

## Kwanzaa celebrates African culture, customs

**By Ashley Kelly**  
Co-News Editor

Students in Ms. Stephen's African American History class rehearse for a program in the media center. "It is not a holy day, not a holiday, nor a substitute for Christmas," said Ms. Stephens. Then what is it? It's Kwanzaa.

"It is a celebration honoring our ancestors' achievements, and heroes," said Ms. Stephens.

Meaning "fruit of the harvest," Kwanzaa is an African American celebration that takes place from Dec. 26 to Jan. 1. Founded in 1966 by Dr. Karenga, Kwanzaa is an African American celebration, not an African celebration.

Because celebrating African tradition is important to Ms. Stephens, instead of giving her students a written exam, she expects them to put together a Kwanzaa program. "This program allows my students to acquaint others with their family background of which they should be proud," says Ms. Stephens.

This year's Kwanzaa pro-

gram will be on December 8<sup>th</sup> in the Grimsley media center from 10:00 a.m.-12:30 a.m. During this program the students will present and give the meaning of the seven principles of Kwanzaa: Umoja, Kujichagulia, Ujima, Ujamaa,

"How will I know who I am unless I know my past? If a person does not know or understand his or her past, then that person allows others to define [their] past."

**-Ms. Stephens,  
African American  
history teacher**

Nia, Kumba, and Imani. The seven principles all represent different things. For example, Kujichagulia means self-determination as well as to define ones self, while Ujima stands for unity. "[Seven principles] serve as a model for our role in our



*Fountain photo*

Erica Miller, Ashley Mckoy, Malarian Hunter, Malukah Bailey, Ashley Means, Teaira McDow, Ashley Kelly, and Alexis Alston recite a poem in preparation for the Kwanzaa celebration. The poem is "Phenomenal Women," by Maya Angelou.

race, community and society," says Ms. Stephens.

In addition to presenting the seven principles of Kwanzaa, the program will include a speaker, poetry, and a feast to conclude the event. Each student will make a family tree, which will be on display in the media center.

Kwanzaa is celebrated world

wide in recognition of the customs as well as the culture of western Africa. African American History class is one of the few outlets that allows students to learn about these two things that may or may not be taught in regular history classes. Mario Fountain, a senior, said, "I signed up for this class to learn more about my Af-

rican heritage, culture, and background."

Learning and teaching African American history is important to Ms. Stephens, who says, "How will I know who I am unless I know my past? If a person does not know or understand his or her past, then that person allows others to define [their] past."

## Telewhirlie: A new-age solution to an age-old problem

**By Erin West**  
Reporter

Following the horrible Columbine incident two years ago schools across the country are worried about their inadequate safety conditions, and Grimsley is not excluded.

A parent is unable to quickly locate their children if they need to pick them up from school. Parents have to go to the main office or library to obtain their child's location.

Should office personnel need to speak with a student, another student must run the errand of finding his classroom and delivering the message. Often the attendance office staff will send any student waiting in the attendance office-whether he is sick or waiting for an early dismissal

ride home-on such an errand.

Should a teacher be put in the position of acts of violence going on in his class, he had no way of contacting the office. There is a solution, however, to fix these problems.

The solution is Telewhirlie, a phone system that Grimsley plans to install this year. It will provide each teacher with easy-access to a phone and personal voice mail.

The idea was born in the spring of 1999 when Mrs. Teague requested a grant towards installing such a phone system in Grimsley. Her request was denied by the school board, but was willingly accepted as a priority by the PTSA Board and the Grimsley Alumni Association.

The estimated cost of the communication system is an overwhelming \$150,000. The PTSA planned to raise \$75,000 and the Grimsley Alumni Association planned to raise the other \$75,000. Kathie Amato, one of the PTSA coordinators for this fundraiser, said, "In terms of enhancing the working environment, it's worth every penny."

The PTSA has had great success in getting parents to respond to this cause. One family pledged to donate \$100 for each other family that donated \$200 to a maximum of thirty families. The Alumni Association has contributed greatly to this collection fund by donating \$31,000 before it even started a campaign.

In the eyes of Mrs. Teague, the new communication system is a necessary step towards getting Grimsley up to date. "Can you imagine any business in 2001 without a phone?" asked Mrs. Teague.

Commenting on possible downsides, such as a teacher forgetting his voicemail password, Mrs. Teague said, "I'm sure there will be bugs...there are downsides to everything. I would never not give teach-

ers what they needed to be successful, even if it could be misused."

Grimsley is expected to run more smoothly, and safely, after the arrival of Telewhirlie.

### 2000 Exam Schedule

December 13	First period	8:35 a.m.-10:35 a.m.
	Break	10:35 a.m.-10:54 a.m.
	Second period	11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
December 14	Third period	8:35 a.m.-10:35 a.m.
	Break	10:35 a.m.-10:54 a.m.
	Fourth period	11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
December 15	Fifth period	8:35 a.m.-10:35 a.m.
	Break	10:35 a.m.-10:54 a.m.
	Sixth period	11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

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#### No smoking section

Ex-smoker regrets past mistake, warns teens against cigarettes.

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#### Get into the spirit

Spread the joy with stress relief methods and fun activities.

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#### Coach Griffin

Coach Griffin inspires swimmers amidst a busy teaching schedule.

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