

EXTERMINATORS

The PTA has started a petition to get rid of the Hornet as our school mascot. It was the cheer that got to them. They heard it at the last basketball game.

"WE ARE THE HORNETS,
HORNY, HORNY HORNETS!
EVERYWHERE WE GO-OH,
PEOPLE WANT TO KNO-OOW,
WHO WE ARE, SO WE TELL THEM . . .
WE ARE THE HORNETS,
HORNY, HORNY HORNETS!
(and on and on and on)

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The wiggles and shakes that accompany the cheer freaked out the Merryweather PTA. Freaked out PTAs all over the city when the Horny Hornet cheer was televised. The TV sports guy thought the song was cute, so he did a segment showing the "Hornet Hustle," with the cheerleaders shaking their stingers, and the crowd bumping and grinding their horny Hornet heinies.

The student council started a counterpetition. The Honor Society wrote it. It describes the psychological harm we have all suffered from this year's lack of identity. It pleads for consistency, stability. It's pretty good: "We, the students of Merryweather High, have become proud of our Hornet selves. We

PERSONIFICATION

are tenacious, stinging, clever. We are a hive, a community of students. Don't take away our Hornetdom. *We are Hornets.*"

It won't be a real issue until football starts up again. Our baseball team always stinks.

THE WET SEASON

Spring is on the way. The winter rats—rusty brown \$700 cars that everyone with sense drives from November until April—are rolling back into storage. The snow is melting for good and the pretty-baby shiny cars glitter in the senior parking lot.

There are other signs of spring. Front lawns cough up the shovels and mittens that were gobbled by snowdrifts in January. My mother moved the winter coats up to the attic. Dad's been mumbling about the storm windows, but hasn't taken them down. From the bus I saw a farmer walking his field, waiting for the mud to tell him when to plant.

April Fool's Day is when most seniors get their acceptance or rejection letters from college. Thumbs up or thumbs down. It's a sick piece of timing. Tensions are running high. Kids drink pink stomach medicine from the bottle. David Petrakis My Lab Partner is writing a database program to track who got in where. He wants to analyze which advanced-placement classes the seniors took, their standardized test scores, extracurriculars, and GPAs to figure out what he needs to do to get into Harvard.

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Awesome

I've been going to most of my classes. Good girl, Mellie. Roll over, Mellie. Sit, Mellie. No one has patted me on the head, though. I passed an algebra test, I passed an English test, I passed a biology test. Well, hallelujah. It is all so profoundly stupid. Maybe this is why kids join clubs—to give them something to think about during class.

Andy Beast joined the International Club. I hadn't figured him for a deep interest in Greek cooking or French museums. He has abandoned the Martha table and hangs around and onto Rachel/Rachelle and Greta-Ingrid and all the other resident aliens. Rachel/Rachelle flutters her purple eyelashes at him like he's some kind of Überdude. You'd think she'd have more sense.

Easter came and went without much notice. I think it caught my mother by surprise. She doesn't like Easter because the date keeps shifting and it's not a big shopping holiday. When I was a kid, Mom used to hide colored eggs for me all over the house. The last egg was inside a big basket of chocolate rabbits and yellow marshmallow chicks. Before my grandparents died, they would take me to church and I would wear stiff dresses with itchy lace.

This year we celebrated by eating lamb chops. I made hard-boiled eggs for lunch and drew little faces on them with a black pen. Dad complained about how much yard work has to be done. Mom didn't say much. I said less. In heaven, my grandparents frowned. I sort of wished we had gone to church. Some of the Easter songs are pretty.

SPRING BREAK

It is the last day of Spring Break. My house is shrinking and I feel like Alice in Wonderland. Afraid that my head might burst through the roof, I head for the mall. I have ten bucks in my pocket—what to spend it on? French fries—ten dollars' worth of french fries, ultimate fantasy. If *Alice in Wonderland* were written today, I bet she'd have a supersized order of fries that said "Eat me," instead of a small cake. On the other hand, we're rushing toward summer, which means shorts and T-shirts and maybe even a bathing suit now and then. I walk past the deep-fat fryers.

Now that spring is past, the fall fashions are in the store windows. I keep waiting for the year when the fashions catch up to the seasons. A couple of stores have performance artists hanging at the front door. One guy keeps flying a stupid loop-the-loop airplane; a plastic-faced woman keeps tying and re-tying a shawl. No, now it's a skirt. Now it's a halter top. Now it's a head scarf. People avoid looking at her, as if they aren't sure if they should applaud or tip her. I feel bad for her—I wonder what her grades were in high school. I want to give her a tip, only it would be rude to ask if she has change for a ten.

I ride the escalator down to the central fountain, where today's entertainment is face-painting. The line is long and loud—six-year-olds and their mothers. A little girl walks past