



# Smoke Signal

50¢

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## In this issue:

**Blaxton  
promotion**

**Refinancing  
issue**

**PRIDE**

**Symposium  
winners**

**Thespian  
Convention**

**Teacher Spotlight:  
Mr. Miller**

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\*Joke\*  
\*\*Signal\*\*  
.....

## Massey honored at All-State

*Chosen Young Director of the Year*

By Allen Archer



*Band director Brady Massey conducts the beginning brass band.*

At the All-State Band convention in Hot Springs, Brady Massey received the Young Director of the Year award.

“It is sponsored by the American School Band Directors Association and cosponsored by United Musical Instruments to recognize outstanding teaching and achievements of the recipient’s band,” Massey said.

A committee picks one winner from each state, then

one from each region of states, and one winner in the nation. The national winner will be announced this summer.

Massey feels this is an honor for him and for the PHS Band.

“It really is a big honor. I think it speaks highly of the members of our organization and this wouldn’t be happening without the band,” he said.

He also thinks it’s funny that he is considered a young director after ten years of directing.

# Bond refinancing generates money for school

By Elizabeth Crisp

On January 22 the voters of Pocahontas voted 494-22 to take advantage of lower interest rates by refinancing bonds made by the Pocahontas School District.

This refinancing, which will not raise taxes, but generate money for the schools, will provide approximately \$1.9-2 million for the school depending on when the bonds sell.

By this process the school will be issued new bonds at lower interest rates and extend them 15 more years.

There were many factors taken into consideration when deciding what to build with the money.

The school board had to decide what would benefit the most people and meet the most needs of the schools.

Superintendent Marc Van Camp says they first looked at building an auditorium.

"We went to Nettleton and estimated that their auditorium cost approximately \$2 million," he said.

They also looked at the auditorium in Beebe, it was estimated at \$2.5 million. Neither of these buildings contains classrooms though and that was something that the board knew they wanted.

"I pushed for extra classrooms," Van Camp said.

With talk of consolidation and obviously expanding class sizes the board could not decide to spend all of the money on one building that would have minimal use due to a lack of

classroom space. Building an auditorium would have also caused a tax increase and the building would have to be air conditioned year round.

After many board meetings it was decided to divide the money among projects to help in many areas. It will be used to build an indoor facility for sports/PE, expand the band room, and add a new wing containing six classrooms to the junior high.

The sports facility will be built in the area behind the drama building, by the football field and the new classrooms will be built in the area between the junior high and the woods by the MD Williams playground. The band room will be extended into the teachers' parking lot.

The sports facility will be made up of an "activity area" for practice and PE classes, coaches offices, locker rooms, dressing rooms, restrooms, shower rooms, a therapy room, and storage spaces. There will also be an upper level weight room. The ground level is approximately 16068 square feet and the upper level is 3227 square feet making 19295 total square feet for sports activities.

The junior high PE classes had to share facilities and work around other schedules, the new facility should help with that problem.

In addition to the six classrooms the proposed junior high wing will contain new restrooms and a custodial room. It will encompass approximately 9730 square feet of area.

"There is always a need for new classrooms," Van Camp said.

The extension to the band room will contain an area for uniform storage, dressing rooms, instrument storage, and new offices for the band directors. This addition will provide about 7500 square feet for band use.

After sitting in on a typical band class, Van Camp could only describe the experience as deafening because the size of the band has exceeded the space provided, and expectations of the band show that this problem will not go away by itself.

"As long as there's a well liked band director the band will stay strong," Van Camp said.

One inconvenience caused by the construction though is that a new parking lot will have to be made for the junior high teachers. For the first year of construction, they will have to park in the circle in front of the junior high, but a new parking lot extended behind the old one should be available after that.

The school board is hopeful that these facilities will improve our school in many ways.

"We are trying to keep our programs as updated as possible," Van Camp said.

As for the auditorium, Van Camp says that it is definitely still on the minds of the board.

"A school this size needs one, so maybe next time we can raise taxes for an auditorium," he said.

## Students compete at annual symposium

By Elizabeth Crisp

Approximately 485 students from northeast and central Arkansas attended the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Trivium Quadrivium Symposium in Marion on February 23.

These students were competing by taking tests in math, English, science, journalism and foreign language.

Twenty-five students from Pocahontas attended this event. Pocahontas received three



Jill Pecoraro holding her first place trophy for English.

team awards. They were second place in English and Spanish, and honorable mention in history.

Four Pocahontas students received individual recognition for their tests.

In biology Miranda Steimel placed second and Eric Flagg placed third.

Flagg also tied for third place in the Spanish category with a fellow PHS student, Shana Simpson.

Jill Pecoraro placed first in English.

## PRIDE team attends State

By Brent Miller

At PHS, PRIDE is a drug/abuse awareness group dedicated to promoting a drug free lifestyle through education. On February 18 and 19 these educators were educated through the state PRIDE convention.

Nineteen PHS students attended the convention held at the Robinson Center in Little Rock. Accompanying the team as advisors and chaperones were Lynn Hogan and Kelly Rodgers.

PRIDE members attended lectures on rape, abuse, drug awareness, and peer-pressure prevention at the convention. Also, the PHS PRIDE team

showcased a music medley.

“State PRIDE gives members from all over the state a chance to learn about current issues related to drug abuse and prevention and ways to spread our drug free message,” Sally Malone, PRIDE sponsor said.

In addition the PHS PRIDE team had four of its members named to the Arkansas State PRIDE team. This team is comprised of the state’s top dancers and vocalist. Carrington Gray and Tiffany Casillas made the team as vocalist and Londyn Clements and Caleb Rodgers were dancers. In order to be on the state team, they had to try out in the Hot Springs in early November. A panel of judges the selected them.

## ASU hosts contest

Crisp earns two certificates

Nettleton High School won the sweepstakes award March 2 at the 64<sup>th</sup> Annual Journalism and Broadcasting Day at Arkansas State University. Conway captured second, Wynne third, and West Helena Central fourth.

Smoke Signal editor-in-chief Elizabeth Crisp earned honorable mention certificates in both copy editing and feature writing.

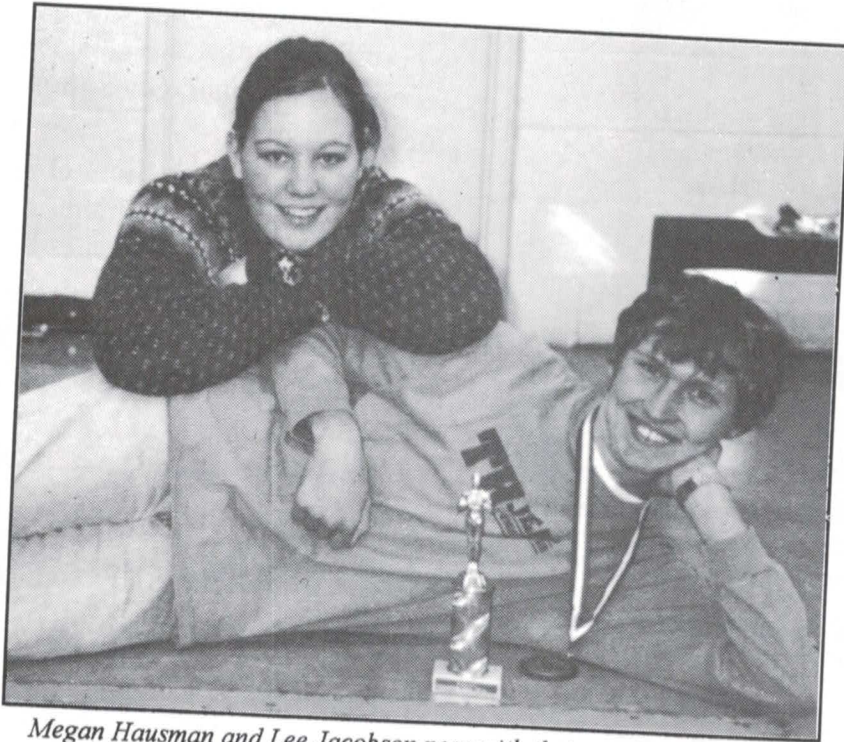
Students competed in thirteen contests for individuals as well as newspaper and video competitions.

In newspaper competition the Wynne Yellowjack was named the top paper in Division I, and the Nettleton Chieftain took top honors in Division II.

In individual contests for newspaper were feature writing and newspaper copy reading, photography, news writing, sports writing, editorial writing, headline writing, and editorial cartooning.

Awards were presented by College of Communications students.

## Thespians receive awards at State Convention



*Megan Hausman and Lee Jacobson pose with their trophe and medals.*

**By Angela Benson**

“Sightings,” the Thespians’ one-act play, was rated excellent at the State Thespian Convention February 23. Four hundred students from sixteen schools participated in the Thespian Convention. Seniors Megan Hausman, Lee Jacobson, and Toby Manciaz acted in “Sightings” at the Fowler center in Jonesboro.

The play was performed in front of about 150 people.

“It felt great to share the final performance with people who appreciated what we had worked so hard for,” Jacobson said.

There was a lot of competition at the center.

“There were some good plays. I didn’t see any better than ours, but they certainly were good,” Thespian sponsor Jon Crabbe said.

Hausman believes that the audience enjoyed the play.

“There were several oohs and ahhs! I think they enjoyed it a lot,” she said.

“The audience was very responsive and very active in the play. They cheered when called for and laughed throughout the play. They were very supportive of us,” Jacobson said.

Both actors learned new things from the experience.

“I learned that a crowd is gullible.

You can make them laugh when you want, cheer when you want, and cry when you want. It’s a very emotional time not only for the audience, but for the actors,” Jacobson said.

Hausman has performed in front of an audience before, but she believes every experience is a learning experience.

“There is a lot going on in your head while you are on stage. For example, lines, movement, and remembering to wait for the audience’s reactions.”

Both actors were surprised when they were selected all-state cast.

“I felt like all the hard work finally paid off,” Hausman said.

“I felt honored and overjoyed to know that I was not only a drama student, but a Thespian. You can’t beat that feeling,” Jacobson said.

There were a lot of things to do at the competition for those who are interested in theater or dance. They include costume design, technical competition, publicity design, stage design, one-act plays, individual acting competitions, singing, and several workshops.

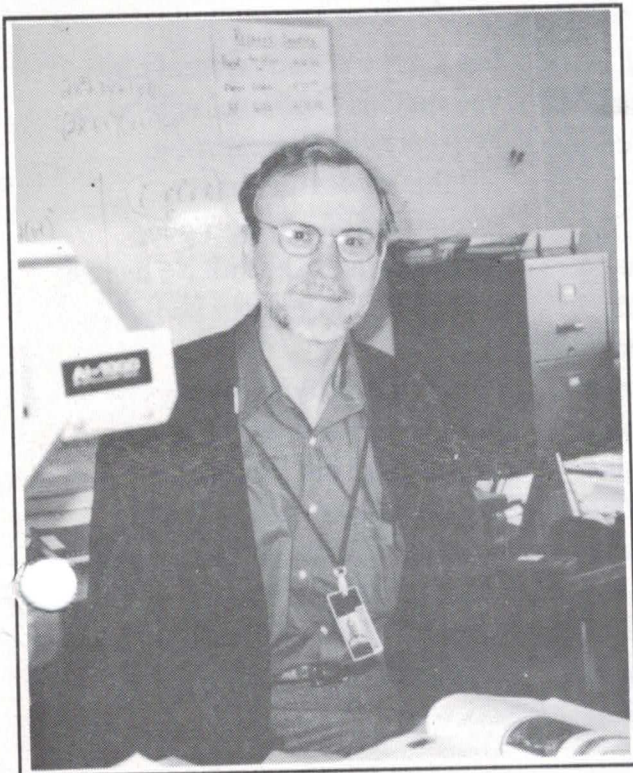
Crabbe believes that it is always good to go somewhere where other people share your interest.

“The students that participated worked hard and did a good job representing PHS. It is always good to go somewhere where other people share your interest. A lot of the students made new friends from other schools,” Crabbe said.

# Feature

## Teacher Spotlight

### Miller finds importance in family, faith, and teaching



Gary Miller teaches in front of a class.

By Amy Whitehorn

When he is not teaching math, Gary Miller spends time researching and writing. Miller has worked at Pocahontas High School for 25 years.

He says he teaches because of his interest in physics and because he loves kids.

After graduating from Maynard High School, Miller attended several colleges in Arkansas and Texas.

"I am presently finishing a Masters of Education Degree in instruction and curriculum at Texas Wesleyan

University in Forth Worth, TX," Miller said.

Religion, family, and teaching are all important to Miller.

"Next to my religious connections, my wife and two daughters, Sarah and Ruth, are most important to me," Miller said.

As a hobby, Miller also writes religious articles. He has written articles on religious topics for his church's periodical, "Insight." It has subscribers in 24 foreign countries and the U.S.

"I have written about 60-70 articles of this kind. I have also written four books on church doctrine," he said.

Miller takes teaching a year at a

*"Next to my religious connections, my wife and two daughters, Sarah and Ruth are most important to me."*

time, but after he retires he plans to continue writing and researching.

"I plan to devote my time to religious studies and publication for our Church. I also plan to continue research in physics and teach part time," he said.

In the summer Miller teaches the ACT prep session, takes courses, and teaches at BRTC.

Sarah and Ruth Miller are both graduates of PHS and are in college.

"My oldest daughter, Sarah, is planning to pursue a career as a supervisor at an art museum. My youngest daughter, Ruth, is thinking of working in some area of mathematics, probably teaching math on the college level," Miller said.

### Smoke Signal Staff

*The Smoke Signal is a member of the Arkansas Scholastic Press Association.*

**Editor-in-Chief:** Elizabeth Crisp

**Advisor:** Janet Crabbe

**Staff:**

Allen Archer  
Angela Benson

Brent Miller  
Amy Whitehorn

## Blaxton promoted to assistant superintendant

By Allen Archer

At the January school board meeting, the board voted to promote Daryl Blaxton to the position of assistant superintendent next year.

Blaxton, who has been assistant principal at the high school for the past two years, will be the assistant superintendent for two years and then take the position of superintendent when Marc Van Camp retires in two years.

No one, as of yet, has been named to take Blaxton's position.

Blaxton's first year as assistant superintendent will be spent learning about the responsibilities of the superintendent and in his second year he will make the transition into the position of

superintendent. He will also have to take on curriculum director Grant Killion's responsibilities because Killion is retiring after this year.

"I'll learn about the budget process and probably the curriculum. Unofficially I've already started. I'll finish out the year as assistant principal, but I've already started learning [about the position of superintendent.] You have to

have a strong knowledge of school law and finance, be a good communicator, have conflict resolution skills, and have knowledge of curriculum," Blaxton said.

Van Camp speaks highly of Blaxton and his qualifications.

"Mr. Blaxton has been here and number of years and his people and communication skills are good. The areas he doesn't have experience in are budgeting and curriculum. He also has never had a chance to work with kindergartners," Van Camp said.

Blaxton feels that Pocahontas

has a good school system now and that his challenge will be to help carry on the tradition.

"I think Pocahontas is recognized as having a good school system. I think we have a great staff and student body," he said.

As for Van Camp, he says he is looking forward to doing some traveling during retirement.

"I would like to follow the Razorback football team. I would like to buy an RV and travel full time. Maybe then I will settle somewhere and build a house," he said.

## PHS hosts regional tournament

*Skins end season 22-5, Lady Skins 14-13*

By Elizabeth Crisp

Pocahontas High School hosted the regional basketball tournament February 18-23.

Twenty-four teams (12 boys' teams and 12 girls' teams) participated in this event including the Redskins and the Lady Redskins.

While the visiting teams were at PHS, student volunteers served as hosts and

hostesses and different high school clubs ran the concession stand each night.

In their first game of the tournament the Redskins were defeated by East Poinsette County, finishing their season with a 22-5 season.

The Lady Skins were defeated in their first game by Mt. View, ending their season with a 14-13 record.

## Band students attend All-Region/All-State tryouts

*Two named to All-State Band, twenty-eight chosen as All-Region*

By Jill Pecoraro

Seniors Bridgette Kick and Evan Waggoner were chosen to be in the 2002 All-State High School Band.

On January 19 members of the Pocahontas High School Band in grades 10-12 traveled to Batesville High School for the 2002 All-Region Tryouts.

Preparations for tryouts required lots of practice. Students were given pieces of music of to play the tryouts. Scales from memory and sight reading was also included in the judging.

After the judges were finished scoring the audition, the scores were added and used to determines the students' placements in one of two All-Region Bands.

Students who placed high enough were eligible for All-

State Tryouts, held February 2.

From PHS, twenty-eight students were named to the All-Region Bands and three were named as alternates. Nine were in the first band and 19 were in the second band.

The students who made first band and attended the All-State Tryouts were Stephanie Nieman, Bridgette Kick, Evan Waggoner, Debra Baltz, Jill Pecoraro, Lee Jacobson, Erin Sullinger, Matthew Walton, and Derek Kearby.

Students named to the second band were Jessica Throesch, Michelle Guthrey, Lauren Pennington, Davida Williams, Amy Downs, Leah Baltz, Zac Thielemier, Kim Dishon, Eric Flagg, T.J. Thompson, Allen Archer, Lance Williams, Casey Murphy, Jennifer Riney, James

Gates, Ben Thielemier, Alex Burns, Casey Grissom, and Joey Broadway. Dishon, Flagg, Archer, Grissom, and Broadway were also alternates to All-State Tryouts.

The students named as alternates to All-Region were Charles Rouyer, Lyle Williams, and Samantha Hall.

Both All-Region Bands performed a concert at the Fowler Center at Arkansas State University January 26.

The students selected for All-State Tryouts traveled February 2 to the University of Central Arkansas in Conway for the tryouts.

Waggoner was selected as first band, 12<sup>th</sup> chair, and Kick was selected first band, 18<sup>th</sup> chair. Jacobson was named first alternate, and Flagg was named fourth alternate.



# Busch fulfills goal, becomes cheerleading coach

By Amy La BlancCorne

After three years of sponsoring the high school cheerleading squad, Mrs. Kick decided to step down and let someone else have the rewarding job. As soon as this was announced, math teacher Don Busch gladly took her place.

"It has always been a dream of mine to be a cheerleader, but since I'm too old, sponsoring is the next best thing."

Busch grew up in a cheerleading environment. His three sisters were all cheerleaders. So it's no surprise that he took this job.

"I would always try to talk them into letting me be on the squad. Dancing and shouting are two things I love to do," Busch said.

Busch has many future plans for

the cheerleaders. His two major plans are new cheers and change in dress code. "I have been coming up with some really great cheers. When I am at home at night the cheers just come to me," he said.

But Busch mainly wants to focus on dress code. He plans to get trench coats for all the girls to wear while cheering.

"The reason I decided to do this is because I think the outfits they currently

long to make up for it.

practicing cheers at home. "I got a little out of hand when I tried to do a back handspring and landed wrong," he said.

This was a minor setback for Busch, but he has all summer long to make up for it.

wear are too revealing and probably distract the players. The coats are a great alternative," he explained.

Some other changes that are going to be made are the girls are going to have to ride the bus with the football players to away games. This way the girls have time to think over their cheers for the game, just as the boys have time to think of their game. Earlier this year Busch had a shoulder injury. This was from practicing cheers at home.

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The Joke Signal is in no way affiliated with any type of organized media. We lost our membership due to recent accusations of scandalous activities, which we deny!

Ruler-of-All: Queen Elizabeth the Sparkley

"Advisor": Janet Crabbe

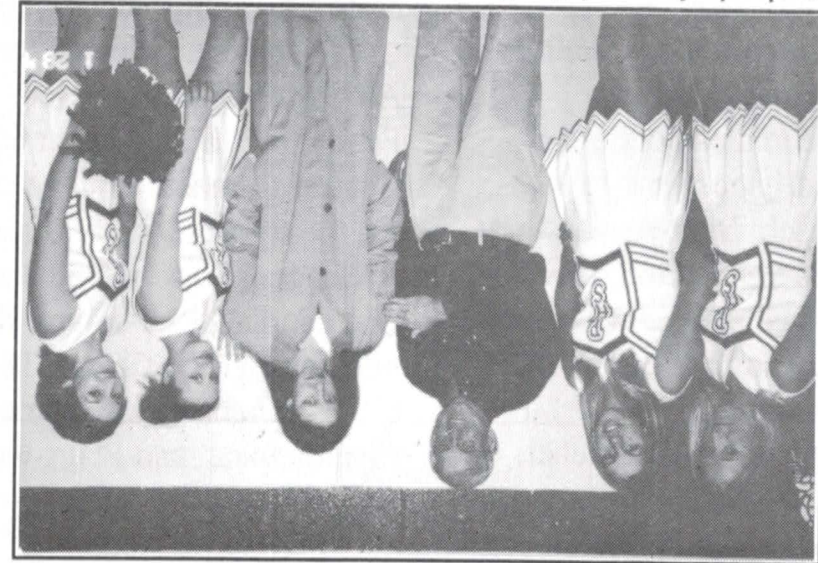
Not-so-secret agents:

Mac Diddy Archer

Angela Phillips Benson

Amy La BlancCorne

## Joke Signal Staff



New cheerleading coach Don Busch poses with cheerleaders (L to R) Lindsey Peters, Leah Baltz, Stephanie Hicks, Stephanie Petrakis, and Candie Font.



# Miller inspired to go *Back to the Future*

By Mac Diddy Archer

Scientists have never been able to

discover a way to make time travel

possible, but PHS math and physics

teacher Gary Miller has done just that.

One Saturday afternoon when

Miller was watching his favorite

movie, *Back to the Future*, he

pondered on how to build a time

travel machine. After he watched the

movie, he went to go wash out his

popcorn bowl and spilled some soapy

water on the linoleum of his kitchen.

With *Back to the Future* fresh in his

mind, he slipped on the linoleum and

hit his head. He was unconscious for

hours.

"I don't know how long I was out.

I had started watching the movie in the

afternoon, but when I woke up it was

late in the evening," Miller said.

When he woke up, he had a vision.

This vision was a clear and definite

way to build a time

travel device.

When Archimedes

made his discovery of

buoyancy, he went

running through the

streets naked yelling

"Eureka." Miller did

the same thing, only

he was wearing his

pajamas and an apron

which is no less odd.

The neighbors did

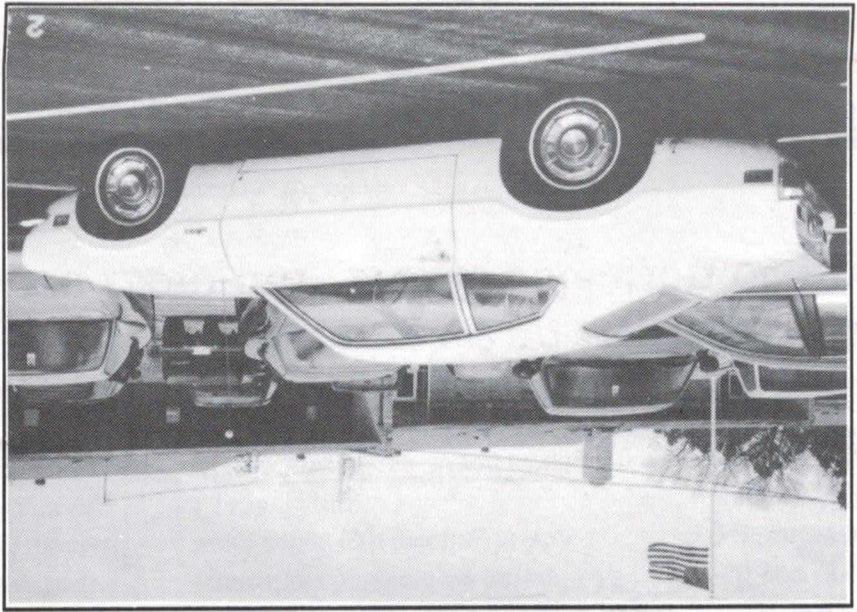
not notice this

because it was normal

behavior for Miller.

"We had seen this

type of thing before



The "Super Maverick" sits in the teachers' parking area.

with Gary. He's always coming up

with some new discovery like that,

bettering the human race and such

nonsense. Frankly, I'm tired of it," an

anonymous neighbor said.

Miller's time travel machine would

not be easy to build because of how

complicated time travel is. His

machine would have to be built into a

classic, gas-guzzling car. This is for

some unknown, highly scientific

reason that only the super-mega-

uber-genius, as Miller likes to call

himself, can understand. The perfect

choice of car was easy for Miller to

make. He decided, without

hesitation, to use his 1970 Ford

Maverick.

"The Maverick and I have been

through a lot together. It wouldn't

feel right if I traveled in time with

another, inferior car. It would be

obscene," Miller said.

He likes to call his new time travel

machine "*The Super-Maverick*."

(He wanted the name to look

important so he gave it an ultra-snazzy

name, put it in quotation marks,

bolded it, underlined it, and italicized

it.)

Anyone who would like to know

how "*The Super-Maverick*" was

built could ask Miller about it. He

loves to talk about the details of his

time travel machine. Not many

people can understand him though

because he uses a language that is

known as uber-genius. Only uber-

geniuses are taught this language and

they can be punished for teaching

common people how to speak it.

Miller has been able to visit many

different time periods with his time

travel machine. This has always been

a goal for him.

"Ever heard the expression 'It's the

best thing to happen

since sliced bread?'

I hate that saying. I

plan to go back in

time to the day that

sliced bread was

invented and show

them "*The Super-*

*Maverick*." That

way they will forget

about sliced bread

and the expression

will never be used

again. This was my

inspiration for

building the time

travel machine,"

Miller said.

# Mysterious bag appears in office everyday

By Queen Elizabeth

the Sparkley

After many encounters with a

strange phenomenon, the smoke

signal staff started a thorough

investigation of what we call "the

Liz Lunch!"

We are often making trips to

the office during third hour (our

journalism hour), and we noticed

that every day a mysterious

brown bag with the letters "LIZ"

sat on the counter.

Curious about the bag, we

questioned office aide Dilan

Ross about it.

"I know! It's the weirdest

thing! The bag just appears from

nowhere, and I never call anyone

to pick it up, but it's always gone

the next day, so someone has to get

it. It's a mystery!"

Agitated by the lack of information

from Ross (I mean, we already

knew it was a mystery!) the staff

decided that maybe the answers

could be found if we could just

figure out who the mysterious "Liz" is!

All of the students and teachers with

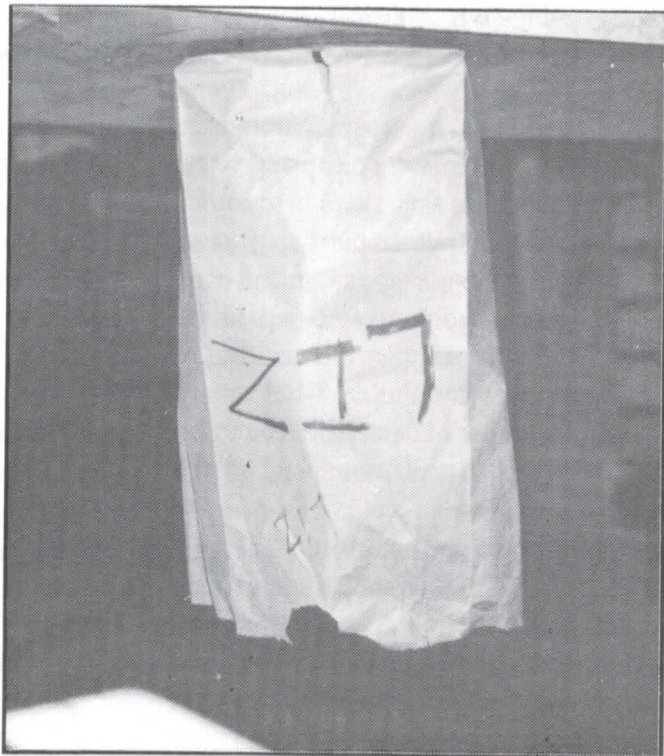
the first or middle name Elizabeth or any

name that contained the letters "LIZ"

were called to a meeting in Mrs.

Crabbe's room.

Unfortunately all denied having any



involvement with the

bag.

Our questions were

still left unanswered.

An undercover staff

member seized the lunch

on March 1 to see what

was in it. It contained a

peanut butter and jelly

(possibly grape)

sandwich, a bag of

pretzels, and an apple.

The lunch was replaced,

unharmful.

It still did not answer

our questions.

1) Who is "Liz" and

how does she know to

get her lunch?

2) How does this bag

"appear" everyday? When

and why?

3) Is it always the same contents?

If you or someone you or anyone

you know has info regarding this

investigation please contact the

Smoke Signal staff immediately.

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# Joke Signal JOKERS



# O'Donnell's slave tells of horrendous life

By Allen Archer

A disgusting secret has been discovered about one of our teachers. Shawn O'Donnell has done something far more heinous than lying, stealing, or even jaywalking. He has violated someone's civil rights with malicious intent.

During the summer of 2000, O'Donnell paid an immigrant smuggler \$10 through eBay for a computer nerd. He uses this illegal immigrant for sweatshop-style computer work.

O'Donnell had given this alien the name of Lavon Butler and only recently has his original name been discovered. His name, when loosely translated, means "man with great knowledge of designer purses." Butler, who can only refer to O'Donnell as "master," has

gotten daily beatings the whole time he has lived here. This has resulted in many trips to the emergency room for injuries including a broken leg.

"Even though I like to take out my aggressions on him, I never harm his precious fingers because they are the only reason he is valuable to me," O'Donnell said.

In addition to this, Butler is severely malnourished and sleep deprived. This is due to his low income and the fact that he has to sleep in O'Donnell's basement, where it gets very cold during the winter and hot during the summer.

Also, Butler is not allowed to help teach the Cisco class, although his goal in life is to become a "teacher" like O'Donnell. This is because he

is considered an embarrassment and a liability.

"He once tried to learn programming and accidentally wrote a virus and infected the school's network with it. This cost me many hours of work to clean up and is costing the school because of lawsuits brought against the school by Mrs. Hatch for 'unreasonable amounts of distress in the workplace,'" O'Donnell said.

Butler has been working here the whole time so that he can earn enough money to have his fiancé shipped to the U.S. as a legal citizen. Once this happens, Butler will marry her and get his green card so that he will never again have to live under the oppressive rule of "Lord O'Donnell the fascist dictator," as Butler refers to him.

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Val-U Meal



Mac Ronald's

Located in PHS under the library.

Expires 4/1/2000

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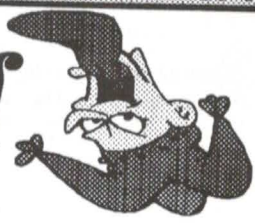
O'Donnell  
slave  
discovered

Mystery in the  
office

Miller discovers  
time travel

Sports: Busch  
becomes  
cheerleading  
coach

# Joke Signal



£500

## Casillas' music career takes off



Super-star singer Tiffany Casillas poses for her new album cover.

By Angela Phillips Benson

Few high schools can claim they produced a celebrity, but PHS senior Tiffany Casillas is on her way to fame and success. Garth Brooks, who is on the Jared diet, stopped by Subway on April 1 after a concert at BRTC. While Casillas was making his sandwich, she was singing a song she wrote, "My Baby Left Me for a Subway Sandwich." Brooks was amazed by her unforgettable voice, and he helped her get an audition at the Grand Ole

Opry. Everyone there loved her voice as much as he did. "I can't believe I've been discovered. It's so amazing because now I don't have to worry about getting fired for spitting on the food when I am singing. Oh yeah, sorry about that, Garth," Casillas said. Look for Casillas' new album, "Inspirational Songs From the South," featuring soon to be hit songs: "My Baby Left Me for a Blonde Cowgirl," "My Baby Left Me Plowin' Fields and Herdin' Cows," "My Baby Left Me to Go Huntin' (and Never Came Back)" and Garth Brooks' favorite, "My Baby Left Me for a Subway Sandwich."