

WAVELENGTHS

Voice of the Greenwave

Ashbrook High School, 2222 South New Hope Rd., Gastonia, NC 28054

Lying under pressure

Colleges randomly checking applications for truthfulness, accuracy

BY LYNSEY WILSON/Editor

College acceptance has become increasingly competitive, pressuring students to pack more extra-curricular activities into their schedules, as well as perform better academically. In order to obtain the needed edge, colleges have found that some students either lie about or exaggerate their activities on their applications. To combat this, the University of California system will be the first in the country to implement a program which will randomly check students' applications for accuracy.

Students applying for admission during the fall 2003 semester will be the first to undergo this process. Currently, the universities only check grades at the end of a student's senior year and investigate obviously suspicious statements.

University officials feel the programs will restore confidence in the acceptance process, and discourage students from being dishonest

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Senior Amy McGaha studies for her math test. Colleges have found that students will fabricate or exaggerate their achievements on their applications in order to gain an advantage.

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Sports

Junior Varsity girl's basketball team plays short-handed, still manages to have winning record
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Lawmakers debate effectiveness of state's license law

BY LYNSEY WILSON/Editor

The state has seen a drop in high school dropouts, but educators are not convinced the state's license law is the reason. The law, which prevents minors from getting a license unless they are passing 70 percent of their classes, was implemented in 1998. Since then, drop out numbers have declined from

25,567 students in 1998 to 22,365 students during the 2000-2001 school year.

Representative Robert Grady, who co-sponsored the bill in 1997, said the premise behind the bill is what makes it so effective.

"A 16-year-old who wants to drop out of school doesn't understand what dropping out means to their

future," he said. "Many times the only thing they do understand is a driver's license."

Students agree, saying their license has been their primary reason for working to keep passing grades.

"I'm not that great of a student," said an anonymous Ashbrook student. "Honestly, if it wasn't for not being able to get my license I would re-

Drama department looks to make music with spring production of *Music Man*

BY BRYAN COCKFIELD/
Staff Writer

Following a successful fall production, director Jonathan Buckner, along with his team of actors and technicians, will once again be kicking up their heels, this time to the tune of the *Music Man*.

"It will be better in the sense that we will be able to have a larger audience," said Buckner. "Actors feed off their audience and looking out on a full house give you

much more energy than when you look out on a house that is only partially filled.

While Buckner looks for a full house, he also adds that a larger audience does not place extra pressure on the actors. In fact, actors sat the larger the audience the better they will perform.

"It's like home field advantage for a football team," said senior Rich Abernethy.

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"We feed off our audience. When you have a large audience you step up your level of performance."

- Rich Abernethy,
senior

Number of reported offenses rise, crime rate still declines

BY LYNSEY WILSON/Editor

Despite the increase in the number of offenses required to be reported crime rates in Gaston County schools declined from 4,405 incidents per 1,000 students during the 2000-2001 school year to 3,725 incidents per 1,000 students last year.

Last year, schools were expected to report offenses in three new categories - possession of an alcoholic beverage, bomb threat and burning of a school building. Superintendent of Gaston County Schools, Dr. Ed Sadler, feels the decrease stems from the job school personnel are doing to con-



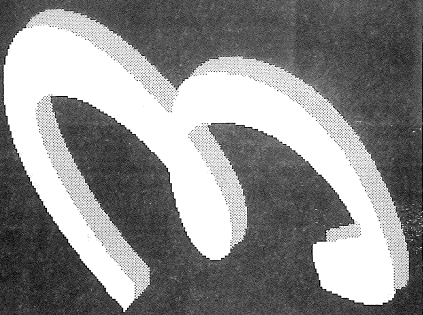
Senior Veronica Yavelak visits with her friends in the parking lot while she waits for the traffic to clear. North Carolina law prohibits students under the age of eighteen to get their license if they have dropped out of school or are not passing the majority of their classes.

vey the county's zero tolerance policy to students.

"Our folks were paying attention, and they are diligent," he said. "Our kids know they can fight down at the 7-11 or at the park and maybe get away with it, but not at school."

More than two-thirds of the reported crimes occurred on high school and middle school campuses, with only 16 crimes being reported from elementary schools. Crimes were reported in areas such as possession of weapons not including firearms, assaults involving

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The purpose of this publication is to apprise its readership of pertinent, school-related information and, as a public forum, to offer them the opportunity to publish their convictions in the form of letters-to-the-editor. An editorial board comprised of the editors and adviser reserves the right to review all letters for ethical standards and to edit them for accuracy.

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EDITORIALS

Schools lack equipment and funds, official makes education third priority

Our schools need computers, money for publications, money for repairs and upgrades, along with more employees and teaching resources. However, with all these needs, a county commissioner has put schools third on his priority list, behind water and sewer systems.

Recently, the school board was forced to cut 36 jobs, 30 teacher's assistant positions and six jobs from the central office. The state asked Gaston County to make more than \$1.37 million dollars in cuts, with position cuts accounting for \$1.09 million.

The cuts added to the deficit the county must earn over the next three years in order to bring the system up to date. As it stands, the county needs to amass a 20 percent increase in budget in order to allocate an extra \$7.2 million to all schools within the next three years.

With lagging systems and below par facilities, those in charge still put schools third on their priority list, citing an increase in taxes as the main reason. However, the commissioner feels that if a tax increase is necessary monies should be put toward our water and sewer system.

While water quality and sewer systems are important, should the education of our students, those who will take over the jobs of keep our water clean and our sewer systems in tact, really take a back seat to that?

If school systems are forced to continue cutting jobs due to lack of money, who will be left to teach, and if money isn't supplied for new textbooks, computers and building

repairs where will they learn and with what will they teach?

Though it is understandable you can only spend as much money as you have and that money is not in an unlimited supply, it is not clear why education should suffer in a money shortage.

Most teachers in North Carolina are not paid enough to even cover the cost of living for themselves, let alone support their families. It is often said that teachers are paid too much, but by saying that one is not only avoiding reality, but they are also putting a price on your child's education and by extension on the future of this na-

Line them up!
Water and
sewer first,
schools third.

tion.

It is also distressing that students are forced to learn

technology on outdated equipment, and oftentimes even when equipment is supplied it takes months for someone to be sent to connect it. For example, many classrooms still have

not been connected to the Internet, even though the switches needed to make the connection came almost two months ago, or they are still the equipment necessary for Internet connections. Also, some of the equipment provided is missing hardware or install disks, so while the equipment is there it is unusable.

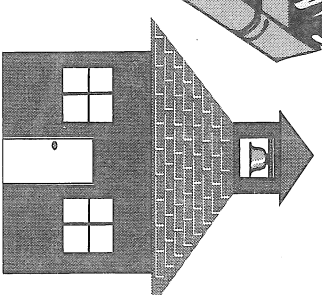
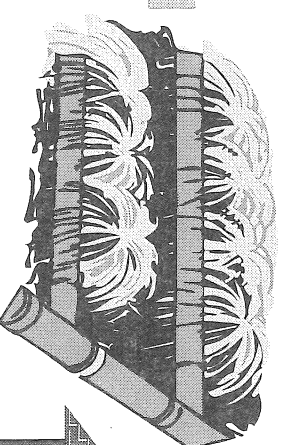
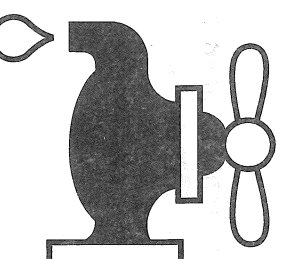
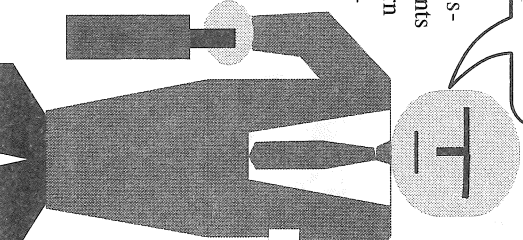
Many of the school's publications, such as newspaper, yearbook and the literary magazine, struggle daily to make ends meet because, despite their accomplishments, the county still refuses to give them financial aid. Staff members must obtain support solely from the generosity of businesses in the community.

Science students are often unable to perform experiments due to

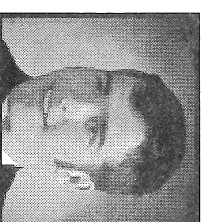
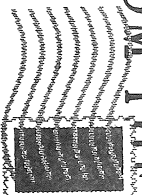
lack of equipment or supplies, and English teachers are unable to assign readings because there are not enough books to supply all their students. Students are forced to deal with books that are missing pages and covers that are falling off.

While the newest equipment and supplies will not always be feasible, it should be feasible to provide books that are not held together by tape. It should also be feasible to provide cables and software to hook-up new printers, scanners and computers. What is the point of having new or better equipment if the accessories necessary to utilize it have not been provided?

With all that is lacking in our school system and the experiences students are not given due to lack of money, it is shocking that someone would put education third on their list of priorities. It is even more shocking that when budget cuts need to be made, schools are typically the first targeted. Perhaps those in charge should reevaluate their priorities and take time to consider the education they're providing to those who will one day me in charge of them.



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



By HARRISON MOSKOWITZ STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT

Hello Student Body,

We are all privileged to spend such an incredible year at Ashbrook. A good year was quickly transformed into an unforgettable one with a triumphant football season. Thank you football players and thank you students for having an unparalleled level of support and school spirit. From the massacre of Weddington to two close calls to the single greatest comeback in sports history at Asheville to the memorable game in Raleigh, the Green

Wave rolled victoriously. Let us continue to have unwavering faith in our athletic teams.

Amidst the excitement, we have progressed into the second semester. One asks, is the year half over or half begun? That is for you to answer, but which one is the optimist and which one is the pessimist? The months preceding graduation will be enjoyable and exciting for the senior class and hopeful for the underclassmen. Whether clubs, athletics, or academics appeal to you Ashbrook can be an excellent

place to have fun and meet people.

Student council has had great success in the first semester and we can attribute all of it to you. An empathetic and interested student body and faculty have caused high participation in events and programs. The effort for Cans for Kids was most impressive. The men from the Crisis Assistance Ministry were stunned and grateful when they saw more than three truckloads worth of cans. Congratulations to Coach White's 2nd period for lugging in more than 1500 cans.

Ashbrook provided a great service to families in need and inflicted some student council members with permanent back problems, but it was worth it. Your elected council has a great agenda planned for the next few months with some new events and old favorites. Please keep in contact with your representatives for suggestions. Enjoy the spring semester. Peace in the Middle East.

Harrison Moskowitz

Alumni Views

Students need to exhibit school pride, support fellow classmates

Where have we had so much more of which to be proud. Some people and some students will disagree with me, but they are not aware of the traditions that exist or the pride that once existed.

The student body would sing *On Gastonia* at pep rallies, after touchdowns and during basketball games. Now, there are very few students that know the tune to our fight song, much less the words. It is rarely played at pep rallies and only occasionally during football games and hardly ever played at any other sporting events.

However, it is not just the level of enthusiasm that surrounds our sports teams that has declined, it is also school pride. In the past, Ashbrook students took pride in our school, our buildings and our reputation.

Clean-up days were a popular, widely attended event. They were a time to not only improve the school's appearance, but also a time to have fun and

spend time with your friends.

Now most students don't even throw their trash in the trash can, instead it ends up in the halls, on the grounds, and on the lunch room floor, and no one cares enough to come and pick it up. The few clean-up days that have been held were marred by meager numbers. Those who did attend were diligent and hard-working; however, the low numbers were enough to demoralize and discourage even the most ardent of workers.

Students do not even care enough about their school to attend events where former coaches will be honored, coaches that led sporting teams to countless victories and did so much to build the outstanding reputation the school enjoys today. It was appalling to see the sparse attendance at a crucial conference game, where admittance was only one dollar and facilities were being renamed.

They are also passive at pep rallies. As hard as student council, teachers, athletic teams, band members, cheerleaders and administration work to organize, plan and prepare for these events, students rarely show any enthusiasm or excitement. Most are excited about missing classes and classwork, but are rarely excited about the purpose of the pep rally.

Pep rallies are supposed to serve as fun events that heighten and stir up excitement and anticipation for the upcoming game, but the majority of students walk in and sit down on the bleachers. They rarely get excited for the game nor do they even pay attention to what's happening on the gym floor. However, while attending games and wearing green and white on Friday is important, school pride is much more than that. Having school pride means more than picking up trash in the hallways and traveling to Raleigh for a state championship game, it is about supporting your fellow students on and off the field, whether they win or lose. It's about supporting them in the classroom and in the halls. It's about having enough pride in your school and in yourself to lend your fellow students a hand. Being and Ashbrook student is a privilege, so show your pride.

By SHERRY SPARROW

SHERRY GRADUATED FROM ASHBROOK IN JUNE 1978. SHE ATTENDED EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY. SHE IS CURRENTLY A TEACHER'S ASSISTANT IN FRESHMAN CLASSES AT ASHBROOK.



SO WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Insufficient funds result in excessive amount of fundraisers

Why do schools and organizations always seem to be trying to separate you from your money? You know what I'm talking about, every time you turn around someone is having a fundraiser. Why? In elementary school, we had fundraisers too, but not to the extent we do now, and at least they made these gimmicks exciting. I remember going to assemblies where they enticed everyone by showing off prizes and giving away candy.

In high school, however, all they do is hand you a packet and say to turn it in by a certain date. Where's the pizzazz? And to make it worse, they're doing it more and more every year.

This year alone I've been asked to buy or sell fruit, wrapping paper, cookie dough, greeting cards, calendars, t-shirts, raffle tickets, BBQ tickets and candy, just to name a few.

When you ask teachers why you do all of these money grubbing schemes you get the same answer, to raise money, but why? The government gives the school money and everyone pays instructional fees.

An idea is because of the lack

of funds given by the government. This school year Gaston County schools have a budget of \$29.6 million. It seems like a lot but you have to factor in all the things money is spent on before it is divided among the schools.

Gaston College is also given a portion, as is Kings Mountain County Schools. Because of overcrowding in Gaston County, students are being sent to Kings Mountain, who is being generously compensated. Not a lot of money is left for our schools, leaving fundraisers our only hope for a decent education.

The simple thing of fundraisers seems to be a good thing, but with all the hassle it doesn't seem worth it. This annoyance can be reduced by a sizable increase in the school's budget. Unfortunately, the feat is

AMBER POLK, SOPHOMORE

Devalued honor cards lack incentives to motivate students

Honor cards are rewards for having good grades, attendance and behavior while at school. Now that the value of an honor card has dropped tremendously, students are not as concerned about these things because there are no immediate rewards involved. Students worked hard to obtain their honor cards, and now it seems as if they have done it in vain.

In the past, honor cards allowed students to leave for lunch five minutes early and five minutes early at the end of the day. They also allow students to receive parking passes at a reduced price and attend special

functions strictly for card holders.

Teachers have complained about losing five minutes of teaching time during third and fourth period classes. While you can understand their position, students who receive honor cards are already making good grades so missing five minutes shouldn't matter. After all, in most classes, the last five minutes is used to pack up and socialize.

There are three graduated levels of honor cards, gold, which gives students the most benefits, silver and bronze. The card's level depends on how well a student has performed. Now that the cards have been devalued it doesn't matter what level of card a student has because there is no difference in their worth, a student with a 2.0 GPA has the same benefits as one with a 4.0 GPA.

If they would simply let the cards carry the same value as they have in the past students would be happy. Teachers have missed five minutes of teaching time in the past and students have still performed well academically. We work hard for our honor cards and if we earn them we deserve the rewards that should accompany them.

BRIDGER FLOYD, SOPHOMORE

Bell schedule rushes students

The bell schedule at Ashbrook doesn't allow students time to get their things and take care of miscellaneous business. As it stands now, students have five minutes to go to their lockers, got to the bathroom, take care of any other needs and get to class. This may seem like enough time, but it is not.

If a student has a problem opening their locker, such as the door being stuck or the

lock not working, it could take longer than five minutes to find help.

Also, if a student's locker is downstairs and the majority of their classes are upstairs, it creates other problems. You would then have to carry all of your books around all day or risk being late because you have to go to your locker.

Furthermore, the amount of students that attend Ashbrook makes the halls crowded. With everyone changing classes at the same time, it takes a while to move from place to place. Even when there is a steady flow of traffic it's hard to get to your locker and to class. However, you have to contend with students who stop in the middle of the hall to talk and don't leave enough room to pass, and if you try to pass and bump into them, they get offended and make rude or threatening comments.

With the problems students encounter simply trying to get their books and get to class, there is no time left to go to the restroom. Many times students must go to class and asked to be excused which causes them to miss class. This poses another problem because some teachers do not allow students to leave class to go to the bathroom, leaving students very uncomfortable. When students are uncomfortable they do not focus on what the teacher is saying, causing the to miss what is being taught.

If students were allotted more time between classes it would create better learning conditions because students would have time to take care of their needs, meaning they would no longer have to miss or interrupt class to do so.

HEATHER GREEN, FRESHMAN

Teens, experts view ads as mistake citing constant changes, ineffectiveness

Companies target youth with advent of slang ads

BY LYNSEY WILSON/Editor

The media and corporate America seem to believe if they include slang in their advertisements they will immediately attract younger consumers. Recent ads for the release of Star Wars: Episode II on DVD feature an announcer asking "Who's da man?" with the answer coming as "Yoda's da man."

In a recent e-mail to his employees, a CNN producer gave his staff a slang dictionary with the suggestion that "all you homeys and hon-eyys use this guide to add a new flavor to your tickers and dekkos," in other words, asking them to make their graphics more appealing to the younger generation.

While slang is becoming more and more common in the media, many young people say it is not having the desired effect.

"Ads like that are ridiculous," said sophomore Paul Riser. "They do get your attention and make you laugh, but adults can't use slang. It just doesn't work, and it certainly doesn't make that product more appealing to me."

Riser goes on to say that when adults use slang it loses its appeal. "Once you hear an adult use slang, you typically don't use it anymore," he said. "Part of slang is

that it's just for you and your friends. If your parents start using it, it's not for you anymore so you find something different."

Another problem teens say the media face when using slang is that their use is often out of date.

"I saw an ad the other day that was trying to discourage kids from trying a drug, and the general idea was not to use drugs because they not only make you ill, as in physically sick, but they are ill," said junior Chris Trent. "I'm sure it wasn't for starters, nobody really uses the word ill anymore, and if they do, it means something's good, not bad."

Paul McFedries, creator of an online catalog of terms called Wordplay.com, says it is no surprise adults are unaware when the definitions of slang words change, pointing to that as another reason the media should refrain from using slang in their advertisements.

"Slang is meant to be separate," he said. "Adults aren't supposed to use it and they aren't supposed to know exactly what it means. It constantly changes, which means when they make the ad, a particular word could mean one thing, but when the ad is aired it now means something different

and conveys the wrong message,"

Tina Wells, a chief executive at Buzz Marketing Group, says that while some ads have successfully used slang, such as the Budweiser "Whassup" ads, the media need to focus less on becoming part of youth culture and more on understanding it.

"I think the smartest advertisers are realizing that it's more about understanding youth culture than using their language," she said.

Jameel Spencer, president and partner of Blue Flame Marketing and Advertising, agrees.

"It's really about being respectful of their culture," he said. "Any culture wants to be respected, not mocked, in the media."

Teens feel there is no reason for the media to change their ads to appeal to youth.

"All they need to do is make their ads interesting or entertaining, like they always have," said freshman Tamara Jenkins. "We know what we're interested in and what we aren't. It's unlikely that by using slang, advertisers will turn us on to a product we otherwise wouldn't care about, however, it is likely they could turn us off to a product that would otherwise be very popular."

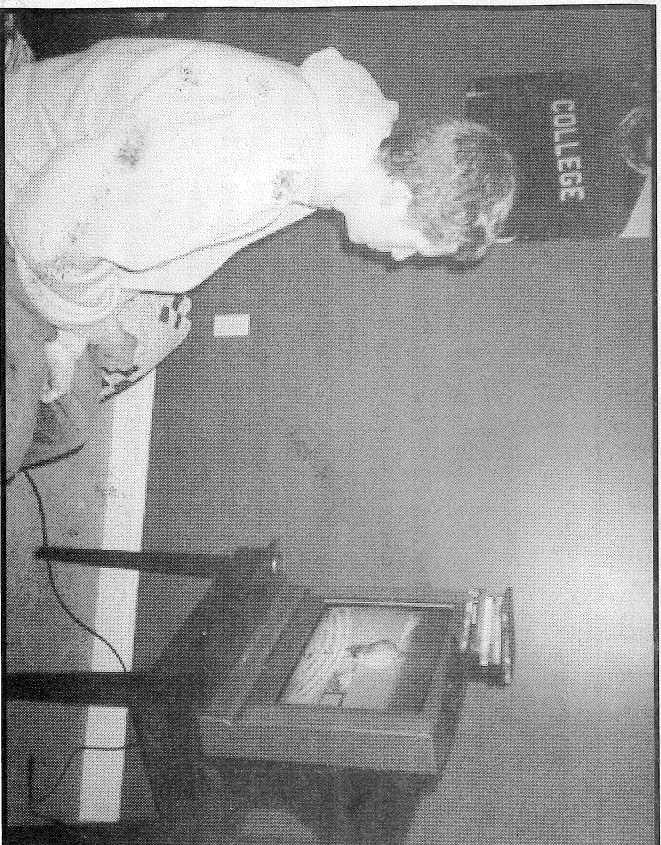
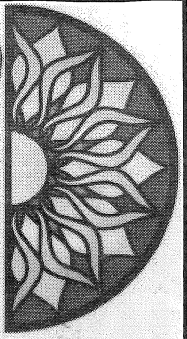


Photo by Matt Johnston

Senior Daniel Johnston watches television as a way to relax after spending a day at school. In order to make their products more appealing to the younger generation, advertisers are including popular slang in their television and radio ads. Teens, however, feel that such ads are useless and ineffective.

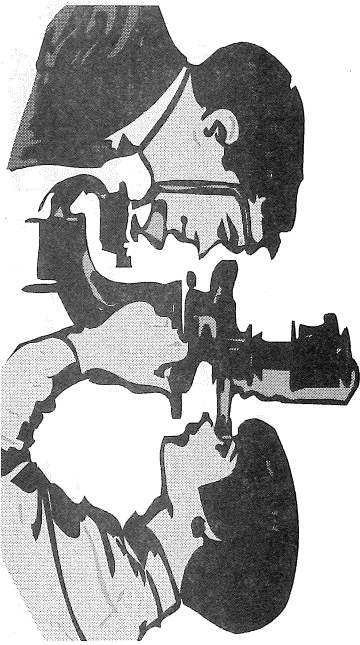


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NORTH CAROLINA'S TOP EARTH SCIENCE TEACHER MARIE MCKAY



Photo by Jaime Lee

Earth and Environmental science teacher Marie McKay looks over the tests from her previous class. McKay began her career at Ashbrook as a substitute teacher. She began teaching at Ashbrook full time in 1998 and began teaching Earth and Environmental science in 1999. Students describe McKay as a hands-on teacher who brings difficult concepts down to a level they can understand.

"I've had teachers before that give you the book and tell you to go at it," said freshman Amanda Polk. "Those types of classes are much harder. She puts things in layman's terms, which helps us all understand."

Crime Rates continueded from pg 1

the use of a weapon other than a firearm and bomb threats, with the majority of crimes coming under the category of possession of a controlled substance, a statistic that doesn't surprise students.

"With drugs being such a big thing it doesn't surprise me that most of the crimes came from that area," said sophomore Katie Owens. "People bring stuff on campus either to use or give out and don't think they'll get caught, maybe this will show them that someone is paying attention, and they aren't immune to having to accept the responsibility and the consequences for their actions."

They also attribute the drop to the presence of resource officers on campus and their involvement in student activities.

"It's intimidating to have a uniform police officer walking around," said junior Mark Wallace. "If you're thinking about doing something wrong, it will make you think twice. It also helps that they're such a presence in our extra-curricular activities, it makes them more visible."

Resource officers not only monitor student activity but they also advise the school's Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE) club and conduct safety demonstration programs. They also started a crime tip program last year called Silence Hurts. The program encourages students to go on-line or call a hotline to give anonymous tips about campus crimes.

Ashbrook resource officer Jeff Kalyor feels a combination of many factors has caused campus crime to decline.

"I don't think you can point to any one thing and say that's why crime rates have decreased," he said. "I do many factors contributed to the decline and as long as everyone continues doing what they are supposed to then rates will continue to fall."

A SMILE IS FOREVER



-THE PROFESSION OF DENTISTRY

continued from License law pg 1

"It's trying to use the wrong tool for the right job," said president of the John Locke Foundation, John Hood. "We need to address the drop out problem, but we shouldn't mix it into driver safety and the transportation system. Licensing someone to drive should be primarily, if not solely, about safety. It shouldn't be a device to accomplish some other social good, no matter how well-motivated the law is."

Officials say that to date there is no conclusive proof the law is the primary reason for the decrease in drop out rates, due mainly to lack of enforcement and numerous laws which are aimed at keeping kids in school. "It's hard to point to any one program or law and say that was the silver bullet — that's what kept our kids in school," said Michelle Wallen, health education and driver's education consultant to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. "There are multiple programs that schools are using to encourage students to stay in school and lower their drop out rates."

Wallen goes on to say that some school systems did not implement the law when it went into effect, and that even now systems are inconsistent in their enforcement of the

law.

"A lot of educators have told us that it is burdensome to administer," she said. "Chairman of the State Board of Education, Phil Kirk, and state Superintendent Mike Ward are going to start a letter writing campaign to school systems across the state urging them to better enforce the law."

Kirk also said he believes in the laws effectiveness and feels it should not be changed.

"We will fight any attempt to repeal the law," he said. I think it's a no-brainer that the law is helping the dropout problem. I personally know of examples with family and friends that prove the law has had an effect."

While there is no concrete proof the law is the sole reason for the lowering of the dropout rates, students say they have seen it's effective on their friends, and despite the laws inconvenience it should stay in place.

"It doesn't necessarily make sense that how you do in school has a bearing on how well you drive," said sophomore Katie Holcombe. "However, I have seen it motivate some people to stay in school at least until there 18, so if it's working there's no reason to change it."

Virginity in vogue

More teens saying 'no' to premarital sex

BY LYNSEY WILSON/Editor

In 1996 2.5 million teens pledged to remain celibate until they were married, a pledge sociologists say is one of the many reasons for the decline in the number of teens who are having sex before marriage.

"We didn't expect to see any effect from these pledges, but it was just the opposite," said Columbia University sociology professor Dr. Peter Bearman. "Even in those that broke their pledge there was a delay of at least 18 months before they had sex, which was purely an effect of the pledge."

A study done by the *American Journal of Sociology* found that at age 16, 68 percent of those who had not taken the pledge were still virgins compared to 79 percent of pledgers, and at age 17 half of non-pledgers had initiated sex, while 65 percent of pledgers had abstained.

"An argument against our findings is those who pledged wouldn't have had sex anyway," said Bearman. "Although that is probably true to some extent that data proves confidently that the delay we saw was real."

According to Bearman's study, over half of all teenagers abstained until they were at least 17 years of age, but that only 6.9

percent of men and 21 percent of women remain virgins until their wedding night.

"Most relationships don't last more than three months," said Mike Long, consultant for CNN's Talkback Live abstinence based program, *Project Reality*. "We want teenagers to date and have a wonderful time, but we want them to live in a sexually controlled atmosphere so they have wonderful positives to look forward to on their wedding night."

According to Long, *Project Reality's* goal is to educate teens to make smart, healthy choices that build character, responsibility, maturity and discipline.

"Today's young people have a brain and the ability to make good decisions and avoid very life-scarring consequences such as pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases," he said. "We want to train teachers and parents how to get on a teenager's level so it doesn't seem like you're poking a finger in their face or lecturing them to just say no. You're giving them the kind of direction that teenagers are so desperately searching for."

Abstinence based education, presented

see *Virginity in Vogue* pg 7

Marching to the beat

Bands entertain fans, provide camaraderie

BY LYNSEY WILSON/Editor

Every Friday night throughout the fall and winter months lines can be seen forming outside Ashbrook's stadium, and the excitement can be felt as fans crowd in to watch a football game. However, while they enjoy the game, most don't think about the work that goes into creating the game atmosphere on the sidelines.

"Of course the main thing is the game," said junior Alex McGraw. "You come to see a football game, but what would it be like without the band and cheerleaders? Those things are synonymous with football, and people just don't think about what it would be like to go to a game and not have the entertainment on the sideline. The band and the cheerleaders are there to keep the crowd involved."

The Ashbrook High School band not only provides the background music at the games for cheerleaders and fans, but they also participate in various competitions throughout the year. The marching band, which provides the half time show, competed in the Elkin Exhibition of Pride and was awarded first place for the drum line and second place overall. Band members say that those types of accolades take hard work and dedication.

"I love playing the drums," said sophomore drum major TC Chambers. "You have to know your music though, and you have to play it right."

While fans say they don't understand the work that goes into maintaining a successful band, they do appreciated the end results.

"I honestly don't understand band," said sophomore Sheena Craig. "I can't read music, so I don't really appreciate or comprehend the musicianship behind the performance. I do, however, understand how the music hypes up the crowd and how the level of excitement rises when the band gets fired up."

Another division of the Ashbrook band, the concert band, fail to get the exposure offered to the marching band. Students say, however, that is one of the advantages of being a member of the concert band.

"One of the good things about being in concert band is that you get to meet new people and learn new things," said freshman Ashley Creech. "The extra practice time allows you to really get to know people, and it's nice to know you already have something in common with them."

"It's different from marching band though, because you don't have the worry of performing every Friday night and at all the pep rallies, as well as in a concert. Instead, you get to spend time with each other with out the pressure."

Members are looking forward to getting to know each other better this spring when they got to New York over spring break.

"I am looking forward to our trip," said junior colorguard Amber Polk. "That is one the reasons I love being in band."

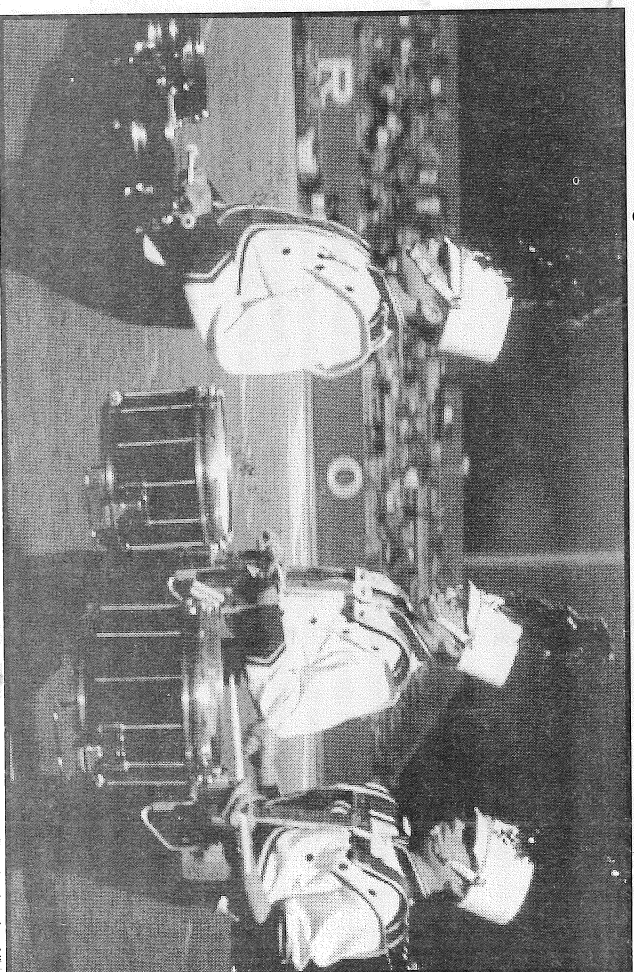


photo by Jessica Allen

Juniors Jay Seawell and Brent Cates and sophomore TC Chambers entertain the crowd at a home football game. Marching band members were able to showcase their talents throughout the game and during the patriotic themed halftime show.

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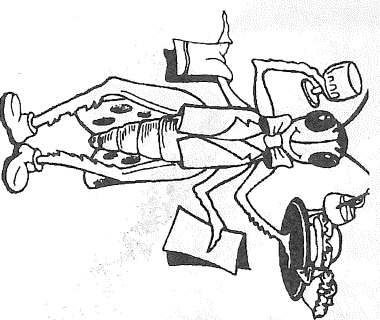
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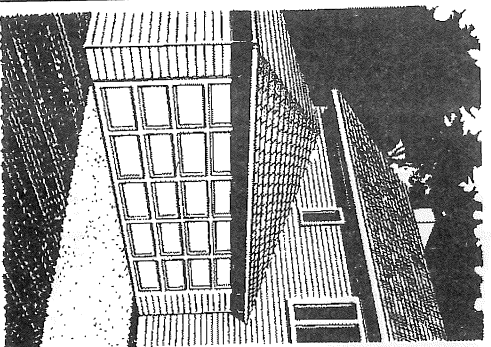
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NCAA alters eligibility requirements

BY LYNSEY WILSON/Editor

On October 31 the National Collegiate Athletic Association, NCAA, voted to establish new academic eligibility requirements for student athletes. Under the old law, Proposition 16, athletes had to have a minimum 2.0 GPA and score a minimum 820 on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).

Many, however, felt Proposition 16 was discriminatory to minority and low-income athletes.

"Critics of Prop 16 warned the NCAA that the SAT was inherently discriminatory toward minority athletes and, furthermore, the statute simply eliminated the opportunity for many youngsters to get an education," said Joey Ax, in a recent *Yale Herald* article.

The new rules place less importance on the SAT score, allowing higher GPA's to compensate for lower SAT scores. It also established a sliding scale and eliminated the minimum SAT requirement. Athletes can score the minimum 400 on the SAT and still be admitted as long as they maintain a 3.55 GPA in their core high school courses. The new rule also increases the number of required core courses to 14.

"After 20 years of research data, we have established that grade-point averages in core classes are just as important as test cores in predicting academic success," said Wallace Renfro, NCAA academic eligibility and public affairs representative.

The new rules are considered the first step in the NCAA's efforts to raise student-athlete graduation rates. According to a study released by the NCAA, graduation rate for student-athletes is 60 percent.

"The problem is getting them to graduate from college," said Renfro. "Our research tells us that if you're not where you're supposed to be by the end of your freshman year, you won't be there by graduation. We want to make sure our athletes are where they are supposed to be."

Some, however, feel that by lessening their requirements the NCAA has only hurt their chances for increased graduation rates.

"If they lower their requirements, or make them less stringent, then they're allowing students with lower academic levels to compete," said senior Kristin Cook. "If students were motivated enough to excel academically they would have done it in high school."

Many also feel that in an effort to be fair to their athletes, students who are vying for entrance on their academic merit are being slighted.

"Personally, I don't see how they are being fair to applicants who are non-athletes," said sophomore Chris Lawson. "The minimum SAT requirement for athletes is essentially 400, but it would be impossible for a non-athlete to get in with that score. At most colleges the average SAT score is somewhere in the 1100 range."

Under Pressure continued from pg 1

on their applications.

"We recognize in order to maintain the highest level of public confidence, we need to have some form of verification," said Barbara Sawrey, head of the faculty's Board of Admissions and Relations with School at University of California at San Diego. "We have done some pilot screenings and, for the most part, have found students to be nothing but truthful. That can mean that students are already being more careful about what they put on their applications, or it could just prove what the numbers show that while the majority of students are truthful, we have to make sure we account for and discipline the handful that are not."

Two pilot studies were done this year. The University of California at San Diego checked claims involving family incomes, honors, achievements and community service made by approximately 437 students. The office of the President reviewed personal statements of approximately 40 students. In only one instance was a student unable to support his claim.

Despite these promising results, counselors say it's naive to believe that students don't fabricate hardships or exaggerate their achievements in order to make their applications stand out.

"I firmly believe – though I don't know what the number is – that as things become more competitive everybody is looking for the one little thing that will push them into the acceptance pile," said Tom Key, a counselor at a California high school. "I think students will take liberties they shouldn't take, including saying they've done things they haven't done."

Students also believe that many of their peers exaggerate on their college applications, and they hope other universities will follow the lead of the California system and implement similar programs.

"The pressure to get into a good school is intense," said senior Josh Stillwell. "Students might stretch the truth because they don't feel they have done as much or accomplished as much as everyone else. An accuracy program would make students think twice

about lying on their applications and even the playing field."

"It's not a huge secret that some people lie on their college applications," said senior Ashley Jacobs. "I think other systems around the country need to look at beginning similar programs. It's unfair for students to be accepted based on lies when there are people who have legitimately worked hard and deserve to get in."

Studies have found the most common form of fabrication among students is not in the area of honors and achievements, but rather in the area of financial need and family hardships.

"Many times students who have affluent parents, have gone to prep schools all their lives and have average grades and extra-curricular involvement feel they cannot compete with those who have disadvantage backgrounds, especially when it comes to scholarship monies," said admissions counselor Chris Cates. "Some feel that their backgrounds work against them and, in part, their claims are founded, because there is more money available for those who have financial need, but that's mainly because organizations feel that financially impaired students need it most."

Cates goes on to say, however, that scholarships are available which do not take financial standing into account, and that is in no way an excuse for students to lie on their applications.

Officials at the University of California at Berkeley and the University of California at Los Angeles say they hope the new program will not only discourage students from fabricating hardships and accomplishments on their applications, but also no longer make them feel lying about it is necessary.

"Kids are aware that their chances of getting into some schools are slim," said Nina Robinson, University of California's Director of Policy and External Relations for Student Affairs. "They are afraid other people are making things up to get an advantage, and feel they have to do the same. We want to take that pressure off them, the pressure of exaggeration."

Perfect score increases from 1600 to 2400 SAT revisions set to debut in March 2005

BY LYNSEY WILSON/Editor

For roughly the tenth time in its 76-year history, the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is being revised. Due largely to recommendations from colleges across the country, the College Boards' Board of Trustees voted unanimously in June to change the test.

The new test, which will be administered for the first time in March 2005, will include a new writing section, and the verbal section will be revised and renamed the critical reading section. The math section will also be expanded to include questions from not only Algebra I and Geometry, but also Algebra II. The new writing section will consist of multiple choice grammar questions and a written essay. Students will be given 25 minutes to take a position on a statement and support their views. The essay will be graded on the student's organization, his ability to take and support a position, and his ability to provide supporting evidence.

"Adding a writing section to the SAT is a good idea," said English teacher Sharon Eccles. "Writing is a critical skill for success in college and beyond and perhaps it would cause schools and teachers to place more emphasis on teaching writing and grammar."

Essays will be made available to admissions offices over the Internet. The writing section will increase the time and money a student must invest to take the SAT. It will also increase the maximum score a student can get from 1600 to 2400.

The revamped verbal section will no longer include questions on verbal analogies. Instead, it will contain long and short reading passages a student must read and then answer comprehensive questions.

Educators feel that tougher and more comprehensive questions will encourage students to take more difficult classes in high school.

"With the SAT becoming more difficult and more comprehensive, I believe more stu-

dents will enroll in hard classes to help prepare them," said counselor Larry Carpenter. "Students know, at least for now, their SAT scores are a vital part of their college applications, and if they're concerned about that at all, they will do whatever they can to make sure they are ready."

Students, however, do not feel a harder SAT will help them. On the contrary, they feel it will simply discourage students because the test will become impossible to score well on or impossible to prepare for.

"It is rare that students receive a perfect score on the SAT," said sophomore Tia Cross. "They spend weeks before the test studying and reviewing, and many are still unable to perform as well as they want. They already offer a writing section in the SAT II. I don't see why it's necessary to add that extra pressure on the students with another section they have to study for and worry about performing well on."

Others, however, feel that by adding a writing section they are simply forcing students to prepare themselves for college.

"The majority of your first year of college is spent writing papers," said college freshman Natalie Christian. "By adding a writing section, they are simply making sure students are equipped. Many times writing and grammar are overlooked in high school, but it is something they expect you to know in college. Teachers will no longer be able to overlook those things now if they want to help their students perform well on the SAT."

Field testing and test development will begin this spring for the revised SAT and also for a proposed optional writing exam that may become part of the American College Test (ACT). In light of the changes on the SAT, American College Test, Inc. has begun debating the possibility of revamping the ACT as well. The final decision, however, will not be made until after preliminary field testing occurs.



Photo courtesy of Lelia Evans

Juniors Rebecca Cramer and Sarah Day Dixon study their math assignment to prepare for classes the next day. Taking higher level math and English classes will help students who have to take the revised SAT starting in March 2005. The math section of the test has been expanded to include not only questions from Algebra I and Geometry but Algebra II as well. The new verbal section will no longer include verbal analogies. Instead it will be exclusively long and short reading passages. A writing section has also been added, raising the total score from 1600 to 2400.

NC universities accept more minority students, cite accessibility for all races as primary goal



Photo courtesy of Sherena Foster

Senior Sherena Foster completes a worksheet in her Psychology class. Many minority students felt they had to take harder classes, and exclude electives such as Psychology, in order to have the same chance of being accepted to college as their peers. North Carolina universities have begun to combat this problem by making their college more accessible to all races. As a matter of fact, in 2002 the enrollment of minority students at the state's universities increased twice as much as the enrollment of white students.

BY LYNSEY WILSON/Editor

Minority students are becoming a more common sight at North Carolina universities. As a matter of fact, according to a study by the system's Board of Governors (2002) this year's enrollment of minority students increased twice as much as the enrollment of white students, and systemwide enrollment of all races reached its highest level ever.

Molly Broad, president of the University of North Carolina system, said these numbers are proof that universities in North Carolina are on their way to achieving their primary goal.

"It is the highest priority of the university to provide access (to students)," she said. "That's what we're here for, and we have a major commitment to expanding access to people of color."

She goes on to say, however, that the system still needs to work at attracting minority students, and the

system will continue working until all races have equal access to an education.

Minority enrollment rose an average of 7.2 percent across the 16 public campuses, now accounting for 28.2 percent of the system's total enrollment.

"It's encouraging, especially since I've started working on my college applications," said senior Alexandra Garcia. "Even though places talk about equal opportunities, in my experiences that's not always the case. The fact that universities here in North Carolina seem to truly be offering equality makes me more optimistic about my chances."

The total enrollment for the campuses this year, also, rose 4.2 percent to 176,967 full- and part-time students.

Due to the increased numbers of students, the Board is also re-

viewing the state's tuition policy. The North Carolina Constitution states that "public institutions of higher education, as far as practicable, be extended to the people of the State free of expense."

The provision, which is due to be discussed in January, recommends the Board ensure North Carolina upholds its constitutional commitment by keeping tuition at state universities in the bottom 25 percent of tuitions in the country.

Junior Gaby Rangel feels this will also help them achieve their goal of equal access for all students.

"The more affordable education is, the more people that will benefit from it," she said. "Not just minority students, but all students, whose families would have a hard time sending them to college, will receive opportunities they would otherwise miss out on because they were unable to afford it."

continued from *Virginity in Vogue* pg 5

by shows such as *Project Reality*, have had their affect. According to a recent study by the Princeton Religious Research Center, an increasing number of American teens consider premarital sex to be wrong.

"In 1999, 39 percent of Americans teens thought premarital sex was wrong compared to 46 percent in 2001," said journalist Leilani Corpus. "Most respondents cited moral and religious reasons for their views, but others attributed them to the growing concern over the risk of disease."

Growing concern over the risk of teen pregnancies and STDs has been attributed to the advent of the safe sex movement.

"Abstinence education has its place," said Gurl.com co-founder Esther Drill. "Parents and teachers need to be ready to truthfully answer frank questions. You need to explain what STDs are and teach responsible birth control. It's a disservice to teenagers to assume that telling them something means they're going to do it. We shouldn't shield information from them."

Rutgers University anthropol-

ogy researcher, Helen Fisher agrees.

"Abstinence will work for some people, but it's definitely not for everybody," she said. "We have got to face the fact that teenagers are sexual beings. Numerous organizations have taken polls which show that just because you give kids sex education doesn't mean they're going to be driven to experiment with sex earlier. In fact, it enables them to think harder about sex and their choices."

A 1999 study by Planned Parenthood found that 93 percent of Americans support sex education at the high school level. Approval ratings dropped, however, for junior high students with 84 percent saying they felt sex education would be appropriate. Eighty-nine percent, however, felt that information on contraception and disease prevention should be available to both age groups.

North Carolina law requires that information, which presents the consequences of sex before marriage, be an integral part of the

curriculum, information some teens say, while not preventing them from having sex, made them consider their decision more carefully.

"I won't deny that I am sexually active," said an anonymous Ashbrook teen. "However, with all the information that is available to us it made me move more cautiously. My partner had a partner before me so he was tested for any STDs, and I talked to my doctor about protection and contraceptives. While it may not have been the results the media or my parents ideally wanted, it did make me go about my decision responsibly which to me makes the campaign successful."

While abstinence advocates agree safe sex is not the ideal situation, it is at least a step in the right direction.

"The numbers show that virginity is making a comeback, which would be ideal," said psychologist Silas Heine. "Realistically, however, we won't be able to sway all teens to abstain, but educating those who persist, may curb the onslaught of STDs and teen pregnancies."

Music Man continued from pg 1

said senior Rich Abernethy. "We feed off our audience and it's important that we have a lot of support. When you have a large audience you step up your level of performance, you want to make sure they are enjoying themselves."

However, while the actors are focused on the audience and their performance, Buckner says their job is to make the audience forget they are watching a play, something he feels will be easy to do with this particular play.

"As an actor you want to draw the audience in," he said. "You're job is to make them forget about their lives and help them enjoy themselves for as long as they watch your play. However, no matter how good or talented the actor, whether or not they are successful depends on the material."

"The *Music Man* is a fun play and will make for a fun show," he said. "The theme, while relevant, is not a serious nor is it presented in a serious manner. The music is fun, and the actors enjoy performing it, a feeling of enjoyment which they will convey to their audience."

Past audience members say what makes a play truly enjoyable is when an actor stops playing a role becomes his character.

"To me, part of being a successful actor is being able to play

your character as naturally as if you were being yourself," said junior Tricia Cole. "When an actor is forcing his role, but when he transforms from acting to being, that's when a performance becomes not only enjoyable but memorable."

Buckner hopes audiences will not only experience a memorable performance, but that they will also transform with the actors.

"On the surface this play is about a con man who travels from town to town swindling the people who live there," he said. "However, his plans change when he falls in love with one of the town members he is trying to swindle. That event changes him, transforms him. Ultimately, this is a play about transformations and how this man transforms himself. It's meant to show the audience the necessity of change within ourselves."

The play, which will run March 13 - 15, will Buckner's first musical at Ashbrook, but students say if his first play, *Murder at Ruthford House*, is any indication the production will be worthwhile.

"*Murder at Ruthford House* was so different that anything anyone has done before," said sophomore Craig Robinson. "It was well acted and well directed. If it was any indication, *Music Man* will make for a good show."

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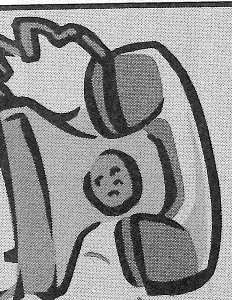
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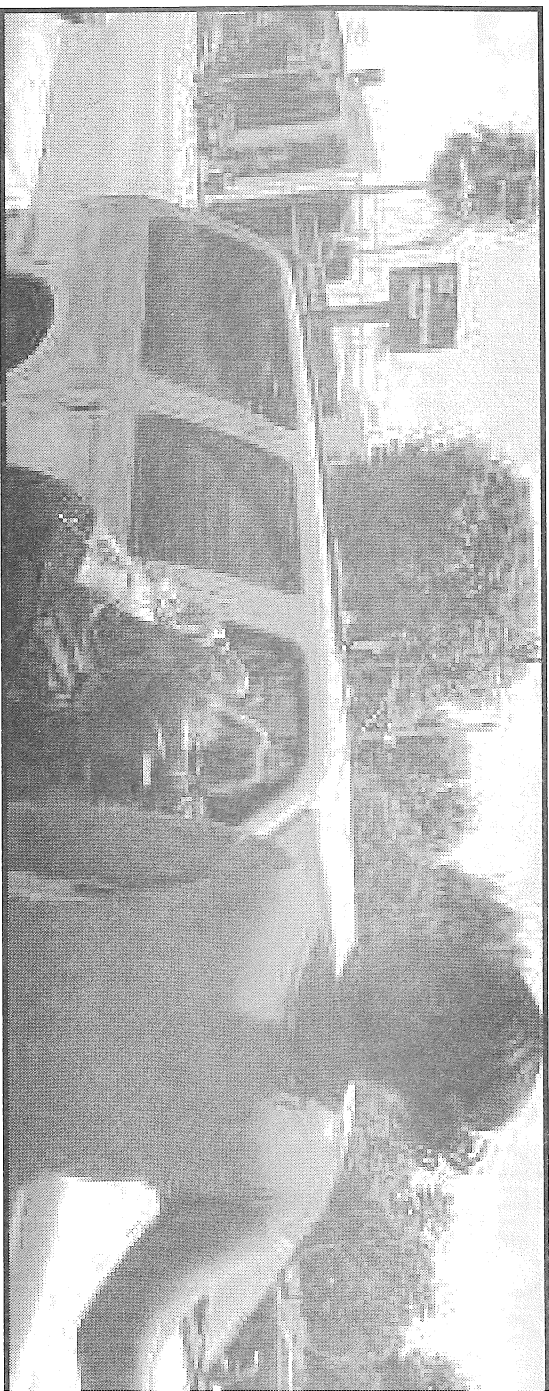
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Stop Running: Christina's Advice to Runaways

If you're contemplating running away, the best advice I can give you is not to act on impulse. Most kids pick up and leave immediately after they've had a fight with their parents or because they don't like some rule they're being made to follow, but that's not a reason to leave. In fact the only reason to leave is because you're in danger, and even then make sure you've exhausted all other possibilities, such as alerting the police, social services and trusted friends of family members, before permanently leaving.

There is a romanticized portrayal of kids that runaway, but this isn't the movies and the Lost Boys don't exist out on the street, there is no Peter Pan to come and save you. It's not a fairy tale and rarely is there a happy ending.

The streets are a horrendous place to live. Most of the time you are forced to compromise your beliefs, standards and yourself in order to simply exist. You live off people's spare change and charity, whether that be your pimp's or a shelter's. There are no home-cooked meals, new clothes, houses or trust on the street. You eat other people's leftovers that you find in trashcans, you don't take showers and you essentially have one outfit that you never change, you sleep on a park bench or under one if it's raining and your only friends are the people who have yet to steal from or double-cross you, but they're only temporary because inevitably they will. It's all about survival. People don't matter, their lives mean nothing to you if by shortening theirs you can lengthen your own. That's not the image kids have in their minds when they run but that's reality.

If you feel hopeless and you feel as if you have no other option to run away, then have a plan. Think things through before you run and make sure you are running to somewhere. I found help at Children of the Night and I recommend going there, but there are other good local and national centers established specifically for runaway children. They want to help, and they'll give you hope.

READY TO

BY LYNSEY WILSON/Editor

Literature is filled with romantic portrayals of children who run away or live away from home. However, according to one runaway, life on the street is not like the world of Huckleberry Finn. Instead, it is a world of drugs, prostitutes and fear.

"There's nothing like being on the street," said Christina (not her real name). "It's not something you can describe or explain. All you ever feel is fear and the emptiness of your stomach."

Christina ran away from home when she sixteen years old. Like many runaways, her home life was violent and abusive.

"I don't think anyone would say I had an average home life," she said. "My family was extremely violent in every way you can imagine: physically, mentally, verbally - everything was violent. It was that way ever since I was five or six, or maybe that's just as far back as I can remember."

Christina lived with her mother and stepfather. By the time she was 15 she was doing drugs to help her escape the pain.

"Things had gotten so bad that I started doing drugs," she said. "I had always tried really hard not to do drugs, but the pain was too much for me. Mostly I did acid, PCP and drank alcohol. I used to have this dream that I'd grow up, live in a condominium, go out and buy my own groceries and work as a receptionist at a law firm. I soon realized that my dream was just that - a dream."

The Midwest Longitudinal Study of Homeless Adolescents found that, like Christina, 73 percent of runaways are fleeing from abusive situations. They also found, however, that many times runaways find more abuse on the streets than they left at home.

"This is a different kind of kid than you'd think," said Les Whitbeck, co-author of *Nowhere to Grow: Homeless and Runaway Adolescents and Their Families*. "In the '60s kids would run away to find adventure, now it's a really different thing. It isn't looking for adventure or looking for a better life - it's looking to escape a bad situation, and unfortunately, what's out there isn't any better."

Christina's story is a testimony to that. "I met a lady who claimed to be a gypsy," she said. "For two weeks she gave me money, fed me, looked out for me and found us places to stay. One night she dropped me off to get a doughnut, and while I was there, a man named Gordon came up and offered me money, clothes, makeup and a nice house to live. I took it."

What Christina didn't know then was the gypsy lady had sold her to Gordon.

"He called us models, he bought us nice things. It took me a while to catch on, or maybe I just didn't want to catch on," she said. "He would take us out every night and introduce us to his friends. It was uncomfortable at first but nobody had been nice to me in a long time. It was what I had been searching for."

When Christina realized what her situation was, she decided to run again, but this time she ran for help. "I took all my clothes and called Children of the

Night (a nonprofit organization that establishes shelters and provides aid to runaway teens) for a ride to the shelter. By then, I had lost a lot of weight, too much weight, because I had been doing so many drugs. On the streets, people just hand out drugs, or they were easy to buy with the money Gordon gave me. There were a lot of people worried about my physical condition."

Children of the Night placed Christina in an Alcoholics Anonymous program as well as a rehabilitation program.

"I went through five days of withdrawals, sweating, not sleeping, getting sick and shaking all over. I was so lucky I got to the shelter. Everyone was so supportive of me. I've never had anything like that in my life - except at Children of the Night."

However, Youthquake counselor and chairman of Shelter, James Nayagam, says many runaways are not so lucky.

"Most girl runaways are ensnared in the vice trade and are stopped from escaping by gangsters," he said. "They're often told there's no point in going home because no one wants them. If that fails, they're told they have to stay and pay up the debts they've accumulated from the supposedly free food and lodging they were initially provided."

"Usually, they're saved by the police when raids are conducted. Their stories are sad. They were made dependent on the pimps who have sex with them or even get them pregnant. Sometimes drugs are fed intravenously to them or they're forced to smoke it." Nayagam goes on to say, "Some of these girls who are unable to take it commit suicide by slashing their wrists, hanging themselves or resort to what has become quite common, leaping out of hotel rooms."

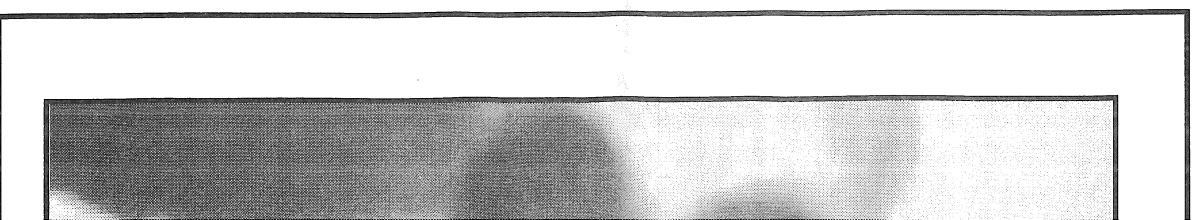
Nayagam also said those that endure the hardship oftentimes end up turning on one another.

"Others soldier on, as they feel there's nothing else to lose," he said. Then it becomes a matter of survival of the fittest. Competition can result in blades or hot water being used to disfigure the faces of other girls under the same pimp."

Christina witnessed this desperation for herself. "You feel hopeless," she said. "You don't really think about what you're doing. All you know is that your food and well-being depend on how much money you get from the tricks you turn, and you'll do whatever is necessary. It's hopeless desperation; that's something not many people can understand, and it's the worst kind."

For the estimated 1.5 million American children who run away from home each year, the hopeless desperation and loneliness they find on the street is the very thing they ran away from.

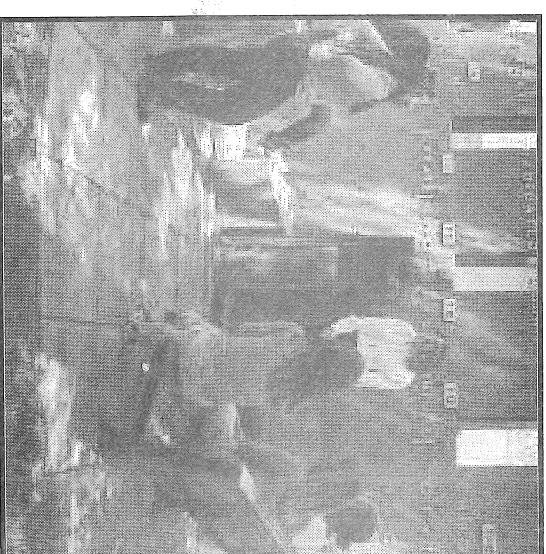
"A lot of kids leave home because of abuse and others leave simply because they feel they aren't being understood," said psychologist Sias Heine. "The root of the problem for many runaways is lack of communication. When their parents talk to them, they feel as if they're being attacked, and they see no other way out, except to leave. However, what they don't think about is who they're going to communicate with on the street, who's going to understand them out there, because if they had really thought about it, they'd realize the answer is nobody."



Nayagam says parents trying to take them back to their parents fail to recognize that their child is not like their child is not like they don't take the time to do it enough and so

it's at that point that actually threatening them with a personal help. Many of them more often than enough to do it."

Heine agrees, saying that to have gotten where they are, they see a lost hope. "You might disagree, and th



RUN.

• Teens who leave home searching for safety, love are finding same abuse and hopelessness they left



Runaway children often find themselves without money, food or shelter and are forced to use prostitution or stealing as a source of income. Many times they become addicted to drugs as a means of curbing their pain or hunger. Oftentimes their only chance of survival is to find a shelter, such as Children of the Night, which is designed especially for runaway children. These shelters not only work to take runaways off the street, but they also give them a place where they can obtain an education and learn social skills, as well as overcome their past.

If a problem occurs, not in their children, but when warning signs are going to argue, that's a problem. "However, when you get angry with you, it's time to get angry when they think to them, what they don't feel the same way. They listen to their child's side; they will begin to feel trapped. The point where the child is away, it's time for professionals, but most kids don't run me thought into it; so if enough to make that threat, they've thought about it

listened, that's the important thing. Kids don't leave home because they aren't getting their way; kids leave because no one will listen to what they think about the subject. By the time they're teenagers, kids feel like they should be able to have input in what they are allowed to do and not do. It's when they are belittled for that input or completely ignored that they begin to feel cornered."

Heine also warns that, if they are serious, once kids decide their only hope is to do something as drastic as run away, unless they find a shelter such as Children of the Night, there is little hope they will be found.

"Once they're gone, it's too late," said Heine. "Yes, there are some who run away for a night just to make a point, but for those that are truly serious, then parents have missed their chance. Most get lost out on the streets; those that don't and actually do find help are determined never to go back. They may grow up and become happy responsible people, but that family tie is severed. Very rarely can we convince a child to contact their family."

Christina's own life is proof of that fact. "I'm happy now," she said. "I have a job, a foster family, friends, there's nothing that I want. The counselors at Children of the Night, and the ones I see now, want me to call my mom, just to talk to her,

but I won't. I don't want to talk to her. I miss my brothers and I wish I could have brought them with me instead of leaving them there in that horrible place, but I'm not going to go back and get them. That is part of my past and I won't let them become part of my future. It sounds heartless, but it's true. I never felt any kind of bond with my family; and, even if they've gotten help, even if they've changed, I don't want to create one."

Psychiatrist Judith Walters said that sentiment is also common among runaways she has counseled, and she warns parents not to ignore their children's requests for help and consideration.

"When parents of runaways come to me, as hard as it is, I can honestly tell them it's not likely they will ever see their child again if they've been gone a week or more," she said. "While most parents feel remorse over losing their child, it's really their own fault. They should have let their child know that they loved them while they had the chance. In my experience, kids don't give too many second chances, and while all parents make mistakes, you can't keep making the same ones, you can't just pass your child over. They are becoming a person, and if you want to see what kind of person they become and be a part of that person's life, you better take an interest in who they are now."

To receive help or for more information contact:

Children of the Night

1-800-551-1300

www.childrenofthenight.org

Child Quest

International

1-888-818-4673

www.childquest.org

National Runaway

Hotline

1-800-231-6946

www.bakersfield.org

National Runaway

Switchboard

1-800-621-4000

www.nrscrisisline.com

National Youth Crisis

Hotline

1-800-448-4663

www.1800hithome.com

Covenant House

1-800-999-9999

www.covenanthouse.org

Teen Help

1-800-840-5704

www.vpp.com/teenhelp

National Hotline for Missing & Exploited Children

1-800-843-5678

www.missingkids.com

Teens spending billions of dollars on soda annually, experts warn parents of high sugar content, dangers of increased consumption

Soda Surge

BY CLAIRE LODGE/
Contributing Writer

Americans are consuming twice as much soda as they did 25 years ago, according to the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI). Teens are also spending \$5.4 billion a year to support this habit.

Much of that money comes from teens. A survey done by CSPI found that five percent of male soft drinkers between the ages of 13-18 drink five or more cans a day, up 80 percent from 20 years ago.

In order to combat this problem, many have asked schools to add more water fountains and have health-education campaigns funded by state taxes on soda.

"Many teens are drowning in soda pop. It's their main beverage, providing many with 15 to 20 percent of all their calories and squeezing out more-nutritious foods and beverages from their diets," said executive director of CSPI Michael Jacobson.

"It's time parents limited their children's soft drink consumption and demanded that local schools get rid of their soft-drink vending machines, just as they have banished smoking."

However, most schools have soda machines because it is a good way to raise money. Coca-Cola and PepsiCo are relentless marketers. These companies spend millions of dollars to get exclusive marketing rights in schools.

Coca-Cola, for instance pays the Boys & Girls Clubs of America \$60 million to make its company's products the sole brand in more than 2,000 clubs. Pepsi, for instance, gives many Gaston County schools scoreboards and cups for sporting events.

This, though, is not the only reason for increased consumption. In the past 40 years, bottle and cans have gotten bigger. For example, in the 1950s, Coke's "family sized bottle" was only 26 ounces. Bottles and cans have also gone from six and half ounces to 12 ounces to 20 ounces. Today, convenience stores sell 64 ounce bottles.

However, some students feel that the bigger sizes don't make student drink more.

"I would prefer smaller bottles because I normally waste a lot of soda from the 20 ounce bottles," said junior Jessalyn Smith.

Also prices encourage students to drink large servings. For instance, McDonald's restaurants have a 12-ounce drink for 89 cents, while a 42-ounce (250% larger) drink is \$1.59 (only 79% more).

"When a drink that is a medium for 95 cents and a large one is \$1.05, you automatically get the bigger one," said former Ashbrook student Tara Jenkins. "You think that you can get a lot more drink for only 10 cents more so it is a good buy."

These good buys, however, are leading to other risks. Carbonated drinks are the single biggest source of refined sugars in the American diet, according to CSPI research. According to dietary surveys, soda provides the average American with seven teaspoons of sugar per day, out of a recommended 20 teaspoons. Teenage boys get 44% of their 34 teaspoons of sugar per day from soft drinks, while teenage girls get 40% of their 24 teaspoons from soda.

Also, as teens have doubled or tripled their consumption of soft

the most caffeine allowed in a 12-ounce can is 72 mg.

Mello Yello has 51 mg in a 12-ounce can, Sundrop has 63 mg, Mountain Dew has 55 mg and Pepsi One has 55 mg.

Despite the new caffeine loaded sodas, colas remain the most popular and account for about three-quarters of all soft drinks sold. Their persistence is puzzling, according to CSPI. No one knows why colas continue to dominate the market.

Most people also have their favorite cola drink, as well.

"I drink Coke and Pepsi, but I like Coke better," said sophomore Leah Hollar. "They both taste different and Coke just tastes better."

However, many people can't tell the difference. In taste tests conducted by *Consumer Reports*, most self-confessed, die-hard cola "addicts" couldn't

identify their favorite brand from its competitor.

This survey proves taste is a subjective matter.

According to some, this is why soft drink makers are advertising so aggressively. In 1997, Coca-Cola, which accounts for 44 percent of the soft drink market in the U.S., spent \$277 million on advertising and the four major companies spent \$631 million collectively.

Companies make sure their product is readily accessible. In 1997, 2.8 million soft drink vending machines dispensed 27 billion drinks worth \$17.5 billion. Coca-Cola's soft drinks are sold at two million stores, more than 450,000 restaurants and in 1.4 million vending machines and coolers. These companies also target children aggressively. Pepsi advertises on Channel One, a daily news program shown in 12,000 schools.

"I guess people don't really realize how much advertising really plays into what you buy," senior Jayni Fernando. "They don't realize that they saw or heard an ad about a certain drink and then they happen to go out and buy it."

Despite all the statistics reporting that soft drinks are unhealthy, they have been a part of people's lives since 1881, when the first cola-flavored beverage was released. In 1920, the U.S. Census reported that over 5000 bottlers were in business. Today, the Soft Drink Association is a multi-billion dollar industry.

"It is just one of those things that is like an American pastime," said junior Chris Warden. "I can remember my mom saying that after church her father and brother would go to the diner and her brother and her would split a Coke. Everyone has memories like that, and they don't want to give them up."



photo by Lynsey Willson

Senior Nils Buch buys a Sundrop in the lobby between classes. Students often stopped to get food and drinks during class changes. Almost all vending machines offer a healthier option, such as water, but the majority of students opt for a soda. They say that the caffeine and sugar found in soft drinks supplies them with the extra energy they need to stay awake during classes and throughout the day. Experts warn against this kind of false energy, however, saying it causes people to overwork their bodies, weakening their body's defense systems and making them susceptible to sickness.

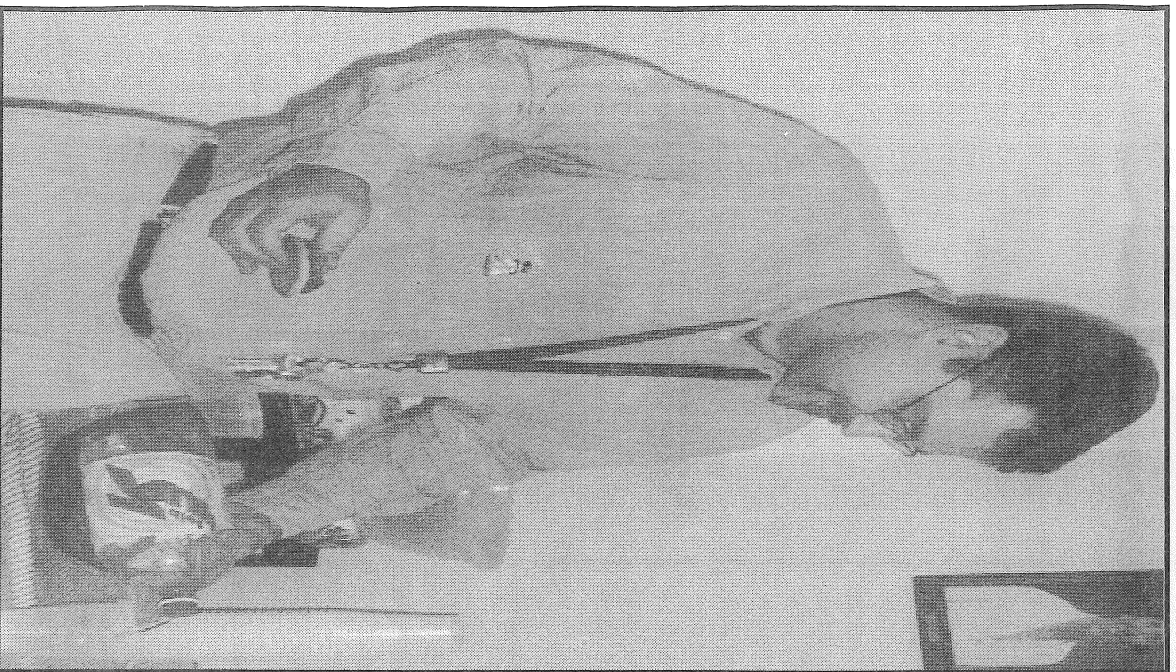
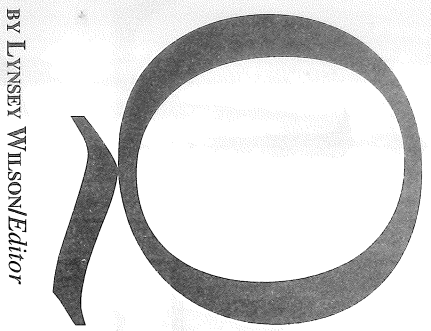


photo by Leah Hollar

Theatre arts teacher Jonathan Buckner pours a caffeine free drink at the Future Teachers of America teacher appreciation luncheon. Many teachers and students choose caffeine free and diet sodas in order to reduce the amount of sugar in their drinks. However, these drinks often contain more sodium and still contain excessive amounts of sugar. Experts say many people deceive themselves into believing that these drinks are healthier, but, in truth, they are still adding extra sugar into your system.

Students, faculty lose dedicated mentor, friend Queen descends from her throne



BY LYNSEY WILSON/Editor

While Ashbrook's football team was being crowned king, the student body was discovering it had lost its reigning queen. Ellen Griffin, who was affectionately known as Ashbrook's "Prom Queen", passed away on December 14, 2002, at the age of 54, after a long, courageous battle with cancer.

For over 30 years, Griffin was a member of Ashbrook's faculty, impacting countless staff members and students who say they will remember her most for her dedication and enthusiasm.

"She was always upbeat and positive," said freshmen English teacher Patricia Ratchford. "She seem to grab life with gusto and enjoyed it no matter what she was doing."

"During middle school she was my bus driver," said senior Nicole Schaefer. "When we would get on the bus in the afternoons she always had a smile on her face and was always cheerful. No matter what kind of day you had, you could always count on Mrs. Griffin to brighten it."

Griffin's dedication and love for the school showed in all she did. She served as junior class adviser, prom adviser, sound technician for the Miss Ashbrook Pageant and graduation and as auditorium manager. She began her career at Ashbrook as a substitute and later became a full time French teacher.

"She was a part of Ashbrook," said Ratchford. "She cared more about this school than most people can imagine. She seemed to always want to be here and be involved with the kids and with the school."

"She was a part of the school," said science teacher Ben Earle. "She did a lot of things that went unnoticed. She's part of the school's history, a part of this family."

Her numerous activities not only gained her the respect of her peers, but of students as well. Through her involvement she became not only a teacher and a mentor but also a friend. "I always knew I could turn to her," said

junior Mark Stacy. "She was always willing to take time out of her day and help us if we needed it. Many times she would approach you with a word of encouragement or comfort even when you hadn't confided in her. She always seemed to know what we needed

primary reason for her popularity. "She was well versed in her subjects," said junior Kyle Morton. "She knew what she was talking about, and she loved what she was doing. Most days you come into class and you're really not all that excited about what

important that she make your day better than that hers get better. She was one of those people you like to see coming."

Students and teachers chose to honor Griffin's memory with the origin of the Ellen E. Griffin Talent award which will be presented annually at the Miss Ashbrook pageant to the contestant with the highest score on talent. Pageant participants feel this award accurately commemorates Griffin's involvement and devotion to the success of not only the pageant but each contestant as well.

"Mrs. Griffin always enjoyed the talents," said senior Coree Hall. "It was one of her favorite parts. She would always watch us and give us tips on what we could do to play to the audience more and heighten the effectiveness of our performances."

"It's very appropriate that this award be named after Mrs. Griffin," said sophomore Katie Treitz. "Not only because she was so involved in the pageant, but because it's

a way to honor her memory while still including her in something she loved. It ensures that will contestants will never forget. Fifteen years from now when most of the teachers and students who knew her are gone, there will still be this award that will arouse contestants curiosity and motivate them to find out who Ellen E. Griffin is, and she deserves that."

Students feel this fitting tribute will also help alleviate some of



to hear."

"Her honesty was what always struck me," said

senior

Chelsea Grath. "Even if it wasn't what you wanted to hear, if it was what you needed to hear she told you. That's a rare quality and I respected her for not only having it, but for not being ashamed of it."

Students also point to her passion as a

not only brightened the day of her students, but her coworkers as well.

"I loved seeing her in the halls," said geometry teacher Bobbi Thomas. "She always knew how to put a smile on your face, and if you were both having a bad day, it was more

her job made that class worth going to. It made those long never-ending weeks seem a little bit shorter and those bad days a little bit brighter."

Griffin

the pain. "One of the real tragedies in this is that their are entire generations of students who won't have the privilege of knowing Mrs. Griffin," said senior Kent Powell. "They will never have the privilege of being taught by her, working with her or being befriended by her, but they will know that she was someone special - special enough that she was honored with an award, much like students now think of Linda Sell. Most of us never knew her, but we know her name, and we know she had to be someone worth honoring."

We will never forget

I first met Mrs. Griffin my freshmen year. As a freshman, I was a little scared and a lot nervous, but the second I walked in to her room I knew she would be a teacher I would love, and this would be a class I would enjoy. She had an attitude about teaching that I had never encountered before and I knew she was placed on this earth for one reason, and that is to teach.

After spending a semester with her in Success 101 I was determined that I would be in

at least one of her classes every year. With scheduling conflicts, however, I was unable to take another class with her until this year, and it was one of the most difficult and most inspiring experiences I have ever faced.

She had recently trained to teach the North Carolina teacher cadet course which gives students who are hoping to pursue a career in education or who would just like to learn more about the education system a chance to study and learn more about North Carolina educational laws,

as well as about their school system.

Shortly after classes began Mrs. Griffin became very ill and was forced to frequently miss classes. She would call and give us our lessons over the phone; some days we even went to the hospital and she taught us from there. After a year of fighting cancer it was time for her to go.

As hard as her death was it illustrated the greatest piece of advice she ever gave us, never give up on what you want. She will always be in our thoughts,

hearts and memories. Mrs. Griffin will always be in our hearts and we will always remember her. She watches over us everyday and it is our responsibility to carry on her legacy.



Jeanna Murphy

ZONEBALL



New sport bounces into popularity at Ashbrook

BY BRYAN COCKFIELD/
Sports Editor

The idea is simple - justbounce the ball twice.

But there is more to Zoneball than just bouncing a ball. Sophomore Doug Branson, the founder of zoneball, describes his sport as a mixture of several sports.

"It's like tennis without rackets or a net," said Branson. "There's also a little infusion of football."

Branson has set up an entire zoneball league. Similar to leagues in the NFL, the teams are divided into two divisions. The league has its own commissioner and player's union, called the "Baller's Union."

"We don't really need the player's union," said Branson. "But if there are ever disputes between players or between players and the commissioner, then it's nice to know that we have it if we need it."

Teams within the league are satisfied with this, and also find a certain thrill in playing zoneball.

"Zoneball is a great sport to play. It's one on one, so you can't blame any of your teammates for anything you do, like in basketball or football," said sophomore Daniel Parker. Parker is the captain of the Menace. "It's an interesting game that could catch on pretty quick."

Zoneball's interest from players and non-players alike comes primarily from its relative ease to understand.

The zoneball court is 44 feet long and 22 feet wide. At each end of the court there are 10 foot zones, which are similar to end zones in football. Neither player can stand in their zone during play. Players can only field the ball in the rest of their half of the court, called the field.

Zoneball is played with a white rubber ball, about the size of a baseball. In certain matches, a smaller

racquetball is used. A zone ball can be purchased at any dollar store.

The purpose of this one-on-one game is to bounce the ball once in the opponent's field and again in their zone on the same throw to score a "zone." Zones are worth three points. However, players can only catch or throw the ball with one hand, and can't wait to throw the ball. Hesitation in zoneball is similar to a delay of gamepenalty in football.

Zoneball games are finished when one player reaches 50 points, and a clock does not in any way rule games.

However, there is a large portion of minor rules that Branson says are crucial to the game, but can only be learned first hand on a zoneball court. These rules include "errors," which is when the opponent drops the ball or throws it out of bounds. When a player commits an error, the other player may receive a point.

Also, Branson and his associates are in the process of changing many rules during the winter off-season, to add more flavor to their sport. Their goal is to make zoneball more physically demanding when their season starts again in the spring. They hope to attract several new people by then.

Zoneball is quickly catching on with students at Ashbrook. The reason for its vast popularity is the relative ease of the sport.

"It's not a sport that relies on brute strength like football or wrestling," said Branson. "Just about anyone can play. The way I see it, we are already more popular than curling."

Zoneball currently has ten teams split into two divisions. Players compete in various tournaments to build up their records. The teams

with the best overall records will qualify for the playoffs.

Currently, the teams with the best records include the undefeated Force, Branson's team, and the Menace, led by sophomore Daniel Parker.

Other teams that compete in zoneball tournaments are the Sweetness, the Terrorists, the Demons, and the Spartans. Each team has its own captain.

Zoneball also has its rivalries. Similar to the Green Bay Packers and the Chicago Bears rivalry, the Sweetness and the Force hold the fiercest zoneball rivalry. These teams have over five matches against each other.

"I'm like the Bears of the rivalry," said Branson. "When a player commits an error, the other player may receive a point. Also, Branson and his associates are in the process of changing many rules during the winter off-season, to add more flavor to their sport. Their goal is to make zoneball more physically demanding when their season starts again in the spring. They hope to attract several new people by then. Zoneball is quickly catching on with students at Ashbrook. The reason for its vast popularity is the relative ease of the sport. 'It's not a sport that relies on brute strength like football or wrestling,' said Branson. 'Just about anyone can play. The way I see it, we are already more popular than curling.' Zoneball currently has ten teams split into two divisions. Players compete in various tournaments to build up their records. The teams

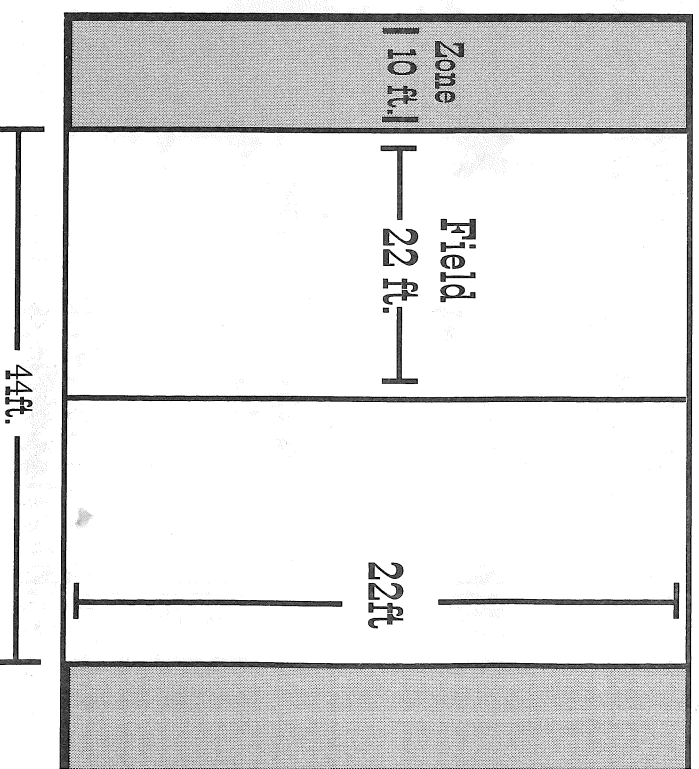


Sophomore Doug Branson demonstrates how to throw and catch in the game of Zoneball. Players may only use one hand to throw and catch the ball. Zoneball is played on a court 66 feet long and 28 feet wide with 11 foot zones at each end. A player scores by bouncing the ball into the opposing team's zone. The new zoneball season will start on February 28.

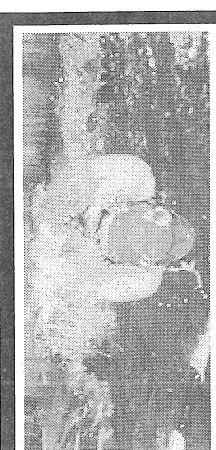
photos by Bryan Cockfield

ZONEBALL TEAMS:

FORCE	CAPTAIN: DOUG BRANSON
SWEETNESS	CAPTAIN: PRESTON NEILL
TERRORISTS	CAPTAIN: MADDIE KIRLIN
SPARTANS	CAPTAIN: JUSTIN GRIFFITH
MENACE	CAPTAIN: DANIEL PARKER
DEMONS	CAPTAIN: PETER HALEY



SPORTS



Men's and women's swim teams romp through conference, head to regional meet
page 12

Greenwave crashes Panther title hopes, win state 3-AA championship

BY BRYAN COCKFIELD/*SportsEditor*

The Ashbrook Greenwave football team started the season with a 1-3 record. Four games into the season, sports reporters were already calling it a "growing" season for the team. The team, however, had other plans, and their plans didn't include growing; they included winning.

"We kept our faith, even when we were 1-3," said head coach Joe Shepard. "We talked to the players about still having a good team, and we kept working at it. I think one important thing for us was too that we kept our expectations high. If your expectations aren't high, then rarely do you reach high goals. Even at 1-3 we believed we could still do it and our players, obviously, bought into that."

Not only did the coaches work towards the team's high goals, but also according to Shepard the players dealt well with the changes they made in order to achieve those goals.

"I presented the changes to the team and then we tried it out," he said. "They understood that changes were necessary, and they had confidence in our decisions. They looked at the positives of the move rather than focusing on the negatives."

The changes Shepard is referring to came during the team's fifth game when senior quarterback Kenyon Wade was moved to defense and junior Cole Russell became

the starting quarterback.

"It was necessary," said Wade. "Coach thought it would be a good move and look where it got us. Sometimes you have to be willing to sacrifice and make changes for the good of the entire team."

The change proved to be the spark the team was looking for leading them to win five of their last six games and propelling them to the playoffs.

"It was a surreal feeling," said junior Michael Briggs. "With that kind of start it's difficult to believe you're going to make it to the playoffs, let alone win a state championship. That shows the heart of our team though. We never gave up."

However, many say they wouldn't have faulted the team had they given up. With four of their five playoff games, including the state championship, ending with a difference of three points or less, the team gave their fans an exciting ride to glory.

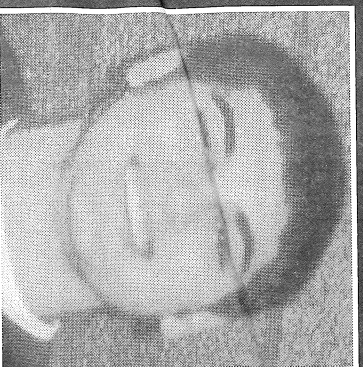
"There were times I almost wished they'd give up," said junior Chris Reen. "You'd go to games and you're heart would just stop because they came so close to losing so many times. It made for exciting games, and it made the championship even sweeter because they'd worked so hard to get there, but getting there - that was tough."

The team attributes much of "getting there" to the toe of senior kicker Julian Rauch. "Julian was a huge part of our success,"



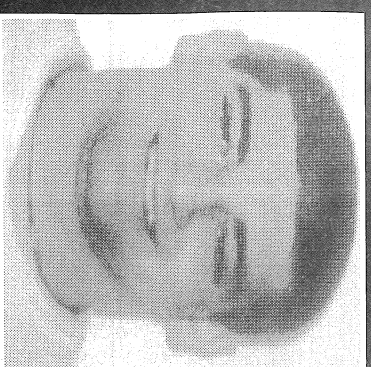
Joe Shepard
HEAD COACH

Gaston Gazette & Charlotte Observer Coach of the Year



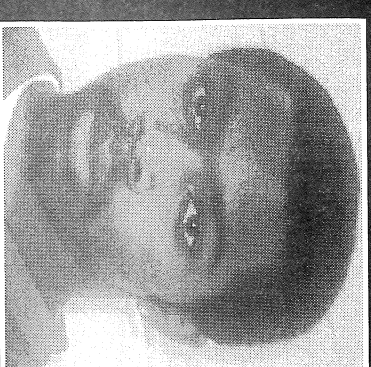
Julian Rauch
KICKER

Game's Most Valuable Player
Kicked 28 yard winning field goal with 12 seconds left



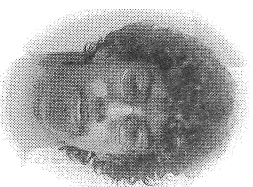
Michael Briggs
FULLBACK

Offensive Most Valuable Player
Rushed for 62 yards on 10 carries



Kourtland Nixon
CORNERBACK

Defensive Most Valuable Player
Recorded 9 tackles and 1 sack



Two-Minute Drill

by Bryan Cockfield

The men's team took nearly 20 people to states.

Not only did the team take people to the state meet, but the schools only individual state champion, current sophomore Alex Lytton, gained his title in the 100-yard breast-stroke. He also swam in the men's 200-yard medley relay, which placed third in the state.

The women's team was also uncontested in conference meets as well as a huge contender in regionals and states, placing ninth in the state meet and fifth in the regional meet.

The women's team was also five points away from a perfect meet, meaning they had two swimmers place first and second in every event. The only reason they could not gain those five points was because each swimmer can only swim two individual events and two relays, or three relays and one individual event and there were not enough people to go around to every event.

Close-to-perfect meets and a romp through the conference (not to mention high rankings at the regional and state level) is a big indicator that these are the most competitive teams at Ashbrook.

But why would the teams that are as ac-

complished as any other Ashbrook sport, not have fan support? Oftentimes, the only spectators are the parents of underclassmen that cannot drive themselves home after the meet.

These few spectators, however, enjoy a type of race that can be found in no other sport. Somewhat similar to a track meet, a swim meet puts great swimmers from all over the county in the same pool. One of the greatest races is the 100 butterfly, where Southpoint seniors Steven Pennington and Jack Miller challenge Ashbrook junior Jared Lytle.

Races like these are very hard to come by, even in track, and are completely unattainable in sports like basketball and football. Every person at Ashbrook should experience a swim meet first hand. Conference meets are held at the YMCA in Mount Holly, and the state meet is held at North Carolina State University.

Ashbrook, known throughout the state for its Zoo Crew, wild fans and excellent athletic program, needs to show some support for the sports at Ashbrook that compete the most on the regional and state levels.

see **State Championship**
page 15

Cheerleaders strive to earn desired recognition, accolades from judges

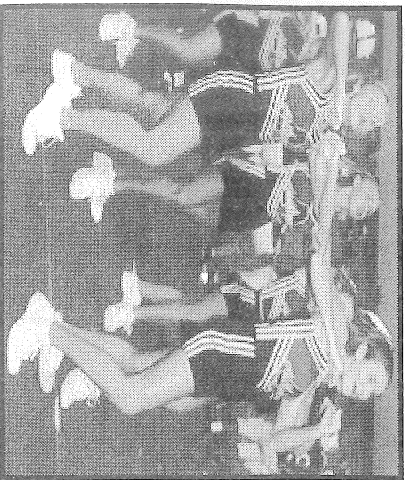


photo by Bryan Cockfield

BY BRYAN COCKFIELD/SportsEditor

Band members and cheerleaders are as essential to the atmosphere of a football game as the players themselves. Responsible for pumping up the crowd, both spend long hours in practice and take their roles very seriously. However, since the county does not consider cheerleading a sport only band members are allowed to earn varsity letters, a fact cheerleaders say is inaccurate.

"Although cheerleading is not always referred to as a sport, I believe that a team who performs together, depends on each other and even sweats together should definitely be considered a sport," said senior co-captain Erin Goodman.

Coach Pam Funderburk agrees. "We feel like we should be considered athletes, and the individuals within the sport should be able to letter," she said. "Countywide, though, cheerleading is not considered a sport."

Despite the fact the county does not recognize their efforts, fans appreciate the work cheerleaders put into their routines.

"Cheerleaders add a level of excitement," said junior Chris Marks. "It has a high level of difficulty and a high level of trust. You have to really trust one another to perform stunts, more so than other sports. The squad attributes their cohesiveness to their friendships.

"We are more than a cheerleading squad, we're a family," said Goodman. "We depend on each other to throw and catch us, as well as for moral support."

Goodman also points to the state championship game as, not only as the highlight of the season, but also as an event that brought the squad even closer together.

Senior Coree Hall, junior Megan Spika and sophomore Lauren Caldwell rev up the crowd at a football game. The cheerleaders ensured the crowds stayed energized and involved throughout the football and basketball games, as well as performing at half times and going to competition.

"The most exciting even of the year was cheering at the championship game," she said. "That trip brought us closer together than ever because it made us shed tears of happiness and even tears of sadness when we learned of Mrs. Griffin's death."

This year the squad has not only worked to strengthen their bonds with one another but to also strengthen their stunts.

"Our stunts have gotten a whole lot stronger since last year," said senior co-captain Katie Trueman. "We've focused on that aspect of our routines more, mainly because we now have more performance time at the basketball games."

Funderburk hopes that, not only will the girls continue to improve and work, but also that she can generate more male interest.

"Hopefully we can have more guys," she said. "College squads have a guy for ever girl. If kids at the high school level could get past the stereotypes and give it a try we'd have a definite advantage."

The absence of male members also effects the squad's division in competition.

"Since we lost BJ Hemphill, we've been thrown into a larger competition," said Funderburk. "We have to be stronger, better and cleaner because there are so many other schools with all girl squads."

However, the squad feels that under Funderburk's guidance they have the ability to perform well.

"Pam has always been a dedicated leader and a role model for her girls," said Goodman. "She completes the squad and strives for us to be the best we can be, that is why we are and will continue to be the best."

Swimmers make splash in Big South 3-A

BY PRESTON NEAL/StaffWriter & BRYAN COCKFIELD/Sports Editor

When winter rolls around, people usually gear up for snowball fights, ski trips, and long nights by the fire, but very few students think about changing into a swimsuit to go dive into a pool in the middle of January, but many students at Ashbrook are doing just that.

The Ashbrook men and women swim teams continue to make great strides in the Big South 3-A conference. As a follow up to last years 27-0 record, with a seventh place finish at the state competition for the men's team and a ninth place finish in the same meet for the women's team, this year's teams are beginning where they left off with two blowouts to open the season.

The second meet of the season was indicative of Ashbrook's power in the conference. The men's team scored 211 points to East Gaston's 116, and Southpoint's 87. Hunter Huss did not score. The men won every event except for the 100 butterfly and 200 freestyle relay.

On the women's side, Ashbrook won 231 points, compared to Southpoint's 140, East Gaston's 92, and Hunter Huss's 25.

Two meets, a quad meet at the Stowe YMCA and a dual against Shelby, were postponed due to inclement weather. They will be made up in January.

"I think that we can still continue to dominate in conference even after our class graduates," said sophomore Austin Munnell. "I think Ashbrook's teams have a high chance of being one of the top teams in the state meet."

Part of the success of this year's teams is the fact that more people are participating, whether they are freshman or just new swimmers.

"We talked to our kids about putting together their best effort and 14 of them swam personal best times," said coach Lloyd White. "The depth shows in both our experienced and new swimmers."

Both swim teams have benefited from the gain of some of the cross-country team. Senior Daniel Reed, sophomores John Beveridge and Craig Rawe, and freshman Allie Hess are the first year swimmers from the cross-country team. They meet returning swimmers who also ran cross-country this year, such as seniors Rich Abernethy, Caleb Davis, Deborah Cramer, junior Rebecca Cramer, and sophomore Austin Munnell.

"We have a lot of guys, and we have a lot of new guys coming out which helps us with numbers," said senior captain Rich Abernethy. We can have more people in events, and other schools only might only have one or two. With guys like Daniel Reed and Joe Gates coming out, we can fill more spots."

Last year the men's team only had 12 swimmers, nicknamed the "Dirty Dozen" by their coach, Lloyd White, but this year, the men's team has also benefited from several freshmen. Two freshmen, Powell Latimer and Josh Rutherford are key swimmers for the men's team.

"With so many new swimmers this year, the teams can fill people into almost every race, whereas last year, they had to leave some races empty sacrificing points to other school's teams," said Abernethy.

Sophomore Alex Lytton, who holds a state championship title in the 100 breaststroke, and is the school's only individual state title holder, along with sophomore Trey Taylor, and junior Jared Lytle continue to put out best times for the men's team. For the women's team, senior Haddon Mackie and sophomore Sarah McSpadden provide most of the winning points.

However, swimming has been met with some question about its appeal.

"Swimming is a lot harder than most people think. People think that all you have to do is get in and swim," said Rawe. "You have to use so many muscle groups and your breathing has to be on time."

This year both the men's and women's teams aim not only for another undefeated season in conference meets, but to do well in the regional meet, which is used as the qualifying meet to move on to states.

"The bar is set at a state title every year," said Abernethy. "That's something that's achievable if we work hard enough. But even if we don't win states, top five is definitely a goal for this year."

Basketball team relies on defense, fan support to help them reach title game

BY BRYAN COCKFIELD/SportsEditor

With the loss of all of last years starters and two other key players, many are left wondering if this year's varsity men's basketball team will measure up to the level of performance fans have come to expect.

According to coach Marty Hatchell, fans have nothing to worry about. Despite the inexperience, Hatchell feels the team's talent, coupled with hard work, will ensure them a playoff berth. In fact, he has made it a season goal.

"We can contend for the conference championship," he said. "We will have to improve a lot if we are going to win it, but my three main goals for us this season are to have a winning season, to win the conference championship and to make the state playoffs."

Players believe one of the keys to achieving their goals is defense.

"We've always had a strong defense," said junior Eric Lampke. "It's our biggest asset and a huge part of our play."

The team also cites the fans as one of their biggest advantages. The "Zoo Crew," which is comprised of students and fans, has become a vocal fixture at games.

"We have a great home-court advantage," said sophomore Antwan Pagan. "Our fans always come out to support us and they are always so involved. We feed off their energy."

Students say the "Zoo Crew," not only pumps up the players, but keeps the fans interested as well.

"I think it frustrates the other team that our fans are so vocal," said sophomore Patrick Nelli. "It pumps up the players, but it also gets the fans behind the team and keeps them interested in the game."

With their three biggest games coming up, Hatchell hopes the fans will remain loyal.

"Our fans are a huge help," he said. "We haven't had as much support this year, mainly because of the late football season, but now that it's over we're hoping attendance will increase, especially with big games coming up against Forestview, East Gaston and Huss."

The team's next home game will be Feb. 10, against East Gaston.

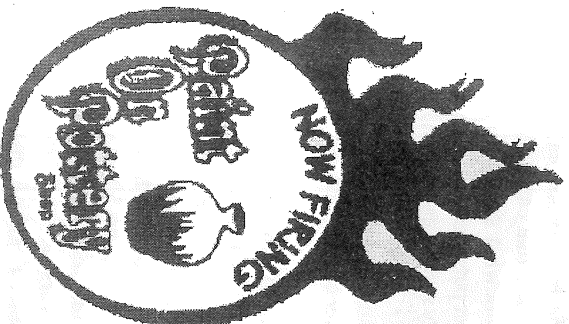
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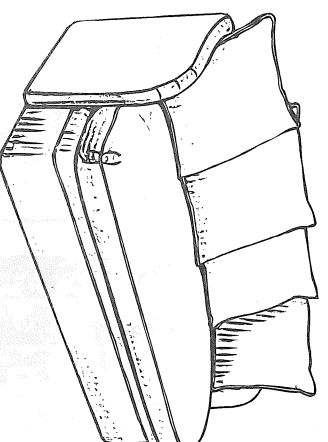
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Women's basketball depends on leadership, camaraderie to propel them to playoff spot

By Bryan Cockrem/D SportsEditor

With only two major losses and several returning players, Ashbrook's women's varsity basketball coach Steve Hudgins looks for this year to be an improvement on past seasons.

With the loss of only two seniors the team, according to Hudgins, is incredibly similar to last year's.

"Although I have six players returning from last year's team, things are very different," said Hudgins. "The players and I know one another so much better, which makes them more comfortable on the court. We are much farther along than at this point last season."

Hudgins claims the driving force of this year's team is three key sophomores, Caitlin Cavin, Beth Ann Urban and Fox. He also points to juniors Ashley Pate and somebody as key players.

Teammates also point to returning seniors point guard Sheena Williamson and power forward Melissa Kiwala.

"The seniors are very helpful," said Fox. "They give us direction on the court, which is something invaluable in game situations."

Along with Kiwala and Williamson, the team also includes seniors Tanisha Davenport and Leanne Biles.

"The seniors are expected to provide leadership for the team because of their experience," said Hudgins. "However, that doesn't mean that all the players aren't expected to step up and take charge when necessary."

The team's leadership and play has gained them conference recognition, play which Hudgins hopes will gain the team a playoff spot.

"I feel that if we keep up our current level of play we can contend for a playoff berth," said Hudgins. "However, it will be tough as our conference gets only three (seeds in the bracket) this year."

The team has similar expectations.

"Our goal is to not only make the playoffs this season but to be able to compete once we get there," said sophomore Alison Fox. "It's a goal we can achieve as long as we, as a team, stay committed and dedicated."

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"We have thirteen seniors on these guys," said senior Rich the team this year," said Shepard. Abernethy. "They were down so "They're all valuable, and you re- many times and so many teams ally can't start ranking them in or- would have given up, especially der of importance. They're just all there at the end of the last game too important." with only twelve seconds left, but

While the loss of thirteen play- Shepard, however, says that it ers will be hard to overcome, was really no surprise when the state championship game will help team fell behind with only twelve motivate returning players. seconds left.

"Based on our returning play- "It wasn't going to be easy for ers we have a good nucleus to start us," he said. "When we started out off next season," he said. "Their with a 16-0 lead I thought we might expectations will be high, as well, win at least one game where it didn't because of all we've accomplished come right down to the end, but it this year." made it much sweeter."

Briggs agrees. Players, however, say that while "We'll definitely want to go the victory was sweet, the support back and defend," he said. "You're of the fans was even sweeter.

"Our fans are always there," said senior Oreon Mayfield. "There's something about having you start the season, but once all those people there screaming for you've experienced what it's like to out that boosts you up. You come play in the game it gives you more motivation, more drive." to play, and it's just like look at all those people. If they're going to come all that way just to see us play,

Fans, however, question if a team can have more drive than this then we're gonna make sure we year's team. work our hardest and do our best

"I don't know how any team could be more motivated to win than for them."

Senior Eric Fields grapples with his opponent during a recent match against Cherryville. This year's wrestling team finished third in the conference, behind East Gaston and North Gaston. Senior Eric Fields won the conference championship, as well as acquired his 100 win. Senior Zeke Harriam was also conference champion in his weight class. The team's top 16 wrestlers will travel to the regional tournament February 15.

Team member say one of the keys to their success this season was senior leadership.

"The seniors this year were great leaders and great wrestlers," said junior Trey Anderson. "We're all really going to miss them next year."

Senior wrestlers say the sport has not only allowed them to be involved in a school activity, but it has also taught them about life.

"Wrestling taught us dedication and hard work," said Harriman. "We learned never to give up no matter what the odds."

While fans were certain they would be there to support the team, they were disappointed in the restrictions that were placed on that support.

"The North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) had all these rules about what we could and couldn't do as fans," said Abernethy. "We weren't allowed to wear any body paint or bring any big signs. I think it's stupid that we weren't able to show our support however we wanted to, and that's an issue they need to address."

Abernethy along with senior Jay Morehead are the unofficial leaders of the Chest Club, a group of eight guys who spell out the Ashbrook on their chests in green paint and do push-ups equaling the team's total number of points after each score.

"Our excitement keeps the rest of the fans excited and involved, which lets the team know we're behind them," said Morehead. "It was disappointing that we couldn't do it at the championship game. It's not like this was a golf tournament. It's

Senior Eric Fields grapples with his opponent during a recent match against Cherryville. This year's wrestling team finished third in the conference, behind East Gaston and North Gaston. Senior Eric Fields won the conference championship, as well as acquired his 100 win. Senior Zeke Harriam was also conference champion in his weight class. The team's top 16 wrestlers will travel to the regional tournament February 15.

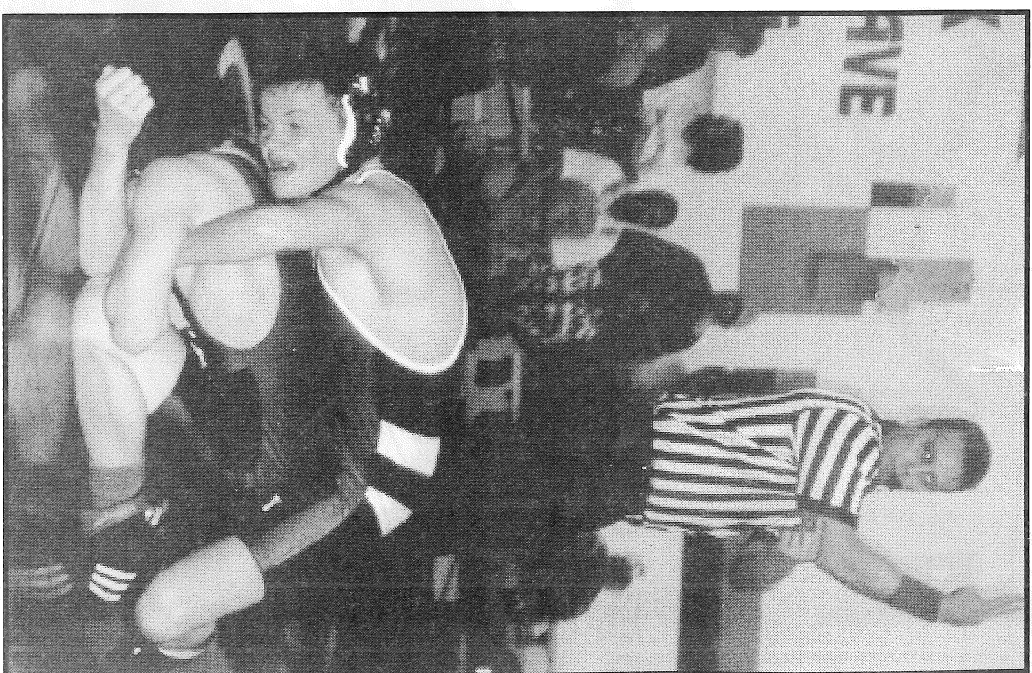


Photo by Lynsey Wilson

a football game. You're allowed to yell and be excited."

While fans weren't allowed to show their support for the team the way they would have liked, there was no absence of excitement in fans when Rauch's field goal was ruled good.

"Everybody was so tense when he was kicking," said senior Catherine Mason. "But after it went through, nobody could stop screaming. Everybody was jumping up and down and hugging one another. It was amazing just being in the stands. I can't imagine what it was like for the players."

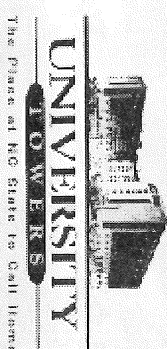
Players say the excitement wasn't only present on the field and in the stands but on the bus ride home as well.

"We were on the bus fighting and slamming each other," said Mayfield. "We were wild and Coach couldn't do anything about it because the season was over. It was a long ride, but it was fun."

While the ride home may have been unconventional, Shepard says the team's attitude and preparation for the game was the same.

"When I get older I'll be able to tell my kids that my team won the state championship," said senior Oreon Mayfield. "I'd like to be able to say that to my son."

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JUNIOR VARSITY

Men's basketball team offers players chance to gain experience, gives glimpse of future

BY BRYAN COCKFIELD/SportsEditor

Most junior varsity teams are used as a stepping-stone for varsity. Players that start out in junior varsity as freshmen usually move up to varsity as a sophomore or a junior.

This is a good indicator that this year's junior varsity men's basketball team will, in future years, be able to enhance the play of the varsity team. But first, they will try for a romp through the conference.

Several of the players believe that they can come close to going undefeated in conference match ups.

"We want to run other conference teams off the court," said sophomore Patrick McCarter. "We also need to up the intensity and play a little tougher, but we're getting there."

McCarter, along with sophomores Michael Bogart and Michael Hartsos, and freshmen Chris Pierce and Josh Smith will start.

"This team is different than last year because of our size and speed," said coach Marty Hatchell. "Pierce, Smith, and McCarter are all new and potential players."

However, the team still has the regular lack of school support, as most of the fans

are parents and relatives of the players and the junior varsity cheerleaders.

"It's good having supporters out here with us," said McCarter. "It gives us a sense of pride knowing we have their support."

"I would like to believe the fans could make a difference," said Hatchell. "We have to consider the time we play and the amount of time we play."

This year, however, the team is looking behind the starters and to the bench. The team would like to strengthen their bench players and give the starters valuable time to rest for the last minutes of any key game.

"We need big minutes from (the bench players)," said McCarter. "We want to make our bench as good as our starters."

The team will need these minutes from all their players for several conference games. The junior varsity games are usually more intense when the varsity plays rival conference teams, such as Forestview and East Gaston.

"We want to play the best against Hunter Huss," said McCarter. "Rivals play they hardest, and we know they will come out to play with us."

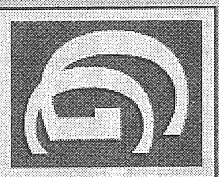


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Women's team overcomes lack of fans, inexperience, displays determination

BY BRYAN COCKFIELD/SportsEditor

A squad of new players and the usual lack of fans at Ashbrook's women's junior varsity basketball team is not enough to keep the team out of the top seeds in the conference.

So far this season, the junior varsity women have had to finish two games in what hockey fans would call a power play.

They had to finish the game against Forestview with only three players, but still managed a win. One player reported injured before the game, which meant that the remaining five would have to play the whole game. Two of them fouled out near the end of the game.

JV seasons are limited to the regular season, but even with obvious impediments, the junior varsity team has still gained a prominent regular season record.

"The team should give a competitive run at being one of the top three (seeds)," said coach Jerri Edwards. Junior varsity sports do not have playoff brackets or compete in a regional tournament.

On the court, Edwards turns to sophomores Anna Mackie, Sally Peach, and freshman Keisi Lindsay.

"Anna will run the show for us at point and shooting guard," said Edwards. "Sally will be shooting it up from the perimeter, and Keisi will give us the ability to create things in the point on both offense and defense."

The junior varsity team plays the most important games against Forestview and Hunter Huss on the same dates as the varsity team.

However, the junior varsity team is not looked upon as a competitive sport as much as it is a building stage for its players.

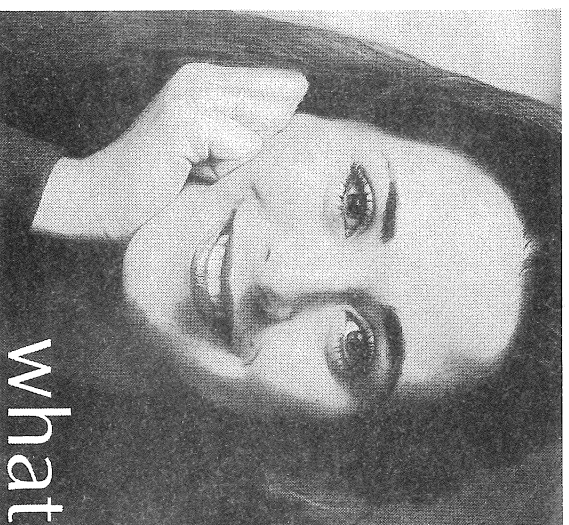
"Sally and I played varsity last year so we have experience that the other players on the team don't," said Mackie.

Peach and Mackie are the oldest of the team's six members. Among the rest of the players are freshmen starters Lindsay, Kaci Bentley and Jenna Landstoffer.

As for the lack of a crowd, Mackie said it could go either way. If the game isn't very close, the crowd doesn't matter, but if there is a close game, there is no fan support.

"Last year our parents supported us so well and cheered so loud, we believed we had a crowd," said Edwards. "The JV boy's parents even started coming a little earlier to help our parents support the team."

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