



Discover what has been planned for prom this year.

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Should gym class be mandatory in schools or is it unnecessary?



In honor of autism month, learn about the disorder and its symptoms.



What has been going on with spring sports for our school?



Find out the good and the bad of the newest sensation, the iPad.



Read about all of the theories surrounding *Lost* as it comes to a close.



Read about the senior class president, Camilla Sanchez.

Seniors given opportunity to serve community

Gwen Fishel
Copy Editor

In June, seniors at West Potomac will have the opportunity to engage in a program of community service from June 3 through June 16, where they will have different service activities and internships in which they can participate, in an effort to give back to the community and leave a good legacy.

In a March meeting with the Student Government Association (SGA), Principal Clifford Hardison announced his plan to start this program, and model it off of other local schools. In a handout given to teachers at a faculty meeting and to the SGA, Hardison wrote, "I have discussed with the WP L[eadership] team that we need to consider other actionable and instructional changes to our end-of-year schedule for next year, for sure, but maybe starting this year as a pilot. The whole premise of June is not an *effective instructional time* for the majority of students and teachers." This original handout noted that students would be expected to have somewhere between 70-80 hours of service completed within the two weeks. It mentioned that students could work at Habitat for Humanity, shadow and intern at various places, etc. Most of the handout was unspecific and Hardison acknowledged this writing, "I do believe this all needs fleshing out."

On April 16, there was a senior/junior meeting, in which seniors were handed a new packet with more information on this new opportunity. According to the handout entitled "West Potomac High School Senior 2010 Community Service or Service learning Project," the program has since been named SHOUT (Students Helping Others United

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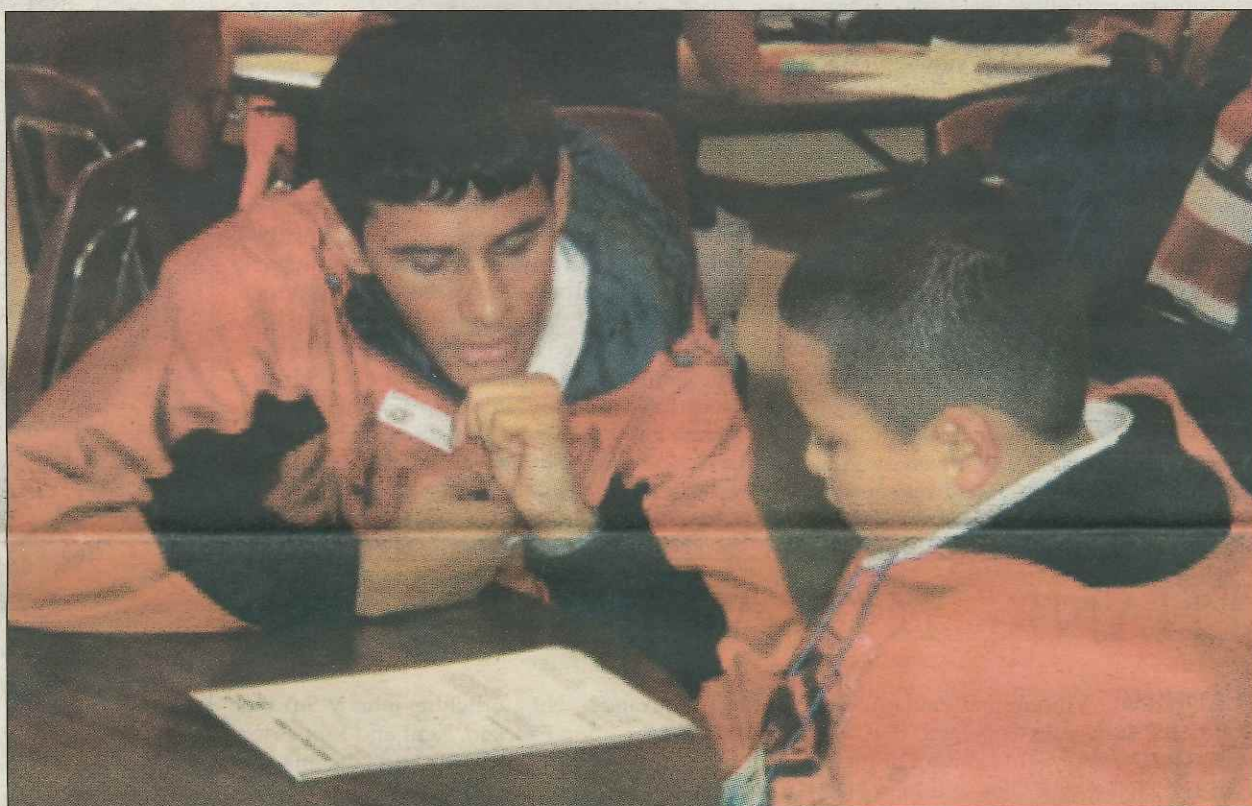


Photo Courtesy of Alex Butler

All year, seniors have mentored at Bucknell Elementary school as a part of an afterschool program. Pictured above, senior Kevin Del Sid helps his mentee with his homework. Some seniors are planning on continuing this as their service learning project. Senior Alex Butler said, "I'm considering volunteering at Bucknell because I like working with kids and I'm already helping with a fifth grade class."

Students stay silent to speak for others

Bryan Jacobs
Style Editor

On April 6, 2010, the Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) met to discuss the Day of Silence planned for April 16. The meeting was attended by six group members including the group sponsor, Ms. Kathryn Nelson. The group discussed ways to increase the group's popularity and message of tolerance in the school. Most important to the meeting was the effects that the Day of Silence, which was planned for April 16, would have on the student body of West Potomac. The group's secretary, Mariela Mira, led the discussions. She said, "The Day of Silence is a day where people support people in the closet and all others abused



Photo Courtesy of Kathryn Nelson

Gay-Straight Alliance members painted the "rock" to encourage student body awareness of the difficulties facing some students due to their sexual orientation.

for their sexual orientation. Basically, it supports the hurt." The Day of Silence helps and raises awareness for students in "the closet" and for those who are openly gay. The Day of Silence is considered important because it also raises awareness for homophobia and that gays are four times more likely to be bullied and commit suicide for their sexual orientation.

The Day of Silence is the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network's (GLSEN) annual day of action to protest the bullying and harassment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students and their supporters. Students take a daylong vow of silence to symbolically represent the silencing of LGBT students and their supporters in remembrance of Lawrence King, who was shot and killed for his orientation. The Day of Silence has been held each year in April since 1996.

The 2010 Day of Silence was on April 16. To end the Day of Silence, a party was held at an Oakton Unitarian Church rightly called, "Breaking the Silence." Three students from West Potomac attended. President of GSA, Alexander Tyson, was at the forefront of the "Breaking the Silence" party. Tyson said, "Well, I got there kind of early, so there weren't that many people there, but people started trickling in, and sitting down, talking to other people. After a bunch of people had arrived, some students went up to the microphone at the front of the church and just talked about their day of silence experiences then the pizza got there, and everyone ate and talked away, the lights went off, the music started blasting... In addition, students Mariela Mira and Ryan Mauldin came to the dance, along with somewhere around 30-40 people."

Overall, the Day of Silence and Breaking the Silence party were a major hit at West Potomac and hopes are high for

Students become princesses for prom

Michaela Accardi
Editor-in-Chief

On Friday, May 14 and Saturday, May 15, the Princess for a Night (PFAN) project will hold their eight annual clothing and dress selection at T.C. Williams High School, Mount Vernon High School, and Annandale Community Center.

The PFAN project is a collection for dry-cleaned formal dresses, shoes, handbags, jewelry, unused make-up and shopping bags. This project allows teenage girls throughout the community to attend prom without spending a lot of money, and has been done successfully for the past seven years. The project was first started by social worker Katie Basinski, "I had heard about [Princess for a Night] in other places and at that point I was the social worker at Edison, and I started it asking for dresses from my friends. The program started out small and has grown and grown each year," said Basinski.

In the past, the PFAN project has had girls mostly from Mount Vernon High School participate in the dress selection part of the program. Last year, about 200 girls arrived at Mount Vernon High School to find new and used dresses, about 80 of which were from Mount Vernon, while the remaining 20 were from other area high schools, according to Basinski.

Junior Reed Elbertson said, "Princess for a night gives every girl an opportunity to be glamorous and let everyone else see how special they are." Elbertson noted she would have donated her old homecoming dresses she usually wears only once, but she did not know where to drop them off. Last year, more than 500 dresses and other items

See Dresses on page 5

VA bans alcohol ads in college paper

Recently, the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University's student-run newspaper *The Collegiate Times* and the University of Virginia's newspaper *The Daily Cavalier* claimed that they have lost about 30,000 dollars in ad sales revenue due to a recent Virginia ban on alcohol ads in college newspapers.

This decision was made after the Fourth Circuit Panel ruled that Virginia's alcohol regulatory board can ban alcohol ads in student newspapers. Originally, the two universities claimed that this was a violation of First Amendment rights regarding commercial speech. This claim was supported by the district court, which permanently banned the Virginia's Alcoholic Beverage Control Board from enforcing the ban.

Soon this decision was reversed in the court of appeals in Richmond, Virginia. For the 2-1 panel, Judge Dennis Shedd wrote that the restriction "is narrowly tailored to serve the board's interest of establishing a comprehensive scheme attacking the problem of underage and dangerous drinking by college students." Therefore, this ban allows restaurants to advertise drink specials and the restriction only applies to collegiate newspapers which are largely targeted at students under the age of 21.

The US District Judge Norman Moon, who participated in the panel discussion, wrote the dissenting opinion and claimed that the newspapers could resolve the issue because the majority of their readers are over 21.

Behind all of these state court cases and argument of Constitutional rights is the fundamental question, would the ban of these ads in newspapers truly put a stop or decrease the number of underage or binge drinkers on college campuses? No, they would not. According to a 1999 study by the Harvard University School of Public Health College, binge drinkers cite their

reasons for drinking as drinking to get "drunk," the status associated with drinking, culture of alcohol consumption on college campuses, and peer pressure and academic stress. Even if these ads were not present, the culture of consuming alcohol on college campuses would still exist, as it always has. When outside of college campuses, ads for alcohol are present. "Outside" of a college campus is not that far, in many cases it is the same distance as dorms are away from central campus. If a college newspaper is independent, meaning not sponsored by the school, alcohol ads should not be prohibited.

Even when teenagers begin to experiment with drugs and alcohol in high school, they do so without seeing ads published around the school environment and in for example, this student-run newspaper. While this is an extreme violation of first amendment rights to commercial speech, this attempt towards control will prove to be unsuccessful. Students are well aware of the harmful effects of binge drinking but still do so. In a 2007 Monitoring the Future survey one in eight (13%) of college students reported having 10 or more drinks in a row at least once in the prior two weeks.

As newspapers all over the country, and around the world, decrease their circulation and slowly go out of business, some analysts say the death of in-depth journalism is fast-approaching. By decreasing the revenue of these valuable learning tools and award-winning collegiate newspapers, the breed of conventional journalists will soon too die. These newspapers are not supported by the school and are entirely student-run - the school does not pay for it to be printed. If *The Daily Cavalier*, *The Collegiate Times*, and other college newspapers go under, so will the major outlets for budding journalists to develop their skills and thoughts.

Rants and Raves

A rant for the Capitals' disappointing end to a great season.

A rave for NBA Playoffs on TNT.

A rant for a huge oil spill off the Gulf Coast.

A rave for *Iron Man 2* coming out.

A rant for unpronounceable Icelandic erupting volcanoes.

A rave for the JV girls lacrosse team going undefeated.

A rant for A.P. testing.

A rave for the end of the school year (31 more days!).

Should freshman be forced to pay for their own sports next year?

Dear Editor,

I am addressing the current issue which is requiring the freshmen next year to pay for their own sports. As a freshman this year, I have had an outstanding experience playing sports during all seasons. However, all of the sports that I play require different equipment. Equipment ranges from a simple two dollar lacrosse ball to a one-hundred dollar field hockey stick. On top of all that, spirit wear is also pricey. Although spirit wear is not required, there are plenty of days when your team wears spirit wear to represent the team. I could not imagine having to pay to play the sport that I desire to. On that note, there are plenty of people that unfortunately cannot afford to pay for basic needs like food and shelter.

To have to pay for a recreational activity at your school would evidently be an embarrassment. If the freshmen did have to pay, the sports teams would simply diminish. There have already been situations where a JV team could not be structured because of the lack of participants. When you have to pay to actually play the sport, it is a huge turn off.

For something like this decision to occur, I think that it should require a school-wide vote. The school should even get parents involved. I think that being part of a sports team is part of the entire high-school experience. If you cannot participate in the sport of your choosing because of financial issues, that is a huge downfall for yourself and your future teammates. What if you are a star player, but cannot participate in playing because your family is having financial issues? In conclusion, the final decisions that may require freshmen to pay for their sports should be looked deeply into and should be well thought out.

Karley Zdebski, Freshman

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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THE WIRE Staff

West Potomac High School
6500 Quander Road
Alexandria, VA 22307
Volume #25 Issue #8

Editors-in-Chief
Lucas Alexander
Michaela Accardi

Focus Editor
Alex Fabrizio

Entertainment Editor
Alex Britcliffe

Copy Editors
Gwen Fishel
Emily Smith

Assistant Focus Editor
Maggie Grady

Photographers
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The JMU riot was not an isolated event



Katelyn Woodward
Reporter

James Madison University in central Virginia gained national attention over the weekend of April 10 when police clashed with students and community members at their annual block party.

The event, called "Springfest," generally attracts about 2,000 people; however this year, over 8,000 people attended the party in a popular neighborhood near the campus. Things quickly got out of hand as beer bottles and cans flew, hitting many and injuring some, while car and house windows were smashed and dumpsters were set on fire. Over 200 local police were dispatched to quell the commotion and were met with flying bottles and an onslaught of drunken, angry college students. When partygoers were unresponsive to police efforts, the police used tear gas to break up the huge crowd. Some partygoers were also sprayed with pepper spray, or hit with rubber bullets. In response, beer cans and bottles were thrown at the police force, which was prepared for the backlash in SWAT uniforms complete with riot shields and a K-9 unit.

By the end of the night, more than 30 arrests had been made and several people had been flown to the University of Virginia Medical Center, while about 30 were treated at the Rockingham Memorial Hospital for unspecified injuries. These figures have sparked significant criticism toward the JMU community from news services and other universities across the country, especially in Virginia.

It is clear that the events at JMU got out of hand very quickly, and that those present were immature in their actions toward law enforcement. However, this activity is not unique to JMU, nor should it be considered a reflection of this institution alone. Every year, many schools across the country host Springfest-

type parties to celebrate the arrival of warm weather, and of those, many end in situations similar to the one at JMU.

At the University of California in Santa Barbara, "Flotopia" is an unofficial beach party which last year resulted in 13 arrests and 33 hospitalizations. This year, when police closed the beach off and moved the party to the streets, 31 people were arrested and 12 hospitalized, from a crowd of about 8,000 in the off-campus student residence area.

Similarly, the Mifflin Street Block Party at the University of Wisconsin has yielded around 440 arrests over the past several years. These numbers have pushed the event to have some sort of official sponsor, and police are being urged to give verbal warnings before arresting partygoers.

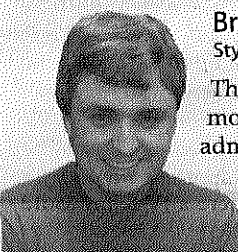
Perhaps most akin to the JMU riot, the Spring Jam celebration at the University of Minnesota spiraled out of control when students began starting fires and tearing down street signs. Police here were also forced to tear-gas the crowd, and arrested 12. This year, the event will be shorter and attended by police.

It is also important to note that a significant number of those present at Springfest were not JMU students, and instead hailed from neighboring schools such as Virginia Tech and Washington and Lee. Additionally, many were high school students attending orientation or simply visiting from several Harrisonburg high schools. Senior Maggie Farnin witnessed the events first-hand and said, "There were kids from all over the country- Jersey, the Carolinas; only like 2,000 of that whole crowd even go to JMU."

Although some JMU students can definitely be held responsible for damages inflicted during the party, we should not single out their school or student body. Considering the apparent prevalence of such activity around the country, perhaps we should instead evaluate what we have come to accept, and expect, as college culture.

kwoodward@wpwire.com

Nuclear Iranian technology poses a threat



Bryan Jacobs
Style Editor

The current situation in Iran is the most daunting task facing the Obama administration. Following along the lines of the Bush administration "The Axis of Evil" (Iran) will soon have the capability to truly unleash their nuclear capabilities on the Middle East and the world if their nuclear

ambitions are not ebbed. It is important to note that the true "Axis of Evil" is not the people of Iran but rather the President of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and the country's religious theocracy.

After the Iranian government declared that they intended to go nuclear in 2002, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad quickly came to the world scene. On his presidential website, he wrote, "The Zionist regime is in a total dead end and, God willing... will disappear off the face of the world," calling for the complete destruction of Israel. This was a wake-up call to the Western world that the Iranian government had truly sinister intentions.

The post came only months after the Iranian government declared that they were developing nuclear technology. Obviously, Israel, one of the Middle East's wealthiest and the most powerful democracy was concerned. A nuclear Iran not only had political, military and religious implications, but also hurt the interests of many countries in the region and caused more tension in a fragile area of the world. The Israeli government responded swiftly to the statement made by the Iranian President by saying, if necessary, "force" would be applied to Iran to stop their nuclear intentions. Internationally, the UN Security Council levied embargos and sanctions on Iran after nuclear inspectors were not allowed in the country;

recently, the sanctions have found to have little impact on the Iranian government. Finally, the Bush administration decided that little involvement in the issue and "staying strong" would solve the problem.

Now, the year is 2010. Barack Obama and the democrats won key victories in the House and Senate in 2008, but congressional democrats futures are looking bleak in the upcoming November elections; the time is to act now. With Iran on the verge on developing a nuclear weapon, an international victory could save Democratic politicians and ultimately Obama politically, as well as save the world from a potential nuclear World War III.

Obama and Congress need to focus on the true threat of the Middle East, not terrorists hiding out in caves. The Iranian government is Shiite, a Muslim minority, and has many internal problems, but Iran would have no hesitation to terrorize Israel, Europe, or possibly, the United States with nuclear weapons. The Iranian government is the true country who *will* have "weapons of mass destruction" if the international community, notable Israel and the United States, does not strike first. If the Iranian government does not bow to the West's nuclear incentives and goals, it is imperative that the current administration or Israel bombs the nuclear facilities of Iran to stop further development. The destruction of the nuclear plants would weaken the government so much that it could be the linchpin for the Green revolution in Iran to revolt and overthrow the government. In simpler terms, the eroded legitimacy of the failed theocracy will take a turn for the worse, giving the revolution a clear shot to topple Admajinahad and his religiously crazed government.

I do not support violence, however if there is no other option, I think that force is appropriate.

bjacobs@wpwire.com

Large and in Charge

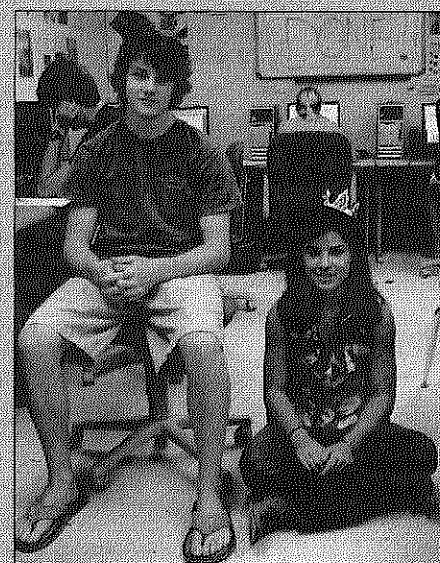


Photo by Megan Haley

Lucas Alexander
Editor in Chief

As every school year nears the end, students are put into the same situations over and over again. When May comes around, which means SOLs and AP exams, teachers continue to focus on cramming every lesson into the days that they can. While it is obviously necessary for learning purposes to finish lessons and chapters that are going to be on the tests, it is up to the teachers to fit these into the year adequately, so that proper review time can be used.

Instead, teachers sacrifice any time the students have for review by continuing to test and try to cram things into student's heads right before they take the tests. This is not helpful because it only puts a focus on the lessons later in the year, and causes older lessons fall out of focus.

Mentally, students check out after they take their AP exams or SOLs, because those tests have been the focus of the entire year. When they are finally over and the students' hard work has culminated, there is no push or desire to continue to work at new lessons.

However, even for seniors, some teachers continue to try to cram grades, tests, or completely new information into the last month or so. On the contrary, others teachers completely drop everything and just stop teaching all together. The problem with this is that there really is no medium between the two styles, and students end up caught in the middle.

In order for the educational value of the last few months of school to hold, teachers need to come to an agreement about how to handle it. The differences in teachers techniques only hurts students more, because the classes that do no more work hurt students' work ethics, and they lose interest in all other classes. Still, if every class still had work, students would still check out and lose focus because of a lack of interest. Because of this, teachers need to reach a middle ground where they can still help educate students without them losing complete interest in the lessons.

Another problem that teachers run into is late finals. The fact is that students lose all focus in early June, and stop caring and lose focus, cause low marks on their finals. However, some of the more experienced teachers solve this problem by setting aside long and involved projects for the month of June. This still teaches the subject to the students, but can also act as a replacement for a final exam. This is a good strategy because it does not overwhelm students with a bunch of busy work, and provide a relatively interesting activity to encourage kids to attend the last few weeks of school.

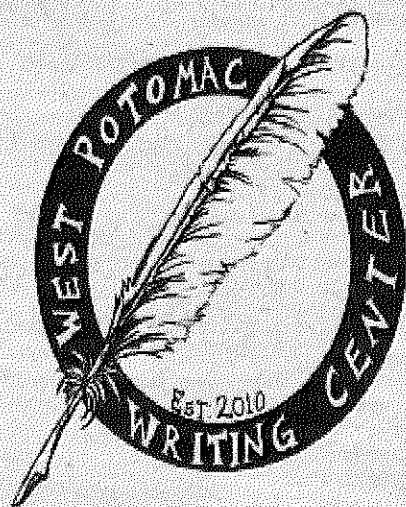
The lack of interest in the last few weeks of school makes the service learning project a good idea, because it provides students with a respectable way to accomplish something like community service and not hurt their grades by simply falling out of focus in school. In its pilot year, it will be interesting to see how it turns out. If it works, it could provide a good solution for future.

lalexander@wpwire.com

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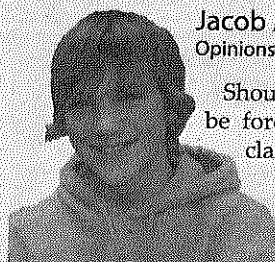
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OPINIONS

Gym class should not be forced



Jacob Alexander
Opinions Editor

Should students really be forced to take gym class in high school?

With the growing problem of obesity in America, many people may

think that gym class is good for students. It gives them time to get exercise and could help cut down on this problem. However, is it really necessary for all students?

Many students stay in shape in other ways. The best way they do this is by participating in team sports for their school. Playing on a sports team gives students daily after school exercise, so gym class is not a necessity to these kids. Therefore, students who participate in a school sport for every season of the year should not be forced to take gym class their freshman or sophomore year, which is what they are required to do now. If they are constantly participating in sports, they are constantly getting exercise and do not need gym class.

Many students strongly dislike gym class in the first place, and this would be an alternative most of them would be happy to choose. Sophomore Dale Lescher said, "As a three sport athlete, gym class does absolutely nothing for me. It annoys me when kids don't take it seriously. It makes the class less fun." Many students think of gym class as a joke where nothing gets done and could easily be spending this waste of an hour and a half doing something more productive. Although there are physical activities in gym, many students do not take them seriously and do not even get much exercise. The students who do not need the exercise because they play sports are stuck having to deal with the kids who are just sitting around. Gym class then becomes boring and serves

them no purpose.

If this opportunity was given, many students who dislike gym class would choose to participate in sports. They would enjoy school much more and also get a much more efficient workout every day. Doing this would also help cut more on the problem of obesity than forced gym class does now. Although sometimes students are forced to participate in physical activity such as when they run the mile, this is still very rare and does not help much. Besides, some students even choose not to participate in things like that and just get a bad grade rather than run for a couple of minutes.

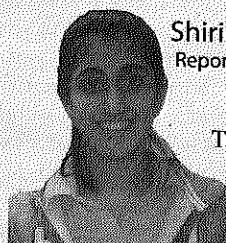
The only things students that already participate in sports benefit from in gym class are health and drivers' education classes. Obviously if these students were not in gym classes, they would not receive these classes, which are needed, especially drivers' education. However, there is an easy solution to this problem, too. These classes could easily be implemented into other classes. For example, students could learn a health unit in science classes.

If this happened, the students that were not participating in gym class because they were doing sports would be able to complete these classes. This would also give the students who are in gym class another one or two quarters a year in actual gym class, rather than in a classroom learning health.

Overall, gym class is not needed for students who decide to participate in sports. Students take gym class as a joke of a class and benefit very little out of it. Students overall would benefit more if they were not forced to take gym class if they chose to do sports year round because more students would choose this. This would give more students a better exercise every day and the chance to take a class that they can actually care about and benefit from in their future.

jalexander@wpwire.com

Knocking out bullying in school



Shirine Loghmanian
Reporter

The death of 15-year-old Massachusetts resident Phoebe Prince has helped raise awareness

regarding bullying in schools. This case has shone a light on the growing amount of bullying in various high schools across the nation.

Phoebe Prince was a new Irish girl who had just entered South Hadley High, a school in Massachusetts, for her freshman year. She was brutally harassed by a group of nine teenagers. Students would knock her books out of her hands, fling several items at her, send her threatening messages over her phone etc.

By January 14, Prince had undergone an overwhelming amount of torture and committed suicide by hanging herself.

In the bullying case in Massachusetts, Prince was harassed repeatedly on school grounds. This is not acceptable, as schools should be held responsible for the safety and health of their students. According to the *Washington Post*, the school was already informed about the harassment of Phoebe Prince before her death.

Also, prior to Prince's death, her mother spoke with at least two school staff members about the harassment Phoebe had reported to her. Sophomore Taylor Evans said, "It is completely unacceptable that the school was informed about Phoebe Prince's case and chose to do nothing. Her death could have been prevented by taking disciplinary actions against the nine teenagers who were bullying her."

The school needs to take the initiative and try to prevent bullying from occurring. Faculty members should report any bullying they see and try to implement harsher disciplinary actions. This can include actions ranging from detention

to suspension. Sophomore Reanna Dona said, "counselors can provide sessions for students who feel harassed at school. School is supposed to be a safe learning environment." The school can also try to create and advertise an anonymous website or hotline where students can report bullying. This way, any bystanders or teachers could easily report harassment occurring in the school.

An online system was developed by the Hillsborough County's Anti-Bullying Youth Advisory Subcommittee in Florida. It allows anyone to anonymously report bullying occurring in the county. It proved to be very successful after the school successfully got a report of a bullying case on the first day back. Sophomore Taylor Evans said, "I don't think West Potomac has a bullying problem, but this system could definitely improve a number of various issues occurring in our school. For example, it could also be used as a helpful tip site. Also, it must not be very expensive to set up."

Sophomore Jackie Beckwith agreed with Evans and said, "This could really help stop bullying. Especially now with the internet and phones there are a number of ways students can be harassed and bullied. This can be a great solution to this problem." New technologies have allowed bullying to spread and become more common.

The new online system or hotline can be easily set up and could be very helpful in preventing bullying from starting and spreading. According to www.how-to-stop-bullying.com, 96% of children will be bullied at least once in their life time.

It is about time our school took initiative and took actions to stop bullying at our school.

Shirine Loghmanian

sloghmanian@wpwire.com

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People become aware of autism

Camille DiFolco
Photographer

April is National Autism Awareness Month, but many people are unsure as to what exactly autism is. According to the Autism Society of America, autism is a "complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and affects a person's ability to communicate and interact with others." This definition is, however quite broad and there is much that experts still do not know about autism.

A certain set of behaviors known as "spectrum disorder" is used to gauge the degree to which various individuals are affected by autism. Some autistic children virtually never speak, as they are so engrossed within their own mind that they cannot surface, while other children affected by what is known as high-functioning autism are able to do things such as read and write, show affection, and do math. However, these children may not be able to pick up on social cues or hold eye contact. High-functioning autism is not a specific diagnostic term, and it is not precisely the same as Asperger's Syndrome.

Today, it is estimated that 1 in 110 births are affected by autism, and 1 in 70 births in boys. This means that as many as 1.5 million Americans may be on the spectrum. In a 2005 Medscape interview with autism expert Catherine Lord, Ph.D., explained that "even with a very

expert person conducting the [screening] tests, at least 50% of the cases may be missed." Apparently, autism may not be readily recognizable in children until they are two or three years of age. Lord also cautions against allowing autistic children to remain completely isolated. If it is diagnosed early on, it is key to "bring the child into social interaction...[and] to really engage each child as much as possible [in the hope that] we may be able to decrease quite markedly the social deficits that children with autism have when they're older."

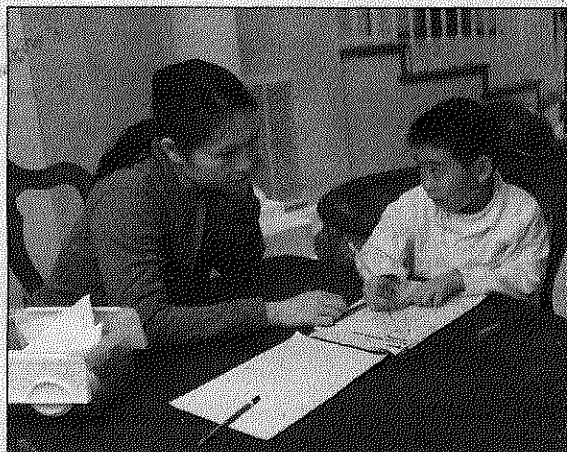


Photo by Michael Allen Jones/MCT

Students living with autism have many challenges to overcome and rewards for their dedication in school and at home.

tal triggers, and brain imaging technology. Certainly genetics are a factor, but unlike some other disorders, autism cannot be pinned on any one gene. Also, "both prenatal and postnatal exposures like diet or chemicals" could provoke autism. Dr. Goldstein clarified, "Once we understand the brain activity involved, we should be able to design more effective drugs to combat the symptoms of autism."

An interview with Dr. Gary Goldstein, the president of the Kennedy Krieger Institute and Clinical Scientific Advisor for Autism Speaks, addresses this topic in more detail. The interview, which is posted on the Autism Speaks website, describes the three main focuses of current autism research. These are genetics, environmental

New opportunities for community service

Continued from page 1

Together), which is credited as being the idea of parent Jim Fishel.

The project will encompass the Essential Life Skills and Community set forth by Fairfax County Public Schools, and the new West Potomac Student Improvement Plan (SIP) that was created this school year. The newest requirements state that seniors will be required to get the approval of all of their teachers. In addition, students cannot be in danger of not graduating, and students in classes with Standards of Learning (SOL) tests at the end of the year are required to arrange a time to take them. Students who are able to participate must now only complete 50 hours of community service. As for senior exams, they would be given before the starting date on June 3, and teachers have a variety of options, including but not limited to projects and tests, or may choose to forgo the exam all together.

Students who were interested had to fill a form out and get the signatures and approval of all teachers and their parents by May 7, and return it to one of the two senior class sponsors, Ms. Gloria Robinson or Ms. Marilyn Moore. Students could choose their own activity to submit for approval, or choose from the list of pre-approved opportunities, which could be found on the Blackboard Student Portal, or in the main office. It is noted that students are required to provide their own food and transportation.

The conditions from that point are up to the student. They could choose to "complete the 50 hours via a few days of intense effort or spread the time out...[and it is] dependant on what activity the students select to do or submit." On June 17, students will be required to present a presentation on their project, by whatever means they choose to do so. The handout mentions that students can make a Youtube video, poster board, collage of photos, skit, poem, or even an essay. It just depends on what the student wants.

According to Hardison, accountability is "biggest hold up for a lot of people." However, Hardison insists that seniors are more than able to represent themselves, and there has to be a level of responsibility and trust. He said, "I wouldn't give it if I didn't trust you guys." Hardison also noted that "excellence is a tradition" here at West Potomac, and that he "hopes that the seniors leave a great legacy."

Senior Morgan Carter said, "I'm looking forward to working with elementary students at Hollin Meadows. This is a great idea in my opinion. I plan on taking full advantage of it."

Teachers have mixed views on this program and how it will affect their June instructional programs. While some teachers think that it will interrupt their ability to teach students and change their end of the year curriculum, others are enthusiastic and supportive of the idea. Business and leadership teacher, LaTrease Rich, said that she thinks it is a good idea. She said, "I think it's a great initiative and if properly implemented, the students of West Potomac have the opportunity to make a tremendous impact in our community." English teacher, Bernard Cabral, said, "How can anyone be against community service? Everyone benefits from it, right? If for two straight weeks several hundred West Potomac seniors volunteer their time to serve their community—well, a lot of wonderful things will surely happen."

Five students imprisoned in Pakistan

Emily Griffin
News Editor

A group of five American men from the D.C./metro area were arrested and are on trial in Pakistan, waiting for their verdict.

The D.C. Five is made up of a group of students, Umar Farooq, Ahmed Abdulah Minni, Aman Hassan Yemer, Waqar Hussain Khan and Ramy Zamzam, who have been arrested in Pakistan. Artis Borracho Rutledge, a 2009 West Potomac graduate who was on the wrestling team with Minni told the Salt Lake Tribune, "He [Minni] was always a very nice, calm and energetic guy. Never would hurt a fly. All I can say is Ahmed Minni was a great guy, and I could never imagine him doing anything to this extent." Zamzam's mother, Amal Khalifa, stated to the *New York Times* that "He [Zamzam] said: 'Mom, I love my country. I want to go back to my country. Why do the Pakistanis want to do this to us?'" While Khalifa stated that she and her husband are not very religious, meaning they go to the mosque only on Muslim holidays, Zamzam and his friends at West Potomac regularly went to the neighborhood mosque. They used to worship together at a mosque in Alexandria, Virginia; they then went missing in November and were found in December in Pakistan, according to CNN.com. They were then arrested in Sargodha, which is 120 miles south of Islamabad, after their parents, who live in the United States, reported them missing to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) reported CNN.

These five students have been put on trial in Sargodha, Pakistan on Wednesday, April 14. They have been accused of plotting attacks against Pakistan, while the Pakistani officials have been accused of fabricating evidence against the Americans. If convicted, these men could receive life in prison; many are worried about this possibility as the Pakistani officials have been said to be under severe pressure to convict them according to CNN.com. The Pakistani authorities accused the men of trying to join extremist groups in Pakistan, in which the men tried to communicate with the groups via Facebook and YouTube. The Pakistani police

continued by stating to nydailynews.com: "We have seized maps of a Pakistan air force base in Sargodha and some sensitive installations at Chashma Barrage outside the town." The map of the Chashma Barrage has a major water reservoir and huge power plants that are frequently in use.

According to CNN.com, Tariq Asad of the defense counsel stated that "We have gone through all their statements and the story. [Pakistani authorities] have manipulated and concocted things which really are not true. They are false and frivolous." While Asad refused to give information involving the evidence, he mentioned the Pakistani authority's fabrication of evidence against these teens. He told various news channels, including Fox News, that he believed some of the evidence that the

authorities had acquired was on the teens' computers, then, the authorities manipulated their findings, which was various emails to the extremist group leader of the Taliban. The Pakistani authorities stated that they have tracked down the men's e-mails with various extremist groups, but they have had difficulties tracking down the alleged Taliban recruiter named Saifullah, who has been reported by nydailynews.com to have been in contact with all five men.

Very few people have been allowed access to visit these men. So far, according to nydailynews.com, the FBI has been granted very limited and strict visitation rights to the men. The verdict of the trial has yet to be announced, but both the Pakistani and the United States (US) authorities have predicted, according to cnn.com, that the men will be deported back to the US and be dealt with accordingly. Richard Snelsire, the spokesman of the US Embassy had no comment on this matter. According to nydailynews.com, the Pakistani extremist group, the Taliban, has fled to Orakzi, Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani has reported to pursue a full-scale offensive attack on Orakzi. The United Nations has reported that approximately 40,000 people have fled Orakzi.

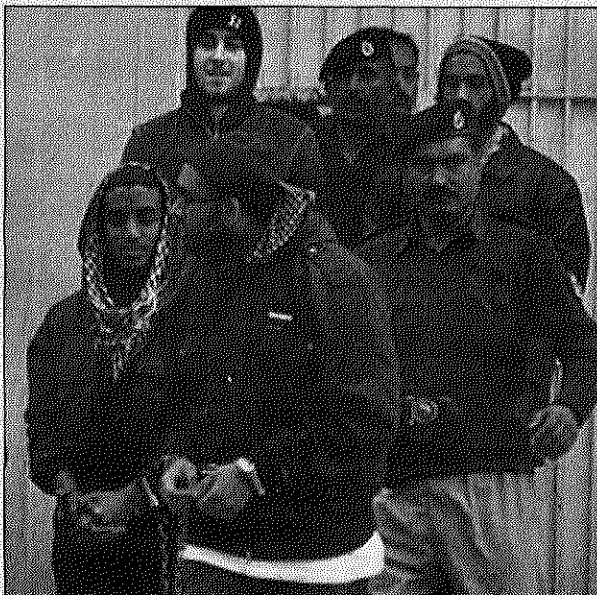


Photo courtesy of csmonitor.com

Five students have been convicted and jailed in Pakistan of attempting to join the extremist group, the Taliban. Pakistani authorities have evidence of communication between these students and the Taliban leader.

Prom dreams come true for many girls

Continued from page 1

were donated to the project and more than 325 students from 11 high schools attended the shopping day. Most of the student body has been uninformed about donation dates, but students like Elbertson encourage participation next year. "Yes, I would participate. I think [the Princess for a Night project] would be a good idea, if you have trouble finding a particular style or size," said sophomore Emily Woods.

"Usually I contact your school social worker Mr. Jones-Mendelsohn, but I would be happy to work with the [SGA], I just do not have a contact," said Basinski. Coordination for next year will follow, if desired, by the two programs.

Currently, for women in need of a dress, dress selection will take place at T.C. Williams High School on Friday, May 14 from 4 to 6 p.m. and Saturday, May 15 from 9 a.m. to noon. In addition, students can go to Annandale Neighborhood Center on Monday, May 3 from 3 to 8 p.m. Students will be served on a first-come, first-serve basis and all northern Virginia students are welcome.

According to Alexandria Public Schools, donations are accepted to support the project in future years.

would have all night

the tradition

Maggie Grady
Business Manager/Asst. Focus Editor

High school prom, a traditional rite of passage for the final two years of school, but is it really all that it is said to be? From TV shows to the box office, prom has been stereotyped as "one of the best nights of our lives." Several prom stereotypes include finding that perfect dress, going with your "high school sweetheart," crowning the prom king and queen, and riding in a limousine. But, where do all of them come from? Several of them come from movies like *Pretty in Pink*, *American Pie*, *Carrie*, *Prom Night*, and *10 Things I Hate About You*. Even reality shows, including MTV's *Laguna Beach*, feature prom episodes highlighting various stereotypes. All of these things have influenced the way the average American teenager views prom night.

the stereotypes

Jacob Alexander
Co-Opinions Editor

When most people think of a prom king or queen, a particular type of person in mind. They picture someone who knows the whole school—someone with good looks who knows how to have a good time---as king. The queen is as a good-looking popular girl, who is captain of the cheer team and has a bad attitude. The prom king and queen are already very popular in school. Their announcement is no surprise. Most students have a general idea of who will be king and queen before the prom happens.

the sweet ride

Josh Belanger
Assistant Sports Editor

When it comes to a student's "big" day, nothing is more important than the ride in which they arrive. Even Cinderella did not have a regular carriage; she arrived in a magical pumpkin carriage that a fairy godmother created for her. So, when it comes to Prom, students only want the best that their parents' credit cards can afford, and that usually turns out to be a limo. A big favorite at prom is the stretch Hummer edition; however, other students prefer the original super stretch black limo. The parents take hundreds of photos of their kids in front of the limo, which usually end up on Facebook or sent around via email to anyone your mom has met in her life. Next comes the ride in the super limo, which you share with some of your best friends. To most students, this will be the only time they ride in a luxurious limo in their life, and will be a moment they will never forget. Prom has tons of traditions and stereotypes, but none are more popular to the students than getting a ride in the limo on Prom Night.

mead nt

typical outcome

n, they have a sports star that grades who also picture the queen the cheerleading e will earn them te both the prom L the official ally have a e prom actually

Norris Brooks
Reporter

the high school sweethearts

As May approaches and prom season is in full swing, one goal is on every student's mind: finding a date. From the time kids are little, fairytales, novels, and movies put the idea into their minds of going to prom or a glorious dance with the "love of their life." However, as more and more kids find themselves dateless for prom, unconventional ideas are brought into the picture. Now, quite different than in the past, girls and boys are going to prom as "just friends." Pacts are even being made by freshman to go to their junior and senior proms with their closest guy or girl friend. Students are also going in groups of ten to twenty people. The evening begins at someone's house for fun group photos and then the entire group heads to the dance. As it turns out, this approach causes students to have a lot less anxiety about the "big" night. The pressure is off, and the only focus is having fun.

the perfect dress

Nia Copeland
Photographer

For many young ladies, the dream of the perfect prom night means wearing a dress that attracts everyone's attention. However, many girls hunt and search through every inch of several stores hoping to find "that perfect prom dress," and still end up overpaying for a less than ideal dress. With prom just around the corner, figuring out how to pick the perfect prom dress should be the first thing on the minds of all female high school juniors and seniors. After all, it is important to look absolutely fabulous for the most memorable event of high school. To those searching for the most beautiful and elegant dress: be sure to pick one that is unique. It would be terrible to show up to prom and run into somebody else wearing the same dress. The key to finding the perfect prom dress is to pick one that matches your personality. Since everyone has a different personality, the perfect dress is different for everyone which is why it is important to buy one that you think is special.

Spring Sports Overview

Coffey Talk

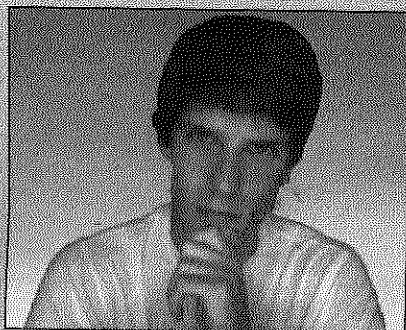


Photo by Peter Coffey/Mac

Peter Coffey
Sports Editor

The reasons why you play sports:

Your sport is why you wake up in the morning

It is the reason you cannot get out of bed

Your sport is why you stay awake in class

It is the reason you put your head on your desk

Your sport is why you are happy

It is the reason that you are mad

Your sport is why you show up early

It is the reason that you stay late

Your sport is why you push yourself

It is the reason that you are sore

Your sport is why you run fast

It is the reason you are out of breath

Your sport is why you are strong

It is the reason you need to be stronger

Your sport is why you win

It is the reason that you fail

Your sport is why you care

It is the reason that you give up

Your sport is why you are proud

It is the reason you are disappointed

Your sport is why you are healthy

It is the reason why you are injured

Your sport is why you smile

It is the reason that you cry

Your sport is why you are respected

It is the reason you are mocked

Your sport is why they like you

It is the reason they hate you

Your sport is makes things easy

It is the reason they are so hard

Your sport is why you are smart

It is the reason you cannot think

Your sport is why you shake hands

It is the reason that you get in fights

Your sport is why you are in bed early

It is the reason you cannot stay out late

Your sport is why you lay awake

It is the reason you fall asleep

Your sport is the reason why.

Tommy Friederich
Assistant Sports Editor

Girls' Soccer

The girls' soccer team is off to a mediocre start, and has struggled against district play, but is trying to turn it around. This talented team is showing signs of being a real contender after their win over Mount Vernon, but at the same time, the team has showed weaknesses that they must address before it is too late. "We play really well as a team that makes us successful during games and practices," said freshman Orion Taylor. She continued on their plan for success, "[We] need to score more and not letting down when the other team scores. We need to stay strong and just try harder." The Wolverines are full of experience which should pay off later in the season. Coach Jean Coder commented on how the experience has affected her team and said, "We have four senior leaders right now, but two are hurt right now, so we are struggling a little bit. Five starters on our team are out, but our seniors are really keeping it together and leading the team."



Photo Courtesy of RTEAMSITE.

Sophomore Jasmine Picini gets in a ready position before the next pitch while playing third base.

Softball

The Wolverine softball team is off to a hot start and is looking forward to a long season ending with a district championship. An 8-3 start has a lot to do with sophomore pitcher Morgan Maniglia. "Morgan has done a great job pitching and is one of the reasons we have done so well. Her strong pitching gives us a good start to the game," said second baseman junior Taylor Aitken. Aitken, as well as the rest of the team, believes they can win a district title. "We have a really strong team this year at the plate and in the field. We were rated lower than we thought we should of in the beginning of the season which really drove us to prove what a good team we are. We all also have a love for the sport which helps as well." Another player leading this team is first team all district sophomore Jasmine Picini. Last year, Picini put the team on her back and there is no doubt it will be any different this year. "I'm off to a slow start but I am going to work hard in practice with the rest of the girls and hopefully will get out of this funk and be a force to be reckoned with," said Picini. The softball team is an up and coming team at West Potomac.

Boys' Soccer

The seven seniors are a huge part of this year's boys' soccer program. The team is 3-5, but has beaten two very good teams in Herndon High and Falls Church. "At time within the season we have looked like a team that can do some real damage within the district. At the same time, we haven't played up to our potential as well. I think our senior leadership should pay off in the second half of the season," said sophomore Grant Cohen. The boys' soccer team has a tough schedule, but will have to rely on their hard work on Carl Sandburg Middle School's field during the off-season. "The work we did in the off-season helped us do two really big things, they helped us build chemistry and also get a head start on the season ahead of us," said senior Colin Heath.

Baseball

A talented but young Wolverine baseball team looks to the sophomore class to carry this year's team and teams of the future. There are advantages and disadvantages to having a young team said sophomore Casey Hagan, "Because we're young we are inexperienced and that gives confidence to the opposing team. On the other hand, we have a lot of talent and can hang with the juniors and seniors at times. Also, varsity exposure will better us in the long run." The varsity baseball team came into the season relying on their offensive, but it has been a difference story early on in this season. Besides a 10 and 13 run offensive games put up on by the Wolverines, the pitching by freshman Jayme Murry, sophomore Josh Belanger, and junior Jacob Glaser has been consistently good. They keep their pitches low and change speeds effectively. The team has flaws, however, said senior captain David Burns. "Until we

learn that each pitch, play, or at bat is different we're going to have a long season. We have to start doing our job: just trying to hit a ground ball to the right side to bring in a run, moving runners, not trying to pull the ball and hit a home run every at bat, locating our pitches better, and pitching with a slide step from the stretch. We need to better realize our strengths and use them every chance we get. We need to start playing within ourselves as well as working harder. That's the only way we're move into the top half of the district. Right now, we're not."

Boys' Lacrosse

After a rough season last year, the boys' lax team is back with a new look. New head coach Ken McCaferty is changing the attitude of the whole program. Junior Brooks Lee is one of many talented players on this team; he believes the attitude is different with the new coach. "It's a lot more disciplined for sure and we go out there actually thinking we have a chance to win most of the time, a complete 180 from last year," said Lee. Coming from a winless season last year, the team is showing signs of improvement. The team looked very good against Park View in their only win of the season. A one win season does not seem like an accomplishment, but it shows signs that the program is progressing to be a real contender in the future. "Last year we went into games thinking we couldn't win, this year we've had some success so now we know we can be competitive," said senior JP Marinelli.

Girls' Lacrosse

With the JV lacrosse team 10-0, the varsity team is looking for success in the first half of the 2010 season. With a 4-7 finish, injuries played a huge role in earlier season struggles. Star defender junior Adrienne Hampton went down early in the season and sophomore Jessie Dartoozos has had to step up and fill in for Hampton. "I was very intimidated, but the girls really took me under their wings and helped me develop into a pretty good player. Even though I'm not playing my natural position, I think I have stepped in pretty well," said Dartoozos. Injured Hampton still believes that her team can win, saying, "Yes, even though we struggled early in the season, I know we could make a good season out of it!"

Boys' Tennis

Although three of the six top players on this year's tennis team are juniors, there is a bright future for the boys' tennis program. Junior Drew Sander is one of these three players. "We have a long way to go, but we will get there eventually. Because our team is young but talented, we should gain experience this year and be a real force next year," said Sanders. The whole team seems to think the same thing, he continued, "We are in a rebuilding stage but we are progressing very quickly and showing signs of improvements." The season started out great with an impressive win over South County, but has been mediocre at best the rest of the season. The team has beaten Lee, T.C. Williams, and South County twice. Consistency is a big factor that this team needs to work on; once this happens the team will improve. "Once we focus more and become more consistent, I know we can compete," said Sanders.

Girls' Tennis

A mid-season win over West Springfield has really given the girls' Wolverine tennis team a lot of confidence that is showing. A 3-6 record is what the team has been able to do within a very tough Patriot district. When sophomore Jillian Kelly was asked about the progress being made this year she said, "We are getting better and better each match and each practice. No matter the outcomes of the matches, we always seem to show some improvement." Big wins over Lee and South County have proven that this team is not one to be taken lightly. Just like the boys' team, with a consistent focus on the game, they will succeed.

Spring Track

The ninth district title in a row is the goal this year's spring track team is focused on more than ever. Losing their incredible four by four team that consisted of four Division I caliber runners, this year's team will have to be much more balanced. "The distance part of the team will have to carry us to a ninth title instead of sprints like it was last year," said junior Mark Hanak. A lot of young runners are influencing this team greatly; freshman Mark Lotterie broke the freshman mile record with a time of 4:35. Senior Peter Coffey leads the distance portion of the team by finishing second in the Cassel XBC Track Invitational.

Kevin D. Dohmen, M.Ed.

Learning Consultant

21 West Caton Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22301-1519
(703) 683-9617

kevindohmen@verizon.net

www.kevindohmen.net

the art of learning for the information age

Maniglia family leads softball team to victory

Nia Copeland
Photographer

This year, the varsity softball team has made many changes in order to improve their reputation and team record. The first change being a new coach, Craig Maniglia. Maniglia coaches the team with his daughter and assistant coach, Brittany Maniglia, sister to sophomore Morgan and freshmen Sydney, who both play softball for West Potomac.

Unlike the past few seasons, the softball team has started the season off strong. So far, the team has played seven district games and has only lost one. In each those seven games, the team has not given up more than one run to the opposing team.

Junior Tayler Aitken is a varsity softball player who believes that the new coaches have helped her to improve her softball skills and helped to make her a better player. "The coaches give me tips on how to improve my batting stance, fielding, and have helped me become an all around better softball player," said Aitken. "They can be strict sometimes if we are having a bad practice or behind in a game, but they do their best to motivate us, get us pumped, and encourage us to do better."

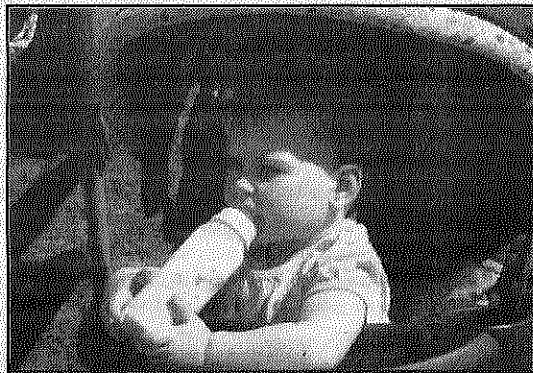
Maniglia and his coaching staff have worked hard to prepare his team for the season through off-season camps and conditioning. They continue to work with them during practices six days a week in the hope of winning districts and making it to regional championships. "Our season has been very successful we are six and one right now, our only loss being to South County who we held 0-0 for seven innings. As a team we hope to beat South County, win districts, and try to make to regionals," said Maniglia. Now, the Wolverines are 11-4 and in second place in the Patriot District.

Maniglia has definitely brought the team together and taught his girls to work hard but

have fun while doing it. "I think our coach has really united us and taught us how to play together as a team," continued Aitken. "I feel that it is important to remember that there is no 'I' in team and that a team has to play as a whole and be cohesive in order to win."

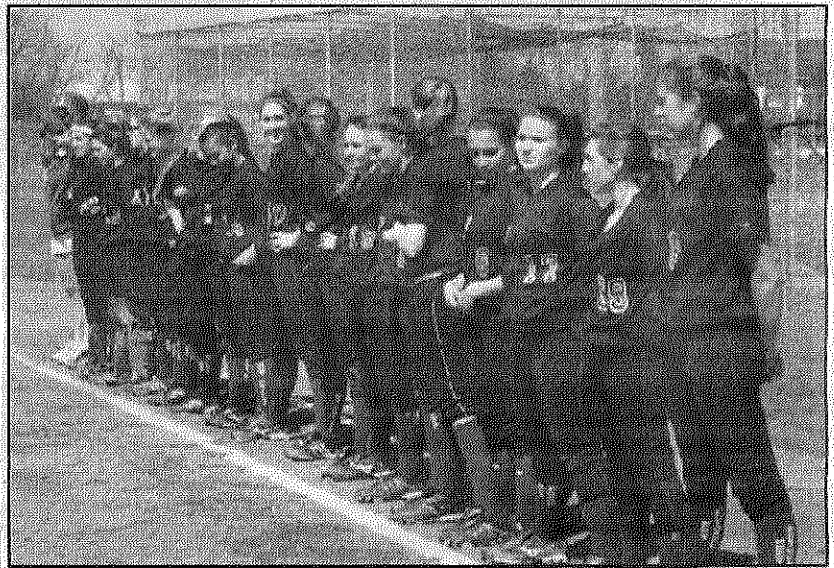
Although winning is very important the team, building an organization that shares a strong connection and understanding of the meaning of a real team is the team's main focus. "My favorite thing about my team[mates] is that they are all really driven," said Aitken. "The coaches support us 100 percent and are always there for us no matter what. Though we are all very concerned about keeping our record nice and high but we are mainly interested in keeping our program united and strong. Teamwork is what is most important," continued Aitken.

Maniglia has motivated all of the girls and encouraged them all to do their best. "Coach Maniglia has taught us all a lot," said Aitken. "He and his coaching staff are preparing the program for success in the near and far future and all of us are ready for victory. Through our hard work and the coaches' good leadership, I am sure that our team will do great this season and in all of the seasons to come."



Courtesy of Rteamsite.com

Even Morgan's little sister, Hayden, has been at all the games, cheering her family on.



Courtesy of Rteamsite.com

Top: from left to right; Craig, Morgan, and Brittany Maniglia. Bottom: The West Potomac softball team is currently in second place in the Patriot District.

Redskins reform and rebuild

Josh Belanger
Assistant Sports Editor

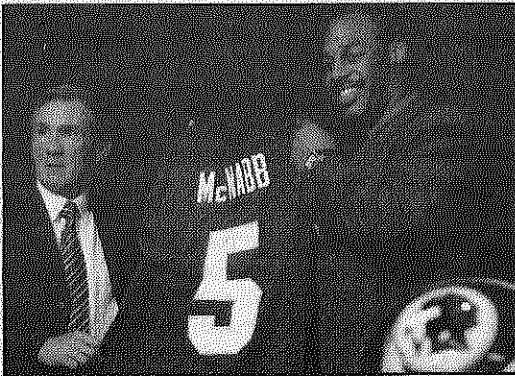
On January 3, Jim Zorn and the Washington Redskins walked off the field in San Diego after their twelfth loss of the season, and for most of them it would be the last moment in their Redskins career. After a very disappointing season and tons of speculation of the right personnel on the field, the Washington Redskins made multiple moves to improve the team and bring a championship to the city of Washington, D.C. The 4-12 record in 2009 was not only disappointing, but embarrassing. The Skins have not won a Super Bowl since 1992 during the Joe Gibbs era. When Gibbs returned to the team in 2004, the front office and the fans hoped he could bring them back to the promise land. After only one winning season in his four years in Washington, owner Dan Snyder moved on to the former quarterback Jim Zorn. Zorn did not make it happen either only lasting two years, taking tons of criticism, especially with one of the highest paid teams in the NFL. Now with a new coach and new talent, the Skins expect to improve to a playoff caliber team.

Their first move towards improvement was firing head coach Jim Zorn and signing the former Denver Broncos coach Mike Shanahan. Shanahan won two Super Bowls with the Broncos and looks to bring that success to Washington. Another drastic move was the signing of free agent Willie Parker. Parker won two Super Bowls with the Pittsburgh Steelers in 2006 and 2009; however after a couple of good seasons, the 29 year old Parker seems to be falling off the charts with multiple injuries in the past couple of years. Parker most likely will help out Clinton Portis with the amount of carries and will deepen the running game for the Redskins. Despite these two moves, the biggest move by far is the trading for former Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb. The Pro Bowl quarterback played for the Philadelphia Eagles and took them to four National Football Conference (NFC) Championships. Many thought that Jason

Cambell would stay in Washington and back up for McNabb, who at times can be unreliable. However, during the 2010 Draft, the Skins traded him to the Raiders for a draft pick in 2012. Also during the draft, the Skins picked Trent Williams with the fourth overall pick. Williams was an offensive tackle for the Oklahoma Sooners and looks to give McNabb some better protection in the offensive line.

Some other huge moves the Skins made was signing quarterback Rex Grossman, running back Larry Johnson, and releasing running back Ladell Betts, wide receiver Antwaan Randle El, and cornerback Fred Smoot. These aggressive moves by the Washington front office show to the fans that this year they are going to do everything they can to bring the best football team possible to the nation's capital. When asked if he thought the Skins moved were going to pay off, substitute teacher Abdul Jabbar said, "It's really is up to the O-Line giving McNabb the time he needs to perform. I think they will go 9-7, 10-6 at best." The Hogs will open their season in training camp in Loudoun, VA knowing full well that championships are not built on paper, but with hard work.

All in all, Redskins fans are looking ahead to what promises to be an exciting and competitive season for Washington, D.C.



Courtesy of MCT Campus

McNabb is welcomed to Washington by new head coach Mike Shanahan.

free tests
walk ins welcome

www.simpregnancy.org

Alexandria
pregnancy help center
703-780-4700

LifeChoices
resource center
703-323-8060

Fairfax
pregnancy help center
703-278-5433

Allergies rebound during the tumultuous spring season

Camille DiFolco
Reporter

Every year, springtime arrives in a flurry of flowers, sunshine, and, as always, pollen. The scourge affects over 40 million Americans in the form of seasonal allergies, which are triggered in spring and fall. Seasonal allergies are more commonly termed "hay fever."

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) maintains that there are no cures for allergies, and that one in three children will have allergies if only one of their parents is affected. If both parents suffer from hay fever, the risk rises to seven in 10 children. 2010 has seen record high pollen counts, according to The Weather Channel. High pollen counts result from unusually cold winters, which may delay the pollination of certain trees, grasses, and weeds. This was certainly true of the 2009-2010 winter, which experienced record amounts of snow that exceeded two feet, all told. For Wednesday, April 14, the pollen count was 11.2, measured on a scale from one to 12 with 12 being the highest concentration of pollen. As temperatures increase, pollen counts also rise.

Living with seasonal allergies is certainly inconvenient and unpleasant, but the good news is that such allergies are entirely manageable. Everyone with allergies has tried at least one medication, and common choices include Zyrtec and Claritin. However, according to an article by Shireen Shah that was posted on the Greeniac website last year, there are plenty of natural ways to alleviate allergy symptoms. Shah explains that eating plenty of vegetables and fish, and drinking lots of water will keep vitamin levels high and help ward off allergy attacks. An eHow article by Katherine Huether claims that eating local honey, bought from a farm or farmer's market, will expose the body to small amounts of regional pollen and act as a vaccine, helping the body to build up immunity to the given area's specific variety of pollen.

It is also important to eat foods with high amounts of Quercetin, a "natural plant-derived compound called bioflavonoid [that] helps stabilize mast cells and keeps them

from releasing histamines," according to the Mother Earth News web site. A natural antioxidant, Quercetin can be found in foods like citrus fruits, onions, apples, parsley, tea, tomatoes, broccoli, and lettuce. Supplements are also an option for allergy sufferers, and the recommended dosage is 1000 milligrams a day, taken in between meals. In addition to Quercetin, foods that are rich in Omega-3 fatty acids, such as cold-water fish, walnut and flax-seed oil, and eggs, help fight inflammation while some natural decongestants include horseradish and chili peppers. More



Photo courtesy of MCT Campus

The season of spring brings many surprises, including the unpleasantness of allergies.

information on allergy-fighting foods is available on the Mother Earth News web site.

To this end, junior Sarah Slichter said that her favorite natural remedies are "sleep and orange juice."

Another natural remedy that is worth considering is neti pots. These are small jars shaped like Aladdin's lamp, according to the Mother Earth News Web site, and have been used in India for thousands of years "to flush the sinuses and keep them clear." Though it may seem strange to Westerners, rinsing out one's nasal passages with a cup of lukewarm water, fortified with a half teaspoon of non-

iodized table salt, twice a day will rinse out allergens and lessen nasal congestion. A study published in the International Archives of Allergy and Immunology found that this method was particularly effective in children, and "markedly reduced their use of antihistamines."

Junior Alexa Botha claimed that the best remedy for allergies is "South African herbal red bush tea." Red bush tea, also rooibos tea or merely bush tea, has been popular in South Africa among Dutch settlers for years, and the herb rooibos grows only in the region of the Western Cape province. With its high levels of antioxidants, red bush tea is purported to combat nervous tension, allergy and asthma symptoms, and dermatological problems.

A final form of natural allergy relief is to fight fire with fire. That is, taking small doses of certain herbs to combat allergy symptoms. Butterbur, derived from a common weed in Europe, can be taken in capsules. According to a study published in the British Medical Journal, Swiss researchers proved that "just one tablet of butterbur taken four times daily was as effective as a popular antihistamine drug in controlling symptoms of hay fever," without causing drowsiness. However, since butterbur is from the same family as ragweed, it can exacerbate symptoms rather than alleviate them. Stinging nettles, either in the freeze-dried capsule form or distilled in tea, have also been found to be effective in some cases. Mary Hardy, MD, director of integrative medicine at Cedars Sinai Medical Center in L.A., told WebMD, "herbal supplements [that may prove] helpful include freeze-dried nettles and a tonic made from the herb goldenseal." According to a WebMD interview with James Dillard, MD, nutrients such as grape seed extract and the aforementioned Quercetin can also be "extremely helpful in reducing allergy symptoms, particularly in conjunction with Vitamin C."

Perhaps by following these natural remedies, one can get into the habit of eating healthier, more wholesome foods year-round, which will ultimately yield a stronger immune system and lessen allergy symptoms when they do flare up.

The clash of Apple's titans

Sarah Holloway
Reporter

With all the new gizmos, it is a daunting task to find the perfect laptop. Those "Einstein-esque" geniuses at Apple keep amazing the global population with unimaginable technologies, beginning with the iPod mini and now with the new touch screen laptop, the iPad.

As if it was not hard enough for college students to pick out a laptop before this technological advancement, students now have another option to consider. Apple recently presented their hybrid between the MacBook Pro and an iPhone- the iPad. So to help the students and staff of our school looking to purchase a new computer, here are a couple of points to consider.

With its many capabilities such as video chat, web browser, email, iTunes, and of course its compact size, the MacBook has become an instant hit, especially amongst students. Starting at around \$1,199, Gizmodo raved about the MacBook Pro and said, "It's cheaper, faster, has more consumer-friendly features and now even has a 13-inch option for people who need slightly more portability."

The iPad, comparatively, offers GPS, email, Safari Explorer, and iBooks E-Reader. For its relatively compact size and its versatility, the iPad has gained popularity in the corporate world, and at only \$499 it seems to be a bar-

gain.

However, there are differences between what the iPad does and the MacBook, or any laptop for that matter.

The iPad does not have a camera or ability to attach a webcam, which eliminates iChat from the iPad. Also, the iPad is not equipped with an attachable keyboard, so for all who lack the skills to type touch screen, the iPad may be impossible to master.

One main point to consider when contemplating which way to go is the price difference. Obviously, at around \$500, the iPad seems too good to be true. However, the price of a MacBook is based on all it does, such as running CD-ROMs and having the ability to attach to a printer, scanner, etc. While the iPad is extremely versatile, sleek, and new (let us face it, newness has a major appeal), it does not mimic all the capabilities of a stationary or laptop computer.

All comparisons aside, the iPad is a revolutionary hybrid of the laptop and iPhone (which both seemed relatively revolutionary themselves) and is a reasonable price for most anyone willing to invest in the portable, touch screen computer.

The Mac Book remains the most popular laptop among most students and young professionals around the globe.

Our world is on its toes and anticipating the arrival of the next big thing,

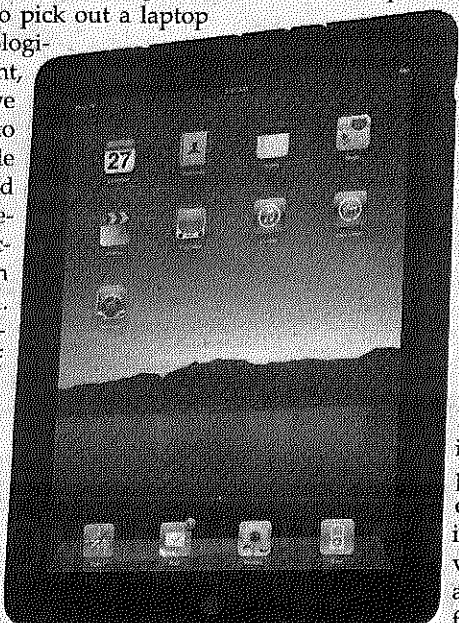


Photo courtesy of MCT Campus

Apple's latest, Ipad, compares to the MacBook with only a few minor differences.

Neanderthals roam the Smithsonian

Anna Dreyfuss
Reporter

A new exhibit opened March 17, 2010, on human evolution at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, the nation's most-visited museum, which hosted 7.4 million visitors in 2009. Among the 285 artifacts and fossils in the exhibit is the only skeleton in the U.S. of a Neanderthal, an extinct human ancestor that lived between 28,000 to 200,000 years ago.

When first entering Anne and Bernard Spritzer Hall of Human Origins, tourists are greeted with a time line of evolution showing the earliest humans to our present day species. The first main attraction is skulls of Australopithecus Africans that evolved over 2.5 million years. Although creepy, tourists are able to touch them and feel the difference of the sizes of the brain cages due to climate changes. The exhibit shows easy-to-read graphs of the different types of organisms humans are related to after billions of years of evolution. Throughout the hall are metal sculptures of different types of early human species. The first encounter tourists meet is with a paranthropus boi who lived in East Africa pulling a root while scavenging for food.

The first use of fire took up a main chunk of the exhibit, describing hearths up to 790,000 years old and cooking which started 1.5 million years ago. There are several mini movie theatres showing clips of scientists talking about different topics, for instance how in the first several million years of evolution humans only lived in Africa and then 1.8 million of them spread abroad facing harsh climate changes. It took 100,000 years for early humans to reach China, which American scientists found out in collaboration with Chinese scientists. Interesting to more of the female crowd, across from the first made weapons, the exhibit showed

how early humans used and traded decorative shells as jewelry among their social groups.

The most exciting part of the exhibit, that kids squealed over, was the "Turn Yourself into a Neanderthal" photo booth that takes tourists pictures and, after only three swift taps on the touch screen, gives a picture of what the person would look like as a Neanderthal. Tourists even get to choose the hairstyle. After turning into a Neanderthal, tourists see eight very realistic heads of different types of early human species made by John Gurche. He was an artist that used the latest forensic techniques and fossil discoveries to create the lifelike reconstructions of early humans. It took him 20 years of experience and two and a half years to finish

the eight head busts. Past the busts was a realistic cave with old-looking writings on it, with replicas of the symbols and words early humans used 8,000 years ago. In the room next to that showed a map of the world population today using tiny lights, changing within seconds showing babies being born. Between 1959 and 1999, 40 years, the population increased from three billion to six billion people. At this rate, by 2042 there should be nine billion people in the world. The exhibit ended with a video showing how much humanity has improved and evolved. It stated that one human to another has 99.9% identical DNA, making racism pointless.

Overall, the museum had very interesting and surprising information, although it was not too kid friendly. Most of the exhibit is reading and graphs rather than hands on things and videos to watch. Most of the youngsters resorted to the "Turn Yourself into a Neanderthal" photo booth and climbed on the early human metal statues. The artifacts and fossils made up for it though, showing Lucy, the only Neanderthal in the U.S. and the skulls of the earliest humans. Although a short exhibit, tourists gain more knowledge on the topic than three months of health class would give you. As one tourist remarked, "Ain't nothing like this in Texas!"

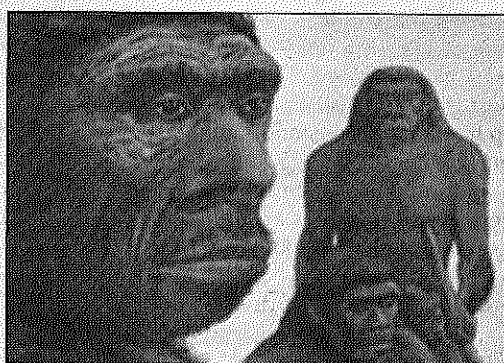


Photo courtesy of MCT Campus

Neanderthals once explored the Northern Hemisphere. However, they now roam the halls of the Smithsonian.

Scorpions back in action

Jacob Alexander
Co-Opinions Editor

After about 45 years of rocking the crowds, the famous rock band, The Scorpions, decided to release their last hoorah.

The Scorpions are a five-member band from Germany that was formed in 1965. Their members include lead vocalist Klaus Meine, lead guitarist Matthias Jabs, guitarist Rudolph Sherk, bassist Pawel Maciowoda, and drummer James Kottak. Some of their already popular hit songs include "No One Like You," "Rock You Like a Hurricane," and "Wind of Change."

On March 23, 2010, the Scorpions released their final album: *Sting in the Tail*. This album reached number 23 on the Billboard top 200 charts, and also made number six on the Rock Albums chart, which are some great numbers for an album to make, especially this late in the band's career.

Their new album also contains another hit single to go with the many that they already have, "Raised on Rock," which hit number two on the Classic Rock Mediabase chart.

The Scorpions have announced that they are going on their last tour to celebrate this final album called the "Get Your Sting and Blackout World Tour." It will be a two-month tour over the summer, with over 30 shows planned in North America. The tour will head west and stop in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The tour is set to begin in Holmdel, New Jersey on June 18.

Overall, this album was great. There were a couple songs that stood out, including "Raised on Rock," which especially complements their style of rock that won them so many fans. This song along with others such as "No Limit" and "Rock Zone" all show the same great style as their extremely popular

1984 anthem, "Rock You Like a Hurricane." These songs had the same vintage rock and roll style riffs that the Scorpions are famous for, and really sound great.

This is not the only style of music the Scorpions were able to incorporate into their last album. There were other styles that they were able to pull off, making the album that much better.

For example, they also had some slower-paced, softer songs including "Sly," which is still an amazing ballad, one of which the band should be very proud.

This album also had other great songs on it, making the album enjoyable as a whole. One of these songs includes "The Good Die Young," and "Lorelei," two songs that are both definitely worth listening to. Another great song on this album is "Turn You On."

Finally, "Spirit of Rock" is also another must-hear on this album. This is a typical arena metal song that the Scorpions pull off so well.

With such great ballads like "No One Like You" and "Rock You Like a Hurricane" already under their belt, many fans did not expect the Scorpions to live up to their fans' desires and be able to create other great songs on this album. However, the Scorpions accomplish this, finishing on a high note and giving their fans what they wanted.



Photo courtesy of MCT

After 45 years of touring and rock and roll glory, the Scorpions are wrapping up their fruitful career with one last album.

Ellington's work still appreciated

Anna Dreyfuss
Reporter

Take a travel back in time to hear our nation's history of jazz played right before your eyes. April 15, 2010 was the opening night of Duke Ellington's *Sophisticated Ladies*, at the Lincoln Theatre. The musical is an award-winning revue that explores the life and legacy of jazz hero, Duke Ellington. The production

travels through a history of American music and dance, from the Charleston to swing to tap dancing. The production was a family affair with theatrical advisor Mercedes Ellington, granddaughter of Duke Ellington and the musical direction of Mercer Ellington, Duke Ellington's son. Legendary choreographer, Maurice Hines, choreographed and starred in the show as the one and only Duke Ellington.

The show started out with a filmy screen covering the stage showing Arena Stage when it first opened in 1922. Duke Ellington, a Washington D.C. native, performed at Arena Stage during his career. After the picture of the theatre which earned some claps, a picture of Duke Ellington appeared which caused a roar and standing ovation from the audience.

The musical is less of a story and more of an entertaining concert of Ellington's most famous songs and a travel back in time. The ninth song performed was Ellington's most famous song "It Don't Mean a Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing," which also served as the reprise at the end of the show. The older part of the audience was smiling the whole time. The main reason to see the show is the unbelievable dancing. It is no wonder Hines is a legendary choreographer. The choreography transforms the theatre back to the 40's and the dancing looks authentic.

The youngest generations in the audience got their dose of history lessons at the show.

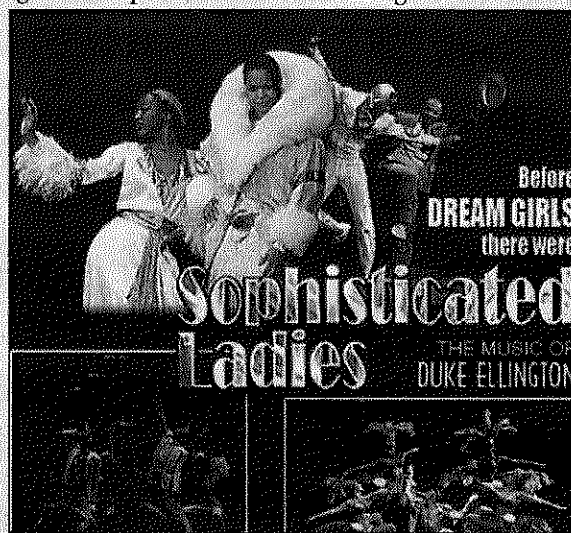


Photo courtesy of MCT

The play, *Sophisticated Ladies* shows the timeless beauty of Duke Ellington's work.

The musical not only shows the life and times back then, but also the racial tension and separation of whites and blacks.

The main event of the show is the Manzari brothers (17 year old John and 15 year old Leo.) The D.C. based high schoolers are making their professional regional theatre debuts in the show. The two were spotted by Hines and director, Charles Randolph-Wright, at the Duke Ellington School. They are accomplished

dancers on the regional and national scene and perform an amazing tap-dancing battle with Hines at the beginning of the second act. Hines is not a bad tap dancer himself. In fact, he started tap dancing at the age of five and won many awards.

While dancing, Hines effortlessly chatted to the audience about Michelle Obama and the

new health care, which made the conservatives and southern tourists boo and yell obscene things towards him for a couple minutes. The mood changed back to joyful when the Manzari brothers showed up on stage again. They earned a standing ovation.

Overall, the award winning Broadway musical was a hit at Arena Stage.

The show had the full package, including the sparkly outfits, show wigs and of course the dancing. Randolph-Wright said, "I have never worked on something so thrilling, so joyous and as outrageous as this show, I'm thrilled!" The band being on stage definitely added character to the show and the musicians even sang a couple lines. Although a Bostonian tourist said, "I don't get it" after the curtains closed for the first act because it is not clear the musical was about Ellington's life. The show had an energetic and fun vibe throughout and was great for all ages.

Lost viewers find themselves "lost" in the complex plot twists

Katie Woodward
Reporter

For those not willing to put in the necessary time and effort into keeping up with ABC's hit show *Lost*, it is easy to become, well, completely lost. But, for everyone who has somehow managed to keep track of the constant time-travelling, re-alliances between Oceanic flight 815 survivors and the elusive "others," and jumps between reality and the alternate universe where everyone's fates are still conveniently intertwined, this season marks the end of the six-year saga of confusion.

Although with each new episode, the show's producers continue to dish out enough surprises to make your head spin, the long-awaited "answers" to viewers' many questions are slowly, but surely being delivered. However, this is all fluff compared to the giant revelation that will [hopefully] be delivered by the end of the season, in response to everyone's burning desire to know why exactly the island is so special (and why Richard Alpert wears eyeliner). Until then, diehard fans have developed numerous theories pertaining to this question:

1. **The Island is purgatory:** Basically, everyone who was on the plane really did die. Their actions on the Island determine whether they will go to heaven or hell. *Lost* fanatics support this theory by reminding us that every survivor has something for which they need to atone. Over the seasons, the flashbacks have simply been the recollections of each crash victim during their final moments of life. The Island's natural beauty could be symbolic for the Garden of Eden, which Dante sketched as the highest point in purgatory.

2. **Everything happens for a reason:** As the Island's pre-connections between the survivors of flight 815 continue to pile up (such as Claire's psychic convincing her to take the fatal flight, and

subsequently causing Eko to board as well), it is hard not to think that everyone was simply fated to end up there. However, *Lost* producers have continuously debunked this theory, stating that "there is a rational, scientific explanation for everything that has happened so far."

3. **The alternate reality:** Everything that happens on the Island is occurring parallel to real events. Senior Laina Schneider understands and agrees with this theory, believing that "things will result identically in 'real life' as they do on the island; *Lost* is trying to portray that fate has the upper hand and that one choice or event will not change your life forever." As the season progresses and those from flight 815 living in real life have visions of what occurs on the is-

land, they will realize their destinies (however outrageous those might be).

4. **There is a big decision to make:** Sophomore Lara Chilton believes that "at the end of the season, the survivors will be forced to choose between their lives on the Island and a normal life. Because Desmond is a regular go-between for the Island and the real world, he will have to sacrifice his island life for everyone's regular life."

5. **The Cork concept:** The Island is guarding the doorway to hell and preventing evils from "leaking" out. This idea has been proposed numerous times throughout the series, as Jacob and a variety of his minions attempt to convince the survivors that they were chosen to protect the Island.

If no one is singled out as this guardian, literally all hell will break loose (sort of an Aughts version of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*).

6. **The Soprano's take two:** The producers are just like us, and have no idea how they could possibly end the show. Instead of trying to explain everything to viewers, the series will simply end in a blackout and we will have to spend the rest of our lives speculating (while under restraining orders to prevent us from hurting the producers for such a letdown).

Given their record of plot twists and surprises, it is likely that the producers will somehow find a way to untangle themselves from the mess that is *Lost*. Producer and writer Carlton Cuse has been quoted as saying "I'm not sure that there is an ending that will satisfy everyone, our hope is that it will be...the logical conclusion of the story." However, after keeping us wondering, guessing, and completely entertained for six seasons, we all know no ending could ever do the show complete justice anyway.



Photo courtesy of yorkblog.com

It is no mystery as to why *Lost* fans are stuck in a haze. It is a show clearly open for interpretation. *Lost* is one of the few shows on television that leaves room for critical thinking.

Senior Camilla Sanchez shines as a student body member

Gwen Fishel
Copy Editor

Whether it is as Homecoming Queen, senior class president, or as an overall friendly, familiar face, many students know senior Camilla Sanchez.

Sanchez was born on October 18, 1991, in Alexandria, Virginia, where she was also raised. She has gone to West Potomac for her entire high school career, and can be seen participating in many activities and programs around the school. Camilla has said that the "last four years at West Potomac have been an adventure!"

Many of her peers consider her a leader, as she is senior class president and overall good role model for many of the underclassman students, as well as her senior peers. This is shown by the school-wide support that elected her Homecoming Queen last October. She said that being named Homecoming Queen was "definitely" the best moment of her life, as it was the perfect present for her birthday the next day.

When Sanchez is not organizing senior events, like the Special Olympics and class lunches, or participating in other school events, she said, "I like to paint and create... floral arrangements or bracelets and necklaces." She also enjoys going to the gym which she recently joined and fishing, as well as watching movies. She said that she is "pretty sure that [she] watches a movie once a day." However, it is not limited to these things. She does so many other things outside of school as well.

Sanchez is also well known for her outgoing personality, which she describes as goofy. She said that a lot of the time, she ends up embarrassing herself somehow, although she can get frustrated too. As part of being a good role model, she loves to help people and give advice. The person that has been most inspirational when it comes to Sanchez's good view on life is her mom. She said, "She had to skip school and get a job [in order to help her family]... I respect her because she always tried to do the best for me."

Because of her outgoing personality, Sanchez is sure to go far in the future, and she has big plans, which include becoming a forensic odontologist, which means forensic

dentistry. One day, she hopes to visit Paris, so she can put her "3 years of French to good use [and] ... learn to cook French dishes." Sanchez said that if she could meet anyone in the world, it would be Cristiano Ronaldo, who is soccer player for Real Madrid and Portugal. Jokingly, Sanchez said that she asked her parents to send her to Europe to marry him for graduation!

Overall, Sanchez has very much enjoyed her time at West Potomac. Her fondest high school memory is hanging out at football games freshman year and goofing off with her friends. She wishes that her grades could have been better during her sophomore and junior years, but has very few regrets. Sanchez mentioned that she would like to thank "all the wonderful teachers at West Potomac who helped me out and cared for [her.]"

Being the role model she is, Sanchez said that her advice for her peers is to "always be yourself no matter who you are with and be a bigger person when it comes to certain situations and just let life come to you."

Plans for the Future:

1. Be crowned Homecoming Queen.
2. Be elected senior class president.
3. Become a forensic odontologist.
4. Marry Cristiano Ronaldo.
5. Go to Europe.



Photo by Sonia Garakyaraghi

Foreman will serve on Seventeen's Style Council 2010

Norris Brooks
Reporter

On November 21, junior Alexis Foreman—one of our Academy's own—flew to New York for her job with *Seventeen* magazine. Foreman was about to participate in her very first *Seventeen* photo shoot. Out of thousands of contestants, Alexis was chosen to participate in the *Seventeen* magazine Style Council 2010. The council is made up of ten members from all over the world. Alexis was chosen to be a fashion editor/stylist. Her main involvement with *Seventeen* will be stories that demonstrate her style to readers. She will give tips on how to achieve a stylish wardrobe while spending little money.

Foreman is enrolled in Fashion Design I at the West Potomac Academy and expressed an interest in applying to the Style Council. She received information from her teacher, Maggy Francois, and persisted through a detailed application process. She answered required questions, wrote an essay on personal style, and sent in multiple pictures of herself showcasing

her many different looks. She did not stop there. She continued to contact *Seventeen* and was eventually chosen.

When asked what was her favorite part about working with *Seventeen*, Foreman said, "The best part was definitely the photo shoot! I had never experienced a real photo shoot, and in New York!" Foreman had the opportunity to meet nine other fantastic young women on the Style Council, and according to her, they were "nice and down to earth." Most of them were local to New York and older than Foreman.

Another aspect of the job that Foreman enjoys is online blogging. Girls submit questions on www.seventeen.com, and Foreman provides an innovative and helpful response. When one reader asked about creating a spring wardrobe without breaking the bank, Foreman wrote back, "Fashion on a budget always seems to stump fashionistas, but instead of buying new clothes, how about shopping at second-hand stores/consignment shops such as Goodwill or local thrift stores?" She went on to suggest, "There are always some interchangeable pieces that can be used throughout the year."

Working with *Seventeen* is a dream for many young girls who aspire to be involved with the fashion industry. The Style Council presents an amazing opportunity. To Foreman, it seemed almost too good to be true. She explained, "It didn't really hit me that I was actually a part of the Style Council until the magazine came out! That's when I could see myself and know that it was really happening." Now, Foreman has a bright fashion career ahead of her. As Francois describes Foreman's good fortune, "It is an opportunity of a lifetime. Being able to share your fashion tips, ideas and talent with the world is amazing. It's great for her portfolio and a definite resume builder."

Seventeen is considered to be the number one magazine for teenage girls. For more than 60 years, it has been the teenage girls' go-to source for fashion, beauty, health, and dating advice. Alexis is featured in the March 2010 issue of the magazine. To find her, look on pages 45 through 53. Or catch her in the audience at Fashion week in September!



Photo Courtesy of Maggy Francois

Alexis Foreman, pictured below, poses for her *Seventeen* magazine photoshoot. Foreman will serve on the magazine's 2010 Style Council in New York City.