

What are Academy students doing to fight poverty?

# THE WIRE

WEST POTOMAC HIGH SCHOOL

Volume 24, Issue #3  
6500 Quander Road  
Alexandria, VA 22307



How is real high school different from the movies?

Thursday, November 6, 2008

## Inside:

### Sports

5 6 7 8 9 10 11



Photo Courtesy of David Houston

Can our basketball team maintain its recent successes with only two returning seniors?

### Style

7 8 9 10 11 12 13



Photo by Madyson Miller

Learn about why some students are choosing to shop at the thrift store.

### Opinions

1 2 3 4 5 6



Photo Courtesy of MCT/Handout

Are the outfits worn by fashion model to ridiculous for public?

### People

9 10 11 12 13 14 15

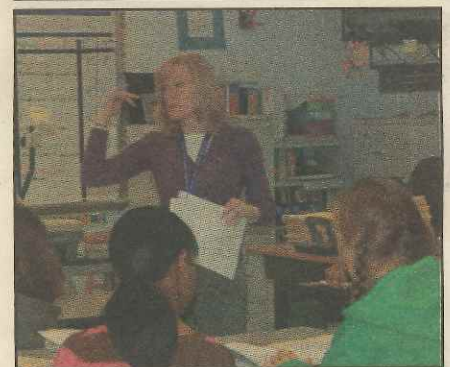
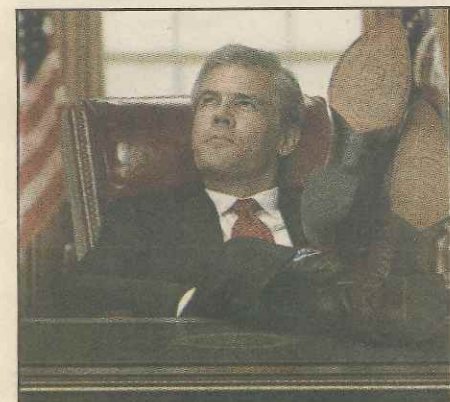


Photo by Erin Parker

Mrs. O'Connor: More than a Spanish teacher and a "perfectionist."

### Style

6 7 8 9 10 11 12



Is Oliver Stone just released a new movie about Bush's presidency, but is it accurate?

## Economic Crisis Causes Huge County Budget Cuts

STEPHEN HOWELL  
LAYOUT/NEWS EDITOR

The effects of the current recession, including falling house prices, the high cost of gas, and sharp increase in foreclosure rates have produced a budget deficit nearing \$60 million for Fairfax County's overall budget for Fiscal Year 2010. With housing prices set to fall an estimated 12% during the next fiscal year, the approximate deficit is above \$460

million. County officials have decided to implement a furlough day on January 2 for all County employees, except those in emergency services. There will also be a hiring freeze, a cancellation of all non-essential travel, a delay in purchase of new vehicles, and a delay in building projects. Closing the county's public libraries on Fridays was also thrown on table to be debated.

Each County department has been

asked to identify 15% reductions, and David Rohrer, the police chief in the County, has already begun to eliminate many of his department's programs including anti-gang operations, the police language program, education initiatives, and DUI enforcements. Rohrer was to prepare for the possible layoff of about 280 officers. "All the things we have done in the last 20 years are at risk," Rohrer said

See Budget, page 5

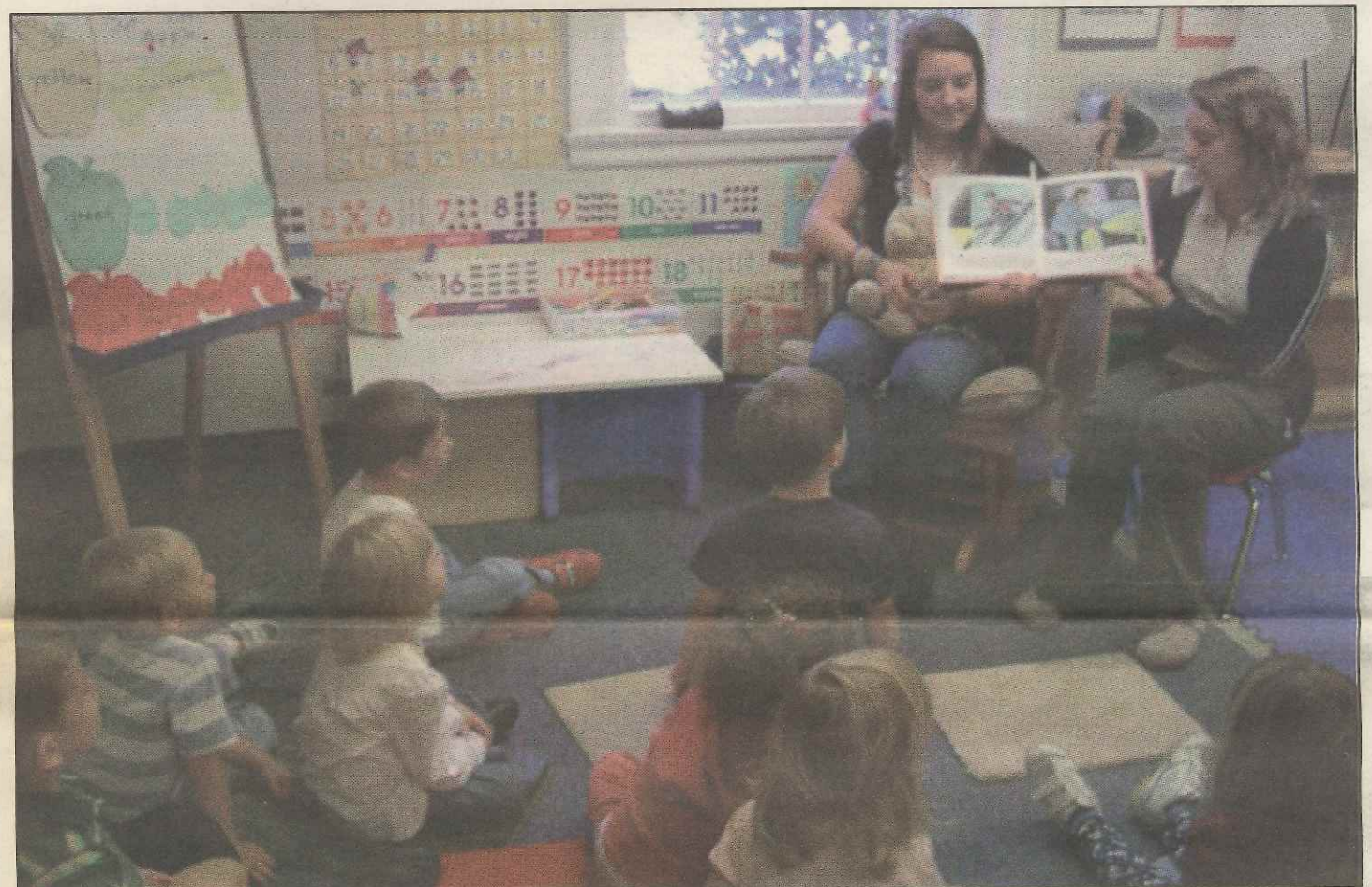


Photo Courtesy of Brittney Anderson

Seniors Sarah Gerard (right) and Stephanie Mullet (left) read to preschoolers as part of the Teacher Cadets program at our school. See page 4 for full story.

## Former Students Make Homeless Documentary

STEPHEN HOWELL  
LAYOUT/NEWS EDITOR

For many graduating seniors, the thought of seeing a past teacher over summer seems imposing, but not for Nancy Mantelli's TV Production students.

This past summer, Mantelli hired three of her former students, including Nathan Baer from our school, to produce a documentary about homeless veterans in the nation's capital.

"My friends thought it was cool I was working on a movie and I think my parents were glad I had a summer job," Baer said of the reactions he received. The idea to shoot a documentary with former students came to Mantelli early last spring. Mantelli wanted to find a way to work with her students, and homelessness was a topic of interest to her and her friend, Alivia Tagliaferri, who works for IronCutter Media, LLC.

"Beyond the Walls: Homeless Zone" is a documentary about homeless war veterans in the Washington, D.C. area. The documentary was debuted at the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars on Monday, November 3 at 6 p.m. The project started as both a mix of Mantelli's interest and a desire to work with students. With funding from FannieMae and private contributors, the third year teacher was able hire three of her former students; Nathan Baer, from our school, Marcus Clarke, from Hayfield, and Cory Jones, from Mount

See Documentary, page 4

## Students Will Pay for 2010 AP Tests

MARIYA ILYAS  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

No AP exams?

With our county facing a nearly \$500 million budget deficit for Fiscal Year 2010, many things, including students paying for AP exams, are on table for the School Board to consider when making vital budget cuts that have far-reaching consequences for every student.

There is a great possibility of students paying for their AP exams in May 2010. "From the discussion of the challenges we face in the county," AP Coordinator Alex Case said. "The read I have is that [Fairfax County] will not be funding AP exams in future years."

The final decision will be controversial, because as Case said, in order "get the 0.5 in future years GPA, you would probably have to take the AP test."

Fairfax County

faced a similar budget problem in the 1990s, in which students had to pay for all of their AP tests.

However, the funds for this year's exams are safe, according to Superintendent for Instructional Services. "I was also pleased to hear from the Deputy Superintendent that the funding for my AP Boot Camp is safe for this coming year," said Case.

An online program, known as the AP

See AP Tests, page 5

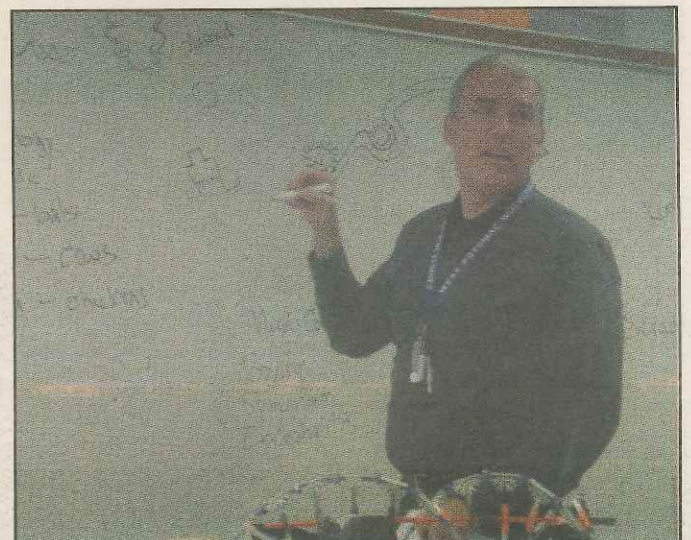


Photo by Mariya Ilyas

AP Biology teacher Ed Chapman teaches his students. To compensate for a budget shortfall, Fairfax County has proposed students pay for their AP tests.



# It is Not That Much to Ask, People

Quizzes and tests and school bathrooms, oh my!

Our school is like a second home to many students, who spend time before and after school in the building. But when nature calls for students, they are faced with a gruesome site – the school bathrooms.

Sure, it is only natural and students cannot be blamed for doing their business, but the words ‘clean up’ seem to confuse a few teenagers. Someone’s private business should be either flushed down the toilet, or discarded properly in a trash can, and everybody should know what goes in the proper disposal.

Students are always encouraged to express themselves, but personal opinions need to be kept out of the bathroom, period. The next case is graffiti. No one cares. People are simply in the bathroom to get their business

done and be on their way, and that does not include reading hateful messages. Writing gang signs, remarks about other students, and random comments on the walls is not only immature, it is offensive.

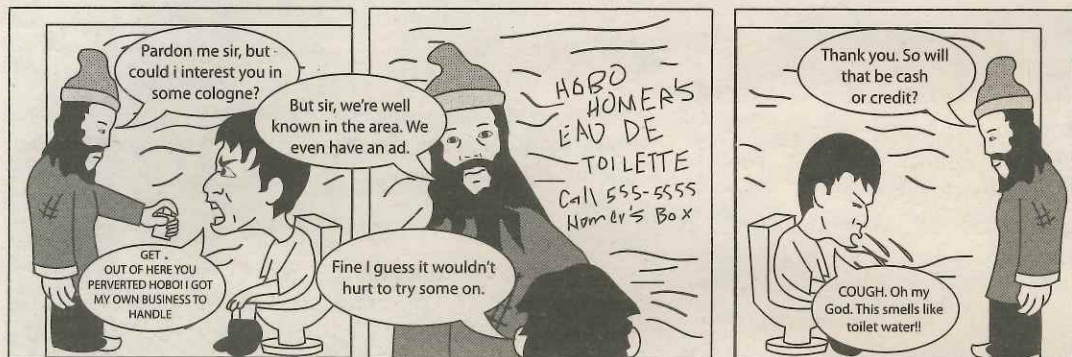
People might get a good laugh out of them for a short while, but in reality, they are cruel, as kindergarten-ish as that sounds. Graffiti shows the maturity level of some students, or lack there of. What a great impression it makes on visitors and parents; the students at our school cannot even get along with each other.

Smell is another huge problem that students deal with when using the bathrooms. This clearly cannot be prevented, but there are ways to alleviate the pain the smell of the bathrooms puts on our nostrils. All of the bathrooms are not well ventilated, and even the ones

that do have windows are normally never opened. One solution to solve this problem is use air fresheners.

Supplies, supplies, supplies! Teachers are constantly complaining about students not bringing the correct writing utensils, or forgetting their book at home. The same thing goes for student and the lack of supplies in the bathrooms. Students often leave the bathrooms frustrated, because the paper towel or toilet paper dispensers are either jammed, or more often, empty.

The lack of consideration the janitorial staff and students put into keeping the bathrooms clean is appalling and something needs to be done. If you sprinkle when you tinkle, please be neat and wipe your seat. It really is not that much to ask to be sanitary in a professional environment, like our school.



By Darryl Sharp

## CORRECTIONS

On page 10, Emily Griffin wrote the article “Raising Football Stars In the Making,” not Jessica Taylor.

On pages 6 & 14, Asma Ahmad’s name was misspelled.

On page 7, Brett Dunlap’s name is misspelled.

On page 7, the photo for “Increase in DWI Arrests” was courtesy of MCT, not clip art.

On page 10, the photo for “Crew Sits on a New Fundraiser” was courtesy of Emily Kuhbach.

## RANTS and Raves

A **RANT** for Socialist economies.

A **RANT** for the expensive \$20 Z-Pizzas.

A **RANT** for the school bathrooms.

A **RANT** for teachers who do not prepare their students for quarter tests.

A **RAVE** for *The Wire* receiving Trophy award for 2007-2008 school year!

A **RAVE** for the Miami FINS.

A **RAVE** for being 25% done with the school year.

A **RAVE** for excess amounts of sugar.

## WEST POTOMAC HIGH REPORT CARD

### 1ST QUARTER

### ADMINISTRATION

The administration did not approve Powderpuff Day this year.

C

### ATHLETICS

Cross country teams did well, as boys and girls both advanced to regionals. Field Hockey team finished 9-7 and improved on last year’s record. Football team lost 4 games in a row after winning first 5. Volleyball team won only 4 games.

C+

### CAFETERIA FOOD

Yuck, with exception of the Spicy Chicken Sandwich.

D

### STUDENT GOVERNMENT

Leaders of our school did a great job with Homecoming and raising school spirit. Keep it up, President John Rice and crew.

A

### CUSTODIANS

Custodians do a terrific job of cleaning up, however there is always room for improvement.

B

### WEPORT

The WePort is not on enough, but the FLEX videos are quite entertaining, even if it took a long time to start.

B

### OVERALL SCHOOL GRADE

C+

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## Modern Fashion Takes it Over the Top



**ASMA AHMAD**  
ONLINE EDITOR

Fashion changes from season to season, and trends are usually not popular for longer than a few weeks. However, that does not mean high fashion has to be completely erratic, unaffordable, and a waste of time and money.

Though everyone has the right to express themselves through their attire, when was the last time anyone strutted down the sidewalk wearing feathery, metallic fabrics, with awkwardly fitting tops and ridiculously large high heels?

Let us look at the bigger picture. Unless the money that is generated from \$150,000 fashion runway shows is being donated to charity, which is a rare occurrence, there is little humanitarian influence in the fashion world and beyond. According to an article in *Slate Magazine* in 2004, author Josh Partner said, "Fledgling designers are lucky if they can get sponsorship – perhaps from a liquor company or trade organization – to help deflect costs." This superficial industry has completely transformed the way women and models live their lives, considering "models often work for clothes rather than money, especially when the designers have small houses but growing prestige."

On some level, celebrity obsessions and the exaggerated media is to blame. The purple blazers everyone was swooning over this fall will be history in four months. So, who really cares how the proportion of a waistline emphasizes the cheek bone, or how flat shoes make one look slouchy even though they allow for faster and more comfortable walking? The point is that the average American does not have the time nor money to keep up with the super high speed of lofty fashion trends because

**“When was the last time anyone strutted down the sidewalk wearing feathery, metallic fabrics, with awkwardly fitting tops and ridiculously large high heels?”**

what we see on the runway is usually *haute couture*, a French term meaning “high-sewing,” or overly priced ready-to-wear clothing.

Senior Brianne Wilson brought up the fact that “Fashion helps historians understand a past society’s culture, but it also makes people conform to the norms of the society by categorizing anyone and everyone. For example, if a girl wears fish nets, she is considered a punk.” So what would a historian from the year 2050 infer about our era? That we were all incredibly balanced individuals who wore narrowly hemmed dresses with fur hats and shirts made of unusual materials? Regardless of what the historian would think, the fashion industry of our time is not currently portraying our society’s culture truthfully.

Relative to our economy, the other problem that arises is how retailers depend on impulsive buyers who treat clothing like disposable Ziploc bags in order to make the profits they need to compete in the greater, global economy. This requires continuous buying and the complete negation of spending money responsibly. The fashion industry needs to promote smarter spending for the sake of either helping humanity or our economy, which could use some serious help.

There is a distinct difference between decent, wearable clothing that follows recent fashion trends, and clothing for the sake of making an artistic statement. Seeing how fashion has transformed from the prescribing what one should wear in the coming seasons to an esoteric visual culture made only for those who can afford to live a glamorous lifestyle, I believe that measures should be taken to try and include the greater majority of people who do not fit in the category of tall, size 2, physically flawless individuals.

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## Interims Do Nothing But Make Matters Worse



**MICHAELA ACCARDI**  
NEWS EDITOR

As first quarter grades were just finalized, some students remember seeing their interims with disappointment. For some, interims are only sheets of paper (quickly thrown away or lost), but for others, an interim could determine their lifestyle for the next four and a half weeks.

Many teachers agree that interims are a tool for students to determine where they stand and can be used to measure how strenuously they will need to work for the remainder of the quarter. US History teacher, Salvatore Olivo said, “In my experience... they [interims] help wake up students before quarter grades.” With this fact, I do agree. However, if any parent saw a D or F on an interim, they would not be so confident in their child’s ability to raise this to the desired grade by the end of the quarter.

Seeing low grades on an interim is not a confidence booster, even if these grades can be easily changed. To some, interims seem so finite and unchangeable, that their parents even freak out when they receive them.

Obviously interims can not be removed from the school system. Nevertheless, emphasis on interims should be decreased. It would be wiser to inform parents of the flexibility of grades on interims because by the time interims are handed to students about a week after grades have been entered.

Junior Camthao Dang agreed that some of her grades were inaccurate. “I turned in a lot of stuff [schoolwork, homework] afterwards,” she said. Dang also stated that she would rather receive a greater amount of grade printouts because they are more accurate and timely. “They [interims] are just like grade print outs on official paper,” said Dang. This quarter, Dang did not show her parents her interim because “I only show my parents if they’re good.”

**“Emphasis on interims should be decreased.”**

INTERIM REPORT:

Math C  
English B  
Science D+  
History C+

Parent Diane Gleason said, “Interims are just as vital as final quarter grades because it should help the student keep track of their grades and not get into a moment of panic the last week of the quarter feeling that they have lost the opportunity to make up work.” Like Gleason, parents understand the use of interims but do not have the same concept as students do.

Along with Dang, many students feel that parents do not understand the insignificance of interims when looking at the big picture. Quarter and final grades are really the ones that count. Even teachers tell students this, but parents are the ones that do not understand. Unfortunately, parents are the same people that run the household. Whatever a parent may deem a bad grade can result in a bad situation for the student, such as being grounded. Dang said if she had shown her parents her interim, they would have cared about her grades.

When asked if he thought that interims were overemphasized, Olivo said, “Yes, they [interims] serve as a good guide but they’re not directly related to report cards. I find that my grades go up after interims.”

Other students did not show their parents their interims. Even if students told their parents that interims were not a big deal and that they could work to improve their grade, it would make little difference to them. But if faculty or teachers accurately explained interims to parents the same exact way they do to students, their view may be different.

Interims are definitely needed to keep students in check especially when they do not receive grade printouts on a regular basis. However, parents should have an accurate understanding of the purpose and significance of interims resulting in the lessening of punishment for students. Unless grades are horrendous, parents should understand that a stern talk with their son or daughter about improving their grades or seeking help is sufficient.

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## HANGING OUT WITH THE HEAD HONCHO

*I met Hillary!!!*

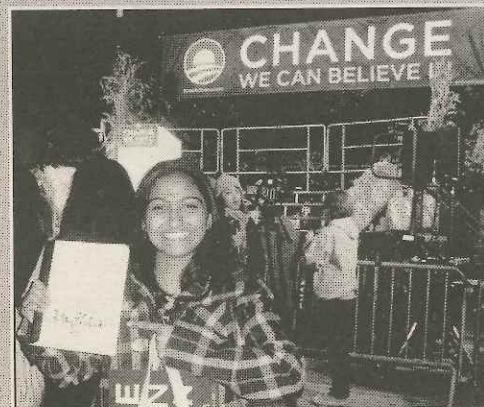


Photo by Maryum Ilyas

**MARIYA ILYAS**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

I waited four hours in the cold, chilly weather. As the winds pinched me, my Obama buttons chattered on my jacket.

The crowd was pushing against me, there was so much noise. Somehow, the loud yelling and screaming didn’t matter, for all I could hear was my heart skipping beats. My eyes were fixed as she drew closer. She was coming towards me, in her blue suit, smiling.

There she was. My hero, my role model. For a moment, I could not believe it. I was going to meet Hillary Clinton.

Past Monday at the George Mason campus, I got the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to shake hands with Hillary Clinton, the lady who I look up to the most. She stood before me smiling graciously, as I glared at her, unable to say anything. It seemed as if time had frozen. My hand trembled as I took her pictures, shot after shot.

Suddenly, in a jolt of emotions, I came back in touch with reality and realized she was moving on to the next screaming fan. I pulled out the first thing I could get my hand on – my yellow English writing notebook – and asked for her autograph. She graciously signed with the black sharpie.

Getting to meet Hillary was an experience I dreamed of for a long time. In the patriarchal Pakistan, women received very few rights and privileges. Although Benazir Bhutto, prime minister of Pakistan for some time, also inspires me, I have come to admire Hillary’s courage and bravery as well. I never really got a chance to know Bhutto, who was murdered in December 2007.

Growing up in the United States was difficult, especially learning English and emerging in the American culture. But somehow, I found it easy to understand the U.S. government, perhaps because I embraced democracy and the concept of “consent of the governed.” The more I studied U.S. history and the political philosophies, the more intrigued I became with politics – the great leaders of the past, their policies, and the citizens’ response.

Hillary inspires me to be the leader I am today. As senior class president and editor of the school newspaper, I enjoy standing up for my beliefs, and I never hesitate to challenge my peers who question my ability to lead.

For the 2008 presidential election, I had sincerely hoped that Hillary receive the Democratic nomination, not because she was a woman, but because I believed – and still do – in her ability to lead our nation. This is not to say I doubt Barack Obama; in fact I have campaigned for him every weekend since September and hope he wins the election.

Hillary is living evidence of breaking the barriers set by men, for fighting and overcoming roadblocks, and most importantly, believing in her own abilities despite the opinions of others. I can only hope to be as strong as her.

I can now tell my grandchildren, with evidence, that I met one of the greatest women of our times: Hillary Rodham Clinton.

On Monday, my dream came true. (Well, at least one of them.)

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Photo by Mariya Ilyas



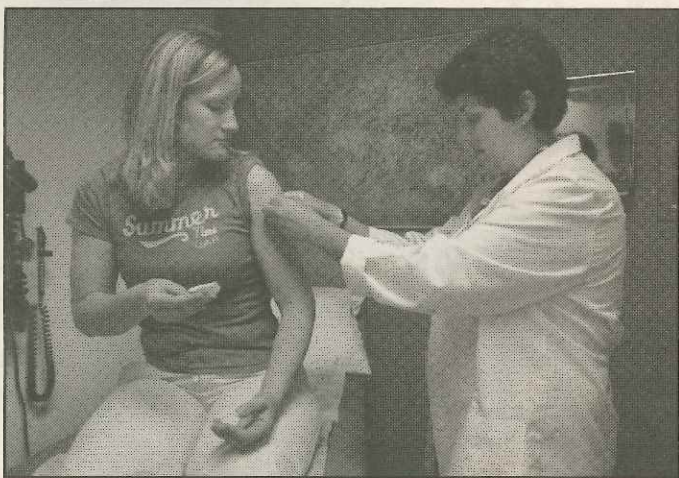


Photo by Benjamin Benschneider/MCT

A doctor gives a patient the human papillomavirus, more commonly known as HPV shot. One of the three trials required to prevent cervical cancer.

## HPV Vaccine Causes Controversy

RACHEL MARTIN  
REPORTER

Cancer is a scary thing.

It changes your entire life, makes living a struggle between you and the illness. It always seems like it happens to someone else, but it reality, it could happen to anyone. And there is a virus that can increase the chances of getting it.

This virus is the Human Papillomavirus, or HPV, which can cause cervical cancer in women. What makes this especially concerning is how common this virus is. 20 million people are already infected with it, with 6.2 million more being diagnosed every year.

Fortunately, there is a vaccine that can be given to girls to help prevent four of the most common types of papillomaviruses which cause cancer. This vaccine, Gardasil, consists of three injections over six months. Colonel Kugler M.D. of Dewitt Army Hospital recommends this vaccination for girls between the ages of 11 and 12, and from ages 13 to 26 if they have not yet received the vaccination. He recommends it for girls of such a young age because it is most effective when given before the recipient has become sexually active, because they have not yet been exposed to HPV.

However, women who are already sexually active can still benefit from having the vaccine. It is important to remember that the vaccination helps to prevent HPV that causes cervical cancer, not the cancer itself. While it is effective in preventing the viruses that most commonly cause cancer, Colonel Kugler said that 30 percent of cervical cancers are not prevented by the vaccine.

However, some people are opposed to the Human Papillomavirus vaccination. They believe the best way to avoid HPV, as well as cervical cancer, is abstinence until a committed, monogamous relationship. There is also concern that it could encourage girls to be more sexually promiscuous if they believe that they are safe from some of the most common sexually transmitted diseases. Some are also critical of girls receiving the vaccination at such a young age, arguing that it might encourage girls to become sexually active sooner.

Others argue that the side effects of the vaccine are not yet fully understood. As junior Laura Cunningham, who decided not to get the vaccination, said, "I think it's a bad idea because it's so new. There could be long term side effects that we don't know about."

According to the National Cancer Institute, the vaccine's effectiveness against cervical cancer makes it highly beneficial to women or girls who wish to take it. Those who support the vaccine believe that any prevention against cervical cancer is worthwhile. Junior Deisy Lopez is among them. "I think that it is a good idea because any defense against cervical cancer is worth it. I'm sure it has been tested enough, anyway, since the FDA approved it."

Colonel Kugler believes that all young women should be informed of and consider the vaccination, and urges all young women to get regular screenings, or PAP smears, for cervical cancer.

Human Papillomavirus is a group of viruses that affect the skin and mucosal surfaces of the body. The most important ones are the genital viruses, which are spread by sexual contact. This variety can be harmless, either only causing warts, or having no symptoms and even going away without treatment. However, this is also the variety that causes cervical cancer.

Cervical cancer can be caught and treated early with regular screening. If cervical cancer is detected while still in Stage 0, in which the cancer cells are only in the first layer of tissue in the cervix, then the National Foundation for Cancer Research states that the survival rate is 100 percent. However, because it often shows no symptoms until its later stages, in which the cancer has spread and the chances of survival have greatly decreased, it is often only caught when it is too late. Colonel Kugler M.D. said that of the 12,000 women who are diagnosed with cervical cancer each year, 4,000 women die from it.

That's one in every three women.

## Students Cadets Gain Experience

RACHEL MARTIN  
REPORTER

Senior Ellen Peterson's voice filled the classroom as she read aloud. The preschoolers' eyes were wide as they took in every word, enraptured by her voice. As Peterson realized they were listening, her voice grew stronger. "At first, I was thinking, 'I hope they're paying attention to me.' But when I realized they were listening, I felt more confident, I really enjoyed it."

Peterson is one of the teacher cadets at this school. These students read aloud to several classes at Plymouth Haven Preschool as a part of the National Read Across America Program. This program is designed to encourage reading in children. Laura Bush also took part in this program in October, inviting children to come to the White House, where she read to them.

For the teacher cadets, it was a very rewarding experience. These students take an elective to explore the field of education. They learn about instructing in a classroom, the responsibilities of being a teacher, and participate in an internship outside of the classroom. This was their first experience in front of a classroom, and it has reinforced their desire to be teachers. As Sarah Gerard said, "I really enjoyed it. It was a good experience."

The preschoolers immensely enjoyed the occasion. They listened attentively as the teacher cadets read them *Corduroy*, a classic book about the adventures of a stuffed bear. "They were so excited; it was adorable," Peterson continued. "They were all telling us about their stuffed animals. When we were reading, they were just fixated on the book." The preschoolers were ecstatic as the cadets passed out bear stickers for them to wear.

This event was organized with the help of the

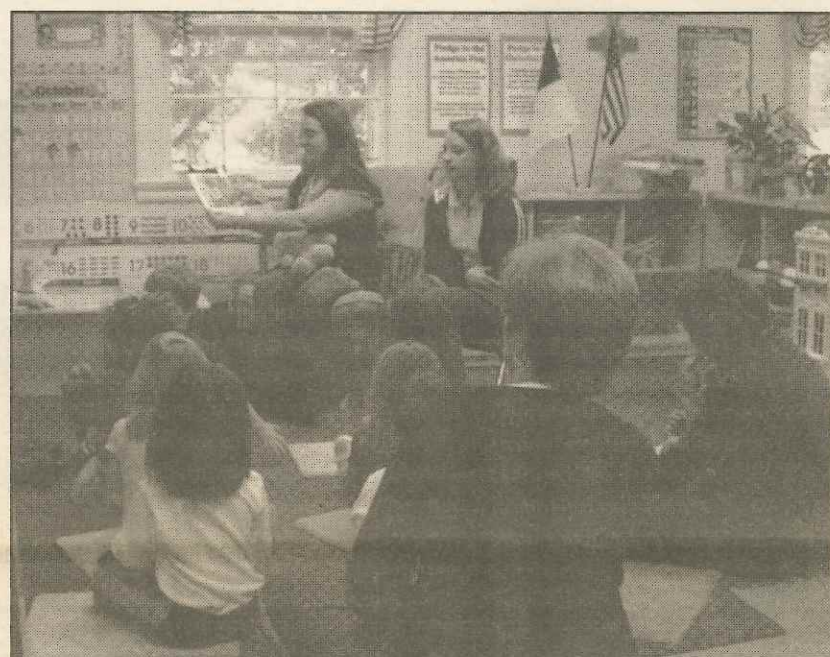


Photo by Erin Parker

Senior Stephanie Mullet reads to a group of preschool students as part of the Teacher Cadets program taught at our school by Mrs. Kathryn McCullohs.

## Academy Teacher Hires Former Students and Films Documentary

*Continued from page 1*

Vernon. The veterans featured in the movie were all from the Vietnam War, but Mantelli said it was not uncommon to see homeless veterans from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Mantelli also explained that becoming homeless is a process, and doesn't happen overnight. "It takes years for [veterans] to become homeless... But because of the current economic situation, veterans from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars are becoming homeless at a faster rate, Mantelli said.

Mantelli, who has worked with Proctor and Gamble and The Center for Missing and Exploited Children, among others, stressed that the TV production class not only teaches students the elements and processes of production, but gives students "real world" knowledge and experience.

"I want to give all of my students the opportunity to work in this field," Mantelli said of her passion to incorporate students into her work. The TV Productions class is an Academy class, and students have it every day. Approximately seven of Mantelli's current students, from both West Potomac and Annandale, will cover the screening and make a marketing video.

Baer, who currently attends Columbia College in Illinois, never thought he would be working with a teacher after graduation and said he gained

many experiences from working on the set with Mantelli, who he refers to as 'Nancy.'

"It was fun. It got stressful at times, but it was fun nonetheless. Nancy always had a good working attitude; she really loves her profession," Baer said of working for his former teacher. When asked what he would've thought if someone told him in the beginning of the year that he would have had a job for his teacher the following summer, Baer said, "I would've thought I picked the right class. Which I did."

The crew starting shooting in June at various locations around Washington, D.C. and interviewed many experts and administrators for homeless organizations, as well as also the homeless veterans themselves. "It was heart breaking sometimes," Baer said of the close encounters he had with a few of America's estimated 150,000 homeless veterans. Mantelli's vision of giving students real life experience was fulfilled for Baer, who learned a lot about the industry. Baer learned how to work at a professional level, but he also learned about the "ins and outs" of working on a set, including the importance of keeping in touch with coworkers.

Mantelli hopes to make another film with her future former students again this summer, but doesn't have an idea just yet. "There's no better place on this world than a production set."



# Fashion Works to Fight Poverty

KARLA CRUZ & EMILY SMITH

REPORTER & MANAGING EDITOR

Can fashion fight poverty? This was the question debated in Washington D.C. for the fourth year in a row, earlier this September.

In 2005, Michael Dumlao, Sylvie Luanghy and Kadrieka Maiden, of the Style & Image Network (SIN), decided to organize an event to raise awareness and funds, to encourage fighting poverty through creative, effective, and sustainable means. This event was planned to unite the two seemingly opposite worlds of high fashion and worldwide poverty. *Fashion Fights Poverty* (FFP) provides a forum for dialogue and partnerships between development and corporate communities to discuss ways to both promote their art and to donate time and money to alleviate the suffering of people in poverty ridden countries.

Fashion designers also communicate and exchange ideas with each other about how they can help through their clothing. This

year, one of the more important topics was the use of environmentally sustainable fabrics, and equal employment opportunities.

The goal of FFP is not to completely change the spending and shopping habits of people, but rather to give them opportunities and knowledge about where they can both buy clothes and donate the money to charity. Maria Kappel, the Career Counselor for our Academy, was part of the Fashion Staff for this year's FFP. "This year we did this fashion show that was for helping out fight poverty," said Kappel. "It was great!" Many of her students helped out back stage with the fashion show too.

One of the participants at FFP was Eddie Fam, a fashion designer of a clothing line called iKY. Fam's clothing line reaches New York, California, North Carolina, and other states. "I've been a designer since 2004 but [the line was] established in year of 2005. Before I was

in the music industry but then one of my friends was into the fashion so I got into it. Ever since that time I've been working with

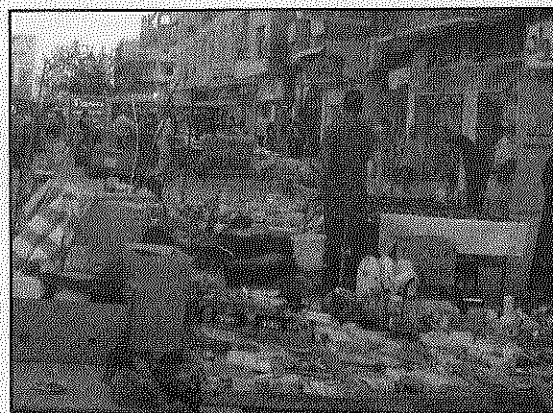


Photo by Laith Hammoudi/MCT

FFP works to prevent poverty such as that shown above.

this clothing line..." Our school's fashion design program was fortunate enough to meet Fam in person, and he will attend our

school's Fashion Show later on this year.

Though emerging clothing brands such as iKY are represented, the sponsors are well known. Glaceau's *Smartwater* sponsored 2008's FFP, as did *The Washingtonian*, and the gift bags were stuffed with goodies from Loreal Professional and Green Mountain Coffee. The United Nations Association of the United States of America's National Capital Area chapter supplies volunteers for the annual fashion event, and One, the Campaign to Make Poverty History, works with volunteers and fashion designers.

Though *haute couture* and third world countries are two phrases rarely heard in the same sentence, Fashion Fights Poverty proves that people can come together and change the fashion world. The world of fashion was once so removed from the everyday lives of citizens, but has now changed to a worldwide phenomenon that is working to alleviate the suffering of those in poverty stricken countries.

*Continued from page 1*

are at risk," Rohrer sad of the effect the budget cuts will have on his department.

A recommendation was sent to the Board of Supervisors for withdrawal from Fairfax's Revenue Stabilization Fund. Created in 1999, the fund has strict requirements for withdrawal, including when the County's General Fund revenue is decreased 1.5% from the current estimate. This has been the first time conditions were met in the Stabilization Fund's history.

"I am aware that many of the recommended actions are unprecedented

and will have significant impacts on County agencies' ability to provide services," County Executive Anthony Griffin said in a county-wide email.

The county has an overall budget of \$3.3 billion, and over half of it, \$1.8 billion, goes to funding the school system, which is the nation's thirteenth largest. County executives have no say in how school officials spend their budget, only on how much they have to spend. Typically, Superintendent Jack Dale and the School Board do not discuss the budget until January. However, given the current economic situation and expected controversial cuts, they talked earlier.

Dale has identified possible administrative cuts of \$2.9 million, which include reducing the number of school board members, but deeper cuts will need to be made across the board, he said. Possible cuts include reducing the number of school resource officers, health clinic aids, and funding for the Head Start Program.

There will be community dialogue meetings November 13 at Oakton Library, John Marshall Library, Woodrow Wilson Library, Burke Center Library, and the Mason governmental centers. For more information can be found at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget).

## Paying for Tests is a Reality for Students

*Continued from page 1*

Potential, is available as a resource for all Fairfax County teachers and counselors. The premise of the program is to identify potential students to take an AP course based on how well they tested on their PSAT tests. An online database comprises the scores of every student, and any teacher in the county has access to this information. The program is designed to target students who normally would not sign up for an AP class but have the potential to do so. "I used it last year a little bit and counselors will be using it this year," said Case.

"I do not think it is necessarily a good system," said senior Frederic Klein said. "I think a better idea would be, after course selections are due, to pull out students who are not signed up, but their scores reflect that they should be in AP."

Case is a lobbying to prevent students paying for AP exams because "it detracts people from taking exams," he said. "Not having tests funded will discourage" many students from signing up. Case said, however it should not be problem because our school's AP enrollment "doubled in size in last four years."

In the last four years, the number of AP tests taken by our students has increased steadily. In 2005 a total of 751 tests were taken by 394 students, and in 2008, a total of 1,152 tests were taken by a total of 542 students. Also, minority students are signing up for AP classes at a higher rate. Our school offers 27 AP classes, and hopes to add AP Environmental Science next year, bringing the count to 28.

School Board's goal as part of the School Improvement Program is for every student to take at least one AP, Dual Enrollment, or Honors course before graduating by the year 2015.

Recently, Fairfax County Publics Schools were recognized for representing one third of all minority tests taken in Virginia.

There is also a possibility of students just taking AP classes, but having the option to take the AP exams. Case stated that it would not be surprising if students had to pay for the tests for a subsidized fee, like \$10 or \$20 rather than the full cost of \$84 per test.

"That is a good compromise," said Biology teacher Ed Chapman. He went on to say that he does not think the budget cut will "affect students because they're going to take AP's anyway." He reasoned that students should only be taking exams they can do well on.

There is a way to identify students on free and reduced lunch programs so they can get fees waived.

Last year, Chapman graded AP exams, and was disappointed that hundreds of exams were blank. "That just wasted money," he said.

If you were to make budget cuts for our county, what would you eliminate and why?

"I don't know why there's a special school like Thomas Jefferson, taking money. If there's anything I would cut, it'd be that."

"Freshmen sports, because Freshmen teams don't really have a purpose. They should practice more to get on varsity, and a lot of schools don't have teams."

"Students should pay for their AP tests because it's a college course, so if you're going to take on the workload, you might as well take the entire package, which includes paying for the test."

"Late buses and field trips because that is the least amount of students that would be affected."

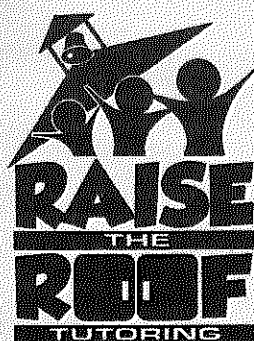
**Aaron Helmick,**  
Director of Student Activities

**Rachel Browning,**  
Juniors

**Erik Ferri,**  
Senior

**William Haire,**  
Security Administrator

Photos by Karla Cruz



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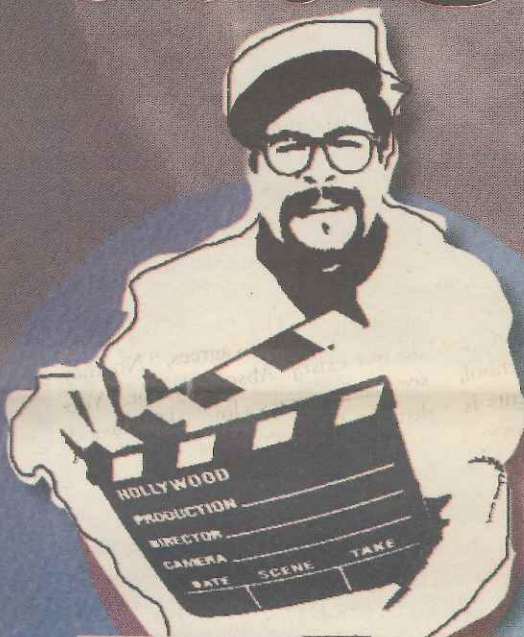


When

HOLLYWOOD

MEETS

HIGH SCHOOL



CUT. THAT'S A WRAP.

Photos by Laura Zitnik and Erin Parker

US V. THEM

JESSICA TAYLOR  
REPORTER

Hollywood seems to be in love with forcing the complications of life into easy clichés, and high school movies do not escape this trend. The stereotypes are always the same; the jock, the princess, the criminal, the basket case, and the brain that first graced our screens in that 80's classic, *The Breakfast Club*. Since then, they have seemed intent

on maintaining those themes. It is true that these stereotypes can often turn out to be over-the-top gross exaggerations about high school life, yet, if there is no truth to these classifications, what gives them such a powerful staying power?

Like it or not, these stereotypes seem here to stay. There is no denying that there is some element of truth to these clichés. Cliques do exist in high schools across the country, but they are not always accurate.

OUTCASTS

BRYAN JACOBS  
SPORTS EDITOR

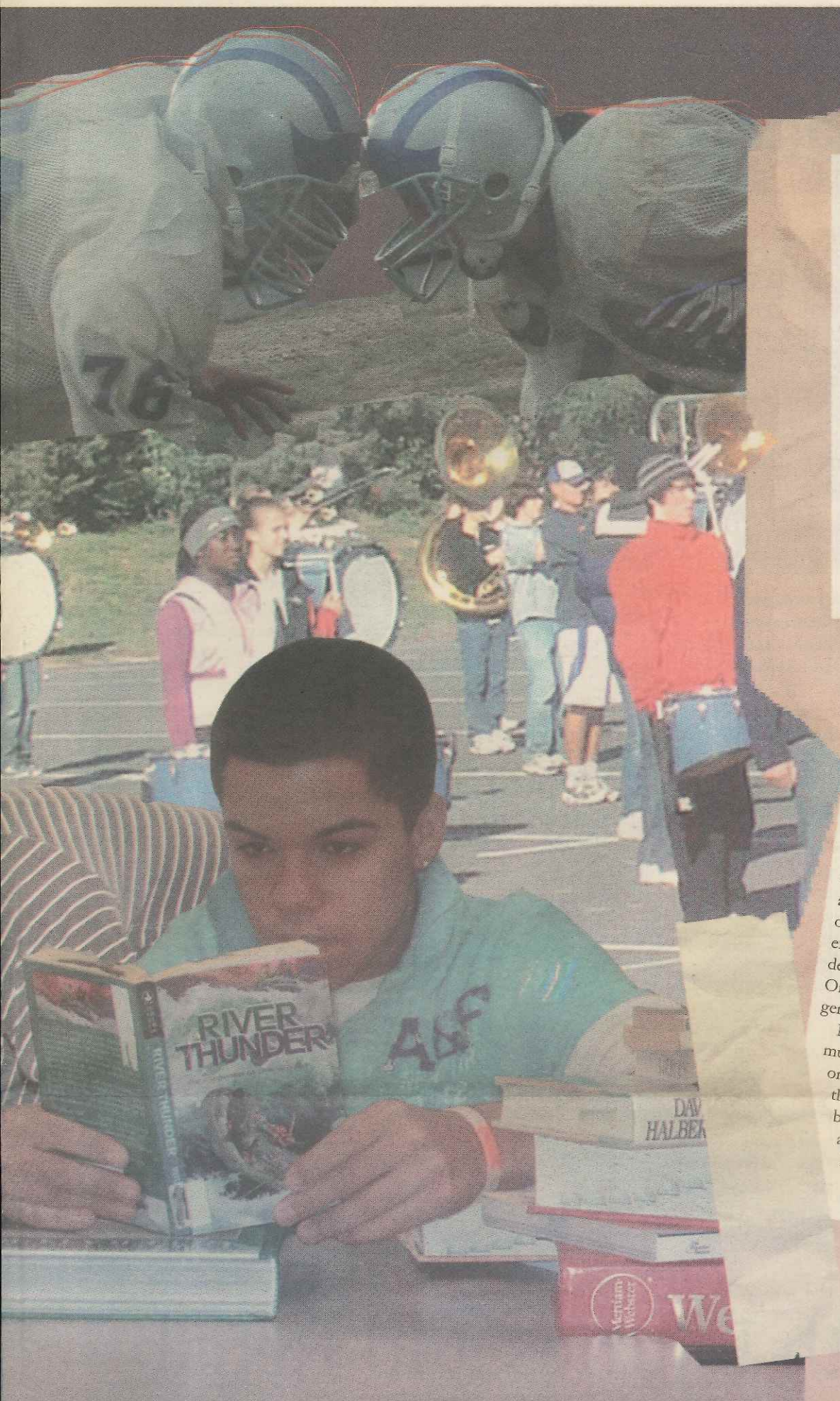
They are called many different names: nerd, freak, or "noob," but in Hollywood movies and at our school, they are the losers. Losers in popular culture are usually represented as a dorky looking person with a calculator in one hand and a physics term paper in another, and actually liked doing it. Junior Nina Suggs said "The average loser is really just a kid who is unfriendly and anti-social; I really could care less about them."

At our school, the "losers" are

people who only want to fit in, but are not generally accepted. Maybe it is their style of dress, attitude, or just basic human sociology that there will always have an "odd-one-out". Most of these students are labeled because of the insecurity of other kids, who find it necessary to make these students fit the high school role of a stereotypical loser.

The "popular kids" can have their reign of terror, drugs and alcohol until the reality sinks in, that the world is not a popularity contest and the world is not a "Did you hear that Kelly went to..." You can finish the rest.





# JOCKS

**PETER COFFEY**  
REPORTER

When people see high school jocks in the movies, they are usually big, buff, wear their letter jackets, and are not book smart. But people who are actually in high school know this is not true. In Hollywood movies, the varsity cheerleaders are supposed to date the Varsity football players. Jocks, according to Hollywood and T.V., are always stealing the

non-athletes' lunch money; this is not true at our school either. Ask junior Cole Coder if he has ever gotten his lunch money stolen from a jock. He said, "No!" However, he did have a story about a time when he was waiting in the snack line and a jock asked him for a dollar and he said no. The jock just walked away forcing no violence towards Coder. Jocks in real high school are completely different from jocks on T.V. and in movies.

# Band Geeks

**GWEN FISHEL**  
COPY EDITOR

In high school, cliques dominate the majority of the social scene. Many students are put into stereotypes and are stuck with them for the remainder of high school. Unfortunately, extracurricular activities usually determine how you will be grouped. One of these groups is the generalization of "band geeks."

Many students are involved in the music department at our school; one of the largest departments is the band. In Hollywood movies, band geeks are usually depicted as "lame" and without social lives.

At our school, it appears that "band geeks" are not

really geeks at all. In fact, last year's homecoming queen was the Drum Major of the band, far from the typical Hollywood stereotype. Many students at our school, who play in the band, also participate in many other activities and definitely do not play music and do homework all the time. Casey Jenkins agrees, "No, [they do not exist.]. Absolutely not. You see that in movies a lot." Hollywood distorts the image of band geeks for their own purposes, but at our school, there is not such visualization of that stereotype. However, junior J.P. Marinelli thinks that that stereotype may be partially true. He said, "Yes [they do exist.]. They dress funny."

# Overachievers

**TIDAE JOHNSON**  
PHOTOGRAPHER

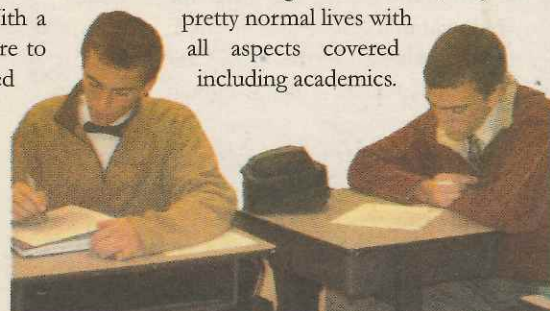
Often times in Hollywood movies, an overachiever is portrayed as the kid rushing to get to class to be the first one there, or as the kid whose hand shoots up quickly to answer the teacher's question. An overachiever is perceived as the kid who would rather sit home in front of his computer doing extra credit, than hanging out with friends. As we all know, directors of Hollywood films portray high school life differently in their movies – sometimes exaggerating a bit too much than what reality actually seems to be.

Overachievers at our school are different from those on the cinema screens. With a corky smile, junior Isiah Manalo admitted to being an overachiever, "Yes, I try be." With a 4.0 grade point average and a driven future to be an engineer or a chemist, Manalo stated if I were to bring home a C or below "My parents [would be] disappointed, and they would know I could do better."

Senior twins Ben and Thom Hammond are known to excel in their studies as well on track, yet they do not consider themselves overachievers. "I set high

standards for myself and strive to accomplish my goals," said Thom. Both brothers agree that learning the material is far more important than getting an A in any class. "To me getting an A has never been as important as learning itself," said Ben. "While it is always nice to get good grades, my attitude is that as long as I work hard and do my best, then grades are secondary." According to Thom, if "I learn the concepts, good grades will follow." Both admit that they have pulled the infamous all-nighters during their sophomore year, which is why they only take on a course load they can manage and still get enough sleep.

In actuality, overachievers are not the geeks that sit in front of a Calculus class or are isolated during lunch. In fact, they lead pretty normal lives with all aspects covered including academics.



Seniors Ben and Thom say they are not overachievers however, they admit to working hard.

Photo by Mariya Ilyas

# Burn outs

**EMILY GRIFFIN**  
ASSISTANT STYLE EDITOR

Remember the scene in *Mean Girls* where Janis tells Cady about the lunch tables? Janis tells Cady about where each clique sits, including the burnout clique.

Like our school, the movie, *Mean Girl* has a clique known as the burnouts. A burnout, by definition, is a high school or college student who does little else than cut classes and smoke weed. They usually have long, straight hair and have acted proclivity toward heavy metal bands of the 70's and 80's. They can often be found in smoke-filled bathrooms and makeshift

basement bars, according to [www.urbandictionary.com](http://www.urbandictionary.com).

The burnouts in a typical Hollywood high school would usually just hang around with each other and remain anti-social towards other cliques. In real life or just at our school, the burnouts do have their own clique and they do have a pretty big one at that. Senior Chloe Lenel believes that "truthfully I believe there are many [burnouts at our school]. I have seen some peoples' eye and they're bloodshot." There are even a few burnouts that will not talk to anyone around them and mostly listen to their iPods.



## Chris Horton Causes a Stir

Chris Horton is a Star Athlete on the Redskins Team

**PETER COFFEY**  
REPORTER

Chris Horton, a safety for the Washington Redskins, who was picked 249th in last year's NFL draft has already made an impact in the league.

Horton was born in the city of Los Angeles, California on December 29, 1984. At a very young age of seven, many recognized his athleticism and major potential when he helped lead his Little League football team beat its rival, in the championship game.

Although he spent his younger years in California, he later attended De La Salle Catholic School in uptown New Orleans, Louisiana.

While at De La Salle, he made a huge impact on the school's football team. Not only did he receive a varsity letter three years in a row, but he was a PrepStar All Region Selection. In other words, he was vicious.

Every year in high school, he improved his game. Junior year, Horton made 105 tackles and had two interceptions, and as a sophomore he was credited with 97 tackles.

Horton made 117 tackles (86 solos), 21 tackles for loss (including four sacks) in 10 games during his senior season.

He also caused 12 fumbles, recovered four fumbles and blocked seven kicks, an impressive feat for a high school senior. This talent did not go unnoticed and Horton was offered a full scholarship to University of California Los Angeles, which he accepted.

Horton continued to amaze people while at UCLA. After red shirting

as a freshman he came out strong for UCLA in his rookie season playing in 9 games where he blocked two punts and had a fourth quarter interception against Illinois that ended up leading to a touchdown by UCLA.

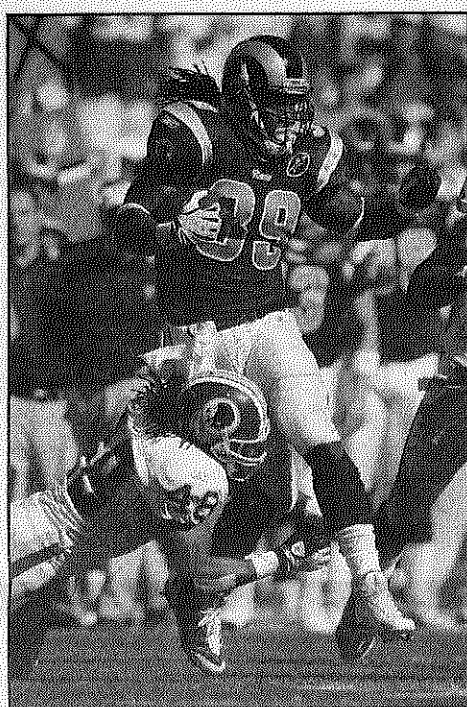
Unfortunately, his sophomore year he sustained a wrist injury that limited to only six games. This injury did not stop him from being a stud his junior year.

He started all 13 games for UCLA where he was the defensive winner of the Paul I Wellman award for all around excellence. Even in his senior year he continued to exceed expectations, starting all 13 games (again) and earning First-team All American Honors from the Sporting News, he was also first-team all Pacific-10.

He finished up his college career playing in 41 games and starting in 28 of them, in those games he tackled 238 people, had four interceptions, three sacks, three forced fumbles and two fumble recoveries.

You would think that a collegiate like that a person with a resume like that of Chris Horton would be picked high in the NFL draft? Wrong. Horton was one of the last picks of the NFL draft being picked up in the 7th round of the draft by the Washington Redskins.

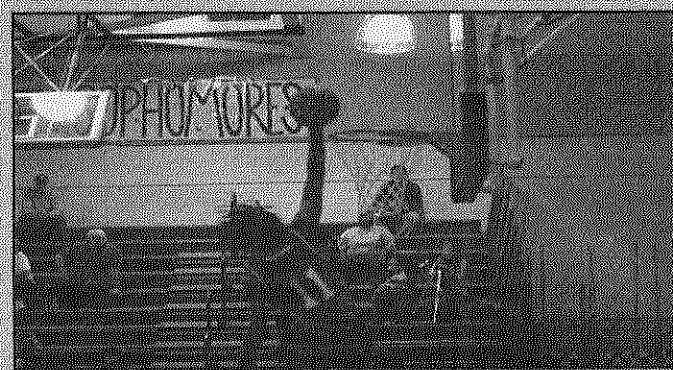
This decision to get Chris Horton happened to be one of the best pick ups in the NFL. Already in just seven games, he has intercepted three passes, two of which were in the same game and 37 tackles. Quite impressive for a NFL rookie let alone one of the last picks in the draft.



Courtesy of MCT Campus/ Handout

Rams Steven Jackson is hit by the Washington Redskins' Chris Horton.

## Sports Warm Up



Courtesy of Wolverines Athletics

Guard Matez Refearn (11) makes the first dunk of last year's basketball season.

**CATHERINE BRADLEY**  
REPORTER

The fall sports season is just wrapping up and already the winter season is upon us.

Tryouts are set to begin on November 10th and will include boys and girls' basketball, wrestling, cheerleading, gymnastics, rifle team, track and field, and swim and dive.

Each sport is hoping to improve on the previous years' record, and some want to completely rebuild their program; the winter sports season is already looking interesting.

The winter season provides students with a different variety of sports to choose from and a different atmosphere.

Unlike fall and spring sports, winter sports are played indoors and therefore make practices different; teams mostly condition inside and do not have to worry about the weather and game cancellations.

The boys' basketball team led by David Houston had a terrific season last year with a record of 14-12, their first winning season since 1998.

They made a playoff run finishing second in the Patriot District

and finishing in the top eight in the Northern Region. "The fans and students should expect the most exciting brand of basketball they've seen here in at least 5 years," Houston said of the team, which will be athletic and defensive orientated.

After losing five key seniors, and only have two returning seniors, the team is hoping to come back strong. The girls' basketball story is a little different.

Following a disappointing season last year the girls are hoping to "bounce back" with the help of their new head coach, Michael Weber.

The track and field team coached by Don Beeby is hoping to have another terrific season after the girls finished in a strong second last year, and the boys in a close third in the Patriot District.

The track team will also be seeing some coaching changes this season with the addition of Coach Kraut who is replacing Dan Lundin.

The gymnastic team coached by Pete Novgrod had great success over the past years and this year is looking to senior Julie Ruamthong to help lead the team.

## Athletes Cope With Injuries and Rehab

### Getting an injury is just the beginning of a recovery long process

**PETER COFFEY**  
REPORTER

In the world of high school sports, losing a game is the least of some athletes' worries. Injuries scare the athletes the most because it could mean not playing for rest of the season.

When athletes are injured, not only do they miss the big game or race, but they have to put in much more time and effort to improve their situation. Most athletes will agree that injuries are a catastrophe. Aaron Looney, a senior who plays on the Varsity football team has had not one, but two injuries just in the past year, which includes a dislocated shoulder and patella tendonitis that affected his knee. These two injuries kept him from working out for a total of four weeks. Looney comments on his injury, "The worst part was sitting on the sideline, watching the team play, knowing you can't do anything about it."

Another well known athlete, the senior Varsity captain of the girls Cross Country team, Amelia Cooksey was seriously injured. She was traumatized by a knee injury that kept her from doing Cross Country for two weeks. Like Looney, her thoughts about being injured were "It was just tough to watch other people run, when I couldn't."

Injuries affect every aspect in the world of sports at West Potomac, including volleyball. Junior Susan Sterne is on the Varsity Volleyball team and has had a "grocery list" of

injuries that have kept her out of the game for the majority of the season. Her knee cap was unstable; along with a surplus of fluid in her shoulder and tendonitis in her bicep. Basically, she was a walking train wreck.

While on the sidelines, injured athletes notice their surrounds much more. Another issue that they commonly see is perfectly healthy people quit because they simply do not feel like playing. "When some guys would take themselves out because they had a head ache...that just made me so mad, I mean its football come on!" said Looney. In regards to fake injuries, Captain of Cross Country Amelia Cooksey, responded, "I mean, if you have the ability why would you do that? It's just not fair to the people who are injured."

Then, along with the injuries, comes the long hardships and process of rehabilitation. Athletes have to work harder than their teammates every day to just get better. Aaron Looney put lots of hard work into rehab, four hours a day to be exact. Susan Sterne had to work hard as well. She went to physical therapy almost every day and when she was not at physical therapy, she would be in the training room. Fortunately, athletes do get better. Amelia's knee injury is gone, Susan was able to make it back for the last two weeks of the volleyball season and Aaron

is back on the playing field. If injuries are to teach athletes anything, it is to take full advantage of being healthy, because you never know when it's going to be you sidelined with an injury.

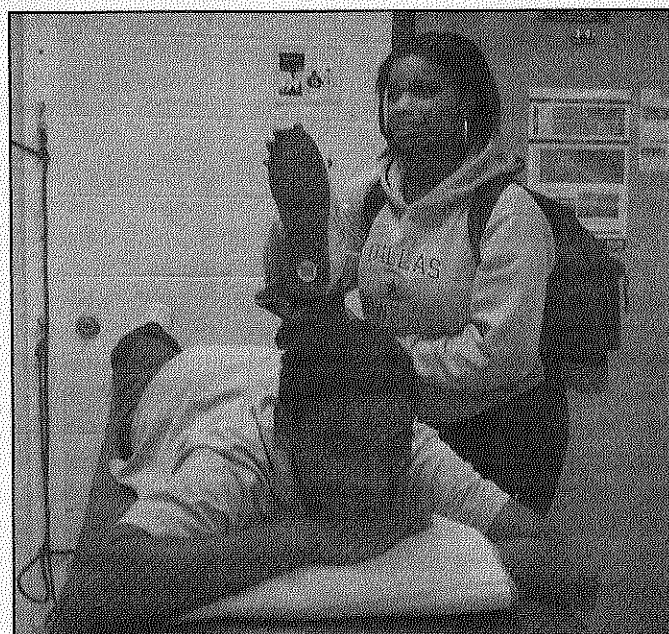


Photo by Bryan Jacobs

Freshman football player Brandon Anderson pulled his muscle at practice and hopes to recover soon so he can play again.



## Who really knows W?

**GWEN FISHEL**  
COPY EDITOR

Who knew *W.* was so complex?

The new film *W.* (a common nickname), written by Stanley Weiser and directed by Oliver Stone, chronicles the life of current president George W. Bush and thrusts him into a light that is not usually seen by the American public.

The movie begins with Bush (Josh Brolin) standing in a ball park, presumably around the time that he was the owner of the Texas Rangers. Then, an imaginary crowd cheers, as he is announced as the 43rd President of the United States. The movie immediately shifts to 2002, where Bush and his cabinet discuss the possibility of invading Iraq, Iran, and other countries that possibly could have weapons of mass destruction in their possession.

The film follows all the major events of "W's" life, by switching between scenes in the modern time, which relate to his past experiences, giving viewers some valuable insight into his life. The flashbacks begin in college, as he is being initiated into a fraternity. They continue as he goes through many jobs, from an oil worker to a position in the National Guard.

The audience also sees him crash cars into garage doors and front lawns, while under the influence of alcohol. However, as these flashbacks get closer to present-

day scenes, he begins to grow up — running for political office, marrying Laura Welch (Elizabeth Banks), and becoming a born again Christian.

However comical some of these events are, it was quite surprising to find that one could feel sorry for this man, who had everything he could ever want, except for the one thing he really wanted: his father's approval of his goals and life choices. It became apparent that everything he did was always greeted with a, "I'm deeply disappointed" from his father, former President George H.W. Bush.

The entire cast was amazing because each actor played their part with extreme grace and reality. Notable standouts included Josh Brolin as Bush, Jeffery Wright as former Secretary of State Colin Powell, and Richard Dreyfuss as Vice President Dick Cheney.

Like Bush, Brolin was able to capture all of Bush's

mannerisms, as well as his speech patterns. Wright was able to capture the audience as a dissenter throughout the movie and ultimately, able to make the best connection with the audience. However, Dreyfuss as Cheney was so perfect, it was almost scary.

*W.* was entertaining, and the end allowed the audience to Bush's humanistic side, that Americans do not usually see.

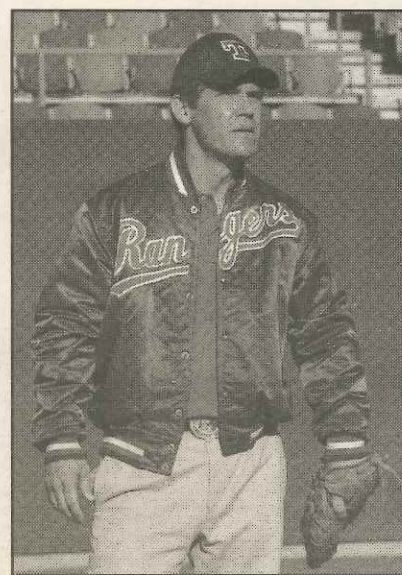


Photo by Sidney Baldwin/ MCT Handout  
Josh Brolin brilliantly takes on the lead as George Bush in *W.*

Reviewers Grade: ☆☆☆☆

## A New Movie That is Sweeter Than Honey

**GRACE POWELL**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

"Why didn't you love me?" Lily Owens (Dakota Fanning) whispers this, dropping to the ground in anguish. Honey oozes from the door she threw glass jars at. This is what the *Secret Life of Bees* does, mixes sweetness and sorrow all at once.

Women of all ages piled into the theatre establishing the idea that the *Secret Life of Bees* is above all else a chick flick. The film based on Susan Monk Kidd's novel journeys through the sad life of Lily Owens. Lily carries immense pain from her past. When she was four, her mother died. She lives with her hard edged dad T-Ray (Paul Bettany) and Rosaleen (Jennifer Hudson), their feisty African American maid.

Set in the racially tense 1960's, Lily and Rosaleen are forced to run after Rosaleen challenges three white men. Lily takes both her and Rosaleen to Tiburon, Alabama. They soon find a "peptmo bismol" pink house. Lily thinks the owner of the house, August Boatwright, knows something about her mother.

It is with the Boatwrights that Lily tries to find more about her mother. Meanwhile, she and Rosaleen enjoy a vacation from the racial tension and T-Ray's meanness. With the Boatwrights, Lily discovers the magic of honey. She helps August take care of her honey bees. Ultimately Lily and Rosaleen find a safe haven, a place that they can love and be loved, a place they might dare call home, if only for a little while.

The film adaptation of *The Secret Life of Bees* preserves the novel in its classic form. The old rusty town is clearly represented by



Photo Courtesy of MCT Handout

Fanning and Hudson shine in the new movie, *The Secret Life of Bees*.

the grassy plains and country town shots from the movie. The passion evident in Kids' novel is also apparent in the film. However, while the novel has mature themes, they are not as deeply rooted in the film. At times, the film touches the surface of Lily's rough life and grips the audience. Other times the scenes are generically optimistic. This is tricky. If the film delved deeper into the racial tension, it might have lost its youthfulness in the process. However, while the plot might have been watered down, the actors were not.

Dakota Fanning is an actress above her time. Her emotional scenes are not only heart wrenching, but believable. She carries the audience with her emotion, leaving them crying when she cries. Jennifer Hudson portrays Rosaleen with soulfulness and spunk. However, Hudson's character is more subdued in this film than in the novel. This is disappointing because Rosaleen is such a dynamic character in the novel and Hudson has the potential to fully exhibit Rosaleen's lively personality. The Boatwright sisters are, the Boatwright sisters. Queen Latifah brings royalty to August Boatwright's character. She commands attention. Sophie Okonedo embodies May with her kindness and deep sorrow. Alicia Keys understands June and her no-nonsense personality.

*The Secret Life of Bees* is as captivating as its title. A film to enjoy for years to come.

Reviewers Grade: ☆☆☆☆

## A Modern Fairytale Takes on a Musical Twist

**MICHAELA ACCARDI**  
NEWS EDITOR

Fans of films like *Juno* and *Charlie Bartlett* rushed to see Michael Cera's and costar Kat Dennings' newest movie, *Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist*, recently released to theatres nationwide.

The movie is based on the book with the same title as the movie, written by young adult authors Rachel Cohn and David Levithan. Critics argue that although the movie was a great teen flick, both Cera and Dennings played the safe roles which have been seen before.

Cera has played roles as the same quiet and slightly awkward male, in films like as *Juno* (2007), *Superbad* (2007), and an appearance in the television series *Arrested Development*.

Although not as widely known as her costar, Dennings also continues to perform, like the role of an attractive misfit, as she did in *The House Bunny* (2008) and *Charlie Bartlett* (2007).

In the movie, Nick and Norah meet accidentally, then spend the night searching for Norah's best friend and a band called "Where's Fluffy?" The night leads to a learning experience for both, as they both have relationships they are still hung up on.

This is not only an original spin on the typical romantic comedy but the choice in actors and actresses was perfectly fitting. Though critics may complain, they can not deny that Cera and Dennings have obvious talent for the "safe" roles that they played.

Despite the fact that Cera and Dennings were playing the

sage roles again, it does not in any way take away from the fact that both lead roles are depicted with outstanding talent. Cera and Dennings' roles are so believable throughout the moments of tears, heartbreak and insecurity; making the viewer feel as though they know what they are going through.

The setting and roles are so realistic to any teen. Anyone could find the two teenaged characters relatable and come to love the film as much as its predecessors (such as *Juno*).

Both the movie and the novel tell the story of a heartbroken teenage boy (Cera), Nick. Recently, Nick broke up with his manipulative, gorgeous girlfriend Tris. Nick often makes CDs for her, which Tris throws away in front of her peers, Caroline and Norah (Dennings). Norah listens to the CD and instantly falls in love with the music on the CD. Apparently, Norah had been collecting the CDs that Tris throws away saying that Tris does not appreciate good music.

As a member of a high school rock band, Nick is found at a bar where college students often go, that his bandmates force him to go to after he broke up with Tris. At the same bar Norah needs a stand-in boyfriend.

She spots Nick and bluntly asks if he could be her boyfriend for just five minutes and the night spirals from there. To prove to Tris that she has a new boyfriend, Norah kisses him. Little did Norah know that Nick was Tris' ex-boyfriend.

The pair gets to know one another and their demeaning relationships as they accompany one another throughout



Photo Courtesy of MCT Handout

Cera (left) and Dennings (right) show their versatility as actors in *Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist*.

New York City and the unglamorous world. When they finally are able to show any sign of being somewhat actually interested in each other, it is immediately put to a halt by their exes.

After Norah leaves to go home, Nick finds Tris sitting on the top of his car. He finally decides to confront her, at the same time Norah accidentally bumps into her ex again.

Unlike the movie, the book begins after the introduction of the characters Nick and Norah, when Nick asks Norah to be his girlfriend in an effort to impress his ex-girlfriend Tris; not through an abrupt kiss as depicted in the film.

More significant differences exist in the book, such as the fact that Nick and Norah's interest in one another takes some time to develop. Their relationship does not become serious simply after one long, eventful night. In addition, many more sexually graphic scenes are present in the book unlike the PG-13 rated chick flick.

The sexually graphic scenes include an encounter in the Marriott ice room and a kiss between Norah and Tris, which can only be fully understood with the reading of the novel.

Lastly, the novel also brings a new type of experience to Nick and Norah's story, as it is written in two different perspectives. For example, while one chapter may be written in the first person by Nick, the next would be told by Norah.

After watching the film, junior Morgan Carter said, "It [*Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist*] was really funny and original." Although she had not read the book or heard of it before seeing the movie, Carter commented that she would like to read the book in the future.

Jeff Carter of *The Scorecard Review*, said "I haven't made a list but this has got to be one of the best high school/coming-of-age/romantic/comedy films of the past decade," according to *rottentomatoes.com*. Many of the viewers agree that director Peter Sollett had a great cast to start the movie with and ended up making a terrific new version of a modern fairytale for teens.

Reviewers Grade: ☆☆☆☆



## Hello Kitty Conquer All

*Hello Kitty becomes a globalized phenomenon*

**BRYAN JACOBS**  
SPORTS EDITOR

The white cat is back and ready to take on the world. The phenomenon of the *Hello Kitty* franchise can be seen all around our school.

The *Hello Kitty* franchise of Sanrio™ sells products depicting the famous white cat as dolls, stickers, greeting cards, clothes, accessories, school supplies, dishes and even home appliances. It sells very well in the Asian markets, most aggressively in Japan where it is seen as a “must have.” *Hello Kitty* is also seen as a status symbol in the United States.

At our school, students show their “Kitty” pride by carrying *Hello Kitty* folders and wearing accessories and watches. Students and even counselors like Christine Spaulding have all joined the band wagon.

As an avid customer of *Hello Kitty*, sophomore Stephanie Terault admitted, “I have a wallet, calculator and I were tempted to buy a *Hello Kitty* toaster, but I had to digress.” Spaulding said, “I really did like *Hello Kitty* when I was younger, I had a pencil case, a “pre”-mechanical pencil and of course, an eraser. It is a fad.”

The Hello Kitty franchise is hardly a fad at

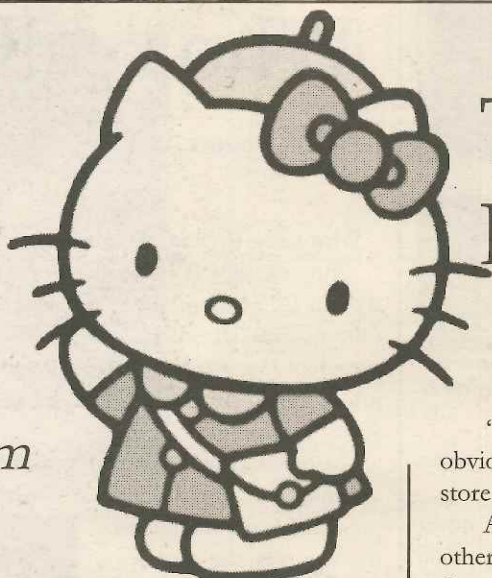


Photo by Natalie Caudill/MCT

Originally popular in Asia, the Hello Kitty phenomenon has spread throughout the world.

all. Founded in 1991, the *Hello Kitty* franchise has blossomed into an empire worth around one billion dollars as of today, and it shows no signs of slowing down. Recently, *Hello Kitty* came out with a new line of school supplies, which could rake in as much as sixty million dollars a year. The main consumers of this fad are the Japanese and Americans, especially girls, young women and, of course, celebrities.

Celebrities such as Paris Hilton, Mariah Carey, and a student favorite, blogger Perez Hilton have been seen wearing *Hello Kitty* jewelry which as high as \$200,000 at any high end retailer.

Only as recent as October 7, 2008, the *Hello Kitty* franchise came out with their newest item to its passionate customers. The *Hello Kitty Album* hits mainstream and will feature songs such as “Come on, Come on,” “All the Girls,” and “Get This Party Started.” This exciting new album will be available in the United States and can be downloaded off of *Myspace.com*.

## Thriftling Becomes the New Shopping Crave

**ALEX FABRIZIO**  
FOCUS EDITOR

“Nice shirt! Where’s it from?” The obvious reply would be, “Oh, this thrift store I found.” Right?

Although wearing other people’s discarded clothes may seem gross to some people, shopping at a thrift store proves to be very beneficial to some people within a community. It stimulates the community’s economy and usually benefits a group of people who need help, like at the resale shop Look Again (900 King St.) where the money benefits the Blindness Prevention Society.

Also, the clothing is extremely inexpensive. *The Washington Post* found a plaid silk sundress (\$8.98) at the Goodwill Retail store 2200 S. Dakota Avenue, Washington D.C. They also found a men’s tie (\$2.98) there. If D.C. is too far to travel, look no further than Sherwood Hall Lane and Richmond Highway.

Lastly, it promotes creativity and individuality. Junior Max Muir said, “When you see someone wearing something from the thrift store you’re not likely to see another of the same thing.” While his

classmate Ryan Mach said that he doesn’t think thrift store clothes make someone’s style interesting and said, “All I want are some bro-hats.”

We have a number of thrift stores in our area that sell very nice items. Sometimes a lot of patience and digging around is involved, for instance at Look Again, they sell a myriad of designer items. For instance they had a very nice women’s navy Ralph Lauren Polo skirt for \$6 and a Pendleton sweater for men



Photo by Madyson Miller

Thrift stores offer myriad clothes and accessories among other things.

(\$5). The Back Porch, a thrift store run by United Community Ministries (UCM), is located in Mount Vernon Crossroads Shopping Center on Richmond Highway. The money is used by UCM to improve the quality of living for many families and individuals in our community. The Back Porch sells nice clothing donated by members of the community for a range of prices dependent upon the item. A sweater or a dress can cost anywhere from \$5 to \$15. Both Look Again and the Back Porch sell house ware items, clothing, shoes, electronics, furniture, entertainment items, and books.

# GET RADICAL!

Feed the hungry

Clothe the naked

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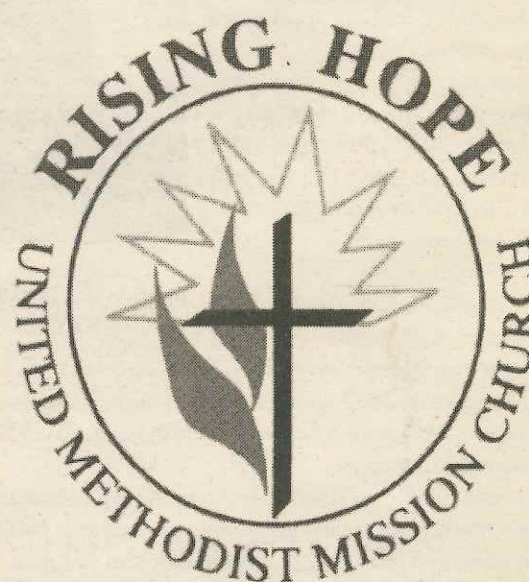
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CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP  
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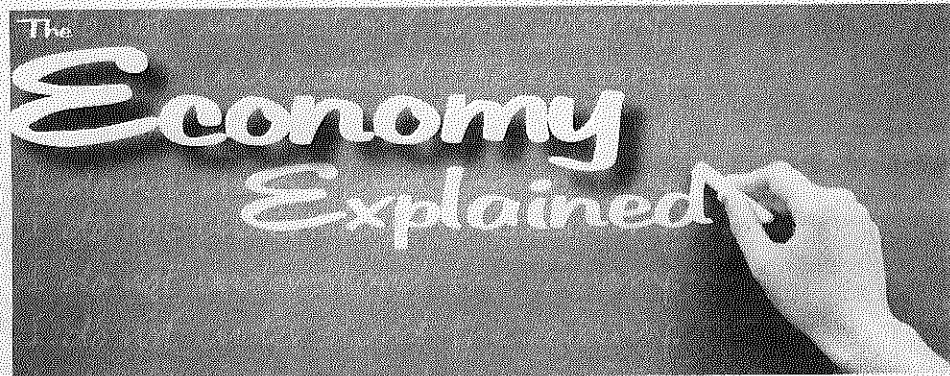
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Graphic By Clip Art

**JESSICA TAYLOR**  
REPORTER

With all this talk about bailouts, pork barrel spending, recession, and depression, one is left to wonder what all these terms mean.

By this time, everyone knows our economy is doing "badly," but what exactly does this mean? Below is a breakdown to help understand how our country got to where it is today.

## Banks Lend Money

It all began when our economy was doing well, and banks had lots of money. As more families began investing in homes, they borrowed money from banks, promising to pay it back. Banks eagerly lent out money in the hopes of making large profits through interest and fees. They were particularly eager to sell "sub-prime" mortgages that had adjustable rates that started low, but adjusted upward. "Sub-prime" means the financial institutions are lending to people who have so low of a credit score that they can not receive a normal mortgage.

## Banks Sell Mortgages

The mortgage companies then sold these people's debt to other financial institutions, sometimes bundled as "prime" or safe investments when, actually, they were very risky, "sub-prime" investments.

## Unable to Pay Back

With the domestic economy beginning to slow down and adjustable rate mortgage payments rising, many people could not pay back the money they borrowed, leading to their homes being foreclosed. It can either auction that property or sell it in the market.

## In Debt Lost Value

The debt spread around through all the financial institutions, losing its value. The values decreased so much that no one would buy the debt. Soon, nobody knew how much the debt was worth, causing a credit crunch (a sudden, unexpected decrease in the availability of loans).

## Stock Market

A term that often comes up when discussing the economy is the stock market. Basically, the stock market is a worldwide market for trading stocks (or a share in ownership of a company) in companies. The way that the stock market

runs is that investors invest money into a certain amount of stock in the hopes of making a profit in the future. The investor buys the stock at a price decided on by the market. This is a risk because the value of the stock can go up or down. The investor ends up making or losing money depending on what happens to their stock. If they sell their stock when its price has risen, they make a profit, but if they sell their shares once the stock has fallen, they lose money. When economists speak of 'the Dow Jones falling 749 points,' it means that people are selling their stocks. The number a stock falls or rises represents how much is being sold or bought. When a stock falls, that means, despite stock being sold, none is being bought, and the stock returns to the company.

## The Average American

The current economic crisis has led to turmoil that not only affects the stock market and big businesses, but average American citizens as well. Even before large investment banks began declaring bankruptcy and requesting to be bailed out to prevent further economic crisis, citizens were feeling the pains of an economy in crisis. Well before politicians and reporters were focusing on America's economic problems, average citizens across the country were having their homes foreclosed upon and losing their jobs.

So, now you know the basics of the state of our economy. "Well what next?" you might wonder, 'how is all of this going to be fixed?' President Bush and the current congress have already proposed and passed a \$700 billion bail out of the troubled financial institutions. But still more needs to be done before our economy is back on track, and that task relies on the next president and congress.

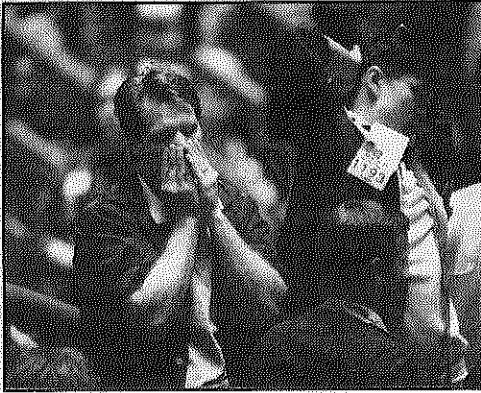


Photo by Biz Dow/MCT

Marketers are frustrated after the closing bell on Monday.

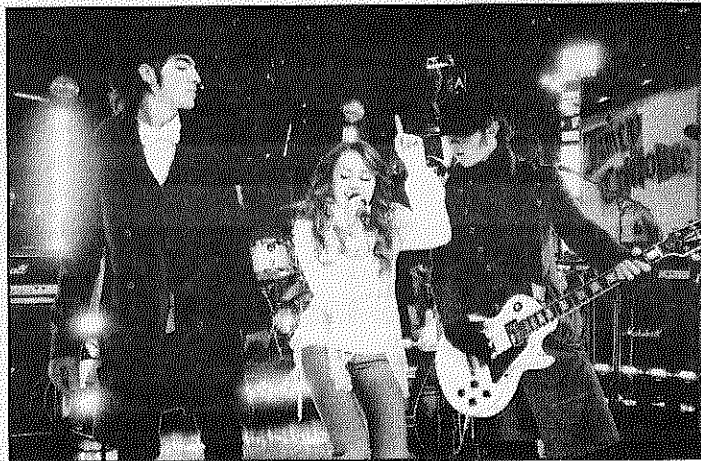


Photo by Johnathan Fickles/ MCT

Miley Cyrus and the Jonas Brothers are some of the popular celebrities who have appeared on the TRL.

# Goodbye TRL

**EMILY GRIFFN & TIDAE JOHNSON**  
ASSISTANT STYLE EDITOR PHOTOGRAPHER

TRL was like the American Bandstand of our generation.

10 years ago in the heart of Time Square in, New York, Music Television (MTV) created Total Request Live (TRL), a show that would change the world. Yet, now the producers of TRL have decided to end the show.

TRL brought celebrities, music stars, and the every-day "Joe the Plumbers" together. With the help of its original host, Carson Daly, TRL grew in popularity with over 500,000 daily viewers. However, now the hosts consist of a random assortment of famous people including Vanessa Minnillo to One Tree Hill's Hilary Burton.

TRL made a show that made stars like Destiny Child, Britney Spears, Eminem, and tons of other music groups, a household name. They did this by broadcasting their music videos to a large number of daily viewers.

With many viewers tuning in daily, TRL made female singers like Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera and Mandy Moore famous. Spears's first music video, "Baby One More Time" became so infamous because of TRL and it reached number one. While Aguilera's first single, "Genie in a Bottle" became one of the most popular songs in the late 1990s, the music video debuted on TRL as well. Lastly, Moore was the third most iconic singer to begin her music career with "Crush" which reached number one in 2002.

Boy bands such as N'SYNC and Backstreet Boys were made infamous by TRL. The fans of TRL welcomed both bands warmly in the fall of 1998 and continued to do so until the bands retired in late 2002. The Backstreet Boys did

make a comeback in 2005 with their sixth studio album, *Never Gone*.

Surprisingly, TRL even attracted Disney stars such as Hilary Duff, Aly AJ and the Jonas Brothers for a showing of their music videos. Duff had singles such as "Wake Up", "Beat of my Heart" and "With Love" that reached the number one slot on TRL. Aly and AJ had the majority of their singles showed on TRL in which most of them reached number two. The Jonas Brothers singles "When You Look Me in the Eyes" and "Burnin' Up" also reached the number one spot.

TRL has also made television shows watched more frequently. In the television series, *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*, there was an episode where Sabrina visits TRL in 2002 which was when TRL. In a scene in the Nickelodeon movie *Drake and Josh* go to Hollywood, Drake Bell actually did perform his single "Hollywood Girl" in front of a live audience at TRL.

As the years grew, TRL became one of MTV's most iconic shows. It started airing in the late '90s and continued to hold their audience until recently. It has pulled in millions of young viewers, especially high school students, all over the world, who craved to see their favorite celebrities on TRL. According to *TRL.com*, the official finale of TRL will be on November 16<sup>th</sup> that goes from eight to ten at night.

The end of TRL is going to be hard on many of the viewers. Since the show has been on air for 10 years it has received much acclaim by young viewers. *Newsweek* reported that Sirulnick said "We want to close this era of 'TRL' in a big celebratory way, and 10 is a great number". Also, Sirulnick said that "TRL isn't dead just yet but that it's just going on a temporary hiatus."

When the ratings dropped to the lower 300,000, Sirulnick pulled the plug.

# Papa Bryan's Cooking Corner

**BRYAN JACOBS**  
SPORTS EDITOR

Waking up in the morning with the sun shining down upon one's face under the warm blankets is possibly one of the best feelings in the entire world. However, most people wake up at 6 a.m.; grab a bowl of cereal and hit Quander Road before the first bell. In this edition of *Papa Bryan's Cooking Corner*, we will dive into the artery clogging food of Chocolate Chip Muffins.

More importantly, this comes just in time for the November Elections and Thanksgiving. Keep your fingers crossed that the candidate of choice wins and that you can make these celebratory muffins the morning after the election. If you are a person who is more on the healthy side, you can substitute the chocolate chips in your muffins with blueberries, which are high in antioxidants. However, these Chocolate Chip Muffins are definitely one of my favorite recipes of all time and I make them every weekend.

## Ingredients:

- 3 cups flour sifted
- 1 cup sugar
- 4 tsp. baking powder
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup oil
- 1 cup milk
- 1 1/3 cup blueberries or chocolate chips

## Instructions:

1. Turn oven to 350 degrees F
2. Mix dry ingredients
3. Add wet ingredients
4. Keep muffins in the oven for 18-20 minutes or until golden brown on top
5. Serves around 15 people



Drawing by Brendan Murphy



VICTORIA NARINE  
STYLE EDITOR

## Senior Session

What is your favorite place in the world?

The football field

What is your most treasured possession?

My mom

What is your greatest regret?

I have no regrets. Things happen for a reason.

What is your greatest fear?

God

What is your favorite movie?

"How to be a Player"

If you could be anything in the world, what would you be?

A football coach. I love the game.

If you could be anything in the world, what would you be?

Something the flies, like a flying unicorn

What is your favorite place in the world?

The tennis courts

If you could buy anything in the world, what would you buy?

A rare animal, like a miniature horse.

What is your greatest fear?

Not trying my hardest

What is your greatest regret?

Not taking more risks

What is your favorite movie?

"The Notebook"

Photos Courtesy of Dereck Barber & Julie Ruamthong

## A Day in the Life of... Victoria O'Connor

MARIYA ILYAS  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

"They led by example," she said.

O'Connor has often said cynically that her parents are the greatest people on earth because they gave birth to her. They are "two of my favorite people in the world and I respect them," she said.

Victoria O'Connor grew up in the mountains in the small town of Spruce Pine, near Asheville, North Carolina. Everyone there knew each other and news spread like fire. She is used to the cold weather because in Spruce Pine, there were lots of snow days, and the temperature was never higher than 80 degrees.

When she was young, she and her sibling traveled all over the United States with her parents. "While I grew up in an isolated community, I developed early on different ways to look at the world." Because of the travels, "I am a more understanding and accepting of the world."

O'Connor attended Mitchell High School, where she was an active member of Model UN and French Club. Although she studied French in high school, she fell love with the Spanish language after taking it during her senior year. She also became a cheerleader that last year. "I was bored, and all my friends were doing it," she said. O'Connor was a focused student in high school and "always felt more mature than others." Even in middle school, O'Connor did not participate in prank phone calls, the most 'popular' thing to do at the time. "I just didn't feel right," she said.

However, O'Connor enjoyed college far more than high school. "High school was a means to an end for me." At University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, she enjoyed more independence. One of the highlights of her experiences in college was studying abroad in Spain at the University of Sevilla, Spain, for 11 months during her junior year. "It was a life-altering event," she said.

O'Connor said the study abroad experience made her more patriotic because "you are representing the United States, so you have to stand up for your country." It made her question her views about the world, and wonder "why you do things you do." Living abroad "makes you appreciate diversity" and at the same time, realize "how much we are the same."



Photo by Erin Parker

Spanish teacher, Victoria O'Connor, is in a passionate discussion with her Spanish students.

After graduating in 1993 from Chapel Hill, O'Connor received master's degree in Spanish from Middlebury College exactly one year later. She started her teaching career in D.C. public schools. Teaching in D.C. was quite an experience, especially getting used to the city. They were the "toughest two years of my life," she said. Students were rowdy and always challenged her authority. The majority of the disrespect contributed to the fact that "I was a white woman in a predominantly black classroom." Every day became a struggle, a fight for respect and there was more discipline-teaching than the actual subject. "Education begins at home," she profoundly said.

In the end, "I knew I had made a mistake taking the job," O'Connor admitted.

However, her teaching career did not stop there. In 1996, O'Connor landed a job at James Madison High School in Fairfax

County, where she found more resources and felt comfortable in the better school system. In 2003, she was recognized with the Triple "I" Teacher of the Year Award, a prestigious award sponsored by the school's Academic Boosters and the JMHS Student Parent Teacher Association, that honors the teacher who most exhibits excellence in innovation, instruction and impact on their students.

She then came to our school, and immediately earned the title of the 'most organized teacher.' On her desk, everything can be found in tact. An extensive "things-to-do" list is always posted on the right hand corner of her desk, as she checks it off throughout the day.

"I just don't understand how anyone can be disorganized," said O'Connor. "I don't know how they sleep." She said she developed her organizational skills from her mother and hopes that her "students learn to be mature and responsible."

Senior Alex Snider had O'Connor for Spanish 4. Because of her class, "I have gotten much more organized. I have started using a planner, I have learned to mark things on a calendar and to plan for events down the line," he said. It comes as no surprise that she is this year's new World Languages Department Chair.

O'Connor likes the diversity of this school. "West Potomac is much more reflective of American society as whole," she said.

When teaching, "I absolutely love it when students begin to think about world in a different way," she said. As a Spanish teacher, she enjoys teaching her students about different Spanish cultures and loves giving the students the opportunity to talk openly about controversial issues.

"One of the greatest things about that class was being able to candidly discuss issues, in Spanish speaking countries, and on a global scale," said Snider.

"When somebody is as passionate as you are, that's the best feeling of all time," O'Connor said, smiling.

It is not easy to earn an 'A' in her class. "I had to know what I was doing," said Snider. "I could never

wing it." Students have to come prepared with homework and study hard for tests.

"She is a great teacher because she raises your game," said husband Corey O'Connor.

She met Corey O'Connor at the Fish Market Restaurant in 1995. "I couldn't help joking with her," said Mr. O'Connor. "We have been best friends ever since."

Being punctual as she is, O'Connor described how she fell in love with Mr. O'Connor "I loved the fact that when I first met him, he would say he would call me at 10 p.m. to tell me that he couldn't talk to me at that time."

O'Connor is also a self-acclaimed 'perfectionist.' Everything must be exactly right, even at home. "Her perfectionism: You mean refolding clothes I have folded? Or wiping out the sink I just wiped out Nope, can't say I notice that!" joked Mr. O'Connor. "She is so fun to go through life with."

Besides teaching, O'Connor has always dreamed of becoming a two-week trip-planner to Spain. One would have to be interviewed for her exclusive trip. The only condition, O'Connor said, would be that the couple "would have to pay my expenses."

However, O'Connor loves being a teacher, and hopes that her students "view me as fair, firm, and friendly."

"Señora O'Connor is very driven in everything that she does, and everything she does has a purpose," said Snider. "One of the best things that Mrs. O'Connor was able to do was instill a desire to learn in her students."

O'Connor smiled and simplistically said, "Only thing I can do is lead by example."



Photo Courtesy of Victoria O'Connor

O'Connor, with her husband Corey O'Connor in Spain.