

Prank gone bad damages East's reputation

KERNAL
staff editorial

Graffiti splattered over the hallway paint job, excessive cursing, and now we can add arson to the list of things people will think when they're confronted with the topic of East High. While it's true that the vandalism that happened the night before Highland's homecoming was, for all intents and purposes, a prank, that doesn't negate the fact that it made our student body look bad and furthered the bad reputation that East is given by others.

We on The Kernal staff take our responsibility as a source of news very seriously, and we strive to print the truth. Something big happened that had an impact our school, and the staff believes students need to know about it. But getting verifiable facts has been difficult.

During the course of this investigation, it became clear that administration wouldn't give any

information concerning the acts of vandalism or the students who were involved.

All we know is that several senior students seemed to have disappeared from campus, and other students were spreading the rumor that they'd been expelled from East because they committed acts of vandalism.

The acts themselves were burning EB into the Highland football field and putting graffiti on some of the signs at Highland the night before their homecoming game on October 28.

As mentioned, administrators such as the Principal and the Dean of Students aren't able, by law, to tell us anything about the crime committed.

"I am not at liberty to discuss with you student discipline cases or outcomes," Principal Lee Vasquez said. "FERPA [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act] and confidentiality laws forbid it. I apologize if this has caused you any inconvenience."

We, as a staff, understand that, and while they couldn't give our

reporters specifics on the punishments of the students involved, administration did explain the punishment for vandalism in general. Vandalism costs money to clean up, up to nearly \$80,000 a year for East High alone.

This is money that Dean Stephen Mettler said "could be spent on books." It's also usually the student's money that's going to the repair whatever they defaced. Another possible likely outcome for those who vandalize school property is expulsion, or suspension.

It's district policy to expel a student to one of the 11 community schools in the Kern High School District, said the dean.

Kernal reporters also contacted several of the students involved to ask about their punishment and what actually happened the night of the crime. They, however, refused to give any information even after they were told that their names wouldn't appear in the story.

The newspaper staff chose not to publish the names of those who

vandalized the Highland campus to follow the gentlemen's agreement kept by the professional press concerning minors who commit crimes.

Students often make mistakes like this in the name of school pride, and they shouldn't be labeled forever because of their teenage fun.

The punishment given to the group of students who committed the actual crime was expulsion, and while some might think it's unfair, these students held positions as leaders and athletes on campus.

It's up to all students, and those who hold leadership positions especially, to rebuild our school's tarnished reputation and to dispel the negative rumors concerning our students.

Editor's Note: The Kernal encourages its readers to send letters to the editor expressing their opinions. The easiest way to do this is to put letters in the mailbox of journalism adviser Randy Hamm.

the kernalstaff

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managing editor
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The Kernal is a monthly publication of the journalism class of East Bakersfield High School. The Kernal is an open forum for students, faculty, and alumni of East High.

The opinions and views expressed in this newspaper are the sole responsibility of the staff and do not reflect the views of either EBHS or the Kern High School District. The Kernal is a 2005-2006 winner of the

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Survival of the fittest 'The Hunger Games' review

emmascott
staff reporter

Fantasy is not my cup of tea. I liked "Twilight" in fifth grade and got over it in sixth grade. I never cared for "Harry Potter" and I didn't pretend to when "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part Two" came out. I watched "Percy Jackson and the Olympians" solely for Logan Lerman and even his undeniable pretty boy charm didn't make it any more interesting or any less confusing. However, "The Hunger Games" was worth the confusion.

The Hunger Games is a post-apocalyptic novel set in Panem where the United States once existed. The hunger games are an annual and merciless televised

event where two teenagers from each district must fight to be the last one standing.

Recruits have to do more than just kill the competition. They have to do it with a smile in order to win over their viewers. Basically, it's the Kardashians on crack. Just a lot gorier.

While most of the representatives were recruited, Katniss is a volunteer. She is fatherless and dry and an admirable protagonist. Think about it. Would most 16 year olds sacrifice themselves for their little sister? Probably not.

Peeta is a lowly and timid baker's son, but he definitely has charisma and is definitely a smart game player. Peeta and Katniss are your stereotypical underdogs who climb their way up the ladder, and so they do.

They become a crowd pleaser after they tell the audience that they're in love. They easily become a reader pleaser as well.

Author Suzanne Collins has a lot to be proud of. "The Hunger Games" is as solid as concrete. Sure, it's a simple and slightly unoriginal recipe. "Battle Royale" anyone?

It can easily blend into the typical chick flick with Katniss and Peeta's fake love story line alone, but Collins brings something new to the formula. The protagonist is a girl? Girl book. The protagonist is a boy? Boy book.

Collins takes some risks and sprinkles the metaphorical sci-fi cake by basing the story around Katniss.

It's hard not to root for Katniss and not to root for Collins and their future endeavors.

Editor's Note: If you have a suggestion for a book to review next month, please write it down and put it in the mailbox of journalism adviser Randy Hamm.



Most popular books at EB

1. "A Child Called 'It'" by Dave Pelzer

2. "Twilight" by Stephenie Meyers

3. "Define 'Normal'" by Julie Anne Peters

4. "The Lost Boy" by Dave Pelzer

5. "Go Ask Alice" by Anonymous

6. "The Hobbit" by J.R.R. Tolkien

7. "Crank" by Ellen Hopkins

8. "Breaking Dawn" by Stephenie Meyers

9. "Carrie" by Stephen King

10. "Blood and Chocolate" by Annette Klause

Source: librarian buddavis