

# THE WIRE

West Potomac High School  
Library



West Potomac High School  
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Alexandria, VA 22307  
Volume 20 #6

WEST POTOMAC HIGH SCHOOL

Friday, February 25, 2005

## Teachers and Students Interact Internationally

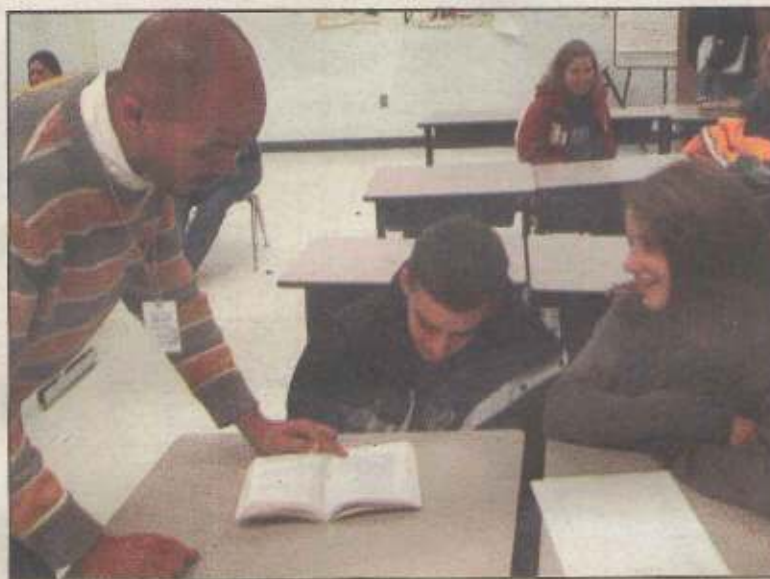
Jeff Snyder

News Editor

On March 7, 2005, this school will host guest teachers from the Middle East. Their visit will be a diplomatic project to share opinions and experiences with American students and teachers.

Social Studies teachers Hassan Mims and Emily Millians are coordinating their students for a Deliberating Democracy Project (DID). A DID is an international educational exchange program designed to improve teaching and learning in democratic principles and the skills of civic deliberation. This year, the democracy education project will partner six Fairfax County teachers with six Azerbaijan teachers. Azerbaijan is a Middle Eastern country found north of Iran and south of Russia. The Azeri teachers will travel to Fairfax County and visit schools from March 7-11.

On March 7, the Azeris will spend the day at this school and exchange dialogue and observe Mim's Period 3 US/VA Government class. The Azeri teachers will be split into teams of three, plus a translator, to focus on and discuss with students issues such as foreign policy, government regulation of video violence, and environmental protection with the schools they attend. Schools participating in this exchange are encouraged to arrange a tour of the school for



Hassan Mims works with seniors Hal Vernon and Becki Wise on their presentations.

them, observe additional class as time permits, and possibly partake in after-school meetings.

During the week of April 4-8, Millians will be going to Baku, Azerbaijan with five other Fairfax County school

teachers to observe Azeri schools and complete DID project activities there.

To prepare for the debating, Mims's and Millian's classes have read articles and statistics pertaining to video violence. Each student has written down pros and cons on the issue, and has personally decided which side they will belong to. "I am really excited to be a part of this project. This is the first time I have experienced an international program in high school. I think the students are really lucky," said senior Feven Ghebremedhin.

This project is a one year program that began in October and will conclude in June. It is sponsored by Street Law and the Constitutional Rights Foundation, and is funded by a federal grant. The purpose of the Deliberating Democracy Project is to "improve decision-making and higher order thinking skills, and increase student-centered learning opportunities," said Mims. "We are also striving to improve students' organization and their understanding on the nature and complexity of controversy."

Photo by Jeff Snyder

## Rebirth of an Opportunity

Taylor Dankmeyer

Special to the Wire

The Renaissance Pilot Program was created by a concerned parent who wanted to help students that had the grades to get into college but weren't necessarily encouraged to go for it. That parent was



PTSA President Diane Brody speaks with students and parents at the first Renaissance Pilot Program meeting.

Photo by Hana Beckerle

Stan Blacker, whose son Andy is a freshman at this school. Even though Andy is planning on attending college, Blacker still wants to help other students.

The program is an addition to the guidance and career services already available at the school. This program is focusing primarily on low income Hispanic Americans, African Americans, and single-parent families. Parent liaison Cernata Morse said, "This program will provide an intense focus for students who are treading the water...the objective is that they are prepared for the college of their choice."

It will specifically help twenty-two students selected to develop their best portfolio in order to increase their chances of getting into college. However, there are other benefits to this program.

Freshman Cha'vais Summers, who wants to attend the University of Southern California, said, "I think the program is also for students who are doing poorly in school." She continued, saying, "I know that I'm struggling in some key areas and I do need help. I hope to get used to the workload of high school. Once that happens I think my grades will go up and I'll be okay."

The students enrolled in the program meet after school and are paired with volunteer. These volunteers, mostly National Honor Society members, are there to give support and advice to the members.

Volunteers help the selected students with every

See Renaissance, page 5

## The Hunt for Morals

Rob Jones

Wire Reporter

Stephen M. Hunt, an official of the Fairfax County School Board, sent out a letter on January 30 to the principals of all 24 high schools in the county, urging them to promote the invitation of "ex-gay" speakers to address students about the issue

of changing one's sexuality.

The letter describes homosexuality as a "destructive lifestyle" and describes the movement for sexual re-orientation as a product of compassion for a "misguided" population. Hunt observes that schools make a point of teaching tolerance of homosexuals, and teaching students that homosexuality is both normal and natural. "It is neither," he says, contending rather that sexuality is neither predetermined at birth nor a product of early child development, but instead, a personal choice made as a result of misdirected emotions. He urges schools to promote ex-gay seminars and student organizations in an attempt to inform the population about the movement to change gays' sexuality and "preclude them from this self-destructive path".

Although the letter was printed on Hunt's personal stationery, he signed it as a Member, At Large of the



School board member Stephen Hunt is fighting for an addition to homosexuality curriculum.

Photo Courtesy of FCPs and Stephen Hunt

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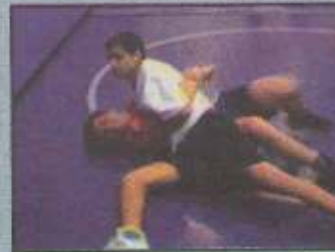
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## Pro-Life Feminism

Dear Editor,

Hana Beckerle makes a common though incorrect assumption in her declaration that real feminists are pro-life. She assumes that to be pro-choice is the same as being pro-abortion. I know as a feminist, the daughter and granddaughter of feminists and the mother of a feminist, she's dead wrong. To be pro-choice is to support the right of women to make the choices that are right for them, without the interference of government. I'm pro-choice, but like many other feminists I hope abortion becomes increasingly rare, but it must remain safe and legal.

I have never been faced with the decision or whether or not to terminate a pregnancy. I know people who have. It is not a decision that they made lightly. I believe all children should be conceived with love and welcomed into the world with joy. But we know that not all pregnancies occur in that way. Women who find themselves pregnant from rape or incest or indiscretion should be able to end the unwanted pregnancy, if that is their choice. Those who suggest adoption as a solution in such cases seem to regard such women as brood mares for the infertile.

Real feminists trust women to make their own choices, especially in the most personal of matters.

Judy Grumbacher, Physics Teacher

## Setting the Redskins' Record Straight

Dear Editor,

What is with your sports editor? I read the article about the Redskins in the last edition of *The Wire* and I noticed that it was one of the worst sports articles I ever read. It was full of stuff that anyone who had watched even just one Redskins game could tell was false. For example, why would the Redskins start Tim Hasselbeck if "he managed a goose egg in the QB rating department"? And I would really appreciate it if you explained to me how "he could just cheer you up... even if we got shut out." A shut out definitely doesn't cheer me up especially if the 3<sup>rd</sup> string quarterback was starting and the team has a losing record. Also, the article said that we should bring back players who have been retired for several years and that "they're better than Ramsey, Portis, and Coles." If you watched the Redskins at all you would know that Clinton Portis had over 1,300 rushing yards. That's more than Fred Taylor, Ahman Green, Jamal Lewis, and Priest Holmes. And Laveranues Coles had 90 catches more than Javon Walker, Isaac Bruce, and Keyshawn Johnson. It's like Joe Gibbs says, "If you're going to say that, at least you have some obligation to do some research..." P.S. You're a sports editor, not a comedy editor, act like one. P.P.S. If you want to see the biggest choke of all time check out the Boston Red Sox in Game 6 of the 1986 World Series.

Kenneth Llewellyn, Freshman

## Cut it, Keckee

Dear Editor,

I have heard a few complaints from my friends that they don't exactly like "Keckee's Katch". I know he "doesn't care what you think with a passion", but too bad. As a writer in the newspaper, you're going to have to listen to constructive (used lightly) criticism. All the sarcasm you have put into your articles is a bit much. To have a little sarcasm is great, but too much is bad, especially in the last article about the 'Skins. It's come to the point where I don't know when your being sarcastic and when you're not. All you talked about was Tim Hasselbeck. He's a third string quarterback on the skins, and he should stay there. We also never put our starters in the preseason against the other team's third stringers, we just care more about the games because we have so much hype around us every single year. There's a new coach, new system, new stars. That is why we win, the hype. But hype only last so long. Also, I have never prayed for Riggins, Theismen, or Monk. Those guys cannot play. They are old, I'm sick of all your sarcasm. Who has ever told you that they pray for Monk to come back! You got some crazy, goofy friends if they did. This article is proof that you don't watch the games. You said it yourself in the article. "...made me, want to watch Gilmore Girls rather than the games." So although it said it made you WANT to watch Gilmore Girls, you probably did with the information you know about the Redskins and your crazy thinking. That's all I got.

Taylor Dankmyer, Freshman

## Rants and Raves

A **Rave** for the warm-weather days in February. You can't beat wearing flip-flops around Valentine's Day.

A **Rant** for the constant appearance of random signs in the hallways. Before they can influence and educate us, we need to know what they're for!

A **Rave** for the revolutionary "Under the Sea" dance. The atmosphere was cool and the jazz was hot.



A **Rant** for chemical accident in the Chemistry hallway one evening. It would be swell if people were more careful.

A **Rave** for the tater-tots and Cup Noodle soups that have suddenly found their way into the cafeteria. That kind of food rocks.

A **Rant** for the rude people in the lunch line. Let's stand in line and get our food like adults, folks.

## Borders on Free Speech

Dear Editor:

It was with a great sense of interest that I read the columns by Rob Jones and Drew Macklin concerning free speech and what its limits might be. Since both are students in one of my AP Government classes, I feel especially grateful to see them passionately pursue a debate that began before the nation itself.

Having spent some time in the Nixon White House during some of the most violent anti-administration protests in recent American history, I share Drew's concern that anarchists and others are "pushing the envelope" too far and are using the Bill of Rights to subvert the very institutions that protect them. Some might even say that, by their actions, they may be destroying support for the Bill of Rights itself.

I personally find Rob Jones's characterization of Mr. Bush as "Führer" and "lack(ing) the neurological means to chew gum and walk at the same time" as offensive and political hyperbole, even for the few leftists who still refuse to acknowledge that Mr. Bush has won the presidency not once, but twice. Rob's characterization of the election as "...the collective ignorance of a slight majority..." smacks of the elitism against which Mr. Bush campaigned so successfully (twice). I also find it irrelevant that Rob thinks he speaks for what he calls, "...the opinion of most of the world." However, I will defend Mr.

Jones' right to say (or carry signs to demonstrate) whatever his political beliefs might be.

Drew's call for an end to the "violence and mayhem that tries to hide underneath the Bill of Rights..." is, however, just as wrong as is Rob's perspective, although for different reasons. In his call to "...put down your signs, your trash and your rocks," Drew is getting very close to the line of intolerance for any dissent.

For a nation to be truly free, even the most unpalatable speech must be tolerated. Thus, the courts allow neo-Nazis to march in the predominantly Jewish community of Skokie, Ill. and pornographers to publish indecent photos on the Internet. However distasteful or understandingly objectionable those views may be – even to an overwhelming majority – they must be tolerated as a price of individual freedom. However great the danger they may appear to pose and however stressful those views may be to the American political system, they pose less danger to the very fundamental institutions than does the arbitrary imposition of censorship or prior restraint on even the most distasteful public utterances.

William F. Rhatican, History Teacher

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# A Double Dose of Dean

Drew Macklin

Opinions Editor

I would giggle with delight, but I stopped giggling when I hit elementary school.

The headline giving me such a feeling should be making waves, but it has so far evaded significant attention. Howard Dean — centrist governor, leftist Presidential underdog, fundraising virtuoso, Him of the Primal Scream — has been elected to the Chairmanship of the Democratic Party. The election was little more than a formality, and Dean was the expected winner from the moment former Chairman Terry McAuliffe announced he would step down, but this anticipation does nothing to reduce the elation I feel when I hear it for sure.

After all, the November Presidential Election placed Democrats at a crossroads, a veritable time of reckoning. After four years in which their disgust for President Bush was palpable, they rejected the extreme anti-war candidate, nominated a Veteran with a distinguished Senatorial record, and rallied to raise a record amount of money.

The result? Bush won again — no dispute, no recount, and with a margin that approaches a “mandate” by today’s standards. Even while the vacuums were still running after the Bush victory party, the soul-searching began. Clearly, there was some fundamental flaw in the Democratic strategy, whether it was simply a campaign mistake or an actual ideological deficiency, only time would tell.

Time has told, but its message has been hijacked by the “Deanies”. The debate after the election was fought between those Democrats who sensed an unhealthy party devotion to radical liberal ideas, and those

who thought the party wasn’t embracing those ideas enough. Dean became the face of the latter group, urging an unabashed and unadulterated swing even farther to the left. His election as Chairman of the party is an instant indicator of what the movement of the party will be in the next few years.

If a reader was mildly inquisitive, and found himself intellectually engaged by such political predictions, he might ask, “What, pray tell, then, does the future hold for the Democratic Party?” I can only hazard an answer, but, so far, that answer seems surprisingly accurate.

In my mind, the impact of the decision to make Dean the Democratic Chairman is best demonstrated by the following extended analogy: after the election, Democrats found they had an ingrown toenail which was seriously inhibiting their ability to run with the Republicans through the minds of America’s independent voters. Two possible cures existed. First, the toenail could be trimmed and teased until the foot was once again whole. This would have been painful, but, in the long run, would have given the Democrats their agility of old. Unfortunately they chose the second option — their selection of Dean is, as far as I can tell, the equivalent of using a chainsaw to cut away the entire, pained foot. The diseased nail is no longer a problem, but the bloody stump in its place will debilitate them even more.

The saddest thing is that Bush’s victory could have been a perfect opportunity to reverse the alarming political trend in our nation. Over the past two or three decades, politics has grown into a strident and divisive monster which can sever families and ruin friendships. I am not

trying to advocate a forced coercion of Democrats into the Republican camp, but I believe the logic is clear. Faced with a clear disavowal of their platform by a majority of Americans, the Democratic Party could have attempted to make some concessions toward Bush with the intent of opening a broad, easy-going dialogue, which very well could have led to compromise and actual



Photo by Houston Murphy

progress in Washington. Instead, they are refusing to back down.

Given these circumstances, I am commemorating Friday, February 11, 2005, as the official date of the death of the Democratic Party as we know it. In the place of the party which pulled America out of the Great Depression, built social security for elderly Americans, stood up to communism in Russia and Vietnam, and dreamt up the vision of an American flag on the moon, the next few years hold the promise of violent protest, illogical pacifism, refusal to compromise, and plenty of animal-like screams. Congratulations, Howard Dean.

## The LaBarrometer Measuring the Pressures of Daily Life



Photo by Kim Wagner

### Indie Followers

Ansley LaBarre

Editor-in-Chief

Don’t toss me into the stream just yet.

I have become slightly befuddled, and annoyed, by the rising “indie revolution.” For those who may be unfamiliar with the term, it is the evolving mindset of teenagers to be anti-conformists, therefore rejecting mainstream culture. Regardless of their efforts, every “indie” person is just another follower of a new trend.

Is it possible to toss the words “indie” and “trend” so mindlessly together? While every non-follower may be experiencing the same convulsions that occur upon hearing an *Usher* song as they read these words, it is undoubtedly the truth. What’s more, brace yourselves revolutionists, is that every person is indie in their own way.

No matter how hard we may try to include ourselves, or stray from the norm, no two interests are exact replicas. This means every person is has differing values, making them somewhat independent, or, indie. Being indie does not mean you have to attend poetry readings on a weekly basis, mostly, it involves being yourself.

I am not embarrassed to say I am the world’s biggest fan of country music. Blaring it from my car, I receive multiple stares in the parking lot each day. Onlookers

Why, with a culture that is idolized by so many, does America’s youth feel they will turn into lemmings if they embrace it?

would never assume I am also a fan of 80’s Dance Night, a recurring theme at D.C.’s emo club, *The Black Cat*. Does that make me indie? By the extremists’ standards, I’m sure it doesn’t, but by mine, it makes me one diverse and open-minded individual.

I do not understand the complete detachment from popular culture as well. Pop culture is significant to every American’s lifestyle. Foreign countries, try as they might, can only hope to develop a commercialized and popular culture as prominent as ours. A French movie theatre has more American films with subtitles than French-composed ones. Why, with a culture that is idolized by so many, does America’s youth feel they will turn into lemmings if they embrace it?

Perhaps it is the constant temptation of rebellion surging through teens’ veins which drives them to once again be different. And yet, these subtle difference, found in each one of us, are what compose our individuality, which then overflows into the ingenious variations of our pop culture. Instead of trying your hardest to be the most unique character possible, laughing at the popped-collared, polo wearing kids, be yourself, because in my opinion, we are all indie enough.

# Stuck With Eternal Snow

*Forced to chose between personal dreams and parental “guidance”.*

Laura Lofgren

Photo Editor

I hate scarves; I hate gloves; I hate coats. I hate winter. All my life I have been forced to endure five months a year of blistering cold because my dad works in D.C. But I hoped this will soon change when I finish high school.

Ever since I can remember, I’ve had my heart set on the University of California — Los Angeles. Warm weather, beaches, and a good school where I could get a good education. You could call it my “dream school.” But I soon realized this school will remain a dream forever.

My parents wouldn’t even allow me to apply. I begged and begged, but I am confined to an in-state school. However, I just couldn’t accept this. On the deadline date for UCLA, I snuck over to my friend’s house to fill in the application, and then went home to send it with my parent’s credit card. It just so happened my internet went down — but if I didn’t send the application that day, it would be too late.

I called my friend and asked her to send it for me. As I was secretly whispering the credit

card information over the phone, I heard my parents down stairs as they somehow figured out my illegal activities. 8-2-1-3. My parents were storming up the stairs. 4-3-3-1. My pace quickened as they entered the



Photo by Evan Dobbs

kitchen. 3-2-1-1. My father was now standing right in front of me yelling, “HANG UP THE PHONE! YOU CANNOT APPLY!”

I heard my friend on the other line shouting, “Expiration date! Expiration date!”

My father was still screaming for me to hang up as I yelled, “10- 06! 10- 06!” Then I hung up the phone to face my angry parents for a night of fighting.

A few months later, my mother casually informed me

about a letter she received months ago. I accidentally left out my social security number on my application. If I could please send it to UCLA within the week, they would be able to continue reviewing my application. Well, “within the week” was only a few months ago. Unfortunately, as much as I tried emailing and calling the school, it seemed to be too late. My application was void. I spent \$55 on the application fee, and hours of my time applying, only to have my malicious mother make that all worthless.

I thought it funny how my parents cared so deeply about restricting me from out of state college, but so little about everything else.

As I was applying to UVA — a school on my parents’ okay list — I needed license registration dates, parent’s colleges, etc, but every time I asked for help, they’d brush me off. I ended up having to make up that entire portion of my application. I asked my dad if he could edit my essay (he is an English major), and ended up hearing

the word, “later” so many times that I eventually gave up trying. (By the way, if you’re worried about my parents’ reactions to this article, have no fear. My parents have no clue that I write for the school newspaper or that I even take the class. Believe it or not, I called my dad to give me a ride home from school once, and he had to ask me what school I attended.)

I’m not saying that I don’t appreciate all the things that my parents do for me — feed me, provide shelter, and hold the occasional conversation with me. But it would be nice if they made it a little less difficult to apply to college, and even cared to know what colleges I’m applying to. So the next time you find yourself annoyed to death by your parents nagging: “Get working on your application!” or “Let me proof read your essay,” at least be glad to know that they’re willing to pay for your college education, and care enough to assist you in getting in to the college of your choice. As for me, I’ll be spending my college years locked inside my dorm as the snow builds up, dreaming of the beach and the palm trees.



## A No-Sex Education

Rob Jones

Wire Reporter

"Guys, please, don't have sex. If you have sex, you will get pregnant, and die." Most remember this as a quote from last year's blockbuster, *Mean Girls*. This oversimplified quote is indicative of the entire sexual education curriculum in many school districts. Since the major Conservative shift in Congress, most government funds allotted for sexual education have been reserved for abstinence-only education programs. Issues such as contraception, homosexuality, abortion, and masturbation are not even mentioned, and students are commonly reprimanded for asking questions about these topics.

The primary force behind this trend is the influence of religious right on state and federal education committees responsible for structuring sex-ed classes. These groups feel that educating students about safe sex and human sexuality promotes immorality and a surge in premarital sex. Unfortunately, they fail to grasp the idea that young people will continue to have sex, and lack of information about contraception will only serve to increase teen pregnancy and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.

With the current spread of the HIV epidemic, it seems only pragmatic to

educate young people as well as possible in order to stem the trend. While abstinence is a safe choice, bashing students over the head with it and using scare-tactics are not effective strategies to promote sexual health. This only serves to alienate students by insulting their intelligence with misinformation and sugar-coated perceptions of an ideal lifestyle.

Students at this school can relate. While the curriculum here does educate students about contraceptives and sexuality, as well as abstinence, it is clear teachers are kept on a tight leash. The subjects are always general and treated phlegmatically, with lessons read directly from an approved lesson book. Instructors shy away from questions about "morally ambiguous" topics such as masturbation and homosexuality, giving answers that generally have little to do with the queries. Whenever a student challenges a dubious assertion, protocol compels teachers to belittle the student's opinion without giving definitive reason.

This type of situation is the truest indicator of the failure of the health education system. A good teacher would respond to a challenge with a class debate, allowing students to participate in the education process and become involved, increasing the likelihood they would take something

away from the class. Unfortunately, this is not the reality of modern sex education. Although teachers ask questions that are thought provoking, they expect "appropriate" answers from the approved facts the students are force-fed. For example, a teacher may ask students to list emotional consequences of premarital sex. While this is a subjective question, to which different students will inevitably formulate varying answers, the curriculum mandates teachers only to accept a set list of generalized responses. Instructors tell students what they should think about sexual health, and tolerate no second-guessing.

While this system is far from flawless, it still manages to instruct young people as to the safest ways to have sex, should they make that decision. Unfortunately, many school districts cannot say this. Their strict adherence to the abstinence-only curriculum keeps students uninformed and unprotected if they become sexually active. In an ideal world, schools would facilitate the development of their students' mental and sexual health, and pay more than lip-service to safe sex practices. However, until the religious right stops prying into the public education system, lip-service is the best we can hope for.

## Suppressing Speech in School

Adele Hampton

Business Manager

America is a country that prides itself on democracy and freedom, separating us from other countries run by dictatorship. As American citizens, we have the right to speak our minds without being oppressed. If everyone wasn't granted this privilege, wouldn't that mean the foundation of the country was a lie?

In schools, kids are encouraged to be receptive to new ideas and explore different possibilities. Some parents don't want their kids to be exposed to drugs, sex, or violence. But sooner or later, students will have to enter the real world. It would make more sense to teach kids about daily dangers in a safe environment, rather than having them figure it out themselves when they're forced in an unsafe situation.

School is a place where students are encouraged to write and free their minds. Writing conveys passionate beliefs. I feel that, when it comes to creative writing, students should not be limited. If a student is a compelling writer, then



Photo by Evan Dobbs

subject matter should be of little relevance. Granted, if the story to be written was about *A Tale of Two Cities*, and the student writes about bunnies, then content would be relevant in how the piece should be graded. But overall, writing should be crafted according to the

writer's interpretation of life.

In this great nation, people are allowed to be themselves and convey opinions through art, music, writing, or whatever else they do. But when there is censorship, that freedom is taken away. Censorship molds people into having the same state of mind. There are no individuals, just clones with a pre-approved idea.

Some censorship is necessary for order, but not to the degree where we aren't allowed to express ourselves through writing solely because of controversy.

For example, I wrote a fictional story about the effects of heroin and was told I would receive no credit for the assignment due to content. I was extremely upset because I was very proud of the piece, and I was given a zero for describing the horrors of drugs.

There is nothing written in the Students Rights and Responsibilities stating I was not allowed to write about drugs. However, the teacher told us to not include violent acts, drugs, or sex in our stories. This is where I feel censorship hinders the creative process; we can't write about controversial issues, so we end up writing about something more conventional.

We live in a world with liberal ideas and issues. Censorship should be applied to the extent that it doesn't hinder our right to explore, discuss, or write about topics such as drugs, sex, violence, or anything else that would be worldly issue in an appropriate way. A mind is a terrible thing to waste; we shouldn't let the voice of America's youth wither away, never to be heard.

## No Fiesta Para Nosotros

Evan Dobbs

Photo Editor

Many people anticipate the arrival of February and the festivities it brings. Teachers educate students on the achievements of African Americans. The school has celebrations and activities to commemorate many of our black leaders. I think that it is great to see our community honor people who have accomplished great things, but I always think that maybe there is a group that



Photo by Evan Dobbs

has been left out. "Respect for the rights of others is the peace," said Benito Juarez, the first president of the Republic of Mexico.

Hispanics have done many things, and deserve just as much credit. October has been set aside as Hispanic Heritage Month, but it is not as celebrated as much as February or March, which is Women's Heritage Month. It's just that it's not fair for the Hispanic community to be forgotten, which almost happened this past October. The school seemed reluctant to do anything in honor of Hispanics. The library set aside a few books written by Hispanic authors, where as now they have viewings of "Antwone Fisher" and "Crooklyn", both of which are inspirational films. There was no weekly trivia or posters around the walls in October.

I am of white and Mexican descent. I have yearned to learn something about my roots. I hear stories of Cesar Chavez and Che Guevara from my elders. But I've always wondered if there were other people who have influenced the way we Americans as a whole live. Martin Luther King Jr. was a great man, and did many great things along with other black leaders, such as Malcolm X. There are also many great Hispanics who have done great things such as Dr. King.

Since I have grown up embracing my Mexican roots, I am dismayed by the fact that I don't know anything about Hispanic culture and history. I feel betrayed by my education because of my lack of understanding of my own history, and by the school's lack of acknowledgement of the contributions made by the Hispanic population.

I appreciate Black History Month, and I don't see the festivities as unnecessary. I am not offended by a teacher reminding a student of what Benjamin Banneker did for Washington D.C., or how George Washington Carver revolutionized botany. I just wish I could rattle off as many Hispanic names as I can when I think of black heroes.

## Questions for Thought

If people from Poland are called Poles, then why aren't people from Holland called Holes?

Why is an alarm clock going "off" when it actually turns on?

What hair color do they put on the driver's license of a bald man?





## Sarah's Scholastic Section

**Sarah Raser**  
Wire Reporter

For this issue's section, here is some information on the top liberal arts schools in the country! These are the top five in the country based on "US News and World Report," and all of them have a highly competitive acceptance rates.

**William's College-** Even though there is no core curriculum, the academics at William's College tend to work the student's brain with personal attention from the teachers. The student body is said to be preppy and friendly, and everyone seems to possess some type of special skill.  
Tuition: \$29,786  
Room and board:  
Enrollment: 1,931  
Average SAT: 1413  
Location: Williamstown  
Contact #- 413-597-2211



**Amherst College-** Amherst College has diverse student body, so everyone can learn from anyone. It is a liberal arts college that believes that teacher and students must work together for maximum results.  
Tuition: \$30,780  
Room and board:  
Enrollment: 431  
Average SAT: 1422  
Location: Amherst, MA  
Contact #- 413-542-2328



**Swarthmore College-** The students of Swarthmore maintain a high level of intellect and a majority of the student body is involved in various extracurricular activities. The campus is very politically and ideologically liberal making the conservative right-winger feel out of touch with the rest of the students.  
Tuition: \$29,782  
Room and board:  
Enrollment: 1,459  
Average SAT: 1430  
Location: Swarthmore  
Contact #- 610-328-8300



**Wellesley College-** Wellesley is an all girl's college that welcomes a wide variety of women who want to be well developed personally and academically. The students are very focused on their studies and many are actively involved in the student government.  
Tuition: \$29,176  
Room and board: \$9202  
Enrollment: 2,229  
Average SAT: 1367  
Location: Wellesley, MA  
Contact #- 781-283-2270



**Carleton College-** Carleton divides its school year into trimesters, with the students taking only three classes per term, helping the student focus more on each subject. The students tend to be independent thinkers and there is a mutual respect throughout the campus towards everyone.  
Tuition: \$30,501  
Room and board: \$6309  
Enrollment: 1,932  
Average SAT: N/A  
Location: Northfield, MN  
Contact #- 507-646-4190



## "Ten and Two" or a Ticket For You

**Ashlee Newcomb**  
Style Editor

Over the past few years, the Virginia Senate has passed several laws restricting the rights teen drivers were once granted. They have instituted driving curfews, a limit on passengers, and a change in required

using mobile phones while driving a car was advanced to the House of Delegates.

"We feel that the teen driver with the provisional license and a learner's permit should be dedicated to one single act, and that is that awesome responsibility of driving a car," said O'Brien to *The Washington Post*.



Photo by Houston Murphy

Junior A.J. Fabrizio often talks on his cell phone while driving. Studies have shown that this practice can lower driver reaction rate and cause car accidents.

age for a license. Recently, the Virginia Senate has passed a bill, with a 37-2 vote, which will ban the use of cell phones for drivers under eighteen while driving. They have also proposed a bill that allows police officers to pull a driver over for not wearing their seatbelt.

The bill was proposed by Senator James K. O'Brien, along with Senator Williams C. Mims. The passage of this bill will make Virginia the first state to ban minors from

The new law has established multiple conflicts. Many opposers believe the law will encourage "age discrimination," by pulling over random drivers for the simple fact they look under the age of eighteen. "I feel like this new bill will be an invasion of my rights. There is no excuse to give someone

the right to pull me over simply because I look young. If they are going to set this bill, then it should apply to all drivers, not only teens," said junior Brittany Maniglia.

Currently, in the District, it is illegal to talk on a cell phone while driving without a hands-free device. This law does not require officers to have evidence of another traffic violation to pull over the driver. This law can result in tickets that can be up to \$100 for each offense.

"It has been my experience that cell phones, radios and other distractions contribute to alteration of speeds," said Officer Darryl Davis. "When all drivers, not just teenagers, distracted they can have a tendency to drop well below the speed limit or increase well above the speed limit without realizing their change in speed."

Distractions not only cause drivers to get into accidents, they cause teens to drive at a slower or faster pace. Statistics from a study by the University of Utah have shown that people between the ages of 18 to 25, and 65 to 74 years old are at the highest risk of traffic accidents. This study has shown that driving while talking on a cell phone, can add decades on a teenager's driving skills. Within five seconds of using a cell phone, a teenager can go from being an average teen driver to having the driving habits of a 70 year old.

"Inexperience, coupled with other distractions can possibly have a high impact on why the teen accident rate is what it is today," said Davis.

Young drivers using cell phones tend to have a reaction time in hitting the brakes that slow to an average of eight-tenths to nine-tenths of a second. These drivers are shown to be eighteen percent slower in braking and tend to take seventeen percent slower to regain speed after braking. It is also a fact that motorists who talk on their cell phones are more impaired than drunken drivers with a blood-alcohol content level exceeding 0.08.

There will not be a vote to finally pass the bill until the next General Assembly, next year.

## Traffic Plan Comes to a Halt

**Ansley LaBarre**  
Editor-in-Chief

The morning traffic patterns are continuing to jam cars and tempers. Returning from winter break, the majority of the West Potomac community was expecting a calmer morning commute. The new plans, which would seemingly improve the slow and often hazardous morning routine, have yet to be instituted. After much publicity, their delay of arrival has disappointed tardy drivers across campus.

Hopes had been for the new traffic plan to be instituted January 1, but are now being postponed until spring break. The technicalities are rather simple, and eventually the new pattern will replace the current vehicle route. However, the weather needs to be at least forty degrees in order to ensure the pavement is cleared, and the new paint needs at least 24 hours to dry.

"We predict the renovation will be complete after one of the following breaks from school," said Head Security Officer Bill Haire. Four other schools in Fairfax County have put in the request for changes ahead of this school, and therefore will have their work finished first.

The administration has also decided to put numbers in all parking spots. This way, for students and teachers, there will be no turmoil

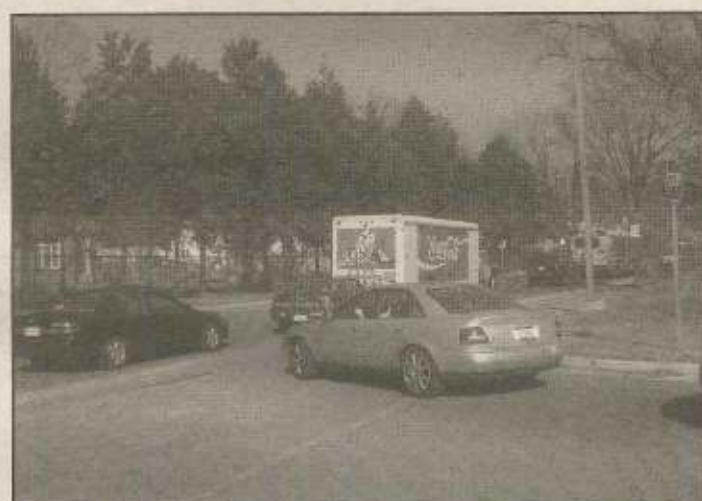


Photo by Houston Murphy

A new traffic plan is in high demand as it complicates the arriving and exiting of students, parents, and teachers.

over parking spaces. Although the drone of the bumper-to-bumper morning routine continues, the community can still look forward an optimistic, and more efficient, routine to arrive at school.



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*Renaissance, cont'd from page 1*

aspect of their portfolios, including identifying academic areas of interest, course work for that interest, study and test skills, entrance and SOL testing issues, college selection, the college application process, extracurricular activities, athletics, community service and more.

"This program will allow us to develop a 'template' for continual improvement of services that we now provide through our excellent career center," said freshman class administrator Gregory Oliver.

Junior Diana Burk, a student mentor for this program, said, "I already tutor after school, so it wasn't that far of a stretch to do a little bit more tutoring in a different form. I think we can make a difference." The Renaissance Pilot Program is yet another way that we continue to celebrate our diversity at this school.



# Balancing Cultures in High School

Joy Yoo

Wire Reporter

Every teenager's life is filled with a good amount of stress. All face the hardships of peer pressure; some face academic challenges, and others multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is parallel to cultural pluralism; its technical definition is "a condition in which many cultures coexist within a society and maintain their cultural differences." For a person who is dealing with multiculturalism, the different cultures come from their parents' native land(s) and the country in which they are living in.

Many students are trying to fulfill the social norms of America and the traditions of their parents' native country. It may seem easy and simple to those who do not deal with this dilemma daily; however, it is like a tug-o-war between satisfying your parents and your friends. There are those who embrace multiculturalism as a challenge, and there are others who do not even attempt to incorporate multiculturalism in their lives. Obviously, those who face it as a challenge benefit from its numerous privileges and unique characteristics.

For many who embrace multiculturalism, there are three categories into which they fall. The first is the person who is living in America and has parents from another nation. One senior who falls in this category is Emmanuel Gamor. Gamor is a Ghanaian-native; unlike many others who fall in this category, Gamor actually lived in Ghana for seventeen years. Gamor said, "Coming from a multicultural background has its obvious challenges. And though

these challenges cannot be assumed to be insignificant, the opportunity to experience between 'the best and worst of both worlds' imparts a positive influence on any individual. Personally, I feel blessed." An open mind to all sorts of traditions and customs is imperative in a successful blending of cultures.

There are also those who have been adopted from a foreign country to live in America. Senior Jon Politte was adopted at three months from Pusan, South Korea. "I am glad that I have been exposed to both cultures, especially through culture camp. I love the Korean cuisine and traditions. I can't wait until I visit Korea next summer," said Politte. Those who adopt in America are beginning to expose their children to their heritage a lot more earlier on in life. This is important for children to be able to find a true identity.

Some who do not fall into the latter category are those who deal with multiculturalism because of parents of various ethnicities. Senior Jessie Stage, along with many others, is biracial. For Stage, her mother is Peruvian and her dad is Caucasian. "I like to think that I get to see the world from two different perspectives. I have often felt that I never fully related to the Peruvian culture because I've never been there but someday I hope to visit," Stage said. Many students, along with Stage, believe that they will never fully reach the culture median

until they actually visit their parents' native land(s). For me I have been facing the dilemma of blending American social standards with South Korean traditions, and I do not believe



This school is one of the most culturally diverse schools in Fairfax County. We meet the educational needs of students from hundreds of different origins.

## Kudos To

Junior Angela Fuentes for the publication of her poem "Time of Friendship" in two anthologies, *Labours of Love* and *Eternal Portraits*.

Diana Burk, Thao Do, Daniel Jachowski, Nicholas Jachowski, and Molly Turner for placing third out of nine in the at the 2005 Chesapeake Bay Bowl. The contest is similar to *It's Academic*, and they were a split second from first place.

To both boys and girls track and field teams on an outstanding Patriot District Championship meet. Outstanding performances for boys were displayed by Chris Jones, Charles Jones, Houston Murphy, Frank DeVar and Antwane Minter. Outstanding performances on the girl's team were turned in by Natalie Duncan, Nicole Gerow, Bailey Kavanaugh, Kat Lee, Vera Parkinson, Laura Regensburg, Elizabeth Heath and Shanna Richardson.

Mr. Garry Relton for again coordinating an outstanding science fair at this school. Also kudos to all the students who participated in this year's fair. We are very proud of you, and your hard work and effort really showed.

The JROTC class for receiving a 97.7% approval rating from the U.S. Army. Their rating retained them an Honor Unit with Distinction Status.

Robin Mason, Allison Delano, Ben McVety, Michelle Kim, and Liz Jenkins for placing in the All State Chorus ensemble.

Hunt, from Front Page

School Board. This act prompted a swift, unanimous reprimand from the remaining members of the Board, informing the schools that this was an independent act and not the official view of the County. Hunt soon posted an apology for the involvement of the School Board, and for generating the impression that he does not support the rights of gays.

The incident has prompted a frenzy of Internet blog-room activity. Conservative groups such as Concerned Women for America (CWA) and

Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays (PFOX) have devoted several web pages to congratulating Hunt for his "courage". On the other hand, groups such as the Gay and Lesbian Political Action and Support Groups (Gay PASG) and the Human Rights Coalition (HRC) have denounced Hunt as an intolerant bigot, promoting something resembling a gay re-education movement. These groups call for Hunt's immediate resignation or expulsion from the board. However, due to the lack of action in the past three weeks, it seems unlikely anything of such magnitude will happen.

## WEST POTOMAC UPCOMING EVENTS

February 28

- Black History assembly in auditorium (915am-1055am)
- Winter Sports Award Night in cafeteria (6pm-930pm)

March 1

- Band concert in auditorium (730pm-930pm)

March 2

- Orchestra concert at Sandburg (7pm-9pm)
- WABC Rep/Coaches pizza dinner in Cafeteria (630pm-730pm)

March 3

- Band concert in auditorium (730pm-930pm)

March 4

- SGA film festival in auditorium (7pm-930pm)

March 5

- Step team competition in main gym (7pm-1030pm)

March 7

- District debate tournament at Woodson (3pm)

March 8

- Interims distributed during 7<sup>th</sup> period

March 9

- Foreign language open house in

Kogelman Theatre (7pm-9pm)

March 10

- Touch base with teachers (530pm-8pm)

March 11

- 2 ½ hour delayed opening

March 12

- SAT testing (730am-2pm)

March 14

- Spring sports pictures in small gym (230pm-6pm)
- Sophomore class dinner in cafeteria (6pm-930pm)

March 15

- Spring sports pictures in small gym (230pm-6pm)

March 17

- International nights in cafeteria (6pm-930pm)
- Thespians inductions in Kogelman Theatre (630pm-830pm)

March 19-26

- Spring Break

March 27

- Easter Sunday

March 30

- College bound seminar in library (7pm-9pm)
- Band March Madness concert in auditorium (730pm-930pm)

Do you think you're the next Spielberg?

Come be a part of the 2005 Film Festival.

Friday, March 4th at 7pm, in the Main Theater.

\$5 admission

Winners Receive Cash Prize

All films must be submitted by February 28th, 2005 to Ms. Reynolds in room 317.



# All My Murders Knocks 'Em Dead

*Cappies Critics Review this school's rendition of "All My Murders" with much raving*

Our school is one of the many in Fairfax County that takes part in the Cappies Critic program every year. For most of our theater productions, students from other schools watch the play then write a review to be submitted for publication in the school newspaper. Mary Austin Slate of Herndon High School wrote a review of this school's "All My Murders."

**Mary Austin Slate**

*Special to the Wire*

Today, on the "The Day After Tomorrow"...Cameron's wife Marla discovers his affair with Delaney while feuding with his ex-wife Justine, whose ex-lover Baxter is now married to Holly...It may sound like the plot of a soap opera, but in West Potomac's production of "All My Murders" it's actually the actors in the daytime show whose lives take melodramatic turns. In this hilarious case of art-imitating-life, the preening stars are just as vapid and lustful as their TV counterparts.

The show begins on a dress rehearsal of the popular soap opera, "The Day After Tomorrow"—"TDAT". Today, pompous director Cameron Dickinson (Shaughn Dugan) has fired some of his actors, and needs some audience members to fill their roles. Two audience members were selected for small parts, and four other "audience members"—actually members of West Potomac's cast—were also called onstage. The rehearsal goes smoothly, with the usual plot of catatonic blind mothers, pregnancy traps, an aborted wedding, and alien abductions, until Justine Winter/Medina Gazebo (Keonia Lucas) is actually shot by a castmate during a blackout. The jokes in "All My Murders" fly fast and furiously, taking aim at soap clichés and cheesy bad acting, and the West Potomac players know how to get laughs. They had the audience roaring over their comedic timing, not to mention impressive acting and commitment.

"All My Murders" is unlike most high school shows in that it is interactive and improvisational—for a half hour

before the show began and during intermission the actors of "TDAT" roamed the lobby, interacting with each other and audience members while staying in character. These moments led to character development and allowed many of the actors to further showcase their comedic skills. Kathleen Wheeler (Delaney Dodd/Aurora Spork) was one who stood out in these scenes, alternately turning on the charm and hysterically screaming.

There was not one weak link in the cast, as each actor was always committed to his or her character. This fabulous

ensemble had widespread talent, but even on a stage of scene-stealers Candace Scholz became an audience favorite as the asylum-escapee Stoneybrook Park. As the others rehearsed, Stoneybrook began to stuff her mouth with the hot-pink monkeys from a "Barrel of Monkeys" until they were hanging from her lips, much to the delight of the audience. Also especially humorous was Parker Fishel as Ashley Studwinkle/Johann Talmadge, half of TDAT's gay German couple.

The intimate atmosphere of the auditorium was perfect

for the show, and the simple technical elements also felt appropriate. The set of the Blue Parrot Bar was very fitting and nicely decorated, and looked just like a TV studio's set.

The focus and obvious preparation of the cast of "All My Murders" paid off as the laughs never stopped. The acting of the entire company was top-notch and their shining performances will not be forgotten. Murder has never been so hilarious—that is, until West Potomac's to-die-for show knocked 'em dead.



Keonia Lucas, Laura Herren, Emily Rogers, Randy Wallace, and Kathleen Wheeler perform in this school's winter play, "All My Murders," on opening night.

Photo by Houston Murphy

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# Expanding Mo

## Transcending Racial Barriers

Houston Murphy

Photo Editor

There are plenty of stereotypes, many of which are too ridiculous to understand. One of the stereotypes that I find to be unnerving is the musical stereotype – the stereotype that supports racial barriers in musical genres.

Students often listen to music according to their race, often because of the crowd that they associate with. It is fine to want to listen to the same type of music as your friends, but to refuse to try any other genre of music just because of what your friends may think is ridiculous. It is ignorant to deny different styles solely based on the fear that your peers will not accept them; music is full of a variety of culture and distinctive qualities that should be explored. If one doesn't try different things, how would they expect to find their own style or broaden their horizons?

Musical stereotypes put a strangling hold on how people look at music. Typical views of genres of music such as rock, rap, country, jazz, and pop will continue to last and influence other stereotypes in pop culture. Younger people

typically see rap as listened to by black teens, rock by white teens, country by southern teenage girls and boys, jazz by older people, and pop. These stereotypes may be broad and untrue

As these trends continue, many students are of the types of music they sample. There are tons of that most students have yet to discover. With su

"I like so many things about different genres, so I listen to it a

~Junior Simon W

view, how can they know if they like the early fu the Red Hot Chili Peppers or the story telling rhyth Rick or the rebellious sound of Rage Against t Most of these brands of music can be quite d whole, but often have several characteristics that the same person's attention that listens to totally op of music.

There is also a good amount of students who genres of music. They can see the influence artists have had on newer artists' styles. This is appreciation. Michael Jackson, Led Zeppelin, M and so on. These artists and groups of artists have several modern styles of music and have revolution as a whole with their unique styles. Junior Simon "I don't restrict myself to just one type of mus many things about different genres, so I listen to i students who don't conform to the typical musica and constrain themselves to a certain type of definitely enjoy and appreciate what music has to

Music from other genres and generations have in music of today, just as best-selling rap artist, Th in his song, *Dreams*, "Rap phenomenon, defying gravity / Studied all the classics, start revising my

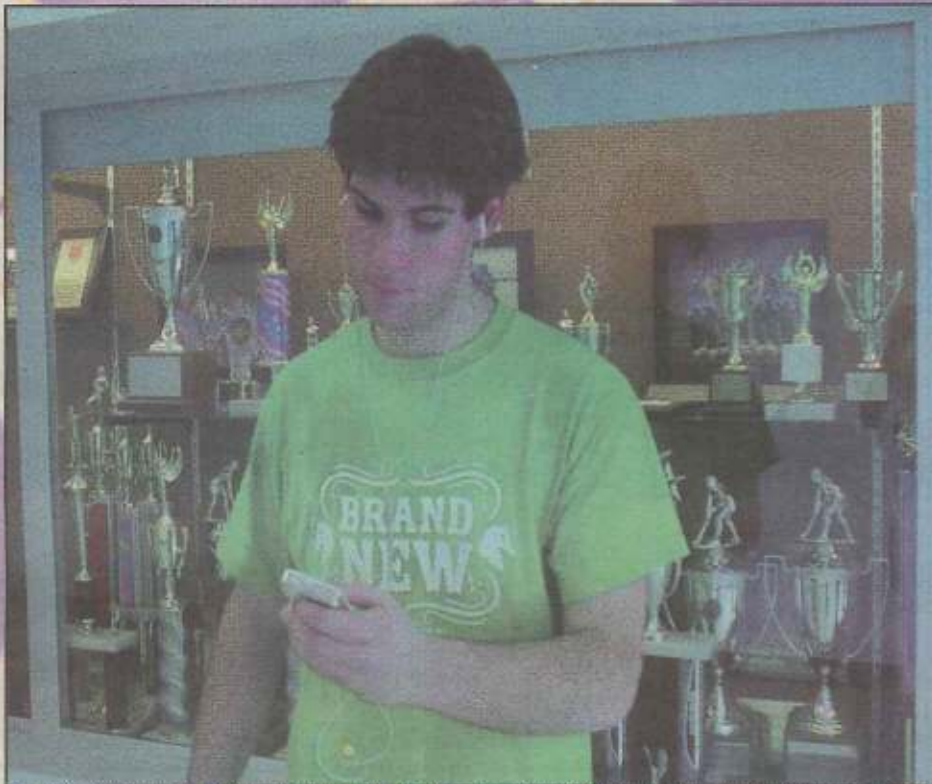


Photo by Houston Murphy

Kenny Roden sports Brand New, his favorite band's, shirt. On his iPod, however, there are many unique genres of music beyond emo and rock.

in some cases, but it seems as though these are just the typical groups that listen to these types of music.

## International Spotlight

**Volovan** – This band is the best of Mexican indie rock; **El Tri** joins them in a category of Mexican rock pioneers.

**Deep Forest**–Eric Mouquet and Michel Sanchez take voices from around the world, from Africa to Eastern Europe to combine an unmistakably unique techno-tribal beat.

**Stenli**– These Bulgarian techno artists will make you want to break out the glow sticks and raver pants.

**Gunther**– If a Swedish male voice singing, "Oh, you touch my tra la la," doesn't make you smile, then I don't think anything can make you happy.

**La Oreja de van Gogh**– If you're into Spanish pop-rock (and who isn't?!), this chart-topping band will win your heart. You may also want to check out **Las Ketchup** if Spanish girl bands are your thing.

**Las Guanabanas**– For Spanish reggae lovers everywhere, this gangsta beat will keep you dancing para siempre! Other recording artists you may enjoy include **Luny Tunes** or **Don Omar**.

**El Canto del Loco**– Their Mexican folk music will make you want to break out your guitar and sing along. You may also like **Presuntos Implicados**– their song "Todas Las Flores" will make you feign a traditional Mexican dance.

**Kyo**– It will take you a while to realize that this French rock isn't in English. Kyo is obviously highly influenced by American rock.

**Manu Chao**– His style is indescribably unique. First of all, he sings in English, French, and Spanish. Secondly, his music uses an excellent conglomeration of random instruments that sound almost magical together.

**Jenifer**– She is like a French Michelle Branch or Vanessa Carlton. Her ballads sound angelic, and her more pumped-up beats will leave you in a good mood.



Photo by Lauri Lofgren

## Staff

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# Musical Horizons

## Revamp Your Playlist

Marissa D'Orazio

Focus Editor

In tenth grade, I had four CD's. Literally. Four.

I'd be listening to those same forty-six songs if it weren't for this mix CD that I stole from a friend. Someone I didn't even know had burnt it for her, but I was immediately hooked. I ended up getting every CD by every artist on that mix.

I learned to open up my mind to different genres, and found new places to hear music. Now my iPod has 1890 songs. Here are a few surefire ways to expand your musical horizons:

**Raid Someone Else's Playlist.** Be a stalker. It's okay. No, it's more than okay. It's exhilarating and rewarding. If

you have a friend whose taste in music you admire, go to their house, and while they're in the bathroom, run to their computer and take down a list of songs. Or you could just ask them to see it. But that ruins the fun of it.

**Music Choice 900 Channels.** You may not know this, but if you have the Cox Digital Cable (standard for this area) you have these channels on your TV. I recognize that some of these stations, like Hit List, just overplay songs that we've all heard way too many times as it is. But the random channels hold the key to some awesome tunes that you'd never hear otherwise. My personal favorite channel is 944 - Rock en Espanol, but most of the obscure channels are similarly awe-inspiring. However, try not to listen to Sounds of the Season when it's not the holiday season, like in, say,

August. Songs like "Playing Croquet" by *The Young Ladies* will somehow drill their way into your head, until you go around chirping in an obnoxiously singsong voice: "Playing croquet is a wonderful way to enjoy the afternoon!" (Vomit.)

**Mix CD's.** Spread the love, spread the music. An eye for an eye (understandably so), a tooth for a tooth (I cringe every time I hear it), and a mix CD for a mix CD. So pick a friend, exchange CD's, and jam in harmony.

**TV Shows.** Try and develop a knack for remembering lyrics. Or keep a pen and paper near your TV-watching area at all times. If you hear something you like, jot down a few of the lyrics, then google lyrics plus whatever you heard. Some TV shows even have their own online episode-by-episode music guides (The O.C., for example.)

**Unreleased Songs.** Every artist has these. Finding them is the tough part. When you are searching a favorite artist of yours on one of those terribly criminal music piracy programs, you may see 20 copies of each song that is on their CD. If you see one or two copies of a song, chances are this is an unreleased one that can't be bought on a CD. Sometimes these songs are the artist's absolute best that somehow don't quite fit the structured prototype of a track on a CD. Some artists have more of these than others. One artist that sticks out in my mind as really having a beautiful excess of unreleased songs is *Something Corporate* (my personal favorite unreleased song by them being "If I Die" - its guitar solos and singing without attempting to sound pretty will satisfy you).

**Musicplasma.com.** This was my newest discovery, and I nearly screamed when I first stumbled upon it. You should probably visit it for yourself, as words could never be great enough to give it justice. Basically, it is a giant web with just about every musical artist one can imagine. You type in an artist you like, and it will take you to that part of the web, showing you other artists you would probably enjoy. You can click and move about the web, seeing what similarities lie between artists. It includes international music, techno, country, classical, and just about every obscure genre imaginable.

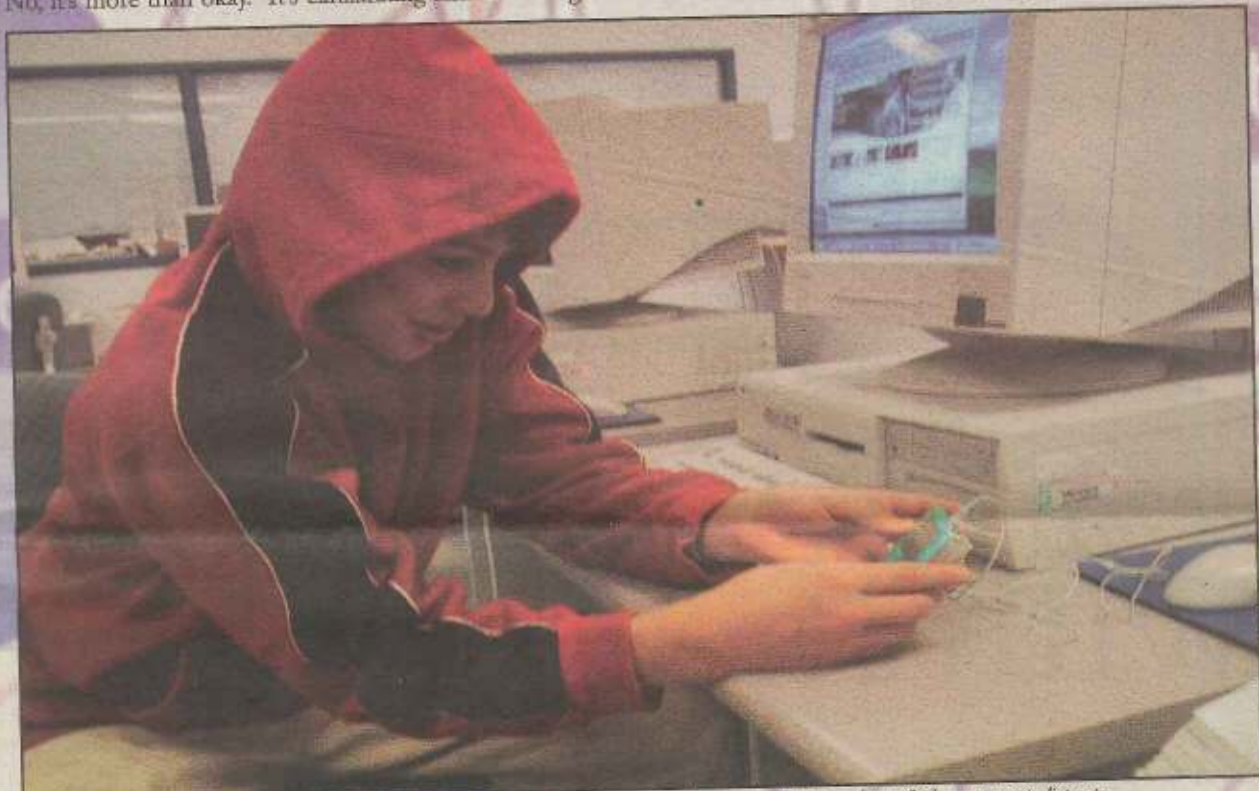


Photo by Laura Loggion

Freshman Paul Devar frantically searches through the playlists of an unsuspecting classmate's iPod in order to find new songs to listen to.

## Exploring the Underground Scene

Houston Murphy

Photo Editor

Have you ever been listening to the radio and suddenly realize that they are playing the same song that you have just heard four, five, even six times earlier that same day? This is one of the unnerving reasons why I have shunned listening to the radio, and have since strayed away from most mainstream music. I can't stand to have the same annoying song that is played repetitively on the radio to be driving me crazy while it is stuck nagging at me in my head.

As an alternative to listening to the watered down and overplayed music on the radio and on MTV, I have turned to seeking underground music, or unreleased music that won't be played out only a week after I first hear it. This unreleased music can include new artists who have not gone mainstream yet and are often just waiting for a supporting fan base to blow up big-time.

Most bands and artists have to work their way up through the underground in order to get to the mainstream, which is where all the money is. To seek these special artists and discover them before anyone else can be hard, but after sorting through a million bands not worth listening to, finding one excellent band with a new brand of music can be an incredible feeling. Once I discover them, I can listen to this newfound band all I want without it being worn out by the public; I feel like I have them all to myself for my personal pleasure. I can introduce their music to my friends and share it like a secret treasure that is exclusive to only the private club of people who love music.

This feeling often lasts for a long time, until the band releases its first single to the mainstream music industry and public. It is good that the artists get to share their music with everyone and that everyone gets a chance to hear this good music, but once it is out, I can only hope that my favorite song of theirs doesn't become the song that is played every five minutes on any select radio station. Sure, the song may be worth playing over and over again, but that

doesn't mean that's how it should be done. A friend told me about a band called The Secret Machines awhile ago, when they actually were relatively secret. I enjoy listening to their music and they have recently gone mainstream. It's cool that they are well known now, but I hope that their special unconventional brand of music doesn't change after a mainstream release.

**I can listen to this newfound band all I want without it being worn out by the public.**

Underground music also consists of artists' music who I have grown to enjoy already that is unreleased, like the b-side tracks that haven't been added to any of their albums. Nirvana's

box sets of previously unreleased music are full of b-sides that captured and emphasized several emotions the band didn't show in most of their released songs. B-side songs in which artists have collaborated with other artists to make are often of a unique style and many times are quite brilliant. Rage Against the Machine's rendition of one of NWA's classics that was definitely a rant against conformity was a perfect fit for their bold style and is one of my favorites.

Rap artists put frequently record freestyles, which can be much more appealing than most regularly written songs. Most freestyles consist of wild rhymes that come naturally to the artist off the top of their head. These freestyles are put together on mixtapes that are mostly not released in stores. What makes freestyles so engaging is the explicit opinion that is expressed in the lyrics.

Underground music is very exciting to find, and can be quite difficult to come across the right type of underground music for you. But after sorting through the puzzle of music out there, it can be a delight to discover that music that is unreleased is often better than the music you are used to hearing all the time on the radio.

## Picks

"Way to Heaven" by Led

"ake Five" by Dave

s - Toby Keith or Tim

Zeppelin  
Something Corporate

- The Strokes

s by Michael Jackson

- Alkaline Trio

n - Jimmy Eat World

Through  
Anything but Something

mb - "Too Much Booty  
e Crew

"Great Heights" by The

Love Ain't For



## Keckee's Katch

Just Thinkin About Tomorrow...

# All Is Lost, Will it Ever Be Found?

Alex Keckeisen

Sports Editor

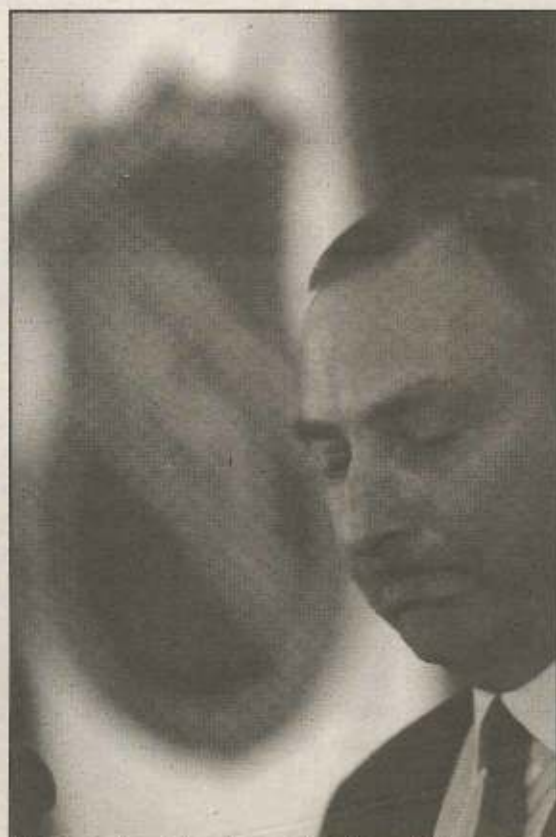
An Open letter to NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman and the NHLPA executive director Bob Goodenow.

Dear Mr. Bettman and Mr. Goodenow,

I am writing to you today to acknowledge that you are ruining your sport. I'm sure you've heard it all before, from the casual sports fan to the extreme hockey fan, but you *have* to listen. The state of your sport has been in decline for the last ten years. You blame players' salaries for the over two billion dollar loss in the last ten years but that's not really the truth. You have to look at attendance and marketing to your fans, who are the ones that are actually paying everyone's salaries.

You also need to understand that there are no great teams like the '84 Oilers or the '77 Canadiens. You have no Gordie Howe or Wayne Gretsky to be the face of your league, and you have little time to regain your fans' confidence. Attendance has been down in the last few years because you do little to attract fans, except using fighting to incite them to come watch a few games.

There has to be a salary cap to keep the league competitive or you'll have the same teams going to the playoffs every year. With the difference between the minimum and the maximum of only \$10 million, the players will still make enough to feed their families and the owners won't have to feel



NHL commissioner Gary Bettman officially cancelled the season on February 16.

like they are paying more and more every year by forcing salaries that look like they're from the MLB. There will still be great teams even with a salary cap. Take the NFL for example. The same teams are not always

in the playoffs. One year, a team could be in the conference championship and the next they could be a 5-11 team. It's unpredictable and it will give every city a chance to cheer on their team.

Now for some ideas to save the season. Cutting into the off-season would not be hard to do in this kind of situation, since you have already taken over 150 days off of this season. Make the season 28 games with a round robin inside of each division. The top 16 teams advance to the playoffs where teams are grouped into four groups. Round robins again for the first round and the top two teams in each group advance. Then you have a best-of-five series until you get to the Stanley Cup which will be a seven game series.

The first 30 team playoff would not be such a bad idea either. All the series will be best of five except the Stanley Cup, which would be a traditional seven game series. It would be interesting because of the layoff, and you never know how each team will perform down the stretch.

You two are heads of the fourth largest sport in the country, and traditionally included when someone talks about the "four major sports." How would you feel to hear someone say the "three major sports," and not include you? A lot of people have forgotten what it's like to have hockey and they don't seem to care anymore, and if they don't care, you don't have fans, so don't lose their trust.

Watching the AHL all-star game between the Planet USA Stars and the Canadian National Team, I recognized how much I missed the sport. The teams included players that I had never heard of before and usually when I don't know the players, I don't like the game. But it had been so long since I had watched a hockey game because of the lockout and the game really kept me on the edge of my seat (especially when the Planet USA all-stars won in a shoot out). The break that the NHL has left us with has not been like an off-season because your never sure when the first regular season game will be played. It really scares me that they have to argue that they're not making enough money even though they are some of the richest people around because they are good at hitting a rubber puck with a stick. The players feel like they're being left out in the cold but the truth is the only people being left out in the cold, are the fans.

Sincerely,

Alex Keckeisen

# Obsessed with the Sport

Robin Harry

Business Manager

Although crew is often labeled a "cult" due to the demanding schedule and lifestyle, it is a sport that is highly looked-upon because it helps develop life skills. It is a group of people that have a true love for the sport and grow into a family. It is not only rowers, but the parents and coaches that all work together to make a winning team. "We have all grown inseparable. It is like having another family," said Varsity girl's rower, senior Moira Holt.

During practice, the team undergoes an intense workout, pushing them to their limits both mentally and physically. Each practice

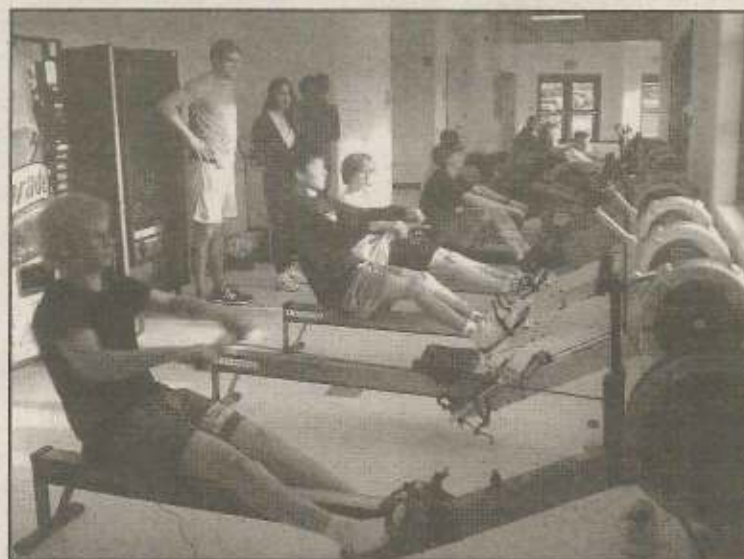
begins with a run, usually a few miles long. They also do several exercises in order to increase abdominal and leg strength. One of the least favorite is the "wall sit," requiring your back to be straight against the wall with your knees bent at a 90 degree angle. If the coach is in a bad mood, he could have the athletes sitting and suffering for up to ten minutes. "Ergs," rowing machines, are also key in winter training since it was too cold to use their boats, or "shells."

In order to be a successful rower, it requires a big time commitment. "During the season you literally eat, breathe, and sleep crew," said Holt. In the actual spring season, practice is held Monday through Friday for a minimum of two hours. After practice on Friday, the team then goes to a member's house for a carbohydrate-filled dinner in order to be energized for Saturday's regatta. The regattas are held early Saturday morning, but then the team sticks around to support the others.

Unlike the other recreational sports teams at this school, crew is not funded by the county whatsoever, making it pricy to join. For the uniform and other basic fees alone, it costs \$300. Although there are a lot of members, it is still necessary to do fundraisers in order to

purchase new shells and oars. On Sundays, both team members and parents volunteer their time. During the holiday season while middle schools sell Christmas trees, the members of the crew team are there alongside selling wreaths and garland. Other ways money is raised is by car washes, silent auctions, and pot-luck dinners.

The boy's and girl's teams are broken down by grade and ability, and then assigned to a boat. Each boat has eight seats on it, but the team has a few extra people in case of absence. While each individual is essential for the race, the stroke and the coxswain are in control. The stroke is the strongest rower that sits in the front, setting the pace at which everyone else will follow. The coxswain does not row, but sits facing the rowers in the front steering the boat while yelling commands over their microphone.



The crew team works out in the connector during the winter because of the cold weather.



Crew is one of the most grueling sports to participate in. These athletes are often required to row two kilometers for a time.



# March to the Arch

Best teams in the nation head into March looking for some wins

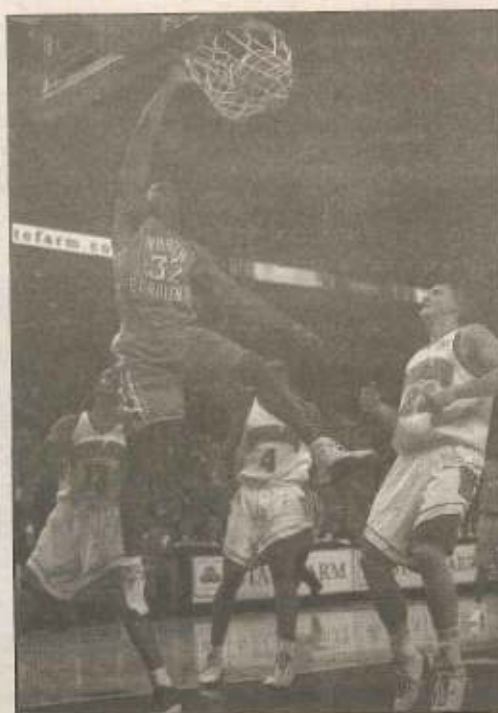
Jason Yaworske

Wire Reporter

February is the worst month of the year. It's tough to think of one good thing about it. It's cold. It's right in the middle of the school year. Sports fans like me, who are caught right in the middle of the NFL playoffs and March Madness, cringe at the lack of engaging, meaningful sports games. Hearing sports writers go on and on about the latest meaningless off-season baseball transaction or helplessly reflecting on the past football season is tiring, to say the least. But there is a glimmer of hope for us sports fans, as right around the corner is the greatest sports event of the year (in my opinion, at least), the NCAA college basketball tournament.

Nothing is better than March Madness. Every year sports fans are treated to a barrage of meaningful, intense, and highly enjoyable games that make up the conference tournament, and the NCAA tournament. This year's tournament will be played in venues throughout the country. The first games of the tournament will begin on March 17<sup>th</sup>, and will culminate with the Championship game on April 4<sup>th</sup> in St. Louis.

Selection Sunday will be March 13<sup>th</sup>. This is the day the tournament selection committee decides who will be playing in the tournament. They will also decide the seeds of the teams and the first round match-ups. This decision is based on a combination of RPI rankings (a computerized ranking system), the Coach's poll, AP polls, and automatic bids for conference champions around the nation.



Rashad McCants and North Carolina have improved this season to show the power of one of the highest scoring teams in the nation.

Considering the unpredictability of college basketball, it is still way too early to know which four teams will receive the number one rankings in the bracket, but it appears that undefeated Illinois (Big Ten), Kansas (Big 12) will secure these bids notwithstanding any late season collapse. However, both the last two number one seeds could possibly both go over in the always intense Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), where Wake Forest and

North Carolina are frontrunners to obtain the final two spots. To be anybody watching or reading about college basketball in the next month will undoubtedly hear the words "bubble team" mentioned countless times. "Bubble team" is a term used in reference to the teams that are on the bubble in terms of whether or not they will receive an invitation to the NCAA Tournament, or if they will have to settle for "the other tournament (NIT)". Some teams that came out of nowhere and have played themselves into tournament contention include George Washington, Miami (Fl), Miami (Ohio), Vanderbilt, Georgetown, and Notre Dame. Other teams, such as NC State, Indiana, Temple, Princeton, Michigan, and Missouri received a lot of hype before the season but have failed to play up to their potential, and might not make the tournament. Area teams such as Maryland, Old Dominion, and Georgetown will also probably find their way into the tournament.

The NCAA tournament started in 1940 with eight teams, and gradually expanded until 1985, when the tournament expanded to the current format with 64 teams. It is a favorite among many sports fans because of its unpredictability, the fun of filling out a bracket, the excitement, effort and closeness of the games.

Recent winners of the tournament include Connecticut (Big East) in 2004, Syracuse (Big East) in 2003, Maryland (ACC) in 2002, and Duke (ACC) in 2001. UCLA has won more NCAA tournaments than any other team with 11, with Kentucky (7) and Indiana (5) coming in second and third, respectively.

## Olympian Just Wants to Help

Alex Keckeisen

Sports Editor

Tiombe Hurd, an Olympic athlete and alum of this school, recently came back to visit and share her experiences of being a student-athlete in college.

Hurd became an Olympian after setting the U.S. record in the triple jump with a leap of 14.45 meters. She also won three U.S. Indoor Championships in 2000, 2001, and 2004. She attended James Madison

University and graduated with a major in hotel and restaurant management in 1994. Two years later she received her MBA from Howard.

A sports panel was set up with athletes from each sport. Hurd openly answered their questions and discussed the importance of being a student before an athlete. "I had friends who got dropped by their sponsors and called me crying because they never had a

real job before," she said. Athletics were an interest of Hurd's and she was recruited by many schools, but decided to attend college on an academic scholarship. She walked onto the team as a freshman and after her first year, she was offered an athletic scholarship and took the sport more seriously.

Balancing school and sport was hard for Hurd but she learned to budget her time well. "The schedule is tough when you're traveling so much but I still got to do the things that I wanted to," she said. "You just have to contact your professors because when you're traveling, you will miss a lot of classes," she added.

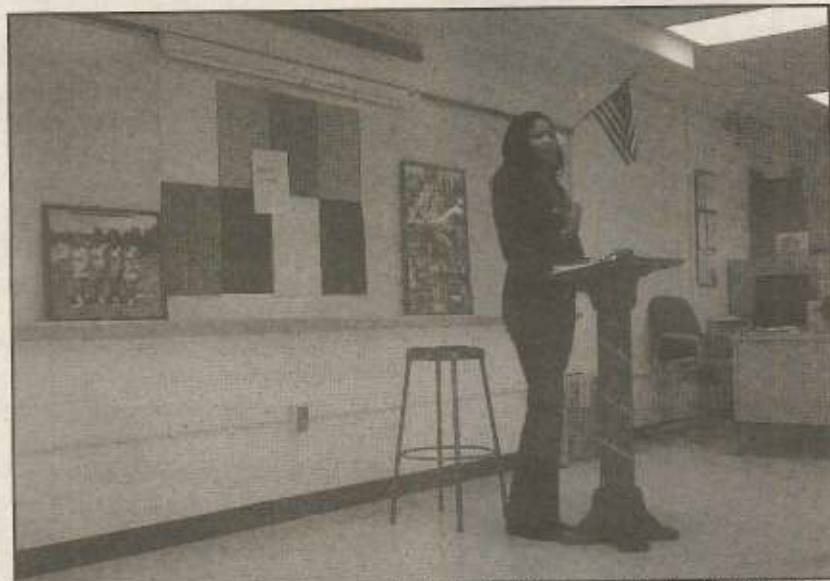
Many coaches were in attendance and asked questions and remembered the "vogue" girl that they once coached. Former coach Inez Bryant and current coach Don Beeby often teased Hurd about her high school days including her excellent academic

work.

Between school, traveling, and practice, Hurd always kept her priorities straight. After college she worked with Hyatt Hotels for seven years until becoming a full-time athlete. "I knew that if I got injured, my sponsors would forget about me but I'd have a career to fall back on."

She also gave many tips to the attending athletes such as using the perks of being a student-athlete to your advantage, noting that college counselors will be there to help you. Sometimes these counselors could be used to get into the best classes and signing up for classes before regular students. Eating habits were also a topic for discussion. Hurd recommended to drink plenty of water and to always take daily vitamins to stay as healthy as possible.

This Olympic athlete and former Wolverine provided many valuable resources to the athletes that attended and gave very helpful tips to succeed academically while taking on athletic responsibilities. Hopefully those who attended will pass the tips to their teammates and succeed beyond high school and even further into the future.



Tiombe Hurd, seen here speaking to a group of this school's athletes, competed in the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens in the Triple Jump event. Hurd graduated from this school in 1991.

## In The Numbers

10

Free throws hit in overtime against the West Springfield Spartans in a 61-58 victory. Tim Young scored 23 points and got 11 rebounds.

4

Place the girls and boys Winter Track teams took in the Patriot District Championship.

46

Margin of victory for the Girls Basketball team against the Falls Church Jaguars. The defense held the Jaguars to 31 points.

1

The NHL became the first North American sport to cancel an entire season due to a lockout. Fortunately, the AHL is always an option.



# Ready to Make 'The Leap'

Winter teams improve on last season; set foundation for next year

Houston Murphy

Photo Editor

Going into the 2004-2005 winter sports season, the expectations of teams at this school were uncertain, with several teams taking on new head coaches with different systems. There have been new head coaches in three of the six winter sports, including boy's basketball, wrestling, and track and field. Whenever a team takes on a new coach, it is uncertain what to expect of their new philosophy and coaching style as opposed to the previous coach, and the situations can create positive, as well as negative results.

When a head coach is replaced after a losing season, the school anticipates a change for the better, and there are often high expectations going into the new season. At the start of this boy's basketball season, young new head coach David Houston was anticipated to have a fresh new system of basketball that would inspire our young team to hustle and play smarter. "I was excited about this [basketball] season because we have a new coach and a good team with

good chemistry," said senior forward Tim Young. This season has proved to be successful, with many positive aspects to build on in the future, as the boy's team has improved from a record of 2-20 last year to 6-15 this year, with a 4-8 record within the district. This improvement was led by senior Tim Young, who led the team in points and rebounds, and juniors Derrick Baker who led the team in assists and minutes played and George Johnson, who was third on the team in points and second in rebounds. All of the team's hard work almost paid off in the district playoffs, but the team fell just short of a win in overtime against T.C. Williams.

The girl's basketball team has stayed consistent throughout the season, with head coach Parker Roach running a familiar system with the outstanding backcourt of senior guards Lauren Arthur and Mary Lawson. As the lady Wolverines have matured with 7 seniors on the team, they have improved from a 6-13 record last year to 11-12 this year, and ended the season with a tough loss against Hayfield in the first round of the district playoffs.

The boys and girls co-ed wrestling team also has a new head coach this year, Zak McNamara. With fresh hopes of performing better than last year, the wrestling team has overachieved, as they recovered from losing some top wrestlers from last year's team. Their record this season has improved from only one win last season (1-14) to 8-16 this season. With strong performances this year and a promising core of wrestlers such as regional qualifying junior Abdullah Amadi, this young wrestling

squad has plenty of room to grow and potential for a winning season next year.

The boy's and girl's swim and dives teams had a very optimistic attitude going into the season with plenty of support from the rest of the school. With the biggest turnout at this school ever, the mood at the beginning of the season was filled with excitement and anticipation. "I was ready to compete this season because I feel that I have improved my diving and we are better as a team this year also," said junior Dana Wernecke.

After winning a third straight district championship during the spring season, the boy's track and field team went into this winter season with high expectations. At the beginning of the season, with new head coach Joe Coates, the team practiced under a lax schedule that none of the returning athletes had been used to under Coach Bowerman in previous seasons. After only three weeks into the season, Coach Coates stepped down as head coach and Bowerman and Coach Beeby returned to get the program back in shape.

As anticipated, senior hurdlers Charles and Chris Jones steadily held the first and third rankings, respectively, in the 55 meter hurdles all season. At the district meet, they finished first and second place. Antwane Minter, a junior who has been to states each season since his freshman year, has improved his jumping even more, holding the number

one seed in the triple jump throughout the season and winning it at districts. Minter also scored needed points winning the long jump and the 55 meter dash, beating Hayfield rival Travis Swaggard in the dash. Junior Frank DeVar placed second in the 2 mile with a personal record in the event for

the indoor season with a time of 10:01. Although the boy's team had these strong performances, they had to settle for fourth place behind Hayfield, Lake Braddock, and Robinson. Even with a fourth place finish in the district, the boy's team is still a favorite to win the regional

meet, as more teams and fewer athletes are invited to the meet.

The girl's track and field team also had strong efforts throughout the season and in the district meet. Standout performances included senior Bailey Kavanaugh placing third in the 55 meter dash, senior Laura Regensburg in the 2 mile, and freshman Kat Lee, who won the long jump and missed placing first in the 500 meter dash by only 2-hundredths of a second. These strong efforts helped the girl's team to fourth place in the district.

This winter sports season has been a new experience for many athletes and has provided several exciting events for both competitors and fans. With several new coaches introduced, it has been a busy season for the West Potomac athletic program.



Junior Frank DeVar separates himself from the rest of the field at a Winter Track meet. DeVar placed second in Districts, the team as a whole took fourth.



The boys' basketball team improved on last seasons record with a 6-15 record. Unfortunately they lost in overtime in their first district playoff game.

## SPORTS CALENDAR



### Monday, February 28

Winter Sports Awards Night

Cafeteria

6:00 p.m.

### Friday, March 4

Girls Varsity Lacrosse  
State Track Meet

vs Fairfax

7:15 p.m.

George Mason

5:00 p.m.

### Saturday, March 5

State Track Meet  
Boys Varsity LacrosseGeorge Mason  
at Woodbridge

9:00 a.m.

10:00 a.m.

### Tuesday, March 8

Boys Varsity Lacrosse

at St. Stephens

4:00 p.m.

### Wednesday, March 9

Boys Varsity Soccer  
Girls Varsity Soccer  
Varsity Softball

at Thomas Jefferson

7:00 p.m.

vs South Lakes

7:00 p.m.

vs Yorktown

6:00 p.m.

### Thursday, March 10

Girls Varsity Lacrosse

vs Madison

7:15 p.m.

### Friday, March 11

Girls Varsity Soccer

vs Herndon

7:00 p.m.



## Students Wanted!

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# Day in the Life of.... A Caring Counselor

Sarah Raser

Wire Reporter

There is no typical day in the life of a guidance counselor. To Kirsten Wiley, each day is a different exciting adventure she looks forward to when she wakes up. According to Wiley, she has the best job of anyone she knows.

Her day typically begins bright and early in the morning, and she leaves her home in Fairfax with just enough time to beat the morning traffic on her commute. She arrives around 6:30 AM to get a head start on some paperwork, because once the clock hits seven and the students start to arrive, there's no more time for that until later in the day. "I come in with an agenda, but a majority of it gets done after 2:05," said Wiley.

Guidance counselors deal completely with students and parents throughout the day. They work with issues anywhere from the student's grades to being a crisis intervention counselor. If a student falls behind in class, it's a counselor's job to help a student understand why it's happening and how to fix it. A guidance counselor is the first to diagnose what is going on and the person to turn to when wondering where to go to get it fixed.

Seniors are big projects of hers, as they are for most counselors. Wiley loves helping the college-bound seniors figure out where they're going to spend the next four years. In most circumstances, she knows the seniors and the freshman the best, since they have the most concerns. Because

changing one person's day can mean a world of difference. "Ms. Wiley helped me a lot during the summer when I was trying to figure out my schedule, and I would come in every day and see her," says senior Jon Politte.

For Wiley, a day usually ends around 6:30 pm, when she finishes what she needs to complete and heads home. Outside of school, Wiley likes to spend her time working out or with friends. The job can get so mentally exhausting dealing with everyone's problems, she likes to relax and let her creative side loose while she organizes things into in her spare time. This is due largely to her perfectionist personality.

The most rewarding part of her job is the little details that happen throughout the school day. Anything, from a simple "Thank You" note to just going in and introducing yourself, makes a big difference in the way Wiley perceives her job. "She brightens up my day when I walk in and she greets me with a smile," adds Politte. So, on the chance that you do see Wiley in the hallway, smile and say hi. It is sure to make her day.



Photo by Laura Lofgren

Counselor Ms. Wiley frequently contacts colleges in order to get valuable information for her students.

Wiley is a bit younger than the rest of her colleagues, she can relate more to what her students go through on a daily basis, and she does love this school and tries to do the best she can do at all times.

Wiley loves the spontaneity of her job. Every student comes in with a different problem, and it is her job to find a way to fix it. Whether it's improving grades, or someone is going through an emotional time, she enjoys helping people. To her,

# Filmmakers of the Future

Hana Beckerle

Editor-in-Chief

It has been said by many people (including the Wire's Opinions Editor) that one of the best ways to get the most out of our time in high school is to start a club. Juniors Brett Smith and Chris Kelly have done just that with the formation of the Independent Film Club this year.

Students will probably recognize Smith and Kelly from their original and humorous commercials on the morning announcements. These commercials are a good indication about how the two behave when they are off-camera as well.

Perhaps the best way to address the idea of such an organization would be to ask the basic question: what is an independent film? An independent film is not produced by one of the major motion picture companies; rather, it is made usually by newcomers to the field. Most independent films are produced on a relatively small budget, and have come to be regarded by many as an alternative to cookie-cutter motion pictures by big-name companies. "It's all about heart," said Smith.

The Independent Film Club has met five times so far this year. Usually the meetings are held in Ms. Dickens' room or Mr. Fitzgerald's room. However, Smith said, "We don't like being tied down. We're like the wind." At one meeting, a representative from the Missouri Film Commission came to speak to the members.

The club is open to students of all ages, and members of the club share

a passion for movies that is scarce among other members of the student body. In fact, the only official membership requirement is, according to Smith, a "serious desire to



Photo courtesy of Chris Kelly

Juniors Brett Smith and Chris Kelly discuss the next shot for their independent film.

independent film" Besides presidents Smith and Kelly, prominent members include senior Greg Ekberg, junior Caitlin Middlebrook and sophomore Kim Schreiber.

Recently, the Independent Film Club undertook the project of producing its own independent films. The presidential duo produced two scripts, one written by Smith and one that was a collaborative effort between the two. The pair held an audition in the main auditorium one afternoon in early February, and selected casts to for both of their movies.

When asked what the movies are about, Kelly countered, "What aren't they about?" He continued, saying, "We deal with movies thematically, and we aren't plot-dependent." The equipment used to film was all privately owned by club members, and all of the scenes were shot at this school or at members' houses.

"Our films deal with real people, real emotions," said Smith. The club plans to enter their productions into the upcoming West Potomac Film Festival, and may possibly enter them into other contests, such as the annual Sundance Film Festival.

"By indie, we don't really mean indie, we just mean making quality work, and making quality work requires heart. And it ain't no trip to Cleveland," said Smith. The spirit and ideals of the club can pretty much be surmised by that one statement. Watch for upcoming commercials, which will no doubt be hilarious, on club activities.

## Quotable Quotes

Random quotes from West Potomac students. You had to be there.

English teacher, Mrs. Reynolds "What other biblical tree references are there?"

"...THE GIVING TREE!"

~Rob Jones, 12th

"Are fish mammals?"

~Joy Yoo, 12th

"I didn't know Katie went to Italy. I thought she went to Rome."

~Nathan Palma, 9th

"I have African healing powers."

~Brad Dalton, 11th

"It's not a bad habit, it's an addiction."

~Amy Dobson, 12th

To English teacher Mr. Russell "So where do you work?"

~Marissa D'Orazio, 12th

To swimmer Jon Politte

"Why don't you stop swimming and get a real job!"

~Casey Rivkin, 11th

"Hey guys, if I sew on wet fabric, will I get electrocuted?"

~Erin Coffey, 11th

"Really, what are they gonna do about it? Hold you at gun-point and tell you pull up your pants?"

~Chelsea Hilton, 10th

Ashlee's Quote of the Issue

"Wait, how do fish have sex?"

## A-List

Newcomer names her number ones.



Book. Since I am taking so many AP classes, I have little time for side reading. *How to Make a Man Fall in Love with You*, by Tracy Cabot, was highly entertaining during the Valentine's Day season. My friends and I enjoyed reading the tips on getting a guy and compared them to real guys' opinions.

CD. Thanks to procrastination, I found myself up late at night in the process of writing my seminar paper. During this time I found a new obsession for the Ruff Ryder Astan rapper Jin's "Rest is History." With songs like, "Learn Chinese," and "I Gotta Love" featuring Kanye West, I was instantly addicted to his sound. He reminds me of an Astan Eminem, and of course, I have to support my culture!

Movie. I am a huge fan of Will Ferrell! His humor can be extremely what I need. To relax after a stressful night, I joined some of DVD. I don't think I have laughed that hard in a really long time!

Restaurant. For the past few weeks, I have had a constant Mt. Vernon, and every once in a while I can't pass up the West Potomac.



stupid sometimes, but it's the simple, stupid humor that is just my friends in watching *Anchorman*, which recently came out on "I love lamp!"

craving for Sherwood Gourmet. My all-time favorite is the Hawaiian. I do recommend that the owners change the

me, so watching "My Super Sweet Sixteen" on MTV is who complain about what an inconvenience it is to be closed. In one episode, Hart bought his female stepmother's designer shop.

## Community Craft Show and Yard Sale

Saturday, February 26th 8am to 2pm

Come and help the tsunami relief.

Will be raffling off a Bear donated by Why Not™



# Reality TV Revealed

Katie Staples  
Features Editor

## State

New Found Glory  
The Norva  
Norfolk, VA  
March 21

Nelly  
Constant Convocation  
Center  
Norfolk, VA  
March 18

L.A. Guns  
House of Rock  
White Marsh, MD  
March 30

Of  
Papa Roach  
The Norva  
Norfolk, VA  
March 28

Kiss Army  
Alley Katz  
Richmond, VA  
March 25

Elton John  
Richmond Coliseum  
Richmond, VA  
March 8

The Average White Band  
Birchmere  
Alexandria, VA  
March 11

Ryan Cabrera  
The Recher Theatre  
Towson, MD  
March 2

Slipknot  
Hampton Coliseum  
Hampton, VA  
March 18

## The

Blue Floyd  
State Theatre  
Falls Church, VA  
March 16

Naron Carter  
The Recher Theatre  
Towson, MD  
February 27

Ashlee Simpson  
The Norva  
Norfolk, VA  
March 28

Toby Keith  
Richmond Coliseum  
Richmond, VA  
March 3

## Arts

Many of us have become slaves to reality television. We all know about what happens on screen, but what about off? Your top five questions about reality TV shows have been answered.

1.) How do you sign up for shows and how are contestants selected?

For CBS's hit reality show *Survivor*, prospective contestants send in a three-minute long audition video tape of themselves and what they're like. In the past, they have ranged from Lindsey Richter of *Survivor 3: Africa* riding her mountain bike up a hill naked to *Survivor 2: Outback*'s Alicia Calaway's audition tape of her tackling someone in a kangaroo suit.

The same goes for MTV's *Real World*. For most of MTV's reality shows, such as *Road Rules* and *Pimp My Ride*, they require people to send in a short homemade video describing them. Although some shows do not have an age cutoff, *Real World* does, limiting contestants to those who are between ages eighteen and 24.

For NBC's *The Apprentice*, people over 21 can either attend a live casting audition or send in video tapes no longer than ten minutes describing why they would make a good apprentice.

After producers receive hundreds of audition tapes, they have the rigorous job of picking a select few people who stand out enough to be on their show. Some people think that good looks and a relatively o.k. personality make them a shoe-in, but shows like NBC's *Fear Factor* look for someone with an outgoing personality who will complete all of their challenges, no matter how scary or disgusting they might be. Shows like *Survivor*, *The Apprentice*, and *Road Rules* where conflict between contestants cannot be avoided look for a wide variety of people from all different backgrounds.

Some shows like VH1's *Surreal Life* does not feature the same people as *The Apprentice* and *Fear Factor*; its characters are famous people like this season's Verne Troyer (*Austin Powers*), Da Brat, and Christopher Knight (*The Brady Bunch*).



Omarosa from the first *Apprentice* enjoys her newly developed fame.

Tom Fox / KRT

2.) How do producers think of challenges for the shows?

Although shows like *The Amazing Race* always have a straightforward goal (end at a designated city in the United States after traveling halfway around the world), others have challenges that are different for every episode of every season. For *Fear Factor*, producer Rich Brown and his team are responsible for thinking of each show's gross or daring stunts. *Fear Factor*'s grossest eating challenges have included season five's Road Kill Café where contestants had to eat the insides of actual road kill, and season one's Bowling for Beetles where contestant had to eat however many beetles they bowled in two frames of bowling.

On *Survivor*, producer Mark Burnett and assistants spend days thinking of creative challenges for the tribes. A winning idea included *Survivor Amazon*'s 'Perch' where the contestants had to stand on square foot perches in the middle of alligator-infested water without falling.

3.) For filming out of the country, what are the insurance policies/health screenings?

Many reality shows such as *The Amazing Race*, *Survivor*, and *Road Rules* go out of the country for their filming. To do this in other countries, especially Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and South America, American citizens have to have proof of recent vaccinations of diseases such as typhoid, yellow fever, and even Japanese encephalitis. That's a lot of shots!

4.) How do producers keep contestants quiet after filming?

Although making contestants sign contracts promising their silence about the filming of the show usually works,

producers have taken such drastic measures to keep everyone quiet as sending them on an all expenses paid cruise or vacation to a remote tropical island. For *Survivor*, Burnett has all of the contestants sign a secrecy agreement; breaking it costs you up to 5 million dollars. The location of filming is also not disclosed until after filming and during promotion of the show.

5.) How much money do winners really win?

With big winnings come big tax rates. For *Fear Factor*'s cash earnings of 50,000 dollars, singles get nineteen percent taken out for taxes. That means they only really win \$40,500. Married winners only have fourteen percent taken out but that still only amounts to a grand total of \$43,000. Winners of *Survivor* only really receive around \$668,000.

## The Low-Down on Piercings

Evan Dobbs  
Photo Editor

Students have been getting pierced more and more since the mid eighties. What was once considered gross is the now a hit. While some piercings are considered vogue, many can be also hazardous. Before being spontaneous, kids should learn a thing or two about getting pricked.

Most people who haven't been pierced know enough about what they need, and the care they have to take. Sometimes, even more than people who have had been. The first step of the process is research. Finding a legitimate piercing parlor is critical. Trust whoever is doing the piercing them. Do not be afraid to ask to see a piercing license. He or she should make sure they are clear with everything. Ask about aftercare, and how long until the piercing should heal. If these precautions are neglected, there risk getting HIV or hepatitis.

Some of the common facial piercings includes the eyebrow, nostril, and labret (centered below the lip). Some of the newer features include: snake bites, which are placed at each end of the bottom lip, like fangs. The septum piercing is a spike through the middle of the nose, often called "the bull ring". A Monroe, named after Marilyn Monroe's mole, is the stud to the side of the nose, above the lip. Oral piercings are less popular, due to pain. Now, people are piercing the skin under

the tongue and the skin above the gums under the lip, the smiley. "I really want my smiley done because when ever i smile will look adorable," sophomore Lindsay Rosenfeld.

Body piercings have been traced back to the early civilizations. African tribes used

to pierce the tongues of the warriors to sow a sign of strength, and Egyptians pierce their navel as a sign of royalty. The webs of the hand and feet, surfer and the vampire kiss; the back of the neck has been a

masochist favorite. "I think that a vampire kiss is extremely attractive" Sophomore Bianca Ambrosino.

The most common piercings are on the ear. The ear can either be abstract or concrete. The cartilage is simply a piercing in the top region of the ear, where the cartilage is located. The industrial is two cartilages piercing connected by a bar. The tragus is the small piece of skin on

the outside of the ear canal. The lobes could either have a single stud, to multiple studs. Gauging, making the hole bigger, is popular with teenagers. A normal stud starts at a twenty gauge. As the number gets smaller, the hole gets bigger. A twelve gauge is smaller than an eight. After zero,

then comes double zero, followed by inch measurements. Tapers are used to stretch the ear to a bigger gauge. People sometimes knitting needles and tweezers, which is extremely dangerous. "I tried stretching my ears with straws, and that didn't work, my left lobe got swollen" said Rosenfeld.

Students have a better chance of not getting an infection if they informed themselves from the beginning. People should stay away from sharpening studs and sticking them in themselves. Make sure the professional piercer uses hollow needles, using a blunt or jagged object can

endanger their health. The body has been known to reject the piercing, and remove it from the surface. Hitting a nerve can cause the face to sag to the side. There are many licensed people who will do this, and are cheap. Some doctors are qualified to pierce, and are recommended. If you have any questions on piercing hazards check out <http://www.mnsi.net/~expert/>



Senior Matt Pague shows off his septum ring.

Photo by Evan Dobbs



# Seoul Food

Joy Yoo

Wire Reporter

Ethnic food has become the new craze, whether it's Afghan, Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, or Thai. One type of cuisine that has not typically acknowledged as much is Korean food. Like many of the other Asian foods, Korean cooking is healthy and extremely tasty. Local Korean restaurants are located mainly in Vienna and Annandale. Annandale is also known as "Little Korea" or "Korea Town."

Korean food has been overshadowed by its cousins, Japanese and Chinese food; however, the DC-Metropolitan area is one of the first areas to "catch the new wave." Korean food is



Photo by Laura Lofgren

Il Mee Buffet offers over 50 different types of dishes including the popular bulgogi and delicious sushi.

more vivacious and diverse than Japanese food, and is a lot less oily than Chinese food. There are foods for all kinds of eaters, whether they are vegetarians or meat-lovers.

Il Mee Buffet is located on Duke Street in Annandale. It is a one-price buffet that offers over fifty different dishes, with a large variety of meats, sushi, and vegetables. Sushi is a universal dish that almost all people enjoy. One unique characteristic of Korean cuisine is *pan chun*. It is basically the American name for side dishes. This includes the renowned kimchee, a spicy red pepper seasoned cabbage, bean sprouts, and tofu. Senior Jon Polite says, "I love Korean food! Il Mee Buffet is awesome; there's so much food. The variety cannot be found anywhere else."

The tastiest dishes at Il Mee are the fish and the meat, including chicken and beef. The dish that attracts customers is the beef. Unlike other buffets, the beef is already marinated and ready to go, but not cooked. Customers are able to cook their own meat at their table on a barbecue grill that is built into the tables. Here, diners can truly have "all-they-can-eat," even up to three, four, or five dishes.

The only setback of Il Mee Buffet is that unused meat and food is added to your bill by pound; however, this is easily fixed by just attaining smaller samples at a time. Without a doubt, Il Mee Buffet closely mimics the food in South Korea. Healthy, tasteful, exquisite, and unique are all adjectives that describe the food at Il Mee Buffet and Korean cuisine overall.

# Without a Hitch

Jason Yaworske

Wire Reporter

"No matter what, no matter when, no matter who; any man has a chance to sweep any woman off her feet. He just needs the right broom." This is the philosophy of Alex "Hitch" Hitchens, an anonymous New York City date-doctor, who claims that he can help any man win over the woman of his dreams. That is the premise of the new romantic comedy, *Hitch*.

Let's face it; you know what you're getting yourself into when you go to see a romantic comedy. The story lines are predictable, everybody knows how they are going to end, and there is usually a forced, sappy romance that many would prefer simply cut from the movie. To judge a romantic comedy on its plot wouldn't be very fair, so I'll just take *Hitch* for what it's worth. Usually these movies aren't very funny past the three or four one-liners you've already seen a hundred times in the trailers. But the newest in the genre, *Hitch*, starring Will Smith, Kevin James, Eva Mendes, and Amber Valletta, provides slightly more than expected.

Albert, a pudgy, awkward, clumsy accountant, has developed a fascination with his new celebrity client, Allegra Cole (Valletta). Knowing he is helpless in winning this girl over on his own, Albert turns to the

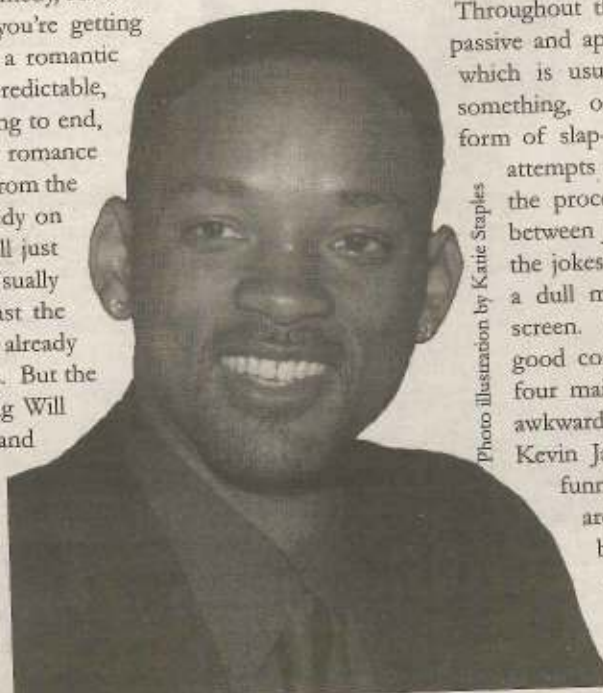


Photo illustration by Katie Staples

Will Smith plays Alex "Hitch" Hitchens in *Hitch*.

services of Alex "Hitch" Hitchens (Smith). Alex agrees, and while helping his new client, Alex himself becomes engrossed with Sarah (Mendes), a beautiful journalist who writes a daily gossip column in a New York tabloid. From there you can all guess what happens, so it's not much of a spoiler to tell you that the couples have some hilarious encounters, and Sarah is conflicted between her new love interest and her desire to get the scoop on Manhattan's famous date-doctor.

Throughout the movie, Albert goes from being passive and apprehensive to being overconfident, which is usually where he falls down, breaks something, or does some other embarrassing form of slap-stick comedy, at which point Alex attempts to swoop in and rescue him, starting the process all over again. The chemistry between James and Smith is really good, and the jokes come off flawlessly. There's never a dull moment when these two share the screen. However this seems to be the only good combination the movie makes of the four main actors. Smith and Mendes look awkward, and James and Valletta do as well. Kevin James and Will Smith are two very funny people, but Mendes and Valletta are really out of place and tend to bring the movie down whenever they appear. Overall, I would say *Hitch* is an enjoyable, slightly above average romantic comedy, but the natural fallbacks of the genre keep it from being really good.

# Trekkie Transformed

Drew Macklin

Opinions Editor

"Beam me up, Scotty." These immortal words by *Star Trek's* Captain Kirk will forever live on in American pop culture. However, William Shatner, the venerable actor who portrayed Kirk and carried a generation into space on his shoulders, has been anything but immortal, lingering on the fringe of icon status since he first stepped away from the public eye.

Time may have banished *Star Trek* to the realm of cult fanatics and aged box sets, and the incessant advance of the years may have built Shatner into just another piece of television trivia, but no amount of decades will ever destroy Shatner's voice. That voice — deep, melodic, and possessing the satisfying quality inherent in down comforters and chicken noodle soup — has proven to be his only recourse in the search for a consistent livelihood.

In 1968, Shatner first dipped his prodigiously talented big toe into the expansive and increasingly stagnant pool of popular music. His album, *The Transformed Man*, created ripples and added life to a pop culture that had become increasingly obsessed with mass-produced look-alikes of the Beatles and the Stones. *Transformed* was revolutionary in nature and seemed to espouse something like musical anarchy; combining various poems and Shakespearean soliloquys read aloud to cutting-edge guitar hooks and orchestral arrangements, it was written

off as a hoax, a deranged joke by a musical outsider.

Shatner, however, would not be denied. In October of last year, he collaborated with rebellious musical genius Ben Folds to, once again, shatter the pop music mold. The album born of this relationship, *Has Been*, contains what is likely one of the most monumentally innovative and groundbreaking collection of songs since Ludwig von Beethoven composed his 5<sup>th</sup> Symphony.

Shatner's voice is more powerful than ever on *Has Been*. It drips wisdom and fits like a comfortable sweatshirt. The songs are the culmination of his life — his own introspective ruminations and recollections. "It Hasn't Happened Yet" takes a contemplative look at Shatner's own accomplishments in life. He feels unfulfilled and dissatisfied with the course his life has taken. Yet, as the title track reminds us, he is anything but a "Has Been." After all, as he writes, "A Has Been might again..." The musings of the aged form the basis for "You'll Have Time," in which Shatner reminds those of us still in our youth that we will have time to reflect on our lives because, as he puts it, "You're going to die...live like you're going to die,

because you're gonna." The plight of American culture is the subject of the angry rant "I Can't Get Behind That," and we feel Shatner's disgust at student drivers and teenage grammar through the all-percussion track. "Together" easily takes the cake for the most abstract. The words say it all: "He says Phoenix, Pegasus, Grecian urn, Midwestern, so much to learn, together." The song in its entirety is a poem written for his wife; it is truly splendid.

The musical arrangement by Ben Folds is by far the greatest part of *Has Been*. Whether the song is contemplative, defiant, or romantic, the music fits like a pillow in a pillow case. The overall effect, when Folds' music is joined with Shatner's voice, is no joke. It is a serious album that is seriously good.



William Shatner creates a musical masterpiece for all ages, moods, and genders.

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## Nick Ranks Number One

Ansley LaBarre

Editor-in-Chief

Everyone whispers about the new kid. Senior Nicholas Jachowski is giving them something to whisper about. Jachowski was a new arrival at the start



Senior Nick Jachowski plays the piano in his Piano 3 class.

of the 2004-2005 school year, stirring up controversy by bumping down every senior's class rank when he took the spot of number one. Considering all of his achievements, it's no surprise that he was accepted early by Stanford University.

Jachowski is among the top in the nation for his knowledge of geography. Coming from a naval family, which means frequent relocation, sparked Jachowski's interest for becoming familiar with a variety of lands. He has been the state geography champion in Maryland and Hawaii, claiming the AAA Travel High School Challenge National Championship. In 2001,

Jachowski won second place in the National Geography Bee, automatically making him a member of the gold-medal winning team representing the United States in the International Geographic Olympiad. His success has won him up to \$25,000 in scholarship money.

Hoping to share his knowledge and expertise in the area of geography, Jachowski is currently directing an after-school geography club for elementary students at Hollin Meadows.

Outside of geography, Jachowski has been an avid participant in a multitude of school clubs, as well as science- and math-related competitions.

In the International Science Talent Search, he was one of 300 semifinalists to selected from throughout the world. Many of his science fair projects have won state finalist awards, and Jachowski

spent two summers working as an intern for the University of Hawaii, while living there, studying oceanography. At the end of his high school career, he will have successfully completed twelve AP courses, and scored an impressive 1550 on his SATs.

AP U.S. History teacher Jeff Feinstein said, "Nick is an exemplary student, serving as a model to all. He is engaged, hard-

working, always looking for meaning beyond the text book and finding real world applications."

Jachowski's achievements extend beyond the classroom. He has participated in cross country and track and field all four years of high school, placed first in the Hawaii State Junior Olympics Cross Country Championships, and was a vital member of this school's team, which placed second in the state. Jachowski is also musically oriented, taking courses this year that include piano, guitar, and chorus. He taught himself to play the ukulele during his years in Hawaii. Fellow seniors Alex Arnold and Taurin Barrera noted, "Nick is an enigma wrapped in a riddle. He is the only man who can write a song about lemurs."

To top it off, Jachowski contributes to the community on a regular basis. His interest

for children is evident in his work at Hollin Meadows, and his contributions to "A Keiki's Dream," a program which aids children at a crisis management center. He has volunteered time with physically and mentally challenged individuals, and has been an influential member of Key Club and the National Honor Society.

Needless to say, Jachowski has constructed an impressive college application. This school has been proud to accept him into our community, making it evident that he's no ordinary "new kid."

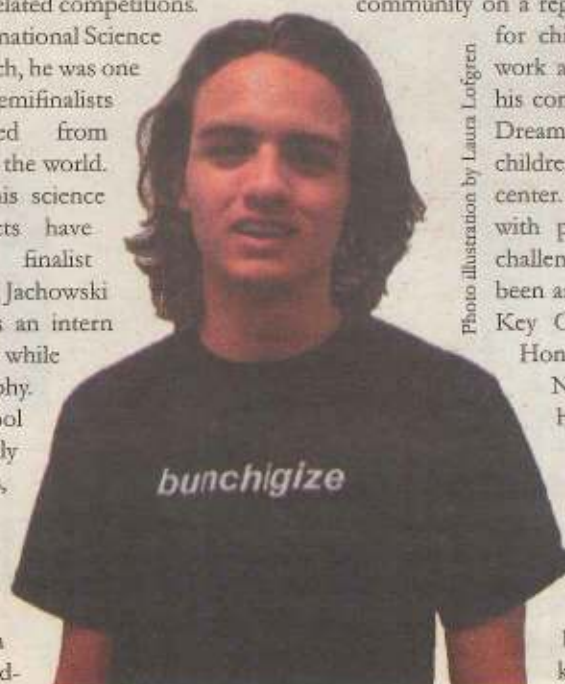


Photo illustration by Laura Loifgren

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## Active AshBash

Joy Yoo

Wire Reporter

Ashley Smith: a name many in this school know. She has been on the varsity volleyball, basketball, and soccer team since her sophomore year. She is a member of the National Honor Society and the College Partnership Program. Many describe her as outgoing, funny, and energetic. Senior Bethany Coan said, "What can I say about Ashley Smith...for one thing, she always has something to say and for any other thing, that something is always funny."



Smith counts money from the SGA's Tsunami relief bracelet sale.

For Smith, every single day has its own challenges and busy schedule. Smith stated, "To keep myself organized, I write down a schedule every morning." Unlike many students who spend a lot of their time at home, Smith is only at home to eat, sleep, and do

homework. Other times, she is either at her church, practice, school, or hanging out with friends.

Sports are a major part of Smith's life, especially in high school. Athleticism comes naturally to Smith. Many struggle to make varsity teams as seniors; yet, Smith began playing varsity for three sports as a sophomore. In other words, she will have received three tri-athlete awards once she graduates. Smith said, "Out of all my sports, I like volleyball the most because it's the most fun. I feel like my aggressiveness and enthusiasm gets the team pumped, no matter what the sport is." It is clear that team spirit and competition are very prominent in Smith's sport life.

Of course, school is Smith's number one priority before sports. She is an active member of the National Honor Society, and, has already been accepted to Virginia Tech and Virginia Commonwealth University: her two top choices. However, for the past three and a half years, the road has not been easy. Many wonder how Smith manages to keep her grades up while not having an off-season from sports. For her, it all depends on time management. With her daily schedule always planned out, Smith effectively balances her AP classes with extracurricular activities. Smith gives a lot of credit to her teachers, as well. "My favorite teacher is Ms. Reynolds, because she is like my other mother. Freshman year, she was my least favorite of my teachers since she wouldn't let me out of her class. Since then, she's taught me that I can truly do anything," she said.

Smith is also extremely active in her church activities. She attends Shiloh Baptist Church every Sunday. Smith is not just a regular member; she is an usher, a member of two choirs, and the treasurer of the youth group at Shiloh. Smith said, "For me, church is a source of comfort from the rest of the week. It's a

time for me to relax and have some personal time with my best friend (God). Religion is a core in my life; I plan to take it with me wherever I go and share it with others." Obviously, religion and morals are held highly in Smith's life.

No matter what the activity is, Smith is an enthusiastic and hard-working individual, inside and outside of the classroom. Senior Kate Griffin stated, "Ashley is such



Senior Ashley Smith celebrated her eighteenth birthday on Friday, February 18.

a hard working person. She puts 110% in everything she does." With her goals set on becoming a dentist, Smith describes herself as "a teenager ready to start anew at college." She has already been accepted at Virginia Tech, and may head there next year. Without a doubt, no matter what school she attends, Smith will definitely find ways to keep herself busy.

Photo by Laura Loifgren