



Profiles in Grizzly Greatness



The Bard - Talon Houde

Mesa Ridge sophomore Talon Houde has always wanted to be a storyteller. From the storylines in video games to old poetry to reading fantasy novels, Talon's love of stories has had a profound impact on his identity. Talon's penchant for storytelling presents itself in many ways in his life - he loves to read and write fiction and he also is a dedicated member of the set crew for Drama Club. However, one of the most exciting ways Talon gets to tell stories is by playing the role of dungeon master (DM) during Dungeons and Dragons with friends. Those who are not familiar with D&D might not realize how time-consuming it can be to create an entire plotline for a new game with a group of players. However, Talon takes this challenge in stride. For this reason, Talon is recognized as one of Mesa Ridge's Grizzly Greats.



Dungeons and Dragons is not a traditional board game because much of the gameplay exists in the players' imaginations. It is the DM's job to write the story that they will then use to manage the gameplay with the group. Usually groups are around 3-7 people but Talon once managed a game with 10 players! As the players progress through the game, the DM must be ready to adapt the story for any random roll of the dice or unpredictable player decisions. That is where Talon's love for storytelling comes in - he pulls from his years of experience (he's been DMing since he was 10!) and his love of fantasy novels to keep the story moving in an engaging and exciting way.

"Ultimately, it is just a social storytelling game; it's best with people you know well," said Talon, describing what makes D&D fun. To him, the interpersonal nature of the game is critical because it has helped him become a more social person. "It's social in a way that introverts can enjoy. I used to be introverted when I started but D&D has helped me become more extroverted."

Talon plans to continue DMing for different groups of friends. He wants to pursue writing fiction or poetry and possibly become an English teacher so he can teach narrative writing. With no limit to his creativity, Talon's future in storytelling is wide open. "You don't need the books, you don't need the accessories, you don't even need the dice. All you need is some sort of imagination to get you going."