

Editorial

Just as each year the President of the United States must deliver a State of the Union Address, this school deserves to be kept up-to-date on its current affairs and plans for the future. For this reason, herein lies the State of the School Address.

From the start, this school year has been quite different from recent years. Most notable among these differences was that we began the year not under Bach's familiar, friendly and protective wing, but instead with a new principal, David Wellington.

Many students expressed immediate doubt at this new arrangement, particularly as they were accosted in with different new policies, complete with stringent guidelines and punishments. The tardy policy was a real crowd favorite, as was, to be sure, the tyrannical cell phone policy.

The transition from a warm and inviting environment into a totalitarian, Draconian rule seemed complete. Students, particularly the notoriously rowdy senior class of 2008 (holler!), moped about as they wondered how far the administrators dared to push these newest policies.

It was a great surprise to many, therefore, when it was found that Mr. Wellington expressed a genuine interest in the everyday lives of the students in the school, paying particular attention to the various leadership groups around campus able to effect the most change in the Bellevue community. As the year progressed, the policies slowly slackened, and students began to accept their new administration.

Apart from this rocky start, another drastic problem quickly emerged. The senior class, long characterized as one of the worst to come through first Chinook and then Bellevue High, did nothing to move beyond that stereotype. We partied, we got into trouble and we certainly didn't act very classy, but that can be expected of any group of 17- and 18-year-olds.

The problem arose when we refused to dissolve our cliques and social barriers and evolve into the cohesive senior class that

those before us had become. A blatant example has been our shocking lack of school spirit. Even more unfortunate is that this has trickled down to the lower classes because traditionally seniors are not only role models but also the generators of tremendous school spirit.

The outcome, however, has not been quite so bleak. There have been some extraordinary successes on a more individual level throughout the year. Bellevue Hope has continued its mission of spreading empathy and compassion throughout the school community; a Bellevue Youth Court has been created, providing many students with an amazing real-world opportunity; many other clubs, both old and new, have had their own share of success.

Our sports teams, as usual, have made quite a showing and, last but not least, the entire senior class of well over 300 people has applied, been admitted to, and recently matriculated to a smattering of top-notch colleges or else has other equally attractive options which it is pursuing.

So congratulations on your accomplishments, Bellevue, but also stay mindful of that which has fallen short. In all honesty, this year has not been all it could have been, but here's to hoping that next year will be.

All of you juniors, learn from the mistakes of this year's seniors. Lead our school to become the spirited, fun-loving, inclusive place that it can be. And to the administrators, we thank you for working to keep our school running to the best of your abilities, but there are also some things that you can learn from this past year.

Sometimes black and white policies lead only to technical changes, while it is the truly creative and adaptive solutions that really have the potential to make a difference at our school. Have an open discussion about these policies with the student body and its leaders, and you might just be surprised at the results.

Dear Editor,

I am writing to you about the vandalism done to my car on Thursday, April 24. While I was visiting your school to work with Nancie Shaw's orchestra class, someone spray-painted the back and side windows of my car. The tagging was extremely offensive. This incident occurred sometime between noon and 1:45 while I was inside working with her students.

I am part of the Seattle Chamber Music Society's school outreach program. Every spring, deserving public schools are awarded this fantastic opportunity to have music professionals in a string quartet come into the music class to perform, coach and mentor students. I have been a part of this program for three years. It is a terrific program and an honor for a class to be chosen for us to work with. I would never even imagine that I would have to worry about safety or crime during my visits.

Obviously, it would be valid for me to not come back to your school for the next scheduled visits. However, I personally believe that the action of one cruel and irresponsible student should not jeopardize the education of good students. That said, I feel something needs to be done to show this particular student that actions have consequences.

I am just shocked that one of your students came to school with spray paint and instead of being inside learning, chose to vandalize my car.

You should be aware that our violist called to tell me that he was harassed by a carload of BHS students when he pulled up to park in the same lot. Someone leaned out the window and yelled obscenities saying he should not park in the permit parking

lot. He then moved to another lot. I chose to park in the permit lot because with all prior school visits we are extended that courtesy. If I had parked in a handicapped spot, a ticket is valid. But for a student to feel that they have the authority to maliciously mark a car just because they don't like where I chose to park is reprehensible. Or if that person thought that my car was indeed that of a fellow student, I find that even more horrifying.

Anonymous

Dear Editor,

While summer can be a great time to relax and catch up with friends and family, it can also provide you with time to be an active member of your local community.

You have the power to be a change agent in Bellevue. Unless we, as young people, are aware of the problems in our communities, have accurate information about the problems, and begin thinking about effective ways to help solve them, we cannot help close the gap between our ideas and the status quo. Here are a few ways you can get involved this summer:

If politics are an area of interest – both major political parties have state/local chapters that are always looking for volunteers.

This summer, more than ever before, the political parties are going to need your help as the 2008 presidential election nears. Go to these web sites for information: Washington State Democrats: <http://www.wa-democrats.org> and the Washington State Republicans: <http://www.wsrp.org>.

If the game of politics isn't your thing, head to a web site like Seattle Activism: <http://www.seattleactivism.org/links.asp>. This web site has links to tons of local organizations who are actively working in our community. What kinds of organizations? Here's just a sample: Washington Wilderness Coalition, United Nations Association, Seattle Young People's Project, Northwest Animal Rights Network, Lifelong AIDS Alliance, and the Community Alliance for Global Justice.

There are so many ways to get involved this summer. I encourage you to think about your core values and find a way to act on them during your summer break.

Your action is essential to creating the positive change we want to see in our communities. With your time, energy and effort this summer, our community can be made better.

Amber Graeber
Social Studies

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