

This Month's Focus:
This I Believe

Student and faculty
share thoughts
on faith, friendship,
and life.

Jan 5,
2007

THE WIRE

WEST POTOMAC HIGH SCHOOL

Friday, January 5, 2007



INSIDE THIS ISSUE



News Page 6

Jeffrey Washington/KRT

The danger, risk, and
consequences of driv-
ing drunk.



Style Page 12

Winter Cravings: The
simple things we turn
to for warmth during
cold weather.



Opinion Page 10

A Pro-Con debate on the
repercussions of a draft
for the war in Iraq.



Sports Page 14

The BCS once again stirs
controversy: Does college
football need a playoff
system?

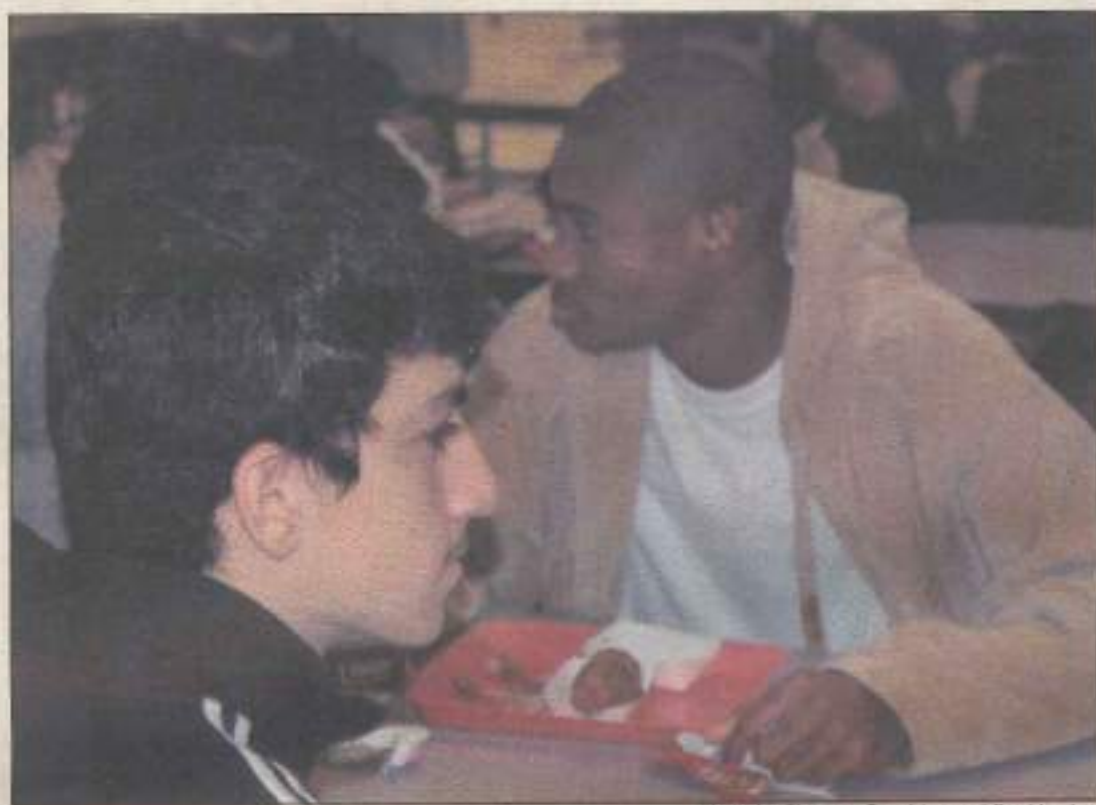


Photo by Shannon Bowdring and Brad Lupton

David Reyes and Waadalla Shalal sit and eat their lunch in the cafeteria. The cliques in the lunch room are just one example of the school's self-imposed segregation.

Cultural Differences Result in Violence

Kate O'Connor

News Editor

Our school prides itself on being a safe place for learning, free of racism, gangs or violence. However, a recent outbreak of culturally-fueled fights poses the question: does our school have a problem with cross-racial hostility?

"You hear about black and Spanish boys getting into [fights], but most of it is just a feeling," said sophomore Marsha Page. Many students agree that if there is a conflict, the bulk of it is underlying, unspoken and avoided.

The story of a fight several weeks ago at Bethany Lutheran Church on Beacon Hill Road was industriously circulated until it became infamous. It was difficult for anyone not to hear some version of the account, no matter how detached they were from the actual situation. Those who heard rumors in their most audacious form drew the conclusion that African American and Hispanic boys started the brawl out of contempt for the other ethnicity. The real story is far from that possibility.

The clash originated with two underclassmen boys—one African American and the other Hispanic—both of whom must remain nameless because they were expelled. The two bumped into each other in the cafeteria, but instead of dismissing the accident they continued to purposely collide with each other in hallways or between classes until the conflict escalated out of control. One boy challenged the other to a fight. They agreed to have it at the park on Beacon Hill, near the school. After their last class, the two boys headed to the playground with at least forty friends and onlookers in tow.

"If there is a fire, everyone is gonna go to see what's going on. It was kind of like that," said freshman Martez Redfern who was on the outskirts of the crowd when the fight started. After only a few minutes, law enforcement arrived at the scene and the boys scattered, only to regroup moments later in the Lutheran Church parking lot. The violence broke out again, except on a larger scale.

"A car pulled up with some Spanish guys in it and

See Culture Clash, page 6

Suddenly Growing Up Faster

Young women share their thoughts on teen pregnancy and what it is like to be a teenage mother.

Sydney Smith & Erin Burke

Wire Reporters

An estimated 750,000 teenage girls, between the ages of thirteen and nineteen, get pregnant every year according to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. This statistic includes teens like senior Regina Washington, who was pregnant during her junior year and gave birth this past summer to a baby girl.

One of the most difficult challenges for the mother-to-be was telling her parents she was pregnant. Washington said, "They were upset. My mom started crying. My dad, he could not believe it, he was in shock. Over time, they accepted that I was pregnant."

A pregnant teen can face discrimination or cruel and harsh words from her peers on a daily basis. Even though she was pregnant through most of her junior year, fortunately Washington was able to avoid this type of harassment. She was able to attend school and hang out with her friends without fear of be-

ing singled out. She said, "I had a normal life, I was my normal me, just pregnant." She was lucky that she was surrounded by a group of friends who supported her throughout her pregnancy.

Washington also experienced the hard choice of whether or not to keep her child once she gave birth. Some of the options that she had to consider included having an abortion or giving the baby up for adoption. For Washington, the decision was an easy one. "I do not believe in abortion. You know the saying, 'an extra burden will bring you two steps back?' Well, I feel that my daughter has put me forward," she said. Washington plans to go to college and her parents will help take care of the baby.

In health classes, teachers talk mainly about sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) and abstinence. The issue of contraception is also controversial because teachers are never sure of the maturity level of their students. Health classes at our school give the basic definition of contraceptives such as condoms, spermicide, diaphragms, and sponges but they do not fully demonstrate how these products should be used. Health teacher Tyrone Strothers said, "There is a unit on birth control, which includes contraception. We try to go into detail about the different types, over the counter, prescription, what is out there."



Photo Courtesy of Regina Washington

Senior Regina Washington had a baby girl over the summer and now faces the trials and joys of motherhood.

In recent years, the question of whether or

See Teen Mom, page 7

Amnesty Club Denied Request to Watch Controversial Documentary

Alex Keckeisen

Editor-in-Chief

A controversial film from Amnesty International is causing concern from the administration as the group looks to protest United States torture tactics.

Outlawed was first put forth by the Amnesty International organization to show at an Amnesty club meeting. The Amnesty International Club at our school wanted to show *Outlawed*, a movie that profiles Khaled El-Masri and Binyam Mohamed, two men who survived torture at the hands of the U.S. government. The worldwide Amnesty International Organization encourages high school clubs to invite members of the community and the media to the screening. It contains no profanity or reenactments of torture; rather, it includes accounts of the suffering by one of the victims and accounts of a diary from another. The video also includes commentary from the United Nations High Commissioner on human rights, President George Bush, and other high ranking officials. One of the major issues discussed in the video is the use of the CIA Rendition program, which transfers prisoners from country to country, usually those friendly to the United States. Those who shared their stories said the U.S. told countries such as Morocco to torture these prisoners.

Amnesty International provides information to clubs around the country and leads various protests mainly for human rights. AmnestyUSA.com said human rights "belong to everyone, regardless of their race, sexuality, citizenship, gender, nationality, ethnicity, or abilities." The site also said they are "essential to freedom, justice, and peace."

The president of Amnesty at our school, senior Lauren Schmalz, requested the video after a suggestion from the official Amnesty International group. The viewing was set for December 18 at a meeting for members of the club, but Schmalz decided to run the idea past Principal Rima Vesilind before airing it.

Unfortunately for Schmalz and Amnesty, Vesilind rejected the idea calling it "un-American."

Vesilind cited unfavorable political views in the video with no opposing viewpoints as her reason for rejecting the proposal. "I watched this video with a number of people familiar with foreign relations and they were angry at the slant of [the documentary]," said Vesilind. "It emphasizes anti-American feelings," she added.

When asked whether she thought this censorship was an obstruction of freedoms, Vesilind said it was not. The clubs sponsor, American Sign Language teacher Ashley Hall, understands, and believes the challenge of presenting an opposing middle-ground is possible. "Showing it at intervals to present a middle-ground can make the video more informative

See Amnesty, page 5

RANTS and RAVES



A RANT FOR LACK OF SOAP IN THE BATH-ROOMS.

A RANT FOR A LACK OF SNOW.

A RANT FOR LOST PSAT SCORES.



A Rave for the Senior carry out lunch!

A Rave for the Key Club for collecting 134 new toys during the toy drive!

A Rave for Chipotle raising \$3,300 for our athletic department on opening night!

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Website is Dynamite

Dear Editor,

I'm writing to tell you that I took a look at your website, and I really enjoyed it. I was surprised to see that there were new articles that I hadn't read in the paper. There were a lot of interesting articles such as "Flex is Not Effective." Also, I found a lot of up to date news, like the story about the elevators in the school. I also found it cool that I could e-mail all the Wire staff. Overall, there is a lot of national and local coverage and I actually enjoyed the site more than the printed paper. You can look at it whenever you want, instead of waiting for the monthly issue. Eventually, internet newspapers will probably replace printed ones because they have more updated news.

Junior, Hunter Coleman

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

THE WEST POTOMAC WIRE

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The Wire is a publication whose aim is to inform, educate, and entertain the student body. The Wire will not print any material that is libelous or obscene, or that will invade any person's right to privacy. The ideas expressed in unsigned editorials reflect the opinions of the newspaper staff; however, Letters to the Editor do not. The Wire is an open forum for discussion which is printed by Silver Communications.

STAFF EDITORIAL

Stop the Parking Lot Drops

"This blue hybrid parks in my spot constantly to drop off his kid!" said frustrated senior Patrick Moniz. Senior Carrie Urban supports his complaint and said, "No one can get in [the parking lot] because these parents in their minivans drop off their kids at the entrance. Students can't get around them."

Students who drive to school expect the freedom of parking before and after class. We did not expect our \$150 parking spots to be taken by parents dropping their students off in the mornings.

Parking spots are for parking. They are not meant to be drop-off points for parents who are in a hurry or students who cannot handle being dropped off in the same line as every other student being chauffeured to school.

Traffic is always a problem in the mornings, but is constantly slowed because multiple parents drop their students off at the entrance of the senior lot. Security officer Mr. William Haire said that "We [the security department] know about the problem in the morning, but there is no way that we can control the flow of traffic from Quander without blocking things up more than they already are. We hope that the parents realize that they are creating a problem for not only the students, but themselves as well by getting in the way."

Senior Sarah Aircheson wondered why "nothing ever happens to the parents, they never get yelled at" and classmate Eric Trouton wondered "if the administration is so uptight about the tardy policy, maybe they should look at the reason we are late

to class. No one wants to be late, but these parents let their kids out and make a U-turn, making us wait behind them since we cannot get through without hitting them."

Haire stated that the proper procedure for students whose spots are taken is to "park in the grass by the softball field, and then go to the security office. We will try to get the car moved by the end of first period and get you back in your spot." This seems like a great solution, except when it makes us late to class.

Last year, our school underwent a long and expensive change in the traffic pattern to solve many of the problems of parking and driving to school. The new system, which has seniors and other students who drive themselves to school enter at a different point than buses and parents dropping students off, is great. It makes getting to school much less stressful, and eliminates a lot of the problems it was intended to solve.

All of the money, effort, and time that went into this project, however, is being destroyed and wasted by parents who do not follow the clear instructions of the road. If there is a bright yellow or blue pass hanging on your rearview mirror, turn left at the first entrance and be on your way. Otherwise, get in the line to turn at the second left like everyone else. To parents who block traffic, cut students off, and park in assigned and expensive spots, please make use of the new system, designed for your convenience and ours. Students are working to get to class on time with as little angry, honking drivers as possible.

Corrections From Last Issue

The story "Tis the Season of Giving" was actually written by Emmanuel Koduah, not Lakeisha Langley.

In "Tis the Season of Giving," Tyler Wong was referred to as a sophomore, he's actually a freshman.

In "Are Early Hours the Key to Successful Athletics?" it was said that the early morning swimmers swam for three hours, when it was

actually three miles. Also, Jimmy Bennett's name was spelled Benot.

In "Reveal Yourself Online, and Face the Consequences," Ms. Vesilind's name was spelled Vesilind.

The story "Fun with Vivacious Vance" was written by not just Lara Davidson but also Devon Cain.

Cartoon Corner



Illustration by sophomore Darryl Sharp

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

2006, There is Plenty to Fix

Emily Kuhbach
Asst. Copy Editor

2006 was quite a year, full of headbutts and heartbreak, comebacks and cultural learnings, slipups and "seriously." It was a feast for pop culture mavens, a good laugh/headache for politicians, and a full plate for sports fans. Let us take a closer look.

2006 was a year of scandals. Our very own Senator George Allen ended his presidential aspirations in one "macaca" of a reelection campaign. House Majority Leader Tom DeLay backed down, as did Congressman Mark "Maf51" Foley. Defense Secretary Donald "Good Golly" Rumsfeld, and Ted Haggard, the high-ranking evangelical caught with a gay meth-selling male prostitute. Let us all take a minute to absorb that one.

2006 was a year of goofs. For one thing, President Bush spoke. CNN celebrated the election of the first Muslim Congressman by asking him to prove he was not a terrorist. Dick Cheney shot his friend in the face and... that one does not need any help. It is its own punchline.

2006 was a year of unholy unions, and I am not referring to gay marriages that are now illegal in 27 states. Brangelina made it official: official that Angelina can break

up any marriage if she sets her mind to it. YouTube, the technological breakout of 2006, hooked up with Google to become the power couple of the year. Justin Timberlake struck gold when he paired up with Timpaland in an unforgettable campaign to "bring SexyBack."

On the flip side, a fair share of couples called it quits this year. Britney broke it off with K-Ped the first time he opened his mouth to sing. Ryan and Reese ended their marriage after seven years, claiming it was seven years too long for Hollywood. And Serbia and Montenegro ended things, citing irreconcilable

differences. 2006 was a year of explosions. North Korea tested its first long-range missile and nuclear weapon and Iran got closer to achieving the same goal. Conflict ignited between Israel and Lebanon, immigration legislation caused an explosion of national protest, and Tom Cruise erupted on Oprah's couch.

2006 was a year of victories. Italy won the World Cup on penalty kicks, but the real story was French star Zinedine Zidane, who, mistaking himself for a bull, headbutted an Italian player to the ground. Thanks to the wonders of YouTube, you

can watch unknowing civilians suffer the same fate, over and over again. Meanwhile, High School Musical made the Disney Channel cool again (that is up for interpretation), but it did not prove "Promiscuous" enough to beat out the "Irreplaceable" stars who reign Billboard.

On the other hand, Pluto was forced to relinquish its planet status, and the Winter Olympics happened, but no one remembers them. Like Lance, Floyd Landis won the Tour de France, but unlike Lance, Floyd got charged with steroid use.

2006 was a year of oddities. Chile and South Korea elected women to high positions, while we made fun of Katie Couric, upon her debut as first female anchor of CBS Evening News, for her outfit. And the argument that eating your spinach might kill you became justifiable.

2006 was a year of colors. Virginia became a purple state with the election of "Democratic" Senator Jim Webb, the enemy of horny people everywhere. And Senator Barack Obama began his 2008 presidential campaign, hoping to become our first black president.

Finally, 2006 was a year of Inconvenient Truths, or should I say "truthiness." School shootings became a trend we could not ignore. As temperatures continued to rise, we set closer and closer deadlines for oil's fall from grace. And Destiny's Child and the Black Eyed Peas just could not last forever. Bring on 2007.



Photo by Drew Smith

O.J. Book: Nobody Will Take a Look

Emmanuel Koduah
Asst. Business Manager

"If the glove don't fit, you must acquit," was the renowned line used by attorney Johnny Cochran during the murder trial of football star O.J. Simpson. This was twelve years ago, Simpson was acquitted, and Cochran has been dead for almost two years now yet Simpson is blowing another controversial sandstorm about this case with his written-but-never-released book *If I Did It*.

To understand the root of this controversy, one must understand the O.J. Simpson story. O.J. Simpson was a famous National Football League (NFL) superstar with the Buffalo Bills. After retiring, he became well known sports analyst on NBC's Sunday night football. He had it all, money, fame, and popularity.

Then, he began his less than graceful fall from grace. Simpson was accused of killing his wife Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman. The whole country was captivated by this trial as people chose sides on whether they believed Simpson was guilty or not.

The infamous trial lasted from January 24, 1995 until October 3, 1995. Despite compelling evidence and testimony against him, Simpson who claimed his innocence the whole time, was found not guilty of murder. However, Simpson was found guilty of wrongful death in a separate civil case. His downward spiral

continued as he was ordered to sell his house and other possessions and also to pay 8.5 million dollars to the family of the murder victims.

For the next twelve years, Simpson stayed out of the public eye. However Simpson sent another wave of controversy in November 2005 when word was released about his book, *If I Did It*, in which he provides a hypothetical situation of how he would have committed the murders "if" he had done it.

The public went into an outrage after learning of book. The outrage was so great that the publishers of the book were forced to stop the release of the book. Simpson claimed his only motive for writing the book was for profit to pay his bills.

Despite the public outrage, there may be a bigger issue than actually realized. Simpson is not the only athlete to have potentially gotten away with a crime. In 2004, National Basketball Association (NBA) star Kobe Bryant was accused of sexual assault and rape, but the case was dismissed after Bryant essentially paid the woman to go away.

Marcus Vick, former star quarterback at Virginia Tech and younger brother of NFL superstar Michael Vick, has a long rap sheet that includes crimes from driving under the influence to attempted robbery. However Vick has never served any significant jail time and is currently

making a six-figure salary in the NFL.

Baltimore Ravens (NFL) star Ray Lewis was charged with the murder of two people in Atlanta, Georgia in 2000. Lewis eventually pled guilty to a misdemeanor and served no jail time.

Even local football hero Sean Taylor seems to split his time between the playing field and the courtroom as he has been convicted of multiple crimes from driving under the influence to assault. Oddly, Taylor has never spent time in jail either.

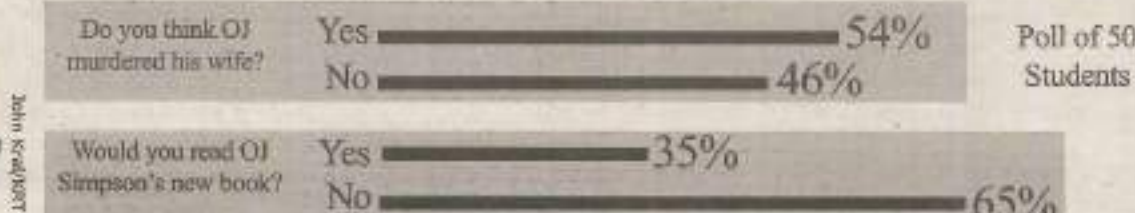
These are just a few of the many athletes to have possibly gotten with crimes. Their athletic abilities and social status seems to put them above the law. In the Simpson case, 9 of the 12 jurors believed that Simpson was less likely to have committed murder because he was a famous athlete. Oddly in the case of Lewis, all key witnesses suddenly changed their testimonies during the trial.

Despite the outrage over Simpson's book and possibly getting away with murder, I for one am not surprised. Not to say that all of these athletes are guilty of their accused crimes but the trend seems to show that if you are a famous athlete, the justice system is sure to look your way.



Photo by Ken Uwealyn

What Students Say About O.J.



Adele's A-B-C's

Getting Through Your Life
One Letter At a Time



Photo by Leticia Langley

Adele Hampton
Editor-in-Chief

It is a new year. Whoopie. The holidays are done; it is time to get back to work. No more fun, no more food, no more music, just blank, mundane work. Actually it is quite depressing. After all of the high excitement of the holidays, once January first hits, there is nothing to look forward to, except Valentine's Day, and who cares about Valentine's Day?

Katzenjammer; a hangover. No, this is not the type of hangover that is acquired from drinking large amounts of alcohol; rather it is the feeling of a hangover that is acquired from large amounts of holiday fun.

During the holiday season everything is colorful, bright lights shine, your body can take in excess amounts of food without gaining a single pound, magical music is heard playing overhead at all times. Then, the holidays end and you realize that the bright lights were just tacky plastic reindeer from Wal-Mart, you actually gained 20 pounds from all of the excess food, and the magical music that was heard over head was just another way to get you to buy something. Not to mention the fact that everyone is flat broke after the holidays and everyone knows that a life without money is no life at all.

It is almost sad how the holidays work. One minute a person is jingling all the way, and the next minute, that same person is sitting in class bored out of their mind. Such emptiness and sadness after a time of such warmth and joy is just cruel.

So, to avoid such depression I am going to pretend that it is still the holiday season. Yes, I will get strange looks from people when I burst into a rendition of "Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer" and I also understand that I am creating a fire hazard by keeping my tree up. But, the way I see it, the holiday spirit is not limited to just two months at the end of the year.

Limbo; to wear oneself out trying to come up with new ideas.

The thing about the new year is that it requires thinking. Every year countless numbers of people make New Year's resolutions. These are usually along the lines of, "this year I will try to be a better human being and respect all creatures of the Earth," or "this year I will not procrastinate," or "this year I will lose 50 pounds." The only problem is these resolutions only last about a week, and then everyone is back to being mean, procrastinators who do not exercise.

Another problem is that after a couple of years, people run out of resolutions. Instead of reusing previous resolutions, we end up with odd ones, such as "this year I will not wash a brand new red shirt with white clothes," or "this year I will remember to tip the pizza guy in order to prevent him from stealing my garden gnome."

So, for this New Year's I think I will just stick to the usual: this year I will try to be nicer to people and blah blah blah.

Reviving the Draft

America Does Not Need a Draft

Sam McCann

Wire Reporter

If Congressman Charles Rangel gets his way, college will no longer be the most pressing issue facing high school students.

Rangel, a New York Democrat in the House of Representatives, hopes to reinstate the draft, the likes of which this country has not seen since the Vietnam War. As hard as it is to fathom, a congressional proposition would have many seniors all over the nation no longer worrying about which college will accept them and what they will major in. Rather, their primary concern would be which service to enlist in and which part of the world they would be shipped off to.

In reality, there is little chance of such a bill actually being passed and enacted, consider the ramifications if it did. Would it, as Rangel hopes, prevent Congress from waging future wars because their children could potentially be involved? Or, would it spark widespread controversy and ultimately lead to chaos?

To answer these difficult questions, it is important to see what previous reactions to drafts in America have been. During the Civil War, the Union's implementation of a draft led to riots in New York, which included the hanging of several freed slaves. During the Vietnam War, those who opposed the draft organized mass protests, polarized the country, and resulted in violence.

Therefore, if history is any barometer, a draft would yield a great deal of violence at home. We still do not have Iraq under control; do we really need to create chaos at home?

Rangel has defended his belief in the need for a draft by explaining that there are far too many minorities currently enlisted in the armed forces. He believes that a perfectly representative army is more important than free will. Although there is a disproportionate number of minorities in the military, there is not necessarily anything wrong with that. Nobody forced any of these individuals into the service, it was their personal choice. If people believe that the military offers them the

greatest opportunity for success, then they are free to sign up. However, if someone feels that they are better suited to another line of work, that is their choice. "The army was intended to be a voluntary organization, and it should remain that way," said social studies teacher Annica McKenney. The government has no place to force a career path upon anyone. People should not have to fight for the freedom of others when they are not granted that same freedom.

Another argument in favor of the draft is that Congress would be less likely to wage future wars if their own children were involved. However, congressmen are expected to do what is in the best interest of the country, not themselves. If they truly believe a war is justified, they should support it, regardless of the burden it might place on themselves and their family.

A final problem the nation would face if a draft were implemented would be the issue of exemptions. Deciding who would be forced into duty would be even a more serious issue now than it was during Vietnam. Whether only men would be eligible for the draft, as has been the case in the past, or whether, in the spirit of equality, all American citizens would be qualified would surely stir up controversy. Beyond the gender issue, the grounds on which exemptions would be granted are debatable. The last time there was a draft, individuals who refused to fight based on religious beliefs, such as Muhammad Ali, were often persecuted.

At this crux of American history, where America can either reassert its place as a world leader or let the other nations of the globe dictate the future, America's soldiers are crucial. We need an army of troops loyal and dedicated to the cause, rather than a group of unwilling individuals pressed into service. The last thing the United States needs is a draft.



Photo by Brittany Collins

A Draft Could Be Beneficial

Stephanie Simmons

Special to The Wire

When many people hear the word draft, they cringe, thinking back to the days before 1973 when such a thing existed. This is partly because of its controversial ending after the Vietnam War when many men left the country to avoid the draft. However, that tumultuous ending, culminating in many protests and questions of the fairness about the drafting system, leads to negative connotations about the nature of a draft, not necessarily all of them truthful.

Many arguments for the draft include that of New York Senator Charles Rangel, who started all this talk of a reinstatement back in 2004 and again in November of this year. Where he reasoned to the Associated Press that, "There's no question in my mind that this president and this administration would never have invaded Iraq...if indeed we had a draft and members of Congress and the administration thought that their kids from their communities would be placed in harm's way." In other words, our country would not be so quick to get into a war if a draft were reinstated. There would not be so many knee-jerk reactions considering the fact that we would be dealing with both a younger demographic as well as people who may not want to be there.

As far as the war in Iraq goes, volunteer soldiers are dwindling, the death toll is rapidly approaching 3,000 troops lost, and the general feeling is that an Iraqi civil war is in the near future. Experts are saying that if we do not increase our troops, nothing will change, and we will in fact never get out of Iraq without

leaving the country in shambles. There is no way to increase troop levels without a draft of some kind.

Another reason for the draft is the military force, as it stands, is representative of America as a whole. Minorities and many people who not wealthy have taken too much the burden on their shoulders. To quote Rangel once more, "A disproportionate number of the poor and members of minority groups make up the enlisted ranks of the military, while most private

Americans are underrepresented or absent."

Of course, there should obviously be some restrictions placed on the draft, as with everything else. "I think the draft should be used to a certain extent,"

military really needs more soldiers," sophomore Sarah Harden. "However, I do not think the draft should involve people in school, just those who have completed their education, health, or personal lives not conflict with their ability to serve the Armed Forces." The proposed draft would allow for people to avoid the draft if they were continuing their education or had mental and physical disabilities.

What it all comes down to is the draft could be the only way to get our country out of this war. We cannot simply leave Iraq the way it is with no concrete government present and violence escalating. To stay in Iraq, we need more troops and unless recruits start falling from the sky, the draft is currently the best option. Though many people do not find the draft particularly appealing, there are valid reasons as to why it should be reinstated.



Photo by Grace Powell

Losing Sight of a Significant Dream

Grace Powell

Opinions Editor

He said he had a dream and the world listened.

American people wiped the dust out of their eyes and realized that there was more to a person than their race. Martin Luther King Jr. taught our nation about freedom and equality, a cause he was willing to die for.

Now, we are living his dream in a nation filled with equality and a lot of freedom. Yet, it seems as though our society is close to trampling over the moral foundations laid by the backs of past activists such as Dr. King.

If Dr. King were to step within the walls of our school, his reaction to all the different races blended together he would be wonderfully surprised. Yet, if he were to walk a bit further, if he were to listen and observe, he might find some aspects disturbing, one being the "n" word.

This term holds the history of being the most degrading name an African-American can be called.

Despite the recent outburst by former *Seinfeld* actor Michael Richards, who used the word toward two black males during a stand up comedian conflict, Dr. King might

be even more disappointed by the African-Americans use of this word.

In our school, I hear the term n— used as flippantly as "dude." Did past slaves and African-Americans fight so fiercely for equality just to hear their own people referring to the word that once humiliated and demeaned them? Senior Gentry Rogers said he only utters the "n" word under circumstances of anger and frustration. "I know how effective that 'n' word is, I know the history of it towards our people."

In 1954, the Supreme Court ruled the segregation occurring between blacks and whites to be unconstitutional. As a result of *Brown vs. Board of Education* and the rallying of many civil rights activists, the barrier between blacks and whites gradually began to crumble. However, it has never ceased to exist.

In 2002, a young girl, Gerica McCrary, strived to end segregation occurring in her

high school in Butler, Georgia. For years, the school had separate proms for black and white students. McCrary advocated to end the segregation and brought the proms together. I see glimpses of segregation occurring in our school cafeteria. Students tend to sit with people of their own race and culture.

While there is nothing wrong with this, Administrator of the Academy Carlton Carter, notices the separation as well. "Yes, I see segregation here, why? It's about education, about willingness to meet new people. I think as teachers and administrators in order to meet new people we would have to assign seats."

Why are we still fighting the same battles we thought had been defeated fifty years ago? "Because we're still divided," said Math teacher Kevin Johnson. He feels that fifty years is not enough to end a century of segregation. "There's always going to be that separation," he said.

Would Dr. King be proud? Similar responses circulated when this question was asked. Former business teacher Jean Wells

said, "I don't know if proud would be the word I'd say." She continued, "All of the things he stood for, it seems to be reversing character seems to be thrown out the window, especially among young people." Wells, an older African-American woman, feels that young people in our society do not appreciate the opportunity that has been laid before them. "Parents give too much, it comes too easy for them."

If Dr. King were to address these issues, he would only repeat what he said before, "We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools," or "Mankind must evolve for all human kind a method which rejects revenge, aggression, and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love."

Clearly, our nation is far from the place that it was over fifty years ago. However, we need to pay more attention to our actions. Students, particularly minorities, have to take advantage of the opportunity that our ancestors have fought for.

Dr. King once said, "I submit to you that if a man hasn't discovered something he will die for, he isn't fit to live." Let us be more passionate about freedom, equality and morality and fight for them fervently.



Photo by Brittany Collins

Getting Caught Write-Handed

Evan Fritz
Wire Reporter

Plagiarism is a problem that has touched many schools, including our own.

With the advent of the Internet, more and more information is available for students to use. However, with all of this information for student use, how can teachers ensure the originality of their students' work? Say hello to turnitin.com, a plagiarism detection website that makes the lives of teachers easier and the lives of students a little harder.

Turnitin is one of the most effective methods of preventing plagiarism today. The website combines its own search engine with a massive database of billions of pages from older and newer Internet articles as well as other papers submitted to turnitin.com.

The teacher simply submits a paper to the website and gets it back in the form of an originality report, highlighting any problems with plagiarism. The website is so effective in performing its task that, according to feedback presented on the website, almost all instances of plagiarism are identified.

What does this tool mean for students? Does this create too much scrutiny for the average student, or is this something that should be used by all teachers assigning research projects in order to ensure originality of students' work? Is plagiarism even a serious problem in our school?

According to English teacher Joan Reynolds, it is: "The Internet is responsible for almost all the plagiarism within this school." While figures are unavailable for our school, according to plagiarism.org, "58.3% of high school students let someone copy their work in 1969, and 97.5% did so in 1989," clearly signaling that plagiarism is a pervasive problem on a national level. This upturn is reflected in a growing number of plagiarism discoveries made using turnitin.com.

How do students perceive the plagiarism situation within our school? Many students think that the issue isn't as big a deal as it seems to be. "I just don't see it as a huge problem," said junior Davey Hoen. However, experienced and watchful Mrs. Reynolds said, "I'm afraid that plagiarism is rather prevalent in West Potomac." Through websites such as turnitin.com, teachers would have a

way to monitor the state of plagiarism within this school, and Mrs. Reynolds has used turnitin.com enough to see the growing trend in plagiarism.

Yet how frequently the website should be used is a touchy issue. "I think that it shouldn't be used all the time, only for big projects or papers," said senior Burd Boonyoo. However, in the end, it is the teacher's decision on how often it is used. "I usually use turnitin.com whenever I have a feeling, upon initial reading, that plagiarism is present," said Mrs. Reynolds. Turnitin.com's ease of use is one of the many reasons why teachers use it so frequently. "If I can use it, it is user-friendly," said Mrs. Reynolds.

The gradual emergence of a website such as turnitin.com raises questions about how closely teachers must monitor the work of their students. Do services such as turnitin.com provide excessive vigilance for the scope of the plagiarism problem? Should teachers have more faith in their students and not presume a need for plagiarism detection? Or maybe this is a website that can significantly contribute to safeguarding the integrity of all creative work.

Would You Like To Knit For a Bit?

Sydney Smith
Wire Reporter

Now that the weather is cooling down, many students make their own scarves, hats, and mittens to keep warm. The Knitting Club is our school's destination for these students to gather and knit together.

In order to be a member of the club, "You just have to want to knit. You do not have to know how, we teach," said sponsor and math teacher Rita Foss. Students can join the club at any time. Foss said, "Right now, we are just meeting. We mostly knit scarves because they are basic."

The club also wants to be involved in the community. Club president, junior Sara Kepple, said, "Our projects include knitting and donating our art pieces to those in need." Foss said that in the future, "We hope to give scarves and baby blankets to people who need them." Sophomore Aurore Michel is a member of the club. She knits, "so that I can make things for my family."

Michel joined "to relax and have fun" and stayed a



Photo by Lakeisha Langley

Some students knit in class instead of working.

member because, "I have a chance to relax and meet people who enjoy what I enjoy." Kepple said, "We are a group of cool kids who knit and break bread every Wednesday."

Unfortunately, some students are taking advantage of this after school pastime. Some students are bringing their knitting needles to school and knitting during their classes instead of doing their work.

English teacher Susan Paxton said, "I have only had one student knit in class and he was doing it rather than completing missed assignments in Flex. I don't think that class/instructional periods should be used for a hobby." Kepple disagreed and said, "It's a relaxing hobby that chills people out before tests. Also, it has been proven to increase one's concentration on other tasks." Paxton went on to say, "I think that having a club for a hobby that like-minded people enjoy is fine, but ... like other sports and hobbies, these activities should be reserved for after school."

The club meets every Wednesday in Mrs. Foss' room, room 208.

clubs making it seemingly difficult to present Amnesty's viewpoints. "Just because we have no opposing interest doesn't mean we can't share our side," said Schmalz.

Vesilind has offered to bring in people who can show the opposing viewpoints of the video. "Amnesty does try to right the ills of the world, but this video has a political bent that cannot be shown in school without another side," said Vesilind. Senior Aaron Harris, the coordinator between the international organization and our school was told to "find the middle ground" by Vesilind. He also added that he does understand how this is not censorship.

While videos must be approved by the administration for classroom use according to Fairfax County Public Schools' website, the guidelines lack any required content approval for after school clubs. Vesilind did say that if the county approved the video, she would allow the club to air it during their meeting.

Amnesty is still considering other options to take with the video, but until then, the screen will stay blank. "Some people don't believe it is happening," said Schmalz about U.S. torture. "It's frustrating that we aren't allowed to play this."



Photo by Jocelyn Finfrank

Members of the Amnesty Club discuss the video *Outlawed*.

Check Out These Websites!

Taylor Dankmeyer
Managing Editor

Everyone loves YouTube, Myspace, Google, and Facebook, but they do not call it the world wide web for nothing. There are plenty of other free sites out there that people simply must know about.

Music

Seeqpod.com: Stuck at school or not able to access a library of music? Maybe students would like to listen to a song their friend told them about for free, without downloading it? Sure, there are other sites that do this, but none as fast and easy as seeqpod. Simply click 'music' from the home page and then type in the song or artist into the search bar. The song plays immediately, no ads, no buffering, just the song.

Pandora.com, last.fm and purevolume.com: On Pandora, discover new music by typing in a favorite artist and getting familiar sounding music back. The site can even save artist playlists on Pandora once a student makes a username. Last.fm is very similar to Pandora, and purevolume.com is a great place to discover new music.



Graphic by Taylor Dankmeyer

Pandora.com is a useful site for finding new tunes to listen to.

School Help

Online Word Processors: Blackboard's digital drop box allows students to send files to teachers or keep files on the blackboard site. By doing this students can access the files from anywhere. However, if they cannot use that or do not want to, then online word processors are a great option. People can upload word documents to all three of them, and then add on or edit them and then save them again online. Students can even type up a document on the site. It is almost like having a "My Documents" folder online. Students can access any of their saved documents on any computer with internet. The most popular online word processors are ajaxwrite.com, docs.google.com, zohowriter.com.

Google calendar (www.calendar.google.com): Can't get organized? Forgetful? Then Google calendar can help! Once someone makes a username, they can add events to their calendar, and even get text message alerts for events before they occur. The alert can be sent any time between five minutes to an hour before the event/task starts.

Time Killers

Furl.com: A good online video site that gives students another option other than YouTube and Google video.

Slightly Illegal

The Wire in no way condones illegal activity or piracy on the internet. *The Wire* is simply printing the news.

Albumbase.com: Want an album? Once a person makes a free username, they can start downloading albums and opening these album files with software called winRAR (Google it).

http://tv-links.co.uk/: Watch TV shows online, for free. It is also very easy to use.

http://tinyurl.com/yjsuqo: Watch movies online, for free. Most movies come in parts that can range from 10-30 minutes long.

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Social Networking Sites Continue to Incriminate

Sara Mathewson

Style Editor

Social networking websites are becoming increasingly popular, especially with students at our school. Some of these sites are places where hundreds of "friends" can be obtained in a matter of days, and they are also places where anyone can display pictures and are available for all to see.

There were numerous pictures sent to principal Rima Vesilind from common websites including Myspace, Facebook, and Weebshots. These pictures include students not only from this school, but from other schools as well, participating in illegal activities, the most common of those being

drinking. The pictures show students with cans and/or bottles in their hands clearly marked as alcohol, but due to the fact that it cannot be proven exactly what is inside the cans or bottles, no criminal charges can be filed.

Senior Ryan Baker said, "The school has absolutely no right to tell us what to do and what not to do when we are not in school. They should be concerned with what goes on during school and on school grounds."

Although no criminal charges can be filed against students for these pictures, the administration at the school can, and are contacting parents of those students to inform them as to what is happening.

Vesilind said, "We, the administration, are primarily talking with students and parents to help them understand that what they put on those web blogs are not private." Junior Amanda Ramsey said, "It is an invasion of privacy, they are going into our private lives and punishing us for things that happen out of school."

By simply creating a personal account on Facebook, for example, joining a certain network, and becoming friends with just a few people can allow anyone access to enough information to suggest inappropriate behavior. Baker said, "The administration should not do anything because it is not their business. Suspensions are for breaking school rules during school; contacting parents is about as much as they should be able to do because there is nothing happening during school."

The pictures are not the only things sent into the school and the police. On Facebook, members can create groups for others to join. Group topics could include anything from support of an issue, to invitations to an event. The problem is students at this school created and joined a group labeled "F--- Mrs. Smith and Anyone Related to Her." Students believed parent Sally Smith told Vesilind about students drinking.

Thus, first of all, is slander simply because Smith was not the one who alerted the administration and the police as to what is on the websites. The pictures given to Vesilind are completely anonymous. "The packets of material that were sent to me and to the police came in unmarked, absolutely unidentifiable envelopes. I have no idea who sent them. However, I do know that some people who have been blamed for sending them in did not send them," Vesilind said.

Students may think the administration is simply looking for a way to punish them, but they are only trying to help solve a serious issue. Vesilind said, "This is not a school problem, it is a community problem. We are allowing parents and kids to be aware of something very detrimental. We want to warn kids to get it off the Internet."

One of the main reasons for making this information known is because these kinds of pictures and groups can affect a student's future. Colleges and employers check these websites when considering to accept a student or hire an employee. Vesilind said, "We don't want any of our students to have a difficult time getting into the colleges or jobs of their choice because of an indiscretion on the web."

"The Web is open to all and what I have seen from our students is not anonymous. They have pictures and their names readily available to anyone around the world who is interested in looking," Vesilind said.

The drinking is one issue, but the main point to make is to keep incriminating material off of the Internet. With the right knowledge, anyone can access profiles online and it could ruin a student's future. When asked what message she would like to send to the students, Vesilind said, "I am concerned about the drinking in this community. I do not want our students hurting themselves and the community."



Dallas Morning News/KRT

Pictures and information on websites such as Myspace.com and Facebook.com often end up in the hands of school administration through anonymous sources.

Culture Clash, from page 1

and someone jumped in the window," said one onlooker who preferred to remain anonymous, "the two kids started but everyone jumped in."

A freshman's brother, who was not one of the two who originated the dispute, was expelled for joining in to help his friends. Rumor was that the boy shattered another boy's jaw. Redfein discredited the gossip. "We didn't know who was hitting who," said Redfein. "We were there to watch but we all just looked at each other and it blew up."

Although the fight was off campus, the school still had the power to enforce punishment on the boys because they were under Fairfax County jurisdiction. "Until you get home, you are our responsibility," said Principal Rima Vesilind. The administration is adamant about not having cross-cultural problems. Over the past four years, the policies prohibiting gangs were strengthened, and zero tolerance was enforced. "We've had to get rid of fifteen or so males over the past three years. Four years ago the school had seventy documented fights, the second highest in the county behind Hayfield," Vesilind continued. The suspensions and expulsions wiped out all obvious gang activity on campus and almost eliminated school fights.

The Beacon Hill fight opened a whole new can of worms for the student body to grapple with. According to eyewitnesses, the majority of those participating in the fight were ninth graders. The freshman class SGA decided not only to acknowledge the racial hostilities, but also proposed to hold an assembly featuring a speaker who would promote cultural integration. The idea was debated in depth at the last officers meeting. "We can't hope to solve this issue because we don't know what the issue is," junior Jocelyn Garry said to the class. "[The

conflicts] start in middle school, and [the students] live with it their entire lives, not realizing they are part of a problem." The team finally decided that something as simple as an assembly could not end a problem embedded so deeply in our society.

"It goes like this," explained senior Demetrius Smith, "the [Hispanics] do their thing and the [African Americans] do their thing. And it's all about appearance. About who's hotter. And sometimes we're just gonna step on each other's toes... So is it cultural differences? Not so much. I just don't see any mixtures. [The school] is all cliqued out. Everyone stays to themselves."

If cultural differences were once part of the fuel for the seventy-some fights at our school, then students must have found at least a short-term solution to their disparities. They ignore and avoid other races entirely. Maybe no one could not have stopped it even if they had tried, but by not reaching out, self-enforced segregation is created.

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Drunk Driving Hurts Everyone

Emmanuel Koduah

Wire Reporter

By the time students at this school go through a normal school day, about thirteen people will have died from alcohol-related accidents. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, one person was killed by an alcohol-related crash about every 30 minutes in 2005.

Despite laws prohibiting it, drunk driving is a major issue that continues to take thousands of lives every year and injures many others.

Anyone over the age of 21 is prohibited from getting behind the wheel if their Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) level is above .08. Drivers under 21 cannot have a BAC level of .02 or higher.

Penalties for breaking these laws range anywhere from jail time to having your license taken away. Virginia, along with 44 other states, has instituted the Zero Tolerance policy, in which an underage person caught drinking and driving faces consequences such as immediate revoking or suspension of license.

Regardless of these harsh punishments, many people are still choosing to drink and drive. According to Health and Physical Education teacher Jean Coder, "They feel like they're okay [to drive]." Most people believe that they still have the ability to drive after drinking; however, "even a little alcohol can change your perception," said Coder.

Most people do not understand the dramatic influence of even just a little alcohol on their mind and perception. The average reaction time for a sober person is half a second and three-fourths of a second for an impaired person. "Alcohol decreases your reaction time up to three times," said Coder. All it takes is this little amount of time to cause major fatalities.

Unfortunately, sometimes innocent people have to suffer the consequences of the poor choices made by drunk drivers. Freshman Megan Haley's

grandmother was driving down the George Washington Parkway from church when she was hit by an intoxicated driver. Haley's grandmother was sadly killed upon impact. "My aunt was supposed to be getting married soon then this happened," said Haley. According to Haley, "My whole family was really upset, especially my dad. He doesn't like to talk about it."

Fatalities such as Haley's grandmother "happen way too often," said our school's resource officer,



Milwaukee Journal Sentinel/KRT

Drunk drivers often do not realize the potential hazards involved with getting behind the wheel until it is too late, and an accident occurs.

Daryl Davis, who has made numerous amounts of drunk driving arrests including one on school grounds in October.

To help reduce the occurrence of these accidents, there are many organizations such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), which produces television commercials and other programs to increase awareness. Haley's parents contributed to the cause of awareness by doing an interview for a driver's education video.

In our school, there is the Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD), which focuses on helping students not make destructive decisions such as drinking and driving. Despite the importance of such programs, a large responsibility does lay on the shoulders of the driver.

Countless advertisements and programs such as MADD and SADD are working to get out an important message. It is a simple message that carries heavy consequences: do not drink and drive.

Grab the Hottest New Products to Ring in the New Year

Grace Powell
Opinion Editor

Technology may be one of the leading changes that occurs this new year. From touch screen iPods to multi-task keyboards, the products are appearing to be more innovative and enhanced than ever. Any person not familiar with the whirlwind of gadgets may find themselves quickly left behind.

Junior Jeremy Bogdan knows a lot about technology, so much so that when asked about some of the new products coming in 2007, he could only explain them in separate categories, the first being the Sixth Generation iPod by Apple. "The rumor is, it's gonna be a touch screen," said Bogdan about the potential touch screen iPod device by Apple. According to AppleInsider.com, the touch screen will have a clear screen with sensors that respond by touch.

HP Corporation created a touch screen computer called the *Crossfire*. The computer contains many features; the Engadget web site describes a few such as a touch-enabled nineteen inch diagonal wide screen, built-in web camera, DVD burner and high-performance built-in 2.0 speakers.

Also along the lines of computers is a keyboard by Russian artist called the Optimus Keyboard. The keyboard is supposed to contain keys that have visuals and are coded for a number of sequences. With the Optimus, it would be possible to change fonts as well as work on programs such as Photoshop which is a digital imaging program.

Another expected product is the Blu-Ray Disk. Bogdan said, "Blu-Ray and HD-DVD are the next generation movie formats that companies are banking on. Rather than getting one format, such as DVD which we had for the last five to six years, the market is now split into two camps." He continued to explain, "The system can hold much more information, pushing the limit to what you can hold on a single disk."

Retailers are also working on a wireless Internet connection that can be achieved by using a cell

phone tower as well as combined cell phones and iPods and many other progressive products.

With technology appearing in so many attractive forms, some consumers are trying to determine whether the most recent products are a necessity or indulgence.

Graphic communications teacher Angela Minor said, "My personal opinion is absolutely not, none of this is a necessity." Minor believes that as corporations continue to come up with new products, the items many people previously lived without are becoming essential. "Before, high speed [Internet] was a luxury so now, it's becoming the norm," she said. She continued to explain how she thinks rising technology is not positive. "There is a big, big negative effect, people are not forced to be creative."

However, technology is positively changing the medical world. According to former medical health technologies teacher Doug Cantao, the medical world is advancing in areas of organ donation and prosthetics, as well as stem cell research. "[Technology] makes it easier for doctors to diagnose and treat patients," he said.

With the war in Iraq, medical advancements are becoming crucial to the well being of soldiers. Cantao explains that in our present age, injured soldiers who return from Iraq are receiving more flexible and comfortable prosthetics for any missing limbs.

For the unfortunate individuals who know little to nothing about the new technology upgrades, Bogdan said, "They need to catch up." Technology is escalating to heights some people have only dreamed of; staying updated with these trends will help to ensure that nobody is left behind.



Apple Computer/KRT

2007 will be a big year for new technology, due to the emergence of new products.

Students AVIDly Prepare for Life After High School

Mariya Ilyas
News Editor

Students in the AVID program can be identified due to their humongous binders, in which all their classes are neatly organized. Our school sponsors a program, known as the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program to help students succeed in high school, get into college, and manage time wisely.

According to avidonline.org, "AVID is an in-school academic support program for grades 5-12 that prepares students for college eligibility and success." The site also reported that AVID places academically average students in advanced classes.

Health and Physical Education and AVID teacher Denise Green said, "I believe in the program [AVID] and what it stands for. [Basically] I teach my kids how to play the game called high school."

Sophomore Julian Holden said, "I like the program because it helps me stay organized in all my classes." The program helps students prepare for college life as well as how to effectively manage their time after high school. Things like what courses to take, how to study, how to take Cornell notes, how to stay organized, and how to succeed are taught in this course. "I teach them time management, study skills, test taking skills, and organizational skills. I prepare them for the SAT and we have private seminars as well," said Mrs. Green.

This is the first year AVID was implemented at our school and it will continue again next year for sophomores and juniors. It is

actually an international program, offered to any school with the proper resources, funding, and professional development. It is especially designed for "students [who] hunger for more challenging coursework but fear failure. Their potential lies dormant, waiting to be recognized, encouraged, and supported," reported avidonline.org.

"I love being in the AVID program because we are like a family. We help each other out in our problems and try to find out how to make school easier," said sophomore Evelyn Caicedo. This gives all the more reason for Mrs. Green to enjoy teaching her AVID seventh period class. "I love [teaching] this class because I can actually see myself making an impact on students. I didn't have someone to prepare me [when I was young], and [therefore] I am a mentor, parent, friend, and advocate for these students," she said.

The program plans to visit college campuses around the area to give students an opportunity to experience college life. "We're gonna take field trips to colleges in D.C. to see how college life is like," said Holden.



Photo by Lakeisha Langley

AVID teacher Denise Green teaches students to get organized.

Teen Mom, from page 1

not to show students how to use contraceptives was debated. Parents are afraid if their children know how to use condoms, they will be more likely to have intercourse, or that these classes encourage sexual activity. Strothers said, "We try not to encourage or suggest that teens are having sex, but we try to correct wrong information. Many students are misinformed, so we try to correct that." There are also numerous pills, patches, and rings that are available to teen girls. However, while this technology is easier to use, more convenient, and even available without parental consent, many teens do not know about it or are embarrassed to use it. With these new technologies, health teachers are increasingly pressured to answer questions by curious students, many of which they do not have the answer to, or cannot respond to under school rules.

No matter what our health classes do or do not teach, no amount of discussion can prepare a student for parenthood. Teen parents face challenges that come with raising a baby in addition to balancing their schoolwork and trying to succeed.

Washington said, "It's like fifty-fifty. It's hard sometimes, but half the time I get help from my parents. I would not say it is easy, but I get a lot of help."

With support from home, it is proven that a teen parent will graduate high school, with the child growing up with a normal life. Child Development/Parenting teacher Barbara Yancy agreed, "The students have a higher chance of success if they have help from home."

Washington's decision to raise a child was difficult, and some teens disagree with the choice she made. Although adolescents may feel invincible, the reality is that teen girls have a ninety percent chance of becoming pregnant within the first year of having unprotected sex, according to the Center for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention.

Sex can add emotional complications to the already stressful life of a teenager. Because of gender roles in our society, being a pregnant teenager is sometimes accompanied with a reputation. "I think that guys should be held responsible for their actions. So should girls, but [girls] take most of the blame. Guys are basically praised. It is a double standard," said senior Elizabeth Daleh.

Even though life as a pregnant teen can be difficult, life as a teenage mother is even harder. However, Washington has embraced her new role in life saying, "I love my daughter to death. I think teenage girls out there...think having kids will stop them from doing what they want to do. Do not let anyone tell you that, because you can."

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January Calendar

January 5 th	at Lunch
• Senior Bowling night (11pm-4am)	• Night of One-Acts
• District orchestra	January 19 th -20 th
January 9 th	• Night of One-Acts
• US navy recruiters at lunch	January 22 nd
• Wheel chair rugby	• WPPTSA meeting
• WABC meeting	January 23 rd
January 10 th	• US Navy recruiters at lunch
• Concert and Drama for tiny tots	January 25 th
• NHS meeting	• Student Holiday
January 11 th	• Pyramid choral concert
• Concert and Drama for tiny tots	January 26 th
• Cabaret Night	• Student Holiday
January 15 th	January 27 th
• Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday	• SAT test
January 17 th	January 30 th
• Forensic Debate meet	• Wheel chair Rugby
• Night of One-Acts	January 31 st
January 18 th	• Latino parents night
• US marine recruiters	

Faith for the New Year

I believe that the sun rises every morning and sets every night. I believe the earth revolves around the sun. I believe in America and freedom. I believe in my family. I believe in my friends. I believe in the impoverished child with AIDS. I believe in hope in the future. I believe in God. I believe Jesus died on the cross and rose again. I believe in the Holy Catholic Church. I believe in Christmas, the birth of Jesus, and Santa Claus.

Soon after I was born, I was baptized as a Catholic. My parents took me to mass every Sunday. By the time I was in second grade, I received my first Holy Communion. About six years later, I was confirmed. Yet this was all something I was given. I never had to work for my faith. I never had to want it, it was always there. But how do you believe in something you've never been made to want?

It is hard and sometimes it seems impossible, but that is part of the challenge. This belief, this faith, is so different from our everyday life. It is a foundation, one of hope and needing a home I can always turn to. But it almost seemed to be too easy.

Just before I entered high school, we moved from a rural area in North Carolina to urban northern Virginia. This move also provided a change in faith. In North Carolina, I did not have access to a good Catholic church, so [my family and I] went to a Baptist church. This gave me reason to question my faith.

When I moved to northern Virginia, I joined a Catholic youth group. But the challenge of keeping my faith in North Carolina made me much more appreciative of the Catholic beliefs I was born into.

- Junior Colleen Gottlieb



Photo by Drew Smith

Junior Colleen Gottlieb

Necessities for Cell Phones

I believe that, in 2007, most teenagers at West Potomac will go crazy if their cell phones get taken away. In my family, my sister Kate, my brother Josh, and I are constantly using our phones. I am not going to lie, if I lost my phone for longer than three hours, I would get extremely uncomfortable. Anxious, nervous, and apprehensive are only some of the feelings I would acquire without my prized possession.

These feelings would only get stronger if it was a weekend night. The only thing that would be going through my mind is, "I wonder what important calls I am missing right now." I know that my cell phone is really ugly, but I could care less as long as I have that communication link to my friends. I understand that this sounds really weird, but the fact that cell phones are almost a necessity for teenagers is entirely true. This is why I believe, in 2007, that teenagers will go crazy without their cell phones.

- Freshman Kelly McFarland



2001 Attacks Affects Student

9/11, for most people, was a sad day in their lives. For me, it was not just a sad day; it woke me up to realize what it meant to be an American. I found out that we are so lucky to have all the freedoms that we have: freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom of petition, freedom of religion, and freedom of assembly. We also have a democracy, which a lot of countries do not have. What must it be like to be ruled by a dictator who says you have to do this or else you and your family will be killed and he can get away with it like it was nothing? In America, nobody can do that without getting punished. Until 9/11 came

I knew all of this, I just never acknowledged. After 9/11, I found out how good it was to have all of taking it for granted. I could have said I was proud American before, but not knowing if I believed it as I said it. I believe in my country. I can now say with pride and dignity that I am American.

9/11 was a horrible day, knowing how many people lost their lives. Firefighters risking their lives for others, they are heroes to me.

- Freshman Nick

Freshman



Photo by Brittany

Freshman Nick

This I Believe

Based on a popular 1950s radio show, the National Public Radio (NPR) has a series of programs that invite people from all walks of life to share the personal philosophies and core values that shape their lives. To read more "This I Believe" stories, visit www.thisibelieve.org.

The Importance of Religion

If I am to state what I believe, I will not waste any time; I will move straight to the biggest, most important question of belief, the one that all the others lead to. And to that question, I will say that I do in fact believe in God. However, I probably do not believe in your god, since everyone has their own unique idea of God, regardless of whether he/she believes that God exists. Somebody who takes cues from a religious text might call me an Atheist. I will freely admit that I do not follow the creed of any organized religion. But please don't think for one minute that I believe in a hopeless world, devoid of direction and purpose. It is true that I believe humans created in their

minds the idea of God. But that doesn't mean that God is any less real.

Here is what I believe: that an idea as magnificent as God can be conceived in the human mind is proof that God exists within that mind. The force of salvation that we have described in thousands of different ways was never a physical entity, but the steps to reach that goal were human tasks. Perfection is not real. But accepting living with our imperfections can be. Making that choice could be our salvation. And so, in that spirit, I will not wish you a happy New Year, but rather ask you to help make it one.

- Junior Calvin Hentges

Children Can Make A Difference

Let me tell you a wonderful story.

Children live in a world of color, sounds, feelings, emotions, encounters, and more importantly to me, language. I want to tell a story, a narrative, an autobiography of children in science, and learning. There is a story to be told. I need to tell it. But first, in my own right, I need to deconstruct so that I can co-construct these stories. So where do I go from here? I move forward with my firm belief that children can learn best from using their "voice" as an authentic means to construct contextual meanings in their life and the life they live in this world. And we as educators have a job to tell their story, to listen, to record, and to learn from them as they in turn learn from us. Yes, a story. I hope in time at the conclusion of my journey, I can tell you a wonderful story.

- Chemistry teacher Mr. Kerns



Photo by Lakeisha

Chemistry teacher Mr. Kerns

Faculty

Happiness in Christianity

"Seeing is believing." Well, at least for most things, but what I believe in cannot be seen with the eyes; instead it can only be felt with the heart. I believe in God. Personally, I cannot imagine a life without the presence of God; a God whose love challenges me to not only respect others and love others more, but myself as well. It is by God's teachings and the teachings of the Catholic/Christian Church that I live my life. I face the same pressures that every other teenager and adult faces, but since I so firmly believe in God and His love for me, I strive to live a moral life that will glorify Him which helps me to avoid temptations such as drinking or sex. Deciding to live a moral life has paid off. Although some of those things will give me a temporary high, the self-respect I have from avoiding those things has left me a permanent satisfaction that is unsurpassed.

I believe God is the key to my true happiness. It is like having a 24/7 lifeline that is always there and knows you better than you know yourself and helps you to become the best that you can if you will only let Him. My self-esteem is high because I now I am created as a beautiful human being in His very image, as is everyone else. Also, by trying to glorify God, I find that I have confidence and a true sense of self-respect because I have not subjected myself to things that will degrade me. I am not going to lie and say it is easy to live up to God's standards because I know I make mistakes all the time, but I do believe it is worth the challenge. The happiness and self-worth that is obtained, the love that is spread, the chance at eternal life; I believe there is no greater success.

- Junior Jess Dixon

Juniors



Photo by Lakeisha Langley

Junior Calvin Hentges



Photo by Drew Smith

Junior Jess Dixon

Henderson and Wolverines "Fly" to the Top

I believe that in 2007, our West Potomac football team will go to Districts. The reason that I see how hard the football players work and how much time and effort they put in. I would hope their efforts would pay off in big ways. I believe that our football program that parental involvement and community interest are growing everyday and that each a better person for being involved in football. I believe that working hard for kids pays can fly. I believe I can reach the sky. I think about it almost everyday; I spread my wings. Believe I can soar. See me running through that open door. I believe I can fly. I believe

- History teacher

Hail to the Cubs

I believe with quite some certainty that this is the year that my beloved Chicago Cubs will win the World Series. For all you baseball fans out there who know the whole story about this storied franchise, bear with me. For those who have no clue, they have not won the World Series since before any of your grandparents were even born (1909) and have not even played in the series since 1945. A couple years back, they were oh so close, but yet again could not quite make it in (unfortunately because of a fan, Steve Bartman, and a costly error by shortstop Alex Gonzalez). Although Cubs fans say that "this year is our year" every year, 2007 is truly the year of the Chicago Cubs. For one, the two other teams that have had a cursed past: the White Sox (Curse of the Sox) and Red Sox (Curse of the Bambino) have won in the past three years. As for the Cubs, I think we could take a Billy goat any day. Also, you can't argue with the money that owner Hendry has put into the team. He signed Alfonso Soriano through two thousand one hundred and fourteen with a lengthy contract while taking the hometown hero out of Washington. He went out and renewed the contracts of both Aramis Ramirez and Kerry Wood who are quality players. To top it all off, he signed two proven pitchers in Ted Lilly and Jason Marquis. With abundance of heavy hitters and quality pitchers, the Cubs will at least be a scary team. Although it seems impossible to most, I do believe that the Chicago Cubs will win the World Series in 2007.

- Junior Matt Husband



Photo by Drew Smith

Junior Matt Husband

The Benefit of Family and Friends

I believe in the value and importance of friends and family. I believe I have come to value what it means to be a true friend. From my friends, I have come to believe in the power of loyalty, honesty, and kindness - three qualities that make someone trustworthy, reliable, and enjoyable to be with. With these qualities, I know I can value their opinions and their respect. I also believe in family. My family has always been there for me one

hundred percent. With my supportive, caring, reliable, and honest family, I have learned how to respect others and what it means to be a part of such a loving network of people.

I believe an important part of maintaining these relationships is through communication and interaction. From this, I believe it is important to stay open-minded and be willing to try new things because it helps you to be more appreciative and accepting of others. I

think every individual has something unique to bring to the table and their input and ideas help us to learn from one another. I believe all of these things: family, friends, trustworthiness, honesty, staying open-minded, and communication; they are what govern me as an individual and have made me the person I am today.

- Sophomore Jessie Reeves



Photo by Lakeisha Langley

Sophomore Brianne Wilson

R-E-S-P-E-C-T

As we all know, the saying is you cannot judge a book by its cover. You cannot say a single word about it until you have read the pages of the book. The point is when people talk about one another, I believe that it is rude.

Not only is this rude, but also disrespectful. Judgment by looks does not prove anything, but I guess people make them just to have something to talk about. God made everybody to be different and feel different, so when people talk about same-sex marriage, it bothers me. These people have the right to be with whomever they please. You cannot make a law stating that you want same sex marriages banned because you cannot change the way people feel about one another. If the people in this world would just understand the fact that so many people are trying to fight for their right to marry the one they love, we would not have any problems like this. I am pretty sure these people hurt deep down inside because nobody understands the way they feel, the people against them fail to realize that they are hurting many hearts and continue to do so as long as their pleasing themselves.

- sophomore Shamera McDaniel

Sophomores



Photo by Lakeisha Langley

Sophomore Jessie Reeves



Photo by Lakeisha Langley

Sophomore Shamera McDaniel

e in 2007

is a weekly program, "This I Believe," that allows "Americans from their daily lives." Faculty and students from our school share their thoughts. If you have comments or suggestions, please email them to wpwire@wpwire.com. If comments are not printed, go to www.wpwire.com.

Dangerous Fruits and Veggies

I believe that you can live your life to the fullest without ever touching or eating a fruit or vegetable. Yes, I have managed to live 46 years so far without those nasty things. Could someone please explain to me what they actually do for you? Before you all come at me for this, I am not saying I have managed to live a healthy and happy life. I played sports in high school, I got married and had a family, and yet here I am, still healthy (well, somewhat anyway, I do work as West Potomac). Just so I do not offend any of you diabolical vegetarians out there I want you to know I did manage to raise five kids, three who like fruits and vegetables and one of them happens to be a strict vegetarian. So, I can cook vegetables but I choose not to eat them, and to all those people who think you need them to survive, hi-ho, I am doing just fine without them.

- Gary Jones



Photo by Lakeisha Langley

Secretary Ms. Jones



Word of Voice Through E-mail

Knowledge is one thing that is dear to us. We can lose every worldly possession and yet maintain knowledge. I do random e-mails sometimes about some interesting topic and some 25 people get them. And they actually enjoy these weird facts. I also have done requests about certain topics. This free distribution no doubt will pay off for friends and it also helps me research ideas of my own. Learning does not always have to be in a school environment but friends can communicate these lessons. You will find that information you look up or get told by friends is a lot easier to

remember than facts in school. This is why I find it so important to talk and send mass e-mails. Simply one way of describing me is laid back, but not to the point of laziness. I believe that no one should dwell on something too much. Worry won't help you at all. Life is no game but a few little mistakes won't cause disaster. Even a few things you may think are huge you may look back upon and think how stupid it was to worry. The well-known phrase "Step back and smell the roses" can actually be more beneficial to you overall performance. I have found that everyone works better when calm and not always worried. Many may disagree with a lot of what I said but think about and you may find it making you see life differently.

- Senior Jeremy Rocke



Photo by Drew Smith

Senior Jeremy Rocke

Seniors



Photo by Brittany Catina

Senior Hedison Doe



Photo by Lakeisha Langley

History teacher Mr. Henderson

We're All Together in this Fight

Most times in our lives, we confront events that sometimes result in unexpected circumstances. To survive an event, we feel it necessary to blame others for the things that went wrong, and most often, we refuse to take responsibility for a failure. We perceive that if someone else was to take the fault, leaving ourselves free from any possible questioning of what went wrong, we could relieve any sense of accountability, thus compelling ourselves to believe that we did not fail. If we could assess our failures, we could learn from them and avoid having to remake the same mistakes. We should also learn to discontinue the act of having to always point fingers when things go wrong, instead of working to find a better result. If we could all learn to see the errors of our ways, before focusing on the errors of others, we could see that the people we are most likely to hate would turn out to be ourselves.

Growing up, most of us were taught by

our parents or elders to refrain from being judgmental. This skill is a very valuable one to know, follow, and understand, because it helps in encouraging everyone, to broaden their spheres of influence, whether at school, work, or even at a religious establishment. Widening our influences, allows us to see the world through a different approach. By expanding our influences, we begin to understand why people conduct themselves in certain ways and how we could act towards one another. By having a broad view on the world, we can be able to affiliate ourselves with every single person we meet. If we could see each other as friends and colleagues, rather than as members of different classes and status of society, we could work together and put what makes us different behind, and set forth what we all have in common, while working hard to resolve our differences.

- Senior Hedison Doe

Racial Differences

It is the obsession in life over racism which only increases that problem. If we are to ever treat people equally, we should stop obsessing about racism. The continual talk about how people were once treated differently only makes everyone think about the differences that people share. If those differences were not clearly stated then the amount of racism today would be less. All young adults today wouldn't differentiate people as much as they do now and just because they were taught repetitively about those differences.

Every day people notice factors that make people different, like that they are African American or that they are Mexican, or Asian. We classify people based on those factors because we were taught about what separated those ethnic groups in history. From those lessons, we learned about their hardships that they faced in the past and how they conflicted with each other. For instance, the Crusades were conflicts between Muslims and Christians and they separated them into groups based on their religion. Then in the 1900's, there was the problem of racism against African Americans in the United States. When that was resolved to honor the hardships created by that racism Black History Month was created.

Also, Hispanic History Month was created for historical reasons. Because of these months, we learn a lot about the history of racism and how in the past it affected us. Because of that knowledge, we become all too aware of what differences used to separate people. We then focus in on those differences and notice anything that could be called discrimination. Because of that, everyone watches what they say around people in order to not insult them. But in being so careful, you emphasize those differences, make them larger and keep the problems of past racism alive today, never creating the equality so hoped for by Martin Luther King Jr. and many others.

- Sophomore Brianne Wilson

Taking a Spiritual Journey

Do you know people who don't place any value on who they are? Instead of looking within for value, they allow what's on the outside to determine their worth. Whenever you're more concerned with obtaining things rather than building up your inner worth, you'll be confused and messed up from the floor up. Failure to value who you are will allow you to put up with anything and everything. Unless you value you and all that God created you to be, then you'll allow others to use, abuse, and misuse you. I want you to know it's your values that gives you value as a person.

In this spiritual journey, we can learn a few things about having strong values and standards. The first lesson learned is that your values and standards are defined by what's on the inside and not predicated by what's on the outside. If you know God for yourself, you realize that you're part of a special family. With God on your side, you got it going on. The good news is that He loves you for you. The second lesson learned is that your values and standards should never be compromised to get something or someone. When you compromise who you are, you're telling God that He made a mistake in creating you. As long as you live according to God's principles, you've got more than you can imagine. In his letter to the people of Colosse, the apostle Paul deposited these words of wisdom, "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ." I like this because this tells us that we are to rise above the standards and morals of this world and accept what God has for us. Please don't miss this last lesson - your values and standards will weed out those people in your life who are trying to hinder you. That's my word for you. You're more than money or material things, because you're a child of Almighty God. As I close this message, you need to know where you place your value will determine your value as a person.

- Senior Amber Carter

Tackling the Issues

BCS: The Only Way That Makes Sense

Hooff Cooksey

Sports Editor

Starting December 18, every night there will be a college bowl game, where there is no tomorrow for either team playing. This day begins the end of the college football season when certain teams are invited to play in certain bowl games. An invitation to a bowl game is like making it to the playoffs because this takes the place of the playoffs for an NCAA Division I football team.

From the start of the off-season to the final regular season game, all college football teams are striving to be good enough to play in one of the four Bowl Championship Series (BCS) games or, more importantly, the championship game. Over the years, this form of a playoff has caused a great deal of controversy among sports reporters, athletes, coaches, and fans. Many people believe that there should be a playoff similar to the college basketball playoff system or the NFL playoff. In reality, however, what is the big deal with the BCS?

College football should keep its bowl game system the way it is for these reasons:

1. There are too many teams in college football to have a playoff system.
2. All college teams play different schedules that have different skill levels. For example, the University of Florida played many ranked teams who competed for a ranking in the top ten; whereas, West Virginia University played many unranked teams who were an easy win for WVU. How would the playoffs be made when some schools have an easier game schedule than others?
3. The BCS rankings are determined by a computer that bases its rankings on the strength of the team's schedule and its statistics. Many people believe that a machine should not determine how good a football team is; however, there are also rankings made by coaches and by the press that help determine the rankings of

the teams. This system of computer and human rankings provides for a perfect balance in determining how good a team really is. This system is not flawless but it's the closest thing there is to a fair system in college football.

College football is great because it is different from every other sport in our country. The athletes and teams strive to play their best in every game, every week, because one loss could ruin the hopes and dreams of a

season. A season with two or three losses is a success in some people's minds but at the end of the season the teams with these records will be playing in a low bowl game and not a BCS game. College football needs to keep every aspect of its season, its teams, its coaches, and its players the same, because it can not get any better.



Photo by Brittany Catina

The BCS is Simply a Mess

Sam McCann

Asst. Sports Editor

For college sports fans everywhere, the arrival of March signifies the onset of Madness. 65 teams are still in contention for the national championship and the top teams are left clinging to their title dreams against a group of nobodies from a small college. No one would ever dream of changing the annual celebration of competition that is the NCAA Basketball Tournament.

January also brings madness into the lives of college sports fans, but in a radically different way. January Madness is simply a debate over the legitimacy of the college football title contenders. Rather than frantically checking the scores to keep up with all the upsets as they do in March, fans are left to wait out a few dozen games with no championship

implications, while drifting slowly to a climax scripted by old men and computers, instead of on the playing field.

Throughout the month, only two, perhaps three teams have a shot at the title. The title is right—college football needs to implement a playoff system.

For the past eight years, college football fans have been subjected to the horrendous BCS, or Bowl Championship Series, system, which has generated far more controversy than excitement. For every epic

game, like last year's Texas-USC showdown, there were far more perceived snubs, most recently the exclusion of Michigan from the title game. It is an outrage that the system prevents all but two teams from showing their championship merit on the field in the postseason.

Luckily, there is an incredibly easy solution to this problem: implement a playoff system similar to that which college basketball fans are annually treated to. Scrap the entire BCS system and allow the Associated Press (AP) Sportswriters Poll, a broad-based, globally respected news service, to determine the top eight teams in the nation, *a la* basketball selection committee. Then, have those top eight teams settle the championship on the field in a playoff. This would make the teams left out far less significant, since the gap between a snubbed third place BCS team and their perceived title shot, and a ninth place AP team and their perceived shot would be vast.

College football fans would be able to enjoy nearly a month's worth of meaningful games. Looking at the bracket, if a tournament were in place this year, 2007 would kick off with an incredible set of games. Best of all, it would end with a single, definitive winner, something the BCS can simply not guarantee.

College football needs to bring new meaning to January Madness. The only way to do so is to institute a playoff system.



Photo by Brittany Catina



Eric Seals/KRT

The game between Ohio State and Michigan helped determine who would be number one in the BCS ranking system. But is the BCS itself flawed?

Local Teams Begin March Towards Tournament

Taylor Dankmyer

Managing Editor

With Georgetown, Maryland, George Washington, and George Mason, DC has turned into quite a college basketball town. Georgetown is on the road to returning to what they used to be in the 80's, Maryland is trying to get back into the NCAA tournament, and George Mason and George Washington are coming off breakout seasons.

The Georgetown Hoyas, the highest pre-season ranked local team, started off at #8 in the country, but have dropped out of the top 25 because of losses to mediocre teams Oregon and Old Dominion. They could not pull out a win against Duke, either. However, this team still has a lot of potential to do well this year. The Hoyas are fairly young, with four freshman, two sophomores, and five juniors. Furthermore, the two seniors on the team rarely play all season (about ten minutes a year). The two starting juniors who were both

on the pre-season All-Big-East team, Roy Hibbert and Jeff Green, are the clear leaders, but the 7'2" Hibbert is still developing and Green has been inconsistent so far this year (with a combined fifteen points in the Hoyas three losses).

The Maryland Terrapins, who have struggled the last few years especially because of disciplinary problems, is looking to get back on the national stage. At #22 in the nation, they have not played a currently ranked team this year, and probably will not play one until deep into their conference season.

The George Mason Patriots (4-4) magical season last year was great, but do not be expecting the same thing this year. Mason lost its top three scorers and three of its starters from last year. With clutch performers and leaders like Jai Lewsi and Tony Skinn gone, Mason is in trouble. Do not expect much out of George Mason this year. However, last year's run will give them some decent recruits for the years to come.

The George Washington Colonials are set to have an unpredictable season. The fact that the Colonials lost four of their starters is not good, but do not count them out yet. The strength of this year's team is its guard play. Senior Carl Elliot (15.7 points per game) and Maurice Rice (13.7 points per game) are ready to play. Down low, Regis Koundhia (10.8 points per game), Rob Diggs (12.7 points per game), and fifth-year senior Dokun Alangbade (6.2 points per game) round out the rest of a solid starting five. However, the question remains whether they can get into the NCAA tournament with such a weak schedule. Look for this team to be a National

Invitational Tournament (NIT) invitee.

Overall, Georgetown and Maryland look the best, and are both poised to go deep in the NCAA tournament. Georgetown will develop through the year, and will definitely be fun to watch (they do not call them the "heat attack Hoyas" for nothing). It looks like Maryland's players are finally playing up to their potential, and other ACC teams should watch out. No matter what, it is clear that college basketball is back and stronger than ever in the DC metro



George Bridges/KRT

Roy Hibbert, the 7'-2" Georgetown center, was a key player in the success his team had last year.

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Kobayashi Takes Command

Jon Yoo
Sports Editor

Leadership is the key to success in athletics. It can improve the talent, ability, and athleticism of the team. With the winter athletic season underway at our school, this is an opportunity for captains in all sports to take charge and play a part in the success of their sport. However, there is one captain that stands out from the rest. Sophomore Gen Kobayashi was chosen to be one of the swim captains, making him the youngest winter captain this season.

When Kobayashi first received the news that he was named one of the swimming captains he thought that there was a mistake. "I was surprised because a senior is almost always selected," he said. However, this was no mistake. Kobayashi was given the title based on his swimming accomplishments and outgoing personality. He is said to be committed and always trying to get better by asking the veterans on the team for constant advice.

At the same time he is laid back, and a good communicator that puts the team first. Senior Brendan McDowell said, "Gen is a very fun, outgoing person, but he

has a seriousness about him. He befriends everyone and is able to give them advice in a direct manner. This allows him to lead the team in a professional way."

Kobayashi began swimming at the age of six. He made the All-Star team for his pool four times, and broke the 50 meter breaststroke record during his time on the team. Last year, he was one of the few freshmen to make it to districts.

However, his role on the team has changed drastically this year. As captain, he will be responsible for being the main communicator between the coach and team. Kobayashi is taking his role to a different

level. "I think I can bring spirit and unity throughout the team. Also since I am an underclassman myself, I can just try to relate and reach out to all the swimmers on the team," he said.

The expectations and standards that our team is facing due to this year's talent has placed even more pressure on Kobayashi and his new role. Kobayashi admits that he feels this by saying, "I feel some pressure as captain, because I have so many more roles that go beyond just being a swimmer. I need to have our swimmer's back and make sure that they excel and are having fun."

He has earned the team's respect and trust. McDowell put it perfectly by saying, "He is a good person, and

will make a fine captain. He is competitive yet laid back, so there is no question to his role as captain."



Photo by Drew Smith

Kobayashi is one of the top swimmers on our school's swim team. Here he begins his warm up laps before practice.

The Woes of the Redskins Continue

Defining "Redskin's Football" is the Key to Success in 2007

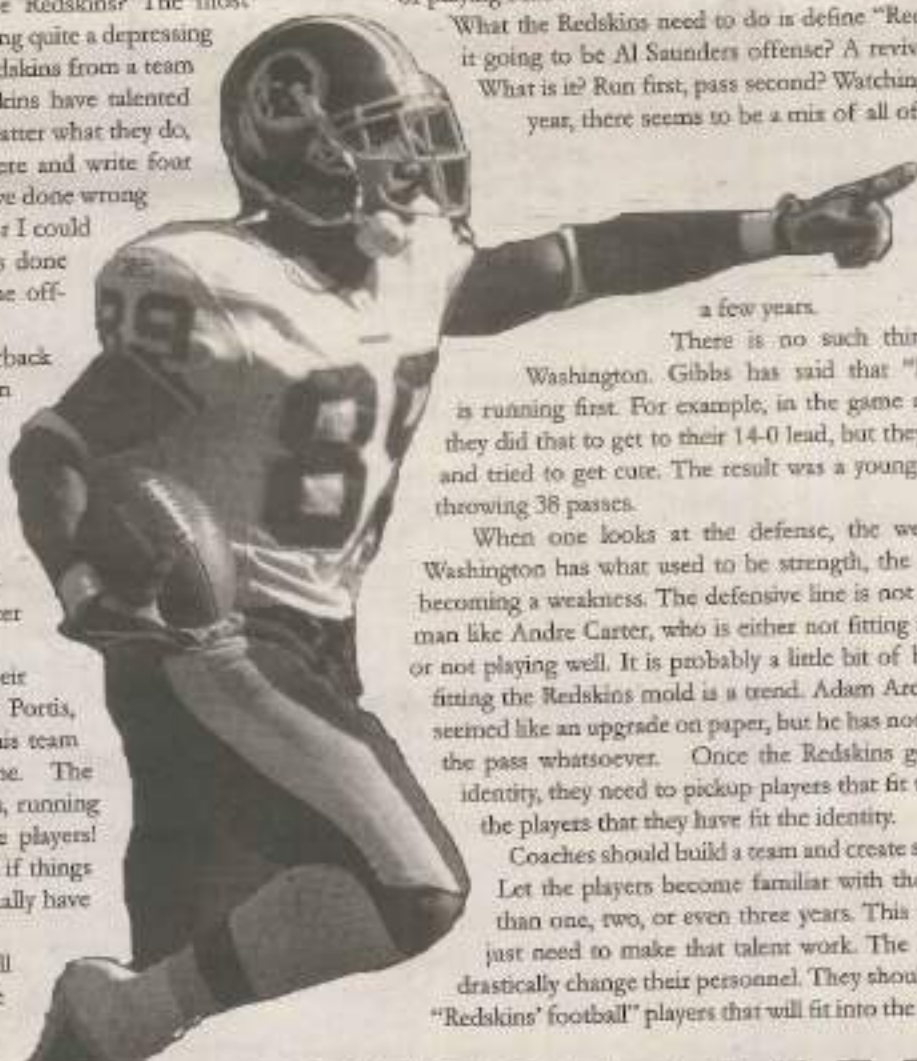
Taylor Dankmyer
Managing Editor

What should we do with the Redskins? The most frustrating team in the NFL is having quite a depressing season. See, what separates the Redskins from a team like the Browns, is that the Redskins have talented players, but still cannot win. No matter what they do, it never works. But I could sit here and write four pages about what the Redskins have done wrong the last few (more like 10) years, or I could try to look at what this team has done right, and what they can do in the off-season to get better.

No matter what you say, the quarterback is the most important position on the field. The Redskins did not rush Campbell in, thankfully, and now he already has some experience. The Redskins QB position, for the first time in a long time, has a bright spot. Here is to hoping he turns out better than Patrick Ramsey.

More powerful, though, is their running game. With Clinton Portis, Ladell Betts, and T.J. Duckett, this team should run the ball all the time. The Redskins have the wide receivers, running backs, tight ends, they have the players! The missing key is Campbell, and if things turn out well, the Redskins officially have an offense.

However, even with Campbell in, not all is solved. Do the Redskins have an identity?



Years ago, Dan Snyder was changing coaches and swapping out "bad" players for supposedly better ones like he was running a fantasy team or playing Madden '07.

What the Redskins need to do is define "Redskins football." Is it going to be Al Saunders offense? A revived Gibbs offense? What is it? Run first, pass second? Watching all the games this year, there seems to be a mix of all of them and it is not

working. They need to set on one idea and build upon it and keep it in place for

a few years.

There is no such thing at this time in Washington. Gibbs has said that "Redskins Football" is running first. For example, in the game against the Falcons, they did that to get to their 14-0 lead, but they went away from it and tried to get cute. The result was a young, inexperienced QB throwing 38 passes.

When one looks at the defense, the weaknesses are clear. Washington has what used to be strength, the linebacker position, becoming a weakness. The defensive line is not much better, with a man like Andre Carter, who is either not fitting into the system well or not playing well. It is probably a little bit of both but players not fitting the Redskins mold is a trend. Adam Archuleta, for example, seemed like an upgrade on paper, but he has not been able to defend the pass whatsoever. Once the Redskins get some kind of an identity, they need to pickup players that fit that identity or make the players that they have fit the identity.

Coaches should build a team and create some team chemistry. Let the players become familiar with the playbook for more than one, two, or even three years. This team has talent, they just need to make that talent work. The Redskins should not drastically change their personnel. They should pick up one or two "Redskins" football players that will fit into the offense and stop aimlessly signing players.

IN THE NUMBERS

24

of points our boys basketball team beat Stuart High School by, led by junior Robert Byrd.

1

All-Met player from our school. Jimmy Bennett was featured as an All-Met offensive lineman. Neal Hardie and Josh Wells received honorable mentions for football. Elizabeth Heath received 2nd team honors for Cross Country.

60

Gilbert Arenas scored a career high number of points against the Los Angeles Lakers at the Staples Center.

25

The number of goals Capitals Alexander Ovechkin has. He leads the league (as of 1/2/07).

Boys Varsity Basketball

Mount Vernon Invitational
Location: Mount Vernon H.S.

Results

-12/28 WP 66, Stonewall Jackson
High School 43
-12/29 WP 53, Mount Vernon 49
-12/30 Potomac (VA) 64, WP 48



Girls Varsity Basketball

Holiday Tournament
Location: South Lakes

Results

-12/28 WP 38, Dominion 36
-12/29 St. Stephen's/St. Agnes
57, WP 52

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A Lack of Creativity

TV programs no longer show much diversity

Sandy Slippen
Copy Editor

Taking one glance at the top twenty rated programs of the season as of November 26, one notices a considerable lack of original, creatively stimulating shows currently popular. Television shows seem to be losing rather large amounts of creativity in their quests to achieve wide audiences.

Some programs, such as ABC's *Grey's Anatomy* and NBC's *Heroes* use diverse qualities unlike any other shows on the air to achieve their popularity, but the majority of the top shows on television are rather routine. Among the top twenty as of late November (and this does not include mammoth blockbuster *American Idol*, which does not premiere until January), procedural dramas, game, and reality shows are starkly noticeable.

A procedural drama is defined by those in the television industry as a program attempting to depict the activities of a police force of some kind investigating crimes within a given episode. These shows are arguably the most popular on television currently, especially among older viewers. All four of the big television networks (NBC, CBS, ABC, and Fox) have procedural dramas on the air, with CBS having an especially large number of them. Looking at the CBS primetime schedule, one notices a rather long list of these types of shows. Over the course of a typical week, CBS airs *Cold Case*, *Without a Trace*, *CSI: Miami*, *NCIS*, *The Unit*, *Criminal Minds*, *CSI: NY*, *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*, *Close to Home*, and *NUMB3RS*. A staggering seven of the programs of those just mentioned are in the top twenty, and that is just on one network.

Despite how similar all of these shows seem to be, they remain enormously popular with viewers. Still, there are a number of

those who do not respond favorably to the rather gloomy nature of these programs. "I'm not into the hardcore procedural dramas like *CSI*, I'd consider myself a bigger fan of light-hearted mysteries like *Scoby-Doo*," said junior Ben Kirby.

In some ways, these procedural dramas have nothing on certain reality shows and the buzz they create. ABC's *Dancing with the Stars*, NBC's *Deal or No Deal*, and CBS' *Survivor* and *The Amazing Race* are all very popular reality competitions, prompting tremendous amounts of buzz among younger viewers. Other than *Deal or No Deal*, most likely the only successful game show still airing on



Griffin and Wilson/ K&R
CBS TV shows *Cold Case* (left) and *CSI: Miami* (right) have very similar plots as well as characters who look strangely alike.

primetime television, these reality competitions stick to a basic format. Within the independent premise of the show, contestants battle it out with each other, and one contestant or group is usually eliminated at the end of an episode. Arguably the most popular of these shows, Fox's *American Idol*, has premiered with and maintained massive ratings every January since its debut in 2002. *American Idol*, which sticks to a rather rigid routine as it glory-rites its way to success every season, is especially popular among teenagers and younger people. "I like *American Idol* because it is fun to try and predict who will win and observe how bad some of the people are," said junior Cindy MacPherson. Despite its massive popularity, *American Idol* has never

been guaranteed safety from a fairly common public backlash, from people who believe the show is unoriginal and cheesy. "People who don't have enough talent on their own have to go on *American Idol* so that they can actually get noticed by someone," said junior Joe Bradley. Like the procedural dramas, however, *American Idol* and other reality shows remain incredibly popular despite a large number of people who are frustrated by them.

Places To Attend On The Weekend

Kate O'Connor
News Editor

Teenagers have a problem, an addiction if you will, to doing the same thing every weekend. It is an ailment that I like to call Ihavenothingbettertodothangettothemovies-syndrome. They may not realize the mall will forever be filled with expensive goodies to pine after, or that there are plenty of backyards and basements to party in, and, if all else fails, there will always be a TV in the living room to go comatose in front of. Now that we have admitted our problem, the twelve steps to recovery can begin.

You should know there are options; ways to have fun that do not involve a dimly lit basement or an uncomfortable movie theater seat. Instead of relapsing into old habits, why not don an argyle sweater and some earmuffs and head to one of the makeshift skating rinks (accessible via Metro)? Pentagon Row, for example offers skating starting in November. This is a great intermediate option because it is still near a mall, so it is less of a stretch from the usual weekend outings. The National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden also offers skating and has a

much more intellectual atmosphere. As you skate, you and fellow insightful students can critique the masterpieces and point out which ones resemble food products, body parts, or the friend foolish enough not to attend your adventure. "Hey, that lumpy one looks like that loser, Billy Tinkle!"

If skating does not sound like a good time, it is ok, I understand. Lots of people are horrible skaters. It is not your fault you are not coordinated.

D.C. has a lot more to offer than slabs of ice. South Hall is the last remaining traditional market in Washington. Every weekend, Eastern market in Southeast D.C. becomes a flea market that spans Capitol Hill. Interesting jewelry, antiques, touristy-gimmicks, and authentic foods are displayed on tables and booths throughout the squares. The Black Cat on U Street and the 9-30 Night Club feature live rock or alternative music. All of these locations are within four blocks of a metro stop. For more information on events, DCist.com offers lots of ideas for exciting outings. Scheduled for this weekend, there are already sculpture exhibits, the National Tour of the Capital Steps comedy troupe, *A Light in the Piazza* at the Kennedy Center, and much more. If nothing strikes your fancy among the plethora of choices on the website, you could always go with an old favorite.

The National Gallery of Art is just steps away from the Archives Metro stop on the Yellow Line. There, you can peek at a Picasso, admire a Monet, and sip espressos in the gift shop downstairs. From the

warm comfort of the museum, you and Billy Tinkle can laugh at how cold the people who decided to ice skate must be.

If one has the thought "I'll save myself the hassle of really going to a gallery and see *Night at the Museum* at Hoffman," then stop thinking. Your higher brain functions are betraying you.

The memorials are also within reach from public transportation. Although most people schedule their dead-president-to-dead-president monument pilgrimage for the spring, you can fight the system (and avoid the crowds) by traveling in winter. Lincoln is waiting.

Maybe what you need is to be truly daring. Grab the car and take off on a mini-road trip over the Woodrow Wilson to Baltimore. The trip is a whopping one and a half hours to travel all 48.9 miles (estimated on Mapquest) from sleepy little Alexandria to the bustle of the port city. Visit the Baltimore Aquarium, open every day this weekend until 5:00 pm, and bask in the "Rainforest room," which offers a mini vacation for those who were stuck at home watching *Whose Line is it Anyway* while others enjoyed their winter breaks in Tijuana and Fiji. This weekend, Baltimore also happens to be featuring a reading seminar with Clifford the big red dog at Port Discovery. Who would pass that up?

So, please, stand up for your right to excitement and wonder. Do it for people who do not have legs and can not have the fun that you can. We should all have been listening closely when the infinitely wise and deep Paris Hilton said, "The way I see it, you should live every day like it's your birthday."



Deslich/KRT
The National Gallery of Art is a great place to go on the weekend with friends to learn about artists and have fun at the same time.

Winter Cravings

Lara Davidson
Poll Editor

Imagine that you just came in from the piercing cold weather. Your fingers and toes are numb, your nose is red, and you have rosy pink cheeks. You are dying to get warmed up. So what do you do? Grab a fuzzy, thick blanket, put on a pair of warm slippers, pour a cup of hot cocoa, and lie by the fireplace. Feeling better?

During this winter season, we are forced to deal with the unbearable cold. When our bodies are frozen and our teeth are chattering, we search for items to warm ourselves up. Whether it is a hot beverage, or comfy clothes, certain cravings call to us throughout this winter season. "After being out in the cold for a while, I start to crave warm showers," senior Malika Radzhabova said. Other items we could not survive the winter without are jackets, boots, scarves, gloves, and hats.

Although we have these winter cravings most when we are cold, that is not always the case. In light of the holiday season, many strange and unusual cravings may pop up in your mind, making you have to have them. For example, Christmas lights. Driving through neighborhoods and seeing the beautiful array of colorful and different styles of the decorated houses can be a craving that you only get in this special month of December.

Not only on houses do these bright lights catch our eyes, but also on the inside of our houses. Those of us who celebrate Christmas enjoy the twinkling lights and the shiny ornaments that cover our Christmas trees. "The holidays always remind me of driving around with my family and looking at all the different lights," said senior Elyse Doherty.

It is always nice to see decorated houses. It's a wonderful feeling," said Elyse Larson, sports and entertainment marketing teacher.

Besides the holiday decorations, many crave the mouthwatering holiday treats. From hams and o

keys, to candy canes and gingerbread, to hot cocoa and eggnog, some treats just scream winter. "My favorite winter drink that I depend on to keep me warm is warm peach jammin' tea from Old Town's Tea and Spice," senior Elyse Doherty said.

We all have cravings that we love to indulge in. Certain ones are only available in the winter season, and around the holidays. It is a special time of year that brings us fun and memorable traditions, as well as puts us all in a cozy mood! Even after reading this article I bet you are now craving a certain treat as well!

What Is Your Favorite Winter Drink?

68% Hot Cocoa
32% Eggnog

Per poll of 100 students

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Camera in Hand, Film on Mind

Kate O'Connor
News Editor

Movies have told stories for almost a century. Films were once an enormous financial investment, but now, thanks to technological advances, everyone can tell their story through film. At our school, many young filmmakers are making their mark with a video camera.

The independent film club meets every other week in English teacher Paul Russell's room to watch, discuss, and prepare to film movies. IFC is a relatively new addition to the school's clubs.

Sophomore Leighton Good and senior James Cheeseman began the club to meet with others also interested in making movies with the hope of hosting a film festival. Although the club has struggled with low attendance, junior Sam Nowak already has a movie in pre-production.

"The movie is about a high school student who thinks he's crazy because he sees people. It's trying to say that there is no definite line between sanity and insanity," said Nowak. He already has three roles cast, one of which is junior Travis Batchelor.

Although the actors are in the dark about the project, Nowak is optimistic. "I couldn't tell you what it's about. I haven't seen a script," said Batchelor. He laughed, mock-punched Nowak, and said, "He dragged me into it."

For these students, film is their passion, although most do not have the free elective to take the TV production academy class. All of their movies are made using their own equipment and money. Good, one of the club presidents, has made around twenty five movies using a Panasonic camera he was given for Christmas and editing software on his family computer.

At fourteen, Good compiled a documentary about Che Guevara, the Argentinean revolutionary. The movie was shown in a film festival at the Old Town Theater.

"It started with a project I had in seventh grade," said Good. "We read a short story, and turned it into a movie." Since then, he has made music videos, movie spoofs, and short films, all between five and twenty minutes long.

Many members of the club plan to pursue careers in the film industry. They are drawn to the nitty-gritty appeal of low budget cinema. The internet has fundamentally served as a theater for these directors, who choose to post their work for the world to watch and review. Sites like Youtube.com are allowing small-time films to reach larger audiences. Like budding musicians who generated a fan base online, directors with a vision are getting exposure from the internet.

Inexpensive yet quality editing software also minimizes the gap between amateur and professional movies. Apple's Final Cut editing software is commonly used by expert Hollywood editors, but is also available for home computers. Recent versions of Windows media come complete with editing software.

Students with a natural talent for movie making are lucky to be coming into the industry at a time when there are so many opportunities.

Film has given many students direction, whether they pursue it during their spare time or in an academy class. During the TV production class film festival last month, the subject of many of the films was changing one's life. With a camera in hand, these kids can do more than just change their lives, their message may change the world.



Ainsworth/KRT

The independent film club was created for students with a passion for filmmaking.

A Hint of Animal Print

Kate Sigety
Wire Reporter

As seasons change with trends that come and go, there is one style that remains constant. Whether it is on the runway or in the halls of our school, animal print is a trend that never seems to fade.

Wild, bold, and exotic, animal print is known for its flair and sassy appeal. Becoming more and more popular in local stores, the prints are popping up everywhere. Whether it is through apparel, accessories, shoes, or home items, animal print is the hot item to own.

Seasons do not have an impact on this particular style. From winter to summer, new forms of bold animal prints, usually leopard or cheetah, can always be spotted, ranging from bathing suits all the way to winter coats.

Walking through Bed Bath & Beyond and the home department of Target, there is always the appearance of animal print, whether it is bedding, pillows, throw blankets, or even rugs. Leopard print themed bathroom accessories are easily found as well to give a bathroom an extra boost of excitement, with fun shower curtains, bath mats, and other bathroom objects, such as toothbrush holders and soap dispensers.

Even if you are just window shopping, it is clear to see through the displays how the popularity is rising.

Steve Madden and Nordstrom have a wide variety of animal prints from flats to heels to boots all with different styles including leopard, zebra, and cheetah. Up Against the Wall, along with Target, both have these styles of shoes, but for prices a little bit lower.

If animal print clothing is what you are on

the lookout for, Forever 21 has a great display with dresses, sweaters, and camisoles, some even of different shades of the actual print.

"Although leopard and cheetah print are the most common and most popular animal prints, zebra and cow prints can also be of style," said junior Virginia Armstrong.

The media is known for its wide ability to not only get a message across to a large viewing audience, but also set trends. In the movie *The Devil Wears Prada*, Anne Hathaway walked the street in a leopard print lined coat that insinuated her elegant look, but also added a sense of enticement.

Movies are not the only part of the media that portray this style; in the winter scene of Danity Kane's new music video, "Ride for You," one of the girls is seen wearing a long leopard print jacket.

Just a small animal print accessory can easily spice up a simple outfit, and looking in

the classrooms of our school, an animal print accessory can be spotted in just about every one. "Wearing a bold printed accessory, like a headband with cheetah print adds a lot of flair to a regularly plain outfit, without going over board," said senior Marley Kimmel. A new accessory which recently seen more often is the appearance of animal print tights.

As long as the malls and fashion runways are embellished in animal print, it is clear to see that this spontaneous style has not and will not be going anywhere anytime soon.



Photo by Jocelyn Finrock

Junior Haley Mertins carries her leopard print tote to school. Animal print is very popular among the students in our school.

Watch out for the Elevators!

Annam Jaffri
News Editor

To glance into an open elevator at our school is a rare event, and riding in one is even rarer. There is a certain magical quality to our elevators; their creaking and buzzing seem to lull students into yearning to ride in them. Our school system's elevators are thrilling, mysterious, and seemingly treacherous vessels of transportation. Those who have never used the elevators crave to travel in them, while those obliged to use them find them very irritating.

The most recent mishap regarding the school elevators involved English teacher Preston Withers. Withers was trapped in the Quander elevator for close to fifty minutes until emergency personnel were called in to save him. On Monday, December 4, at 7:15 a.m., Withers and his cart were in the elevator, when the elevator stopped and the doors refused to open. When he attempted to manually open the doors, they opened about four inches, which was when Withers saw that the elevator had stopped about eight inches short of the floor. Calling the front desk with his cell phone, he reported he was trapped. Maintenance workers and school resource officer Daryl Davis came by to get Withers out, to no avail. Jumping up

and down did not help either. Firemen finally came, shut off the elevator, and manually lowered it to the first floor, and Withers and his cart were released unharmed.

During his lonely ordeal, Withers passed the time by humming to himself, jumping around, and sitting down and contemplating his situation. Though he is forced to ride the elevator every day due to his cart, Withers does not mind. Unafraid, he sees the incident as a good story to tell others.

To prevent others from becoming ensnared in the elevator, school administrators called in service workers shortly after Withers' incident, who worked on the elevator for two-and-a-half to three days. The problem was blamed on by old elevator parts, and new ones were ordered. On Tuesday, December 19, as far as assistant principal Bruce Jankowitz was concerned, the elevator was fixed. It had been shut down for three days and tested. But after trying to open the downstairs Quander elevator to prove that it was running, Jankowitz was quite surprised. The elevator doors would not open.

Using his key to attempt to open the upstairs key after that, he was again surprised. The door did not budge. Apparently, even after

three days of maintenance, the elevator was simply pretending to be fixed. Finally, on Thursday, December 21, Jankowitz bravely put himself in danger and tested the elevator, and it worked perfectly.

"I wish injury upon my friends so I could hitch a ride with them on an elevator."

~Junior Faith Le

used more, but added that was "no excuse."

Junior Chelise Roberts, who recently had surgery on her leg, is forced to use the elevator. To her, elevators are fun, "except for when they make noises and stop," like the Quander building elevator does. Assessing the imminent danger the elevator poses to her life, Roberts now uses the stairs in Quander, a real feat considering her crutches and leg cast. Unfortunately, the uncertainty of the elevator has forced Roberts to travel from class to class this way.

Others, such as junior Faith Le, are "pretty much dying to use the

elevator." Since she has never been injured, she has never had the opportunity to ride in it. Friends of Le should be warned, however, because "I wish injury upon my friends so I could hitch a ride with them on an elevator," she said.

On the contrary, sophomore Mary McKnight said sarcastically, "If I die, and I've been on the elevator, I'll feel complete." In actuality, she is terrified of the elevator, and knows that finding oneself in it brings certain doom.

After realizing the peril involved with riding the Quander elevator, our school placed yellow police tape on the door, as a warning. The tape fell off soon thereafter, but here's hoping that the threat of the elevator will not soon be forgotten. Ride at your own risk.



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Day in the Life of... a Snowsational Student

Hooff Cooksey

Sports Editor

Freshman Kendall Snow strolls into school in the morning just like any other student. Unlike many students, however, when she returns home that afternoon and flips on the news channel on her television, there is a great possibility that she will see her father, the White House Press Secretary, on the screen talking to the press.

Tony Snow is the father of our very own Kendall Snow. Tony Snow was recently appointed to the position of White House Press Secretary. Snow's job is to inform the press about what is going on in the White House and, more importantly, in our government. Before his White House job, Snow provided news announcing on National Public Radio (NPR), was a regular guest and host on *The Rush Limbaugh Show*, and had his own FOX show called *The Tony Snow Show*. Tony Snow also worked for George H. W. Bush during his terms of office as the chief speech writer and the Deputy Assistant of Media Affairs. Now with a wife, two daughters, a son, and many pets, Snow has a lot on his plate. He believes that his current job is the best he has ever had. "I really enjoy spending time with the president," he said, as

well as knowing many of the reporters he talks to due to his 27 years of expression in the press. Kendall's father has had a very successful career and his main advice to reaching such a high position is to become the best writer you can be.

Kendall Snow is attending her first year of public school since third grade. "This school is a lot better than the private school I went to," said Kendall. She really enjoys the diversity in the grade and the fact that there are so many people here to meet. "She loves the many activities available as well as the new people she is meeting," said her father. She remembers back to her first day when a girl she had just met brought her over to a huge group of people and introduced her. Kendall is also a member of our school's crew team as well as the Advanced Women's Chorus. Kendall Snow deals with school and her extracurricular activities as well as attending many events, meeting new people, and getting helpful hints on careers and jobs from her father. "At this point in my life, I have learned that to be successful in life you need to be yourself at all times and be nice," said Snow.

When asked what her favorite aspect of having her dad be the White House Press Secretary, she said, "I really like meeting a wide variety of people." One of Kendall's fondest



Photo by Brittany Cabina

When not focusing on academics, Freshman Kendall Snow enjoys rowing. She is a new member of the crew team and plans on rowing in the spring.

memories of her father's continuing political career was attending the White House Christmas party a year ago. Snow is very happy with the first half of her freshman year, and plans to make the rest even better.

State of the Arts

Justin Timberlake

February 2, 2006

Verizon Center

Washington D.C.



Fall Out Boy

January 17, 2006

930 Club

Washington D.C.



Dancing With The Stars

January 28, 2007

Verizon Center

Washington D.C.

O.A.R.

January 26, 2007

Patriot Center

Fairfax, VA



Jamie Foxx

January 21, 2006

Verizon Center

Washington D.C.



Sara Evans

January 13, 2007

Meyerhoff Symphony Hall

Baltimore, MD



The Right Snowball Fight

Devon Cain

Wire Reporter



So you are walking to school, just like every morning. The birds are chattering and you are whistling a holiday tune and everything is lovely when SMACK! A cold white snowball hits you in the back of the head. Oh, this means war.

For a snowball fight, two things are needed: snow and people. Senior Amanda Walsh said, "One-on-one battles are good if you have a personal vendetta against the person, but in general, having a snowball fight with a lot of people is more fun."

There are some people who make great teammates/opponents in a snowball fight. Whether they are skilled or not you will have much more fun playing with/against them in comparison to other people.

Good people to play with

- Friends
- Neighbors
- Cousins
- Siblings

Bad people to play with:

- Extended relatives
- Complete strangers
- Young children
- Elderly



First, before initiating battle, you might want to invest in some leather gloves. Without any gloves your hands will get cold very quickly. With wooly gloves, snow will stick to your hands, which in turn get wet. Walsh also offered, "You need to have a good pair of snow pants and boots too with thick socks. If you really want to stay warm, put Ziplock bags around your feet before putting your boots on!"

The next step is finding your fighting ground. Ideal combating terrain would be a flat field. Hilly ground works too, but expect a slower fight as everyone tries to run up and down during the conflict.



Some snowball-ers like to build forts to protect themselves from barrages of snowballs. Forts work best in large team battles. The main rule to remember about building a snow fort is *substance over style*. It is pointless to waste snow that could be used for building snowballs, so make your fort wider rather than taller. A good snowball fort can also be used to store snowball caches.

Now it is time for battle. Since there are no set rules for a snowball fight, it might be necessary to set a few house rules.

Suggestions:

- No face/head shots
- A set boundary (from this house to that tree)
- A time limit (until 4 p.m. or for one hour)
- Each team can build a fort before it starts



Some strategies for playing on teams:

- Keep small snowball caches: You definitely want reserves of snowballs. However, if you have one large one as opposed to multiple smaller ones, you will find yourself constantly running back to your cache and exposing your resource to your enemies.
- Scramble: If everyone on your team is together, you will be knocked down like bowling pins when the other team attacks- spread out and confuse them!

After the snowball, Walsh suggested, "Make nice with the enemies and invite them over for hot chocolate."

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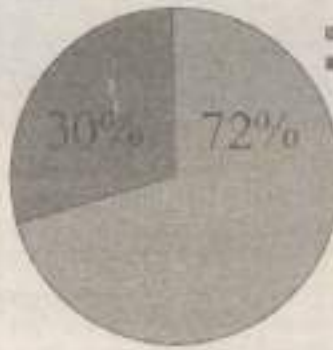


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The Best Pick for the Best Food

Ken Llewellyn
Opinion Editor

Over the past year, many new restaurants and eateries have opened across our school's community, from Just Fresh on Route 1 to Dunkin' Donuts at Belle View shopping center. But many of these new places have similar menus

to old favorites. For example, Moe's Southwest Grill, in Mount Vernon Plaza, is known throughout our school as Chipotle's identical twin. Sure all of them taste good, but which are the best of the best? These are some restaurants in our area that are very similar. Although both choices are good, one usually stands above the rest.

Review	Winner	Review	Students' Take
Panera Located at Beacon Hill, Panera Bread is a cross between a bakery and a cafe. Panera serves sandwiches, salads, and pizza, along with pastries, breads, and bagels, and they are all at reasonable prices. Panera is also a free wi-fi hotspot, so one can work on a laptop while enjoying delicious food. "There is no question that Panera balls any restaurant like it," said junior Tra'mel Morrison.	PANERA	Just Fresh Just Fresh, located in Mount Vernon Plaza, has a reputation of being similar to Panera, but these restaurants are very different. While Just Fresh does have a bakery, it has little selection. Just Fresh's entrees are very different from Panera's. They do have pizza, but also quesadillas, and a wide range of breakfast items. Although there's no question of the quality of Just Fresh's food, it seems one gets a small amount of it for a high price.	(50 students questioned) 
IHOP The International House of Pancakes, or "IHOP," is also located in Mount Vernon Plaza and serves both dinner and breakfast (any time), but the breakfast is really the highlight of the restaurant. IHOP has a wide variety of breakfast choices such as omelets, pancakes, waffles, and French toast. IHOP has great specials like its famous Routy Tooty and has very reasonable prices.	IHOP	Denny's Located on Route 1 near Safeway, Denny's is very similar to IHOP. Known for its slams and scrambles, Denny's has just as affordable prices, but the food is not of the same quality as its counterpart. "Denny's is alright, but IHOP is straight up delicious," said junior Aaron Bowles.	
T.G.I. Friday's A restaurant and bar located across from Springfield Mall, Friday's is best known for its Jack Daniel's Grill, where every entree comes with Jack Daniel's BBQ sauce. Friday's serves everything one would expect from a casual dining restaurant (such as Applebee's, Outback, or Ruby Tuesday), at the prices one would expect.	FRIDAY'S	Chili's Chili's is currently located in Kingstowne, but a new one is being constructed on Route 1. Chili's specialty is its Baby Back Ribs. There are five different varieties of ribs to choose from, and one can mix and match any two kinds. Chili's is also a bar and serves pretty much everything Friday's does at the same quality and price.	
Moe's Before Moe's and Chipotle, there was Taco Bell. Well, neither of these southwestern grills are anything like it. Located in Mount Vernon Plaza, Moe's has much higher prices than Taco Bell, but there is way more food for the money. Moe's serves burritos, tacos, quesadillas, enchos, salads, and fajitas, and they're made anyway you want.	CHIPOTLE	Chipotle Chipotle was farther away than Moe's, but there is a new one that just opened at Beacon Hill. Chipotle has a much smaller menu than Moe's. Chipotle serves three different kinds of burritos, as well as tacos and salads. While the selection is more limited, it's still great tasting and it's a large amount of food. A burrito from Chipotle is as big as a squirrel.	

Polls done by Lara Davidson

Everyone's Talking about Grey's

Jayne Seward
Wire Reporter

Since the first time we were introduced to Meredith Grey and her fellow interns at Seattle Grace Hospital on March 27, 2005, we have not been able to get enough of *Grey's Anatomy*.

Continuing into its third season, ABC's hit show is still holding strong as one of television's most popular shows. This stimulating and provocative show follows the life of a world-renowned surgeon's daughter as she struggles to maintain relationships with four other interns, as well as her bosses, at one of the most challenging hospitals on the West Coast. Meredith, along with George, the exceptionally insecure and emotional intern; Izzy, the model-turned-doctor; Cristina, the cutthroat and extremely competitive intern; and Alex, the good-looking but arrogant intern, must compete with each other for opportunities to scrub in on amazing surgeries.



Janet Rahn/KOAT

The cutthroat atmosphere and relentless stress the five must work in is almost unbearable, however, they manage to become best friends.

Imagine the show *Sex and the City* mixed with *Hannibal*, and you have got just a taste of the drama and trauma you get from *Grey's*. The staff of Seattle Grace Hospital constantly crosses the line between professional relationships and personal relationships with one another.

Over the past three seasons, audiences have become invested in Meredith and Derek's (a.k.a. McDreamy) on-and-off relationship full of surprises with every new episode. Audiences cried with Izzy when she lost Danny, a heart patient who she left Alex for after she fell madly in love with him, despite hospital regulations.

Loyal viewers constantly wonder what the next step in intern Cristina's and attending Dr. Preston Burke's relationship will be. Will Burke stay with her even though she betrayed his loyalty by turning in his hand tremor to the chief, or will their relationship come to an end? Will George take Callie back even though she slept with Dr. Mark Sloan (a.k.a. McSteamy)? What will Izzy do with all of the millions of dollars Denny left her? It is safe to say that the third season has not disappointed in keeping its audiences engaged in the many entanglements at Seattle Grace.

The dynamic cast combined with the witty writing and steamy story plots created a phenomenon throughout the nation. Senior Edlin Rodriguez, who watches the show every week, said, "Seeing all the drama mixed with the medical cases is cool because it makes you wonder if real hospitals are actually like that." With characters such as 'McSteamy' and 'McDreamy', it is no wonder why this show gets the praise it does. This show has supplied its audiences with not only a gorgeous blend of cast members to watch, but also rousing stories that keep them on the edges of their seats. From forbidden love triangles and cheating husbands to code blacks and train wrecks, there is never a dull moment on *Grey's Anatomy*. With its new season, and each new episode, the show's fans are getting exactly what they want: their weekly dose of the must-see hit *Grey's Anatomy*.

Favorite Family Film of the '06 Holiday Season

Sara Mathewson
Style Editor

Unaccompanied Minors is a movie suited for any age, and its silly humor allows for it to be a great family movie for the night. The plot is entertaining and the acting is reputable.

It is Christmas Eve, and a number of unaccompanied children become stranded in an airport due to a huge blizzard. After being stuck in a holding cell along with dozens of other children who were traveling alone, a group of kids decide to escape in order to make the best of their holiday situation.

Spencer, played by Dylan Christopher, leaves in order to make his younger sister's Christmas the best he can. He wants to make it to her in time to deliver "Santa's present" in

order to maintain her childhood belief of Santa Claus.

Grace, played by Gina Mantegna, just wants to have someone that cares about her. Brett Kelley plays the role of Beef, a comic book nerd. Charlie and Donna, the other two runaways, couldn't be more different. Charlie, played by Tyler James Williams, is known as an academic overachiever, who also turns out to be a great dancer. Donna, played by actress Quinne Shephard, is a tomboy from a trailer park with divorced parents. The children all come together to escape from the airport security, and make the most of their Christmas holiday.

Being chased by airport security cannot stop this group from becoming a family of their own; they form a group that normally would not have been together.

Unaccompanied Minors proves to everyone that it does not always matter where you are during the Christmas season, but who you are with.

Baggage chutes, kayaking, and canoeing down the hill are just a couple of the obstacles that the children go through, but do not stop them in the end. Junior Donte Johnson said, "I plan on seeing this movie as soon as I can, the plot sounds very interesting."

Unaccompanied Minors is both fun and entertaining, although it sounds like one of those corny holiday movies. It was a pleasant surprise and provides a good chuckle for the night. It is a movie that anyone could watch from small children, to adults, even to a couple of teenagers out for a night. Junior Joe Coggins said, "I haven't seen the movie, but from what I hear about it, it seems like a pretty good family movie."



Innovative Creative Klein

Devon Cain

Wire Reporter

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"Yeah, this hole is a par six." How many people can say this while standing in their front yard? The one and only, senior Will Klein.

You will probably see some green turf if you drive by Klein's house. There is a nine-hole miniature golf course in the making that Will and friends spent the better part of their summer constructing. Klein said, "Basically, it's my life because it is a symbol that if you dream, you can do anything you want."

Park your car next to his, it is the one with the plethora of bumper stickers on the back, which read everything from "Ohio State" (He is big fan of the Midwestern college football team), to "Jack Johnson" (His favorite artist, along with Bob Dylan), to "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle." (He is a self-proclaimed tree-hugger.)

Watch your step getting out of the car as some playful labs are sure to leap at you. Klein loves to jump around with his two dogs, Abby and Ginger. He said, "They are a great inspiration to me because they are very intelligent, resourceful, nice and loving."

Do not trip on the soccer ball lying on the step! Oops. Too late. Your brief time in flight was very graceful... Klein spends a lot of his time playing, or thinking about playing soccer. While English teacher Bernard Cabral said, "He needs to get haircuts more

often," friend, senior Molly Weisblatt, attributes some of Klein's amazing soccer skills to his famous curly hair. She said, "The ball just seems to deflect off of [his hair] when he heads it during the game."

As you stand and brush the leaves off your clothes, you might hear the soft music of a string instrument. Klein plays both the violin and the mandolin. Weisblatt said, "He is known for his romantic good looks and he plays the mandolin! Will is a troubadour in every sense of the word." Klein said, "My friend and I want to play in Old Town before we graduate."

What is that tune? Oh yes... "California," The O.C. theme song. Although it is Klein's favorite song to play, you will not catch him watching the teenage soap opera. Klein would much

rather look up articles on Wikipedia. org, go on an exciting adventure into D.C. with friends, practice his violin, bake a six foot tall cake, or take photographs. When asked what he

most wants to do in the world Klein laughed before quoting the Toto song, "Africa," in reply, "I would climb Mount Kilimanjaro, which rises like Olympus above the Serengeti." Klein has a smart sense of humor that both his friends and teachers appreciate. Orchestra teacher Mary Wilkerson said, "He's hysterical and his positive energy is contagious." Weisblatt said, "He is very intelligent, witty and he has mastered the art of quiet humor. Will has presence that can be felt."

Walk down to the door. If you take a glimpse through the window, you might see some goggles lying on the table next to today's newspaper, which Klein reads everyday. This year, Klein was voted to be a swim team captain by his teammates and has been very successful so far at juggling practice and the work for his very demanding classes.

Knock, knock.

He is probably going to invite you to play a round on the golf course. Go ahead. As Cabral said, you will leave having met "someone who, in the future, will do something important and good for the better of humanity."



Photo courtesy Will Klein

Will Klein enjoys a game of mini golf on the course he made in his own front yard.

Jolly & Joyful Jennings

Drew Smith

Wire Reporter

In a school of more than 2,000 students of every gender, race, religion, and personality, it is hard to know everyone. However, there is one student that almost everyone knows, senior Traci Jennings.

Known as one of the former anchors for the school's morning news, she is one of our school's most positive students. "I like to smile,"

proclaimed Jennings. Her friends do not see her just as a source of positive energy, however. Senior Sujin Yoo said, "She's the type of friend that everyone needs. She's a motivator."

Jennings' positive attitude and high self-

motivation have gotten her far. Taking almost exclusively Honors and AP courses for the past four years, she has worked hard to prepare for her college career. Her plans are to attend Northern Virginia Community College for a year, and then go to Virginia Commonwealth University as a sophomore. She has also decided to pursue a double major in

Business and Psychology.

She is currently a member of the Gospel Choir and the

Black Cultural Alliance (BCA), where she has risen to every challenge. Sponsor of the BCA Mrs. Sandra Bobo said, "I am delighted to work with such a strong individual. She brings fresh ideas and new meaning to Black Cultural Alliance."

Traci always goes above and beyond the call of duty."

However, one of the most unique abilities that Jennings has is her



Photo by Drew Smith

Senior Traci Jennings enjoys smiling and feeling happy.

ability to speak her mind. Being a self-proclaimed "radical," her larger than life personality and voice matches her outlook on life. "Carpe Diem, live for the day," is the motto she leads her life by, and it shows.

Being present at most school sports events, her vivacious and friendly personality can be seen cheering for friends, or flirting with boys. Her self-confidence oozes from her as she hosts the morning news, conducts an assembly, or when she is acting as spokesperson for the BCA. One thing is for sure, with her amazing attitude and willingness to work hard, there is no doubt she will go far and achieve much success in her life.



Photo by Drew Smith

Senior Traci Jennings spends a lot of time out of school as well. She enjoys playing the piano.



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Seniors in the Hall

Candace Schol



Photo by Drew Smith

Describe yourself in three words:
"Confident, talented, vivacious"

What is something a lot of people don't know about you?

"I can tap dance."
Candace also was accepted into NYU.

Where do you see yourself in ten years?

"I see myself winning an Oscar."

If you could have lunch with anyone who would it be?

"Cate Blanchett. She is a very talented actress."

What is your favorite thing to do?

"Act!"

Casey Snyder



Photo by Drew Smith

Describe yourself in three words:
"Creative, swell (buff), goofball."

What is something a lot of people don't know about you?

"I will do just about anything to get people to laugh. In elementary school I was one of the cool kids. I also like feeding horses."

Where do you see yourself in ten years?

"Teaching kids how to use creativity and imagination to their fullest extent."

If you could have lunch with anyone who would it be?

"Ricky Fitz. His interesting and creative way of thinking seemed to have an impact on people. This is important to me."

What is your favorite thing to do?

"Make people laugh. If people don't laugh it makes me feel that I have failed at life."