



Students reflect on their current and their previous relationships.

Monday, March 1, 2010

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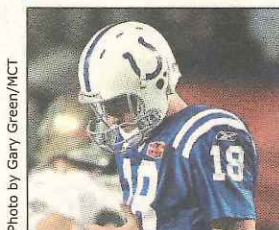
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Are gender roles influenced by parents and peers or by society?



Learn ways to prevent dating violence between teens and others.



How do the stars sitting out before the Superbowl affect the teams?



Learn about musically inclined students who formed a band.



New artist Ke\$ha creates a stir with her debut album, *Animal*.



Learn about two seniors who really enjoy each other's company.

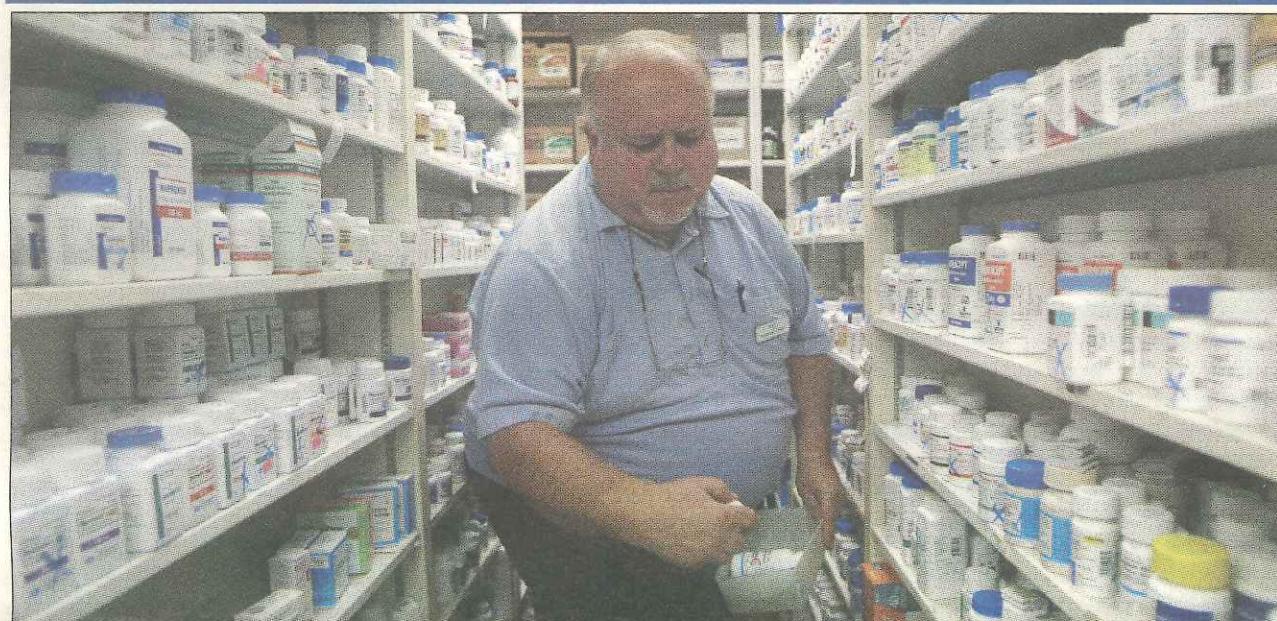


Photo by Gary Oppenheimer/MCT

Some students believe that prescription drugs are safer to use than street drugs because they are sold in stores, as shown above. However, the consequences for using these drugs remain the same.

## Prescription drugs hook students

KATIE WOODWARD  
REPORTER

The December 20 death of Brittany Murphy has brought light to what experts consider to be a "significant emerging problem in the United States." Prescription drug abuse has become a national concern in the last few years as statistics begin to reflect a rise in the non-medical use of many household medicines. Although inside sources say Murphy's death is unrelated to the ten different drugs found in her home at the time of death, there has been much speculation that the circumstances reflect those of what some now call "Generation Rx."

The most commonly abused classes of prescription drugs are pain medications such as OxyCotin and Vicodin, anxiety and sleep disorder medication such as Valium and Xanax, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder medication such as Ritalin and Adderall. One anonymous student said, "I heard that ADHD medication makes you less hungry, so I started taking [Adderall] every few days to help me lose weight."

There are serious health risks related to abuse of prescription drugs. A single large dose of prescription or over-the-counter (OTC) painkillers or depressants can cause breathing difficulty that can lead to death. Stimulant abuse can lead to hostility or paranoia, and even have the potential for heart system failure or fatal seizures. Even in

small doses, depressants and painkillers have subtle effects on motor skills, judgment, and ability to learn.

The abuse of OTC cough and cold remedies can cause blurred vision, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, coma, and even death. Many teens report mixing prescription drugs, OTC drugs, and alcohol. Using these drugs in combination can cause respiratory failure and death.

In a 2008 study by NIDA, 15.4 percent of 12th-graders reported using a prescription drug non-medically within the past year. This category includes amphetamines, sedatives/barbiturates, tranquilizers, and opiates other than heroin. Vicodin continues to be abused at "unacceptably high levels."

Teens report using prescription drugs simply to experiment, while others say they want to show that they are "immune" to side effects others may experience. Some teens will experiment and stop, while others may continue to use the drugs occasionally without any significant problem. One student said, "My brother takes Adderall for his ADD; I took it one day before a test and have been using regularly since." Certain groups are at higher risk of becoming dependent on prescription drugs, in particular those with a family history of substance or alcohol abuse, depression, and/or fatigue. The common denominator for all users however is their easy access prescription drugs; the majority of those who reported abusing prescription drugs say they took them from a medicine cabinet in their

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## Google hacked by the Chinese government

NORRIS BROOKS  
REPORTER

Until recently, the impression most students had of Google was that it was a "cool" company founded by Stanford University grads who created the internet's best search engine, the miracle of Gmail, and provided foosball, video games, and awesome food to its employees. Last December, however, Google ran headlong into the very serious world of cyber security when it discovered China had hacked into its corporate infrastructure and stolen intellectual property. Apparently, companies and individuals involved with human

rights in China were the targets, and the Gmail accounts of many activists in the United States were compromised.

This incident revealed how unsafe the internet can be, and why students need to be more aware of how vulnerable they are when they go online. According to the National Cyber Security Alliance (NCSA), 93 percent of teenagers in the U.S. are online. Students today live in a digital society. They have grown up using the internet extensively for academic reasons, as well as for social networking. Every day an enormous amount of personal data is transmitted in cyberspace, yet the NCSA reports

that only 20 percent of teens said they follow safety measures when sharing personal information on the web.

Given the grave nature of the problem, Fairfax County Public Schools take cyber security very seriously. According to Ms. Zina Facemire, our school's Instructional Technology Specialist, the FCPS Instructional Services created <http://fcpsnet.fcps.edu/is/oiti/InternetSafety/>—a website on the FCPS Intranet concerning Internet Safety. The site states that "in order to help keep our students safe on the Internet, the Virginia General Assembly passed a law in

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## New uses for Twitter

MICHAELA ACCARDI  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

"It [Twitter] is pointless and it's overrated," said junior Erin Eyler.

Like other students, Eyler sees Twitter as a useless device. However, it has recently become valuable to several media outlets as a resource to track the citizens of Haiti.

CNN.com and *TIME* magazine have used live Twitter feeds as quotes in their news articles. "Just about all the lights are out in Port au Prince...people still screaming but the noise is dying as darkness sets," said Richard Morse, a Haitian musician and hotel manager on January 12, as quoted in *TIME* magazine. CNN.com has also created a live Twitter feed to update readers and users. These updates and "tweets" can be viewed at <http://twitter.com/cnnbrk/haiti>.

While Twitter has been critical in gathering donations from citizens worldwide, donations made via text messaging and on iTunes have also been important in collecting money. Rapper Wyclef Jean and the Red Cross asked users to text a number to make a donation which would be added to their cell phone bills. The Red Cross estimated that over three million people were affected by the earthquake on January 12 and initially pledged via Twitter to donate 200,000 dollars to assist the individuals affected by the earthquake.

Students have also participated in donating to the cause largely through text messaging. The Red Cross has even created a text message to be forwarded through Blackberry Messenger. Senior Meredith Ryan has used Blackberry Messenger to donate to the Red Cross. "I think with the amount of people who have Blackberry's today, I am sure it raised a solid amount of money. Whether it was a large or small sum, anything helps the people of Haiti," said Ryan. Those who did not wish to donate through their cell phone bills have also purchased the "Hope for Haiti" album on iTunes. Senior Ryan Mach, after acknowledging the donations made by the album, said, "I'm just glad Haitians finally have access to Beyonce and Coldplay." This album can still be purchased on iTunes for \$7.99.

However, while Twitter has been useful in obtaining and exchanging information, it has proven to be an unreliable media forum at times. According to CNN.com, "Twitter was buzzing Thursday morning with news that several airlines are flying doctors and nurses to Haiti free of charge to help with relief efforts there in the wake of Tuesday's devastating earthquake." These rumors proved to be false, after the American Airlines spokesperson denounced them. In addition, users circulated a rumor that United Postal Service (UPS) would be shipping any package under 50 pounds for free. This rumor was also disputed, on UPS's website, the spokesperson said, "Our own shipping services to Haiti are on hold," due to the lack of communication and transportation access in Haiti.

See Twitter on page 4



Photo by Amy Davis/MCT

Students have used Twitter and text messaging on their cell phones to donate money to Haiti.



## Wii does not solve fitness woes

### Are the days of good 'ol fashioned exercise long gone?

The days of a pickup game of baseball, or a spontaneous football game with neighborhood kids, are numbered.

Where kids used to run around the yard playing T.V. tag, they can now play a tennis match or snowboard right in their own home.

How, one might ask? Why, with none other than the revolutionary gaming system. More specifically, Wii Sports. For \$200 or less on Craig's List, kids do not even need a soccer ball, boat, or skis to do all the things they like. Just pop on the television screen, hookup the Wii game system and take up fencing. Or is it really that simple?

Is a virtual game really equivalent to zooming down the slopes in Utah, taking in the smell of fresh powdered snow and standing atop a mountain bigger than the Empire State Building? Is it really the same as feeling cool blasts of water spray up from under the water board as one holds on for dear life to the boat's rope line? It is not.

Granted, for the average American, it may be as close as they will get to such experiences, given the hard economic times and the income gap. However, the makers of the Wii could be depriving children of more than they intended.

In 2008, the obesity statistics revealed that only one state, Colorado, had an obesity prevalence of lower than 10%. Thirty two states were revealed to have obesity prevalence of 30% or higher. Now one might wonder how this ties

into a Wii fit game. Well, it is as simple as this.

Recently, two Wii sets were given to the West Potomac physical education department to reduce spending on thirty or forty soccer balls, badminton sets, and plastic bats. The questions is, how exactly are kids supposed to learn how to stay fit and play actively if they are learning from a video game? In addition, the solitary nature of the Wii activities allows children to avoid team sports and evade connections that are often made through exercise and outdoor activities.

“However, as for the 58 million overweight, 40 million obese, and 5 million morbidly obese, the Wii has created yet another reason to sit on the couch and gorge while experiencing exercise through the television.”

In a news post written by Brian Braiker, he said “... [The Wii] certainly tries to ensnare your competitive spirit.” Has the world of athletics resorted to the need for a video game to spark competitive spirit? The answer is probably not. There will still be Freddy Adus, Roger Federers, and Kobe Bryants.

However, as for the 58 million overweight, 40 million obese, and 5 million morbidly obese, the Wii has created yet another reason to sit on the couch and gorge while experiencing exercise through the television.

As far as fantastic technologies go, the Wii is revolutionary. “In terms of skill, balance, coordination and agility are important for our functional capabilities, but they don't equate to how fit a person is,” says Cedric X. Bryant, Ph.D., FACSM, chief science officer of the American Council on Exercise (ACE).

## RANTS and Raves

A **RANT** for upcoming SOL testing.

A **rave** for West Potomac Boys Basketball winning the district.

A **RANT** for shoveling snow.

A **rave** for spring sports.

A **RANT** for winter lasting way too long.

A **rave** for the USA beating Canada in men's hockey in the Olympics.

## NHS updates selection process

In regard to the opinions piece written by Emily Smith in the January issue, we would like to clarify the changes being made within the National Honor Society and explain the reasons behind these changes. After the fall admittance, there was a collaborative decision made by the NHS sponsors and the school administration to update the selection process.

Following this year, which can be thought of as a transition period from the old system to the new one, there will only be one selection period in the spring. This will allow more time for students to gain the experience necessary to complete a successful Prospective Member Packet (PMP). The PMP is meant to encourage students to detail a specific activity that has given them the opportunity to demonstrate leadership, character, and scholarship. Previously, students were asked to complete separate, short answer sections related to each tenet. This new essay model is designed to allow students to express their accomplishments fully and avoid vague responses.

Along with the revised PMP, the workshop, which has always been a part of the process, has been redesigned to be more effective. We hope to use this time to explain to prospective members what should be included in a PMP. Additionally, students whose PMP's do not meet the criteria will receive feedback on their PMP after it has been reviewed by the faculty council. These students will be invited to attend a second workshop to hone their submission.

It is our understanding that Fairfax County is looking into standardizing the GPA requirement as a result of the grading scale implemented in the 2009-2010 school year.

As an organization, we hope to include all students that meet the criteria of the National Honor Society. The new selection process will ensure their recognition.

Sincerely,  
The NHS Officers

Maggie Berrigan  
Molly Bowdring  
Sarah Chaney  
Isiah Manalo  
Evan Rajadhyaksha  
Katie Woodward

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

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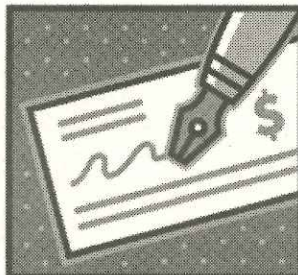
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## Gender roles are taught by society



**EMILY GRIFFIN**  
NEWS EDITOR

Why is it wrong that girls can play with trucks but boys cannot play with dolls? People's behaviors are based on past experiences, social interactions, parenting and various other reasons.

For years, scientists have debated whether or not gender roles, the way one is supposed to conduct themselves based on their gender, are learned or inherited. While many scientists have some information that proves that some parts of gender roles might be inherited, the overall picture is learned. According to faqs.org, "Unlike sexuality, gender roles are imposed from without, through a variety of social influences. Formed during the socialization phases of childhood and adolescence, gender role issues influence people throughout their lives; conflict can arise when someone does not feel at ease with his or her gender role."

Think about it. From day one, if a baby is a boy he automatically receives every possible blue colored item. On the other hand, usually girls are only sent pink colored blankets, clothing, and other materials. When the baby becomes an infant, the parents tend to buy the boys the trucks and the cars, while girls are bought Barbie dolls and kitchen sets. This sets the child's mind up to think that they are supposed to act a certain way. The boys generally think they should be loud, due to the loud sounds the trucks and the cars make. The girls on the other hand, believe they

should look perfect, hence being able to change Barbie's clothes all of the time.

Gender roles are continuously learned throughout one's life, whether one suspects it or not. When the infant's reach the age of five, the boys are given their first toy tool set and the girls are given their first tea set. This teaches them the etiquette that they are expected to show. Most boys will deny playing with Barbie dolls when they were little because of what society has taught them. This is not the same for girls. Most girls do not mind admitting that they played with action figures when they were little. This could be because of a variety of reasons, possibly that society holds higher standards for boys than girls at times.

However, it is not just parents and other adults that influence the gender roles. It is also the media. When has anyone ever seen a man use the Swiffer mop on the television or, for that matter, any cleaning product? It is always a woman doing the cleaning or showing the man how easy it is to clean. Another

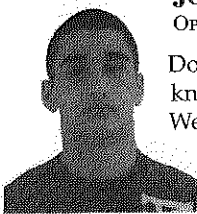
prime example of this is the Mr. Clean commercials. In every commercial thus far, there have only been females doing the cleaning, not any males. No matter where one looks they will be influenced in some way, shape, or form.

Gender roles have been learned from society since the beginning of time. Our society just refuses to change our standards from what they have always been. Our society will most likely never change; there are certain standards for both men and women that will always be made the same.

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“Gender roles have been learned from society since the beginning of time. Our society just refuses to change our standards from what they have always been.”

## Double standards exist for the sexes



**JOSEPH MARINELLI**  
OPINIONS EDITOR

Does the average high school student know anybody that is a "sex offender?" Well, if a student does, they should not be quick to judge the person deemed a sex offender because that title is easier to earn than one would ever think.

In September of 2009, a 26-year-old teacher in London was seduced by her 15-year-old student. She was arrested for having sex with this student and is now currently serving her 15 month sentence in jail. This punishment is clearly unfair and way too harsh for this teacher. The relationship began over coffee, progressed to flirty texts and even a trip to Paris, and finally to a sexually involved relationship. She was arrested when the headmistress heard news of this and called the cops. Goddard was arrested in July 2009 after her house was raided by the police and they found sex toys and fluffy handcuffs. The two also come from completely different backgrounds. Goddard is a small-town type and enjoys things like music and is very religious, while the anonymous 15-year-old student goes to an exclusive school for girls in London. So now the question is: Was the punishment of a 15-month jail sentence too harsh for the teacher?

The punishment was definitely too harsh on Goddard considering the circumstances. Normally any teacher having sex with her young student should be immediately

punished without question, but this case contains many exceptions. First off, the student admitted to initiating the affair, while the teacher even admits to having been pressured by the girl. Now how can a "pedophile" be pressured into a relationship? Some people might even call her a sexual predator, but clearly she is not because the girl pursued the relationship in the first place. The odd pair even plan to continue their relationship when Goddard gets out of jail and the girl turns sixteen, which is the legal age of consent in the U.K. Goddard's life and reputation is now ruined by having her name on a sex-offender registry. Now Goddard must carry this burden wherever she goes, which will change how everyone reacts to her and might even hurt her in the future. Though she should not have

“Normally, any teacher having sex with her young student should be immediately punished without question, but this case contains many exceptions.”

been more responsible and not have had sex with an underage student, the prison sentence would have been enough punishment for the situation. She did not exactly do anything to deem herself the title of sex offender. It is possible that maybe her situation was greeted with less sympathy because she is a lesbian. Whether people like to admit it or not, society acts differently towards gays and lesbians. If the student was a boy, people would have been more understanding because that is much easier to accept, even though that is also still very sick. Goddard also was apparently straight, but had previously been in homosexual relationships. Something must be wrong with the legal system if this woman is getting severely punished to having been pressured by a student into having a sexual affair and the student is not in trouble.

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## LARGE AND IN CHARGE

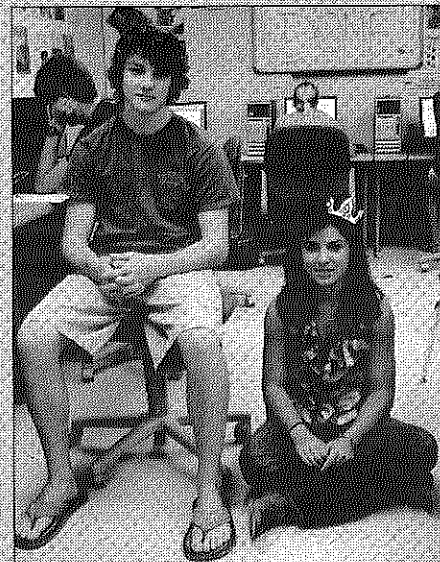


Photo by Megan Haley

**LUCAS ALEXANDER**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

One year in elementary school, we missed a lot of school because of snow. Fairfax County then added about 30 minutes on to the end of each school day in order to make up for all the missed time. What all of the teachers ended up making the kids do, at least in my class, was simply read. The teachers actually did not care what we did however, so we just talked. Teachers were just as unhappy as students that they had to stick around school another half hour to basically babysit kids for a pointless amount of extra time. Even as a 10-year-old kid, there was an awareness that the whole situation was a joke.

The reason for bringing this up is obviously due to the large amount of snow days we have had this year. The question has arisen as to what to do to make up the time missed. Clearly, we have lost some days off, we were supposed to lose Presidents' Day and have lost teacher work days. Other ideas that have come up include adding days to the end of the year and adding time to the end of the day, at some point in the fourth quarter. These ideas are so insanely pointless and a waste, it is actually sad. This has actually just become a way to fill protocol, because the FCPS officials have to realize that using either of those ideas will literally accomplish

“Days that we lost during this time are not required to be made up by the state and future holidays should not be lost due to a time during the year when the state was in enough danger to put everything on hold.”

nothing.

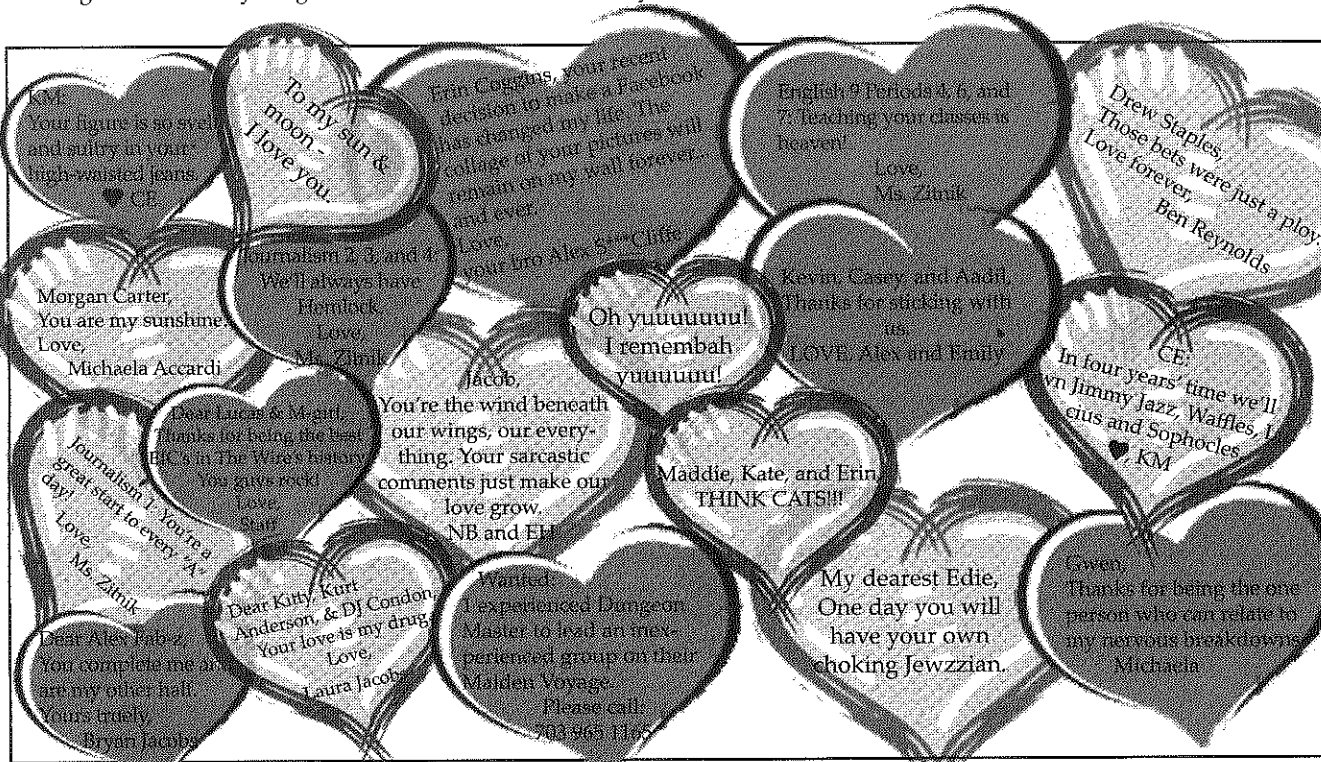
The worst idea is clearly to add days on to the end of the year because grades will still be due the same day, seniors will have graduated, and the only thing that students might learn is what they are going to do after the stupid movie their teacher put on to pass the time ends and school lets out.

Adding time onto the end of the day is just an extension of daycare. The only possible ways to make it work in a high school would be to add 15 minutes to each class, which would allow minimal extra work to get done, or to create an extra period, which would serve no purpose and would lead to skipping class.

During the storm, Virginia was in a state of emergency, and this outweighs the need to be in school. Days that we lost during this time are not required to be made up by the state and future holidays should not be lost due to a time during the year when the state was in enough danger to put everything on hold.

The fact is, nothing needs to be done. Teachers posted assignments to Blackboard, and quite frankly, they managed to post enough work to the point where students did not really fall that far behind. It will simply cost more money to add school, and with little benefit to actually doing it, the whole idea should be dropped as a whole.

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## Earthquake in Haiti causes chaos

**GWEN FISHEL**  
COPY EDITOR

On January 12, 2010, an earthquake of a seven magnitude hit the island of Haiti during the afternoon.

According to the *Boston Globe*, the earthquake hit ten miles from Port-au-Prince, and is being deemed the worst global earthquake in over 200 years. After the initial earthquake hit, twelve aftershocks followed with a magnitude up to five, and caused major amounts of damage to the country. Buildings collapsed, trapping mothers, fathers, daughters, sons, family, friends and strangers under the rubble.

Fires occurred, and people screamed, hoping to be pulled from the debris. The death count could far surpass 200,000 people, in comparison to the 10,000 during 2005's Hurricane Katrina, reported the European Commission in connection with the local government. Rescue crews from all over the world arrived, including Fairfax County's Virginia Task Force 1, hoping to help save the lives of many Haitian people. In fact, Virginia Task Force 1 was one of the first crews to arrive in Haiti, and like many they, composed of firefighters, engineers, doctors and other experts, helped save many lives in the wreckage before returning to the U.S. on January 29. Many organizations such as the Red Cross have been working overtime to raise money and offer aid to the recovery of Haiti.

According to the Associated Press, President Barack Obama began to deploy the military, give supplies, and send rescue crews to Haiti, shortly after the earthquake occurred. Obama has pledged over \$100 million dollars to relief and deployed over 10,000 troops.

Some say that this is to prevent criticism that Obama did not act fast enough on Haiti's behalf, like the criticism that President George W. Bush received over Katrina. "We saw what happened during Katrina and Obama is certainly not going to let the same mistakes be made that Bush was

so heavily criticized for," said John Renne, an expert on disasters at the University of New Orleans.

Relief efforts have been difficult; many of the streets are inaccessible because of the debris lying across them. The U.S. has been sending more and more aid as the days go by as a result of increased criticism. According to the *Miami Herald*, there has been trouble handing out the water, food, etc. that was sent over in some places, and Haitian police are needed to police the lines.

While there is very little hope of finding anyone in the rubble after the search and rescue period is closed, on January 26, a man was pulled alive from the rubble by U.S.

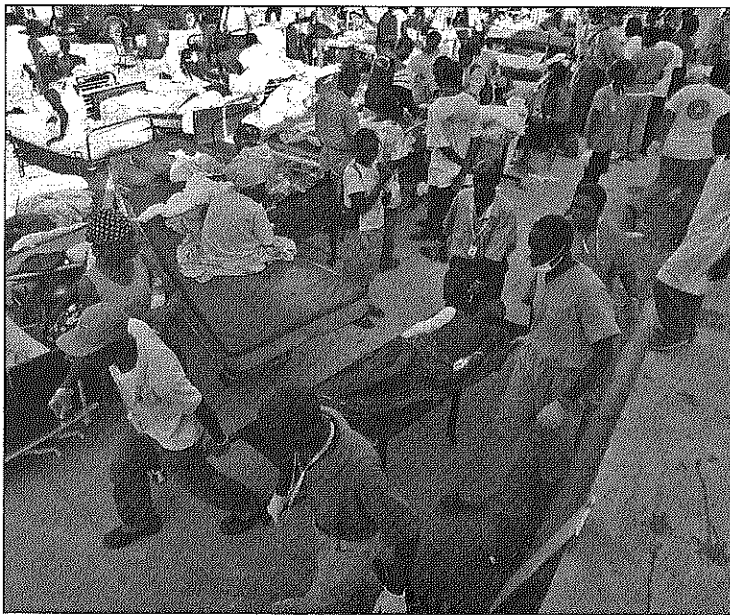


Photo by Carl Juste/MCT

The recent earthquake in Haiti has left the country in disarray and in a state of panic.

troops in Port-au-Prince, 14 days after the earthquake initially occurred, according to Reuters. However, CNN reported that some researchers were aware of the fact that many could live under the rubble from many days, based on their bodies' elasticity to adversity and squalor. At our school, many clubs and programs have been helping with the relief effort.

The West Potomac Theatre Department had a theatre sports event to raise money for Haiti. Sophomore and participant Emily Woods said,

"We donated all the proceeds from the tickets to Haiti, and originally, it was not for Haiti. But, after the earthquake, we decided that instead that the theatre department should give back. It was a last minute thing." The Student Government Association also helped out with Haiti relief; members made a presentation at the Talent Show, asking people to donate. "Help Us Help Haiti" was the slogan.

Some students have donated by donating money through text messages on their phones, or buying the album, "Hope for Haiti," on iTunes from which all the proceeds were donated to Haiti relief charities. This album included live performance from musicians as recorded on the Hope for Haiti Telethon.

## Prescription drugs tend to be taken by many

*Continued from page 1*

own home. Another anonymous student said, "It's not like I have to buy anything- I get it all from my parents' bathroom."

Some teens cite prescription drugs as a "safe" way to get high without using illegal drugs such as cocaine or heroin. More teens now abuse prescription drugs than any illicit drug, except for marijuana. Another student said, "I use Valium whenever I have a bad day. I have friends who use it every day- it's a happy pill." However, most teens do not realize that taking drugs without a prescription - or sharing a prescription drug with friends - is actually illegal as well.

Across the country, many campaigns have been organized to confront this problem. For example, The Partnership for a Drug-Free America has established a program called "Not In My House," which teaches teens and their parents about the causes and risks of prescription drug abuse. The National Council on Patient Information and Education is another organization which has worked to address prescription drug abuse: "Maximizing Your Role as a Teen Influencer: What You Can Do to Help Prevent Teen Prescription Drug Abuse" helps to educate and equip those in position to influence teens. Every campaign centralizes on the idea that the first steps to fighting prescription drug abuse are communication between teens and adults, and education about the many risks and consequences of this latest threat to teenagers.

## Google fights with China

*Continued from page 1*

2006 requiring each school division to include an instructional component on Internet Safety for students." Facemire also explained, "The site gives a link to the Guidelines and Resources for Internet Safety in Schools that the Virginia Department of Education published to assist schools. The question is: Are all of these efforts having an effect on the way students behave on the Internet? Students at our school vary in the precautions that they take." When asked about what safety measures he uses on social networking sites, sophomore Ethan Chaney replied, "I don't even think about what I put on Facebook. Anyone in the world can see my profile." On the other end of the spectrum, sophomore Morgan Maniglia said, "I always make sure my Facebook is locked so that only my friends can see my activity." Facebook has 350 million users, and they rely heavily on the security of the site to connect with family and friends.

Our school, specifically, has taken proactive steps to ensure cyber security. For example, social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook are blocked. According to Principal Cliff Hardison, "SRO Goodley presented a powerpoint to the seniors at the Senior Town Hall Meeting in October. The Mount Vernon Police also did a presentation for parents in December. We limit where students may travel on the Internet, at least at school. Our firewall is fairly robust."

## Twitter lends help to Haiti

*Continued from page 1*

While Twitter has negatively impacted the information regarding the crisis in Haiti, it has risen as legitimate media outlet when used by reliable sources.

## Teen dating violence made more aware to students

**KATIE WOODWARD**  
REPORTER

For teenagers, the second week of February is well-known for prompting special recognition of one's boyfriend or girlfriend. However, the first week of February holds significance as well, especially in regard to teenage relationships. National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week, which lasts from February second until the sixth, is an effort to bring more public awareness to a problem confronting today's teens.

Statistics show that one in five teens have experienced violence in a serious dating relationship. Dating violence is not an argument every once in a while- it is a pattern of abusive and controlling behavior. According to the National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline, as many as one third of teens know a friend who has been hit, kicked, punched, slapped, or choked by their boyfriend or girlfriend. Females ages 16-24 are more vulnerable to intimate partner violence than any other age group however- at a rate almost triple the national average.

Dating violence can include verbal and emotional abuse as well as physical abuse. Sometimes a partner may attempt to keep close tabs on their boyfriend or girlfriend by asking where they are and who they are with excessively. Other times, a partner may threaten the other with violence or self-harm when presented with a break-up.

The rise of dating violence among teens has taken on technological forms of abuse as well. Constant texting, phone calls, or embarrassing photos online can also be a form of abuse. A 2007 survey found that 68% of teens say boyfriends or girlfriends sharing private photos or videos on cell phones and online is a serious concern for them. The long term affects of dating violence are great. Teens may develop a low self-esteem which often reaches well into adulthood. Says school social worker Angela Dixon, "You stop believing that you can be yourself and make your own decisions."

These statistics are a cruel reality for many teens, yet parents and communities are often not conscious of the pervasiveness or complexity dating violence. Congress established national Teen Dating Violence Awareness and

Prevention Week in 2006 to increase public consciousness and education of the prevalence of dating violence among American teens. This initiative has been successful enough to be carried out by a unanimous, bi-partisan Congress every year since then. Additional attention was brought to this issue at last year's Grammy's when R&B singer Rihanna was assaulted by her then-boyfriend Chris Brown.

Teens in an abusive relationship often have a difficult time seeking help. They choose to keep their situation a secret because, said Dixon, "they are still seeking an identity, and this is the best they think there is and they don't know better." Teenagers are more likely to disclose information about relationships to their peers than adults, and because of this it is important for friends to speak up if they think they know someone who is being abused. If students are in an abusive relationship, they should seek help from someone who they can talk to, such as a parent or a school official. There are numerous websites and anonymous hotlines available for teens as well, such as the loveisrespect.org and the National Dating Abuse Hotline (1-866-331-9474). "Speaking up is the first step," said Dixon, "It takes a lot of courage to get out of an abusive relationship."

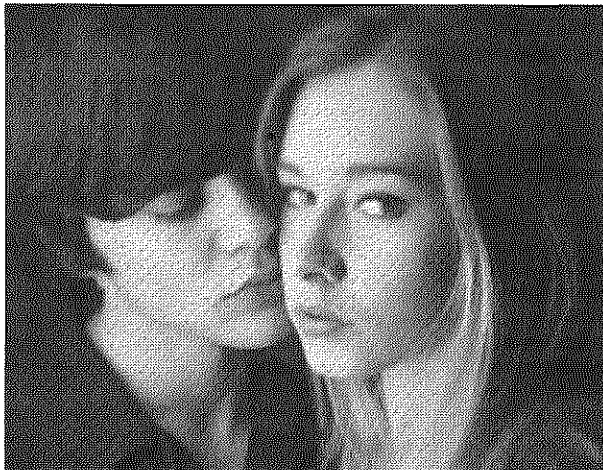


Photo courtesy of akronchildrens.org

Teenage dating violence has been going on for a long time and it is time for awareness of this issue.

## School Calendar

### Monday, March 1:

PTSA meeting is being held in the library at 6:30 P.M.

### Monday, March 1-Friday, March 5:

Writing SOL test.

### Friday, March 12:

Interims are sent home.

### Sunday, March 14:

Daylight savings time begins.

### Monday, March 15:

College planning night starts at 6:30 P.M. in Springbreak.

### Tuesday, March 16:

Students make up snow day.

### Wednesday, March 17:

Saint Patrick's Day, remember to wear green.

### Monday, March 29-Monday, April 5:

Enjoy Spring Break!

# Writing Center strives to help all students in need

NIA COPELAND  
PHOTOGRAPHER

For some students, writing clearly and concisely does not always come easy.

In response, the English department has created a program called the Writing Center that aims to help make students become better writers in all core subjects. English teachers have selected approximately forty upperclassman students to help other students that are struggling with English or have a difficult time understanding the writing process. Students selected had to qualify to become a member of the Writing Center, and were required to go through an application process, which determined whether or not they were able to participate in the program.

According to English teacher Jacqueline Livelli, the Writing Center tutors will help students organize and develop their ideas in written form. Livelli believes that the Writing Center will help struggling students develop basic writing and communication skills. Through help from peers, students will be able to learn quickly, and earn better grades in their English classes.

English teacher Kimberly Thompson is a Writing Center advisor that also believes that this program will be beneficial to students. "The purpose is to help support student writers. There has been a lot of research that shows that students learn very well from their peers, and this will provide an opportunity for them to get this additional support prior to submitting their work for a grade," said Thompson. "Students will receive help with any aspect of the writing process, so they can come in at the beginning of the process if they need help coming up with ideas, or after they have an outline or draft if they need help with organization or structure."

Though the Writing Center is meant to help students, some students may feel embarrassed to ask other students for help. However, Thompson feels that working with

other students will definitely help students get better grades and improve their writing skills. "Students who go to the Writing Center for help will be spending additional time looking at, discussing and working on their writing with someone who has proven to understand the writing process. This will undoubtedly lead to improved writing... and therefore improved grades. This shouldn't be limited to English class, however; students can get help with writing for any of their classes," Thompson said.

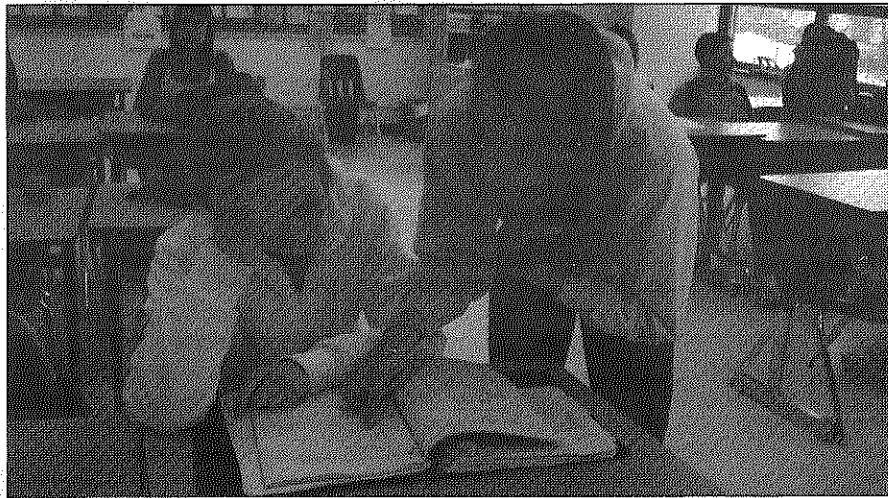


Photo courtesy of Laura Reynolds

Writing Center tutor, junior Emily Smith (right), helps junior Lauren Wilmont with her homework. The Writing Center will employ tutors like Smith to help students in English assignments or any other writings that they have for a class. The Writing Center will meet on Wednesdays after school in room 302 beginning in April.

Students may also worry that the students selected to be a part of the writing center staff may not be able to help them with their work. However, students chosen must qualify in order to assist students that are seeking help. "Students were nominated by their current or former English teachers. Once nominated, they submitted applications and writing samples. The Writing Center Committee went through the applications to select those that would

be the best fit, based upon writing skills and their ability to work with others," Thompson explained. "We have a little over 40 tutors, which makes it possible to staff the Writing Center each week while allowing those students to also participate in additional extra-curricular activities."

The Writing Center will be open on Wednesdays after school from 2:30 to 3:30 in room 320 sometime at end of March after students have been trained on how to tutor in writing. All students can receive help as long as they sign

up. "Any and all students can receive help. We hope that everyone will take advantage of this! We are just asking that they sign up ahead of time so that we can ensure we have enough tutors, though walk-ins will certainly be welcome as long as a tutor is available," said Thompson. "Next year, we are hoping to provide services during lunches as well so that students have several opportunities to become a part of this amazing program."

The Writing Center will be beneficial to the tutors as well. They will gain an understanding of the art of teaching and receive service hours for their work. "Students will receive service hours for participating. For those who sign up for the Advanced Composition course next year (which will provide Writing Center services during all lunches), it would provide an excellent focus for their Service Learning projects."

"We are really excited about this endeavor, and think it will provide excellent opportunities for students to improve their writing, regardless of their current skill level. We are modeling the Writing Center after the one at George

Mason University, which is known for the quality and effectiveness of theirs," Thompson added. "We are lucky enough to get the opportunity to send some of our tutors to shadow the George Mason graduate student tutors, and learn from them how to best provide writing support for peers – the best way to learn! We hope to see all WPHS students at the Writing Center at one point or another!"

## Record snow covers the area

LAURA REYNOLDS  
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

This winter has proven to be one for the records. Called a "snowverload," "snowpocalypse," "snowmageddon," and many other names, the amount of snow that has been dumped not just on this area but on the entire east coast is monumental. According to CNN.com, the 16 inches that accumulated at Dulles airport beat the previous 10.6 from 1964. The amount at Reagan set a new record with 13.3 inches over 11.5 documented from 1932. Warnings were sent out all up and down the coast to stay off the roads, except in the case of an emergency. Transportation problems were a big issue of the massive snowstorm, as many airports and trains were ground to a halt and roads were in terrible condition. Plows were working around the clock, as were power companies trying to get electricity to all who lost it.

In this general area, life came to a standstill. Fairfax County schools were closed for a week and several days the week before the massive snowfall. In the aftermath of the storm, they experienced a few delays and problems with buses and students being able to navigate the roads and get to school on time. Power outages were common and walking was the most reliable form of transportation. Although students were happy with what many call a second winter break, teachers are frustrated with the loss of time. Many tests that they spend all year preparing for, such as the SOL's or AP exams, have fixed dates and will not be moved back even after this blizzard. This leaves teachers with less time to prepare their students and a strong desire to get kids back in school at the normal hour, even if two hour delays may have been necessary in the week after the influx of snow. Students can expect their own, though not as pleasant, overload- more homework. Many teachers used Blackboard to keep up with assignments which, even though it is helpful, does not make up for

missing several classes. Parents, also, became very frustrated with how much school their children were missing.

The effects were not just felt academically, as well. Sports teams in the district had to adjust their scheduling of games and, for track, even cancel their district meet. Losing an entire week of practice and competition at the end of the season had a big impact on all of the winter sports teams. With rescheduling and the cancellation of some games or meets, sports at our school and in the district and region are back in business. The efforts by the county to get everything moving again worked well, and life grinds on; the only thing that has ended is the snowmageddon.

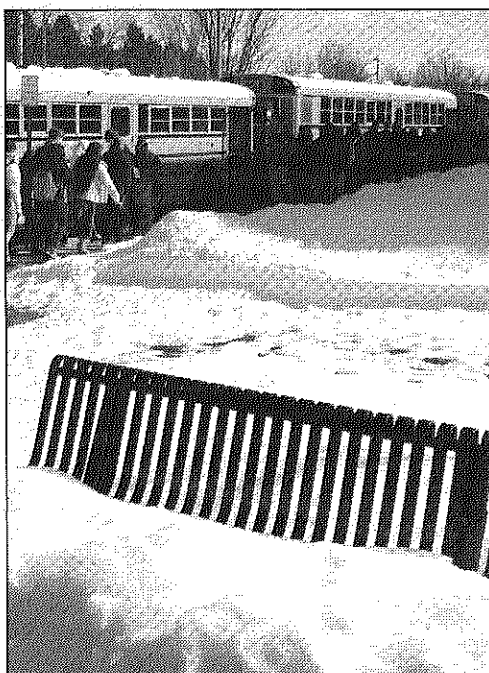


Photo courtesy of Sonia Garakayaraghi

Snow accumulated around the area and caused problems with transportation and keeping schools and workplaces open. When schools finally reopened, there was still a fair amount of snow on the ground and it was piled everywhere from plowing and shoveling.

## News Briefs

LAURA REYNOLDS  
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

### Man Flies Plane Into an IRS Building

On February 12, Joseph Stack of Austin, Texas, flew his private plane into an IRS building that housed employees. He had gone through a long feud with the IRS and decided that, as he posted on his website, "violence is the only answer." Stack proceeded to set his house on fire and then fly his plane into the building; he was killed in the process.

### Olympics Take the World By Storm

The Winter Olympic Games, held in Vancouver, Canada, are being closely watched around the world. The big names of Winter sports, such as Shaun White, Apolo Anton Ohno, Lindsay Vonn, Bode Miller, and many more have attracted a lot of attention to the Olympics this year. Perhaps one of the most stunning athletes is Shaun White, a snowboarder who is known for making up some of his own tricks. The U.S. is currently doing better than expected in the medal count.

### Tea Party Movement Surfaces

A new kind of citizen and voter has been born. After all of the uncertainty and doubt in the government, a different political party has formed that has conservative, yet discontent views. Most members of the Tea Party movement also identify with the Republican party, but want sweeping changes to make the government more conservative.

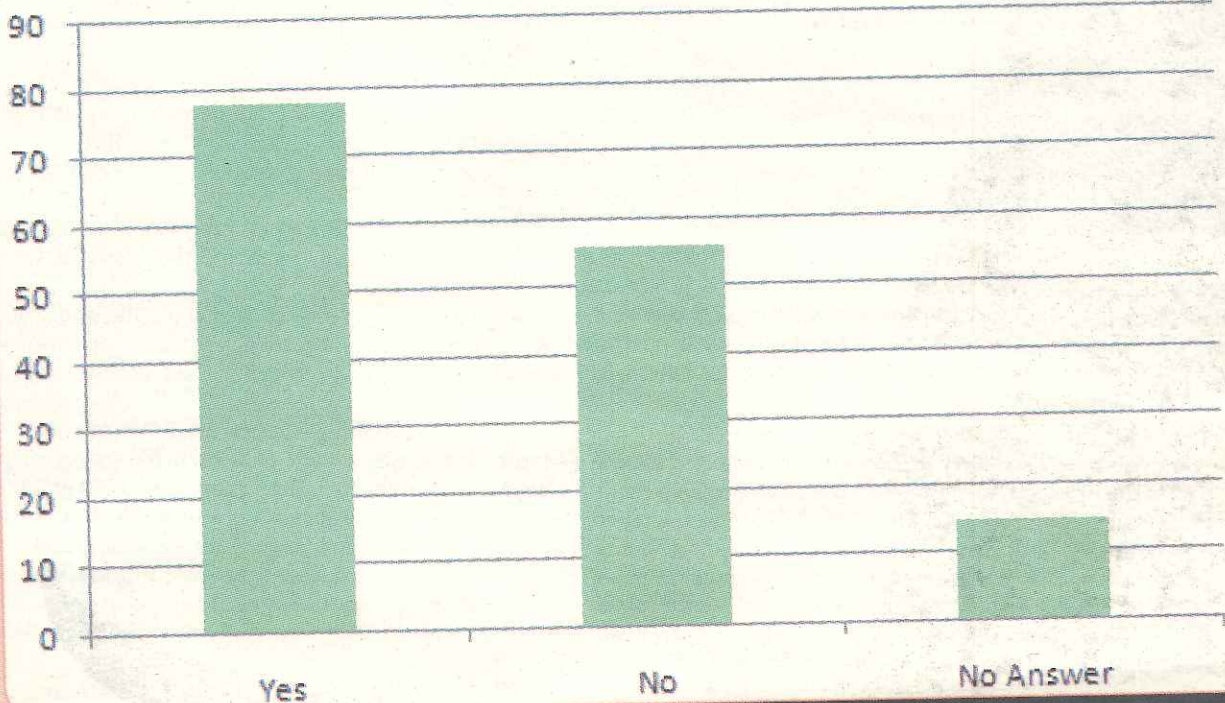
### Afghan Taliban Leader Arrested

Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar was arrested in the Pakistani city of Karachi. He is being held by the CIA and Inner-Security Intelligence Agency in Pakistan and is said to be the number two man for the Taliban, under Mullah Omar. Baradar may be able to provide the names and whereabouts of other influential Taliban leaders which would greatly help the American war effort. There is speculation as to whether the capture of those at the top has a lasting impact, though; there are many more waiting to step into the spot that Baradar vacated. For the time being, his arrest is being viewed as an important step in the war on terror.



# IS LOVE II

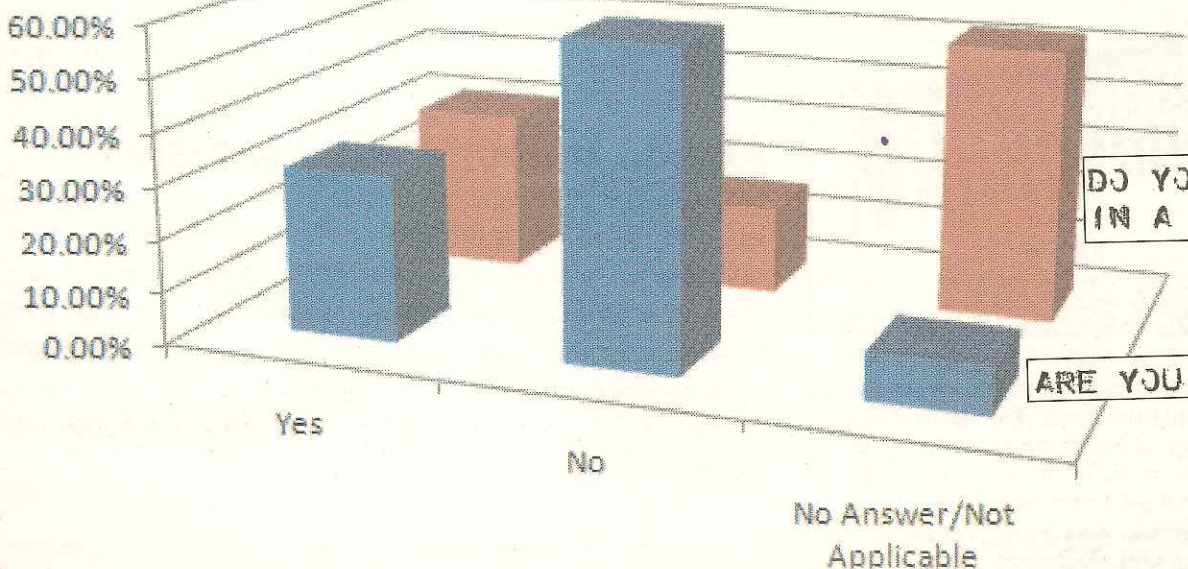
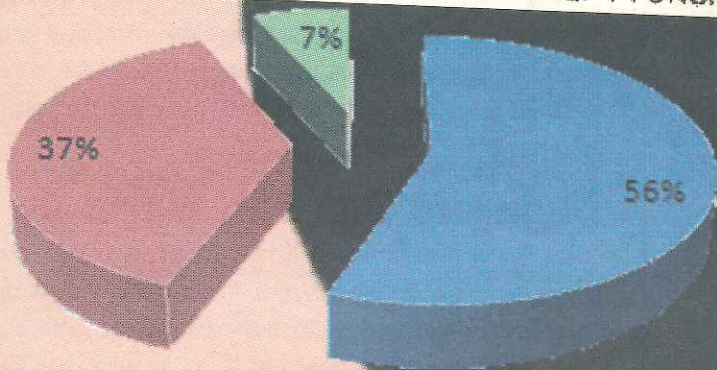
DO YOU FIND PDA BOTHERSOME?



OUT OF 149 PEOPLE POLLED.

■ Yes ■ No ■ No Answer

HAVE YOU EVER FELT JEALOUS IN A RELATIONSHIP?



DO YOUR PARENTS KNOW THE PERSON YOU'RE IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH PERSONALLY?

ARE YOU CURRENTLY IN A RELATIONSHIP?

*Tyler W.*  
I dropped  
the day you  
life. The day  
the day I  
And

**BRYAN JACOBS**  
STYLE EDITOR

What would high school be with one walks down the hallways of V caressing faces, and one will prob stairwells.

Normally, high school relationships greeting, awkward conversation, n Old Town, regular hang outs, and in high school is mostly a physical couples stray from the norm. Ther that incorporates the stereotypical "together when convenient couple couple."

Overall, high school relationships and precursor for real world relations school instead of the "awkward co offer a crash course on relationships



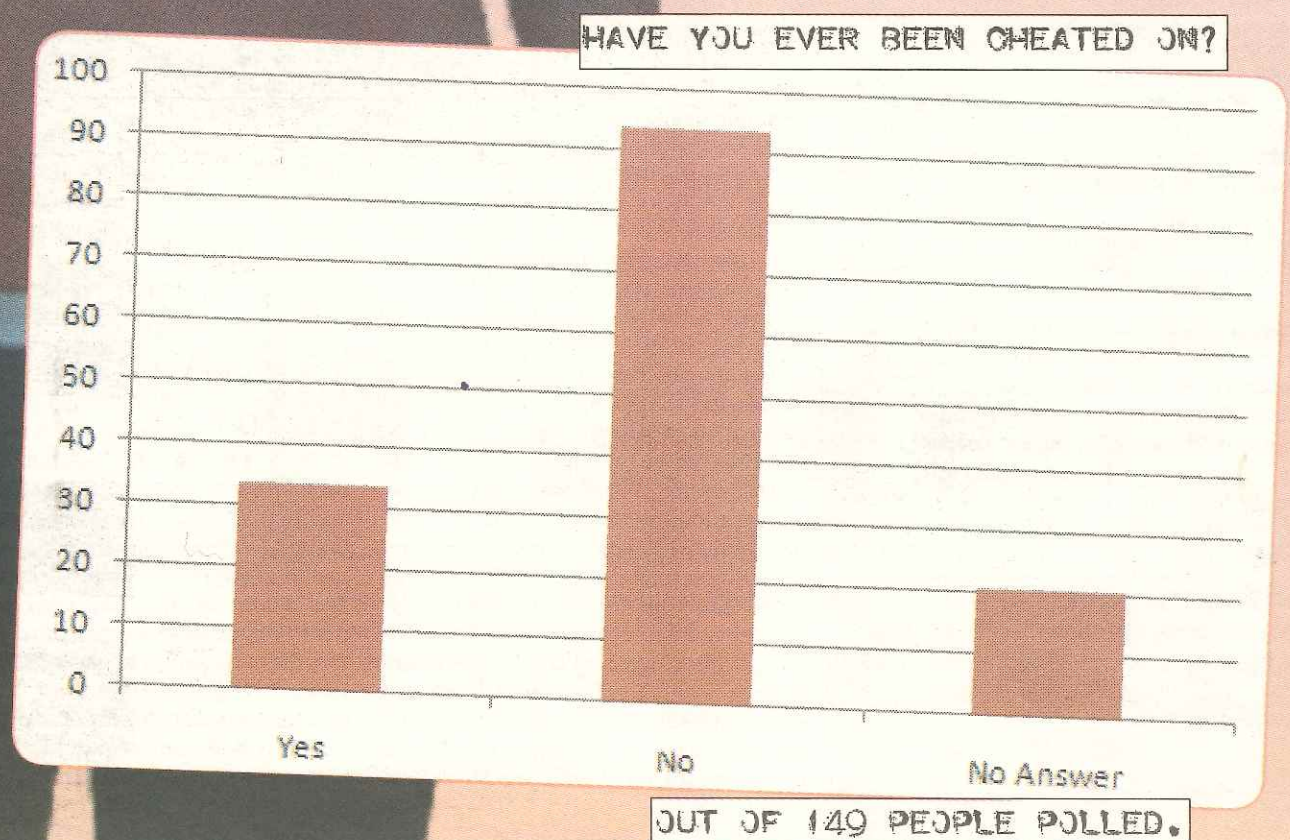
# N THE AIR?

ar in the ocean  
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relationships and everything in between them? As  
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l occur in the following order: initiation and  
conversation, personal conversation, a date in  
the question, "Want to hook up?" Although dating  
nship more than an emotional relationship, some  
ways the "perfect couple" of each grade a couple  
with the stereotypical girl or the "awkward couple,"  
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not perfect. However, they offer a valuable lesson  
s; why not be the "awkward couple" of high  
of your future neighborhood? High school can  
ore that happens.





# Oversharing on Facebook: the new online virus

CAMILLE DiFOLCO  
REPORTER

In an age of technological connectedness, where social networking sites such as Facebook dominate the online lives of most teenagers, it can be hard to know where to draw the line in info-sharing.

Status updates are often entire schedules of one's day and profile pictures have reached a personal level of epic proportions.

Especially with the threat of losing one's job, scholarship, or friends, understanding how much is too much is invaluable knowledge.

"Overshare" is a relatively new term and it is defined as divulging "excessive personal information, as in a blog or broadcast interview, prompting reactions ranging from alarmed discomfort to approval" by Webster's *New World Dictionary*.

It was officially coined last year when it was named Webster's *New World Dictionary* 2008 Word of the Year.

Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg commented on this development in a recent interview with American blogger and entrepreneur Michael Arrington: "People have really gotten comfortable sharing not only more information and different kinds, but more openly and with more people."

A sardonic blogger countered Zuckerberg's statement in a post dated January 12, 2010: "Perhaps you [Zuckerberg] were naïve enough to believe that people use social networking sites to communicate...in a relatively private way...Like letters that fly at the speed of light. You were mistaken."

According to a recent University of Florida study in which researchers accessed the Facebook pages of more than 800 of the school's aspiring med students, the "oversharing" phenomenon is rampant. Students posted pictures, information, and conversations that "they likely wouldn't want their [future] patients to see."

The cause of this phenomenon is debatable, but psychologist Jean Twenge of San Diego State University told an MSNBC reporter that the "influx of the overshare [can be blamed on an increase in individualism – and with that comes a hike in narcissism. We're oversharing now because we're pretty pleased with ourselves."

West Potomac students agree with this analysis.

Junior Alexa Botha explained, "It's really annoying when people have relationship issues and they narrate it through their statuses."

Students are not the only culprits, however, as many adults engage in oversharing as well. Recently, a Staten Island Criminal Court judge was relocated after excessive Facebook posts on his public profile, allegedly from the bench at times. He also attempted to "friend request" various lawyers.

One insider told *The New York Post*, "It's just inappropriate. It puts the lawyer in a very uncomfortable position."

Additionally, a notable rise in Facebook scandals that have resulted in people being fired has occurred over the last year.

Last February, 16-year-old Kimberly Swann was fired from her post as office administrator at Ivell Marketing & Logistics in Essex, England after posting a comment that her job was boring. Swann told the UK's *Telegraph* newspaper, "I didn't even put the company's name [in the post]!"

Employees everywhere take pause when they hear such stories. Another facet of the Facebook oversharing bug

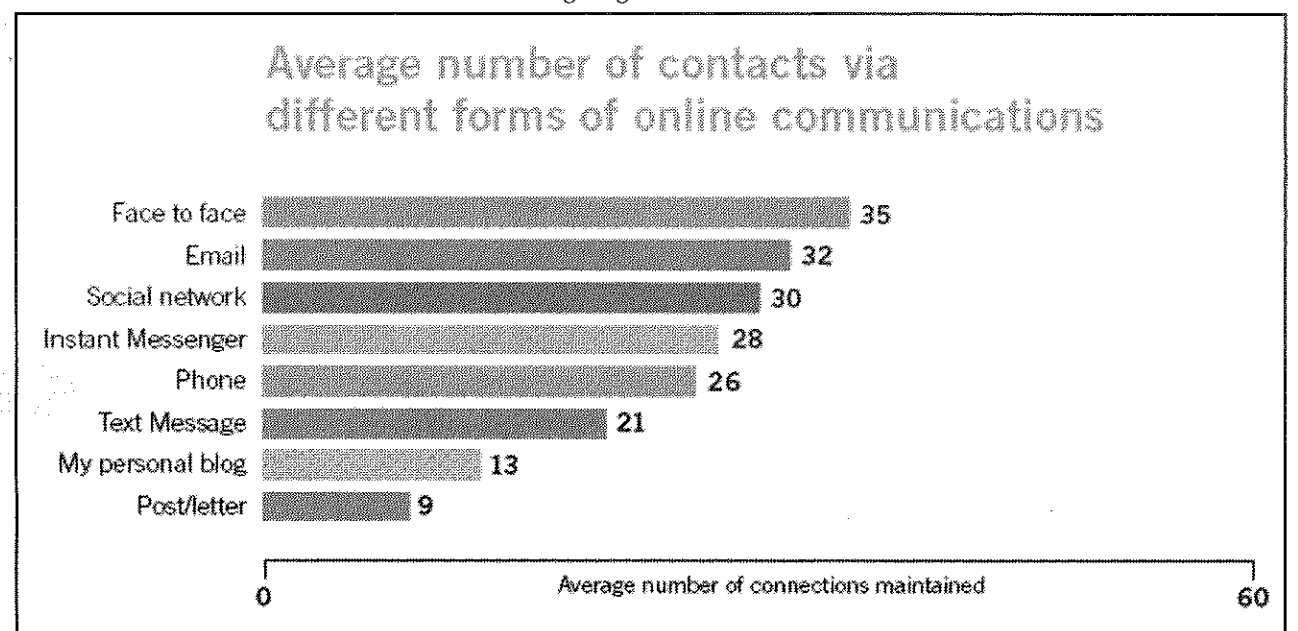
comes into play in a specific scenario: when teachers and students become Facebook friends.

Suddenly, that photo from a friend's wedding is open to any student "friend," while a student's birthday party pictures and relationship status can be monitored by teachers. Some teachers avoid this scenario entirely by refusing to "friend" students.

Prince William County middle school Spanish teacher Eileen Bell said, "I never friend my students until they're in eleventh or twelfth grade, and I never friend any current students."

Keeping in mind the risks of the Facebook overshare, and taking active steps to avoid it, anyone can ensure that their private life doesn't become fodder for gossip in the workplace or school.

So think twice before publishing that frustrated status or "friend-request" your teacher!



According to numerous sources, online communications will eventually become the main form of contact. This means that people will start to only communicate with each other through various chatrooms and such.

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## Coffey Talk

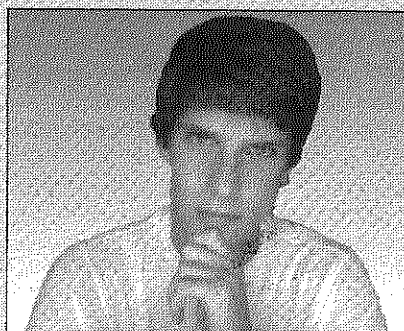


Photo by Peter Coffey/Mac

**PETER COFFEY**  
SPORTS EDITOR

On Friday, February 12, 2010, Nodar Kumaritashvili, a 21-year-old luger from the country of Georgia suited up for a practice run on the Vancouver Olympic track, just hours before the opening ceremony. Minutes later, Nodar lay lifeless next to the track- his empty sled at the finish line. On that fatal practice run, Nodar lost control of his sled, while rounding turn 16, and was launched into the air, slamming into a metal support beam at 90 mph. It was the very same track that Nodar had told his father earlier in the week was too slick, and fast. It did not take long for the International Olympic Committee to announce that the crash was not caused by the track. Rather, it was Nodar who was at fault because he was just too inexperienced; this is completely false.

Nodar started training for the luge event when he was 14. His father, David Kumaritashvili, pushed him into the family sport because he was a former luger himself. Nodar had all the experience of many years, even though he had only been competing for seven years. He had raced on tracks all across the world, passed through all the stages of the World Cup, and was ranked 44th in the world. Nodar finally made it to the Olympics- a long time dream of his. He had hoped to bring home a medal for his country and back to the small village of Bakuriani, where he grew up and was a local celebrity.

Jaws dropped in utter disbelief when the International Olympic Committee (IOC) blamed the crash on Nodar, not the track. Nodar had been training since the age of 14 and for the IOC to have said that the cause of the crash was because of the luger's "inexperience" is just ludicrous. Why did the IOC fail to take into account that the track was considered *the fastest ever*? It was, after all, the very track that was marketed as "faster, steeper, and more intense than any track in history," when it opened in 2008. Did they even consider the consequences that one in the twenty single luge runs would end in a crash, especially before the opening ceremony? Yeah, they were probably just "inexperienced" too. It seems the IOC wants to put the blame on anyone but itself.

The truth is that the track was unsafe and although the IOC has yet to come out and say it, their actions prove it. Olympic officials shortened the track; the men started where the women were supposed to start and the women start at the junior starting spot. They also placed padding and a wall at the spot, where Nodar lost his life. If the track were safe like they said, then why are they making all these sudden changes? The IOC had the balls to say that these actions were not because of safety, but rather because of the "emotional component." Yeah right! And baseball players wear cups to look more endowed. The IOC needs to realize that the perfect Vancouver games were not so perfect, and that they made mistakes.

On Monday, February 15, Nodar was flown back to his hometown, not with a medal around his neck or the joy of competing in the Olympics- the most prestigious games ever -- but instead in a casket.

## Athletes risk injuries for glory

**JOSH BELANGER**  
ASSISTANT STYLE EDITOR

Peyton Manning, Drew Brees, and Kurt Warner all sat on the bench and all watched their teams lose the last game of the season. The Colts had an undefeated record before head coach Jim Caldwell sat Peyton for the sake of being healthy for the playoffs. Of course, the fans booed but the MVP still sat and watched the Colts lose the lead and the chance for a perfect season. However, what is more important-- winning all your games in the regular season, or winning all your games in the playoffs? Most coaches would take a chance at losing an undefeated postseason and a championship than risking your star player to injury. Football is not the only sport that has this issue with playing time. Before the season, first round draft pick Blake Griffin injured his knee in a preseason game and has yet to play a game this season. Griffin opted to end his season for knee surgery so the \$5 million rookie will not play a single game this year. Another big time injury that occurred this year

when All-Pro wide receiver Wes Welker, who at the time was leading the league in catches, injured his knee in the last game of the season. Even though the Patriots were fighting for a playoff spot and needed Welker to play, it still gives coaches an example of why they should rest their players.

Of course the NFL, and all the other sports that have this problem, hate when coaches take their franchise players out because of the money they bring into the league. Fans, who pay an arm and a leg for tickets, parking, and everything else at a game, want to see the best players and most of all want to see their team win. However, when teams are playing the back-up quarterbacks and bench warming point guards, it does not exactly draw the customer in. The NFL and its commissioner, Roger Goddell, have even proposed a reward to give teams who decide to play their stars instead of sit them down.

At West Potomac, we have the same situation. Put oneself in Coach Eric Henderson's shoes- if our football team is undefeated playing a pointless district game, should he play Colin Mathewson and Colin McConville risking them to an injury? Most coaches would take the opportunity to rest his players, allowing time for possible minor injuries to heal or to have them take a breather in the middle of a long season; however Coach Henderson has a deferent perspective. "If I were in a position where I could do something really

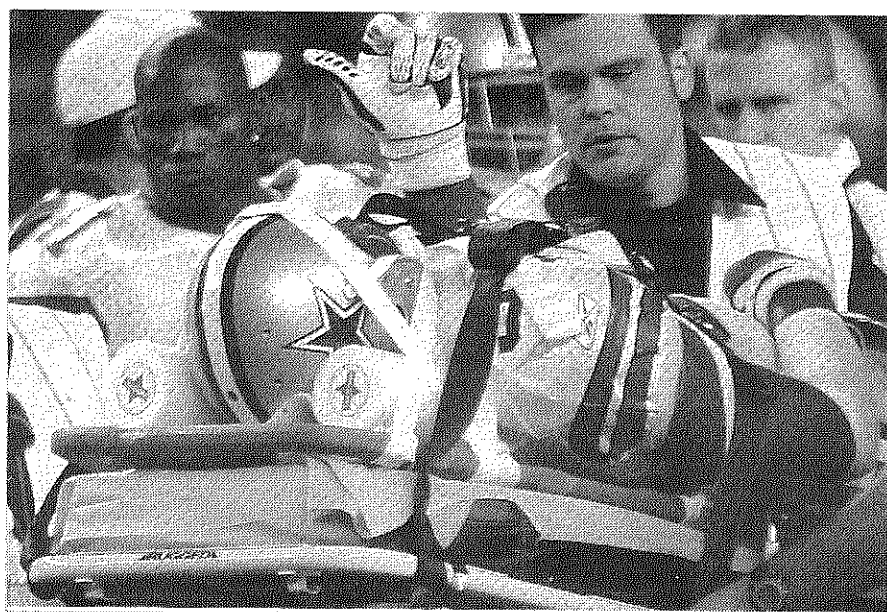


Photo Courtesy of MCT campus

Dallas Cowboy, Demarcus Washington, gives a thumbs up to the crowd as he is carted off the field in a early December game. He was just one of the few who sustained injury in games leading up to the playoffs.

remarkable like go undefeated during a regular season or rest my starters and probably lose the game, I'd choose to win the game. You worry about the playoffs when they come. You owe it to the team to go as hard as possible and win as many as possible - that is why you train and do all the stuff you do. Football is violent and injuries are a part of it," he said. Coach Jim Sullivan of the baseball program also has this dilemma with resting players like pitchers and catchers. He has a similar response as Coach Henderson about resting star players, "I wouldn't rest a star unless there was an injury or some other issue where the player would benefit from the rest." However, he did mention that he would rest pitchers to set up a strong pitching rotation for the playoffs. Pitchers' arms can get very tired at the end of a season and a couple days without pitching could be very crucial to the team come playoff time. Catchers also get very worn-out with the constant crouching and blocking that a couple days of rest here pay off down the road.

Throughout the history of sports, coaches have had this tough decision. Some of them have been fired because of the outcome that came from resting or not resting. In the end, you play to win, and you must sacrifice to win, even if that sacrifice is to take a seat on the bench, and come ready for playoffs. But, winning also takes guts to take on that risk of injury and finish a season strong and go into the post-season, eager for a championship

## Saints bring home first Super Bowl trophy

*Saints comeback win brings hope to the fans of New Orleans football*

**LUCAS ALEXANDER**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

On Sunday, February 7, America turned in for another year to the most popular television event of the year. 106.5 million people, in fact, tuned in to CBS to make this Super Bowl XLIV the most watched television show ever.

After every NFL season, the Super Bowl is the culmination of every team and player's hard seasons, and every fans tumultuous hopes and cheers. The 2009- 2010 season came to an end when the New Orleans Saints played the Indianapolis Colts in Miami, Florida. For the first time in years, the two number one seeds entering the playoffs actually made it to the Super Bowl to compete against each other.

Combined, these two teams started the season at the top, reaching a combined 27-0 before the Saint's first loss, and finished at the top in the spectacle of the game. After the Colts regular season ended with a record of 14-2, and the Saints 13-3, both teams earned first round byes in the playoffs. Both teams rolled easily in the second round, the Saints beating the Arizona Cardinals 45-14 and the Colts beating the Baltimore Ravens 20-3. The Division Championships gave each team more competition, the Colts needing a strong second half to put down the New York Jets 30-17, and

the Saints needing an overtime field goal to put away the Minnesota Vikings 31-28.

The game started out slow, with the Colts edging a 10-0 lead in the first quarter. The Saints put up two field goals in the second quarter, leaving a low scoring 10-6 Colts lead at halftime. The second half was a different story, as the Saints put up 25 more points, including a fourth quarter interception for a touchdown by Tracy Porter to cement a 31-17 win by the New Orleans Saints.

Peyton Manning, the quarterback for the Colts, threw for 333 yards, but only managed to throw one touchdown and threw the late interception that may have cost them the game, and there has been a lot of talk about how this game will affect his legacy. Popular Colts wide receiver Reggie Wayne did not perform up to his usual standards, having only 5 catches for 46 yards, and he gained a lot of attention for his lackluster performance.

The saints were led by their quarterback Drew Brees, who threw 288 yards and two touchdowns. He had a record tying 32 completions and impressively low incompletions with only seven. The Saints, as they had done all year, put together a great team effort to come together to win the game. They performed well in all aspects of the game, and this was a large part of their victory.

In the years following Hurricane Katrina, the Saints have built hope into

the city winning its first Super Bowl in history. A ton of media attention has been given to this, as the street of New Orleans have been crowded with people since the win, and the party continued on into Mardi Gras. However the win might affect the future of the city, it at least has inspired the people and instilled a sense of pride back to the area.

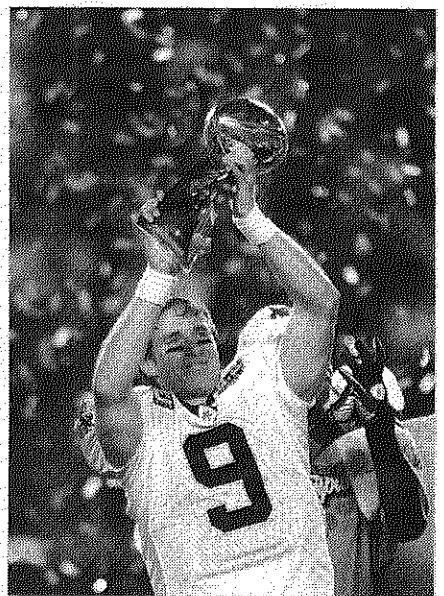


Photo Courtesy of MCT campus

Quarterback Drew Brees hoists the Vince Lombardi Trophy after the Saints beat the Colts in the Super Bowl.



# Oversharing on Facebook: the new online virus

CAMILLE DiFOLCO  
REPORTER

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"Overshare" is a relatively new term and it is defined as divulging "excessive personal information, as in a blog or broadcast interview, prompting reactions ranging from alarmed discomfort to approval" by Webster's *New World Dictionary*.

It was officially coined last year when it was named Webster's *New World Dictionary* 2008 Word of the Year.

Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg commented on this development in a recent interview with American blogger and entrepreneur Michael Arrington: "People have really gotten comfortable sharing not only more information and different kinds, but more openly and with more people."

A sardonic blogger countered Zuckerberg's statement in a post dated January 12, 2010: "Perhaps you [Zuckerberg] were naïve enough to believe that people use social networking sites to communicate...in a relatively private way...Like letters that fly at the speed of light. You were mistaken."

According to a recent University of Florida study in which researchers accessed the Facebook pages of more than 800 of the school's aspiring med students, the "oversharing" phenomenon is rampant. Students posted pictures, information, and conversations that "they likely wouldn't want their [future] patients to see."

The cause of this phenomenon is debatable, but psychologist Jean Twenge of San Diego State University told an MSNBC reporter that the "influx of the overshare [can be blamed on an increase in individualism – and with that comes a hike in narcissism. We're oversharing now because we're pretty pleased with ourselves."

West Potomac students agree with this analysis.

Junior Alexa Botha explained, "It's really annoying when people have relationship issues and they narrate it through their statuses."

Students are not the only culprits, however, as many adults engage in oversharing as well. Recently, a Staten Island Criminal Court judge was relocated after excessive Facebook posts on his public profile, allegedly from the bench at times. He also attempted to "friend request" various lawyers.

One insider told *The New York Post*, "It's just inappropriate. It puts the lawyer in a very uncomfortable position."

Additionally, a notable rise in Facebook scandals that have resulted in people being fired has occurred over the last year.

Last February, 16-year-old Kimberly Swann was fired from her post as office administrator at Ivell Marketing & Logistics in Essex, England after posting a comment that her job was boring. Swann told the UK's *Telegraph* newspaper, "I didn't even put the company's name [in the post]!"

Employees everywhere take pause when they hear such stories. Another facet of the Facebook oversharing bug

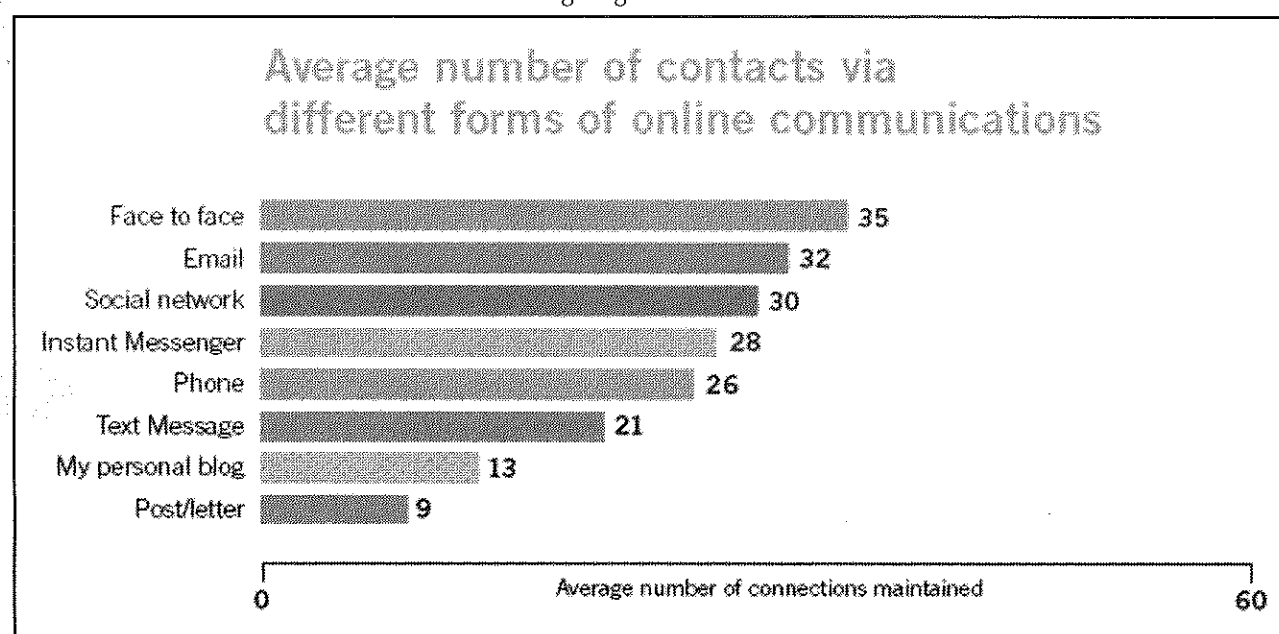
comes into play in a specific scenario: when teachers and students become Facebook friends.

Suddenly, that photo from a friend's wedding is open to any student "friend," while a student's birthday party pictures and relationship status can be monitored by teachers. Some teachers avoid this scenario entirely by refusing to "friend" students.

Prince William County middle school Spanish teacher Eileen Bell said, "I never friend my students until they're in eleventh or twelfth grade, and I never friend any current students."

Keeping in mind the risks of the Facebook overshare, and taking active steps to avoid it, anyone can ensure that their private life doesn't become fodder for gossip in the workplace or school.

So think twice before publishing that frustrated status or "friend-request" your teacher!



According to numerous sources, online communications will eventually become the main form of contact. This means that people will start to only communicate with each other through various chatrooms and such.

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# Teenagers have different views on pregnancy and sex

EMILY GRIFFIN  
NEWS EDITOR

Sex has consequences.

One of the main reasons for the raise in teenage pregnancy is that couples are not willing to buy condoms and/or birth control. However, an incident occurred recently with a male student at our school while trying to purchase condoms; the cashier at the drug store would not sell condoms to students under the age of 17.

According to [sexetc.org](http://sexetc.org) "You don't have to be a certain age to buy condoms (there is no 'legal age'). The person behind the counter may raise an eyebrow, but he or she should not make you feel bad for choosing to protect yourself and your partner." This means there is no "official" legal age to buy condoms and that the cashier selling the condoms should not in any way make one feel uncomfortable. Another factor attributing to the increase in teenage pregnancy is the lack of the practice of abstinence and safe sex.

Valerie Huber, who is part of the National Abstinence Education Association, said, "Research unmistakably indicates that delaying sexual initiation rates and reducing the total number of lifetime partners is more valuable in protecting the sexual health of young people than simply passing out condoms," to the *Washington Post*.

Whenever one hears about a teenage mother's child, they tend to hear about how much the mother's life has changed. However, one hardly hears about men making changes in their lives to help the life of their child.

According to research, 34% of women under the age of 20 have been pregnant or are currently pregnant and 79% of these women are unmarried teenagers, according to [familyfirstaid.org](http://familyfirstaid.org). The Guttmacher Institute stated that pregnancies, miscarriages and abortions have been increasing annually.

In 2005, the rate rose 3% and in 2006 the rate continued to rise to 7%. The seriousness of relationships has taken a serious downfall according to studies conducted by *Seventeen Magazine*. Also according to *Seventeen Magazine* "among teen boys, serious relationships are about as common as hookups."

According to *Jezebel* magazine, the increase of pregnancy mostly takes place between the ages of 18 and 19. While many students are waiting to be sexually active until high school is over, there are still many students who have been or are pregnant. The fact is that it is becoming more culturally accepted to be a teenage mother nowadays than it was 20 years ago. Guttmacher Institute researcher Lawrence Finer said, "the focus on abstinence and the shifts in pregnancy occurred about the same time."

There are many other influences to teen pregnancy. Multiple reality shows, television shows and movies have surfaced, no-

table on MTV. Reality shows such as *Teen Mom* and *16 and Pregnant* show the lives of teenage mothers and the harsh reality of this ongoing issue.

Popular television show *The Secret Life of the American Teenager* shines a different light on this subject. It shows ongoing struggles that all teenagers face in their high school years. Finally, the movie *Pregnancy Pact* showed the hardships of having a baby at a young age.

Teenage pregnancy has been an ongoing issue in this country for many years, and most of the time people refuse to acknowledge it as an issue.

However, over the years, people have become more and more accepting of teenage pregnancy.

It has started to become more accepted in many cultures and it seems that our society has become more accepting of teenage pregnancy. According to *Jezebel*, most people disapprove of teenage pregnancy but they do watch shows about teenage mothers. It calls teenage pregnancy the new "thing" of this year.

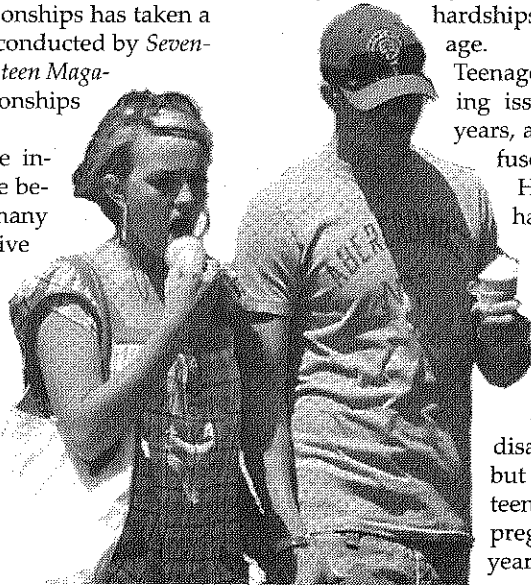


Photo courtesy of [fisherwy.blogspot](http://fisherwy.blogspot).

Jamie Lynn Spears is a celebrity known for her experience with teenage pregnancy.

## Student moves back from Africa and reflects on her experiences

ANNA DREYFUSS  
REPORTER

Leila Gustavsson left her home December 30, 2008, and arrived in Uganda, Africa on New Year's Eve. Gustavsson's mother works for foreign aid, helping third world countries, causing her to move to the exotic country. She was hired for the chief of party for Long-term Chemonics International, a company part of the Civil Society Fund, an organization based in Uganda that funds HIV aid victims.

So Gustavsson moved from Alexandria, Virginia, to Lubowa, Uganda, not knowing what to expect. When asked about the small private international school there, she said, "The students are really interesting, since they're from all over the world. They are used to moving over and over again, so everyone is very friendly and social. We all have interesting stories, but we're all just regular teens you would meet at an American high school." There are 30 kids in Gustavsson's class, but with that she has more freedom, like being able to go outside during class and listen to music while doing work. The small school has also never heard of bathroom passes.

Other than the teachers being a little difficult to understand and being from all over the world also, Gustavsson has become more interested in doing community service. "Last year, we helped at a church treating local people that can't afford medicine for themselves or their family. It was really sad to see this, but it was an amazing experience to help them. I also went to a very poor local school and played games with the children. Seeing how little they had made me feel extremely grateful for my life," said Gustavsson.

On a lighter note, Gustavsson has been exposed to many different and exotic animals, before she only saw on television.

The first safari she went to was in Lake Mburo, where she went horseback riding, one of her favorite activities she did in the States and saw hogs, antelope, zebras and buffalo. The next day, she went on a boat ride across the Mburo and saw birds, hippos and crocodiles. The second place was Murchison Falls, one of

her favorite experiences in being in Uganda. "We saw all different types of monkeys, elephants fighting with their tusks and even a hippo taking a mud bath!" said Gustavsson. It is no surprise she has a deep appreciation for all the different animals that cannot be found in the States.

When asked about African stereotypes, Gustavsson replied, "I don't have any lions or jungle animals living in my backyard, except for the occasional monkey, we have power and running water and many people think Africa is a dangerous place, but I feel completely safe here." Meeting the local natives was

definitely one of the most fun experiences for Gustavsson. "Ugandans are very friendly people. A lot of times, if they see a non African they will yell 'Hello Muzungo!' which is quite hilarious because it means different person. They are very kind and mannerly people, really a joy to be around," said Gustavsson.

As most of the Ugandans speak English to each other, it is not their mother tongue, because they are all different from tribes that speak different languages. The most commonly spoken language is Lugandan.

It was not very easy moving to a different continent, but Gustavsson said it was definitely the best experience in her life. "At first I really did not want to move to Africa, because I didn't want to leave my home or my friends, and I will admit it took me a long time to settle in. But I've made really good friends here, I feel like I've had a really unique experience, I mean honestly how many teenage girls get the chance to live in Africa? The place is really beautiful, it's very green and hilly, and I love seeing the amazing wildlife! I love the freedom and looking out over my balcony to see our gorgeous view of Lake Victoria. So the answer is yes, even though I miss Virginia, I am really happy to be living here for a while." She will come back to West Potomac in June with a new outlook in her hometown.

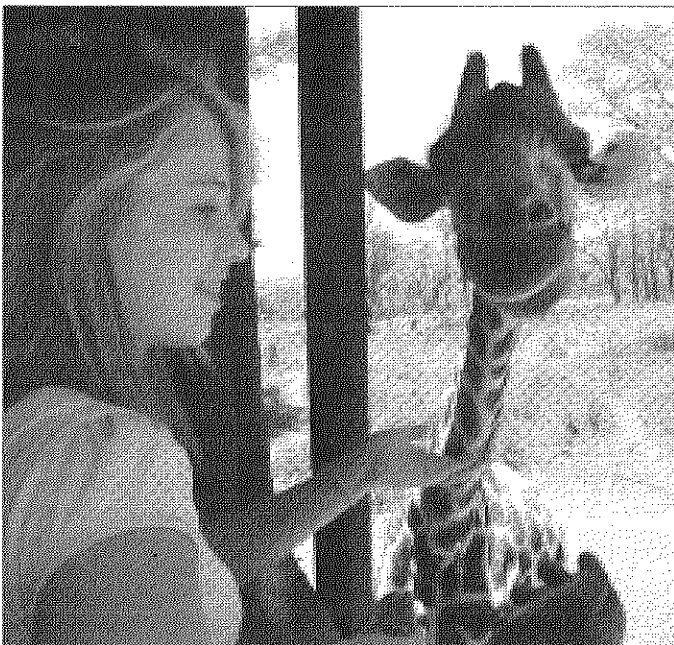


Photo courtesy of Leila Gustavsson

Leila Gustavsson lived in various places in Africa, including Uganda. While in Uganda, she immersed in the new cultures and got an up-close and personal look at the wildlife of the African savannah.

## Shayka Boyz sing to success

SARAH HOLLOWAY  
REPORTER

Many students have seen these boys around. Jacob Lawlor with his dark, curly mop hair is hard not to notice, as is Burke Solo in his band tees and exuberant demeanor.

What many do not know here at West Potomac is that these boys are members of a local band called Shayka Boyz. Band members include Lawlor (drums), Connor Chilton (vocals/guitar), Solo (vocals/guitar), Alex Wong (bass), and home-schooled Christian Jackie (guitar).

Shayka Boyz were recently put on the musical radar in our area because of their involvement in Battle of the Bands. The band auditioned and won over several other bands which gave them the opportunity to play at the popular 9:30 Club on Valentine's Day in D.C.

Two of the band members were responsible for creating Shayka Boyz, Chilton and Solo. They learned that the band will get to perform about 7 or 8 of their originally written songs with their new band members.

The boys play acoustic covers of popular songs (specifically a guitar rendition of "Hey Ya" by Outcast for those who witnessed their lunchtime show).

Cleverly named Shayka Boyz, Chilton and Solo humorously remarked, "Well, we both have epilepsy, so we thought it would be a kind of cool name." The "Boyz" classify their style as alternative rock, but they pick up just about every genre. Being talented musicians, they can all play varieties of music genres and are extremely versatile. Burke was sure to mention, "While Connor writes a lot of our lyrics, it is really collaboration among band members to put songs together."

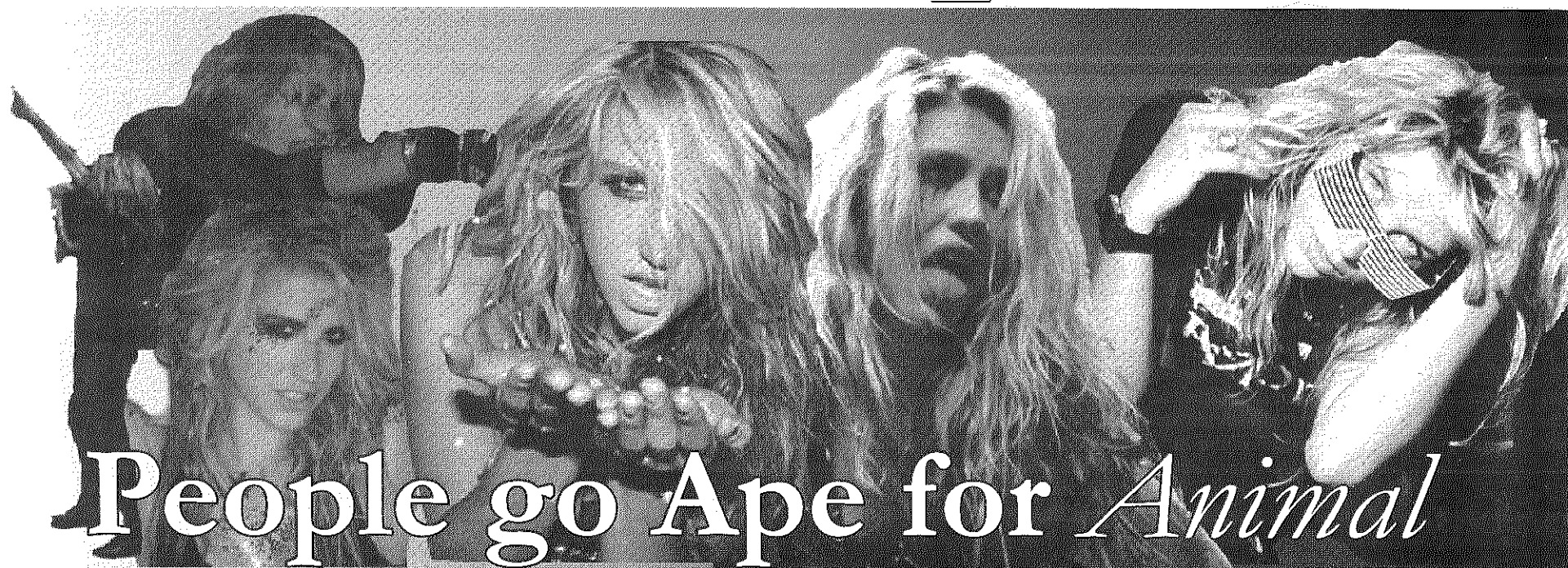
In the recent "West Potomac's Got Talent" show, band member Chilton played an acoustic duet with a West Potomac peer. YouTube has made it easy for the band to get their music circulating in the area, and all over cyberspace.

Many recount a few of the boys playing and singing during lunches to spark interest for the Guitar course offered at West Potomac. Who could forget assistant principal Ivan Johnson's solo? Hopefully, this will have been the first of many performances by the talented Shayka Boyz.



Shayka Boyz is a boy band that is composed of students from our school. The band has played at many competitions, including in Battle of the Bands.





Photos courtesy of keshaparty.com, idolator.com, justjared.buzznet.com Photo Illustration by Emily Griffin

## People go Ape for *Animal*

**NORRIS BROOKS**  
REPORTER

With her hit single "Tik Tok" topping the charts and snagging the last spot on the best songs of 2009 list, Kesha Sebert has had a stellar year. On January 5, 2010, she released her debut album *Animal*. After the album's release, the album immediately shot to the number one spot in the United States, selling 151,942 copies on the day it came out. "Tik Tok" is not the only song from the album to make the charts. "Blah Blah Blah" featuring 3OH!3 overtook "Tik Tok" and became the number one song, while "Your Love is My Drug" reached number eight. When asked what her favorite song on the album was, Kesha replied, "'Stephen,' a song about a boy I was obsessed with, but wouldn't give me the time of day." Kesha makes her feelings pretty clear when she sings, "I want to keep you as my pet to play with, and hide under my bed."

Kesha spent her early years in Nashville, Tennessee, hanging out in recording studios with her singer/songwriter mom, Pebe Sebert, who has been a great influence on her daughter. Pebe encouraged Kesha to sing and taught her how to write songs. The duo co-wrote many songs on

*Animal*.

The album has clearly lived up to the hype. Do the songs have deep and meaningful lyrics? No. Are they good? Yes. When asked about her style and success, Kesha said, "I'm just being myself. I don't know if people are necessarily looking for it or not looking for it. I'm just kind of being myself. There's nothing I can really do. I try not to think too much about trying to censor myself on record or off." Unlike most artists, Kesha does not care what people think, and her songs show it. Most of her songs are about partying and what life is like as a 22-year-old in New York.

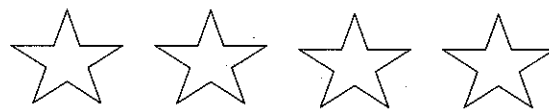
The reason her music is so appealing is the fact that she is not just another Hollywood airhead. She actually enjoys subjects like history and math. In fact, Kesha almost scored a perfect 1600 on her SAT's. The fact that people can respect her makes her music more interesting. When asked how she felt about her music being considered pop, she replied, "You can't take for granted that this is pop music. It's not rocket science, it's not brain surgery, and I'm gonna stand by the fact that I'm proud of this record. I'm not a moron, so there..." Her songs may not be the most original, but they are fun to listen to and help pass the time. *Rolling Stone* said it best when they reviewed *Animal*: "Kesha's

music is repulsive, obnoxious and ridiculously catchy."

The best songs on the album are "Blind," "Your Love is My Drug," "Stephen," and of course, "Tik Tok." Each song is filled with catchy lyrics and creative beats. The only cut on the album that is surprisingly bad is "Dinosaur," a song about an old man who is hitting on Kesha and her friends. The chorus is annoying and the subject matter unappealing. With her songs "Animal" and "Hungover," Kesha proves she has a powerful voice and is not just here for 15 minutes of fame.

Kesha is known for her unique style; she wears a variety of clothing with bleach blonde hair - she can even be compared to Lady Gaga in a more subtle form. Not only does her music grasp the attention of the public, so does her sense of fashion. With such a successful album, listeners look forward to hearing what will come from Kesha next.

Overall, Kesha's album deserves four out of five stars.



## Audiences swoon over *Dear John*

**NIA COPELAND**  
PHOTOGRAPHER

"Two weeks... that's all it took for me to fall for you..." is the line that many will remember after seeing *Dear John*, a romantic drama starring Channing Tatum and Amanda Seyfried.

Based on the novel by best-selling author Nicholas Sparks, this romantic drama tells story of John Tyree (Channing Tatum) and Savannah Curtis (Amanda Seyfried), who meet over spring vacation and immediately fall in love. John is a young soldier home on leave and Savannah an optimistic, naive college student who always seems to see the best in every situation. Over several years, the couple began to separate due to John's several deployments and only communicate through the very passionate and romantic love letters they sent each other while John is stationed overseas.

Tatum, who is famous for his appearances in movies such as *She's the Man*, *Step Up*, *Fighting*, *Public Enemies* and *G.I. Joe: Rise of Cobra*, is forced to play a more gentle and passionate character in this new film. Seyfried, made her movie, *Dear John*, acting career debut playing the supportive role of dim-witted Karen in the movie *Mean Girls* in 2004. She is also well known for her performance in the musical *Mamma Mia!*

The chemistry between Tatum and Seyfried is strong and clearly demonstrates how devastating it was to find true love and have it unexpectedly stolen from each other. Their letters, which took up a great portion of the beginning of the movie, also effectively portrayed how difficult it was and provided further connection and emotion.

Both actors have shown in their roles that they

are able to act in different genres and play the roles of many different characters. Surprisingly, Seyfried was able to bend her emotions and play the very affecting character of Savannah Curtis. She finally showed her serious side after being commonly remembered as "hilarious Karen" from *Mean Girls*. Tatum portrayed a very sensitive character and showed that he is able to handle an emotional role.

*Dear John* is often compared to epic romances such as *A Walk to Remember* and *The Notebook* but unfortunately, is not comparable. The film starts off very strong, building the intense relationship between Savannah and John and showing the deep connection and passionate interaction between the couple. However, everything quickly falls apart. Their relationship is put to the test after John decides to re-enlist into the army after the recent 9/11 attacks and the angle taken at the beginning of the movie disappears after his departure. From then on, we rarely ever hear of any more letters exchanged between the two. The movie definitely leaves one in a dizzy and confused after the plot loses focus and spins out of control.

Ultimately, *Dear John* is a predictable chick flick that appeals mainly to teenage girls and those who enjoy romantic films. The only thing that is not predictable about the story is the ending, which throws off many who have read the book. The movie ending is completely different from book which greatly surprised the members of the audience, especially since the ending of the book is the main point of the story.

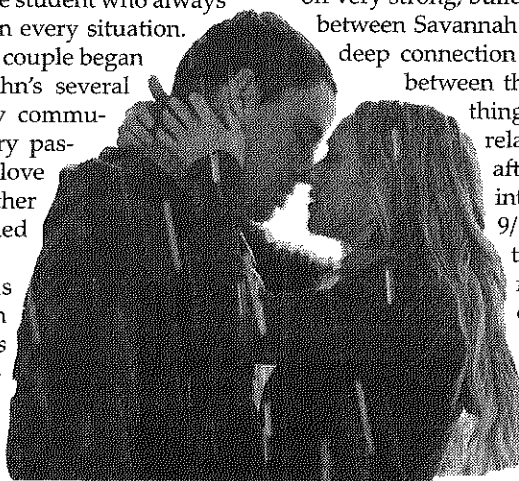


Photo by Scott Garfield/MCT

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# Was it love at first sight? Maybe.

A glimpse into the lives of Amanda Raffaele, Alex Pino, and their relationship

BRYAN JACOBS  
STYLE EDITOR

Alex Pino

Alex Pino is a "Lance Romance." He is a stunning 6'0", with straight brown hair, almond brown eyes, and perfect nails and skin. Pino has the women dying for his affection, yet his heart remains loyal to his beautiful girlfriend, Amanda Raffaele. Born in Alexandria, Virginia, but raised in Prince George's County, Pino's fondest childhood memory is that "one time, I beat up a kid." Other than his impressive drumming skills on Rockband, Pino said that he has immersed himself in the liberal arts since an early age. Pino attended a Montessori school and remained there until sixth grade. "I went to Stratford Landing for a year and then Sandburg for two years. Drew Staples and Stephen Reynolds were my best friends," said Pino. Pino describes his teenage years as, "all a haze of teenage angst and brooding redundancy."

However, even with his busy schedule, he finds time to remain the local socialite. His exclusive posse includes "Daniel Singer, Matt Clubb, Sam O'Neil, Drew Staples, Stephen Reynolds, Aadil Shafiq, James Lewis, and notorious Ben Reynolds." He said, "They are my best friends. Basically, we go out chill, hang out, and go to the hottest clubs. It really is not a big deal. Our motto is 'go big, or go home.'" He says, "We're a cut above

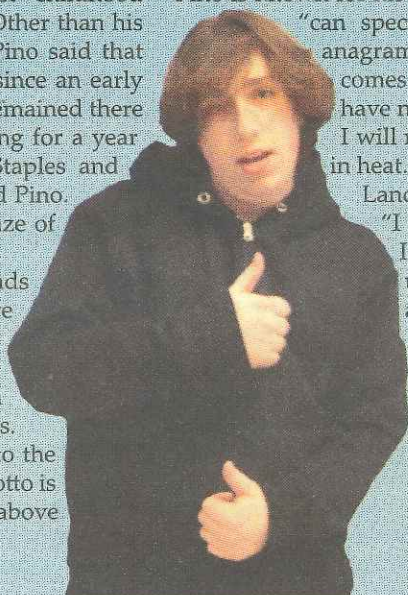


Photo by Sonia Garakyaraghi

nerds. We still do all the nerdy things like video games and *Lord of the Rings*.

Pino takes pride in his musical abilities. "My parents are very similar to music. In many ways... although nothing comes to mind." He is, however, similar to his parents in that they are "democratic all the way." Academically, Pino is currently taking Spanish, Government, English, Art, World Religions, and Geosystems. Aside from academia, Pino is known for his "good Nicolas Cage impression. He can specialize in the truth/future revealing anagrams. I am bad at lying also." When it comes to future plans, Pino is unsure. "I have no idea [what I want to do], hopefully I will not end up in India. I do not do well in heat."

Lance Romance's final comment was this: "I was once involved with a group of Irish vigilantes who were uncaptured until (myself included) they were ambushed in the house of head of an Italian mob syndicate. They strapped me to a chair and shot me. When I remembered, I was fatter."

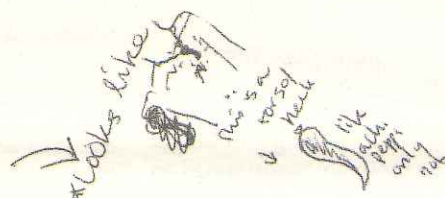
End.



Illustrations courtesy of Amanda Raffaele

Was it love at first sight? Describe it.

yes. no.  
actually yes.  
He wears an Italian Horn\* and when I saw it that was it. lol! in simple  
(also he dances like Michael Jackson)  
ahahaha



## Amanda Raffaele

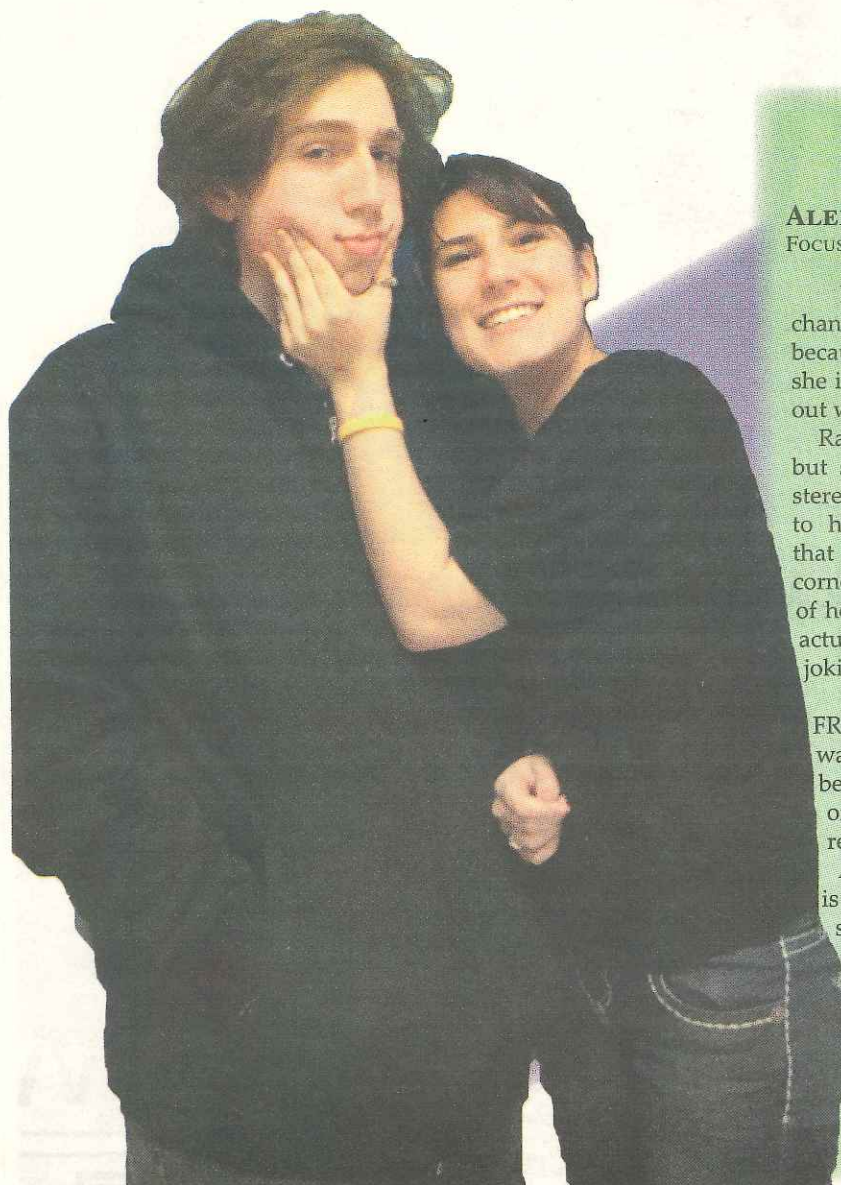


Photo by Sonia Garakyaraghi

ALEX FABRIZIO  
FOCUS EDITOR

Most people have probably not had the chance to talk to senior Amanda Raffaele. Not because she is reclusive or rude, but because she is usually found in Springbank or hanging out with her boyfriend, senior Alex Pino.

Raffaele is currently taking three art classes but she does not quite fit into the artsy kid stereotype. Within a few seconds of talking to her, it becomes overwhelmingly obvious that she does not sit at home alone in a dark corner of a room creating art that expresses all of her depressing thoughts. Her personality is actually quite the opposite. Raffaele is always joking around with her friends—err, friend.

"[Senior] Alexis Englemen IS MY ONLY FRIEND!!" she said. Her more serious reply was, "I try to associate with everyone. It's better to have friends all over the place instead of just one group of friends otherwise you really isolate yourself."

An apparent aspect of Raffaele's personality is her humor. When asked what inspires her she first answered "love," but then said, "jokesy things, I guess." This includes her relationship with Pino. (As demonstrated by her drawing of him and her response to whether or not it was love at first sight.)

At times Raffaele may seem strange, like

when she doodles the people that she knows on her class worksheets. These doodles provide humorous commentary and caricatures of everyone around her. She can be intimidating when she shows off her extensive pop cultural knowledge about obscure 90's rappers. Other quirks of hers include her collection of mascara with both normal and festive types, and a slight obsession with Dita Von Teese. She has said that she tries to channel Von Teese at times when getting ready for her day with her makeup and clothes. For the most part, however, she is just like everyone else.

Her typical weekend is rather characteristic of a high school student. It consists of hanging out with her boyfriend and their friends, playing video games and watching movies—usually at senior Daniel Singer's house.

Raffaele and Pino have been dating for over a year. She says their relationship was prompted by her (only) friend, Englemen, after the three of them had been spending a lot of time together over Thanksgiving break. The two are often found standing or walking around the hallways together, giving each other a smooch or two.

Next year, Raffaele plans to attend Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She would rather go to the University of Oregon, but it is too far from home.