



Contents

Sports

College Football: Playoffs and Pay Offs	Pg. 2
---	-------

School Life

The Evolution of SALC	Pg. 4
A Dressember Recap	Pg. 6
Holiday Help	Pg. 7
A Year in the Life	Pg. 8
Eddas Coffeehouse	Pg. 10
Amplified	Pg. 11
Lady Vikings Basketball	Pg. 12

Tech

Overlit	Pg. 14
---------	--------

Runes

Featured Artist: Kaitlyn Graham	Pg. 15
Peace Within the City Art Show	Pg. 16

Letter from the Editor

2017 heralds in, among many other things, a pervading sense of optimism shared by the smallest child to the greatest world leader. Some, however, find themselves trapped in the mire of yesteryear, bogged down by the divisive and electric issues of 2016. It may be easy to focus on the downfalls of our community, our country, and our world. But, with a new year, let America focus not on its lows but rather its highs; just as lows compliment highs, highs compliment lows. As we experience lows, highs must follow. As the last memories of 2016 are shed by the endless march of Time, they will be replaced with the first memories of 2017 – ones which we ourselves must make positive. Negativity harbors inaction and indifference. It is only through positivity that action and change come into fruition. The duty rests on no one but the individual.

Ryan Crow

Editor-In-Chief

“What we think, we become.” – Buddha

College Football: Playoffs and Pay Offs

By: Muhammad Amjad

The National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) reports college football is the most watched sport in all of amateur athletics in America. It makes complete sense since the NFL is the most watched (per game) league in professional sports. Yet, with such a huge fan base, there seems to be controversy upon controversy in a sport whose infrastructure is as illogical as it is unfair to the thousands of young student-athletes. The problem does not lie in the quality of the competition, or oddly phrased rules, but rather in the out-of-touch and greedy men in charge of the body.

Year after year, decade after decade, there is *always* the inconsistency in choosing (yes, choosing) the teams who play for the national championship game. In college football, with over two hundred teams who play division I, the method of ranking and selecting the participation in marquee bowl games is at the will of the College Playoff Selection Committee. This committee consists of current athletic directors and former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. What is their criteria for selection? No one knows. However, it is worth mentioning

that with the current playoff system, none other than the most revenue and rating generating teams have been consistency featured, albeit being talented of course. But the line between talent and the businesses of football is so shaky that the general public has no clue on what the committee thinks as they cast their ballots.



The clearest example was this past season; of the top eight or so teams, one could argue for any combination of four to be in the playoff. Alabama, Clemson, Ohio State, and Washington were the lucky bunch who played for the 'chip. Ohio State did not win its conference, and Washington had the worst strength of schedule of any top-15 ranked team. However, from this list were cut Michigan

and Penn State. Shouldn't a team have to have won its conference to be play for the national championship? Maybe it's because the name Ohio State is so common in sports talk that it is a given for them to be featured in marquee games. The evidence is clear that neither they nor Washington deserved such an opportunity, as both teams were blown out in the first round.

If Penn State or Michigan had played 'Bama or Clemson, then perhaps the competition level would have been more entertaining (note: Penn State beat Ohio State, but lost to Michigan. Michigan lost to Ohio State on a controversial goal line call). It is widely accepted that Michigan was the better team and should have played Clemson for a chance at the title, or even Penn State should have taken Ohio State's spot. But what is not arguable is that the committee does not exercise objective judgement in choosing these teams. Most members are *current* athletic directors of D1 football programs that have much to lose from certain teams being in or out of the playoff system.

Solution: expand the playoff! Eight teams as opposed to four guarantees each worthy and credible team a chance to play for the biggest honor in amateur sports. Make the Playoff Selection Committee *completely* unbiased; do not allow current administrators a vote, but rather retired Hall of Fame football players and coaches (there are literally thousands

who would gladly take that paycheck), and *publish* the actual criteria for how teams are chosen. Take the ambiguity out of college football, and let the people see what they want to see.

The second and most glaring issue in college athletics, specifically football, is that players are not compensated fairly. The average “full ride” scholarship is worth easily over \$80k. A free education is absolutely a worthy compensation for student athletes. However, college football players, unlike the average student, are often restricted (by coaches or by time) from holding jobs as most kids do. They have an insane class and practice schedule that demands 110% daily. But the real reason these kids deserve compensation is that they bring in hundreds of millions of dollars for their schools that use their names, merchandise, and likeness for profit. College athletes are not allowed to sell their own gear or trademark their persona in the

context of sports by law or they’ll lose their scholarships. In a country where we pride ourselves in seizing our talents for economic gain, why aren’t athletes in the most profit-generating sports allowed to?

Most D1 kids come from poverty. In fact, 86% of ALL college athletes live below the poverty line. Meanwhile, the average revenue from football for a college in D1 is well over \$75 million. Obviously if colleges pitched money as a reason for a kid to attend their



COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF

institution, then amateurism is invalid. But, if there was a universal system of fair payment, then football players wouldn’t have to struggle for food and living expenses as they do today.

Solution 1: every college football player receives a stipend of \$500 per month from the university. This is equivalent to what the average work-study program in a

university would pay, and schools couldn’t compete with each other on money since it would be a universal system.

Solution 2: To increase graduation rates from these kids which would benefit all parties, give each player his fair share of revenue in a single payment upon conferring a degree. Marquee players would be rewarded with the attention and money they brought in fairly, while all students would get a check. The student athletes would have had to complete their degree, and the university bolsters its academic purpose.

In summary, college athletics are the perfect balance of amateur talent and alumni pride. But, with increasing controversy amongst the football tournament system, there needs to be a change. Football players bring in hundreds of millions of dollars for their programs and do not receive a single cent of that (they cannot even sign and sell their own jersey); let them have their cake and eat it too. The NCAA needs to be more proactive in these reforms, or else the lure of college football will fade away to the pro.

Bridges, Gaps, and Legacies: The Evolution of SALC

By: Nathan Amanuel

Student Academic Leadership Class (SALC) has been instrumental in the effort to further elevate the role and continued importance of Woodbridge Senior High School in the eyes of the local community as an elemental force of good. SALC is currently organized by Mrs. Bristow and Mr. Viola. Dedication to the service and voice of the student body is unparalleled and extends not only to one service, but many. Co-Director of the SALC Mr. Viola notes that "SALC is busy- the students are producing large scale events, enhancing school pride and school culture through various programs and projects, committing philanthropic work in the community and spreading vast awareness, and publicizing and backing all academic programs, extracurricular activities, and students and staff."

An all-inclusive Viking community is being built through such maximized efforts as evident in the aforementioned statement. And, those who under different circumstances might typically feel marginalized in regard to support from fellow students and staff, will have an adequate foundation for relationships to be built upon. Such outreach extends not only to the disenfranchised, but

to those who may not feel a connection to their class due to certain language barriers. An active outreach program for those participants in English Learning program has brought a different texture to SALC, and has further diversified the demographic. As the nation continues to expand the definition of what it means to be an American in this day and age among the international pantheon, it is not only sensible but right that the SALC continues to represent such a paradigm shift. Constantly evident from the genesis of the SALC as an organization has, of course, been the inclusion of those with the uncanny ability to tap into the public consciousness and reach out to issues of the utmost importance.

In such a breeding ground for creativity and open dialogue, an excitement in the air can be found, for which is the root of much innovation and strides pertaining to impact in the general populace of the Viking community. However, in the adolescent stage of SALC, those who joined seemed to have extroverted qualities, drive, and initiative; in other words, bold characteristics. It is true that the conception that those who show leadership qualities tend to be charismatic is not completely unfounded; however, there are a great

number of those within the annals of history who have shown such qualities of perseverance under pressure, with the goal of serving the common good. Abraham Lincoln, for example, was a noted introvert by nature who led not with charisma, but appeal to moral excellence and civic duty. He came to be remembered as a transformative figure in the evolution of the American Identity from one stratum of thought to the next. Likewise, SALC's change in recruitment methods has come to reflect the inclination to proactive change, while also paying tribute to those previous individuals.

Upon the transition from Mr. Karnbach and Ms. Robinson to Mr. Viola and Mrs. Bristow, there was an active effort on behalf of the faculty and staff to impart knowledge of the SALC's need of a growing leadership community enveloped around its already established causes, of which diverse students were needed. This edict, in a sense, lead certain educators to notify those who showed qualities of leadership yet lacked the traditional charismatic presence commonly associated with such roles.

Change notably comes not in broad strokes, but in isolated increments of minute adjustment. Adding such individuals, the silent leader archetype in a sense, will only continue to add to the versatility found within the workings of the SALC from humble yet respectable beginnings, and have beneficial effects in terms of broad based appeal. In such a quest, there is no one better to have as an advocate than Principal Abney. Since January 2016, Principal Abney has undoubtedly created an eloquent rapport with the student body through various modes of communication. "I try to keep an active dialogue and extend an open hand, whether it be through social media, encouraging each extracurricular activity, or visiting classrooms and carrying conversation with those who attend Woodbridge Senior High School, on a more intimate level" comments Principal Abney.

Embraced here is the idea that there is no typical or generically archetypal student. Each person has a perspective to offer, and a passion to share. Therefore it is a good indicator for the future that, as SALC continues to include more versatile traits as an institution,

Principal Abney offer a viable support system. "Each month, SALC focuses on a different cause for awareness concerning various issues that may come to directly or indirectly impact students," Principal Abney adds. "I think not only the social work aspect in this respect is beneficial to the student body, but it is imperative to have an



organization such as SALC have such prominence within the school and continue to develop. It bridges students of differing backgrounds into comradery, and gives students a better opportunity to really come into their own."

The ultimate goal is forthright, and on a course of proper realization. Mr. Viola shares his goal for the leadership course: "The main priority and hope is that SALC can be a beacon of leadership and a driving force within Woodbridge that inherently devotes itself as a whole to giving back to the community. As Miles Desamour once said, 'trust in the process.' That's all

Mrs. Bristow, the 75 students in the program, and I can do: trust that what we are doing and how we are doing it is making an impact. Transition years are hard, but the positive impacts that we are collectively trying to sustain is what we want to focus on."

Elaborated on further by Principal Abney, she would like to see SALC extend into a

full blown specialty program in the ensuing years. Principal Abney states, "I'd also like to see similar leadership programs extend to the middle school level, to get future students used to such organizations and be prepared to join and offer up their unique skillsets. Right now, SALC is grades 10-12, but in the future I can certainly see that being changed to incorporate those in grade 9."

Ultimately, time will tell what the future holds for the SALC. When infrastructures of established parties are being revolutionized, there is no benchmark or indicator for where that trajectory will end up. Whoever said a radicalized development was built on stability was lying. What can be known only is that it will lead to something different and new: exhilarating and experimental. "What comes with that," questions Viola. "Who knows?"

Freedom for Every Captive: A Dresseember Recap

By: Emma Seguin

Dresseember first reached Woodbridge three years ago when current senior, Amanda Rice, learned of the movement from a friend at her church. The idea seemed simple – wear a dress for a month, raise money to end slavery. That winter, she enlisted her friends Shannon Gage, Erika Ervin, and Emma Seguin, among others, to join her. The girls embarked on a journey to share the reality of human trafficking with their peers, and used their dresses as a talking point. Even if the girls' legs got a little cold, they raised over \$1,200 in the end – and that's what made it worth the sacrifice.

The next year, some more of their friends wanted to join, so they created a team of around fifteen girls, from all across Northern Virginia. Students from Forest Park, South County, as well as Woodbridge all joined the girls and together they more than doubled the amount raised: close to \$3,000. Regardless of the money raised, however, the girls never strayed from their focus on everyday advocacy.

This past December, Dresseember boomed at Woodbridge and in other schools across Prince William County. Amanda Rice, Emma Seguin, and Shannon Gage were joined by thirty other students, faculty, and parents in the fight to end modern day slavery. Principal Heather Abney, Maya Mason, and Olivia Black are just a few of the powerful advocates they were proud to have on their team. The movement kicked off with an information night on November 29, with materials donated by International Justice Mission, a justice-seeking nonprofit that fights slavery worldwide. The night featured testimonials, an IJM representative, and of course, dress-shaped refreshments. Over the next few nights, the word got out and the voices spoke loud and clear, proclaiming that they wouldn't accept slavery as a justifiable act, as they dedicated themselves to wearing a dress for the month.



Dresseember began as a fashion challenge formulated by a woman named Blythe Hill in California, and, within a few short years, has made it across the nation and globe. Dresseember has seen participants from over 30 different countries, and this year, doubled its funds raised to meet a grand total of three million dollars.

It's hard not to want to get involved when the girls discuss the reason they're committed: "It's unacceptable to me that big-name American brands consciously use slave labor to make the clothes I wear", says Emma Seguin. Research proves that there are more than thirty million slaves in the world today, and close to 20,000 live in the United States. Taking on forms such as bonded slavery, forced labor, and sex trafficking, human trafficking appears in every major city across the globe. During Dresseember, participants take to social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to ask their friends and family to help them reach their fundraising goal. Sharing facts such as "Another person is sold into slavery every 30 seconds" and "The global average price for another person is \$90", they spread the word of this horrible reality and have spurred their communities into action.

At the end of the month, the girls are only a few dollars away from having raised \$6,000. "Donations can still be made online by heading to www.dresseember.org and searching for our team, NOVA for Freedom," reminds senior Emma Seguin. "It's never too late to take a stand for freedom."

Holiday Help... Giving Back to the Community

By: Megan Whatley

Congratulations to the students and faculty for another successful Holiday Help event this past December. Without all the efforts from everyone here, Holiday Help would not have been such a successful event.



Holiday Help is an event which is sponsored by the SALC class to provide children from financially unstable situations a chance to experience the holidays like many of us are usually accustomed to. The teachers and students here at WSHS “adopt” a child in need and their “wish list”. Students and faculty then donate the items on the child’s “wish list”. In addition to the donations of toys and gift items from the “wish lists” of the children in need, necessities such as clothing, winter coats, hats, gloves and shoes are also provided for them.

Once all the gift items were collected, the SALC class took up their list and checked it twice to make sure every child would receive the gifts on their “wish list”. Then, they sorted and packaged up the gifts for each individual child. The SALC class delivered the packaged items to the Principals and administration teams at Occoquan, Rockledge, Belmont and Kilby Elementary Schools. The principals and administration teams distribute the packages to the families, so the children have presents to open on the holiday.

Many of our students have said that “it feels good to give back to our community, especially when it helps out little kids”. They have also said, “I wish I could see their faces when they open their presents! I bet they are so excited.” While the SALC class was making rounds to the elementary schools to drop off the Holiday Help presents, they were able to spend some time with many of the students during their lunch period. The elementary school kids were so excited to see the high school SALC students. They spent their lunch time talking and taking pictures with the older students.

A big “Thank You” goes out to the SALC class and their Philanthropy, Pride, Production and Public Relations committees along with Mr. Viola and Mrs. Bristow for organizing such an important event and fulfilling a need in our community. Also, a huge “Thank You” goes out to everyone that participated in this event. Because of the generosity of our students and faculty, the Holiday Help event provided the children of need in our community a much brighter holiday this year.



A Year in the Life: Interview with Principal Abney

By: Ryan Crow

Principal Abney came to Woodbridge in January of 2016 to a month filled with several challenges and the looming threat of another massive snowstorm. A year later, the scene is totally different, with a calm and academic year that has introduced new traditions and is poised to be one of Woodbridge's best. I interviewed her recently about her first year, and the impact it's brought.

Ryan: So what got you into education?

Abney: "...when I was in high school I planned to be...a newscaster. And so that was my plan to study communications in college. [And] my freshman year in college I started to substitute teach. And when I was substituting, I began to fall in love with education. And it was the high school level, but I realized that that might be a career path I would be interested in. At the same time I attended a seminar at George Mason and they talked about the need for teachers and how it would be... it was an occupation. And there was a there was a, a need for teachers, especially special education teachers, and at the time I wasn't sure which route I wanted to go in education, so I started taking some classes. To teach Special Education."

How has your time at Woodbridge changed you as a person?

"I think one thing that it's done is... I'm more flexible than I was before, because I'm a very detail oriented and organized person, and I can have my schedule in place but if something happens during the school day my schedule gets altered, and I'm gonna have to be flexible to move into whatever role I need to move into. So I think the one thing that I've learned to do is to be more flexible... [my time has] allowed me to develop more relationships with a wider variety of people because I realize I'm communicating with on a daily basis with students, with parents, with teachers. And I think it's developed me into a better leader overall."

What's been the most challenging part of Woodbridge?

"The most challenging [part is] balancing everything, because I'm a real hands-on mom, so, being present with my kids and my husband while also being present for everything going on at Woodbridge. ...I feel so committed to everyone at Woodbridge, so it's a tough balance sometimes when a student wants me to come to, for example, a basketball game, but I also know I need to go home and have dinner with the family."

Your first few weeks here were pretty rough. Looking back on that, how did that influence how you came into this job?

“Well, it... it really kind of threw me into the fire, literally right away, but it made me realize the importance of communication, because I realized how important it is to keep students, staff, and parents updated on a regular basis... you can never communicate too much.”

In your time at Woodbridge, what event or experience has had the biggest impact?

“What I remember the most [are] my experiences with SALC, well, with student leadership [in general]. Because I’ve never been in a school, where we have so many students involved, and taking the lead on so many different initiatives. That, [and] the school spirit- I was blown away at my first football game, because that Woodbridge student section is like no other that I’ve seen. Those two, and also... I was really impressed when I came here with how everyone is so accepting of one another. I think that really stands out different from other schools where I’ve been.”

If you could tell the students one thing, what would it be?

“I would probably just tell them that I love what I do. The thing that I love the most is meeting with students, and being able to help students achieve their goals. And when I put that out there... people might just think that I’m just saying it, but I have students that send me e-mails and say, ‘can you help me with a letter of recommendation?’ Or, ‘can you meet with me because I’m struggling with a class,’ and I really feel that I serve in the role [of principal] as a parent first, for 2600 students.”



Eddas Coffee House

By: Kyle D. Trott

A dimly-lit, packed Senior Lounge, on a Wednesday night, humming with nervous energy, warm laughter, and a loving atmosphere. In the midst of tests, final papers and end of the year projects, a collection of highly talented artists gather together in the night and lend their voices to the powerful play that goes on. These gifted artist, musicians, and writers fearlessly share their talents and gifts to an enthusiastic and encouraging audience. "All are welcome to perform and share their gifts," sophomore Marquis Ventura says between cookies and coffee. "I show up for the variety and craziness."

The Eddas Coffee House, meeting once a month, is a place for students to showcase their best work, works in progress, and progress on their work. Cathy Hailey has been holding the gathering of artists and observers for over 16 years. "It started as a way for students to share their talents," Hailey says between rummaging through audio cables. "We started once a year. Then twice. Once we realized the support, we just kept going once a month." It has steadily turned into a staple for performers and artists of all kinds. The intimate setting hosts a contention of over 60 students contributing, observing and appreciating each other's talents and gifts. As well as coffee and donuts.

"The first time I performed was freshmen year," says junior Michelle Garcia, after singing her rendition of "White Christmas" while playing guitar. "Having the lights down and your friends in front of you; it's just a safe place to perform." Open to any and all, this sentiment is clearly shared by all who come to this gathering. From freshmen to seniors, no one is an outcast amongst this community.

The venue is unlike any other. With plays and formal performances, the Coffee House allows for students to openly perform and work on their art

in a low pressure way to an appreciative audience. Not for grades or accolades, but for the purity of their respective fields. Senior Christian Ellis, prominently involved in theatre and music, reflects on the differences between the main stage and the Coffee House: "When you're on the main stage, it's all professional. You've worked so hard with all these people and this is the show. Coffee House isn't like that. It's a fun and freeing place to be creative." Ellis took the stage with fellow choir students and sang, acapella, "Carol the Bells" to thunderous applause.

Open mic ends the collective concoction of contributors. An opportunity for anyone to sign up and share something. A cornucopia of writing, music and song concludes the night that would impress even The Dead Poets' Society. The artists file out contemplative and contented with the combination of art and companionship. All buzzing with anticipation for the next Eddas Coffee House on February 15.



Amplified

By: Michelle Hilado

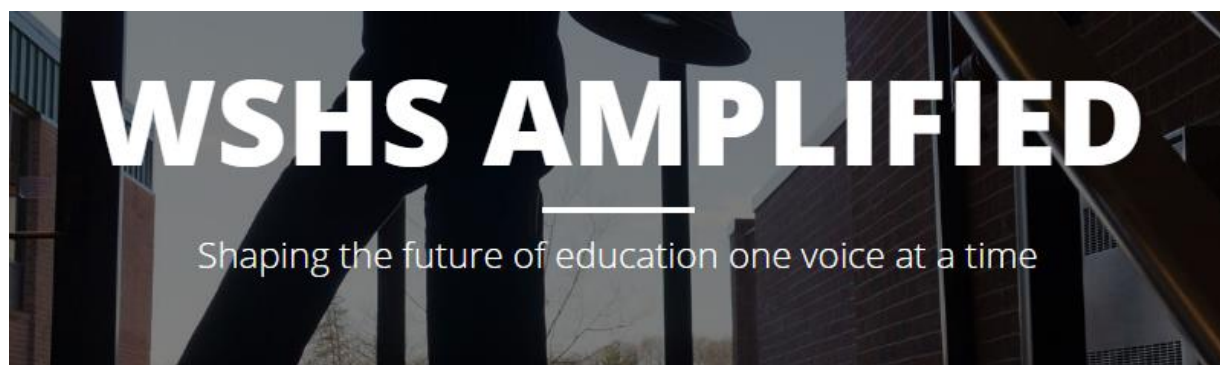
Wshsamplified.com is a student created, student led, and student revolved website. This new school website was designed and created by two current seniors at Woodbridge Senior High School: Jose Reyes and Samir Bawazir. The planning process of Amplified began during their sophomore year, and it only took them about a year before presenting it to teachers, staff, and eventually the entire SALC program. The website release ceremony of the website took place on August 19th, 2016, presented along with the newly renovated senior lounge, in front of students, teachers, staff, administration, and even the Area IV Associate Superintendent of High Schools, Mr. Mulgrew. Since then, both Jose and Samir, with the help of SALC students, have put in countless hours to bring Amplified to where it is today: a place where students can let their voice be heard.

In essence, Amplified is a place that allows the voices of students, staff, and anyone from the Viking community to be heard, and it's also a place where visitors can be informed on news within the school whether it be by a class newsletter, a student spotlight, or the class of 2017's digital time capsule. Also featured on the Amplified website is the school's podcast, Under the Bridge, hosted by

Patrick Stead and Chris Mack. However, one of the main focal points and goals of Amplified is to give both the people of Woodbridge Senior High School, as well as anyone in the Viking community, the ability and opportunity to collaborate or solve different topics going on within the school, especially when it comes to improving the learning environments for students.

This website represents Woodbridge Senior High School's theme, created by the principal, Mrs. Abney, which is "Building Bridges, Closing Gaps, and Leaving Legacies". Whether it's the student spotlight and recognizing those outstanding students who may have otherwise gone unnoticed, or a blog on annotations and whether or not they're really worth it, students are able to share their thoughts and opinions, and express their voice for the entire Viking community to hear. Amplified is a prime example of two students who had a vision, worked hard, and made it come to life.

You can visit the Amplified website at:
<https://wshsamplified.com/>



Lady Vikings Basketball Dominating Midway Through the Season

By: Mary Trimble

The Lady Vikings Varsity Basketball team is dominating this season, leaving the rest of the region in the dust with their 11-1 start to the year. They are currently ranked 13th in Virginia and have their sights set on a run at the state championship.

Head Coach Tamika Dudley says hard work is a pillar of this team's success. Their approach to practices, preparation, and their contributions to the school community are something she refers to as a "Woodbridge Culture". "We do extra. They know they

[the players] need to be here 30 minutes early; there are certain expectations for them to do things in the classroom and throughout the school building," Coach Dudley said.

"The Woodbridge Culture means a lot to me," said Tyler Young, the senior power forward for the Vikings. "We have to keep our heads on straight to do what we have to do."

Senior point guard Hanna Oliver described it as, "Doing what you are supposed to do on, and off, the court. Being examples for others. Always working hard, no matter what kind of day you've had, just give 100 percent. Have energy." Oliver leads her team in three-pointers with 28 scored in just eleven games. "We work pretty hard, probably harder than any of the teams in

According to players, their hard work and dedication comes right from the top. "[Coach Dudley] is in the gym all the time, whenever you ask," Oliver told *The Valkyrie*. "Her work ethic is probably the reason we work so hard."

"She has contributed to my strengths and to who I am as a player today," Young said.

"If it wasn't for Coach Dudley, we wouldn't have a goal of getting to the state championships," said Camryn Platt-Morris, sophomore forward for the Lady Vikings.

But hard work and great coaching isn't all there is to it.

There is no lack of talent on the varsity roster which includes players from all four grade levels. But, even the younger players aren't lacking experience with the game. "They all have been basketball players from the time they were little. That is their thing: basketball," Coach Dudley said. "This is what they do. That's a huge strength."

The team also acknowledges an area that



this area. We are in the gym six days a week."

It shows. Setting the tone in the season opener against Colgan High School on December 2nd, the Lady Vikings racked up 79 points to the Sharks' 28. Their highest scoring game so far this season was a substantial 89-38 win over Freedom High School. They have continued this trend of high scores throughout the season so far.

needs work. Coach Dudley said, "We are very talented, so we can play a lot of kids, and sometimes that hurts our cohesiveness on the floor." But she noted, "The more games we play, the more cohesive we become."

"The meshing [as a team] is starting to come, but I think now that we have meshed on defense, we need to mesh on offense," said Tyler Young.

The Lady Vikings understand that in the middle of the season, things are going to get harder. Coach Dudley noted that, "At this point, we practice so much the girls are bored." She added that she expected their January 13

matchup against William Fleming High School from Roanoke (7-3, ranked 23rd), to be one of the hardest of the season. (The final score went for Fleming, 62-52) The players say they are working even harder in order to prepare for the more challenging opponents to come.

"[We] watch a lot of film," Oliver explained. She added that they apply the lessons they learn in the film room to their practices.

"Practice has to be really hard, so the games can be really easy," said Coach Dudley. Moving forward in what has already been a phenomenal season, the state

championships are a goal at the forefront of the mind of this team, and they feel they can get there. Coach Dudley reflects, "This team has all the pieces it takes."

"If we put in the amount of work we need to, we could get there," said Platt-Morris.

"This team is stronger. The bond is stronger," answered Young, when asked what made this team different. "They work harder. We all individually work hard. I can say there's not one person who is slacking. We all work hard, because we know that's what we have to do as a team."



Overlit

By: Stephen Caldwell

Since the rise of eSports in the last few years, more game developers have decided to focus on taking their game to the global stage. The massive recognition of eSports tournaments in the news, along with huge profit-laden events, has brought game developers to create competitive and strategic games like Overwatch. Overwatch is a first person team shooter, where two teams of six are pit against each other to deliver a payload or fight for a control point.

In Overwatch, each player selects a hero from a pool of 23 to fit their team composition. Each hero has a role, and each player takes this into consideration when creating a team composition. This is what makes Overwatch such a unique eSport- each player needs to know multiple heroes who have different attributes, strengths and weaknesses. To have the most effective team, each player has to choose a hero that not only fits their desired role, but also coincides with the rest of the team's heroes - also known as team composition.

Here at Woodbridge, a group of seniors has created a competitive Overwatch team, named *Overlit*, which is competing in the High School Starleague. High School Starleague is a country-wide bracket style tournament, where the winning team takes all. It all takes place online - and the incentives to win are scholarships for the team members. The roster below is the teams current lineup – from top left, Alec Yeager, David Ouyang, Gabe Santana, Tyler Weyant, Logan Moran, Michael Griese, Ryan Crow, and Donovan Lucore.

I am interviewing a Tyler Weyant, who is a member of *Overlit* and has been playing Overwatch since release.

Why are you dedicated to playing Overwatch?

Tyler: Because I enjoy playing a game competitively so I can watch myself improve.

What is your opinion on Overwatch becoming a competitive eSport?

Tyler: It's a great way for Blizzard to promote the game and attract new players to the community.

How would you compare the rise of Overwatch as an eSport to other games such as League of Legends or Counter Strike?

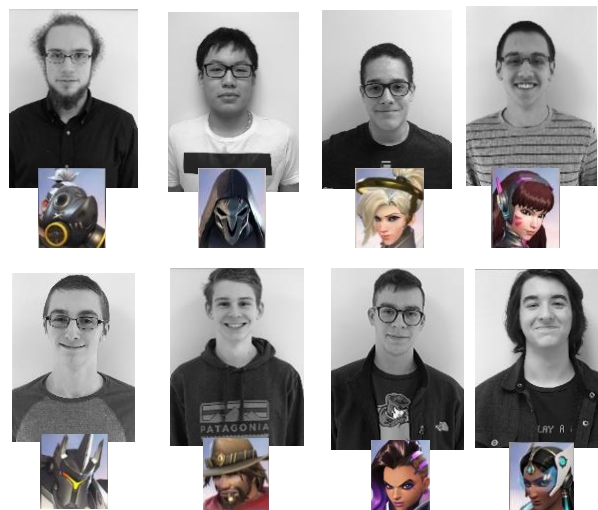
Tyler: League and Counterstrike had to build their own foundation for eSports, while Overwatch came at a time where eSports were already prominent in the gaming community.

Is character balance a problem in Overwatch?

Tyler: It is a problem but it's nowhere near as big a problem as in other games, such as League of Legends.

How would you compare Overwatch to other FPS's?

Tyler: The core elements of an FPS are there but Overwatch is very different because players have to account for the abilities of both themselves and their opponents as well as the FPS aspect of the game.



Featured Artist: Kaitlyn Graham - Poetry

Kaitlyn Graham is a senior in the Center for Fine and Performing Arts program, specifically the Creative Writing concentration with Mrs. Hailey. In her time as a writer, she has won numerous awards, including first place in the Center for the Arts Off the Wall poetry contest, two Special Young Writer's Poetry Awards by Balticon for science fiction poetry, and most importantly, two national silver medals for poetry in the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards. In the future, Kaitlyn plans to pursue political economy in college and eventually work in legislation or humanitarian endeavors.

I Love That Her Hair Is Purple

because I write poetry in purple pen

because I drink grape juice every morning and it's
a good kind of bitter

because it's the color of kings and queens,
and God

because purple is the bubbling in your diaphragm
when you're trying to breathe but you're scared
and every breath feels like shards of amethyst
growing in your lungs

because grape lollipops stain my tongue
the way
I imagine the galaxy
stains our minds

because it's a poet's jubilation
to see a head full of melancholy lavender,
oceans of forgotten metaphors
crashing on ink shorelines
unaware of the ephemeral grandeur

of boxed hair dye

because the back of my eyelids

turn violet when I'm tired

because purple is soft
and smells like lilacs in June,
and the aroma reminds us of weddings
and Sunday post-church naps

because it's her.

Violins Play in the Foreground

Deceit lingers
in the breath
of a spring flower
blooming in July.
How faint and fair her death,
how fragile and routine-
a beautiful, shapely
doom.
Imagine,
a whisper perishing
in the sun,
withering away,
away and away
from the Earth
that crumbles between fingers.

And we learn to let go
every time.

Peace within the City Art Show

By: Cynthia Davis

Homicides have been on the rise in Prince William County, and local residents want it to stop. Local artist Alexis Gomez yearned to make a statement about this. "Peace Within the City was created as a positive platform for the community to focus their energy. I wanted to give students the opportunity to show their work and get a taste of what it's like to exhibit if they hadn't already. This is something I wished for when I was in high school and having a show makes all the hard work that goes into the creative process worthwhile," said Gomez. The 'Peace Within the City' art show rose from this concern. The purpose of this show is two-fold: raise awareness of local crime rates and to promote peace in the community. Peace Within the City was a one night show, held on Friday, January 13th, at the Chinn Fitness and Aquatic Center. Gomez contacted local student artists to be a part of it, and encouraged teachers to submit students' work. Our school had 6 artists in the show: Alani Weeks, Cynthia Davis, Katie Carstens, Hope Bishop, Jacob Chartier and Jamie Brewer. All the RSVPs were promptly filled and people constantly came through the door. There were local vendors,



photographers, a DJ at the event, and all guests were able to get free photos taken. Guests crowded around the art on the wall to appreciate the students' talent, and overall the show was very successful. One of the students, Alani Weeks, said "It was cool to see everyone's art, I was surprised to see my art there, I felt good about it." She had a painting entitled 'Aqua'. The show was a hit, accomplishing the original goal of Mr. Gomez; "I hope everyone left the event inspired and ready to make more." The guests left feeling passionate about promoting peace, and students and their families both had a positive experience.

