



The ORACLE

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West Springfield High School 6100 Rolling Road Springfield, Virginia 22152

Tragedy strikes Arizona

Some blame Tucson shootings on political rhetoric

By Peter Simonsen

Senior Staff Writer

Arizona Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords was attending a meet-and-greet with her constituents, when a gunman opened fire in Tucson, killing six people and wounding 14, including Giffords.

A federal judge, one of Giffords' staffers, and a nine-year-old girl were among those who died in the attack. Giffords sustained a gunshot wound to the head at point-blank range and remains in critical condition.

"I was so upset about the little girl," said senior Cathy Chubb. "That shouldn't be happening."

The 40-year-old Arizona democrat was speaking with local citizens near a supermarket. The event was titled "Congress on Your Corner" and was part of Giffords' attempt to communicate with the members of the state's eighth con-

gressional district.

A suspect, 22-year-old Jared Lee Loughner, was apprehended at the scene after being tackled while attempting to reload his weapon. He has been accused by federal authorities of attempting to assassinate the congresswoman, along with four other federal charges.

Loughner appeared in federal court and agreed not to contest his confinement, and is being held without bail. The capital defense lawyer hired to represent Loughner, Judy Clark, has stated her concern that Arizona judges or prosecutors may be biased in their case.

The shock from the attack has been evident throughout the nation. Senior government officials, including President Barack Obama and House Speaker John Boehner, were quick to describe their shock and remind people that violence has no place in our society.

Media circles and even the families of the victims were quick to blame the nation's fiery political rhetoric for what transpired. Conservative icon Sarah Palin is taking the brunt of these accusations due to a map created by her political action committee showing crosshairs over Giffords' and other districts. The issues of gun rights and the security of elected officials have also been raised.

"It's the systems fault," said Government teacher Carol Truedell. "We don't look closely enough at mental health of young people between the ages of 18-30."

Obama traveled to Arizona to attend a memorial service for the victims.

"I think it's good that people are talking about the toxic political climate," said senior Chris Wink, "but this really was just one deranged gunman."

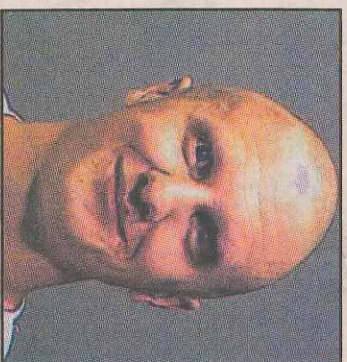


NewsRadio



British Broadcasting Corporation

Police responded to the emergency call after 20 people were shot at Representative Gabrielle Giffords' meet-and-greet event. Alleged shooter Jared Lee Loughner smirks in his mug shot, seemingly taunting mourning Americans. Giffords poses in her office, miraculously she survived the shooting.



The Australian NewsRadio

Loss of game, gain of knowledge for Sports Marketing

By Lee Gleason

Sports Editor

The Washington Wizards got "knicked up" on Career Day.

Last month, the Intro and Sports Marketing classes participated in Career Day at the Verizon Center for the Washington Wizards vs. the New York Knicks game. Although the Wizards lost to the Knicks 101-95, the students at the game got to enjoy the many perks of the event.

"It was a lot of fun," said senior Jake Flewellyn. "I got to sit courtside for warm-ups and got to slap hands with Nick Young."

Career Day is an annual event held at the Verizon Center over the past seven years. It has hosted over 17,000 students and almost 200 different high schools from Maryland,



Courtesy of Waki Pettibon-Kelley

Students in our school's Sports Marketing class got up close and personal with the Washington Wizards in order to get a look at how sports marketing works in the real world.

Donors give the gift of life

Key Club exceeds expectations at latest drive

By Julie Parisi

Oracle Editor

Just before Winter Break, hundreds of Spartans helped save lives.

Every year, the WS Key Club sponsors a blood drive so that students who wish to participate can donate blood to the Inova Health System. Students older than 16, who turned in a permission form by the deadline, and faculty were assigned a time slot and asked to report to Spartan Hall on the day of the drive.

After filling out a form and reading the provisions, donors were looked over by Inova nurses who measured vitals such as blood pressure and temperature. When the nurses were satisfied that the student was in good health, it was time to give blood. Each person donated a pint, which took approximately

half an hour per student.

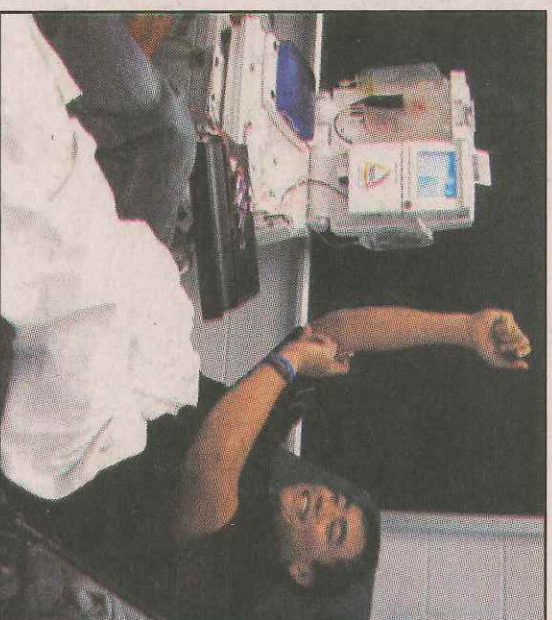
"It hurt when the needle went in but after that it was just uncomfortable," said junior Hannah Houghton.

When they were finished, students were required to wait for a half-hour at a refreshments table to make sure nothing went wrong. A few students experienced dizziness and/or nausea, which are common adverse effects of donating, but there were no major health concerns.

"[These health concerns are] actually fairly normal to happen to a small number of donors at all blood drives," said Technology Education teacher and Key Club sponsor JT Alukonis. "The fantastic staff from Inova is well-trained to deal with such a situation."

Plenty of people volunteered, but some were absent and

See "Blood Drive" on Page 6.



Sarah Kenney

Senior Nick Pham applies pressure to his arm after donating blood at the Key Club blood drive on December 14.

The Oracle recommends more school spirit.



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Bong Night informs about drug dangers.



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WS grads face off in Champs Sports Bowl.



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Jemey Davis

Random spirit weeks boost moral

More pride in our school helps build a sense of community

One thing Spartans like to pride themselves on is spirit.

Homecoming Week, we go all out. Togsas, Cops and Robbers and Tropical Island Day. We wear ridiculous outfits and rock the school colors, all building up to the traditional pep rally and Homecoming game.

But if we have so much school spirit, why should we limit ourselves to one spirit week a year?

Before the Student vs. Staff basketball game, the student body held an impromptu Spirit Week featuring days such as Super Hero Day and Wacky Tacky Day. We think there is no better way to build excitement for an event, while also promoting a sense of community, than a Spirit Week.

It is a way for people to go crazy with their outfits and have fun being creative with the days.

On Super Hero Day there were several Quail Men from "Doug" wandering the halls of our school

and a multitude of Bahmans keeping us safe from the Joker.

Random Spirit Weeks help with one major thing: they remind us that we don't need a big football game or Student vs. Staff basketball game to have school spirit.

We are the Spartans. Teams should fear us when they walk into our courts and onto our fields because of our student body.

Spirit from our fans doesn't just scare the other team; it helps our players compete to the best of their abilities. When we boost them up with cheers, trash talk the other team and keep the team in the game we can be unbeatable.

We think that the school shouldn't over do the Spirit Week idea; however, a better option would be to have one for every sport. We could have one spirit week for each team leading up to their respective Senior Nights. It would be a nice way to honor all the seniors who participate in sports at our school.

"Random spirit weeks help with one major thing...we don't need a big football game or Student v. Staff basketball game to have school spirit."

Making the students more aware about what big games are happening at our school would encourage more attendance at the games.

Plus, it's fun. Everyone enjoys the chance to dress crazy and create a sense of camaraderie between students and teachers. It is a safe way for students to express themselves as a whole without caring about their peers judging them in a mean way.

Extra Spirit Days and Spirit Weeks throughout the year would add to the school's overall character and give everyone a chance to express themselves and their devotion to our school.



Jemey Davis

English teacher Jennifer Beach is lifted in the air by other teacher cheerleaders during halftime.

Airport security has reached an all-time high

TSA security measures have spiraled out of control in terms of personal privacy

By Allie Colella & Jessica Drago
Oracle Staff Writers

Here it comes. The dreaded moment that precedes every plane trip. Security.

Security is a pain in the neck, whether you are scared every time you walk through the scanners, wondering if you will get busted for breaking some unknown rule, or if you hate having to wake up early in order to make it through security.

And lately, the grumblings about security have been louder than usual.

One of the concerns people have is whether the amount of radiation the body scanners emit is enough to cause cancer.

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has refuted this claim, stating that the radiation a person comes in contact is less significant than the radiation that same person will come in contact with while he or she is on plane.

Others are worried about the new body scanners which display a fuzzy, yet still somewhat revealing, image of the body—nothing too graphic, but enough that it is causing anxiety.

Even though airports claim they go to great lengths to keep the images from the body scanner private, nothing, especially cy-



Jeff Topplings

A woman is getting thoroughly patted down and getting her privacy invaded by a police woman in the airport.

"...the new body scanners... display a fuzzy, yet still somewhat revealing, image of the body—nothing too graphic, but enough that it is causing anxiety."

berspace, is perfect.

This alarming risk, along with the general indignation over the inconvenience, has many questioning why we allowed security to get so bad.

As the last few classes who can remember 9/11, we identify with the nation-wide fear of other attacks from the sky.

And it is for this reason that we, along with the rest of Americans, have accepted the increase in security in our airports.

The decrease in our civil rights was balanced out by the promise of security from the government.

However, as years have passed and security measures have reached all-time highs, some have begun to wonder if we have let it spiral out of control, particularly as we are standing in front of the entire airport in our

socks getting patted down for explosives.

Now, as a high schooler, I recognize that we all still have a far way to go before we can state an educated opinion about the goings on of America.

But, I have also gotten my backpack searched through because I forgot to take my sunscreen (which, cops, exceeded 3 ounces) out, so I feel we are entitled to be a little expressive.

The reason we are becoming angry over airport security is that the scare 9/11 has faded.

Although threats to air-born Americans still continue, they are not widely publicized. Thus, to the average person, the extravagant security is no longer needed.

The opposition to security would decrease if we could see the results. We might be more inclined to wait in long lines and walk around in our socks if we knew the reason why.

Hopefully, security has reached its peak and we will no longer have to stand awkwardly in line waiting to pass through the body scanners.

Otherwise, it won't take much time at all before we are banned from bringing anything, but ourselves, on the plane, not even a carry on bag.

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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.

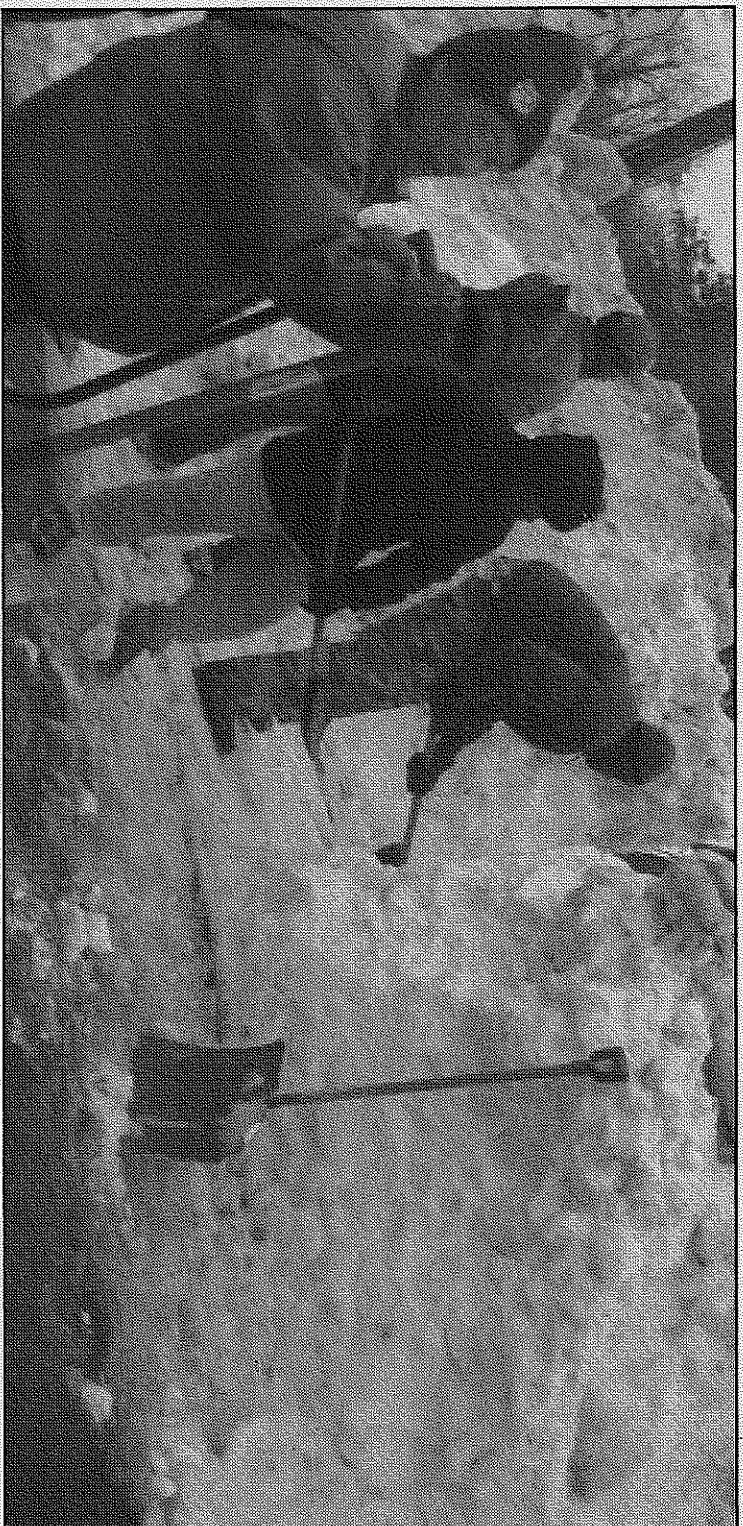
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Brooke Nelson

Last year, our area got about 55 inches of snow over the course of the entire winter and didn't go to school for over two weeks cumulatively. The blizzards also prevented a lot of businesses from being open and delayed driving on almost all roads for days. School was also extended by the school board for many extra days in an effort to get the mandatory 180 school days all accomplished. While seniors don't mind days being extended since their graduation date doesn't change, underclassmen are often annoyed when days are knocked off of their summer vacations in order to fulfill their hours-in-school requirements.

Spartans have mixed feelings about snow days

Underclassmen don't appreciate extra days

By Karista Giordano

Forum Editor

Every underclass student looks forward to their 76 days of summer, until it is suddenly cut down to 68 or maybe 67 days.

Snow is beautiful and fun, yet no student can control when the sky drops it on the ground. A snow day is a wonderful thing too, but it has a catch in the end.

Sure the student can sleep in and has the day off from school, but the School Board makes sure it catches up with us in the end. The Fairfax County School Board allows for a small amount of three snow days and once we pass these three days we have to make up every other snow day in one way or another.

To me this seems a bit ridiculous. Our summer and our spring break can simply be shortened because of something we can't control: snow. Students need all of these breaks including summer. Without these breaks we would give up on school or become brain dead due to all the stress school causes on us.

To be honest with you, even

on a snow day most students are still acting like they are in school; checking blackboard, studying for the tests they should have had that day or just doing homework so they won't be behind on the first day back.

Teachers won't accept that just because it was a snow day, the homework couldn't be done. Every teacher has a blackboard site that their students are connected to. On a snow day for some reason, the "Announcement" section seems to fill up like mad with what the students have to do to keep up with the work.

Our breaks, including summer, are a time for relaxation and not having to worry about anything except yourself. With this time taken away from us it suddenly turns into school, school, and more school on our minds. I know that is not healthy for anyone.

The School Board shouldn't be allowed to take away our summer or spring break because the messy snow that makes the roads slippery and difficult to drive on.

We should not be penalized for something that we have nothing to do with. It is out of our hands. We are the victims. We can't control it!

Future grads say 'yes, please' to snow days

By Kelly Carlin

Oracle Editor

Between September and June, a lot of unexpected weather can wreak havoc on our little school. Let's take a trip back a year to the infamous Snowpocalypse.

What seemed like ten feet of snow left students in a snow coma; once we all got back to school, no one wanted to focus on the work that had built up over the excessive snowcation. But for seniors, the return to school was less of a stress factor. In fact, the roughly ten snow days that were forcibly made up by underclassmen had no effect on graduating seniors. This year as a senior, I am praying for so much snow that leaving the house is entirely impossible for the entire winter season.

If I don't have to make up the missed school days near the end of the seemingly infinite school year, I'm all for playing in the snow from December through March. The snowmen, snow angels, and snowball fights that I participated in over the winter left us in school for three

extra days at the end of the year; the three longest days of my entire life. This year, all of that will change.

I have finally reached the coveted position as a senior, someone who does not have to make up snow days. Since graduation is a date set long before the impending year, the winter weather seems trivial compared to this long reserved event. So bring on the snow.

I will do the snow dance every night. I will flush double the required ice cubes down the toilet. I will pray to the snow gods every day of the week. That's how much I want this snow.

I remember last year during a snow week off, I dumped my snow gear in preparation for a one block trek that normally took five minutes. It ended up taking thirty. This year I will have more patience in taking my time on snow days. I will use each and every snow day to watch movies, enjoy the time off from school, and not worry about the toll it will take on my school year. Like college applications, senior skip days, and graduation itself, snow days should be added to the list of our privileges, because, in the long run, it positively affects the seniors.

Lee's resolution: to fulfill his resolutions

By Lee Gleason

Sports Editor

My favorite part about the New Year is that it makes me realize that my previous year's resolutions have gone completely unfulfilled.

This recurring realization happens year after year, usually as I'm tipping back my third glass of sparkling cider. This time around, however, my New Year's Resolution is to fulfill my resolutions for the first time in 18 years. And over the course of this year, there are definitely many resolutions that I want to fulfill.

Since it's 2011, I feel as though eleven resolutions would be sufficient.

Number one: get into college. This is an important resolution because if we don't get into college, we'll be spending way more time in NOVA than we really want to be spending.

Number two: complete the gallon challenge. For those of you unaware of what the

gallon challenge is, it's when you try to drink a gallon of 2% milk within an hour without throwing up. It sounds easy, but it's not.

Number three: find a cure for senioritis; whether this cure is not coming to school at all or having the teachers get involved and have them give us less work to do, either way, something has to be done.

Number four: sleep through a timed writing. I know this doesn't help the cause to cure senioritis but this has always been something that has been tempting throughout high school for me.

Number five: become a star on OMGpop. OMGpop provides a safe environment for people to compete against each other in pool without having to go down to a sketchy pool hall. To become a star would be the greatest achievement.

Number six: create the greatest senior prank. A prank that allows everyone to still walk at graduation but yet at the same time lets everyone else know that we are the class

Letter-to-the-Editor

To the Editors:

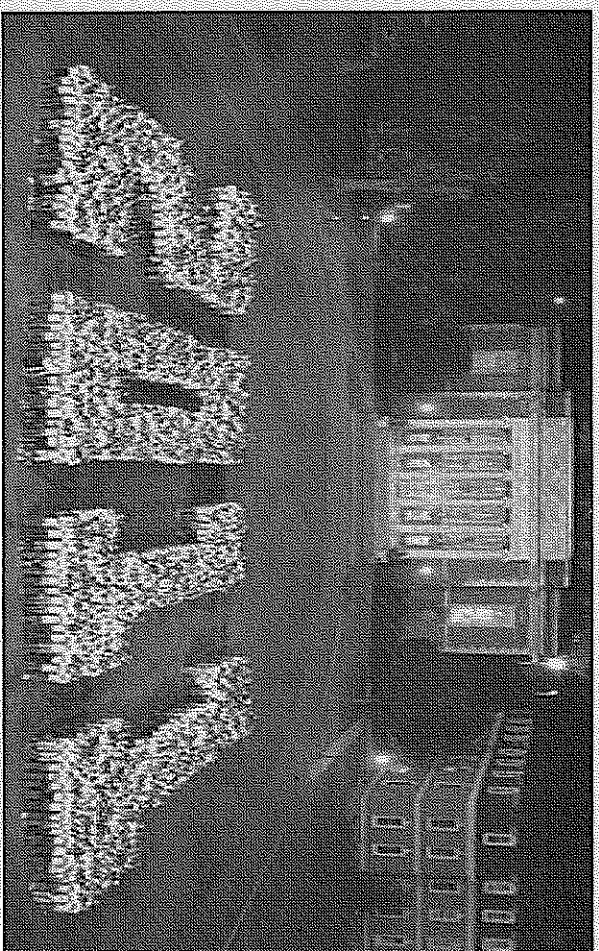
I felt it necessary to take a moment to address a comment made in the December 17 edition of *The Oracle*. Annarda Pearson's article, "School replaces phone after confiscation goes awry," contained senior David Thompson's remark that he "was more upset at the fact that [he] didn't have a phone for [almost] three weeks" than about the theft of his property.

While I appreciate Pearson's reminder that phones would remain safely in [students'] hands and situations such as this could be entirely avoided" if the devices were left in backpacks during school hours, as is mandated, it seems to me that Thompson (and many other students) are missing this point and, consequently, the bigger picture: Breaking this rule costs our school money. This money is then unavailable for its true purpose, which is the improvement of your education.

As a teacher who literally did the little Snoopy dance of joy upon learning that she had received a \$390 grant from the PTSA, in order to purchase additional copies of a book for her classroom, it causes me pain and frustration to realize that the cost of replacing this electronic device was more than the cost of these texts.

In fact, this grant will not be enough to purchase copies for all of my classes. I'll probably be holding a bake sale this spring in order to make those last 25 or so copies happen. In the meantime, because this student couldn't refrain from texting in class, our school (and your learning) is \$600 poorer.

Sincerely,
Madelaine Dalie
English 10



Chris Hildreth

The class of 2011 at Duke University forms a "2011" on the East Campus lawn of the school. Just like every other new year, 2011 provides us with new opportunities and possibilities to achieve our resolutions.

of 2011.

Number seven: beat Coach Eldredge in a game of one on one. First to 11.

Number eight: rep orange and blue until June 22, not black and yellow.

Number nine: pass all the AP exams with-

out studying.

Number ten: come in late to school with no doctor's note... but tell them I went to the doctor's.

And number eleven: create an all male acapella group... check.

NHS receives more applications than ever

By Luis Lester

Sports Editor

Junior year is when students typically begin to buckle down and start searching for colleges and the requirements that are necessary to be accepted. As colleges are becoming more and more competitive, students try to gain an advantage any way they can, which may be the reason that this year the National Honor Society (NHS) received the most application packets ever.

This year, the NHS received 174 application packets, which is roughly 25% of the junior class. However, the NHS doesn't have a limit on how many students can be accepted, so just because of the increase of packets doesn't mean it will be necessarily more competitive to get in to.

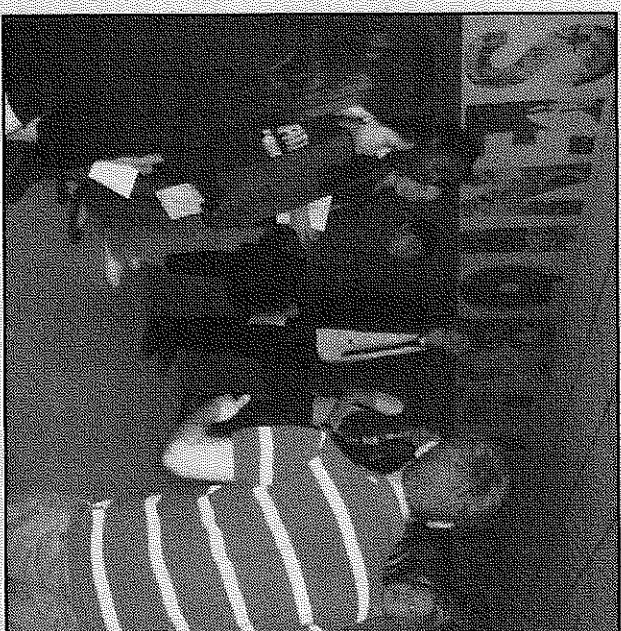
"What [the NHS sponsors] do is go over the student's packet and if they meet the criteria we're looking for they'll be accepted," said Government teacher John Thorson, Head Sponsor of the NHS.

If anything, becoming a part of NHS has become easier due to the change of the grading policy. Last year, Fairfax County decided to change to a normal grading scale, but the NHS remained with their 3.5 GPA requirement.

"The officers, sponsors and I have all discussed if we could change the GPA requirements for NHS, but we're not allowed to because those rules fall under the jurisdiction of the county," said senior Mai-Vi Nguyen, historian of the NHS. "However, I personally think NHS should change the GPA requirements because that would make it fair for future and current members."

The NHS provides students with opportunities to enrich their leadership skills by working in the community and becoming more involved with the school by helping students with their homework. Students must complete a certain amount of community service hours per quarter and maintain a 3.5 GPA or else you'll be placed on probation. Being able to show colleges that you were able to maintain your school work and still be in this prestigious society would really catch the college's attention. With the population of the school not seeming like it will decrease, it looks like the packets for NHS will continue to grow.

"I think application amounts will continue to grow because the population continues to grow and students are realizing how good NHS looks for college applications," said senior Jennifer Moore.



Thomas Arfale

The National Honor Society President, senior Erik Bakke, speaks to new NHS members at an induction ceremony rehearsal. The induction ceremony was held on January 12.

News Bites

10 die in 'inland tsunami' in Australia

Three quarters of Australia's Queensland is now a disaster zone due to flooding caused by the biggest rainfall the area had seen in 37 years. After 24 hours, 78 people were declared missing and 10 have been declared dead. Government officials are urging the two million residents of Brisbane, Australia's third largest city, to evacuate.

Verizon launches its own iPhone 4

On January 11, Verizon Wireless announced they will be offering Apple's iPhone to customers starting this February. With this new deal, AT&T Wireless's previous exclusive hold on the iPhone will end.

Omaha high school principal shot, vice principal dead

The vice principal of Millard South High School in Omaha Nebraska, Vicki Kasper, is dead and the principal, Curtis Case, is hurt after a shooting by student Robert Butler Jr., who was found dead in his car after an apparent suicide.

New Huck Finn edition to be "clean"

Editor and Mark Twain scholar Dr. Alan Gribben is releasing a new, cleaned up version of Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* that eliminates the book's previous usage of the "N" word. Although the word is being eliminated because of its offensive connotation, the change is causing a stir in the print industry because Twain's original satirical intention was to draw attention to racism of the time.

Kardashians sued for over \$75 million

Famed Kardashian sisters Kim, Kourtney, and Khloe are being sued by Revenue Resource Group for their endorsement of the Kardashian Kard, their prepaid debit card created with MasterCard. The lawsuit's loss of revenue charge is also for the money lost from the launch party, previously thrown to endorse the card.

—Compiled from local news, police and online sources



Misreen Sumrean

For a fundraiser in November, the Spanish Honor Society organized and took part in a canned food drive for those less fortunate during the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving. Their food drive was successful, possibly due to the advertising done with member made posters.

Spanish Honor Society succeeds

By Misreen Sumrean

Features Editor

This year the Spanish Honor Society got into the spirit of giving, raising over 2000 cans for the November Thanksgiving food drive sponsored by the National Honor Society.

The SHS decided that on their own they might not have been able to raise as many cans as they wanted, so they opened up their collection to all the Spanish classes, and offered them an incentive: the first Spanish class to collect the most cans would get a party sponsored by the SHS.

"We opened up the collection of cans to all the Spanish classes, and the class with the most cans would win," said sponsor Jonathan Blaylock. "The winners were Mr. Eldredge's Spanish 3 class."

Spanish teachers constantly reminded students to bring in cans, not for a party, but to get the chance to help those less fortunate than themselves.

"My teacher would remind us every once in a while to bring in cans, and she kept a box in the front of the room," said senior Zehra Rahman. "I think the reason we were so successful this year was because we kept thinking about how we could make someone's holiday by giving them what they would not

usually have." Eventually, the Spanish Honor Society accumulated so many cans that they had to stop collecting.

That could be due to the fact that this year the National Honor Society did a much better job of advertising the food drive. The NHS made many colorful posters that they posted all around the school, and in almost every teacher's classroom.

The extensive advertisement this year over last year made it much easier and accessible for students who wanted the chance to give to those less fortunate.

"The canned food drive was relatively well advertised and started early in the month, which helped anyone who forgot," said President of the Spanish Honor Society Meredith Zettlemoyer.

As the wide variety of cans, boxes, and other non-perishable food items piled up in the teachers' classrooms, students who participated felt a sense of pride in their successful endeavor.

"We really came together to help the families; the group of kids we have this year would do anything to help the community," said junior Candace Plaska. "We were really successful because the sponsors pushed us to do so."

Family Hair Salon

Color Reg \$40.00	Highlights Reg \$55.00	Ladies' Haircut Reg \$14.99	Updo & Styling \$20.00 and up
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Bong Night informs parents

Second annual event features WS officials, drug specialists to create more awareness

By Thomas Ariale & Kelly Carlin
Oracle Staff Writers

Stoners beware.

Last month, we hosted its second annual winter Bong Night to educate parents about different kinds of drugs their children may be using and ways they may be using them.

"I put on the event to show parents trends that teenagers tend to exemplify," said Substance Abuse Counselor Patrick Lawton. "And how they can help educate and stop their children from harming themselves."

Lawton is leading the fight here against drug use by the student body. Lawton also hosts Bong Night at Marshall High School.



The 420 Shack, edited by Lisa Williams
Many teenagers do not realize the legal consequences of their drug activities, and the purpose of Bong Night is to make parents aware of devices their child could be using to get high, so that they can maybe stop their child's illegal activities.

Bryant Alternative School, West Potomac High School and Mount Vernon High School. The goal of Bong Night is to help parents become more aware of what devices their children could be using to take illegal drugs. This year's event didn't yield the same amount of attendees as the previous year, with only 15 people showing up to hear from Lawton and the Narcotics Officer, Joe Pittman.

"Last year we had around 170 parents attend the event," said Principal Paul Wardinski. "Compared to this year's number it's a lot less parents, but it was still worth it despite the small number of people."

Pittman doesn't just tell parents about what their kids might be doing through a boring PowerPoint; he brings in actual drugs to show them. He brings in tangible products so the parents can see and smell what their kids could be taking. The officer also showed parents examples of common things their child can buy at a grocery store or gas station that can be used to facilitate drug use. Things like common water bottles from a gas station can be used to create a device to smoke marijuana. Some students aren't sure that this is the best thing for parents to be doing.

"I don't think it's necessary, it just seems unimportant," said sophomore Jonathan Xantz. "Parents shouldn't care about how they do it, rather, why they do it and how to stop their kids from doing it again."

However, the administration does think it is important to educate parents about what their children might be up to. The reason it is held every year is more so because things change from year to year. Some rebellious teenagers are always finding new ways to



Recently, Miley Cyrus was seen taking hits of saliva from a bong, a hallucinogenic substance that is legal in California but illegal in many other states, including Virginia. She is a role model to many impressionable children, and many think that this is inappropriate behavior to be exposed to younger children.

take and abuse illegal drugs, so parents have to be up-to-date if they have any chance of helping their children stop these abusive habits.

"I think it is a good idea to inform parents about this stuff," said senior Jackie Wood. "Our school is really big on weed."

Even if a parent has raised their kid in a drug-free environment, he or she might still be pressured into experimenting with drugs by peers and friends. In high school, many students are more likely to do what their friends think is "cool" than what is morally important to themselves and their families. Some high school students also abuse their parents' trust and get away with using drugs

because they have their own means of transportation. The amount of freedom teenagers are allowed also grows as they proportionately grow older. These are just two of the factors that allow for young people to make possibly bad decisions without parental involvement.

That is why it is so important for parents to be able to identify what drugs might look like, what their child might look like on drugs, and what drugs smell like.

"I think some parents are just in denial, they are hoping that it couldn't be their child," said Wardinski. "I wish more parents would have come to this year's Bong Night, I know that I learn something new every year."

Drappin' phat beatz in our lunch room

By Eleanor Lamb

Features Editor

Students in the cafeteria have long been used to the constant clatter of trays and the murmur of conversation surrounding them. Now, they must also grow accustomed din of music playing in the background during their lunch.

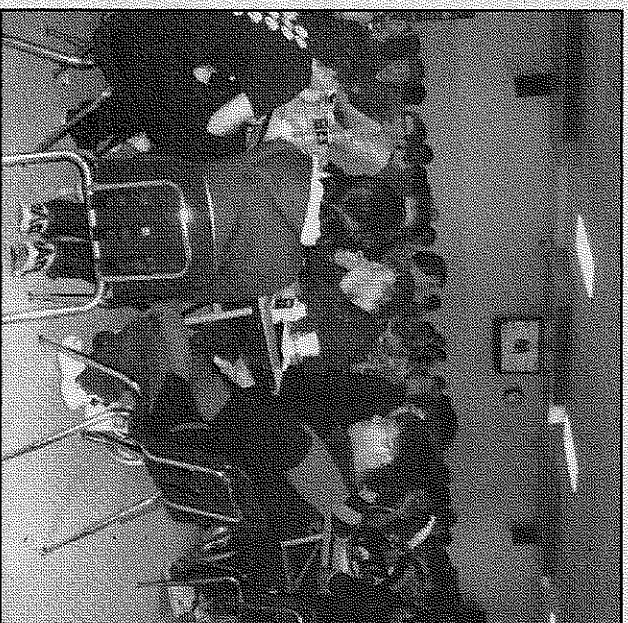
Recently, students have noticed and wondered about the music that has been filling the cafeteria as they chew their peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and slup their Capri Suns. This music was not the initial intent of the staff; it was played at first just to test out the newly-installed sound system.

"We host a lot of events. We were just testing out the system," said Assistant Director of Student Activities Betsy Fawcett.

However, this simple test resulted in an idea that was meant to give students enjoyment. Assistant Principal Richard Griffin had the idea of playing tunes for the students during lunch. A student brought him a CD, and he decided to play it during his assigned lunch period.

"Each administrator has cafeteria duty," said Griffin. "I like to do it on Friday."

Griffin enjoys the music because he believes it is a means for students to loosen up during their highly-stressed school weeks. The music is an unusual part of lunch that is meant to be fun for the students to listen to as they catch up with their



Students enjoy the music that is now played every day during the three lunches. Assistant Principal Richard Griffin came up with the idea and students contribute the music they choose.

Dancing back to Florida

By Thomas Ariale

Oracle Editor

The Dance Team is poppin', lockin' and droppin' their way to Nationals.

Last year the team took people by surprise and won Nationals, which is held at Walt Disney World in Orlando.

"Nationals was one of those once in a lifetime opportunities," said junior Hannah Ernst. "Being on the stage and hearing them say that you're National Champions is incredible."

This year Dance Team is being led by seniors Katie DeClark and Chelsea Kopf. There are three other captains alongside of DeClark and

friends during lunchtime.

"I can dance with them. It's a way to relax," said Griffin. Students' opinions of the music being played are as diverse as the tunes themselves. Some students enjoy the new songs; they believe it gives a more fun and relieving atmosphere to spend time with friends in.

"I like the music," said sophomore Ashley Frost, "except it's kind of ghetto." Frost is one Spartan who enjoys the relaxing feeling the music brings with it. She especially likes it because it makes the cafeteria feel less like school.

Frost is not the only one who shares this particular critique of the music. Junior Bethany Davis also thinks that the music brings a rough, "ghetto" atmosphere with it. However, she doesn't think it needs to be stopped and does not mind the flow of tunes through the sound system.

"It makes our school seem more 'ghetto,' but they can play it if they want to," said Davis.

Some students, however, strongly dislike the music and believe it is totally unnecessary. They find it interrupts their usual lunchtime activity and gets in the way of the conversations they enjoy sharing with their friends, causing them to find music as a nuisance rather than a treat.

"It serves no point while we're eating," said junior Danny Fraedrich. "Either you can't hear the music, or you can't hear the people."

Kopf, Ernst, and juniors Nicky Ditnoy, and Riley O'Rourke. The team is also bringing back a squad of veteran underclassmen. Even with the return of such strong leaders the team is trying not to let last year's win get to their heads.

"We always want to win, but we try to stay humble," said O'Rourke. "We don't want to brag about our wins."

An important part of the team this year is their chemistry. Even though they practice at all times of the week the team members still hang out with each other in their free time. They have team sleepovers, fundraisers, and enjoy spending time with each other.

"A lot of teams say they're families, but you don't know what a family is until you hang out with our team," said O'Rourke. "If we weren't so close together, I don't think we would have gone that far [last year]."

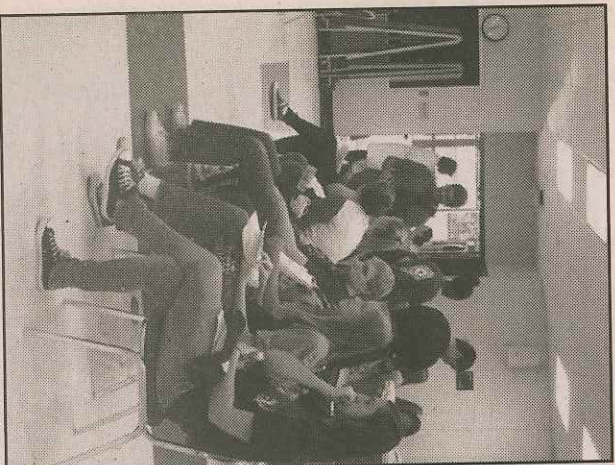
The team still has a long road before they make it back to Nationals. The last two competitions the dance team took first and is now looking forward to the future competitions. The two competitions coming up will be held at South County and the other will be hosted at WS.

"The coolest thing right now is that we are starting to get a fan base," said Ernst. "We are no longer the 'Where is Kobbie?' team."

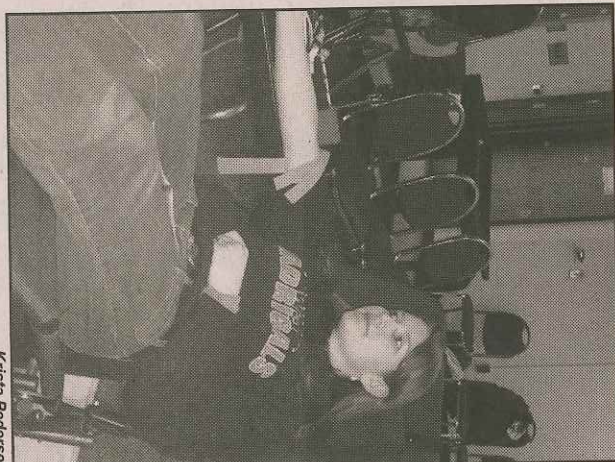


Jerney Davis

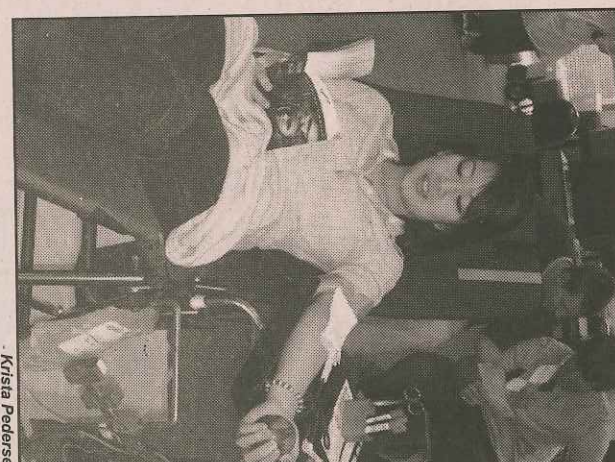
Following their win at Nationals last March, the Dance Team had big shoes to fill. They are continuing to work hard and are attaining success yet again, and are remaining a very close knit group.



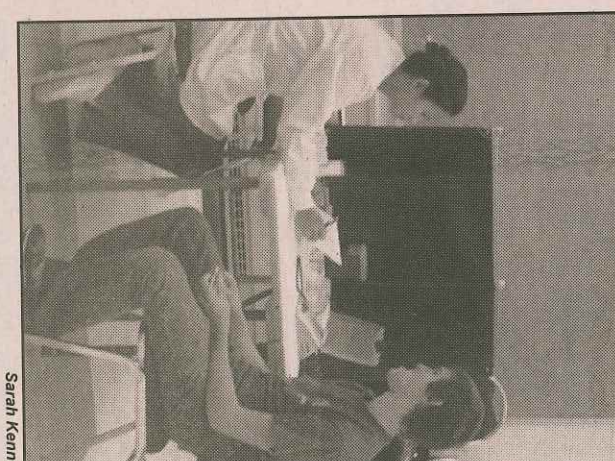
Sarah Kenney
From right, senior Nicole Kiwis, junior Katelyn Lovan and senior Josh Smith wait in line to have their blood drawn at this year's drive.



Krista Pedersen
The Key Club Blood Drive has been a school tradition for many years now. In 2009, Kaitlyn Simmons donated blood at the annual drive.



Krista Pedersen
Jen Tran, an '09 grad, donated blood at the blood drive that year. Like Tran, many students read while donating as a distraction.



Sarah Kenney
Sophomore Joe Paris fills out Inova's required paper work before giving blood this year at the Key Club's annual blood drive.

Blood drive encourages students to give

"Blood Drive," from Page 1.

some ended up falling through due to the strict provisions that Inova takes to ensure that blood will not hurt the recipient.

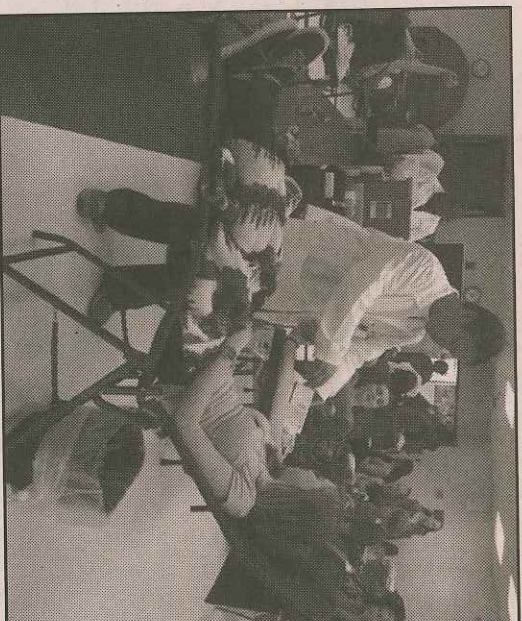
Students can be deferred for reasons including dehydration, being sick, having a low iron count, or even having traveled to foreign countries for an extended period of time (as they could have been exposed to certain harmful diseases).

"They didn't let me donate because I was born in Bulgaria," said junior Ellyse Bochna. People who have lived in Europe for three or more months are not eligible to donate due to the risk of Mad Cow Disease being communicated to the recipient through the blood.

This drive is the perfect opportunity for students to donate blood who would otherwise not have a chance; some, however, have made a point to donate regularly at their local hospitals.

"I wanted to do the school blood drive, but I donated blood a couple weeks ago," said senior Thanh Kha. "The only way I could have done it would be if they accepted platelet donations."

Though organizing a blood drive is a lot of work, Key Club members were able to achieve a lot. They recruited a large



Sarah Kenney
Senior Haley Bell waits to donate blood while an Inova representative prepares all the necessary equipment for the donation. Bell has a friend with a heart disease, which was her motivating factor for donating blood.

numbers of potential donors and worked at the drive, helping to make sure that everything ran smoothly. Alukonis kept in contact with the Inova coordinator in the weeks leading up to the blood drive, and in the end, the event was a tremendous accomplishment.

"It is a large amount of work that is spread around, but it is an incredible cause so everybody loves to help out," said Alukonis.

Some of the donors agree to participate for more personal reasons than just wanting to help out the general blood transfusion recipient. Those with friends or family in need of blood joined forces with the rest of the donating crowd to make a huge difference. Among those donating for a reason close to heart was senior Haley Bell.

"One of my closest friends has a heart disease, and if I could save one life, it would be hers," said Bell. There were 120 time slots available throughout the entire day and the initial goal was to fill 90, but WS students far exceeded the expectations and ended up providing 108 successful donations.

"Compared to what they expected from us," said Alukonis, "it was an incredible success."

Sports Marketing in real life

Class gets up close and personal with Wizards

"Marketing," from Page 1.

infamous dunks off the trampoline.

They even got the pleasure of hearing how G-Man himself became a member of the Wizards organization. After the chairmen were finished with their presentation, the students were able to attend a college fair within the Verizon Center. There were over 38 schools stationed around the Verizon Center before the start of the Wizards game, but of course that was not the part of the trip the students were looking forward to.

Before the start of the game the students got to sit court side and watch both the

Wizards and the Knicks warm-up.

"My favorite part was getting [Ronnie] Turiaf's attention," said senior Michael Kim.

Turiaf is a member of the Knicks and before the game, students were shouting the names of their favorite players and got either a hand shake or a slight wave in response.

Although the Wizards eventually lost the game, the students still enjoyed the event and the overall goal of the trip was accomplished.

"It [was] a great educational experience," said Marketing teacher Vicky Pettibon-Kelly. "For the speakers of their caliber to speak to a young group is a great opportunity."



Verizon
The Washington Wizards play all home games at the Verizon Center in D.C., where the WS In-tro and Sports Marketing classes took a field trip to on their Career Day, January 10. The field trip was organized so that the students could interact with the marketing executives for both Monumental Sports and Entertainment of the Wizards.

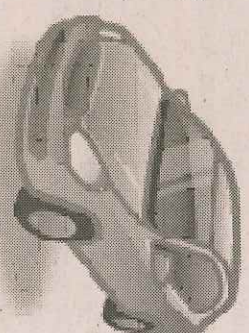
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Perlin brings home the bronze

By Lauren Giery

Page One Editor

After several weeks of preparation, the Debate Team headed to Frederickburg for the Washington-Arlington Catholic Forensic League (WACFL) Competition on November 20, where senior Abby Perlin took home the bronze.

"It felt amazing," said Perlin. "I was really surprised."

Perlin has been a member of the Debate team throughout her entire high school experience, this being her fourth year actively debating.

To prepare for the competition, the debate team, Perlin included, attended weekly meetings leading up to November 20.

The debaters also had to write both a six minute speech, a four minute speech and come up with cross examination questions.

All the work finally paid off for Perlin when she placed third in the WACFL competition.

"It's really hard to place and I'd never placed at the national level," Perlin said.

Perlin competes in the Lincoln-Douglas form of debate, with her topic being whether drugs should be a health concern or a criminal concern.

The Lincoln-Douglas style of debate places heavy emphasis on logic and ethical values. Unlike most forms, Lincoln-Douglas does not require a substantial amount of evidence, but instead it relies on the debater's ability to persuade the judge that their side is right and their opponent's is wrong. Each person gets 13 minutes to speak and three to five minutes of preparation between speeches.

"I've tried public forum but I like Lincoln-Douglas because it's definitely the best form and the hardest," said Perlin. "It's more about how you can get your say to translate to the judge."

As all good debaters know, keeping your cool is an important aspect in debating. They're trained to remain stoic and unemotional no matter how well they do or how bad their debate is going.

However, Perlin isn't one to conceal her emotions; she jumped up and down when she won her first debate and has never been the best at hiding her surprise. Upon hearing she had placed at the national level it can only be expected that she'd be enthused.

"I cried," said Perlin. "And you're not supposed to show your emotions in debate."



Jordan Cinkenbeard
Senior Abby Perlin with Speech and Debate Coach Patricia Hagy and senior Erik Bakke. Perlin won a bronze medal at a recent event.

Senior could swim in Olympics

By Maria Suri

Oracle Online Assistant

Senior Sin Hye Won came to WS when she was a freshman and instantly took advantage of the school swim team. Although she is not currently swimming for the Spartans, she is a member of a local swim team.

"I started swimming when I was seven years old and I stopped when I was in sixth grade," said Won. "My mom wanted me to focus more on school, but when I came to America in ninth grade, I began swimming again."

Swimming in the morning opens up more time for Won to do her homework after school and maintain a social life, but it can be difficult to balance swimming and school.

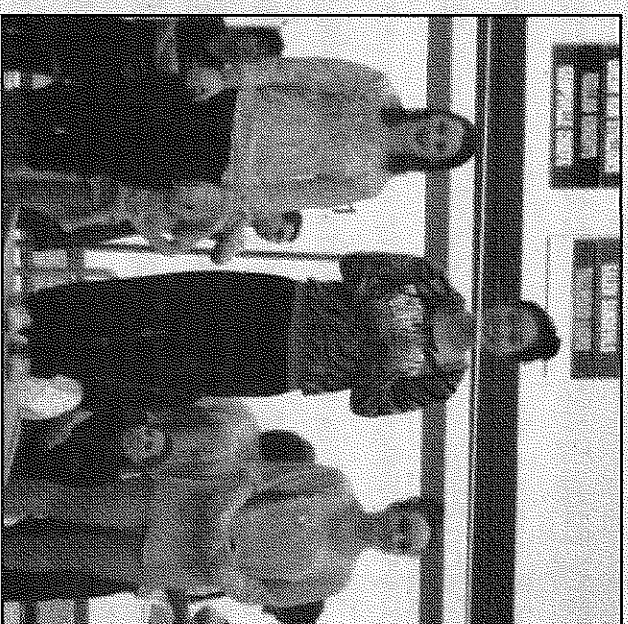
"I usually don't have much trouble turning in my homework because I have morning practice," said Won, "but I occasionally have to skip out on a few assignments here and there when I can't find the time to complete them."

Won has recently made a cut that qualifies her for 2012 Olympic trials in swimming. While she fully intends to take advantage of this opportunity, she will speak with her coaches before making a final decision.

Last year, she won first place in the Senior Short Course Championships, and got straight 9s in the Junior Nationals. Although she is competitive and wants to do her best, Won isn't expecting a gold medal; just being in the Olympics is an honor in itself.

Won began swimming so that she can get a scholarship, but she doesn't intend to do anything in her future that involves swimming.

"I really enjoy swimming, but I don't think I will do anything more than swim for college," said Won. "I'm thinking about doing dentistry, but I'm not sure yet."



Bri Rhinako
Won finished first in the state meet last year as a junior. She hopes to swim in the upcoming Olympic games.

Pradeep gets ahead with independent marketing

Selling energy drinks helps senior make a name for himself in the business world

By Kelly Carlin

Oracle Editor

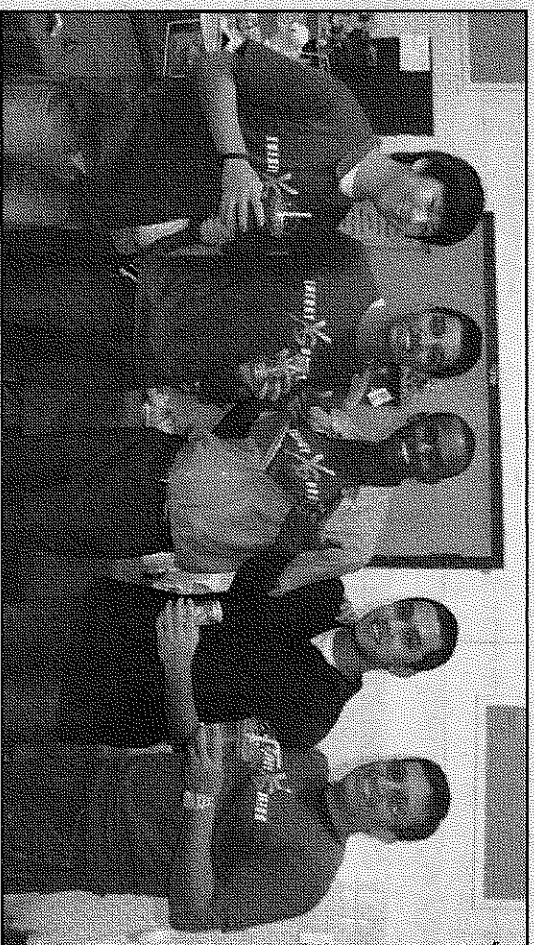
For most high school students, average day-to-day activities include schoolwork, homework and sports. For senior Adarsh Pradeep, work is a word that takes on a much bigger meaning.

Pradeep works with XS Energy Drink LLC, an energy drink company that originated in California in 2001 and is now, in terms of traffic, the twelfth largest energy drink company in North America.

"I am actually an independent distributor (business owner) for the company as in I'm not an employee but rather like a middle-man," said Pradeep. "This means I market, sell, hold events and do anything else a private business owner would do."

XS is most famous for being the first to use a "Sugar Free" label and now manufactures 14 drink flavors. While his work experience is now established and beneficial, his initial touch down with the company in interesting as well.

"My dad is a distributor as well and he thought it would be nice for me to experience the business world and of course make money," said Pradeep.



Courtesy of Adarsh Pradeep

The work Pradeep does with the company is ambitious, and while other seniors goof around and focus on being teenagers, he spends his time creating a name for himself in the business world. In the next year, Pradeep hopes to bring XS into a large industry: nightclubs.

"I've started to work with some of the hottest nightclubs in D.C. to put XS energy in their beverage list by doing promotions, events, etc.," said Pradeep, who hopes to land a million dollar contract with a nightclub in the area within the next year.

If he is successful with this business en-

"Due to my age, I constantly have to prove to these owners and managers that I am completely serious."

—Adarsh Pradeep, Senior

deavor, Pradeep will have enough financial sovereignty to not worry about working during college, and be able to focus on other things like paying attention to his schoolwork and enjoying himself. While the work he's done has been serious, Pradeep has been met with his fair share of adversity.

"In dealing with vastly successful nightclubs and restaurants, there is definitely a credibility factor involved. Due to my age, I constantly have to prove to these owners and managers that I am completely serious about my propositions with their companies and do this, you need to have a strong self-image and mental attitude," said Pradeep. "Also, just as with anything else in life, practice leads to greater confidence and eventual perfection."

BRITISH?

By Lee Gleason
Sports Editor

This story will be very brief.

There are those things in life that you will always remember and love. In some cases, you love that something so much that you have no choice but to revert back to it.

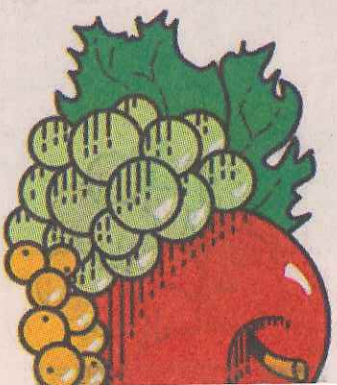
A person graduates four times before they even reach high school, as hard as that is to believe. They graduate from diapers to Huggies, from Huggies to tighty-whities, from tighty-whities to briefs and then from briefs to boxers. However, just like in high school, some kids do not graduate. They grab their GED at the boxer-brief stage and continue through life with their heads held high. Boxer-briefs serve many purposes. Perhaps the most important purpose is security. Have you ever been on a roller coaster and not felt secure? Well, it's not very fun. I realize that this is a metaphor of two extremes; however, boxer-briefs in a sense do the same thing as roller coaster security. They keep everyone and everything secure and they ensure that the participants are continually having a good time.

Nothing is more uncomfortable than playing a sport in boxers. It always feels like something is missing and I could never think of what that thing was—until now. That thing I was missing was comfort and from now on I will never wear boxers while playing a sport again.

Some people may say that briefs are feminine simply because they're tight-fitting, but I say they're wrong. If you think about all the great superheroes of our lifetime, every single one wore tight-fitting pants. Do you think they bunched their boxers up under all that spandex? I don't think so. Therefore, it is safe to say that the obvious underwear of choice for our beloved superheroes was in fact, the boxer-brief.

The lone feature that comes with the choice of wearing boxers is a 24/7 atomic wedgie. However, with the boxer-brief you are guaranteed a tight fit, one that does not bunch and promises to provide the utmost comfortability for its wearer. It seems to me to

be an obvious choice: Would you rather go through life with an atomic wedgie, or take one step to looking like a superhero? The choice is yours.



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BOXERS?

By Luis Lester
Sports Editor

The ongoing debate over whether to wear boxers or briefs has finally reached a decision. The briefs and their tight fit cuffing never stood a chance against the loose boxers, and they were knocked out easily in the first round.

Briefs bring an unnecessary, uncomfortable feel in the one place a guy should feel most comfortable. In "Man's Land," it shouldn't feel as if the sky is slowly collapsing, and the citizens have insufficient air to breathe. Boxers allow their citizens to run around freely. They minimize the awkward adjustments that are sometimes needed to be made throughout the day. And the comfort of boxers even attracts more and more girls to wear them instead of pajama pants to go to sleep.

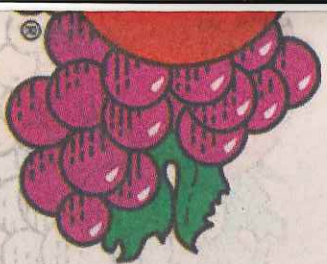
Not only do boxers make you feel better, but they also improve your appearance. Unless you have a 26-pack and are an inspiring Hanes model, briefs aren't the way to go. With boxers, a sense of originality comes into the game. There could be racks filled with boxers of different designs ranging from the Superman logo to the logo of your favorite sports team, from checkers to polka dots, and from SpongeBob to

Snooki. This changes the perception of underwear by allowing it to become a form of expression. If you want to find originality on briefs, you might have better luck looking in the kids' extra-large tighy-whitey section.

As if comfort and appearance aren't enough to change your mind, perhaps the health benefits boxers provide will do the job. It's been proven that the cuffling of briefs for a long period of time could have an effect on a man's sperm count. Not that any of us cares about that now, but in the future we don't want to look back and regret that the reason we aren't able to have kids was because of our choice of underwear.

In an episode of "Seinfeld," Kramer, one of the main characters, was told by his doctor that the reason for his low sperm count was because he was wearing briefs. He immediately switched to boxers and loved the free feeling so much he decided not to wear anything. I'm not advising you to go to those extreme lengths, but you have to do whatever floats your boat.

This is not a decision that can come off the top of your head. You should sit down, devote some time, and think twice about the type of underwear you want to spend your life with.



BOOM

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NEW YORK



POLO RALPH LAUREN

Another snowpocalypse?

By Allie Colella
Forum Editor

It's that time of year again. Time to set your home-screen to the FCPS Emergency announcement page so you have a constant update of cancellations and delays. Time to anxiously watch the page for the red words which announce our time off. Time for snow.

Last year, the Metro Area was spoiled by "Snowmageddon," the name of the blizzard that brought nearly 40 inches of snow and a two week break from school. For the first few days of the blizzard, we watched in disbelief as school was continuously canceled, shoveled the driveway a dozen times, and trudged up major road-ways through waist-deep snow.

"You know in Calvin and Hobbes how they build all the snowmen? I made one swimming away with all the sharks following it," said senior Annette Diptert.

The unexpected vacation gave us a reprieve from the long winter months which normally stretch out before us in bleak, five-day weeks without breaks. Even though we

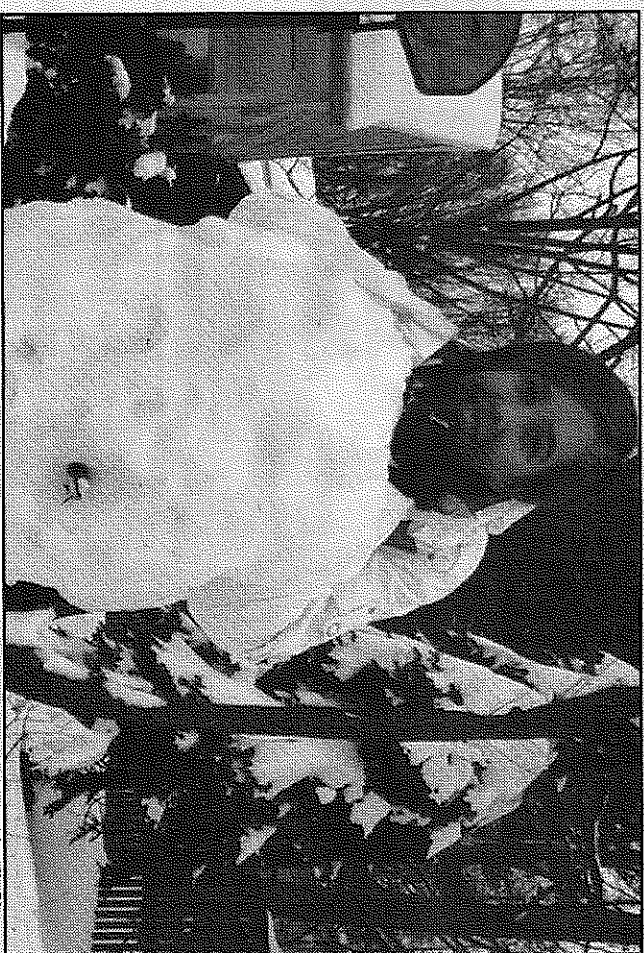
started showing symptoms of cabin fever after a while and were (admit it) a little happy to return to society after days of being cooped up, that doesn't stop us from hoping for another blizzard just like it.

"I'm counting on [snow]," said sophomore Maddie Wittich. "No school, that's the best part."

The chances for a snowy winter are slim. It is unlikely we will get as much as last year, but the early release and late start on December 16 and 17 are not to be discounted. Plus, the snow days in December bring up an important question for Spartans, much more important than Heathcliff's motives or right triangles: what will we do with our snow days this year?

"I'd start a fire with my Capstone project to keep warm," said senior Claire Dennings. "I'd also pack some clothes so I would have clothes if I got stuck at someone's house."

Another student had more practical ideas in mind: sophomore Madeline Diaz said she would make sure check Blackboard, her teachers stressed at the beginning of last



Junior Kelsey Simpson kicks back and plays in the snow during last year's "Snowmageddon." Students hope that we will get lucky again this year with another snow storm.

year. Most students, however, maintained that in the event of a snow day they would leave their homework, stay up late, and look forward to sleeping in the next morning.

"I'd be sitting in front of the fire, not shoveling," said junior Candace Plaska. "I remember watching my dad shovel, it was the best."

This Spartan still bleeds orange & blue

2005 alumnus tries the high school experience from another angle

By Nora Osei
Viewpoint Editor

Most students who graduate from here leave their high school days behind, but that wasn't the case for English teacher Jacob Branigan.

Physically, WS hasn't changed much since '05 when Branigan graduated, other than the Sports Lobby bathrooms getting renovated and the removal of the carpet from the "carpeted hallway" downstairs; however, Branigan said the policies have changed immensely.

"The grading scale was more difficult, you had to have a teacher recommendation to take an AP class, and 5th period was the period that met every day," said Branigan. "There was also no Spartan time. Lunch was during 5th period, so we always had the same lunch. I don't know how you guys deal with having different lunches on different days. That would drive me crazy."

When Branigan, who has been teaching for one year attended WS from '02 to '05 he was really into the guitar program which was es-



Nora Osei

WS graduate Jacob Branigan, shown helping junior Mike Maquera, returned to teach English after being away for five years. He gets the unique opportunity to see how WS works from both a student and a teacher's perspective.

Branigan.

Not only was Branigan apart of the guitar program, but he also ran Cross Country and Track and Field under former coach Chris Pellegrini. He wasn't necessarily the fastest runner, but every year he had fun and liked the challenge, which is why he continued to do it for all four years.

"Running is a personal challenge. You have to be competitive, but it's inner competition. I loved the personal challenge," said Branigan. Even though several years later Branigan found himself back at the school that he spent four long but exciting years at, it's still kind of like a whole new experience to come back and teach compared to being taught.

After graduating from James Madison University and spending one year in an internship in the Shenandoah Valley, Branigan had an epiphany: He realized that WS is the only school in the world where he could experience both sides of being a student and a teacher. This was a chance that he just couldn't manage to pass up.

"After getting to know the students here I'm so glad I came back," said Branigan.

Did You

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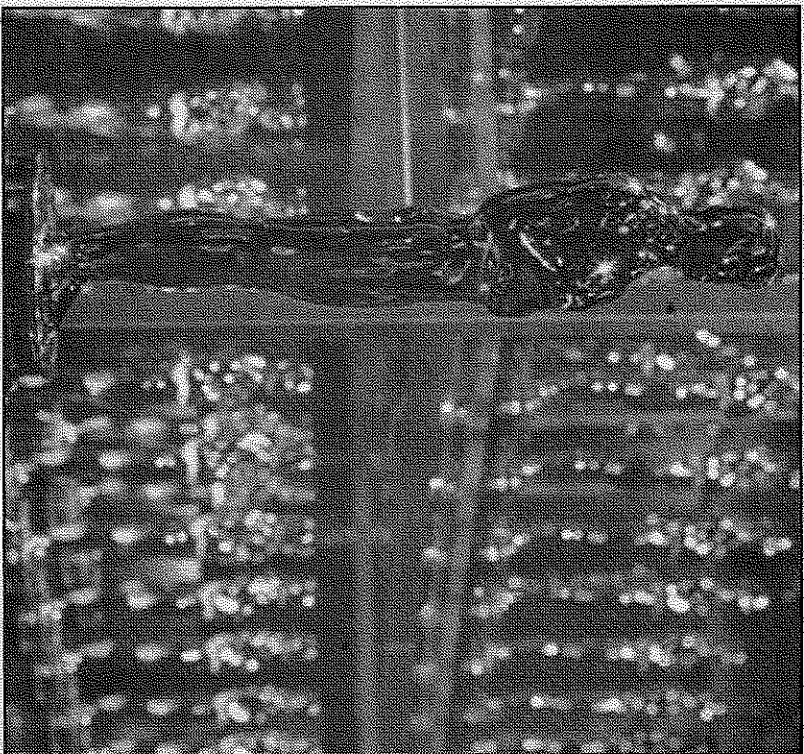
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Earl Blais

The Oscar statue is the award presented to the best actors and actresses in Hollywood during the Academy Awards. They will be presented by actors Anne Hathaway and James Franco, who could be honored themselves.

Oscar noms even for hosts

By Rita Zevallos

Senior Staff Writer

For film enthusiasts, the end of 2010 means one thing: the 83rd annual Academy Awards.

On February 27, the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences will hold the prestigious and much-anticipated Oscars award ceremony to determine the best in film for 2010.

They will judge a number of categories such as Best Picture, Best Actor, and Best Director. The event, held at Kodak Theatre in Los Angeles, will be broadcast around the world.

As usual, this year's Oscars will include lots of new films. Critics predict that high in the running for Best Film will be Christopher Nolan's blockbuster "Inception," the Facebook movie "The Social Network," "Black Swan" starring Natalie Portman as a ballerina, and the Pixar family favorite "Toy Story 3."

There are 248 films eligible in total for the ten nominations, which will be announced on January 25. This number is less than it has been previously.

"I want Black Swan to win because that movie was really good," said freshman Natalie Steinberg.

An important change is the choice of Anne Hathaway and James Franco as co-hosts. In the past, the Academy has usually chosen middle-aged talk show hosts or comedians to play this role in the ceremony, such as Chris Rock. Some die-hards cite this tradition in their disapproval of the two actors.

"It's fine, because they're kind of comical. I just worry a little because having actors present other actors is a little weird," said senior Lisa Eichhorn.

Since the hosts' performance is scripted, the fact that they are not comedians is irrelevant.

On the other hand, both Franco and Hathaway could also be up

for nomination, Hathaway for her performance in "Love and Other Drugs," and Franco for his in "127 Hours."

The Oscar producers felt that Franco and Hathaway represented the film industry in its fullest, and are confident in their choice.

"James Franco and Anne Hathaway perfectly fit the next generation of Hollywood icons—fresh, exciting, and multitalented," said Oscar producers Bruce Cohen and Don Mischer.

Hathaway, after accepting the role, recently added another unusual touch to February's ceremonies. She visited a New York City public school's Annual Winter Concert to give the school's choir a surprise invitation: to perform at the Academy Awards the upcoming February. Franco, although he has released no specific plans, is enthusiastic about his role in the event.

"I'm front and center, but... I feel confident," said Franco.

Raised by the power of Will (and Jada)

Jaden and Willow Smith follow in their parents' successful footsteps

By Julie Parisi & Lisa Williams

Oracle Staff Writers

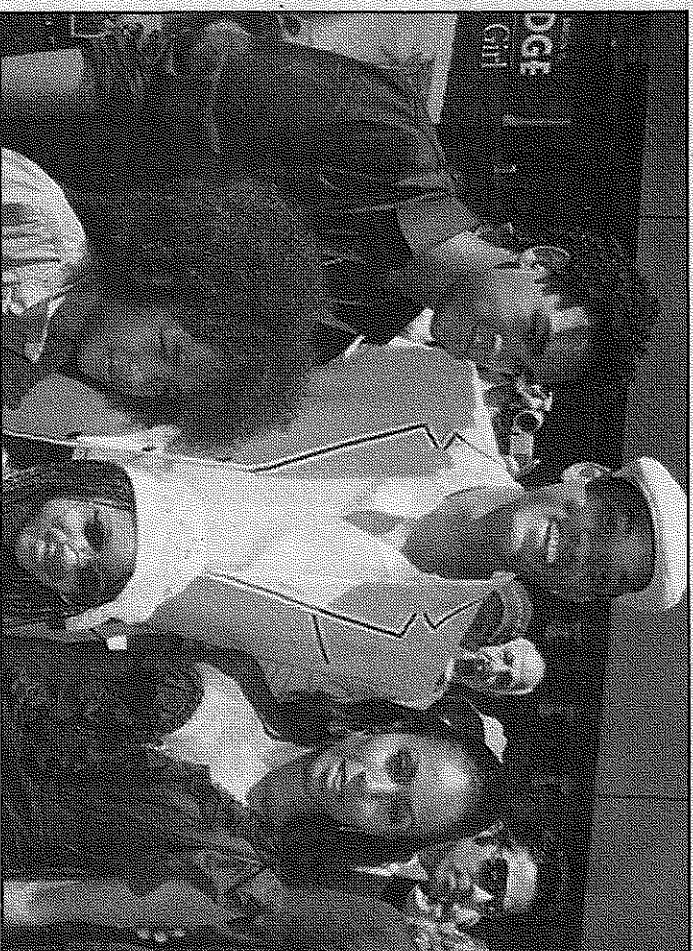
The four members of the Smith family have a lot in common: genetics, prominence, and, of course, their names.

Jada, Jaden, Willow, and Will have been taking the world by storm as a foursome in the past year. Will and Jada have had recent successes in the box office themselves, but 2010 was really all about their children.

Will got each child started on their career in show biz by taking them under his wing and giving them an acting opportunity on the big screen. In 2006's "The Pursuit of Happyness" Jaden starred alongside his father as a father-and-son duo. A year later, "I Am Legend" was released, which featured (though briefly) Willow as Will's character's daughter.

Flash forward to 2010: the Smith kids showed the world they didn't need Daddy's help to be successful in both acting and singing.

Twelve-year-old Jaden scored the leading role in "The Karate Kid," a remake of the very popular 1984 film. In addition, he was featured as a rapper in Justin Bieber's song, "Never Say Never," which was made to accompany the movie. "The Karate Kid" was



People Magazine

Will Smith is pictured with his family which includes his wife, Jada Pinkett Smith, their children, Jaden and Willow Smith, and his son from a previous marriage, Willard "Trey" Smith. number one at the box office in its opening weekend, and has grossed over \$358 million dollars worldwide. Not to be outdone, nine-year-old Willow

Film brings passion and thrill

By Tiffany Clark

Entertainment Editor

After viewing commercials for a ballet-themed psychological thriller starring Natalie Portman and Mila Kunis, I was eager to see "Black Swan" — but I didn't quite realize what I was about to experience.

"Black Swan" starts by depicting Portman as Nina, an endearing and innocent ballerina in a New York City ballet company whose life is consumed by dance. The company's artistic director, Thomas (Vincent Cassel), is opening a new production of the play "Swan Lake" which means forcing current Swan Queen, Beth Macintyre (Winona Ryder) into an unsought retirement resulting in her demise.

"Swan Lake" is a ballet about a girl who is turned into a swan, the White Swan. Only her true love can break the spell that has caused this to happen but her malevolent twin, the Black Swan, seduces her true

love and steals him away. After losing all hope, the White Swan kills herself.

The Swan Queen requires someone who can dance the part of the angelic White Swan as well as that of the dark, enticing Black Swan and Nina's determination wins her the part. Unfortunately, Nina's strive for perfection causes an already troubled girl to spin out of control.

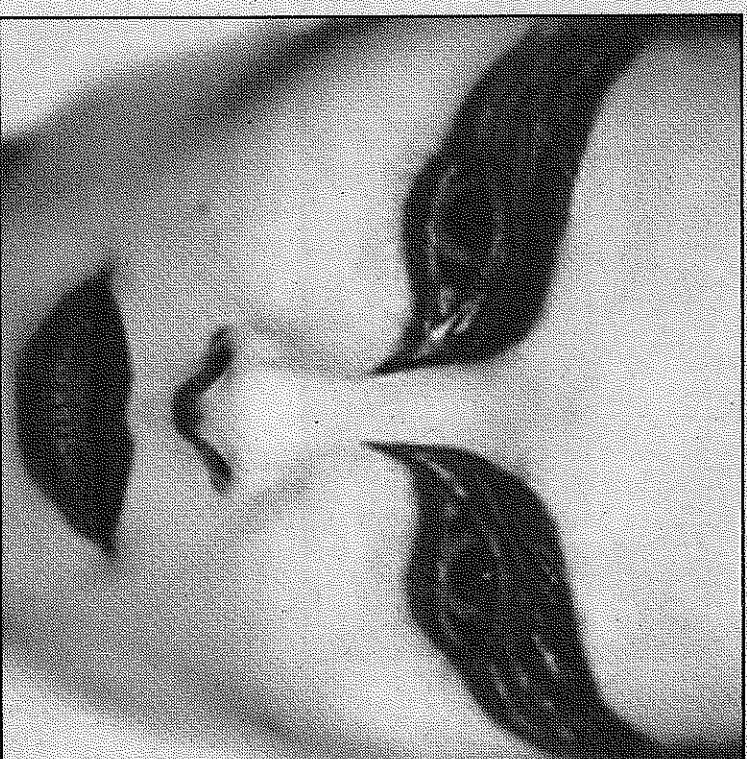
Nina discovers competition in Lily (Kunis) as she has the natural ability to portray the Black Swan, a quality which Nina lacks. And although Nina believes that Lily is trying to steal her part in the ballet, whether or not a rivalry actually exists between the two is debatable as much of the film is Nina's paranoia due to stress from her lead role and need for perfection. Despite what Nina thinks about Lily, they form an unusual friendship as Lily and Nina begins exploring a darker side

of herself, the black swan inside.

Throughout the movie, I was going back and forth between staring at the screen, completely entranced, to covering my eyes, completely terrified and disgusted. The movie is passionate, but graphic and therefore not made for the squeamish. Of course, don't think that means that I didn't love it.

The plot is crazy, intense, and at times somewhat confusing. Portman commands the screen with impeccable acting. In fact, the entire cast is fantastic which probably takes a part in why it's a prime choice for an Oscar nomination. It's an amazing film and definitely worth seeing.

Director Darren Aronofsky is known for creating films that are beautifully disturbing while walking a thin line between madness and genius which is a perfect way to describe "Black Swan" in its entirety.



Hollywood News

Natalie Portman is made up to portray the Black Swan aspect of her role not only as the devious character in "Swan Lake" but also to show her transformation into the darker side of her personality throughout the film.

Hit MTV show fist pumps into Season Three

Cast heads back home to 'Jersey Shore' with more drama than before

By Karista Giordano

Forum Editor

Drama, Drama, Drama. Welcome to the "Jersey Shore."

By the third season of "Jersey Shore" on MTV, nothing has changed. It is still a bunch of young Italians who get on each other's nerves.

I personally don't see anything wrong with it. As most of you know, Angelina left last season in Miami and did not return for the third season back at the shore, instead a Snooki look-alike came into the house as the bravest rookie known.

When they left their audience hanging back in Miami there was a lot of tension between the girls: JWOWW, Sammi and Snooki. It was Snooki and JWOWW against Sammi; two against one. Coming back to this shore the drama between them didn't disappear, it just got worse.

Snooki's new look alike, Deena, has caused everything in the house to come to an uproar. Of course though I can't forget Sammi had to start the drama right off by choosing a room with three beds for her and Ronnie messing up the whole sleeping situation. I don't understand why you would choose a room with three beds when you and your boyfriend normally sleep in one.

Sammi made it clear in the beginning when she met Deena that she wanted nothing to do with all four feet of her. When you are drunk on the first night of the shore to the point where you don't know you are taking you bikini bottom off in front of Mike (The Situation) I would want nothing to do with you either.

Deena made it clear that she was ready to party and be just like Snooki by hooking up with the three guys, Mike, Pauly D and Vinny, in the house. I think we can all agree

that one Snooki is enough we don't need two of them at the shore. Deena made this clear in the hot tub that she wanted to hook up with Vinny when she was all over him. What I don't get is how Snooki can be mad at Vinny and not Deena when it was all Deena on Vinny. I mean come on Snooki, open your eyes and notice that this girl is betraying you.

I didn't know that simply laughing at someone gave them the right to call you horrible words. Well according to the new rookie she can be super brave and call Sammi whatever she feels like. That is another mistake for you Deena, because now you have Ronnie up in your face. One thing you don't want is Ronnie on your bad side.

This incredible first episode to the third season left you hanging with the "I can kick anybody's butt that I feel like" attitude from JWOWW literally in a fist fight with Sammi. It couldn't get any better than that.



Show Biz '09

This year the cast of "Jersey Shore" goes back to the their original house at Seaside Heights. With the addition of a new roommate, drama is already brewing in season three of MTV's hit series.

'Bridalplasty' takes reality TV to new heights

By Peter Simonsen

Senior Staff Writer

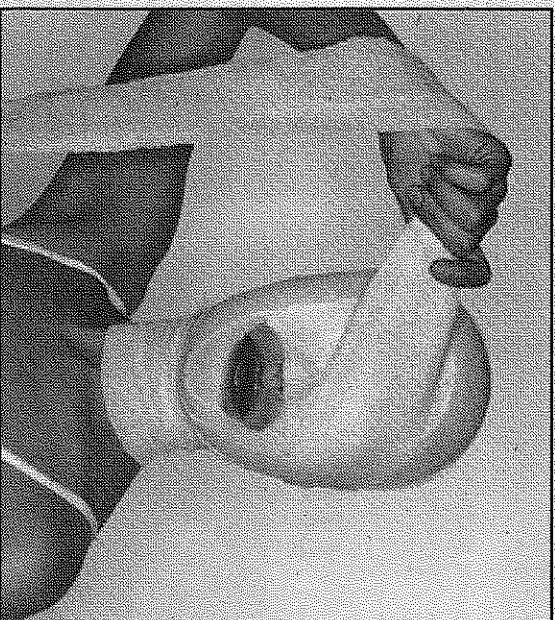
In the past, if television viewers wanted to catch a glimpse of the worst possible thing humanity can do to itself, a History Channel special on World War II would have been appropriate.

But now we've adopted more sophisticated methods of screening exactly how appalling the human race can be. The latest manifestation of this trend is the E! show "Bridalplasty," which premiered last December.

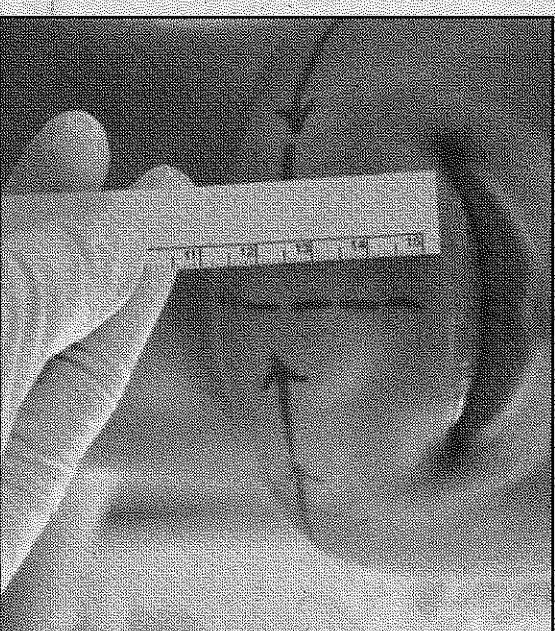
The premise is basically "Extreme Makeover" meets "The Apprentice." Twelve brides-to-be compete in weekly challenges; the catch is that the winners receive a cosmetic surgical procedure of their choice. In the first episode, we meet the 12 contestants who are all engaged and desire to look perfect for their wedding day. They are all subjected to a full body mirror and were scrutinized by surgeons who indicated all of their flaws, and recommended a list of procedures. After a series of challenges, the winner will receive all of the surgeries on her list and be revealed to her husband on their wedding day.

The first challenge was a rather simple puzzle of refrigerator magnets that had to be assembled, and the last two brides to finish would be sent home (on a side note, all the contestants were terrible at the puzzle). The ten "winners" were given syringes and frisk off to an "Injectables Party" where they were pumped full of Botox. At this point, I must tell any readers who have not heard of this show, I am not kidding.

You might be thinking that anyone willing to be on this show would be your typical narcissistic attention monger (that I'm sorry to say have become so common place). You would be wrong. The women on this show achieve a level of selfishness that has yet to be named by human science. First we have Alexandra, a former contestant on "The Biggest



To Kill Life



Random Air Food

A new E! Television show, "Bridalplasty," has blurred the line between what is right and what is wrong. Contestants on the show go through challenges to win prizes. Their prize however, isn't money; it's plastic surgeries recommended by doctors. Loser" who once threatened to cut another contestant with a knife. Another star, Janessa, decided to pawn her fiancé's engagement ring without telling him. While plastic surgery is not without its critics, I will say that the greater sin this show has committed is revealing that people like this even exist. These women give shows about brides competing for surgery a bad name.

Now, all the typical criticisms of reality shows have been done before. The idea of pointing cameras a people who simply want attention; the concept that we a culture idolize beauty and artificially alter ourselves to obtain a hollow existence; the fear that we are becoming more shallow people because

of these kinds of shows; these have all been discussed in great detail.

What is truly terrifying is the fact that only the most ludicrous of ideas, whether they're TV shows or marketing gimmicks, get any attention in the current media. "Bridalplasty" is the television equivalent of the KFC Double Down sandwich, in that both are attempting to draw in business by being the most ridiculous thing imaginable. The news will only cover and draw attention to the products or shows that are pushing the limits, whether it's a sandwich using chicken meat for a bun or a show about the worst people in society pushing the limits of human decency.

'Fockers' needed to stop when they met the parents

By Sara Blaylock

Managing Editor

The Focker family is back but they should have stayed.

From "Meet the Parents" and "Meet the Fockers" to "Little Fockers", the continuous tongue-in-cheek titles attracted crowds expecting to get the same humor that the propaganda promised. But sadly, the best parts of the three movies have already been seen in trailers—a typical Hollywood money-sucking trick.

While the movie wasn't as bad as the comments and rating were, I left the theater with the same feeling—I'm not really a fan of the Focker movies.

At the beginning of the movie, the audience was lead to believe that this film might actually be about the kids. Well, that didn't last for long. It was the same story as the last two movies: the son-in-law trying to prove himself.

After ten strenuous years, Greg Focker (Ben Stiller) is finally gaining favor with his crazy father-in-law, Jack Byrnes (Robert DeNiro). After a few witty scenarios and a life-threatening heart attack scare, Jack appoints Greg as the next "Godfather." This is a huge

turn-around from the last two movies, and now Greg has a huge responsibility.

It wasn't long before Greg "messes up" in Jack's eyes and all the drama breaks out when everyone is together at the kids' birthday party. Here, the classic chaos of the first two movies is finally shown.

Although this movie was funny at some points and was a different story, it was by far the worst of the Focker trio.

There was a new director for the third movie, which could explain its disappointment for many. The movie was over-edited with less mistakes and less camera movements, which could have taken away from the collective audience laughs.

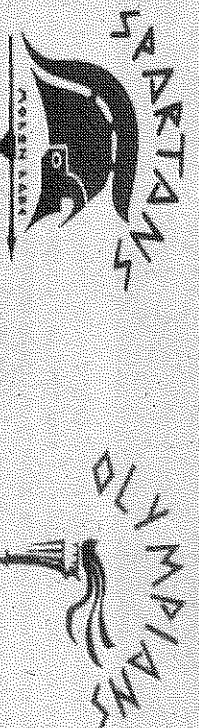
The first two witty movies hosted the expected craziness of meeting the in-laws and dealing with that stress in a very comical, revealing way. The third was a failed attempt to picture the family a few years down the road with kids.

It was predictable that in the end Greg and Jack become BFFs again and everything works out fine. Even though I felt like this movie was a waste of my time, it was nice to see that Ben Stiller still has his groove and that Robert DeNiro isn't too old to play crazy,



My ABC Shows

"Little Fockers" was a good effort at a movie involving Greg Fockers children and how his life is going, but all in all it was poorly executed. The movie had its moments, however, it seemed to drag on and didn't have a well developed plot line.



Family Restaurants

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Jeremy Davis
The Patriot District Champion Spartan Cheerleaders cheer at a home football game during their fall season. Now, they are no longer able to cheer in the winter due to the budget cuts.

Say 'goodbye' to Winter Cheer

By Luis Lester
Sports Editor

Walking into the Main Gym on a winter night will not as rowdy as previous years; not because fewer fans are in the stands or the teams aren't playing as hard, but because of the absence of our cheerleaders.

The new budget cuts are responsible for the dismissal of cheerleading during the winter season. Fairfax County decided that reducing cheerleading to a one-season sport would be less detrimental than getting rid of freshman sports teams, late buses, or Indoor Track & Field.

What the county might not have accounted for was how cutting the cheerleading season short will affect the team next season.

"Even though our competition season is over, the winter season helps us with our skill and maintain our endurance. We'll see how it goes," said Varsity cheerleading coach and Leadership teacher Betsy Fawcett.

The cheers seen at sporting events are used as a sort of trial and error for the team. They are used to see which cheers capture the crowd and should be incorporated in their competition routine.

Not having cheerleading will also have a direct effect on the basketball players. Always having that little extra push or incentive can keep a player going when they start get-

ting tired in the later part of the game.

"It's going to be different," said senior basketball player Lawrence Rouse. "I could always hear them in the back of my mind and they kept the crowd into it. If the crowd's into the game it makes it a lot more fun to play."

Not only do players and fans enjoy the cheerleaders and their spirit, the cheerleaders themselves enjoy the change from pace.

During the fall season, they stay outside in the freezing cold with their backs to the football field; in the winter season, however, the squad gets to come inside and stand front and center at all the basketball games.

"It's definitely a change because we're more in the action. Rather than standing on the sidelines facing the crowd we're standing directly under the basket," said senior cheerleading captain Erika Nielson. "This let's us see more on what's going on."

So all in all, it's pretty safe to say that no one is in favor of getting rid of cheerleading this winter season. Instead of cheering on the court this season, the cheerleaders will be leading the rest of our crowd in cheers from the stands. While this isn't exactly the same, the Spartan fans will have to make do.

"It's kind of a bummer because they kept the crowd loud and into the game," said senior Carlinn Arneson, "but our crowds are awesome no matter what."

SYC basketball: an outlet for many students

By Nora Osei

Viewpoint Editor

The guy dribbles the ball, shoots, and scores the three-pointer. And the crowd goes crazy... just kidding the five exhausted parents slowly clap their hands.

That's pretty much the deal with SYC basketball games. It starts when the winter sports season do in the month of December every year lasting in till about mid February.

"Practice is only once a week, and games are only once a week, so it doesn't take up a lot of your time," said senior Cody Cashman, who is playing SYC this winter.

A numerous amount of boys and girls from WS who may find the school's basketball teams a little too intense or who want to play a sport just for the enjoyment, may try and play club.

"I used to swim but I stopped, and now to occupy my time I thought I would play basketball this season with [my friend] Summer just for fun," said senior Celine Donohue.

Many of the guys who play club during the winter have been doing it since they were much younger and even find it a tradition to do it every year. A lot of them may not be good enough to play on their high school team but they still love to go out there and just have fun.

"I played high school basketball last year, but I wanted to play SYC this year so I could focus on baseball," said junior Zach Jarrett. "All my friends play SYC and it's not that competitive, so it's fun."



Courtesy of Trevor Snook
Senior Trevor Snook goes up for a layup against fellow senior Lincoln Chasteen during an SYC basketball game.

Some people think since the stands are never filled with as much people as at high school games, there is no point in participating club.

That maybe some people's opinion but to other people like former and current seniors Lee Gleason and Luis Lester may

'Do it right or do it again'

By Sara Blaylock

Managing Editor

With new rules and new focuses, Weight Training class has taken a fresh and healthy approach to combat of the common elective stereotype—it's no easy A.

Previously known as Weight Training, the course adapted a better fit name: Personal Fitness. The class is typically filled with a mass of jocks, mostly males in need of an extra elective class to fill their schedule.

In the past, students who took this class usually expected an 'A' for the whole year because working out and lifting were the only activities, plus the grade was more dependent on attendance. This year however, Varsity football coach and Physical Education and Personal Fitness teacher, Brendan Campbell is bringing in important factors and lessons of fitness to students.

"He is much more involved than the previous teachers," said senior Tyler Basse. Campbell has made the foundation of the course about health for oneself and doing their best rather than just for attendance. His main goal and purpose of the class is to teach students how to develop their own personal fitness program.

"I've learned to do more workouts than I'd ever imagine," said Basse.

At the beginning of the school year, each student made a promise and signed a contract to work their hardest or switch to another elective class. Even though the class might be a challenge everyday, it does pay off.

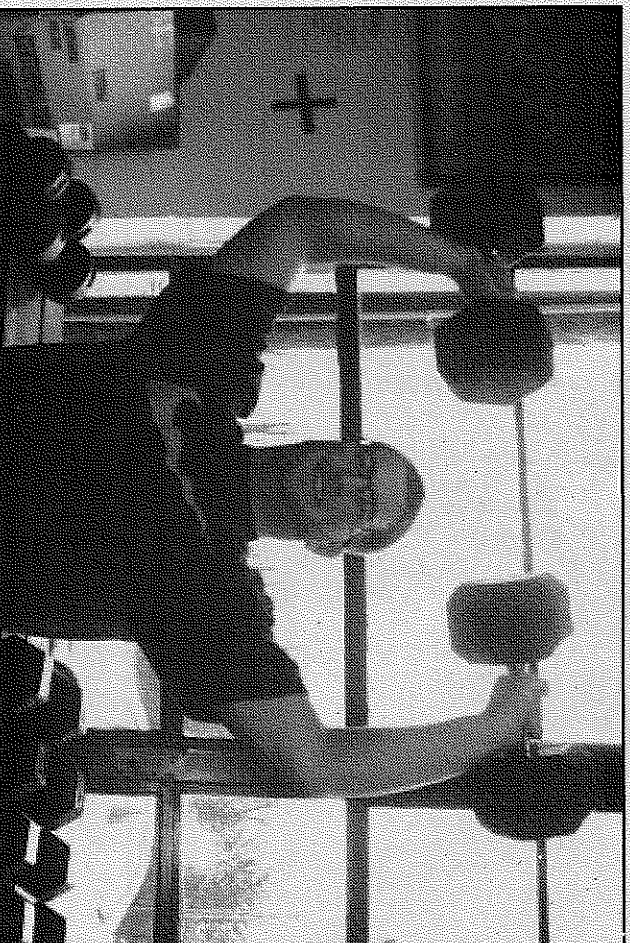
"The skills and habits that students learn will impact all aspects of their health," said Campbell.

Routine exercise has been proven to help with grades, sleep, confidence, energy, and psychological issues.

"[It] helps [a student] cope with stress," said Campbell. "The plus side of consistent and focused exercise is irrefutable."

Campbell is a good fit to teach this class because he is passionate about health and knows a lot about the human body and how to really get a good cardio workout. He attended West Virginia University and received a Bachelors of Science in Health and Physical Education. He is also certified in Crossfit Level 1 and Crossfit Football.

"The things these students do in class are not easy," said Campbell. "The students are challenged physically, mentally and especially emotionally."



Sara Blaylock
Senior Joe Synchrona pumps iron in the weight room for his Personal Fitness class. Varsity football coach Brendan Campbell has expanded this course to encourage development of healthy habits and teach students rather than just let them lift weights.

While getting a better grip on life and ensuring health, it is still possible to have fun in this class. There is positive and

encouraging energy with loud music adding to an enthusiastic atmosphere. The class is also well-structured and well organized which makes it easier for students to follow and understand. "That Spartan commitment and enthusiasm gets me out of bed every morning with a smile on my face and a spring in my step," said Campbell.

"Practice is only once a week, and games are only once a week, so it doesn't take up a lot of your time."

—Cody Cashman,
Senior

think different.

This season as part of their senior Capstone Project, they decided to help give back to their community by coaching their own U-10 basketball team named, The Others. Unfortunately, Lester and Gleason got the last pick of the draft for their team, but that doesn't stop them from being negative. They feel a lot of the game is about the coaching and it is not as easy as it may look.

"Part of what we have to do is create practice plans, call the parents to let them know that their child has made the team and how excited we are to coach them, create snack plans, and much more," said Lester.

Both of these men thought coaching club this season would be pleasurable since they both knew how it feels to play on a club team when they were little. Those years of club never were forgotten but became amusing memories they will keep for a long time.

"I played last year and I made it rain, and this year I just want to continue my legacy," said Gleason.

Baseball team starts working toward repeat

By Kyle Rushton

Oracle Staff Writer

The state champion Varsity baseball team is at it again.

After a highly successful season last year, the players are hard at work preparing for the upcoming season. With just over two months left until the tryouts, they have been meeting three times a week for off-season workouts in order to prepare for the new season ahead of them.

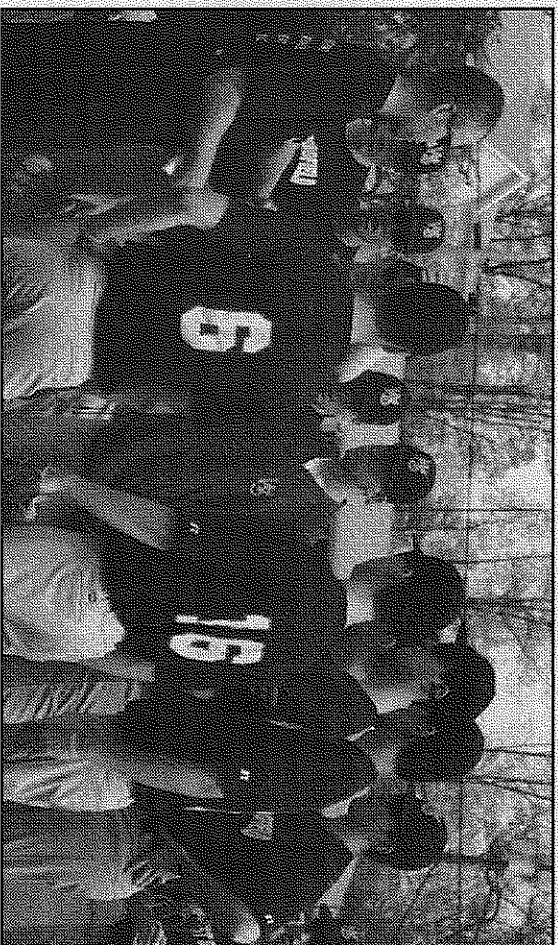
The team lifts weights every Monday and Wednesday, and then finishes the week off with a run on Fridays.

"We're more targeted this year, so Coach [John] James has us working hard," said sophomore Taylor Boyd.

Not only are the boys improving physically, but mentally as well. Despite the loss of six seniors last year, two of which made First Team All-State, the team is still standing strong.

"We're going to try hard to fill those spots," said senior David Pyon.

With the help and guidance of the upperclassmen, the younger players of last year's team are really stepping up to help complete



Alina Colabella
Baseball coach John James is starting to prepare the baseball team for their upcoming season by putting them through an off-season strength and conditioning program.

the roster this year.

"The underclassmen are going to work out a lot," said Pyon. "They'll have to contribute even more than last year."

As freshmen on last year's Varsity team, year, but also for years to come.

"It was pretty special to see Bobby and Charlie and be able to play with them," said Boyd. "My goal is to make it to States all four years."

The team agrees that their goal for this season is to make it through Districts, Regionals, and States, and hopefully play their hands on the first place trophy once more. They believe it is important to work hard off the field and train by themselves, not just at practice.

Coach James has had a significant influence on the success of the team over the years. He attends the off-season workouts and is at the team's side to support them through their intense training.

"We work to improve every day and we compete for the championships," said James. James has a positive attitude which helps encourage the boys and has led them to the success they have experienced in past years. James is proud of his team despite the score, especially when he knows they have done the best they can.

"We can't worry about how good we'll be," said James, "we can only control the effort we put forth."

Bowl system still in question

By Lauren Giery & Lisa Williams

Oracle Staff Writers

Whether the bowl games should continue, or be replaced by playoff games, has been a hot topic for college football fans since bowl games heightened in popularity during the '50s.

The NCAA Division I football uses the BCS system to determine the National Champion. The system is unique in comparison to other college sports. Instead of having all teams compete in a playoff tournament, they assigned a bowl game. Which bowl game each team goes to is decided by a system of polls answered by experts and formulas that determine the top two teams in the nation.

"I'd rather watch bowl games than [wait through] playoffs," said junior Veronica Aguilar. "All the playoff games would take too long."

From the first Rose Bowl game in 1930 to the 35 games schedule for 2010, people have taken opposing stances on the Bowl Game vs. Playoff controversy. Bowl games are more popular among coaching staffs in the NCAA, while many fans fight for playoffs. Fans would prefer that teams play a variety of other teams for the National Champion title, whereas coaches would prefer the opportunity to prepare to face off against just one team rather than generically planning for a larger quantity of games.

"Playoffs would be way better, because there would be

more games [to watch]," said junior Sam Halle.

Bowl games sometimes take the excitement, and the possibility of a big upset, away from a team's post-season experience. The excitement of a tournament is exemplified every March, when madness breaks out all across America for the NCAA Men's Division I Basketball Championship, dubbed March Madness.

For both football and basketball, it takes a month to determine the National Champion team. The difference is that basketball teams take part in a month's worth of games leading up to the National Championship. College football is different because bowl games do not feature a process of elimination leading up to the National Championship; instead, the two teams featured in this game are chosen based on regular season play, not a knock-out tournament.

While 68 other teams get to play in bowl games, they have no chance of advancing past that bowl. This differs from what players who advance to the National Football League will see in post-season play, as they also use a knock-out tournament to decide the winner of the championship.

However, it's pretty apparent that no matter how the champion is decided—through bowl games or a playoff tournament—college football fans will be rooting for their favorite teams regardless.

"All of the teams are doing well this season," said junior Michael Kenefick. "I hope it's going to be a good one."

Former WS kickers face off Bitancourt and Czajkowski go toe to toe

By Austin Kaminski

Sports Editor

Every bowl season, there are a few compelling matchups that draw people's interest for one reason or another. Generally, they involve two very talented teams that should be a close game.

Sometimes the biggest story is not the game itself, but the stories within the game. This year's Champs Sports Bowl had one such story.

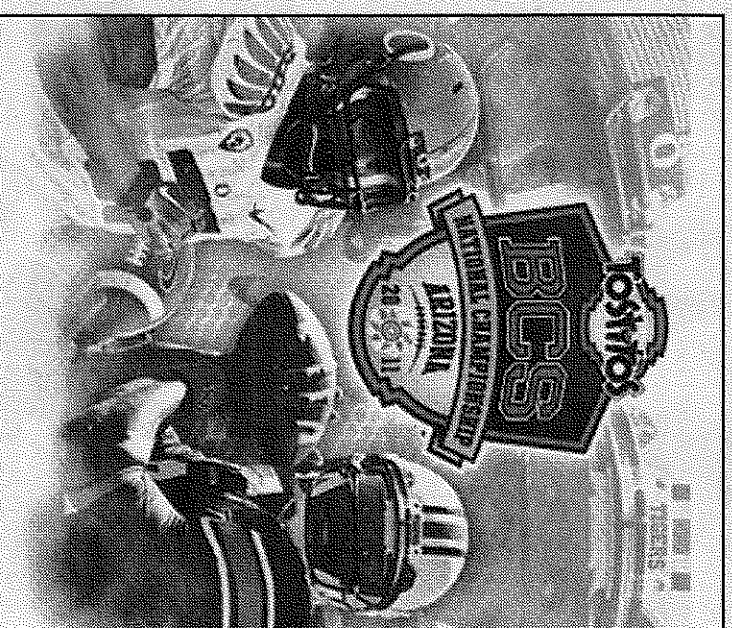
Two recent WS graduates, Josh Czajkowski (North Carolina State) and Tyler Bitancourt (West Virginia) played against each other, with NC State winning 23-7.

Both of them scored in the game; Bitancourt had an extra point in the losing effort, while Czajkowski added two extra points and three field goals, including a 45-yarder.

As former Spartans who play the same position, it is no surprise that the two are close friends.

"If [Bitancourt] ever has a problem or if anything isn't going well, he can always call or text me," said Czajkowski. "I'm one of his biggest fans and I'm very proud of what he's accomplished."

Aside from Czajkowski and Bitan-



Bowl Championship Series
The BCS system selected the Auburn Tigers and the Oregon Ducks to play each other in the Tostito's BCS National Championship game this year. If college football had playoffs for the title, perhaps the teams competing would be different.

court, WS has had many kickers move on to higher levels of play recently.

Graduate John McConnell is a kicker for Buffalo John McConnell is a kicker for Buffalo University, and current Pittsburgh Steelers punter Jeremy Kapinos also attended WS.

Czajkowski attributes this success to the coaching of former NFL punter and WS coach Bill Renner, as well as former kicking coach Paul Woodside, a former West Virginia kicker himself.

"We have some of the best training at our position that you could have," said Czajkowski.

But they couldn't have gotten their without helping each other out.

"I wouldn't be where I am today without [Czajkowski's] help," said Bitancourt. "He helped make me the kicker I am today, but more than that he showed me how to be a good friend and a teammate."

One of the best parts about playing in a bowl game is not the game itself, but the entire bowl experience. Not only do the teams get to stay in a five star hotel in sunny Florida in the middle of winter, but each team receives a complimentary gift bag filled with a gift card to Outback, a beach towel, and a customized pen to go along with a shopping spree to Best Buy.

"I'm one of [Bitancourt's] biggest fans and I'm very proud of what he's accomplished."

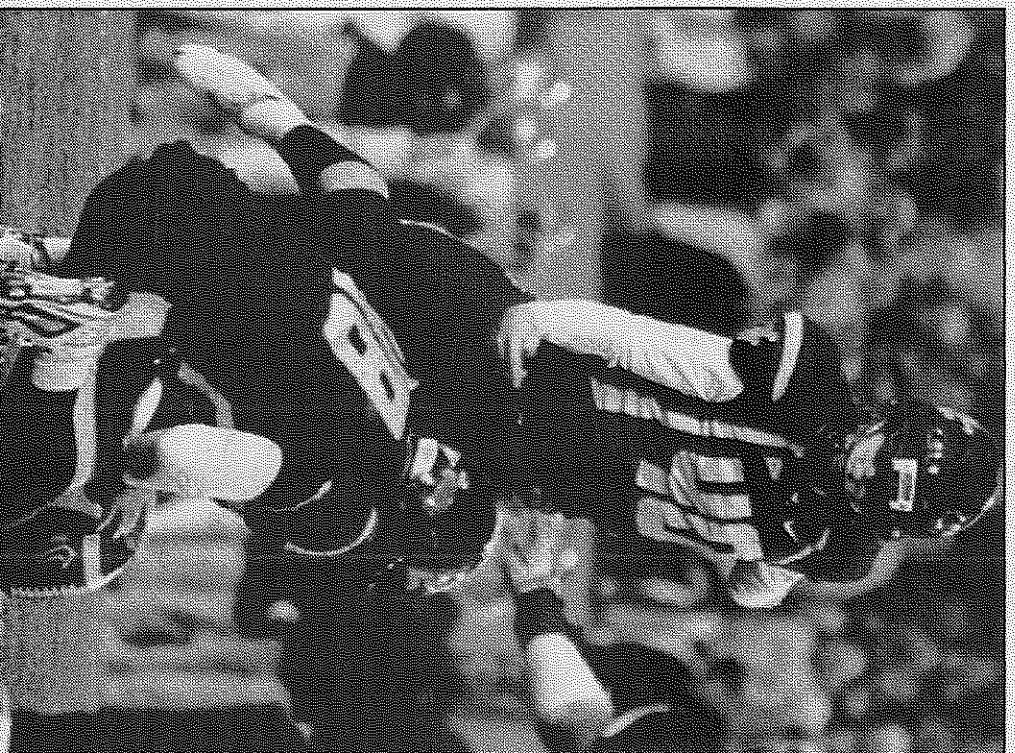
—Josh Czajkowski,
'07 WS graduate

"The bowl experience itself was awesome," said Bitancourt. "It's always nice to visit Florida, especially in winter."

Bitancourt has had instant success at WVU. He has been a starter since his freshman year, kicking two game winning field goals in two years and being named to the watch list for the Best Kicker in the country.

Czajkowski was also on the this list this year, and is hoping to continue his career at the next level after graduating from college.

"Of course I want to finish what I have started with kicking," said Czajkowski. "The NFL is a great shot for me as of now, I'm just crossing my fingers at this point and hoping for the best."



West Virginia Illustrated
Bitancourt didn't see the field much during the game, kicking just one extra point. His team failed to give him more opportunities, unlike Czajkowski's team, who presented him with five successful scoring opportunities.

