

Older generations can provide beneficial differences

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"When I was your age..." That's the phrase some parents use to prove a point, whether it's about grounding you from your phone or scolding you about watching too much television. As a teenager, you may roll your eyes and scoff. The stories can be interesting, but most of the time, it sounds like our parents didn't have any fun. Let's face it, most of us have been a part of this conversation at least once in our lives.

Obviously enough, "back in the days" was much different than now. Over the years, technology has

evolved—for example, no cellphones to bulky cellphones to smart phones. Benefits of this technology include easier access to information and faster communication. It has transformed the way we watch movies and read books (Kindle, eReader, Nook).

But, what happened to the days when "hanging out" meant going to the park or socializing with friends? Nowadays, it's killing enemies in "Call of Duty" or shopping at the mall. Back then, we had chess and tic-tac-toe, now we have

phones and iPods. Communication between friends used to mean letters and postcards, and now it's just a chain of text messages sent with the push of a button.

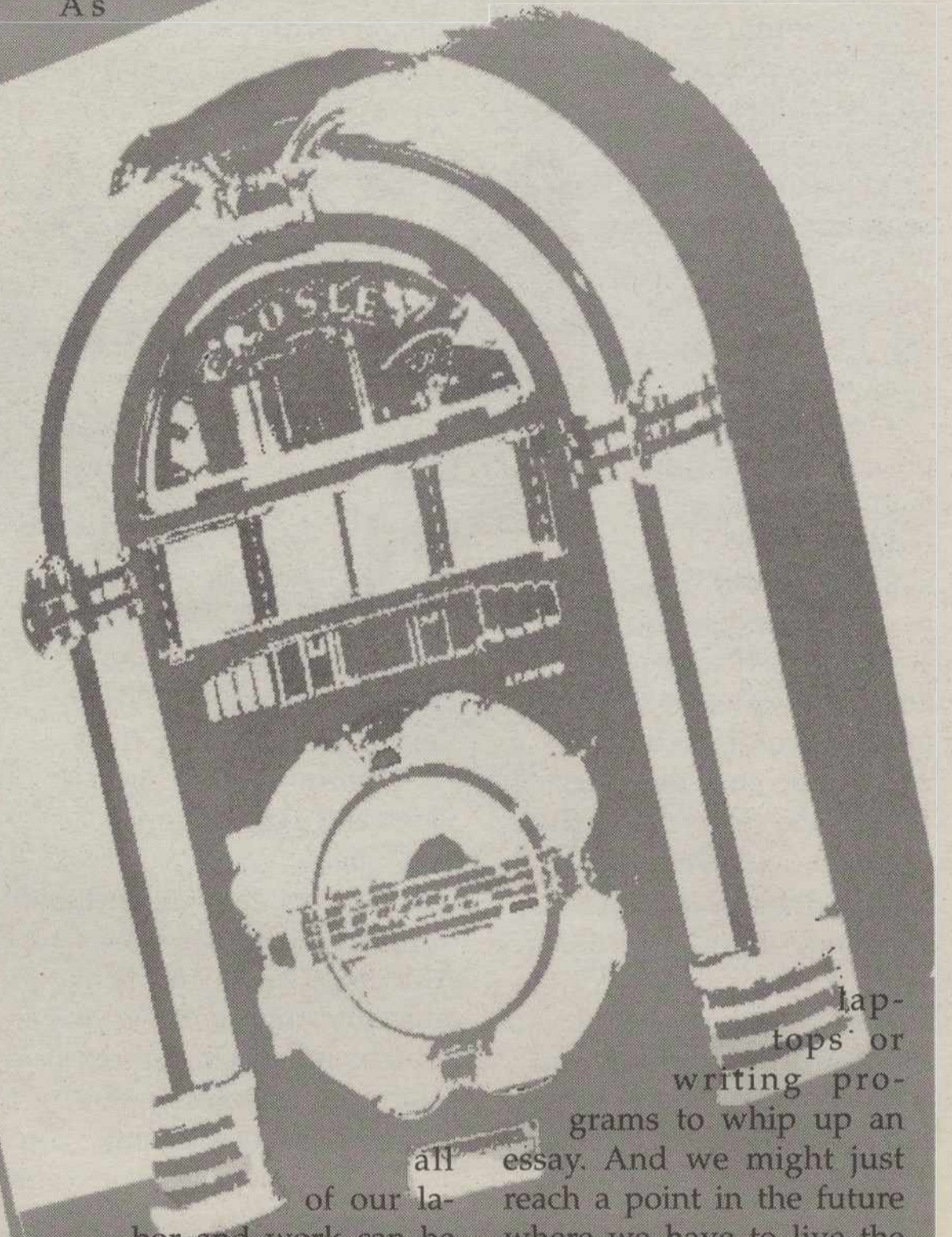
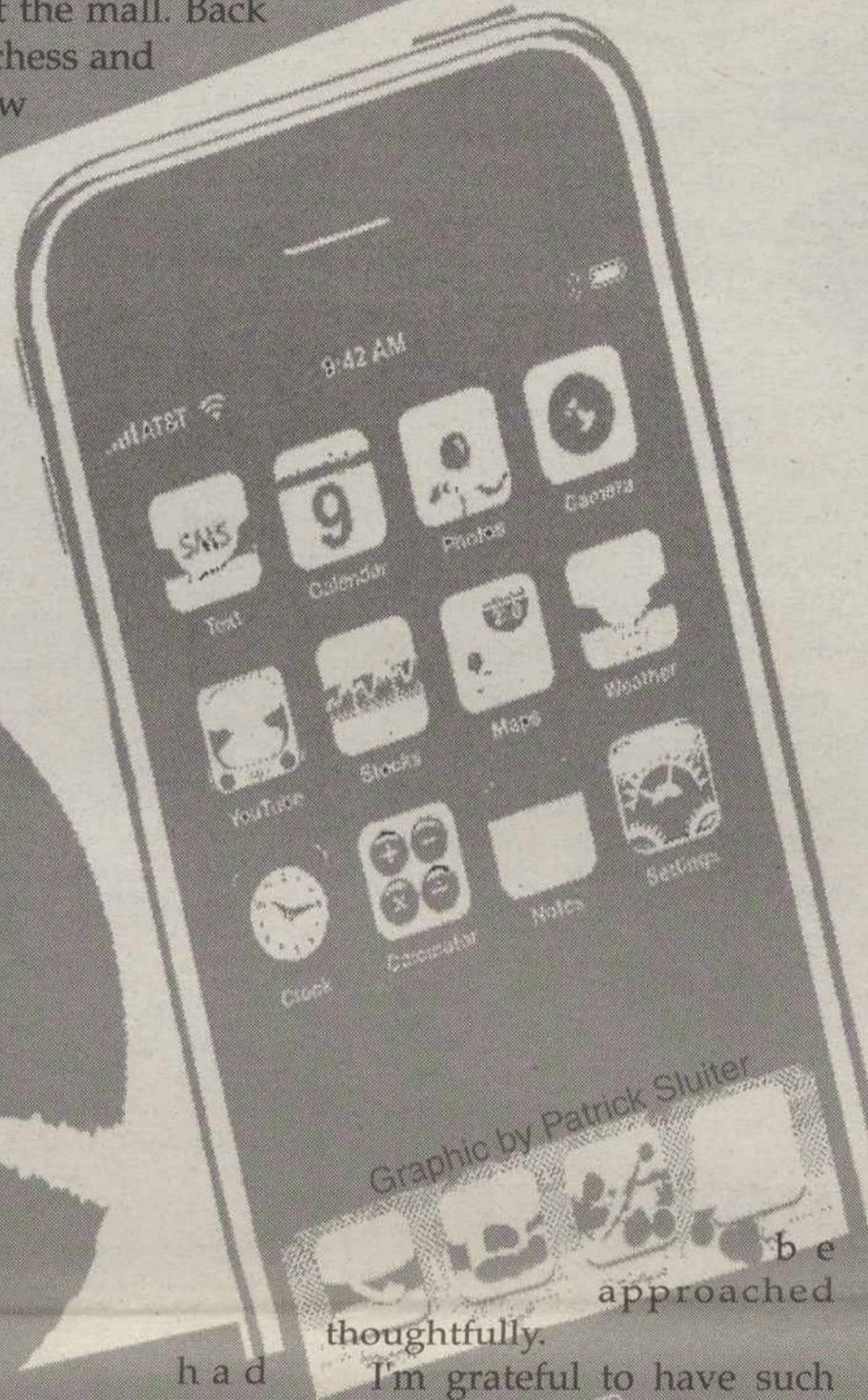
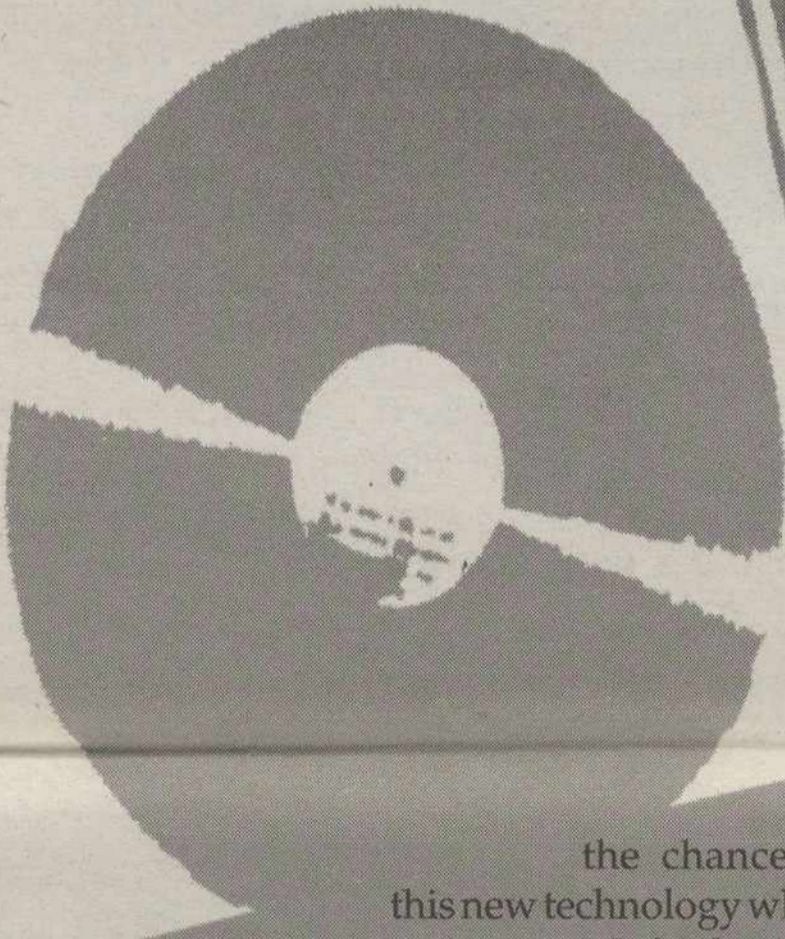
When our parents and grandparents were teenagers, they had planned ahead if they wanted to meet. They didn't have technology to distract them, and that

is something we can learn from.

Instead of being constantly plugged in to technology, there was a slower pace to life; being able to spend time with the family or pass the time together—in person and undistracted.

As

teenagers, we often take technology for granted. Parents and grandparents



might see it as something else that's just complicated to understand. One may sympathize and feel sorry that the previous generations never

had the chance to use this new technology when they were teens. I think it's such a privilege to be able to utilize such high-tech gadgets to entertain, communicate, or educate ourselves with, but it needs to

be approached thoughtfully.

I'm grateful to have such accessibility to the newest technology. But thinking about how my parents and grandparents grew up doing certain tasks makes me wonder if we—the "now" generation—are as fortunate as we may think. Almost

all of our labor and work can be aided or finished by some sort of technology whether it be calculators or the newest laptop model.

Imagine what would happen if everything technically managed failed. It seems highly unlikely, but it's not impossible. Would we have to rely on brains and pencils? Our parents and grandparents didn't have

laptops or writing programs to whip up an essay. And we might just reach a point in the future where we have to live the same way.

Technology continues to evolve. Being a teen in this generation means being thankful for the machines we have. So the next time your parents start the same conversation, listen to them; chances are it'll probably be a good historical lesson for you.

Budget restrictions limit number of vocational opportunities necessary for life skills

Vocational classes

continued from page 3

"Those are all very expensive programs. And they're difficult to fund," Bailey said. "We need to do a better job

with internships, work experience and other vocational training. I don't think we've explored all of our options, and that's the march I want to go down with our counseling staff."

One possible solution suggested by Bailey was a half school day for students who would be interested in vocational training. In this type of format, a student would be able to take regular classes for half of the day at the high school, and then go off campus to a different site for specific training.

These types of classes are essential to the growth of imperative life skills in all high school students. With places like Clackamas and Portland Community College offering job training and transitional programs, this may be the solution that many students are looking for.

The bottom line is that with current budgetary issues within the district, WLHS is stuck between a rock and a hard place trying to sustain every student's needs. But until these classes are included in the schedule of WLHS, many students are left asking: where do we turn?

Streetcars have little benefit to West Linn

Public transportation

continued from page 3

The city is already struggling with budget cuts and funding the streetcar project will make that even worse. If there is a streetcar, Metro taxes would be slightly higher each month, even though we already pay an average of \$24 in Metro taxes each month. Having to go to Lake Oswego to catch the streetcar could also lead to more traffic on Highway B than there is currently.

There are two alternative options for West Linn which could actually ben-

efit the city. The first option is not to build the streetcar to Lake Oswego. Instead TriMet could improve its system in our city. The other option is a high speed bus. Either of these would be a lot more beneficial to the city's budget and its people.

The not build option would be the best one for West Linn. West Linn riders would only have to make the one transfer with this option and maybe TriMet could improve its service. We should refrain from funding a streetcar for now.



Photo by Laurel Massaro
A student in Mylan Rakich's Introduction to Welding class watches sparks fly while welding April 22 at Clackamas Community College. In the past few years, schools like CCC and PCC have begun offering more specialized training classes similar to welding.