

Read the February hearts on pages 4 and 11.

THE WIRE

Volume 24, Issue #6
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WEST POTOMAC HIGH SCHOOL

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relationships



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Friday, February 6, 2009

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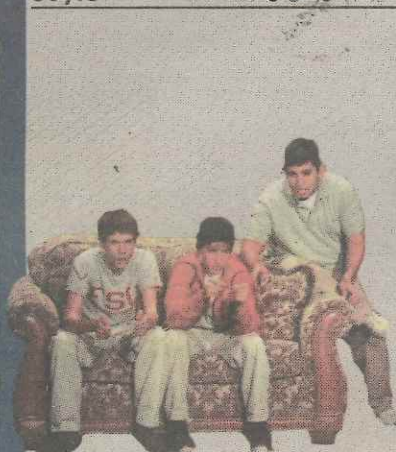


Photo Courtesy of Peter Coffey

How were One Acts this year?

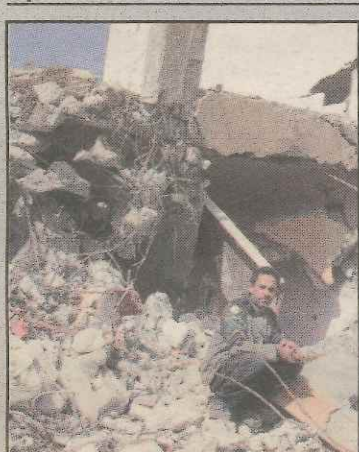


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What does the conflict in Israel mean?



Photo Courtesy of Handout/MCT

Who won the big awards at the Golden Globes?

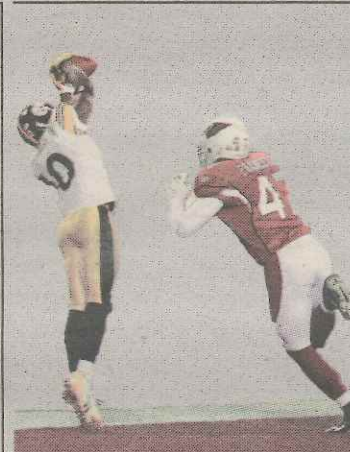


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Get a recap and analysis of the Super Bowl.



Photo by Victoria Narine

See what a day in the life of Caitlin Schoerder is like.

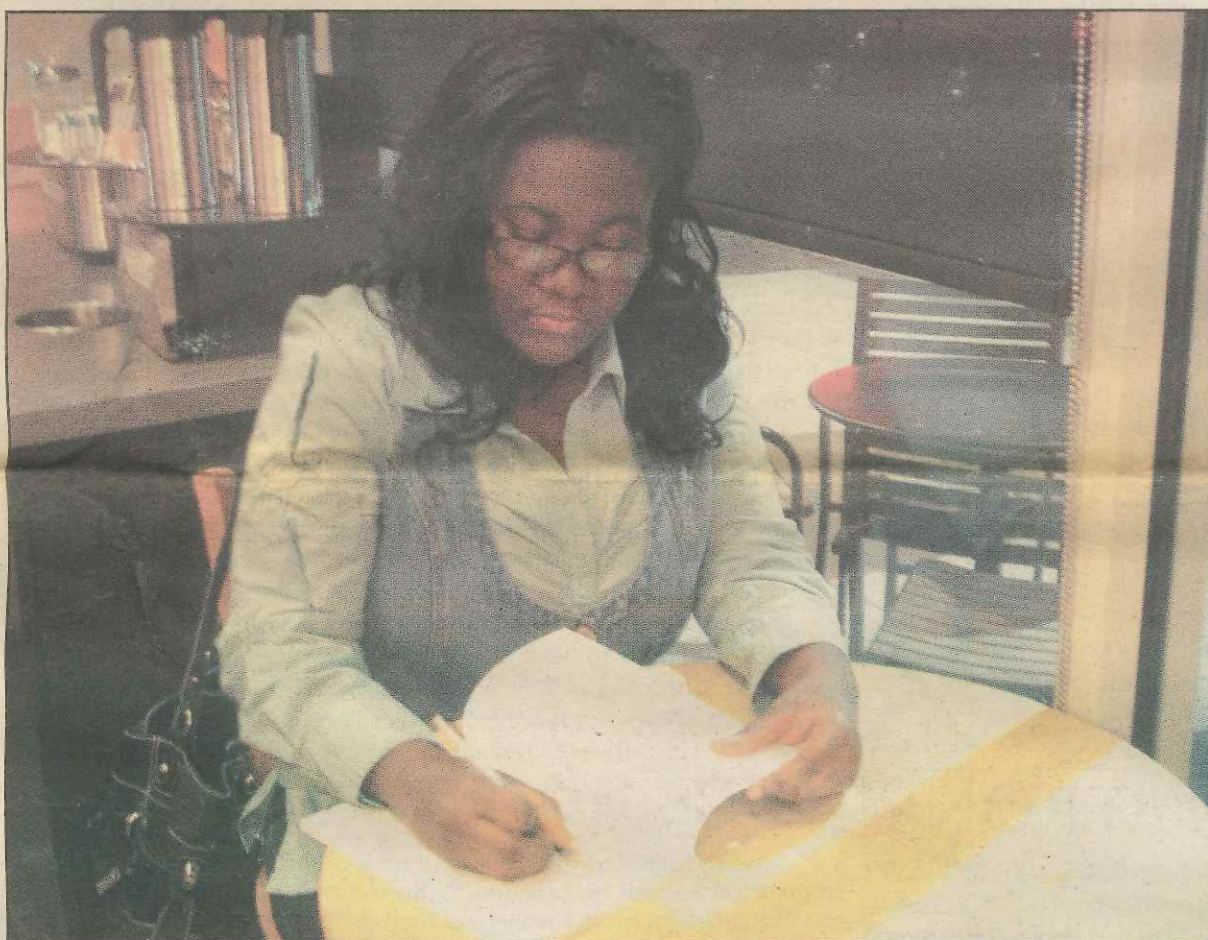


Photo by Mariya Ilyas

Former student, Amazing Grace Danso, published her book *Bound by Kente* in December 2008.

Graduate Publishes Book

MARIYA ILYAS
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The coffee shop was warm and cozy. Beatrice Mensah looked out the window. Deep in thought, she finally spoke. "The only thing that will bring the world of poverty together is..."

"...education," Amazing Grace Danso finished her mother's sentence.

After a brief moment, Danso continued. "It is harder to go to school, and even harder to get supplies such as pencils and erasers. I want to use [my] proceeds for deprived areas in Africa or sponsor a child to get education."

Former student Amazing Grace Danso self-published

the book *Bound by Kente* in December 2008. Composed of five short stories about West Africa, Danso takes the reader through times periods ranging from ancient kingdoms of Africa to when Christianity was first introduced. The stories are of "my youth perspective," she said.

Originally from Ghana, Danso moved to the United States in 2005. She attended our school through junior year, and then graduated over the summer in 2008. "Although I graduated in 2008, I'm still '09, always '09," she said.

Danso said she knew that the book would require "a lot of time and effort" and so a "break from school" was

See Published Book, page 5

School Board Approves AP Weight Change

STEPHEN HOWELL
LAYOUT/NEWS EDITOR

The school board recently voted to change the countywide weights for honors, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and some dual enrollment classes.

Students who take AP and IB courses will have a 1.0 weight, and honors courses will have a .5 weight. This change will be retroactive on current student's transcripts. Seniors will also get credit in the GPA calculation for the courses they are taking. The county will also send a letter to admissions officers, during the week of February 2, of colleges where students are applying, explaining the change in weights.

"[This change] would help kids overall, all across the board," said Principal Rima Vesilind. Vesilind is also hopeful the change will encourage more minority students to take AP and honors classes. "We've been working for years to get more minorities into honors classes...[The change] is going to help more kids have courage in taking high level classes," Vesilind said. The school has worked to get more minorities in higher level classes in the past

See Weight Change, page 5



This graphic, from the grade policy report, shows the average increase in GPA from a change in weight (red), change in grading scale (blue), and both (green).

Debate Team Competes Well in State Competition

MEGAN HALEY
REPORTER

"Debate is the art of being able to argue and analyze issues from both sides and effectively convince your opponent that you are right," said debate teacher and coach Julian Dotson. The debate team does just that, in practice and in the formal competitions that they frequently attend.

The team consists of about 40 people, of which about 20 take the class and the rest

are a part of it as a school club. Whether in the class or not, any member of the team who qualifies is allowed to compete on the state and national level. Dotson picks from the best debaters and forms his competition team. While every member has an equal opportunity to qualify, only the best are selected. According to Dotson, good debaters are above all coachable, but also have an innate sense of judgment to look at a problem and immediately know what to

argue. They are willing to research heavily, have self-confidence, the ability to sound or look intimidating, are quick-witted, and already do well in school.

"I joined the debate team because I like communications and I feel strongly about a lot of issues, also I really like arguing and I'm pretty good at it," said senior Hussein Fahema, an active member of the team and the class. "My most memorable debate was probably the one at UVA last weekend, there

were like these uber-debaters who spoke a million miles a minute. It was amazing," said Fahema.

In addition to tri-monthly competitions, the team also competes in the VHSL league once a month, beginning in February every year. Three times a month, starting in September, the team goes to area debates and competes with high schools in Virginia, from close by to as far as the Shenandoah Valley (about

See Debate Team, page 5

"Anyways," Use Your Grammar

With all of the readily available communications technology, the downward spiral in the proper use of the English language is not surprising.

Every day, students send text messages and instant message one another--the faster, the better. With communication being all about speed, grammar has become an afterthought to most teens. This may not seem like a big deal, but the problem comes about when this "informal English" penetrates into everyday and even formal speaking.

Hearing statements such as, "the team has just scored their first point," a stickler for grammar may sarcastically reply "Oh, really, has they?" Most people see the problem with the latter, but many do not see what is wrong with the former. Subject verb agreement (the problem in the former) is key to any properly structured sentence and more importantly, is key to sounding intelligent when it really matters, such as in a job interview.

While at a job interview for a managing position at one of the most prestigious law firms in the country, Louis Haley answered every question set forth by the interviewer to the best of his ability. When the interview was over, however, the interviewer essentially told him that he had no real chance of getting the job because of a few mistakes he had made in his grammar, mistakes he did not even know about. Losing a job to something that could be easily fixed is, to say the least, frustrating. So why do people not speak properly? According to English teachers Colin O'Grady and Kimberly Thompson, this is due to the lack of priority on proper grammar at young ages.

"What bothers me the most is when people use adverbs and adjectives interchangeably like when people misuse [the words] less and fewer,"

said O'Grady, "and what bothers me even more is that I sometimes make mistakes myself."

Proper grammar is not stressed in elementary learning, and it is hard to come back after that. "When students get to high school, they have already spent 14 years doing things the wrong way. Teaching it beginning in high school isn't enough to combat this," said Thompson.

According to several English teachers, the most common mistakes are ending sentences with prepositions, disregarding subject-verb agreement, and confusing 'who' and 'whom.' The subjunctive is another frequent mistake, but most people have not even heard the word "subjunctive" to know they are doing something wrong. For example many would say, "I prefer that he does his homework at home," and see absolutely no problem when in fact the sentence should be: "I prefer that he do his homework at home."

Mistakes such as these weave their way into conversation every day, and have become the norm. What is even worse is that teachers often are not instructed to stress grammar as much, and therefore make mistakes themselves. Furthermore, how can a child be expected to speak correctly when essentially the most educated person they know--the person they expect to speak correctly--does not? This vicious cycle inhibits them from receiving potential jobs and bright futures. It just goes to show that even though grammar is an afterthought to most teens and people in general, it still plays a large role in how people are treated for their work. Now, it is impossible to expect a change in everyone, but just be more aware of things that are said in everyday conversation. Oh, and by the way "anyways" is not a word.

CORRECTIONS FROM LAST ISSUE

On page 1, teh continuation message should read "See Late Opening, page 5."

On page 5, the photo of the Art Mural in Springbank was taken by Erin Parker. Also on page 5, the photo of Capitol Hill is courtesy of Clip Art.

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RANTS and Raves

A **RANT** for the Pittsburgh Steelers winning Super Bowl XLIII.

A **rave** for the halfway point of the school year.

A **RANT** for Uggs; they are ugly.

A **rave** for Amazing Grace Danso's book.

A **RANT** for no snow days off this week.

A **rave** for Mariya's 18th birthday tomorrow!

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

We were surprised by some of the thoughts and comments in the article "Teachers Need to Give out Grade Sheets More Often." While many teachers find it helpful to hand out individual grade reports, some notify students in other ways. Many post class-wide grade updates or give informal cautions to students not working up to their potential. We will always meet with students before and after school to address progress and missing assignments in any class. These one-on-one conversations are beneficial to students because general areas of concern that might not be evident on a sheet of paper can be identified. Handing out reports that the student simply throws in the trash, or worse on the floor, often amounts to nothing more than tree-killing.

Students can't take a "don't ask, don't tell" approach when it comes to grades. They know when their work is suffering and shouldn't act surprised by their grades. Many teachers were concerned by the statement "it is the teacher's responsibility to keep track of our grades," as well as the phrase "the teacher's job." Learning is a two way street. Keeping track of grades is part of the teacher's job for the purposes of record keeping and as an indicator of student's abilities to move to the next level of learning. It is the student's job to keep track of their own grades in order to work toward their own personal goals. It is that factor that is most affected by work not turned in. Too many students seem to see education as a service and not a job. As a teacher, we do get paid in the form of money, but students also receive reward for their work in the form of an education. That education is valuable and will pay off in the future. The article also referred to AP classes which pay off in college credit. Teaching and learning are both "jobs" that students and teachers do together, both receiving the rewards.

Students can't afford to see themselves as just passengers in the classroom. It is easy for students to think of school as an experience to suffer through and not take partnership in. They are doing themselves a disservice if they only care about their progress when they are handed a piece of paper. Students and teachers should be partners BOTH should take responsibility for their part.

-Mr. Salvatore Olivo (History) & Mrs. Mary Mathewson (English)

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: laura.zitnik@fcps.edu. All submissions become property of *The Wire*.

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Gaza is to Blame, not Israel

BRYAN JACOBS
SPORTS EDITOR



The war in the Holy Land has been raging for 2,000 years; however, the recent war between Israel and the organization, Hamas, has only heightened tensions. Hamas has been labeled

by the United States, Israel, and most of Western Europe as an fundamentalist Islamic terrorist organization.

Since Hamas and Israel agreed to a six month cease-fire on June 19, 2008, 250 rockets have been launched against Israel from the Gaza Strip according to the United States State Department, which is a direct violation of the signed cease-fire. During this cease-fire, Israel was forced to endure bombardment and live in constant fear for their lives from rocket attacks aimed from the Gaza Strip. These attacks, although supposedly justified by Hamas' want for freedom in the Gaza Strip, have lasted since the beginning of the signed cease-fire in June 2008. Israel had observed the truce down to the letter of the law and at the end of the cease-fire in December of 2008, Israeli officials publicly voiced their yearning to extend the agreement despite continuous rocket attacks against Israel by Hamas. Hamas had simultaneously issued statements that they would not extend the cease-fire because, according to *Al Jazeera*, Israel had "not respected the truce," because of incursions by the Israeli army, after rocket attacks at the boarder.

According to Israeli media, on December 27, 2008, Israel launched a military campaign against Hamas, exactly six days after the official cease-fire ended. With the help of Islamic news, *Al Jazeera*, the common misconception is that Israel started the Gaza-Israeli war by invading the Gaza Strip for little to no reason.

However, this misconception is false because Hamas broke the cease-fire, when rockets were fired into Israel by them. This also violated the written accords of the truths. In response to the constant bombardments from Gaza,

" Hamas broke the cease-fire when rockets were fired into Israel by Hamas. "

Israel has waged a military campaign which is one of the most morally just, humanitarian oriented, and militarily impressive defensive wars against the Hamas terrorist organization in the Gaza Strip. Also, it has managed to keep civilian casualties lower than anyone could have possibly predicted in the Gaza Strip, which is roughly the size of Washington D.C. with 1.6 million people and a birthrate of six children per family.

To add to this, the overwhelming majority of those that have been killed by what is called "Operation Cast Lead" are Hamas terrorists and not civilians. The remarkably small number of civilians that have been killed had been ordered to hover around potential sites for IAF (Israeli Air Force) attacks to raise the number of "civilian" casualties, according to Israeli and international media around the world. Hamas purposely operates within or near civilian centers such as mosques, schools, playgrounds and ordinary neighborhoods to increase civilian casualties and lets the western media play into their hands.

Recently, during an interview with *Al Jazeera*, a senior member of Hamas, Abu Marzouq said, "We are not saying we will stop firing rockets from the Gaza Strip to Israel - we are only talking about stopping the aggression from the Israelis against the civilian population in the Gaza

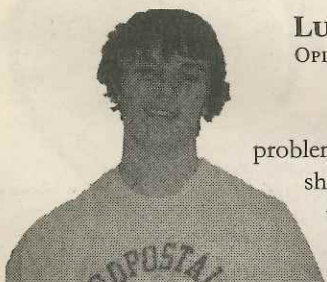
Strip. When others talk about a cease-fire, they are saying all military operations should stop. But we are sending a message [by firing rockets]: 'We will not surrender. We have to fight the Israelis and we will win this battle.'" Yes, Abu Marzouq, but what message does this send to the world when Hamas is the one asking for a public outcry against Israel, yet does not even agree with its own double standard?

As an American, I am very concerned with individual rights and personal security; it would be hypocritical not to support Israel's "War on Terror" which has lasted for the past 60 years.

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Pirates are Least of Our Worries

LUCAS ALEXANDER
OPINIONS EDITOR



Piracy has been a huge problem for countries when shipping valuables across the sea for a very long time. However, with the popularity of Disney movies, pirates have

become childhood legends glorified by Halloween and video games.

Piracy, such as that depicted in movies like *Peter Pan* and the famous *Pirates of the Caribbean* trilogy, is completely different from real piracy. That kind of piracy used to be a huge problem during the age of exploration, and in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries for countries like Britain, France, Spain, and other European powers.

Countries transported people, soldiers, crops, livestock, gold and silver, etc. back and forth between Europe, Africa, and the "New World" during these times. These countries were already spending huge amounts of money in colonization, and could not afford to have gold or

other valuables stolen from them, especially due to the mercantilist economy, which measured a nation's power in the amount of gold it possesses.

However, with inventions of the motorboat and advanced weaponry, specifically guns, the targets of piracy have greatly changed. Pirates tend to now focus on large cargo ships with no defense system or trained crew, to capture and demand a ransom from.

Piracy has skyrocketed on the other side of the world. Yet, once again, the United States Armed Forces feels the need to try and fight it. Piracy is very frequent in both the Strait of Malacca, specifically Singapore, and on the coast of Somalia in Africa, the east and west boundaries of the Indian Ocean. Somalia is an African country with no form of real government. It is ruled by warlords and is a breeding ground for pirates, many of whom live within the country's boundaries to hide.

The Navy recently created a new unit called Combined Task Force 151, whose sole task is to fight piracy in the Indian Ocean. This begs the question: why?

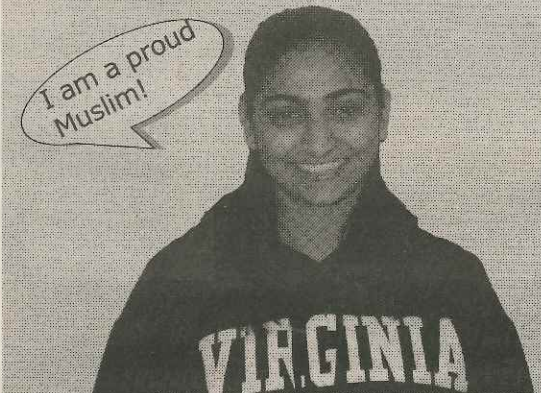
Yes, piracy is dangerous and any weaponry the pirates can get their hands on is a risk, but pirates merely benefit from the lack of effort countries put into shipping valuables. For example, a group of pirates who operated out of Somalia raided a cargo ship headed to Kenya from Russia. There were six Russian tanks on board and the pirates demanded a ransom that was bigger than Kenya could afford.

This problem only happened because Russia did not bother to put weapons or trained soldiers who could be ready for pirates on board. If they had done this, the entire debacle would have been avoided.

However, once again the United States is focusing more on other countries' problems than its own, and it needs to stop. Otherwise, we will end up sending soldiers to every country in the world for the most menial of problems.

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HANGING OUT WITH THE HEAD HONCHO



MARIYA ILYAS
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

One day I will be able to tell my grandchildren that I lived through history. Through weekends of canvassing and literature drops, I helped elect Barack Hussein Obama as the 44th President of the United States of America.

On January 20, millions around the globe watched Obama take the sacred oath into the highest office of the world. That day, everyone – either watching from the comfort of home or in the freezing weather in Washington D.C. – became a witness to history. In addition to the oath, I was particularly looking forward to Obama's speech for I knew that his words on the Capitol would carry a lot of weight and ultimately set the tone for his presidency.

What divided America over two centuries ago came back and united her. The election of Obama was a racial victory for all in America. We sent a powerful message to the world- "yes, we can." We *can* elect an African-American as our nation's leader. However, a victory of religious tolerance has yet to be won.

"To the Muslim world, we seek a new way forward, based on mutual interest and mutual respect," said President Obama in his inaugural speech. He was referring to strengthening our ties with the Islamic states and seeking them as international allies, not enemies.

Since the September 11, 2001, attacks, Muslim-Americans have fallen victim to extreme animosity and discrimination, to some extent. Their interrogation directly following the attacks led to the incarceration of many Muslim-Americans. Furthermore, this hostility has led many individuals to view Muslims in a negative light, giving rise to their association with the word "terrorist."

I am a proud Muslim. And unfortunately, I am a victim of such accusation. During my freshman year, one of my classmates asked me why I had bombed the Twin Towers. Appalled at his question, I broke out in tears. I could not believe one of my peers, someone I went to school with, associated me with being terrorist. (He did not know that I was a Muslim. He simply assumed I was). That day, I realized something.

Hatred is inevitable. And it comes in many forms.

One of the greatest examples of this is the July 21, 2008, issue of *The New Yorker* titled 'The Politics of Fear.' The cover depicted a 'Muslim Obama' wearing a turban and his wife Michelle with an Afro and an AK 47, and the two of them doing the fist bump. This controversial cover buzzed the 6-million Muslim-American community, along with many Obama supporters.

In its defense, the magazine claimed that "artist Barry Blitt [was satirizing] the use of scare tactics and misinformation in the Presidential election to derail Barack Obama's campaign." This "satire" was, unfortunately, an expression of hatred.

Whether it is a life-long embedded grudge we hold against others, or a plan to seek revenge for our loss or misfortune, we tend to express hatred with our actions, words, and even in silent gestures. Sometimes we hate things we are scared of and other times, we hate because we are fearful. Of course, the root of all hatred is ignorance. Whatever the reason may have been for my peer, he chose to express his hatred with hurtful words. He made me realize that hatred even exists in the very institution I call my school.

"To those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent, know that you are on the wrong side of history, but that we will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist," continued Obama.

What Obama should have asked was: are we willing to unclench *our* fists?

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WEST POTOMAC HIGH 3RD QUARTER REPORT CARD	
ADMINISTRATION	C
ATHLETICS	D
STUDENT GOVERNMENT	B
WEPORT	F
OVERALL SCHOOL GRADE	C

Students Mentor at Bucknell Elementary

MICHAELA ACCARDI
NEWS EDITOR

What may seem to be just an extracurricular activity to earn service hours happens to be much more for some members of our school's basketball team, as well as other students at our school.

Several members of our school's varsity boy's basketball team participate in a mentoring program at local school Bucknell Elementary, along with other students from our school that participate in school sponsored extracurricular activities. A few students include juniors Shawn Lee, Sarah Holloway, and Shakil White and seniors Will Kreger, Leigh Blair, Courtney Walker, Abu Yalih, David Gaylord, Derrick Barber and Cole Walter. "I think I make a pretty big impact on his [mentee] life overall with all the things he goes through in his life and the challenges he faces," said Kreger.

Every Wednesday from 3:00 to 4:15 p.m., students from our school support younger students by serving as peer mentors in an effort to promote academic success and develop relationships between high school and elementary students. The mentors begin by greeting their mentees and discussing their day to day lives. For example, they may discuss the activities they have been doing since they have last seen one another. They then work on homework, which usually consists of math, reading and spelling. After their homework is complete, the students are allowed to play board games, make crafts or play sports with

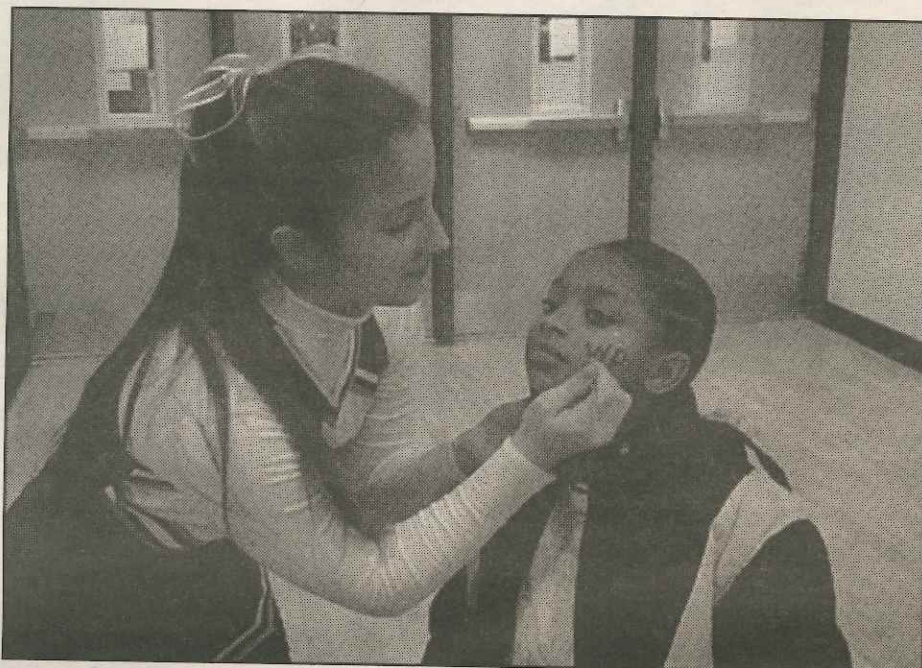


Photo Courtesy of Carrie Jones

Senior Rebecca Walker paints the face of a young girl before a varsity basketball game as part of the mentoring program at Bucknell.

one another such as tie-dying T-shirts or playing kickball.

The 2007-2008 Program Survey showed results that were staggeringly successful. 95% of Bucknell students reported that the program helped improve their grades and 95% of our school's mentors reported that "participating in the program helped them see the positive impact that they could have

on the community," according to the Fairfax County Public Schools website.

Third grader Jaquan is partnered with Kreger, varsity football and basketball captain. Kreger has been part of the program for two year and said, "I continue to be a part of the program because of the good feeling you get from helping the younger kids and know you're helping your community and a child in

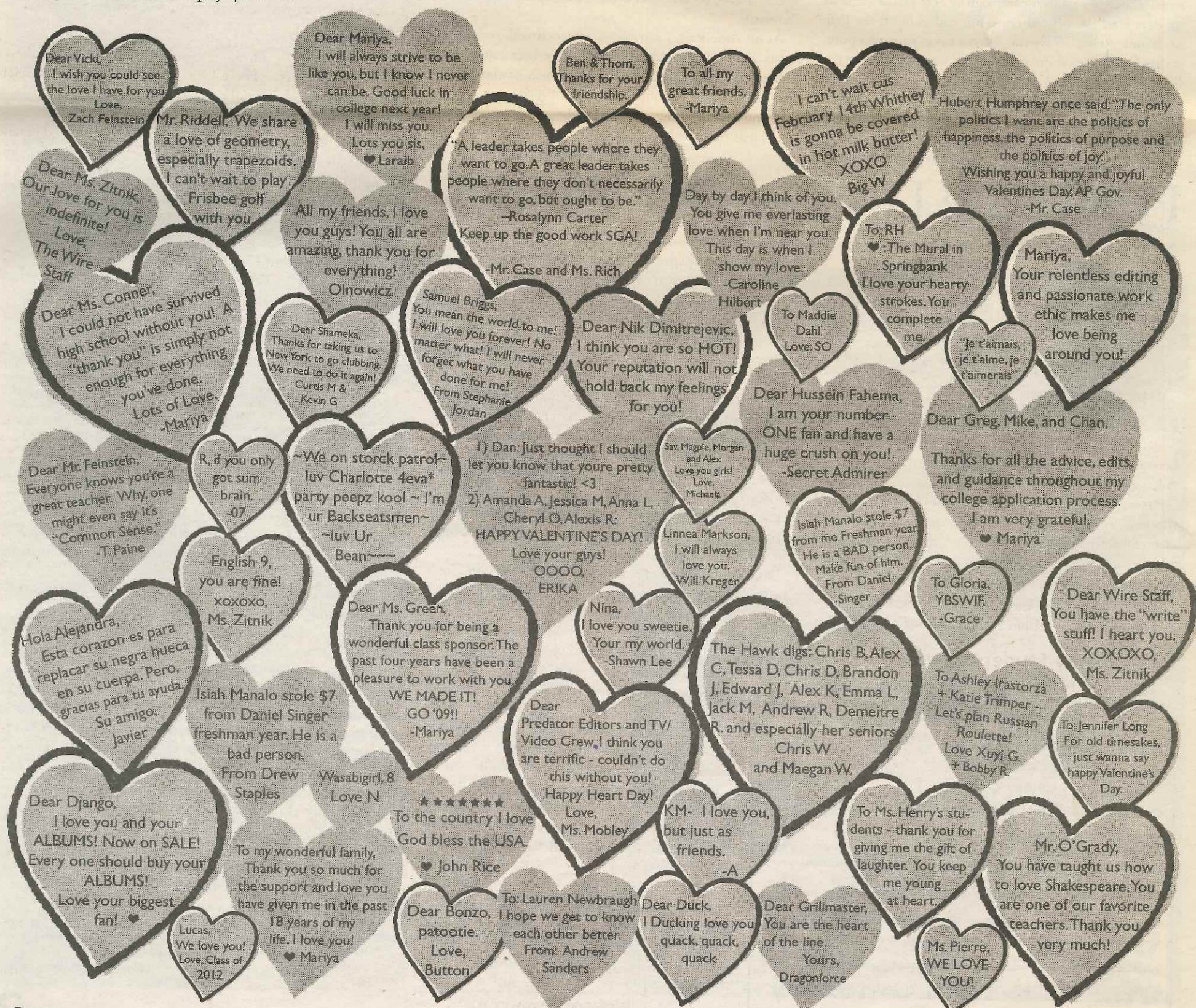
need." Kreger was also named Fairfax County Mentor of the Month, in what he calls one of the most rewarding moments of his life.

As a result, the boys have developed close relationships with the younger students by not only helping them to read and do school work but also by being a role model. The young boys look up to our school's top athletes for more than just physical ability. Kreger said, "I'm not going to lie though, being a part of football and basketball at West Potomac does make so the kids look at you in a different way."

Junior Shawn Lee, also a member of the varsity boys basketball team, said "The most rewarding thing is the kids loving you and looking up to you. It's about them not me."

The relationship that the students have developed with their mentors has left a lasting impact on both the mentors and mentees. "For me, the most rewarding part of mentoring a student is realizing that no matter what the life might be like at home, you can help to instill some effective skills and positive values as well as just being an ear for them when they need to talk. It's so much fun learning from them as well, like new math skills that I never learned," said junior Sarah Holloway, who plans to continue the program next year.

Students that are interested in participating in the program can contact social worker Ms. Carrie Jones. Jones will give students a permission slip and after it is completed students are paired with a younger student.



Key Club Donates to Troops

BRYAN JACOBS
SPORTS EDITOR

Lieutenant Colonel Mark C. McCullohs subtly walked up to the front of the cafeteria. The students listened intently as he presented and shared stories from his experiences. "I bring the entertainment to the troops," he said.

On Monday, January 12, Key Club held a meeting in the cafeteria to launch off one of their biggest service projects of the year, "Operation Treats for Troops." McCullohs, husband of English teacher Kathy McCullohs, was invited to make a PowerPoint presentation and share his experiences from serving in Iraq.

"Operation Treats for Troops," sponsored by Key Club and Student Government Association (SGA) is a project to collect various packaged food items for soldiers overseas. These goods include foods that are unavailable to soldiers overseas, such as 100-calorie packs and Cheetos. The food collected through the drive goes directly to men and women serving in Iraq. McCullohs acts as the liaison and intermediary to ensure the food items are shipped safely to the troops, to "boost their morale."

"This drive is a really good thing to do and good way to show support for the troops and an excellent way to say that we care," said freshman Trevor Jeene, an active member of Key Club.

Lieutenant Colonel McCullohs is the Chief of Programs for the American Army in his section of Bagdad, and has brought many well-known performers to the front line. "I did all of the fun stuff [in Iraq]," he said with a large smile. He described the many famous performers he brought in for the troops, which

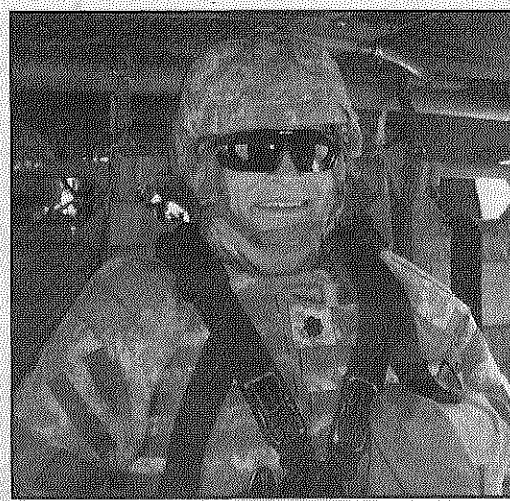


Photo Courtesy of Mark McCullohs

Mark C. McCullohs, husband of Key Club sponsor and English teacher Kathryn McCullohs, flies inside a Blackhawk while he serves overseas and helps to deliver the club's donations.

include Tim McGraw and Dallas Cowboys' cheerleaders.

In his presentation, McCullohs shared his experiences and hardships, as well as the happiness and joys that he went through during his duty in Iraq, which included working at former Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussein's old palace, the Al Faw.

McCullohs emphasized the happiness that the soldiers feel when they were "blessed" with all of the donations from our school and others around the nation. The "Operation Treats for Troops" by McCullohs inspired many students to donate because of the hard work and commitment that soldiers do for their nation.

Junior Curtis McCullohs and senior Julia McCullohs attend this school and have participated in the project this year. "I really think that this drive will get a lot of American snacks such as Pringles and other food items which will in turn make our troops happy and well...maybe not so healthy, but definitely happy," said Curtis McCullohs.

Senior Najwa Tatby said, "They [the soldiers] do so much more than just fight. They do everything that normal people do in a civilian setting, but just on Iraqi soil."

The drive lasted from January 19 to the 30.

Debate Team Prevails

Continued from page 1

two and half hours away). So far this year the team has qualified for, and attended the state meet on January 23rd, and came in 1st place overall for the year and 2nd place for large schools at the competition.

The team members won numerous individual awards at states as well, including senior Frank Maldonado's 6th place finish in Foreign Extemporaneous Speaking. Other awards comprised of junior Katie Trimper and senior Ashley Irastorza who finished 5th in the Policy finals and junior James Lewis qualified for the semi-finals in Domestic Extemporaneous speaking. Also senior Shayana Oakley qualified for the National Tournament in Serious Dramatic Forensics, which will take place during the week of June 14-19. As said by Fahema, Serious Dramatic Forensics is like acting where one plays all the characters. "I got to sit in on her one of her competitions and she did amazing," said Fahema concerning his teammate's Oakley's performance.

"I first joined [the team] because I like to argue, but once I got there I heard about forensics, which is like acting, and

I like that even more," said Oakley. Since the national competition is the same week as graduation, Oakley said, "I'm hoping they'll change the date of either the competition or graduation so I can go to both." However since neither scenario is likely, it will quite a decision for Oakley to make.



Photo Courtesy of Julian Dotson

Debate team sponsor Julian Dotson awaits the results of the Virginia state debate team competition.

1.0 Weight for AP Courses

Continued from page 1

by providing programs like AVID, Brothers Achieving More, and AP Bootcamp, as well as teacher and counselor help.

Some "higher level" semester-long classes will also receive a weight of 2.5. Some of the courses include Multivariable Calculus, Differential Equations, and Complex Analysis. The County will also

work towards identifying other classes that are honors or at an above average level. These classes will not be given a weight until next year.

The school board voted January 22, and also directed Jack Dale to recommend "variants on a basic ten-point grading scale with pluses and minuses" for the next school year.

newsbriefs

RACHEL MARTIN
REPORTER

Peanut Products Recalled Nation Wide

Peanut Corporation of America has recalled peanut products made after July 1, 2008, because potential salmonella contamination of the peanut paste it manufactures. Some of the popular products being recalled are King Nut, Parnell's Pride, and various ice creams and cookies. For a more detailed list and information, visit this website: <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/peanutbutterrecall/index.cfm>

Obama Signs the First Bill of His Administration

Obama signed his first bill into a law on January 29, 2008. The new law, the Lily Ledbetter Act, makes suing for unequal pay easier for workers. This law nullified a 2007 Supreme Court decision that ruled that workers had to file complaints of pay discrimination within 180 days of being hired.

Academy Students Launch Website

The West Potomac Academy Pro Graphic students launched a website. Visit it at www.freshpicked.moonfruit.com to learn more about the class and their work.

Science Fair Held January 31

The annual school Science Fair was held January 31, 2009. The first place winners include: Sara Link, Evan Rajadhyaksha, Lorraine Hausen and Emily Sedlack, Adrienne Hampton and Madeline Weisblatt, Amanda Crowley and Emily Hrin, Alex Cheng and Jason Lee, Margaret Corum, Chris Hollingsworth, Isabel Hardee, Thomas Hammond, Benjamin Hammond and Mariya Ilyas, Chelsea Bender, Jeynna Diallo, Celeste Walker, John Thompson, Ned Klein and Victoria Narine, Connor Tufford, Margaret Berrigan, and Victoria Parces.

Counselors Recognized Nationwide

February 2 through 6 is National School Counseling Week. This recognition of school counselors is sponsored by the American School Counselor Association, in order to call attention to the work counselors do in helping students with school and planning for the future. Make sure to thank your school counselor this week!

Danso Self-Publishes a Novel

Continued from page 1

necessary to finish the project in a timely fashion.

Danso developed a love for writing at a very young age. "Grace is a born writer, she is a creative writer," said her mother. "She is comfortable with words and has the wisdom to put them together."

When Danso heard about submitting her writing to *Szygy*, our school's literary magazine, her mother encouraged her to compile all her stories and publish a book. "I always encourage her to do all that she can, and be all that she can be," said her mother.

Danso was so eager to publish her book that she wrote all her stories in a short time. She then asked her mother, members of the community, and one of her teachers to edit the book.

Danso's Pre-AP English 10 teacher, Kathryn McCullohs, also edited the stories before publication. "I really enjoyed reading the stories," she said. "She does have a gift for writing."

Bound by Kente is sold on Amazon.com, iUniverse, Target Online, BooksAMillion, and Barnes & Noble. The book has even showed up to be sold in Europe, India, and China in search engines. In the United States, the book sells for \$9.95, but "finances did not come to mind, they were least of my worries," said Danso.

Danso's favorite part about writing and publishing the book was coming up with the characters' names. Some names are traditional from Ghana, while others are composed using

Ghanaian words and ideas that describe the character's personality.

The Akan culture of South Ghana has a precise system of naming babies based on the day of the week they were born, Danso explained. For example, if a girl is born on Monday, her name will be 'Ajua' until her parents assign her an official name. Even after the legal name has been established, family and friends still use the week-name to refer to others.

When she attended our school, "she was a phenomenal student, extremely interested in details," said McCullohs. An overachiever, Danso always strives for the best in her and seeks to help those around her. "If she knows you have more potential, she'll push you to be the best you are," said junior Elsie Ajety-Daku.

Danso dreams to go "anywhere I can get the best education possible." She has applied to many schools, including Ivy Leagues. While "writing is more of a hobby that I hope to go far with," Danso wish is to major in economics.

Danso's goal in life is to work for a humanitarian organization, such as the United Nations and to become an ambassador for children overseas. Ultimately, she would like to be the Secretary of U.N. "Whatever it is that she chooses to do, she will excel and outshine all those around her as she is so accustomed to doing," said senior Forrest Allen. No matter where Danso ends up, "She is outstanding and outperforming in just about every aspect of life."

relationships

Most teenagers have a first hand experience with relationships, both romantic and friendly. Technology has changed these relationships over time.

what our parents

When our parents were growing up, the world around was very different. The music and technology were different and the clothing was surely different. However, dating was a staple in the lives of teenagers and high-schoolers.

Just as our parents once did, many of us have ventured into the wild world of dating. However, our dating world is not *Pretty In Pink* nor is it reminiscent of *Sixteen Candles*. These teenagers are more apt to go out in groups, but some still have a steady. English teacher and school parent Mary Mathewson agreed and said, "I think that kids are less focused on having a boyfriend [or girlfriend.] I think you guys travel in packs." Not to mention another key difference, Mathewson said, "I think that parents

text messages

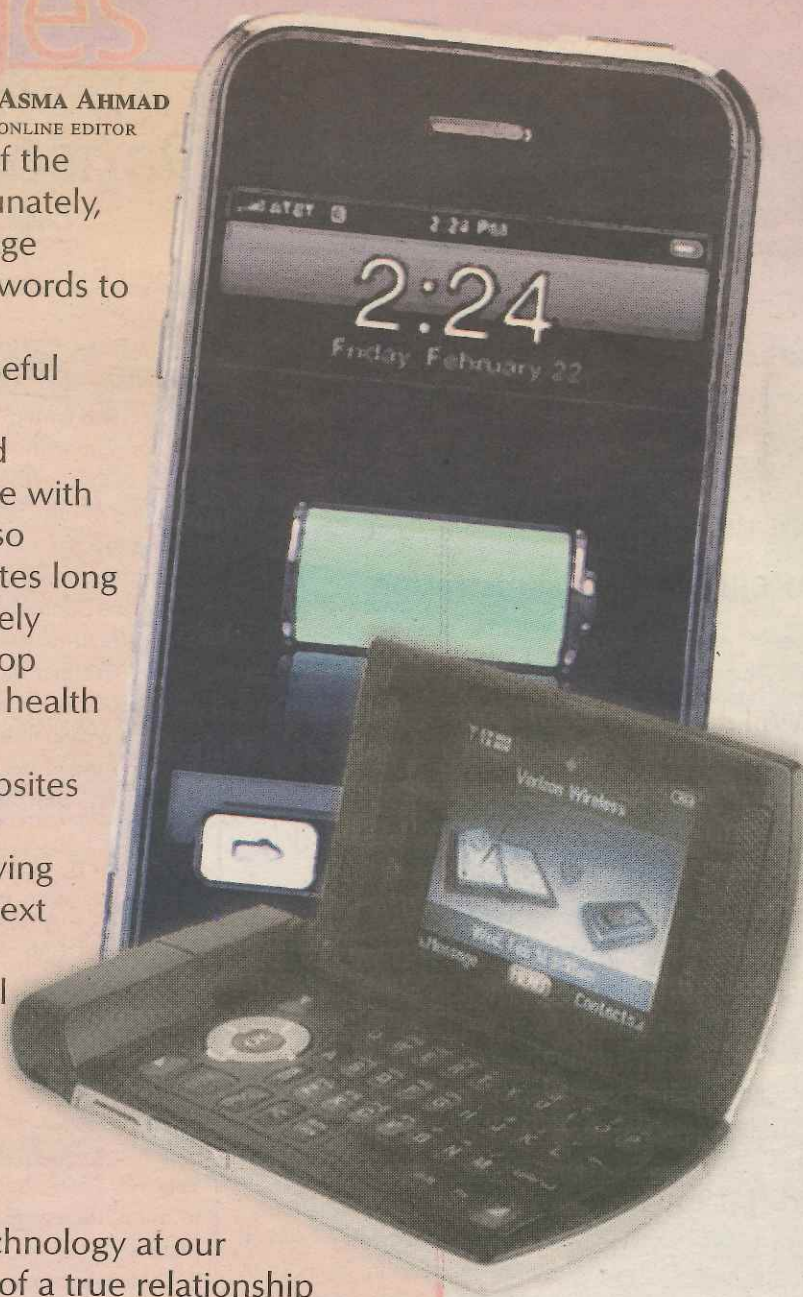
ASMA AHMAD
ONLINE EDITOR

Saying "I love you" to someone can be one of the most memorable moments in their life. Unfortunately, the prevalence of internet and even text message relationships are causing these three powerful words to lose their meaning.

Over the years, the internet has become a useful resource for information. Along the way, social networking websites such as Myspace, hi5, and Facebook have allowed people to communicate with not only their real-life friends and family, but also strangers. A person can lurk around on these sites long enough until they spot someone they "like" solely based on a picture. People then begin to develop feelings that can be detrimental to their mental health and perception of reality.

Before the emergence of speedy internet websites and text messaging technology, boyfriends and girlfriends would think of creative ways of showing their devotion to their loved ones. Nowadays, text message screens barely allow 160 characters, making it incredibly difficult to express personal feelings. The idea of falling "in love" has also suffered as a result of wireless relationships seeing as how for many teens, saying "I love you" to a partner has become easy and very common.

As we get used to the new and innovative technology at our disposal, it is important to remember the value of a true relationship where both partners are dedicated and honest. Such a relationship is much easier to carry out when done in person, not when important messages are conveyed through texts and emails.



face-to-face

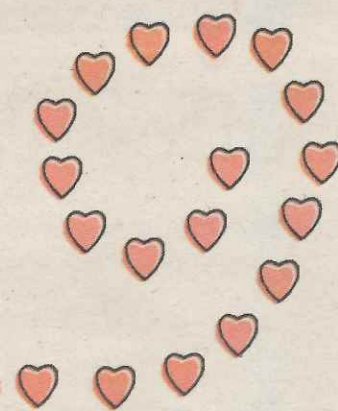
With the new age of technology, it has become more difficult for teenagers to have a face-to-face relationship.

With the help of cell phones, couples can constantly communicate. However, this can hurt a significant other's feelings. Present texting conversations are not face-to-face conversations. Relationships begin by displaying smiley faces. "It [technology] is not real communication and it is not real."

When our parents were growing up, they did not have technology. Text messaging is a new technology that parallel the infamous note passing generation. This did not take away from the relationship. They argue that the modern age is now meeting their "soul-mate" for them by a computer. Not to mention a different meaning.

As young adults, being connected is important. The solution? Do not use Facebook chat them. In the result will be much more

hips



ts did

GWEN FISHEL
COPY EDITOR

are more relaxed because I don't think that [they] recognize what you do as dating."

Similar to our grandparents, our parents now are experiencing firsthand the many variations of teenage dating. There is a whole new set of rules that are defined with the times, just as when they were dating in high school. While many of our parents were in high school, they had to have a date to go to Prom or Homecoming. However, these days, while many students go to these events, they choose to go in groups.

As the years go on, dating will most likely continue to evolve and change.

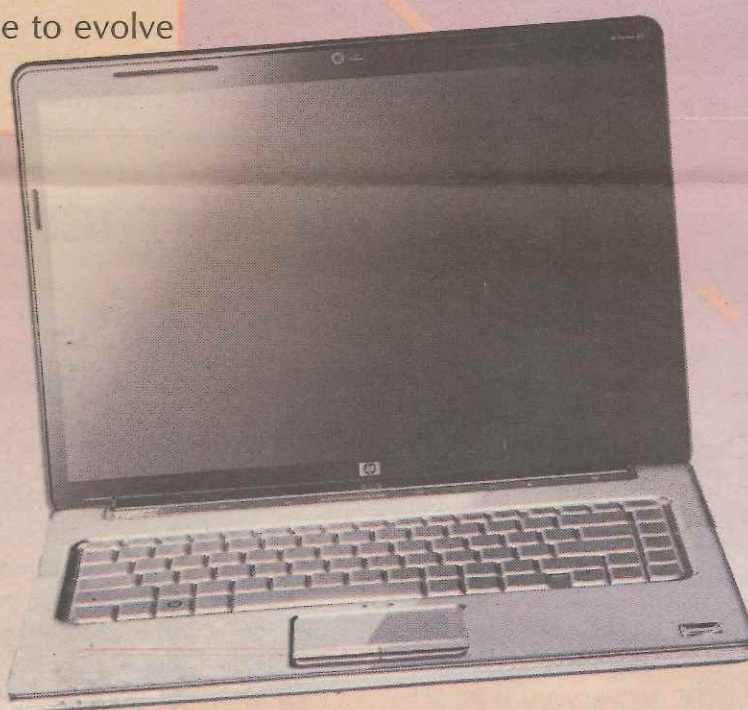


MICHAELA ACCARDI
NEWS EDITOR

ogy, "serious talks" have become even es, especially in person.

Facebook and other electronic devices, nicate. When is enough enough? Will it if one asks to take a break from the ever exting and Facebook messaging can make yard and difficult. Increasing amounts of g one's initial attraction with "LOLs" and akes relationships impersonal and there's e," said freshman Meredith Gilmore. ger, they were familiar with different one use, and social networking sites ng and letter writing of our parents' ver their relationships however. Many echnology is doing just that. People are online with a personality match found rue love at first "site" has a completely

ent in ourselves becomes extremely t send a special someone a text message , strike up a conversation in the hallway; warding.



JESSICA TAYLOR
REPORTER

Technology is always bringing new and innovative ways to connect and keep in touch with others. By far, one of the most significant new technological advance in communication is social networking. Several years ago, Facebook was yet to be founded and MySpace was just starting up. Now, however, Facebook has become not just an exclusive social networking site where Ivy League college students can go to waste time while avoiding homework, but it has become a must have in order to maintain a proper social life. This not rings only true for high school and college students but for working young adults across the world.

Once seen as a simple internet fad, social networking sites such as Facebook have become more and more integrated into peoples' day to day social contacts. Originally seen as a novel way to keep in touch with old high school contacts, Facebook now has become a primary way to engage in all sorts of social interactions. From planning parties and get-togethers to continuing and building upon relationships, Facebook is almost entwined with one's real life. What one does on Facebook can lead to real life drama and even affect whether potential employers and colleges accept an applicant.

As Facebook approaches its fifth year of social networking, the once exclusively Harvard site has 150 million members and looks to be far from slowing down and growing obsolete any time soon.

social networking

Coffey Talk

Keeping
You
Informed:

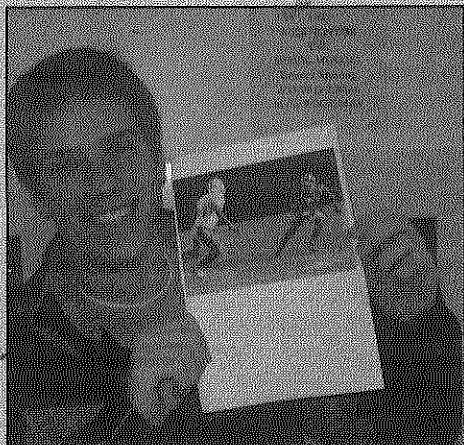


Photo by Bryan Jacobs

PETER COFFEY
REPORTER

This fall, in the pouring rain, Shawn Lee jumped up over a cornerback from Mount Vernon high school to make a catch for a first down, with a big gain.

Why is this such a big deal? Shawn Lee is 5 foot 5 and weighs only about 156 pounds and that is considerably smaller than the typical size of your average football player. Then again, Lee is not your typical football player. Lee is one of the best athletes in our school, and a top athlete in the whole Northern region as well. In his first year as a starting wide receiver, he caught 60 passes for 720 yards and had four touch downs. He has caught more passes in a single season than anyone else has in the past 23 years at our school. Lee had 60 catches and the previous record was 57 catches held by another stand out wide receiver Neal Hardy. Lee is an all star athlete, with most of his plays worthy of the ESPN Top 10, mostly because the people he is making plays against are seven inches taller than he is.

Not only does Lee excel on the football field, but he shines in the classroom as well. His GPA this year is a 3.78, or about the cumulative GPA of the whole Mount Vernon football team. "Hard work does not come unrewarded, so I know if I take the time to put the work in, I will be rewarded in the end," Lee said about his work in the classroom. "When I go out there on the football field I remember all the hard work I've put in and give it my all, no matter what."

According to Coach Henderson, "Lee was one of the leading receivers in the Region last year and should be a top receiver next year. If he works on his speed and gets stronger, he could be the best receiver around - without a doubt." This is from Henderson, the guy who has built this football team from the ground up since he began working here; he knows a good athlete when he sees one.

Not only is Lee breaking down barriers on the football field, but on the basketball court as well. Lee is a varsity basketball player and has been since freshman year. His work ethic is untouched by others, and he dedicates many long hours to the weight room and on the football field every day in order to improve. "I know I'm good, but every time I step on that football field I have to prove I'm good, and I almost always do," said Lee. Lee dedicates his practice time to proving the naysayers wrong. It will not be long until people are looking up to Shawn Lee.

Color Guard Spirit Causes a Fanfare

EMILY GRIFFIN
ASSISTANT STYLE EDITOR

They toss and spin rifles, sabers, flags and even dance. They are the indoor color guard team of our school. While indoor color guard is not a school-sponsored activity, the participating students practice just as hard and as long as any other school-sponsored sport. With the help of band teacher and director Steve Rice, sophomore captain Elizabeth Wolfrey was able to form an indoor color guard team.

The team has spent many hours practicing and put in a lot of dedication into this sport. Wolfrey mentioned that she "personally loved outdoor color guard, and I'm sure a lot of the other girls who are on Indoor Color Guard, love it too." According to Wolfrey, "most of the indoor guard consists of people from the outdoor guard and marching band." The members of Indoor Color Guard include sophomores Sarah Argott, Veronica Clark, Adam Collet, Megan Elliot, Heather Murphy, Janna Murphy, Natalie Sarmento, Emma Swaney, and junior Tory Normille. Wolfrey stated

that the main difference between the outdoor and indoor color guard is that it "is just like color guard without the band or drum line." Swaney, who was part of the marching band in the fall, said the main reason that she joined the team was because it "is a good activity and you are with your friends. Clark, who was part of the outdoor color guard said the moment that she knew she wanted to be part of the color guard team was "during the Shades of Blue Show last year. The color guard work was amazing and I really wanted to join."

Wolfrey said that "this year, during our fall season, we got a new coach. We haven't actually had an indoor guard in a couple of years, so she asked us how many would be interested if there were one. We had enough recruits so the guard was formed." Recruiting people was not a problem, according to Wolfrey.

She and some of the members of the outdoor color guard "went to [their] friends and asked them if they were interested and to talk to people if they were interested too."



Photo by Elizabeth Wolfrey

The team practices their technique sometimes for three hours for local competitions.

"We also had a few clinics and interest meetings before the season started to let people know what we really do and to teach the basics (drop spins, speed spins, rifle and sabre spinning, etc)," Wolfrey said.

They have two to three hour practices during the week and 10 hour practices on weekends, usually. Weekend practices "started in January, right as the season starts to pick up. However we do try to get in as much practice as possible," Wolfrey said. During practices, the students do a variety of things. They start out with a ballet warm up to stretch their muscles, and then they transition to flag basics and tosses. Later, the team warms up their weapons, such as swords, by practicing routines they will use in future competitions.

At the end of each practice, they review what they need to work on and how they can improve. Wolfrey added that "Everybody is really supportive of each other, and no one is afraid to ask for help. Everyone is always happy to help if someone is having trouble."

Wolfrey said, "Our schedule is also pretty similar to the indoor Drum Lines." However, they are in preparation for finals, in which some of the practices they rehearsed will be exactly what they perform in the competition. Their finals and competitions include the following according to Wolfrey, "Broad Run Competition is our first competition; that's the first Saturday of February. We also go to Potomac Falls, Deep Run, Edison, and Finals. We also have our finals preview at school."

Superbowl Attracts 95.4 Million Viewers

LUCAS ALEXANDER
OPINIONS EDITOR

This past Sunday, nearly 100 million viewers tuned into the biggest football game of the year: Super Bowl XLIII. The Arizona Cardinals and the Pittsburgh Steelers met in an intense battle for the title of world champions.

It had been 61 years since the Cardinals have won an NFL championship- the second longest drought in major sports. However, it had been only three years since the Steelers won the Super Bowl in 2006.

The game started out in the favor of the Steelers, who scored a quick touchdown. However, a good call by Cardinals Coach Ken Wisenhunt to challenge the play led to a reversal and only a field goal.

This was short lived however, because at the start of the second quarter, the Steelers scored a touchdown making it 10-0 in their favor.

Next, the Cardinals quickly marched down the field to score a touchdown, making it 10-7 and once again reigniting the team.

Late in the quarter, Cardinals Linebacker Karlos Dansby was able to grab an interception deep in the Steelers' territory. As the Cardinals marched to the doorstep of the Steelers turf, James Harrison intercepted Arizona Quarterback Kurt Warner's

pass, and returned it 100 yards for a touchdown; it was the longest play in Super Bowl history. This play ended the Cardinals momentum and gave the Steelers a 17-7 half-time lead.

This momentum carried into the second half as they held the Cardinals scoreless and went to the fourth quarter with a 20-7 lead, after another field goal. The fourth quarter remained scoreless until halfway through, when the Cardinals drove down the field and scored.

After five more minutes of scoreless football, a holding penalty was called on Steelers offensive lineman Nick Hartwig in his own end zone, which resulted in a safety.

It was then 20-16, with the Steelers barely hanging onto the lead. Almost immediately after that, the Cardinals star receiver caught a pass and cut up the middle of the Steelers defense for a 64 yard touchdown catch. The Cardinals had come all the way back to take the lead and it seemed everything was going their way, until Ben Roethlisberger led the Steelers down to score on a spectacular catch by Antonio Holmes in the corner of the end zone. The comeback by the Cardinals ended, and 37 seconds later, the dream season was completed on a controversial fumble by Kurt Warner. The Steelers had won 27-23.

95.4 million people watched Super Bowl XLIII, the most ever to watch a super bowl behind only last year's 97 million. There are many NFL fans, but many people simply root for the home team and do not really sit down to watch a NFL game from start to finish. The one weekend where this changes is Super Bowl Weekend.

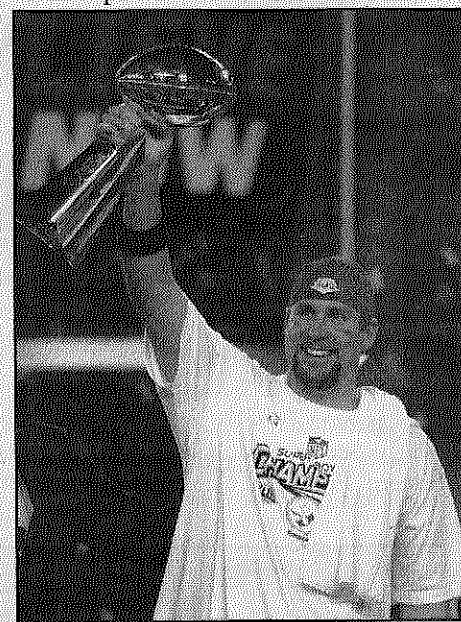


Photo Courtesy of MCT Campus

Steelers' quarterback Ben Roethlisberger celebrates as the Pittsburgh Steelers win the Super Bowl XLIII.



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One Acts Leave Audience in Amazement

BRYAN JACOBS
SPORTS EDITOR

Our school presented the annual One Acts, which were comprised of four rather long, but, in many cases, entertaining plays on January 17. The One Acts are a tradition at our school where theatre students are able to direct their own One Act. This year's One Acts included: *Waiting for Lefty*, *The Auditioners*, *Hard Candy*, *Jimmy the Antichrist*.

Waiting for Lefty

The first play of the night, *Waiting for Lefty*, consisted of four scenes that showed the poverty and hardships that many Americans faced during the Great Depression. This play had notable performances by senior Kathleen McDowell, junior Rachel Martin, and junior Madeline Dahl. All of these actresses were highly convincing in their roles and showed true passion in their characters.

However, it was very hard to completely follow the entire story line because of confusing scenes. Sometimes, the actors struggled with regular fumbles of lines and seemed to lose enthusiasm.

Overall, the play was only average. Compared to the other plays during the One Acts, this was by far the darkest with almost no comedy included and a depressing story line. The plot had a menacing undertone detailing the years before the Second World War. ☆☆☆

The Auditioners

The next and the night's most entertaining One Act, by far, was *The Auditioners*. This performance immediately captured the audience's attention by the first scene when freshman Laura Magonan ranted about "getting high off of nutmeg," causing a sea of laughter in the audience. The play then followed with twelve other "auditioners" trying to get a role in an upcoming play "directed" by junior Megan Haley. Each "auditioner" came up with interesting and comical ways to portray their interpretation of one single monologue, their only chance for stardom.

The most entertaining and "seducing" member of the

entire cast was freshman Emily Woods. Woods, who was properly entitled the seductress, made the audience feel like they were in a sensual scene in the movie or play, *Rent*. Along with Wood's entertaining personality, she did not forget to ever so slightly brush junior Megan Haley's cheek at the end of her monologue. Haley later reported, "That was totally not in the script." It was all about the laughs in this entertaining performance. ■■■■■

Hard Candy

The next highly entertaining yet unusual one act was *Hard Candy*. This act was directed by senior Derek Marsh and was another fast-moving play. In each scene, a different person tried to apply for a job at a firm which, depending on the boss, had either entirely too high or very low standards. The best actors in this One Act were Freshman Alex Wong, Wong and senior Caitlin Fleisig who tried to outwit each other in the beginning of the act with the "46 different languages" that Fleisig, the firm's interviewee, knew from her years of experience in the field. Together, the duo created quite an emotion in the crowd, causing giant roars and sometimes little whimpers of laughter, as they did their best to show their true knowledge of linguistics. However, this all stopped when Wong could not understand the word *Hola* "Wait what did you say?" Wong said with a smile on his face. Junior Jacob Lawlor, an avid member of theatre who sat front row during the performances, commented, "[This was] the best performance. I am confident the audience loved it and that is all that matters." I agree that it was definitely above average. ☆

Jimmy the AntiChrist

The last One Act was an informative satire on the Western views of social issues, such as homosexuality. In this One Act, Jimmy, played by sophomore Keith Riddle, comes home from college with his new "friend" Colin, played by senior Andrew Neilsen. Jimmy, after greeting his entire family at the dinner table, claims that he is the Antichrist. This is just another way

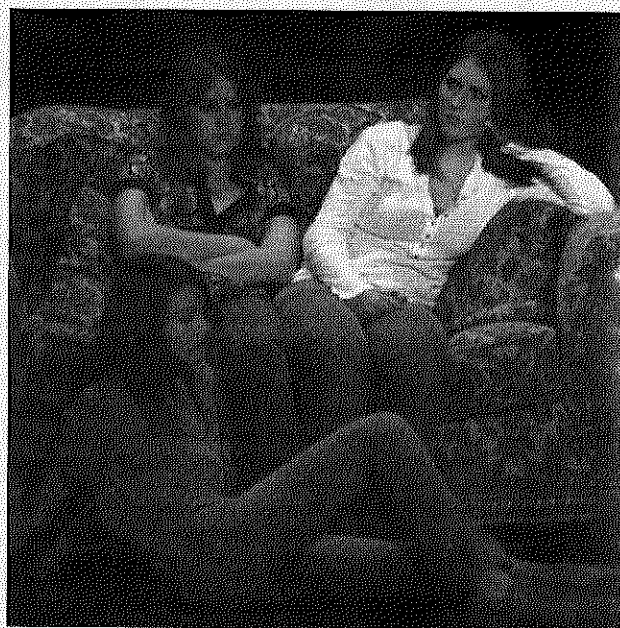


Photo Courtesy of Peter Coffey

The One Acts consisted of four plays that were a mixture of hilarious comedies to ones that were dreary and confusing.

of "coming out" to his family, without directly stating it. His father, played by senior Alex Snider, wants nothing to do with the notion and continuously states that there could not be an Antichrist in his household. Jimmy's mother and sister, played by sophomore Callan Memmo and freshman Sami Kadonoff, started to "get the drift" after Jimmy explained the signs of being the antichrist. These signs included the plague of frogs and his yearning to watch *Gossip Girl* which Snider claims to be feminine, giving the audience a vague reminder of the West Potomac Gossip Girl that, as the frogs did in the time of Moses, plagued our school with nasty and fictitious rumors. The play draws to an end when old Aunt Cathy, played by sophomore Madeline Evans, passes out and Jimmy saves her using his "powers" that include hailing fireballs. This convinces the family that although he is the antichrist, he is still family and love conquers all. ☆

Defiance Disappoints Expectant Viewers

ZACH FEINSTEIN
BUSINESS MANAGER

Since the new school year, Hollywood has increasingly delivered movies about people living in Nazi Germany and how they either suffered or fought back.

Defiance follows the path set earlier by *A Boy in the Striped Pajamas* and *Valkyrie*, which detailed life under the Nazis for not just Jews, but also for everyday Germans. The difference with *Defiance* is that it shows how the oppressed rose up and fought off the Nazis.

The film's main characters are three brothers, Tuvia Bielski, (Daniel Craig), Zus Bielski, (Liev Schreiber), and Asael (Jamie Bell). Set in 1941, in what is today the Eastern European nation of Belarus, the

Bielskis seek protection in the forests after the Nazis start rounding up and murdering Jews in their home town; Both the Bielski parents were killed in the process. They then escape to the woods finding fellow Jews who thought the denseness and thickness of the woods would protect them from the horrors of the Nazis.

Over the year, the brothers take command of the rag tag group of survivors and form a camp to protect each other. Whenever the food or water supplies run out, a raiding

party led by one of the brothers is unleashed on one of the surrounding villages. As these raids start to increase and as the number of Jewish lives lost increases, a conflict between Tuvia and Zus develops over who should lead the group and how they should prepare for the upcoming winter. Zus eventually decides to leave the camp so that he can join the Soviet Red Army Guerrillas, while older brother Tuvia takes control of the entire group of refugees.

While the action scenes are extremely

exciting and heart pounding, the movie overall is average. Craig was miscast for this role partially because he exudes the confidence of 007, not of a Jewish partisan during World War II.

Another problem with this movie was that some of the actors, such as Bell, just did not have the convincing accent of a European Jew. The whole movie was mostly average acting wise, but if you enjoy a bunch of Jews beating, evading and fighting the Nazis, this is the movie for you.



Photo Courtesy of MCT Handout

Daniel Craig (right) and Liev Schreiber (left) star in the new movie *Defiance*, in which they play brothers, who must protect themselves against the Nazi's.

LISTEN!

WKCR

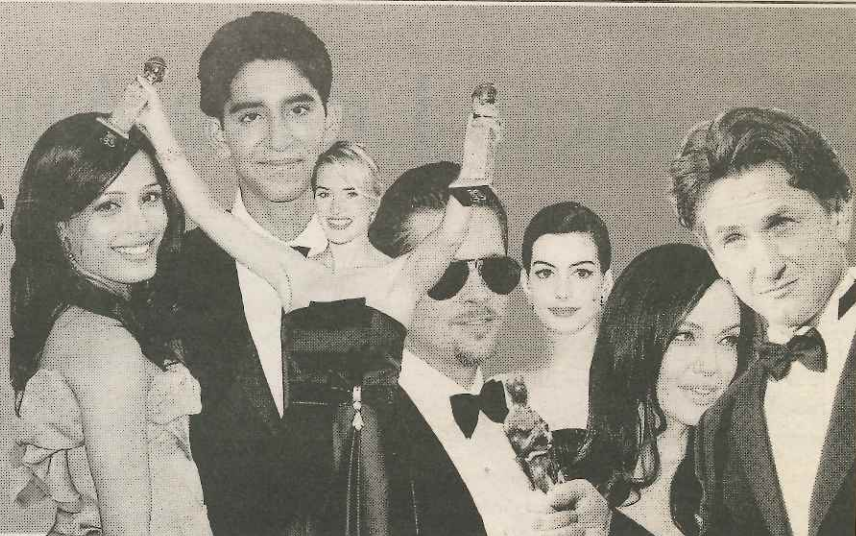
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LISTEN!

Golden Stars at the Golden Globes

VICTORIA NARINE
STYLE EDITOR



Photos by MCT/Lionel Hans/Michael Golding-Photo illustration by Grace Powell

There is the inexplicable birth of an old man and a behind-the-scenes look at an interview of an incorrigible president. There is rhythmic Indian "Who Wants to be a Millionaire" and a lusting German adolescent. Then there is Harvey Milk...

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button

David Fincher deviates from his usual directorial picks (*Fight Club*, *Seven*) with the emotionally tolling *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*. This romantic drama tells the heartwarming tale of Benjamin Button (Brad Pitt), a boy born as an old man with wrinkles, cataracts, and rheumatoid arthritis. Benjamin gets years younger while those around him grow older.

He meets the love of his life, Daisy (Cate Blanchett), while she is a little girl and he an old man. The story unfolds as their paths repeatedly intersect and their love remains listless.

While Cate Blanchett has several prominent movies under her belt (*Babel*, *I'm Not There*, *Notes on a Scandal*), Brad Pitt lacks many notable ones. His mediocre performance is dwarfed by the talented Cate Blanchett, and the story line is all too predictable. Brad Pitt seems to always be nominated for a prestigious award but never wins. This year will be no different.

Frost/Nixon

Michael Sheen's performance as the flamboyant talk show host David Frost generates the question of why he is not nominated for an award. The actual nominee for Best Actor in a Lead Role, Frank Langella as Richard Nixon, gives another satisfactory performance that deserves every bit of recognition. *Frost/Nixon* follows Frost's heightened reclamation of fame as he tempts the then reclusive former president with hefty sums of money and the chance to explain himself to the American public. Ron Grazer, known for the previous Oscar winner, *A Beautiful Mind*, directs another could-be winner. Grazer, however, is just sly of another Oscar win.

We No Music

ALEX FABRIZIO & GWEN FISHEL
FOCUS EDITOR & COPY EDITOR

Bob Dylan once said that he wrote the Bible. Well, we wrote the Book of Love. So, here are the songs, and they do not suck.

Teenage Angst at its Best:

"Smells Like Teen Spirit"--Nirvana

Yeah, we know it is overplayed and cliché, but it is the angriest, most brooding song ever, just like Chuck Bass in the latest *Gossip Girl* episodes and who cannot love him?

"Teenage Dirtbag"--Wheatus

Who could turn down tickets to Iron Maiden? 'Nough said.

"Authority Song"--John Cougar Mellencamp

Anarchy and teen angst live happily ever after forever and ever. And ever. And ever. And ever.

"Born to Run"--Bruce Springsteen

The Boss wants to know if you are ready. Forrest Gump was.

"Baba O' Riley"--The Who

Let us face it. We live in a "teenage wasteland."

"Bad Reputation"--Joan Jett

We all want one.

"You Oughta Know"--Alanis Morissette

This song is the reason why adolescent girls use her as a standard to measure how angry a song is. But, maybe, bitter is more appropriate.

"Complicated"--Avril Lavigne

Sing it, girl. Sing it.

"Time of Your Life"--Green Day

This song is largely misunderstood. Take a hint.



"To Hell and Back"--Madeline Swooning is the antithesis of teen angst. This song is the antithesis of swooning. Therefore, by law of syllogism, this song is teen angst.

"Santeria"--Sublime

Shout out to Lucas Alexander.

SUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUP?!
SWOON faint:

"I Want You"--Third Eye Blind

Just listen to the live acoustic version and it will all make sense.

"For the Widows in Paradise, For the Fatherless in Ypsilanti"--Sufjan Stevens

His voice is enough to melt anyone's heart, and the banjo is to die for.

"I Love How You Love Me (Phil Spector)"--Jeff Mangum

This song is the sweetest song ever written. Mind the sweater.

"I Want You to Want Me"--Cheap Trick

It was popular in the 70s, 80s, 90s, and is popular today for a reason.

"I'll Be"--Edwin McCain

This song is probably how Seal got with Heidi Klum.

"Naomi"--Neutral Milk Hotel

It is as beautiful as a blood orange sunset over a picnic in the park.

"Postcards From Italy"--Beirut

Listen to the melody, starting at 2:03. It is, like gondola in Venice, being serenaded by a local. Now, that is romance.

"Wonderwall (Oasis)"--Ryan Adams

No comment. It is Ryan Adams.

"On the Way Down"--Ryan Cabrera

If only we were Ashlee Simpson.

"Maria"--Nik Freitas

The nostalgia is reminiscent of a former love... that did not exist.

"Love Me Do"--The Beatles

Sing the song, see the reaction.

Believe the hype; it is true!

The Reader

Kate Winslet (already winner of two Golden Globes this year for *The Reader* and *Revolutionary Road*) has created a niche for herself in tasteful nudity. Winslet's character, Hanna, tempts a virginal Michael Berg after finding him with a serious case of scarlet fever. Clothes are off and windows get steamy within ten minutes of opening credits. The affair, however, mysteriously loses steam after Hanna disappears without telling the young, love struck Berg. Decades after the affair and while in law school, Berg re-encounters his former lover while she is defending herself in a war-crime trial.

The performances of Winslet, David Kross as the young Berg, and Ralph Fiennes as the post-adolescent Michael Berg are incredible and entirely convincing. Kross exemplifies the angsty teenager while Winslet's seductive tendencies are somewhat masked, leaving the affair that much more unexpected.

Slumdog Millionaire

Slumdog Millionaire is the must-see movie of the year. With only limited initial publicity and viewings in E Street-esque theatres, *Slumdog Millionaire* will win Best Picture, guaranteed. A fresh-faced cast of Dev Patel (Jamal Malik) and Freida Pinto (Latika) evokes insurmountable talent. Jamal Malik, a "slumdog" from the slums of Mumbai, wins the Indian version of "Who Wants to be a Millionaire," only to be greeted with suspicions of cheating. He must convince the unforgiving police sergeant (Saurabh Shukla) that his answers were authentic. All the while, his actual motive for going on the game show -- to get the attention of his childhood love, Latika -- is revealed.

Milk

Gus Van Sant is a cinematographic genius. Known for cult classics such as *Last Days* and *Drugstore Cowboy*, Gus Van Sant's latest directorial product is by far his best. Harvey Milk, the first openly gay politician, struggles to win the votes of San Francisco in hopes of establishing civil rights for all, no matter their sexual orientation. An amazing ensemble of some of the best actors of the time -- Emile Hirche (*Into the Wild*) and James Franco (*Flyboys*) -- makes this film utter perfection. But Sean Penn as Harvey Milk completes the film. His portrayal as the relentless crusader is flawless. Although not likely, *Milk* deserves every award possible.

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iTunes Rocks a Lower Price

EMILY GREEN
ASSISTANT STYLE EDITOR

In April of this year, iTunes will be cutting the prices on various songs that have not recently been big hits. These "not so popular" songs will have a price cut of 30 cents, priced at 69 cents instead of the usual 99 cents.

However, prices for some other songs will be raised to \$1.29. This all depends on which recording company they come from and how big of a hit the song is, according to Apple's top marketing executive Phil Schiller. Apple CEO Steve Jobs said that there will be "many more songs priced at 69 cents than \$1.29," according to MSNBC. Apple will also sell songs without "digital rights management" or DRM technology, which limits the ability to copy songs or move them to multiple computers.

For many students at our school, this will mean that they will have to be more careful selecting what popular songs they want to buy because the price will be \$1.29. Sophomore Alexander Tyson said that he will continue to buy songs off of iTunes "because I have an iPod and it's easier to buy from iTunes than [go to a store and] buy CDs."

Michael Gartenberg, an analyst at Jupitermedia, told *USA Today* that he thinks that the "99 cent songs will pretty much start to disappear." This means that song prices will either be 69 cents or \$1.29 in the future. Unlike the previous years, where customers could only download songs from their computer, iTunes has now permitted people to download songs from almost any electronic device, including the new iPhone 3G. According to *24/7 Wall St.*, "Skeptics will claim that Apple's iPod sales are slowing due to the maturity of the product and the recession which has badly hurt consumer electronics." Many people, along with *24/7 Wall St.*, believe that Apple is having trouble maintaining previous customers due to overpriced songs and albums on iTunes. By pricing each song based on popularity and sales records, the songs and albums should be more fairly priced and Apple should be able to keep all of their previous customers and be able to attract even more customers.

Other sites, such as *Product Review*, believed that the prices are changing on iTunes because of the constant pressure from the music industries, since more people would buy a 99 cent song than a full priced album at a store. NPD analyst Russ Crupnick told *nj.com* that the music industry has been facing many problems with the sales of albums. He said, "As the album as we know it goes away, how do we replace a \$12 or \$13 item with something that costs more than 99 cents?" Most students usually only buy a few songs off of an album, but hardly go out and actually buy the CD. According to *macm.com*, "iTunes still leads the digital music market in 20 countries, with an 85 percent share of the global digital music sales market. There are now 10 million iTunes users with accounts at the iTunes Music Store. In the United States, Apple had more than an 80 percent share. Apple did not release specific numbers for the Japan market, but states that it was the leading music store in the country."

With all the changes that Apple is making, it should continue to be the top music retailer in the United States, according to The NPD Group.

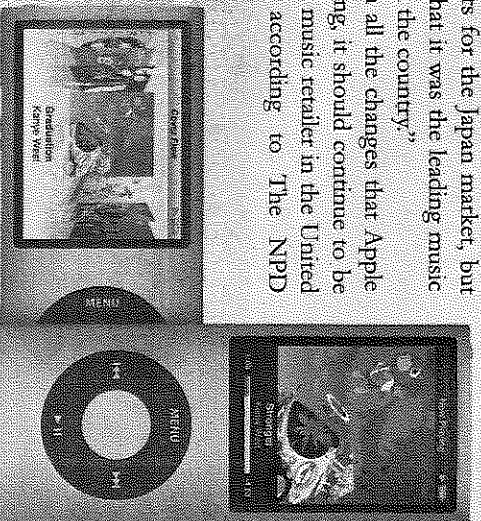


Photo Courtesy of MCT/Handout

A Day in the Life of... Cate Schroeder

Schroeder views life from a different perspective

ZACH FEINSTEIN
BUSINESS MANAGER

Just like every other student at our school, freshman Caitlin Schroeder has to push people out of the way to get to her classes on time. Schroeder is a normal student who likes to watch TV and hang out with her friends. However, there is one small thing that most people notice about her: she is much shorter than everyone else at our school.

When she was born, Schroeder was born with the medical condition called dwarfism. According to Mayo Clinic, dwarfism is typically caused by a genetic disorder, yet some of the causes of this disorder are unknown. Dwarfism generally occurs when there is a defect in either the father's sperm or the mother's egg. In early 2007, Schroeder made the decision that would change her life forever. Her decision was to have her legs extended so she could be taller. Her main idea behind having the surgery was "to be taller and to function easier without being too short." With the height of 4'3", Schroeder was hopeful that the outcome of the surgery would be successful.

The surgery that vertically changed her life for good took place at Sinai Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland, on March 20, 2007. For the surgery, the doctors broke the bones in both of her legs. They then drilled holes in the areas of the fibula and tibia, which are below the knee in the leg. After the holes had been drilled completely, a wrench

was inserted in the holes and was turned every day so Schroeder's legs would stretch. This grueling process went on for another six months while Schroeder went through rehabilitation. By the time school had started in September, Schroeder was ready to return with a new attitude and a new height as well. When she had left school the year before, she had been a mere 4'3", but now she was a giant 4'9". The first thing she did after being able to walk and move normally again was "a lot of shopping. I bought jeans, I didn't have to get them altered which I did before." She was also, for the first time, able to ride her bike around the neighborhood.

Before her surgery, Schroeder felt like she was different from everyone else. Now she does not feel like her height is holding her back. It is pushing her up like the screws that made her taller.

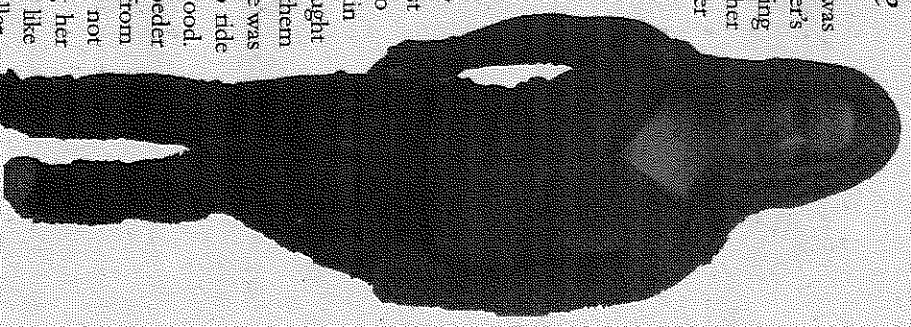
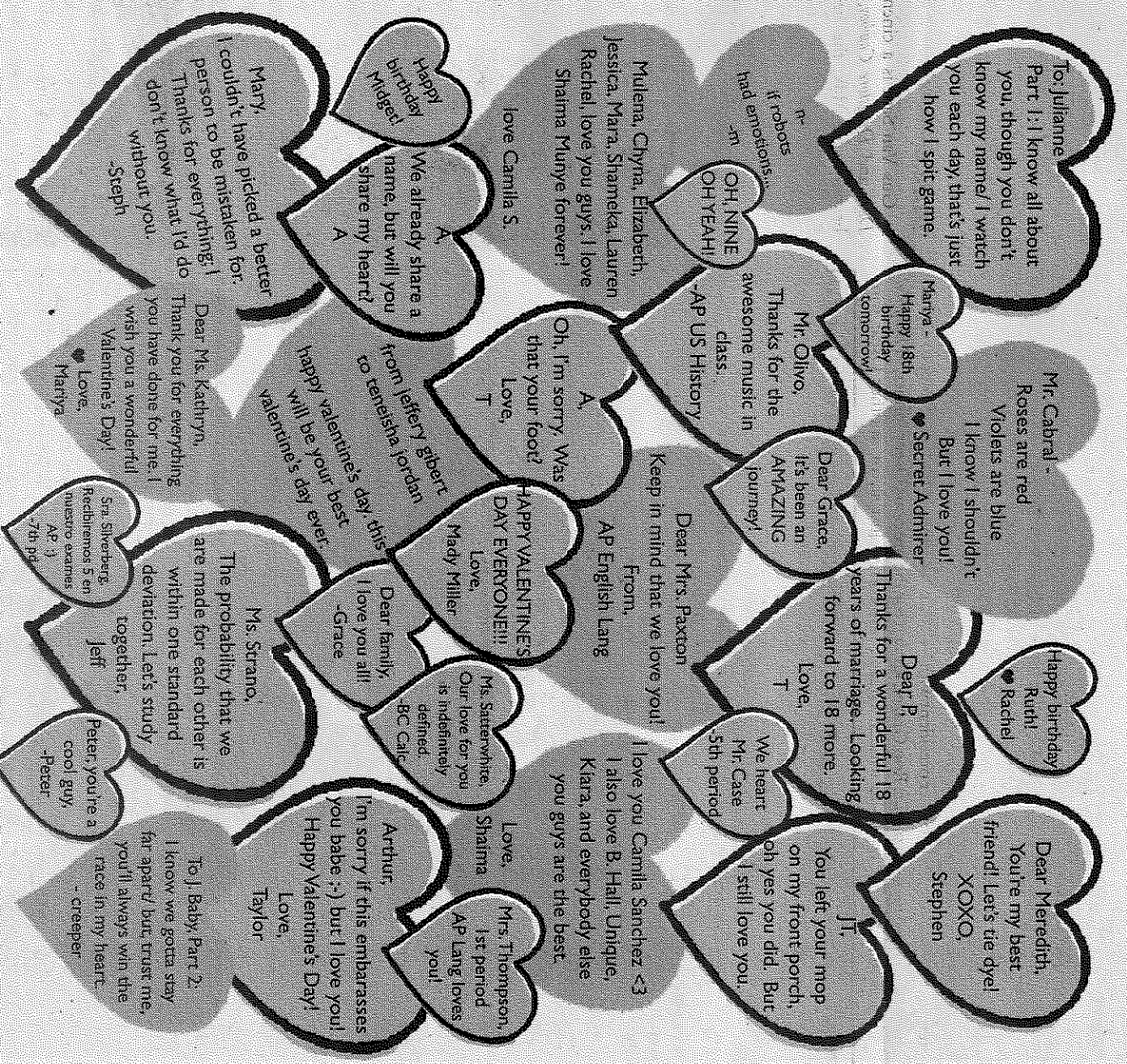


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{Senior Session}

RACHEL MARTIN
REPORTER

ANDREW NIELSEN

The Lone Ranger

In an artistic person," senior Andrew Nielsen's husky voice rasps. That much is evident. Nielsen is passionate about music; his favorite genre is rock. His interests not an amateur one either. "I read as much as I can about bands and their music; I'm really picky about what bands in particular I listen to." A skilled musician himself, Nielsen can play bass guitar and is learning to play the piano. His favorite bands include The Melvins, Led Zeppelin, and Queens of the Stone Age. Nielsen's talents are not confined to music, however. Some of his best experiences have been with West Potomac's theatre department. "I've been interested in, you know, acting and theatre for a while but I've never actually gotten involved until last year." Last year was his first performance; he was a craps shooter in the spring musical, *Gyps and Dolls*. Having no experience with dancing or singing prior to doing the musical, it certainly must have been a challenge. He also played Lord Capulet in the fall play, *Romeo and Juliet*, and was Colin

in one of the winter one-acts, *Jimmy the Antichrist*. "[My favorite play was] *Jimmy the Antichrist*, because it was a small cast and everything had a more laid back feel to it. I also had more fun with my character than any other previous roles I've played." He notes that a career in drama is definitely a possibility, and plans on getting more involved in theatre, while in college. As for plans for the future, Nielsen casts the image of a laid back artist, passionate about his music and acting, but no solid plans or concerns. "I'm probably going to move back to Utah. That's where most of my family is. Probably go to a community college there or something." Traveling is another interest of Nielsen's, and he hopes to learn French and travel around Europe someday. Typical of any artist, Nielsen finds inspiration in others, including Gandhi. "Gandhi's a big hero of mine. I'm a big fan of Gandhi. I'm nonviolent, I believe in pacifism, I really like what Gandhi did." Although a political leader is his hero, Nielsen is more of the private type and prefers to keep his opinions on politics to himself.

Andrew Nielsen gives the camera a coy smile. Ladies, you know you want that!



Photo by Peter Coffey

Photo by Gwen Fisher

Photo by Gwen Fisher

“For Winter Break, I’m going clubbing in Iceland”

STEPHEN HOWELL
LAYOUT/NEWS EDITOR

Katy Anderson

On The Run

Her favorite class this year is Mr. O'Grady's AP Literature class because she has been able to read classics such as *Dracula*, *Hamlet*, and *Moby-Dick*.

Anderson still reminisces about her middle school bowling team. "It was really fun freshmen year. I got to take bowling instead of a quarter of gym," Anderson said. Though the outfits were less than flattering, she looks back on the experience fondly.

Her favorite book is *The Time Traveler's Wife*, and Anderson listens to mostly Hawaiian music. She likes 80's movies and her favorite television shows are *The Office* and *Friends*.

Anderson was accepted to West Point this year, however she is waiting to hear back from her other choices. The College of William and Mary, University of Texas-Austin, Texas Christian University, and James Madison University. "I'm still weighing it," Anderson said.

Her dad is a Colonel in the Army, and her mom is an Instructional Assistant at Stratford Landing Elementary school. She drives a 1997 Gran Marquis, whose name is Norman. "My friend from TJ named it that because it's an old grandpa car so we gave it an old grandpa name."

Currently, Anderson is cutting weight for pole vaulting, so she can use a more flexible pole. "It sucks not being able to eat spaghetti at track team dinners," Anderson said. Track team dinners have become one of her favorite high school memories, with "epic" mahunt games and, of course, spaghetti.

Katy Anderson, a lover of track and field and cross-country, is often seen on the track before and after meets.



Photo Courtesy of Karen Becker Photography



Photo Courtesy of Katy Anderson