

Forum

Military recruiting tactics take advantage of students

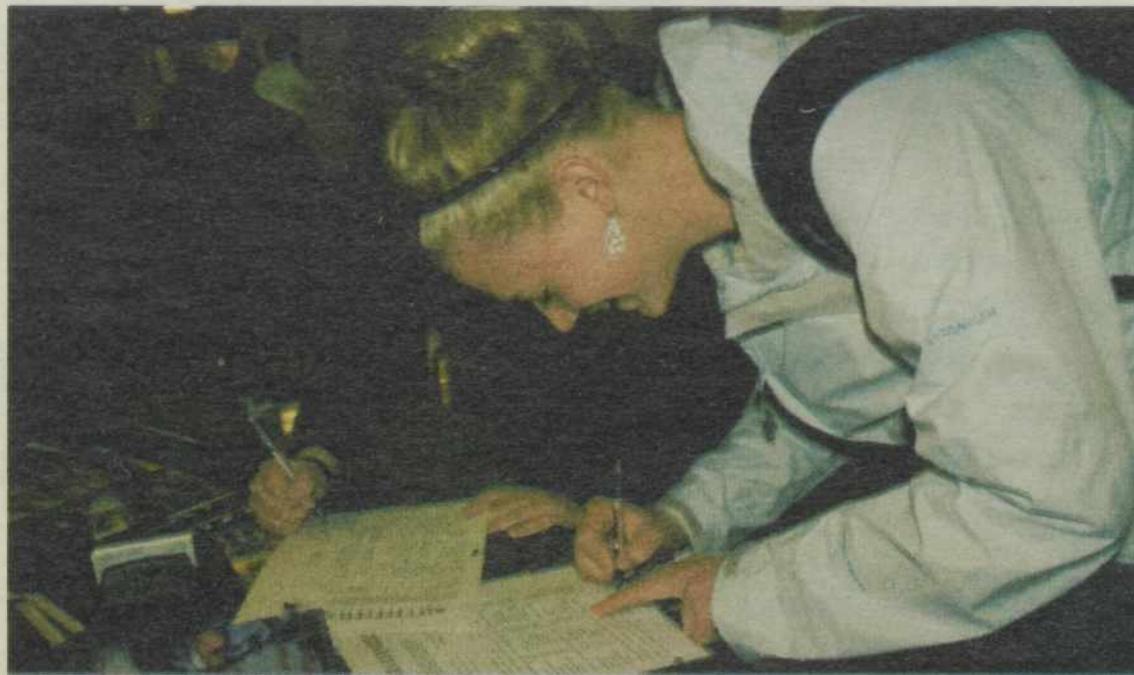
CALLEY LATHROP

Staff Reporter

The war machine that our military has turned into since 2001 is starving and, as a result, is wasting away. Students, or should I say potential recruits, have been privy to the bloodshed in the middle east and have probably heard that soldiers are having to endure multiple tours of duty. This has caused many to rule out the military as an option. But because of legislation like the "No Child Left behind Act," recruiters are obtaining more and more personal information about us and using aggressive and often inappropriate tactics in their efforts.

The No Child Left Behind Act created in 2001, set new standards and regulations for public schools. Section 9528 specifically allows "military recruiters access to secondary school students names, addresses, and telephone listings." If a school does not agree to this, it will lose all federal funding. The act was supposedly created to help raise education standards, but where does giving more information to recruiters improve the education of our country's youth?

A student's parents can ask that their child's records be withheld, but only after writing a letter to the school asking to opt out. At West Linn, contact and information sheets are mailed home each year. In the lower corner, parents can check a box stating that recruiters cannot have their child's personal information. If access to personal information such as your



Betsy Luehrs, junior, fills out a questionnaire for the U.S. Navy. Navy recruiters visit WLHS several times per month to talk with interested students.
Photo by Calley Lathrop

phone number and address isn't enough, the Army, Navy and Marines have also been given the right to blanket our school with self-promoting merchandise such as calendars, book covers and pencils. It is as if they are trying to incorporate the armed forces into every and any aspect of high-school life that they can.

Another issue with recruiting in schools is the fact that the armed forces break a crucial rule that schools have regarding discrimination. Schools

are supposed to be places where race, religion, creed and sexuality do not affect students' chances of joining a program or participating in an activity. The fact that the military does not allow homosexual or bisexuals among its membership classifies them as a discriminatory group, and public schools prohibit discrimination of any kind.

Don't get me wrong, military service is a great option for post graduation, and is one that I have considered. The benefits are

great; your college tuition is paid for, you enjoy full health care, you'll be very physically fit and there's no chance of your job being outsourced (yet). All of these are very necessary in today's recessive America. However, students should not feel pressure from recruiters to join the military when, in reality, they will most likely become just another bit of fodder to feed the failing fight.

Several weeks ago, I received a letter from the U.S. Army in the mail, just like the pamphlets and brochures that colleges send to sophomores, juniors and seniors. Inside were several brochures, as well as a booklet and, surprisingly, a CD. I opened it up, and found a video game entitled, "Special Forces Ops [operations]." On the cover was a crouching soldier, a gun on his shoulder, poised and ready to fire upon someone or something in an all-too middle-eastern environment. A label on the cover read, "The Army's Official Video Game." Since when is joining

the military only about shooting people? Yes, video games act as simulations for soldiers in training, but potential recruits, aka teenagers, should not be exposed to something so unrealistic representative of normal military life, or taken advantage of for their curiosity and, for some, their attraction to violence.

Don't fall under any spells that the armed forces try to cast upon you. War is not a game, especially a video game! Joining any branch of service is very honorable, however, these new recruiting tactics are a horrible invasion of privacy. Don't want recruiters to have your information? Ask your parents to check the box that takes you off the list of students names, addresses and phone numbers.

The military is mysterious to many of us, so recruiters visiting to provide information to interested students is a very good thing. However, these charades and lies are just a facade that these "hungry" forces hide behind, and it needs to stop.

New forecasting system has its pros, cons

ADAM HOLMES

Staff Reporter

During the week of April 15-18, freshmen, sophomores and juniors took part in a necessary evil. It is a process that many consider stressful, but one that is very important to determine the "course" of the following year. I am, of course, talking about forecasting. My experience with this process in the past

has never been extremely horrible, but I'm not going to lie—I get a tad stressed when that time of year rolls around.

I appreciate that our school gives us the opportunity to choose what classes we can take, and that the students are able to talk face-to-face with their counselors if a problem occurs. This year a new factor was added to forecasting which caught some by surprise—technology.

This new system had its up and downs. On the one hand, it was environmentally efficient and productive. Instead of printing off approximately 6,200 sheets of paper, not counting the paper that the adults had to us, it was completed online.

The computers use a better organizational system for deciding which classes a person will take and instead of just listing the names of which classes are available the next year, a paragraph-long description of each class was provided. It detailed what students would do in the class, what grade level is required to enroll, and if there was an associated cost for it.

On the other hand, the computer system seemed a bit flawed this year. A few times, there were little glitches in the system that hampered the organizational function. Also, I didn't like how there was



such a long process for taking off pre-assigned classes, and how administrators had to do it themselves instead of letting the students do it. I understand that there are certain measures that the school has to go through to ensure students meet requirements, but still, it would be easier to have that ability. Finally, maybe it's just me, but the new forecasting system takes away the time that could be spent talking with different counselors and receiving life advice from them. That is one thing that a machine cannot accomplish.

The computer system for

forecasting has potential. It really is a good idea to cut down on paper and switch to computers for greater organization and efficiency. However, the system needs to be revised. First, fix all the little glitches that plagued the process this year. Second, don't rely so heavily upon computers for the whole process. Believe it or not, sometimes good things shouldn't be changed. Students still want to consult with their counselors and ask questions of experienced individuals.

I believe that the time spent on the computers at school should instead be spent with different counselors, so that the social interaction is achieved. Leave the computer portion for when students are at home.

By changing our forecasting system, our school is showing that we not only care about the environment, but we care about making forecasting as easy as possible for students. The thing is, there also needs to be a balance between electronics and social contact. If we can find that, then perhaps forecasting will no longer be considered a stressful process.

Amplifier

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