

Smashing Pumpkins

by Jennaye Derge

Need something to do with all of those leftover, hollowed out gourds rotting on the front porch? Or perhaps you have a lasting vendetta against the orange fruit during the holidays? Or maybe you're simply angry with that particular hue from, say, our river earlier this season? Too soon? Whatever the reason, two years ago, Animas High School had a smashing idea to give the has-been Halloween decorations a fitting farewell while allowing students to flex their creative muscles. Last week, eight teams of students from Dave Heerschap's Advanced Physics class brought out their homemade "punkin chunkin" machines. Many used the gravity-assisted Trebuchet model (think medieval castle-storming contraption) to sling, whip or otherwise fire the orange projectiles into a nearby mud pit. Each machine was judged on the distance chucked, with the winner, "Mother Chunkerz," hitting a respectable 131 yards. With machines bearing such names as "Mothers Against Chuck Driving," "Chunkin' Sailors" and "Inglorious Chunksters," imagination ran wild, along with the undeniable satisfaction that comes when the rind meets the road.



Students load their weapon of choice.



Team "Chuck on THIS" prepares for take off.



The pumpkin chucking aftermath – not as pretty as pie.



Exploding pumpkins make for great entertainment.