

Hilltop: Mid-Winter Edition

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Mean Green Reading Machine

By: Hannah Shaffer

The Mean Green Reading Machine (MGRM) is an incentive program that was created by the Title 1 Reading Specialist (Christina Franey, Emily Horn, and Emily Steberger) in the year of 2013-14 school year to enhance the skills of independent reading for children in kindergarten through fourth grade. This school year the program runs from September fourteenth through the end of May. Even though this program is optional to students, it has been a huge success. The students get awarded for their efforts. Every week students fill out a MGRM log and return it on Thursday. The students who have turned in their logs will have their name entered for a weekly drawing, held each Friday morning during announcements.



A winner is drawn from each grade level who has participated in the program. Each weekly winner will be able to wear a Mean Green Reading T-shirt, receive a free book, and a Reading Certificate! Their picture will be displayed on the bulletin board in the auditorium lobby for everyone to see! Students also have the chance to participate in quarterly incentives if they turn in the required number of MGRM logs for the marking period. To participate in the first nine weeks incentive students had to turn in four reading logs. Students who met that requirement attended a scavenger hunt/nature walk. For the second marking period, students needed to turn in six MGRM logs to attend the nacho party. I had the opportunity to speak to students about the nacho party where several students expressed their opinions on reading and the nacho party. Third grader Isaac Geer stated, "I read about 100-1,000 words each day, I read about 10 chapters in a book...its true!" In addition, Melody Shi commented "I like it because you get to eat your favorite nachos... I love nachos, playing limbo, and playing with friends." During the party, the students participated in a limbo contest in which Melody was the champion! The third nine week incentive is an egg hunt for younger students and a dance party. The fourth incentive to end the school year is a "pie day," which is a student favorite. On this day students are able to "pie" teachers in the face.



SADD Cart

By: Emily Niper

As the year moves on and prom is just around the corner the SADD club wants everyone to know the precaution of drinking and driving and how it is unsafe to do. To stimulate the idea of drinking and driving the SADD Club purchased a buggy like vehicle to show students what it is like to be drinking and driving. In addition to buying the buggy they also purchased drunk goggles. When you put them on it's like walking when you are intoxicated. SADD advisor Mr. Brian Randall stated "We hope this makes the students realize the hazards of drinking and driving. By doing something as irrational as this you are taking the chance of taking your life or someone else's life." In 2013, 10,076 people were killed in alcohol-impaired driving crashes, accounting for nearly one-third of all the traffic-related deaths in the United States. Of the 1,149 traffic deaths among children ages 0-14 years in 2012, 200 involved an alcohol-impaired driver. Of the 200 child passengers ages 14 and younger who died in alcohol-impaired driving crashes in 2013, over half were riding in the vehicle with the alcohol-impaired driver. In 2012, over 1.3 million drivers were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics. That's one percent of the 121 million self-reported episodes of alcohol-impaired driving among U.S. adults each year. Drugs other than alcohol are involved in about 18% of motor vehicle driver deaths. These other drugs are often used in combination with alcohol.



Financial Aid Workshop

By: Braedon St. Clair

The Financial Aid Workshop is an in school event sponsored by the PAHS Guidance Department. It begins at 9:00 AM and concludes at noon. Students will have to register prior to the event by contacting Mrs. George, our guidance counselor, and by applying for your FSA ID. If anyone has any questions about this event pick up a flyer from Mrs. George in the guidance office. This workshop will be on February 27th and is a great opportunity for students. This is the fourth year that Mrs. George will be helping host this event at Portage Area High School. If you need to contact Mrs. George about anything you can find her in the guidance office or email her at mageorge@portageareasd.org for any questions or concerns you might have about the workshop. This is a completely free event hosted specifically for all students. It doesn't matter what you plan on doing with your future, whether you have it planned or not, this will benefit everyone who attends. When I asked Mrs. George for information on this she handed me a flyer and it explains everything I need to know so get yours before it's too late to register. I asked her why she helps host and she replied with, "I just think it's a very helpful event for all students and big opportunity for anyone who attends." I think everyone should consider attending because you never know how many opportunities like this you will get.



Vassas's View

By: Elliott Vassas

Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton follow close to one another in the Democratic Party. Just to throw some numbers out there; statistics show that on January 17th, Hillary Clinton had a 25 point lead on Bernie Sanders. That is 59% support for Clinton and 34% support for Sanders. As of January 21st, the CNN/ORC polls show Sanders is now beating Clinton 51% to 43%. As for the Republican Party, Donald Trump is still leading the polls by 15.2 points compared to Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio. Now among these nationwide voters, not all of them believe Trump would make a good president. In fact, there are many people that do not think he should be the president. On another note, Bernie Sanders is now beating Hillary Clinton and the polls are proving that people are interested in what Sanders would do as president. He supports tax cuts, minimum wage increase, healthcare and benefits, climate change, civil rights and social equality. These are many issues that need improved. He doesn't put on a funny or good show like Trump does. Voters are actually voting for him for reasons other than being a good entertainer. Some people just vote because they hear what others are doing and follow along. When you actually research some topics and compare different political reviews you get a broader understanding of what is going on. The statistics will continue to change and the parties will continue their battle. So, who do you want to be president?

Andrew's Automotive Assessment

2016 Toyota Tacoma



By: Andrew Koval

The 2016 Toyota Tacoma TRD Sport is up there with the top ranking trucks in the world. First and foremost these trucks are basically tanks because they last forever. There are still Toyotas on the road today from the 80's and 90's that run great and probably worth about \$5,000-\$10,000. Which is also great about these trucks because they retain their value so well. Now on to the trucks options. The 2016 Tacoma comes with an option of either an access cab with a 6ft standard bed, a double cab with a 5 foot short bed, and last a double cab with a 6 foot long bed. The truck comes with a 3.5L V6 that produces up to 278 Horsepower and 265 lbs. of torque. Being that this truck isn't very big compared to other full size trucks the horsepower and torque are actually very good for the truck because less weight means more pickup to the motors power. The truck also comes with a 6 speed automatic transmission. Toyota is actually highly praised as one of the highest return value on their vehicles. For example, you buy a 2016 Tacoma for say \$28,000 in 10 years probably depending on how your finances are, the truck will be paid off and have a value of \$15,000 or more. This is also why Toyota trucks are mainly the highest selling truck in the world. Their engines last forever, the body lasts a long time before any rust problems come about, and for the return back in money you could get from owning this vehicle you just can't beat it.

Richardson's Reflection

By: Alexis Richardson

Mrs. Gdula

Q: Do people still call you Ms. Duncan?

A: All the time

Q: What makes you laugh? Why?

A: Everything. I'm just a happy person. I like to laugh

Q: Who's your favorite celebrity?

A: Alex Burrows. He's a hockey player

Q: Did it feel like Christmas without snow? If so, why?

A: No

Q: Do you prefer Italian or Chinese food? Why?

A: Italian because I love carbs. #ItalianFeast

Mrs. Fox

Q: What do you do in your spare time?

A: Puzzles, cooking, especially fishing

Q: What's your most memorable year? Why?

A: The year I worked with the high school life skills class

Q: Where's your favorite vacation spot?

A: Anywhere I can fish

Q: What's it like to be a secretary?

A: Very rewarding

Q: What's your favorite dessert?

A: Anything chocolate

Mr. Rousell

Q: Easter or Valentine's Day? Why?

A: Valentine's Day because you get to spend time with someone you love or if you have someone to love

Q: Who's your favorite author?

A: Mitch Albom

Q: Have you ever played an instrument when you were younger? If so, what did you play?

A: Yes I played a trumpet

Q: How do you feel about the band this year?

A: I feel like the band is better and stronger. They work hard and have fun

Q: Does Tyler C. assist you with the band? Why?

A: Yes. He helps out. He's our senior drummer and he's become a leader

Wozniak Reaches Milestone

By: Sumer Slobodnick

Before January 6th, Stacy Alexander held the school record for three-pointers in Lady Mustang history. Alexander had a record of 174 three-pointers which was made in the early 1990s. But senior Lady Mustang, Lexi Wozniak, took over that record. She has become the all-time three-point shooter in Lady Mustang history. The game was at home against Conemaugh Valley in which the Lady Mustangs won by a score of 55-39. She had broken the record in the 3rd period of the game. Wozniak commented "I couldn't have done this without the love and support of my teammates, coaches, family, and fans. I'm truly blessed to live in such a supportive town." Some might say that that was enough excitement for a while but, a little over a week later on January 14th, she had scored her 1000th career point at Conemaugh Township. She went into the game standing at 998 points. She only needed two more points to reach the mark. Finally, in the second period with about four minutes to go, Lexi made one of two free throws which put her at 999. Finally, in the middle of the 2nd period, Wozniak made a three point shot that put her over the century mark. Lexi is only the eighth girl in Lady Mustang history to score 1,000 points. After Lexi made her 1,000th point she commented "I am so grateful to carry out my senior year and reach these milestones. It has truly been an honor playing with everyone and being in such a supportive town."



Duct Tape

By: Courtland Corrente

The freshmen in the Intro to Business class became very crafty 2 weeks ago. They had a sale that included many different items that were actually useful and were all very inexpensive. The best part about it is that every item was made out of 1 thing: duct tape.

The sale took place on January 20th during all lunch periods. The project was inspired by the show "Shark Tank". I asked Mrs. Gribbin some questions about the project, and her answers are below.

Q: Did the students enjoy the project?

A: Yes, they really enjoyed creating, designing, and producing the products to sell.

Q: How did you come up with the idea?

A: I knew I wanted them to create a product, but I wasn't sure how to make it fair for everyone. I needed to level out the playing field. I knew we needed cheap materials. That's when I thought of having each group use duct tape. Since there are so many different varieties of duct tape. That really lent to the students being creative.

Q: Are you planning on continuing this project?

A: Yes, it was a lot of fun for the students and it was an experience that they can relate to the world of business

In all lunch periods the auditorium lobby was packed with people selling the projects, and some students even sold out of their products. Maybe we will see the sale take place again.

Stay Positive

By: Taylor McCloskey

Is the glass half full or is it half empty? Today, we affect and get affected by the people we meet. This can happen on a subconscious level or can happen intuitively. Our positive or negative thinking can be contagious. It can be through words, thoughts, feelings and even through body language. A lot of situations can put you in a negative mood and make you think negatively. "Your class, the class of 2017, needs to have a more positive attitude, this year you guys have been more negative towards school. You all need to be the agents of change." said an anonymous teacher. School can be such a drag when all you do is use negative thoughts that turn you and/or someone else's good mood into a bad one. Throughout the school day I hear people saying, "I'm never going to get better at anything", "I'm going to do horrible on the test tomorrow", "I feel so stupid", "I hate school." All people do is bring themselves down during the school day, and then ends up bringing everyone else down with them. Everyone thinks so negatively. At least try to be positive. Find a positive viewpoint in a negative situation. "As you think, so your life becomes." If you think more positively, your life and people around you will tend to be more positive. As you think more negatively, you and your life and the people around you will tend to be more negative. If you change your attitude and expectations towards situations and/or people, sooner or later, your life will change accordingly. Be positive.



By: Max Gossard

Portage Palate Gossard's Grub

Beverage Can Chicken

Ingredients:

1 frying chicken (roasting chickens are to big)
 ½ can of a 12oz soda of your choice (I chose sprite)
 1 lemon
 ¼ - ½ cup of whatever seasoning you prefer for oven roasted chicken or grilled chicken (I used Werber Chicken & Rib Rub)
 Salt to taste
 Pepper to taste
 1 stick of butter (if needed)
 Water (if needed)



Directions:

Pour out half of your 12oz soda and place on tray
 Place chicken on top of the can with the can going into the body cavity and make sure it will stand by itself
 Season with your ¼ - ½ cup of preferred seasoning all over the chicken (season generously)
 Cut lemon into halves or quarters and shove into the neck cavity of the chicken
 If there is any torn skin cut the stick of butter into about tablespoon sized pads and place over torn skin, may use toothpicks to hold in place if butter is falling off
 If you used butter then be sure to cover the bottom of your pan or else the butter will melt and burn leaving a lot of smoke.

Oven directions:

Preheat oven at 375 degrees
 Place your already prepped chicken into the oven
 Cook chicken for 2 ½ - 3 hours
 Take out carve and season with salt and pepper if you wish

Enjoy

Charcoal grill directions:

Place charcoal in a ring around the grill light and wait for fumes to disappear
 Place chicken into the center of the ring and let cook for 3 - 3 ½ hours and keep an eye on the temperature (try to keep it above 275 degrees)

Remove off grill carve and season with salt and pepper and enjoy

Lady Mustangs March On

By: Katie Nolan

On Wednesday, January 20th 2016, the Portage Area Lady Mustangs took on the North Star, Lady Cougars at the Len Chappell Gymnasium at 7:00 in a white out. The Lady Mustang starters on Wednesday were seniors Katie Nolan, Kacie Baker, and Lexi Wozniak and juniors Abby Chobany and Lauren McCabe. Going into the WestPac North game the Lady Mustangs were 11 and 1 and the Lady Cougars were 13 and 1 and the Lady Mustangs were out seeking for revenge. After a tough loss to them in December 2015 the Lady Mustangs knew they needed to win this game to beat North Star out for the WestPac North. The Lady Mustangs came out in a triangle and two attempting to key on the Lady Cougar's two leading scorers, Jackie Stanko and Courtney Schrock. But unfortunately for the Lady Mustangs, the Lady Cougars were "on fire." The Lady Cougars hit a big 3 right off the tip and led the game from there on out. At the half the score was 45 to 18 sending the Lady Mustangs to the locker room down 27 points. Coming out of the locker room for the third quarter the Lady Mustangs started to hit but shots continued to fall for the Lady Cougars as well. At the finish of the game the Lady Cougars came out on top with 66 to 44 victory, leaving the Lady Mustangs with two loses to them on the season.



On Thursday, January 21st 2016, the Lady Mustangs took on the Shade Lady Panthers at the Len Chappell Gymnasium for a 6:00 tip off. The Lady Mustang starters on Friday as well were seniors Katie Nolan, Kacie Baker, and Lexi Wozniak and juniors Abby Chobany and Lauren McCabe. Going into the game the Lady Mustangs were 11 and 2 and the Lady Panthers were 12 and 2. The Lady Mustangs initially were off to a slow start walking to the locker room at the half down 2, 30 to 28. The Lady Mustangs came out after the half with a completely different game plan. They came out in a box and one with Katie Nolan keying on Shade's Emma Spinelli. Once shots started to fall the Lady Mustangs took off ending the game with a win, 66 to 48. The win advanced the Lady Mustangs to 13 and 2.

SADD Pirate

By: Nathan Teno

The annual SADD Pirate trip will be setting sail on Friday, May 20th 2016. They are set to be playing the Colorado Rockies. The trip every year has been a huge success in terms of student wanting to attend and how well behaved our students have been. This year the ticket prices are \$75 per student but, that includes a free shirt (Free Shirt Friday), all you can eat burgers, hot dogs, nachos, peanuts, ice cream sandwiches, and soda! Hurry up though! Last 2 years tickets have sold out almost immediately and this year only 37 tickets are being sold. Note to yourself that this is an opportunity to spend some time with fellow friends and classmates while enjoying your local baseball team play. Mr. Randall feels that this trip and all SADD club activities are a great way to show kids how to "have fun without drugs" and to "get high on life and not drugs." Also it's a night game so you will be leaving shortly after school lets out and will be arriving to the game right before the gates open. Bring some spare money in case you and your friends want to walk around the stadium and purchase your favorite Pirate shirt, antique or any other kind of collectible. Lastly, if you are wanting to go and are unsure go ask someone who has gone before how much of a good time the trip can be and surely you will have made up your mind.