

The Billie Bulletin

Pleasant Hill High School
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A library that holds more than stories

by Eden Noe

Our Library was built in 1961 and hadn't had any renovations or remodeling since—until this year. With old, gloomy purple colored walls and scruffy carpet, the library just looked sad. Our previous librarian requested a furniture remodel. We know that this request eventually got folded into a remodel. But funding for a project like this is expensive, so how did we pay for it? Some of the money used to renovate the library was donated in honor of a man named Patrick McCurdy.

Patrick McCurdy became a high school counselor in 2001 and was loved and adored by many.

"Right away he was unlike other counselors," Timothy Meinzen, a former colleague of Patrick McCurdy said. "Patrick had long shaggy hair, a casual demeanor, and it was clear that he loved 'The Grateful Dead.'"

Patrick had a strong compassion for the students of our school. He was one who was determined to reach kids and make an impact. "Kids were deeply affected by him," said Timothy Meinzen. "Patrick showed an extraordinary amount of care, but also was goofy and fun to be around."

Patrick made a huge difference in many students' lives.

"Navigating teenage years is hard, having a really good guidance counselor in that time made a big difference," said Caitlin Carlson, a former student of Patrick's. "He had a more relaxed and laid back feel to him, his door was always open. He never had a sense of judgment or agenda. He always met us where we were at."

Patrick's wife, Katie Barr, taught English classes at PHHS at the same time. She taught with passion and a sense of humor and everyone adored her. They also had a 4 year old daughter, whose name was Olivia.

On March 17th, 2003, while the McCurdy's were driving to school, a truck traveling the other way lost its rear axle which rammed into the McCurdy's car. Patrick, Olivia, and their family dog were killed, while Katie was injured.

"For a lot of kids, it felt like the person who cared the most for them was taken," said Meinzen.

In response to this event, Patrick's family decided that they wanted to do something in honor of Patrick. Our school now has a mentoring program in Patrick's name. This program helps adults in the community to connect with kids.

The money for the mentorship program was funded by the McCurdy family. When the money was donated, there was an extra amount that was undetermined as to where it would go. The Pleasant Hill Education Foundation sought to use the money for an upgrade. With this new makeover, the library will be named in honor of Patrick McCurdy. "This is the power of a remarkable person who has touched a lot of people in a community."

Our library will have a grand opening on November 7th, with a new name that carries a lot of meaning.

One hundred years of the yearbook: 1926-2026

By Greta Gramzow

Pleasant Hill's Hepta, also known as the "The Yearbook," has officially been around for ONE HUNDRED YEARS! Next year, 2026, marks the 100th year anniversary of the yearbook.

Although most people nowadays call it the yearbook, the title "Hepta" has been around longer! This word originates from the Greek language meaning "seven."

Seven what?

Seven schools.

In 1910, five elementary schools united to send their graduates to Union High School in Pleasant Hill. Hence why we now have both an elementary school building and a high school building. Two more schools joined in the 1920's. The original seven were Pleasant Hill, Dexter, Enterprise, Edenvale, Cloverdale, Trent, and Coast Fork.

1908 was the start of high school in Pleasant Hill. Believe it or not, our colors were blue and orange then—we didn't even have a mascot yet.

At games, the crowd would often cheer, "go Union go!" rather than what we chant today, "go Billies go!"

Our mascot actually came from other school's fans that our sports teams would go up against. They heard the name "Pleasant Hill" and decided to call us the "Hillbillies." Eventually, we decided to make it official. By putting a space between "Hill" and "Billies", we became the Pleasant Hill Billies.

Many designs for our mascot were made each year, but the one we have now came from a real semi pro hockey team from Quebec that went out of business. Since they weren't in need of their logo anymore, we asked them if we could use it! The team agreed.

It's pretty cool to see the history of our school throughout the years. That's what makes the yearbooks so special. Mr. Meinzen keeps the oldest newspapers and Heptas in his classroom, Room 10, you can go check them out.

Even though we don't use the word, "Hepta" as much as we used to, it's still a cool piece of history. Without it, we wouldn't be celebrating our 100th anniversary.



The Homecoming Royalty looks on as Hunter Lardy and Allison Rife are crowned King and Queen. The new red track figured prominently in the Homecoming fun.

New track gets Billies excited

By Jolle Heacock

Runners, to your marks! Let's talk about the brand new track. It's been 12 years since Pleasant Hill updated their track and field facilities.

This summer, local folks saw workers and machinery driving by the school. The entire tear down and replacement of the turf and track was visible from the end of school on. When the turf and track were finished, everyone was surprised.

Why is the track red?!

This was a controversial decision on many levels. If you're not a track kid, you'd think we were trying to look like Creswell, our biggest rivals. But this is NOT why the track was colored red.. The red track is famous in the track and field world as being the color of Hayward Field's track, which is the University of Oregon's track.

Hayward Field is famous, as they host the Prefontaine meet and the Olympic Trials. Having a red track does not mean we want to be like Creswell, or are stealing their colors, when Creswell "stole" it from Hayward first.

But how did we have enough money to refurbish the track? According to the Sports Venue Calculator website, a new 8-lane track can cost anywhere from \$300,000- \$4.1 million?! How were we able to pull this one off?

The track itself cost \$190K. A committee called the Track and Turf Committee formed in the spring of 2024. The committee worked hard to raise money, the manager of EPUD donated \$1000.00.

Generosity bloomed in our community, especially from Kendra (Chambers)Goldberg. Kendra Goldberg worked extremely hard on the Track and Turf committee to raise money for the turf and track. Her many connections and contributions proved essential in the long run. An anonymous matching donation for \$30K was offered.

The Jeremiah family also donated a whopping sum of \$25K, alongside other fundraisers and donations. The district had funds set aside for replacement as well. But the community was key.

Now, the big controversy. Red vs black. Where did the red come from? We were told that nothing was going to change. The black would come back, it would just be refurbished. The Pleasant Hill community doesn't do well with change. The color change was the result of a misunderstanding between the District Office and the contractor. Superintendent Crist checked his email to the contractor and it called for a black track. However, that was not to be. The contractor offered to repaint the lines for free in a few years as acceptance of responsibility of sorts.

But Kevin Smead, head track and field coach, said "the kids love it, and red is the most fade resistant." Red is also cooler and "cooler."

It's safe to say that the red track will stick around for the next 10+ years. Though not always well accepted by the student body and community, the red track signifies far more than people think, and is a fabulous upgrade from the previous track.

New Athletic Director, Alan Stearns' interview on page 2.



by Jay Griffith

Our faces are always changing. Now, I don't mean your face or mine. I mean the faces of our school. People leave our school, new people come to our school, creating an ever-changing environment for Pleasant Hill.

New people bring new opportunities, new friendships, new teammates, and new classmates. They make each year feel new and fresh.

Let's take Locke Apker for an example. Locke recently moved here from New York. He went to Ithaca, High School. He moved to live with his grandparents. Locke's favorite part about Pleasant Hill are the teachers and that the classes are easy. He dislikes the fact that it is so small compared to his old school. Locke is an active member of the community, singing in the choir and playing on the soccer team.

Another newbie is Isaiah Kozuma. Isaiah is a returning member of the Pleasant Hill community as he formerly went here in 6th grade, but has just returned from living and going to school in Hawaii. Isaiah went to SEEQs charter school while in Hawaii and he came here to "Teach everyone Clash Royale." He likes to play Clash Royale in the middle of class, but hates when the teacher tells him to put his phone away. Isaiah is a valued member of the boy soccer team and has expressed interest in playing basketball, and running track when the time comes.

Hattie Bruns is new to Pleasant Hill High School this year, coming from Mountain View Academy. She wasn't originally planning on coming here, but the school she was going to go to had been taken in by another high school, so this was the next best option. She said her favorite thing about this school are the teachers—her favorites being Mrs. Flood and Mrs. Casarez. The thing she dislikes the most is juggling sports and school work at the same time. She really likes the sports here though, she is currently playing on the volleyball team and later she wants to play for the flag football team.

Lastly, take a look at Wyatt Cummings. Wyatt also came from Mountain View Academy in Lowell. He moved to this school because he lives nearby. His favorite part so far is the sports as well, he is a member of the soccer and cross country team. The thing he dislikes the most is the short passing period between classes, he says the 4 minutes isn't enough.

The new people who join our school and community don't just fill up the classrooms, they enrich them. We need diversity, it spreads new ideas and can give creative solutions to on-going problems, which in turn gives us a more lively school year.

The faces of this school are always changing and it's sometimes hard to catch a glimpse of them, but this is a small insight on a few of those ever-changing faces.

The Pleasant Hill Education Scholarships

by Jaxson Potts

Education is costly. Some students can't afford the expensive requirements. The Pleasant Hill Education Foundation is a group of dedicated parents and community members who aim to enhance students' opportunities in school and outside. One of the members is a seasoned teacher and mentor to many, Timothy Meinzen, the secretary of the Foundation. I asked what this charity means to him and why he thinks it makes a difference.

Meinzen said, "Thanks to the generosity of the community, the Foundation can help teachers purchase classroom enrichments, provide scholarships and grants for students to broaden their education. The Foundation is made of dedicated and hard-working folks who want the best for all kids in the district. The Foundation provides grants and scholarships that amount to about \$40,000 each year."

There are many different scholarships for academic aid, such as the Joan Hladky Creativity Scholarship, the Jordan Jeffs Scholarship, the Debbie Laney Scholarship, the Katie Lovelace Scholarship, the PHEF Legacy Scholarship, the Kris Violette Music Scholarship, the Balreet Pawar Memorial Scholarship, and the Adams-Meinzen Global Exploration Fund.

Each scholarship has different reasons and histories on why they came about, with the main goal of education. Some of the scholarships were established in memory of alumni and staff who made a lasting difference to the Pleasant Hill community. Others are based on passions of who the scholarships are based on, like music for the Kris Violette Music Scholarship, or STEM-based majors like the Debbie Laney Education Scholarship.

Ways to give to the foundation are through campaigns that the Foundation makes, like the Winter Gala or the Breakfast On The Hill. Thanks to the Pleasant Hill community, these essential scholarships continue to grow and thrive.

Lovdokken brings emphasis on TAG...and a great companion



By Aria Verma

You might have seen Ms. Stephanie Lovdokken around campus with her service dog, a black lab named Huey. Huey is a service dog for her Type One diabetes.

"Huey can smell a change in blood sugar from a biochemical scent released in the body 20 minutes before a sensor will read a raise or drop." explained Ms. Lovdokken.

Ms Lovdokken is Pleasant Hill's new K-12 instructional coach and tag coordinator. "I go around and help mentor the teachers."

TAG is a program for students that are "gifted" or have very high scores in academics. Ms Lovdokken is trying to update the Pleasant Hills TAG program.

"I will be helping to mentor teachers and support them in serving their TAG students at their correct rate and level."

She was born in Medford and moved to Springfield when she was one. Half way through her junior year she moved to Pleasant Hill and went to high school in Thurston.

"That's kind of where I got interested in tag, because at that point in time, to be identified as talented and gifted" After high school she went to Pacific University

On top of being identified as a tag student she also has Dysgraphia, ADHD and visual processing disorder.

Dysgraphia is a learning disability, or LD, that affects your handwriting, spelling and organization. ADHD is another LD which affects not being able to sit still and not being able to focus. Visual Processing Disorder is a neurodevelopmental difference.

"So that means my brain automatically reads from bottom to top, right to left, instead of top to bottom, left to right. So I had to retrain my brain to use different skills, and then also my lines move on the page."

She is very passionate about TAG because of this. Ms. Lovdokken is currently working on implementing the TAG program starting with elementary and making her way slowly to high school.

"I feel like it's gonna be kind of a multi-year rollout."

By January she hopes to have "learn together nights" where students with TAG identification and their parents will go to see a guest speaker and learn together as an enrichment activity.

"One year, I ran a program, and we had a Greek instructor come in, and families who were interested could come learn Greek together, so that TAG students and families could come together and learn."



Love and Lunches

By Peyton Horton

Think about our loyal lunch ladies. Miss Phyllicia Price said "everyday she comes to work with a positive attitude."

Yes, some kids are a bit loud and obnoxious but she loves her job and loves that multiple kids can even choose to help them by getting a food handlers card.

While researching she told me that Josie Pierzina is another lunch lady who has three kids attending here.

Miss Phyllicia's job is to make the menu for about every day or so, but she is expected to follow a health code policy. She still tries to make it fun for kids.

On her first day of becoming a lunch lady she admitted that she was "nervous but also excited." Now with this information I hope you understand the respect our lunch ladies really have for the kids of this school.

The new Athletic Director settles in

By Tim Meinzen

Raised in Oakland, Oregon, Alan Stearns decided he did not want to take over the family business, despite the expectations of the community. In fact, such expectations, and little curiosity about who he really was, inspired Alan Stearns to pursue a career in education.

Stearns is now our new Athletic Director replacing Kyle McClain who found a new position in Wyoming.

Stearns is a hard working, cheerful and fully engaged administrator learning who the Billies are as individuals.

"Everyone knew me," said Stearns about growing up in a small town. He was known as "Bill's [his father's] kid." Oakland was a safe place to be raised but "boring to grow up in." He played everything: basketball, baseball, football. Being "small and undersized" he got "pulverized" in football. Stearns then began to hone in on cross country where he went to the State meet.

After high school he attended Umpqua Community College, then became a walk on for the Southern Oregon University track team. During his time at Southern Oregon he did a semester abroad in Costa Rica and that changed his life. This experience abroad ignited a sense of adventure which led to a certification in scuba diving, an exploration of Panama, visiting Mayan ruins, and finally graduating from SOU with a degree in history. He followed that by getting a Masters in Teaching, met his wife, then moved to Ft. Collins, Colorado where his wife got a PhD in Forestry at University of Colorado.

She then got a job at the U of O as a research professor. "She is good at what she does," he noted. After moving out to Oregon, he took a job at Sutherlin while completing his administration program.

AVID (a college readiness program for grades 5-12) helped him see an alternative way to educate.

Stearns then became an administrator at Creswell. There he began student teams, student management, and noted that attendance is a big deal. After two years, Stearns took the assistant Principal position at Willamette High School. After refining systems, WHS saw great rises in graduation rate.

2017 Stearn's first son, Jack, was born and in 2021 Cece, a daughter arrived.

Stearns then took a principal position at South Albany High School but the commute was hard on his family. He realized that he didn't have "to have two separate lives," so applied for the job of Athletic Director at PHill.

Stearns realized that his kids could come with him to games.

"Feels amazing [to be at our small school.] "I am excited to see faces, to know their names," he said of the students at PHHS.

Stearns reflected that in his high school experience "no one really got to know me at school, even though everyone knew me."

"My mission is to make schools a better place for kids. They need to be seen, heard and valued, and they need to feel that." Stearns emphasized that "all means all."

He posed a hypothetical question. "How do we include [all in] our sense of belonging?"

"We are making citizens, who are able to think, speak critically in high school."

Why did Stearns choose to be a teacher then administrator?

Stearns suggested that his high school experience was "not the most positive. The lack of structure, his not getting the best grades because he did not try as hard. His counselor placed a barrier for him in taking honors class. The counselor suggested that Stearns was only "going to be working in [his dad's] hardware store."

Stearns chose to major in history "to hear stories" then he wondered what it would be like to be a teacher.

Then why become an administrator?

Stearns said that he taught six of the same classes which can be mind numbing. He then prepped to be an AVID teacher which inspired him. He also was encouraged to take an administrators program. He spent nine years as a teacher and coach, and then nine years as administrator.

On an entirely different track, what is on Stearn's Spotify playlist?

"It is all over the place: Zac Brown Band, rock and pop."

He also listens to Audiobooks. He likes "The Favorite," "The Expanse Series", Sci Fi, lot of fiction. He also enjoys historical fiction. His favorite podcast is, Best Idea Yet (Big Reader).

On his own time he is an avid snowboarder and his kids, Jack and Cecilia are learning to ski as well. He noted that kids are free to ski under 12. I am "investing big in that."

A Flood of contagious enthusiasm

By Hattie Bruns



Mrs. Jessica Flood is one beloved teacher by the majority of her students.

Mrs. Flood's, "Hi good morning, good morning hi" right as the bell rings is always joyful and full of excitement as students flood into their seats. Her enthusiasm in the classroom is contagious! Some students go into her classroom with sleepy faces and frowns but as soon as

the bell rings and she gives her "infamous" spiel, you can feel the energy in the room become positive! She is approachable and constantly smiles.

Mrs. Flood has the superpower of making people happy and feel welcomed when they enter her classroom. Her love of math has spread to her students. One student said, "Math was my least favorite class, but now that I am in Mrs. Flood's class, I can't wait till second period." (second period is Geometry taught by Mrs. Flood). She welcomes everyone. Mrs. Flood has respect for all students. She easily creates an exciting environment around her wherever she is.

Some students struggle with geometry. Mrs. Flood has been there to help them time and time again. Through email they are able to plan a time either before or after school to help the student with a multitude of equations or just basic understanding. She doesn't demean the student for not understanding, but instead helps them. She is always there to aid students to the correct answers and guide them to success. Mrs. Flood is always on schedule and is easy to communicate with students on work that they have missed, need to correct or just need to improve on.

She gives grace when necessary but can also keep students on schedule. She follows the school policy to a "T". Mrs. Flood enforces the no phone policy to the fullest and all of the other rules. While she can be funny and full of laughs, she can ensure that the students are on the task at hand and are focused.

Mrs. Flood has four goats and two dogs. She spends her free time on trails with her jeep. Her favorite drink is an iced breve, yum!

This is her 13th year of teaching. She went to Boise State University where she got her Bachelors degree and then Montana State for her masters.

When I asked her why she wanted to pursue a profession in mathematics, Mrs. Flood said, "I was not sure what I wanted to do when I went to college. I guess when I realized that I wanted a career in math was when I was taking a ton of math classes and my professor asked me to tutor. I tutored peers; everyone and I decided that I liked helping people with math. And I loved tutoring so much that I decided to continue that path and become a math teacher."

Her love of math has been with her since the beginning. Mrs. Flood is proud that she was the first person in her family to complete a college degree.

Getting to know Mrs. Flood has been an awesome experience. From her "hyper spiels" to her kind tutoring Flood is a great teacher. When you walk through the door of room 11 (Mrs. Flood's classroom), you are instantly hit with what could only be described as a welcoming blast of warm air in the cold of winter.

Under Pressure

By Zia Jones

How does peer pressure affect our decision-making?

Peer pressure happens when others influence you which makes you act and think a certain way.

This can be a good influence or a bad influence. Sometimes when you are under peer pressure you can make a safer, wiser decision. In the circumstances that you are under a bad influence of peer pressure, that can lead you to have risky behavior, or have fear of being judged.

But why is peer pressure so powerful?

Everybody has a social need for belonging, people want so much to "belong" that they accept the influence of others. When your brain is still developing and changing, peer pressure can make you more susceptible to influence

Lots going on the Hill! Last week was Homecoming week, Prize Patrol, Run for Fun and games for the Middle Schoolers on our new, plush turf. Below bottom left, Elementary runners blast down the brilliant red track to raise money for their school. Below right Pleasant Hill Education Foundation members announce the dispersement of \$46K in grants to among others, the library for renovation, and the preschool for Field Trips. The Foundation funds things that enhance the education of Billies.

Do students have free speech?

By Mark Buchan

Free speech is a freedom that is very important in the United States. It is one of the most important rights embedded in the US Constitution. Freedom is something that many of us feel entitled to. But how far does that right extend for students?

Well it turns out that the answer is a bit complicated. Students do have constitutional rights, but they are limited in a few key ways.

Students do not "shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate," declared the 1969 Supreme Court case *Tinker v. Des Moines*. In that case, some students were suspended for wearing black armbands to protest the Vietnam War. The Court ruled that schools could not censor student expression unless it caused a significant disruption to a schools learning environment.

More recently, the 2021 Supreme Court case *Mahanoy Area School District v. B.L.*, a Pennsylvania high school violated a student's First Amendment rights when they punished her for an inappropriate Snapchat post made off-campus.

But student speech is not without limitations. In *Bethel School District v. Fraser*, the Supreme Court supported a school's decision to suspend a student for giving a speech filled with sexual innuendos during a school assembly. The Court ruled in that case that schools have the right to prohibit "vulgar and lewd" speech that is inconsistent with the schools policies.

While student speech is not unlimited, we still have rights. It is important to be informed and protect student speech without impacting the quality of education.

The truth behind the "New Phone Policy"

By Spencer Smith

What's the deal with the "new phone policy"?

You may have heard rumors about a "statewide phone ban" or "anti-phone law." You may have also noticed that the school has added a revised phone policy to the handbook. This addition to the handbook is in compliance with a new law.

Oregon governor Tina Kotek signed Executive Order 25-09, which states: "Districts will be required to adopt a policy prohibiting cell phone use by students by October 31, 2025 and those policies must be in full effect no later than January 1, 2026."

What will this look like for Pleasant Hill students?

There's nothing in there saying that our phones must be left in cars, locked in vaults, or nowhere on campus. Our district will have the final say as to what this shapes up to be.

But don't think that means nothing will change. Our district will be monitored by the Oregon Department of Education to make sure that we are compliant with the order. If you've taken our school's new policy lightly to this point, you may soon see harsher retribution.

Our district's policy must be decided and enacted by October 31st, so that students may be ready to implement the new strategy before the new year. We will know by then if there are any changes to the current policy.

Whatever ends up being the official law, it is clear that the intent behind it will be fulfilled. We can expect to each have to adjust our phone usage at school, in some way or another.



Not enough time: Passing periods are stressing us out

By Camryn Carey

The passing period, or the time between classes, is a big deal. It is your time to get water, go to the bathroom, put away your things from your previous class and get things for your next class. The only problem is that there is almost no time to do those things. There are only four minutes and it doesn't feel like nearly enough.

Getting into your locker takes up a big portion of that time. First you have to navigate the big groups of kids standing in the middle of the hallway and make your way to your locker. By the time you reach it, there are bound to be a few kids trying to open their lockers which are around yours. You could force your way through, but you will probably have to wait around a minute just so you can start opening your locker, which may not open on the first try.

By the third minute when the fog horn goes off (a warning for only one minute left) you may be running to the bathroom or to your next class. If you get to your class and realize you forgot something, too bad, you'll have to do without or be marked tardy when you go get it because you weren't prepared.

I believe that it would be better if we had at least one more minute of passing period so us kids don't have to stress about being able to get to our locker and then not being able to get to class on time. With the no back pack rule it makes it more difficult to be prepared and not tardy. We should be able to go to the bathroom, get a drink of water, get our books and still get to class on time.

Thanks for helping us make a great yearbook.

Satire by Jolie Heacock

You've seen us. I know you have. Through the window of your classroom, with a camera held up to their face, index finger poised over the shutter. And, before you know it, the camera clicks. Too late. Too late for you to shield yourself from the photo. It's already been taken.

Now, your initial reaction is simple. Cover your face with your hands to make sure they can't identify you. That would be so helpful to the photographer, wouldn't it?

Absolutely. In fact, the more kids that are unidentified in the thousands of candid photos that pile up, the better. The fewer people we can get in the yearbook, the better.

Another thing that is on point: when you complain about not appearing in the yearbook. You flipped through the pages, and saw a stunning picture of you and your friends. You deem it "chopped," or "ugly." So immediately we have to rearrange the entire yearbook so only gorgeous, approved pictures appear. That means of course 28 pictures total make it into the yearbook.

Are you satisfied? Of course not. There's the arch nemesis of all athletes.—he sports pages. Your school photo looks great, you're actually looking at the camera in the courtyard photo of your class, but that picture of you playing basketball twists your features. Maybe your hair is whipped to the side, or your lips are slack and loose.

Naturally, none of us would dream of putting a photo of you playing your sport in the yearbook or the Billie Bulletin. Instead, we will always stick with the photos of you posing with your friends in your jerseys. Tongue out, peace sign up. It really says CLASSY, doesn't it? That really captures the essence of your athleticism.

Now, if we were sick and twisted people, we would put photos of you in the yearbook of you playing your instrument or sport. You jump up in the air, reaching for the basket to make an epic dunk. Zoom in. Maybe you have slightly closed eyes. Maybe it doesn't look perfect. But it is a good photo. So we put it in the yearbook.

Yes, you may have been "clipped" in one or two of the thousands of photos we take and put in the yearbook. As of right now, there are 1,409 candid photos of students in the yearbook photo library. Of COURSE you are in every single one of them. Of COURSE you are clipped. It's our duty as the publications staff to ensure that this happens every time.

Finally, please take note that not every photo we take of you will be plastered on every frame and doorway in the school. We will only supersize it and glue it onto a popsicle stick and hand them out during assemblies. See you then! Everyone will.

And then we will drop it on every social media account we can find. Thanks for helping us get the very best of you...for posterity.

04 Student Life

Student Spotify Spotlight

By Zane Koszegi

The students of PHHS have been bustling in the halls for over a month now, and it's time to ask the question "Which students have turned to music to escape this harsh reality." I took to the halls to answer this urgent question via interview.

Cody Moore, local sophomore/cross country runner, believes "Music is more of a distraction to me." I can't say I agree with you Cody.

When asked, On a scale of 1/10 how often would you say you listen to music? Cody Replied "About 3/10, I don't have a lot of extra time to listen to music, especially with Cross Country."

I ended by asking him, Well when you do get the chance to listen to music, what do you like? " Cody said "I'm a big fan of the Arctic Monkeys, and the Red Hot Chili Peppers."

Cael Erlei, another sophomore, is quite the opposite when it comes to music. Cael believes that "Music is very influential to me, I listen to it everyday" I couldn't agree more with Cael.

When asked, On a scale of 1/10 how often do you listen to music? Cael said "20/10, I love music and find it very influential to my days."

I then asked, Cael, why would you say music is so important to you? Cael said "I find music very motivating and helpful when trying to focus on tasks."

I concluded by asking Cael one more question, Cael could you give me your top three artists? Cael replied "My top three would definitely be Kanye, Playboi Carti, and Travis Scott."



Neill knows

By Seth Lebow

Mr. Joe Neill knows Pleasant Hill High School better than most. First as a student-athlete and now as a

teacher who has been shaping students' lives for years.

After graduation, he didn't plan to return to PHHS. "When I got out of high school and graduated... It was the last place I wanted to be" he recalls. "It had basically been basically my whole childhood and I was ready to... go see what else was out there."

After graduating from Linfield College, Mr. Neill spent a decade teaching in Rainier before finding his way back home. Since then, he's seen the school evolve while keeping the same heart. "Some programs have come and gone," he says, "but the foundation is still the same. The community support and commitment to helping students become what they want to be... that's what makes this place special."

"I had a great experience as a student," said Mr. Neill. "Being at a smaller school meant I could be involved in a lot of different things... and still feel that strong community support from teachers, parents, and friends."

As a student, Mr. Neill played soccer, basketball and baseball. "It's more of a collective memory," he reflects. "The practices, the bus rides, the friendships... you appreciate those moments more as you get older." He still applies lessons from sports into his teaching: teamwork, resilience, and working toward a shared goal.

Looking back, he'd tell his high school self to "be more open" and "enjoy the ride." His advice for students today is similar: "find something you love to do... because you've got a lot of years to work, and it's a lot better when you enjoy it."

From student-athlete to longtime teacher, Mr. Neill's journey at Pleasant Hill shows how one person can grow with their school. Some passions, like sports and learning, stay with you forever.

The Power of Piper

By Harper Brothers

Every senior has a story, and this one is Pipers. Most students consider her as a celebrity. Everyone in the school knows her, and she takes pride in being a good example because she knows she's the coolest.

I may be one of her biggest fans, but I didn't know some of her favorite things. Her favorite sport is basketball, her favorite animal is a bear, and her favorite color is black (because it goes with everything). Piper might have failed her first drivers test, because she accidentally stopped at a green light. But she learned that trying to get her license was "diabolical" —her words—and she now loves her freedom and "free will."

In Piper's last year of high school she has some great advice to share. Piper says to "always try your hardest and if you feel that you're drowning in schoolwork, you can always ask for help." "Don't waste your time with people that don't bring out the good in you and enjoy your school years before you have to grow up."

Piper wants every girl to know that you shouldn't let boys take up your time, your mom is always right, and listen to your gut. Piper's favorite phrase has great words to follow. "Life happens, but at least I have mac and cheese."



What we think: Freshmen Edition

By Sophia Dennis

A whole month of school has passed for all high schoolers, but this time, we are zeroing in on the freshmen.

I have asked all freshmen to take a poll on high school and their futures. I have 51 responders. Here are some questions and their answers

What are some differences between middle school and high school?

Zoë Harr said, "I feel that middle school is less stressful, and you're less busy. The grades you get in high school appear on your record, you get more homework, and sports become more demanding."

Logan Humphrey said, "The halls smell way better in high school than in the middle school."

"Middle school is lil boi, high school is big boi." opined Emerie Martin.

What is the best part about high school so far?

Jaxon Dodge said, "Going home."

Isaiah Kozuma wrote, "The new classes, especially metal shop, and being on a team even if I am not very good [at them]."

"Making more friends and building connections," was the response of Chloe Raman.

What are you hoping to achieve in high school?

Brooke Green said, "To leave high school as a senior having life lessons."

Holleigh Farver added "Get a scholarship, make varsity, and have fun."

"To survive" was the goal of Izabella Patterson-Giles.

I asked the freshmen if they wanted to go to college. 63% said yes, 19% said maybe, 9% said no, 5% said noh, and 1% "I like turtles."

Has the new phone policy affected your screen time?

68% says it has not, 15% says it has, and other responses express dislike to the new phone policy, such as, "Yes it has, I miss my phone"; "I hate policy"; and "It makes me want to look at my phone more."

The last question asked was, hot dogs or waffles? (You can't choose both.) And 86% said waffles, and 13% said hot dogs. I am not surprised.



Who is Ms. Williams?

By Michelle Hammond-Mendez & Katelynn Macklin

Ms. Lea Williams chose to be a P.E teacher because, "it's fun and I get to play games all day." Mrs Williams lived in Seaside, Oregon and then moved to California and lived there for 7 years. Around the age of 7 and half she moved again to Idaho and was there for 8 years then she came back to Oregon. At 17 she moved out of her parents house to live with her best friend for one year. went to Bushnell University to get her bachelors degree and she is now living with her husband.

This is Mrs. Williams' first contract year and she had two student teaching experiences last year. One 8th grader said that "she pushes us too far, but I like her teaching and she makes us do something."

Tough Questions for the MS teachers

By EB Wilberger

From one time to another, there is always a time where we want to ask a teacher a question. But we don't always follow through with it. Sometimes we are shy, and sometimes we want to ask questions that might be considered rude or prying.

But I decided to ask these teachers anyway. I didn't ask to pry or be rude, I did it to know more about these 5 teachers that teach many kids every day. Maybe, after reading this, you will know more about your teachers. Maybe, you will be more comfortable around them. Maybe, you will enjoy their classes more.

First I interviewed Mrs. Huff, the 6th grade math teacher. I asked her "Would you rather a kid be behind in your class or ahead?" Can you guess how she responded? Let's see!

Mrs. Huff said, "Definitely ahead. I want a curious mathematician who is wondering what we are doing next. I love working with students that look for the real world application of the math."

After Mrs. Huff I decided to interview Mr. Dixon. If you are a part of choir, try to guess the three challenges in choir that Mr. Dixon mentions!

When I asked Mr. Dixon what was challenging in choir, he said, "One challenge is the level of focus that it takes to be a member of a choir. Everyone needs to be at 100 percent for the choir to have its most optimal sound and appearance when performing. Another challenge for many students is learning to read music. Learning to read music is essentially just the same as learning a new language. One has to understand where notes fall in both treble and bass clefs, understand rhythm, melody, and harmony. Additionally, choral singers need to have an understanding of how to read and follow their own voice part in a piece of music. One final challenging aspect of choir is learning how to listen. Often, we view listening as something that is really easy to do, but the practical application of listening seems to be much more challenging. I'm not only talking about listening intently to another person in a conversation, but also listening in a musical way. In order for a choir to have appropriate choral blend and balance, each singer has to take ownership of listening to those around them. Often, I will stop in the middle of rehearsals with choirs and ask them, "Can you hear the person singing on either side of you?" If they can't, then they need to listen more intently, and adjust their volume accordingly."

After Mr. Dixon, I thought of a rather interesting question for Mrs. Raade, the 6th grade science teacher. I went up to her and asked her what she would do if somebody said her class was boring. She said, "If someone said my class was boring I would take it as a challenge to prove them wrong. I would try to make my lessons more hands-on. And prove to them that science is not only fun but cool." You better not tell her that her class is boring! You might get beat in a challenge!

When I interviewed Mr. Pritikin, I got an amazing response. I asked Mr. Pritikin what his favorite thing about teaching was. He told me, "I like seeing the light go off in students when they finally figure out something."

Finally, we have Mr. Wilson. I decided to ask Mr. Wilson what he would do if he couldn't be a P.E. teacher. When I asked him what he would do if he couldn't teach in the position he does now, in any school, what would he do? He responded, "If I was not able to be a teacher, my second career choice would be to play basketball in the NBA. Seems like a fun job, and they get paid well. With that being said, I love my job as a PE teacher at Pleasant Hill, and wouldn't trade it for anything!"

From interviewing these teachers, I have learned new things about them. For example, I didn't know Mr. Dixon taught such a challenging subject!

The Pleasant Hill Middle School girls cross country team is wired for fun and endurance racing.



Mrs. Moch— otherwise known as “Mom”

By Lawson Halstead and Eli Baker

Have you ever thought it would be fun to teach?

Amanda Moch or Miss Moch is our middle school special education teacher. And she is a very “special” special education teacher. To many students, she is like a mom to them.

She always has what you need and she is pretty smart. She doesn't quite have a favorite color but her favorite colors are blue, lime green and purple. She wants a lime-green Jeep with black rims and a black outline. That is her dream car. She grew up as Amanda Krumdieck without siblings and met her husband, Vince Moch, in high school.

They were high school sweethearts.

One of the reasons that she wanted to become the special education teacher for Pleasant Hill Middle School is because she loves helping kids who struggle. Kids in special education really just need extra help.

She enjoys being outdoors, riding quads, fishing and hunting with her family. She has been affiliated with Pleasant Hill For 19 years She was a homesteader and this is her Homeland.

Her favorite fish to eat is halibut. Her favorite fish to catch is Kokanee. Ms. Moch has one rottweiler, a bearded dragon and five cats-- but the Bobcats have been killing those cats off.

What we love about sports

By Harper Quinones

Fall sports are a big part of Pleasant Hill middle and high school. There are a lot of sports but everyone has their own ideas on which one is the best.

So we have interviewed people to find out what they like about their sport. First we interviewed Tessa Sprague about cross country. She said that her favorite thing about cross country is “Getting medals at the end of the meet if you get top ten.”

She thinks that other people should join cross country because “You get faster and you get to have fun hanging out with friends.”

Then we interviewed one of our girls soccer players, Harper Nice, who has been playing soccer since she was 5 years old. Her favorite position to play is left wing. The reason why she likes to play soccer is because “there are friends on the team and it is fun to play”.

Next we interviewed one of the football team players Archer Ferguson. We asked him what his favorite play was and what his number was and he said that his number was 52 and his favorite play was Orange Dive Right.

We also asked what his favorite thing was about one of their coaches. He said that his favorite thing about one of his coaches is about Coach Steve, “Coach Steve because he has been coaching for a long time.”

Sammie Baker and life in the 7th grade

By Aurelia Lenhart

I chose to interview Sammie Baker. I want to get an inside view of the life of a 7th grader.

So what is your mood when you get to school?

“Tired and if it's a good morning, like ready to learn.”

How well do you normally get work turned in?

“Normally on time and if late only like a day late.”

So how is your focus?

For the most part yeah my focus is really good, unless it's something boring, then I'm half listening.”

What is one of those examples where you were only really half listening?

“In Mrs.Mcool's when we were listening to the audiobook I was half listening. I was mainly cutting up an eraser.”

Who is someone you have in a lot of your classes?

“Serena and Natty: I have all my classes with Serena and all but two classes with Natty

How many friends do you have at school?

“I'd say 4 or 5 best friends and then just other people I am friendly with.”



By Olivia Melvin

Have you ever thought how hard it is to run a library? It's a challenge keeping all the books in place and knowing what books are missing. Well, Ms. Daphne Metcalf is here for that.

Mr. Daphne always keeps the library nice and neat. She also has games, like chess, checkers, color sheets and more. She has access to any book you could be interested in. You are always welcome to ask her any question that is on your mind.

I think Mr. Daphne is a pretty amazing librarian. I think we should all visit the library more!

New librarian manages new library

Getting it done: the story of how the district found the right person to update the track and turf in one summer

By Tim Meinzen

The Superintendent called Kendra Goldberg (PHHS '10) during the summer of 2024 asking for a big favor.

Could she help Pleasant Hill School District run a capital campaign to raise the more than \$200,000 it would take to replace the track and turf?

Kendra, a mother of four precocious kids, AND a business owner (Just Move Fitness), turned out to be the exact person for the task.

Kendra is the eldest daughter of Kellie and Scott Chambers whose history of benefitting the District is widely admired.

“Yeah, I know what to do,” thought Kendra. She had experience in this sort of thing as she had co-chaired the community phase of the \$48 million YMCA capital campaign in Eugene. But she knew that if she could not justify the turf and track replacement it would be a near impossible sell.

Superintendent Crist noted that the District had set aside money in reserve but not enough to complete the project. The turf and track were getting compacted and exceeded the recommended life cycle of both.

This insight led Kendra to realize that this was a “rural public health issue.” She noted that unlike incorporated communities, there are limited facilities in Pleasant Hill for community members wanting to walk safely or to play safely. The district facilities have become the de facto center of our community. And the district facilities function very much like a park district, only without the dedicated tax base. Deciding to explain the need for a replacement turf and track as a benefit for all the community, donors began to line up. This was more than a sports facility upgrade.

Pleasant Hill lacks a park or even sidewalks to walk safely, so the District facilities provide a generous and safe site.

Kendra had to get the campaign going over the summer of 2024 by spreading the word in the community. She created a social media presence on Instagram and Facebook. What also figured in was the historic story behind our track.

In 1964, Bill Bowerman, a legendary figure in track and field, collaborated with Pleasant Hill teacher and track coach Jim Puckett to create the first synthetic track in Pleasant Hill. Using tire rubber from Wyatt Tire Shop, sand, and liquid tar, they laid the foundation for a revolutionary track surface. This history underscores how special our school track is. Ellie Epperson, 2025 yearbook editor, wrote that the track and turf were the center of her existence as a Billie for all her life.

Kendra's pitch also became personal as she made calls on donors. Her inspired work and authentic joy vetted the district \$30,000 in an anonymous donation, \$30,000 corporate gift, two gifts from local families (with no kids in the district). The Chambers Family Foundation invested \$30,000 while Wildish Company donated \$2000 and the Giustina Foundation donated \$5000, EWEB also donated \$1000 for the replacement.

Small donations were also important. The Pleasant Hill Education Foundation offered service as a 501(c)3 non-profit to accept donations, and many impactful donors committed \$1000 or less. This was helpful for showing deep community support.

Like any capital campaign, there was pushback. But Kendra emphasized that the district has a “fiduciary duty to maintain existing facilities.” She offered the metaphor that having a turf and track is like a marriage. You commit to its care for life. That means renewing the turf and track every 8-10 years to make certain it is safe for the school kids and the community.

Kendra insisted that maintaining the track is “mission critical” for the Superintendent and the District. The district already budgets for replacement, but that cost keeps expanding.

Was Kendra surprised or disappointed with the red track? Heck no. She grinned, the red color “is a throwback color, more historical” and important in reflecting our great track history.



Athletes, walkers and yes, princes and princesses, all benefit from the new track and turf. Here the Homecoming court gathers to find out who will be chosen: Seniors Hunter Lardy and Allison Rife were crowned minutes later.



Cheerleading: an insider's view

By Hadlie Saxon and Tessa Sprague

You might want to know what a cheerleader does to get ready on a game day. For this information I interviewed Reese Bagwell.

In the morning Reese does her hair. She has a “team hair” style for each game. “For example, one day we will be doing two bubble braids on the top of our head into a high pony tail.” Some cheerleaders were made up to add “pizazz,” but it is never required .

Reese said that her school day is pretty normal before the game. But at the end of the day, the fun begins , things get more intense. She goes to the girls locker room to get ready with her team. Then she goes to the game and cheers for the athletes.

Staff embarrassing and rewarding moments

By Tyson Humphrey

All teachers have embarrassing moments. Will they tell us? Maybe...

Mr Griffiths said “I get really embarrassed when I forget people's names. My most rewarding moments are watching kids succeed and graduate. Most embarrassing is spilling coffee all over myself and having spots on my pants, losing my keys and forgetting my water bottle all over.”

Ms. Angel said “there was this student that I didn't know very well yet and I called them by the wrong name. That was really embarrassing. My most rewarding moment was being able to be a positive influence and to be able to help kids be successful with the skills they will need in life.”

Ms. Dow said “my most rewarding moment was when a student said very not nice things to me but the next day he came back in with a hand written letter of apology. That made me feel so good.”

Ms. Metcalf said, “my most embarrassing moment was hyping up the high school crowd and while talking, the band started playing and no one got hyped and it was all flat.” Her most rewarding moment was when “someone last year said thank you for doing Hannukah decorations in the library last year.”

Outdoor School shenanigans

By Pippa Hammond

We have officially survived the first month of school, and here's what some 6th graders had to say about their experience.

One thing that surprised Evan Ferguson about 6th grade is “You get your fingers slammed” more often than he expected.

Sounds painful. Speaking of lockers, most 6th graders agree that “Lockers are very helpful to store things and fun to decorate!” but everybody admitted it was really hard at the beginning of school with opening lockers but, They later got the hang of it.

Of course, Outdoor School is a huge highlight of 6th grade. When asked what the best part was, most people agreed that the food was the best and the skits were a hit!

A 6th grader, Lucy Smith's favorite memory from Outdoor School is “Tango dancing with Olivia Melvin!” And yes, someone may or may not snuck butter in their Counselors sleeping bags..

As for the 6th grade teachers, we wanted to know what they think of their new classes. Mr. Pritikin (Mr.P) answered that, “They are such a friendly grade!”

He also mentioned “It was so cool to see the grade interact with each other and see their strengths outside of school” such as Outdoor School.

It seems like 6th graders are enjoying their first month of school, let's see what the rest of the year brings!

The people's music

By Lauren Darling and Adellina Scott

Is country music good or bad? Obviously that is a matter of opinion. Still, let's find out with some interviews.

Ezra Gottfried(8) said he doesn't necessarily have a favorite genre of music. Ezra said his favorite artist is Forest Frank. He said he likes his song “lemonade” which he described as upbeat and happy, with no swear words. Grayson Cockerline said his favorite genre of music is country. His favorite artist is Luke Combs. Grayson explained that he likes him because he is good at what he does and makes the beat match the lyrics of the songs. He said that Comb's lyrics made him feel happy and or sad depending on the song playing. (any favorite songs?)

So all in all we interviewed a couple more people and 2 said that they liked hip hop and 4 said they liked country music. One said they liked their artist's voice because she is soft spoken and very talented. We found out 5 out of 8 people we interviewed said that they like country music. So there was our answer: most people here do like country music.

Billies dominate league football

By Colton Carey

The Pleasant Hill football team is off to their best start to a season in years. Pleasant Hill football has kicked off their season with a strong rhythm. After falling in their season opener to Sutherlin, the Billies bounced back by defeating Brookings-Harbor, 33-20.

"It felt really good to get that win since we lost to them last year," said outside LB Boyd Craig. "Showed that we're not the same team from last year."

Pleasant Hill football has been on a hot winning streak ever since. The Billies were able to knock off Douglas 40-27, with a game sealing interception that later turned into an 8-point touchdown.

Then the Billies had their first road game of the season when they visited Cottage Grove. They were able to pull off the upset, winning 20-18.

"We were just keeping ourselves motivated," said RB/LB Kai Davis. "Even though we had mistakes, we just kept each other motivated."

This season has been a phenomenal one so far, with several dominant wins and an upset thriller. Then not long later, Pleasant Hill had another dominant victory over Elmira in the school's annual pink-out game. The Billies defeated the Falcons 42-16.

Pleasant Hill's rushing and defense are their most effective tools in each of their games, but they can be vulnerable when their opponents run a fade route.

This season could be the one where the Pleasant Hill football team can win their first league title since 2001, and make their first trip back to the state playoffs since 2016. With a long way left to go in the season, the Billies take a lot of confidence with them when they take on the remaining teams on their schedule.

Kristen Gardner, a freshman, has stepped up to become a force on the girls soccer team, helping them advance to the state tournament. Due to injury, her season was cut short.



Coach Sugitani's story

By Darren Soper

Ryota Sugitani is the varsity boys' soccer team's head coach. He has two assistants, Trevor Shields or also known as "The tech guy" and Ryan Lane who is an alumni from Pleasant Hill. I interviewed Mr. Sugitani about his life and coaching.

Sugitani said, "I was born and raised in Japan until I was 15 years old then I moved to the U.S by myself."

How long did you play soccer for?

"I played soccer from the age of 6 on the street to a local youth club for soccer then on to high school soccer. My last year of competitive soccer ended as I graduated from high school."

What was your favorite part of playing high school soccer?

"Even after 40 years, there are still many memorable moments in my soccer career. What I cherish most is the connection and trust all cultivated in our high school team. Even after all these years it is amazing when I see my old teammates, we remember so many memories."

What position did you play in soccer?

"I was a center back as a freshman or also known as a "sweeper" but we don't call it that anymore. From sophomore year on until I graduated, I was goal keeper."

"As a high school soccer coach, I see change in our athletes.

This change is not just limited to athletes but all of us, including adults. The world is becoming more isolated. I partially blame this change on our phones/social media. Even Covid did significant damage to our society. We are starting to lose empathy for others and gain fear of one another. In a small way, student athletics can bring us back together, because we can't win alone."



Soleis Jones kicks into gear for the last lap in Cross Country.

Jacob Neely makes a dramatic entrance for yet another touchdown in the Elmira game. Neely has helped the team to win league and has been athlete of the week several times He is considered the league's top wide receiver.



Hastie helps Cheer team

By Laynie Reed

Taylor Hastie came in the new addition to the Cheerleading team. Taylor is our new assistant coach and we were all so excited for her to come in and have some change of coaching, and have more dynamism on the team.

The first day I met Taylor she was really quiet and didn't ever really step up but now as the season has been going on she has been a perfect fit, she is the perfect middle on being strict but also having fun.

Hastie treats us all equally and helps the team towards success. I talked to Greta Gramzow and she said that she thinks Taylor is "really nice" and plays her role very well.

Taylor doesn't overstep and she stays in her role as assistant very well. We can have our opinions but the head coach Chelsi Toles-Wallace opinion should be out there too, Chelsi loves having a change with a new assistant. Chelsi

I am super excited to work with her and see how she is with us during the rest of the season. Overall we are so happy we have Taylor coaching this year, and she brings positivity and a bright attitude. Taylor went to Pleasant Hill and won state in 2015, this helps bring a winning attitude to the team and she strives for us to be better.



New coach Taylor Hastie supervises a stunt



Beating the Odds

Pleasant Hill Volleyball advances to state tournament play

By Josie Heacock

Despite people's doubts, the girls volleyball team has excelled this season. Many people thought the loss of their senior starting line up would cause the Pleasant Hill girls to struggle this season, but the opposite has occurred. In spite of injuries, setbacks, and difficult teams, the Billies are currently ranked #19 in state.

But this season hasn't come easily. Several injuries, including a concussion to their setter Siena Shaddon, ankle problems for Kilinoe Cookman and Piper Fisher, and others, have forced the Billies to get comfortable being uncomfortable. From losing starters to switching positions, the girls showed their resilience in the face of adversity.

To the surprise of many, the girls beat rival Creswell on our home turf 3-1 and again at Sisters high school for the first round of league playoffs. After an exhilarating victory against Banks, the Billies are still in the state tournament.

Led by Anna Crawford, Siena Shaddon, Luci Brady, and Sari Strinz, the Billies are gearing up to face Westside Christian in the next round of playoffs.

Whether or not they advance, the girls have proven themselves this season. When other teams counted them out, they showed up to prove them wrong. This is a program that delivers excellence every season. It doesn't matter if they have girls getting recruited or a group of underclassmen, Pleasant Hill volleyball is always a tough competitor.

Dahn Nikitins is in it for the long haul

By Mattie Peacock

When Dahn was in 4th grade, he and his friends heard about a kids' wrestling Tournament at OSU in Gill Coliseum. Dahn's parents were not very interested so Dahn convinced his parents to give an okay" for his enrollment in the OSU wrestling tournament.

After 3 years of "Oregon Kid Wrestling" Dahn started Junior high wrestling sponsored by the school. Dahn joined high school wrestling.

Dahn claims he was "never good, just a brawler", that's not what his coach had told him. Dahn was good at wrestling from all those years of experience "A tough out at best" as he liked to call it. (a tough out is an idiom from baseball, meaning a player who is tough to strike out, or keep off the field)

After High School, Dahn did two years of competitive wrestling at LCC, winning less than 50% of his matches. For a while Dahn went into the work force.

I went to work for an International Harvester dealership in Junction City. I've been working on equipment now for 45 plus years, some in Ag and some in industrial. I am married to the lovely Tami Nikitins, formerly Miller, and have two daughters, Heather, who teaches 4th grade at Cottage Grove and Tahni who is finishing her masters in psychology. He had good memories of wrestling still in his head and after looking at some old pictures, it dawned on him that all the things his coaches tried to teach him through sports are things that make one a valuable member of society.

Dahn decided that it was in his best interest to go back to Pleasant Hill, but was disappointed with the level of participation in the wrestling program. He thought what great use he might be" to Bob Williams, the legendary coach in the 1990's. Dahn learned a lot of good things from Bob, but not as much as he wished he knew, before Bob passed. Bob Williams is now in the "Oregon Coaches Hall of Fame".

Steve Smith was the AD at the time of Bob's passing. Steve called Dahn and said "Either Dahn was the head coach or Pleasant Hill dropped wrestling." Dahn took that offer, he still owes Steve for letting him have the opportunity to spend time with "High quality young people" who choose wrestling.

The sport of wrestling is much more technical and way more demanding than most people think, Dahn believes that coaching wrestling keeps him young, and in that matter he likes to think he can still out wrestle anyone in that wrestling room.



Jack Quinones leads on a hot day in Cross Country.

The only socially acceptable stimulant: coffee

By Nora Yath

Chances are at one point or another you have had a caffeinated beverage of some kind, but do you really know what caffeine is? If not, you may find this interesting.

Caffeine is classified as a Central Nervous System Stimulant or CNS for short. CNS are a type of drug that increases activity in the brain and nervous system which causes increased blood flow and breathing rate, which if you have ever had a cup of espresso those effects may sound familiar.

About 99% of caffeine consumed is absorbed into the body in the first 45 minutes after it is ingested. Of course, like any other stimulant, your body can gain a tolerance to it which can make absorption times vary. If you frequently drink caffeinated beverages you may have withdrawal-like symptoms if abstained from for longer than usual.

Caffeine functions by blocking Adenosine receptors in your brain, Adenosine is a depressant your body produces that tells your brain it's time to sleep, and when Adenosine cannot perform its function, blood flow increases and relaxes lung tissue, (which can help with asthma.)

As great as caffeine is, it can be dangerous. 10 to 14 grams of caffeine is all it takes to kill the average person. Thankfully most caffeinated beverages contain far less caffeine than that, for example: one shot of espresso only contains 64 milligrams of caffeine, so chances are you can drink your coffee without worrying about dying from it.

While caffeine is a stimulant it may actually help people with ADHD to focus better. While this theory has never been tested professionally, many people who have ADHD claim that it helps them focus better. One anonymous person said "It reduces activity levels for a short period of time,



which makes it easier to focus."

The Battle between Billie Baristas

By Caroline Carlson

Caffeine— staple in many teenager's diets. And why not support a local business while supplying your thirst? You get in your car and are making your way down town and you come to a dilemma.

Right off Highway 58 there are two coffee shacks: Pleasant Hill Coffee Co. and Espresso 58.

"Ruh roh."

How do you choose?

Well, my fellow troubled bean bros, fear no more.

Here are the opinions of your peers!!!

Before I go to the student body, I asked my good friend, Google. With only a small difference in the amount of reviews they both evened out at 4.7 stars.

Hmmmm. Well, that was helpful. It's time to ask the student body.

Greta Gramzow enjoys the "iced caramel macchiato" from Espresso 58.

"It's the only 'coffee' I will drink. I don't like the taste of coffee, but this just tastes like a caramel drink with the same effect as coffee. I got it from Starbucks before but it was not as good. Espresso 58 has more flavor."

The next source was Jolie Heacock. "Whenever I go to the Pleasant Hill Coffee Co, I get the iced pomegranate infused Redbull. Mrs. Kinman recommended it to me and it's my favorite."

Laynie Reed also enjoys the Pleasant Hill Coffee Co. Redbull infusions. "I really like the coconut Redbull and I let the workers give me another flavor everytime."

For our final input we have Mrs. Moch. She really enjoys the "Caramel Frescantte" from Espresso 58.

The only conclusion I can make is that the coffee from Espresso 58 is exceptional in the caramel category and the Redbulls from Pleasant Hill Coffee Co. are a hit. I guess you are going to have to find out for yourself. I mean they are only two minutes apart.

Señora Watne shows students the world

By Daphne Phillips

Learning Spanish in high school is more than just a requirement—it is an opportunity to gain a useful skill and to learn new things about a culture. Being one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, Spanish is used for communication by over 500 million people!

Here is an insight into Pleasant Hill's very own Spanish teacher, Ms. Watne, and the amazing work she does for our language program!

In the beginning, Ms. Watne was just your ordinary student who started out with Spanish in high school. She found her liking of the language during that time and liked it so much she decided to continue to minor in it during college.

What she really wanted to do was to teach social studies. She went on to do some of her student teaching in social studies during her masters program.

When she moved on to working at her first job, her job managers realized that she had a good grasp on Spanish so they decided that she would use that as her student teaching experience for two periods a day. Afterwards, she then decided to get her teaching license and her Spanish endorsement.

Fast forward into her time working at Pleasant Hill. Ms. Watne has a history of offering wonderful traveling experiences to those who would like to tag along! She enjoys traveling with students and uses these times as opportunities to see how her teaching has impacted students and to see what she has taught in a classroom opening up Spanish speaking cultures for students.



Ms. Watne enjoys splitting her trips up. Some years she plans them out to be in Spain, and other years she aims towards Central America / South America. In June of 2026, she plans on traveling to Costa Rica!

Mrs. Watne noted that "When I take them on trips and I actually see it working, everything that we've done in class, it's a big uplifting moment for me because it tells me what we are doing in class is actually working!"

Students explain what makes them proud...of themselves

by Juan Contreras

When you look at yourself in the mirror what do you feel? You might feel many things, some things some people would understand and some not so much. But do you ever feel this? Do you ever feel pleased with yourself, satisfied? Have you ever felt proud of yourself?

I became curious and started wondering if anyone ever felt proud of themselves too. So I asked a variety of people what they are proud of about themselves. Here are their stories!

Let's begin with a quiet person, Oscar Jimenez. He surprised me by being very open about what makes him feel proud. He told me that what he most felt proud of was his accomplishment of making a whole lot of money! I don't know if I should disclose the amount of money but let's say it's a whole lot of money. He told me that he accomplished this by doing some sort of business whatever that meant? (can you find out what this is? It sounds a bit like the way you put it.

Next up is Dallin Bahen! He mentioned to me that one of the things he is most proud of is his ability to grow and learn fast! For example, he told me he was proud of his ability to grow as a trumpet player and as well as a volleyball player.

The last person I got to interview was Benaiah Carrera. I've known Benaiah for some time and I've always known him as the "wonder boy." Whenever I was puzzled it seemed like he was always there; he was always so knowledgeable like a search engine. Benaiah was like a brain machine. I never understood how he was so smart!

When I went up to interview him I had all these thoughts in mind and when I asked him what he was most proud of it seemed we were both thinking about the same thing. He told me that he was very proud of having a high GPA (as expected from the genius). When I pressed him, said, "Make sure to get my work in with all the required criteria."

In the end maybe life is about the good things, maybe we all shouldn't focus on the bad. Maybe there's something you've really wanted to do, but you've never had the courage to, well maybe this is your sign to do it. And maybe in the end you'll look back and find that you were proud of yourself for doing it!

Books vs. movie adaptations: Which are better?

Analysis by Noelle Kindorf

"But remember nothing compares to the book..." said Mrs. McCool. If you didn't know, over the years we've been introduced to some amazing books, like Harry Potter, Lord of the Rings, Hunger Games, and MANY more. Some of these books have even been lucky enough to receive adaptations for the big screen.

Some books turned into movies are cultural icons, such as The Lord of the Rings Trilogy or the Harry Potter film series, while others were done poorly like Skellig: The Owl Man. But a common debate remains: Which was better? A vast majority of people point to the book being better, while a very small percentage lean towards the movies.

Some reasons for the books being far superior include diving into inner monologues, a complex plot, and a more personalized experience. When I asked 8th Grader WileE Peacock about this, she wrote, "I feel I get more memory from the book. I can't imagine if it's not good enough (for me). Ex... If the book is telling me what a person or thing looks like I always have to imagine that. Also, I imagine the voices."

Some reasons for the movies being more enjoyable include a more immersive experience with good acting, visuals, and music, as well as trimming stuff like subplots or minor characters, while keeping the central narrative intact. When I asked 8th Grader Edward "Eddie" Bazinet to write his opinion, he wrote his choices which were, "Harry Potter movies because I can understand it more than the books. Maze Runner books because the plot is better than the movies. Lord of the Rings movies because I like when they battle and the story in the movies."

At the end of the day, if you like the layered storytelling, inner monologues, and the personalized experience of a book, that's great. Or if you feel that good acting, soundtracks, and well thought out visuals do it for you, that's acceptable as well. Ultimately, it's for the person to decide.

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Hailey Wolf runs with the (boys) football pack

By Lucy Smith

Have you ever thought about playing football as a boy sport?

Well Hailey Wolf doesn't let that stop her. Wolf plays on the boys middle school football team. Here is a Q&A with her.

Why do you like football so much? "I don't know, my dad coaches it so I guess it runs in the family."

Are the boys annoying? "Yes." Is it annoying being the only girl? "No, not really" What position do you play? "Running Back."



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The Billie Backside

What you don't know about Casarez and Jampolsky

By Audrey Driessnack

Have you ever looked at your teacher and wondered what their life was like when they were your age? What challenges they faced? What led them to stand in front of a classroom today?

Well, I interviewed some of our most beloved teachers, Ms. Jay and Mrs. Casarez, and got their answers to those questions.

When Mrs. Casarez was our age, although she was a good student, she admits that high school was a wake-up call for her. "I had to actually try for good grades, which was something totally new," she recalls.

Her classes were harder than they are now so she had to work for what she wanted. What made a difference for her were the teachers who saw her as a person, not just another student. Their encouragement helped shape her into who she is today. Teaching was also in her blood—her father taught for 30 years, and out of 25, more than half of his side of the family followed the same path.

Ms. Jampolsky (Ms. Jay), on the other hand, describes herself as a socially awkward bookworm who always carried sketchbooks wherever she went. School was a place where she built lasting friendships with people she still talks to today.

Her academic path was unusual—she split her schoolwork between special education and gifted classes, experiencing both ends of the spectrum.

Her favorite teacher, Mr. Meinzen, inspired her deeply. After high school, Ms. Jay's life took an unexpected turn when her grandmother became ill, and she stayed home to help care for her for three years. During the recession, as jobs were scarce, she received an unexpected offer from the former art teacher to join the staff.

With an emergency license, Ms. Jay started teaching by day and taking college classes at night. We can overcome what we think we can't. We don't always have to figure out what we want to do years in advance, we can just focus on making good grades and making lasting friendships with people who we care about, taking life one step at a time knowing our teachers went through some of the same things and use them as our guides through middle school and high school.



How to get a HOCO date!

By Arianna Bowman & Emerie Martin

Homecoming is coming up and you're sitting on your bed, doomscrolling on TikTok. You're watching all the happy couples get asked out, and look at home coming poster "Inspiration" without having the drive to be inspired yourself.

This is your sign to stop being lazy and to go ask her/him out. But how to do this?

We interviewed a variety of high school students, and asked for their opinions on asking a person to homecoming, so we could provide you a guide to get that hoco date!

Step 1: First you have to find the person you want to ask. Find a backup if the first says "no." Your options don't have to be romantic interests, a good friend will work as well! And maybe better.

Step 2: Get off your butt and get the courage to do it. What is the worst that can happen? Getting turned down? Ask someone else. Then get hyped with your friends and start planning! The sooner you get a plan, the sooner you can put it into action.

Step 3: Start talking with your "intended." If you aren't already close, this is the time to insert yourself into their life. Start off with simple conversation starters, or ask for help on an assignment. Make sure you feel comfortable with each other.

Step 4: Get flowers and make a poster that relates to your person. Do your homework. Ask lots of questions to make sure they'll like it. Do icebreakers, it will help you ask casually. It will help get you closer with the person and help you know what they're into.

Step 5: Get nice clothes. Although to most people this is just a casual little dance, it's always nice to dress up a little. Especially if your potential hoco date wants too.

Connor Miles is excited to dress up. "Oh heck yeah. I'm dressing up, I'ma wear a pink button up." Many people believe that homecoming is the one night you get to look a little fancier than usual.

Step 6: Ask them out! Even if it's scary you just gotta do it. People love to be asked so there's really no harm in trying. Kamdyn Green says the best way to get someone to agree to go with you is to say "YOU HAVE TO GO WITH ME." Supposedly it works. Even the sixth graders have great advice! "Just like thinking the worst thing they could say is "no" right?" suggested Dominic Silba.

In the end, it doesn't matter if you end up with or without a date. No matter if your potential person says "yes" or "no", you still gathered enough confidence to ask! Homecoming is a fun event—if you make it fun, it doesn't have to be romantic, your date can be a friend! Just remember to enjoy the moment, and have fun.

Tot Takes

By Annaleigh Epperson

100 years ago people never would have guessed what is "trending" among youngsters and teens everywhere. The idea that kids had anything of worth to pay attention to, did not exist. But today I want to know.

I've taken it upon myself to figure out what younger kids think about this generation of teens.

I interviewed my little cousin and my nine year old sister to see their point of view of what's going on in the world.

"What do you think six-seven* means?" * ("six-seven" is a meaningless phrase repeated ad nauseum to snickers by some teens.)

Taggart Anderson (4th Grade) said, "It's about this basketball guy who said "six-seven" and then a long time later a girl said six-seven in a speech and it got really, really big."

My little sister Kate Epperson (4th grade) said, "Six-seeeeeeeen! It's just a trend. It's very popular. It's kinda like saying 'your mom' but not really."

No one really understands the meaning of "six-seven," but fourth graders seem to know quite a bit. Taggart unfortunately was not available to answer more questions after the first one.

"How do you feel about Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce?"

"It kinda sucks because Travis Kelce and Taylor Swift aren't that good of a match...They also both have busy jobs...also nobody likes Travis Kelce or Taylor Swift anymore. They're overrated," Kate said.

Who knows how this relationship will go. I guess we'll see.

"What is your favorite Tik Tok reel or meme?"

"I don't have one because I don't watch YouTube or Tik Tok that much, but probably "Stop! I coulda dropped my croissant!" said Kate.

The way in which this world creates content that is popular is so weird but honestly fascinating. See for yourself. Ask an elementary student.

About that red track

Satire by Ava Umbarger

As you know our new track is red but most of you might not know why.

The real reason is that Creswell, bribed the workers to make our track red.

Creswell were so mad at us (and who knows why, we are AMAZING.) that they had to get their revenge.

The track was supposed to be black but because of the suspected bribe it's scarlet now. The reason we suspect Creswell is that the color of the track is suspiciously like the red spray paint that Creswell uses to paint our rock

This track glows when hit by the sun blinding our players and making us lose against the Bulldogs.

This crimson track is part of the Creswell's school revenge. There may be more pranks coming.

I've talked to a few people on this subject Mr. Griffiths suggested that "This level of aggression from Creswell needs to be responded to."

Others have felt this way. This prank is so appalling we must fight back and watch our backs. (this story is all satire none of this really happened as far as we know.)

Middle school students react to new track

By Junie Epperson and Reese Dockery

Pleasant Hill has needed a new track for about 8 years now. We decided to interview people about their opinion about the new track.

When asked about the red color of the track, Carter Black in 8th grade stated, "Uh, red is ugly."

However, Olivia Melvin in 6th grade said "I like it. I think it looks professional, and more, you know it just looks better."

Archer Ferguson's(8th grade) response was. "It's softer to land on."

When we asked Violet Raschio in 7th grade the same question she said "I like that it is cleaner." Our next question was, "They messed up on the color. Would you rather go back to the black or keep it red."

This is what Ronan Schack in 6th grade responded with. "Yeah, probably back to black, I like the black better."

Hadlie Saxson in 7th grade responded to the same question as Ronan "um, if we could go back, I wish they would do it like navy blue, like our colors."

After the interviews we had a lot of very similar responses and a lot of very different responses. We thank all the people for their answers, but overall we think the majority of students liked the old track better.



Ms. Jampolsky on Halloween and Mrs. Casarez, at the Homecoming Dance, taking tickets.