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# The Nerd Wörd

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## Chess, govie-style

By Lauren Bright

"Checkmate," Nathan said as he beat Scott and then shook hands with him.

"Ah, that was a good game," Scott said, setting up the pieces again, "You wanna play again?"

"Sure," Nathan said, setting his pieces up also.

I was at a chess club meeting. The sound of ticking time clocks and the dull thud of pieces hitting the boards on the table reached my ears as I looked around the room at all of the students in there: Simon Zhang, Lin Xu, Jonathan Fulton, Eric Buchanan, Andrew Smith, Scott Gibson, Nathan Kwan, John Kang, Johnny McArthur, Aisha Arroyo, Jeremy Zhang, Aaron Cheung, Sebastian Zhang, and a couple other visitors, just stopping by for a quick game or some physics help from Dr. Smith.

I thought about the last competition that the GSSM Chess Team went to, the State Scholastic Chess Championship. It was a hard competition, and GSSM won the team championship with a total of 16.0 points, the next closest school with a 14.0. Four players from other schools tied with Simon, Lin, Jonathan, and Jeremy for third place, and on tie breakers, Simon came in fourth, Lin fifth, Jeremy sixth, and Jonathan tenth. Simon also received the trophy as 12th grade champion and Jeremy received the 11th grade champion trophy. Eric got a trophy for first place among players rated under-1000, Andrew placed 6th under-1000, and Scott 8th. The eleventh trophy received by the GSSM team went to Johnny for second place unrated, meaning that only one person among the newcomers outscored him out of 16.

I thought about next year's chess team and wondered where the team would be without the leadership of the seniors who are the top players, and also the Chess Club (En Passant) officers (President - Lin Xu, Vice - Simon Zhang, Secretary - Nathan Kwan, Treasurer - Travis Roberts). Dr. Smith reassured me, however, saying that the top four junior players at the competition (Jeremy, Sebastian, Aaron, and Jonathan - a suite!) totaled 14.5 points, which still would have been enough to win the championship.

GSSM has won the team state championship eight times in the last twelve years, and Mike Bishop, a member of the 1999 champions, returned this year as the director of the tournament. Once a chess player, always a chess player.

"You wanna play, Bright?" Simon asked me, startling me out of my thoughts.

"Haha...no thanks, Simon...you'd beat me if all you had was a pawn," I said, scared to death to play, not ready to break my treaty of never playing any of my chess god friends.

"But if you don't play you'll never get better," Nathan said, listening in as he moved his pieces around.

"I'll play sometime, Simon, but...hey he wants to play you," I said, pointing at Johnny.

Not everyone has their skill at chess, but that doesn't matter to them. All they want is a good chess game, an opportunity to learn, an opportunity to teach, and a chance to exercise their minds.

Chess club meets on Thursday and Friday in the physics lab and is open to anyone who wants to play a game or two. "Or there or five," Dr. Smith added.



**The 2004 State Scholastic Chess Championship winners, from left to right, were Jonathan Fulton, Jeremy Zhang, Simon Zhang, and Lin Xu.**

# What really happens to college apps: advice to juniors

By Brittany Strecker

You have just labored for two hours on your Duke admissions application. Your essay is finished, the forms filled out in your neatest penmanship. You fill out the carbon copied processing slip, attach it to your application, and turn it into Mrs. Douglas. As you leave the office, you are filled with a sense of accomplishment.

Yet, have you ever wondered what happened to your two hours of diligent work after it has been submitted to the office? Does it just travel randomly throughout the universe until it is time to be mailed off?

After your application is submitted, a certified transcript, course description, school profile, two teacher recommendations, reply card, and counselor forms are placed into the application packet. The certified transcript has your final grades from eighth grade through your senior year. It also has the scores of any standardized tests (SAT, PSAT, ACT, etc.) you may have taken. On your transcript the courses are named by abbreviations, the course description aids the colleges in deciphering these abbreviations. The school profile gives specific details about the school. It tells about our no-ranking policy, the research program, and explains the intensity of the

courses. The reply card simply acts as verification that the application was received by the college.

Teacher recommendations are completed by the teachers of your choice. The teachers pull information from the "brag sheets" each student fills out at the end of their junior year. The "brag sheets" give details about you and your experiences that your teachers may not have known and help the teachers get to know the students they are recommending a little better.

The length of counselor forms can be anywhere from half a page to four full pages. A typical state university counselor form asks for grade point average, class rank, and serial number. More competitive schools require more information from guidance counselors. A selective university like Duke typically asks for counselor recommendations, SAT scores, class rank, grade point average, a printout of the highest level course in each area of curriculum, and student perception by peers and faculty.

Counselor recommendations are written based on personal acquaintance and the information provided in your (it's very important to turn this in) "brag sheet." Student perceptions, however, are filled out from the counselors' viewpoint. A student

perception is typically a checklist that lists both academic and character traits, and asks the counselor to rate the student for each trait. See, having a strong character counts for something!

Now that your application packet has been completed and sent off, all you can do is wait. Weeks fly by. You pray for an acceptance letter, and dread the arrival of a rejection letter. But the worst thing to ever happen is to be wait-listed, or so everyone believes. Sure it may hurt to have the fact that you are good, but not quite good enough rubbed into your face, but wait-list letters do not always mean, "Sorry, bud." Sometimes you are wait-listed because the university wants to see more information before they make their decision, or you may be on the cusp of being accepted and they want to see your second semester mid-term grades before a decision is made. Unfortunately, waiting on an acceptance letter after being wait-listed can take months. On occasion, there have been acceptance letters sent to students mere weeks before the Fall semester began. Seems a little rude to me!

Now as you are still waiting for last minute letters to come in, the best thing to do is to kick back, relax, and think of what you are going to wear to your interview.

## Senior scholarships

By Virginia Outen

Along with the lengthy college applications, seniors have spent the school year applying for a variety of scholarships as a source of financial assistance to help pay off those college bills.

So far, thirty-two seniors applied for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship (worth \$6,700 a year), and the entire senior class is qualified for the Life Scholarship (worth \$5,000 a year). Both scholarships are renewable as well as state supported. Twelve seniors are National Merit finalists, and they will receive anywhere from \$500 to \$5,000. Colleges and corporations give more than the foundation itself, which gives a one-time scholarship of \$2,500.

Nathan Kwan and Chelsea Reighard were both named Clemson National

Scholars. They are offered a full ride at Clemson including tuition, fees, room and board, and money to cover some expenses and books — not to mention a free laptop computer. They were automatically chosen to go to the Honors College at Clemson. They are also offered one summer term of study abroad and up to two years of graduate study at Clemson, all expenses paid.

Melissa Sims was awarded the NCSSMST scholarship of \$10,000 a year for four years at Florida Institute of Technology. Stephanie Darden is a Tift Legacy Scholar for Mercer University and received \$10,000. Lauren Bright received \$40,000 for four years at Anderson College. Alex Marshall was a semi-finalist in the Coca-Cola scholarship. Brittany Strecker received \$38,000 at Guilford College. Also, any students who entered the Governor's School with a straight-A

average or who was ranked number one in their class will automatically receive a scholarship from Clemson or USC.

Mr. Caffee feels certain there are other scholarships that have been awarded which have not been recorded. Congratulations to all the seniors for their achievements!



Mr. Caffee helps students with applications for scholarships and colleges.

# Pennies for Patients

By Crystal Zhao

Pennies for Patients is a nationwide charity organization, and the Governor's School, like hundreds of other schools across the country, actively participates in raising money for the less fortunate. The National Honors Society sponsors the event every year, but not all years are as successful as others. Last year the Governor's School collected less than \$150, but this year was amazing, because the final amount came to \$410.37. Our goal was \$250, yet we greatly exceeded this. The results by floor in descending order are: \$147.09 by the second floor boys, \$120.89 by the second floor girls, \$110.99 by the third floor girls, and \$21.40 by the third floor boys.

The students at Governor's School have demonstrated great character by giving back to the community in such a manner. This organization raises money for "leukemia, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, Hodgkin lymphoma and myeloma research and local patient services," according to the official website of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. The student body has really represented the school well with its generosity.

## Medical ethics

By Lauren Bright

One of the more important things you may not think of automatically when the word "medicine" comes to mind is the ethical decision-making that is involved with it. Last Thursday we had a guest speaker come to talk to us about the importance of this aspect of medicine in Davidson Hall.

He at first spoke about the background of decision-making, right versus right decisions, dilemmas, and the importance of each with respect to medicine. At the top of the list were the rights of the patient. Before a big medical step is taken, however, trust must be earned by the patient. Only after that trust is earned, then medicine can continue.

Soon GSSM was presented with some case scenarios. They were all debated and spoken about, and we only successfully got through two or three full cases before the time was up. The questions were all well-written and both sides of the argument could be easily defended.

As we worked our way through the questions, it became more and more obvious to me about how crucial medical ethics were to today's society and to everyday people. It seemed to matter a lot to some people in the room, further proving just how much medicine affects everyone's lives.

## Good thinking, logic, and physics

By Lauren Bright

"My initials are 'MG,' which is the second half of the weight equation:  $W = mg$ . So, if you need to remember that equation, my initials can help you," Mark A. Godwin, my physics teacher, said at the beginning of the year. I was sitting in his Introduction to Physics class, one of the two classes he was teaching at the time (the other being Modern Physics, which deals with special and general relativity, atomic structure, quantum mechanics, spectroscopy and most other branches of physics discovered in the last two centuries). One of the distinguishing characteristics of "Doc. G" as we affectionately call him, is that he is both an excellent teacher and a good person to talk to.

"Hey, Doc. G, do ya' wanna play *Risk*?" I ask him every so often. He either lets me play in his office while he works, or he plays a quick game with me (most likely annihilating me, but helping me with my strategy at the same time). The most interesting part about Dr. Godwin, however, is that he is very accessible to students and gives help to them no matter what.

In addition to teaching three classes a

semester, each with a lab session once a week, Dr. Godwin teaches a higher level physics independent study (second semester only) and is also the sponsor of three clubs and serves as the volleyball coach. He sponsors Junior Classical League, Ultimate Frisbee, and The Society for the Easily Amused, which are all currently active clubs. In past years he has sponsored a paintball club, and recently signed papers to start it again, willing as always to help in anyway he can.

With all of these things he does at school, I wanted to know what he considered his most important accomplishment. "My greatest accomplishment? Gah...that's a good question. I can't chose just one. I have several things I'm proud of, though," he said, thinking. "Well, I'm proud that I worked on making a website for students to access, and learning how to do it myself. I also am proud of the fact that I do a good job with my classes," Some other things he mentioned were reorganizing the school's physics lab manual to include more lab activities, and working on the

Consortium board (NCSSSMST).

I looked at my watch and realized an hour had gone by and it was time to go to lunch. We left for lunch together, which he consistently eats in the cafeteria, to see what's going on in the students' lives and to just talk to people. *'Good thinking, good logic and good physics,' is truly what Doc G is made from,* I thought as we sat down to eat, *If he could bottle that up and sell it, he'd be rich.*



**Doc. G, reading a book about – you guessed it – physics!**

# And now for the fun stuff...

## The new and improved Rooster

By Crystal Zhao

Since the fall of 2002, the Midnight Rooster has provided specialty coffees and a place to hang out for students and native Hartsvillians alike. What's even better is that in the very near future, the "Rooster" is expanding to accommodate a new deli and courtyard. Owner Jessie Avant says that the concept is a fairly new idea to her. In fact, when she first opened the coffee shop, she says that she refused to open a restaurant. However, a year and a half later, she decided that coffee and desserts wasn't going to cut it anymore.

She says that the new deli will serve sandwiches, soups, salads, quiches, and omelets. Avant acknowledges that the clientele is "one-half meat-and-potatoes, one-half health-conscious, new-age people." She says she plans to make the food as healthy and organic as possible.

She even tried to make the atmosphere "healthier-looking." The paint in the new wing is orange and green, and Avant herself jokes that it looks like a carrot.

The inside of the deli will seat twenty people or so and will feature a bar to sit at.

The outside courtyard will seat another thirty-five, and musical acts will perform outdoors in the future. These plans will be executed by May of this year, and a Grand Opening ceremony will be held sometime in early summer.



A view of what will be the outdoor courtyard. "It's a work in progress," jokes Avant. "It's a mess now, but eventually, it'll be nice."

## Not your typical sequel

A review of *Dirty Dancing: Havana Nights*

By Erica Plowden

*Dirty Dancing: Havana Nights* is, obviously, the very belated sequel to the 1987 hit *Dirty Dancing* with Patrick Swayze and Jennifer Grey. To tell you the truth, I wasn't expecting much when I went to see it. It was a sequel and, in my experience, sequels generally just don't measure up to the originals. Remember the Beethoven movies? All those horror flicks with about eight sequels (think Jason, Freddy, Chucky...)? Just about any Disney sequel ever made?

Amazingly, this was not one of those sequels. It wasn't perfect, and, hey, nothing can beat the original. But it was still thoroughly enjoyable.

The plot is a lot like the original, though that is to be expected in this type of sequel. It is set in Cuba in 1958. Katey Miller (Romola Garai) and her family have just moved there from the US due to her father's job. She is in the middle of her senior year and is somewhat bookish and socially inept, so she has trouble adjusting. She doesn't fit in with the popular, rich, white crowd of her school. She is more drawn to the local crowd, particularly Javier (Diego Luna). She watches him dance in a town square and decides to ask him to partner her in the dance competition at the country club.

Eventually they make it to the final round of the competition. This is where the movie falls apart a little. Throughout the plot, you

get little hints of the revolution in Cuba (yes, by Fidel Castro). It comes full out in the final scenes, which gets in the way of the end a little. It doesn't have the great finale that the first one had. But, all in all, the plot was pretty decent.

The cinematography of this movie is superior to the original, but that is somewhat due to technological advancement in the field. Garai and Luna have chemistry on screen and their characters are likeable. The soundtrack, a mix of Latin and hip-hop, is awesome and probably the best feature of the movie. Overall, the movie has its flaws but it is fun enough to overcome them.

This movie was rated PG-13.

## Top ten govie phrases

Compiled By Lauren Bright

- 1337. (translation: leet, which is short for elite)
- You got pwned. (translation: You got owned, which means beaten)
- Nothin' good.
- That's like...retarded!
- What? I had my lights on? I was sleeping!
- w00t.
- I'm such a nerd.
- Leave me alone, I'm studying.
- I have three tests tomorrow, again!
- Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm a senior at the South Carolina Governor's School for Science and Mathematics.



## A powerful movie...

A review of *The Passion of the Christ*

By Virginia Outen

Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* has given many critics something to talk about recently. Some see it as powerful and moving, while others tend to focus more on the gruesome aspects of the movie.

*The Passion* primarily deals with Jesus' (James Caviezel) final days—from when he is arrested to his death on the cross. It's not about the Christian teachings of love and peace, but rather reflects upon what Jesus endured in sacrificing his life to save mankind. Jesus is brutally beaten at length throughout the movie and is shown being nailed through the palms of his hands to the cross. To provide relief, Gibson cleverly incorporates a few flashbacks which are mostly memories that give the audience background information about the life of Jesus.

To keep with the setting, the film is

spoken in Latin, Aramaic and Hebrew, which was spoken at that time, but by the end of the movie, you don't even realize you are reading the English subtitles. Satan appears briefly in a few scenes to remind the audience of the presence of his evils among the people; the depiction

of Satan is seductive and frightening but not overdone.

I agree that this is a powerful movie, but how you react to *The Passion of the Christ* depends on what you want to take in.

This movie was rated R.



### Birthdays for March

Compiled by Brittany Strecker

Jeremy Zhang (1) / Sebastian Zhang (1) / Beth Copelan (2) / Travis Roberts (4) / Cody Whetsel (10) / Andrew Smith (16) / Erica Plowden (19) / Matt King (19) / Chris Collins (26) / Jonathan Beam (27) / Mary Lim (31)

## Creepy but awesome

A review of *Secret Window*

By Erica Plowden

*Secret Window* is based on the Stephen King novella "Secret Window, Secret Garden." It is about an author named Morton Rainey (Johnny Depp), who has been successful in the past, but is currently going through a messy divorce from his wife Amy (Maria Bello) and suffering from a severe case of writer's block. So he holes up in his cabin with his dog and an ever-present bathrobe to escape.

But his world gets a little out of whack one day by a knock at his door. Standing there is John Shooter (John Turturro), a mysterious stranger with a serious southern drawl and a large black hat. He accuses Rainey of plagiarizing a story he once wrote and won't back down. Rainey tries to dismiss the intruder, but eventually does read Shooter's story. He is completely freaked out when he finds

that the two pieces, both entitled "Secret Window," are extremely similar.

When Rainey continues to assert his innocence, Shooter begins to threaten him. Rainey does the atypical movie thing and actually goes to the police (very nice touch in my opinion). But the violence escalates, spreading to the people in Rainey's life, including his soon-to-be ex-wife and her new boyfriend (Timothy Hutton). This, of course, only adds to Rainey's frustration. Soon he is fighting a battle against time to try and catch Shooter before someone dies.

The characters in this movie are real and natural, and the dialogue is very believable. Turturro, Hutton, and Bello are awesome in their respective roles. The camera work is amazing. However, Johnny Depp is the most outstanding in his role of the tortured, slightly confused

writer.

This movie displays his skill as an actor extremely well (and I'm not just saying this because he's good looking).

Overall, *Secret Window* is a tremendous ride. It's spooky and tense without being overblown, the acting is excellent, and the major twist at the end comes out of nowhere.



### Birthdays for April

Compiled by Brittany Strecker

Olga Lepigina (1) / Everett Hite (1) / Chelsea Reighard (3) / Cam Taylor (6) / James Razick (8) / Paige Porter (13) / Lauren Bright (26) / John McArthur (29) / Jialiu Liu (30) / Gayle Douglas (20)

## Alien reconstruction

A review of *After the Blue* by Russel Like

By Brittany Strecker

In the beginning of the twenty-first century, the Gruumsbaggians make initial contact with Earth. Beginning as a peaceful outing, they spread an alien virus that causes an epidemic that wipes out ninety-nine percent of the human population. A century later the Gruumsbaggians are ready to make amends and undo the destruction they caused, so they bring grown-up human test tube babies to repopulate the world and enough supplies to rebuild it as it once was. The only problem is the aliens' perspective of what life on Earth used to be is not exactly accurate. Using old videos,

books, magazines, tabloids, and newspapers, the Gruumsbaggians begin to reconstruct the planet. They cut down the forests, pave over the farmland, erect fast food joints and malls, and build pollution machines to restore the planet to its original "beauty."

Viewing society through the perspective of aliens shows the complexity and troubles of human nature. This book is filled with comedy and laughter as the aliens force the population of Jamesburg to assume the roles and lifestyles of long ago Earth.



## Crystal Zhao speaks...

Advice on surviving roommates, moms, and more

Q: "My mom won't stop calling me. Every day she calls me and makes me feel guilty for living away from home. I understand that she misses me, but it's getting on my nerves. How do I get her to leave me alone?"

A: First of all, look on the bright side. There are plenty of people who would love to have a mom who cared that much about them. You have to understand that parents are people too, and they really do miss you. If you were to miss your mom that much, wouldn't you want to talk to her more too?

There is no easy solution here. You can't be rude to your mother, but you obviously do feel suffocated. You should take baby steps to get your mother to stop calling so much. Make sure that she feels confident that you're healthy and happy and that you miss her too. Don't try to avoid her either, it'll only make her more worried about you.

Q: "My roommate is always playing pranks on me. It's really hard for me to get any work done, and even if I try to go to the study lounge, I am followed and then distracted anyway. Should I turn him in to ResLife?"

A: Hold off on turning him in at first.



He isn't playing pranks on you to be spiteful or bully you. If you haven't told him that you have a problem with it, do so first. As long as his pranks aren't destructive or could physically hurt

you, getting him into trouble with authority is not a necessary step to take. Just talk to him and express that it is imperative that you get your work done and set limits on times when he or she can't mess with you.

Q: "My roommate has eight o' clock classes every day and he insists on waking me up. I don't have class until much later, and I'd like to get more sleep. Why can't he leave me alone?"

A: If he wakes you up intentionally, then tell him to just leave you alone and go back to sleep. If he resorts to physically trying to pull you out of bed, talk to someone in a position of authority. If he is only waking you up unintentionally, then wear earplugs or an eye mask to bed, or just talk to this person. Keep in mind that it may be difficult for him to be completely silent in his morning routine, but you should be able to come to some compromise.

**Do you have a thought, comment, or question? Need some advice? Then email us at [journalism@gssm.k12.sc.us](mailto:journalism@gssm.k12.sc.us). We also accept letters to the editor, articles, top ten lists, comic strips, etc. Please submit!**