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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Every Child? Every Opportunity? Every Time?

Unbalanced class size limits educational experience for upperclassmen

Staff Editorial

Whatever happened to "Every child, every opportunity, every time?" With the establishment of the Freshmen Academy at Loy Norrix, upperclassmen have suffered with overcrowded classes. Sophomores, juniors and seniors are forced to try to focus in rooms that feel smaller than a sardine can due to the high number of students in their classes, often over the recommended 28.

Stated in the agreement between KPS and the Kalamazoo District Association, the recommended class size for every secondary class, for every grade is 28. The number of students in LN classes needs to be balanced for all grades.

With the Kalamazoo Promise, the increase of enrollment in Kalamazoo Public Schools is understandable, but with the class size cap being 37 (with the exception of gym, marching band, and choir) it is unrealistic to think a student's ability to concentrate will not suffer when classes exceed the recommended number of students.

Students who might need extra attention in a subject will not get the help they need because the teachers cannot stop teaching a class of 32 or more to help one or two struggling students. The Freshmen Academy has smaller class sizes (generally in the 20's) thus offering one-on-one attention for the students.

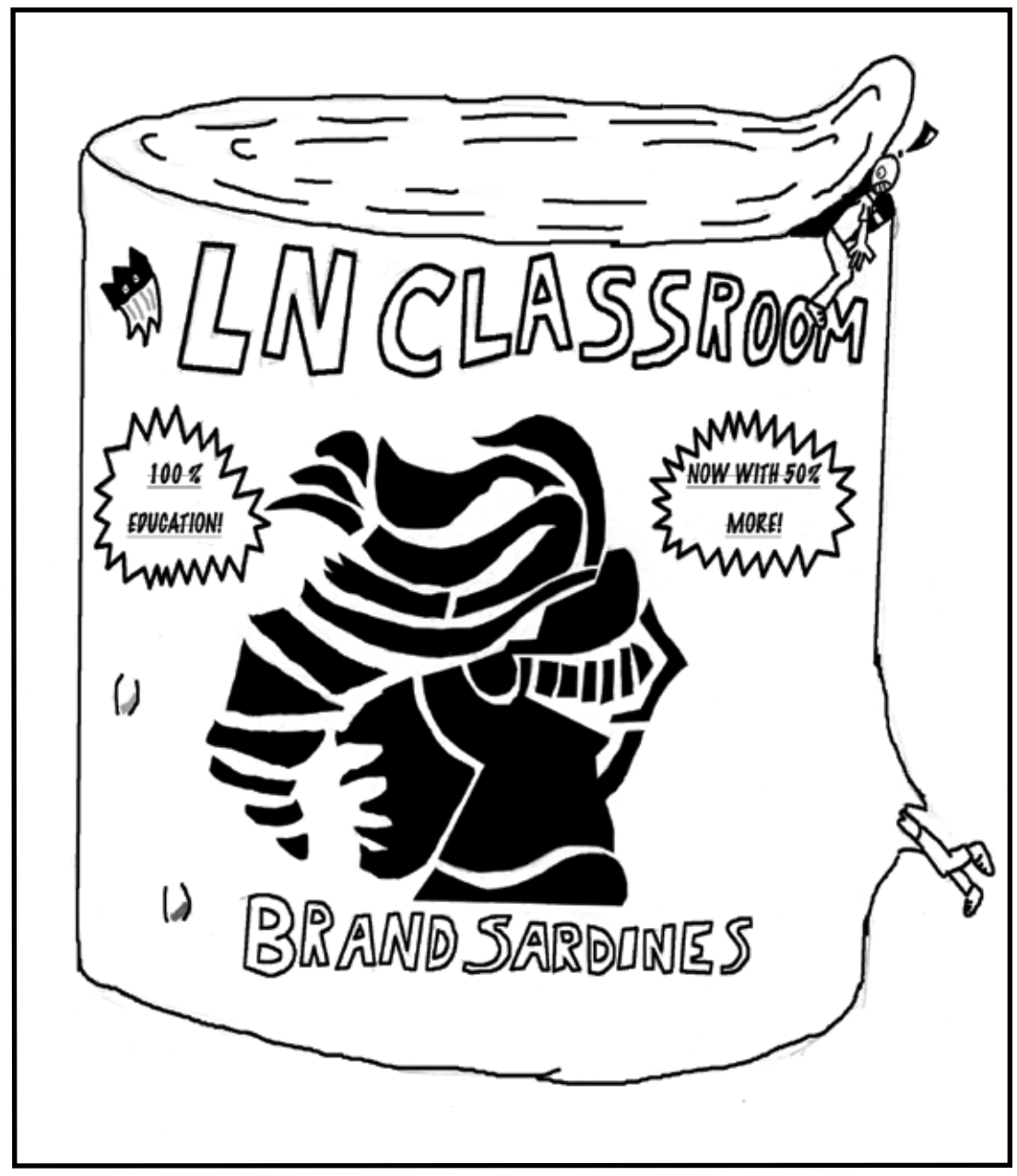
But what about the rest of us? With many of the classes above capacity, less learning takes place. When classes exceed the recommended number of 37, teachers are lucky if they see every student on the same day. This makes it very difficult to keep all students successful and up to date.

If the students are not in their classes, where are they? If we are the future and embrace the Kalamazoo Promise, we need smaller classes. How are students who miss a class supposed to make up an assignment when their teacher does not even know that they have missed a day?

Overcrowded classes are not only stressful for students but also for the teachers. Teaching is hard enough, but when you add another 10 kids to a classroom, it makes it that much worse. Besides the fact that teachers cannot give the students the individual help that they need, teachers order class sets of books for 30. When they have a class size of 35-37, how are the other students going to get the education that they deserve when they do not even have the textbooks they need?

One of Cindy VanLieu's art classes has 31 students. While the recommended for an art class is 25, many art classes are packed. 31 students is a safety hazard. While using sharp utensils with sculpting and other projects, a student could slip and puncture another student or themselves. Storing students' projects is also a big issue. Storing 31 students' projects with a limited amount of space is difficult.

It is about time that administrators fix this problem for the welfare of every student as well as their teachers.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editorial Staff of Knight Life,

I am writing in opposition to the counselor change Loy Norrix had made this year. Although I am happy that the Freshmen Academy has worked out so nicely, I am extremely unhappy with the fact that I, along with numerous other students, have lost our counselor.

Ms. Benton had been a counselor for some students for four years now, others for three, and myself, coming up on two. Part of the wonderful job of being a counselor is the bond and relationships that form throughout the years working together with the students. Not only do you get to know each other as people, but you form a deeper friendship; one that could last long past our high school days.

Those of you who have been inside Ms. Benton's office, have seen the wall covered almost completely with student pictures, new and old; pictures of family, graduations, and special events. But those faces on the wall are much more than pictures, they're relationships and strong bonds that have been polished and shined throughout many years. Now though, the students who have been working with Ms. Benton for the past two to four years are left feeling quite abandoned, not by Ms. Benton, but by the administrators who decided to take away our counselor, our friend, and relocate her to the Freshmen Academy. Of course she will meet new students and form new bonds; and yes, outside of the counselor's office a relationship can still occur, but every year, she will acquire a new group of students; she will have to make new bonds.

No longer can she watch her students grow throughout the years, taking each step alongside them, preparing them for the years out on their own. The decision to put her in Freshmen Academy has taken away that most precious part of being a counselor.

Although petitions are being sent around and signed, and students are voicing their opinions, I have little confidence that our voices will make much of a difference. But at least the administration and the staff here at Loy Norrix know how resentful and infuriated many students are about this situation. Not only have we lost our counselor...we have lost our beloved friend.

Victoria L. Evans, Sophomore

Dear Editor,

This has been the smoothest start to a school year that I've ever witnessed. But there's always a catch, right? About a week or so ago, I learned that the administration was sending my counselor, Ms. Benton to the Freshmen Academy. I wasn't too fond of the Freshmen Academy in the first place but now they are taking my counselor who I've worked with for almost three years. Ms. Benton was really the only person who stayed constant in my high school career. People rarely have teachers more than one class not that they're unimportant, they are very much so, but Ms. Benton and I were working on my high school career and future. I changed my schedule all the time so I can get the education I want. Ms. Benton would always bend over backwards for me.

Now, I have no idea who my new counselor will be which troubles me because I love getting involved in things and Ms. Benton always told me about new activities and opportunities. I wish the administration would see that they are doing a disservice to the many people who are now left counselor-less but what about Ms. Benton? Her job now is to work with the freshmen and the freshmen only. She only has one year with the new students and then they're off and then the next group comes in. That doesn't give her the time to actually work with these students and not to mention she is the only counselor for the freshmen. So, not only does she have to leave her old students behind but she probably won't even have the time to actually get to know these students in depth. I mean, she'll never even really get another senior picture for her wall again.

I'm very disappointed in this poor choice by the administration because they are doing Ms. Benton a disservice and to her kids as well.

Abbey Brooks, Junior

Dear Editor,

Homecoming for high school students every year is a memory that lasts with them until they are telling their children and even their grandchildren stories. When the principal said that he had decided that he was going to cancel the powder-puff game, the pep rally, and the homecoming dance, everyone though that those memories were going to be lost for the year. Each year the seniors finally get to be on top and have their reign as seniors and have the bragging rights at the pep rally and all of the other festivities. But all of those memories were going to be taken away because of the childish acts of teenagers and because of the parents of those teenagers.

I understand that there were numerous fights involving not only Loy Norrix students but also Kalamazoo Central students that were at the basketball game and even the ADULTS! Adults are the ones who are supposed to be setting the examples for teenagers. They are not supposed to be the ones who are instigating the situations. I also have heard that most of these problems that are being brought into our school have to deal with gangs and neighborhoods. I believe that it is very immature to endanger innocent people's lives over stupid reasons such as neighborhoods or gangs. People are risking their lives overseas for us everyday so we can live peaceful lives. They are not over there fighting for us to be wasting our lives and time on ridiculous crap such as those acts that took place at the basketball game.

The senior class of 2007 then did the responsible thing and got involved and talked to the principal about the situation. They then came to the conclusion to have the pep rally and then once the pep rally was done to announce whether they were going to have the dance or not depending upon the students' behavior at the pep assembly. I believe that all of the seniors who got involved really showed their character because it took a lot of work to get everything prepared the day of the pep rally. It also took a lot of support from the senior class to show that they could do it.

At the pep rally everything went as planned and then they announced that the dance was going to back on. The football game ended up being delayed because of thunderstorms in the area. The dance then started and I wasn't sure whether to go to the dance or not because of the events that took place but I went to it and there was no problem. I helped start a mosh pit to an AC/DC song, which was when they then paused the dance for a second but beyond that the dance was a lot of fun and problem free.

Thank you to all of the seniors who took the initiative to get things back on track, and thank you to all of the staff members and police officers who helped with the pep rally, the football game and the dance. Last I would definitely love to thank Mr. LaPrairie for being willing to change his mind about such an important event. It showed a lot about his character and personality. It was amazing that all of these festivities proceeded to happen and there were no problems at any of these events. I just hope that in the future that these people bringing ridiculous problems into out school realize the impact that are having on us. They will then realize that we will not put up with these problems in our school.

Ben Kozlowski, Junior

KNIGHTS SPEAK OUT

What do you think about the School Store being closed?

Stephanie Junker

Stephanie Junker, junior

"It's dumb, because the school store was the only place that offered any tasty nutritional food like fruit snacks and Nutri-Grain bars."

Megan Shurr

Megan Shurr, sophomore

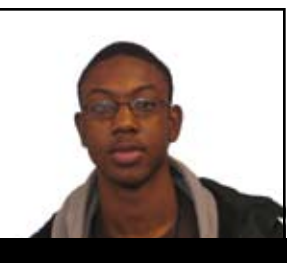
"I think it sucks. I would always get cookies and stuff like that."

Andre Kelly

Andre Kelly, junior

"It really doesn't bother me that it was shut down. Kids didn't value the store and it lost money."

Jadon Hawkins



Jadon Hawkins, sophomore

"I don't like it because I got everything from there. Now I have to go to the store before school."