

The Wire

West Potomac High School
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News, Views and Entertainment



DECA Stars
Bring Home
National
Awards!
pg7



SGA President, senior Meg Fennell, speaks at West Potomac's 'Celebration of Excellence.' Other speakers include representatives of the school and community.

Community Turns Out for West Potomac Gala

Washington Post Magazine ranking prompts celebration

Dan Schaffner
Entertainment Editor

"A Celebration of Excellence" was held April 22nd at Carl Sandburg Middle School, to recognize and honor the achievements of West Potomac students in academics, athletics and the arts. According to Lynne Egge, West Potomac's PTSA President, the students, faculty, and parents understand that West Potomac is an outstanding school. The purpose of the April 22nd celebration was to share West Potomac's accomplishments with the rest of the community.

The catalyst for the event was West Potomac's fifth place ranking in the Washington Post Challenge Index. It was fifth of 123 metro area high schools. The ranking was based on the number of students taking AP courses. West Potomac, with 25% of its students on free or reduced price lunch, came in second in Fairfax County. Only Langley High School, with 1% of its students on free or reduced price lunch, has a higher percentage of students taking AP courses.

"Any student who attempts an AP class is challenging himself to perform at his highest possible intellectual

level. He will be introduced to ideas he might not have picked up voluntarily. The highly motivated student will get an early taste of college-level work," commented Ms. Erin Brick, AP English Language teacher, on the effectiveness of AP classes.

This academic recognition from the Challenge Index caused people to look at the other Wolverine accomplishments, including more musical awards than any other high school in Fairfax County. West Potomac has won Virginia Honor Band, three Regional Athletic Championships, and so many other awards that the scroll on which they were written for the "Celebration of Excellence" stretched across Carl Sandburg's auditorium into the lobby.

"All these communities that were split ten years ago have really begun to come together and to stick together," said Chris Braunlich, Lee District School Board Representative, as he commented on West Potomac's recent accomplishments.

According to West Potomac Principal Ms. Carma Norman, the most notable achievement is that "West Potomac continues changing demographically while still

continued on pg. 5

Students Ready to Rule

Honor Council Approved

Rita Anyang-Kusi
Wire Reporter

By the fall of 1998, the West Potomac honor council, modeled on a similar council at the University of Virginia, will be up and running. It will be the first student honor council in Fairfax County. The Council has been approved by Principal Ms. Carma Norman and the Fairfax County School Board. Student members of the Council have been nominated. The five person council will be elected by a general student vote.

The creation of the five person Honor Council, spearheaded by senior John Clark, has required the work of many SGA and Leadership students, and class officers. Candidates for the council have been nominated by teachers, principals, and Student Government Association members.

The council will review cases including those dealing with libel, vandalism, officer impeachment and harassment.

Students will not make final decisions. The council will hear cases which are recommended by administrators. The council will make recommendations to the administration and the administration will make final decisions concerning punishment.

The council will review evidence, and question the defendant to find out motive, intention, and accountability. The council will also be allowed to subpoena witnesses. All decisions will be made based on a majority vote.

Assistant Principal Ms. Doris Evens has said she believes that this is a chance for students and administrators to learn from each other by stepping into one another's shoes. "They'll better understand how hard it is for us to make decisions and punish students," stated Evens.

The Honor Council was designed to implement the Honor Code. "If there's no mechanism to implement the honor code then it might go ignored. The student council might give the honor code some teeth," Government teacher Pat Chorpenning has suggested.

John Clark discusses the honor council on pg 2

Inside



Check out Sheryl Crow and other summer concert performers in the Focus Pg 8-9

Council has Potential to Create a New Tradition of Honor

In the March issue of the Wire, an editorial appeared that presented a skeptical and perhaps cynical attitude toward the development of an Honor Council at West Potomac. The following guest editorial, by John Clark, who spearheaded the creation of the Honor Council, is in part a response to that article.

The Editors

Since the start of this school year, the Student Advisory Council has been drafting the bylaws for a student-run honor council. On March 31, students govern-

ment ratified Virginia's first, public school honor council and is now filling its five seats through an established nomination and election process.

As an auxiliary of the current honor code, the West Potomac Honor Council seeks to increase students' awareness of honor in the learning place by holding them accountable to a body of their peers. Upon administrative issue of a case to the honor council, students will convene, examine gathered evidence, and hear all parties' testimony. After deliberation, a formal decision and any appropriate punishments will be recommended to the administration, wherein they determine final judgement. Still partly due

to the council's novelty and ingherent potential, many students have become skeptical of real progress. Many stu-



Dr. K

dents are concerned that the council will have little voice in honor violations. Some feel that it will be ineffective in

public schools where legal issues bond.

However, after months of research and planning, the bylaws were designed to completely coexist with the practical and legal aspects of our public education system. There are provisions for nominating the most honorable student leaders in the school; regulations establishing for preventing favoritism and shortsightedness during case hearings; and, most importantly, a general structure which is designed to combine strong student leadership with especially close faculty interaction.

While it is impossible to insure the success of the Student Honor Council, SAC with the

support of our current administration, feel confident that in order to give students a real say in governing our academic environment. The Honor Council has the potential to heighten student integrity, to improve faculty-student relations, and to carry-on a tradition of honor at West Potomac that, at present, no other Fairfax County school comes close to meeting. The members of the Student Advisory Council and I are proud to have been a part of this tradition, and we hope that future student leaders will labor to deliver that West Potomac really deserves; an academic community based on trust.

-John Clark, Senior

Letters To The Editor

West Potomac Lends a Hand

I love West Potomac and believe that, unfortunately, it is a far too well kept secret in Fairfax County. The fine people that grace the halls of our campus everyday fill my heart with pride.

A special thanks goes to "The Wire" for the opportunity to use this school wide forum to express my appreciation and thanks for the warmth, compassion, and friendliness that I have experienced during these past 25 months of dealing with a foot injury.

After four extensive surgeries on my left foot, complicated by osteoporosis, I am in the physiotherapy stage of recovery. Walking continues to be painful, depending on duration and distance. As a result, I carefully plan my time and work my plan to reach desired goals.

A special thank you goes to all of the wonderfully supportive students, teachers, counselors, administrators, media center, health awareness and security, custodial, clerical, cafeteria, and itinerant staffs for being so patient and kind.

My first experience of kindness occurred when a quick-thinking young man ran to my rescue, as my wheelchair was about to flip over. As a result, Magda Perez, the Parent Liaison and campus mobility expert, provided me with valuable mobility and travel suggestions. Through the stages of recovery, using a wheelchair, assorted casts, crutches, canes, and surgical shoes and cut out tennis shoes, all of West Potomac has been absolutely wonderfully supportive. As we have smiled, joked and on occasion shed a tear, people have occasionally pushed my wheelchair, carried my books, loaned me crutches and canes and moved materials, and they have always opened doors for me. Both students and adults have been understanding, encouraging and extremely positive.

Several of you have asked questions and have tried out the wheelchair only to realize it wasn't as much fun as it looked. We've learned from each other as you've also taught me to be more patient.

Additional thanks also go to:

Douglas Jackson, Mr. Joe Rose, Mrs. Ann Sparks, Mr. Greg Koons, Mr. Mark Lewis, Mr. Joe Skovira, and others for pushing my wheelchair. Walter Ramos, Brian Spencer, Troy McWhirter, Jigar Desai, Rowland School, Mr. Joe Skovira, and others for using the luggage cart to help me move materials to and from my car. Thanks to Mrs. Jenny Dandar from the Media Center for graciously loaning me her cane and special crutches, and to she and Ms. Magda Perez for providing me with countless lessons and advice regarding mobility and building accessibility.

I apologize if I have left out someone. Hopefully, my "student elevator friends" in casts, wheelchairs, and braces, smile because they too, have experienced generous acts of kindness here at West Potomac High School.

Recently, I experienced another fabulous act of generosity and kindness when Mr. Jim Poythress came to my rescue with an exercise bicycle for hip movement. I am overwhelmed because I know that somehow the words "Thank You" simply aren't enough to express my gratitude and appreciation to him and to all of you at West Potomac High School. I want to shout loudly so that everyone can hear.

"THANK YOU WEST POTOMAC HIGH SCHOOL! YOU ARE THE GREATEST and I LOVE YOU FOR CARING!"

Our students at West Potomac are fortunate to have such excellent adult role models. As these students graduate and move on to the next stage of their lives, I feel hopeful. Not only are they academically prepared, but West Potomac High School students are also cognizant of the importance of compassion and kindness in society.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Kathy Schauer

Employment and transition representative

Achievement Overlooked

Dear Editor,

It is appalling that careless reporting of the WP Science Fair First Place winners left out Senior, Chelyse Stefanik-a Veteran of winning Science fairs. A veteran of going to the Regional Science and going again next week to the Regional Science Fair for the 4th year in a row. She was not only a first place winner in the Health and Medicine area of Biology but was commended by staff and administrators as having a potential Grand Prize Entry this year because of the Professional Presentation and intrinsic value of her research on the Tumor Necrosis factor preventing Toxic Shock Syndrome-Research she did as an Intern at Walter Reed Army Medical Center this summer.

Your oversight was an insult to a serious science student her family.

Name Withheld on Request

Our sources may have been incorrect or we might have made a mistake in transcribing the list of science winners. We deeply apologize.
The Editors

The Wire appreciates and strongly encourages letters to the editor

Warnings of Violence go Unheeded

Edinboro, a small town in Pennsylvania, is only the latest victim of apparently random youth gun violence.

According to Edinboro police, on April 24, 14 year old Adam Wurst opened fire at his eighth-grade dance, killing one school teacher and injuring a second teacher and two teenage boys. According to Wurst's friends, he had warned people of his plans. "I'm going to go to the dinner dance and kill some people," he is said to have remarked.

But nobody paid attention.

In Jonesboro, Arkansas last month; in West Paduka, Kentucky last December; and in Pearl, Mississippi last October, four separate occasions in six months, a teenaged killer has given warnings to those around them.

But nobody played attention.

Kids do say things that they don't mean. They sometimes do have terrible fantasies that they won't act out. But it is now clear that kids sometimes say and then do terrible things.

Only after the shootings at Jonesboro did school and government officials begin to talk about how to prevent such acts from happening.

"I think if somebody is talking about it, you take it seriously. Something is wrong. Something is bothering the child," said Dr. Burt Singerman, director of psychiatry at St. Francis Medical Center in Pittsburgh.

Unfortunately, adults too often do not take kids seriously. But how can anyone know when to take talk seriously?

In each of these cases there were multiple causes. Guns were available to these kids. Some had been trained in the use of guns. Of course all had been exposed to media violence, and all of these kids were boys.

When was the last time you heard of a girl spraying a

room with bullets?

Unfortunately, the children in these cases probably were following the patterns of adult role models. In Jonesboro, the entire family was involved in gun training. The 13 and 11 year old boys also followed predictable patterns of domestic violence, patterns often ignored even when crimes are committed by adults.



Mary Shaw

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, a woman is beaten every 15 seconds. However, despite its startling presence in our lives, domestic violence is rarely mentioned in the headlines, even when it could be an important factor in explaining other social problems.

When the boys in Jonesboro pulled the fire alarm of their school and ambushed their fellow classmates, they were exhibiting the familiar patterns of domestic violence.

Could it be that it was too obvious? Probably not. The media has downplayed domestic violence for years, but then so has society as a whole.

At the massacre, 15 were injured, 14 of them were female. Johnson's girlfriend was injured. According to Jonesboro police officer Doug Golden, on ABC *Prime Time*, the victims were, "selected because of their sex or who they were. It was not a random shooting. If that had been true, you would have had as many boys as you did girls."

Despite comments like these, no stations or newspapers investigated this matter further.

Mitchell Johnson, 13, had recently been dumped by his

girlfriend, and he had expressed many frustrations with other girls from his school, but the media did not connect this to regular patterns of violence in our society.

It was reported that Johnson had threatened to kill his girlfriend earlier that week too. According to a recent report put out by Women Organizing for Change, "many students recounted the repeated threats made by one of the boys to kill his 'former girlfriend' for breaking up with him." Johnson was not going to let his girlfriend leave him.

This mentality is present in many domestic violence offenders. The Justice statistics gathered from 1992-1993 predicted that 28% of women killed in homicides are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends. Women are 75% more likely to be killed by their abusive husband if they decide to leave. Some believe that the woman could easily leave and that if she stays she is asking for it. Unfortunately many don't have anywhere to go and they fear being found. Right now there are three times as many animal shelters as shelters for battered women and children. This is why 50% of homeless women and children are on the streets, because they were battered.

The personality of a likely abuser is not difficult to identify. Most are extremely jealous, and possessive of their spouse. They tend to be distrustful, and have a low self-esteem.

Why does the media insist on ignoring such a prevalent problem within our society? This problem could be alleviated through wide exposure and education. We deserve the opportunity to become educated and the media has the power to do it. The media should make this a top priority.

An Apology

In the March Issue of *The Wire*, freshman Patrick Condon was misquoted in a story. Not only was the quote wrong, but it was falsely disparaging to Condon and it was intentionally fabricated by a *Wire* reporter. While such dishonesty would be unacceptable in a normal classroom situation, it is reprehensible in a publication.

The Wire has taken measures to minimize the likelihood of this happening again. We have introduced more rigorous fact checking, and we have put into writing a clear policy on plagiarism and lying, which is more severe than the general school policy.

The Wire would like to apologize to Patrick Condon and his family and to all of our readers who we hope will continue to rely on *The Wire* to be accurate.

-The Editors

The Wire

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The Wire is a student forum at West Potomac High School, established to disseminate news, ideas and other matters of interest to West Potomac students.

The Wire will publish no material that is libelous, obscene or which will likely create a substantial disruption of the school routine.

The Wire encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be signed, but names may be withheld by request. The Wire reserves the right to edit such letters for grammar, punctuation and length.

Editorial opinions expressed in *The Wire* are not necessarily those of the faculty adviser, the administration of West Potomac High School, or the Fairfax County Public Schools.

Student Sends Senate Smoke Signals

Diane Alford
News Editor

On March 19, 1998, four teenagers appeared before the U.S. Congressional House Subcommittee on Health and Environment. They gave their views on the effectiveness of various tobacco controls in reducing teen smoking. *The Wire* Sports Editor, Jameson Penn, was one of the four.

During the week of January 24-31, he had the great fortune to participate in a program, Presidential Classroom. It was a week of learning and seeing the 'ways of Washington, D.C.' through visits to Capitol Hill, the White House, the State Department, the Pentagon, etc.

While on the Hill, a friend from D.C. a he slipped into the Committee on Commerce's Tobacco Hearing on the day of opening statements, when testimony was being given by the four Tobacco company CEOs.

During the Congressmen's opening statements, one Congressman, who was waiting to

speak, noticed Penn and his friend in the back. The Congressman got up, rushed out the back door and moments later was tapping on the shoulders of the two.

The Congressman introduced himself as John Shimkus of Illinois.

He led the two students outside and sat them down on a park bench in the middle of the horse-shoe-shaped court. He spent five minutes asking them about smoking: what they thought, if they agreed with the proposed tobacco settlement, and so on.

As he was thanking them and walking them back in, he asked if they had any suggestions. Penn explained that he felt there should be teenagers up there to express their thoughts on the situation. Since they are the focus of the settlement, Penn said, they should be represented.

Shimkus ran back just in time to make his statement, wherein he motioned to have a teen panel appear on a later date.

A few weeks later, Penn e-mailed Shimkus, thanking him for listening and dispelling the

myth that an individual cannot make a difference.

The reply, one Penn hadn't expected to get at all, came on Monday, March 16, 1998. Penn received a phone call from Shimkus' office inviting him to participate in a teen panel on Friday, March 19, 1998.

Four students from across the nation were invited to speak—Mr. Jacob Falwell of Murray, Kentucky (a tobacco farmer, himself), Ms. Nicole Gallegos of Denver, Colorado, Ms. Elisa Svensson of Herndon, Virginia, and Jameson Penn.

That Wednesday, CNN's Washington Senior Correspondent, Charles Bierbaur, came to interview Penn at his home. The entire week was a nonstop rush of adrenaline. Thursday he testified before Congress.

The committee wanted Penn to speak as a teenager and not attempt to come off as an expert with charts and graphs. They just wanted an honest answer to a puzzling question: "Why do teens smoke and what can society do to address the problem?"

Should the Federal Government Drastically Increase the Tax on Cigarettes in Order to Reduce Teen Smoking?



"No because teens will always find a way to inhale and exhale, despite the fact that the price will increase and the restrictions will become harder."
Kahan Dhillion 11th

"Yes they should because it will deter kids from wanting to smoke because the costs will constantly be rising."

Ryan Fulcher 9th



"Yes because they are cancer sticks and life is valuable. In the end it could be for their own good to increase the price."
Sarah Compton 10th

Penn's Opening Statement to Congressional Committee

Why do teenagers smoke? I went around my school and asked friends that smoke why they do. And nine out of ten responded that it was simply peer

pressure. And, I don't mean the cliched afterschool special—health video—public service announcement, "Hey Man, everybody's doing it," type of peer pressure.

When you see your friends and parents lighting up, that has a powerful impact. At that point, any antismoking propaganda that you have digested is completely forgotten.

When a child grows up in a smoking environment, they tend to wind up having the worst addiction. Wendy, a friend of mine, has parents like that. They would buy her cartons and cartons of cigarettes. What kind of a message is this sending? How can parents one minute tell their kid not to smoke when the next minute they nearly hack up a lung finishing off that third pack of the day.

It's sort of funny when one of my friends, Eric, comes to me one day in school and says, "Oh man! I just got busted by my parents last night for smoking. I'm grounded for two weeks." A month later he gets busted again by the school for smoking on school grounds and the parents look the other way because "It's a lost cause. He's already addicted."

The first thing that this Committee needs to realize is that the vast majority of teens have smoked at least once or twice and many of those smoke on a regular basis. Teen smokers of today can no longer be pigeonholed as the rebellious punks that lurk in dark alleys.

They are now the jocks, the artists, the preps, the musicians, the skaters, the nerds, the intellectuals, and the rebellious punks. Go to any trendy coffee shop and you'll barely be able to see through the thick cloud of cigarette smoke that blankets the room. The kids that are so earnestly discussing philosophy and international affairs

are in the mean time puffing on the cigarettes that they know to be dangerous.

Why are these otherwise smart kids doing something so moronic? Because of the impression it gives. There is a certain laid back vibe to smoking that we love. Nothing combats emotional weariness like a feeling of reckless abandon (i.e. smoking).

A friend of mine, Kyle, was a freshman the same year his older brother was a senior. In order to fit in, Kyle followed his brother to parties and picked up the habit of smoking because it made him feel like he belonged. This year as a senior, he's a National Honor Society member with a schedule full of Advanced Placement courses and varsity sports. Not exactly the image you'd expect of a chain smoker. Once addict O, my friends make up any excuse to get away and take that drag they so desperately need. How many cigarette breaks does it take during their homework? How many times do they have to "take their dogs for a

walk?"

I've noticed that in my school, the ones that take those drags to fit in, are the first ones to incorporate marijuana and alcohol into their social routine. Remember my friend Kyle? He's a pothead, too.

From the years of Health education I received regarding the dangers of smoking, the one thing that I remember now and will never forget when the videos about the effects. We talk of emphysema and we talk of cancer. But, until you see it, you don't understand the significance. In one such video, there was a man who smoked his entire life, starting at the tender age of seven and continuing on until his final days. Through the entire interview he smoked through a hole in his trachea.

America was founded on one primary belief: freedom of choice. People have always been given the choice to smoke or not. That is why I feel the money that might exchange hands in a settle-



Jameson Penn will be managing editor of *The Wire* next year.

ment shouldn't go to assist those with diseases brought on by tobacco but to educate the youth on how stupid it is to start this fatal habit.

I will come from this experience having a new love for our country. I always thought that the bigwigs sat up there on their pedestals and made decisions concerning us, not caring what we thought.

But, now that I know personally that we can make a difference, I feel good about our future.

The names in this article were changed before the testimony was presented.

WP Hosts Tournament of Champions

Brooke Lombardi
News Editor

On April 22, West Potomac hosted the Tournament of Champions.

Junior Poonum Korpe advanced to the Tournament of Champions in Lincoln-Douglas debate, and senior Aaron Connelly advanced in Forensics.

The tournament is a series of championship bouts between students who are, "the best of the best," said Forensics and Debate sponsor Ms. Gloria Spriggs.

After arguing both sides of the question, Korpe advanced through five contests of elimination. "The debate was hard because you have to argue both sides of the issue," commented Korpe. "There were a lot of talented people there," she added.

Debate contests are of two sorts, Lincoln-Douglas, in which students debate general principles, and Policy, in which students debate specific policies. Each year students from around the country study, prepare for and debate a single issue. Students must prepare to debate either side of the issue.

This years Lincoln-Douglas topic was whether



Forensics and debate sponsor Ms. Gloria Spriggs speaks with junior Towney Teague.

or not civil disobedience is acceptable in a democracy. It featured 44 classrooms of heated debate and speech. Participants included students from throughout the area. Similar tournaments throughout the state prepare top students for the state forensics tournament.

Celebration of Excellence Honors Achievements

continued from pg. 1

maintaining its excellent academic quality."

Fairfax County School Board member Kris Amundson, and PTSA president Lynn Egge, organized the event to honor West Potomac students and teachers and to make the community aware of

their accomplishments. Eight West Potomac students: Michael Wilson, Meg Fennell, Allan McGarry, Kassie Brown, Brian Pinedo, Katrina Weintraub, Willie Pile, and John Clark spoke and explained their interpretation of excellence at West Potomac. The speakers were athletes, scholars, musicians, class officers or some combinations of all

four. The audience listened, and deeply appreciated what they heard.

The West Potomac Soundsations and West Potomac's Marching Wolverine Band entertained and demonstrated through their performances why West Potomac has won more musical awards than any other high school in Fairfax County.

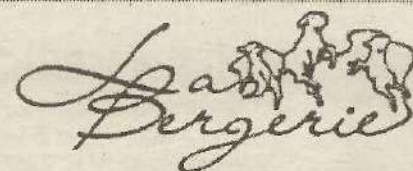
Part of the Celebration was the presentation of the Daimler-Benz Award of Excellence to Christine Burns. This is a national award and the prize is a three week all expense paid trip to Germany. Two thousand schools nationwide participated and only 50 students were selected.

There was a standing ovation for West Potomac teachers who were also recognized for their excellence. Joan Reynolds and Thomas Johnson were honored for being nominees for the Agnes Meyer teacher of the year Award, and Jody Nagao was honored for being a nominee for the Sallie Mae First Year Teacher Award. According to Kris Amundson, West Potomac's excellence is due in large part to its outstanding faculty.



Diane Alford

The West Potomac Soundsations performed at the event.



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A drive volunteer looks on as a student donates blood.

Diane Alford

Blood Drive Turnout Disappointing

Micah Schwartz

Managing Editor

Have you ever considered helping someone in need by giving blood? The Key Club, a West Potomac community service organization, held its annual blood drive on the 30th of April.

Fifty-four prospective donors volunteered to give blood. Seventeen of which were turned away. Donors are turned away for various reasons, including being sick, having a low iron content in their blood, having received a tattoo within 12 months, or for weighting too little. Donors must weight 110 lbs. or more.

"We were happy with the turnout, but we would have liked a few more donors," said Key Club advisor Mr. Chris Deshazor. "We wish more teach-

ers would have donated blood, and that students would have been more mature and contributed to the drive."

Deshazor notes that it is difficult to do a blood drive at a high school, where most of the students are not old enough to donate. He also said that donor turnout was lower than expected because many students had to take Standards of Learning Tests during the drive. Nonetheless, the Key Club hoped for a larger turnout.

To give blood, one has to be over age seventeen. Sign up for this blood drive was held in the senior cafeteria during the week of April 13. Potential donor were than assigned a specific time, between 8:30am - 12:00 pm, in which to report to the small gym, located in the lower Gunston building. When they arrived, donors were asked many questions and were counseled in the process of blood do-

nation. Donors were forced to undergo several blood tests before giving blood to ensure that their blood is healthy enough for donation. Donors are than seated in a reclining chair, and one pint of blood is extracted.

Donated blood is tested for diseases, such as AIDS. Healthy blood is taken to a blood bank, where it is distributed to hospitals and given to those in need of blood.

The annual drive is sponsored by INOVA Blood Donor Service, which holds several blood drives at various places over the course of the year.

The blood drive was organized by junior Max Price, a three year member of the Key Club. Price organized the event as his community service project, necessary to become an Eagle Scout, the highest honor of the Boy Scouts. "I was basically the middleman between INOVA and the Key Club. It was a lot of hard work," said Price.

Although they regarded it as not the most pleasurable of experiences, students and teachers felt good about donating blood. Senior James Holt, who donated blood last year but was unable to this year, said, "I like donating blood. It makes me feel good inside because I know I'm helping out others and donating to the community."

The Key Club is an extremely active organization at West Potomac. The club organizes—as well as blood drives—food drives, toy drives and bake sales. Members tutor students at Belle View Elementary School.

The club is advised by Deshazor, who is a first-year marketing and EFE teacher at West Potomac.

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DECA Descends on Denver

Patrick O'Brien
Wire Reporter

Six West Potomac Fashion Marketing students participated last week in the national level Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) competition.

The competition was held in Denver, Colorado from April 24th through the 29th. All of West Potomac's competitors were honored for their spectacular achievements in all levels of the competition.

Based on their scores throughout the event, five of the six received the National Award of Excellence. On top of that, senior Mary Shaw was awarded a medal for Basic and Social Skills, as well as being named an overall finalist in retail merchandising.

West Potomac competed in eight categories on the regional level this year, with six students winning first place. All six of these students, juniors Meghan Butasek, Ashley Ott and Caitlin Stangel, and seniors Alison Thrasher, Adam Soller and Mary Shaw, were able to win again at the state level, an unprecedented number of students from one school.

"It is not the norm for one school to produce so many winners, however it is becoming a strong tradition at W.P.," said Ms. Tricia Wenzel, fashion marketing teacher.

But the National competition presents more of a challenge, said Wenzel, "On the national level, it becomes very, very competitive".



At the hotel in Denver, Meghan Butasek, Ms. Tricia Wenzel, Ashley Ott, Adam Soller, Mary Shaw, Alison Thrasher, and Caitlin Stangel smile before going to the closing session.

However, Wenzel said her only hope in that students have a good time.

The purpose of the DECA competition is to develop necessary skills for marketing, merchandising and managing careers by evaluating students' achievements in these fields. The competitions motivate students to assume responsibility for self-improvement in a realistic business environment.

In these competitions, each student competes in a different category, such as Marketing Management, Retail Merchandising and Service Marketing.

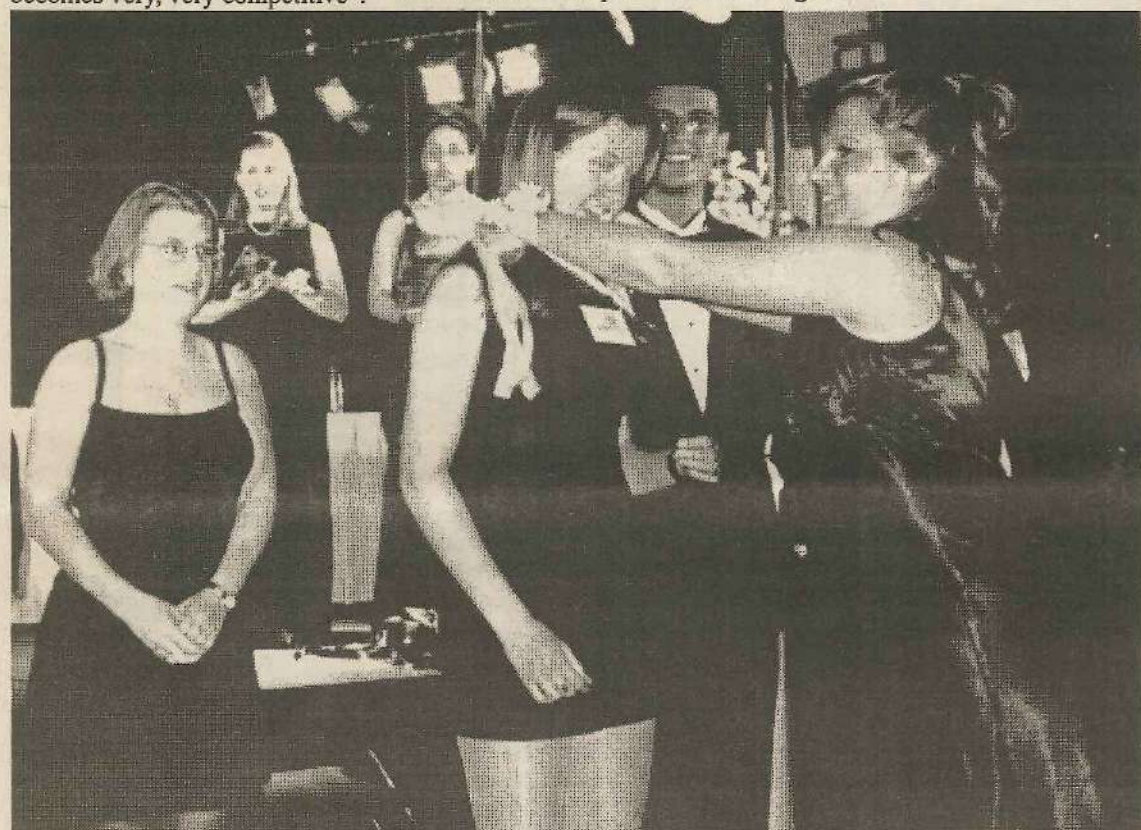
The competition is broken down into three different parts. There is

a comprehensive exam and then two role plays, evaluating specified competencies in the field, such as promotion or personal selling. The students act out the role play in front of judges who rate all of the competitors.

The judges are typically volunteers who are involved in the industry that the event deals with.

At the competition students also compete for scholarships ranging from \$250-\$1000.

With over 12,000 students from all over the world Denver was a great experience Soller said, "From the girls to rock climbing, the trip to Denver proved to be an experience that I will never forget."



Junior Caitlin Stangel receives the first place award at the state competition in McLean.

157 F.C. Seniors Named National Merit Semifinalists

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation has announced that 157 Fairfax County Public Schools seniors, representing 17 county high schools, have been named semifinalists in the 1998 National Merit Scholarship program.

West Potomac High School had one semifinalist, Patricia Crane. The largest number of semifinalists attend Thomas Jefferson.

Commenting on the announcement, interim Superintendent Alan E. Leis said, "Once again, we are very proud of Fairfax County Public Schools students' outstanding performance in the National Merit Scholarship competition."

Although Fairfax County Public Schools had only 14 percent of the total number of juniors in the state when the qualifying tests were given, we have 40 percent of the state's semifinalists."

The more than 15,000 semifinalists from across the country were selected from more than 1.1 million students enrolled in 20,000 United States high schools. Semifinalists are the students who scored the highest in each state on the 1996

Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) as high school juniors.

The semifinalists represent less than one percent of each state's graduating classes. About 90 percent, or approximately 14,000, of the semifinalists are expected to meet the high standards to advance to finalist standing, and all Merit Scholarship winners will be chosen from this group. Finalists will compete for approximately \$28 million in merit scholarships, which will be awarded next spring.

Pledge of Allegiance May Become Part of The School Day

If the Fairfax County Board authorizes a proposal by board member Carter S. Thomas, the Pledge of Allegiance may become a part of the school day in Fairfax County Schools.

On April 23, Thomas introduced his plan to require students to begin the day with the pledge. "It's an attempt for unity," commented Thomas. He expects the proposal to pass when a vote is taken in May, however others disagree. Other school board members question Thomas' idea because of the number of different cultures represented in Fairfax County.

Under Thomas' plan students would not be required to say the pledge, but be permitted to sit and listen as others say the pledge.

The Fairfax County School Board will vote on the proposal in May, and if it passes the middle schools will begin with the pledge every morning starting

School Board Choses 1998-1999 School Year Schedule

The Fairfax County School Board has now confirmed the dates for the 1998-1999 school year. Because of the "Kings Dominion Law" schools will begin after Labor Day on September 8 and end on June 23. If Virginia receives snow, unlike this year, the school year could go on until June 25th.

Earlier this year, the school board had recognized the potential problem in starting school after Labor Day, but on March 12 the board voted to withdraw its request to the Virginia Board of Education for a waiver of the law.

News Briefs



TIBETAN FREEDOM CONCERT

COMING TO A CAPITOL CITY NEAR YOU

Tibetan Freedom Concert Publicity Art

TIBETAN FREEDOM, DC STYLE

by Jameson Penn
Sports Editor

Tibetan Freedom Concert: coming to a capitol city near you. RFK Stadium will welcome on June 13th and 14th the third annual nonprofit festival that benefits Chinese-oppressed Tibet. Some leading acts include A Tribe Called Quest, Beastie Boys, Beck, KRS-ONE, Herbie Hancock, and Pearl Jam.

Tibet? What's That?

Tibet is a small region in the southwestern corner of China. Being surrounded by the Himalayas to the south, the Karakorum Range to the west, and the Kunlun Mountains to the north, Tibet is the highest region in the world, Tibet is sometimes referred to as The Roof of the World.

China took advantage of these natural borders on October 6, 1950 when 40,000 Chinese soldiers invaded Tibet. The small Tibetan army quickly surrendered to the PLA (People's Liberation Army), realizing there was no point: resistance was futile. On May 23, 1951, the Tibetans signed a treaty, The Seventeen Point Agreement. In this, the Chinese promised not to "alter the existing political system in Tibet," and, "in matters relating to various reforms in Tibet there would be no compulsion on the part of the central authorities."

Unfortunately, this promise was quickly broken under the watchful eye of Chinese dictator, Mao Zedong. After his death in 1976, a Chinese Democracy Movement gained momentum.

Chinese Democracy Movement

"'Democracy Walls' began to spurt up all over Tibetan cities. The walls held posters demanding 'basic human rights and democracy,' stated the Free Tibet web site (www.tibet98.com). Following this, underground newspapers detailed the brutality Zedong allowed in order to crack down on the Cultural Movement of 1966-67. He brought free expression to a halt in order to transform Chinese society into the socialist utopia he dreamt of.

The leaders of the Democracy Movement were Chinese students of whom learned from the tragic mistakes of earlier generations. Sadly, on June 4th, 1989, the Movement met PLA head on in the infamous Tiananmen Square, Beijing.

Tanks literally ran unarmed peacefully protesting students over. A large silenced mass of protestors quickly fled to avoid any more unnecessary fatalities. "Our struggle is one of peaceful protest, and the highest principle of peace is sacrifice." (Chai Ling, Cries for Democracy)

The Chinese government quickly arrested all rebels they believed to be involved in Tiananmen Square. Since Tiananmen Square, they've become even more harsh on dissidents. In the first week and a half of a 1996 campaign, 8,750 offenders were captured by the Public Security Bureau. All offenders go to trial, but most punishments are decided before trial. The majority of defendants are sentenced to death, lined up on their knees and shot in the back of the head.

History of Tibetan Freedom Concert

The Tibetan Freedom Concert was organized by the Milarepa Fund (www.milarepa.com). Adam Yauch, of the Beastie Boys, has helped promote and in-

form about Tibet. The first two concerts took place in San Francisco and New York, respectively.

According to MTV News, although many will be going for their favorite rock stars, thanks to the concert, some of those people will end up learning what is happening.

"People just need to, become aware... have the information given to them and they can do what they will with it, and I think music is a great way of doing that," said Alanis Morissette, a 1997 Tibetan Freedom Concert alumni.

Chinese dissident Wei Jingsheng and Tibetan monk Ven. Palden Gyatso-la will be speaking on the main stage about the unjust treatment of the Tibetans by the Chinese government.

Jingsheng, who has been dubbed the father of the Chinese Democracy, was arrested in 1979 in response to his involvement in the 'Democracy Wall' movement. He was sentenced to 15 years for speaking out against the Chinese government and Deng Xiaoping, the premier of China since the death of Mao Zedong. It surprised many when Jingsheng was released six months early from prison. Tibetan freedom propaganda suggests he was released early to enable the Chinese to win a bid for the 2000 Olympics.

Why DC?

The 1998 Tibetan Freedom Concert will take place prior to President Clinton's trip to China. On June 15th, a Tibet Freedom Rally will take place on the Capitol Mall at noon.

The festival will provide musical entertainment and a knowledge. This year's Tibetan Freedom Concert will be one more step towards winning the peace and independence of which Wei Jingsheng and many other so-called dissidents dream.



Buddhism and especially Tibetan Buddhism have been the subject of several recent films. *Little Buddha* portrays the search, in Seattle, for the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama. The recent and popular film, *Seven Years in Tibet*, portrays the Chinese assault on and occupation of Tibet, as seen through the eyes of a Westerner, here played by Brad Pitt. Martin Scorsese's more recent *Kundun* tells the story of the occupation from the point of view of the Dalai Lama.

Can't Wait '98 For Summer

LILITH FAIR-SECOND TIME AROUND

Sarah Ashton
Managing Editor

What was once just small talk is on the verge of becoming a cultural touchstone. Last summer, performing artist Sarah McLachlan had a vision to create an event that would celebrate women in music. Many people did not support McLachlan, though, convinced that an all-women festival would not be successful. But they were wrong.

What became the Lilith Fair sold out venues across North America and became the top-grossing festival tour in 1997. Pollstar named it the magazine's "Tour of the Year."

This year's Lilith Fair will be even stronger than last year's. It will kick off on June 19th in Portland Oregon and continue through August 31st. The Fair is scheduled to stop in many cities that were not reached in 1997, including Seattle, San Francisco, and D.C. Plans also include a larger roster of performers. Some women who'll be seen on stage are Natalie Merchant, Sheryl Crow, Missy

Elliot, Indigo Girls, Paula Cole, Queen Latifah, and of course, the star herself, Sarah McLachlan.

June 19th the Lilith Fair will be at Merriweather Post Pavilion. It will include a Main Stage, Second Stage and Village Stage for both established artists and emerging artists, focusing on offering a broader range of musicianship to the D.C audience. The village stage will also include a local artist, not yet announced.

Organizers of the Fair have announced plans for to make charitable contributions. They are predicted to top last year's total of \$700,000. Each tour sponsor has committed to partner up with a national non-profit organization, to whom they will donate their earnings. In addition, \$1.00 from each ticket sold for the Fair will be donated to a local charity. A few of the non-profit organizations will be present at the Fair with booths in the Village Area. The Breast Cancer Fund will be at each of the Fair locations and will be distributing breast exam cards and other educational material.

Lilith Fair is not necessarily the rising up of female singers. It is a demonstration of the growing audience that

these woman musicians are attracting. The Lilith fair is a good way for these musicians to get a chance to shine and show their talent. Many of these performers weren't heard on the radio a lot before last years Lilith Fair, but now they are receiving regular radio play. According to McLachlan this non-discriminating forum gives the female musicians a chance to be respected and loved for what they say.



Sarah McLachlan (left), and Sheryl Crow, two main performers at this year's Lilith Fair

THE NAKED TRUTH ABOUT HFS

by Mary Alyce Shaw
Editor in Chief

This year tickets to the annual HFStival sold out in 99 minutes, setting another new record. Every year the HFStival sells out in record time, and tickets are still in high demand.

Every year 99.1 has contests to give away tickets. However these are no ordinary radio contests. HFS listeners have to earn their tickets. 99.1 does not provide a simple call-in contest. Last year the morning show had listeners send in naked photos of themselves, and the best looking were awarded tickets. The crew chose who to send tickets to on a cosmetic basis.

This year the station took that contest to a new level. Not only did listeners get naked, but they then had to go out in public. Every morning a location was announced. One morning the station even asked listeners to get naked in front of the White House. The first person to show up naked won tickets.

The following week the station had a house volunteered, and they invited listeners to show up at the house to play naked twister. The winner of the game won HFS tickets. The host of the game won tickets by walking to Dunkin' Doughnuts to order breakfast, while wearing only a t-shirt and tennis shoes. The police stopped by to give him a personal escort.

It would seem that the contests could not get any weirder, but HFS succeeded in making them so. The station had a man feather himself at a local gas station and scream, "My baby! My baby!" He could not get tickets until another listener brought by a live chicken.

99.1 has not only used the high demand for tickets as an excuse for weird contests, but they have also used the demand for tickets to raise money for charitable causes. One morning the station had a group try to win tickets by attempting to raise \$500 for the Pediatric AIDS Foundation.

Students have different reactions to the contests. Junior Colleen Hanrahan said, "I think it is kind of pathetic that someone is that desperate. They should have bought the tickets when they had the chance. But it is still funny to listen to."

As long as HFS follows tradition the concert will be unbelievable. Let's hope those who have publicly humiliated themselves enjoy the show.

THIS YEAR'S HFSTIVAL WILL BE HELD ON MAY 16 AT RFK STADIUM

FEATURED HFS BANDS

FASTBALL	MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES
SEMISONIC	GOD LIVES UNDERWATER
TUSCADERO	BARE NAKED LADIES
WYCLEF JEAN	SOUL COUGHING
FOO FIGHTERS	SCOTT WEILAND
HARVEY DANGER	SAVE FERRIS
CRYSTAL METHOD	EVERCLEAR
MARCY PLAYGROUND	GREEN DAY
AGENTS OF GOOD ROOTS	B-52'S
CHERRY POPPIN DADDIES	FUEL



Richard Charlton

Parent volunteers help out by selling cruise tickets during both A and B lunches in the senior cafeteria.

Seniors Are Cruising Away

Charles Lenard

Focus Editor

So far, to most of us, the "Senior Cruise" has been sort of a mystery, one that we don't know much about, aside from what we can see in the logo. Past years' logos have typically depicted a tropical island setting of some sort, or a big cruise ship. This year's logo, courtesy of Doug Bentley, captures the theme best of all by means of a ship sailing off into the horizon, symbolic of us seniors sailing off to our futures.

But only figuratively do we cruise away. You see, the cruise is not really a cruise at all. It's an all night party for graduating seniors, held at Belle Haven Country Club, which is beautifully decorated like a cruise ship. In past years, the Cruise has been a lock-in, but that's not the case anymore. If you decide to leave, your parents will be notified, and you will not be allowed to return.

You probably don't have to worry about that though, because there will be plenty of fun stuff to do. Cruise '98 is a safe, chaperoned, drug and alcohol free

party, which has been attended by 80% of graduating senior classes in past years. According to AP English teacher Ms. Erin Brick, who has worked on the cruise in previous years, "It's a great way for students to let their hair down after four years of hard work."

Everybody who cruises that evening will come away with a door prize, perhaps a TV, CD player, or dinner certificate for an area restaurant, and one lucky person will represent West Potomac in an area drawing to win a car!

Also at the cruise will be a casino, music, dancing, bingo, karaoke, an artist drawing caricatures, other games, and great food and drinks served until dawn!

"We'll all be having fun, and nobody will be drunk," said senior cruiser Brendan McDonough.

Tickets for Cruise '98 will be available starting sometime in May, and are \$30. This amount doesn't nearly cover the costs that go into the Cruise. Senior Cruise '98 is a gift to this year's seniors from parents and area businesses. Their donations make the party what it is. So don't turn down this once in a lifetime opportunity, come and Cruise '98!

Students Question Board Members

Kenny Shin

Wire Reporter

Recently The Wire sent a survey to all Fairfax School Board members, asking wide ranging questions about public school policies in Fairfax. We questioned subjective political perceptions of the state board, views on the new Standards of Learning, on the GT and AP programs, whether members supported charter schools and private school vouchers, and whether or not they thought the use of over the counter medications should be controlled in schools. Four members were kind enough to respond. We asked the board members to respond to some recent criticism of

through imposing tough standards, such as the new SOLs.

Member Kristen Amundson stated, "I do think that the previous Governor appointed people to the State Board of Education based more on their ideology than their commitment to public education," but both Amundson and Member Robert Frye believed that, "is changing under Governor Gilmore."

In contrast, Christian Braunlich believed the perception was inaccurate and arose from an unwillingness for "discussion and de-

bate about the substance of tougher standards."

We mentioned to members that Robert Samuelson, a nationally syndicated conservative economist, has cited that only 4 percent of the U.S. workforce uses advanced math or science in their occupations, but that the state and Fairfax County nevertheless are pushing for more advanced science and math to be taught to all students.

All board members responding cited expected changes in our society, that math and science will be more and more important. Braunlich said, "It is indisputable that we're headed into a more technologically oriented society, and we should prepare students



School board member Christian Braunlich

for that society."

The Wire asked members to comment on the disparity of resources provided to GT-AP students and to "regular" students. No members agreed there was such a disparity. All expressed commitment to all students. Amundson said, "all students are entitled to a gifted and talented quality education." Other members felt more students should be challenged to take harder courses.

No members supported the use of vouchers in Fairfax County. Vouchers are public money applied to private school tuition. Braunlich said, "I do not believe vouchers would work in Fairfax County, where our public school system is strong and delivers a high quality education. By the same token, I do not believe I should stand in the way of efforts, including vouchers, to improve the quality of education for students living in areas where the public schools have totally imploded."



School board member Kristen Amundson

the composition of the state school board. Some critics have complained that the state board overly represents the views of conservative Christians who want to shape or damage public education

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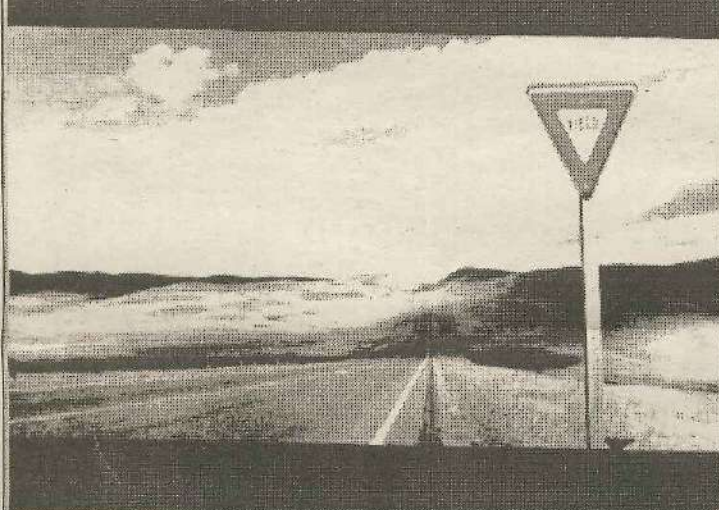
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PEARL JAM



Yielding To Old Influences

Jameson Penn

Sports Editor

Who is this and what have you done with Pearl Jam?

Pearl Jam—released *Yield* and proved my nearly hopeless theory that they'd be brought back to life. No Code, their last effort, if you consider it much of an effort, pushed me to great lengths to come up with good things to say about it in *The Wire* October issue. Luckily, my BS-ing abilities won't be tested this time.

Pearl Jam is Eddie Vedder, Jeff Ament, Jack Irons, Mike McCready, an Stone Gossard. Irons being the replacement for Dave Abruzzo who was fired two years ago.

Believe me when I say that it was quite a relief to push play on my stereo and hear the best PJ sounds since the days of "Jeremy" and "Black" (Ten).

Maybe my high regards of *Yield* can be traced back to when I learned Vedder surrendered some of the musical control to the rest of the band.

According to the Philly News, Ament said, "Ed's typically the guy who finishes off the songs, and that was working enough. But by the end of No Code, he was so burnt, it was so much work for him."

"I remember him saying it would be great if other people could come in with ideas. So we all went home and wrote a bunch of songs."

Vedder even went as far as having the entire band collaborate on "In Hiding" and even allowing Gossard to write "No Way." It may not sound like a lot, but, if you are aware of the notorious Vedder anal-retentive-

ness and perfectionist qualities, then it's easily understand how this is such a great feat.

With *Yield*, Pearl Jam is reaching out once again; the songs are bolder and omit a sense of confidence. "Push Me Pull Me" is a Beatles homage and a shifty studio experiment. "The theme for 'In Hiding' originated in the four day 'speech fast' Vedder did last year where he didn't speak for the 4 days. 'If you don't eat for a long time, food tastes better.'"

In the U2-esque anthem "Given to Fly," *Yield*'s first single, a man is blessed with the power to fly. The man returns to earth to share "the key to the locks on the chains he saw everywhere," but is ironically greeted with violence. The badly-beaten man continues to try to give away what he's learned only to be met with resistance each time.

"The song's about not rising above anybody's comments about what you do and still giving your love away," said Vedder. "You know—not becoming bitter and reclusive, not condemning the whole world because of the actions of a few." Hmm... could this be an important lesson Vedder had to learn?

Could this be the newly adopted strategy Pearl Jam is employing? Instead of fighting futile battles and standing on principle until its point is lost, they've chosen to yield, to move forward and offer something of value to what's left of its audience.

And that is why I've backed Pearl Jam through both the great and the difficult times. If you are like me and have missed the PJ of five years ago, then welcome *Yield* with open

Grease's Lightning Strikes Twice

Diane Alford

News Editor

We are now celebrating Grease's 20th anniversary with the gigantic re-release containing new, enhanced color and new digital sound. Grease was re-released on March 27, completely uncut, with Danny, Sandy, Rizzo, Frenchy and all the Rydell High gang.

It was a huge hit in 1978, when Travolta was 24 and riding his first wave of stardom, and has consistently stayed popular as both a video and soundtrack ever since. Grease is a romantic musical comedy that both parodies and celebrates the era of drag races and switchblades, malt shops and high-school hops and most of all, American Bandstand rock 'n' roll, long sideburns and big wavy pompadours of heavily creamed hair.

Following the road-blocked romance of Danny and Sandy, Grease showcases two kids who love each other despite vast social differences. Danny is a bad boy, Sandy is a good girl, and the two shall never mesh during the course of the school year. There, the good girlishness and bad boyhood keep Sandy and Danny apart, at least until Sandy wiggles into her black spandex pants.

When Grease debuted in 1978 it grossed more than \$340 million in box offices around the world. This became the biggest grossing musical movie in all of film history, a record that still stands today.

After 20 years, Grease ranks as one of the top ten videos sold in the United States. Not just the movie, but the soundtrack was a huge hit.

According to *The Chicago Tribune*, Grease is shot with the same zest that Busby Berkley's MGM teen musicals with Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney, but with more irony and sexual knowingness.

The music seems to be rather bizarre, but the songs are catchy, the choreographed dances are full of energy, and the guest cast of diverse types that seems to light some fires.

Since '78, there have been over 20 million double soundtrack albums sold. Alone in the past three years there have been more than 1.2 million sold. As of the first of February it has

stayed on the top five for the Billboard pop charts for 244 consecutive weeks.

Sophomore Alison McLean said, "I believe that Grease did well because it's fun and it is still doing well in its re-release especially since we now can sing along with the songs."

Grease has captured a variety of generations since its release. Both the movie and the music have played repetitively on TV and radios around the world, ranging from colleges to the family room.

Junior Mary Miller said, "Grease is a classic American musical with pep. It's got music to dance to and personifies 'cool.'"

Students, parents, and young children all are waiting impatiently to see the singing performances of John Travolta, Olivia Newton-John, Stockard Channing, Frankie Avalon, Sha-Na-Na, Frankie Valli, and the rest of the cast.

According to Paramount Productions, Aaron Carr one, of the producers and the adapter of the Broadway show, stated, "I wish I could claim that my colleagues and I knew exactly what we were unleashing more than two decades ago when we first began planning this film. I always thought it would be successful when I optioned the rights with a vision of making it into a movie, but I never dreamed of this phenomenal success."

On the other hand, there are

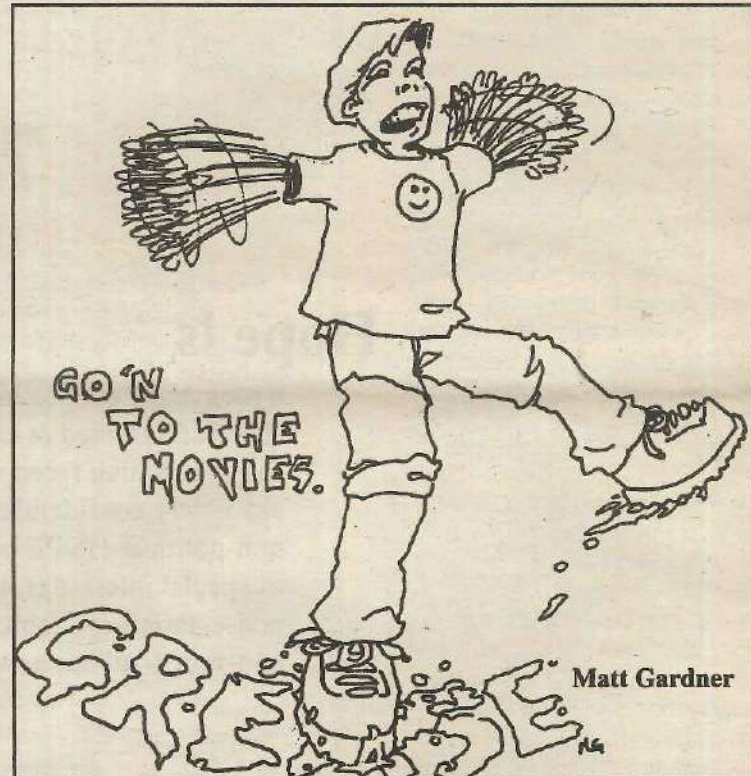


Grease was one of several 70's films that highlighted John Travolta's dancing

also those that believe Grease should not of been re-released, despite their need to try to earn more money. Michael Wilmington, one of the Tribune's Movie Critics seems to be among the few that feel this way.

"I thought the movie was overcute and overdone back in 1978, and my opinion had never changed despite the multiple viewings since. What I don't like about Grease is its chirpy artificiality, the just-kidding-around campiness of the secondary characters."

Grease has come to touch the hearts of all who come across the movie, the soundtrack, and even the reminisces of the good old high school days. So for all those cats and chicks who do dig Grease, this is the time to see it. Especially while it's on a big screen, with all the colors shiny and new, and Travolta and Newton-John looking just like they did when they were playing teenagers while still in their 20's. Greasy kid stuff it all may be, but just like rock 'n' roll, it'll probably never die.



Matt Gardner

Megan Wood..., Dancing to Her Own Beat

Crystal McMillan
Features Editor

When Senior Megan Wood is not dancing, she is sometimes spotted painted blue, out on the weekends.

Wood is currently a senior. She has a 3.5 G.P.A. and is the Senior Class Vice President. She would love to be more involved in school activities, but dancing takes up most of her time.

"Dancing takes up a lot of my time, but in the end, I know it will be to my benefit. I love it more than anything and I'll never give it up," said Wood.

Wood, has been dancing since she was five years old, at Terry's School of Dance and Gymnastics. She has taken several different types of dance classes, including Jazz, Ballet, Tap, Hip-Hop, Lyrical, African, and gymnastics, all which she now teaches.

Wood teaches anywhere from

three to five days a week. She teaches students from the age of three to thirty and at all levels from beginning baby combos to advanced.

Wood has achieved many awards for dancing. The most recent was The Miss Dance U.S.A. title, in which she competed in a solo category.

"Megan is without a doubt the most talented, loyal, energetic, trusting, young lady I've ever met. Megan knows what she wants out of life and is willing to give up lots of social, normal school activities to pursue her dreams. If you've ever known Megan as a friend, you'd know she'd do anything for you that she possibly could do, that would be right. I'm going to miss her as a student, a friend, and a teacher for all of her talents," stated Owner / Director of Terry's School of Dance and Gymnastics, Terry Peyton.

Unlike many other seniors at-

tending West Potomac, Wood doesn't plan on going to college next fall.

This is not necessarily a bad thing for her though. She plans on moving to Los Angeles around January of 1999, (after she finishes a few more dance classes at Terry's), and will start taking dance classes at The Edge Performing Arts dance studio in L.A. When she feels she is ready, she will audition for a scholarship program. If she is accepted for the scholarship, she will take forty hours of dance a week for one year, then The Edge will grant her a one year paid tuition.

Wood hopes that after that year she will get signed with an agency. She will then begin auditioning for various commercials, shows, and video parts. This will definitely not happen over night. Wood will have to put a lot of time and effort into all of this.

Wood said, "If my plans do not



Wood talks with friends in the cafeteria.

Richard Charlton

work out, I will go to college in California. Then I will move back to the East Coast and open my own dance studio.

"I follow my heart more than anything and this is a dream that I have had for years. When I'm older, I don't want to look back and wonder if I could have made it," Wood said.

The most important things in Wood's life are her friends, fam-

ily, dancing, and having fun. "Megan is the sweetest girl I have ever met. She is very outgoing, and a fun person to be with. She never makes anyone feel uncomfortable or unwelcome. Megan is the perfect person to go to when you need to cheer up or when you need a shoulder to lean on," states a good friend of Wood's, junior Eric Mueller.



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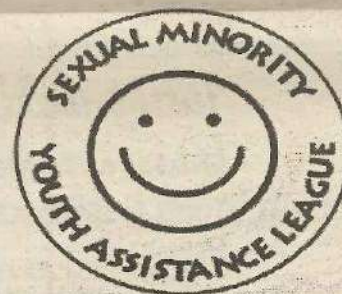
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Jordan Retires, Superlative Lives On

Michael Jordan considers retirement after the 1997-98 basketball season

Pat O'Brien

Wire Reporter

I just happened to be reading the March 30th copy of *Sports Illustrated*, for my own amusement, and I happened along an essay in there about how terrible it will be when Michael Jordan retires from the NBA.

The reason it will be terrible, of course, is that people use the phrase "the Michael Jordan of" to describe someone that is the best at what they do. For instance, *Pat O'Brien is the Michael Jordan of newspaper writers*. Everyone is afraid that once Michael Jordan retires, they won't be able to do this anymore. They will have to find some other catchy phrase, which they don't want to do, because this is difficult. Fortunately, I have decided to take this burden upon myself, so that everyone else can keep on reading *Sports Illustrated* and watching basketball games.

I've given this topic more consideration than it probably deserves, and I will now share my thoughts with you. You may discuss amongst yourselves which suggestion you like best and then forget about it completely because it's really not that important, but here's what I came up with.

My initial thought was to revert back to the old superlative system of judging who's the best, the greatest, the most liked athlete, or whatever. But then you think about it, you say a few of them

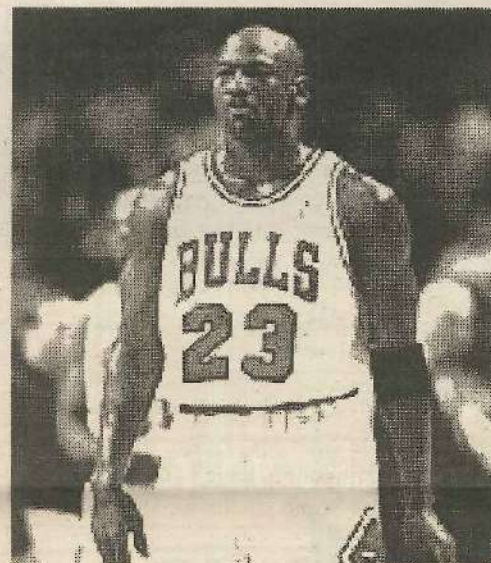
to yourself. They just don't have as much of a ring as 'the Michael Jordan of'. Look at this comparison for yourself:

A: Enchiladas are the best tasting Mexican food.

B: Enchiladas are the Michael Jordan of Mexican food.

Not convincing enough? How about this:

A: There is nothing worse than



having a limb amputated.

B: Amputation is not the Michael Jordan of surgical procedures.

Do you see the so-so quality of the superlatives when you compare them to the convincing finality of "the MJ of"? So it's clear we can't go with simple superlatives.

My next thought was to think of someone else who was the best at what they did and use their name

in the place of Michael Jordan's name. Here is a preliminary list of people I compiled:

Hitler, best at being an evil dictator.

Chevy Chase, best at blowing a promising comedy career.

Jim Morrison, best at doing more drugs than anyone else in the sixties.

Anna Nicole Smith, best at exploiting unnaturally large, artificially implanted body parts.

Again, none of these seem to be the best alternative to Michael

Jordan. First of all, certain groups may become offended if one of these names is used in a slightly less than serious way, which they obviously would be. Second, I realized that although these people may have been good at what they did, their names don't really fit when you are trying to describe the best new baseball player. A few examples are all you need to realize this doesn't work:

Juwan Howard is the Jim Morrison of the Wizards.

This doesn't work, and take my word for it, none

of the other ones do either.

So, after using dozens of brain cells for the purpose of replacing Michael Jordan's name, brain cells which I can never recover, I've come to a conclusion. Why can't we just keep using Michael Jordan's name after he retires? That way, people won't forget who he was. When somebody uses the name Michael Jordan, at least one other person will remember him.

House Leagues Bring Better Grades, Fitness to WP

Kelly Hesaltine

Entertainment Editor

Sports are a major part of most peoples' lives. But here at West Potomac, some students just don't have the time that is required for most high school sports.

For those people, there are youth leagues. These are teams for athletes of all ages.

Junior Patricia Olsen played WP basketball and soccer her freshman and sophomore years.

Olsen now plays for a Lee-Mount Vernon soccer team.

"Since I don't have time to play a high school sport every season, playing house league soccer keeps me running a couple times of week so I am able to stay in shape," said Olsen.

The time it takes to play sports is hard on students trying to keep up their grades. House leagues, such as Lee-Mount Vernon and Fort Hunt, accommodate those students who want to keep their grades up and stay in shape.

"I just don't have the time that is

necessary for high school sports," said senior Ted Price. "I play Fort Hunt basketball in the winter because I love the competition."

"Since some students don't have the mentality to play on a high school team, they look forward to the house leagues to stay in shape," said junior Brianne Hoffman.

House league sports don't have practice everyday, but they do provide a time for some students to get out and run, and just feel good about themselves.

Severson vs. Weav: Who Should Have the Upper Hand on Varsity Teams—Talented Underclassmen or Decent Seniors?



Pro Seniors

Phil Severson
Wire Reporter

It's the 1993 college championship game. There's less than a minute left and the game between the experienced North Carolina Tar Heels and the youthful and badly inexperienced Michigan Wolverines team has come down to the wire. Chris Webber, a freshman, steals the ball from a UNC player and is immediately trapped. Webber calls a time-out. He thinks this will allow Michigan to retain the ball.

If Webber had more experience, he would have remembered that all his teams time-outs had been used. As a result of his error, his team was assessed a technical foul which lost them the ball and, eventually, the game.

If a senior member of the Michigan team had been in the game instead of Webber, the Wolverines could have and prob-

ably would have won the game. It was Webber's inexperience that lost the game and the championship.

This year we had a basketball phenom enter our school, Andre Eason. Eason began the year as a solid contributor and earned a lot of minutes on the court.

However, as the game came down to where one mistake could cost West Potomac victory, Eason was pulled out of the game and replaced by an older member of the team. This was wise of the West Potomac coaches and does not reflect badly on Eason, who is young. West Potomac advanced to the state semifinals.

When a new underclassman phenom comes along, they are often worshiped and idolized. The student body loves them for their talent and the coaches love them for the effort they show on the field, but there is no reason to allow inexperienced players to hurt the team.

These talented underclassmen need time to grow up and experience their sport. The seniors, who might not have as much talent as some of the underclassmen, or have to work harder to achieve it, have the most experience and, therefore, the most knowledge of the game.

The seniors have the most experience in tight games. If I had to choose between a talented senior and a more talented freshman or sophomore during an important stretch of a game, I would choose the senior nine times out of ten.

Who should have the upperhand: talented underclassmen or decent seniors?

Decent seniors—because they've been playing the sport longer, so they should have seniority even if they're not as good.

-Emily Payne
Senior

Talented underclassmen—it's better for the team.

-Connie Wicks
Freshman

Talented underclassmen—just because you're a senior doesn't mean you should get a special privilege.

-Sedrick Winston
Senior

Decent seniors—they are graduation and underclassmen still have next year.

-Nikki Tsimbidi
Senior

Decent seniors—underclassmen have more time to play.

-Allison McLane
Sophomore

Pro Ability

Carrie Weaver
Sports Editor

Most coaches have criteria for selecting a varsity team: strength, endurance, ability, cooperation. If these were always applied, schools always would have the best of the best on varsity.

Sadly, however, this is not true. When choosing who should be on varsity, many coaches factor in how many seniors are trying out for the team.

Why? Nowhere in the *Student Activities Extracurricular Participation Policy* pamphlet does it say that a coach must put all seniors on varsity. But, for some reason, that seems to be the way it goes.

Interviewed students had not considered the question of whether or not seniors should automatically have varsity status.

Perhaps sometimes the reason lies with the size of the team—a coach may put all seniors on varsity just to fill the roster. In this case, yes, I agree that seniors, no matter what their ability level, should be on varsity.

But the senior privileges laid out at the beginning of the year by both senior class officers and the administration do not include automatic placement on varsity sports teams.

Having varsity status is one of the highest honors in sports both



at the high school and collegiate levels. An athlete should earn his/her spot on varsity, not have it given to them because of their seniority.

Assistant Director of Athletics, Dale Eaton, believes that, from a coaching standpoint, putting less abled seniors on varsity "takes away spots to develop younger players." On the other hand, he has to ask himself, "Are they really challenging themselves against freshmen on JV?"

In addition to fielding a team for the current season, coaches also must project the size and ability of the team for the next two or three years.

Director of Athletics, Jeff Dietze, believes that players on varsity should "be able to start or get a significant amount of playing time."

This is the way it should be. Not only participation, but attaining the status of varsity should not be a requirement for seniors.

Papa John's Is Preferred Over Pizza Hut.

In a recent taste test, people with a preference chose the taste of Papa John's Works pizza over Pizza Hut's Supreme pizza by a significant margin.

*Taste test compared Papa John's regular hand-tossed crust to Pizza Hut's regular hand-tossed crust. The test was conducted by an independent marketing research company.

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WP Crew Determination, Enthusiasm Keep Team Afloat

Diane Alford
News Editor

The crew team gets the school's support through encouragement and praise, but the West Potomac crew team is unable to obtain school funding for what is designated a club sport.

Because there is not much competition from surrounding schools, the team must be categorized as a club sport. The only other school in WP's district that is able to have a crew team is T.C. Williams.

Since crew is categorized as a club sport, the school isn't authorized to contribute money to the team. All high schools, including West Potomac, are encouraged to have clubs, but all clubs must obtain money in their own ways. Just like the Spanish Club or the Key Club, crew acquires

"This year we raised over \$7,500 in donations..."

money through fund-raisers.

Junior Sasha Anderson, a participant on the crew team, said, "I think it's unfair that we have to pay [for everything]; it gives the team a disadvantage in getting new equipment."

As it is, WP is unable to receive



Erica Davies

Members of the girls crew team practicing on the Potomac River. From left to right: junior Kelly Luhring, sophomore Christine Burns, senior Noelle Mercer, senior Meryl Rukenbrod, and senior Emily Burns.

massive amounts of money in order to fund the many other sports. There are so many different teams divided into allocated divisions of Freshman, Junior Varsity, and Varsity. Thus, there is only a certain amount of money set aside for each team.

Crew alone cost thousands of dollars to provide the team with all the equipment needed. Expenses range from the boats, costing up to \$20,000 a piece, to the smallest amount of \$60 for uniforms.

Many athletes at WP agree that if the crew team became even partially funded, it would take money away from many of the other sports that are already struggling to receive money.

Junior Lisa Keller, a fellow WP athlete, said, "We are already tight for money with the teams that we have; with another team, it would take away from funding for other sports."

Crew is one of the few sports that does not make cuts. But because of the high costs, many students who wish they could become members of the crew team are unable to participate.

Between the \$250 a season for dues, \$60 for uniforms, and the individual trips costing approximately \$100 each trip, membership becomes very expensive.

Even after the dues from each member of the team are collected, thousands of dollars are still needed to fully equip the team.

The team must have a certain number of boats and oars for the different divisions of the team.

Bob Wood, one of the crew team's coaches expressed his feelings on the situation: "I think it's difficult on the parents and the rowers to have to fund the team, and unfortunately it's a very expensive sport."

This is where the different types of fund raisers come into play. The team raises money from wreath sales, bake sales, car washes, and silent auctions.

This year alone the crew team has grossed over \$10,000 from fund raisers.

Donna Linnell is a parent of a crew team member and headed the committee for this year's silent auc-

tion. Linnell said, "The silent auction is one of the team's main fundraisers. It is essential to have because it raises so much money. This year we raised over \$7,500 dollars in donations, which helps the cost that the parents have to pay."

There are different perspectives on how the crew team should be supported, but the lack of school funding definitely hasn't affected the team's ability to achieve. Since last year they have achieved high standings in various local divisions and in the nation.

Even though the crew team is not school funded, they still carry the West Potomac High School name, and they make everyone proud.

Chicora Ledbetter

Singing high notes and catching pop flies

Thomasina Moon
Features Editor

Bruised, scraped and cut but still a beautiful person, junior Chicora Ledbetter gives her all to softball.

In 1993, she began to play softball and with practice, has become exceptional at the sport.

Coming this past November from West Haven High School, in West Haven Connecticut, Ledbetter, better known as ChiChi by friends, is a marvelous addition to the West Potomac varsity softball team.

"Softball is a very exciting sport," said Ledbetter. "Not only is it fun, it is also mentally challenging. It gets you in shape and gives you a big boost of energy."

As designated hitter, third baseman, retired catcher and outfielder, Ledbetter is, "a breath of fresh air. She is a lot of fun to have on the team," said softball coach, Ms. Carol Horton. "You never know what to expect from ChiChi."

**FACE
IN THE
CROWD**

When she gets a hold of the ball she can knock the stuffing out of it. Right now she is playing designated hitter and outfielder.

The softball team gives Ledbetter part of her personality. "Everyone on the team has a good

personality," said Ledbetter. "If you make a mistake, you just do it again until you get it right. They all have good sportsmanship and I love them all."

Besides playing softball, Ledbetter sings as second soprano in the West Potomac Gospel Choir, and plays volleyball in the spring.

"Being in Gospel Choir is fun just because Chicora is there—she has a beautiful voice," said freshman Kentara Tatum.

When graduation arrives in June 1999, Ledbetter plans on going to a business college, such as Computer Learning Center or Strayer College. "When I finish college I want to be a business woman. Right now, I'm taking classes to prepare me for that," said Ledbetter.

Business Education teacher, Ms. M. Moore said, "Chicora will get the job done. She is strong—if she doesn't know how



Chicora Ledbetter, known as Chi Chi to friends and teammates has been a marvelous addition to the West Potomac Varsity Softball team.

to do it, she will figure it out. In the business world you need someone who is flexible and can adapt easily to change."

Junior Melissa Waters said "Chicora is friendly, well rounded

and nice—she gives all us African American women pride."

"ChiChi is ChiChi and that makes her a wonderful person and friend," added Tatum.