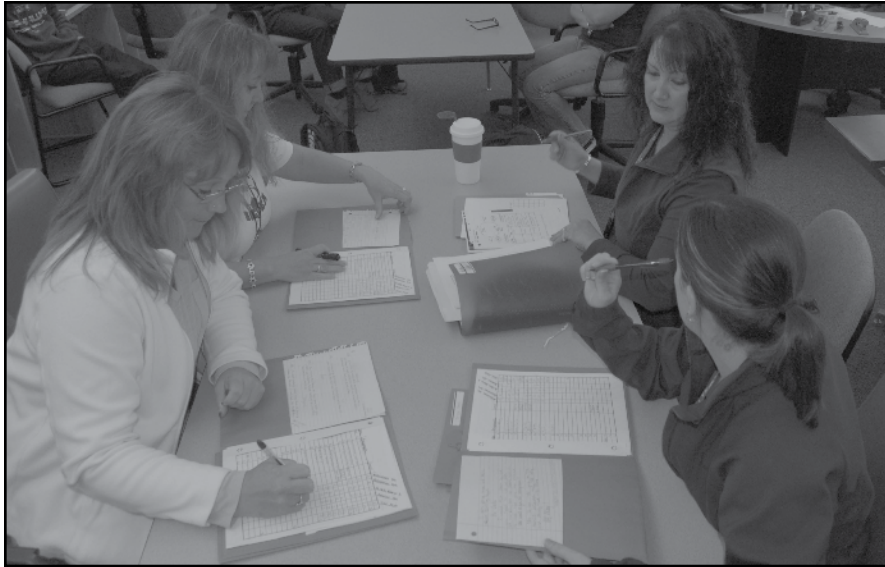


# Educational assistants offer focus, direction for students in need

## FEATURES

Though some people might not have even met them or get to see them throughout the day, educational assistants are a very important contribution to Elmira High School. One could say without them some students might not get the extracurricular help they need.

Educational assistants (EA) move around to various classes throughout the day. "I start out my day teaching English in the integrated skills class room. I also teach a small math class in integrated skills, then I assist in a physical science class in Mrs. St. Hilaire's room. I come into the learning center room to assist the students. Halfway through this class I do physical therapy with a disabled student for about twenty minutes. After lunch I do another study hall with Mr. English. I also assist Mrs. May with her freshmen English class sixth period, and then I go back into another physical science class seventh with Mrs. St. Hilaire; if I'm not needed in physical science, I go



Julie Cross, Debbie Harrison, Kelly Keller, Andrea Johnson work hard on lesson plans.

to value the experiences on the job too. "The students and my coworkers make every day new," said Cross.

Keller became an EA fourteen years ago, starting out as a substitute. It grew on her. She just loved it, she said. Harrison was working in a preschool and as her kids grew,

she moved up through the schools with them. Cross became an EA in 2006 and she had the opportunity to start working for the school district. One new EA, Andrea Johnson, was added this year. "I love my job," said Johnson. "I like helping people."

All the helpful educational assistants have had different paths that led them to becoming educational assistants, but they have similar goals when it comes to their work. They love helping the students.

-By Breenna Butler

into a sophomore English class with Mrs. Brumbach," said Debbie Harrison, EA. She said the most difficult part of her day is "dealing with all the different behaviors in the classrooms."

Kelley Keller is also an EA who said her day consists of weekly work assignments for the learning center, helping the students with multiple assignments for the first four periods, and working in the front office during lunch time.

Julie Cross, another EA, said she schedules meetings, helps

in biology, and helps in the learning center. "Trying to get students to work on the subjects that they need to work on might be the most difficult part of my day," said Cross.

Though their days can seem hectic, that's not all their job is. "You come to work, but it doesn't feel like work because you love your job," said Keller.

Other EA's share Keller's love of the job. "I love it most when I know I've made a difference in a kid's life," said Harrison.

Educational assistants seem

## Fifth disease can happen to anyone

Fifth disease, also known as "slapped cheek" disease, is very common among children ages 18 and under. The scientific name of the disease is erythema infectiosum. It is a very mild disease. It starts with cold symptoms—fever, runny nose, headache—then a red rash forms across the cheeks of the victim. After the rash is gone, a second rash may occur on the chest, back, buttocks, arms or legs. The rash may be itchy, especially on the soles of the feet. The rash can vary in intensity usually lasting for seven to ten days, but may

last for weeks. Another symptom is painful, swollen joints. This symptom is typically found in more adults with this disease, especially women.

In the sixth or seventh century the disease got its name from French doctors who named diseases after how common they were. The order is thus: first disease, measles; second disease, scarlet fever; third disease, Rubella (German measles); fourth disease, Duke's disease; fifth disease, erythema infectiosum; sixth disease, roseola. All of these diseases contain some sort of rash as a

main symptom.

Fifth disease spreads through respiratory liquids (such as saliva or nasal mucus) when an infected person coughs or sneezes. So the next time someone sneezes next to you, check to see if they have a rash on their cheek!

-By Troy Dardis

## Friendship Connection approaches

Students interested in the Friendship Connection exchange trip to Germany, or interested in hosting a German student, should contact Frau Anderson at [nanderson@fernridge.k12.or.us](mailto:nanderson@fernridge.k12.or.us) or visit [www.friendshipconnection.org](http://www.friendshipconnection.org). Or talk to Frau Anderson.

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# Dance Club May Yet Return

People dance to relieve stress, exercise, or just for fun. "You think without thinking, and it's fun," one student said.

Physiological Studies show that participating in dance makes people want to do better in school because to remain in a sport, one has to keep up good grades.

"When you dance, you feel free and alive and that is a feeling everyone should feel," said another student. With so many who love to dance, it makes people wonder why there isn't a dance team here.

"Due to budgets, three things had to get cut from school sports. So we got together a group of staff members and decided to cut the three things that would affect the least amount of students. Dance team, JV soccer, and away travel by bus are the three things that got cut," said Gary Carpenter, principal.

"The body says what words cannot,"

said author Martha Graham. And many people agree that this is a valid sentence. "Dance is a way to express what you are



to be said without words. Dance is beautiful. The way people twist and turn and move their bodies is art. It is art that is priceless," said Brittany Glenzer, former graduate of 2011.

It is possible to get a dance club, though a list of things are needed before approaching to ask for one. First, they would need to find a classroom where people could practice. Then we would need to arrange times and meeting dates. After that, the most important thing to do would be finding a teacher or staff member who would be willing to supervise the club.

With so many people who love to dance, there is possibly a dance club in this high school's future.

- By Fiona Carlin

## Sports prices rise from multiple causes

Sports are a common pastime, watched by most people from all countries. Plenty of people have played or are playing sports in high school. Elmira has systems in place to help those who can't pay, but the price hasn't always been what it is now. The price of sports is affected by multiple factors, including Measure 5, advances in technology and the housing crisis.

Oregon Ballot Measure 5, an amendment to the Oregon Constitution, was passed in 1990. The bill initially capped property taxes that went towards funding schools at \$15 for every \$1000 of the home's real market value, and decreased it to five dollars per \$1000 over five years.

"Since the late 90's, when Measure 5 was enacted, the cost of sports has gone up a lot. It's simply because schools don't have the funds to run the programs on their own," said James Monegan, science teacher. Reduced funding to schools is one of the complaints of the opposition to the bill, but there's more factors than just Measure 5.

The housing market bubble has also had an impact. Housing prices rose beyond what their actual value was, and once they were corrected, prices plummeted due to lack of interest in buying new homes. Because funding for schools comes mostly from property taxes, which tax at the value of the home, less tax money was given to schools. It's been several years since this event, but it's still affecting people. There are also advances in technology to consider, though this is more relevant to sports like football that rely heavily on equipment.

"The cost helps off-set the price of buying new equipment... In football, the technology of plastics and such is changing constantly, so there always seems to be new and safer helmets... We feel we owe it to our athletes to make sure they are as protected as possible," said Monegan.

Some students would say that the cost isn't quite worth it, but still play sports. "I wouldn't say too much 'cause there's a bunch of fundraisers for each sport. I'd say no, [It's not worth it,] it's the same equipment every year," said Junior Tristan

Cregan. There are also others whose love for sports is enough for them to ignore the price almost completely.

"I think it's worth it; the money you pay for the sports is going towards new equipment, which we get every... two or three years," said Junior Cullynn Blum.

There are fundraisers for sports, and it costs money to go to games. Despite all of this, sacrifices are made in budgets around the country. However, students don't seem to be bothered enough to skip out on sports.

"I know at Elmira, every student gets the opportunity to play a sport, regardless of cost. I don't know of any students who wanted to play but couldn't because it was too expensive." Said Monegan. This is because Elmira has a system in place where an athlete can get scholarships to help pay for sports if they are unable.

Considering how many people play sports, it appears that most students are not seriously affected by the high price.

-By Aidan Ohnemus

# ATHLETE OF THE MONTH

*Congratulations Gannon Jones, jr.!*

**Q:** What is your favorite thing about cross country?

**A:** "Always trying to do your best."

**Q:** How long have you been involved in cross country?

**A:** "Since freshman year."

**Q:** What is your greatest achievement?

**A:** "Getting second team all league at districts."

**Q:** How do you feel being Athlete of the Month?

**A:** "Pleased."



## Freshmen at Elmira show their style

Every year, Elmira High School receives a new class of freshmen, and every year, a few of these freshmen dazzle audiences with spectacular levels of athletic talent. However, these freshmen face an uphill battle when it comes to their place on athletic teams at the high school level.

"The hardest coaching job for me, in my sport, is getting kids to want to do it. There's no pressure for kids who want to do it, but the hardest thing for me is to recruit kids, convince kids, that running is fun and cross country and track are fun, and you can be part of a team," said Brad Bellingham, cross country/track coach.

Coaches agree that the freshman athletes are often unprepared for the level of competition awaiting them at the high school level.

"Getting them to focus and be intense at practice is the most difficult aspect about coaching freshmen. I just don't think the majority of them realize that the harder and more focused they are at practice, the better results they will see not only in this season, but for the rest of their high school career," said girls' soccer coach Rob Lee.

"When I coached freshman athletes, it was difficult to get them to understand and respect the balance needed between school work and athletics. A lot of them think they won't have to put in any time to either do homework or improve their skills. They of-

ten find out they were wrong. It also can be very similar to teaching someone how to walk. We start with the very basic fundamentals and don't often move too far past that. We strive to have a good base idea of the sport and how it works before moving on. Freshmen can be easily distracted and not aware of the commitment it takes to be on a team sport," said football coach James Monegan.

However, this year seems to be shaping up to be a good one for freshmen competing in sports. "Specifically to the soccer team, I think my freshmen athletes are amazing. I have three that have become starters on our varsity team, something I don't think has happened in a while," said Lee.

"This year's group of freshman athletes is very physically talented. If they can stick together and form a good team bond, when they are seniors, Elmira athletics should be very successful; Football at least," said Monegan.

Bellingham said, "there might be one, possibly two [freshman] kids that will run varsity at districts. Now remember, I can only run seven of my top kids in varsity, and we have over 20 boys on the team; this is one of the hardest years to make the varsity cut off. I would say one or two really have a shot at it."

The coaches agree that keeping the pres-

sure on their freshman athletes minimal is a good idea. "I try to balance putting pressure on them and keeping them relaxed as best I can. I think it's important for athletes to learn how to perform under pressure, make good decisions quickly, and set high expectations of themselves and of the team. But I also know that too much pressure can break an athlete down and they underachieve because they feel overwhelmed. Some athletes can handle a lot more pressure than others, and it is my job to figure out what each player needs to be the best they can be on the field," said Lee.

Monegan also said, "we try to run a fairly pressure-free team. We set expectations for our athletes, and hold them to those expectations, but I wouldn't say we put a lot of pressure on our athletes. They're pretty good at motivating themselves when we let them know what is at stake, ie, district championship or play-off contention."

The coaches agree that freshman athletes are of vital importance to the athletics at Elmira. These athletes, though they sometimes don't work as hard as they should, are a determined group of talented athletes. This year's group of freshmen is shaping up to be a competitive one and the rest of the classes may find themselves hard pressed to stay at the top.

*-By Steven Parker*



# Crouching tiger, hidden junior: students practice martial arts

Martial artists are portrayed in many different ways by many different people. Sometimes Enter the Dragon, other times The Matrix. From live action to cartoons, martial arts aren't uncommon in American culture. However, they are a part of many people's lives beyond the screen. Plenty of people play sports at Elmira, yet few of those people train in a martial art. Though there are exceptions to this, this is because of a fundamental difference between sports and martial arts.

"One of the things that makes martial arts different from other physical activities is that it focuses on the individual rather than being a team sport," said Alan Best, chief instructor at Best Martial Arts Institute.

While sports like football are more about the benefit of the team, martial arts rarely focus on that, if ever.

"It's very popular amongst high school students who otherwise don't like athletics because of its emphasis on training of more than just the body," Best said.

While martial arts are a way of training the body, its real purpose is development of character. "There's a thing which many people call the ultimate goal of martial arts, it is and I quote 'the harmonious development and eventual perfection of human character.' Kanō Jigorō created the saying and it pretty much sums it up,"

Best said.

Kanō Jigorō is the founder of Judo and Jujutsu (not Brazilian jiu-jitsu, though they are similar.)

"It has given me something to work to-



A. Ohnemus/*The Falconer*

*Judo students warm up for falls.*

wards and has taught me to have a better work ethic in all areas of my life," said Senior Hunter Weast, who is a purple shirt at McKenzie Martial Arts. Martial arts are often used as catalysts for developing good habits for school and work, and their focus on character is used by many practitioners to improve themselves in everyday life.

Weast's art is known as Jeet Kune Do, a style developed by Bruce Lee which combines multiple arts he learned over the years. Lee fine-tuned them to be used against opponents in weight classes 100

lbs. above his own, which he succeeded in. Its goal is to take out any unnecessary flair and get straight to the core of fighting. Once the basics are understood, the art encourages understanding of why and how moves work.

"I think it could tie in with normal life more than other sports," said Junior Gannon Jones, who is a fourth degree black belt in Shūdōkan, a style of karate. What Jones learns is more focused on kata, or rehearsed forms and patterns of moves, and kumite, or sparring.

One martial arts stereotype that everyone knows is the silent master, who gives philosophical advice that sounds like it was read out of a fortune cookie. While the philosophy of martial arts isn't quite that, patience is an important virtue in many of them.

"One simple distinction would be how the martial arts affects the individual, and the other is how it affects their relationship in society...the discipline, self-control, perseverance, striving for excellence, all those aspects of the individual, but then the courtesy, respect and non-violent nature of martial arts helps the greater community," said Alan Best.

*-By Aidan Ohnemus*

## WHO KNOWS YOU BEST?

BRAD BELLINGHAM WANTS TO KNOW WHO KNOWS HIM BETTER: HIS STUDENT, MASON BEEBE, JR. OR HIS T.A., BROOK MOSER, JR.



Bell



Beebe



Moser

1. How long have you been teaching?	33 years	33 Years +1	A long time +1
2. What is your favorite movie?	The Wizard of Oz or Glory	Patriot	Django Unchained
3. What were you before you were a teacher?	A Deputy Sheriff	Cop +1	Cop +1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>It's a Tie!!!</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>

## News Briefs

January 8-OBOD

January 15- Martin L. King Jr.

Day

January 23-Coffee house night

3-9 P.M. Cafeteria

January 27- Winter Formal

Coronation

# All our hard work is pretty much pointless

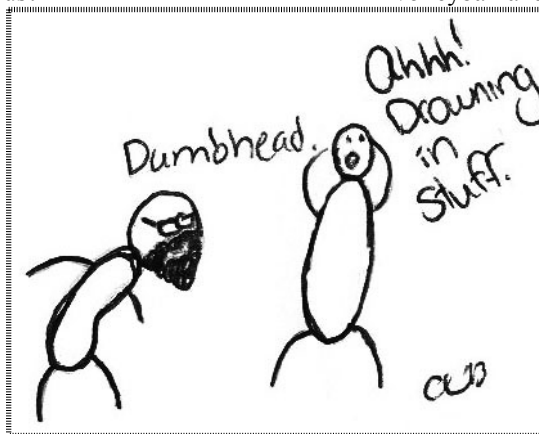


I read this thing a while back that said, in a nutshell, every progressive generation works a whole lot

harder than

the one before it, but that doesn't mean it makes them smarter. Basically, we do more than our parents and; we take more classes, join more clubs, jump through more college hoops, but it's not doing anything special for us. It's like, are we any smarter than older generations? I know a bunch of you would say "Yeah, of course I'm smarter than my parents!" but really, I don't think we are. I mean, we have more technology to adapt to, but they adapted as well, to personal computers and VHS tape-things, and a lot of older people are pretty good at operating iPhones and other fancy newfangled gadget-examples that I can't think of at the moment. They're not all technological strangers in a strange land.

And in school, you never really heard about students of the 70s or 80s taking the seven classes per semester most of us are used to, as well as the five clubs and the three sports and the fifty million scholarship registrations. That kind of workload seems new. So all this extra junk we have to do, is it really benefiting us?



I think if the idea of all those special responsibilities is to make us more prepared for college or for the rest of our lives or something, or to make us the smartest demographic in American history, it's kind of pointless.

I'm fairly certain any and all of those geniuses with hard to spell names that we read about in history and science classes didn't have to work as hard in school every day as we do, and look how they all turned out. I just can't imagine someone like Rosalind Franklin having to balance Key Club and Honor Society and volleyball and AP History.

Really though, if we want to be super duper smart and successful in the world, we shouldn't be piling ourselves with so much work that we don't even need. We should just focus on the things we know without a doubt will help

us specifically, and focus on those things. People who plan on finding a career in French romantic history shouldn't have to deal with the extra workload and stress of the three or four science requirements, if science

won't benefit them and won't even stick in their minds past graduation. (Although I don't really recommend a future in French romantic history, because there are literally no jobs there.)

If we stopped trying to do so much all the time, then we'd be able to focus on things that matter to us specifically, whether that's memorizing fifty speeches from assorted shows and movies, or designing shoes with wings on them. Yea, this is basically my elaborate explanation for why I don't want to work hard, but it works and I give you all permission to use it for when someone asks you why you won't join every club under the sun to beef up your college applications. It's just no fun.

-By Cheyenne Cox

## Society excuses harassment as women battle daily to keep dignity



Women can't win.

Every girl knows by the time she is 14 how it feels to be harassed by boys. The

littlest things, or the things that seem the smallest, never are. The comments, slurs, obscenities, yells, "compliments"—all of these things that guys do or say to us; these aren't compliments and they aren't little, these definitely aren't things that we should be pushing away or ignoring. A *compliment* is respectful and intended to make someone feel good but telling a girl that she has a "great rack" or "nice butt" or honking or yelling obscenities at us is not, by any means, respectful. It doesn't make a girl feel good about herself; it makes her feel threatened.

Sexual harassment has become a

part of our culture and our society without a second thought of how harmful it is on so many levels. We are taught to ignore it, to brush it off. But what good will that do? And when girls feel defeated and frustrated by constantly being violated by this behavior, they are told, "boys will be boys." Girls are told that they're overreacting, just to ignore it. Men and boys are given power by these comments and will continue to carry that power as long as women and society as a whole stand by and allow them to act this way toward us. It is unacceptable.

Ask any woman about being harassed and if she answers honestly, she will have no less than a dozen stories. Harassment is as simple as a woman being honked and yelled at while walking down the street or having crude, obscene comments mumbled to us by men at gas stations, grocery stores,

school hallways—*everywhere*.

When you boil it down, harassment is men showing women that they can have access to their bodies at any time, that they have power over them. That is an invasion of privacy in the most violating and degrading way, yet it continues and excuses are made for this behavior. Boys don't think twice about making a menacing comment because they're learning from the example that society and other men set.

Acceptable social appearance is also never enough however a woman presents herself. One is either too "slutty" or a "prude". We have to look attractive, but not too hot because then we'd look "slutty." Women have to be confident but not too proud and not too smart but also not too dumb. Stereotypes make or break women as they struggle to fit the mold that society desires. Those nasty

comments that boys yell at a girl as she runs by during a sports practice are truly preposterous. We are not here for you and we aren't running for your viewing pleasure.

We, as women, can't win this battle because every day this harassment goes on and few people do anything to reverse it. Our sons are being raised believing that making those comments is okay and normal, that a woman's body and consciousness are acceptable outlets for their emotions. And our girls are growing up being scared, resigned to whatever men decide to subject them to. Our society tells us that these things are normal. Society dismisses harassment and claims that women overreact but it's not true. It's a result of being tired of decades of abuse.

So, I repeat, we can't win.

-By Grieta King

# Stop shoving math, science, English down our throats!

Drama and art classes are essential for the education of children. These classes build self-esteem, confidence, and speaking skills that are necessary for school and later life.

These classes give students a creative outlet. Most people say that you get a creative outlet in English when you write a creative essay. In all my years in high school, I have written only one

creative essay and I hated every second of it. Drama classes let you be creative through

acting, costume design, play writing, prop making, lighting... the list is nearly endless! Art classes let you be creative through drawing, painting, sculpting, sketching, and creating pieces of fine art.

Drama classes help you also in a different way. English classes teach you how to read and write, but they don't highlight an essential skill that you use nearly every day: speech. Public speaking is one of the greatest fears in the U.S. Why is that? Students are not taught how to speak in front of a crowd. Schools push reading, writing, math, and science down our throats because, yes, they are important, but drama classes are the main way students learn to speak in front of a crowd. Being on a stage

in front of an audience of hundreds of people is public speaking!

Art classes help build self-esteem and confidence. How would you feel if all you got in school were C's, D's, and F's? Probably not very good. By being in an art class and excelling, students have the self-esteem and confidence to do better in their classes. They build the confidence that is needed for the rest of the school day/year.

Drama and art classes together help students succeed in school. In recent studies, it has been proven that drama and art classes help students' grades in English, math and science. So when schools make budget cuts and they cut these programs, they are, in a sense, helping students fail

in school. Yes, all the other classes are important, but isn't there a different way to make budget cuts without cutting these classes? It may be harder and challenging, but don't take the easy way out when it is at the expense of the students grades. Let's help all the students succeed in one of the best ways we can, through drama and art classes!

-By Troy Dardis



"creative outlet."

After viewing all of the above points, it is hopefully clear that art cannot exist without having first mastered math, English, and some forms of basic science in order to procure a strong understanding of artistic expression.

If you cannot seem to comprehend what you have just finished reading, then perhaps it would be more suitable for you to locate yourself in the vicinity of an English class rather than one that focuses on drama and theatrics.

-By Jeremy Cooper

## IMPORTANCE OF ART A MATTER OF OPINION

English, math and science are essential for skills that students will need later in life whereas art may be slightly less important as a career related skill.

English teaches students the essentials of not only reading and writing, but also public speaking and debating, as well as providing for a creative outlet, no matter what my narrow-minded opposition might say. Many people enjoy reading books, all of which are a work of literary art. Every single play that has ever been written was a form of art. Without proper English skills it is entirely impossible to create a play.

As for math, how much is used in art? Tons! Math is used for everything from creating props and costumes for plays to making

sculptures and drawing beautiful sketches with geometry. Art also requires chemistry to make the paints that are used and requires knowledge of graphite for sketch artists.

M.C. Escher was a brilliant artist who dedicated years of his life to mastering geometry before he began producing masterpieces. His first artistic work was eight human heads on different planes, titled Eight Heads. Without basic of geometric designs and symmetry, his works would not have made such an impact within the artistic community.

"Although I am absolutely without training or knowledge in the exact sciences, I often seem to have more in common with mathematicians than with my fellow artists," said Escher.

As for my opposition claiming that

art promotes self-confidence, how can they make such a bold statement considering the vast number of artists throughout history who have been everything from mentally unstable to clinically depressed? The following are examples of famous artists who were diagnosed with clinical depression: Vincent van Gogh, Pablo Picasso, Georgia O'Keefe, Jules Feiffer, Hermann Hesse, Jack Kerouac, and Mark Rothko.

Art majors consist of 0.5 percent of the workforce; roughly 6 percent of college students choose art as their major, which means that 1.3 million students will graduate as an art student, and 110 thousand of them will be employed, leaving 1.2 million remaining art majors without any plausible career paths that require their oh-so-essential

## Should art be singled out for cuts?

"No, because it makes people more creative and it's fun."

Miranda Harrison, fr.



12 Falconer



"Yes, because I don't care for art."

Adam Costello, soph.

"No. Art is expressing yourself and that's what teenagers need."

Hannah Admire, jr.



"No, because it's an easy class and fun. I like it more than math."

Chandler Sawyer, sr.

October 31, 2013



# Students need to show spirit for more than just football



What is school spirit? Is it a crazy, complicated mix match of purple and gold? Is it a homemade

T-shirt displaying numbers and names of your favorite football or volleyball players? Or maybe it's dressing up a day or two out of that one week in October we all know as SPIRIT-week, that ends with the year's most anticipated athletic event. .... the homecoming football

game. Well if that is what comes to mind, it wouldn't be wrong because all these things together do represent accurately the spirit of being an Elmira Falcon. However, it seems that much of the student body that gets swept away with football fever in the fall, forgets to show their enthusiasm for the athletes that work hard all year round.

Baseball is "America's Past Time" and well loved by many as it represents a change in seasons, and a reliable opening ceremony to warmer weather, dugouts, and sunflower

seeds. Track and Field offers a gateway to summer, and many of Elmira's spring sports athletes are exceptional enough to be invited to participate in a statewide competition. Not to mention the wrestling team competes internationally! All this said, supporters would be hard pressed to find anyone sporting painted faces in the halls or crazy class competitions revving up the spirit for these athletes.

All we need to do is take a minute and look around us right now, be inspired by the

unity that we all look forward to as a student body during the month of October every year. It's likely that we would all benefit from bond we undeniably form when we back the participants of Elmira's athletics program. The truth is, there is no such thing as too much school spirit!

-By Kaylee Wolgamott

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## Elmira High School student represents in Washington, D.C.



In the spring of 2013, I received an invitation from the National Youth Leadership Forum. I had no idea what this forum would

be like, but I immediately started working on finding out. Tucker Barnes, a friend and fellow student, had recently gone to Washington D.C. for the same forum. Despite the knowledge that the forum would occur during school this fall, I decided to set aside the money and time to attend. I chose the forum on national security, the same one that Tucker had attended.

By the time this fall rolled around, my excitement had reached a fever pitch. On the first day of the forum, we were told how we must dress in formal attire for most of the events. I was very excited, and could hardly keep my eyes open. After retiring to my room after the first exhausting day, I found that my roommates and I shared the same birthday. Also, one of my roommates had the same name as me.

The next day was a blur of action, with some three hundred students divided up into smaller groups called National Security Action Meetings (NSAMs). We met with our NSAM groups, discussed national security and other important topics, then left to eat lunch at a place called DuPont circle. The food was fantastic. I as well as some of our NSAM members  
October 31, 2013

began strategizing on the election that was to be held in our group later that night. When the bill came, we scrambled to divide up the \$145 tab. After not adding enough money up between us, we realized we had forgotten the sales tax. We agreed on Saad Ahmed for president, and in return I was guaranteed a spot in

and I ran around the compound looking for people, asking for reports, and making decisions. One of these decisions involved taking out the leaders of the cartel with a black ops team. We went ahead only after the intelligence people confirmed that the report was true. In the chaos that ensued, we discovered



Photo courtesy of Foley and Lardner LLP

Saad's circle of advisors.

On Friday night, the NSAM groups were split off based on which branch of the government we were in. As part of the executive, I was in a room with our president and the rest of his cabinet. That night we began a three hour government simulation where we were briefed on a hypothetical situation involving chaos in Latin America. The premise was that the Los Zetas cartel had been taken over and was taking over the government of Mexico.

For the rest of the evening, the president, the rest of our advisors,

only the next day that this "decision" saved the life of the Mexican president.

The rest of the National Youth Leadership Forum was spent driving by interesting monuments like the Washington Monument and the World War II memorial. They were all closed due to the government shutdown. We went to the one museum that was not closed, the Spy Museum, the larger portion of which was dedicated to fifty years of James Bond films. We celebrated homecoming for those students

who were missing it, and visited Arlington Cemetery. At Arlington, we watched the changing of the guard and participated in a wreath laying ceremony in front of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. We also visited John F. Kennedy's grave, where the eternal flame was still burning.

In the end, the trip was somewhat watered down by the government shutdown and its effects. On the last day, many students cried. We all became such good friends and none of us wanted to leave. But this wasn't my first time at the rodeo, and I have had to say these same goodbyes before. I felt much worse for those who have never been to the Smithsonian and the National Mall than I did for myself. Even in the airport before I started back home, there were more people that I met.

The experience of the National Youth Leadership Forum was one of making friends and finding confidence. The price may be high, somewhere around \$1,800, but I recommend that anyone invited to one of these events should do whatever it takes to attend. It is an amazing experience.

-By Steven Parker

### Letters to the editor

If you have something you would like to say to *The Falconer* staff, you can put it in the box in the library.

Thanks!