

“ Seeing this unrealistic presentation of life over and over as we scroll through our newsfeeds has its repercussions.” P. 5
-Nora Charles

“ Coach Dunham wanted to take the track team to new heights: winning the DCSAA ” P. 12
-Isaac Frumkin

“ Back in the day it wasn't about fame or who you was...” P. 14
-Yung Gleesh



Woodrow Wilson High School THE BEACON

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YUNG GLEESH

Interviewed by
Monet Jones



A giant crowd of students descended on The Beacon office when Rapper Yung Gleesh came to Wilson for an interview with The Beacon's Monet Jones. Gleesh, 23, grew up on 18th and Monroe in Northeast DC and attended Wilson. He never envisioned himself where he is today, with videos on MTV, bookings going for \$10,000, and a current national tour. A former congo player in the DC gogo band T.O.B., Yung Gleesh never even expected to start rapping. He never gave up despite going unnoticed for work. In the interview (on page 14) he said that in DC we are "crabs in a barrel," all clawing each other just trying to save ourselves. Nonetheless, he is humble and he is real. He deserves fame because he represents DC in a way most celebrities that made it don't, using words like "moe" and "kill" in his music. He is not A-list yet, but there is no doubt Yung Gleesh will put DC on the map. Find out more about Gleesh on monettjones.tumblr.com and on thewilsonbeacon.com.

cont. pg 14



Cartoon By Amanda Kartano

Eating Disorders Cause Education to Suffer

Ellie Melick
Web Style Editor

This year's National Eating Disorders Awareness Week was February 22 through 28, and its goal was to educate the public on the often misunderstood illnesses.

The theme of this year's Awareness Week, which is being organized by The National Eating Disorder Association (NEDA), is "I Had No Idea," the main focus being on "early intervention and recognizing the diverse experiences of people personally affected by disordered eating," according to NEDA's website.

In the U.S., up to 24 million people of all ages and genders have at some point suffered from an eating disorder, according to NEDA. Anorexia Nervosa is the third most common chronic illness among

adolescents, with a mortality rate 12 times higher than any other cause of death in females aged 12-24. Despite how common they are, there is still a widespread misunderstanding regarding eating disorders.

"Eating Disorder" is a blanket term for all instances of disordered eating. There are several specific diagnoses of eating disorders, including Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, Binge Eating Disorder, and Other Specified Feeding or Eating Disorder (OSFED), among other less common ones. Each illness has a defining set of characteristics and requires different approaches to treatment. But no matter what particular eating disorder someone has, if they are a student, they are likely to see their education suffer.

When dealing with an

CONT. ON PG 2

Wall-E Goes to Mexico

Danielle Breslow
Tara Bretzfelder
Staff Writer, Contributor

Thirteen Wilson students will travel to Mexico City to compete in the FIRST Mexico City regional robotics competition.

According to physics teacher Angela Benjamin, the team's coach since 2009, Wilson's robotics team is the only team from the United States that is going. "FIRST [For Inspiration and Recognition of Student Technology] Robotics is an acronym for inspiring students in STEM education," says Benjamin. "We have huge international competitions."

The Wilson team usually competes in the DC regional and the Chesapeake regional competitions, but this year they have added the Mexico competition.

The competition in Mexico will have different objectives than their previous competitions. "This year we don't really like the goal," said Benjamin. Instead of having a robot that can throw a frisbee or a ball, the overall goal of the competition this year is to build a robot that can move crates, and stack them on top of each other. "It's like a factory game,"

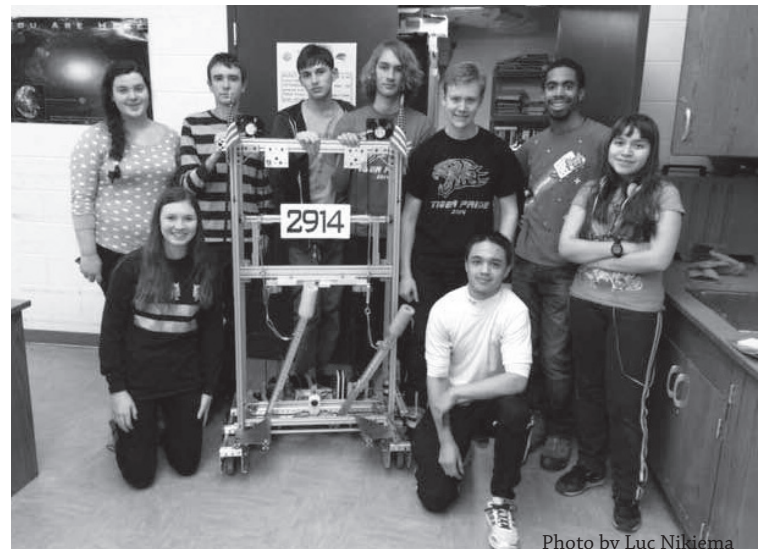


Photo by Luc Nikiema

HEAVY METAL - Thirteen members from Wilson's Robotics team will be headed to Mexico City to be a part of the FIRST Mexico City competition. This is the teams first time out of the country for competition.

she says.

They are currently working on a robot that can move more than one crate at a time. The team will have to take the robot to Mexico and will have a pit crew that will be modifying it the whole time.

The event has four-minute rounds where the team has to control the robot on the computer and complete the goal. For at least one round, junior Tobias Shapinsky will be operating the robot. "I've programmed the robot and built the pneumatic system, with the

help of others, and I'm the lead programmer," he said.

Senior Colin Escribano said what he is most excited about going into the trip is "to travel and see different monuments that they have."

"I've been on the team since ninth grade, this is my fourth year. I'm excited to go to Mexico," senior Sebastian Quilter said.

Wilson's Robotics team is looking forward to the adventure and is preparing to take home the gold! •

BÉISBOL - The boys baseball team, along with a few members of the Wilson community, travelled to the Dominican Republic from February 10 to 16 to begin their season. They played nine games in five days against local teams, some featuring minor league players. However, parts of the trip were spent working with local kids where the team hosted a baseball clinic for them. Read more on page 11.



Photo Courtesy of Henry Cohen

NEDA Focuses on Early Intervention

FROM PG 1

eating disorder, school slips down the list of priorities, and it becomes harder to focus on work. The illness always comes first; whether you're in treatment or still stuck in its grips, everything else takes a backseat in your life.

One recovering anorectic describes how, prior to medical treatment, she was in "a constant state of feeling physically crappy...which is not a very fun or efficient way to go through high school." The current Walt Whitman senior, who does not wish to be identified, missed so much school due to physical complications, as well as two months spent in inpatient treatment, that she may not be able to graduate with her classmates this June.

"There's no way you can make up two months of work and try to get used to living at home and keep up treatment at the same time," she explains. "In which case I either have to get my credits over the summer or just do senior year all over again."

Because of the stigma associated with eating disorders, some patients prefer to keep their illness a secret, even from teachers. "I'd miss a lot of class for doctor's appointments, or

if I was too sick," said a former Bulimict, now fully recovered and in her freshman year of college. "Most teachers were understanding...not asking a lot of questions, letting me make up work. But one teacher was awful about it. She demanded explanations," she said, "and when I finally told her what was going on, she had zero sympathy."

One goal of this year's Awareness Week is to combat the false perception that eating disorders aren't real illnesses, or not as serious as strictly physical illnesses. Many of people with eating disorders choose to keep their condition private because they worry they'll encounter judgment if they don't.

NEDA hopes that by raising awareness, people suffering from eating disorders won't have to encounter ignorance and judgment on top of everything else. With this year's "I Had No Idea" theme, extra focus is being placed on eating disorder education, so that if someone is developing a problem, they can be recognized as struggling and receive earlier intervention. The Whitman senior agrees that if she'd started treatment earlier, she'd probably be graduating this June. But she's thankful to be on the road to health, saying it is "better to stay an extra year in school than be sick." •

Q&A With Mr. Bargeman

By Sophie ReVeal and Greg Kopetsky

Q: What are your main goals as interim principal at Wilson?

A: Well, we have the goals that they've given me, and that is ninth grade promotion rate. So what we're doing about ninth grade promotion rate for as far as next year's concerned, because I'm in charge of putting the plan together for next year, we're bringing back the Ninth Grade Academy because we want to make sure we are focusing on the ninth grade. We're looking at the data of ninth grade and we're looking at the students, and if students fall behind we want to make sure we put some strategies in place for them to make sure they're successful.

Q: How do you feel about the changes at Wilson with the absence of Cahall?

A: I think we are moving in the right direction. They have given me Mr. Cahall's goals and told me, "These are now your goals and you have to achieve those goals."

Q: Like you've gotten comments from parents and administration?

A: Yes, a lot of people have known I've been here for a while. I've been at Wilson for 14 years and they sort of feel comfortable with me.

Q: Do you think this change was for the greater good of the Wilson community?

A: I don't know. I don't know all of the details behind all of why Mr. Cahall was released.

Q: Who informed you of the change and how have they been keeping you updated with information?

A: They called me over the winter break and asked me would I be interim because Mr. Cahall was leaving and so my boss, Dan Shea, has been keeping me abreast on what I need to do in the principal job.

Q: Have you kept in touch with Cahall?

A: I spoke to him this past weekend. He's telling me he has a new job, he's feeling less stressed.

Q: What kind of principal does Wilson need right now?

A: A principal that connects with the students and the parents. A principal who is focused on improving the school and a principal who can bring in community organizations.

Q: What are your future plans, as in applying for the job again?

A: I do want to be a principal, I plan on applying, but I also plan on - if there's something else out there for me, any other principal jobs. But Wilson might be my number one choice. I've been assistant principal for six years so I think the time is kind of good.

Q: What are your personal opinions and what do you think happened with Cahall? Based on everything that has been reported on and what you've heard, is there something you think people don't know?

A: What they tell me is, it's a personnel matter and I can't discuss it. •

TO FIND OUT ABOUT THE BARGE'S MYSTERIOUS PAST, THOUGHTS ON TOMATO SANDWICHES, AND THE REDSKINS, READ THE FULL TEXT OF THE INTERVIEW AT THEWILSONBEACON.COM.



Photo by Elena Remez

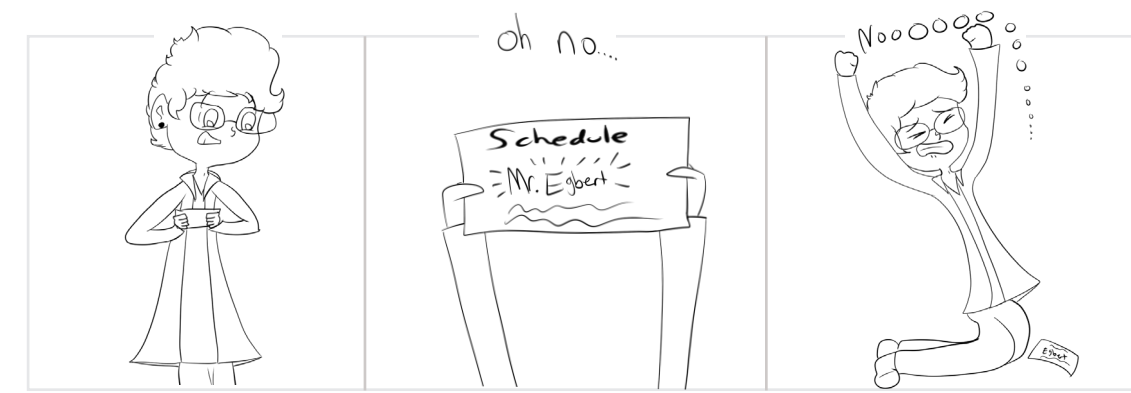
Student Dissatisfaction Disregarded in Teacher Evaluations

Emma Buzbee
Web News Editor

Anticipation quickly turns to disappointment and frustration when a student gets their new school schedule in late summer and sees the name they've been dreading: that terrible teacher cursed by so many of their friends. The only glimmer of hope for the student is to switch out of the class as soon as possible to avoid a guaranteed year of misery. This is a common quandary at Wilson, where teachers can't be fired because of student dissatisfaction.

There are some teachers whose classes students drop in droves every year. Assistant Principal Tennille Bowser acknowledged that there are times when large numbers of students leave a class. The administration will then "address it with the teacher and we try to work with the instructional coaches to find out what is happening in that classroom that so many students don't feel successful in that space."

Occasionally the administration has to restrict how many students can leave. Bowser explained that this is: "because it isn't fair to other teachers to increase their caseload because students aren't successful in another teacher's



Cartoon by XiXi Simmons

class."

Junior Ingrid Fekete, who switched out of her math class at the start of the year, explains, "I had the same bad math teacher since freshman year and I got [them] again this year." Fekete says her counselor, Pamela Bright, was not surprised that she did not like her teacher because Bright said she often speaks with students who want to switch out of the class. However, Fekete said that this year "I was the only one who got to [switch out]." Fekete's teacher had also been unpopular during Fekete's freshman year; students had switched out of the class then as well.

A Wilson student who wishes to remain anonymous attempted to switch out of one teacher's class at the start of the year. "I heard a lot of stories from other kids who said her class would be the most

difficult thing I would ever do, impossible to succeed." The student's counselor ultimately told the student they could switch out, but it would be a long process. The student believes, "They didn't want me to switch out because so many kids wanted to in the class before me. There were 30 students, now only about 20 show up."

Though these teachers are unpopular among students, many have been at Wilson for multiple years. Teacher termination is based on a complex evaluation system that gives teachers an overall score of one to four. "Teachers are evaluated based on nine standards of their IMPACT and those standards are [generally] based on rigorous instruction and engagement with students. That's I believe 75 percent," Bowser said "Then there is something called TASK, Teacher

Assessed Student Performance, and that's 10 percent." Teachers pick an assignment to submit as their TASK, such as their students' midterms, and then the scores of the students will demonstrate whether the teacher was effective over the that semester.

The final, most personalized category, is Commitment to School Community (CSC). Interim Principal Gregory Bargeman said an example of CSC could be "the number of students passing the teacher's class. If less than 80 percent are passing, then the teacher could be downgraded on the evaluation scale."

If a teacher has a 2.0 evaluation score or below for two years in a row, they are eligible to be terminated. However, the principal of the school has the power to argue on behalf of the teacher. According

to Bargeman, "If they fall below 2.0, then the principal could make the argument to keep the teacher." Bowser said a principal may vouch for a teacher if they believe he or she still has potential: "Just like [students] have rough years, sometimes teachers have difficult case loads. The principal may write that in a statement to Central Office, but in the end of the day the Central Office can decide, 'We accept that or not.'"

In more extreme cases, other methods are used for teacher termination. If a teacher has engaged in some level of inappropriateness with a student, such as an inappropriate comment, Bowser explained that, "we can follow up with progressive discipline for the teacher by writing them up. That could be a pathway that could lead to their termination, outside of the IMPACT evaluation."

Although administrators are aware that some teachers have large numbers of students who attempt to switch out of their class, student satisfaction with teachers does not factor into teacher termination. "There's been some talk about using [student satisfaction] as a factor in evaluations," Bowser said, "but right now that does not play a role in evaluations." •

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Our mission is to provide an accurate representation of the diverse views, opinions, and concerns of the students of Wilson High School. We aim to serve as the voice of the students. Through responsible, ethical journalistic practices, we strive to provide thorough, reliable news coverage of issues relevant to Wilson.

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The Beacon is a public forum created for the purpose of expressing the views of and providing information to the Wilson student body. Thank you for reading *The Beacon*.

Give New Parents More Time Off

Elias Benda

Opinions Editor

Physics teacher Patrick O'Steen, always punctual and present, missed three weeks of classes last advisory. He was not sick, there was no death in his family, and he was not taking a personal vacation. O'Steen was caring for his newborn child, and his three sleepless weeks of changing diapers and feeding his son were unpaid.

O'Steen is not unlike many other parents in the U.S. We are the only developed country in the world to not offer national paid parental leave, according to the Huffington Post. Only 12 percent of private employees in the United States are covered for paid family leave, meaning the vast majority of the workforce are forced to take unpaid or sick leave in the event of the birth of a child.

This fact reflects a larger problem in the American mentality towards workers. As opposed to most European countries, where it is the explicit responsibility of the government and employers to care for their employees needs, the United States allows the burden to fall on its workforce. The same goes for health care: neither the government nor employers are obliged to provide insurance or medical coverage for their workers.

The argument for paid family leave is that employers should take responsibility for the wellbeing of their employees and their families. There has been back and forth between progressives and conservatives in U.S. politics for years, with the latter insisting that such rules would be harmful to business and thwart economic growth.

The opposite is the case. Paid leave would ensure families that cannot afford to take unpaid time off work are able to care for their children, and encourage women to join the workforce knowing they can return to their jobs if they choose to have children. It is important for people to not fear consequences of having children, and to know that their employer offers a constant and secure source of income.

DC is making progress, although O'Steen just missed his chance. On January 27, 2015, the DC Department of Human Resources extended paid family leave of up to eight weeks to all city workers. Previously the DC Family Medical Leave Act (DC FMLA) made eligible employers give employees up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for the birth of a child. The new family leave policy puts DC among only three states – California, New Jersey, and Rhode Island – to offer paid family leave.



Photo Courtesy of Patrick O'Steen

It is a shame that O'Steen was not able to take advantage of the new DC FMLA changes, but it is good that DC is implementing measures to correct a problem that has existed for far too long. Equally important, if not more so, is the fact that 12 weeks does not sufficiently cover the amount of time a parent needs to spend with a newborn.

The change to the DC FMLA is a good start, but it isn't nearly enough to provide parents the time and resources that they and DC children deserve. The 365 days offered by the UK and Australia make sense, erasing the need for expensive day care and allowing the parent-child bonding so important for infant development. It is good that DC has made steps ahead of the rest of the country, but it sadly seems to be a case of too little. •

New Principal Must Meet Certain Criteria

By The Beacon Staff

This February, Wilson students and parents voted for parent members of the Principal Selection Committee, who will be part of the interview process for potential principals. We hope that the principal selection process will be as transparent as DCPS's responses surrounding former principal Pete Cahall's termination were secretive.

Since Wilson students have not been invited to offer input into the process, we have outlined here our ideas about the vital qualities of an effective principal.

The most important quality a Wilson principal can have is balance. Wilson is a study in contrasts, from racial divides to our many academies to the division between extracurriculars and academics. Cahall's strengths often played to one side of the teacher-student division. He formed strong connections with students of all backgrounds – but sometimes at the cost of relationships with staff, as we found in our investigation of his termination. Wilson needs a principal who is there for students, but also understands and works closely with educators.

This type of principal-teacher relationship requires a principal who has an academic background as opposed to one

that is solely administrative. Cahall was great with students because that was what he knew best – during his career he moved through the ranks of gym teacher to administrator without extensive time in a purely educational position. An ideal principal would have spent time studying education or teaching, thereby being equipped to forge productive relationships with teachers and understand their unique concerns.

Supporting Wilson's diverse student body also requires an understanding of our culture. A good principal must respect the values and beliefs of students, which can be hard when those beliefs conflict with the official views of the school system.

Many students remember the 2012 Turkey Bowl, when the Wilson football team was disqualified because of the ineligibility of one player. Instead of going with the school system's decision, Cahall fought for the students' right to play. Though Wilson was banned from competing in that year's championships, we gained something possibly more important: the feeling that we had a principal who was on our side.

Another important set of skills are transparency and communication. Both are qualities that DCPS and Wilson

administration have lacked in recent history, from the school system's refusal to disclose information about Cahall's termination to the controversy surrounding this year's Homecoming Court. A good principal must make decisions using such clear judgement that he or she is willing to share them with the entire Wilson community.

Future Wilson principals should also take a page from Cahall's book on the issue of free speech. School administrations in the U.S. have the legal right to prior review – being able to preview a newspaper before publication – but Cahall never exercised it. He had no qualms with hauling Beacon staff into his office when we published things he disagreed with, but he also seemed to grasp the importance of student voices – the fact that we need somewhere to express our views without restriction from the administration. We hope that the Principal Selection Committee also understands the importance of a free student press.

No matter how qualified you are, being the principal of a large urban high school is a balancing act. It is crucial that our next principal caters to all of the needs of the Wilson community. •

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- 4 Tiger Explores New Land: Wilson Versus High School in Ghana

Ellice Ellis
Junior Editor

Being in high school in Ghana, and a boarding school at that, is basically the last thing I ever thought I'd be doing for my junior year. I never pictured being told the only student bathroom was an abandoned dorm, or that there would be monkeys swinging about in trees distracting me from my schoolwork and teasing me with their freedom while I sit up straight for nine hours a day on a hard, back-problem-causing wooden seat.

Despite the obvious differences, like my school being smack in the middle of the jungle, and me being the only person in school with hair, it's fascinating that school is pretty much the same: stressful. My school day starts at 7 a.m. and ends at 3:10 p.m., and during this time I learn more about Ghanaian culture than I do

about any of the ten subjects I take.

The textbooks and my senior schoolmates' notes have become my academic bible here in Ghana. I've embraced the popular phrase "learn hard," which is basically any teacher's way of saying, "I'm going to dictate you a summary of what we are supposed to learn this term and the rest is up to you." Rote memorization is what I have become accustomed to – that and being asked random questions on my exams about material that I have no memory of learning. I miss Socratic seminars, essays, and all the freedom I had in the U.S. as a student. In the midst of all my frustrations with Ghanaian school, I find myself, every now and then, dreaming of Wilson.

"I hate Wilson" was a popular phrase of mine before I embarked on my exchange to Ghana. It wasn't specifically

my teachers, the students, the crowded hallways, or the fact that the metal detectors never worked, it was a combination of these and much more, which any high schooler has to deal with. But now I know the real meaning of "You don't know what you've got until it's gone."

When I first started school in Ghana, I had hope. "It's gonna get better" is what I would say to myself. I approached the situation by describing it as a "me problem." I was always waiting for something exciting to happen in class, but no, for the past six months things have pretty much been dull when it comes to my school lessons. It didn't take me more than two months to realize that my favorite parts of school were the hours I got to talk to my classmates and sit in the corner of the school's library reading by myself.

Recently at my mid-

stay orientation, one of the volunteers working with my program told me and the other academically-frustrated exchange students that the "best" schools in Ghana are the ones where the teachers show up about three times a week. And now I know this to be true. The campus of disconnected concrete buildings, also known as Ghana National College, was constantly praised by all the Ghanaians I encountered before my exchange. And now every time I find myself in the middle of the school day taking a two-hour nap, I curse them for their lies.

You may conclude that I hate school in Ghana, but that isn't 100 percent true. It may seem like I want to hop on the next plane home, or that this school year has been a waste academically. But I learn more about Ghanaian culture every day at the school, and that is one

of my biggest victories.

I pat myself on the back for being able to greet my classmates in three of the local languages and for getting them to read "Gone Girl" – despite the fact that I did terribly on my agriculture exam last week. I've learned to value the education that has been given to me through more than just reading a textbook but also by discussing and analyzing the world around me.

Ghanaian school and Ghana itself have taught me more than any textbook or lecture ever could. I've learned that the grass is not necessarily greener on the other side; it's just different. When I get back to Wilson, I'll be wishing I was sitting at my wooden school desk in Ghana that has probably given me scoliosis – just like how right now, thousands of miles away in Ghana, I long to be walking the hallways of Wilson. •

Tenleytown Lacks Excitement



Sam Masling
Junior Editor

There's no way to sugarcoat it or beat around the bush – Tenleytown has become boring. For Deal sixth graders, Tenley represented the newfound freedom they got from finally becoming a middle schooler. No more walking to your friend's house while your respective babysitters chitchatted behind you. No more waiting for your mom to pick you up and drive you to your piano lesson. Now you had the opportunity to go where you wanted to go, with people you wanted to be with, without any intervention. To these wide-eyed sixth graders, Tenley was limitless with opportunity.

As the years went on, and Tenley stayed the same, you couldn't help but notice that things got repetitive. Going to the same places every day for three years isn't the most fun thing to do, but as it got worse and worse, you clung to that little bit of wide-eyed hope left in you, reminiscing about the awe-inspiring Tenley hangouts from sixth grade.

For those of you who have been Tenley-ites since day one, this regression of allure and attraction has been coming on for quite a while now. There's food, but there's food everywhere, and besides that, Tenley doesn't have much to offer. The most exciting thing to happen to Tenley recently was the implementation of electronic signs above the bus

stops. And even this brought little excitement, as people have been and will continue checking the WMATA app anyway.

During the first of couple months of hanging out in Tenley, whether going to grab a quick bite to eat, or lingering for hours on end, there was never not something to do. But as more time was spent there, and the same restaurants were visited over and over again, things got boring. With the constantly going-out-of-business restaurant across the street from the library, the mob of people at Chipotle, and the deceptively expensive meals at Z-Burger, nothing changed. And as new, more attractive places opened up across the city, our after-school adventures spread likewise.

As these winter months drag on, and temperatures drop, a brisk walk into Tenley seems much more appealing than taking a train downtown or waiting outside 15 minutes for a bus in order to go some place with more excitement. But while wandering around Tenley looking for something to do, a pit of dread fills your stomach as you recognize the futility of your goal. There's still nothing to do in Tenley.

For students living outside of AU Park and Chevy Chase, this has never been much of a problem. And lucky them. But for Tenley-ites, the general lack of non-edible attractions that Tenley has to offer is becoming increasingly boring. Years ago, right across the street from Hudson Trail Outfitters, there

was a pool hall/cafe named Babe's Billiards that ruled the scene. Not only did it serve breakfast until 3 a.m., but it had pool, darts, and foosball tables for all to enjoy. Something like this brings life into the commercial epicenter we call Tenley, but today, one has to travel to Dupont Circle to find something similar.

While there's no easy fix to make the area more interesting, the issue can certainly be viewed as beneficial. Wilson students are branching out, no longer being satisfied with what gets put right in front of them. Your classic AU kids can be found all over the city these days, from getting Shake Shack on Capitol Hill to playing soccer in Georgetown.

Of course, not everything in Tenley is boring and old. The ever-appealing late night meal from Steak and Egg is always delicious, and the sprawling fields at Fort Reno are often host sporting events for all to see. Also, the Fort Reno summer concerts bring hundreds of spectators and great music. While outdoor sports don't last the whole year and the summer concerts only go for a couple of weeks, Tenley still has a few interesting places and events that make it unique.

As the development of commercial Tenleytown continues to grow, the needs and wants of high schoolers as well as adults should be kept in mind to ensure the welcoming of all into the neighborhood. •

TOP 10 Movies About Wilson

1. American Pfeifer
2. 50 Shades of PDA
3. The Fault in Our DC STARS
4. The Hobbit: The Adventures of Sal Caccavale
5. Interseller: the Coupon Kid Story
6. Hood Boy
7. Guardians of the Hallway: Chronicles of Mark Martin
8. Into the Woods: the Wilderness of Ft. Reno
9. The Grand Seneca Motel
10. Word, Man: I Totally Agree

Open Your Eyes, There's No Harm in Lies!

Ellie Melick
Web Style Editor

As you may have heard, NBC News' former anchor, Brian Williams, has recently come under attack. Well, actually, the helicopter in front of him has come under attack. Well, actually, a helicopter in an entirely different fleet has come under attack, about 30 minutes before the chopper Williams was in flew over that airspace.

Much to my dismay, my man BriWi caught a lot of flack for his misremembering of a day he was reporting from Iraq, back in 2003. Even more to my dismay, people have been 'investigating' his 'lies' over the 'years'; for example, his 'description' of 'seeing' a 'dead body' after 'Hurricane Katrina', and so on and so forth.

I, for one, am appalled by these fruitless allegations. I consider Mr. Williams a close friend of mine, a father figure, if you will. He has personally mentored me throughout the years, and we've shared many a laugh over his charming anecdotes, from JFK's [1963] assassination to Pearl Harbor [1941]. It is an insult to me when people question the veracity of his claims, as he has greatly influenced me throughout my own lengthy

reporting career. I stand firmly in solidarity with Archbishop Williams, and to demonstrate my devotion, I'd like to engage you in a friendly game of Two Truths and a Lie.

As the name implies, I'm going to tell you three stories from my life, two of which are 100 percent word-for-word true, and one of which is a lie. It is up to you to identify the lie. I am doing this to demonstrate that every reporter becomes a victim of misremembering every once in a while, and when they do, it's really no big deal. What did a little inaccuracy ever do to hurt anybody?

1. I recorded a Snapchat video of Neil Armstrong planting the American flag on the surface of the moon then sent it to the Soviet Union and rubbed it in their face.

Now this is a moment I shall truly never forget. I felt such a powerful swell of patriotism that I might've lifted off the ground and gone floating into space, if it weren't for Buzz Aldrin standing by to protect me from the low gravity. When Neil, Buzz, and whoever that other guy was went over to marvel at the flag, I caught a vid of them on Snapchat and sent it to Leonid

Brezhnev, the then current leader of the USSR (he was my third best friend on Snapchat, nbd). He responded with a selfie from the Kremlin, and captioned it with the angry red face, the Russian flag, and some bomb emojis. He put a lot of bomb emojis, come to think of it.

2. I shared Limoncello with Leonardo Da Vinci while my brother posed as "Mona Lisa."

Yes, you read that right; the Mona Lisa is actually a dude. My older brother Steve, to be exact. We were at a little get-together at Leo's place, when Steve put on a dress and a wig, and was all, "Yo Leo I look great can you flick me up right quick?" Since cameras hadn't been invented yet (duh) the term "flick me up" referred to portrait painting. The old 'Nardo obliged, and I made sure our glasses were constantly filled while he worked. The whole thing took about ten or fifteen minutes, and none of us had any idea it would become the international sensation it is today. Of course, Steve didn't even live long enough to see the movie adaptation of Dan Brown's novel "The Da Vinci Code", but Leo and I still share a laugh about it every once in a while. Oh yeah, you want to

know what Great Hidden Secret lies within the Mona Lisa? In the lower lefthand corner, Leo drew a small penis, then covered it with a light coat of paint. Such a jokester.

3. Do you remember the Charlie Bit My Finger video? Yeah, that was me.

After years of keeping it a secret, I've finally decided to come clean: I am Charlie from Charlie Bit My Finger. My older brother, whose finger I bit, was the aforementioned Steve. We set the whole thing up one day with our parents, who happened to be extremely talented makeup artists. They made me into a baby (though Steve actually looked like that) and we did a few takes performing the Steven Spielberg-written script. Our parents later edited the video and posted it to Youtube. The next thing Steve and I knew, we were superstars! We couldn't bask in our stardom, though. Mom and Dad wanted to keep our role a secret, so some kids in England got to enjoy all the credit while Steve and I remained unknown and unappreciated. But hey, at least he got to be Mona Lisa.

Now after those three stories, do you think you know

which one was a lie? If you guessed #3, you're wrong! If you guessed #2, you're also wrong! And if you guessed #1, you are the most wrong of all!

All three those stories are true. I've had an incredible life, and my passion for sharing my own stories, along with others', sometimes, is greater than I can articulate. I wouldn't dare lie, exaggerate, or modify even the smallest detail. I know Brian Williams wouldn't either.

Okay, so a few details from my stories may not totally check out. But anything I've recalled incorrectly has simply and honestly been misremembered. The fog of memory obscures things from time to time, but that happens to everyone. Even to me. And even to Brian Williams.

So, folks, don't waste your time doubting and double-checking journalists' claims. If they do occasionally get things wrong, it's probably an honest mistake, and not at all a ploy to boost ratings or garner sympathy or heroize themselves or any combination of the three. Truthfulness isn't all that important to journalism, anyway. Just ask Brian Williams—he can tell you that himself. •

FEATURES

Through Sickness and Health but not High School

Nora Charles
Junior Editor

Since it was Valentine's Day, it seemed fitting to reflect on my marriage. Regrettably, I had forgotten who my wife was. Panic began to set in, but before long I realized that modern technology could help me figure this one out. I logged on to Facebook and checked my relationship status. I was married to a middle school friend whom I hadn't seen since our romantic eighth grade graduation ceremony.

Did three years of limited contact with one's wife constitute a good marriage? I pondered this. After about half an arduous second I decided it did not. I then faced what would become my reality: divorce.

Believe it or not, it was significantly easier to get divorced through Facebook than U.S. court. The process started and ended with clicking one of the relationship status options on the site. There were myriad options: "single," "in a relationship," "engaged," "in a civil union," "in a domestic partnership," "in an open relationship," "it's complicated," "separated," "divorced," and "widowed."

Breathing shaky, uneven breaths, I tapped "divorced."

"Changes will not appear in News Feed," Facebook alerted me. Excuse me, why not? Getting divorced was a pivotal moment in my life, but Facebook evidently did not care-- and it assumed my 891 friends felt the same way. To put it lightly, I was hurt.

Indignant, I toyed with the idea of selecting other relationship statuses, starting from the top of the list. It turns out that Facebook also refuses to display when one is separated, becomes single after being married, or is widowed.

These things are all deemed by our culture to be sad

and negative. Why does Facebook only want to display

"happy" things?

No one's life is all happy. But to someone who learns about their friends from checking Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or Snapchat, it might appear that way. People post smiling pictures from their beach vacations and lists of the colleges that accepted them, not their dull night of homework and disappointing rejection letters.

Seeing this unrealistic presentation of life over and over as we scroll through our newsfeeds has its repercussions. The University of Michigan published a study in 2013 that found that the more often people checked

Facebook, the worse they felt about their lives. This phenomenon can be attributed in part to the way social media facilitates and encourages social comparison. When Facebook refused to let my 'friends' see that I went through a heartbreaking divorce, it hurt them all as well. •

Graphic by Jane Martin



BLACKOUT MIXER TONIGHT

TICKETS \$10

At the time of this printing the "Blackout" Wilson mixer is scheduled to be held tonight in the atrium. After the idea of a school dance with Wilson and Walls fell through, student body president Jennifer Li suggested the school have a mixer where students from schools in the district, private and public, can purchase tickets.

The students from the other schools can either have a friend buy their ticket, which will be held at the door, or they can purchase their ticket upon arrival. Senior class president Sarah Marion came up with the theme of blackout, which "was inspired by how cool the seniors looked at the pep rally." She also added that most other themes are hard for students to follow in cold weather.

In preparation for the dance, the Student Government Association (SGA) has made posters, hired DJ Ricochet, and designed the tickets. The tickets for the mixer are only \$10, compared to the \$15 for homecoming tickets. Homecoming had black lights, glow sticks, and tables of food; the upcoming mixer will not have these features, lowering the cost.

According to Marion, the administration told the SGA the consequence for students who are caught under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be suspension. SGA faculty adviser Jessie Poole said that one difference between the mixer and homecoming is that, when buying tickets for the mixer, students must sign a contract showing they understand that the consequences of being under the influence. "I hope being transparent about consequences will discourage that kind of behavior," she said.

Poole explained that the administration and SGA are cracking down on students because "we're not talking about talking in class, we're talking about the law."

The dance will happen tonight unless the Student Government has not met the ticket quota and received sufficient revenue. •

By Sophie ReVeal

Black History Month Has Roots in Carter G. Woodson

Lucy McCurdy
Contributor

The precursor to Black History Month, Negro Appreciation Week, was the brainchild of famed historian and activist Carter G. Woodson. Born in 1875 to two former slaves, Woodson was the second African American to earn a doctorate degree from Harvard University. He went on to start the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. Woodson devoted his career to documenting and publicizing black history in America with the belief that cross-cultural understanding would serve to combat racism. His legacy is most clearly apparent in the nationwide celebration of Black History Month each year.

In 1926, the first Negro Appreciation Week was scheduled for the second week of February to coincide with the birthdays of both Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. Schools and colleges nationwide gradually began to adopt the concept, and in 1971 the federal government officially recognized February as Black History

Month.

Each year there is debate on the value of having a month specifically for celebrating black history. Critics argue that no race should have its history relegated to a single month, that black history should be taught as American history. However, others contend that Black History Month provides a platform for useful discussion about people and events that are underrepresented in history classes during the rest of the year.

At Wilson, Black History Month is heralded by the arrival of informative powerpoint presentations broadcast on the televisions in the atrium and by a series of events in the library media center. Five different films were screened in the library, including the documentary "Unchained Memories: Readings from Slave Narratives" and the dramatic World War II movie "Red Tails." There was also a scheduled speaker series featuring lectures entitled "Black Tenleytown" and "Memories of the Kids of Birmingham, 1963." Some of the lectures were cancelled due

to snow, but school librarian Pamela Gardner says they are being rescheduled.

"I'm impressed with the screening and discussions," says world history teacher Sylvia Boateng, "but I think these events need to be publicized more."

Some teachers have chosen to mark the occasion in the classroom, but senior Asya Crump believes that this is not enough. "A lot of people fought really hard for Black History Month and we don't even really celebrate it. I definitely think Wilson should do more," she says.

Many students are unaware of or unlikely to attend Black History Month events outside of class. "How much history are we actually learning?" asks English teacher Sandra Wright. "I think the events need to have more of a focus."

The consensus among students and teachers at Wilson seems to be that Black History Month is a valuable occasion at school, but we should do more to make sure students are engaged in it. •

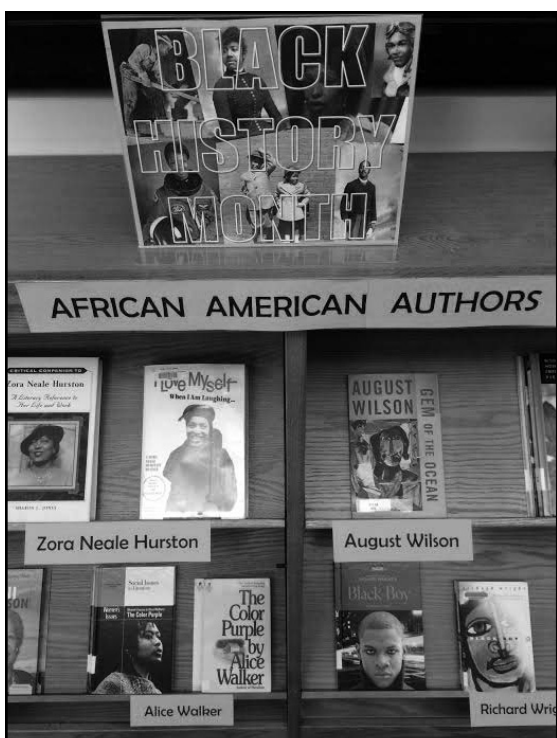
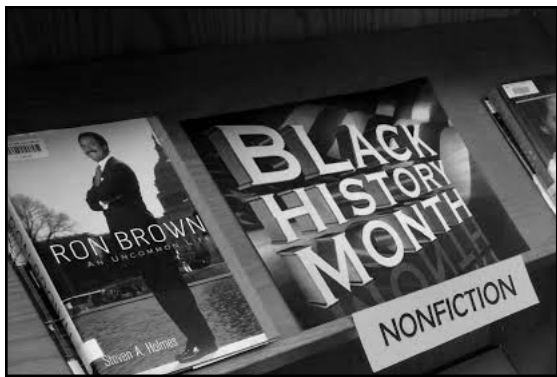


Photo by Warren K. Leffler, Library of Congress



Photo by Warren K. Leffler, Library of Congress

DREAM DEFERRED - Pictured above are scenes of destruction after the 1968 riots in DC in response to Martin Luther King Jr's assassination. DC was left in shambles.



Photos By Ellie Le Blanc



Collage by Jane Martin Photos from Creative Commons

Black History Month Isolates Black Culture

Zahra Wardrick
Contributor

Black History Month: that series of 28 days out of 365 when people act like posting some vague quote by Harriet Tubman, Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, or Martin Luther King, Jr. on social media means they understand the complex timeline of an entire group of people. In school we maybe have a discussion or some poorly planned assembly that's repeated year after year. But outside of that, what is there to Black History Month? A quickly televised memorial feature between commercials on our local news station? I'll admit this isn't always the case, but most of the time something along those lines is pretty accurate.

Black History Month serves to isolate Black people and our culture more than highlight them. We live in not just a country, but a world where, according to an incredibly oppressive Western view, being of any kind of African descent almost always makes you the underdog that rarely gets rooted for. The separation of our history from the rest says that we're not

a part of this big production that is the United States of America, when in reality we've been some of the disturbingly large number of stage hands who don't even get their names in the program. Somehow, having a single month of the year--which happens to be the shortest--is supposed to make up for it by showing that "Hey! Black people have actually done things too!"

While that separation may be considered fine to those who see Black history as both a part of something bigger and still deserving of its own time to be reflected upon, the issue of how it's celebrated comes back to center stage. In this day and age of pervasive mass media only the bare minimum is being done to recognize Black History Month, and it's clear that this isn't enough to give Black History the credit it's due. To summarize, while putting aside time to commemorate Black History hasn't done much prior to now, if it's to be a thing, don't let its importance stop come March 1. Otherwise, we risk setting it back those 200 years our textbooks start it at. But that's another article of its own. •

The Racial History of Wilson High School

Gregory Kopetsky
Features Editor

Flipping through the senior photos of the 1954 Woodrow Wilson High School yearbook, one sees page after page of beaming faces, hundreds of excited eyes perched above rented tuxedos and suits. Page after page of faces – white faces.

Woodrow Wilson was once an all-white school. That's the fact of the matter.

In 1954, the Brown vs. Board of Education decision by the Supreme Court finally made it illegal for school districts to separate schools based on race. After 1954, Wilson opened its doors to black students for the first time.

But for almost 15 years after this historic decision, black students were rarely seen at Wilson, as only kids living in the majority white neighborhoods west of Rock Creek Park lived within the attendance boundaries.

It wasn't until 1968, when DCPS pushed the school boundaries east to 16th Street, that Wilson started to become truly integrated.

In 1969, one year after the boundary changes, nine percent of Wilson's graduating class was black. Two years later, in 1971, that number jumped to 29 percent. By the mid 1970s, Wilson was majority black.

"Every year, you could see the faces of Wilson students change from white to black," says Jack Koczela, class of '70.

As black students began attending in larger numbers, Wilson underwent some major changes,

including a change of principal.

"He [the previous principal] made us think he'd never seen a black kid before," says Louis Hankins, graduate of the class of '72. "He was a fish out of water when it came to integration." The new principal, Maurice A. Jackson, connected more closely with the student body, and was better suited to lead Wilson in a more progressive time.

"He knew everybody by name," recalls Pamela Gardner, Wilson librarian and graduate of the class of '73.

Other members of the administration were equally unprepared to interact with the changing student body, a fact that was evident in how they treated black students.

"No matter how smart you were, the guidance counselors would recommend every black student for vocational school," Hankins recalls.

Nothing, however, highlighted this difference in treatment better than the tracking system, which separated kids into two groups: the more advanced students on the upper track, the others on the lower track.

"If you were black, you were most likely put in the lower track," says Hankins.

Black people experienced this kind of inequality all across the country, resulting in a palpable tension which often boiled over into violence.

In the District, the tension was never clearer than in 1968, when thousands of Washingtonians took to the streets following Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination.

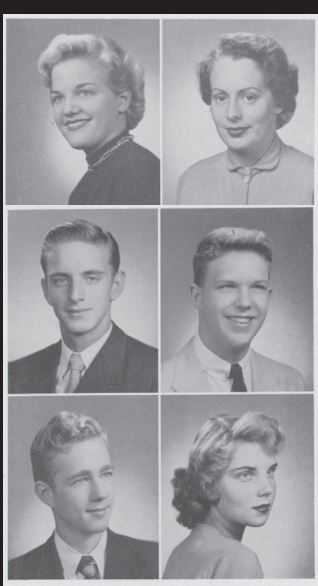
In fact, in the days after King's assassination, as Koczela recalls, armed National Guardsmen were posted on the corner of Wisconsin and Van Ness, just a few blocks from the Wilson campus.

Luckily, racial violence was rarely seen within Wilson High School. "Some fights broke out the first couple of weeks [of 1969], but after a while we learned we had more in common than to fight about," says Hankins.

Occasionally, according to Hankins, students would take advantage of the tense environment by staging fights between white and black kids, which would usually result in a cancellation of school.

Wilson has come a long way. Last year, Wilson was 49 percent black, 25 percent white, and 17 percent Hispanic, according to the DCPS website. We are no longer a school for one race, but for all races, trying to cater equally to the educational needs of all students. Now, flipping through the senior photos of a recent yearbook, or just walking down one of our crowded halls, one can see bright faces of all colors.

However, this school and this city still have work to do. The vestiges of our school's segregated past are still apparent in academic and social spheres, where many students are divided along racial lines. Whether it is a result of self-segregation, the city's segregated history, or a combination of factors, the phenomenon continues. Students and administrators at Wilson should keep the legacy of Wilson's segregation in mind when making decisions that will impact our school's future. •



1954
THEN
&
NOW
Wilson
Graduating
Classes
2014



SECOND GLANCE - From 1954 to 2014, Wilson's senior class has changed immensely. Integration in 1954 began to split the difference, and by the mid 70s Wilson was majority black.

FEATURES

Synesthesia Brings a Different Perspective

Emilia Majersik
Claire Shaw
Madeleine Teems
Contributors

Imagine if every time you heard your name you tasted chocolate in your mouth. Or every time you read the word "dog" you saw the color yellow. This might sound crazy, but for people with a condition called synesthesia, this is everyday life. Synesthesia is a rare neurological condition in which two or more of your senses are connected. Most Wilson students interviewed for this article had never heard of synesthesia.

According to research done at the University of California, synesthesia is believed to affect less than one percent of Americans. It manifests itself in a variety of ways: some people link certain numbers to colors while others see shapes when tasting foods. Any sense can be triggered, so the possibilities of different links are endless.

Growing up, many kids with synesthesia do not realize

that these sensory links are unusual. As they get older and are diagnosed or begin to understand that others don't share their sensory experiences, it can be both difficult and exciting. Seeing as there are many variations of the condition, it's common to think you have it. However, severe cases can be difficult to deal with day to day.

Depending on how strong a reaction a person experiences, sometimes synesthesia can be very overwhelming. People have reported sensory overload, confusion, and sometimes panic. Often people have a hard time understanding what they're experiencing or explaining it to others. "A Mango-Shaped Space," a popular book by Wendy Mass, tells the story of a girl living with synesthesia. Mia Winchell, the main character, first notices her symptoms when she is in third

grade. Her teacher dismisses her automatically, and Mia doesn't tell her parents about her difficulties for several more years.

After reading the book in elementary school, young students often wished they had synesthesia. Freshman

my senses mixing as Mia had described."

Some synesthetes see their condition as an advantage. Individuals living with synesthesia often have enhanced memory or enhanced senses. Many famous musicians

such as Jimi Hendrix, Stevie Wonder and John Mayer have or had synesthesia. It can be useful for occupations

such as wine tasting – synesthetic wine tasters can see the different tastes of the liquor – and musicians, who can feel or taste the music they play.

A lot of these symptoms seem fun, but can be disconcerting. Some people may have bad tastes triggered by noises. Or seeing different colors with every word you read may grow distracting. All these preferences are based on point of view, and with time most synesthetes come to embrace their unique experiences as a special gift. •

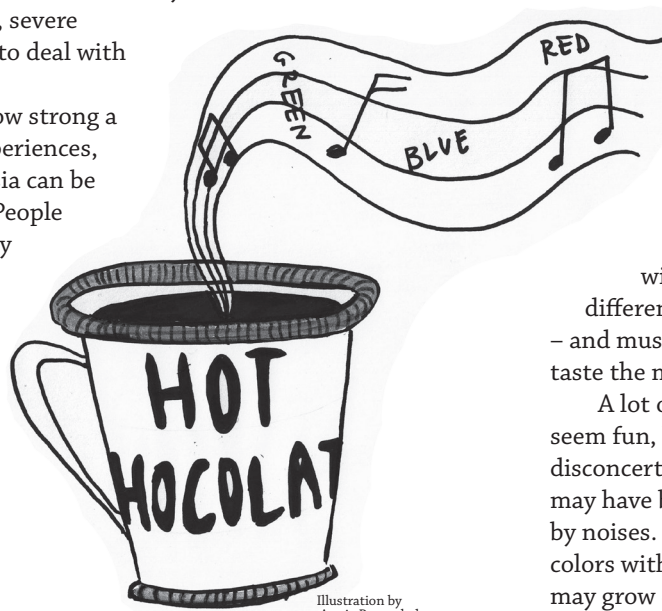
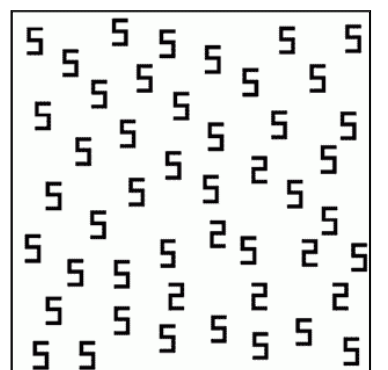


Illustration by Annie Rosenthal

Camille Williams says, "I remember reading that book and wishing I could experience



MUDDLED SENSES- Neurologists Edward M. Hubbard and Vilayanur S. Ramachandran devised this test for synesthesia. Where most people see black numerals on a white background, synesthetes may see a triangle of 2s, because the numbers appear to be in different colors. This test first appeared in the *Journal of Consciousness Studies* in 2001.

A Slice of Life: Wilson Pizza Seller Interviewed

Q: When did you start selling pizza?

A: About a year ago, September 2013.

Q: What are the perks and challenges of your job?

A: I like driving myself, nobody bothers me. But too much headaches. Sometimes traffic, lots of pressure.

Q: Favorite pizza topping?

A: Veggies.

Q: What's your favorite pizza place?

A: Domino's maybe. It's all same same.

Q: Where are you from?

A: Morocco. One year and three months in DC.

Q: What's your craziest work related story?

A: Students are crazy sometimes. Sometimes I give him change, he says I don't. Sometimes they steal.

Q: What are your interests? Outside of selling pizza, of course.

A: Stay home with my wife, sometimes movies. Watch soccer.

Q: What's your favorite soccer team?

A: From my country, Raja Casablanca.

Q: If you could have any job, what would it be?

A: I like driving, so taxi driver.

Q: Thoughts on dessert pizza?

A: What?

Q: It's like pizza but with sweet toppings, like chocolate and sprinkles and Oreos.

A: Ohhhh...I don't like it!

By Ella Feldman
Junior Editor



Photo by Sophie ReVeal
Graphic by Jane Martin

My Life So Far: Tobias "HTML" Shapinsky

Rachel Page
Web Features Editor

Most Wilson students spent their winter breaks catching up with family or enjoying the cold weather, but junior Tobias Shapinsky had greater goals in mind: a worldwide coding contest hosted by Google.

Shapinsky was one of the 36 finalists in this year's Google Code-in, an annual contest in which students between the ages of 13 and 17 compete against each other to complete tasks for participating organizations. Contestants choose between 12 open-source organizations, including Wikimedia and Apertium, and are then assigned specific jobs that can range from designing a logo to writing a blog post. The students who complete the most tasks within the seven-week period win the competition.

Shapinsky chose to work for Copleft Games, a company which supports and promotes entertainment software products. Throughout the course of the contest, he hosted Google Hangouts, wrote code on the



Photo by Luc Nikiema

CRACKING THE CODE - Junior Tobias Shapinsky participated in the Google Code-in this year and was one of 36 finalists. Shapinsky sees coding as a future career.

company's game engine, and designed logos. At the end of the seven weeks, Shapinsky had completed a total of 13 tasks, beating out the vast majority of the 668 participants in the

contest.

As one of the five finalists named for Copleft Games, Shapinsky received a certificate and a Google Code-in sweatshirt. The grand prize

winners for each organization won a trip to Google's California headquarters and the chance to talk to Google engineers and company mentors.

Coding has been one of Shapinsky's hobbies for a long time: he first wrote a program at the age of nine after learning the basics from an older cousin. "In middle school I would write basic programs to do things like the quadratic formula for me," he says. At Wilson, he "fulfilled the role of tech support" by fixing teachers' computers when they were not operating correctly. But this was his first year participating in the Google Code-in.

Despite the time-consuming nature of many coding projects--he spent between three to five hours on each individual task in the contest--Shapinsky still finds the time to pursue other interests. He is the lead programmer, driver, and co-captain of the Wilson Robotics team, was part of the cast of this year's fall musical, and plays on Wilson's ultimate frisbee team.

The success of the Internet and organizations like Google in

the past few decades means that there are a growing number of resources available for students who are interested in learning how to code.

"Mr. Jacoby's AP Computer Science class is great, and it gets better every year," Shapinsky says. Websites like Khan Academy, code.org, and Codecademy also offer free lessons on beginning coding geared towards high school students.

The most important thing an aspiring coder can do, says Shapinsky, is to learn how to use Google. "I know it may sound silly, but knowing how to Google problems that you are getting when you start coding can alleviate a lot of frustration."

Shapinsky sees coding as a real career possibility in his future. "I wouldn't want to work for Facebook or any of those social media companies," he says. "I'd much rather be working on code for spacecraft and robots."

Though he may be just a junior in high school, Shapinsky is already shooting for the stars. •

At Wilson, There Is Such a Thing as a Free Lunch

Abby Tanen
Staff Writer

When the bell rings at 11:16, hordes of students head down to the cafeteria to eat: some pay for the school lunch, while others are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. The main purpose of serving meals is not to raise money for Wilson; it's for students to eat!

The Wilson cafeteria serves breakfast and lunch every day. Breakfast is free to anyone and full-price lunch is \$2.60. For some students, these are the only two meals they will receive in a day; that's why administrators and the cafeteria staff so often promote the food. When getting breakfast in the morning, cafeteria manager Lakisha Ferguson often tells students to take at least three items and "as many fruits as you want." She explains that she encourages kids to take the fruit because, even if they don't eat it, they can keep it in their bags for later and eat it as a snack.

Academic Director Alex Wilson says that many people would be surprised to find out that they qualify for free or reduced-price meals. According to the USDA website, the yearly household income for a family of four had to be below \$43,568 in order to qualify for reduced-rate lunches during the 2013-2014 school year.

At Wilson, each student

who chooses to buy lunch waits in line, gets their food, and punches their ID number into the machine at the end of the line—which takes the correct amount of money from an account set up by the student or their parents—before sitting down to eat. There is no distinguishing between students who pay full price for their lunches and students who qualify for reduced-price or free lunch. Still, Alex Wilson says that some students who are eligible for free or reduced-priced meals are not applying because of shame or embarrassment.

In fact, he believes that every parent should fill out an application for reduced-rate lunches, because it can take the embarrassment out of turning in the form if everyone does it. The application process is simple. After filling out the forms, which are located in the main office, it takes from five to seven business days for the application to be processed. Then the student finds out if they are denied or accepted for reduced-price or free lunch.

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) was implemented by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1946. The NSLP requires that all cafeteria food be provided by the USDA and ensures that schools provide meals that meet the federal requirements. The amount of

money a school has to pay for its food is determined by the numbers of students eligible for free or reduced-priced lunches compared to the total number of students buying lunch. For example, a school like Wilson where fewer than 60 percent of the students get reduced-price lunches is reimbursed \$2.98 for every meal served to a qualified student, while schools with higher percentages of students eating reduced-price lunches get reimbursed \$3.21 for every meal.

The tricky application process is one reason that not everyone applies for free or reduced-price lunch. In the past when parents have come to Wilson at the beginning of the year to register their child, they could fill out the forms for reduced-rate lunches along with the registration forms. However, in recent years, lunch forms have arrived at the school days after the registration forms. Parents then had to come in another day or their child could bring the form home, have them fill it out, and bring it back—which, as any teacher who has handed out a permission slip will say, is not always a highly effective process. Wilson says that coming back to school to fill out the forms can be difficult because many parents who have a low income are most likely out looking for a job, or they cannot afford to take

time off work to come into Wilson to fill out a form that should've already been provided to them.

If you have an ID number, you have a school lunch account. To add money to the account, students paying either full or reduced prices for lunch can go to one of the machines stationed by the rose garden in the cafeteria, type in their ID number and insert bills into the machine. Ferguson says that students who don't put money on their accounts can still get food, but that puts them into debt. Each time they type in their ID number, it shows them how much money they owe. This money adds up, and if they do not pay it off, the debt is added to the student's senior dues. "It's just like a book fine," she says. In the end, this can be very costly.

In the past, Wilson has tried different programs to provide more food for students. The first was a snack program for students who were doing sports or studying after school. The snack was something small, "just like a muffin and a fruit or cereal,"

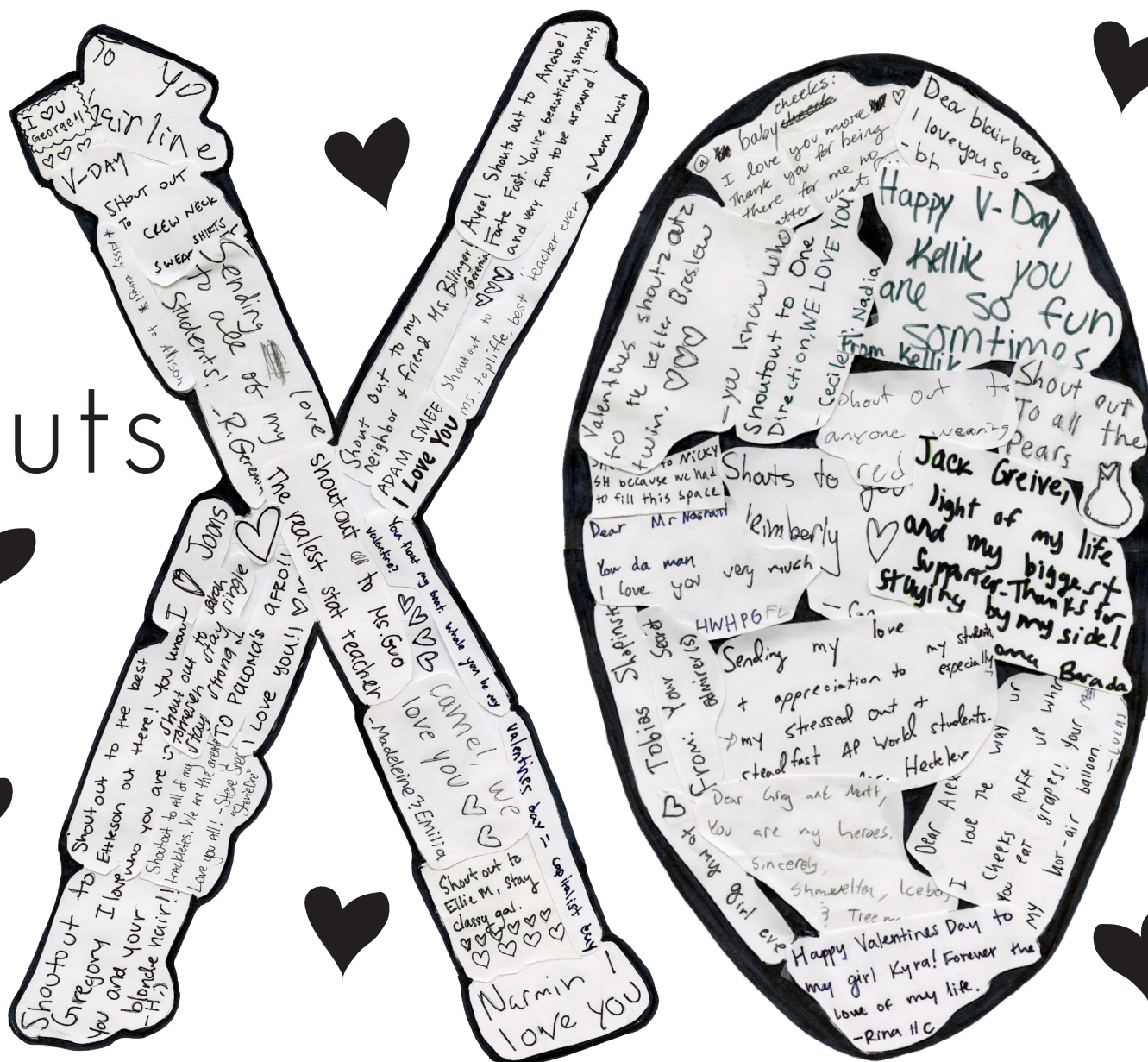


Graphic by Jane Martin

Ferguson said, but was not very popular amongst students. A second program that provided dinner for students who stayed late at school was more popular "because it was more like a meal," according to Ferguson. The school ended this program, too, though the cafeteria staff doesn't know why.

As the nation continues to strive to find the perfect meal plan with the best nutritional values for school lunches, Wilson just wants to make the food available and affordable to all. So whether you think you're qualified or not, head over to the office and fill out that form. •

V-Day Shoutouts



Compiled by Maria Brescia-Weiler

Check out our romantic Valentine's playlist on our website www.thewilsonbeacon.com

How GPA Affects Sports

Alex Martin
Junior Editor

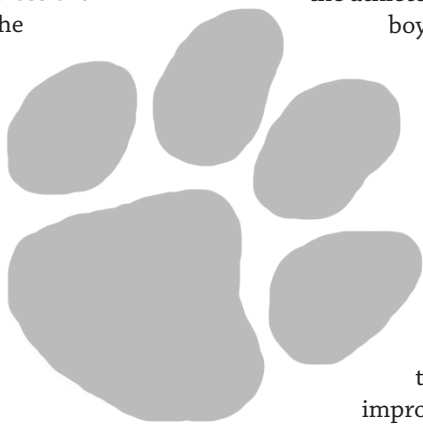
With extracurriculars and schoolwork, among other things, Wilson students have a lot to balance, but the athletic restriction means that students' GPAs don't suffer. The 2.0 grade point average requirement to play a school sport is not unique to Wilson and is used in school systems across the country. The effect of the requirement can be seen on some of Wilson's youngest student athletes. Theo Shapinsky, a player on the freshmen boys basketball team, said "many players have missed games and that has affected the potential of the team." Many players miss practice because of low GPAs, making it difficult for the team to improve.

Many athletes at Wilson struggle to maintain the required grade point average. Often instead of practicing with the team, a student athlete will have to go to a teacher after school to get their grades up to the necessary standard. This can cause the player to lose motivation on school work and have

their grades continue to drop. Sometimes star players don't get a chance to play for their high school or even go to college because of their grades.

The required 2.0 GPA has, however, had a positive impact on students, who are motivated to work hard to improve their grades. The teams with the highest combined mean GPA of all the athletes are both girls and boys crew, along with ultimate frisbee and girls soccer. The students' high GPAs allow their teams to practice and compete at the highest possible level without anyone having to take time off to improve grades. These teams are able to thrive because they can practice without distractions.

With college tuition continuing to rise, many families need their son or daughter to get some kind of scholarship in order to attend college. However, less than 20,000 students a year get full scholarships to colleges and only 138,000 students get sports scholarships. Sports can change lives in many other ways than just the classroom. Athletes who get into college have the opportunity to find a new passion that can improve their life, but in order to achieve that, they must meet the GPA requirement. •



Wilson Athletes Participate on DC Hockey Team

Erin Doherty
Web Sports Editor

The snow-covered sidewalks and the frigid temperatures that have plagued DC the last couple of weeks have turned the city into an icy tundra. As the majority of Wilson students hides in their houses anxiously awaiting spring weather, some Wilson athletes find enjoyment on something the rest of DC wants to avoid: ice.

The DC Stars Ice Hockey team is a team with openings for any DC student who doesn't have a hockey team at their high school. Athletes from a dozen schools including Maret, Georgetown Day School, Edmund Burke, Sidwell, Anacostia, School Without Walls, and, of course, Wilson come together to make up the team. Wilson students on the team include freshman Oscar Lonaeus, sophomores William Sheldon and Kieran Irwin-Leventhal, junior Jonathan Costan, and senior Will Oakley.

Experience is not necessary, as coaches just look for athletes with "the drive and eagerness to learn the game," Sheldon said. The team practices once a week at Fort Dupont ice rink and plays games all around the DC area.

The Stars concluded their



Photo Courtesy of: William Sheldon

STARS, BARS, AND ICE - Students across DC came together to form the DC Stars hockey team. After an impressive start to the season the Stars lost 7-5 in the playoffs.

tenth season on Friday, February 20, in a controversial loss to their rival Montgomery Blair High School in the second round of the playoffs. The DC Stars cruised through the first round of playoffs, winning 6-1 against Magruder High School in Rockville. Going into the second round, the team had a respectable record with ten wins and only three ties.

The game proved to be controversial, however. According to league rules, each team can only have a certain number of athletes from each school. Blair broke this rule and "were supposed to be disqualified from the playoffs," Sheldon explained, "Of course they [Montgomery Blair] appealed and appealed

until they reached the USA hockey officials who let them play in the playoffs." Ultimately, the DC Stars lost 7-5 and their season was over.

Although the team was disappointed by the end result of their season, the friendships that were created cannot be overlooked. When asked about the highlights of their season, both Oscar Lonaeus and William Sheldon commented on the lasting friendships. "It has been fun getting to know all the guys from all different schools," Lonaeus said. Similarly, Sheldon commented, "when we hang out as a team, it's not about whether he goes to Maret or Anacostia, it's about the hockey." •

Athletes Turn Dreams into Reality on Signing Day

Asa Canty
Matthew Smee
Staff Writer, Sports Editor

For thousands of student athletes every year, the first Wednesday in February marks the beginning of a new chapter. The many months of recruitment, with the countless sales pitches given to teenagers by college coaches all trying to sell their school to athletes, culminate with the 24 hour period that is National Signing Day. For many young athletes, hosting a press conference where they don their new school's hat with pride and sign the letter of intent to play the sport they love for the next four years is a dream. On February 4, several Wilson students made this dream a reality.

Prior to 1981, college conferences held conference signing days around the country to publicize pledges athletes made to play at schools. As publicizing commitment to a school to play a sport became more popular, this tradition became difficult

to execute, and thus National Signing Day was born. Any commitment an athlete makes to a school is purely verbal until they sign a letter of intent to play for the college, binding the two to each other, and Signing Day is the first day that a senior can sign this letter of intent.

On February 4, Wilson senior and member of the varsity football team, Kareem McDonald, signed his national letter of intent to play at Monmouth University, despite having verbally committed to play at the University of Virginia on August 5 of last year. After changing his recruitment multiple times, McDonald is no stranger to how the process works. "If a school likes you, they'll start sending you mail, come to the school and start talking to you," he explains. According to McDonald, the team then brings you to their school, where the prospective student athlete gets wined and dined by current members of the team.

These visits are an opportunity for the school to make their best case for why the student should attend their college, and for the student to get a feel for the campus where they might be spending their next four years. This was a crucial part of recruitment for McDonald, as he noted the huge size of Virginia sticking out as a negative, and Monmouth's proximity to the beach as an appealing factor. McDonald says the reason he went with Monmouth, however, was not a result of preference but a decision made out of his control. McDonald has attended more than one high school, and, although he eventually transferred smoothly to Wilson, his credits did not; and without a valid set of class credits, the University of Virginia revoked its offer. Despite this series of unfortunate events, McDonald is optimistic. "I'm happy with how it turned out. The school's a good size where it won't swallow me up, but I'm thinking about

transferring to Maryland or UVA after the first year."

McDonald is not the only Wilson scholar who has already transferred allegiances to his future school. Senior Skyler Mackey signed her letter of intent to play soccer at University of Maryland Baltimore County on National Signing Day. Although very excited about her future as a student and athlete at UMBC, she has mixed feelings about the whole process, explaining that it "is a little unfair because there are many athletes who haven't been recruited but are amazing." This is a result of these players not "playing on top-ranked teams in the country." Furthermore, Mackey believes that "coaches put a lot of pressure on athletes so it can become stressful." Despite this, Mackey can attest to the day being a very rewarding experience for the athletes who have obviously put in a tremendous amount of work in their sport.

Today college sports are a

hotbed of controversy. From the issue of sports being a billion dollar industry that doesn't pay the athletes who generate the money to the question of how young is too young when recruiting sites start ranking sixth graders, there is much to be angry and disappointed about when it comes to college athletics. Yet, the world continues watching college sports because there are enough moments that make people forget about the corporate greed running the game and instead focus on the young men and women who are spending their foray into adulthood playing the games they love in front of fans who adore them. Sports can be romanticized because of these young people, and no matter what the world thinks about the sports industry in which these student athletes participate, the joy on their faces as they formally commit to a college on National Signing Day is one reason so many love sports. •

ATHLETE OF THE MONTH:

Lindsay Cunningham

By Henry Shuldiner



Girls Varsity Track

Photo by Rochelle O'Brien

Senior Lindsay Cunningham has helped lead the girls varsity track team to a very successful season. Cunningham, over her four years on the track team, accomplished many feats, including being a part of the qualifying 4x400m relay team for New Balance Indoor Nationals in March. The team qualified at a track meet at Virginia Tech earlier this season.

Regarding goals for the upcoming outdoor season, Cunningham said that she hopes to “shave my times down, make new personal records and overall make sure I can help lead the team to victory in any way possible.” She also hopes to be a strong competitor in the 800m race in the outdoor season. “It’s going to take a lot of guts and determination but that’s why I love it,” said Cunningham.

The team has evolved quite a lot over the course of the season and has turned into a championship caliber program. The girls track team placed second in the DCIAA meet and third in the DCSAA this winter, but look to finish back on top this spring. “Going into the season it’s all about staying humble and preparing to defend our outdoor championship DCIAA and DCSAA title,” said Cunningham.

Cunningham has not made a final decision about whether or not she will run in college, but has accepted an academic scholarship at Hampton University. She is excited to get more involved with more academic programs. “Being an athlete will always be a major part of my lifestyle,” said Cunningham. “Track has taught me many important lessons in life.”

One of Cunningham’s favorite quotes is “No one ever drowned in sweat. Gold medals aren’t really made of gold. They’re made of sweat, determination, and hard-to-find alloy called guts.” This ideology showcases Cunningham’s tenacity and diligence at track and in school, along with her commitment to both. •

Baseball Team in Dominican, Going to Come Back and Win Again!

Ben Kostyack
Staff Writer

As temperatures reached record lows in DC last week, Wilson’s varsity baseball team traveled to the Dominican Republic to play some ball and soak up the Dominican sun. The trip, organized by Wilson alum and D.C. baseball aficionado John McCarthy, Wilson, and boosters of the Wilson baseball program, lasted from February 10 to February 16. We stayed in a hotel in Juandoilo, a province about 45 minutes outside of Santo Domingo, and played games in nearby Conseulo.

We played nine games in five days, finishing with a record of 5-3-1. Although happy with our record at the end of the trip, the focus was not on wins. The goal was to be immersed in the Dominican culture by playing baseball.

Baseball is a huge part of the culture and daily lives of the Dominican people because, for some, it can be a ticket out of poverty. It is hard to ignore the poverty in the Dominican Republic. Like most islands in the Caribbean, it is glamorized as a beach destination with extravagant resorts. But the Dominican Republic is still considered a developing country. Sometimes there is an immense amount of pressure put on kids living in poverty to get recruited by U.S.

Major League teams to support their families.

As we arrived at the hotel on Tuesday afternoon, weary from a long day of travel, we were told to change into our uniforms. When we got to the field, we were met by a field of players ready for the first pitch to be thrown, and a good-sized crowd curious to see how a team from the United States would compete with their local ballplayers. The atmosphere was incredible. Dominican music that begged for dancing filled the air, and a colorful announcer described the action play-by-play while simultaneously entertaining the crowd. The other team was good, but that is a given when you’re in the Dominican Republic. We ended up winning the game, surprising the crowd and our opponents.

A big problem in the Dominican is the huge gap between the wealthy and the poor. Our hotel was in a gated community, full of mansions owned by former and current Major League stars. Yet just a few miles down the road, there were people living in severe poverty, cutting sugarcane for a living. On one of the days, we went to a village to host a clinic for the area’s youth. We quickly bonded with the kids. Although we didn’t speak the same language, we shared a passion for baseball, and that was enough for them. At the end

of the day, we were sad to leave our new friends. It was particularly hard for us to see these kids walk back into the tiny shacks they called home as our bus drove away.

This trip did a lot for our

team as a whole, and for each person that came along. We not only got to improve our game alongside some of the world’s most passionate coaches and players, but we got to experience and live in another culture for a

week. The memories of the people we met and the experiences we had will live with us forever, as this was truly an eye-opening trip for all Tigers involved. •



Photo by Henry Cohen

¡HONRON! - After playing nine games in the Dominican Republic, the boys baseball team went 5-3-1. Through this successful trip, they expect to have a good season.

Boys Varsity Lacrosse Expects A Promising Season

Matthew Smee
Sports Editor

As the lacrosse season approaches, members of the boys varsity team are optimistic. With a new coach who has big plans for the team's future, it seems the players do, in fact, have a lot to look forward to.

At the end of last year, with coach George Arlotto's departure and multiple graduating seniors, the team's future was uncertain. The team experienced a stroke of luck, however, when they found a very qualified new head coach in Anthony Wilson. Wilson has been playing lacrosse since he was a child and coaching for almost a decade at

schools like St. Albans and Mt. Vernon. He hopes to bring both short- and long-term success to the program.

"Obviously our number one goal is to win the conference, and I think we are well positioned to do that," Wilson said. But it's what he plans to do with the team, going forward, that's even more exciting.

As a lifelong fan of the sport, he loves "the idea that the game is growing" and thinks coming to Wilson is a great opportunity for it to grow in the city. This means expanding the program and playing teams of a higher caliber, such as Potomac and Landon. "I'm looking forward to that, and I think we're

gonna have a great season if everyone's prepared and ready to practice," sophomore Damani Macadoo said.

To counter the loss of experienced players last year, the team looks to add a number of new players as well as place veterans into key roles for this season. With these leadership changes, "the team will be more than capable of stepping up to the task [of winning]," said senior Max Cooper.

With all this confidence, Wilson can look forward to seeing what this team can show us this spring. •



Graphic by Jane Martin

The Success Story of Coach Dunham

Isaac Frumkin
Junior Editor

Growing up in what was then the murder capital of the country, Gary, Indiana, proved to be the first of many challenges track coach and gym teacher Desmond Dunham had to overcome. Dunham imagined himself having a career in basketball, and it wasn't until high school that he was introduced to running.

After the first practice, Dunham immediately knew that cross-country was for him. He also realized that running was his way out of Gary. His coach quickly became a father figure to Dunham, who was raised in a single-parent household. With his mother working 24 to 28 hour shifts at her job, Dunham wanted to give himself an opportunity to provide for his family.

Running proved to be Dunham's escape when he earned a joint cross-country and track scholarship to Howard University. The hard work did not end in high school. When the Howard cross-country team was not practicing, each athlete was required to run ten miles a day on their own. One night, Dunham said, he was comfortably in bed at midnight when he remembered his workout. Most people would probably go back to sleep at that point, but not Dunham.

"I was cheating myself and that wasn't acceptable to me," he recalls. Within minutes Dunham was running along Georgia Avenue. And not only did Dunham run the ten miles, he ran two extra as self-punishment.

That type of commitment was evident in everything he did. By his senior year, Dunham was the captain and MVP of Howard's cross-country and track teams. He graduated from Howard with a bachelor's degree in physical education and later earned a master's degree from Trinity University.

Fast forward to Dunham's new passion: coaching. After college, Dunham was on his way to medical school when he found a way to give back to the community in a more self-fulfilling way. "I then realized that I had more of a purpose in life and passion for coaching than I did for pursuing a medical career," he says.

By the end of his second year in coaching, Dunham was the head coach of three different track teams, in addition to starting his own Junior Olympics team with his wife. "And I absolutely loved all of it!" he adds. To his athletes he emphasizes his seven pillars: positive attitude, resilience, respect, community, accountability, commitment, and communication.

During his five years as coach at Eleanor Roosevelt HS, Dunham led the girls cross-country team to three Maryland State titles and the track team to nine state championships. Roosevelt broke national records in the 4x800 and sprint medley relays and earned high placement at Nike Indoor/Outdoor National track meets. Coach Dunham was recognized by the Washington Post as the

All-Met Coach of the Year three times. Following Roosevelt, Dunham coached for four years at University of Maryland.

Dunham said he enjoyed coaching at Maryland but missed coaching high school track. He wanted a job in DC so when the Wilson position opened up, it was a perfect fit. He began his tenure here with lofty goals: "Develop a positive culture at Wilson where student-



athletes develop traits and characteristics for a successful life."

"At first, I couldn't see myself talking to him," current senior Chris Askew says. "But after I heard about his accomplishments and his achievements and the type of person that he is, I realized that Coach Dunham is a man who is serious about what he does and cares about his athletes."

Coach Dunham has transformed Wilson's track team into a perennial DC champion. As the girls cross-country coach, Dunham has led Wilson to three straight championships from 2012 to 2014. In the last three years (including indoor and outdoor), Wilson's boys have won four DCIAA championships and the girls have won two.

While winning the DCIAA is certainly an impressive feat, Coach Dunham wanted to take the track team to new heights:

winning the DCSAA. The DCIAA consists of all the DC Public Schools, and the DCSAA includes all DCPS in addition to all the private and charter schools located in DC. While these schools may have better facilities and more prestigious reputations, Dunham makes sure that Wilson is always the most prepared.

Freshman Mariah Randriambololona agreed with Dunham's strategy: "I use my training as positive encouragement when I'm running because I know I have put in all the necessary hard work during our practices."

When the DCSAA came around in 2013, the team was prepared to make history. The girls narrowly pulled out a victory, and Wilson became the first public school to win a DCSAA title in any sport.

Still, Coach Dunham constantly stresses how

important life outside of track is to his student-athletes. "Track is only temporary," Dunham reminds his athletes. He requires every student-athlete to turn in a progress report signed by all their teachers.

"One of the best feelings in the world is when I see one of my former student-athletes and they're successful with their family and in their career and their community," Dunham says.

Like Askew, fellow senior Steve Sneed had his reservations about their new coach at first. His doubts were quickly erased: "Once I met him and found out his plans for the team, I was confident in Wilson's future."

Coach Dunham helped Sneed determine that track was the sport for him. Next year, Sneed will be running college track at Stevenson University. In addition, five runners from last year's senior class received track and field scholarships for college.

The Wilson track team is enjoying continued success this year as the indoor season recently came to a close.

The girls 4x400 relay team, consisting of Asia Amis, Druex Collins, Lindsay Cunningham, and Jordan Dean, is heading to the New Balance Indoor Nationals in New York City next month. Askew and Sneed are close to leading their respective relay teams to qualification for Nationals. Outdoor season is starting in the upcoming weeks and anyone is welcome to come and try it out. Just know that with Coach Dunham, there is a lot more to track than running.

"It starts with track but it ends with success," he said. •



FASHION IN THE HALLS: BOYS' HAIR

Compiled by
Melinda Oluhara

One Acts Don't Lack Laughs

By Chloe Leo and Tara Bretzfelder

From a senior eating an onion in his underwear to a re-creation of the "Dirty Dancing" jump scene, Wilson's 2015 "One Acts" provided lots of laughs. Assisted by faculty member Jill Roos and social studies teacher Jonathan Shea, the Wilson Players directed, acted in, and produced the plays. This annual winter festival, including 10 humorous acts which were each around 9-10 minutes, is always a big hit around the Wilson community.

Among these ten were two student-written plays, "From Russia With (Gay) Love" written by Ellie Melick and Nicky Swanson Hutchinson, and "Just My Cup of Tea" written by Helen Malhotra and Zoe Mills.

Auditions were held mid-January in the Black Box: juniors and seniors were given the opportunity to direct them, while any one could try out as an actor. The shows took place on February 12, 13, and 14, in the Black Box theater, where tickets were \$5 to students, and \$7 to everyone else.

The audience remained entertained throughout the whole show, laughing at a wide variety of jokes about the absurdity of certain stereotypes, outrageous situations, and others of that nature. One of the highlights of the show was a performance of "We're All In This Together," from "High School Musical," by the senior class members who participated in the One Acts,



Photos by Tara Bretzfelder

AND, CUT - The 2015 One Acts came to a close on February 14. These ten student-directed, produced, and acted plays were a huge success.

as a bittersweet goodbye.

Although there were a few complications, and the Players had to make some last minute changes, the shows were a huge success, despite the cancellation of the last show. •

Check out videos of all the One Acts on our website www.thewilsonbeacon.com

Student Artist Drops New Mixtape

David Fadul
Staff Writer

"20-20 vision man I see my dreams clear/ bouta blow up it ain't even been a year" raps Danny Skunk on "New Flava," assisted by the beat from the classic 1994 song "Flava In Ya Ear." Skunk and \$avvy each deliver wordplay-laced verses, trying to out-brag each other. This song is effectively a summary of Nothing Out of Nowhere, Skunk and fellow rapper \$avvy's debut mixtape, which is full of bragadocio, references to drugs and life in poverty, and piles upon piles of wordplay.

Junior Danny "Skunk" Kunk's work is nothing new to Wilson. It seems like many students know of his presence on Soundcloud, and many will even name some of his most well-known songs, like "If Heaven is a Ghetto" and "Melancholy Music." But this mixtape shows a side of Skunk that we don't see as much on his page. While he's philosophical and introspec-

tive on many of his Soundcloud songs, "From Nothing Out of Nowhere" has songs like "[F] Your Party," a Skunk-only song where he raps about superficial topics like weed and sex. Of course it's impossible to talk about a collaboration mixtape without mentioning Skunk's fellow MC, \$avvy (real name Eddie Bosques). This Moco/DC artist has been rapping since second grade, and it's evident in his music. From the all-out boasting on "Classic" to the dark and reflective verses on "Facts," \$avvy shows off his versatility. His verses on "Facts" are something I wish we saw more of on the mixtape.

The mixtape starts off with the song "Classic," which Skunk has already debuted on his Soundcloud page. Sampling a fast-paced 90s beat, \$avvy goes in for a solid minute and forty seconds without pause, delivering a verse studded with drug and sex references. With barely 50 seconds left Skunk comes in with an intricate verse showing

off his expansive vocabulary, casually rhyming "catechizing what I see" with "emulating what I be."

To those who are familiar with Skunk's reflective songs, "Facts" is most similar to songs like "Melancholy Music." The two MC's reflect on the struggles they've endured throughout their lives. \$avvy describes the violence he's witnessed in a very Nas-esque verse, most notably with the lines "in the land of the hitters you gotta watch the whispers/Nafi got killed getting candy for his sister." Skunk describes the poverty he has endured and argues that being white does not mean life is free of hardships. He ends the song on a positive note, remarking how the two are now "on the map."

"New Flava" and "Gladiator Flow" are arguably some of the best songs on the mixtape, along with "Facts" and "Classic." The

two MC's do not waste "Gladiator Flow's" spectacular beat, firing off bar after bar of wordplay. They also take shots at unnamed rappers who would dare compete against them. Skunk calls out the "fakes" who have only befriended him for his newfound money, and \$avvy tells the lame rappers to "shape up like a haircut." Skunk and \$avvy shine on New Flava as they replicate the flows of the rappers

"Bars on point and I ain't talking 'bout a spear."

who featured on the classic 1994 song and lyrically flex with lines like "When you on fire they can't match you" and "Bars on point and I ain't talking 'bout a spear."

For those familiar with Skunk and \$avvy's music, From Nothing Out of Nowhere is a very welcome addition to the collection. It has philosophical musings, allusions to drugs, and all the one-liners you could

possibly ask for. For those who aren't already associated with the duo's music, From Nothing Out of Nowhere has enough songs to get a taste of their style, and maybe even turn you into a fan.

Admittedly, the mixtape might get repetitive at times, and of course not all songs can be winners. "We'll Never Know," although it does have its share of good lyricism, feels like a filler track. More importantly, though, the mixtape shows the hunger of the two young rappers. From Nothing Out of Nowhere is a solid mixtape, one I recommend to anybody willing to try new music. For those who only want a taste of their music, I would recommend "Classic," "Facts," "Gladiator Flow," and "New Flava" for their incredible beats and lyrics, which are both deep and clever. Hopefully we'll be around to see some of Wilson's own fulfill their claim: "On the rooftop but I came from the basement." •

Former Wilson Student Yung Gleesh is Now Up and Coming Rapper

Monet Jones
Contributor

The Beacon: Where did you grow up?

Yung Gleesh: 18th and Monroe, Northeast.

Q: What did you do growing up?

A: I was in T.O.B, the gogo band, we went everywhere. I wasn't no regular kid, everyone was waking up late as s**t on the weekend, I was already at band practice getting ready for four shows that day.

Q: What DCPS schools have you attended?

A: I started off elementary school at Amidon, graduated there in sixth grade, went to Jefferson till eighth grade, then CAPS in 9th (uptown by Georgia Av) then an alternative school called Foundations, then ended up in Wilson.

Q: Did you graduate from Wilson?

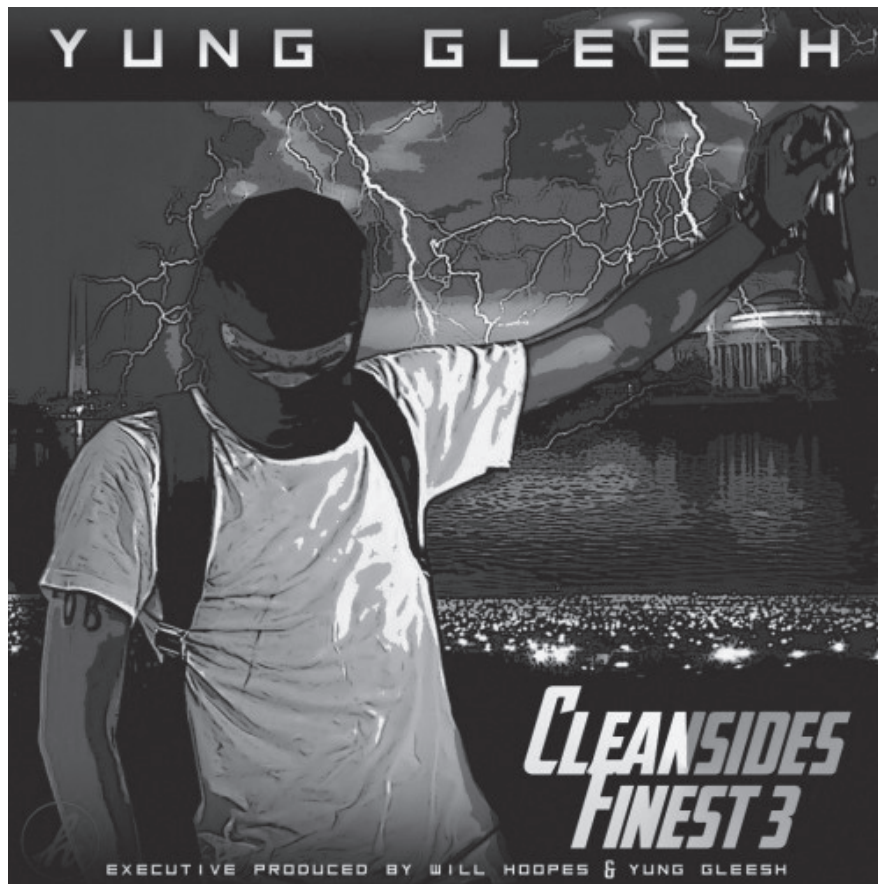
A: Nope, took my GED.

Q: What was your favorite subject in school?

A: I ain't have one, I didn't really like school, never had school spirit, I never liked going to pep rallies. I never liked crowds I couldn't control. Y'all seen me at my show... I got control over that crowd.

Q: I heard you say in a previous interview that you didn't like what DC has become. Can you elaborate?

A: Back in the day it wasn't about fame or who you was, if you didn't have any street credibility or we couldn't pull your work up in the street, we wasn't tryna hear anything else you was talking about. If we had problems and you was up, I'm not about to stop having problems with you cause you up. We just gonna have problems and that's what it's gonna be 'till



the end. You might go up and I might go up. You might go down and I might go down but we gone have problems regardless, it don't matter if you up or somebody now... Let's squash all this beef. DC ain't never used to get down like that.

Q: How did you start rapping?

A: I was in gogo, and everybody know gogo ain't nowhere near rapping. Then I wasn't even on the mic. I was in the background playing percussions... One of our keyboard players, Roderick, ended up making a transition from gogo to producing. It was

just like a joke one day and they was like "yeah man, you should rap." It was

just like a stupid idea but I wrote some bars and I liked what I wrote. I was like damn, I didn't know I could do that like that and I just kept writing like that whole week, whole next month after that. I just never stopped. A lot of people get tired but I never stopped. A lot of people might not see progress in their process and they fade away but I stuck with it.

Q: What's your relationship like with Makonnen and A\$AP Rocky?

A: It's crazy that I be knowing these people, able to pick up the phone and they answer, text and all that. However I wanna communicate with them, it's easy to communicate. I f**k with them. I don't really like too many people, especially in the industry. And I really don't like doing music with too many people because that's when friendships turn into business. Rocky cool, the reason he know me is because of Yams, R.I.P Yams. Yams put him on to me and stuff. Makonnen cool. I bang with Fredo.

Everybody else in the industry come and go, ya know what I mean?

Q: How do you feel about other DC rappers?

A: Man, y'all know what DC like. We a barrel of crabs man, and we all haters. You a hater, I'm a hater, we all haters. Anybody doing something you

don't like, you don't like em, trust me, I know. It's just the environment we was raised in... like how I said I used to be on that trash can. (During his time at Wilson, Gleesh stayed posted on a trash can in the hallways.) I'm from Northeast and this a Southwest school, I knew everybody from Southwest but, y'all ain't from my hood so I don't owe you guys nothing to even bang with you. As far as other DC rappers, y'all know how it go... I don't feel 'em just cause they wasn't feeling me. It was a long time and

nobody saw me come up. I felt like I was doing the same or better of what they was doing. I was looking at it like, how could y'all listen to this? Y'all don't even know them. I walked in to sign in at the front door and the lady at the front desk still remembered my name. I don't remember those guys, so I can't sit here and condone what they talking about is the truth. Then I hear some of the stuff they talking about bricks and pounds of coke, I don't remember none of this. We was in the gogos it wasn't no bricks on the street, all this money them guys talk about I don't remember. That's the truth.

Q: Where do you see yourself in the next five years?

A: Everything's been going good in the past year so I haven't thought about the future,

I live my life off structure. In five years I need to be up, all the way up. Setting my kids up for the next 15 years.

Q: What's your favorite DC slang word?

A: Moe. I got something [new] for them though. Imma take it to the old school joint, the bama joint when our parents used to say "Joe," take it back to "Joe." They not gonna know what hit them on the next mixtape.

Q: What do you get from the corner store?

A: Sprite and Fanta and Backwoods. I like to say I live a luxury lifestyle, we not all the way 5 star, but I still go and get my necessities. I don't eat McDonald's or nothing like that, no no, don't stoop down to none of that. McDonald's, Popeye's, Wendy's, Long John Silver's, that s**t is terrible. Why is there a Long John Silver's? It's like the seafood version of McDonalds. Who does this s**t?

Q: What was the most influential moment of your life?

A: The day I got verified on Twitter.

Q: How do you feel about the recent killings of young black men? Like the recent Trayvon Martin case.

A: I'm a real big conspiracy believer, but, like it's sad cause the way we lived for the past 100, 200 years we used to that. Like what are we gonna do? Protest? People been protesting for years and nothing happened. New World Order, man. The Trayvon Martin situation is f****d up but that's what's happening, that's whats going on right now in America. Now everybody can wake up and see or we gone keep living how we living. And even if everyone wake up and see, what can we really do? We know our government ain't doing everything they say they doing. Wars ain't for what they said they was... we birds for real, we believe everything they tell us. •



Photos by Asa Canty

Artist Profile: Joyce Distinto

By Zoe Mills



Senior Joyce Distinto marvels at a picture of a marble statue in her Latin textbook before beginning the interview, obviously adoring the technique employed by the sculptors. "Honestly it's just something I was born with," Distinto says about her interest in art. "I just continued until I got better."

Distinto knew by the age of five that art was what she loved. "People told me I would grow out of it, and from then on I just had to prove them wrong."

Distinto enjoys creating many different styles and forms of art, usually finding herself sketching portraits, something she began doing for her friends as early as middle school, or

painting with bright colors.

Though she may be accomplished and has been creating pieces since she was in kindergarten, she is still looking to improve. "I definitely have improved," she says. "I see the heads of busts I've made, like there's one from my sophomore year and I can see how far I've improved 'til now. As I get better I just want to keep on going."

One of Distinto's strongest influences is Banksy, whose work she describes as an "eye-opener." She also admires Claude Monet's impressionist style and how the change over time is visible in his work. Wilson art teacher Mary Lambert is also an important role model to Distinto, who has taken classes with her since freshman year.

When asked about her greatest accomplishments as an

artist, Distinto remarks reflectively, "Every piece is an accomplishment because it makes me a better artist. Every time I pick up a paint brush or pencil for something to do, it makes me better."

As a senior, Distinto will be graduating from Wilson in the spring and will attend DC's Trinity University in the fall. While Trinity does not offer classes in an art program, Distinto is very much looking forward to creating a lot of work on her own. She hopes to develop her skill and possibly pursue a graduate program in the arts.

A strong believer that art is a vital and healthy way for people to express themselves, Distinto's main goal is to get a job as an art therapist for children. "Art is a really good way to heal, and I love working with children." Every time she draws or paints is a learning experience for Distinto, and something she plans to continue throughout her entire life. •

Hyper Bole is the Superbowl of Poetry



Photo by Ellie LeBlanc

SNAPS - Wilson poetry club attended the Hyper Bole at George Mason University on January 31. One Wilson student, Odera Oliver, advanced to the finals.

Ellie LeBlanc
Photo Editor

Nerves were high as the gaggle of Wilson students entered George Mason University's Johnson Center on January 31 to participate in the annual Hyper Bole. After registering, students were free to begin practicing their poems individually or with others. Shortly into their warm-up, Wilson librarian and poetry club director Pamela Gardner called the students together into a group huddle.

"We're going to take a minute to just get ourselves together-- get all the kinks out, calm down and then do our thing."

A silence fell over the room as students joined hands and bowed their heads in reflection.

"Now everyone take a big deep breath in....and let it out..."

The circle rose with the air they inhaled and sank as that air was released along with tension and anxiety.

Next, in order to get their excitement flowing, poetry club coach Asha Gardner had the students spit all their poems out at once. The room suddenly filled with dozens of voices, each trying hard to be heard over so many others.

Each year students from schools around the DMV come together to compete in a daylong poetry slam festival. Co-founded and managed by Joseph Green and Brian Hanan, the Hyper Bole was patterned after "Louder Than a Bomb," a separate poetry slam for Vir-

ginia students.

As some of the Virginia teams were coming home from the slam on the Metro, they decided to perform their pieces for each other. By sheer coincidence, or perhaps fate, the director of student activities at George Mason was on the same train. He liked what he heard so much that he arranged for the school to host an annual poetry slam on campus.

The goal? "Bring students together to talk about things that matter to them and introduce them to things that they may not be aware of," said Green. This occurs in workshops that are hosted by George Mason students. Before the workshops, students went through the first stage of the competition, during which each person presented two original poems for the judges.

Following lunch and the workshops, students were able to participate in an open-mic session, which allowed them to hear people they hadn't heard earlier. Once the list for finals was posted, students, teachers, parents, and staff gathered to hear the finalists compete.

At this year's festival, Wilson senior Odera Oliver advanced to finals. Oliver is a first year poet who was brave enough to stand up and speak about personal issues openly. Although she did not make it to the second round, the young poet will continue to write with the hopes of being able to share her art with others throughout high school and beyond. •

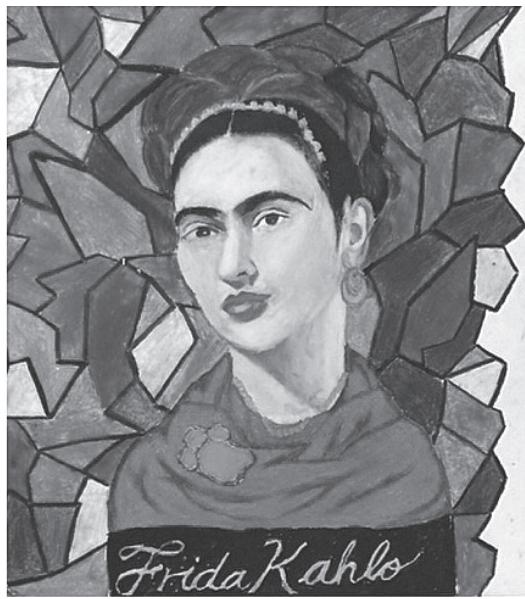
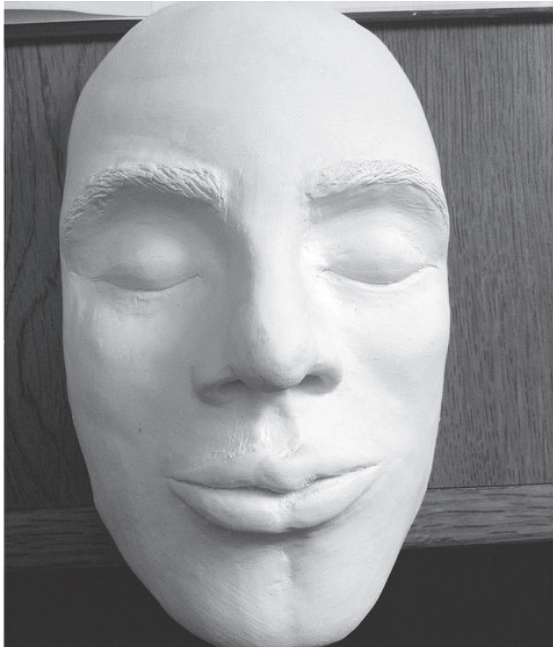
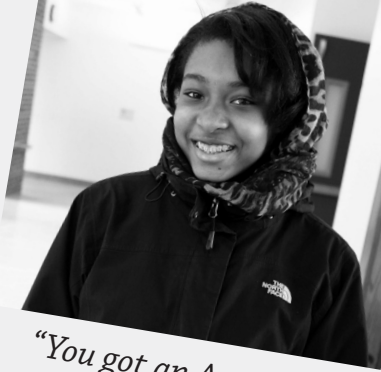


Photo Credits: Joyce Distinto

What's the best/worst thing a teacher said about you at parent teacher conferences?



"Your brother is so smart..."
Teo Topa, 10



"You got an A- on your packet!"
Jada Coley, 9



"Oh... you're back"
Christian Calhoun, 10



"You're brilliant, but you don't do your homework"
Frank Borris, 9



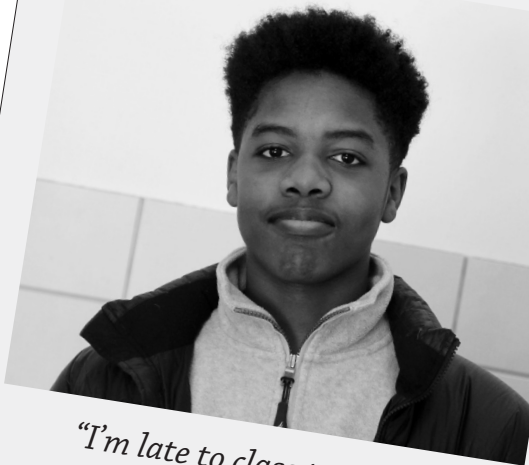
"Your son asks too many questions"
Nathaniel Tolbert Smith, 12
Nathan Kovar, 11
"We think your son has ADD"
Charlie Steinman, 11



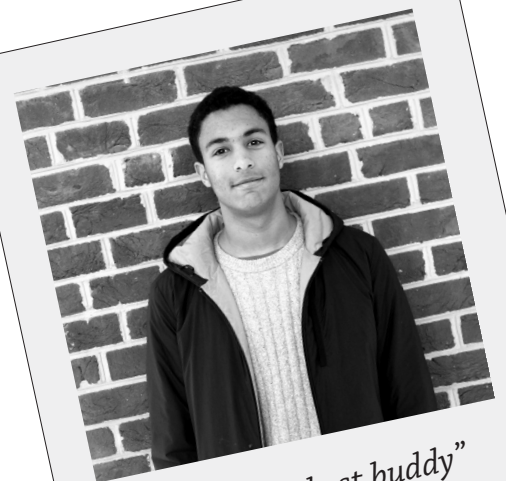
"Your son disappoints me"
Max Aviles, 12



"She totally disrespected me and cussed me out"
Kechelle Thomas, 9



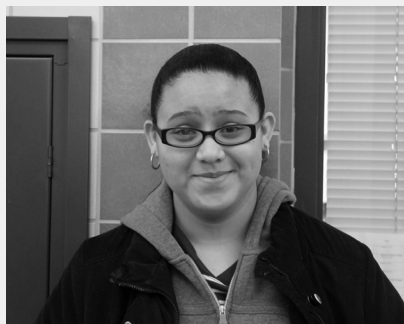
"I'm late to class too much"
Christian Hudson, 11



"You're my best buddy"
Lazaro Cardenas, 10



"I talk too much"
May McLaughlin, 9



"I'm unfocused"
Jaednee I. Ramirez, 9



"He always smells like brownies..."
Zach Potts, 12