



Jamie Lutke

Beauty is more than skin deep

BY JAMIE LUTKE
Special to the Record-Eagle

We see them everywhere. They're on posters, the Internet, in magazines and on television.

They've overcome our world. They're what VHA would call Teen Idols.

We have the angelic ones like Hilary Duff and the Olson twins, and, on the flip side, we have the maturing teen idols like Lindsay Lohan, Christina Aguilera and the ever-famous Britney Spears. These girls are beautiful. They're singers and actresses and have the lives of luxury. They're famous. Of course, we would all love to have the sweetness of Hilary Duff or the beauty of the Olson twins or the body of Britney Spears, but sometimes these things are being shown to a crowd that doesn't understand that beauty isn't always what you see.

Our youth today reflect their lives, styles and, sometimes, actions upon what they see on television or in magazines. Some teens will starve themselves so they can have the body of Britney, or they'll change their image to look like somebody everybody else envies. In my opinion, the definition of beauty is missed in many ways. According to Webster, the definition is as follows: Beauty: the inherent quality in an object of pleasing the eye, ear or mind.

For example, you go shopping with the girls and see a shirt that is pleasing to your eye. You like it; it's beauty. You were born blind and cannot see anything, but you hear a good song on the radio. You like it; it's beauty. You get an assignment in English class to read a book. You read the book and come to find that you enjoy it a lot. You like it; it's beauty.

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Wanted: Your submissions

If you attend junior high or high school in the 13-county Traverse City Record-Eagle coverage area and like to write, please send articles and essays for possible publication in the monthly Generation Why page. Pieces that have appeared in your school newspaper that might have broad interest are acceptable. We use between five and seven items per month and welcome diversity in submissions.

SENIORS: We are especially looking for essays relating to your thoughts about senior year, graduation, college plans, the future, etc. for the June issue.

Generation Why runs monthly from October to June. In June, we will review all of the published items and select one as a favorite, awarding the author a \$50 bookstore gift certificate.

Submit your writing, along with a picture of yourself if possible, to: Generation Why, Traverse City Record-Eagle, 120 W. Front, Traverse City, MI 49685; fax to 946-8632; e-mail to kgibbons@record-eagle.com. Questions? Call (800) 968-8273, Ext. 1452, or 933-1452.

GENERATION WHY

Tuesday, March 1, 2005

NEWS TIP LINE (231) 933-1472

The adventure of life



Sara Hoover

Taking driver's seat on the way to the future

BY SARA HOOVER
Special to the Record-Eagle

*"Life is a highway. I want to ride it all night long."
— singer Tom Cochrane*

Before modern times, one trekked, hiked, or walked down the path of life. In today's world of hurrying everywhere, there is no longer time to simply walk. The car has become the

LONG ROAD AHEAD

principal mode of transportation. And so life is often an expressway, and the cars traveling in all directions are people.

The rush of speeding down a road with an infinite number of exits is exalting and thrilling. The horizon at the end of the road begging to be explored desires only one answer: the rev of the engine as the car races into the unknown. In a time of never-ending possibilities, the road is the limit. There, dreams can be made and

visions become reality. With miles of pavement, anything is feasible.

However, reaching that point of accomplishment is far from easy. Life cannot be taken as a joy ride and the attitude of "all play and no work." Nor can it be a hitchhike simply relying on others.

To reach those goals in the distance requires work, just as a car must have gas, regular check-ups and oil changes to run smoothly. It does not matter what detour one takes down a country road, side street or boulevard: the car will stop running without fuel or an

efficient engine and miles of opportunity are lost. Only through dedication and effort can a car reach its destination.

Along the way will be speed bumps and potholes, with the occasional accident. But that is part of the expedition. Every hardship is a test of each car's ability to maneuver the terrain. Each obstacle along the road either proves the vehicle's capability to surmount the challenge or forces it to turn back. Mishaps and crashes will occur, but to keep on going is to overcome.

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PORTRAIT OF AN ATHLETE

Jogging to the finish

Takis Pifer is running toward the end of an era

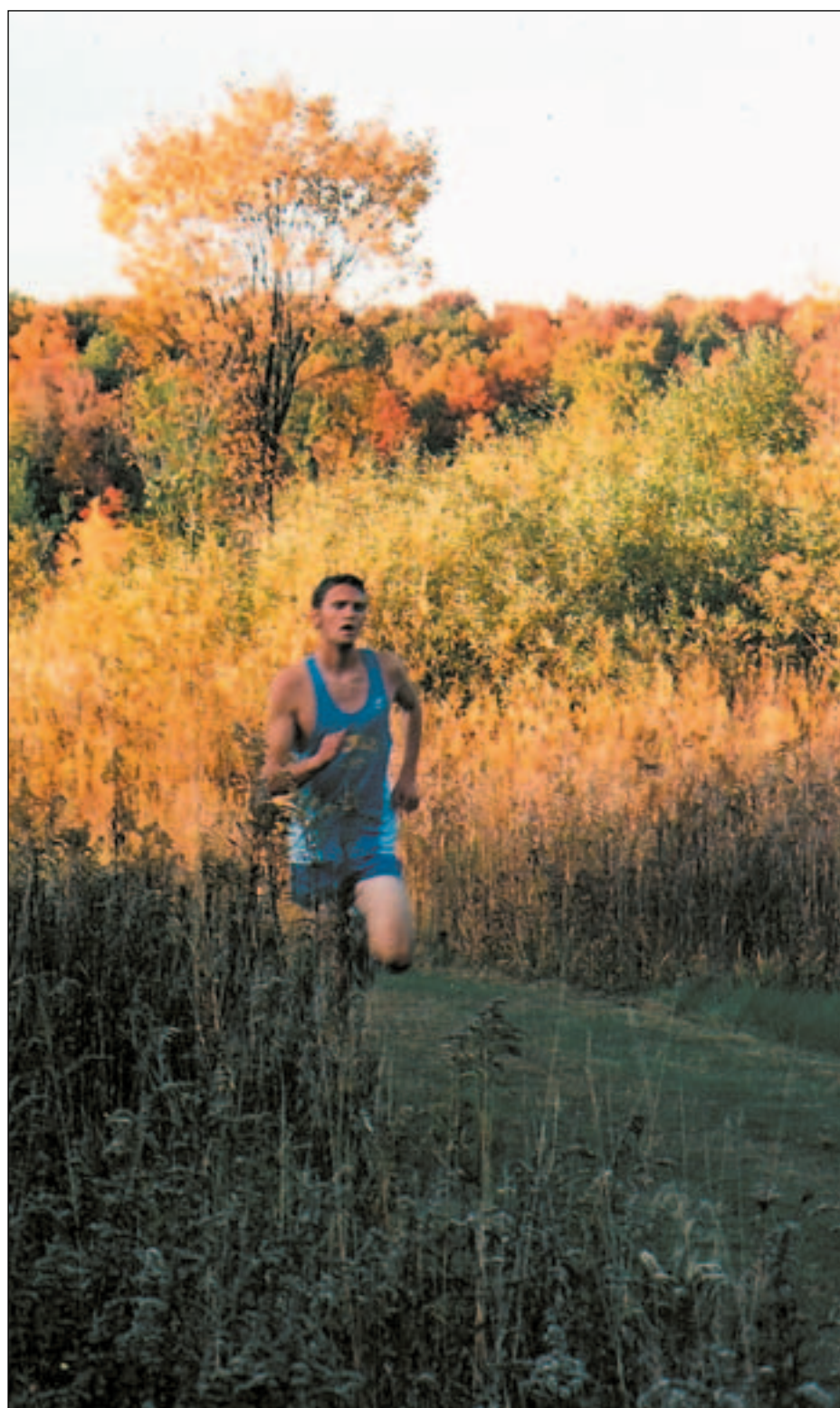
BY JASON HAINES
Special to the Record-Eagle

Takis Pifer wakes up every morning intending to push his body to the limit when running his neighborhood block in preparation for the next race.

"I push myself hard; that is the way I have always trained," said the 6-foot-2, 145-pound "running bear" of Buckley School. "And heck, it has worked well for me so far."

A "running bear" since he was 13, Pifer has run almost every day to build himself up physically and mentally for the almost endless cascade of races he competes in almost every weekend during the summer and fall.

This dedication can mainly be contributed to the fact that Pifer's parents often pulled double shifts, so he was often left at home. Fortunately, he had his two older sisters, both of whom had been running since they were young. It was their job to take care of him when his parents were at work. He noticed something about his sisters that he found interesting. Every night, at about the same time, they would go out and run their approx-



Special to the Record-Eagle

PLEASE SEE PAGE 2B Takis Pifer runs cross country last fall.

A ROAD LESS SLOTHFUL

Being fit builds confidence

Author learns to run with the Elks

BY KEENAN BAILEY
Special to the Record-Eagle

I knew something was wrong when I needed to poke a new hole in my belt.

Being mildly overweight and in high school can be a dangerous combination. Fortunately, I confronted this danger before it was too late.

My freshman and sophomore years were lonely times for me. I was short on confidence, an insufferable know-it-all and pretty pudgy. This combination led me down a hostile path, but I was lucky enough to take a detour around this



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Keenan Bailey runs cross country last fall for Elk Rapids High School.

road to "unfundom" to a better place that has made me strive to be a better person.

My first two years of high school were consumed with three things: school, video games and theater. I have always been a rather good pupil — not spectacular, but in the more competitive league of students.

I was also known for being rather good at the popular X-box game "Halo." In addition to school and games, I was involved with the Elk Rapids High School Drama Club. With these three items, my day would consist of going to school, then rehearsal and,

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EVERYDAY LIFE

Cut the drama: Yelling, swearing unnecessary

It's time for high-schoolers to grow up

BY DANIELA ROJAS
Special to the Record-Eagle

"You b%\$&! I hate this f°&%#! place. I need to get out of here!"

Those were the first words I heard one Thursday morning as I was walking into the front doors of the school. These words came from an upset freshman girl, who was yelling at what used to be her best friend.

This is not the first time I have witnessed this display of "drama" in our school. I have witnessed it many times, as I'm sure many other students have, too. Is this drama neces-



Daniela Rojas sary? The yelling, the swearing, the bawling your face out: Is that all worth it? Is it getting you somewhere? I don't think

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HEALTH



Kirstie Johnson

Strive for sleep necessary for teens

BY KIRSTIE JOHNSON
Special to the Record-Eagle

Most teenagers wake up somewhere between 5:30 and 7 every school day, quickly make themselves appealing for the day, eat a morsel of breakfast and jet off to school.

Once at school, they float from class to class, perhaps dozing off in a few of them, and then attend any extracurricular activities that they may participate in. After a long, challenging day at school, teens arrive

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DRAMA

High-schoolers need to grow up

FROM PAGE 1B

so. Especially if issues such as, "my boyfriend cheated on me," "my best friend is a skank" and many other Ricki Lake-related topics are becoming your excuses to perform poorly in school.

Students usually start getting their act together and start to mature before or a little into their junior year. But is that too late?

"Every student matures from the time they're a freshman to the time they graduate — some just take longer than others," commented Jim Rummer. "You just got to wait for that time."

Will waiting for a high maturity level for too long become a concern? Will a year and a half be enough time to bring GPAs up?

Randy Newstead doesn't believe that much of the drama that goes on gets in the way of a kid's performance in school.

"Not all of it has an impact," he said. "It can very much, if a student is dealing with personal problems, then sure, but not unnecessary drama."

Rummer seems to agree. "Some kids love drama," he said. "They walk the talk, but there is that percentage of kids that are dealing with realistic situations."

So how do we differentiate the kids with personal struggles from the kids that love attention? Kids who love the attention have got to understand that all of their display is not helping them mature.

"I believe sophomores especially have got to start making that big decision between should I start working hard now, or should I continue to act childishly," said Petoskey High School junior Danielle Houle. "Building up to work hard your junior year and even at the end of your sophomore year will definitely be rewarding."

Colleges look at your junior year the most, so if you're one of those kids that love to cause drama, I suggest you stop and you get your act together. How many times have you heard, "I hate this town?" My question is why waste your time sitting around complaining about it when you should be out there working your butt off in order to get out of here?

So your one true friend just stabbed you in the back? He or she was probably not a good friend to have around in the first place.

So your boyfriend cheated on you with a girl three years younger than you? He's probably just a jerk.

You need to know that you will never see at least three-fourths of your graduating class after graduation, so don't waste your

four high school years crying over that one girl you never asked out, or that boy who never liked you. Use this time to show off your talents, achieve good grades and get involved in positive activities. In the end it will pay off. You will meet new people and drama might start again, but by then you will at least have a good idea as to how to go on about it — and that is to just ignore it and work hard towards a goal.

Daniela Rojas is a junior at Petoskey High School

SLEEP

Teenagers need a full night's rest

FROM PAGE 1B

at home nearly exhausted and encounter homework, chores and parents. Finally, after all the busy work is taken care of, there is time for the Internet, the phone, or video games. But something is missing from the lives of busy adolescents — sleep.

Teens should get eight to 10 hours of sleep every night, but instead most teens get less than six hours. This presents a huge problem, because a lack of sleep interferes with learning, paying attention, memory and much more. On top of all that, teens who do not get enough sleep may fall asleep in class, which could lead to many problems in school.

Many reasons contribute to this epidemic of sleeplessness. Most young adults have so much going on in their lives that the last thing on their mind is sleep, until it's time to

wake up. From personal experience, staying up late night after night trying to juggle homework and after-school activities makes sleep my last priority — until it's 5:30 in the morning and I have to crawl out of my warm bed into the frosty air.

Sleeping too much can also have the same effects on your body as sleeping too little for some unknown reason. If adolescents try to catch up on their slumber over the weekend by sleeping in, then it's almost as bad for their bodies as getting too little sleep. Snoozing in on the weekends causes them to stay up late on Sunday night, which throws the whole week off again.

The best way to solve this problem is to count out eight or nine hours from your normal waking time and try to get to bed by that time every night. By doing this, your internal clock will not be thrown off, and you will have less groggy feelings during the day.

The outcome of getting more slumber is an all-around more pleasant person to be around.

Kirstie Johnson is a junior at Traverse City Central High School

PIFER

Runner faces end of an era

FROM PAGE 1B

imately three-mile neighborhood block, and he always wanted to join. This urge to run soon turned into what the residents of Buckley like to call "The Pifer Legacy." It started back in 1995, with his older sister Jessica, and continued with his other sister Holly.

Even though he has been running since the day his sisters let him run with them, he wonders: How much longer is this going to last? How much longer will he be able to run in competitions?

"As soon as my last year of high school is over, I will not be running as a Buckley runner anymore," said Pifer, a senior. "I will not be able to run for my friends, family and my school the way I do now,



Jason Haines

which is one of my major motivators to go out every day and train."

Pifer has been one of Buckley's best male runners in both cross country and track since the day he joined the team nearly five years ago. He has been placed in the top five in almost every 800-meter, 1600-meter, hurdle race and three-mile race he has been in.

Pifer's amazing feats in running have earned him

interest from a variety of colleges. But he still feels a bit of sadness leaving "The Pifer Legacy."

"I know my time in Buckley is running out, but I am going to make the best of it," he said.

Last fall in Kingsley, Pifer did just that. He set a course record in the first Greater Northwest Conference cross-country jamboree of the season. With an 11-second lead on the next competitor, Pifer won the boys meet with a time of 17.52 in the 5K (approximately 3.1 mile) run, and helped squeeze Buckley into second place.

Who does Pifer attribute much of his success to? He believes that it was a mix of his parents' upbringing, his ability to be self-sufficient when there was no one around to help him and the guidance of his coach, Kenneth Wicker, whom he has known a good portion of his life.

Though Pifer runs cross country and track for his own well-being and pride,

he has another reason. Pifer wants to stay running for his father, Todd Pifer, who has wanted to see his son succeed where he was not able.

"He wants to see me get farther than he did before both his knees were ruined," Pifer said. "He was constantly running to the point of exertion. Wrestling at school level downstate on almost a daily basis when he was young also contributed to his knees."

This year, Pifer is giving his all and doing whatever it takes to get to be in the elite class of runners. Even though he will be leaving Buckley, he will continue to work hard and try to make his friends and family proud.

"These past few years have been great," said Pifer. "Running cross country and track for Buckley has been some of the best years of my life. I just hope my hard work will continue into college and I can keep this going."

Jason Haines is a senior at Buckley School

FIT

Learning to run gives confidence, greater health

FROM PAGE 1B

finally, home to play a ridiculously time-consuming game.

Notice how homework was never a part of my day. In the mornings and study periods, I would panic on my homework, or simply not do it.

This was not the most athletic schedule. I let school, games and drama give me my "freshman 15" three times over.

Considering that I did not really care for the compa-

ny I kept in my extracurricular activities and that I was gaining weight, I decided I needed a change.

I found this change of pace in cross-country running. I ran during middle school, but for recreation — not health. I decided to get my weight under control. I would need some major cardiovascular training. I also decided I would make more friends if I was with people I liked.

The summer of junior year was the eve of my metamorphosis. I began running twice a week with the summer runners, and was the slowest person by a significant margin. The team was supportive and I continued. My weight before joining the team was 160 pounds. As more races came by, I would eat away the minutes that sep-

arated me from them and, soon, the gap between us, as well as my pants size, began to shrink.

As my body shrank back to a more svelte form, my circle of friends began to grow. Over the course of the year, I went from the hunched-over kid that sat alone in the lunchroom to a person who actually had a chair at a lunch table with other living, breathing, talking human teenagers. At the end of my first season, I had lost 30 pounds and taken minutes off my time. I did not realize until then how my confidence could be affected so drastically.

When the second season began, I had had my taste of what it was like to improve at something. Now I was out for blood. I never stopped from track to pre-season training. Our team

was content being unnoticed in the region, but now we had a chance to actually be statewide competitors and this made us ecstatic.

I am proud of what the team has helped me do, and I am proud of what I think our team will be able to accomplish this year. If I was asked as a freshman what I thought I would be doing as an upperclassman, I would never have been able to imagine myself as an athlete, nor would I have seen how far I would let myself go and the struggle to bring myself back.

Though I haven't reached my destination yet, the road to "unfundom" is cordoned off by orange pylons that mark my course to a more enjoyable future.

Keenan Bailey is a senior at Elk Rapids High School

SKIN

It's important to look beyond appearance

FROM PAGE 1B

ty. What we need to realize in our society today is

that beauty is more than skin deep. Whatever you see on the outside is sometimes just a cover-up. Don't worry about what you look like or what other people think. Just be yourself and you will come to find that people like an awesome personality a whole lot better than a stunning appearance.

Jamie Lutke is a senior at McBain High School

ROAD

Life is one big adventure

FROM PAGE 1B

Through those trials and difficulties come possibilities and opportunities. Sometimes the road of life is a highway with unex-

plored roads in every direction, and sometimes it is a two-track leading to a dead end. The journey of life is one big adventure that changes the lives of all; many will stumble, but many more will succeed.

The important thing, however, is not the destination, but how each car endured and persevered to get there.

Sara Hoover is a senior at Elk Rapids High School

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