

Forum

Tragedy provides reality check on fragility of life

JON HELMKAMP

co-Editor-in-Chief

The tragic deaths of Thomas Earhart and Daniel Sawyer, seniors, remind us that life is a gift. All it takes is one second, one moment of inattention, one moment of not thinking consciously that can flip your life completely upside down, or even worse, end your life altogether. Sometimes, it is simply beyond our control. Life is not a game that comes equipped with a redo button. There are no second chances, when your life is over, it's over for good.

Sometimes it's easy to get so caught up in the hustle and bustle of everyday life that you forget what's truly important in your life. That old saying about taking the time to stop and smell the roses couldn't be more true. The small and simple pleasures of life like enjoying the company of the ones you love, cherishing the mere fact of being alive and having the opportunity to be in a place in life where you are given the opportunity to succeed sometimes eludes us. We don't always understand the beauty of what we're given, and the reality of how quickly that can change.

Hurting through life with reckless abandon might fulfill a person's need for adrenaline, but I assure you that we are not invincible. Sometimes it feels like nothing could go wrong; like no matter what crazy thing you think of

doing it couldn't possibly end in you losing your life. But that's just it, it can.

Take time and think about your life. Think about what you're doing. Be mindful. Tomorrow isn't promised for anyone. Every day, be thankful for the things that you are blessed with and be thankful for all the simple things. Be thankful for laughing, crying, smiling

and frowning. Be thankful for having the opportunity to meet people, connect with people and relate to people. Be thankful for life

enhance his or her life, whether it is by gaining an appreciation for the things around you, striving to better yourself, or simply by being more careful.

Take the initiative to take care of yourself,

because you have a far larger impact on others than you realize. What

happens to you doesn't just affect your life, but the lives of everyone around you. The deaths of Tom and Dan have brought people together, and made many people think about what matters most to them.

Be truly thankful for your life. Life is an incredibly fragile thing that can be wiped away at any moment. Cherish your life because there is no way to guarantee what tomorrow holds.

Cherish your life because there is no way to guarantee what tomorrow holds.

itself and each day that you are here to enjoy the things you love.

Every person can

UNCLE SAM STILL wants YOU!

CALLEY LATHROP

Staff Reporter

It's FREE! Students and teachers are being offered free school supplies including book covers and calendars. Every week at lunch, men and women come to teach us about their line of work. Are they doctors? No. Lawyers? No. Our school has experienced an influx of Navy, Army and Marine paraphernalia as well as increased visits by the soldiers themselves. Why? They need recruits—more than any of us can imagine.

Iraq is a very strange "war." First of all, there is no draft. Nearly all U.S. wars in the past have had a draft in place. Second, the whole (well, almost the whole) country disapproves of the war, with less than a 34 percent approval rating as of September 2007 (CNN.Com). In fact, hearing the word

"Iraq" anymore just leaves a bad taste in my mouth, and conjures images of dead soldiers, maimed Iraqis and often the face of our oh-so-infamous President.

Many of us can agree that Iraq is a mess. The U.S. is spending around 200 million dollars a month, and our casualties number around 3,878. There have been over 28,000 more wounded. Another shocking statistic is that of the Iraqi deaths: 600,000. These are people that were not insurgents, and had nothing to do with their government or its policies. It is estimated the average American is paying \$4,500 in taxes per year to support a war that is still putting the U.S. billions of dollars into debt. (Source: CNN.com)

One problem that is not being addressed is that of the soldiers who are continually being forced to extend their tours of duty. How will they replace these soldiers?

That's where you, the student, comes in. What if the U.S. did enforce a draft? Some Americans are pushing for it due to the fact that many soldiers are not coming home. Former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has speculated that the U.S. could be in Iraq for years to come. The American people may be pushing for withdrawal, but that, like many other

things in this war, cannot be expected.

So, freshmen, who normally don't have to decide their futures yet, may need to consider the possibility they will be at a training camp, not a dorm, after graduation. Seniors

need to face the reality that if



they do enlist in any branch of the armed service, they will probably end up in the Middle East. As of June 2007, 75 percent of the nation's soldiers were deployed or scheduled to be deployed, according to CNN.com. The armed forces have major recruitment problems. In June, recruitment was down 42 percent from several years ago. A draft would allow soldiers to come home, and replace those who have been killed and wounded.

If a draft is created, you WILL be on the list. In this day and age, the Army no longer discriminates between mens' and womens' abilities to serve our country, so women will also be required to sign up. Think that because you're going to college they'll give you a get-out-of-jail-free card? Nope. They don't care what's on

your agenda. There is no one too fat, too thin, too slow... if you are called to serve your country, you'll be going, whether you like it or not.

No one WANTS a draft, and politicians have said there won't be one. What we see about Iraq on the news every day changes, but never for the better. Things are getting worse. Our soldiers are being killed. Innocent Iraqis are dying. Two hundred million dollars a month is being used to fight a "war on terror" that no one is winning. In 2003 there were an estimated 17,000 terrorists in Iraq. As of June 2007, there were an estimated 115,000. It is time to face facts. We ARE in a war, although we may not feel it on the home front.

Don't want to go? Become an advocate for peace. There are protests and vigils all the time in Portland (www.pdxpeace.org). Join local clubs, like Young Advocates For Peace (they meet Mondays in B201). Write a letter to your local representative or senator. They can draft us. But we can stop it.

Letter to the editor

To the editor:

Meth is soooo bad for you. I think it's super great that you are making an article exploring the dangers of illicit drugs. They are the downfall of modern society and should be destroyed. I've heard stories about meth babies with four eyes and two livers, (as well as other birth defects). Thanks for informing me.

—Cole Carnel, junior

Amplifier

West Linn High School, 5464 West A Street, West Linn, OR 97068
(503) 673-7843 • fax: (503) 657-8710 •
wlhs-amplifier@wlhs.wlww.k12.or.us

The *Amplifier* is published approximately every four weeks by the West Linn High School Advanced Journalism class. Opinions expressed in commentaries and editorials represent only those of the writer, and are not necessarily the opinions of West Linn High School, its administration, faculty, staff, or student body.

Editors-in-Chief

Sarah Chicoine
Jon Helmkamp

Section Editors

Nick Arntz

Business Editors:

Chris Erbin

Kelsey Schrader

Section Editors

News: Hilli Ciavarello

Forum: Sarah Chicoine

Features: Chris Erbin

Sports: Jon Helmkamp

Entertainment: Kelsey Schrader

Photo Editor:

Malia Chong

Staff Reporters

Isaac Callagan, Emmalie Cox,

Adam Holmes, Calley Lathrop,

Kira Matsuoka, Kaitlyn Ragan,

Lexi Welp, Mary Wood

Contributing Writers

Chelsea Callas, Dalton Kuepfer,

Haley Epperly, Kaitlyn Lathrop,

Valorie Wallace

Photographers

Sarah Chicoine, Jon Helmkamp,

Adam Holmes, Kira Matsuoka

Adviser

Ann Breynne