

THE HILITES

JAN. 31, 2008

COURSE REGISTRATION: Managing the shift to semester length classes

By Kristy Collazo, 11

"I love coming back to school because I get to see everybody."

"Me too. I hate the homework though."

"So, how was your summer?"

This conversation rounds the halls for at least the first month of school. After students finally settle in, they realize some of the changes that have taken place in their schedules and classrooms. One change that will spark reactions among students is the expansion of semester courses.

It took five years for this idea to go from a written proposal to a soon-to-be reality in student schedules.

Dr. Jack Denny, the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, worked with the Curriculum Advisory Council (CAC), a group of teachers from different departments who review and deliberate on a variety of curriculum issues, to encourage the shift. Ultimately, the Board of Education, approved the course adjustment, which will see that most courses at Leyden are offered in semester-long rather than year-long increments.

Even though we're a few months away from offering a more extensive series of semester courses, it's important for the student body to know how this will impact them. Dr. Denny thinks highly of semester courses. As an administrator, he wants to offer students a chance to get the

most out of Leyden. He saw that semester courses will help do that by opening up students' schedules. Junior Amy Podgor also sees these courses as a positive change. They both believe that semester courses add a multitude of class options for students to sign up for. Therefore, as juniors and seniors, when students have more room in their schedules, they will be able to take many different and, possibly, new classes.

However, semester courses also bring a string of prerequisites to accompany those electives. Dr. Denny suggested that, along with the other changes, several electives require introductory courses next year. For example, Culinary Basics will precede Pastry Chef and Management as part of the culinary sequence within the Family and Consumer Science department. This may make it difficult to fit courses into schedules, but they will help students better understand the material and perfect the skills they learn in those classes.

A more frustrating consequence of semester courses is that they will increase the likelihood of having a different teacher every semester. Some students, like Podgor, think that switching teachers so much within the year causes problems. For instance, they put a halt to student-teacher relationships within the classroom. Podgor stated, "At the beginning of the year, it takes students and teachers [a while] to get used to each other, and if students change at the semester, they have to do

it all over again." I'm sure many students understand Podgor's concern. Teachers will struggle with half-hearted student relationships as well. Because many of their students will change at the semester, teachers may not get the chance to see their students' full potential. With only a few major assignments contributing to a final grade, teachers might only get first impressions. Students will be judged by teachers based solely on the assignments that make the cut for first semester.

Semester courses are an inevitable change that may affect us more than we'd like. Yes, these courses mean taking more things into consideration when planning schedules, but without them, classes like Art Survey, an overview of two and three-dimensional art, Sports and Entertainment Marketing, a tutorial on marketing and management within the sports and entertainment industries, and Interior Decorating, an introduction to the world of HGTV, wouldn't be available for us. And yes, semester courses will only allow a brief relationship to prosper between teachers and students, but they make the ability to hone skills that you can use after high school possible.

Semester courses won't be the last change to affect East Leyden. For all students who do and will walk the halls at Leyden, Dr. Denny advises "be informed of all the course opportunities Leyden has to offer, work hard, and pick courses that you enjoy and can help you in the future."

Photos by Roman Arciniega

The annual talent show featured solo and team acts.

CHOICES, CHOICES

Elective teachers explain just a few of the options.

BUSINESS EDUCATION

WHY DO YOU THINK LEYDEN STUDENTS NEED ACCOUNTING?

"[PEOPLE NEED ACCOUNTING] BECAUSE EVERYTHING YOU DO FOR AND IN THE WORLD IS ABOUT BUSINESS."

- KIP PYGMAN

ART

WHAT DO STUDENTS ENJOY MOST ABOUT CERAMICS?

"THEY LIKE THAT THEY CAN PUT THEIR OWN SPIN/TWIST ON THEIR PROJECTS. I BELIEVE THAT EVERY STUDENT SHOULD TAKE AN ART CLASS BECAUSE AT A TIME IN YOUR LIFE WHEN EVERYONE AROUND YOU IS TRYING TO CHANGE YOU INTO SOMEONE ELSE, DOING ART WORK HELPS TO BRING YOU CLOSER TO WHO YOU REALLY ARE."

- BILL KRYPEL

MODERN LANGUAGE

WHY DO YOU THINK STUDENTS WOULD WANT TO TAKE A LANGUAGE?

"IF THEY TAKE A LANGUAGE, IT WILL HELP THEM GET A BETTER JOB AND COMMUNICATE WITH OTHERS. IT WILL ALSO LET THEM GET A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF OTHER CULTURES."

- CATHERINE O'ROURKE

MUSIC

WHAT ELECTIVE DO YOU WANT STUDENTS TO TAKE FROM YOUR DEPARTMENT NEXT YEAR AND WHY?

IT IS DIFFICULT TO CHOOSE ONLY ONE BECAUSE THE SAME VALUES AND OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS IN ALL OF OUR COURSES: BEING PART OF A SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZATION, LEARNING, ACHIEVING, PERFORMING QUALITY MUSIC, MAKING (LOTS OF) GREAT FRIENDSHIPS, AND TRAVEL/TOUR OPPORTUNITIES. THIS YEAR ALONE, OUR STUDENTS WILL BE SEEN BY OVER 350,000 PEOPLE (AND THAT'S JUST LIVE. IT DOES NOT INCLUDE SEVERAL APPEARANCES THAT HAVE RECEIVED TELEVISION COVERAGE) IN PLACES RANGING FROM LEYDEN, TO CEDAR POINT, DISNEY WORLD, AND EVEN EUROPE.

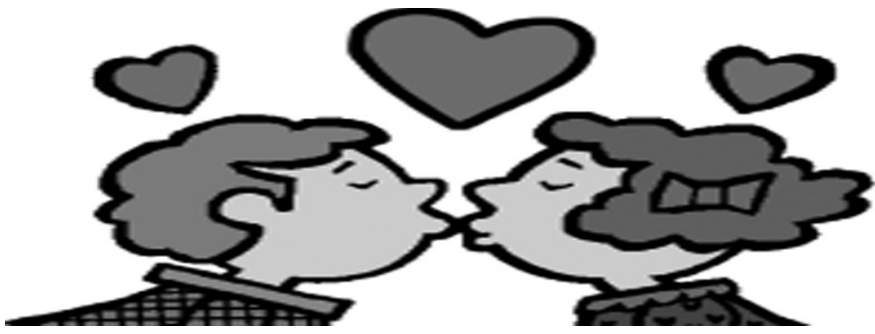
- BRYAN MILLER

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

WHAT DO STUDENTS ENJOY MOST ABOUT TASTE OF TEACHING, CHILD CARE, AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT? HOW HAVE STUDENTS RESPONDED TO THE CLASSES?

"IT GIVES THEM A TASTE OF WHAT THE REAL WORD IS LIKE AND WORKING WITH CHILDREN IN A SCHOOL SETTING. AWESOME, THEY LOVE IT. THEY WANT MORE CLASSES LIKE THEM."

- JULIE SHROEDER



DATING: YOUR PARENTS' OPINION MATTERS

By Melisa Osmanovic, 09

"How can a daughter like mine date a guy like him?" What do you do when your mother and father start asking this question? I have always ignored it and kept doing as I pleased. Then, not much later, I've regretted it. As soon as your parents find out about your relationship, they make judgments quickly. As teenagers, we look away and pay no attention to their words of advice. I've discovered that, maybe, we shouldn't ignore their thoughts.

Among the craziness in the hallways, I have seen girls and guys dating someone who any sane parent would disapprove of, which probably started the connection in the first place. Many girls have dated that "bad boy" and enjoyed seeing their parents look away in disgust. Then after that broken heart, we wish we had listened. You can't take back that relationship, but you can definitely listen to someone older and avoid many tears. This happens to boys as well—not necessarily with tears and broken heart but possibly with a broken ego and lost respect.

Many think that I, as a teenager, would believe that we shouldn't listen to our parents' wise words but instead should rebel and laugh away their disappointed looks. Whether they like it or not, most will see that generally older, more experienced people know better. It spares so much and makes everything a whole lot easier. They have experienced love and what feels like love many times, more than any student could ever imagine. I have experienced shattered relationships just because I didn't listen to my mom and dad, and so have many other teenagers. One guy I know dated a cheating girl even when his uncle told him she shouldn't be trusted. He regretted it, of course, and then continued to make similar mistakes. His unwillingness to listen to his uncle's advice has led to repeated wasteful relationships.

While I do highly recommend listening to the advice of your dad, mom, or grandma, etc., because it helps a great deal, it is also important to consider your own ideas about this person. At times, they might say, "Oh, I don't like his hair, break up with him" or "Wow, she isn't that bright, dump her." These are only small details about a person that could be overlooked for other greater qualities. If you're certain this is the case, explain to whoever disagrees why you care about your girlfriend or boyfriend. It is all quite simple. It is fine to disagree about this, but ultimately, parents' feedback can be helpful.

Even if your parents aren't approachable, finding anyone older is beneficial. It is difficult, especially for me, to listen to my parents' thoughts about everything. One of my close friends let her boyfriend hurt her emotionally and physically. I told her to leave him and she did, her mom told her to do so much earlier, and she paid no attention. I didn't understand. When it comes to relationships, your parents' thoughts matter more than ever. Yet, the listening ear of an older, wiser person will do.

Experiencing persistent break ups is just a waste of time. We, as teenagers have the tendency to think we're always right. And after making mistake after mistake, we still believe so. It is nearly impossible to persuade every student in East Leyden that, yes, your parents do know better. They have endured more, giving them more knowledge and useful advice. One thing I can do is show you that there are some teens who let one mistake reveal the truth. The truth is that when parents don't approve of your relationship, it shouldn't be set aside but instead heard and appreciated. If you're not capable of listening to your parents' advice to avoid heart ache, you may at least consider it to avoid their nagging complaints.

TEAR DOWN THE (SONIC) WALL

By Mindy Silva, 11

Everyone that has used the internet in school has come across the heart warming red and black screen that reads, "Web Site Blocked by SonicWALL Filter." But who is this infamous character they call SonicWALL? Why is he blocking all these websites, and what are his motives behind blocking these specific domains?

Companies such as SonicWALL are used at schools and in the workplace as content filters for the internet. They work by setting up a rating system that evaluates websites for appropriateness. If they aren't acceptable, they go on the list for all sites unacceptable. Keywords such as the obvious "sex" or "drugs" are put on lists that will automatically block the site. However, these lists can be edited by whoever purchased the software to either add words to it or allow words that are already on it.

Obviously, during school any website that isn't educational will not be allowed because it causes a distraction. But what about after school? Administrators may assume that students are bolting for the doors at 2:30, but there are always students found loitering in the hallways or using the computers in the library. This could be because they don't have access to a computer at home. Why can't these students browse the internet without content filters after educational hours just as their peers may be doing at home?

The internet is obviously a main source of communication among adolescents today. Teens are always on Myspace or Facebook socializing with friends. Blocking these websites at Leyden after school may exclude students from a growing fad among

their peers today. On the other hand, if the school provides this opportunity, it might actually be helping the social lives of its students.

It can even be argued that by allowing these websites to students after school, then students may make better or safer choices by asking friends or adults how to protect their identities.

Similarly, using the computer for online games should be a choice for students who just want to relax. Online games are harmless recreation for students with nothing to do.

It's mostly the SonicWALL Company that is responsible for the websites that are being blocked, but the administrators can choose to put websites on a list that will not be allowed through the system or that the SonicWALL Filter could have missed. Some websites that administrators at Leyden chose not to allow are ones such as Facebook, Myspace and most websites that provide online games. By filtering out sites, it makes more students prone to use sites that circumvent SonicWALL. This could be avoided if the sites were simply allowed after school.

But the major reason why Leyden should allow complete online access after school is because it's a government-funded institution. They are providing the computers to their students, yes, but they should not be allowed to restrict access to information because of it. They, as a government institution, should not censor information.

It makes sense for the school to block certain websites when it causes a distraction, but that doesn't apply when the school day is done.

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The *HiLites* is the official school newspaper of East Leyden High School. Its stories and other contents are developed by students as part of an extracurricular club under the supervision of English teachers Ms. Cheyenne Aguilar and Mr. John Rossi.

The ideas in the Opinions section do not necessarily represent the opinion of Leyden administration, faculty, or staff. Unsigned pieces represent the majority opinion of the newspaper staff. Signed columns represent the opinion of the individual writer.

All students are welcome to participate on the staff and are encouraged to do so. Students wishing to simply comment on the paper or issues affecting the school are invited to contribute a letter to the editor via email to jrossi@leyden212.org. All letters must be accompanied by the writer's name and phone number, but they may be published anonymously upon request.

HOCKEY CLUB REBOUNDS

Players hoping for fans, support

By Svyatoslav Nakonechny, 10

While media bombards you with an up-to-date coverage of the sports events that take place in the professional leagues and the announcements keep you informed about the school teams' progress, you probably never think about numerous local teams who compete against each other in your own neighborhood.

Meanwhile, in their returning season back after several years of a "leave of absence," the Eagles hockey team continues to show its best performance and skills in a league that includes one of the best and most experienced teams in Illinois. And similar to many high school hockey teams, they officially do not represent their school. Without being recognized by the Illinois High School Athletic Association or receiving any athletic funds, this club—that's its official title—continues to show an outstanding level of competition.

"I'm used to it," said team's coach Mike Niedziela. "Even the best teams like New Tier are clubs," he explained. With his great experience as both a University of Illinois hockey player as well as the coach of numerous teams in the Leyden community, Niedziela gathered a "well-fit" group of people that managed to defeat top ranking teams.

But it's not so simple. Behind the success lie many obstacles both players and the coaches have to overcome. "Hockey is one of the most expensive sports," said Niedziela. And it's not just the equipment but also renting fees for the arena where young hockey stars play. Niedziela is very optimistic about these issues even though he remembers numerous Eagles who stopped competing after several years of perform-



Photo courtesy of Michael Cronin

The Eagles continue to show a spectacular performance in their returning season.

ing in West suburban leagues. Niedziela recognizes that the school cannot provide financial support, but he would like students to see the team as their team. "What I really want is support from [the school] administration like banners or announcements," he concluded.

When it comes to the recognition, Leyden's Athletic Director Mr. Randy Conrad has a very simple answer for the dilemma. Even though he is the head of Leyden's athletics, the Illinois High School Athletics Association determines the policies as well as creates leagues and tournaments for the sports Illinois schools sponsor.

"IHSA doesn't view [hockey] as an official sport simply because of the team numbers," he explained. While a vast majority of the teams run as independent clubs, schools whose students participate in these activities cannot consider them their official sport because of the IHSA regulations.

While some students choose to participate in the community activities such as hockey teams, unfortunately, they cannot compete at the high school level without being recognized by the IHSA as an official sport. "If the state has a large need for all the schools that have [hockey teams], they create a tournament," added Conrad.

Despite the issues of the recognition as a high school sport, the Eagles continue to prove their leading position among other West suburban hockey teams. And while your friends might follow the media's coverage of the Super Bowl or basketball, you might consider the hockey teams who show a spectacular performance on the ice arenas of your area.

GAMING ALL GROWN UP



Photo from nintendo.com

Today's developers are, literally, working to change the face of gaming.

By Adrian Blaszkiewicz, 10

The old stereotype of the solitary gamer who is completely engrossed by his game is rapidly going away thanks to game developers.

Although single-player campaigns can be very enjoyable to play, they do get boring fairly quickly because the programmed AI [Artificial Intelligence] engine is very predictable and repetitive. So how do you make a game fun for a long time? Well, you make sure that gamers can play with others online or in the same room. There isn't anything more satisfying than beating up your friend in a virtual arena.

Video games are becoming a social pastime. Almost every single game

developed for a Play Station 3, Xbox 360, Nintendo Wii, or PC has some sort of multiplayer aspect where you can play with others as far away as the other side of the globe. Each one of those platforms supports over-the-internet gaming. Over time, vast gaming communities sprang up. Their original purpose was to create a group of players that could play and interact together. Now those same Guilds, Clans, and forums organize tournaments and events and let players share knowledge and strategies.

Another very popular game mode supported by the consoles as well as the PSP and Nintendo DS is co-op. Co-op allows two or more people to play the same game on the same console. It's really fun to play with your friends or siblings (it is also a great way

to settle rivalries). East English teacher Mr. Kurt Schuett told me that roughly every week he gets together with his brother, and they play video games together. Those of us that have had Schuett as a teacher know he is very competitive, so I wonder what the score looks like.

Playing against other players is naturally competitive. No one wants to lose; we all want to win., and with the growth of large, multiplayer components, the games, and the general image of gaming, have changed.

FINE ARTS SPOTLIGHT

Graphic Design

By Polina Batchkarova, 10

Have you ever seen an ad in a magazine or online? Most probably. Advertisement graphics like the ones you see in the media can be made in Leyden's Graphic Design classes through the Photoshop and Illustrator programs. Through these programs, images can be manipulated to make the impossible possible.

This month's fine arts spotlight comes from sophomore Erin Chuang's advertisement and animation graphics. She recently won the title of Best of Graphic Design at the Triton Area Art show, placing first out of 42 people and 60 pieces from six other area schools.

The winning project was her advertisement of Etnies bike shoes. Inspired by her love of the Etnies shoes, she created a Photoshop winner. Wouldn't you buy Etnies after seeing this ad of a boy doing tricks on his bike? It makes you think, as soon as you put them on, that you'll be able to fly through the air.



Another of the graphics that Erin is proud of is the animation graphic that she made of her friend from Taiwan. Inspired by a detailed photo of her friend, she created the animation through the Illustrator program. This was a particularly hard piece because there were a lot of lines that needed to be made. Erin used many layers and shadows to make the graphic seem realistic. In addition, each layer needed to have the same color as all the other layers, which was a task in itself. A lot of time was spent on the project. Erin commented, "I was going to give up, but it started to look good and then [I] took more time on it. It looks great now!"

In the future, she wishes to manipulate her own pictures. So far, she has only fiddled with pictures taken by other people. She explained, "I need to have a good moment taking pictures. [Then I will be inspired to change them.]"



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ATHLETES OF THE MONTH



Photo by Piotr Kubek

Adam Schamert, 11



“Winning the Leyden Invitational twice.”



“It keeps me disciplined so that I don’t do anything stupid to jeopardize my career.”



“Getting past the mind set that I was just gonna be good because I could be great now.”

By Frank Nagy, 10



Photo by Svyatoslav Nakonechny

Samantha Downs, 11



“I have a good sense of humor. I am a ‘class clown.’”



“When I started to bowl, I went to throw the ball, and it [rolled] back behind me.”



“I want to get scholarships for college, and I would love to bowl there.”

By Maggie Liskowicz, 10

BY THE NUMBERS

The position at which the Girls Varsity Gymnastics team finished at the Larkin Invite.

7

The place Leyden bowlers took at the Prospect Knights’ Invitational.

21

The number of points by which the Boys Varsity Basketball team beat Argo.

11

Distance in yards Joe Sevilla swam in 52.75 seconds, winning the freestyle race against Downer Grove.

100

The number of meets the varsity wrestlers won in the regular season.

19

Weight class at which varsity wrestler Bhavik Patel won the Eagle Invite.

103

UNDEFEATED, YET NOT LEGENDARY

By Jim Boehmer, 12

Another game and, yes, another win for the New England Patriots. So what’s left for the Patriots to do? They didn’t lose a game in the regular season, and they tore through the AFC playoffs like they were playing youth teams. People might say that the spy gate incident should prevent them from getting any postseason accolades, but I say they got caught and they were watched thoroughly throughout the year to prevent further cheating. Yes, they have everything to lose and for good reason. When they play the New York Giants on February 3rd, they aren’t just playing for the Super Bowl; they are playing for a perfect season.

If they lose the Super Bowl game, the season is a disappointment. And the reason for it is obvious: losing the Super Bowl would allow them to go from being potentially one of the best teams in NFL history to just another team that lost. If this happens, nobody will remember them.

If they lose, what argument do they have to say they are better than, if I may, the ‘85 Bears or any team that lost one game and won the Super Bowl?

If you put both teams side by side, the ‘85 Bears would probably come out as the better team. That’s not just because I’m a fan. The New England Patriots’ defense gave up 20 points a game this year and 350 yards per game. The ‘85 Bears’ defense gave up 11.1 points per game and only 252 yards per game. That is almost 100 yards less per game. Oh yeah, the ‘85 Bears only gave up 10 points the whole postseason, and the Patriots have already given up 32 points without even playing the Super Bowl.

The Patriots, however, definitely win the offensive battle, but we all know defense wins championships. People might think I am crazy for thinking that if the Patriots lose, their season was a disappointment, but, quite frankly, it is. If they lose, they will be known as the team that made it so far just to be defeated at the end. That is if anybody remembers them at all.