

The Billie Bulletin

Boosters raising funds for all-season baseball and softball diamonds at April 27th fundraiser

By Tim Meinzen

"We are all passionate about this community," explained Jennifer Jordan about the four women who are the PH Booster Club.

This small group of women (Jennifer Jordan, Celine Ziolkowski, Heather VanOrdstrand and Stefanie Sheava) have dedicated themselves to raising money for the students of Pleasant Hill School District. But it has not been easy.

Most folks assume that the Boosters is only about raising money for high school sports. Other assumptions run along the lines of the Boosters are kind of an exclusive club. Both of these assumptions are wrong.

In fact, the Boosters put in innumerable hours raising funds, training kids, and helping students AND athletes have the equipment and equipment to do their best.

But with a small team and big tasks, the Boosters are actively seeking more parents to join their efforts. And they have big plans.

Among their projects are providing the funding to replace the grass with turf on the baseball and softball fields. This will allow all season play. And it will reduce district maintenance. But turf fields are expensive. Estimates range about \$200,000 but the Boosters have already raised \$125,000 and the coming Auction on April 27th will add to that. Past auctions and fundraisers have raised from \$20,000 to \$50,000.

But the Boosters, these four women, also raise money for school clubs, for CTE and for scholarships. And they work for the middle school as well.

How do they provide so much help with so few helpers? It started with the tremendous work and recruiting of Amy Burbee who brought on Jennifer Jordan and Celine Ziolkowski. They in turn reached out to Heather VanOrdstrand and Stefanie Sheava. All of them find inspiration in the others.

"We end up filling the gaps...alway scrambling" AND giving of their own time and treasure. All the members agreed that in addition to seeking donations, they also donate personally. It is this all-in commitment that marks the Boosters commitment.

The Boosters also provide work experience that students get from learning how to run the concessions. Any group can sign up to run the concessions and earn the money which is split with the team or club. The concessions are "undervalued" in that the experience students get provides great advantage in future employment.

Ultimately the Boosters are motivated by their love for the community. The enormous effort they expend in raising money, several even without kids in the school system, speaks to their commitment. And all of them are busy with work outside of being moms and Boosters. Sheava said "The busiest people get the most done."

But their good work could use some other hands. Like the PH Foundation, the money raised goes to all the kids in our school community. With a big auction on April 27th, the Boosters would love some help, either to go and enjoy donating or even to help in the process.

The Boosters Auction will be held at the Springfield Armory at 3106 Pierce Parkway, Springfield, OR 97477 at 5 pm on Saturday, April 27th.

Library (and Forestry Building) makeover in the works

By Katrina Biggs

The library has not changed much since its initial construction in 1967. "Librarians have cycled the books in and out over the years" said the librarian, Amy Brothers, but the library has remained virtually the same. The bookcases in the library are now an ugly, dull color and look ancient.

The windows have to be opened with care because they are very old. Ms. Brothers, the librarian, says that one of the windows has a crack down the middle and some can't even open at all. The carpet is dirty, old, stained and faded in places.

But this shall not pass.

Not if the Pleasant Hill Education Foundation and the PHSD have anything to do with the library. And it appears they do. I interviewed Superintendent Jim Crist via email and this is some of what he said.

"The new library is going to separate the middle school reading areas from the high school reading areas" said Jim Crist. So far the cost of the renovation is going to be roughly "between \$200,000 and \$250,000" and might still go up. The renovations are going to include "updated lighting, flooring, paint, bookshelves, tables, chairs, furniture, and new windows."

They plan to "redevelop the two office spaces that are currently used as storage back into office space, updating counters and storage in the teacher work area (book repair area), creating a tech repair and storage area and possibly updating the HVAC system as part of this project" said Mr. Crist.

This will make the library more safe and enjoyable for everyone.

"The design phase is still in process and is in the hands of the architects." said Mr. Crist. "There will be an opportunity to give feedback to the renovation plan, when it is completed by the architect."

There are still a lot of steps that need to be done before the library can be renovated. The renovation process is going to take place over the summer and hopefully be done before school starts back up.

"I am very excited for the library updates." - Amy Brothers. (right: Caleb Kesey recruits new Chess club members to the ancient game in the library)



How do you run a school district Mr. Crist?

By Jocelyn Heacock

As it turns out, it is a lot harder than one might think. Running a school is not just up to the principal or the superintendent, but there are many factors that come into play.

Mr. Jim Crist is the Superintendent at Pleasant Hill and is an important factor in the process of making decisions for Pleasant Hill High School and Elementary school. Crist has been working in schools since 1994. He started out as an education assistant at an elementary school, got his teaching license and became a teacher at Thurston Middle School before becoming a superintendent.



"[At] my last job in Springfield for three years I worked in their human resources office as assistant director and through that I really learned a lot about contract management, labor relations, and the business of a school...Just getting that experience I felt more confident stepping out and taking that superintendent role."

As a superintendent, Mr. Crist operates on a week-by-week schedule.

"In a typical week we'll have a board meeting, generally two weeks before that is the week we are really nailing down what our agenda will be for that meeting and then collecting and reading the information we will need for the school board. In the off weeks it's going to be other items like labor relations. [We are] prepping for those meetings and holding those meetings...coming together to align what we are doing for the next month based on the previous month's work we have going on."

"All the space in between is just supporting individuals whether it's community individuals, administration staff, teaching staff, coaches. That can be a community person that wants to do something for the school, or the Booster Club planning an event, the Education Foundation working through grant cycle/fundraising, parents who have complaints and want someone to talk to."

What most people do not realize about Mr. Crist's job is the work he does guides the majority of the teachers and the administration at Pleasant Hill Schools. For example, policies regarding teachers' opinions on various topics. "In the Eugene school district they have policies where teachers are allowed to provide their own opinion on a particular subject they are talking [about]. [At] Springfield and Pleasant Hill, our policies are teaching on the adopted curriculum, not your outside opinions. If you share your personal opinions, you have to give equal weight to two contrary ideas or opinions. Grading procedures and policies can also come from our school board. Those big picture ideas make them happen as equitable as possible knowing that a particular community will have a culture that goes with it as well. Some are heavily influenced toward education, arts, sports and athletics, and you work with your community as well and what they want to see from their school. This is often influenced by the budget, and I do a lot of that as well."

The role of a superintendent is layered, crucial to the success of a school district, and necessary to a well-functioning school. Pleasant Hill School District is fortunate to have a well-qualified and experienced superintendent like Mr. Crist.

"[When] running a school, I want kids to be able to have an understanding that we want an environment where they can make mistakes. Making mistakes does not mean they are free from responsibility, working with students to take responsibility and regain trust. Mistakes can make it feel like their life is ending, even though it's not. In light of that, is the understanding that life in general is about growth and it starts within our school system. Learning to make mistakes and take chances and still be able to recover from them."



Cael Shepherd wins the popular vote in a battle of the drummers. Competitors include Mr. Gray and Noah Bernacki.



Zoey Brott gets things done

By Rosie Calva-Paredes & Kyra Bebb

Meet Zoey Brott, a senior and sister who loves engineering and the world. Zoey is a seventeen-year-old girl whose passions run from robotics, fashion and thrifting, animals, Calculus and working really hard..

All her life she has given more than 100% in all that she does. No surprise, but her favorite class is Calculus because it is challenging. She has recently been awarded a presidential scholarship for OSU. She earned this award because of her high school activities in class and out.

Three words describe Zoey Brott: motivated, extroverted and curious. Brott plans on becoming a nuclear engineer.

Zoey Brott learned to advocate for herself and to work hard. Her mom, Kendra, instilled curiosity. While experiences like Destination Imagination, solving problems as a team, helped her consider engineering as a form of problem solving.

One social challenge she has faced is COVID because she is a very outgoing person who loves to talk to people and it was very hard to do that when she was forced to have no contact with people.

Two things she would change about her life is not having COVID and to have joined Robotics sooner. Her dream accomplishments that are more realistic are publishing a paper in a scientific journal, her more shoot for the sky dream is to win a Nobel Prize in science.

Toles-Wallace inspires the Cheer Team

by Greta Gramzow

Chelsi Toles-Wallace, our high school head cheerleading coach, never coached anything before she took on coaching our cheer team.

Chelsi was inspired to be the cheer coach by being surrounded by people who had faith in her. She also did cheerleading when she was in high school. So since the cheer team lost their coach a few years before today, Chelsi stepped in to help out. She plans to continue being the cheer coach for a long time. At least until her son graduates.

"I just love cheer in general," she says.

Although, cheer was a little different for her than it is now. There were no phones, so when you were informed when practice was scheduled, you were expected to be there unless you were genuinely sick.

"Work was not a valid excuse."

Chelsi explained, that even if you had a job, cheer came first. She even mentioned that some of the cheers that us cheerleaders practice today are the same ones that she had learned when she was in high school.

Whatever the similarities or differences, it is clear that under Chelsi the cheer team has revived a competitive spirit and exciting performances with tumbling and dance that earned the team state accolades. But even more importantly, Chelsi's success can be found in the bonding of the team and their loyalty to their cheer coach.



Network support specialist has a knack for technology

By Kylie Lan

One of the many unsung employees working at Pleasant Hill is a calm, collected person named Devon Bartow who is our network support specialist working with Trevor Shields. I caught up with him for a short interview.

What made you choose this job?
How long did it take you to get there?

I've always had a knack for technology so I've been searching for a job that suits me. For about 2-3 years. I've been working towards this job, graduating from college in Tennessee in 2018 and coming here to pursue a career.



- How long have you been a Tech aid?
Have you been employed at other schools or organizations?

I've been working here at Pleasant Hill for about 4 months now. Before this I've previously worked as a kitchen manager for a restaurant. The job was 50/50, some days were enjoyable, other days were slow which made it hard.

- How would you describe the experience you've had with this job?

So far the people here have been very kind and it's a very warm and welcoming place. Being blatant with who you're talking to makes it much easier to get the job done.

- Would you recommend this job to others?

I definitely would if you're interested in jobs surrounding tech.

- Are there any problems you face with this job? Are there times you wish you chose a different one?

The only problems I've faced were moments when I needed to reevaluate what I was doing and I'm pretty content with what I'm doing now. I plan on keeping a permanent job in the tech career, but you never know what life will throw at you.

Any advice for students?

"If you ever feel that you are missing out on life, just take a step back, breathe, think about where you were 6 months ago. Never feel like you need to rush in on anything."

And as an addition, the school is allowing students to attend internships over the summer so if you're interested in anything techy and want to pursue a career similar to Devon's you should totally check that out!

Writer's Block: How To Find Inspiration

By Zoe Harr

Imagine you're a writer. Perhaps a writer of books, writer of letters or texts, or maybe you're just trying to write this essay so you can be done with your homework, but you have a problem: the words are not coming. You're chewing your nails, the daunting blank Doc sitting in front of you. You just can't figure out for the life of you why no ideas are flowing! Why would that be?

If this is your situation, I can confidently diagnose you with Writer's Block. Luckily, I know a thing or two about Writer's Block, and I know a few tips and tricks to help my fellow writers!

Writer's Block comes in all shapes and forms. Of course, it can be as simple as your idea faucet refusing to turn on. But, it can also be that you don't know how to progress your plot, or you can't think of any compelling character ideas! Or you can't find an idea for your school Bulletin story.

"I have gotten Writer's Block before, and honestly, I didn't do anything about it," said Sienna Malekzadeh, a fellow writer. "I just didn't write for like a really long time, because I didn't know what to do."

And she is not the only one! Pervis Taylor, the author of *Survival Mode*, has had similar experiences. Taylor wrote, "writer's block felt paralyzing because writing is the way I express myself,"

"It is truly immobilizing, it makes you second guess yourself with questions like, 'did I even write before this?', 'am I even this published author that people say that I am?'"

If this is the case, there are a few things you can do to get those creative juices flowing.

You can find inspiration everywhere! It's not cheating, in fact, it's one of the most useful tools a writer can have! "I would read other books to maybe get some inspiration, or sometimes I've gone to Pinterest, and I would get inspiration from there," said Sienna.

You can also get inspiration from your peers, past experiences you or a friend had, or even simple things like music or your surroundings. "One of the things I always say to writers who ask me this is: just write. Write without judgment, you write to find your voice. Don't write because you are trying to get it right, write because you have something to say," said Pervis.

Don't worry, nearly every single thing has been done before, and authors have just been getting inspiration since the very beginning. Even before we used words, we would draw out stories on what we've experienced!

So next time you're feeling judged by that smug Doc, pull out your inspirations and get those wonderful writing skills of yours flowing!



Beauty standards through history

By Sierra Malekzadeh

Many of us have that image of a perfect body and face inside our heads, setting standards for ourselves that are so hard to grasp. Then when you feel you may have the looks that everyone else acquires, the "trend" is over, and you're left feeling the same as you did before.

There's been many beauty standards that have changed over the years, making it so hard to keep up with the "trending looks."

The 1920s standards were definitely different from ours now. During the Roaring Twenties women's standards featured a flat chest and a boyish body. The "bob" was the "in" hairstyle. Men's ideals weren't that different in this time period, wanting to have slimmer and lean bodies because at that time Hollywood stars were gaining popularity and so were the expectations that they must be thin.

Within a decade the slim bodies were gone, and on came the golden age of Hollywood. (1930s-1950s.) Women were standardized to have an hourglass figure, with a small waist and big curves, as well as having the hairdo of cascading curls. Marilyn Monroe became the poster woman of this era. Men were to have strong muscles and broad shoulders, but since actors being slim were still popular, trends were not much changed for them.

Fast forward to the 1980s where an ideal woman was tall and had an athletic body with curves that weren't too big, and toned arms, but they couldn't be too muscular. They had big hair and bold makeup. Men were expected to have big muscles and fit bodies as always.

In the 1990's things changed drastically from the curvy expectations to an extremely thin body for women. They were supposed to have translucent skin, and a waifish complexion. Men were standardized to be tall and well-defined, as they dressed nicer in this time period.

Nowadays women are idealized to capture a flat stomach, a thigh gap, a curvy figure, and be just the right amount of skinny because if not then you'll be viewed as unhealthy of course. You also are expected to attribute big eyes, thick eyebrows, and plump lips. Men are to have a muscular physique, golden skin, and fluffy hair. Though more recently, some people have been trying to achieve an androgynous look.

Women and men have been put into these boxes that tell you what is beautiful—but the dirty secret is that you're still not good enough. When in reality, standards can change so drastically in just a decade, it is so difficult to capture the "perfect look" for each trend. This really shows us that no look is really more desirable than another, because in just a matter of years, one will be gone and you'll be trying to change yourself all over again.

Perhaps we should simply learn to love the skin we are in. So the question is, What's next? And how will beauty standards affect all of us in the long run?

The Pleasant Hill Education Foundation thanks the people and businesses who supported the school district. We raised \$67,000 for classroom education and student scholarships. Thanks so much!

Who Bullies target

By Aria Verma

According to Florida State University (FSU), “1 out of every 3 students in U.S. schools are being bullied.” Most people have experienced bullying or seen bullying once in their life whether a spectator or as a victim.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defines “bullying[as] unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. Bullying behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.”

But have you ever wondered why certain people get bullied? There are many possibilities that someone could be targeted.

Popularity

Someone’s “ranking” on the social hierarchy can determine how much of the spotlight is turned on them, good or bad. If someone new comes into the equation and a bully feels they are challenging their perceived “ranking” they will be more likely to bully them.

Skill

If someone is very talented at what they do then they could be a target for bullying. “From my experience most people who are good at sports ‘jocks’ don’t get bullied but often people good at school (nerds) do.”

Physical features

Distinct physical features like a large nose, overweight, underweight, glasses, or acne, can become a target to bullies. The bullies take these things and use it against you. “I was bullied in kindergarten because I had glasses and they ripped them off my face” This can be detrimental to a person’s overall health. “[being bullied] made me insecure about how I looked.”

Illness or disability

Bullies are more likely to target people who have disabilities like Autism, ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), outward physical impairment(s) and more. If a bully knows this about someone, a bully might use this to their advantage.

Race

In any environment when there is one predominant race, if someone comes in who doesn’t meet the “norm” people can be xenophobic and bully those around them. This fear of the unknown can create an atmosphere for bullying to occur.

Belief

Someone’s beliefs can make them susceptible to bullying, whether someone is Christian, Muslim, Hindu or anything in between. “[Looking at] data from over 96,000 schools [they] found that 23% percent of allegations of bullying involved harassment or bullying on the basis of race, 16% involved allegations on the basis of sexual orientation, 11% involved allegations on the basis of disability, and 8% involved allegations on the basis of religion.” stated FSU.

This is only a partial list of the categories that seem to mark those bullied.

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Gordon, Sherri. “10 Types of Kids Most Likely to Be Bullied.” Verywell Family, 25 March 2021, <https://www.verywellfamily.com/reasons-why-kids-are-bullied-460777>. Accessed 1 April 2024.



MS Art Club finds energy in art.

3 Lessons We Can Learn From NATURE

By Maddie Gunn

The first lesson is that change is inevitable. Nature is ever-changing. The seasons shift, the leaves turn different colors, the flowers come out after lots of rain. Life never stays still.

Nature is a wonderful teacher. Connecting to nature is essential in our technology-focused generation. Using nature as a “healer” can also be beneficial. Getting out into nature is connecting back to our source, it’s breathing fresh air in, detoxing from screens and their damaging blue lights, and being in nature is always rewarding.

The second lesson is patience. Nature can change fast when it gets stormy, but really it takes patience to turn leaves red from green and green grass to be covered in snow. Patience is something that takes a lot of practice, but, the more you do it, the easier it becomes.

Finally, the third lesson is perseverance. Just like nature, human beings are growing constantly, whether that be physically, emotionally, or even spiritually. We are constantly learning new things and growing. Think of a fruit seed. It starts off from another fruit, if you plant it, it will grow, if you water it, it will grow, and if you give it sunlight and shade it will thrive. If you are persistent with these habits, the seed will eventually turn into a tree that offers more fruit for others.

Also, nature offers a cornucopia of benefits. Nature can decrease anxiety and depression levels, improve your immune system, benefit your physique, and so much more.

“Forest bathing” is an ancient Japanese method of relaxation. It is also a great way of relieving stress. You can practice forest bathing by lying down on the ground and taking slow deep breaths in a forest. Spending time in nature alone is healing.

We can apply these lessons to our daily lives. In order to be successful, it takes perseverance, patience, and change. You’ve heard the old saying,

“Nothing changes if nothing changes.”

It’s true. Human beings were meant to be out in nature, studying its habits. I believe we will be much better at understanding others, understanding our emotions and our passions if we spend more time in nature. We are more like nature than we think.

Strict parents help kids learn

By Abigail Blatch

Do you have strict parents?

Does that ever feel frustrating or unfair?

Well, maybe, in the end, your life will be better off for it.

When students have “strict” parents they learn many examples of responsibility which can help in many positive ways. One positive: that kids will become responsible and have a strong work ethic with good discipline.

Some negative outcomes of parents who are not strict may mean that their kids can become bratty and feel like they have all the control over their choices. Such kids may feel like they can do whatever they want and may be more likely to act out and make wrong choices. In a word, entitled.

My parents have taught me so much in how they decided how they would discipline me since I was five. They have taught me to have responsibility in doing things like chores and rules that I have to follow to earn trust.

Many parents feel like if they discipline their kids they become the “Rude Parent.” But I think that such “discipline” means that it actually comes in handy when the kid becomes older.

Many teens have different stages of attitude and it can be hard to figure out what to do in tough situations and how to provide consequences for their kids. But studies of “Very well parents” suggest that “Redirecting them[kids], praising them, and spending quality time together” will help in producing children who are good people and happy people.

So, in the end, strict parents can create positive outcomes and can improve kids abilities to be a better, and more of a responsible person.

Photojournalist shows horror of Gaza

by Angel Calva

A young boy clawing at the rubble under his feet to find his family. A little girl watching her entire family die around her in the same car bombed by Israeli forces as she was on the phone with a Red Cross member trying to flee Gaza. A father reuniting with his daughter after he thought she had died, and Palestinians cleaning animal feed to eat because they are starving.

This is what the news won’t show us.

On social media, some Palestinian journalists are showing the true horror going on in Gaza that the news won’t show us. On Instagram and Facebook, Motaz Azaiza shares Palestinian stories through photojournalism.

His journey to journalism started when he woke up in shock at what was happening around him in Gaza, looking around and seeing rockets in the sky and explosions. So he grabbed his camera and said “Since that day, everything has changed.”

Before October 7th, Motaz was an aspiring travel photographer. He captured images of everyday life in Gaza. overnight he became a citizen photojournalist showing his followers a raw, unfiltered view of the horrors going on around him.

He talks about the children who have lost their entire family and how they’re so young they don’t even know what’s going on. Talks about how hard it’s going to be to tell these children, these babies, that their parents died because the Israeli planes dropped bombs on their house and the flesh of all around them. So how do you tell them this and expect them to be a normal person after all they went through?

Motaz evacuated Gaza with his family, and now he’s trying to fight for Gaza on the outside and trying to get more eyes on the truth of what is happening. He thinks it’s a kind of victory for journalism as a young man to show the world what the Western media couldn’t show, or do. To get the people’s hearts from outside with him.

Motaz is an inspiration. Every second he was in Gaza showing the world the truth, he was risking his life. Just like him, there were many other journalists but unfortunately, they lost their lives. It is dangerous to be a journalist in Gaza because they face particularly high risks as they try to cover the conflict, most saying they are being targeted.

“I’m a photographer, I want to capture the beauty of Gaza, not the war on Gaza.” Motaz is a symbol to remind you that there is more to see. Motaz is a human just like anyone from any part of the world, he wants us to truly see Palestinians and what they have to endure.

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Peer pressure Is Misrepresented

By Abbie Landers & Andrew Taylor

Peer pressure can be done by a group of people to one individual, or one individual to another individual, now clearly this affects a social group immensely. Peer pressure makes people conform to how the “group” wants it to be. Peer pressure has been used probably since the dawn of the human race, and has been quite effective because we’re evolutionarily adapted to fall into Peer pressure to survive. But you’re unlikely to die if you don’t fall to peer pressure, you’ll probably just feel a whole bunch of negative emotions your brain tries to avoid.

Although we mostly think of peer pressure as “drinking the Kool Aid.” But very often it’s not that, you interact with peer pressure all the time, and it can be a very good thing! I (Andrew) have experienced peer pressure, and no sadly a classmate of mine didn’t tell me to take a whiff of their vape. It was more of playing sports that my friends liked doing. I actually enjoyed playing those sports, and they made me a more rounded person.

I (Abbie) have also experienced some amount of peer pressure although mine weren’t as grueling as my partners, I this week baked cookies with (my wife & and soul mate) India. Would I bake cookies on my own for a band fundraiser without her suggesting it? Probably not, but due to her, I baked quite delicious snickerdoodle cookies, and I felt pretty good afterwards because it was going to the band fundraiser.

I believe that peer pressure gets a bad rep, because all we think about are the bad; doing drugs, and performing other frowned upon and illegal actions. But it can also be good and push us out of your comfort zone, and can challenge you to be a better person.



Destination Imagination heads to competition under Mrs. Olson while their leader, Joan Hladky recovers.

The Billie Bulletin

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4 Fools

Difficult test has parents suing the school to fire teacher

by Sienna Malekzadeh

"My daughter isn't ready for such math!" parent Joanne Bentely told the school after 7th grade students took a challenging test. Ever since the middle school's math teacher Mrs. Olsen gave her 7th graders a tough test that was "too hard for their young minds," almost all the parents came together to demand that Pleasant Hill fire her.

The parents have claimed that their children came home making big fusses after failing their tests, saying how their teacher gave them no warning about the difficult problems assigned, and that Mrs. Olsen gave them so little time to prepare.

Bentley and the rest of the irate parents met with the principal so they could address their concern for the poor students.

"I have never seen such an outrage," said another concerned Joe Neill. The principal gladly listened, and agreed to their points. He then turned to Mrs. Olsen herself for her thoughts on the matter.

Olsen said that she gave the 7th graders more than enough time to get them ready for their test, and she offered many example problems and help.

"I even wrote notes down with them. I don't know what else I could've done to help them prepare." Mrs. Olsen also says that her 7th graders have been struggling paying attention during class, as they were chatting with their friends or playing games on their computers instead of taking notes.

The parents denied her claims, and took things even farther, stating that her difficult test gave the children trauma.

"My child is in therapy now because of this test. Her therapist says that it's going to take a long time to get her confidence level back up," said Mrs. Julie Johanson, one of the many parents that are worried for their kids' mental health.

Mr. Reiersgaard took everything into consideration, and after what he called not a very tough decision, he decided that, of course, Mrs. Olsen was at fault. The principal announced that all the kids were to get A's and the school would pay if students needed therapy after the greatly challenging test.

"These students just work so hard it would be inhuman to not even help them learn. My child always listens in class. He is such a good student, teachers are always so jealous of him. That's why his grades aren't fabulous." One of the proud parents said.

So, at last these students were brought justice for their hard work and determination to push through their test, one which they most definitely didn't deserve.

PHSD is getting uniforms?

By Abbie Landers

Is Pleasant Hill School Getting Uniforms?

After 124 years of kids wearing what they want, PHSD is going for uniforms! Teachers and staff are tired of writing students up for breaking the dress code. So the Pleasant Hill will get rid of that problem entirely!

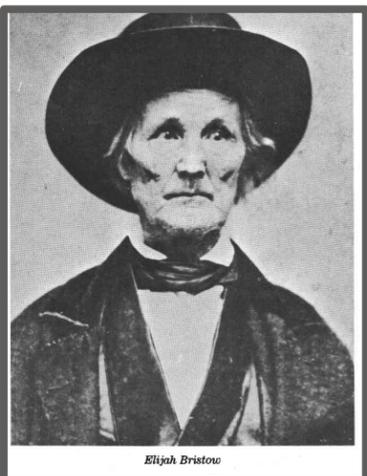
Boys will be wearing blue suits, a white undershirt, and a yellow tie. As for the girls, a blue button up, blue skirt, white knee high socks, and a yellow tie.

"This sucks, I just want to wear my booty shorts in school" whined Mckenzie Willamette

Mr Reiersgaard believes it's best if the students are required to wear uniforms instead of scandalous crop tops and sweatpants. Teachers and staff agree with the principal, but students are outraged!

Students plan to protest in the courtyard next Wednesday with students claiming that they no longer have free will.

Some students have planned to "refuse to comply" with the new uniform mandate.



Throwback style uniform worn by Elijah Bristow will be the new norm for Billies. "It worked for the first pioneers. It can work for us" said Caleb Salmond.

Get a puppy

by Ally Moch

Are you a teen?

Do you have precious little free time?

If so you should get a puppy.

You will never have free time again you will have to spend every waking moment with your puppy. If you love getting a good night's sleep you can say goodbye to that.

Once you have a puppy you will not ever get any sleep at all. Sure puppies are cute and cuddly, but they also love chewing on your shoes. So if you have some nice expensive shoes you can kiss them goodbye. You will go through so many shoes, but at least you get to stay up with the newest fashion.

The thing puppies love the most is FURNITURE!—especially wooden furniture. You will be replacing a lot of wood. Puppies enjoy chewing up all pillows, stuffed animals, their beds, and couch cushions, really anything.

If you leave them home you will come home to a delightful pile of fluff from their bed or your favorite pillow.

With your puppy you will have fun with no sleep and your social life will decrease.

Oh and one more thing: your friends—if you have any—will only want to come to your house to see your puppy.

Trust me.

The seniors of Pleasant Hill turned into ghosts

by Katrina Biggs

"I don't see any seniors in any of my classes anymore, it's like they all disappeared or worse," said teacher, Joe Neill.

Some of the teachers started to realize that their senior students just stopped showing up to their classes. Mr. Neill said "First it was just two students who didn't show up for a while, then all of them just slowly disappeared."

Mrs. Flood, at first, thought that most of them were "skipping school" or "cutting class" but then realized that even the best seniors were also not showing up.

"How can they go weeks without anyone seeing them? If it was just two people then it could be a coincidence, but over 20 people all at once. Impossible!" said Ms. Flood.

"I still get all of their homework. Most of it is on paper, which means that there would be no way for them to get it without seeing me," Mr. Gardner said.

"The first few seniors disappeared around Halloween, the others slowly went away soon after," added Ms. Bonaventure.

"Spotting a senior in any class is like finding a needle in a haystack," noted Miya Biggs.

Most of the seniors decide to focus more on their jobs, then on actually showing up at school. They know that even if they don't go to class, they will still pass. The school carries seniors across the finish line, by making them pass, but barely.

"We are just too busy to actually show up to class. Too much stuff we have to do," said Chloe Meyer, one of the seniors that barely goes to school.

"Other seniors before me have passed, while still failing a couple classes along the way. Why should I put in the effort to make sure I come to school and pass?" Martha Bing

"Best person" in school

By Ava Loose

Are you sad or depressed? Do you feel discouraged about yourself? Then here is a solution to all your problems: Make fun of other people.

It's fun and gives you a good feeling about yourself (totally).

If you are asking how, it's super easy just look at a person and say something mean about how they look. That way you can feel better about how you look. The "pros" of this approach is that you can seem super confident. Others will admire you for telling it like it is...in a mean way. It is a good form of entertainment and it's "fun."

Another advantages is that you will be the most "popular." People like to be close to mean kids.

If you are unsure how to start being nasty, just say critical stuff about their facial features or things they wear.

Everyone will love it.

You will be the "best" person in the school.

Suspicious of link between masculinity and truck size confirmed

By Bob Strawb

A groundbreaking study has rocked our pleasant community and confirmed the suspicion of teenage boys statewide. The study, published in the prestigious Journal of Automotive Anthropology, has uncovered an undeniable link between masculinity and the size of one's pickup truck.

The study surveyed teenage boys at a local high school. Participants were asked to rate their own masculinity on a scale from one to ten, with ten being the epitome of machismo. Unsurprisingly, those with towering trucks rated themselves significantly higher on the masculinity scale. It seems that compensating for something isn't a stereotype after all.

Critics have pointed out the study's limitations, arguing that truck owners may just be compensating for something. "This study oversimplifies the complex and subjective nature of masculinity," said Dr. Grace Nuance, a gender studies professor. "It's not the size of the truck that matters, but how one chooses to use it."

When confronted about Dr. Grace's statement, a local group of teenage truck drivers conceded, "Get er' done." The group demonstrated a shared love of carbon emissions and revving their engines for attention.

Despite the controversy, truck manufacturers have already capitalized on the findings, rolling out a new line of "Beefcake Bigwheeler" trucks with larger cabs, taller tires, and more aggressive styling. "Our customers demand the biggest, baddest trucks on the road," said Chad Torque, CEO of Alpha Auto Inc. "It's key to their rugged country lifestyles."

As the debate rages on, one thing remains certain; in the world of teenage boys' trucks, size does matter. And for those who feel the need to compensate, there's always a bigger truck waiting on the lot.

The Senioritis Epidemic

by Charlie Neal

In a stunning turn of events, high schools across the nation are grappling with an unprecedented outbreak of a mysterious and highly contagious condition that's left the senior class in a state of academic anarchy: Senioritis.

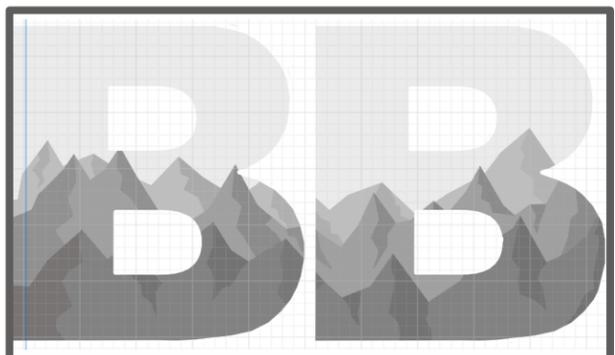
Symptoms to watch out for include a sudden aversion to homework, extreme drowsiness during class time, and a profound sense of apathy towards grades. Students afflicted with the condition may be easily identified by a disheveled appearance, glazed-over eyes, and other such traits.

As the epidemic continues, scientists scramble to find a cure, while teachers and administrators are left bewildered and struggling to keep their seniors motivated and on track to graduate. One teacher, who wishes to remain anonymous, stated, "It's like they've all decided that all the effort they've put in throughout their school career just doesn't matter anymore -- they're done!"

In a desperate attempt to contain the chaos, the school has hired motivational speakers to encourage the seniors to finish the year with a bang. Unfortunately, speakers have reported that their messages of hard work and perseverance have been met with a chorus of yawns, eye rolls, and critical jeers.

Meanwhile, the seniors have begun protesting and in extreme cases, outright refusing to show up. At our very own Pleasant Hill High School, petitions for nap time have sprung up on the whiteboards of many teachers. Seniors, now freshly educated on the U.S. constitution and government systems, demand that their right to do nothing is fundamental.

As the Senioritis epidemic rages on, many are left to wonder if this generation of seniors will recover from this academic malaise. Only time will tell if the cure for Senioritis will be found or if high schools will forever be transformed into havens of apathetic and indifferent students, dreaming of graduation day and a world beyond the walls of education.



Teacher gives class 3 consecutive projects, says it's "Light Work"

BY Ty Heard

"Five packets this week?! There's no way I can get this done in time!"

Actually, you can.

PHHS' former teacher, Joseph Baker, has recently been employed at another school in Lane County. He hands out what students deem to be "too much work" every single day. Sometimes, this comes in the form of a 27-page packet. Others, it's a hundred-point project. One thing is consistent: it's always due within the next three days.

Despite having the same amount of time for every assignment, students rarely turn anything in when they need to.

"I just don't get it," Baker said. "I give students plenty of time to do everything at home. 'Sports,' 'work,' and 'rest' are never excuses. If you have a spare moment, you should be working. You can afford to lose sleep. You can't afford that F."

One of Baker's students, Anne Smith, gave feedback on his teaching.

"This is ridiculous. Three projects can't be done by Monday. I have other classes to keep up with," she said.

Baker responded to this complaint by saying that it was "light work" and, once again, condemning basic human needs.

From our interview with Baker, we've come to the conclusion that students are lazy. Nothing should come before education, especially joy and good health.

Mrs. Watne doesn't actually speak Spanish

By Faye Ake

"Hola, me llamo es Sra. Watne." These famous words are often spoken by our Spanish teacher, Sra. Watne. For years students have flooded into the classroom, their minds eager to learn a second language. For years we have believed that we were hearing real Spanish..

Instead, we have been fooled.

Some students have come to the conclusion that Sra Watne doesn't actually speak any Spanish, in fact, she isn't at school.

Sra. Watne invites students to travel to some supposedly Spanish-speaking country nearly every year. Ironically the first time the trip was taken in 2004, Sra. Watne didn't return. Instead, our beloved teacher has been digitally projecting an image of herself through the whiteboard.

Most students don't know this, but the white board is actually a double sided mirror, it may look like a white board, but behind it, is a camera that is projecting Sra. Watne in front of the class. We interviewed a few students when the news was broken that we students had been tricked.

Fall Alse, a sophomore, gasped when she heard the news.

"I always knew something was off, like there was a flicker off the top of her head."

A teary eyed, Missy Lead, a senior said, "I've always thought that Sra. Watne was too good to be true!"

The administration is now investigating several conspiracy theories out there as well as to who might be the "real" Sra. Watne, and if she actually exists, is she still in the Galapagos Islands? Does she need rescuing?

We might never know, but what we do know is that Profe Watne doesn't speak Spanish. Instead, it is a software malfunction of her projection. This might be why students have such a hard time learning "Spanish."

People litter

By Greta Gramzow

That's been a common problem in society for many, many years. Yet everywhere you go you can find a trash can. Scientist Dr Adam Govey decided to test his theory, "Are People Trash Can Blind?" The results were promising in pursuit of litter bug behavior.. To test this, Govey provided 12 trash cans to PHHS. He painted three of them a bright, neon color. Three more were provided with pictures of famous music artists and other celebrities on them. Another three had the lids replaced with a basketball hoop. As for the final three, he pasted an image of something that everyone loves the most... phones.

In this experiment, Adam's main focus is to determine if different trash can looks of can get people's attention. But it seems that nowadays we all have short attention spans. he hoops cans were a hi with the basketball player—unless the test subject missed.

"It seems that they needed encouragement to keep trying until they actually made it in," Govey said.

"But in the end, people are not blind to trash bins at all. Perhaps they are just ignorant."

Tyrannical Band Director Lectures His Students On Why "Oxygen is Overrated"

BY Zoe Harr

A recent rise in "breathless" middle school students at Pleasant Hill Middle School has raised suspicion. The one thing the students have in common is a constant shortness of breath.

"It's strange," said principal Mr. Reiersgaard during an interview. "We can't seem to find anything else in common with these students."

However, there was one thing that investigators did overlook. All of the students were band students.

During an interview, we asked the band director Zac Tendick about the recurring instances of exhausted band students.

"My students have to learn to play without breathing," Tendick said. "Breath marks in the music are a waste of time." He followed his statement with a rant about useless things like 'dynamic diversity', 'good sound', and 'being able to actually finish the song'.

After receiving Tendick's explanation, we looked to his faithful and dedicated 7th grade students.

"I'm quitting!" said 7th grader Ezra Foreman, who'd been yelled at for taking a micro-breath in between measures three and four. "I can't stand blowing my lungs off 'till they bust!"

"I-I, I want to do b-band, but..."

What's a circular b-breathing?" sobbed Dominik Hammond-Mendez. Following the countless protests of the band students, a riot exploded in the school-yard.

"I've gotten asthma from band!" shouted Sahalie Johnson. "I don't care if that's not possible!"

"Free the lungs!" yelled Caroline Carlson and Aria Verma.

"We need air too!" says the Percussion Section, who apparently breathes through their hands.

he School Board is considering suspending Zac Tendick from his job...And gifting all the band students their own inhaler.

Students celebrate work being optional

by Aria Verma

With more and more students refusing to turn in school work, the school has decided to propose a big change. Mr. Salmond said "I have gotten so many complaints from teachers about students not turning in their work that it was time to get serious about dealing with this issue." From this time forward the school will not require students to turn in work.

Since the announcement, students celebrate school work being optional. With this new policy almost all students stopped turning work in.

"I don't have to do my work and I won't get in trouble for it!" Darren Soper yelled. Now students have decided to sit back and relax as they ride on "Easy Street."

"It was getting to be too much. The amount of missing assignments students had was ridiculous! And most of them weren't doing anything about it. So after a long hard talk with all the teachers we decided to make it optional,"said Mr Salmond.

With this new policy instituted teachers now report that most students don't bother with the idea of "school work" and "working."

"It's not worth my time to do it, I have more important things to do," Bella Giles said.

Some choose to do their work. "In the future I want to look back on my academic life and say, wow, look at what I accomplished, and not 'I wish I would have not been so immature and started thinking about my future.'" Aria Verma opined..

Most teachers disagree with this new policy. "I believe that students should do their work. For most, it will help in the long run," said Ms. Taylor. On the other hand teachers are loving the decrease in the amount of work they have to grade. "It makes our jobs so much easier."

With assignments dwindling, staff feel everyone might regret this decision.

"The amount of D's and F's is insane!" Mr. Salmond said. "There are more than 250!" With our goal of having fewer than 100 D's and F's for a quarter three reward trip, our chances look grim. "I was looking forward to a quarter 3 reward trip," said Caroline Carlson who is contributing to the inflated number of D's and F's.

Will letting work be optional be a downfall for the school? We will have to C...or D...or F.

Swifties Storm the School

By Schmelenor Schneperson

If you live in this world, there's no doubt you've heard of Taylor Swift. She started with music but has completely taken over everything, even our beloved football (like I said, everything.) Swift has created quite a division, resulting in "Swifties" and haters that hate. Historically, the haters' group largely consists of older adults. However, recent observations around Pleasant Hill High School might tell you differently.

"I walked into Spanish a few minutes earlier than normal and startled Senora Watne listening to Cruel Summer dubbed over by a Spanish translation. She quickly turned it off before I could ask about it," said Jimmy Stone. While scanning to see if anyone heard, he quickly added, "Uh, I mean, I don't know what song it was..."

Mr. Neill was spotted by several students last Friday driving out of the school parking lot, singing to what could only be the undeniable songs of Taylor. Some students speculate it was "We Are Never Getting Back Together."

When asked about the matter, Neill stammered, "My daughter. It was my daughter. Yeah. She was listening to it last and it just started playing, so yeah. That's why." He refused any further examination.

Students have recently reported hearing muffled sounds of the 1989 album coming from Mr. Reiersgaard's and Mr. McClain's offices.

"I was walking in from lunch the other day and I heard Kyle and the principal taking a karaoke break. To be honest, they sounded pretty spot on," recalled Jodie Alison.

"It's getting a little old. Whenever parents or visitors come into the front office I just have to ignore the singing and act like nothing is happening. It's getting awkward," said Office Manager, Noell D'Agosta.

Mr. Gardner has embraced his Taylor Swift fandom loud and proud. If you've taken any of his classes lately, you likely have been introduced to his new and upcoming unit, "Analysis of T.S. Songwriting."

"I'm taking it upon myself to integrate her writing into our education system. I firmly believe that she is the way for modern literature classes."

Whether you like Taylor Swift or not, it's apparent that some of our teachers have a hidden (or not so hidden) passion for the enchanting lifestyle of a Swiftie. Next time you see Mr. Reiersgaard, challenge him to a karaoke battle.

If you see Mr. Neill give him a song suggestion "for his daughter." By doing this you might come to know more about our teachers than you ever thought possible.

Mrs. D'Agosta gets "massive" pay raise

by Josie Heacock

Recently, it has come to the attention of the Pleasant Hill administration that office manager Mrs. Noell D'Agosta deserves a pay raise.

Originally, this proposal was shot down by the argument that Mrs. D'Agosta did not do enough for the school.

"I mean, her job is so simple, even I could do that, in addition to everything else I do.. Managing the front office, answering phone calls, running the admissions at the games, and everything we don't do, it's just what she does for fun. That part is for kicks," stated Mr. McClain.

However, plenty of other people think D'Agosta deserves a raise. Several students and staff members have sent in letters, or personally called Mr. Reiersgaard all demanding that change be evoked.

As more and more complaints were filed in, the administration slowly began to realize that Mrs. D'Agosta does more work than what her job entails.

In order to comply with the demands of the students, staff, and members of the community, the administration agreed to raise Mrs. D'Agosta's pay.

On the next pay day, D'Agosta reported that she did indeed receive a raise.

Twenty-five cents.

Twenty-five cents symbolized what the administration believed her work was worth. This marked a monumental moment in the history of the front office. For the first time in over two decades, one of them received a raise that was beyond all their wildest dreams.

Pocket change can really change a life.



6 sports

PHOTO CREDITS: Tye Photography



Baseball dedicated to making a run at state title

By Josie Heacock, Sports Editor

“A well oiled machine” is how the baseball team describes itself as they gear up for the season.

The Pleasant Hill baseball team has started off their season with high hopes and dedication that the program hasn't seen in a long time.

“I have never seen a group work this hard in the off season in my entire life. [This] goes for all ages. They have a specific dedication, a common goal that not all teams have. They seem to have come together under the goal of wanting to win a championship. I think this team is going to do extremely well,” said Coach Johnny Bowden.

Last season, the team finished in the top eight in State, and was second in the league. However, many players felt let down after last season and are determined to go all the way in the 2024 season.

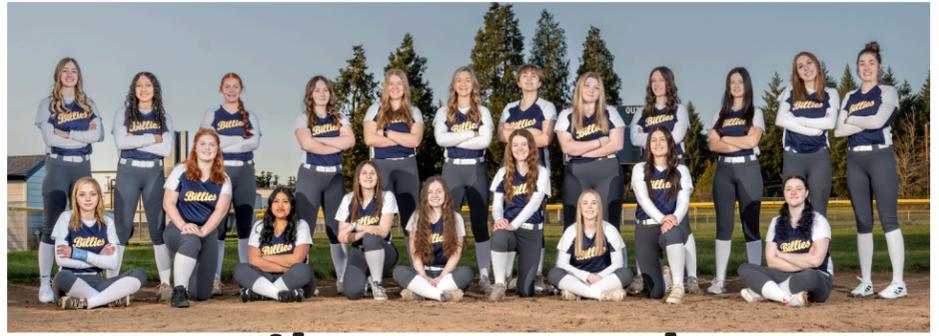
Benjamin Gunn, first baseman and pitcher agreed. “We all work very very hard for our season this year and we've outworked everyone and we can basically win state if we keep our heads down and keep focused and stick to our goals.”

The team feels like family, according to many of the players. “[We're a] family, we are all one. We love each other and have each other's back,” said Caden Richardson, the team's shortstop and pitcher.

The players aren't focused on only winning—many of them truly love the game. “The dynamic of it, the good vibes you get off of it, going to the games and everything” are what outfielder Ewan Stuart, describes the feeling of playing with the team.

“Playing center field, knowing that I have the team being my back and the great coaches. [makes the experience] great.” added centerfielder Caleb VanOrdstrand.

With motivation and drive from last season the team is determined to go all the way to the State Championship.



Family atmosphere propels softball team

By Josie Heacock, Sports Editor

Softball isn't just a team, they are a family. The girls strive to have communication, friendships, and commitment to each other both on and off the field.

Piper Fisher, the team's utility player said, “When you celebrate, you don't celebrate in groups, you celebrate as a whole team. Everyone is super kind to each other and super friendly to each other- you can ask anyone any questions. Everyone is super friendly and nice, not every sport [team] is like that.”

Last year, the softball team experienced what Senior Bella Black calls “A building year. Transitioning to a new coach, and new players, [it was] lots of learning building.”

“You have to work together to make it run smoothly [and] last year it was a little difficult for that. This year, I think it's going to be a lot healthier of a style for all of us and I think it's going to be a very successful year and lot of people will enjoy it.” Piper Fisher.

Looking to the future, Raigan Obie, a senior, says that she can see, “A lot more depth on our team this year, not just a few good players but a lot.”

The team hopes that in the future, there will be, “Better communication on and off the field, become better teammate, win league and make it state, [as well as] build up the program for upcoming years.” Sami Pembleton, first baseman and catcher expressed her hopes for the team's future.

Being on the Softball team is “A lot of fun. There are so many different things in softball. [There is] always something to learn, [you are] never bored, [you are] always improving your skills.” Bella Black, Pitcher.

All the girls would recommend the softball team to anyone interested in playing. Sami Pembleton said, “They are very welcoming, loving, supportive, intelligent, kind, and if you ever need help they have no problem helping. Softball is the only sport I have ever played that I really enjoy. Having a group of girls that have the same interests as you and that will have your back and that will not get mad at if you mess up is just amazing.” Right: Bella Black winds up to fire a pitch home.



Out of many, One Track is a team of individuals

By Josie Heacock, Sports Editor



Above: Jessica Clough soars in long jump while Dhanesh Naidu takes the handoff from Braedyn Hazel in the 4by 100 meter race.

Every other sport at Pleasant Hill is based on a group, a team, who all work together to accomplish one purpose.

Track, however, stands alone.

Dakota Hyland, a senior, describes the Track environment in contrast to other sports. “It's very different from other sports in that it's a team sport, but also very individual. The culture is very individual...You get off the basketball court and talk mean to each other (opponent), but you leave the track and you congratulate each other (your opponent). We are a bunch of kids who are really dedicated and congratulate each other.”

Dakota, who has participated in track and field since seventh grade, sees this year team as “An eclectic group of people who cross-train for other sports, this is their only sport, or their first year, you have a lot of different experience levels, grade levels; boys and girls, but somewhere everyone gets along and is uplifting to each other. Positive and encouraging to each other. We can still be competitive, but you [will] have someone on your team who doesn't know your name but is at the finish line cheering [you on]. That's really cool.”

When you join the track team, you are instantly brought into a community of people who are there to support you, cheer you on, and help you get better throughout the season. Kolbi Hampton, a sophomore who has run track since eighth grade, would recommend track to anyone. “It's so versatile— there is an event for everybody. You don't have to be fast or super strong. It just depends on your strengths and weakness.”

Coach Kevin Smead, who ran track in college at LCC and specializes in sprinters is interested to see where this season takes the 2024 track team. “[I am] really excited for this upcoming season, we started pre-season practices for the first time in a long time and the program has steadily grown over the last two years. I think we have really competitive group of athletes this year that will be surprised at where they are at the end of the season.”

Steven Gunn, who participates in discus, shot put, javelin, and the 4x4 relay, summarizes the Track team and it's coaches. “It's very welcoming, they encourage you to do whatever event you want, they just let you pick. If you have a bad day in track, it's not the end of the world, keep doing your stuff. [It's a] very solid community, our coaches are awesome. They have always been very supportive, everyone competes very very hard in every meet and there is good work ethic.”



My fathers battle with cancer

It started as a small poke.

Just a small sliver from a piece of stray metal he had been working with. Nothing significant—or so we thought.

Little did we know that small sliver would change everything—and not for the better.

That small sliver of metal wedged beneath the nail of his thumb in his skin became infected. After multiple doctors appointments and eventually the removal of half his thumbnail and a skin graft, we thought it was good as new.

Turns out, cancer had sprouted in the fresh wound: A skin cancer called squamous cell carcinoma.

How strange to think that a skin cancer, and one easily treated, would put a halt to our everyday lives.

Hearing the words “it’s cancer” made my stomach churn. I had already lost my adoptive mother to cancer that had started in her colon and spread through her body.

I wasn’t ready to lose my adoptive father too.

The doctors went in and removed what they believed to be all the cancer but during the process a single cell remained.

One. Single. Cell.

Escaped and planted itself in my dad’s armpit.

Months went by and everything seemed normal until my dad started feeling small grape sized nodules in his armpit. Worried, both my parents went to see his doctor to get a scan, but the doctor assured them that it was just an enlarged lymph node and sent them home.

But it wasn’t. It was a tumor.

Because of that doctor, my dad’s arm was amputated. The tumor grew to the size of a cantaloupe. It was so large it was coming through his skin. He went to treatments, radiation, chemotherapy, immunotherapy, everything, all in hopes to shrink the monster growing in his arm.

The tumor made him sick. He was taken to the hospital three times in one month, sick with sepsis. Everyone decided that he either got his arm amputated or he’d die. And so he got it amputated. His arm weighed 27 pounds at the time of amputation. 27 pounds. It’s insane. Imagine having to carry a 27 pound weight around everywhere you go. After the surgery he came home and I couldn’t even look at him.

The treatments had taken my strong dad who stood proud and tall, and turned him into a small shriveled man.

It terrified me. All I could think about is “what if he never gets better?” or “What will we do if we lose him?” I wasn’t ready to lose him.

After the surgery he seemed to recover quickly. He was back to doing his normal duties, but slightly less because of his missing arm. He continued to receive radiation and chemotherapy.

He took my brother and I shooting down at the range in Dexter. That was the last thing we ever got to do with him. The next day, his knee broke.

I was in the kitchen doing schoolwork when I heard the fall. I ran out into the living room to see him collapsed on the couch so I panicked.

He looked at me and said “I think my knee is broken.” And it was.

I sat with him as we waited for my mom to come home. He kept holding my hand and saying that he was scared. So was I.

When my mom came, she called 911 and had them come get him. And when they arrived, they pumped him full of pain meds and hauled him onto the gurney and out the door. And when the ambulance took off my mom and I embraced each other and cried. That was the first time I’d ever seen her cry.

“How much more is going to happen?” She asked.

So much more did.

The doctors scanned my dad’s knee. Then they took him back to get him a CT scan. That’s when they discovered cancer in his bones. It was in his hips, making them brittle and prone to breaking. He had tumors sprouting in his lungs, small ones, but tumors nonetheless.

It only confirmed my fear.

When he came home, he could barely walk. He had to be wheeled around in a wheelchair and helped into every seat. His throat had shrunk, making it hard for him to eat. He’d choke on everything, even liquids, and soon he just stopped eating because he was scared.

Because his room was upstairs, we turned the nursery into his room so he could sleep downstairs. With my room being downstairs,

I hear a lot of what happens—especially at night when the house is quiet.

Every night I’d lay in bed and listen to my dad crying, praying, yelling, begging for the pain to end. It scared me and I’d cry too. I’d never heard my dad crying like that before.

For many many months, I’d listen to it. And pretty soon I had gotten used to it. To have someone’s crying become normal to you is horrible. It shouldn’t be normal. But it was.

Soon my dad couldn’t even stand. His knee wasn’t getting better, instead it had become swollen to the point he couldn’t even bend it. And from then on, everything went downhill.

He was admitted to the hospital again, this time because he was delirious and talking out of his head like before when he had sepsis. While in the hospital, his breathing became worse.

He was sent home with an oxygen tank. Seeing my dad degraded down to this small sickly husk of the man he used to be made me sick. I knew he wasn’t getting any better.

I was haunted by nightmares. All of them were focused on him dying. I soon stopped sleeping properly and became scared of sleeping because I didn’t want to see that. He slept a lot. And cried all night. He had stopped eating and my mom struggled to get him to even drink his protein shakes.

They looked everywhere for things that might help him. A naturopath came to recommend natural remedies for cancer, medication, supplements, everything. But it didn’t stop the cancer. He was soon bed bound.

Coming home from school to see his chair empty and him laying in bed asleep, I knew that it was getting close, I just didn’t expect it to be so soon.

On March 13th, I went into his room to tell him “good-bye and that I’d see him later.” I leaned over and gave him his usual hug when he took my hand and looked me in the eyes and said: “Stay a little longer.” I wanted to stay, but my mom came in and told him I couldn’t and sent me off. When I came home from school I was greeted by my aunt in the living room who walked over and hugged me and said: “Your dad isn’t breathing too well. He’s been like this all day, I don’t think he’s going to last much longer” That broke me.

I went in to see how bad it was and it was terrible. He looked almost dead. He was gasping for breath and my sister and her boyfriend were there. I left the room because I couldn’t stand looking at him.

I went back in a few minutes later and sat by his bed, holding his hand and wishing that he’d squeeze it back. 4 hours went by and he eventually took his last breath. At 6:58pm on March 13th, 4 days before my birthday, my dad died.

It still seems like a dream to me. I wake up expecting to see him in the nursery or in his chair. Everywhere I go I’m reminded of him. My mom gave me his backpack and his water bottle. I found his cologne which I like to spray in my room at night and his blanket that I sleep with. All these small comforts are only a temporary relief. Coming to school, watching TV, walking through town, seeing all these happy families, daughters with a healthy dad, it makes me think “why can’t I have that?” Why did I have to be the one who lost their dad? At times I feel I’m alone, the only one who’s going through this pain.

For 5 years, 5 years, my dad battled cancer. And for those 5 years, I started to realize how much he meant to me, I just wish that I had come to realize it sooner. Even through all the arguing and yelling and anger between us, I still loved him in the end and he loved me. You may fight with your parents, but they’re only looking out for you, that’s why they may be strict and nag, I thought it was because they just wanted to make things hard for me but it took losing my dad to realize it wasn’t.

My mom shared a poem with me that I hope will bring comfort to you, to those who have experienced loss. “Death is nothing at all. I have only slipped away to the next room. I am I and you are you. Whatever we were to each other, That, we still are. Call me by my old familiar name. Speak to me in the easy way which you always used. Put no difference into your tone. Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow. Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes we enjoyed together. Play, smile, think of me. Pray for me. Let my name be ever the household word that it always was. Let it be spoken without effect. Without the trace of a shadow on it. Life means all that it ever meant. It is the same that it ever was. There is absolute unbroken continuity. Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight? I am but waiting for you. For an interval. Somewhere. Very near. Just around the corner. All is well.”

can seriously affect your sleep schedule.

But there is some good news. You can reduce the effects of blue light from mobile devices in a couple ways, including: wearing blue light glasses, using screen filters, and turning on night mode (which reduces your devices brightness).

Another reason why people believe mobile tech could be hurting us is because they believe attention spans are decreasing. Multitasking has become very normal in recent years and some scientists believe this can contribute to a lack of focus, especially in children. Multitasking can also lead to a number of other issues, such as added stress, less productivity, and more tomfoolery.

In conclusion, our mobile devices can hurt us in some unforeseen ways, but they can also be great tools for information and communication. They also provide us with lots of fun.

Social Media for Teens: To do or not to do?

By Carson Bernardo

Quick disclaimer for this publication: This is going to be entirely based on my opinions and views on social media as a whole and my beliefs on whether or not it’s a problem in modern society. Again, this is my own opinion(s), so if you don’t agree with me, don’t come crying and yelling at me about it; just cry about it.

Social media has become a huge part of our lives as students. Cell phones are considered a necessity in our day and age. Almost everyone has social media—unless, of course, you are not allowed to use said social media. My aim here is to explain the pros and cons of social media and the problems with the concepts.

As a whole, social media is a website or application that allows people to create and share content and personal experiences with one another. This could be as simple as sharing about a recent trip you just took with your friends via photos and descriptions, or it could be something else, like full-on media creation like YouTube and live streaming. YouTube and live streaming can be a full-time career, depending on whether or not you get blessed by the algorithms. Platforms like TikTok often show success with individual creators, due to TikTok and other apps’ nature. The short videos and non-click exposure help spread smaller creators to a wider audience.

More traditional social media platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook, or Twitter (now called ‘X’ but that’s a dumb name...), are more for news and real-world events than platforms like TikTok or Twitch. I won’t get into the whole Twitter/X fiasco because I don’t believe it’s very fitting for a school newspaper, and I don’t really feel like writing 300 words about that disaster.

As of writing, TikTok is currently in the process of being banned from use in the United States as long as it’s under a Chinese parent company. Again, I won’t go too much into this because the story is always changing, and by the time this is published, chances are it will already be either banned or sold to another parent company.

Now onto the meat and potatoes: social media for teens. As said previously, social media has become a huge part of our lives as teenagers for a few reasons. First of all, it’s on our phones, and we all know about teenagers and their phones. Secondly, kids our age love to share about what we are currently doing. We want our friends to see what trips we just went on or how good our Panda Express looks. Another reason is solely the fact that we love to keep up with the trends. Anything that’s popular spreads quickly, especially to those who are online frequently.

Many parents are normally concerned about social media, deeming it the best place for ‘bullying’ and ‘harassment’ to take place without much notice. While I agree that this can sometimes be the case, it’s not frequent. Social media is more of a place for positivity than negativity, although, again, there’s a place for both on any social media platform.

Another belief I strongly believe in might sting a little for some, but all of the “bullying” that happens on social media—that’s not the creators of the platform’s fault, but newsflash: it’s more the parent’s fault than anything. If your kid is not in a good mindset to be on social media and, more commonly, is too young to be put out there like that, this is solely the parent’s fault; unless, of course, you have sneaky kids. As parents, it is your responsibility to monitor what your kids do and intact with, especially online.

Many are quick to blame the creators of social media for people being bullied, but to be completely honest, there isn’t much they can do to keep the bad people out. That’s the reality of it, just as in the real world; you can’t immediately recognize and single out every bad person. No matter how much security is put in place, harassment will happen. This might sound harsh, but in a way, being on social media prepares you for the future by exposing yourself to a little taste of the real world before you step out into it as an adult. Social media teaches you how to point out bad interactions and situations, and steer clear of them.

Many social media platforms have some sort of moderation put in place to ensure the ‘safety’ of all users, but we’ve all heard that crap. There’s only so much you can ‘moderate’ before it is just an invasion of privacy. An unfortunate reality about social media is that sometimes you see things you would be better off not seeing, missing the person you were 5 minutes ago.

A lesson I’d like you, as the reader, to take away from this publication is this: if you aren’t ready to see the real world, stay away from social media. Come back when you are ready to handle the harsh reality we live in.

You’ll have to step into it eventually if you hope to move out and be on your own.

Is Mobile Technology hurting us?

By Mark Buchan

You probably use your phone (or laptop) quite often, but did you know that it could be harming you?

One of the main causes for concern is blue light. Blue light is rays of light that have short wavelengths and high energy. Their most common source is the sun, but they are also produced from screens. While the blue light from screens is far less than from the sun, it still raises concerns due to the close proximity and length of time spent looking at them. Blue light can contribute to cataracts and eye cancers. They can also cause retinal damage.

When you use a phone or laptop at night, it can disrupt your circadian rhythm. Your circadian rhythm is your internal clock that tells you when to sleep and wake up. It knows when it is day because of absorbed blue light from the sun. When you use a mobile device, you are fooling your brain into thinking that it is still daytime. This

The Billie Backside



Kayla Metcalf and Makaila McLeod are great friends and practitioners of the art of Girl Talk.

Girl Talk

By Ellie Thebo, Rhianna Prakash and Siena Shaddon

When saying “girl talk” most people think of giggling about boys or gossiping. But if you’ve ever been a part of a real “girl talk”, you’d realize it’s so much more.

According to The Michigan Daily, “Girl talk” is defined as “conversation between women or girls, typically about subjects considered to be uninteresting or inappropriate to men.”

Whether in relationships with friends, family, or a partner, identity, work, or education being a girl in our world today can be a challenge.

By having “Girl Talk”, girls get to feel confident or even just heard—depending on what they are going through. After ranting and spilling on certain topics, girls can gather advice from their friends.

It helps girls relate to each other, to problem solve, and to better understand situations. Talking about relationship struggles you may be going through or friends not treating you how you should be treated most likely is easier with your close friends than your parents.

Most likely you’ve heard “I was a teenager once too!” from one of your parents. This is true but, your parents may look at the situation differently, and although they have been teens before they may not get exactly what you are going through. Especially if you are looking for specific advice but aren’t necessarily receiving it, it could get frustrating.

The best advice comes from the friends closest to you that have your best intentions at mind. Having people around you to help you through bad situations, that give you honest, true advice is crucial to being a teenager.

Without having my closest friends to give me advice, I would’ve made lots of bad decisions, and been in a much worse place than I am now. If it weren’t for my friends picking up the phone at midnight to me crying about a boy, helping me stand up for myself in bad situations, or listening to me bring up the same thing annoying me over and over again, and giving me actual advice, and helping me realize my advice, I’d definitely be a lot worse off.

Girl talk is the best therapy for teen girls. This helps our self esteem and can promote lots of positivity. It makes girls feel heard and that their feelings are valued. Girl talk is crucial to girls’ mental health, it’s a way to express our emotions and feelings without being judged. Something about discussing your problems and interests with other girls who can relate is very therapeutic. It’s a safe place to express your mind and discuss common ground.

<https://www.michigandaily.com/opinion/the-importance-of-girl-talk/>

Gaven Castro's experience with music

By Taliegh Jackson

I interviewed a musician friend of mine from a different school, Gaven Castro. Gaven goes to Springfield High school and is in Band and Choir. They’ve been in band for about three years now, and choir this year. Gaven is someone I’ve known since 3rd grade, so seeing them accomplish what they have is impressive.

Gaven is in Mariachi band, concert choir, Concert Band, Jazz band and Orchestra. They describe their experience as mostly positive, besides some kids who don’t like them to which Gaven said, “They’re losers so it doesn’t matter.”

I find it funny that they say this because it expresses that they don’t care that much how other people feel about them, as long as they’re having fun doing things they love to do, it shows that they don’t have shame in themselves because they don’t care about others’ opinions of them.

Gaven and I had a conversation about what really inspired them to do music, and they’re answer was, “My brother, Marco Castro, Jr., was a massive inspiration to me growing up. His passion for singing really stuck to me and I’ve just been trying to be him.” I found this really interesting because most people find their inspiration from creators or parents, never really siblings.

Gaven does band to express their feelings because they find it easier than a lot of other things. Gaven also said that their favorite instrument is Electric bass.

Gaven is also a tenor.

The Real Slim Shady of PHill

By Ellie Epperson

May I have your attention, please? May I have your attention please?

Will the real Slim Shady please stand up?

Yes, yes he will.

His name is Vedder Anderson.

Like a caterpillar to a butterfly, Beyoncé crossing over to country, or a phoenix rising from the ashes, Vedder has shed his old self (or rather, his signature beach boy hair) and transformed into something new.

“I hadn’t done anything exciting with my life for quite a while.”

After some convincing and months of consideration, Vedder bit the bullet and shaved his “gorgeous” mane.

“[His hair before] was luscious. It looked so good. Before, it looked great. I mean, [he] looks good either way cause [he] has the tough look with this,” said Joe Ewing (9).

Ryder Swaim (9) said, “It’s fine. [I liked it] before he got it blonde. I like the buzz, not the blonde. If you’re gonna go blonde, make your eyebrows blonde.” Vedder said the original inspiration came from his cousin.

“My cousin had been trying to get me to do it for quite a while and I was kinda getting bored...so I decided to cut it,” said Vedder (11). “[My cousin] lives in Wyoming, his name’s Bill. We’re pretty good friends and we always hang out during the summers. We both grew our hair out together and that was pretty fun but then he decided to shave his head and he’d been trying to convince me to for about the last year.”

However, making the initial decision to do such a thing doesn’t mean it will be easy from there on out.

“I didn’t like the brown at all because my brown buzz was not the look. I decided to bleach it. And the first few times it turned out very yellow. It was kind of a learning curve.”

The desirable white color came only after multiple tries, including a crap ton of bleach, beanies, and some professional help. Vedder saw hairstyles involving buzzed hair with designs on top. Spiderwebs particularly piqued his interest.

“My sister and I took it upon ourselves to dye spider webs into my white bleached hair. It did not turn out very well. It did not turn out well at all actually.”

So commenced the 3-hour long period of desperation before school came the next morning. He had a “panic-attack at 9:00 at night” and decided to go all-black. However, layer after layer of black dye, the result stayed less than desirable.

“The first coat turned out blue so I just kept adding more and more black until probably about 12:00 at night when I finally gave up and resigned to wearing a beanie. The whole rest of that week I just bleached my hair everyday. I probably did it like 4 or 5 times and it looked the exact same.”

As the weekend approached, Vedder realized his parents would probably not allow him to wear a beanie to church.

“That Saturday I went to a salon and had them fix me up which turned out.”

Vedder has noticed that lots of people feel the need to give their opinion on his hair...even when he didn’t ask. The spectrum of opinions has created a minor controversy in the school.

“I’ve been called Brad Pitt, a few times. That’s probably my favorite. [It’s a] good ol’ confidence boost. A lot of “Slim Shady’s”, as to be expected. Most of the females I’ve talked to about it don’t like it, and they’re mad about it. All the guys love it though.”

Despite the myriad of comments, Vedder shrugs any of it off.

“I didn’t do it for you and it’s convenient,” Vedder blithely said.

To anyone on the verge of deciding to do something crazy with their hair Vedder says, “Just do it. Get the regrowth going. You know it’s temporary. It’s one the most temporary parts of your appearance. Might as well have fun with it.”

As for the future of his hair, Vedder sees himself trying a grow-out phase during the summers and continuing to buzz it during the winters, though he isn’t quite sure yet. He only misses his long hair when he sees good pictures of it.

“That’s a rare occurrence, but when I do, I miss it.”



Alex Cloyd and Kyle Ludwig are well dressed.

A closer look at gentleman's FASHION

By Raelynn Dubose and Evander Ruiz

As part of our efforts to understand the fashion preferences of gents, we interviewed four guys: Mr. Ludwig, Dhanesh Naidu, Joseph Housen and Alex Cloyd. During the interview, we delved into their style, asking them a range of questions that aimed to uncover what makes their fashion sense unique and noteworthy. We wanted to know how they define their style, what specific elements of their clothing choices stand out the most, and if there’s a particular theme or aesthetic that guides their fashion choices. Our goal was to gain insights into the fashion trends and preferences of a sample of our gentleman with sartorial taste and to understand what factors influence their sense of style.

During our interviews, we spoke with freshmen Joseph Housen and Dhanesh Naidu. They described their fashion style as streetwear vintage, which is original. They explained that it takes confidence to dress differently and stand out from the crowd. They draw inspiration for their fashion style from each other and online sources. Like what sources, get me a link.

During our discussion, we had the pleasure of also speaking with Mr. Ludwig, a fashion enthusiast with a strong preference for urban, sporty, and comfortable clothing. He is a fan of popular athletic brands like Nike and Adidas, which he considers to be both stylish and functional. When it comes to fashion, Ludwig’s favorite aspect is footwear. He spoke at length about his growing passion for shoes and his recent interest in shoe authentication.

He mentioned that he draws inspiration from a popular YouTuber named Rami the Icon, who is an expert in authenticating shoes and is known for his positive attitude. Ludwig finds Rami’s videos to be informative and entertaining and looks forward to watching them regularly.

In our most recent discussion, we had the pleasure of conversing with Alex Cloyd, a senior with a unique sense of style. Alex characterizes his fashion choices as “Lowkey,” and he prioritizes comfort above all else. When it comes to his wardrobe, Alex draws inspiration from a variety of sources, including his personal preferences for design, texture, and color. His fashion choices are a reflection of his individuality and his commitment to staying true to himself.

Jazz scene alive and well in Pleasant Hill

By Murphy Sprague, Charlie Neal

When most of us think about jazz music, our mind goes to elevators, intelligentsia, and our grandparents’ CD collection. It’s old and decrepit. A relic of antiquity. So with the jazz scene seemingly concentrated into a few small demographics, is it fair to say that jazz is dead?

The question of jazz’s survival has been raised in every era by each generation of listeners. It originates from a myopic view of music and a romanticizing of the past. All genres evolve over time. Jazz in particular was invented in an era of newfound freedom, and continues to be an experimental channel for cultural and musical innovation.

So, with jazz seemingly expired, we asked members of Solar Jazz to give us their two cents:

According to the musicians we interviewed, modern jazz is thriving.

India Isaacson, flutist and guitarist, says that “jazz is still very important to the people who play it” and offers the examples of Grace Kelly and Esperanza Spalding, both of whom are widely considered jazz prodigies.

James Hoopman said that jazz is very much alive, and says these artists along with many other jazz musicians of today are “some of the most talented to exist in the genre’s history.”

To summarize, jazz isn’t dead, at least, not for the first time. The busy brass and soulful syncopation don’t just sound timeless, they are. So the next time you step into an elevator or watch your grandparent pop a Louis Armstrong CD into the slot, think of jazz as time machine transporting you to an era of freedom, potential, and hope.

The Billie Extra

What do Puppies actually cost?

By Alexis Moch

So you want a puppy. That brings up big questions. Do I have Enough money for a puppy?

Will I sleep with a puppy?

These are questions almost all first time dog owners ask. If you are planning on getting a puppy you are most likely going to ask yourself these questions. So here's some advice from someone who currently owns a puppy.

If you are wondering if you have enough money to buy a puppy, it depends if you are getting a puppy that will grow to be a big dog or if you are getting a small dog. Let's go somewhere in between and say a medium sized dog.

Food will be around \$40 a month as a puppy and \$80 as an adult. Puppies require at least three Rounds of shots which are around \$110 each. It is recommended around a year of age to get your dog spayed or neutered, it costs around \$400 to \$800. But it is not a requirement.

Sleep well, that is an interesting question to answer. It depends on the age of your puppy if you have a 6-8 week old they will most likely not sleep a whole lot. If you get through the night at this age without waking up, consider yourself lucky. If your puppy is 9 weeks or older you will most likely start getting a full night of sleep.

Other than getting little sleep puppies are really fun and enjoyable. I highly recommend getting a dog. They are really exciting and crazy. You will love the puppy stage a lot. Wish you the best of luck.



What do you want to tell the next generation?

By Jaxson Potts

Many of the Generation Z kids (people born mid to late 1990's to 2010) have graduated and gone on to their adult lives. Generation Alpha is now in middle school.

This is why teachers are worried about this generation. In the summer of 2023, the United States released a report on how the country's 13-year olds were doing in the subjects of math and reading. grades were at their lowest in decades. Researchers suspect that this is because of technology that Generation Alpha has grown up with.

So here is the reason why teachers are worried about generation alpha, short attention spans caused by factors like social media.

Also normal punishments like suspending or referrals are not working and school districts are seeing an upping rate in them because kids aren't as worried about them: so.

This is what some teachers or other adults want to tell the next generation.

Mr.Meinzen, the teacher who connects with students, suggested that students should "suspend judgment as an act of hope. Students should remain curious so that your world will be bigger and better.

Ms.Jay, the master of the fine arts is excellent at teaching all the grades, painting models and ceramics.

Here is the quote of all of generation Alpha "Don't let technology do everything for you, let your creativity grow"

Here I'm going to talk about Mrs.Crim. She is one of the most hardworking teachers in this school. She constantly tries to make her students' lives easier and improve her teaching skills. She may be new to pleasant hills, but she has much to offer and wise words to say.

"The desire to reach for the stars is ambitious. The desire to reach hearts is wise."



The chicken champ of Lane County

By Ava Loose

Chickens:some like them breaded, fried, or in a dino shape.

But also people like them in their coop.

You may love chickens or hate chickens but I know someone who absolutely loves chickens and knows them inside and out. It is Caroline Carson, the Lane County champion of chickens.

What sparked Caroline's love for chicken?

"When we moved back to Oregon, I was 5 years old when we got our first batch of chicks and I absolutely fell in love with these little fluffy bodies that chirped. My favorite thing was holding them. My mother, Caitlyn who went to Pleasant Hill was a chicken champion in her youth and I wanted to follow in her footsteps."

Q:What do you have to do to prepare for the show?

A:Study, study, study, study, that's all I do most of the time. Then about a week before the fair I make sure my animals are healthy. I quarantine my chickens I am showing. I them special treats to make their feathers shine. I make sure I have all my stuff in my tack box for when we are at the fair so that I know I'm prepared. About 3 days before the fair I wash all my chicken so they look their best.

Q:How do you decide what chickens you bring to show?

A:At Fair there are three categories I compete in which are Market, Showmanship, and Breed class. For Market I bring three Cornish cross chickens (meat chickens) that are all close to the same weight. For Showmanship I bring one chicken that is easy to handle and obeys so that I can show them correctly. And for Breed I bring my chickens that are closest to the standard (the standard is how that breed is supposed to look).

Q:Do you eat you chickens?

A:Yes, but not the pet ones. We only eat the Cornish cross and sometimes the freedom Rangers that we buy for their meat and we process them in the summer.

Spring break adventures

By Darren Soper

For most people they go on adventures and trips during spring break. I went around and interviewed some people about what they are going to do for spring break

I interviewed Ms.Hill. She went to a Tim McGraw concert during spring break. Timothy Meinzen went on a trip to southern Utah to camp and explore ruins and sacred petroglyphs.

Personally I will not be going on any trips that I know of but will be most likely starting bonfires, riding my bike and playing games.

Most people I know will just sit at home and do nothing for the entire week besides binge watching movies or staying up till 3 am playing video games. Some people also go skiing or snowboarding up in the mountains during spring break which I have wanted to do but have not because we have been so busy recently. Some people also do a lot of gardening and yard work during spring break which is influenced by the parents but their children hate doing it.

Most parents force their kids to do chores during the break but the kids don't want to do it because they just want to relax and play with their friends. So spring break can be a mixed experience.

Above Mallory McGuire models a hoodie that captures a common experience. Below, Clayton Fischer points to the smokers that metal shop build for the Foundation fundraiser. Upper left, Connor Cheatham, Zach Poore, Max Driver and Corbin Bray help with gardening in MS. Raade's Student Helper class. Lower left is Evan Jones practicing his BMX riding. Below Steve Smiths woodshop students build two sheds for St. Vincent De Pauls program.

