

# Editorial

Pretend for a moment that you have never set foot into a foreign language class. The next year, however, you are scheduled to take AP French or AP Spanish, even though you can't speak a word of the language. For the most part, the class is a lesson in gibberish. You dread the thought of spending the rest of the year stuck in an environment where you struggle to break through the language barrier. This situation is unlikely for the average student, but it is all too real for some students who learn English as an additional language.

Did you know that English Language Learners (ELL) students are not directly taught grammar rules at our school? The thought process behind this is that students can learn the language just as a native speaker would, but this may not lead to a complete understanding of the language's grammar. Without the foundation of a strong understanding of English language rules, ELL students struggle not only with class work, but with immersion into American society — especially in a predominately white-American environment.

The communication barrier causes many to view ELL students as strangely "foreign" and "different." This ten-

gency, stemming from the struggles to demolish the barrier, is one that sadly contributes to the many social cliques that exist in our school.

To prevent these difficulties, grammar should be taught directly to students in ELL classes, rather than in the current indirect manner which forces students to infer all of the language's intricacies on their own. If we as language-taking students learn grammar in Spanish and French and Japanese, why should learning English be any different? Additionally, an intermediate class should be created to bridge the gap between the ELL program and mainstream classes for those who need more assistance in learning English.

With these two additions to an already strong ELL program, struggling students can close the language gap before they are burdened with the pressure of mainstream education and realize their true potential as both learners and as members of the Bellevue High School community.

No matter what changes are made, however, we as a collective group of individuals must do our part and realize that ELL students should never be relegated to anything less than full and equal members of our student body.

## Dear Editor,

I just finished reading the article "The A.I.—Artificial intelligence?" and would like to point out a few things that I saw as wrong. First of all, I go to Chrysalis, not

Academic Institute. Secondly, I have experienced overwhelming amounts of homework and drama and drug use and all three of those resulted from the inefficiency of the Bellevue School District and its curriculum. At my school I am paying, but I'm not paying for grades.

I pay so that I can receive an education that challenges me and that not only allows me to learn, but that also allows me to enjoy life.

I've gone to Bellevue High and I have "sucked it up," but why put up with something that makes you miserable when you can live life to the fullest and learn?

I sleep in four out of five days and I can pursue my interests such as gui-

tar and snowboarding. So before you look at alternative schools with a closed-minded "Bellevue-ness" that I know all too well, maybe consider that it's a better option.

**James Gerstenberger**  
Sophomore

## Dear Editor,

I'm writing because of the "I'm a cheap Jew" article in last month's issue of the Barque. While I found the rest of the paper to be very well done, this article really, really made me think. I wasn't even going to write, but yesterday afternoon, I was talking with a couple students in my office and one of the boys (a junior) started talking about how the article made him feel as a Jewish student in this building. He was angry and insulted to say the least.

I've heard that the article was supposed to be "satirical" and that people are just over-reacting, or that

people who get offended by it have no sense of humor. However, I think we are in a situation where we have to think about the *impact* of the article as opposed to its *intent*.

I wonder what value the article has in a student newspaper, a paper read by 14-year-olds. High school is a time of identity formation, and I wonder how this might affect Jewish students are coming to grips with their own personal identity about what it means to be Jewish in this school, in this community and in this nation? How is it funny to stereotype people based on their religion, especially when some of our kids may have grand-parents or great-grand parents who survived the Holocaust?

In the article, the author talks about "South Park" and how hilarious phrases are uttered by an 8-year-old. What the author misses is that South Park is not written by 8-year-olds, or by high school students, but

by adults. What the author misses is that adults have already gone through their identity formation phase and most have skills with which to deal with insults and stereotypes and prejudices.

They also may understand satire whereas I wonder how many of our students really thought it was satire (and how many thought it was just hilarious because of all the funny Jewish jokes — completely missing the point).

I could go on and on. Why is it OK to use Jewish students for satire, when you wouldn't have done a satirical article on black students or gay students based on their background characteristics?

I guess I'm really asking this: how did this article help make BHS a better place? How did it help build a more inclusive, tolerant, respectful community? The answer: For at least one Jewish student, it didn't.

**Eric McDowell**  
Activities Director

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