



See where the seniors of 2010 are going to college after high school.

Monday, June 14, 2010

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Photo by James Bates/MCT



Find out what students are doing to protect the world's dolphins.

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Photo by Sonia Gareyaga



Guess which teacher received a UMBC Fullbright scholarship.

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Photo by Harry Walker/MCT



How are the Washington Nationals doing so far this season?

Style 9 10 11 12 13

Photo by ROD MAR/MCT



Which jobs are the best fitting for students in high school?

Ent. 10 11 12 13 14

Photo by John Johnson/MCT



What do students think of the new movie *Letters to Juliet*?

Paxton's 34-year reign ends



Photo by Kathryn Nelson

Paxton's seniors, Elsie Abjetey-Doku, Alyssa McDonald, Shannon McCarn, Megan Maple, and Ariane Abcede surprise her with a banner they made in her honor. According to the seniors, Paxton repeated the phrase 'Keep in mind...' at least 400 times this past year.

LAURA REYNOLDS
REPORTER

The end of this year marks the end of an era: Mrs. Paxton's teaching career. After thirty four years of teaching English, seven of which were at West Potomac, Mrs. Paxton has decided to focus on other things. For as long as she has taught at our school, juniors and seniors have realized that having Mrs. Paxton as a teacher equates to their being in a college-level course.

Although it seems as though Mrs. Paxton has been at West Potomac for the majority of her teaching career, she has spent most of her time at the seven other schools that she taught at throughout her life. The most enjoyable school for her to teach was one that carries much familial importance. "My favorite school was Maury High School in Norfolk, Virginia – not only is it a very beautiful school but it is a school with a great deal of history – my grandmother attended as did both of my parents and both of my children," she said. Not only has she taught at high schools, but Mrs. Paxton also put in time at middle schools and community colleges. Seventh grade was her least favorite because there are "too many hormones," whereas dual enrollment was the most enjoyable

to teach. No matter what went on in the classroom, even the ones that she was not fond of, teaching was a compelling enough career to keep Mrs. Paxton coming back year after year after year.

An exacting teacher, Mrs. Paxton leaves an impression on every student that walks into her classroom. The work load is not light, but the results speak for themselves. Paxton's students do well on testing, whether it be an AP exam or an SOL test, and are faced with a teacher who expects a certain level of responsibility and conduct in her classroom. As junior Callie Jacobs put it, "You're never sure what to expect walking into her room. She never takes a break. Mrs. Paxton was my only teacher who started a lesson the class after the AP exam so that we would be prepared for next year's AP course. Though most students might prefer to coast and not do much for the rest of the year, she is setting us up to succeed later. I'll be thanking her when I can relax a bit in English class at the beginning of my senior year." This attitude is typical among her students. The work can be copious, and frustrating, and difficult, but in the long run it is born of years of experience with how to teach students so that they can reach their full potential. After all the years of teaching, Mrs. Paxton has decided what she

See Paxton on page 5

"Legends of Song" amazes audiences

NIA COPELAND
REPORTER

Every year the choir department displays its best work during the annual Spring Show. Choir director Ernest Johnson and his students were excited to present this year's show themed "Legends of Song". It showcased the student's talents through the many works of several brilliant artists such as Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, George Gershwin, Cole Porter, Richard Rodgers, Duke Ellington, Elvis Presley, John Lennon, Paul McCartney, Billy Joel, and Michael Jackson.

His enthused singers kept the audience entertained through their excellent performance of several upbeat, modern hits. "Each year I try to design a new show around a theme that would be both entertaining and educational for our audiences and singers," said Johnson. "This year, the show theme is 'Legends of Song' – which focuses on composers of some of great standards in popular music, particularly early in the 20th century."

The students paid tribute to several excellent artists through constant singing, dancing and acting. "The show includes songs by Irving Berlin (*Blue Skies*), George Gershwin (*Our Love is Here to Stay*, *Strike up the Band*) and Jerome Kern (*Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man*), from his ground-breaking musical, *Showboat*," added Johnson. "Duke Ellington (*Don't Get Around Much Anymore*) and of course some of the more contemporary artists that most West Potomac students and their parents would be fond of such as Elvis Presley, (*Jailhouse Rock*, *Can't Help Falling in Love*), John Lennon & Paul McCartney of the Beatles (*Yesterday*, *Can't Buy Me Love*) Billy Joel (*Tell Her About it*, *Piano Man*, *Scenes from an Italian Restaurant*) and Michael Jackson (*I'll Be There*, *Bad*, *The Way you Make Me Feel*) were also included. These are only a few of the many songs that were included in this two hour all singing, all dancing show!" Johnson was excited to present his talented students to the community. He not only showcased the work of the students in his chorus classes, he also included performances by local elementary and middle school students enrolled in chorus classes and West Potomac teachers. "The show will feature a cast of over 200 students," Johnson continued. "In addition to the West Potomac Choirs which are Bella Voce, Colonial Singers, Freshman Women's Chorus and the Mixed Chorus, special guests will include 50 children from a few of the West Potomac Pyramid elementary schools such as Stratford Landing, Belle View, Fort Hunt, Hollin Meadows, and Waynewood. Singers from Sandburg Middle School will also be featured in the show along with Mr. Garry Relton, a West Potomac chemistry teacher." The show also included several vocal and dance solos. One of the most memorable solos was performed by junior James Guss and sophomore Julia Warren's performance of *We're a Couple of Swells* by Irving Berlin.

Though chorus students were required to attend long rehearsals and practices each week to prepare for the show, it was all worth it

See Orchestra on page 5

Clifford Hardison reflects on his first year as West Potomac's principal

NORRIS BROOKS
NEWS EDITOR

"Learning will begin in ten minutes!" These words have blasted through the halls of our school all year, and the man behind them is Principal Cliff Hardison. Mr. Hardison left his position as Vice Principal of Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology and took the reins as head honcho of West Potomac in the fall. He came in with a different perspective and several new ideas.

For some students it was a rocky start. They were upset with the changes in the FLEX schedule, the new tardy policy, and the elimination of D lunch. As sophomore Daniel Morris put it, "Change is hard." However, as Mr. Hardison's inaugural year comes to a close, students have adjusted to the new policies. Mr. Hardison has instituted many changes, all with the goal of improving student learning and our school's record of excellence.

Mr. Hardison and his team started by focusing on the School Improvement Plan (SIP), a blueprint that defines the mission of the school, outlines its core values and beliefs, and charts a course to achieve them. As Mr. Hardison describes it, "We renewed dedication to ensuring rigorous learning opportunities for all students, redefining our mission/vision, and refining what a professional learning community means."

Preliminary results seem to be positive. Mr. Hardison and the staff have been impressed by student performance at the science fair, Technology Student Association competitions, and fine and performing arts shows. English SOL scores have improved, the honor roll is vigorous, and seniors have had a successful year with SHOUT—a community service project. Another positive step has been the conversations the faculty has had and the exploration they have done about the issue of diversity and what it means to them to be part of a diverse school such as ours.

See Hardison on page 5



Photo by Nia Copeland

Principal Hardison has established a solid relationship with the faculty, including secretary Patty Jones.

There is more to learning in high school than test scores

Each year, West Potomac students are required to take Standards of Learning (SOL) end-of-the-year exams for various CORE subjects (math, English, history, and science). Pass rates on those exams determine whether our school makes Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). During the 2007-2008 school year, West Potomac failed to make AYP, according to a report for the Virginia Department of Education. Because of this, West Potomac has been forced to push harder toward succeeding in AYP, so the credibility of the school could stand on strong ground.

Initiated in 2002 under the No Child Left Behind Act of the Bush administration, AYP was added into the provisions of a linked legislation entitled Improving America's Schools Act to the already existing SOL tests, and gave more strict national guidelines for determined success. The primary functions of AYP are to provide accountability in public school systems and to create a system of standardization across all schools in America, as well as to aid the closing of the achievement gap, according to stipulations in the bill as well as the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. AYP is judged primarily by state reading and mathematics tests and graduation rates in secondary education, according to *Education Week*, although individual states do have some flexibility in setting parameters.

While accountability is important for any successful school system to monitor the progress of students and the success of teachers, the standards placed in No Child Left Behind have ensured that the spotlight falls not on learning, but rather on making sure that students know the information on the test. Many teachers at our school would love to be able to teach other topics, not included on the SOL's, however, because of the short amount of class time in school year, teachers must curtail their lesson plans to Standards of Learning (SOL) examination criteria, which limits their full ability to foster bright students to their full potential and permit them to think "outside the box."

While many proponents of AYP say that it has helped define responsibility in learning among school systems, it is still unfair. As the system stands now, teachers are reviewed and judged on how well their students perform on these standardized SOL tests. But, these numbers should not be the main indicator of a teacher's

overall success in the classroom. The true assessment of a teacher's ability should be based on how well he or she motivates and educates students who can and want to succeed in higher education and in the workplace, and provides them with the skill sets necessary for such success. Not every student is able to show his or her true mastery of the content through a test.

School funding also somewhat rests on how our school's students perform on these standardized tests, as well as other tests, according to a survey on Fairfax County, because national funding is based on the scores of these tests.

So, teachers could teach the content of the SOL in a shorter amount of time and then move on to the topics that they want to teach and think are enriching, right? Wrong. It is not that simple. Teachers cannot always adequately plan how long it will take them to teach the SOL content because all students learn at different speeds. Thus, it is unfair to both the teachers and students at our school.

It is rather unfortunate that Virginia is plagued with the curse of standardized testing. While it must be said that standardization means that students across the board are learning the same content material, it does hinder learning beyond the topic areas mandated by the Commonwealth of Virginia. When the No Child Left Behind Act was instated, it put a stipulation in place that said schools should have a 100% pass rate by 2014. Obviously, that will not be the case for all schools, but one can hope that West Potomac is on its way to meeting that goal in the near future.

Maybe then, teachers will have the freedom to teach the subjects that are outside the Standards of Learning, and not have to fear looking like a failure in the eyes of their coworkers, and students will not have the responsibility of holding the school's success on their shoulders.

This is not to say that students do not learn in SOL classes. It is just that teachers at our school are extremely well versed in their subject areas and should be able to teach students all that they have to offer and more, beyond what is important for one test. Teachers have the ability to give students the skills and knowledge that will help them in the future, and when it comes down to it, these AYP and SOL tests are not going to determine one's future.

RANTS and Raves

A **RANT** for teachers giving last-minute tests.

A **rave** for the revival of the Celtics and Lakers rivalry.

A **RANT** for a continually leaking oil pipe in the gulf coast.

A **rave** for the new *Wire* staff. Congrats EIC's and editors!

A **RANT** for seniors leaving school weeks before everybody else.

A **rave** for the outdoors pools opening.

Recall the "forgotten decade"

ALEX FABRIZIO
SPECIAL TO THE WIRE

One decade is always seriously overlooked and underrated: the 90's. I can tell you, as someone who has been in love with the 90's for a few solid months now that there are some heavy reasons why it is better than the world we live in now. Would you like me to provide them for you? No? Oh well, if you do not care, then do not read it.

"Teen" culture was better. First of all, MTV actually played music and had some good shows on it like *Beavis and Butt-head* and *Daria*. Secondly, I can think of a handful of other shows

from then that are even better. (*Twin Peaks*, *My So-Called Life*, *Rugrats*, *Boy Meets World*, and *Mr. Shows*.) Also, the movies were really very good. (*Clueless*, *Doom Generation*, *Nowhere*, *Fight Club*, *Reservoir Dogs*, *Pulp Fiction*, etc.). Now to move on to the heavy hitter: music.

I could leave it at just the really influential and breathtaking artists from the time like Pavement,

Neutral Milk Hotel, Bikini Kill, Nirvana, etc. or I could discuss all of the wonderfully ironic songs like "Macarena," "Gettin' Jiggy With It," "Rico Suave," etc. But I think I'll just leave it at those and talk about how the Nineties included an extremely important feminist movement called Riot Grrrl. Without Riot Grrrl, females would still be as objectified in the media and would not have been able to pursue serious careers in the entertainment industry.

Finally, the 90's were a time of prosperity and the era of the television, video, and tape recorders. Everyone was wary of the government yet everyone was happy.

People were left alone and no one was chained to the internet, email, or text messaging. I will admit that these technological advances are convenient and I would probably die without them, but back then they were not used to them yet and they still had the innovations up ahead. The world was not nearly as cutthroat or competitive.

Isn't that a world you would prefer?

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Save the dolphins, save the world



KATIE WOODWARD
SPECIAL TO THE WIRE

Sophomores in our school recently viewed a documentary called *The Cove*, which details the practice of Japanese dolphin hunting.

They learned that every year, Japanese hunters kill over 20,000 dolphins and porpoises to continue the "proud traditions" of their towns by luring the sea animals into caves where they are killed with spears. Students' reactions to the video ranged from horrified to outraged by not only the suffering of the animals, but by the risks posed to the public from the high mercury levels in dolphins. Said sophomore Ali Muir, "I was completely repulsed by what I saw in *The Cove*. With today's technology, there is no need for primitive hunting tactics that emphasize the animals' suffering." They learned that the meat from the slaughtered dolphins is sold at incredibly cheap prices to thousands of Japanese citizens, who in turn are put at risk for mercury poisoning. Other dolphins are simply captured and sold into captivity to institutions such as Sea World, where they are used for entertainment purposes.

In-school viewings of films like this one have inspired student action across the country. Said Muir, "The video prompted me to sign up [for] the World Wildlife Fund this summer, because I realized that the only way to address this issue is to take personal action." Another example of students taking charge was the creation of school club Students Against Seal Hunting (SASH). President Bryan Jacobs discusses his inspiration for establishing such an organization, saying "Grassroots organizations are essential to the improvement [of] our environmental situation, and wildlife protection is a significant part of that issue. SASH allows students to have a voice." SASH has helped to spread awareness of the dangers of seal hunting and served as a starting point for many students to take action in regard to causes like this.

SASH has often come under fire as a club focused upon a remote, even a laughable, issue, but the truth is that dolphin and seal hunting is a relevant issue today. The fact that these valuable creatures are hunted for sport, despite their importance to the ecosystem and relatively fragile existence, is sickening. While the practice of dolphin hunting may be a tradition in

Japan, sometimes it is necessary to compromise or adapt traditions to changing times, and the world is certainly changing now at a rapid pace. Due to the fact that over 20,000 dolphins and porpoises are killed each year one can only imagine how these numbers may have expanded in the last decade. Environmentalists have been showing increasing concern in regard to this practice, and not without due cause. Already, species like the striped dolphin have been driven to near extinction due to excessive hunting while a pro-whaling bloc in 2006 helped effectively nullify the moratorium on whaling.

The practice of hunting dolphins and whales is repulsive to many Westerners, but the hunting methods themselves are also cruel. Dolphins are herded towards shore and into large nets where they are left for days before actually being slaughtered. Baird's beaked whales, which have been hunted off the coast of the Boso Peninsula since the 1800s, are hauled onto landing stations and butchered by whalers. The meat is sold at markets, both local and remote, while the excess is used for fertilizer. For the animals that escape slaughter, the alternative is not much brighter: life in a commercial aquarium or as entertainment at Sea World is hardly a satisfying life for animals meant to enjoy the freedom of the ocean.

Some argue that the dolphin and whale meat culled from the hunts supports coastal towns like Taiji in southeastern Japan, but the fact is, the hunting practices are wasteful and outdated in the modern world. Many towns have been forced to rely more heavily on the annual fish catch, and bans on commercial whale killing have somewhat decreased the number of slaughtered marine mammals. However, the issue has not been eradicated, and dolphin hunting remains an enviable, even glamorous, occupation in Japan.

But this practice is destructive to the environment, cruel to the creatures, and wholly unnecessary. Since attempts at setting limitations and ceilings on hunting numbers have been unsuccessful, more drastic legislation must be taken. Student groups such as SASH can help bring light to this problem, and allow students to express their distraught over this problem. Sometimes traditions must be relinquished in favor of what is right for the modern world, and the practice of dolphin, whale, and seal hunting falls into that category.

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The West Potomac High School report card



BRYAN JACOBS
SPECIAL TO THE WIRE

Over the past four years, the best word that describes West Potomac is transition. Everything is momentarily moving and spinning, students are rapidly rushing from class to class, and teachers

are furiously typing and teaching, all at once.

From day one, West Potomac was a step above the dark and gloomy halls of Carl Sandburg Middle School.

I remember walking down the halls freshman year and thinking to myself, "This school is really big... and really bright." Slowly I became accustomed to the unfamiliar blocked scheduling of "A" and "B" days and often got confused, messing up homework and walking into my period 2 class when it was actually an "A" day. Oh, the humiliation! However, freshman year was more than the awkward first days and the constant struggle of, "Is that upperclassman looking at me funny?", and more of a reality check. Freshman year was a time to make a transition, from middle to high school. I realized I was moving up to the big league. I began to realize that there were letters in math, the meanings of syntax, how mitochondrion work in a cell, and all the tips and strategies of how to run the "all-important" P.E. mile. More importantly, I learned how to become friends with people from other cultures, races, and religions.

I began to understand that there are more than just the suburbs of Hollin Hills, Waynewood, or Fort Hunt.

Over the next three years, I began to truly grasp West Potomac and all of its benefits. I went from sophomore, junior, and senior years joining club after club and slowly taking leadership roles. I joined *The Wire*, SGA, Key Club, and even started an animal rights group. Each of which, allowed me to meet someone new and different and brought a new perspective of West Potomac. By senior year, I had been voted Vice President of Student Government and had an editorial position on *The Wire*, mostly through sheer involvement.

"The point that I am trying to make is that to be involved in more than just academics really gives you an opportunity to see the school, or just about anywhere, at face value."

The point that I am trying to make is that to be involved is more than just academics. It really gives you an opportunity to see the school, or just about anywhere, at face value. Contrary to popular belief, West Potomac is a good school, with caring teachers and students. I plead that the future students and classes will be

more involved in West Potomac and give back to the school that will and has given so much to you.

As the British musician Graham Nash said, "One can't deny what has happened to us in the past. The secret is to enjoy and be proud of the music we've created and the people with whom we have been linked. It's all a long chain of involvement in the world, and we are proud to be yet another link in this chain."

LARGE AND IN CHARGE



Photo by Megan Baker

LUCAS ALEXANDER
SPECIAL TO THE WIRE

After four short years of high school, it culminated early school work, at least for many of us, due to SHOOT. While graduation, as well as a few other formal events, remain, our high school lives are pretty much done. In a tradition that dates back immeasurably, students usually come up with some mischievous prank to show their happiness and leave their legacy on the school. Pranks range from minor stunts to a wide variety of illegal and violent things like breaking into the school or letting animals loose throughout the school. On June 2, some seniors decided to take their part in this tradition. A lot of ideas were passed around the school, and eventually the simple, harmless prank of dressing up and rollerblading, skateboarding, or something around the school was decided upon.

This was one of the least dangerous or violent pranks that

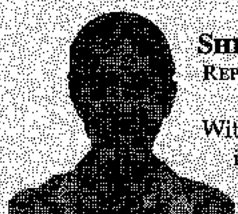
"This was one of the least dangerous or violent pranks that could have been used. Honestly, was it disruptive, yes it was. But in reality, what harm did the students cause?"

could have been used. Was it disruptive? Yes it was. But in reality, what harm did the students cause? None. If someone wants to honestly come forward and say that the roaming students disrupted them enough to impact their Standards of Learning (SOL) or final test grades in a negative way, then they are welcome to do so. However, I do not think anyone will. These seniors do not deserve any punishment, despite the school's argument that toys are a Students Responsibilities and Rights (SRR) violation. In reality, the purpose of the punishment is only an attempt to make an example out of this year's seniors.

This event can summarize the problems with public education across the country. Schools focus too much on reaching standards and following them to the line. They leave little wiggle room, and students end up losing all authoritative respect for the school administration. Examples of this can be seen throughout the year, most obviously in the tardy policy. The tardy policy clearly did not work, as students came purposefully late, teachers tried to enforce it, detentions were only handed out to certain students, and it never led in any student making an attempt to come earlier to school. Still, the school stuck with it and refused to budge even though it was widely known it is ineffective. The same scenario can be seen in the handing out of Saturday school detentions to students who participated in the school prank. This is going to have no effect on students, and again the student body continues to lose respect for the administrative decisions and authority at West Potomac.

These students should not have been punished for doing something so harmless. The school should be thankful that the selected prank was as harmless as it was, because there could have been much worse options. High school is supposed to prepare students in education and behavior for the rest of their lives, but quite frankly, some of the administration's actions have instilled rebellious reactions and are really doing the opposite of what they intend.

Self-defense is valuable



SHIRINE LOGHMANIAN
REPORTER

With the recent violent incidents in schools across the county, it has become even more crucial now that students learn self-defense. Last October, a student was walking home when a stranger tried to abduct her. Due to the watchful eye of the community no one was hurt. However, this is only one of the many hazardous Fairfax county assault incidents that prove students need to be trained to defend themselves. Students need to be able to protect themselves from different forms of violence so they can feel safe in their learning environment. If motivated, our school has the ability to easily aid students in their effort to become more attentive toward their own safety.

Small changes in school curriculum can help this effort. For example, the school could offer daily self-defense classes in ninth and tenth grade gym classes. It would make enough of an impact to help stop at least one violent incident. Sophomore Ali Muir said, "They can easily replace it our handball or basketball unit in 9th grade." Instead, of two quarters of gym, self defense classes can easily be fit into the PE 9 and 10 curriculum. Sophomore Jackie Beckwith said, "I remember playing handball in gym and thinking how it would probably never benefit me in the future. Self-defense classes could make students feel they are in a safer learning environment. Also, it could lead to an increase in independence and self-

sufficiency at our school." If self-defense classes were provided to all the students during gym, nobody would have to spend an extra amount of money and time taking the classes outside of school. This would help underprivileged children also remain safe at school and in their own community. In addition, it would be provided and would teach students how to become more attentive toward their own safety as well as others. They would not even need to buy new supplies to practice self defense. Beckwith added, "It will definitely help alleviate the anxiety some parents may feel."

"Self defense classes can...help many students maintain their safety while in their learning environment."

However, other students believe that such a change could send mixed signals about the ability of law enforcement to prevent crime. Sophomore Reanna Donasaid, "Having self-defense classes at our school may lead to the idea that our community is ineffective in fighting crime. It could lead to a greater amount of doubt in the law enforcement system and therefore, an increase in crime. This could easily result in an increase in violence at our school." However, self defense classes could intimidate students and community members from taking part in crime at school and in our community. In addition, it could help raise the self-sufficiency of our students by making them feel more independent and confident. Self-defense classes can easily be fit into the PE curriculum and help many students maintain their safety while in their learning environment. Whether or not the system may be radically helpful, it could lead to a greater awareness to personal and fellow members' safety. Even the smallest increase in the protection of the students at our school is important.

Nazism is taking over

Immigration Laws will create problems and strife



EMILY GRIFFIN
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

"It is like Nazism," stated Los Angeles Cardinal Roger M. Mahony on Arizona's new Immigration Laws.

Arizona Governor Jan Brewster signed the new Arizona immigration bill into law on Friday, April 23, 2010. The immigration law states that immigrants must always have at hand their alien registration documents and police have the right to question them if they suspect they are an illegal alien. This law also aims to arrest people who hire illegal immigrants as laborers or transport them to the United States illegally.

This immigration law is going to turn into racial profiling. Racial profiling is defined as "discriminatory practice by law enforcement officials of targeting individuals for suspicion of crime based on the individual's race, ethnicity, religion or national origin," according to aclu.org. This means that an officer has the right to ask for anyone's alien registration documents and if they do not have the documents on them, then they can face either jail time or being deported.

It is obvious that Brewster is targeting the Mexican population in Arizona. Because Arizona is one of the few states that borders Mexico, along with Texas

and New Mexico, it has a very high population of Mexicans. Brewster has now given the Arizona police department the authority to arrest people whom are committing any suspicious acts. This will lead to many arrests of innocent Mexicans and any other race that has a negative reputation in Arizona. Basically what this means, is that anybody who is not of White or African American ethnicity has to have their alien registration documents on them at all times.

There are many flaws to this law. First of all, this law will definitely turn into racial profiling due to the power given to Arizona officials to arrest anyone they find suspicious whom does not have their alien registration documents on them. Second, and most importantly, this law gives authorities too much power.

"This will lead to many arrests of innocent Mexicans and any other race that has a negative reputation in Arizona."

The law does clearly state that officials are only allowed to demand alien registration documents from a person if the person is acting in a suspicious way. However, how can one truly define suspicion? The definition of suspicion

according to dictionary.com is "a vague notion of something." But every person in this country has a different opinion on what is or is not suspicious behavior. In conclusion, why should authorities receive the power to arrest people (and possibly deport them) without legitimate evidence of whether or not they are a citizen of this country? The answer is a very clear one; they should not.

End of the year tests are too much for students



JACOB ALEXANDER
OPINIONS EDITOR

With the end of the year approaching, school has become extremely hectic. Every student has to prepare for both SOL's and finals. Students taking Advanced Placement (AP) classes also have to take these tests. Overall, every student in the fourth quarter has to take two or three end of the year exams, along with worrying about their fourth quarter grades. Is it really necessary to cram these students with all these tests?

If these tests were not as serious and big as they are, this would not be such a big deal. While there is a valid point to giving these tests because they analyze how the students have progressed over the years, all they do is cram students at the end of the year, causing them to choose whether to focus on fourth quarter or these tests. If they choose to focus on their fourth quarter grades, they are giving themselves less time to study for these tests. On the other hand, if they focus on preparing for these tests, they spend the majority of their time studying, giving themselves less time to focus on their fourth quarter grade. Either way they are potentially lowering their chances of performing

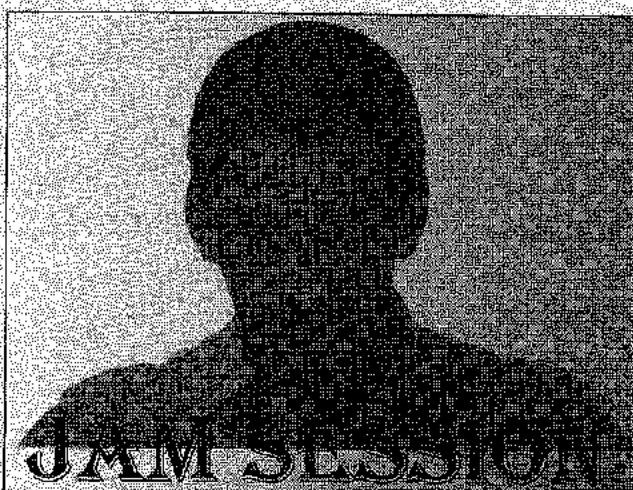
to the best of their ability in at least one of these categories, and that is simply not fair.

Many students spend most of their time in the fourth quarter studying for these tests (especially students who need to take AP exams). Many of these students begin studying for these tests months before the actual exam. This gives them less time to complete homework and other assignments, which can lower quiz, test, and homework grades. This also gives them less time to study for unit tests for the fourth quarter, which can greatly lower test grades. All of this really hurts the students' fourth quarter grades.

Another factor to this problem is the tradition of end of the year slacking. Many students put less effort into their work at the end of the year because they are tired of school and ready for summer. This greatly adds to this problem in many ways. First of all, if they are spending more time studying for these exams, then their slacking will hurt their fourth quarter grade even more. This may also potentially affect their studying, as well. Students are more likely to not do as well as they could on these exams in the end of the year as a result of this problem. This also lessens the point of these tests, because they are worth so much, but many students will not do their best, even if they do not mean to.

There are many possible solutions to this problem. These tests are necessary to evaluate how much the students have really learned over the course of the year, so they should not simply be removed. However, it is not fair to the students to keep them as they are, because the students are way too crammed during fourth quarter. One possible solution is to change the final exams. One thing teachers could do that some teachers already do is to count the SOL as the student's final exam. However, some teachers feel the SOL is too basic to count as a final. If this is the case, rather than giving one huge final at the end of the year, teachers could break it up into quarter finals. If teachers do this than students would not have to spend nearly as much time studying for these tests in the fourth quarter.

Overall, it is simply not fair to expect students to prepare for and do well on all of these exams as well as maintain good grades in the fourth quarter. This is simply too much for students to deal with, especially at the end of the year. Teachers also often cram students with final projects which simply give the students more work to deal with. I am not proposing that these exams are simply removed, but the final exam, SOL testing and AP testing system needs to be changed.



Get ready for an awesome new column, arriving in the September 2010 issue of *The Wire*. Not convinced? Check out this excerpt from "Jam Session": "I would like to talk about my favorite team of all time, the *Boston Celtics*. They are in a great position to win their 18th NBA Finals championship and knock out the *L.A. Lakers*. This is a huge rivalry in sports and dates back to the Red Auerbach days." Now you know what is on the mind of Joseph Alexander Marinelli. Hooked already?

Mr. Zhang becomes administrative intern

EMILY WOODS & CALLAN MEMMO

FOCUS EDITOR & REPORTER

Fairfax county seniors weren't the only ones receiving acceptance letters this spring. Many of their teachers were as well, upon gaining the opportunity to become an administrative intern with the FCPS leadership program for employees (LeadFair). One of the successful applicants was our very own Yunian Zhang, a WPHS special educator.

The select few who were chosen as interns get the chance to receive training in educational leadership, in the hopes of one day pursuing a career as an administrator. Although Zhang described his reaction to his admittance into the program as "very exciting," it was hardly a surprise to others. His past training and experience make him extremely qualified for the position. Mr. Zhang talks to fellow colleagues about pressing issues at the school. Zhang has passed the state leadership licensure requirements as well as having taken several courses in this field. He also exemplifies multiple qualities of a leader in his teaching job at West Potomac, in which he works with kids with special needs and specific learning disabilities.

In addition to his leadership traits and mastery in special education, Mr. Zhang is experienced in the arts and communications. Originally from China, he holds four degrees from various colleges, including

a B.A. degree from Nanjing College of Arts in Acting and a M.A. degree from Shanghai Theater Academy in Performing Arts, where he first began working with children with special needs. "I had been working with various students with special needs at Shanghai Theater Academy while I didn't have special training and necessary skills to serve those students well before I came to the United States. I was fascinated by the

curriculum offered by the Department of Human Development, at the George Washington University," commented Zhang.

Upon studying special education in D.C., Mr. Zhang worked at Quander Road School as an instructional assistant. He also taught elementary school students for a year at Saratoga Education center. He came to West Potomac in the school year of 1999-2000 because the school was seeking an instructor for the Chinese language course they were offering at the time.

Photo courtesy of Yunian Zhang

Mr. Zhang will undertake his prestigious intern role at the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year. He is anxious for the experience but also acknowledges the one downside of the opportunity. "Because the internship requires one year absence from my current position and being away from my base school, I will miss both my students and West Potomac colleagues."

While Mr. Zhang may miss West Potomac, the school population is extending their full support to him throughout the duration of his unique internship.



AP gardens bring serenity to students

MAGGIE GRADY

REPORTER

After the final Advanced-Placement (AP) tests were completed, teachers have filled the time in class by teaching new material, or preparing their students for their finals. Other teachers, who have already given the finals to their students, fill the time with fun class activities or movies. AP Environmental Science teacher, Erin Sikes-Thurston, has come up with a new, fun way to keep class interesting. Her students will be building gardens around the school. Sikes-Thurston has three AP Environmental Science classes and each class will be constructing two gardens each for a total of six new gardens planted at our school.

Sikes-Thurston wanted to make sure that her students were applying their skills and knowledge from her class to real life. "I wanted for these children to have an opportunity to put into action the content of the course and the gardens were the perfect vehicles," said Sikes-Thurston. The environmental students also had motivation to put a vast amount of effort into these gardens. "All of them were researched to meet different criteria and they were to be taken seriously as the whole project from soup to nuts. Seniors are working long hours everyday to make sure it is their final exam grade," the gardens are completed on time and meet Mrs. Sikes-Thurston's requirements. Students, including senior Maggie Berrigan, were also happy that their final exam grade was building a garden instead of a test. "The fact that this is our final exam grade has made the post AP exam season less stressful and more fun!" Added Berrigan.

Throughout the school year, Sikes-Thurston's students have done research on the different types of gardens that they will be planting. "They had to research the types of plants that would do the job to meet the goals of the garden. Additionally they need to meet the guidelines for them to be national wildlife certified: ground cover, access to water and food plants," added Sikes-Thurston. For example, a rain garden and butterfly garden were planted at our school. Students planned out which types of flowers, plants, and the work that was needed to complete their projects. The purpose of the rain garden was to help maximize the use and benefits of rainwater

by collecting it in a berm. A berm was located around a drain filled with rocks and soil, and it acts as a filter system within the garden. Also, specific types of flowers were needed to attract butterflies to the garden for the butterfly garden. "The butterfly garden by my room has herbs, a birdbath and several plants to provide cover for developing larva. The hope is that the pond area and the courtyard by my room will both be able to be certified [as well]," said Sikes-Thurston.

Berrigan was one of the students that worked on the rain garden and she had to do a lot of preparation before the building began. "I planned the garden's layout with Katie Woodward, made trips to buy topsoil and pick up the rocks, and helped dig out the berm and plant the

plants chosen for a variety of reasons to be included in the garden," said Berrigan. "[Also], specifically, I spent a lot of time with Katie using the information we had gathered to design the garden and finalize the budget and plant selection. We made a really cool landscape design poster board which has been helpful in the planting process," Berrigan added.

There is another courtyard that has a pond that was fixed by students and an

additional garden that is supposed to attract different types of birds to the courtyard. Also, there is another garden planted outside of the gym as well, and the garden has xeriscape landscaping. This garden only has plants that do not require a lot of water. In all of the gardens, there are more than 100 different species of plants as well. Sikes-Thurston's students will be working on the gardens for the next couple of weeks. Then, the seniors that have signed up for the Students Helping Others United Together (SHOUT) will leave school and the remaining students will continue to work on and finish the gardens. Sikes-Thurston's have enjoyed working on these gardens and were happy to have this opportunity. "I have really liked working on this project because the gardens will be something that can be enjoyed by the school for years and we were able to implement some of things we learned," said Berrigan.

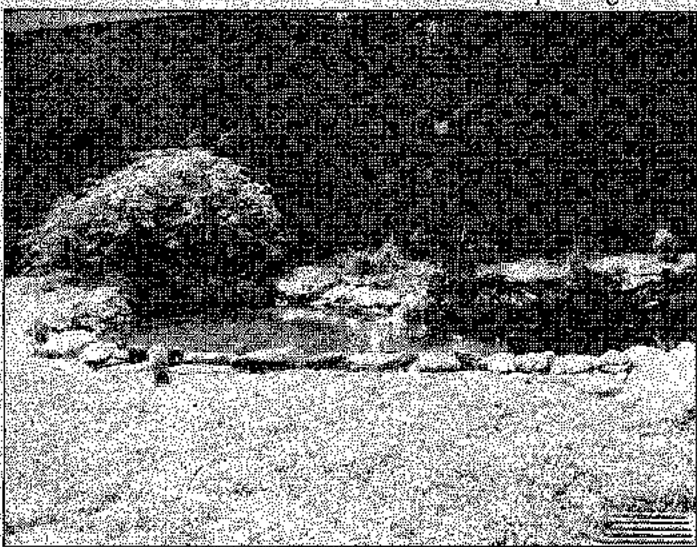


Photo by Sonia Garakyaaghi

After seven years at our school, Paxton retires

Continued from page 1

because of the fantastic performance that was offered to years of teaching, Mrs. Paxton has decided what she wants to focus on now that she is getting out of the profession. She has been working on several novels over the years that she will now be able to dedicate more time and effort to. Paxton also said she plans to "Spend time with family and friends. Do a lot of reading and writing." West Potomac will have to find a new teacher who can step up to the plate and take Mrs. Paxton's place. Luckily, she has plenty of advice, both for new teachers and for all of her students past and present. As for new teachers, she said that "Time management is one of the most critical aspects of successful teaching. Construct lessons that provide several activities that link together so that shifts from one to the next are seamless." For students, and for everyone else as well, her advice is to "Use language well - As humans, this is our greatest asset." Mrs. Paxton has been helping students with just that throughout her 34 year career, which has not been without trials and tribulations. However, at the end of it all, she is glad for the rewarding moments and knowing that she has made an impact on many lives. One of her fondest memories occurred recently outside of the classroom. "I was at a pick-up baseball game in Norfolk - most of the team and most of the fans were former students," she said. "It was wonderful to see what successful and attractive adults they have all become." Even though she is retiring to move on and relax, Mrs. Paxton will always be able to think back to past students and what she did for them. She will be missed.

Hardison's first year

Continued from page 1

One of the main actions Hardison took was to install noise lights and security cameras. A great deal of effort has gone into redesigning a safer and more efficient traffic pattern for dropping students off in the morning. The disciplinary actions have been the most controversial. Reducing four lunch periods to three caused cafeteria lines to stretch out the door, and this problem still exists today. The tardy policy, which requires students to obtain a tardy pass the second day, has also been a point of contention. On November 18, 2009, 217 seniors gathered by the rock and were late to their first period class. Grades were through eleven staged a similar event the following day. Principal Hardison listened to the concerns and brought the issues up with Student Leadership, but made it clear that being to class on time was necessary for student learning.

Despite how much Hardison has on his plate, he still has a positive outlook. When asked what his favorite experience was at West Potomac this year, he could not name just one. He said that on a daily basis, he enjoys observing student and teacher excellence in action. As guidance director at our school in the 1990's, Hardison was impressed by the "tenacious spirit of West Potomac students in athletics or in class." These are qualities he had not found at other schools at which he had taught or worked. Speaking about his return to our school, he said, "I am pleased to see that same student spirit and tenacity present."

Given the stress of the job, it's good to have a sense of humor. Hardison admits his funniest moment of the year was when he woke up one morning thinking he was late. He frantically rushed to school, only to find the parking lots empty, and he realized it was Sunday morning. Hardison enjoys a daily laugh and appreciates the jovial attitude of the staff.

Reflecting on Hardison's first year, junior Caitlin Corrigan remarked, "At first, it was difficult to adjust to. Principal Hardison's new rules, but I see he had our best interests at heart."

Spring show is a hit

Continued from page 1

community. "The students started preparing for the show right after spring break, rehearsing every Tuesday evening in April and every class period," Johnson said. "In May, we rehearsed every Saturday in the mornings through the afternoons so that the performance would be the absolute best that it could be." The wide selection of songs chosen to be performed in the show made it very difficult to pick a favorite. Not even the director of the show was able to select a song that he could say was the absolute best. "It's difficult to select a favorite piece from among all of these great songs," said Johnson. "I have favorites by each composer. Although I know all of these songs very well, the pieces take on new life as my singers perform them, making them so much more meaningful and personal to me. I really can't select just one song from among the 50+ pieces in this show, and identify it as my favorite. I select songs for each spring show because - they are all my favorites!"

Students excel at engineering competition

NIA COPELAND
REPORTER

On April 26, 2010, West Potomac students both competed in and received awards at the Virginia Technology Student Association (TSA) State Leadership Conference. West Potomac was also recognized for its excellence within its engineering and technology program and earned the Lynn P. Barrier Outstanding School Division Award at the Middle School Level. Both our school and its participating students are looking forward to competing in the National TSA competition this summer.

Junior Jennifer Long and Senior Julio Quevedo are two West Potomac students who are a part of the animatronics branch of the engineering program and participated in the Virginia TSA competition. They placed first in the state for their excellent work on their display and presentation and are excited to be attending nationals this summer. "We are so excited to be state champions and be travelling to nationals this year," said Long. "We have worked so hard for this and we plan to do just as well when we go to the national competition."

Under the leadership of Joseph Franco, head of the engineering program, Long and Quevedo earned West Potomac recognition as the school with the best engineering program in the entire state of Virginia. Several of his students, including Long, believe that he is an awesome teacher that has motivated and inspired them to pursue further education or a career in the engineering field. "He's a pretty cool dude," Long said. "If I ever had a question about how to do something he would always answer it thoroughly and help try and figure out how to solve the

problems. I'm pretty sure that he knows everything," Long continued. "That man is a power god of knowledge! He never discourages us and always pushes us to prove him wrong, even though he never likes to be."

Long and Quevedo were required to create a non-remote controlled robot that could be programmed to run on its own. After much brainstorming and many discussions, they came up with the idea to create a Halloween themed animatronics spider that detected the distance of a person walking closer to it. They set a bowl of candy in front of the spider and when a person came close enough to the bowl of candy, it shot them with silly string. Their display was a huge hit with the judges because they had never seen anything like it before. "The judges were really intrigued



Photo by Nia Copeland

The engineering team celebrates their wins at the Virginia Technology Student Association.

by our presentation," said Long. "They felt that our project was really unique and creative which is why we won first place."

Quevedo and Long's success is a huge achievement for the engineering program. As Long said, "This competition consisted of all of the top competing schools in all of Virginia and all of the other competitors had projects in which you had to push a button to make it move or make noise. Ours was different because it interacted with the people without a remote and it didn't move or make noise unless someone came close to it. The closer someone came, the more the spider performed which is why we designed it in the way that we did to make it unique and stand out and be remembered."

One of the main reasons that Long and Quevedo did so well is because they were able to get along and work together. Though it was Long's first time doing anything engineering related, Quevedo competed last year and placed third in the state. He worked with Long and taught her everything she needed to know. "Julio was a good partner because since I was new at this, he knew what tools to use and how to use them," said Long. "He taught me a lot of the things that I now use almost every day in my animatronics class." Though the TSA competition is taken very seriously, Long and Quevedo had a great time while working on their presentation. "Julio and I had a lot of fun working together and we only got really serious at the end when we were perfecting everything," she added. "We pretty much had the same ideas and thought process which made us compatible teammates. He and Mr. Franco taught me so much this year that made me want to go into engineering that much more."

Heath wins scholarship

MAGGIE GRADY
REPORTER

Spanish teacher Jamie Heath at our school has recently been honored with a University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) Scholarship Award. She has received the UMBC Fulbright-Hays Group Project Abroad Scholarship, and the opportunity to improve her Spanish studies. Along with the prestige and honor of winning this award, Heath was invited to spend five weeks in the summer in Mexico City studying Mexican Culture and Art in an Intercultural Perspective program. This award is highly competitive; only 12 people in the United States are given the award and it is an honor that Heath is going to be a part of the experience.

Heath was awarded this scholarship even though it was her first time applying for it. Furthermore, she only heard about this extraordinary opportunity by chance. "I learned about the scholarship through a forwarded email here at school," said Heath. The application process consisted of several things. In addition to letters of reference, there was a statement of purpose, college transcripts, and completing the application on time was also a deciding factor.

Heath will be traveling to different parts of Mexico, though this will not be her first time visiting the country. She took classes at a language school in Morelia a couple of years ago. Morelia is located in the Mexican state of Michoacán. In addition, Heath will have the opportunity to study Mexican art while she is in Mexico. "I will be studying Mexican Art in the capital city of Mexico called DF or Mexico City. Also I will be traveling to a silver mining town, Taxco," added Heath.

Mexico was not the only place that Heath has studied Spanish to improve her skill level. Heath has traveled to Costa Rica, Spain, and other Spanish-speaking countries including Peru and Guatemala. However, this trip to Mexico will be her first time studying at a university level. She believes that this opportunity will help to improve her studies and will eventually help her future students as well. "I feel like it [this opportunity] has been missing from my repertoire as a teacher for the last 10 years. I am thrilled to be learning about the history and culture

of Mexico through its art because Mexico's history is a colorful one of dominance and oppression. I enjoy seeing the world from a different perspective. I hope to bring this back to my students," said Heath.

In addition, Heath is excited to learn more about Mexico's interesting history and culture. "Mexico is the one country because of being our neighbors that has the most influence on our country, culturally, socially and politically," Heath added. For her class room and students next year, Heath plans to use Mexican culture and what she will learn this summer to help her students master the Spanish language. "I am hoping to be able to use what I learn about Mexican art to paint a more visual, interesting picture of Mexican culture for my students. I can see easily how I will incorporate it into upper level classes in themes like human rights but I am hoping to find some interesting art to be able to use with my young freshman too," said Heath.

Heath was extremely thrilled to receive this opportunity and she would like all of her students to try to pursue an opportunity similar to this. "I hope that all of my students get to travel the world when they become young adults. It has been a life-changing experience for me to see how other cultures live and how the lives of world citizens are affected by how their governments operate. It has really shaped my perspective and made me appreciate (and question) all we have in the U.S.," said Heath.



Photo by Sonja Garakyeraghi

Spanish teacher Jamie Heath helps students Narkey Terry and Bobby Merritt with their reading.

Murder at UVA shocks all

CAMILLE DiFOLCO
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Dating violence is not only one of the greatest fears among teenagers, but it is also a real and prevalent danger. According to the Dating Violence Resource Center at the National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC) website, "one in five teens in a serious relationship reports having been hit, slapped or pushed by a partner." The recent murder case at the University of Virginia (UVA) has highlighted this widespread issue.

The news that the body of Yeardeley Love, 22, a UVA student and varsity women's lacrosse player, had been found early in the morning, approximately 2:15 a.m., on Monday, May 3 by her roommate was enough to shock the campus. It quickly became clear to investigators that Love had died from a series of brutal injuries.

Almost immediately, the crime was connected with George Hugueley, 22, a fellow UVA student and varsity men's lacrosse player, who had previously dated Love. An investigation of Hugueley's apartment revealed a crimson-stained Cavaliers lacrosse jersey and a letter to Love; he is currently incarcerated under a first-degree murder charge, though his attorney, Francis Lawrence, maintains that Love's death was an accident. According to police documents, Hugueley admitted during questioning that he had kicked in Love's door, shaken her violently, and that her head "repeatedly hit the wall."

The incident was not Hugueley's first transgression. In 2008 he was charged with resisting arrest and public intoxication after he "had a run-in with a Lexington, Va. police officer, a female officer who felt so threatened that she had to use a Taser to take him into custody," CBS News Correspondent White Johnson reported on May 8. Rumors have since surfaced that previous violence had occurred between Hugueley and Love, who dated for over a year. In February 2009, signs of trouble began to appear in Hugueley and Love's relationship. A teammate of Hugueley's walked Love to a victory party off-campus and Hugueley, getting wind of it, believed that the two may have kissed. Hugueley reacted by breaking in to his teammate's apartment late at night while the guy was sleeping and repeatedly pummeling



Photo Courtesy of Pete Souza/MCT

UVA lacrosse players grieve the loss of their friend and teammate.

him. The incident was not reported to the campus authorities because both Hugueley and the teammate played it down like a minor scuffle. Such reports have raised questions as to whether Love's life could have been spared through a more vigilant and punitive attitude by police towards Hugueley.

The murder had a profound effect upon the school's highly-ranked lacrosse teams as they attempted to prepare for the NCAA tournament. The men's lacrosse team played their round-one game on Saturday, May 15, and achieved an 18-4 victory.

Junior Margaret Kerr commented, "The tragedy really affected all the teams in the NCAA tournament [because] it brought them closer together. Everyone knew [Love], either because they were on her team or had played with her."

On Sunday, the women's lacrosse team played their first-round game against the Towson Tigers, who wore orange wristbands emblazoned with Love's initials as a sign of respect and commiseration. Spectators, numbering over two thousand, showed similar signs of love for Love and the crowd abounded with fans displaying pins, ribbons and other emblems.

Prior to the game, a moment of silence was observed in honor of Love, and it was broken only by a lone call of "Let's Go, UVA," which was echoed throughout the crowd until the bleachers roared with the chant. The women's team achieved a hard-won 14-12 victory.

Love will continue to be honored at UVA by receiving a posthumous degree and by all of her friends and teammates. Yet unanswered questions continue to loom large, and the campus will not soon forget its shocking and terrible loss.

Students discover Manga

ERIN EYLER & KARLEY ZDEBSKI
REPORTERS

West Potomac librarian Mrs. Howard-Kongolo helps kids check out books from the newest addition to the library, the Manga collection, pronounced "Mun-ga," more than once a day. The Manga collection is a series of Asian graphic novel titles like a comic-book or an anime story, according to Michael Pawuk, author of *Graphic Novels: A genre guide to comic books, Manga and More*. Since the stories are indigenous to Japan, the story reads from back to front, unlike the usual reading style of an American. The American version of these stories is called "Tokyopop" and is extremely Manga-like.

Mrs. Howard-Kongolo says, "Kids will come in the morning to the library and check out four or five of the stories at a time. Then come back around lunch time and check out the next volumes of the story."

The Manga collection consists of graphic stories in which there are multiple volumes in each story. Essentially, each volume is a new part of the story. They are the same story with individual interpretations of it incorporated together. Each volume usually has new characters, which appear with over-exaggerated eyes and a small nose and mouth. Some series only have two volumes of the book because no one has written the next part to the story.

Mrs. Howard-Kongolo used to be an English teacher and understands the controversy over the graphic novels. She mentions, "The stories have a small amount of text and a lot of pictures. It is evident that kids, who do not usually like to read, enjoy reading these novels." However, the plot of the stories is sometimes difficult to understand and requires critical thinking. Some of the novels are versions of traditional high school English classic reads, like *Romeo and Juliet*.

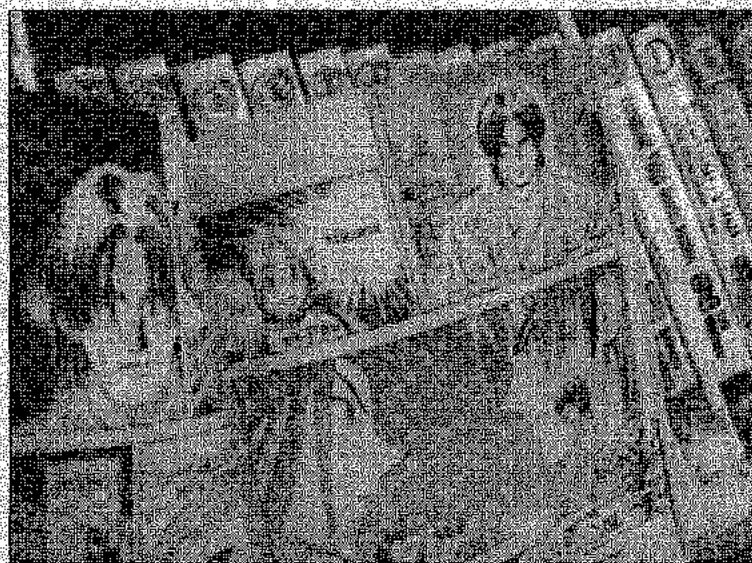


Photo by Sonia Garakyragh

The library now includes an expansive Manga collection that is growing in size and popularity. An excerpt from one of the most popular series is pictured here.

Some teachers think that these throw off a kid's attention to the novel, but they don't realize that reading a different version of a book could lead to a better understanding or a new interpretation of the classic reads. There are many pictures and symbols throughout the story. Kids often analyze the pictures. However, analyzing the symbols is not necessary. Each volume shares the meaning of different symbols, which then appear in different situations throughout the story.

The beginning of this addition to the library began with a request from the kids. Mrs. Howard-Kongolo, a big promoter of the stories, said, "I had to research the stories to figure out which ones were appropriate. It was also difficult because with these stories you cannot just read one volume, so you have to order all of the volumes of each story. I had to call other libraries and get a list sent to me of the most popular novels. I

also accidentally ordered a few inappropriate stories, which turned out to be pornos." These graphic novels are also questioned because of their common sexual storyline. The characters are often described as having sex or doing other sexual things. Therefore, Mrs. Howard-Kongolo states, "These stories are strictly for high-school and up."

It is apparent that more boys check out books from this collection than girls. This may be a result from the many illustrations inside the story or the basic storyline. However, there are stories that are meant for females to read. They are usually love stories with covers that would attract a girl. Mrs. Howard-Kongolo hopes that next year she will be able to host her own Anime-Manga festival. Her intentions are to have people dress up as the characters with intense make-up and costumes that are very much like the ones in the stories. She also hopes to expand the collection so that the series become more popular.

Pulley Center's new "Starr" raises bar

CLARE PALO & TESSA DAMRON
PHOTOGRAPHER & REPORTER

The difficult job of the Pulley Center principal has taken a new spin with a recent addition to the Pulley Center staff. Anne Starr, a newcomer to the Alexandria area, has entered the Pulley Center's hallowed halls and vows to give her best effort to make the Center the best it can be.

The Earl L. Pulley Center provides career and independent life skills training to students with special needs. The staff strives to empower a diverse population of students for transition to a variety of post-secondary options. With just over a hundred students in the school the Pulley Center staff is able to give individual attention to students in need of extra help and support.

At first, Starr was unsure about accepting the Principal position at Pulley. However Starr says, "My personal life brought me here to Virginia. I moved here from Connecticut to be with my fiancé, plus, my daughter is now in college, so it felt right." In her past jobs she filled the position of vice principal for both middle and high school, as well as a special education teacher, which made her desirable in the special education

world. She has worked with students of many different ages and thoroughly seen how each student is special and unique in their own way. "All of the students that I work with are all very interesting. They are all learning normal things that everyone else is learning, but in a very different style," said Starr.

She took many courses and spent her college years getting masters degrees in psychology and special education, not knowing at the time that she would build up her impressive resume for the West Potomac Pulley Center principal position. "I wanted to try something new. Before, I worked as a Special Education teacher, and when I was offered the job as Principal, I was still questioning about whether or not I should take the job. But, now that I have the job, I love it!" Starr said honestly.

Whether she is helping students learn proper work habits and behavior, achieve a degree of independence, or hone their decision-making skills, the staff at the Pulley Center will have Mrs. Starr watching over them and cheering them on. Starr's enthusiasm about her new job and love for children makes the challenging job worth it. "Watching the students at the job sites is the coolest thing in the world; working here is what I love most."



Photo Courtesy of Anne Starr

Pictured here with her daughter, Anne Starr is embracing her position as the new principal of West Potomac's Earl L. Pulley Center, which offers "life skills training to students with special needs."

News Briefs

Deadly tornado ravages Oklahoma:

On Monday May 10th, several tornadoes hit the Great Plains. The violent tornadoes killed five people and injured dozens, leaving damaged property and many without power. The storm went through Oklahoma and Kansas dumping hail as big as baseballs and caused a path of destruction, flipping vehicles on roads and crushing houses/businesses. "The kids and I got in the closet and prayed," said Jami Keyes about 20 miles south Oklahoma. Oklahoma officials had put a weather alert watch alerting people about potential damages however, they predicted severe weather for Tuesday not Monday.

Professional golfer dies suddenly:

Family and friends of Erica Blasberg are shocked by the sudden death of the 25-year-old golfer. Blasberg was found dead on Sunday, May 9 at her home in Henderson, Nevada. The cause of her death is still undetermined, many say it was suicide, however her father believes there is something strange about her death.

Gulf oil spill gushes on and on:

The ongoing oil spill that began on April 20, 2010, with a massive oil well blowout on the Deepwater Horizon offshore oil drilling platform and owned by British Petroleum (BP), situated about 40 miles off the Louisiana coast, is now considered the biggest offshore oil spill in U.S. history. The spill is really more of a geyser as the oil is issuing from an oil gusher about 5,000 feet below the ocean's surface. Though plugging the well is a major priority, since the spill has continued for over a month, the containment and cleanup efforts that are most prominent.

Sleek iPhone4 finally released:

Apple, Inc. recently unveiled the fourth generation iPhone. Chief Executive Steven P. Jobs claims that the 9.3 millimeter-thick phone is the "thinnest smartphone on the planet." Among the exciting new features is the thin steel frame around the iPhone that acts as an antenna. The device also features a higher resolution screen than previous models and a gyroscope that will pave the way for new iPhone games. The battery is larger and more powerful than before, the camera shoots five-megapixels and high-def videos, and a front-facing camera to enable video-chatting. Available June 24, the phone is priced at \$199 for the 16-gigabyte model and \$299 for the 32-gigabyte model.

World Cup 2010 kicks off Friday:

Tourists are already swarming South Africa, arriving from places as diverse as New York, Atlanta, Washington D.C., Paris, London, Frankfurt, and Cairo, in pursuit of soccer. The World Cup, which occurs once every four years, is the zenith of professional soccer and will unfold throughout the following month. The tournament will be launched on Friday with the South Africa-Mexico match in Johannesburg.

Natalee Holloway case reopened:

The 2005 disappearance of 18-year-old Natalee Holloway during a school trip to Aruba has occupied headlines for years. The prime murder suspect is Dutch playboy Joran van der Sloot, but the authorities have long lacked the evidence to arrest him. However, van der Sloot made the shocking confession last week that he had murdered a 21-year-old Peruvian woman whom he claimed was "intruding into [his] private life," according to an ABC News article. Van der Sloot is also currently suspected of various extortion operations, including an attempt to extort \$250,000 from Holloway's family in exchange for information on cause of death and the location of her body. Holloway's father expressed hope that the matter would finally be settled and van der Sloot had taken his last victim.

Lindsay Lohan dons ankle monitor:

Due to Lindsay Lohan's alcohol addiction she was given a bracelet that is an alcohol monitoring device. After missing her hearing last week, Lohan thoroughly enraged the judge. Lohan is facing drunk-driving charges and is forbidden from consuming alcohol. She has been asked to report for weekly drug tests. Lohan could face dire consequences if she fails to follow court orders.

Oh, the places you Congratulations

OUT OF COUNTRY
MONTREAL, QUEBEC,
CANADA
McGill University
Erin Spangler

MILITARY
Air Force
Devon Des Jardins
Jean-Pearce Jenkins
Army
Diego Davis
George Huley
Marine Corps
Nishma Brown
William Harris
Michael Littleton
Brendan Wescott
Navy
Marc Elliot
Cameron Long
Kesewante Nebiye
David Ratcliff

CALIFORNIA
Fashion Institute
of Design and
Merchandising
Jordan Gray

NOT REPORTED/ UNDECIDED

Reginald Abankwah
Jessica Adomako-Jones
Saml Ahmady
Ingrid Amaya Giron
Muhammad Arslan
Samy Azzam
Antony Ball
Edwin Blanco
She'Aira Boston
Irene Brako
Shanoa Byrd
Nathanael Chicas
Sandra Cortez Lazo
Devin Daffin
Carmen DeMar
Mercy Dheming
Mercedes Franklin
Ana Galofre Villa
Randy Green
Evelyn Guardado-Castellon
Charles Gyasi
Britney Hall
Keevyn Hankins

Jocelyn Hernandez
Aleksandr Hyra
Shauntae Jackson
Tom Jalloh
Massah James
Laura Johnson
Darius Lane
Ra'sean Lawhorne
Craig Lemeschewsky
Richard Lewis
Janisha Liverpool
Rufino Maltez
Andrew Manous
Christopher Marion
Ryan Mauldin
Ravynne McFail
Christian McRae-Thompson
Anjelica Newkirk
Diana Nolton
Robert Owusu
Tanya Pensamiento
Emily Pleiming
Julio Quevedo
Marcel Quinn-Parker
Vanessa Quinteno

Natalie Ramos-Guzman
Saher Rashid
Laura Reyes
Estephania Romero Blanco
Imelda Rosales Correa
Robert Ruiz
Ashley Rutledge
Dylan Slattery
Keenan Smith
Kevin Sosa
Stephanie Sosa
Devin Stackhouse
Shameka Thomas
Katelyn Trimper
Juan Varon Rincon
Lakia Wallace
Terrell Ward
Ian Watt
Justin Wiggins
Nuku Wollar
Kyle Wilson
Rebecca Young
Munazza Zaheer
Natalie Zelaya

WASHINGTON
University of Puget
Sound
Maira Fagan

MINNESOTA
University of
Valerie Sk

WYOMING
University of
Wyoming
David Burns

COLORADO
Regis University
Michelle Arileth
University of Colorado
at Boulder
Jaron Drucker
United States Air Force
Academy
Margaret Haley
Colin McConville

ARIZONA
Arizona State University
Michael Brandt
Alysha McDonald

WORKING
John Borders
Ebony High
Kendall Snow
Nirole Talamoni
Kadeem Veney

LOUISIANA
Louisiana State
Zachary J
Andrew
Loyola University
Orleans
Alexander

Advanced
Technology Institute
William Luster
Blue Ridge
Community College
Steven Herren
Bridgewater College
Shawn Lee
Christopher Newport
University
Elsie Adjete-Doku
Mark Bignotti
Samuel O'Neil
Andrew Redding
College of William
and Mary
Jessica Merek
Benjamin Reynolds
Culinary Institute of
Virginia
William Moscati
DeVry University
Clara Castro

George Mason
University
Paxton Aardema
Ramon Castro
Sarah Chaney
Alexandra Crowe
Laura Cunningham
Patricia Higby
Michael Lagana
Jeffrey Lopez
Cody Mortell
Lucy Niedbala
Alexander Pino
Jessica Rubio
Amanda Sin
Daniel Singer
Amina Zafar
Greerminia
Community College
Emily Shockey
Hollins University
Elizabeth Avila
ITT Technical Institute
Carlos Lopez

James Madison
University
Morgan Carter
Coleman Coder
Mathew Cunningham
Maggie Farnin
Francis Gerow
Kevin Glatting
Bryan Jacobs
William Llewellyn
Maxwell Muir
John Murphy
Julia Pei
William Rosenkranz
Timothy Soule
Jeffrey Toth
Nicholas White
Cara Yaworske
Longwood
University
Rachel Browning
Robin Flynn
Mary Baldwin
College

Queen Martin
Marymount
University
Lilly Guerra
Norfolk State
University
Mucktar Renner
Northern Virginia
Community College
Ariane Abcede
Jessica Aguilar
Glen Aguilar Escamilla
Nora Alhassan
Jenny Andrade
Redwan Anwar
Alexander Arevalo
Denia Ayala
Juan Carlos Barrera
Joseph Benitez
Jessica Boxley
Bianca Bradley
Jalen Brooks
Sarah Burley
Carlos Castro

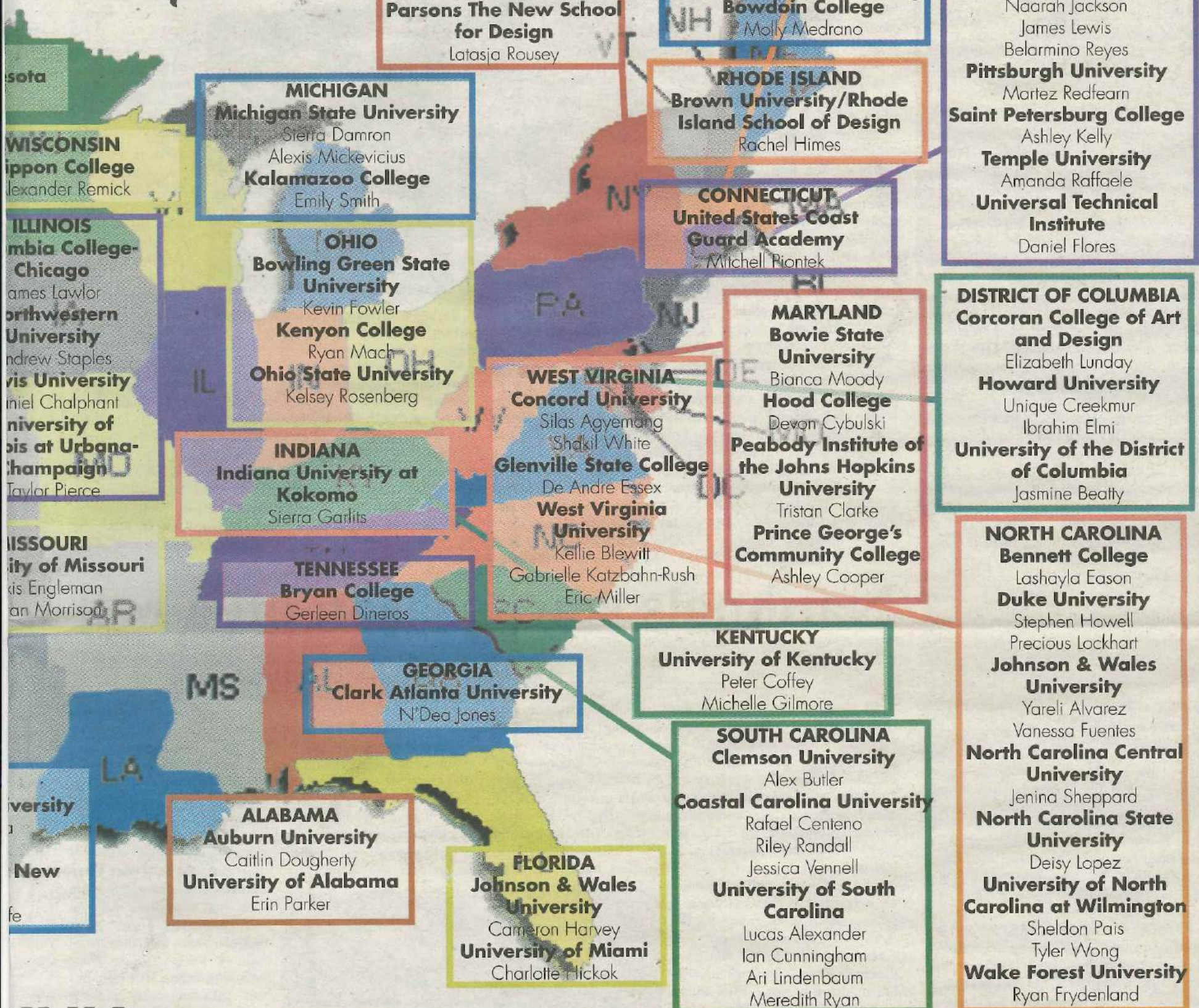
Filberto Castro Espinoza
Ian Chaava
Isabella Clark
Patrick Commons
Caitlin Corcoran
Tamisha Crews
Charles Crouse
Lashonda Day
Kevin Delcid
Mara DeRose
Demonte Dixie
Luz Dominguez
Juan Elizalde Castro
Kiadra Faulkner
Danny Flores
Ashley Fry
Kelli Garcia
Erik Gwynn
Elias Hayredin
Colin Heath
Sade Jennings
La'Shai Johnson
Trenton Jones
Mason Kraut

VIR

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Ak
Go
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Carlos
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i'll go!

Class of 2010



VIRGINIA

Mustafa Salim	Brittini Ervin	Elizabeth Campbell	Commonwealth University	Julianne Bigler
Alhan Samimi Darzi	Chelsea Hicks	Lauren Floyd		Molly Bowdring
Camila Sanchez	Taylor Jasper	Rachel Martin		Kathleen Brady
Maticca Savage	Aminata Kamara	Allison Stevens		Matthew Campbell
Amna Shafiqat	Kwasi Owusu-Agyemang	University of Virginia		Teresa Camthao Dang
Alex Shieh	Chaka Smith			Christina Devine
Nicholas Sigety	Christina Suggs	Michaela Accardi		Alexander Gheesling
Jessie Tamayo	Tiara Suggs	Margaret Berrigan		Casey Jenkins
Christopher Tyson	Radford University	Anthony Kennedy		Waqas Khattak
Kimberly Ulbert	Mallorie Calvert	Marisa Lewis		Brian Linnell
Crystal Umeres	Lauren Ebberts	Isiah Emmanuel Manalo		Gonzalo Mallea
Sandra Vargas-Ortega	Megan Maple	Benjamin Meyer		Paul Marinelli
Alexis Vergara	Linnea Markson	Rachel Munyan		Madalena McNeil
Nynika Walker	Randolph Macon College	Stephen Reynolds		Laina Schneider
Bram Walzl	Maryam Yachnes	Christina Son		Christopher Sidney
Jerri White	Regent University	Peter Stebbins		Susan Sterne
Deborah Winbush	Shannon McCann	Katelyn Woodward		Madison Tindle
Kelsey Younts	Saint Paul's College	University of Virginia at Wise		Virginia Union University
Old Dominion University	Priscilla Boahene	Isaac Aboagye		Monet Oliver
	Abigail Koduah	Matthew Clubb		Westwood College
Kiara Artis	University of Mary Washington	Alfred Jabatty		Ayana Vaughan
Milena Belajic		Aadil Shafiq		Jykeel Little
James Clarke		Virginia		
Cordelia Cranshaw	Eunice Achiaa			

Coffey Talk

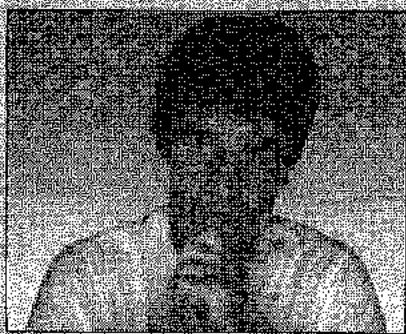


Photo by Peter Coffey/Mac

PETER COFFEY
SPECIAL TO THE WIRE

Running means everything to me. It is difficult to imagine a world without it and it is even harder to imagine my life without it. I spent the first 15 years of my life hating running. Three years ago, however, I grew to love it. The thing about running is that once one gets past the "running sucks" phase it becomes an activity and sport to enjoy. But I am not the only one who enjoys running.

Dick Hoyt and his son, Rick, love to run. They have competed in 65 marathons together, despite the fact that Rick has cerebral palsy, a disorder that debilitates fine motor skills, particularly the control of voluntary muscles. This makes it far more difficult for Rick to compete than many other runners his age. In every single marathon Dick motivates his son to overcome his disability. He never questions Rick's decision to compete because his son told him after their first race, "Dad, when I am running it feels like I am not handicapped." Both father and son find running to be an escape that lifts life's burdens.

When Kevin Strayer's daughter and running partner, an eighth grader, committed suicide, he was devastated. Her lungs were donated to a man in Georgia who was on the verge of death. A few years later the stranger from Georgia met with Kevin and the two decided to go for a run. They ran an 8k together and then a half marathon together. It was like Kevin was running with his daughter all over again.

Running is freedom and it brings people together. On average, 20,000 people flock to Boston every year to run the Boston Marathon. 20,000 people who are willing to put themselves through 26.2 miles of pain, most receive a mere medal. Their love of running, however, outweighs the harshness of the marathon.

Maybe this is a bit biased because I love running. Maybe it's a bit outlandish for me to think I can convince someone that running is not that bad. The fact of the matter is if running is as bad as most people say it is, then why do so many people do it? My answer to that question is freedom. I run because it makes me feel free. When I am running no one is out there telling me what I can or cannot do, it is just me and the open road and nothing else matters. So rather than wasting time in front of a TV screen, try going on a run. Call up a friend and get going.

Basically all I want to do is convince people to try running, regardless of whether they are an athlete or not. Just give it a try before deciding to hate it. But if that first run works out and people realize they love it, they can thank me later.

West Potomac Sports: a year in review

TOMMY FRIEDERICH
CO-SPORTS EDITOR

Between good teams and mediocre teams, West Potomac has had many highlights throughout all of this year's sports seasons. The beginning of the West Potomac sport season was bittersweet. A promising football team started off the season with a dominant win over rival Mount Vernon, but was plagued by injuries and a patriot district filled with championship caliber teams.

The team finished 2-8 with their second win coming on homecoming night against Washington and Lee. On the other hand of the bittersweet season, the Cross Country team qualified for states and finished a successful season. The team was lead by seniors Peter Stebbins and Peter Coffey. The girls' team was lead by sophomore Dale Lescher and senior Julianne Bigler. At states, the boys' team finished ninth, and the girls' team finished third.

Lescher commented, "States was so special for our team. We really wanted to do well for our coach, Beeby, and I think we achieved that. It was memorable with everyone there and such a great finish to the season." Senior Catie Liebeck, a golfer for West Potomac also made states and was very competitive. "I had a great season but I believe I could have done better at states, but there's always next year."

The winter sports season was one to remember in West Potomac history especially for the basketball program. With a mediocre to good regular season, the Wolverines played lights out through district play and eventually beat W.T. Woodson for the district championship. "Winning

the championship is something I will never forget and will cherish as memories for the rest of my life," said small forward junior Karl Grabbi. The team eventually was knocked out in regionals against Chantilly. Another West Potomac team that flourished during the winter was the winter track team that feed off their amazing cross country fall season.

The team was lead once again by the Stebbins and Coffey along with Bigler and Lescher. Along with usual stars another runner that had a great season was juniors Mark Hanak and Chris Dynes. "Even though it's really cold out during the

season, our team was very strong again. On both the girls and boys side we always found a way to be competitive weather it was sprints, long distance or shot put," said Dynes.

Finally, the spring season was West Potomac's all around best sporting season. The softball team was atop the district for the year and have recently made it onto regionals.

Sophomore Danielle McHugh commented on their great season, "We had an awesome season, I wish our team could have beat South County but even with those losses are team did great, we have a lot to work forward for in the future."

Another team that had a great season was the girls' lacrosse team that had an average record at 4-7 but that was great considering the injury to some of the teams top such as junior Adrienne Hampton. Also, West Potomac girls' lacrosse has a lot to look forward for because the JV girls' team had an undefeated record going 12-0.



Photo by Jessie Dartooz

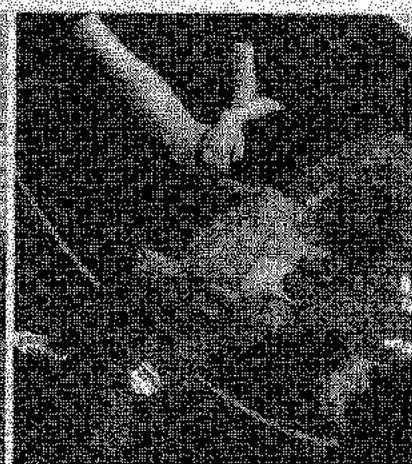


Photo by Tommy Friederich

The players of the sport teams at West Potomac demonstrated their skills on the field at all of their games, matches, or meets.

Nationals start season on a roll

JOSH BELANGER
ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

The Montreal Expos moved their franchise to Washington in 2004, and since the move the Washington Nationals have failed to make any noise in the playoff race or to even win games. Last year before the All-Star game, the Nationals were on pace to have the worst record in Major League history. The Nationals have also not had a winning record past the month of April, since the debut in 2005. The overall record for the Nationals in their five year existence is 343-466 and they have had three different managers. This season however, has been different for the Nationals, they have a winning record and as of right now, tied for second place in the National League East, five game behind the Philadelphia Phillies. The Nationals are led by All-Star third baseman Ryan Zimmerman, who has made eight home runs and is batting a solid .322. However, it has been the supporting cast that has been really winning games for the Nationals. Guys like Ivan Rodriguez, who lead team with a .336 batting average and Nicer Morgan who lead the team in hits with 38. Adam Dunn has also contributed well with his team high eight homeruns. "Every night someone seems to come up big in a new way. Either a diving catch from Willie Harris or a big homerun by Ryan Zimmerman. The Washington Nationals began their season with everybody has contributed in a very impressive winning streak."

commented senior Ian Cunningham. "The Nationals are actually a good team this year, which is a surprise." The pitching has been a different story as well, with veteran Livan Hernandez carrying the young rotation. Hernandez has the third best Earned Run Average (ERA) with a 1.42 and leads the team in innings pitched. Scott Olsen has also been a very dominant starter who nearly threw a no-hitter early this month. Olsen has 31 strikeouts and head coach Jim Riggleman looks to him to be the future for the Nationals, along with prospects like pitcher Stephen Strasburg. Matt Capps and the bullpen have also stepped late in games. Capps has been perfect in his save attempts, coming through on fifteen of fifteen attempts and reliever Tyler Clippard

has seven wins and 31 strikeouts, which is best on the team.

The team chemistry has also been a huge part of their success. Centerfielder Justin Maxwell told the *Washington Post* recently that "the whole clubhouse atmosphere is way better than it was last year. It's just the personalities that we have. It's a lot more fun coming to the ballpark every day." The Nationals have really come together as one big family, and in result has posted a solid record and has put them in good position to make a run for the postseason. "They probably won't make the playoffs but to see them compete and try to go on a run would be fun to see. My Phillies need some competition," said senior David Burns.

The biggest part of the Nationals success this season is by far been the "want" factor. For the past couple of years

the Nationals have been the door mat for the National League. Teams would walk all over them and they have been finishing in last place for a long time. This year has been different, after picking up some new key players, the Nationals are now more motivated for a change and for a winning season.

Even if the Nationals do fall out of this season and end up in last place again, I think it is safe to say that the future for the Nationals is very promising. Strasburg has been dominating in the minors throwing twenty innings of shutout baseball. Strasburg's appearance in the Major Leagues is one of the most anticipated debuts in Major League Baseball history.

Also, with the number one draft pick this summer, most Nats fans hope they can draft teenage phenom Bryce Harper. "Strasburg and Harper as a pitcher-catcher combination would be sick," said Nick Cordone. Cordone and everybody else have gone along with the hype that Harper can be a future super star in the red and white. Other young stars like Desmond and even Zimmerman make for the Nationals future to be very exciting and maybe a future championship up the road. There is some controversy that Harper might play right field because of his stellar arm. "Anywhere Harper plays, I believe he will have a huge impact on the team," said sophomore Casey Hagan.

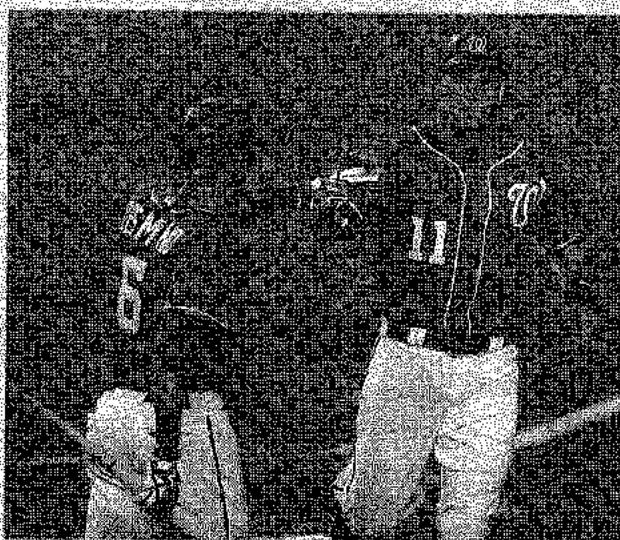


Photo courtesy of Harry Walk/MCT

Must Watch
NBA FINALS

Lakers vs. Celtics
Tuesday June 15, Game 6

(If Necessary)

Students seek out summer job opportunities

SARAH HOLLOWAY
SPECIAL TO THE WIRE

The summer is what most students dream about all school year long: the sun, beaches, pools, and just some good downtime. However, for many kids, this will be the year they hear the dreaded words spill from their parent's lips, "Go find a job." It is summer, no one wants to work all day and miss the fun in the sun. Getting a job for the summer does have one perk, cash money. For rising college students (and pretty much anyone) those two words can be life-altering. Having a job as a high school student can teach responsibility and life skills, and can sometimes even help to choose a career path. Without getting too far ahead of myself, let me just confirm that a job can be serving at a restaurant, working at the grocery store, paying, non-paying, camp counselor, volunteering, anything! To help the students of West Potomac here are a few jobs around the area and some tips to finding the right one.

Nanny or sit for kids in the neighborhood: post some flyers and watch as the phone calls come flooding in. A lot of parents need a sitter in the summer because while school is out, work continues for most working adults. Just be sure you can handle children and are willing to play hide-and-go-seek, a lot.

Volunteer at a local camp: in the immediate area, Fauquemont Preschool on Fort Hunt Road runs a camp as well as Burgundy Farms School off of Telegraph. Most of these places require their counselors to be of a certain age,

but they usually pay their instructors well.

The classic and never out of style: The Variety Store in Hollin Hall Shopping Center has a history of hiring West Potomac students; that goes for a variety of stores in the Hollin Hall Shopping Center.

For the "Pool Rats": Life guarding is a great job for a solid summer tan, long days at the pool, and servicing the community while getting paid. If life guarding seems too weighty, most pools hire swim coaches, landscaping help, and even front desk workers.

Advertise your own company: No one wants to do landscaping in the summer when it is hot, humid, and muggy out. Advertise a lawn mowing, weed cutting, or plant watering service and get paid by neighbors for what you do for free at home.

Mamma's Kitchen: is the newest hot-spot restaurant in the area offering its reasonably priced Greek and Italian food. It also holds a record for most West Potomac workers.

Apply for a restaurant job here or any other restaurant in the area, just be sure you can handle the heat before you get in the kitchen.

Vacation spots and tourist attractions: They require a lot of help and staff during the summer while people across the U.S. are traveling. Knowing this, living in the heart of Virginia, next door to D.C., and a hop-skip and a jump away from Old Town, there are opportunities waiting to be taken.

If all fails: If every single job in the Metropolitan area has been swiped, there is not shame in setting a lemonade stand up in the neighborhood. Who does not love a cold glass of lemonade on a hot summer day?



Photo courtesy of MCT Campus

Babysitting children is fantastic way to make cash during the summer.

Facebook interferes with relationships

JACK KING
SPORTS EDITOR

Facebook is currently the reigning social networking site on the planet. Most high school students cannot get through the day without updating their status, writing on someone's wall, or just checking to see if anyone has written on theirs. With the power that Facebook has on most of the world's population, it is very likely that the site could influence the things that people do, especially from a relationship standpoint. Could it be possible for people to get into a romantic relationship by simply changing their relationship status on Facebook?

When one finds oneself on Facebook "stalking" other people, one nearly always clicks on the info tab on the person's profile and often the first thing one looks at is that person's relationship status. When one sees the words, "In a relationship" or "In a relationship with..." it can be very disappointing. Some people even take it to the next level and set their relationship status to "engaged" or "married," whether it is an actual relationship or not. With a growing number of people in relationships, it is more likely that people will strive to be in a romantic relationship. "Once a lot of people and their friends start to get into relationships and change their relationship status on Facebook, then of course, they are going to feel pressured to get in a relationship so they can follow along with everyone else" said sophomore Sofie McMullen. The combination of friends getting into relationships over Facebook and the overall influence the social networking site has on everyday people; it is likely that a lot of people could be pressured into relationships so they can change their relationship status on Facebook. "People put way too much value into Facebook relationship statuses," said McMullen.

Some people do not get the chance to be in a

relationship. A given profile may list the person as either "in a relationship with..." or "married to..." a casual girlfriend or "bro."

When asked why she thought that some people listed themselves in a relationship on Facebook with a friend, sophomore Celest Coley said, "I think some people do it just so they don't have to put a check by 'single' on Facebook, whether it's just a friend or your actual boyfriend or girlfriend."

However, some people disagree and think that changing their relationship status on Facebook really does not matter and does not have any real value. Sophomore, Rachelle Husband has a boyfriend but does not indicate it on Facebook. "The relationship status on Facebook isn't anything of value," said Husband. "Some people may want to change their relationship status, but personally I don't think it's a big factor or that it really matters at all." Sophomore, Evan Jenkins is another student that believes that relationship statuses on Facebook are not important and of little value. "I have a girlfriend and she wanted to change our relationship status but I told her I didn't

want to because it's not like we need to announce to the world that we're dating or anything," said Jenkins.

There is no reason to be in a relationship just so people can change their relationship status on Facebook. The entire point of being in a relationship is so people can get to know and spend time with someone that you care about. Unfortunately, the monster that Facebook is, it has seemed to change the way people think about relationships as a whole. The more people who are listed as in a relationship on Facebook, then the more others are going to strive to look the same. After all, "It's not official until it's on Facebook."



Photo by Anna Dreyfuss

Relationship statuses on Facebook have changed the outlook on student relationships.

Green is the new tan: 10 summer activities

CAMILLE DiPOLCO
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

That a simple six-letter word can summon so much meaning in two syllables is impressive, but the word "summer" does just that. Equated with longer, hotter days, trips to the beach, and above all no school, summer is wished by students across the board. However, it can be altogether too easy to be wasteful of energy, especially with the prevalence and convenience of air conditioning. This summer, why not resolve to scrimp, save, and reduce your carbon footprint as much as possible? As far as summer goals go, it is one to be proud of. Read on for ten practical and simple "green" summer activities that anyone can accomplish.

Camping: Rather than take an expensive vacation or cross-country road trip, return to nature and try a tent. Not only will it cut down on pollution and save money, but it can be fun, too. Everyone loves a good hotdog and marshmallow roast over an open campfire and the sensation that comes with sleeping under the stars. Avoid campground fees and pitch a tent in your backyard to be even more "green." Just don't forget the bug spray.

Picnic: With so many great parks nearby, it is a waste *not* to have a picnic. Pack a healthy lunch and walk or bike to a park with friends, or even host the picnic in your backyard. Avoid littering, and you can enjoy a peaceful meal in the sun with friends. A picnic seems to far outweigh a starchy, unhealthy meal at a fast food joint under unflattering fluorescent lighting.

Backyard Sports: Instead of paying the exorbitant green fees at the country club or driving to the batting cages, why not try a backyard sport? Choices abound with favorites like badminton, croquet, and the tried and true favorite game of catch. The exercise and fresh air is good for you, and it's all free.

Gardening: Ever notice how much more delicious those farmer's market vegetables are than the supermarket variety? Homegrown food tastes better, so starting a garden is a perfect summer activity. Besides reaping the reward of delicious tomatoes, cucumbers, and whatever else you plant, your garden will help reduce the amount of trips you make to the grocery store, will impress people, and you could even get a tan while tending it.

Reuse: Instead of rushing out to stock up on the latest summer fashions, try reusing some of your winter wardrobe. High-waist jeans can easily be converted into comfy cut-off shorts while old t-shirts are perfect for wearing on the way to the pool. After all, who wears much besides a swimsuit in July anyway?

Smoothies: Everyone loves a good smoothie run, but wasting all that gas for one quick fix is a bit wasteful. It is far more cost-effective and instantly gratifying to make your own smoothies at home. Look up some recipes online and combine fruits, juice, yogurt, or whatever else you want in a blender. Rather than spending five dollars on one smoothie, you can easily make enough to share with friends in a fraction of the time it would have taken to drive to the smoothie joint in the first place.

Library: Quit paying those exorbitant movie admissions fees. All the story line you can take is waiting for you at the library, and guess what - checking out books is free. There's virtually no limit on how many books you can check out and it is impossible to put a price on expanding your literary horizons. The library itself is something to take advantage of - it has free air-conditioning and wireless internet access all day.

Thermostat: The difference of a few degrees probably seems trifling, but it can actually have major impact on the environment. Every degree that you turn down the heat or turn up the air conditioner saves about three to four percent of heating or cooling costs, respectively. By adjusting your thermostat by two degrees year-round, you can save approximately 2600 pounds of CO₂ a year.

Tire Pressure: Strange as it seems, slight variations in tire pressure can affect your car's gas mileage monumentally. By insuring that your tires are properly inflated you can improve your gas mileage by 3% - which means you can make it to and from school with less trips to the gas station in between. Every saved gallon of gas equals 20 pounds of CO₂ emissions.

Power Strip: Technology is moving forward at rapid rates and the inundation of devices like cell phones, gaming consoles, and iPods shows no signs of slowing. However, by plugging all your appliances, X-boxes, cell phone chargers (pretty much anything with a cord) into a power strip your energy use will be 60 to 80 percent more efficient. Of course, when you aren't actually using these devices, turn them off and unplug them.

ENTERTAINMENT

A timeless love story... ruined

NORRIS BROOKS
NEWS EDITOR

It is a timeless story of true love. William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* has inspired people throughout time to follow their hearts and believe in destiny. It is also the premise for the film *Letters to Juliet*. The movie's story centers around Sophie Hall, played by Amanda Seyfried (*Mean Girls*, *Dear John*, *Jennifer's Body*), an American journalist who is traveling to the city of Verona, Italy with her fiancé Victor, played by Gael Garcia Bernal (*The King*, *I'm with Lucy*, *Babel*).

While in Italy, Sophie stumbles upon a long-lost love letter tucked into the wall beneath the balcony of the fictional Juliet's house. The letter is addressed to Juliet herself and asks for advice about true love. In 1957, Claire Smith, played by Vanessa Redgrave (*Atonement*, *Julia*, *Mary Queen of Scots*), wrote to Juliet for guidance about the love of her life, Lorenzo Bartolini. As Sophie reads the letter, she feels a connection to Claire and urges her to reunite with the man of her dreams. Sophie's fiancé is preoccupied with finding Italian wine for his new restaurant, so Sophie feels free to accompany Claire (now an elderly woman) and Claire's grandson, Charlie, played by Christopher Egan (*Kings*, *Everwood*, *The Prince*), on the search for Lorenzo. Along the way, Sophie and Charlie fall for each other.

The minute Seyfried appeared on screen, it was clear that the movie was going to be filled with sappy looks and a contrived plot. Sometimes a predictable story can still be worthwhile if the experiences of the characters are believable. Unfortunately, this was not the case in *Letters to Juliet*. When Sophie and Victor first arrive in Verona, he pays no attention to her, foreshadowing their "heartbreaking" end. From that moment on the movie delivered only what was expected. Every problem was easily handled; every situation was resolved perfectly. Without any real conflict, the movie seemed to drag. It was difficult not to nod off in the long pauses between scenes. Perhaps audiences were caught up in the feel-good of the movie because the storyline was constantly shifting

and never found its rhythm.

Luckily, the character of Charlie brought comic relief. His sarcasm and exaggerated mannerisms were the highlight of the film. His character's responses to Sophie were spontaneous and full of humor. Even though it was obvious that their rocky relationship would turn into something more, their journey together was worth watching. In fact, the saving aspect of the film was the instant chemistry between Sophie, Charlie, and Claire. The connection between the three main actors popped off the screen and made the overly dramatic story bearable.

Even after one sees *Romeo and Juliet* performed many times, someone can still be intrigued by the relationship of the star-crossed lovers and feel for their tragic end. Although *Letters to Juliet* was inspired by this great play, it did not capture the essence of a true love story or provide the emotional ride.



Photo courtesy of MCT Campus
Sophie Hall (Amanda Seyfried) talks to Claire Smith (Vanessa Redgrave) about reuniting her with her lost love Lorenzo.

Expendables try to "Prove it"

JOSH BELANGER
ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

Every band has their huge hit; Sublime has "Santeria," the Red Hot Chili Peppers has "Fortune Faded," and 311 has "Amber." Each one of these songs either propelled the band to greatness or was a hit that really put them over the top. Now three years after their biggest hit "Down, Down, Down," The Expendables release their fifth album, *Prove It*. With the biggest hits being "Trying to Focus" and "Dance, Girl Dance," The Expendables return with the same old mix between alternative and rock. Now, with top hits like these, The Expendables are one of the premier reggae rock bands around, along with student favorites like Passafire and Reblution.

The Expendables have gained a lot of popularity within the walls here at West Potomac and many students here have enjoyed this new album. "I really like listening to them [The Expendables] when I'm driving in my car or just chilling with my friends," said Spencer Watkins. "They have some good jams." Watkins has become a big Expendables fan since coming to West Potomac.

"I still think their biggest hit is 'Down, Down, Down,' but this new album could come out with a hit just as good," he said before the album came out. Since the debut in May, thousands of people and many students at West Potomac have bought this new track to hear if this could be true. Now after listening to it, Watkins still believes that "Down, Down, Down" is their biggest hit and this album did not live up to his expectations.

Prove It includes 19 songs, however many believe there are only five or so good songs. "I like the album, but there

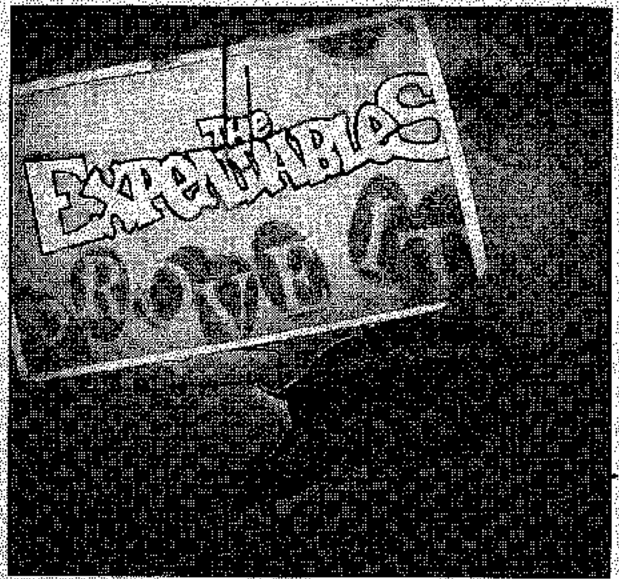


Photo courtesy of MCT Campus

The Expendables came out with their new album *Prove It* on May 11th. The album debuts hits like "Trying to Focus" and "Positive Mind."

are a lot of songs that aren't that good," one Expendables fan said of the album. Watkins is a huge fan but believes that they should have cut the album to a select few to make the album stronger overall.

"I mean, they have a lot of awesome songs, but they have some others that are just awful," said Watkins.

Geoff Weers and the band did a great job creating an album for the fans to enjoy and to attempt to create something better than before, but *Prove It* just does not live up to their previous albums.

"It's tough when you have a great song out because everyone expects your new music to be even better," commented Todd Ferri.

The Expendables tried to prove to the world they could release an album that is just as good as the previous ones, but it just did not make the cut. *Prove It* is still a great summer album, though, and will get you in the mood for your summer activities.

Summer movies that will make a splash



All photos courtesy of MCT Campus

EMILY GRIFFIN
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

A variety of movies will be released into theatres this summer. Many of them will either be talked about for either the superior skills or laughed at for the horrid acting. Either way the movies that will create a big buzz in the month of June are listed here. Here are just a few of the new released ones:

Opening June 11, 2010:

The A-Team tells the story of a group of soldiers who are convicted of a crime they did not commit and they attempt to prove their innocence. A-list actors such as Bradley Cooper and Jessica Biel star in this film.

The Karate Kid is a remake of the 1984 classic *The Karate Kid*, in which a young boy moves to Beijing with his mother and discovers his passion of martial arts. Famous martial artist Jackie Chan and actor Jayden Smith play the main characters in this movie.

Coco Chanel & Igor Stravinsky shows the regard for the love of the theater and how the theater can change people. This film has international actors such as Mads Mikkelsen and Anna Mouglalis.

Winter's Bone is about one girl's search for the truth behind her father's crime and she must find her father in order to save her family. Jennifer Lawrence and John Hawkes star in this motion picture.

Opening June 18, 2010:

Jonah Hex is a bounty hunter who is trying to save everyone by finding his worst enemy and stopping him from unleashing Hell. Actors Josh Brolin, John Malkovich and Megan Fox star in this adaption from the Western comic books.

Toy Story 3 continues with Andy leaving for college and leaving all of his toys behind. The fate of Woody and Buzz will be determined in this third installment. Voices for the characters were provided by Tom Hanks, Tim Allen, Jodi Benson, Michael Keaton and Joan Cusack.

Cyrus is about the struggles of adult relationships and the obstacles that one must overcome to find true love. Famous comedians Jonah Hill and John C. Reilly star in this romantic comedy with a twist.

I Am Love tells the story of a family who struggles through the hardships of love affairs and keeping their family name intact. This drama is produced in Italy and stars Tilda Swinton and Flavio Parenti.

Killer Inside Me tells the story of a small town's Deputy in Texas going on a shooting rampage and killing anyone and everyone. This killer movie stars Casey Affleck as the town's massive killer Deputy.

Opening June 25, 2010:

Knight and Day is a romantic comedy with a twist when a woman finds herself leaving the country with her international spy boyfriend. Tom Cruise and Cameron Diaz put their best foot forward in this upcoming action flick.

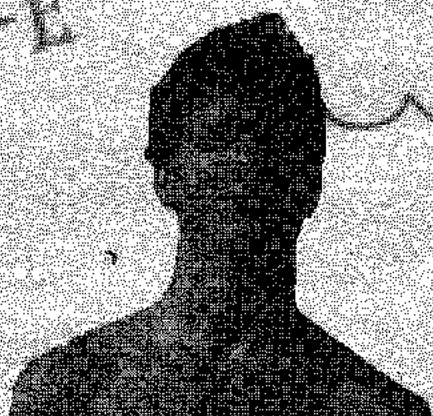
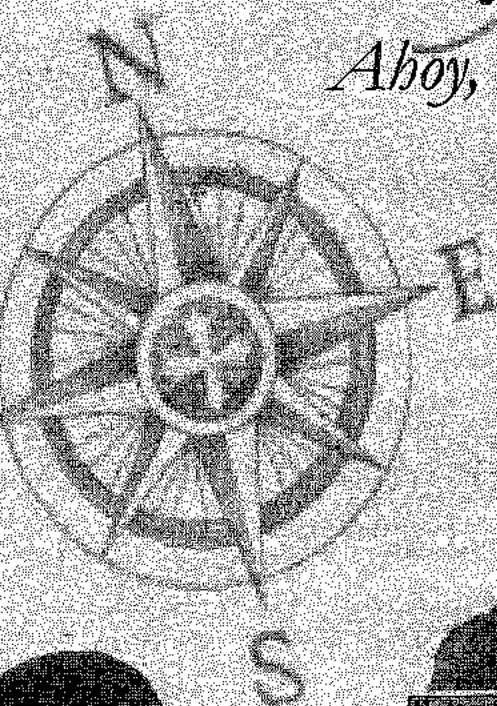
Grown Ups portrays a group of men dealing with the issues of growing up and wanting to be kids for the rest of their lives. Funny men, Adam Sandler and Chris Rock star in this epic comedy.

Opening June 30, 2010:

The Twilight Saga: Eclipse is the major blockbuster hit about the love triangle between Isabella Swan, Edward Cullen and Jacob Black that continues in the third installment of *The Twilight Saga*. Famed actors Kristen Stewart, Robert Pattinson and Taylor Lautner star in this blockbuster movie.

"X" marks the spot

Ahoy, matey! Wire seniors get ready to set sail.



Peter Coffey
Position: Sports Editor
Years on staff: 2
Will remember: Tripping and falling while handing out papers
Quote: "Follow me on Twitter."



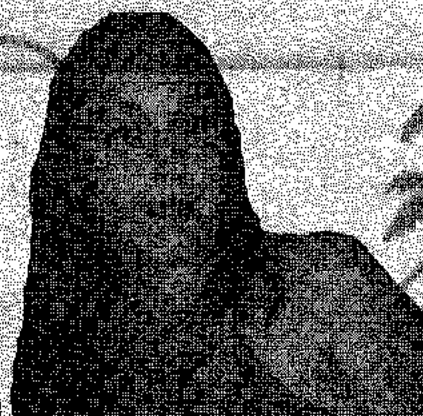
Gwen Fisher
Position: Copy Editor
Years on staff: 2
Will remember: Good times in Journalism I with Bryan and I near food excursions with staff members
Quote: "Be curious, not judgmental!" - Walt Whitman



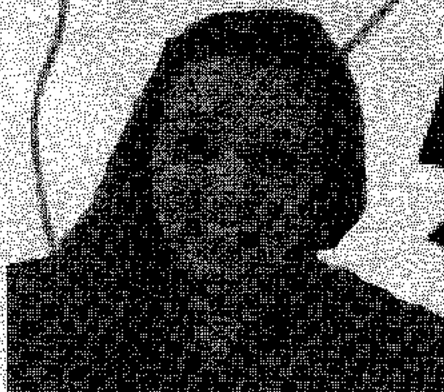
Katie Woodward
Position: Reporter
Years on staff: 1
Will remember: Paying homage to Gianni DiFolco everyday
Quote: "High school has taught me a lot about life, but I still can't figure out how paper beats rock (I mean really, what the heck?)."



Sarah Holloway
Position: Reporter
Years on staff: 1
Will remember: Ian and Josh watching *North Hard* in class
Quote: "Language is gone upon the lips." - Virginia Woolf



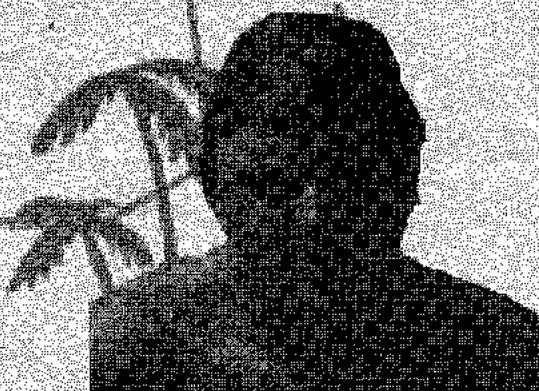
Emily Smith
Position: Copy Editor
Years on staff: 3
Will remember: Singing by my beloved people Alex Fabrizio and Emily On the
Quote: "Why is ITHN blocked?"



Alex Fabrizio
Position: Focus Editor
Years on staff: 1
Will remember: Annoying everyone whenever I'd listen to music loudly in Rm. 416



Alex Brucellite
Position: Entertainment Editor
Years on staff: 1
Quote: "I'll make it to the moon, even if I have to crawl!" "Seat Tissue" Red Hot Chili Peppers



Bryan Jacobs
Position: Style Editor
Years on staff: 3
Will remember: Lunch breaks during layout with Afab and flirting with Mady Millar
Quote: "The Wire is the best. Who can't love a group of liberals in a small room together? Maybe the BIC's, but hey, it's all in good fun. Long live Ms. Z and the Style section."

PEOPLE

Two different personalities work to complete a common task

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LUCAS ALEXANDER
SPECIAL TO THE WIRE

For four years, Michaela Accardi has excelled at West Potomac High School in many activities, as well as in academics. Michaela Accardi can be recognized for being extremely hard working and determined, but she is also so much more. This is evident in all aspects of her life. Next year Accardi will continue her education at the University of Virginia, a fact that shows just how hard she has worked through high school. Accardi has been extremely successful in balancing her school work and social life, a fact that she attributes to the influence of her mom and the fact that she is able to multitask very well.

Accardi has established a reputation as the diligent, hard working, and intelligent girl, and she herself even recognizes that she may have "overworked [her]self at times." Regardless of how people, or even she views herself, her determination has certainly paid off, and through it she has learned a lot about herself. "I learned from doing gym-

nastics at a young age that time is valuable and you should use whatever little time you have wisely. Over time though, I've learned that "wisely" can mean doing work, while also creating memories with your friends and family," Accardi said.

When asked how she has been influenced over the past years, she credited, "Several teachers including Ms. Kelly Pierre and Ms. Erin Sikes, along with my mother" as inspiring her to become "a strong, passionate woman." "Over the past four years, my friends have taught me a lot of lessons, and while friends may come and go, these lessons will always follow me." These teachers and others, as well as friends, have taught Accardi how to balance her life well and help define who she is as a person.

Accardi's life started when she was born in Maryland, and was soon followed by moving to Germany with her family when she was young. While she does not remember much before moving back to the States, it has always been an idea of hers to go back to Germany or another country to experience that kind of lifestyle.

While she may have built up this reputation fairly, there is a lot more to Accardi than meets the eye. Over the years, she has built up a wide variety of things to her resume, including becoming Editor-In-Chief of the school paper, joining leadership and becoming part of the SGA, and taking classes like Environmental Science to learn about things that are important to her, such as the

safety of our planet. Often overlooked, she also has a care-free side to her that comes out around her friends that a lot of people do not get to see.

Accardi is a very caring and nice person, who "would like to influence public policy in some way, whether that may be writing for a magazine or working with a government agency." She has also mentioned ideas of joining the Peace Corps and living a life trying to help people.

She summed up her experiences in high school perfectly when she said, "Looking back, I can't believe how hard I worked at times. I definitely think I was a committed and hardworking student, but more importantly I've learned a lot about myself and made some genuine friendships which I hope will continue after high school."

She defines her personality as "caring, motivated, and passionate." Her friends would agree with this statement. "I definitely wear my heart on my sleeve, and because of that I am known as the 'mother' of my group of friends. Whether that is a good thing or a bad thing, it shows the type of person that I am. Somehow, I motivate myself to work hard and put effort into every task I begin, that is just something that always has been a characteristic of mine and I can't really explain why." Accardi has the drive to be successful, and everyone at West Potomac knows she will be in the future.

computer access at home. "I couldn't imagine doing my homework without the use of my laptop. That's why I feel that it is very important to have property. Apparently, companies and individuals involved with human amount of personal data is transmitted in cyberspace, yet the NCSA reports

MICHAELA ACCARDI
SPECIAL TO THE WIRE

To some, senior Lucas Alexander is a quiet student sitting in the back of a classroom; to others he is a typical rowdy teenager, but to avid readers of the Wire, he is known for his controversial column in the opinions section. Countless times, he never fails to cause readers to nod their heads in approval, scoff with disdain, or disagree wholeheartedly. However, when one gets to know Alexander, they will surely realize he is unlike any other.

Alexander described himself as "opinionated," "realistic," and "logical" and these words are right on target. Around friends, family, and teachers, he displays these qualities openly. However, these harsh words hardly define a person. Growing up in a military family largely affected the person Alexander has become today. "My dad was in the military, so we moved around a little. I was born in Monterey, California and moved to San Diego when I was two. When I was five, I moved to Hawaii, and when I was seven I moved here," said Alexander. Due to these locations he lived in at a young age, Alexander has come to find beaches and tropical places a source of comfort.

Even though Alexander no longer lives in these unique locations, growing up in Alexandria allowed him to develop friends that he still has today. One of Alexander's long term best friends, senior Tyler Wong said, "Luke and I have been bros for years. Ever since fourth grade we've competed in everything from basketball to lacrosse. I think we bring out the best in each other. He's the Diane Sawyer to my Katie Couric."

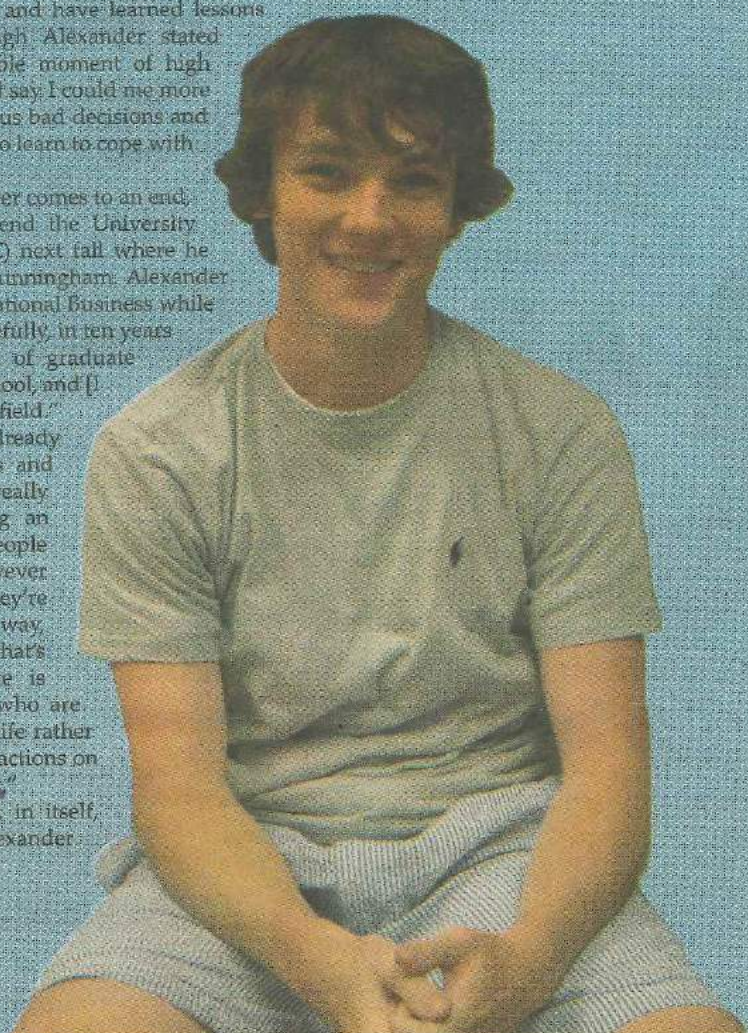
The friends Alexander made characterized his experience at West Potomac. "Overall, I'd have to say [high school] has been a great experience, despite all the hardships, because of the great friendships I've built throughout my time here." His friends, including Wong, and seniors Ian Cunningham and

Jeffrey Toth, have joined him through the "ups and downs" of high school and have learned lessons along the way. Though Alexander stated that he had no definable moment of high school, he said, "I would say I could be more defined by my continuous bad decisions and different ways I've had to learn to cope with problems."

As his high school career comes to an end, Alexander plans to attend the University of South Carolina (USC) next fall where he will be rooming with Cunningham. Alexander plans to major in International Business while at USC, and said, "Hopefully, in ten years I will have gotten out of graduate school, probably law school, and [I will] be working in that field."

While Alexander has already developed future plans and goals, he said, "I am not really concerned with leaving an impact on the world. People can take my actions however they want [to], and if they're impacted in a positive way, then that's great but what's more important to me is staying loyal to those who are most important in my life rather than trying to base my actions on what other people think."

And that statement, in itself, explains exactly who Alexander is.



In a March meeting with the Student Government Association (SGA), Principal Clifford Hardison announced

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