

Dec. 1,  
2006



# THE WIRE

WEST POTOMAC HIGH SCHOOL

Friday, December 1, 2006



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Alexandria, VA 22304

## Wolverine Cubs are Cherished and Coached

Amun Jaffri

New Editor

Little wide-eyed children tread single file through the halls, staring up at passing teenagers. These are our school's head start children, taught by the Early Childhood Careers class.

The class's teacher, Barbara Yancy, teaches her students how to develop plans for teaching young children different skills, such as color recognition and knowing the ABCs. Being a part of head start also means cooking, learning about animals, and doing that "age old thing of planting seeds," said Yancy. Apart from in-school activities, the class goes on four-to-six field trips a year, with different students rotating to ensure that everyone has a chance to attend a field trip with the children. Head start activities depend on the average age of the kids enrolled in head start. This year, the majority are three year-olds.

Students at our school see the head start children when they walk through the halls or around Halloween, when the youngsters trick-or-treat around the school. "When they were trick-or-treating, they were so cute," said senior Rachel Good when asked about the head start class.



Student teachers help at our school's head start program for children under five. The community receives a free head start program, and students learn about working with young children.

Photos by Lalestia Langley

Head start enrollees are also taught essential life skills such as learning when to talk and listen when appropriate. "When they get here, they have a lot of energy, and they don't always listen," said second year Early Childhood Careers student senior Kamel Green. When asked about whether the kids can become too rowdy to handle, Green responded that they could become unruly, but he was responsible to teach them, so he could not become angry with them. "I'm doing it for them, to help them out," he said.

Early Childhood Career students have objectives to meet

for passing the class, such as learning how to develop and enact lessons to teach young children concepts such as knowing different colors. "I hope that they will learn how to guide children, how to talk with children and support them in play and learning," said Yancy about her students.

Newspaper articles and references by the Office for Children in Fairfax provide the community with knowledge about the head start program, but most of the community finds out from word-of-mouth. The program is federally funded, and is free for families.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE



8  
RISING STRESS WITH CHRISTMAS



8-9  
THE SECRET BEHIND YOUR CRAZY DREAMS



14  
HOMECOME HOLIDAY GIFTS FROM THE HEART



15  
OPERAGIOUS JACK BLACK AND THEAGUS D

## Students Cope When Parents Fight Overseas

Kate Sigety

Wire Reporter

With the persistence of the media pushing on our nation in every way, it is impossible to forget about anything concerning the War in Iraq. Yet, the effect that parental deployment is having on teens is not always noticed.

Twenty five percent of children with deployed parents in the United States are between the ages of twelve and eighteen, according to a study done at Virginia Tech. With the increased number of deployments, relocations, and family separations, stress is elevated for all members of a military family, including teens.

According to the conducted study, "Findings suggest there are several over riding themes: changes in behaviors, changes in family relationships, changes in routines and responsibilities... communication with the deployed parent and issues that arise when the deployed parent returns home. In all but one case, the deployed parent was the father."

Not having a parent in the house in which a child has grown up in may be a difficult change for

anybody to cope with, especially for students in high school who are already coping with an abundance of changes. A new form of responsibility and stressors brought on. With the way that the media portrays everything going on in Iraq, it is hard to not worry about your loved ones who are away. Teens in this particular situation sometimes feel that there is a new responsibility for looking out for the rest of the family, especially mothers and younger siblings.

A change also occurs when the parent returns home. New schedules were developed and the family usually works in a different way than it was working before. As the family changes back home and grows new living habits, so does the deployed parent. "My dad is in the military, but has not been sent to Iraq. Just the thought of him leaving would be hard for my family to deal with. We are so used to the way we live now that I cannot imagine how different our worlds would be," said sophomore Chris Shields. The characteristics of living in our nation compared to Iraq are completely opposite.



When parents go to Iraq, teens go through a difficult change as they adjust without them.

Photo by Nancy Yousef/KRT

## Reveal Yourself Online, and Face the Consequences

Sydney Smith

Wire Reporter

Many students keep abreast of current events through the now controversial method of blogging.

Blogging is when a person creates an online diary. Other internet users can log onto your blog and respond to what you have said. The point is to express your own thoughts and ideas and it is also great way to keep in touch with friends. Senior Ashley Garrison likes to blog to, "express my feelings," while sophomore Allison Cappelletti blogs "when I'm bored. I've kept my live journal for over a year."

Even major companies have blogs to announce the release of a new product, or a journalist can have an accompanying blog attached to their story. Whatever the reason, many start their own blogs for the same reason that Cappelletti did, because her friends were doing it. According to Cappelletti, "A friend was doing it, and I thought, ok...why not?" Our schools' yearbook adviser, Ms. Melanie Mobley, said "I like the blogging idea; it is good that people write more, but when thoughts are put out to the masses, they lose their importance."

Unlike most fads, this one comes with dangers. Predators have easy access into teens personal information. A predator can keep track of your information and over time gather enough information to track down the blogger. Garrison is not afraid of online predators, and said, "I don't respond to people I don't know. People who meet up with people off the internet are silly



Creating a blog helps people express themselves, but also leads to trouble.

Photo Graphic by Taylor Dushmeyer

fools." Cappelletti agreed, "Someone who is not careful can get into trouble. I use an internet alias and whenever I'm talking about a real person, I call them a different name. I also don't use real locations. I give specifics, just the wrong ones."

Many students who have blogs belong to Facebook or MySpace. Students are known to post pictures of themselves and their friends drinking and/or smoking. At the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) meeting on Monday November 20, Ms. Barbara Conner and Ms. Rima Vesilind told parents that pictures of students from our school drinking and smoking were circulating online. These pictures were sent to the police, who sent copies of the pictures to Ms. Vesilind. Ms. Conner also told parents that college admission deans look at the web pages of their prospective students, so it is recommended that students clean their pages up.

Ms. Vesilind added that over the past few years, drinking has become an increasing problem at our school. The 2005 Fairfax County Youth Survey found that nearly one third (30%) of tenth graders and about half (48%) of twelfth graders have consumed alcohol in the thirty days before taking the survey. These online pictures also pose a challenging

See Blogging, page 6



# News Fads: Here Today, Gone Tomorrow

When we were little, we always made a big deal when our friends touched our favorite toy. It was not that big of a deal, but at the time it seemed like the worst crime ever committed. Well, the national news media has a tendency of acting the same way as one did when one five, making things that are somewhat significant into gigantic issues.

Remember SARS, the coughing sickness from Asia that was going to spread to the U.S. and start an epidemic? What happened to it? Nobody from our school got infected. In fact, only 68 cases of SARS were found in the U.S., according to the *Washington Times*. If it was such a big deal why has it fallen off the face of the Earth? Because it was not a big deal, for some reason the media decided to hype it up and make it a big deal for no reason. SARS is not the only thing that is overexaggerated.

About six months ago, bird flu was the new SARS. Once again, nothing happened! There were cases found in the U.S., but an "epidemic" never occurred like so many predicted. Even farther back, there was mad cow disease. Many were personally offended by this media hype because it really took

the enjoyment out of a great hobby, eating meat. I mean, how is one supposed to enjoy a Wendy's Classic Triple with cheese when all they can think about is the possibility of a brain-killing disease inside of it?

It is not just diseases that the media hypes up; they can do it with almost anything. Awhile back, the country was thought out of social security funds within ten years. National media covered this issue every day for about a month or two, and yet today they do not speak a word of it. Did we suddenly find a hidden stash of social security tax payments or was this just another small deal hyped into a very large deal? It was hype alright, but why does the media have the ability to do this?

The media makes these small dangers seem like catastrophes waiting to happen because it will get more people to watch their shows. The "terror alert level" (the color-coded system that tells us when we are most likely to be attacked) helps the media create these illusions. When the threat level is higher, media reports on diseases and attacks seem more likely. Remember when the threat level was orange and everyone was buying duct tape and bubble wrap to protect themselves

from possible terror attacks? The fact that an attack could be coming led people to believe that all the media hype was true. Another factor is the fact that the public does not know any better. The news tells us what is happening, and they are usually right, so we tend to have a large amount of trust in them. It is like a reverse boy-who-cried-wolf. Think about it, if Brian Williams came on NBC Nightly News and told everyone there was a meteor headed towards Earth would people not believe him?

Although it may seem like the point of this article is to complain, it is not. The national point is that the media likes to stretch the truth on some issues. It is hard to tell what is being overexaggerated and what is actually an important issue because it is hard to find reliable sources outside of major news media, and all the major news stations are usually talking about the same thing with the same sense of urgency. It is called "news" not "what could happen?" and we prefer theirs with facts, not speculation. People can play on the safe side and believe everything the media says, but think about this. Americans like us have been eating burgers and steaks for years and have had nothing happen to them

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Effects of Disrespect

Dear Editor,

I was very disturbed by the article in *The Wire* entitled "Color Guard Betting Scandal." I find it hard to believe that students at our school would be calling out numbers corresponding to the number of dropped throws by the color guard. If the article is correct, however, this behavior has been occurring and needs to be stopped immediately. In high school, students become involved in activities which they find meaningful and challenging. Different groups have different interests, but no one group should put down another group—that is not school spirit, that is negative behavior which should not be tolerated by other students or the administration. We are proud of all the many honors and awards which our students attain in the classroom, on the playing field, or in a music ensemble. We support each other and do not belittle or poke fun at another group. The West Potomac band and Color Guard consistently compete at the highest level. We are proud of the Marching Wolverines and the long hours and commitment that which these students have devoted in order to superbly represent our school. School spirit is called RESPECT!

Madelyn Turner, School Counselor

If you have an opinion on a school-related issue, please submit your Letter to the Editor of 250 words or less to Room 418 Quander, or e-mail us at: [keley.pierre@fcpss.edu](mailto:keley.pierre@fcpss.edu). All submissions become property of *The Wire*.

## RANTS and RAVES



**A RANT FOR TOILETS NOT BEING FLUSHED IN THE MEN'S BATHROOM.**

**A RANT FOR WINTER BREAK BEING JUST ONE WEEK LONG.**

**A RANT FOR TOO MUCH HOMEWORK OVER THE BREAKS.**



**A Rave for the new paper towel and toilet paper dispensers in the bathrooms.**

**A Rave for the holiday season.**

**A Rave for the football team finishing tied for first in the Patriot District.**

### Corrections From Last Issue

In "Day in the Life of... Benevolent Beeby," it was said that Mr. Beeby attended our school, but he actually attended Fort Hunt High School.

In "Fabulous Frederick," Nick Friedrich was referred to as president of our school but he is only President of the senior class.

In "Boys and Girls Cross Country Cross Finish

Line Victorious" Kelsey Rosenburg's name was incorrectly spelled "Keley."

In "Unhappy Homecoming," Homecoming tickets were said to be \$12 two years ago when they were actually \$15.

If you have a correction for *The Wire*, please submit it to room 418 or e-mail it to [keley.pierre@fcpss.edu](mailto:keley.pierre@fcpss.edu).

## THE WEST POTOMAC WIRE

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## Cartoon Corner

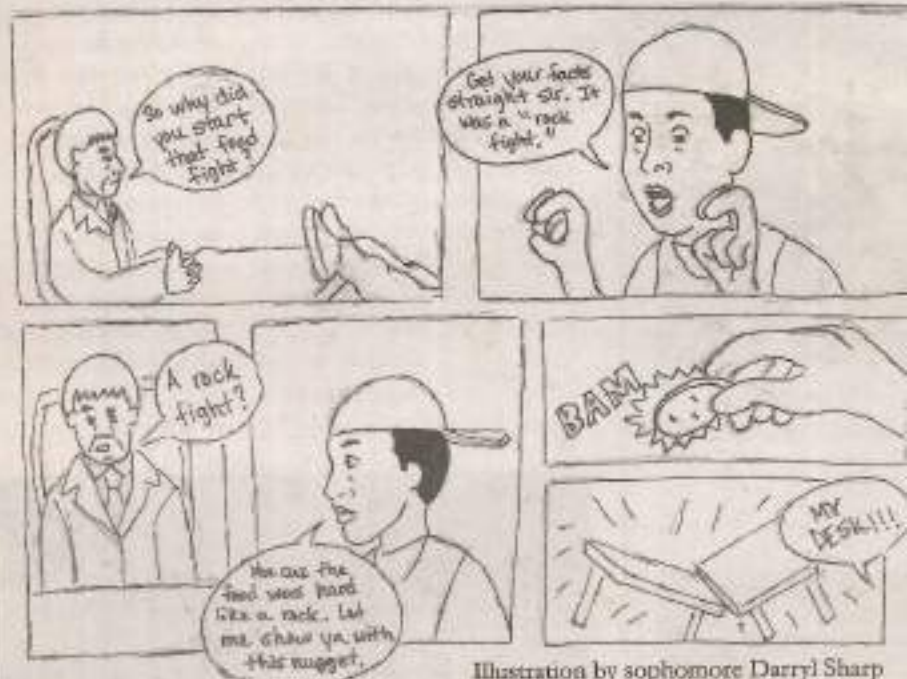


Illustration by sophomore Darryl Sharp

Have a cartoon for *The Wire*? Submit it to room 418. All submissions become property of *The Wire*.



# A Little too Much Stress

Erin Burke  
Wire Reporter

At multiple lunchtime discussions, my friends and I discuss our plans for life after high school. We sit at our table throwing out questions about transcripts, applications, and the forms our school makes the seniors fill out in addition to applications for college. As any senior will tell you, applying to college is a daunting and grueling task. Colleges give us a ton of paperwork to fill out, scores to worry about, and essays to rewrite multiple times. Our school should make this process easier, but in fact it makes this process harder.

The packet includes information from the College and Career Center, SAT and ACT Test dates, planning guidelines for those interested in entering the professional and technical world or the military, as well as a college planning calendar and options for two-year or community colleges. Though it has been revised, the packet is not new for the class of 2006-2007. The packet provides helpful and valuable information, but includes extra paperwork for every senior to complete for their counselor before they apply to a college.

At our school, the counselors write a recommendation for each senior applying to college. In order to make sure that every senior gets a good recommendation, the counselors require seniors to complete at least three teacher input forms (included in the packet) that must be passed out to teachers whom they feel connected with. Senior Andrea Cudjoe is feeling frustrated by the teacher input forms. "I was confused because our senior

packets have teacher recommendation forms but they say nothing about whether the teacher should write a letter [which some colleges request] or if they should just fill out the forms. The packet in its entirety is extremely confusing and unclear."

So, if we add those three teachers to the one or two we need for college recommendations, this makes a total of four to five teachers we should talk to. I love this school and all, but some of my favorite teachers have left, and honestly, I do not have four to five favorite teachers or classes I have done exceptionally well in.

There are also student input forms and parent/guardian input forms to fill out. I, as a senior, have to sit down and answer questions such as "Name three adjectives that describe you and why you chose them." Then my parents had to fill out a form with similar questions, like "What are three adjectives that would describe your child." In addition, I had to fill out a student activities form, naming everything I have done in my four years of high school, when I participated, and if I received any awards or recognition for them. All this paperwork leads up to the senior interview with our counselors, where I answered almost the exact same questions with the same answers.

I appreciate everything that the College and Career Center and our counselors do to help us choose and apply to colleges, and I think that it is great that the counselors

write us recommendations. But I have to wonder, is it really necessary to pile on all this extra paperwork? Moreover, why does it all have to be so confusing? There are no specific due dates for any of these forms

given in the packet (other than the transcript request form), and there are many questions that the senior packet leaves unanswered. I know that I have put off applying to schools because I have been too busy worrying about my teacher inputs and other forms. Counselor Christine Spaulding said, "the forms are not meant to add extra work to the already busy workload of the seniors, but it is necessary in order to give the colleges the best possible view of the student."

What little spare time I have had since the beginning of the school year has gone towards getting these forms completed and turned in. My teachers are also feeling the burden of the teacher input forms they receive, with one of them saying, "I don't want to see another one of these input forms for at least a week, people!"

It would be nice to be able to look at the checklist of the application process in the senior packet and not feel overwhelmed. The colleges will never see our teacher input forms, nor will they see our student or parent input forms. We have had to worry about getting into college long enough, and are especially feeling the stress pile on now that the application deadlines are approaching. There has to be a better way for our school to help us get into college, without stressing us out even more than we already are.



Photo by Brittany Castro

"Is it really necessary to pile on all this extra paperwork?"

# Putting it all in Perspective

Kate O'Connor  
News Editor

"The black market for paper is now officially in effect, so if you want to trade two sticks of gum or some cigarettes, I'm your man," joked a history teacher in the hallway between classes. Supply shortages are certainly no stranger to our school, but lucky for us, our problems boil down to a lack of dry erase markers or printer paper. Fairfax County is privileged enough to wonder how to spend our money while less than 20 miles away, DC schools are trying to scrape enough funds together to patch leaky roofs in school buildings so old, they border on being uninhabitable.

Fairfax County schools receive an average of \$12,917 per student. That funding covers everything, from the first moment the student steps on the school bus in elementary school to the second they step off the stage at their graduation. "Fairfax County is very careful about being equal and funding the schools based on student membership," said Principal Rima Vesilind. This capital is more than enough to keep our school functional and in business.

Our school currently faces a series of choices concerning how to use our budget. "We need a new sign board, our current one takes 45 minutes to change," said Vesilind, "We also need a new tractor, ours is 14 years old and has been used heavily." The student body is also calling for more durable seating in our cafeteria. All of these renovations would be costly and several would require fund-raising from the PTA or SGA. I will not discredit these options because they have the ability to greatly improve our school. On the other hand, teachers and students at District of Columbia schools have reported bare, leaking pipes, dangerous electrical issues, mold, vandalism, rodents and schools that are just generally falling apart. Mark Borbley, former DC school teacher and current candidate for the DC board of education, started the website [fixourschools.net](http://fixourschools.net). Among the pictures on the

site there are images of overflowing bathrooms, lockers without their doors and snaking pipes dripping into rusty buckets. The watermarked ceilings and peeling walls look like the setting for a scene from *Jaw*. Their problems make ours look trivial and almost selfish.

Last year, our school spent \$40,000 on two new wireless laptop carts. Teachers and students alike applauded the new technology and have found it a great aid to learning. In the same year, the school bought an entire new inventory of science text books. The average DC school budget per pupil is only \$6,551. It is desperately trying to keep its teachers, so any increases to the school's budget tend to dissolve into teachers salaries, which are still significantly less than the salaries of teachers in the surrounding suburbs. The DC Public School System proposed budget for 2005 said that the school's second priority is training teachers because a significant number of students are struggling or failing school. Their stretched budget has very little room for expenditures like digital sign boards and new tractors.

So, like I said before, we are lucky. Our school system is spending wisely and our community is contributing regularly. Personally, I think we should invest in the new \$15,000 sign board. It would help the school and community to stay informed. I agree that we should update our landscaping equipment and buy the new tractor. The sports fields could use a pick-me-up and clean grounds would benefit the school overall. We should make these changes because we can, and why not use all the resources we have? However, it is just important to remember not to take everything we have

"It wouldn't kill us to show a little more gratitude"

for granted. There is very little separating us from DC schools, and if a different series of events occurred in the past, we could be the ones with the leaky ceilings. It wouldn't kill us to show a little more gratitude. We would still scrape by if we did not buy the next new thing that tempts our student government, and instead donated the funds to a school that could really use the money. But above all, get a little perspective before you say "man, this school is so ghetto."



Photo by Brittany Castro

# Adele's A-B-C's

Getting Through Your Life  
One Letter At a Time



Adele Hampton  
Editor-in-Chief

Snow has begun to fall (maybe not here, but certainly in other parts of the country), so obviously all signs point to the holidays! It is that special time when families get together, consume more food than their bodies can handle, and eventually end up arguing the night away...or at least that is how it is in my family.

Intending to eat together. Does it not seem like the only thing people seem to be doing in the months of November and December is eating? Well, that is because it is. Yes, the holidays are all about faith, family, and friends, but they are also all about food. Thanksgiving being the holiday that is dedicated to eating is the grand-master of all holiday dinners.

If you are unfamiliar with this holiday, here it is in a nutshell. Turkey, ham, mashed potatoes, baked potatoes, stuffing, cranberry sauce, and that weird casserole one member of the family brought over, all adorn the dining room table. This tantalizing display lasts for about 30 seconds before it is completely dismantled. After everyone is finished stuffing their faces, there is nothing left to do but waddle over to the couch, pie in hand, and watch good ol' American football.

However, once the month of December hits, Thanksgiving is forgotten and one's mailbox is flooded with invitations to holiday parties. Most of these parties will all be on the same day, forcing you to circulate spending five minutes at each party, drinking and eating as many pipe-in-a-blanket as possible, before moving on to the next house. This vicious cycle will continue until the holiday party-goer in question's brain is swimming in eggnog and he or she can barely stand up. This is when a cab magically appears to take the drunken partyers home.

Jiggumbob- a thingamabob, a gadget, a whatsit, a gewgaw. Now, I realize that Christmas is not the only winter holiday. There is also Hanukkah and Kwanza and other celebrations from different religions. But, seeing as I know relatively nothing about these holidays, I will steer clear of them as to not offend anyone. As a result, I will focus on the holiday that I know best, Christmas.

While Christmas is about love and joy, it is mostly about presents, lots and lots of presents. And everyone knows that it is better to receive than to give. This is true unless the items in question are things like socks, pencil sharpeners, lint rollers, and snow globes.

Picture this: it is Christmas Eve and you have been up all night dreaming about all of the glorious gifts that will soon be coming your way. Finally, it is time you open your presents, the tension is mounting as you grab the gift closest to you. "Oh my gosh! Thanks Mom and..." Your excitement drains as you gaze upon your brand-spanking-new lint roller. Yes, lint rollers are cool, but they are not as cool as a new pony.



# Living in a World of Fear

Emily Kubach  
Wire Reporter

It is the reason I found myself on a hunt for Starbucks at 9:00 at night after a long day in the Washington Dulles International Airport.

My mom and I were going to Vermont for the long weekend. We had arrived almost two hours early for our flight, as suggested. Alas, the airport had other plans for us. The security line moved at a snail's pace, and there I stood, contact solution in hand, ready to be specially inspected, so that I would not waste an extra second getting through security. It did not matter. In the end, we missed our flight.

As I waited in the airport for another four hours, I watched what was going on around me. Air travel had undergone drastic changes in the last few years. By the time I boarded my plane, I had put my finger on it. It was no longer fun.

As for why, I did not look have to look far to find my answer. "The Current Threat Advisory is Orange," a sign blared at me as I unlaced my shoes at the security checkpoint. To my right I noticed a welcoming "America!" store, which

enticed customers with useless gadgets for any patriot stuck in the long lines. "Remember," it seemed to say to me as I chucked my Gatorade and prepared for extra screening, "you live in the land of the free." When I tried to take pictures of security for purposes of this story, one security official told me I would have to delete them immediately or else run the risk of being fined. Overhead, I heard a warning to report any suspicious activity to a security official immediately. I fondly remembered my last time at the George H.W. Bush Airport in Houston, Texas, where the kind announcer had told me that any "inappropriate jokes or comments" could result in my prosecution. Simply put, we live in a world



Photos by Brittany Collins

of fear. Our administration hails us as brave fighters in this War on Terror, but I am not so sure we are winning. I am aware there have been no attacks on American soil since 9/11, and I am very thankful for this, but we have lost out to fear. Airport officials pull us aside for extra screening because we look suspicious. We are encouraged to look twice over our shoulders, and to suspect each other. And this is all in the

name of national security.

The worst part is that the government takes advantage of it. We turn on the TV to see footage of Osama bin Laden followed by the message that only our administration can protect us. The government listens in on our phone calls. President Bush goes around saying things like "You are either with us or you are against us." Terror Alerts warn us to be cautious in our daily lives, but what good purpose does the "color wheel of terror" really serve? Dan McCann, director of NetHub, an organization within the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), admits that they are subjective and based on "what the TSA perceives to be the threat level against the nation."

According to the Terror Alert color wheel, Code Orange means a "high risk of terrorist attack." That makes me think that there is a terrorist lurking behind every corner, when, in reality, the probability of being attacked by a terrorist rivals that of being struck by a meteorite, claims John Mueller, author of *Overblown*.

President Bush tells me that I am either with him or the enemy. If the enemy includes Americans who value their rights, then count me in.

## 'Tis the Season of Giving

Lakeisha Langley  
Photo Editor

Betsy Damite, a volunteer manager of the United Christian Ministries (UCM), is excited about the upcoming holiday season. During the holiday season the UCM, a soup kitchen for the less fortunate, receives a large increase in the number of donations and volunteers during the November and December holiday months. So what about the other ten months of the year?

The holidays are known as the season for giving, but a lot of people seem to believe that this is the only time to do so. For most of us, including me, volunteering does not even cross our minds during the year unless required by a class or club. It is not until the holidays that we think about those in need. This is the time when a lot of people want to participate in food drives and other programs. According to Damite, "We get about 134 or more volunteers daily during the holiday season then the rest of the year." Why such a large increase during this season?



Photos by Brittany Collins

One reason may be because of busy schedules. During the year, we are preoccupied with school, work and extracurricular activities. Because of this, students do not even have time to consider volunteering. "I used to volunteer there [UCM] every Friday because I had to do it for my civics class," said sophomore Tyler Wong. However, when asked if he would continue to volunteer if he was not required to, Wong responded, "I

am just too busy." The holidays are when most people take a break from their hectic schedules thus people have more time to give to those needy.

Another reason may be because of guilt. The holidays are a time of large feasting and gathering with the family. While we are sitting in our warm living rooms with our families eating on our abundance of food, we remember that there are people out there in the winter cold with no food to eat. To ease this guilt, spend a few hours at the local shelter, or we grab a piece of turkey or chicken and drop it off at a UCM or other homeless shelter, not to return for another year.

Senior Tori Wong, who is a regular volunteer at UCM, also notices the difference in numbers during the holiday season. "Now that we are getting closer to the holidays, there is always a whole bunch of new people everyday. I had to do it for a club, but I stayed," she says.

It is unrealistic to expect everyone to spend every weekend volunteering but the reality is that there are millions of people without homes and food. For these people, being homeless does not begin in November and end in January. It should not take a holiday to remind us that we need to give to those who are less fortunate. Whether it is once a month or once every two weeks, a helping hand is welcomed at the UCM or any other local charities, no matter what season it is.

## When Should the Holiday Hype Begin?

The Holiday "Hype" is the excitement that comes before the actual holiday begins. For an example, some stores begin decorating for Christmas in October, is this right? A poll out of 82 students determines when is a appropriate time to begin the hype!



47% December

"It really annoys me to see all of the Christmas decorations and stuff up at like Halloween. When the actual season comes around, it's not as special because everything's been out for a while."

-Freshman Jessica Merck



40% November

"Thanksgiving is one of the best holidays- football, food, family and with the Christmas spirit to top it off, bring on the hype."

-Sophomore Andrew Lutz



12% October

"It's never too early to start celebrating."

-Junior Alexis Vlasbo



1% Other

"Christmas should be celebrated all the time for all the good its done the world."

-Freshman Erin Fitzgerald

Photos by Brittany Collins

## Students Should Not Be Given Homework Over The Break

Devon Cain  
Wire Reporter

Winter break is eleven days long this year (we come back on Tuesday, the day after New Year's Day) and the students of our school will probably have homework to do under the mistletoe.

The point of winter break is to get away from the stresses and frustrations of school, but students have grown to be pessimistic about their ability to escape. In the years that have made up my high school career, teachers have always assigned homework over winter break. When asked whether he assigns homework, AP Government teacher Eric Henderson replied, "Yes. Lots. AP Government demands that you keep up with your reading." It is understandable that teachers want us to stay focused and primed for knowledge

assimilation whilst we vacate, but for many students the extra work is more of a burden than a learning experience.

For seniors, the addition of the dreaded college applications to the course load often makes the presumed workload unbearable. "Winter break is the only time I get to spend time with my family and once I even had to work on a project in my cousin's basement," said senior Emily Echols.

A resting period could actually be more helpful than time-consuming homework assignments. Greg Bechtol said,



Photos by Brittany Collins

"You need time to relax so that you can be more prepared [when you come back to school]." If given a real break, our students' quality of work for the New Year is bound to be better. "[The quality of work turned in] isn't very good because the whole time I'm doing it I resent it so much," argued Echols. Rather than coming back drained from a huge project, students would be well rested and ready to learn.

Eleven days? Is that too much to ask for? How much information is going to disappear from our brains in one short period of freedom?

Please teachers and administrators of that school, when you write, "Happy Winter Vacation," on the board this year, do not add a homework assignment too. Your students need a "break."



# Just Good Ol' Fashioned Radio... Except Better

Sandy Slippen

Copy Editor

A sudden collection of seemingly unfamiliar voices jars you awake from a deep slumber. After the initial shock, you realize that this is just your alarm, set to your favorite radio station, waking you up for the day.

Radio, like other broadcast mediums such as television, has been present in the majority of homes for multiple decades. In fact, radios were the first common broadcast form to appear in homes. In the past, while they had their practical purposes such as receiving the world news, radios generally served to bring people together. Friends could share a good laugh over a comedy program or find themselves entranced by a suspenseful murder mystery. Like television, listening to the radio remains popular currently. However, increases in technology have led to the expansion of radio stations. It is no longer completely necessary for listeners to tune a wobbly old dial and get past the static to hear music or news.

One of the main changes regarding radio stations has been the development and popularity boom of XM and Sirius Satellite Radio networks. Similar to cable television, these networks are pay-for-service, which typically cost anywhere between \$30-400 for a one-time fee. XM Satellite Radio, which holds an edge in popularity over Sirius, carries a wide array of options for the viewer. In addition

to carrying 73 music channels, XM also contains 39 news, sports, talk, and entertainment

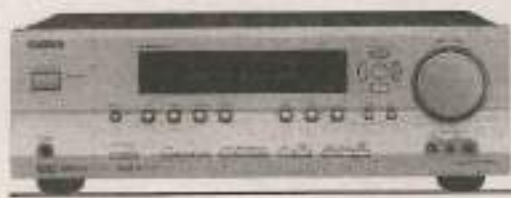


channels, 21 regional traffic and weather channels, and 23 play-by-play sports channels. XM radio stations have many benefits opposed to regular radio stations.

One of the more noticeable effects of XM is that listeners can

listen to nearly any type of music or feature they want. "I think XM Radio is an interesting idea as opposed to regular radio stations because you get to listen to more of what you want," said senior Steven Minson. Indeed, viewers have the freedom to choose not only from genres of music, like easy listening or hip-hop, but also up-to-the-minute local news, weather, and sports programs. In addition to the variety, many prefer XM Radio because of its superior convenience. Not only can XM and Sirius satellite radios be played in offices, bedrooms, and computers, they can also be hooked up in vehicles. As junior John Polk stated, "I like XM Radio because it is easier; there is a much wider variety [of channels]."

Although such devices as iTunes and iPods themselves are transported many places by people throughout the world, the device of a radio is still important to the lives of many. "I cannot do anything without listening to the radio, it helps me focus," remarked junior Colleen Gottlieb. Indeed, radios remain a viable listening option in today's world, especially as technological advances propel them forward into the oft-changing future.



Illustration/KEE



Senior Kaitlyn Payne (center) trains with Dragon Pad, a speech recognition software, with hopes that someday her mastery of the program will give her physical independence despite her disease. Teacher Colleen Ohara (left) and Ashley Evans (right) work with her.

Photo by Laocelia Langley

# Conquering Cerebral Palsy One Letter at a Time

Caroline Staples

Focus Editor

Sitting at the computer with students from Mrs. Joan Reynolds' sixth period leadership class, and technology instructor Ms. Colleen Ohara, and practicing using Dragon Pad software has become the highlight of the day for senior Kaitlyn Payne.

For many students Payne is known as the girl in the wheel chair that is followed by an assistant through the hallway in-between classes. As we all know, Payne is a little different from the rest of us because she was born with the disease called Cerebral Palsy, which disables her from using her hands well. What we do not see about her is the "go-get-em" attitude and persistence in becoming an independent adult through Dragon Pad that she has every single day.

Dragon Pad is a software program designed by ScanSoft that allows someone such as Payne, who can't type well, to speak to the computer and have it write for them. After training the computer to recognize her voice, Payne will hopefully be able to use documents like Word to write essays and projects or use it to type e-mails, which she is not able to do now. Dragon Pad might also allow her to surf the web and use any other programs on her computer by simply saying "open Internet Explorer" into the microphone. The only problem that Payne will have when using Dragon Pad is her speech pattern. Her unique type of speech makes it difficult for the program to pick up

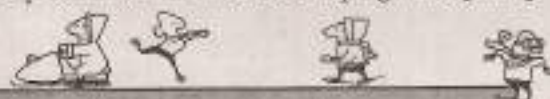
what Payne is actually saying, making Dragon Pad almost impossible for her without someone's assistance. None the less, she does not give up and is quite eager to work with Dragon Pad. "She's a smart kid and has a great attitude," said Ohara.

Payne has been working with Dragon Pad for over two years now in an attempt to have "freedom," as Ohara puts it. It is the biggest thing that Payne is after and will probably never give up trying to achieve. Because of her disease, she is always being helped out with writing, but with the possibility of Dragon Pad on Payne's side, freedom is not so far away.

After putting over 100 hours of working with Dragon Pad into her life at home and in school, Payne has gotten very far along with the program. Training the microphone, working on speech, and also training the software to recognize her military alphabet, takes a lot of time and work; so although it may seem like her progression has gone nowhere, it is the total opposite.

Payne will be attending George Mason University next year and hopes to be independent with Dragon Pad. "I look forward to college, but I am a bit nervous," said Payne. Because her temporary assistant, Medina, works for the school system, Payne will be introduced to a new assistant in college that will be taught to use Dragon Pad with Payne.

Thanks to Dragon Pad, it gives Payne high hopes to her future in becoming independent individual like any other student that graduates from our high school.



## NEWS BRIEFS

### Trash Can Caravan

Thanks to the Pulley Landscape team, the two garden beds outside of entrance 12 have been weeded and mulched. The Collingwood Garden Club donated plant material for the beds. The Pulley Landscape team transported mulch from a pile behind Spring Bank to Gunston in trash cans, earning them the nickname, "The Trash Can Caravan." After Thanksgiving, they plan to construct evergreen centerpieces.



Illustration/KEE

### Dressed To Kill

Café Asia, located at 1550 Wilson Blvd in Arlington, is hosting a Holiday fashion show and shopping benefit on December 6th. The event features a suit drive

for DC career women of lower incomes, gift shopping, a silent auction, caricatures, tarot and palm reading, a fashion show, and complementary sushi and chocolate bars. Advance tickets are \$45, and include a holiday gift bag. Tickets at the door are \$60.

### Senior Update

The senior class is having a Midnight Bowling party on January 5th at Alexandria Lanes. Also, thanks to a great DJ, the Pizza Party on November 17th was a success! At the party several new senior privileges were announced, which include seniors leaving five minutes early from school on Fridays, catered lunches several times a month, the return of the senior lunch line, and a "Super Senior Saturday" where students can meet with teachers to prepare for college. The senior class student government is working hard with the administration to negotiate more senior privileges for the remainder of the year.

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# The Devotion Behind the Veil



Emily Kuhbach  
Wire Reporter

A controversy taking root in our society can be represented by a single object: the Muslim headscarf, whether it be a head-covering hijab, more conservative chador, or body-encompassing burqa. Because of our school's diverse population, it is impossible not to notice the groups of



Senior Rayyan Abdelgader wears a hijab to show respect for Islam.

Muslim girls who veil and those who do not. One cannot help but wonder what causes this difference.

We must look to the only source that would really know: Muslim women. Sophomore Maryam Sajjad, a practicing Muslim from Pakistan, explains that she wears a headscarf "to represent my culture. It shows I am a respected lady of Islam." Junior Rida

Khan, also from Pakistan, does not wear a scarf, but agrees that it "symbolizes respecting your religion." However, to her, the important things are "on the inside. If I am a good girl, I do not need a hijab to show it. It is a symbol of being Muslim, but it is not everything. You have to have beliefs."

The veil is a hot topic in our nation today because to some, it is a contradiction. Some Americans believe that it is a sign of oppression and subservience to men and go as far as to tell Muslim American women donning the scarf that they do not have to wear it anymore because they are in America now and they are free here. They are proud of America's secular culture and supposed gender equality, and translate this into a belief that the headscarf "embodies all things anti-women," reports Arzu Merali of *Islam for Today*, a website "for Westerners seeking a knowledge and understanding of Islam."

Many non-Muslim Americans and feminists fail to realize that the scarf is a choice. Most Muslim American women realize that they are in a free country, and still choose to veil. Some Middle Eastern countries have forced women to veil in the past, such as Afghanistan under the Taliban and the Islamic state of Iran today, but one cannot forget

that before the 1979 Revolution, Iranian officials under King Shah Pahlavi went around literally ripping veils off women walking down the street, which violates their rights just as much.

Most frequently, however, the veil has been a symbol of freedom throughout history. Algerian women donned the scarf to protest French occupation and retain their identity while Iranian women living under the veil ban wore it as a sign of their personal rights, even if it was at home or in the shadows. Later, during the Revolution that uprooted U.S.-installed Shah Pahlavi, it was a symbol of anger with the United States. Whether worn as a sign of national pride or opposition, it still represents a choice on the part of Muslim women. As long as it is a choice, we cannot call it oppression.

On top of being a choice, some Muslim women who veil consider themselves feminists because the headscarf liberates them from advances from men. Khan said, "As we all know, the hair does attract guys." Just like non-Muslim feminists, Muslim women are trying to prevent the treatment of women as objects. Perhaps it is time they realized they are fighting for the same cause.

## Students Challenge Themselves By Taking Harder Courses

Mariya Ilyas  
News Editor

Advanced Placement (AP) and honors classes are arduous and fast-moving courses taken by students who want to challenge themselves. Honors classes offer more challenging content and pace than regular classes, and help show a student's willingness to try harder. It is recommended that students take honors classes to transition

from regular into AP. AP classes are equivalent to college-level courses. At the end of each course, students take a challenging exam in that particular subject. A rubric of one through five is used to grade the exam, with five being the highest and one being the lowest. A student is beneficial if he takes challenging classes.

For example, one advantage for taking an AP course is that they look great on transcripts. Colleges would much rather see A's and B's

in AP and honors classes, than straight A's in easy, regular courses. One can also get recognized by many AP awards offered. According to the CollegeBoard website, "The AP Program offers several Scholar Awards to recognize high school students who have demonstrated college-level achievement through AP courses and exams. Although there is no monetary award, in addition to receiving

an award certificate, this achievement is acknowledged on any grade report that is sent to colleges the following fall."

The CollegeBoard website also reports the specific requirements for each type of award. For example, "AP Scholar" is granted to students who receive grades of three or higher on three or more AP exams.

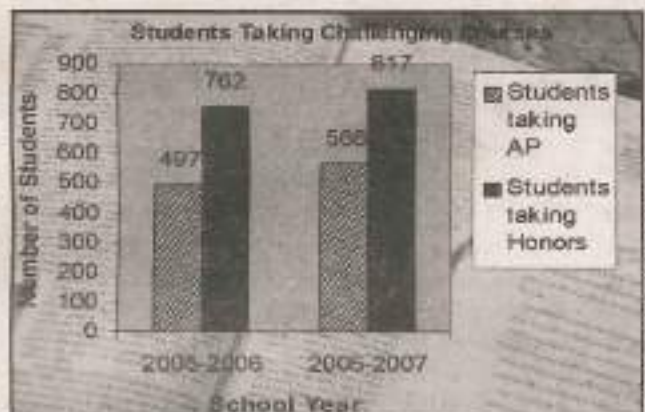
Fairfax County designed the Advanced studies diploma to allow students to take a course load that is preparing them to be a competitive college applicant," said counselor Kirsten Wiley.

Senior Mina Nekoueeian is taking AP English 12 and AP Stat for that reason. "The reason [I am taking these classes] is because I like challenging myself and want to know how I am going to be doing in college," she said. Former student Shannon Munyan, now a freshman at the University of Pennsylvania, took all honors core classes during her freshman and sophomore year. "My junior year I took AP Calculus BC, AP Stats, AP English Language, AP Spanish Language, and AP U.S. History," said Munyan. "My senior year I took AP Economics Micro/Macro (they were semester courses), AP

U.S. Government and Politics, AP English Literature, AP Spanish Literature and AP Physics C."

Teachers that teach AP classes try to make the course as challenging as possible, to give the student the real college experience. "For homework, students in my AP classes have regular reading assignments in a college-level textbook. My students also get a lot of practice with timed, in-class writing assignments," said AP U.S. History and World History teacher Mr. Jeffrey Feinstein. "The workload could get intense at times, but as long as I didn't procrastinate I was alright," said Munyan.

"Colleges and universities like to see that a student has taken the most challenging course load appropriate for that student. Challenging oneself academically is important to the schools but overloading oneself to the point where one is doing poorly (below a B) in a higher level course is not appropriate," said Wiley. She also shared that students who originally wanted to drop an AP or honors course earlier in the year later realized that with effective time management and additional support, they may really enjoy their classes.



From last year, there was an increase in the number of students who took AP courses and Honors courses. \*Note: Students could have taken both AP and Honors classes.

Graph and Photo by Mariya Ilyas

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### Parents, from page 1

Everything from sleeping, eating, working, disciplinary actions, and just the basic routines of life are switched when a family member is away from home.

Family and friends' relationships change as well. Without one parent, whom a teenager is used to at home, it makes it easier for the teen's former relationship with parents to go in a whole new direction. Since communicating with a parent who is away at Iraq is difficult, many teenagers report growing closer to the parent at home. This was especially the case for teenagers in the survey who had a step-parent deployed. On the other hand, having a parent away at Iraq can also bring a parent and child closer through support. "Before my dad left someone gave me one of those yellow rubber wristbands that says 'Support Our Troops,' and I made sure I wore it everyday until he came back, and about three days after he came home, it broke. I thought that was kind of cool," stated senior Allie Dahl.

Overall, studies show both good and bad results occurring from the deployment of parents. The changes occur from the media and building stress. Stress can also force an individual to step up and take the extra plunge to a new form of responsibility. "Having my dad away was hard, but it also taught us a lot. It showed my family how much we could take and how important things were," said Dahl.

### Blogging, from page 1

post a challenging problem for those who find them. Parents struggle with the choice of whether to report the drinking to the police, or to the parents of the kids in the pictures.

Another shocking find was that the survey reported that twenty percent of those ages sixteen and older have driven a car after drinking alcohol. If parents are not aware that their children are drinking initially, then they do not know how their children get home after a night of drinking. The most important question now is whether or not if the students in the pictures, or any students who drink, drive under the influence. According to the website, <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov>, "every thirty minutes someone in the United States dies in an alcohol-related crash." This means that last year, more than one million people were injured in an alcohol-related car crash. The web site <http://www.madd.org> said that "Alcohol is the No. 1 drug problem among youth killing more young people than all other illicit drugs combined... In 2005, 1,367 youth aged 15-20 died in crashes involving a 15-20 year old alcohol-impaired driver or motorcycle operator."



# Welcoming Our Immigrants

**Kelly Wood**  
Features Editor

The American Dream is something that some immigrants possess when entering our country. There are many opportunities for immigrant families to pursue, including education for their children. There is more to the student immigrants at our school—each has a unique story of their journey to America.

Many different ethnicities exist at our school, causing people to blend in and be easily accepted. However, some immigrated students have stories of their past hidden beneath the surface.

Sophomore Yoon-Ji Ha left Korea in 2000 and entered Waywood Elementary School. She was placed into a fourth grade class despite her inability to speak English. "I hated school when I first arrived because I didn't understand what was happening and I felt like an outsider," said Ha.

For the next year, Ha struggled with language comprehensibility and adapting to her new lifestyle. However, by middle

school, Ha was speaking perfect English, taking all honor courses, and excelling in all subjects. Ha said, "I try really hard to do well in all areas. My parents are always pushing me and when we first arrived, they expected me to go to Harvard for college."

By taking only one glance, students passing by would only see Ha as a smart girl, but by looking deeper, one would see a girl who has climbed a mountain.

Sophomore Amazing-Grace Danso came from Ghana only last year; however, she already knew English along with the other four native languages she spoke. "The education is actually kind of similar, but America offers better opportunity for college and higher education," said Danso. She also discussed the higher work load she found when she entered our school on the first day.

These girls, along with many others at our school, overcame challenges to add to our already diverse hallways. They are only two among thousands of immigrants that enter our country each year. According to the US Census Bureau, there are 20,369 foreign born people from ages fifteen to nineteen in our country, many of whom help to fill our public schools.

Diversity is more than just appearance; it includes having different ideas and ways of thinking. This makes our school more rounded and diverse, making our school community a wonderful place to be.



Immigrants continuously come to the United States for better opportunities.

# Depression Takes Over

**Grace Powell**  
Opinion Editor

Sophomore Jessie Gower first noticed the murky silhouette rising slowly behind the tombstone; it was the shadow of depression. "When I was in fifth grade my dad died ... I guess for an eleven-year-old all that was hard to take," she said. Depression lingered behind her for years, "I would cry a lot. For no reason. During school I would break down to a point where I'd have to go talk to a counselor or be sent into the hall to calm down." She describes the condition in one word "Terrible." She adds, "Depression is something I don't think anyone should ever have to go through."

According to the recent Fairfax County survey, a growing number of teens are enduring the gloomy days and endless tears inflicted by depression. The survey also remarked that the rising number of students going through this may be due to the use of substances such as drugs and alcohol. "Alcohol and some drugs are known to have depressant effects," states KidsHealth.org, a website promoting the safety and health of adolescents.

The Safe Youth website which focuses on youth violence prevention says, "Major depression strikes about one in twelve adolescents... about five percent of nine to seventeen year-olds are estimated to be suffering from major depression." According to Paxler.com a site advertising depression medication, depression can be defined as a medical condition leading to intense feelings of sadness or despair. A person is usually diagnosed with depression after experiencing the characterized sorrow so often that the feelings distract from normal life. Depression can be triggered by a number of factors including low self esteem, traumatic events, substance use and stress.

It can be especially difficult for a teenager to undergo depression. Teens are bombarded with so many issues such as peer pressure, grades, and the infamous hormones that are said to be at their peak during the adolescent years. Gower's struggle to battle depression and school has been intense. "I remember last year when I was a freshman, I got really down about stuff at school and home. With the big high school workload, I began to slip in all my classes. I lost all motivation to work. Doing homework and class work just didn't seem important anymore."



However, depression is not content to create feelings that cause plummeting grades and a lack of enthusiasm alone; it can also result in feeling physically and emotionally drained. "You straight up feel like crap... Sometimes, the whole reason why you're depressed is because you have such low self esteem. You hate on yourself a lot. Always pointing out your faults and never noticing your good attributes," said Gower.

Sporadic emotions tend to come with the package of being a teenager; as a result it can be difficult to diagnose depression. "All too often, depression is left untreated because people fail to recognize the symptoms and believe that it is just normal sadness, a phase that a teen is going through, this can be a terrible mistake," said Safe Youth.org. Depression not dealt with has the potential to lead to suicide. There are many symptoms of depression including irregular sleep patterns, thought of death or suicide, difficulty concentrating and remembering, irritability and feelings of guilt or worthlessness.

School Counselor Kirsten Wiley elaborates on depression "It's not a sign of weakness," Wiley also reiterated the fact that if somebody suspects a person to be severely depressed, it is important to tell somebody. "It's better to lose a friend temporarily than to lose them forever... Speak up!"

For Gower, depression is not a lost cause. "Since I am diagnosed with depression, you might think I would straight up say, my life sucks... But my life is really going good right now. I'm doing really well in school, I have a roof over my head and a family that loves me, and I have the best friends anyone could ask for. There are rough spots when life does get tough, but if you keep your head up high and think positive, you usually can get passed them without any serious problems."

It is important to recognize the symptoms of depression. If someone suspects that they, or someone they know is experiencing depression, should tell somebody and get the help they need. Nobody has to suffer. For more information about depression, feel free to talk to the school counselors. Also, students can check out websites such as (kidshealth.org and safeyouth.org) or key word: teen depression.

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## December Calendar

December 2 <sup>nd</sup>	• SAT Testing	• Lunch	• Caps and Gowns orders during lunch
December 4 <sup>th</sup>	• One-Act Auditions	• WABC meeting	
December 5 <sup>th</sup>	• One-Act Auditions	• BCA meeting	• Orchestra Winter Concert
	• Parent Liaison Community Meeting	December 14 <sup>th</sup>	• Guitar/Piano Concert
December 6 <sup>th</sup>	• District Band auditions	December 15 <sup>th</sup>	• Interims Distributed during 7 <sup>th</sup> period
	• One-Act Auditions	December 18 <sup>th</sup>	• WPPTSA meeting
December 7 <sup>th</sup>	• U.S. Marine Recruiters 10	December 20 <sup>th</sup>	• BCA college Panel
	• Lunch		• Choral Winter Concert
	• Winter Band Concert	December 22 <sup>nd</sup>	• Fine Arts Assembly during Flex
December 9 <sup>th</sup>	• ACT training	December 25 <sup>th</sup> -29 <sup>th</sup>	• Winter Vacation
December 11 <sup>th</sup>	• College Financial Planning Meeting		
December 12 <sup>th</sup>	• U.S. Navy Recruiters 12		





# White Sugar Plum Fairy



## Interpret Your Dreams



Jocelyn Finfrock  
Style Editor

Imagine this. You get in bed and pull up your favorite blanket. Your head sinks into your pillow. You close your eyes and your

imagination begins to run wild.

Dreams are unpredictable and uncontrollable. Some nights, one may fall asleep and not dream a single thing. Other nights, you may have two or three dreams all mixed together. Then there are those nights where you have either one amazing dream where you never want to wake up or that dream where you wish you could wake up from and forget it ever happened. No matter what you dream, there is a reason you dreamed it and an interpretation for almost everything. By understanding the meaning of your dreams, you can attempt to decipher them and understand more of what is going on in your life both mentally and physically.

Chase dreams often come from anxiety that you have in your life. The way you respond to pressure and anxiety can be shown through being chased in a dream. Most of the time in these dreams you will have a chaser or attacker as you are trying your hardest to out run or hide from them. Chase dreams represent your way of coping with fear, stress, or various situations. Instead of confronting these troubles you avoid or run from them.

Failing a test is one thing that many of us pray we don't do. If you have ever had a dream about failing or taking a hard test you may be anxious or agitated. Failing a test indicates that you are being put to the test or scrutinized in some aspect of everyday life. These dreams can usually stem from your lack of self-esteem or confidence and may mean that you feel as if you do not measure up to others expectations and are not accepted.

Falling dreams are probably one of the most common dreams among people. Whether it's falling off a cliff, a bike, or steps, they are all connected. Falling is an indication of insecurities, anxieties and instabilities. You may feel as if you can not hang on or keep up with certain things that are happening in your life. Falling dreams also often reflect a sense of failure or inferiority in some circumstance or situation such as failing in your job or school, loss of status, or failure in love. Falling dreams typically occur in the first stages of falling asleep. These dreams may cause muscle spasms in the arms, legs or whole body known as myoclonic jerks. It is thought that this jerking action is part of an arousal mechanism that allows the sleeper to awaken and become quickly alert and responsive to possible threats in the environment.

No matter what you dream, there is an interpretation for it. Whether it's an exciting and happy dream or scary and sad dream your mind is dreaming that because of a response to mental feelings.

Dream interpretations from [www.dreammoods.com](http://www.dreammoods.com)



Photo by Latetisha Langley



## Teachers' Dreams Are Different Than We Think

Mariya Ilyas  
News Editor

There are flowers everywhere, bridesmaids are dressed up, groomsmen look handsome, cameras are clicking, and wedding music is slowly playing in the background. One would think the bride-to-be would be ever so happy ready to accept her beloved one and spend the rest of her life with this man. Indeed, this bride was; however, she was also worried sick. The sweat trickled down her beautiful white gown. Where was the groom?

The alarm goes off and the bride wakes up with her heart pounding, relieved it was all just a dream! "It was the night before our wedding," said English and Leadership teacher Mrs. Sandra Bobo. "And [in reality] he was actually late for the wedding."

Bobo's dreams have changed now. "[My dream is] to become a successful administrator and to open up an all-girls' leadership academy or school," said Bobo. While growing up, Bobo was around strong women who served as mentors. "This has affected me to pass the knowledge to young ladies inspiring to become future leaders themselves," she said.

Everywhere he looked, he saw white. He saw

angels and the Lord—Chemistry teacher Mr. Eli Hyman dreamed he was in heaven. When he saw the Lord, he became angry. He told the angel next to him, "He didn't die because of me!" and the angel replied, "No, he died for you." Suddenly, Hyman fell from heaven and woke up.

Hyman described, "The dream above was the most vivid and strange dream I had ever had. I could feel the warmth from God's glow. It was very strange. I have never had a dream with that much detail." Hyman believes it was a direct intervention from the Lord, leading him to become a Christian (at the time, he was Jewish).

Every corner she turns, she's confused. Ever step she takes, she is unsure. Counselor Ms. Sarah Smith has imagined herself in the big department store of Ikea. "[It was] this bookcase I really wanted, and I was planning on getting it, but didn't," she said. Smith shared that she experiences recurring dreams, but they usually happen when she is stressed.

All in all, thought not that different from students, teachers can dream of many topics too.



Teachers Eli Hyman, Sandra Bobo, and Counselor Sarah Smith all have dreams about random things.

Photo by Latetisha Langley

Kate Si

Creating success, Garrison dreams up hold. Ever since she of being a sales prom Def Jam.

Dreams have always passageway into under desires. They can be showing visions from t

"I have always thought amazing lives," said ex it be to know that yo help create the biggest girl Garrison has enjoy as *Entertainment T* help publicize the cele be the person being p that much attention to without me, this celebr success," said Garrison

Lakeis

Dreaming is part babies dream. It is goes on in the min tests. Although no down or even dro drowning are a co dreams, mostly sym ness of foundation control, powerless.

Drowning dre you feel too ove something going reality.

"Ever since I w one certain dream This dream only slept against the myself on the ve stairway. As I'm and fall on the fir to the end of the

You'

Picture this; you waned ordinary event turns into has had a recurring night at least three different where her recurring nig

Her dream begins as sh Looking at the immense to grab a fresh blueberry she begins to realize that Her skin starts to become blue polka dots all over Rogers has transformed. blueberry muffin! Just as any wonder, a gigantic b appears from the shadow rises as the burly man b muffin Rogers through b

Rogers has never fi know what her fate wo catch her. She has awak dream; whether the be muffin, meatloaf, or a g unknown.



# s Dance in Their Heads



## Garrison "Sells" Out Her Dreams

Wire Reporter

and enthusiasm, senior Ashley Garrison imagines her future as a top model. As a young girl, Garrison has dreamed of being a top model, like a singer for a top record label, like a professional athlete, and even as though they are a secret. She knows what a person truly wants and meaningful gifts and messages, and sometimes even the future. Her dream managers lead the most successful. "How incredible would it be if an actual mastermind working to help me?" Ever since she was a young girl, she has dreamed of being on such TV news shows, such as being a model in celebrity magazines which she has. "I do not actually want to be a model or recorded; I do not need to be able to know that I want to be able to know that I want to be able to have this type of dream."

Garrison has had this dream multiple times and does not believe that it is anywhere close to ending. "I love having this dream of being a promotion because every time I have it, it's like watching a new episode because each one has the same basic idea, but something new always happens," said Garrison. Since this dream has occurred so many times, Garrison views it as though this dream may be one of the first true callings in her life. "I have known Ashley for what seems like for ever, whether her dreams show it or not, I know that she will be successful when she grows up," announced senior Lindsay Rosenfeld.

A recurring dream is a dream that someone repeatedly claims to have over an extended amount of time. These usually include being held down, nakedness in a public area, being held back in school, or being chased, each of which have different interpretations. As for Garrison who does not seem to experience any of these in her recurring dream, the fact that she is so successful in her dreams could be seen as she feels confident, well supported and free. Looking at and observing her personality, it makes sense that she would have this type of dream. With not only strong aspirations, but also strong skills, there is no doubt that Garrison can not make this dream come true.

## Plug In, Log On, Power Up

Lara Davidson

Wire Reporter



Photo by Lakshita Langley

Ever had a wild dream? Maybe when you met your favorite celebrity, won a reward, learn to fly, or even fight with your favorite hero? Whatever the case may be, our dreams are usually random, sometimes so odd, that we find them hard to forget.

Senior Nathaniel Oak was in sixth grade when he experienced one of his coolest dreams, a journey across the desert with Mega Man. Oak, being a fan of this evil fighting hero, was pleased with his exciting dream. He had the power to fly and after defeating Cutsman, Mega Man had scissor powers. Along their journey, the two also fought the evil Dr. Willie. Oak found this dream interesting because, "Who wouldn't want to fight with Mega Man?" It was a dream that made such an impression on him, that he is still able to remember it. "The next night I tried to have the dream again, but I failed." When asked what he thought of this dream Oak said, "I think that the dream was telling me how cool Mega Man is, and therefore I have sweet dreams!"

## Vanilla Dreams of Falling

Photo Editor

Everyone dreams even unborn babies. It is a natural part of life that we have dreams. Some dreams are so vivid that we feel like we are actually living them. Some dreams are so scary that we wake up in a cold sweat. Some dreams are so funny that we laugh out loud. Some dreams are so strange that we don't know what they mean. Some dreams are so beautiful that we want to live in them. Some dreams are so sad that we cry. Some dreams are so powerful that they change our lives. Some dreams are so simple that they are just a fleeting thought. Some dreams are so complex that they are like a puzzle. Some dreams are so mysterious that we don't know what they are. Some dreams are so common that we have all had them. Some dreams are so rare that we never have them. Some dreams are so important that they are the key to our future. Some dreams are so insignificant that they are just a waste of time. Some dreams are so beautiful that they are like a work of art. Some dreams are so scary that they are like a horror movie. Some dreams are so funny that they are like a comedy show. Some dreams are so strange that they are like a mystery novel. Some dreams are so powerful that they are like a super hero. Some dreams are so simple that they are just a thought. Some dreams are so complex that they are like a puzzle. Some dreams are so mysterious that we don't know what they are. Some dreams are so common that we have all had them. Some dreams are so rare that we never have them. Some dreams are so important that they are the key to our future. Some dreams are so insignificant that they are just a waste of time. Some dreams are so beautiful that they are like a work of art. Some dreams are so scary that they are like a horror movie. Some dreams are so funny that they are like a comedy show. Some dreams are so strange that they are like a mystery novel. Some dreams are so powerful that they are like a super hero. Some dreams are so simple that they are just a thought.



Photo by Lakshita Langley

Bonilla has dreamed of the same dream multiple times in her life.

"I have been trying to prevent myself from falling," said senior Jessica Bonilla. "Another thing that happened to me only happened once. My sister and I went to sleep around the same time. The next morning we were telling each other about a weird dream we'd had that night. We find out that we had the same dream. We never came up with an explanation for it but we thought it was kind of cool and a bit freaky having the same dream on the very same night", said Bonilla. This is not such an unusual occurrence because mutual dreaming is more common than we think. It is the same dream shared between two or more people. It could pertain to you and one of your friends or family, perhaps even a stranger. You meet in a dream, you share the same dream content and setting and you're able to wake up with clear memory verifying it with the other party involved. Weird isn't it?

## Turning Violet, Violet!

Wire Reporter

As a young girl, senior Chandler Rogers has had this dilemma happen to her. On one night, Rogers has fallen into a dream-like state where she is in her kitchen to fulfill her late night cravings. She is presented with a choice of choices she can choose from, she decides to eat a blueberry. As she munches on this delectable treat, she begins to change in its appearance. She becomes a giant and she begins to sprout wings. In just a matter of minutes, Rogers is transformed from a normal teenage girl into a giant. Rogers thinks that this could not be a good thing with a very large appetite and mouse game soon to follow. In her dream, she will never wake up. In the real world, Rogers is chasing a blueberry. In the end of Rogers, her fate is sealed.



Photo by Lakshita Langley

## How Dreams Relate to Your World

Kelly Wood

Features Editor

Where do our dreams come from? Are they simply random thoughts that are forgotten by morning, or are they fragmented ideas that make no sense when we wake? Is it possible for dreams to have a deeper meaning that relates to something that is happening in the world?

As found in the journal, *Dreaming*, put online by Springer Netherlands Publications, "1. Dreams reflect emotions, and 2. Pre-dream thoughts, current circumstances, and personal definitions build dream meanings." According to this journal, dreams can be influenced by what we are thinking and current events. I strongly believe this because of my own personal experience.

I remember the feeling of falling and the quickening beat of my heart as I awoke with a jolt. I dreamt of an amusement park. I was running up the steps to a huge water slide with my friends, and as I arrived at the top, I looked down at the people below who resembled nothing more than tiny specks. The tower began to sway slowly and we began to lose our balance. In a matter of seconds, we were holding onto the rails with all our strength as the tower crashed to the ground. It was at that very last second before reaching the ground that I awoke.



I had this dream only days after the tragic attacks of 9-11. Coincidence? I am guessing no. About a year later, I had another weird dream which was just as terrifying. It occurred right at the time of the sniper attacks.

In my dream, I was at my wedding and there were tons of people attending. Everything was just fine until a man walked in with a gun. Not many people noticed him, until he started shooting at random. Terror swept the room and everyone tried to get out. However, no one was able to escape, except my husband, my sister and I. It was a very emotional dream, especially since many young children were present and also savagely killed.

While it is interesting to make connections between dreams and the events in the world, perhaps it is better not to relive the constant terror of the world in our sleep.





# Lean, Mean, Sprinting Lundin

Sara Mathewson  
Style Editor

Many students know, or at least have heard of teacher and track coach Daniel Lundin, but there is a lot about him that students do not know.

This is Lundin's second year of teaching here at West Potomac. He teaches two sections of PE 9, and three sections of weight training and conditioning. Co-worker and friend Tyrone Strother said, "I love working with him. He is dedicated, honest and responsible. I spend more time with him than I do with my own wife." Lundin has been said to be "Strother's brother." He is also the head coach of the sprint section of track and field. "I love coaching, the kids are great. I wouldn't get into this profession if I didn't enjoy it," Lundin said. Growing up in Minnesota, Lundin has spent his entire life in education. His mother is a special education director, and an occupational therapist, while his father is a very well-known track coach.

A year before he arrived here at the school, Lundin was an assistant track coach at Eagan High school in Minnesota. When asked why he came here, he stated, "My name was always associated with my father. It's hard to live in his

shadow." His father, Phil Lundin, is the men's track coach at the University of Minnesota. Just a few of his records include four Big Ten Championships, three in outdoor track and one in indoor track. His team placed either first or second at the outdoor championships in six of the last eight seasons.

**"I love working with him. He is dedicated, honest and responsible."**

*—Gym Teacher, Tyrone Strother*

Lundin came here to make a name for himself. "I decided to coach track at West Potomac because it is a family tradition," Lundin said. In his free time, Lundin does a lot of running, which is not surprising from a track and field coach. He also enjoys going to concerts, his favorite bands being Pearl Jam, Ben Harper, and likes jazz and classic rock. You would be able to find Lundin experiencing all of the attractions around Washington D.C. One of Lundin's hobbies is to work with digital photo editing. He also consumes time in reading, most of the material being track and field training articles. Lundin's summers are spent participating in coaching clinics.



He participates in level two clinics for the USA Track and Field, USATF. His father teaches the level three clinics.

Many people know Lundin whether they are in his classes, have him as a coach, or simply see him in the hallways around the gym. Luckily for the students at the school, Lundin does not plan on leaving his job anytime soon. "I'll be a lifer here, I will probably stick around until I retire," he said.

## Are Early Hours the Key to Successful Athletics?

*Students Compete Before School to Further Develop Their Athletic Skills*

Sam McCann  
Asst. Sports Editor

The sky is still pitch black as junior Jayne-Marie Haley climbs out of the pool and collects her breath. The sun will not come up for at least another hour, and Haley has dark bags under her eyes- she hardly got any sleep last night. However, the determined swimmer presses on, and readies herself to dive back into the water for yet another lap. "Practicing in the morning makes me more awake by the time I finally get to school, and I love the feeling of just having finished a really hard set."

Haley, like many other athletes at the school, goes to great lengths for the love of her sport. Not only does she attend all the regular swim practices and meets, but she also has early-morning sessions in the pool. Every weekday morning, Haley, along with her younger sister, freshman Megan Haley, wakes up at 3:50 AM to prepare for training. She hurriedly

gets ready and rushes out the door. When she gets to Lee District ReCenter, Haley immediately dives into the water, and begins her grueling regimen. After her hour-and-a-half long session, which entails about three hours of swimming, Haley, along with her sister and several other swimmers, prepares for school. By seven in the morning, when many students are just walking out their doors, Haley has been out and about for more than three hours.

Although far from typical, a surprising number of dedicated student-athletes share a similar routine. These resolute individuals participate in a wide array of sports. Although many swimmers such as Haley are known to be heavily involved in such rigorous training, others, including the entire Varsity Basketball team, are extremely dedicated and practice every morning. The training, said junior and Varsity Basketball player Jimmy Bennet, helps because, "Getting the drills in during the morning [session]

makes afternoon practices easier and more to the point. To him and other dedicated athletes, the effort is rewarded in their performance. Shaving mere seconds off a lap time or making that one extra lay-up could mean the difference between victory and defeat, so the athletes are willing to put in the extra effort.

The extraordinary dedication of these devoted swimmers, runners, and other athletes certainly has serious repercussions. Many athletes do not get enough sleep because of their intense practice schedules. "Sometimes I don't get to sleep until 11 at night from doing homework and then get up before four in the morning to go to practice." However, one aspect that is not necessarily affected by the extreme practice schedule is academics. Jayne-Marie Haley is a member of the National Honors Society, and her sister, Megan, gets all A's and B's. "I utilize what little time I have to do my work and get it done," explained Megan.

With an incredible work ethic, athletes with such demanding practice schedules are the epitome of dedication. Both on and off the field, (or in and out of the pool,) these individuals' hard work is nothing short of extraordinary.



Junior Jayne Marie Haley finishes strong with a dive to the basket in an early morning varsity basketball practice.

Photo by Haniff Coobey

## Captains Corner

A Look at the Students Leading Our Athletic Teams

Sara Mathewson  
Style Editor

### Basketball

Boys: Zaid Brooks-Saahir  
Grade: 12

Hopes: Our hopes for this season are to win states and districts, and to have a good and cooperating team this year.

Girls: Claire Randall  
Grade: 12

Hopes: I hope that this season we will become one as a team and work hard together in order to successfully achieve our goals.



Photo by Drey Smith



Photo courtesy of Jayne Bryant

### Cheerleading

Girls: Christina Christian  
Grade: 12

Hopes: My hopes for the season are that people will help to support us during the season, and to keep the WP spirit up for this season.

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## Wolverines Prepare for Winter

Jon Yoo  
Sports Editor

### Swim and Dive

The expectations are high for the swim and dive team as they look forward to the season. Upper class leadership should play a large part in the development of the team as there is a healthy mixture of veteran and freshman athletes.

Fresh off the spring board, the dive team should have a good showing with four juniors looking to help the team while helping the younger freshman divers find their way to competition.

Freshman Rachel Browning is looking forward to the new season. "There is a lot of leadership from the juniors and I'm hoping to learn a lot," said Browning. Junior Andrew Swinson looks to lead the team as one of the most experienced divers.

Already in the water, the swim portion of the team will not be gasping for breath in the highly competitive Patriot district, rather, they will be looking for distinction from their competitors as they face the spotlight.



Photo by Drew Smith

Photo by Drew Smith



Photo by Drew Smith

### Wrestling

With six seniors leading the exceptionally large wrestling team, many young athletes will have to step up to the challenge.

After going 8-8, in what senior Michael Graham called "a good year," the wrestling team worked in the present with a flurry of state contenders, but

now must look to improve on that record. "We have a lot of goals this year. One is to improve our record," said Senior James Hale. Unfortunately, when losing experience and senior leadership can be hard for any team. The hopes are high for the Wolverine wrestlers as many goals are set for this team.

### Basketball

Coming off a tough loss to the Lake Braddock Bruins in the first round of last year's district tournament, fans may be seeing a plethora of new faces on the court and the bench.

Head coach David Houston will lead the charge for the boys with seniors Zaid Saabit, Latarius Hawthorne, and Elex Speights. Re-building could be a term focused on by

many attending games in the Wolverdome, as the team graduated almost half of the squad from the 2005-2006 season.

Claire Randall will be at the helm of the girls team as the captain. The senior will lead a squad featuring key members Danielle Dotsey, Leigh Blair, and Kimberly Jones. The team will look to improve on last year's disappointing season.



Photo by Hoof Coobey



Photo by Sam McCann

### Boys Winter Track

Second year coach Dan Lundin faces a tough challenge this season, after losing key sprint and jumpers Antwan Minter and Josh Rodriguez to graduation last year. However he is leaning on seniors, Neij Mehta and Neal Hardie to help guide the inexperienced squad filled with young talented sprinters Julian Holden and Chris Newkirk as well

as distance runners Paul Devar and Kelly Carmichael. "The boy's side will be younger than last year after losing several top athletes to graduation. We have a lot of talented, young runners, and it will be up to them as to how hard they work this season that will determine our success," he said. Even with all the losses, the squad believes they still have a chance for another district title.

### Girls Winter Track

The girl's side of the track team will be made up of a young squad once again led by senior Jana Decoster and juniors Stephanie Gerow and Kat Lee. It is expected that the Lady Wolverines will be in a tight battle with Lake Braddock for the girl's district team title. Even though this year's squad is relatively young,

their athleticism, leadership, and toughness, separate them from previous teams. "The girl's team is tougher and more experienced than [in yrs] last year, [and has] a shot at winning the district title," said coach Daniel Lundin. The team will be hard-pressed to live up to such daunting expectations, but may have the talent to do just that.



Photo by Sam McCann

## - UPCOMING MATCHUPS -

#### Girls Basketball:

12/1 - Game @ Wakefield  
12/8 - Game vs. Centreville  
12/12 - Game vs. Falls Church  
12/15 - Game vs. Stuart  
12/19 - Game @ West Springfield  
12/22 - Game vs. South County  
12/28 - 12/29 - Holiday Tournament @ South Lakes

#### Gymnastics:

12/4 - Meet @ Mt. Vernon  
12/13 - Meet @ West Springfield  
12/20 - Meet @ Jefferson

#### Boys Basketball:

12/1 - Game vs. Wakefield  
12/8 - Game @ Centreville  
12/12 - Game @ Falls Church  
12/15 - Game vs. Stuart  
12/19 - Game vs. West Springfield  
12/22 - Game @ South County  
12/28 - 12/30 - Mount Vernon Invitational

#### Swim and Dive:

12/1 - Meet vs. T.C. Williams (at Mt. Vernon Rec Center)  
12/2 - Meet @ West Springfield (at South Run)  
12/8 - Meet vs. Hayfield (at Mt. Vernon Rec Center)  
12/15 - Meet @ Annandale (at Lee District)

#### Winter Track:

12/8 - 12/9 - CNU  
Invitational in Newport News  
12/9 - Meet @ Episcopal  
12/29 - FIT Invitational at PG Sports Plex

#### Wrestling:

12/2 - Spartan Invitational @ West Springfield  
12/6 - Meet @ Lee  
12/7 - JV Jamboree @ Jefferson  
12/13 - Meet at Home  
12/14 - JV Jamboree @ Jefferson  
12/16 - Lions Club Invitational @ Park View  
12/20 - Meet @ Hayfield  
12/27 - 12/28 - Cavalier Holiday Tournament @ Woodson

## IN THE NUMBERS

# 66

Length, in yards, of Jason Campell's pass to Chris Cooley that gave the Redskins a 17-13 win over the Carolina Panthers.

# 16

Number of Quarterbacks the Washington Redskins have had in the last 17 years.

# 136

the worth, in millions of dollars, of former Washington National Alfonso Soriano's new contract with the Cubs

# 8

Years since the last time our school's football team captured the district title with a win over TC Williams, finishing with a record of 6 wins and 4 losses.

# 68

The number of points both West Potomac and Woodson scored in Saturday's basketball scrimmage, which ended in a tie.



## A Flurry of Women's Fashion

Lara Davidson

Wire Reporter

When walking down the hallways at our school, many new trends stand out. These clothing items and accessories have made such an impression, that every student seems to be jumping on the bandwagon. One may be wondering where these new eye appealing, not to mention extremely cute trends, can be bought. We have the answer.

1. Puffy Coats with fur lined hoods- (Abercrombie and Fitch) \$198.00
2. Uggs- (Nordstrom) \$100.00 to \$400.00
3. Leggings- (Target, Nordstrom) about \$10.00 to \$25.00
4. Beaded necklaces (Target, Nordstrom, Claire's, Forever 21)
5. Headbands (Target, Nordstrom, Claire's)
6. Colorful pattern tops (Forever 21 / XXI)
7. Ballet Flats (Target, Urban Outfitters)
8. Pea Coats (J. Crew, Nordstrom, Gap, Old Navy)
9. Zip up fleeces- (Abercrombie and Fitch) \$59.50 to \$119.00
10. Button up long sleeve tops- (Abercrombie and Fitch) \$59.50 to \$69.50
11. Timberlands- (Rack Room, DSW) around \$100.00



Photo by Lara Davidson



Wichita Eagle/KJKT



Photo by Lara Davidson



Photo by Lara Davidson



Photo by Lara Davidson



Photo by Jocelyn Fritrock



Photo by Britany Catina



Photo by Lara Davidson



Source: Times/KJKT



Photo by Jocelyn Fritrock

## The Big Slang Bang

Anum Jaffri

News Editor

No day is complete without hearing "Ballin'" or "Wamps" yelled across the hall. Expressions like these exist in every school, city, region, and state. It is pretty amazing how one person, somewhere in the world, can think up a phrase, and within days teens everywhere, at multiple schools, know what the word means, and can use it in context. If only a foreign language could be learned so easily.

"Squamps," "wamps," and "ballin'" are just a few of the words in our Wolverine vocabulary. Unlike words that actually hold substantial meaning, these three words are only said when you lack something else to say. Sophomore Andy Funk said, "You can't just say 'ballin'", you have to use the hand gestures too." Funk was, of course, referring to the gesticulation of throwing an invisible basketball into an invisible hoop. "Squamps" is also useful when a word is needed to yell out at pedestrians and drivers, or fix a stalled conversation. "Squamps" can also be used, "when something falls, and you jump out of the way," said sophomore Alex Allen.

Other words are treated just like normal words. Examples include gicksy (an object of one's affection), gicksy cups or Dixie cups, (to be very, very attracted to someone), hype

deuce (making something seem bigger than it actually is), and hype williams (one who makes something seem bigger than it actually is).

Other phrases are included in the Alexandria dialect. Words like "janx" and "bomb" are used by many all over the area. Telling someone to stop "geekin' out," and they will probably understand you and stop laughing like a hyena. "That movie's the hype," will get the point across that it has too much publicity around it. "Vicious" can be roughly translated as, "mean, in a good way." Mean, for those not in the know, can also be used in a positive connotation as well. "Shwangin," a personal favorite of Allen, can replace "cool" in any sentence, to add spice.

Sometimes, teachers become famous for their own type of slang. History teacher George Coe is often easily flustered by his underclassman students. In his moments of student-caused confusion, he has been reported to use the phrases, "Blasphemous little fellows," "yakking," and the favorite of many: "dapper."

"I say 'That's hot,' like Paris Hilton," said senior Katie Garcia. Later, she demonstrated another Virginia term when talking about her senior dues. Talking to a peer, Garcia said, "I don't have a hundred dollars! Hello!" Specific rules and regulations exist when using the seemingly normal word, hello. One has to say "hello" in a strange, preferably Scandinavian, accent, where the word is pronounced "hellewwww."

"No dice" is an expression used to illustrate the point that a person will definitely not be attending a certain event. Explaining, sophomore Abad Khilji said, "Are you coming to that party tonight? No dice."

When slang words are taken out of their normal environment, mass confusion ensues. The other day, my friend from Illinois told me to "stop selling wolf tickets." After a quick trip to urbandictionary.com, I discovered he was telling me to stop lying. Although my vocabulary is a bit more enriched, I could never say "selling wolf tickets" at our school, unless I wanted to be



Photo by Jocelyn Fritrock

Walking through the hall one is almost guaranteed to see the "ballin'" hand gesture shown above by Alex Sprights, Zaid Brooks and Will Venable.

shunned by society. Slang has strange and mysterious powers. "People say 'grease' in Florida, but no one here says it," said Khilji.

These phrases are fickle. By next season, half the words and phrases commonly used today will be out of circulation, and will undoubtedly be replaced by unpredictable new words. But there is no need to worry, we will all know what they mean.



Photo by Britany Catina

### School Slang Terms and Definitions

1. Squamps, Wamps and Ballin' - used when you lack something else to say.
2. Gicksy - an object of one's affection.
3. Gicksy cups or Dixie cups - to be very, very attracted to someone.
4. Hype - making something seem bigger than it actually is.
5. Hype Williams - one who makes something seem bigger than it actually is.

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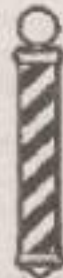
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# CHRISTMAS IN NOVEMBER?

Jon Yoo  
Sports Editor

The time of the year has finally arrived! The holiday season is getting in full swing with all the lights, trees, and decorations making everything beginning to look a lot like Christmas. The weird thing is that Christmas is still almost a month away, and yet we find ourselves unable to stay away from getting caught up in all the holiday festivities.

It is a Monday morning, and still senior Melissa Conway can not help but crank up the stereo system and sing as loud as she can to the lyrics of Kelly Clarkson's "My Grown Up Christmas List" on the way to school. Just like most everyone else, she is having a blast during her favorite time of the year. However, she stated that the thought of still having to go to school brings her spirits down a little. "I think Christmas really starts the day we get out of school; it doesn't really feel "Christmas-y" when we still have to go to class." Nevertheless, there are still some who will not let our school and its Grinch-like atmosphere bring their feelings down.

Senior Casey Snyder believes that Christmas really starts the day after Thanksgiving. Since Christmas is the best time of the year, people get the most out of it by celebrating it for a whole month, maybe two. "I think it's great. Best time of the year, you can't help but get caught up in it." Both

Conway and Snyder can not wait for all the light decorations, Christmas sweets, and reruns of the Christmas Story on TNT, and most of all, snow. Conway said, "I love to eat chocolate, shop, and the whole nine yards, but the whole season is so much better when it snows."

Aside from all the usual merriment, Snyder finds joy in different ways than most. During this supposed "time of giving," he truly finds ways of helping out. Besides decorating his whole house, he volunteers at homeless and animal shelters. This is the true reason why this is the most appreciated time of the year around the world. The time when everyone can give from their hearts, and truly cherish those in their lives. Snyder put it perfectly by saying, "It makes me feel happy inside that I'm making a difference in someone's life during the greatest time of the year."



This year the Christmas music started before Thanksgiving, which usually does not begin until after Thanksgiving.

## O' Christmas Tree What's up with Thee?

Kenneth Llewellyn  
Opinion Editor

The holiday season is getting closer and most know what that means. Time to go to the local church or empty parking lot and purchase a pine tree. Then on Christmas day there will be numerous presents under the Christmas tree. But why does one cut a tree down and put it in our living room during Christmas? And why is it a pine tree, why not an oak or maple?

Like the pine tree, each holiday has an uninvolved mystery. Why does a bunny come during Easter? Why does the bunny have eggs? Why is turkey eaten on Thanksgiving instead of fried chicken or pizza? Well all these traditions have a history behind them.

The first is the Christmas tree. Sophomore Andy Lutz said, "What is so weird about a Christmas tree?" but think about it, a tree is placed in the middle of the living room so a fat man in red pajamas can come and put presents under it, and then fancy socks are hung over the fireplace and stuffed with candy. This is done because during the seventh century, in Germany, there was a Saint named St. Boniface. He came to Germany on a mission to convert the Germans to Christianity. Legend says that he was walking through a forest when he saw a few pagans worshipping an oak tree. Enraged, St. Boniface cut down the oak and it

is said that a pine tree burst out of the oak's stump. St. Boniface took this as a sign of Christian faith, and he used the pine's triangular shape to describe the Holy Trinity. The pine became "God's tree" and by the sixteenth century people started putting the pine trees inside their homes during Christmas.

Another strange tradition is eating turkey

on Thanksgiving. Sure turkey tastes both, but some may prefer something else, "I'd rather go to Taco Bell," said sophomore Mike Condon. The common belief is that turkey was the main course at the first Thanksgiving so it was the main course for the second, and third, and so on. But that is not the case, since there was a cornucopia of lobster, goose, duck, seal, eel, during this time, these foods were most likely the main courses of this first Thanksgiving. It turns out that Queen Elizabeth liked to chow down on a goose whenever there was a feast in sixteenth century England. So when the pilgrims came over, they had the closest thing to goose, turkey.

Now here is the mother of all holiday mysteries. Why is there a bunny for Easter? And a better question is why does he have eggs? Last time I checked, bunnies did not lay eggs, especially teal and fuchsia colored ones. Well, the Easter bunny actually comes from the Pagan festival of Eostre, which celebrated the return of spring. The goddess of Eostre was a rabbit, and after the Civil War, the rabbit incorporated itself into the Christian holiday of Easter. But what about the eggs? Well, before the bunny was a major part of Easter, Christians exchanged eggs with each other. The eggs were usually wrapped in gold or boiled so that they became bright and colorful. Overtime, the two traditions fused together.

Sure some of these traditions may seem weird, but they all have reasons behind them. Maybe someone will invent new traditions for future generations, and they will wonder the same thing, "Why the heck am I doing this?"



Sitting up a Christmas tree is a big tradition. Without it, Christmas just is not the same.

## Hip Hop Rises to the Top

Nevin Albert Jr.  
Wise Reporter

Hip-hop is in turmoil; Nas's new CD is entitled *Hip-Hop is Dead*. The title may have something to do with the

eruption of snap music and this skateboard rap flooding the airwaves. Many believe that this music is not Hip-Hop and that it is just a fad poisoning the ears of young rap fans. While others believe it is just a result of Hip-Hop's maturation.

Southern music was established as a major player in the Hip-Hop game with T.I., Lil Wayne, Rick Ross, and Mike Jones. Southern music was always there, with big names like Ludacris, Trick Daddy, Hotboys, and others, but it was on the back burner for a long time until The Carter came out. The Carter was Lil Wayne's 4th Album, went 2x platinum, which is even more of an accomplishment with all the CD burning this not only solidified him as one of the top players in the game but it solidified Southern Music as the front runner.

Music is always changing for better or worse, and recently southern music formed a new style of music called snap music, which was made on the Atlanta club scene. All snap music has basically the same beat because underneath all the sounds, it's a simple 1-2-snap. The music also goes along with the lean and rock dance which accounts for most

of the appeal to people. Sophomore Mario Escamilla said, "I like snap music because it makes you move a lot." But others believe that snap music is a product of the industry and not another style of hip-hop. Junior Tata Ingraham believes that snap music is "Commercial [stuff]." Snap music lacks content in snap songs they do a lot of talking but they never really say anything.

In urban areas or ghettos, there are not many positive activities to get into to stay off the streets. The two most common escapes are hip-hop and sports.

By sports I mean football, basketball, and even baseball. Hip-hop and sports mix all the time from rap music during timeouts and quarter intermissions to sports players actually trying to rap, like Allen Iverson, Shaquille O'Neal, Ron Artest, and even Kobe Bryant. Hip-Hop is not just music hip-hop is a culture. It is a swagger, a dialect, and a style. So, most African American players are mixing hip-hop and sports just by being in the league.

Even though basketball and football are the biggest in the ghetto, they are not the only sports that are played. Some kids get into skateboarding. Now it seems that Hip-Hop and the

skateboarding scene are starting to mix. Mainstream hip-hop got its first taste of the skateboarding scene from Pharrell. His success led to other skateboard rappers to including Lupe Fiasco and The Pack. Skateboard music is different because of how they rap and how they flow to the beats. They have a laid back swagger that you can feel in their music even when they are on an aggressive beat their tone is always very calm. That is a result of the skateboard culture they dress different, talk different, and have their own swagger. Now it seems like skateboarding is poised for a hostile takeover of hip-hop. There is ready evidence of the takeover with the popularities of shell jewelry, van shoes, and skin tight tee shirts.

The only question that needs to be answered is how long these styles will be around. Will this stuff last or will pure hip-hop prevail? And who will be rap's Messiah, will it be Jay Z since he has a new album or will it be Nas to bring God's Son title to the next level by resurrecting hip-hop? Or maybe skateboarding will stay around to bring hip-hop to a new era. Will Pharrell Williams go down as the skateboarder's Afrika Bambaata?



Pharrell Williams may go down as the skateboarder's Afrika Bambaata.



Jay-Z and Beyonce both have top selling albums and are among the top singers in today's music industry.

<p><b>State of the Arts</b></p> <p><b>Red Hot Chili Peppers</b> December 25 Verizon Center</p>	<p><b>The Nutcracker</b> December 2006 Warner Theatre</p>	<p><b>Mistletoe Meltdown 2006 with Nick Lachey</b> December 16 Hippodrome, Baltimore MD</p>
<p><b>Incubus</b> December 28 9:30 Club</p>	<p><b>Jet</b> December 3 9:30 Club</p>	<p><b>Tenacious D</b> December 3 Patriot Center, Fairfax, VA</p>



## Day in the Life of... a Scholarly Substitute

Adele Hampton

Editor-in-Chief

"Oh, the cool substitute," said senior Julianne Wochtle. When asked about substitute Sid Smith, a smile emerges on most students' faces. He is a regular substitute at our school and one cannot go through a day without seeing him walking in the hallways or teaching a class.

Being raised in a family of lawyers, it was predisposed that Smith would go that route. He became a naval lawyer and served aboard two aircraft carriers. But, although being a lawyer was a sufficient job, Smith always had a longing to go into teaching. So, after years spent as a lawyer, Smith switched his gears to teaching. "I didn't want to continue government work. I just wanted to try something new," he said. Since he did not want to get a degree in teaching, but still wanted to be in a class room, Smith started to substitute teach. "I have considered it [becoming a full time teacher], but now I'm just focusing on being a full-time sub," he said.

A typical day for Smith can be anything from teaching a complete lesson plan, to just popping in a movie. When a teacher does give a lesson plan, Smith takes full advantage of it. With an interest in English and Biology, Smith is eager

to share his own knowledge about the subject as well as learn new subject material. When teaching, he tries to set a good example for students by "projecting a sense of organization and order, maintaining a pleasant demeanor, and demonstrating a genuine interest in helping the students learn." During class Smith tries to pick up where the teacher left off, involving the class in activities and encouraging them to do their best. He is a positive figure, laughing along with students and joining in their conversations.

For Smith, substitute teaching does not come with many downsides. He enjoys the interactions with students and teachers that subbing provides. For the past four years,



The "cool sub", Mr. Smith, enjoys his job as a substitute because of the interactions with the students he gets while teaching.

Smith, known as El Sid in his Spanish classes, has been a regular sub at the school. Even though he focuses most of his time here, he has also subbed at Thomas Edison High School, Mt. Vernon High School, and T.C. Williams High School. At one time, Smith also subbed in Coronado, California for part of the school year.

While Smith enjoys time in the classroom, teaching is not the only thing he enjoys doing. Listening to classical and 70's music is another one of Smith's favorite things to do. He also enjoys getting outside and riding his bike.

Although he has subbed at many schools around our area and across the country in California, Smith always comes back to our school. He said, "The best part of subbing for me has been the association with students, teachers, and staff at West Potomac. [They are] always very dedicated, friendly, and helpful. Additionally, I enjoy the sense of public service and feeling like I am part of a team with worthy goals."

## Christmas Gifts for Everyone

Brittany Carina

Photographer

With the approaching holiday season, many people begin racking their brains to come up with ideas for what to get their family, friends, and loved ones. Each year, stores promote new items, whether it is technology, movies, music, or clothes. Often times, people find it difficult to keep up with the ever-changing market and buy the newest merchandise. In order to avoid some of this confusion and anxiety over what to get people this year, we will break down gift ideas for different people as well as spot-light some of the season's "must-have" items.

One possibility is the option of buying gift cards. Although this may seem very easy and requires very little thought, it is a great idea. Even if you don't know what store the person likes, there are still options. American Express and Visa both offer gift cards that are accepted almost everywhere. This is a great idea because it allows the recipient to purchase what they want from wherever they want. Another option is purchasing someone a gift card for a specific store they like. In this case, the person can purchase what they like from that store, and also allows them to see that you do know what they like while giving them the option of using the money on what they wish.

In terms of actual gifts, there are still many options. Many popular stores for people our age include: Abercrombie and Fitch, Aeropostale, American Eagle, Best Buy, Forever 21, Frye, Hollister, Hot Topic, Ralph Lauren, and Tommy Hilffger. These are just a few popular stores that could be great for friends, boyfriends, and girlfriends.

This year, Abercrombie and Fitch are promoting their "classic sweaters" and "outerwear" for men. For women, they are promoting their "fleece," "long sleeve knits," "sweaters," "active pants," "leggings," and "leg warmers." Their new line is supposed to be cute yet stylish, which is a season must have.

American Eagle is promoting their denim, their sweaters, and their scarves. Last year American Eagle had their pea coats on sale, and this year they have changed their colors. Again these clothes are a very cute way of staying warm.

In terms of technology, Best Buy is promoting items such as the new PlayStation 3. The new game system is last year's "XBOX 360." Other name brands to look for at Best Buy this year include: Microsoft, Cannon, Sony, Toshiba, Pioneer, Intel, and Samsung. Technology is always changing, so with each new year there are always many options in the technological area.

Some things to keep in mind this year when shopping for friends, family, or loved ones are to think it through. It truly is the thought that counts. If you sit down and consciously think about what a person wants, chances are you are going in the right direction.



### Top gifts for guys:

- Video Games
- Movies
- Music
- Clothes



- Planning a special date (if a boyfriend)
- Making a Mix CD of their favorite genre of music



### Top gifts for girls:

- Clothes
- Movies
- Perfume
- Purse
- Music



- Taking her out somewhere nice (again if a girlfriend)

Try not to stress out this holiday season, if worst comes to worst gift cards are always an option.

## Homemade Gifts For The Holiday

Jocelyn Finrock

Style Editor

Christmas can be one of the best times of the year, but it can also be one of the priciest. From purchasing gifts for your family to buying presents for your friends, it can begin to add up. For those of us who do not have the money for tons of gifts, do not worry, there is a solution. Make a gift! Here are a couple of ideas that do not cost much at all; just a little bit of your time and your friends and family will love their gift!

### •Candles and Candle Jars

Materials:

- 1 large saucepan
- Canning jar lid rim
- Coffee can
- Paraffin Wax
- Crayons
- Paint stirrer
- Candlesticks (one for each jar)
- Widemouth glass jars
- Metal Tongs Plastic beads
- Tacky Glue

Directions:

- Put the saucepan on the stove on high heat with four to five inches of water and put the canning jar rim on the water. Pack chunks of the paraffin wax into the coffee can and put it on top of the rim of the jar so the water in the pan heats the wax. Continue to add more wax to the can as it melts until it is about 2/3 full.
- To color the wax, peel a crayon and break it in half, putting small pieces into the wax. After it has melted, let it cool for about 10 minutes.
- Cut the candlesticks 1/2 inch shorter than the candle jar's height. Now, heat the jars by running warm water on the outsides but not the insides (this will help prevent cracking when you pour in the hot wax).
- Dip the bottom of the candlesticks into the hot wax and stick into the bottom of the jar. After the candlestick has hardened pour the wax into the jar and cover the candlestick but not the wick.
- Once the wax has completely cooled, decorate the jars with fun, festive beads.

### •No-Sew Heart shaped Fleece Pillow



Pillows are a popular homemade Christmas gift, they can be made in any kind of shape, whether it be hearts or squares.

Materials:

- Fleece, two different colors
- Scissors
- Chalk
- Ruler
- Fiberfill

Directions:

- Cut two identical heart shapes from your two chosen colors. Be sure to cut the hearts eight inches larger than you want your finished pillow because you are adding four inches of fringe to the edge of the pillow.
- One at a time, draw a heart with the chalk, four inches inside of the fleece heart cut out. Measure and draw lines about one inch wide and 4 inches long outside of the heart just drawn. This will be the fringe. Cut along these lines, stopping at the heart you drew. Stack the hearts on top of each other when you cut the fringe so they will be exactly alike.
- Begin at the bottom point of the heart and tie the top piece of fringe to the bottom piece by double-knotting them. Continue up the side of the pillow. Once you close to the top, stuff the pillow with fiberfill and the close up the remaining hole. Brush off the remaining chalk and you have yourself a soft heart shaped pillow that you made all by yourself!

These are just two quick and easy ideas for a Christmas present. If neither of these spark an interest, baking cookies and putting them in a decorative tin can is always a good gift. No matter what you get or make your friends or family they will surely love that you thought of them and gave them something in honor of the Christmas season.



# True Quality is Stranger than Fiction

Sandy Slippen  
Copy Editor

Many people become so consumed with their internal dilemmas, they almost feel as if there is a voice in their head describing all of their painstaking realities and decisions. Director Marc Forster's (*Finding Neverland*) new comedy *Stranger than Fiction* takes this premise of "a voice in the head" to previously unheard of dimensions. Highly popular comedian Will Ferrell, known for such goofy comedies as *Anchorman* and *Talladega Nights*, takes a rare "mature" role, hoping to expand his audience base. Given how enjoyable and ultimately touching *Stranger than Fiction* is, Ferrell seems to have succeeded in this audience-expanding goal.

Harold Crick (Ferrell) has never been one to stand out in a crowd. A lonely IRS agent who practically lives his existence in solitude, Crick's life remains remarkably dull until a certain day. After going through typical daily routines, Crick begins to hear a British woman's voice narrating all of his actions. Although he is rather confused by the voice and interpreting it to be the voice of fate or some divine spirit, it is actually the voice of Kay Eiffel (Emma Thompson), an eccentric author struggling to overcome writer's block. Unbeknownst to Harold, Eiffel is actually

writing a novel in which he is the main character, although she is also unaware of his real-life existence. Eiffel's voice is mostly an annoyance to Crick, until one ordinary day when she suddenly proclaims that he will eventually die. Frightened, Crick seeks help and is directed to a literary

professor (Dustin Hoffman), who tells Harold to figure out if he is in a comedy or a tragedy. At the same time, Crick is sent to inspect the tax forms of a free-spirited baker (Maggie Gyllenhaal), who he makes a surprising romantic connection with. Now that Crick actually has something to live for, he races against the clock to determine how his fate plays a role in a story before it is too late.

By never going over-the-top and keeping Crick grounded in reality despite his rather wild circumstances, Ferrell succeeds in creating his most normal, likeable character yet. Thompson and Hoffman present amusing characters who provide considerable comic relief, while Gyllenhaal is delightful as a woman who first hates, then pities, and finally loves Harold. *Stranger than Fiction*, with a screenplay by newcomer Zach Helm, follows a logical narrative path that makes the film easy to follow and understand, despite the rather large potential for head-scratching as a result of the premise.

A common phrase heard throughout the world is "the truth is stranger than fiction." This phrase sums up this film perfectly, as the truth about *Stranger than Fiction* is that it uses an ingenious premise far more cleverly and extensively than a typical moviegoer might have a right to suspect.



A scene from the enjoyable movie, *Stranger than Fiction*, which attracted many to the theaters over the weekend. Will Ferrell plays the lead role, however, he plays a more serious role in hopes of expanding his audience base.

Photo: KKT/Handout

## The Best Movie to See is Tenacious D

Alex Keckrisen  
Co-Editor-in-Chief

To say Tenacious D is outrageously funny is a ~~possible~~ understatement of their talent. To say that they are an absurdly hilarious and absurdly creative duo of musicians would be a much more descriptive statement.

As their new comedy, *The Pick of Destiny*, hits theaters across the country, their equally amusing CD hit shelves earlier this month. Together, Jack Black and Kyle Gass put together one of the best comedic rock groups in history and a great CD for any fun night. The lyrics deserve their own level of warning label because of the amount of obscenities but they basically make the CD. If the CD you buy does not have a warning label, do not buy it because it will mostly sound like a late '90s DMX album: Lacking words.

Other than the amazing lyrics, this album does provide a few features of great artists such as Dave Grohl from the Foo Fighters, Meatloaf, and Liam Lynch, a director of many Jack Black movies, including *The Pick of Destiny*.

The first single off the CD, *POD (Pick of Destiny)*, sums up the movie and the history of Tenacious D in a few verses. It tells the story of how Jack and Kyle "met" and trained to become rock stars together. Later on, they fought the devil in a guitar fight.



Photo: KKT/New Line Cinema

The lyrics, as cool as they sound, are often incredibly lame. "The wizard and the demon had a battle royal, the demon almost killed him with an evil lapow, but then he broke his tooth and then the demon said 'OW!' spouts the fourteenth track off the album. Most of the lyrics, in fact, cannot even be quoted in this newspaper because some students at this school have probably never even heard of these curses. "It's incredibly vulgar," said junior Amanda Schmick.

The genre, for some can often become diluted in the heavy lyrics. "It kind of sounds like country, but it's satanic at the same time," junior Liz Hanson said as she winced to the beat of the guitar. Much of the CD's lyrics actually criticize those who think that rock metal should stay where it is.

This CD fits into its own category of hilarious fun that aims at a good time, not leisurely listening for a soft rock fan. Sometimes, you just have to be in a good mood for the guitar and the lyrics but when you get into it, it can blow your mind.



Photo: KKT/New Line Cinema

## The Not so Sunny Side of Hawaii

Grace Powell  
Opinions Editor

When a person envisions the lush islands of Hawaii, paradise often comes to mind. However, few people know the dark history that lingers over the Hawaiian island called Moloka'i. Within the island lies the town Kalaupapa. During the 1800's, Kalaupapa served as a place of containment for the unfortunate Hawaiian individuals who contracted the rare disease of leprosy. Leprosy is a horrendous, painful disease that eats up a person's skin and weakens their body. Death is present everywhere, in Kalaupapa it was quickly inevitable. The town was far from a comfortable treatment facility. Kalaupapa often lacked the technological advances that were present in other societies. Medical treatment and facilitators were few. However, the pain that most patients endured was often overwhelmed by the lack of contact with their family.

The story *Moloka'i*, by Alan Brennert, presents the life of a young girl named Rachel Kalama, who contracts leprosy when she is only six years old. The mysterious scar first appears after Rachel gets into a fight with her sister. Rache's mother inspects the wound and pokes at it, but Rachel feels no pain. Days and weeks later, the scar is still there, and still, Rachel claims she does not feel a thing. After being taken to a treatment center, Rachel is diagnosed positive with *Mo'i pako* (leprosy) and is sent to Moloka'i the island where all of Hawaii's leprosy individuals were sent. On the island, Rachel is confronted with life in its most agonizing state. She is surrounded by people so affected by the disease that their faces and body parts are monstrously distorted. The stigma of having a leprosy child causes her family to be shamed by

the community and thus, Rachel was shut out.

Librarian Adriana Meeks enjoyed the novel because she spent a number of years in Hawaii. However, she does not feel that the average high school student may enjoy the novel as much as she did. "I enjoyed the book because it brought back memories of Hawaii...I could see how it would not be an exciting read for teens unless you can relate to Hawaii."

Rachel is a stirring character; her courage, strength, and ability to endure trials show that despite the pain, hurt and abandonment she goes through, it is possible to live a good life. The struggles she encounters and the lessons she learns are enormous. She deals with these hardships in a practical way, one day at a time. The novel of *Moloka'i* presents death and life in ways that are not only diverse, but worth taking note of. It is a story about pain, suffering and hope.



Photo by Drew Smith

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## The Break Dancing King

Hooff Cooksey  
Co-Sports Editor

Most people know senior Matt Motley, as the kid who is able to break dance anywhere at anytime or the kid who danced to techno music with glow sticks at the Mr. West Potomac show last year. However there is more to this talented senior than meets the eye.

Motley works at the Mount Vernon Recreational Center, located near Belle View shopping center. He currently works as a regular employee, maintaining the area around the ice rink and the pool, as well as cleaning the weight room and manning the main desk and the ice skates rental desk. However, Motley dreams of one day deiving the ever popular zamboni (this is the machine that smoothes the surface of an ice skating rink). "I am a very optimistic guy," said Motley, "so I believe this is a definite possibility in my future."

Next to working at the Rec-Center, Motley is a member of our school's cross country team, as well as the winter and spring track and field teams.

Motley is a very family oriented guy. He has a younger sister as well as a "very cool younger brother," said Motley with enthusiasm. He also has a very supportive mother as well as a supportive father. To add even more to his family, he owns two dogs, a dalmatian as well as a beagle. Motley

really cares about his family and sees them as a top priority in his life.

Once again, Matt Motley the break dancing kid you see around the halls



Motley often bursts into his breakdancing routines in the hallways but mostly settles in club-like movements.

Photo by Drew Smith

or sometimes in the gym showing off his talent to his fellow peers. However, Motley did not just wake up one morning to find that he had the ability to perform amazing stunts by spinning around on a tile floor. Motley remembers being invited by his fellow classmate, senior Mike Richards, to church event to watch a group of break dancers perform. "My friend Franklin and I were immediately hooked on this way of dancing," said Motley. Motley and Franklin Pagan then learned the basics in brake dancing from another close friend who was a talented dancer. "After learning

the basics I pretty much taught myself new moves and then perfected them." Break dancing is one of Matt Motley's many passions, next to attending Cape May in New Jersey with his family every year.

Motley has been attending Cape May for as long as he can remember. "My father used to go every year with his family, so we have continued the tradition." He really enjoys just relaxing in the sand and getting away from the world around him. Motley looks forward to attending Cape May every year.

By continuing his optimistic attitude everyday, Matt Motley, is very content with his life at the moment. Matt Motley is much more than the break dancing, senior at our school. He is the family man. The man with incredible ambitions in life. Matt Motley is the man with plan.



Enthusiastic Motley is known around the school for his amazing break dancing talent. Motley has other interests besides break dancing and is always looking towards the future.

Photo by Drew Smith

## Fun with Vivacious Vance

Lara Davidson  
Wire Reporter

Imagine the funniest person in the world. Ever. Got a picture of Dana Vance in your head? Good.

Charismatic, exuberant and eccentric. We, the students of this school, are lucky to have Dana Vance, a master of humor and impression as a peer.

Senior Patrick Moniz commented, "She has the ability to make people laugh without trying. I wish I could do that but I can't, so I just admire her." Vance creates her own characters and has often been compared to actor Will Ferrell. She likes to act in school plays and also loves, "To make and write movies." She played multiple characters in a recent film, *Annoyed as Hell!* (broadcasted on YouTube.com), which she co-wrote and produced with a group of friends.

In her spare time Vance gives her

friends free haircuts, goes "bush diving," makes prank phone calls, and laughs for hours about funny words, like "fetuses." She takes frequent trips to Wal-Mart, which she describes as, "A



Vance (right) and friend Carrie Urban share a hug in the hallway. Vance is a person filled with good humor and is always doing something fun to keep herself entertained.

Photo by Drew Smith

cultural experience." Wherever Vance is, fun follows. For Homecoming this year, Vance journeyed to Wal-Mart with

friends, bought several pumpkins and painted them whilst many of her friends got down at the dance.

The promise of a good laugh is not the only reason why people love this insane girl. "She smells nice, like the flowering blossoms of tulips in the summertime," shared Moniz. "She is also a caring person. Dana rehabilitated her dog after he had surgery by giving him physical therapy in the form of water aerobics and jazzercise (pop 80s tunes included)."

On a more serious note, Vance has always done well in school and her teachers find her to be a joy in class. She takes AP Statistics, AP Government, and Chinese. Vance hopes to continue Chinese in college and shares new knowledge about the language with her friends on daily basis. AP English teacher Bernard Cabral said, "She used to make me laugh all the time [last year], she's a great kid."

Vance will be attending University of Florida or Florida State University next year. "I want to pursue either a career in acting or psychology. Mad props to Ms. McKenney!"

Is there a bright future for this light-hearted comedian? Cabral replied, "I see her waiting for a spaceship" If an alien came to this planet, Vance would be our ideal representation. Vance said, "It helps that I'm so cute. Just kidding! Not really."

## Seniors in the Halls:

### Candace Watson



Photo by Bethany Cerna

1. How would you describe yourself?

Social, outgoing, friendly

2. What's your favorite activity?

Reading, just chilling, playing sudoku

3. Who would you have lunch with whether dead or alive?

Jamie Foxx

4. What is something not a lot of people know about you?

I can be quiet

### Major Sturm



Photo by Drew Smith

1. How would you describe yourself?

Joyous, musical, and spiritual

2. What is your motto?

Manland must learn to live together because as one we can overcome anything

3. If you could have lunch with anyone, dead or alive, who would it be and why?

Bob Matley because he was sending something positive through the world.

4. What is something not a lot of students know about you?

I am very serious about music. I play guitar, piano, the bongos, and sing. I play anything I can create in my mind.

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