



Huntington-Bellehaven Patch

Christmas lights previously found at 1601 Collinwood road are temporarily discontinued.

**Zach Day**  
Reporter

Every year there is a particular house on Collingwood Road that is lit up with thousands of twinkling Christmas Lights, which for much of the community, help kickoff the Holiday season. Over the many years a Christmas tradition of parking across the street with hot coco on hand and watching the twinkling lights pulse along with the radio has become popular among families in the neighborhood.

More often than not, cars can be seen lining up along the side of the road with people who just want a chance to see the fabulous light show. In addition to the lights, the man behind the scenes, Bill Vaughan, father of Anna Vaughan, a senior at West Potomac, has even added his own radio station, which plays Christmas music that is synchronized with different light patterns and sequences.

Andrew Maloney, a freshman at West Potomac, says that, "My family always drives by there whenever we come down the parkway, and I always convince my parents for one more song, after each song." Another student at West Potomac, freshman Kylie

McPherson says that, "We (the McPherson family), love the lights, and enjoy seeing them every year." Gabby Bomberg, a sophomore at West Potomac states that, "My family and I have memories from driving past the spectacular light display." Bomberg adds that, "the display was something magical, something that not only children could enjoy, but adults as well."

This year though, for the first time in the twenty-one year history of the light show, the lights on Collingwood Road will not go up. The freshman, McPherson states that, "I'm really mad that the lights are not going up, because I like seeing what they do every year." The freshman Maloney also believes that, "it will definitely seem weird not having them up as usual." Maloney, adds to that statement by saying, "I don't think it will be big, but I think it will have some effect on the kickoff of the Holiday Season." Adding on to this, Bomberg feels that, "The Collingwood home is truly extraordinary, and my family and I are disappointed that that the festival of lights will not continue this year." [continued on page 3]

## Bye, Bye Twinkies

**Connor Phillips**  
Sports editor

On November 21, Hostess Brands, the company famous for making Twinkies and Ho-Ho's, announced that it was being forced to shut down all operations. The company had been in business since 1930, over 72 years.

The Bakery, Confectionary, Tobacco and Grain Millers Union began a strike on November 9th, 2012. With many of the company's 18,500 employees being members of this union, Hostess took a huge hit. According to the Hostess press release, the company lacked the funds to be able to survive such a large labor action. The two sides were not able to reach an agreement in mediation, and the company was forced to shut down.

This is not the first time Hostess Brands

has had financial problems. In 2004, the company filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, meaning that the company was still operating, but was controlled by the debtors.

Hostess Brands' included many well-known bakery brands, such as Blue Ribbon, Drake's, Hostess, and Wonder Bread. The shutdown will cause the loss of 18,500 jobs in an already struggling economy, as well as the closure of the company's 33 bakeries, 565 distribution centers, and 527 bakery outlet stores.



www.accessnorthga.com

## Mr. Olivo wants to be a millionare

**Leila Fleischman**  
Reporter

On Wednesday, November fourteenth, West Potomac's very own leadership, history and government teacher, Mr. Olivo, was on the popular show, Who Wants To Be A Millionaire. He shares his story with students and staff at West Potomac.

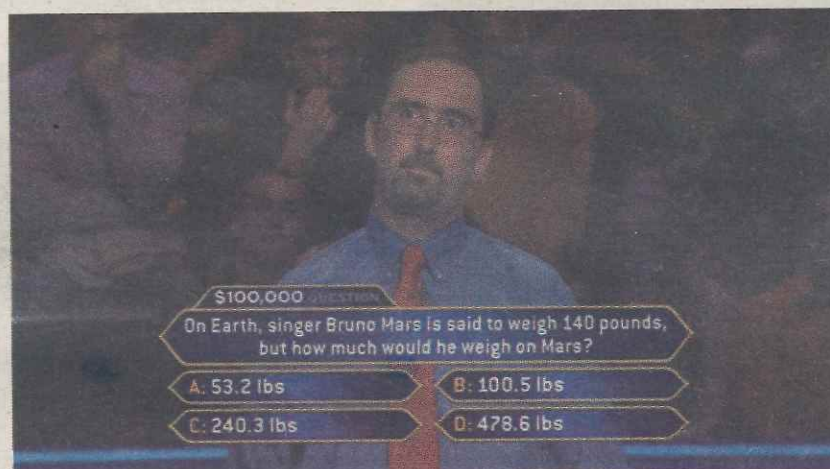
Olivo says, "I've watched the show for years and my brother always thought I'd be great, so I've kept up on when auditions were. I took a multiple choice test of 30 questions in New York City in July. I passed and had an interview with a producer. Then they asked to film and interview me. I got called in September and was asked to be on the show. I thought it'd be fun, make a great story and the potential money just made it cool. Also, I always thought it would be great to show students that knowing things could be profitable. I'm glad I was proved right."

Mr. Olivo did very well during the show. He used no lifelines until question number five, and he got the answer right and had a total of \$31,100. He didn't use another lifeline until question number nine, where he 'jumped the question,' meaning his record says he gets the answer right, but does not receive the prize money for the question, so he had a total of \$58,100. He answered question number ten correctly, and moved onto round two with \$68,100.

However, for the \$100,00 question during the second round, he decided to use his last 'jump the question' lifeline. He still had a total of \$68,100. Then came the \$250,00 question. Out of lifelines and unsure of the answer, Sal decided to not take a guess and walk away with his entire accumulated Millionaire Bank, which had risen to \$68,100. If he had guessed incorrectly on the \$250,000 question, he would have fallen back to \$25,000 in winnings.

Olivo reflects, "A million things were going through my mind. Most of all, two things: Have fun and don't make a fool of myself. Looking back, only a few questions were difficult, but when you are up there under the lights and risking money, every question is difficult."

Olivo has one last thing to say, "It was incredibly fun to watch the show surrounded by West Potomac students and staff. Everyone has been incredibly supportive and I appreciate it very much."



Mr. Olivo, puzzled over his one hundred thousand dollar question, how much Bruno Mars would weigh on Mars.

**Holiday Extravaganza: A festival of one acts-**  
December 14 at 7:00pm and December 15 at 2:00pm

**Organization and Study Skills Workshop-**  
December 17, 2:30-4:30 in cafeteria, sign on [www.fcps.edu](http://www.fcps.edu)

**West Potomac choir, community singers and orchestra performance-**  
December 19 at 7:00pm \$10 admittance

**West Potomac Christmas Tree and Wreath Sale-**  
Carl Sandburg weekdays from 5-8, Saturdays 9-5, Sundays noon-5

**Winter Break Begins-**  
December 21 at 2:05



# EDITORIALS

## Thom Ingram, View From Above

When I was in high school the things I worried about were the same things I worry about now, years and lifetimes later, having passed through careers and communities and cities. The things I worried about then were how to get through this stage of life and onto something better. And now, I worry about how to help students get through to their better. I see myself in many of you, your awkwardness, your false bravado, your unwillingness to be loud and wrong or your complete abandonment of social constructs you have not yet learned. Some of you won't talk out of fear, and some won't stop talking out of fear. And I worry about how to help you make it through.

Adults are always yelling. Even when their voices are not raised the tone of much of the conversation I hear in our workrooms and hallways and classrooms is exasperation, teachers and parents and administrators frustrated with the world. I offer two reasons why this might be the case. First, adults are set off by the same things that set teenagers off. You've all been there, sitting in a class with a boring, mono-

tone teacher who does not seem to care much for the content and even less for the audience. Teachers get frustrated by the same thing, students who sit bored in class giving the same monotone answers and not caring much for the content and even less for their own learning.

The second spark that lights a teacher's frustration is that we face the same pressures many of you do. In most situations we know what we need to do, and we want to do the right thing, but we have authority figures (the administration, the county, the state, your parents, or you) telling us to do something different. We get confused by mixed signals and struggle to hold true to what we believe would be our best move.

I'll tell you a dirty little secret, which means, in a high school, it may not be a secret at all. If you took two rooms and filled one with students and one with teachers and you just both talk the conversations would be very much the same. Each room has its brainiacs, its beautiful people, its clowns, its outcasts, its quiet mouses in the corner and

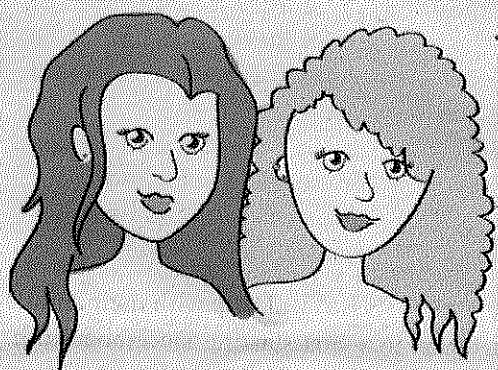
each room complains on and on about how things could and should be better.

Let me offer this. Everything going on around you, at school and at home and in between, is an imperfect dance. Whether it be the teacher who appears to know it all, the administrator who seems impervious in their seat of authority, the popular kid whose life seems ideal, the parent who will not listen or the student who gets all As on all the tests, none of us know what we are doing. We're making it up as we go along. We are struggling to find our place in this space and time and hoping, soon, we can build something better. We know little and hide that well. And here is the bad news. There is no someplace better, nor something better. No promised land awaits just beyond the next year or next assignment or next issue. The secret to success is not in college nor the workplace, nor adult life, but here and now.

Around you, right now, there are people who are angry and depressed and others who are excited and overjoyed. If you look at those people around you, the frustrated are wishing

for some other place or time and happy are loving life now. Frustration has a place. The frustrated will be better tomorrow because they do not admire the status quo. And sometimes the happy are happy because they are oblivious to suffering and mediocrity. My challenge to you, here and now, is to embrace the best of both. Be angry long enough to fix something, and be overjoyed in the process of fixing. Do not be depressed at the state of the world and excited to change it.

Life now is not so different from when I was in high school. I still find myself moving down the hallway hoping to not drop something and not get trampled on. I still worry about how to make my next class exciting and interesting. I still get caught up, every now and again, in some great conversation with a student or teacher, which feels like the glorious core of education. I am still uneasy whenever I drift off toward some other place and other time, wishing I was somewhere or someone else. I am still overjoyed when I bring myself back and sit myself down in the imperfect glory of the here and now.



See you  
next year!

-Laura & Leigh

## Education Under Fire

Kamilia Moalem  
Guest Writer

It's 6:30 AM and most of us are hitting the snooze button on our alarms, grumbling to ourselves that we would do anything in our power to get five more minutes in bed. We crawl out, throw on the closest pants and jacket we can find, and groggily drag ourselves to school. Along the way, we may even complain about a math test, a history project, or the lack of sleep we've gotten this week. The truth is sometimes we are so caught up in our crazy lives that we forget to put things in perspective. We should not feel forced to go to school. We should feel privileged to go to school. Believe it or not, the right to education is something many people in the world yearn for, but are not given.

Recently, news was released of Malala Yousafzai, a fifteen year old Pakistani girl denied schooling under the country's law, because she is a female. She stood up to the Taliban, asking for a chance to get an education and nothing more. Not long after, they shot her in the head. Malala has survived and, to the Taliban's dismay, is now a symbol of their unrighteous behavior and complete disregard for universal rights. Unfortunately, I cannot even tell you that Pakistani girls are the only ones denied the right to education. The Baha'i faith, the second most widespread religion in the world is faced with this

oppression, as well. Baha'is in Iran are denied any rights to higher education.

What does this mean? It means that as we're excited to escape off to college, meet new people, and work towards our futures, they are sitting at home, fearing the government. It means that people are going to jail just for attempting to learn. They are pressured to abstain from reading, writing, studying, learning: all the things we take for granted every day. As Nelson Mandela stated, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." It may be difficult to remember when we're stressing over homework or a test, but we are working towards a bigger future, towards becoming a more influential part of society. Baha'is in Iran don't have the opportunity to do that.

So, what can we do about it? We can bring it to the attention of the media in the US. We can notify Senators, Congressman, Governors: anyone who will listen. We can spread on social networks and sign the open letter to the leaders of Iran on educationunderfire.com. Even more than that, we can look at ourselves every morning and realize how lucky we are to be free. Don't live life feeling sorry for yourself, because there are many that would do anything in their power to be in your position.

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For more information, contact Thom Ingram at [thewire@silvercommunications.com](mailto:thewire@silvercommunications.com)



## The scandalous survey

Leigh Orleans  
Editor-In-Chief

Many high school students have things they want to keep solely amongst their peers. Typically scandalous things, like if they have had unprotected sex or if they have used hard drugs, are things only to be shared with close, trustworthy friends. This past week, however, students were asked to share these personal details in a 203-question Fairfax County Youth Survey administered in their English classes.

Despite the anonymous nature of the survey, some students said they were still shocked and slightly uncomfortable answering these intrusive questions, especially when sitting so close to their classmates. Alternatively, Sophomore Sebastien Richard answered truthfully and willingly because, "It's anonymous so I see no problem with personal questions."

Unlike Richard, Senior Amanda Parker reported that she "didn't take it seriously," not because it was invasive, but "because it was two hundred questions which is excessive. If it were shorter, I may have taken it seriously but two hundred is just too many." She was not alone. Last year, only 87% of students reported to have answered survey questions truthfully.

While some students chose to dis-

regard the survey, others like senior Brian Smith took a different approach. "I took it seriously because I felt it was the right thing to do. If someone took the time to make a two hundred question survey then people should answer it and not take their work as a joke or waste their time."

The time taken to answer these questions does not go unnoticed. Junior and SGA President Mary Hill explained the importance of the survey. "It is the county's way of getting information about each school's needs and the needs of the county as a whole." She recognizes that, "Not all student's take it seriously but it is important that they do, otherwise we may not receive some of the help from the county that we need."

Results from last year's survey show that nearly 40% of high school seniors had reported the consumption of alcohol in the past month and 20% reporting the usage of marijuana. Almost 30% of students in grades 8-12 reported experiencing symptoms of depression with 15% having contemplated suicide. Hill reported that the WPHS student government will continue promoting awareness months to address last year's results for the county.

## Spreading holiday cheer

Laraib Ilyas  
Opinions Editor



Families find presents for their children for the holidays at UCM.

The temperature is below 32 degrees, holiday music is in the air, and kids throughout neighborhoods are making wish lists for Santa. For the less fortunate, however, that Santa is the United Community Ministries (UCM).

Every year during the holidays, UCM receives many toy donations from all around the community. Throughout December, they deliver them to low-income families who cannot afford to buy their children presents for the holidays.

According to ucmagency.org, "UCM assists low-income families and individuals living along the Route One Corridor of Fairfax County, Virginia, an impoverished area in an otherwise wealthy county." A handful of students at West Potomac receive assistance from UCM daily with a donation of food and other basic needs.

During the holiday season, they too are fortunate enough to receive a plethora of gifts. An anonymous West Potomac sophomore said, "It doesn't matter to me that my presents are not the latest video game system or the new iPhone, just a jacket or a ball cheers me up during Christmas. I am

grateful that UCM is a part of my life."

There are many volunteers from this school who go to UCM and help distribute presents to the families. The experience for senior, Emily Lorenza, is not only eye opening, but useful for her as well. "I get to speak Spanish with most of the families and that helps me improve my Spanish speaking skills. Volunteering during UCM's holiday drive is amazing in all aspects because I feel good about myself helping others and I get to brush up on my Spanish skills."

West Potomac's National Honor Society (NHS) will help with their annual Sox in a Box starting December 10th. NHS' sponsor, Ms. Allison Satterwhite, said the collection process "will last until January and we [club members] will be delivering these items to UCM and offering to help them with their organization of donations." Students can bring in various types of toys and presents that will be donated to the organization.

Many unfortunate children in this community have smiles on their faces during the holiday season due to the support of UCM and caring donors.

## \*\*\*\* Teachers

Josh Shelton  
Sports Editor

"Oh \*\*\*\*." Classes typically break out into a combined gasp or quiet giggles when teachers curse, depending on the vulgarity of the word and the maturity level of the students. Teachers cursing are not a rare occurrence in some classes at West Potomac.

When a teacher uses profanity during class, it becomes the topic of the day or a trending topic on twitter.

Teachers are viewed to be continuous workers, constant graders, and scheming individuals that pride themselves in assigning homework.

This may come as a shock to the students at West Potomac, but teachers are human beings that have social

lives outside of school. "A teacher and a student are more in common than you think," said sophomore Shreyak Khanal.

They direct most of their derogatory language at the technology that does not ever seem to work when they want it to, rarely directing it at a student.

If teachers are criticized for their use of colloquial language, then a vast majority of West Potomac students should have their mouths washed with soap.

When asked about whether cursing was a bigger problem between students or teachers during school hours, Khanal said, "Definitely students, we are

the ones you hear in the hallways, in lunch and in class. A teacher might cuss once out of every 100 student cusses."

Some students feel the opposite about how far the teacher's vocabulary can stretch during the school day. They see teachers as people that lead by the actions they take.

"Teachers are supposed to set a good example," commented sophomore Lizzie Wood.

"You can't tell a kid not to cuss and then you cuss as an adult."

Teachers have a different view point of the whole situation.

When asked about whether students cussing or teachers cussing was a bigger problem an Anonymous person had this to say, "Students direct their cursing at other human beings rather than using it to emphasize an idea."

Other students are indifferent to the whether or not a teacher curses during class. "I guess they probably shouldn't but I don't personally see a problem with it," said junior Robbie Snow. "Anything to keep my attention is fine with me."

There are still many other ways teachers and students alike can express themselves, so use of such profanity should be on a short \*\*\*\*ing leash.

**"A teacher and a student are more in common than you think"**

-Shreyak Khanal

### [continuation of Holiday lights, not so bright]

According to the Fort Hunt Patch, the process to set up the lights takes, "around 300 hours to set up. The display consists of 7.5 miles of electrical wire, 290,000 lights, and 900 pounds of cords."

Maloney, who is upset that the lights are not going up, says that even though he loves the lights, he, "Understands how hard it is." Vaughan says, "In years past I was blessed with the good fortune of being able to take off from work the entire month of November and work full time on the set up. This year however, I have not been as fortunate, and I realized several months ago that I just wouldn't be able to make it happen. There will be no Collingwood Lights this year."

Fortunately, for all the families that like the lights, Vaughan says, "My hope, God willing, is to come back next year, bigger and brighter than ever." Unfortunately, the lights will be sorely missed by those families this year, and the Holiday Season might not seem as bright, especially for those who get a kick out of the lights. McPherson states that, "I think people won't get the message (that the lights are not going up), and they will pass by the house and be disappointed." But, their hopes now turn to next year, for what was promised as a, "bigger and brighter," light show next year. "The Collingwood Road may feel emptier and darker this year, but at least we have our hearts full of eternal joy and brightness this special home has brought us in years past," conveys Bomberg.



# STYLE

## The Fall of Facebook

The once great social media site loses its edge as new sites grab users attention

Wake Coulter

Focus Editor

Facebook, the internet giant that revolutionized social networking and wasted the time of one billion people across the world, is finally starting to lose user interest. Recently, new social sites like Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest have seen a dramatic increase in users, and this is taking a toll on Facebook's relevance. Parents are now more active on the site than most teenagers, and Facebook has no foreseeable solution.

The once busy Facebook news feed, teeming with complaints of homework and bad weather, group photos from parties, and links to bad Youtube videos is now a quieter place. "I only really use Facebook to ask about homework assignments and check the hype squad page," admitted senior Kat Rausch. Status updates have been relegated to Twitter, and photo uploads have migrated to Instagram. As always, adults and parents are the last to discover web-related development, and the site is now full of posts and links shared by moms and their friends. The sharing feature may even have been a large factor in Facebook's downfall, for in an effort to add social news to its feature list, it ended up filling users' newsfeeds with incessant links and misleading news articles.

Every day, it seems like a new social networking site is introduced, and users' iPhones and smartphones are rapidly filling up with apps that aren't Facebook. Cinemagram, Path, and Foursquare are some new sites that all pose a threat to the social behemoth. These apps are

simpler and more to-the-point than Facebook, a full-featured, dynamic site. Facebook's fancy features are the root of its problem. Users have to go through a lengthy process when they want to upload a photo for their friends to see, but they can just snap a pic in seconds with apps like Instagram and Snapchat at their command. Facebook must simplify its functions to keep up its image of a sleek and convenient social site.

Facebook has also lagged behind in the mobile realm, and this is mainly due to an unsolvable problem; it was a website before it was an app. Instagram began as a handy mobile app, and isn't tethered to a desktop website. Snapchat is mobile-exclusive as well, and this gives it a quick, simple feel. Facebook may be accessible anywhere

through any device, but users have grown tired of being followed around by their social networks. Quick, throwaway apps are the new standard.

In a few years, or maybe just a few months, Facebook could join the leagues of Myspace and Internet Explorer, forgotten relics of the cyberpast. If this happens, gone will be the days of a looming online presence, automatically logging you into every site you visit and creeping you out with its privacy vagueness. A new era of mini-apps like Instagram and Twitter, each with their own individual function, will begin. It's hard to say whether this would be an improvement, or just more of the same.



twitter.com, netrightdaily.com, github.com

## Put the green on your doc

West Potomac Crew sells wreaths for the holidays

Laura Jacobs

Editor-in-Chief

The air was intoxicated with the smell of pine needles as volunteers huddled to put the finishing touches on wreaths. In the background, Dave Mathews Band was playing softly, while steamy mugs of hot cider were abundant. These are not just any wreaths, but uniquely decorated wreaths handmade by the crew team. By the end of the day when the wreaths were finished, the West Potomac crew team was ready for their annual Wreath Sale.

Though wreaths are sold after Thanksgiving, the program starts during the summer. After setting up a wreath sale to organize the whole fundraiser, preparations are made to advertise and coordinate with the WABC (The Wolf Boosters Club). The WABC is popular for holding their annual Christmas Tree sales behind Carl Sandburg Middle School to benefit West Potomac athletics. Though the crew and tree sales are both sold at Carl Sandburg, crew "is not a tree program at WP, but rather a club, we do not benefit from tree sales," explained Mrs. Liz Gwartney, VP Administrator of the Crew Boosters.

This year, the crew team has expanded their sales to a new site at Hollin Hills Pool on Ft. Hunt Road. At these sites, they sell not only decorated wreaths, but kissing balls, bows, wreaths, and garland to community members.

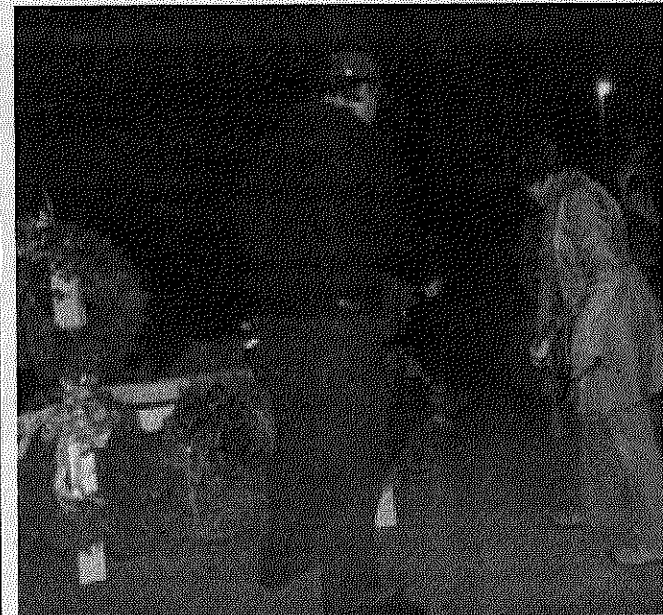
Due to construction at Carl Sandburg, both fundraisers have been moved to the grassy island at the entrance of the school. Without the luxury of the concession stand at the move, the crew team will only be selling wreaths at Sandburg on Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

Furthermore, they will be at the Hollin Hills Pool on Saturdays and Sundays. In addition to the greenery, the team will also be promoting their new Crew Brew (coffee grounds with their logo) made by a local family coffee shop, called Beans. "This fundraiser is vital to our program to make sure the crew can continue as a sport at West Potomac," finished senior Captain George Bowerfind.



**Above:** Christmas wreaths displayed for sale at Carl Sandburg middle school to raise booster funds

**Below:** Volunteers help customers pick out a decorative wreath for the holidays



## A'nova option

Northern Virginia Community College is a choice for students to consider

Leigh Orleans

Editor-in-Chief

It is that time of year when everyone is finishing up college applications and thinking about where they are going to spend the next four years of their life. Many students have dreamt of a particular school since childhood, knowing they were just born to go to Cornell or UVA.

Despite the prevalence of seniors raving about finally getting a chance to leave home, some students will not have this opportunity. A lack of financial means, poor marks, an inability to complete applications on time, or an unwillingness to leave what is comfortable are a few of the reasons some West Potomac seniors may not be leaving home this upcoming fall.

While some may consider leaving home or giving up on a higher education to be their only two options, that is not the case. Our area is fortunate enough to have the Northern Virginia Community College or NOVA as a means to receive a good college education.

Not only is the location convenient, but also there are several great opportunities available for students attending the college. The base tu-

ition cost is \$135 with an additional \$145 for every credit received. This is an incredible deal and even if students still demonstrate financial need, there are opportunities for financial aid. The school also works to help students financially with scholarship opportunities, student grants, loans, and work-study opportunities to lower the cost even more.

One of the most beneficial opportunities given to NOVA students is the University of Virginia and NOVA partnership. This collaboration grants students a guaranteed transfer to UVA if specific course and grade requirements are met.

The college is very accommodating and willing to help adults make the transition to another college or the job markets. If transportation to and from campus is a problem, there is a public transportation system that is there to help. Teachers are dedicated to helping their students learn and there are also available tutoring systems.



## A million miles away from Ghana

*Junior Dorcas Koduah expresses her dual Ghanaian-American nationality*

**Laraib Ilyas**  
Opinion Editor

Speaking Twi and wearing the entuma on special occasions comes naturally to junior Dorcas Koduah. Although born in America, her parents are natives from Ghana. She is proud of her roots and being a Ghanaian-American, saying, "I get the best of both worlds."

West Potomac is a melting pot with students who come from different countries and backgrounds. Those who come from foreign countries each carry their heritage and culture. Food, traditional clothing, and language are what gives them their identity as a foreigner and what makes West Potomac a great place to meet them.

Being a part of both nationalities can be difficult at times to manage for Koduah. However, she has a positive attitude towards balancing the two. "I have to deal with Ghanaian rules as well as find a way to fit in the American way of things in life. But overall, I learn to make it work by compromising with my parents when situations arise."

At home, Koduah loves to be surrounded by her culture. She has an Akwaaba or "welcome" poster in her room. On this poster, there is a woman holding two black and beige pots. She is dressed in an African cloth and is smiling. For Koduah and many other Ghanaians, this popular poster is a powerful reminder of

their homeland in Ghana.

Many special occasions are celebrated by Koduah and her family. Ghanaian Independence Day, on March 6th, is recognized in her home. Other Christian holidays like Christmas, Easter, and Thanksgiving are also celebrated in the Koduah household. On these special days, dishes like jollof are prepared by Koduah's mom and enjoyed by all her family members. Jollof is comprised mostly of rice and chicken, smothered in tomato sauce and various other vegetables. "When I eat Ghanaian food, I am immediately reminded of my vibrant culture. To me the best part about being a Ghanaian-American is experiencing the different aspects of what my country offers and incorporating that into my American life," says Koduah.

In 2006, Koduah visited Ghana. She enjoyed her time there because she was able to finally meet her distant relatives. Glimpses of poverty were seen and so was pollution. But, in Koduah's eyes, Ghana is at a stable state and doing better than neighboring countries.

"Overall, I see myself as a unique individual because my identity comes from my Ghanaian and American heritage, customs, and culture. Very few people get the chance to call themselves a Ghanaian-American, and I'm proud to be one of them."



Koduah wearing her traditional entuma dress.

Dorcas Koduah

*How can I love  
when yours is a poison?  
Lifting me up and pulling me down  
with not yet a reason.*

*How can I know?  
When you teach me to fly  
but only show me how it feels  
to sink.*

*You assist me in filling my cup to the  
brim  
but why, why?*

*When the sugar turns to spice  
the water freezes-  
cold as ice.  
The dripping honey  
turns to molass;  
growing thick with  
reasons of doubt.*

*So why, love?  
Why so assuring  
yet capable  
of leaving me in the cold rain.  
Allowing me  
to hang myself to dry.*

*You better my heart  
but envenom my soul.  
Be the antidote to my pain  
not the rain on my parade  
that's already flooded by life's impacts.*

*Please, love.*

*Love,  
Me*

Melissa Loughridge  
Winner of the West PoEtry Slam contest  
Theme: A Childhood Memory

## A jazzy schedule

**Laura Jacobs**  
Editor-in-Chief

Eighth period does exist in most students' schedules. For a talented few, Jazz Band is offered as a class credit held after school with practices every day. With less than 20 people enrolled, Mr. Rice grades these students on participation, improvement and performances.

The 45 minute jam session begins promptly at 2:15 p.m., and "immediately the jazzy imagination flows," explained Senior Pianist Christian Escoto. This band focuses on not only traditional jazz, but also a variety of styles including samba, swing pieces, and modified holiday songs.

Though jazz band is offered as a class, the musicians are hand picked prior to the school year. "Jazz band started after marching band ended but Mr. Rice had asked me before the summer if I would be willing to do jazz after school," explained Senior Saxophonist Hannah Graham. Graham has been playing saxophone for the past eight years, and plans on continuing her musical career through college.

Escoto had a similar experience of being recruited by Mr. Rice. "Even though I am a classically trained pianist, I was very intrigued by the unfamiliar side of jazz so I immediately said yes and was committed to the 2012-2013 WPHS Jazz Ensemble," added Escoto.

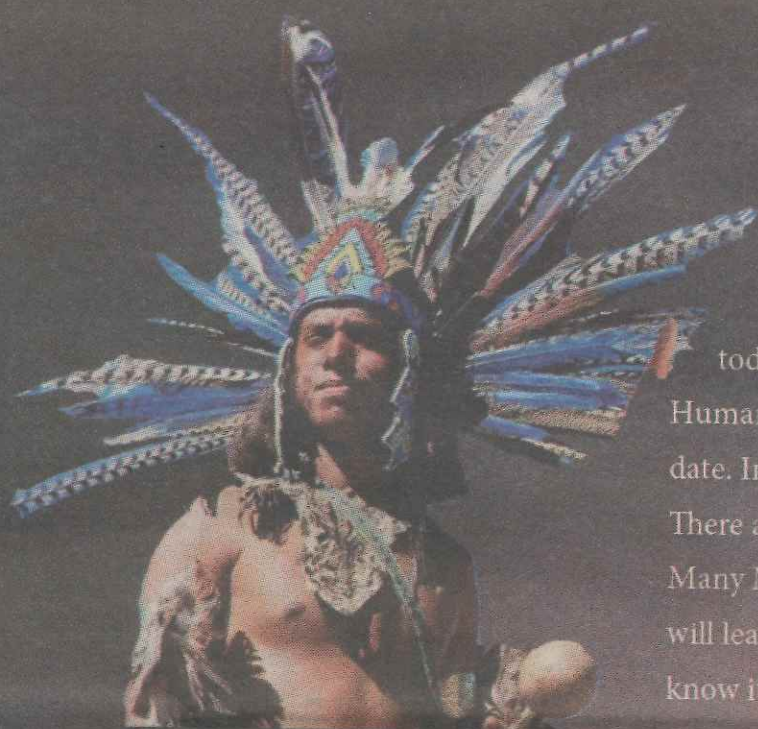
One of the main differences between regular band class and jazz class is the improv music flowing throughout the practice. "It's more fun to play jazz rather than classical music on the sax because we get the melody more," commented Graham.

"I like jazz band because the ensemble really makes, rather, forces you create improvised melodies (a solo in most cases) between songs. Without improv there is no jazz, without jazz there is no creativity, and without creativity there is no improv," added Escoto. This band plans on performing for multiple events including faculty luncheons, winter concerts, and the jazz festival this spring. "I definitely see myself playing the piano as an old man because none of this stuff goes away. It stays with you forever and that's the beauty of it," finished Escoto.



# Apocalypse Now

On December 21st, 2012, the world will end. Maybe. Nobody knows for sure what is going to happen on this prophecized day, but plenty of signs point to the end of days. Today, The Wire will take an investigative look at armageddon.



## THE MAYAN PROPHECY

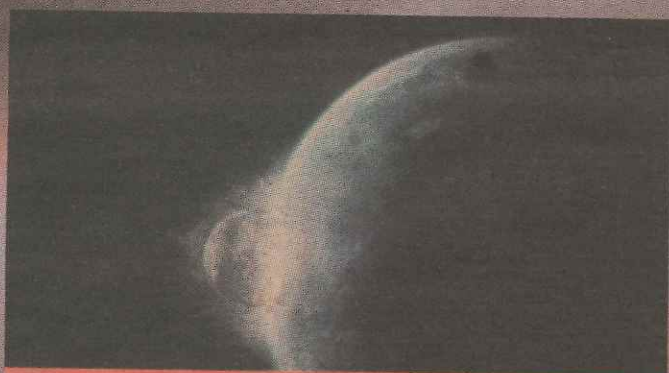
Like many other ancient civilizations, the Mayans had creation myths and legends that were of utmost importance to their daily lives. They believed that the world we live in today is the last of the Gods' four attempts to create a world, the previous three failing. Humanity was placed in the fourth world, but the age of the fourth world has an expiration date. In the Mayan calendar, a b'ak'tun is a measurement of time equal to about 5,125 years. There are 13 b'ak'tuns in a world's age, and 13 b'ak'tuns will have finally passed next Friday. Many Mayan documents have been lost over time, so it is unclear whether the end of this world will lead to another, renewed world, or to the end of ours as we know it.

Either way, this day is enormously significant to Mayan culture, and is bound to have results, whether the Mayans were right or not. Many conspiracy theorists and believers across the world will be conducting rituals or searching for safety on this fateful day. There is no reassurance modern scientists can give to people who are already convinced. Whether it be by faithful studying of Mayan historical documents and theories, or the rumors emanating from the media and disaster movies, thousands of people truly believe the apocalypse is coming much sooner than we would hope.



## WHAT COULD HAPPEN?

There are countless ways the world could end, some that have been prophecized and some that have been theorized by scientists. These are some of the most-feared predictions of the earth's demise next week.



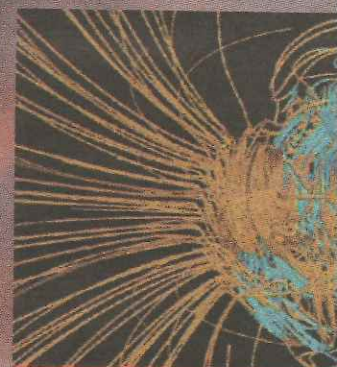
### PLANET COLLISION

A questionably existent rogue planet named Nibiru be heading towards the earth, and if it collides with us, all life on our planet will be wiped out.



### SUN STORM

If a solar flare erupts facing earth, it would completely deactivate the power grid. Nuclear plants would shut down, communication would cease, and chaos would ensue.



### POLE SHIFT

If the earth's crust suddenly shifts, the north and south poles would move. The results would be catastrophic. Tsunamis, earthquakes, and other natural disasters would be widespread.



# WHAT'S YOUR TAKE?



## Alex Amico - Senior

"I think that the world's economies will collapse first. Governments will plunge into anarchy, allowing a race of super intelligent but immensely incapable geese to rise to power. This will lead to the world's population suffocating under Goose feces."

## Delaney McPherson - Junior

"Some say the world will end in fire. Some say in ice. From what I've tasted of desire I hold with those who favor fire. But if it had to perish twice, I think I know enough of hate to say that for destruction ice is also great and would suffice."

## Jackson Kosmacki - Freshman

"A vicious horde of the undead will invade. It's gonna be a zombie apocalypse, caused by a virus like the walking dead. The whole human race is going to turn into mindless flesh-eaters, and the world is going to be a much scarier place."

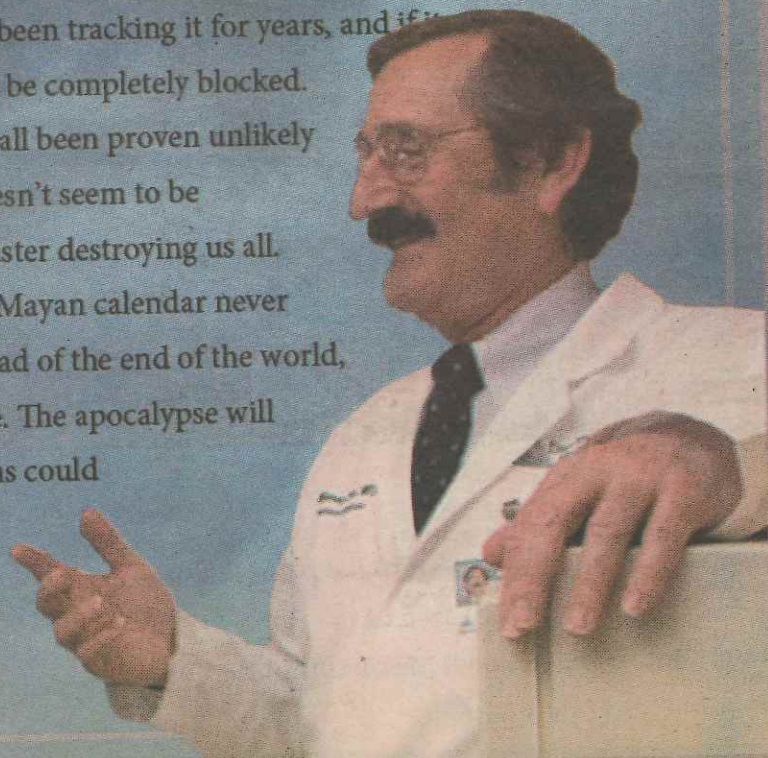


## *the* SCIENTISTS *say...*

There's no need to say your final good byes to your family and friends. The earth has been around for 4 billion years, and it will probably be around for at least 4 billion more. The only event that will really have any impact on Dec. 21st will be the winter solstice, which is an annual event that is not out of the ordinary at all. A long winter day seems much better than the end of the world as we know it, so hopefully you aren't too disappointed about the survival of our planet.

The planets have aligned three times in the last 100 years, so theories claiming such an event will lead to a global blackout of some sort are basically void. If a rogue planet or foreign celestial body was heading towards our world, scientists would have been tracking it for years, and if it was going to hit us in a week, the sun's rays would be completely blocked. Deadly solar flares, asteroids, and pole shifts have all been proven unlikely or impossible by NASA researchers, and there doesn't seem to be evidence pointing to any other sort of natural disaster destroying us all.

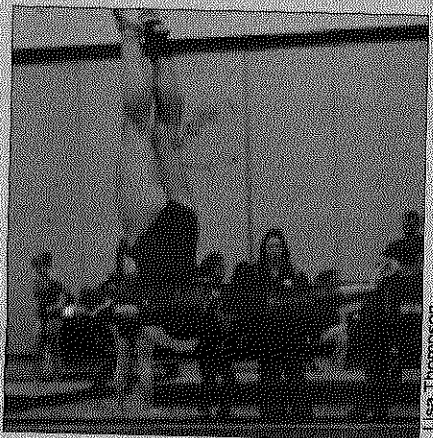
Historians and scientists have agreed that the Mayan calendar never really ends. It just restarts, and begins anew. Instead of the end of the world, maybe we will witness the beginning of a new one. The apocalypse will have to be put off until another date. If the Mayans could see how far we've come today, they may have believed that 2012 had already happened. Maybe we've already entered this new age.



moves and the  
w locations, the  
Get used to  
strange storms.



## WOLVERINE WARRIOR: Monica Thompson



Monica Thompson performs an aerial.

**Zach Day & Jayme Murray**  
Reporters

It was love at first flip. From her initial gymnastics meet at twelve, Monica Thompson's passion for the sport has only grown. Now as a junior, she is one of the leaders of the West Potomac gymnastics team.

Not only is she a key member of the high school team, Thompson also participates on a Arlington club team. Thompson is capable of competing in all gymnastics events, although her talents are best utilized on the floor and in vault events. Through all of her hard work, Thompson reveals, "My greatest achievement in gymnastics was making it to the regional tournament in the 2011-2012 school year."

There is no off-season for Thompson as she is constantly striving to get better, by not only practicing with her club team year around, but with a strong dedication to practice with both of her teams.

With the winter gymnastics season starting, Thompson has a choice she must make. With the amount of time that is consumed by the high school season, Thompson still needs to decide how she is going to balance the high school team and the club team. "It's hard, but most of the time I choose club," because she finds it to be more rewarding. "Last year I made the Virginia Team for regionals," she said. For Thompson's club team level, regionals consists of seven states, as she was one of six gymnasts to make the Virginia Team.

Thompson would like to continue participating in gymnastics throughout college, as a member of a club team.

### SHOUT OUT

to the new coaches joining the West Potomac Coaching Staff. Dive Coach Brian Bahr, Girls Tennis Coach Susan McConville, and Varsity Lacrosse Coaches Geoff Hill, Patrick Dewey, Lloyd Crouse, and Chris Farquhar.

## West Potomac Hockey Breaks the Ice

**Ian Thompson**  
Reporter

No longer solely for Russians and Canadians, ice hockey has taken off in the national sports arena. Despite this growing trend in popularity, it is typically not a sport offered in public schools due to the aggressive nature of the sport.

This did not prevent West Potomac students from taking initiative to bring a sport they love to our school.

Alex Holm and Bobby Soule have been fans of hockey for most of their lives. In 2009, their freshman year, Holm and Soule decided to get a hockey team together for the school. Although they formed the team in 2009 they weren't actually able to start until the following year. Over the past two years the team has grown but Holm said, "It's grown slowly but we still wish more people knew about it". The hockey team is not well known around the school, junior Willard McMullen said, "I didn't know we even had a hockey team".

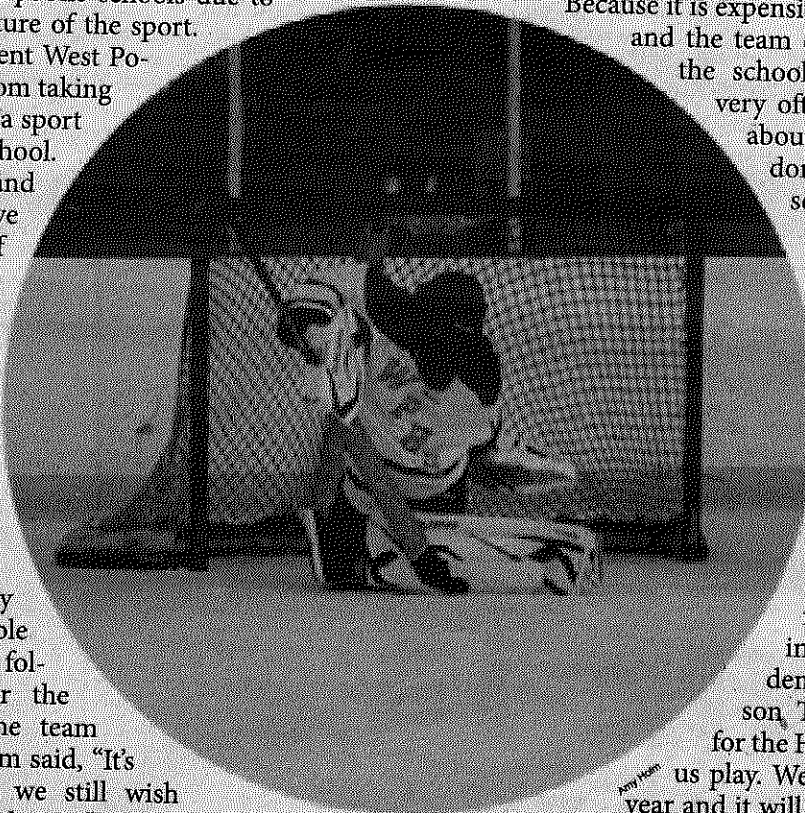
One reason why students don't know about the team is that it is not actually recognized as a West Potomac sports team. Instead it is titled under the category of

club sports. There are players from both West Potomac and George Mason on the team. The team has to travel to Kettler IcePlex in Arlington, to practice.

Because it is expensive to reserve the ice rink, and the team doesn't get money from the school, they cannot practice very often. They only practice about once a week when they don't have games. Since the school does not fund the team, the coach, Steve Toth, volunteers his father, volunteer coach, to help.

This year the West Potomac Hockey Squad plans to attend some of the regional hockey games, though they are not a quote on quote West Potomac team. This will be good for raising awareness and interest levels of the sport. Team member Jason Toth said, "I'm excited for the Hype Squad to come to us play. We are looking good this year and it will be cool for students to see what hockey is all about".

Now that more people plan to come to the games, the hockey team is looking to improve on previous years' results. After winning only three games in their first two seasons, the team has improved greatly and are on track for their first winning season.



## Swimming for Letters

**Zach Day**  
Reporter

There is cheering all around. The swimmers step up to their boards. The buzzer sounds and the racers plunge into the pool. Swim team is a very popular winter sport for many student athletes. Recently though, there have been some students who have joined swim team for the varsity letter only.

Since there are no cuts during tryouts, it is an easy way to get a varsity letter, and to boost a diploma. The student athletes that participate just to get the letter can also choose to not even participate in practices and meets either. Freshman Connor Hayes believes, "It is stupid that people do it [participate on the swim team] just for the Varsity letter, because they don't do any work and they still get the same rewards as the students who go to every practice and meet." Hayes on a lighter note said, "There isn't anyone doing it this year that I know of, because this is the first year they have done tryouts, unlike previous years when everyone made it."

Cyrus Adams-Mardi, who is a junior and a captain of the swim team, has been swimming since he was four. "Swimming is my life," Adams-Mardi said. He also said, "People who join swim team for this matter are not encouraged to join. That being said, most of these people are quickly sorted out of the sport, because we have a minimum number of practices and meets. If they are not cut during tryouts, most varsity seekers do not last the season." Adams-Mardi does say that, "This year we have a very dedicated group of athletes."

Gabby Bomberg, a sophomore at West Potomac, has been swimming for a long time. Adams-Mardi, has been swimming for a long time. Bomberg has competed in the Northern Virginia Swim League for ten years, and has participated in many different swim programs such as Fort Belvoir swim team and Curl Burke (J&M or the Nation's Capitol Swim League). In agreement with Hayes, Bomberg says, "It is a privilege that only swim team gets. I believe that only swimmers who commit to the sport every day and give their best effort should be given letters."

On the other hand, senior Trevor Woods says that, "I really do not feel that people [student athletes] join swim team just to get the Varsity letter."

Adams-Mardi also says that, "Coach Lombardi is not concerned with the issue, and believes that the letter is well earned by athletes." Junior Carolyn

Murphy, also agrees on this topic. Murphy says that actions are being taken to prevent this from happening. She states that, "Attendance is now taken, and if you do not attend enough practices and meets then you could possibly get kicked off the team."

This is just one of the many steps that are being taken to eliminate student athletes from joining for the Varsity letter only. The swim team is headed in the right direction as the practices and meets start up this winter. Adams-Mardi says, "We [the swim team] are excited for some great races coming up."



The swimmers make their way through the pool at one of the meets.



# Concrete Jungle Gym

Margaret O'Meara  
Style Editor

From expert David Belle's YouTube videos, to The Office's Michael Scott's and Andy Bernard's amateur attempt, to a push off a wall and shouting "Parkour! Parkour!" The art of parkour or PK has been known as training and a fun way to exercise and get around things. For students at West Potomac, the city, town, and parks are their gym to practice and play around with the flips and tricks of parkour and free running.

Parkour is all about getting from point A to point B in the most creative and fastest way possible. Often, the fastest way has obstacles. Traceurs, those who practice parkour, live to have obstacles because this is where parkour comes in; Running up a wall to get over something, flipping off of a barrier to get down, or even just jumping off of an obstacle into a duck-and-roll (much like a summersault) to get to the final destination is all fair game in the world of parkour. But parkour can be dangerous and risky. Urban Evolution in Alexandria and Manassas VA are parkour gyms to practice and learn new tricks and flips safely.

Parkour has been featured in movies such as the 2006 film, Casino Royale, and 2010 film, Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time. YouTube videos of

amateurs and experts showing off their moves, tricks, and flips, and movies with parkour are ways to find out about parkour. Sophomore, Sammy Snider first learned about parkour from his brother and the James Bond film Casino Royale which feature parkour. "Once I checked out parkour videos,

Parkour; Some call it free running and some people just call it training. Parkour, the meaning and what it is, can be different from one person to another who does it. For some, it's an expression, for some it's a way of life, and for others it's just a different way to keep in shape. Parkour is different than other sports because it looks at a urban terrain differently from another activity

who practice parkour, look at an obstacle in their way, and make a sport out of getting around, over, and/or under that obstacle. Hunt practices parkour, "because it is a challenge of both mind and body. It helps you think outside of what the human body does on a regular basis which allows you to develop a new, creative way of movement."

For Snider, the best part of parkour is the adrenaline rush; "When I am in the air, I get an adrenaline rush and my focus is only on what is ahead of me; It's like a tunnel vision," says Snider. Parkour is also very strenuous on the body. "I like parkour because it really puts my body to the test physically to see what I am capable of doing," says Snider. "My favorite things are flips and jumping gaps. My favorite flip is a side-flip." "Aside from the personal feeling of accomplishment you get when mastering skills, parkour and free running make you see the world as one giant jungle gym. All of the sudden that bench you walk by in the park becomes something to vault over, the angled wall of a building becomes something to tack off of or climb up, and the scaffolding over the metro - your own personal monkey bars," says Hunt in explanation of her love of parkour.

The experience of parkour is, according to Ms. Hunt, "like getting an A on a test and is a personal achievement." Many athletes practice parkour to build up endurance and strength, but for the true traceurs, well stated by Ms. Hunt "parkour lets you fly."



Snider glides up rails in Old Towne performing the urban sport of parkour.

I eventually loved it and I have been doing it ever since," says Snider. "It is a combination of mental and physical strength and many hours of training that allow people to make those impressive YouTube videos," tells West Potomac English teacher, Ms. Melanie Hunt.

Parkour is used as a training method and as a sport. "Not everyone calls it

or sport," explains sophomore McKenzie Beeby. "People think parkour is all about jumping off buildings or doing flips outside. It's not. It's much more. Parkour is a training method in which you use your body to overcome obstacles in your environment in creative, many times efficient, ways," tells Hunt.

Parkour is not only a work-out, but it's also an adventure. Traceurs, those

## Winter Hype Squad

Ian Thompson  
Reporter

The West Potomac Hype Squad, a group of enthusiastic students, received recognition for their support during the fall sports season. Seniors Alex Hauser, Alex Amico, and Garrick Willis have big plans for the Hype Squad for the winter season.

One big change for the winter season is the addition of all classes to the Hype Squad. Previously, only the seniors were included. Now, all students are encouraged to join. Amico said the reasoning behind this is that, "We [Alex, Garrick, and I] don't want to divide the classes. We are really hoping that this will boost everyone's overall school spirit."

"Games are expected to be more entertaining with more students, personalized cheers and the Funky Four," Hauser said. The Funky Four are a group of seniors who will attend the sporting events in ridiculous attire to try and energize the crowd. The four seniors are Paul McClure, Hauser, Amico and Willis.

Hauser has been working with the others to come up with new ideas to

make the Hype Squad more fun. New shirts are being designed by Wake Coulter specifically for the winter season. Coulter designed the fall t-shirts and his design was very popular among fans. The new shirts will not be senior specific and will be available to all students.

The Hype Squad is also trying to shine some light on the less popular sports like gymnastics, wrestling, swim and dive, girls basketball, and even the ice hockey team. The players on the teams of these less recognized sports are excited to finally get more fans to the events. West Potomac senior Zach Prinzbach, a member of the varsity wrestling team, says, "I think it's great that the Hype Squad will be at our senior night. We usually don't get many fans and it means to have people come out and show their support."

Overall, the mission is the same. The Hype Squad wants to create more school spirit and help make the 'other' sports teams become more prominent in the school.

## BY THE NUMBERS

32

HOME

TIMEOUTS

37

POINTS SCORED BY THE BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM IN A DOUBLE OVERTIME WIN AT HERNDON

2

NUMBER OF PINS FOR SENIOR JJ PEREZ IN HIS FIRST WRESTLING MATCH SINCE HAVING BRAIN SURGERY

30

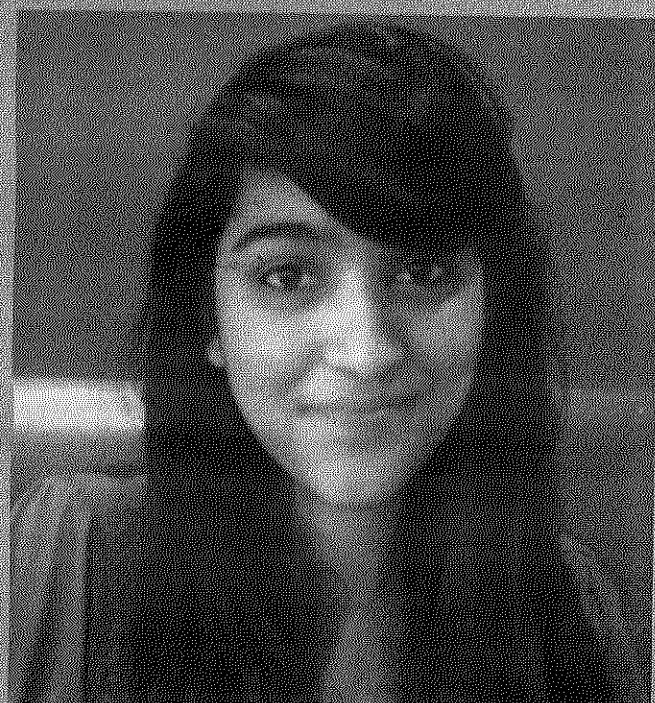
POINTS SCORED BY KWAME CAMON IN THE DOUBLE OVERTIME WIN AGAINST HERNDON

2ND

PLACE FOR THE WEST POTOMAC GYMNASTIC TEAM IN THEIR HOME MEET ON DECEMBER 6TH



## The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly Truth



### Who invented this?

Laraib Ilyas  
Opinions Editor

It is hilarious to look around and see some of the most ridiculous inventions that are still around or being used by the human species. Sometimes this question naturally pops up in my head, "Which idiot came up with this?"

**Paper Grocery Bags.** Why do grocery stores still have them as an option? Everybody uses plastic bags for a good reason; they can be properly held. Paper bags can only be carried by the arm, two at a time. Not only that, but they are humongous and nondurable. To be frankly honest, the only place I have seen people carrying them are in cartoons and nowhere else.

**Moving Walkway.** One question, why? It is literally a conveyor belt that one stands on to get across 20 feet of land. And the most astounding thing: SOME PEOPLE ACTUALLY WALK ON IT. This invention is mind boggling; especially when I see people at the airport who would rather take their sweet time going on this slow, moving walkway. If you are jet lagged, then you should walk so there is proper blood flow going around in your body, not stand on this conveyor belt.

**Finger Gloves.** Some people wear these types of gloves during the wintertime, out in the freezing cold, walking around and acting like their fingers aren't being frozen to death. What's the point of having these finger gloves on if your hands aren't being fully warmed?

**Bathroom Hand Dryers.** This machine is in bathrooms everywhere. People actually stand in line to get their hands dried by this thing. It takes longer to dry your hands with this machine than it does with paper towels. Not only that, but it consumes energy to run and makes this loud, horrendous sound. To all those who use this pathetic machine: please stop. Use paper towels instead; they are fast and efficient.

**The Snuggie.** Or what I see as a blanket with arm slots. The infomercials advertise these Snuggies with idiotic people wearing them outside in public. It doesn't even warm one's whole body. The arms sleeves are humongous, meaning, cold air still slips through. So, what's the point of buying them? Well, there isn't one.

Overall, these absurd inventions have this popularity attached to them that I cannot comprehend why. The world would be a better place without them. Period.

## Stressful school work overload

Ian Thompson  
Reporter

We've all been there. It is late at night and you just finished getting your stuff ready for school the next day, when all of a sudden your phone goes off. You read the text from your friend asking you a question on the paper due the next day that you forgot to write. So now, you have to rush to get it done, but in the back of your head you know it is going to be crappy because you're just scribbling down random ideas to complete the assignment.

This problem happens far too often and sometimes it is out of the students' control. Between the school day, possible jobs, and sports, some students are compromising the quality of work just so they have something to turn in. Others are sacrificing their sleep and staying up late into the night to get their work done.

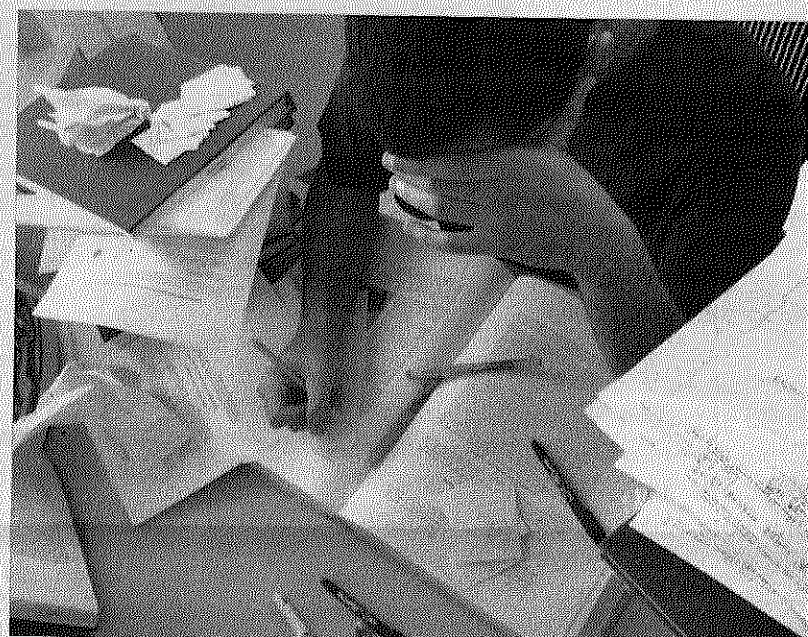
This should not be happening. Sometimes yes, it is the students fault for procrastinating, but

teachers assign work like students have no other classes to worry about. There have been some incidences for students where projects and essays are due all on the same day. It is incredibly stressful trying to deal with these huge workloads.

For particular classes, the work seems to be just for the sake of having something for the teacher to grade. There are classes where teachers use the class time wisely and almost every grade comes from assignments completed in class. This works just fine because it teach-

es students how to manage time in class, and not, then they have to finish it for homework.

In other cases, class time is a complete waste. Teachers assign pointless busy work and do not teach at all, which I have found to happen in many Advanced Placement (AP) classes. This hurts the students tremendously because every second for a high school student is precious. However, students sign up for this lifestyle. If a student is taking multiple AP or Honors classes then they should expect to have a big workload. If a student does a sport or has a job, then they should make time to get their work done. If a student is applying to many colleges, they still need to get their work in. It is unjust when teachers assign unfair amounts of work because many students are already overworking themselves as it is.



Students feel overwhelmed with the tremendous amount of work they receive from their classes.

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## Falling gas cost has a price

Declining gas prices has grim outcome  
Wake Coulter  
Focus Editor

These days, filling up your gas tank usually mean emptying your wallet. Gas prices have been significantly increasing each year, but recently the prices have become more reasonable. That's good, right? Less cash for gas means you can drive without having to worry so much about the price of leaving your house. While a reasonable fuel cost may seem like a godsend, I think that it may have a more disastrous outcome than most people realize.

Lower gas prices mean that you can put more gas in your car for less money. This means that you are going to be filling up your gas tank more often as it is now more affordable. This will do nothing but hurt our already suffering environment. When gas prices were at record lows in the mid 1970s, carbon emissions increased exponentially. If gas prices went down continuously for the next few decades, global warming would become more evident than ever before.

If gas prices continue to fall, clean air is not the only thing we will be losing. Energy saving vehicles, hybrid cars, alternative energy sources like wind and solar, and other clean energy initiatives are all made to keep the world safe from dangerous carbon emissions. They are also a relief from ridiculously high fuel costs. There would be fewer of these innovations if gas is made cheaper. When gas is expensive, people look for cheaper ways to get around, and if they buy a hybrid car, they won't have spend as much on gas, or they could get a solar panel installed in their house and pay less on their monthly bill. With cheaper gas, there is a decreased incentive to make this change.

When gas prices drop, the demand for alternative energy also drops substantially, because people can return to good old crude oil. High prices seem bad, but the worse they are, the more the world is pushed to find a new way to power itself. This is a slow process to transition to a cleaner world, but if prices stay low, the transition will never fully happen.

Don't fret the next time the gas tank empties out and you can't afford to fill it back up, it may just be time to find a better way to get around. There are plenty of subways, buses, and bikes just waiting for you to hop on. When the prices get low, that is when you should really start worrying.



Lowered gas prices is an incentive for many to be on the road more often.

## 'Tis the season for bountiful wasting

Many families have a high electricity bill during the holiday season due to lighting up their houses

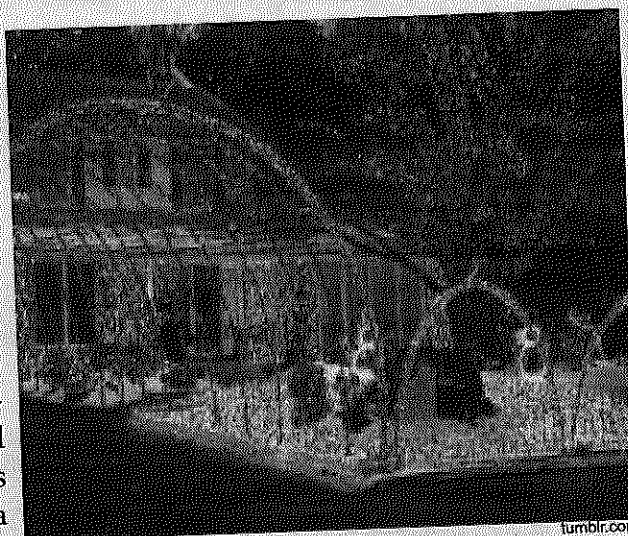
Josh Shelton  
Sports Editor

Have you ever looked at your energy bill during the holiday season? Chances are the amount is a significant increase than previous bills.

Ten strings of traditional holiday lights (C9-7 watt bulbs) cost approximately 26 extra dollars a month to display. This may seem like a small amount of money, but if 25 percent of the almost 2,500 students who attend West Potomac only had these lights decorating their house, the total price increase would be \$16,250 of extra money spent on their energy bills. The money adds up quickly because many houses are not only lit on the outside.

Ten sets of 100-light strand of the miniature lights one normally sees wrapped around trees costs only about \$6 a month. If the same number of students uses these lights, there is an additional cost of \$3,750 a month.

Now that you know the facts, is having a cute house for one month really worth it? Not only is money wasted, but so is time. I personally spent an entire day, 8am-4pm, untangling and putting up lights and decorations. All of this in vain because once the lights are up, half of them blowout resulting in the retrieval of the old ones and purchasing and setting up new lights. And at the end of the month, the lights are taken down, placed in boxes and stored for 11 months only to repeat the tiring process again.



Holiday lights, though festive, can be considered a waste of money, time, and energy.

Now that it is apparent how Scrooge McDuck thinks, what about the joy and holiday spirit one gets from seeing all these beautifully illuminated houses? Like the one on Collingwood Road where families cannot wait to show their relatives the 270,000 lights and perfectly synced dancing deer. Well, to all those looking forward to that grand spectacle, it has been cancelled.

The Collingwood Lights Show was officially cancelled by owner Bill Vaughan on November 22nd. According to the Collingwood Lights Blog, Vaughan spent over 300 hours to produce what we see on display at his house and took off from work half of September and the entire month of November. That is an average of 50 hours a week in preparation of the spectacular light show.

No one can blame him for taking one year off from the twenty one years Vaughan has been doing it. He will also get a break from a costly energy bill. With the amount of lights used at the display, Vaughan spends about \$320.44.... an hour. With the show usually running about five hours a day for 37 days, the grand total for our holiday enjoyment is \$59,281.40. To put in perspective, the average salary of a US Citizen is about \$47,000. Happy (expensive) Holidays

## Crazy Black Friday shoppers

Sophie Spriggs  
News Editor

Plenty of West Potomac students attended Black Friday sales over their Thanksgiving break but the vicious shopping does not end there.

Shoppers burst through a crowd with a box under each arm and an item of clothing placed precariously in each empty space on their carts. The aisles begin to plug with bodies and carts. I have a sudden daydream where I'm Indiana Jones and am about to jump across a trench when my friend yells "Indy throw me the idol", so I do, just to make it out alive. Next thing I know I am in a line for the check-out and the only thing I have to show for my efforts is a pack of gum. It's a wonder that some people don't love the holiday season.

Costs are up, profits are high and the economy is booming. What's not to love? I would say elbows in the face, lots of waste, and gift receipts galore. According to thebusinessinsider.com, "This year's Black Friday saw a record-breaking 226 million shoppers making purchases with an average of \$398 spent per person."

The holidays became commercialized when mainstream retailers realized they could profit from holiday spirit. This most likely happened around the turn of the 20th century when a rapidly industrializing America began to seek profit out of our belief systems. It is, however, just as much the consumer's fault as it is the

producers. Retail stores and business owners respond to what their customers want, and once they know it is often difficult to derail.

This Holiday season I challenge regular shoppers to stop this trend. Some of the best gifts I have received were handmade. Something that takes time to develop is worth more than anything from a store. If this is too much to ask, try cutting down on gift giving and get loved only what they really want or need. A well thought gift bought at a local business will do more good for the world than could any stimulus produced by the wrong kind of holiday spending.



# the WIRE Family Cookbook

## Lily's Latkes

7 lb russet potatoes, peeled and grated  
7 medium yellow onion, peeled and grated  
7 egg, lightly beaten  
2 tablespoons unbleached flour  
7 teaspoon salt  
1/8 tsp freshly ground pepper  
1 1/2 tablespoons canola oil

Combine all ingredients except the oil in a bowl. Heat 3/4 tablespoon oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Drop 3 tablespoons batter (7 per latke) into the pan. Flatten each latke with a nonstick spatula. Reduce the heat to medium-low, and cook until golden brown — 5 minutes each side. Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate. Repeat, using all the batter and the remaining oil as needed. Serve warm.

Try some of these tasty treats  
at our bake sale after school today  
in the main lobby!

## Sophie's Yorkshire Pudding

4 eggs  
2 c. milk  
2 c. flour  
1/4 teaspoon salt

Beat well and let rest for about 2 hours. In a 450 degree oven, heat a muffin tin with 1/8 inch vegetable oil in the bottom of each cup for a few minutes. Pour batter in to cups and bake for 15 to 20 minutes, until puffed up and golden brown.

## Laura's Favorite Almond Cake

3 eggs, lightly beaten  
1 (8-ounce) can almond paste  
3/4 cup granulated sugar  
1/2 cup unsalted butter  
1/4 flour

Preheat oven to 350. Grease and flour one 8-inch round cake pan. Beat 1 egg, almond paste and sugar. Beat remaining eggs. Add butter and beat until creamed. Stir in flour until blended. Pour into pan. Bake for 45 to 50 minutes.

## Murray Baked Pineapple

1 can crushed pineapple  
2 eggs  
1 Tbsp corn starch  
1/2 cup sugar  
Sprinkle of cinnamon

Bake at 300 degrees for 1 hour.  
Enjoy!

## Day Family Apple Cake

3 eggs  
1 1/2 cup oil  
3 cups plain flour  
1 tsp. salt  
2 cups sugar  
1 tsp. baking soda  
2 tsp. cinnamon  
2 tsp. vanilla extract  
3 cups chopped apples  
1 1/2 cups pecans chopped  
1 cup butterscotch chips

Preheat oven to 350. Mix eggs, oil, and sugar; blend well. Sift flour, salt, soda, and cinnamon; add to egg mixture. Add vanilla, apples, and pecans. Pour into greased 8-inch tube or bundt pan. Bake 1 hour. While cake is still hot, pour hot topping over in pan; let cool. When completely cool, remove from pan.

Topping:  
1 cup brown sugar  
1/4 cup milk  
1/2 cup butter  
1 tsp. vanilla

Combine ingredients; cook 2 1/2 minutes. Pour over cake.



*Happy Holidays from the Wire Staff!!!*