

Rikki Willis exhibits dance talent

By COLLEEN RYAN

It is a known fact that BRHS teachers are talented. They are usually seen in their elements such as science, logic, and in teacher Rikki Willis's case, English. What many people don't know is that, in addition to being an English teacher, Willis is a prominent dancer in Baton Rouge.

Willis began dancing at the age of seven at Morgan St. Dance Co. in Broussard where she grew up. She trained in many styles of dance, but did a lot of con-

temporary as well.

"When I got to college I barely took dance classes. It was hard finding a place I liked," said Willis. She ended up dancing with the LSU dance ensemble and began taking classes at The Dancer's Workshop.

She still takes classes there, and she also dances with Of Moving Colors, a small modern company, for which she recently auditioned.

Willis was recently seen in The Martha Graham production of Panorama.

"I had never done Graham style before," said Willis, "so I thought it was a lot of really hard work, but I enjoyed it."

There are many benefits to keeping dance in her life.

"My main goal is to stay in shape," says Willis, "but most days I just want to go home and take a nap." Somehow Willis manages it, while keeping up with her teaching.

"It's good for my mental health. When I'm not dancing I'm more stressed," she said.



English teacher Rikki Willis dances a solo with the LSU dance ensemble (Photo courtesy of Rikki Willis)

All-State orchestra is music to everyone's ears

By JEREMY NICHOLS

On the weekend of November 23, thirteen Baton Rouge Magnet High orchestra students will convene with over 100 other orchestra members to perform with the prestigious Louisiana All-State Orchestra.

The orchestra students selected for All-State were Senior Eunjin Jang, senior Cory Bodley, Howard Tsai, Ipsita Subudhi, Hyungie Sung, Laura Song, David Holmes, Lucy Li, Conrad Sprunger, Trey Haliburton, David Lee, Annie Carlson, and Braxton Ray.

The application process included the recording of one solo piece, an etude, and a series of scales.

For senior cellist Conrad Sprunger and senior bassist Trey Haliburton, the application's solo was a Bach piece.

"I found it to be challenging but an interesting piece of music. It sets the

tone of the whole All-State experience," said Sprunger.

According to Sprunger, Haliburton, and fellow senior cellist David Lee, the All-State experience is an "intense" three days of hard work and practice.

"We get there on Friday evening and go until about 10 p.m., then on Saturday we are there from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. and on Sunday we're there from 9 a.m. till our actual concert about 3 p.m.," said Haliburton.

"From the minute you get there the only person talking is the director. Competition is cutthroat," said Sprunger.

On the first day of practice the guest conductor holds auditions for chairs or positions. According to Sprunger, BRHS's biggest competition comes from Caddo Magnet High out of Shreveport.

"Every year I get beaten out for first chair by these two kids from Caddo. My goal is know to crush them especially since one of these kids has a \$50,000 cello. It's ridiculous," said Sprunger.

Despite the intense nature, most students agree the orchestra pushes them to be better musicians and prepares them for a more professional environment.

"I have been playing the cello for nine years and the All-State Orchestra really allows you to see what its like to play in a professional music group like the Baton Rouge Symphony," said Sprunger.

The concert will take place on Sunday November 23 at the Holiday Inn Select off of College. The orchestra will perform Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's symphony No. 4.

Rising with Copper Sun

By JALISSA WYNDER

The historical fiction novel *Copper Sun* written by Sharon M. Draper is a must read. This heartbreaking novel will have its reader filled with tears from beginning to end. This is a story of a 15 year old African girl named Amari who is taken on an unforgettable journey to America. She learns the true value of family, friends and the feeling of home when she is captured and sold into slavery.

With determination Spirit Amari transitions from a naïve young girl to a focused young woman. She learns the hardest lessons of all is that fairy tales don't exist in this world.

Disney channel attracts high school fanatics

By ZOE CUNEO

Although the Disney Channel is geared towards children ages 5 to fourteen, there are a number of students at Baton Rouge High who are avid fans.

One of the most avid fans is senior Anne LaPlante.

When asked what her favorite movie on Disney Channel is, she said, "High School Musical. Is there even a contest?"

LaPlante has been a fan of the series since 2006, when the first one aired on television.

"It was really catchy and cute. I love things that are catchy," she said.

"I used to watch Hannah

Montana, but now it's mostly High School Musical 3," she said.

For her, the fondness for



Anne LaPlante

the High School Musical movies was how charming they were.

"I mean, the guy [Zac

Efron] was cute, but it was mostly just adorable," she said.

It was adorable enough to make her buy the High School Musical series that were released on DVD so far.

"I've only seen the first one a couple times, but the second one maybe four," she said.

She didn't get to go see the midnight showing of the third movie that came to theaters last month, because she had a test the next day. However, that day, she came to school dressed up as one of the characters with shirt and pom poms.

When LaPlante was asked which movie out of the three was her favorite, she said,

"Third one. Definitely. Best movie I've ever seen in my life."

Another, not as enthusiastic fan, freshman Bethany Dennis, claims. "I'm not obsessed!"

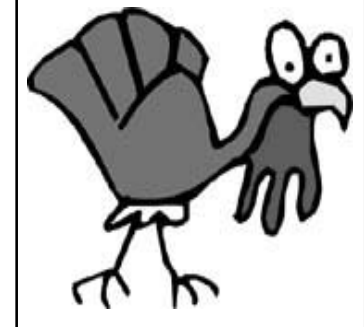
Dennis is an admirer of the Disney Channel shows rather than High School Musical specifically.

She's not indifferent, however, to the effect the movies have.

Dennis's favorite show on the Disney Channel is *Wizards of Waverly Place*.

"I like the main character Alex, 'cause she's funny and fashionable," she said.

Turkey Jam 2008



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