

ASB: is it *still* popularity contest?

ADAM HOLMES

Staff Reporter

In April, students gathered in different areas of the school to watch as sophomores and juniors explained why they should be elected to the most prestigious form of student government that exists at our school: Associated Student Body officers, otherwise known as ASB.

Just thinking about ASB makes me chuckle, as I flash back to my freshman year and remember the video promotions were quite random. For those who saw it, who can forget Isaac Cohen riding around on his bike in the skate park, or Katie Fogle pushing herself down the stairs in a recycling bin? Most of the election videos didn't feature anything that told what the candidates stood for. Fortunately, the format changed the next year, ensuring candidates actually gave speeches that were related to what the candidates stood for. This was a huge improvement, giving voters information about which candidate is competent enough for the job.

Fast forward to this past April. This year, the candidates improved their

speeches and presentations. The students were much more knowledgeable about the issues at hand. For instance, candidate Samantha Hanlin, junior, was not only an excellent speaker, but she highlighted her experience for the leadership role required. She also seemed to understand what issues need to be focused on and what is important to the students. And it wasn't just her, but many of the ASB candidates. However, as another ASB election passes by, I can't help but notice that once again, this whole process has the same thing in common every year: it's a popularity contest.

Don't get me wrong, I felt that a lot of the candidates this year were very qualified for the jobs, specifically that they have taken the Leadership classes and are well-rounded and social individuals. I think these are the most important aspects. However, this year was no different than previous years in that all of the candidates were well-known and quite popular around school. This is the same thing that happens every year; popularity wins.

We always have students from the same group run for ASB, and they always have similar backgrounds

to the students who ran the previous year. Granted, many of the applicants have experience in student government and overall school participation, but then there are others who simply are voted for because they have a lot of friends, or their speech was the funniest. Not to be cynical, but I think this could be preparing us for the real world in politics. Usually, in the real-world political race, the "average Joe" contender will fall under the pressure from the rich candidates that have deep roots in politics. It's not exactly fair, but the argument against experience is getting old. How does the average American gain experience for a job in the White House? It's the system we have, and if you're not alright with it, than do something about it.

Next year, during the ASB elections, encourage students to vote for candidates who will really show leadership in the school, not just friends or comedians. That's why the ballots don't ask for your name, so you can vote anonymously. Don't stick with the students who have the most recognizable face, go with the students who can get the job done. Then, ASB will function at its highest potential and really work for you.

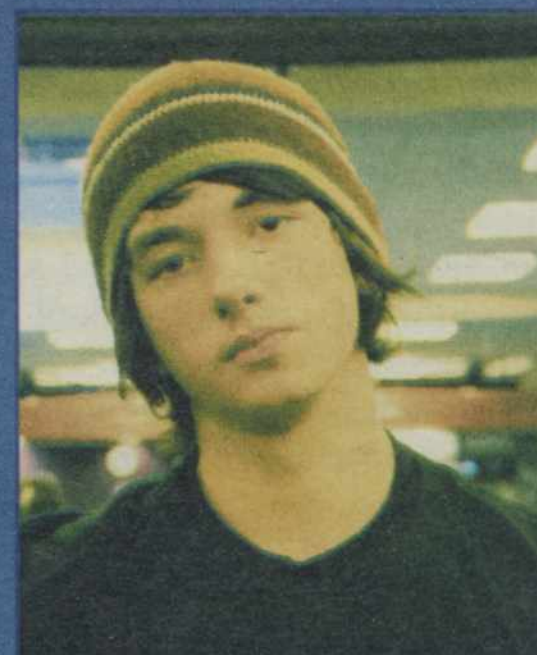


"It makes it easier for kids to select classes. You can click on a link next to the class and see the course description; which makes choosing courses easier."

—Angie Hammond, IT Specialist

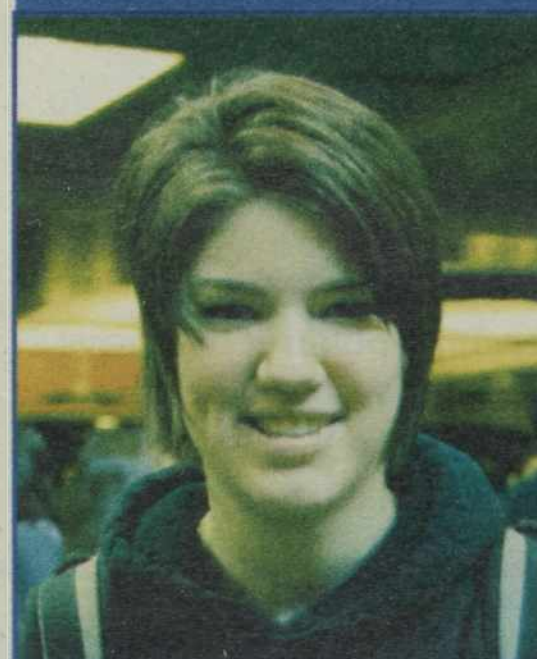
"You're wasting time. It would be twice as fast if you could just mark the classes on a piece of paper."

—Darryl Montpart, freshman



STUDENTS & STAFF SPEAK OUT

How do you feel about the new on-line forecasting system?



"I think it's a good idea, but it might not work out as they planned. I think only responsible students will complete it."

—Alexis Welp, sophomore

"I think that it's good that they're finding different ways of doing it. They're saving trees and helping to make our school green."

—Gordon Werrett, junior



Inconsistent cell phone policies cause conflicts

JENNIFER SITTON

Staff Reporter

Teachers need to be consistent about enforcing cell phone policies. Inconsistency breeds frustration.

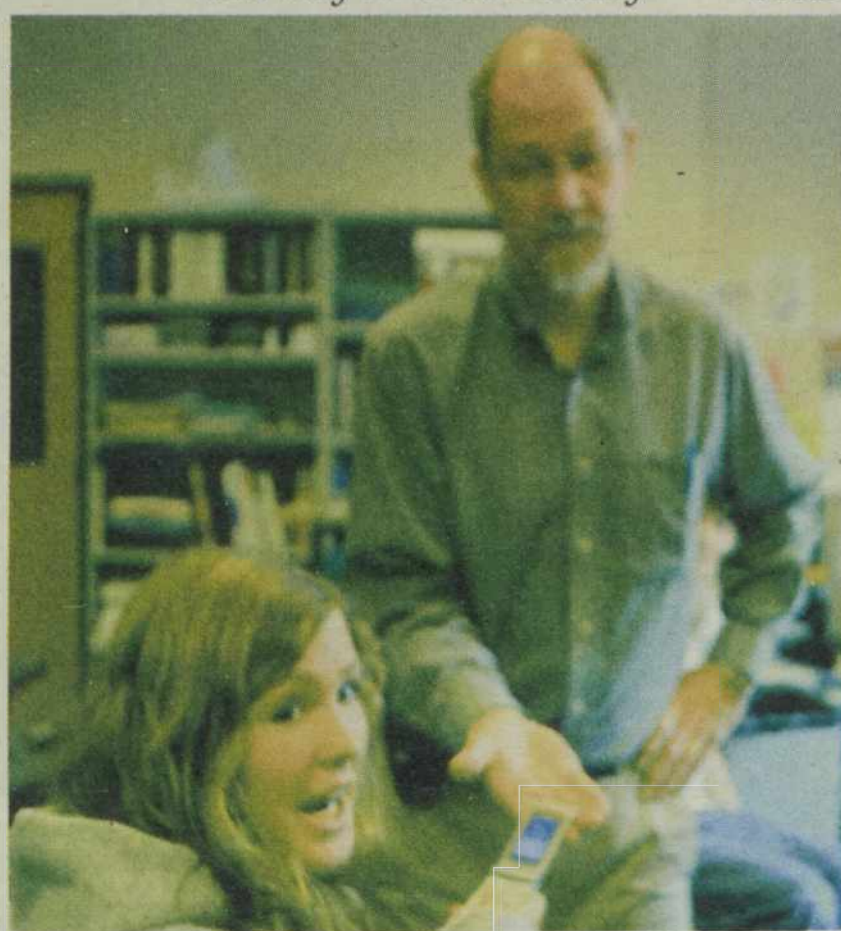
Even though most teachers clearly outline their policies at the beginning of the school year, much of the time they don't follow their own policy. There is no consistency between teachers. Some teachers will immediately take your phone away, some will simply give you a warning, and some will pretend they didn't even notice it.

This needs to change. I am not condoning cell phone use during classes, nor am I wishing for my phone to be taken away; I simply want the policies to be consistent.

Cell phones are clearly a distraction when used during class. This is addressed in the student handbook. Under personal electronic devices (which includes cell phones) it states:

students are discouraged from bringing personal electronic devices to school. They are forbidden to be

turned on during class time. If they are found to be turned on during class they will be confiscated and may be returned only



Gary Eppelsheimer, photography teacher, confiscates freshman Claire Offer's cell phone in a pre-arranged demonstration. Many teachers take phones if they are caught with the during class, but policies are not consistently enforced. Photo by Calley Lathrop

to a parent/guardian from a school administrator. WLHS is not responsible for a student's personal electronic device if it is damaged or stolen while here at school.

Most students would say that they have their phones on during class. Yes, it is most likely on silent or vibrate, but it is on nonetheless. These same students would most

likely say that their phone has never been confiscated unless it has gone off in class or they have been caught texting during class. Most would probably say that a parent has never had to come to school to retrieve their phone.

This leads one to wonder, if teachers don't follow the school cell phone policy, how do they keep classroom cell phone use under control?

Many teachers have created their own cell phone policies. Some teachers follow the school cell phone policy, confiscating cell phones the first time. Sometimes students can receive their cell phones back at the end of the period, while others must wait until the end of the day to retrieve theirs. Many teachers will give their students one or two warnings to put their phones away.

I have no problem with teachers that are consistent, but when they don't mind cell phones one day and the next they confiscate them, something needs to change.

Cell policy conundrum

continued on page 7