



Nisky receives thanks, gives blood too

by *Ryan Lindenberg and Anna Yu*

NEWS

The high school was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation from the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York in honor of the \$2,465 raised by the school's clubs for the Sept. 11 relief fund. This award ceremony took place the same day as a blood drive for the Red Cross, which NICS sponsors semi-annually.

The certificate was presented December 14 in the New Cafe during learning lab. Two local representatives from the Red Cross, Victor Grant and Ron Cremisio, offered the certificate as a token of their thanks. "The outpouring of your clubs is just terrific," Grant stated, expressing his gratitude in front of 13 club representatives from around the school.

The students represented various clubs which each raised money for the Red Cross, including KEY Club, NICS, Multicultural Society, the Classes of 2003 and 2004, Chem Demos, and SADD. Each club used different fundraising techniques to raise the acquired money. Multicultural Society sold star-shaped lollipops; NICS created paper doves to be hung at the Albany International Airport; SADD sold flowers; KEY CLUB, Chem Demos, SADD, and the Classes of 2003 and 2004 sold raffle tickets.

It was a new experience for Niskayuna to actually have the representatives come to the school. "I thought it was much more personal than what you usually do - when the check is simply sent and you don't see them taking it," said Key Club president

Robyn Blackmore. "Here, you actually see the person; you can connect a name to a face."

The Red Cross representatives were eager to take advantage of the exposure at the school. "It has allowed us to get visibility and awareness within the community," mentioned Grant.

While here, Grant and Cremisio took advantage of the opportunity to encourage participation in other Red Cross volunteering activities. "This has been a whole new episode for the Red Cross," explained Grant. Because of the tragedy, the Red Cross' awareness has been growing, and they encourage future volunteers. The Red Cross helps not only the Sept. 11 fund, but also the house, feed, and clothe the victims of all local disasters.

NICS, Niskayuna Intercommunity Service, also held the biannual blood drive in the Blatnick Gym during most of the school day on December 14.

Junior Audrey Henderson, who co-ran the blood drive with senior Alyssa Kouzan, noted the increase in blood donors and attributed this increase to the events of September 11. Henderson, who was unable to give blood due to the age requirement, said, "On this blood drive, there were a lot more student donors [than last year]. I think many students were impacted by the September 11 events and recognized the need to donate."

It was Kouzan's second time donating blood. She said, "It was the second time. It felt a little weird but it was cool doing it."

This year is also the first year that the administration

opened the blood drive to the public. In order to donate blood, donors had to be at least 17 years old and fulfill certain requirements.

Senior Lindsay Liquori, another blood donor, said, "Everyone at the blood drive was really supportive. I was a little shaky, but everyone reassured me and reminded me that it was for a good cause."

All blood donors received a free red, white, and blue T-shirt with a patriotic slogan.

The American Red Cross has visited over 30 schools in the Capital Region already. The representatives conserved time by going to Niskayuna for the check presentation and the blood drive at the same time.

Into The Woods

Cast List

<i>Baker</i>	Brian Dashew
<i>Baker's Wife</i>	Megen Vo
<i>Witch</i>	Julie Brooks
<i>Narrator</i>	Chris Cooke
<i>Cinderella</i>	Anjuli Upadhyay
<i>Jack</i>	Zach Berger
<i>Little Red</i>	Elissa Hewitt
<i>Rapunzel</i>	Stephanie Gentry
<i>Cinderella's Prince</i>	Dominic Fallacaro
<i>Rapunzel's Prince</i>	Jesse Conti
<i>Mysterious Man</i>	Brennan Fischer
<i>Wolf</i>	Paul Hebert
<i>Jack's Mother</i>	Celia Ganey
<i>Step-mother</i>	Regina Schwartz
<i>Florinda</i>	Sara Backowski
<i>Lucinda</i>	Danielle Kessler
<i>Steward</i>	Connor Smith
<i>Grandmother</i>	Erica Lucas
<i>Cinderella's Father</i>	Billy Vacca
<i>Cinderella's Mother</i>	Marci Tebanno
<i>Giant</i>	Marci Tebanno

Musicians perform in Melodies of Xmas

by Kishori Rajan

NEWS

The 22nd annual Melodies of Christmas ran Thursday, December 13 to Sunday, December 16. The performances, held in Proctor's Theater, were open to the ticket-holding public. The music will also be aired on WRGB Channel 6 on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Melodies participants from the high school included Brian Dashew, Karin Donhowe, Virginia Gao, Tracy Gosda, Judson Hardy, Greg LaMontagne, Kishori Rajan, Noah Luft-Weissburg and Cassandra Wolos.

An impressively large audience filled the theatre for four sold-out nights. The concert is a combined effort of the Empire State Youth Orchestra (ESYO), the Empire State Youth Chorale, Freihoffer's,

Price Chopper, and WRGB in an effort to raise money for the Child Cancer Program at the Albany Medical Center.

This show is one of the most time consuming productions that ESYO puts on during its season, adding up to nearly 18 hours of playing and singing during the week of performances. "It's a heck of a lot of time," remarked LaMontagne, who plays piano for the orchestra.

However, the motives behind the large-scale production were well worth the time, effort, and lack of sleep. Luft-Weissburg, concertmaster of the Niskayuna High School orchestra, commented "It felt really good to raise so much money for the cancer patients." Luft-Weissburg also enjoyed the opportunity to play for a full house and, of course, the chance to appear

on TV.

The orchestra and chorus performed a series of popular holiday tunes, ranging from traditional hymns such as "The First Nowell" and "O Come All Ye Faithful" to a snowy version of "Winter Wonderland" and a medley of popular tunes including "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus" and "Santa Claus is Coming to Town." Added Luft-Weissburg, "The music is easy, so I can really just relax and have a good time with it."

Working with the singers was another bonus. French hornist Gosda said, "It's nice having the chorus. They're a lot of fun, and it adds a new layer [to the sound]." She also observed that the overall Melodies experience was very well produced and rewarding: "It's unlike anything you do in high school. We're treated like pro-

fessional musicians. It's like a real job."

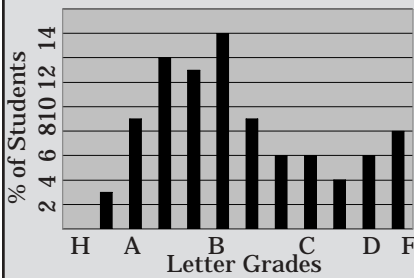
The special guests this year were Ernie Williams and his band. The group provided crowd-pleasing music that blended blues and gospel sounds with an infectious enthusiasm that reverberated throughout the theater. "They were very energetic," Gosda commented in response.

LaMontagne agreed, saying, "They added a nice contrast to the performance."

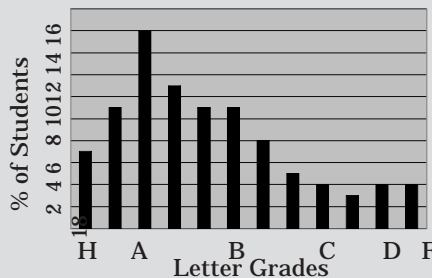
For those not directly involved in the performance, Melodies of Christmas has become a holiday tradition. Senior Robyn Blackmore has gone for a "countless number of years" and hopes that she'll still have the opportunity to attend even after she graduates. As for the quality of the show, Blackmore said, "It was incredible!"

First Quarter Grades

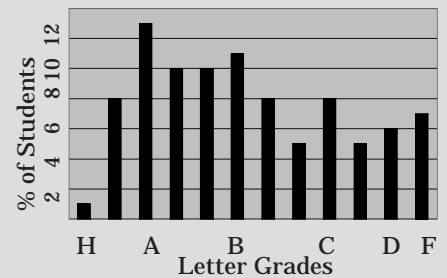
English



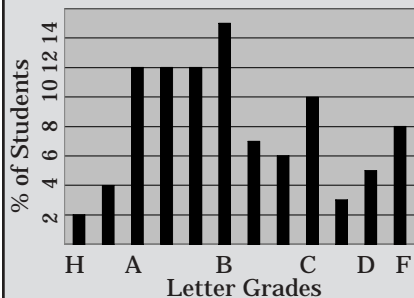
Foreign Language



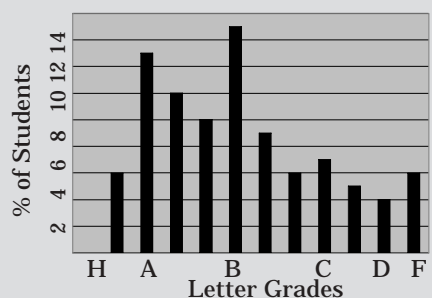
Math



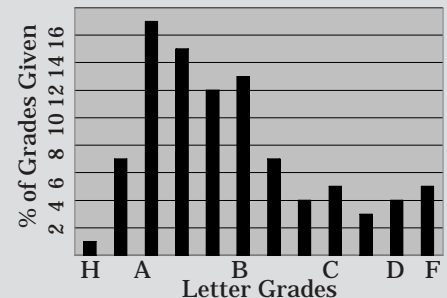
Science



Social Studies



Grand Total



Compiled by Charles McCambridge

NEWS VIEWS

“How is 9-11 affecting your holiday season?”



“I have much more to be thankful for because I did not lose anyone in the bombings.”
-Junior Jerry Adler (above)

“The whole September 11 attack has shown us what’s really important in life. It’s straightened out my priorities this holiday season.”
-Senior Sean Quinn (at right)



“Overall, I think everyone is looking forward to the holiday season more because we’ve been so disconnected as a country.”
-Senior Katie Mangano (at left)

“The holiday season will be somewhat subdued because of all the sadness.”
-English teacher T. A. Subramanian

“9-11 has affected me because I’m now fully aware of how much love I have for my family and friends, and it’s made me appreciate them a lot more.”
-Junior Mike Utzig

“This year, I am recognizing the holiday a lot more, and I am more thankful for what I have.”
-Senior Dave O’Connor



“I’ve developed a much greater appreciation for the important things in life, such as family, love, and peace.”
-Junior Pat Sharkey (at left)

“This holiday season seems to be more focused on peace and love rather than presents. As a society, I think we are much less materialistic than we have been in the past, as well as less commercial.”
-Junior Jessica Chen

“It has brought down my spirit. There’s fewer people now, so that means less people to enjoy the holidays.”
-Freshman Tiffani Friguletto

“Everything is a lot more meaningful and special because we’re all more thankful for what we have.”
-Sophomore Tricia Zeccola

“It makes me more thankful for friends, family, and the freedom I have in America.”
-Senior Dawson Grau

“Truthfully, it hasn’t been something I have been thinking about. I’m more appreciative I guess, but I feel it is best not to dwell and just move on. I took my time to go through all of the emotional stages; now it is time to move on.”
-Junior Dave Corcoran



“Retaliation seems to be the correct move for our country right now, but as a practicing Christian and especially during the holiday season, I’m having trouble trying to resolve over the fact that Christianity does not endorse retaliation.”
-Math director Doug Lohnas (above)

“I’m not in the least bit interested about the shopping or celebrating. Right now, I’m much more concentrated on peace.”
-Spanish teacher Michael Jones

“This year, I really just want to be with my family. Instead of gifts, we’re more focused on family and peace.”
-Freshman Megan Murray (at right)



Study halls can be bearable

For underclasspeople, study halls range from useful to boring. Unfortunately, the movement of all study halls to the Little Theater has made it even more difficult to accomplish anything, since there are no desks. Students have also been complaining about alphabetized seating, which makes it difficult for them to collaborate on homework or projects when necessary.

Students may be annoyed by these inconveniences, and they are not alone. The administration admits to these problems. However, it is difficult to find a viable solution: the auditorium and cafeterias already having proved unworkable because of rehearsing musical groups and intruding upperclassmen.

This is a bad situation for everybody,

EDITORIAL



Warrior art / Eugene Yee

Instead of complaining, students should do their best to be constructive and creative. Those who really need to work together are encouraged, by all means, to get a pass to one of the resource centers. Disrespecting the study hall supervisors and flaunting the rules only forces the administration to create new rules in order to keep insubordination under control.

In an ideal world, it would not be necessary to have study halls, but the administration unfortunately feels that some students cannot handle free time. Still, all is not lost if we do our best to create a pleasant

atmosphere in which students can voice their concerns.

Don't destroy holiday spirit

(Continued from page 5, REVIVING)

are banning their symbols? How are we allowing students to take an active role in the "global community" when we support an attitude of one-dimensionality and ignoring of other cultures? Surely, everything has to be politically correct; we have to satisfy everyone and don't want to possibly offend one single person. Perhaps this is the reason why Santa Claus died in Niskayuna, and why the happiness of every community member is valued more than the active role that we are "supposed" to take in the global community of the future.

It is reasonable for the administration to cite the principle of separation of church and state. (Pssst... Did anyone notice the *national* Christmas tree?) However, the erection of a Christmas tree is a custom of the pagans, who

did not believe in God. Although it has acquired religious significance, many Christians and non-Christians, including myself, regard the tree as a secular symbol. Therefore, the religious connotation of a Christmas tree is not as pronounced as it seems. Now I ask you: Is there any reason to completely eradicate this "religious" symbol from Niskayuna High School when many regard it as secular? NO!

And that's only talking about Christmas trees. Other decorations, such as menorahs, wreaths, Santa Clauses and Santa Claus hats, and colorful lights, are also banned. During the holiday season, the rest of the sane world is delightfully celebrating. Meanwhile, in Niskayuna High School, we can only daydream about the merry sights of Santa and colorful lights. Wouldn't it be nice if we could feel re-

laxed and have wonderful holiday spirits while sitting through class? Wouldn't hanging up Christmas lights (oops, "decoration lights") and transforming our sterile, banal school into an engaging and fascinating place be more welcoming? The holidays are meant to bring joy and cheer, but as the celebrations approach, the only joyous and cheerful people are the ones who don't die of boredom in this apathetic school.

Even though some community members are offended by the presence of Christmas trees, menorahs, and other "detestable" symbols, why should these scattered people get their desires at the expense of the others? We must stand up for what is right and just. By doing so, we will be bringing the much needed holiday spirit back to Niskayuna High School and reviving the Santa Claus that was unfairly taken away from us.

The Warrior

Niskayuna High School
1626 Balltown Road
Niskayuna, NY 12309
(518) 382-2511, Ext. 351
<http://www.nisk.k12.ny.us/nhs/warrior/>

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Christmas decorations: yay or nay?

Reviving Santa Claus

by Jonathan Chow

OPINION

A hasty observation of this school before Christmas vacation (or "December break," as to prevent any offense) would undoubtedly dishearten any lively person. "Where did the Christmas trees go? The wreaths? Santa Claus? Menorahs? Colorful decorations?" we are inclined to squawk. The dismal truth is that in 1980, the administration changed our school forever, unjustly killing Santa Claus in Niskayuna by prohibiting "the display of religious objects or symbols."



Warrior art / Eugene Yee

There is no reason why educationally valuable holidays and symbols should be banned. So much knowledge can be gained by merely looking at any symbol of a culture. Just by glancing at the menorah, one would learn an important Jewish symbol, as well as the meaning of each candle. What about celebrations such as Ramadhan, which are not observed as widely? If their symbols were displayed, the entire community would have some sense of the culture and traditions surrounding this holiday, as opposed to the current predominant ignorance. As social studies and psychology teacher Geoff Stroebel explains, "We should be celebrating each other's cultures and traditions... that is education... But instead, we are educated on ignorance."

An even deeper educational problem is the obvious contradiction with the Mission Statement. It promises, "We will provide opportunities for all students to acquire knowledge... and form attitudes that will enable them to take [an]... active role in their... global communities." How are we providing an opportunity for students to "acquire knowledge" about cultures when we

(Continued on page 4, DON'T)

Holiday decor illogical

by Cassandra Wolos

OPINION COLUMN

Hark, the holidays! The winter ones have arrived already or are on their way. Christmas, Hanukkah, Ramadan, Kwanzaa, and, oh yeah, Christmas.

This school district maintains a healthy policy of religious non-affiliation. We permit all faiths and promote none. Though the school seeks to educate its students about cultural diversity, the administration correctly concludes that the coming of Christ's birthday should not prompt an influx of religious decoration.

Ideally, students in a public school could learn about culture by viewing symbols of every set of beliefs. The problem is that the urge to absorb religious enrichment is limited to December. Hanukkah is not a major Jewish holiday, but no one hankers for the traditional apples and honey in the Old Cafe on Rosh Hashanah - the Jewish New Year unfortunately does not coincide with Christmas. Hinduism, Buddhism, and Atheism haven't yet proposed winter observances, so we can apparently ignore these religions altogether.

Although the high school science department does its excellent reputation justice when it celebrates the Winter Equinox, and math teachers disperse irreplaceable education on Pi Day, it is not possible to honor every celebration

CASEY AT BAT

So why M o s t Niskayuna students observe Christmas - if the object is to educate, then why should the majority of students do the teaching instead of the learning? The well-founded absence of colored lights in the school hasn't seemed to induce ignorant queries from non-Christians about the basics of that faith. If anything, decorations should represent those religions that most students are less familiar with. We could display kinaras to teach the roots of Kwanzaa, for example.

But African-Americans aren't asking for this. In fact, some Muslims say that any sort of symbol for Ramadhan is a misrepresentation, since the holiday is not a joyous celebration, but a reminder of the importance of self-control. The only requests are from Christmas-revelers who inexplicably ask to hang their own decorations and educate themselves further on their own holiday.

A.C.T.I.O.N.S., the high school's alliance of Christian teens, has hung signs to signify respect for several December holidays. Like many of my peers, I appreciate this attempt to expand the arms of the season's festive embrace. However, there is something disconcerting about being wished an "Excellent Eid" by non-Muslims. If I am to be educated, I prefer to receive information from those with particular knowledge.

Proponents of religious beautification at Christmastime say that bright lights and Santa Claus make the school a more welcoming place. I hope this isn't a new direction for the Climate Committee; those who do not celebrate Christmas do not feel welcomed by Christmas decorations.

I do learn significant lessons whenever I look at a Christmas tree in a public place. Look, a pagan symbol of secular worship enshrined in the hallway to commemorate the birth of Christ! Look, a declaration of holy euphoria in which I am not included! Yippee.

Without this essential token of cultural literacy in the school, I am forever ignorant of religious diversity. I will never be an active member of the global community. I might even die of boredom.

Thank you, Niskayuna.

Save your money: don't see *Vanilla Sky*

Vanilla Sky

Starring: Tom Cruise, Penelope Cruz, Cameron Diaz

Directed by: Cameron Crowe
115 minutes, Rated R

Rating: ★☆☆☆☆

by **Ryan Lindenberg**

MOVIE REVIEW

Cameron Crowe, a director whom I have always felt to be extremely talented and often brilliant, just released his latest film: *Vanilla Sky* is a reworking of Alejandro Amenabar's 1997 film, *Abre los Ojos* (or *Open Your Eyes* for those of you who aren't drunk). Because of the respect Amenabar's film has gained with most critics and the input of Crowe and Tom Cruise, I had high expectations going into this film. Unfortunately, my expectations were completely shattered.

Before I begin foaming at the mouth, let me give a brief run-down of the film's basic premise, which actually isn't very basic at all. Actually, I don't even know if this movie has a premise. Well, nevertheless, Cruise plays David Aames, a rich business tycoon whose wealth and publishing job was inherited from his dead father. His sex buddy, Julie, played by Cameron Diaz, wants a commitment, but he wants Sofia, who is played by Penelope Cruz. Julie, in a jealous and enraged frenzy, declares her love to David, and then drives him off of a bridge. The crash kills Julie and leaves David with a scarred, deformed face.

The movie then takes a weird turn with lots of twists that don't make any sense. It makes you ask yourself, "Did the crash really happen?" "Is Julie really dead?" "Is David's face really deformed?" and "Just how *did* Crowe go from *Almost Famous* to this?" And then, during the film's final 20 or so minutes, it takes an approach much like last summer's *A.I.*, ridiculous to the point where *The Wizard of Oz* seems realistic. These last 20 or so minutes ruin very redeeming quality the film had going for it (which, in this case, is not much). I understand that most films ask the audience to suspend reality to an extent—but *Vanilla Sky* simply asks too much.

You'd probably think the use of top-notch stars like Tom Cruise and Cameron

Diaz would add to the film. Unfortunately, they only add to its flatness. Tom Cruise gives new meaning to the word "overacting." His embellished persona is so contradictory to that of his subtle co-star, Penelope Cruz, that it makes you wonder how on earth he meshes with her in real life and left Nicole Kidman. As I was watching this, I couldn't help but think, "so *this* is what Tom was doing while Nicole was sitting at home with the kids." And that just made me hate this movie even more.

Kurt Russell is also in the movie, which doesn't need much explaining considering, well, it's Kurt Russell. Need I remind you that Russell's past two films were *3,000 Miles to Graceland* and *Soldier*? Cameron Diaz gives a spectacular performance: it's a shame, though, that she seems to be in completely different movie. The best actor by far was Jason Lee, who plays David's best friend, Brian. He gets the best lines at all the best moments, and is basically the only reason to see this movie. Actually, I take that back; there is no reason to see this movie. Besides, Lee is much cooler in Kevin Smith's films and Crowe's *Almost Famous*.

Speaking of *Almost Famous*, it had the best soundtrack ever. Come to think of it, all of Crowe's films have had a m a z i n g soundtracks, and *Vanilla Sky* is no exception. There are some great songs from R.E.M., Radiohead, and Paul McCartney. Unfortunately, Crowe puts these songs in all of the wrong places. The music and images don't blend or don't flow like they did in Crowe's past films. I would really love to buy the soundtrack; I'm sure that I will, just so long as I don't have any of the horrible pictures *Vanilla Sky* decided to plaster upon the screen in my mind.

Which reminds me: aren't editors supposed to learn how to edit in film school? Apparently the editor of this film never went to film school, or was never taught how to edit, because the movie's editing

is just horrendous.

Vanilla Sky is so preposterous, so pretentious, and so frustrating that I can't even begin to explain where this film went astray. It could have been good; it should have been good; it wasn't. Instead, it's a self-indulgent, overblown, incoherent piece of garbage where just about everything that was good in Crowe's *Jerry Maguire*—one of my all-time favorite movies—is completely discarded. I simply don't like it at all. I hate it. I hate this film so much; it even made me like *Jerry Maguire* less.

Am I overreacting? Probably. Do I really care? No, not really.

You may be saying: if you really hate this film as much as you say you do, Ryan Lindenberg, then why did you give bother to give it an entire star? Well, there were three scenes in the movie that were good, one of them involving a nude Penelope Cruz, which alone merits this film at *least* a star.



Photo courtesy IMDb.com

CRUZ ON CRUISE: Penelope Cruz, reprising her role from *Open Your Eyes*, and a Nicole-less Tom Cruise embrace in Cameron Crowe's latest and worst film, *Vanilla Sky*.

Also, the killer opening scene takes place in an abandoned Times Square with not a moving vehicle or human being in sight, and it's really creepy.

Let me also say how unbelievably pretentious this film is. Even its title is pretentious. I mean, c'mon, *Vanilla Sky*?! It thinks that it's so poetic and so important, but it only comes off as pompous and frustrating. *Vanilla Sky* lacks the sincerity and the emotion of Crowe's past films and the film wants to be so much more than it really is. And what it really is, in the end, is not much.

Alpine Ski hoping for success and snow

by Mike Spinnicchia

SPORTS

To quote the great Yankee catcher Yogi Berra, it seems like deja vu all over again for the Niskayuna alpine ski team. Once again, the team is very frustrated by the non-existent snow in this early winter season. Most of the varsity skiers from last year are returning to the team this year after a very successful season last year. This means that the team should have a great amount of talent this year. Right now, their biggest concern is getting snow on the ground. "We're going to be good. We just need snow," commented sophomore Andy Millspaugh.

This year, the team is coached by social studies teacher John Sharkey. Like the rest of the team, he is very frustrated by the lack of snow. The team has had a chance to become more conditioned by Sharkey stressing the importance of actually getting on the mountain and skiing. The team is currently practicing about three times a week after school. In these practices, the team focuses on conditioning through running, push-ups, and working out in the weight room.

The team hopes to have their first race on December 28. However, depending on the weather, this may change. If Niskayuna is able to race on this day, it is doubtful that they will be able to practice on the mountain beforehand. Once the season gets into full swing and Mother Nature is pumping out a steady supply of snow, the team hopes to ski on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays. They will continue their dry land training once or twice a week.

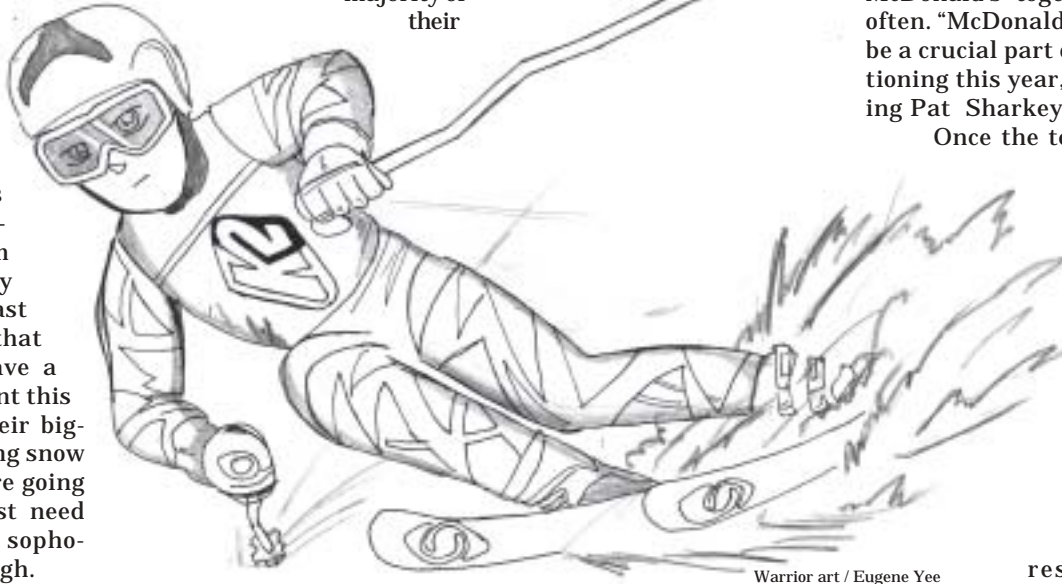
The team usually races on Saturdays and occasionally on Wednesdays. Niskayuna is

hosting a Wednesday Night Race on January 30, at West Mountain. West Mountain is the home of Niskayuna's practices and the majority of their

snowboarders," junior Chris Meyerer said in reference to

the team having a very tight bond. The team gets along very well, and through past seasons, they have developed a tradition of going to McDonald's together rather often. "McDonald's is going to be a crucial part of our conditioning this year," said a joking Pat Sharkey.

Once the team can get over the frustration of not being on the slopes, members should be able to post some great results this season. Summa-



major races. The major meets during the season are the Queensbury Invitational, the Lake George/Bolton Invitational, the Glens Falls Invitational, the Dual Slalom, and the Ahern Memorial at Royal Mountain.

The ski team's season culminates on February 12 when they attend Sectionals at Gore Mountain. Those who do exceptionally well at Sectionals can advance to States on February 26-27 at Bristol Mountain. Not all members on the Niskayuna team will make it to States, but they have high hopes for Sectionals. "We should send a lot of kids to States this year," said junior Pat Sharkey, son of head coach John Sharkey.

Some of the team's strongest skiers this season are Sharkey, sophomore Chris Hammond, junior Jerry Adler, and senior Mike Haseck. Along with all of these talented skiers, the team also has a snowboarder this year in sophomore Keith Kotecki. "We need more skiers on the team, and less

the lone snowboarder.

A great deal of the success that the team expects to have this year can be attributed to

rizing the general feeling around the team right now, Coach Sharkey said, "Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow!"

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Basketball playing above expectations

by TJ Andrews

SPORTS

The boys' basketball team has exceeded all expectations early on this season, earning a decent 2-3 record in its first five games of play. Prior to the season's start, the general consensus was that the Silver Warriors wouldn't play well, having lost 12 seniors from last year's team. However, this year's squad of fresh, talented players has proven that they are capable of competing with anyone.

Despite their losing record, the Silver Warriors have played solid basketball this season, averaging 57.6 points per game. At home, they are 2-2, including two blowout victories over Ballston Spa and Averill Park. In their three losses, the team was defeated by an average margin of only five points, including a narrow defeat to Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake, 41-39, in which the Warriors' would-be tying shot was deflected by the Spartans' Ian Beasley.

The offensive success of the Silver Warriors this season has

revolved around an inside-outside combination of power and finesse. Sophomore Josh Duell has supplied the team with a low-post scoring threat, while juniors Kevin Rucinski and Kevin Jordan have provided the team with clutch outside shooting ability.

As expected, Josh Duell, Niskayuna's 6'6" sophomore center, has dominated opponents early on this season. Averaging 12.8 points per game, Duell is the team's number two scorer and clearly the most reliable option in the Silver Warriors' offense. He also has proven himself to be an excellent rebounder and shot-blocker, shouldering most of the team's load in these two categories. Duell's hard work in the key has also made him the recipient of the team's most fouls, averaging five trips to the free throw line every game. Despite all these feats, however, it has been his rim-rattling dunks which have garnered the most attention from the fans for the team's young center.

Even with a center like Josh

Duell, much of the Silver Warriors' success can be attributed to their three-point accuracy. Opposing teams trying to collapse their defense on Duell have paid for it dearly, allowing the Warriors to average a stunning 5.8 threes per game. The marksmanship of junior Kevin Rucinski has been a large factor in the squad's success from downtown thus far in the season. Through games, Rucinski was the team's leading scorer with 13.2 ppg and also the team's leader in three-point field goals, averaging 2.8 per game. During a December 11 game, Rucinski shot the lights out of the Averill Park Warriors, hitting on five shots from beyond the arc. Fellow junior Kevin Jordan has also been a factor in the backcourt this season, averaging just over eight points and a three-pointer per game.

In addition to Duell, Rucinski, and Jordan, the entire squad has played well as a team so far, with players such as juniors Frank Longo, Dustin Pusatere, Gabe Randolph and seniors Jor-

dan Hoerl, and Greg Howe all providing scoring support when needed. The Warriors have also worked hard on rebounding, and played solid defense (only 49.2 ppg allowed.)

In a game against the Bethlehem Eagles on Friday, December 14, the team kept it close throughout the entire game. With two minutes left, the Warriors were leading. Unfortunately, they could not hold the lead and Bethlehem came back to prevail by a score of 44-40. The team played amazing defense and their shooting was also very impressive.

The real test for this young Niskayuna team will begin on December 18, when the league portion of their schedule begins. Facing tough opponents like Guilderland and Bethlehem in the Suburban Council (both have beat the Warriors this season), the team will have to step up their level of play to match their talented opponents. However, one thing can be said for sure: the Silver Warriors won't be lacking in intensity.



Warrior photo / Matt Larkin

PASS IT HERE: Senior Jordan Hoerl receives an in-bounds pass during the Warriors' game on last Friday, December 14th. The Warriors lost to Bethlehem, 44-40.



Warrior photo / Matt Larkin

DEFENSE: Junior Frank Longo guards his opponent from Bethlehem last Friday. The Warriors lost before their home crowd after leading the game with less than two minutes remaining.