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# THE WIRE

West Potomac High School  
Library



West Potomac High School  
6500 Quander Road  
Alexandria, VA 22307  
Volume 20 #5

WEST POTOMAC HIGH SCHOOL

Friday, January 28, 2005

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## Mock Trials and Tribulations

**Jeff Snyder**  
News Editor

Two students at this school have been charged with murder. However, the proceedings at the annual Model Judiciary Program Mock Trial also left this school with victorious prosecution teams.

Social Studies teacher Eric Henderson's students participated in the annual mock trial on January 15, 2005 at the Fairfax County Judicial Center. Henderson sponsored the team. The participants in the trial were volunteers from senior AP Government classes. Although the event is called a mock trial, all proceedings were accurate portrayals of a real trial. The students acted as lawyers, witnesses, defendants, and jurors. An array of volunteer judges presided over the cases. The competition pitted a school's prosecution or defense team against another prosecution or defense team from another school. Other high schools including Lake Braddock, Robinson, Stone Bridge,

McLean, Paul VI, Chantilly, Thomas Jefferson, and Yorktown participated in the mock trial competition.

teams were victorious in their trial. West Potomac Prosecution 1, led by attorneys Kat Gragg and Carolina Llinas, beat Chantilly

and sentenced to ten years for manslaughter.

Our school's West Potomac defense teams were not so

lucky. West Potomac Defense 1 competed against Chantilly Prosecution 1. Defense attorneys Jessica Rexroat and Sarah Jacobs presented their defense case in front of Judge Thomas Mann. After a ten minute private jury deliberation, the jury convicted Rexroat's and Jacobs' defendant played by Alex Davis. Davis was sentenced to 30 years for 1<sup>st</sup> degree murder. West

Potomac Defense 2 contended against Thomas Jefferson Prosecution 1. Defense lawyers Taurin Barrera and Alex Young also lost which resulted in defendant Paul Cambon being sentenced to 30 years for 2<sup>nd</sup> degree murder. Plans for the next round are being organized.



Defendant Alex Davis stands shocked with his attorneys Sarah Jacobs and Jessica Rexroat as he hears his verdict, guilty of first degree murder.

Photo by Jeff Snyder

"I wish all of you the best of luck, and hopefully, this day will change your life," said Judge Klein to all the students participating right before the trials began. Klein started this program fourteen years ago to solely get students involved in law from the inside.

Both West Potomac prosecution

Defense 3. The Chantilly defendant was found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to three years. The greatest West Potomac victory of the day was to West Potomac Prosecution 2. Prosecutors Hana Beckerle and Steven Petreuas defeated Paul VI Defense 1. The Paul VI defendant was convicted

## Turner's Fun with Phytoplankton

**Katie Staples**  
Focus Editor

Junior Molly Turner was selected out of nearly 200 entrants as one of the five students from the Greater Washington Metropolitan Area to present a paper at the 2005 Junior Science and Humanities Regional Symposium (JSHS).

JSHS is a program that promotes original research and experimentation in the sciences, engineering, and mathematics, and encourages students' continued interest and participation in those subjects. Their mission is to recognize accomplishments and the significance of research in human affairs, and the importance of humane and ethical principles in the application of research results.

During the summer of 2004, Turner attended mentorship Governor's School at Christopher Newport University for five weeks. The program requires students to do research for the five weeks and then write a paper on it. Her topic was "The Trends and Environmental Factors Affecting the Distribution of Polar Phytoplankton in the Ross Sea, Antarctica." Turner used slides from the Ross Sea to analyze the trends of the phytoplankton throughout the sea. She prepared the slides with the samples and studied the amount of cells from the eleven different stations in the sea. "Last year

in chemistry, Mr. Relton nominated me to participate in the symposium. There was a second part of it where we could submit original research for adjudication, and I sent them my paper from governor's school," said Turner.

Turner presented her award-winning paper on her analysis at Georgetown University in front of 200 students as well as the university teachers and faculty on Thursday, January 6. The students also attended a variety of lectures and laboratory opportunities. The judges who chose the papers were Georgetown University employees and adjudicated the fifteen minute presentation each finalist presented.

"I presented last out of the five and thought it went really well. It was exciting

and good practice in public speaking and it fostered an intellectual environment to talk about my research," she added.

She returned on Friday to find out she was unfortunately not one of the top two finalists

who present at San Diego. However, "I received a scholarship for 'mini-medical school' which means I get to take courses at Georgetown Medical School at night for eight to ten weeks, all paid."

All five finalists from each regional symposium, ours being the Greater Washington region, go on an all expenses paid trip this spring to

San Diego where the top two winners will present their research for a chance to go to the international competition in London.

"I'm really interested in science and I think this is a great opportunity for me but I don't know if I want a career in this yet; we'll see," said Turner.



Molly Turner spent five weeks last summer analyzing phytoplankton for her JSHS research paper.

Photo Courtesy of Molly Turner



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## Putting the Honor Back in NHS

Dear Editor,

We have heard quite a few disparaging remarks lately about the National Honor Society in addition to Jessica Rexroat's letter to the editor. While some of those remarks have been warranted, many have not. They sell short the students who work very hard to live up to the name "Honor Society."

The disparaging remarks don't take into account the students who began a mentoring and tutoring program specifically for ESOL students. They don't take into account the students who give nearly 100 hours each semester of community service to the Mount Vernon Hospital, or the students who volunteer with the drama program at Carl Sandburg. The list goes on. Ms. Jensen and I have heard directly from community service coordinators about how valuable West Potomac NHS volunteers are. In the last 18 months, the number of contacts we have received from community organizations asking for help has more than tripled. Those who have gone before have represented us well, and the community knows that they can rely on us. In addition, West Potomac itself knows it can count on us. The athletic department has requested that we set up a formal tutoring session for athletes and the guidance department contacts us regularly for the names of students who are willing to volunteer as tutors. Both the school community and the community at large know they can count on us. If an NHS member says they will do something, they do it. If a single member doesn't meet their obligation, another one will step up to cover for the loss.

Does that mean that we don't have some bad apples? No. Does it mean that our members don't lie about their service or other character traits? Probably not. Or does it mean that the NHS sponsors don't know who these people are? Definitely not. But, the next time a negative comment about the National Honor Society is presented, try this: ask that person how they know about the bad things, then ask them what they have done to fix them. It's easy to sit down and write a letter, it's another thing to ask, "Then why are you here?" Kudos to Jessica for exposing the issue. Now what?

Mary Mathewson, NHS Sponsor

## Senior Words of Wisdom

Dear Editor,

This is a letter of reassurance to all freshman and sophomore girls: IT GETS BETTER. Unfortunately, in order for things to improve they must first become worse. That is where junior year comes in.

Your junior year of high school. You will learn to deal with the stress of being a high school student. All of your complaining sophomore friends will be scoffed at ("Hah, you think ONE AP is bad? I'm taking four!") Your homework load will quadruple (and so will the BS you are encouraged to produce), and you will say to yourself "Thank God I only have one more year left in this hell-hole." As for your social life - if you aren't in a clique (or if you're not one of those people who transcend social boundaries), you'll be pretty much on your own. Here's where I say, again, IT GETS BETTER.

Senior year, in terms of workload, anyway, sucks. Fortunately, the teachers are more relaxed, the work is slightly more interesting, and the BS-factor increases exponentially. Your ultimate goals; finish college applications and live through the end of first semester. If you're lucky enough to get into college early, life will be significantly less stressful; if not - I'm sorry. When you're caught up in all of the collegiate drama, sit back for a second and take a look around. The cliques that seemed ubiquitous during junior year disintegrate as if by magic. It is almost as though people realize they have less than one year left in this place - maybe it's about time they started being nicer to everyone. Or perhaps they don't want to be remembered unkindly at their twentieth high school reunion. Regardless, you will (hopefully) find yourself making friends with people you would have never even considered previously. Just remember to give people a second chance - people can change over time, and they often do. Boys will be boys, and girls will be girls, but we all grow up (whether it is obvious or not). Especially the boys. Make friends with them - they are infinitely less dramatic, and they only complain half as much (on average). Plus, many of them are much more mature and insightful than we give them credit for.

In closing, I'll just say it one more time: IT GETS BETTER. My only remaining advice is to not let yourself get caught up in too much of it - perspective is key. Now, sit back, relax, and enjoy everything you've got going for you.

Sarah Mullens, Senior

# Rants and Raves

A Rave for the administration for cancelling a scheduled Saturday School. A fresh slate for tardies sure feels good.

A Rant for the taking away of a teacher workday at the end of the quarter. Our teachers deserve a chance to wrap up everything they deal with.

A Rave for the onslaught of snow at the end of the month. It's about time!



A Rant for the ugly wolverine carcass that now decorates our school trophy case. What an incentive for school spirit!

A Rave for the rash of extended weekends in the month of January. School always seems better when observed on an off-day.

A Rant for the sudden phenomenon of unidentified flying objects in the hallways. Kids, grow up.

## There's No Sense Like Snow Sense

Illogical. Irrational. Absolutely absurd. These words and more accurately describe the Fairfax County Public School System's snow day policy.

It's not that FCPS is stingy with snow days and two-hour delays; it's that the delays are given with no earthly rhyme or reason. Tuesday, January 18, students were awarded a two-hour delay for extreme cold - the night before, temperatures dipped into the single digits. It's perfectly reasonable to have such a delay. As the school board said, buses would have a difficult time starting and driving in such conditions. However, when the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup> rolled around, it was just as cold. The school board had been thoroughly chastised for its precipitation-less panic, so the school day occurred as usual. For the next week, the thermometer never inched above freezing, yet that one Tuesday morning marked the only cold-related schedule change.

The next weekend, the DC area was hit with its largest snow storm yet this year. Four to five inches of snow fell around the county, and by Sunday night, most neighborhood streets around West Potomac remained unplowed. Logically, a two hour delay was granted on Monday to ensure plenty of time for buses and student drivers to navigate the treacherous roads.

On Tuesday, these same roads were largely unchanged. A brief, violent snow shower hit the area in the early afternoon and fed the

already-icy streets. As on Sunday, cars slid around corners and through stop signs, yet again the schedule remained normal despite the existence of similar conditions which prompted a delay.

It is time for the School Board and FCPS Administration to construct a discernible and coherent policy regarding snow.

The county leaves students and parents alike in the cold with its insane decisions. Whether it's waiting until 5 AM to announce a delay for weather that lasted through the night, or declining to release students early because snowfall began 15 minutes after the cut-off time, the School Board puts students at risk by leaving them out on roads that are unsafe.

This staff does not purport to demand that delays and cancellations be handed out like Halloween candy; we are required to attend 180 days of school, and significant dents in the schedule will serve as a wrench stuck in this fine-tuned educational machine. No, instead, we simply ask for an intelligible response or explanation from FCPS when we examine the local weather and discover a snow storm barreling down from the northwest.

The student body has failed to gain an off-campus lunch policy because the county fears for our safety. Why should these same students be forced to skate their cars to school?

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## Lost Lore of Lunches of Yore

Drew Macklin

Opinions Editor

It has become something of a ritual for me to write an Opinion column in every issue of this publication. For a long time I boldly used the column as a soapbox for my political views, until I was sure that I had resoundingly chastised every dissenter with my brilliant rhetoric. Then, I felt compelled to extol the glories of hard work and diligence with regards to class and extra-curricular activities. It seemed the least I could do to make a difference in the school. Strangely, these two subjects soon lost their luster; I became convinced readers were tired of them – that they had become clichéd and overused. So, with no small



Photo by Houston Murphy

amount of forethought and contemplation, I have struck upon an issue that lies close to my heart and, in my mind, desperately wants for attention: the travesty that is our school lunches.

"Bah!" you might cry. "I've eaten a pink tray lunch every day since 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and I've found that, once you manage to gum through the staler portions, school food is surprisingly tasty as it sneaks down your throat! Sure, sometimes the taste doesn't match the actual food product, but hey! Who doesn't like a little surprise now and then?"

Yes, you might utter this declaration with sincerity and confidence on the outside, but I have no doubt that, inside, your innards are weeping for those lost sack lunches of yore. The awful truth is our school food just doesn't light a candle to the nutrition, taste, and convenience of a scrumptious home-made-and-packaged-with-care brown bag lunch. Worse – most students realize this, yet they still prize the unpalatable pink tray lunch.

Why is this? Could it simply be one more condemnation of our society as a whole – just another item found on Osama's "Reasons to Hate America" list? Does there exist, far away in a secretive terrorist camp, a classroom poster with a pink tray labeled "evil," a sickly looking American child labeled "ignorant," and a firm exhortation to "Fight to save the bag lunch from the worthless infidels"? I can only hope not.

Instead, I lay the burden of blame on a little vice I like to call "laziness." That's right, "laziness." Picture this all-too-common scenario: every morning, our hero Wally Wolverine listens to the alarm issue a call to "rise and make ready for the day!" The stage is set, the time is there for the taking: the kitchen all but shouts, "Look

in my pantry! There are chips and cookies and pretty brown bags! Go on, open up the fridge! Look at this lunch meat – ham and turkey and salami and cheeses galore!" Does our noble Wolverine heed this call to wake and make a lunch? No – he hits the snooze and rolls over for a bit more sleep, leaving the house groaning in agony.

Then, sometime in the third block of the school day, the stomach of this unfortunate student sends forth an ominous growled warning. The hapless scholar realizes at last that the curse of unfathomable hunger is minutes away; in a fit of panic he watches the clock tick toward lunch. Finally, the lunch bell rings and the classroom vomits him out toward the cafeteria. Our wayward hero senses relief at last, when, Oh no! The pungent odors of the lunch line waft into his nostrils and ooze out again through his ears! He casts his eyes about desperately, searching for escape, but is greeted oh-so-cruelly with the vision of his classroom compatriots contentedly chewing on cookies and chips that they carried from home. Dejected and despondent, he files through the line like a prisoner of war, his pink tray a badge of shame.

Sadly, Wally Wolverine is not just a figment of my imagination. He comes to life everyday in the shape of students among us. So this column will end with one resounding exhortation, aimed toward those who are able to make a lunch, yet indolently choose not to: wake up! Sacrifice those precious five minutes in the morning and pack a lunch into a little brown bag! Your stomach will thank you.

## The LaBarrometer Measuring the Pressures of Daily Life



Photo by Kim Wagner

### Adulthood Beckons

Ansley LaBarre

Editor-in-Chief

Middle school must be the most awkward experience of anyone's life.

Since we all experienced it, it cannot be denied. You don't know how to look, dress, or act; your hormones are out of control, and every day is a constant war with zits. You seem so cool because you no longer have recess, even though you secretly miss it. And after just two years of this goofy stage, you're expected to be a full blown high-schooler.

Reflecting back, being a freshman is little different than being in middle school. Except, you think you're even cooler now for being in "high school." It doesn't really matter, because in all actuality, you are only slightly removed from the days of being friends with everyone, and seeing one teacher all day long. As much as we'd like to think we're mature with the label of "ninth grade," we're still so young.

Whether or not we like to admit it, our four years of high school are plagued by the presence of our parents. High school is such a small amount of our lifetime, and at the conclusion we are expected to just leave the nest and become our own people. Stepping in as freshman, although we consider ourselves "old," most of us would undoubtedly not be able to last two days on our own.

That's why I was utterly surprised that I feel a sudden urge of independence this year. In essence, it wasn't that long ago when I was a freshman. Is it possible for such a seemingly short amount of time to have prepared me for such a drastic change? I hope so. It's almost scary to think I was just hit one day, bam!, by the realization that the time is dawning to move along with life. Although other aspects of life may still be dependent upon the care of others, most seniors would be able to survive and thrive psychologically and emotionally on their own.

As with every concept of life, there must be exceptions. I am sure there are individuals who have been eager to leave since the start of junior year, or those who are dreading that day next fall when they face the world of the unknown. But regardless, six years after standing in a single file line and racing on scooters in P.E., we are ready to take our stand in the world. It may be January, but acceptance letters are flowing in, and our futures are already unfolding. In fact, they have been since unstable freshman year, we just don't realize it. Maturity may hit us all at different times, and although seemingly small, our time in high school displays the evolution from the awkward and uncertain, zit-fighting dependent, to the adult mind set we will inhabit for the remainder of our lives.

## Elegy for Almost Ivy-Leaguers

Marissa D'Orazio

Focus Editor

"Oh my god...what if I don't get into any of my top choice colleges and end up having to go to UVA? I'm so worried..."

The first time I heard this, I almost spit out what I was eating. I soon found this was no anomaly, as I heard it fifty more times. Face it, the senior class at West Potomac is full of spoiled brats.

For those of you who haven't begun the horrific process of transcribing your life onto a few sheets of paper on a college application, you should know a little bit of background information. The best in-state school's tuition averages around \$10,000 a year, out-of-state schools average \$20,000 a year, and finally, the top name Ivy League colleges many of my peers hope to attend, cost about \$30,000 a year. And this is only tuition-- no room and board included. College is not cheap at all.

"Oh well," some of you may say. "Mommy and Daddy will pay for it." Not everyone's parents are willing to do this. And even if they are, is there some kind of sick pleasure you take in burdening them with ridiculously high tuition bills?

There is no point. Unless you harbor a deep hatred for the people who raised you and wish to run them straight into the ground, you have no excuse not to be reasonable in where you choose to apply to school. If you apply yourself, there is no difference in the amount that you can learn between Ivy Leagues and Virginia's fine selection of schools, except that Virginia schools are about one third as much as Ivy Leagues, and students in Virginia don't have their noses quite so high in the air.

Why do people set their sights on prestigious private colleges? For that matter, why would you pay more for a shirt at Abercrombie instead of a lot less at Wal-Mart when you know both fulfill their task-- clothing you? Because you pay for something depending on the name and reputation it has without considering how decent of a job it does.

If you know you aren't cut out for Smart People Land, why even waste a college's time? I once heard a rumor about a kid who was a complete slacker, and their list of potential colleges was astoundingly decorated with name-brand colleges. When someone asked how this person expected to get accepted, they

simply replied, "My parents have connections." If your education really isn't important to you, then why don't you find some other job and let someone who will take college seriously take your place?

In our minds, we're all special; we're all prodigies. This is what



Photo by Evan Debbles

society wants you to think. You're told all of your life that you are smart, but applying to college is your time to prove it.

You open up one of a thousand packets you receive in the mail from a smorgasbord of colleges: "Dear Johnny, we've seen your test scores and GPA, and we think you'd be a great candidate for Harvard College."

"Did you hear that, Dad? Harvard wants me! Harvard!"

That is how the idea is planted

in our minds. We are the chosen ones; the well-above-average children. But what colleges don't tell us is that as humans, we are naturally over-confident. And what your friends won't tell you is that it is utterly sickening to listen to you count your chickens before they hatch.

Sometimes I imagine a board of men in black suits, each representing a college, in an intense meeting about their long-standing conspiracy. The NOVA rep is seated next to a Yale rep. "Mr. NOVA, isn't it hilarious how we provide the exact same education? When is America ever going to find us out?"

"Mr. Yale, you know they never will! Americans will spend absolutely any amount of money to increase the standing of their reputation." Mr. Yale flashes him the omniscient smile that we all think only an Ivy League man can give.

Whether you think I am sadistic or not, I am going to laugh when all of these poor kids don't get into the disgustingly expensive Ivy League where they thought they would graduate first in their class, and instead have to hang their head in shame as they slouch through the hallways of the University of Virginia.



## It's Fairly Plain: Feminism is Pro-Life

**Hana Beckerle**

*Editor-in-Chief*

On January 24, I attended the 32<sup>nd</sup> March for Life in Washington, D.C. This annual event is held on or near the anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court decision, *Roe v. Wade*, which legalized abortion in 1973. The March for Life attracts pro-life citizens from across the country to protest the tragic ruling and show support for life, even in its earliest stages.

As a staunch advocate of the pro-life movement, I was heartened to see people of all ages and races. Over 100,000 people braved the frigid temperatures and slush-covered streets of our nation's capital for the march this year as a united front for the pro-life majority in this country.

One thing that I have come to understand is that most Americans feel the feminist movement is, as a rule, "pro-choice." Nothing could be further from the truth. Feminism is to advocate women's rights and advance women's causes, and I can think of no

better way to do this than to be pro-life.

Pro-choice advocates may argue that the reversal of *Roe v. Wade* would be most detrimental to women of limited means because they may not be able to afford any option other than abortion. Contrary to what one may think, there are many resources available to women in crisis pregnancies. There are dozens of websites that have contacts for women who don't know where to turn. In our area, there are several crisis pregnancy centers, such as the Mariah Center in Alexandria, which offer everything from food and shelter to counseling. These centers may not receive very much attention, but they offer better choices for a desperate woman than to simply end her baby's life. A true feminist recognizes that there are better options for her fellow women.

There is always the alternative of adoption, which has been available to women for years. Some couples that are unable to have children of their own have resorted to measures such as

traveling to Eastern Europe and Asia in search of healthy babies to adopt. There are even services that allow women to choose their child's adoptive family. Imagine if, instead of killing unwanted children before they are born, the women of this country offered these babies up for adoption to

**A true feminist recognizes that there are better options for her fellow women.**

those who will love and care for them.

Advocates of "choice" have tried for years to make the assertion that after an abortion, a woman can simply return to her everyday life as it was before, without the "burden" of a baby. These women may be unaffected economically and socially, but what about their moral, psychological and spiritual well-being? There are countless tales of women who regret their abortions after the fact. I can only imagine the remorse that would result from having a life ended at my hands. Does feminism

mean that promoting moral and spiritual health in women is not as important as economic and social normalcy? I think not. A feminist above all others should recognize the need to spare her fellow women the anguish and regret of abortion.

Besides a woman's psychological health, her physical health may also suffer from having an abortion. According to several recent scientific studies, women who have had one or more abortions are at a much higher risk for cervical, ovarian, and breast cancer later in life. A "feminist" who argues that it is in a woman's best interest for her health to have an abortion is simply wrong.

At the March for Life, I was glad to see my fellow demonstrators carrying signs that read "Women Deserve Better." New research has shown that many women feel pressured by friends, family, or their baby's father to have an abortion in the first place, and the vast majority of women regret their abortions afterward.

Organizations such as Silent No More work to disseminate the myths about how women's lives are affected by abortions.

The catchy phrase "reproductive rights" thrown around so often by pro-choice citizens does not describe all of the effects of an abortion that are in no way helpful to women. Rather than presenting women with all of their options, the pro-choice community chooses to emphasize the poorest choice a woman can make. How is that feminism?

It is time that the pro-choice community recognizes that abortion is not a woman's only option, and that it is the option that will most negatively impact her life. We are constantly told by the media and by various organizations that a feminist is pro-choice. Women across the country will testify that this is not true. If we seek to serve the best interests of women, abortion is not acceptable. I hope that the day will soon come when all women can see that they deserve better.

## Tsunami Life Lessons

**Joy Yoo**

*Wire Reporter*

The number of deaths caused by the infamous Southeast Asian tsunami is continuing to increase hourly. More than half of the deaths have taken place in Indonesia with a toll over 100,000. The earthquake that caused the tsunami has been the deadliest earthquake over the past century. These numbers and descriptions are simply unimaginable. How can one earthquake take away so many lives?

As the nation's youth and future generation, we are responsible to aid not only these numerous victims but also the rest of the underprivileged and not-so-fortunate throughout the world; however, many of us still remain absorbed in our "own little world." Despite our awareness of the horrific evils of poverty, abuse,



Photo by Evan Dobbs

disease, and natural disasters like the tsunami, we still choose to carry on with our lives and ignore them. Some of us do not think we have time; some think their time and volunteering will remain insignificant. These are all excuses and deceptions we consistently hammer into our heads. We are always engrossed in the money and material-driven world.

Ignoring the needs of others is simply inhumane. As students, we have a strong

voice in the worldwide community. Many believe the youth of the world do not have the capability of expressing opinions anywhere; however, this is not true. When an adolescent makes a big break in news, many, including adults, kids, and senior citizens, are motivated to follow their lead.

As teenagers, we sometimes believe that no one is more important in this world other than ourselves and a select few other people. We often live as if the other billions of people are unimportant to our world. There are really only handful of teenagers who act unselfishly.

In other parts of the world, such as Thailand, citizens live on the bare necessities; however, here in America, citizens take the basic necessities for granted and believe that material things are essential. Our world is based on availability. If our nation was stripped of the superfluous designer stores and expensive cars, life and society would change. People would realize that there is more to life than being rich, famous, and good-looking; it is sad that we cannot realize this regardless. There are many ways to voice your opinion. Schools are a great source of voicing your opinion; you can join a club or even start your own club. In this case, you can go about upholding your responsibilities as citizens of the world with your friends.

Take a step out of your normal world. Try and volunteer and commit just a little bit of your time. Time is not a measurement of your commitment; your persistence and visions are. As the future of this world, we need to wake up and acknowledge the global problems and try our best to change it. Now is the critical time to begin this. Currently, we believe we are invincible and "on top of the world," but sporadic events such as the tsunami should open our eyes to reality. After such a tragedy, we cannot sympathize for a couple months and forget. Now is the time to take a stand and put others before ourselves.

## Join the (Slacker) Club

**Ashlee Newcomb**

*Style Editor*

Wake-up, suffer through four classes, push through the hallways, rush to your ride home, but wait, you have a club meeting after-school. Stumble back through the hallways, against student traffic, to the club's location and sit through a long speech about attendance, community service hours, group projects, and blah, blah, blah. Such is the life of a club member. This may sound a little contradictory from an officer of two community service clubs, however, this is the impression I receive from a majority of members. I personally do not feel the same as these select students, but, I admit I have days when I just want to go home and sleep. However, that is not what I signed up for.

The community service organizations within this school are beneficial to their members' future. The select societies that handpick members assist in exemplifying to colleges that their membership is held in high-regard. These members are supposedly individuals who desire to help others, and are capable of balancing their school work and still remain dedicated to their extracurriculars.

You would think that these prestigious members would not complain about organization policies, when that same organization has the potential to aid its members with their college acceptance. Most colleges look for prospective students that are active in their community and are members of associations that achieve to do so. Now, I trust it is not only I who believes merely attending meetings and completing community service hours would be not too much for something that can profit you for college. Most service clubs have a meeting once a month, which proves somewhat inefficient. However, to some, those precious 15 minutes-one day a month-is a complete waste, and could be spent playing board games.

Hopefully, I am not coming off entirely biased and sounding like a ranting club officer, but I do not find it demanding to reserve some of your time to attend your designated clubs' meetings and actually participate. If you intend to claim you are a member on your college applications, why not seek to prove that you are an effective one, for moral's sake. It does not follow through that you are an active component of a society when you blow off your responsibilities. For those of you, who are taking their chances to fool the system, don't think it will last.

I personally do not understand the mindset of students who claim to be making a difference when they do not actively participate. How could they not carry a heavy conscience when they know they are doing is immoral? To them, it's the easy way out.

Theoretically, most members of these service clubs are, "the best of the best." It's interesting that some of these students



Photo by Houston Murphy

do not actually do anything to prove their supposed superior status. Maybe the leaders of these societies are the individuals to blame. It's possible that leaders, like me, who set their members on a pedestal, are buying into their members' good deeds, and working to give their organization a good name. However, I wish that were actually true. There will always be people who take advantage of club benefits, whether they do anything or not.



Pro/Con

# I Beg To Differ: Assessing the Right to Protest

## Free Speech Cannot Be Denied

Rob Jones

Wire Reporter

Imagine a world run by Drew Macklin. A world in which people could never express their opinions, never show indignation, and never practice civil disobedience. A world in which we would be expected to fall in line behind our beloved Führer, following his tyrannical lead while the country swiftly runs itself into the ground. Sound like a pretty picture? Well, since there is very little chance my esteemed colleague will be running the free world any time in the next few years, we may rest assured that our basic civil liberties are safe. Or may we?

Inauguration day empowered spurned voters to protest against the induction of a leader, who in their opinion, (and in the opinion of most of the world), lacks the neurological means to chew gum and walk at the same time, let alone cope with the vast array of constant pressures that berate world leaders at every moment of their lives. Multiple demonstrations were planned to coincide with the inauguration ceremony: unified efforts from grass-roots campaigns working toward anti-war, pro-environment and various other liberal causes. Voters from all over the Metropolitan area turned out to demonstrate their unabashed disgust for the reelection of a president who has poured hundreds of billions of dollars into an unnecessary and unjustified war while the national economy experienced a downturn from the largest projected surplus in history to the largest projected deficit.

Even as these masses turned out on Inauguration Day, some people feel that such a demonstration is disrespectful to the powers that be, and hence, should not be allowed. Perhaps they are right. These demonstrators clearly present a danger to our society. After all, nothing is more detrimental to a free culture than dissent. Where would we honestly be if people were allowed to denounce our commander-in-chief and present a picture of national disunity? Oh, that's right, we'd be in AMERICA.

The demonstrators were fully within the bounds of their constitutional rights to freedom of speech and assembly, merely expressing their outrage at the collective ignorance of a slight majority of the American public. However, supporters of the Bush administration see the protests as unpatriotic and disloyal to our country in a time of war. They say our nation must show its support for our efforts on behalf

of "freedom" and "justice" in Iraq. They want us to believe that if we are against the powers that be, then we are against America itself.

This approach is typical of the Bush administration's record these past four years. The President and his GOP chorus line have been constantly playing on the American people's most primal fear. They have escalated the terrorist threat rating to a perpetual level of "high" and built their campaign for reelection on the fear of a policy shift in the country. Bush's own unofficial slogan has been, "If you're not with us, you're against us," a motto which helped to draw undecided votes away from his primary opponent in the 2004 election campaign, John Kerry. The administration has kept the public in constant fear of deviation from the status-quo, and wants to maintain the illusion of unified support of its "great leader".

What they fail to mention is that the very vitality of our nation has been a result of centuries of controversy. It has been the driving force behind every major social and political change in our history, and it will be the same in this situation. Apparently, conservative America is not secure with its hold on the country, and would prefer the masses to fall behind their banner like a mindless mob of monolithic neo-fascists. Perhaps they have forgotten their mass condemnation of the repression of free speech in countries controlled by "evil-doers" such as Saddam Hussein. (Just to refresh everyone's memory, this played a major role in justifying our invasion of Iraq in 2003).

These critics of public demonstration forget that the freedoms of speech and expression are our most cherished freedoms of all. This country was built on dissent and civil disagreement. Difference of opinion is the very foundation of American freedom. It has been responsible for everything from our very independence to the foundation of civil rights and equality for all people. If the conservatives cannot handle that, they cannot claim to be patriotic. By attempting to suppress civil dissent on Inauguration Day, they are, in effect, no better than the tyrants we have striven to overcome.

## Free to Speak and Destroy?

Drew Macklin

Opinions Editor

"Congress shall make no law... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble." The First Amendment in the Bill of Rights represents the bulwark of democracy and our way of life. One insignificant collection of words guarantees dissent, dissension, and, therefore, continuous political change. It ensures a majority that will never rule too severely and a minority that will one day rule again. In short, it provides everything that sets America apart from the rest of the world.

Freedom of speech protects the airspace of both Al Franken and Rush Limbaugh, letting them rant and rave to their heart's content through the nation's radios. It allows both *The Passion of the Christ* and *Fahrenheit 9/11* to hit America's movie screens. And most of all, it guards both the annual March for Life and the annual March for Women's Lives. Whether or not the rhetoric, images, and the ideology behind them match the administration in power, they are protected under the First Amendment.

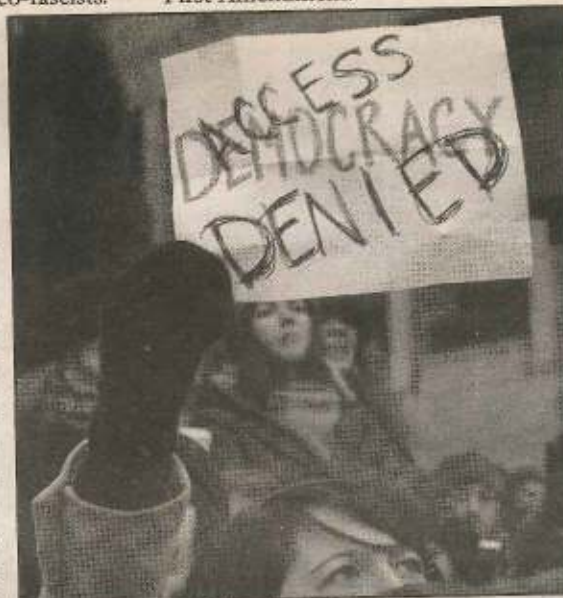
Free Speech is essential in America; however, the contemporary idea of protest usually goes far beyond that basic principle.

In the weeks leading up to the 2005 Inauguration, leftist groups around the country concocted plans for protest to demonstrate their solidarity against President Bush. They planned events and organized rendezvous. One group, Anarchist Resistance, wrote a *Call to Action* on their website: "Four years ago anarchists marched on the Inauguration, hundreds strong. The police set up check points forcing thousands to adhere to bag and body searches, in response - we smashed a secret service check point, opening up the parade route for all. While some waved the American flag, we burned it. While some booed, we pelted the motorcade with trash...The U.S. Presidential Inauguration is...a prime opportunity to shatter these illusions of grandeur by crashing this decadent display of arrogance and wealth. This, Jan. 20th, let's bring anarchy to the streets of DC - make resistance visible, and ring in the next four years with a smash!" Indeed, from my perch in the bleachers next to Pennsylvania Avenue, I watched protestors burn American flags, pelt police with trash, and scrawl the anarchist 'A' on buildings and cars.

This is not free speech. This is not constructive dissent. This is violence and mayhem that tries to hide underneath the Bill of Rights alongside letters to the editor and radio talk shows.

What do the protestors hope to achieve with these actions? From the signs I saw, I gather they hope to strike down "Tyranny at Home" and wrest liberty from "Bush: a mother[expletive]." In doing so, they disregard the wonder that this country, and its much-maligned president, allow them to express their ideas at all. We could be a Russia, where every television station is owned by Vladimir Putin's government. We could be a France, where religious symbols have been banned from public. Instead, we are America, Land of the Free and Home of both the Brave, Loyal, and Supportive and the Digusted, Distracted, and Angry.

So put down your signs, your trash and your rocks. Stop your chants and put away your lighters. Thank God for this free nation and celebrate by dissenting peacefully.



A Protester at the 2005 Presidential Inauguration.

Tom Priddy/KRT

The right to assemble is just as important. It allowed Martin Luther King, Jr. to organize his Civil Rights March in the heart of DC and forever change the racial outlook in America. It allows millions around the country to gather in churches every week and practice their faith.

## Questions for Thought

If vegetarians eat vegetables, what do humanitarians eat?

If a turtle loses its shell, is it naked or homeless?

If the "blackbox" flight recorder isn't damaged during a plane crash, why isn't the whole plane made of that?





# This is Our Own Inevitable Evil

Laura Lofgren

Reporter

The bell rings for the start of math class. You are scribbling down your friend's answers to the worksheet. It was her turn to do the homework this time. You turn it in, safely on time. It's not like the teacher reads it anyway. "Time for the Horner's Algorithm quiz," the teacher announces to the class. You didn't study, as usual. But as soon as the teacher steps out of the room, in an attempt to be subtle, you ruffle through your notes. You just didn't know the last couple questions...that's all.

For quite a few people, these actions are daily occurrences, and many of these same people wouldn't consider themselves cheaters. How many people can honestly say they feel thoroughly educated coming out of high school? Probably not very many. But how many can say the same when leaving college? College is where the real education starts. High school is just a place to put the nation's children until they can either work or go to college to actually have an impact on society. We are treated like rats in a maze, running from place to place at the sound of a bell. And as for our "education," much of our time is spent wastefully.

Teachers have an hour and a half to teach (enforced by Fairfax county), and when they run out of material, they hand out inconsequential worksheets to keep us busy, in other words, "busy work." Busy work is torture in the form of a crossword puzzle. It teaches nothing. So why not get it over with quicker by splitting it with the kid sitting next to you? "Busywork is belittling to our intelligence, so there is nothing wrong with belittling the teachers right back by cheating on it," says senior Katherine Ward.

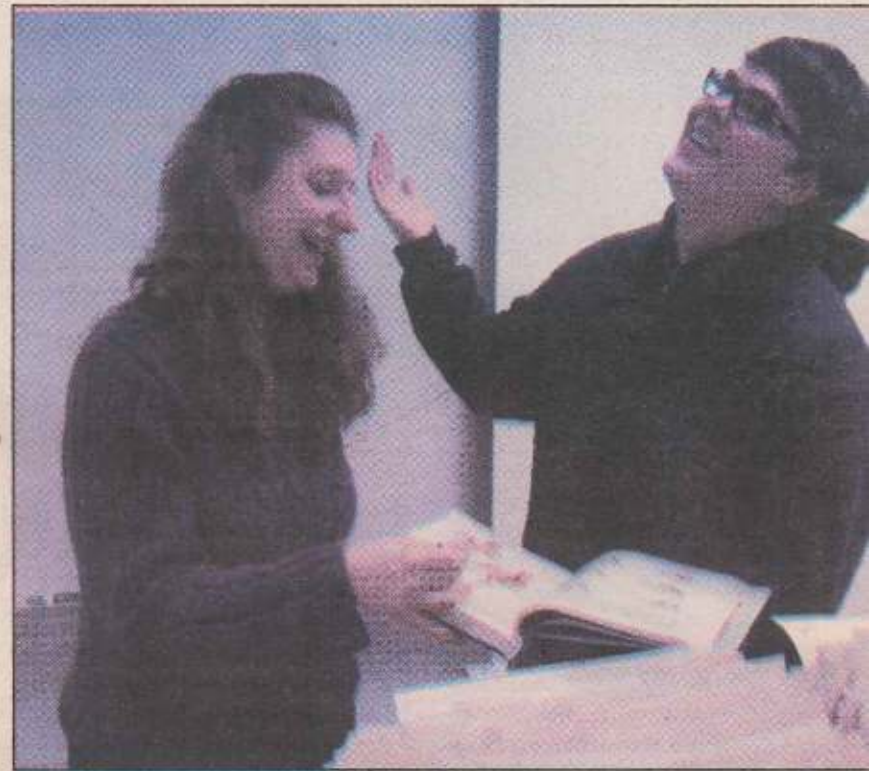
The kids who initially never cheated have by now picked it up from their friends. When the test scores come back, and half the class has A's because they conferred with each other in whispers during the test taking, the non-cheaters feel compelled to cheat as well. This is how new cheaters are bred. Soon, the whole school will be ridden with cheating gurus. It is inevitable.

But does it even matter? Many say cheating is morally wrong. You are receiving credit for

something you didn't do. But the whole point of school is to receive an education, not to show off your A's. We should be intrinsically motivated to do well, but when we are forced to direct our time to worthless worksheets and information we will never use in the future, it seems as if we are squandering our time to toil over it all.

Many teachers also set their kids up to cheat. I can't remember how many times the teacher has left the classroom for a moment during a quiz, and the entire room bursts into "What did you get for number 3?" to be immediately hushed when the teacher approaches.

Lazy teachers also feed the cheating frenzy. By only checking homework for completion, it soon dawns on the students that they can copy their friend's paper word for word and the teacher will never notice. Although plagiarizing a whole essay from off the internet wouldn't be a good idea, a little bit of harmless "working with a friend" on useless worksheets shouldn't be considered such a big deal. In college, we can focus our attention on something we actually want to be learning, and spend our class time actually doing the learning instead of just passing the time unengaged.

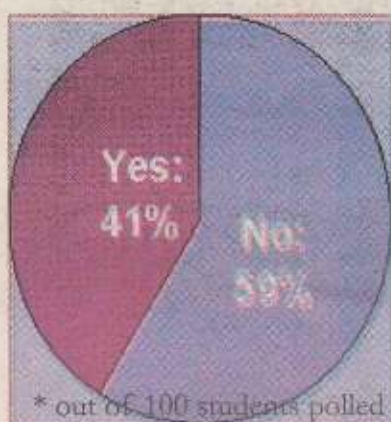


Senior Mike York talks after school with AP Bio teacher, Danielle Sebookraft. Many students avoid the staying after school to learn material inside and out.

## Top 10 Shady Plays

- 10) Copying the work of the student next to you.
- 9) Buying/borrowing a project off of an old student.
- 8) Writing the answers on your fingernails.
- 7) Writing a cheat sheet on the back of a gum wrapper.
- 6) Taking a picture of the test on a camera phone and sending it to a second party to give you the answers.
- 5) Recording a lecture, and listening to it on headphones on test day.
- 4) Making signals for each letter choice on a multiple choice exam.
- 3) Writing the answers under a cast of a broken arm.
- 2) Writing the answers on a cheap pair of sandals, then throwing them away after the test, and putting on a new pair.
- 1) Convincing the teacher you did the project and accusing him or her of losing it.

### Is Cheating Inevitable?

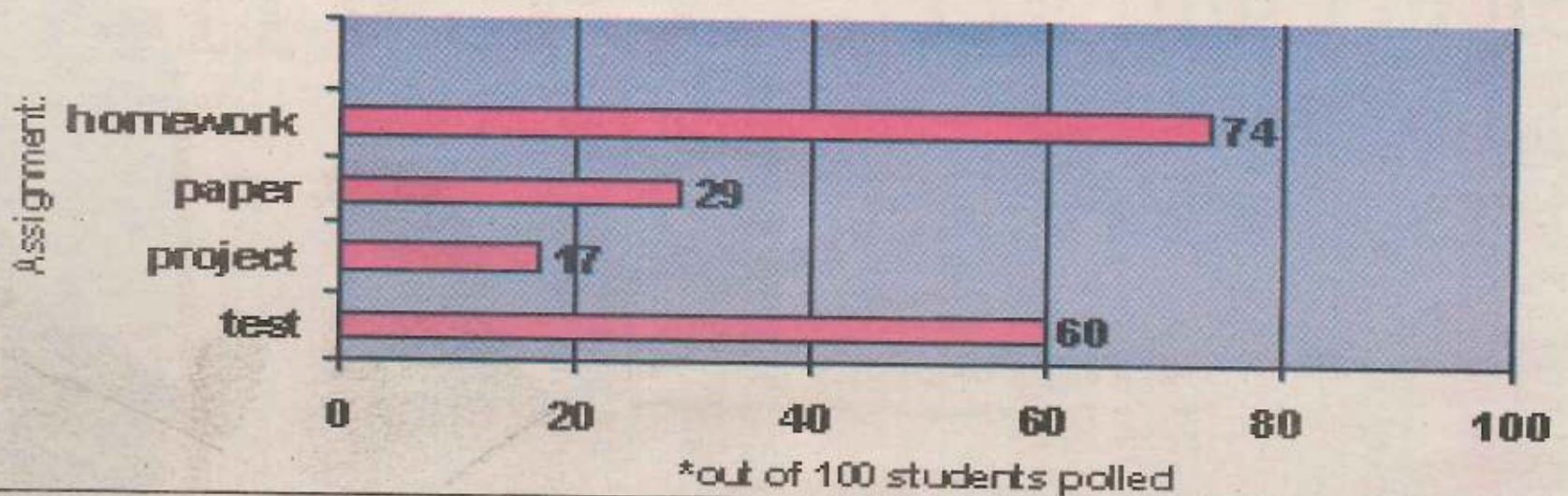


☐ No ☒ Yes



# Work, We Promise

## What Have You Cheated On?



## Does Everyone Cheat?

Sarah Raser

Reporter

Cheating and plagiarism are inevitable. Whether it is copying and pasting something from a website, or just a simple "Can I borrow your homework?", cheating happens anywhere and everywhere.

It happens all the time: at home, in the cafeteria, or even during class when the teacher sitting in the front of the classroom. I admit, I have been a culprit of cheating. I have copied someone else's homework and "accidentally" glanced at my neighbor's test when

I coincidentally needed an answer to questions. I admit I have cheated. I have fought my conscience various times so I can get that extra point on a quiz. At those periods of time, I feel I have no other options but to cheat. It all comes down to principle.

The common misconception about cheaters is that they are the slackers and failures of school. In reality, they are the honor students. They are the athletes. They're everyone. There have been cases of forgery within our own National Honor Society. More than once there have been incidences of people making up their service hours in an effort to avoid a measly ten hours of service. There was even a suspicion of people cheating to get on Homecoming Court. Rumors were started, tears were shed, and people were flat out angry off and it was just Homecoming! Why don't people get this fired up when they hear about someone getting an 'A' with the help of a cheat sheet and the trustful students get 'C's? It's all a matter of loyalties: loyalties versus integrity. Are you loyal to your friends enough to let cheating happen? Or will you not stand for someone cheating and turn them in?

Many of the leaders of the school are cheaters as well. Who are we able to exemplify if the crème of the crop cheat and plagiarize? Who do the freshmen have to idolize? If everyone does it, how can we determine who is authentic? Personally, I'm not surprised people cheat. With all the stress students feel to good grades and even reach the top of the social ladder, where is there time to do one little math problem? I feel it everyday. It comes from everywhere: my parents, my teachers, my coaches, my friends. It never seems to stop. Sometimes you just have to slack off and lie to say you did it, but everything has limits. When it comes to writing the answers of a test on the inside of your

According to a 2004 survey of 24,763 high school students by the Josephson Institute of Ethics, 62% cheated on exams. 92% responded that they were satisfied with their ethics and character.

water bottle label, you know you've got a problem.

I also that know some people refuse to give in to cheating. Occasionally I hear a little "Psst!" coming from another table towards another student. Then I hear a whisper of, "Do your own work!" It makes me giggle every time I hear it. It reminds me of the

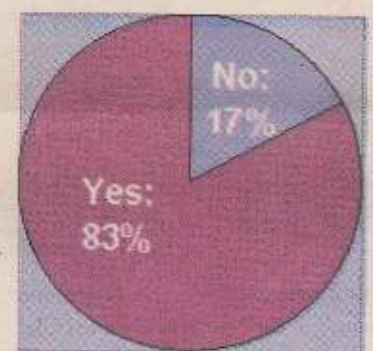
**It reminds me of the movie *Napoleon Dynamite* when some guy asks Napoleon, "Napoleon, give me some of your tots!" and he replies with a simple, "NO! GO FIND YOUR OWN!"**

movie *Napoleon Dynamite* when some guy asks Napoleon, "Napoleon, give me some of your tots!" and he replies with a simple, "NO! GO FIND YOUR OWN!" It sounds ridiculous, but so is being

as obvious as to actually ask for an answer.

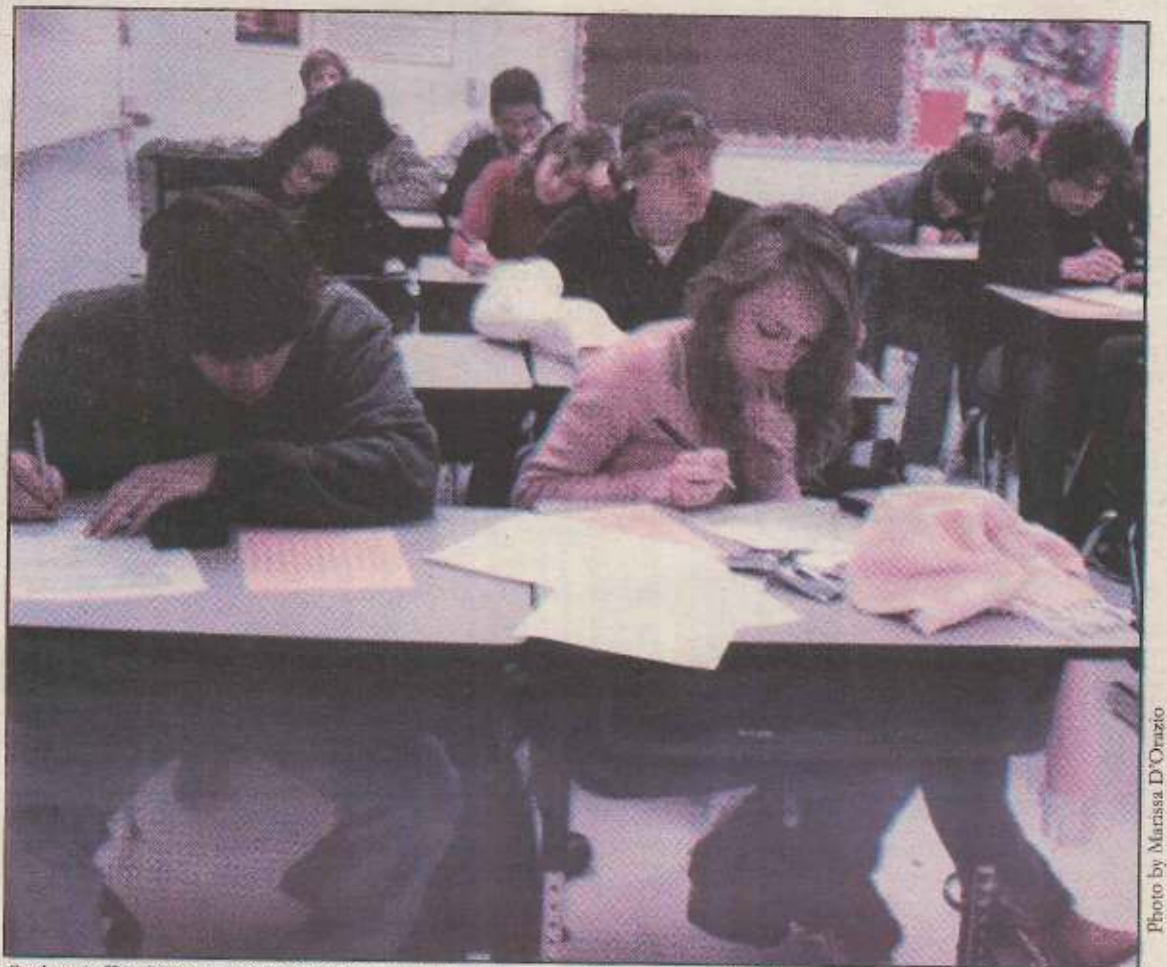
In my opinion, cheating is necessary sometimes. It pains me to say it, but it this immoral act has benefited me more than not and I know what I am putting on the line. Even though I say this, I do not encourage it. Cheating can make and break you and it may seem cliché to say, but in the end, you're only cheating yourself.

## Is Cheating Wrong?



\* out of 100 students polled

■ No ■ Yes



Students in Kate Wollong's AP Statistics class concentrate during a test. Rigorous tests in difficult classes sometimes make cheating very tempting for the perfectionist students at this school.

Photo by Marissa D'Orazio



# The Secrets of the SR&R

**Evan Dobbs**  
Photo Editor

With the new administration, we are bound to experience the change in enforcement with policies and procedures. Problems arise when most students don't know many of the current rules.

Both students and teachers don't fully understand the tardy policy. It is the same as former Principal Johnson's tardy policy and last year's as well. The only difference is the removal of tardy desks. Students now have the ability to go directly to class, and don't have to wait in a long line for a pass. Sophomore Brittney Boykin favors the changes, "I think the changes in the tardy policy benefits students. Now if we have an emergency, we can get to class without wasting more time, and the teacher can decide whether or not we are late." Boykin stated.

If students accumulate seven unexcused tardies, they will receive an out-of-school suspension. What some students don't know is that they can collect three tardies in different classes, and still will be assigned Saturday school. The teachers' responsibilities are to watch students outside their classroom doors and ensure students arrive on time. Only few teachers do.

Before school, some pull out their phones to quickly call their friends to make sure they are prepared for class, or to catch up on any gossip they might have missed. Teachers who see these students threaten to confiscate their phones. However, the SR&R states that "students are not required to give their phones if they are not yet in the

building before 7:25". This rule also applies to CD players and other electronics. Yet administrators disagree, "I think that once you enter the building, it is not the time or place to use phones or CD players," said Principal Rima Vesilind.

Hats and other items that are confiscated



Sophomore Alyson Murphy gets her phone taken away by Security Officer and Teacher Tyrone Duggins.

are never kept by the teacher or administrator. The item must go straight to security, where it is logged and should be picked up by the parent. If a student brings a blade, he or she will end up with an expulsion. If the blade is over three inches, students find themselves with a criminal charge. If kept concealed, and if a student can prove that he or she has no intention on taking it out to harm another student, he or she may not get expelled.

The SR&R Handbook, which is given to students at the beginning of each year,

explains how students should behave on a daily basis. Administrators enforce these rules to make sure student welfare is protected. Twelfth grade Administrator Inez Bryant said, "These rules are set up to ensure that the students are safe".

Some sections of the SR&R are thought to be vague. The SR&R emphasizes specific prohibitions, "Any unauthorized use of any weapon, or possession of any of the weapons...shall result in a ten-day suspension and recommendation for expulsion," giving a direct list of banned weapons, also stating "any weapon of like kind." Many objects have been questioned on whether or not they should be allowed on school. Plastic knitting needles and nail clippers are included.

Students are reminded to look back into the SR&R handbook if a disagreement on teachers' disciplinary actions arises. Teachers, however, are assigned a faculty handbook each year, and expected to read and understand these rules every year. Some teachers don't know where the handbook is located; others didn't know there was a handbook. If a student has any questions about our school policies, refer to the SR&R. All FCPS policies, regulations, and rules are available at <http://www.fcps.edu/>

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- January 28
  - One-Act Play in K Theater (7:30pm-10:30pm)
- January 29
  - District and Region Scholastic Bowl at Edison (8:00am)
- January 31
  - Fashion Show Rehearsal (2:30pm-4:00pm in room 506 Springbank)
- February 5
  - Science Fair (7:00am-3:00pm in Cafeteria)
  - District Band Concert (7:30pm-10:00pm Auditorium)
- February 9
  - NHS Meeting (2:15pm-3:00pm in Cafeteria)
- February 10
  - All State Choir Auditions (3:00pm-6:00pm Annandale)
- February 12
  - Region One-Act Play Festival @ Herndon (10am)
  - ACT Test in Cafeteria (7:30am-2pm)
- February 16
  - FL Honor Society Inductions in Auditorium (2:30pm-3:15pm)
  - AP/Honors Orientation in Auditorium (6:30pm-7:30pm)
- February 17
  - District Forensics Tournament @ Robinson (3:30pm)
  - Winter Play in Kogelman Theatre (7:30pm-10:30pm)
- February 19
  - Winter Play in Kogelman Theatre (7:30pm-10:30pm)
- February 23
  - Region Forensics Tournament @ Woodson (3pm)
- February 25
  - Fashion Show/Talent Show in Auditorium (7pm-9pm)

# Commemorating the Commander

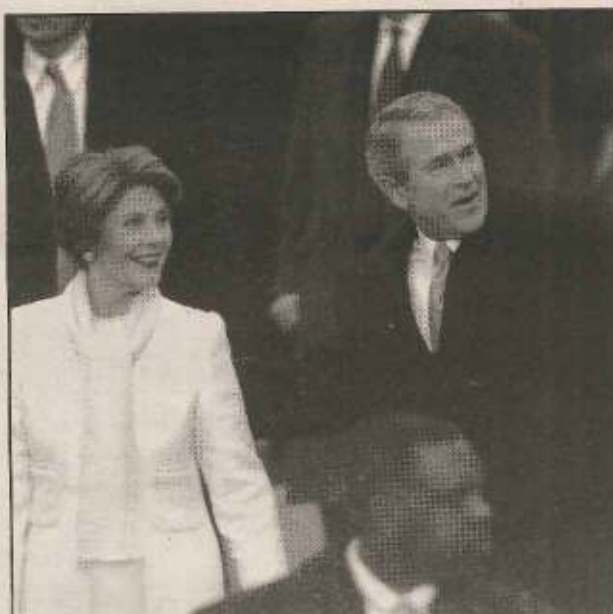
**Jason Yaworske**  
Wire Reporter

The American people re-elected George W. Bush as our president on November 4<sup>th</sup>, but it was made official on January 20<sup>th</sup> as Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney were again sworn in to the highest office in our government.

The theme for this year's 55th Inauguration Day was "A Vision of America," which was intended to commemorate the anniversaries of two influential events in American history. It is the one hundred year anniversary of Theodore Roosevelt's formal inauguration as president in 1905, and the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark expedition reaching the Pacific in 1805.

This year's speech was no different, as President Bush spoke of advancing freedom throughout the world and justice at home. "The speech was more visionary in content than a laundry list of actions," observed history teacher Bill

Rhatican, a former White House staff member. "For that we'll all have to wait for his State of the Union Address." What issues Bush did address, he addressed very vaguely, though it was impossible to mistake what he was referring to in most cases.



Some students went to the Inauguration to participate in protesting while others went to support President Bush.

He referred to 9/11 as "the day of fire" that disrupted America's "years of quiet" following the "shipwreck of communism."

Before the main ceremony, there are pre-inaugural receptions, and after the ceremony parades, balls, and other forms of celebration last through the night; all to

welcome the president and start off the new administration with a bang.

This year's inauguration was also marked with numerous protests. Picketers and others who decided to bare the cold weather showed up in great numbers, showing that while Bush may have won the election, there is still plenty of resentment towards his administration. Hecklers could be heard from the television broadcasts. While some groups, like Anarchist Resistance, were rowdy and disruptive in an attempt to, according to their website, "bring it (the government) down". A "Turn Your Back on Bush" event called for protestors to simply turn their backs on the President's motorcade as it passed.

Another group, called Critical Mass, which organizes bike rides once a month to raise awareness for the environment, staged a bike ride in order to disrupt

traffic. Senior Shaughn Dugan participated in Critical Mass's ride. "Since I wasn't able to vote in this election, I felt helpless watching Bush win," said Dugan. "I figure this is another way that my voice can be heard."

In such defining events in our country, differing opinions run rampant. As the finality of the 2004 election hit on Inauguration Day, Kerry supporters mourned as Bush followers watched in delight. "I thought the whole inauguration was great, I'm so glad Bush will be leading our country for the next four years," proclaimed junior Alyssa Kuhn. "What a great event in American history," echoed junior Antony Minter. While Tauren Barrera, who attended the event, had a unique view of the process, saying it is a "travesty to Democracy when citizens cannot see the president they elected get inaugurated without having to pass through security checkpoints and armed guards."

As we look forward to the next four years, Bush speaks of a bright future where America will continue to ensure the world is safe from tyranny and oppression. The tradition of the inauguration has seen many memorable moments, and only time will reveal this inauguration's place in history.

## KUDOS TO

Wrestling Captains Joe Voellm and Abdullah Ahmady for having a combined record of 10-0.

Mr. & Mrs. Cleary and Mrs. Bennett, for organizing the trophy cases in the main gym lobby.

Mr. Mims' Government and History classes for donating over 800 pounds of clothes to homeless people.

Emily Allen, Lisa Butler, Elizabeth Crowe, Warren Davis, Greg Hancock, Amara Lewis, Andy Meyer, David Singer, Juli Smith for being selected for Senior District Honors Orchestra.

All of the parents that donated their time and labor to shovel snow here at West Potomac.

The two new Security Officers, Leon Roberson and Frank Birtz, for keeping West Potomac safe.



## Sarah's Scholastic Section

**Sarah Raser**  
Wire Reporter

Here's a list of some historically Black colleges in our area, in honor of February's Black History month.

**Bowie State University-** BSU is one of the few degree-granting universities within the University System of Maryland. It prides itself on being number one in having African American graduate with master's degrees in computer science and information sciences, and second in psychology.

Tuition: In state- \$3,551

Out of state- \$10,894

Room and board: \$6,020

Enrollment: 3,961

Average SAT: 887

Location: Bowie, MD

Contact #- 301-860-3415



**Virginia State University-** VSU the first fully state supported four-year institution of higher learning for Blacks in America.

Tuition: In state- \$2,150

Room and board: \$6,260

Enrollment: 3,937

Average SAT: 789

Location: Petersburg

Contact #- 804-524-5902



**Saint Paul's College-** Saint Paul's College emphasizes the individual to recognize the future success of their students. The campus has a diverse mixture of academic and social activities that help create a better environment for its students.

Room and board: \$5,188

Enrollment: 677

Average SAT: 740

Location: Lawrenceville

Contact #- 434-848-1856



**Norfolk University-** This school is one of the most predominantly black colleges in the country. It prides itself on having a talented student body, a motivated faculty and staff, and being active in the community.

Tuition: In state- \$1,658

Room and board: \$5,588

Enrollment: 5,810

Average SAT: 860

Location: Norfolk

Contact #- 757-823-8396



**University of Maryland Eastern Shore-** UMES is a branch of the University of Maryland, located on 620 acres of land and is only one hour away from Ocean City. Its main goal is to offer a wide curriculum in order to prepare students for a competitive workforce.

Tuition: In state- \$3,994

Out-state- \$8,497

Room and board: \$4,930

Enrollment: 2,704

Average SAT: 840

Location: Princess Anne, MD

Contact #- 410-651-6410



If you would like to learn more about Historically Black Colleges, please visit their website: <http://hbcuconnect.com/>. The site supplies information regarding scholarships and job and internship opportunities. You may also get in contact with current students and alumni of HBCU's and ask any questions you have about them.

## Mission: College Admission

**Joy Yoo**  
Wire Reporter

There is a lot of stress piled on all seniors. Some are looking to enlist in the services; others are frantically looking for a post-high school job. The majority of students are college-

GPA, SAT scores, AP scores, and curriculum to first become informed about the academic student. Next, extracurricular activities are valued. Seeing a student involved in other activities besides education is important; it reflects a student who is

ethic. Many of the top-notch schools also respect leadership skills, which it is in the school community and other. Extracurricular activities and community service are both a reflection of a student's persistent determination, work ethic, and organization skills.

For those who are seeking a university, there is the option of Early Admission or Early Decision. If your chosen university offers early admission, some schools, the early admission process is binding; in other words, if accepted, a student must attend that university. There are also institutions who offer an unbinding early admissions program, so students have an option of looking at other schools as well. There are some advantages to every early admissions program; the main attraction is that there is a smaller pool of applicants applying, which increases your chances of acceptance. However, there is the setback of having more qualified applicants than yourself.

Getting a head start is a good idea. "Doing college applications is a stressful process. Especially with all of the separate papers to fill out since every school has different requirements. I'm glad I've heard back from some schools, though, because it makes the waiting process less stressful," said senior Kate O'Connell. Everyone would agree that hearing back from colleges within a few weeks is very comforting. Having a "safety" school takes away from the intense amount of pressure.



Counselor Jeanne Bohlin meets with Chris Jones and goes over his transcript for his college application.

Photo by Houston Murphy

bound. GPA and SAT scores are the obvious preliminaries that all colleges look at; however, there is so much more.

The beginning of senior year is the beginning of the infamous college application process. Depending on how many colleges one is applying to, the duration of this process can last for one month or even half a year.

Initially, colleges look at an applicant's

able to balance their time efficiently and is passionate about something. Whether it is sports, a club, or art, extracurricular activities demand commitment and persistence.

Community service is vital in the college process. The passion to serve others is a quality that almost all colleges want to see.

Consistent jobs are also a good reflection of an applicant's work

## The Dirt on West Potomac

**Laura Lotgren**  
Wire Reporter

"There was no toilet paper left in any of the stalls, so I just used some toilet paper I found on the floor," said one anonymous senior. Does West Potomac need a clean up job? We spend at least eight hours a day here, so it is important to maintain a sanitary living environment.

One big problem is our bathrooms. The lack of toilet

paper require trips to several bathrooms before one with a sufficient supply of this sanitary need is found. Yet this isn't a rare occurrence. Toilet paper is consistently absent from our bathrooms - never seeming to be a custodial priority to refill it on cleaning rounds. "We keep putting toilet paper in the bathrooms, but the students waste it by T-Ping the stalls and urinating over entire rolls. Sometimes we don't have time to keep refilling the toilet paper," says custodian Elizabeth Chartey. But toilet paper isn't all that's lacking. Many times there's no soap for use - forcing us to walk around with urine infested hands, touching door knobs and sharing pencils. "I personally think that West Potomac is pretty dirty. The floors are not swept and all dusty. I have never put my backpack on the floor," says freshman Cassie Tabarin.

And although we have trash cans at every corner, many kids feel the act of walking ten feet out of their way to dispose of their Coke can is too much to handle. Therefore, they toss it casually to the side to clutter the hallways. The

cafeteria can sympathize with the hallways. After lunch, many kids refuse to throw their food trash in the plentiful trash cans that line the way out, and leave it on the tables as if the cafeteria has waiter-service. We understand that the custodians at our school do their best to keep West Potomac healthy and safe, but it is aggravating that there always is trash and dirt on the floor the bathroom. Keeping the soap dispensers full would be helpful, too.

senior Nicole Andrade.

From the custodian's perspective, the school is a lot cleaner than it used to be, but there still are a lot of areas that need to be improved. The cleanest area of the school is the cafeteria. We mop it once a week. "We work hard to keep the cafeteria nice," says custodian Felicia Soloman. However, there still are some areas. How should we be improving this? "The custodians need to show more respect for helping us and throw away the trash," says senior Cassie. According to her, we can't put it all up to the custodian.



This water fountain contains bits of yellow, red, and green which turns thirsty students away.

Photo by Laura Lotgren

need to pull our weight and take some action as well.

Including our bathrooms with sticky floors, unpleasant smells, and our classrooms with dusty desks, how does our school compare with others? We do pass health regulations, but dirt isn't appalling. The sanitation of our school goes unnoticed from day to day. "Certainly, there are cleanliness issues, but when compared to other schools in the district, West Potomac really stands out," says senior Capestany. Our custodians really do work hard to keep our school as clean as possible. Teacher Paul Russell says, "Jerry is da bomb; he's a mean cleanin' machine!"



# Alternative Living

## Students can find shelter at helping home

**Adele Hampton**  
Business Manager

Being a teenager can sometimes be a wonderful, yet dreadful experience. With all the uncertainties life hands us, one thing is always the same, your family. But for some teenagers, a family is more like a nightmare, something that's neither welcoming nor reassuring. For teenagers who have no where to go, and who have no family, there is

one-on-one counseling, and positive peer pressure to help teens. "I think it's good because if the kids are getting abused then the kids can live in a better environment with kids that know what their going through," said sophomore Jennifer Grim. Alternative House serves about 150 teens a year. There is also an outreach van that has helped 300 teens a month by giving them help on a more neighborhood level.



Photo Courtesy of Karen Horowitz

This house, known as the Alternative House serves as a safe haven for teens in need of counseling or a temporary safe place to stay.

a place that they can find refuge. That place is Alternative House.

Founded in 1972 as a shelter for runaways, Alternative House is a two-week crisis center for teenagers ages 13-17. They provide homework help, counseling, and a safe place from gang recruitment. They help teens who have no where to go and are willing to get their life back on track. The program is free and is completely voluntary, meaning participants are there by free will. The Alternative House counselors utilize

aren't as fortunate as others," sophomore Katherine Perkins said.

"Our goal is to help teens and to make sure word gets out that we're here to help as many teens as possible," said Karen Horowitz, who is the volunteer coordinator at Alternative House. No matter where you are or what your situation, there's always help and someone there for you at Alternative House. They are located at 2100 Gallows Road Vienna, VA. Call toll free 24 hours, seven days a week at 1-800-SAY-TEEN.

# Taken Too Soon

**Jeff Snyder**  
News Editor

On the afternoon of December 21, 2004, Anna Ringer and three of her friends were on their way to cheerleading and basketball practice. The girls did not make it to their practice, and Anna Ringer tragically lost her life at the tender age of 16.

At a four-way stop, a collision killed Anna Ringer and significantly wounded the driver and two other passengers in their car. Anna had just recently moved to Warrenton County and attended Highland High School. After her passing, Anna had two funerals. One for her abundance of new friends in Warrenton, and one at Aldersgate Method-

ist Church on Fort Hunt Road for her long time friends here. Her funerals and casket were heavily decorated with a variety of differently shaded pink flowers; pink was her favorite color.

Anna made the Varsity Field Hockey team as well as Varsity Cheerleading at her new school this year. She also enjoyed swimming and playing soccer. Anna was very popular and known as someone that could always make you laugh. Her death has left many feeling devastated and vulnerable. In remembrance, some of her best friends are discussing plans for a commemoration to Anna.



Anna Catherine Ringer  
November 8, 1988 - December 21, 2004



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# A Day in the Life.... of a Compassionate Coach

## Take a Shot With Photo Club

Robin Harry  
Business Manager

Besides sports, band, and the many other extracurricular activities available, this school offers a Photography Club. One Tuesday a month, the eager photographers meet in room 503 with sponsor and photography teacher Anne Dunn to discuss upcoming events and projects that they would like to work on. While enjoying pizza, the students brainstorm ways to raise money in order to go on trips to shoot rolls of film at different unique locations. One of their most successful ways of raising money is selling extra paper and film to Photography students.

In order to join, a student has to be enrolled in a photography class and be truly dedicated to the subject. The club is not only a productive after school activity, but a step beyond classroom instruction. Club president senior Moira Holt said, "It is a more independent way of studying photography.



Mrs. Dunn instructs her student photographers.

It is definitely for those who want to excel in the field." It also gives them the time to experiment with different techniques, such as liquid lighting and lazertran. Liquid light is a silver-gelatin emulsion designed to be easily applied to any material. Lazertran is also used to apply images to various surfaces. Since both products are so expensive, only club members have the privilege of experimenting with them.

A big project for the club, which will be on-going for the remainder of the year, is creating a mural that will be displayed in Springbank. The mural will be of various prints club members took and developed, which they will then transfer onto the wall tiles using the lazertran technique.

As well as field trips to beautiful destinations for a few hours, the Photography Club spent a lot of time planning a big trip for the end of the year. On June 25<sup>th</sup>, the group plans to go to the Grand Canyon, where they will learn from professionals and take pictures of various sites.

In comparison to last year, this year's club has more members. The group is definitely on their way to accomplishing beautiful art to decorate the school, but has had to overcome slight bumps. In past years they have displayed their work at Starbucks, but due to a change in management, they are not allowed to do so this year.

Without a doubt, they will find new ways to express themselves, display their art, and move onto become the prestigious photographers they set out to be.

Mark Peterman

Wire Reporter

Some teachers choose to go above and beyond what is required of them in their job description. P.E. teacher Tyrone Strother is one of these special individuals. Not only is he one of 166 teachers here at this school, but he also coaches some of our sports teams.

He starts each day with a freshman P.E. class. His first two classes on A days are filled with these newcomers before he gets a break during fifth period. His B days are pretty much the same layout, but his break comes a little sooner. He has a second period 9<sup>th</sup> grade P.E. class and doesn't have another class until 6<sup>th</sup> period. Strother has one 10<sup>th</sup> grade class everyday during 7<sup>th</sup> period. He is joined by seven other P.E. teachers who also have five classes.

During the fall and winter he was the coach for the JV

football team. Despite their below average season, he enjoyed it very much. There will not be too many changes for next season aside from the addition of the upcoming freshmen and a few new coaches. "I wanted the players to learn a new system and have



Coach Strothers enjoys teaching P.E. along with coaching both basketball and football.

fun playing football," said Strother. He started coaching football one year ago at this school and he has no intention of stopping.

At the moment, he is an

assistant coach for the boy's basketball team, which is doing fairly well. The JV and freshman teams both have a record of 4-4, while the Varsity team has a 4-8 record. "We are right about where I thought we would be at mid-season," he said.

"I don't think there will be any changes made." This is his first year of coaching basketball here, but he started out two years ago coaching

the Fairfax High School basketball team, which marked the beginning of his coaching career.

"I think coaching is the best job next to

teaching," Strother said. "I really enjoy it because you can see the progress in the players from the beginning of the season to the end. His players are learning a lot and playing hard. Strother does not intend to coach a sport, but can expect to see him here helping out our football and basketball players next year."



Photo edited by Houston Murphy

## One Acts Gearing Up

Rob Jones

Wire Reporter

This school's drama department's performance of the greatly anticipated *Night of One-Acts* is in full swing. Nine student-directed one-act plays premiered or will premiere on the nights of January 26-29, at 7:30 p.m. each evening. Half debuted on Wednesday, January 26 and will run again on Friday, January 28, while the other half ran

on Thursday, January 27 and will run on Saturday, January 29. Tickets were available for purchase in the cafeteria during lunch on the week of January 28, as well as at the box office outside the Kogelman Theater on show nights. This year's plays promise a wide range of creativity, ingenuity and raucous humor, which we have come to expect from the theater program at this school.

The One-Acts feature a mix of seasoned thespians and students who have never taken a drama class in their lives. "It's a great way for non-theater students to get involved in drama," says senior Dustin Smith.

"Charlie Chan in Chile", directed by senior David Hanson, is about a murder to which a parrot is the only witness. The criminals guilty of the killing attempt to capture and kill the parrot (portrayed by junior Alyssa Kuhn), and end up following it to South America. Other featured actors

include juniors Britney Zeman and Brett Smith and seniors Drew Macklin and Caitlin Coggins.

Senior Sara Hoffman's production of "Deceiver Malone", featuring seniors Dustin Smith and Maddie Vonada, tells the story of a bumbling detective who loses his car keys and accidentally travels to China.

"Galton and Simpson's 'The Poetry Society'" is an ironic comedy about a man whose dreams of becoming a great poet

are dashed by the bumbling efforts of two of his friends. It features sophomore Rachel Lear and Junior Patrick Ross in two of its leading roles.

"The Mystery of Twicknam Vickerage", a satirical murder mystery about a hedonistic Scotsman

and several of his jilted lovers, starring seniors Paul Cambon, Alison Arberg and Rob Pickle, juniors Bailey Disselkoben and sophomore Kathleen Wheeler.

"Words, Words, Words", directed by junior Lauren Davis, portrays a group of monkeys left in a room with typewriters. Humor and chaos ensue as the apes begin writing Shakespearean drama.

Senior Kat Schoonover directs "Suppressed Desires", a comedy drama about a married couple coping with new strains on their relationship.

"The Anniversary", directed by senior Keonia Lucas, starring senior Shaughn Dugan and junior Nelle Smircina, is about arguments between a newlywed couple.

"Terminal Terror" is a dark comedy, directed by Lucas, about a plane full of unwitting dead souls being flown to Junior Pierce Allen stars as the pilot of the plane, who alone knows the full truth.

Junior Erin Coffee's production "Check Please", a comedy about a series of bad blind dates, has qualified for Virginia High School League District Festival, where it will be judged in comparison with plays from various high schools in our area.

Rehearsals for the One-Acts took most days after school. As the casts of short productions overlap with that of Winter Play, scheduling conflicts did but for the most part, the two groups worked together to accommodate another's time constraints. "Rehearsal is progressing so well that most of the is finished," says Allen. "One-Act year should be a real hoot!"



"Charlie Chan in Chile" actors take their dress rehearsal before the big night very seriously.

Photo by Houston Murphy

### Featured One Acts:

"Charlie Chan in Chile"

Director: David Hanson

"Check, Please"

Director: Erin Coffee

"Deceiver Malone & the Case of the Missing... Oh, There It Is!"

Director: Sara Hoffman

"Galton & Simpson's 'The Poetry Society'"

Director: Parker Fishel

"The Mystery of Twicknam Vickerage"

Director: Matt Rossi

"Suppressed Desires"

Director: Kat Schoonover

"Words, Words, Words"

Director: Lauren Davis

"The Anniversary"

Director: Keonia Lucas

"Terminal Terror"

Director: Keonia Lucas



# iCrazy for iPods

Joy Yoo  
Wire Reporter

This past holiday season, many parents, often disguised as Santa, bought their kids the famous 2004 iPods. Whether it was the mini-iPod, the 5,000-song iPod, or the 10,000-song iPod, many students rejoiced and beamed at the sight of their new handy-dandy devices. Because of the recent popularity of this music tool, CD Players are no longer "in"; these iPods, along with other MP3 players, are the way to go.

The new iPods and MP3 players are another sign of an international advance in technology. Only twenty years ago, the fad was cassette/tape players. Now, in the year 2005, tape players do not exist anymore and CD players are on the verge of being extinct. The most beneficial thing about the new iPods is the storage space. Even with the mini-iPod, 1,000 songs can be downloaded. If that's not enough, you can choose from a 5,000-song holder or a 10,000-song holder.

Throughout all three versions, many features remain the same. For instance, the "library" and "music search" features are exactly alike in all three. In addition, all three have a "Games" category which includes a "Music Quiz." This game plays a song clip, and you must choose the correct song out of five choices. On the other hand, there are different features in all three. For example, the mini-iPods come in various colors: silver, gold, blue, pink, and green; the other two come in the classic white model or the special U2 version.

Without a doubt, the U2 special

edition stands out from all the others. Instead of being white, the face is black and the scroll is red. The back of the iPod contains laser-engraved autographs from all four members. Purchasers also receive a free U2 poster.

iPods are also very easy to use. Senior Laura Biegging said, "I just got my iPod and I already have over a day of music on it. It's really easy to use and more convenient than burning CD's. Now all my music is in one place and much more organized."

Controversy arises over the steep price. The mini-iPod is the cheapest of all four and costs \$249. The 20GB/5,000-song model sells at

\$299.  
The  
U2

special  
edition

20GB is set at \$349. Lastly, the 40GB/10,000-song iPod is sold for \$399. To some, all of these are worth

the price. Senior Jessie Stage said, "Although they're a bit pricey, iPods are extremely convenient. Not only can you listen to music like you would on a CD player, but you can

Junior Ali Brody enjoys the convenience of using an iPod.

Photo edited by Houston Murphy

## The Different Faces of iPods



**iPod:**  
Holds 10,000 songs  
\$299-\$399



**iPod mini:**  
Holds 1,000 songs  
\$249



**iPod shuffle:**  
Holds 240 songs  
\$99

listen to music in your car as you would a car radio by using an adaptor. They're small, cute, and convenient — and well worth the cost." On another note, there are some students who do not think iPods are price-worthy. Junior Beth Grady said, "Personally, I don't have a need for an iPod and I think they are not worth \$250 when I have perfectly fine CDs and CD players." Surely, everyone can agree that iPods are "in." They are easy to access, yet whether it is worth its price, is decided by each individual.



## A-List Newcomb names her number ones.

**Book:** *Black Boy*, written by Richard Wright, has been one of my favorite books since tenth grade English with Mr. Johnson. Though it is not exactly the most positively-told tale in the world, it has a wonderfully detailed plot. Even though the majority of the scenes were horrifying, they were well-presented and kept you reading on.

**CD:** The Killers' "Hot Fuss" has to be one of my favorite CDs. It may have been out for awhile now, however, the new band is so good that none of their songs get old. "Change Your Mind" and "Smile Like You Mean It" are some of the best songs of the year.

**Movie:** *Meet the Fockers* is not that new, but I haven't yet seen a more hilarious movie in a long time. Even though the "Focker" joke was a little over-used, I don't think anything can get any better than a toddler boy saying "@\$\$\*\*\*\*" and making the "sign" for milk.

**Restaurant:** When in search for a nearby Asian restaurant, there is no better place than Mai Thai in Old Town. For an affordable price, you can enjoy appetizing Asian cuisine in a modern atmosphere. The pad thai noodles are awesome!!!

**Show:** VH1's "I Love the '90s: Part Deux" is a perfect addition to an already great show. The show takes me back to my childhood, which was all of 7 years ago, and it features fads, entertainment news and events that I could remember from my lifetime.





# "Paved Paradise and Put Up A Estacionamiento"

Hana Beckerle  
Editor-in-Chief

## State

Steel Ridge  
State Theatre  
Fells Church, VA  
February 12

The Starting Line  
The Richter Theatre  
Fauquier, MD  
February 12

Boatfish: The Tribute to Sublime  
The Richter Theatre  
Fauquier, MD  
January 23

African with Tangled Thoughts  
Fauquier, MD  
February 1

Menztrap  
Black Cat  
Washington, DC  
February 12

The Sublimity  
State Theatre  
Fells Church, VA  
February 1

Strike Anywhere  
Black Cat  
Washington, DC  
February 10

Hal Morning Messiah  
Notre  
Washington, DC  
January 23

Things  
Drama  
Washington, DC  
February 4

## of

Brad Paisley  
Patriot Center  
Fairfax, VA  
February 18

## the

## Arts

For many D.C. area radio listeners, January 12 marked the end of an era. The station 99.1 WHFS-FM was replaced with El Zol, a Spanish dance music station. The switch took place at around noon, leaving many evening listeners surprised and angry when they turned their radios on later that day. Speculation about the way the radio station was overturned has caused indignation among many listeners. Rumors circulated that the employees of HFS had not been informed of the switch until that day.

Even if you didn't listen to HFS, you probably have heard about the switch by now. HFS, the self-proclaimed "true alternative" station, began broadcasting in 1961. Early listeners of the station recall that it was one of the very first stations in the area that played "alternative" music that was not found on other stations. HFS also made somewhat of an effort to promote local bands by playing their demo tapes and having a "locals only" stage at its annual HFStival. While it had been losing listeners as of late, it was a radio staple for many students and area residents.

The replacement of HFS has left many listeners wondering why. The answer lies in the way radio is run today. Large corporations, such as Clear Channel or Infinity Broadcasting (which owns WHFS), own the majority of stations nationwide. When a radio station isn't making enough ad revenue, many corporations make changes to appeal to a more profitable market. With the rapidly growing Hispanic population in this area, Infinity executives saw a Spanish-language station as a better investment. "It's sad when corporate motives interfere with art and music," said senior Paul Cambon.

It's not just HFS, however. Nationwide,

rock radio is in a decline as it is slowly replaced with more urban (hip-hop and R&B) and ethnic stations. "The media conglomerates control all the radio waves, so it was no surprise that they would decide to drop one of their rock stations," said Cambon. The resurgence of country and the wild popularity of hip-hop among young people have taken away listeners from critical audiences, baby boomers and teenagers. In 2004, only two rock CD's (Evanescence and U2) were among the top twenty in sales for the year.

The problem for rock radio may not lie in the music, but in the format. Many music fans complain that consolidation has made radio as a whole less diverse and less interesting, with more commercials and smaller playlists. "Radio has been dead to me since 1998," said senior Taurin Barrera.



As a regular listener, senior Hana Beckerle is greatly disgruntled by the replacement of WHFS with Hispanic dance music.

Photo by Houston Murphy

With new forms of technology emerging all the time, many listeners prefer CD's or downloadable music technology such as iPods, where they can pick only the songs they want to hear without getting the annoying commercials or other songs. The growth of XM and Sirius satellite radio has also diminished FM radio's audience by presenting nonstop music from any of dozens of genres, with no interruptions.

With the loss of the radio station comes

the loss of other popular facets of. Among these is the annual HFS concert, which drew such big names as Eminem, Sublime, Cypress Hill, and Deftones. There was also the yearly HFSmas Nutcracker concert during the holiday season, which regularly sold out due to big-name lineups.

When I think of the loss of HFS, the thing that I will miss the most is probably the "Junkies in the Morning" program, which aired during the daily drive to school. Some of us don't have CD players in our cars, and the Junkies were a constant source of entertainment for morning listeners. "The Junkies" made their return as the Sports Junkies on January 18, and will be on the air at midnight on weekdays on 106.7 WJFK-FM (after Howard Stern).

The void left by HFS is, for some listeners, a tough one to fill. If you're looking to replace 99.1, turn your radio button, try listening to its former rival station DC 101 (WWDC-FM). This station is similar to HFS in many ways, but the major difference being that DC-101 has a very annoying morning show. The music isn't bad, but the host, E. Murphy, has a laugh and a voice that would get on almost any listener's nerves. Another, less known alternative is 98 Rock (WJFK-FM), that plays similar music to HFS, but with more classic rock tracks. On the day HFS was replaced, 98 Rock invited listeners to come down to the station and receive free t-shirts that read "R.I.P. HFS."

Whether or not you listen to the radio, HFS was one of the most well-known stations in the area. HFStival and the Junkies are just two things about the station that area residents mourn the loss of. For many, HFS was a pioneer in rock and a symbol of alternative music that has been missed.

## Want To Place An Ad?

If you are interested in placing an ad in *The Wire* to get word out about your business or school activity contact:

Wire adviser: Ms. Jensen  
Business Managers: Robin Harry, Adele Hampton, Angie Palma

at (703)718-2572 or e-mail at [kelsey.jensen@faps.com](mailto:kelsey.jensen@faps.com) or come to room #418



West Potomac Academy Fashion Show

Friday, February 25th

in the Springbank Auditorium

\$10 per ticket

Contact Ms. Fresh in Springbank for purchasing your ticket

## Quotable Quotes

Random quotes from West Potomac students.

You had to be there.

"Hey, I think it snowed!"  
~Chardey Pettiford, 10th

"I like it when it rains hard because it makes me feel like I'm by the ocean."

"I'm really good at strenuous noises."  
~Leigh Rossi, 11th

~Lindsey Goldstein, 11th

"Look, it's snowing sideways."  
~Caitlin Spangler, 11th

"So, what kind of cheese do you like?"  
~Stuart Trouton, 12th

"Dolphins swimming in space...It's the illogical part that makes it so logical."  
~Laura Braff, 12th

"Our good ol' WePo archers shot the badger in the woods, and put it in the trophy case."  
~Katherine Clubb, 10th

"That just butters my biscuit."  
~Dorothy Leigh, 11th

"I can walk in the snow because I have these boots. It's like 4-Wheel-Drive."  
~Patricia Hoen, 12th

"It would really suck to be a mime, because everyone is always like 'Oh, shut up mime!'"  
~David Singer, 11th

Ashley's Quote of the Issue

"David Hamelhoff, isn't he that magician?"



## Keckee's Katch

*Doesn't Care What You Think With a Passion*

# One Last Hope For the Redskins?

Alex Keckeisen

Sports Editor

The Redskins went 6-10 this year, once again farther out of playoff contention than Jared from the Subway commercials is from an all you can eat buffet. Big whoop. It's happened before, and we got Joe Gibbs, so who really cares? But if you DO care, then here are some tips for next season to help get the Redskins into the playoffs.

*Don't have any hope for them in the pre-season.*

Yes, a lot of us thought that we'd be in Jacksonville in February for the Super Bowl, or at least in the playoffs, but we didn't make it. You've been hoping for years they would make it because of the pre-season when we used all our starters against everyone else's third string and we won. "Hooray," you thought. "We're going to the Super Bowl!" But you were wrong. Dead wrong. In fact, the team had players suspended for DUI infractions and quarterback changes you should have seen coming from the start. But your vision was blurred by images of Joe Gibbs holding up the Super Bowl Trophy in front of thousands of cheering fans with Dan Snyder doing an Ashlee Simpson jig. You must have thought, "Hey, these odds are great! 100 to 1! How can I lose?!" And proceeded to put up all your life savings, including your college tuition to DeVry.

*Joe Bugel is back and so is Joe Gibbs. Now pray for Theisman, Monk, and Riggins to come back.*

Sure they're old, but who cares, we can

still use them for something. They won us three Super Bowls, so shouldn't we owe them for that? It's got to be better than Ramsey, Coles, and Parris, who made me want to watch *Gilmore Girls* rather than the games. So every night before you go to bed, send ol' Danny Snyder a letter asking for them back. We could really use the help right now.

*Play Tim Hasselbeck!!!*

Remember last year when Patrick Ramsey got hurt near the end of the season, and Hasselbeck came into play? Didn't those games make you so happy? He could just cheer you up the next day

even if we got shut out. Sure he did

have the game against the Cowboys (go figure) where he managed a goose egg in the QB rating department. But give him another chance... Was the week he got promoted to starter going to be his family's only good week for a long time? If you remember, his wife did take on the role as one of the anchors on *The View* (but that's a whole other column). So next time Ramsey, or whatever quarterback we may have next year, goes down, think about Timmy Hasselbeck. He could be our next Tommy Maddox or Kurt Warner (ok, so those aren't very good comparisons, but who cares).

*We can beat the Cowboys next year. I'm serious on this one.*

Sure, it wasn't the biggest choke in history (see 2004 Yankees ALCS), but it was pretty bad. That December 26<sup>th</sup> loss to the Cowboys brought tears to my eyes. Man tears, but they were still tears (I don't actually cry). How can you let something so close slip away like that? So you're one of the best defenses in the league, huh? Show me, because I'm still not convinced when you lose a game that was more likely to be won in the final minutes, than the assurance that somewhere right now Ron Artest is promoting *Allure's* new CD.

Why must you play nasty tricks on us? There's no hope for next year, so why even bother hoping (for all of you that believed every word that I just said, it's my strategy. Have no hope and maybe they'll win).



Photo: Alex Keckeisen

## The Boys of Winter

Mark Peterman

Wire Reporter

The boys' basketball season has been described as nothing less than "golden." Head coach David Houston comes up with new plays and formations almost daily. With the help of assistant coaches Tyrone Strother, Charles McCullough, Ryan Cage, Wayne Washington, and Anthony Moses, "He's making things more organized and showing us the way to win on the court and in life," said senior Nate Fells.

The Varsity squad is doing better than last season. The team now has four wins, which is double the number of wins as last season, and the regular season isn't over until mid February. The Wolverines are now 4-8 overall and 2-2 in district tournament play. With seniors Andre Ford, Tim Young, Nate Fells, and Emmanuel Gamior at the helm, their record should continue to improve. Sophomore Yasmeeen Teisem said, "Our Varsity team has the most enthusiastic players. I love the huddle. Who will win, we will win!"

Every game is monumental, but some are more than others, like the game against West Springfield on January 6<sup>th</sup>. The game was tied at 46-46 for the final seconds. Senior Walter Grady got injured while picking up a rebound and junior Marcus England was put in for him



The boys' basketball team warms up before their game against T.C. Williams.

to shoot the free throws. He sunk both shots which put the Wolverines in the lead, 48-46. West Springfield's last ditch attempt at scoring was a failure and the Wolverines pulled out the win. Senior Tim Young had 18 points, point guard Derrick Baker had 11 points and 4 assists, and Paul Campbell had 5 points and 7 rebounds which helped bring this game home for our school.

This was a very important win for the team. Not only was it the first time in four years that the Wolverines beat the Spartans, but Coach Houston used to be on the coaching staff at West Springfield. That fact made it a very emotional game for the whole team. "That will probably be the most important game of the season," said Fells. They play West Springfield again on February 1<sup>st</sup> and it will likely be just as intense.

The regular season is far from over. There are still five games left with the last game on February 11<sup>th</sup>. After that there are still three district games and four regional games and the regional finals are played on February 26<sup>th</sup>. "I think we will most definitely go to regionals," says Fells. If they continue to do well then they are in a good position to be the champions.

## Sports Calendar



### Friday, January 28

Boys Basketball Game	7:30 p.m.	vs Hayfield
Girls Basketball Game	7:30 p.m.	at Hayfield
District Swim Meet	5:30 p.m.	Lee District Rec Center
Wrestling Quad	5:30 p.m.	at Fairfax



### Saturday, January 29

Winter Track Meet	7:30 a.m.	at Episcopal
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### Tuesday, February 1

Boys Basketball Game	7:30 p.m.	at West Springfield
Girls Basketball Game	7:30 p.m.	vs West Springfield

### Monday, February 2

Regional Dive Meet	5:30 p.m.	Oak Mar
Wrestling Quad	6:00 p.m.	Home

### Wednesday, February 3

Gymnastics Competition	6:00 p.m.	at Lake Braddock
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### Friday, February 4

Boys Basketball Game	7:30 p.m.	at Lake Braddock
Girls Basketball Game	7:30 p.m.	vs Lake Braddock

### Saturday, February 5

Winter Track Meet	7:30 a.m.	at Episcopal
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## In The Numbers

35

Points combined by senior Lauren Arthur and Mary Lawson in the girls' basketball triumph over the Annandale Atoms. The final score was 48-45.

2

Free throws hit by junior Marcus England with 4 seconds left in a win against the West Springfield Spartans.

1

Junior Antwane Minter placed first in the triple jump with a distance of 43 feet 11 1/4 inches at the Nike Indoor track meet.

486

Games lost through Friday, January 28 due to the NHL lockout.

## District, MLB Strike a Deal

Jason Yaworske

Wire Reporter

Although Major League Baseball has been over for some time now, the off-season has been especially exciting for Washington baseball fans, as the Montreal Expos have relocated to Washington, D.C. and have been renamed the Washington Nationals. After 34 years without a team, Washington baseball fans finally have a team to cheer for.

Students have contradictory feelings on the new franchise. Some just couldn't care less, while others are really excited. "I don't really care about getting a baseball team," says senior Omar Mahmood. "We've haven't had a baseball team in this area during my lifetime, and I don't think getting one now is going to change anything." On the other hand, former West Potomac student Max Watstein says, "I'm really excited about the prospect of having a home team to root for, and I can't wait to go to the games next season."

While initial interest and excitement is sure to draw huge attendance to the National's games during the upcoming season, some fear that the enthusiasm will quickly die down should the team not enjoy early success. One thing seriously lacking from the National's roster is any big-name superstars that fans will recognize and embrace. Last season, the

Expos, managed by former Orioles player and manager Frank Robinson, went 67-96, finishing 29 games behind NL East winners the Atlanta Braves. Nationals interim general manager Jim Bowden has been working very hard to try and fix this



problem, signing solid shortstop Cristian Guzman, veteran third basemen Vinny Castilla, and outfielder Jose Guillen, but he has fell short of being able to acquire any of this season's biggest free agents, such as pitchers Randy Johnson and Derek Lowe, or outfielder Carlos Beltran.

Though the new team was recently made official, the process of obtaining a team in Washington has been a long and difficult one. When it was made official

over two years ago that Major League Baseball was intent on relocating the Montreal Expos franchise, many cities jumped at the opportunity to bring a team to their area. Of these many cities, Washington, D.C. and Portland, Oregon

came up with private funds that would cover 50% of the stadium costs, the stadium authorization would become null and void. This surprise piece of legislation brought the city into panic, and even caused many early season ticket owners to demand refunds. However the conflict was resolved shortly thereafter when the council met again and agreed that the city would cover any shortcomings in private stadium funding.

And yet there is still some trouble ahead for the Nationals. Baltimore Orioles owner Peter Angelos has assured the league that he will sue them if a team was brought to the Washington area. Angelos feels it would be unfair to the Orioles organization to bring another team so close to them, because it would take away profits from the Baltimore franchise, which has been struggling financially anyway. But it was all made official on December 15<sup>th</sup> as the D.C. council gave its final approval for a ballpark to be built near the Anacostia River waterfront in Southeast, D.C.

were the initial frontrunners. But with its constant, formal solicitation to the league, as well as its obvious advantages in population and per capita income, Washington, D.C. was ultimately chosen by the league. Yet there were still obstacles. In a council meeting on stadium financing that was expected to be a formality, council Chairman Linda Cropp ushered a major amendment requiring the city to find private funds to finance the stadium. If the city could not

After a much anticipated acquisition of a baseball team in the Washington-Metro area, the Washington Nationals will be the craze of the town come April and opening day. The Nationals will play their first regular season game on April 4<sup>th</sup>, and will have its home opener on April 14<sup>th</sup> against the Arizona Diamondbacks.

## Ft. Hunt Basketball Takes Its Shots

Houston Murphy

Photo Editor

Some kids just like playing basketball. This is what the Fort Hunt Youth Basketball League is all about.

The Fort Hunt Youth Basketball League is a league that students can join if they are looking for an opportunity to play some ball with their friends. The league gives anyone the chance to have some fun and serves many purposes to students who play. Before the first game of the season, league commissioner of the 16-18 age group of boys basketball, Mr. Viilo addressed each team to tell them what the league is all about. "We are all here for you guys to have a good time," Viilo said in his speech. "Have some fun and be competitive, but remember good sportsmanship." All of the players listening seemed eager to get the season underway. The players continued to listen to Mr. Viilo as he encouraged, "By the end of the season, these games are going to get really exciting and the stands are going to be full of people."

Students who don't make the varsity basketball at this school often join the Fort Hunt league as an alternative to choosing a different sport to play or not doing anything at all. Students who are involved in a school sport in which they are not willing to give up in order to play basketball can play ball recreationally in this league in addition to playing their school sport (with the permission from their coaches).

Anyone is allowed to join, with multiple age groups ranging all the way from the 8-9 year-old age group, to the 16-18 year-old age



A Fort Hunt basketball player practices his close range shot.

group in which many students from this school participate in.

This basketball league is also well organized and supported, with strong annual participation of kids from the community. Parents encourage their children to get involved in this organization because it is a healthy program that also gives their children a chance to get together with all of their friends from the team that they are on as well as the opposing teams. "This is a fantastic thing that they [Fort Hunt Youth League] are doing for the kids," says Jim Fishel, coach of junior Parker Fishel's house basketball team. "They get an opportunity to hang out with their

friends and play some ball, and it looks like they have a great time doing it."

The "house" basketball league, as it is commonly referred to because of its local players, has some of the most exciting games and surprisingly large turn-outs in the crowd to support these often-rowdy games.

Though the house basketball league is meant to be fun, it sometimes creates frustration among the players and the coaches due to the crowded schedules of gyms around the area. Games and practices are all at Carl Sandburg, for not just the older age group, but all age groups, both boys and girls. The house league must also share the gym with the Fort Hunt boys and girls county basketball program and often the Mount Vernon boys and girls county teams, which both have much higher statuses than the in-house league. There are often scheduling conflicts among the county and house leagues, and house league less than rarely wins the battle. In the past, nearly all of the scheduled games during one of the days had to be moved to another time or date due to scheduling conflicts among other schools.

Even with all of these problems that may seem like a hassle, the league is appreciated widely by the students. "I am very glad we have the [Fort Hunt House] league to play in, it makes Sundays much more exciting," says junior Sean Houser. The Fort Hunt House League continues to thrive and provide an enjoyable, exciting brand of basketball that is welcome to everyone.



# Girls Basketball Working For the Wins

Adele Hampton

Assistant Business Manager

With hard drives to the net and swift steals, the girls' varsity basketball team has the skills necessary to potentially win the Patriot District. The team is currently 6<sup>th</sup>, but if they keep improving and do well in the next few games they could have a great chance at being the champions.

"The team's doing great compared to past seasons," said head coach, Parker Roach. So far this season they have tied the record for most wins which is 7. They beat T.C. Williams and Wakefield and have lost to Lake Braddock, Hayfield, Edison, and West Springfield. When the team's stats are measured up against other high schools in the district, they appear in the middle. The starters at forward and guard are Mary Lawson, Kat Gragg, Ashley Smith, Lauren Arthur, and the center position rotates between three players, Favion Ghebremedhin, Madeline Majors, and Stephanie Gerow. The captains are Lauren Arthur and Ashley Smith.

Some of the team's strong points are leadership and having great seniors. Starter Mary Lawson said the team should improve on rebounding and getting back into transition. Also communication difficulties on the court sometimes make it hard for the team to focus. "You can always improve. Our goal is to improve everyday," said Roach.

At the game against Annandale on January 18<sup>th</sup> the team showed good ball handling skills and excellent defense. It was a fast paced game and there seemed to be no communication difficulties; everyone on the team was focused and ready to take on their challengers with enthusiasm. They had fast drives to the net and three good steals in the first half. The big scorers of the game were Lawson and Ghebremedhin. The team never let Annandale get too far ahead of them and kept the score tight. By the end of the first half the score was 15-18 with Annandale having the three point lead. "They have a really good coach and are dedicated players," said freshman Mara Cate. In the second half the team showed no sign of fatigue and kept on pushing their way through the game. At the end of the game they were able to pull away with a win in overtime. Even though they are a mediocre team and have improvements to make, they never gave up and always played their best during the game.

Senior Kat Gragg, who is a starter on the varsity team said,



The girls basketball team takes a break at the game against Annandale. The Lady Wolverines pulled out a narrow three point win. The final score was 48-45.

Photo by Adele Hampton

"We're a great team and we have a lot of fun, woot." They're an excellent team with a great personality, but they're not afraid to put on their game face and do what it takes to win.

# For NFL Elite, Jacksonville is the Last Stop

Hana Beckerle and Mark Peterman

Editor-in-Chief and Wire Reporter

The beginning of a new year means the winding down of another football season. The regular season is over and many teams are packing up for an overdue break, before its back to training camp. Only two teams, the New England Patriots and the Philadelphia Eagles, still have more football to play. After being victorious in all of their playoff games, these teams are set to meet in the Super Bowl next weekend. The importance of the Super Bowl ring to these players is unparalleled, but they still have a tough road ahead of them if they want to earn it.

This year may as well have been called the year of the quarterback in the NFL, as the teams who were contenders at the outset of the playoffs demonstrated. Veteran quarterback Brett Favre of the Green Bay Packers was perhaps the most well-known of these quarterbacks, and many hoped for a Super Bowl victory to crown his illustrious

career.

Besides Favre, the best young quarterbacks in the league led their teams to the playoffs. These include the versatile Michael Vick of the Atlanta Falcons, whose speed and agility have earned him the distinction from some of being the best overall athlete in the NFL. Peyton Manning, who led the Indianapolis Colts, broke Dan Marino's 20-

year-old record for most

touchdown

passes in

a season

with 49.

He also led

perhaps the

top offense

in the NFL this

season. Rookie

Ben Roethlisburger

of the Pittsburgh Steelers was undefeated heading into the season, and was named top offensive rookie of the year. The Patriots quarterback Tom Brady is also extremely well-known, having led his team to two Super Bowl titles in the past three years, and holding a perfect, undefeated playoff record. Last but not least, the

Eagles' Donovan McNabb has overcome pressure from previous failed playoff hopes and from intense Philadelphia fans to finally bring his team to the Super Bowl.

The Patriots are playing in their third Super Bowl in three years, with victories in both of the previous two. The word "dynasty" has been tossed around many times during football commentary. The biggest test of the Patriots season came last weekend with their playoff game against the formidable Steelers. The Steelers, with rookie phenom Roethlisburger at the helm, had an impressive 11-5 regular season. However, the Patriots were able to overcome the Steelers in Pittsburgh. Led by Brady, and a defense that stopped the Colts and Steelers cold, Patriots fans are optimistic about their team's chances this time around.

In order to reach the Super Bowl, the Eagles had to defeat their own personal

demons more than they had to worry about their playoff competition. For the past two years, the Eagles have advanced to the conference championship (one game away from the Super Bowl), only to be beaten in their home city. This year, the pressure to win that particular game was greater than ever from tough-love Philadelphia fans.

Fortunately

for the team,

they were able

to defeat the

Falcons with

a near-perfect

performance from

McNabb.

Football has millions

of fans all over the

world and it continues to

grow every year. Because of its ever

increasing popularity, the Super Bowl has

become one of the biggest sporting events

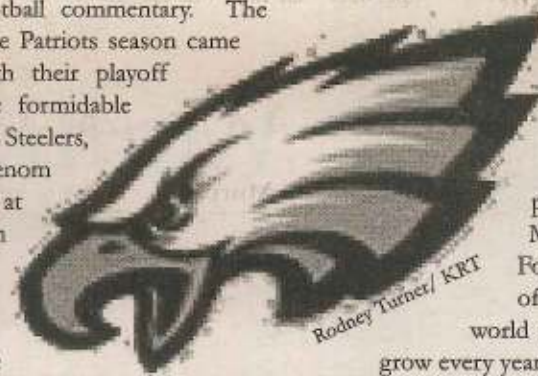
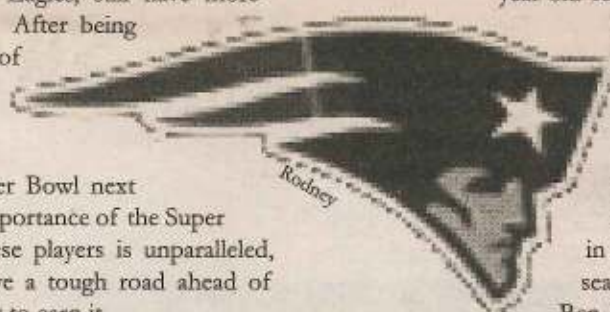
of the year. Tickets to the Super Bowl are

hard to come by, and die-hard fans from

New England and Philadelphia alike are

willing to spend enormous sums of money

to travel to the big game.



## The Wire Picks Them

Next Sunday, one lucky team will be able to call themselves the Super Bowl champions of the 2004-2005 season. But before that happens, *The Wire* staff makes their predictions.



Alex Kockeisen



Mark Peterman



Houston Murphy



Jason Yaworske



Adele Hampton

Projected Winners:





## Too Much Noise

For *White Noise*

Katie Staples

Features Editor

It's such a shame that a conceivably riveting movie is able to grab your attention with flashy special effects and exciting hype, yet can totally fail to meet your expectations by dropping the ball on a potentially thought-provoking ending. Geoffrey Sax's thriller, *White Noise*, fits this example to a tee.

Jonathan Rivers (Michael Keaton) is crushed by the unexpected and early death of his wife, Anna (Chandra West). Soon after, Rivers meets Raymond Price (Ian McNeice) who claims to have heard Rivers' dead wife trying to communicate with him. Price says he hears Anna's voice over the 'white noise' of an untuned radio and sees her face through the 'snow' of a lost television feed. This phenomenon is known as Electronic Voice Phenomena (EVP), where the dead try to talk to the living through

"Although the beginning was really scary and built up so much suspense, the ending ruined it for the whole movie."

~Junior Lindsey Goldstein

household recording devices. The living do not know that EVP not only enables people to talk to each other, but it also opens the portal to the world of the nonliving.

At first Rivers does not believe he is once again able to interact with his wife, but unfortunately his nostalgia for his dead love cannot ignore what Price has told him. He begins to constantly search for ways to communicate with her, buying expensive equipment solely for the purpose of talking to Anna. But is it only Anna trying to contact Rivers? His insatiable need to communicate with her has unknowingly invited unwanted evil not only into his life, but the rest of humanity's. This is where the film takes a turn for the worse and spirals downward away from reality, depleting of any of the suspense it might have accumulated.

"Although the beginning was really scary and built up so much suspense, the ending ruined it for the whole movie," said junior Lindsey Goldstein.

Contact with the dead? Highly unlikely. Most critics will agree that there is too much noise about *White Noise* and it's hardly worth talking about.

## Two Genres Collide

Marissa D'Orazio

Focus Editor

I have this super-ghetto radio in my shower. The volume is short; it usually decreases as I listen to a song, it is impossible to tune in, and I typically end up listening to a desired station with a little bit of background fuzz from another.

So it didn't surprise me when my stupid radio got stuck halfway between some Linkin Park song on 99.1 HFS and something by Jay-Z on HOT 99.5. I was about to try and zero in on the right station, when I stopped.

Whoa, I thought, this actually sounds pretty freaking cool together.

I was late to get the memo that Jay-Z and Linkin Park had actually released an album together. What I was hearing would become the fused hit, *Numb/Encore*.

Collaboration is typically tiresome and predictable, especially when it comes to rap and hip-hop. What I'd like to know, is just how many songs are there in this world featuring Ludacris? How many songs, by a random assortment of rappers, have Lil' Jon scream in the background, "HA-WHHHAATTT!" That gets a smidgen old after a while.

But Jay-Z and Linkin Park? Together? It's like bringing two great things together that would seem to clash, but, instead, they compliment each other to make something even greater. Like chicken nuggets and honey.

I knew the CD was going to be good when I turned it on. "Where's my Frappuccino? I ordered a f\*\*\*ing Frappuccino!" The hooligans Jay-Z and Linkin Park are joining forces, and causing a ruckus in Starbucks Coffee shops everywhere. World, look out.

*99 Problems/Points of Authority/One Step Closer* combines the bouncy background beat and gangsta stance of *99 Problems* with the all-out white-boy intense anger of *Points of Authority*. You'll be driving down the road with one hand on the steering wheel, pimp-style, nodding

you're head in consensus, uttering, "I got 99 problems but a \*\*\*\* one...hit me," and moments later, both hands will be on the wheel and your head will be banging as you scream along to, "SHUT UP...SHUT UP WHEN I'M TALKING TO YOU!" But be careful, kids. Concentrate on that driving. Remember that you shouldn't be

listening to loud music in your car. make sure there isn't more than one passenger in the vehicle...

I must admit, *In the End/H to the Izzo* is a total disappointment. *H to the Izzo* on its own is a phenomenal rap song. I mean, even made a shout-out to our stupid state: "For shizzle my nizzle used to dribble down VA." How could you not love that? And *In the End* is hypnotizingly awesome. My friend once witnessed an entire restaurant of people subconsciously sing along to this song in a monotone: "All I know is time is a valuable thing/ watch it fly by as the pendulum swings/ Watch it count down to the end of the day/ clock ticks life away..." Sadly, mixing these songs is like mixing bleach with ammonia. Linkin Park attempts to utter their borderline-emo lyrics about some kind of harshly emotional breakup to the tune of Jay-Z's jam about life it up back in the day... it doesn't work.

*Jigga What/ Faint* is an excellent mix. Two songs were meant to be together (much like the single *Numb/Encore*). There is no less of a distinguishing in this song between "Jay-Z's part" and "Linkin Park's part."

song sounds as if it were recorded by one recording artist, not two. I think this is the nirvana that they were trying to reach through this album.

Ultimately, this CD will make you smile. It reminds me of the time on *Seinfeld* when Kramer was obsessing over the feelings of solidarity and peace that the black-and-white cookie brought him. This album was a black-and-white cookie to me, reminding me that no matter how different two things are, they can work combine to produce something entirely supernatural. Worlds are colliding, my friends. And this CD acts as a beautiful crystal ball showing us what strange, irresistible fusions are to come.



Senior Marissa D'Orazio contemplates the combining of 'rock' and 'rap' in *Collision Course*.

Photo by Evan Dobbs

## Worth Staying in on a Friday Night

Alex Keckeisen

Sports Editor

You may have seen the hit movie in theaters late last year, but believe it or not, *Friday Night Lights* is a book. It will soon come out on DVD, but do you really want to be lazy and sit on the couch and watch it?

Imagine a place where nothing matters but football, Friday nights are more important than Sunday mornings, academics don't matter, and everyone in town sets their watch by the first day of practice in the summer. 20,000 parents, alumni, and fans cram into the multi-million dollar stadium built just for the football team, and the only way you miss the game, if you are a truly devoted fan, is if you've deceased. This West Texan high school from Odessa revolves around football.

Mojo, the nickname for the pride that is carried by Permian High School supporters, is remembered for the playoff wins and State championship teams, and not the oil bust that occurred only a few years before that ruined the dreams of many. Integration was only forced upon the school in 1981, which only helped the team, but off the field no one cared about the poor black kids on the other side of town. It only mattered that they could gain a few yards on the turf field, not how they lived in their one-room houses across the railroad tracks.

Education wasn't a problem either. Sure, Permian only had one Merit Scholar, and the only way that most of the football players graduated was by making the grading system

easier. Boobie, the star running back for the team in 1987, had to take the SAT's four times just to be eligible for a scholarship. The first three times he got under 700, but the fourth time he just barely made the requirement.

Every coach that coached the Permian Panthers fell out of favor with the fans at one point or another. Having a record of 7-2 was considered a horrible failure, even if both of the losses were by one point or less. It didn't matter, if you lost a single game, someone wanted you gone.

Not many books can really tell you the story about athletes

who fail in the classroom and then excel on the field. Or how racism can take over a town for decades and then over night the people embrace the other color because of their skill on the field. Think of *Remember the Titans*, now think of the opposite, and you'll get

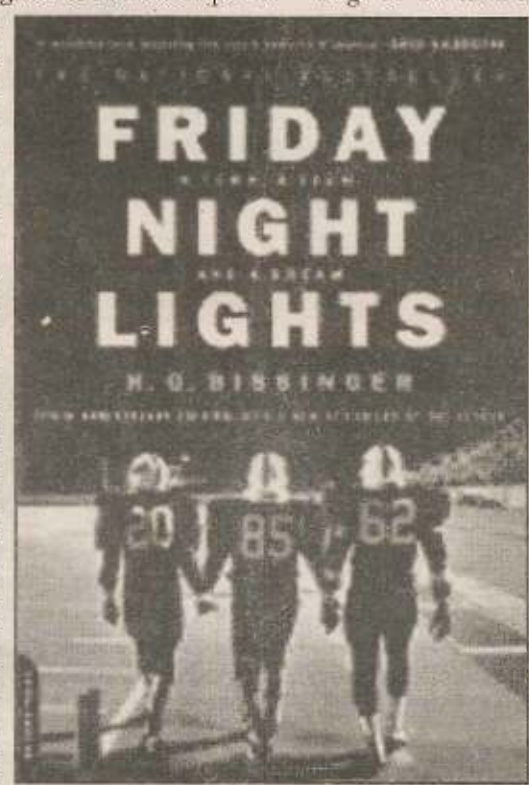
what *Friday Night Lights* is all about.

While the movie does provide a close-up image of the team and the city of Odessa,

the book explains what the movie can't. The small details are what make this story great and even detail, from the players so nervous that they throw up in the locker room before games to the crushing blow on the field. The book will have you on the edge of the seat cheering for the Permian football team. The playoff game near the end of the book will leave you gasping for air as you were acting on the field.

H. G. Bissinger is an author who isn't afraid to

the truth. He went into Odessa looking for a story like *Hooiers* but came out with something completely different. This book was re-released a decade after its first release and contains extra information and what the players at Permian went on to accomplish.



*Friday Night Lights* is a story about the love of the game and how a team can overcome racism.

Photo by Katie Staples



# Get Stunned by the Scorpion

Adele Hampton

Asst. Business Manager

What does the future hold in store for us? No one knows, and yet there are so many books and stories about the subject. No different is *The House of the Scorpion* by Nancy Farmer. But this book, unlike other books about the future, focuses on not only sci-fi characteristics, but also on conflicts and social issues that go along with the present and the future. I'm not a big fan of sci-fi, so when this book came to me as a gift I wasn't sure if I should give it away or give it a chance. I decided to read it and it turns out that it was one of the most interesting books I've ever read. It's filled with fascinating characters, a wild and twisting plot, and a main character that stays on your mind long after you've put the book down.

*The House of the Scorpion* takes place half in a country called Opium, which is a strip of land between the United States and what was once Mexico and is now Aztlan, and the other half in Aztlan, which is basically a more crowded, polluted, and technically advanced Mexico. Matteo Alacran is the clone of El Patrón, a big-time drug lord who has no sympathy or feelings of compassion. Matteo was cast out of society by the Alacran family and was forced to live a life of solitude and loneliness in the poppy fields of Opium, with only the companionship of his caretaker Celia. When Matt is six years old, he first comes in contact with a girl his age named Maria, which throws him into a whirlwind of

conflicts and emotions.

As Matt gets older and is brought back to civilization, he begins to discover what he is; a clone of El Patrón which everyone knows. Matt is then brought into a world that hates him, and it's only because he's El Patrón's clone and he is still alive. Maria soon abandons him because her father, who doesn't want her to be associating with clones, sends her to a convent in Aztlan leaving Matt alone. Matt doesn't know is that he is the last of seven other clones that El Patrón had made. The clones were not just for his company, but also for spare parts. Patrón's health is deteriorating and Matt is his spare life line. When Matt discovers this he can't understand why he could seem like such a loving and kindhearted person, when in fact he is a cold, bitter-hearted vulture. He decides to escape his fate and run away. With the help of a few friends he makes it to Aztlan and must survive on his own.



The House of the Scorpion is a well balanced story about survival, love, hope, and growing up.

Photo by Evan Dobbs

He is brought into an orphanage where, for the first time he is living on his own with boys his own age. With the aid of his new found friends he is able to find Maria and start a new life as a respected human being.

*The House of the Scorpion* is the winner of the National Book Award, the Newbery Honor Award, and the Michael I. Printz Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature. Author Nancy Farmer is a three-time Newbery Honor winner. She's the writer of *The Ear the Eye and the Arm*, *Do You Know Me*, *The Warm Place*, *A Girl Named Disaster*, and three picture books for young children. Her books combine sci-fi elements as well as present day emotions people can relate to.

If you're looking for a good sci-fi book, or a book that takes you on an amazing ride, check out *The House of the Scorpion*. Throughout this book the reader is thrown from one situation to the next in an exciting story. It's a good, well balanced story about survival, love, hope, and growing up trying figure out who you really are.

If you are a cartoonist and looking for the opportunity to get published, please submit work to *The Wire*, Quander room 418!



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# Scarf at the Wharf

Robin Harry

Business Manager

There comes a point in a teenager's life when they just get tired of fast food and actually have a little bit of money. For several students *The Village Wharf*, located in the Hollin Hall Shopping Center on Ft. Hunt Road, is the ideal place to grab a quality bite at a reasonable price. Senior Chad Wormeley works a few stores down and orders lunch quite frequently. "Besides being convenient, they have delicious food. The workers are also very nice," said Wormeley.

Dinner entrees can be pricy, ranging from eleven to eighteen dollars. If you do not want to spend that much, the first two pages of the menu are full of tasty choices that are no more than nine dollars. My personal favorite is the "Lord Fairfax," a good size hamburger with Swiss cheese and bacon, accompanied with fries, pricing at \$6.95. The appetizers include a chicken quesadilla and chicken fingers, which could easily be a meal and does not exceed six dollars. The best and most famous item of the menu would definitely have to be their cream of crab soup, which is homemade. Although \$3.95 for a cup may seem steep, it is worth every penny. The creamy, crab-filled soup with a slight kick is perfect on a winter day.

A few months ago, the establishment underwent a change in management and ownership. The overall appearance inside has been replaced with new tables and chairs, making it appear more polished. New items were also added onto the menu, and the prices went up slightly. "I have always enjoyed the Wharf, but I must say that it has definitely improved since the change-over and you notice more people coming in now," said



Photo by Houston Murphy

Located in Hollin Hall, The Wharf's outdoor dining area attracts many customers.

junior Megan Farrar.

Besides being a good place to get a quick bite with some friends, it can also be an ideal setting for a date. "It provides a peaceful atmosphere with candles and low-lighting," said senior Luke Urban. In addition to being a great setting, it leaves your date thinking you went to a nice place but does not leave your wallet empty.

While it can get extremely busy on the weekends, particularly around dinner time, quality service is never spared. No matter what time you choose to go, you can count on being greeted pleasantly at the door, followed by enjoying delicious food.

Not only do teenagers find this to be a good place to dine, it is not uncommon to see the bar full of older people enjoying a drink and friendly conversation. Whether you are looking for a top of the line entrée or simple sandwich with fries, this is the place for people of all ages to stop in to hang out and enjoy good food.

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# More Than Meets the Eye

Ashlee Newcomb

Style Editor

In movies, high school students are given labels that supposedly reflect them entirely. There are the Jocks, who are all about sports, the Cheerleaders who love to shop, and the Nerds who sit at their computers to design websites. However, that in no way is true in "reality." Every person has different interests and hobbies. Somewhere out there, there is probably a student who is at the top of her class, who plays sports, and even has an artistic side. Wait, that girl is senior Rachel Chaney.

It was not until this year that I was given the pleasure of meeting Chaney, and was able to create a clearer picture of her personality, diminishing the image of a super genius that I would have nothing in common with. I have found upon sharing our AP Literature

"It is important to realize that no matter what someone's apparent and obvious characteristics might be, many of his or her other attributes remain hidden. It is important to remember that no one is two-dimensional enough to be defined by a word."

~Senior Rachel Chaney

class that there is more to Chaney than her academic achievements.

Chaney began her senior year as number one in the senior class of 2005, but once transfer students Stephen Petraeus and Nicholas Jachowski came, like everyone else, her rank was shifted. As a National Merit Commended Scholar and an AP Scholar with Distinction, Chaney is held on a high pedestal, and mainly looked at only for her academic achievements, when she also enjoys other activities that most people do not know about.

At the age of eighth, Chaney was diagnosed with diabetes, causing her to be more careful of what foods she eats. "Every time I eat I have to give myself insulin from my insulin pump. I give myself a certain amount of insulin based on the amount of carbohydrates I eat. Since most food doesn't really have 'Nutrition Facts' attached to it, I often have to guess how much I should give," said Chaney. It does not greatly bother Chaney to have to go through this routine, and she is often optimistic about her situation. "The best thing about being diabetic, though, is that I can eat in any class. If my blood sugar gets low, I have to eat something," said Chaney.

Chaney has been involved in art since she was nine, when she began taking oil painting classes where she lived in New Mexico. However, once she moved to Utah, she felt that she was horrible at art. In eighth grade, she reconnected with her love for art and has been greatly involved with it since. Chaney has been taking art classes at this school all four years, and even takes art classes at the famous Torpedo Factory in Old Town Alexandria.

"I use my brain so often in almost everything I do; it is nice to do something less analytical. Because most people's dominant sense is sight, images have a powerful impact on any viewer," said Chaney. Some of her friends are often able to view her work, like senior Ijeoma Nwatu. "She draws things that you could only imagine in your dreams. It's cool to see what she draws because it is always different - in a

good way," said Nwatu.

Chaney has been playing volleyball at this school since her freshman year. Joining varsity her junior year, Chaney was given the opportunity to gain a close friendship with her teammates. "The best thing about being on a team is becoming friends with new people you may not have ever been friends with otherwise," said Chaney.

"She always was a good sport and was easy to get along with, she made everyone laugh. People perceive her as a big-headed person, but that's not the type of person she is, she is very down-to-earth," said senior Ana Campomanos.

Most graduating seniors look forward to spending their last summer in town, saying long "good-byes" to their fellow classmates and family members. However, Chaney has bigger plans for her family "good-byes." "I plan on spending my summer road-tripping with my family. I want to go to Acadia National Park and Assateague Island, and maybe New Orleans," said Chaney.

There is no better way to describe Rachel Chaney than to say that there is more to her than most people assume. "It is important to realize that no matter what someone's apparent and obvious characteristics might be, many of his or her other attributes remain hidden. It is important to remember that no one is two dimensional enough to be defined by a word," said Chaney.



Photo by Houston Murphy

Avid photographer senior Rachel Chaney stays after many days in the darkroom developing her pictures.

RACHEL CHANEY

MATT ROSSI

# The Talented Mr. Rossi

Laura Lofgren

Wire Reporter

"Matt Rossi...I've heard that name before." Duh! Of course you have. He's famous! Even if you don't know him personally, everyone can recognize Rossi as that drama kid who hangs out with all the other drama kids. His unmistakable deep voice and ardent expression when he speaks gives him the perfect qualities of a talented actor - one of the most brilliant actors at our school. Rossi is someone who thrives in the spotlight. "I was a shifter in the downtime of my sophomore football season, and when *Romeo and Juliet* was performed and I went out to take a bow, just as a shifter...that was what snared me. The lights and the applause..." says Rossi.

It took him until his junior year to actually audition for a full part in a play, which Rossi considers a huge mistake. "It has been the one thing in my entire life that has come naturally to me,"

he says. I'm sure the school deems it a mistake as well, considering his outstanding performance as Petruchio in *Taming of the Shrew*, was unmatched - they could've used his talent a long time ago. "Matt Rossi is just an all-round great student. He is very talented,



Photo by Rosie Carmichael

Rossi in the fall play, Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*.

completely dedicated to the program, and above all else a warm and caring person who works well with everyone and always gives 100%," says drama teacher Ms. McCormally.

What else does Rossi do? Pretty much nothing. He calls himself a "theater rat," as he spends so much of his time in drama related activities. "I really think that there is a common misconception

about West Potomac theatre, too. People see the final result and they think (at least I hope) that it's amazing. But they don't see the two month preparation period and the behind-the-scenes effort," says Rossi. He spends at least three hours a day on weekdays and six hours on Saturdays rehearsing lines, blocking scenes, and even building the set. "Theatre is as much a team sport as any. Focus, patience, dedication, and endurance are all factors of the utmost importance in theatre, and after you have all that down, it still takes an extraordinary amount of chemistry to pull off a well-produced play," he said.

When Rossi is not doing something for theatre (I know, it's hard to imagine), Rossi does have some fun. "Yeah, I go out on weekends and maintain a level of relaxation to balance out the rigors of theatre and school, but theatre is fun for me, so it isn't something that is painful



Photo illustration by Katie Staples

to endure," says Rossi. Obsessed. But for a good cause. When you are as gifted as he, the only way to harness the talent and improve is to work at it persistently. He even plans to continue theatre at Christopher Newport University, where he is headed next fall.

Don't forget to see his amazing directing of the upcoming one act, *Mystery at Twickenham Vicarage*. He's also playing Sgt. Tony Moreni in the winter play *All My Murders*. "Matt's a great guy. I know that he'll get on my nerves sometimes, but he really continues to impress me with how he's really becoming his own person and excelling in a lot of areas," says his sister junior Leigh Rossi. "Matt is the epitome of a Matt-like person. I like his smile. He also has a very big heart," says senior Brent Hawkins.