Knight Life Publication Policy
Got opinions? Disagree with something we've said? Just want to get your say in the paper?
Write us!

Direct letters to the Editor to:
Knight Life
Loy Norrix
606 East Kilgore
Kalamazoo, MI
49001
-OR-
Submit to Room B-10
-OR-
E-mail to pankoptl@kalamazo.k12.mi.us

Guidelines:
-250 words or less
-Contain author's name, phone number, and address

Right to withhold:
-As space permits
-Guest columns
-Personal opinions
-Contains libel or obscenities
-Disrupts school environment
-Invades privacy of others

Notes to reader:
-Any photography that has been manipulated will be labeled a photo illustration.
-Knight Life will publish a formal correction of any factual error made in a previous issue.

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Knight Life Offers Students Outlet for Views

-Staff Editorial

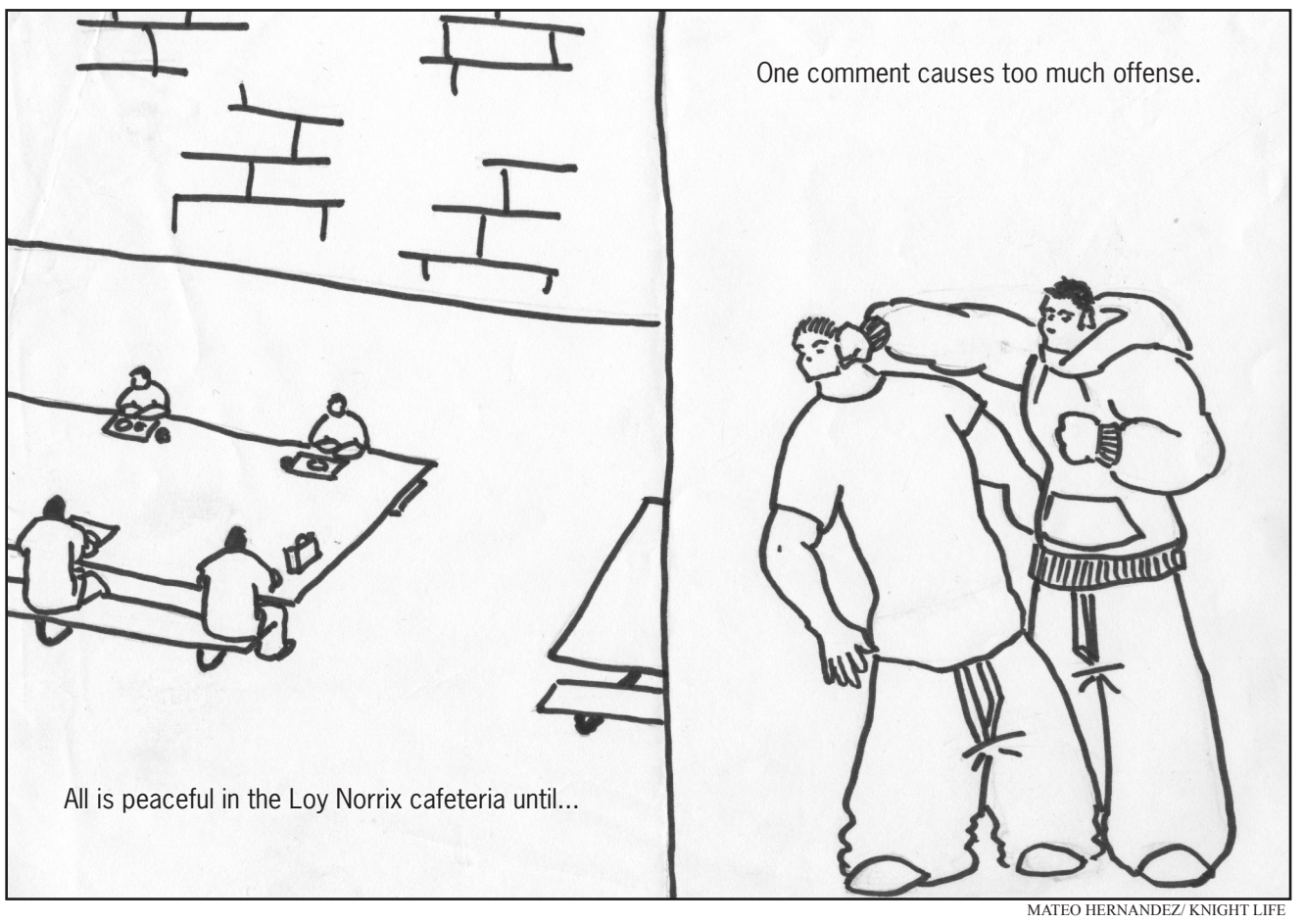
As "the voice of Loy Norrix High School," we feel it is of crucial importance that we cover the issue of teen violence in our community because the violence has such a large effect on many students in this school. In the past year, five Kalamazoo teens have died as a result of violence among youth, including four former LN students. The effects of violence are felt even after someone is killed, by their friends, family members, teachers, and even people who did not know them. It is time that the insight and opinions of teens on this issue are heard.

As a school newspaper it is our responsibility to report on what is happening in the school and community and how it affects students. In voicing the opinions and thoughts of youth who have been directly affected by the violence, "Knight Life" hopes to not only give people a better understanding of the problem, but to help in bringing about a solution. In this special edition of "Knight Life" various topics relating to the subject of violence occurring among teens are featured, such as how students cope with losing friends and family as a result of violence, the history of gangs, and the role that parents play in keeping their children out of gangs.

Through research, interviewing, and allowing people to share their stories, "Knight Life" reporters realized that the issue of violence among youth in our community is much larger than initially thought. Even though "Knight Life" reporters experienced some difficulties as they attempted to present the whole story and do justice to this topic, still managed to hold several very intense and enlightening interview sessions. For the first time many of these students who have been affected by the violence in our community had the opportunity to share their stories, their beliefs and their ideas for solutions to youth violence in Kalamazoo. Given the opportunity to speak without the fear of being punished, students opened up and were not afraid to share their stories and insights.

In reporting on the issue of youth violence "Knight Life" reporters had to take into consideration the limitations presented by student press laws. These laws prohibit us from reporting on illegal activities of minors or things that could potentially cause a disruption in school. Due to the graphic nature of some of the violent events, some details were omitted in the best interests of the students. Presented with these limitations, we found it difficult at times to report on the full story, but as much as we could we included the honest opinions and facts presented to us by students.

"Knight Life" seeks to act as an outlet for the thoughts and feelings of students in this school and to bring attention to the thoughts and ideas of students that have seldom been heard up until this point. In doing so we hope to spur students and community members to think about youth violence in a different way and perhaps come up with solutions on how to address it.



MATEO HERNANDEZ/ KNIGHT LIFE

If a Stranger Walked into LN

All the Negatives at Loy Norrix Hide the Positive Aspects

Renee Macdonald
Layout Editor

Noisy, boistrous hallways, colorful language, insults thrown like fastballs, straight and to the point, disruptive classrooms, failing grades posted on teachers' doors, numerous fights, etc... Word on the street is that this is how Loy Norrix is.

Imagine your idol walking into a normal day at LN. Would you be proud? I would not be. The strong verbal abuse in the hallways alone makes me cringe. Mix in an accidental shove and you've got yourself a full-blown disaster. This happens a lot, especially in such crowded hallways.

A stroll into a classroom shows students not paying attention, sleeping, yelling, interrupting, and people walking in late. No wonder there are students failing classes. This is not the ideal learning environment.

As a student attending, you should not have to look at your school and think to yourself "Man, I wish I went somewhere else." You should be able to be proud of your school and look at it with pride. Norrix has so much going for it, it is depressing when all things commendable are lost under tidal waves of inadequate behavior. Take a minute to think about everything LN has in the positive direction.

First and foremost, we should be glad that we have such a wide variety of sports available to us. Not every school has lacrosse, swimming, or tennis. Some schools cannot afford the facilities and equipment necessary for those sports.

Be grateful for LNTV. Even though the technology may need an update, be happy that we aren't listening to an administrator every morning. We all know how fun that is.

LN's music and drama departments are fairly large in size and do their jobs well. There are a lot of schools not as fortunate as ours that don't even have a choir, a drama program, an orchestra, or even a band. Some schools don't even know what a forensics team is, let alone actually have one.

The amount of computers that LN has is something to be proud of. Computers that work too. Do not sit there and complain about how they are loading slowly, they are not that slow; it could be worse. We could not have them at all.

Be glad we have so many windows to enjoy the outdoor courtyards, even though we're always inside. We could be at Kalamazoo Central, the building of few windows. Respect them, don't break them. Try to keep the courtyards looking nice and don't throw that empty bag of Cheetos out the window. You're not the only one who has to look at that piece of trash. Use the garbage can.

Be appreciative of LN's teachers and administrators. It's not easy running a school, dealing with parents, laws, disruptive students, etc... They try to make your learning environment the best they can, but they can only do so much without your cooperation. BLUE is a result of that. While it's a long acronym, it still makes some good points.

Be there. Be Ready. Live responsibly. Uphold integrity. Embrace Education. These basic ideas are important. Do not throw them away with your old homework.

Loy Norrix is a community, treat it as such. We have our problems, but when you really look at it, it really isn't all that bad. Fact is, it could still be better.

You wouldn't want Beyonce, or any other idol of yours, walking in and seeing our school the way it is now. So why does everyone seem to insist on keeping it this way? We have come a long way from the beginning of the school year, keep it up! LN doesn't have to be what it's advertised as, but the only ones who can really fix it is us, the student body.

One-Hit-Wonders not Worth it

Jose Escamilla
Guest Writer

In the most recent issue of "Knight Life" I took notice of the segment titled "Loy Norrix Top 10", which detailed specifically, as voted by the students of Loy Norrix High School, what our (as a whole) preferred artists, albums, and songs of 2007 were. Reigning supreme at the number one spot of the Top 10 Songs column was Soulja Boy's single "Crank That (Soulja Boy)" from his second album "Souljaboytellem.com." I knew the song was popular, but I had no idea it was popular enough to win so much support from a vast majority of Loy Norrix students. Herein lies the problem.

Flash in the pan singles, and moreso the artists that produce these singles are far too common for popular music to be taken seriously. For those who don't know, "Flash in the pan" basically means a fad that is extremely popular for a short amount of time, then quickly falls into obscurity, forgotten by all. Music is unfortunately one area where countless one-hit-wonders have soared to popularity, only to fall as fast as they rose. Recent examples include D4L's "Laffy Taffy," Mims' "This Is Why I'm Hot" and Hurricane Chris' "Aye Bay Bay." All of those songs contain no lyrical depth or purpose, are annoying to many, but yet for some reason still managed to gain prominence, however short those periods might have been.

The fact that 17 year old DeAndre Ramone Way (Soulja Boy) can create a dance, and a song to go along with it (I can't even describe what a certain portion of the song's lyrics mean, they're considered highly inappropriate for school), and sell more than half a million copies of an album within four months is a clear indication that flash in the pan artists are here to stay. Though at this point it is impossible to say how well he'll fare in the future, if history is any indication of things, Soulja Boy will be long forgotten within a year at the latest.

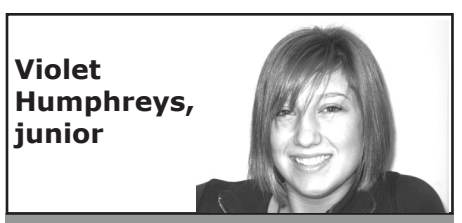
> Stop giving praise to artists and their singles that contain no lyrical depth or meaning, and that only serve to earn a profit just because people will buy their album because the beat sounds catchy.

It's not like one-hit-wonders are a new phenomenon. Back in 1992 House Of Pain hit it big with their single "Jump Around", though later albums released by the group were critcally panned, and they would disband when their leadman Everlast opted to try out his solo career (which would, ironically enough, only produce one memorable single as well - "What It's Like," his other works were also a commerical failure). There are an infinite number of examples of one-hit-wonders.

So what can be done to prevent these flavor of the month smash-hits? The obvious answer also happens to be the most effective solution - stop giving praise to artists and their singles that contain no lyrical depth or meaning, and that only serve to earn a profit just because people will buy their album because the beat sounds catchy. If this pattern persists popular music will only continue to be considered a joke and anything truly groundbreaking and original will be ignored. When Mims says "I can sell a million sayin' nothing on the track", in his forementioned single, he unfortunately speaks the truth.

KNIGHTS SPEAK OUT

How do you think street violence affects Loy Norrix's environment and image?



Violet Humphreys, junior

"It doesn't affect me personally, but it clearly affects other students here."

Oneshia Dade, sophomore

"It makes us look bad because a majority of the kids are involved in street violence."

Tiana Carruthers, sophomore

"I think it affects us because it makes people scared to come to school."

Jeff Boggan, Assistant Principal

"It puts a tremendous amount of pressure on school officials to keep students and staff safe."