

The MLWGS Jabberwock

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Friday 29 October 2004

MLWGS Students Orchestrate Youth Policy Forum at State Capitol

Virginia Issues Analyzed Included Education, Environment and Crime

Aileen Zhang
Jabberwock Staff Reporter

Students from 28 Virginia schools gathered at the State Capitol to discuss policy options with state legislators at the Virginia Youth Policy Forum (YPF) on Oct. 20.

Congressman Bobby Scott delivered the opening address. More than 100 students from the Northern Virginia, Tidewater and Central Virginia regions were then divided into four groups. The large groups split into smaller discussion groups of five or six students with MLWGS students as facilitators.

"The structured discussion lets students see past partisan lines and attack the problem," said Harsha Dante



Carlton Forbes ('05) moderates a discussion. Photo courtesy of Ms. Pat Taylor.

('05), student coordinator of YPF. "It's a unique opportunity for kids to talk with legislators that actually debate these issues and formulate policies."

Over 25 students from MLWGS helped run the annual event.

"It was easy to be a moderator because the kids were well-prepared and ready to debate," said Max Griffith ('06). The groups deliberated on issues important to youth, and each large group wrote a speech.

The topics consisted of SOLs and graduation requirements, pollution of the Chesapeake Bay, drug decriminalization and school vouchers. One or two students from each group presented their issue to the assembly of youth and legislators.

The panel, made up of state legislators, included Senator Edwards,

Senator Devolites, Delegate Dillon, Delegate Watts and Delegate Baskerville. After each proposal the panel gave their views and constructively criticized the presentation and solution.

"They [students] get to find common ground with very diverse opinions and come up with a presentation in one day," said Mrs. Pat Taylor, the co-sponsor of YPF. She stressed the importance of the program as youth's chance for political action. The students could "interact with others and actually occupy the seats of power."

As the coordinators of YPF, Harsha Dante, Shaily Pandey ('05), and Ashlee Sawyer ('05) started planning for YPF last April. "We secured the facilities and negotiated to get speakers of that level to come," said Mrs. Taylor.

In this Issue:

Young Democrats vs. Young Republicans
(page 3)

Ladder 49 Review
(page 5)

Mock Election
(page 6)

Signs of Civil Discourse

Unlike most high schools around the nation, MLWGS has a student body which is very politically active. The Young Democrats and Republicans are two of the largest clubs in the school. And with the election coming around on Nov 2, the clubs have been more active than usual.

Social Studies classes at MLWGS were hyped-up about the presidential race even before the presidential debates began. Being in the school for "Government and International Studies," MLWGS students have been closely following poll results and news events related to the presidential race. Even though most students will not be able to vote in 2004, students are nonetheless excited about the elections.

It is hard to miss the many political signs taped up around the school. However, not all the posters are very tactful in getting their message across. Many posters around the school have the sole purpose of putting another candidate down. Signs put up by the different political clubs at MLWGS should show students why their candidate should win, not why the opposing candidate should lose.

Some MLWGS students may be taking their political affiliation to an extreme. A few students have been seen pinned up with Kerry or Bush pins or covered in stickers and slogans. This show of loyalty to one's party can prove to be quite a distraction during classes. Students wearing garments with distracting phrases should be, according to the dress code, pulled out of class. However, the students with very distracting political slogans worn on their bodies never seem to get into trouble for violating the dress code.

MLWGS is one of the most active high schools when it comes to the election of presidents. An issue that many students here have been not been paying much attention to is the election of state and local representatives. These officials will probably affect us more directly than the President will. Shouldn't MLWGS also try to address these elections?

— SS

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

How many times do Harsha, Carlton, Trevor and the rest of the gang running the SCA have to say it? Keep Walker Beautiful. Please people, just pick up your trash and put it in the trashcan. Don't throw food, and especially don't just leave it there. Pick up your messes, for the sake of the school. It's appalling how little respect the students of this school show the building that they live in seven hours a day, five days a week. Every day, after lunch and after school, loads of garbage can be found on the tables, under the tables, on the chairs, spilled on the floor, and the list goes on.

Yes, I know the usual argument: Why doesn't the

custodial staff clean it up, it's their job? The answer to that is simple: You're wrong.

The job of the house-keeping crew simply entails the maintenance of the building, which is a mammoth task even without the heaps of trash left around. They should be concentrating on the halls, the classrooms and the restrooms. They shouldn't need to scrub the floor where someone spilled a soda, didn't pick it up, then spilled fries, didn't pick those up either, then proceeded to step on it all. This is a disgrace.

So please, listen to the morning announcements when they say: *Keep Walker Beautiful*.

--Keith Moran('07)

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Kerry is Right Man for the Job

By Amber Kunkel ('08)

One of the first things every child learns about morals is that with privileges come responsibilities. Nobody can deny that the United States is an amazing place, filled with opportunities and freedoms. John Kerry understands that we have responsibilities to other

“Kerry plans to cover all Americans with quality healthcare, decrease the cost of prescription drugs and cut family premiums.”

nations. As a young person, I know that I can trust him to solve problems today, not just leave them all to my generation. He has the flexibility to act according to our country's needs and has shown incredible strength and con-

sistency, especially throughout the debates.

Kerry knows that America will be safer in the world if we are respected, not just feared. He understands the challenges of winning the war on terror, stopping the spread of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and promoting democracy, freedom and opportunity throughout the world.

At home, Kerry will fight to give more opportunities to the middle class and those who need opportunities most. He plans to create good-paying jobs here at home, not overseas, cut middle class taxes while rolling back tax breaks for the wealthiest two percent and invest in the jobs of tomorrow. By cutting waste and inefficiency, Kerry plans to cover all Americans with quality healthcare, decrease the cost of prescription drugs and cut family premiums.

I support Kerry because I know he can make us safer by destroying not only the terrorists but also the reasons they have for terrorizing. I support him because I want to be able to breathe during my sports practices and know that other kids around the nation

**Opinion from....
Young Democrats Club**

have the same scholastic and extracurricular opportunities that I have. I support him because he is focused on improving the lives of all Americans, now and in the future. I support him because he is determined to help our deficit problems, oil problems and environmental problems *now*, not just to leave it for future generations. I support Kerry because I trust him.

Bush Deserves Another Term

By Matt Shapiro ('07)

As an El Salvadorian Jewish Republican, I am certainly one of those in favor of Bush as the necessary candidate this election.

President Bush is not without fault; perhaps his largest mistake so far is his

**Opinion from...
Young Republicans Club**

inability to recall any mistakes he has made in his presidency. John Kerry has tried to push through this election not by selling himself but by pushing down the achievements of Bush. John Kerry consistently cites the great job loss and dip in the economy during the Bush administration, claiming this has hap-

pened to no other president. However, no other president in modern history has sustained a direct attack on American soil other than Franklin Roosevelt.

Bush has not only had to confront 9-11, but at the beginning of his term, the “Clinton surplus” was soon to be all for nothing because of the “dot-com bubble burst.” This is where, during the Clinton administration, trillions were invested in over-the-internet companies (with no true value) which began to collapse by the end of his term. Bush has raised the standards for education, but no matter how much John Kerry proclaims its ineffectiveness, Kerry's “planning for a plan” is long past due. President Bush has freed two nations with force, and one simply by example (Khadafi's Libya). For those in opposition to the war originally, the

fact remains that if Saddam was not faced now, he would have to be faced later.

“A vote for President Bush is a vote for an America with conservative values [. . .] and a vote against uncertainty.”

Finally, Bush has, despite the problems caused in healthcare during Clinton's administration, already begun reform for those healthcare plans and social security.

A vote for President Bush is a vote for an America with conservative values once envied around the world, certain prosperity, and a vote against uncertainty.

SCORES

Varsity Field Hockey

Monday 11 October

Monacan 2
MLWGS 1

Friday 15 October

Prince George 1
MLWGS 0

Tuesday 19 October

MLWGS 1
Midlothian 0

Thursday 21 Oct

MLWGS 1
Thomas Dale 1

Girls Cross Country

Wednesday 20 Oct

MLWGS 15

J.R. Tucker 50

MLWGS 15

Patrick Henry 50

Boys Cross Country

Wednesday 20 Oct

J.R. Tucker 17

MLWGS 40

MLWGS 20

Patrick Henry 42

Varsity Boys V-ball

Wednesday 20 Oct

Patrick Henry 3

MLWGS 2

Thursday 21 Oct

Deep Run 3

MLWGS 0

Tuesday 26 October

MLWGS 3

Godwin 0

Varsity Girls V-ball

Thursday 14 Oct

Freeman 3

MLWGS 0

Friday 15 October

Collegiate 3

MLWGS 0

Tuesday 19 October

MLWGS 3

John Marshall 0

Wednesday 20 Oct

Patrick Henry 3

MLWGS 2

Help Wanted:

Music Reviewer

The MLWGS Jabberwock staff is looking for an avid music fan interested in writing new music reviews.

Please submit two sample music reviews to newspaper@gsgis.k12.va.us by Fri. Nov 19.

Cartoonist

A position in the MLWGS Jabberwock staff is open for a strip cartoonist.

Please submit five comic strips either to Sohini Sircar ('07) or to Mr. Hal Waller in room 236 by Fri. Nov 19.

Ladder 49 Goes Up in Smoke

Ellen Hart

Jabberwock Staff Reporter

No matter how hard you try, you'll just die anyway. At least it seems this is the theme of the movie "Ladder 49," starring Joaquin Phoenix and John Travolta, a sappy tearjerker and an obvious tribute to the firefighters of the 9-11 attacks. With a hackneyed script and aimless plot, this is far from the best movie of the year.

The film is about firefighter Jack Morrison (Joaquin Phoenix) whose life flashes before our eyes while he lies injured in a burning building after saving someone just before the floor gave way underneath him.

However, viewers will find that they eventually ask themselves sometime during the two and a half hour movie, where is the story? There is no



Joaquin Phoenix and John Travolta looked surprised and anxious in "Ladder 49." Photo courtesy of Touchstone Pictures.

character development in Morrison, except that he becomes slightly more skilled at being a firefighter. But it is understood from the beginning of his career that he would risk his life to save others.

It is not to say that "Ladder 49" is a completely and hopelessly bad movie. The cinematography is excellent, and the film opens with a powerful and breathtaking scene of an enormous burning building.

It's almost as if director Jay Russell took this clichéd script and said, "I am going to make the best of this. I don't care how pathetic it is." And he certainly held true to that.

"Ladder 49" also has its funny parts, but only a select few characters you really get to know, and even fewer who are likeable. Firehouse pranks

always succeeded in wrenching a couple laughs from the audience, and there are a few bar scenes that could be found humorous.

Most people know John Travolta from such movies as "Grease" and "Saturday Night Fever." Just to be nice, I will say that he was all right. But whenever he comes on screen, he seems to remind the viewer not of a gruff captain, but of Danny Zuko getting ready to sing "You're the One That I Want." Then he just appears like a washed up movie star trying desperately to maintain his fame.

And the ending! It was as if Russell suddenly decided to give up trying to make this movie as good as the script would allow and said, "I am going to ruin this ending as much as I can." And so he did. A flimsy, unfeeling speech and a loud, nauseatingly cheesy song made it difficult not to grimace. The ending was indeed sad, but only because of what happened, not how it was played out.

Overall, "Ladder 49" left the viewer counting the minutes until the movie was over.



John Travolta in one of his better movies "Saturday Night Fever." Photo courtesy of Paramount Pictures.



Corrections from Issue 3:

In the caption for the picture on page 1 of Issue 3, Alyssa Mullins's name was incorrectly spelled. We apologize for the mistake.

Mock Election Results In

Statewide Winners Announced

Matt Kiehl
Jabberwock Staff Reporter

President George W. Bush was victorious over Senator John Kerry in the statewide Virginia Student Parent Mock Election (VSPME). The preliminary results were announced at a reception at the General Assembly Building on Thursday, Oct. 28.

President Bush garnered 56.5% of the vote, with 42% going to Senator Kerry. Libertarian Party candidate Michael Badnarik received 0.9% of the total ballots cast, and Constitution Party

candidate Michael A. Peroutka won 0.5%.

"I think it's good to see so many high school students involved in the political process," said Tobin Van Ostern ('06), a VSPME volunteer. Hundreds of votes were cast from high schools in Northern Virginia, Chesapeake, Central and Southwest Virginia.

Locally, Congressman Robert C. "Bobby" Scott, a Democrat, won in the 3rd congressional district race against Republican challenger Winsome Sears. In the 7th congressional district, incumbent Republican Congressman Eric I. Cantor handily defeated independent challenger Brad

Blanton.

Participants in the VSPME chose national security as the most important issue in this election year, with job creation and economic growth falling second.

Voters in the VSPME voted not only for their presidential preference, but also voted for candidates in each of Virginia's 11 congressional districts. There were also two proposed constitutional amendments and four general issue-based questions for voters.

The VSPME is a non-partisan event held to give high school students and their parents the opportunity to play a more active role in the political and electoral

Sophomores Scare School

Ilya Dubovoy & Sohini Sircar
Jabberwock Staff Reporters

In anticipation of Halloween, the sophomore class has organized a horror-film night in the auditorium on Friday, October 29, from 4 to 9 PM.

Two films, Gore Verbinski's remake of Hideo Nakata's "The Ring" and M. Night Shyamalan's "The Sixth Sense," will be shown.

"The [school social events] are a great opportunity for socializing and bonding," said Carlton Forbes ('05), in response to

this year's Halloween film festival.

Admission for this sophomore class fundraiser is free. Chinese food and drinks will be available for five dollars. Popcorn will also be served.

"The sophomore class officers have been working really hard for a while to get everything set up," said Jennifer Le ('07).

"There have been lock-ins in the past where films were shown, but nothing I can remember around Halloween," said Forbes.

"I guess it will turn out fine," said Jennifer Aliemeke ('07).



Mandy Truman ('08) considers attending Scary Movie Night. Photo by Ellen Hart.