

# Wildcat Chronicle

Community High School 326 Joliet St. West Chicago, IL 60185

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## Learning from outside classroom

By Alex Lima  
Reporter

A big risk led to great return for seniors Anna Lane, Michelle Memoli, Kelly Nottingham and Samantha Sanmiguel with the team taking first place in The Illinois Capitol Challenge, which is a special competition within the

Stock Market game.

"[In the competition] a team is selected to be under the sponsorship of State Representatives Mike Fortner and Randy Ramey," said business teacher Donald Zabelin.

All students were part of Zabelin's consumer education class and were honored with a House Resolution at the Il-

linois House of Representatives in Springfield. Medals were given to Lane, Memoli, Nottingham, Sanmiguel, and Zabelin.

"I am proud of the students who participated in this task and I am hopeful they will be able to benefit from this learning experience in the future," said Fortner in a press release.

Free admission to the Lincoln Museum and Visa gift cards were also given to the team.

"I am impressed with the students' capability to learn from events taking place outside the classroom," said Ramey in a press release.

Each team invested a simulated \$100,000 in mutual

funds or stocks. During a 15-week period, the teams had the opportunity to buy, sell, and short sell shares whenever possible.

Zabelin stated that success in the game is based on how the actual stock market performs.

See Success page 5



Photo by Greg Vodicka

Cars remain stopped on Washington Street in West Chicago due to train traffic, which will only increase in local suburbs due to the new train merger.

## Rolling through suburbs

*New merger causes increase in traffic, affects students*

By Greg Vodicka  
Editor-in-Chief

Starting March 4, a significantly higher number of trains will be rolling through Chicago's western suburbs in an attempt to shift bottlenecked train traffic out of the city.

Expect delays through West Chicago's main train lines due to the Canadian Railway Corporation (CN) buying out the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway line (EJ&E).

While Chicago will see ben-

efits from the business decision, suburbs such as Aurora, Barrington, West Chicago, and Hawthorn Woods argue it will destroy their quality of life.

According to West Chicago's Resolution 08-R-0007 objecting the change, train traffic on the EJ&E line north of the Union Pacific (UP) tracks will increase from 4.4 to 24.4 trains per day, while the EJ&E line that runs south of the UP tracks will increase from 10.7 to 34.5 trains per day.

Train length will also increase. From the current 21 carloads per year to 265 carloads per year north of the UP tracks, and south of the UP tracks there will be an increase from 31 carloads to 301 carloads per year.

This increase in trains threatens West Chicago with backed up traffic through Church, Ann, and Washington streets. This also will impact emergency response times and impact emergency vehicle access.

In addition, the traffic poses a threat to Community High School, located one block from the crossing at Ann Street. Traffic congestion is already

See Trains page 4

## School selected for state assessment

By Amanda Rathe  
Center Spread Editor

One hundred and twenty seniors were randomly selected by the National Center for Education Statistics to take the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

Students around the country pulled up chairs to take tests on reading, mathematics, and science on Feb. 19.

The school was chosen as one of 99 Illinois schools based on the diversity of its student body, said English teacher Patricia Santella.

Test takers did not know what topic they were to be tested on until they arrived.

According to Santella, the test also included a large student background section asking questions from how their teacher teaches to how much TV they watch.

"We strongly encouraged the students to take the test," said Santella. "It makes a difference showing what students are learning and how to best educate them."

The test lasted 90 minutes. Kim Kleczewski took the reading test and said, "It was really easy. I just read stories and answered questions about them."

However, some of the tests were more involved than others. For example, Virginia Mason took a math portion where she was given a spinner and had to create a bar graph from the results she spun.

"Joslyn Meissner was sitting one seat away from me and she got a spinner too," Mason said. "I felt so bad for Doug Mateas because he got the miserable seat in between the two of us, while we were flicking our spinners."

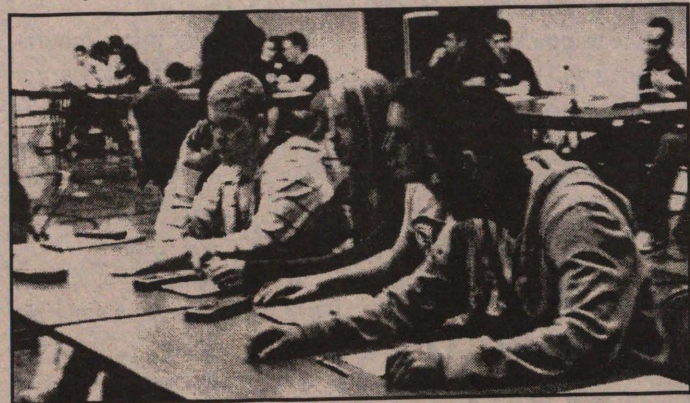
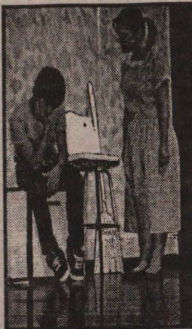


Photo by Amanda Rathe

Seniors took the National Assessment of Educational Progress test, which included reading, math or science.

INSIDE



### 'Mrs. McThing'

With several unforgettable moments, the winter play, "Mrs. McThing" left audiences amused and shocked. Didn't see the performance? Find out what happened --see **NEWS**, page 2.

### Gitmo Bay

Is President Obama keeping his promises in office? Or is his image being shattered by the closing of Guantanamo Bay?--see **PERSPECTIVES**, page 6.

### Underage Drinking

Alcohol has become a substance which is abused by teenagers. What many teens do not realize is the dangers associated with underage drinking--see **CENTER SPREAD**, pages 8-9.



### All-American

Two generations of All-American swimmers are wandering the Wildcat halls. They struggled and triumphed in their seasons to receive the prestigious title--see **SPORTS**, page 16.

## What's Happening?

Compiled by Evan Morgan  
Reporter

### Student Council

Student Council is hosting a dodgeball tournament Thursday as a way to raise money to update the school's technology. Profits collected from the tournament will buy new TV's for reviewing game footage. Student Council adviser Eric Lasky said that the new TV's would replace the current ones that are over 20 years old. The championship game will be played during the March 26 pep assembly. Check in for the tournament is at 6 p.m. and the first game begins at 6:30 p.m. in the Bishop Gym. Tickets are \$1.

### Transitional program

Students can now choose between regular or decaf coffee and hot cocoa in the mornings. The developmental learning program is selling hot beverages every morning in room 159 in order to teach its students lifelong money skills. A large is \$1.50 and a small is sold for \$1. All profits will purchase new school materials.

### Book Club

The LRC will host a "Lock in and Read" March 6 during periods one through three. The first 100 students to turn in a permission slip along with a \$5 donation will be allowed to spend their first, second, and third hours in the LRC reading. The donations collected will benefit the CHS Breakfast Book Club's local organization of choice. Students are reminded to bring a pillow and blanket to keep comfortable during the three hour lock-in.

### Scholastic Bowl

West Chicago's Scholastic Bowl competed in its conference meet at Naperville Central Feb. 18. The varsity team finished without advancement to the second round, after entering the meet seeded seventh with a 1-6 record. JV advanced to the second round and finished in fourth place for the first time in eight years. The varsity team moves to sectionals on March 14.



Photo courtesy of Diana Martinez

At their most recent competition, 15 out of 17 FBLA members placed in the top 10.

## Next step: state

By Payton Bayless  
Reporter

Fifteen Future Business Leaders of America members placed in the top 10 at the 2009 Northern Area Conference competition on Feb. 7.

First place finishes were awarded to senior John Kinsella in the computer applications category; senior Diana Martinez for business communications; and senior Joe Serio for personal finance.

Senior Jamie Roman placed second for public speaking II, along with senior Hanna Colliander for the who's who in FBLA category.

Third and fourth place awards went to senior Dana Burgess in the introduction to technology concepts category

and senior Rebecca Cisowski for sports management.

With nearly the same number of students placing as last year, FBLA has kept a constant winning streak.

"It was not a big surprise that the students did well at conference," said FBLA adviser and business teacher Donna Durbin.

Out of the 17 who competed, only two did not place in the competition.

When asked if they could improve, Durbin said, "Anybody who placed below third place, we would like to see improve for state."

Dacatur, IL., will host the state championship April 3-4, where Durbin seems pretty confident her club will be headed.

## Community gets chance to inquire

JSA hosts forum for questioning new candidates

By Jacob Wucka  
Sports Editor

District 94's Board of Education is undergoing major changes, with the election of four members, including a new president.

Incumbent president Tony Reyes has opted out of running for the board, and instead is running for Winfield's village manager. Reyes filled a vacant seat in 2003, and was elected as president in 2005.

Secretary Tammie Murphy, and member Gordon Cole have also chosen not to run for re-election.

Murphy was appointed to fill an expired term in 2007, and Cole was appointed to fill a vacant seat in 2004 and was elected to a full term in 2005.

Meanwhile, current board member Rich Nagel has chosen to run again. Nagel was

elected to the board in 1993.

Besides Nagel, candidates include Dale Crawford, Dirk Gunderson, Katherine Maguire, Tony Molinaro, and current board treasurer Gary Saake.

The Junior Statesman of America (JSA) is hosting a forum March 18 that allows community members to question the candidates.

"We're asking community members to come in, to ask questions, and to hear what each candidate has to say," said JSA adviser Barb Laimins.

Senior and JSA president Laurant Hon hopes that the candidates know the district and the students well.

"I am hoping [Board members] will represent students well, like how the president represents a country," said Hon.

At 6 p.m., candidates from Districts 25, 33, 34 will be answering community members' questions. The forum for District 94's board members begins at 7 p.m.

The election will be held on April 7.

## Amusing comedy and fantasy combination entertains audience

By Alexis Hosticka  
Perspectives Editor

A mix of comedy and fantasy, "Mrs. McThing," intertwined mobsters, a witch, a rich woman, and her son, to form an entertaining production Feb. 19-21.

Sophomore Emma Roberts played the part of Belle Larue, Howay Larue's (sophomore Joe Wais) mother. Although it was not Roberts' first main part in a play, it was her first lead role.

"It was definitely a lot of work," Roberts said, but she liked the result. "I thought it went really well, besides a few wardrobe malfunctions. It was a lot of fun."

However, the wardrobe malfunctions that occurred on the first night of the play were minor: an unzipped dress and a missing belt.

Saturday night's performance left audiences shocked as the fire alarms were set off by the fog machine, interrupting the final minutes of the play.

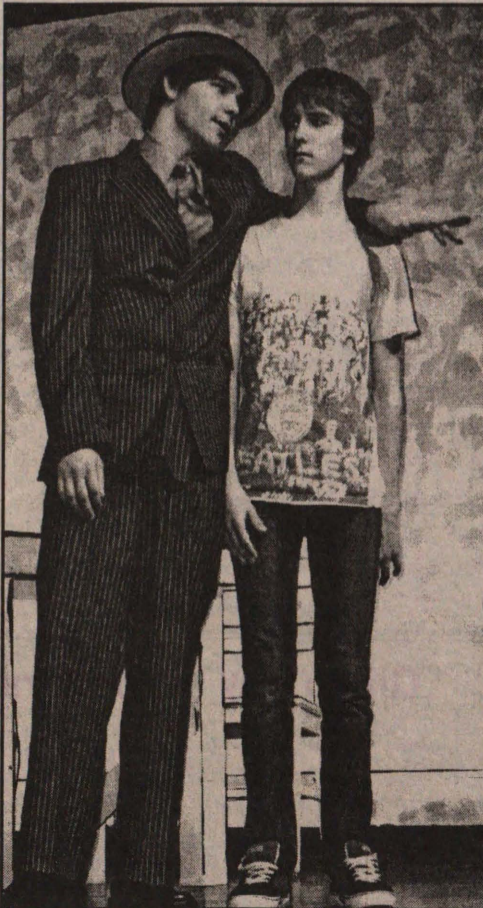
The play's title character, Mrs. McThing, is a witch

who creates stick-figure doubles of people. She uses her power on both Howay and Belle.

A group of mobsters

brought constant laughs and freshman Noah Strayve, who played a waiter, added even more humor to the production.

"It was really fun and exciting because on production night the hard work and practicing finally pays off," said Strayve.



Photos by Alexis Hosticka

With witches, riches and mobsters, the winter play "Mrs. McThing" kept audiences intrigued while delivering comedy, fantasy, and even some moral lessons.

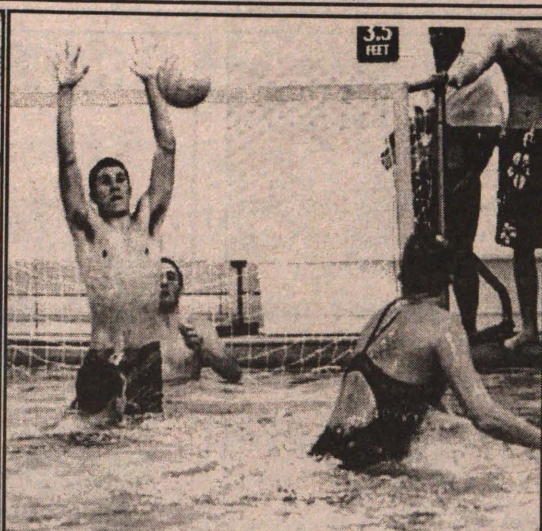
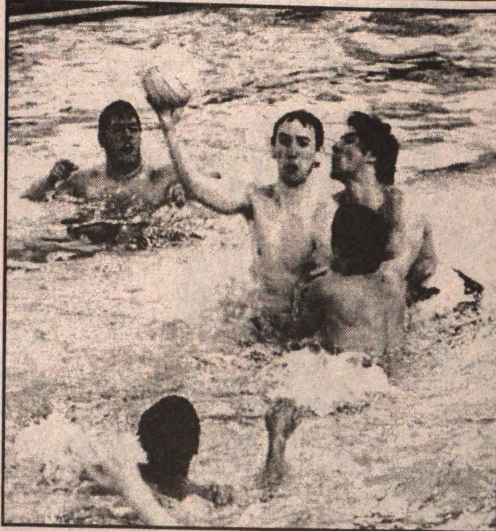


Photo courtesy of Anthony Nolzaco

The swim team (left) and the wrestling team (right) practice for the upcoming water polo tournament in hopes to raise money for the Annie Ryan Fun Run.

## Class project makes splash for the cure

By Evan Morgan  
Reporter

Sophomore Anthony Nolzaco decided to "Make a Splash for the Cure" by organizing a water polo tournament in order to raise money for Lutheran General Hospital's Midwest Children's Brain Tumor Center in Park Ridge.

The fundraiser started as a class project where Nolzaco had to do community service.

"We had to do community service for my world studies class. I decided to do a water polo tournament so I could do a fundraiser and some-

thing students would be interested in," said Nolzaco.

All money collected will be donated to the Annie Ryan Fun Run, which benefits the Midwest Children's Brain Tumor Center at Lutheran General Hospital. Nolzaco said he chose to donate because it impacted someone he knew.

"My cousin is married to Jim Ryan's son. Jim Ryan's the guy who ran for governor. His daughter, Annie Ryan died of a brain tumor and now every year he has a fun run in order to help fund research for the brain tumor center," said Nolzaco, who is hoping to raise at least \$500.

The tournament is taking

place on March 11 at 7 p.m. at the pool.

Winners of the tournament will be awarded with five tickets each for a raffle to win four Chicago Bulls tickets along with free parking and Lexus Club seating to the April 9, 7 p.m. game against the 76ers. Napco Steel inc. donated the ticket package.

Spectators will be able to purchase tickets for the raffle for \$1 per ticket or \$5 for six.

Teams should sign up by March 6, bringing their \$36 fee to either of the world studies teachers Barbara Laimins or Timothy Courtney in order to compete in the tournament.

## Shooting hoops unites players

By Alex Lima  
Reporter

West Chicago is hosting the third annual 3-on-3 basketball tournament March 14.

Players from the local area, Chicago, Downstate, Iowa and Indiana participated in the first two tournaments.

"The event is open to teams from fifth grade to adult and every year we see some very good basketball at all levels," said Wayne Sills, a Winfield business executive and co-chair of the event.

Registration is first come-first serve. All registration forms, entry fee information and liability waivers are online at d94.org, and can be turned in at the Administrative office.

There is a \$60 fee per team through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

For men's, women's, senior and open divisions, there is an \$80 fee per team.

The deadline for rosters and fees is March 6. However, there is an extended deadline of March 10 for high school players.

Each team is guaranteed two games, and each game is played to 15 minutes or 15 points, whichever comes first.

Every 20 minutes a game will start.

Trophies will be given to division champions. The open division champions will receive a \$400 cash prize.

Last year, the wheelchair division featured two-time Paralympics gold medalist Jennifer Ruddell.

Tenth through 12<sup>th</sup> grade teams will begin at 10 a.m. and adult divisions begin at noon.

## Back on the prowl

By Amanda Rathe  
Center Spread Editor

After taking a year off, Mr. Wildcat is back on the prowl, but will be held on a shorter leash than in past years.

Due to the threat of violence last spring, Mr. Wildcat did not happen, and inappropriate content marred the '06-'07 competition.

This year the school is cracking down, screening absolutely everything before it will be seen on stage March 6.

"[The contestants] went through and told us exactly what they will be doing for the modeling portion, and they have to have a legitimate talent," said Mr. Wildcat adviser Mitch McKenna. "They also have to sign something that says they won't do anything controversial or unplanned."

The show will begin with a cheerleader escorting each contestant on to the stage, fol-

## Talking up the ladder

### Regional success leads to next level

By Sarah Berger  
Entertainment Editor

Speech team sent three students to the IHSA sectional competition after destroying the competition at regionals.

The team was successful at the IHSA regional competition at Wheaton-Warrenville South on Feb. 7 with sophomores John Heinze and Thalia Fernandez, juniors David Garcia, Veronica Salazar, Karan Panchal, Carrie Liska, and seniors Bill Henize and Kasha Grabiec placing 11 events in total in finals.

"I am so proud of our team and how far we have come this season," said Fernandez.

Bill Henize, Liska, and Salazar advanced to the IHSA sectional competition on Feb. 14 at Warren High School in Gurnee.

In order to advance to sectionals, the students needed to place in the top four at regionals. Liska placed in poetry reading, Heinze in impromptu speaking, and Salazar in dramatic interpre-

tation.

For Heinze, this was not his first year at sectionals either.

"I went to sectionals last year, and placed ninth or tenth. I thought we did well this year, we had a lot of people go up there and they just did their best speeches. I thought that this year we had a really dedicated team that tried their best, and it's only going to get better from here," said Heinze.

One of the three speech team coaches, Chris Covino, believes that the success of the team also has to do with the size of it.

"We had almost twice as many students come out for the team this year. The coaching staff was very excited to see a renewed interest in speech. The leadership of our seniors and juniors is a strength that has definitely played a role in our achievements this season," said Covino.

Heinze also feels grateful for the opportunity to compete at sectionals for a second year in a row.

"I'm glad I did the best that I could, not all seniors get the chance to compete," said Heinze.

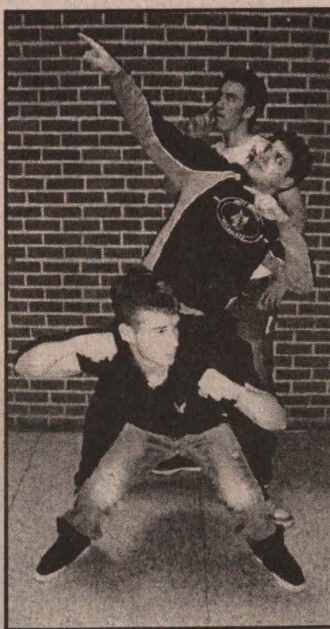


Photo by Greg Vodicka

Seniors Rhett Gunderson (back), Alex Puetz (middle), and Brian Skrzypczak (front) practice their hip-hop dance performance for Mr. Wildcat.

lowed by a modeling, talent, and Q & A portion.

Tentative participants include seniors Alex Puetz, Alex Pirela, Jozef Pavnica, Ivan Desfassiaux, Brian

Skrzypczak, David Peace, Rhett Gunderson, and Marco Favela.

Contestants officially signed up Wednesday as of press time.

The contestants have big plans for what they are going to do during the talent portion.

"I'm probably dancing, a little bit of poppin' and rockin'," said Gunderson. "I just wanted to do something to make high school worth while, I had some goals for senior year and this was one of them."

Pavnica will either take the dancing route as well, or show what he can do with an instrument.

"I was thinking of an interpretive dance, but I'll probably end up playing the guitar or piano," Pavnica said.

Mr. Wildcat will be held March 6 at 7 p.m. in the auditorium. Tickets can be purchased for \$2 at the door.

# Trains: Anticipated delays

*(Continued from page 1)*

an issue during peak hours of arrival and dismissal.

With 35 percent of students walking to school and a large percentage that are bused to school, this traffic becomes an issue for the school commute.

Students on the west side of the tracks will be impacted the most. Senior Alex Pirella walks less than 10 minutes to school everyday.

"I always felt lucky to live so close to the high school," said Pirella. "But if there are always trains on the tracks I am going to have to get up an hour early just to make it to school on time."

Other students who live east of the tracks may not notice the effects.

"I live in Winfield and get a ride to school. I don't live in walking distance, but I'd rather live here than have to worry about a train every day," admitted sophomore Evan Bernard.

However, the deal did come with several conditions including: two highway-rail grade separation projects, cameras at crossing to

help emergency responders, pedestrian safety measures, noise reductions measures, and a 5-year environmental reporting requirement.

In an interview with the Chicago Tribune, CN argues that moving freight traffic will free up a train bottleneck in Chicago and solve regional congestion problems. Towns intersected by the CN train lines welcome the change and say it's time for other neighboring towns to share the burden.

In addition to traffic, CN says acquisition of EJ&E will be more efficient and also have environmental benefits.

In an interview with the Daily Herald, West Chicago Mayor Michael Kwasman said that the result was anticipated but they will continue to fight it through Congress.

He also said the deal was an inconvenience that means the federal government is ignoring the needs of the community. Kwasman worries that the biggest impact will be getting kids to schools.

Retired locomotive engineer and West Chicago resident Phil Weibler feels it is an

excellent change, one that should have been done years ago.

"Besides relieving congestion near the city of Chicago, it will allow connections to be made more efficiently," said Weibler. "This was the reason the EJ&E was built."

Weibler admitted the numbers look threatening; however he argued that it will go virtually unnoticed to West Chicago residents.

"It's a fact of life in West Chicago. Why move into a town known for its trains if you have a problem with trains?" Weibler asked.

Weibler also mentions that without this change, trucking traffic will increase.

"People don't think about what the other options are," he said.

According to Weibler, trains are the most efficient type of transportation. Trains can double stack containers and hold twice as much as a truck.

"Imagine how many trucks would be equivalent to a two mile long double-stacked train," said Weibler.



Photo courtesy of Mary Ellen Daneels

Children in Angola gather around the shipping container which was sent last year through WeGo 2 Africa.

# Dance funds new classroom

## Clubs work together to reach goal

By Jake Bradley  
Reporter

After the recent turnabout dance, WeGo 2 Africa has pulled in \$8,000 in an effort to build a new school in Angola.

The original goal for WeGo 2 Africa was to raise enough money to build an entire school, which would cost approximately \$40,000. Even though they did not raise enough to build the school, WeGo 2 Africa has enough money to buy one classroom.

"We will send them the money for the room," said adviser Mary Ellen Daneels. "What happens is schools will start to band together to help make the entire school."

Turnabout raised several thousand dollars, and many students also participated in the match-making program where they paid \$1 to find out who they were compatible with.

Plenty of opportunities await students to raise more money towards Angola.

Coming up in the spring, Maggie Haas' world geography classes will be collecting backpacks and filling them with supplies to help children get a good start.

Also, the ceiling tiles project, "Look Up," will begin after spring break through the International Club, which

has three students from the community leadership class involved. Students who wish to purchase a tile can see International Club adviser Sarah Bellis in room 303. Clubs, sports and advisories will gain first priority, then individuals.

The girls swim team is also holding another swim-a-thon, "Swim for Sakutopi" where the West Chicago Sharks will be swimming for 6 hours to raise money. No date is set yet.

Student band, Sheffield, will be performing at The Boondocks in West Chicago on Friday, and will donate profits to WeGo 2 Africa.

"Shoot for the moon even if you miss you will land in the stars" was a quote used in last semester's community leadership class as they debated an appropriate goal.

"If we make [the goal], awesome," said Daneels. "If we get close, we are still closer than we first started. You don't gain muscles by lifting feathers."

Surrounding community organizations have not been able to donate as much as previous years because of the country's economic situation, which has also hurt WeGo 2 Africa, according to Daneels.

But in an effort to get more student involvement, senior Catlin Shiga has recently gone to junior high schools to talk about WeGo 2 Africa, and spark an interest among future high school students.

"Think big," said Daneels. "Good leaders empower others."

# Gaining respect while balancing priorities

By Megan Tennis  
Reporter

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.

December's Student of the Month, senior Lisette Dominguez, balances school, work, and a child every day of her life.

Dominguez thinks she is December's Student of the Month because she does her homework, works at Monarch Landing retirement communities, and had a daughter at a young age.

When Dominguez found out she was Student of the Month she said she was surprised.

"I really don't like the attention, it feels kind of weird," Dominguez said.

She maintains straight A's with all of this on her shoulders.

Dominguez says her life is

extremely stressful.

"It's hard not being able to have your own time. I have to always think of what's next on my list," said Dominguez.

She balances everything by keeping her priorities straight. Her number one priority is her 16-month-old daughter.

Dominguez's friends and parents are very supportive.

Her mom inspires her when she's having difficulties.

"She works and still comes to school," said Dominguez

about her mom who is a student herself.

Dominguez thinks that being Student of the Month has helped her gain respect from the people that look down on her because of her daughter.

Students and teachers see that she maintains her grades and are surprised by her success.

Becoming a registered nurse, attending College of DuPage, and working with the elderly are Dominguez's hopes for the future.

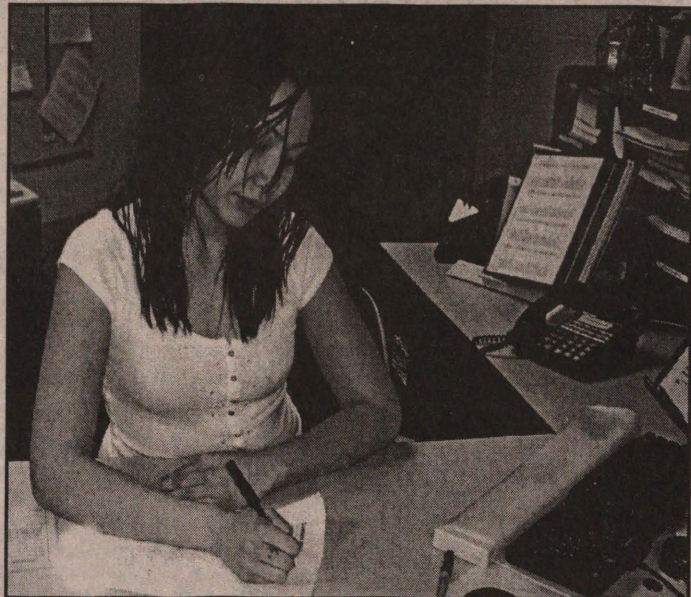


Photo by Megan Tennis

Senior Lisette Dominguez balances regular school work with a part time job as well as a family.

## Success: Students honored for first place

*(Continued from page 1)*

Their portfolio had a final equity value of \$103,433 and their portfolio performed 34.6 percent better than the performance of the S & P 500.

"The students learned why a company's stock might be doing well in the market. They also learned about risk management and how to manage a stock portfolio," Zabelin said.

He also mentioned that this year was especially different.

"The market volatility during October through December made this a particularly interesting time to be learning about the stock market," said Zabelin.

Seniors Kristen Beres, Danielle Brown, and Nicole Jacobsen took first place in The Stock Market Game.

Their portfolio had a final value of \$148,754.

Beres, Brown, and Jacobsen were also part of Zabelin's consumer education class.



Photo by Alexis Hosticka

VFW post 6791 and Lady's Auxiliary sponsored the annual Voice of Democracy competition that 42 students participated in earning over \$5,500 in scholarships.

## Essays honor veteran's service and sacrifice

By Alexis Hosticka  
Perspectives Editor

Forty-two students supported the local VFW post by writing essays and earned over \$5,500 in scholarship money for their entries in the annual Voice of Democracy competition.

The national essay contest, which is sponsored by West Chicago VFW post 6791 and Lady's Auxiliary, was themed "Service and sacrifice by America's veterans benefit today's youth by..." The 42 students answered the prompt in a three to five minute recorded essay.

Seniors Jozef Pavnica,

Ryan Crawford, and Rachel Molinaro all advanced to the next level, the district competition, where Pavnica placed eighth and Crawford fifth.

Sophomore Shelby Copple entered the competition for the first time. She thinks it is a great way to pay respect to the VFW. She incorporated her family into her essay.

"I wrote about my grandpa being in the military," Copple said. "He was in the Navy and I wrote about the impact he's made on me."

Copple plans to enter again next year. Besides the scholarship money, she thinks it is nice to "support the VFW and it's good for college."

Social studies teacher Mary Ellen Daneels coordinates the Voice of Democracy program. She was nominated by the VFW post, and won 19th District Voice of Democracy teacher of the year. Daneels was unaware of her nomination and was "very surprised."

"The veterans have given so much," Daneels said. "It's really my honor to be part of this program."

The VFW post also sponsors the WeGo 2 Africa program, the bands and choirs, as well as a spring scholarship for seniors. Interested seniors can talk to Daneels for more information.

## Rewarded for effort

*PAWS program  
allows teachers to  
recognize students*

By Jake Bradley  
Reporter

Faculty is honoring students for their outstanding personal contributions in the classroom or community through the newest student recognition program, Promoting Awareness of Wildcat Success (P.A.W.S.).

Language arts department chair Chris Covino started the program which acknowledged 14 students in January who have been showing improvement in the classroom, provided support for a peer or their community, or have overcome a significant challenge.

Two students were recognized by each division, and the nominating teachers, the selected students, and their parents were honored at a continental breakfast earlier this month.

"It was a real honor to be able to choose a student who works hard every day and doesn't get recognized for it," said English teacher Cat Thielberg.

Students that received first recognition were seniors Courtney Barrie and Phil Lenertz nominated by the student services team; sophomore Julie Birkey and junior Allan Alfonso Castellon nominated by the physical education division; sophomore Carlos Cinto and senior Reina Hernandez nominated by the world languages division; senior Kelsey Davis and freshman Adolfo Perez nominated by the humanities division; seniors Juan Reyes and Ismael Sanchez nominated by the information/technology division; sophomore Ashley Troia and junior Courtney Vargas nominated by the math/science division; and junior Amanda Winters and freshman Chelsea Wittenmeyer nominated by the language arts division.

Teachers spoke briefly about their nomination at the breakfast, and each student received a certificate, and the student's parents received a Wildcat license plate cover.

Each month, divisions will choose new students to honor for their achievements and efforts in school.

## Senior manages to hang on to sanity

### Student makes major impact on fine arts department

By Megan Hernbroth  
Features Editor

*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.*

After four years of accomplishments in and out of school, senior Dave Hiltner has one more to add to his collection, Student of the Month.

Hiltner dedicated most of his high school career to

marching band, being drum major for three years.

"Conducting three years' worth of football halftime shows was a really fun experience," said Hiltner.

Band has taught him more than just music, with the help of band director Stephen Govertsen.

"He's [Govertsen] been a constant all four years of high school, and, like any good band director, music is the least of what he's taught me," said Hiltner. "If I could grow up to have a third of his leadership, charisma, and personality, I'd be stoked."

Hiltner has also participated in jazz band, orchestra winds, thespians, three plays, National Honor Society, Spanish National Honor Society, and is an Illinois State Scholar. Hiltner plans to continue with extra curricular activities in college.

"[Extra curriculars] is where all the good stuff hap-

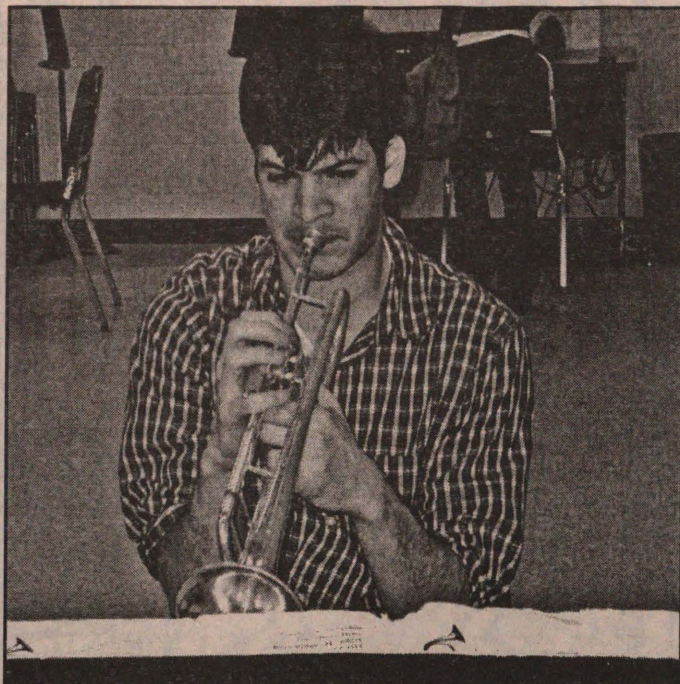


Photo by Alexis Hosticka

Senior Dave Hiltner looks up to band director Stephen Govertsen through all four years of band practice.

pens," said Hiltner.

Music also will follow Hiltner to college.

"The plan is to major in music composition at either Roosevelt University or University of Illinois," said Hiltner. "What actually ends up happening is anyone's guess."

Although there is no doubt shadowing Hiltner's accomplishments from band to thespians, full responsibility for them doesn't fall just on

Hiltner.

"To accept full credit for all of my accomplishments would be a bit of a slap in the face to the people who have helped me along the way and kept me motivated," said Hiltner.

Through his scholastic awards, Hiltner's proud of one aspect that most students overlook.

"Really, I'm just proud that I've kept my sanity," said Hiltner. "Most of it, anyway."

*Our View*

## Turning a quick trip into an annoying commute

Every student has encountered the running late crisis. The alarm clock magically stops working and students rush to brush their hair and teeth while grabbing a small breakfast, all before rushing to school.

Hopefully, students will find themselves walking through the doors with 5 minutes to get to their lockers and then their first hour.

Occasionally, however, students will find that their cars or buses are stuck waiting for the Metras or freight trains that constantly rumble through West Chicago.

As the students watch the clocks, the time keeps passing and any hope of arriving on time is shattered.

Well, students are now in for a rude awakening. This train traffic will be going from occasionally to constantly, affecting the way students get to and from school.

Students who drive are familiar with the train tracks located on Wood Street, which almost always contain a Metra train passing through at 7 a.m. and a freight train at 3:05 p.m.

Not only does this extremely frustrate students, but it impacts their after-school lives. Many students who have jobs or extra-curriculars right after school need to arrive in a timely manner.

The increase in train traffic will only leave students with jobs struggling to make it on time, and those with extra-curriculars unable to make a quick stop home before coming back for practice.

As traffic continues to build on Wood Street, many students hope to escape the wait by taking the Wilson Avenue Bridge. However, this idea soon falters as each student thinks the same thing, and congestion builds on the already overcrowded bridge.

With nowhere to filter, traffic will continue to build in every direction, and students as well as community members will find themselves at a stand-still.

And while students who drive and take the bus will be impacted, they are not the only ones who should be concerned.

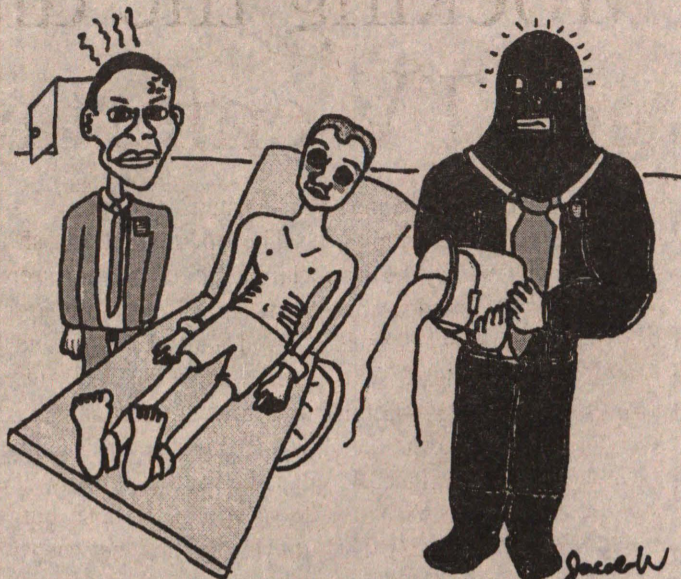
Students who walk to school will be the most negatively impacted by the increased train congestion, especially those who need to cross the tracks in order to get to and from school.

According to a West Chicago resolution, 35 percent of students walk to school, the majority of which live on the west side of the tracks.

These students will now need to rearrange their schedules in order to ensure they can cross the tracks at a time earlier than the train, or else leave their houses early in order to go out of their way to walk under the intimidating and disgusting tunnel.

With an increase in the number and length of trains, the acquisition will negatively affect students as well as the community.

However, there is one positive aspect to the entire proposition: It will teach students to manage their time wisely and leave plenty of time to get to and from school.



Obama: "Not under my administration! Close this down!"  
Interrogator: "But he'll confess to something today... maybe."  
Prisoner: "Phew..."

## *Huge step for humanity equals big responsibility*

One of President Barack Obama's first actions in office was to order the shut down of Guantanamo Bay within the year. Not only does this action show that Obama will bring change, but it is also a huge step for human rights.

On Jan. 21, Obama arranged the termination of the prison as well as implementing new rules for the U.S. to follow for interrogating prisoners.

These new measures will ensure the United States will not be a party to the torture of prisoners of war. The U.S. will now abide by the same rules and regulations that American citizens have, as well as the standards put forth in the Geneva Convention.

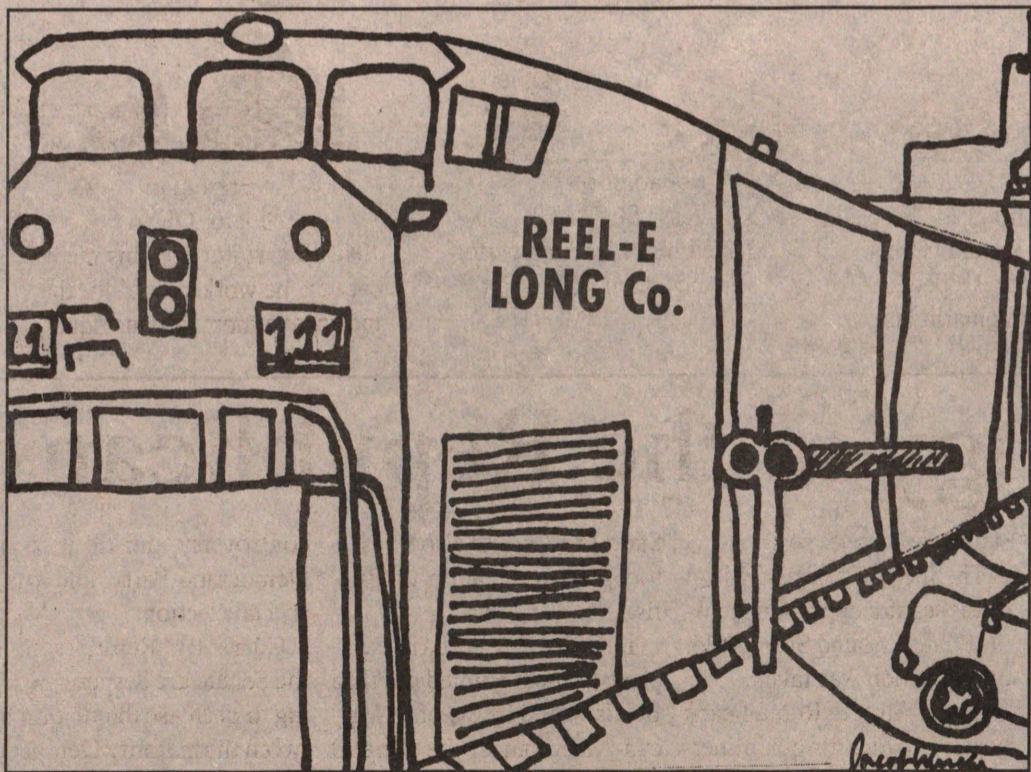
This move is controversial for many politicians, who say that the U.S. cannot house the terrorists. It is true that what some of these men have tried to do to our country is inexcusable. In the long run, however, this will make our country safer.

The U.S. will be seen as a fair government and the U.S. will show the world we are not ruling with a fist of revenge but rather an open hand. Through our actions of fairness and justice, our allies and even our enemies' condemnation of our country will lessen and we can build a road to better understanding and global cooperation on the war against terrorism.

Many countries have already applauded the closure of Guantanamo, but are not willing to take these prisoners back into their countries. The U.S. created this problem and now we alone must fix it.

Obama's first plan of action is to have the prisoners all receive a fair trial in the United States to determine their innocence or guilt. After the trials are complete, then it will be decided what to do with each prisoner depending on the outcome of the trial. This will not be an easy process, but it is a necessary one.

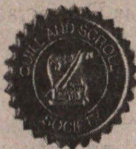
Unfortunately, Obama inherited this problem from his predecessor who chose to sweep it under the rug. A policy of 'out of sight out of mind' doesn't work. The problem is not going away and it will only get worse, not only with the injustices done to the prisoners but to our world image. So, Obama has made the tough decision, and the right decision, in closing Guantanamo.



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**THE WILDCAT CHRONICLE** is the student newspaper at 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 paper's content. 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 staff members 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.

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## Mocking the disabled is not TV entertainment

As I flipped through channels on the night of the Grammy's, I was overwhelmed by the garbage that TV was broadcasting. Who cares who Bret Michaels falls in love with next? Who wants to watch "Happy Gilmore" for the thousandth time?

However, I was intrigued by a show called "How's Your News?" on MTV, thinking that it could be interesting coverage on national and worldwide news that was tailored to teens. However, I was stunned by what I watched.

"How's Your News?" takes people with mental disabilities, hands them a microphone, and they interview celebrities.

Now, this doesn't seem bad

at all, right? Wrong!

The opening of the show claims, "You've never seen a news show like this before."

And it's true; I have never seen a show so utterly repulsive and so derogatory towards those with disabilities. It's not that they directly mock those with disabilities, but it's the interaction between the reporter and celebrity which is shocking.

Reporter Robert Bird, otherwise known as Bobby, has Down syndrome and a speech impairment which makes him hard to understand.

As he attempts to ask questions to celebrities such as Sarah Silverman and Jimmy

Kimmel, they skew his questions and deliver preposterous, absurd answers as they laugh at him, which only make Bobby look foolish.

And while the producers of the show and MTV attempt to make it appear as though they are giving these so-called reporters the opportunity to travel across the country in pursuit of a passion while meeting celebrities, the real purpose of the show is to exploit those with mental disabilities and make them comical.

And, even worse than the show itself is the fact that the family members support it.

They show cuts of the family speaking about their child

Jessica Bergman



News Editor

and how their disability has affected their lives.

I don't understand why any family would put their child through this humiliation.

Maybe these reporters and their families believe the show

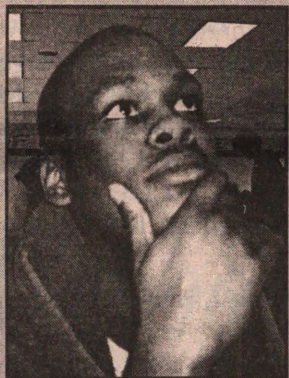
is an opportunity of a lifetime, but really, it is meant for pure mockery.

And I know, now we're all curious about what's really on the show, but please abstain from watching.

## Students Speak

Compiled by Megan Tennis

Should Michael Phelps have his medals taken away or be suspended for his use of an illegal drug?



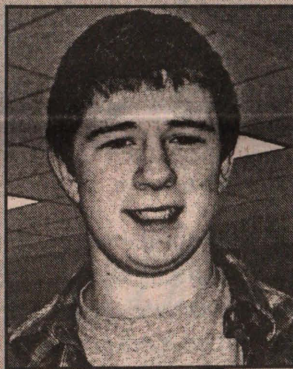
Senior Craig Epps

"Yes, because he is setting a bad example for the kids."



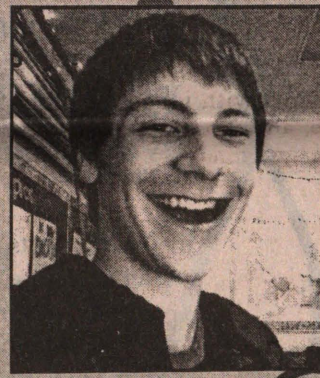
Junior Emily Hahn

"No, I don't think he should get his medals taken away or be suspended because he wasn't using marijuana during the Olympics."



Sophomore Jesse Short

"If it affected his swimming performance, then yes."



Freshman Justin Olsen

"He deserves to keep his medals because he worked hard for them and earned them fair and square."

## A humble apology to the Republicans

Typically, I don't agree with the GOP. Come to think of it, I hardly side with the Republicans about anything.

We don't see eye-to-eye on

social issues, and we disagree on how to stimulate the economy.

However, I will swallow my pride and say (with a humbled sigh) that the Republican elephants were right for once, and have made the Democrats look like a bunch of jackasses.

After former Gov. Rod Blagojevich was indicted for the attempted sale of President Barack Obama's congressional Senate seat, the future of Illinois' junior

senator was in jeopardy.

The idea of stripping Blago of his senator appointing powers floated around Springfield, but no action was taken.

Then, Illinois Republicans began broadcasting commercials asking for a special election. Some Illinois Democrats also supported a special election, but not nearly as many as the Republicans.

However, the majority of the Illinois Senate (made up of Democrats) refused a special election. That was the Democratic Party's first big mistake. Then, Blago seized the opportunity and appointed Roland Burris to fill Obama's vacant Senate seat.

At first, Democratic majority leader of the U.S. Congress Harry Reid took a firm stance that Burris was not to be seated.

Democratic Secretary of

State Jesse White also refused to sign a verification of Burris.

Then the race card was placed. Blago pointed out that Burris would be the only African-American in the Senate. He also asked the media not to "lynch him."

The Dems buckled.

And now that Mr. Burris is our junior senator from Illinois, an affidavit has come out showing that he may have been involved in Blago's pay-to-play operation.

This all could have been avoided if we had a special election.

The GOP mainly vouched for a special election because they wanted another elephant in the United States Congress.

The Republicans knew that if they had a special election, they could spin the Blago

controversy and tie it to the Democratic Party, and win a special election.

Currently, Republicans in the Senate are desperately trying to decrease the margin between the majority Democrats and the minority GOP.

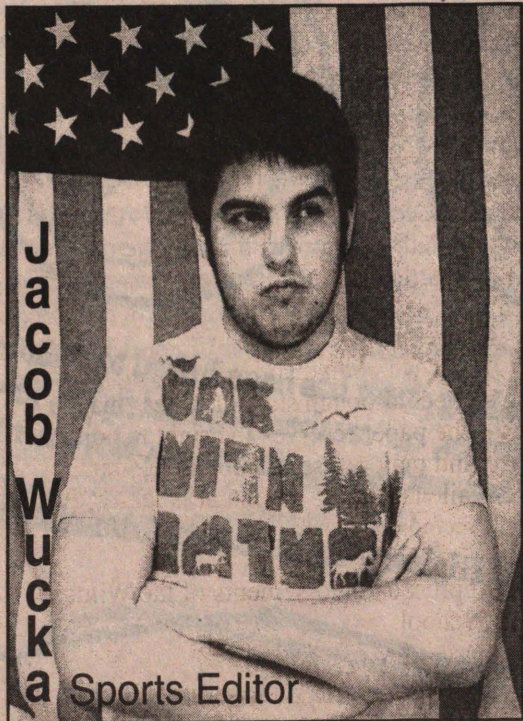
Even though they wanted the special election for their benefit more than anything, those elephants were right.

In the mix of all the Blago controversy and Burris-gate, Illinois' true voice in the Senate has been lost.

Who can we rely on, senior Senator and advocate-for-himself Dick Durbin?

Illinoisans should not have allowed such a corrupt politician to choose our senator.

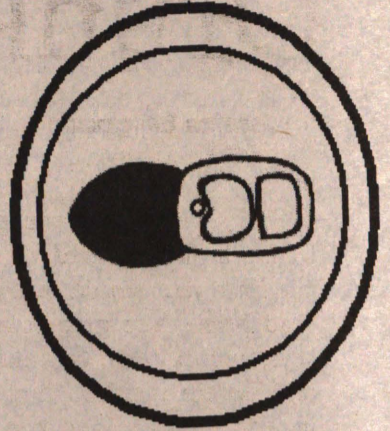
Residents missed the opportunity to stand up and voice our support for the special election. Let's make sure the same mistake isn't made in 2010.



Jacob Wucka

Sports Editor

Drinking is increasingly the chosen pastime for teenagers around the country. But do they know what they're risking?



Repeated alcohol exposure can alter the trajectory of teen brain development impacting adolescents.  
-Zeigler DW



## Tickets are just the beginning

### Zero tolerance law leaves no room for second chances

By Greg Vodicka  
Editor-in-Chief

Your parents are going out of town for the weekend to visit your older sister at college. You manage to stay home saying you can't miss work.

As the weekend approaches, friends catch wind that there will be no adult supervision at your house. When more and more students find out about a potential party, the event begins to get out of hand.

The party develops and the neighbors call telling you to turn down the music.

Realizing how many people are there, you quickly turn down the stereo. What you don't know is that another neighbor has already called the police suspecting something with the dozens of cars parked on both sides of the street.

You're about to find out what Illinois' zero tolerance laws mean.

Illinois' "use it & lose it"/zero tolerance laws set the acceptable alcohol level for anyone under 21 years old at .00.

According to officer Joe Gaztambide, the first thing police do when they arrive at a party where they suspect underage drinking is speak to the owner of the house or adult at the party to verify alcohol is being

served to minors.

Every minor is asked to take a breath analyzer test that measures blood alcohol concentration. Any alcohol content found in the suspect's system results in a drinking ticket. Refusal to blow means an arrest.

"Anything over .001 means they have had something to drink," said Gaztambide.

The minimum fine for a drinking ticket is \$75, not including court costs.

"Depending on the judge your ticket can cost a few hundred dollars," said Gaztambide.

When no parents are present, the kids can be arrested and taken out of the house, and the adult is cited.

Alcohol at school or school events is a whole different issue according to Gaztambide.

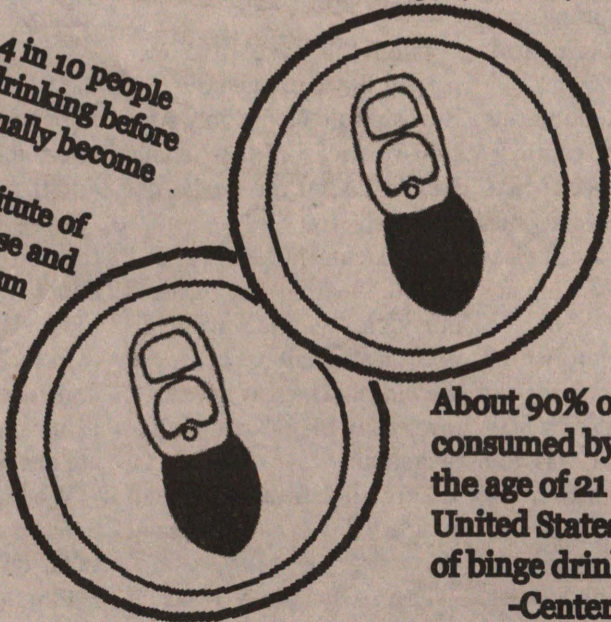
"If you're leaving a school event such as prom, homecoming, turn-about, or sporting events the school is responsible for you until you get home," said Gaztambide. "If you're caught drinking during these events or during school hours you'll get a ticket, your parents will be involved, and a minimum 10 day suspension[is imposed]."

Obviously the price to pay for underage drinking is significant; however, Gaztambide says some students don't fully understand all that implies.

"A drinking ticket is more serious than something like a traffic ticket because it involves drugs. Alcohol is a drug," said Gaztambide.

More than 4 in 10 people who begin drinking before age 15 eventually become alcoholics.

-National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism



About 90% of the alcohol consumed by youth under the age of 21 years in the United States is in the form of binge drinking.

-Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Early drinking onset has been linked to unintentional injuries, car crashes, physical fights, unplanned sex, and academic underachievement in teens.

-National Highway Traffic Safety Administration



Jacob Wade



## Drunk driving takes its toll

By Jessica Bergmann  
News Editor

After a few drinks, you're feeling a little buzzed. It's late and you should really head home. You grab your keys, unlock your car, and turn on the ignition, thinking that it's not a long drive, you'll be fine.

What many teens don't realize is that alcohol impairs judgment so severely that, while they believe they are still sober enough to drive, they are not sober at all.

"The part of our brain which controls coordination and driving ability is smaller and therefore affected by alcohol earlier than the part of the brain which makes decisions," said science teacher Dr. Hank Murphy.

He believes there is an increased problem with teenagers because they don't have responsible experiences with

alcohol.

A study conducted by Southern Illinois University Carbondale in 2002 shows that 43 percent of high school juniors and seniors admitted they have been intoxicated before driving at some point during the year.

English teacher and Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) adviser Dave Jennings is an advocate against drinking and driving.

drunk driving.

"My Aunt Sylvia was killed by a drunk driver. The roads were slick that night and she falsely trusted her friend's sobriety," Kimball said. "They were going to a party, taking back roads a little too quickly, and ended up running into a tree."

The accident killed her aunt and left the drunk driver with severed legs.

"I do feel some anger to-

"[The accident] has caused me to really look down upon substances like alcohol. Substances like these affect people's judgment and endanger everyone around the user," Kimball said.

According to a 2007 report by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 18 percent of teen drivers 16 to 20 years old who were killed in driving accidents had been drinking at some point.

"I think it's very unhealthy for [students this age] to design an escape of reality, and drinking is a means of doing that," said Jennings, who believes the best way to avoid drunk driving is to not drink at all.

"It is so easy to make mistakes when under the influence," Kimball said. "I do not want what happened to my aunt to happen to [my friends]."

*'[Drinking and driving] is the worst decision you can make.'*

*-- English teacher and SADD adviser David Jennings*

"[Drinking and driving] is the worst decision you can make. It not only endangers you, but puts other people at risk as well," Jennings said.

Senior Sarah Kimball has experienced the trauma of having a loved one die due to

wards the driver, but I also feel that he has received what he deserved," Kimball said.

Although Kimball was 6 years old when the accident occurred, she said that her reaction to the incident grows stronger each day.

## Alcohol leaves a bad aftertaste

By Clark Hudmon  
Reporter

Just one drink at a party could flip a student's life upside down, and sometimes that one drink can lead to more serious matters from alcohol dependency to death.

Some freshmen and sophomores recently learned how alcohol can affect a life at York High School in Elmhurst.

The school suspended 43 student athletes in spring and fall sports for a fifth of their season after they decided to party hard, according to York High School's athletic director Rob Wagner.

Along with serving the suspension through the athletic administration, the Elmhurst police stepped into the situation, and the students will have to dish up 20 hours of community service.

Community High School's policy is very similar to York High School's policy. The first time a student athlete is

caught with alcohol, he or she receives a two week suspension, the second suspension from remainder of the season and, by the third time the athlete will be kicked off the team.

If risk of ruining a sports future is not enough to put down the bottle look at the health side effects.

Kids who drink by age 15 or under are four times more likely to develop alcoholism than someone who is 21 and starts to drink, according to the Marin Institute, an institute fighting to make communities alcohol free.

Students Against Destructive Decisions reports the biggest killer of teens in the United States is alcohol.

The biggest problem to youth drinking is binge drinking. Kids drink too much way too fast when binge drinking. In fact, two-thirds of student in high school who admit to drinking also admit to binge drinking, according to WebMD.

When a teen drinks, too much too fast, the alcohol slows down body functions, such as heartbeat, thought process, and gag reflex. Alcohol poisoning could potentially force the drunk teen to choke, go into a coma, or even die, according to emedicine.com.

If students keep up these habits throughout high school, more serious health problems can occur than just forgetting what they did last night.

Alcohol causes damage in the long run too, like causing liver failure.

The American Liver Foundation states that the liver's job is to break down the alcohol so the body can handle it. When drinking too much, the liver cannot keep up. Eventually it shuts down, and not only stops regulat-

ing the booze going into the victim's bloodstream, but the fats and carbohydrates into the body which could greatly harm the body.

And don't forget about death. According to the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, approximately 14 teenagers die a day due to underage drinking.

**Each year, approximately 5,000 young people under the age of 21 die as a result of underage drinking.**  
-National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism



## More than just a winter hobby

By Megan Hernbroth  
Features Editor

Winter can seem like an endless season with mountains of snow turning into slush and fewer hours of sunlight than any other time of the year. Sophomore Conor Zaputil chooses to make the most of a normally dull situation by strapping on his snowboard.

Zaputil has been snowboarding for over three years, getting into it after his friends kept encouraging him to give it a try.

"A lot of my friends were snowboarding a couple of years ago and I thought it would be fun," said Zaputil.

At first, Zaputil stuck to local hills such as Villa Olivia and Cascade, but soon wanted a bigger hill to tackle.

"The first time I went down a hill was at Four Lakes down the tiny bunny hill," said Za-

putil. "I got about two feet before I fell right down."

Now, Zaputil visits ski resorts in Wisconsin and is saving up to snowboard in Colorado.

"I went down a black diamond in Wisconsin for the first time that had a bunch of trees," said Zaputil. "Halfway

down my board hit something under the snow and angled me in a weird way so I almost hit a whole group of trees."

After years of practice, Zaputil still had some work to accomplish on the black diamond, the most difficult hill to ski or snowboard down.

"On that same black dia-



Photo courtesy of Conor Zaputil

Sophomore Conor Zaputil takes advantage of the snowfalls during the winter and practices his snowboarding skills.

mond, after I'd gone down it a few times, I was going too fast and before I could stop myself I ran into a tree," said Zaputil. "My foot popped out of my boot and it got twisted all funny. My parents took me to the emergency room out there and I broke my ankle."

Even though he suffered other injuries in addition to his ankle, Zaputil did not stay off his board because friends encouraged him to start snowboarding again.

"Five of my really close friends snowboard, and that's how I got into it in the first place," said Zaputil, "but I've made a ton of friends since I started and we've gotten really close. We usually just get together to go snowboarding and if they lived closer we would probably hang out and just relax more often."

With help from his friends and a professional teacher, Zaputil was able to master a few tricks after plenty of practice.

"When I did my first trick, I remember going down the hill really fast and I had this feeling that I would be able to do the 180 turn that I'd been practicing," said Zaputil. "It's a hard feeling to describe but I landed the jump and I felt really accomplished."

Even though snowboarding has become almost second-nature to Zaputil, there is no doubt in his mind about the difficulty of his sport versus skiing.

"In snowboarding, both of your feet are strapped to one board, so it's like you have one foot to steer and stop with," said Zaputil. "In skiing, you have two skis and it's easier to stop and steer with."

In order to participate, Zaputil has to dish out over \$300 for gear alone, not counting the countless lift tickets in different areas. With this large of an investment in the sport, Zaputil has high hopes for his future in the dangerous sport.

"For now, I'm working on getting a lot better so I can compete," said Zaputil. "Once I'm really good, though, I really want to make a career out of it."

Zaputil encourages others to lighten up their winter with snowboarding, even if they don't plan on becoming professional in the near future.

"It's really fun to go to a smaller hill on the weekends and just fool around," said Zaputil. "If you're bored and you get a few friends together there's really nothing to lose."

## Tackling different terrain

By Megan Hernbroth  
Features Editor

Illinois is better known for politics than its ski resorts, but science teacher Hank Maher doesn't mind. He finds a way to ski despite the flat land.

Maher has been skiing since he was 19, making it about 40 years.

"I grew up in Wyoming right next to

Colorado," said Maher. "There was always a ton of snow so skiing was something everyone did, kind of like soccer here."

Maher participates in both downhill and cross country skiing, and remembers his first time attempting both.

"The first time I went downhill, my family was in Oregon and we stayed at this little resort called Hoodoo that had one little tow rope and one chair lift," said Maher. "Just trying to get around everywhere was my cross country practice."

After Maher had a handle on his technique, he experienced some humiliation to put a damper on his lessons.

"One time, my brother skied over the ends of my skis when we were going down a hill really fast," said Maher.

"I went flying head first into the snow and the patrol asked if I was okay then burst out laughing when he

found out that I was fine."

When Maher was learning to ski, techniques and the approach to teaching skiing were different from what they are today.

"I took two one-day classes, one for downhill and one for cross country, and they taught us on the skis suited to our bodies," said Maher. "Nowadays kids start out on the smallest skis possible so they learn how to control everything right off the bat and then graduate to big skis."

Maher has tackled the slopes in Wyoming, Colorado, Oregon, Illinois, Wisconsin, and even Hawaii.

Down one double black diamond mountain in Beaver Creek, Colo., Maher lost control and reevaluated his skill level.

"My skill was definitely not up to that mountain," said Maher. "I darn near killed myself."

Surprisingly, Maher has never broken a bone on his many expeditions down the mountains, and his worst

injury came during a cross country ski trip.

"We were coming down the trail and it was really icy," said Maher. "I was going so fast that I couldn't stop and went down really hard on my hip. I found out that it was deeply bruised."

In order for Maher to take the safer route and ski downhill, he has to pay around \$600 for the equipment and countless lift tickets. It's cheaper, however, to put your life on the line in cross country skiing at under \$300 for equipment and free trails.

"I think I like the cross country more," said Maher. "It's cheaper and you get a much better day of exercise."

Although the athletes in the Olympics make the sport look easy, Maher looks at it as a challenge at times.

"It can be relaxing if you are in your skill level," said Maher, "but it can also be frightening and exciting too. But to me this is just a hobby, like some people work on cars."



## Amazing chance for Costa Ricans

*Differences in temperature and food make for exciting experience*

**By Megan Tennis**  
Reporter

Traveling to a new country can be a nerve-racking experience, not to mention coming to a new school. This year's foreign exchange students have to deal with both.

Looking around and not seeing any familiar faces, a

lesser-known language, and a new culture to adapt to is a lot to handle for one person.

But the eight exchange students from Costa Rica think of it as an amazing opportunity.

The Costa Ricans arrived in America on Jan. 16 to experience what American life is like and to practice their

English as part of the annual foreign exchange program.

Costa Rican Adelayda Vargas de Krujif said the best part of the exchange program is "getting to experience what it's like here."

Many of the Costa Ricans said they weren't scared coming to America, just excited.

Meeting their American hosts was a comfortable situation also.

Vargas de Krujif said her host, freshman Deirdre Hofmann, was really funny and nice.

Costa Rican Faubricio Forester said his host family members were also very nice people.

While here the Costa Ricans ice skated in Millennium Park, saw the Sears Tower, and walked around Chicago.

Forester said one of the funniest parts of the trip was watching the other Costa Ricans try to ice skate, since they kept falling.

He says he is a good ice

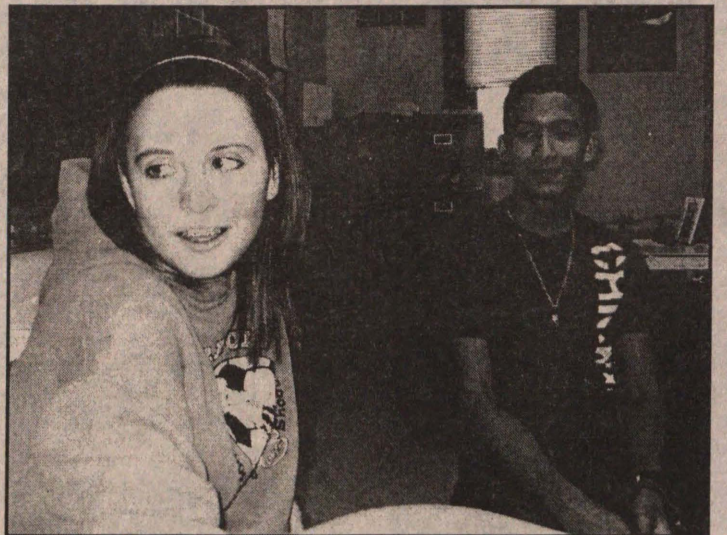


Photo by Jacob Wucka

**As part of their visit, sophomore Sarah Opel learns from exchange student Faubricio Forester during class time.**

skater compared to the other Costa Ricans.

The temperatures in Costa Rica are blazing compared to winter temperatures in Chicago. High January temperatures run from 73 degrees to 87 degrees, so many Costa Ricans saw snow for the first time.

"The weather is the biggest difference," said Vargas de Krujif.

The exchange students were wowed by the size of America, since Costa Rica is so small.

Many of the Costa Rican girls said when they go back

to Costa Rica, they'll miss the big malls because there are so many more choices.

While here the students experienced a typical American lifestyle, including fast food.

Surprisingly, the food, the malls, and the trips to the Windy City were not the only highlights of their trip.

"The people are the best part of America," said exchange student Lua Fox Marin.

The Costa Ricans left Feb. 6.

When asked if he'd come again to America, Forester responded, "Absolutely."

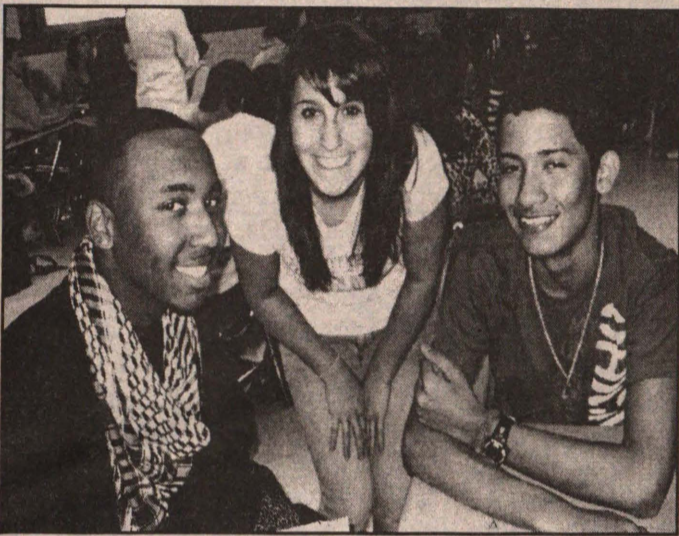


Photo by Jacob Wucka

**Students in the Spanish 2 class spend time getting to know the Costa Ricans. From left, sophomores Josh Foster, Jess Infelise, and exchange student Faubricio Forester make the most of the experience.**

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## Broadway in Chicago

Compiled by Jessica Bergmann  
News Editor  
Photos courtesy of Joan Marcus

**Broadway is coming to Chicago this spring with three new shows: "Legally Blonde," "Rent," and "Chicago." Expect phenomenal dancing, exceptional acting, and songs that you won't be able to get out of your head.**



### 'Chicago'

**When:** Until March 8

**Where:** Oriental Theatre, 24 W. Randolph, Chicago

**Price:** Ranges from \$30 to \$150

**Synopsis:** The scene is set after bombshell Roxie Hart discovers her lover lied about making her a star and she shoots him dead. The police take her to prison, where Roxie meets murderess and former star Velma Kelly. The two compete in a race for publicity and fame while attempting to revoke their sentence on death row. "Chicago" integrates smooth, jazzy music numbers incorporated with the lifestyle from the 1920's. With wildly entertaining lyrics and dance, the musical is sure to wow audiences and leave them wanting more.

### 'Rent'

**When:** March 31 to April 12

**Where:** Oriental Theatre, 24 W. Randolph, Chicago

**Price:** Ranges from \$25 to \$100

**Synopsis:** Set in New York's East Village in the late 1980's, "Rent" follows the lives of eight friends who balance friendships, love, and death. Roommates Mark, an aspiring film-maker, and Roger, a washed-up guitarist recovering from a heroin addiction, struggle to pay their rent in the midst of an economic downfall that forces people out of their apartments. As the two struggle to pull some money together, they find friendship in others. The group deals with controversial topics such as AIDS, drug addictions, transvestitism, and homosexuality. "Rent" has transformed the Broadway stage and captivated audiences with one truly powerful story.



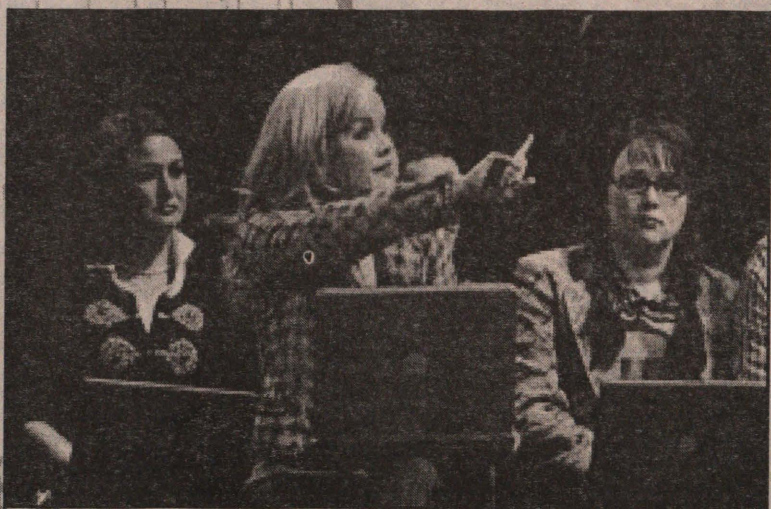
### 'Legally Blonde'

**When:** May 12 to May 31

**Where:** Oriental Theatre, 24 W. Randolph, Chicago

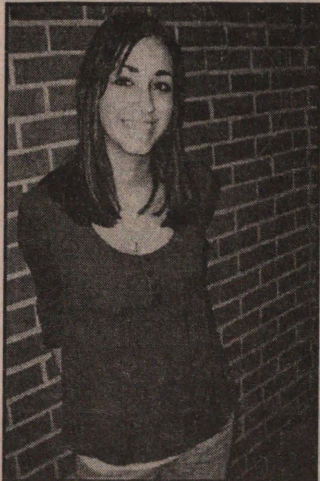
**Price:** Unannounced

**Synopsis:** "Legally Blonde" centers around popular, beautiful, blonde sorority girl Elle Woods, who doesn't let others discriminate against her. When her boyfriend dumps her for a more serious girlfriend, Elle decides to ditch her posh lifestyle and hit the books at Harvard Law to prove herself to the world. While Elle searches for intellect and belonging, she doesn't shed her perky personality and fabulous outfits. Students who might have seen the musical "Legally Blonde" when it was featured on MTV did not experience Broadway in its fullest. Upbeat songs, dance, and Elle's perky personality light up the stage and deliver audiences a fun, yet powerful, performance.



## Ledger deserves credit

By Sarah Berger  
Entertainment Editor



At the Oscars Sunday, Heath Ledger was posthumously awarded the Oscar for Best Supporting Actor.

Eyebrows were raised when the late Ledger was nominated for best supporting actor for his role in the movie "The Dark Knight."

Many people have speculated whether or not his nomination was based off his performance in the movie or the fact that he tragically passed away last year due to accidental prescription drug

overdose.

It's unfair that people doubt Ledger's credibility for the nomination; he deserves the award more than anyone. People need to stop looking at Ledger's death and start focusing on what he should really be remembered for; his acting ability.

It's understandable that some people believe the nomination was triggered by the sympathy and sadness that was felt around the world after Ledger's death, but at

the same time people need to remember that this is the Oscars, one of the most prestigious award ceremonies of the year.

Anyone who has seen "The Dark Knight" would agree with me when I say that Ledger's portrayal of the Joker was exceptional.

Rolling Stone gave "The Dark Knight" three and a half stars, and the New York Times wrote that Ledger's performance was, "so visceral, creepy, and insistently present that the characterization pulls you in almost at once."

Alongside nominees John Brodin, Robert Downey Jr., Philip Hoffman, and Michael Shannon is right where Ledger belongs. If Ledger was still alive, there wouldn't be any question if he deserved the nomination.

Ledger may have played the Joker in "The Dark Knight," but his performance was no joke.

Ledger even seemed to steal the show from Christian Bale, who played Batman in the movie.

Ledger deserved the nomination, and his death should have nothing to do with it.

## And the Oscar goes to...

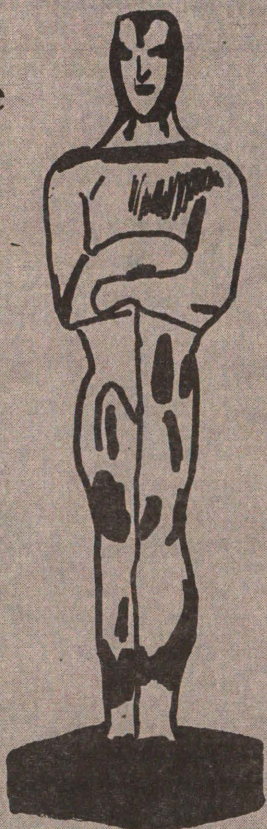
Compiled by Sarah Berger  
Entertainment Editor

Whether it was karate-fighting pandas, insane jokers, or robots falling in love, this year the movies were truly magical. The Oscars is a night where the best movies and actors of the year are recognized for their achievements. Fifty students voted on who they wanted to win at the awards, and the results didn't always agree with the real results.

### Best Actor Supporting Role

*Student Pick:*  
Heath Ledger in  
"The Dark Knight"

*Oscar Pick:*  
Heath Ledger in  
"The Dark Knight"



### Best Picture

*Student Pick:*  
"The Curious Case of  
Benjamin Button"

*Oscar Pick:*  
"Slumdog Millionaire"

### Best Animated Feature Film

*Student Pick:*  
"Kung Fu Panda"

*Oscar Pick:*  
"Wall-E"

### Best Actress Supporting Role

*Student Pick:*  
Brad Pitt in  
"The Curious Case of  
Benjamin Button"

*Oscar Pick:*  
Sean Penn in  
"Milk"

### Best Actor Leading Role

*Student Pick:*  
Taraji Henson in  
"The Curious Case of  
Benjamin Button"

*Oscar Pick:*  
Penelope Cruz in  
"Vicky Cristina Barcelona"

### Best Actress Leading Role

*Student Pick:*  
Angelina Jolie in  
"Changeling"

*Oscar Pick:*  
Kate Winslet in  
"The Reader"

## Reporter's Picks

Compiled by Payton Bayless  
Reporter



Every month, check here for a different reporter's pick in movies, music, books, and games. For February, Payton Bayless chooses her favorite picks in entertainment.



## Movie 'Push'



An exciting, action-packed rollercoaster, "Push" will keep you on the edge of your seat as it dives deep into the world of the supernatural. After his father was murdered by a mysterious organization called the Division, telekinetic Nick Gant goes into hiding in the hectic maze of

radar, Nick is drawn out by 13-year-old Cassie Holmes, a clairvoyant, or "mover," in need of his help.

Together, the unlikely pair search the undergrounds of the city for another of their kind that may be their last chance to take down the Division. Cast includes Chris Hong Kong. After almost a decade of staying under the



## Music

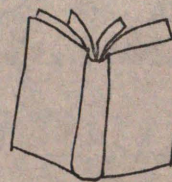


### Red Jumpsuit Apparatus 'Lonely Road'

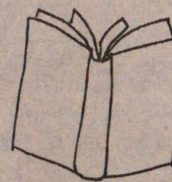
Back again with their blended alternative punk and emo styles, Florida-natives The Red Jumpsuit Apparatus are back again and better than ever with their new album, "Lonely Road." Starting off with "You Better Pray," a soulful first single, the band pulls off a less edgy beat than that of "Don't You

Fake It." On "No Spells," the band starts off with a punchy tone and throws in yet another catchy chorus, while "Pen and Paper" shows off a little more of RJA's usual pop-rock flare.

Overall, "Lonely Road" brings back the pumped-up rock vibe of the budding band.



## Book 'Pride'



The third book in the Sanders werewolf series, "Pride" brings out the best in author Rachel Vincent's work.

As it starts off, werecat enforcer Faythe Sanders is on trial for her life, accused by the Tribunal for murder after infecting her former human boyfriend.

However, though she is facing a potential death sen-

tence, Faythe admits to the deed, saying it was an "accident." She also continues hunting down strays and loners with her lover/enforcer partner Marc Ramos.

The duo races to reach the last remaining rogue before the killer cats can reach them. Rachel Vincent provides a thrilling ride through the paranormal underworld.



## Video Game



### 'Tom Clancy's Endwar'

Set in the not-too-distant future, "Tom Clancy's Endwar" puts an innovative twist on the standard military video game. Revolving around the idea of World War III, this game allows you to put on a headset and direct battle units by speaking commands into the microphone. This feature, paired up with intensely-accurate special effects, brings

the world of gaming to a whole new level.

Experienced gamers may be familiar with several others in the "Endwar" game series, but this, by far, is the superior. With its advanced communication methods, fast-moving story plot, and flashy effects, "Endwar" will set the bar for gaming much higher.

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*Season Wrap Up*

*No chance for state*

By Evan Morgan  
Reporter

Wheaton West Wild Hockey finished its season with a 18-13-2 record and a final win to Andrew after losing its chance at the state title.

Varsity head coach Dave Dyson said "We've performed exceptionally well, above expectations."

The team lost its first game of the state tournament, the Blackhawk Cup, Feb. 4 to Waubonsie Valley in a 4-3 battle for advancement to the next round.

"The Waubonsie Valley game was a big disappointment. It's tough to work that hard and come that close [without a victory] but that's how the game is sometimes," said senior Kyle Obright.

On senior night West Chicago's two seniors, Katie Bell and Obright, were recognized for their hard work.

"I thought we had a very successful season, we finished over .500 but there's always something more to shoot for. It's been a really fun experience," said Obright.

*Gymnast misses out*

By Payton Bayless  
Reporter

Although West Chicago sophomore Kristina Terry didn't qualify for sectionals, the Wheaton North Falcons varsity gymnastics team sent one member to the competition.

"The whole season we were within the top 15 in the state, and with fewer girls on the team than most of the others, I think we did the best we could, and that's basically all we could do," said Terry. "Our average was about 136 to 137, which is good not having many optionals on varsity."

While their scores might not show it, the team has improved greatly from previous years, facing some of the toughest teams in the state.

"Being in the top 15 is an accomplishment for us because last year, we stayed in the top 25 most of the time," said Terry.

Finishing up their season, the Falcon gymnasts said they exceeded most of their expectations, and more importantly, came together as a team.

Terry said, "There were a few let-downs, but we picked each other up and brought it all back."

## Wrestling comes to bittersweet finale



Photo by Jacob Wucka

Seniors Jonny Padilla (top) and Calvin Holt (bottom) practice during the regular season. Padilla qualified for sectionals but was eliminated in the first round. Padilla was also struggling with an injured back towards the end of the season.

By Jacob Wucka  
Sports Editor

Wrestlers started the season looking forward to pinning the state title. Yet by the end of the season, many wrestlers quit and the team was forced to forfeit countless matches.

Yet through all the hardships two upperclassmen wrestlers qualified for the sectionals competition: senior Jonny Padilla and junior Jon White.

Senior Jonny Padilla and junior Jon White.

"It went better than I expected. I didn't go in to the match being overly-confident. I've went in doing all the same stuff that I've done all season," said White.

Both Padilla and White did not qualify for the second round.

Padilla, who had injured his back towards the end of the season, was disappointed

by sectionals.

"I was getting runs in after practice and kept working out... so I was disappointed. I ended up getting caught twice on my back. I had planned on getting to finals which I should have," said Padilla.

Padilla, who plans on wrestling next year at either North Central College or Northern Illinois University, has high hopes for the team next year.

"I hope there's a good line

up like how this year started out. I hope kids don't quit," said Padilla.

Head coach James Phillips also hopes that more wrestlers will join, and fewer will quit next year. Approximately 30 wrestlers quit this season.

"It lets me down as a coach," said Phillips. "Hopefully more kids will be interested, and more tougher kids will join."

## Rough end to a tumultuous season

*Boys struggled to overcome record-crippling losing streak*

By Alex Lima  
Reporter

As the regular season comes to an end, the Wildcats struggle to regain their composure before playoffs.

"We've worked hard to put ourselves in positions to win games," said head coach Kevin Gimre.

Saturday the Wildcats lost against Naperville Central, 58-40.

Unfortunately the team met the same fate at Friday's game against West Aurora.

Trailing into the fourth quarter, the Wildcats were making a comeback.

With less than two minutes to play, the Wildcats were down by 2.

West Aurora took advantage of turnovers, and went on to win, 57-51.

"Right now we are not playing the best we have played," said senior Tony Quarto. "We are hoping to turn things around."

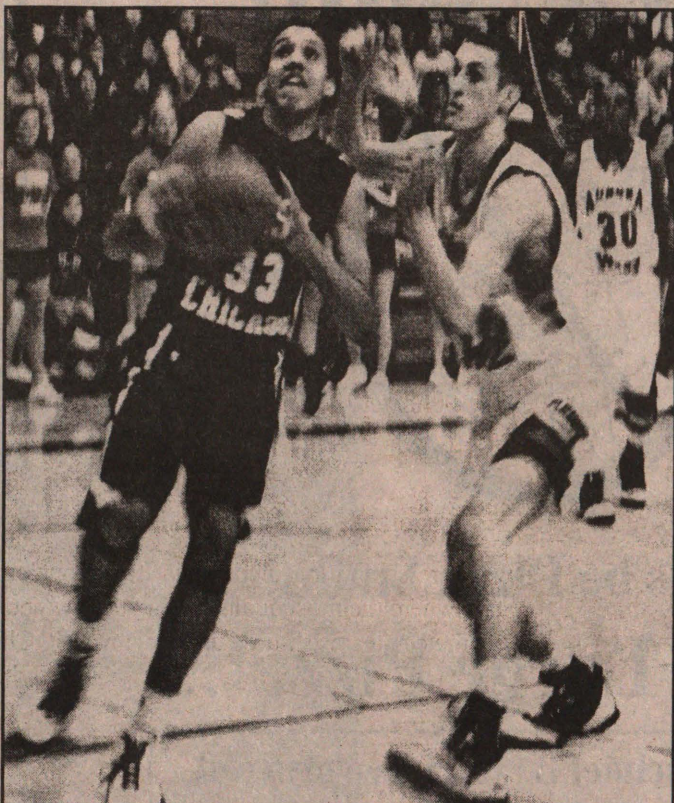


Photo by Alex Lima

Junior Tyler Griffith (left) runs toward the hoop before dunking the ball at the game against West Aurora on Friday.

Playoffs begin Monday at home, when the Wildcats go against Oswego East.

With a current record of 8-17, and 2-11 in conference the Wildcats are hungry for a win.

"Hopefully we can end the season strong and head into playoffs with confidence," said Quarto.

As of press time, Wednesday's results were not available.

Being in one of the toughest conferences in Illinois is a major factor in the playoffs.

"Playing in the DVC is an advantage because there is a lot of good competition," said Quarto. "Playing with confidence and playing as a team is what helped us win so many games."

Senior Eli Asani wants to assure fans that the best is still to come, and that fans should not lose hope before Monday's game.

"We still have playoffs to prove ourselves," said Asani.

## Season Wrap Up

## Season of narrow wins, tough losses

By Greg Vodicka  
Editor-in-Chief

## Loss concludes girls' regional championship bid

Despite a successful season, the lady Wildcats had a disappointing ending to their triumphs with a loss to the undefeated Geneva Vikings 54-32 on Feb. 18.

After 14 wins and a tie for third place in the conference, the Wildcats walked off the court with their heads held high.

"Our defense just wasn't there, and we didn't come out to play like we could have," said junior Katie Staiton.

However, the girls came out to play the first round of regionals Feb. 16 beating Glenbard North 53-52 in the final seconds.

The Wildcats had a commanding lead through the first half until their defense let up in the third quarter leaving the score at 39-36 going into the fourth quarter.

With 2 minutes left in the game, the Panthers took the lead, only to be quickly answered by the sharp Wildcat offense. Through the final minutes of the game the teams were exchanging points along with the lead.

With under a minute left in the game, freshman Claire Monroe took one in to take back the lead, only to be answered by a Panther three-pointer with 6 seconds on the clock.

After a timeout to stop the clock, the Wildcats gave the ball back to Monroe who



Photo by Greg Vodicka

Sophomore Mary Connolly (#55) guards sophomore Emily Paschke (jumping) as she attempts to score against the Wheaton-Warrenville South Tigers on Feb. 12. The team's regional hopes ended at the next game against Geneva on Feb. 18.

made the shot to send the Panthers home.

"We kept coming back after the lead was taken, and came up big offensively," said head coach Kim Wallner.

Prior to Glenbard North, the team beat Wheaton Warrenville South 48-47 Feb. 12, but lost to Glenbard East 45-44 Feb. 10.

"We've definitely had our fair share of close games,"

said Wallner.

Wallner said that they tend to get a big lead in the first quarter but let up in second and third.

Senior Chrissie Rovtar agreed saying, "Third quarter is our lowest scoring quarter. We allow teams to come back."

While Wallner applauds her offense, she admits that her team still "struggles play-

ing four quality quarters."

Compared to the first half of the season, the girls have made improvements.

"We are a better team than we were in December in all areas of the game," said Wallner.

Poise and composure were just two things Wallner said the girls had gained throughout the season.

Junior Jessica Baidis owes

her success as well as the team's to their ability to play as a team.

"Everyone contributes on offense and defense," said Baidis.

With only three seniors leaving, the Cats look to next year to be even more successful.

"We'll have a strong core of returning starters, but the juniors and sophomores will be pushing them," said Wallner.

After conference titles with the junior varsity season as well as the sophomore season, the girls returning will come off a season of success.

"We've created competition in our program which will make us that much better," said Wallner.

Rovtar agreed saying this group has a chance for DuPage Valley champs next season.

"They have the experience and the potential, they just need to keep their heart in the game," said Rovtar.

With expectations high, Baidis still feels the team has plenty of work to do in the off season.

"Weight training, conditioning, and going to open gyms are all things we need to stay on top of," said Baidis.

Wishing some of the season's close losses could have gone the other way, Rovtar said that it would have been nice to have the title of third in conference all to themselves.

Photo by Jake Bradley

Sophomore Jeff Pierpoint practices the backstroke at a practice before the boys headed to sectionals.

## Seconds away from state

By Jake Bradley  
Reporter

The boys swimming team was only seconds behind from the qualifying pace as its season ended.

Sophomore Anthony Nolazco, who was only 3 seconds away from the qualifying time in the 100 meter backstroke, finished with a 56.27, 1 second over the goal of 55.07.

Junior Steve Balmer, who was 4 seconds away from the qualifying time, finished with a 1:05.79 in the 100 meter breaststroke, 3 seconds over his goal of 1:02.19.

"It was going to have to take a perfect swim," said head coach Nick Parry. "We swam pretty well in the meet as a whole. We are a pretty young team and we were swimming in the fastest sectional in the state where the most qualifiers for state was 66."

Nineteen teams showed up to swim at St. Charles East High School Saturday. Each school had been

allowed to enter two swimmers per event, and form one relay team, for a total of 19 events.

The places did not matter in the sectionals, it was about meeting a race qualifying time.

Veteran swimmers stepped up their game while training for sectionals, since only three seniors were on the sectional squad.

One senior, Phil Lenertz, has had great swims this year, despite this being his first year on the team.

"I'm not as much nervous," said Lenertz. "I just really want to do well."

To improve in upcoming years, Parry encourages his team to join the school's swim club to be better trained.

"Kids need to swim for more than just three weeks to be at the top," said Parry. "Michael Phelps practiced every day for four years to prepare for the Olympics."

Only four swimmers from the team participate in the club, and all of the swimmers raced in sectionals.

Despite not sending anyone to state, Parry said that they have been swimming faster than before last year's sectionals.

Being their last year swimming, the seniors showed great leadership at the conference meet.

"They showed a lot of emotion, which got the adrenaline going," said Parry.

Parry is looking forward to the trust that he has built with the returning swimmers.

"After [the girls swim team's] success, the guys can put their trust in me," said Parry. "They know that what I have works. Hopefully we will be able to build on what we have done this year and really make a splash next year."

## Replacing integrity with irresponsibility

What is the first thing that comes to mind when we think of athletes? Do we see a model citizen representing his or her profession with pride? Or do we see a selfish, money-driven criminal that gets away with breaking laws the average citizen would be sent to prison for?

My fear is that today's typical professional athlete is the second option, abusing his or her status and neglecting a potentially powerful role in society.

A photo of Olympic medalist Michael Phelps proving his lung capacity, smoking a marijuana pipe was released on Feb. 2. This is just one example of a clear winner, by definition, that became a high-grade loser because of poor decisions.

Although this example is of a professional, we see similar mistakes in high school. York High School suspended several dozen student athletes for attending an underage drinking party Feb. 10.

While I don't want to preach about what teenagers should and shouldn't do, I think it is important for athletes to understand that they are under the microscope.

Whether it's a professional basketball player, with fans lining up for autographs, or a captain of the varsity soccer team, with wide-eyed freshmen idolizing their abilities; every move this athlete makes is watched by someone.

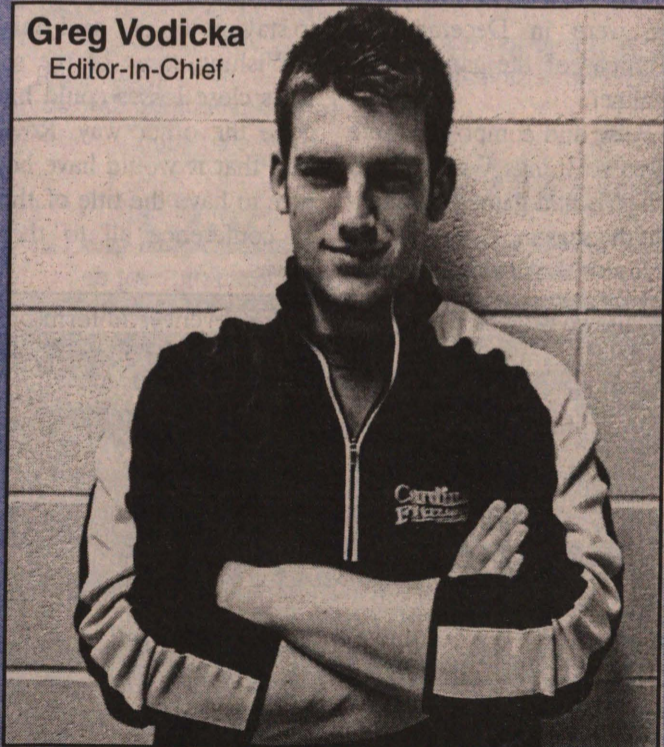
These individuals who are caught breaking rules may argue that it does no significant damage to their game, and some even argue that it helps them.

But as we look up to these Olympic medalists and varsity lettermen do we begin to question our own decisions? Perhaps using drugs doesn't hurt your game if these athletes make it work.

Letting these lifestyle decisions get in the way of athletes' futures and losing integrity is the biggest mistake an athlete can make in high school.

What athletes need to realize is what they have is a tremendously fragile gift. To be able to play a competitive sport through high school is an honor. Going further than that is even more uncommon.

**Greg Vodicka**  
Editor-In-Chief



All of the students in the stands wishing they had that gift would agree, while the athletes taking their talents for granted are wasting away their potential.

It is almost sad to think what a dedicated mediocre athlete could do with the god-given size and athletic ability certain people are blessed with.

Even our record-breaking summer hero, Phelps, who got further than most athletes, wound up with nothing. With plenty of gold around his neck from one season, countless endorsements, and millions of fans in his lane, who can say this guy isn't one of the biggest success stories in sports?

Whether you care that the guy smokes pot or not, the truth of it is, he is no longer the winner Americans once bragged about.

Besides losing endorsements, millions of dollars, and countless fans, Phelps has lost his integrity as an athlete.

Take him back to his high school, ask him to dive in one last time, and see if he wouldn't go back and correct his mistakes when he had the chance.

## Two generations of All-American



Photo by Jacob Wucka

Science teacher Corrie Stieglitz (left) placed All-American in 1993. Sophomore Kelly Dunn (right) placed All-American at the state competition in November.

### *Within West Chicago's walls walk two All-Americans: a student and a teacher*

**By Alexis Hosticka**  
Perspectives Editor

Making All-American time is an honor for any athlete, and both sophomore Kelly Dunn and science teacher Corrie Stieglitz have reached that point in the sport of swimming.

Dunn earned her All-American time at the Nov. 22 state meet in the 100 meter backstroke with a time of 57.27, putting her in the top 130 swimmers in the country. She was about three-tenths of a second under the time cut, and as of December was ranked 39th, but the ranking will change due to other states still finishing their swimming seasons.

"When I found out about the time I was really surprised," Dunn said. "My coach and I hadn't even talked about being an All-American."

Stieglitz made All-American in three relays during her high school swimming career, two of which came in first place at the state competition.

"I knew it was an honor, but later on in life was when I looked back on all my achievements and realized how big a deal it was," said Stieglitz. "Especially now that I'm a teacher, I realize how hard it is to juggle school and sports."

The only recognition that

All-American swimmers have received are certificates hanging on the wall by the pool. Dunn was congratulated by a few of her friends, teammates and coach. Neither Dunn nor Stieglitz was formally recognized, and, according to Athletic Director Doug Mullaney, the athletic office does not keep records of All-American times.

"I don't remember any fanfare," Stieglitz said jokingly. "[Physical development division head Dan Johnson] just came up one day and told us about the certificates by the

After high school, Stieglitz received a 75 percent scholarship to University of Missouri where she swam throughout her college career

Dunn's goals for next year are not clear, but she is hoping for a successful next season and will continue to work hard.

"My goals for next year are the same as always. Come to every practice with a positive attitude and work my hardest," said Dunn. "I just take things one practice or one race at a time so I can make it my best. Hopefully next

*I always had this inner drive to do well. You have to do it for yourself, not for records. You do it because you love the sport and to better yourself as a person.'*

**-- Science teacher and All-American Corrie Stieglitz**

pool."

However, Stieglitz and three of her teammates who placed third as a team were honored at an assembly.

Dunn doesn't think of making All-American time as her biggest accomplishment, but she does appreciate that it "is making me more known to other competitors."

"All of the things that I've accomplished in swimming are important to me. It's been an amazing experience and I'm just having a great time," said Dunn.

year I'll place top six at least and maybe even top three [in state]."

Stieglitz can look back on her career and see what it was that motivated her to do well.

"I knew I had to do well in the classroom," said Stieglitz, who maintained a 3.8 GPA in high school. "I always had this inner drive to do well. You have to do it for yourself, not for records. You do it because you love the sport and to better yourself as a person."