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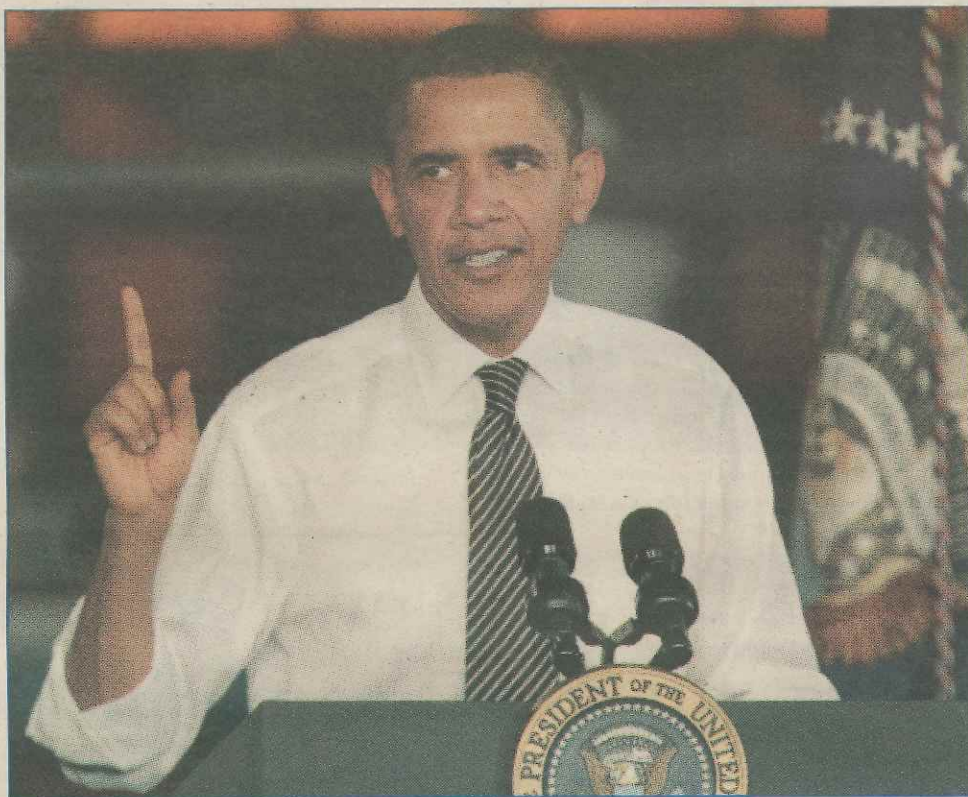


Photo Courtesy of Mike Cardew/MCT Campus

President Barack Obama spoke to students at Wakefield High School about the significance of education.

President's Speech Stirs Controversy

NORRIS BROOKS
REPORTER

"To watch, or not to watch?" That was the question on September 8, 2009. On this day—the first day of school for many students—the President of the United States, Barack Obama, delivered a speech regarding the importance of education and encouraged kids to stay in school.

President Barack Obama told students at Wakefield High School in Arlington, Virginia, as well as viewers across the nation, that, "Whatever you resolve to do, I want you to commit to it. I want you to really work at it. ... But the truth is, being successful is hard. You won't love every subject you study. You won't click with every teacher." Obama went on to say that students learn from their failures, and that quitting school is not just quitting on oneself but on their country as well.

Although students at Wakefield experienced the President's speech, many others did not. Due to concerns about the content of his presentation, several

districts—pressured by parents—banned it from their schools. Jim Greer, chairman of the Florida Republican Party, said the speech was an attempt "to spread President Obama's socialist ideology." As the President drove through Arlington, his car was greeted by some protestors who held up signs such as, "Mr. President, stay away from our kids." Others felt that censoring Obama's speech was disrespectful to him and the office of the Presidency. It was pointed out that past Presidents have spoken to the nation's students without controversy.

Students at our school were not prohibited from watching the President's speech, but they were not required to watch it either. When asked about not being able to see the speech, freshman Katie Mach said, "People made too big a deal out of his speech, and I definitely believe everyone should have gotten to experience it." According to Principal Hardison, "Teachers were allowed to incorporate President Obama's speech in a lesson but could not just show it out of context of a lesson." He explained that he suspected students would be "exposed

See Speech on page 4

Students Cope with Changes to the Schedule

EMILY GRIFFIN
NEWS EDITOR

Why are there so many changes at our school this year?

There have been multiple alterations to the school schedule this year, including changes to the Tardy Policy and D lunch being taken away. The question in many students' minds is "why?"

Many students were confused and unhappy with the new tardy policy, which can be found on page nine in the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) Students Responsibilities and Rights. Our schools new principal, Cliff Hardison has said that the Tardy Policy "will change throughout the year, in conjunction with West Potomac Leadership direction and guidance. The bottom line is that we as a school are pursuing higher academic expectations."

There are many reasons for the change in the tardy policy. Hardison continued to press the main goal of FCPS, that, "all students must possess numeracy, literacy, and communication and problem solving skills as they exit West Potomac into the world, whether college or

work. So, to accomplish this, we know that attendance is very important." Many of the teachers think highly of the new tardy policy, like English teacher Kelcy Pierre. Pierre said that "So far, I think it's been a great program and hopes that the administration continues to follow through with the program." Junior Charlotte Strudgeon said, "I think the new tardy policy is better because now the teachers decide the punishment for the first three tardies and the teachers punishments are usually nicer than the administrations punishments."

Many students were in an uproar due to the removal of D lunch. While it is unknown how long D lunch was in existence for, but Director of Student Services, Timothy Boyd stated that "D lunch has been around for at least two years." In other words, D lunch was being used on a trial basis to reduce the amount of students in each lunch. However, the main reason for this action was to give students more time in class. The aftermath of the removal of D lunch was that B lunch now is completely packed full of students. In reaction to this English teacher Bernard

Cabral said, "[It is] just a mess."

Another pressing issue is whether or not FLEX 8 has been eliminated or not. As of now, FLEX 8 is on hold for the first semester according to the school administration. "Teachers have been

See Hardison on page 4



Photo by Sonia Garakyraraghi

Principal Cliff Hardison has administered new changes to this years schedule, in which students have mixed feelings.

New FLEX Schedule Makes Things Difficult for Students

Due to the ever increasing problem of students skipping FLEX, the new administration under Principal Cliff Hardison had decided to make FLEX "unFLEXable."

FLEX was first created in the 2006-2007 school year as a fourth period class in which attendance was not taken. For the past two years, it has been an eighth period class where attendance has been taken. At first, teachers were not supposed to teach new material and FLEX was instead put into effect to provide time for students to catch up on work they had missed in previous classes. In addition to this, students could choose to "flex out" to other classes in which they had make up work with the approval of both teachers twenty-four hours in advance. However, this rarely happened as students did it the day of or right before the FLEX period. In addition, many students would forge signatures or "FLEX" in and out without one teacher's approval leading to chronic, school wide skipping.

In order to solve this problem, the administration has chosen to make FLEX a class that will change every other day rotating from first period and continuing until seventh in a cycle where flexing out is not allowed. This has entirely cancelled out the point of FLEX because while in some classes students will do work, in others they will sit and do nothing. In addition, students may have work to make up in first period while it is second period FLEX and will have to wait until the entire cycle is complete to make up a test during school hours. Our question as a staff is, why not make FLEX a study hall instead? That is essentially what it is now.

Having a study hall would allow students to work on homework and get ahead in classes they need to. Currently, most students have to stay after to make up a test or a quiz in a timely manner. If the administration wishes to not have a study hall, why not make FLEX what it was before? Either way, if FLEX becomes a stationary class, let us at least change the name.

Hispanic Heritage Month

For those of you who are not aware, September 15th to October 15th is Hispanic Heritage Month. This month is celebrated for recognizing the importance of Hispanic/Latino culture and all that it embodies. In turn, by appreciating and embracing this, we learn more about each other and ourselves as a society.

Whether an individual is Latino or non-Latino, ethnic diversity should always be celebrated. Whether in our school, our community or our country, we are an ethnically diverse society and we should embrace these aspects that make all of us unique and amazing.

It is in the students' hands to make West Potomac High School a better community; one that is welcoming and safe. I ask that you, the students, find ways to share of your and bring us together as a community.

Suzette Henry- English Teacher, Advisor: LCC and Key Club

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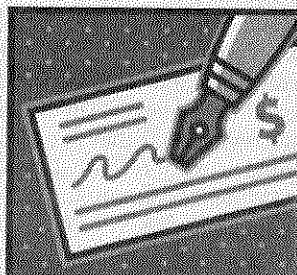
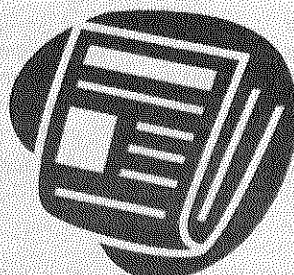
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For more information, contact Laura Zitnik at lbzitnik@fcps.edu or 703-718-2572



Rants and Raves

A rant for the Redskins sloppy season start.

A rave for school computers being updated to Microsoft Office 2007.

A rant for Burger King.

A rave for Gnarshmallow, a new online skiing and snowboarding game.

A rant for the Geosystems SOL.

A rave for late- night Taco Bell trips, and Mountain Dew Baja Blast.

A rant for the new traffic pattern before and after school.

A rave for the start of college and professional football seasons.

A rant for people not writing letters to the editor

New School Policies Disappoint Student

I've come back from summer for my final year at West Potomac and found everything to be worse upon return. What I mean by this is that great deals of policy changes have had a negative effect on the overall school experience. The number of lunch periods has been reduced to three, causing school lunches in the cafeteria to become tightly packed, claustrophobic experiences. It is now impossible to flex out of 8th period classes, allowing teachers to treat the classes as they would a normal class, which is not only generally irritating for both teachers and students, but results in two 90 minute classes in much too close proximity. Flex 8 has been eliminated, as of this writing, no senior privileges exist, and there is a definite rise in the number of security officers employed (despite the supposed budgetary cuts), all of which point to a general distrust of the student population. The reasons for this mainly pertain to an apparent rise in truancy and overall irresponsibility that occurred with these privileges in place last year. Does this correlation indicate that one caused the other? Most likely. But to be perfectly blunt, these privileges, whether abused or not, led to an overall higher satisfaction with the school experience. How they affect the student's academic habits should be something the students themselves are held responsible before. But as a result of the suspension of these privileges, many students, myself readily included, hold a whole lot of resentment towards and reciprocated distrust for the administration. I don't think that trend will decline unless a less insulting set of policies is adapted in the near future.

-Senior Ryan Mach

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

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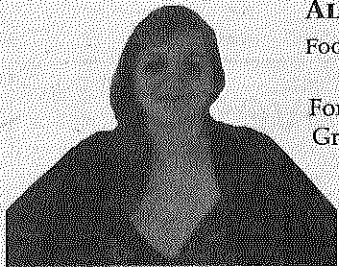
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Domestic Opression Runs Rampant



ALEX FABRIZIO
FOCUS EDITOR

Fort Hunt High School and Groveton High School merged together in 1985 to form the school that we all attend daily, West Potomac. Since then, there have been more than plenty

of noticeable policy, schedule, or attendance changes that the students had to acclimate to in consequence. This year we are not spared the changes.

Some of us have been around for three full years and remember that our freshmen year was the first that FLEX was implemented. (There was almost uproar among the student body because of it. Not at all, actually, that was a joke.) Back then, FLEX was attendance-free and took place second block on B days. The year before we even showed up, there were more groundbreaking changes. That was the year the spot numbers in the junior and senior parking lots were created and assigned to students. Some teachers have been known to say that the senior class was so outraged by the administration's flex of their controlling muscles that they painted over each number.

Regardless, as was aforementioned, this year was hardly an exception. Changes within our school include the removal of D lunch, no walking during the pledge, etc. Whoa, whoa, whoa! The lunchrooms are so packed now; it's almost impossible to see the opposite side due to the

pollution known as overpopulation! School starting 10 minutes earlier is surprisingly difficult to adjust to, and to come to terms with considering the fact that school was almost decided to begin at 9:30 AM this year. Another change is the new attendance policy which is hopefully going to be much more benevolent to those of us who are chronically two minutes late to first block.

Speaking of being late to class, it is understandably disrespectful to not observe the pledge of allegiance (whose existence is a tirade of a completely different color) but, when we are in effect made LATER to our first block because we had to stand there for two whole minutes doing NOTHING what is the point? Is walking with purpose more disrespectful than halfheartedly mumbling words that don't even hold meaning?

The numerous school-wide initiatives are mind-boggling. Our school may need improvement, but some of us are already doing a great job, so stop marginalizing us! The list goes on and on and on, but this is becoming rather Sisyphean, or tedious, so everyone shall be spared.

Also note the lack of college flags along the walls in the Cafeteria and the new tiles. Why do we need new tiles? (If anyone has information on this, please email me at afabrizio@wpwire.com) School is so different now, but why? It would all make sense if someone gave me a good reason.

PS I like who I am, and will not change that for anyone.

afabrizio@wpwire.com

“ The lunchrooms are so packed now; it's almost impossible to see the opposite side due to the pollution known as overpopulation! ”

Health Care: What It Will Really Cost?



BRYAN JACOBS
STYLE EDITOR

Since President Obama took office in January 2009, he has made it his priority to give every American a chance to healthcare insurance.

Quickly, this became the most heated debate on Capitol Hill, beginning a political battle that has lasted months. In a Congressional speech on September 9, 2009, Obama signaled that the time for healthcare reform is now and clearly stated his views on how reform should look. The majority of Americans do not understand the facts, concepts, and true costs of healthcare to make the right decision. Healthcare reform is a necessity as well as a moral and financial obligation that the government needs to address immediately. Without healthcare reform, this country will continue to suffer from a broken system, which drops patients with preexisting conditions, and will face ever-increasing medical costs.

In 2006, there were 47 million people in the United States (16% of the population) without health insurance. (U.S. Census Bureau). This number has surely grown to astronomical heights. According to the Gallup Press, a non-partisan newspaper, 1 out of every 6 adults do not have healthcare. Many people without health insurance have been turned away from hospitals and sent to the emergency room (ER), all because of their lack to pay health insurance. This is only one of the many ways that the current healthcare system takes a heavy toll on Americans, morally and financially.

According to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 55% of U.S. emergency care now goes uncompensated. When medical bills go unpaid, health care providers must either shift the costs onto those who can pay — mainly those with health insurance or government program, or go uncompensated. In the Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act, passed by Congress in the 1980's, the bill requires hospitals and ambulance services to provide care to anyone needing emergency treatment regardless of citizenship, legal status or ability to pay. Cost shifting amounted to a hidden tax levied by health providers. For example, it has been estimated that cost shifting amounted to \$455 per individual or \$1,186 per family in California each year. In other words, this means that families pay for other people's medical treatments at extremely high costs. However, under Obama's proposed healthcare plan, the costs will be covered by a combination of the healthcare provider and the government; therefore, it would not affect

the American taxpayer as directly or as hard any longer.

Secondly, the biggest concern about healthcare reform is the cost. Republicans are against the idea of healthcare reform because they argue that reform would be a huge financial burden, add to the deficit and is unnecessary because the current healthcare system is effective. Democrats, however, argue that healthcare is a right that all Americans should enjoy, no matter what the cost. Health care reform, if it passes, will cost about \$1 trillion over the next 10 years. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the current House proposal would actually increase the deficit by \$239 billion over 10 years. Negotiators in the Senate and House say that they have winnowed the cost down to “only” \$900 billion, although President Obama and congressional leaders have been adamant that health care reform will be financed through savings on existing programs or new revenue. In addition, Obama stated in his September speech that he would not sign a bill that, “adds a dime to the deficit.”

The biggest opponents to President Obama's healthcare reform are, yet again, the Republicans. Congressional Republicans have repeatedly attacked Obama for his views on healthcare and have repeatedly spread lies that insinuate that Obama is trying to have a complete government takeover of the healthcare system. Lobbying groups such as Conservatives for Patient Rights (CPR) have stated that Obama is trying to create a healthcare system similar to Canada and Britain, where all citizens

must drop their current plans and have government health care coverage, paid for with taxes. However, according to factcheck.org, a political non-partisan website funded by the Annenberg Public Policy Center, “Obama has long said he would allow individuals or small businesses to buy insurance through a public plan — like the one now available to members of Congress. However, nobody would be forced to drop his or her current insurance, and private plans would exist as they do now. This was the health care plan he promoted as a presidential candidate.” Most Republicans argue against healthcare reform just because it is outside their ideological beliefs, and believe that it will cost too much money.

But why complain now? We have already spent over \$900 billion dollars in seven years funding a war in Iraq and Afghanistan that has no end, with money loaned by China on an enormous interest rate, and lobbied by oil companies in a quest for American imperialism. The American public needs to wake up and realize that they are surrounded by lies that are detrimental to society and do not answer to the 47 million that need healthcare immediately, President Obama wants to make healthcare affordable and accessible to all Americans. The time to act is now.

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“ We have already spent over \$900 billion dollars in seven years funding a war in Iraq and Afghanistan that has no end... ”

LARGE AND IN CHARGE

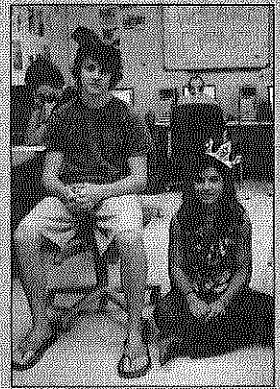


Photo by Megan Haley

LUCAS ALEXANDER
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

At this rate, Republicans will either never win a public office again, or take over Congress in 2010. However, the Republican Party has seen a lot of scandalous events that seems to be tearing the party apart.

The most recent of these issues occurred on Wednesday September 9, when President Obama addressed Congress and America about the problems with healthcare in America and his solution to the said problem. While his discussions on healthcare itself are an entirely different subject, I am going to respond more to the way Republican members of Congress chose to act during his speech. One individual in particular is South Carolina representative Joe Wilson.

Wilson decided to yell out, “You lie!” in the middle of Obama's address, prompting boos from the entire crowd. Wilson was reacting to the President's statement that his proposed healthcare plan would not cover illegal immigrants, which Wilson disagreed with obviously. Afterwards, Wilson issued a public statement saying, “This evening, I let my emotions get the best of me when listening to the president's remarks regarding the coverage of illegal immigrants in the health care bill. While I disagree with the President's statement, my comments were inappropriate and regrettable. I extend sincere apologies to the President for this lack of civility.”

“ At this rate, Republicans will either never win a public office again, or take over congress in 2010. ”

Wilson also called the White House and spoke with Obama's chief of staff, who accepted his apology on the President's behalf. However, in today's political world, this apology was probably only said because of the negative effect his statement would have on his reelection campaign. Wilson, most likely, is not truly sorry at all.

Other Republicans decided to either hold up a Republican healthcare bill in response to Obama's call for Republicans to share with him their healthcare ideas, and Louie Gohmert, Republican representative from Texas, wore a sign around his neck that said, “WHAT BILL?” These actions, while they may be legitimate points, are simply immature and only contribute to the liberal image in America of Republicans and do not help their public image.

These are just a few of the Grand Old Party's (GOP) many problems, particularly in South Carolina, where Republican Governor Mark Sanford will most likely be asked to step down as governor after State GOP Chairwoman Karen Floyd called for a party resolution asking for his resignation. This is because he had an unannounced trip to Argentina that exposed an extramarital affair. Republicans have had numerous scandals and foul play like this emerge over the past few years and it is getting to the point of nonsensicality.

Even against all this, the GOP is still expected to take over congress in 2010, much like they did in 1994, or at least make up a lot of ground. The recent raging liberal youth movement for Obama has died off a little bit since he was elected and because of the lack of this in places like our school, the liberal dominance in politics may face downfall in the near future.

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The SAT Scores Continue to Rise

MAGGIE GRADY
ASSISTANT FOCUS EDITOR

Our school's hard work in academics is finally starting to pay off.

Proven by recently released Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores, students have improved their average scores in Critical Reading, Mathematics, and Writing. Critical Reading saw a jump in scores by 21 points, mathematics improved by 12 points and the average writing score increased by eight points.

Our school is not the only one that has improved their SAT scores in Fairfax County. Some high schools that have raised their test scores include Fairfax, Madison and South County. Our school's new improvements were ranked the 3rd highest across Fairfax County.

According to fcps.edu, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) Superintendent Jack Dale is very pleased with the results. "I am especially proud of our students and staff members, who continue to raise the bar," said Dale. These improved test results prove that the students' academic success is improving.

Barbara Connor, College and Career Center Specialist at our school, said that about 200 students sign up to take the test prep every year at our school, and this past school year the students had more materials for their test prep. "Each student had their own copy of *The Official SAT Study Guide*. They had it with them from the

first day, through the entire program and could access it at any time," added Connor. These classes can help prepare students before they take the test. Senior Mad-die Tindle, who took her SAT's last year, signed up for a prep course and it boosted her self-assurance and got her prepared for the exam. "I was very confident walking in to take the SATs," said Tindle.

Another aspect that may be a factor in the improved scores is the testing location. Students are allowed to take the SAT's at school, which makes them more comfortable while taking the test. Tindle, who has taken the SAT's twice, said she was more comfortable while taking them at our school than a different location. "I knew where everything was and it gave me a better testing environment," replied Tindle. Connor also agrees, "I always think being comfortable helps the students. I think it allows the students to take the test in a familiar environment and I think that can definitely have an impact." Connor offered tips for preparing for the SAT's: "Use the test prep website everyday for five to 10 minutes (www.fcps.edu/westspringfieldhs/career/testprep.htm). It will help students with critical reading, critical thinking, and critical analysis, which they need on the SAT but also in class everyday," said Connor. She also advises students, especially juniors taking the SAT's this spring, to sign up for them now in order to make sure they have a spot at our school. If students follow this advice, our school's SAT scores will continue to improve.

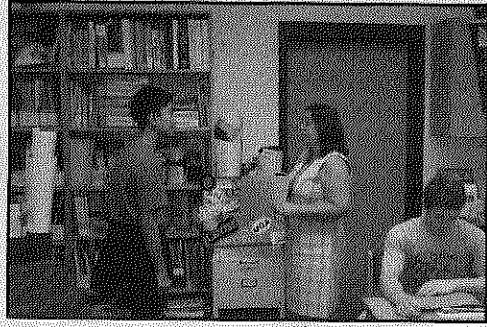


Photo by Nia Copeland

Barbara Connor, from the college and career center, helps students prepare for the SAT.

Swine Flu Takes America by Storm

GWEN FISHEL
COPY EDITOR

"I don't want anyone to be alarmed, but I do want everyone to be prepared."

President Barack Obama said these words to the American people, as larger threats of the Swine Flu (H1N1) pandemic surface once again. These words also come after White House advisors said that an outbreak in America is a possibility.

Swine Flu is defined by Google Health as "a flu that generates mostly among pigs." However, when the disease infects humans who are not impervious to the disease, the disease has a larger capability to invade. Symptoms are very similar to regular influenza, and are treatable if found early. As of now, there have been at least 593 deaths attributed to Swine Flu in America and its territories.

A vaccine against the H1N1 virus, which can be given with the regular influenza shot, is expected to be available this fall. Secretary of Health and Human Services, Kathleen Sebelius, said recently that U.S. studies are showing that the vaccine is working well. "This is very encouraging news," commented Sebelius.

Many students and parents at our school are wondering how Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) would deal with the problem, if the Swine Flu was found in our school. Superintendent Jack Dale has sent several letters home to parents, in concern of Swine Flu. The latest letter, sent in August, warns parents of the underlying concern, advises them on how they can help teach their children to remain healthy, and encourages them to "stay informed."

Parent Dale O'Neil said, "I am not concerned about the swine flu. If you are in a compromised health situation you should consider the vaccine. In high school, there is a lot of close contact so the concern is certainly the spread from those who are sick to those who are healthy. Awareness of the symptoms and trying to take good care of your health is the most important thing

you can do." Parent Beverly Wong agreed and said, "I do plan to have my sons get a seasonal flu vaccine soon and an H1N1 vaccine when they become available. I think that if people do this, it will lessen the impact at West Potomac and in our families."

According to fcps.edu, FCPS has collaborated with the Fairfax County Health Department, which in turn projects the guidelines of the Center for Disease Control. To further inform parents, town-hall meetings were held during September.

In the larger sense, the Virginia Department of Health has increased their calling center capabilities to help answer any questions that state residents may have. The number listed on their website is 1-877-275-8343.

A press release from the Federal Government has expanded the options given to schools on how to respond to an outbreak. However, almost all leadership suggests that students/teachers with flu-like symptoms should stay home for at least 24 hours, and students/teachers wash their hands regularly. Instructional videos are included on the government website to help demonstrate how to wash one's hands properly, and how to prevent flu-like symptoms from spreading.

A letter from Arne Duncan, Secretary of Education, and Sebelius, stated that

all public schools are required to have an emergency plan in place. Principal Cliff Hardison insists that our school will follow all of FCPS protocol in the case of an outbreak.

Students have mixed reactions about the H1N1 flu. Senior Jacob Lawlor said, "I am not very worried about the H1N1 virus. If it were to get in our school, however, it could cause lots of problems, especially this early in the school year with educational instruction just beginning."

However, English teacher Kimberly Thompson said, "It's not going to be a huge issue for me. My students read and write every day, so I know if we are not in class, they'll continue with this habit!"

Thus, a collective effort on the behalf of students, parents and faculty will prevent the H1N1 virus in our school.



Photo Courtesy of Chuck Berman/MCT

Some teachers have resorted to giving students hand sanitizer in order to reduce the risk of Swine Flu.

Sexting Becomes a Major Problem at Schools

Continued from page 1

to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy reported last month that a survey of 1,270 teens and young adults found that 20 percent of the teens surveyed had sent or posted nude or semi-nude photos or videos of themselves.

To prevent sexting from becoming an issue at our school, Goodley plans to give a presentation to all ninth grade health classes in order. "We are educating the students to the dangers of sexting and explaining to them how to avoid something that can change their lives forever," said Goodley. Some students

already realize the weight of sexting. "I think that sexting is really stupid because once you send something you're not in control anymore and it can get spread anywhere. So if you don't want your grandma to see it, keep it to yourself," said sophomore Livvy Micevicius.

Luckily, no issues with sexting have occurred at our school yet but nationwide many teens, both celebrities and common high school students, have learned the high price they have had to pay for possessing or producing nude or semi-nude photos. So, students think before you hit send.

Obama's Speech Creates Debate in the Public

Continued from page 1

to President Obama's speech more in the future as teachers incorporate [it] in lessons for students."

The reaction to the speech by those who saw it was varied. Senior Peter Stebbins, said the speech had "too much tension and

should have been more upbeat." Other students thought the speech was well written and inspiring. Students and teachers of Arlington County were honored that the President spoke at one of their high schools.

New Changes to Schedule

Continued from page 1

encouraged to extend their teaching and to share character education lessons with students. Again, the bottom-line is that eliminating FLEX at this point allows more time on task and for learning. "One of the priorities, after the Leadership Team finishes the School Improvement Plan which as the vehicle that will frame instruction and programs, is to examine various FLEX models to determine which

parts or whole pieces might better fit West Potomac," said Hardison.

Despite all of the changes and the mixed feelings that students have towards the changes, Hardison's main goal is to "encourage all students to willingly step up (raise up) to positive challenges, figuring out how to solve problems (academic or personal), and striving to be intellectually curious are the focus of my efforts as principal."

School Calendar

Friday, October 9:

Interims mailed home from school, find out how you did for the first four weeks of school.

Monday, October 12:

Student holiday, Columbus Day. What will you do with your time off?

Wednesday, October 14:

Early closing at 12:30. Time to go home and relax those brain muscles.

Friday, October 16:

Mark your calendars for the Homecoming dance. Details involving the dance will be released soon.

Sunday, October 18:

Fairfax County Public Schools College Fair starts at 7:30 PM and is at Fair Oaks Mall.

Monday to Friday, October 19 to 23:

Seniors, Standards of Learning testing for this week, come prepared.

Friday, October 23:

Food, dancing, and fun at the Hispanic Heritage Month Community Dinner. Starts at 6 PM in the cafeteria.

Band Blends the Old Members with the New Songs

CAMILLE DiFOLCO
PHOTOGRAPHER

"Mark time, mark! Ready, march!" This shout signifies that the marching band is on the move. This year, the marching band is bigger than ever, totaling more than 200 students, and is ready to wow at the upcoming competitions.

The theme of this year's marching band show is "Dusk 'til Dawn" and features a three-movement medley of songs, ranging from darker melodies to a burst of life at the show's finale to celebrate the dawn of a new day. The band and color guard have been working since early August, and will practice five times a week for the next two months.

The first competition was Saturday, September 26, but the marching band also performed for the first time at the home football game on Friday, September 25 at halftime.

Asked what she is most looking forward to this season, color guard captain junior Natalie Sarmiento said, "We're excited to see the show all finished and put on the field." "Our work is really, really good this year!" added color guard captain junior Sarah Argot.

In response to this year's improvements over last, Sarmiento said, "We're a lot more ahead of our game, we know more of our work, [and] it's cleaner than last year. All



Photo by Camille DiFolco

The band is hard at work perfecting their new show "Dusk 'til Dawn."

of our skill levels have gone up and the freshmen are really good." "Our team is a lot more bonded this year," said Sarah Argot, "we're all friends!"

In addition to a lively color guard section, the band is showcasing several songs that are rich with imagery. The songs are meant to inspire emotion and to illustrate the transformation from night into day. For instance, a "dusk" song will probably be set in a minor key, evoking darker, melancholy feelings, while a "dawn" song might feature a prominent horn section to symbolize the rising sun.

Marimba player, junior Caitlin Moniz,

agreed that the music was better: "I like the show better this year than last year because the first movement rocks." The first movement is entitled *Dies Irae* which roughly translated from Latin means "Day of Wrath." "The song is a really powerful, wrathful tune that fits our band well because we have so many low-voiced instruments. It's a song other bands [with fewer low brass] wouldn't be able to pull off," said flute section leader junior Leah Naidorf. "*Dies Irae* is really intense. It's a requiem so it's pretty intense and dark," said Moniz.

The drum line is especially featured in

this piece, and the pit has a long run near the end. Also featured in *Dies Irae* is the band's extensive woodwind section.

"At the end of the first movement, there's a woodwind feature. We have a woodwind feature in every year's show," said Naidorf.

Another change this year is the influx of freshmen who are, as junior snare drummer Evan Rajadhyaksha described, "satisfactory and improving." While many athletic departments have freshmen teams which separate the ninth graders from upperclassmen, thereby ensuring that only seasoned athletes play on the upper teams, the marching band is open to anyone. The task of combining a group of kids ranging in age from 14 to 18 and with differing skill levels in marching, playing, and flag-twirling, is ambitious but not impossible.

"The lengthy practices tend to pay off in the long run," said flute section leader junior Jacob Glazer.

This year's marching band and color guard show is a healthy combination of the old and the new. It features new students, songs, and steps, but also has many returning members and will play familiar tunes from the stands, including of course, our school's fight song. Whether on the field, in the bleachers, or practicing in the back parking lot, the marching band and color guard are considered a vital part of the school and continue to work hard to achieve excellence.

Eagle Population on the Rise

Eagles found along the George Washington Memorial Parkway

ANNA DREYFUSS
REPORTER

"Oh, 'Eagles' like the bird?" said freshman Joanna Morgan. Yes, I am talking about the birds. Not too long ago, our nation's mascot was on the verge of extinction. Luckily, the Bald Eagle's population is now more stable, and there are about 440 active nests in Virginia, although there is also a large population of eagles too young or old to make nests. One nest is in fact a couple blocks from our school on the George Washington Parkway. People can be found birdwatching there all throughout the day and on weekends. However, it is very hard for them to find habitats now, because they do not like to be disturbed.

Eagles will rarely nest near people or roads. Then why did they decide to nest near Old Town, right above the George Washington Memorial Parkway and Mount Vernon Trail? "There are very few places for them to live now, because of houses being built and disturbing areas, but they deal with it," said Kent Knowles, head of the Raptor Conservancy of Virginia. The conservatory takes in injured raptors, or birds of prey, nurses them and puts them back into their habitat.

People often stop and take pictures of the majestic birds, and even sit around for hours watching them. Even though it does not look like it, this heavily disturbs the birds. If they do not have babies, then they will probably leave to find a quieter area. "We are trying to protect them by putting up signs and barriers, so people won't get too close to scare them off," said Knowles.

The eagles' nesting season starts in February. At that time, the parents meet and "date." Yes, date. The male and female will usually fly around and catch fish together. After a couple weeks of their highly serious

relationship, they will have eggs and they will tend to them until they hatch in March. After the babies are fully grown and matured, or graduated like high school students, the parents will kick them out of the nest to go build their own nests and families.

Do students really care about the eagles? "No, because teenagers aren't concerned with things outside of themselves and most don't know much about them to care," said junior Liz Wolfrey. Sadly, she is probably right, but we should care that, although the population is rising, our nation's symbol was almost extinct. They have been forced to make homes where they are uncomfortable and are under pressure to reproduce and survive in the midst of a busy area. The health of our national bird should be important to every American citizen.

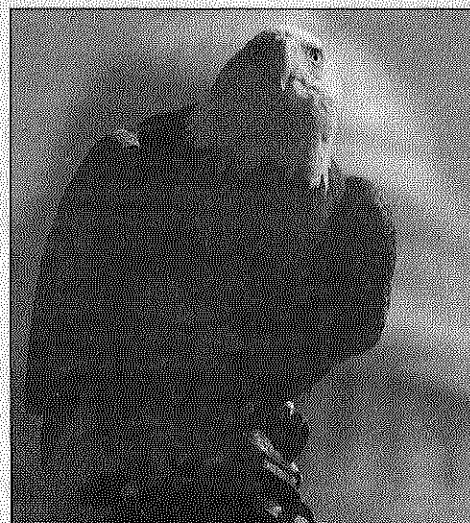


Photo Courtesy of Chuck Kennedy/MCT

Eagles, such as the one above, are repopulating the suburban area around Washington DC.

News Briefs

Verizon to Carry iPhone

Many students have heard the rumor that the iPhone is switching from AT&T Wireless to Verizon. Apple has yet to comment on this rumor, but Stan Sigman, who is CEO of wireless at AT&T has stated to USA Today that "I am glad we have (the iPhone) in our bag. Others will try to match it, but for a period of time, they're going to be playing catch-up."

Also according to USA Today, the fight over the iPhone is for customers and popularity, meaning, whichever company receives rights to the iPhone will have more customers than the other leading companies. AT&T leads the pack with the most customers with approximately 62.2 million, followed by Verizon which has an estimated 60.7 million and Sprint who has 53.6 million. The exclusive contract that is signed by both Apple and AT&T wireless is still in effect and will be in effect until the year 2012.

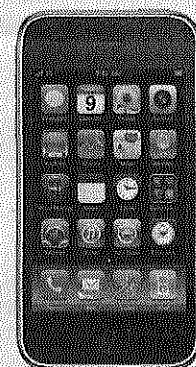


Photo Courtesy of MCT

Kanye West Interrupts at VMAs

As many students have heard, the Video Music Awards (VMA), that were held on Sunday, September 13, was full of memorable moments, all thanks to Kanye West and Taylor Swift. It started when West arrived with an alcohol bottle in hand which he was continually drinking from throughout the show. As Swift was giving her acceptance speech for her win for Best Female Video, she was rudely interrupted by West, who took the microphone out of Swift's hand. West went on to say that Beyoncé Knowles, who was nominated for the same category for her music video "Single Ladies," deserved to win because she had the best video over all. West was later booed off of the stage and left Swift standing on the stage looking absolutely devastated. However, Swift got her time in the spotlight, as when Knowles won for Video of the Year for "Single Ladies," let Swift come out and finish her acceptance speech. Many celebrities also gave their support to Swift throughout the show.

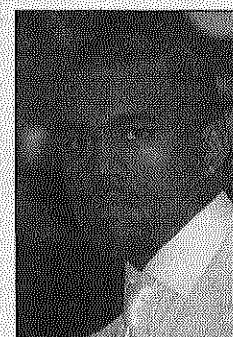


Photo Courtesy of Hahn-Khayat/Abaca Press/MCT

After the VMA's ended, West issued a long apology to Swift via his blog and wrote in all caps. The apology that West issued received much negative backlash from the public and media bloggers such as Perez Hilton. West apologized to Swift in the statement but also said that "Beyoncé's video was the best of this decade!!!" However, other celebrities ranging from Spencer Pratt to Kellie Pickler all took their Twitter and wrote many negative remarks about West's actions and all congratulated Swift on her win. On September 15, West called Swift to personally apologize to her.

**Want to advertise in West
Potomac's Newspaper
The Wire?**

If so, please contact Laura Zitnik at lbzitnik@fcps.edu.

old things no

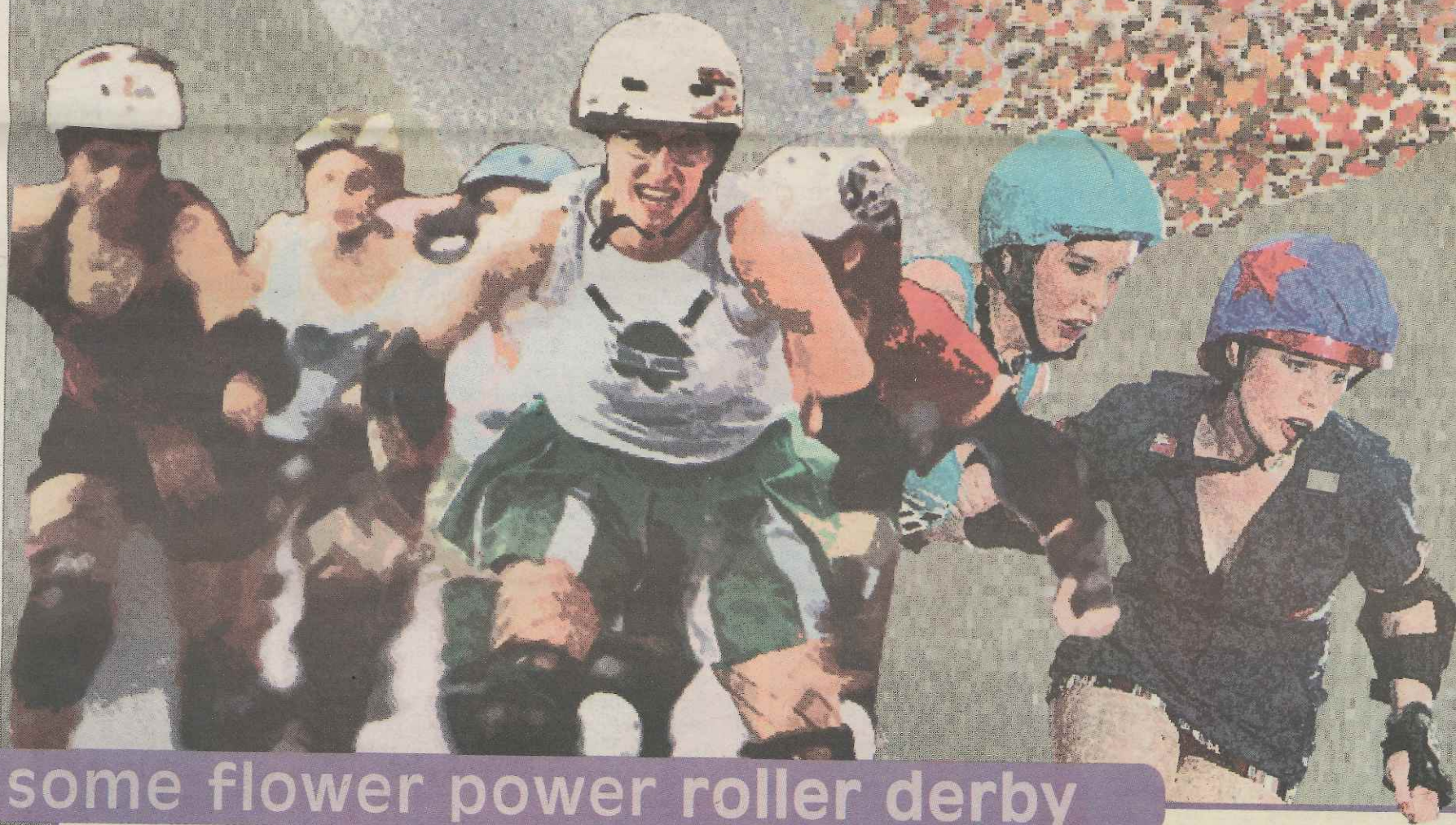
EMILY GRIFFIN
News Editor

Many trends have come back to grace us with their presence or have just recently created a phenomenon. For example, Roller Derby, which was popular in the thirties, is making a comeback. As for new trends, there is one that took the world by storm—and that trend would be vampires.

Roller derbies were a fun way to skate and socialize with friends back in the day. There, people could listen to music, talk with friends, and skate around all at the same time. Recently, many people have started to mosey back on in to Roller Derbies. Senior Rachel Martin said, "Roller Derbys are really cool, I went to one with my aunt recently."

Another new trend is the 3-Dimensional (3-D) movies. In order to make a 3-D movie, 3-D film makers spend enormous amounts of time just to create one scene, let alone a whole movie. Recent 3-D movies include, *Up*, *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, and *Monsters vs. Aliens*.

Another movie that made fans go wild is the *Twilight* Saga, this made Vampires one of the most popular trends. Many vampire-centric television shows and movies have recently surfaced. The *Twilight* Saga phenomenon was not the only reason for this new trend. One of the most notable vampire television shows includes HBO's *True Blood*. Eager *Twilight* Saga fan, junior Veronica Clark believes that, "[*Twilight* vampire] Edward Cullen started the vampire trend."



some flower power roller derby

GWEN FISHEL
Copy Editor

Ever wanted to put on a pair of skates, skate around in circles, and try to knock other girls off their feet? Well, roller derby is that and so much more. Since its origin in Chicago, Illinois, in 1935, roller derby has exploded in popularity both nationally and internationally. While it began as a sport played by both men and women, roller derby is now predominantly a female sport, played in an arena setting.

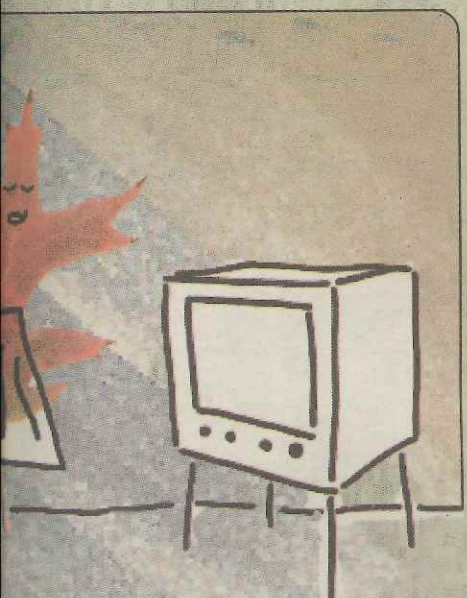
In the late 1940s and 50s, roller derby gained more attention, after being thrown into the spotlight on national television. However, almost more than 60 years later, roller derby is once again becoming a popular fad.

Many new and current television shows and films feature the sport of roller derby. In October, Vincent Pictures is releasing *Whip It* directed by Drew Barrymore, a movie about a young woman portrayed by Ellen Page, who joins a roller derby team in Texas.

Many students at our school are interested in the school. Senior Madeline Dahl said, "When my friend's mom told us her team, the DC Demoncats, was in the semifinals, I decided to go and watch... It was awesome. I was totally unaware of the unique culture that goes along with roller derby, [such as] the nicknames." She also said that she is a member of a junior league that will start later this fall.

Wanna join the fun?

How people really dig



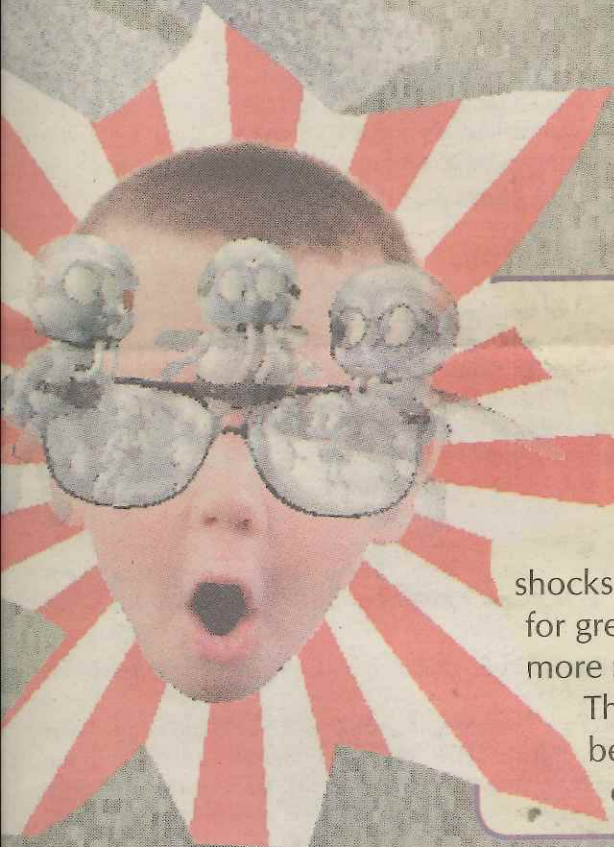
the full 3-D experience

STEPHEN HOWELL
REPORTER

Three-dimensional (3-D) movies are coming back into style. They have become really popular and have had success in theatres. At least 5,000 3-D movie systems are expected to be in place in American theatres by 2009.

Recently, *Final Destination 3D* has had success at the box office. The thriller/horror shocks the audience with eye-popping scenes. Making the movie three dimensional allows for greater thrills too. Scenes suddenly become much scarier, and the death animations are more realistic. Some even think that the 3-D medium is what makes the movie enjoyable.

These movies give viewers a completely different experience. Many industry analysts believe three-dimension movies are the future, and they compare the leap in technology comparable to changing from black-and-white to color films.



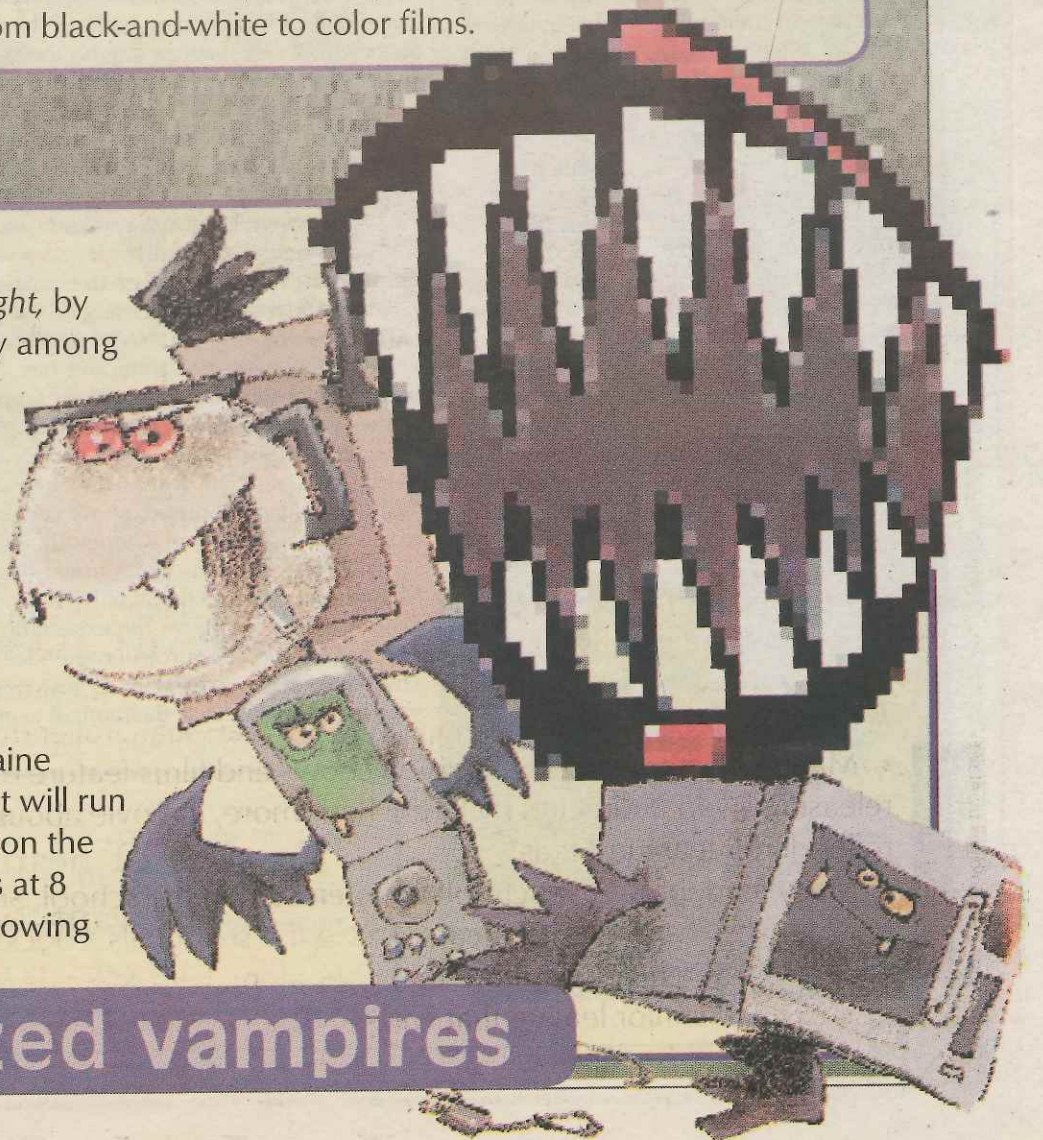
MICHAELA ACCARDI
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

With the rise of the popular book series put to big screen, *Twilight*, by Stephanie Meyer, vampires have become an obsession, especially among tweens.

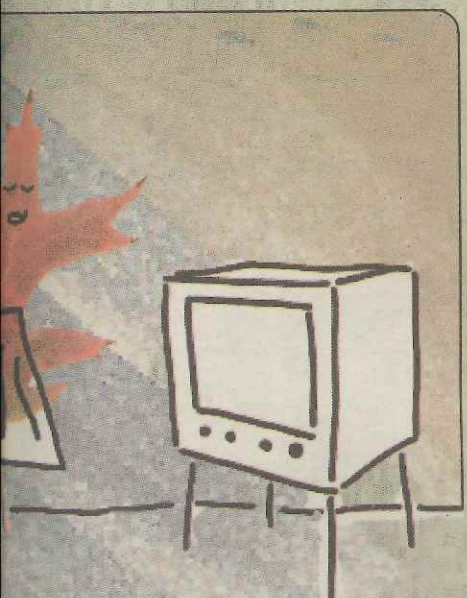
12-year-olds everywhere can be seen sporting "Team Edward" shirts as the popular character played by Robert Pattinson, has gained popularity to the point of mania. Girls everywhere idolize him and are fascinated by his pale skin, gelled hair, and yearning for human blood. As the series plans to release its second movie, television shows featuring vampires on HBO and the CW are also on par with the trend.

On Sundays at 9 p.m., HBO features the series *True Blood* also based off of the novels *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* by Charlaine Harris. With its past success, the producers have confirmed that it will run through its third season. In addition, the CW is hoping to cash in on the vampire train with the show *The Vampire Diaries* airing Thursdays at 8 p.m. All of these series, both in literature and on television, are growing exponentially in popularity; we will see where it hits next.

the newly romanticized vampires



How people really dig



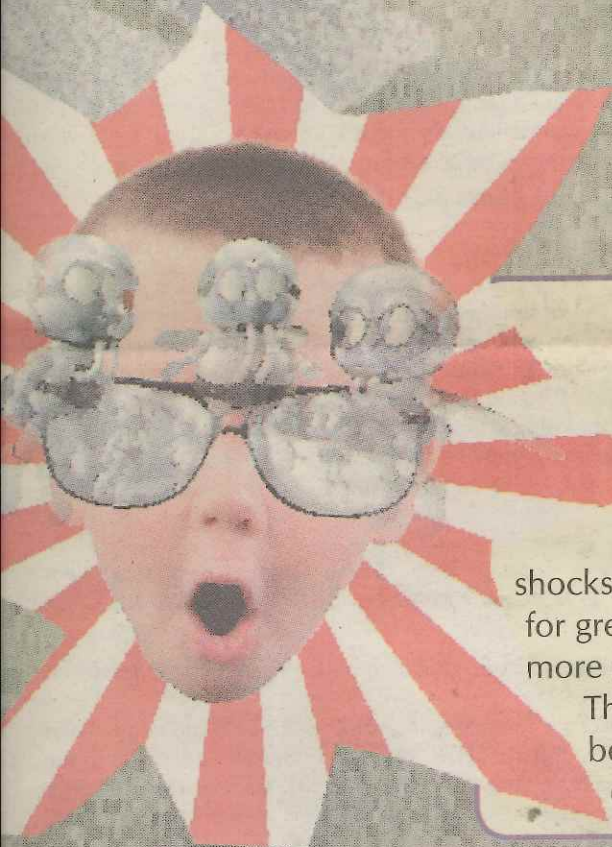
the full 3-D experience

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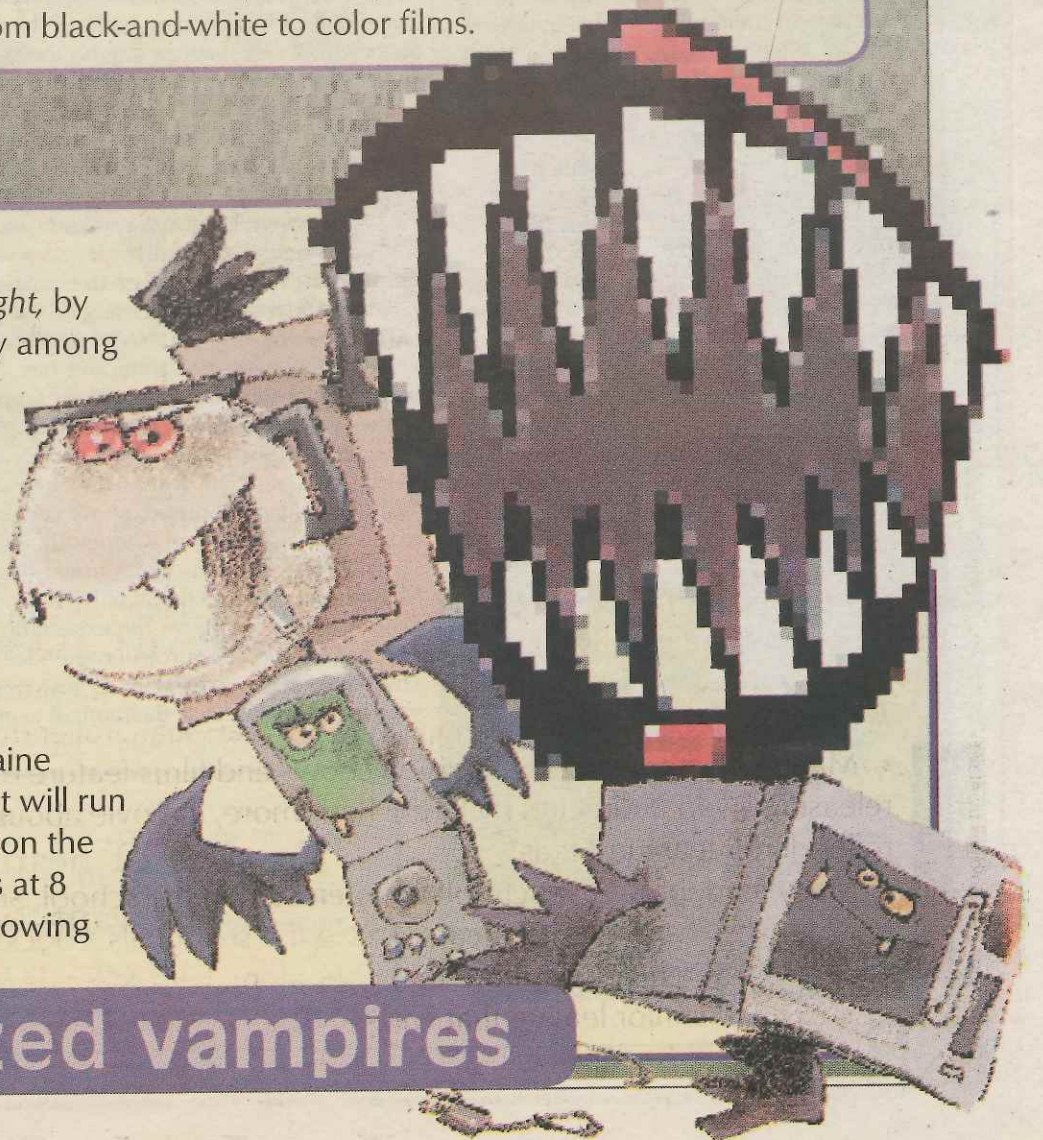
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Coffey Talk

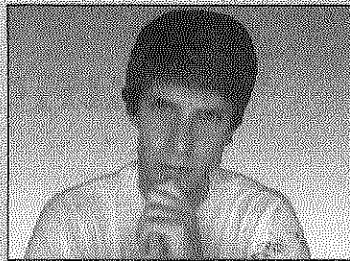


Photo by Peter Coffey/Mac

PETER COFFEY
SPORTS EDITOR

Ahhhhh yes! The beginning of summer, so relaxing, and a time to kick back, relax, and enjoy those summer nights. But for the elite athletes of our school, the start of the summer means the beginning of fall sports training. To the average athlete, training before practice starts seems dumb. I mean, who wants to do work when you do not have to? I will tell you who, the athletes who want to be better than the rest.

Amanda Gunderson and Toni O'Boyle of the field hockey team are prime examples of putting in work over the summer. While most girls were at the pool getting their tan on, they were out training hard. "I ran at least 5 miles a day and did abs every day," said Gunderson. She kept things tough but simple. O'Boyle's training regimen however was much more complex. She kept to a strict training program of 2-3 days of strength training, stick work every other day, sprints/plyometrics every other day, 3 long runs, one day of cross training, and one day off each week. But putting in time and effort does not come without making sacrifices. "I had to plan out my schedule in advance so that I would always have time for training," said Gunderson. When asked about sacrifices O'Boyle commented, "I was not able to go anywhere for the last few weeks leading up to tryouts and that was tough."

The runners at our school also trained hard over the summer; some started to train even before the last bell at school rang. "I started training a good two weeks before school let out," said Peter Stebbins. "I just wanted to get a head start on my competitors." The cross country runners were not just running, they were strengthening their abs daily as well. "A lot of people don't know this, but your core needs to be strong when you're a runner, if it's not you can not be good," said senior Max Muir.

The football team went right to work this summer as well with passing camps on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays the week after school went out. But for some these 3 days of training were not enough. "I dedicated at least 2 hours a day to getting better," said senior Linebacker JP Marinelli. Marinelli did not work alone however; he worked with team mates Kevin Fowler and Colin McConville. They were out there daily doing sprinting drills and when sprinting was not enough, they ran with parachutes behind them.

And for all the athletes who thought they did not need to put in work over the summer, they have plenty of time to think about what they can do to get better next summer, while sitting on the side line.

MUST WATCH

Capitals at Bruins
October 1st. The
Caps hope to expand
on their successes
from last year.

Bucs at Skins:
1:00 at FedEx Field
Skins look to rally
the fans.

Fall Sports Previewed

TOMMY FRIEDERICH
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Football:

After getting a rating of one star in *The Washington Post*, the football team is on a mission to prove everybody wrong. Senior leaders Colin McConville and Matt Cunningham will lead the way of a hard hitting, enthusiastic, and very good football team. After destroying rival Mount Vernon, the team suffered a loss to powerhouses Westfield and Chantilly. The Wolverines will hopefully bounce back in the next weeks so that they can have a chance at a district title and a playoff run.

Cross Country:

The cross country team is predicted to continue their dominance on both the girls' and boys' side, especially for their retiring coach Don Beeby. A young star of the girls' team Sarah Jane Underwood stated, "Things are looking pretty good so far, we have a lot of depth on both the girls' and boys' side." On the boys' side, Ethan Chaney commented, "The boys' team looks very good. I predict we are going to have a very successful season and compete with the top team's in the state." Right now, the boys' and girls' team rank fifth in state.

Field Hockey:

A new coach has given this year's varsity field hockey a new vibe. Captains Toni O'Boyle, Kelsey Donovan, and Laura Reynolds are leading a team of young players that have a lot of potential. Sophomore Livvy Mickevicius said, "I think our young players will really perform this year." Senior Rachel Browning said, "I think we have a really strong team and a lot of skill which will hopefully get us through districts and onto regionals." Hopefully this prediction will be come true for this hard-working team of girls.

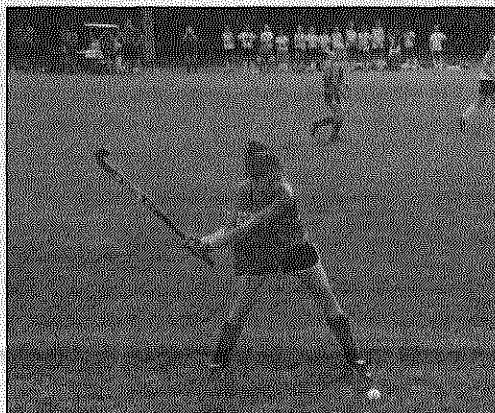


Photo courtesy of Toni O'Boyle
Team captain Toni O'Boyle practices, so that she can improve her game.

Volleyball:

This year's volleyball team is hoping to be very competitive after adding a new coach and having a very talented team. Sophomore Morgan Maniglia said, "This year's volleyball team really works hard, we focus a lot which should help us win a lot of games this year." There is a lot of senior leadership on this year's varsity squad which will only add to the team's performance.

Golf:

A young golf team lead by sophomore Cormac McPherson features a lot of very good golfers. "I think our team will compete at a high level this year, we have a lot of talented players," he said. The golf team will hopefully be very competitive this year. Junior captain Alex Cheung is not only a leader, but he is also one of the team's best players. Alex Browning commented, "I think we are going to be good for a couple years now, we have a good young team that will only get better."

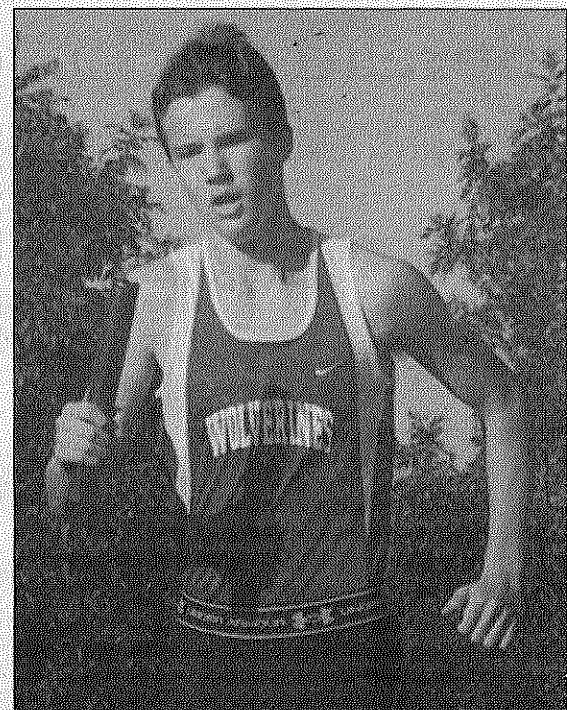


Photo Courtesy of Patrick Murphy

Junior Ben Aleixo shown working hard to pass runners ahead on him at the Potomac Runners Relays in August. The team ended up getting second, which gave them early bragging rights in the northern region.

One Star Given to West Potomac

JOSH BELANGER
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Before the 2009 football season started, the *Washington Post* came out with a preview with all the football teams in the DC Area rating each team and who the star players are. The *Post* gave West Potomac just a one star ranking saying that we are rebuilding our team.

Instead of just ignoring it, Coach Henderson came up with the idea to give all the players a star t-shirt representing the one-star rating to motivate the team to do better than projected. "I felt so short-changed because the team worked so hard and West Potomac football doesn't represent a star player, it mirrors the student-body and shows of the hard work of the team," said Coach Henderson, commenting on the rating.

The *Washington Post* also ranked Mt. Vernon with three stars and Oakton with four stars and our "one-star varsity squad" beat both of them by a combined score of 70-3. Even though the team faced a tough loss to Westfield, they look to bounce back against tough competition in Chantilly and in the rest of the Patriot district. "This team works hard and they have a positive attitude," Henderson said, so we can expect a great conclusion to this year's season and a hopefully through the playoffs.

Led by team Captains Matt Cunningham, Steven Howell, Colin McConville, Shawn Lee, Shakil White, and Silas Aggemang, the team hopes to go above the expectations that the *Washington Post* has set and be a forceful contender in the Northern Region. The team, however, demands just one thing, "We need the school support because the football team represents the student

body the most and our goal is to make them proud," preached Henderson.

When asked if the one-star t-shirts motivated the team, Colin McConville replied, "Hell yeah, it definitely does," and the whole team feels the same way. This whole experience has only brought the team closer together and has served as locker room motivation.

Now, as the team moves forward they are motivated and hungry to win and move on deep into the playoffs with one team, one mission, one star.



Photo courtesy of Colin McConville

The West Potomac football team storms on to the field to take on the Westfield Bulldogs. The Wolverines are lead by captain Matt Cunningham.

SOUND BITE

"I'm tired of hearing about money, money, money, money, money. I just want to play the game, drink Pepsi, wear Reebok."

~Shaquille O'Neal

Taking Woodstock Does Not Spread the Love to Everyone

ALEX BRITCLIFFE
ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

Anyone who knows anything about rock music has heard of the legendary music festival Woodstock.

It was arguably the most influential concert in rock history drawing some of the most musically and lyrically talented musicians that the world has ever seen. Appearances were made by greats such as Bob Dylan, Jimi Hendrix, Creedence Clearwater, The Who, and Janis Joplin. One would think that if a movie was made about possibly the greatest concert to ever take place, it would have a stellar soundtrack, and some scenes of the center stage, portraying what the magic must have been like to be Woodstock. Interestingly enough, that was not what Ang Lee had in mind when directing this movie.

The movie takes place in upstate New York in a small rural "po dunk" community. The story revolves around a young Jewish man named Elliot who helps run his rundown household. Also happens to be the Chamber Commerce for his community. Elliot receives word that a nearby town turned down the offer to host a concert and so Elliot uses his small pull in his communities government to bring the concert to White Lake despite the locals outrage. Elliot's initial intention

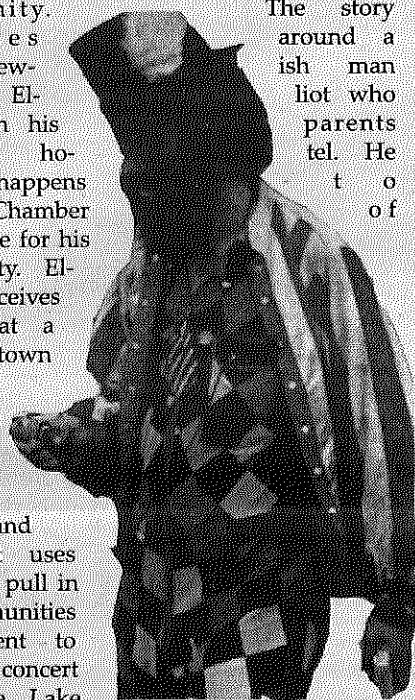


Photo Courtesy of filminfocus.com

In the recent movie, *Taking Woodstock*, one could see characters dressed similar to the one pictured above.

was to bring some much needed business to his parents near vacant hotel and to say the least, he was successful. Instantly, things start to get hectic as lawyers, workers, and the events organizers start preparing the town for the concert. Almost everyday, the amount of people expected to attend increases drastically, and all of the hippies start to swarm into town. Elliot begins to grow fond of the hippies and their unique, loving lifestyle and he becomes inspired to finally leave his rural town and start a life of his own.

The movie has way too casual of a plot for too extraordinary of an event. People were disappointed that this movie didn't have a more passionate engraving feel to it. Woodstock was all about the hippie peace loving culture and of course, the music. The movie spent all the time focussing on the personal life of Elliot and his family and barely any time portraying the kind of people who attended. There were endless scenes of family situations that kept reiterating the fact that Elliot's parents were cheap scates who were only interested in this event because of the money it would make them.

Throughout the entire movie, there was not one scene where they showed any artists playing on a stage. In fact, Bob Dylan was the only artist that was even mentioned in the movie. It seems pretty ridiculous for a movie about Woodstock, but Ang Lee decided to focus solely on the preparations and how the concert played specifically into Elliot's life.

Despite the bizarre way that this movie was conducted, there was an amazing use of special effects in the scene when Elliot trips out on acid. On the second day which was the prime time of the concert, Elliot meets two groovy hippies and he has his first experience on LSD.

Elliot is gazing down a huge hill at the main stage, and the crowd starts to turn into waves, methodically moving up and down and all of the light focuses to where the source of the music is, making the stage look like a ball of light trapped within a bubble.

Ang Lee's piece could be described as more about how a boy who was used by his parents stood up for himself and became a man, and starting his own life.

Woodstock was a chance for Elliot to be part of something big that really mattered to him and it helped him mature into someone with a great deal of independence.

The Gleeks Take Over the T.V. Land

BRYAN JACOBS
STYLE EDITOR

The new smash hit on Fox, *Glee*, has taken the world by a storm. *Glee* had a pilot episode with over 10 million viewers, and it was one of the highest anticipated shows of the summer. *Glee* takes place at a fictional high school loosely associated to the creator's (Ian Brennan) high school, Prospect High School in Illinois.

The story begins when Spanish teacher, Will Schuester (Matthew Morrison) wants to help rejuvenate the school club to its former glory, thus beginning his sponsorship of the Glee Club. In the show, the Glee club is a musical-dance group that has very low participation and has five members that misfits and stereotypes.

Rachel Berry (Lea Michele) is the leader of Glee club because of her talent in singing and dancing that is supposedly, "forced upon by my two fathers, musical theatre, and singing lessons at the age of three," she reminisces at the beginning of the episode.

Secondly, Mercedes Jones (Amber Riley) plays the stereotypical African-American large curls and style heard in the first episode, "I ain't no Kelly her background singing Glee's performance. Golfer) plays a flam-participates in Glee club Kurt is known throughout the, "latest in Marc Jacobs" robe, he is bullied for his (Kevin McHale) plays a Glee despite his disability because of his disability. Finally, the most "desirable" character to join the Glee club is football player Noah Pukerman (Mark Salling). Noah is black mailed by his teacher Mr. Schuester in the locker room shower and realizes his talent.

Kurt Hummel (Chris DiFranco) is a gay boy who because it accepts him. the school for wearing but despite his wardrobe sexuality. Artie Abrams (Dianna Agron) is a paraplegic who dances in it. He, as well, is bullied by Quinn Fabray (Dianna Agron). Quinn, is head of the Cheerios and along with her strict yet hilarious coach Sue Sylvester (Jane Lynch) serve as the antagonists of Glee.

Overall, *Glee* takes one of the most creative twists on the high school experience more than any other show on television. *Glee*, with a combination of its colorful characters and intense dynamics leaves the reader gripping to his seat and laughing uncontrollably.

This is one of the best new series on television and it is definitely worth to take a Wednesday night to have a series-date with *Glee*.

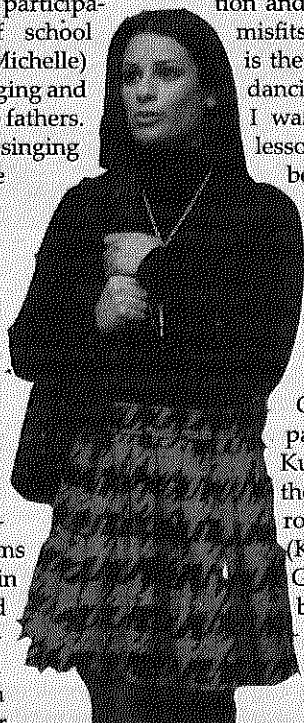


Photo Courtesy of MCT Campus

Fall Television Introduces a New Line-Up with Old Favorites

CAMILLE DiFOLCO
PHOTOGRAPHER

After three months of summer reruns, new seasons and series are finally here. Catch all your favorites with this guide.

FOX:
Glee (Series premiere Wed. Sept. 9, 9/8c): The new comedy about a young teacher (Matthew Morrison) trying to revive the school's once thriving glee club while attempting to make ends meet with a baby on the way is finally here. The pilot aired last May, whetting many appetites and making the ensuing four months torturous. But the hilarious group of misfits that make up the glee club continue to charm and the show is worth catching. The show stars Matthew Morrison, Jane Lynch, and Lea Michele.

Lie to Me (Season premiere Mon. Sept. 28, 9/8c): The second season of the popular drama in which a group of human lie-detectors use their skills to solve crimes and domestic problems is coming soon. Stars Tim Roth, Kelli Williams, and Monica Raymond.

Bones (Season premiere Thurs. Sept. 17, 8/7c): The witty crime-solving duo is back. Socially inept forensic anthropologist Dr. Brennan (Emily Deschanel) and cocky FBI agent Booth (David Boreanaz) made an effective, if unlikely team. Brennan's expertise in identifying and "reading" human remains too far-gone for standard FBI testing procedures earns her the nickname "Bones". Stars Emily Deschanel, David Boreanaz, and Michaela Conlin.

NBC:
30 Rock (Season premiere Thurs. Oct. 15, 9:30/8:30c): Liz Lemon (Tina Fey) is the head writer of a fictional NBC show, and must deal with a conceited boss (Alec Baldwin), self-



Photo Courtesy of Lionel Hahn/Abaca Press/MCT
Alec Baldwin and Tina Fey walk the red carpet showing off their Golden Globes.

absorbed TV stars (Tracy Jordan, Jane Krakowski), and a neurotic page (Jack McBrayer). Filled with clever witticisms as well as guffaw-inducing moments, and with an impressive 22 Emmy nominations under its belt, *30 Rock* is back for the fourth season.

Heroes (Season premiere Mon. Sept. 21, 8/7c): The addictive show chronicling the lives of seemingly ordinary people with superhero abilities returns for season four. Stars Jack Coleman, Hayden Panettiere, and Milo Ventimiglia.

The Office (Season premiere Thurs. Sept. 17, 9/8c): A colorful cast of office employees working for a ridiculously unprofessional boss (Steve Carell) is back for season four. With nine Emmy nominations and a loyal following, the new season is sure to be a success. Stars Steve Carell, Rainn Wilson, and John Krasinski.

CBS:
The Big Bang Theory (Season premiere Mon. Sept. 21,

9:30/8:30c): Look out for season three of the comedy about an attractive waitress with dreams of getting into show biz who moves in next door to two brilliant but socially incompetent physicists. Hilarity ensues. Stars Johnny Galecki, Jim Parsons, and Kaley Cuoco.

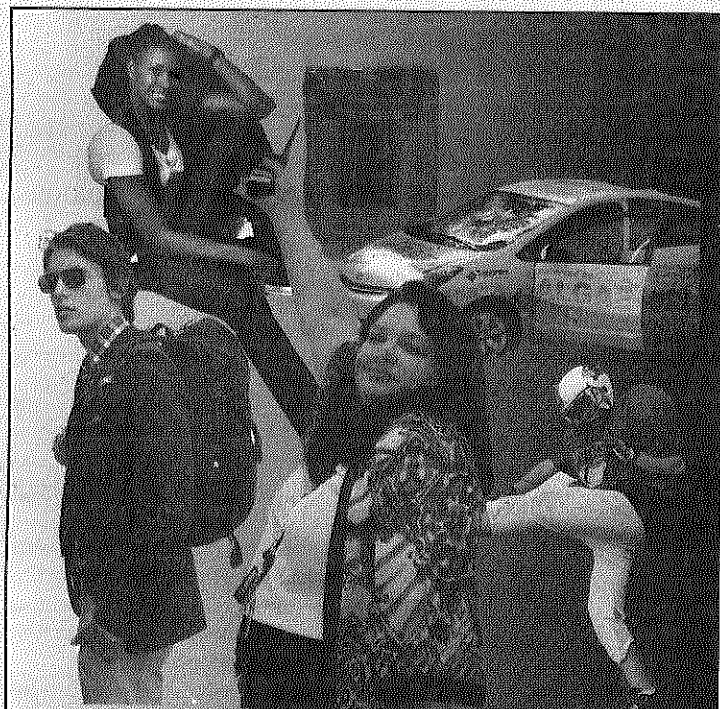
CW:
One Tree Hill (Season Premiere Mon. Sept. 14, 8/7c): With the exception of Lucas and Peyton, the rest of the gang is back for season seven of the hit show. Stars James Lafferty, Sophia Bush, and Chad Michael Murray.

Gossip Girl (Season Premiere Mon. Sept. 14, 9/8c): The socialites everyone envies are back for a third season chockfull of fresh drama, new faces, and of course gossip. Stars Leighton Meester, Blake Lively, and Chace Crawford.

America's Next Top Model (Wednesdays 8/7c): Cycle 13 is here and it is fierce. A fresh crop of would-be models are ready to strut, pout, and claw their way to the top. Stars Tyra Banks.

The Beautiful Life: TBL (Series premiere Wed. Sept. 16, 9/8c): A new show that focuses behind-the-scenes of the glamorous runway depicts the lives of a group of models living together in a co-ed residence in NYC. When a new model, Raina (Sara Paxton), steals the spotlight away from fellow model, Sonja (Mischa Barton), Sonja desperately tries to maintain her supermodel status. Stars Mischa Barton, Sara Paxton, and Ben Hollingsworth.

The Vampire Diaries (Series premiere Thurs. Sept. 10, 8/7c): A vampire love triangle with unexpected twists. Brothers Stefan and Damon find themselves drawn to Elena, a high school girl whose parents died four months before, and an ancient rivalry is rekindled. Stars Nina Dobrev, Paul Wesley, and Ian Somerhalder.



10 Tips for Surviving Freshman Year

Photos Courtesy of Sam Grando, David Evlitt, Autumn Crz, Brayn Patrick/MCT, Bryan Jacobs and Emily Griffin. Photo Illustration by Emily Griffin

SARAH HOLLOWAY
REPORTER

As the freshmen walk up the sidewalk to the huge building labeled West Potomac High School, they suddenly realize how big it really is. The ceilings tower at twice the height of those in Carl Sandburg, and so do the senior students.

We all remember our first grueling days: attempts to navigate the halls of the three buildings, eyes darting in an attempt to find a familiar face, and students who actually know where they are going. However, there are several simple ways to get through freshmen year without too much emotionally crippling damage.

1. Whatever you do, nix the rolling backpacks. Not only are they completely impractical, but the rolling monstrosities clog the halls and are a dead give-away that you have not been here long enough to know they are impractical. Save the rolling bags for the airport.
2. Enjoy your year of transition and take advantage of the excuses, "I got lost," "I didn't know where the principal's office was," and "I am new to this whole high school thing."
3. Acing your freshmen year will put you in a good place come the demanding junior year, and will surely boost your GPA.
4. Get involved! Our school offers such a wide variety of extra curricular activities, it is impossible not to find a club or team that appeals to you. Keep your notes from the club fair, and remember to follow up on the meetings.
5. Dress to impress. Limit yourself to one sweatpants day per week. Any more and you are bordering upon bum status.
6. If you MUST stop to check your fire escape map of the school, please stand to the sides of the halls out of respect for other students.
7. Accept seniority. Respect the status. And no, there is no possible way for freshmen to catch Senioritis.
8. This year is all about "Going Green," so carpool or get a ride with upperclassman friends. Not only will hitching rides be environmentally friendly, but it will dramatically decrease congestion on Quander Road and at the drop off. However, taking the bus is still the most efficient (and appropriate) way to get to school for freshmen.
9. Getting in trouble really is not cool and does not impress anyone; it just gets you a pass out of class to Mr. Eaton.
10. Sentimental moment: Have fun because, in accordance with popular belief, four years go by quickly.

When asked how he would guide the freshman through a smooth year, senior Riley Randall remarked, "I would just tell them to respect their upperclassmen, and they will be good." Understanding other classes is the only way for everyone to get along. Senior Casey Jenkins said, "The freshman should mingle with the upperclassmen more, otherwise they will not get the full experience of high school." Do not be anxious to mingle with new people during the lunch period. In fact, freshmen might be excited about the annual "Mix it Up" day in which students are encouraged to sit at the designated table displaying their birthday month during the three lunch blocks. Opportunities are all around to kick it with older, influential students.

As schmaltzy as it sounds, the main thing to remember is not to get too caught up in the rush of high school and to remain vaguely true to your originality. There are not enough tips to tell you how to get through freshman year or any other year in high school. Being a senior does not give me much more insight, only experiences. My best advice is to do high school your own way. You cannot really go wrong if you make good friends, get good grades, and set yourself up for as many good opportunities as you can.

The Vitamin D-debate

KATIE WOODWARD
REPORTER

Vitamin D will not give you super-human powers, nor will it prevent the swine flu. It is, however, one of the few positive products of tanning.

Ever since Coco Chanel upset the fashion world's preference for pale skin in the 1920's, people have looked to tanning as a means of achieving that perfect "bronzed glow." Many of us approach tanning as a risk less activity. "Honestly, I just go out there and don't wear sunscreen. Actually, I wear SPF four... sometimes," said Senior Mara DeRose.

However, most people know that tanning has notorious links with skin cancer. Recent campaigns recommend wearing sunscreen for not only prolonged sun exposure, but for any outdoor activity, such as a simple stroll around the block. In addition to skin cancer, large amounts of sun exposure can lead to premature aging of the skin.

Other research, however, has presented claims supporting unprotected sun exposure at least two times a week to battle what health professionals agree is a significant and growing problem throughout the world: vitamin D deficiency.

In the United States, 60% of adolescents and children lack the levels of vitamin D necessary to carry out the maintenance of vital organ systems, promote the flow of calcium into the bloodstream, and strengthen and encourage bone growth. Vitamin D deficiency, in various forms, has been linked to cancer, schizophrenia, autoimmune diseases, depression, and diabetes.

Worldwide, there are an estimated one billion people with this deficiency. In a study conducted in Boston, 32 percent of participants had low levels of this essential vitamin, even though they regularly took a multivitamin, drank milk, and ate salmon (which contains a considerable amount of vitamin D).

The study concluded that a lack of sun exposure contributed greatly to this deficiency and that adequate sun exposure for between five and thirty minutes twice a week is the best way to combat a vitamin D

deficiency.

Although tanning appears to be the optimal method of boosting vitamin D levels, the underlying message in this research shows that Americans simply need to spend more time outdoors.

No one needs to intensify their risks for skin cancer by using low vitamin D levels as an excuse for tanning all day on the roof. Instead, kill two birds with one stone: go outside to exercise and catch some rays in the process.

A pick-up game of soccer or a bike ride are only a couple of the countless ways you can be healthier, boost your vitamin-D, and in turn soak up some sun.

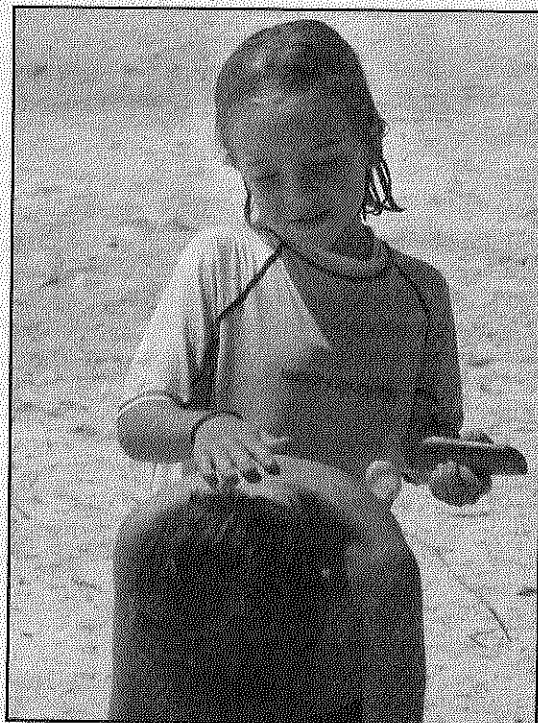


Photo Courtesy of Ronna Gradus/ MCT

While there are some benefits tanning, it is always smart to put on sun screen while in direct light.

Do the Crime, Do the Time

NIA COPELAND
PHOTOGRAPHER

It is always disappointing when an admired person ends up labeled as a bad influence. That is how many Chris Brown fans must have felt after learning that Brown was accused of attacking his celebrity girlfriend, Rihanna Fenty, last winter after having a heated argument with her. "I was shocked and disappointed in Chris Brown," said junior Anna Manalo. "I think domestic violence is unacceptable and unfathomable."

It was all over the news, internet and magazines and everyone knew about it including those who had never heard about him before the incident. Before, he was known as a great entertainer that could be recognized as a good leader or role model.

Now the only thing recognized about Brown is how he is associated with domestic violence. Junior Tayler Aiken expressed her feelings on the situation by saying, "It's really awful that men beat women out of anger. No woman should ever have to experience that kind of pain."

Fans all around America were in disbelief when the news about Brown and his girlfriend Rihanna was released. It was hard to believe that someone like him could ever do something like that. To many people, Brown never seemed like the kind of person that

would ever lay a hand on anybody, especially not a woman.

According to CNN, this assault was not the first. Brown and Rihanna had been involved in at least two other domestic violence incidents that happened prior to the one in February. There had been one incident in Europe last November and another in Barbados earlier this year in January. Knowing this information, many feel that Brown's sentencing fits his crime and that it is no surprise that he will have to do a lot of work to earn back the respect of his fans, listeners, and viewers.

Many were unaware that Brown and Rihanna's relationship had been violent before hand and it was really appalling. "I didn't know this had happened many times before," said Manalo.

"I'm not too big of a fan but I really respected him and his music until now. He should really be ashamed of himself. I really am."

On August 25, Brown was sentenced to serve five years probation and spend more than 1,400 hours in community service in Virginia.

He has also been enrolled in a domestic violence program for 52 weeks in Richmond and has been required to pay about six thousand dollars worth of fees. Some people feel that his sentencing was somewhat extreme while others feel that his actions fit his crime.

Some teens like junior Lisa Kinston feel that Brown's ruling was absurd. "I feel that Chris Brown's sentencing was a ridiculous punishment," said Kinston. "Situations like this happen everyday with ordinary people and many men don't have to face the consequences. I don't believe that domestic violence is right because I have seen first hand how bad it is, but five years is just a tad bit outrageous."

Others like sophomore Dale Leshner feel that Brown deserves the punishment and more. "I feel that is unacceptable and unjust," said Leshner. "It's really sad to find out someone you know and love is a monster. There are many conflicting emotions and he deserves to be disciplined harsher."

Brown is now working to win back the respect of many fans, women and listeners. This will not be easy for him but it is good that he is willing to face the consequences and serve the time in order to become a better person.

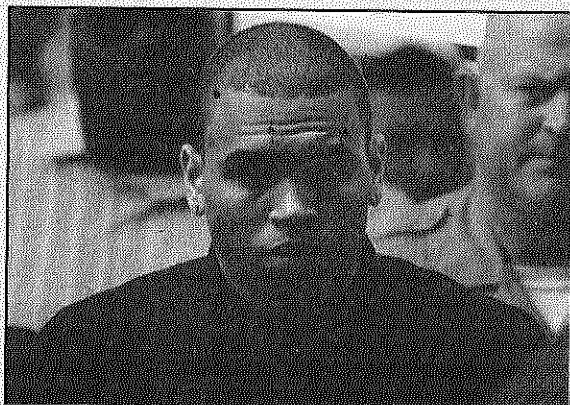


Photo Courtesy of cdn.newsonline.com

Chris Brown (above) awaits his sentence, for the charges that occurred last year, in a Californian Court.

Six Feet Under is Now Six Feet Under

ALEX FABRIZIO
FOCUS EDITOR

This is a story of boredom turned into slight interest turned into deep, sweet love.

Six Feet Under debuted eight years ago with a 61-minute pilot (no commercials, just pure content) on HBO—created by Alan Ball (the writer, occasional director, executive producer, etc.). Ball also wrote the 1999 masterpiece *American Beauty*, and HBO's current foothold in the inescapable vampire craze (not to mention allegory for homosexuality): *True Blood*.

Like his other writing endeavors, the sex and recreational drug use that takes place is neither romanticized nor gratuitous. They, along with the ever-present homosexuality, are both very normal presences that familiarize and humanize the characters (especially in *Six Feet Under*) with the viewer (i.e. me).

Throughout the first season of *Six Feet Under*, I had a slight distaste for each of the characters because of their humanity. Of course, I cut them slack because in the opening scene of the pilot Nathaniel Fisher (Richard Jenkins) their respective father, husband, or employer died suddenly in a car crash, but they were all so flawed at first.

As the show progressed they became more flawed, but the initial imperfection was slightly irritating because it seems somewhat juvenile (in later seasons the audience nostalgically appreciates their initial flaws.)

These initial flaws include the eldest son, Nate's



Photo by MCT Campus

The cast of *Six Feet Under* accepts their first Screen Actors Guild Awards.

(Peter Krause), bitterness that he stayed home to run the family funeral business (their home is the fully-functional funeral home Fisher & Sons) instead of returning to Seattle. David (Michael C Hall) is a tightly wound, self-loathing, mostly closeted homosexual. Claire (Lauren Ambrose), their much-younger sister, is stuck in adolescent hell known as high school, and is pinned as a freak by her peers because she does not conform (she also drives a lime green hearse and lives in a funeral home). Their mother, Ruth (Frances Conroy), grapples with her guilt, sexuality and

own well-being.

The other characters are not quite as obnoxious as the Fishers are. They add charm and spice into the show providing an easy transition for the audience to become thoroughly entertained by the series.

Probably around season three it was not really about the complex story lines or the drama or the awesomely surreal scenes.

Well, it was, but I cared more about the well-being of the characters than how their stories would unfold.

Besides those actors who were major characters (like Brenda who is now in ABC's *Brothers and Sisters*) and George Sibley (who was the farmer in *Babe*) there was Arthur (Rainn Wilson), a brief love interest played by Jenna Fischer, Edie (Mena Suvari), Celeste (Michelle Trachtenberg), and Russell (Ben Foster).

Honestly, it is very difficult to pick out the best parts of *Six Feet Under*—the things that make it really great. It could be the intro, the surrealism, the cinematography, the somewhat dry humor, the dynamic characters, the complex story line, or the credibility of the entire thing.

I really do not know, nor do I know how to summarize or simplify its endless charms and impeccable nuances found in this impeccable mater piece of a show, however I only have one piece of advice.

It seems as though there is really only one way to understand: to experience it.

Looking for a creative way to celebrate a birthday, anniversary, team win, new job, or any other special occasion?

A Flock of (Friendly) Flamingos can help!

The tropical birds will mysteriously appear on the lawn—with a special message for the recipient -- and roost for two days before migrating to the next location.

"Flocking" is a fundraiser for the Class of 2010 All Night Graduation Celebration (ANGC). All profits go to this special event.

Price range:

- \$ 10 small flock (10 flamingos)
- \$ 20 medium flock (20 flamingos)
- \$ 30 large flock (30 flamingos)
- \$ 50 super size flock (50 flamingos)

Don't let this opportunity fly by. Order a flock between October 5 and November 20.

Email dgleason@nata.aero, or call 703/660-6980 for more information.

New Teachers Give Lasting Impressions

STEPHEN HOWELL
REPORTER

Kirylo, Ariel

College and Degree: BA in English Literature from John Cabot U in Rome, Italy and MA in Secondary Education from Marymount University in Arlington, VA

Subject: English

Years teaching (and school): First year

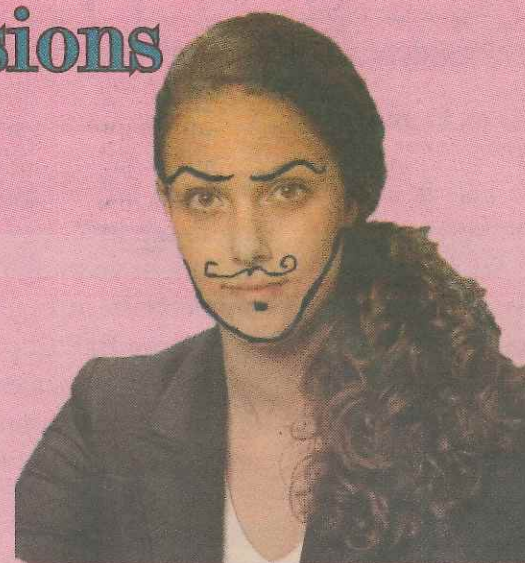
What do you teach? Pre AP ENG and Expanding Lit. II

What activities did you participate in when you were in high school? I played on the soccer team as well as participated in the yearly Shakespeare festival.

What was your favorite high school memory? High school prom where a piece of chocolate cake was thrown on my dress.

If you could have any other job, what would it be? I wouldn't rather be doing anything else in the world.

What is your favorite food? I love my own cooking.



Hubbard, Dana

College and Degree: Goucher College, B.A. in Biology

Subject: Biology and Anatomy

“

I was a long-term substitute last year and I loved working at West Potomac. I am the second Hubbard at WPHS and am very excited to be working with my brother as well as the other staff members.”

Why do you teach? I teach because I want to make a difference in young people's lives.

What makes you different from other teachers? I am awesome!

What activities did you participate in during high school? I played field hockey, soccer, and basketball. I was also part of the band.

Marston, Robert

Age: 49

College and Degree: Tulane University/BA Political Science; George Mason University

Hometown: Don't really have one; grew up overseas, and spent 25 years in the navy moving around; consider northern Virginia home.

Subject: US/ VA Government & world History I

Years teaching (and school): New Teacher

Why do you teach? To try and help bring the world a little closer to everyone in the classroom.

What makes you different from other teachers? Spent 25 years in the U.S. Navy and lived in seven countries growing up.

Do you have any hobbies or talents? Bicycle rider; ride for cancer research.



Taking Learning To The Next Level

SONIA GARAKYARAGHI
PHOTOGRAPHER

While not all students at our school have had the opportunity to learn from Gary Hoag, his contributions should not go unnoticed.

Hoag has been a special education English teacher at our school for five years, but has been teaching dyslexic students since 1993. He has since been teaching several self-contained classes that include students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

Hoag's career began during his employment as a product development specialist at a publishing firm. "The corporate climate where I worked, my relationship with the company, became strained," he said. One of his colleagues left his job to teach reading and writing skills to dyslexic students using the Orton-Gillingham system. This system focuses on phonetics, as well as using kinesthetic, auditory, and visual teaching techniques to better connect with students.

Hoag completed an Orton-Gillingham course of study, before beginning a career in private teaching. "Running a business is a 24-7 proposition, and I have a son who I wanted time to coach little league baseball and that kind of thing," he said.

These time constraints led Hoag to seek an opening in the special education department at our school. The teaching position was for English special education. Although Hoag's diploma is in history, his background included working with special needs students, and he secured the job.

"I began to work toward a teaching license and a Masters in Education. It's been a long road, but the licensure is done and the Masters in Education is almost in hand," said Hoag.

Many of Hoag's students have failed to pass their 8th grade Language Arts SOL's, but after years of teaching at our school, Hoag understands how to best teach his students. "The students tend

to excel in storytelling. They need structure to make their stories work, and many of them have good verbal skills."

Hoag understands that although his pupils may not have stellar testing skills, they have talents in many other fields. "He brings his technological skills and writing experiences to the classroom," said team teacher Suzette Henry.

However, do not be fooled into thinking Hoag is a push-over. This teacher grades his students rigorously, explicitly states his expectations, and insists that each student meet his standards. His relationship with students is filled with compassion, but they realize that he is fully in charge.

Hoag's goal as a teacher is to fight the social stigma of special education students.

"I think there is still a stigma attached to special education. Some students have lowered their expectations and thereby abetted this problem, but I think FCPS has also focused on higher-performing students at the expense of those who have learning and other needs," he said.

Although he remains in control of his classroom, he enjoys letting loose occasionally.

On Halloween, Hoag got into the spirit with a realistic cowboy costume. "The students could not get over how authentic he looked," said Henry.

His colleagues respect Hoag as much as his students do. "Working with Hoag is fun and exciting; There is never a dull moment," said Henry.

Hoag's charisma and creativity make learning a manageable feat for his students, and place him into the ranks of the great teachers of our school.

