

# Middle school referendum fails

By Megan Hernbroth  
Features Editor

After the concern for overcrowding in District 33's elementary schools prompted a referendum by district officials, voters did not support their solutions and rejected the referendum April 7 by a vote of 1679 against and 1169 in favor.

In order to accommodate growing numbers of students, the referendum included a plan to build an addition onto West Chicago Middle School. Main use of the addition would be for sixth graders that would be moved into the middle school.

However, enough voters that were in favor of the referendum did not vote, which some think is yet another product of a drowning economy.

"A lot of people said they believed this change was right for the community and the students," said director of community relations for Dis-

trict 33 Becky Koltz. "It's just that not enough of them came out to vote. My gut feeling was that it wasn't passed because some people are probably nervous because of the bad econ-

omy, even though there would be no additional tax raise."

Also a perk of the referendum was the opportunity students would have at the middle school compared to those

at the elementary schools.

"Students would have many more opportunities if they were in the middle school," said Koltz. "There, students have lab privileges, explorato-

ries, which are kind of like elective classes, and competitive sports, all of which could benefit the high school."

See Referendum page 6



Students gather outside West Chicago Middle School, the building District 33 had planned to renovate to accommodate the growing student population within the feeder elementary schools.

Photo by Megan Hernbroth

## Teachers voice opinion about recent resignations

### Association concerned with administration's motives behind removing coaches

By Alexis Hosticka  
Perspectives Editor  
and Greg Vodicka  
Editor in Chief

The West Chicago Teachers' Association recently expressed its dissatisfaction with coaching changes that were made over the past few years.

"The members of the Teachers' Association feel that there has been a lack of support

for coaches who have done a good job," said Association president Brad Larson. "There have been several instances when coaches lost their jobs because of pressure by a small number of parents."

Representing the Teachers' Association, Larson presented a letter at the April 14 Board of Education meeting voicing teachers' concerns

Athletic director Doug Mul-

laney said that it is his job to make tough decisions for the betterment of the program.

"My charge at West Chicago is to create optimal opportunities for the kids, parents, and for the community," said Mullaney. "We have very dedicated coaches here, and I want to retain and keep coaches in the building and on staff."

He added that tough decisions and conversations take place every day to make sure progress towards those opportunities is continued.

One of the coaches referenced in the letter was former head varsity basketball coach Kevin Gimre, who resigned recently due to a request from

Mullaney.

"I was very appreciative of what was written on behalf of the coaches, and I thought it was totally appropriate," said Gimre.

Respecting Gimre, Mullaney would not comment, but he said coaches are being

*"We have very dedicated coaches here, and I want to retain and keep coaches in the building and on staff."*

--Dan Johnson

evaluated all year as an element of professional growth.

"Evaluations can only make the program better for the kids," said Mullaney.

Larson hopes that the letter

will have an effect on future administrative decisions regarding the departures of coaches. The Association's key complaint presented in the letter was not specifically directed toward the people within the administration, but how they make their decisions.

The letter said that in many scenarios "the complaints of a few dissatisfied and outspoken parents have, sadly, overridden [other] considerations."

Although the Association has received no response from the administration, Larson is still optimistic that it will influence how they make their decisions.

"Hopefully the effect of the letter will be a greater level of support for our coaches and better decisions when a few people are dissatisfied," said Larson. "This is not an issue of personalities, but of leadership and decision making."

See Disapproval page 5

## INSIDE Beautification

Wondering why so many street signs are hanging in every hall? Find out where the money came from and who sponsored the beautification process--see NEWS, page 2.



## Price of prom Settling refugees

As the economy suffers, many students are still dishing out the money for prom. As the decades change, so does the price--see CENTER SPREAD, pages 10-11.

After a tough and long journey, a refugee Iraqi family finally settles in West Chicago. Three new students joined the hallways, only to be surprised at the changes. --see FEATURES, page 12.



## Winning streak

With a solid record and a serious attitude, girls softball is working hard to keep their offense and defense in tact for the remainder of the season--see SPORTS, page 17.



## What's Happening?

### Key Club

By Payton Bayless  
Reporter

Key Club will "let the dogs out" Saturday at Dog Park Registration Day from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. The group will meet at Reed Keppler Park, where they will help people sign up their dogs for the private, permit-only dog park. "Wiggly Field" will be crawling with owners and their furry friends, who will be given special collars and tags that allow them into the park.

"For those who didn't make it to prom, this would be a fun way to give back to the community and spend some time with puppies," said Key Club adviser Ward Rau.

## Going Green

By Alex Lima  
Reporter

Teaching students about conserving the environment and future green jobs is in the curriculum of the future.

That's why family and consumer science teacher Patti Kozlowski, and business teacher Peggy Peach are collaborating to write a curriculum that will bring attention to students about "green collar careers."

"The curriculum is to bring awareness to students what high school classes are available for students and what colleges are available to enter the green collar work force," said Kozlowski.

Green collar careers are blue-collar work force opportunities that are created by organizations and firms that look to improve the environmental quality of life.

According to Kozlowski, 10 years from now, green collar jobs will be in demand, but as of now, many people are unaware of them.

Students from Kozlowski's consumer education class researched what the school does to harm the environment.

One solution is to use both sides of paper when making copies or to take advantage of technology and make assignments electronically.

Seniors John Krystinak, Enjelica Carlos, Daisy Martinez, and Eder Gonzalez suggested that the school use hybrid cars for driver's education and behind the wheel classes.

ALGEBRA AVE BISHOP BLVD CAT PAW PASS

# Grant provides beautification

By Jessica Bergmann  
News Editor

Students concerned with the beautification process have no need to worry: The money is not being used in vain.

The beautification process was originally created by the WeGo Beyond committee, a group of volunteer staff members who meet together in order to improve the school beyond the classroom.

Principal Moses Cheng, who was a key leader in forming the committee, wanted to make the school feel more welcoming and inviting to students, staff and visitors.

"The main thing we talked about was making the school environment more appealing to kids," said Cheng.

Projects spurred by the committee that are already displayed include the flags in commons, which was sponsored and paid for by Cheng, and the hallway signs, which were paid for by Student Council.

The committee is also planning a variety of new picture frames that will be placed throughout the school.

"We are hoping to put candid shots of students in different sports and activities and change them periodically," said Assistant Principal Gail Aronoff, who detailed that this project would be sponsored by Supt. Lee Rieck.

Aside from these major projects, the committee also wants to see a variety of new decorations for the different departments.

However, these side projects are being funded by a grant that was given to the school.

The \$8,000 beautification grant was given to the school by the Education Foundation, an organization which hosts fundraising events to raise money to give to the school.

"The Education Foundation is a committee of volunteers who, for the most part, are alumni or have children attending the school," said Education Foundation liaison Gail Eckl Daniels.

The foundation, which has been meeting for the past six years, has sponsored events such as the 3 on 3 basketball tournament, scholarship raffles, and different events during homecoming week, all to raise money for school projects.

"[The foundation] raises money for projects that are not involved in the school budgets, such as new books for the library," Daniels said. "Teachers and students have to fill out a mini-grant application and present and, in most cases, they will receive the grant."

Aronoff was ecstatic when she discovered the Education Foundation was willing to sponsor the beautification process.

"We are very excited that other people thought our ideas were good enough to sponsor them," Aronoff said.

The grant will provide a variety of new resources for the different departments, including the purchase of display cases, decor for rooms, more directional signs, and other items to make the school appealing.

"We've wanted to do the hallway signs for a long time. It will make it easier for freshmen to locate their lockers and classrooms," Aronoff said.

However, these new signs are not to be confused with the existing street signs, which were sponsored by Student Council as part of the senior gift.

Many students began voicing concern over the administration's decision to furnish the school instead of purchasing useful resources, like textbooks and computers.

"When I first saw them putting up the signs, I wondered what purpose they could possibly serve when our school could use the money on other things," said senior Coralyn Kutzner.

However, Aronoff specified that the beautification process is not being taken out of the school budget that would pay for classroom resources.

"The grant from the Educational Foundation is one that can solely be used for beautification purposes," Aronoff said.

The committee is hoping to use all of the money before summer so that members of the Education Foundation can tour the school and see the progress that has been made.

"School is not just about academics. When kids come to school, it's a place where they hopefully come to grow as an individual," said Cheng.

He hopes that these projects will make kids feel comfortable in their surroundings, and is pleased with the overall progress.

HUMANITIES HIGHWAY

LOCKER ROOM LANE

MAIN STREET

TRIGONOMETRY TRAIL

VICTORY LANE

MUSIC DRIVE

MATH BLVD

DIVERSITY DRIVE

BLUE & WHITE BLVD

WILDCAT WAY

SCIENCE STREET

AUDITORIUM AVE

LANGUAGE LANE

INTEGRITY INTERSECTION

DRAMA DRIVE

## 'Watchu got?'

By Evan Morgan  
Reporter

Show the school what you got, May 22 at the artistic talent show, Show Me Watchu Got!

This celebration of the arts includes an open mic for anyone wishing to express themselves, a slam poet, and a slam poetry competition.

English teachers Amanda Cordes and Tara Deleon said that there is a lot planned for the event.

"We wanted to do this just to celebrate the spoken word. I guess we would have to call it a celebration of WeGo artistic talent," said Deleon.

Students are encouraged to perform any type of art that they can think of during the student performance portion of the event. Deleon said some examples are singing, dancing, rapping, break dancing, poetry, short stories, photography and art.

With the live performances, students can have their work published in a journal which will be released at the beginning of the event and sold during and after the celebration.

"It is a real book; we are releasing it on the day of the event. We are planning on using some of the funds raised from the sales to save until next year," said Deleon.

A small admission fee will go to charity and to help pay for the journals, Deleon said.

Mike Whitfield, a poet from Illinois Wesleyan University, will perform and host a free workshop before the event to teach anyone interested in the forms of expression.

To give the audience an opportunity to participate, there will be a slam poetry competition to finish off the night featuring five of the school's own slam poets. The audience is encouraged to be rowdy and cheer on what they like, and boo those they dislike.

The celebration takes place from 7 to 9 p.m. in the auditorium.

Students can sign up for the chance to perform by e-mailing either of the teachers at showme-watchugot09@gmail.com.





Photo courtesy of Donald Zabelin

Four students competed at the Federal Reserve Bank, winning first place in the Illinois Personal Finance Challenge. From left, teacher Donald Zabelin, seniors Diana Martinez, Sam Wais, Steven Romanelli, Stuart Sankovitch, and president of Econ Illinois Joanne Dempsey.

## Unforgettable experience

By Alex Lima  
Reporter

Winning state in the first Illinois Personal Finance Challenge was a competition that four students will never forget.

Seniors Steven Romanelli, Sam Wais, Stuart Sankovitch, and Diana Martinez beat 19 teams April 21 at the Federal Reserve Bank in Chicago.

Almost all of the students are from business teacher Donald Zabelin's investment class. Wais was the only player on the team that was not in the class. Zabelin asked Wais to compete because Wais was in investments first semester and is currently in his business law class.

"I had all members of my investments class participate," said Zabelin. "They started by taking a 30 question test online."

All members of the team competed in LifeSmarts last month.

"[The competition] was really fun," said Wais. "It was scary when we went to the finals because we didn't want to make a mistake and lose it."

About 450 students participated in the on-line preliminary rounds of competition.

"Wabaunsie Valley High School scored higher than us in the on-line preliminary round," said Zabelin.

But the finals proved Zabelin's team was the best in the

competition.

After two rounds of individual tests, the team was tied with four other schools for first place. To break the four-way tie, there was a group test.

The team and Wabaunsie Valley were the only two teams left in the finals, and the team won 15-4, taking home a trophy, plaque, individual certificates and medals along with a \$500 savings bond for each student.

"Once they got to the finals, it was a two-team match with buzzers," said Zabelin. "All the LifeSmarts training kicked in, and because the players were former LifeSmarts players, they did extremely well."

## Prioritizing students

By Greg Vodicka  
Editor in Chief

munication.

District 94 appeals to Ponce because he said that the "community is a dynamic area."

District U-46 Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services Lalo Ponce will replace Supt. Lee Rieck when Rieck retires at the end of the school year, the Board of Education decided.

Ponce's current position with U-46 is among the seven administrative positions the district is removing.

According to school board member Gordon Cole, the goal was to find a applicant who had the potential to connect the school and district with the community.

"We were looking for someone who has the ability to build a level of trust with the staff, administration, board, and the community," said Cole.

"I have a lot of experience working with teachers, administrators, and most of all parents," said Ponce. "I have also been involved in a number of initiatives to improve schools."

At U-46, among other things, Ponce was responsible for designing and implementing programs for improving test scores as well as greater parent and community com-

Prior to his position with U-46, Ponce worked in the Dallas Independent School District where he was a teacher, principal, executive director, and area director. Ponce taught Spanish, social studies, and marketing at the high school level.

"I taught at Carter High School which is the opponent school in the movie 'Friday Night Lights'," said Ponce.

Choosing the high school level was a simple decision for Ponce claiming he enjoys that age and has plenty of experience in it.

Ponce admits there will be a period of time for him to listen and learn about the district. His first priority is to talk to the community leaders, the staff, and the students and familiarize himself with the district.

"My goal is to engage with the students, staff, and community and to encourage the community to join together to support each other," said Ponce. "High schools don't stand alone. They need the community for support."

## Improving speech while making amigos

### Spanish exchange students grasp cultural opportunities

By Alexis Hosticka  
Perspectives Editor

Twenty students had the opportunity to make new amigos as they traveled around Spain experiencing culture, trying new foods, and practicing Spanish skills.

"I loved it," said sophomore Dani Keller. "It was one of my best travel experiences to date."

The group stayed with their host families in the town of Soria. Keller's host student, Sofia, was a sophomore who she got along with very well.

"She didn't speak a lot of English, but we got along really well. She was sweet and fun," Keller said.

Sophomore Meghan Nichol also really enjoyed the trip, which lasted from March 26 to April 7.

"I thought it was amazing

and really fun. The food was awesome and [the trip] really improved some of my Spanish skills," said Nichol. "At times, I did want to leave [due to homesickness], but I'm really glad that I went."

Nichol also said that she would return to Spain if she had the opportunity.

"It helped me grow as a person," said Nichol. "I couldn't rely on my parents to help me."

Spanish teachers Elizabeth Govertsen and Sarah Bellis chaperoned the group. It was Govertsen's first time on the trip, and she enjoyed herself.

"I really liked the time we spent in Madrid," said Govertsen. "We visited museums and famous architecture, and it was a lot of fun."

She was also happy to see the students making use of Spanish skills, instead of re-

lying on English.

"Travel is a broadening experience. The students were able to experience a new language, new culture, and new traditions. They were all very lucky to have the opportunity," said Govertsen.

However, there were also aspects that the students didn't enjoy about travel.

"I really didn't enjoy having to sleep on the buses and planes," said Keller. "It was really uncomfortable, so I was tired a lot."

Nichol had a hard time getting used to the meals, although she thought that the food was very good.

"I had to get used to the meal times and sizes," said Nichol. "Their lunch was at 2, and it was the largest meal, and they ate dinner at 10."

But overall, the students believed the trip was one that will be unforgettable.

"I enjoyed it so much," said Nichol. "It was a really good learning experience."

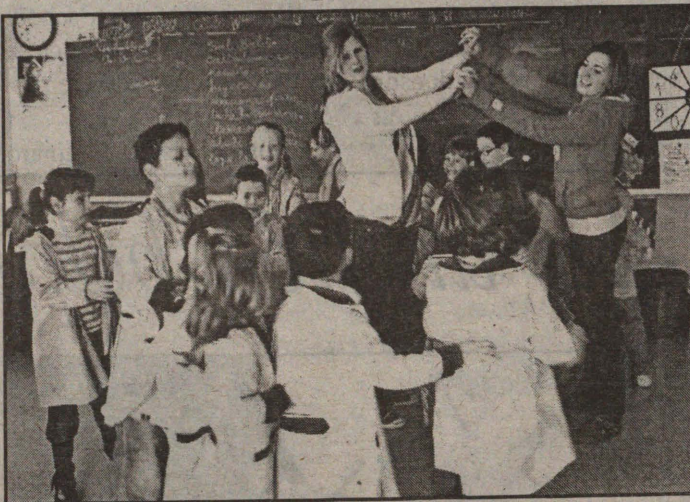


Photo courtesy of Chrissie Rovtar

Spanish Exchange students Chrissie Rovtar (left) and Lizzie Gola experience life at the elementary schools.

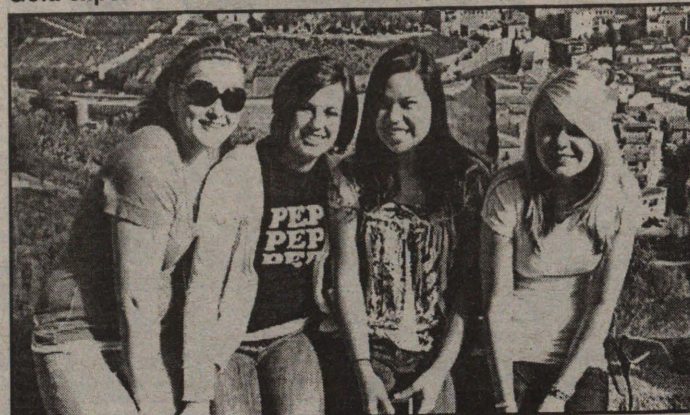


Photo courtesy of Chrissie Rovtar

Among other experiences, seniors (from left) Chrissie Rovtar, Lizzie Gola, Sara Lim, and Taylor Turner sightsee.



# Election results in new faces on board

*Members determined to build concrete relationships*

By Greg Vodicka  
Editor in Chief

Voters in Community High School District 94 have spoken as they elected three new additions to the school board while re-electing one.

On April 7, voters chose to support Gary Saake, Tony Molinaro, Dirk Gunderson, and incumbent Rich Nagel, each one with their own plans and goals to improve the district.

Saake had previously run in 2007, losing in a tight race. He was later appointed treasurer, and has been involved in finances, budget, and investments throughout the past several years.

"I'm familiar with all of the issues that have come before the board for quite some time," said Saake.

In addition, Saake brings experience in technology, business management, as well as politics.

Stating that public service has always been an important aspect of his life, Saake said that it wasn't until he was attending a speech given by a board member that he felt compelled to become involved.

One goal Saake has as a new member is building a better working relationship with the three feeder districts.

Following the consolidation study, Saake said, "I believe we all realized that we need to work more closely and effectively together to close some of the gaps that exist between the K-8 schools and the high school."

Achieving long-term fiscal responsibility, implementing accountability for results, and raising the bar educationally for all students are Saake's three main goals.

With experience on the Benjamin District 25 school board, Molinaro has been attending District 94 meetings for the past few years. During his eight years with District 25, Molinaro served as a general board member, secretary, and president of the district.

"During my time as president of the school board, we successfully negotiated a four-year labor agreement with the teacher's union, and we succeeded in achieving a balanced budget while still offering a quality education to Benjamin students," said Molinaro.

Molinaro hopes to work towards local accountability in the district during his time on the board.

"We need to keep school district accountability close to the taxpayers and the parents," he said.

Another issue Molinaro

addressed was Annual Yearly Progress suggesting it be split into sub-categories: general population, limited English, low income, and special needs.

"The lack of improvement in these categories shouldn't convict the entire school of lacking adequate yearly progress," said Molinaro. "Each category should be pinpointed and dealt with separately."

With children in the district, Gunderson brings personal insight to the table.

In addition, Gunderson owns his own business and is savvy in the business world.

Gunderson's greatest concern was the participation and attendance of high school athletics.

"We need to get the kids back involved and you will see an improvement in the community," said Gunderson.

He said it starts with simple goals: individual goals, team goals, and total goals. Addressing a goal and making it a priority to fix it, is the first step in improving the athletic program in Gunderson's opinion.

Gunderson also said that he wants to push reading in the schools because he sees that as a main priority in education.

Addressing the budget, Gunderson said that it is the board's job to make sure budget cuts do not affect the students negatively.

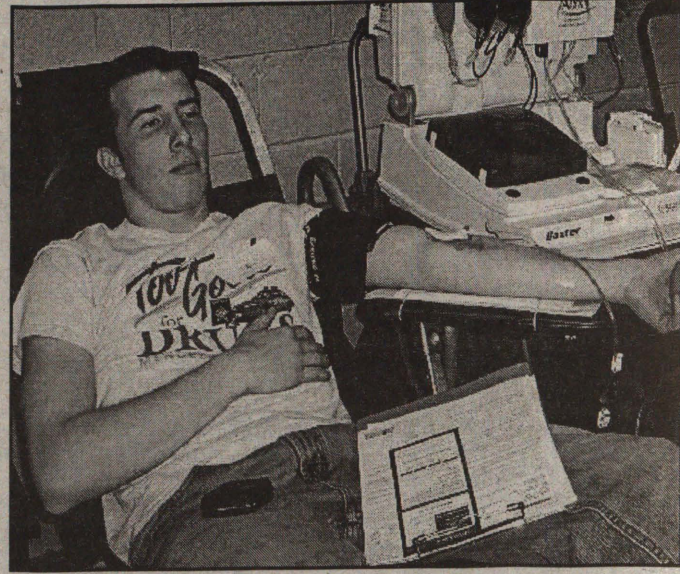


Photo by Payton Bayless

Senior Kevin Marano was just one of many students who donated blood for the spring drive, which raised 176 units.

# New incentives for donations

By Amanda Rathe  
Center Spread Editor

Students donated a part of their time and their bodies on April 17 when they donated blood at the spring drive.

"Usually, our November blood drive is a little more successful than our spring [drive], but we tried to get people and push it, but there was a lot going on," said counselor and blood drive coordinator Ward Rau. "We were trying to match what we did in the fall which was 185 units. We tried to gain additional attention by offering some rewards and prizes."

Rau was willing to use the prizes to motivate students, despite his personal beliefs against it.

"I used to think that people should just donate without offering rewards, but I know people are busy, and so by offering them, we got their attention, and students were

more likely do what is good for other people," said Rau.

The drive accumulated 176 units of blood, becoming the school's second best ever.

Every junior and senior advisory that had at least five donors was eligible for an ice cream party, and each advisory with at least three donors for freshmen and sophomores. Seventeen advisories earned the ice cream party.

Advisories with the highest donation from their advisory period earned a pizza party.

Winning advisories were Kristen Isacson, Sandra Schueller, Lucinda Sanders, Joy Tanimura, and Jared Winquist.

"There's no substitute for actual human blood," said Rau. "Any time someone is injured, they need blood, but also a lot of cancer treatments like radiation and chemo kill red blood cells and a blood transfusion will help them live longer."

# Art auction helps preschool students in need



Photo courtesy of Megan Dulkinys

This piece, entitled "A Reinterpretation of Qui Ying's 'Spring Morning in the Han Palace'" by sophomore Andy Taeger, is one of many which will be auctioned at the art show.

By Sarah Berger  
Entertainment Editor

Achieving the best of both worlds, an upcoming art show auction will give student artists an opportunity to showcase their work, while helping West Chicago preschoolers in need at the same time.

The art show auction will be held on May 21, 22, 26, and 27 in the administrative conference room outside of commons and will be open for bidding during all lunch hours.

Art teachers Megan Dulkinys and David Exner choose the artwork that will be auctioned off and then asked for the artist's permission to auc-

tion their pieces.

"We have all types of artwork at the auction; drawings, paintings, computer art, and even sculptures," said Dulkinys, who is excited about holding the auction this year.

Half of the money from the bid will be given to the artist and the other half will be donated to the West Chicago preschool and will go specifically towards the preschoolers' coats, clothes, and other basic school supplies.

The world studies classes, art classes, photo classes, and Art Club are all working together to put on the art show auction.

"We are very enthusiastic about the show, and have fun

creating pieces for it," said world studies student and Art Club member sophomore Maddy Dall.

Typically, the art show auction brings in between \$75 to \$100 of revenue, and this year the auction is occurring after the choir and orchestra concert on May 28, so Dulkinys hopes that a larger audience will be brought in after the performance.

"Any donations will count and help these families out so much. It would mean so much to those who contributed their pieces to the show if anyone would come and see the projects they worked so hard on. Plus, it'll help us get a good grade on our project," said Dall.



# Encouraging students to speak

## Humanities divisions asks Mary Beth Tinker to share life's experiences

By Jacob Wucka  
Sports Editor

Her 1969 Supreme Court case was a major victory for student rights. Hoping to remind West Chicago's students of their rights, the humanities division invited guest speaker Mary Beth Tinker to speak on April 9.

"I feel that young people have a right to speak up about their issues," said Tinker. "Those affected by the policies decided should have a voice in those policies."

Tinker, now working as a nurse in Maryland who works with teens affected by trauma, travels to schools to tell students of her inspirational story.

In 1965, 13-year-old Tinker and her 15-year-old brother John, along with their friend Christopher Eckhardt, wore black armbands with a peace sign on them in protest of the Vietnam War, and in support of the Christmas truce proposed by then Sen. Robert Kennedy.

"Being raised in the church [influenced my beliefs on peace]," said Tinker. "We were very spiritual people, and we were taught peace, love, and brotherhood. Our main belief was that we should put our beliefs into action in our day-to-day actions."

Amidst rumors of the pro-

test, the school board of the Des Moines Independent Community School District voted to ban armbands. However, the Tinkers and Eckhardt still wore them, and all three were suspended.

The ICLU (Iowa Civil Liberties Union) chose to represent the Tinkers who filed a lawsuit against the school. When all lower courts upheld the school board's decision, the Tinkers appealed directly to the Supreme Court.

When first stepping into the Supreme Court on Nov. 12, 1968, Tinker felt a sense of importance.

"Here I am at this place, where the decisions made will affect every single person in this country one way or another," said Tinker.

After the final arguments, the court deliberated and on Feb. 24, 1969, voted 7-2 in favor of Tinker. Tinker considered the ruling a victory for free speech.

"We had no idea it was going to be so significant," said Tinker. "It's the small actions of our lives that make the most impact."

After telling the students about her case, Tinker answered questions from the audience.

Topics ranged from why she believed in peace in Vietnam to how she feels about corporations that treat employees unfairly.



Photo by Jacob Wucka

Guest speaker Mary Beth Tinker's speech about rights in school encouraged students like junior Brittani Rollins to stand up for what she believes in.

A question from senior Tara Breinig about a lack of student rights in West Chicago received applause from the audience of agreeing students.

"In high school, we're taught to be independent and to express ourselves. Yet within this high school, our voices fall on deaf ears. What advice could you give us?" asked Breinig.

Currently, Breinig is trying to organize a student group and believed Tinker shed some insight into creating such a group.

"I'm going to start a student rights alliance, where we

will peacefully deal with the problems of our school," said Breinig.

Since 1969, the power of Tinker v. Des Moines has been restricted. The 1988 Supreme Court case, *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier*, gave schools the power to regulate school-sponsored newspapers and cut back on students' free speech rights whether that be expressed by words or clothing.

Still, Tinker hopes that her speech will motivate students to stand up for what they feel is right, and administration to allow students to express themselves.

When confronting the issue of how administrators should handle students that wear swastikas or other offensive signs, Tinker said that it should be allowed.

"It's better to allow free discussion even if it is something that people don't agree with," said Tinker. "If the idea is driven underground, it can fester, and come back and become a worse problem than before."

While Tinker spoke, the McCormick Freedom Museum was recording and taking photos for their current exhibit about Tinker, titled "The First Amendment."

## Disapproval: Teachers push for compromise

(Continued from page 1)

Mullaney argued that his presence is not to divide but to be part of the staff as an administrator.

"My first priority is to be a respected colleague," said Mullaney.

Physical development division head Dan Johnson has been at the school for 31 years and thinks that parents have always had an influence in the administration's decision-making.

"It always bothers me when a coach is dismissed because of the difficult conference and feeder schools," said Johnson. "Coaches who take a job here know that they're fighting an uphill battle."

Johnson believes that the letter applies well to Gimre's situation, and agrees with the central focus of what the Association said.

"The focus of the Association's letter is that you have to look at both sides of this and of other coaching situations," said Johnson.

Supt. Lee Rieck believes that the Association has a right to express their opinions, and neither agrees nor disagrees with what the letter said.

"The Association has a right to present its perception of events as they occur," said Rieck. "It was surprising that [this letter] came right to the board level without discussion with administration."

Rieck said that he has no firsthand knowledge of whether or not parents have influenced the athletic ad-

*"Coaches who take a job here know that they're fighting an uphill battle."*

--Dan Johnson

ministration's decisions.

"Parents have expressed concerns about coaches before, and mostly about whether their son or daugh-

ter is receiving enough playing time," said Rieck. "But the number of complaints at this school doesn't differ from any other."

Another coach who the athletic administration let go about 13 years ago was former varsity head football coach Bruce Donash, who still works here as a P.E. teacher. Donash agrees with what the Association's letter said, and believes that parents were one of the key reasons he was asked to resign.

"Unfortunately, the squeaky wheel gets the oil, and parents can be very vocal with their opinions," said Donash. "It happens everywhere, [West Chicago] is not unique."

Donash does believe that parents' opinions should factor into the administrators'

decisions, but only as a small variable.

"I think that as an administrator, you have to take in a lot of info, but you need to hear all of the parents, not just the ones who are loud and boisterous," said Donash.

Former athletic director Bob Stone commented on the letter saying someone is always going to be unhappy when a coach is dismissed, but often changes are necessary. Stone left the school last June after 11 years to be head football coach at Mundelein High School.

Stone also said that there is pressure from other areas that people should consider before criticizing.

"Parents are often an influence," said Stone. "But there are other factors that are not always considered."



## Referendum: School searches for options

(Continued from page 1)

Because the referendum was rejected, these opportunities are not open to the students and even more money is getting poored into finding alternatives to the growing issue.

"We were just about to pay off Currier and Wegner elementary schools," said Koltz, "so there would be no tax hike if the referendum passed, the taxes we imposed about six years ago would stay in effect over a 20-year course, but now the people will see a slow decrease in their taxes."

With over 30 students per teacher at most of the elementary schools, one option to deal with the overcrowding includes adding temporary trailers to supply extra classrooms, which Turner and Pioneer schools already have. At Wegner, an extra classroom has been built inside the library in order to accommodate the growing

number of students.

"If a class has about 32 students or more, we usually try to split that class into two classes," said Koltz. "But we no longer have space at any of our schools, so the class size will grow and students will get less teacher-time."

Another alternative on the table is busing students to less-crowded elementary schools. Indian Knoll has the least amount of students enrolled, so students from the overcrowded schools may be bused there. District 33 has received a state reimbursement for the extra busing, but the reimbursement will come from tax dollars. The actual cost is still unknown.

As West Chicago Middle School is also running out of space, the possibility of even adding trailers as mobile classrooms there is being considered.

"We hope to present the referendum again next February to the board," said Koltz. "The board has a lot of deci-

sions to make this summer as they see enrollment numbers coming in. Hopefully we will have better luck this time because many people truly believe this is the right thing to do."

One solution that was already off the list was adding yet another elementary school to the five already in District 33.

"It was considered to add another elementary school into District 33," said Koltz, "but we really feel the educational opportunities lacking for the sixth graders need to be addressed."

A last addition was built on the middle school in 1994 to accommodate increased enrollment, the same problem district officials are dealing with again.

"Right now, we are in a wait-and-see mode to see how many students enroll next year," said Koltz. "After those numbers come in, we will decide where to go from there."



Photo courtesy of Patricia Clifford

Seniors Lizzie Gola and Preston Hauptman experience marriage first-hand at the mock wedding on April 16.

## Magical night fills commons

By Payton Bayless  
Reporter

Seniors Lizzie Gola and Preston Hauptman exchanged their vows on April 16 at the family and consumer science's mock wedding.

The happy couple shared their "Magical Moments" with the pleased crowd, who filled the commons.

"It was cool to get to see how much planning goes into making a wedding and it was fun getting to try on real wedding dresses," said Gola.

The department used the night's festivities to showcase all of the classes. Child development, clothing, and foods were among the participating classes.

Contemporary life classes arranged the night's festivities including the DJ, food, and decorations. Clothing classes designed and produced the fashions of the night, and foods classes made the cakes that were auctioned and cookies, which were complimentary.

"We [the teachers] give them a little guidance, but other than that, the show is run completely by the students," said family/consumer science teacher Patricia Clifford.

Clifford also said that everyone in the class has a part that they have to play. "Teamwork is key," she said, to putting together the final performance.

"This really gave me a

sense of just how hard planning and having a wedding really is and how stressful, too," said Gola.

Students from the contemporary life classes narrated this skit about one of the most important decisions in a person's life.

"The skit teaches kids to make sure they've found the right person before getting married," said Clifford.

Though the skit showed how a happy couple begins their life together, it also demonstrated how much work and preparation goes into carefully planning a wedding.

"It also shows how many different career opportunities can be found at a wedding, like the planners and decorators," Clifford said.

Along with the high school students, a preschool choir from the child development classes sang songs before the fashion show.

Thirty-five students from all clothing classes participated in the fashion show as part of their final exam, putting the spotlight on their designs.

Not only did the students design and create the outfits, but they also modeled them on the runway.

The cooking classes baked over 20 party cakes for the wedding that they auctioned off after the wedding.

The \$600 raised from the cake auction and ticket sales will fund a scholarship for a Skills USA member.

## Go, go, go, go to 'Joseph'

Biblical theme and unique songs make fun production

By Sarah Berger  
Entertainment Editor

Incorporating a biblical theme, variety of music, and large male cast, the upcoming spring musical is building up to be a fresh and fun show.

"Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" will be performed at 7:30 p.m. on May 14-16, and a matinee performance at 2 p.m. on May 17.

"The musical is the biblical story of Joseph, who is the youngest of 12 brothers. He is his father's favorite child, and his jealous brothers sell him into slavery. He ends up becoming a dream interpreter for the pharaoh of Egypt," said one of the musical's directors Mary Hafertepe.

One unique twist to the musical is the variety of music that will be performed in the show.

"Each piece of music is from a different

era in time; there's calypso, western, and even go-go style songs," said Hafertepe.

Along with unique songs, the dancing has its own style as well, adding more color to the show.

"Choreographing the danc-

es is so much fun because all of the dances are different styles since they all are from different eras," said choreographer Devin Vasser.

With a story plot that calls for a male lead as well as his 12 brothers, the musical's cast is mostly made up of male parts.

"With all the work put into the musical, the cast has all bonded and have become one big family; it really is just so much fun," said sophomore Jeff Pierpoint who plays one of the brothers and the butler.

The cast isn't entirely made up of boys, though. A few girls play a crucial part in the production.

"At first I was a little bit nervous working with all the boys, but it has actually turned out to be surprisingly fun," said senior Renee Cirone who plays a wife.

Tickets go on sale for \$3 for students on May 11 during all lunches as well as at \$5 at the door for adults.

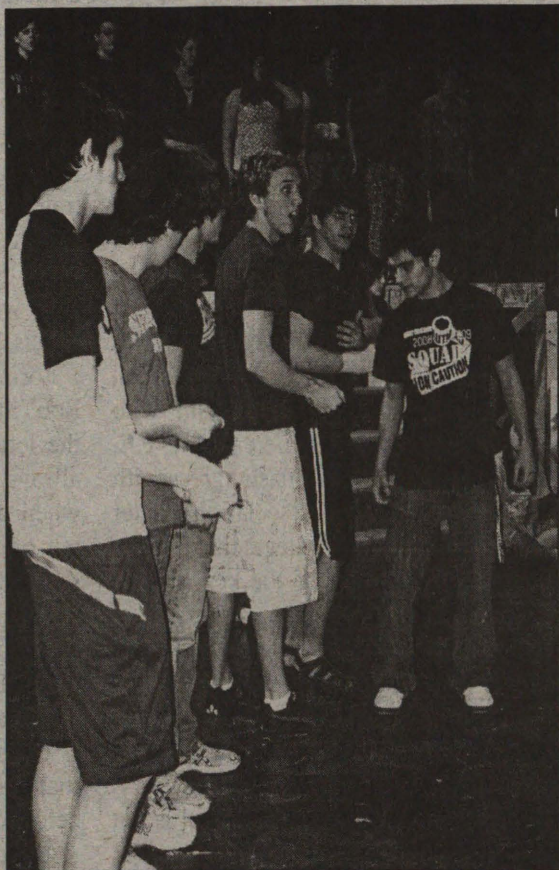


Photo by Alexis Hosticka

With a predominantly male cast, "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" promises to please audiences while performing catchy tunes.



# Fulfilling journey

*National Honor Society members spend spring break volunteering*

By Jessica Bergmann  
News Editor

Hearing about my friends' plans for spring break, I began wondering why I hadn't chosen to go to an exotic island or a foreign country, especially with this being the last spring break of my high school career.

Instead, I found myself standing in the freezing cold at 7 a.m. on March 28, boarding the school's mini-bus.

Seven other National Honor Society members, our adviser, Kristina Mallon, and her mother, Ginger Nusser, piles of luggage, and 50 pounds of uneaten food defined our trip to Mobile, Alabama.

I never considered doing a service trip over spring break, but now seemed as good a time as any to work for Habitat for Humanity rebuilding homes after the tragic effects

of Hurricane Katrina.

Four games of Ipod monopoly, six bathroom breaks, two food stops, and 15 hours later, we reached our destination: the Seton Center.

The Seton Center was a convent that was converted into a dormitory for volunteers to stay in. It was a quaint little place, but it was slightly intimidating with Jesus hanging above your door watching your every move.

The first thing that my roommates, Caitlin Shiga and Lia Smith, and I did, besides complain about how tired we were, was search for the perfect room. Unfortunately for us, the only room which had three beds also had peeling paint, and weird water stains on the ceiling that reminded me of "The Grudge."

After a few minutes of hunting for new mattresses and jumping on the bed, we

settled down and slept, anxiously anticipating work the next morning.

We arrived at the worksite the next morning, quickly introduced our group and were immediately thrust on to the worksite with hard hats and hammers.

Not only did our three construction managers, Justin, Ken and Brent, provide humor and comfort at the worksite, but they personally knew each and every one of us.

Ken, who looked amazingly similar to Dr. Foreman from "House," worked with Caitlin, Lia, Anna Lane, Bill Heinze, and I to put up panels on the roof so they could begin shingling.

And as we became more familiar with how everything worked, we began using power saws and climbing around like spider-monkeys while singing Britney Spears songs and formulating raps for our presentation the next morning.

On our last day, it was our turn to show the crowd our talent. Anna, Lia and I came up with some gangster raps and



Photo by Jessica Bergmann

During their spring break, seniors Caitlin Macdonald (left) and Lia Smith volunteered for Habitat for Humanity.

some insane beats for each of our advisers, who couldn't stop laughing through the entire performance.

Although we knew it was our last day, we made it last. After returning to the Seton Center and eating dinner, we made conversation with some amazing Canadians, Mike and Greg, who were staying there as well.

We talked about Canada's healthcare system, the fact that there are no restrooms along the highway, and about the education system. Did you know you could go to college for practically \$12,000 a year? And that Canadians have a funny way of saying

"out and about?"

After that conversation, we were pretty set on moving to Canada!

I never thought that a spring break of volunteering would be such an amazing experience, but it truly was rewarding to know that you are making a difference in someone else's life while still having fun.

Currently, the group is planning a return trip at the beginning of summer in order to see the progress and continue restoration in Mobile County. Hopefully we will raise enough money to get back, although I am not looking forward to that bus ride.

## Student of the Month exemplifies priorities

By Payton Bayless  
Reporter

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

March's Student of the Month, senior Ryan Crawford, knows how to use his time and effort to make himself stand out.

Crawford believes he is Student of the Month because he has a decent GPA, is involved in several extracurricular activities, and knows how to balance his priorities.

As treasurer of FBLA, as well as captain of the golf team, Crawford finds time to mix his academic and athletic talents into his busy schedule.

He also takes part in the student ambassadors, organizing many of the school events and providing services to the surrounding community.

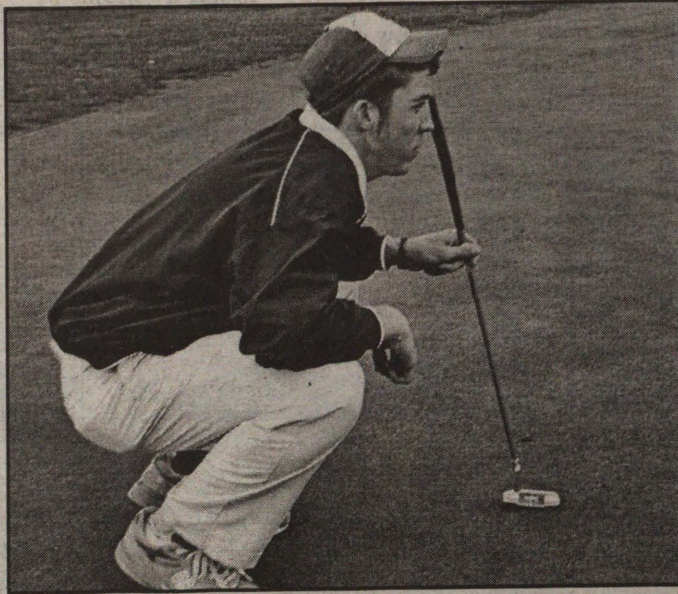


Photo by Payton Bayless

With a full schedule and multiple priorities, senior Ryan Crawford still manages to unwind with a round of golf.

"I try to do my best in everything I do, and I stay as involved as possible within the school," said Crawford.

Even with his busy schedule, Crawford also likes to find time to relax and hit a few holes on the golf course. He also caddies for members at the St. Charles Country Club.

Along with caddying and chilling out on the green, Crawford spends his hours working his shift at My Chef Catering in Naperville.

Saying that his education is "very important," Crawford has big plans for his future. Certain people had inspirational influence on him to get him this far.

"My parents were very inspiring throughout my childhood, and I basically thank all of my freshman teachers for teaching me what I know now," said Crawford.

Crawford plans to attend University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where he will study business and finance.

## No bailout for economics team

By Clark Hudmon  
Reporter

The West Chicago economic team couldn't get bailed out as they fell short in regionals in Dallas on Monday.

The team, which was not able to place first and travel to New York City, took third place in the challenge, though they did all they could and took a lot away from the performance, according to senior Jack McCormack.

"[We] feel good about our performance in Dallas, though we didn't win we gave it our all," said McCormack.

In its first year competing in the national program, the team coasted through the competition in Illinois, winning first place before heading to Dallas.

They faced over 200 students from across the nation to compete for the top spot in New York City May 16-18.

The players were excited for the opportunity to represent the school on a national

level.

All four members on the team, Jozef Pavnica, McCormack, Kristin Goffinet, and Jason Foreman are seniors.

"This is a big deal for our school; it is an opportunity to put West Chicago on the map across the United States," said Pavnica.

Coach Candace Fikis held practices once a week and she felt confident about competing in Dallas. She trained the team with practice national challenge questions, which were more challenging than the ones they faced in Dallas.

The team has been a dedicated group, who has worked hard since the beginning of the year to make it to this level, according to Fikis.

Fikis plans to join the challenge next year, though she will miss training the current players who will not participate because they will graduate.

"I had a great opportunity to work with a good group of kids, who are dedicated at getting better," said Fikis.



*Our View*

## Not really beautiful

Start on Main Street, make a left at Victory Lane and Bishop Boulevard, and take that to Integrity Intersection which will take you all the way to Diversity Drive.

You may have noticed the halls labeled with street signs as a gift from the senior class. You also may have heard complaints from students saying that the signs are unnecessary and a waste of money.

There are plenty of other ways we could use an \$8,000 grant from the Education Foundation.

To start, maybe we could fix the leaky roof that has been repaired yet continues to leak in spots. Next, maybe we could do something about our rodent problem that has staff and students setting traps for mice invading the premises.

The list of ways to make use of an \$8,000 check goes on, and everyone has their own opinion how they would spend it. Street signs to identify hallways that already possess names that even a freshman in September can identify, sounds



like a horrible waste of money, but the truth is, the choice of how to spend this grant was limited to the beautification of the school.

While some may say that a school with a leaky roof combined with mouse droppings could use a facelift, the funds were meant for something else.

The Education Foundation fundraises to benefit the school through grants such as this one. It is rude and inaccurate to make negative assumptions about the use of the grant because most students don't quite understand it. This beautification grant was for just that:

beautification.

Right now, any extra financial help should be appreciated. With budgets tight and budget cuts a reality, we should be thanking the Education Foundation for helping our school maintain attractiveness when that is one aspect that could be overlooked.

Agreeing that hall signs aren't necessarily a need, being proud of the way your school looks should be a priority. However, if students have an input in the spending, maybe there would be less criticism.

Maybe Club Green could have even used funds to do some beautifying to the grounds of the school. Maybe fixing up the antique bathroom fixtures would also have been a good way to begin beautifying. However, Foundation priorities may not be the same as student priorities.

Regardless of how you feel about street signs in hallways, students should have had a say in how the grant was spent. After all, it is their school.

## Acting like little kids will not solve problems

Thousands of Americans came to the streets to protest the increase of taxes and overspending of the U.S. government as President Barack Obama tries to lead this country toward an economic recovery. Crowds in many cities across the country dressed up like our forefathers and in some areas threw parties before protesting, according to the Associated Press.

The crowds acted like spoiled children, complaining about having to dig deep into their pocket to help an economic crisis. However, we are all to blame for the current situation.

Protesters were polluting the rivers by throwing crates of tea into them, and carried banners and posters attacking Obama's policies. So what was Obama's reaction to this temper tantrum? He stated "My administration has taken far-reaching action to give tax cuts to Americans who need them while jump-starting growth and job creation in the process."

It seems humorous, if not a little perverse, that in cities like Detroit, families are being forced to sell their homes for \$18,000, because they cannot find employment. This is in stark contrast to cities like San Francisco, where they staged an elaborate and costly tea party. There are people throughout this country that actually need the help of the taxes and the government. Before we can get back on track, we have to help the one class of people being squeezed the most - the working middle class.

In fact, only the richest five percent of these protestors will get higher taxes, according to a White House press release. So most protestors are protesting an issue that is not relevant to them.

The recent recession our country has fallen into is a serious matter, and as our forefathers would agree it will take all of us to chip in to get us through this recession. The same people that complain about high taxes also demand the most from our government: better education, safer streets and national security. None of these things come cheap, so we all must pull together to make this country a better place to live.

Although the tea parties received a lot of attention, the fact of the matter is that 62 percent of people taking a CNN/Opinion Research Corp. poll said they approved how Obama is handling taxes. So, maybe it's time to put the tea down and get back to work.

## Students Speak Compiled by Evan Morgan

What do you think about all of the school beautification?



Senior

**Zack Mowen**

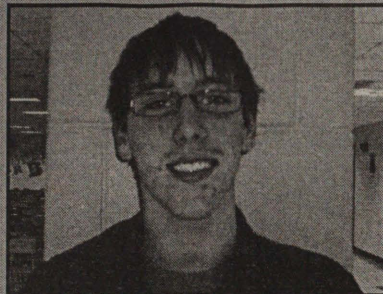
"I don't see a purpose to it. It just seems like wasted money to me."



Junior

**Alexis Miller**

"I think the signs have no purpose, but the other ways of decorating are kind of cool."



Sophomore

**Dillon Hall**

"I think it's cool. I really like the street signs, I think they're pretty clever."



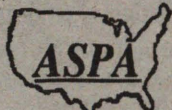
Freshman

**Claire Mowen**

"It makes our school look nicer, it's cool to see the flags of all the home countries of people that go to our school."

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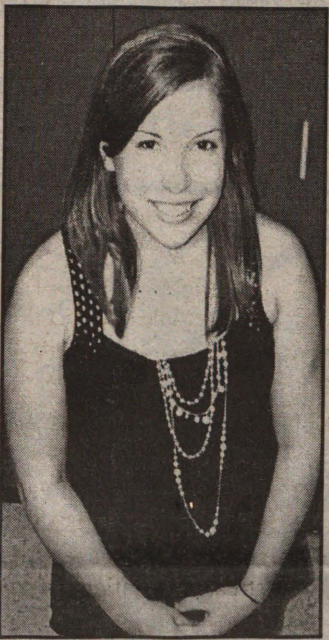
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## Jessica Bergmann

Legalizing marijuana should not be a main priority to legislators, who should be concerning themselves with the economic recession at hand. And yet, they are at it again.

While some argue that the legalization of marijuana will help benefit the economy in these tough times, do we, the United States, really want the solution to our economic problems to be marijuana? It is shameful to continue to put money over the well-being of the people's health. Consider the study conducted



by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 2006.

According to [www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov](http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov), the FDA found no accurate scientific studies that supported medicinal marijuana use, and the Institute of Medicine went as far as to claim that medicinal marijuana should not be used "because of the health risks associated with smoking."

So why, then, is there still an argument about whether or not marijuana should be legalized?

If there is no proof that it does anything medically, besides the fact that it can give patients suffering with AIDS and other diseases a high which will eliminate their pain, what other benefits support its legalization?

I don't see any benefits, but what I do see are more problems that will arise from the legalization than continuing to consider marijuana an illegal drug.

Results from the National Institute on Drug Abuse Monitoring the Future survey indicates that, in 2006, more than 13 percent of high school seniors admitted to driving under the influence of

marijuana in the two weeks prior to the survey.

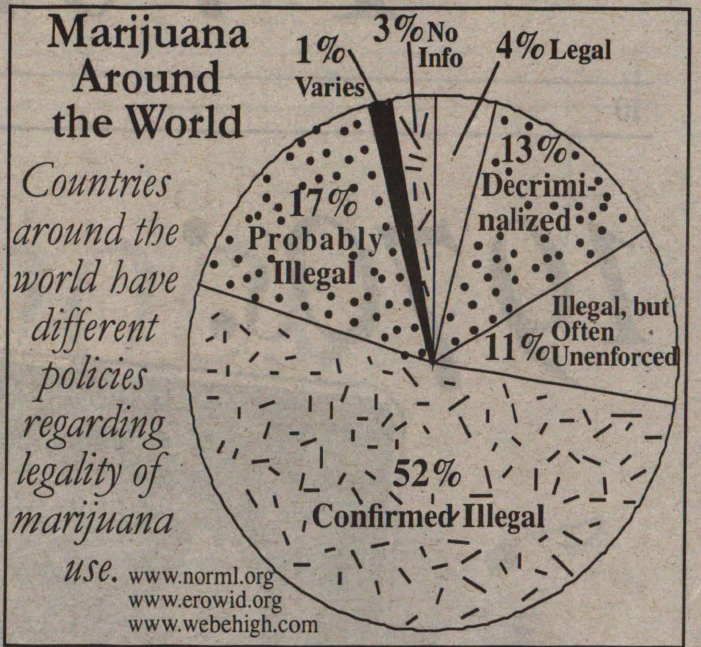
And while teenagers are convinced that alcohol is the most lethal drug involved in car accidents, drugs such as marijuana have the same effects. Marijuana not only impairs the user's motor skills, reaction time, and judgment, but is a serious threat to both the driver's and passenger's safety.

It is impossible to ignore the fact that, if marijuana is legalized, driving under the influence will become an even larger problem than it already is.

Aside from the basic health risks and consequences of marijuana use, one cannot ignore the simplest question of all: If legislators were to legalize marijuana, what stops them from legalizing other drugs which are just as illegal and harmful.

Americans need to realize that legislators have more important issues at hand, like finding a suitable way to end the recession, not beginning a country that is dependent on drug sales.

However, I do understand that legislators feel the need to bring an end to the threatening



drug cartel in Mexico.

According to an article written by CNN, over 1,800 people have been killed since January due to drug violence. Obviously, this issue needs to be addressed.

However, legalizing marijuana is not the solution. Many believe that, by legalizing marijuana, all of the battles between drug cartels will be resolved and the murders will cease.

In an alternate reality, this would work. However, as suggested by former Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, legalizing marijuana

"won't work," and I agree.

Legalizing marijuana will only increase the value of the drug businesses run by the cartel because they no longer have to worry about the running of an illegal business.

And, when the value of every drug cartel's business increases, competition between them still remains, and violence continues in the same manner.

In the end, legalizing marijuana has no benefits to citizens or to ending drug wars. So why are legislators still addressing the issue?

## Keep the marijuana policy

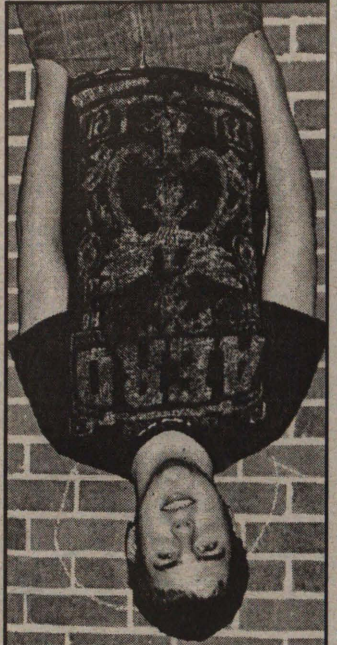
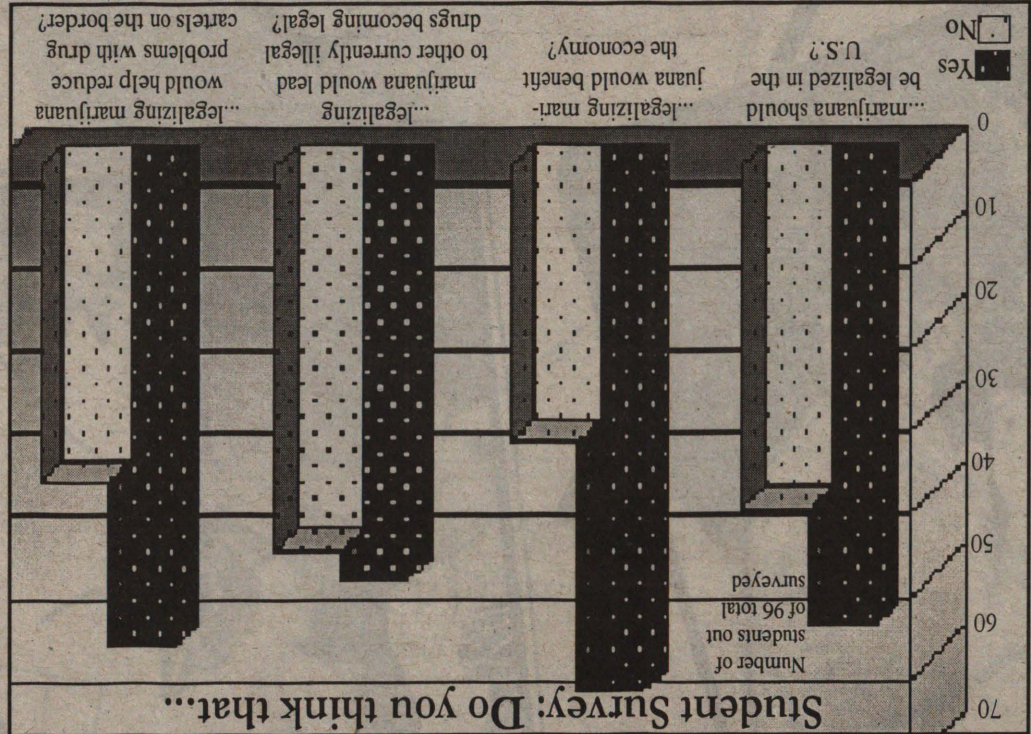
## It is time for a big change

And if the benefits to this country aren't enough, legalization would strike a blow to the drug cartels and the drug wars currently raging on the United States-Mexico border. For too long, people have over-exaggerated the dangers of cannabis, and the time has come to reform our outdated marijuana policy.

But does it cause as much harm as other illegal drugs, or rather alcohol? Simply, it doesn't. According to "Reefer Madness," dying from an overdose of cannabis has never been recorded. Over time, marijuana has the same effects as cigarettes, such as clogged arteries, damaged airways, and risk of cancer.

falls, according to [www.MYT.com](http://www.MYT.com). Also, when we should be halting the cocaine trade, cracking down on crack houses and heroin, or getting drunk drivers off the road, we are too busy focusing on a relatively harmless plant. I say relatively harmless, because yes, marijuana does cause some harm.

Our government spends \$9 billion annually on ineffective marijuana laws. Sure, they are effective in the sense that many people are arrested for possession or distribution. However, they are ineffective for the fact that the tax-payer still has to pay for 33,655 state and 10,785 federal inmates to be fed, clothed, and sheltered in our already overcrowded jails, according to [www.Dollars.com](http://www.Dollars.com).



believes marijuana legalization in California could bring in \$20 billion annually. The economic benefits of legalization are blatantly positive. As stated in the book "Reefer Madness," Illinois' industry would be beneficial for cash crop isn't corn as many America's economy and help alleviate some of these debts. Corn only brings in \$16 billion. Meanwhile, the illegal cannabis trade rakes in \$19 billion. Man Tom Ammiano introduced a legalization bill in his state that would generate over \$1 billion in revenue per year. However, the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML) believes marijuana legalization in California could bring in \$20 billion annually.

## Jacob Wucka



# Prom: An Exp

## 1970s:

“Keep on Lovin’ You”  
-REO Speedwagon

“You Light Up My Life”  
-Debbi Boone

“Sometimes When We Touch”  
-Dan Hill

Prom Songs:



30 years ago prom was a simple for at home, saving a bundle. Current into an expensive phenomenon with

By Amanda Rathe  
Center Spread Editor

With the high costs of prom, it is only natural that some students feel  
“It digs a pretty deep hole in our pockets,” said junior Michael Bry  
Hopefully all this money will be worth it.”

Some girls think it is a necessity to partake in such high spending for  
“I think it’s a lot of money and it is a big stress beforehand, but once  
junior Caitlyn Madsen. “I guess it would be just as fun without all the  
For others, spending a lot of money is important to their prom exper  
“The dress was worth the money,” said senior Megan Zajac who spent  
than once.”

Dresses are already expensive by themselves and that does not include  
“I hate that I have to pay \$400 for a dress I actually like and then  
Pfeifer.

**Prom Receipt**

Dress	\$30	(1977)(w/ inflation)	\$98
Hair	\$0		\$0
Tux	\$75		\$163
Shoes	\$20		\$65
Tickets	\$20		\$65
Flowers	\$12		\$39
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$157</b>		<b>\$430</b>

“[Prom] digs a pretty deep hole in our pockets.”  
-- Junior Michael B



# ensive Evolution

the affair that girls prepared for the current prom has exploded with countless accessories.

feel they are being cheated out of their money. Bryant. "I personally think that the prices are a bit too high. ... for prom, while others see it as a bit frivolous. ... once you get to the dance, it's easy to forget about it," said ... the crazy expensive stuff." ... experience even if they would rather not. ... spent \$350 on her dress. "I just wish I could wear it more ... include the cost for alterations. ... when \$100 more to get it to fit me right," said senior Molly

## 2000s:



### Prom Receipt

Dress	\$400
Hair	\$35
Shoes	\$65
Tux	\$150
Tickets	\$110
After Prom	\$30
Flowers	\$35
Manicure	\$20
Pedicure	\$20
Limo	\$115
Tanning	\$35

**Total: \$1,015**

*'I guess it would be just as fun without all that crazy expensive stuff.'*  
--Junior Caitlyn Madsen

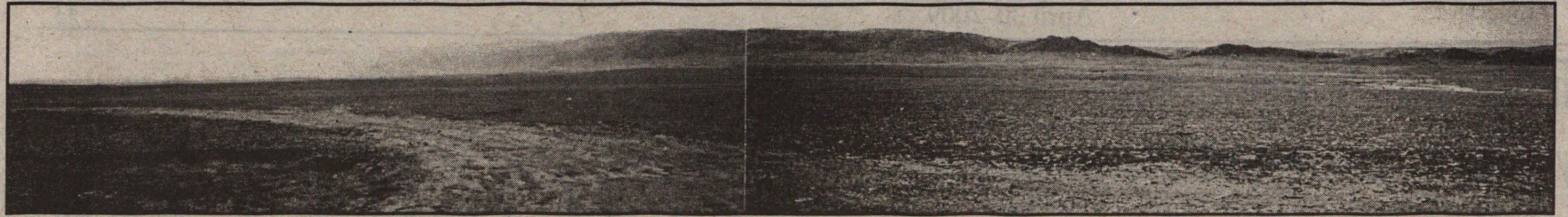
*'I hate that I have to pay \$400 for a dress I actually like.'*  
--Senior Molly Pfeifer

*'I just wish I could wear [my dress] more than once.'*  
--Senior Megan Zajac



**Prom Songs:** "I'll Stand By You" - Carrie Underwood    "Amazed" - Lonestar    "You and Me" - Lifehouse





Photos courtesy of Alex Al Hamy

Through two pictures matched together, the mountains and grasses of the Al Hamy's old home country, Iraq, comes to life, vivid with many memories.

## Whirlwind journey

*Students from war-torn Iraq settle comfortably into their newest home in West Chicago*

By Jacob Wucka  
Sports Editor

It has been a whirlwind journey for the Al Hamy family, as they have finally begun settling into life in West Chicago after living as refugees.

"It's nice and it's different here. It's raining too much, but it is nice here," said Alex Al Hamy.

The family was relocated from their home town of Mosul, Iraq, by refugee resettlement group World Relief based out of Wheaton.

"It was a quiet area and we did not have war," said Alex. "But my father was a translator for the United States Army."

After leaving in January, the family stayed in Turkey for about a month to undergo

medical examinations. Then they stayed in Frankfurt, Germany, and after that flew into Chicago on Valentine's Day. At first, they stayed at a hotel in Glen Ellyn.

Now, the family lives in West Chicago, in a house currently being paid for by a charity.

Seventeen-year-old Alex, whose real name is Muqdad, attends Community High School with his 16-year-old twin sisters Reema and Shahla, and 15-year-old sister Shahnaz. Three of his younger siblings attend a district 33 elementary school, but the fourth is too young to attend school.

In Iraq, Alex and Shahnaz were the only two who attended school.

"Everything is good, but

it is very different," said Alex of West Chicago. "Iraq had a small school with 64 students and 20 teachers."

While Reema and Shahla did not attend school, both girls are self-taught literate in Arabic.

Adapting to America has not just been a struggle for Alex's family. According to world languages division head Janelle Stefancic, communication has been a challenge that the ESL program is trying to overcome.

"It is a challenge for ESL teachers and content teachers when you have students come into the United States,

and can't communicate easily," said Stefancic.

To make their experience easier, the siblings share a similar schedule. A majority of their day is spent with ESL teacher Mark Poulterer.

"Alex is extremely excited to be here. He just wants to be in class where he can speak English. He answers all the questions," said Poulterer.

In fact, Alex is dropping an ESL class, and is moving onto a biology class.

Meanwhile, the three girls are still in a silent period, but Poulterer is trying to introduce the girls into the culture as much as he can.

On April 17, Poulterer introduced the girls to the wackiness of West Chicago at the pep assembly.

"I took the girls to the assembly and they were all like 'what's going on?' and looking everywhere," said Poulterer.

However Poulterer can see the siblings becoming comfortable in their new surroundings.

"Their culture is so different, but their learning of the language will be fast," said Poulterer.

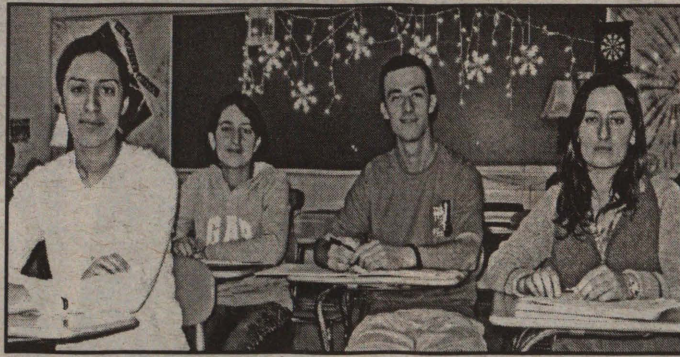


Photo by Jacob Wucka

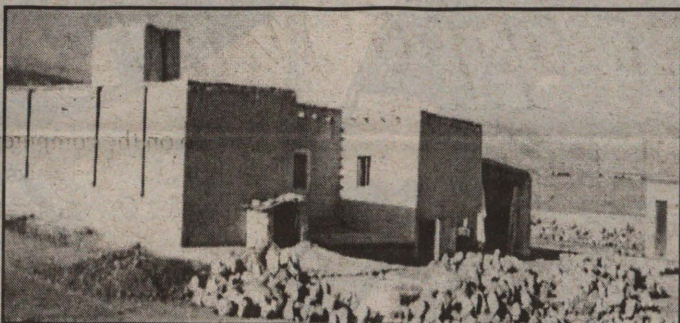


Photo courtesy of Alex Al Hamy

After moving to West Chicago from their home in Iraq (bottom), from left, Reema, Shanaz, Alex, and Shahla Al Hamy adapt to American schooling.

## Hoping for the best, fearing the worst

*Tough family situations in Mexico conflict with student's life after gang threats begin*

By Megan Hernbroth  
Features Editor

\*The names have been changed to protect the privacy of the people involved.

With a large Hispanic population, West Chicago is no stranger to the threats present in neighboring Mexico. But for Sara\*, the threat hits closer to home.

A sophomore, Sara moved to the United States when she was 6 months old because her father wanted a better life for her and her mother.

"Most of my father's side is here," said Sara, "and of course my mom and I are here, too."

The rest of Sara's family still resides in Mexico, in-

cluding her cousins and her grandmother.

"It's really hard because my grandma and uncles are still in Mexico," said Sara, "and if they get sick we can't just go there to make sure they're okay."

One relative Sara worries about is her cousin, Mark\*, who is a trained kick boxer, and is therefore a target of the drug-run gangs in Mexico.

"The gangs threaten my cousin a lot, but they stopped asking for money from us," said Sara. "Once they asked for \$1 million from my family so we can see my cousin again, but we never gave it to them."

In Mexico, the gangs look for a specific leader and occasionally some body guards.

Because of his ability to fight well, Mark fits the job requirements for both high-end positions.

"It's hard because my cousin is such a good fighter," said Sara. "They want him to rule the gang or at least protect the leader they already have."

In 2007, Mark was kidnapped by the gang and thrown in a cave, where he was tortured and threatened. He was shot in the leg to prevent escaping, and the gang members said if he were to get away, the consequences would be much worse. He was released shortly after.

In December of 2008, Sara and her father visited their family in Mexico to see how the family was handling the threats stemming from

Mark's capture.

"When we went to Mexico, there were all these cars in the streets," said Sara. "They would come up to us because they knew who we were and would tell us to get in the cars. My dad was really mad and wanted to find [the gang members] so he could do stuff to them, but I was very scared. We hoped to see [my cousin] in the streets when we drove by just so we knew he was still alive."

Sara and her family hope for a glimpse of Mark even today, through the live news coverage of the attacks and threats made in Mexico.

"I'm really worried about not seeing my cousin again," said Sara. "We see others getting captured on the news, and we hope that we see my cousin through the news just so we know he is still alive."

As a safety precaution, Sara's father is trying to move

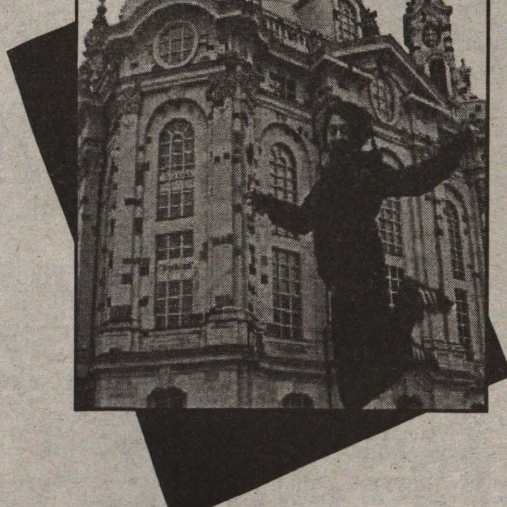
more family members to the United States away from the threats of the gangs, hoping the threats cease sooner rather than later.

"I think everything will get better," said Sara, "but now I'm starting to think that is more a hope than anything."

Thoughts of Mark's safety are some of the only thoughts that still keep Sara together during the tougher times when she has to deal with other family problems and stress from school. She looks towards other family members as the vital source of the strong composure she wears each day.

"I just try to be strong," said Sara, "but my cousin has a brother that looks just like him, and when I see his pictures I just start crying. My biggest hope is that he's safe and that we get to see him again soon."





Photos courtesy of Mary Murphy

## Making the most of scholastic opportunities

### Junior assimilates to German culture after living with host family

By Amanda Rathe  
Center Spread Editor

Making the leap from living as an American teenager to living in Germany for a year is an opportunity that junior Mary Murphy took full advantage of.

She won the Congress Bundestag Scholarship which allows a student to travel to Germany for a year and is fully paid for by the U.S. government other than spending money. Murphy left July 21.

Murphy is located in Dömitz, a farm town located near Schwerin, with host parents Dirk and Wiebke Schäfer

"In the time leading up to my departure to Germany, I was really excited. I was, of course, a little bit nervous and hesitant, because my town here is really small," Murphy said in an e-mail interview.

Due to the small size of her town, many of its residents live on farms.

"My host mom is a farmer and my host dad is a vet, and they told me that they have sheep as pets," Murphy said. "Because of that I was nervous, but I was more excited than anything and couldn't wait to begin this new adven-

ture."

Culture shock can be expected when moving to a new country, but for Murphy the transition was relatively easy.

"It hasn't been hard at all to assimilate to the German culture. My case is a little bit different than normal, since my host family isn't typical German at all. Typically, German families keep everything neat and orderly," Murphy said. "Here by my host family, it isn't so, but I wouldn't have it any other way," she said.

Murphy had only two years of German under her belt before her departure.

"The language barrier hasn't been a problem for me at all. There's at least someone in my host family who can speak Russian, Spanish, English, and French," she said. "They've always been patient and explain things, and I couldn't ask for anything better."

Living in this small, farm town, Murphy finds herself with a large amount of free time.

"Here in Dömitz, there's basically nothing to do. There are no shops, no movie theater, no train station, nothing. On weekdays I usually study for school, play piano or gui-

tar, read, go on the computer, go running or go for walks," Murphy said. "On weekends I usually meet with friends and we meet at someone's house, go to the disco, or take the bus/train to bigger cities to go shopping."

Germany has many landmarks to see, but Murphy has not seen very many sights at all.

"My host family doesn't go out of the way to look at things, because that's just not a normal part of life," said Murphy. "I've been to Berlin, Rostock, Schwerin, and Hamburg, which are all bigger cities, but as far as sights, I haven't seen very many."

The food in Germany is different from a lot of the food in the United States.

"Personally, I find that German food is delicious! In my host family we cook almost everything at home, and we rarely cook with the microwave," said Murphy.

She enjoys a large majority of German foods but some of her favorites include döner and spätzle.

Döner is a Turkish meat dish, and spätzle is small noodles usually made into dumplings.

Murphy will be in Germany until July 11, when the German school year ends. After a year away, she will be making yet a second leap, having to assimilate to American culture once again for her senior year.

## Rushing all over Chicago

Megan Tennis  
Reporter

Djebour had similar thoughts.

French fries and French toast are no longer what Americans think of when France is brought up, thanks to the recent visit from the French exchange students from Grenoble.

While here between April 10 and 24, the French students went bowling, laser tagging, shopping, and saw the Sears Tower and the Hancock building.

Everything is bigger here, in the United States, emphasized French students Romain Seraglini, Camille Regache, and Cherine Djebour.

"The sensation of having freedom and being on your own, and explaining who you are and your culture is something you can only get in a foreign country," said Regache about being in a new country.

Even though the students were entering an unknown country where they don't speak the language very well, they said they weren't nervous when they came to America.

"I was just thinking about what my family was going to be like, what I'll do, and if I'd like it," said Djebour.

But all of Djebour's questions were answered when she met her family and everything was okay, she said.

The French students had ideas about what America would be like before they came.

"I've seen America on TV but it was cool to see it in reality," said Regache.

"I thought about skyscrapers, and a big country with stores that I can buy everything in," said Djebour.

To experience true American culture the French students stayed with an American family while here. They also tried traditional American foods, especially fast food.

Djebour said she tried Mexican food for the first time and loved it. In France they don't eat a lot of junk food and don't snack as much as Americans do, said Regache. France also doesn't have bagels and the cookies are different.

The three emphasized how teenagers are so different in America compared to teenagers in France.

They do similar things like shopping, going to the movies, and bowling, but Regache said that teens from France like to relax and take their time, unlike here where everything is rushed.

Teens in France also can't drive until they are 18 so underage students have to find other means of transportation, like bikes.

"Even though we don't have the same culture, it's good to see that there are different people [in the world]," said Djebour.

With such great experiences, the French students seem to have even more ambition to try new things.

"Now, I need to see something different and that is the first reason we travel," said Djebour.

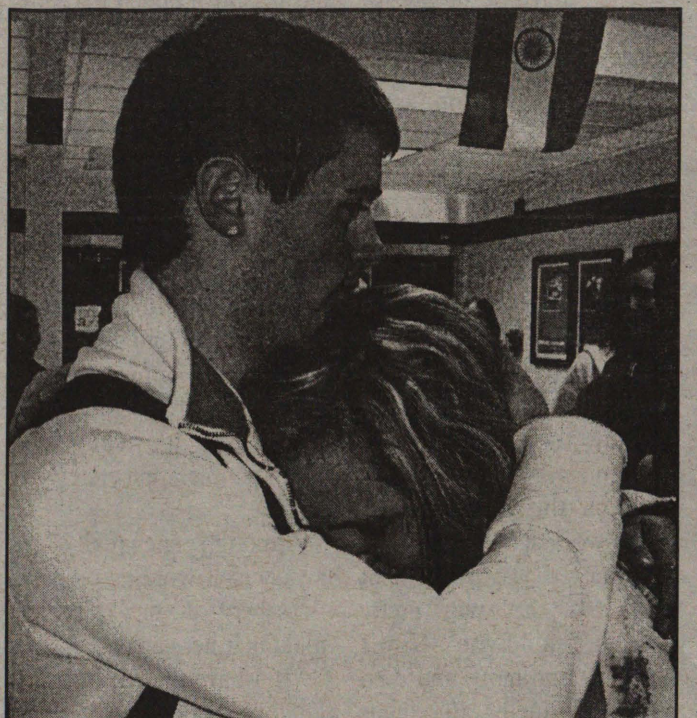


Photo by Jessica Bergmann

During a drawn-out goodbye, Francois Michard comforts sophomore host Sami Lauf and encourages her to visit France with the other hosts next year.





Photos by Alexis Hosticka

Senior Coralyn Kutzner (left) works her magic with the spotlight while junior Jackie Leeseberg (right) sorts through costumes for the upcoming musical, 'Joseph.'

## Behind the scenes

By Alexis Hosticka  
Perspectives Editor

As the latest play or musical runs flawlessly on stage, there are many people at work in the balcony and behind the curtains helping to make the production a success.

The audience is usually focused on the actors - not even thinking about the lights, costumes, or props.

However, a lot of work goes into the backstage and technical aspects of every musical and play. Seniors Kelli Lyne and Coralyn Kutzner have worked on tech crew in many productions and know just how much effort goes into making every scene a suc-

only learned how to work the lights. She has also picked up life skills from working on tech crew.

"You learn to be patient with everyone," said Kutzner. "[Tech crew] is really important, but we're often the last ones considered. It can be frustrating, but it's definitely worth it."

Junior Jackie Leeseberg is one of two stage managers in charge of the backstage crew, which she has been working on since freshman year. Her job encompasses making sure everything gets done as well as coming in after school almost everyday and on Saturdays.

"I decided to do [stage

*'You learn to be patient with everyone. [Tech crew] is really important, but we're often the last ones considered. It can be frustrating but it's definitely worth it.'*

-- Senior Coralyn Kutzner

cess. "I like that I don't have to be on stage and be seen by everyone, but still contribute to the production," said Lyne, who has worked on six productions. "I feel like I do more things in tech crew behind the scenes putting the production together [than I would on stage]."

Lyne and Kutzner both began their tech crew careers working only the spotlights, but now they know how to work most of the technology, although their favorites are still to work spotlight.

"I started just doing spot light and that was pretty much it," said Lyne. "Now I move around more and do a lot of moving the attic lights around."

However, Kutzner hasn't

crew] because my older sister did it, and it ended up being a lot of fun," said Leeseberg. "I've worked up to being stage manager."

Leeseberg thinks that the best part of being on crew is the reward that comes when the production is finished.

"All the effort and time goes into the production for two to three-months, and then in the end for three or four days the production happens," said Leeseberg. "It's really cool when people appreciate your work."

Although she really enjoys herself working on crew, Leeseberg doesn't plan on making it her career.

"If I have the opportunity, I'd love to do it in my free time because it's so rewarding," said Leeseberg.

# Taking the stage

*Three students were not able to resist the spotlight*

Megan Tennis  
Reporter

Bright lights, memorizing lines, and big audiences are almost second nature to theater veterans juniors Chelsea Ross, Rebekah Babis and senior David Hiltner.

Babis started acting in eighth grade, and Ross sophomore year.

"I personally like comedies, because it is great to hear the audience's laughter and the funny lines are something that you won't forget," said Ross.

Stage fright is something else these thespians have learned to conquer in addition to the other fears that come with any kind of performing.

"At the beginning of the show it's really nerve-racking but as it goes on you feel confident and by curtain call you just feel awesome," said Ross.

Babis, Ross, and Hiltner put

a lot of time into practicing by rehearsing at school and memorizing lines at home.

"In the musicals there's some dancing that I have to practice on my own since I'm not very good," Hiltner said humbly.

Balancing school work into their busy rehearsing schedules is important, but the three seem to have it under control.

"You kind of just have to deal with it. There's obvi-

ously going to be more work and more to think about, but that's how it is with any out-of-school activity," said Hiltner.

After all the hard work and frustration that goes into every practice and performance, the trio agrees on one thing: The people they work with and the friendships they gain are the best parts of doing theater.

"A lot of the people in the plays aren't necessarily people I would normally get to meet so it's a nice thing to see a lot of different types of people working on one show," said Hiltner.



Photo by Megan Tennis

While working on different productions, from left, junior Chelsea Ross, senior David Hiltner, and junior Rebekah Babis often run lines in the hallway.

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## Fun halfway around the world

Compiled by Sarah Berger  
Entertainment Editor

French exchange students Mira Benchikh, Anais Pallas, and Pauline Tomasi share an inside look on what's popular in television, movies, and music in France.



Photo courtesy of Helene Sankovitch

Mira Benchikh, (left), and Anais Pallas enjoy listening to American music such as Lady GaGa, Katy Perry, and Beyoncé along with their favorite French tunes.

### Le Film

**Favorite American movie:** 'Gran Torino'

**Favorite French movie:** 'Jeux d'Enfant'

**Favorite actress:** Audrey Hepburn

**Favorite actor:** Johnny Depp

**Pauline says,** "In France, people are always going to the movies. There is a lot more action in American films, French movies are more romantic."

### La Télé

**Favorite American Show:**

'Gossip Girl'

**Favorite French Show:**

'Seconde Chance'

**Anais says,** "French television shows are very stupid, American shows are funnier and have better acting. Also, the American shows have more drama."

### La Musique

**Favorite American song:** 'Hot n' Cold' by Katy Perry

**Favorite French song:** 'Toi Plus Moi' by Gregoire

**Favorite American artist:** Santogold

**Favorite French artist:** Pep's

**Mira says,** "American music and its lyrics are more for dancing, unlike in France."

## A change of tune:

By Jacob Wucka  
Sports Editor

### Jonas Brothers

After "Burnin' Up" the pop charts in '08, the Jonas Brothers are back in the studio working on what is being described as a more instrumental album.

Their fourth studio album is tentatively titled "Lines, Vines, and Trying Times," and is set to release on June 15.

In an interview with Rolling Stone, Nick Jonas describes the album as "our journal in songs."

He has stated that the album is going to be based off personal experiences, and will try to connect with listeners.

Kevin Jonas adds that the band is using new instruments and sounds for this album to help give them a new more unique sound, different from their 2008 album "A Little Bit Longer."

### Katy Perry

She kissed a girl, and America loved it.

However, Katy Perry is going back to boys and basics with her next album, slated to start recording in October.

When asked about her follow-up plans to her 2008 album "One of the Boys" by MTV, Perry announced that she is dropping the themes that launched her into stardom, including her wild style, and kissing girls.

She told MTV that "she can't be that grown-up Shirley Temple girl wearing that stupid strawberry in her hair."

Perry plans on creating a "fun" pop record, but with a more mature sound.

Whoever said that someone singing about one's bi-curiosity, bi-polarity, and fondness of cherry-flavored Chap Stick isn't a mature artist?

### Lil Wayne

His album, "Tha Carter III," was the highest selling rap album in 2008, but now Lil Wayne is looking to climb the rock charts.

Wayne's rebirth of his career, the respectively titled album "Rebirth," is scheduled for a June 16 release. It will be his debut rock album.

His first single, "Prom Queen," was released on Jan. 27, and received high markings on the Billboard music charts, under the categories of pop, and rap.

"Rebirth" will also feature collaborations with other artists, including Lenny Kravitz, Pete Wentz, Avril Lavigne, Birdman, and Kanye West.

However, don't expect "Rebirth" to be the last you'll hear of Wayne in 2009.

He plans on releasing "Tha Carter IV" in late 2009.

These stars dominated the music charts in 2008. But in '09, they are planning on reemerging as completely new artists. See how the Jonas Brothers, Katy Perry, and Lil Wayne are going to make this year different and, hopefully, better than last.



## What's on your iPod?

Compiled by Sarah Berger  
Entertainment Editor



Freshman

"Mudvayne, the lead singer is really good," Sean Fayfar

"I like Coldplay, it's really relaxing music," Lauren Pugh



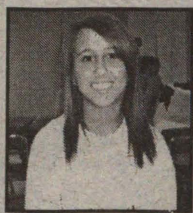
Sophomore



"3OH!3, they are so awesome," Alexis Brunelli

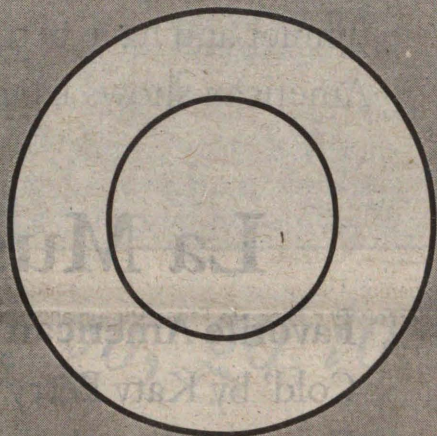
Junior

"Taylor Swift, I feel like she writes her songs about my life," Molly Pfeifer



Senior

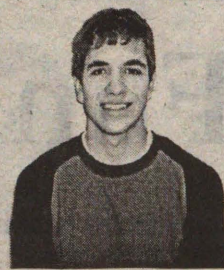
Wildcat



Playlist

## Reporter's Picks

By Evan Morgan  
Reporter



Every month, check here for a different reporter's pick in movies, music, books, and games. For April, Evan Morgan chooses his favorite picks in entertainment.

### .....Movie..... 'Obsessed'

Beyoncé takes part in this packed romantic thriller as the wife of Derek Charles, a successful financial manager who is enjoying life as it is after receiving a big promotion.

It is here that his co-worker Lisa becomes Charles' stalker.

She does everything in her will to make Charles be with her, from drugging him to sneaking into his house. Charles keeps his cool

around Lisa, ignoring her and only giving into temptation once, due to the influence of date rape drugs. It is now up to Beyoncé to do everything in her power to protect her husband.

This movie is packed with romance and thrills, each twist in the plot will keep the audience on the edge of its seats. 'Obsessed' is a movie that proves that even the man in the house can be put in life or death situations.

### .....Music..... Ziggy Marley 'Family Time'

The four-time Grammy winner and son of the great Bob Marley, Ziggy Marley releases his third solo album Tuesday.

"Family Time" features more of an easygoing style of music, including original songs alongside some covers. The songs are geared towards anyone who will enjoy the laid back, family-focused tunes. Marley decided to invite some of his musical

friends to help compose the music for this album including Who bassist, Pino Palladino. Marley's album features a variety of other artists and family such as Marley's mother Rita, Jack Johnson and Willie Nelson, along with Jamie Lee Curtis, who narrates two stories. You can listen to the album on his website, [www.ziggymarley.com](http://www.ziggymarley.com) if you can't wait until Tuesday.

### .....Book..... 'Always Looking Up'

Michael J. Fox awes readers in his book, telling the story of his struggles with Parkinson's throughout the last 10 years of his life.

Fox shares how he has always seen the positive side of his problems, ranging from his battle with Parkinson's to his retirement from the show,

"Spin City." Fox also talks to others in his book; people who have battled through their tough times and survived by always seeing problems optimistically.

This is the second book published by the number one best selling author and definitely one to pick up.

### .....Video Game..... UFC 2009- 'Undisputed'

UFC 2009-"Undisputed" takes the reality of the UFC and condenses it into an action packed video game.

Players will experience lifelike arenas, battling in the octagon. "Undisputed" contains 80 elite fighters, lightweights, heavyweights and everything in between

including Chuck Liddell, Rampage Jackson, BJ Penn, and Brock Lesner. Including a create-a-fighter feature, players can produce their own ultimate fighter. Players can alter appearances, attributes, learn new techniques, and battle to the top in UFC 2009-"Undisputed."

## Tween star no more

Zac Efron scores a slam dunk in his new, more mature role

Megan Tennis  
Reporter

In 1989 basketball superstar Mike O'Donnell had everything going for him.

He had a free ride to college and the perfect girlfriend.

But when he discovers that his girlfriend, Scarlett, and he are expecting a baby his bright future leaves his grasp.

Twenty years later, an unhappy O'Donnell's marriage to Scarlett is falling apart, his company passes him over for a promotion at work, and doesn't get along with his kids.

Now he's getting the chance of a lifetime to go back and do it all over again.

Although Zac Efron plays a basketball star in both his well

known role in "High School Musical" and in "17 Again," Efron portrays a much different character.

Efron has to get in touch with his deeper side to play a teenage boy with the burdens of a 37 year old.

With a surprisingly sophisticated and well thought out plot "17 Again" has audiences wanting to cry one minute and laugh out loud the next.

Even though he is still playing a boyish high schooler, it is nice to see Efron really taking the role as O'Donnell with sophistication.

It is obvious in every scene that he is developing as an actor and is trying to move on from his "High School Musical" days.

Audiences seemed to enjoy

the more grown up Efron and they should.

This film proves that Efron is more than just a pretty faced, teen in a basketball jersey.

While showing off his acting chops, audiences see Efron's character, a younger version of O'Donnell, grow up and realize the important things in life right in front of their eyes.

This is a funny, smart, and quick-witted flick that you'll want to watch over and over again.

"17 Again" has a serious topic but there is the perfect balance of comic relief thanks to certain characters like Efron's best friend in the movie Ned, played by Thomas Lennon.

With a good life lesson to be learned at the end of the movie, audiences are sure to leave the theater with smiles on their faces.

*"When you're young, everything feels like the end of the world. But it's not, it's just the beginning."*

- Zac Efron in '17 Again'



# Sports

## Baseball:

By Clark Hudmon  
Reporter

Facing one of the top teams in Illinois, West Chicago struggled to keep up at the game against Wheaton North.

"We knew could keep up with them, the team did their job out there," said senior Jordan Long. "I thought we could pull a win out."

Long pitched a phenomenal game throwing 140

pitches in ten innings.

He only allowed 2 earned runs to Wheaton North; a nationally ranked team.

The young Wildcat team lost 3-2.

Although this loss struck a blow to team morale, they have hung in there with other tough opponents like Elk Grove, and Wheaton Warrenville South.

Conference just started for these young Wildcats, as they are 9-7-1. They

### 10-8-1

started conference by taking one game out of a three game series versus the Wheaton Warrenville South Tigers.

The bats have come alive for three seniors who lead the team in major batting categories: Rhett Gunderson, Ethan Burau, and Tyler Christ.

These key bats give the team an added edge. It also gives head coach Dan

McCarthy confidence facing tough opponents.

"I know every time our team steps out onto the field we can hang in there, and come away with a victory," said McCarthy.

The strongest point of the team is the starting pitching, with two aces, senior captains Jordan Long and Trevor Bodie. The tandem gives an opportunity to come away with a victory whenever they step out.

"All I want to do when I step out there is winning, no matter what it takes. That is my main focus out there on the mound," said Long.

According to McCarthy, the team needs to improve their defense, and mental attitudes, now that conference is starting.

Hopefully, the Wildcats will improve enough by the time they play Naperville North for a double header on Saturday at 10 a.m. and noon.



First row: senior Cole Paler, juniors Blair Skarin, John Wehr, senior Trevor Bodie, junior Matt Matson, senior Jordan Long, juniors Al Robbins, and Nick Carnot. Second row: head coach Dan McCarthy, juniors Ben Orr, Jeff Robinson, seniors James Jensen, Tyler Christ, Rhett Gunderson, Dan Michiels, Ethan Burau, and junior Louis Diaz. Third row: Pitching coach Adam Zimmerman, junior Matt Ackerman, senior Corey Freebern, juniors Kevin Peterson, Charles Jacques, and senior Jimmy Laiter.

# The Great American Game

## Softball:

By Greg Vodicka  
Editor in Chief

Holding its spot at first in the DuPage Valley Conference, the softball team beat Naperville Central Monday, making it their toughest challenge so far this season.

Strong defense on both sides left the teams scoreless until the ninth inning.

"Both teams were making some contact, but the defense was holding each team from scoring," said junior Taylor Dash.

Leading off the ninth senior Chris Rovit was hit by a pitch, and

then moved to second after sophomore Mary Connolly's sacrifice bunt.

Senior Jamie Dash pushed Rovit to third with a single to center field. As the Redhawks pulled their infield in, Taylor popped her first pitch just over a Redhawk shortstop, giving Rovit the opportunity to score.

"I knew I couldn't be picky on the pitch," said Taylor. "I had to go for anything close."

Rovit added that the team's bunting in key points of the game proved to make a difference when they really

### 16-3

need it.

Losing Friday's game against Naperville North, and one of Saturday's to Batavia, the pressure for a DVC win was high.

The Cats beat West Aurora April 23, for the second conference victory of the season.

"This win was definitely a team effort," said Rovit. "Everyone in the lineup got a hit, which shows how much our offense has improved."

However, Johnson is not satisfied yet.

"Teams in the DVC are

ready for us this year, so it's not going to be an easy road," admitted head coach Emily Johnson. "We are going to have to work for every run. Nothing will be handed to us in this conference."

Glenbard East was the girls' first test in the DVC, and they passed beating the Rams 5-1. The game started out slow with an inning of three up three down. Once the bats started coming around, the lineup fed off the energy of the game.

"Hitting is contagious and the game proved that," said Rovit. "When the top of

der started coming around, everyone else followed."

According to Rovit, this takes the pressure off the defense so they can "go out there and just play."

Starting off with a good lead made it possible for the team to work in some suicide steals, delayed steals, hit and runs, and bunts, all key tools they utilize.

This emphasizes Johnson's "small ball" mentality, where bunts and steals make determine the game instead of always relying on big hits.

"[Johnson] pushes us to our limits, and that's what need in a coach," said Connolly.



First row: Junior Molly Monroe, senior Katrina Turzinski, and junior Taylor Kutilek. Second row: juniors Aly Taddeucci, Taylor Dash, Danielle McAvoy, sophomore Mary Connolly, seniors Anna Lane, Courtney Macko, Jamie Dash, junior Kaity Olson, senior Chrissie Rovit, junior Izzy Bruce, freshman Jessica Wood, and head coach Emily Johnson.

Photos by Jacob Wucka



# Unpredictably consistent team

By Jacob Wucka  
Sports Editor

Struggling to keep a winning momentum, the boys volleyball team is trying to lift themselves out of their current losing situation.

"We just need to be more consistent," said head coach Kris Hasty. "I'm hoping we can figure out what's going on and get our game back."

Entering its season, the team knew it was going to be a challenge, especially after losing seven varsity members from the previous year.

However, the team is working to overcome such obstacles, including the challenge of filling their lineup after senior Dan Calabrese sprained his ankle.

"We just need to work harder on our blocking and going after every ball," said senior captain Steven Romanelli.

Romanelli also believes the team needs to focus on

improving communication skills.

"We try to bring it in together after every play," said Romanelli. "If someone misses a play, we tell them to shake it off and go get the next one."

Senior captain

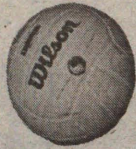


Photo Illustration by  
Jessica Bergmann

## 5-18

Ryan Krage believes that the team needs to have more fun.

"Our most recent strategy is having fun, and hoping that it will make us play better," said Krage.

However, Krage doesn't want the team to reserve all the fun for the court. He hopes that the team can bond outside of the gym.

"Steve and I are trying to do the same team bonding things like we did last year," said Krage. "This year, we're thinking maybe paintballing."

The Wildcats rally against the Wheaton North Falcons on Thursday in Bishop Gym at 6 p.m..



Photo by Alex Lima

Sophomore Rachel Thomas charges along the sideline, avoiding opponents at the game against the Glenbard East.

# Middle of the road

Girls working hard to have season immortalized in gym

By Alex Lima  
Reporter

Starting the season with four wins, three losses, and two ties, the girls soccer team is on pace to keep its season goal of putting a plaque up on the wall of Bishop Gym next to the girl soccer player.

According to senior captain Kristen Day, the goal is still within reach.

"We are really determined to accomplish our goal," said Day. "We've worked harder than ever."

The lady Wildcats lost a game against division rival Wheaton Warrenville South but defeated the other divi-

sion rival Glenbard North, keeping hopes of being one of the top teams in the DVC.

After a string of crucial losses against Wheaton North, and Hinsdale Central, the girls worked hard to turn things around.

## 4-4-2

"When we step off the field we forget about the game and concentrate on what we did wrong to improve," said Day.

Improve the girls did, as the girls got back to their winning ways as they defeated Glenbard East on April 23.

Sophomore Meagan Radloff used her speed to her

advantage as she sped past Glenbard East's defenders to score.

Minutes after scoring Radloff scored her second goal to give the lady Wildcats the 2-0 lead. The girls went on to score two more goals and won the game 4-1.

"We're trying to play one more game than we did last year," said Day. "This will be done with our hard work and determination."

Thursday the girls play West Aurora at West Aurora beginning at 6:30 p.m. The next home game is Monday when the lady Wildcats go up against Downers Grove North at 6:30 p.m.

# Spring in their step: High expectations for outdoor season

By Payton Bayless  
Reporter

Winter has ended, allowing the track season to leave the indoors, and head into the cool spring air.

With one runner placing in the top six at the indoor state meet, the boys outdoor track team is steadily making its way to state again. The team and coaches say that they even prefer the outdoor season.

"Indoor was for training, getting the guys in shape, and giving the boys a taste of what is to come, but outdoor has better turns, more space, and we get to wear spikes," said head coach Paul McLeland.

Several stand-out members, including senior captains Zach Mowen, who was injured throughout the indoor season, and Kyle Nichol, seniors Doug and Brian Mateas,

and junior pole vaulter Matt Kubik, will play an important role in the events the team hopes to qualify for state in.

Motivation to compete comes from many different sources.

"The biggest part of motivation is to not let yourself get discouraged in competition, but to look forward and always end on a good note," said Kubik.

Also having one member qualify for state, the girls outdoor track team is fighting its way towards the top.

"Many of [the girls] are finding that they are getting healthier and getting better times at the meets," said head coach George Petmezas.

Among the stand-outs on the team are sophomores Annette Eichenberger and Karlie Becker who will help lead the team to state.

"We're definitely hop-

ing for at least one person to qualify for state, but having more than one would be great," said freshman mile runner Kelsey Sayner.

Though it is an individual sport, the team does a lot of team bonding during practices and the coaches make sure to remind all the athletes that they are competing for a team victory at the end, said Petmezas.

Always striving for improvement, the two teams will keep pushing towards the title of DVC champ.

"It's very hard to compete against schools with triple the amount of members, but anything is possible," said Petmezas.

The boys team will compete against Waubonsie on Saturday at 10 a.m. The girls will face Wheaton Warrenville South for their DVC meet May 7 at 4:30 p.m.

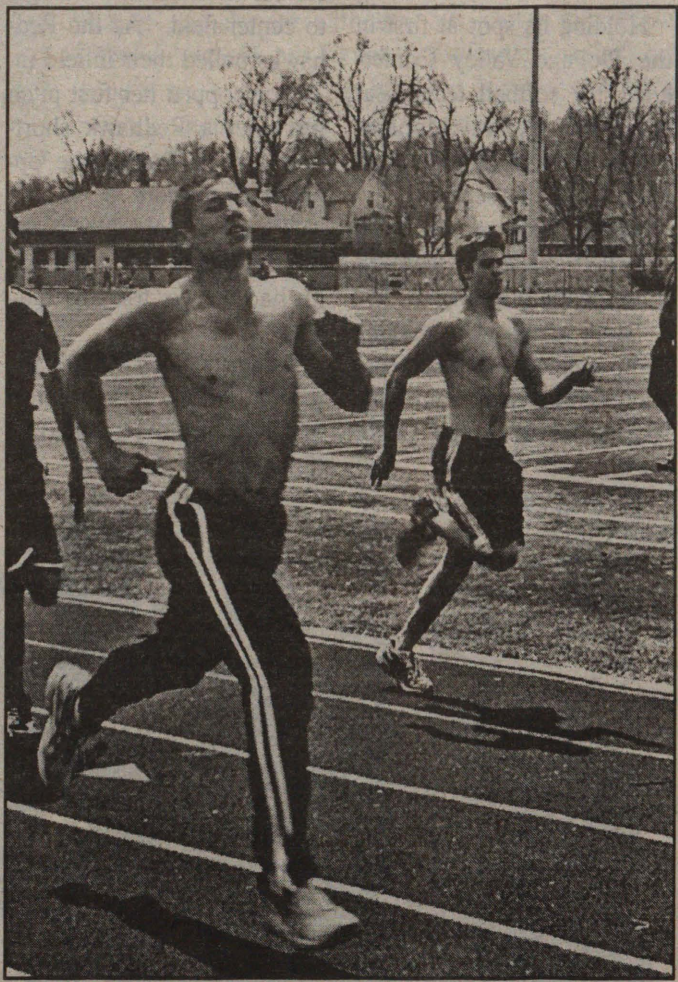


Photo by Jacob Wucka

Seniors Alex Pirela (left) and Zach Mowen warm up by running straight-aways as they prepare for the meet at Glenbard South on Friday.



# Sticking together through losses

By Megan Hernbroth  
Features Editor

## 0-10

### *Zero wins puts a damper on team morale*

After a string of heavy losses, the boys lacrosse team looks to practices as its main hope for success this season.

The team faced Naperville Central on Tuesday, and lost by a devastating score of 11-1.

Winless so far, the team has lost ten games including 20-2 against Marian Catholic and 15-7 against Geneva.

On April 21, the team had another game against Geneva, but the game was cancelled due to rain.

Against Waubonsie Valley on April 23, the team lost 15-1 as both offense and defense lost their footing.

Before the Marian and Geneva losses, the team had only a few practices. Some of the players blame the heavy scoring for the opposition on the lack of a sturdy defense as a team.

"We have a lot of young, inexperienced guys on varsity defense," said junior and varsity captain Blake Zampano, "They really try to live up to varsity and play well."

With more practices, the team hopes to turn its luck



Photo by Megan Hernbroth

Sophomore RJ Kobringer (right) rushes aside an opponent at West Chicago's game against Waubonsie on April 23.

around.

"We need a lot more practice," said sophomore varsity player Darrek Sams. "If we don't try as hard, there's no way we'll be able to win any-

thing."

On April 18-19, the team hosted the Sticks and Stones tournament at West Chicago Middle School.

With a lack of scoring, the

team lost all five matches. A few games ended without a Wildcat score.

"We had a few points, but overall it definitely wasn't a good tournament," said

Sams.

As a team, however, bonds are closer than they have been in previous years.

"We get along a lot better than we did last year," said Sams. "We have a better group and we work together a lot better."

Varsity head coach Dave Pater also has hopes for the season, but insists that practice is the best possible way to improve the team.

"The best possible way would be to have the guys play the game well and practice more," said Pater.

Practices incorporate game situations with a base of team work.

"They focus on a lot of team work and offense and defense situations during practice," said Pater.

With hopes of success for the season, some players wish they were more acknowledged by the school as a legitimate after-school activity.

"I definitely think we should be part of the school's athletics," said Sams. "It would also be really cool to play on the football field or have our own lacrosse field at the actual high school instead of at the middle school."

## Back & Forth Racket games

### Tennis

By Evan Morgan  
Reporter

With a total of seven matches under its belt, the boys tennis team strives onward with the goal of state qualifiers in sight.

This year's specialty is in doubles matches with senior captains Jason Foreman and Jozef Pavnica. They have both played tennis for all four years of high school and are planning on making this year stand out.

"Hopefully this year we would like to go to state and win DVC. If we make it to state I would like to see us go at least top 10 in state," said Foreman.

So far, Foreman and Pavnica are on track to reaching their goal of state. The pair took first place in the tournament versus Lisle, Montini, and South Elgin.

"Jason and I are undefeated at 4-0, so I think that we have a good chance at state," said senior captain Pavnica.

Players said that one factor playing into the team's improved performance from last year is the off-sea-

son coaching and practices over the winter. The players were encouraged to play over the summer and take part in the seminars run by former WeGo player and professional Gregg Van Dine.

"[Van Dine's] coaching greatly helped improve our tennis skills and knowledge of the game," said junior Mike Russo.

Pavnica said that he is content with the team that he is leading this year.

"Of my four years playing [for the high school team], this is the strongest team that I've been on," said Pavnica.

Although it is only midway through the season, the team is already starting to focus on team and individual goals for the end of the season.

"We are hoping to finish in the middle of the DVC along with winning a few matches and placing well in the tournaments we have," said Russo.

The team takes on Glenbard North, Thursday at 4:30 p.m. on the tennis courts.

### Badminton

By Alexis Hosticka  
Perspectives Editor

The girls badminton team is slowly making a comeback from last year's streak of losses with a record of 4-5 as they work hard in practice to improve from previous seasons.

Senior and varsity co-captain Lia Smith sees the progress from last year, but knows that the team can keep working to get better.

"Our scores are improving a little, but not an incredible amount, just enough to show improvement," said Smith. "We did really well in preseason, but the DVC is a hard conference."

One of the key reasons that Smith believes the DVC is such a difficult conference to compete in is due to many girls from other school playing club badminton year round, whereas their badminton season lasts only about two months.

Another of the four captains, senior Jamie Roman, thinks that head coach Bang Nguyen has

been pressing the team harder this year, helping them to become more aggressive.

"Our coach has been pushing us a lot harder, and even though people may not like it, [the work] is showing," said Roman. "We're working really hard."

The third captain, senior Yessenia Geromini, has been on the team since her freshman year and can see the improvement since then.

"We came in a lot stronger this year," said Geromini. "We have more skills this year than other years, and it shows."

Nguyen thinks that the girls have realized that they need to step up their effort in practice in order to really improve.

"I think we are going to have to step up our work ethic in our practices to achieve what we need to," said Nguyen. "It's harder than some other teams because we have such a short season and spring break right in the middle."

The next varsity match will be on Thursday at Glenbard East at 4:30 p.m.



# West Chicago's Superfan

By Greg Vodicka  
Editor in Chief

It's a sunny Saturday afternoon in April. The team is warming up on the diamond, while the opponent's bus pulls up. With the smell of grilled hot dogs and fresh cut grass, it is a perfect day for a ball game.

"Let's go Wildcats!" Superfan Dan Rakow shouts from the top of the bleachers at the park, his home away from home.

After over 20 years of religious attendance to Community High School sporting events, Dan is widely recognized as a WeGo superfan.

"[Dan] just loves to be part of the community, and the games give him a place to talk to all the people he meets," said Dan's mother Eldra Rakow.

After being diagnosed with autism at 8, Dan left public school and joined the Little Friends school out of Naperville. However, he did receive a diploma from Community High School.

"[Dan] likes things over and over again, and it takes him awhile to adapt to new things," said Eldra.

Being able to retain and recall information is a quality Dan has.

"Dan remembers everything. If you ever have trouble remembering something, just ask Dan," said Eldra.

Discovering his love for sporting events when he was still a teenager attending high school football games, at 44, Dan still rarely misses a home game.

"He tries to attend as many home games as he can," said Eldra. "He fits his life around the schedule."

Known for his positive attitude no matter what the outcome of the game, Dan rarely gets discouraged after a loss.

"He is a very positive cheerer and optimistic even when the team is struggling," said Eldra.

After a tough loss, Eldra said that Dan will come home and tell her that next time the team plays they will win.

"[Dan] goes to the games whether we win or lose," said Eldra.

Admitting softball season is his favorite, Dan said that he started attending softball games regularly after having several friends who played on the varsity team. These games have shown to be his favorite because of the wide array of friends that he's made.

"Whenever I bump into past players I always will say hi," said Dan

According to Eldra, Dan has made tons of friends over the years, and he regularly sits with certain families. Often Dan is approached by other fans due to his reputation as WeGo's number one fan.

"People find out who I am and then will talk to me at the games," said Dan.

Besides community members and students, Dan also has built relationships with staff such as coach Paul McLeland. Dan met McLeland through McLeland announcing basketball games.

Basketball season is especially important to Dan because in the summer he has plenty of opportunities to see his friends at summer events or Turtle Splash Water Park.

During the winter, he relies on the games to keep in touch with the community.

In addition to football and softball games, Dan said he has been to several baseball games and also a few track meets.

A September football game against Wheaton Warrenville South in 2004 was Dan's most fond memory of a game.

"The Poms dedicated a dance performance to me," said Dan. "They did a dance to the song 'This is your Night,' by Amber, because they knew I loved that song."

After a conference title last softball season, Dan now cheers the team on in hopes of another title.

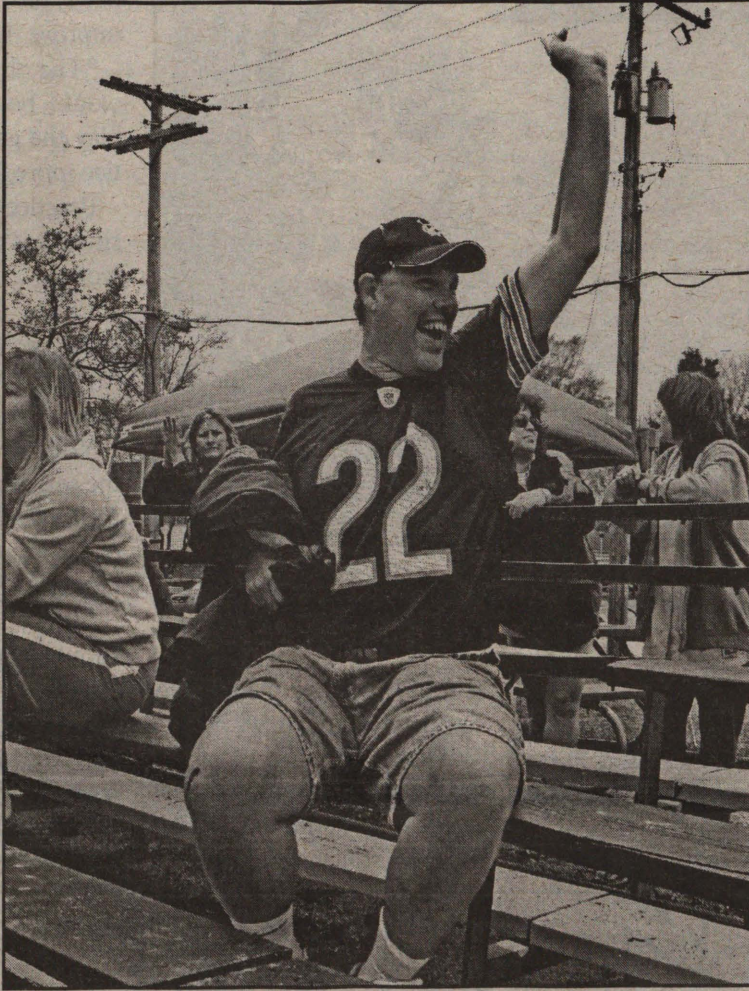


Photo by Jacob Wucka

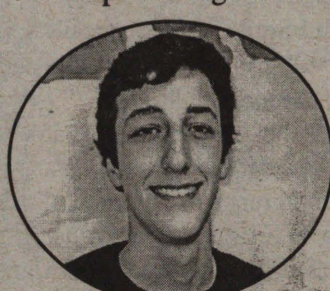
Dan Rakow tries to attend all of softball's home games. At Saturday's game against Batavia, Dan cheers after the team won 9-3.

## How does Dan affect the atmosphere at games?



Senior Varsity Softball Player  
**Courtney Macko**

"Even hearing him when I'm on the bench makes me want to cheer harder because of how hard he's cheering."



Senior Squad Leader  
**Blaine Flanagan**

"Dan is always happy, and his happiness brushes off on everyone else and motivates everyone on the team."



Softball Head Coach  
**Emily Johnson**

"It's always good to hear a familiar, encouraging voice from the stands. It's very comforting."

## Sending players mixed messages

The number one objective teams and coaches work towards is improvement. Building a competitive team or improving a team starts in the off-season. Any athlete would agree that the best athletes always find a way to improve.

While much improvement can happen during the season, the off-season is a time that should be devoted to improvement and preparation.

When searching for the missing link to make the Wildcats successful, the answer is right under our noses.

While expensive uniforms, pictures in the halls, and free hot dogs at the ballpark are funded through the athletic budget and with money from the Booster Club, more serious expenses are being neglected.

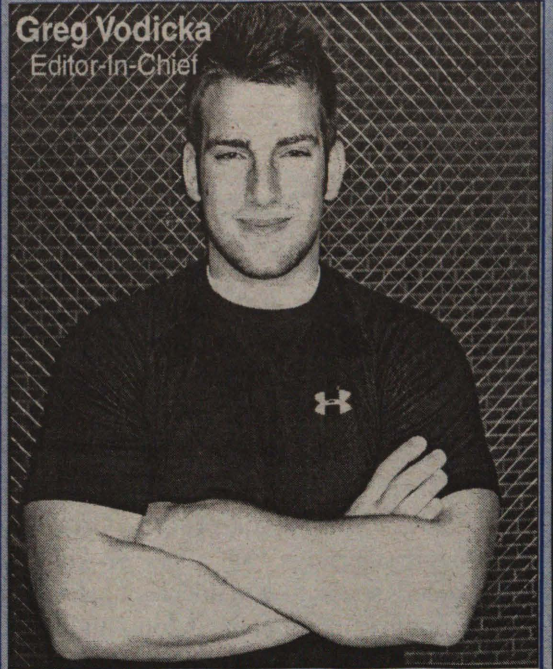
Most recently, the weight room has had trouble finding someone to supervise athletes and students work out after school.

I would rather see athletic funds pay a supervisor rather than purchase stickers that identify the administration office, or I would rather see new equipment purchased to upgrade off-season programs rather than framing more pictures of teams that had disappointing seasons.

As athletes are told they need to work out in the off-season they hit a road block when they are not allowed access to the weight room certain days of the week. Other days, coaches who are monitoring the room ask them to leave due to prior commitments.

We are sending mixed messages to athletes who want to prepare for the season by telling them to work out, then turning around and sending them away due to lack of funds.

In no way are the coaches at fault. With an already undersized coaching staff, it is too much to ask the few coached who do not have other



Greg Vodicka  
Editor-in-Chief

responsibilities to give up their time to volunteer five days a week for upwards of seven months.

Having a paid supervisor on staff would benefit all teams.

Getting athletes in the weight room should not be a difficult task, but it is, especially at the lower levels.

One of coaches' main goals is to simply get kids to workout. Who ends up showing these kids how to work out properly? Who monitors their progress and helps them develop and grow?

We cannot expect this out of every athlete, and with a supervisor, this out of reach expectation becomes a reality.

Let's keep this sanctuary's doors open and offer something Wildcats have not committed to trying yet. What do we have to lose: An administrative memorial or free hot dog day at the ballpark?