

Survivor grabs interest but shows room for improvement

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Dimly lit torches, a dark mysterious room and challenges around every corner pitted senior against senior as ten contestants fought for the ultimate prize: an iPad. Survivor became a fun part of the daily routine in West Linn High School for one week in February. For many students it might have been glamorous and entertaining, but for others, it was not.

I want to acknowledge that ASB did a really great job putting the event together. It was well organized and well executed. ASB planned the event with the goal of raising school spirit and it seemed to be one of the most popular events held this year.

"It was pretty risky to do this because it hasn't been done before," Gracie Myers, senior ASB president, said. "But it ended up going really well. A lot more work went into it than we expected. We started planning it in June and all of the different aspects such as food or challenges were headed by a different person on ASB."

However, Survivor only involved ten contestants, while other students were unable to directly participate. People like me, who didn't know the participants or didn't really have a vested interest in the event, were kind of left out of the equation.

"I thought it could have been a lot better. They could have made it more

realistic and entertaining. I'm sure it was fun for the contestants, but it wasn't

people would have more than one chance to participate, making the

a play, or hosting a public debate. There could also be challenges which focus on



Photo by Julie Olson

Taylor Rose, Sharon Shin, Baxter Wilhelmi, Rachel Nelson and Natalie Smith, seniors, line up to throw darts for a Survivor challenge while onlooking students anticipate the action. Students camped out in the school while completing challenges to win an iPad over the course of one week in February.

really fun watching," Katee Gillham, sophomore, said.

Only seniors could be contestants. Students from every grade need to have an equal opportunity to participate in something like this. No grade is superior to another, so why shouldn't the other grades have an equal opportunity at participation?

At the very least, juniors should be given the opportunity to participate as contestants. Some students felt unequally represented or left out. If we need to have some fun, there needs to be a more inclusive way to accomplish it. If Survivor was open to other grades,

event a little bit more equitable.

I'll admit that some of the younger students might not be mature enough to stay in school for a week. However, it's fair to say that there are a number of freshmen who don't fit into that group. I might suggest that the interviewing process be a means of determining whether or not someone is mature enough to participate.

As a school event, it would be nice if it had something to do with education or gave students an opportunity to share their skills with their school such as staging

knowledge and education, such as a scavenger hunt leading to historical books in the library, or a riddle that leads to something having to do with school history.

Survivor teaches us values, but maybe not the right kind of values. The contestants had an incentive to undermine and team up on other contestants. Is "survival of the fittest" the kind of message we should embrace as a school?

"I thought it was the best week of school in my life," Baxter Wilhelmi, a contestant, said. According to Wilhelmi, there weren't hard feelings at the end of the week.

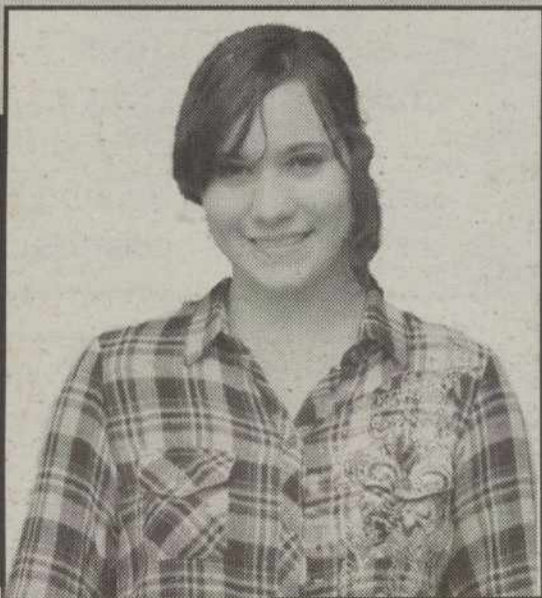
Although the event was fun for some, we have the opportunity to make Survivor better, or go in a different direction all together. Survivor had some fan support, and some benefits, and if Survivor is to return, it should come back with some improvements.

ASB is discussing possible changes to the event for next year to involve more students. One idea they discussed is to assign groups of people to root for a contestant or implement a system where students could text in to vote for an MVP of the day. They have also thought about more ways to incorporate students into daytime challenges or inviting them to attend challenges after school. They are open to any suggestions any students are willing to offer.

Survivor was something new. Experimenting with new kinds of events is good, but it needs to be looked at carefully, opening it up to discussion and student input. Sending a poll to students, asking them specific questions about what they thought of it and how it might be improved would be a good start.

STUDENTS speak out

What can the school do to involve more students in school activities?



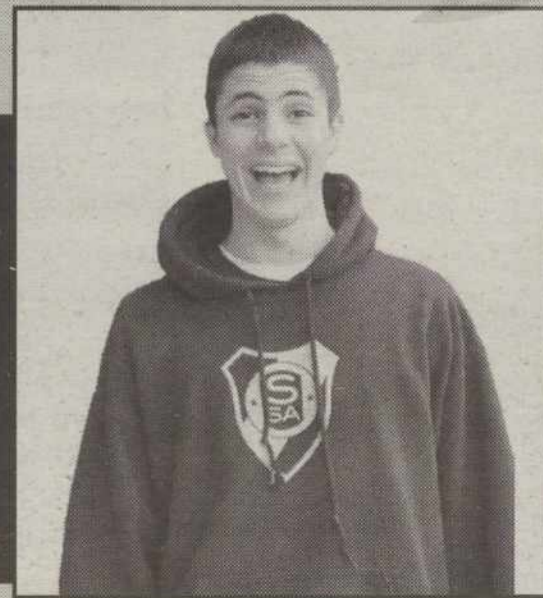
"I think that we should make school activities more group oriented. Older students should have the advantage so the younger students have something to look forward to."

—Maria Myre, freshman



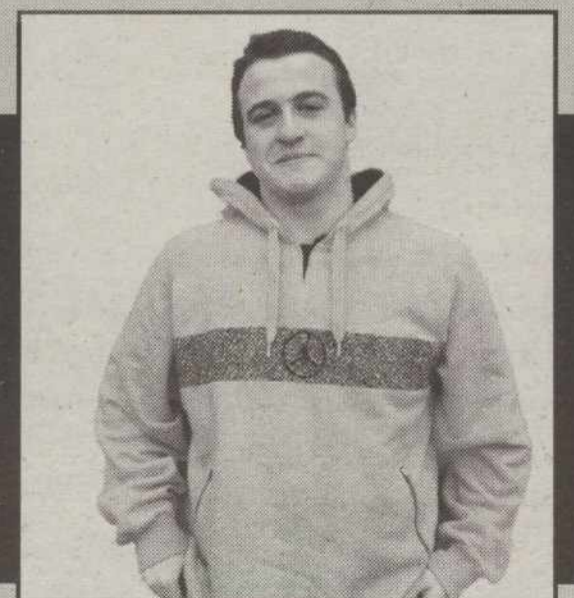
"There should be more activities at lunch and more awareness of the activities that are offered here."

—Katherine Stubblefield, sophomore



"Provide incentives for kids to participate in school activities and give the impressions that more students can be involved."

—Nour Alharithi, junior



"They should have more interesting school-run activities other than sporting events."

—Christopher Jonsson, senior