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THE WIRE

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Library



West Potomac High School
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Alexandria, VA 22307
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WEST POTOMAC HIGH SCHOOL

Friday, October 29, 2004

Inside This Issue:



Livestrong Bracelets:
Charity or Fad?

p. 4



Election Connection

p. 10



Red Sox "Curse"

p. 12



A Day in the Life
of Custodian Felica

p. 15



Degrassi Review

p. 19

Teenage Politicians Work to Promote the Vote

Jeff Snyder
News Editor

Teenagers these days are becoming increasingly involved with political parties. Whether it is a discussion with their peers, or being a part of a campaign, they're voicing

thanks to Young Democrats and Teenage Republicans, teens have a place to go and share their political affiliation with fellow comrades.

The Teenage Republicans (TARS) and the Young Democrats (YDA) are organizations that have thousands of different chapters in

communities and high schools across the nation. The Young Democrats and Teenage Republicans both have a place at this school aiming to get teens involved with politics. Drew Macklin, president of the Teenage Republicans said, "Our goal is to have a

are guided by mathematics teacher and sponsor Bill Dobson. The Young Democrats are sponsored by mathematics teacher Nance Cedar and led by elected president, senior Alex Arnold. The Young



Photo by Jeff Snyder

Young Democrats president senior Alex Arnold gets the attention of the Young Democrats club members as they discuss ways to help the Democratic Party at a recent meeting.

their opinions loudly. With teens at the height of their pride and hormones raging, a discussion can lead to a heated argument, or campaign signs can be vandalized. But

positive influence on the election for President Bush because his leadership will help secure the principles that we should all embrace." The Republican meetings



Photo by Jeff Snyder

Senior Greg Ekberg shows his affiliation as *Ellis the Day* with a t-shirt and Anti-Kerry button.

Democrat's election during their second meeting also appointed junior Chris Kelly to Vice President, junior Laura Herren to secretary, senior Stuart Trouton to treasurer, and senior Kevin Ebberts and junior Asia

See Political Clubs on pg. 8

RIAA Cracks Down in FCPS

Adele Hampton
Assistant Business Manager

Most teenagers know how to download music from the internet, burn CD's, and download MP3's. If they don't know how to do those things, then they probably

at least know what they are. What they most likely don't know is that it's illegal and can get them fined or thrown in jail.

On July 15, 2004, assisted by the RIAA, 19 locations

See RIAA on pg. 6



Photo Illustration by Hazelton Murphy

Will Schenck and Marley Kinnel listen to downloaded MP3's on a Macintosh iPOD, a very popular device for listening to downloads.

Indie Music Scene Draws Students

Milica Wren and
Diana Blaszkiewicz

Special to the Wire

Three nights, three shows, one city, and two unexcused absences. For one student, traveling to New York City midweek to hear bands play is all in a day's work.

In a growing trend at this school more students are looking to diversify themselves by veering away from the typical "high school" agenda of football games, movies, and parties, towards more unconventional and avant-garde exploits.

With music as the driving force behind this social revolution, more students venture into cities and to clubs such as DC's 9:30 Club, Black Cat, and Baltimore's

Recher Theatre; areas previously dominated by college students and adults. These all-ages-venues foster environments of multicultural mingling that allow students to pursue their interests.

As a result, this movement, labeled "indie" or "hipster," is now becoming more prominent at this school and other local high schools.

Junior Chris Kelly prefers concerts, "because there are people who listen to the same type of music as you, which is always good. Most of the time you meet

interesting people that you wouldn't find at, say, a football game.

See Indie Bands, page 6



Photo by Milica Wren

The Libertines perform at the 9:30 Club.

Field Hockey Vandalism

On Friday October 15, 2004, someone vandalized the field hockey field. They poured a streak of chlorine in the middle of the field. Both the JV and Varsity teams weren't allowed to play because of the risk of injury, so we had to go all the way out to Thomas Jefferson High School to play our game because we weren't allowed to play on the football field. The chlorine may take about 4-5 days to wash out, so until then, we have nowhere to play, when we have two home games left.

Not to mention, field hockey has a much better record than football. No offense to the JV and varsity football teams, but they haven't had a good year.

I don't understand why we wouldn't be able to play on the football field, since the football team doesn't use it all the time. Depending on when our games are, we should be able to use the field. It is bad enough we have to play on the baseball field anyway, when football takes up most of the campus. There is plenty of room all around for us to play, but we are forced to share one field with two full teams of about 20 people each. Until our field is safe to play on, we may not be able to have the last of our home games, which, in my opinion, are the most fun.

Sara Mathewson, sophomore

Props for Freshman Football

Its football season here at West Potomac High School. Our Varsity team and Junior Varsity team haven't won a game, but our Freshman team has won two games. Where is the credit? This may not seem great, but compared to the Varsity and JV team it is. The Freshman team last year went 0-8, so this team has already accomplished a lot this season. The team's first win came against Robinson one of the leading football schools in this division. I think this team should get more publicity and credit for its accomplishments. Head Coach, Eric Henderson is very excited about this team and its future in the West Potomac football program. These players and coaches have been coming out to West Potomac everyday since two weeks before school started. They have worked hard for 2 1/2 hours after school to improve their skills and plays, to win more games. This team needs to have at least an article in the paper or a "Good Job Freshman" on the morning announcements. All there needs to be is a little bit of credit.

Hooft Cooksey, Freshman

Put the 'Spirit' Back in Spirit Week

Spirit week is supposed to be a time for students to have fun and think about something other than work for once. Spirit week is also bringing up an important issue in my mind; our lack of school spirit! Now I know articles complaining about peoples' uncaring mindset when it comes to supporting our school have been written before, and they're going to keep being written until something changes. I know school starts way too early, but wake up people! Why is it that showing enthusiasm for school activities and participating in such events such as homecoming such a crime now? Many people that I've talked to have said that they don't want to go to homecoming because it's "stupid." I understand if you have another priority to attend to, but people who would rather sit at home or go through the same old routine of hanging out with friends rather than go to an event that only happens once a year leave me speechless. Just because you can't dance, does not mean you have the right to spread negative vibes about the dance itself. High school is supposed to be the time you'll remember forever. Frankly, I don't know why anyone would want to remember nothing but work and projects. Our SGA is always trying to appeal to the students at West Potomac by planning fun events. Why can't we as a school be appreciative of that? I'm not accusing everyone of not having WP pride. On the contrary a lot of people actively participate in spirit activities. I'm talking to the all too many people that don't.

Anum Jaffri, Sophomore

Corrections

Rodney Morrison's position was incorrectly identified as offensive linebacker, he is a defensive linebacker and halfback.
Vanessa Alvarez's name was misspelled.

Rants and Raves

A Rant to the administration for threatening to shorten our lunches. They should try working for seven hours on an empty stomach.



A Rave for the upward trend in school spirit during homecoming week. Blue and white never looked so good!

A Rant for the vandalism of the field hockey and baseball field. No one wants a black eye and nausea from chlorine.



A Rave for the teachers who deal with frantic seniors during their application process. Thanks for calming us and creating college opportunities.

A Rant for the lack of school acknowledgement of Hispanic Heritage Month. Why don't we honor an integral part of our school?

A Rave for the football team's continued high spirits despite their record. Persistence will pay off in the end!

Leave Your Mark

It seems that apathy and disinterest have taken permanent root in our society. With the nation involved in heated ideological and political battles over this year's upcoming election, many citizens begin to wonder...is this year's voter turnout going to be any different from previous elections? Let's hope so, because the past few years of elections are poor representatives of the character of our citizens. Besides the national voter turnout trend, habits of indifference have begun to show themselves in the halls of our school.

In the 2000 presidential election, 51.3% of the eligible voting-age population turned out to vote. Some may feel that this number isn't so bad. This number, however, is unacceptable, especially when one takes into consideration the enormous sacrifices that have been made throughout our nation's history in order to secure the right to the free and objective elections that we take for granted today. In fact, in the past twenty years, no federal election has had a higher turnout from the eligible population than 56%. Sad really.

It is our responsibility as citizens not just to vote, but also to educate ourselves on the issues at hand. In this age of technology, when information on any issue is at hand instantly, it is unreasonable that voter turnout is lacking.

The age group that seems to have the least interest in making themselves heard is the 18- to 24-year-old bracket, which consistently has lower voter turnouts than any other eligible age group. As students and as the future of this nation, it is important to make our voices

heard.

Even though most students at this school can't vote yet, signs of apathy are already apparent. In the elections for the 2004-2005 officers of the National Honor Society, nobody ran for the position of treasurer, and only one candidate ran for president. Besides just looking good on a college application, these are opportunities to really influence our school. This disinterest manifests itself in other ways as well, such as the low number of students who run for Student Government positions (there were a couple of positions with only one candidate on last year's ballot), and a lack of student interest in school-sponsored events.

While voting is one of the most important ways to make one's voice heard, there are other ways to get involved for those of us who are not eligible yet. If one's parents are not planning on voting, remind them of the tax dollars spent on the logistics of elections, the sacrifices that have been made, and the opportunity that they are letting slip by. There are also many things students can do at school. Run for office. Write letters to editors of the school or local newspaper. Or simply watch the news and educate yourself on the issues so that when your turn comes, you will be ready.

Everyone is busy in today's society, but nobody should be too busy to exercise his or her rights as a citizen. No matter whom you vote for, or how you make yourself heard, it is of the utmost importance to our future that young people reverse the trend of indifference.

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Changing the World From the Couch?

Drew Macklin

Opinions Editor

Amidst the hustle of my senior year, while I feverishly compose my college applications and struggle with a ridiculously difficult course load, I have become aware of a startling absence in my resume, one which borders on a character flaw. It's not my GPA, or the number of AP classes I am taking. It's not my athletic involvement or membership in extracurricular clubs. Rather, it is the amount of time I have spent serving my community that is deficient. I have spent four high school years building an application that will wow admission officials. I have dedicated my time and energy to things I am not actually enthusiastic about, all for the sake of listing a title on a piece of paper and yet, I have neglected to really use the positions and privileges I have been blessed with to make a difference in the world around me.

Why is this? I know I am not the exception, I am the rule, and this thought saddens me greatly. But it also spawns questions in my mind—questions about the generation I am a part of, and the culture that has bred us to be as we are. Why are we so content to live our lives from the comfort of our suburban neighborhoods? Why do we persist in holding ourselves apart from the things we could change? We laughingly joke about getting lost in Anacostia. We carefully

avoid certain parts of Alexandria, partly at the behest of our parents and mostly out of our own nervousness. We hire our tutors and take our SAT prep classes. We seclude ourselves in advanced classes and never marvel at the demographics of such a class. Why?

Where did this sense of entitlement stem from? At what point in time did we stop caring about everything except ourselves? At our fingertips, passing us everyday in the halls, in the mall, and on the road are people who could desperately use our help. Some have never experienced anything but poverty. Some have the desire to succeed, and yet fall prey to the pressures and demands of their peers. Our friendship, our guidance, and our experience all can have a powerful impact on the lives of these people.

How can we stem the tide of indifference? How can we set out to be a positive influence on those who need one? Sure, the easy excuse is that we are too busy, too overextended to do so. I myself fall prey to this all too frequently, and seemingly, with good reason. After all, I participate in an obscene number of clubs, advanced classes, and sports. If anyone is exempt from participation, surely I am. Yet, when I truly take account of my use of time throughout a normal week, I find that I somehow always reserve time for *The Apprentice* and football games. What does this say about my priorities? The reality is, all of us could

easily find the time to volunteer.

Here are a few suggestions: join Key Club and volunteer for the activities they sponsor. Join National Honor Society and, instead of avoiding any real work, find some community service opportunities that are real and actually meaningful. Go by the Thrift Store or United Christian Ministries on Route 1 and ask how you can help. Stop by the office of the elementary school closest to you and ask if there are any



Photo by Evan Deblin

students who need tutoring or mentoring. To go outside our area code, visit the Serve DC website at <<http://www.serve.dc.gov>>.

The bottom line is, complacency in our community will not make problems go away. It only masks them. In our indifference we give the negative influences of the world more power. Our voices diminish; theirs grow stronger, until they dominate the landscape. We cannot let this happen! We must venture out of suburbia and work for change.

All Dressed Up With No Where to Go

Hana Beckerle

Editor-in-Chief

Eighteen is a magic number for teenagers. With the eighteenth birthday can come new privileges and freedoms, a later curfew or more driving rights. Often overlooked by teenagers is the all-important right to vote. For those of us who will not be eighteen in time for this year's election, the situation is frustrating.

A seventeen-year-old with political opinions is sort of like a person who is dressed up to go out at night but has nowhere to go. We know how we feel about the issues, we know whom we would vote for, but a cruel trick of fate has left us out of the process for at least one more year. Being seventeen has its perks, but I can't help but wish that I had been born just a few months earlier.

There are, however, outlets for us opinionated teenagers who cannot vote. Organizations at this school and in the community welcome young volunteers and members, regardless of legal voting status. Both the Teenage Republicans and the Young Democrats have held events in support of their parties' respective candidates, and the majority of the members of both of these clubs are too young to vote.

I have been asked more than

once why young people who cannot yet vote would bother to get very involved. Isn't it a waste of time? I think not. We will soon be entering the world of adults, and I for one do not wish to be behind when I do. Getting involved in the political process is a right that was won for us through sacrifice, and choosing to let it pass us by is



Photo by Evan Deblin

the real waste. I simply do not understand how a high school student can choose not to care when they're bombarded all the time by messages from their peers and pop culture icons about getting involved.

Many grumble at the state of political affairs in our nation today. Young voters have consistently low voter turnout rates, leaving many to assume that young people don't care as much, and that laziness is a more prevalent virtue than citizenship. Our nation seems to be divided today in an ugly

partisan battle of mudslinging, and there appears to be no room for compromise. Issues often become obscured by other aspects of a candidate, such as speaking flaws or skeletons in their closets. However, I have observed several trends among students at this school that are very promising for the future of this country's electorate.

Although the current presidential campaign has brought out many of the negative aspects of the American political process, it has also energized many citizens who have not voted in awhile. It has also inspired many young people to wish to get involved, even if you're stuck at seventeen like me.

Many soon-to-be voters can be outspoken and rigid about their political beliefs, but I find that among our weekend and lunchtime banter about the current campaigns, there is willingness to compromise. This is something that encourages me to think more positively about the future of our electorate. It is so important that we somehow maintain that spirit of equal discussion and compromise throughout our lives.

Another encouraging trend in high school political forums is a sharper focus on the issues at hand than on the candidates themselves. Voting is not

always about appearances, and the fact that so many of my fellow students are politically intelligent and well versed on issues gives me confidence about our future.

Above all, it is extremely important that we maintain an active interest in political affairs and ideological debate. The habits of good citizens that I have seen played out here at our school should not be allowed to pass out of our systems once we move on to bigger things.

In the meantime, there are so many ways to make ourselves heard besides voting that there is no excuse for any student with viable opinions to remain uninvolved. Involvement is the key that will unlock many doors for us during our lifetimes, but it must start now. We may be too young to vote, but involvement is most definitely not a waste of time.

It would be a waste of time to sit by and pretend that we don't have anything to say because we realize that we have no voice at the polls on November 2. As for me, I can live with being seventeen for now with the promise of a brighter tomorrow as our generation steps up to make itself heard. I'll reach the magic age of eighteen soon enough.

The LaBarrometer

Measuring the Pressures of Daily Life



Photo by Evan Deblin

The Bitter Truth

Ansley LaBarre

Editor-in-Chief

"Does this make me look fat?"

The stereotypical question asked by females when distressing over a fatal dressing decision. Yet, when a friend confronts you with such a potentially explosive inquiry, would you be able to answer in brutal honesty? I wouldn't.

In such a seemingly simple matter, a universal contemplation arises. Is it moral to speak the truth which may potentially hurt someone, or tell them what they'd like to hear, regardless of the consequences?

This perplexity stretches beyond waist bands. So what if I've confirmed to friends they look amazing, even when bursting from the seams, because they still have the confidence to carry it off. However, I cannot get away with it when it comes to my most recent concern, college.

My dream has been to attend an out of state school, and ironically the favorite across the nation in California. Although I would die of happiness if accepted, there are those who would be more likely to curl up in hatred if they heard of my departure. Worst, those who are against my decision are some of the most important to me, family and friends who have contributed greatly to the success I have experienced. Who am I to leave them behind?

Now I am caught in a conflict of morals. I can't decide if I would be justified in applying to the schools I fantasize about day in and day out, because of the harm it could potentially cause. I would not be able to live with myself knowing I selfishly

Is it moral to speak the truth which may potentially hurt someone, or tell them what they'd like to hear, regardless of the consequences?

based my decision on personal desires instead of considering the concerns of those I love.

At the same time, I am a firm believer that this is my future and I should follow whatever opportunities are delivered to me. I would also not be able to live with myself if I missed one of the greatest chances I was given to succeed. Why else would I have worked so diligently for the past four years?

If I consent to apply, I rebound to the same burden commonly found in the firing room. Do I tell the ones I love I am choosing to send my applications, even though they may be disgusted with me? Do I wait until I receive the final admissions decision, and then burst the bubble? Or do I avoid the situation by never applying and compromising my future somewhere closer to home? If a lie can give a friend the confidence to carry off something a little too tight, should it give me the same surge to at least be able to apply?

Yellow Revolution

Touching Display of Charity?

Joy Yoo
Reporter

Take a look around. The color yellow is roaming the halls, signifying the popularity of the new bracelets distributed by the Livestrong foundation, an informative program of the Lance Armstrong Foundation. According to Lance Armstrong, "[Yellow is] a symbol of hope, courage and perseverance."

The bracelets are yellow with the phrase "LIVESTRONG" engraved in the plastic. They are a symbol of the fight against cancer. For only \$1, people purchase the bracelets so they can display their support for the battle against the terminal disease, and the purchasers have the satisfaction of knowing the proceeds go directly to the LAF (Lance Armstrong Foundation).

Inspired by Lance Armstrong and his rigorous road to recovery, these bands are irreplaceable. After Armstrong's sixth win in the Tour De France, purchases of the bracelets skyrocketed. There is no discrepancy for who wears them; they are universal. However, many remain unaware of the buyers' incentives and claim the bands are just a "fad" and will eventually become old. Since when has support for the fight against such a slow, agonizing death ever been a "fad?"

The bands are so much more. The bracelets are a way to increase the funding for the foundation, but they also create unity among the many different people who wear the bracelet. They allow people to put their differences aside and join the struggle together. This unity is unique and there aren't many other things that can create such significant oneness.

However, there are still many people who will continue calling the bands a "fad" because there are a lot of people who wear them. Just because they are popular doesn't make them a "fad" or a fashion joke. It's good that there are many people supporting a universal cause. The bracelets are undoubtedly very effective devices for promotion and advertisement; they are a creative way of spreading the word of how one can donate money to such a worldwide cause. It's like a chain reaction: one person asks their friend what the band is for, then goes and purchases one, and so on. How can that be wrong?



Photo by Evan Dobbs

Many people are attracted to the bracelets because of the fact that a lot of people have them. However, after buying them, everyone who wears the Livestrong bracelet inevitably supports the cause. In other words, the initial interest of many

people may be caused by the popularity rather than the cause, but after learning the details, the main incentive is always for the right purpose. Without a doubt, this phenomenon is not a "fad"; it represents something beautiful. The main purpose of these bands is to inform those who don't know that almost 10 million people live daily with cancer. Through the yellow bands, the LAF creates a new "hope for living" for these victims. They deserve that hope, and to deprive them of such hope is inhumane.

So the next time you see yellow in the halls, think about this: for almost ten million people, "Yellow [is what] wakes [them] up in the morning... Yellow has taught [them] the true meaning of sacrifice. Yellow makes [them] suffer. Yellow is the reason [they're still] here."

■ Fad
■ Charity

Another Fad For the Masses?

Mark Peterman
Reporter

Everybody has seen or bought the yellow bracelets that say Livestrong, but not many people know what they represent. Why buy them then? Well, as long as you buy it for the right reason, it proves that you have a heart and can see beyond your own nose. Livestrong started out as an educational program set up by the Lance Armstrong Foundation (LAF) as a resource for cancer survivors and their friends and families. Its purpose is to help them deal with the after effects of surviving cancer as well as raise five million dollars for cancer research. They made these special bracelets yellow because that is the color that the leader wears in the Tour de France.

The idea was ingenious because the thought of a reward, no matter how small, would hopefully appeal to the younger generation and the cause itself would do the same for the older folks. Many people, including myself, believe it has evolved from a simple fundraiser and become just another fad brought around by high school students. They just see it as a way to remain "cool" in the eyes of their peers. I actually spoke with a fellow sophomore who said that she had no idea what it stood for but that it matched her outfit. I guess I was clinging too tightly to the hope that teens would be in the same mindset as our older counterparts.

Of course there are exceptions to this rule. Many students have made me proud by purchasing the bracelets before the rush of "trend-setters" got their hands on them. These people are few and far between, however, and are greatly outnumbered by the others who are stuck in the constant cycle of fashion updates. Personally I think it is an outrage they don't try and find out what Livestrong means before they slap it on their wrist and show it off.

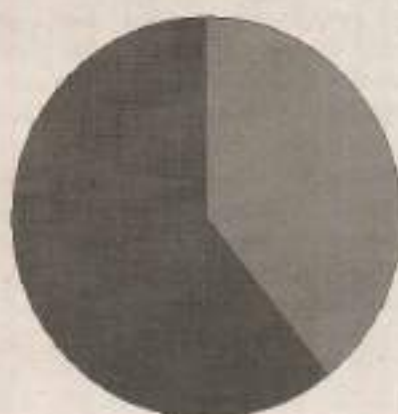
Some of them don't even realize where their money is going and how it is helping society. If you told them every time they buy one of their precious bracelets, one hundred percent of the money they spent on it went to help LAF reach their goal; they would probably just shrug, say "That's cool" and forget all about it. I'm sure all the people who lived and are currently living with cancer would be pleased to hear how much they care about their situation. I wonder how they would feel if the "shoe was on the other foot."

Overall, I am very disappointed with my generation. People who ignorantly purchase these bracelets without knowing why are basically spitting on the feelings of the many people who are forced to live with cancer, just so they can remain hip. Not to mention the memories of the millions of people who have died fighting this horrible disease. Some of them feel that just the mere fact that they are aiding this great cause should be sufficient, even if they didn't know what they were doing until you told them. I am not alone in my feelings as there are many other high school students who are completely disgusted by what they have seen. We can only hope that the next generation will not be so thoughtless.



Photo by Evan Dobbs

Photo illustration by Evan Dobbs



What do you think about yellow?

39.7 % of students believe they are a form of charity.

60.7 % of students believe they are just another fad.

Losing at Home

Jason Yaworske

Reporter

A growing concern of many students at this school over the past few years is the decline of our sports programs. For many, a lack of pride in their school's teams is an issue. Most students don't remember what it was like to attend a football or basketball game expecting to dominate the other team on our home turf. Now, with a winless football team that used to be consistently solid year in and year out, people are left shaking their heads and wondering why. Are we untalented? Is our school big enough to compete with others in our division? Have we just lost the will to win?

Statistics show that the excuse for school size may be legitimate, but not overwhelming. West Potomac has 2,043 students currently enrolled, while the average for the AAA Patriot league is around 2,414. Robinson has the most with 3,025, and only T.C. Williams has fewer students with 1,997. Maybe our coaches have slightly less students to choose from than other schools, but the problem must be much deeper than that.

Most of the standout players we have had on our traditional sports teams (football, basketball, baseball) have left for other more accomplished schools with sports programs that will better hone their skills and prepare them for the next level.

While athletics is the most publicized and noticeable category of how we stack up against other schools, there are also other unsettling statistics in categories such as our graduation rate and advanced diploma percentages, which are only higher than that of T.C. Williams, and

the number of reported fights, which is higher than all schools in our division except Hayfield.

But it is not as if our school is so outclassed by our division that we aren't capable of holding our own in other categories. In fact, West Potomac ranks in the middle of our division in categories such as proficiency in state tests, and average SAT scores.

So maybe the blame for the sports failures shouldn't be placed on the school itself, but rather the community. Many, if not most, players coming into a high school sport have little or no previous training in their respective sports. Perhaps what is actually needed are better youth league programs around the area, and more advertising and encouragement for younger kids to participate in them. Our high school teams are encouraging more and more players to try out for team despite never having played that sport before. This puts our school at a severe disadvantage to schools like Robinson, who frequently train kids that are still in the seventh and eighth grades, and whose community programs seem to be taken more seriously than those in our area. As a result, Robinson is able to have students come in as freshmen with the knowledge and fundamentals necessary to make positive contributions to their teams. This gives coaches the freedom to teach the finer aspects of their sports and develop team play, as opposed to being forced to teach each individual the basics, holding back the limited amount of more advanced, experienced players.

Whatever the reason is for our faltering in sports, excuses are piling on as fast as losses... actually, maybe *that's* the reason.

Losing Abroad

Houston Murphy

Photo Editor

After these past summer Olympics, a large number of Americans raised the question about the lack of integrity and desire that American athletes had when competing against other countries. Several American Olympic teams performed under their potential, leaving the United States with unfulfilled expectations. Americans sat at home and watched on their television sets as teams such as the once proclaimed U.S. basketball "Dream Team" walked in disappointment as they walked away from defeat, only to see the celebration of other countries winning events once dominated by the U.S. These poor performances during the summer games made many Americans wonder whether our talent is dwindling or international talent is just improving, making foreign competition stronger.

Is the rest of the world catching up to the U.S. in sports? In most sports, yes it is. Other countries are doing what needs to be done to close the gap between themselves and the level of talent and confidence that the U.S. holds. "The rest of the world is catching up and will eventually surpass the U.S. in sports," says junior athlete Frank DeVac. "This is evident because of their superior work ethic and desire to win."

In the Olympic basketball games this summer, it was obvious that teams such as Spain and Brazil now actually believed that they could beat the U.S. team for the gold. In many sports, the self-assurance that the U.S. held for such a long time seems as though it may be shifting over to other countries. These foreign teams are being prepared to look Americans right in the eyes and compete just like they believe they

should — among the elite.

Countries such as China and Italy train young athletes in their specialized talents, so they can later thrive in a specialized sport. These young athletes first learn the fundamentals of the sport right away, an aspect that is sometimes skipped here in our country. While learning their skills early on, many international athletes play in professional leagues at a much younger age, sometimes as young as in their early teenage years, around 14 years old.

At these young ages, the students become fanatics, spending all of their time improving their skills so they can one day compete with the best of their country, and later maybe compete against the United States in the Olympics. Some of the problems with sports in the U.S. is the athletes don't always learn the fundamentals of their sport. Instead, their athletic abilities are hyped and they are expected to progress nationally solely based on their athletic talent. An athlete can get by on their athletic talent throughout the amateur levels of competition, but once they get to the pros, they are left looking dazed and confused.

This problem was shown this summer in the Olympics in basketball. The U.S. basketball team had such a young group of players, the international teams were often the ones dominating, as they had more veteran players who just knew how to play the game better.

If the U.S. wants to progress along with the rest of the world in sports, American athletes need to take international athletes more seriously, and recognize that we too must have the desire and the work ethic to compete among the elite in the future.

Too Punk Rock For This?

Marissa D'Orazio

Focus Editor

You know how the VJs on MTV think they're cooler than the rest of the world? That's a huge problem. But do you know what's even a bigger one? A lot of rock listeners think the same way about themselves.

I was watching something on MTV this summer when a wise little VJ popped up to introduce a Modest Mouse video that apparently was blowing up at that point.

"You know, Modest Mouse has been around forever, but now that they're getting famous, there's all these little groupies who are like, 'O-M-G! I just LOVE Modest Mouse!'" He rolled his eyes.

The funny thing is, probably every single person watching

MTV at that moment thought, "Yeah, I hate those stupid groupies! I, on the other hand, am not just part of the hype—I'm a true indie, hard-core fan."

I don't understand why it makes a difference who listens to music, as long as it's being listened to. If you were a real fan, wouldn't you want more people to share your love for a band's music? Or do you feel like you should have them all to yourself?

The fear of what uncool scum is going to start listening to "your music" creates ridiculous problems. Some people will stop listening to a band that becomes famous because this apparently means the band has "sold out." But wouldn't these people be the real sell-outs by flip-flopping on bands they once loved? How can

the mere factor of gaining fame change the music they already made? I understand that a band could release a new album that has a totally different sound than their first album, but whether induced by greed for record sales (like Good Charlotte's *The Young and the Hopeless*), or not (like Brand New's *Deja Entenda*), this gives you no excuse to condemn their old stuff that you once liked.

Many people also fear the media and think it does damage to the quality of the music produced, when in fact, it is our own fault that the music played on the radio is terrible. In the world of rap, the most famous artists are also the best. But if you turn on any rock station, you hear mostly watered-down

pop rock from those artists who permit stations to play their music. Why don't rockers want to gain fame? Because with fame comes the title of being a "sell-out." And whose fault is this? Yours. The listeners. The sell-



Photo by Evan Dobler

out fans who trash the albums of rising stars.

When I saw the commercial for "Without A Paddle," I screamed out of joy and sheer shock. One of my favorite bands of all time, and one of the least famous bands I listen to, Lucky

Boys Confusion, had their song featured in the commercial. Now a typical "hard-core" fan would draw the conclusion that the Boys were starting to sell out, but what do they want? For them to remain undiscovered forever? I praised the soundtrack selector, hoping that this meant that the Boys might be able to headline a tour now, and start playing at venues outside of just the Midwest.

We get so caught up in what lead singers are wearing and what image they are trying to present, how famous they are, who listens to their music, and whether or not they are "underground," "hard-core," or "indie." Why don't we relax and see music for what it really is — simply music?

Questions For Thought

Do blondes really *know* that they have more fun?

Do CD's spin backwards in Australia?

Can you cry underwater?

What was the best thing before sliced bread?



Virginia College Report

A basic look at some of Virginia's most popular universities

Sarah Raser

Wire Reporter

Hey all you juniors and seniors out there! It's important to start looking at colleges soon, so here's a few of the top Virginia colleges that you might be interested in:

Virginia Tech- With a status of being a great sports school, Virginia Tech also has outstanding engineering, veterinary, business, and computer departments.

Application Deadline: Fall freshman- January 15th

Tuition: In state- \$11,247

Room and board: \$4,084

Enrollment: 21,332

Average SAT: 1250

City: Blacksburg



University of Virginia- UVA is widely known among students in Northern Virginia to be a "dream school". Its high academic standards and its conservative reputation make it a safe and fulfilling environment for its students.

Application Deadline: January 15th

Tuition: \$15,860

Room and board:

Enrollment: 12,979

Average SAT: 1324

City: Charlottesville



William and Mary- Known for its high academic standards, William and Mary is a highly competitive school where slacking off is unheard of.

Application Deadline: January 5th

Tuition: \$6,430

Room and board: \$0

Enrollment: 5,686

Average SAT: 1343

City: Williamsburg



James Madison University- James Madison has standout programs in music and business and has an innovative science and technology department. It is also known for having great parties and being affordable for its in-state and out-of-state students. If you want to go to a party, James Madison is the one for you.

Application deadline: January 15th

Tuition: \$5,476

Room and board: \$5,880

Enrollment: 14,685

Average SAT: 1167

Location: Harrisonburg



Mary Washington- Mary Washington has a wide range of courses and makes college fun for the freshmen. And while the student population may be small, it has a reputation for having a friendly campus, and has a great, outgoing staff.

Application Deadline: January 15th

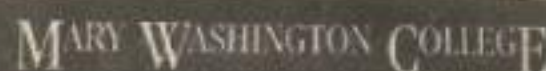
Tuition: \$4,688

Room and board: \$5,318

Enrollment: 4,039

Average SAT: 1208

City: Fredericksburg



Radford University- Radford has a great selection of courses and helps its new students creating specially designed new-student programs such as University 100 class and Success Starts Here. Located about half an hour outside of Roanoke, Radford is surrounded by the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains and is perfect for the student who enjoys the outdoors.

Application Deadline: May 1st

Room and board: \$5,442

Tuition: \$3,594

Enrollment: 8,146

Average SAT: 991

City: Radford



Indie Bands, cont'd from Page 1

Concerts aren't just about listening to music; there is a certain atmosphere when you are in a place with a lot of people that you don't know but weirdly feel connected to."

In this spirit of connectedness, a group of students from this school recently attended a show at the 9:30 Club by British rock band the Libertines. With a high concentration of Brits, the venue turned into an exchange forum with American and English students discussing everything from "favourite" bands to foreign policy. As the crowd packed in, one concertgoer circulated rumors of a planned stage invasion during the closing song. The news spread like a

were pulled off the stage by security, still singing and dancing to every word.

Speaking of the why he went to the Libertines show, Junior Parker Fishel, said, "I enjoy meeting older, attractive British women who like the same music." While not everyone's fancy may lie in British women, the search for a diverse group of people who share common interests and the possibility of discovering new interests are alluring aspects of these events.

These interests new and old are often a topic of conversation among club patrons. Bands, movies, places to be, and books are points of discussion that can lead to the discovery of new favorites. "I'll go to a show and start talking to some people and they might mention a book or an author and I'll be like, 'I should check that out.' That's how I discovered [the book] *Electric Blue Acid Test*," said senior Shaughn Dugan.

In part, it is this desire to expand intellectually that has prompted students to eschew high school events for more extraneous ones like concerts. Junior Randy Wallace attended a show at the 9:30 Club "instead of homecoming because I find homecoming to be kind of shallow." While some dismiss this attitude as jaded, others see it as a positive trend in teenagers' lives. Independent artists' reflections on literature, politics, and culture in their music help interest teenagers in



Carl Barks of The Libertines plays for students and fans at the 9:30 club.

an intellectual world of profound impact.

English teacher Paul Russell agrees with the value of this movement. He says, "I had a student, Michael Terzano, who would often go to coffee houses and clubs by himself, sometimes as far away as Arlington and DC to listen to music, and he always seemed to know and find out about the most interesting things. He would meet and keep in touch with all kinds of people and it really expanded his friend base; people who went to different schools and all sorts. It really takes an independent and confident person to do that. There are some adults who won't go to places by themselves."

Whatever impact this trend has on the generation as a whole remains to be seen. The impact on individuals, however, is apparent as students step outside the normal routine and experience something different.

RLAA, cont'd from page 1

were searched for music piracy in Fairfax County and Herndon, and approximately 21,000 counterfeit CD's were removed.

The Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) represents the US recording industry. This organization creates about 90% of all valid sound recordings in the United States and protects the property rights of artists worldwide.

Every year recording industries lose up to \$4.2 billion in illegal downloading over the internet. The RIAA has filed lawsuits against software companies that violates copyright laws. "There will always be a degree of piracy, both on the street and online. But without a strong measure of deterrence, piracy will overwhelm and choke the creation and distribution of music," said RIAA president Cary Sherman in August of 2004.

Millions of people all over the world are breaking the law and don't even know it. The majority of high school students download daily and don't know the consequences. To them, downloading music off of the internet is a free and easy way of getting the music they want. For some students downloading music is a way of life. Kids and parents would be left bored and broke if the opportunity to downloading music was taken away. "I think it's cool. I think it's neat that you can just pick a certain song and

download it and not have to buy whole CD," said Virginia Lanthier, a parent of a teenage girl. Yes, the record companies would be happy and computer technicians would have a hundred people calling them to fix their computers because of a crash caused by a virus from downloading software. Brenda Sullivan, a junior at Gonzaga said, "I think people should be able to download as they please. Even if the RIAA tried to stop people from downloading, they're just going to do it anyway."

Although it may seem like the RIAA is trying to shut down these sites, that is not the case. Illegal sites would not have to shut down; they would just have to change their software so the user would

"I think downloading music should be legal. At least kids aren't doing other, bigger crimes like drugs."

~Senior Tamera Anderson



Bands outside of high school mainstream inspire new intellectual interests.

shockwave, causing the already animated crowd to gush more fervently. As the band smashed through their set, Brits and Americans alike danced and sang together, until the final number ended in a massive stage crash. As the invasion ensued, students

pay for the song and the proceeds would go to the record company. "I think downloading music should be legal. At least kids aren't doing other, bigger crimes, like drugs," said senior Tamera Anderson. The RIAA's main goal is to stop the unlawful distribution of music. They just want the sites to play by the rules just like everybody else even if it means putting up with unhappy teenagers.

WEST POTOMAC UPCOMING EVENTS

October 30

- Cheerleading District Finals at Hayfield (1pm)

November 1-2

- Student holidays

November 5

- Senior portrait make-ups in Auditorium (7:30am-2:30pm)

November 6

- SAT testing in cafeteria and Quander classrooms (7:30am-2:30pm)
- Crew "Learn to Row Program" at Sandy-Sun Regional Boathouse (9am-12pm)

November 8

- Senior class dinner in cafeteria (6pm-10pm)
- PTSA meeting in library (7pm-9pm)

November 9

- ASE test in cafeteria and classrooms (6pm-11:30pm)

November 10

- Counselor's Touchbase with sophomores (7:30am-2pm)
- NHS meeting in cafeteria (2:15pm-5pm)

November 11

- 2 1/2 hour delayed opening
- TOUCH BASE with teachers (7:30am-9:30am)
- Marching band awards night in cafeteria (6:30pm-9:30pm)
- ASE Test 6:00pm-11:30pm (Cafeteria & classrooms)

November 17

- Fellowship of Christian Athletes Meeting 2:20pm-2:50pm room 130G

November 18

- Health Screening 7:00 (small gym)
- Full Play 7:30pm-10:30pm

November 19

- ESOL Awards Assembly 9:00am-10:55pm (auditorium)
- Full Play 7:30pm-10:30pm

November 20

- Full Play 7:30pm-10:30

Montreal Expos Begin Expedition

Alex Keckeisen
Sports Editor

It has been a long 33 years since a major league baseball team has played in the district, but the wait will soon end when the Montreal Expos make their trek to the nation's capitol.

The league-owned Expos will now make a much anticipated relocation into D.C. with the help of baseball supporters from all over the area who worked for years to get a team. D.C. has often been used as a puppet by the league to scare owners about relocation since the Washington Senators moved to Texas in 1971. But they have never received a team through those long, frustrating ordeals.

The struggling Expos put together an average attendance of only 8761 fans in 56 home games in Montreal's Olympic Stadium last season.

The relocation of the team did not come without some confusion and fights over money. The Orioles, who play at a stadium less than 40 miles away from where the relocated team will play, have some concern over the move because of the financial issues that come from having two teams so close together. Peter Angelos, the owner of the Orioles, has been particularly upset, but has been assured that he will not lose any money. His belief is that the new team will take away fans coming from the suburbs to watch the Orioles play at

Camden Yards. While he has been arguing and complaining to the league and trying to bring fans to his side, many believe this whining could only hurt the team. The league office has guaranteed Angelos that if attendance revenues do not meet that of the previous season then Major League Baseball will make up the difference. If Angelos ever decides to sell the team, he has been guaranteed that he will be paid the same amount at which he bought the team.

Pending approval of \$440 million by the district, the team will be enjoying plush conditions in a state-of-the-art park for baseball only. Until the new ballpark is built, the team will be playing at Robert F. Kennedy Stadium. RFK hasn't hosted a baseball game since 1971, and will now have to make the transition between the D.C. United's soccer field and a baseball diamond.

Opponents of the team's movement have also taken the offensive against using tax dollars to build a new stadium on the Anacostia River. While many think that this could revitalize the crime-ridden area, some think it could only make the area worse by creating bad, low end jobs.

No matter what the effects of a new team have on the Anacostia area and the district, the team will be playing its first home games at RFK Stadium, and will hopefully be here in the area for fans to enjoy for many years to come.



Driving Out the Myths

Ashlee Newcomb
Features Editor

Getting a driver's license has always been an important milestone in a person's life. After driver's education, the permit test, and Behind-the-Wheel, it would seem drivers would know the rules of the road, especially teenagers because they are fresh from the learning experience.

"Most teenagers think of driving as something that just comes with age, not as a privilege. Driving is a big deal, and it comes with a lot of responsibilities. Some of my friends, I won't lie, aren't the best drivers," said senior Amy Dobson. Fellow senior Patrick Dewey plainly agrees, "Most people take driving for granted and do stupid things but usually everyone has a close call that makes them realize they should be more careful."

However, many teenage drivers, after all their time in driver's education, seem to either not know the restrictions on teenage drivers or they tend to ignore them. Many parents are unaware there are teenage driving regulations. Considering the time gap from when most parents received their driver's license and when their children did, many new laws have been put in place. Licensed teenagers are not necessarily going to inform their parents that there are such restrictions.

Statistics show that fourteen percent of all deaths due to motorized vehicle accidents are teen drivers. "Since the beginning of school the Washington Metropolitan Area has

lost over fifteen teenagers due to fatal traffic accidents. With such high rate of deaths caused by teen drivers, parents should be aware of the driving regulations to help prevent possible incidents," said Officer Daryl Davis.



Junior Nick Brady pays the price for missing high speeds and slippery roads. Students often break the laws for driving until something serious scares them straight.

There are many mixed beliefs on what the regulations are for teen drivers. "It has come to my attention from parents and students that the law regarding passenger limits is

exempt for driving to and from school," said Davis.

Fact:

- Licensed drivers under the age of eighteen are prohibited from driving from midnight to four am, unless it's for the following reasons: in an emergency, when traveling to and from work or a school-sponsored event, when accompanied by a parent or other adult acting in place of a parent, or when responding to an emergency call as a volunteer fire-fighter or rescue squad member.

- First year drivers are only permitted to have one passenger under the age of eighteen.
- After one year of holding a driver's license or while under eighteen, a licensed driver is permitted to have three passengers under the age of eighteen.
- Drivers under the age of twenty-one with the Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) level of .02% are considered under the influence.

Fiction:

- Driving curfews are set by parents.
- There are not any restrictions in Alexandria.
- Teenage drivers can have as many people in the car as there are seatbelts.
- Teenage drivers can have one friend and one family member as passengers until they are eighteen.
- Teenage drivers can drive as many family members in their car at anytime or any age.
- With a driving permit one can only have family members in their car.
- The BAC level for teens is .08%, like adults.

With such inconsistent beliefs on teen driving regulations,

See Driving Laws, pg. 9

How Well Do You Know Hispanic History?

Hana Beckerle

Editor-in-Chief

Hispanic Heritage Month is a yearly celebration of Hispanic-American history, traditions, and contributions to our society. The state of Virginia declared this year's theme for the month-long festivities as "Hispanic Americans: Making a Difference in Our Community and Our Nation."

Hispanic Americans are the youngest and fastest-growing segment of Virginia's population. Various events took place around the area, including George Mason University hosting Latin jazz great Tito Puente on October 2. However, there was not a major campaign to publicize the event at this school. There was a shelf in the library of books by Hispanic authors, which were soon replaced by Halloween books.

Here are a few trivia questions about the history of Hispanic Americans in the United States. Test your knowledge and check your answers on the bottom when you're done!

1) Which Hispanic baseball player played for eighteen years with the Pittsburgh Pirates (1955 to 1972), during which time he earned twelve gold gloves, four batting NL batting titles and played in two World Series?
a) David Ortiz
b) Tony Pérez
c) Roberto Clemente

2) Name the first Hispanic to have served in the U.S. Congress in the early 1800s.
a) Joseph María Hernández
b) Henry Cisneros
c) Markey Gonzales

3) Name the first Hispanic woman to be appointed as Surgeon General, the chief doctor in the United States, in 1990.
a) Isabel Allende
b) Linda Chavez
c) Antonia C. Novello

4) Who was the first Hispanic American woman to fly into space in April 1993?
a) Pan Muñoz-Ryan
b) Ellen Ochoa
c) Pat Mora

5) Name the Hispanic who won the Nobel Prize for medicine in 1959 for his discovery of the process that would allow humans to develop RNA (a vital life substance that makes cells grow) in a test tube.
a) Severo Ochoa
b) Roberto Clemente
c) Rodolfo Anaya

Answers: 1.C, 2.A, 3.C, 4.B, 5.A

Freshman Class Officers Plan for the Year Ahead

Sarah Raser

Wire Reporter

Muhammad Choyt- President: "I really want this year to be good. I plan for our Homecoming float to win, and the dance to be fun for all classes. I'm currently trying to set up a pot luck or field day sort of thing to raise money for our class. I remember in middle school we had many useful fundraisers and it would be great to bring them here. It's my job to represent the freshman class to the fullest."



Derek Barrera- Vice president: "I'd like to put together fun events for the freshman, and make it an all around good year. Being a freshman is tough, but I want to make it more eventful. I also don't want to run out of money. Raising money is hard, so we want to conserve what we spend."

Julicia Lewis- Secretary: "Since I'm new at this, I plan to be the best secretary I can be. I want to have enough money to last us this year and the next. I also want a rockin' float for Homecoming. It's very important for me to get other people's ideas and incorporate them during our SGA meetings."



Laura Howell - Treasurer: "I hope to make a good float for homecoming, so we have a chance to win. It would be nice to make a fun class dinner and make it memorable for all of us. All of the officers agree and we want to make a good prom for the Juniors and Seniors. They deserve it."

Stephanie Gerow- Historian: "As historian it is my job to take photos and make memories for my class. I plan to make a scrapbook for this year, and if I'm elected for the next three years I'd like to make it a 4 year album."



Chi-Chi Nwatu- Representative: "I plan to fully represent my class well. I want my fellow freshman to have a good year, and I want to use everyone's ideas. I plan for this year to be fun."

KUDOS TO

All the ASL students who participated in signing the national anthem for the Homecoming festivities. Thanks to Angie Terzano for leading them.

Assistant Principal Janice Monroe for the time and effort she put into ensuring a smooth PSAT.

The entire SGA for a busy, well-planned, happy Homecoming.

The All Male Drill Team for having the courage to make us laugh.

Krista McGillion, Liz Jenkins, Charlene Prescott, Alex Arnold, Dustin Smith, and Michelle Kyong Kim who were chosen by audition to perform with the Virginia Honors Choir at the Virginia Music Educators state conference in Norfolk.

The Marching Band on winning the Mt. Vernon and Calton competitions and to the drum line for getting the highest score in West Potomac history.

Five students from this school have been invited to perform in Senior Regional Orchestra. They were selected through a very competitive audition process that included students from all of Fairfax County. The group includes seniors Steven Bobbit, Laura Lloyd-Bratt, Chae Prescott, and Edward Cawenton, as well as junior Sami Klein.

Political Clubs, cont'd from page 1

Merriam as the project coordinators. "It's not just about partisan politics; we believe that through our work we are promoting values and policies that make America great. We consider that the greatest service in our club," said Arnold.

Macklin and his fellow conservatives are scheduling activities and taking action to complete their mission statement. They've organized a function on October 12 at Paul Spring Community Home to register

elderly men and women to vote. The club also frequently passes out Republican literature to residents in the neighborhoods around this school. On Thursday, October 21 the Young Republican club wore flip flops and anti-Kerry t-shirts to commemorate their original creation of "Flip-Flop Day," a day of enduring cold October temperatures in warm weather attire to criticize what they see as John Kerry's inconsistent

stances on issues. The Young Democrats have also been proactive and organized voter registrations during school. Like the Teenage Republicans, they've spent weekends canvassing, which is going door to door in the community to remind citizens to vote and pass out Democratic literature. At the Young Democrats' first meeting, Virginia Delegate Chris Amundson came to address the club's 50 member turnout. She came to show the members a pro-Kerry TV advertisement and

discuss how the "Democratic Party is best for the future of America."

Despite the two clubs' drastically different political point of views, they both can agree on one thing: why you should join their clubs. The Young Democrats and Teenage Republicans are opportunities to give back to the country, community, and yourself. They both agree that it's a club where you can make a difference in something important and something you believe in.



A Teenage Republican celebrates Flip-Flop Day with a political shirt.

Photo by Houston Murphy



Many students get involved by campaigning and placing signs in their neighborhoods.

Photo by Houston Murphy

NEWS BRIEF

Angie Palma

Assistant Business Manager

Women Faster Than Men



John Covales/Denver Post

By the middle of the next century women may be leaving men in the dust and, for the first time, may beat them in the 100 meters. According to scientists at Oxford University in England, women will clock 8.079 seconds in the 100 meters,

leading of the best male time of 8.098 seconds. If current trends continue, women will run faster than the men by the 2156 Olympics. There is currently a steady trend of both men and women improving their 100-meter times but women are increasing at a much faster rate. Some research shows no sign that male or female athletes have reached a plateau. Studies did not include difficult influences such as timing accuracy, environmental variations, national boycotts or the use of legal or banned stimulants. How much illegal substances have influenced men's or women's timing is unknown. According to some, drug use can explain why women's times were improving faster than men's, however no evidence has been found to support that. One clarification for the closing speed gap is that women have not been competing as long as men and only an insignificant amount of the female population has been given an opportunity to compete.

Driving Laws, cont'd from page 7

one would believe that the majority of drivers would not be allowed on the road. However, considering the Behind-the-Wheel programs that are available, the ability to obtain a driver's license is not as difficult as it should be.

There are many teenage drivers who both agree and disagree with the regulations set in place. "The curfew law is an attempt at taking away our given freedoms. Also, the number of students in the car is [unfair]. It's all based upon the automobiles' monopoly to get more kids to drive, instead of car pooling. Why are don't we try and save the environment? Oh wait, lets restrict young adults' freedoms even more," said junior Taylor Mertins.

There are also student drivers who find the regulations to be an accurate reflection of a need for guidelines. "As a teen driver, who has participated in Autocross, timed races in parking lots, I know how easy it is to lose traction and control of the car. Most teens do not know the limits of their car and when they exceed those limits, they have absolutely no idea how to correct it," said senior Stuart Trouton.

Some student drivers recognize the dangers of inexperienced driving. "Many are attentive, but looking back, drivers with less than a year of experience (juniors) often lack the 'feel' of driving, especially in high stress situation i.e. school," said senior Kevin Ebberts.

"Many of the drivers that I see are excellent drivers, whereas some of them have a tendency to be impatient when leaving the school. Some do not take the responsibility of driving serious enough," said Davis. Responsible driving comes with time and experience, and an overall knowledge of driving laws will benefit any young drivers.

Creatine Use By Student Athletes Increases

Alex Keckeisen

Sports Editor

As drugs and steroids become a large part of professional sports, over-the-counter drugs are becoming the solution for some players in amateur and high school sports. An increasing number of athletes are using creatine, a performance-enhancing supplement, to boost their muscle mass and gain weight in order to perform better.

Supplements such as creatine have entered the spotlight for legal performance enhancers as athletes in high school sports look for a boost. This relatively new supplement has caused uproar, both good and bad, in the athletic community. While some trainers and doctors may recommend it for building muscle mass, it can have its fair share of negative side effects.

Creatine is a natural substance in muscles that is used in the production of adenosine triphosphate, also known as ATP. ATP is used for energy by cells in the body and can increase endurance. Extended exercise can mean more strength and ultimately weight gain.

Severe cramping, nausea, and muscle tears are just three of the possible side effects caused by creatine. Cramping is the most widely seen short-term effect because users do not drink enough water during practice or workouts. Trainers from various professional teams and college teams have also noticed more serious effects of creatine. While cramping, muscle tears, and dehydration are a concern, many are worried about the long term

effect on a user's liver, kidney, and pancreas. Extended use has been shown to limit the creation of natural creatine in the body.

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) has recently released documents focusing on creatine and other similar supplements, discouraging their use. "A



Photo by Heather Mayday

Creatine, an anabolic steroid, is used by many high school athletes.

balanced diet and proper exercise will allow our athletes to grow. These supplements are unhealthy," said this school's director of Student Activities, Jeff Dietze. "We've done what we can, we've told our athletes not to use them," he added. As creatine grows in popularity a recent study has shown that 44 percent of high school senior athletes have used the supplement sometime in their four years in school. The FDA which would usually govern over drugs cannot have any say on its sale in the U.S. because it is a dietary supplement.

The question of supplement

use in high school sports will always come back to drug use by professional athletes. With such athletes such as Marion Jones and Barry Bonds under suspicion during the BALCO investigation, it begs the question of whether high school athletes are influenced by how well these athletes are performing. Barry Bonds has opened up about his use of the legal drug. "Definitely. I take supplements. I have taken creatine, protein pills and amino acids," he said in an interview while still denying he ever used anabolic steroids. While anabolic steroids are the usually the drugs being used in the pros, creatine can be affiliated to them but on a smaller scale. Professionals can make it seem so easy to get away with using drugs that are illegal and can improve performance, because many of these leagues give these players second and third chances to "clean up." Ricky Williams, the former running

back for the Miami Dolphins, recently retired after his third failed drug test, and if he returns to the NFL he will have to serve a mandatory one year suspension. In a statement after the tests had been released to the public, he responded, "I didn't quit football because I failed a drug test, I failed a drug test because I was ready to quit football."

Due to the lack of any drug testing in high school, it is impossible to track if a player has been using creatine or other drugs unless caught. And as long as there are sports, many athletes

Community Grieves for a Groveton Grad

Evan Dobbs

Photo Editor

While many students were getting ready for Homecoming last Saturday, local community members were mourning the loss of a fallen soldier, a former student of Groveton High School. Commander Sergeant Major Jim Blankenbecker was killed by an RPG, or homemade explosive, on October 1st, 2004, on his way back from a promotional ceremony in Samara, Iraq. Blankenbecker was survived by his wife and three children, his two parents, and his brother.

Blankenbecker graduated from Groveton High School in the class of 1982, three years before it merged with Fort Hunt to become West Potomac. His classmates

say he was a great athlete. He was the quarterback of the JV football team, played basketball and baseball for Groveton, and soccer outside of school. "He was incredibly gifted and he could play any sport that he wanted to," said Phil Rodgers, a friend of Blankenbecker.

Blankenbecker opted for something other than college, and immediately enlisted. He was assigned to the Second Airborne Division and reached one of the highest ranks, Regimental Sergeant Major. While in the military, Blankenbecker received his bachelors and had been working on his master's when he was killed.



Photo by Evan Dobbs

Mourners gather around a memorial plaque and tree to honor fallen soldier, Jim Blankenbecker.

A tree was planted at the bottom of the hill by the entrance to the track to honor Blankenbecker. A father, a son, and a soldier, he will be missed by many people, and will always be remembered as Jim, the all around guy.



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...So Who Would



"I've discussed the candidates and the election with my parents and after seeing 'Fahrenheit 911,' I don't feel that George W. Bush is the most honest person. I think that honesty is a great trait that the president must have." Brittney Rouse, Junior

"I don't like either of them. They are both stupid and will do nothing for the country." William Faxon, Freshman

For A Stronger America

Rob Jones

Wire Reporter

There is no question about it—this year's Presidential election will be by far the most important and hotly contested in decades. After four turbulent years marked by tragedy and a gross mismanagement of government affairs, America needs to elect a competent leader who will work to correct the Bush administration's errors in judgment and abandonment of the legislative process.

Over the course of the last four years, America has reeled from the terrible tragedy of September 11, and, for a shining moment, experienced an overwhelming display of unity. However, the Bush administration has squandered that unity. He lost the support of a large percentage of the American Public when he insisted on launching a "pre-emptive" invasion of Iraq without the support of the UN. Between the war and Bush's maintenance on passing a tax cut affecting primarily the wealthiest Americans, the administration has succeeded in turning a \$5.6 trillion budget surplus into a deficit of equal amount. The money spent pursuing this "clear and present danger" could have been used for domestic improvements, perhaps to stem the rapid growth of the country's unemployment rate. The President, however, has largely ignored these important domestic concerns, and has said that although US forces have found no conclusive evidence that a terrorist threat ever existed in Iraq, he would still proceed with the invasion of Iraq with the intelligence available today.

As the election draws near, many Americans are disgusted with the current administration. The slogan "Anyone But Bush" has become commonplace across the nation, with millions of people willing to vote for anyone with a chance to beat the incumbent. However, some voters

are hesitant to put their faith in John Kerry, about whose ideas they know very little. This is due in large part to the fact that the primary focus of the campaign advertisements has been the candidates' respective service records from the Vietnam War, an issue which has little bearing on the current election.

Now, however, the American People have had an opportunity to hear the candidates discuss their plans for the future of our country's foreign policy. It will be remembered that, while the President stumbled through a series of thinly-veiled attacks on United Nations diplomacy, Kerry presented a plan to develop strong alliances, and to gain support from world powers before authorizing US soldiers to become involved in a foreign war. His economic plan calls for a repeal on tax cuts for the rich, while offering relief to middle and lower-class citizens. He plans to gain the support of the UN in an attempt to restore order and set up the most functional government possible in Iraq. Finally, Kerry has a plan to reduce the budget deficit through responsible government spending.

However, some avowed Kerry supporters wonder whether he even has a chance to win this election. With the lack of information about his policies, and the fear tactics the current administration employs in an attempt to frighten voters away from a shift in power, many undecided voters are unwilling to elect a candidate whose leadership they have not experienced firsthand. Still, many loyal democrats believe Kerry will defeat Bush in November. "The American People will vote for a candidate who has their best interests in mind, who will stand for domestic improvements rather than foreign wars, and who will be concerned with the affairs of the common man, rather than just the super-rich," says senior Alex Arnold, "and that person is John Kerry."

"I think Bush should remain president throughout the whole war." Marley Kimmel, Sophomore

On the

Ansley LaBarre

Editor-in-Chief

Too bad they don't have a ticket on the ballot towards the "politically challenged." I carry this to be perfectly honest, I am so challenged that I know if I follow the majority of the population

Personal beliefs and political opinion are two different things. I can tell you without a doubt choice, pro gay rights, supportive of the end against capital punishment and war. With all one would consider me a liberal. Why then, would be a solid supporter of John Kerry? Politics is confused to trust in either candidate.

I have been subjected to a republican because of my parents' beliefs. And as often as with them, I know they have justification in Bush. Although I have been unimpressed with conflicting feelings arise of whether or not deserves to be thrown out. Because of my parents unfortunately they are still influential on my life, I find myself drifting to empathize with a man whose beliefs differ greatly from my own.

Being subjected to campaigning on television

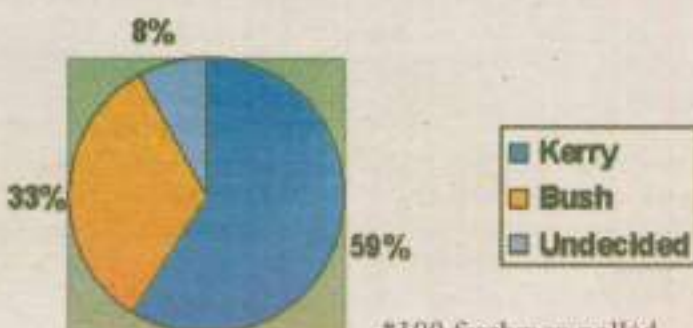
The Issues	Kerry	Bush
Gun control	For	Against
Death Penalty	Against	For
War on Iraq	Out in 4 years	Stay in
Affirmative action	For	Against
Taxes	Higher for rich	The same for all
Banning of gay marriage	Against	For
War on Drugs	For	For
Abortion	Pro-choice	Pro-life

"I feel that our nation has sacrificed a lot because of lies, and Kerry has the diplomacy to regain the respect towards the US and trust from the world, specifically those countries that tend to harbor 'terrorists.'" Michelle Khilji, Senior

"It is essential to America, especially at this point in time, that an experience and intelligent leader continues to lead our country." Anonymous

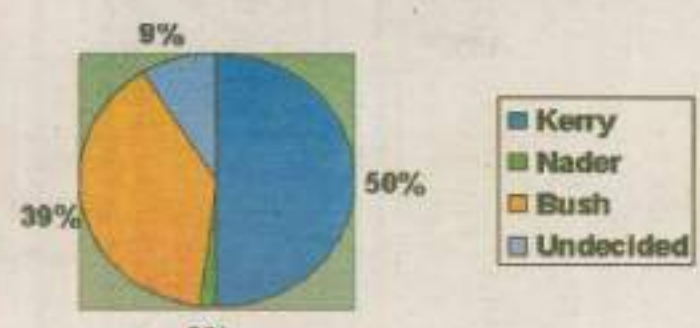
"Although John Kerry isn't the ideal president, I don't think we can take four more years of the current administration." Katherine Ward, Senior

Grade 9*



*100 freshmen polled

Grade 10*



*100 sophomores polled

Did You Vote For?

The Fence

side the decision making process. With all the negative ads bashing opponents, the viewer can't help but wonder who will make it to hell faster, instead of who they would want running the country. The same can be said for the debates, as each candidate spent the majority of their time pointing out what the other has done wrong. How does this build faith and confidence in a future leader? If I only listened to television, I'd be living in Tokyo.

While holding my eyelids open through the debates, I realized you couldn't just watch and make a decision. You actually have to *understand* what the candidates are talking about, and furthermore apply their views on each topic towards your own. Without even recognizing the concept of Homeland Security, I could've cared less what they had to say.

Luckily, I am sitting this election out. I know I would not vote for Bush, but I cannot determine if I would feel secure with a vote for Kerry. Therefore, it is understandable why so many young people don't vote even when eligible. They have not had the time, or devotion, to establish their own views and discover what they stand for. With all the focus on the negative, it almost feels easier to stay home and sit this one out.

"I would rather have someone who stands up for what he believes in than someone who can't make up his mind." Kathleen Wheeler, Sophomore

her. They both look cy." Angela Giles, omore

"This school election will probably go to Kerry because too many students who don't know what they are talking about will vote for Kerry because of biased media which makes kids blindly vote against Bush." David Hanson, Senior

"Bush appears really childish in the debates; he constantly has these little chuckles after he makes a point. It's really irritating." Becky Holloway, Sophomore

"Flip flops are for feet, not for politicians." Casey McGee, Freshman



Moving America Forward

Drew Mackdin

Opinions Editor

Surprisingly, I have been asked to explain why I am voting for President George W. Bush in this election. Not being very opinionated, I balked at the difficulty of the task. After all, I have always struggled expressing my ideas with words. I think it's because I'm afraid of what people will think of me if I'm outspoken.

It seems that almost every reference to politics in the last three years has involved the attacks of September 11, but this is because that date that day was the Pearl Harbor of our generation. In the span of three hours, the world was dramatically altered. The ideas, habits, and experiences of September 10 became ancient history.

I can hardly imagine the thoughts that ran through our President's mind the day he heard that the first plane had hit the World Trade Center. The idea of seeing all of your plans and goals become suddenly irrelevant would be truly disheartening. An event like that changes the fundamental methods of running a government. Presiding over such events is a President's worst nightmare. Furthermore, such a national crisis places an enormous spotlight on the President's reaction. It is a moment that can define a presidency, and yet the attention is totally unwanted.

President Bush handled the situation incredibly well. Think what the past three years would have been like if we had not responded rapidly and with force. How many more lives would be shattered? How many more times would we have had national days of mourning? Bush's firm action overseas has not only kept America safe, it has helped further the cause of freedom around the world. The sight of teams from Afghanistan and Iraq at the Olympics

was truly beautiful to see.

Domestically, I believe Bush's record will stand the test of time. He inherited an economy that was already sinking into recession following the bursting of the tech stock bubble. He took a lot of criticism for his tax cuts, but American consumers took that rebate and spent it, putting it right back into the national system. Since then, the economic growth of 4.8% is as strong as nearly any year in the past 20 years. In addition, the percentage of Americans owning homes is the highest ever. As for the deficit created, this was inevitable with the advent of the War Against Terror. Protecting our nation is not cheap; the new Department of Homeland Security (another Bush creation) needs the proper funding to do its job. Combined with the cost of creating a democracy in Iraq, such cost is unexpected and acceptable. Responsible government spending will enable our nation to rebound rapidly.

Finally, behind these other initiatives, Bush is a man of conviction. His steady, principled beliefs have been criticized, but his critics at least know where he stands. His defense of traditional marriage, lower tax rates, and the rights of unborn children has been unwavering. His faith is strong, and not fake - it really does guide every policy idea, and every response to criticism. Such dedication to causes simply for the reason that a higher absolute truth makes them right is refreshing to see in this age of politicians whose morals reflect the most current poll.

I count myself proud to be casting my vote for George W. Bush as President of the United States for four more years. His leadership, innovation, and conviction would earn my vote in any election in any year.

And as for John Kerry...

"Having Kerry as president will make this country more dangerous for the Americans." Adam Shaughnessy, Senior

The Lowdown on 3rd Parties

Green Party: The "Greens," as they call themselves, are very environmentally-oriented. The Green Party also emphasizes nonviolence, equality and "grassroots democracy." The Green Party has advocated Al Gore, the most visible third party candidate in this election. Find out more at www.greenparty.org.

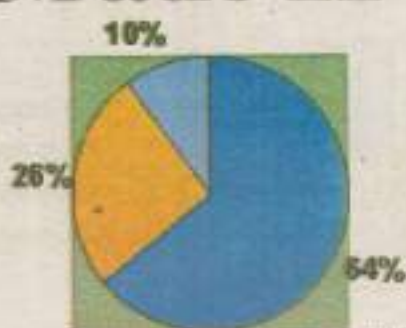
American Party: This party stresses fundamental conservative values. It is chiefly concerned with such issues as foreign involvement in U.S. affairs, military strength and upholding religious morals. In this election, Diane Templin is the American Party candidate for president. Find out more at www.americanparty.org.

Libertarian Party: The Libertarian Party places importance on personal responsibility, free trade, and a foreign policy of non-intervention and peace. Overall, the Libertarian Party opposes less governmental control in every aspect of life. Their candidate in the upcoming election is Michael Badnarik. Find more at www.libertarian.org.

Reform Party: Well-named, this party aims to reform the many corruptions that take place in America politics. Among things this party wants to change is campaign procedures, the current tax system, Social Security, and lobbying. They are also been supportive of Nader. Find out more at www.reformparty.org.

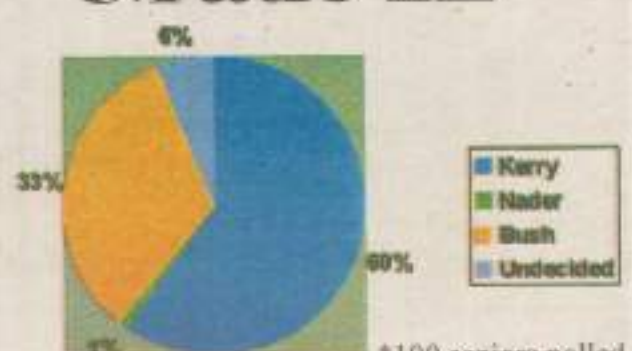
Grade 11*

"[Kerry] is our favorite to Bush." Dugan, Senior



*100 juniors polled

Grade 12*



*100 seniors polled

NEWS BRIEF

Angie Palma

Assistant Business Manager

Women Faster Than Men



John Gonsky/Gettysburg Post

By the middle of the next century women may be leaving men in the dust and, for the first time, may beat them in the 100 meters. According to scientists at Oxford University in England, women will clock 8.079 seconds in the 100 meters,

leading of the best male time of 8.008 seconds. If current trends continue, women will run faster than the men by the 2156 Olympics. There is currently a steady trend of both men and women improving their 100-meter times but women are increasing at a much faster rate. Some research shows no sign that male or female athletes have reached a plateau. Studies did not include difficult influences such as timing accuracy, environmental variations, national boycotts or the use of legal or banned stimulants. How much illegal substances have influenced men's or women's timing is unknown. According to some, drug use can explain why women's times were improving faster than men's, however no evidence has been found to support that. One clarification for the closing speed gap is that women have not been competing as long as men and only an insignificant amount of the female population has been given an opportunity to compete.

Driving Laws, cont'd from page 7

one would believe that the majority of drivers would not be allowed on the road. However, considering the Behind-the-Wheel programs that are available, the ability to obtain a driver's license is not as difficult as it should be.

There are many teenage drivers who both agree and disagree with the regulations set in place. "The curfew law is an attempt at taking away our given freedoms. Also, the number of students in the car is [unfair]. It's all based upon the automobiles' monopoly to get more kids to drive, instead of car pooling. Why are don't we try and save the environment? Oh wait, lets restrict young adults' freedoms even more," said junior Taylor Mertins.

There are also student drivers who find the regulations to be an accurate reflection of a need for guidelines. "As a teen driver, who has participated in Autocross, timed races in parking lots, I know how easy it is to lose traction and control of the car. Most teens do not know the limits of their car and when they exceed those limits, they have absolutely no idea how to correct it," said senior Stuart Trouton.

Some student drivers recognize the dangers of inexperienced driving. "Many are attentive, but looking back, drivers with less than a year of experience (juniors) often lack the "feel" of driving, especially in high stress situation i.e. school," said senior Kevin Ebberts.

"Many of the drivers that I see are excellent drivers, whereas some of them have a tendency to be impatient when leaving the school. Some do not take the responsibility of driving serious enough," said Davis. Responsible driving comes with time and experience, and an overall knowledge of driving laws will benefit any young drivers.

Creatine Use By Student Athletes Increases

Alex Keckeisen

Sports Editor

As drugs and steroids become a large part of professional sports, over-the-counter drugs are becoming the solution for some players in amateur and high school sports. An increasing number of athletes are using creatine, a performance-enhancing supplement, to boost their muscle mass and gain weight in order to perform better.

Supplements such as creatine have entered the spotlight for legal performance enhancers as athletes in high school sports look for a boost. This relatively new supplement has caused uproar, both good and bad, in the athletic community. While some trainers and doctors may recommend it for building muscle mass, it can have its fair share of negative side effects.

Creatine is a natural substance in muscles that is used in the production of adenosine triphosphate, also known as ATP. ATP is used for energy by cells in the body and can increase endurance. Extended exercise can mean more strength and ultimately weight gain.

Severe cramping, nausea, and muscle tears are just three of the possible side effects caused by creatine. Cramping is the most widely seen short-term effect because users do not drink enough water during practice or workouts. Trainers from various professional teams and college teams have also noticed more serious effects of creatine. While cramping, muscle tears, and dehydration are a concern, many are worried about the long term

effect on a user's liver, kidney, and pancreas. Extended use has been shown to limit the creation of natural creatine in the body.

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) has recently released documents focusing on creatine and other similar supplements, discouraging their use. "A

use in high school sports will always come back to drug use by professional athletes. With such athletes such as Marion Jones and Barry Bonds under suspicion during the BALCO investigation, it begs the question of whether high school athletes are influenced by how well these athletes are performing. Barry Bonds has

opened up about his use of the legal drug. "Definitely I take supplements. I have taken creatine, protein pills and amino acids," he said in an interview while still denying he ever used anabolic steroids. While anabolic steroids are the usually the drugs being used in the pros, creatine can be affiliated to them but on a smaller scale. Professionals can make it seem so easy to get away with using drugs that are illegal and can improve performance, because many of these leagues give these players second and third chances to "clean up." Ricky Williams, the former running

back for the Miami Dolphins, recently retired after his third failed drug test, and if he returns to the NFL he will have to serve a mandatory one year suspension. In a statement after the tests had been released to the public, he responded, "I didn't quit football because I failed a drug test, I failed a drug test because I was ready to quit football."

Due to the lack of any drug testing in high school, it is impossible to track if a player has been using creatine or other drugs unless caught. And as long as there are sports, many athletes



Photo by Halloway Murphy

Creatine, an anabolic steroid, is used by many high school athletes.

balanced diet and proper exercise will allow our athletes to grow. These supplements are unhealthy," said this school's director of Student Activities, Jeff Dietze. "We've done what we can, we've told our athletes not to use them," he added. As creatine grows in popularity a recent study has shown that 44 percent of high school senior athletes have used the supplement sometime in their four years in school. The FDA which would usually govern over drugs cannot have any say on its sale in the U.S. because it is a dietary supplement.

The question of supplement

Community Grieves for a Groveton Grad

Evan Dobbs

Photo Editor

While many students were getting ready for Homecoming last Saturday, local community members were mourning the loss of a fallen soldier, a former student of Groveton High School. Commander Sergeant Major Jim Blankenbecker was killed by an RPG, or homemade explosive, on October 1st, 2004, on his way back from a promotional ceremony in Samarra, Iraq. Blankenbecker was survived by his wife and three children, his two parents, and his brother.

Blankenbecker graduated from Groveton High School in the class of 1982, three years before it merged with Fort Hunt to become West Potomac. His classmates

say he was a great athlete. He was the quarterback of the JV football team, played basketball and baseball for Groveton, and soccer outside of school. "He was incredibly gifted and he could play any sport that he wanted to," said Phil Rodgers, a friend of Blankenbecker.

Blankenbecker opted for something other than college, and immediately enlisted. He was assigned to the Second Airborne Division and reached one of the highest ranks, Regimental Sergeant Major. While in the military, Blankenbecker received his bachelors and had been working on his master's when he was killed.



Photo by Evan Dobbs

Members gather around a memorial plaque and tree to honor fallen soldier, Jim Blankenbecker.

A tree was planted at the bottom of the hill by the entrance to the track to honor Blankenbecker. A father, a son, and a soldier, he will be missed by many people, and will always be remembered as Jim, the all around guy.



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Class of '06 Shocks Seniors

Juniors Show Seniors How To Play in Low Scoring Affair

Joy Yoo
Wire Reporter

Powder Puff the game where the junior girls take on the challenge of beating the senior girls in a game of touch football. Spirit week would not be the same without it. For as long as we know, the senior girls have been victorious in the annual game. This year, however, the tables were turned and the seniors suffered a 3-0 loss. Blustery weather and problems with practice attendance did not deter from the good time had by all. "I had great time at the game bonding with my friends even though we had problems," said senior Caitlin Coggins.

Last year the seniors dominated the game, and the junior girls did not even receive their T-shirts. However, before the game this year, senior Natalie Titerence said, "We are trying to organize a lot more

effectively."

Unlike preceding years, the senior girls were up for some competition. Coached by juniors DA Leigh, Antony Minter, Houston Murphy, Senon Willis, and Tyler Gray, the girls worked hard. Both the juniors and the seniors practiced rigorously

agenda for Shannon, who played safety, and her junior teammates consisted of working on certain routes and plays within each section of the team. It was obvious by the intensive drills that conditioning was an important factor for them as well. Also, the girls end every practice with a review of running and passing plays.

Unlike the juniors, the senior girls only had three consistent coaches, seniors Forrest Watson and Joey Pope and junior Michael Welbourne. Problems for the senior team were compounded as many girls did not show up to practice on a regular basis and the coaches were forced to work with as few as eleven girls. Their main focus was working on screens and running plays, which played a big part in their offensive strategy during the game.

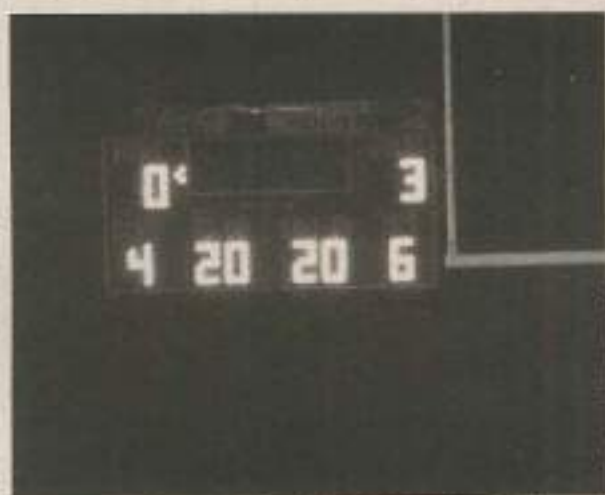
Junior Brittany Maniglia said before the game, "The seniors will win, because it's always rigged. But,

if it was for real, the juniors would win." This prediction was proved unfounded.

Because of the poor conditions, only three quarters were played before the game went into overtime. Throughout those three quarters, the game remained scoreless. In the first overtime, the junior girls were not able to score with their possession, then the seniors were forced to attempt to kick a field goal. However, kicker Laura Bieging just missed sealing a victory for her team when the ball fell short by inches of the post.

The junior girls had varsity football kicker Ali Brody, who scored a field goal in the second overtime. This put the score at 3-0. The senior girls were then faced with the tough decision at 3rd down of whether to attempt another field goal to tie the game, or to go for a touchdown and a victory. Titerence at quarterback, as well as Pope and Watson, decided to attempt a touchdown, but the girls were unable to score.

All in all, it was an exciting game for everyone as the juniors pulled off an unprecedented victory.



Time runs out as the juniors begin their celebrations with a 3-0 win over the seniors. This was only the second time in school history that the juniors have defeated the seniors in the annual powderpuff game.

Photo by Evan Dabbs

every Monday and Wednesday. "The coaches taught us a lot and get us prepared for the game, and we had fun while doing it," said junior Lauren Shannon. The common

Volleyball Goes On The Offensive

Adele Hampton
Assistant Business Manager

"W-w-e-s-t P-o-t-o-m-a-c W-W-p-h-s we are the best!"

No one in this school knows that cheer better than the varsity volleyball players. This is a strong team with big goals. Varsity coach Jean Coder said before their game against Lake Braddock, "Our goal this season is to finish first in the district." The team is currently second in the district, so reaching that goal doesn't seem that far.

On Tuesday, October 5th the varsity team faced off against Lake Braddock. They started off strong, controlling the first game, killing Lake Braddock with their powerful spikes and awesome serves and coordination. They then came back to dominate the second game, winning 25-12. By the third game, though, Lake Braddock stepped up, blocking spikes that were launched at them and upping their serving technique. But the lady Wolverines were able to hold it together and pull through with a 25-23 win. "Although there are some minor obstacles to overcome, we are able to work them out as a team and win," said sophomore Jayne Seward. The varsity plays like they're one person with one mind. They're skilled, competitive and determined to win.

Just like every other group the varsity

team has its problems.

Coder stated the team needs to improve on passing and serving, but her outlook is positive. "Keep working hard. Take it one game at a time, and cut down on the amount of errors, and improve every game," said Coder of the team's goals.

They lost some valuable seniors after last season, but now have new juniors and seniors stepping up and rising to meet the challenge. Senior captains Kelly Robinson, Ashley Smith, and Sarah Raser work hard to sustain the team morale, and keep their winnings going. This season they've beaten TC Williams, Hayfield, West Springfield, and Lake Braddock, losing only to Robinson and Herndon. They're going to have their work cut out for them the rest of the season, as they face off again against Robinson, TC Williams, West Springfield, Hayfield, Annandale, and



The team sets up a crucial play during a match against Lake Braddock.

Photo by Adele Hampton

Lake Braddock. This will make winning harder since they've already played against them.

Jess Dixon, a member of the freshman volleyball team said, "We see the varsity team as being role models. Watching them helps us to improve the way we play."

Volleyball has one of the best records of all the fall sports at this school. They are currently 6 - 2, but that could all change. It depends on how hard the team is willing to work for their goal. Judging by their performance so far, it seems like they will have no problem.

In the Numbers

33

Yards overcome by junior Ali Brody to kick the game-winning field goal in the Powder Puff game.

6

Place by varsity cheerleaders in the District Semifinals competition.

9

Number of teams who have come back from a 3-0 deficit before the Red Sox did in the ALCS.

6

Points allowed by the Redskins' defense in their past two games against the Bears and the Ravens.

1

Touchdown scored by the varsity football team during the Homecoming game against Hayfield.

Keckee's Katch

Heartbreak Horror? Yeah Right...

Alex Keckesen

Sports Editor

86 years. Do you understand how long that is? Red Sox fans have been depressed and forced into the habit of drinking and crying for that long. They've kept their cool, they know they're going to lose, but they've shuffled into Fenway Park day in and day out dedicated to the team. The fact that the Boston Red Sox have not won a World Series since 1918 and the rivalry with the Yankees makes the Red Sox a team that has sympathizers across the country.

While there are two other teams that have waited longer for a World Series, the Cubs and the White Sox, they don't have the rivalry that the Red Sox and Yankees have. As a Red Sox fan, I'll admit it, as any other fan would, the Yankees have owned the Red Sox since the Big Bambino was sold. There, I said it. Cheer all you want Yankees fans, but who's in the World Series? That'll shut you up.

This past summer on a trip to Boston, I had the pleasure of sitting through a game at historic Fenway Park. The atmosphere was not only upbeat but almost euphoric thanks to a slugfest and a shut-out of the Oakland Athletics. What other place on earth can you hear 35 thousand drunken fans singing the "bah-da-dah!" of Sweet Caroline? Not in Yankee Stadium. Why would fans continue to watch a team that hasn't won a World Series in 86 years? The Florida Marlins won the World Series last year and fans don't watch their games. Walking five feet in Boston is hard to do without seeing the red

"B" on the dark blue background. "Believe" and "Keep the Faith" are two common phrases plastered across the city like they are phrases from the Bible.

What happened in the ALCS was supposed to end in something like what happened in the 1986 World Series with the ball rolling

threw Bill Buckner's legs. On that last ground out, the ball SHOULD HAVE gone right through Mark Bellhorn's legs and the Yankees SHOULD HAVE rallied back to win the series and dash Red Sox spirits. But they didn't, and that made the difference.

After the 19-8 win in game 3, I gave up. For the rest of that Saturday night I was completely depressed and lost in oblivion. I woke up the next morning to the sports page with a picture of a banner hanging from Yankee Stadium that read "Mission Accomplished" with the signature Yankee pinstripes but the series wasn't over yet. In fact, it was far from it. At that point, I gained hope again and from that point I knew the Sox would pull

off the greatest comeback in sports history.

The grief on the 55,000 fans at Yankee Stadium during game seven just made me smile. Close to tears, they watched their "beloved" team lose to the team they should have been beating. The somber expression on A-Rod's "MVP" face. It made me smile

and laugh. They were in the position that Sox fans had been in for 86 years. And these "fans" of the Yankees that were not born in New York are the people who see a good team and want to be associated with a winner. The Yankees have the power to buy any player they think is good with a payroll around \$60 million

more than any other team. (Side note: Does anyone else notice that the Yankees general managers last name is Cashman?) Even when they know they are going to lose, they can't shut their mouths. When Pedro went in during game seven, even down 8-1 they still chanted "Who's your daddy?" The real question is, "Who's your Papi?"



Game 6 hero Curt Schilling on the mound. With a torn tendon in his ankle he still insisted on playing.

AP/WIDEWORLD

Even with an 8-1 lead going into the eighth inning, I was still nervous and superstitious. I refused to talk to my friends about what was going on. They kept trying to talk to me over AIM but I refused. "No talking during the game," I told them. "I know where you're coming from," one friend replied. I cringed to see the Yankees sluggers step to the plate and looked away in horror, but it never came. The Sox actually won. I thought that it must have been a dream.

Curt Schilling is the definition of a gladiator after his game 6 heroics. He gave Red Sox Nation hope to believe. With a loose tendon in his ankle he insisted on playing. Not only did he play, he didn't wear the boot that was specially designed for his ankle. Seven innings, four hits, and one run fighting an injury that would have kept most of us home from school sitting around, not slamming our ankles every 30 seconds. Brought in to avenge what happened in last year's ALCS he earned the city upon his shoulders and succeeded.

Whether they win or lose in the World Series, I will still be behind them 100%. They pulled off the most unbelievable comeback in sports history that generations from now grandparents will be telling their grandkids about. This is the number one upset in sports history, ranking ahead even of the 1980 "Miracle on Ice."

I used to think Yogi Berra put it best in 1999 when he told Bernie Williams, "Relax. We've been playing these guys for 80 years. They're never gonna beat us." At the time I found this true but now I just find it funny.

SPORTS CALENDAR

Friday, October 29

Varsity Football Game 7:30 p.m. At Annandale

Monday, November 1

District Volleyball 1st Round 7:15 p.m. Top Seed Site
Regional Field Hockey 1st Round 3:30-8 p.m. At Oakton

Wednesday, November 3

Regional Field Hockey 2nd Round 6:00/7:00 p.m. At Oakton

Thursday, November 4

Regional X-Country Championship 3:15 p.m. Boys Burke Lake
3:15 p.m. Girls Burke Lake
Regional Field Hockey Semis 7:00 p.m. At Oakton
JV Football Game 7:30 p.m. Home vs Oakton
Freshman Football Game 6:00 p.m. Home vs Oakton

Friday, November 5

Varsity Football Game 7:30 p.m. At Oakton

Saturday, November 6

Regional Field Hockey Final 3:00 p.m. At Oakton

Friday, November 12

Varsity Football Game 7:30 p.m. Home vs Lake Braddock



Golf Team Looks Forward

Mark Peterman

Wire Reporter

Golf is the first sport to start each school year, and the first fall sport to end at this school. The team's first match occurred on August 19th against Hayfield, before school even started, and their last match was on September 30th. Their season not only includes matches but also two tournaments, one at International Country Club and another which was the Stafford Invitational. They lost two of their matches by only one stroke, and finished with a final record of 2-4-1.

The way the matches are scored is slightly different from other sports. Eight players from each team play nine holes, but two of the eight were alternates and their scores don't count. The remaining six submit their scores, and the best four scores count towards the total team score and whichever team has the lowest score at the end, wins. Districts are scored in much the same way, except that each team plays eighteen holes instead of only nine.

Senior captain Jason Yaworski was a key asset to the team, but was not able to go to two of the games. Ironically, the games he wasn't there for were the games that the team lost by one stroke. It is the universal thought of the team that they were "cheated."

Yaworski, who has been on the team for three years, missed the requirements for Regional Championship by only one stroke; however, junior Vincent Genuario proceeded to Regionals and did well. He enjoys playing golf and has nothing but good things to say about the team. "The golf team is very chill. There is only the occasional pressure here and there," said Genuario.

The golf program consisted of only one co-ed Varsity team coached by Chris Tippins. They held their practices at either Belle Haven golf course or Hilltop Driving Range two to three times a week. These golf practice areas were also considered their home courses. The practices occurred after school, so time allowed for them to play only about nine holes of golf each day. Junior Lauren Davis was the only girl on the team this year.

Even though the team had some bad luck this year, they still improved from last season. "Although we didn't qualify for Regionals this year, we met our desired goal," stated Genuario. "We shot a one day round of 332 as a team." Their 2003 season ended with a record of 1-5 after losing to every team with the exception of T.C. Williams. Maybe they will continue to improve, but only time will tell. Sophomore Bobby Clark simply stated, "I hope we do better next season."

A Day in the Life of...

An Under Appreciated Element of WePo

Katie Staples

Features Editor

Many students spend time in the cafeteria each day, yet know very little about one of the most familiar faces.

Every day from 6:30am to 3:30pm, shouting, "Hey y'all Bama," Felicia Tanimowo-Solomon is at this school working hard to make it spick and span for students and faculty. "I wake up every morning at 4:45am and get to school at 6:30," she said. Her 45-minute commute from College Park, Maryland is tiring, but she makes it fun by listening to reggae music from her favorite artists, such as Shantae.

Upon first arriving at school, Felicia signs in and goes straight to the cafeteria to check out the students and see what's going on. "I like my job. I like when I come into the cafeteria and see the students." A lot of the students like seeing her, too. "Every day I enjoy seeing Felicia. She

brightens up my day," said junior Simon Willis. Felicia can be seen occasionally talking with students about their day during the morning or lunch periods. "She is special because she tries to be one of the students again," said freshman Corey Gray.

"This is what I look forward to every day, because as a working mom, I can't be with my own during the day," Felicia said of her job.

During 1st period,

Felicia cleans up the

cafeteria from the morning, patrols the school grounds for trash, and takes care of the Gunston building until nine, including the Academy and Pulley Center. "I really wanted to work with the Pulley Center kids. I wanted opportunity to do something else around the school," she said. Then she spends time buffing the floor and policing Gunston hallways and bathrooms until 10:45. The next 30 minutes are Felicia's lunch break and rest prior to returning to cleaning up before the lunch bell rings.

When asked why Felicia is unique, co-workers Janet Jones, Building Supervisor, and Jerry Swann, assistant Building Supervisor, said, "She is a very unique person because she is very outspoken and has a good personality and is a good worker."

The next few hours of her hectic schedule consists of the A, B, and C lunches and cleaning up after each. When the final lunch has let out, Felicia and the custodial staff clean the cafeteria, sweep and mop

the floors, take the trash out, and fold up the tables. "I get to go home at 3:15 or 3:30," said Felicia, where she is greeted by her daughters.

At home, her time is devoted to her



Felicia takes a break from work to connect with students, her favorite part of the day.

twin nine-year old daughters, Lateefat and Olawotun. She enjoys spending time with her kids and coming home after work each day. After dinner and the occasional Girl Scout meeting for her daughters, Felicia finally goes to bed at nine or ten, thinking of coming back to work the next day.

Celebrities Speak Out

Hana Beckerle

Editor-in-Chief

With the country divided as it is over the upcoming election, it was bound to happen. Eventually, celebrities were going to get involved. Beyond merely publicity for themselves, many recording artists, actors and actresses, and celebrities of every scope want to get in on the election year action and make their opinion known in hopes of influencing voters.

This is by no means a new phenomenon in American pop culture. During the Vietnam era, many prominent artists were outspoken critics of the war. Activists such as the Smothers Brothers, Jane Fonda, and Donald Sutherland received both positive and negative attention. Later, Frank Sinatra campaigned for both John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan.

One of the public figures who has been very critical of the Bush administration, classic rocker Bruce Springsteen, gathered other artists of similar persuasion together and launched the Vote for Change Tour with Move On PAC in hopes of ousting the president. The event crisscrossed the nation, with 34 shows in 28 cities, mostly in 'swing states' such as Pennsylvania and North Carolina. The culminating concert took place in Washington D.C. on October 11.

The tour boasted an all-star lineup, including not only Springsteen and his band but also Jackson Browne, R.E.M., the Dixie Chicks, Pearl Jam, and John Fogerty of Creedence Clearwater Revival, among many others. The Bush administration has

not remained silent about this concert. "We think it's unfortunate these particular fine musicians have decided to affiliate with a hate-filled fringe group like MoveOn," said Mark McKinnon, media director for the Bush campaign.

Whether or not the concert persuaded undecided voters is another matter. Concert attendees noted that Springsteen and his



Dixie Chicks rock out at the "Vote for Change" concert supporting anybody but Bush.

fellow musicians focused more on voting in general than on voting for a particular candidate.

On the other end of the spectrum, there are many celebrities who have publicly stated their support for Bush. Among these are Ted Nugent,

Martina McBride, Lee Ann Womack, Kid Rock and Travis Tritt. While not hosting any events on the same scale as MoveOn PAC's tour, these celebrities have been outspoken, writing songs and giving speeches to rally

Republican voters.

The effect of a celebrity's political stance can have a negative effect on the public's response to their work. The Dixie Chicks, which used to be one of country's leading groups, saw just such an outcome after their anti-Bush remarks at a concert in England in 2000. Many country radio stations nationwide boycotted the Dixie Chicks, and their record sales took a sharp dip. While the effects of their comments on their long-term success remains to be seen, the Dixie Chicks could be seen as an example to other artists who wish to make inflammatory statements.

There have been efforts by a few artists that transcend ideology and party lines. Several artists have founded voter-registration organizations, which focus not on specific candidates but just on registering people to vote, especially young people. Among these is the Citizen Change foundation, started by Sean "P. Diddy" Combs, and bearing the dramatic slogan of "Vote or die!" Citizen Change is non-partisan and non-profit, and has a slew of celebrity endorsers besides Combs. Other nonpartisan voter registration organizations include Rock the Vote and MTV's "Choose or Lose" campaign.

Another example of efforts to overcome partisan mudslinging is the song "What Say You," by outspoken liberal John Mellencamp and conservative country star Travis Tritt. The song features lyrics such as "I'm not always right/I don't think I'm better than you/I don't have all the answers/But I'll share my point of view."

Sadly, it seems as though efforts to reach across party lines are few and far between these days. Whether or not the opinions of the rich and famous will have an effect on the upcoming election remains to be seen. Whatever the result, we can always count on celebrities to get in on the latest trends.



The host takes a stand and the show goes on.

State of the Arts

April Savings
Hampton Coliseum
Hampton, VA
October 30

R. Kelly & Jay-Z
Hampton Coliseum
Hampton, VA
November 17

Excentrics
Jazz Night Club
Springfield, VA
November 21

Alan Jackson & Martina McBride
MCI Center
Washington, D.C.
November 19

The Used
9:30 Club
Washington, D.C.
November 10

Reel Big Fish
Rochester Theatre
Towson, MD
November 10

Gavin DeGruze
Verizon Sports Arena
Arlington, VA
October 30

Partyin' New Orleans Style!



Photo Illustration by Ryan DeBris

Quotable Quotes

"The homecoming dance was a metaphor for our graduation. It was short-lived and loud, and accomplished nothing." - Shaughn Duggan, 12

"Being on the all male drill team was an interesting experience. I definitely have more appreciation for girls now." - Luke Urban, 12

"This may well have been our most successful Homecoming ever, thanks to the diligence of the leadership class." - Joan Reynolds, teacher

"If I could witness a balloon drop everyday for the rest of my life, I would be a happy man." - Chris Kelly, 11

"My favorite spirit day was 'Beads and Boas' day. It was like a Mardi Gras festival." - Ryan Tuzi, 12

"This year I voted you the best in all the four years." - Luke Urban, 12

"It was a lot of hard work but as we hear, it was one of the better traditions of the world. Do your friends, because the balloon drop shall live on forever to come." - Liam Herrera, 12

"The pep rally was a lot of fun. It was fun performing and dancing for the school." - Chakera Dixie

Shrew Shall Succeed

Drama Department's fall play updates a classic

Rob Jones

Wire Reporter

Preparation for the drama department's fall production of William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* is in full swing. The principle roles have been cast, the set is under construction and rehearsals are under way. The play, directed by drama teacher Kathie McCormally, The drama department's rendition will star seniors Matt Rossi and David Hanson and juniors Laura Herren, Leigh Rossi and Candace Scholz. It is set in post-World War II America, a creative departure from Shakespeare's original production.

The cast and crew are hard at work getting the show ready to open in mid-November. Actors meet after school at 2:30 every day, and on most days, rehearsal lasts until 5:30 p.m. The schedule for rehearsals is very regulated, with certain days devoted to specific Acts

Every Saturday, the crew meets from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. to work on the set, now partially constructed in the Kogelman Theater.

The immense success and progress

Meredith Richard. Senior David Hanson agreed, saying, "The show is coming together very well, considering many of our veteran actors graduated last year. The unity of the cast helps to make up for its lack of experience."

McCormally is optimistic about prospects for the show's success in November. "I always enjoy opening the fall season with Shakespeare, because the students are always drawn to his plays," she said. The show opens Wednesday,

November 17, and runs until Saturday, November 21. Judging by the drama department's previous productions, it should be a major success.



Students practice their rendition of a Shakespearean classic in the Kogelman Theater.

Photo by Houston Murphy

Quick Tips for a Quick Boo

Robin Harry

Business Manager

Invited to a Halloween party last minute and do not have any idea what to wear? The following ideas are great and creative ways to solve your problems. Not only will you have fun making them, you will be the most original person there.

1. To be simple, take a sheet and cut holes out for your eyes. Put it over your head and "boo!" you are a ghost.
2. If you feel like having fun with it, go to Wal-Mart or Target and buy a tie-dye kit and a white t-shirt. Make a groovy shirt and then let it dry for about thirty minutes. Then, put on your new shirt and a pair of corduroys and mess up your hair a little. Within about an hour, you are a hippie.



3. Okay, girls, this is probably the easiest costume of them all. All you need is your homecoming or basic black dress, some big jewelry, preferably pearls, and black heels. Once you are all dressed you are a flapper from the Roaring Twenties.

4. To relive a part of your childhood, try this out. First of all, find a friend that has a pair of overalls and a green shirt. Then, get out your overalls and a red shirt. Now, go to the store and purchase two fake mustaches and one green and one red hat if you do not already have them. Once you both put on your outfits you are a real-life Mario and Luigi.

Photo by Ashlee Newcomb
Junior Boon Dorian tries on his last minute Halloween costume as a "leftover."

5. To be multi-cultural, listen up, this is the costume for you. Take a white sheet and wrap it around your body and over one shoulder, making a toga. Now, find a wreath or leaves and put them around your head. In just a few minutes you are an ancient Greek.

6. Finally, if you are really desperate, go into your cabinet and grab a roll of tinfoil. Ask a friend to wrap it around your body. In just a few turns you are a leftover. Also, on Halloween night if you go to Chipotle dressed as burrito, which, this costume could work for, you will receive a free one.



The A-List

Newcomb names a her number ones.

Book: Tired of reading complex novels? Then stop stressing and read "Sweetie & Petie." It's a cute picture book about two skunks. I just wish my 2 year-old sister would let me read it to her.



CD: No Strings Attached is the best N*SYNC CD ever! Songs like "Space Cowboy," "Dilemma Get Down," and "This I Promise You," are all excellent reasons to listen to this awesome CD. I am not ashamed to admit that during my long hours doing my AP Lit paper they were there for me.



TV Show: "Laguna Beach" is a better version than the O.C. I was highly infatuated with Fox's California show, but the this classier show is definitely better. LB deserves Steven, and Kristin needs to go somewhere far, far away!

Restaurant: When I want pizza with overloaded toppings and bubbly crust, there is only one place to go: Generous George's Pizzeria. It has the best pizza ever, and the building is pink! What could be better than that?



Movie: I am a classic movie girl, so of course "Dazed & Confused" would make my A-List sooner or later. This movie was the breakout performance of many popular actors of today. This movie is a little bit inappropriate, but it's so funny that it makes up for it.

Horrifying Halloween Happenings

Looking for Something to do for Halloween: Here's a Few Haunting Activities

Ashlee Newcomb

Features Editor

***Fright Fest*:** "Thrills by day, Chills by night" Located at Six Flags in Baltimore, MD, the 13th annual Fright Fest is loaded with tons of scheduled spooky shows, and funhouses. Get there soon, the fun ends on October 30th.

***Springfield Classroom-on-the-Mall's Halloween Fun Fest*:** This night of fun is provided inside a safe environment, with great activities, crafts and games. It's located at Springfield Mall on Halloween day from 2pm-5pm. It's only \$5 to get in.

***Alexandria's Original Ghost & Graveyard Tour*:** Looking for a historical activity for Halloween? Old Town Alexandria has always provided ghost tours of the historical town, but it seems more appropriate during the Halloween season. Tours are given on Wednesday through Sunday at 7:30pm and Friday through Saturday at 7:30pm & 9pm.

Breathe, "Dance," Shake

Dance Team Moves to a Different Beat

Jason Yaworske

Wire Reporter

From entertaining the halftime home-game crowds to competing in local dance competitions, this school's dance team makes an impression everywhere they go.

This year's team, coached by dance teacher Courtney Betzel and led by senior captains Lexi Blankenship and Annie Levin, are an experienced group of dancers who work hard everyday to entertain the crowds and prepare for their annual competition. Betzel, who has been the coach of the dance team for the past four years, notices a definite difference in this year's team from the teams of the past. "We have more experienced dancers and senior leadership than we've had in the past, and I'm confident going into the competition," said Betzel.

The dance team is a major commitment for these girls, who practice for two hours every day after school, and also prepare during the last three weeks of summer to finalize their routines. Their practices usually consist of fifteen minutes of warm up and 30



The W&P's Dance Team poses for a photo at the end of their performance at the pep rally.

minutes of practicing different techniques. The remainder is dedicated to learning and memorizing new dances.

A single two minute routine

can take up to two weeks of intense preparation to master. "It is a lot of hard work, but is a lot of fun and very rewarding," says Levine. All

of their hard work will be worth it if the team can manage to place high in their competition and move on to face some of the best dance teams in the nation, once the football and basketball seasons have concluded.

Win or lose, their efforts and performances are appreciated by the student body. "I love watching the dance team perform for us. I always look forward to their performances during the football games," says junior Nicole Gerow. It's clear the rest of the crowd feels the same way judging by their cheers after a dance team performance.

For any girls with dancing experience or for anyone who thinks that they have what it takes to be a member of the Dance Team's competition squad, tryouts will be held for the winter competition in November, so keep your eyes and ears open for any announcements.

Photo by Brian Dobbs

REVIEWS

Change Your Life

Evan Dobbs

Photo Editor

Self-help books often try to aid the reader make his or her life more enjoyable, by encouraging them to be more organized, relaxed, and stress free. *This Book Will Change Your Life*, by Benrick is the exact opposite. Although it has the same intent of making the reader a better person, its strategies are way off the curve. This book, offers help through spontaneous and bizarre strategies. It has specific instructions to follow each day. Three hundred sixty-five pages for three hundred sixty-five days.

The book has such an impact on a person's life, it has a warning and disclaimer in the beginning. It's supposed to be taken seriously, and one needs much discipline to complete each day's of instructions. Of course, not all days can be completed, in fact, there are a few days that tell you to 'ignore today' and have no instructions. Its unnecessary to follow it to the word. It's a whole year, which makes it a big project. Its purpose is meant to show the funnier side of existence.

But in the real world, you can't accomplish every task, especially in this case towards minors. One man who completed it lost his girlfriend and got arrested.

Some days are as easy as "Make something and sell it." Others can be unreasonable, like, "go to France for a week." Lindsay Rosenfeld, a sophomore, did day three of the book, "throw away a prized possession." After an hour of thinking of what to dispose, she had clipped off a piece of her hair. "There are many things that I hold close to me, but nothing comes closer to me, than my hair," said Rosenfeld.



Sophomore Lindsay Rosenfeld cuts off some of her hair for day 3, give up a prized possession.

Photo by Evan Dobbs

Not all days are selfish, some days can help you interact with others and make friends. "I wrote a message about what is important to me, life," Brittney Rouse, a junior said. Rouse completed day two hundred, which was send a message in a bottle. Her message expressed that life shouldn't be wasted. "Always treasure it [life], not disregarding bad cards dealt for they make you stronger," she included in her message.

Colleen Gottlieb, a freshman, had completed day three-hundred three, a list of tasks to complete. First count all the busses you see on your way to school and multiply that number by two. "My number was twenty," Gottlieb said. She was then to put that number in candy bars, and give them to random people. Except since she didn't have twenty dollars, so she bought five packages of Oreos™, "I walked up to someone and gave them some Oreos. They looked at me like I was crazy."

Daniel Jachowski, a junior, completed day three-hundred thirty, kiss someone where they have never been kissed before. "I was at lunch when I gave this girl a kiss on the shoulder," Jachowski said, "She gave me the weirdest look and said, 'That was odd.'"

The authors of the book want the reader to achieve something, and they have elaborate notes on how the reader may complete the tasks and give resources for the special days. *This Book Will Change Your Life* is meant to help the reader be successful, and live a better life. It has a section for notes, so the reader can write to his little hearts content. This book is available at most bookstores for eighteen dollars, it's a great accomplishment to complete this book, and you haven't lived life to the fullest until you've tried this book.

What You Want to Hear

Marissa D'Orazio

Focus Editor

If you are one to dismiss artists as "emo", I would think twice about doing so to Taking Back Sunday. Their sophomore album, "Where You Want to Be," puts the "emotion" in emotional. Although they sing about things that rockers tend to ignore, like actually having feelings for women, they do most of it in a way you can lock the door to your room, shut the blinds, and rock out! Or maybe that's just me...



Focus Editor Marissa D'Orazio enjoys listening to one of her favorite bands.

Photo by Evan Dobbs

want to go through the discomfort of wearing contacts, but at the same time he learns to deal with his child's size medium black shirt from Hot Topic cutting off the circulation on his arms. I'm not judging Emile's lifestyle, rather his excellent taste in music, specifically, how Taking Back Sunday's Where You Want To Be affects his life.

Emile's calculus teacher passes out a test that he should have studied for, but he was up late crying about the insignificance of human life. Emile automatically reverts to "A Decade Under the Influence," and cries, "I've got a bad feeling about this, I've got a bad feeling about this!" The cool thing is, he could also sing this song when he begins a relationship with a girl he ends up hating who has annoying friends, and whose stature is "sad, small, sweet, so delicate." Whichever of those things happen first.

When Emile drives to the emo store or wherever it is that he goes in his spare time, he blasts "Set Phasers To Stun" and shouts his favorite catchy parts, even though he's alone in the car: "I'm sorry it took me so long! I'm sorry it took me so long!"... "You know I/ I could take/ the place of those pills/ocean blue/ paint it white/ Now who-oo ya gonna call tonight?"... "Say yes, say yes, say yes!"

Emile's friend may look over to him in AP Psychology and shout, "I didn't have to, I didn't have to." Emile knows, instinctively, that his friend is referring to "The Union," and that he is to yell back, "I never made a scene!" Okay. Maybe that's not Emile and just me. But still. That's a good song. It features some amazing

guitar parts and throws out the ponderable statement, "Home is where you make it." You'd recognize this phrase from the sign the homeless man on the CD itself is holding if you weren't a worthless bum who will eventually get sued because of CD burning, like myself.

At a Taking Back Sunday show, Emile is most likely to get a black eye during "Bonus Mosh Pt. 2." Although none of the album is really hard core rock, this song is possible the hardest. Strangely enough, the phrase that they are screaming is, "Well it's love/ make it hurt," but of course, this only emo-tensifies the song almost to the point of emo-kid anthemdom.

This album also has a much softer side as well. When Emile is sitting at home crying because his girlfriend broke up with him, he can listen to (other than the entire album, or the entire genre for that matter) "New American Classic." The song laments, dare I say, classic remarks such as, "Just ask the question/ come untie the knot/ say you won't care...retrace the steps/ as if we forgot/ say you won't care." It summarizes the "it's okay, you can hurt me all you want" attitude of emo.

Surely Emile has tried before to perfect the vocal overlay techniques presented in "One-eighty By Summer" ("I don't think I'll ever come back- I don't think I'll ever come back down"). The song displays the ingenious way of saying just the right thing in just the right way at just the right time (who do I sound like?)

All in all, Taking Back Sunday's album is similar to their first one, but more laid back. It includes repetition to stress points in many songs, but not in an annoying way. Another cool asset to the album is that all of the titles have clever names that do not once appear in the actual song. I would recommend this album to anyone. I'm sure Emile would too, but he's out buying tissues right now.

"Putting the 'F' Back in Freedom"

Rob Jones

Wise Reporter

Matt Stone and Trey Parker have done it again. These pioneers of potty-mouthed, animated antics have created a cinematic gem that more than amply fills the shoes of their last film, *South Park: Bigger, Longer and Uncut*. In this fall's *Team America: World Police*, the two Colorado comedians have forgone the cut-paper animation of their minusculely successful series *South Park* and the resulting Oscar-nominated movie for a new medium: marionettes. The result is a surreal, nihilistic and delightfully tacky feature film that is nothing short of ingenious.



Trey Parker and Matt Stone arrive for a premiere of "Team America: World Police" on Monday, October 11, 2004, in Los Angeles, California.

The film opens with a scene in which the Team, in Justice League fashion, streaks into Paris in star-spangled planes, Humvees and helicopters to foil the sale of a weapon of mass destruction. In the process, they manage to destroy the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre and the Arc d'Triumph, and then tell the Parisians standing in the ruins of their city that they are safe from terrorists and their weapons of mass destruction. The Team then recruits Broadway actor Gary Johnston to help them foil a conspiracy between North Korean leader Kim Jong Il and the Film Actors' Guild—a group of anti-war Hollywood actors, headed by Alec Baldwin, who hate Team America's reckless, violent tactics.

Many liberals will undoubtedly fall into the trap of believing that T-A W.P. is reactionary and pro-war. I very nearly caught myself being offended by Parker and Stone's merciless portrayals of such Hollywood personalities as Michael Moore, Sean Penn and Susan Sarandon as "enemies of the state." However, I came to realize that the film really takes no political stand, and certainly mocks the Bush administration's reckless war having in the way that Team America destroys every city it sets out to save. The movie's creators are purely comic giants who take no real political stands on any issue and whose only aim is satire.

No matter what one's politics, *Team America's* antics are sure to leave the viewer doubled over with laughter. Between the musical numbers such as Kim Jong Il's musing "I'm So Lonely (Lonely)", the provocative encounter between two puppets that almost earned the film an NC-17 rating, and perhaps the most ingenious (if profane) argument for political moderation in cinema history, Stone and Parker have put together a sure contender for funniest film of the year. If it is declared eligible, *Team America* may win them the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature Film, an award that did not exist when *South Park: Bigger, Longer and Uncut* was released.

Team America: World Police is rated R for strong language, grotesquely hilarious violence and anatomically-incorrect sex — all involving puppets.

All "Aboot" Degrassi

Marissa D'Orazio

Focus Editor

If it's not on *Degrassi*, then it doesn't happen.

The funny thing is, this show that has everything, this show where you can assign each of your friends to each of the characters, is a show that's about as unknown as the fad of wearing your socks inside-out (didn't you guys hear? *Everyone's* doing it).

Maybe the reason no one knows about it and it doesn't get played on normal stations is because it is Canadian. Why, you may say, there are lots of wonderful things that have originated in Canada that are super-well-known here, like Avril Lavigne and Simple Plan. If you are attracted to music that makes statements as deep as "He was a boy, she was a girl..." then yes, great things from Canada thrive in the U.S. But for the other 99.9% of you, the only thing I can use to defend *Degrassi's* Canadian dignity is maple syrup.



Degrassi High's Hell Hath No Fury gets ready to take the stage in front of the school.

Degrassi has no main character. Rather, it follows several characters with basically equal roles on the show throughout their lives and shows how they intertwine.

I must admit, the earlier shows had a very cheesy After-School Special feel to them. As

if this weren't enough, when you press info for digital cable on the earlier episodes, it will actually pinpoint the "teenage problems" it discusses. "Peer Pressure," "Perfectionism," "Rumors," even "Male Puberty," can be seen as topics of an episode. The newer episodes are much less of an enriching, learning, 7th-heavenesque things you'd want your kids to watch, and much more of a teenage soap-opera (without the piano music and long staring) that is all too real.

Many things that go on at *Degrassi High* go on at any high school, even ours. Artsy Ashley Kerwin (Melissa McIntyre) had a very long, loving relationship with hard-rocker Craig Manning (Jake Epstein) but when she wouldn't have sex with him, he found another place to get it—innocent little girl-turned-slutty cheerleader, Manny Santos (Cassie Steele). After many weeks of wanting to die, Ashley finally used her creativity to get back at him. Her band, Hell Hath No Fury, wrote a song entitled "Mr. Nice Guy," and performed it for the entire school—

including Craig, while wearing shirts that show Craig's face in flames (if you're really shameless, an iron-on of the shirt can be printed out from www.thedegrassi.com).

Paige Michalchuk (Lauren Collins) seems like a pretty, shallow, self-absorbed head

cheerleader (aka The Spirit Squad) who makes her boyfriend do just about anything she wants, but she is actually more complex than we'll ever know.

In one hour and a half episode entitled, "Shout!" Paige is raped by a soccer player at another school. With each day of denial, she gets worse, thinking that all men are evil, but finally tells a friend and decides to go into counseling. Upon talking to a counselor, she decides that she wants to press charges, but this is easier said than done. She has little proof and this case is her word against his. In one of the latest episodes, on a psycho-raging rampage, Paige takes her boyfriend, Spinner's car, and runs it into her rapist's car. Her psychological state and self-esteem are deteriorating with each episode.

Marco Del Rossi (Adamo Ruggiero) is possibly one of the best actors on the show. He plays a confused gay teenager, who at first, attempts to hide his homosexuality by dating Ellie Nash (Stacey Farber). But it is Ellie who, regardless of her feelings for him, convinces him to come out, and he is eventually accepted by his gay friends. One of the most controversial episodes of

Degrassi is Marco's first date with Paige's older brother—ending with a passionate gay kiss (and we wonder why channels like Disney won't play *Degrassi*).

Terri McGregor (Christina Schmidt) is currently in the hospital, thanks to her creepy boyfriend, Rick. To get a visual of what Rick looks like, think of the song "Teenage Dirtbag" by Wheatus. He's not pretty. He's not very nice, either. He is extremely possessive, and while fighting with Terri, he knocks her down and she hits her head on a rock.

My favorite character would have to be Emma Nelson (Miriam McDonald). Emma takes no crap from anyone, and stands up for herself no matter who is trying to stop her. When she began a protest outside of her school because the cafeteria was feeding them

potentially harmful genetically modified foods, the principal informed her that she could either apologize over the announcements, or get suspended for a week. She chose the latter.

Degrassi airs on Fridays on The-N, channel 156. You may or may not get that channel, but chances are one of your friends gets it. *Degrassi* is like an underground network—you see it by random chance, you tell all your friends, they tell all their friends... I let you guys in on this little secret show in case you haven't caught the *Degrassi* bug yet!



Drawing by Aaron Lee

Top 10 Hair-Raising Motion Pictures

Katie Staples

Features Editor

We polled 100 of this school's students and faculty to find your top 10 Halloween movies.

10.) *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984)

"One, two, Freddy's coming for you. Three, four, better lock your door. Five, six, grab your crucifix. Seven, eight, gonna stay up late. Nine, ten, never sleep again." —Children
MPAA Rating: R

"It was a well-made horror flick with good twists," said senior Joseph Pope.

9.) *Se7en* (1995)

"A landlord's dream: a paralyzed tenant with no tongue." "Who pays the rent on time." —David Mills and William Somerset
MPAA Rating: R

"I liked *Se7en* because Brad Pitt is hot," said senior Luke Urban.

8.) *The Shining* (1980)

"Little pigs, little pigs, let me in. Not by the hair of your chinny-chin-chin? Well then I'll huff and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in." [sees the door] —Jack Torrance
MPAA Rating: R

"I loved the part when Jack Nicholson says, 'Here's Johnny!'," said freshman Joe Bradley.



7.) *Halloween* (1978)

"A man wouldn't do that." "This is not a man." —Sheriff Leigh Brackett and Dr. Sam Loomis
MPAA Rating: R

"I liked *Halloween* because it was suspenseful," said sophomore Rebecca Bonio.

6.) *Hocus Pocus* (1993)

"You know, I've always wanted a child. And now I think I'll have one... on toast!" —Winifred Sanderson
MPAA Rating: PG

"We liked the blonde, prostitute witch," said freshmen Avery McMahon and Natalie Lord.

5.) *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (2003)

"You know, I have just as much respect for dead bodies as you do. No not on the backseat, you'll get it all dirty! Throw her in the trunk." —Sheriff Hoyt
MPAA Rating: R for strong horror violence/gore, language and drug content

"It scared me because there's a man wearing other peoples' faces and cutting people with a chainsaw," said junior Matt Walker.

"*Texas Chainsaw Massacre* was scary because it was based on true events," said senior Jay Berquist.

4.) *It* (1990)

"I'm every nightmare you've ever had. I'm your worst dream

come true. I'm everything you ever were afraid of." —It
MPAA Rating: R

"There are no words to describe the sheer terror of this masterpiece," said senior Natalie Stowell.

3.) *Silence of the Lambs* (1991)

"Tell me, Clarice - have the lambs stopped screaming?" —Hannibal Lecter
MPAA Rating: R

"My favorite part is when Hannibal says, 'Hello, Clarice,'" said sophomore Peter Curcio.

"It made me sleep with the lights on that night," said senior Zoë Hefflin.

2.) *Exorcist* (1973)

"What an excellent day for an exorcism." —Regan MacNeil
MPAA Rating: R for strong language and disturbing images

"The scariest part was the girl [Regan] crawling down the stairs backwards," said junior Leah Withers.

1.) *The Ring* (2002)

"Seven days..." —Samara Morgan
MPAA Rating: PG-13

for thematic elements, disturbing images, language and some drug references. "The Ring was very scary - I couldn't get to sleep," said freshman Alex Protosevich.



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PROFILES

He Probably Hates You

Ashlee Newcomb

Style Editor

"I usually roll out of my bed and onto the floor around 6 am and think of the kinds of ignorant peons I'll have to put up with that day. I don't usually pay attention in any of my classes...I doze off, pondering things like whether or not conformity implies rebellion,



West Potomac graduate Lavin Thomas and Hawkins joking around after school.

captain position as well. According to Hawkins, these sports "filter out the miserable waste and leave the worthy human beings. Team dinners are fun."

"Brent has been a dedicated cross country runner for four years. If there is one person that I could say provides spark and team camaraderie to the 'big picture' it would be him. He has a strong moral character and a real love of life," said cross country coach, Don Beeby.

Besides his sports activities, Hawkins enjoys just sitting with his "fellow intellectuals," drinking tea, and pondering. He greatly admires the works of Edgar Allen Poe, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry Thoreau, especially *Walden*. "Brent is always striving to be different by buying obnoxious clothing and working at tea shops. He's an especially cool guy because he is one of few intellectuals capable of sitting down and sipping tea," said junior Frank DeVar, friend of Hawkins and fellow cross country runner.

Hawkins greatly admires music and the positive impact it can have on society. "The people are the ones who shape the music, and in turn it slightly shapes who you are. The punk scene influenced me a lot, hence the mohawk I had for three and a half years, plus all the dyeing different colors," said Hawkins.

Hawkins has been an active member of high school theater for two years now. Before high school, his first role was Brom Bones in the Carl Sandburg Middle School rendition of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." "Drama appeals to most people and myself because they get to act in ways that society doesn't usually accept, or they get to be someone other than themselves. I think that a lot of people are pushed into their persona, so they get to let their guard down and relax when they are in theater,"

said Hawkins.

His weekends consist of events that range from working at the local Old Town Tea and Coffee Shop to "social justice and liberations." He also enjoys "being smarter than the rest of humanity." "The most memorable event with Brent was when we went to 7-11 and got grape soda. Then we drove around for

He's an especially cool guy because he is one of few intellectuals capable of sitting down and sipping tea."

~Junior Frank DeVar

hours drinking our grape soda and feeling superior to the commoners, as Brent refers to them," said close friend senior Mike York.

Although he states he doesn't pay attention in class, he does leave a lasting impression. "When you see Brent you can tell that he has a different personality. In class, he finds ways to make comments that when he opens his mouth you never know what he's going to say. Somehow in his mind, it connects to the material," said Hawkins' AP Statistics teacher, Kate Wolting.

Most seniors like to take with them memories from high school and commemorate their accomplishments. However, Hawkins doesn't. "Forget everything, remember nothing, except Bob Boden," Hawkins comments. What exactly he meant by the Bob Boden quote, I guess no one we will ever know. His major accomplishments would have to be "being better than everyone, having mental capacity greater than a goat, unlike the rest of my peers."



Hawkins, Will DeVar and intercession, and senior Luke Urban after a swim meet.

or the existence of time," said senior Brent Hawkins when asked to voice his typical day at school.

A person of sarcastic ideology, Hawkins, a six foot two varsity cross country runner and swimmer, has a perspective of the world that is unique from the average teenager. When told he was chosen as this issue's male profile, Hawkins requested to be portrayed differently from the routine positive persona *The Wire* portrays. Hawkins desires to be illustrated as his true self, and no glossing of his image was necessary.

This sets a new precedent for *The Wire*'s usual profile guideline. Instead of the usual list of accomplishments and the memories the graduating senior will take with them to college, *The Wire* is giving a straightforward look into Hawkins' life, the way he wishes it to be portrayed.

As mentioned before, Hawkins is an active member of this school's cross country team. In the winter he is a member of the swim team, where he has held a

"Everybody Buckle Up"

Joy Yoo

Wire Reporter

What is it like having parents who immigrated to this country? One can ask senior Ijeoma Nwatu. Her parents emigrated from Nigeria for an equal opportunity that only America could offer. In Nwatu's household, two languages are spoken: her native language and English. Nwatu plays an

"My culture does not hinder me in any way, if anything, it motivates me."

~Ijeoma Nwatu

active role in many aspects of the school. She is a committed member of the varsity volleyball team, National Honors Society (NHS), and the forensics team. In addition, Nwatu has been a member of the student government for the past four years, and this year she is serving as senior class vice president.

Nwatu has become accustomed to her many roles here at school. Taking rigorous classes such as AP Latin, AP Literature, AP Statistics, and AP Government this year, Nwatu has

still been capable of maintaining the impressive 3.5 GPA she has had throughout her high school career. She has learned how to balance her leadership roles in the school and athletics in an effective manner. Aside from school, Nwatu has made many valuable friendships with teachers and students. Even though there are "many cliques and immaturity... which all get annoying fast," Nwatu said that the best part of high school was, "having best friends to laugh and cry with and teachers who teach because they love it."

By taking a closer look into Nwatu's background and heritage, you can tell that she has many other things to deal with other than school, friends, and sports. Her parents are both extremely inspiring people to her. Emigrating from Nigeria was a big step for Mr. and Mrs. Nwatu, and they have adjusted well. Currently, they are both enrolled in college courses. Her mother is working to attain her Bachelor of Science in Nursing, while her father is pursuing to receive his PhD in Information Systems Management. It is obvious that they "value education a lot," as Nwatu stated. Aside from her parents' successful adaptation to

the American society and its traditions, Nwatu is always faced with a cultural barrier between herself and her parents. This is shown by a struggle that all second-generation children must deal with. Regular actions such as going to the mall or a friend's house can become a big deal. Despite this barrier, however, Nwatu deeply appreciates her parents' persistent support. "My culture does not hinder me in any way, if anything, it motivates me," said Nwatu.

Nwatu's passion is public service. Being in SGA for two years, she has quite a lot of leadership experience. The best thing about being a class officer to Nwatu is the ability to help others with their problems and making this school and community a better place. "SGA has shown me that people put faith in those who deliver on their promises," said Nwatu. Since Nwatu has had so many good experiences with SGA throughout her two years, she looks forward to being involved in student government

in college. UNC Chapel Hill, Clemson, University of Pennsylvania, John Hopkins, George Mason, and Syracuse are all prestigious institutions that she



Working hard after school, Nwatu devotes herself to SGA, along with other scholarly activities.

is interested in attending. Wherever Nwatu goes, she wants to be a leader. "Leadership is dedication, plain and simple. I want to be a good leader that makes decisions that will positively impact the world." Her goals in life include owning her own business, running for Congress or mayor, and creating a foundation for kids who lack a sufficient education. Without a doubt, Nwatu has proven herself to be capable of achieving her goals.

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