



Student killed by train School and community mourn the loss of senior Kyle Hobday

By Andrea Bradley

A memorial surrounded by flowers marks the spot where a beloved senior lost his life.

Kyle Hobday, 17, was struck and killed by a westbound freight train around 10:41 a.m. on Feb. 8.

News of his death reached

only a few students on Feb. 8, and an announcement was made in school on Feb. 9. A crisis team of over 20 teachers, social workers and police officers was available for the students for the rest of the week.

The team waited in senior hall for students who needed some-

one to talk to.

Hobday was struck as he crossed the tracks near Washington Street and Turner Court, about a half-mile away from the school.

Principal John Highland said that Hobday was a popular senior around school and that he was liked by students and faculty.

Good friend, senior John Yednock, agreed. "Kyle was a good guy. He always aimed to please those around him," he said. "If he ever saw that someone felt uncomfortable, he would do his best to comfort them, and was always willing to help out."

Other students felt the same way. With over 15 pages of comments left on Hobday's online blog, students shared memories and emotions with him and other friends.

On the blog, senior Carolyn

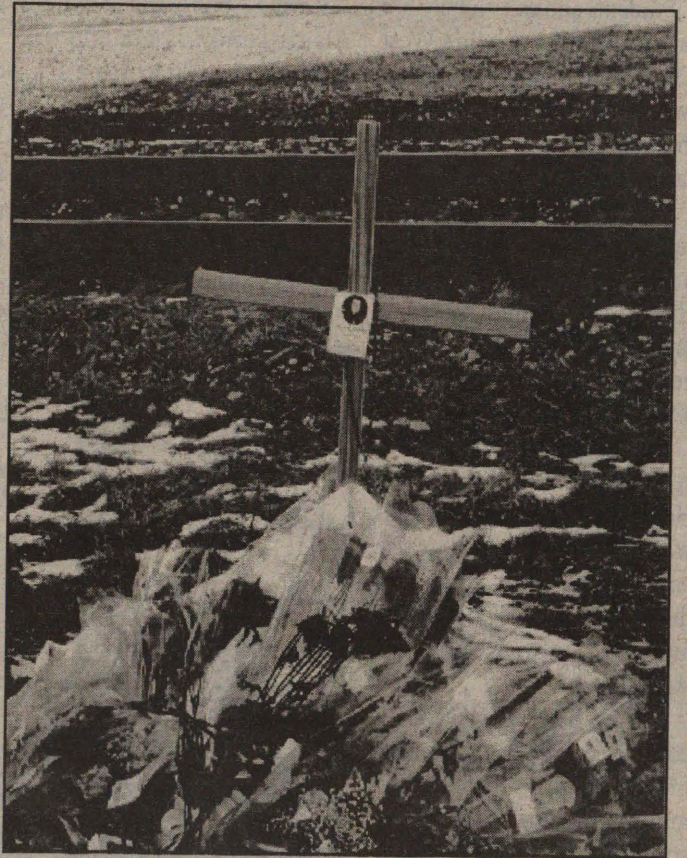


Photo by Ellyn Fortino

Students, teachers and community members began a memorial for Kyle Hobday almost immediately after his death, leaving flowers and other tributes near the train tracks where he died.

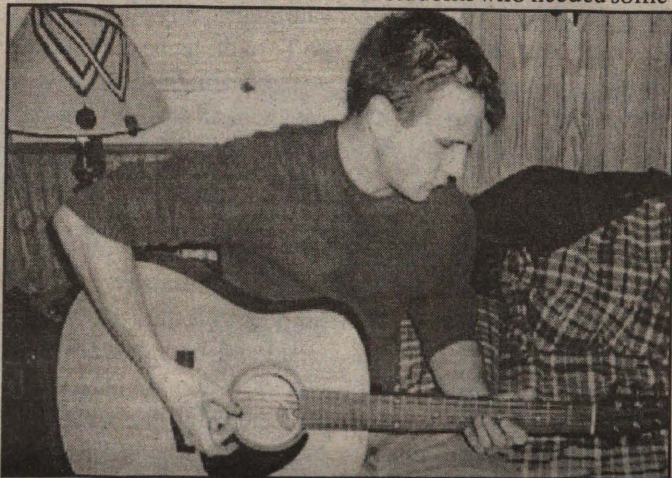


Photo courtesy of Brittany Rose

Dozens of students mourned the loss of their friend Hobday by posting letters and memories on his online journal and paying their respects at his wake.

Blackman said that her senior year would not be the same without him. Senior Ryan Pinto shared his memories of shooting pool with Hobday at Brunswick Zone.

Hobday's younger brother,

John Smagacz, wrote to Hobday telling him that he will always be his best friend.

Another good friend, senior Dustin Hedmark, also has many memories of Hobday.

(See Hobday page 2)

Campaign started to raise PSAE awareness

Students, teachers and faculty brainstorm incentives and penalties to encourage juniors to do well on tests

By Ellyn Fortino

The Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) is commonly referred to as a practice test by students, but that is not the case.

The PSAE test scores are important because they determine whether high schools make the adequate yearly progress (AYP), according to Principal John Highland.

"We don't like it but we'll rock it" and "Your Score Counts" were just a few of the

slogans brought up during a campaign meeting concerning the test.

The campaign team, made up of students and faculty, are currently trying to raise awareness of the PSAE's importance.

Last year, juniors made AYP and soon will come time for current juniors to take this test.

If AYP is not met, the school is one step closer to becoming a state run school. With consequences such as loss of electives and stricter classes.

Making AYP is not something to joke about, said No Child Left Behind coordinator Lourdes Ferrer.

"We need to erase this idea that the PSAE is a blow-off test," said Ferrer. "This test doesn't just represent a student's college accountability, it also represents the school as a whole. If you do bad we look bad."

Ideas such as free tuxedos or limo rides for prom, Ipods, TV sets or even the opportu-

nity to be exempt from a senior final were just a few ideas brought up in order to motivate students to take the PSAE seriously and pass the test. Students that passed the test would be the only students eligible to enter a raffle to win prizes, or they will have the opportunity for off-campus lunch, tenth hour off, or free senior parking.

A more drastic and controversial incentive talked about was making the test a graduation requirement.

"I don't think it's the right thing to bribe students," said junior Heather Stoeberl. "Students should want to do well on their own. The kids that fail

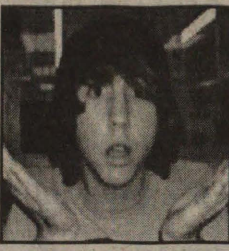

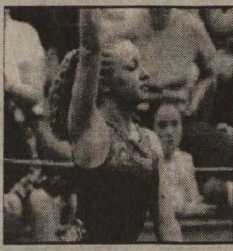
may just have trouble with timed tests, so it isn't fair that only the people who pass get rewards."

Juniors Caitlin Flood and Lauren Dylla disagree.

"If it will keep the state from taking over the school, I think it is a good idea," Dylla said. "Some kids only go to school for sports, electives, clubs etc. That wouldn't be good if they cut these things from our school," Flood added.

The test, which will be held on April 26 and 27, may still be a long time away for juniors, however PSAE prep worksheets have already been given out to students for practice.

(See PSAE page 2)

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Local family devastated by house fire

By Sabrina Potirala

Students and community are pulling together to help a West Chicago couple who lost their two young children in a fire that also destroyed their home Jan. 29.

The fire started when a lit candle on the first floor of the house set nearby curtains ablaze. The fire then spread to the second floor, trapping 7-year-old Natali Alanis and her 3-year-old brother, Noe.

According to relative and special education teacher Helen Cortez, a memorial fund was established to help raise enough money to assist with the funeral, as well as medical and living expenses for the Alanis family.

Cortez believes that with continued support of family, friends, and the rest of the community, the goals will be accomplished.

"We had an amount to meet to cover the funeral expenses and I believe that as of right now we are pretty close to meeting that amount," said Cortez. "However, there is no way to know for sure how much money has currently

been collected," said Cortez.

Karina Aburto, friend of the Alanis family, is grateful to anyone that has donated money.

"They're such nice people. It is a tragedy that the fire took the lives of Natali and Noe, and it is nice to see that people in the community are joining together to help their parents

get through this difficult time," said Aburto.

The fund was established only one day after the fire destroyed the couple's home.

"I was surprised to see how fast everyone acted on it. It just goes to show how compassionate people really can be," said Aburto.

The fund will continue until

the Alanis family is able to get back on its feet.

"This family has lost absolutely everything, and the continued support of the community would be greatly appreciated," said Cortez. "They will obviously need funding for quite some time. It doesn't just stop here."

According to Cortez, the family is currently living day-by-day and trying to deal with the loss of their children as best as possible.

Aburto encourages people in the community to continue donating money for the family.

"It would help to get the family back to living as normal as possible. Right now they really need our help," said Aburto.

People interested in donating money can make checks payable to the "Natali and Noe Alanis Memorial Fund" and leave them with Cortez, secretary Martha Ventimilla or social worker Alina Cyrus in the counseling office.

"We will see that they are properly deposited with DuPage National Bank for the family's use," said Cyrus.



Photo by Cristina Samelli

Relatives and other mourners left flowers and photos of the children at the homemade memorial in front of the destroyed home. The fund will help with repairs, among other family expenses.

Hobday...

(Continued from page 1)

"He was a very caring person. He would strive to be number one," Hedmark said.

He also remembered how Hobday could walk the length of his backyard on his hands, and that he did a great AC/DC impersonation.

Hobday will be greatly missed by everyone Pinto said on the blog.

Over 100 people, including students and faculty attended Hobday's wake on Feb. 11.

PSAE...

(Continued from page 1)

On April 25 Highland will talk to juniors about the importance of the test and motivate them to do well, and We-go Thru the Tube may show a segment on the life of a student without electives, showing what a school day would be like if the state ran the school.

"As a staff we have been guilty of minimizing the importance of the test," said Highland. "Students need to know that they are judged individually and the school is judged as a whole. This is a very serious test."

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Student athlete garners award for January

By Kellie Virnich

(Student of the Month is based on a solid academic history, commitment in extra-curricular activities, and community involvement. Students must be nominated by at least one staff member, and the final selection is made by the student activities director and a committee made up of additional staff members.)

Being well-known in the school as an athlete, senior Kelly Mateas was not surprised that her January Student of the Month nominations came from her swimming and basketball coaches, Curt Herrin and Kim Wallner, as well as P.E. instructor Dan Johnson.

"My favorite class these past four years has probably been advanced strength training with Mr. Johnson," Mateas said. "I love the competitive atmosphere of the weight room, and I'm not afraid to work hard."

In addition to her varsity spots on the school's swimming and basketball teams, Mateas has belonged to a club swim team for 10 years, and is secretary of National Honor Society.

She attributed her recognition of Student of the Month to not only her commitment to extracurriculars, but also her academic standing as one of this year's valedictorians.

She said, "I put lots of time

into everything that I do, and I encourage other people to do the same."

Mateas advised students not to join activities just because their friends are involved, and not to hesitate in joining something because they don't know anyone in it. Also important, she said, is taking freshman year just as seriously as any other, because "once you start to slack off and get behind, it's that much harder to catch up."

Though Mateas is eager to start college in the fall, she has said that she will miss all of the friends she has made, especially those on the swim team who have helped to push her to her full potential. Some of her best memories from high school include going with them to state swimming competitions for three of her four years at CHS.

"I have so many friends here; it's going to be really hard to leave them, my family and my teachers behind," Mateas said.

The University of Northern Iowa has already given her a partial swimming scholarship and accepted her into its honors program, where she will study elementary education. She hopes to eventually become a third grade teacher as well as a coach.

She partially attributed her athletic success to her family, which has somewhat of a knack for sports. Her father played baseball throughout high school and college, and her freshmen brothers are both in cross country, track and baseball.

Though Mateas said that her parents, teammates and coaches have always encouraged her and made her strive for improvement, she considers herself to be internally motivated. One saying that she uses to motivate herself is by poet Ralph Waldo Emerson. "No one can cheat you out of ultimate success except yourself."



Photo courtesy of Kelly Mateas

Mateas is excited to go to University of Northern Iowa on a partial swimming scholarship despite the fact that she will miss her teammates and family.

Dual credit now available

By Brittany Blanchard

For the first time, students will have the opportunity to earn both high school and college credit, simultaneously and affordably. This opportunity comes in the form of "dual credit."

Former business teacher Cass Streicher, in conjunction with District #94 faculty, has been working at College of DuPage (COD) to offer dual credit at Community High School. "(The program is) a great way to get a head start on college and save parents money," Streicher said.

Streicher found out about the program through COD. Once she realized area high schools like Naperville Central, Naperville North, Nequa Valley and Waubonsie Valley offer dual credit, she wanted to help make dual credit available to CHS students.

By working with COD High School Articulation Coordinator, Linda Bollendorf, students will have the opportunity to achieve dual credit during the spring 2006 semester for the following courses: keyboarding/word processing, bilingual keyboarding, sheltered word processing, photography, technical drawing, computer applications and architectural drawing.

Streicher and Dist. #94 staff are currently negotiating dual credit for computer art 1, desktop publishing, clothing construction and human anatomy and physiology.

In order for COD to accept courses, it must first be established that the curriculum at CHS matches that of the courses at COD. "It is important that the courses align to meet COD criteria so that students who will eventually end up at COD are ready to take the next level," said Streicher.

However, the program is not only limited to students

who plan on attending COD after high school.

Dual credit will give students college credit that can be transferred to any other state university, as well as many other colleges and universities. "Any university that accepts credit from COD will accept dual credit that a student obtains through CHS," Streicher said.

Students interested in obtaining dual credit must first enroll in one of the courses that offer the program and then apply to COD for dual enrollment credit by the deadline. Because dual credit is part of a permanent college transcript, it is strongly suggested that only students confident of earning an A or a B in the class apply for dual credit. Unfortunately, only students currently enrolled in these courses have the opportunity to earn credit. Students who have previously taken these courses are not eligible to receive dual credit.

Streicher is excited about this new opportunity for numerous reasons.

"I'm hoping that it encourages kids to take more electives and learn more about possible careers as well as their likes and dislikes," Streicher said. "It's a great way to get a head start on college and save money, but I also think it will give some students who are unsure of going to college the confidence that they can do college work and hopefully make college a little less intimidating."

Students wishing to participate will be charged a fee of \$10 only once, no matter how many times a student attempts to receive dual credit. Also, tuition is waived whereas one semester at COD can cost \$87 per credit hour, or \$261 for a 3 credit hour class or approximately \$1300 per semester to be a full-time COD student.

Boys strut their stuff in Mr. Wildcat competition

By Terri Molo

It's that time of year again, when senior boys get to show off their talents and physiques in Mr. Wildcat, March 10.

The show includes a series of events where the boys can show off their character. After an introduction, the boys perform their talents, model eveningwear, and end with a question and answer session.

Eric Lauer is one of the many boys hoping to earn the title of Mr. Wildcat. "I'm doing Mr.

Wildcat just because I want to. I love the stage and competing is the definition of being a senior," Lauer said.


Lauer will perform a rap that he wrote himself.

"I'm doing a rap because it makes me smooth with the ladies."

Chris Prochnow will also vie for the title of Mr. Wildcat by doing a fake ballet dance wearing a tutu.

"I'm pumped up because I really want to win," he said.

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Proposed license laws may affect teen drivers and their parents

By Brittany Blanchard

Life has the possibility of changing drastically for high school students across the state as a state legislator has proposed a bill to raise Illinois' driving age from 16- to 18-years-old.

Rep. John D'Amico said the issue is one of safety and presented the bill as such in January in response to two teen deaths in his district in December. The teens died when a 16-year-old lost control of a vehicle.

"Sixteen is an awfully young age to be driving a vehicle that could potentially kill you or someone else," D'Amico said to reporters.

Driver's education department chairman Dan Johnson does not support the proposed legislation.

"Driving ability and maturity are different for every person," Johnson said. "Lots of my 16-year-old students are very mature and excellent drivers so I don't think age is a determining factor. It's more about accepting the responsibility."

In addition to raising the driving age, D'Amico also wants to raise the age in which teens can obtain their learner's permit to 17 as well as double the number of hours a teen must log driving with an adult to 50 instead of 25 hours.

This is a proposal Johnson agrees with.

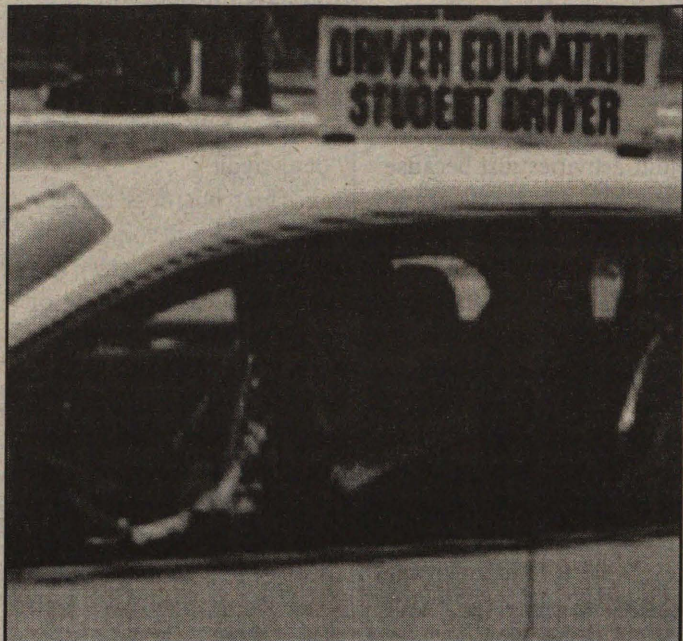


Photo by Brittany Blanchard

If politicians pass the bill raising the driving age from 16 to 18, students like sophomore John Photopulos would be unable to take driver's education until their senior year.

"Extra practice determines more of a student's driving habits than anything else," Johnson said.

Johnson also pointed out that Illinois is currently on the low end of teen driving requirements.

"Most other states require around 40 or 50 hours so an increase in practice time with a parent or adult really isn't all that uncommon," said Johnson.

Senior Sara Kufta imagines how much different her high

school life would have been had she needed to wait two extra years to receive her driver's license.

"If I didn't have the freedom and independence to drive until this year, I think it would have been more stressful on my parents than me," Kufta said. "I'm involved in so many after school activities that it's absolutely vital I am able to transport myself because my mom just doesn't have the time to constantly be dropping me off and picking me up."

Correction

Board of Education member John Jensen was incorrectly identified in December's "Tak-

ing up the Chalk" article. The Chronicle regrets the error.

Budget cuts dismantle home maintenance

By David Thomas

The first in the coming series of budget reductions was felt as the home maintenance program was cut.

Starting in the 2006-2007 school year, the nurse's office will occupy the home maintenance area while the former nursing area will be converted into classrooms.

Supt. Lee Rieck said that there were several reasons for the cut.

"The main issue was space," said Rieck. "It sits vacant five-sevenths of the day while in some areas there are too many kids."

Rieck also pointed out that the Technical College of DuPage (TCD) has a similar program. Teachers' Association president Barbara Laimins, however, laments the cut.

"It's a real loss to the ninety kids that were signed up for that class next year. It taught kids skills they need throughout their lives," said Laimins.

Industrial arts department chair Paul Junkroski was also critical of the cut.

"It was a viable class. We had 90 kids signed up for next year, so it was obviously popular," said Junkroski.

The class taught students many practical skills, including carpentry, dry walling, and plumbing. But the home maintenance class goes beyond construction. According to teacher Michael Terronez, science plays a crucial role in

the class. Students learn which trees are good for lumber and which are good for hardwood and softwood. They must also budget their projects, simulating what families do when they decide to remodel.

"We're teaching students how to make it in the real world," said Terronez.

Despite the hard work, the students enjoy the class.

"I think it's the best class I've ever taken," said junior Mike Cirelli. "It's a shame they're getting rid of it."

Terronez recounted the scene he witnessed during first semester. He opened the class to students who needed to meet their deadlines for two days during the winter break. According to Terronez, 20 students came in.

"When you have kids coming in on Christmas vacation, I think that really says something about the class," said Terronez.

Junkroski said that the class was valuable in that it allowed students to experiment.

"If a student wanted to learn something practical, or they were thinking about getting into the building trade, this was the class to take," said Junkroski.

He also said that TCD was not a supplement to the home maintenance program, remarking that it would more (See Cuts page 2)

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Bookstore moves to library

By Kym McDaniel

Students seeking extra supplies will be relieved to find that the bookstore is now available to them in the LRC instead of commons.

Bookstore hours have expanded from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. daily. Previously the bookstore was only open Tuesday mornings 7:15 to 7:45 a.m.

The bookstore sells all kinds of school supplies, including rulers, pens, pencils, notebooks, folders, paper, computer disks, drafting supplies and erasers.

Compared to walgreens.com, bookstore prices are significantly cheaper. A 12-inch ruler at the bookstore is 75 cents while at walgreens.com it is 99 cents. A bigger difference is in binders. Bookstore binders are \$1.25, and at walgreens.com they are \$3.49.

Edie Freund, LRC clerk, and Eric Bodwell, LRC director both said that it was implied that budget crunches contributed to the move.

"A lot of supplies weren't

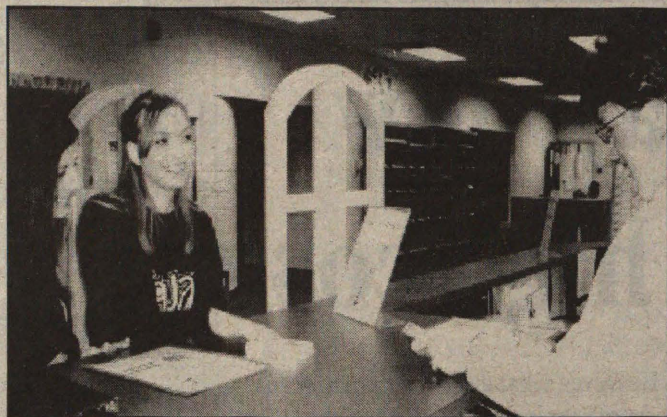


Photo by Kym McDaniel

Now only has the bookstore's location changed, but it is also available to students during the entire school week.

being sold and the administration saw that supplies were just sitting there," said Freund.

Students are quickly buying supplies.

"I was using change out of my pocket on the first Thursday (it was open). I didn't even have a cash box yet," said Freund.

Sophomores Melanie Linsenmeyer and Melissa Molskow are happy with the new location.

"It's more convenient because then you don't have to go all the way to commons. If I

needed something I would be more likely to go there than go to Jewel," said Linsenmeyer.

Molskow agreed, "It is more convenient. I just went there for the first time today and I liked it much better in the library."

But other students aren't so thrilled about the move.

Sophomore Dustin Hon said, "It was more convenient in commons. I don't go to the library that often and even though the hours are better in the library, I still would like it better in commons."

School intruder caught

By Katie Taylor

An intruder suspected of kissing a high school girl against her will and a daytime assault at the city's commuter train station was arrested near the school campus Jan. 25 by West Chicago authorities.

Juan Perez, 21, was seen wandering the halls Jan. 19, when he allegedly grabbed a female student and kissed her on the cheek, according to West Chicago police commander Laz Perez.

Juan Perez was caught with the help of a female staff member, who described him to a sketch artist after being warned to look out for suspicious male intruders. Perez was then recognized by a security guard.

Juan Perez was charged with aggravated battery, un-

lawful restraint and attempted sexual abuse in the Jan. 2 incident and aggravated battery and criminal trespass to state-supported land in the Jan. 19 case.

Assistant Principal Josh Chambers said that Juan Perez was allegedly inside of the school on two occasions, once while the school was open for dance production and another while entrances were open for indoor track.

"As a school we try to do everything to keep the school safe yet keep the doors open for access to students," said Chambers.

Chambers said that he is in the process of asking the Board of Education for an after-school security staff to keep the campus safe during sports and activities.

Sumo for Africa

By Andrea Bradley

Teachers are getting ready to rumble for community leadership's next Wego 2 Africa fundraiser, a faculty sumo tournament on Monday.

Students in the class hope to raise money for the school they plan to build in Africa with the Tournament.

The student's first step in creating Sumo 2 Africa was choosing 30 teachers to help them earn money.

For one week, students were able to put money in their favorite teacher's jars. The 16 teachers with the most money earned a spot in the tournament.

Band teacher Steve Govertson had the most money in his can and is excited to step up to the challenge.

Govertson hopes to win using his "long standing connection to the sumo culture with its heavy reliance on food and thongs."

Senior Lauren Buscemi wants Mary Ellen Daneels to win the tournament.

"She looks like she could be intimidating. I think she would definitely scare her opponent," she said.

While the change drive took place, Wego 2 Africa students

created posters depicting teachers as sumo wrestlers to advertise the event.

Students in the class are eager to see their hard work pay off for the children in Angola, Africa.

"We are gifted with so many opportunities and the best gift we, as a community, can do is give back those same opportunities," said senior Phyllida Kornoski.

Classmate Alex Breinig agreed with Kornoski.

"It's a great feeling because I know that I am helping people have better lives and I hope that others will do the same," she said.

The event is important to the students and their goal of earning \$10,000. The event will only cost viewers \$2, and all of the money will go to helping the kids in Africa.

Students will be able to see their favorite teachers dress up like sumo wrestlers from 7-8:30 p.m. in the Bishop Gym.

"If a student is interested in donating but cannot attend Sumo 2 Africa they shouldn't worry. There will be other ways to donate throughout the year. Also, if anyone has any ideas for fundraisers, please talk to me," said Daneels.

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Cuts... (Continued from page 4)

expensive to send the kids to TCD than here.

The board is also looking at other classrooms and how often they are used.

In addition, the position of bilingual education coordinator Norman Kane was reduced to a teaching position.

"We didn't want the cuts to

come out of the teachers' ranks. We're also looking for flexibility out of our administrators," said Rieck.

The school employs 17 administrators, and all except three have had teaching experience. According to Rieck, more administration positions will be reduced.

Our View

Wal-Mart's 'always low prices' come at high cost

As the world's number one retailer and America's largest employer, Wal-Mart has made a significant impact on the lives of millions. Whether Wal-Mart's impact has been a positive one, however, is questionable.

The retail giant is in the news almost daily, with reports of unfair labor practice, gender discrimination and lack of health care coverage for its 1.3 million U.S. employees.

One of the most recent concerns with Wal-Mart came from Evergreen Park, where 24,500 Chicagoans applied for 325 positions at the new store which opened Jan. 27. Alderman Howard Brookins Jr. of the 21st Ward spoke out against the opening, "For all practical purposes, Wal-Mart is in the city of Chicago without us receiving any benefit. You're going to see the parking lot filled with cars with Chicago city stickers."

Chicago officials struck down a plan to build a Wal-Mart in the city, and consequently, the new store was built one block outside city limits. In turn, Wal-Mart will collect all of the profits, instead of the city and its residents.

Despite the criticism, millions of consumers rely on Wal-Mart for its "always low prices."

The promise for low-priced goods clearly seems to take priority over morality and the rights of Wal-Mart's employees; both in the U.S. and overseas.

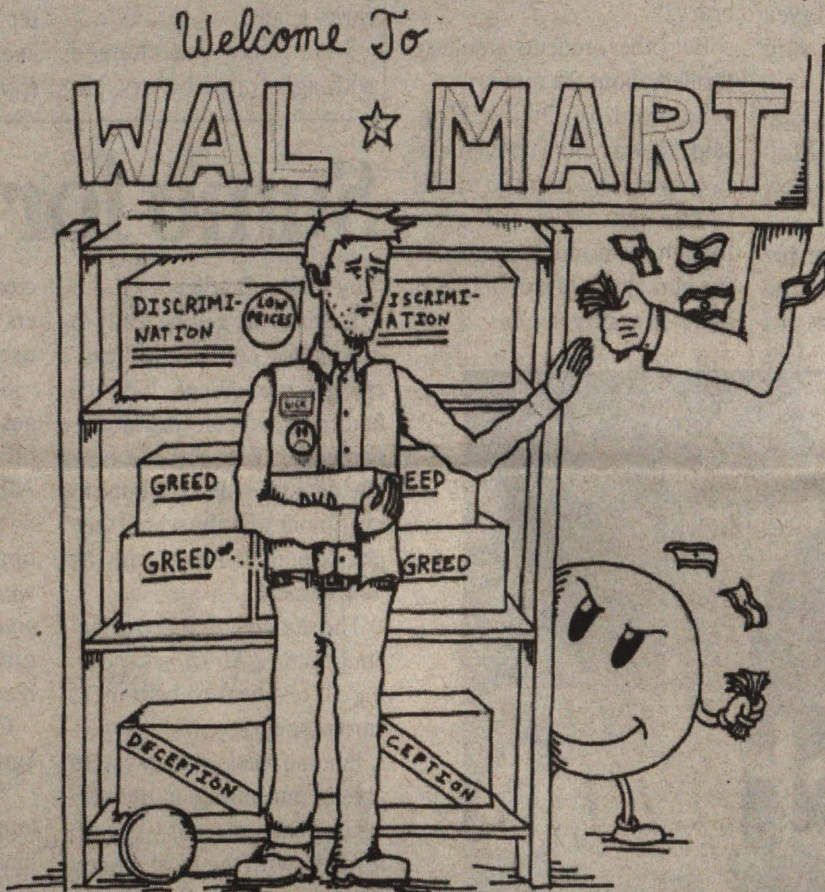
In 2001, the most recent year Wal-Mart released figures for its sales associates, they earned an average of \$8.23 an hour for an annual wage of \$13,861, according to wakeupwalmart.com. The 2001 poverty line for a family of three was \$14,630, the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services 2001 Poverty Guidelines reported, therefore making it impossible for a single mother of three to support her family working there.

Many argue that Wal-Mart's low costs are too good

to pass up. However, what customers fail to realize is that the cost of keeping prices so low comes with a penalty.

Keeping prices down hurts employees, and hurts U.S. taxpayers. Harper's Index reported that the estimated total of federal assistance which Wal-Mart employees were eligible for in 2004 was \$2.5 billion.

Customers of Wal-Mart are not saving money.



Instead, they are blindly feeding a salivating, hungry giant whose only goal is to dominate the retail industry and crush Mom and Pop businesses. According to the book "The Wal-Mart Effect", between 1990 and 2000, 31 supermarket chains sought bankruptcy protection, including 27 that cited Wal-Mart as a factor.

Millions rely on Wal-Mart because of its low prices and local availability, but when the rights of workers, minorities, women, and small businesses are sacrificed for customer "satisfaction" and global dominance, saving a few bucks is not worth it.

Letter to the Editor

Political views set aside to consider safety of Plan B, especially for teens

The topic of emergency contraception can be discussed on many different levels, including ethical, political and scientific.

It is important to check our facts and to be open and honest with one another as we debate such controversial issues.

I found the Chronicle editorial "Bush Administration and FDA need to stop putting religion into science and approve Plan B" to be honest in its political opinions but flawed in its scientific assertions. This tends to be the case when scientific issues are debated, even among scientists!

I followed the development of the "morning-after" pill as it was presented and discussed in medical journals and at conferences. I am aware of the concerns of those physicians who oppose making this an over the counter (OTC) medication, and I have heard the arguments of those who support such a move.

The problem with making any medication available OTC is that it can be used by people who have no place to turn in case of emergency.

If a woman has an ectopic pregnancy (a pregnancy outside of the uterus), there is a great potential that the "morning after pill" will be ineffective. Because she is not seeing a physician, the pregnancy will grow and eventually rupture inside her body. This is the leading cause of pregnancy related death in American women. It happens more often in teenagers than any other group.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has asked the manufacturer of this drug ("Plan B") to implement a plan to prevent these potential catastrophes. I was one of many physicians who wrote to the FDA and suggested caution before making this medication available over the counter.

Please understand that I am not making a political statement about abortion or the Bush administration. I am concerned about the health and well being of American women, having served them for 22 years as an obstetrician/gynecologist.

The role of the FDA is to assure safety in the health industry, not to promote any particular political agenda.

Unfortunately there will always be people who see politics in every decision the FDA makes. You feel that Republicans are making this drug less available.

Many conservatives felt that Democrats made it available when it was approved (by prescription) in 1999. Is either side being fair in their accusations?

Hank Murphy, MD
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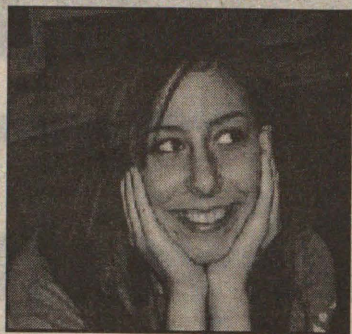
THE WILDCAT CHRONICLE is the student newspaper at West Chicago Community High School. It is a public forum for freedom of expression and encourages readers to express their views. The Chronicle publishes eight times a year, with the student editorial board making the decisions concerning the paper's contents. Unsigned editorials represent the views of the majority of the staff.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR are welcomed and will be published as space allows. Letters must be signed, although the staff may withhold a name upon request. The paper reserves the right to edit letters for grammar and clarity, and may refuse to publish a letter. Letters to the editor may be e-mailed to Laura Kuehn at lkuehn@d94.org or delivered to Room 319 before or after school.

Top 10 reasons why junior year is grueling and stressful

By Katie Taylor

If you were to walk through the halls of our school, you would probably encounter buoyant freshmen, stress-free sophomores, and troops of lazy seniors. And those depressed teens observed schlepping to class carrying loads of homework in a sleep deprived trance would be the juniors.



Junior year is notorious for being the toughest year in high school, which is completely true.

These are the top 10 reasons why junior year is stressing out the class of 2007:

Number 10 is the infamous junior research paper. More than having no idea what to write about, the looming weeks ahead of researching, bibliographies and more researching is a headache on the horizon.

Number 9 is turning 17. I know it sounds lame, but it's just not quite as exciting as the sweet 16 and nowhere near as significant as becoming an adult, legally at least. It's an in-between age that pales in comparison to the big one eight.

Number 8 is the ACT. Not only do we have the enormous pressure to study for this exam, but we are being coerced by our worried parents into taking a boring ACT prep class. Plus, this test is only one week after spring break, so just as our brains have turned to mush, we juniors get to take the test that determines our futures.

Number 7 is club commitments. Thinking about college applications, people are joining simply to add to their list of activities. And for those of us who are al-

ready in clubs, junior year marks more commitments and gruesome fights for leadership positions.

Number 6 is the fact that cliques and stereotypes are set in stone by junior year, and it is nearly impossible to change a stereotype, even if the people who label you don't really know you.

Number 5 is the parking situation. Most of us have cars, but because we aren't seniors we're forced to park at the library or Kerr-McGee, and walk a few blocks in the snow.

Number 4 is the expectation from teachers to be a perfect model student. We have been at the school long enough to be expected to know all the rules and policies, yet we aren't given the slack for being late to class like most seniors. I'm convinced that most teachers love to torture juniors just to see when they'll snap.

Number 3 is the massive amount of homework we are assigned. I have never had to write more papers, read more books, and overall study more than this year. Homework tends to keep me away from my friends and because I'm usually held captive in my room by "The Scarlet Letter".

Number 2 is college pressure. By now, we're supposed to start thinking about what we want to do with our lives and more specifically, what schools we are going to apply to. Scheduling trips, talking to counselors, and thinking about scholarships is enough to drive anyone mad.

And finally, the number 1 reason why junior year is impossibly taxing: the Prairie State Exams. Not only are these dreadful tests too important to blow off, but the long day of tedious fill-in-the-bubble testing falls the day before our junior prom. Great timing!

At least there are two things juniors can rejoice about: The year is already half over, and next year we're going to be seniors. Cheers, class of 2007, to next year!

Ray Nagin's outlandish remarks are blatantly racist

By Ellyn Fortino

New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin blasted African-Americans for not taking care of themselves, took a swipe at the Bush Administration's war in Iraq and said that recent hurricanes were God's way of showing his anger for waging a war in Iraq based on false pretenses. All of this on Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Despite the fact that whites and blacks were just about equally affected by Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, Nagin, who is African-American, also promised that the new city will be a 'chocolate' city again.

"It's time for us to come together. It's time for us to rebuild New Orleans- the one that should be a 'chocolate' New Orleans," Nagin said. "This city will be a majority African American city. It's the way God wants it to be. You can't have New Orleans no other way. It wouldn't be New Orleans."

Many whites perceive this loaded comment as racist and feel as though they are not welcome in New Orleans.

Whites are now refusing to donate their money to the hurricane relief funds and some occupants of the city are refusing to move back once the city recovers from the hurricane.

Think about this. What would happen if a mayor of a predominately white city were to proclaim the new city would be a 'vanilla' city?

How fast would the NAACP and all other race-baiters descend on that city in a rage of fury?

Considering New Orleans was more than 60 percent African American before Katrina hit, whites can almost understand what Nagin was trying to communicate, although his choice of words ("It's the way God wants it to be. You can't have New Orleans no other way") were poor.

Mind you, Nagin is an elected official and has already been on the record making another racist comment. Addressing a business forum in October, Nagin put the issue bluntly: "How do I ensure that New Orleans is not overrun by Mexican workers?"

He also was criticized for saying shortly after Hurricane Katrina that 10,000 people had probably been killed in the city, and that there were rampant rapes and murders taking place at the Louisiana Superdome, where thousands had sought shelter after the storm. However, the actual death toll for the state was closer to 2,000, and journalists and law enforcement officials have criticized the initial reports of rapes and murders as grossly exaggerated.

The mayor, who is up for re-election this year, attempted to defuse the controversy, which spurred cable television polls and hours of talk radio debates.

"How do you make chocolate? You take dark chocolate, you mix it with white milk, and it becomes a delicious drink. That is the chocolate I am talking about," Nagin told CNN affiliate WDSU-TV in New Orleans. "New Orleans was a chocolate city before Katrina. It is going to be a chocolate city after. How is that divisive?"

New Orleans was an American city populated by Americans, not "white milk" or "dark chocolate." Does it matter what color the skin is?

We will only become a unified country when we start acting like it.

People should not give up their identities, but wedges should not grow between each other either. We must strive to become a more colorblind society if we expect anything to truly change.

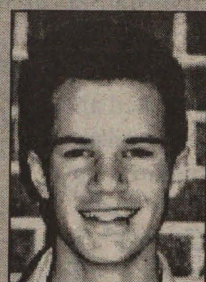
Question & Answer

How do you feel about Ray Nagin's comment calling New Orleans a 'chocolate city'?



Sara Earhart
Senior

"I don't think it was racist because there's a lot of African American history in New Orleans."



Nathan Melbourne
Junior

"I love the idea."



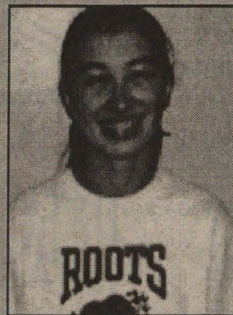
Corrie Stieglitz
Botany teacher

"Maybe he likes (singer) George Clinton."



Rachel Jefferson
Sophomore

"I wouldn't mind living in a chocolate city."



Caitlin Shiga
Freshman

"Whoa! That is out of bounds. That is crazy."

"If a white mayor wanted a 'vanilla city' he would've been kicked out of office already."



Evan Serwinski
Senior

Added caffeine: Almost like steroids for a chocolate bar

By Terri Molo

After consuming pounds of chocolate on Valentine's Day, many people blame the caffeine for their jitteriness. Except for one problem: chocolate does not contain natural caffeine.

It's a misconception that chocolate contains caffeine. Chocolate actually has theobromine, an organic compound similar to caffeine.

Theobromine is the active ingredient in chocolate. Theobromine and caffeine are related and have similar structures, but are different chemicals with different properties, effects and origins according to sources at www.mrkland.com/fun/xocoatl/caffeine.htm.

Junior Laurie Aburto depends on chocolate to gain relief.

"I'm addicted to chocolate and I eat it because when I'm sad and

depressed it makes me feel better," Aburto said.

There are some chocolate products that have added caffeine, but it is

are theobromine is gentle while caffeine is intense. Theobromine is not addictive and caffeine is.

The effect of caffeine is strong and theobromine is mild. Theobromine causes someone to feel happy, caffeine causes alertness and can also make someone feel nervous.

Almost no one is allergic to theobromine. Many people are allergic to caffeine, according to the website.

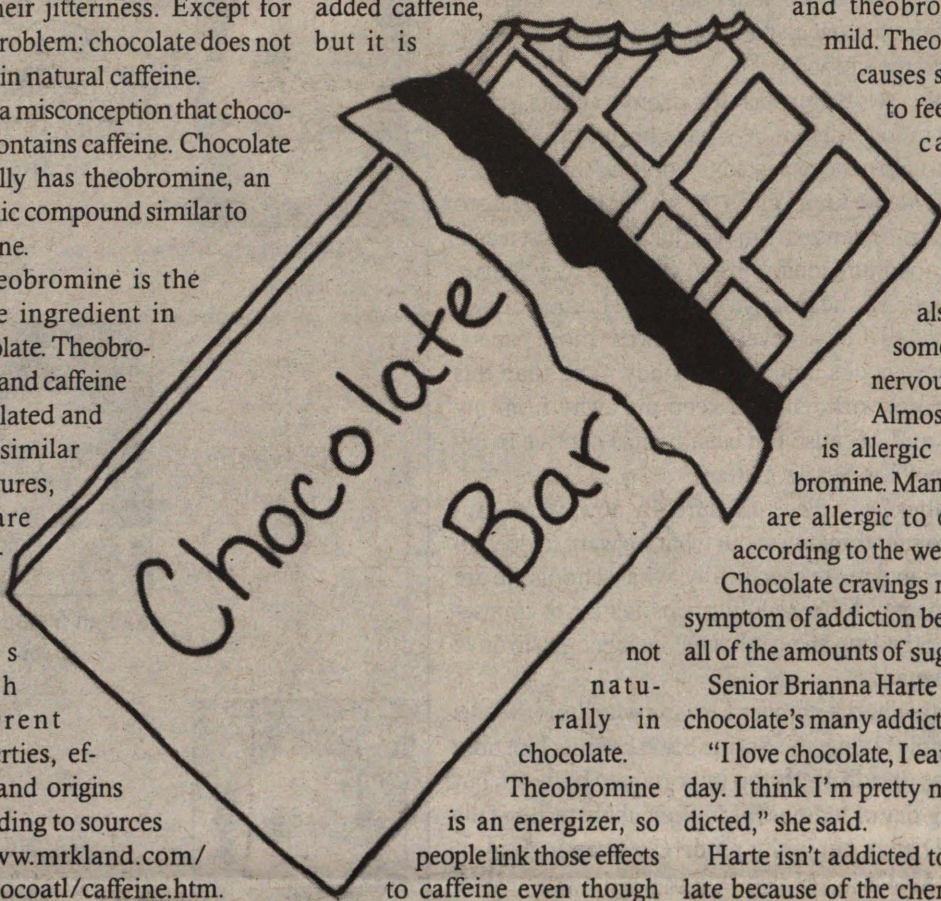
Chocolate cravings may be a symptom of addiction because of all of the amounts of sugar.

Senior Brianna Harte is one of chocolate's many addicts.

"I love chocolate, I eat it every day. I think I'm pretty much addicted," she said.

Harte isn't addicted to chocolate because of the chemicals it contains, but more for the flavor.

"I don't really feel anything when I eat it. I eat it because it tastes good," Harte said.



not naturally in chocolate.

Theobromine is an energizer, so people link those effects to caffeine even though many of the effects are different from caffeine.

Some of the differences between theobromine and caffeine

Energy pills' quick rush may cause unhealthy and addictive habits that could become fatal

By Katie Taylor

Some teens aren't reaching for soft drinks or coffee, but a far more serious caffeine fix: Energy pills.

Teens know the routine: After a late night of homework or TV watching, a little caffeine boost in the morning can get them through the day.

But what many caffeine pill users don't know is that these stimulants can be unhealthy and even dangerous.

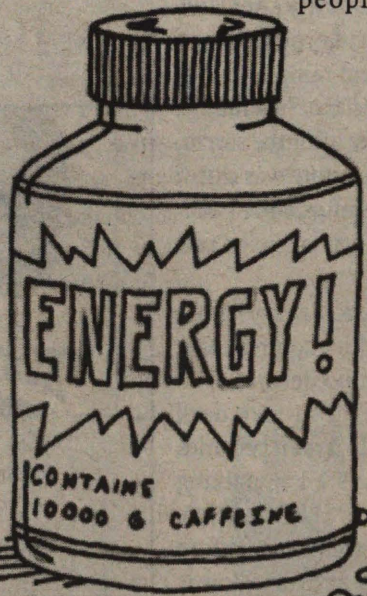
"They can keep you up really late if you need to do stuff," said freshman Patrick Taylor. "I know they are bad, but lots of people take them when they need to wake up early for sports or something."

Caffeine pills come in tablets, and can contain up to 200 milligrams of caffeine in one capsule, which is almost six times as much than in a 12-ounce can of Coca-Cola.

"It's a bad habit," said school

nurse Beth Jones. "It definitely gives you a rush, but it's not a natural way to treat your body."

Doctors recommend that people



should consume no more than about 100 milligrams of caffeine daily, according to kidshealth.org. Therefore, those who consume only one caffeine pill would already be doubling the recommended amount of caffeine that profes-

sionals determine healthy.

"I've tried a caffeine pill once, and all it did was make me really shaky and give me a bad stomachache," said junior Brittany Casey. "I probably wouldn't try them ever again."

Caffeine pills are often considered harmless. According to the label on Vivarin, a popular caffeine pill brand, "Vivarin is used for a safe, fast pick up anytime you feel drowsy and need to be alert. The caffeine in Vivarin is less irritating to your stomach than coffee, according to a government appointed panel of experts."

However, like any medication, caffeine can be harmful or deadly in sufficient quantities.

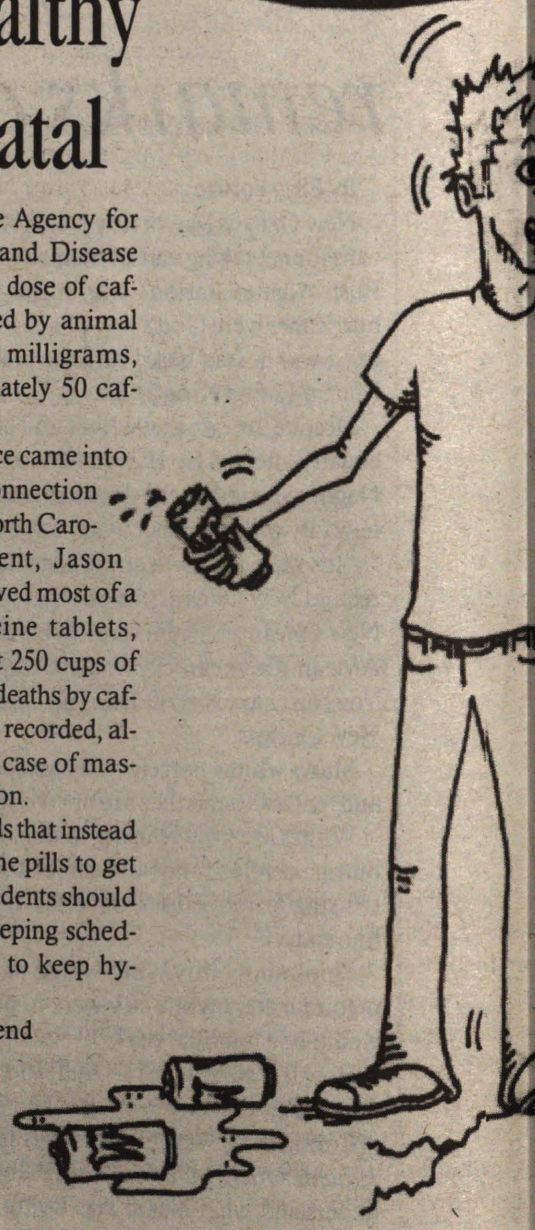
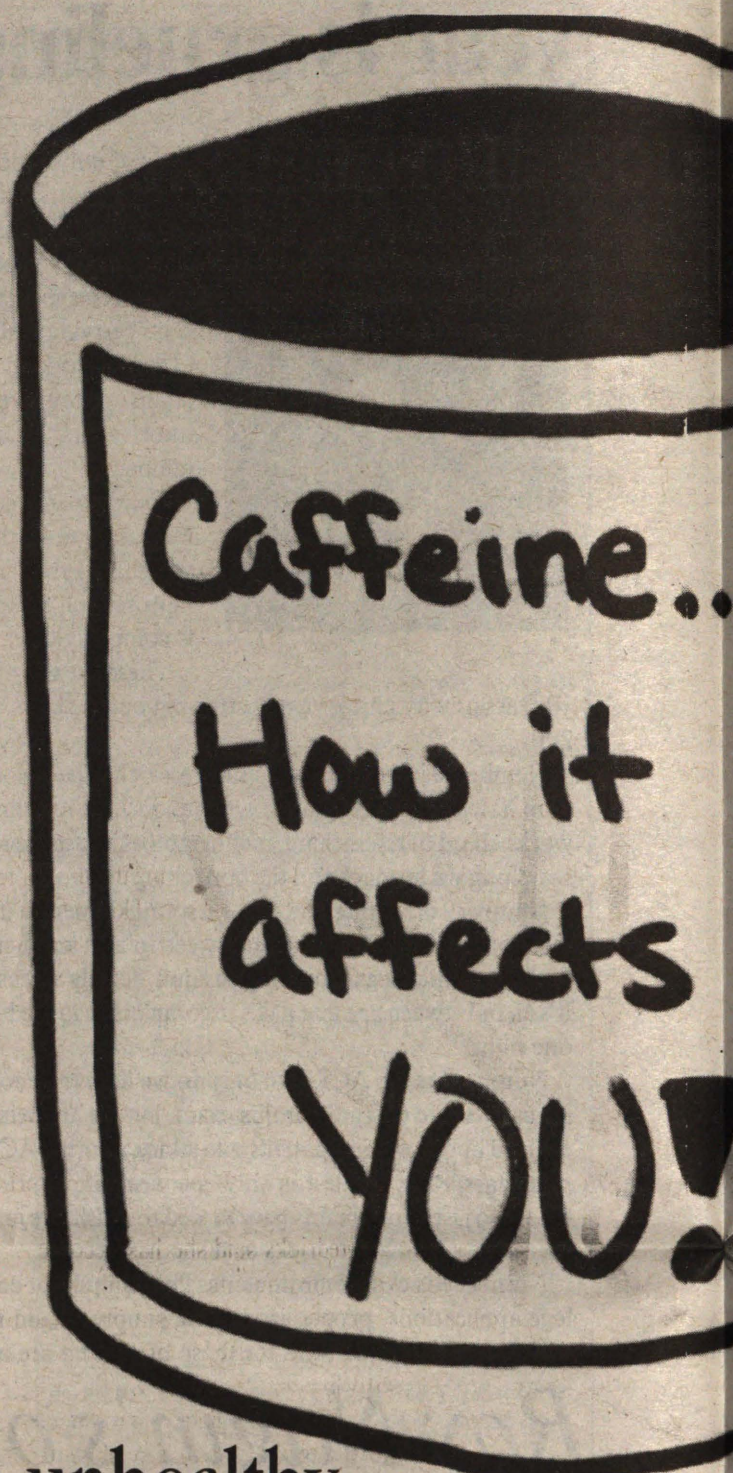
Most warning labels on caffeine pills say the drug stimulates the central nervous system and can cause restlessness, nervousness, gastrointestinal disturbances and other problems.

According to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, the lethal dose of caffeine, as determined by animal studies, is 10,000 milligrams, which is approximately 50 caffeine pills.

Caffeine pills once came into examination in connection with the death of North Carolina college student, Jason Allen, who swallowed most of a bottle of 90 caffeine tablets, equivalent to about 250 cups of coffee. A few other deaths by caffeine overdose were recorded, almost always in the case of massive pill consumption.

Jones recommends that instead of relying on caffeine pills to get through the day, students should get on a regular sleeping schedule and remember to keep hydrated.

"I don't recommend (caffeine pills). It's better to get by on time management and plenty of sleep," Jones said.



Energy drinks: Causing destruction and bringing out the 'monster' in you

By Kym McDaniel

Whether you drink an energy drink to wake up, before sports or a party, or for the energy rush, be prepared to accept the consequences that result afterwards. While students admit that they think energy drinks may not be healthy, it does not stop them from drinking them. "I know for a fact it's not (healthy)," said sophomore Caitlin Fredricks, who drinks Monster five times a week and Rockstar and Redbull regularly. "It just tastes really good," Fredricks said.

Fredricks said she has become immune to Monster's supposed energy rush because she drinks it so much. "It used to make me really hyper," she said.

Joe Lasacco agreed, "I know that anything that has that much stuff you can't pronounce in the ingredients is bad to drink."

Energy drinks include taurine as a main ingredient.

Energydrinks.factexpert.com said that taurine has caused anxiety, high sensitivity to noise, irritability and self-mutilation in rats.

"Caffeine makes you jittery,

gives you a hard time sleeping and bad habits," said Cara Blevins, a food and fit teacher.

However, taurine also plays a major role in digestion and in some studies has lowered blood pressure in humans.

According to wikipedia.org, taurine is being tested to reverse liver damage caused by alcoholism. No studies have confirmed that taurine enhances the effects of caffeine.

Redbull energy drink also has heavy amounts of taurine.

"Redbull is okay, but Monster just tastes better," said Fredricks.

Blevins said that Monster is "not good to drink everyday."

Fredricks said Monster is separated from other energy drinks that she has tried because of Monster's taste.

"It (Monster) tastes like liquified shocktarts," said Lasacco.

Lasacco used to drink Monster but has now stopped because it was "pure caffeine" and "too much for too long."

Lasacco also drinks Sobe Adrenaline and Redbull.

"Some energy drinks boast higher caffeine than others, but they all vary. Drinking addicting energy drinks could lead into other substances like mphetamines," said Blevins.

However, according to peakperformance.com, energy drinks are "developed to provide energy and for periods of in-

creased mental and physical exertion. Energy drinks help restore mental alertness when experiencing drowsiness."

"Energy

Blevins also said that teens "need to learn how to get some sleep."

Fredricks, who plays softball and basketball, knows that it's bad for athletes to drink energy drinks. Blevins agrees.

"I have heard that that amount of caffeine can cause heart palpitations if working out. But, working out should give you energy, not an energy drink. It is not safe to drink a stimulant and then work out," said Blevins.

The Monster energy truck has come to school for the past two years to endorse Monster.

"(The truck) is defeating the purpose of food and fit. I don't think it's a good idea at all," said Blevins.

Apparently, Monster's lure is overpowering. On Jan. 27, JV cheerleaders raced out of the gym to run to get their Monster from the van, parked outside the school during the sophomore basketball game. Monster officials ran out of Monster to hand out.



drinks keep me up in the morning. Coke and Sprite don't work," said junior Kevin Sinclair, who drinks Monster every day.

Sinclair also drinks Kaos, which is 70 percent juice. Sinclair, Lasacco and Fredricks all drink the regular, 16 ounce size.

Blevins also mentioned that Kaos has fruit juice, but it still includes caffeine, and is addictive to start drinking at a young age.

"There is that fear that energy drinks will lead to other dangerous substances," said Blevins.

Coffee, in moderation, can be healthy

By Kayla Harris

Millions of Americans drink coffee every day, but what many fail to realize is the physical and mental effects it has on individuals.

Coffee has become such a necessity that Starbucks, the world's leading coffee retailer, serves approximately 25 million customers every week according to cityofseattle.com.

When Googling "coffee addiction," almost 2.5 million results appear.

Sophomore Greg Pelke knows this feeling all too well. Pelke has been drinking coffee since he was 6. Normally, he consumes about six shots of espresso

throughout the day. When he has not had his normal cup of coffee, he experiences headaches, shakes uncontrollably and has a difficult time concentrating.

Pelke has tried to stop what he calls his addiction. "My head hurt too bad so I just kept drinking," he said.

The sophomore almost always has a mug of coffee with him and even received three Starbucks giftcards for Christmas.

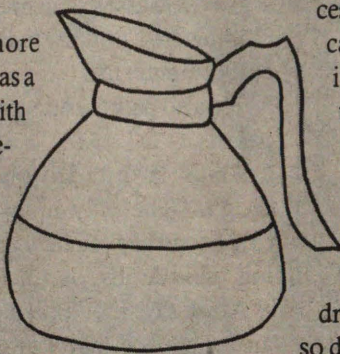
"I would probably never give up coffee," Pelke said, "unless there was some serious health risk."

The reason behind the coffee obsession may point toward caf-

fine. Coffee's main component, caffeine, has caused controversy in the medical world for years, and with good reason. Regular coffee consumption reduces sensitivity to caffeine, which in turn builds up caffeine tolerance.

Consumption of caffeine in excess of 250 milligrams causes restlessness, insomnia, gastrointestinal disturbance and muscle twitching, according to WebMd.com.

Coffee withdrawal would not be so difficult if it was not for caffeine. Often, people who are reducing their caffeine intake report being irritable, unable to work, nervous, restless, fatigued, and suffering from headaches.



Dan Johnson, physical education department chair said that drinking coffee is not necessarily a bad thing.

"Too much of anything is not good," Johnson said. The key, he says, to quit drinking too much coffee is to slowly decrease the amount over time.

Johnson doesn't recommend stopping cold turkey.

"The side effects lead to failure," he said.

Instead of giving up coffee altogether, health officials recommend drinking about two cups every day. Researchers have found that drinking coffee regularly can help lower your risks of diabetes, Parkinson's disease and colon cancer.

The main objective, officials say, is to drink coffee in moderation.



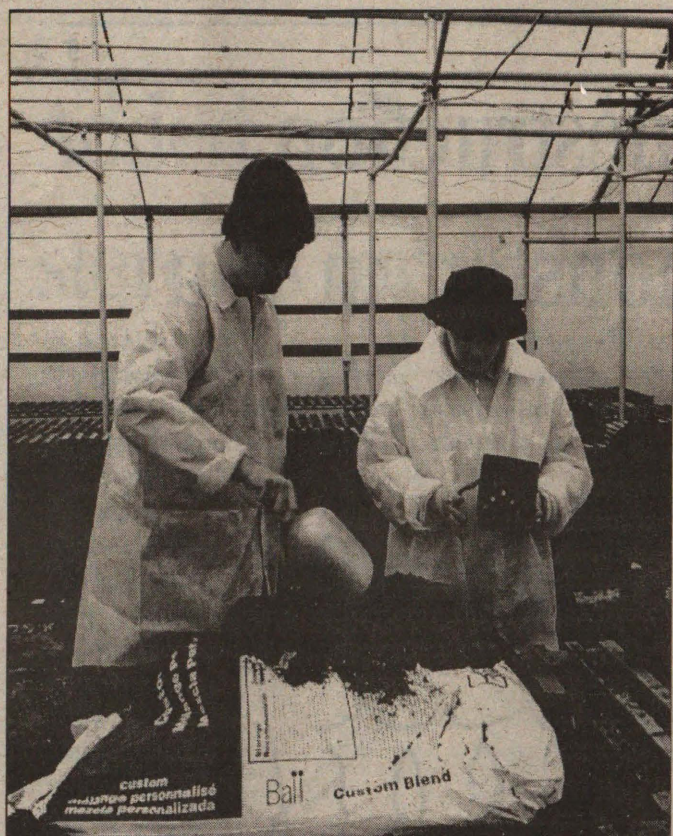


Photo by Julie Youngwith

There are many different jobs for the workers at We Grow Dreams. Brian Goste and Andrea Larson fill empty pots with dirt to plant with seeds later.

Local greenhouse grows more than just plants and flowers

We Grow Dreams gives hope for those with disabilities

By Julie Youngwith

There is a place in West Chicago where individuals learn to grow plants as well as their dreams.

We Grow Dreams, Inc. is a year-round non-for-profit organization that was founded in December 2004. It provides training and employment opportunities for people with special needs and disabilities. They can make friends, assist customers and enjoy working in the community all while earning their own paycheck.

President of the organization, Donna Jarmusz, and her family were one of the three original Naperville families who founded the greenhouse. They started the program because in Illinois individuals with special needs can only stay in the school system until they are 21. After graduation finding these students a place of employment can be a challenging task.

Bob Goste's son, Brian, has been involved in the program since his graduation from Downers Grove High School last June.

"Our experience in this program has been really great," said

Goste. "It gives the kids a great opportunity to work in the afternoon and on weekends. Also, it's really hard to find good job placement for these kids and this place is a really good place that can benefit many kids in this area."

The founding families researched to find jobs that were low-tech and that had many jobs that individuals with varying disabilities could execute.

We Grow Dreams, a program that only began with a few participants has grown exponentially. The program now has 60 participants, called team leaders, from DuPage, Cook, Kane and Will counties.

The team members work 10 hours a month in the greenhouses with the We Grow Dreams staff learning important work skills. There are over 45 specific jobs at We Grow Dreams Greenhouse and Garden Center for the job training program, including greeting and assisting customers, watering and filling pots with soil for seeds.

In addition to the gardening, team members also learn how to make birdhouses, planters and other garden accessories

that are sold alongside the plants.

Each team member's family is required to contribute 10 hours a month volunteering to assist their family team member or work with other team members as job coaches.

The parents also pay \$15 an hour for their team member to participate. The team member then earns \$3.50 an hour of that money.

"I love the fact that not only do the kids work, but they earn a paycheck," said Goste. "It gives them a sense of worth and pride."

Donations from business contributions and parents keep this non-for-profit organization afloat.

Anyone interested in volunteering must be at least 14 and willing to attend training by the We Grow Dreams staff to become a job coach with a team leader.

We Grow Dreams Greenhouse and Garden Center is located at 1055 West Washington St., in West Chicago.

The greenhouse is open 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday-Saturday and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday.

College Column... Juniors urged not to slack off and to take PSAEs seriously

By Kellie Virnich

As seniors continue to hear back from their prospective schools, the focus changes to juniors who are just entering the college process.

Juniors had a mandatory Making Your College Search Count assembly Wednesday during school, followed up by junior parent night Thursday, where teachers and counselors will review steps to be taken for the next year for parents. In March, counselors will talk to the American history classes showing students their PSAT scores and utilizing the DISCOVER computer program to aid in college and career searches.

Head counselor Maura Bridges complimented this year's seniors on their organization in the college process, and thought that it was partially due to counselors meeting with each student separately. Though they are not repeating that process, she cited it as a reason for the department's changes this year.

"These seniors were really good about applying early and keeping us informed, so while we aren't doing individual student/counselor meetings this year, we are still trying to reach every student," she said.

Another change is the general attitude toward Prairie State Achievement Exams, the state-mandated tests all juniors must take in April along with the ACT. Though CHS passed AYP with last year's scores, there is even more pressure this year to improve, allowing the school to

make "safe harbor," postponing the state taking over the school. Teachers and administration have already started planning incentives for students to do well, both for themselves and for the school.

"A lot of students don't realize that the PSAEs are on their transcripts, and could ultimately be a determining factor," Bridges said. "Don't take any chances by slacking off."

Though seniors have all of this behind them, they are not clear just yet.

Bridges urges students to take a second visit to colleges once they have been accepted, and change their view from a hopeful applicant to a critical prospective buyer.

"You are purchasing their product. Ask questions and see how comfortable you feel on campus. They should be willing to accommodate you, and if they're not, take that into consideration as well," said Bridges. She highly recommends eating in the dining halls and sitting in on classes to really get a feel for what it would be like to live at the school for the next four years.

As for scholarships, Bridges encourages students to continue checking Senior News, as well as the scholarship drawer in the counseling office. There are still many more deadlines, including the all-important decision deadline: May 1 for most schools.

Bridges said, "Compare and visit as long as you have to. Don't feel like you have to make a decision now."

Sketching his future, Artist of the Month Amos finds his inspiration from Van Gogh

By Julie Youngwith

(Each month a different fine arts teacher will select Artist of the Month. Art teacher David Exner chose David Amos.)

Senior David Amos used his artistic side to sketch his way to become February Artist of the Month.

After graduation, Amos plans to attend College of DuPage for two years and then transfer to a four-year university to study either history or art.

The artist has been drawing since third grade and has taken a few art classes in school including art 1 and 2, studio art and computer art.

He also paints and works in pastels.

Amos' favorite artist is Van Gogh. "The way his works came together is really inspiring," said Amos.

Amos says that he can draw anywhere and that it is an activity that helps him relax.

"I find inspiration to draw all the time, especially during class. My teachers are starting to take away my sketchbook during class," said Amos.

His favorite type of art is fictional art and his favorite piece is modeled in a drawing he did in eighth grade of a man wear-

ing a robe standing in front of a moon.

Amos is currently working on drawing a tattoo for his brother.



Photo courtesy of David Amos

David Amos plans on attending College of DuPage to study art or history.

Young drivers targeted with Driver's Edge program



Photo by Kayla Harris

Students from FBLA, Skills USA, the Wildcat Chronicle, and We-go Thru the Tube including, senior Chris Jelen, received the opportunity to hear about a new teen driving program. Mario Andretti also spoke on tire safety and signed autographs.

By Terri Molo

Young drivers will learn how to stay safer on the roads thanks to Driver's Edge.

Driver's Edge is a non-profit organization that will give teens free classroom and behind-the-wheel accident instruction to combat the statistics.

The teen drivers are targeted because they are the ones most likely to get in a car accident over the last five years, according to the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety.

"Car accidents kill more teens than drugs, guns, and violent crimes combined, but the conventional driver's education in America only teaches drivers how to identify road signs and basic driving skills and then sends them on the roads," said Jeff Payne, president, CEO and founder of Driver's Edge. "To keep them safe we need to take this training to the next level, use a different approach, and that's what Driver's Edge is

about."

Payne discussed the program at a press conference at the Chicago Auto Show Feb. 8. Members of the Wildcat Chronicle, FBLA, LifeSmarts and We-go Thru the Tube were invited for media day to hear about Driver's Edge and to hear retired racecar driver Mario Andretti speak at the press conference sponsored by Bridgestone.

Andretti's speech focused mainly on tire safety.

Payne created the Driver's Edge program to teach real life emergency avoidance, response techniques and overall driver safety.

The program is taught with an "MTV flavor" by professional racecar drivers and performance driving instructors.

About 20,000 young drivers and their parents have attended free, half-day Driver's Edge programs. Driver's Edge will be in Chicago Aug. 26.

The program is typically offered twice a day, with each session filled with 75 to 100 students. Parents are also encouraged to attend and observe.

The program includes written tests to measure students' driving knowledge before and after the course, classroom and behind-the-wheel defensive driving instruction on skid control, evasive lane change maneuvers, anti-lock braking skills and panic braking techniques, local law enforcement interaction including impaired driving awareness and seat belt safety.

A proper car maintenance session is also offered.

After the program, Driver's Edge will contact students at 12 and 24 month intervals to monitor driving experience.

Young drivers, aged 15 to 21, with a valid learners permit or license must register in advance for the program either by phone at 1-877-633-EDGE, or online at www.driversedge.org.

Heart stopping incident prompts policy change

New mandates change requirements for use of Automated External Defibrillators

By Nick Gorski

School will soon be a safer place for students, thanks to new mandates and an incident in the P.E. department.

Since 2005, Illinois state law required Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) to be present in school facilities. Supervisors of extracurricular activities, administrators, and physical education teachers are now required to become proficient in their use, as are nurses and special education specialists.

But, "We've been over compliant for six years," said PE Department Chair Dan Johnson.

The department conducts AED and CPR training for PE teachers, and seven staff members are qualified instructors.

But the standards for AEDs and their use have been emphasized recently due to safety related issues in the department, as it has become clear that there may be a need for additional training to prepare for real life situations.

The P.E. department faced one such instance earlier this semester. AEDs helped save senior Ryan Pinto after he collapsed during his gym class one day in January. "I feel lucky to go to a school with extra defibrillators," said Pinto.

"They saved my life. I can't imagine any logical reason why schools wouldn't have them."

P.E. department chair Dan Johnson recognized the incident as unfortunate, not only for the individual, but for the department. "The timing of the incident was at the time that we were distributing information about the training classes," he said.

So this semester, CPR and defibrillator classes will be offered for all staff members. Approximately 80 teachers have already signed up to receive training, according to Johnson. This reflects that staff is becoming increasingly concerned about safety in the school.

The AED class is scheduled for later this month, with further safety related changes to come.

The staff feels that even more still could be done to ensure students' safety in the building.

"The training is done here at school for the physical education department by certified teachers in AED training," said P.E. teacher Kris Hasty. "I suppose the fire department or the EMTs could come in and teach the training to all staff members."

Teacher's bilingual science program wins Best Buy Te@ch Award

By making learning enjoyable and incorporating technology into class Eduardo Montoya wins award allowing him to purchase new equipment

By Cristina Sarnelli

A digital camera from Best Buy: \$500. A brand new laptop from Best Buy: \$1,000. An assortment of 70 CDs from Best Buy: \$1,000. Being able to buy new equipment to improve the education of Community High School students: Priceless.

Teacher Eduardo Montoya won a \$2,500 Best Buy Te@ch Award that he will use to purchase new equipment including a new video camera and a new computer with video editing software for his bilingual integrated science class.

The Te@ch Award is given out to teachers who make learning enjoyable by incorporating technology into their course.

The teachers must submit an application in September describing an activity that they do in the classroom that uses technology to teach the students. Then, Best Buy selects finalists from the applications in January and rewards them with gift cards.

Montoya, who also teaches bilingual physical science, submitted an application describing the videos that his bilingual integrated science class put together.

"This is a project we used to do in integrated science. The students would make video clips of labs where they would investigate experiments and research about them, write a

script, shoot the video, edit the video, and the final product is a DVD," Montoya explained.

This is the third year that the class has made the videos, and it is the first time Montoya submitted an application having to do with them.

When Montoya found out that he had been chosen to receive an award, he was very excited.

"I went to the Best Buy web page and saw my name posted there. I was very pleased with the award," he said.

The incorporation of technology in a classroom is important to Montoya, and he feels that the Best Buy Te@ch Award is a very positive award.

"I think it is good for a corporation to support the classroom and the use of technology in the classroom," he said.

Not only did these videos contribute to the education of the students, but it also was the start of some other clubs around the school.

"As a result of the students' videos, we started a Spanish video club. Wego En La Tele was also a by-product of these videos," Montoya said.

Recently, Montoya, along with Annette Rubino, received a grant from the Educator's Association.

The grant will support an air-powered projectiles project for physics and physical science students.



Photo by Cristina Sarnelli

After receiving the Best Buy Te@ch Award, Eduardo Montoya was able to purchase new video equipment for his classes.

More than just a footnote

Style switch ups and growth in band members pushes Strokes' third album 'First Impressions of the Earth' ahead of the game

Vocals: B+
Rhythm: A
Lyrics: C+
Overall: B+

By Nick Gorski

When they burst onto the scene with 2001's acclaimed album "Is This It," The Strokes were considered the future of rock n' roll.

Every live performance became a huge event, and their music (as well as their partying) made them heroes in their native New York City and all over the country.

But in the years that followed, it seemed that The Strokes were destined to burn out and become mere footnotes in the bible of rock history.

Their second album, 2003's "Room on Fire," was too similar to their earlier work, like B sides to "Is This It," and was considered mediocre at best.

But with the new "First Impressions of Earth," New York's finest show they may not be done after all.

As if to respond to their critics, the new album shows a reinvention of the band's classic sound. It abandons some of their distorted guitar sound in favor of '80s style pop, as in the album's brilliantly catchy first track, "You Only Live Once."

But perhaps the most significant growth is shown by lead singer Julian Casablancas. His vocals on the new songs are clear and occasionally sing-alongable; whereas he always

used to sound distorted and wail incomprehensibly.

He seems to have grown not only as a musician, but also as a person. He sings about mortality and death, and gets downright melancholy on songs like "Ask Me Anything," in which he repeatedly and melodically sings "I've got nothing to say" over subdued synthesizers. It's the album's most radical, bizarre track.

And on "On The Other Side," Casablancas sings about how he hates everyone he knows, and deals with these feelings by drinking heavily.

Evidently, Casablancas is actually a singer, rather than a decent vocalist in a band that just rocks too hard to be denied (which The Strokes certainly do). This may turn some pop fans on to his band, as well as appease those who complained about their lack of growth.

Meanwhile, the other Strokes play with precision and skill, as they always have. They complement the intense, erratic vocals with smooth, crisp play,

SONIC BITES

What We-Go students are listening to...



NAME:
Joe Tedeschi ('07)

LISTENING TO:
The White Stripes



NAME:
Dustin Hon ('08)

LISTENING TO:
AC/DC

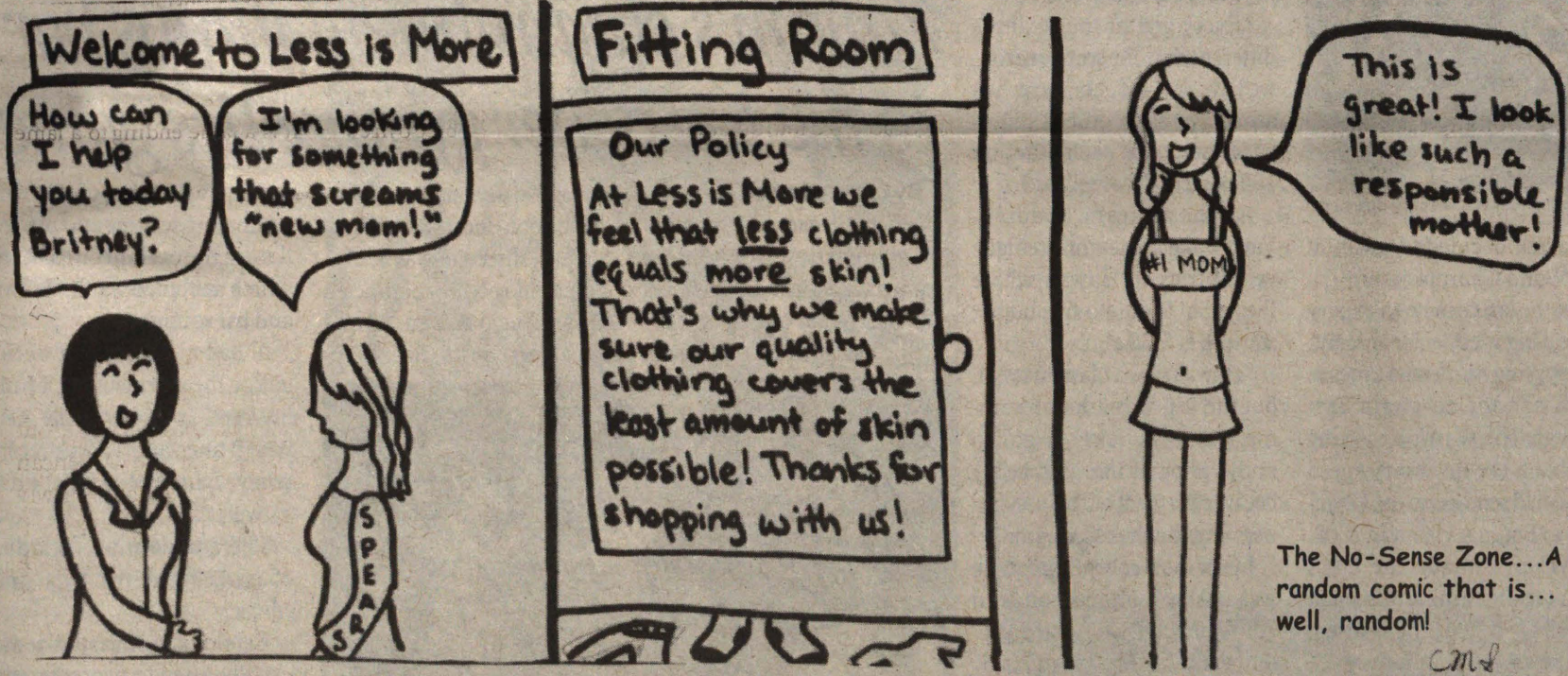
each instrument fitting together like puzzle pieces.

As for the songs themselves, "First Impressions" has a few that fail to impress. But these are outnumbered by several potential classics, including the '80's metal-style guitars of "Vision Of Division," one of the band's best melodies in "Electricityscape," and "15 Minutes," which sounds like a weird Irish drinking song, sung by a possibly intoxicated Casablancas.

But the best song is "Ize of the World," which rhymes together words like "monopolize," "ter-

rorize," and "organize," with impressive results. The song has the album's most insane vocals, is generally catchy, and features a new wave guitar solo that still plays inside one's head long after listening to it.

"First Impressions of Earth" is not for those who fear change, as The Strokes have finally switched up their style. But the high points are definitely high, and the songs are what keeps the fans coming back. It's definitely a solid release, especially upon repeated listens.



The rise of corporate radio and the end of an American medium

By Nick Gorski

Ever since rock n' roll began to dominate the American musical landscape about 50 years ago, the radio has been an important tool for people in search of new music.

But lately, diversity, creativity and quality have been nearly impossible to find on the radio dial.

Local stations used to be culturally diverse, featuring endearing personalities and regionally unique playlists, with just enough advertising to maintain a profit.

But today, radio conglomerates like Clear Channel are sucking the life out of a medium that was once a staple of American culture.

Top 40 stations, which have the attention of many young

listeners, seem like they aren't even trying these days. Turn on Chicago's 103.5 Kiss FM, and one will primarily hear commercials, or if you're lucky, lame, uninspired songs from artists like Ashlee Simpson or Nickelback.

Playlists on these stations are constantly shrinking as well, so if you heard Nickelback's hit "Photograph" at about noon, you can bet you'll hear it again before 1:30 p.m.

And the songs are the same all over the country, so listeners in each city no longer have a say in what they're hearing.

Perhaps young music fans in Boston can't relate to the lyrical brilliance of "Photo-

graph," while New Yorkers can't get enough of it. Standardizing all the stations limits what can be done to ensure that Bostonians, New Yorkers, and Chicagoans all hear what they want.



Even worse, listeners in many major cities have seen their favorite rock stations radically change their formats or be eliminated completely. Here in Chicago, 94.7 The Zone, an alternative rock station, recently was inexplicably converted to oldies, foregoing up-and-coming bands in favor of overplayed hits from the past.

Another prominent local station has switched to a new format called Jack FM, in which DJs and formats are eliminated completely. Jack instead plays a random shuffle of songs from various generations, from the Eagles' "Hotel California," to Kelly Clarkson's "Since U Been Gone," all of which you've surely heard a thousand times before.

But without DJs or the infusion of new music, radio becomes even more faceless and corporate than ever before.

This sleazy corporate aspect of radio has been emphasized recently as payola scandals have rocked industry.

Payola occurs when labels offer stations cash or gifts in exchange for increased play of

its artists on the radio.

These people have no shame. Stations are throwing music on the air in the face of corporate handouts, rather than judging it on quality or whether the public would appreciate it.

So in the face of such shame and corruption, what's a listener to do?

Many have turned to the Internet, where websites like MySpace have begun to make a difference. Meanwhile, college radio provides a decent alternative, but it's not available for everybody.

Yes, it seems that radio's glory days are over, at least until the would-be revolution known as satellite radio fulfills its potential.

Olympic hopeful Jackie Vavrek swims for the gold

By Katie Taylor

While many find success after high school, few can compare to the triumphs of 2004 graduate Jackie Vavrek, who transformed from a small town swimming champion into an Olympic hopeful.

Vavrek, now a sophomore at University of Wisconsin Madison, surprised herself and teammates when she qualified for the 2008 U.S. Olympic Trials in the 50 yard freestyle in 22.9 seconds at the U.S. World Championship trials in April of 2005.

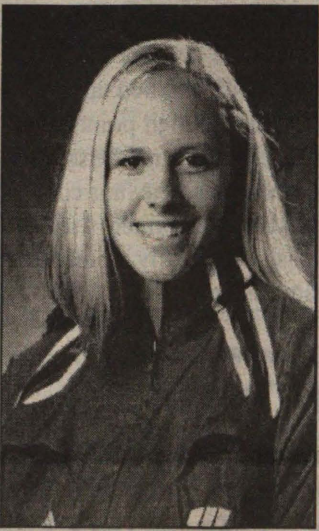


Photo courtesy of www.uwbadgers.com

Vavrek decided to swim at the World Championship Trials at the last minute to experience a big meet environment. After trying numerous times in high school to swim fast enough, she wasn't expecting to obtain the necessary speed that could send her to the Olympics in Beijing, China in 2008.

"When I made the cut I didn't really think anything of it until my coach, Eric Hansen, came over and was pretty much the most excited I have ever seen him," said Vavrek.

Vavrek has experienced a fair share of swimming with Olympic-level swimmers, including South African world record holder Roland Schoeman, and closer to home; her teammate and gold medallist Carly Piper, whom she claims motivated her to perform well.

"Two days earlier my teammate Carly won the 400 Freestyle and became our first national champion for Wisconsin in school history. Seeing her win that event really made me want to swim fast," Vavrek said.

With trials coming up in only two years, Vavrek said that she is hitting the pool as well as the gym to prepare.

"If I do make the Olympic team then it'll be great, and if I don't then at least trials will be a perfect end to my swimming

career," she said

Vavrek attributes her success not only to her former coach Dan Johnson, but also to her new coach Eric Hansen, who reminds her of Johnson.

"When I was looking at colleges, I looked in particular for a coach that would be much like Mr. Johnson," she said.

"Eric Hansen is the most knowledgeable coach I have worked with."

Vavrek notes that her techniques have improved drastically because of Hansen, who sometimes gets into the pool with her and watches her stroke from all possible angles to understand where she is losing speed.

In addition to the new coaches, Vavrek's group of 20 training partners, whom she refers to as her 20 best friends, push her to achieve more during practices and meets.

"Every girl on our team is different, but for some reason, we have the best chemistry. We all accept each other's differences and back each other up 100 percent," Vavrek said.

As far as team bonding, Vavrek and her teammates take yearly trips to Hawaii where they train for up to five hours, starting at 5:30 a.m.

"Hawaii was a blast this year, but the trip was a lot of training," said Vavrek. "I got to know a lot of the girls better because we went out to nice dinners and beaches as a team."

In her short college career she was an honorable mention as an All-American, and made second team All-Big Ten in 2005.

In addition to that, during high school she was not only a three-time state champion, four-time All-America selection, national qualifier in the 50 free, all-state all four years, team MVP freshman, junior and senior years, and Chicago Tribune Scholar Athlete, but she was also class valedictorian and an Academic All-American selection all four years.

Vavrek is more than just an athlete. She is looking forward to her career outside of the pool in food and bioprocess engineering, and is enjoying her college life in Madison.

"I love living in Madison because it's a wacky town where you never know what will happen next. School is tough because they expect a lot, especially as a student-athlete, but it's definitely worth it," she said. "I wouldn't trade in my experience here for anything."

Athlete of the Month

Captain does more than play hard

By Julie Youngwith

By being one of only three girls in the school's history to earn four varsity letters in girls basketball, senior Jessica Crawford has earned her spot as February Athlete of the Month.

She has been playing basketball since she was 10 and now serves as a point guard on the varsity team.

Crawford loves the feeling she gets when she steps onto the court.

"The pressure gets the adrenaline going and makes me concentrate harder," said Crawford.

Both her coach and teammates hold Crawford in high regards.

"Jess is the only athlete I've coached on a varsity team for four years," said coach Kim Wallner. "She is the heart and

soul of the team."

Wallner also commended Crawford on the amount of

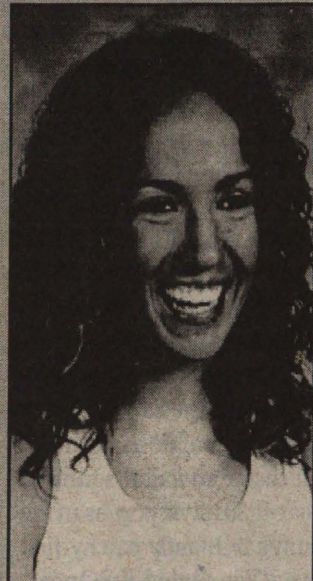


Photo courtesy of Jessica Crawford

time and effort she put into basketball, even though it is not her main sport.

"She is a leader in the

sport," said Wallner.

Although Crawford is passionate about basketball, she claims soccer is her favorite sport.

In the spring, Crawford also shows off her athleticism on the field when she starts as a forward on the girls soccer team.

Next year, Crawford plans on attending Clemson University to major in political science.

Crawford says her biggest supporters are her family and teammates.

"They are always there to cheer me on and support me through the good games and the bad," said Crawford.

Besides being actively involved in sports Crawford is in Key Club, president of the National Honor Society and volunteers at the DuPage Convalescent Center.

Zanoni's commitment jumps her to the top of her gymnastics game

By Cristina Sarnelli

After 13 years of hard work in gymnastics, sophomore Amanda Zanoni's commitment has really paid off.

She has been involved with

Gymnasti Gymnastics, an organization located in Carol Stream, since she was 3.

Zanoni recently competed in San Diego on Jan. 21 and placed first on her floor com-

petition where she performed a tumbling routine and placed third in the overall competition which included vault, beam, and bar routines.

"I had an injury two weeks before the competition. I hurt my knee, and I was really nervous," she said. "I was really relieved and excited that I did so well."

The competition included 65 girls from the U.S. and Mexico.

Zanoni's gymnastics team usually attends two competitions each year, and this is not the first time she won awards.

"I won two years ago at the level eight regional competitions. It's the same thing as the competition in San Diego except you had to qualify for this one," she said.

At the level eight regional competitions, Zanoni made the all-star team which is a team of seven girls who represent Illinois and compete against five other states.

Though she has accomplished a lot, gymnastics is not always easy.

Zanoni has to work hard to balance her time.

Zanoni says that she wants to continue doing gymnastics and sees herself participating in it in the future.

"I want to try and get a scholarship and possibly attend the University of California in Los Angeles," Zanoni said.



Photo courtesy of Amanda Zanoni

Sophomore Amanda Zanoni made the all-star team at a level eight regional competition two years ago (above). Since then she has gone on to win third place at a competition in San Diego.

Determination and drive remain key for Wildcats

Team hopes hard work pays off at end of the season

By Brittany Blanchard

The boys basketball team has used perseverance to stay competitive through the season.

Head coach Kevin Gimre attributes the team's drive to his players' work ethic.

"The players have really done a nice job doing what they've been asked and making themselves competitive in games," said Gimre. "Overall, they've been learning."

And learning is exactly what Gimre wanted the team to accomplish, as they started the year with only two returning varsity players, seniors Larry Pope and Dennis Rocha.

"We knew going into the season that we needed to make up for our lack of experience with hard work," Pope said.

Although the team hasn't won as many games as they would have liked, they have stayed competitive which has made for some exciting games.

"We always try our best to put up a good fight, no matter what team we're playing," said Pope.

One competition Gimre was particularly impressed with was the conference game against Glenbard East who were 16-2 when the Wildcats faced them. Although the game ended in a loss, the Wildcats outplayed the Rams for three quarters and got within 7 points of their opponent in the fourth quarter.

"We always try our best to put up a good fight no matter what team we're playing."

--Larry Pope

"That game just showed a lot of effort by the players and it was a good boost of confidence that they could (keep up) with a team that good," Gimre said.

Throughout the season, the team has stuck to its strengths, which according to Gimre include outside shooting and defense. However they've also been able to look at losses individually to see where play-

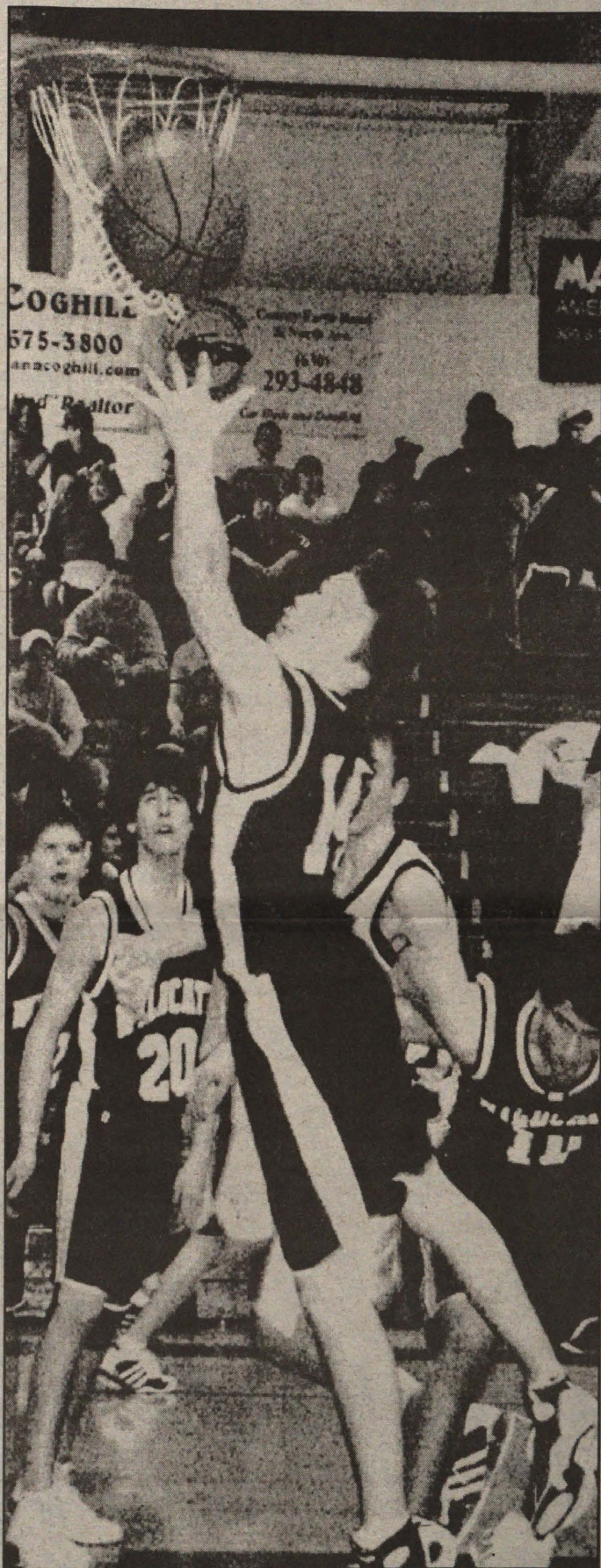


Photo by Kym McDaniel

Although the boys basketball team has not won as many games as they would have liked, players stay competitive while exciting the crowd. Junior Pete Konchar scores for two after dribbling past his opponents.

ers can improve.

"It's tough when you look at how you played and see what you didn't do well," said Gimre. "It's reality but its not always easy to take."

Gimre said players who have played particular key roles this year are Pope, Rocha, and junior Pete Konchar. He also mentioned that juniors Brian Wheelier and Matt Claude and senior Greg Dunn have helped the team recently with impressive performances.

Although the season is quickly coming to an end,

Gimre is still striving for improvement.

"It's just a matter of recognizing their strengths and weaknesses individually and realize that it takes all the players' strengths to perform well on the court," Gimre said. "We need to play all four quarters—every possession with the fewest mistakes as possible and play a complete game."

The team will play their last home game, which is also Senior Night, against Glenbard North, Friday at 7:30 p.m. in Bishop Gym.

Growing up in a man's world not a disadvantage

By Kellie Virnich

Though she grew up in a time when womens sports were not very popular or supported, basketball coach and physical education teacher Kim Wallner has always felt a calling toward involvement in athletics, both playing and coaching.

"As a kid, I was never really aware that girls 'shouldn't' play sports," she said.

Playing on some of the first organized girls teams during junior high and high school, Wallner felt personally rewarded to see so many changes in womens sports surrounding her. Though she did feel that some opposed the changes, she felt encouraged by nearly all of her coaches throughout her education.

"I was very determined. I knew I wanted to coach and teach, which was and still is fairly rare, since most teens seem so unsure about their futures," Wallner said.

She played basketball, softball and field hockey in high school, but was forced to limit in her college years at North Central College in Naperville. There, her team won an NCAA Division 3 national championship. She had the chance to go to Illinois State University or Northern Illinois University, both Division 1 schools, for field hockey, but said that she was unable to give up basketball as she would have had to.

Wallner has taught physical education and coached at elementary, junior high and high school levels, the longest being 12 years at Benjamin Middle School, and is still considering her next step.

She said, "I took my Type 75 so that I could become an athletics director if I wanted to, but I've also considered coaching college athletics."

Though Wallner still sees the passion and love of sports in student athletes today as she felt growing up, she also thinks teens face a lot more pressure when involved with sports.

"I see a burnout in many kids I work with today because they concentrate so hard on one sport, they lose interest," said Wallner. "I played because I loved sports, but I think I would have felt the same way if I were under the same demands." She cites parents, coaches and the pressure to get athletic scholarships as several reasons why kids get "burned out" on one sport alone.

The proudest moment of Wallner's athletic career was being part of the first class inducted into the North Central Hall of Fame.

"My mother tells me that I came out competitive, with a scowl on my face. I cried a lot when games didn't go well," she said. "Sports shaped my entire identity, and I feel that how a person deals with working hard and winning and losing carries over into how they handle life."

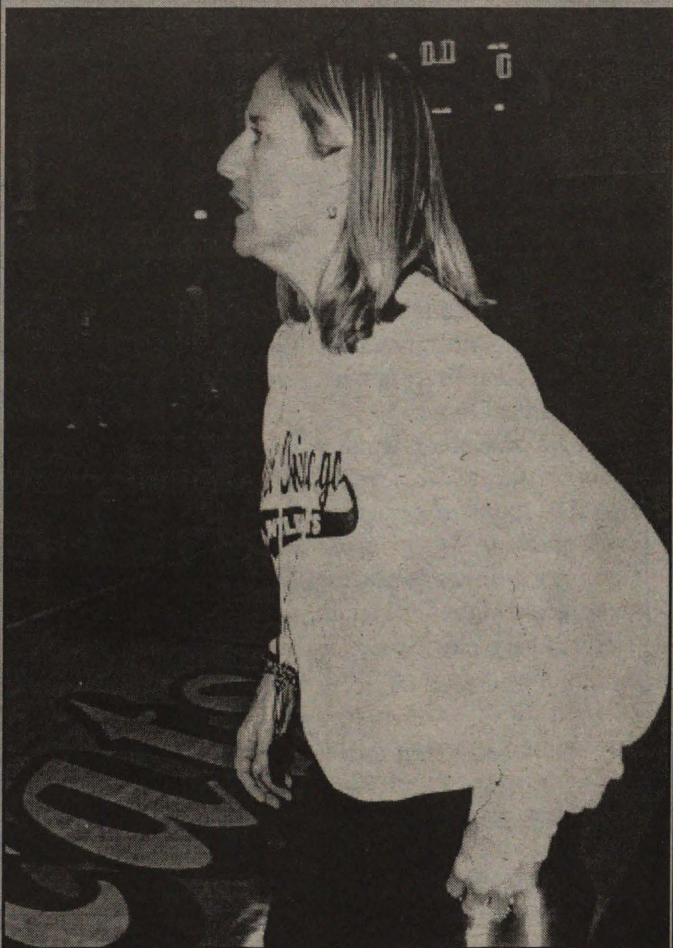


Photo by Terri Molo

Kim Wallner is always ready to help her team improve, whether it is on the court or off.

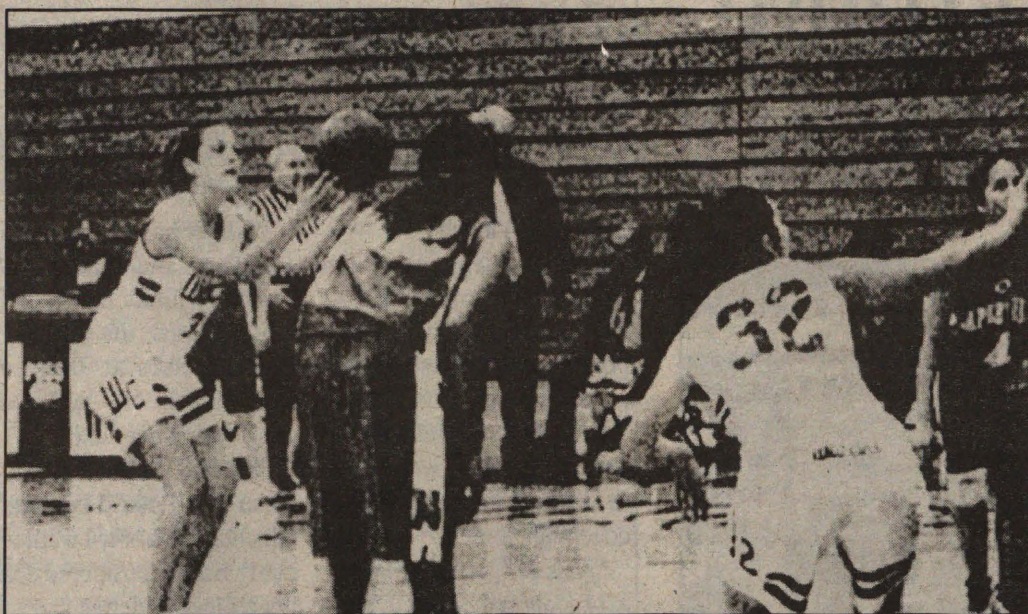


Photo By Leah Kuzmich

Melissa Olsen, shooting, will be one of the many juniors who will step up for her team next season. Wallner hopes that her juniors will be ready for the challenge.

With DVC evenly talented, the team is ready for surprises that may come

By Leah Kuzmich

Though the girls basketball team played with chemistry, they fell just short of winning the first round of regionals.

The girls tried to win their first regional game in over two decades on Thursday, Feb. 16, but lost in a back and forth game against Geneva 41-32.

"We were very competitive this year. We had many close games. When the girls decide to play together, they are a very fun team to watch," said coach Kim Wallner.

Wallner said that the DuPage Valley Conference was evenly matched this year, meaning no team was sure to win.

Though the loss was unfortunate, the girls were able to pull off an upset win against

Rosary just two days before.

The girls won their semi-final regional game 43-37. The game was competitive but the Wildcats earned the win.

"In conference we did not play up to our full potential, and our second time we stuck with all the teams," said junior Laurin McCaffrey.

Bringing the girls to the semi-final round were their wins against other DVC teams.

The girls won against Naperville Central on Feb. 9, with a score of 30-27.

McCaffrey who played during the game and said that the team went all out for it.

The game was played fiercely and competitively, and also with immense teamwork.

Communication will also be

a goal for the future games to come.

Many of the girls that are playing for the team this year will be returning next year as well.

"All season no matter what happened we played as a team, and had a lot of team chemistry," said senior Jessica Crawford.

The season has been up to the girls' expectations with a win in their semi-final regional game, making it to a regional game and hopefully more games if they continue to win.

The team has two graduating seniors, Crawford and Kelly Mateas. With the seniors leaving, the team will have many hardworking juniors ready to step up to the court.

Co-op team ends year with a win in regionals

Girls excited to see teammate do well during competition

By Elynn Fortino

Girls on the Wheaton North/West Chicago Co-op gymnastics team celebrated as they watched a teammate excel in her routine.

The team may have had a rough start of the season due to injuries on the varsity level, however that did not stop the team from placing third out of four teams at regionals on Feb. 3.

Junior Allison Rysell competed on beam and vault.

Rysell qualified for the sectional gymnastic meet on the balance beam and placed 16 out of 49 competitors. Rysell received her highest score of the season with an 8.7, leaving her only two and a half tenths away from a state qualifying score.

"Allison worked hard all year on beam. This was her main event, so she would spend all practice perfecting her routine," said Spayth. "I was very excited for her to compete at sectionals and many of the girls came to support her at the meet, which helped contribute to her success."

Although the team was younger this year, with very little varsity experience, the girls improved greatly and were able to learn new tricks, according to Spayth.

"To prepare for regionals, we didn't do anything different

than usual," said coach Jorie Spayth. "The girls just spent more time focusing on form and being relaxed during their events."

Teammates from school included seniors Brittany Blanchard and Justine Egert and freshman Lanie Sikorski on all around which includes balance beam, vault, uneven parallel bars, and the floor exercise.

"The girls showed outstanding improvement on each event and everyone learned a few new tricks by the end of the season," she said. "Unfortunately, our team score didn't improve greatly. I could never get five stuck routines on each event at one meet."

Spayth is very pleased with how the season has ended.

"I honestly have the greatest group of girls to work with," Spayth said. "They get along with each other very well and each one adds some different aspect to the team."

Egert agrees with how well the team gets along with each other.

"Our gymnastics team is seriously team unity at its finest," Egert said. "We're all so close; everyone is best friends with everyone and the closeness of that bond helped immensely in getting us through what would have otherwise been a rough season."

Andie's Angle

Winter Olympics becoming too expensive for small countries, as U.S. and Europe take control of events

By Andrea Bradley

Elitism and exclusion have now taken over the friendly spirit of competition, as more and more countries are ignored in the Winter Olympics.

The 2006 Winter Olympics in Torino, Italy, with a record high of 85 countries participating worldwide. It's a record high, but it does not come close to the record high of 143 countries that have participated in the Summer Olympics.

The truth of the matter is that winter sporting is too costly for most countries. It's not the fact that these countries have climates that prevent training, it is that they cannot afford the facilities that most Olympians train in.

If climates were a case, most of the American figure skaters

would not be training in southern California and Florida.

The problem is all in the price of training a person or a team for the Olympics.



For example, the average cost of a single bobsled is around \$35,000. Take that and add on all the costs of finding a fit team to run the sled. How are poor countries supposed to afford something like that?

Jamaica tried, but later failed. They sent their first

team to the games in 1988.

In 1994, the Jamaicans finished in a surprising 14th place, but never got the chance to do better. They had a good team, but could not compete in the 2002 games due to the lack of funding.

Now when it comes to the Summer Olympics, Jamaicans do not have this problem. It does not cost thousands of dollars to find someone who has the heart to compete as a sprinter.

Of course, not all countries are as poor as Jamaica, but shouldn't the games provide equal opportunity among competitors?

Take Ethiopia. They have finally raised enough money to send their first "team" to the Winter Olympics, a single

skier. Ethiopia sent their first man to the Winter Olympics in 2006 although the games have been in existence since 1924.

Chances for less fortunate countries earning medals are getting smaller and smaller each year.

Since 1924 competitors from only six countries (Russia, Germany, Norway, the United States, Austria, and Finland) have won nearly two-thirds of all the medals awarded. Only 38 countries in total have received a medal in the Winter Games.

Of course the summer games have medal hogs too, but they are nothing like the winter games.

Not to mention that 17 out of the 20 games have been held

in the United States, Western Europe, and Canada.

The spirit of competition should not be blocked by economical advantages.

Not to say that winter Olympians lack the heart for their sport, but they do have advantages based on where they live and train.

It does not seem fair that a country like Norway, whose population is just under that of metropolitan Washington, should be winning three times as many medals as Asia, South America, and Australia combined.

The International Olympic Committee needs to provide equal chances to every competitor who has the heart and determination, not just the ones who have money.