

THE WIRE

WEST POTOMAC HIGH SCHOOL

West Potomac High School
6500 Quander Road
Alexandria, VA 22307
Volume 21 #8

Friday May 26, 2006

Students Acquire FLEXability

Alex Keckeisen

Co-Editor-in-Chief

Starting next year, a new bell schedule could affect students in the way that they learn, and in how much "after-school" learning time will be spent in school.

The proposed FLEX Schedule, which will go into effect during the 2006-2007 school year, intends to transform our current seven period day (with the last period being short) into eight periods of equal lengths.

"Making goals," was one of the reasons that we are making the change to the FLEX schedule said assistant principal Rod Manuel. "It fits into our school-wide needs to improve literacy, find time for remediation, and enrichment." Manuel also commented on the need for the plan because of the diversity within our school. "Some kids can't stay after for after school work, whether it is because of family obligations, work, or something else."

This new schedule will not add another elective; rather, it will amend an already existing period in favor of a study-hall type class on every other day. And while there would still be two alternating days, A and B, the order will be different. A days would be the same, with the first, third, fifth, and seventh periods in the same order. The B days would be a much different story. Students will still report to their second block class for regular instruction but for students fourth, or FLEX block, a different type of instruction, will come into effect. On students first FLEX day they will go to your first period class for class time that could only be used for make up work, unless the student has completed all work and

asked the teacher to go further in the curriculum. Students can also get passes to make-up tests, quizzes, or work during the FLEX period. To do this, students will need to get passes signed the day before the FLEX period by the teacher of the class they will be in as well as the teacher that they will intend to go see, in order to set up an appropriate communication system between the two teachers and the student.

One of the possible reasons for this plan is to give students in-school time to do out-of-school work. So while students' grades suffer this year because they do not stay after for school, the FLEX period gives them a full period to get their work done.

The following B day will go just about the same, but the FLEX period would mean that you will go to your second period. The FLEX schedule will keep going in order of

2006-2007 School Year				
PROPOSED FLEX PLAN				SAMPLE WEEK
Monday (A)	Period 1 History	Period 3 Art	Period 5 Science	Period 7 Spanish
Tuesday (B)	Period 2 Math	Flex 1 History	Period 6 Tech Draw	Period 8 Yearbook
Wednesday (A)	Period 1 History	Period 3 Art	Period 5 Science	Period 7 Spanish
Thursday (B)	Period 2 Math	Flex 2 Math	Period 6 Tech Draw	Period 8 Yearbook
Friday (A)	Period 1 History	Period 3 Art	Period 5 Science	Period 7 Spanish

This sample schedule illustrates how classes will be set up next year, with a FLEX class in place of fourth period. This class will allow students to get help from teachers, finish homework, and retake tests without staying after school.

periods until after the eighth period, when the FLEX plan would reset back to first period. If the school wanted to schedule an assembly, they will not have to take away from instructional time. Instead they could simply use a FLEX

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Teens Have Cents, but Sense as Well?

Adele Hampton

Managing Editor

Finally, the time has come when high school is coming to a close and teens are forced to be out in "the real world." Students are plagued with credit card offers and college tuition. With all of these expenses flooding in all of a sudden, many teens are lost, dazed, and confused.

Each year teens spend about \$172 billion on personal items, according to Teenage Research Unlimited. Local restaurants, the mall, and the movies play home to the money of thousands of teenagers. Businesses are taking advantage of the younger generation because of the gold mine teenage spending creates. According to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, clothing stores such as Forever 21 and Gap make billions of dollars every year off of teens alone. However, teens without

money management skills are at major risk of digging themselves into a financial hole too hard to get out of.



Junior Natalie Zuffi expertly demonstrates the importance of holding on to one's money.

Due to this risk, schools across the country have implemented credit unions, this school being one of them. The Apple Federal Credit Union (A.F.C.U.) gives full financial help and services to students who wish to learn how to manage their money. The A.F.C.U. is located in our cafeteria, which is both good and bad. It is a good thing because of the amount of space available and the easy access for students, but the downside is that the A.F.C.U. often goes unnoticed.

The A.F.C.U. actually does have many useful resources for students. "Students at West Potomac can come in and open up accounts, savings and checking, they can get credit cards, check cards, ATM cards, they can open up special club account cards for their education, for vacation, and holidays," said Jerry

Vanpelt, director of the A.F.C.U. Vanpelt also said, "I think the students themselves who have smart parents at home that teach the kids responsibility for money management are going to get a lot out of this program; those who have not learned that responsibility are going to get a hard knock on the head."

While many students at this school do not know about A.F.C.U., they are getting advice about money management elsewhere. Parents are an obvious resource. There are also teen debit cards, like Visa Buxx for instance. It is a debit card that allows parents to watch over their child's spending. Another way kids can prepare for money management in the real world is to budget money. Allot a certain amount of money for each month and

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Snack Attack!

STAFF EDITORIAL

Snack machines: cheap chow, delicious food, and very convenient for high school students. With all the great things to say about our snack machines, why are they being turned off during the hours of the school day?

There are a total of ten snack machines in the entire school, all of which are turned off between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., except for the two located in the cafeteria. Cafeteria custodian Maria Maldonado said this new regulation was put into effect this year and was proposed by our principal, Mrs. Vesilind. The purpose of the machines being turned off during classes is to keep students in class and not wandering through the halls buying food when they should be learning.

From getting up at a ridiculous hour in the morning to going through long and stressful classes, a little food is a much needed energy boost. The snack machines have always been some student's favorite part of walking through the hallway because they are quick and convenient. Students can quickly get food if they are hungry or if they forgot their lunch, while still getting to class on time. "I use them every chance that I get, before, during, and after my classes," said sophomore Justin Kremer.

The worst part of having the freedom to buy food besides lunch food in school is the fact that it is made impossible when the machine is not even on. When Kremer walks up to an unavailable snack machine he will usually kick and scream at it due to aggravation and hunger. "It's not helping me to gain weight, and when I can't buy food, it hinders that process," said Kremer. Although the new policy of the snack machines being turned off has many down sides, Kremer believes that there are some plus sides. With the snack machines turned off, students are not only getting a better education, but are also staying healthy. Freshman Larry Williams, who uses just about every snack machine in the school, agrees with Kremer, saying that the reason the machines are being turned off is to keep students in class and prevent anyone from skipping to go get food.

There are other objections to the rise of snack machines in schools. Some people say that the availability of unhealthy snacks is one of the reasons for the rise of obesity in America's youth. Yes, there is unhealthy food in vending machines, but whether students want to lose or gain weight is totally up to them. If a student wanted to lose weight then he or she would not indulge in the Honey Buns and other not-so-nutritious food items snack machines have to offer.

It should be our choice whether or not snack machines should be turned on or off during our classes. There is not going to be a disastrous problem if a student writes a pass in order to go buy a snack. If they put it back in their bag once they get it, or eat it during lunch then a crisis will not ensue. It could not hurt to let us take a few minutes out of a class that we take for nine months to go and get food.

It's not like the students don't pay, the vending machines do get money—otherwise it would not work. If it is a win-win situation, why avoid it? Students who skip lunch to do work in the library or stay with a teacher are pretty hungry by the end of the day, and a snack would surely get them going. Almost everyone is mature in this school, and are able to make their own decisions. Therefore it should be up to the students to make the correct choice of their diet. It's nice that Ms. Vesilind is looking after everyone's health, but again, she's not our mother.



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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Submit your Letters to the Editor to thewire_letters@yahoo.com

I Don't Want to Grow Up Right Now

Dear Editor,

As seniors, do we really feel that our school has prepared us enough to go off into the real world; college?

My opinion on this subject is our school has prepared us as well as we are going to be. I know going into the real world as freshman next year is going to be hard, but that is the next step and something we have to be willing to take in order to make it. The real question is, are we ready to grow up? We have been in a comfort zone for so long going into the the world as adults is going to be really hard because our parents will not be there when we need help or when something goes wrong. Personally, I am so afraid to leave high school because nothing will be the same; your friends will change, because you have to make it your business to meet new people, and that may be hard for some people. Your life may be totally screwed up for the first semester of college. The things you use to love will be gone.

Senior, Karin Neal

RANTS and RAVES

>A Rave for our
Softball team!
They were 14-1!

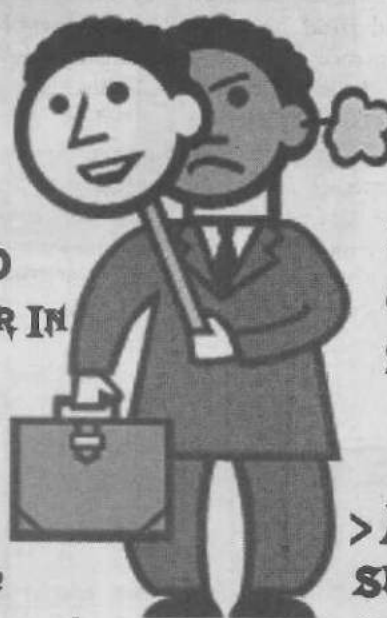
>A RANT FOR
SCHOOL NOT BEING
OVER YET.

>A RANT FOR NO
TOILET PAPER IN
BATHROOMS.

>A Rave for a well-
executed prom this
year!

>A Rave for the
Freshman Backyard
BBQ! They raised
over \$1100!

>A RANT FOR THE
SMELLY BUSHES
OUTSIDE OF GUNSTON
HALL.



Legitimate Literacy?

Hooff Cooksey
News Co-Editor

Many students took time out of their English period to take a test called the Gates McGinity Test. Its purpose was to assess the literacy level of the student taking it. It was made up of two sections - a vocabulary section and a comprehension section, both of which were timed. For the vocabulary section, students were given about 25 minutes and for the comprehension section there was a 35 minute time limit. Teachers then collected the test and faced the task of grading them.

The first question, a sample question, was: "a big garage." Students were asked to define the underlined, bold-faced word. The correct answer was, obviously, a place to store a car. This is how most of the test went. There were questions with simple, everyday vocabulary words. The test did get a little more challenging as time went on, but it was still at about a seventh grade level.

Students wasted a class period of English to test whether they were literate or not. Why did students need to take an hour and a half out of their day to take a test that was not necessary? There are many other ways to see whether someone is literate or not, and unless they have just moved to our country from another country, or they have

been diagnosed with a disability, then the student should logically be able to read and write.

Another problem with this test was whether or not it was an accurate assessment of the students' literacy level. When I went to search for it on the internet, the most information I was able to find was a two paragraph summary of the test, no sample questions or pictures showing the test. Also, when reading a review done by a middle school teacher, she said that she was able to score a 3.5 score on the test, while taking it blind. She did not read any of the questions, she simply went through the answer sheet and guessed. A Houghton Mifflin Company published the test, and when visiting their website, I noticed there was no contact information which might help one get any information about the test. Finally, when going to the Riverside Publishing website there was a very small amount of information regarding the test. All in all, it took me about fifteen minutes to find solid, dependable information on the test, which

is not a good sign.

The reason for this test was to not only test if a student was literate or not, but also to determine what level of English a student should take in his or her next year of school. As far as I know, students are allowed to choose any class they would like to take, whether it is a regular class, an honors class, or an Advanced Placement (AP) course. The school can recommend that the student not take a class based on their performance in other classes, but ultimately the student can still take whatever class they wish to take. Also, based on the test, students can be recommended to take certain courses in addition to their English class, which would help the student specifically with reading, writing, or both. The test as of now really serves no purpose other than to help teachers recommend students to the English class they should take the preceding year.

The test was a good idea, but the whole situation could have been handled in a different way. The test put a very large financial burden on our school, and succeeded only in taking away precious learning time. Our school made a good effort, but came up short.



Photo Illustration by Kate Staples

'Digital Digital Get Down'

Taylor Dankmyer
Opinions Editor

The world has become so dependent on technology. Think of a day without some of the latest technology.

One wakes up, and goes to school. Most likely, in one of one's classes, one uses a computer to do some work--the first sign of technology in one's day. When one gets home one may do his/her homework, either by writing it by hand or typing it on a computer. Once again, the option to make things easier by using technology resurfaces. Then, there are the large majority of students who get on the internet. If you are researching for an essay or project, the internet is one of the best places to go. Say a student want to look a few words up in the dictionary for a vocabulary quiz tomorrow. Dictionary.com! Instead of going to get the

dictionary that is somewhere in your house, you can sit down at your computer, type in the word, click, and *voila!* You have more than just one definition of the word, sentences, everything you would ever want. Want a thesaurus? It is there, too.

Once you are done with your homework, you have some leisure time. You get on AIM, Myspace.com, anything. You can find absolutely anything and everything on the internet. Then you remember your friend told you the new Red Hot Chili Peppers album was out, so you open iTunes on your computer, go to the music store, search, click, and you are done. It is now on your computer. Then, you plug your wonderful iPod in and you have the music. CD's? I have not bought a CD in a store in over two years. I either buy the album on iTunes, or, well, Limewire.

Then there is shopping. I could drive five miles to Target

and buy that video game I really want, or I could buy it online for a possibly cheaper price (using a price comparison website like Froogle.com), never leave my house, and find it in a few days waiting for me at the door. Yes, I wait a few days, but heck, Target may not even have the video game.

"Get it on eBay!" say many tech-savvy people. I bought a car manual for my '96 Honda on eBay for seven dollars. Without eBay, I would never have found the car manual, and I might still be putting premium gasoline in my car when I could be using regular gas (speaking of gas, check out GasBuddy.com to find the cheapest gas in your area). Craigslist.com, an increasingly popular online classifieds organized by major cities, is also a great place to go to buy and sell things. Online retail topped \$65 billion last year, and it increased by 26 percent between 2004 and 2005. Online shopping is getting bigger, and bigger, and bigger. Many people are doing some if not all of their Christmas shopping online. Technology, technology, technology, everywhere.

Cell phones are also extremely popular now. In a study by the University of Michigan, more than 80 percent of cell phone users say the device has made their lives easier. And that is why technology is so big. It makes things so much easier, not to mention quicker.

Think of a day without your cell phone. Think of a day without your computer. Although this is not true for everyone, people in school and business have become extremely dependent on technology, primarily computers and cell phones. The more advanced cell phones, like Blackberrys, Palm Pilots, and Pocket PC's, are also very popular.

Other technologies are not exactly necessities, but people have become spoiled by them. Take, for instance, the iPod. The iPod is a god to many music fanatics. I do not even need to explain how great iPods (and other MP3 players for that matter) are.

Without technology, the world of today would be completely different. People would be forced to read more, carry around those *big* CD's and CD cases and *actually* have face-to-face conversations with each other. The development of technology has launched our society into one in which people have a heightened dependence on inanimate objects, and that's alright.



Photo by Lakisha Langley

In England, in the 1880's,
"Pants" was considered a dirty
word!

Dolphins sleep with one
eye open

The most popular first name
in the world is Muhammad

Every 45 seconds, a
house catches on fire
in the United States

The king of hearts is the only
king without a moustache on a
standard playing card



Did
You
Know?

Keckee's Catastrophe

Wondering Where it all
Went Wrong



Photo by Lakisha Langley

Do Not Whistle While You Work

Alex Keckeisen
Co-Editor-in-Chief

One more month. One more month of busy work. One more month of tests. One more month of school.

Go ahead and think about for just a few minutes and let it sink in. After June 20, you will no longer have to deal with school work for three months (unless of course you have summer school). But when people think about it, for most of us at least, summer is just a working extension of school. Many of us will probably be getting a job, which just means new experiences and new chances to learn. Luckily, work outside of school is basically just a pattern for many. It is not learning literary terms or quadratic equations; it is almost a social interaction with different people everyday. It may be a fun job, or it may be a job that makes some so mad that others cannot wait to get back into school and get the opportunity to quit.

But whatever job students do get, there will always be the dumb guy who does not know how to do anything. Maybe they are just stupid, but most likely they just do not care, and when some are getting paid minimum wage, is there really any point to care? Actually there is. Where there is a lazy person, there is also a person that is picking up the slack, putting in extra hours, and not complaining about it. I am not that person. I actually work hard and complain. But right now, I am here to stick up for the silent worker. It is not fair that these people have to deal with the laziness of others. And if people are truly too dumb to work a semi-complicated job, quit and work at McDonald's. Unless of course you already work at McDonald's, in which case you are already at the bottom and might as well try and get good grades.

Summer jobs can also be extremely rewarding. It could be a combination of a pack full of new friends with a lot of great stories to tell. A job is often not just all work all the time; it can also be a lot of fun. In some of my experiences, people have stayed after for hours, even after they had the chance to leave. It could start as a simple working relationship, but some people can find some of your best friends at work, and when people can have a good time working with others while still getting stuff done, everyone wins.

Instead of thinking about the grueling hours that are passing slower than a three-day long game of cricket, think about the rewards and the reason you are working. Maybe it is for something as small as fast-food money or as large as a car, but when you finally get to your goal it can feel so good, so why spoil a benchmark for being lazy.

So if anyone would like to stay on my good side, do not make others pick up the slack for them. Work hard over the summer, put in the hours, and the rewards will flow in the form of a pocket full of cash.

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Keckee's Catastrophe Wondering Where it all Went Wrong



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The king of hearts is the only
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Did
You
Know?

FLEX Idea is too Far-Fetched?

Taylor Dankmyer
Opinions Editor

Finally, it seems like our school has done something right. Well, it might be a little too early to say that. The FLEX schedule is a very good idea. It gives us study hall, it fixes the problem of students not being able to stay after (however, students will most likely still have to stay after for some school work), and most of all, it forces us to be a lot more responsible. It also gives us a sort of quasi-study hall because we are allowed to work on what we want during the flex period.

All classes will be of equal length--no more short seventh period. For teachers and students, having a short seventh period has never been good. It screws up teachers' schedules. Currently, teachers have to set up a whole different schedule for their seventh period class. This is now not a problem whatsoever.

It is true that lots of students have trouble staying after because they have

family obligations, work, or cannot get transportation. Now, with the FLEX schedule, the time students will have to stay after for will be significantly reduced.

The FLEX schedule makes school more like a job because a lot less students will be staying after. It makes school more like a nine to five job, except in this case, it's more like seven to two. However, students also have to be a lot more responsible because they will have to plan ahead to know where to go for their flex period a day before, since they will be required to get passes filled out in advance.

Two minutes have been chopped off for time in between classes. This may be a

negative to most students; however, I see it as a plus because it makes students more responsible. They are given less time to get to class so they cannot mess around as much

and focus on just getting to class. I personally do not have any trouble getting to class. Once I get to the general area of the class, I talk to friends. However, I know there are students who complain about not having enough time to get from a

science class to a class in Springbank. Here is the solution: walk faster (speed walking is the new cool thing to do!). The other option would be for the school to implement a policy that gave certain students that were going, say, from a science class to a class

in Springbank, special privileges, meaning a longer time to get to class. However, our school administration would probably not support such an idea, and I doubt some of the students given the privilege could actually be trusted.

Another plus for students is that there will be four lunches. This means that there will be fewer kids in each lunch, which would mean shorter lines, resulting in more time to eat.

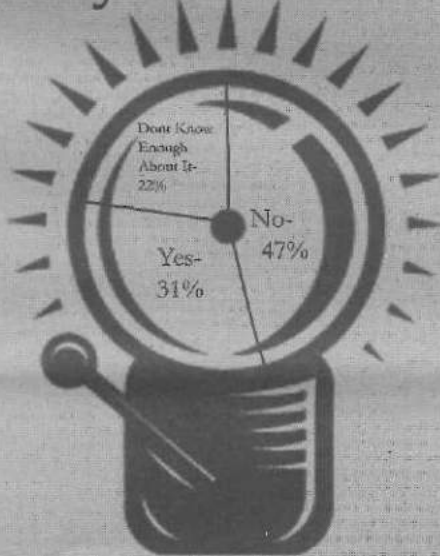
However, the issue of planning time for teachers has not changed. It may have gotten worse. With the flex period, many teachers will be busy balancing their schedules between helping students make up work and teaching class.

Overall, I think the FLEX schedule is great. It gives us a study hall and fixes many of the problems with the old schedule. Hopefully, everything goes according to plan, and overall, our school will be better off with this new schedule.



Photo by Lakeisha Langley

Do you like the New Block Schedule, the FLEX?

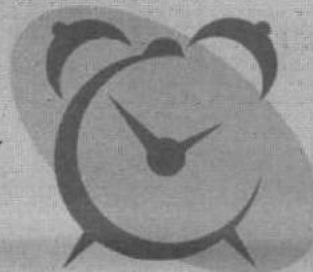


◆“No, I think the student body will take advantage of it and treat it as a free period.”

-Mike Sears, Sophomore

◆“Yes, it helps if you need to make up work and have no time to stay after school or if you don't want to.”

-Abbey Temoshchuk, Freshman



◆“I love the idea of having time to do my homework in school, rather than at home.”

-Kat Brewster, Freshman

◆“I think it's too confusing. Plus, kids will use the flex period to skip. I also like having a short seventh period.”

-Mara Cate, Sophomore

◆“No, because students can stay after school for help and the FLEX plan would make the students disorderly in the hallways because they would all want help at the same time.”

-Buchi Akpati, Junior

Tight Lipped, Does it Matter?

Kristina Dahmann
Wire Reporter

It is mid-September and time is ticking for the college-bound seniors. Early decision deadline is on the door steps and regular decision deadline is screaming from only a few short months away. What to do? Or what not to do...

While making my decision on where I wanted to attend college and spend the next four years of my educational career, I tried to keep all of my options open. I looked at big schools, small schools, private schools, in-state public schools, schools that were classified as extremely difficult, and others that were only moderately difficult. I look at everything. But it was not all in vain. I found what I wanted: small, liberal arts, very difficult to get into, New England, and good food! I knew I was going to apply to Bowdoin College far earlier than I let on to believe. I told close friends and family, but to the general public, I was undecided. That is, until the early decision deadline was closed. But where I was going to apply regular decision was, of course, undecided after that point. Am I alone? I think not.

Do people keep their choice college or college applications quiet until the deadline is closed? If so, why?

I found it almost offensive when people would not tell me where they were thinking about applying. Of course, this was extremely hypocritical because I did

not want to seem decided myself. However, some people had legitimate reasons for not disclosing their college choice, as I most definitely did.

Some people were simply shy, and did not want to seem rash while making their selection. Along similar lines, others did not want to make a big deal about where they were going. They wanted to eliminate the hoopla of, “Hey I applied there, too, and we should play out our future together!”

Some have difficulty explaining exactly where the, perhaps very large, amount of colleges are, and exactly what they are about. Since there are many fabulous (and extremely selective) schools in Virginia, some people decided to wait until they heard back before listing off where they applied. This idea made both the conversation exchange and

the morale of the student higher! In my case, I did not tell others due to the strict reason I wanted to give myself the best chance of acceptance.

Now, on the other side of the process, things seem a bit different. Disclosing our college selection appears far off on the horizon. Either way, acceptance letters are out, and the checks are in. Everyone is going to have a different college experience, and some may be rough, however generally they will be the most rewarding years of their lives. Good luck next year, everyone!

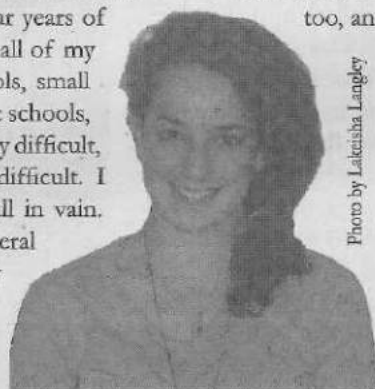


Photo by Lakeisha Langley

Questions for Thought

-Why are softballs hard?

-Why is “abbreviated” so long?

-Why isn't phonetic spelled the way it sounds?

Break the Rules and Pay the Price

Students who fail to display their parking passes face serious consequences

Caroline Staples

Features Editor

Every year, juniors and seniors purchase a parking permit within the first two weeks of school and also receive a Student Parking Regulations Form, which is signed by the student that specifically states the rules of student drivers.

These rules consist of violations of state laws and school regulations such as leaving school grounds during school hours and going to one's car during the school day. According to the Student Parking Regulation Form, a parking permit is a privilege and not a right. Some regulations are that students must display their permit at all times when on school grounds, not park in a teacher's spot or another student's spot, and the most stressed rule, number six (it is highlighted). "The vehicle is not a locker and students should not go to their cars during school hours," said Security guard William Haire.

Haire said these rules are not made by our school or our administration, but by the county. Not only must our students and staff follow these guidelines, but so must all the other schools in Fairfax County. "Students get upset with us when they get caught, but the thing is, we don't make the rules," said Haire.

Breaking the regulations can result in punishments. For example, parking in a teacher's spot or parking without a

displayed permit can result in a ticket and a fine of \$25. Since there is no limit on the number of tickets or fines a student can receive, \$25 can add up to be a lot of cash coming out of a teenager's wallet. If a student driver receives a ticket, they must pay the fine within 48 hours else security sends the fine to the main office to add to under their student obligation. Too many items under a student's obligation can result in being prohibited from senior activities like the ice cream social, prom, and even graduation. Any administration member can take away a student's parking permit at any time, even on the spot.

Junior Hunter Lord had his parking pass taken away when he tried to turn left onto Quander Road from the school after classes let out. "I don't think it was fair because they haven't enforced it all year and we didn't know," said Lord. After Haire took the pass away, he grew frustrated knowing he had to find another way to get to school, but ended up getting his pass back the next day.

All parking permits have been sold this year, creating a small wait list of students. The students on this list could possibly receive a permit if one of their classmates were to get theirs taken away by breaking the regulations mandated to all drivers on the Student Parking Regulation Form.



Photo by Alex Keckisen

Failing to display a parking permit in your car while parking on campus, could result in prohibition from privileges and senior activities, including graduation.

Rhatican Serves Up Nutrition and Knowledge at His Dinners

Dan Jachowski

Wire Reporter

Bill Rhatican's AP Government class has the unique opportunity several times a month to meet people from all fields related to government, from a major newspaper reporter to an employee of the Justice Department.

Mr. Rhatican, a former politician, is one of our school's AP US Government teachers. In his class, he offers his students a number of unique opportunities to better understand government on a very deep level, through projects like publishing a compilation of essays every year and holding dinners where he invites his students and members of the political community to come and discuss interesting topics.

One of Mr. Rhatican's students, Senior Alexandra Knopple went to a number of Mr. Rhatican's dinners. She liked the very involved discussions where she was able to learn more about the current issues happening in government. "It was good for me as a citizen to be more informed about the political aspects of government," Knopple said. Even though her own interests lie in the field of medicine, the discussions were definitely worthwhile and give her a real world view of politics, thereby adding to her class experience. She felt it helped significantly to have a stance on the issues discussed beforehand, but even if you did not you could learn and get involved in the discussion. For Knopple, "The dinners had a really relaxing and enjoyable environment with intelligent conversation and good food."

Senior Kristen Merek has gone to Mr. Rhatican's dinners to hear from a major newspaper reporter and a public opinion pollster. Both of these speakers gave her a very interesting look inside of how government works. Although the speakers connected to things she was learning in her government class, Merek was also able to connect their talks with classes she is taking besides government. The public opinion pollster discussed how studies used by politicians and interest groups can be skewed to substantiate any claim. "I'm taking statistics, and we've been learning how bias can affect studies. He showed us how political parties and interest groups exploit these biases for their own benefits," said Merek. "Those kinds of opportunities help teach us how government functions aside from what we learn in the text book." The dinners also gave her a unique opportunity because they provided a very relaxed academic environment, rather than having to worry about a test looming over you or making sure you take copious notes.

Mr. Rhatican's dinners seem to be an incredibly useful experience for many, if not all, of his students, because apart from getting good food, they also learn how they can relate their knowledge from class to the real world.

FLEX, from page 1

Annandale, Fairfax, and Falls Church are just a few out of the handful of Fairfax County schools that have seen the positives to the Flex plan.

In response to the issue of skipping during the Flex period, unexcused absences will count against the Flex period class that a student was not present for. So, if a student skipped their first period Flex period three times in one quarter, they would end up with an F for your first period class.

One of the hardest parts to this change in schedule could be the adjustment period that it will take students to get used to it. The time that it takes to get from class to class will be cut by at least two minutes to accommodate the eight total periods. Some have already complained that even nine minutes is not enough to get from a class in the science department to another in lower Springbank.

Another transformation for next years' bell schedule will be the starting of school five minutes earlier at 7:20 a.m. but getting out of school at 2:00 pm. The change was largely due to the bus schedule and not the S.L.E.E.P. initiative that school officials have been preaching for the past year. The school board had informed school

officials that if there were any pyramid that could put the S.L.E.E.P. program in effect it would be the schools that filter into West Potomac. So with the new schedule almost set in stone, a change would not take place until at least the 2007-2008 school year.

An increase in the number of lunches will also be a large change to accommodate the schedule. The current plan has plans to put in four lunches, each of varying lengths. "We want to lessen the number of kids in each lunch so they have more time to sit down and eat. With less students in each lunch there won't have to be as much adult supervision, which allows them to free up more time to plan," said Manuel.

The change to eight total periods also raises numerous questions about teacher planning periods. According to teacher contracts, they must have at least one planning period per day. If the Flex plan were to go into effect they would have one extra period to teach; for some teachers, both of their planning periods could potentially fall on the same day.

Changing the schedule could cause an uproar, this is mostly because of confusion, but a change may help this school take a step forward to achieving its goals of improving the overall performance of its students.

Money, from page 1

outline what is to be spent during that month. Parents can also encourage their kids to separate their money into savings and spending and set a savings goal for each month.

Parents can also send their child to financial literacy summer camps, such as The Money Camp in Santa Barbara California; to become more financially savvy. Some teens need this introduction to the world of finance. Teens such as junior Teresa Mehan, who spends her money without thinking said, "It just gets spent somewhere, I don't know how."

Junior Gaby Khromal has a different philosophy about money. She says her parents monitor how much money she is given and have taught her how to save. "I only get money from my parents in small doses, like twenty bucks for the movies whenever I go. They always told me to not to spend it on stupid stuff that I never use anyways, so the money that I would otherwise spend on pointless things, I save," she said. Khtomal plans to use the money that she saves towards college expenses.

Money management can help students prepare to embrace a responsible life as an adult, free of parents, and debt.

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Revitalization of Route One

Route One Adds Numerous Restaurants and Stores

Taylor Dankmyer

Op-Ed Editor

Over the last two years, Route One has improved drastically. A plethora of new commercial projects have been constructed that have dramatically changed the appearance of the road.

Some improvements as of late include the renovation of Mount Vernon Plaza. A Staples, Michaels, Bed Bath and Beyond, Cold Stone, and more have been put in the plaza. Also, the old Hechinger's building was replaced by a Golds Gym and a Quizno's Subs, and a Target was built. Panera Bread was also a recent addition, replacing Hollywood Video. The Safeway in the

Mount Vernon center opened on April 6 of this past year.

The Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation (S.F.D.C.) has identified remaining development opportunities along the highway, which are based on recommendations and

In place of the old Dunkin' Donuts, a Walgreens is going to be built. Walgreens will also replace the Dak's Grill. Dak's Grill is working with Walgreens representatives to find a new location on Route One.

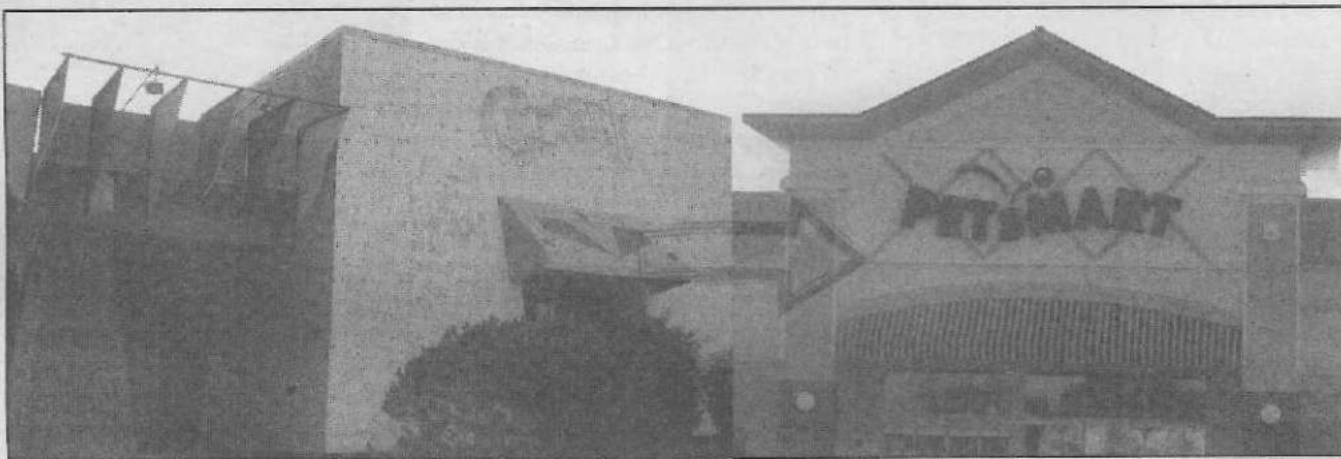


Photo illustration by Hooff Cooksey

Chi-Chis will be replaced by a newer establishment, like the Petsmart in the new shopping center at Mount Vernon Plaza. This is occurring all along Route One.

One of the biggest renovations that has been delayed for a long time is King's Crossing. King's Crossing, if built, would be placed at the intersection of Route 1 and Kings Highway. It would include both residential and commercial buildings, comparable to Pentagon Row. The S.F.D.C. website explains the project:

"Two key properties have been selected as the core of the proposed

development, but up to thirty other properties could be included. The citizens and business community have partnered with the Fairfax County Government to forge a commitment to make the Kings Crossing area the signature retail, office and residential hub of southeastern Fairfax County.

At this very moment, Route One is being rebuilt and redone. This is occurring up and down the entire stretch of the highway in our area. The plan to rebuild this stretch of highway has been a priority over the last few years, but has finally been put into action over the last couple of months. The site plans have been changed, but it is probable that it will be constructed. For more information on current route one projects you can go to <http://www.sfdc.org/projects.html>.

AP Exams Finished With No Problems

Exams Cause Stress at First, but Soon Bring Relief at Finish

Katie Staples

Co-Editor-in-Chief



Students at this school became very stressed out while studying for AP exams, but were relieved when they were finished.

began at 12:00 p.m. and included AP statistics, AP French literature, and AP psychology.

Senior Marcy Bozek took AP physics C this year and took the multiple choice and free response-based AP exam on Monday, May 8. Prior to the test, Bozek stated, "I'm optimistic about passing the exam, but I definitely need to study some more." Students in Judy Grumbacher's fifth period AP physics class prepared by taking notes in class and, "Grumbacher assigned us readings and problems in the book," said Bozek.

AP world history is taught by AP coordinator David Goldfarb. Sophomore Caroline Beaudette skeptically enrolled in AP world history. "Before [the test] I was really nervous. I had studied, but probably not as much as I should have. During the exam it was really stressful. There were 60 or 70 kids crammed in a room trying to focus. It was so boring because it took four hours of basically just writing whatever you remember from the year." Although Beaudette does not feel as though she excelled, she said, "I don't think I bombed it either."

Unfortunately for many of Goldfarb's current and prior students, he will be leaving us this year for Harvard University to get a master's degree in administration. Front office assistant Patty Jones said she does not know who the new AP coordinator will be. "It's probably not going to be until over the summer to see who the new staff will be, until all the staff members are in place," she said. Hopefully this coordinator will be as well-liked as our current, and AP exams will continue to go smoothly in the future.

May is usually associated with the end of school, warming temperatures, and the flowers the April showers bring. However, they are also known for something slightly less enjoyable: AP exams.

The Advanced Placement (AP) exams take place during the first two weeks of May. AP students, from classes that range from the popular AP histories to the slightly unknown AP music theory, dread the days when they are locked for hours in the gym or classroom to test what they have been learning for the past eight months. The exams were kicked off Monday, May 1 by the AP English language exam, and were drawn to a close on Friday, May 12 by the AP Latin literature exam.

Taken in the main and small gym, career center, and a few classrooms, the AP exams took about four hours each to complete. The morning exams started at 8:00 a.m. and included tests such as AP calculus, AP U.S. history, and AP chemistry. Proctors ushered the students into the designated testing sites around 7:30 a.m. to ensure, after seating all students and going through directions, the exam would start promptly at 8:00 a.m. and the students could be released as early as possible. Afternoon exams

Some future plans are construction of Famous Daves, a barbecue restaurant which will take the place of the former Shoney's. Chipotle is starting construction in the Beacon Center within the next two months as well. The Value Inn was demolished and a Chili's and Commerce Bank are being built soon.



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Ambassador of Ghana Premieres at Our School

Dan Jackowski & Emily Chilton

Wire Reporters

The honorable Ambassador Fritz Kwabena Poku of Ghana visited our school on Wednesday, May 24, and gave a presentation about Africa Day.

Celebrated on May 25, Africa Day is a continent-wide holiday for the African Union. It celebrates the continued achievements of Africa as well as their future prospects, and allows them to reflect on the economical and social problems and challenges they face. Poku allowed the students to create their

of many different cultures. Despite their differences, the people of Ghana are able to maintain a secular stance and live peacefully.

Before the presentation, students were briefed on the content of Poku's speech. Junior Marley Kimmel said, "I'm excited to learn more about African heritage." Junior Traci Jennings, active member of the Black Cultural Alliance (B.C.A) and Gospel Choir, said, "We are going to clarify everything right here, right now [about Africa Day]."

Students who attended the presentation learned Africa is viewed negatively by the western world, especially in the media, because agriculture is seen as one of their only strengths. However, raw materials include gold, cocoa, diamonds, etc. This is the bedrock of their economic stability.

Sophomore Allie Bennett enjoyed the presentation because it provided her with an "intellectual insight" into life in Ghana and African achievements.

Poku encourages students of this school to raise awareness about Africa Day and all of Africa's achievements thus far, "By doing citizen diplomacy. Talk with them in focus groups and exchange ideas on what you know and what you've learned." Poku's attendance at our school helped some of our students gain a sound impression on what Africa is really like. Hopefully, we can continue to spread this positive image throughout our community.

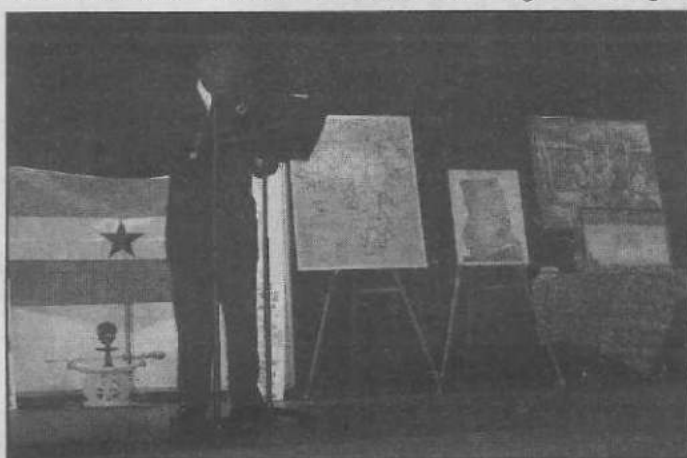
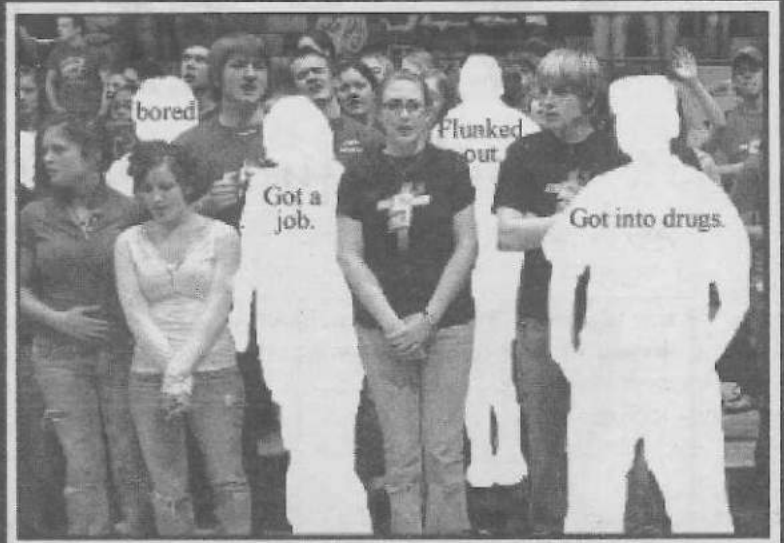


Photo by Lakeisha Langley

Fritz Kwabena Poku, the Ambassador of Ghana, speaks to students and faculty about Africa Day in Kogelman Theater.

own ideas about what shapes a person using the Socratic Method, his favorite method of teaching. Questions asked by Poku included, "How many of you chose your own parents...How many of you chose to be born on Earth...How many of you chose birth of African, Indian, or Chinese [heritage]?"

Poku's speech was easy to follow, enthralling, informative, and peppered with pithy humor. He spoke of his country, Ghana, founded in 1957. It was the first country south of the Sahara to be liberated from colonial rule. There is now a population of 21 million, composed



One out of every three high school students won't graduate. There is no good excuse to keep you from your education.

STAY IN SCHOOL.

Photo illustration by Kate O'Connor

Student Drop Out Rate is Slowly, Steadily Increasing

Jocelyn Finrock

Focus Editor

The dropout rates of schools around the county have been increasing each year. According to the Fairfax County Public Schools (F.C.P.S.) network, 2.7% of their students drop out every year. Our school has the highest number of dropouts. In the 2003-2004 school year, 124 students dropped out. That is a huge amount, considering the majority of other schools only had about 50 dropouts. Last year, 72 students left, which is an improvement from the previous year; however, it is still the highest out of all 21 high schools in Fairfax County. "I think it is crazy and absurd that we are leading the way into the future with dropouts," said junior Nick Wazilewski. Between 1999 and 2005, our school has had the highest student dropout rate. What is the reason for so many students to drop out? The Virginia Department of Education gives nine primary dropout reasons: achievement problems, behavioral difficulties, expulsion, employment, family pregnancy, health problems, maximum age, financial

hardship, and unknown. "I think we have a lot of dropouts because our students are unmotivated," said Wazilewski.

In our area, many families do not have the money to send their kids through school. When junior Nick Friederich was asked why he thought our school had so many dropouts, he said, "Many people need to work and support their family, so they can't afford school after high school." It is possible that is why we have such high dropout rates.

When a student drops out of high school, they are making a huge decision that will affect the rest of their life, especially if they never go back to graduate. Students need to realize what they are giving up when they dropout. Dropouts will make \$200,000 less than high school graduates in their lifetime, and \$800,000 less than college graduates. In 1971, a male dropout made \$35,087. In 2002, that figure decreased 35 percent, and a full-time working male dropout made only \$23,903. Students need to know what they are giving up when they drop out and how important it is to stay in school.

News Brief

By Hooff Cooksey

Science Students Win Big in Indianapolis

Two of our fellow seniors, Diana Burk and Daniel Jackowski, competed at the International Science Fair in Indianapolis, Indiana. Jackowski's project consisted of the study of solar eclipses and the effect they have on G.P.S. Burke's project was based on car crashes and the impact they have. She built a machine, which used green and red lasers, to test the impact without actually using real automobiles.

Jackowski's project received many honorable mention awards at the fair. Along with this he received many scholarships from organizations and corporations. He received a total of \$4,800 in

scholarship money from the competition.

Burke's project was given the fourth overall placing in the world for her project in the Engineering category at the fair. "I was so excited," said Burke when asked about being given the fourth overall ranking in the world.

Not only did these two students compete in an international science fair, they also watched the start of the Indianapolis 500 race. "It was really loud," said Jackowski. Also, when asked about the science fair, Jackowski said, "Anyone has the ability to get to this level of the science fair. All you need is a creative idea with a good scientific method."

The New SGA Officers

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What Makes a P

Molly Turner

~Why do you think you were nominated for being one of the most influential people?

"I do what I believe in and I hope people respect my original and creative thought. I try to be a friend to many and just stay true to myself."

~What is your definition of influential? "Someone who has made a difference or touched someone's life in some way."

~What/who is influential in your life? "My family. My parents have always been so supportive of everything I do. My sister has shown me strength, hard work, and dedication; and my brother has been an integral part in the way I think and perceive ideas, ethics, and art."



Photo by Lakeisha Langley

Nicole Gerow

~Why do think you were nominated for being one of the most influential people?

"I think I was nominated for being an influential person because I try and keep a positive outlook on things. I also view myself as somewhat outgoing and very easy to make friends with."

~What is your definition of influential? "Influential is someone who changes the way you think or act. An influential person is someone whose ideas are greatly respected and bring about positive change."

~What/ who is influential in your life? "My parents have been the greatest influence and motivation in my life. They've helped shape the person I am today."



Brad Dalton

~Why do you think you were nominated for being one of the most influential people? "I honestly was very shocked in receiving this, but if I had to answer, I'd probably say it's because of my heavy involvement and participation in many of the school's activities."

~What is your definition of influential? "Influential, to me, means someone making a difference in another person's life. Whether it is your best friend or the 20 kids on the varsity team, influencing others is the ability to attempt to set a good example while still not being perfect. No influential person is perfect; they simply help others realize what is perfect about them. They bring out the best in people while trying to motivate them or obtain a goal."

~What/who is influential in your life? "I am lucky enough to have my influence be in my very own house. My mom influences me on a daily basis and to many extents. Anyone who comes into contact with my mom can tell you the feeling they get when around her. They will admit there is an indescribable aura of happiness that surrounds her at any given moment and how easily it is spread to those around her. She is honestly the most thoughtful, genuine, kind, happy, and hard-working person that I have ever met. If life's goal is for us to be happy, having such an influential mom has taught me every possible important value in life."

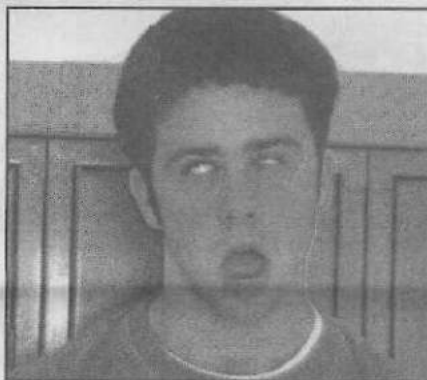


Photo by Lakeisha Langley

Kat Lee



~Why do think you were nominated for being one of the most influential people? "Because I get along with people and run track."

~What is your definition of influential? "To be a part of a change in something or someone."

~What/ who is influential in your life? "Family, friends, coaches, team, school."

"She is a great role model and proves that you can do anything you want." -Anonymous student

Mohamed Chouat

~Why do think you were nominated for being one of the most influential people? "I guess that it's because I try to get to know people and I'm very optimistic. I love life and I guess people love positive people."

~What is your definition of influential? "Influential is someone who has an effect on others lives whether it means that you're a leader or that you were there for someone when they needed you."

~What/ who is influential in your life? "Mrs. Reynolds, Mrs. Bobo, and Mr. Goldfarb. Mrs. Reynolds made me a better person, community service is now a large part of my life. Mrs. Bobo, my sponsor, gave me a true life perspective. Mr. Goldfarb has influenced me into analyzing anything and everything and now I like to think that I am one of the great Greek philosophers..... again, I said I like to think."

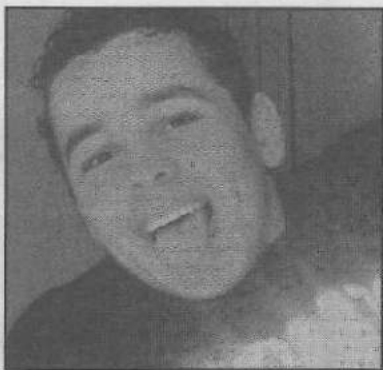


Photo by Lakeisha Langley

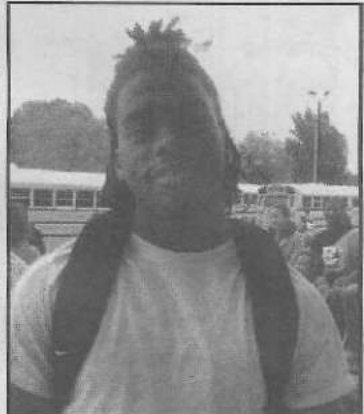
12

Antwane Minter

~Why do you think you were nominated for being one of the most influential people? "I think it is probably because I'm well known throughout the school, for both my personality and my athletic talents."

~What is your definition of influential? "My definition of influential is something or someone that has an effect or impact on the way a person goes about things."

~What/ who is influential in your life? "My parents influence me because they work so hard to make sure I have all that I want and need. Another thing that is really influential to life is my sports talents, which allow me to keep my head straight and keep my grades up." "He inspires me to run track and study sports medicine." - Arielle Brock, 11



Megan Donovan

~Why do think you were nominated for being one of the most influential people? "I have no idea why I was nominated! I guess it's because of my take-charge attitude."

~What is your definition of influential? "I feel being influential is possessing the ability to cause change."

~What/ who is influential in your life? "Everyone in my life has influenced me; my friends, teachers, parents, siblings, neighbors, and coaches. They all have had an impact on my life and have shaped who I am today."

"Megan has gone through alot and she is one of the strongest people I have ever met. Everyday she provides an example for me to be a better person." - Shannon Higgins, 10



Photo by Marche Payne

Henok Amenu

~Why do think you were nominated for being one of the most influential people? "I don't know."

~What is your definition of influential? "Influential is someone who motivates people to do something."

~What/ who is influential in your life? "My mom."

"He was the first person to ever talk to me in this school." Anonymous student



Photo by Lakeisha Langley

The Process

Adele Han

"You don't have to be influential. In fact, my life are probably better because they've taught me."

An influential person is inspiring, kind, a leader, and a friend. Time Magazine's 10

Ivania Martinez Tuba Ahmed Alisha Prier Quiyana Pierce Lloyd Laura Page Shelby Boruff Hooff Cooksey Michael Adu Wesley Woodward Devin Clark Chelsea Roberts Stephanie Gerow Mali Errekah Calvin Hedges Paula Dodo Lynette Green Nick Thessin Tori Wong Matt Motley Usra Mirza Andrew Scheuermann Ian Shaw Claudia Siles Mike Casey Sonny Lutz Marquita McCallum Brian Fuentes Kirsten Serba Katie Kosanovich Jacques Holding Mike Black Shakera McDaniel Emily Hylton Neil Burke John Rice Catherine Ramos Grace Powell Rashida Moore Annie Trimmer Alex Scrino AR Chouat Zach Feinstein Sinead Smith Javier Medrano Tyler Lord Abad Khilji Patrick Bostick

Chris Brennan Fred Dowdell Rosa Moran Charles Boyce Mimi Conway Danielle Morin Lisa Hall JJ Conway Kaitlyn Payne Melinda Golden Russso Dylan Matthews Lacey Williams Matthew Seyoum Rosa Climaco-Mata Thomas Hammond Benjamin Hammond Martiya Ilyas Danny Peterson

Person Influential?

Kay and Penny Danquah

~Why do think you were nominated for being one of the most influential people?

Penny: "I have a positive attitude; I do what teachers ask of me and am respectful."

Kay: "I don't conform to the beliefs and ideas some students have. I also respect my teachers, friends and teammates."

~What is your definition of influential?

Penny: "A person who has a positive impact on others."

Kay: "Having a positive impact on people that can never be erased."

~What/ who is influential in your life?

Penny: "My parents, teachers, and my teammates all support me a lot."

Kay: "My family, pastor, teachers, friends, coaches and teammates."

'She and her twin sister are the only black girls on the lacrosse team. Even though some people said is was a white sport, many black girls are now willing to join the lacrosse team due to their perseverance.' -Anonymous student



Photo by Lakeisha Langley

Elex Speights

~Why do think you were nominated for being one of the most influential people? "Because I'm fresher than fresh and everyone knows me or wants to know me! Naw, I'm just joking, I think its because I'm nice, cute smart and real cute."

~What is your definition of influential? "Someone who people look up to for the positive things they do."

~What/ who is influential in your life? "My mom was really influential in my life. She made me who I am and I thank her for everything she did."

"He is funny and gets along with everyone. Without him school would not be as interesting." - Stacie De Guzman

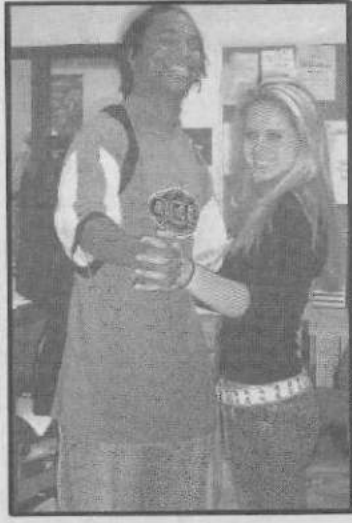


Photo by Lakeisha Langley

Ryan Baker

~Why do think you were nominated for being one of the most influential people? "Because I have a lot of energy and I'm a little different than everybody else."

~What is your definition of influential? "A change in somebody in the way they think or act on a certain issue."

~What/ who is influential in your life? "Mr. J.D. Sicila, who is like a second father to me is always looking after me."

"He's always happy despite his own problems and is always willing to lend an open ear. I have yet to see a sad face when ever he is around." -Anonymous student



Photo by Lakeisha Langley

Sujin Yoo

~Why do think you were nominated for being one of the most influential people? "I guess I was nominated because my involvement in student government for the junior class! 07!!"

~What is your definition of influential? "My definition of influential is characteristic of being a good role model and to inspire others to become a better person."

~What/ who is influential in your life? "I would have to say my mother. She has taught me so much about life and how my actions should be used in any situation in a positive way. She is definitely my role model."

'She is our class president and she is very dedicated and has a lot of hope in our class.' - Danielle Morin, 11



Photo by Lakeisha Langley

to Determine Who is Influential at this School

ing Editor

son of influence' to influential people in aware of the things mis.

who is thoughtful, a role model, a n the April issue of influential People, The

Wire has asked you, the students of this school, who you think are the most influential people here at West Potomac. Through a poll of 200 students, The Wire has tallied and picked four of the top students from each grade and four teachers who you thought made lasting impacts on your lives. The names around the border are all the students who were nominated by other students.

•To see our influential teachers, go to page 15.



Photo by Lakeisha Langley

Joe Bradley

~Why do think you were nominated for being one of the most influential people? "I have a lot of friends and I try to be respectful."

~What is your definition of influential? "Someone who has an effect on everyone around them."

~What/ who is influential in your life? "Mom, senior Brad Dalton, teachers, and brothers."

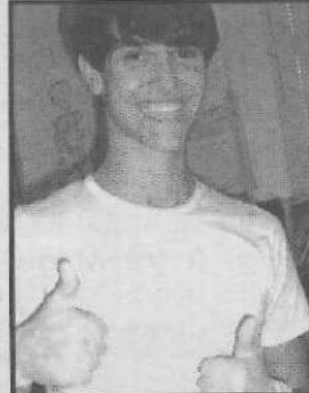


Photo by Lakeisha Langley

Rosa Climaco Mata

~Why do think you were nominated for being one of the most influential people? "I don't see myself as influential but I guess that's how other people see me."

~What is your definition of influential? "Being a leader to someone"

~What/ who is influential in your life? "The person who influences me the most is my mom and also getting better at basketball."

Mariya Ilyas

~ Why do you think you were nominated for being one of the most influential people? "I am always encouraging my classmates and I set a great role-model for my peers."

~ What is your definition of influential? "Influential is someone or something that has made a lasting impact on something that one can reflect on years from now."

~ What/ who is influential in your life?

"My parents have always let me pursue my dreams. My biology teacher, Mr. Halteh, has always given us advice about the "real world", and has taught us to improve our character. Mrs. O'Connor, my Spanish 2 teacher always sets great expectations for her students. And finally, all my friends and classmates- I learn so much from them everyday."



Photo by Lakeisha Langley

Zack Feinstein

~Why do think you were nominated for being one of the most influential people? "I am really surprised that I was nominated. Although I guess I was nominated because I'm nice to people and people claim I'm funny."

~What is your definition of influential? "My definition of influential is someone who affects others in a positive way. Also, they care about others."

~What/ who is influential in your life? "People influential to me are my parents. They are influential because they have taught me many things and I respect them." "Made my year at West Potomac in journalism a lot easier to handle." Anonymous student



Photo by Lakeisha Langley

Mary Comber Vanja Gvozdenac Ruby Szilagi Kelly Wood Gertrude Baidoo Joe Heines Channantha Toy Desmond Quaye Arthur Benitez Caleb Taylor Derrick Barber Joe Ludovici Rosa Romero Mary McKnight Marcus Jones Jenny Ven CJ Sutton
Dan Jachowski Alyssa Kuhn Richie Math Becky Boucher Marcus England Justin Wilson Laura Herren Vincent Cennario Pierce Allen Mark Rogers Ashleigh Howard Helen Ramirez David Fernandez Antony Minter Chris Jones
Dwayne Jackson Bekah Boro Dymonique Tucker Tori Wong Andre Arrington Dymonique Terault Mohammed Choat LaDawn Dean Leisha Ford Sarah Borell Kelly Carmichael Hector Perez Adolfo Munoz Liz Hanson

Soccer Olé!

Dan Jachowski

Wire Reporter

With the year coming to a close, our girl's soccer team finished with a record of eight wins and five losses, and they advanced to the regional competition.

With four seniors who helped keep the team motivated, and the Coaches David Goldfarb and Jean Coder made the team well prepared to face the best teams in the district. "I'd have to say the combined efforts of Coach Goldfarb and Coder [helped us win several games this year.] Also, the seniors were able to do well and motivate the team because of their experience," said Senior Elise Bender. For junior Becca Vonada, the team did well because of the great bonding with each other. Also scrimmages and technical work on possession, shooting, and endurance skills definitely helped them during the season.

In one of the most exciting games of the year, the squad beat topped ranked, Chantilly, by a score of three to two. The Chantilly team started the game behind, but slowly climbed their way back into position to win. One minute before the end of the game, Chantilly scored a goal to tie the score, but our team pulled off a goal of their own in the last minute to win the game by a single point. The game was not only exciting because of how close it was, but also because Chantilly ranking. Our team managed to stay together in the last few minutes to pull off their win. More recently, the team pulled off two amazing games against West Springfield and Lake Braddock in the final two games in the district championship. With the score tied against West Springfield going into the last three minutes, until Stephanie Gerow slipped in a goal to win the game. Against the Lake Braddock, which was the state runner up last year, the game was tied 1-1, and went through 20 minutes of overtime, ending with a final shootout that left our team just shy of another tie, with Lake Braddock having scored 3 penalty shots and West Potomac scored 2. So, the girl's soccer team is now the runner-up for the district, and advances to regionals for the first time in a decade.

The confidence the team learned this year, along with the bond they developed, will allow next years team to do just as well, if not better. This year was a fantastic season for the girl's soccer team, and hopefully they will only improve in the coming years. One of the main challenges they face is the loss of four seniors. Emily Macklin, Elise Bender, Nicole Gerow, and Ali Brody were all starters, which could hurt the team next year. "I think the team will definitely miss the seniors, but I hope the team will be able to improve in the years to come," said Bender. "Next year will be a challenge because we are losing four starters," agreed Vonada, "but with the bond we have now and the upcoming girls, we'll be able to stay together."

Success with Consequence

Jon Yoo

Asst. Sports Editor

Almost every kid in the world has a dream of becoming a famous sports star. In any sport, they see themselves dominating every part of their game.

This is the reason why we find ourselves on the courts or fields at such a young age, envisioning being the best. With all the young sports talents today, everyone wishes they could become the next LeBron James, and convince themselves to believe they can make this dream a reality. Unfortunately for many, they realize too late that this dream will always stay a dream.

In today's society, athletics have become a primary source of entertainment. Sports have become a major force in our country, and

their favorite athletes goes beyond just admiration. They

become a trademark of the player, wearing their jerseys and shoes, using their signature moves, or having the same number; just think about how many number 23's there are in honor of Michael Jordan.

Players' influences have become so great that if they make a mistake or off the playing field they are criticized. Junior Dawane Munelyn said, "With what happened in the Kobe situation, it seemed like I was the only person that still rooted for him. You can really see how much he was affected and how much he wants to prove everyone wrong for doubting him. Sports stars, just like us, can't always be perfect."

However, it does not really matter if they made a mistake or not, because no matter what, we continue to adapt from them and try to follow in their success. We become models of them in and out of sports, from their moves to their swagger and even celebration. As much as we are pursuing to be in their place one day, there are so many others doing the same. What we fail to recognize is that we are not the only ones who take after these superstars; we are one of maybe millions.

With all the young athletes, such as James and Reggie Bush, becoming the main attractions in sports today, it has changed our society's standards view on sports. "It is incredible to see how LeBron and Reggie can take so



With his phenomenal physical talent, LeBron James, whom many have deemed as King James, has become the up and coming face of the National Basketball Association.

much pressure and deliver. What they can physically and how bad they want to win is incredible," said senior George Johnson. The success that is seen through the likes of the players has made it acceptable for an athlete to turn professional without finishing college or skipping college altogether. Much of this is due to pressure and timing. However, they do not know how much hard work and effort one has to put in to reach a certain point. How many good players there are, let alone their chances of becoming a superstar.

The amount of pressure that young athletes face today seems to set them up for failure. Many players not only have trouble adapting to the pro game, but also must deal with situations off the field. What most athletes see when they make this jump is the instant fame that can be theirs. Therefore, when they make this jump, many of them never realize their potential and fail to play professionally. They fail to realize that as a pro athlete it takes much more than being able to be strong, fast, or having a jump shot. Besides talent, potential, and maturity at such a young age, it takes something that no one else has, like a swagger or a certain edge. They also need to be able to handle pressure, deliver at crucial time, and be committed to being successful. They need something that goes beyond sports; something the rest of the world can relate to and take from.



Reggie Bush, seen here at the 2006 NFL Draft after foregoing his senior year at USC, has yet to show that he can live up to the hype.

have become more than just being a game. Athletes are idols to many people throughout the country, especially to our youth. We see them making the clutch plays, being displayed on the media, and signing those luxurious contracts; bottom line is, we want to be in their position. Most people's fascination of

The State of the Nationals

Alex Keckeisen

Co-Editor-in-Chief

More than two years ago, Major League Baseball (MLB) made the decision to move the Montreal Expos to our nation's capital, giving the district their first baseball team since the Senators left over 33 years ago. So, as the Nationals are already underway into their sophomore season, how is the franchise?

A few weeks ago, after much speculation, a group headed by real estate developer, Ted Lerner were able to buy the team for approximately \$450 million. While baseball did look for the most capable owners to keep a profitable team, it may be hard to rebuild such a devastated franchise. The team's payroll has been stuck at around \$60 million for the last few years after Bud Selig and the other 293 owners bought the team. The farm system has also taken a large hit, as it has proven difficult to hire scouts because of the budget.

The stadium has also been a hot topic, and while the deal has been resolved and the first steps have been taken in construction, the question remains as to whether the Nationals fans will be able to fill the stadium, day-in and day-out. On the Nationals' home opener, games which usually draw capacity crowd, over 5,000 seats were left unfilled at RFK stadium. And while team officials remain positive about attendance, saying they expect about the same numbers as last year (2.73 million), others remain skeptical. On May 4, the city officially broke ground on the \$611 million, publicly financed stadium. Breaking ground was one of the biggest steps forward for the young franchise. DC chairperson Linda Cropp initially opposed a new public



Although the Nationals are 16 and 29, they have gotten a new stadium in South East DC and a new owner, Ted Lerner.

financed stadium; instead, she proposed any money should go toward renovating the 45 year old stadium that they Nationals currently play in. Mayor Anthony Williams became skeptical of whether the team would even stay in the district, stating that there probably will not be baseball in Washington for much longer.

Last year's inaugural team also broke out in the NL East early in the season, and seemed prime to make the playoffs. But after a slump, finished with an 81-81 record. This year's team is currently standing in knee deep water in the cellar of the NL East and sinking fast.

Whether the decision to bring baseball back to D.C. was a good or not, there will always be skeptics about if it was the right decision not only to bring the team, but to publicly finance a stadium.

In The Numbers

5

Goals scored by the girls soccer team in a first round district tournament win over T.C. Williams, with 2 goals scored by sophomore Stephanie Gerow.

6'4"

Personal best height that senior Josh Rodriguez placed first with at the district track meet.

Houey's Highlights

Triumph Measured in Lengths

Houston Murphy

Sports Editor

The boys' track and field team has proven to be not just a perennial contender in the district, but continual district champions and legitimate regional and state contenders. The team accomplished an incredibly esteemed feat on May 17th and 18th as they captured their fifth Patriot District title here at our school.



Senior AJ Febrizio exerts his intensity to wind up for a toss in the shot put. His throw of 47 feet helped him maintain his shot put title since winter season.

Going into the district meet, the Wolverines faced a usual scenario: they were ranked as underdogs against Lake Braddock. The one-point deficit in their projected score compared to Lake Braddock's, which was composed from team meet results and individual statistics, was at least the third year in a row that they were underdogs going into the district meet. The Wolverines managed to win the meet by 60 points, a blowout that is remarkable in one of the most competitive districts in the state.

Following their strategy from the indoor winter season, Coach Lundin placed athletes in events all across the board and expected them to compete for points aggressively, yet efficiently. "We had even more depth, and this allowed us to be more selective in what events we put people in," said Lundin. "It's all about picking your battles," continued Lundin. "If we have someone who is good in one event, but might only score a point or two because that event has the top runners in the region from our district, we would put them in a race where they would be more competitive."

The team captains and veterans paced the team, and newcomers and role players played important parts in securing the title and setting the team apart from the rest of the competition. Seniors Antwan Minter and Josh Rodriguez took first and second place respectively in the long and triple jump. Senior Frank

Devar went all out in the mile, achieving a personal record to help him capture fourth place. Senior AJ Febrizio followed up his outstanding debut to track and field during the winter season, defending his shot put title with a first place throw of 47 feet. Sophomore Christopher Newkirk placed second in the 100-meter hurdles and spring newcomer Arthur Williams placed second in the 100 meter dash and also helped the 4x100 meter dash along with senior Corey Smith, Rodriguez, and Minter capture first

place with a personal record of 43.1 seconds. The team was so well-balanced that they had points come from every event except three, two of which were scratched because they led by so many points by the end of the meet.

The girls' team showed one of their strongest performances since the days of lady wolverine alumnus and Olympic star Tiombe Hurd. The girls sincerely gave their all, with personal records swarming the stat sheet. Senior Debbie Armstrong started off the meet on May 17th in the first event of the meet, placing an astounding second with a PR of 4'6" in the high jump. After the high jump, sophomore Kat Lee leapt to first place in the long jump. Though she suffered a tough beat when she scratched all three of her triple jumps, she made up for it well when she came out of no where to spring herself to a second place pole vault. Senior Amara Lewis and junior Jana Decoster both scored important points, making it to the finals in the 400 meters and 110 meter hurdles, respectively. Senior Shanna Richardson scored in four different events and qualified for states in the long jump. On the distance side of the team, sophomore Elizabeth Heath placed fourth in the mile and junior Kelly Jemison ran a personal best time that placed her second in the meet and was hundredths of a second away from qualifying her for states.

Although these points, personal records, and single performances are achieved by individuals, they are all accomplishments of the team. When one person does their best in an

event, especially on the high school level, it is in great part because of support from their teammates. Whether it was when they pushed each other through practice, helped someone stretch out a tight muscle before



Sophomore Elizabeth Heath paces herself to pass a rival Lake Braddock runner in the mile. Heath placed fourth in the event.

a race, gave them advice or encouragement when they doubted themselves, or simply cheered them on during the last stretch of their race, all of the individuals on this track team make up one big family that proves that track and field is more than just an individual sport. All of the track athletes are out there putting it on the line every day in practice, together, and this is how they get through the season. When it comes time to be out there by yourself in front of everyone, you are on your own. But the great thing about track and field is that you know you aren't all alone.

Tennis Takes a Swing

Jon Yoo

Asst. Sports Editor

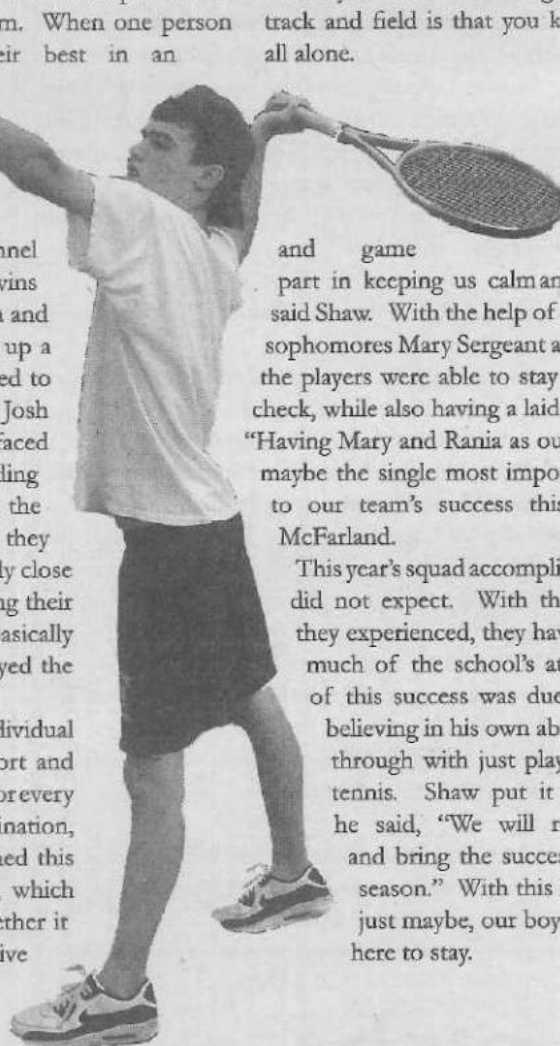
For the past several seasons, our school's boy's tennis team has not received much of the spring sport spotlight. This was due mainly to the team's little success and diminishing popularity, which did not match those of track and soccer teams. However, the 2006 squad has changed these ways with a highly successful season, which included a district tournament birth. Junior Ian Shaw replied on the much approved season by saying, "Besides the fact that everyone stepped their game up, we had more veterans and a better quality line up compared to past years."

With the steady leadership of senior veterans Matt Vennel and Ricky Lowey, the six-man team finished with ten wins and four losses. Returning junior starters, Neij Mehta and Nick Waslewski, also powered the squad by moving up a slot in the singles lineup, while more depth was added to the team with the additions of Shaw and sophomore Josh McFarland. Even with a solid roster, the team still faced tough competition from district opponents, including Lee High School. Many of the players agreed that the match against Lee was the most difficult. Though they were handed a six to three loss, the meet was extremely close down the line, with Waslewski and Shaw both winning their matches. "The Lee game was a close match, and it basically came down to who made the least mistakes and played the hardest," said McFarland.

Though the wins for the team came by the total individual victories, the players relied on each other for support and confidence. Under Coach Pete Raney, it was expected for every member of the team to play with confidence, determination, and to give their all on the court. They accomplished this by following the team's strategies and game plans, which included being able to stay focused at all times, whether it was during practice or a match, and showing no negative body language. "We all knew what we were capable of, and we played to our strengths. Our strategies

and game played a huge part in keeping us calm and prepared," said Shaw. With the help of team managers, sophomores Mary Sergeant and Rania Fusisi, the players were able to stay focused and in check, while also having a laid back approach. "Having Mary and Rania as our managers was maybe the single most important ingredient to our team's success this season," said McFarland.

This year's squad accomplished what many did not expect. With the progress that they experienced, they have finally caught much of the school's attention. Much of this success was due to each player believing in his own ability and coming through with just playing good, solid tennis. Shaw put it perfectly when he said, "We will remain focused, and bring the success into the next season." With this in mind, maybe, just maybe, our boys' tennis team is here to stay.



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"Loving care from familiar faces"

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14

Number of district games won by the softball team, on their way to the first undefeated district season in Patriot District history.

6

Number of athletes ejected from games this year, qualifying our athletic program for probation.

42

Number of points scored in districts by sophomore Kat Lee to help the girls track team place second.

Day in the Life of... *the King of Kings*

Katie Staples
Co-Editor-in-Chief

Our school used to pride itself on being a democracy, an administrative team-run establishment of learning. But that is wrong, so wrong. Our school is actually ruled by a familiar face among the students, a football icon, a man for all seasons; his name, King Ritchie.

Saturday, May 13 was no ordinary day for the students of this school. It was a day of pampering, primping, and partying, one of the most anticipated nights of the year: Prom. However, it also marked the beginning of King Ritchie's reign. That Saturday at Prom, senior Ritchie Math beat out several other prominent senior boys for the title of Prom King. "I was really excited because a lot of people were happy for me. Even before I won, people were chanting my name," said Math. Prom-goers congratulated him once he was announced prom king.

"[Ritchie] looked as happy as a little kid on Christmas. He was sexy; his tuxedo really accentuated his features," said friend, senior Nick Brady. After his dance with Prom Queen senior Elise Bender, Math hurried back to his date, girlfriend of six months, senior Mayra Elias. "I think it's great [Ritchie

won] because he was one of our leaders in football and our all-time great. He was most deserving of Prom King because he's been through so much. He basically represents the student body: he's smart, good at sports, a minority, and easy to get along with," added sophomore Mohamed Chouat.

On a typical day, Math goes to school, work, and, yes, you guessed it, plays football. "Football is my life. I dedicate most of [it] to football," he said. One of King Ritchie's favorite classes is weight lifting. "I like to work out to get ready for football in the future," Math stated. Weight training teacher Dan Lundin said, "[Ritchie is] an active member in school, faced a lot of adversity, set a good example, and is a good selection overall for any leadership position. He's a good kid with a good attitude about things." King Ritchie played middle linebacker and tight end for our school's varsity football team and will play football at either Shenandoah University or Southern Virginia University this fall. He said the schools are putting together as much money as they can for an athletic scholarship. As a graduated college athlete, Lundin discussed several scenarios with



Seniors Ritchie Math and Elise Bender won the title of Prom King and Queen of 2006.

Math in which he could excel academically, physically, and socially. "The goal is to put him in a situation where he'll have most success," Lundin said.

Math works at Village Hardware with best friend senior Jimmy Arrington. After that he does homework and watches his favorite T.V. shows, The Simpsons and Family Guy. On weekends, "Jimmy, Tyler Gray, Corey Gray, and I play volleyball," Math said. He loves to stay active on weekend and hang out with friends. "I owe all my fun weekends to Brittany Maniglia," he continued.

Math's close family consists of his two older sisters, both West Potomac graduates, soon-to-be brother-in-law, Eric, and friend Brice Pope, with whom Math is so close he calls his brother. He also shares his house with his half-cat, half-bobcat, Xavier, and dachshund, Midget.

After college, Math hopes to be a football player for the Bengals. However, "If that doesn't work out, I'll be majoring in business and criminal justice," he said. Until then, Math said he will continue to be the "outgoing, fun, gentle giant" of a player turned Prom king the students of our school know him as.

Eight Places To Hang

Nyisha Vann
Wire Reporter

For students in our generation, things change all the time. But we are also a fairly schizophrenic in nature—at one instant we want to do one thing, only to radically shift our focus the next instant. Students hang out at many different places, and people from different ethnic groups hang out at different places. So what are your top eight places that everybody can agree on no matter what age and what ethnic group you fall in? This is an informational guide to the top eight hang-out spots.

8. **The park**--a lovely place to view old-fashioned natural beauty (plants, flowers, etc...)
7. **The movies**--the community theater to check out all the latest motion pictures.
6. **TJIF**--an eatery/bar located throughout our city.
5. **The mall**--a fashionable place to purchase items; one can interact with others, and meet new friends at the mall.
4. **House parties**--a place where one can be in thier comfort zone and have a great time celebrating whatever you are celebrating!
3. **Most known teen night clubs**--a place where teens are having fun in the Washington D.C. area.
2. **Downtown D.C.**--known as the mini New York City, a place where you will never sleep, not with all the great restaurants and shopping malls (Georgetown, etc...)
1. **Dave and Busters/ESPN Zone**--an eatery where you can play games and have a great time doing so.

These places can be found throughout the whole Metro area, and some of them are right under your nose. Just hanging out with your friends can create a very good time.

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Sudoku Challenge

Sudoku has become increasingly popular among students

Kristina Dahman
Wire Reporter

Sudoku is an up-and-coming trend that can be found all over the publication and internet world. Sudoku's have three levels: easy, medium and hard.

- The rules are simple; use the integers 1 – 9 to fill in the rows and columns.
- The tricky part is you can only use each integer once in each row and column.
- There are nine 3 x 3 squares and each square must be filled with the integers from 1 – 9 as well, using each one once.
- Some easy locations to find an easy or a challenging Sudoku: The Washington Post, Style Section, generally toward the end of the section, Target, Sudoku: Puzzle Addict for PC, 9.99, or these websites: www.websudoku.com, www.sudoku.com, or www.dailysudoku.com

*Please feel free to complete the Sudoku puzzle below. Good luck! This is a really easy one, just to get you started. The answer to this puzzle will be in the next issue.

1		8			3		4	
9	4		7	1	5	3		
		2				5	1	9
	6		4	3	7			
7		1		8		4	6	3
	8				2		7	
6			3				5	7
2		5		7	4			1
		7	2		1	6		

Texting 1, 2, 3

Anum Jaffri

News Co-Editor

"Txtn=luv" read a recent text message I received on my cell. Why a person would want to pay ten cents for saying this is beyond me. Though the psychology of text messaging eludes me, I am a certified text message addict.

What can you do if you need to ask someone something, but are in class, or simply do not want to have a real conversation with them? Text them! People have even texted happy birthday, or actually, "hapbday!" to me instead of actually calling me. A text I got over winter break read, "moneys short, times r hard, so im txtn u ur xmas card. Pass it on!" I laughed when I read it, because it summed up how unattached our society has become. What happened to meeting someone face to face when you wanted to talk to them?

Do not get me wrong, I love text messaging. I save all the interesting ones I send

and receive, because people look through my phone and read them. The first thing I do when looking through someone else's phone is read their text messages. It is a brilliant indicator of a person's personality. No text messages? The person is a CIA agent, and deletes all the top secret text messages he/she dispatches and receives. When I see numerous text messages from one person, and the person is single, I know they will not stay single for long. Like my wise friend said, "txtn=love." You really love a person if you randomly send text messages to the same person three or four times a day.

But this should not be confused with people who text you to say things that could easily be said over the phone. This means that the "texter" does not wish to talk to

you, but do not feel offended; you are guilty of doing it, too. When I accidentally call people, then realize I do not really want to talk to them, a simple text fixes things. "Woops rong #," I write, and leave it at that.

Texting is also the number one choice for communication during class. "You can do it quietly," said sophomore Stuart Robinson. "You can get away with it easier." It is up to teachers to decide what to do with cell phones should they happen to catch kids using them during class. While some teachers warn their students to put the cell phone away, French teacher Daniel Fitzgerald takes them for the entire day.

Just like odd phone calls, text messages can sometimes get a little weird. "Some random person said I love you," said Robinson regarding a suspicious text he once received. "I still don't know who sent it."

Texts can also be little gigabytes of sunshine you can savor forever. Junior Whitney Gray's boyfriend from Mt. Vernon High

school sent her song lyrics. "I thought he was being really corny," said Gray before she realized her love was expressing his devotion through the art of texting. For Gray, texts are, "things you can always have to look back to."

For my phone, texts are a huge problem, because they take up so much space in my phone's memory, but I save every important text message so people looking through my phone can see what I do. Imagine if your cell phone got lost. What would someone looking through your phone think about you?

Text messaging is arguably the best cell phone feature, shadowed only by polyphonic ring tones. Most importantly, they keep other informed about you.



Rodney Turner/KRT

Text messaging has overwhelmingly surpassed note-passing as the preferred method of stealth communication during classes.

State of the Arts

HFSIval 2006
May 27-28
Merriweather Post

KT Turnstall
June 8th
9:30 Club

Rob Thomas featuring
Natasha Beddingfield
June 6th
Merriweather Post

Wolfmother
June 6
Black Cat

Sonic Youth
June 15
9:30 Club

VANS Warped Tour '06
June 15
Merriweather Post

She Wants Revenge
May 17
Sonar

Carlos Mencia
May 20
Warner Theatre

Dave Matthews Band
June 24
Missan Pavillion

Cool as a Cucumber

Kristina Dahmann

Wire Reporter

The temperature is steadily increasing and the new summer styles have been on the runway for months. So I find myself asking, why do I still see *Dress For Success* t-shirts when there is just so much to choose from? Males and females alike tend to get warm when the temperature breaks 60 degrees. Males can stick with their trusty tees while females are left in the dust trying to cope with a wardrobe that is either too hot or not school appropriate.

Dress code guidelines state that "... and other tops exposing the midriff, cleavage, torso, back or chest are prohibited. Examples include, but are not limited to, tank tops for both males and females, spaghetti straps, fishnet-like shirts...unbuttoned shirts revealing chest and tarzan shirts." Tarzan shirt? A tarzan shirt, for your information, is a shirt that looks like something Tarzan would wear—who knew!

Either way, in the summer heat this dress code can be constraining. Tank tops are cool and can be unrevealing, but are still banned from school. So what is a girl to do? It is easy. T-shirts are good for school, and can look nice, not to be confused with the junky sports tees that are spotted oh-so-frequently on boys these days. Nordstrom's carries many appropriate t-shirts that are also cool. If a t-shirt has short-short sleeves, or sleeves that expose the armpit, sweating is eliminated. Well, if you do sweat, you cannot see it at least. Also, along the same lines of sweating, gray and other pastel colored

shirts are probably not the best way to go. This is because the "sweat spots" are easily "spotted." Besides, polos will perpetually be in style, whether you pop your collar or not.

Today's mass media tries to express the idea that less is best. However, it can be cool to wear more than just a skimpy outfit. Your midriff and that beautiful stomach ring may

seem attractive to you; however, in general society there is no need to show them off: everyone has them!

Shorts happen to be somewhat synonymous with short. But it does not, by a long shot, have the same meaning! Commonly referred to as Bermuda shorts, shorts that are purposely made longer, are always an A-plus in an administrator's grade book. They even look best on the longer-legged people.

Finally, lightweight clothing is key to being cool while staying in school. With lightweight clothing, you can easily adjust to the highly air conditioned first period and then to the overheated, stuffy second period, while you can romp around outside after school. It is a done deal. Bring that extra layer (probably long sleeve) to slip on in

the cooler classrooms. Nevertheless, if you wear lightweight clothing, with a little breeze you are set for the sun all day long.

All in all, you want to be comfortable, but anything is possible in today's consumer-based society driven by rampant materialism. It is all there, from the inane to the quintessentially stylish. But it is up to you to step up and make that effort to look cool in school.



Smart seniors Lindsay Goldstein and Sarah Kessler know that you don't have to cover up to look cool.

Photo by Diana Blaszkiewicz

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So Dull the Con of Man

Diana Blaszkiewicz
Style Co-Editor

When a book sells 40 million copies, is catapulted onto nearly every best-seller list in the world, and instigates a fury of dispute between Christian scholars and skeptics, it is a sure thing that it will be followed by a multi-million dollar cinematic spectacle. In the case of *The Da Vinci Code*, the screen adaptation of the literary phenomenon fails to



Tom Hanks and Audrey Tautou stand in front of the Mona Lisa in *The Da Vinci Code*.

meet the grandiose expectations set by the book. Although directed by the esteemed Ron Howard (*Cinderella Man*, *A Beautiful Mind*), it falls into the category of movies with "potential."

We first meet Robert Langdon (Tom Hanks), a Harvard symbolologist, as he is signing copies of his newest book at a promotional event in

Paris. His idyllic book signing is interrupted by super-intense French detective Bezu Fache (a scary Jean Reno) who has tagged him as the prime suspect in the murder of Louvre curator Jacques Sauniere. Langdon is elicited at the crime scene to unravel the mysterious cipher left by Sauniere, meant to lead Langdon to the mystery behind Sauniere's murder. The mystery in question is the location of the Holy Grail, a Christian relic whose discovery would revolutionize mankind's conception of history and Christianity. Langdon is accompanied by Sauniere's granddaughter, cryptologist Sophie Neveau (Audrey Tautou). As the two travel across Europe attempting to unravel the mystery, they are chased by operatives of Opus Dei, a conservative Catholic organization hell-bent on destroying the Holy Grail and the historical repercussions it carries.

The Da Vinci Code is a movie made for people who have already read the novel. It is devoid of the historical delving that made the original book so interesting. In doing so, the filmmakers dull down some of the

key points of the movie, and churn out a plot that is, often times, hard to follow. "I haven't read the book, so [the movie] was confusing at times," agrees senior Sarah Merchant.

Casting was another problem that plagued the film. Hanks lacked the cinematic presence to pull off the role of the confident Harvard professor, and made for a seldomly compelling leading man. Tautou fared better in her role as the feisty Neveau, but her gamine face and naïve mannerisms were still too reminiscent of *Amélie*. The ever-excellent Ian McKellan, however, made a good appearance as Sir Leigh Teabing, whose presence was a welcomed burst of energy in the film. Paul Bettany's chilling portrayal of Opus Dei assassin Silas was by far the best performance the film had to offer.

Generally speaking, *The Da Vinci Code* is a good movie, but may not be touted as such because it fails to meet the hype created by the book, like many adaptations before it (can anyone say *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*?). In fact, it belittles the insightful points of the book by oversimplifying them. Sadly, that is the sorry fate of many books outsourced to Hollywood.

Rand Fascinates in *We The Living*

Anum Jaffri
News Co-Editor

Written in 1936, *We The Living* by Ayn Rand weaves a moving story around a lack of human rights and a girl named Kira trying to live her life in communist Russia in the early 1900's.

The plot is rich, and the characters are fascinating and complex. Far from a historical tale, the story is a lesson in philosophy and human nature. The characters constantly clash with the eternal struggle between individual desire and the good of society as a whole.

The novel expertly shows the effects of communism on the citizens of Russia; while some rise to power, others, like Kira's family, have their mansion seized from them. The bourgeoisie of Russia transform from being in the upper class to being poor citizens, while the proletariats rise to power. The story follows Kira and her two polar opposite lovers, Leo and Andrei, living in a world where individuals are not valued because their struggles do not matter when it comes to the welfare of society as a whole.

While Leo is the orphan son of a counterrevolutionary leader, Andrei is head of the Communist party in Kira's town of Petrograd.

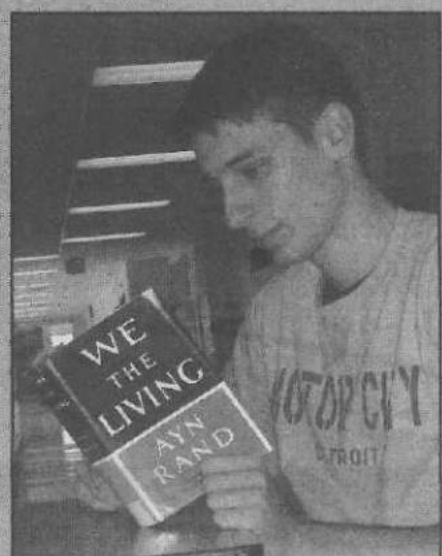
Kira is an idealistic girl who possesses none of the qualities characteristic of a normal teen. She wishes to be an engineer at a time when such a profession for a woman was unheard of—she lives life exactly how she wants to.

Like every person in real life and unlike the static characters of some other books, Kira, Leo, Andrei, and the other characters surrounding them are

unsure of themselves, unsure of the future, and test their morals. They grow and mature like real people do; they are flawed, and they abandon ideals. Kira explores her view of communism, surrounded by both revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries. The climax is beautiful, poignant, and tragic for all three characters, making this book one that you will think about weeks after you finish it.

A master of writing prose, Rand illustrates the lives of the characters in a way few have mastered. The intense detail of the characters' emotions and settings makes the reader feel like they are living in Russia with them, and it only takes a few chapters to be completely attached to the welfare of the characters, which makes the ending even more heart-wrenching. Rand uses the revolution to explore basic human desires and situations everyone can relate to: love, loss, hope, and struggle.

The main underlying theme is objectivism, the concept of reason being one's only way to understand the world, and that one should only live for one's own sake. Rand also wrote the famous books *Atlas Shrugged* and the *Fountainhead*, which further express a socio-philosophical commentary. All three will definitely change your outlook on life.



Sergei Dubogruen, also from Russia, reads *We The Living*, written by Ayn Rand.

RHCP Releases *Stadium Arcadium*

Thomas Luhring
Wire Reporter

Diversity. It works well in this school, and even better in the Red Hot Chili Peppers' new album, *Stadium Arcadium*.

Throughout the Chili Peppers' long career, they have blended all sorts of genres and styles to create a sound all their own - *Stadium Arcadium* is no different. From track to track, the album spans almost every modern brand of music. None of the 28 songs sound the same and all are still excellent. The stark differences can be seen easily from their first three songs: "Dani California," "Snow," and "Charlie." "Dani California" goes back in time with classic rock influences and a small dose of metal in the guitar solo. After such a rebirth, "Snow" comes on with a soft rock theme and an almost spiritual vibe. "Charlie" rounds out the trio in a hip-hop/rock mixture which reminds fans of the funk-rock Chili Peppers from the 80's. The album continues through for 25 more songs with every sort of influence possible.

Such a diverse album has few, yet wonderful,

constants. Vocals, bass, guitar, and drums are performed with creative perfection by Anthony Kiedis, Michael Balzary (a.k.a. Flea), John Frusciante, and Chad Smith, respectively. The crazy kids from L.A. have grown out of being energetic drug addicts and into wonderful musicians who make melodies beyond compare. In their old age, the Chili Peppers have fallen onto softer sounding, yet still powerful, music. Kiedis accepts much back-up singing from Frusciante and others in the two-disc set, something which only adds to the beauty of the music.

Stadium Arcadium is a diverse and musically creative album which has one more important feature. The album has two CD's with 28 total songs. The songs are not simple three-minute short songs much like the pop music of today. The first CD, *Jupiter*, is over an hour long and the second, *Mars*, is just under an hour. Anyone can appreciate the two-plus hours of

melodies. No matter what type of music a person may enjoy, there is something for even the most snobbish of music lovers. For just \$16.99 from Best Buy, anyone and everyone should pick up a copy.



Red Hot Chili Peppers bassist Flea performs on the grounds of Slane Castle in Ireland.

Liam Sweeney/KRT

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Kim Wisler

"She is a good teacher and helps me when I need it."
~Ashley Caison, junior



Photo by Sam Mathewson



Photo by Sam Mathewson

Dan Fundin

"He keeps us on track and is a cool person."
~Daniel Baker, freshman

Mary Mathewson

"She has taught me so much and pushed me to work harder."
~Alisha Prier, sophomore



Photo by Lakisha Langley

Unheard Voices... Everyone has their own story to tell

Larry Tahn

Special to The Wire

Something that is special about me is that I am perhaps one of the nicest people you can get to know. I am funny from time to time and I am an average student in my classes. Yes, I am graduating this year and I am a senior. Where I plan to go after high school is uncertain, for I want to try majoring in game art design. As you may know, gaming is one of my favorite hobbies, as well as going to online forums. So at the moment, I am still finding myself and deciding on what to do.

I have many fond memories of my time spent here at West Potomac. Some would include the time when I fell off the Gunston stairs near the JROTC hallway. How I fell remains a mystery, but when I look at it now, it is funny. Another memory that I have is the two years I spent helping in the library as a volunteer. Honestly, working there was fun and I enjoyed it; the librarians were kind enough to help me out. I first began working there to copy someone, not saying who, then it turned out that I was bored. So instead of falling asleep in the library, I asked if I could help out.

Well, my favorite thing so far at this school was taking com-

puter graphics and graphic imaging. In both classes, I have enjoyed the teacher I have had. Most of all, Mr. Premeaux, former West Potomac teacher, and Ms. Angela Miner were awesome teachers that have helped me out a lot whenever

I needed it. I have made many pieces of "art" in my computer graphics and graphic design classes that I have had fun with creating. My favorite works of art were in computer graphics I--I made a CD case featuring my friends on the cover. In computer graphics II, I made a full flash animation. Sadly, not many people saw it, but I enjoyed making it as much as I enjoyed watching it. Finally in graphic imaging/design, I presently intend to make another Flash animation, something to say goodbye to West Potomac.

Honestly, my junior year was better than my senior. It was less stressful, I had better teachers, and I actually had classes with more of my friends from the past. This year as a senior, it is almost the same, but with a couple of differences. This includes high school and the plans that come with it, which to me, is very stressful. Still, I am glad that I am graduating this year, it is a good thing. I leave with saying my favorite quotes, "Don't die before I do," and, "Let the power protect you."



Tahn enjoys participating in his computer graphics class in Springbank.

Photo by Lakisha Langley

Influential Staffers!

Mel Mobley

"Mrs. Mobley treats her students as equals and doesn't act as if we are inferior. She helps us make out deadlines."

~Quiyana Pierce-Lloyd, sophomore



Photo by Lakisha Langley



Photo by Lakisha Langley

John Bulmer

"He is really cool, and he also taught me all the rules of the road!"

~Danielle Morin, sophomore



Photo by Lakisha Langley



Photo by Lakisha Langley

Tyronne Duggins

"Either be in his office or in the hallway, he's always the first one to wave at you with that big smile! Even on the phone, he never misses you."

~Mariya Ilyas, freshman

Felicia Simmons

"She brings liveliness to the lunch room and always makes us laugh."

~Brian Audet, junior

Springtime Heat Is Coming

Nyisha Vann

Wire Reporter

Springtime has come again, and everyone is ready to change, from guys who love short shorts, to girls who just want to show off a little skin in the heat. Everybody, let's "change clothes" and get a new outlook on fashion. The most important thing about spring fashion is where to get it and what is new.

In school, students have started to see popular flat wedges and the common flip-flops. This school has a good chance of being a fashionable school, but the administrators think differently--but are they right? "This is a place for learning, not a fashion show, but if it was left up to us, we all would have the common uniforms," said principal Mrs. Vesilind about the dress code.

So what is spring fashion all about?

This spring, it is all about the look this year. What I mean when I say the "look" is being spontaneous--going out of the box. Take the motto, "you only live once, so don't

take anything for granted." Spring flare is all about the summer glow: the gold and garish look.

If fashion is a problem, do not hesitate to try something new. When you strive for a new look, you can be resourceful and really see how creative you truly are. Shy away from plain and dull clothes--be more vivacious. Go out of your comfort zone this year and change your outer appearance. When spring comes, I like to go all out. "I want to kill it for my final phase of the school year," said junior Thomas Powell.

Letting somebody know you are creative, not just in art, but also in other things, shows others you have a creative mind and that you know how to use it. Spring style will bring out the brightness of your skin and show who you are inside and out.

Things to pick up for the spring/summer season: suntan lotion, body

glow, a pair of exclusive flip flops, a fashionable swim suit, bright color nail polish, a pair of sunglasses, toe rings, and a cool beach bag.



Raul Rubiera/KRT

Sunglasses are a big part of springtime fashion. The Oakley brand, although very expensive, is one of the most popular brands.

WE ARE SO PROUD!

Accepted to Governor's School:

Theresa How-Yew-Kin
- School of Agriculture
Eric Trouton - Humanities
Emily Echoles - Humanities
Bess Crimmons - School of the Arts

Rebecca McVety
Ben McVety
Theresa Mechan
Katherine Perkins
Natalie Zuffi
John Baker (alternate)

All-Virginia Band:

Elizabeth Grady - Clarinet
Rebecca McGraw - Clarinet
Bess Crimmins - Oboe
Molly Turner - Flute



Wind Ensemble:
- Superior Ratings
Sinfonietta and
Symphony Orchestra
- Excellent Ratings

All State Chorus:

Cat Brokaw
Alexandra Knoppel
Katie Kosanovich
Robin Mason
Kate McFarland

Regional History Day Competition:

Amber Wixtrom - Individual
Performance first place

JACKIE FERNANDEZ

Jovial Jackie

Jocelyn Frinfrock
Focus Editor

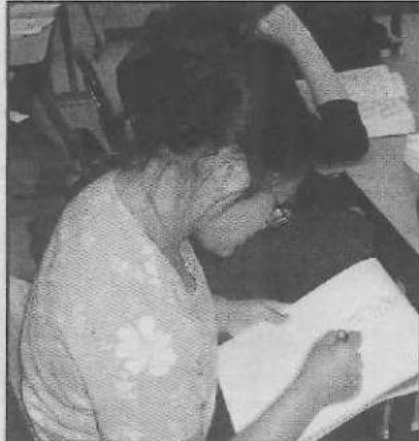
Senior Jackie Fernandez may not be seen in the halls by many students, but go through one of those side doors and a whole different life is revealed.

Jackie Fernandez is probably one of the most interesting and exciting individuals at this school. She has many hobbies, which include drawing, writing, and collecting. She loves Anime and enjoys drawing and collecting Anime characters. She has collected about \$1,000 worth of Anime memorabilia. "I am an Anime freak, but most people know that," stated Fernandez.

Since she was twelve she has written fan fiction and really enjoys it. Fan fiction are when fans of certain books or shows explore different themes and change the content of a story to what they want it to be.

Fernandez enjoys all of her classes. AP government, AP English, anatomy, and computer graphics are a few of her favorites. She is also the president of the Anime Club and is the Copy Editor for the yearbook. "Yearbook was fun, but took so much time and effort. I just hope people don't criticize all the work I put into it," said Fernandez. Fernandez is very serious about the yearbook and makes sure all the

writers get their stories in on time. But she also has a sarcastic side. She once threatened senior Houston Murphy about getting his stories in on time. Fernandez said to him, "If you do not turn in your stories



Jackie Fernandez draws and collects Anime characters in her free time.

by the end of class, I will make you write it using your own blood."

Fernandez will be attending Christopher Newport University next year, and is planning on majoring in computer engineering with a minor in writing.

"Jackie is her own person. She is not a follower and is comfortable with herself. This is rare for teenagers," said yearbook adviser Mel Mobley. Fernandez is a personable, cheerful, relaxed individual who tries to be stress-free and enjoy her life. Mobley believes we will see great things from Jackie, and that is certainly true.

RANDY WALLACE

King of Drama

Brett Smith
Wire Reporter

In Hollywood, a "triple threat" is an aspiring entertainer who can sing, dance, and act with astonishing grace and amazing flair. Randy Wallace is a triple threat.

If you have been to any of the drama productions performed this year, then you already know what I am talking about. Wallace played the lead role of Gilbert in the Fall production of *Anne of Green Gables*. In the winter, Wallace not only matched James Stewart in his portrayal of Elwood in *Harvey*, but actually managed to surpass James Stewart with his compassionate



Randy Wallace portrays Tony in the Spring play, *The Boyfriend*.

acting and meticulous attention to every detail. Additionally, Wallace played the lead role in one of the student directed one acts; his performance earned him the prestigious Judge's Award at the District One Act Play Festival, and helped earn the one act a spot for competition at the Regional One Act Play Festival. Finally, in the spring, Wallace took on his most challenging role of Tony in *The Boyfriend*. Wallace spent several weeks in rehearsal as he perfected several difficult dance solos and many challenging songs.

"Randy has an amazing amount of talent on the stage. He has great stage instincts and can play so many different types of characters," said drama department head honcho Kathy McCormally.

Of course, being a "hot item" among the ladies is not exactly foreign to Wallace, whose talent is matched only by his sensitivity and his alarming attractiveness. Wallace's

skin is considered by his admirers to be "soft, like a baby," while his eyes have been compared to "beautiful lakes of lust."

Wallace's passion for acting and entertaining is, hopefully, the beginning of a long career. Wallace dreams of becoming a professional actor, where thousands of

audiences can witness his genius. In the meantime, Wallace enjoys the simple pleasures. He enjoys hanging out with his multitude of friends, and frequents the concert scene in downtown D.C. at the 9:30 Club or Black Cat. "Randy is a very talented individual who is very dedicated and smart," said longtime friend, senior Kate MacFarland.

With an amazing passion and a talent to match, the future looks very bright for Randy Wallace. And we will all be able to say, "I went to high school with that guy...his skin was so soft."

Gorgeous Genuario

Thomas Luhring
Wire Reporter

Three words. So much can be said about a person in just three words. Senior Vincent Genuario can be described by any set of three words, as long as they are positive.

Asking people how to describe Genuario in three words is like asking a girl to describe her feelings during



Vincent Genuario's friends describe him by his charming abilities, looks, and brains.

Titanic. He does so much for the people he knows and loves. Still, three words always have the ability to come to mind. Vincent described himself as "unfocused, friendly, and weird," while his teacher, Bill Rhatican, chose "a quietly professional academic." Friends of Genuario's went for any word relating to his looks, his brains, and his charming abilities. When a person simply makes people happy, rather than someone who just instigates more laughter, comes along, everyone knows he is special.

Besides being so dang cool, Genuario works hard at whatever he sets his mind to. Playing golf and working for his father take up the time left over after school and friends. He maintains a good G.P.A. while taking challenging courses, such as AP government and AP physics. One of the reasons almost everyone likes him is his lack of any negative feelings. Words so rarely heard from his mouth are "I hate..."

An easygoing guy who wants happiness for all has one weakness—which also happens to be his biggest strength—Genuario is a hopeless romantic. His biggest fear is "not meeting [his] soul mate." There is also one shining characteristic of a romantic which Genuario possesses—humility. No matter what question is asked of him, he is always humble. When asked why he is so dang sexy, Genuario answered, "I will leave it to whoever judges that." The heart is his strongest muscle, and it is what will drive him to a successful life in the future.

He is a "good person, like a really good person," said senior A.J. Fabrizio. Fabrizio hangs out with Genuario weekday and weekend. The three words he chose to describe Genuario were "he's the man." Not technically three words, but still a great summation of Genuario. With so much negativity in the world, Genuario is "the man" who counters with happiness.

VINCENT GENUARIO

Hectic Hoehnhe

Sara Mathewson
Style Co-Editor

Delectable. Oh my, yes. Maureen Hoehnhe is delectable. She has also been known to be a geek box. She is a lively and extravagantly energetic student who simply likes to have fun.

In her free time, Hoehnhe enjoys hanging out with her friends, including seniors Maureen McCusker, Mike Howell, and Lindsey Goldstein. Hoehnhe values her friends more than anything else. McCusker said, "We like to geek out and go to KFC for \$.99 snackers." Hoehnhe is a senior editor for the school yearbook and was formerly a part of the Environmental Club at our school. Hoehnhe is a fan of nature; she goes bird watching with her dad on occasion and volunteers regularly at a local animal shelter. Besides hanging out with her closest friends and her family, Hoehnhe enjoys sailing and going to her favorite beach, South Padre Island, located in the tropical end of Texas.

Along with volunteering, Hoehnhe has two paying jobs. During most of the year, she works down at the Virginia Florist, and in the warmer

seasons she works at the Belle Haven Marina. Maureen is a very friendly and fun person, and is nice to absolutely everyone. She said, "I think that I am likeable; I'm a little shy, a little weird, and would consider myself a creepster."

Hoehnhe will be attending Christopher Newport University next year. Her first choice of majors include pre-vet and biology to continue her love for nature and animals. According to senior Mike Howell, Hoehnhe loves to express this love. "One time, she tried to give CPR to a cat that was dying. It made her very sad to know that she couldn't save it."

Many people, like McCusker, described Hoehnhe as a "geek box" because one of their favorite activities together is

"geeking"—this is the new word for the act of laughing uncontrollably.

Despite her humor and buffoonery, Hoehnhe has a soft and sometimes serious side. She is caring and is someone to talk to at any time. McCusker said, "What makes Maureen different from everyone else is the fact that she can be funny, but also a good and loyal friend. These two things aren't seen together very often."



Hoehnhe considers herself to be a little shy, a little weird, and a "creepster."

MAUREN HOEHNHE