

Oct. 28  
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# THE WIRE

WEST POTOMAC HIGH SCHOOL

West Potomac High School  
6500 Chandler Road  
Alexandria, VA 22307  
Volume 21 #1

Friday, October 28, 2005

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## Just Five More Minutes...Please

Anum Jaffri

News co-Editor

Being able to get up and go to school later is a fantasy many students dream about. But now a campaign is aiming to make that dream a reality in Fairfax County. The campaign calls itself the Start Later for Excellence in Education Proposal, or S.L.E.E.P. The S.L.E.E.P. program wants to move all morning school starting times back about an hour, consequently giving students an extra hour of sleep.

The change has already been implemented in school systems in our area. Arlington Public Schools, who used to have bell schedules similar to ours, converted in September 2001. They now have middle schools starting at 7:50 a.m.; elementary schools starting at 8:25 a.m. or 9 a.m.; and high schools starting at 8:15 a.m. The National Sleep Foundation Adolescent Sleep Initiative released a report on the changeover. A separate council within the public school system advisory council was put together to guarantee a smooth transition.

"I get about eight hours of sleep on a good night, but when I receive more than an hour's worth of homework, which is very often, I definitely don't get enough sleep," says junior Teresa Caro. "I would like to see school start an hour later so that I can actually pay attention in classes before falling asleep first," she adds. Sleep experts say that the average adult needs eight hours of sleep, and this is what most teens believe is the amount of sleep they need. However, experts, such as doctors and psychiatrists, say that teens need the most amount of sleep, next to infants, at nine and one-fourth hours. "I get more than six and less than eight," hours a night, says junior Greg Bechtol. "So I go to bed between ten and twelve. If school started later, I could sleep in and be more rested for tests and quizzes." Studies show that academic performance is usually hindered by a student's lack of sleep.

"I think that would be a wonderful idea," said Physics

teacher Judy Grumbacher, about starting school later. "I don't know what time kids get up, but it's early, and people are tired. It's hard for teens to go to sleep at ten. They need a lot more sleep than they're getting, and there are an awful amount of tired kids in first block."

A child's sleep-wake cycle switches to a later time as the child grows into a teenager. Melatonin, the hormone released into the body signaling that it is time to sleep, is frequently released later in the night during the teen years. This is why many students complain they simply cannot go to sleep early. Law officials predict that getting out of school later keeps troubled teens supervised for longer into the afternoon, which could lead to a dropped crime rate amongst teens.

The downsides of making such a change in the bell schedule are that it would take a lot of planning, as well as convincing, before anything could happen. A time would have to be decided on, that would keep elementary schools from starting too late or too early, so that young children wouldn't have to walk to and from school and bus stops in the dark. Also, the three-tier system for buses (having the same buses transport high school, then middle school, then elementary school students to school), keeps the amount of buses our county has to buy and maintain to a minimum. If this system was abolished, say, to start high school and elementary school at the same time, more buses would have to be purchased. After school jobs, athletics, and extracurriculars would have to be moved down to later in the afternoon as well, which might prove to be an inconvenience. "I don't know the solution," said Grumbacher. "But I'm sure there is one."

The proposal website provides many links regarding the benefits of more sleep for adolescents, and information concerning how Fairfax County residents can help. The website is [www.sleepinfoairfax.org](http://www.sleepinfoairfax.org).



Neal Hardie (back of picture) takes a snooze during class to make up for loss of sleep the night before.

Photo taken by Lakisha Langley

## Katrina's Affects Hit Everyone

Hooff Cooksey

News co-Editor

When Hurricane Katrina hit Louisiana and Mississippi, it completely destroyed any cities and towns in its path. The storm was the strongest to hit the eastern hemisphere in 100 years. These states were devastated, and have been receiving millions of dollars in donations and relief efforts from the Red Cross, small relief organizations, and neighborhood groups, and individuals. Members of this school have been helping with their own effort and have really made a difference.

The Key Club, headed by senior Kate McFarland, collected donations at the

first home varsity football game. They collected loose change or any amount people were willing to donate. "We did a coin drive and plan to do a 'Kits for Kids' drive later on in the year," said Key Club member Sam McCann. This community service club is planning on doing much more throughout

the community to help the victims of this devastating storm. The people in Louisiana, especially New Orleans, and in Mississippi have had their lives devastated and need all the help and



One of the many boxes that were placed throughout the school.

Photo by Lakisha Langley

donations possible.

This school has had some new students enroll in the last month. All were all affected by Katrina, and wanted to get away from the horrible affects it had on their lives. "I lost everything; my friends and family. I am staying with my uncle and aunt

right now," said Tiffany Banks, a senior who has just moved here from New Orleans. She has been "ok" with her move, and says she was given a warm

See Katrina, page 7



## Stop the Drama!

Dear Editor,

A problem I see in this school is that a lot of kids don't get along and there's a lot of fighting. School should not be about friends and what you think about someone, it should be about learning and taking care of your own business. It makes me very sad that people can't get along and people are so immature. I believe that needs to be solved and schools need help with this problem. Also people need more protection and teachers should pay more attention to this! Kids get stressed out and hurt, and this needs to stop!

Freshman, Jasmin Jones

## Can't go to Lunch?

Dear Editor,

I just wanted to say that this school is about the only school I know that doesn't let students go out to eat. I mean it's the only school I know that doesn't let you go out and enjoy our lunch. It's like administrators don't trust us. I mean we do have to learn how to be independent at some point.

Freshman, Yancy Cristeles

## Bells are Bogus

Dear Editor,

I really don't like the bell schedule. Who ever came up with the idea of having four classes a day for a very long time is stupid. It messes everything up, I do homework different nights, class is too long, that towards the end I lose interest in that subject. Every night I have to change the stuff that is in my book bag and it annoys me. Most of my friends agree that seven periods a day was so much better. Also, the last class of the day for an extremely short time is really annoying! I can't get anything done and due dates are different for that class, and hard to meet, because I have no time in class to do it, so we get more homework then kids that don't have that class seventh period. Personally, I think we should go back to seven periods a day.

Sophomore, Matt Persekian



## Interims-Abyss of Madness

Name the one thing that can get you in trouble with your parents, but have no effect on your permanent record. There can be only one answer: interims.

UrbanDictionary.com defines interims as, "A mid-semester quiz report that results in A.) Watching a movie in class while the teacher fills them out and B.) Being harped upon and/or threatened by parents to improve grades before the real report cards are issued." That is the only definition that really matters and because it comes from the internet, you know it is true. These "informative" photographs of your progress only a few weeks into the quarter show almost nothing as many teachers have only started getting into the first unit and having to throw a few things to "gauge" your progress is not very accurate.

Why not do something in the middle of the quarter that truly affects us instead of just giving parents an excuse to yell at us? Why not do something like touch base with us, the students? Just take a two hour delay and have us sit down with our teachers so they

can tell us what we need to improve on, because we all know that with the increasing class sizes, there is almost no attention given to every student.

Or, we could just keep getting treated like we are in elementary school where we have to get our hands stamped to get on the late bus, excuse me, they already do that. Or we could have safety patrols on every corner to help us cross the street. Truly, we are responsible for our own grades, so why not just put the power in our hands and let us know where we need to improve? If we make the mistakes, why not let us clean them up. If we have to clean up what we've done in the lunchroom why not let us clean up our own grades?

Interims just seem to be another pain that we have to deal with, another burden on our backs that we do not need to deal with. So, now we have to get up at six every morning, go to school for seven hours, do our homework, and get yelled at for grades that do not even matter.

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6500 Quander Road  
Alexandria, VA 22307

THE WEST POTOMAC  
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Friday, October 28, 2005  
Volume #21 Issue 1

Name	Job Title	E-mail	Name	Job Title	E-mail
Katie Staples	Editor-In-Chief	KStaples_wire@yahoo.com	Houston Murphy	Sports Editor	HMurphy_wire@yahoo.com
Alex Keckeisen	Asst. Editor-In-Chief	AKeckeisen_wire@yahoo.com	Jon Yoo	Asst. Sports Editor	JYoo_wire@yahoo.com
Anum Jaffri	News co-Editor	AJaffri_wire@yahoo.com	Robyn Byrd	Reporter	RByrd_wire@yahoo.com
Hooff Cooksey	News co-Editor	PCooksey_wire@yahoo.com	Kaelin Emery	Reporter	KEmery_wire@yahoo.com
Taylor Dankmyer	Opinions co-Editor	TDankmyer_wire@yahoo.com	Kevin O'Brien	Copy Editor	KOBrien_wire@yahoo.com
Adele Hampton	Opinions co-Editor	AHampton_wire@yahoo.com	Brett Smith	Reporter	BSmith_wire@yahoo.com
Diana Blaszkiewicz	Style co-Editor	DBlaszkiewicz_wire@yahoo.com	Nyisha Vann	Reporter	NVann_wire@yahoo.com
Sara Mathewson	Style co-Editor	SMathewson_wire@yahoo.com	Adrian Walter	Reporter	AWalter_wire@yahoo.com
Caroline Staples	Features Editor	CStaples_wire@yahoo.com	Lakeisha Langley	Photographer	LLangley_wire@yahoo.com
Jocelyn Finfrock	Focus Editor	JFinfrock_wire@yahoo.com	Angie Palma	Business Manager	APalma_wire@yahoo.com
Letters to the Editor		thewire_letters@yahoo.com			

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# Injustice! Suffering in Senior Year

Katie Staples

Editor-in-Chief

After three grueling years of having to drag ourselves to this school five days a week, one would think senior year would be the best one of all, the *crème de la crème*. Seniors used to be dismissed from classes early, allowed off-campus for lunch, and allowed to paint their parking spots. So for the class of 2006, what do we get? Nothing.

The outrage would not be so bad if it were not paired with the additional "surprises" the administration shocked us with. I am hinting at the new and "improved" parking situation that every upperclassman has to deal with. Last year, the senior parking lot was open for all students who had a parking pass to park wherever they chose. These days, however, parking spaces now resemble prison cells more than anything else — they now have a nice number, which, instead of being spray painted to the back of your orange jumpsuit, are painted at the base of the spot.

Normally, the school changes its policies *after* a problem has occurred. But wait, did anything happen last year that would call for a change in plans? Not exactly. School security officer Mr. Haire said the change in parking rose from the number of complaints about juniors parking in the senior parking lot, seniors parking in the faculty lot, etc. "There were not enough people or time to enforce people parking in the right lots," Haire said. "Last year, Mrs. Vesilind surveyed the staff and a consensus to number every parking space was reached."

Here is what I think happened. While students were imprisoned within school grounds, teachers were leaving during their lunch and planning periods. To their dismay,

they returned to find "their" parking space occupied. They then had to go through the arduous ordeal of driving two spots away to an empty space. After much complaining, the teachers got their way. Now we all suffer and have permanent assigned parking spots.

So what happens if your spot is taken? I arrived at school one day to find my spot taken by some car *without* a parking pass hanging from the rear-view mirror. The next empty spot was four spaces away from mine, so I parked my car in spot 314. However, this solved nothing. Junior Patrick Trimble, who was assigned that space, arrived at school minutes later only to have to search for someone else's empty parking spot because I had taken his. This new parking "solution" makes problems snowball out of proportion. Junior Joey Albano said, "It would have been better to keep the unnumbered spots. That way there wouldn't be any student disapproval and the school wouldn't have had to pay all that money."

Privileges seniors would normally be allowed, but are not so far this year, include leaving seventh period five minutes early every Friday, as well as a designated section outside and in the cafeteria for seniors, according to senior class president Mike Howell. Howell said we have not been given these privileges yet, "Because we've had such changes in administration, we haven't been able to establish a constant relationship. Hopefully this year we can blaze the trail." The SGA has met with Vesilind, and hopefully our privileges will be instated soon.



Photo by Lakeisha Langley

# In Aftermath of Disaster, Who is to Blame?

Adele Hampton

Opinions co-Editor

Dead bodies floating in contaminated streets, tens of thousands of people stranded without food, shelter, or even clean water. These are things that you might expect to find in a third world country, not in one of the most powerful nations in the world. When Hurricane Katrina knocked on, and then burst through America's door, it ripped away layers upon layers of not only houses and land, but also layers upon layers of the false identity of our national government.

"If the New Orleans' government had taken more precautions (such as regarding the levee) and signaled for help earlier, the situation would have been better," said junior Katherine Clubb in response to how the reaction to the hurricane could have been better. But the real question is, where were the leaders of our powerful nation the day Katrina hit? Were they getting together with the state leaders of Louisiana, Florida, Mississippi, and Alabama making plans for what they were going to do immediately after the storm hit? No, they were at their vacation getaways, taking a break from all of the hardships that go along with running a country. Now, I know that

everyone needs a break every now and then, running the country is no walk in the park, but their timing could have been better. They were bound to know that Katrina was coming; it was on the news weeks before it first hit Florida. President Bush and his advisors had to have seen the excessive coverage of the unpredicted amount of damage done to Florida, and if they missed that, they would have had to have heard that a hurricane that was so wide it would have stretched from New York to Cleveland was making its way up the gulf coast. I am sure even Bush's holiday ranch in Texas gets cable.

To cover up their weak response to the hurricane, the Republicans, in a mature and adult like fashion, blamed the people of New Orleans, saying that it was because of the disorganization and hostility of the citizens that they were unable to respond as fast as they would have hoped. That statement is interesting to hear because it is coming from the same leaders who will stop at nothing to bring democracy into a country that is disordered and extremely hostile. Those leaders, our leaders, are willing to sacrifice thousands of American lives to achieve that goal, but when it comes to a massive problem in their own country they postponed

the rescue efforts to save hundreds of thousands of lives because a few citizens were shooting at helicopters. Why is it that our government seems to care more about people on the other side of the world than the people in their own country?

So, this leads up to the ultimate question, will the hurricane affect Bush's presidency? "It further weakens an already damaged presidency. I think the fact that Republicans in Congress are starting to stand up to him in Katrina's aftermath shows that their constituents believe the Bush administration has failed them," said French teacher Dan Fitzgerald. For Bush this could be the defining issue that either reiterates people's beliefs that he is unreliable when it comes to dealing with domestic catastrophes, or it could be seen as an honest mix up, he is the president after all.

When faced with a major situation, such as 9/11 or Hurricane Katrina, we as a country should come together and help each other out. It should not have to be the state's sole responsibility to deal with that dilemma. We are a strong nation because we have a well-built military and system of government, but more importantly, we are a strong nation because of our ability to work together as one determined country. If the states are left alone to deal with massive problems that affect the entire nation, we will lose that strong bond between the federal government and the states. Without that strong bond the United States would be a lie.



Photo by Lakeisha Langley

## Keckee's Catastrophe Wondering Where it all Went Wrong



Photo by Lakeisha Langley

## 7 Pieces of Heaven From 7-11

The path that every man must take in his life at one time or other will always lead to the greatest and most convenient (pun intended) store of all time: 7-11. No matter what you may need, and even the things that you don't necessarily need, can be found here. I am now here to guide you through the most comprehensive list of the seven best things to buy while your car is still running outside.

7. October issue of Body-Building magazine — Buying a body building magazine in the same trip that you buy three bags of cheese curls is like ordering a diet coke with your quadruple cheeseburger. Delicious!

6. Ex-Lax and Hershey Bar — Ok, seriously not kidding here. If you ever want to get back at someone, just buy some ex-lax and scrape off the writing then tell your enemy it is just bitter Hershey's chocolate. Works every time...

5. Arizona Iced Tea — No where will you spend a better 99 cents than with the Arizona Original drinks. Not only are they 99 cents, they are also 23.5 ounces, larger than any soda you will be able to get for 30 cents more.

4. The Steak Angus Burger and Cheese Burger Bite — Sounds disgusting right? As Yoda would say, "Wrong you are!" And how right he is. The grill at 7-11 has gone through a lot of changes, including Taquitos and Bratwurst, but the Steak and Cheese Burger could be the greatest invention EVER!

3. John Wayne DVD — It may be the most irrelevant item that they sell in the whole store but hey, this is John Wayne we're talking about. Possibly one of the best country western actors of all time is now enshrined in a plastic case where his brilliance is now encased.

2. The bomb burrito — All bow to the greatest burrito known to man. Weighing in at an enormous fourteen ounces, this tortilla and bean concoction puts even the best burritos to shame.

1. An apple — It's the least recognized but most likely the most important food in the store. With more and more pressure coming on kids to spend their money on fast food the one alternative to having kids eat all the bad stuff is for them to be healthy. I know I am a bad person to tell people to eat healthy considering I am sitting here with a hot dog and a large box of Sugar Babies it's still important to eat healthy. So until the day you eat healthy you can catch me on 7-11's block.



# Going to Homecoming or Going Home?

## A Magical Night Where Dreams Come True

**Caroline Staples**  
Features Editor

As you know, Homecoming is the biggest school gathering next to Prom. This is where teens get to show off their moves on the dance floor, and flirt with all the cute guys and girls during an awesome night.

Homecoming this year will be held on Saturday, October 29 in the main gym. The approximated number of people that attend this dance every year is around 1,000 students; that is about

half of our school. The tickets will be sold for fifteen dollars; this may seem like a lot for some people, but it actually helps raise thousands of dollars for our school. Just think how much money we would raise if everyone came? That's two times as much as we would regularly raise. Joan Reynolds, English and Leadership teacher

who is in charge of organizing the dance said, "This year's dance will have a great DJ, and light show that will make Homecoming a little more fun." Fifteen dollars will be worth the unforgettable memories from this year's promenade.

Teachers aren't the only ones who love Homecoming; sophomore Brittany Winslow said, "I love Homecoming, it is enjoyable!" When asked if she would go her next two years here she said, "Definitely!" She and her friends look forward to dancing with each other on the dance floor and listening to the loud music being played. Mrs. Reynolds, who also attends Homecoming, said, "It's so

much fun to see people get all dressed up."

Another reason people like to go to Homecoming is because they get to dress up. Becoming Cinderella or Prince Charming for one night is always the high-light of someone's weekend. Going to Pentagon City Mall to shop and try on expensive dresses at stores like Nordstroms and BCGC is great to do on the weekends before Homecoming with your friends. Junior Gabby Krohmal said, "Homecoming is

fun because I love going and getting dressed up, hanging out with my friends, going to dinner, and then Homecoming all in one night." Her taste in music though, does not always match with what the DJ is playing.

Different people like different music.

Personally, I like some of the rap music that they played last year like the reggae and hip hop songs that can be heard on one of Washington's number one hit music stations, Hot 99.5. They have a great beat to dance to and keep everyone out on the dance floor having a good time.

Homecoming is the only thing I look forward to during the beginning of the year. It's a time when I can relax and forget about projects and homework that need to be finished. It's the perfect time to focus on myself having fun and not worrying about due dates and teachers riding up my back every second.



Photo by Lakeisha Langley

## All Dressed Up With No Where to Go

**Kevin O'Brien**  
Copy Editor

The excitement, the preparation, getting together with friends, all the fun; why ruin it by going to Homecoming? This is a common sentiment among many students this year about something which was previously looked forward to. However, Homecoming this year does not look to be as promising as years past.

First of all, the price this year has dramatically increased from approximately ten dollars to fifteen. This is near half the cost of Prom last year, and Homecoming promises not nearly as much entertainment. The extra cost supposedly pays for a DJ, confetti, and lights; all of which were present last year for a significantly lower cost. In most situations, people would not line up and pay to crowd in a school gym and sweat on each other to inaudible music playing too loud for one to think.

You know the feeling of being crammed in the halls in between classes, with people pushing all around you, and yet no one getting anywhere? Or the deafening sound of dozens of different conversations trying to sort themselves out in your ear?

Well Homecoming is even more of that, but for several hours instead of just ten minutes; almost everyone in the school pushing instead of just one hallway worth; along with hundreds of conversations and blaring music that makes an airplane runway seem tranquil.

Most people go to a great expense to buy new dresses and lavish clothing, but to wear such clothing to Homecoming is the equivalent of running a marathon in them. Even if one does not have a severe case of dance fever, they would still likely be sweating from the pure heat of having so many people crowded in an enclosed space. If somehow that does not do it, one of the hundreds of people rubbing up against you will. Having someone else's sweat stains all over you does not traditionally impress a date.

By in large, most people agree that the best part of Homecoming is the excitement leading up to it, not the actual event; dress shopping, finding a place to eat, arranging a group and place and time for them to meet. So

why not forego the extraneous fun-thief that is the Homecoming dance? Think of it. If the school did not have the dance at all would anyone care? People could still have a reason to dress up and go out, but without going to the dance. The school

and each individual student would save huge sums of money. People could individually listen to the music they like and be in complete control of it, instead of an unresponsive DJ. The school's staff would not have to deal with the inappropriate acts that result or the clean up.



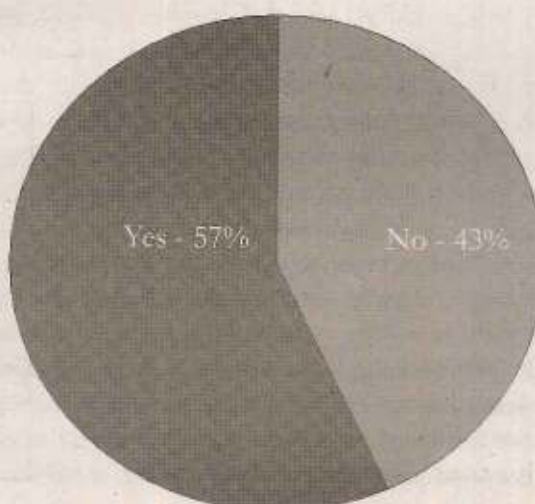
Photo by Lakeisha Langley

## "Will You...Go to Homecoming With Me?"

"Yes, it's fun and exciting, and I like to meet new people."  
Angeline Palmer, sophomore



Photo by Adele Hampton



"No, because I'm not really interested."  
Ariel Guzman, junior



Photo by Adele Hampton



# For Black, A New Amazing Race

Anum Jaffri  
News Editor

Our school now has another reason to be proud. Math teacher Reginald Black was recently on the family edition of the reality show, *The Amazing Race*. Although his family was the first to be eliminated, our school's community has expressed its excitement for Black's new-found fame.

The show began in New York City, and had different destinations as goals for each family to reach. The first leg was from New York to Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The last family to reach the area was eliminated. The Black family competed with the other contestants to cross the Delaware River into Pennsylvania. They sprinted to the finish line, but were beaten by the Linz family.

The Black family consists of wife Kimberly and children Kenneth, eleven, and Austin, eight. They also have a younger son, named Jordan, who did not participate due to his age. They appeared on the Early Show on CBS the morning after the *Amazing Race* was aired. Dressed in their trademark tie-died shirts, Black said he was "sad" to watch his family on television, but called his family winners. "We just weren't winners that day," he added. Happy and grateful for the opportunity, Kimberly Black said on the Early Show, "We were

blessed to even be on the show. It was such an honor." After returning to the school, Black said his experience was "wonderful, memorable, very enlightening, and educational."

The process between being chosen for the race and the race itself is complicated. "There were over 60,000 families who applied," said Black. "[The application process] started in the end of February to the end of May. We traveled to different cities for interviews." There was also a gag order during this process, as well as through the filming of the show.

Being on a reality show, "Took a lot to get used to," said Black. "During the interview process, you learn what to expect. You get used to make-up and bright lights." When asked about the validity of *The Amazing Race* as a reality show, Black said, "It's true. It's a reality show where you're dealing with everyday adventures, but you're learning about other parts of the world."

The Black family was featured on September 27,

during the two-hour season premiere of the show. On the show, they had to cross the Delaware River like George Washington did, in rowboats, to retrieve an American flag. The teams camped overnight in Fairmont Park, in Philadelphia. Then they had to either push a heavy buggy a mile and a half, or build an Amish water wheel. Because the family included children, they chose to build a water wheel, which they completed in 20 minutes. The family simply fell behind and stayed behind until the end, though they showed much effort.

When he returned back to school, Black received a warm welcome. "The math department, who knew about it the most, was unbelievable and warm. I couldn't ask for anything more." Mr. Black has fans outside of our school as well. "Throughout the whole country, we've been receiving emails of kind words," Black said.

Austin Black became the youngest competitor on the history of the show.

Kimberly Black is also a teacher, and the family takes Tae Kwon Do together. Our school should be very proud of one of our own being on such a widely telecast show and gaining national recognition.



Mr. Black, who appeared on *The Amazing Race* with his family over the summer.

Photo by Lakesha Langley

## The Stuff of Siblings

Angie Palma  
Business Manager

What is the worst possible thing about starting high school? How about being afraid that all of your big sisters or brothers friends are going to torment you? Well, actually there are scarier things about starting high school. Going to the same school with an older sibling is not that bad. Think about it. You have an in with the cool older group because they hang out at your house. Instead of taking the long, hot, bus ride home everyday, you get a personally chauffeured ride. Unsure about a teacher? Chances are that your big sister or brother had that teacher or at least have a friend that had that teacher. It is perfect now! You have your own tour guide who can show you the ropes and make sure you are not picked on.

But then again, what if you are only known as "so and so's" little sister? That is a big pet-peeve of sophomore Cassie Tabarini who said, "A time I don't like going to the same school as my big brother is when I'm recognized only as Alex's little sister. That's the only thing that really bothers me." Everyone needs to be known for something that they complete themselves and not what someone they are affiliated with did. That is a hard task made even harder by an accomplished, well-known older sibling.

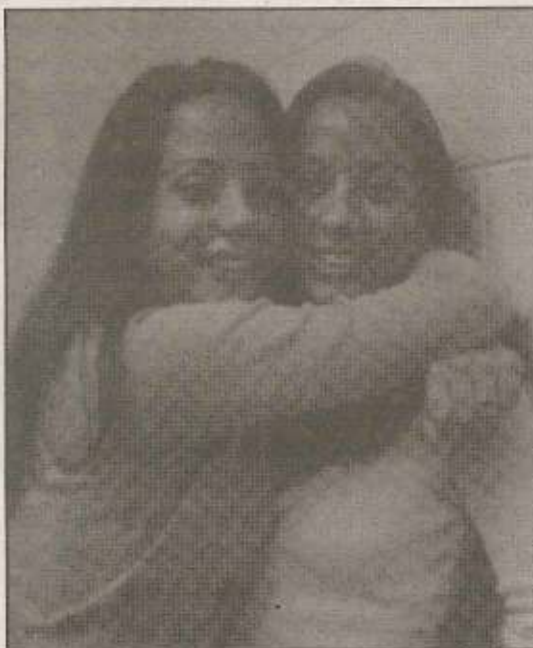
What if you are a twin? Teachers and students alike may compare you and play the "Which Twin is Which?" game. Said Junior Mimi Conway of sharing classes with her twin sister JJ, "In the year, especially in the beginning, it is hard for my teachers and classmates to recognize me as my

own person. However, by the end of the year they seem to realize our differences and treat me as me, not 'a twin.'" Again, there are pluses to going to school with your twin. Imagine having someone to do your homework with everyday. Conway said, "Having a personal study buddy with me at home 24-7 is probably the most advantageous thing about being a twin. Not only does she help me understand my work, she's sort of a challenge that I make for myself." If only all of us could have our own study partner living down the hall.

By the time many younger siblings get to our school, us older siblings don't really mind having them walk the same halls. Senior Alex Tabarini said about his younger sister Cassie, "I almost never see her so it's like she's not even there." As long as big fights or other embarrassing acts aren't committed by the younger one, the older siblings do not really take notice. Junior Marissa Watt laughed as she said, "As long as my friends don't want to date him

I don't care."

How many of you think about missing your sister or brother when you no longer share a school? Junior Carolyn Gibson admitted, "My biggest complaint about going to school with my brother last year was when he would talk to my friends, but it's weird not seeing James around the school anymore." You get used to knowing that someone who loves you is somewhere on the same grounds as you; that they are not too far away if you need them. Yes, it is sometimes a pain having them around, but it's also a comfort. Not having that takes a little getting used to.



Mimi and JJ Conway are some of the siblings that attend school together and have some of the same classes.

Photo by Lakesha Langley

## NEWS BRIEFS

### Quick Thinking Saves Life of Neighbor

Hooff Cooksey  
News Editor

It's not everyday that you hear of someone saving someone else's life. It's even more unusual to have it be someone from your school. Junior Jon Alderson, is that unusual someone. Alderson lives on South Down Road along the Potomac River and owns two jet skis and a boat. Alderson never thought these fun summer vehicles would be used to save someone's life. It was a regular afternoon, when Jon heard the shouts coming from his backyard. He ran out to find some of his neighbors pointing out to two men in the water. Alderson immediately went onto his dock and started

up his boat to go rescue, who turned out to be his neighbor and his friend. It turns out that the hydrila, a green vein plant that grows under water, was incredibly thick and both men had gotten tangled in it. At that point during the year the Potomac River was growing much more hydrila causing the men to have to struggle in the plant. This only made the men become even more entangled. Alderson brought the rescue team out to the scene, allowing for the saving of his neighbors life, but unfortunately it was too late for his friend. Jon Alderson is responsible in helping save a human beings life because of his quick thinking and work under pressure.



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# Don't Become a Statistic

Kaelin Emery

Wire Reporter

Every 22 minutes someone dies from an alcohol related car accident. 60 percent of all teen deaths are alcohol-related. Drunk driving has become a fatally serious problem among teenagers these days. In 2003, 40 percent of driving fatalities were alcohol-related with a majority of the deaths being among people fifteen to 24 years old. With homecoming right around the corner, students need to be aware of these horrifying statistics surrounding drunk driving.

You have seen the banners in the hallways reminding you that illegal substances are "temporary fun with life altering consequences," and if you have not taken that to heart yet then think about this: on any given weekend, one in ten drivers has been drinking and in 2002, 17,419 people died from alcohol-related car crashes. That is 1 person every 30 minutes.

Everyday, teenagers deal with pressure from their peers to drink and drive. "Sometimes people tell you that you are fine to drive when you have been drinking even though you are not," disclosed senior Katie Ellis. They believe that only having one beer will not impair their ability to drive, and besides, nothing bad can ever happen to them, right? Wrong. Boys with a blood alcohol level from .05-.1 are

eighteen times more likely to be in a crash. Girls with the same blood alcohol level are 54 times more likely. Just one beer will put you over that limit.

There are always the instances where teens believe that since they are "less intoxicated" than their friend



The destruction of this car exhibits the detrimental effects of drinking and driving. Please be responsible while driving.

KRT/Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

that they should drive instead. Sophomore Cory Gray disagrees, "There is never a right time to drive under the influence. It is still much more dangerous than any other alternative." Let's face it, everyone knows someone who does not have a problem with driving their car while they are intoxicated. Today, there are so many alternatives to drinking and driving, such as the SafeRide program and the "Contract."

SafeRide is a non-profit organization that has volunteers constantly manning the phones, waiting for

inebriated teens to call. They pick the caller up and take them home, no questions asked. The "Contract" was created by Students Against Drunk Driving (SADD) as a way for teenagers and parents to communicate about drunk driving. Both parties sign a contract agreeing for the student to call home if they, or the person that drove them, have been drinking and the parents will pick them up, no questions asked until later. Both alternatives provide you with a safe ride home and your life still intact.

There is a Zero Tolerance law in Virginia that states that it is illegal under any circumstance for people under 21 to operate a vehicle after they have been drinking. If caught, the first penalty is receiving a Driving Under the Influence. A DUI is considered a misdemeanor, which would not be something anyone would want on their college application. If caught again, the driver will be charged with a second DUI and an automatic jail sentence. "Each year the statistics are still too high, but I feel they have diminished because of an increase in law enforcement," commented Officer Davis who used to be one of the top DUI officers in the Mount Vernon area.

## CLUB BEAT BOX A CLUSTER OF CLUB COVERAGE

### Young Democrats

The Young Democrats meet in room 176 on Thursdays at 2:15, until the state elections on November 8th. They campaign for Delegate Kristin Amundson and gubernatorial candidate Tim Kaine. President: senior Asia Mernissi



Alison Beaton Journal/KRT

### Literary Advocates

They can be found in room 431 on Mondays after school. Upcoming plans are to help students obtain library cards, run a book drive in January, and read to elementary school students. President: senior Casey Rivkin



### Senior Class Activities

Many are planned for the year. The next one is a free ice cream social on November 18 from 1:20-2:10 on the patio.



## A CAPTURED CLUB Debate and Forensics

Diana Blaszkiewicz

Style Editor

After a lengthy hiatus from this school's award radar, the Debate and Forensics teams are ready for a comeback. Coached by English teacher Julian Dotson, the teams are busily recruiting new members, while at the same time working hard at furthering the teams' success this year. The teams are the subsidiaries of a Debate and Forensics club which meets every Monday and Friday in room 319 of the Quander building. Both teams focus on specific events in the Debate and Forensics categories that are performed at high school competitions.

Debate highlights the argumentative aspect of public speaking. Senior Jordan Loveless participates in public forum debate, a two-on-two debate on issues in U.S. government. "I've been doing [debate] since my freshman year," she says. "I enjoy keeping up with things in the government." On the other hand, sophomore Kerry Beyer partakes in Forensics. "It's like acting, but it takes less prep time," she explains. Beyer's event is Impromptu, where participants are given three topics, pick one, and present it out with no prior preparation. Fellow sophomores Jessica Smith and Addison Swaney act out scenes for Duo Interpretation, which entails performing part of a work without looking at the other person. All the monologues and dialogues are directed at the audience.

"My goal this year is to have fun learning about Debate and Forensics with my amazing class and to build the entire team to 50 students. It is an ambitious goal for one year, but when we start bringing home trophies like in the days of old, we will attract a crowd of people who never knew they had it in them!" said Dotson.



Dotson helps Kendrya Garrix do research for debate

Photo by Diana Blaszkiewicz

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## ANUM'S ACADEMICS

These colleges are visiting our school in November. If you're interested in attending, go to the career center and put your name on the list. A pass will be given to you so you can get out of class on the day of the college visit, that will need to be signed by your teacher.

### NOVEMBER

4: Virginia State-11:30 a.m.

A suburban public university in Petersburg

64% of applicants are admitted

8: Marymount University-

11 a.m. -3 p.m.

A private university in Arlington, VA

82% of applicants are admitted



9: Smith College-1:30 p.m.

A private women's-only liberal arts college in Northampton, MA

57% of applicants are admitted

10: Arcadia University-11:45 a.m.

A private university in Glenside, PA

72% of applicants are admitted

Northrop-Rice Aviation Institute of Technology-12:30 p.m.

A technical college in Inglewood, CA



15: Northern Virginia Community

College- 8 a.m.-1 p.m.

A two-year community college with campuses in Alexandria, Annandale, Sterling,

Springfield,

Manassas, and Woodbridge

21: Miami University of Ohio- 9:15

a.m.

A public university in Oxford, OH

71% of applicants are admitted



22: US Coast Guard Academy-

9:30 a.m.

An engineering and liberty college in New London, CT

22% of applicants are admitted

Our school offers a free service to explore career options using Bridges 2005 software

Open to all West Potomac students

[www.access.bridges.com](http://www.access.bridges.com)

Site I.D. 0055152

Password: wolverines

The informative website offers a glimpse into how life is for workers in every career field, including salary and availability of jobs.

# Darkness Falls

Diana Blaszkiewicz

Style co-Editor

A power blackout at this school Friday, October 7<sup>th</sup>, caused confusion among both students and faculty as the administration tried to decide on the best course of action to take. The outage, which occurred when two transformers blew on both sides of the school, took power away from the school and areas of the Route 1 corridor. This school lost power around 6:30 a.m., shortly before students began arriving. Due to miscommunication between this school's administration, Fairfax County Public School officials, and Virginia Power associates, this school was left in disarray in the dark.

There were a number of ways administrators dealt with the blackout problem, with mixed results. Parents bringing students to school were told to go home. "My mom drove me to school and [an administrator] told me to leave. So I went back home and went to sleep," said senior Dianne Thompson. This caused unhappiness among many parents whose schedules were disrupted by this change in procedure. Students who drove to school were not sure how to act. "I didn't know whether to stay or go, but I ended up going [home]," said senior Emily Macklin. Bus-riders were not as well-fated; buses were unavailable to come and pick students back up, and the students that rode them were forced to remain at school. Junior John Mulligan, who rides Fairfax Connector bus 152 to school, voiced his frustration with the administration's treatment of transportation issues. "I was pretty angry. My dad works in Silver Spring, so he couldn't take me home. They didn't give any consideration to people who walked to school or rode public buses."

The administration's decision to shuttle the students that remained into the cafeteria (which was lighted by emergency power) was not well received by the students. "I felt as if it was a waste of my class time and my time to sit in the cafeteria doing nothing," explains junior Rachel Good. By 9:55 a.m., the power was completely restored to the school and students proceeded to their 4<sup>th</sup> period classes. E-mails were sent notifying parents that school was in fact, back in session. However, few students returned to school. "It was a bad decision to re-open the school after people were sent home," Mulligan said. "It was pointless to have school."

Yet the school also handled the situation quickly. The power outage was sudden, and workers tried to fix it as quickly as possible. According to Principal Rima Vesilind, the school lost not only its power and PA capability, but the use of the administrators' walkie talkies, which made communication difficult.

The decision to keep the school open was not that of Vesilind's or the administration's, but of FCPS Superintendent Jack D. Dale. "Central administration [of FCPS] said, 'You are not closing this school,'" said Vesilind of the situation.

Vesilind and the administrative team realize that the handling of the situation could have been more efficient. "We need to find ways that we can communicate; we know now, as an administrative team, we need to make sure that there are alternate methods of communication," acknowledged Vesilind. The power black out proved to be an indicator of the lapses in emergency response and administrative cohesiveness at this school which will allow this school to improve these areas in the case of another emergency.

Katrina, from page 1

welcome. Banks plans on staying in Virginia until the end of the school year. She hopes that people will look over the fact that she is a victim of Katrina and not treat her with more respect and kindness than she would get as a regular person. For the other students at our school, she wishes the same thing.

Jamnecia Nero, a freshman, was also involved in the hurricane, luckily leaving the day before it hit New Orleans. "I was hurt because I knew I could not go back or see my friends," said Nero. Her mother is staying in New Orleans due to her job as a detective. "They were shooting at her," said Nero, about what her mother has had to go through. "She has had to sleep in the car." Jamnecia states that the affects have been a lot worse than what you can see on television. "The TVs did not show the dead bodies and allow you to experience the really bad smell." Nero plans on moving back in November so she can get back to her old life.

One of our teachers was also affected by Hurricane Katrina. Latin teacher Brett Simonson said, "I feel emotionally devastated also after talking to friends and family in New Orleans and seeing the pictures on the news." As a child he grew up in New Orleans, and when he moved to Virginia his family stayed in the south. His family was also affected by the storm. Simonson plans to visit them as often as he can, because of this traumatic event. "I am going to try to help as much as I can when I visit," said Simonson. "The dry wall, carpet, floors, pretty much the entire house will be ripped up." Simonson is very pleased with the kindness and support people have shown in our area. He feels it is awesome that area schools have opened their doors to any victims, and, he gives an example, that the D.C. Armory was used to help the victims.

Hurricane Katrina was a devastating storm that destroyed people's lives. People all over the United States were affected, and are trying to help. New Orleans, where over half the city was flooded the, is currently being drained out and will soon be inhabitable.

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# "THE OLDEST AND STRONGEST

## Phagophobia: Fear of Eating

Diana Blaszkiewicz

Style co-Editor

Sometimes it is the little things that scare us the most; the tap of a branch against our window at night, a spider scurrying across the floor, or the creaking on the stairs that seems to almost happen as soon as you're alone at night. For most of us, our fears are just figments of our imagination. It's hard to deal with them, but with a little bit of rationality and a lot of courage, we learn to overcome them. However, for some people these little fears are deeply psychological and spiral out of control.

Called phobias, they range from the classic fears of the dark or insects, to more exotic ones, such as phagophobia, the fear of swallowing, or eating.

Phagophobia is a misunderstood phobia, often mistaken for anorexia. Though many anorexics display a fear of eating or swallowing, it initially stems from the disease and escalates with their regimen of extreme dieting.

Phagobics get nervous at even the very idea of eating, swallowing, or of being eaten or swallowed. The psychological impact of this disease quickly manifests itself physically. Unable to eat normally, phagobics can drastically lose weight, become dehydrated, and

develop heart and other health problems. At times, the disease can become fatal.

The scariest thing about phagophobia is the ignorance people display towards this debilitating psychological condition. "Phagophobia? What?" commented on the subject senior Amara Lewis. "Not swallowing? That's wack!" added fellow senior Dianne Thompson. A dispassionate attitude towards a serious disease



Photo by Jocelyn Finrock

like phagophobia discourages understanding and empathy towards people affected by the phobia.

Treatment for phagophobia, as with the treatment for most phobias, is fluctuant and can be unreliable. The most important part of the therapy is to find an appropriate cognitive or behavioral psychologist and establish a consistent diet. By realizing that eating or swallowing is rarely harmful and being eaten or swallowed seldom a threat, phagobics have a chance of overcoming their phobia or at least learning how to live with it.

## WHAT SCARES YOU

**"I am afraid of snakes and airplanes. They freak me out."**  
Lauren Schmalz, Junior

**"I'm afraid of electricity. I got in an accident when I was little."**  
Matthew Husband, sophomore



**"I'M AFRAID OF THUNDER AND LIGHTENING. I HATE IT."**  
LAUREN CROW, JUNIOR

**"I'm afraid of spiders."** Rachel Ess, freshman



KRT/David Stephenson

**"I'M SCARED OF WHAT I'M GOING TO DO AFTER HIGH SCHOOL."** PAMELA CHEUNG, SENIOR

## Acrophobia: Fear of Heights

Caroline Staples

Features Editor

Acrophobia is not a word heard very often in the English language. It means that you or someone else has a fear of heights, such as being up in very tall buildings or going on roller coasters.

People who suffer from acrophobia can become habituated, meaning they can lose their fear of heights. However, this only lasts until they are moved somewhere new and unfamiliar that is up high. Some may experience a panic attack in a high place and have sudden urges to throw themselves off of the high location they are at, although they are not suicidal.

A few symptoms of acrophobia are shortness of breath, rapid breathing, irregular heartbeat, sweating, nausea, and overall feeling of dread.



Diving could be extremely hard if you have acrophobia.

KRT/Allison Smith

Don't worry, if you do have acrophobia, know someone who does, because seventy percent of Americans have the same phobia.

Freshman Sarah Curzon said, "I have always been scared of heights!" She doesn't like to be in a high, insecure place that makes her feel like she could fall accidentally, except when she's on roller coasters that are examined every day before they open.

This specific phobia can not be cured, although you can try to reduce it by being exposed to heights repeatedly, even though it can take months or even years. Although a number of drugs are prescribed for acrophobia, it does not actually "cure" you from the phobia. The only way that a person with acrophobia can get over their fear is to revisit tall buildings.

## Aichmophobia: Fear of Pointed Objects

Kaelin Emery

Wire Reporter

Millions of people in this world are plagued with fears of various objects and situations. People with phobias go out of their way to avoid situations that make them confront their fears. Some of the more common phobias are fears of small spaces and heights, but there are also people who suffer from something called Aichmophobia, fear of pointed objects.

Believe it or not, there are people in this world who are scared of various pointed objects such as needles and knives. "I don't like knives because I know someone who got stabbed," junior Shane Sixsmith revealed. Thousands of people suffer from this irrational fear. They can't receive shots at the doctor's office, cut their food with knives, or use scissors. "I'm scared of needles and I hate getting shots. I never tell my parents when I'm sick so that I can avoid getting shots," said sophomore Casey McGee. Imagine never being able to cut up the steak you're eating for dinner, or get your yearly flu shot.

Aichmophobia puts a damper on their lives, holding them back from doing every day activities. Phobias never just go away but through self-help programs people are able to alleviate their fears.



KRT/Vern Fisher

## What is a Phobia

- A phobia is an intense and agonizing fear of an object, place or situation.
- People can develop phobias to animals (ex. spiders), activities (ex. flying on an airplane) or social situations (ex. dinner conversations).
- There are many existing phobias. There is not a possible way to list all the phobias in this world because a person could be afraid of anything.
- There are different forms of phobias: fears of a particular object (specific phobia) or fears of being in public situations or environments (social phobia).



# MOTION OF MANKIND IS FEAR!"

-H.P. LOVECRAFT

## Deipnophobia-Coping With Dinner Conversation

Brett Smith

Wire Reporter

"Deipno-what? I think you just made that up," said senior Paul Whalen.

"Sounds like some freaky kind of disease involving...I don't know, diapers? Fear of diapers? People can do that?" asked senior Ben Larson.

"Deipnophobia. What an odd word," was what junior Nate Snider had to say.

Some phobias involve fear of an object or a place. Other phobias revolve around a fear of weather conditions, or perhaps a fear of certain ethnicities. But deipnophobia is a phobia unlike any other—a disease that sticks out above a list of literally thousands of phobias.

For those afflicted with deipnophobia, dinner and dinner conversations are the equivalent of diamonds—extremely hard, but essential in wooing women.

Think about it. A man with this disease is invited to meet his girlfriend's parents for the first time—over dinner. A stressful

situation even without the disease, dinner conversations are often a key point of social interaction. Business meetings, dates, family outings of any variety—all of these everyday, but nonetheless important, events often occur in the form of dinner conversations. Someone with deipnophobia would probably blow the business meeting, alienate their date, and offend his or her family.

Deipnophobics are among us. Chances are you've met someone with deipnophobia. But you wouldn't know it. Most deipnophobics keep their disease a secret, afraid of how the intolerant public may react. They hide their disease inside, avoiding dinner conversations whenever possible.

If you or someone you know suffers from deipnophobia, you should seek therapeutic assistance immediately.

A world without fear of dinner or dinner conversations — it is possible.



Photo by LaKisha Langley



KRT/Sargith Min

**"I hate [have a fear of] bees. It started when I was a little kid."**

**Mr. Olive, History teacher**

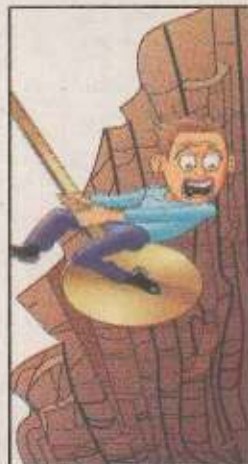


KRT/Laurie Skraivan

**"I'm scared of snakes and spiders."**

**Meredith Maple, sophomore**

**"I'm scared of heights." Kyle Rosenkranz, junior**



KRT/Jim Aberton

## PHOBOPHOBIA: THE FEAR OF FEAR

Adele Hampton

Opinions co-Editor

Have you ever heard the expression, "The only thing to fear is fear itself?" Well, as cliché as it might seem, this phrase is true. One not so simple word can mean a very simple thing. Phobophobia is the fear of fear. This may seem like a straightforward meaning, but do not be fooled by its simplicity. Fear is defined as: an unpleasant, often strong emotion caused by anticipation or awareness of danger. In other words, anxious concern. This is where things get complicated. For each person, fear represents a different thing, usually referring back to that specific person's anxieties and amount of self-esteem.

Even though it may seem bizarre, phobophobia is actually a common phobia. Symptoms may include: breathlessness, excessive sweating, nausea, shaking, the inability to speak or think clearly, a fear of becoming mad or losing control, a sensation of detachment from reality, or a full blown anxiety attack. "People with anxiety disorders get panicky because they think they are afraid," said junior Delynn Woodman. In most cases, phobophobia is linked to and caused by a person's unconscious, where something might have happened in that person's life that would tie fear and emotional trauma.

People who have phobias, including phobophobia generally seek a therapist or psychiatrist to help them get over their fear. Phobophobia, despite its odd name and unusual definition, can be harmful to the people who have it, so it is best to seek help as soon as possible.

No matter what your phobia is, just remember that there's more to fear than you think.

**"The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."**  
**- Franklin D. Roosevelt**

**"I AM AFRAID OF NOT GETTING INTO THE COLLEGE THAT I WANT TO." MEAGAN KIRBY, JUNIOR**

## Taphephobia: The Fear of Cemeteries

Sara Mathewson

Style co-Editor

Have you ever found yourself sweating excessively or felt your heart racing at the thought of being buried alive, or even when you are planning a trip to visit your grandmother's grave? If so, then you could have a case of taphephobia. This phobia could cause someone serious mental stress and could affect someone's daily life. However, with proper treatment and a serious dedication to be done with it, you could easily get through your fear, sometimes even without medical help.

When junior Jayne Seward was asked how she felt about the phobia, she replied "It's an understandable fear because of all the things that you see on TV these days". Junior John Motley agreed, "Many people are afraid of cemeteries because of the fact that dead people rest there, and being buried alive is a scary and uneasy way to die."

People can develop this phobia many ways, by watching too many horror movies about people being buried alive, by thinking about it too much, or you may just be paranoid. Some people could develop a fear of cemeteries by experiencing a traumatic moment, such as a very close loved one dying. The thought of having to go back to a cemetery where you mourned a loved one could horrify you, and make you not want to go back there. Seward said, "I believe people can be afraid of [taphephobia] because it is a mix of different fears like claustrophobia (fear of confined spaces) and achluophobia (fear of darkness)."

If you think you might have a case of taphephobia, ask yourself whether or not you show

symptoms such as these: breathlessness, excessive sweating, dry mouth, inability to speak or think clearly, and becoming mad or losing control, among many other things. You can notice these symptoms anytime; when simply watching a movie about someone being buried alive, the thought of being buried alive yourself, or even when you are trying to attend a burial for a loved one.

Taphephobia is not a phobia that can directly affect your immediate health; it causes a lot of mental stress. This fear can be pretty common; people just aren't as open about it, as it is with most people who are afraid of something. You usually don't notice someone's phobia until they are faced with a situation where it may come out, a time when their fear is shown. Sophomore Kevin Veillard said, "I don't know anyone that is afraid of being buried alive or of cemeteries, but I know I am, I have my life to look forward to."



KRT/Kari Rene Hall



# Early Encroachment

Kevin O'Brien

Copy Editor

For the past several Fridays, this school's Varsity football team has been drawing huge crowds to whatever field it plays at, and with good reason. Although they have not had a perfect season thus far, they have had a highly successful one, including one of the best records in recent years and some very high scoring games. They are certainly accomplishing their goal, as stated by senior player Mike Howell, "We want to bring West Potomac football back to the way it should be."

What brought about this seemingly grandiose change from how the Varsity team has been viewed in past years? Evidence would point to the relatively new coach, Eric Henderson, but he claims "It's not anything I've done." According to him it is just that, "The kids



Senior Captain Mike Howell will concentrate on shutting down Lee's offense.

feel more comfortable in the system," and the kids agree; there is "more of a team concept" according to junior quarterback Chris Farquhar. The team's synchronicity is evident in their well-manuevered plays on the defensive and offensive side, and also their new tradition of lining up and holding hands for the coin toss, an awesome site considering they stretch the majority of the length of the field. Their improved morale and "team concept" is actually really helpful in the game as well, as demonstrated in a few weeks' ago Hayfield game where we were able to come back from trailing ten to zero at the half, to win the game 20 to seventeen.

Senior Deondre Weathers, whose key fumble recovery resulted in a touchdown against Centreville, says that among some of the changes this year are "the offensive line got stronger...we got depth... (and) the fans increased." In addition to Coach Henderson's efforts to bring the team together as one, he has also been bringing the school together as one behind the football team. The school's marching band that is present at every football game has jazzed up its repertoire to increase the excitement of the game. This includes playing the theme from 2001: A Space Odyssey as the team enters the stadium, Darth Vader's theme each time the defense enters the field, and the theme from The Magnificent Seven when a total of seven points are scored. Attendance to home games also greatly improved with the implantation of the school sponsored pre-game tail gate, a notably

hip idea. Some of the excited fans seen at both the Mount Vernon and Centreville games had the name of the school painted upon their bare chests in support.

Though some would consider the heavy loss to Centreville a defeat, it isn't necessarily. In Centreville's so far perfect season, our school scored the most points against them in any game. Asked to comment on this, however, Coach Henderson said, "I don't do the moral victory thing. When we make the playoffs I think we'll see them again, and I think we can beat them." Opinions of the season are definitely optimistic but the down-to-earth team is taking it "one at a time," said Mike Howell. "Every game is its own season."

## Head-to-Head

### West Potomac (2-5)

**Coach (seasons w/ team)**

Eric Henderson (2)

#### Star Players

Chris Farquhar (QB)

Corey Smith (RB)

Neil Hardy (WR)

Mike Howell (LB/Captain)

#### Average Defensive Stats

Interceptions 1

Sacks 4

#### Average Offensive Stats

Rush Yards per game 107

Rush TDs 7

Receiving Yards per game 153

Pass Yards per game 153

Passing TDs 4

Receiving TDs 4

Pass Interceptions -



Varsity football captain senior Corey Smith.

### Robert E. Lee (5-2)

**Coach (seasons w/ team)**

Chad Lewis (2)

#### Star Players

Greg Jones (QB/FS/Captain)

Brandon Cameron (RB/CB)

Dennis Bennett (WR)

Kyle Bates (MLB/FB/Captain)

#### Defensive Stats

Interceptions 3

Sacks 16

#### Offensive Stats

Rush Yards per game 268

Rush TDs 19

Receiving Yards per game 30

Pass Yards per game 30

Passing TDs 0

Receiving TDs 0

Pass Interceptions 2



## New Districts Welcome New Competition

Caroline Staples

Features Editor

Every year high schools are placed into groups, "districts", which contain schools with about the same number of students. Our school is in the Patriot District, and competes against the seven other schools of the Patriot District in all of our sports teams.

Because Robinson High School's student population has increased this year, they have moved out of the Patriot District and into the Concorde District. Two schools that joined our district this year were South County and Robert E. Lee. The other schools that stayed in the Patriot District were our school, Annandale, Hayfield, Lake Braddock, and West Springfield. Not only did our district change but three of the four districts in the Northern Region changed this year. Fairfax and Robinson are new to the Concorde District, Thomas Jefferson was added to the Liberty District, while the National District schools remained the same.

Cross Country, Track and Field coach, and US Government teacher, Don Beeby, said he was very happy when he found out Robinson was out of our district. "They are a great team that always turns out excellent competitive athletes every

year." Beeby also said that they are one of the largest teams in the region with a very accomplished sports program. Our district lost one good team (Robinson) and took in two underdogs (Lee and South County), which will help our school win more games this year in several sports. Sophomore Daniel Penningroth, a winter swimmer at our school, said, "When I heard Robinson was leaving the district I was so excited, they are a really good team."

One of the new schools to the district, Lee, has already proven themselves worthy of being the best at football considering they have won three games and only lost two. In Lee's standings so far, they are tied for first with Annandale. Their Girls Varsity Volleyball Team also proves their excellence as a team, holding the number one spot in our district with a record of seven wins and two losses. Although Lee seems to have all the leading fall sports teams, their Field Hockey team now places last with only three wins and thirteen losses.

South County, one of the underdog teams according to Coach Beeby, is last place in football, losing all four of their games. South County's Volleyball team is also tied for last place with T. C. Williams with a record of zero wins and three losses.

## Volleyball on a Roll

Jon Yoo

Asst. Sports Editor

With the football team finally heading in the right direction, it is little obvious to why much of our school's other fall sports have taken in little notice. However, the volleyball season is in full gear, with the Varsity team cruising with a 9-3 record; the



Senior Manjit Chase going for a spike.

only three tough defeats coming from tough competitors Herndon, James Madison, and West Springfield. Junior starter Jessie Hines said, "The West Springfield match was our most solid game. We played tough, and even though we lost, that was our best outing all year." This type of positive mindset has been instilled into the players by third year coach,

Jean Coder, and has been the main reason for the team's upward success over the recent years.

Teamwork and experience might be the most important reasons to why our school's team has had so much success this year. Veteran leaders, such as Hines, junior Jayne Seward, and seniors Marcia Hollingsworth and

Manjit Chase all gained experience by playing on club volleyball teams outside of the school. With this leadership intact, there is little wonder to why the team has had so much success while playing such a tough schedule. Seward stated, "The direction that our team is heading is definitely a positive one, we have become a stronger team by playing teams out of our district. Through these games, we have definitely learned how to play with each other."

There is only one more goal to be accomplished for this year's team, which is to win districts. Junior Natalie Zuffi said, "We all believe that we have a strong enough team to win districts. That is the reason why we have done our best in practice and games, and why coach has pushed and motivated us throughout the season." With this being said, it is expected that they will settle for nothing less.

Photo by Jon Yoo



# Houey's Highlights

## Students' Active Summers

Houston Murphy

Sports Editor

For students, the summer is a time of festivity, enjoyment, escape, and notorious laziness. But at the times when teens are sick of stagnating in front of the television, there are plenty of options to keep them active while playing summer sports.

Summer sports provide more than just an alternative to sitting on the couch; with the summer season comes many additional sports that one would not usually get a chance to play during the school year and other seasons. With all of these unconventional sports, summer is a great time to try new things that someone might not otherwise know they are good at or enjoy.

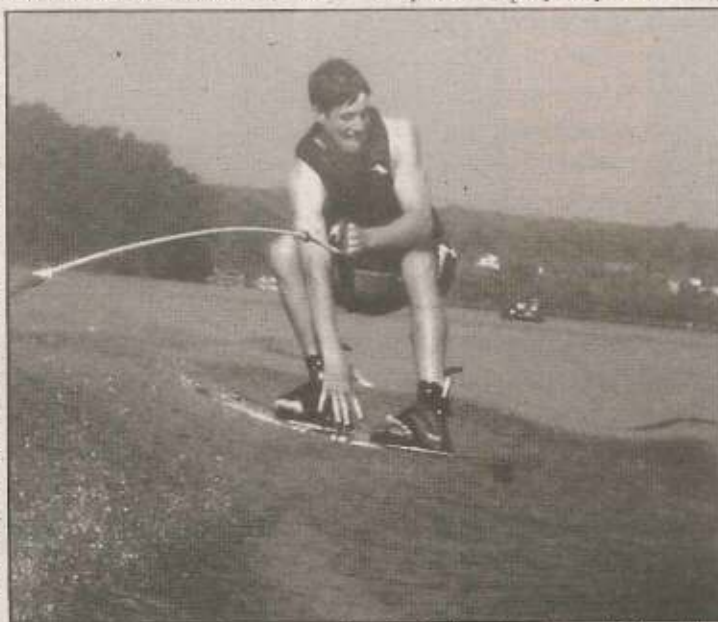
Fans of water sports, or students who swim during the school year, often got chances to go to summer lake houses in order to water ski, knee board, and wakeboard, which is rapidly growing in popularity. I went to my friend senior Eric Pratsch's lake house at Lake Anna this summer to try water sports for the first time. It was definitely something worth trying, as being on the water and trying to control where you go on the skis and wakeboard is unlike any other activity. Senior Chris Porter, who also had his first time trying a water sport this summer at Lake Anna, felt that water skiing was a new challenge that he greatly enjoyed experiencing. "Going to Lake Anna was crazy," said Porter. "It took me a while to get up on the skis, but once I did, it was totally worth it. It wasn't like any other sport I have ever tried, and I had a lot of fun doing it."

Senior Molly Turner, who also took a trip to Pratsch's lake house over the summer, has great experience water skiing. "I have been [water] skiing for a long time, but going out on the water never gets old," said Turner. "Each time out on the lake seems like a new thrill for me."

Pratsch, who has gone to his lake house several times a summer each year since he was five years old, said that wakeboarding is

one of his favorite things to do in the world. "If I could spend my time doing anything, I would have to choose wakeboarding," said Pratsch. "My brother and I have been waterskiing and wakeboarding since I was younger and if I got good enough I would even want to do it for a living because it's what I love to do."

Aside from water sports, there are several other small sport activities that people played during the summer. Senior Pablo Campos often played Ultimate Frisbee with his friends, an activity they could play any time they wanted, with a great amount of



Senior Eric Pratsch stretches out to complete a hand grab on the wakeboard. Though it may look simple, technique for wakeboarding requires much practice.

Photo Courtesy of Molly Turner

action. "I've always loved to play Frisbee since I was in elementary school, but Ultimate Frisbee made me take it to the next level this summer," said Campos. "I would wake up and play Frisbee with [senior] Will [Schworer] and some of my other friends, and we would throw around the saucer for hours at a time. It was a great way to spend my time when I felt like I was getting too out of shape."

Summer activities often provided a good way for students to train and to keep their bodies prepared for the upcoming school sports seasons. With cross country,

football, field hockey, and several other sports starting in the middle of August, athletes had to keep in shape in order to be able to compete in their sports. Senior Antwane Minter, who has played varsity football all four years here at this school, runs AAU track and field during the summer to help him stay active and prepare for football. "Running track in the summer helps me exercise and train to get faster, which helps me for football and also for track in the winter and spring seasons," said Minter.

With summer comes the strong temptation to lounge around and be lethargic, because the school year can often be long and draining for students. But for athletes and non-athletes alike, summer time is a great opportunity to play all kinds of sports for any reason.

## Slow and Steady Wins the Race

Hooff Cooksey

News Editor

West Potomac sports teams have never been known as a powerhouse in the Patriot District sports program. One team that always performs at a high level, but never receives much credit, is our Cross Country team. Coached by Marie Knight and Don Beeby, this team is a big competitor in our district.

They achieve this reputation by, "Practicing for about two and a half hours. We went to camp in Michigan and trained on the sand dunes twice a day for eight days," says English teacher Marie Knight. "We do everything from seven to nine mile runs, and short speed workouts like mile repeats where they do two to three miles with short breaks in between." The team's

"It's not about running fast; it's about looking good."

~Senior Frank DeVar

hard work has allowed for their continued success throughout West Potomac's short existence.

The team is trying to get better and reach certain goals. "For both the girls and the

boys, our goals are to be the top two or three in our district, and then top three or four in the region advancing us to states," stated Knight. The boys finished second in the state last season, and plan to again, or possibly to prevail to first place.

As the captain of the boys team for his second year in a row, Frank DeVar feels the team is really improving. "We finished second in the state last year, and have a lot of depth on the team this year," said DeVar. He feels that

sophmores Corey Gray, Kelly Carmichael, and Paul DeVar will be able to take over the team when he leaves. "The team really needs to do well at Regionals," said DeVar. "It decides who goes to States."

Knight stated that on the girl's team all the runners have improved their times from 30 seconds to a couple of minutes. The runner that she said has really improved the team

is Elizabeth Heath. As a sophomore her best time in a 5K (about three miles) race is nineteen minutes and ten seconds, and as a freshman she finished in the top fifteen in both the district and the region. She received MVP last year and is performing

well enough now to receive it again. History teacher, Don Beeby said, "Frank DeVar is the boys' top runner - Frank ran a 15:49 at Burke Lake (3 miles) last year and should easily beat that time in the post season this year."

The team's biggest competitor in the Patriot District is "West Springfield," said coach Beeby. "However, we have more depth than they do."

The Cross Country team is improving everyday and hopes to take the Patriot District title. They have many rising stars and hope to rule the Cross Country sport for many years to come.



Seniors Amara Lewis and Diana Burke run hand-in-hand at the Oktoberfest Cross Country Invitational.

Photo Courtesy of Amara Lewis

## In The Numbers

32

Number of points scored by the Varsity football team in a shut-out win against rival Mount Vernon.

9

Number of goals that leading scorer, junior Jana Decoster, has scored for our Varsity field hockey team.

3

Number of interceptions made by sophomore Junior Varsity Football player Donte Jones in a 28-7 win over West Springfield.

52

Points the Washington Redskins scored against the San Francisco 49ers on Sunday, October 23.



## Day in the Life of... Sprightly Security

Alex Keckiesen

Asst. Editor-in-Chief

He walks the halls of the school, keeping a close eye on anything and everything that is going on, just to make sure that everyone is safe. "Vic," as he is known by many students, is one of the select few that are here to protect our campus.

Victor Watson's day starts off just as anyone else's at this school. He wakes up and goes to school, but once he gets here he has a unique job, different from anyone else working at this school. He is not here to teach you the quadratic formula or make sure you use proper grammar. He is here to make sure that everyone on campus is safe and responsible.

In the morning you may see him directing traffic and regulating the amount of students that go in. It may be seven in the morning and you're tired, but it is obvious that he is ready for a full day of work as he waves you by.

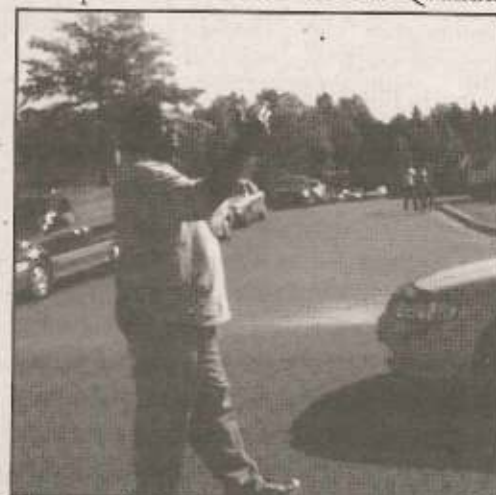
Vic isn't here just to keep you from leaving campus for lunch, or to write you a ticket when you parked in a faculty parking spot. "My main job in the security department is to keep the building free of trespassers, illegal tobacco or drugs, and to diffuse fights. It's really

important to have a safe learning environment for the students," said Watson.

You can see him walking into or past your class, passing notes along to students from other departments of the school. "Being able to work with kids is great because I know I am able to make an impact on their lives" said Watson.

During lunch, you won't see him eating his food. You will see him either in the cafeteria, on the patio, or in the red security vehicle at the entrance of the senior parking lot. His job never seems to end, and the breaks come few and far between. While intentionally looking for him could be tough, when you least expect it, he could come around the corner, talking on his black walkie-talkie, coordinating how to keep the perimeter of the school safe. You could spend your four years at this school trying to learn the school from

Springbank to Gunston, but you will never know the school like Vic does. Every fire alarm and every door, Vic knows where it is, including the pool on the third floor of Quander.



Watson patrols the parking lot in the morning to keep the parking lot under control.

Photo by LaKeisha Langley

Working at our school isn't Watson's only job. He also works as a security advisor at the Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Center. Most of his time is spent watching over those detained. Throughout the day, his hours are long but rewarding.

Seven to eight hours are spent each day making sure our school is safe and free of drugs by each member of the security department. Their dedication to their job is what keeps the school away from total chaos. Making a difference in our lives is what keeps them motivated and their motivation keeps us in a safe learning environment. And in case you wanted to know, the security car tops out at around 40 miles per hour.

## "In"—It's a Statement.

Jon Yoo and Robyn Byrd

Asst. Sports Editor and Reporter

What's up with popped collars and high-top socks, or silver and gold accessories? Are those the new style or what? Students at this school seem to have original ways of putting clothes together.

"When I wake up in the morning and put on my clothes, I like to make a fashion statement," said freshman Lenia Eladlani. It is sort of like each and every individual puts together their own fashion show when coming to school.

Individuality proves to be the most important trend this season, "I don't feel the need to have my shirt match my sneakers because it looks different and stands out," said senior Meghan Mitchell. Wearing non-matching layers is in for most females. Many girls are wearing a lot of accessories that make their clothes look more diverse, including colorful tote bags, long beaded jewelry, mood rings, hoop or dangling earrings; small backpacks, big belts, shades, and hair clips. It seems as if it is the 70s all over again!

Most of the boy's style this year is collared shirts. Boys like to wear them with regular jeans, and gold or silver shoes. They wear long sleeved, short sleeved, stripped, regular, or logo collars. Hats are in too; males wear theirs depending upon the season's sport. Baseball caps during baseball season, football during football season, and so forth. "I like to wear hats because it goes with my gear and over my hair," said senior Marcus England.

Another thing that is in for boys is bead bracelets and bottle cap belts; boys wear the two with anything.

A way of being creative with headgear without covering up your hair is an original hairstyle. The Mohawk is making resurgence this year, but in a softer way than its punk predecessors. Both girls and boys are embracing the "faux-hawk", a more palatable version of the Mohawk.

All in all, creativity is the keyword to fall fashion success. Logos and designer clothing don't always ensure great style, which is apparent this season in an increased willingness to break typical fashion "rules".

HOT		NOT
Desperate Housewives	TV Shows	CSI
Ultimate Fighting	Reality TV	Laguna Beach
Jessica Alba	Actor/Actress	Jude Law
Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes	Hollywood Couple	Nick and Jessica
Harry Potter 4	Movie	Napolean Dynamite
Chris Brown	Music Artist	Usher
Three-Six Mafia	Music Group	G-Unit
Jheal	School Slang	Yeah!
Rosinas	Restaurant	Panera
New Coldstone (Route 1)	Hot Spot	Old Coldstone (AMC Hoffman)
Football	School Sport	Cross Country
"Skins"	Local Team	Nats
Volleyball Spandex	Sports Uniforms	Field Hockey Skirts
Hollister	Clothing Store	Abercrombie
Dwayne Wade	Athlete	Lebron James
Range Rover HSE	Car	Escalade
Original iPod	Gadget	iPod Nano
Bangle Bracelets	Accessories	Uggs

## Dispelled Myth: Urban Legend

LaKeisha Langley

Photo Editor

What better time of the year to tell legends and myths than the month of Halloween, when evil may be lurking around? The word "Halloween" originates from the Catholic Church. It is derived from the holiday All Hallow's Eve. Legend has it that on that day, spirits rise again and look for living bodies to posses for the next year. The belief is that space and time were suspended on the night of Halloween, allowing the dead to emerge with the living. With the fear of becoming possessed, the living disguised themselves in costumes and paraded around the neighborhood, trying to scare off spirits.

Are urban legends simply word of mouth, passed on from generation to generation? "They really scare me", said Junior Stefanie Steuer. "I don't believe anyone can make up a story like that, there must be something true about it."

Although some events start off true, stories become dramatized and falsely told. "I don't believe anyone can make up a story like that, there must be something true about it."

Every place has their own urban myth that relate to their history. ~Junior, Stefanie Steuer

At the Mount Vernon Park, there is an urban legend about an alligator that lived in the lake. Have you heard the name of their swim team? Yep, you're right! They are the "Gators", Freshman Paige Darlington said, "I think it is true because things happen to people."

The Bunny Man is said to be a man dressed as a bunny that haunts the neighborhoods around our nation's capital. As crazy as this seems, the Bunny Man has been a local legend for more than 30 years. Since 1973, the Bunny Man has been seen in Maryland, in D.C., and Virginia. He shows up in secluded areas in a white bunny suit, carrying an ax, scaring children and destroying property. By the 1980s, the Bunny Man had become even more of a sinister figure, committing several murders. Although he has been seen as far south as Culpepper, Virginia, his main hunt has been the area surrounding a railroad near Fairfax Station, Virginia.

Are urban legends cover-ups for cruelty acts, are they means of entertainment at slumber parties, or are they really part of histories past? Whatever they may be used for, most of them really creep you out!



# The Promiscuity of Popped Collars

Brett Smith

Wire Reporter

It's not cute. It's neither fashionable nor attractive. It won't get you a date, and it certainly won't win you a Pulitzer Prize, nor any prize for that matter.

But for those who wear the collars of their Polo shirts (or Polo knockoffs) popped—meaning fully extended rather than hanging loosely—it doesn't matter.

"It's troubling. Every time I see a student wearing one I laugh—not right in their faces of course," said eminent French teacher Dan Fitzgerald.

It's like when boys wear pink. The logic is that it's so un-cool because it looks fairly ridiculous and contradicts the traditional trend, that it becomes anti-cool—and hence, cool.

"I don't personally think it looks

better," said Sophomore Stephanie Gerow, who was wearing a popped collar at the time of the interview, "but [someone] told me to do it."

Sophomore Corey Gray can often be spotted in the halls with his collar popped. On some occasions he is even known to wear a Polo shirt underneath another Polo shirt and pop two collars, hoping to double the potency of his abilities to attract members of the opposite sex.

"Why do I do it? To get the girls," Gray confessed. "And I do try."

In fact, there is a phrase amongst the male collar-popper population that explains for this inexplicable trend:

"When the collar pops, the panties drop."

In a later interview with senior

Emily Macklin, the following question was posed—in the presence of a popped collar, do you truly feel your panties commencing to drop?

The answer was a stern "No." And she was sick of people asking.

So the next time you spot a student wearing their collar obnoxiously popped,

think for a moment. Think about what kind of person this poor soul must be to be popping his (or in some cases her) collar. Think about how badly this



Senior Van Rhodes pops his collar like it's hot.

Photo by Lakesha Langley

student must need to be promoting himself. I have friends who pop their collars, and with every passing day I see their self respect dwindling, like a frail moon diminishing in the sky.

By the way, the dilophosaurus had an extendable frill of skin—a collar, if you will—that it would flail (or perhaps—pop) on two occasions—to spit venom at its enemies and to perform its mating call.

What happened to the dilophosaurus? It's extinct.

# Knitting up a Storm in Fashion Design Class

Diana Blaszkiewicz

Style co-Editor

Senior Kelsey Morrison may not be certain what the future will hold for her, yet most likely it'll involve clothes. "I know I want to do something [with fashion]" she asserts. "I don't know if it'll be design, marketing, or photography." Her sights set on Savannah College of Art and Design, Morrison has immersed herself in one of this school's most original and involving courses, fashion design. Taught by novice teacher Tu-Anh Nguyen, the Academy class focuses on teaching a well-rounded fashion curriculum, culminating in a student-run fashion show in the spring. The class zeroes in on the technical aspects of fashion, drawing, tailoring, and constructing clothing. However, it also ties in the effects fashion has on our lives. It is an intricate study of not only how to create fashion, but also how to make it fit a certain demographic.

"What I teach in here is not only design, but marketing. If [the



Senior Maria Castro refines her sketches in her third period fashion design class.

Photo by Diana Blaszkiewicz

students] create a product, they need to know how to sell that product", explains Nguyen. Design students are putting that philosophy into practice with a new collection of winter scarves. "At first it was difficult [to learn how to knit]" says Design one student, junior Ashley Powell. Yet the difficulty was worth it. The scarves are priced from \$20 to \$50, and come in a variety of colors, including the popular West Potomac white-and-blue school color combination. All proceeds benefit fashion design, allowing the class more options with their budget and activities for this year.

The premise of fashion design is not only to teach the basics of fashion design, but to expand the creativity of its students. Junior Vivian Hernandez explains, "[We took the class because] we wanted to learn something different." As many students are finding, there is no better way to do that than to create purposefully, and have something to show for it.

The Best of Both Grades!

## Junior/SENIOR

Sara Matthewson

Diana Blaszkiewicz

### SARA

Book: *My Sister's Keeper* by Jodi Picoult is a commentary on the frightening implications of genetic research on our lives.

CD: From "Don't Turn Around" to "Macarena" 100% Dance compiles the 90s greatest hits.

TV: Into its second season and still going strong, *Lost* explores the fight to stay alive, and sane, of a group of ragtag airplane crash survivors on a deserted island.

Movie: Psychological thriller *Hide and Seek*, starring Robert De Niro and Dakota Fanning, is dark, sinister, and astonishingly well-acted.

### DIANA

Book: Bret Easton Ellis's refreshing take on his personal fame differentiates *Lunar Park* from his other, more debauched tales.

CD: Franz Ferdinand's album *You Can Have It So Much Better* takes the cake and eats it too for successful sophomore efforts.

TV: *Arrested Development* kicks off the season with great guest stars.

Movie: A poignant portrait of teenage-land, *Thumbsucker* veets away from the clichéd by relating growing up to the age-old bad habit of thumbsucking.



STUDENTS

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## Good Eatin' Waiting...For it to Get Good

Taylor Dankmyer

Opinions co-Editor

Mike's American Grill is a popular steakhouse located at 6210 Backlick Road in Springfield, Virginia, and is one of the best American restaurants in Northern Virginia.

Mike's American Grill serves mostly typical American food. The restaurant serves the usual burgers, sandwiches, steak, pasta, chicken, salad, certified Angus prime rib and steaks. "I love Mike's American Grill, it's one of my favorite restaurants, I always seem to get the chicken tenders!" said Laura Howell. The restaurant's prices are a little above the line that high school students are willing to pay, but the food is well worth it. Some of their best meals are their Filet Mignon, fried chicken tenderloins, and the cheddar burger. The restaurant's bread is baked fresh daily at their bakery, Best Buns Bread Company in Shirlington, and is VERY good. However, the best food there is their shoe-string french-fries.

The restaurant is very big; there are three levels. The design of the restaurant is also very nice, since it was recently remodeled. It features interesting



Photo by Lakeisha Langley

Mike's American Grill where they serve great food from pasta to shoe-string fries located in Springfield.

lighting and a lot of dark wood. The first level, includes a large bar and some seating. The entire top level is mostly booth seating. The bottom level is a men's and woman's bathroom along with a water fountain. The restaurant also has a glass elevator that takes you from level to level for the elderly.

The restaurant is very popular; the usual wait on any day of the week can be from 20 minutes to an hour and a half, so it is good to call ahead for reservations.

The service is good, all of the waiters seem to be friendly, and there are more than enough of them to help you. They are especially good at getting you a refill on your drink.

Overall, this is one of the best restaurants, and the food is very good. Also, the interior of the restaurant is very well done, especially the lighting. More information and a menu is available at great americanrestaurants.com. Their phone number is (703) 644 7100.

Brett Smith

Wire Reporter

Seeing this movie will make your life worse. *Waiting* is a gross-out "comedy" about the wacky shenanigans of a group of waiters working at a restaurant called... well...Shenanigan's. The cast list features a bunch of B/C-list actors whom you will recall seeing from some other (and usually better) movie. For example—"Oh yeah, that guy from *Van Wilder*...oh hey, that chick from *Scary Movie*...oh wait, wasn't he in *Dodgeball*?"

This movie essentially has no plot, with the exception of a few useless side-plots consisting of "should I, or shouldn't I?" scenarios. The main characters work in a restaurant and are forced to endure customers who grow increasingly obnoxious. In fact, restaurant patrons finally become so incredibly insidious that it's impossible to believe any human being can be that truly evil, especially over something as trite as "I ordered medium rare, but *this* steak is medium well! Outrage!" In one particularly unforgiving scene, the team of waiters, in retaliation to such discourtesy, contaminates a patron's food with various bodily fluids. *Fight Club* made food vandalism an art—*Waiting*, however, reduced it to trash.

It's impossible to recount the many grievances that made this movie so unforgivable. In terms of content, every joke in this movie

revolved around phalli, but to a disturbingly and alarmingly high level. As much as I would like to show an example of this, there is no substitute for words in the great span of the English language that I can legally use in this article to convey the atrocities committed in *Waiting* without reducing this article to literary pornography. In fact, I cannot even quote a single line of this movie in this article without breaking a law!

The structure of *Waiting* is equally as bad as its content. The cinematography consisted of two types of shots—the much-too-far-away shot and the way-too-close shot. Cuts were quick and abrupt, which actually makes sense considering about 80 percent of this movie was completely superfluous to whatever theme it was trying to get across. This film is also riddled with jump cuts, so many in fact, one could compare it to an Ed Wood flick. A table of redneck-esque customers are seated during the day (they sit right next to a window, in fact), then when the waiter arrives two scenes later it has inexplicably turned to night, and then when the same waiter brings their food back it's suddenly day again!

This movie is a perfect example of a movie that should never be made. There is not a single redeeming feature about this film. Oh, and definitely do not bring a date to see it. No. Oh God, no. Even if

you want to go just to make fun of it (assuming you've got seven dollars and two hours of your life to waste), do not bring a date with you. My date for the night was so scarred after seeing the film (well, half the film—we left after the first forty-five minutes) that the rest of the night consisted of me making up for having her accompany me to the film. I don't know how *Waiting* ever got made into a movie, and it sickens me to think of the filmmakers and



Ryan Reynolds stars in *Waiting* as he plays Monty, a waiter in a restaurant.

writers who at one point must've thought, "Oh hey, this is good! This is a good movie! Another phallic joke—why not!"

And just in case you were wondering, I left out Andy Milonakis on purpose—his unfortunate role in this movie compounded his inability to be even slightly entertaining.

## Confessions of Georgia Nicolson

Adele Hampton

Opinions co-Editor

What do you first think of when you hear the words, Angus, thongs, and full frontal snogging? I am guessing something along the lines of, "what the heck"? According to junior Allison Tse, at the first mention of the books title she immediately thought of the book's cover and random thoughts that dealt with dirty humor, which is completely reasonable considering the fact that the book is made up of mainly dirty humor. Even though these words might spawn thoughts that are not entirely sane, this is indeed the name of one of the funniest books I have ever read. *Angus, Thongs and Full-Frontal Snogging* by Louise Rennison is both gut-busting funny, and presents a good message.

Told from the view point of a self-absorbed teenager named Georgia Nicolson, this book relates to many teenagers as it tells about pets, thongs, and snogging ("kissing with all the trimmings, lip to lip, open mouth, tongues...everything"). Always crossing the line between sanity and insanity, Nicolson goes beyond the stereotypical teenager. You will laugh, cry, and experience the "fabbitty fab fab" world of Georgia Nicolson.

According to Georgia, the world revolves around her. Her main group of friends, "The Ace Gang", are her partners in crime. Between terrorizing school officials, preparing for public appearances, and "oogling" over

Robby "The Sex God", she barely has time for things like her dysfunctional family. This so called family consists of her deranged father, Vati, her want-to-be-young mother Mutti, her unbalanced sister Libby, and Angus, her mixed breed cat who is half domestic tabby, half Scottish wildcat, and is the size of a small Labrador.

*Angus, Thongs and Full-Frontal Snogging* is the first confession of Georgia Nicolson; she has six more confessions that are just as funny, if not funnier, than

her first. Because these books are British humor it might be hard to understand sometimes, but on the other hand, "British humor is funny because they use different words to describe things," said junior Edlin Rodriguez. Because Georgia is so smart she has conveniently placed a dictionary in the back of the book for all of us in the U.S., also know as "Hamburger-a-go-go-land". Rennison is the author of all six of the Georgia Nicolson confessions. These books have put Rennison on the *New York Times* best seller list several times.

"I definitely think that the trials and tribulations of being a teenage girl transcend cultures. Even though Georgia talks and does a few different things because she's British, I could still relate to her," said junior Becky Holloway. Through the eyes of Georgia, readers get to see the world from an entirely new perspective; we get to see the good, the bad, and the incredibly ugly side of teenage reality.



Photo by Lakeisha Langley

Angus, Thongs, and Full-Frontal Snogging is about teenager Georgia Nicolson.

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# Horoscopes by Nyisha

**Scorpio (Oct.24- Nov.21)** You're too busy, you never keep up with the time. Loosen up and break free of all the busy things. Capture the beauty of your time, and hang out with love ones or friends.

Lucky Days: 2, 16, 21

**Sagittarius (Nov.22-Dec.21)** You think the world is crashing down because you're ill-responsible, but you're going to change. Everybody gets seconds chances, and yours will be coming soon.

Lucky Days: 4, 22, 29

**Capricorn (Dec.22-Dec.21)** You're a mysterious person; you love to look through other people things just to see what they do.

Lucky Days: 15, 18, 30

**Aquarius (Jan.20-Feb.18)** You love the world that you are in, so don't give in to what others say. Stand strong and be yourself no matter what others say or do to you. Always be confident in what you say or do.

Lucky Days: 2,4,18 and 27

**Pisces (Feb. 19- March 20)** You have the biggest heart anyone has ever seen, but you never do things for yourself. Take time for yourself; takeoff, live free, think about yourself for a change, and not others. In the long run they won't do the same for you.

Lucky Days: 7, 18, 26

**Aries (March 21- April.19)** Mystery will sneak into your life within a few days. Watch for various signs of love around you and others. Maybe it's under your nose and you just don't know it.

Lucky Days: 4, 19, 31

**Taurus (April 20-May.20)** With your stylish ways everyone loves you, you stand out of a crowd, you're a trend setter, and underclassman may look up to you. Watch what you do around others.

Lucky Days: 1,8,17

**Gemini (May21- June.21)** You can't wait until the middle of the month because there's special event that takes place that gets you very nervous. No worries it will be great, but watch your nerves.

Lucky Days: 5, 17, 23

**Cancer ( June 22-July. 22)** School is digging under your skin, but just give in and stay on task, it will blow over in a few months. Until then stay focused, and turn in missing assignments and other make up work.

Lucky Days: 3, 26, 30

**Leo (July 23-Aug.22)** You want to be let free from all of your problems, but you can't because you like to hold on to things. When you let go of the bad, the good will be at the end waiting on you to show up.

Lucky Days: 6, 14, 24

**Virgo ( Aug. 23-Sept.22)** You hate the fact that your not dating because you have a lot of things on you mind, but your also waiting on that special someone to find you. Look beyond your school and that somebody will be looking for you as well.

Lucky Days: 7, 18, 29

**Libra (Sept.23- Oct.23)** you think that you are an odd person but that's just because you don't express yourself as much as others. Show more sprit and you wont be the odd person anymore; everyone else will be odd to you.



## The Night of Tears

Mariya Ilyas

*Special to The Wire*

It's about 5:30 a.m. in the Ilyas house on Saturday morning. The family had just eaten for the fast; it was Ramadan. Before sleeping, each one prays and reads the Koran. The elder makes its way down to the basement slowly, hoping to chat with his friends. But then he checked the e-mail...

Written in the e-mail was the news that blew the whole family's sleep away. Right after reading the message, all



Mariya and her relative on his fourth birthday.

ran to phone; anxious to call, anxious to find more details, anxious to know what happened, anxious to investigate, anxious to believe this was all a dream. But unfortunately, they were wrong.

"It was 9 o' clock when the earthquake struck us," said a voice over the phone, explaining what had happened to the elders in the house in Urdu, "and the three girls [your nieces] were at school. The building collapsed and all the students screamed for help. Trapped inside were the voices of the children who cried for their lives! Two of the nieces were at the top-level of the school building; therefore they were easily found with 12 hours. But the third one was no where in sight. Their mother is in the hospital with her own injuries from the roof falling

on her. Her eyes were open, she was breathing, but her soul was dead with the fear of her third child. All the males of the family had being there looking for the traces of the third girl,

but none were found. They did not give up; it was just too hard to believe she was missing; worse yet, she was dead. We just aren't willing to believe she has passed away, we just aren't." The aunt waited for a few moments, then after a bit more of chit-chat, the elder hung up the phone.

Shocked with the news, the minors of the house sat around, listening for hints for what had happened. When the news broke out to them, they had silent tears down their cheeks. The household could do nothing but pray.

On Wednesday, October 12, 2005, the phone rang again. This time, the news got worse. Four girls were found under the rubble of the school, one of them being the third cousin. Sadly, the three girls that were alive were not related, but thank God they survived. The uncles and the older cousins of the family relatives screamed for their beloved niece or cousin to wake up, but there was no response in return.

That night, more sorrow had built up in the family's heart. One of the members being me.

## Time Out Teachers

Name: Mrs. Sandra O. Bobo

Nickname: Sandie

Most of my students would be surprise to know: that I have been featured in a couple of hair magazines in the Washington D.C area.

Three words that describe

you best: outgoing, vivacious, feisty

What would you say to the future leaders of America?

"It's ok to make mistakes; we are ALL human".



Name: William J. Dobson

Nickname: Bill

Subject currently teaching: Geometry and Calculus

Years taught: Approximately 20 years

Most of my students would be surprise to know: That I don't "eat Calculus students for breakfast"

The biggest change I'd like to make in myself? More



Hair on my head would be nice

Three words that describe you best: structure, dedicated, and somewhat strange

## Oh, my Gosh!!!

Ouch! On First Days

Deondre' Weathers, senior

"I was coming in from football practice and I decided to take a shower. I thought I could get in and out quickly. When I was done I realized that I left my towel. I tried to sneak into the locker room, but I slipped and I [fell] naked in the middle of the floor. Everybody pointed and laughed; that was the most embarrassing thing that happened to me."

Stuck On You

Antonia Caper, junior

"I was in P.E. in the gym locker room using the restroom. The bell rang, and I rushed out trying to wash my hands. I grabbed my book bag and ran for the door. When I ran into the halls my friends yelled, "You have toilet paper on your shoes!" I'm still embarrassed now!!"

Sweet Feet

Paris Caper, sophomore

"I was rushing to class on the third day of school, and I dropped all of my books. Then, not noticing that I dropped them, I tripped over them and fell. No one helped me up and people still laugh when I see them!"

Want To Get Away?

Chris Rodriguez, freshman

"On the first day of school I was running to my bus, due to being late. I got on the bus and rode all the way to school and realized that I was at Mount Vernon High School. I was so embarrassed; I totally looked like a freshman."

## Hits from the Halls

Derrick Barber, freshman



"B Days go by way faster"

Sam McCann, sophomore



"B' days, because I have my core classes on 'A' days."

Demetryus Smith, junior



"A' days, because they are easier."

Jackie Fernandez, senior



"I like them both about the same."

Which Do You Prefer-  
"A" Days or  
"B" Days ?



## Lovable Leigh

Kaelin Emory

Wire Reporter

You've probably seen her in a starring role of any one of the school plays in the past four years. Leigh Rossi is an extremely hard working, energetic, and optimistic individual. "Leigh is gorgeous inside and out," gushed good friend, Laura Herren.

In addition to being an active member of the drama department, she is on the varsity swim



Leigh Rossi poses as if she were on stage for her upcoming role in *Anne of Green Gables*.

team and is taking a rigorous course load. While many students in their senior year prefer to take classes that are in sync with their "senioritis" attitudes, Rossi takes five Advanced Placement courses including AP Spanish and AP Calculus

BC. She has taken eight AP courses over the span of her high school career, and has a cumulative grade point average of 3.87. She is attracted to challenging classes and works very hard for her superb grades.

Rossi is interested in applying to the College of William and Mary and the University of Virginia. "I don't have any particular major in mind, I'm open to anything. I'm not particularly interested in one field more so than another. I want to get a broad education and see where it leads me," she said. Her goal is to find an unconventional career that she loves.

Rossi's interests are very diverse. After college she is interested in pursuing either architecture, engineering, art, or theater. This summer she participated in the U.S. Air Force engineering camp. "I don't necessarily want to be an engineer, but it was a good opportunity being able to talk to teachers and students at the U.S. Air Force Academy," she explained. Rossi learned to build

things like sprinkler systems, ships and catapults.

Her other interest, theater, is what she is best known for at this school. She has appeared in *Titanic*, *Les Miserables*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, and *Taming of the Shrew*. If you have not seen her

perform yet, she will be playing Marilla in the upcoming fall play, *Anne of Green Gables*. Rossi first became interested in acting in seventh grade when she lived in Hawaii. She took a theater class at her middle school and found that she loved the thrill of performing in front of large audiences.

Rossi has lived all over the country. Her dad's career in the army has moved their family to places such as Hawaii, Texas, California, and Rossi's birth place of Tennessee. She has loved all of the places that she's lived in. "You can't compare one state with another because they all have good characteristics," commented Rossi.

Rossi's hobbies include spending time with friends, dancing, reading, drawing, and enjoying the outdoors. Every week she volunteers at Mount Vernon Hospital and delivers things from building to building. She loves to help the patients and assist them to their cars or around the building. While she tries to go out with her friends on Friday and Saturday nights, she is often bogged down with homework that keeps her in all weekend. Sunday mornings you can find her working at the Hollin Hall Pastry Shop.

"Leigh Rossi is incredibly gifted and dedicated. She never gives up on anything, and has the highest amount of integrity of anyone I know. Her smile is incredible. I love her," emphasized her boyfriend, senior Taylor Mertins. Rossi has the special ability to bring happiness to everyone around her; not many people can boast that.

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## Rodriguez on a Roll

Jon Yoo

Asst. Sports Editor

Throughout his high school years, all six foot-three inch, 180-pound body frame of senior Josh Rodriguez has been dedicated to athletics and being the man on campus. Besides the fact that he is a multi sport athlete in both football and track for our school, Rodriguez is also preparing to major in drama in college and make a career as an actor after he graduates. He stated that his passion for acting came first from being a fan of movies and claims that he will be the next Denzel Washington one day. With his natural good looks, open personality, and addicting smile there is little doubt that Rodriguez will succeed in his plans for the future.

"Josh is just an amazing person, he is so funny and just such an easy person to get along with. He is amazing in track, and he makes it fun to do," said junior, Jana Decoster. That seems to be the impression that everyone gets from Rodriguez, and it seems that his charming personality comes from the lifestyle that he lives. Besides sports and acting, Rodriguez has always had two passions that he has surrounded himself with, music and poetry. He is a huge fan of R&B artists like 112, Usher, and D' Angelo, and reads poetry from famous author's Maya Angelou and Langston

Hughes. "Poetry and slow jams are two things that have influenced me all my life and they definitely make up who I am as a person. That is part of the reason why I am so laid back and chill." Said Rodriguez.

However there is another side to Rodriguez that he only shows during certain circumstances and athletics is one of those rare chances. Whether it is practice or game time, he always has the perspective of never giving up, and always giving a hundred percent. Rodriguez has picked up this trait from his role model, Darius Gilbert, who is his trainer from Gold's Gym, who has shown Josh that anything in life is possible. With Gilbert's help both Rodriguez and his younger brother, freshman Kristian Rodriguez, have gotten closer to their dream of playing football in a Division I college. Another one of his role models is Spanish teacher, Ms. McKenzie, who he has had for the past two years. Rodriguez has an extremely open relationship with McKenzie who he considers a second mom, who he can talk to about anything because she always seems to be understanding and forgiving.

Our school's star cornerback, receiver, and sprinter is still undecided in where he wants to attend college next year. However with football games yet to be played and track meets yet to be run, there is plenty of time for Rodriguez to plan everything out. However wherever he ends up next fall, there is no doubt that he will make an impact.



Josh Rodriguez stands on his very familiar football field.


Photo by Jon Yoo



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