



The Hatchet

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Mom finds treatment for junior's uncommon disease

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Veronica Bonfiglio, junior Brent Bonfiglio's mother, has possibly found a treatment for her son's disease, neurodegeneration with brain iron accumulation (NBIA). There supposedly is no known cure for this disease, and most drugs cannot improve the condition because they cannot cross the blood brain barrier and remove the excess iron from the brain. Any other drugs would deprive the body of necessary iron and cause patients to become anemic. The drug Veronica found, Deferiprone, can cross the blood brain barrier.

According to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, NBIA is a "rare, inherited, neurological movement disorder characterized by progressive degeneration of the nervous system." Some of the symptoms include involuntary muscle contractions and an inability to coordinate movements. These symptoms

See NBIA, page 4

CHSPE: *Why don't we know about it?* Information about CHSPE not readily available to students

NICOLE PHAM
Online Editor-in-Chief

Those dissatisfied with the school system can leave early by taking the California High School Proficiency Examination (CHSPE), but few Washington students know about it.

Most students know they can drop out, complete independent study or attend an alternative school, such as Robertson. Some students learn about the CHSPE through word of mouth, but the school has not communicated this option to all juniors and seniors.

According to state law, high school principals are required to distribute an announcement

explaining the CHSPE to each student in grades 11 and 12. The superintendent is responsible for informing the principals.

Students who pass CHSPE earn the legal equivalent of a high school diploma by obtaining a Certificate of Proficiency, even without the required units for graduation. Those interested must be between 16 and 18 years old. The exam includes math and English language arts sections. Taking and passing CHSPE, however, does not necessarily require a student to leave high school.

"I believe students should be made aware of this option by school staff," superintendant

Milt Werner said, in an email.

Principal Linda Fernandez relies on career technician Michelene Wittmer and school counselors Carol Brahmst, Britny Stewart and Carrie Merfeld to relay information about CHSPE to students.

In her eight years as a counselor, Stewart knows of two students who took the test.

"For most people, it's not the alternative they want to take," Stewart said. "They don't want a full exit."

English teacher Teri Hu prepared "How Would You Like to Finish High School Early?," a presentation about CHSPE, at a Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) meeting Dec. 7.

"It is not up to counselors, teachers or administrators to determine if a student would possibly want to take CHSPE," Hu said.

"At most, maybe a dozen or so kids will take it, but that will be a dozen kids who would otherwise be miserable in high school."

The test is administered three times a year: March, June and November. Though the March 21 test date passed, those interested can apply for the June 19 test by May 21.

The fee is \$92 for regular registration, \$120 for late registration and \$145 for special registration. Results are mailed July 23.

Fast facts

INFORMATION FROM
chspe.net

- CHSPE stands for California High School Proficiency Exam.
- It differs from the General Education Development (GED) test and California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE).
- Passing the exam is equivalent to having a high school diploma.
- You must be at least 16 years old or enrolled in the tenth grade for one school year or longer.
- The test consists of a math and language arts section.

ASB decorates school campus with flowers and walkway

Seniors Paul Sun and Ben Rich decorate the school by placing a brick walkway in the mud. Students aren't supposed to step into the dirt and kill the plants, so ASB decided to prevent this by building the walkway.

Photo by
KAYLEE MIU



ALEX TYLER
Opinions Editor

ASB members redistributed large planters filled with an assortment of wildflowers around campus over the past few weeks.

The students put in a brick pathway outside of the E-building, and they also trimmed plants around school, with student activities director Helen Paris wielding an electric edger.

These efforts are appreciated, but some students feel the money should go to school improvements, such as new books and bathroom

locks. However, ASB isn't authorized to use student funds on such items.

Senior John Rasure said although the improvements are helpful "they should have done this a long time ago, at this point the money could be better spent elsewhere."

Paris thought of the idea to move the planters from their original position near the E-building because she thought that students were not noticing them. So ASB moved the planters to more noticeable areas, and work during fourth period to water the new flowers and make sure the additions maintain

their beauty.

Junior Julian Malard, president of the New Leaf Club, said their club submitted a plan to ASB to place plants around school throughout the year, but then ASB moved ahead with this project separately.

"I first was a bit disappointed because I wanted our club to do the planting," Malard said.

However, ASB agreed with the New Leaf Club to continue adding flowers, trees and other plants around the school with the help of the club. They will plant to celebrate Earth Day, April 22.



Bandapalooza
returns to WHS

A&E, page 5



Student juggles



baby with softball

Sports, page 6