

May 4
2007

The Joys of a JEF



Ethan Hyman/KRT

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THE WIRE

WEST POTOMAC HIGH SCHOOL

Friday, May 4, 2007

Volume 22, Issue #79
6500 Quander Road
Alexandria, VA 22307

West Potomac High School Library



Photo by Drew Smith

Our school mourned after the tragedy at Virginia Tech at a vigil in front of our school, held Saturday April 21. People also showed their support by wearing ribbons and Virginia Tech colors and attending vigils all across the area for the 33 victims of the shooting on April 16. For reflections, turn to pages 8-9.

ESOL Students Display Work on Wikispaces for the World to See

Mariya Ilyas

News Editor

I write, I wrote, I will write, I have written. I read, you read, she reads, we read, they read. Learning to speak English?

Our school is very diverse: we have students from all around the world, some of whom have recently come to America and are trying to learn English. These students are constantly using technology and the Internet, making sure to not get left behind native English speakers.

Students who are learning to speak English have the option to take the English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) class.

their work. I [also] think students are more engaged and more concerned about the quality of their work because others will see it," said ESOL teacher Gail Kasun.

With technology growing, who can afford to be left behind? Kasun and other teachers devote some of their teaching curriculum to the use of computers and the Internet. In fact, only Kasun can allow students to post and respond to others' writings on Wikispaces.

"When we write on websites, other students can comment and it helps me improve my writing," said junior Abdul Ahmadi, who is from Afghanistan. Ahmadi has been in the U.S. for almost two years and has reached the B2 level of ESOL (last year learning English).

The ESOL students also took a field trip to George Mason University to attend a conference. "That was a conference about peace-building in Africa. Some Africans spend their time and energy on peace, while others are rebuilding important buildings and facilities around the world," said Kasun.

The online website is a great tool that helps ESOL students grow and develop as a writer. "It [Wikispaces] encourages my writing," said freshman Ndeye Diop, who is from Senegal. Diop, who has

only been in the U.S. for nine years, has also reached the B2 level in ESOL.

However, some ESOL students have limited friends in their orbit. These students are continuously faced with the challenges of not only passing their classes successfully (some even taking Honors and AP), but also making new friends, especially given that some students in our school are unwilling to understand the backgrounds of ESOL students. "[It is] human nature to not

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Dropout Rates Take a Turn For The Worse

Grace Powell

Opinions Editor

According to the Fairfax County website, our school had the highest student dropout rate in the county during the 2004-2005 school year. However, according to administrators at our school, the system by which the dropout rate is calculated lacks certain specifications, resulting in a misleading depiction of the actual dropout rate in our school.

"We weren't telling our data where they [the students] were going," said principal Rima Vesilind. Vesilind is referring to students who left our school for various reasons during the 2004-2005 school years. According to the Fairfax County website, common reasons for student dropout include achievement problems, behavioral problems, employment, expulsion, financial hardship, and health problems. However, during the 2004-2005 school year, students who moved to a different school or overall unknown location were sometimes mistakenly counted as dropouts. The Fairfax County website reported a total of 72 students as dropouts during the 2004-2005 school years. The website said 51 of those students moved to an unknown location.

Though the number of dropouts during the 2005-2006 school year has not yet been released, administrators believe the rate to be much lower than what was previously reported. "I personally called students to get in touch with [the students who left the school]" said guidance director Timothy Boyd.

The mishap of the 2004-2005 school year is being resolved by following up when a student leaves the school. "We do have students who drop out," said Boyd, "but we are working [to make sure everyone is accounted for]."

The statistic creates a certain negative perception about our school. Junior Allen Frazier said, "I think [the statistic] shows the diversity of students in our school because we have a lot of really good students and some bad. [However], it makes a stereotype about our school."



Photo by Drew Smith

Achievement, behavioral, and financial problems are among the reasons students such as senior Ally Dahl consider dropping out of school.



Photos by Mariya Ilyas

Junior Abdul Ahmadi and freshman Ndeye Diop use the Internet to learn English as a part of our school's ESOL program.

ESOL students' parents hold the right to place their kids in this class. However, the class is designed to help students learn to read, write, and speak English. For these students, it is just like taking another language.

Besides written work in class, ESOL students also actively participate in online activities. Through an online blog website (kasun.wikispaces.com) they post their essays, poems, and other pieces of writing for the whole world to see. "I think it [the online blog] provides an authentic audience and a way to publish

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Photo by Drew Smith

LACROSS ACROSS THE STATES

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SEQUELS BRING THE
MOVIE MAGIC ALIVE



Handout/KRT

STAFF EDITORIAL

The Tragedy at Tech

There are few times in many of our young lives that make us think, "What's wrong with this world?" September 11, 2001 was one of those days. April 20, 1999 was one of those days. And now, April 16, 2007 will forever be included in this list.

The Virginia Tech Massacre, as many of the media outlets have called it, struck close to our hearts because of its proximity. When many students call the establishment simply "Tech," it is obvious that it will have major consequences on our area. The school, as it stands today and will stand for years, was a place of horror on that fateful Monday.

Heroes shall remain the story of the day as many students and professors displayed incredible acts of courage in such an unknown environment for over 99.9% of the world. It is well known of the heroic acts of Holocaust survivor Livia Librescu and his efforts to save his class by blockading the door with his body and of the many other students that put themselves in harm's way to save others. In the event of a tragedy, human nature serves to help others.

And while the effects of the tragedy will be lasting for years, and possibly decades, Virginia Tech will remain one of the most respected schools in the country.

Its engineering school ranks high on every list of prestigious polls and its students include the best and brightest in the nation.

Ryan Clark, another among the victims, was a triple major in english, psychology, and biology who was destined to have a bright future. His life was cut short by an irrational

massacre, but his memory will live on.

The fact of the matter is that a shooting of this magnitude could have happened anywhere. It could have been a restaurant or a post office, but simply because it was a place of learning, a "sanctuary," as President Bush put it, made the situation exponentially worse.

No student will ever forget the events of that day and it will haunt them for years to come. The thirty-two victims of the tragedy will forever be remembered in the hearts and minds of all that knew them. Their potential was enormous and to be cut short by such a senseless act is a horrifying example of how fragile life really is.

Nikki Giovanni, a Virginia Tech professor, in her stirring convocation address put it amazingly. There are no other words to convey the anguish and anxiety that every Virginia Tech student must be feeling and their resilient response to adversity.

"The Hokie Nation embraces our own and reaches out with open heart and hands to those who offer their hearts and minds. We are strong, and brave, and innocent, and unafraid. We are better than we think and not quite what we want to be. We are alive to the imaginations and the possibilities. We will continue to invent the future through our blood and tears and through all our sadness.

We are the Hokies

We will prevail.

We will prevail.

We will prevail.

We are Virginia Tech."

Corrections From the March Issue

The story "Learning to be Heard Without Words" was actually written by Sydney Smith, not Erin Burke.

In the "News Briefs" about ESOL awards, it was said that the awards were for B1 and B2 level students but they were also for A level.

Despite what the article titled "Crew Team Rowing Towards Success" said, many sports at West Potomac span more than one season.

If you have a correction for *The Wire*, please submit it to room 418 or e-mail it to kelcy.pierre@fcps.edu

THE WEST POTOMAC WIRE

West Potomac High School
6500 Quander Road
Alexandria, VA 22307

Friday, May 4, 2007
Volume #22 Issue 9

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The Wire is a publication whose aim is to inform, educate, and entertain the student body. *The Wire* will not print any material that is libelous or obscene, or that will invade any person's right to privacy. The ideas expressed in unsigned editorials reflect the opinions of the newspaper staff; however, Letters to the Editor do not. *The Wire* is an open forum for discussion which is printed by Silver Communications.

If I Could Improve The Wire...

Dear Editor,

My entire high school career I have been mustering ideas in my head on how to improve *The Wire*. These thoughts range from having *The Wire* come with a complimentary toothbrush to an article on the usefulness of cocoa butter. I must admit, I think about this everyday and it happens to be a very big deal to me. So one day I was riding my Razor scooter through the park when an idea shot through my head like I was just blindsided by a 250-pound football player. I came to grips with my thoughts, pulled myself together, and rode my scooter home with my face sparkling with the cognition of an ingenious idea. As I walked in the door, my family noticed I had a copious smile on my face. My dad asked, "Son, you wouldn't mind if we had barbeque tonight, would you?" I responded with an irritated reply because I simply had too much on my mind. Before I left the room, my mom exclaimed, "Josh, why do you have that big smile on your face?" I stopped where I was, stared at my mom, and told her, "Mom, I finally did what I was meant to do at West Potomac: I came up with an idea for *The Wire*." As my family stared in awe as if I were insane, I raced up to my room and wrote my idea down before it escaped my mind. I turned on my favorite *Panic! At The Disco* Song, threw on my lucky Darrell Green jersey, and grabbed a loose leaf sheet of paper. I wrote furiously and almost as fast as I did on the writing section of the SAT. It read, "*The Wire* needs an advice column by Mr. Hubbard with David Pearce's haircut in the background, a helpful hint from Coach Lundin on how to pick up chicks, and finally a column on ins and outs of high school life by Sam Monteith." Thank you West Potomac, my high school career is finally complete and I think *The Wire* owes me a thank you as well.

Josh McFarland, Junior

April Fools Rules!

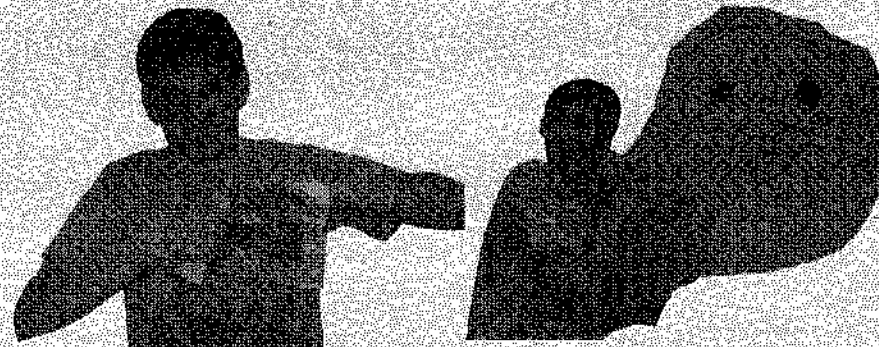
Dear Editor,

I thoroughly enjoyed the April Fools issue of *The Wire*. The articles were rather hilarious, and the photographs were a riot (quite literally in a few cases.) I was one of the victims of the jokes and I had a great time reading your work about various others as well (and then laughing at them.) I especially enjoyed the article about paying for better grades. I always look forward to the April Fools issue. Keep it up, son. Peace.

Brad Lupton, Junior

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

RANTS and RAVES



A RANT FOR FAKE TANS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ROCK THEM

A Rave for the winners at the Science Olympiad!

A RANT FOR PEOPLE WHO USE INSTANT MESSENGER EXPRESSIONS IN THE REAL WORLD

A Rave for the Indoor Drumline for winning the gold medal at the Atlantic Indoor Association in North Carolina!

A RANT FOR MS GRUMBACHER RETIRING

A Rave for getting out early because it was windy!

College Tuition is Outrageous

Taylor Dankmyer

Managing Editor

Why is it that a nation built on freedom, equality, and education for everyone institutes a system of higher education that is unattainable for many of its citizens?

Amid the ten most expensive colleges by tuition are two schools "in the area," including the most expensive school in the country, George Washington, and the second most expensive, University of Richmond. Addit seven of the remaining eight were all on the east coast.

College is important, just look at the stats: According to the US Census Bureau, on average, someone with a bachelor's degree earns \$43,954—almost double the \$23,829 earned annually by someone with only a high school diploma.

Every student in America has a right to an education, right? Yes, but, the price of college these days (tuition, room and board, etc.) is making this right slip out of the hands of this country's students.

Education is clearly one of the biggest issues in America. It is discussed nonstop and no one seems to have a solution, whether it is Joe Schmo, congressmen, or President George W. Bush.

Many politicians believe that our nation's children are way behind those of other nations. Whether this is true or not, 63% of the students that graduate from high school in America go on to college. However, as Andrew Romanoff, the Democratic Speaker of the Colorado House of Representatives pointed out at the 2007 JEA/NSPA conference, "If you take 100 students who are starting ninth grade right now, only about eighteen of those students will end up with a four-year degree," meaning a lot of students drop out of college.

One of the reasons students drop out is their obligations to their family. Maybe the family is struggling financially and needs another source of income. Even then, some students continue on; other times, students cannot handle the pressure of a job and college and drop out.

So, sure, America's education problem may be that students do not have books in classes; they have limited resources, bad teachers, etc. However, a legitimate reason that our students are behind the rest of the world in education is that not all of our students are going to college. Clearly, a higher education will only make our children smarter, but if a lot of Americans cannot afford college or have to throw their life savings into their child's

college education, something is wrong.

A very select and hardworking few at this school get full or half rides to the top colleges in the nation. The solution to not paying the expense of colleges is to simply, "Do well enough to get a full scholarship." However, we all know this is not a very good one. The argument to get better grades is a simple and good one, but even the kids that do graduate at the top of their class may still have to pay for college.

There are student loans, however, many students end up paying these off years after they are out of college, which is simply ridiculous.

There are public colleges, which are significantly less expensive when compared to private colleges. However, over the last five years, tuition at public four-year universities has risen 35%.

Now, there are other reasons for students dropping out of college, however, the lowering of prices of colleges by the government would be something everyone would be happy about and is fairly easy to do. It does not call for standardizing education across the country, or having students start college in tenth grade (which some are lobbying for). It simply calls for a law to be made saying that schools should only be able to raise the prices of their schools (tuition, room and board, books and supplies, and required fees) so much in so many years. At first, the raises would have to be very low, until college tuition was no longer "ridiculously expensive" even for the poor.

Some would say that the schools cannot lower their prices because then they will not have enough money for teacher salaries, improving facilities, and other expenses, resulting in them allowing less students in. However, in a story with Forbes.com about the list of expensive colleges, Ronald Ehrenberg, a professor at Cornell University who has also sat on the school's budget committee, said that schools theoretically could "aggressively try to increase their efficiency, reduce costs and get better by substitution rather than by growing expenditures, [but] they don't do this."

The government has taken charge in education with "No Child Left Behind." Successful or not, the government knows it needs to step in and change something in American education. Wouldn't lowering the price of colleges simply define "No Child Left Behind?" Instead of adding more ridiculous regulations to NCLB, the government, if it truly want to get involved, should regulate just how expensive college tuitions get.

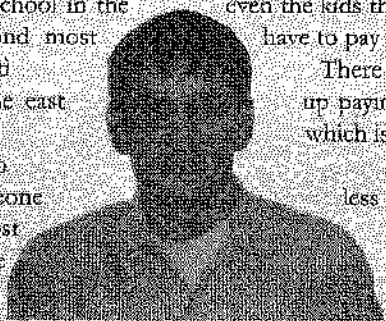


Photo by Ken Llewellyn

High-Five... Goodbye Five?

Ken Llewellyn

Opinions Editor

It has become one of the most ancient and sacred rituals of our time. I am talking about the high five. Everyone knows what it is: the slapping of two peoples' palms in midair in a celebratory nature. However, nowadays people seem to be enamored with the "fist pound" or the bashing of two peoples' knuckles together, also in a celebratory manner.

Personally, I prefer the high five. According to www.nationalhighfiveday.com, the high five was invented by Lamont Slets Jr. Slets was a great basketball player at Murray State University and was named to the Ohio Valley All-Conference Team twice. Lamont's father, Slets Sr., served in the 1st battalion 5th infantry regiment or as Slets Sr. and his army pals called it, "the Five." Slets Sr. and the other soldiers created an informal greeting to be used for members of "the Five." They would raise one hand in the air and spread all five fingers.

According to legend, Slets Jr. would say "Hi Five," when greeting his father's friends and issue the five-fingered salute and he would put his hand against the older men's hands to compare their hands. As time passed, Slets Jr. would issue the greeting to his own friends and over time, it became what we know today as the high-five.

Since then, the high-five has branched out into other variations. These include, the "low-five," where the palms are slapped lower to the ground instead of in midair, and the "no-five," where one thinks they are receiving a high-five, but their hand only touches air.

As for the fist pound, the origins are unknown. There are several versions of the fist pound, such as "explosion," where the pounder and poundee instantly retract their open hands after their fists make contact, and the "tumbler," "lock it up," or "turn the key," where the two fists turn 90 degrees (clockwise

or counterclockwise depending on which hand is used) then separate fists.

There is a third variation of pound where each fist is pounded vertically, instead of the traditional horizontal style, but it seems to no longer be acceptable in today's culture. "It's just too much work," said junior Delante McDaniel. "You have to lift your hand up then put it back down, just too much for me."

I find that the fist pound is a more flashy gesture with no real substance. One cannot express the same emotion in a fist pound that one can express in a high-five. The fist pound was probably invented by a bunch of people who thought they were

too good for the high-five or could not get any high-five action themselves. I think everyone can agree that the movie *Borat* would not have been as funny if he had said "Pound it!" instead of "High Five!" Other great films such as *Top Gun* and *Napoleon Dynamite* would have suffered as well if they had not had those great high-five scenes. Nevertheless, the fist pound seems to be the favored hand gesture around our school. "I prefer the high-five because it's in midair where the whole world can see it," said senior Patrick Langan.

With so many versions of the pound, how do you know when to execute the proper pound? "I like to give the pound when I'm in or coming from a class I have a high grade in," said junior Trae McMorris, a renowned pounder, "but if it is a class where I'm not doing so well, I'll go with the handshake." In reality, there is no standard etiquette for pounds. Just make sure the pounder and the poundee are in sync, as it would be very awkward for one to explode and the other to turn the key.

The decline in the high-five is a very unfortunate one, but I have confidence the high-five will make a comeback. No kind of fist pound can match the sound of a perfectly executed high-five and there will never be another hand gesture that can call itself the high-five's equal. So, if you see me in the halls, up high!



Photo by Sam McCall

Adele's A-B-C's

Getting You Through Life One Letter at a Time



Photo by Lakesha Langley

Adele Hampton

Editor in Chief

This is my last column. Cry if you want, I will be 60, for your enjoyment, I have gathered the odder words I could find starting with the letters S-Z. Be warned, these words were picked at random and have absolutely nothing to do with each other.

Samarra - propeller, like winged fruit. I have never seen winged fruit. I am not even sure winged fruit exists. Because I have never seen it and I doubt anyone else has seen it either, I am going to conclude it is a mythical thing known to sailors where pigs fly and unicorns are crossing guards.

Trichostasis - the spitting of hair. Many of my friends are obsessed with finding the spittle ends in their hair. What is the big deal right? Well, it just so happens that if Suzy has too much spittle ends, her hair will be frizzy and damaged, ultimately leading to a complete annihilation of life as we know it.

Unanimous - equally stupid. Is it really possible to be equally stupid? Just imagine if everyone had the same amount of stupidity. There would be no one to make fun of. Just think, the term "stupid idiot" would not exist, there would be such thing as a dunce cap, and Forrest Gump would never have said "stupid is as stupid does." So, it is obvious the world needs stupid people, because without stupid people, life would not make sense.

Velocetarian - a hand-propelled tri-cycle. I have never seen a hand-propelled tri-cycle and I cannot imagine anyone wanting to ride one. Tri-cycles are meant to function as a speed racer for kids, a five-year-old's BMW. A hand-propelled tri-cycle would just be cheating, the equivalent of diet water. It is just not right.

Wiscot - European biscuit. Have you ever seen a biscuit? They are one of the ugliest animals that walk the Earth. This is contradicted by Europeans. Europeans are such beautiful people. Therefore, it is impossible to have such ugly animals live on a continent with such beautiful people. One again I am convinced they are not real. They exist in the world of winged fruit where unicorns roam and beautiful people and ugly coexist.

Xanthippe - an ill-tempered woman. Known for their poisonous words and rage induced personalities, ill-tempered women are not to be trifled with. If encountered in their natural habitat it is best not to make eye contact. It is rumored that a person will burst into flames if they even glance at one. Over time, men have become accustomed to the unpredictable mood of women and have developed an invisible shield-like structure to protect them. Dun.

Yunitarian - bearing yunitary. I will give three dollars to anyone who can tell me what yunitary is. And no, you cannot cheat by using Google or Wikipedia. Do some real research, lazy burns.

Zoster - a girdle. There is only one thing to say about this word. No matter how bad life gets, no matter how many potholes there are, nothing is worse than wearing a girdle.

Over the past year I hope I have enlightened your life, if not completely, then perhaps just a little bit. So to all my readers, and I know you are out there somewhere, it's been real, it's been fun, it's been real fun.

OPINIONS

All Work and No Pay, Teachers Deserve Better

Sam McCann

Sports Editor

In a society that glorifies pop culture icons, doles out millions of dollars to athletes, and turns individuals with no discernible talent into billionaires, teachers are often neglected. Few would disagree that teachers are among the most underpaid and under-appreciated people in America. So why do some members of Congress hope to make it more difficult for teachers to maintain their already meager salaries or to even retain their jobs?

A proposed amendment to the No Child Left Behind Act could potentially force highly qualified educators out of their profession. A teacher's job would be directly tied to their students' standardized test scores. An instructor would have to become a "highly qualified effective teacher," meaning that their class scored in the top 75th percentile on standardized tests, within three years or they would receive an "individualized professional development." If they continued to miss the 75th percentile mark, the principal would send a letter to parents notifying them of the teachers standing as an ineffective educator. If they continued to miss the mark for two additional years, they would no longer be permitted to teach at Title I schools, which are typically found in poorer areas.

Proponents of the plan argue that teachers need to be qualified. Quality over quantity, right? But what they either

do not realize or choose to ignore is that teachers would then be forced to "sell out" and teach only the smartest children—the ones most likely to push them over the 75th percentile barrier.

The most qualified teachers would obviously have their first choice in jobs and would opt to teach the honors and AP classes, which would provide them with the most impressive standardized test scores. The regular and Special Ed classes would be left with less qualified instructors, thus hindering the students' performance on tests, insuring their teachers would be out of a job within a few years.

This would create a vicious cycle in which those children who need help to score well on the standardized tests which determine their college fate are left with the less talented teachers, which would in turn decrease their scores on the tests. It is the very epitome of a paradox, yet it is what those who proposed the legislation apparently want.

Yet another problem with the proposal is that it undermines teachers. If a principal sent a letter home essentially denouncing a teacher as incompetent, that teacher cannot possibly have any credibility in that school again. Another

seemingly impossible situation would be created, as the teacher would no longer have command enough of the class to present the material, which would send their students up to fail the standardized tests, and the teacher would remain "unqualified."

Perhaps the most startling thing about this entire story is the fact that it is not the first time legislation has attempted to tie teachers' pay to their students' test scores. This past January the Houston, Texas school system approved a plan to give bonuses to those teachers whose students score the highest on

Photo by Brittany Catina

standardized tests. Even teachers at this school have dealt with such legislation; English teacher Kathy McCullohs taught in Florida, where teachers were given bonuses for their students' test scores. She summed up many teachers' gripes with the system, saying, "I believe that all teachers wish for their students to pass, however [they] cannot make them have the ability to do so."

It is unclear whether such plans will take hold nationwide in the form of an amendment to the No Child Left Behind Act, but one thing is clear: such a measure will only yield fewer educators, all of whom will be driven to teach to the test.

Take the War Talk Away from Our School

Kate O'Connor

News Editor

Every year, military recruiters are required to sign a certain number of young people into the armed forces. They are notorious for glamorizing the military and promising excitement and good times to get signatures.

Reaching their quotas has been increasingly difficult as the "quick war" in Iraq draws out to its fourth year. High school students already have access to military opportunities if they want them; recruitment offices are abundant. Desperate recruiters have no place in our schools.

Since the war in Iraq began, 3,287 American soldiers have died.

Whether or not you agree with the war, this is an enormous number of lives lost. To

put it into perspective, it is around the number of people that are in our school right now, plus all of the people living on Quander Road. The Defense Department currently budgets \$1.5 billion a year for recruiting, a number that is expected to increase even more because of the President's regular "surges" of troops into Iraq. It is immoral that, because we are in a war of this magnitude, recruiters still use the same tactics. Unlike in times of peace, when students sign up for the military, there is a good chance that they will find themselves in the middle of a desert war.

The No Child Left Behind Act, passed



Photo by Brittany Catina

in 2002, made it mandatory that school districts allow recruiters access to high school campuses and student phone directories. Any school districts that do not comply face a loss of federal education funds. Before this provision the Pentagon estimated some 2,000 school districts denied military recruiters access to campuses. Today, every district in the country complies. The only way to avoid being hounded by the military is if parents "opt out" by filling out a form saying they do not want their kids recruited.

"No Child Left Behind" made the country choose between the money necessary to run a school and the right to privacy that we, as American citizens, should have. I do not want recruiters pawing through my phone numbers and I don't want to hear their pitch while I try to eat lunch in the cafeteria. I do, on the other

hand, want a roof on our school and enough funding to buy textbooks that were published after World War II.

This issue is receiving a lot of attention nationwide.

In 2005, Garfield High school in Seattle, Washington, voted to institute resolution that says "public schools are not a place for military recruiters." The statement was more a symbol than a policy and, to keep their funding, recruiters still had access to the students on campus. Last month students and teachers staged an anti-war protest outside of the recruiting headquarters in South Los Angeles. Students across the county have created petitions to get recruiters out of their schools. Unfortunately, all of this dissent has not been enough to budge the courts in their decision. No Child Left Behind still stands.

The Silence is Not So Golden Anymore

Anum Jaffri

News Editor

"I pledge allegiance, to the flag, of the United States of America..." As children, we repeated these words every single day until we could recite it in our sleep. In April 2000, Virginia law announced a mandatory moment of silence in all Virginia public schools, for prayer or simple contemplation. But, if the Pledge is such a patriotic activity, and if the moment of silence is a law to help students take time off for a minute every day, why have they disappeared from our school?

In August of 2005, Virginia's law requiring public schools to lead their students in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance was challenged in the 4th United States Circuit Court of Appeals. The law was held constitutional, even though the words "one nation under God" offended people as a promotion of religion. The three-judge panel ruled the Pledge was a patriotic exercise, not a prayer, and should be recited everyday.

Virginia's moment of silence law, was challenged in 2001, and upheld by a

Expecting young adults to recite a pledge everyday is a bit hollow.

federal appeals court. The sixty second silence allows students to meditate, pray or engage in any other silent activity.

But now, both these activities have vanished from our school's morning

routine, which is not necessarily a bad thing for some. Senior Marina Tyquengco thinks the Pledge is necessary, but at the same time, "High schoolers are pretty much as patriotic as they're [going to] be. It doesn't really have an effect on us." We have all been doing the Pledge of Allegiance since before we learned to color inside the lines and expecting young adults to recite a pledge everyday is a bit hollow. "With anything, if you do it everyday, it loses its affect," said Tyquengco.

As for the moment of silence, the same principle applies. "I think for most people when I say that the moment of silence was kind of pointless. Most people

don't use it for its intended purpose and would much rather continue talking," said senior Whitney Gray. "At this school no one really seems to care," agreed senior Katherine Perkins.

"People don't think about praying for people everyday," said Tyquengco, and observing a moment silence loses its intended purpose if we are forced to stay quiet when in the middle of a conversation. In contrast, silences that stand for events are loaded with meaning. The moment of silence observed for Virginia Tech victims on April 20 actually had a purpose, and it was a silence everyone participated in thoughtfully.

It is strange that our school ignores the pledge or the moment of silence but students do not seem to mind.



Photo by Brittany Catina

When Justice is Not Blind

It is Time to Send the Stereotypes Packing

Anum Jaffri

News Editor



Justice is always portrayed as a blind statue of a woman, unprejudiced and wise. Holding a set of scales and a sword, she symbolizes fairness and equality without corruption or prejudice. Unfortunately, students who have a clear view of

the world, too often blindly judge their peers and stereotype them into categories in their minds. Instead of getting to know a person, people rely on a person's appearance and clothing style as a way to figure out how a person is.

Instead of asking questions and taking the

time to connect with someone new, people look at a person's music taste and intelligence and think they know everything about them. Unfair stereotypes plague us all, and the only way to combat them is to have every individual realize that we are more than just our labels.

Clothing

Tida Johnson

Wire Reporter

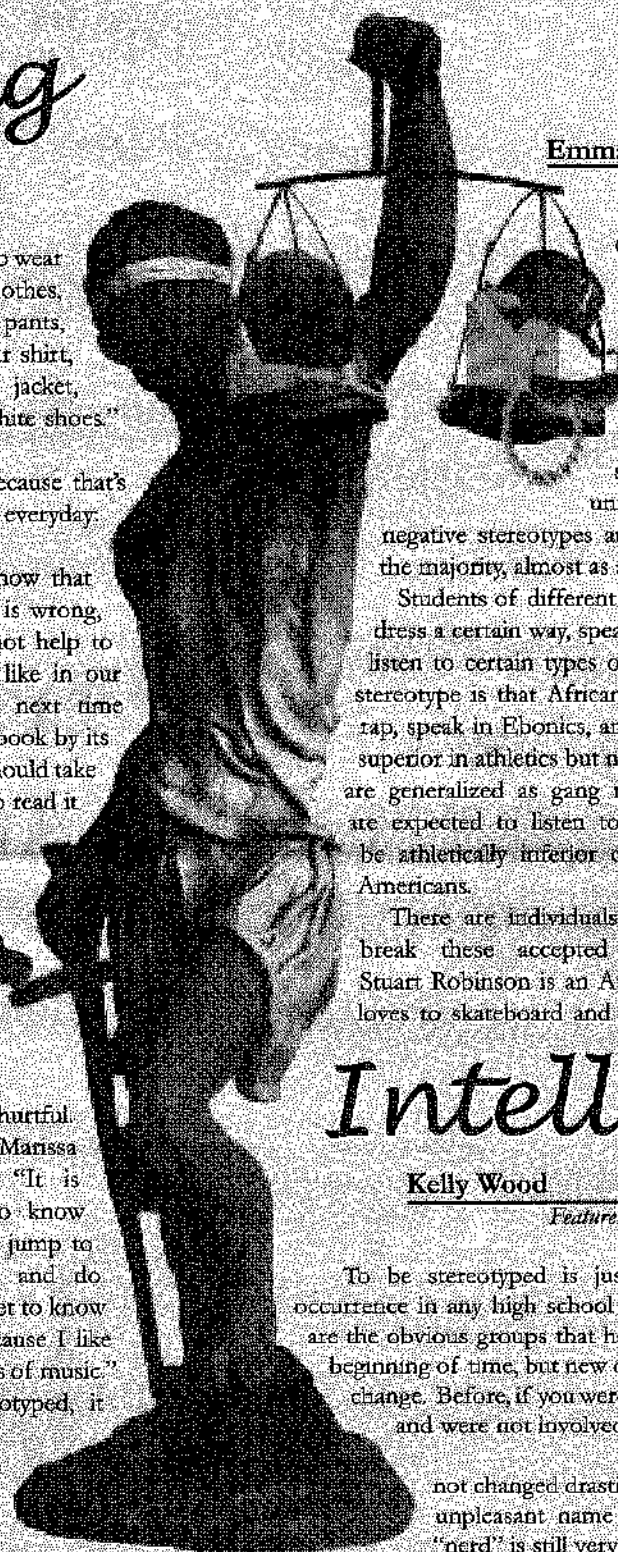
"Do not judge a book by its cover" is a cliché that we should not use, but do anyway. High school students are judged for everything, from what they wear to their religion, race, and who they are friends with.

Sophomore Lamea Johnson is wearing blue jeans, a white hooded jacket and some Coach shoes. "When people see me, some of them ask me if I am rich or have a lot of money because some of things I wear are pretty expensive." But I would not put myself in any type of stereotype because I try to be myself and not what people think I am." Sophomore Darnell Childs,

said, "I like to wear casual clothes, like casual pants, a white collar shirt, a black half jacket, and some white shoes."

I thi
classy girl because that's how I dress everyday, classy."

We all know that stereotyping is wrong, but we cannot help to do so; it is like in our nature. The next time you judge a book by its cover, you should take some time to read it.



Race

Emmanuel Koduah

Wire Reporter

Our school has a great mixture of many different people. In any place with diversity as rich as

our school's, there is bound to be racial stereotyping. What is unfortunate is that these

negative stereotypes are being accepted by the majority, almost as a norm.

Students of different races are expected to dress a certain way, speak a certain way and listen to certain types of music. A common stereotype is that African Americans listen to rap, speak in Ebonics, and are expected to be superior in athletics but not academics. Latinos are generalized as gang members and whites are expected to listen to country music and be athletically inferior compared to African Americans.

There are individuals in our school who break these accepted stereotypes. Junior Stuart Robinson is an African American who loves to skateboard and listen to rock music.

For students such as Robinson who fall outside the expected stereotypes, students can be especially cruel. "I've been called all type of things from an Oreo to white boy but I try not to let it bother me," said Robinson.

The fact is, stereotypes are basic generalization based solely on myths. People are more likely to be influenced by their environment than they are by their race. "People do not understand that where you grow up has more to do with your life than what race you are," explained Robinson.

Our school is fortunate to have such a great diversity of students.

We should take advantage of this privilege and disperse these racial stereotypes. As Robinson stated, "Instead of sitting in separate sections of the cafeteria, people should interact more with each other. They have more in common than they actually realize."



Photo by Ana Lense Larrauri/KRT

Music

Photo by Clip Art

Sydney Smith

Wire Reporter

One aspect of self-expression is what type of music one listens to. Every person listens to different types of music. Unfortunately, there are individuals who make quick decisions about others musical preferences. For example, when a student walks past another student listening to blasting music, that individual makes a snap decision about the other based on what music is playing. This scenario has happened more than once to senior Stacey Selman. "Everyone thinks that I'm a hillbilly because I listen to country music. I'm not, I just like country music," said Selman. Not only is this a form of stereotyping, it is

also very hurtful. Senior Marissa Watt said, "It is upsetting to know that people jump to conclusions and do not try to get to know me just because I like certain types of music." Once stereotyped, it is al

to separate yourself from the stereotypes.

The best advice is to just try not to take it personally. It is a personality flaw in others when they stereotype. Selman said, "When people do this to me, I just think their ignorant."

KRT / Illustration Kate O'Connor

Intellect

Kelly Wood

Features Editor

To be stereotyped is just another ordinary occurrence in any high school atmosphere. There are the obvious groups that have existed since the beginning of time, but new ones emerge as times change. Before, if you were smart, wore glasses, and were not involved in sports, you were

not changed drastically enough for this unpleasant name to disappear. The "nerd" is still very much alive.

The nerds may still roam the halls with their heads to the ground being followed by the sound of jeers, but one day they will be running the country. But what makes someone a nerd? Is it mainly just intelligence? Is it really a bad thing to get good grades and have a brain? Intellect is something that separates students into groups without any further consideration of character.

Students who have a good work ethic and therefore receive decent grades often get stereotyped as the

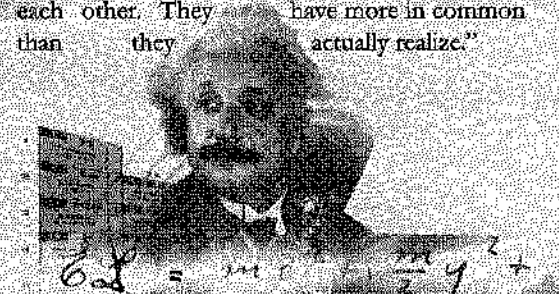


Photo by Brent Castillo/KRT

"smart" kids. I often hear people refer to me as the "smart" girl, which I find funny because my secret is simply that I work really hard to balance my schoolwork and sports. However, it is annoying how people just categorize me as a smart person and do not bother to get to know the other crazy and more prominent side to my personality.

Our society is rather humorous and ironic. To succeed in today's working world, intelligence is a necessity and yet those with brains tend to be mocked in school. We ridicule the high success of others and aim for the lower standards that tag one as "normal." It is nerdy to get straight A's so aim for C's and you will fit in just fine. Who cares what people think? As the saying goes, "Aim for the moon, even if you miss, you'll land among the stars."

Weight

Grace Powell

Opinions Editor

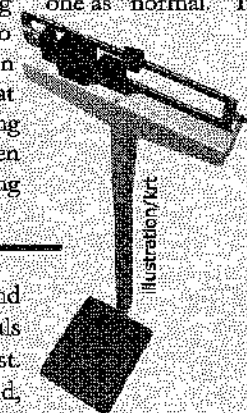
"I don't like being put in boxes. Boy, girl dork, popular- those are boxes," said a character in the novel *Whatever Happened to Lani Garner* about a teen struggling to eliminate common stigmas placed on people who are different. Nobody likes to be stereotyped. However, one of the most harmful stereotypes occurs when the subject of a person's weight is examined.

Junior Tiffany Tennant commands attention, especially on the dance floor. "I love to dance," said Tennant. Yet,

occasionally, even with her contagiously confident attitude, Tennant sometimes falls prey to skepticism when entering the dance floor. "When they see a big girl dance, they don't think she can do as good as someone who is skinny," Tennant does not let the looks or glances stop her. "I love to prove [that I am just as good as anyone else]," she said. Tennant is also comfortable with her weight. "I like my bigness," she said. "If someone says I'm fat, I say thanks it's a compliment to me." Tennant is also cautious to ensure that she is healthy. "I eat and I tame myself, because of my health, so it won't be in jeopardy."

While people of a larger weight tend to get more criticism, thin individuals can also be discriminated against. Sophomore Paige Darlington said, "If you're thin, people assume you don't eat. I don't think it's right to stereotype people [because] all of our body types are different." Darlington said that she has been called anorexic even though she is perfectly healthy.

A stereotype of any sort is unacceptable, people should be considered for the individual they are and what they contribute to society, not their jean size.



Illustration/KRT

Pushing Freedom's Limits

High school student brandishes "Bong Hits 4 Jesus"

Emily Kuhbach
Copy Editor

One expression has turned an Alaskan school's disciplinary action into a national issue that is sure to impact students' rights to free speech.

Joseph Frederick, a high school senior at Juneau-Douglas High School in Juneau, Alaska, unfurled a banner as the Olympic Torch Rally passed through. The principal at the time, Deborah Morse, rushed across the street and ordered him to take it down. Frederick refused, and Morse gave him a ten-day suspension, but not until after Frederick quoted Thomas Jefferson to her. The message causing such a stir? "Bong Hits 4 Jesus."

Five years later, "Bong Hits 4 Jesus" is just as controversial as it was that cold day in Juneau. Five years later, it faces the Supreme Court.

Frederick himself has claimed that the banner had no real meaning, rather, it was an experiment to test his First Amendment right. "I conducted my free speech experiment in order to assert my rights at a time when I felt that free speech was being eroded in America," he told reporters in a teleconference two months ago.

His supporters conjecture that this will be a landmark case for students' rights. If the school has the right to discipline students for disagreeing

with the school's message, some claim, students will no longer have control of their most basic rights.

Advocates for the principal and school board argue that the banner was a pro-drug message that violated the school's policy, and is therefore punishable.

However, it is not just a controversial message scrawled on a banner that is bringing this case so much attention.

For one thing, attorney Kenneth Starr, the prosecutor against Bill Clinton in the Monica Lewinsky case, is arguing on behalf of Morse and the Juneau School Board free of charge.

This case also has to resolve almost twenty years of tricky Court rulings concerning students' right to free speech. It all began with the landmark *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District* case in 1969, in which the Court ruled that a group of Iowa students had the right to wear black armbands to protest the Vietnam War because it was not a substantial disruption to the educational process. However, in *Bethel School District v. Fraser* (1988), the Court put restrictions on students' free speech if it is vulgar or obscene.



Photo by Chuck Kennedy/KRT

The *Morse vs. Frederick* case is being reviewed by the Supreme Court.

Finally, *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier* (1988) restricted the rights of student-run newspapers.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this case is the fact that groups from both sides of the political spectrum are rallying behind Frederick. Conservative Christian groups, such as the Liberty Counsel and American Center for Law and Justice, and liberal groups, such as the Student Press Law Center and American Civil Liberties Union are joining hands in the fight to protect one student's statement.

No matter the meaning of the banner, *Morse v. Frederick*, more commonly known as the "Bong Hits 4 Jesus" case, will undoubtedly be a landmark case for the First Amendment rights of students, making it vital that we stayed tuned.

An Inverse Relationship

Student GPA's are rising while test scores are falling

Kate Sigety
Wire Reporter

According to information on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, also known as the Nation's Report Card, high school seniors are taking challenging courses and receiving significantly higher grades, yet national test scores are at their lowest since 1992.

In 1990, the national grade point average (GPA) of graduating seniors was 2.68 and by 2005, it had increased to 2.98. Along with this, the percentage of students taking the highest level courses offered has risen by ten percent since 1990. "I definitely felt that I was going to do much better on my AP exam than I actually did," said senior Alyson Murphy.

Findings have been viewed as the result of the dumbing-down of courses and grade inflation. Advanced classes, such as AP courses, have impressive course descriptions, but the pressure to pass students causes grade inflation. Though many students do not gain from grade inflation, the students being hurt the most by it are students at schools with low incomes. "Classes around the nation are all different from each other because all schools have different students. I think that location plays a big part in learning," said senior Chris Weston. Expectations fluctuate between different

schools. Schools could have the same course, grading scale, and material standards, but because of different teacher, school, and parent expectations, students are faced with different assignments.

In 2002, the United States passed the No Child Left Behind Act, whose main feature was to increase the focus on reading and improve the performance of U.S. elementary and secondary schools by making states, schools, and school districts more accountable. Even with this law in action, only thirty-five percent of seniors achieved proficient or high results in reading on nationally-recognized tests. This is the worst since 1992, when the tests first began. As of now, the No Child Left Behind Act has mainly focused on the elementary grades, but if the law does not expand to pay more attention to upper grades, any improvements made in elementary grades have the chance of being lost on the way to high school.

In a nation that thrives on education, these findings bring up many important, yet controversial questions, all of which need answers. Are schools accurately preparing students for college level courses? Are courses equal in standards and curriculum throughout the country? Are grades equally distributed between different classes and schools?

ESOL Learning?

Several years ago, in the U.S. only five years, ESOL has also reached the 62 level in ESOL.

However, some ESOL students have limited friends in their orbit. These students are continuously faced with the challenges of not only passing their classes successfully (some even taking Honors and AP), but also making new friends, especially given that some students in our school are struggling to understand the

backgrounds of ESOL students. "It is human nature to not understand things of people that are not the same," said Kasia.

Nevertheless, that does not stop any of the ESOL students from achieving great things and participating in a variety of activities offered at our school. The biggest challenge for them is to master the English language. Ahmad said with a smile, "At first, learning English was hard, but Mr. Kasia has made it easy and fun."

MAY CALENDAR

- May 2-5 - Cluster IV Pyramid Art Show
- May 2-5 - Spring Musical : 42nd Street
- May 5 - SAT
- May 7 - Track Meet: Running is "Elementary"
- May 7 - AP testing begins. See guidance for full schedule.
- May 9-17 - Prom ticket sales in all lunches
- May 11 - Interims distributed in 7th Period
- May 17,18 - Academy Dance Recital
- May 19 - Prom at Crystal City Hilton
- May 22 - Symphonic Band Concert
- May 23 - Guitar Concert
- May 28 - Memorial Day: No School
- May 30, 31 - SOL testing in Library and Computer Labs
- May 31 - Piano Concert

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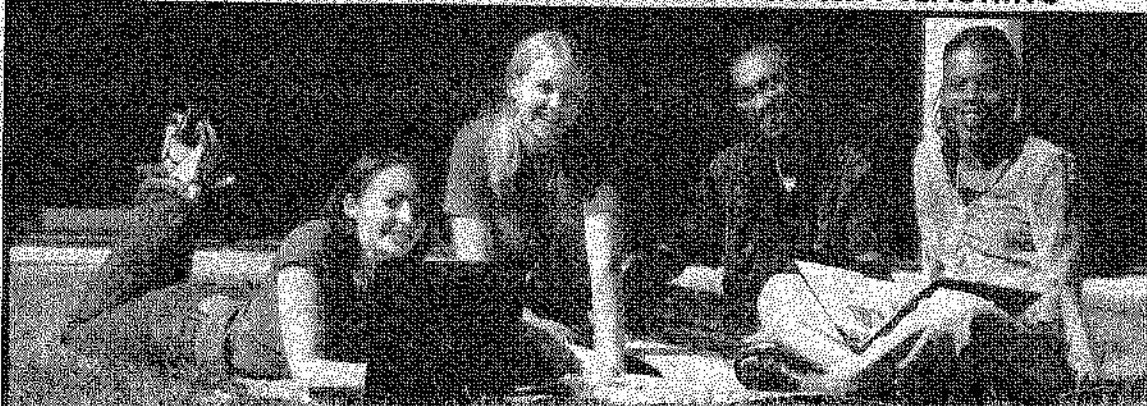
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High Expectations for All Night Graduation Party

Sydney Smith
Wire Reporter

As June 14 steadily approaches, the seniors are slowly getting excited about more than just graduation. The All Night Graduation Celebration (ANGC), which is celebrating its 20th anniversary, will be held at the ESPN Zone in Washington, DC.

The basic principle behind this event is to provide students with a drug- and alcohol-free environment that encourages safe celebration. The event will begin the night of June 14 at eleven o'clock pm, when students arrive at school, register, and load onto buses. Once students are inside the ESPN Zone, they will not be allowed out until five a.m. the next morning, when they will board the buses again and head back to school.

Chaperones are not daunted about containing the seniors in the building. Organizers have planned a plethora of fun activities. Event coordinator and mom to senior Emily Echols, Chris Pryately said, "As part of the senior memories, we plan on having pictures running on monitors that will remind you of just how far you have come - pictures from grade school, junior high, and high school." The new graduates will also be allowed to add their predictions for the future into a time capsule to be sealed until their reunion. Additionally, there will be a baby-matching game in which students match the graduates to their baby photos.

ESPN Zone liaison Katie Rondeau has worked closely with event coordinators to give the graduates a night full of fun. Rondeau said, "Our sports arena has over 11,000 square feet of interactive games and attractions. You can spend time shooting baskets on our NBA Tonight Hoops Court, challenging a friend at Duck Pin Bowling, taking slap shots in our NHL Hockey



Photo Courtesy of Angie Palma

Seniors are anticipating their most elaborate and expensive event of the year; the ANGC. Many also enjoyed other senior events this year (Bowling Party Above.)

Rink, throwing touchdowns at the NFL Countdown or racing someone on dozens of interactive video simulation games." Event coordinator Sally Smith, mother of seniors Sydney and Drew Smith, added that "there will also be a casino room, food, and prizes."

With the ANGC less than one month away, seniors are debating on whether or not to attend. Some seniors are apprehensive about attending. Senior Emily Allen said, "I do not want to go to the ANGC because I do not like the idea of being locked in a building without the option of leaving if I'm not enjoying myself." Others are already anticipating the event. Senior Lorena Villatoro said, "It is our last thing together. We just graduated and we should celebrate together and get to have a good time."

Already, parents of seniors have mailed a form for preordering tickets. Tickets for the ANGC will be sold during all lunches from May 24 through June 1 for \$65. Upon purchase, you receive a t-shirt with Allison Tse's design on the back.

Fun Letters to Friends From France

Caroline Staples
Focus Editor

As an optional assignment, French 4, 5, and AP students can e-mail other high school students who live in a suburb just outside of Paris, France, to help their understanding of the language.

Since the beginning of the third quarter, French students were paired up with students from a French high school so that each can practice with the other language. "It was kind of random," said French teacher Dan Fitzgerald about the start of the program. Although the students from France are one or two years younger, they have a lot in common with American teenagers. Like teens from our nation, they watch American shows and have developed their own slang. Fitzgerald and students created a list of English slang terms and exchanged them with the students overseas in an effort to increase their vocabulary for everyday talking in French.

Though sometimes talking to a foreign student through e-mail could raise questions about security, Fitzgerald assured it was very safe.

As good as the program sounds, there have been complications. "It was a challenge to organize the exchanges," said Fitzgerald. Senior Marina Tyquengco has written to her pen pal

four or five times since the start, but has recently lost contact due to the eventful days of the average high school student. Tyquengco also described her correspondence with her pen pal as inconsistent. Although speaking a language usually makes it easier to learn, the plus side to having pen pals is awesome pictures of France, especially Paris, and an introduction to French culture from a citizen's perspective.

What was thought to be a grade assignment for French students soon became an optional out-of-class activity. At first, all students were required to e-mail French students. Since communication has been interrupted, however, very few students have kept in touch and still continue to converse with their pen pals.



Photo by Lakeisha Langle

Senior Madalyn Humphrey enthusiastically writes a letter in French to her pen pal, hoping to receive a response back.

News-Briefs

Devon Cain
Wire Reporter

Sophomore Class Dinner: May 31

The Sophomore Class dinner (Italian theme catered by Pema's) will be held on Thursday, May 31st in the school cafeteria from 6:30 pm to 9 pm. Tickets are \$9 in advance and \$12 at the door. Tickets will be sold throughout all lunches from May 14 through May 31. Come out for a night of fun, games, dance, and much, much more with your friends and family!

Stephan Daniels Solves the Mystery!

After scouring the paper for clues, sophomore Stephan Daniels uncovered Mrs. Vesilind's kidnapper. English teacher Colin "Green" O'Grady has been apprehended and Mrs. Vesilind has since been restored to her job as principal. For his efforts, Daniel received a cash prize of \$10. Good job!



Photo by Mariya Ilyas

Congratulations Science Olympiad Winners!

Mariya Ilyas, Hussein Fahema, Greg Bechtol, James Lewis, Anna Lee, Neil Burke, Ari Lindenbaum, Asma Ahmad, Isiah Manalo, Julie Rocke, Yoon-ji Ha, Attia Ilyas, Jeremy Rocke, Aravinda Gunda, Colin Chaddock

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INVITES YOU TO OUR ANNUAL

Car Wash

SATURDAY, MAY 12 AND
SATURDAY, JUNE 9

9am-3pm at
Bellevue Elementary
School



Mariya Ilyas
News Editor

Electronic Devices

The biggest issue for the security department is stolen electronic devices, such as iPods and mp3 players. In order to safely return these stolen items, "make sure you note the serial number," said Officer Daryl Davis. To prevent the theft of these electronic devices, Officer Davis suggests never leaving them unattended, "even if they are in backpacks."

WORDS FROM OD:

“Keep your electronic devices with you at all times. If lost, you MUST have the serial number. That's the only way we can get them back if recovered.”

Cop's Corner

Alcohol

Prom is approaching, the weather is warming up, and graduation is around the corner. "[These] could be the best times of your life or a recipe for disaster," said Officer Davis. At this point in the year, the tendency to use alcohol rises among teenagers. Officer Davis stated, "All I can say is alcohol is illegal and a bad choice."

VA Tech Tragedy

The widespread news of the Virginia Tech tragedy has greatly affected security measures in schools. It is the responsibility of everyone in the school community to help make the school a safe environment.

Safety for All

The security department is doing everything it can, but students are a key to a safe learning environment. Officer Davis asks that you report any incident you find unusual, suspicious, or odd as well as other unsafe activities. He said, "The students are my eyes and ears."

Techmen, we're Techmen, with spirit true and faithful, Backing up our team with hopes undying; Techmen, Oh, Techmen, we're out to win today, S

them, just hold them! Your know the corps' behind you, Watching ev'ry movement that you make; Winning games was nothing for our teams before us, Keep the "rep" for V. P's sake. GO, TECH! GO, TECH! H!O!K!H!E!S! HOKIES!

Students Question Attending VT

Sydney Smith
Wire Reporter

By about noon on Monday, April 16, almost everyone in the country knew about what had happened at Virginia Tech. By Tuesday, Tech students were on their ways home to escape the horrific atmosphere. However, with the college deadline of May 1 ever approaching, how do recently accepted seniors feel about attending this now infamous school? Senior Ben Pryor applied and got into both Tech and William & Mary. Just last week, he decided to attend the latter, even though his family has long

ties to Tech. Pryor said, "My parents are really close to the school [Tech], so after it [the shootings] happened, they wanted to go down. Basically, my whole family is freaked." Pryor's cousin is currently is a senior at Tech, while his older brother goes to William & Mary. He said, "My brother said that the security seemed to bump up a little [at William & Mary]. They [the students at William & Mary] seem to support Tech now. Even on Facebook, there is a lot of support." In spite of these recent events, Pryor says that they did not affect his decision to attend Tech. He said, "I know it could

happen anywhere; it could happen at William & Mary. Just because it happened at Tech, does not mean it will not happen again." With the conclusion of these horrible events, students are just looking for some kind of solace and a sense of security. Seniors who are faced with the difficult decision of where to attend college next year should take into account the wonderful memories they have at Tech, and look to the future for the peace that will eventually come into the situation.



Sophomore Gatane Gallagher, tims killed during the shooting day, April 18, 2007.

Tearjerking Events at VT

Taylor Dankmyer
Managing Editor

Via Collegiatetimes.com, planetblacksburg.com, and other news sources.

Tuesday, April 17, 2007 9:48AM
The shooter has been identified as Virginia Tech student Cho Seung-Hui, a 23-year-old English major from South Korea.

Monday, April 16, 2007 4:30 PM
University President Charles W. Steger and Flincham, the campus police chief, confirm that 33 people are dead, including the gunman.

Monday, April 16, 2007 2:13PM
32 people are confirmed dead by collegiatetimes.com

Monday, April 16, 2007 12:23PM
Virginia Tech police confirm 22 fatalities resulting from the campus shootings. The gunman is also confirmed dead.

Classes are cancelled for Tuesday, April 17.

Monday, April 16, 2007 11:57AM
Three people are escorted out of Norris Hall in handcuffs by police. The three were then un-handcuffed after questioning, and canine teams are sent into Norris Hall.

Monday, April 16, 2007 11:50AM
The Associated Press reports at least one death and seven injuries from two shooting incidents on the Virginia Tech campus.

Monday, April 16, 2007 11:36AM
University Relations reports one individual is in custody, and they are searching for a second shooter.

Monday, April 16, 2007 10:36AM
Due to serious wind, helicopters cannot be used to transfer the injured. Instead, ambulances are being used to transport victims to Montgomery Regional Hospital.

Monday, April 16, 2007 10:32AM
One death and one injury have been confirmed.

Monday, April 16, 2007 10:20AM
All classes are canceled.

Monday, April 16, 2007 Approximately 9:55-10:04AM
The University sends an e-mail out saying:
Subject: "Please stay put"

"A gunman is loose on campus. Stay in buildings until further notice. Stay away from all windows."

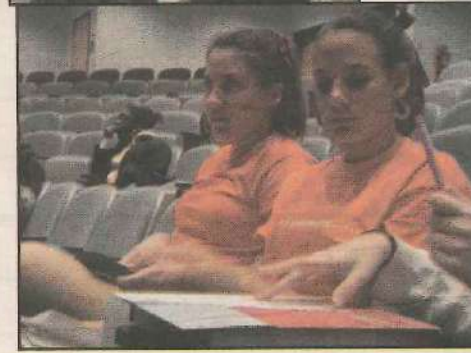
West Ambler Johnston Hall and Squires Student Center are put on lockdown.

Monday, April 16, 2007 10:00AM
A gunman is confirmed loose on the 2,600 acre campus.

Monday, April 16, 2007 7:15 AM
Shots are fired on the Virginia Tech campus, killing two students in West Ambler Johnston Hall.



Photo By Sydney Smith



One of Our Own Speaks

Hooff Cooksey
Sports Editor

After the tragic events that occurred on April 16, 2007 at Virginia Tech, we were able to interview West Potomac High School '06 graduate and former *Wire* reporter, Thomas Luhring, who is nearing the end of his freshman year at VT. This is an account of the deadly shootings that occurred that fatal day based on an interview:

When freshman Thomas Luhring arose in his dorm room in West Ambler Johnston Hall, he had the usual feelings of a Monday morning. It was time to get back into the swing of things because finals were only a couple of weeks away and he still had a lot of work to do. Luhring packed up his supplies for his upcoming class and began to head out of his room, when he remembered that he needed to check his e-mail. Quickly looking through his inbox, Luhring discovered a message from his school reporting a shooting that had occurred in the opposite wing of his dormitory. At this time, it was around 9:00 in the morning, reported Luhring, adding that his Residence Assistant (RA) was not informed of the current situation in the dormitory until 9:00 that morning. Immediately, Luhring thought about his very good friend, whose room was in the same hall where the reported shooting had taken place, but to his dismay, Luhring could not reach his friend. "It turns out that my friend had slept through the entire shooting, even though his

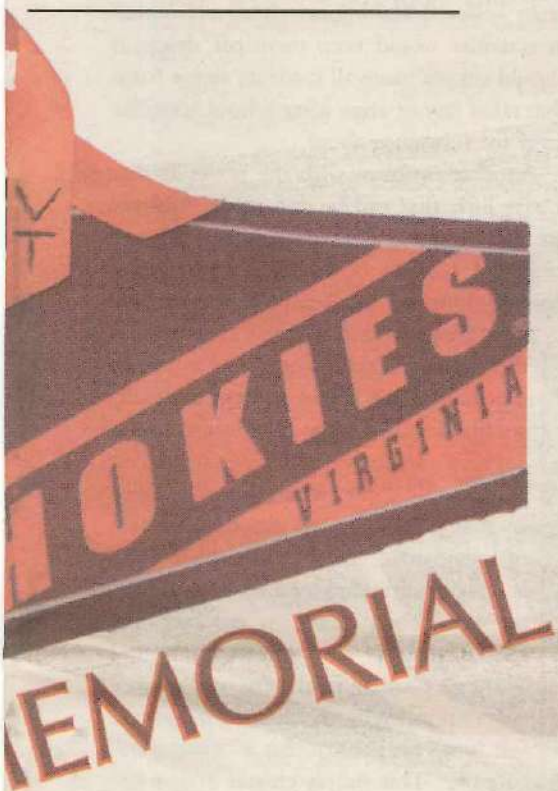
room was only four from the dorm and from the dorm and afternoon at around told to leave the do was told to stay in h Luhring recall the shootings in his However, when he fact that it was sen very angry. "They been handled better and campus police? memorial and mou the shooter. Once returned, then an ir As the dull Mon Luhring recalls stay while calling and re After not sleeping received awful new had died in the ho stated Luhring. "I

pep” and life with which we’re trying; V. P., old V. P. You know our hearts are with you, In our luck which never seems to die; Win or lose we’ll greet you



Photo by KRT/Ted Richardson

t Virginia Tech, mourns for the 33 vic-
t a memorial on campus on Wednes-



Photos by Sydney Smith

Nosy Reporters Makes Situation Worse

Angie Palma

Business Manager

It was early afternoon on Monday, April 16, 2007. The television was turned on, and in big, bold letters, the words on the screen said, “Fatal Shooting at Virginia Tech.” As soon as news stations were informed of the shooting, reporters were sent to cover what has now been acknowledged as the most fatal school shooting in the history of the United States.

Essential news and press conferences were anticipated and expected. Everyone wanted and needed to know as much information as possible. What many feel was unnecessary, however, was the fact that reporters seemed to be hounding the Tech students, trying to get first hand accounts of what had taken place.

Senior Marissa Watt has a close friend who is a freshman at Tech this year, and said, “When I talked to him, he told me that everyone in his building was extremely upset that the reporters were milling about everywhere and conducting interviews with students who

were experiencing a terrifying and distressing event. Everyone he knew was staying in their apartments and dorms to avoid the media.”

As a journalist, it is easy to understand and appreciate the fine line that exists between responsible reporting and going too far. That line was surely crossed by the reporters who were covering what has now been dubbed “The Virginia Tech Massacre.” Massacre is defined as an unnecessary, indiscriminate killing of a large number of human beings. Massacre is such an insensitive and harsh term for an event that caused so much pain for so many people. What made it worse was that by Monday evening, some news stations had incorporated music to accompany any information regarding the shooting. What came off as theme music to a horrible occurrence was hardly in good taste. The coverage of a national crisis needs to be handled with a semblance of respect and consideration to the victims while still getting out the critical information. The coverage up until now has been a media frenzy that angers and upsets just as much as it informs.



Photo by Drew Smith

Leadership students, with the help of others, painted the rock Virginia Tech colors, orange and maroon, to remember and think about the victims and their families that were affected by the shooting rampage in Blacksburg.

Everyone Affected

Emily Kuhbach

Wire Reporter

We all know it as “Tech,” or “VT.” It is one of our best state universities, and the goal of many of our top students. After the events of April 16, it will be forever changed.

We have all heard about school shootings in the past. Sadly, they are nothing new. They have all been scary. But this time, it is closer. And bigger. Although we are still about four hours away from the tragedy, the tragedy has come to us. It has penetrated Virginia, Fairfax County, and West Potomac. I, personally, did not know anyone killed or injured. I do not have siblings that attend the school. But I know friends. And friends of friends. And siblings of friends. As Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Gerald E. Connolly told *The Washington Post* the week of the shootings, “It’s three degrees of separation. Not six.” Or two. Or one.

Every year, about twenty of our own don orange and maroon and become Hokies. As a result of this, this tragedy touched us more closely than ever before. We saw people we knew on TV, and in pictures in the newspaper. All of these people that we know, that we remember for their humor or kindness or good-natured attitude. A part of them is broken. People we know are forever changed,



Photo by Drew Smith

Students pass on the light during the memorial held at our school rock on the evening of Saturday, April 21.

about Virginia Tech Shootings

from the scene. He was then evacuated and moved back into his room until later that night. His friend did not know why he was being evacuated. An hour after he was evacuated, Luhning was in his room for the rest of the day.

Luhning was scared and worried when learning about the later shootings at Norris Hall. He received an e-mail that had been sent to him and the others after the first shooting, it made him feel that the situation could have been worse. He stated Luhning, “The situation could have been worse, that it was not the administration’s fault that occurred. “There needs to be a way to prevent that from happening. It is not necessary except for that directed at the victims and their families. Life has been cleared and somewhat normal life has been restored on how this can be avoided.”

The situation unfolded into a day that will live in infamy, a day that will be remembered for years to come. Watching the news for hours straight, all the while making sure everyone he knew was alright. On Monday night/Tuesday morning, Luhning was proud of his very good friends had been shot and was one of the nicest girls I had ever met,” she was staying in Blacksburg while the situation

finished, but after hearing this news, I had to get out of there.” Within thirty minutes, Luhning was on his way home to northern Virginia. “It felt good to get out of Blacksburg and talk to people who had not been there,” stated Luhning. As the situation unfolded, Luhning learned from an e-mail from his employer that one of his co-workers was a member of the 33 dead at Virginia Tech.

After the days following the event had passed, Luhning looked back at some of the events that unfolded. He stated that the media was good to cover the events, but in some cases, they overstepped their boundaries. “On Tuesday morning, my friend and I were outside our dorm and a British reporter asked me to give him a tour of the dorm. I immediately denied his request. Once he had left, another reporter from People Magazine confronted me and asked me multiple questions.” The media was very nosy when the students, faculty and families needed to be given their space to grieve.

At the time of the interview, Luhning had not seen the pictures and videos released by NBC, but he commented that it may have been too early for those to be released. He then added that he was not happy when he saw the picture of the shooter on the cover of *The Washington Post*. However, Luhning was proud of the camera phone video taken by a fellow Tech student saying, “It was fine. He was very brave, but kind of stupid to get that close to Norris.” This is just one of the many people who were directly affected by the events on April 16. Our nation suffered a great tragedy that

Letter of Sympathy

Thomas Pane once wrote, “These are the times that try men’s souls.” In the last month, this quote has gained new meaning. Reports of “saints and swine” have been pouring out of Virginia Tech. Stories of teachers barricading the doors of their classrooms with their own bodies, and of Boy Scouts performing acts that fulfill the oath of, “On my honor I will do my best, to do my duty, to god and country, to obey the scout law, to help other people at all times.” The zenith of both the goodness of human nature, and the evil, was shown at Virginia Tech.

We are all saddened by the events that have transpired. The call to remember the fallen and the living has never been clearer. All of us are affected by the actions that have taken place. Be it taking dinner over to a neighbor that still has not heard from their children, or attending religious services in the honor of the deceased students and their families. When remembrance is burdensome, neighbors, friends, acquaintances, teachers, students, co-workers, and religious leaders help to lift the stone that is grief. These individuals are worth more than gold, and will be remembered along with the killed.

The Wire staff sends out our thoughts and feelings to the all those that feel for the loss of a loved one, teammate, or friend who was affected by the Virginia Tech tragedy. We dedicate this paper to the remembrance of this horrific event.

and through them we get the slightest semblance of what it feels like to have experienced something like that. And it is awful.

We are thankful that none of our former students were killed in the tragedy, but everyone we know there is a victim for having experienced it. And it extends beyond Virginia Tech and those who remain. We are all victims. As high school students, hearing stories about kids our age (or a few years older) bringing guns to their schools is something that we should never have to feel. What happened is something that is never supposed to happen. School is supposed to be the safest place for a child.

Six of the victims graduated from Fairfax County high schools. The gunman himself used to be a student of Fairfax County. We are in the spotlight. The fact that we had no victims is very lucky. It could have been anyone. It could have been one of us. When we heard that all of ours survived, we breathed a sigh of relief. Until the next time, which hopefully will never come.

Classes resumed at Tech the Monday after the shootings—the one-week anniversary. Students down there are trying to return to some sense of normalcy. It will take a while, but I wholeheartedly believe it will come. But we will always remember.

Tackling the Issues

Athletic Forms Effective and Necessary

Hooff Cooksey

Sports Editor

It is the start of a new sports season and your coach is handing you an unlimited supply of forms that you do not really feel like signing, concerning your eligibility, safety, and commitment. One such paper you are required to sign commits you to a season of responsible and respectful behavior. Many times however, the student only signs the paper and does not really commit to doing what it says. So is this paper really necessary for coaches to hand out, and students to sign?

Throughout the season, athletes and coaches are faced not only with the task of winning games and bettering their skills, but they also must deal with pressures outside of school. These can often lead to illegal activities or actions that anger the team or coach of the athlete's sport. In this situation, the contract concerning illegal activities during a season comes into play. By an athlete signing the form, they have committed to following the rules that a coach has set forth to his or her players. Throughout the season, the athletes on certain teams know that if they do anything to break the bonds of the agreement, then there are consequences that will be enforced by the coach or even the school administration. In many cases when student athletes are given the forms, made by their coaches, they sign them with no intention of following the rules. The athletes do this at their own risk, because if they are caught doing anything that breaks the contract then there are set penalties that will be enforced. Usually these consequences involve suspensions from games, practices or school. For some seniors who have already been accepted to college, if they break a sporting contract the college may remove the student from their roster before they have even attended a day at the university. The contract sets a standard for athletes to abide by, whether they want to follow them or not.

Another question that is asked deals with

coaches enforcing the punishment, and if they do not, then what is the point of the contract? In this situation, the coach is at fault. By writing up a contract concerning all situations and actions that will result in punishment, the coach obligating himself or herself to follow up on the contract. If

a coach does not follow through with a consequence for one athlete, then that will give the other athletes the impression that they can get away with certain actions. The contract sets the standards for both coaches and athletes to follow throughout the season.

The main idea is that the sporting contract concerning the "do's and don'ts" during a season is to set a certain moral standard for all of the athletes and coaches. There have been multiple times this past school year when coaches have followed through with consequences set on the contract to punish certain athletes. Whether or not the rule is followed, the contract is necessary for those few times when someone makes a mistake and must be punished.

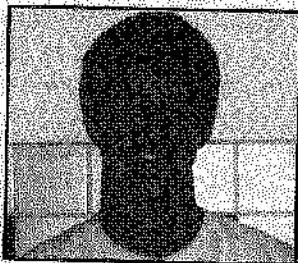


Photo by Brittany Catina

Anti-Drug Forms Carry No Weight

Sam McCann

Sports Editor

Every season, student-athletes in Fairfax County are flooded with countless forms that the school system forces them to complete. Among these stacks of paperwork is the form that supposedly ensures that these individuals will not smoke, drink, or use any illegal drugs. However, this form is merely a formality—the county has to make it seem as though it is working to prevent its athletes from partaking in these dangerous behaviors. All this form really does is make students waste a couple of extra seconds filling it out. If the county really wanted to keep athletes off drugs, it would devise a much stronger policy, one that will actually prevent people from experimenting with the substances.

The primary problem with these forms is that they carry about as much weight with many of the student athletes as a pop-up ad claiming they just won a million dollars. They sign these forms not necessarily because they plan on avoiding all drugs for

the entire season, but because they have to in order to participate in the sport. It is yet another hoop they must jump through to make the team.

Also, most students who do take drugs are not going to be stopped by a form telling them that their season is in jeopardy if they

There is already a firm drug policy in place throughout the county, which includes expulsion and even arrest for suspension from a team for minor annoyance compared to those consequences. If possible imprisonment can stop them, what effect does getting kicked off a team possibly have? None at all. Furthermore, if the county really believed limiting people's involvement in activities would keep them off drugs, they should simply make all students sign a form that takes any of their after-school activities away for substance abuse.

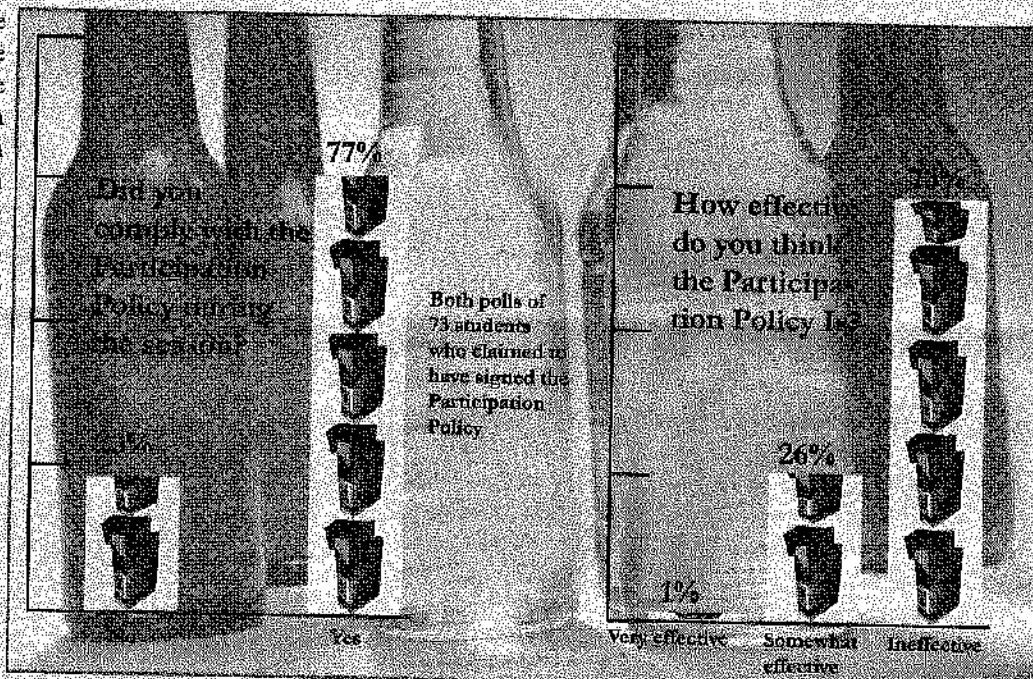
Another problem with the policy is that it says little that can be enforced. Athletes are not required to take drug tests of any kind and coaches obviously are not going door-to-door on weekends to make sure their players do not drink. Therefore, the policy is almost impossible to enforce anything about unless someone literally stumbles into a game intoxicated and is conclusively proven to be so.

One final problem with the policy is that it creates a questionable standard of standards. A student athlete who is caught drinking and is kicked off the team could point to the fact that football players who vandalized Mount Vernon's football field were only given a suspension. Why should they be given a full year's suspension for a 'victimless' offense? This simply creates even more controversy.

It is undoubtedly an admirable goal to keep students off of drugs and alcohol. However, the school needs a better way of doing so; meaningless forms given only to athletes does nothing but pay lip service to a pressing problem.



Photo by Brittany Catina

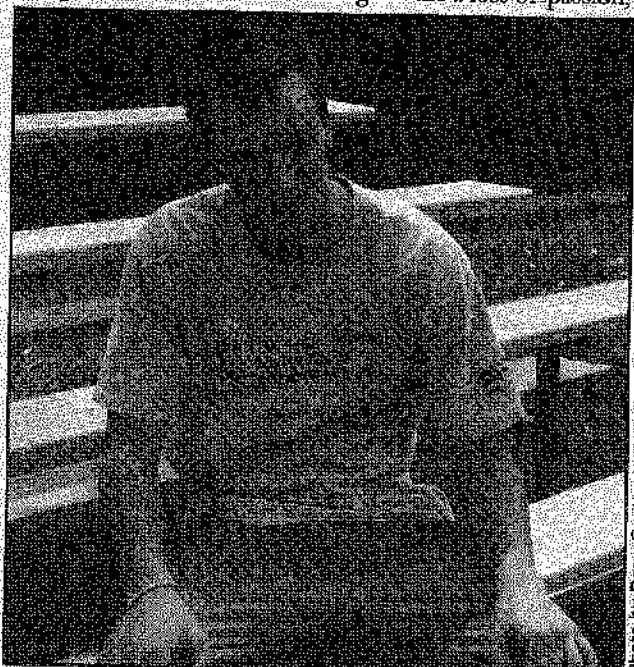


Athletes Have to Battle Spring Slump

Jon Yoo

Sports Editor

Athlete burnout has become a common concern in modern day athletics. Though it has various reasons for occurring, it can affect any race, gender, and age group. The main components of an athlete burning out are a loss of passion,



Senior athlete Chris Farquhar reflects on his high school sports career. Participating in multiple sports, as Farquhar does, can lead to a burnout.

motivation, and drive, usually due to increased amounts of stress and pressure. Over the past decade, awareness of this issue has been raised to not only athletes of many sports, but to coaches, trainers, and parents as well.

When it is said that a sport is at least 90% mental and 10% physical, it is true. However, much of our society ignores this fact; rather, they stay fixated on the physical appearances of superstar athletes. Therefore, it has come to the point where some of us are concerned about how our body looks rather than how we perform. This has taken away from the true enjoyment and love for any sport. It has made our athletes weaker mentally, because they no longer understand what it means to put in the blood, sweat, and tears that is required to reach their goals. This is where athlete burnout first starts.

Many athletes are dedicated to their sport, there is no denying that. However, more and more athletes have weaker mental mindsets and cannot handle the stress and pressure that it takes to succeed in a sport. On top of that, many athletes have to deal with factors outside themselves and their sport, such as the demands from their coaches, parents, or even teammates. This lowers their self-esteem, raises their anxiety, and overall eventually affects their performance to the point where they find no enjoyment in what they are doing.

Determination, desire, and drive are three main components that are not only necessary to be successful in athletics, but anything in life.

Without them, there is no point in participating. All that comes from the love and passion that one has for what they are doing.



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Lacrosse Popularity on a Steady Rise

The sport of lacrosse has branched out from the east coast and is taking the country by storm.

Ken Llewellyn

Opinions Editor

Fourth Quarter has started and that means spring sports are in full gear. When one thinks of spring sports they usually think of baseball or soccer. However, the fastest growing sport in the U.S. is another spring sport, lacrosse.

Twenty years ago, lacrosse was only popular around all-male boarding schools in the east. Today, lacrosse is played from coast to coast and is equally popular with boys and girls. According to a 2005 article in *Sports Illustrated*, lacrosse equipment sales are growing

10% each year and the number of youth-league players in the U.S. age 15 and under is estimated to be 186,000 more than twice what it was in 2001. There are two professional leagues, but the sport's most popular venue is at the college level. In 2005, ESPN drew a .7 TV rating for the NCAA Lacrosse championship, this may seem like a miniscule rating but it was double the rating from the 2002 championship game.

Why is the sport gaining popularity so quickly? "It's not just a sport for preps, everyone can enjoy hitting people with sticks," said midfielder

Aaron Dantley, one of the few African-Americans playing lacrosse this year. Lacrosse does feature many qualities of more traditional sports along with its own spin. Lacrosse features passes that thread the needle and goals that make your jaw drop like soccer, but lacrosse games have about 15-25 goals a game as opposed to 3-5 in soccer. Lacrosse is very similar to hockey except it is played on grass and once again, it features more scoring. For those who like basketball, lacrosse is all about fast breaks, juking your defender, and accurate shooting but there are no free-throws to stop the fast pace of the game. Football fans can appreciate the hits that lacrosse players deliver each game but unlike football there is not a pause between every play.

The sport that lacrosse does not emulate is baseball. It is no coincidence that lacrosse's popularity is growing at the same time that baseball's is falling. "I used to play baseball but I switched to lacrosse," said junior Tom Matthews, "because there's a lot more action and a lot less sitting around." Both sports compete in the spring time and, like Matthews, athletes are choosing the faster-paced lacrosse over the longer, less flashy baseball. If this trend continues there is no telling how high lacrosse will go and how far baseball will drop.

Our school's boys' team is season 5-5 this season with only a few games left and the district tournament coming up. The team hopes that scoring-machine midfielder Chris Farquhar and goalie captain John Falvey can lead them deep into the playoffs. Even if the team does not fair well this year, there are more boys interested in lacrosse than ever, and that means there will be more wins as well.

Girls Soccer Looks to Reach New Level

Can the girls team reach the District finals for a second year in a row?

Sydney Smith

Wire Reporter

The girls of the Varsity soccer team work hard to prove that they are amazing athletes. This year, the team has achieved success and worked through their losses to make the sport both fun and serious.

The beginning of the season brought together a motley crew of players. Under the senior captains Devon Cain, Teresa Caro, Rebecca Vonada and Samantha Strong the girls started work and began to grow as a team. Vonada said, "This group of girls is a lot of fun. We joke around, yet we still are able to be serious and focus on the team." Now that the season is wrapping up, it appears that the girls have found their zone. The team won four of their games, lost four games and tied one game. With the District competition coming up in the beginning of May, the girls have quite a standard to live up to. Last year's team placed second in Districts, losing to Lake Braddock by one point. They also made it to the second round of Regionals.

Vonada attributes their current success to team work. She said, "The girls work really well together. We have learned how to work together and we have adapted to each others skills."

The team practices every day after school. During these practices, the girls run, do ball work and drills. However, the team is not all work and no play. The night before every home game, there is a team

dinner and for away games, the girls do secret sisters. Caro said, "I wish we had high school soccer all year round. Once the season ends, there is not as much to look forward to every day after school."

Even though Caro and Vonada have been on this varsity team all four years of school, they still get a rush playing in our field. Caro said, "Being at the home games with the support of the crowds is really exciting. It is a real honor."



photo by Drew Smith
Freshman Maggie Farnine looks past her opponents defense for an open teammate to throw in to.

Captains Connection: Alex Mounts

Sara Mathewson

Style Editor

- **How long and how often during the year have you been playing soccer?**
I have been playing since I was five years old, and I play year-round for a club team called MCSA, and also for the school's team.
- **How did you become involved in soccer?**
My parents, they were very supportive of me. They were the ones who brought me juice boxes and orange slices during half time of all my games.
- **What awards have you received?**
I was honorable mention in my sophomore year, and second team All-District and received the National Athletic Honor Roll award for my junior year.
- **What is your proudest moment in soccer?**
It would definitely be going to the final four with my MCSA club team last year.

How do you feel about your team this year?

I have very high hopes for my team this year. Our bonds are still growing.

- **Who has been the most influential in the development of your skills?**

My dad, because he was always there for me. He took me to all of my games, and he was always very supportive of me.

- **Do you have any rituals or superstitions before games?**

I wear the same socks for every game.



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IN THE NUMBERS

34

The number of track and field teams that attended the Scudieri Invitational at our school on April 14. Our boys team finished first and our girls team finished third.

4

straight home runs hit by the Boston Red Sox in a 7-6 victory over the New York Yankees. This feat tied the record for most consecutive home runs and a professional baseball game.

23

The number of runs our boys varsity baseball team scored in a 23-16 victory over the Titans from T.C. Williams High School.

3

The number of women pole vaulters on our track team who have qualified for states. All three jumpers reached the height of 9 feet 3 inches and beyond.

Tips on Getting an Awesome Summer Job

Read this step by step guide to land an awesome job and make some extra cash.

Jocelyn Finrock

Style Editor

As the end of the school year quickly approaches and summer is right around the corner, it is time to begin making summer plans. For some, this means finding a job.



Non-Fabrizio/ISTOCKPHOTO

Lifeguarding is just one of the many fun jobs to have over the summer break.

Summer is the perfect time to start working and make some extra cash for spending or saving. Here is a step by step guide on how to find the perfect summer job and keep it.

- Before you even begin looking for a place to work, you should find out exactly what you want to do, because there are so many options. You could lifeguard, work at a retail store, or even volunteer.

- Once you find out what you want to do, you can figure out the location in which you would like to work. The closer to home, the better. After that, start looking for places that are hiring and go get an application or just go into the store and inquire about a possible position that you would like.

- When you return the application, it is a good idea to personally give it to the manager. This will give you a higher chance at getting the job because you took the time to talk with them. When they are reviewing the applications, they can put a face with your name.

- Once you are hired for a job, it is important that your job is something you will enjoy doing. If you begin a new job with the wrong attitude, or if it is not the job you wanted, chances are you will not enjoy working there. Also, having a positive attitude about your new job plays a key factor in whether you keep it or not.

- Being a friendly and personable is important when dealing with customers. Even when dealing with a complaint, you can not yell back at the customer, which can sometimes be hard. Remember, the customer is always right. It is a saying used in every job environment. Yes, it is pathetic and sometimes you will have customers that you just want to punch in the face, but no matter what, they are always right.

Sacramento Bee/KRT

Dog walking is yet another fun and easy job to look into for this summer vacation.

"All That Jazz"

Prom will be at The Hilton in Crystal City on May nineteenth.

Lara Davidson

Poll Editor

What is expected for prom is the question lingering on everyone's mind. Will Prom be everything that everyone has hoped it to be, or will it be a letdown? The theme for the 2007 prom is "All That Jazz." It will take place on May 19 at The Hilton in Crystal City, and as of right now, tickets will be sold for fifty five dollars.

There are plenty of ways for students to experience an exciting and memorable prom. Going in a group with all your close friends is a sure win. Even if one does not have a date, just being with one's best friends will automatically ensure a fun time. How should you prepare for prom? Senior Kathleen Wheeler stated, "I am preparing by getting my group together and scoping for a date." One important preparation is figuring out what to wear. Some great dress shops are:



Beau Capell/KRT

Cache, BCBG, Nordstrom, and Bloomingdales.

The next step is finding a place to eat. Some good restaurants include Stardust, Charthouse, Tokyo Japanese Steak House, or Mike's American Grill. Wheeler is taking a different approach

Prom is an annual high school tradition where students can plan for a night of eating, dancing, and hanging out with friends.

to dinner. "All my friends are coming to my house and having a potluck dinner. Everyone's bringing a different dish." This angle saves money, and makes dinner a lot easier for a large group.

What about transportation? One can always go with the cliché approach and arrive in a limo, or drive themselves, or even ride in a party bus! "Party buses are always fun because you can fit a lot more people," Wheeler said.

But what is with all this excitement about Prom? For some, Prom is another enjoyable dance to participate in, but for others, it is the last hurrah before graduation. Prom is a great opportunity for friends to get together and have an amazing time. For our seniors, it is the last high school opportunity for everyone to be together. Wheeler said, "Prom is important to me because it is a tradition." However, not all feel the same way about this extravagant dance.

Prom should be a great experience, a whole night to spend with friends. What is better than getting dressed up, taking pictures, going out to dinner, dancing, and staying out all night with your best friends? If this sounds appealing, then Prom is a sure go!

Code of Dress Is A Mess

Jayne Seward

Reporter

As spring's warm and sunny weather begins to emerge, more provocative clothing also starts to appear, along with the ridiculously hideous neon orange 'Dress For Success' shirt. The loathed 'Dress For Success' shirt first made its appearance in the spring of 2005, when the administration started to notice the student body was wearing more revealing clothing. Now, only two years after its arrival throughout this school's hallway, there has been a vast decrease in the amount of students being reprimanded for their clothing choices.

There have been hardly any sightings of the orange shirt this year, but why exactly is that? There has been countless times where a girl has been seen wearing shorts that are borderline inappropriate or

To students, some believe that the administration will only notice your clothing solely based on your body type. Others believe underclassmen get it worse than seniors, and some even think that it is all in the way you carry yourself. Senior Lauren Crow said, "People who have longer legs always get yelled at for wearing shorts just because having longer legs makes the shorts or skirts look shorter. If I were to wear the same exact skirt as someone who was 5'2, no one would say anything to them, but I would get in trouble for what I was wearing."

"When girls come in wearing short skirts it is just disgusting."

-Mary Mathewson, English Teacher

Teachers have various takes on dealing with their student's choices when it comes to getting dressed in the morning. Mary Mathewson, an English teacher as well as a mother of two students at this school, has several eccentric ways of enforcing her own dress code.

When spring rolls around, Mathewson is sure to have a full stock of sanitary wipes ready on her desks. "When girls come in wearing short skirts it is just disgusting. I make



Photo by Brittany Catina

According to the school dress code, shorts are not supposed to exceed past the fingertips.

them wipe down their seat before and after they sit in it." She also keeps her room at a frosty temperature to ensure that her students always have a jacket in toe, just in case they happen to be wearing an inappropriate outfit. If a student shows up wearing too little and has forgotten to bring a cover-up, Mathewson always has an extra jacket stored away for that lucky student. When it comes to the orange shirts, Mathewson says, "They are just a trophy for the kids, as well as a waste of

time and money. Sending students to the office just causes them to lose instructional time."

No matter what your take on the orange shirt is, the dress code is most likely here to stay. So, girls, make sure your skirts are long enough and shirts cover enough, and guys, keep your clothing appropriate.



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Get Rid of Pale Skin, the Healthy Way

Erin Burke
Reporter

The weather gets warmer, outdoor sports gear up, the pool opens, and the girls suddenly seem a little darker. As soon as the sun comes out, signs of summer can be seen throughout the student body. Girls are a particularly reliable way to sense the changing of the seasons; once the tanning starts, it is obvious that summer is officially here.

It is quite ironic that teen girls suddenly have a perfect tan on the first day of warm weather. How do they accomplish this so flawlessly? The answer is fake tanning. Whether it comes from a bottle (lotion), spray, or a tanning bed at Solar Planet, some girls will do almost anything to get that perfect glow.

Ron T. Ennis/KRT

However, some of these tanning methods are damaging to the body, and can lead to a lifetime of skin issues.

The sun contains natural UVA and UVB rays, which can tint or damage the skin. According to vanderbilt.edu, UVA rays are the rays of the sun that tan skin. They "penetrate into the deeper dermal layers of the skin... limited exposure causes tanning; overexposure can lead to long-term skin damage," the website stated. In fact, the very definition of a tan is "the result of damage to the epidermis (the top layer of skin)," according to MayoClinic.com. Even with all these risks, teen girls continue to subject themselves to the sun's harmful rays. Senior Julianna Woehrle said, "I tan in the summer because the sun gives the skin vitamin D, and it is really relaxing to sit in the sun by the pool." This may be true, but is a few hours of pool time really worth wrinkles and skin cancer?

Tanning beds emit 40% less UV rays onto the skin, according to vanderbilt.com, but are basically just as harmful to the skin, because just twenty minutes under the lights of a tanning bed is equivalent to eight hours at the beach. The rays still penetrate the skin, destroying the skin fibers, causing the skin to lose elasticity. This can cause premature aging and wrinkling, in addition to deadly skin cancers like malignant melanoma. According to a study conducted by vanderbilt.com, tanning beds makes a person "seven times more likely to develop malignant melanoma if they use a tanning bed ten times a year."

A safer way to achieve the perfect tan is to use a spray, lotion, or cream. The ingredient DHA, or Dihydroxyacetone, clings to the upper layers of skin cells on the body, which are already dead, causing a harmless tanning effect. While the effect of the tan lasts, on average, for three to four days, the long-term effects are immeasurable. With no risk of cancer, premature aging, or sunburn, self-tanners are worth the time it takes to reapply a few times a week. Self-tanning lotions and sprays can be found in any drug store, and come at a relatively cheap cost. The website, beautyvillage.com, rates the Coppertone Endless Summer Sunless Tanning Lotion as their top pick as the easiest self-tanner to use and the most effective in terms of color and longevity. Woehrle said she uses sunless tanning lotion "...in the winter and the off season." There are downsides, of course, to using a bottled tanner. It may be tricky to apply, and may look unnatural on certain skin tones. Woehrle said, "I like to use the lotion, but the sun is better because I like to have tan lines." No matter what method you use, you should always be careful when dealing with your skin. Summer is here, and it is easy to look the part without hurting yourself!

Reality TV Has Gone Too Far

Primetime has been taken over by an unbelievable amount of reality t.v. shows, which all seem to be the exact same.

Kate Sigety
Reporter

As the rage of reality TV takes over primetime, shows are all being based on what has already been a huge hit.

A classic example of going too far with a particular series is what VH1 has done with "Flavor of Love," the dating show where past rapper, Flavor Flav, looks for true love. After choosing Hoopz as the woman of his dreams, she decided that all she really saw in Flav was friendship, which resulted in "Flavor of Love 2." The notorious runner up from "Flavor of Love," named New York, was brought back to the show and was the second runner up for the second time. Because of New York's enthralling and captivating TV personality, on the second "Flavor of Love" reunion she announced that VH1 had given her her own show, "I Love New York." After losing at love twice, New York finally had the chance to find her true Prince Charming. That is not all though, now there is a new show out, "Flavor of Love Girls' Charm School." Yes, the most memorable girls from both seasons are back, but this time, they are learning how to correct their behavior that they presented in "Flavor of Love", and yes, Ms. New York will, of course, have a guest appearance. So, after the hit show "Flavor of Love" VH1 created three new shows which were based around these previous characters.

We all know about the rage of "American Idol," when it first began in 2002. Now, five years later, although it still has all of its scandals and media coverage, it is still the exact same as it was five years ago. After

"American Idol", there were many other shows brought out, of the same genre, just a little bit different. "So You Think You Can Dance," "The Next Grease Superstar," and "Rockstar Supernova" are just to name a few. Not to mention the movie *From Justin to Kelly*, which starred the first American Idol winner, Kelly Clarkson, and her runner-up, Justin Guarini.

Not only do shows base each other after previous hits, but there are also those bonus episodes to stretch the season out as long as possible and gain a few extra views. You know, the ones that show all of the footage that we, the viewers, did not see, or the recaps of the season, and the reunion shows. For "American Idol", the performances were on the first night, while the vote off episode was the next day, taking up two days of the week.

As long as viewers keep tuning in, these reality shows and series are not going to stop, no matter how similar they are to each other and previous seasons. Television companies take whatever has high ratings and run it until they can't anymore.



Abaca Press/KRT
Taylor Hicks came into the spotlight by winning one of the most popular reality T.V. series, *American Idol*.

Feeling hopeless?

You're not alone

10% of 12th graders in Fairfax County Public Schools have feelings of depression

For help or to learn more, visit the Fairfax County Youth Survey, <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb/youthsurvey.html>

This message created by F.C.P.S. students

Day in the Life of... a Gracious Guard

Kate Sigety

Wire Reporter

Picture a beautiful spring afternoon: the sun is out, the birds are chirping, and the students are happy and smiling. Now, picture a dark and gloomy winter morning: it is cold and rainy. No matter what the weather, school crossing guard Ms. Carolyn Levere is always in front of our school smiling and brightening each student's day. "My purpose is to make life a little bit easier and to keep students safe," said Levere, when asked how she feels about her role in the school and her relationship to the students.

Every day starts very early for Levere, waking at 5:50 am each morning in order to arrive at our school by six fifty five. After leaving our school, she stops off back at home to have breakfast, and then is off to her second crossing location at Riverside Elementary by 8:10 A.M. By 8:45 A.M., Levere is on her way home, where she has five hours until she leaves for her afternoon crossings. "For me, a routine day does not exist, which is the beauty of being retired," said Levere, who fills the time between her morning and afternoon crossings with aerobic exercise, Bible study, and enjoying time with an elderly neighbor.

When students think of a crossing guard, the thought of law enforcement does not usually come to mind. In most cases, including Levere's, crossing guards are retired from some type of federal work. Knowing and abiding by traffic laws, as well as carrying them out, is essential when having this responsibility. If Levere could change anything, it would be the way people are becoming more and more dangerous

drivers.

A key essential of being a crossing guard is being aware of one's surroundings. Crossing students, watching the traffic, and being aware of the buses all at the same time can be stressful and dangerous. Environmental surroundings, however, are not the only surroundings that Levere is aware of. Being a crossing guard at both an elementary school and a high school, she notes there are many other differences. "I would never bring out my official stop sign to halt traffic or use traffic cones to make your crossing more visible. How embarrassing! I'm dealing with young men and women!"

The crosswalk is a place that students can safely cross the road in order to get to school, but for Levere, it also serves a second purpose. Each morning, Levere loves to check out the students' latest fashions, as if the crosswalk were her own fashion runway.

Levere is able to have fun and enjoy her position as our school's crossing guard, but at the same time she takes it very seriously. "For all of the years that I have been at this school, Ms. Levere is by far the most efficient crossing guard we have ever had. What she does each morning is truly admirable," said school security officer Daryl Davis.

Although retired, Levere makes sure to make the most out of her time, staying active and spreading her joy and happiness to all of those who surround her. One key concept for Levere is that even something as small as a smile can make somebody's day. "I have known Ms. Levere for a while



Photo by Brittany Catina

Ms. Carolyn Levere, a retired police officer and now our school's crossing guard, enjoys helping students out in the morning so that they can safely cross the streets going to school.

now and each time I see her, she brings a smile to my face," said senior Tony Fluit. She is just one person, but with her strong positivity and bright personality, she is able to make an impact on each student who passes her in the morning. So let Levere bring a smile to your face.

Sequels That Are More Than Equal

Kyle Rosenkranz

Wire Reporter

Today begins another season of "sequel summer" as *Spider-Man 3* hits theaters, along with several other blockbusters that are sequels to major hits of the past.

Each summer, there is a huge number of movie sequels that are scheduled to be shown in theaters. Often times, they are expected to make the most money of the year before the Christmas season. Movies like the *Star Wars* and *X-Men* franchises have always been shown during the summer, and have always been a big hit amongst audiences. Now, they are being followed with movies like *Spider-Man 3*, *Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End*, and *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*.

Spider-Man 3 has been a long awaited addition to the franchise as we see Peter get a handle on his life as Spider-man. That is, until his best friend Harry threatens to kill him and he encounters Sandman, all while

he faces off against the alien "sybiote" Venom.

Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End is another highly anticipated film after *Dead Man's Chest* became a hit last summer. Will, Elizabeth, and Captain Barbosa head to the world's end in search of Jack Sparrow before Lord Beckett takes over the world with the Flying Dutchman at his disposal.

In July, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, the next chapter of the Harry Potter series, will premiere as Harry assembles the D.A., faces massive scrutiny from the Ministry of Magic, and begins his romance with Cho Chang, all during his fifth year at Hogwarts.

Several students predict that *Spider-Man 3* and *Pirates of the Caribbean 3* will be the biggest box-office hits of the summer. "Spider-Man 3 will no doubt be a huge blockbuster this year," said junior Miguel Ventura. Nick Young, a junior and friend of Ventura, feels that *Pirates 3* will be a huge hit at the box-office this year. "I can't wait until *Pirates of the Caribbean 3* comes out. It will probably get bigger audiences than *Spider-Man 3*, or any other movie coming out this summer."

Of these blockbuster sequels of the summer, other movies hoping to bring in the money. To follow the trend, the fourth installment of the *Die Hard* franchise will premiere June 29. Of all the summers so far the summer of 2005 and 2006 featured some of the most anticipated movies, including *Star Wars Episode III*, and *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest*, and *Batman Begins*. This summer will continue the tradition as we await some of the biggest blockbusters of the year.



Elliot Marks/KRT

Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End is a highly anticipated sequel coming out this summer, including actors Johnny Depp and Orlando Bloom.

Don't Stress On The Dress

Drew Smith

Photo Editor



Seattle Times/KRT

Simple white dresses, such as this one from BCBG, are what many girls can choose to wear during the graduation ceremony.

Spring has arrived. The air is warm, the sun is bright, and it is time to start shopping for the perfect graduation dress. Why start shopping so early? Girls are required to wear plain white dresses that are school appropriate. This means that there can be no colorful design of any type on the dress, which will make it extremely difficult to find a dress that no one else will be wearing. The reason why the dresses must be so plain is that the girls wear white gowns, and color will be seen through the gown. Another reason is that everyone is supposed to look alike, so that no one stands out and distracts you during the graduation ceremony.

A few of the stores in our area that carry a wide range of dresses that will be as unique as you are include any department stores, such as Macy's, JCPenny's, and Hecht's. Another popular store for white dresses is the White House Black Market store located in The Georgetown Shops, and also in Union Station. Forever 21, located in Springfield Mall and Pentagon City Mall, has a variety of cute dresses, but be careful to find one that is plain white! Remember, no prints or colors!

State of the Arts

WMZO Fest
Saturday, May 5, 2007
Nissan Pavilion
Bristow, VA

Akon
Wednesday, May 16, 2007
Rams Head Live!
Baltimore, MD

Weird Al Yankovic, Straight
Outta Lynwood
Tuesday, May 8, 2007
Rams Head Live!
Baltimore, MD

Gwen Stefani
Thursday, May 17, 2007
Nissan Pavilion
Bristow, VA

Elliot Yamin
Thursday, May 17, 2007
Baltimore
Alexandria, VA

Seal
Saturday, May 19, 2007
Merrweather Post Pavilion
Columbia, MD

Damien Rice
Friday, May 25, 2007
D.A.R. Convention Hall
Washington, D.C.

Daughtry
Thursday, May 24, 2007
9:30 Club
Washington, D.C.

The Turtles Return in Full Force

Jon Yoo

Sports Editor

Our favorite turtles are back in action! After more than a decade since their last movie, the four brothers have come out of their sewer once again to save the world from its greatest threat yet. However, unlike the previous films, what sets this one apart is that the turtles' relationship with one another has strained, and slowly they are growing apart. It is up to them to bond back together before planet Earth is lost. Can the shell brothers pull it off one last time, or is it too little, too late?

The turtles' return is different then ever before due to the new CGI graphics, which provide never before seen animation that make everything look so real. The CGI effects are especially seen in the many fight scenes throughout the movie. Sophomore Mara Perscheid said, "I enjoyed the CGI

graphics a lot, it gave the film an extra edge to gain its audience." However, that is only one of the many pluses about the film. Writer and director Kevin Munroe does a good job with keeping many of the basic characters of the previous movies, such as Casey Jones, April O'Neil, and of course, Master Splinter. Though sometimes cheesy, Munroe, for the most part, does a good job with the movie's plot. He also does a good job with keeping the distinct personalities for each of the four turtles.

TMNT wastes no time jumping right into the action and environment of the Ninja turtles. With the brothers separated at the beginning of the film, the storyline is different then of the previous. Leonardo, the leader of the four, has been sent to the jungles of South America to learn how to be a better leader, but is still searching for his identity as the head of the turtles. Back in New York, the others

are struggling without him. Michelangelo and Donatello have found jobs, but miss the old days of maintaining justice on the streets, while Raphael has isolated from the rest. He has continued fighting crime by dressing up in full armor and going by the name of Nightwatcher. However, with strange happenings continuing to occur on their home town of Manhattan, the turtles finally group back together stronger then ever to take back their place as the protectors of New York City.

The greatest aspect of TMNT is that it is made for fans of all generations. It lives up to the expectations of old Turtle fans, while also being able to introduce new characters and plots. Senior Thong Dang said, "The movie is just all hardcore, non-stop action." Overall, TMNT is a well made and fun to watch film that provides non-stop action and excitement.

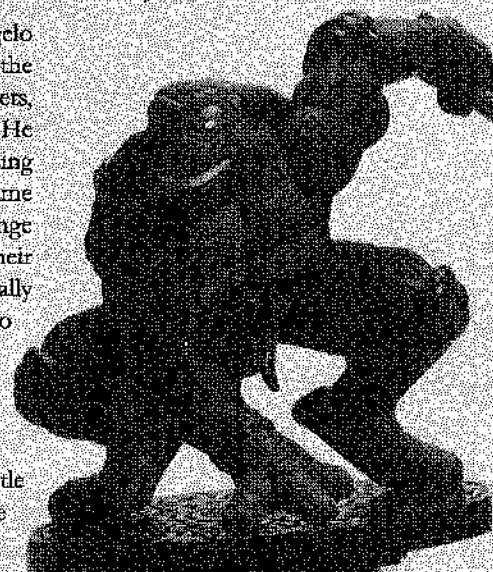


Photo by Jeffery Washington/KRT

Laughter on the Ice

Sara Matheson

Staff Writer

Blades of Glory is the only new head the stars for the winter time movie in America. With main stars being Will Ferrell from *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* and Jim Carrey from *Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events*, *Blades of Glory* is the best movie to go see for a good laugh.

The movie begins with two gold medalists from many winters ice skating World Championships. Carrey, Michael, Michael, and Ferrell, and Ferrell, Michael, and Carrey, are in a brawl over a gold medal. When the new star, Jim Carrey, looked out and completely stunned from the movie, Carrey and Ferrell, and Ferrell, Michael, and Carrey, are in a brawl over a gold medal. When the new star, Jim Carrey, looked out and completely stunned from the movie, Carrey and Ferrell, and Ferrell, Michael, and Carrey, are in a brawl over a gold medal.



John Hader/KRT

The newly released film, *Blades of Glory*, leaves audiences laughing and holding the seat for the double's championship. They must number one movie in America.

Blades of Glory is rated PG-13 for some crude humor and some drug use. This movie is suitable for any age, for anyone who can enjoy the ridiculous humor that Will Ferrell and Jim Carrey give. Jim Carrey is most known for his leading role in the comedy *National Treasure* in addition to *The Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events*. Ferrell has been seen in a number of comedy movies, including *Old School*, *Zoolander*, and *Stranger than Paradise*, just to name a few. Conway said, "The actors were really funny, but I can only see them acting in comedy movies, nothing serious."



After making \$132 million at the box office, as of April 27, since its release on March 30, *Blades of Glory* is a must-see. It is suitable for most ages, mainly teens and adults. Conway believed that it is most suitable for ages eighteen to twenty-five. Ferrell and Carrey come together to provide the audience with continuous laughing and entertainment. Conway said, "If you are looking for a good laugh, this movie is the right choice."

Jon Heder (Jimmy): I see you got fat.
Will Ferrell (Chazz): I see you still look like a fifteen year old girl, but not hot.



John Hader/KRT

Jon Heder plays Will Ferrell's rival, Jimmy in the movie.

An Action-Packed Thriller

Brittany Cadina

Wire Reporter

Most recent slasher movies have had very "witty" commentary, and a very basic plot. *Vacancy* is one of the few cross-over movies.

Vacancy has a very good plot. The movie gives a detailed plot in which the viewers actually get to know the characters. The cast includes Kate Beckinsale as Amy Fox, and Luke Wilson as David Fox.

The movie opens with the Fox couple driving at night in an extremely deserted location. When their car begins making weird noises, they are fortunately able to drive just far enough to a gas station. At this point it is 1 a.m.; the mechanic who is on duty fixes their car with extreme certainty that it was just a belt problem. Once they begin their trip again, their car breaks down. At this point, they can either stay in the car overnight or walk a mile back to the gas station to call a tow truck. After a long dispute, the Foxes decide to walk back to the gas station. Unfortunately for them, the mechanic just left and will not be returning until morning. On the bright side, there is a motel just around the corner.

Upon entering their room, the couple is disgusted by the awful conditions in which the room was kept. David decides to watch a little T.V. before going to bed. To his dismay, there is no cable, so instead, he decides to slip in one of the complimentary movies.



Paul Schmid/KRT

David is horrified by what he sees: the movies all consist of hotel guests being brutally beaten and murdered. After watching only a few seconds of the tape, David recognizes that the movies are of guests in the motel they are staying at.

David tries to use the motel phone, which, of course, does not work, and when he uses the pay phone outside, he only gets one of the murders who can of course see his every move.

The Fox couple must try and stay one step ahead of the murderers, who have the upper hand due to their constant surveillance. While desperately searching for a way out, David finds a trap door out of the hotel, they are immediately lead underground and end up in the hotel lobby.

The couple is in a race for time, as they try to stay alive until morning so they can escape. There is never a dull moment in this heart-

pounding thriller.

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Caitlin Millar Hammaren



Erin Nicole Peterson



Julia Kathleen Pryde



Matthew Gregory Gwaltney



Partahi Mamora
Halomoan Lumbantoruan



Christopher James Bishop



G.V. Loganathan



Kevin P. Granata



Maxine Shelly Turner



Minal Hiralal Panchal



Daniel Perez Cueva



Jocelyne Couture-Nowak



Lauren Ashley McCain



Michael Steven Pohle, Jr.



Nicole White



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Photos courtesy Fair Use