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“I’m not sure that we have an aim for technology in the district that makes sense. I don’t have a clear vision of where it’s going.”

—Mr. Timothy A. Saylor, school board treasurer

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the falcon

Pottsgrove High School
1345 Kauffman Road
Pottstown, Pennsylvania 19464
Phone: (610) 326-5105

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newsbriefs

Report tells districts to wire themselves

Washington (HSNG) — If the nation’s schools are to zoom down the information superhighway by the year 2000, it will be parents and businesses that will pay for equipment, not the federal government.

After a two-year study, the U.S. Advisory Council on the National Information Infrastructure advised that communities start raising the \$11 billion required to put the nation’s classrooms online. The cost includes stocking each school with a lab of 25 computers where teachers would take students once a day.

“We know it’s going to happen anyway in 15 to 20 years, so why not try to do it earlier?” said Ed McCracken, co-chairman of the presidential panel and head of Silicon Graphics Inc. “The benefits to the country would be great.”

Parents with technical knowledge are schools’ best resources, the study reported. And because the government pays for only a few special programs, schools should begin asking local corporations, state agencies or colleges to help them get wired. They also could reallocate some of their own funds.

Last year, students around the world used the Internet for thousands of projects, including exchanging messages with Antarctic explorers, learning about the Mayan Indians and directing a stellar telescope.

Although poor and rural areas may have difficulty raising money to wire their buildings and buy computers, their schools may benefit most from the technology because students and teachers then are able to access resources their districts can’t afford.

“The Internet is the great equalizer,” said Kathy Popp, the council’s technical director.

The advisory council estimated that the \$11 billion cost, which includes training teachers to use the global information network, equals 1.5 percent of the national education budget. About 1.3 percent now is spent on technology.

It would take more than twice as much money, though, to integrate computers and the Internet into students’ studies, the researchers said. To do that effectively would require more training and computers — one machine for every five students — and cost \$47 billion, or 4 percent of school’s budget.

If schools can’t afford new computers, Silicon Graphics’ McCracken said, they should consider older, used models. They may not perform lightning-quick calculations, he said, but “even low-powered computers can be fairly good Internet access points.”

Tobacco companies say FDA ‘twisted facts’

Washington (HSNG) — Tobacco companies lobbied the Food and Drug Administration in a last-minute effort to influence the government’s proposed rules limiting youth access to cigarettes.

Last summer, the FDA said that nicotine was addictive and that cigarette companies entice youths to smoke with catchy ad campaigns, such as R.J. Reynolds’ Joe Camel. It advised that laws prohibiting tobacco sales to minors be strictly enforced and that tobacco advertising and promotion be restricted from areas near schools and at sporting events.

It also would require tobacco companies to give \$150 million a year to educate youth about the dangers of smoking.

The tobacco companies asked the FDA to withdraw its proposed rules. They said the agency had twisted facts, such as the claim that cigarette companies add nicotine to smokes to make them more addictive, and that the rules were a “power grab.”

The National Parent-Teachers Association and a trio of health groups, though, applauded the FDA plan. They said it would protect kids from starting to smoke and becoming addicted to cigarettes as adults.

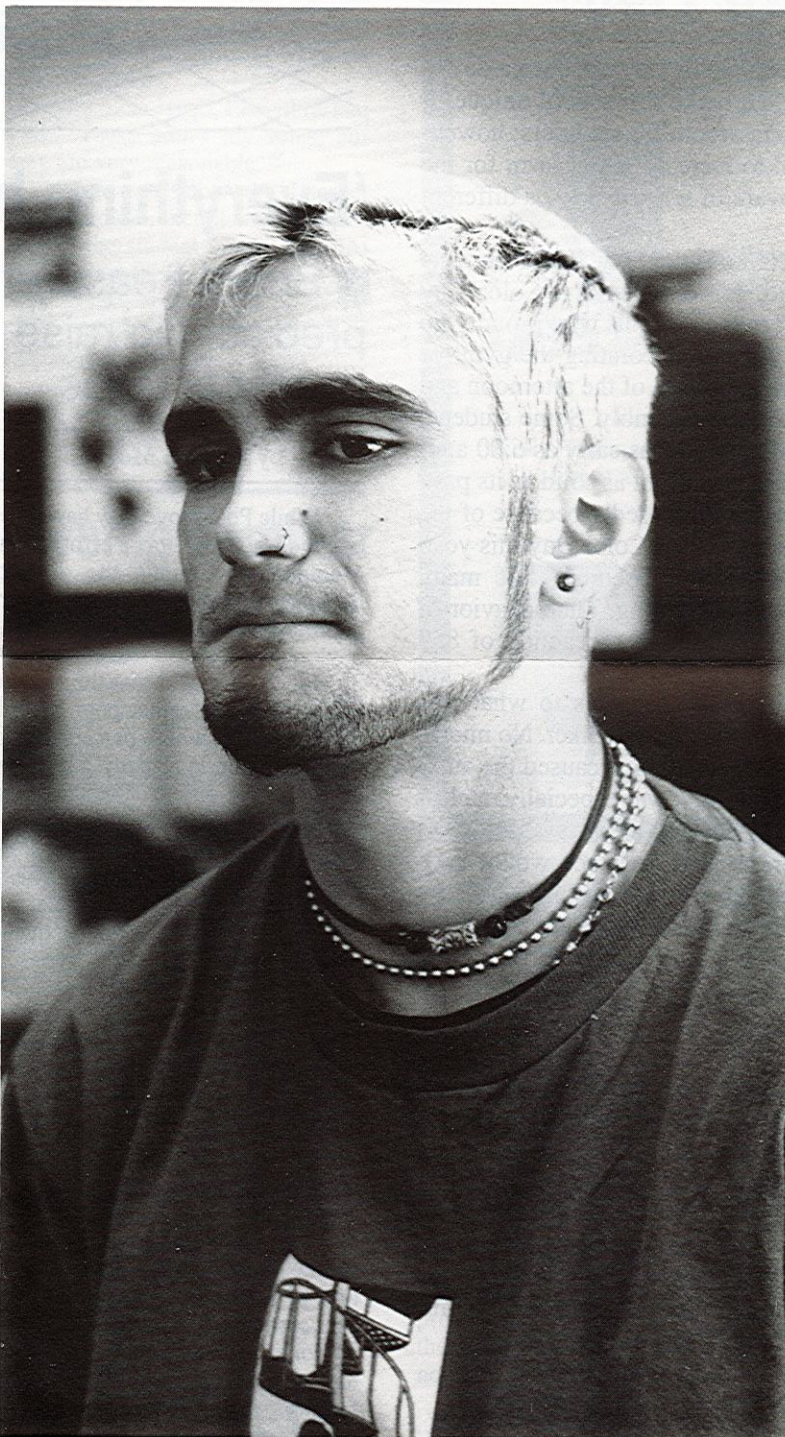
Recent studies have shown that if youths reach early adulthood without smoking, they are not likely to begin.

The early January arguments came on the last day to comment on the FDA’s proposal. The agency didn’t say when it would make its final decision.

Retailers around the nation recently pledged to do their part in stopping teens from smoking. The Coalitions for Responsible Tobacco Retailing starting a program called “We Card.” It encourages its 150,000 members to uphold existing laws prohibiting tobacco sales to youth under age 18 by giving them training and educational materials.

“This is a cooperative and dedicated national effort,” said coalition spokeswoman Teri Richman, “and we share one common goal: To do everything we can to prevent sales to minors.”

Body piercing: A sign of the times



Making a statement: Junior Jon Pace has had both of his ears, his nose and his tongue pierced. “The reason why is to have fun with my life,” said Pace. “I’m just expressing myself to the extreme.”

■ Whether trend or statement, it’s got some risks

by Katie McCormick

Body piercing - the hot topic of the 90s: Self-mutilation, trend or just a way for one to express himself?

Whichever, more and more people are walking around with an eyebrow, nose, tongue or belly button pierced.

“You are always opening yourself up to infection,” Mrs. Kimberly Emery, the PHS nurse, said, talking about the safety of body piercing. “Even if it is a clean pierce, there is a risk of infection if you don’t properly clean it.”

Proper cleaning means using some type of anti-infectant like hydrogen peroxide.

“There is also a risk of getting AIDS,” Mrs. Emery said. However, this risk is very slim as long as the needles and other piercing devices are sterile.

“You should ask about the business’ sterilization procedure before you get anything pierced. If they are using any needles, they should be opening a new package because they cannot be reused,” Mrs. Emery said.

Also, when going to an establishment, you should ask to see their credentials, or call the Better Business Bureau and check on them to see if there have been any complaints. If the place doesn’t look sterile by your own observations, go somewhere else.

One person who was ahead of his time is English teacher Larry Rechten, who in 1982 got his ear pierced.

“I thought that it was kind of cool, something different,” Mr. Rechten said. “After other people started doing it, I decided to get a (Cont. page 3, col. 4)

Juniors head to Washington on their class trip

by Crystal Ehlinger

At quarter to five this morning, the juniors left, via charter buses, for their class trip to Washington, D.C.

For the first time in the many years, the Junior Class trip had to be rescheduled (it was originally scheduled for November) due to the shutdown of the national government.

“People were excited about the trip, but then we were informed that the government screwed it up,” said

Dave Paris, a junior.

Another junior, Mara Stahl, said, “I think it’s stupid, just because the government shut down and can’t handle its problems. It’s not fair.”

Mr. Addison Davidson, the trip faculty advisor, said that he was disappointed about the postponement of the trip and that the original date, Nov. 17, would have been a better time of the year to go.

The new date will not in any way affect the original itinerary. The trip will go as planned, with visits to Arlington National Cemetery, the

White House, Ford’s Theater, etc.

“I was upset (about the postponement) at first because I really wanted to do the laying of the wreath (at Arlington National Cemetery),” said Junior Dawn Morello. “But since it’s rescheduled, it’s okay.”

Some juniors had negative feelings about the trip being postponed; however, others were optimistic and some didn’t really care.

“I was upset in the beginning, but it gave me something to look forward to,” said junior Donna Beccaria.



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Editor-in-chiefMelissa Moyer
 News editorAmy Richards
 ReportersGuy Carter, Crystal Ehlinger, Jennifer Houck,
 Kelly Krause, Megan LaRosse, Katherine McCormick,
 Jen Ullman, Kelly Yeager
 Business managerLaura Mull
 Business adviserMrs. Barbara Eschbach
 Copy/layout adviserCharles E. Parrish

Save Color Day

For as long as anyone can remember, Color Day has been a day to discover Pottsgrove and the qualities that make this school unique. It is true that it takes students out of the classroom for six hours; however, it is a day out of the ordinary used to increase enthusiasm for the ordinary and to make Pottsgrovians aware of what makes us different from other schools.

Students put a lot of time and effort into Color Day, just as our parents who went to school here too did. It's obvious that Color Day means something more than "fun day" to the students who proudly go to school here by the effort that they put into decorating the gym for the event, practicing for the entertainment portion of the afternoon and rehearsing for the speeches for the morning assembly. Some students arrived at school to decorate this past Color Day as early as 6:00 a.m.

But the future of this Pottsgrove tradition is not as solid as its past. The benefits of Color Day are in question, supposedly because of the behavior of students at the morning assembly on Color Day this year. The reprimand given to students after the assembly left many Pottsgrovians confused about what had gone wrong. The behavior of the students in the auditorium was only the natural reaction of 859 teenagers who were trying to participate.

Students at the morning assembly were unsure as to what was expected of them in light of the nature of the guest speaker. No microphone was used for a great deal of her speech, which caused the audience to have difficulty hearing her. Therefore, it was especially unclear what response was desired.

Also, with this particular speaker, a silent audience would have been as inappropriate as the amount of noise that was made because the speaker's purpose appeared to be to stir up the audience. Some students were making noise only because they were asking those around them what they were supposed to be cheering for. Most were unaware that their behavior would be seen by the administration as being disrespectful or rude.

Therefore, when the faculty and administration discuss the benefits of Color Day and, if the administration considers ending Color Day, they have reasons other than the students' behavior during the morning assembly for bringing to an end this long Pottsgrove tradition.

Nevertheless, if this is the case, those deciding the fate of Color Day should be honest about their lack of support for the event, instead of using the students of Pottsgrove as a scapegoat. It is not fair for the classes of '96, '97, '98 and '99 to receive the blame for an administrative decision.

Just enough courses

Are there enough courses offered at Pottsgrove, or should students have more subjects to choose from?

Just scan the Pottsgrove Program of Studies some time—all 60 pages of it. Check out the array of courses listed page after page, and see how many pique your interest. Deciding what classes to take here is like ordering dinner in a restaurant with an extensive menu: there's much to choose from.

There are so many subjects, but not enough class time to schedule everything of interest. After writing down all the required classes and which (can't forget that), there isn't much space left for any electives.

Are there too many subjects, not enough, or is the assortment a good variety? Some students may want more choices; however, others are overwhelmed by all the ones offered already.

The school does need to offer more computer courses besides the ones offered in business and industrial arts classes, but overall, the menu already offered at Pottsgrove has a pretty fair list of choices.



'Everything becomes a question of money'

■ Board treasurer predicts big raise in school taxes

by Melissa Moyer

While Pottsgrove may have one of the highest tax efforts in Montgomery County, the district has one of the lowest costs per pupil, according to Mr. Timothy A. Saylor, school board treasurer.

Mr. Saylor said that the reason Pottsgrove is a "rather poor school district" is that a high percentage of the population is actually attending school in the district. Pottsgrove is an example of a "bedroom community," which puts a burden on taxpayers living in the area and lowers the amount of funding available.

"Everything becomes a question of money," said Mr. Saylor.

Part of the job of the school board as a whole is to oversee the business manager, but as the treasurer, Mr. Saylor is given a little more responsibility with the financial side of things.

"I'm interested in the economic aspect (of the school board)," said Mr. Saylor.

The major upcoming expense for the district will be the construction of a new intermediate school. The current plan, according to Mr. Saylor, is to build the new school on top of the hill on the Hollenbach farm on Hanover Street.

Mr. Saylor said the resulting rise in taxes due to the construction project will be "more than you could possibly imagine." He said

that Pottsgrove is not now at the upper level of its debt service, but the creation of the new school will drastically affect the financial situation.

"Once we borrow money, (Pottsgrove will be) very close to the maximum limit of the district," said Mr. Saylor. "Additional borrowing (to build the new school) is going to severely impact future borrowing."

Mr. Saylor said that the board considers the validity of a program before deciding whether or not to fund it. While he said that, in gener-

'I'm not sure that we have an aim for technology in the district that makes sense.'

al, the cost of the sports program is small compared to the values it teaches the participating students, the board is considering dropping tennis from the list of sports at Pottsgrove. With the unplayable courts and the high cost of rebuilding them, Mr. Saylor said the question of whether tennis is still a viable sport at Pottsgrove is being discussed.

One of the programs that has already been invested in is technology. Mr. Saylor said that he is one of the more technologically literate school board members, but he is still unsure about the plans of the district.

"I'm not sure that we have an aim for technology in the district

that makes sense," said Mr. Saylor, a member of Pottsgrove's technology committee. "I don't have a clear vision of where it's going. I certainly hope (other board members do)."

He said that there is money earmarked for technology and the technology director, Mr. Toby Mochel, who was hired two years ago. He said that the plans are "going forward whether (they are) a good idea or not."

"Hindsight will be great," Mr. Saylor said.

He said that his major concern is the rate at which state-of-the-art technology becomes out-of-date. Since technology can die in a couple of years, Mr. Saylor is worried that the changes will bypass Pottsgrove.

"We can't afford to keep up," he said.

Another issue that has confronted Mr. Saylor concerns his idea to cancel the Martin Luther King holiday and use this day as a snow make-up day for students. Mr. Saylor said that his suggestion was greeted with an uninterested response from the administration.

He said that because students must attend school "deeply into June," he believes an attempt should have been made to "shorten the calendar."

Mr. Saylor advocates a decrease in unnecessary holidays, and since students began school in August this year, he reasons that school should end a week earlier. However, he was told this idea was "educationally unsound" due to a longer summer vacation in which students might lose what they've learned.

On the big screen:

Musician struggles through uphill career in 'Mr. Holland's Opus'

by Katie McCormick

Richard Dreyfuss plays a frustrated musician in the recently released movie *Mr. Holland's Opus*. The tale spans over a 30-year period which details the triumphs and pitfalls of Glenn Holland's career.

In a movie which tries to prove that the good guy never finishes last, Holland dreams of composing the great American symphony. He is

forced to work as a high school music teacher to support his pregnant wife. Holland is faced with the tough challenge of trying to teach music to a bunch of uninspired kids.

Unfortunately, there are many unrealistic qualities throughout the story that only Hollywood can make happen. For instance, a bunch of shabby music students become "talented" over night. And, of course, Holland's child would be deaf—milking as much sentiment

as possible from viewers of the movie.

At some points there are well-acted moments. The most important one is the scene when Holland sings and signs John Lennon's "Beautiful Boy" to the deaf son he ignored most of his life.

Overall, if reality is what the moviegoer is looking for, he won't find it in *Mr. Holland's Opus*. For a two-and-a-half hour movie, there is enough schmaltz for a movie lasting twice as long.

Two upperclassmen make district band

Discipline helps musicians perform at a higher level

by Crystal Ehlinger

Joe Snyder, senior trombonist, and Adam Matilsky, junior tubist, both demonstrated how good they are in music by making district band.

District band is made up of music students from different high schools throughout the area. These students have the ability to perform on a higher level than most of their peers and show a mature level of discipline.

It is a long, time-consuming process of preparations and competing. Snyder, who also made district orchestra, and Matilsky practice on the average seven hours a week.

Seating is determined after reauditioning takes place. In the initial audition, the students vying for seats must play parts of a required solo, three or four scales by memory and do some sight reading.

"(To make orchestra) was tougher," said Snyder. "They (the

judges) took the top four trombones who auditioned for band and orchestra."

The district band performed at the Hill School Jan. 18, 19 and 20 at the District Festival.

Matilsky was one of the top six tubists out of the 15 that auditioned. "I feel good about making Districts. All the practicing paid off," said Matilsky. "It was fun and exciting."

Snyder excelled to the next performance level, Regional Band, which is made up of music students from the various District bands.

"Anyone that can make Districts has the opportunity to try out for Regionals," said Snyder.

Students who made it into District Band were "required to reaudition for seating." Sixty percent of the district score and 40 percent of the reaudition score were taken to figure out who was eligible for Regional Band. The top five trombones from each district were accepted.

Regional Band will be performed at Girard College in Philadelphia on Feb. 23 and 24.

Pottsgrove library goes on-line

by Guy Carter

The Pottsgrove library took its first step into the future in January by connecting on-line with the Internet.

The Internet, which provides quick and easy access to a world of information, is only open to the faculty, however, who have undergone a district training program.

The administration, on the other hand, is in no way ready to hand the Internet over to the student body. One of the reasons is that the Internet has both positive and negative aspects. For instance, students

in one school through the Internet figured out a way to download information on making weapons like pipebombs.

Mrs. Lois Jacob, PHS librarian, said, "These aren't my rules, but they are very reasonable."

"Once we know the Internet inside and out, then it will be available to the student body," she also said. "Hopefully it will be in the near future, that students will be able to experience the benefits of the Internet," said Mrs. Jacob.

The Internet will make it much easier to research topics, especially for seniors who do a research paper.

Ward to attend leadership seminar

by Jen Ullman

The Sophomore Class president, Karen Ward, has been named the winner of the Hugh O'Brian

Youth Award (HOBY) and is heading to a leadership seminar in late March.

The HOBY Award is offered each year to one member of the Sophomore Class. To qualify, students had to fill out an application, consisting of three questions dealing with leadership and school involvement.

Ward would like to become a tenth grade English teacher, and she's hoping the seminar will help her in her career.

"It gives you more leadership skills for the future," she said. "You need to be a leader to be a teacher."

Ward will be attending the seminar on March 28-31 at the Sheraton in King of Prussia. If for some reason Ward can't attend the seminar, the alternate, Jennifer Sheller, will take her place.

Two previous winners of the HOBY Award are junior Karen Reber and senior Melissa Moyer.

Falcon asks...

What do you think about body piercing?

Amanda Genther, senior: "I think it's gross. You're putting holes in your body."



Tom Moslak, freshman: "Go for it!"

Mark Shuster, communications teacher: "As long as it's not my body. It depends on what they want to pierce. Actually, I think it's pretty cool. I was thinking about doing it myself."



Jon Pace, junior: "It's the best fad in the 90's for the new generation."

Kelly Thomas, junior: "I think it's bad. I like it a lot."



Mary Sloss, junior: "You can take it (the earring) out, so just do it."

Body piercing becomes a trend of the '90s

(Cont. from page 1, col. 5)
second one, trying to stay ahead of the game." Four years later he stopped wearing his earrings because of his teaching job.

Body piercing does pose some problems though. An earring could affect your chances of getting a job.

"I wasn't allowed to wear my earrings while I was bartending at Bennigans," Mr. Rechtin said.

Although earrings are trendy, some people feel that they are not professional. Fortunately, having the body pierced for an earring is not permanent like a tattoo.

"I have no regrets. I thought it was fun," Mr. Rechtin said. "My parents didn't like it but thought it was a phase I'd grow out of."

Some people think there is a hidden reason behind why someone wants his body pierced.

"There are several reasons for doing it," Mr. Michael Ondo, a PHS guidance counselor, said. "It is a trend that people go through with

appearance. Some do it for attention; others do it to rebel against their parents or social standards."

For most it is something fun to do, but others do it for other reasons. "For some it could be anger," Mr. Ondo said. "Each person has a different way of showing it. Others like the shock factor."

Whatever the case may be, judging a person on the number of times his body has been pierced can be a risky way of evaluating a person.

"In some countries it is a cultural characteristic, but that really isn't the case here," Mr. Ondo said. "Most people are looking for their niche: where they fit in."

Like it or not, body piercing is a trend—the question is for how long?

It could easily fade out just like a lot of trends from the 80s. Who would have thought, for instance, anybody would ever dare to walk around in platform shoes again?

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Cheerleaders host competition

■ Practicing after school, the PHS Falcons get ready

by Megan LaRosse

On March 16, the Pottsgrove varsity cheerleaders will be hosting the fourth annual PAC-10 cheerleading competition. All of the PAC-10 teams will be participating with the exception of Perkiomen Valley. Admission to the event will be \$3.00 for adults and \$2.00 for students.

The Pottsgrove cheerleaders are looking forward to the event. "We're so psyched for competition," said sophomore Christy Lion.

"The professional judges will base their scores on many things," said senior captain Christina Santos, "like sharpness in movements, difficulty in performance, safety in lifts and crowd appeal."

The squad is practicing every day of the week in preparation for the competition. Senior Jeanelle Morgan said that it is sometimes frustrating when a lift must be tried again and again to get it right.

The defending champions are Lansdale Catholic. They have won the last two years in a row.

"The last two years Lansdale

has done the same routine," said Santos. "They hire private trainers for almost every area of their cheerleading, which includes professional choreographers and a UCA cheerleader to help with lifts."

Santos also said that Pottsgrove's squad makes up their own routines and doesn't hire any outside help.

"That's what separates us from Lansdale," said Santos.

Behind the smiles of the cheerleaders, lie a mixture of emotions.

"I always worry before competition that I'll mess up and everyone will laugh at me," said senior Jilda Hodges.

"I love it the day of competition when the people you least expect come to cheer you on," said Jamie Schalles.

This year there will also be a JV competition; however, there will only be a few squads participating.



Competition coming: The Pottsgrove cheerleaders will on Mar. 16 again host the PAC-10 cheerleading competition which has been won the last two years by Lansdale Catholic High School.

Basketball teams have tough time getting seasons going

by Melissa Moyer

The boys' and girls' basketball teams both started off the season attempting to make five fingers a fist—but the girls' team came up one finger short.

The loss of senior co-captain

Jill Trout due to a knee injury came as a blow to the Lady Falcons; however, senior Christy Hamaker, a four-year starter, along with senior Jackie Pinchok "put the team on their shoulders and led them to a successful season," according to Coach Jan Fritz.

Junior Erin Greene and sophomores Kristen Lucas and Gina Bianchini also stepped up and played well.

Their 14-4 league record gave the Lady Falcons a spot in the Final Four playoffs. But the opening game of playoffs ended in a disappointing loss to St. Pius X. Coach Fritz said Murphy's Law was in effect throughout this game. On the other hand, he said that during the season the team performed beyond anything he thought possible after the loss of Trout.

Coach Fritz said that the Lady Falcons were the best-pressing girls' team that he's coached in his 33-year career (14 years coaching girls). He also said that they improved rapidly because they are "bright kids." With the intelligence that helped them win games and the way they bounced back after antici-

pating playing with Trout, Coach Fritz said it was one of the most rewarding teams he has coached. However, he's never felt worse about losing a player than he did about Trout.

While the boys' team fell short of their goal to make the Final Four, they did show improvement both individually and as a team and won the Holiday Tournament at Schuylkill Valley.

Senior captain Matt Slaymaker led the team in assists and was the best defender, while sophomore Jermaine Thaxton led in scoring and rebounding. Senior Mike Burke was the most consistent shooter for the Falcons, and senior Guy Carter and junior Jim Cerminaro also performed well.

Coach Ralph Werley said that the team's strength came at mid-season.

"Each individual contributed in his own role, making what I call five fingers a fist," said Coach Werley. "The cumulative result of the five was much greater than the sum of the individual parts."

The climax of the season came when the Falcons defeated

Pottstown for the first time in ten years. But the team's success began sliding downhill after that win.

"Unfortunately, injuries, ineligibility and inclement weather distracted our mid-season success," said Coach Werley.

Injuries affected Thaxton, Cerminaro and sophomores Justin Harper and Chris Patton. Also, the snow caused a six-day halt in the team's progress. The Falcons had trouble rebounding after this break in their schedule.

"We never got it back," said Coach Werley.

Falcons have club hockey option

by Jennifer Houck

Pottsgrovians now have the option of going out for a club sport, ice hockey.

"We wanted a team two years ago, but they wouldn't let us," said Zack Holl, a senior on the team.

There is one female on the team—Kiley Sharp, a sophomore and daughter of Mr. Greg Sharp, one of the coaches.

"Sometimes there are comments from people on the other teams because I am the only girl, but the kids on my team don't seem to mind that I play," said Sharp.

The ice hockey team is sponsored by the parents and the kids

themselves.

"The money comes out of our own pockets—or our parents' pockets," said Matt Appleton, a junior, who has been playing hockey since he was four years old. "It is what I want to do with my life," he said. "I want to go to college for hockey."

"I joined the ice hockey team because it was a first-year team, and I wanted to play," said Holl. "I enjoy hitting people. I like being able to carry the puck for my school."

The team played through the winter months on the ice at the sports complex in King of Prussia, against teams from St. Pius and Ridley High School.

Society finds that it has to eat right, exercise to stay healthy

by Amy Richards

Exercise is a way of life for most of today's society, but it's not the only factor in staying fit.

"There needs to be a balance between exercise, diet and amount of sleep," said PHS nurse Mrs. Kim Emery about ways to stay healthy. "If you have a balance, then you feel good."

Since everyone's body is different, each individual knows what's best for himself. But being both physically and mentally healthy is important for everyone.

To be physically healthy, one must start by eating the proper foods, starting in the morning at breakfast. When a meal is skipped, especially breakfast, which is the most important one, it throws off the metabolism, which helps digest the food and turn it into energy, and could cause a weight problem.

Drastic things, like skipping a meal or crash dieting, aren't good for one's body. Crash dieting may take the pounds off for the present time, but the weight will return

later; whereas, when one loses weight from exercising and eating right, those pounds are not as likely to come back.

"People expect immediate results," said Mrs. Emery, talking about unrealistic goals people set. "They need to realize that all good things take time."

In order to expect any results, exercise must play a part in the balance, whether it be a formal exercise program or even something as simple and relaxing as walking.

"I walk to continue feeling fit," said Mrs. Mae Hanna, who walks everyday after school. "It also gets rid of stress from the school day."

Mrs. Hanna along with Mrs. Kathy Baker, Mrs. Kim Sheeler, Mrs. D.J. Istenes, Mrs. Linda Cole and Mrs. Margaret Gerhart (all PHS teachers) walk almost everyday after school for at least a half an

hour either outside, weather-permitting, or in the school hallways.

"I'm very careful about foods and try to stay away from fat," said Mrs. Hanna about her diet.

Others might enjoy more active exercise routines such as running, lifting weights or even aerobics, but whatever activity is chosen, it is best to start out slowly and gradually work up to potential.

Since stress can affect one physically, exercise is a good way to let loose and forget about problems. "It's a holistic thing," said Mrs. Emery, "where so many things make for a healthy person."



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