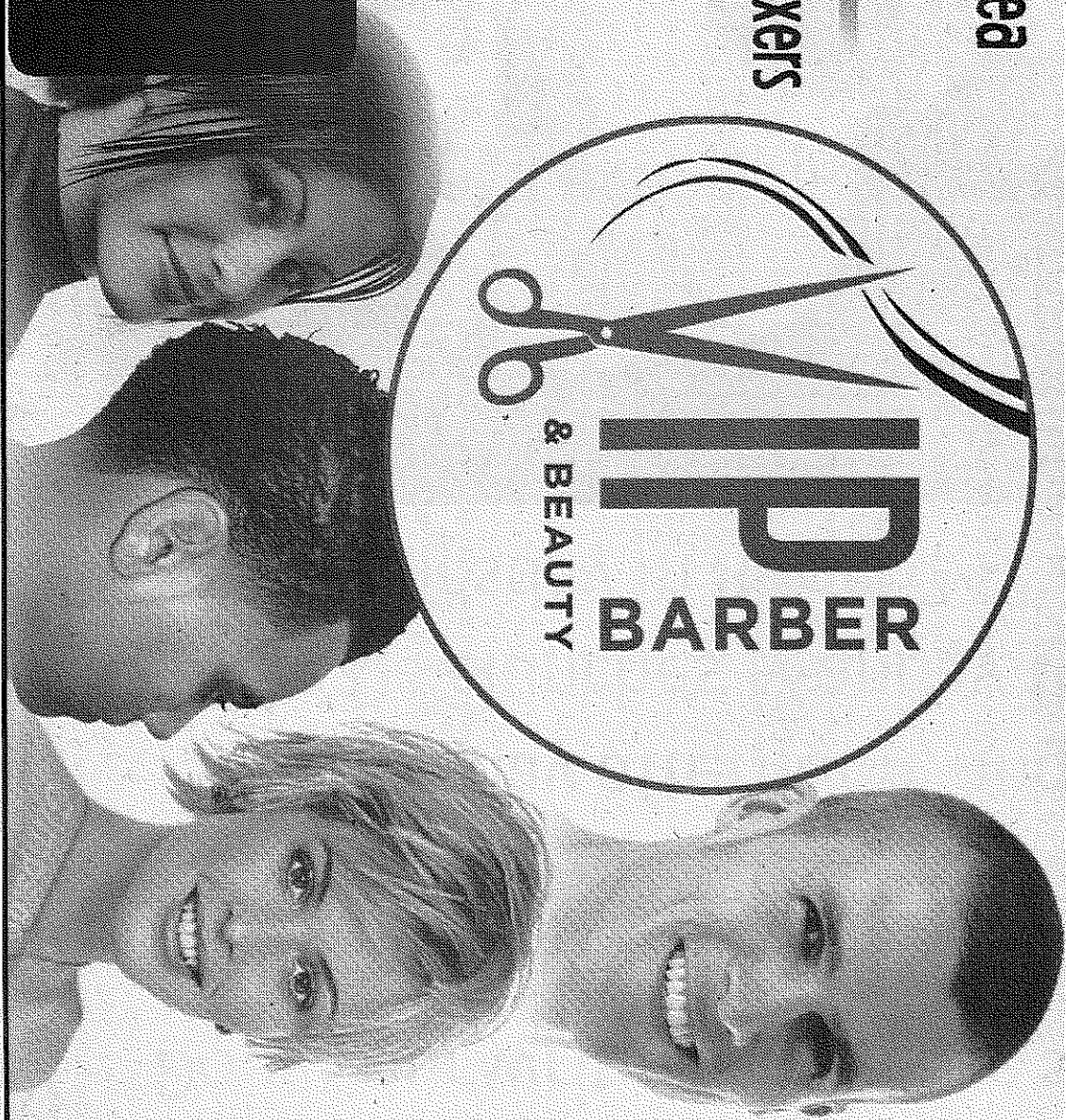
Students discount with school Id.

Sunday-wednesday

Specials Sun, Tues and Weds



VIP BARBERSHOP & BEAUTY  
8101 SUITE B LOISDALE RD  
NEWINGTON, VA 22122  
(703)339-0VIP(0847)



## News Bites

### Golden Globe nominations announced

The films and television shows nominated for the 68th Annual Golden Globe Awards were released this week. Films nominated in the Best Drama category include "Black Swan," "The Fighter," "Inception," "The King's Speech" and "The Social Network." Among the television shows nominated were HBO's "Boardwalk Empire," AMC's "Mad Men" and Fox's "Glee." The awards are scheduled for January 16 on NBC.

### Wikileaks founder in custody

Wikileaks founder Julian Assange was arrested in London on December 7. Assange's bail was scheduled for a hearing that was postponed on charges of sexual assault by Assange.

### Gunman opens fire at Florida School Board meeting

Disgruntled Florida resident Clay Duke opened fire at a school board meeting after what appeared to me anger from his wife's job being lost. During the confrontation, the gunman ended the event by taking his own life.

### Richard Holbrooke dies at 69

Richard Holbrooke, a former US ambassador and renowned American diplomat, died on December 13 after complications caused by a tear in his aorta. Holbrooke will be remembered for his contributions to American government and ideas of diplomacy.

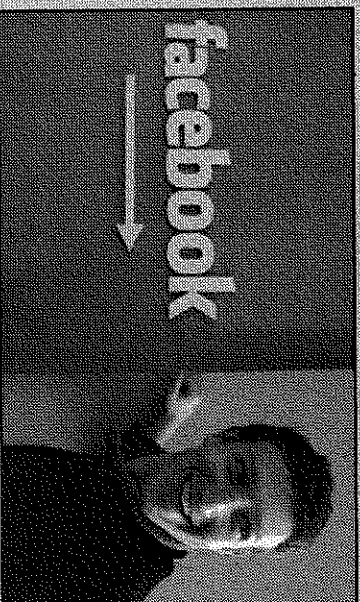
### Rock and Roll Hall of Fame to induct new artists

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame announced their new inductees including Alice Cooper, Neil Diamond, Darlene Love, Tom Waits and Dr. John. All of the artists will be honored at the official induction ceremony in March.

### Metrodome collapses due to snow

The Minnesota Vikings stadium collapsed after massive snowfall caused the roof to cave in under the weight. The staff reconstruct their stadium as soon as possible.

### Compiled from local news, police and online sources



Topic: Dan

### Mark Zuckerberg named Time's "Man of the Year"

Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook's founder, was named Time Magazine's "Man of the Year." Zuckerberg was the center point of one of the year's biggest films, "The Social Network," a biopic that illustrated the years in which Zuckerberg first created the website and the lawsuit that immediately followed its creation.

## Economy changes travelers' outlooks

By Kyle Rushton  
Oracle Staff Writer

Whether it's the desired holiday gifts or competitive sports, the weak economy has gotten to us all.

This year's holiday season may be slightly different than previous years', regarding the poor economy. May families will be unable to attend their annual gatherings with friends and family, or travel to their normal vacation spots. Because of the low economy, long travels to visit relatives will be slightly more uncommon than before.

"My family is going to my aunt's house this year, and we used to go to my grandparents' house, but they're too far," said freshman Lindsay Berthards.

Many families have not only insufficient funds for big trips, but also for holiday gifts. The economy has severely affected the value of the presents given and received around the holidays, because many people find it diffi-

cult to afford the latest trends.

"Things have gone up in price, so it has changed what I'm asking for," said freshman Laura Wolinsky.

The desired iPhone 4 or Xbox may require more than just a general plea on a Christmas list, but rather much-needed savings to pay for the pricey items.

Besides the high costs of items on wish lists, several teams are experiencing troubles with obtaining the proper finances to attend tournaments held over the holidays. Some teams are choosing to partake in less expensive tournaments, while others are not participating at all. While settling with a cheaper tournament may help financially, there are cons to avoiding the pricier tournaments. In many cases, the larger, more costly tournaments provide more opportunity. More college scouts attend the larger tournaments, providing insight to the talent of the players. "There are advantages at more expensive

tournaments, but some people can't afford them," said sophomore Devan Warden.

The economy could take a toll on not only the holiday aspect of the season, but also the sports aspect. Many talented athletes, who can't afford enough money to pay for the expenses of higher tournaments, are deprived of great opportunities for colleges and professionals to scout them.

While many teams have decided not to participate in their normal tournaments, others are determined to attend their annual games. But even though it hasn't come easy in the rough economy, a few teams are choosing to work towards acquiring the proper funds in order to participate in the larger tournaments.

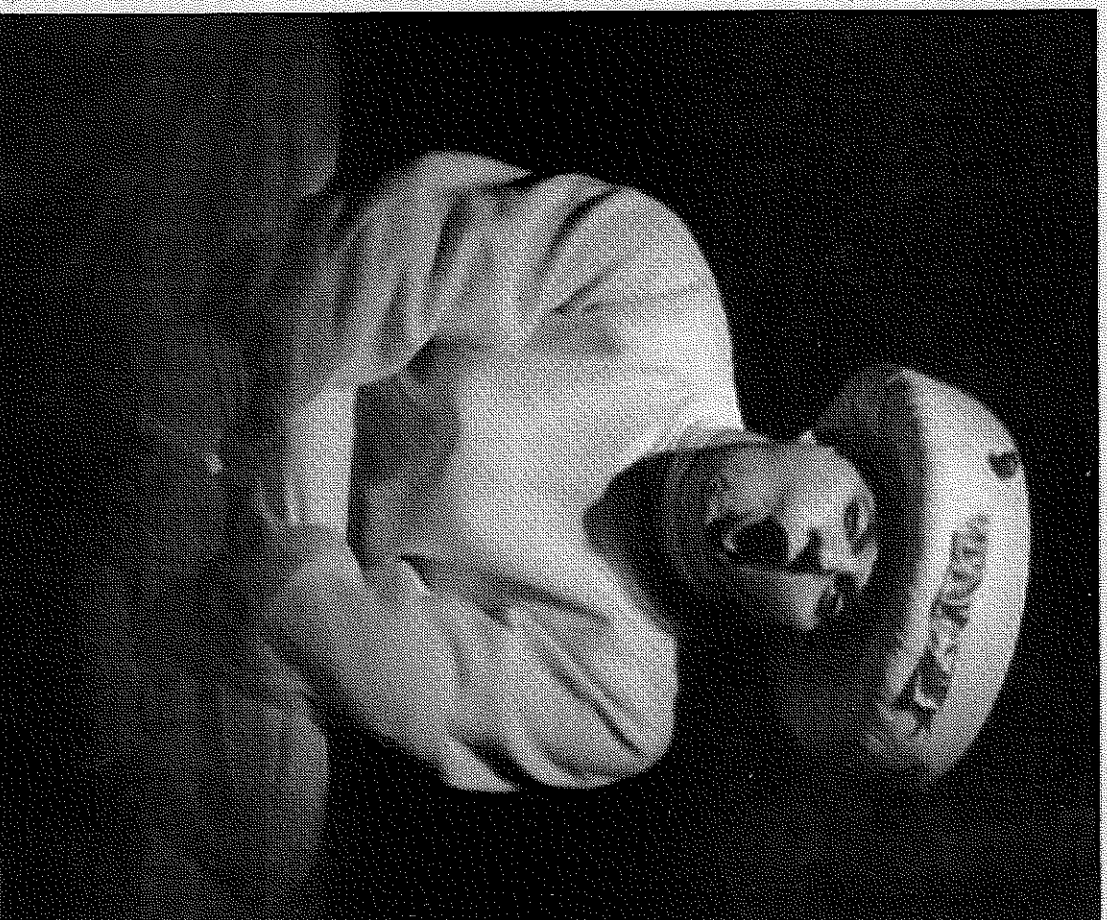
"We're playing at the Disney Showcase tournament in Florida," said junior Jamnik Eckemrode. "We've had to do some extra fundraising activities and programs to help finance all of our trips."



Tenth Amendment Center

A satirical picture of money on a toilet paper roll suggests that the increase in travel prices is just money being flushed down the drain.

Does your writing smell like stinky cheese? Come to the **Writing Center!** Open 2:30-4 PM every Wednesday afternoon, and all Orange Day lunches Monday through Wednesday in Room 242 A!



# Biology teacher uses power of prediction

By Karista Giordano

Forum Editor

Students aren't the only ones in school who look forward to the snow days.

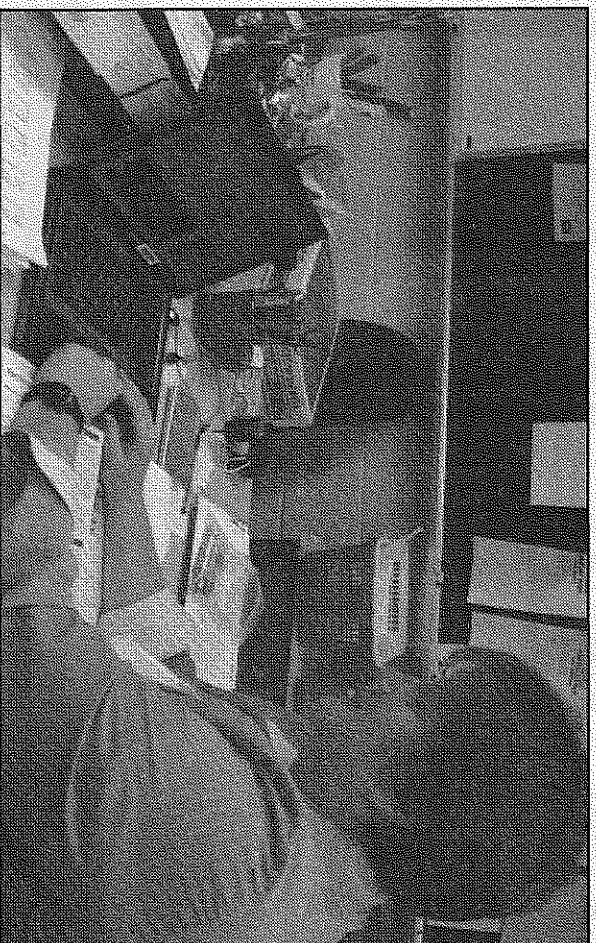
Beth Jewell, Biology and Oceanography teacher, looks at the weather patterns by the maps and weather sites to be able to predict future snow days; she wants snow days just like her students. The most common website where she finds the information is National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) website.

"I like NOAA because they always have accurate maps and they are free," said Jewell.

Faculty here looks forward to the snow days just as much as the students. As for Jewell, she likes being able to stay up late and then sleep in on a snow day just like many students.

"I look at the weather patterns to see if I can stay up late and also so I know to get my shovel ready," said Jewell.

Jewell shares the information that she acquires with anyone that asks or may be



Karista Giordano

Science teacher Beth Jewell sits in front of her computer while visiting the NOAA website where she gets all of her surprisingly true predictions. She loves to guess when it will snow to figure out if she and the rest of the faculty, along with students, will get a day off from school.

## Choosing to be an original

By Anna Lehman & Sara Lepley

Oracle Staff Writers

Hunter Howell is a normal 16-year-old teenager who likes to hang out with friends, attends school, and wants his own car. He is also proud of his fashion sense.

"I just prefer women's fashion to men's," said Howell, a junior. "I'm not the type to wear Nike flip flops and high socks."

He can be seen strutting the hallways in his ripped t-shirts, his infamous fishnets, and his trademark tresses. His ever-present makeup is a nod towards his career aspirations. Howell plans on taking cosmetology academy classes next year as his segue into an otherwise female dominated world. While Howell dreams of cosmetology, what he really wants is equality.

"I come to school to get an education, not to get ostracized," said Howell.

Howell blogs about equality and plans on becoming a member of the school's Gay Straight Alliance Club. Although his approach to break the mold of the status quo may seem extreme to some, everyone can take an example of him and dare to be themselves. Despite the unprovoked insults and dirty looks for simply being unique, Howell almost always follows a sticks and stones policy.

"I just brush it off, but sometimes I end up retaliating," said Howell.

Once, last year, a student was spreading rumors and ridiculing him, so Howell confronted him, landing himself a

five-day suspension while, he said, the other student got off. Fortunately for Howell, he can lean on his friends.

"My friends talk me down," said Howell. "They want what's best for me, and tell me there's a brighter day."

Although they do not share his style in clothing, they look beyond the exterior, and respect his courage.

"He is one of the only people to be himself, he stays a positive and strong person," said his friend, senior Sally Yu.

Besides providing inspiration for others, Howell finds some of his own. He looks to role models for support, who come from not only the flashy world of celebrities, but also from his family tree.

His dress code reflects his "little monster" status, a salute to Lady Gaga. His admiration goes further than just her music and image. Not only does Howell idolize her, but has even met her through VIP passes.

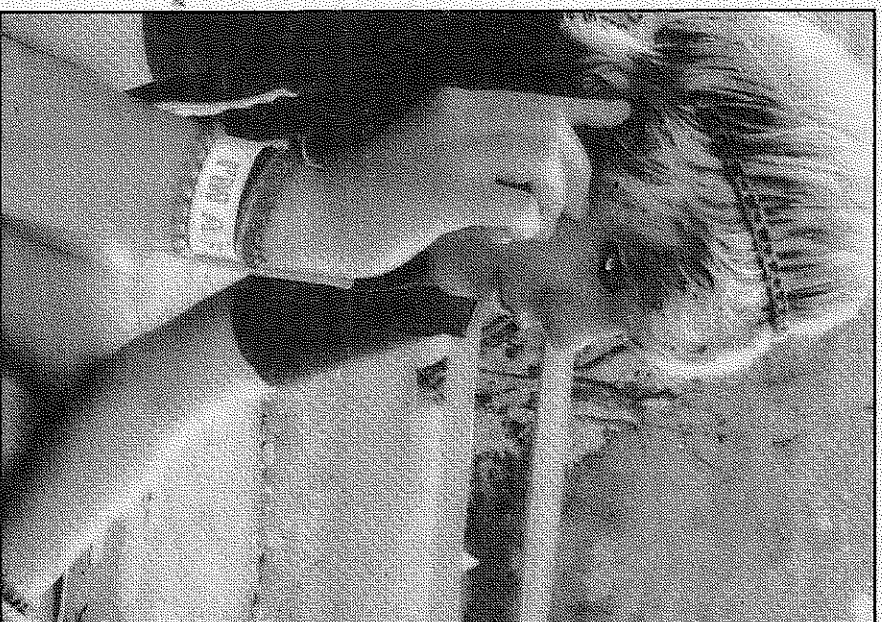
"I got chills that just wouldn't leave," said Howell. "She's one of the sweetest people."

It seems that standing out runs in the family. Howell's uncle Moryce has played a large role in his life. Like Howell, his uncle was ostentatious, but didn't handle intolerance from classmates the way Howell does.

"He's told me he wishes that he coped with it as well as I do," said Howell.

Between his friends' faith in him, his uncle's, and his own, Howell is able to remain true to himself and what he stands for.

"I'm just going to keep being me," said Howell.



Courtesy of Hunter Howell

Hunter Howell dares to be different every day by flaunting his unique style even though he might get criticism from his peers. To Howell, staying true to himself is more important.

## Fuller marches to success Captain leads band to her fullest ability

By Peter Simonsen

Senior Staff Writer

The Marching Band has been rolling along in their traditional eight steps to five yards walk, but it takes a special kind of talent to coordinate the movements of nearly 250 highly trained students.

The marching band recently received the highest possible score at the state festival, which features band competitions from all across the state where every aspect of the performance is scrutinized in great detail.

The band received a "one" out of one on the competitions for performance, and music. This puts them on track to make honor band by additionally receiving a "one" in the spring competitions.

Giving the entire band marching orders is a difficult task. With such a large team commanding them can be difficult but senior band captain Alice Fuller said that everything comes down to determination, and repetition. "During marching band season we get maybe a day off a week, and 14 hour practices," said Fuller.

Band practice starts three weeks before the beginning of summer. In the summer band members have to cart out their instruments

"During Marching Band season we get maybe a day off a week, and 14-hour practices."

— Alice Fuller,

senior band captain

and roll out of bed when most would still be asleep. It might start to get brutal in the summer but it hardly takes a break till the next one. The dedication is even more prevalent in the captains.

"I was there at six setting up and we were starting at five o'clock that day," said Fuller.

Like any sport, the marching band, gives it there all when ever they can balancing school work and practice.

With all that they give to the band, which requires stamina and careful planning, the captains of the West Springfield Marching Band have brought home 12th in the national competition this past spring, scoring a 92 in what they consider their most important competition.

"We came in second to last the year before, but a 92 is good," said Fuller.



Robbie Hamner

Marching Band puts one foot in front of the other proudly proving they deserve the highest score possible for at the state festival thanks to their talent and terrific leadership.

# SPARTAN

## Journalism 1 students get to

### Sophomore acquired her inspiration for writing in freshman English class

By **Katie Carter**  
Journalism 1

**B**eing a writer requires certain skills that only special people possess. One of these people, sophomore MyTam Le, embodies the essence of a true author. The complacent Vietnamese-American girl has the curious personality that will take her far in to the world of words.

Her passion for writing all started in her freshman English class with teacher, Katie Norton. "The inspirational teacher helped Le realize her passion."

"She loved what she was doing and was very involved in making sure her students understood," said Le.

A good friend of Le's, sophomore Emily Braswell, is well aware of how long Le's journey has been, having been in her English class freshman year.

"She didn't really like it as much at first because of the way her essays always turned out," said Braswell, "but she realized she just needed a little bit of help."

Le admits to herself that she isn't the best of writers—only being able to finish the plot line of her stories. Easily able to complete stories in her head, once she sits down to write them, nothing happens. Le said that the whole process is too stressful for her and considers making writing more of a hobby than a career.

"Writing is fun for me and I don't want to ruin it," said Le.

She wants to write stories for kids between the ages of 15 and 18. Her stories will have a moral to be learned that, "opens [her readers'] eyes to the bigger picture."

She jokingly compares her future writing style to that of *Aesop's Fables*. "I would want my stories to teach them something," Le said.

Reading and writing go hand in hand, so it only makes sense that Le also loves to read. A big fan of [www.perezilton.com](http://www.perezilton.com), a blogging site, Le likes reading about other people's thoughts. She jokes that she has very strong opinions about certain things and could probably start a blog of her own. It is all about the deeper connection for her. She gets inspiration from stories she hears and songs on the radio.

"Whenever I hear 'Fearless' by Taylor Swift," Le said, "my mind wanders off and I just add characters and scenarios to make it more interesting."

Le frequently analyzes the stories she hears, going deeper, asking, "what if?" Expanding the scenarios, she goes ahead and finishes the plot in her head. "I like how you can tell who people are by what they write," said Le.



Jerney Davis

**E**mma

pasta and all the family but after her mom returned from Old World ] freshman is When Ru Skocik, stationed at the Wall in Annand was crazy

to selling pass Overnight," said Ruitst fingers. "She literally decided she was going to Now, Ruitstein's war helps out on a regular Italian food, especially even though it's a lot of "You have to be super everything has to weigh Ruitstein of focaccia, a parmesan cheese, rosen "Even though people because they look diff

### On the road again...

By **Kelly Giddens**  
Journalism 1

**C**ounting the places that sophomore Sarah Schlichting has not traveled to is easier than listing the various sites she has visited during her summer trips.

"When people ask me how I spent my summer, I tell them I spent it in North Dakota or Minnesota," said Schlichting.

The typical lazy afternoon spent on the beach just doesn't work for her, as she has "never been to the beach," where there is apparently nothing to see. Schlichting has more important and exciting places to go to and more incredible sights to see.

In fact, chances are, most students have never been to the Mitchell Corn Palace, but Schlichting has.

"It's made out of corn! It's an entire castle!" said Schlichting. "It's just so incredible that a permanent building could be made entirely out of food."

Schlichting lives for zany sights, which live at the top of her list of favorite summer sights because of her passion for adventure. She enjoys beautiful sites as well as crazy ones. For instance,

traveling to Canada opened her eyes to a different world.

"When you cross into Canada, the scenery is just so much prettier," said Schlichting. "It just seemed like more beautiful and green, with wildflowers."

Along with helping her to appreciate nature, Schlichting's vacations help her to appreciate luxuries, which living in a houseboat along the Mississippi River in Wisconsin demonstrates this perfectly.

"It's harder than it seems, being cut off from civilization with no cell phone reception or Internet," Schlichting said.

No matter how exotic the places she has visited, there is one constant that Schlichting enjoys most, spending time with her family—one of the most important aspects of her travels to North Dakota, Minnesota and South Dakota every summer.

"I love to sit in the car for eight hours, just because it's really nice to relax with my family," said Schlichting.

Her ability to enjoy just about any trip is attributed to her strong familial bond as well as her excitement about adventure.

"Sarah is the only person who travels to these obscure places and enjoys it," said sophomore Sophie Benk. "She loves the adventure of traveling to new places with her sister."

Wherever Schlichting and her junior sister, Alexa Schlichting, go there surely is fun because the two share a hobby of visiting different locations. In fact, Schlichting is certain her upcoming summer with her family will be unforgettable.

"I don't know where my family and I are going this summer but I'm really excited. Even if it's to a place I've already been, it never gets old," said Schlichting.





# TOPPRISES

know one another

## Something's always cooking here

Kelly Giddens  
Journalism 1

Rutstein should love things Italian. After all, it's business.

Just one year of helping in their pasta business, Kitchens, the red-haired already sick of pasta. Rutstein's mom, Sandy, tried making pasta to sell at Wakefield Farmer's Market. Rutstein thought she'd prefer to be a nurse instead of a farmer's market. She'll be a snap of her own up one morning and make pasta."

med up to the idea and said. She enjoys making mini-lemon bundt cakes, work.

pre-precise with it because exactly the same," said which is flat bread with tary and olives on top. think they're different rent, they're the exact



Sandra Skocik

same. You just don't notice."

Aside from pasta and bread, Rutstein makes sweet Italian desserts and sauces. She even dedicates a few hours every Wednesday to sell her family's food at the Wakefield Farmer's Market. Rutstein's favorite part about the Farmer's Market is the free

samples from other vendors.

"I can go to the salsa lady and get free samples or buy stuff for half-price. It's awesome," said Rutstein. Even though Rutstein is constantly immersed in Italian food, she never eats the pasta she makes. "We make everything for the customers. People

"We make everything for the customers... We don't eat any of it... we still have to go to the store to buy it."

—Emma Rutstein,  
freshman

pre-order it because they love it so much. We don't eat any of it. Ever," said Rutstein. The family does, however, make and eat pasta out-of-the-box.

"It's kind of funny. We make pasta every day but we still have to go to the store and buy it," said Rutstein.

Even with all the time Old World Kitchens takes, Rutstein still finds time to maintain an A/B average in school, balance two honors classes, learn Spanish and have lots of friends.

"Emma's very encouraging. Anyone who's down or upset, she'll stick with you and cheer you on," said freshman Emma Branch.

In the spring, Rutstein will try out for crew. Until then, she will be doing winter workouts five days a week after school.

"It's going to be kind of crazy the first couple of months. I'm sure helping my mom will take a backseat, but I'll make pasta whenever I can," said Rutstein.

## 'Best sport ever'

By Eric Simpson  
Journalism 1

Playing as lock on the rugby pitch, freshman Dominic Adase slides in for a try to give his team a greater lead. For the last four years, Adase has been playing rugby and his sports career won't end soon.

As a four-sport athlete, Adase participates in football, wrestling, lacrosse and rugby. Although he played for the freshman football team, Adase likes to play rugby more. Wrestling, football and lacrosse are really just conditioning for his rugby season.

"It's the hardest sport that I've ever done," said Adase. "No other sport really compares to it." Since there is no high school rugby team, Adase



Emily Gorham

plans on playing for the local West End team. West

End is one age group up from his last rugby team and it will be a lot harder to be good on West End. But as one of the best on his old team, Adase isn't too worried about not starting.

"It really won't change much. It's the same game just a different team," Adase said.

On his old team Adase scored four tries for 20 points and during the season his team won most of their games. They also did exceptionally well in the end-of-season tournament. Adase's old team has won the past three tournaments, with the most recent ending in a 48-0 shutout.

"Dom leads by example," says freshman Christian Higgins, one of Adase's teammates. "That's what makes us play better."

In his four years of playing rugby, Adase hasn't gotten injured yet, which is surprising since rugby is a very tough sport and it is easy to get a career-ending injury.

"Some players will stuff grass in their wounds so they can keep on playing," said Adase. Most players want to stay on the field and play through their injuries. Unfortunately, some injuries end a rugby player's career.

Adase's dad suffered three concussions playing rugby and he wasn't allowed to play anymore. Adase realizes that at any moment he could get injured and end his rugby career forever but he is motivated by his dad to play even better on the rugby pitch.

As an athlete, Adase has been doing well and expects to get better. He really enjoys playing rugby and has dreams of playing professionally. He said, however, that it's very unlikely to happen. But, this won't stop Adase from striving to be the best.

"It's the best sport ever. Nothing can stop me from playing," he said.

# Finance seminar educates students

**By Rita Zavallos**  
*Senior Staff Writer*

Huge college debt. Bankruptcy. Identity theft. Such ideas can be a sobering reality for the young, financially illiterate high school graduate.

That is why Esther Pincus and Sarah Vink, from the counseling office, and Brian Stagliano, who teaches Economics and Personal Finance, collaborated to hold a Financial Literacy Student Seminar last Wednesday, December 15.

The seminar, presented by Stagliano, covered money-related is-

ssues such as banking, budgeting, credit, and scams. The object was to give students a basic understanding on how to manage their money in high school and in the future.

"It's important for everyone to have a general knowledge of these concepts before going into college and into the workforce," said Stagliano.

The school has been holding the seminar for three years. In the past, it was only as part of the College Partnership Program students, to prepare people able to go into college, but this time they decided to

invite students of all ages, because even in high school people can open their own bank accounts, get jobs, and fall for scams.

"If a student doesn't know not to give out their social security number, or click on an email, they're putting themselves at risk," said Stagliano.

Stagliano explained, to the twelve people who attended, all kinds of different scams people often fall victim to, such as when he got an email from a sender "ebay.com" asking for his private information. He warned never to give information in response to an email, or even click on it, because some programs can log your key-strokes.

"The section on the scams was important, so you don't make mistakes and let other people take advantage of you," said freshman Jake Israel, who attended.

Stagliano also covered the meaning and importance of credit rating, encouraged having a cash cushion when budgeting, and different ways to invest. He used real-world scenarios and stories from his own life as examples.

**"It's important to know...so things you do in the past don't affect he future."**

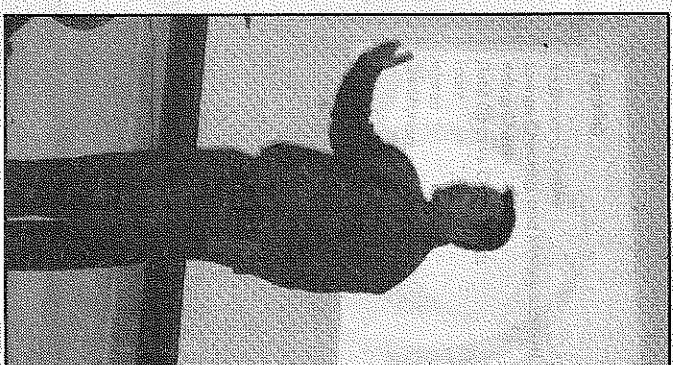
—**Jake Israel, freshman**

"From when I was in high school to today, the biggest decisions I've made were financial decisions. They're huge decisions," said Stagliano.

Although Stagliano considers the presentation a success, he wishes he had more time, and would prefer to split the seminar across two Spartan Time sessions.

It was evident that the organizers of the event planned for much more than the twelve attendees, perhaps because in last year's needs assessment students expressed a high interest in more financial education.

"For advertising it to the whole school, I was a little disappointed [by the turnout] because it's such an important topic," said Stagliano. It is a little worrisome that the school seems uninterested in learn-

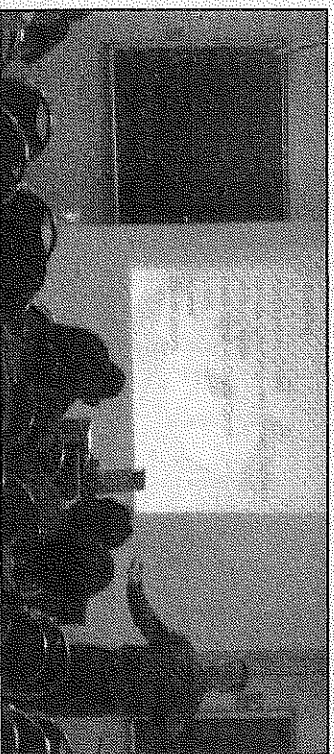


Nora Osei

ing about such practical and necessary real-world skills as managing your money and protecting yourself.

The average college debt was \$29,000 in 2009, and too many people graduate from college without any idea of how to use their credit card or manage their budget.

"It's important to know these things so things you do in the past don't affect the future," said Israel.



Nora Osei

**Economics and Personal Fitness teacher Brian Stagliano did a presentation on finance during Spartan Time so students could learn more about how to handle their money and protect themselves from scams.**

## Roses are red and violets are blue

*Joelle Torreele's marriage blossomed from a true love story*

**By Sam Perstein**

*Features Editor*

In a small town in Belgium in the winter of 1967, a love story so real and so true it could rival any Taylor Swift song came into being.

French teacher Joelle Torreele met her current husband, John Torreele, in January of 1967 when she was a freshman in high school. Joelle attended an all-girls school in Germany but had decided to send him to an all-boys French-speaking boarding school in Belgium. The couple crossed paths only through Sophocles and his inspirational play, "Electra."

"They had one big theater production in these schools," said Joelle, "and we needed the boys."

The two schools came together to hold the play, in which Joelle was cast as the title character. Though he was just an extra, John quickly caught Joelle's eye.

"I thought he was very handsome," said Joelle.

Their budding romance was sadly not to be, because John's parents were given a new assignment that would send them to America shortly after. John was given a choice: he could stay and go to college in Belgium, or he could go abroad and take classes at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. John eventually decided to study at MIT to help his career.

"The first year that he left," said Joelle, "I thought I'd never see him again."

Despite Joelle's fears, they kept up a correspondence and sent letters to each other every day, sometimes keeping up many different threads of letters at once. To Joelle, the letters were like a diary that she has preserved to this day. In total, they wrote 845 letters for the four and half years that they were apart.

A few years into his absence, before a major math test, Joelle received a letter that would change her life; John had asked her to marry him.

Though she was ecstatic, Joelle waited to respond, for she felt she was unable to formulate an appropriate response to such an important, life-altering question. Eventually, she managed to properly put her thoughts into writing and agreed to marry him.

In 1971, the couple said their vows and have been happily married ever since. Now, almost 40 years later, their love is still going strong. Joelle even admits to rereading the letters every once and a while, when she finds time. The letter in which John asked her to marry him has been reread at least ten to fifteen times.

"When you put something in writing," said Joelle, "you know it's going to last."



Courtesy of Joelle Torreele

**John and Joelle Torreele smile on their wedding day in 1971. The couple met in Belgium in 1967, and have been happily married for 40 years.**

## Koses puts a fresh spin on an ancient faith

*Serving as Madrich, sophomore brings fun and education together*

**By Momo Sullivan**

*Viewpoint Editor*

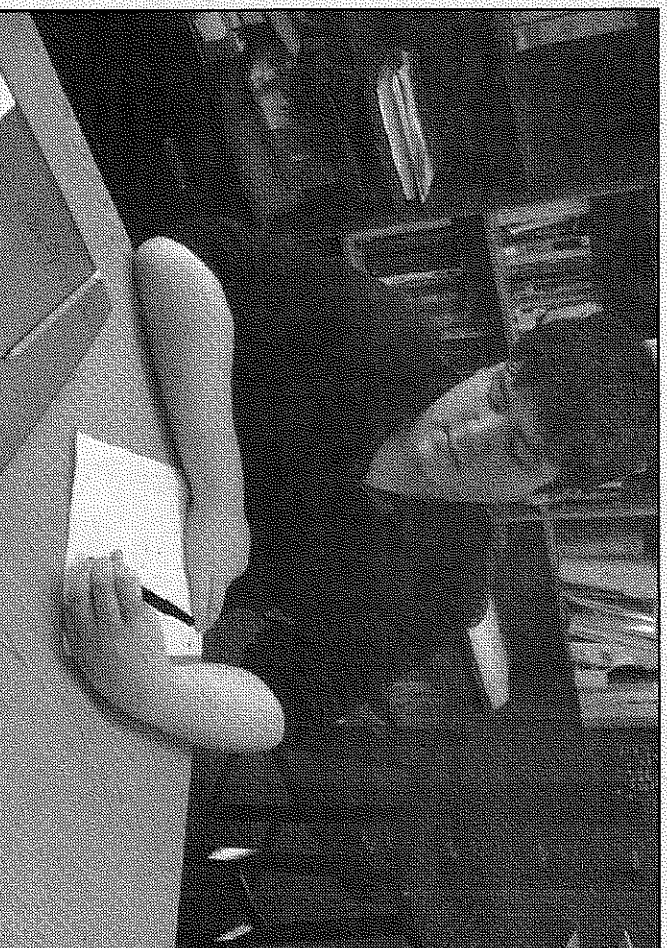
Sophomore Ben Koses used his experience at Adat Reyim, the Synagogue he attends, to improve the learning environment for younger kids.

When Koses attended his own class at Adat Reyim, he did not enjoy learning until seventh grade, so rather than allowing the next group of kids to suffer for that long, he decided to inspire a change. In eighth grade, he became a Madrich, assisting the teacher at the Synagogue with teaching the kids Hebrew readings and Torah studies.

However, Koses gave the kids a dose of fun in their studies. Before, the students had to sit and pray without necessarily understanding the prayers, but now, they play learning games, such as jeopardy, to ensure that the kids enjoy their studies and the materials stick.

"I felt important and useful, and I really feel as though I helped them to understand the material," said Koses.

He has been working as a Madrich for three years now. Each Sunday and Monday, he works with the kids for about two and a half hours. The time he has spent with all of



Sam Perstein

**Sophomore Ben Koses plans out an activity schedule for his teaching job as a Madrich. In his classes, Koses provides plenty of instruction, while still allowing plenty of room for fun.**

these kids has bonded him to them, forming strong relationships with his students.

"I'd say that what I like best about working at Adat Reyim is gaining the students' re-

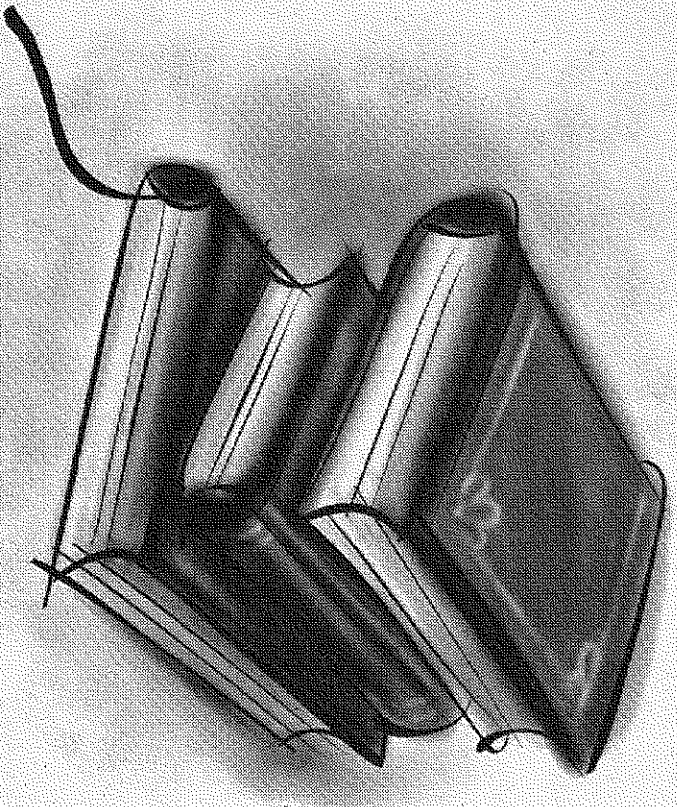
spect, trust and even friendship," said Koses. The age group he has worked with has changed over the past few years. In the past he has worked with fifth graders, fourth graders, and second graders.

This year he has taken on the second grade class for a second time as well as the sixth grade class, which is newer atmosphere. Because he has gotten the chance to work with the second grade teacher for two years now, she has been able to exhibit the good in Koses's heart.

"I call Ben my 'right hand man' because he helps me so much in all areas. I am so proud of him and know the kids are grateful for his help," said second grade teacher, Laura Yarvis.

His position as a Madrich is not without rewards. The job offers community service hours, and, as he spent more time there, he got a paid position. But most meaningful to him is the sense of accomplishment he gets from helping these kids. Koses like knowing that he is helping these kids understand important concepts.

"I enjoy teaching the students and seeing the flash of understanding in their little eyes," said Koses.



It's always  
the right  
time  
to buy a  
**YEARBOOK.**

Don't forget to  
get yours!  
Just go to...



[www.yearbookordercenter.com](http://www.yearbookordercenter.com)  
Order Number 4150.

# Love and Predictable Endings

By Lisa Williams  
Oracle Editor

Warning: if you do not find Jake Gyllenhaal or Anne Hathaway attractive, you will not appreciate "Love and Other Drugs."

The plot line follows the quintessential chick flick flow-chart that starts off with a suave, smooth-talking, attractive male lead (in this case, Jamie, played by Gyllenhaal) and an attractive yet somehow troubled female lead (Maggie, played by Hathaway) who both don't believe in love and agree to have a casual, no-strings-attached physical relationship.



Access Hollywood  
Jake Gyllenhaal and Anne Hathaway star in the new romantic comedy from 20th Century Fox "Love and Other Drugs."

Then an opposites-attract mentality kicks in and they find themselves deeper in a commitment than they had originally planned. Spoiler alert, though if you've ever seen a chick flick you know exactly what will happen, they each find themselves changed by the experience and fall in everlasting love by the time two hours is over.

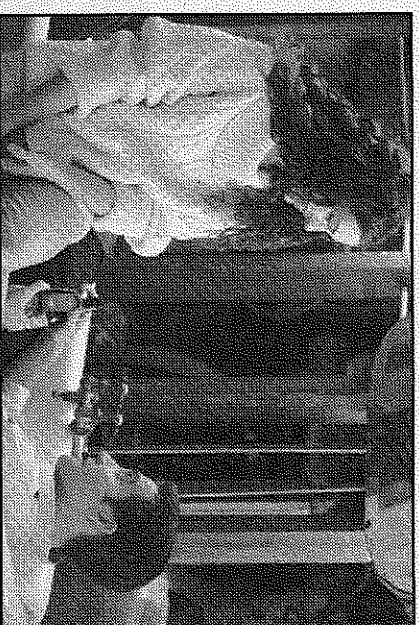
The fact that it's similar to every other girly movie ever made does not mean I didn't enjoy it. There were a few twists on the usual plot line that made it worth \$11 out of my pocket and two hours out of my life.

Jamie is a genius who was never motivated to do anything with his life but work sales jobs and attract beautiful women. He is given the opportunity to become a medicine salesman and voila, he is finally driven to accomplish something.

He comes in contact with Maggie during one of her doctor's appointments, in which we find out that she is not our usual angst-y, misunderstood artist but, in fact, has early onset Parkinson's disease.

Jamie is immediately interested in Maggie, and so they eventually fall into a noncommittal groove of seeing each other and pretending that they don't get more and more attached with every passing day.

The medicine salesman-patient aspect of their relationship is one of the most interesting contrasts the movie presents. He has faith in medicine, because after all, it's making him rich,



Access Hollywood

and tries to help Maggie find a doctor who can help her and possibly cure her.

She feels like she's been cursed and believes that doctors are unreliable. She is also mistrusting of medicine salesmen in general because one, who is Jamie's biggest medicine sales rival, broke her heart.

In a series of complications, we learn that both Maggie and Jamie are really just jaded, and they are perfect for each other.

This movie is not a family film, in any way. It is filled with nudity, profanity, and general vulgarity, but the Disney-esque message is still there: there is someone out there who is going to make you a better person and love you despite your flaws and your own self-doubt.

# My Chemical Romance's new music ushers in era of change In recently released album, band spices things up with glam-rock inspired sound

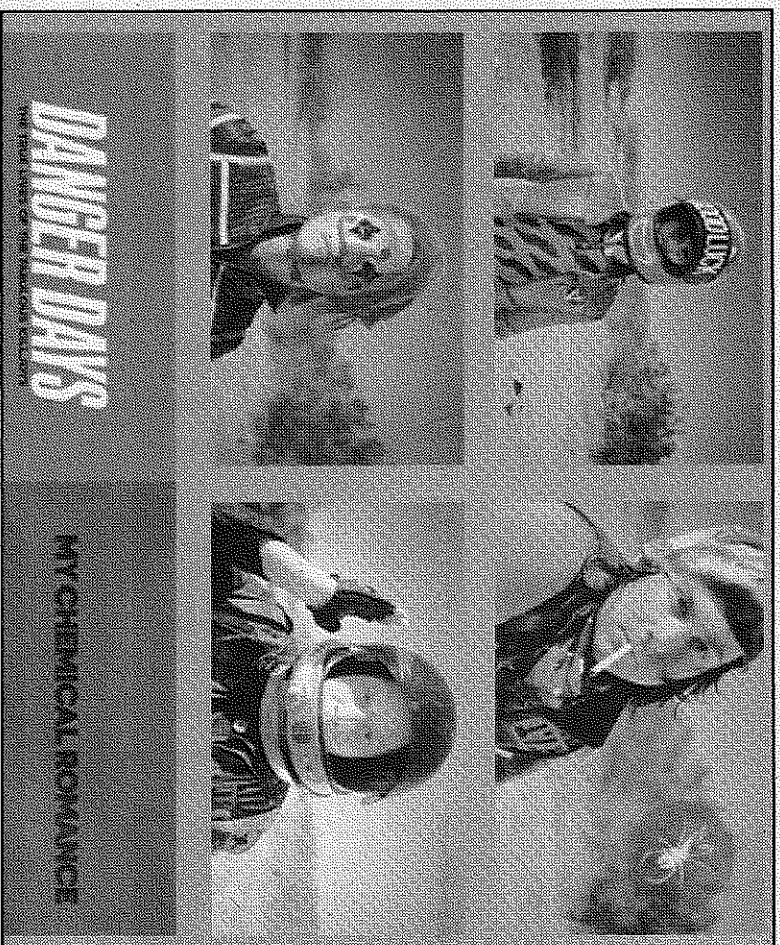
By Anna Lehman  
Entertainment Editor

Welcome to the land of vibrant colors and amazing tunes.

This is the place I've been revisiting ever since My Chemical Romance's new album, "Danger Days: The True Lives of the Fabulous Killjoys," came out. I won't lie when I say that I miss the My Chemical Romance that had the makeup, the uniforms and the doom, always the antidote to any teenage riot. But the wait for the bands fourth album seemed like a long desert trek and when I found the oasis I couldn't care less about their latest changes.

With the new glam rock flavor in the recent album shows off the band's versatility. I find it so uplifting to hear a genuine rock n' roll album in today's musical age of standard electronic auto-tuned pop music.

But one thing is for certain, this album is a huge statement that the band still isn't anywhere near packing up, despite rumor. When they parted ways with their drummer, Bob Bryar (neither the band nor Bryar has gone public yet about why he's left the group) I really thought they would split like Panic at the Disco or pronounce they were on "temporary hiatus" like Fall Out Boy, but I thank my lucky stars the band has stuck together.



BuzzNet  
My Chemical Romance's new album "Danger Days: The True Lives of the Fabulous Killjoys" hit record stores on November 23, to mostly positive reviews. Rolling Stone Magazine featured a profile on the band in their latest issue, focusing on frontman Gerard Way's role.

# Take a look, it's in a book

By Kelly Carlin  
Oracle Editor

There's nothing better than curling up on a cold winter day with a cup of delicious coffee and a great book. Maybe it's my bias as a writer, but the written word should not be dead.

Reading a book allows you to open up your imagination and experience things you haven't before in your own way. At the risk of sounding like a Hallmark card or inspirational poster, it's the time that allows you to go places you never could have. But you learned that from "Reading Rainbow."

With all of these amazing books out there that span the last 400 years, why aren't people reading more?

It's always the same excuses. "Reading is boring," "I'd rather just watch TV," "Ew, who reads?" If you don't, you're not utilizing the resources your wonderful brain has given to you.

And it doesn't have to be a

"classic." Shakespeare is tough, I'd agree. But the books we read for

school are read for a reason. They offer life lessons, historical examples, and are chock-full of lots and lots of information.

If you've never read "To Kill a Mockingbird," you're either a freshman or just an idiot, but that might just be my opinion. I'm someone who'd rather make time to read than watch the "Scary Movie 8" or whatever the hit of the week is.

To anyone who read the Harry Potter series pre-films, they know that what you picture while reading the book is not exactly what the film adaptation shows.

That's the magic of reading. It lets you create your own world inside your head. That's why whenever the film industry makes a movie out of a great book, there are the fears that they'll ruin it. This is another reason I don't tolerate the "I'll just wait for the movie" response. Way to defeat the whole

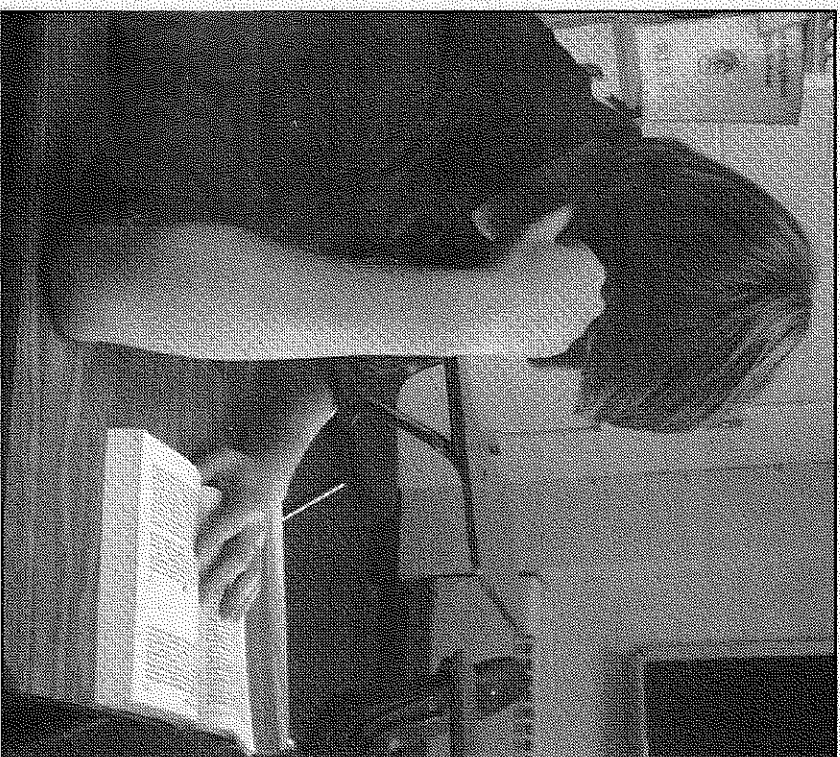
purpose of reading.

Those who do not find the time to read never get to learn from experiences of great characters. Books feature monsters like Frankenstein, great heroes like Frodo Baggins, and everyday people like Holden Caulfield, just trying to get by. Adventuring alongside these quirky characters allows for expansion of the mind and provides the ability to relate to something you never would have been exposed to before.

There's a book out there for everyone. There really is. Four centuries is a great deal of time and a great number of books.

If I could read them all, I probably would. Call me a nerd if you wish, but I appreciate the simple pleasure of getting lost in a really great story.

Between fiction and nonfiction, you can experience anything in any time period you want; all you have to do is put down the remote and pick up a book.



Kelly Carlin

Junior Jacob Melvin takes a break from learning during class and spends the time to focus on a book. Reading is one of the few intelligent ways to kick it old school and many students have forgotten about this pastime.

# Bred in captivity, Disney star released into the wild

By Peter Simonsen

Senior Staff Writer

Over Thanksgiving break, Disney Channel star and teen singing sensation Milley Cyrus turned 18 years old. While age may not affect her endorsement contracts just yet, her reported drug use this past week does well to symbolize how one of Disney's greatest walking gold mines has shed the Mickey Mouse ears.

One can only speculate as to the fabulous career Cyrus will pursue in B-rated romance films and Playboy spreads, but the larger question here is now that Cyrus has been caught on film with a bong with what she claims in Salvia, can Disney manufacture another perfectly formed idol who's mere existence will net them as much money as Cyrus' did?

In 2006 Disney Channel premiered "Hannah Montana," an average television show about an atypical teenager living a double life as a country rock singer. From the start, Disney had a perfect subject to become the idol of every five- to eleven-year-old girl in America; she was young, pretty, and she could act and sing reasonably well by tween girl standards.

Now marketing desirable movies or shows is difficult, so Disney simply used Cyrus as a brand rather than an actress. Instead of advertising films, music, and television shows, they simply had to sell Cyrus herself to the children watching, and anything she appeared in from then on would automatically be a hit just for her presence.

Plenty of celebrities have come and gone on the Disney Channel, but the real magic is in just how fast the company can let go of one star and replace them with another.

Now that Cyrus' ties with the happiest company on earth are beginning to sever,



Miley Cyrus

**Miley Cyrus, former tween pop star and role model of little girls everywhere, has graduated from her bubble gum image and moved on to videos featuring herself scantily clad and a TMZ video taking bong hits of saliva.**

Disney will likely pass the superstar mantle to "Wizards of Waverly Place" lead Selena Gomez, whose already growing acting and singing career would be bolstered with a marketing blitz attack to get her face on anything children will buy. Another candidate is "Sonny with a Chance" star Demi Lovato, though her chances may be clouded by a re-

## CMA Awards are more than just music Country stars share what music means to them and their lives

By Karista Giordano

Forum Editor

Country music always has its own way of telling a story; each artist at the 44th Annual Country Music Association Awards this year did too.

The night of November 10 was the CMA Awards, hosted by ABC and I must say there were a lot of good things that came out of it this year.

A few couples in the country music world have recently become engaged or married. Carrie Underwood is one of them, but what was really special this year was that artists Miranda Lambert and Blake Shelton are newly engaged. Not surprisingly at all, both Lambert and Shelton won Female and Male Vocalist of 2010. It was a very touching story to see them both win in this category and be able to share it together.

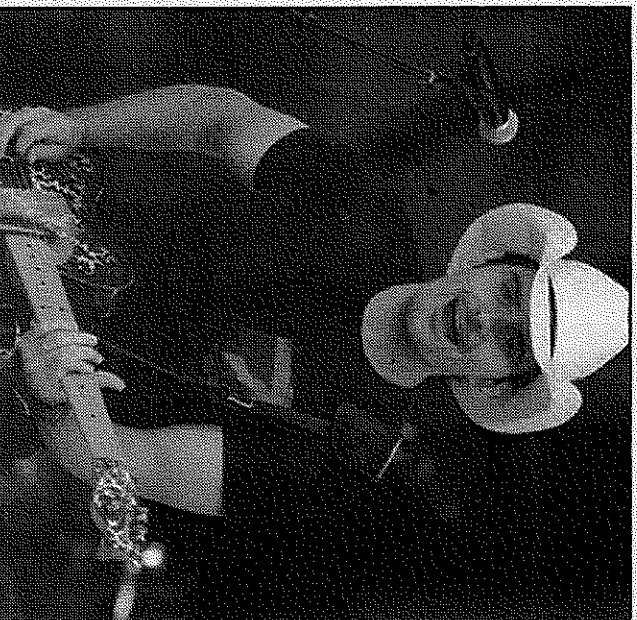
Lambert was also able to experience being the highest award-winning artist of the entire show. She won Female Vocalist of the Year. Album of the Year and lastly Music Video of the Year. These were great and new accomplishments for her that touched not only everyone there, but also viewers because she was so pleased with her achievements. Personally, I was pleased to find out that talented artists

"Listening to the speeches... is always something to enjoy because if you pay attention closely, there is a different story behind each one."

Underwood and Brad Paisley were hosting the CMA's for 2010. These two singers, in my opinion, are some of the most respected people in the country music world for their music and personalities.

Underwood and Paisley were both nominated for awards, and Paisley was very happy and surprised after winning one of the biggest categories: Entertainer of the Year. This did not come unexpected to many people, though, including myself. Every artist at these awards is able to share their stories especially when they win an award. They kindly get to thank anyone they wish and say a few words about how much the award means to them.

Listening to the speeches after winning the award is always something to enjoy because if you pay attention closely, there is a different story behind each one.



NEWS OR

Country singer Brad Paisley won the coveted "Entertainer of the Year" at the Country Music Association Awards after being nominated for it the past six years. His song "Anything like me" is currently number six on the top 100 country songs in America.

## Sophomore success for Cudi

By Summer Claveau

ETC Editor

"Man on the Moon II: The Legend of Mr. Rager," KID Cudi's second album released early this November and has left many of his fans enthusiastic for the continuation of the "Man on the Moon" trilogy, and appreciative of his creativity, something recently declining in the hip-hop world.

With the rise of iTunes and online downloading, the beauty of an album has been lost. Singles and mix tapes are what we upload to our iTunes. Rarely does anyone sit down and actually and listen to the flow and story of an album.

And though hip-hop has a flow all its own, very rarely does a rapper put out an album that tells a story so poetically as this. Rap albums are typically song after song. Lyric after lyric.

In my opinion, true artists compose a work and share it with the musical community in the form of a compilation songs influenced by the issues of today, or the issues they're going through individually.

Though nothing can compare to the music lost by time, this album can be compared to albums of the past that follow stories of

struggling young people trapped in the problems of their time. For example, Pink Floyd's, "The Wall," has a similar theme of a struggling young man. And the creative nuances are both fore frontiers of their times.

His first album, "Man on the Moon," is the story of Scott's dream world, starting with good dreams, turning to bad dreams, and ending with real life. Its popularity was astonishing, and marked his place as the voice of a generation. The second album makes that statement legitimate.

"Man on the Moon II is the story of Scott once he's found fame, and what happens to him once it takes him over. Mr. Rager is meant to represent a changed Scott, thrown into the world of underground party scene.

This is a reoccurring problem for rising stars and for rising teenagers, but KID CUDI speaks to the struggling masses about hope—true to yourself and individualism, and hopefully will continue to for many years to come.

## Help Wanted!

**Interested in a part-time job? You must be at least 18 and have your own transportation. Hours are flexible and negotiable. You will work with a 17-year-old boy on the autism spectrum, as a "buddy."**

**Responsibilities include:** "Hanging out," taking my son to the movies and doing other things that kids his age do. Basically, I'm looking for a friend for my son.

**Good pay: \$11.47 per hour!**

**If you are interested, please e-mail  
techamp2@earthlink.net**

# Local rivals ignite athletes

By Jimmy McMahon  
Sports Editor

Lakers and Celtics. Yankees and Red Sox. Redskins and Cowboys. Spartans and Bruins. Rivalries are one of the greatest aspects of sports.

Since the beginning of sports, rivalries have been a huge crowd pleaser. Spectators wait in anticipation for the benches to be cleared at a Yankees-Red Sox game. Players talk more trash and play more physically than usual. Rivalry games are more personal for the players, and they're not just limited to the pros.

"I think that [rivalries] are more competitive in high school," said sophomore Matt Ahola. "In the professional leagues, players get traded all the time, but for seniors it's their last game against them."

Bringing home a rivalry win is especially important in high school. It's not uncommon for players on opposing teams know each other in high school games, which creates a more personal rivalry than two teams that don't know each other off the field.

At WS, most would consider our rivals to be anyone in the Patriot District, but Robinson and Lake Braddock are two of the biggest standouts.

"High school [fans] are more emotional," said senior David Jo. "That's why we want to win rivalry games."

There are just a few weeks every year where WS athletes prepare to face the Rams or the Bruins, and they can always count on the stands to be packed to the breaking point.

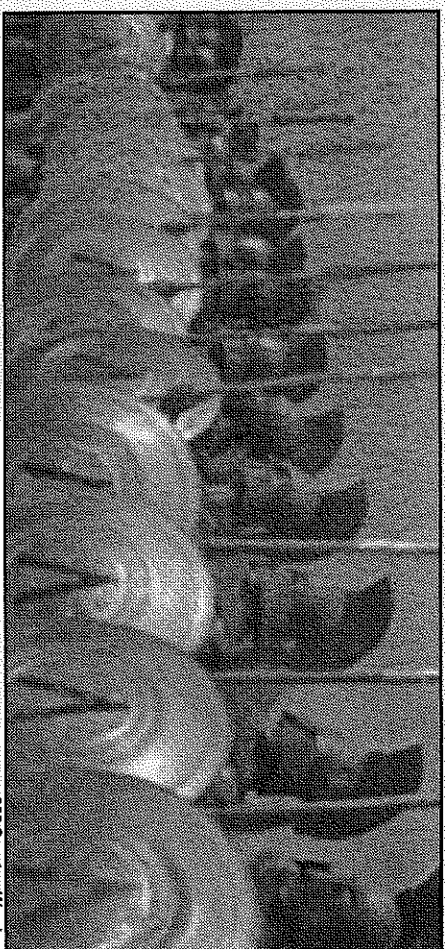
"Rivalries are more competitive in high school."

—Matt Ahola,  
sophomore

"We would rather beat Lake Braddock than an elite team," said Jo.

After practicing for weeks, athletes tend to start going through the motions of practice rather than pushing themselves to their limit. Playing a rival team gives the players a second wind in the middle of the season, it sparks the players into working harder to beat the Bruins or the Rams.

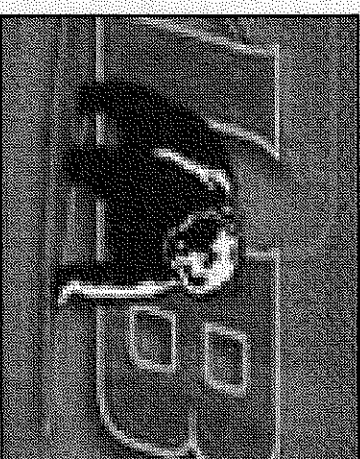
"I think we go harder because we know them," said Ahola. "They live so close to us that we just can't handle losing to them."



300 Spartan Warriors



James Robinson High School



Lake Braddock Sports

Lake Braddock Secondary School and Robinson Secondary School are two of the Spartans' biggest rivals, mostly due to the close proximity between the.

## Stardom eludes WS athletes

By Austin Kaminski  
Sports Editor

Over the years, WS has had its share of notable alumni. Professional baseball player Joe Saunders and NASA astronaut Patrick Forrester are just two of the many successful former Spartans.

But for every successful WS graduate, there are several whose high school glory days are gone upon graduating.

Perhaps the most famous Spartan in recent years was '07 graduate Peter Lalich who was one of the best high school quarterbacks in the country, and took part in the elite eleven quarterback competition.

Lalich received a full athletic scholarship to play football at the University of Virginia, where he got playing time as a freshman. At the beginning of his sophomore year,

he was slated to be a starter when he had several run-ins with the law and was kicked off the team. After a short stint as the backup quarterback at Oregon State University, he was arrested for boating under the influence and was again booted from the squad.

Lalich has since transferred to California University of Pennsylvania, a Division II school not known for football.

He is using a redshirt year and is not listed on the roster. He will have one final year of eligibility to redeem his once promising career. Lalich was not the only phenom to emerge from the class of '07; basketball player Kevin Kilday finished his career as the all-time leader in steals and 3 pointers while being named first team all-northern region his senior year.

Not all Spartan stars have seen their stardom fade away; Graduate Jeremy Kapinos was an All-American punter at Penn State before joining the Green Bay Packers, and Joe Saunders has become famous as an All-Star pitcher for the Diamondbacks. But he wasn't always the star he is now.

"I used to play catch with him when I was a kid," said junior Andrew Koenig, whose babysitter happened to be Saunders' high school sweetheart. "He was always really nice."

### Austin's View

nearly every day perfecting their routines and enduring long practices.

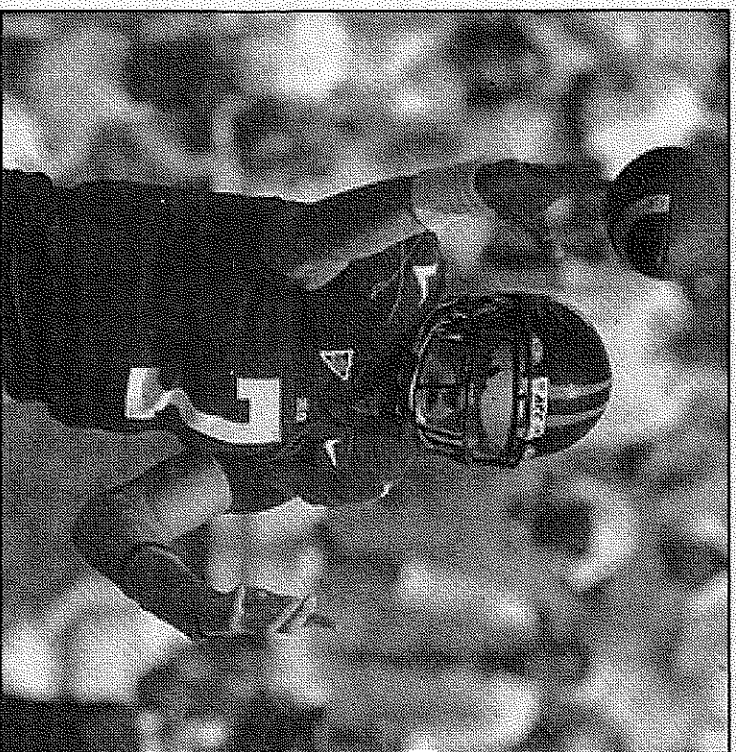
"We have to have very long practices because setting up and breaking down the equipment takes 30-45 minutes in itself," said Sanzi.

They all have great support for each other in their improvements, and team bonding is the key to their small group.

Last year, the team came dangerously close to being cut from high school sports. With the help and support of parents and athletes from other schools, however, the gymnasts' passion remained in high schools throughout the county. Many of the talented gymnasts would have been heartbroken to hear that they couldn't do what they love.

"I didn't want gymnastics to get cut because as a freshman last year, I love doing it," said sophomore Tasy Novopachennaa, "and I wanted to keep participating each year of high school."

WS graduate Peter Lalich throws a pass while playing at the University of Virginia. Although Lalich was once one of the top quarterbacks in the nation, various disciplinary actions have plagued his athletic career.



Sport

# Gymnastics team springsboards into season

By Kyle Rushton  
Oracle Staff Writer

Sometimes good things come in small packages, especially for our Girls Varsity Gymnastics.

Despite the small number of athletes on the gymnastics team and nearly falling victim to the budget cuts, the girls are still going strong. Unlike some of the larger teams in the school, gymnastics is a very close-knit team and all the girls are great friends, both in and out of school.

"We love having a small team," said senior captain Nina Sanzi. "It makes practices much more fun."

With only eleven girls on the team, the competitions are much more stressful because each person has more responsibility during their routine. Having a smaller team also makes the competitions harder to win, but they stick with it and try their best to compete each time.

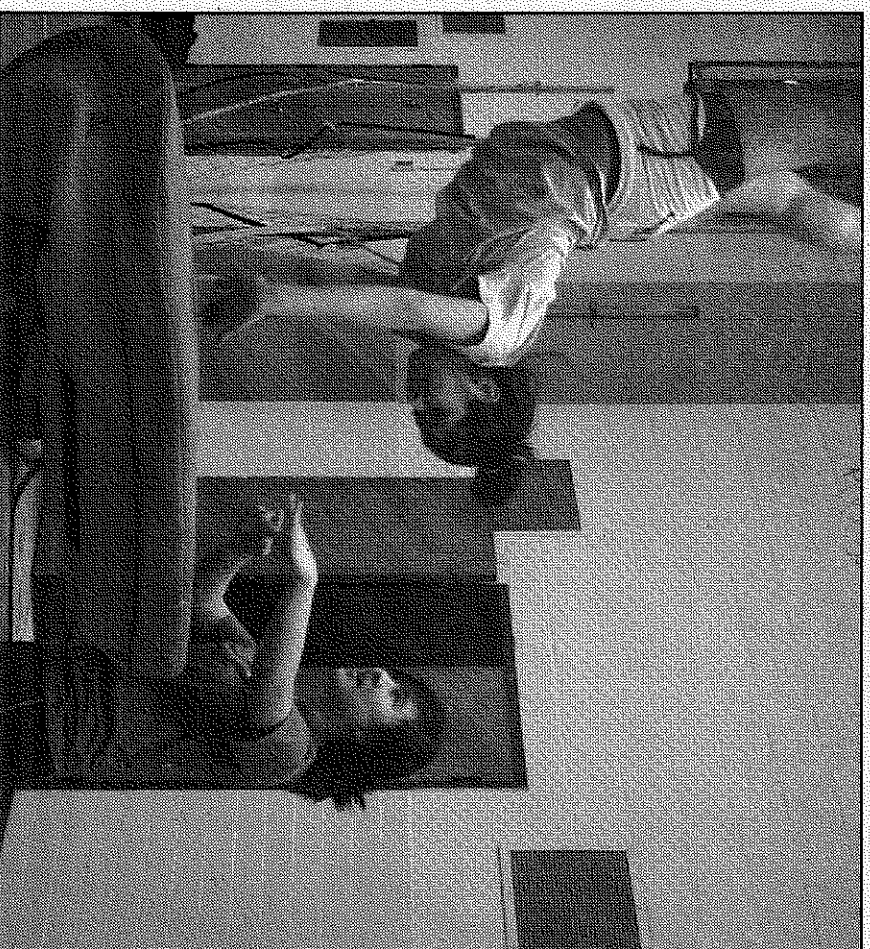
"We know our team is definitely not the best, which

is a con of having a small team, but that doesn't stop us from trying our hardest," said Sanzi.

The team had originally planned on having three days worth of tryouts, however they extended it to one week because they wanted more people to tryout for the team. The team's tryouts went well and as planned, especially because they already knew almost everyone who would have the opportunity to compete on the small team.

The gymnasts have many goals, both personally and as a team, including placing at Districts and Regionals. They all believe that they are improving tremendously from last year, and they hope that their season this year will be a more successful one.

"We all are working hard to get better at our routines from last year," said sophomore Mo Scanlon, "and new members are working hard to start building their routines." The girls work hard



Courtesy of the Gymnastics team

After extending tryouts for two days, the Gymnastics team's roster still has very few people. Without a large roster, the team will have to make up for it by having virtually flawless routines. The team is working harder than ever, especially after coming close to being cut last year along with sports such as freshman basketball and winter cheerleading.

# Staff sends students home with a loss

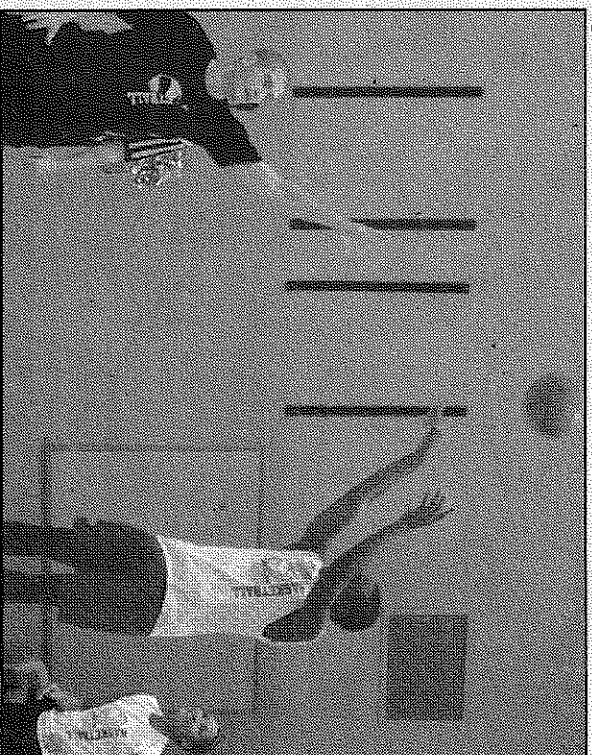
By Austin Kaminski

Sports Editor

Old vs. young. Master vs. apprentice. Student vs. teacher. This classic battle is played out each year in the student-teacher basketball game.

The student team was led by girls' basketball players Emily Esposito and Logan Bartle. They lead a squad with upwards of 20 student members. Due to the large amount of players, it was difficult to keep playing time even and many students didn't get in until the third quarter. The team was lead by Divya Goel and Tyler Basse, both former Spartan ballers.

The faculty squad was coached by Lady Spartans Nora Osei and Emily Essau. The team was lead by tech Ed teacher and lax coach Scott Setter as well as tech Ed teacher John Alukonis and German teacher Chris Trimble. Principal Warden-ski, a former high school basketball



Andy Gmison

Senior Moeq Kamara takes a jump shot against faculty member John Alukonis. Kamara was one of many talented athletes who took the floor.

player himself, also suited up, knee braces and all. The amount of talent on the squad surprised many students.

as the students struggled to figure out their lineup and took a commanding lead into halftime. But near the end of the third quarter, the students cut the lead to five after a 6-0 led by Goel, a former Varsity starter. But in the fourth quarter, the faculty pulled away by playing clutch defense and shooting down the stretch, pulling away for a 52-46 victory.

"We got off to a quick start," said AD Andy Muir. "But the students were in a bit better shape than us and were able to make it a closer game.

Win or lose, the staff was most likely just happy to escape without any major injuries. Anytime you have a wide range of ages, the likelihood for injury is increased, especially when both teams are engaged in such an aggressive game.

"Next time, I hope the students will take it easy with the rough fouls," said German teacher Herr

"The staff was much better than I thought,"

-Divya Goel, senior

Trimble. At halftime, our award winning dance team performed as a warm up for their competition the next day at American University.

"It was nice to see some of my students perform," said Trimble. "I hadn't gotten a chance to see them before."

While the staff game lacks the intensity of other high school varsity games, it is a fun experience for everyone involved and seems to be popular based on attendance to the game.

"It's good to see so many people coming out to the game," said Muir. "It really shows our school spirit."

## Spartans swim for success

By Megan Burpo

Viewpoint Editor

The Spartan swim team is prepared to "just keep swimming" their way to the top.

Though the success of last year's season isn't far out of their minds, the swim team is ready to jump into the new season with high expectations.

Like with all sports, the rotation of new and graduating athletes can change the aspect of the team year to year, causing some feelings of doubt, but the swim team knows how to handle it.

"We have about the same number of talented swimmers this year," said junior Hannah Hagy, "though we are missing a few key swimmers because of injuries and because they graduated."

Last year, the girl's team placed fifth at states and their relay came in third. This year, the team is hoping to improve and go farther into the post season as a whole.

The team didn't waste time getting to work; they held conditioning once a week before the season started and now hold practices three days a week as well as going to the weight room.

Many of the team members swim more

than one season or are on a year round team, and are used to intense training.

"Sometimes we practice with clothes on to create drag while we practice, so we'll swim faster without them during races," said junior Katie Nirenberg.

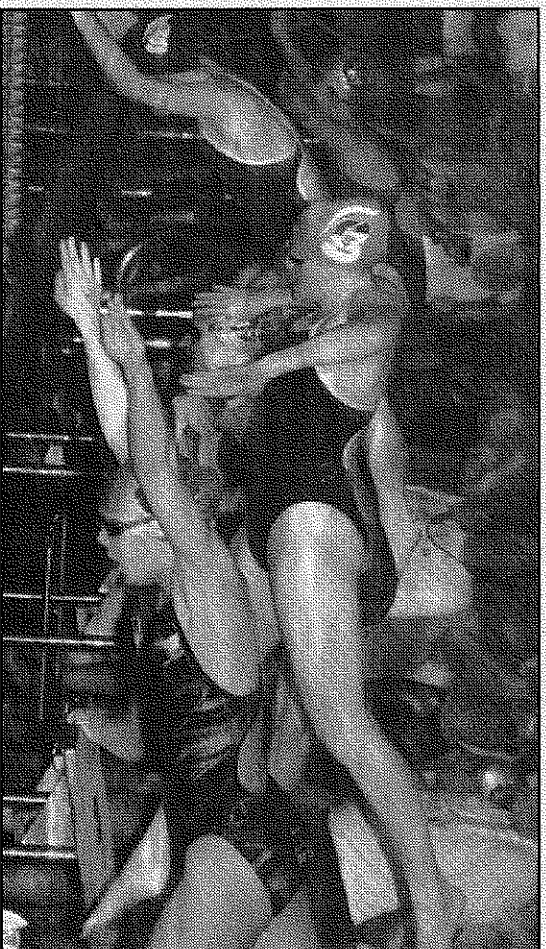
Though some of the team dynamics may have changed talent is not scarce on this team. While talent is important for success, it's how they collaborate together that creates a winning team.

"You need to have a lot of good swimmers mixed with a few great ones, that way everyone's times can create a good score," said Nirenberg.

Many sportsmen would agree that acting as a team and working together is behind the success of every great team. The swim team has the same mindset as team chemistry is high on the list of importance. Getting to know all the teammates is crucial in order to be supportive and cheer all members on.

"Swimming is a team sport as well as an individual sport," said sophomore Stephanie Wilkinson. "To be a good team, sometimes you don't get to swim your best event if the team needs you in something else."

With the number of new freshman joining



Spartan Sports

The Swim and Dive team has been one of the most successful teams at the school over recent years, and even ended up going undefeated in the Patriot District in 2008.

the team this year, being able to create time get to meet all new faces is important. Being part of this team really entails not only putting in physical effort, but also being there for your team mates. Everyone has a role to motivate and challenge each other.

"Being a captain makes me want to improve and set an example for the team to follow," said junior Kim Kellogg.

Though the season is just getting started

these Spartans are pumped up and ready to go, with success on the brain.

"There is definitely pressure to get to that level again, I try to have fun with it though," said junior captain Colin Stephenson.

Last year's achievement in the post season though a little nerve racking, will no doubt only help the work harder.

"We did it once," said Wilkinson, "let's do it again."

## For many Spartans, it's game hard or go home

Recent sports video games such as NBA 2K11 and Madden NFL '11 have students buzzing

By Jimmy Memahon

Oracle Sports Editor

After watching a pro basketball or football game on their 70-inch HDTV and getting those competitive juices flowing, today's sports fan can't wait to replay the action through 2K Sports or Madden NFL.

As with every holiday season, video games are sure to be popular gifts. The new versions of the 2K and Madden series are always two of the most prominent titles.

NBA 2K11 (Michael Jordan on the cover) and Madden '11 (Drew Brees on the cover) are two of the most popular sports games out this year, and are sure to make the wish-list of many sports fans. These games are especially popular among athletes who want to be able to enjoy their sport all the time.

"We like the games because we love our sports so much," said senior Cody Cashman. "We can't wait to get back on the field."

Critics argue that these games tend to be repetitive and it's not worth buying the new version every year. However, fans say that the best part of purchasing the

newest title is the new features that they offer.

"I like the fluidity," said Cashman. "And I always like better graphics, it makes the games look more realistic."

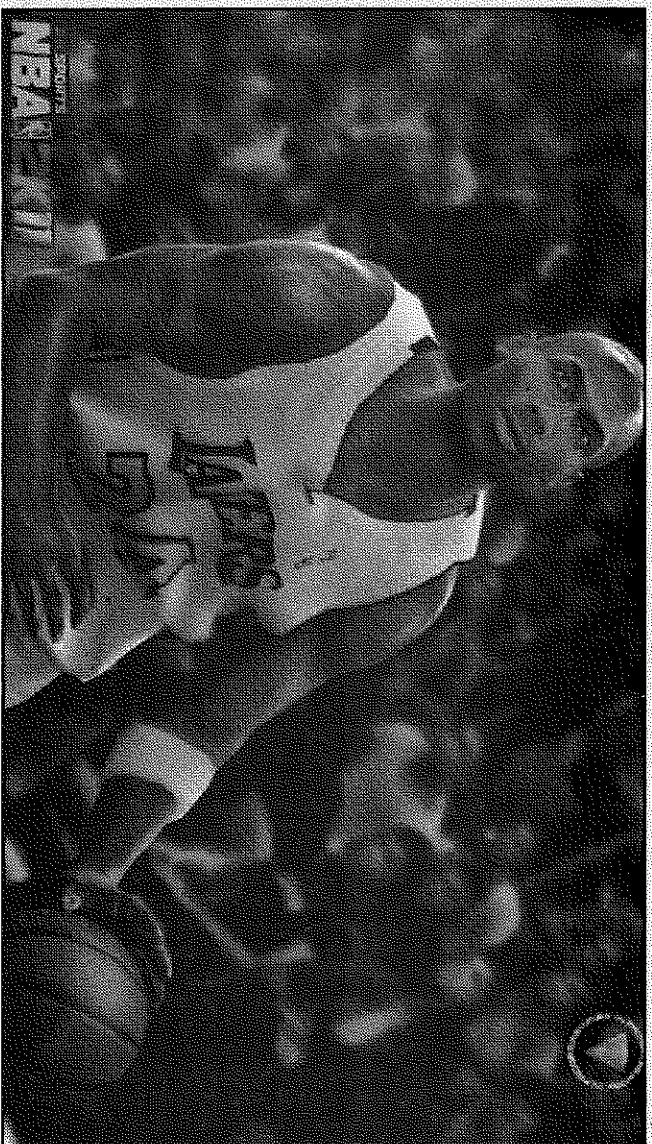
Madden NFL '11 offers a new game play called "GameFlow," which allows plays to be selected based on the game situation, such as kicking a PAT. The user can choose the selected play or choose their play through the classic playbook style selection.

It also offers different game presentations, where the user can choose to play in the Breast Cancer Awareness game, or simulate a Super Bowl game using any two teams.

Along with the usual improved graphics and the option to play games that are occurring and have occurred in real life, NBA 2K11 features Michael Jordan for the first time ever.

It also features a more in-depth "My Player" mode, where users can create their own player and make their way through training camp and eventually play in the NBA.

"I like how when you create a



2K Sports

Lakers point guard Kobe Bryant is depicted in the extremely detailed video game, NBA 2K11. Since it has been released, it has become one of the most popular video games in the country, and among students at WS.

player, their stats change based on their performance," said junior Caleb Snow. "It's also cool how the player's performance changes based on how they're doing in real life."

The holiday season is also one

that inevitably leads to seeing relatives that are seldom seen the rest of the year and we all know, there is nothing more satisfying than using technology in front of an old person.

"I like when an old person walks in the room and says, 'I didn't know there was a game on,' and I tell them, 'it's a video game,'" said Cashman.



Vanderveen Photography

How to solve a problem like

**MARIA :**

*let it snow, let it snow,*

*please let it snow*

**By Maria Scaptura**  
*ETC. Editor*

Here comes another month of madness.

For this column, I plan on advising you on the best ways to ensure the maximum amount of snow fall this winter.

Now, I understand that some of you might be tired of snow after last year's 'whole ordeal, I know, but don't you want just one teeny-weeny snow day?

There's something special about waking up to find out you get to spend the whole day throwing snowballs and making hot cocoa.

So that is why I'm giving this advice: it is important for the students' (and the teachers') sanity.

Here are your snow-inducing options to consider:

**Option 1:** Do the snow dance.

Now, this option can be embarrassing, but if you have lots of guts and if you do the dance with enough passion, then you just might be able pull it off. Though there's no specific way to do the snow dance, the only requirements are to dance outside, in circles, to be more specific and then the rule that you can definitely not break is the one to wear a hula skirt and a coconut bra. Oh yeah, you read that right. It will not work without it.

**Option 2:** Wearing your pajamas inside out.

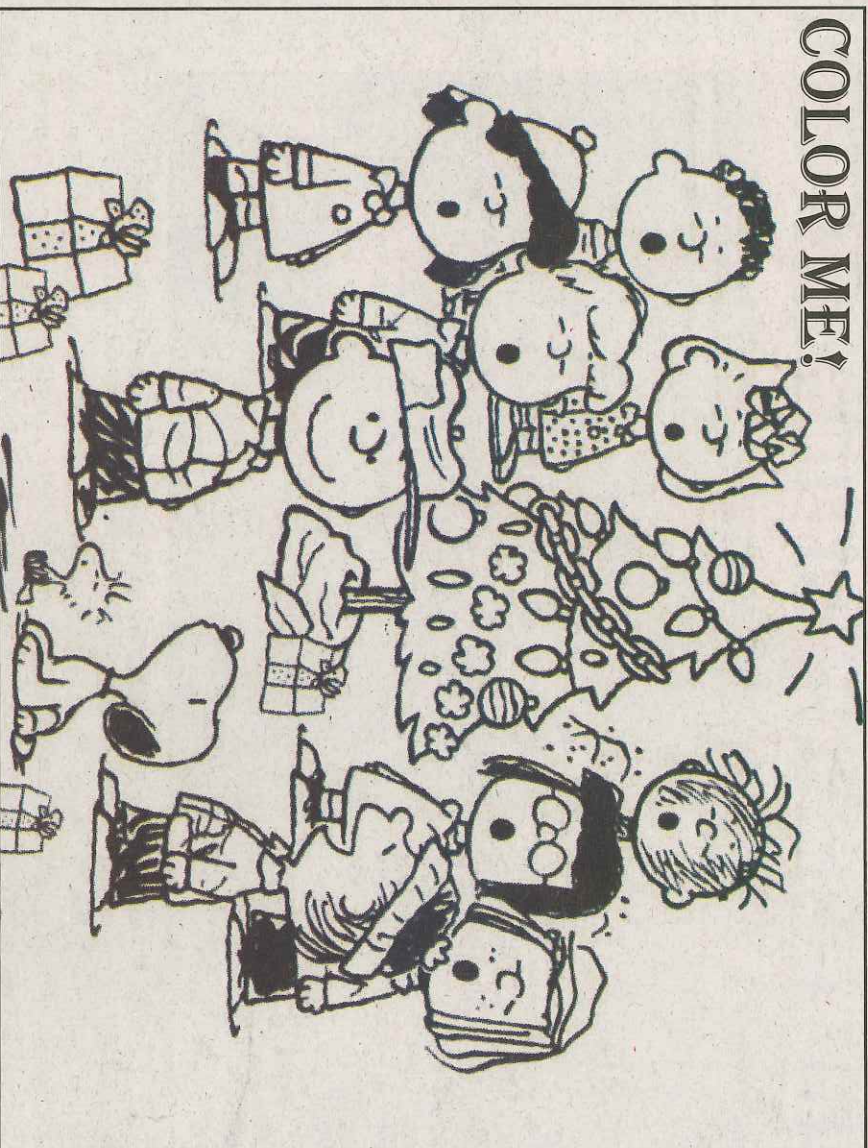
This is a classic. So clearly, all you do is turn your Pjs inside out and enjoy all of the extra sleep the next day when you get the school day off. Simple enough, right? Though it could be difficult depending on what you wear to bed. Let's not get into that now, or well, ever.

**Option 3:** Flushing ice cubes down the toilet.

Yes, it's odd, but you never know. It could work. All you do is put a tray of water in the freezer until it turns to ice and then obviously, you flush the ice down the toilet. My only warning is not to flush all the ice down at once or else you will clog your toilet and no one will have a happy snow day. So there you go, those are your options to make it snow. If you need more options, try putting a frozen spoon under your pillow, a white crayon in the fridge or a bowl of ice under your bed for a night.

But just in case they all don't work, cross your toes and fingers and hope for a snow day to come at least once this school year.

**COLOR ME!**



**ALL WE ARE SAYING, IS GIVE VARIETY A CHANGE**

*Let's break backpack branding boundaries this Christmas*

**By Summer Claveau & Nora Osei**

*Oracle Staff Writers*

Almost every student at WS owns them, in fact, it seems like most students in Fairfax County own at least one of them. Three of the most infamous brands of our time: North Face, Vans, and Uggs.

Here is a challenge for you: Try to walk down the intersection of Hollywood and Vine without spotting either a student or teacher wearing some random colored vans, a North Face backpack with the strap buckled around the waist, or a girl wearing her Uggs either dressed up or dressed down with sweat pants. Bet you can't.

When and why did these products become so popular? We know that they have been around for some years now, but according to previous graduates of WS, four years ago everybody was not rocking 80 dollar North Face backpacks or 52 dollar Vans in every color, shape, and size.

Obviously we're not going to try and say that Vans, North Faces, and Uggs are out of style or anything, we are certainly not the fashion police. Admittedly, we both own at least one of these brands.

This Christmas we can guarantee that at least one person you sit next to in each class will receive an item of one of these brands, if not some sort of variation. There must be something about walking down the hallways with a North Face backpack that adds to your swag, and if you can rock a North Face backpack, jacket, and Vans or Uggs, you'll be set.

Nora bought three pairs of Vans all in one day. They are really comfortable, and they especially go well with skinny jeans, which are now very much in style. Coming to school in her black North Face hooded jacket, black North Face backpack and black Vans just make her feel super fresh.



Summer Claveau

**Seniors Nora Osei, Danielle Mazzuchi and Amanda Pearson show off their stylish North Face backpacks in every color.**

But back to the challenge: not spotting the North Face, Vans, or Uggs in question. We have a better challenge for you. This holiday season when you're telling Santa Claus what you want for Christmas, try to be a little more imaginative with your list. Instead of a jacket from The North Face you could try a sweet James Dean jacket.

Girls, try stepping away from the Uggs phase, there's plenty of other cute boots out there to compliment our new found love of jeggings. And let's get a little variety with your shoe choices here, people, even though it is nice looking down and seeing a rainbow of colors. Individuality is nice, so don't define yourself by your brands.

# DECEMBER '10

Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
17 Varsity Basketball vs. Chantilly, 7:30 pm	18 Swim and Dive Meet vs. Lake Braddock, 8:30 pm	19 Happy 30th Birthday Jake Gyllenhaall!	20 Gymnastics Meet, 6:30 pm	21 Basketball vs. South County, 4:00 pm	22 Two hour early release for students!	23 WINTER BREAK
24 WINTER BREAK	25 WINTER BREAK	26 WINTER BREAK	27 WINTER BREAK	28 WINTER BREAK	29 WINTER BREAK	30 WINTER BREAK
Christmas Eve	Merry Christmas!					