

the high LIFE

“Our nation does not need test scores to prove its worth. Instead, the U.S. needs a combination of academic leaders and educated workers to pilot America into the future.”



Elizabeth Detmar

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Rabbi Fred Guttman speaks about the Holocaust to coincide with students' study of Elie Wiesel's "Night." page #2

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Congratulations to the 2009 Homecoming Court. Back row (l-r) Olivia Campbell, Tori Tucker, Abby James, Chelsea Capps, Kelsey LeGeaux, and Jasmine Williams. Front row (l-r) Hannah Orr, Haley Irvin, Hailey Barringer, Meg McNeill, Wendy Song, and Rebecca Stubbs. Haley Irvin earned the title of Homecoming Queen. Mason graphic

Whirlie mascot finds its way back to campus

BY AVERY HILL
Reporter

Known for its unique qualities that give the school its edge, the Whirlie mascot is about to resurface after 20 years; however, its appearance is still a mystery to the staff and student body. Principal Anna Brady decided to bring back the Whirlie mascot to enhance school spirit and invigorate the crowd during pep rallies, games, and other special occasions on campus. A member of the alumni has agreed to pay for the cost.

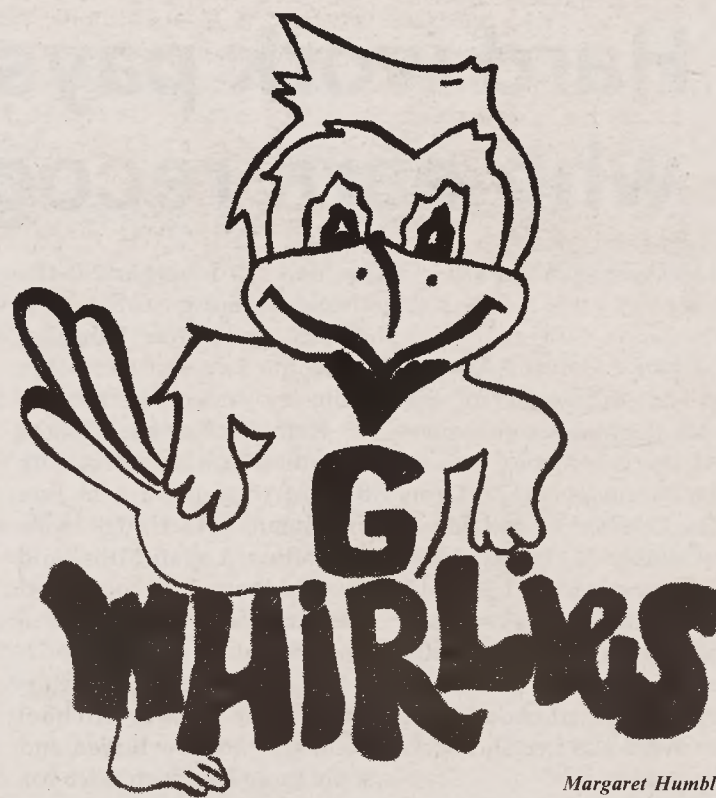
Social studies teacher Joe Franks and math teacher Roberta Rohan, both Grimsley alumni, are presently assisting Brady on plans for the new Whirlie by working on a design with the owner of Eastern Costumes. Once the draft is finished, they will make a final decision and place a purchase order.

Members of the alumni and present student body can recall times when people asked them what a Whirlie was and what it looked like; some have even wondered themselves. According to ESPN, the Whirlie is the only one of its kind in the country. The term itself was coined in 1909 when the school teams were called the "Purple Whirlwinds," but when Grimsley colors changed to navy and white, the name was first shortened to "Whirlwinds" and then eventually to "Whirlies."

"I remember that the Whirliebird [mascot] costume was a nightmare; it was a combo of an egret, an ibis, and a flamingo—in blue. However, I liked, and still like, the idea of a mascot. I also remember when Joe Franks contacted Iowa State to seek permission to copy the university's Cyclone mascot. As I recall, they were very agreeable with the idea. There are times when you really need a character to represent the school at athletic events and other school functions," said social studies teacher Larry Williamson. "As a Whirlie, there have been those times that I wished we had a real moniker that people understood, but the longer I've been here, the more I like its uniqueness. ESPN even noted that we were unique. Just remember, I'm the guy who went to a college with the nickname "Hokies," whatever that means! Virginia Tech has a creative version of a fighting gobbler, so why can't the Whirlies have a cyclone costume?"

In years past, Homecoming involved more than a football game, Homecoming Court brunch, and dance. Students used to organize a parade with various floats.

"I remember working on a club float for the Homecoming parade that had an eight-foot-tall paper mache Whirlie bird who was taking down a pirate. I also remember seeing the cheerleader who wore the



Margaret Humble

Whirliebird mascot costume at the football games. The Whirliebird would help lead the cheers at the pep rallies in the stadium and raised school spirit. I used to tell my friends (from Page, of course) who teased me about it that Grimsley's mascot is one of a kind because we are an exceptional high school and not common like theirs (Page, of course)! I was always and still am proud to be a Whirlie. Whirlie is synonymous with Grimsley, whereas a pirate could be from another high school in another city or even

from a college," said French teacher Laura Wolf.

While an official presentation date of the new Whirlie mascot is still unknown, there will be soon be publicity regarding its arrival, hopefully in time for basketball season. Brady, Franks, and Rohan are developing criteria for student tryouts so auditions can occur each year to see who will wear the costume.

"The mascot may be a symbol of unity. No heat, no embarrassment... Ever. GO WHIRLIES!" said social studies teacher Joe Hill.