

LIFE AS A CLEFT PALETTE CHILD

BY: ALAINA MACKE

Before you read this, I just want to say that I did not write this so you can feel sorry for me and I did not do it to get attention.

I did it so that you would understand. I am a cleft lip and palette child. I have come to accept what I look like and I'm just the same as you on the inside. A cleft lip and palette means that my upper lip was not developed, so I was left with a big open gap when I was born. When I was six months old, I was headed towards my first surgery, in which they sewed my upper lip shut. I was only six months old, so I didn't know how many more surgeries were to come.

My second surgery was when I was five. I had to get a mid-face expansion. Midface expansions are for cleft lip and palette patients whose bone features are lower than others. They put metal rods in my head and had to crank the metal rods every day while I was awake. I was the first girl and second person in the world to have this surgery.

This surgery was when I almost lost my life, too. The nurse gave me the wrong anesthesia, which made me throw up and have a high temperature of 102 degrees. It was so bad that when the doctor tried to give me oxygen, I threw up in my oxygen mask. I couldn't sleep that night. I can still remember how much pain I was in that night and the rest of recovery that followed, which took six months.

After the surgery, I thought I looked like everyone else, but I was wrong. After my first year of first grade, I was constantly teased and stared at. I was also beaten up by my classmates.

I started the Howard School in the second grade and finished in the seventh. In that time, I had two more surgeries to fix my nose and bone structure. I felt better at the Howard School.

There were a lot of questions, but at least they were questions, not mean remarks.

Three years ago I came here to MSA. I finally felt like I belonged. I was always the oddball and people were quick to judge me. Here people didn't judge and got to know me. It was just last year as a freshman I found out that I had to get ready for another surgery. When I heard about that, I had to get my pain and frustration out. I started writing... writing poems, stories and songs.

I felt relieved to get my feelings out. When the surgery came around, I felt calm and relieved. The best part is that I didn't feel any pain afterwards. When I came back to school, I was just happy to see everyone

and talk to them. I could tell they cared. I don't know what I would do without my family, teachers, and friends. I love them all.

I hope you understand now, understand all the pain that I went through and all cleft lip and palette children go through and why we look differently from other people. I hope you understand the pain that we go through emotionally and physically. I think in a way, all cleft lip and palette children are proof of the saying "Don't judge a book by its cover."



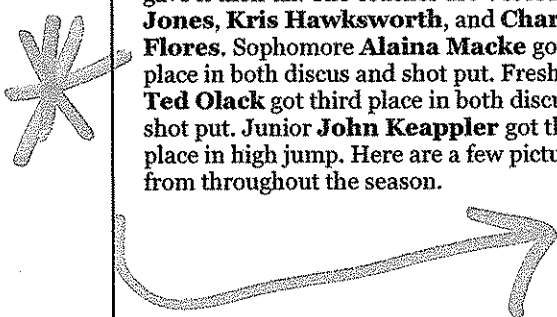
Alaina during field day.

Photo credit Gail Kreher

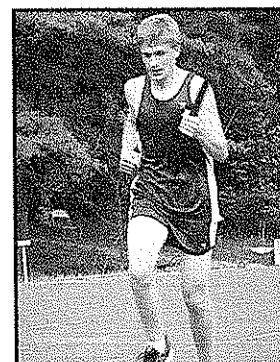
TRACK AND FIELD— A PHOTO GALLERY

BY: LUKE CUNNINGHAM

Howdy Folks! It's the end of the season for the track team. Everyone who participated gave it their all. The coaches are **Victoria Jones, Kris Hawksworth, and Charlotte Flores**. Sophomore **Alaina Macke** got first place in both discus and shot put. Freshman **Ted Olack** got third place in both discus and shot put. Junior **John Keappler** got third place in high jump. Here are a few pictures from throughout the season.



The Medal Winners: Alaina Macke, Ted Olack, and John Keappler. Photo Credit— Rebecca Olack



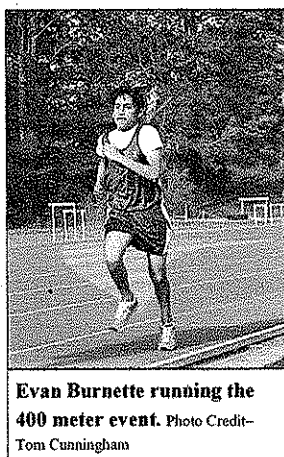
Luke Cunningham running the 400 meter relay. Photo Credit— Tom Cunningham



The team at the championship's end. Photo Credit— Rebecca Olack



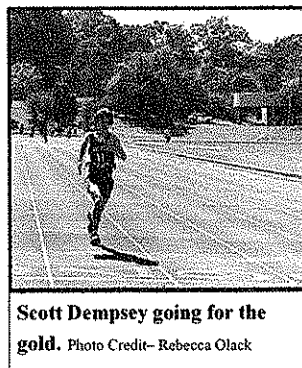
A happy bunch at the victory lunch. Photo Credit— Rebecca Olack



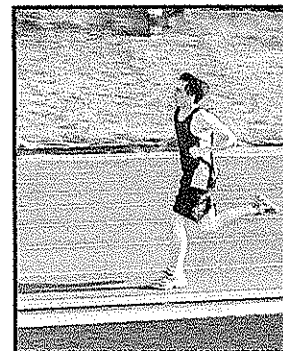
Evan Burnette running the 400 meter event. Photo Credit— Tom Cunningham



Ted Olack Striking an august pose. Photo Credit— Rebecca Olack



Scott Dempsey going for the gold. Photo Credit— Rebecca Olack



John Keappler running the 200 meter. Photo Credit— Rebecca Olack