



Sarah Collins Goes To Switzerland

January to Bring Long-Awaited Improvements

New Cafeteria And Library Opening

Nick Deutsch
Allyson Larrick
Wire Reporters

Hold on to your hats, they're coming: the new and improved library and cafeteria. According to Assistant Principal Ms. Doris Evans, next month both the new library and the new cafeteria are due to open, and both are highly anticipated as great new additions to the school.

The most highly anticipated feature of the renovation, the new library/multimedia center, is expected to be completed sometime in January.

Located in the front of the Quander building, the new one story library will contain more computers with internet access, as well as a computer lab and a television studio, according to librarian Ms. Paulette Miller. The TV studio, complete with editing equipment, will hopefully be home to a new Audio Visual Club as well as a possible morning news show. Eventually all classrooms will be fitted with televisions and it will be possible to more effectively broadcast school produced programs.

The Career Center will also be housed in the library. Although it will be a bit smaller than the current Career Center, the new one will provide a more homey atmosphere and easier access to the information.

Miller and the other librarians are currently weeding out obsolete and unused books. Frequently discarded books are made available at no charge in the library. This weeding process will make the new library look empty at first, but Miller plans to buy more books in years to come, to fill the many new shelves.

Money for new books was not included in the renovation grants, but West Potomac will continue to use its yearly book allocations and money obtained from late fees to buy more books.

Everyone is excited about the forthcoming library.

see Cafeteria page 9

Brooks
U.S. CONGRESS

MORAN
FOR CONGRESS

DEMARIS
MILLER



Government teacher Mr. Pat Chorpenning has a reputation for making his class an experience.

Photo By Theodor Rathbone

Chorpenning Adjusts to Position on Loudon County School Board

Alex Cole
Wire Reporter

All efforts by Government teacher, Mr. Patrick Chorpenning were well received as he won a seat on the Loudon County School Board November 2.

According to Chorpenning, he is currently working with the school board on balancing the budget and spends nights at meetings until 11 PM.

During his campaign, Chorpenning gained endorsements from the Loudon Educational Association, Parents Love A Neighborhood School (PLANS), the Loudon Times-Mirror Newspaper, Mr. Edward Kiley-the incumbent to the school board seat, the numerous voters.

With all of this support, Chorpenning, who ran as an independent against a Republican opponent in a state-mandated (nonpartisan) election, won handily,

garnering fifty-four percent of the votes, and winning four out of five voting precincts.

Chorpenning teaches Advanced Placement Government, Constitutional Law, Comparative Politics, and regular Government classes at West Potomac since 1997.

After declaring his intentions to run for the school board, Chorpenning first hit the campaign trail in February of last year.

Campaigning meant long hours of going door to door in his district, the Mercer District, attempting to drum up support.

As recently as last month, Chorpenning enlisted the help of his students, who traveled to Loudon County to put campaign literature in the doors of residents, and who were continually reminded to "Vote Pat Nov. 2nd." When asked about how the volunteer

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LETTERS TO EDITOR

The Renovation and the Traffic Mess

I am writing regarding last month's article about construction taking place at our school. In the master plan, the safety of all students has been carefully considered. What seems not to have been included in the master plan were the various construction companies' rules regarding the inconveniences for students and teachers due to the renovation. The companies do have rules and regulations that must be followed, but sometimes it appears these procedures are not followed, as shown in the traffic congestion around our school.

Along with many changes at the school due to construction, morning and afternoon traffic congestion has become a large problem. There are reduced numbers of parking places, and off load zones to drop passengers. Also, the two lane Quander Road traffic feeding into the one lane entrance of West Potomac causes many delays upon arriving and departing school. Perhaps an alternative to the traffic pattern, would be to open the first entrance off Quander Road and reverse the traffic. This would allow students to fill in parking spaces and allow the rest of the traffic to filter with less congestion.

Construction has added to delays and perpetuated the traffic problem more and more. For example, on rainy days, it takes some time entering and exiting the school due to blocked drains that have created standing water. There are potential accidents waiting to happen as cars attempt to go

around the miniature lakes. This is only one of the few scenes that should be reevaluated by school and construction officials in order to remedy the traffic problems.

It has been said by many students that teachers should be more lenient with the starting time of school. Daily students come in late to almost every first period class due to the inconvenience of traffic conditions. The morning announcements take up the first ten minutes of school, and should be a "leniency period" where students who were caught in traffic can enter class without penalty. The "leniency period" or morning announcement time could cover all students including car pool members, students who catch a ride with their parents, and bus riders.

As a sophomore at West Potomac, I hope to enjoy the results of the renovation process after enduring all of the hassle it has caused. I do agree that we need to be patient with the construction taking place since it has been long awaited, and much needed. However, I encourage the administration, staff, students and representatives of the construction companies to work together to reduce traffic problems and increase safety.

Chad Chadbourne
10th Grade

No Limits in Europe

Recently, I read an article in the Wire by Catherine Thrasher, concerning underage drinking in Europe versus that in the U.S., and coming from a different culture and different lifestyle, I could see where the problem is and what causes it.

Here, in the United States, teenagers have too many

restrictions, too many rules. In some counties there is no age limit for buying alcohol, and those products are available everywhere. I have found, that despite all of the rules in the US restricting teens, most teenagers in other countries, with more liberal rules, do not drink in such large amounts as those in America. In Europe, kids are taught by their parents from a young age what is right and what is not. Families are emotionally close. But here in the US, there are so many age limits, and parents think those limits will solve the problems involved in raising their children.

I have found that many school rules have an opposite impact on kids than they are meant to, simply because they are so irritating. In Europe there are no such silly rules. For example, we are restricted from wearing hats in the classroom. That rule is ludicrous, and kids break it on purpose. I remember laughing at all of the silly rules at my new high school when I first came from Europe. Where I used to live, teenagers do not wear hats to school because they want to show respect to their professors. In Europe, teens are taught to respect others, especially teachers.

Another problem, is that teens in America have nowhere to go. They cannot go to clubs because of the age limit, if they do not have car, then they can't go to the movies, to the mall, or anywhere else to socialize. Everything is so spread out compared to Europe, where the "Olde Town" is minutes away, within walking distance. In the US, even when a teenager can get to a movie, there is a limit on which movies they can see. In Europe, there are no age limits for clubs or movies. There, teenagers find many other things to do to keep themselves busy, without doing bad things and getting drunk just to have "fun".

Concerning drinking, my dad used to send me to a store to buy beer for him while he was at work. I was 6-7 years old. I was exposed to alcohol ever since I was born, but I never felt the desire to drink it. I know very few people from Europe who have real drinking problems. Teens here drink because they have no place to go and nothing to do except watch TV and play games, if they are under 16. By the time they get to be 18 and start to go out a little more without suffering from age restrictions, they already have serious problems with drinking and may be addicted. From my perspective, drinking habits come from the system in which you were raised. Think twice before you pass a law. Just because it's immediate effect may seem positive, it's final outcome may not be.

Dzejna Mujezinovic
10th Grade

To Remember Mary Fiedor

On November 28, 1999, our Athletic Trainer, Mary Fiedor passed away after suffering from Amyloidosis, a disease that began to shut down her internal organs. This has been a great loss for me personally as well as to the students of West Potomac High School. The service Mary provided to our students went way beyond any contractual obligations called for. West Potomac High School was her life. Mary began work at West Potomac High School as the school's Athletic Trainer and as an Awareness Aide when the school formed in 1985. She began teaching duties in 1997. She was always the example of professionalism in any capacity she worked. In a time when students need more guidance than ever before, she was there for our students. The amount of time spent at school helping others was unbelievable in comparison to others. It never mattered if Mary was sick or had other things to do; she was at the school.

Anyone who knew Mary can confirm that no more caring person worked at our school. She never had a bad thing to say about anybody, even if they were less than polite to her. Many of my colleagues complain about their school's trainers in terms of a good working relationship. No coach who has worked at West Potomac can ever complain about Mary. She was firm in her decisions, yet was reasonable in dealing with the best interests of coaches and athletes. I wish Mary had been my trainer when I had been an athlete.

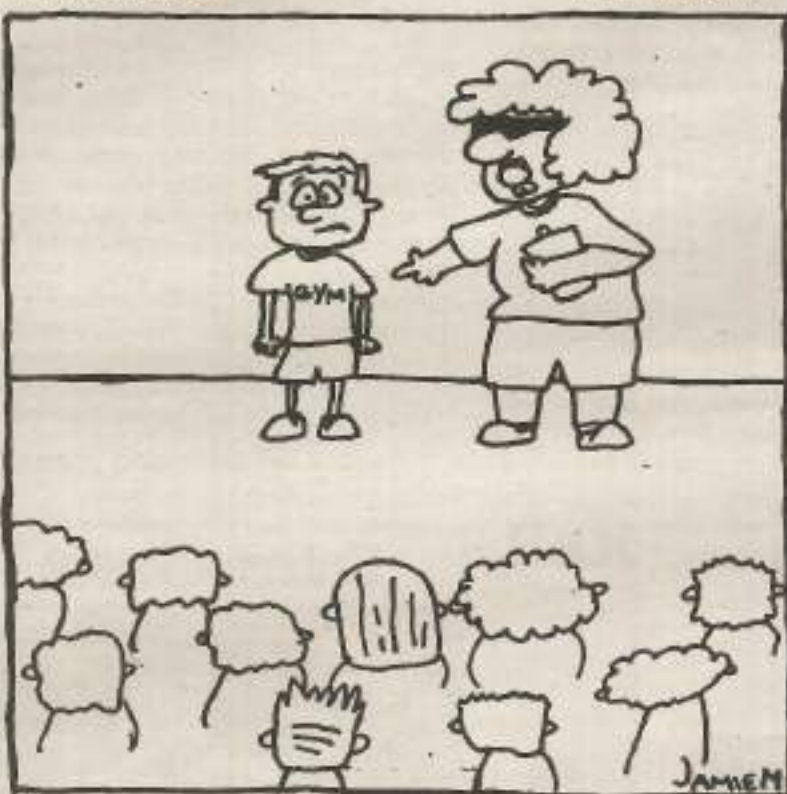
Mary attended every athletic contest she possibly could. It didn't matter if it was a so-called major sport or one that receives little attention; she was there. In the latter stages of her life, she was determined to come to one more football game. Unfortunately, it was not to be. The strain of dialysis and other medical procedures, multiple times a week, left Mary far too weak to attend any games. She was able to come to school for a practice and she was in seventh heaven. She was back with the students and coaches she missed so much. When it was time to take Mary back to her assisted living center it took ten minutes to load her into my SUV. As troubling as the journey was, she was so very happy, having been back to the activities that were taken away from her by the illness.

Every death is tragic, but Mary's death was horrendous; she never did anything to deserve such an end. Ultimately, there was not enough time left before the end to say thanks for everything she did and meant to our school. Her family asked for flowers to be sent acknowledging her passing. Flowers don't last very long. Not long enough to remember Mary. I am proposing to have the West Potomac High School gymnasium named for Mary Fiedor, in recognition of her contributions.

Name withheld by request
Faculty member

CRASH COURSE

Jamie Munyan



"Remember kids, exercise has no effect unless you're wearing one of these special suits."

Rising above the controversy...

Teen Health Deserves Serious Attention

Have you ever smoked a cigarette? Do you worry about your weight? Are you stressed out too often? Have you ever tried drugs?

We often don't realize how many decisions we make each day involve our health. Each of us should be aware and familiar with these issues, not only because it involves our safety, but also because it has been mandatory for us to take a quarter of health for at least two years in high school.

The decision to make health courses mandatory in public schools has been a cause of debate and controversy in school systems all over the United States. In Fairfax County, each student is required to take a health class, in addition to physical education. The curriculum covers issues such as violence, abuse, relationships, substance abuse, anatomy, and pregnancy. But because the issues that encompass health can be deeply

disorders, body image, stress and nutrition, and can affect them for the rest of their lives. With this in mind, health is a topic that should be addressed in great depth either at school, at home, or with peers.

In our society today, awareness and prevention needs to be stressed. But equally important is the need to help those who are living with consequences or disadvantages already. According to "Peer Potential," an

Patricia Hersch, author of *A Tribe Apart: A Journey Into the Heart of American Adolescent*, says, "Kids today are not only one step ahead of us, they're one step ahead of our imagination."

analysis of more than 100 studies on peer influence by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, "adolescents rely on peers for advice or assistance on sexual matters only when parental assistance is unavailable or inadequate." When teenagers can sense that adults are truly comfortable discussing every aspect of health issues, truths are exposed, and awareness can prevail. Professionals who offer this advice are the first to admit that it's not fail-proof.

Patricia Hersch, author of *A Tribe Apart: A Journey Into the Heart of American Adolescent*, says, "Kids today are not only one step ahead of us, they're one step ahead of our imagination." Being a teenager, in an age where movies, TV shows, and advertisements carry immoral messages, adolescents are more at risk to follow the media.

Because our community is so diverse, every aspect of health care is valid to address. Here are some numbers that may serve as a guide to fact and fiction.

Did You Know?

- * Alcohol abuse is the #1 drug in North America
- *10% of Americans who drink will develop alcohol problems
- *17 million Americans have symptoms of alcoholism (6.8%)
- *Only 1 in 10 alcoholics recover
- *50% of homicides and 25% of suicides are directly linked to alcohol
- *Alcohol use at the time of the attack was found to be 1 of the 4 strongest predictors of the likelihood of college women being raped
- *The number of college women who binge drink has more than tripled in the last decade
- *During the hours of 10pm to 4am, about half of drivers and riders killed in car accidents are above the legal limit.
- *Approximately 1 in 10 high school and college students are involved in abusive (physical or verbal) or violent dating relationship
- *Only about 4 out of 10 relationships end after the onset of violence and abuse
- *More than 145,000 women die every year from smoking-related diseases
- *Lung cancer has become the leading cause of cancer death
- *Already, 1 out of 4 young people will acquire a sexually transmitted disease before the age of 20
- *Adolescents have the highest rates of gonorrhea and chlamydia of any age group

Information found from Smith College Summer Science Program Jessica Berger, RN, ARCH- abuse and rape, Mt. Sinai Adolescent Health Care Clinic, The Nite Star Program-NYC.

Staff Vote

Agree: 28

Disagree: 5

rooted in personal and religious beliefs, the public school curriculum is limited and covers only at the bare facts.

The approach to educating children and teenagers about health is always under scrutiny. Each adult and child has an opinion on what seems most important, what needs to be addressed, and what should be left for private conversations with parents and others.

Teenagers though are at a transition period where decisions concerning alcohol, drug and tobacco use, dating, family abuse, sexual orientation, sex, pregnancy, abortion, eating

The Wire



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The Wire is a student forum at West Potomac High School, established to disseminate news, ideas and other matters of interest to West Potomac students.

The Wire will publish no material that is libelous, obscene or which will likely create a substantial disruption of the school routine.

The Wire encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be signed, but names may be withheld by request. The Wire reserves the right to edit such letters for grammar, punctuation and length.

Editorial opinions expressed in The Wire are not necessarily those of the faculty adviser, the administration of West Potomac High School, or the Fairfax County Public Schools.

Where has all the music gone?

Morning Radio Shows Put Us Back To Sleep

Ally Medina
Photo Editor

"Beep, Beep, Beep", the alarm goes off, it reads 6:30 am, and it is time to get ready for school. You wipe the drool from your mouth and turn on the radio and light. The day begins and you think to yourself, well at least the music will wake me up and get me going, even though I don't want to get out of bed. Well, that would be nice except the morning radio shows seem to forget one thing, a very important thing, play music!

These last few years I've noticed that morning radio shows have made it a point

to play as little music as possible. Instead of valuable sound waves, they seem to think we'd rather listen to some celebrity talk about their latest adventure, or some grandpa sing along to Backstreet Boys (in an attempt to win their grandchild tickets). I don't know about you, but waking up before the sun is out to the sounds of a cheese naming trivia show doesn't put me in the best mood.

ON TARGET

Alejandra Medina



Each radio station has their own radio program, along with a division of shows during the day according to the time. They think that by doing some early bird TALKING show followed by 3 minutes of

songs, people will be cheery and listen to them more.

Wrong! The last thing anybody wants at that time of morning is to listen to anyone talk; they'll get enough hot air during the day.

So what is left for us to do? I think I am right to assume that bombarding the radio with at least the radio with negative calls won't alleviate the morning pain, so popping a CD in is our only way out. Just think at least the radio will be

These last few years I've noticed that morning radio shows have made it a point to play as little music as possible.

back to normal by the time we get home from school. Then again as soon as 10 P.M. rolls around the same story continues; but some shows are better than others. With shows like Love Line, you don't mind the talking instead of music.

Lastly, a little tip to start the morning better, remember you need 500 calories to get your noggin' started for the day.

What excuse is it this time?

Everyone is Getting Out of Class Except Me

Nick Deutsch
Wire Reporter

Everyday some group of students is getting out of class for one reason or another, from the Forensics team to the Drill team. They get out early for meets, games, competitions and any other number of events. They go to Burke, and Robinson, and even to Canada.

But as much as students are getting out of classwork one question lingers, why not me? I never get out of class and I am determined to find out how and why all of these other students are.

One of the worst culprits of leaving class is the cross-country team. Almost once a week this group of stellar athletes leaves school in order to go run around in circles. However, this is not the only disturbing thing. They also get

out of class long before the meet occurs, upwards of four hours before a race. One might ask themselves why do they need to leave school early? Extracurricular sporting events are specifically scheduled so they occur after school.

A cross country runner will tell you it is absolutely necessary to leave school at twelve, four hours early, in order to make it to a meet at Burke Lake which is strangely only forty minutes away. If you ask me it's ridiculous, they should leave school at 2:10 with the rest of us.

But wait, there are other groups abusing the privilege of extra curricular activities. The Fashion classes and Chorus have both taken trips to New York. The Band is also a good example. Every year the

highlight of the band is a trip to a competition in a far away location such as Orlando or Toronto.

Once again I don't comprehend why it is necessary for the band to play music, which it does every day,

in Disney World, an amusement park. It appears to me, that they could just as well play their music somewhere nearby such as West Virginia or perhaps even the band room.

It would be one thing if these people really wanted to go to these places and did so on their own time, but they should not leave during school time. In my mind I have always thought the point of an extracurricular activity is that it is in addition to school. Hence the extra added in the word. So why can't these groups fit their activities outside of school like the rest of us? This question continues to baffle me.

I don't understand why I am supposed to be stuck in school while band and cross-country members get to leave.

The only fair solution is to let every extra curricular activity and class leave school. If the band gets to play music in Florida, why can't my government class learn government in California or Hawaii? If the cross country team leaves four hours early then all sport teams should leave four hours early. By allowing only a few students to unnecessarily leave school it appears to be pure favoritism, and I for one have had enough of it. Either none of us leave or we all leave together.

Leveling the playing field...

SAT Prep Classes Ought to be Documented

Allyson Larrick
Wire Reporter

When a high school student walks into an SAT testing room there is usually one thing on their mind: it's so early, why am I here? Their preparation for the test may have consisted of coming in an hour early the night before and eating Cheerios instead of Froot Loops. Many of the people around them though have been preparing months and years for this test.

The average SAT preparatory class ranges in price from one hundred to over one thousand dollars. Some people do not have the luxury of taking such an SAT prep class.

Don't get me wrong, I am not anti-SAT prep class. I simply feel that if you are going to take an SAT prep class, you should have to document it to colleges and universities on your applications. Taking the SATs is not a sport, and if you are going to be coached to take the test, you should have to tell people about it.

In the past, a student could take the SAT test as often as he or she pleased. He or she could then pick and choose between all of the different test scores and

include only selected scores on their applications. The College Board has since changed that and now states that every SAT score you receive will be sent to the colleges or universities you apply to. Documenting SAT prep classes is another step in this direction of fairness.

For example, let's say there are two high school

When a student is trained to take the SAT and has been consistently drilled on the material, the test is no longer measuring scholastic aptitude, it is measuring how fat one's purse is.

students. We will name them Bob and Joe. Bob comes from an affluent, upper-middle-class family. His Dad bought him a brand new car the day he turned sixteen and is currently footing the bill for Bob's \$1000 SAT

prep class. Joe lives with his mom and three brothers. His Dad ran out when he was eleven. His mom works two jobs to make ends meet and Joe is responsible for helping with the care of his siblings. Joe's family can barely afford to eat, much less pay for a \$1000 SAT prep class. When Joe scores an 1150 and Bob scores a 1350, they both apply to the same college and Bob gets in over Joe because his SAT scores are higher. Is that fair?

Had Bob not taken the prep class his score may have been equal to or below Joe's score, and vice versa. When a student is trained to take the SAT and has been consistently drilled on the material, the test is no longer measuring only scholastic aptitude, but also the thickness of one's purse. The prep class puts Bob at an unfair advantage over Joe.

Taking an SAT preparatory class is not a bad thing. However, one must realize that having the experience one gains from being in a prep class gives them an unfair edge over other competitive students, who are perhaps not as wealthy as they are. By documenting these classes, students will be compared on a balanced scale and the SAT will be measuring what it is supposed to, scholastic aptitude as opposed to wealth.

Wanted:

Lifeguards Who Can Swim

Jen Groner
Focus Editor

Wanted: professional lifeguards looking to perform a duty for the greater good of the people by providing surveillance to all aquatic facilities; to replace current lifeguards who are lazy and unaware and tend to value getting a tan, or making new friends over their very important task of watching the pool.

Wanted: Lifeguards to replace current lifeguards who are lazy and unaware and tend to value getting a tan, or making new friends over their very important task of watching the pool.

Sadly enough, this statement is likely to be seen in any newspaper today. This is simply because most lifeguard training programs today, do not address the severity of the decisions made in lifeguarding. Training courses like Red Cross, and National Pool and Waterpark Lifeguard Training (NPWLT) and American Lifeguarding Association, are all designed to inform the lifeguard on proper procedure, decision making skills, and other information vital to this profession. A test is even given at the end of each of these courses to ensure that the participants retained the knowledge. But how long can one retain that kind of knowledge, everyone has sat in history class and

reviewed and then did fine on the test, but imagine taking the test a few months later. One wouldn't do as well on the test a few months after it was studied, than if it was studied days, even moments before. How can Red Cross expect their lifeguards to retain all of the knowledge they learned for 3 years? Senior Kurt Gron who is a Red Cross and ALA lifeguard says "The tests are good, but they should be given more often."

Jeff Ellis, founder of NPWLT, has a solution to this problem, have lifeguards recertify every year and require them to have at least 4 hours of monthly inservice to keep them ready to respond to any kind of emergency, at any time. Having them recertify every year will also allow training associations like NPWLT, to test current lifeguards as well as inform them of the new changes coming to the profession. Lifeguards who are confused about skills now, will surely be more confused about more recent things, like AEDs (Automatic Electronic Defibrillators), Oxygen tanks, and V-vacs. These tools while new, are helping to save lives and without training can be used improperly, maybe making the situation worse.

Most lifeguards who were faced with an aquatic emergency never thought that it would happen to them prior to the accident. This mindset, that it will never happen to them, has caused a lack of attentiveness to the pool. The better lifeguards have already been through an aquatic emergency and finally realize how important of a job it is. It also stresses the importance of always knowing your skills, because a lifeguard can never predict when something will happen, it's impossible.

It's easy today to spot those lifeguards who are not doing their job effectively. Next time you go to the pool, watch the lifeguard. Are they really moving their head and scanning the entire area of the water above and below? Then, ask yourself, is this a safe place for my child, my little brother or sister even for me to swim and play without worry?

Take care.



INTRNT SLNG:

Are you a victim?

Sasha Cannon
Editor - N- Chief

Intrnt Slng. Internet slang. Does anyone else hate it as much as I do? I've had enough of people being too busy with their lives to type an entire word instead of some three-letter abbreviation for a six-letter one. How lazy do you have to be to write "THNX" instead of thanks or "LTNS" for "long time no see?"

There are so many random "slang" words and phrases that I can't even keep up. In the beginning, there was "LOL." That started it all. The puzzled looks on every internet user's face soon gave way to delight as they realized they could electronically mimic laughing with a delicious little three letter dab of pseudo-english. Laughing Out Loud. Oh yes. It made life easier, and made "haha" obsolete. What a time to be alive.

Then it started to get out of control. The confusion rose around the controversial "ROFL" and "LMAO," both released around the same time. They were even

more confusing than LOL and one even contained profanity (but see, that's what made it so devilishly funny and enjoyable). These were soon merged into the juggernaut of "ROFLMAO." yes, "rolling on the floor laughing my *** off" was the giant of internet language. It was the messiah of swearing. It was the McDonald's of fast food. You just couldn't top such a risky combination of internet abbreviations into one acronym so delightfully summarized.

In the beginning, there was "LOL." That started it all. The puzzled looks on every internet user's face soon gave way to delight as they realized they could electronically mimic laughing with a delicious little three letter dab of pseudo-english.

At this point, things went berserk. Good, hard working, honest people logged on to the internet, seeing these new slang words, and realized that anything was possible. They could be the next Steve Connors (the man reputed to have invented ROFLMAO), they could be trailblazers in internet history! New slang was formed every day. TNKS. CNGRTS. J/K. BRB. STD. GUIGB. N/Y. It flooded the internet. Baby talk came along soon after, as adults playfully returned to their halcyon days of childhood... "hugzzz," "huggles," "smooches," and of

Grief:

When Life Hands Us More Than We Can Handle

Courtney Rivkin
Wire Reporter

For the most part, one would think that kids have a pretty easy life. Living with your parents, - or, at least, someone who takes care of you; get what you need, and sometimes what you want; and the biggest challenge in your life is school.

But for some kids, the cookie doesn't crumble that easily. Now, in the 90's, the era of suicide, cancer, drunk driving, and AIDS, some kids have a little more to worry about. Suddenly, school doesn't seem so important, and you begin to rely on your friends and family more than you ever thought possible.

Losing a loved one feels like your heart literally breaks in two. Your body goes numb and stays that way for a while, and you are in denial for even longer.

When someone you know dies, it is very tough to deal with, especially when you are young. There are sleepless nights, with rough days following, and everything seems to move a lot slower.

When an immediate family member passes, however, it is a completely different story. After losing a mom, dad, sister, or brother, someone you have known for fourteen, fifteen, sixteen years, it can feel like there is nothing that could ever fill that emptiness. Losing a loved one feels like your heart literally breaks in two. Your body goes numb and stays that way for a while, and you are in denial for even longer. You think, "Not me. No way. My family?" It just doesn't seem real. "Life without them," you think. "What does that possibly mean?"

What it means is that you've got to live your life, but you can pick your own pace. Tell yourself, "One day at a time, one month at a time." You have got to believe in yourself, to be able to cope. If you have great friends and a loving family, then you can make it.

Remember, set your pace. It's okay to cry. Lean on your friends and let them lean on you. And love your family. After all, what doesn't kill you, only makes you stronger.

course, "kisses," all became the trendiest sayings. Now the internet is a wreck. It's a burned-out battleground where those incapable of regular speech have taken over. Maybe one day, when our children's children have inherited the world, this new language will be obsolete, and we will return to the days of the early 1990's, when "online" wasn't even a word.

So next time you're about to electronically "laugh out loud"... think twice before typing. You may just save the revolution.

They Just Want to Grow Up, No More Toys'R'Us Kids

Meagan O'Neill
Wire Reporter

So, call me crazy, but most 12 year olds look older than me, a junior in high school. Sad, I know...well, for them anyway.

In an attempt to look older, some younger girls try to hide their immature faces with loads of make-up and their body with sensual clothes. As I walk down the street, I see a kid's face in scary amounts of eyeliner and mascara. The kid is wearing a midriff and skin tight jeans, just screaming rape.

Young girls flaunt themselves around without knowing the possible consequences, the dangers there are in this world. Kids are dying to be accepted by older kids and to be "cooler." To do this some will accept the beer handed to them or that date offered by a much older guy.

I mean, who do they think they're fooling? They're losing their childhood. They don't comprehend how precious

it is. You have your whole life ahead to live as an adult but only those early years to live as an innocent, care-free child. You can never get those years back. Once you hit a certain age, responsibilities and life truly kick in.

I remember in 5th or 6th grade kids played an innocent game of family. However, 5th and 6th graders today intensely date older kids. Dating should be reserved for older ages. The cliché, "with age comes experience," should hold true. You have to have something to look forward to when you are a kid.

Kids need to lay off cramming everything in and just go run after an ice cream truck, half naked in the heat of the summer, like the good ole' days.

Boys and girls that young should be playing outside with other neighborhood kids and no worries in the world. The way kids are acting these days, they need to worry about STD's, getting hurt by drugs, or the dangers of staying out late.

I realize that all kids have always yearned for the feeling of being older and will go to great lengths to prove it. I'm sure we all remember playing school or dressing up in our parents' clothes. Not only do kids

You have your whole life ahead to live as an adult but only the early years given to live as an innocent, carefree child. Once you lose those years, you can never get them back.

not look like kids anymore, they don't act like them either. In the summers, there are hardly anymore lemonade stands left, and in the winter there aren't as many screaming sled riders in sight. Now a days kids are more to be found in the malls or wandering the street just

looking for trouble.

A reason these kids grow up too fast is that parents spend less time with their kids. Often both parents work, and kids come home after school to an empty house. When you're always by yourself at a young age, you're forced to grow up on your own and take care of yourself.

Also, these younger kids, around seven to thirteen, shouldn't get as much freedom as they do now. Kids often get more leeway just so the parents don't have to deal with them, or to dodge an argument.

Kids are also more disrespectful to others, including teachers and parents, because parents just brush it aside and don't deal with it. Parents don't recognize the consequences of this.

I just wish we could all go back to the carefree days when social status didn't matter, the word "cool" meant you had Scooby Doo underoos, and kids were kids. The day of scooters, pogo sticks, and playing in the sprinklers...no one can be too cool for these things. They are the coolest things!

55 And Still Alive. Question is, Can They Drive?

Kurt Gron
Focus Editor

Driving is a one of the rites of passage from childhood to adulthood. With the ability to drive comes freedom never before seen to a youth. This freedom is retained often well into old age and often this retention is not appropriate.

Many drivers of course gets annoyed by the occasional elderly driver going twenty in a thirty-five zone. This is not that serious of a problem and one can merely shrug off this as an inconvenience. Unfortunately however, the driving practices of some of the

elderly are not so mundane. From just recent personal experience I have observed elderly drivers doing the following:

One driver at night coming out of D.C. on the memorial bridge with no headlights on merged left while signaling right and narrowly missed the vehicle in which I was riding. As I passed I observed three elderly ladies. That driver almost caused three accidents in a less than five minute period.

In addition I have on numerous occasions observed elderly people who have difficulty walking or an inability to walk altogether, exit an establishment, make their way to their

vehicle and then drive off.

On the surface this makes me a little uncomfortable, but when I think about it it is even more unsettling. It raises questions such as, if the person has difficulty walking, do they have the physical power to stop the large vehicles often driven by the elderly, such as Cadillacs, Buicks, and premium Fords?

Research tends to support my concerns. One instance is a fairly recent Iowa State study in which the driving skills of the elderly were analyzed. According to the Iowa State Daily Leader, the study reported, "Each of us has certain cognitive skills, and regardless of age we have people whose cognitive skills may be below the

norm," but the study found that, "there is a greater likelihood of cognitive skill loss above a certain age."

In addition, in 1997 in Las Vegas, Nevada, more people were killed in accidents caused by senior citizens than by drunk drivers.

My concern is not with all elderly drivers. Many can be counted as some of the most experienced, reasonable and safest on the road, but sometimes precautions are needed. This is one such case. Some type of regularly scheduled testing of elderly drivers is necessary, perhaps starting at a certain age and repeated every few years or so to keep incompetent or unsafe drivers off of the roads.

Traffic Problems Crash Down

Christy Heffernan
Wire Reporter

Every morning more and more students find themselves asking the same question; "Was that the late bell?"

Getting up at the crack of dawn to prepare for the day is hard enough, but with faculty and administration advising students to get up even earlier to account for horrible traffic patterns, many are left wondering, "Isn't there something that can be done?"

With construction and overcrowding issues plaguing school, perhaps each morning's massive backup is the least of the administration's worries. But is dishing out the tardies and requesting an even earlier departure for school really the answer?

The daily backup on Quander Road often stretches well past the school in both directions, ending well past Quander Road School in one direction and leaving many stuck behind the light at the intersection of Quander and Beacon Hill Road for up to 10 minutes. Many, even those who live a normal 5 minute commute from the school, find themselves forced to leave very early to make it on time. Sophomore Beth

Hansen said "I have to leave my house at 6:50 each morning to avoid the traffic and make it on time to school."

For many, leaving so early is a struggle, and they often find themselves late to class. Junior Lindsay Shannon said, "I hate how much traffic there is in the morning. I have to leave 15 minutes earlier than I did last year, and I'm still always late."

Some teachers are understanding about the morning mess on Quander Road and are more lenient to those students who find themselves tiptoeing into class during the morning announcements. Shouldn't more teachers have this mind set? Sitting in traffic until the moment they are dropped off is no reason for a student to fail their first block classes. Until the traffic mess is cleared up, and the drive to school is a fairly smooth one, teachers should forgive those students who miss the bell by a minute or two. Students should not be penalized for the inefficient traffic pattern.

The morning commute system at our school is not working. Before penalizing students for the inevitable traffic the encounter daily, teachers and faculty should look to the source of the problem, and work with the students to alleviate, or hopefully, solve it.

Biased Teachers Cause Trouble

Faye Rausch
Managing Editor

Recently, in Mr. Mace's History 11 class, I experienced an exciting, heated debate on various aspects of West Potomac life, things that students might want to change. Although students had more than a class period worth of stuff to debate, it didn't take long for me to prioritize what I would definitely want to improve at West Potomac. Among the issues of, "cleaner bathrooms", "off-campus lunch", and "better supplies", I thought of a more impacting change that should be made in the school system.

West Potomac is without a doubt, full of biased teachers and administrators. Several times I have harbored resentments for the way a teacher treated certain students, treating them better than my friends or me.

I have found throughout the year that athletic students get off easier than nonathletic, thanks to the coaches who double as teaching staff, and who feel they can't afford to lose valuable players.

I have seen white students treated

better than black, and vice versa. Surprisingly, more negative treatment is often dished out by same race teachers.

I have seen girls singled out by male teachers, and I have seen guys get off easier. And I have seen the exact opposite; the girls on occasion have gotten off easier than the guys. And why? Because the girl looks innocent or the guy plays a sport.

To tell you the truth, it is sickening. Kids fear for their grades, and wonder if, because they are on the Forensics team instead of the baseball team, will they get first choice on a project. They wonder if they will be denied the chance to retake a test, like the white guy sitting next to him.

Many times, teachers are not aware of the bias they show. It is when students do not stand up for themselves that there are unnecessary punishment, inaccurate grades, and unhappy students.

If there is a problem, students should approach it, not deny their own rights as a West Potomac Student. Fairness is key. All students and people are created equal. Lets try to act on that.

Christmas And Relatives; Holiday Hell?

Meagan O'Neill
Wire Reporter

Phew.. Yes, it is that time again, Christmas vacation! A time where you can kick back, get a big tub of chocolate brownie ice cream and watch the tube 'til your eyes melt away, where you have no worries and your main goal is to have as much fun as you can in that lil' break from a whole crapload of school. The school year seems never-ending and even tho' we're not halfway into it, it has sucked my will to wake up weekdays. But, ah yes, it is Christmas vacation; that little time took out of our oh-so-very-busy school year to sleep in, stay out with your friends 'til dawn...and yes, even on a Tuesday night, because we won't have school the next day. So you pack every inch of your calendar full of fun things to do with your friends, not sparing a single second. Your tummy tingles with excitement, you know it does, for the excitement of no school and no worries...this bringing nothin' but fun. All this fun n' folly at least until your mom bangs through your bedroom door tellin' ya to pack your bags for a week at Grandma's!!

Why kids must be put through the torture of spending the holiday with family is a mystery to me. There is no point of every branch of your family's tree draggin' their teenagers out of their caves of a room for a 5 hour car ride squished between your not so trim uncle and screaming 5 year-old cousin, all bearing your big winter coats with the heat on at 90 degrees just for a "family get-together."

Now let's think, what is the purpose of this "get-together?" Family bonding? Maybe so your great uncles can exchange war stories from back in the day, or maybe so your grandmas can exchange health problems, or just maybe so your cousin will lock herself in the

bathroom again because your aunt said her butt was getting bigger. All this chaos is tempting I know, and it is what every kid wants to do for his or her "vacation." Now, I don't think you would consider mashed potatoes flown in your face at the kiddie table, screaming relatives, or thirty fingers pinching your cheeks blue a vacation, I know I wouldn't. Not even to mention getting out the ole' sleeping bag and trying to pitch a tent on the dust farm of your great grandma's living room floor, then trying to fall asleep to the melodies of your uncle's snoring and your grandma's hacking, and finally awaking at 6am to the horn of your Grandpa's old station-wagon and a dog older than you lickin' your face. You keep a tally calendar under your pillow, marking off the days...awaitin' for the last one to go home because now even school sounds like heaven compared to this.

The only thing that keeps you at only the brink of insanity is the thought of opening all your Christmas presents, and when the day finally comes you sigh with relief for now you will finally get that stereo you have been dreaming about. Opening one present after another you think, "Oh, it will be the next one...that's the big one." As you eagerly open the next one though your jaw drops in horror; your aunt must have mistaken the stereo you wanted with the one your 2 year-old cousin asked for, because now you are the proud owner of a purple Barney C.D. player.

Most of us must go through this, or something like it, for the holidays. Even though it does sound like hell for a week and we always wish we were with our friends instead of surrounded by insane family, I would certainly miss it if it were gone. Even tho' I hate to admit it, I am glad my mom forces me to get in that car for a memory-filled week with the family...and I would truly miss hearing about my Aunt Mary's corns and hemroids as she passes the Christmas ham.



Homeless children gather for an event at a capital hill middle school.

Homeless Children Go To Sleep Hungry

Ana Kornely
Wire Reporter

"The weather outside is frightful, but inside it's quite delightful..." So goes a popular Christmas song. It may be easy to lightheartedly sing this song from the comfort of our warm, cozy homes, but the homeless are exposed to the elements. According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, there are about 700,000 homeless people at any given time. Think about that next time you sit down to a plentiful holiday meal. We are all guilty of forgetting about homeless people, especially in the holiday season when we are surrounded by friends and family. But as the average American family celebrates, what do the homeless do?

Just as geese fly south and we crank up the heat in preparation for winter, the area homeless shelters

engage in extra preparation for the cold season. Shelter is the main concern of the homeless. The majority of homeless people take shelter in vehicles, but a large portion have more temporary housing, such as boxes or tents. However, most shelters are already filled to capacity. As many as 25% of requests for shelter go unmet due to lack of resources. The Arlington-Alexandria Coalition for the Homeless has recently

expanded in preparation for the upcoming winter. It can now house 185 people. Organizations like Habitat for Humanity are always putting up housing, no matter the season. Food and warm clothes are also paramount concerns for the homeless. To meet this need, clothes drives by many local charities are currently accepting both new and used clothes, as well as gift certificates. Food drives, such as the one conducted by the Interact Club at our school, continue to accept canned goods to benefit local food banks. Shelters are also looking for volunteers to serve meals on especially Christmas, but other days as well.

In our area, 56% of homeless are under age 18. For this reason, many area

shelters and charities are conducting toy drives, as well as looking for volunteers to wrap and deliver presents. Organizations like the

The majority of homeless people take shelter in vehicles, but a large portion have more temporary housing, such as boxes or tents.

Arlington-Alexandria Coalition for the Homeless are sponsoring Adopt-a-Family programs, to help formally homeless but still struggling families to have a happy holiday season. Ever since the program Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) was cut, the number of homeless families has increased to 40% of total homeless people. This makes the time and goods given by volunteers even more vital.

Key Club Provides Opportunities to Volunteer

Alejandra Medina
Photo Editor

How often do you do something to help your community, on your own and not because you have to? Not often right? That's what I thought. It's sad to see how little we do to help out in this world and how many opportunities we have. Usually the excuse given for not doing community service is, "I don't have the time," or "I don't know what I'd like to do." Well that's just bologna.

We have many clubs here in school that push students to help out, such as the National Honor Society. Some of these clubs are just ignored.

A good volunteering club too often ignored is the Key Club. Usually Key Clubs consists of hundreds, yes hundreds, of members, and yet our very own West Potomac Key Club has only 8 active members. How do we expect our world to be-

come more productive if we only help out when we are pressured to help? I doubt that technique will let us pick up the habit of volunteering and practice it throughout our lives.

The Key Club runs at an international level, and it is extremely active in volunteer work. The back bone of all Key Clubs is the Kiwanis Club, since the Kiwanis club is the Key Club sponsor. There are more than 350,000 Kiwanis members throughout the world. The Kiwanis club helps guide the branching clubs such as the key Club, Keyettes and Circle K. Activities such as selling Christmas trees at the Belle View Shopping Center and the West Potomac All Night Graduation Party are examples of the things the Kiwanis Club helps out in.

So you see the opportunity to make a difference is closer than you may think. Help out your school, join the Key Club!

And remember, what goes around comes around, Volunteer!!!

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CARRY-OUT CATERING

School Cracks Down on Parking Lot

Trevor Gibson
Wire Reporter

Some West Potomac students may be tired of seeing others get away with smoking in the parking lot, on the football field, behind Springbank, and in the bathrooms. Perhaps others could not care less, but as of a few weeks ago, the administrators were taking action on the issue.

Students are being shooed from the parking lots with the threat of being written up. Day says that the number of students caught smoking each week has increased greatly, and there are reports of people getting caught twice in one day.

The security staff is cracking down on the smokers on campus, and the people using the parking lots as social spots. This change is a direct result of at least one member of the security staff being mobile at all times. It used to be that at lunch each member of the staff had a certain area to watch, but there was very little mobility in this system. In the first week of November alone 25-30 students were caught getting their nicotine fix. Punishment for this offense increases each time a student is caught. Some of these punishments are a phone call to parents, AIA, and "Smoking 101," as the smoking awareness class has been dubbed.

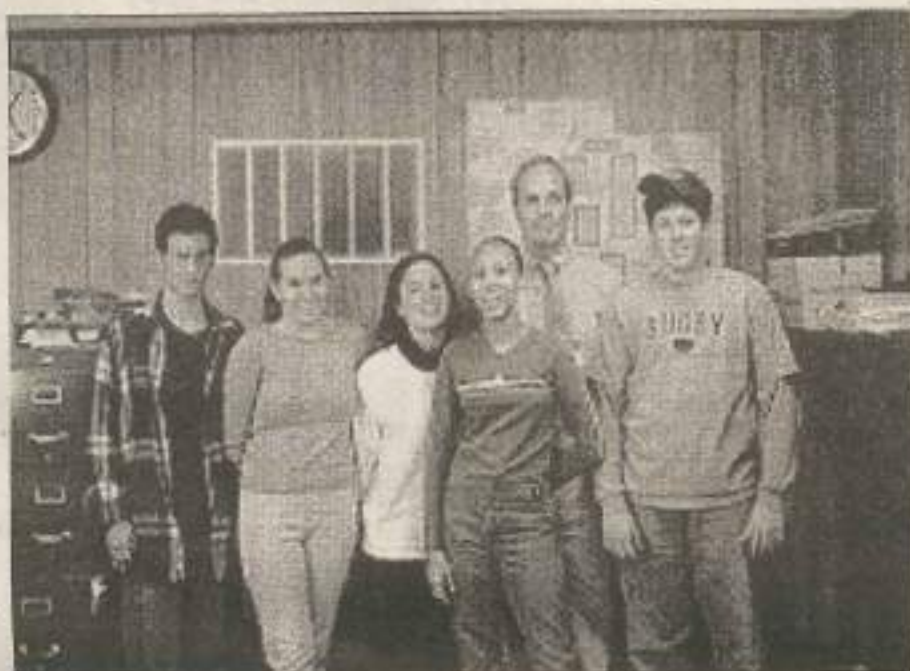
While the security staff might be pleased with all of this, there are complaints from some students. It is not only those who smoke that are complaining to the staff, but those who go to their cars during the day for different reasons. Senior Stephen Bingle said, "I don't rely on going to my car, but to others it is their locker." If you are one of those students who makes many trips to your car, for the rest of the year you might want to make other arrangements.

Chorpenning from page 1.

work went, Senior Drew Hansen said, "It was great. Chorpenning gave us more than adequate sustenance, which included doughnuts and pizza." The campaign literature addressed Chorpenning's agenda, which includes, but is not limited to: Full funding for the school budget; increased parental involvement; smaller class sizes; safe neighborhood schools; integration of technology into the classroom; and the development of school-business partnerships.

In addition to his ideas, Chorpenning also stressed the fact that, if elected, he would be the only teacher on the School Board.

Forensics Team Continues Stellar Season



Mr. Johnson with some talented members of his forensics team

Erika Benitez
Wire Reporter

As the team gets ready for their next tournament, Mr. Alan Johnson, the sponsor for the Forensics team, is very excited about what this year is bringing.

"I am very pleased with what my freshmen can do. G'Nece Jones, Simon Gershman, and Che Young have lots of talent," Johnson said.

Veterans of the team, including Juniors Gina Rojas, Katrina Weintraub, Faye Rausch, and Lauren Pool, also add to the team's strong structure.

They are consistent medal winners in almost every category they compete under.

Said Rojas, "I like Forensics because it gives teens awards for being creative, unique, and basically an everyday teen."

In their last competition, which took place on December 8th, Junior Dane Underwood, Senior Dan Purkey, and Sophomore Sarah Coolidge came in the top three spots under the categories of impromptu, extemporaneous, and dramatic interpretation.

According to Johnson, impromptu speaking is where you are given seven minutes to present a speech on any

given quote. Extemporaneous speaking is writing a speech given seven minutes on a topic of national importance, and dramatic interpretation is where drama is memorized and read from a script using two or more voices from the same person. All are difficult to perform.

Underwood is one of the best at all three in the school, and apparently, in the county. He came in first overall in the December 8th tournament under the impromptu category, and he also snagged first under the extemporaneous category. In the October 17th competition, the forensics team's first competition, Underwood came in first overall in all three categories.

In addition to Rojas, Junior Aida Ibisevic and Junior Meredith Evans finished off West Potomac's top spot by coming in first, second, and third, respectively, under the original oratory and poetry categories.

With talent such as this on the team, it was not a challenge for them to place first overall in the tournament.

This is the first time recently that Forensics and Debate placed first overall, and with the greatest number of students winning in any given category, according to Johnson.

After their victory celebration, what is Johnson's next feat?

He is working with the debate team to change "offensive" school mascots. "Culturally or socially offensive mascots should not be foisted on a public too cynical to care. The future should be soft and peaceful, and we have a responsibility to make it so," he stated.

News Briefs

Students Rights Group Launched

High school students who feel that their ideas are never heard now have a place to voice their opinions. An ambitious organization called the Virginia Students Rights Organization (VSRO) is looking for all students interested in speaking their mind about student issues. According to President Mark Bergman, the organization's purpose is, "to advance student issues at the General Assembly and represent the voices of students across the state of Virginia. The Organization's first goal is to pass the Advil Bill, which would allow students to bring over-the-counter drugs to school without fear of suspension or expulsion. All students interested in joining VSRO can call President Mark Bergman at 804-740-3096 or be put on the organization's mailing list by e-mailing your e-mail address to iggyberg@aol.com. You can also visit the VSRO Website at www.bergmangroup.com/vsro.

Swim Team Makes a HUGE Splash

According to swim team coach Mr. Bob Lombardi, the swim team is said to be the biggest ever in West Potomac history. The team consists of one hundred and fifty members. Apparently no cuts were made.

Drama Department Ambitious Again

Following the huge success of *Pride and Prejudice*, the drama department is going to offer both a "Winter of One-Acts" and a winter play this year.

Items Stolen from Photojournalism/Art

According to Photojournalism/Art teacher Ms. Mel Mobley, valuable items have been stolen from the photojournalism/yearbook room in Springbank. Lost items include software and memory from the room's computer, and a zip drive. Mobley has made 3 police reports this year.

Y2K is on the way

As reported in the *Lee Lance*, the "Y2K bug may close schools." Fairfax County Y2K coordinator told the *Lance*, "We've checked a lot of stuff but we're sure we're going to miss something." Grammick said if a school shut down is necessary, it will be handled like a snow day.



- Pointless Defacing

Pouring concrete is heavy and difficult work. Some students have shown less than reasonable respect for construction workers' hard work.

Cafeteria, from page 1

especially Miller who said, "We love the fact that we are going to be the focal point of the school."

The new cafeteria is also close to finished and is scheduled to open in mid-January. The finishing touches are now underway. The ovens are being installed, the last tiles are being laid, the lighting system is being wired, and the tables and chairs are getting assembled.

"We love the fact that we are going to be the focal point of the school."

Everyone is excited about the new cafeteria, especially the seniors. This year, West Potomac has a new three bell schedule to accommodate for the fact that we only have two cafeterias. Senior April Boone said "I am excited for the new cafeteria so that I don't have to sit so close to underclassmen." After the new cafeteria is finished, people will have even more space, more tables, and a greater number of lunch lines for faster service. One of the new additions will be tables that are fixed to the ground with chairs bolted to the tables. With this new feature, people will be able to eat lunch in a more relaxed ambience (that includes elbow room). West Potomac students can look forward to lunch in a more comfortable cafeteria.



Photo by Trevor Rathbone
The new media center at West Potomac

Local Heroes Amundson and Puller Take High Positions in State Government

Kerry Casey
Wire Reporter
Ben Rankin
News Editor

At the December 16 faculty meeting, Kristen J. Amundson was honored for her work as a longtime school board member and as chairperson of the school board. Amundson has been elected a State Delegate to the Virginia Legislature and will retire from the school board December 22.

According to a statement made by Principal Ms. Carma Norman, "Besides being a parent who served in numerous parent-volunteer types of ways while her daughter was a student at West Potomac, Kris went to bat for West Potomac in countless other ways... Over the past eight and a half years, Kris has supported West Potomac's needs with courage and fervor, and we owe her a great deal of gratitude."

Another local hero, Linda T. Puller, a long-time incumbent as Fairfax County's delegate to the Virginia House of Delegates for the 44th district, which includes West Potomac, retired from the House of Delegates and was recently elected as a state senator representing this district. With the Delegate position free, Amundson campaigned for and was elected as Fairfax County's new Delegate.

Amundson has put a lot of work into this area. She was the President of the Fairfax County School Board for the past 8 years, and also of her Civic Association the past few years. While her daughter attended West Potomac, Amundson was a member of both Crew and Band boosters, and was on the PTA.

During her recent campaign for the House of Delegates, Amundson's focus

was on education. In an interview last month, Amundson said

she decided to run because, "Someone who really understands education needs to be the person who goes to Richmond." Amundson considers her greatest professional accomplishment as a member of the School Board to be lowering first grade class sizes in classrooms with poor students. She is also known for bringing the International Baccalaureate program to

this community, and if I am elected I will work as hard as I can."

Senator Linda T. (Toddy) Puller is also new to a position as a state Senator. Her decision to run for the office came after much deliberation and discussion with her colleagues over whether to retire from her long-time position in the House of Delegates. Puller stated in a press conference that she was ready to move on from her past office but will continue to push for the issues for which she is known, such as higher education.

Toddy Puller has a very interesting family history. Her late husband, First Lieutenant Lewis B. Puller, Jr. of the United States Marine Corps, is one of the most respected veterans of the Vietnam War. Puller, Jr. lost his legs and parts of both hands when he stepped on an enemy land mine in Vietnam. After turning his ordeal into the Pulitzer Prize-winning autobiography *Fortunate Son*, Puller became heavily involved with painkillers and alcoholism to dull his acquired disabilities. These problems culminated in his suicide 5 years ago. He now rests at Arlington National Cemetery.

Toddy Puller has also had her share of health problems. As a result of a stroke several years ago, Puller suffered paralysis in one-half of her body and was restricted to a wheelchair. On her own accord, Puller put herself on a rigorous physical therapy program and is now able to walk on her own. Her life story is an inspiration for all her peers. She never let her disabilities take over her life, and has always been loyal to the issues of reducing violence in schools, lowering class sizes, and organizing higher quality education, among others.

Both Puller and Amundson are very enthusiastic about their new positions and will work hard for what they believe. It will be interesting to see how Amundson and Puller will affect our state of Virginia in their new positions.



Fairfax County.

As a delegate, Amundson says she would like to hire 2,000 more teachers. She supports the Standards of Learning, but says that "the tests aren't ready for prime time." She would like for the writers of the SOLs to understand the consequences of those tests on students and teachers because standardized tests are "here to stay." Amundson is responsible for getting the county to pay for Advanced Placement testing so that students would not have to. On the issue of school violence, Amundson wants to "close all the loopholes that would allow guns on campuses." Amundson says she most wants people to know that "I care deeply about

*John Randolph Proudly
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The Wire

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Historian: Veronica Fitzpatrick
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Sponsor: Mrs. Margie Croes

Freshman Class

President: Sarah Gilmore
Vice-President: Missy Davis
Treasurer: Jessie Scott
Secretary: Sara Bess Norton
Co-Historians: Maggie Fox-Klein
and Anne Harris
SGA Rep: Shannon
Carpenter
Sponsors: Mrs. Pamela Miller
and Mr. Samuel Dickson

Them 80's Toys



Gloworm

Who could ever forget the Gloworm? This green, foot-long, stuffed animal was every three-year-old's dream. Usually green, sometimes yellow, the Gloworm's face lit up when you squeezed it. Selling for about \$10.00 in 1984, these toys flew off the shelves of toy stores across the nation.



My Little Pony

Alejandra Medina

"...Sunshine, Sweetheart, Melody, Brighteyes, Patch and Clover... Bonbons making cookies, girls... Hurry up on over! My Little Pony My Little Pony!", the song still rings in my ears. Every day at 6 am the My Little Pony cartoon would come on with its sweet lullaby. A toy's popularity comes and goes, but the memories they evoke always stay. My Little Ponies on the other hand are making a surprising comeback! Yeah! There are so many little horsies to pick from like Magic Message Pony, Cloud Dreamer, Pretty N' Pearly Seaponies, Ripple, Brush N' Grow Pony, Twisty Tail, Candy Cane Pony, Molasses, Drink N' Wet Babies, Snookums and more! How fun. I'm sure many of you remember how fun they were to play with especially when they got to go to the beach (your bathtub) and go off the diving board (the nozzle). They would have Pony Water Olympics all the time. Of course the Seaponies always won! They had a glorious empire along the shore filled by sea foam (bubbles from your bubble bath), and they'd eat Pudding Delight (shampoo with a side of conditioner).

Regardless of the scenarios picked, My Little Ponies were a must have toy which grew up along with you. Ten years after the ponies came out Hasbro stopped making them, and this was a major disappointment to many. Now, out of the ashes they rise again like a Phoenix and fill shelves once more, so take advantage and collect them all over again.

ALF, the Alien television show, 1990. ALF is a sarcastic yet huggable cat, and in children's

Trans

More Than

Paul

Funk and Junk: A Trip Down Vintage Lane

By Ana Kornely and Kelly Beyer

Funk and Junk is your center for 80's memorabilia. Numerous items grab your attention as you enter the land of your childhood nostalgia. Whether it is the Rainbow Brite suitcase on your left or the stack of A-Team trading cards on your right, Funk and Junk has something for every 80's child.

Located at 106 1/2 N. Columbus St., this vintage shop is one of the most eclectic in Old Town. It carries everything from bowling shirts to aquamarine vinyl furniture. You can find the Gumby figurine you lost ten years ago or pick up a copy of your favorite childhood book. These items and more, however, come at a price. You can spend hours marveling at the wonderful array of items crammed into these two tiny rooms.

Jeff, the store manager, believes that within the next couple of years there will be a huge market for the store's merchandise. "People regret throwing away these valuable things, but throwing them away actually makes them more valuable," he said. Teenagers and collectors form the main market for these items. According to Jeff, youngsters go for the items they can use, such as a Strawberry Shortcake lunch box for a purse, rather than a talking Urkel doll for display purposes only.

Small as the store is, it is jam-packed with 80's goodness and unique wares. There is something to satisfy everyone, no matter how discriminating their taste. A trip to Old Town cannot be complete without a visit to Funk and Junk. Says junior Autumn Brown, "Funk and Junk has a variety of late 70's and early 80's clothing and 'junk.' I love funky stuff like that."



Funk and Junk

Transformers; the comic book, the cartoon series, the toy, the phenomenon. It all began in 1984 with the advent of Hasbro's Transformers action figures. An action figure, with design roots in Japanimation, that could turn from a humanoid structure to a sporty automobile with just a few simple gyrations. The premise was classic, an ancient struggle between good and evil robots, who just happened to transform into cars, trucks, airplanes and other objects.

The initial success of the action figures led to an animated television series, which expanded the story line and spawned a full-scale movie in the late 1980's. After the cartoon series ended, the action figures continued to sell throughout the late 80's and Hasbro continually expanded the story line with dozens of new characters.

The first generation toys eventually died out along with the comic book series. However, in the early 1990's, a second generation of toys emerged bringing with it a new animated series: *Transformers Generation 2*. The second generation quickly became known as the *Beast Wars*. This award winning television series is widely praised by critics and does very well in its ratings category. It has actually done well enough that



Getting Down With Fraggles Rock

Sarah Biersack

The Jim Henson production with familiar fraggles, doozers, gorgs, and the all knowing, talking trash-heap is back. The Odyssey Channel is featuring the celebrated children's show, Fraggles Rock, Monday-Friday at 7:00 AM and 5:30 PM. As if that's not enough, its animated counterpart will be airing Saturdays at 8:30 AM.

Nothing could keep a child as entranced, as glued to a television than Fraggles Rock. This forgotten dream land of a subterranean puppet world captivates all the senses with happy ditties, hyperactive fraggles, energetic doozers, and a motley of colorful characters. The show's inventiveness triumphed in getting the attention of kids and its success kept the show in production from 1983 to 1987.

While flying over the Atlantic ocean Jim Henson originated his idea of a show depicting world peace. "What the show is really about is people getting along with other people, and understanding the delicate balance of the natural world. These are topics that can be dealt with in a symbolic way, which is what puppets basically do all the time," Henson said.

Woozle World? In the early stages of its origination, Fraggles were drawn under the name woozles. After woozles, a 1960s moppet series named Frackles influenced a new creature with attitude and beat, thus the creation of Fraggles.

Fraggle Hill was the suggested title for the show, but was too wimpy from the start. The Henson show was renamed Fraggles Rock, and the attitude and theme developed from there.

"We want to deal with situations that children encounter, and to work through them in a way that will be helpful and at the same time completely entertaining," said Henson about his creation.

These musically energized, dancing, swimming, active 18 inch tall moppets live in the mazes of colorful caverns. The main Fraggles include Gobo, Wembley, Red, Mokey, and Boober. The Doozers are half the size of Fraggles and create crystal towers for them to eat. The garden of the Gorgs neighbors Fraggles Rock and houses the only anti-peace aspect of the show. Junior, a disobedient Gorg preys on the Fraggles, but never succeeds in successfully keeping them captive. Fraggles must go through the



Gorg's kingdom to ask the trash-heap, Marjory, important questions. Philo and Gunge are rodents that live on and assist Marjory. The only human is Doc, an old man who attempts to invent things that never seem to work. His dog, Sprocket, seems to know about the creatures that live beneath in the world beneath his home, but his size prevents him from truly exploring the unknown. All of the creatures in the rock of Fraggles coexist in an unreal, childish manner. Problems do arise, but the 80's child secretly knows that it will be solved. Today, we call shows like this politically correct, a pejorative depiction of the 80's child experience.

Toys With Related TV Shows

The Carebears
My Little Ponies
Jem and the Holograms
The Glo-Friends
The Popples
Strawberry Shortcake
Rainbow Brite
Lady Lovely Locks
She-Ka
He-Man
Transformers
Voltron
The Smurfs
The Pound Puppies
Fraggle Rock
Inspector Gadget
Teddy Ruxpin
Garbage Pail Kids
ALF
Thundercats

80's Toys on TV and in the Movies

by Kelly Beyer and Clarke Whitehead

Toys in the 1980's played a unique role. Children were presented with a barrage of toys and their corresponding multimedia. This interlocking market had many effects on the children of the times. The interconnection between toys, television, and movies created a life-long attachment to the toys kids were so devoted to while growing up. Toys captured all the instruments of media and thus all aspects of our imagination. Behind every great 80's toy, a children's movie and television series exists.

Strolling down the aisle at any local video store, you can find your childhood favorites immortalized on video. Shelves and shelves of these exist.

These toys were taken to a further level than ever seen before. They were present everywhere, in stuffed animals, action figures, lunch boxes, Halloween costumes, and Happy Meals. The entire world, as children saw it, revolved around their precious toys. Not only do these toys remain to charm children today, but they also appeal to a generation of 80's children searching to relive their childhood.



LF
n was the star of a NBC
tired between 1986 and
human family and was a
who's goal was to eat the
red as a stuffed animal,
nd on Television.

ers: ts the Eye

Fox television, teaming with Mainframe productions, has launched a second completely computer generated series known as Beast Wars 2: Transmetals. Both series' have successful toy lines as well as video games.

The Autobots, or good guys, were led by the fearless and just Optimus Prime. The Decepticons, or bad guys, were led by the evil and treacherous Megatron. Both races originated in the famed Cybertron, an ancient planet millions of light years away. Originally one race, the transformers were split by a bloody civil war which carried over to earth when both Autobot and Decepticon spaceships crashed on the planet. Both sides fought over the fate of the earthlings, Autobots defending the people, and decepticons wanting to destroy humans and pillage the earth for resources.

The premise of Beast Wars is a prehistoric earth dominated by transformers in the form of dinosaurs and other prehistoric creatures. Both sides fight over the limited resources.

Beast Wars is shown everyday at 3:30 on Fox and at 10:30 Saturday morning.

Beyond Pong

Catherine Thrasher

These days almost everyone has had a home entertainment system. Most agree that they are very addicting. Only when a game is mastered are the players happy. Many people think that the whole video game craze started in the eighties. This is far from true.

In 1974 the first at-home video console was put on the market by Atari, the Atari 2600. The game Pong was such a hit that many other companies tried to imitate it, using the chip. None achieved the success that Atari did. At this point a video game craze was building. Companies released video game consoles such as Fairchild Channel F, RCA Studio II, and Mattel Intellivision. Eventually everybody had a video game. Kool Aid, Quaker Oats, and even Chuck Wagon dog food had their own video games. The public was overwhelmed.

In 1984 a crash in video game purchases occurred. Home computers became a lot more economical and more popular. It wasn't until Nintendo released Nintendo NES in 1985 that things started to pick up again.

Nintendo dominated the market during the 80's. Nintendo has continued to be successful with Super Nintendo and Nintendo 64, and in competition with Sega and Sony Playstation, among others.



Erica Fonvielle

Forty years ago Pierre Culliford invented the Smurfs. On October 23, 1958, the Smurfs first appeared on television. The television show became a hit in Holland and Belgium before it's fame reached the US. Smurf figurines, plush toys, hit records and above all the TV show spread across the homes of children everywhere. Approximately 256 episodes were produced during the 80's and are now shown in 50 countries.

The only way you can enter the land of smurfs is if you are invited by a smurf. All the smurfs were at least 100 years old and "papa smurf" was 542. Smurfs are timeless characters who were loved throughout the 80's and still adored today.



Elissa Milatowski

Sarah Collins reflects on her time spent in Switzerland as a foreign exchange student

Sarah Collins Spends a Year in Switzerland

Sarah Collins
Visiting Writer

No one understood why I wanted to do an exchange program to Switzerland. I didn't even really know why. I knew that I needed a year to discover my true self. I felt inspired to discover life and culture in another country, though never realizing how difficult and rewarding an experience it would be. The exchange has been one of the most wonderful experiences in my life.

When I first arrived in Switzerland, I was terrified. My knowledge of the language was very poor and I didn't know anyone, including my host family. The first few months were painful to get through. No one understood what I was saying and I missed my friends and family. I was also dreadfully shy, so that complicated my life in many ways. However, little by little, my French improved, I became more outgoing and held conversations with my school friends. Four months into the exchange and I was thinking in French.

Once I began to think in French, I began to have fun. Switzerland is a beautiful country, especially in winter. I learned how to ski; I went snowshoeing; and I learned how to party the Swiss way. In Switzerland, the attitude toward pubs, alcohol, and discos is quite different from America. In Switzerland the drinking age is practically nonex-

istent. The typical Swiss teenager's weekend includes bars, discos, and alcohol. I noticed that, even though there was more access to alcohol, the Swiss behaved more responsibly. There were hardly ever any incidents of drunk driving.

School in Switzerland is quite different from the States. For one thing, everyone wears slippers in school. The Swiss tend to be very neat. Ev-

everyone stays in the same classroom with the same people while the

First Person
Sarah Collins



teachers change rooms. There are few or no electives. They take classes in all of the following areas: geography, history, French, German, English, either Italian or Spanish, math, physics, biology, art, and gym. They go to school from 8:10 to 4:10 with a one and a half hour lunch break. There's also no school transportation. You either walk, drive, or ride the public transportation.

It is impossible to truly describe my experience in Switzerland. I learned how to speak French rather fluently; I learned how not to be afraid of making a fool of myself; I definitely learned how to be independent. Coming back to West Potomac as a senior has been, shall we say, interesting. I've changed in many ways and I now look at life from a different angle. Nothing will ever be able to match the uniqueness of the experience.



Mountains of Switzerland

Photo courtesy Sarah Collins

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Winter Break: Escape the Stress

Ben Rankin
Wire Reporter

Finally, after years and years of spending Christmas break at grandma's, West Potomac students have found their escape.

Many families enjoy forgetting the cold winter weather of Virginia by traveling south for a week or two. Sophomore Christy Heffernan spent her last winter break on an exotic cruise of the Bahamas. When asked what the most interesting part of the vacation was, Heffernan said, "The cruise line owned its own private tropical island. It took us there and we were the only ones on it. It was amazing." Freshman JoAnna Charlton is an avid scuba diver and has spent her last few years diving in Florida and the Florida Keys, Aruba, and both the U.S. and British Virgin Islands. "Diving is a way for me to get away from everything," said Charlton. Her family tries to spend as much vacation time as possible below sea level.

Other West Potomac families spend their holidays on the road. Junior Albert Dominic spent his last vacation on an East Coast road trip with his family. Dominic visited Philadelphia, North Carolina, Atlanta, Houston, and Florida on a month long journey. When asked what the best part of the trip was, Dominic said, "I saw Method Man in Atlanta walking down the street with his boys. Seeing him in person made the trip for me." Junior Corey Copeland visited Dick Clarke's world-famous restaurant in Cincinnati, Ohio, while visiting family on his last break. According to Copeland, "In Cincinnati, there are a whole lot of tight girls."

Some students prefer spending their vacation in the lap of luxury, such as Junior Courtney Rivkin. Her family flew to Hawaii for a week stay at the Wailea Resort, one of the top 10 resorts in the world. According to Rivkin, the resort has 12 pools that are cascaded on a large hill, each with its own giant, built-in water slide that connect the pools. A person can start at the top pool and slide down each slide, stopping at each pool on the way down the hill. Also, in the bottom pool is the world's only water elevator. Said Rivkin of the elevator, "It's

like a giant inner tube that can seat about 10 people. When everyone is seated, the water level starts to rise, causing the inner tube to float on the water all the way back up to the first pool at the top of the hill. It was so cool." According to Rivkin, the bottom pool also extends into a cave beside the resort, in which there is a marble bar that stands about 1 foot above the water. Patrons can sit in stone seats partially underwater and order drinks - and lunch - from the bar.

Out-of-state sports tournaments and special athletic programs occupy some students' holiday break. Junior Kevin Green got the opportunity his last vacation to play basketball in Baltimore, Maryland. Green participated in a special program for ambitious young players in which he met Washington Wizards star George Muresan.

Said Green of the program, "My coach weighed 365 pounds, the greatest man I ever knew." Juniors Gabe Williams and Sam Woldegabrid traveled to Orlando, Florida, to

play in the AAU Nationals for basketball at the Disney Sports Center. Williams and Woldegabrid's team won the tournament and became the first-ranked AAU team in the country. As part of the winner's ceremony, the two met NBA star Anfernee Hardaway. Said Williams of the trip, "Going to Orlando was off the hook, but winning was the tightest."

Other West Potomac families prefer a more ambitious winter vacation. Mr. Ken Patterson, father of Sophomore Brittany Patterson, spent his last winter vacation on the slopes of Wyoming with Olympic Skiing Champion Tommy Moe. Patterson participated in a program called Extreme Ski Camp. According to Patterson, patrons of the program learned to ski off cliffs, down glaciers, and on very rugged terrain. "On the way up the mountain every morning, they would blast head-rocking hard rock music in the tram to get everyone ready," said Patterson. For \$700, anyone, including students, can enjoy four days of skiing on slopes that have never been skied before and private instruction from prestigious skiing professionals.

While some people use holiday breaks to be with family and friends, many people have the best time when they can escape from reality for a few days.



Fraternal twins Emily and Lauren Dickert share many interests. Both work at Roseina's restaurant and play for West Potomac's lacrosse team. The girls say that the best part about being twins is being able to share clothes.

Twins: Double the Trouble

Erica Fonvielle
Wire Reporter

No matter how far or how close together twins are raised, they will always have a special bond towards each other. The question one asks is how much do the siblings have in common if they are not raised together?

Scientists have studied twins for years and have different opinions on how and why they act the way they do. Twins are obviously connected biologically because of genetics but some believe that they share a unique, mystic connection. Many people call this bond a sixth sense or extrasensory perception. The sixth sense between twins is different from that of singletons because twins can express their fears and thoughts, "chatting without talking."

As the number of twin births increase significantly, 33 percent, since 1994, the study of twins has become more popular. One in every 50 babies born a year will have a twin.

Many cases of extrasensory perception between twins have been recorded and are looked at by researchers who want to know how and why it occurs. For example, Martha Burke of California experienced a "burning and tearing sensation, and felt like she was being cut in two", while at the same time her twin sister was flying over the Canary Islands when her plane crashed. This is one of numerous examples that have been experienced by twins all over the world, although most extrasensory communications happen on a much smaller scale and is a day-to-day occurrence.

Twins raised in the same house and in the same environment have many characteristics in common because of their genetic makeup. But few twins who are separated at birth and who reunite later in life have surprisingly many man-

ners in common. For example 58 year old Barbara Herbert found her lost twin, Daphne Goodship. The girls had been adopted as babies into separate British families after their mother committed suicide. They grew up in different towns outside of London and dropped out of school when they were 14 years old. They both fell down stairs at 15, which weakened their knees, and both went to work for the government. Both met their husbands at 16 in the Town Dance Hall, miscarried in the same month, and gave birth to two boys and a girl. They were both squeamish about blood and high places and drank their coffee cold. The most outrageous part was when they were reunited. They both were wearing cream-colored dresses and brown velvet jackets! They had amazingly similar quarks and nicknames such as "squidging" when they pushed up their noses with the palm of their hands. These twins have been studied for a few years and researchers have discovered that they have the same heart murmur, allergies and IQ's a point apart. After they visited each other for a week they went to their separate cities and mailed the identical birthday presents, without knowing it, to each other... Is this all coincident or were these twins

alike in so many crazy ways because of their genetic makeup?

Another example of twins who were reunited after many years turned out to be totally opposite. A housewife from Michigan was reunited after 51 years with her twin, a Polish nun who went on rescue missions. The housewife had blond hair and was covered with jewels while the other had almost all her hair covered and acted as if she was in church. The nun talked about her adventures as she rescued people in Rwanda and how she prays for hours at a time. The housewife explained the hardships in her life including cleaning, running errands, cooking and caring for her family. Researcher Eaves who interviewed the newly reunited twins said, "It was hard to believe that they carried the same genetic imprint." Were these twins an exception to the theory that though twins live in such different environments they still have similar thoughts and actions? No one will ever know for sure if twins have mystic bonds or if their similarities are merely a coincidence. Many twins are separated at birth and are raised by families worlds apart, who knows... maybe somewhere out there, you have a twin that acts and looks just like you.



The Loza twins, Adriana and Margarita meet in the parking lot to converse about after school plans.

Looking to the new century...

Can Electric Vehicles Compete with Combustion Engines?

Paul Rukenbrod
Features Editor

Soon, there will be no gas stations. Well, maybe not soon, but certainly in the foreseeable future.

The demand for Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEV) is growing amid worldwide hype over the threat of global warming and the greenhouse effect. Every major car manufacturer is currently developing one or several electric vehicle (EV) prototypes, and also hybrid-electric vehicles which combine gasoline engines and electric power. Currently there are three automakers in the U.S. that have EVs available to consumers. The government is playing a large part in speeding up the development and distribution of ZEVs.

Originally by 1998, and now by 2003, the government had mandated that all major American car makers sell a certain percentage of EVs from their total number of sales. Also, tax breaks and other financial incentives are being offered by local governments to entice possible buyers.

California, known as a leading state in emission regulation, has new ultra low emissions standards planned to go into law according to EVWorld Online. As more states adopt these laws, the number of electric and hybrid cars is expected to increase rapidly.

One of the major stumbling blocks that developers of EVs have worked to overcome is the question of range. The most advanced battery systems in EV's can travel about 120 miles on one 'charge'. This has limited the list of uses for the cars to mainly local trips. The

future of EV success depends on the development better power systems to allow greater range. Ideally, owners of the cars will be able to charge their cars enough for a whole day of driving after leaving the car 'plugged in' all night, using an electrical outlet from their home.

Major car companies like General Motors and even small companies like Corbin-Pacific began leasing 'EV1's in 1996. Now that the mainly 3 year leases are up, GM is offering to upgrade the cars of customers who choose to renew leases. These new "generation 2" EVs, new for the 2000 model year, come in two versions, both vastly superior to their predecessors.

So as the technology in the field of Electric cars advances and prices go down, one can expect to see more and more electric and hybrid vehicles on the road, and someday, gasoline may become a thing of the past.



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Counting Crows: Not Just Another Boy Band



**Erica Fonvielle
Kelly Mayer**
Wire Reporters

The Counting Crows are an exceptional band with their meaningful lyrics and emotional melodies they create a type of music that suits any mood. They possess a talent that is superior to other bands while the music they bring forth passionately captures their listener's attention.

Adam Duritz is the singer, songwriter, and decision-maker, the heart and soul of the

**Adam Duritz is
the singer,
songwriter, and
decision-maker,
the heart and soul
of the band.**

band.

Duritz was born in Baltimore in 1964 and his family moved around many cities before they settled in Berkeley, California.

He began writing songs in his high-school years but did not complete college. Duritz was two credits short of a Bachelors degree in English when he dropped out of the University of California. He quickly traveled to Europe and continued to write music. After a year he answered a classified ad and joined a band called the Himalayans.



attention and touring so he found a much wanted slower pace and was able to return to reality.

After the band took a short, needed break they began to eagerly produce their second al-

**Duritz was two
credits short of a
Bachelors degree in
English when he
dropped out of the
University
of California.**

In 1990 he joined with his guitarist David Bryson and he began playing regularly in coffeehouses, getting the name Counting Crows from old English divination rhyme. While he was performing in the coffeehouses he decided to make a demo tape, not expecting much attraction. When the demo tape was recorded the rest of the band members joined him: bassist Matt Malley, drummer Steve Bowman, and organist Charlie Gillingham. Duritz was surprised to discover that the tape rapidly spread through the West Coast. This brought the band nine label offers proving the Counting Crows fantastic, indescribable capability. They narrowed the label offers down to three: Elektra, A & M, and DGC. The band decided to rent an empty Hollywood Hills mansion where they began to record their first album. *August and Everything After* was their first album, released in 1993 which included the moving "Round Here" and upbeat, catchy "Mr. Jones". This CD received a four star review from *Rolling Stone* and the magazine said *August And Everything After* was, "one of the best rock releases of the year." On MTV video music awards they won an award for best new artisan video for "Mr. Jones".

Next, the Counting Crows spent 1994 touring North America and Europe, only attracting more, deserved attention and popularity. Then as abruptly as they had emerged, they retreated back to San Francisco. Duritz never liked all the

bum. They once again rented a house to record in while the drummer was replaced by the drummer from the band Cracker, Ben Mize and another guitarist, Dan Vickrey, joined the band. *Recovering The Satellites* was released in October 1996, which included the meaningful, "Millers Angels" and the emotion filled "A Long December".

Across a Wire-Live in NY was released in '98, and *This Desert Life* on Nov. 2. This CD proved once again the expressive and exquisite talent the Counting Crows demonstrate and will hopefully continue as long as Adam Duritz finds inspiration in his music. The Counting Crows for years have enthusiastically captured the souls and aspirations of many fans. So until they decide to produce another CD, their fans will wait and anxiously anticipate the next heart-rending songs they brilliantly devise.

Beck's Midnite Vultures

Kurt Gron
Focus Editor

Beck Hansen is perhaps the most interesting and eccentric artist in today's music scene. His past styles have included hip-hop, alternative rock, folk, and others on his three previous studio albums, *Mellow Gold*, *Odelay*, and *Mutations*. *Odelay* received a Grammy for best alternative album the year of its release. With *Midnite Vultures*, Beck adds funk, soul, and classic rock to his soup of influences and produces a unique album which is enter-



tain on a classic rock radio station, with a singalong chorus, catchy lyrics and Smith guitarist Johnny Marr making an appearance. This track also shows that Beck can tackle an old genre, master it and make it all his own all at once. Beck interprets 70's

CD REVIEW Kurt Gron



taining, shows great talent and exhibits an ability to change all in one. The last track on *Midnite Vultures* is a 70's soul ballad called Debra which is soothing and whimsical, containing the lyrics, "I met you at J.C. Penny/I think your name tag/It said Jerry," and later, "I said lady/Step inside my Hyundai." Other tracks contain odd mixtures of instruments such as the album's first single *Sex, Laws* which pairs a banjo with keyboards, a horn section, and what appears to be early wider game sound effects. *Milk & Honey* is a song one would expect to

funk in his own interesting way in *Nicotine & Gravy* and *Mixed Bizness*. These songs have infectious bass lines, horns, and string sections arranged over vintage guitar playing and background singers singing interesting phrases. In addition, unlike previous albums, Beck enlists the assistance of a number of musicians on many tracks, up to thirteen on *Nicotine & Gravy*. With his fourth album, Beck has scored a real winner, an album which is difficult to listen to at first, but easy to dance to, easy to enjoy, and very easy to like.

The Most Popular Names at West Potomac

Most common male names

Christopher 37; John/Johnathan 30

Most common female names

Kathryn/Catherine 29; Elizabeth 22

Most common male middle name

Robert 18

Most common female middle name

Anne/Ann 44, Elizabeth 22

Most common last names

**Jones 19, Smith 15, Johnson 14,
Williams 11, Brown 10, Nguyen 9**

The Rise to Stardom...

The Little Band that Could

If you know who No Potential is, go to paragraph 2. If not, read on. No Potential is a local band that has been around for four years. This dynamic quartet is made up of West Potomac grads Doug Bentley, Odie Sotomayor, and Nick Elhini and Dave Merkley. Unlike popular boy bands, they play their own instruments and write their own music. Doug can be found at the mic singing the lead vocals and playing guitar, all at the same time. You'll be impressed further still by Dave on the six string fretless bass. Odie busts out with backup vocals and lead guitar and Nick brings it all together on his drums.

Doug writes all the music for this group which he bases upon personal experiences. The band is mainly in-

fluenced by Pink Floyd, NoFX, Faith No More, and Guns N' Roses, but they do not try to emulate other



Publicity Photo Courtesy of No Potential

groups. The band practices 2-3 times a week in a studio in the back of the Hollin Hall Shopping Center. The 7-11 folks know them well. They perform 6-8 times a month at local venues.

The band most enjoys playing at the Black Cat or 14th St. They have a performing uniform of khakis and a button down blue No Potential shirt. One of the band's worst performing experiences involved a clown fraud in a church in Maryland. They consider their best experiences to be when the crowd is gettin' down and funky to their

NO POTENTIAL
www.nopotential.com
nopotential@hotmail.com



groovin' tunes.

Says Doug, "This is not a mere hobby, we're living out our childhood dreams." If this is your dream too, Doug has the advice for you. "For any aspiring artists, listen to lots of Primus and learn what Mountain Dew can do for your creativity." No Potential started out as a simple garage band. Now they are focusing upon it as their career. They just recently got signed to Signal to Noise Records. In fact, they were quoted as being "the fastest upcoming band of the later 90's in this local area." In addition, No Potential is a strong supporter of the local scene. They'll offer help to any struggling band that contacts them.

The band's second CD comes out on the 21st of November. Doug says about the new CD, "The recording is really good. It's really hard hitting." Check it out. These reporters would also like to thank Nick Elhini for the awesome drumstick he threw at the wall.



Velvet

Velvet, a local band from College Park, Maryland, has been together for four years. The band consists of Joe Brewer, Joe Calvarese, Andrew Walker, and Jay McKinley. While Joe B. does lead vocals with his guitar, Joe C. backs him up with additional vocals and guitar styles. Andrew adds a twist with his bass and Jay hooks it up with the drums.

Joe B. writes the lyrics for all the songs and then they come up with the music together. While jammin' in the basement, they create catchy riffs. They also like to mess around with creative sounds, rhythms, and off times. The lyrics are never straightforward. Joe B. gathers inspiration from anything and everything.

Their sound is unique. However, they are inspired by Sunny Day Real Estate, Hum, Deftones, and Jimmy Eat World. They practice both electric and acoustic, each once a week. In addition they perform 1 to 2 shows a week.

Like No Potential, Velvet enjoys playing at the Black Cat. Their worst show, however, was at Hall

Daddy's in Baltimore. Joe B. said, "The ceiling was soggy, we were in this, like, dungeon and there were rats and shiznit!!! IT SUCKED!!!!"

The band hopes to make this their profession for life and they've already released two CD's, a self-titled debut and *Tragic*. They are self-described as hard rock interspersed with moments of quiet beauty. Often classified as alt-rock, Velvet is well-

VELVET
www.listen.to/velvet
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known for their performance in concert. They tour constantly, promoting the local scene.

They too have advice for struggling high school bands. "Practice once a week and make sure you and your band mates hang out and are good friends. That way you can prevent arguments."

Juniper Lane Corners Local Scene

Juniper Lane is a fast rising contributor to the local music scene. They're establishing themselves as a house name on their upward climb to the top. Through their constant performing and the release of their first CD, *Counting*, Juniper Lane has developed a devoted following.

Juniper Lane is a four piece that sprung from the collaborations of several college friends. Lead singer, Vivion Smith, and guitarist, Chris Bonavia, write the songs. Eddie Pasa plays percussion, while Brian Frederick provides bass. The band formed in 1998 to support the musical endeavors of Smith and Bonavia.

Their first release, *Counting*, is available now. Stylistically it shows the influence of artists such as Tori Amos, R.E.M., and Sarah McLachlan, but the CD screams out with originality. The lyrics are a breath of fresh air from some of the popular music today. They are deep and meaningful. They present complexities that engage the listener, drawing them into the intentions of the album. In "If I Should," the chorus includes, "I dress myself

in all black, I stick the knife in my own back, I paint my face with false tears, I swallow smiles that no one hears." This is the quality of songwriting on this CD.

The sound, too, is unique. They build off of a simple piano melody, tying it all together. The strong instrumentals hold together the tracks. *Counting* has eleven tracks providing 45 minutes of listening pleasure. The CD is available through the mail, at local, metropolitan area stores, and at live performances.

Juniper Lane has the potential for success. Reaching the top won't stop them from doing what they love, either. When asked what she'd do with the money she'd get when they become famous, Smith responded, "Use it towards making our next CD." Their love of the

art and their mellow alt-rock sound, will push them on to the top. As of now, Juniper Lane is building themselves up, becoming a cornerstone of the local scene. They are a fast-moving local band to look out for.

JUNIPER LANE
www.juniperlane.com
vivions@juniperlane.com
NEW CD ON SALE NOW!



Photo courtesy Juniper Lane

Local Bands

Mary Prankster: Aspirations of a Joker

Taking the Baltimore area by storm is local indie-rock queen Mary Prankster. You may recognize the name from appearances on WHFS 99.1 playing perhaps her least controversial but still bitingly clever song "Blue Skies Over Dundalk."

With support from the radio station, Mary Prankster and the band named after her, consisting of drummer Phil Tang and John E. Cakes on bass, played the Fall

HPStival. A potty-mouth with punchy lyrics, Mary Prankster puts on a performance with pizzazz. By day, she slaves away at her job under her carefully hidden real name. By night she cultivates her David Bowie-esque alter ego. Banned from ten clubs and run out of the town of Frederick, Maryland for her controversial lyrics, Mary Prankster may not be suitable listening for young 'ns or the easily offended. But if you're looking for slick melodies coupled with stinging words, she's the gal for you.

Interview with Mary Prankster

MP: If (or when) you become a big famous rock star, what are the first three things you'll splurge on first?

Mary Prankster: Bibles, milk and furthering my education. Not necessarily in that order. (This is a school paper, right?)

A: Do you have any advice for high school bands?

MP: Get your parents to buy you as much gear as possible while you're still living at home. Birthdays, Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa- whatever. Ask for equipment-good stuff. Get you Paul Reed Smiths and Marshall stacks and VS1680 home digital recording studios NOW before you have to pay for it yourself. This may be the best advice you'll ever get.

A: Have you ever had to compromise anything for your music?

MP: Never. Not that I haven't been asked to. I've been advised and encouraged to do things differently from the word "Go."

When I was a solo acoustic act I was advised that I'd never play any big gigs just on my own- then I opened for the Violent Femmes at the 9:30 Club.

I was told that the lyrics on "Blue Skies Over Dundalk" (my first full-length album) guaranteed it would never be played on the radio- then WHFS 99.1 FM

started playing the heck out of it. I've been banned from playing the city of Annapolis, run out of Frederick by the police and asked not to return to a variety of venues up and down the East Coast for the things I say and the music I play.

And you know what? I wouldn't have it any other way. My band rocks, my albums sound just like I want them to and the people who get it REALLY get it. If you have a vision and you choose to follow it, you can't expect people to understand. You'll never convince them; do it your own way and let history prove you right. Compromise is for people with no self-confidence.

A: What have been your best and worst concert experiences?

MP: Best experience: Fletcher's, November 24th, 1999- our release party for "Roulette Girl." In addition to our band (featuring Phil Tang on drums and Jon E. Cakes on bass), we had string players, horn players, two guest guitarists and my best friend, Wenona Daniel (who also did some vocal production on the album), and her sisters singing gospel. It's really cool to be able to rock to a sellout crowd and look over and see your best friend next to you on stage.

Worst experience: West Lafayette, Indiana in the basement of a frat house. The less said the better.

A: How often do you practice?

MP: In a past life I was also a controversial rocker with a big vocabulary and a bad attitude who struggled

"I hope to hear renditions of our songs done by high school marching bands across the country."

my eyes-they were already there.

A: What do you have to say to people that may be offended by your lyrics?

MP: Lighten up, you humorless wretch.

A: Do you have any aspirations for your music?

MP: If the new album takes off the way it's supposed to, I hope to hear renditions of our songs done by high school marching bands across the country.

A: If you believe in reincarnation, what were you in a past life? What will you come back as?

MP: In a past life I was also a controversial rocker with a big vocabulary and a bad attitude who struggled

against the system and died penniless and sarcastic. Next time I hope to come back as a tone-deaf venture capitalist.

A: Do you ever want to quit your day job?

MP: EVERY. SINGLE. DAY.

A: How was playing the HPStival?

MP: Fantastic. I'm totally amazed at how supportive WHFS has been to me and local music and general. It's cool to see such a nationally esteemed station seeing what it can grow in its own backyard.

The crowd blew me away too. We don't get to play many all-ages crowd and the kids gave us mad love as soon as we hit the stage. A real "rock star moment." I'm grateful to everyone involved.



Photo courtesy of Fowl Records

VENUES

1. Black Cat
2. Garage
3. Old Probbons
4. Jaxx
5. Metro Cafe
6. Phantasmagoria
7. Planet Nova
8. Nation

MARY PRANKSTER

www.fowl.com
maryprankster@iname.com
NEW CD ON SALE NOW!
Appearing in this month's issue
of Seventeen on page 96!

Contributors of Local Band Scene
Kelly Beyer, Ana Kornely, April Brown

LOCAL VENUES

www.930.com
www.gvmedia.com/blackcat
http://dcregistry.com/art.html
www.phantasmagoria.com
www.tourdates.com
www.jaxxrock.com

Finding her way to America Bjork Is A New Level Of Unique



As the millennium approaches, with all the craze of Y2K, the music scene also has taken a turn. Techno is the most hip music and flows with crazy dancing rhythms, instrumental keyboards, DJ remixes and electronic sounds. Therefore what better time than now to bring to everyone's attention the "Icelandic Diva," better known as Bjork, who has been a major contributor if not creator of this new craze with her own experimental music that is beyond any definite classification.

Her one of a kind voice and original techno styles have even landed her such fans as Madonna, and awards to the max! This Icelandic native has been setting a new trend in music since she was 11 and now rocks music internationally with her blend of punk, techno, jazz and classical. Throughout the world she has

pie commune in Iceland and attended music school at a very young age, concentrating on such studies as the piano, flute and voice.

Bjork was rebellious from the start. In an interview with Seventeen Magazine in 1997, she said "...Teachers in school were teaching 300 years of German music and calling it classical. Why couldn't music from other parts of the world be called classical?"

"The headmaster of my music school had me up in his office a lot."

The start of her music career was in her early teens when she formed bands with friends. At one point she and her friends became so annoyed at the fact that there was never any good music played on the radio stations that they started their own pilot station and played their own music.

By 1983 she and her friends had formed the group Kukl and she married band member Thor Eldenand.

With the band, Bjork toured Europe and developed a jazzy, political, post-punk music style. Like most bands, Kukl broke up and at the age of 19 Bjork gave birth to her and Thor's son. She gave birth on the same day she became a member of the band, The Sugarcubes.

Bjork's solo career started in 1992 when the Sugarcubes split up, along with her and Thor. She and her son moved to London where she became influenced by the British dance scene.

Writing songs in her native Icelandic tongue and translating them into English, Bjork has enjoyed great success as a solo artist, producing four albums. Her first album *Debut* was trashed by

Rolling Stone. However, the sales of the record made her a star in the U.S.. She followed up with albums, *Post*, *Telegram*, and *Homogenic*.

Bjork has been nominated for Grammy Awards, MTV awards and British musical awards. One of the most surprising

awards came in 1998 when she was voted woman of the year by readers of the British Weekly Music paper by Melodrama. Princess

Diana came in second!

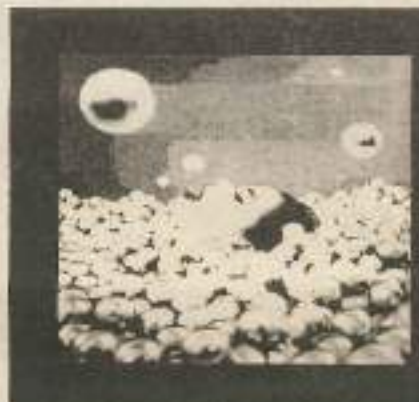
Like most stars, she has many fans and the occasional stalker. One of her fans is Madonna. The title track, "Bedtime Stories," on Madonna's last CD, was written by Bjork and Nellie Hooper.

Managing an amazing career, Bjork has been a major generation X-influencer. Now at age 32 she continues to impress music lovers, many of whom look forward to her new single, "All Is Full of Love" due out in June in the UK (sorry and later to make its way here, to once again blow music critics through the roof in America.



gained such nicknames as "The Queen of Ice", "The Icelandic Pixie", and even the "Child Woman." Although she is not as popular in the United States as in other countries, she contributed to the exciting Tibet Freedom Concert here in the U.S. in 1996. To account for her unique style one must consider her past.

Born in 1965, Bjork grew up in a hip-



Move Over X-Files

As Old Classic May Be Put to Bed, Chris Carter Invents a New, Harsh Realm

Jen Groner
Focus Editor

Tell me it isn't so! The X-Files are coming to an end?

According to the New York Daily News, Chris Carter, creator of the X-Files, is writing this season's 22 episodes as a wrap-up for the entire show, but he says it may continue into next season.

However our Mulder, David Duchovny, has a contract that expires after this season, and he says he is not coming back. Duchovny believes that the show can go on without him. That would leave his partner Scully, played by Gillian Anderson, whose contract does not expire until the season after this, all by herself.

Many fans are opposed to the continuation of *The X-Files*, without Duchovny, but nobody really knows where it will go next year. Both Anderson and

Duchovny have agreed to do a second movie following this television season.

Last year's season finale left X-Files fans at the edge of their seat. Agent Fox Mulder found himself with a serious illness, and agent Dana Scully was on the brink of a source of life. This season opened with Mulder locked away in a mental institution, and it has many surprises in store for the common watcher as well as the long time fan.

The Lone Gunmen are scheduled to

appear in many of the episodes, and the season is filled with characters from the past including Mimi Rogers, as Agent Diana Fowley, and Micheal McKean, as Morris Fletcher.

The Well-Manicured Man, who we saw blowing himself up out of his limo in the movie, has a few appearances in this season, perhaps in a flashback, or maybe he is actually alive.

Chris Carter's contract also expires after this season, but he is working on producing a new show, *Harsh Realm*. According to Carter the show is a, "blend of mythology, the supernatural, humor, fantasy and romantic longing." The plot centers on Lt. Hobbes, who is sent out to get Lt. Waters, a soldier who never returned from the military's virtual reality system, *The Harsh Realm*. Lt. Waters has sided with a military general, Omar Santiago, who entered the system long ago. Santiago has figured out how to escape the realm and he poses a threat to Hobbes, who is forced to control this realm.

According to a recent poll on the internet, 64 percent of X-file's fans expect *Harsh Realm* to succeed. Hopefully this show will help relieve fans' grief over the eventual loss of *The X-Files*.

Characters agent Scully and Mulder from Chris Carter's show *The X-Files*. Some fans can't imagine splitting the pair, and would rather



"Chris Carter explores uncharted territory in his latest science fiction epic *Harsh Realm*"
-X Files Magazine

Looking forward to a good season

Upcoming Movies on The Silver Screen

Clarke Whitehead
Wire Reporter

The Holiday Season has always been a big time for the movie studios. They bring out the movies that they believe will draw the attention come Oscar nomination time. Both *Titanic* and *Shakespeare In Love* debuted in December and both won the Academy Award for best picture.

This year many films are vying for the chance to be nominated. They will join the ranks of such 1999 Oscar-caliber works such as *American Beauty* (which is the favorite at this time), *Three Kings*, *The Insider*, *The Straight Story*, and *Being John Malkovich* but, can Matt Damon, Jim Carrey, or Tom Hanks beat the powerful performance that Kevin Spacey gave in *American Beauty*?

Oscar winner Matt Damon (*Good Will Hunting*, *Rounders*) is the title character in Oscar winning director, Anthony Minghella's *The Talented Mr. Ripley*. Ripley, an ambitious American is sent to Italy in the 1950's to find and bring back an old friend named Dickie Greenleaf, a errant playboy played by Jude Law (*Gattaca*). Once Ripley finds him, he falls in love with Greenleaf's posh, wealthy life and Greenleaf himself. Oscar winner Gwyneth Paltrow (*Shakespeare in Love*, *Emma*) plays Greenleaf's rich wife, Marge. The three became great friends, but all things must come to an end and when they do, Ripley decides to kill Greenleaf and take his identity. It was shot on location in Venice, Rome, Naples, and New York. Anthony Minghella's beautiful adaptation of *The English Patient*, his last film, won him the award for best director, which means that *The Talented Mr. Ripley*'s chances to be nominated are large as well. (Dec. 22)

The Green Mile is the one to watch come Oscar time. It stars Tom Hanks (*Saving Private Ryan*, *Forrest Gump*) as Paul Edgecomb, a death row prison guard. Edgecomb has to watch John Coffey, a seven-foot tall, 300 pound African American convicted of murdering two young girls. Coffey has healing powers which Edgecomb soon discovers. He questions his views and realizes that putting Coffey to death would be the worst thing that could possibly be done. Tom Hanks can be considered the best actor of the decade. He is a shoe-in for an Oscar nomination, but he has some tough competition from Kevin Spacey. The director is Frank Darabont, who won an Oscar for directing the *Shawshank Redemption*. Written by Steven King as a six-part serial, *The Green Mile* is sure to be a huge box office success as well as a favorite of the critics. (Dec. 10)

Andy Kaufman was an innovative, eccentric, and enigmatic comedian who changed the style of his time. In *Man On The Moon*, Golden Globe winner, Jim Carrey (*The Truman Show*, *Ace Ventura*), the master of disguises of the 90's plays Andy Kaufman, the master of disguises of the 70's. The movie traces Andy's life from his birth, to his death of lung cancer in 1984. Also in the movie are Courtney Love who plays Andy's best friend and love, Lynne Margulies; Danny Devito, who was on *Taxi* with Kaufman, and plays Greg Shapiro, Kaufman's manager; and all of Kaufman's buddies from *Taxi* except Tony Danza. With the snub of Jim Carrey for last years *The Truman Show*, he is almost assured an Oscar nod. He plays Andy so on key that he wouldn't get out of character the entire shooting exactly like the real Andy before him. *Man On The Moon* is directed by two-time Oscar winning director, Milos Forman who won for *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Amadeus*, both of which won best picture in the past.

New record no.4...

More Appealing To Old Than New STP Fans

The Stone Temple Pilots (STP) have always been considered a rock band without a niche. In the early half of the decade, during the grunge craze, some considered them to support it, while others pointed to STP's role in it's demise. They were always looked on as followers of the styles of other bands, unable to come up with their own sound or ideas. They've been overlooked for one fact, they are a great, talented, rock band. Their latest, and perhaps their last album, No.4, seems to be a sort of last hurrah for a band who does not fit the rock landscape in which they now find

themselves. The likelihood of another commercially popular release is not likely, due to the incarceration for at least a year of STP singer Scott Weiland on heroin charges. This will inhibit their touring, and their popularity and relationship with radio are both waning.

Their first album, *Core*, was a guitar oriented, alternative rock masterpiece which spawned a few radio hits and brought STP to the attention of the public at large. Their second album, *Purple*, released in 1994, was their best album, spawning such radio hits as, "Vaseline", "Interstate Love Song", "Pretty Penny", and "Big Empty." Their third album strayed into pop with softer songs and sing along choruses.

No.4 combines elements from all three previous albums resulting in a sort of best of styles and ideas and is a fitting end to a talented band. The only current radio hit off of No.4 is "Down", a Coreesque song with a strong grunge influence. This guitar based song is typical STP. Later tracks such as "Sour Girl", incorporate a softer side of STP with sing along chorus and catchy tunes. Other high quality tracks include, "Pruno" and "Glide". Some tracks are a little hard on the ears at first, but with repeated listening can be appreciated for their complexity and ability to surprise. A couple of songs however, especially, "Atlanta", are weird and seem almost to be elevator music. Songs of this type have no place on a STP album, or any album.

No.4 is a decent CD which provides a nice listen for STP fans, but to the non-STP fan may be a little uninteresting or even unlikely. However, a fan of early nineties bands such as Pearl Jam or Nirvana will find this album to be a throwback in many ways to the heyday of grunge; which is not necessarily a bad thing, judging by much of the music coming out today.



Stone Temple Pilots

Matt Damon stars as a villain in the new upcoming movie, *The Talented Mr. Ripley*.

State of the Arts

Concerts

- Dec.17 Jaxx Biohazard
- Dec.20-6:00pm
Dec.20-7:30pm
Holiday Choral Concert
- Dec.21 Iota Club Cravin' Dogs
- Dec.22 Patriot Center Andy Williams
- Dec.22 9:30 Club Mary Frankster
- Dec.25 Jaxx The Roadducks
- Dec.27 9:30 Club Vertical Horizon
- Dec.27 Iota Club The Push Stars
- Dec.28 MCI Barenaked Ladies
- Dec.29 9:30 Club The Roots
- Dec.31 Camden Yard HIPS New Years
- Dec.31 MCI Third Eye Blind
- Jan.1 9:30 Club Slicker Boys
- Jan.14 Jaxx Leon Russell
- Jan.15 9:30 Club Fish
- Jan.16 Jaxx Anthrax
- Jan.21 Wolftrap Clarence Brown
- Jan.21 9:30 Club Macao Parker
- Jan.22 Jaxx Vanilla Ice
- Jan.23 MCI TLC
- Jan.24-26 Wolftrap Eddie from Ohio
- Jan.26 Warner Harry Connick Jr.
- Feb.5 Wolftrap Steve Forbert
- Feb.8-13 MCI Disney Toy Story on Ice

In The Numbers

9.86

Score freshman, Christine Robella recieved to win a Gymnastic event

16

consecutive winning seasons by the West Potomac football team

21,803

career net yards for Chicago Bear great Walter Payton

7

number of extra points connected on by Jon Dyer in a win against Falls Church, a new school record

3

consecutive playoff shutouts by Christine Hofmann during the District and Regional tournaments

0

number of shutouts by the field hockey team prior to the playoffs

56

number of freshmen trying out for this years crew team

2

returning male swimmers who went to states last year, junior Greg Landrum and sophomore Jacob Bennett

17

consecutive years that Redskin cornerback Darryl Green has had at least one interception

76

number of points scored by the Wolverines football team in a rout against Falls Church, a school record

2

highest rank in the history of the Virginia Tech football program.

World Mourns Loss of Sports Heroes

Trevor Gibson
Sports Editor

In just one week the world of sports was rocked with the loss of two remarkable athletes. One coming off the best year of his professional life, while the other had his best years long ago. Both Payne Stewart and Walter Payton, however, were well-respected by their sport and fans.

The news of a Learjet crashing into a South Dakota field came as a shock on Monday, October 25th, to the whole country. The additional news that golfer Payne Stewart along

Both men, just in their forties, left us much to quickly.

with several agents were on board came as an unexpected slap-in-the-face. Stewart was heading to Texas to compete in the Tour Championships in Houston, when his plane mysteriously flew way off-course and crashed in Mina, South Dakota. The cause of the crash is still being investigated, but speculation appears to suggest that the plane's cabin rapidly lost pressure, perhaps due to a faulty seal around a door or window.

If this indeed happened, the cabin would have been totally absent of oxygen in as quickly as fifteen seconds. Investigators are still looking into a possible malfunction of the planes emergency oxygen system.

Stewart was having a year to remember. In June, he won the U.S. Open with a 15-foot putt on the final hole. It was the longest putt to ever decide the U.S. Open in its 99-year history. Just a few months later he helped the U.S. team capture the Ryder Cup in an even more dramatic fashion, rallying to win from the biggest deficit ever.

Then, on Monday, November 1st, the world was slapped-in-the-face once again with the death of football legend Walter Payton. Arguably the greatest football



The Walter Payton Foundation was made in the great football player's memory.

player to ever play in the NFL, Payton finally lost the battle with a rare liver disease and cancer. The all-time leading rusher in the NFL announced in February 1999 that he had a liver disease which would eventually require a transplant. The public, however, was in the dark of the fact that Payton was suffering from cancer until the day he died. While in the league, Payton was known for his hard work-ethic and determination. He only missed one

game his whole career. His 16,726 yards and 21,803 combined net yards are still an NFL record. Payton was All-Pro seven times and went to the Pro-Bowl nine times.

Both men added something special to their respective sport. Both men were loving, caring fathers and husbands. Both men, just in their forties, left us much to quickly.



Stewart left a mark on the game that will be remembered forever.

Sports in Brief

Swimming

With the winter sports season fast approaching, the West Potomac swim and dive team is preparing for another astounding season. The members are very confident and look forward to a successful season. There are a number of veterans leading the team this year, each with high expectations for the season.

The swim team, coached by Mr. Bob Lombardi, is looking forward to another fun and rewarding season. According to Sophomore Allie Kunzig, last year the team had a lot of strong leadership, especially from the upper-classmen. Kunzig said, "Swim team was a great experience for me as a freshman last year because I met a lot of new people and had a great time. I can't wait till it starts again." The team was very talented, with 6 swimmers going on to regionals and 2 going on to states (current Sophomore Jacob Bennet and Junior Greg Landrum). The team hopes to be a major contender this season and anticipates another round of exceptional performances from its veterans.

The dive team, coached by English Teacher Mr. Allen Johnson, has especially high goals for the upcoming season. The dive team had several strong leaders last year and commitment from everyone, but still expects a better season this year. Sophomore and dive team member Sam Ray said, "The team is going to have a great year because of hard work and determination from the whole team."

The swim and dive team should be very successful this year because of determined leaders and dedication from all members. "It's definitely takes a lot of hard work and support from everyone," said Sophomore Kate Brown. "And, it's worth it."

Indoor Track

The '99-'00 winter track season looks to be very successful for the Wolverines. The boys team had a good season last year and is looking for even better results this year. The

team placed 3rd at the District Championships last year as well as strong showings at both the regional and state levels, and hopes for a higher mark this year. Led by senior captains Carter Chandler and Casey Reardon, this years team looks to be as strong as ever. Key performers will be seniors Jerry Harris and Jermie Harris, juniors Jamaal Mills and Marquis Coffie, and the captains.

The girls team, after losing Yolanda Thompson, Keila Williams and Andrea Gun to graduation, will look to new athletes to continue thier success. The girls had a hugely successfull season last year, winning both the District and Regional Championships, and finishing well at the states level. The girls team looks to get key help from senior Jessica Bolton, junior Meghan Hoffman, and sophomores Katie Storck and Dee-Dee Richard. This winter looks to be an exciting and successful season for both the girl's and boy's teams.

Basketball

The West Potomac Varsity Boys Basketball is about to begin their new season. After last year's less than stellar season where the team lost more games than they won, many of the returning players are hoping for a rebuilding year with new talent coming on the team. After returning from an undefeated '97-'98 season many players were disappointed at the many losses the team suffered during the '98-'99 season.

Many returning players who are Seniors are hoping to have a god season to end their last year at West Potomac. Some of the returning players this year are seniors Justin Brandenburg, Sam Oakley, Hart Ebersole, Marcus Tyler, Gabe Williams and Brandon Macon as well as junior Kevin Green. The players are hoping for success despite this being a rebuilding year and to expand on last year's winning total.