

Ignorance displayed by American students about world around them

■ CALLEY LATHROP

Staff Reporter

The word "bubble" has been used to describe West Linn. Most citizens live comfortably and many problems that people in other situations and places face are irrelevant in the generally posh suburbs and calm atmosphere in which we live. Americans, and West Linn students, in the past and very recently, have displayed ignorance in the face of difference. That is not what we should represent.

"The Kenyans are coming!" read a banner hung from the second floor near Student Street. "Welcome Namwela Sister School" was also displayed on a butcher paper sign on the second floor near A porch. The words weren't the problem. There were pictures of a zebra, a monkey in a tree and a bear. Students at Namwela do not live among these animals, as their habitat consists of plains and grasslands. Although no harm was meant by the "Kenyans banner," and ASB had good intentions, many students felt it left a sour taste.

"It was like they were saying 'Run away, the Kenyans are coming!'" Mark Lewis, senior, said.

During the assembly on Dec. 8, when the Kenyan exchange students answered questions about where they are from, several people asked questions that resembled more "verbal diarrhea" than curious students looking for insights. People were asking about Africa in general, when Kenya is only a tiny piece of a large continent.

Americans, in general, are not educating themselves on the lives or cultures of others in the rest of the world. A 2006 survey by Roper Public Affairs and Media found that 20% of 18-24 year-old Americans think that Sudan is a country in Asia, and 48% think that the main religion in India is Islam, when actually the majority is a mixture of Hinduism and Buddhism. That is a very depressing statistic.

I personally experienced ignorance when I traveled to Pennsylvania over winter break. A woman asked me where I was from, and upon hearing the answer said, "Oh, so you live in the wilderness, or do you have real towns out there?" Let's get real. Of course Oregon is a real state! We even have indoor plumbing!

Ignorance stems from arrogance as well as laziness. There is little drive to explore others lives, and this lack of knowledge is just being reflected through the ignorance displayed in every culture, every person and every country. The effects of being uneducated about the world can be costly and lead to

assumptions, stereotypes and prejudice.

It's time people take personal responsibility and recognize the fact that others may be different, but it is not okay to stereotype or judge their situation based on unfounded evidence or assumptions. When you're sitting in history class, pay

attention. Want to know what's going on around you? Classes like Global Issues will open your eyes. Read the front page of *The Oregonian*, watch the Discovery Channel once in awhile. It may seem boring at first, but there is nothing more interesting than learning about the world you live in and the people you share it with.

Teens take privileges for granted

Could you spare a dime?

■ HALEY EPPERLY

Contributing Writer

Looking around the school, I notice Abercrombie logos on clothing, and fingers dancing on cell phones during class. What teenagers may not be aware of is that the money spent on one pair of Abercrombie jeans could feed a family for months. Or that while they are texting beneath their desk in English, people all over the world are working diligently to accumulate enough money to pay for school.

So many people in West Linn, especially teenagers, take the advantages they are given and materials they possess for granted. Living in the United States of America, we have the right to a free education, which means we don't have to pay for elementary, middle or high school. In most countries, education is a privilege, not a right.

Most of the students I know dislike going to school most days and can't wait for that last second when the clock strikes 3:10 p.m. and they are free. I have found myself guilty of not appreciating my opportunity to learn many times. But I also believe, since we are given an education so freely, we should go to class each day ready to learn, not ready to catch up on sleep. The

education we receive through many years of schooling is what helps us thrive in life and become employable.

Think of the difference between a person that has graduated high school, and a person that hasn't. In nearly all cases, the person applying for a job that has the higher education would receive the position over someone less educated. In a study done by the U.S. Department of Labor, the unemployment rate of one that has a doctoral degree is 1.4% and they make a weekly median income of \$1,441. The unemployment rate is 6.8% for people that do not have a high school diploma and their median weekly income is \$419.

That is just one example of how education is important in life. Children develop social skills in elementary school, the basics in middle school and in high school they are able to narrow down the classes they take to the ones that will pertain to their career.

Education isn't the only thing taken for granted in West Linn. Nearly every student in West Linn has one or more of these items: cars, trendy clothes, cell phones, iPods, televisions, computers, the list goes on. They are all luxuries.

Spare a dime

continued on page 10

New venue for Fine Arts Assembly deserves applause

■ EMMALIE COX & LEXI WELP

Staff Reporters

Last school year students congregated in the Main Gym for the Fine Arts Assembly, crawling and squeezing their way through the nearly 1,600 other students to find their seats. Once seated, students continued to converse and socialize. This disruptive behavior continued even after the performances started.

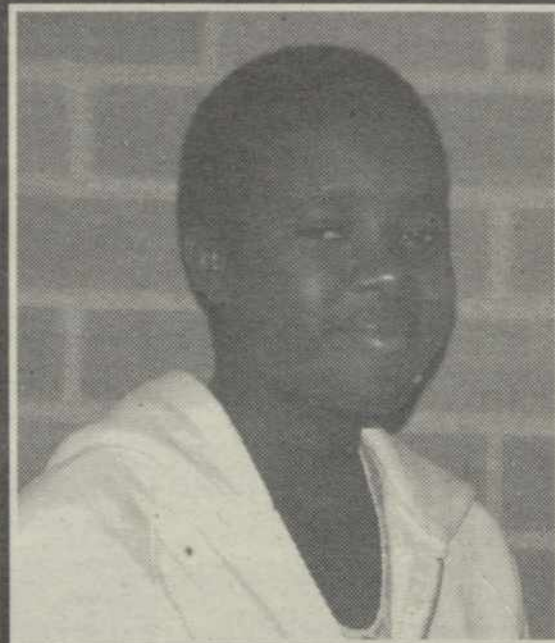
Fine Arts Department teachers felt that the gym wasn't conducive to this type of assembly and suggested that from now it be held in the Auditorium. Numerous issues led to this decision. With seating on both sides of the gym, it was more difficult to keep the attention

of the entire audience. The performances weren't planned to be facing multiple directions, and most often were facing only the junior and senior audience, leaving the sophomores and freshmen feeling left out. Another problem was the unavoidably faulty microphone system that causes even those who are paying attention to lose interest in the hard work of the performers.

By not giving their full attention to the performers, students are not being respectful. The casual environment of the gym contributes to the audience's unfocused behavior.

Fine Arts Assembly

continued on page 8

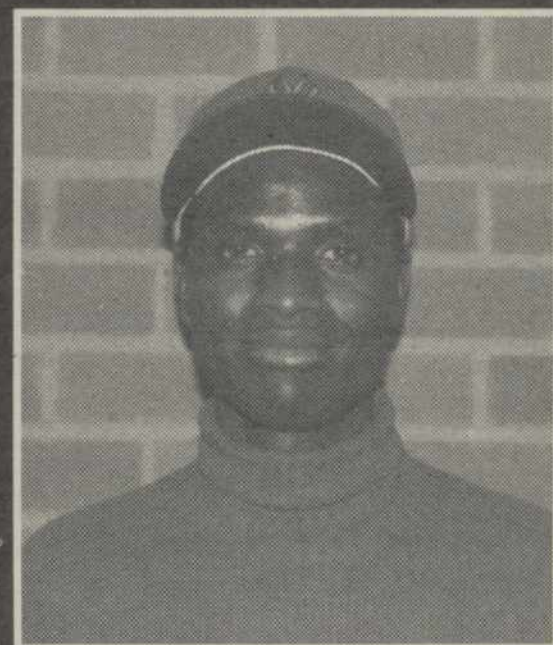


"The education here is easier and less complex than in Kenya."

— Irene Wanyonyi, junior

"Technology and the climate are the biggest differences though the spirit here is very welcoming and friendly."

— Geoffrey Amunga, junior



Kenyans SPEAK OUT

What is the biggest difference between Kenya and West Linn?

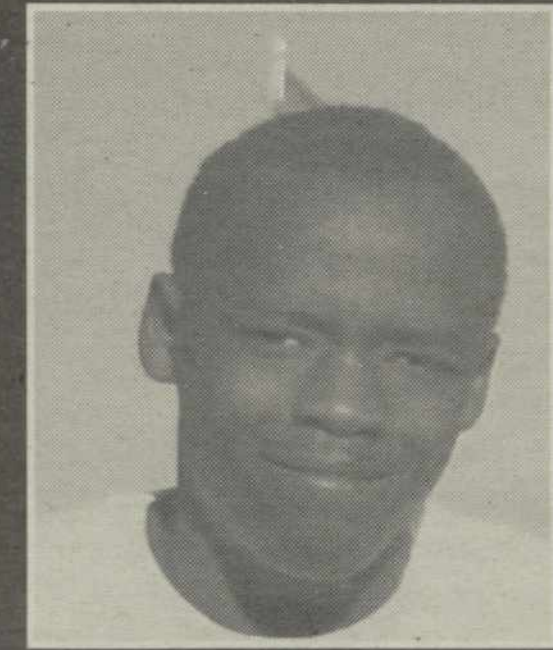


"The lifestyle and guys. They all have vehicles and they're more prestigious."

— Daisy Nafula, senior

"The weather is very different and much colder."

— Edwin Kemei, junior



Photos by Calley Lathrop