

The MLWGS Jabberwock

Volume 4, Issue 11

www.gsgis.k12.va.us

Friday, May 4, 2007

Affirmative Action for MLWGS?

Danny Yates

Jabberwock Staff Reporter

The Regional School Board's Superintendent Steering Committee has charged the administration with five actions dealing with the lack of diversity in the student body.

"Three of the five have already been approved, but the last two are resting on the backburner until we learn the result of a pending Supreme Court case," said MLWGS director Mr. Doug Hunt.

The cases on the Supreme Court docket, *Parents Involved in Community Schools v Seattle School District No. 1* and *Meredith v Jefferson County Board of Education*, involve using race as a factor in determining student admission.

An article in *The Chesterfield Observer*, a local gazette for Chesterfield County, discussed the MLWGS Regional School Board's decision.

The April 4 article, entitled "Maggie Walker's lack of diversity raises questions," asked the question of whether our students are not metro Richmond's "best and brightest" but rather the area's "best and whitest."

This article discussed the underrepresentation of "underserved minorities" at our school.

In light of recent programs which have broken down barriers and united the MLWGS community, such as "Embracing Differences Week," and "Mix-it-Up Day," this article and the board's actions have shocked many MLWGS students, parents and faculty.

For some however, the issue comes as no surprise.

For the past two years, the MLWGS Regional School Board has received requests from the Richmond Peace Education Center (RPEC) to increase our school's diversity in both students and staff.



Yesterday shortly after 11:20, a tractor trailer skidded against the guardrail of Interstate-95 and fell off into the parking lot of MLWGS. The two occupants of the vehicle were taken to the hospital with only minor injuries. Photo by David Sawchak.

Mr. Paul Fleisher, Assistant to the Director of the RPEC, and Ms. Genevieve Siegel-Hawley, a Governor's School alumna and a John Marshall High School teacher, have lobbied to increase representation of underserved minority students.

At MLWGS, "underserved minorities" are African American students. Whites, Asians, and Hispanics, are well represented (in proportion to the region), but African Americans make up only about 10% of our school.

"I think most of us now agree that this is a longstanding inequity... You mustn't let another year go by with the current problems in place," said Mr. Fleisher during the March regional board meeting.

Mr. Fleisher and Ms. Siegel-Hawley have repeatedly asked the board to change and adapt the MLWGS admissions process to make the school representative of "the diversity of the community it serves."

However, not all members of the MLWGS community are supportive of the new propositions. Dr. Charles Byles, MLWGS parent and VCU professor, voiced his opinion during the April board meeting.

"We have to be very careful to consider ramifications to students if a system is put in place which awards extra consideration because of one's race ... How would such a system affect how these students feel about themselves, knowing they were not admitted under the same standards as others?" said Mr. Byles.

Others, including faculty members share similar concerns.

"It's the wrong way to go about the right thing," said MLWGS history teacher Mr. Dan Brown.

The MLWGS administration, although not directly involved in the actual admissions process, are involved in discussions with the Regional Board on this issue.

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Embracing Differences

MLWGS' first Embracing Differences Week kicked off with an assembly featuring several speakers who had themselves been subject to some form of discrimination. One of the speakers was the director for The Richmond Organization for Sexual Minority Youth (ROSMY), an organization whose tenants conflict with the religious beliefs of some students.

Although the assembly's purpose was to encourage tolerance, it is important to be tolerant of those who object to the content of the assembly as well.

Instead of making the assembly mandatory, the school should have offered students an alternate assignment or activity that promoted diversity. Counselors or peer helpers could have held an open discussion in which students shared the reasons for their lack of attendance. Also students should have been informed of the speakers and content of the assembly prior to attending.

All in all, this week demonstrated the diversity of opinions present in our school. Most members of the MLWGS community, including students, teachers, and parents has strong opinions. It is a point of pride that members of our school are able to express these opinions without fear of retribution.

The fact that students are comfortable voicing their concerns with school-sponsored programs demonstrates the true diversity of our community. However, this means that tolerance is essential, as the strength of our sometimes conflicting opinions makes compromise difficult.

—AM

Good luck on
AP Exams

-The Jabberwock
Staff

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The MLWGS Jabberwock covers news events related to the school community and provides a forum for students to share their ideas. However, the statements expressed by columnists do not necessarily reflect the views of the Jabberwock staff.

All members of the MLWGS community are invited to submit letters to the editor on any topic, although the publication of all letters is not guaranteed. The newspaper reserves the right to edit letters for grammar, language and length. Please e-mail letters to: newspaper@gsgis.k12.va.us.

Don Imus, WE are Sorry

I will assume that you know the whole story about Don Imus—he called the players on the Rutgers’ women’s basketball team “nappy-headed hos” during the sports segment of his program. The reaction of people like Reverend Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson, though not unexpected, received mass media attention. Within a week of the comment, which Imus stated to be “some idiot comment meant to be amusing,” CBS fired Imus.

On the surface, people would say that Imus was an equal-opportunity abuser. No public figure escaped his snide remarks, and this was what began the “Shock Jock” radio phenomenon. Though some may not know of Imus, I am sure they have at least heard Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity or Michael Savage. They all come from the same mold, openly criticizing anyone that does not agree with them. Why do people not care about what is said? Because it *should* be our right to express how we

feel, and others need to accept that. This is a great country where censorship is not as controlling as it is in, for example, China. On the subject of China, Rosie O’Donnell said on *The View*, “In China it’s like, ‘Ching Chong, Danny DeVito, ching chong, chong, chong, chong.’” Should I, a Chinese American, be offended?

According to the arguments of Al Sharpton and the Rutgers coach C. Vivian Stringer, I should. Any comment that implicates race discrimination should be publicly condemned. This is where they are wrong. Yes, there are racial tensions and stereotypes in this country. I have been subject to these stereotypes before and am cognizant to their existence. What Don Imus has done is pointed out these problems to the public, and what the public’s reaction should be is to work towards tearing them down. Don’t pin them on a man who simply exposed one of the many flaws within our country.

Opinion

By Kevin Xiao (‘09)



Don Imus speaks on his radio show. Picture courtesy of *The Washington Post*.

Imus Was Justly Fired

When Don Imus referred to the Rutgers’ women’s basketball team as a bunch of “nappy-headed hos,” some of his eight million viewers laughed. Others did not.

It may have ended there, had it not been for media outlets like *You-Tube*. Then it became news, and according to an NBC poll, at least 45% of the television viewing audience felt that Imus had to go.

Judging from the caliber of entertainers, writers, and movers-and-shakers who

appeared as guests, Imus must have had something going for him. Many of those people, along with his viewers, found him witty, warm, and funny.

That is not enough to dismiss the words Imus uttered two weeks ago. Those unjust comments revealed an underlying bigotry.

One side of me wants to believe that Imus has done us a favor. After all, he inadvertently made us conscious about how racial, misogynist, and other such jokes revealed underlying hatred in all of us. He made us aware of how America’s largest media companies and corporate sponsors have supported the rise and eventual rule of this purveyor of ugly stereotypes.

I also know that many Americans will complain, calling it an issue of free speech.

Candidly speaking, racism is a part of life. What is significant is that so many of us accept it as normal. Perhaps what made this different was that Imus did not save his harshest caricature for his usual-suspects—politicians and others in the media spotlight. Instead he directed these ugly words toward some hard-working, dedicated, college students. Americans finally said “enough is enough.”

In earlier eras, his reign would definitely have withstood this storm. Now, we have minority and women politicians, celebrities, and even a front runner for presidential election. The issue that was solved with the firing of Imus is whether the standard of acceptable speech has changed. Ultimately, this is why I believe Imus should have been fired.

Opinion

By Tony Sun (‘10)

Affirmative Action

Continued from page 1

“The neat, unique thing about our school is that everyone has gotten here through the same process,” said Mr. Hunt. “You can’t buy your way into the school.”

However, Mr. Hunt did express his desire to make the

admissions process fair for all, while still continuing to accept only the best-qualified candidates.

Some who oppose adapting the admissions process are in favor of reaching out to families of elementary-age gifted minority students to advertise

the MLWGS program and help students begin planning at a younger age.

“While not the quick fix that many seem to want, it is, in my opinion, the course that has the best chance of success in the long run,” said Mr. Byles.

The controversial question of whether special accommodations should be enacted to help underserved minorities remains a highly debatable issue.

“Diversity is a part of our framework, and our diverse population allows for more learning,” said Mr. Hunt.

“Currently our numbers for minority students are not representative of the communities, but we face the question of should our numbers be representative? We don’t want to accept ill-prepared students who will struggle.”

Five Tasks the School is responsible for in creating School Admissions Policies

1. Investigate the hiring of a consultant who would evaluate the admissions process for fairness.
2. Talk to accepted minority students who didn’t choose MLWGS and find out their reasons for other high school choices.
3. Try to attract and excite minorities about the MLWGS program at younger ages through visits to elementary and middle schools.
4. Add additional points (possibly 10 or so) onto the 0-100 point application ranking scale for underserved minorities.*
5. Add additional slots specifically designated for underserved minorities.*

* Action delayed pending U.S. Supreme Court decisions

Letter to the Editor

Recently, as in “after Embracing Differences week” there has been talk of establishing an Affirmative Action-type system in Maggie Walker’s admissions process. Everyone who attends this school understands that we are very much a diverse community. Still, some “leaders” seem to think that’s not good enough. Some have considered getting private grants for more minority students to attend this school. Currently, our population is 75.3% Caucasian, a respectable statistic considering that it implies 24.7% of our school is “ethnically diverse.” Let’s take a look at the United States population. It’s 81.7% Caucasian. So, technically, we have a 5-6% higher

population of “ethnic” students than what is average in this country. This school was, and should continue to be, a school that admits bright students REGARDLESS OF RACE.

Admissions personnel see a number, and a set of numbers (test scores, grades, etc.) but not a name or ethnicity. That is how it should be. Accepting additional students on the grounds of their race or choosing one student over another purely because of race is DISCRIMINATION. I think people should be more open minded about this, especially because race or ethnicity is hardly something you can choose. Wouldn’t it be better to reward bright students who

to work hard and dedicate themselves to their studies rather than students who are “diverse?”

Finally, let’s turn the coin around--if you had a population of 75% Native American, African-American, Middle Eastern, Asian and other ethnic students and 25% white students at a high school, that would be called “very diverse,” whereas a population of 75% caucasians needs to be “fixed.” How can anyone with such a narrow-minded perspective possibly lead the Governor’s School in the right direction?

-Kaitlin Lawrence

Seeing From a Different Perspective

While college tours praise academic and athletic achievements, they may now include safety precautions

Natalia Virani and Isshin Teshima
Jabberwock Staff Reporters

A typical college tour includes visits to classrooms, dormitories and dining halls. However, for one MLWGS student, a simple college visit turned into one of the most important events of his life.

Senior Andy Rudd's visit to Virginia Tech University was abruptly interrupted by the shootings and murders of April 16.

Even though many of us witnessed the event through simple television and computer monitors, we were separated by an electronic barrier from the sadness, the anger, and the tragedy.

However, Rudd experienced it all first-hand.

Rudd was touring the Architecture School when the shootings occurred. At first, his group was only told that a domestic incident had occurred and a few people had died.

"It's so weird," said Rudd. "I wasn't scared at the time."

Around 9:40, Rudd was touring Cowgill Hall, only a few minutes before the shootings allegedly occurred. Cowgill Hall is located on the northern part of the campus less than 100 yards from Norris Hall where the majority of the shootings took place.

When the college heard of the initial shootings, Rudd was immediately moved to the basement of the Hall with other visiting students, where they waited while a member of the administrative staff continuously updated them on the situation.

"We were led to believe early on that there was only one death," Rudd explained. "The students around me were relaxed."

"By the time the woman told us there



A memorial set at the university for the April 16 victims. Photo courtesy of www.1010wins.com.

were over 10 deaths, the college told us to go back home," said Rudd. "When I got out, it was just surreal because of all the ambulance and cop cars."

Through the media's extensive coverage of the event, Rudd noticed that the murders totaled more than thirty.

"I was just stunned," Rudd said. "No one had realized the magnitude. It's just kind of hard to comprehend."

A Time to Reflect

Rudd was at first extremely shaken after the horrifying event.

"For the first 3 to 4 days, I was pretty upset," said Rudd. "I stayed up until maybe two each night watching the news and couldn't go to sleep."

However, Rudd and the rest of America saw increased unity and a sense of camaraderie between schools throughout the country.

On Friday of that week, people all throughout the country participated in the "We are all Hokies" day, donning the maroon and orange colors of Vir-

ginia Tech to work and school in memory of the Tech students.

"My sister went to Virginia Tech for five years," said Rudd. "I just feel I have a close connection with the event."

Regardless of the unity, some negative backlash also existed throughout America.

"I've heard people make subtle jokes about it," said Rudd. "That just bothers me."

Rudd also noted that something more should have been done about the shooter.

"I think it was wrong that he was left untreated for so long," said Rudd. "He should have had some mandatory treatment."

Regardless of the events, Rudd claimed that the shooting should not affect anyone's college decision-making process in any way.

"This could happen anywhere," said Rudd. "At Tech, with 26,000 people, you can't just put it on lockdown; it's not that simple."

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Virginia Tech

Continued from page 5

In retrospect, Rudd especially admired the faculty-student relations at Virginia Tech.

“I realize how close the Virginia Tech faculty was with the students,” said Rudd. “No one blamed the faculty for what happened.”

However, many people, including Rudd, are bothered by the societal influence on today’s culture. Rudd did not target video games or gun control issues. Instead, he cited the general stereotypes of modern culture to be the cause of the problem.

“In general, we’re so much more desensitized to violence,” said Rudd.

In the end, Rudd claimed that the shooting has not affected his college decision process in any way.

“The even had no effect on my decision,” said Rudd, “they did the best they could.”

Rudd finally has a sense of closure about the entire event.

“Though my sister attended Virginia Tech for five years, being present on April 16 made my bond with the community unbreakable,” Rudd said.

“Though I am not planning to attend, I have spent a great amount of time on campus and it is disappointing to imagine that it may never have the same feel—hopefully the students and faculty will continue to bond together and make Virginia Tech stronger than ever before. No one’s words were stronger than English professor Nikki Giovanni who stated “We will prevail, we are the Hokies.”



Makeshift memorials were erected on Virginia Tech’s campus. Photo courtesy of The New York Times.

Jabberwock Talk

Natalia Virani

Jabberwock Staff Reporter

As juniors, seniors, and selected underclassmen prepare for Prom 2007, there are some important points to take into consideration through the planning process.

Gentlemen

- Be sure to dress in appropriate attire for the event. Coordinating with your date is admirable, but certainly not required.
- Prepare to meet your date’s parents and family. Also prepare to take plenty of pictures
- Purchase a corsage for your date. Learn how to place the corsage on your date properly.
- Look clean: get a hair cut, shave, etc...

Ladies

- Be sure to have an appropriate dress, shoes, and accessories for the event. Try your dress on at least two days prior to the event for a final fitting and alterations.
- Be sure to have a working camera available for the night, but don’t exhaust the camera either!
- Make manicure/pedicure, hair and makeup appointments early. Several high school proms are held the same evening.
- Purchase a boutonniere for your date. Learn how to place the boutonniere on your date properly.

Both Ladies and Gentlemen

- You can go to prom without a date or escort. This is completely legal.
- Be sure the tickets for the event have been purchased.
- Confirm dinner reservations with both your party and the restaurant prior to the event. Be sure your entire party knows the time and location for dinner.
- Decide how to pay for dinner prior to the event to avoid awkward situations at the event.
- Determine who will be driving and the times for pick-up and drop-off.

Most importantly, remember to be safe and enjoy Prom! The school year is coming to an end, and you will want to make it a memorable evening!

007

WRITE A LETTER TO NATALIA

Email us: newspaper@gsgis.k12.va.us

Godly Goodness

Shawn Gill

Jabberwock Staff Reporter

As many gamers know, the original “God of War” was a spectacle in the Playstation 2 realm. Since it won “Best Playstation 2 Game of All Time” earlier this year, many would think, “How can they top that?” With such massive shoes to fill, how could “God of War II” possibly live up to the successes of its prequel?

Somehow, it has. “God of War II” is as enjoyable as its precursor, and even rivals it in some areas. The storyline, based on ancient Greek mythology, creates an intense journey through the betrayal, decline, and eventual uprising of Kratos, the new god of war.

Through various obstacles, traps and stories, “God of War II” brings the player face to face with ancient Greece. The gamer travels through caves, mountains, temples and even time, encountering Gods and Titans and ultimately changing Greek mythology as we know it.

The other components of this game are phenomenal. The puzzles provide an intellectual challenge that surpasses all other video games of its kind.

The game challenges the player to destroy a force field using only a statue, a lever, an elevator and a shield, while being attacked by mythological creatures like the Minotaur or Medusa that requires



Kratos soars through the clouds on the back of Pegasus in Playstation 2’s “God of War II.”
Picture courtesy of www.IGN.com.

some incredible gaming skill for any level gamer.

Even though some argue that the fixed camera angle is a distraction, the stellar graphics compensate and make the gamer feel as if he or she were walking in Kratos’s own shoes. In fact, the fixed camera is very useful during combos required to destroy a foe.

“God of War II’s” innovative relics allow Kratos to reflect magic spells, slow down time or open locked doors. Additionally, Kratos takes flight on the back of Pegasus, glides using a retractable set of wings, and swings through the air using

a new grapple hook technique.

“Challenge of the Titans” is a single-player mode in which the player attempts seven different challenges with increasing difficulty after he/she has completed the main game.

In another bonus area, “Arena of the Fates” the number and types of opponents can be customized, and the experience points carry over to the main game. These added features help to set the game apart from its predecessor.

I would definitely recommend this game for anyone as long as he/she does

not mind blood, gore or extreme violence. Although I did feel annoyed when I kept losing and it told me to revert to Easy Mode, it was better than I had expected.

The game takes a very patient and smart individual to complete, and with the Playstation 2 era coming to a close, “God of War II” is a profound masterpiece.

Forget about the Gods. May the Titans be with you.

Rating:



Softball: This Time It's For Real

Nick Eilerson

Jabberwock Staff Reporter

Imagine a lonely, desolate field lying silently behind a school building, its lush green grass thirsting for the familiar trampling of cleated shoes, its barren bleachers yearning for the harsh collective cries of a crazed crowd of over-excited mothers. An empty softball field, mmm, it is indeed a most lamentable sight. It is akin to a fish bowl without fish; a computer lab without computers; Mr. Benesh without awesomeness. It appears as stranded as a Norwegian sea monkey sulking in the sweltering heat of the Sahara. All right, you win. That just didn't make sense.

But wait! Here they come! Their mighty ponytails flapping gloriously in the wind, their neatly sculpted muscles bulging through their emerald green uniforms, they trot confidently onto their home turf, transforming a once withering field into a field of dreams. With lethal determination in their eyes, pure competitive firepower in their bellies and long, goofy-looking socks covering most of their legs, they fill their opponents with sheer terror, sending a clear message regarding who owns the field on which they stand. But just who are these deadly assassins of the dugout?

They are the 2007 MLWGS softball team. Armed with lethal cannons and unbelievable athletic prowess, these hard-hitting ladies have racked up more wins than any other Dragon softball team before them. And the season is only half over. They are 10-5 and showing no signs of slowing down.

Even with all this drama and their unprecedented success, the softball team continues to receive a lack of respect and attention. At the mention of softball, most people seem to invariably scoff and say things like, "Softball? Who cares?" or "Oh, they're having a good year?" or even "We have a softball team?"

Perhaps students will wake up and begin to realize that the softball team is



The MLWGS softball team makes their way on to the field. Photo courtesy of Ms. Ballentine.

worthy of admiration. Hopefully they will come to appreciate the exciting potential of the team and perhaps even consider attending a game or two. Maybe, just maybe, through continued perseverance and undeniable sex appeal, these battle-hardened warriors of the diamond can finally muster the respect that they have long deserved.

"They get enough respect as it is," remarked senior Mike Hagemann. "Too many people come out to watch this debauchery."

This claim seems quite unfounded, as official records indicate that senior Robert Lawrence is the only MLWGS student to have ever attended a game.

"I tried to go one time," recalled Senior David Giancaspro. "But, dare I say, I merely stumbled upon the post-game handshake. It was dreadfully upsetting."

But it's time to put all this negativity aside and get to the bottom of the team's sudden success. We must unearth the stimulus of their newfound winning ways. Is it their incomparable style? Senior Co-Captain Elena Martinez de Andino seems to think so.

"Sliding shorts may be the most uncomfortable things in the world," said Martinez de Andino, "but they suck in the fat and make us look oh-so-thin."

Co-Captain Lauren Elliott ('07) holds a different viewpoint on the matter, as she claims that winning is about more than looking good.

"We have good freshmen this year," Elliott explained. "We also have a good group of solid returning players."

While such a bold statement may at first seem nothing short of scandalous, her words, upon careful examination, are in fact true. Just take a gander at a few of the starters, for example. At shortstop, there is the super, scintillating, sensational freshman phenom Claire Bailey. At the mound is world class zinger Ellen Graham ('09), who is backed by basemen Martinez de Andino, Elliott, and Jackie Simon ('08). Notable bench players include K'Shelle Waller ('07), reportedly the team's most beloved and passionate player, and Lindsay Elliott ('09), whose presence completes one of the most intimidating sister duos in all of North America.

All in All, the softball team deserves a bit of recognition for their impressive play this year. Students should wise up and join Robert in the bleachers to witness firsthand a fistful of Dragon dominance and a hodgepodge of hand-eye coordination. If only I could say the same for the baseball team...