

The Middle Ground

Pella Middle School
Pella, Iowa 50219

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Page editor Sarah Van Hulzen

Leaders inspire greatness

8th grade students have been studying leadership qualities and people who have exhibited those qualities. Aaron De Joode writes about a leader he admires.

Leadership. Going by the dictionary, leadership is a process where an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. It may be the definition in the dictionary, but is it correct?

I don't think it is. Leadership is much bigger and depends on the time the leader arises and how he or she arises. A great leader is a great servant.

"Leadership is an action, not position."

-Donald H. McGannon

Leadership is bigger than just a process. It's a trait. One trait of a good leader is the ability to communicate. Someone could be the smartest person in the world, the nicest person in the world, and/or the most responsible person in the world but that doesn't matter if he or she can't get his or her point across.

Take Albert Einstein for an example. Great person. Smart person, but did you know that when he was in school, he was put in a special education course because he would mumble randomly and make himself sound... slow? He was actually mumbling extreme mathematical equations, but because he wasn't a good speaker, he

didn't get his point across.

Leadership is also defined by the way the leader leads. Leaders can lead by force, by voice, or the best option, by action. A great leader leads not only by showing people the right path by taking it, but he or she also serves those people.

Using the Bible as a reference, a great leader is like a lamb, not a lion. A great leader is a great servant.

"A good objective of leadership is to help those who are doing poorly to do well and to help those who are doing well to do even better."

-Jim Rohn

That takes me to a great leader whom I know personally. Kent Busman. Kent was born and raised in Michigan. He also attended Hope College. He was hoping to become a forester when God called him to seminary. He is married and has three kids. He now lives in Speculator, New York, and works as the director of Camp Fowler. Camp Fowler is a Christian summer camp.

I have personally been to Camp Fowler for a week, and it is life changing, not only for me but for the thousands of kids who have come to Fowler for a week of praise and thanksgiving.

I believe Kent Busman is a great leader. He leads selflessly, giving time, talent, and treasure. He serves the people. He has changed the lives

of many kids. He even allowed Camp Erin, a camp for children who have lost their parents and helps kids regain mental and emotional strength, to use the Camp Fowler facility as a camp for them. He also has that unique ability to communicate and communicate well. He communicates through his many memorized stories. One of his favorites is "The Cremation of Sam McGee." He has the ability to communicate so that he keeps the attention of the listeners.

"There are strange things done in the midnight sun

By the men who moil for gold;

The Arctic trails have their secret tales
That would make your blood run cold;
The Northern Lights have seen queer sights,

But the queerest they ever did see
Was that night on the marge of Lake Lebargé

I cremated Sam McGee." from "The Cremation of Sam McGee"

Leadership is a big thing. Great leaders lead by example not by force. They are the lambs, the servants who wouldn't hurt someone to get their point across. They are there for the people, not themselves. A great leader is a great servant. The servant who serves the way, the truth, and the light.

"A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way."

-John C. Maxwell



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Iowan becomes World Triathlon participant

by Camille Henry

Charlie Wittmack is the leader of a world organization called "The World Triathlon." This triathlon consists of a 275 mile swim, a 9000 mile bike and a 950 mile run. The World Triathlon takes 11 months to complete, and it travels through rough terrain and treacherous conditions.

Wittmack's wife, Cate, and 2 year old son, James, are a major part of this amazing trek around the entire world by being there to give him food and drinks.

The World Triathlon was made for three main purposes: adventure, global health, and education. The World Triathlon covers 13 countries.

Education is a very important part of The World Triathlon. The education is a module that is set up for the cities Charlie visits on his route. Charlie's life has been impacted greatly by his journey.

Charlie said, "The expedition has changed my life by helping me recognize the small pleasures in life. Many of us take simple things for

granted when we are at home. During my expedition, I had to survive for weeks and months at a time with limited food, little rest, and uncomfortable surroundings. When I returned home, I appreciated everything that I had so much more."

People were asking Charlie how this feat was humanly possible and Charlie said, "I believe that anything is possible if you put your mind to it. Big challenges can be made small by breaking them down into little pieces. I've made The World Tri possible by focusing on each day, one at a time, and trying not to get overwhelmed by the big picture."

This commitment affected Charlie's day to day life, Charlie said, "I take more time to enjoy my family and play with my son. He is only two-and-a-half years old, but he seems to have grown up a great deal in the six months that I was gone. I'm trying to get as much time with him as I can before I leave again in January to finish my adventure."

Respected teacher wins prestigious award

by Marissa Borgerding

This fall Ms. Visser, the journalism teacher at the high school was given the prestigious honor from the National Journalism Educators Association with the Carl Towely National Journalism Award. This award is given only once a year to a JEA member. When she was given the award, some of her students, family members, and friends were there to show their support.

Ms. Visser has been teaching at Pella High for 28 years as the high school yearbook and newspaper adviser that produces nationally recognized publications. Since 1983 she has

worked with many young writers on the Pelladium staff.



"I couldn't work with adults because my students are way too much fun!" Visser said.

Many of Visser's students feel the same way about her. It was her students' nominations that made her a contestant for this award. Her students are so inspired they continue working on campus newspaper staffs once in college.

Ms. Visser's enthusiasm for publications has and will continue to help many kids map out their lives for what lies ahead in the journalism community.

After 13 years of service, the King retires

by Brian Rundle

This year the school is losing a very well respected teacher. Mrs. King will be retiring. Her last day will be December 22.

When Mrs. Bogaard was asked how her day will change with Mrs. King retiring she said, "I must say that when Mrs. King told us she was retiring, I wasn't one bit happy about it! She works with many different students in many different classes every day, and she is a great help in so many different areas. She expects students to do their best and encourages them daily to do the right thing. She came to us with a social studies background, but she is knowledgeable in so many different areas. Mrs. King has been with us for over 13 years, and it's tough letting her go. Many times I have popped over to her room to have a quick chat and to discuss the business of the day, and I will miss not having her here."

Mrs. King will be spending her Christmas with her children in Colorado.

When asked how she will spend her time after retiring she said, "I plan to take my parents and go to Arizona for the winter. I am looking forward to leaving the snow and cold behind. My daughter is having our second grandchild in January, so I will also spend some time in Denver helping with my grandson and the new baby."

She will miss Pella Middle School. She is also looking forward to spending more time with my family and friends who don't live in Pella.



Mrs. King was recently honored at a breakfast to celebrate her years of service.



Administration looks into purchasing laptops

by Kaila Wimmer

Many school assignments today need the power of a computer. The issue is, Pella Community Schools have a limited amount of computers. What happens when a student needs to complete an assignment and there aren't any computers available?

Pella Schools are looking at fixing that problem. Many schools across Iowa have taken in the One-to-One laptop program, and Pella Schools are exploring the possibility of beginning the same program.

This program provides updated laptops to each individual student. The laptops are rented by schools for about \$400 per student, each year. Renting the laptops ensures that they are updated each year with new models and the software.

Decisions have not been made yet. The school district is merely exploring the possibility of the program.

"I think this program would be beneficial for both students and staff," Mr. Patton said.

Eighth grade teacher Mr. Korver took a trip to a school to see how the program worked when put in use.

"I was pleasantly surprised," Mr. Korver said.

The program allows each student to work on school assignments at home. It's convenient in the fact that students' documents would all be in one place.

One concern is maintenance of the laptops. Student would have to pay a fee for all damage done to the laptops.

"This could be a good thing and a bad thing. It would be good to get work done at home, and for people who don't have the school's software at home. But it would also be bad because students could use the Internet to cheat," Sebastian Baugh, seventh grader said.

TOMS Shoes take strides to help children in need

by Mallory Wheeler

In 2006, American traveler Blake Mycoskie befriended children in Argentina and found they had no shoes to protect their feet, even though everyday they were walking on gravel. Wanting to help, he created TOMS Shoes, a company that would match every pair of shoes purchased with a pair of new shoes given to a child in need. One for one.

Mycoskie went back to Argentina with a group of family, friends and staff later that year with 10,000 pairs of shoes made possible by TOMS customers.

A leading cause of disease in

developing countries is soil-transmitted diseases, which can penetrate the skin through bare feet. Wearing shoes can help prevent these diseases and the long-term physical harm they cause. Also wearing shoes can prevent cuts and sores. Cuts can become infected and that's when it gets more serious.

As of September 2010, TOMS has given over one million pairs of new shoes to children in need through Giving Partners Around the World. It's amazing how something as simple as shoes can really help a child's health and future.

Ulrich winner announced



The latest winner of Ulrich's Teacher of the Month was recently awarded to Mrs. Joan Nikkel. Mrs. Nikkel received word that she would be the December recipient of use of the Ulrich car for one month due to the nomination of a student though she was not told who nominated her.

Mrs. Nikkel said, "I greatly appreciate this nod, but what I know is, there is no one teacher of the month- it takes all of us working together. I happen to be blessed to work with one of the best staffs anyone could ever hope for." (photo supplied by Ulrich Motors)



"It's a bird... It's a plane... No, it's Super Principals!"

Mr. Miller and Mr. Patton showed true heroics by dressing up as super heroes to celebrate great book sales during conference week. They are pictured here with Garret Powell.

4 Home Ground

Cheerleaders encourage sportsmanship and energy

by Cheyanne Van Donselaar

They are the girls who stand on each other. They are the girls who smile even if the team is down. They are always encouraging. They cartwheel through the game. They display the best sportsmanship. They are the cheerleaders.

Jessica Wieser said anybody who wants to take the time can be a cheerleader.

“You need to be sort of flexible and have regular physical abilities,” Wieser said. “You also need to be able to memorize some things for the cheers and keep up good grades. Jessica said “It worth the hard work.”

Coach Laura Johnson shared that during practices they try new cheers, share ideas, and revise current cheers. They also put up posters on

lockers to show athlete support.

During the games they do chants, and during quarter breaks, they do longer chants.

Johnson said, “For middle school cheerleading, we adapt what we do to fit our strengths.”



PMS cheerleaders pump up the crowd. (photo by Cheyanne Van Donselaar)

CHEERLEADERS CHEER OTHERS TO V-I-C-T-O-R-Y

by Ashley Kirkland

It’s time to unpack those pom-poms because it’s winter cheerleading season. This year’s team consists of eight girls, two eighth grade and six seventh grade.

Practice started on November third, and finished the season on December fourteen.

The girls cheer at middle school home basketball games for both girls and boys.

Cheerleading coach Laura Johnson said, “Cheerleading is a good way to show support for your school and learn to work as a team.”

“I enjoy when the crowd participates. I personally think that crowd participation makes all the difference,” Caitlyn Dixson said.

Pursuing Victory With Honor awarded to good sports

by Sarah DeWolf

It’s an award only an athlete can get. It comes with a sense of pride and a free t-shirt. It’s the *Pursuing Victory With Honor* Sportsmanship Award.

Every week students can nominate teammates on their sports’ team who they think deserve this award. Then the coaches of the team pick the nominee who, in their opinion, should win the award for that week. Winners’ names are read on the announcements

Monday morning. They get a certificate, a t-shirt, and their pictures are posted on the bulletin board in the lunch room.

For someone to win this award, he or she first has to be on a sports team. Winter awards are given for basketball, wrestling, and cheerleading.

To win the award the athlete must also show a great deal of sportsmanship.

Eighth grader Ashley Kirkland said, “You should be encouraging to

your teammates and have a positive attitude and work hard and have fun.”

Kirkland won the *Pursuing Victory With Honor* Sportsmanship Award for cross country earlier this year. Ashley said she likes that students nominate each other for this award because it gives them a chance to share their thoughts about their teammates.

Week	8th Boys BB	8th Girls BB	7th Boys BB	7th Girls BB	Wrestlin g	Cheerleading
1	Ryan Wichhart	Katie Canfield	AJ Kingery	Elyse Parisee	Jacob Speltz	Kaytline Schroder
2	Andre Hernandez	Marissa Borgerding	Evan Armstrong	Molly Howard	Jesse Arrendell	Jessica Wieser
3	Ben Warner	Cathryn Yoder	Payson Vande Lune	Isabelle Hall	Caleb Blom	Caitlyn Dixson
4	Jamison Roozeboom	Stephanie Rennich	Chase Van Sant	Lauren Kriegel	Jacob Diehl	Margaret Kooser
5	Todd Van Dyke	Kayley De Vos	Jackson Scholten	Kenzie Nossamon	Joe Schall	Loran Sneller



“It takes leadership, building our teammates up, and a positive attitude every time you step on the floor.”-Chase Van Sant

The Middle Ground is a tabloid produced by the Pella Middle School students to serve as an informative, educational and entertaining communications media and to provide an open forum to students and readers. Submissions are welcomed and encouraged. The Middle Ground reserves the right to edit grammatical errors, libelous content and length due to space limitations. Not all submissions will be printed.



Team Quotes

by Brain Rundle and Katie Canfield

“It (the season) has been successful. Not based on wins and losses but on how much we have improved from the beginning of the season to now.” -Coach Zach Elsbecker

“The season is going great. The boys are working hard and improving daily.” - Coach Matt Schulte

“ The season has been super fun. I love basketball and it’s fun to play with my friends.” - Nathan Henry

“I have been playing basketball my whole life so I bought some basketball shoes and they were pretty cool so I went out. Amen.- Tanner Wood



2010-2011 7th Grade Boys Basketball Game Schedule/Results

Date	Opponent	Location	Time	Results A	Results B	Results C
Monday, Nov 16	Knoxville	Pella	4:30	P-61 K-17	P-18 K-7	P-11 K-11
Monday, Nov 22	Oskaloosa	Oskaloosa	4:30	P-52 O-30	P-15 O-8	P-10 O-19
Monday, Nov 29	Newton	Newton	4:30	P-48 N-38	P-10 N-20	P-8 N-18
Monday, Dec 13	Grinnell	Grinnell	4:30	P-48 G-25	P-25 G-22	P5- G-8
Tuesday, Dec 14	Ottumwa	Pella	4:30	P-55 O-19	P-20 O-13	P-17 O-30
Friday, Jan 7	Norwalk	Norwalk	4:30	P- N-	P- N-	P- N-
Monday, Jan 10	Newton	Pella	4:30	P- N-	P- N-	P- N-
Tuesday, Jan 11	PCM	PCM	4:30	P- PCM-	P- PCM-	P- PCM-
Monday, Jan 17	South Tama	South Tama	4:30	P- ST-	P- ST-	P- ST-
Thursday, Jan 20	Pella Christian	Pella Christian	4:15	P- PC-	P- PC-	P- PC-
Monday, Jan 24	Oskaloosa	Pella	4:30	P- O-	P- O-	P- O-
Monday, Jan 31	Grinnell	Pella	4:30	P- G-	P- G-	P- G-
Monday, Feb 7	Knoxville	Knoxville	4:30	P- K-	P- K-	P- K-

2010-2011 Boys Basketball Game Schedule/Results

Date	Opponent	Location	Time	Results A	Results B	Results C
Tuesday, Nov 16	Knoxville	Knoxville	4:30	P-38 K-21	P-31 K-4	P-19 K-6
Monday, Nov 22	Oskaloosa	Pella	4:30	P-43 O-19	P-38 O-5	P-26 O-18
Monday, Nov 29	Newton	Pella	4:30	P-35 N-22	P-14 N-17	P-11 N-14
Monday, Dec 13	Grinnell	Pella	4:30	P-38 G-22	P-23 G-24	No Game
Tuesday, Dec 21	PCM	PCM	4:30	P- PCM-	P- PCM-	P- PCM-
Monday, Jan 10	Newton	Newton	4:30	P- N-	P- N-	P- N-
Monday, Jan 17	South Tama	Pella	4:30	P- ST-	P- ST-	P- ST-
Tuesday, Jan 18	Ottumwa	Pella	4:30	P- O-	P- O-	P- O-
Thursday, Jan 20	Pella Christian	Pella Christian	4:15	P- PC-	P- PC-	P- PC-
Monday, Jan 24	Oskaloosa	Oskaloosa	4:30	P- O-	P- O-	P- O-
Monday, Jan 31	Grinnell	Grinnell	4:30	P- G-	P- G-	P- G-
Monday, Feb 7	Knoxville	Pella	4:30	P- K-	P- K-	P- K-

Tips for playing basketball

by Sarah Van Hulzen

To be a good basketball player, the thing to do is practice. Practice on what you are good at but also the things that need improvement.

Another good thing is to try your best, don’t get down. Just keep on going and strive to get better.

Don’t ever say that you can’t do something. When you say that you can’t do it. It’s what you believe that counts, if you don’t believe, then you won’t go anywhere.

When you are playing a game be patient. The game might not be going well at first, but if you don’t give up, it can always turn back around.

If someone around you doesn’t know what they are doing, then help them out. Be a leader, not a follower. Look at what your team needs and try to strengthen its weaknesses.

If you don’t know what to do or if you think you’re doing it wrong, ask.

Focus on what you do best and expand on it, without forgetting to always practice everything else. And always push yourself to the maximum.

Girls play on hardwood

by Cathryn Yoder

Bounce, bounce, bounce...set... breathe... SWOOSH. What does it take to be a girl’s basketball player in this middle school? Determination. That one word says it all.

In practices people have to understand the drills and execute them with all that they have to become the best. That includes sweating, a sign of hustle. Players work hard from the time the front doors open until the time they close.

Communication is critical in basketball. That includes listening to the coach and yelling out to teammates

during the game.

Coach Hellbusch said, “Being able to communicate on the court is essential to functioning as a unit.”

Communication is the glue that holds the team together. That includes practices in drills, following directions, and passing the ball. Without talking, the whole court would fall apart as soon as the first pass was made. This is also known as having a big “voice” for basketball.

An athlete needs to have fun and strive to make oneself grow, not only as a teammate, but also as a person

in general. Basketball players take on more responsibility and gain leadership skills. Getting up on time, packing all of the right gear, eating healthily, and staying in shape are all things that take responsibility.

Basketball also takes leadership. Competitors have to take a stand at times and make their team ship-shape. A leader has to take charge and make fast decisions.

These things are the main qualities of a girl’s basketball player.



Eighth grade girl basketball players respecting the flag during the “National Anthem”. (picture by Kiley Elder)

8th Grade Girls Basketball Game Schedule/Results

Date	Opponent	Location	Time	Results (Green)	Results (Silver)	Results (White)
Thursday, Nov 18	Knoxville	Knoxville	4:30	P-33 K-13	P-20 K-2	P-10 K-10
Tuesday, Nov 23	Oskaloosa	Pella	4:30	P-48 O-29	P-12 O-19	P-23 O-10
Thursday, Dec 2	Newton	Pella	4:30	P-27 N-19	P-24 N-11	P-22 N-8
Thursday, Dec 9	South Tama	Pella	4:30	P-48 ST-28	P-29 ST-4	P-9 ST-2
Tuesday, Dec 14	Ottumwa	Ottumwa	4:30	P-34 O-9	P-23 O-6	P-14 O-4
Thursday, Dec 16	Grinnell	Pella	4:30	P- G-	P- G-	P- G-
Tuesday, Dec 21	PCM	Pella	4:30	P- PCM-	P- PCM-	P- PCM-
Thursday, Jan 6	Knoxville	Pella	4:30	P- K-	P- K-	P- K-
Thursday, Jan 13	Newton	Newton	4:30	P- N-	P- N-	P- N-
Thursday, Jan 20	Pella Christian	Pella	4:15	P- PC-	P- PC-	P- PC-
Thursday, Jan 27	Oskaloosa	Oskaloosa	4:30	P- O-	P- O-	P- O-
Thursday, Feb 3	Grinnell	Grinnell	4:30	P- G-	P- G-	P- G-



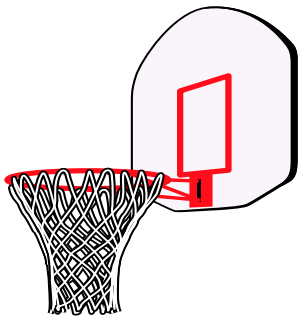
Seventh grade girls enjoy basketball

by Alicia Muñoz

The seventh grade girls basketball team is up and running. This year there are three coaches. Coach VanHemert is coaching the ‘A’ team. Coaching the ‘B’ team is Coach Muñoz. Coaching ‘C’ team is Coach Kubiacyk, also called Coach K. Some players join basketball because that is where their friends are. Others join because of the love of the game. Jazz VanHemert said, “I’ve done it for a long time, also my dad coaches. I like it.”

Coach K is in college this year, and she is coaching for the experience.

When she was asked about what her favorite thing about coaching seventh grade girls, she responded, “Interacting with all the girls, watching them learn, (and the) relationship with them.”



Seventh grade girls talk to coach.
(picture by Alicia Munoz)

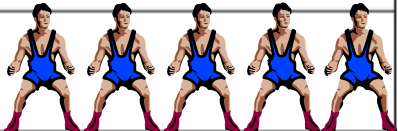


Seventh graders dribble down court, prepared to score. (picture by Alicia Munoz)

Date	Opponent	Where	Results-A	Results-B	Results-C
Thursday, Nov. 18	Knoxville	Home	P-9 K-27	P-21 K-6	P-14 K-5
Tuesday, Nov. 23	Oskaloosa	Away	P-32 O-12	P-22 O-2	P-14 O-8
Thursday, Dec. 2	Newton	Away	P-12 N-27	P-16 N-16	P-14 N-16
Thursday, Dec. 9	South Tama	Away	P-6 ST-44	P-12 ST-20	P-2 ST-12
Thursday, Dec. 16	Grinnell	Away	P-16 G-22	P-12 G-14	P-12 G-12 OT
Thursday, Jan. 6	Knoxville	Away	TBD	TBD	TBD
Friday, Jan. 7	Norwalk	Home	TBD	TBD	TBD
Tuesday, Jan. 11	PCM	Home	TBD	TBD	TBD
Thursday, Jan. 13	Newton	Home	TBD	TBD	TBD
Tuesday, Jan. 18	Ottumwa	Away	TBD	TBD	TBD
Thursday, Jan. 20	Pella Christian	Home	TBD	TBD	TBD
Thursday, Jan. 27	Oskaloosa	Home	TBD	TBD	TBD
Thursday, Feb 3	Grinnell	Home	TBD	TBD	TBD

Athletes take it to the mat

Date	Opponents	Location	Time	Single Match Winners	Double/Triple Match Winners
Tuesday, Nov. 16	Grinnell, South Tama, Knoxville	Grinnell	4:30	Zine S/Remington S/ Stoyn K/Jacob J/ Cole J/Trevor D/ Caleb L/Mason V	Jacob D/Joe B/Will W/Caleb B/Jake S/Jonah S/Jesse A/ Chase P/Trent S
Tuesday, Nov. 23	Newton, South Tama, Norwalk	Newton	4:30	Joe B/Jake S/Stoyn K	Josh P/Will W/Chase P/Cole J/Mason V/Trevor D/Jacob D/Caleb B/ Trent S/Jesse A/Remington S/Jacob J/Zine S
Tuesday, Nov. 30	P-Ville, PCM, Char, L-S, E-B, C-M	Pella	4:30	Caleb B/Cole J/Josh P/Remington S/ Jonah S/Trent S/ Terry H/Spencer S	Jacob D/Jesse A/Zine S/Chase P/Joe S/Trevor D/Mason W/ Jake S/Caleb L
Tuesday, Dec. 7	Oskaloosa, Knoxville, Newton	Pella	4:30	Cole J/Caleb L/ Chase P/Mason V/ William W/Jacob D	Spencer S/Jesse A/Caleb B/Trevor D/Zine S/Jonah S/ Remington S
Friday, Dec. 10	PCM, Bon-Far, Knox, C-M, EV, BGM, P-Ville	Prairie City	4:15	Trent S/Chase P/ Terry H/Mason V/ Zine S/Jacob D	William W/Jonah S/Cole J/Caleb B/Caleb L
Monday, Dec. 13	EB, Moravia, Albia, Chanton, EV, P-Ville, North-Mahaska	Eddyville	4:15	Spencer S/Trevor D/ Jacob J/Travis B/ Chase P/Cole J/Joe S	Jacob D/Caleb B/Zine S/Caleb L
Monday, Dec. 20	L-S, Moravia, Tri-County, EV, PCM, C-M, P-Ville	Sully	4:15		



Athlete Quotes

by Brooke Darnell

“My favorite part about the team this year is that they all work really hard in the room. They each push each other to the limit. The favorite part about coaching is watching them work so hard in the room and then go out and watch them succeed and wrestle so well. Very rewarding.”- Coach Scott Treft

“I like the feeling of pinning somebody.”-Cole Janson

Students share Christmas break entertainment ideas

by Cheyanne Van Donselaar

When the last bell rings on December 22, it will mean one thing for Pella Middle School students and teachers: Christmas break.

During the vacation, a break from textbooks and homework is a highlight. Christina Gualtieri, student, also enjoys time with her family.

Christina Gualtieri said, "Christmas break is fun because you get to see the look on your friend's and family's faces when they see what you got them."

One way to spend the holiday is making cookies for friends and family. There are many different kinds of

cookies to make: gingerbread, snicker-doodle, chocolate chip, and even peanut butter are good for the holidays.

If there is snow on the ground, people go sledding. People try to find a big hill because it makes it more fun to go faster.

They also go ice skating, watch movies, spend time with family, laser tag, and challenge family and friends to an epic snowball fight.

There are many good frozen watering holes in Pella for ice skating, such as Sunken Garden and Central College Pond.

For a professional ice rink there is Brenton Plaza, located in Des

Moines. Brenton Plaza is open from Monday to Friday from 11:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M., and Saturday 10:00 A.M. to 11:00 P.M., also, Sunday 12:00 to 8:00 P.M.

For laser tag there is Tokens, in Des Moines. Players get three games for fifteen dollars. It is open to the public Monday through Thursday from 4:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M., and Friday night 4:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M., and Saturday 11:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M.

There are many fun things to do over Christmas break.



Students host first dance

by Kiley Elder

The students planning to go on a trip to Washington D.C. hosted a school dance on December 3. The purpose for the students was to raise money to go on their trip.

The dance raised \$800. Roughly each student got \$27 dollars a piece.

Sarah DeWolf said, "The dance was a good fundraising opportunity because I got \$30 just for going to a dance and having fun."



Students held a dance to raise money for a trip to D.C and N.Y.



Snow provides winter fun

by Jordan Zemanek

November 30 was the first day snow hit the ground in Pella, Iowa. It was a very cold day. The students got to play in the snow.

Nathan Henry said, "Winter for me is pretty cool! I just love playing in the snow. I like basic stuff like snowball fights, sledding, tackling my snowmen, all the basic kid stuff!"

The middle school kids should put on a heavy coat and go outside and enjoy the Mt. Everest like snow. The kids will need mittens and gloves so they can play in the snow. Snow pants should be used while playing in the snow. A hat would be the most

important thing because it will keep the kids' heads warm.

If they are going to be in deep snow, they will need snow boots so their feet don't freeze. Scarves would be the right choice to keep kids' necks warm.

For middle school students it would be a great time to chill out and have fun with their friends in the snow. They might like sledding on the hills by Jefferson.

Children could love a snow ball fight after school. It's a great time for hot chocolate. Middle School students could go to a friend's house and make a fire in their fireplace.

Students prepare for National History Day

by Matthew Sutija

The road to NHD is a tough one. National History Day is an national event held in the USA, Guam and American Samoa. It is a contest where students compete against each other to make the best presentation of the historical information they have found.

NHD was founded to help students learn about the past and to help them develop good communication skills by competing against each other and to help learn time management.

It takes time and effort going

through with NHD. First, a topic is required. The topic has to coincide with the year's theme. This year the theme is "Debate and Diplomacy"

After a theme is developed, a media must be chosen. Skits, IMovies, essays, websites and story boards are all available options.

After choosing a topic and medium, the facts have to be found. Researching, printing, and citing are all parts of fact finding.

Finally the day for competition has to come. Feelings of excitement,

glee and nervousness will fill the air. When the students have all presented their projects to the judges, the trophies are handed out. It's a thrill to receive one.

The winners in each category move on to the national competition held in Washington, D.C. each year. This year NHD is on March 25 and is held at Central College. Competing this year are sixth, seventh and eighth graders. NHD is a great chance for bright minds to meet with others and share ideas.

F.C.S. students evaluate kitchen tools

Students in the FCS room were given the opportunity to evaluate two models of similar kitchen tools. This edition features can openers. Each product was evaluated based on the following criteria: (Each criteria is worth 5 points)

- Overall look/appeal of the product
- How the product "handles"
- Jobs/Things it can do/Its ability
- Stability/Quality
- Estimated Lifetime
- Cost of Product

Students with a variety of kitchen knowledge and ability levels made several conclusions. The first thing studied was the standard can opener

found in most consumer kitchens. The can opener clamps onto the can vertically, where as the competitor attaches horizontally. It sells between \$2.00-\$7.00. It can be easily washed in the dishwasher but cutting blades can wear or rust quickly.

The second can opener is only sold through independent sales consultants and retails for approximately \$18.00. It claims to leave the can with a smooth edge. It is very durable but difficult to use without reading the lengthy directions. It must be hand-washed and dried immediately. This product claims to have durable, break-resistant plastic handles and turn

knob for easy handling. It comes with a two-year guarantee for noncommercial use, however, requires a sales receipt to return.

Overall the standard kitchen can-opener was rated 26 out of a possible 30, losing points for its ability, overall appearance, it scored well on its stability and cost. The second can-opener was less impressive with a score of 20 out of 30. It had a great warranty, however most consumers don't retain the receipt. It scored well on its ability to do more than remove can lids. It also acts as a bottle opener and can remove metal caps off juice bottles.

Kids cooking club coming soon

Too Many Cooks in the Kitchen? Coming Soon! Kids Cooking Club!

Would you like to go beyond the four kitchens of the FCS room? Do you want to learn more applicable cooking knowledge?

Students will soon be able to participate in an after school program that involves more than just cooking.

They will learn elements of making and planning a nutritious meal,

running a business, and all the fun that comes with fellow students who share the same passion in the kitchen.

Students will meet approximately two days after school a week. The first day will be spent planning and preparing take-and-bake meals for home and the second day they will prepare food.

Keep watching for more information. If you have questions or are interested, please see Mrs. Tinker.



Remember to collect box tops to support the school. Take labels to Mrs. Tinker.

Holiday Books
FOOD HISTORY

Did You Know?

Fudge is an American made candy that dates back to the 1800's. Fudge is known to be a "botched" batch of caramels since they both contain essentially the same ingredients. Fudge was sold for the first time in Baltimore for 40 cents a pound.

The History of Fudge

FUDGE FACTS

Chocolate Fudge

- 2 c. granulated sugar
- 1 c. cream
- 2 ounces unsweetened chocolate
- 1 tablespoon butter

Combine sugar and cream and cook over moderate heat. When mixture begins to boil, stir constantly. Cook until mixture reaches soft-ball stage (234-238 degrees F). Remove from heat and add butter. Cool slightly, then mix until fudge starts to thicken. Transfer to a buttered 8x8 pan. Cut

into square pieces before fudge hardens completely.



Meet the Staff Member

by Brooke Darnell

Mrs. Kilby teaches 7th grade science. She has been teaching for 34 years and has taught in Herber, Templeton, Denison, Carrol, and Pella.



She has taught grades 1, 3, 5, 7, and 8.

Jack is her husband and a truck driver. She has three sons: John, Jason, and Matt. John is a salesman; Jason is a social worker, and Matt is training to be in the army.

When Mrs. Kilby isn't teaching, she is running, kayaking, and hiking. She also likes to slow down and be with her grandkids.

When she was in middle school, she didn't play sports. They didn't have sports for girls.

Kiley Elder said, "She made science more understandable."

Jeannie Etnyre said, "I never had her as a teacher, but she always has a smile on her face which made my day."

Samantha Hendrick said, "She is a great teacher who makes me love science."

Meet the Musician

by Sarah Van Hulzen

Klaire De Vos is an eighth grader who is also a very talented musician. She sings and plays the flute. She has been playing the flute and singing since 4th grade and hopes to continue on throughout high school.

Klaire is involved in many musical activities including: choir, band, show choir, honor band, OPUS, and she sings in the praise band at her church. Klaire likes to use her flute to help with her singing.

Klaire said, "Sometimes when I get a new song, I play it on my flute before singing it. It helps me with finding the rhythm and the pitches of my new song."

Klaire picked the flute because she couldn't buzz like a mouth piece would require, so that meant that she would have to play a woodwind instrument. She found that she could play the flute well so she went with that. If she could play any other instrument, she would either play the saxophone or the piano.

Klaire said, "Whenever I see someone playing the piano, I always wish I could be the one playing."



MEET THE ATHLETE

by Marissa Borgerding



In the summer of 2010 Laurel Stelter completed RAGBRAI, which is a week long bike ride from the Missouri River to the Mississippi River. This was her first year finishing the ride, but in 2009 she rode the first two days before she her mom made her quit.

Laurel liked biking before she joined the race. She trained about every three days by riding out to Red Rock Lake and back. She never wanted to quit, even though she was very tired on the second day. She stopped at nearly every town to rest and get snacks.

She recommends RAGBRAI to other people, and it's open to anyone with no age limits.

"It was very fun and there are so many things to see. That is one reason I love biking. The scenery is beautiful, and when we were riding, we saw a person dressed as a banana and another as some type of electrical shark costume."

Laurel is a very active person; she plays soccer, tennis, volleyball, and she rides her bike everywhere.

Meet the Student

by Ashley Kirkland

"On average, I can read up to 5 books, 300-400 pages per book, per week," Matthew Sutija said.

Matthew is involved in many activities like cross country, gifted and talented, Lego League, OM, Mock Trial, and Knowledge Bowl. Matthew's hobby is collecting pigs.

Matthew's advice for anyone who wants to thrive in school is to study, set small goals, and get interested in a topic and stay with it.

Matthew's goals in life are to invent something and build a computer. When he grows up, he hopes to be a software engineer. Matthew's favorite school subject is Technical Literacy.



Cell phones in school ring with controversy

by Katie Canfield

Cell phones, what many kid talk about. Many kids want one. People are on them much of the time.

According to journalstar.com, 71% of kids ages 12-17 own a cell phone. 40% of students in middle school and high school admit to texting during class.

The PMS rule for cell phones is that students may have a cell phone in class, but it must be turned off. Some schools use the out-of-sight, out-of-trouble approach.

8th grader Colton Bradley said, “I think we should be able to have our phones on in class in case of an emergency.”

These are some pros and cons to having cell phones in school.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Text students that are absent the missed assignment*Take pictures of projects, because parents don't know about group projects*Many phones have calculators, so they can be used for math*If a student is slow at copying notes, another student can take picture of the missed notes for the student to have*Some have music and a headphone so students can listen to music during independent study*Emergency contact to call parents or 911	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Texting friends the answers to a test*Recording teachers*Distraction*Hostility or jealousy*Theft issues



by Ashley Kirland

This edition's newspaper staff



This edition of *The Middle Ground* has been created through the efforts of the staff pictured from left to right Sarah DeWolf, Cheyanne Van Donselaar, Brooke Darnell, Cathryn Yoder, Katie Canfield, Brian Rundle, Alicia Munoz, Sarah Van Hulzen, Ashley Kirland, Kiley Elder, Jeannie Etnyre, and Marissa Borgerding.

Teachers gobble up big win in Turkey Bowl

commentated by Nathan Henry

This past Thanksgiving Eve was Pella Middle School's Tenth Annual Turkey Bowl. For those who don't know what the Turkey Bowl is, it's basically bowling with a big frozen turkey. Yes folks, a big frozen turkey.

This year's Turkey Bowl was between the middle school staff and the fearsome seventh grade students.

Here was the starting line up for the staff:

1. Mr. Anderson
2. Mrs. Kilby
3. Mr. Tangen
4. Mrs. Vander Wal
5. Mrs. VanHaaften/Mr. DeGeest
6. Mrs. Nikkel
7. Mrs. Belding
8. Mrs. Gleason
9. Mr. Knight
10. Mrs. Knight

This was a pretty stacked team.

And now for the starting line up for those brave seventh graders:

1. Levi Vos
2. Mallory Wheeler
3. Nathan Henry
4. Macy Nossaman
5. Rachel Scheepers
6. Colton Williams
7. Tiffany Olson
8. Albert Hershey
9. Kayla Langstraat
10. Paige Anderson

Even though these kids are only kids, they have hearts as big jungle cats.

Now, without further ado, let's talk about what went down that brisk Thanksgiving Eve. The whole seventh grade student body was in the bleachers, cheering on their fellow classmates. Mr. Dole announced the line up for the seventh grade team, and then off they were!

Starting off for the teachers was Mr. Anderson who had a very nice nine-pin throw. The teachers were off to a very powerful start.

Next for the students, Levi Vos was up. He had two pretty good throws for six total pins.

Now back to the teachers, Mrs. Kilby had an amazing throw down the lane and..... BOOM GOES THE DYNAMITE! Ten pins folks! That's a strike! Unfortunately for the students, it was the first strike of many for the teachers.

The students were neck and neck with the teachers until the fifth frame. The teachers gradually pulled ahead. (Before I keep going I just want to warn you that this game had no story book ending for the students.) Now, back to the action. The teachers had an amazing lead following a five strike streak by Mrs. Nikkel, Mrs. Belding, Mrs. Gleason, Mr. Knight, and Mrs. Knight.

Finally in the tenth frame Paige Anderson a.k.a. "The Come Back Kid", had the first and only strike for the students. The crowd went wild! It would've been even better if

the students hadn't needed four more strikes to win.

At the end of this bowling frenzy, the teachers completely "schooled" their students 88 to 52. It was a sad day for the seventh grade... but they put their loss behind them and focused on how much they were going to eat the next day at Thanksgiving.

Another thing I want to speculate... I question if the teachers shouldn't have won. I've watched the tapes over and over and close to half of the teachers stepped over the line when taking their turns. We are not sure yet, but further investigations are being made. Thank you for your time.



Mrs. VanHaaften throws a turkey during the 10th Annual Turkey Bowl.

Girls in spandex dig their way out of winter

by Cathryn Yoder

"Don't pass this up... Set yourself up, and hit Work Systems on December 27-30, 2010." This is directly from the flyer in the middle school office describing the volleyball clinic coached by Cindy Nikkel. This is open to 3rd through 8th graders. Thursday is only for high school girls.

The hours for the clinic for 3rd to 6th graders are 2:30-4:00 P.M. Monday through Wednesday. 7th

through 8th graders after 4:00-5:45PM. On Thursday, high school students come in at 9:00A.M and do a bunch of games until it ends at 11:00A.M.

It costs \$39.00 for a three day clinic, and \$20.00 for only one day (t-shirt included.)

Parents can get a workout too for an additional \$10.00. There is a discount for more than one family member.

This is an opportunity for all

girls to go out and learn more about the game and how to improve their skills. They will learn about the basic formations and footwork. The athletes will learn how to float serve and do lots of fun little drills to help the girls along the process of being an outstanding player.

This is for all players on the court from the low libero to the stellar spiker, so go serve it up at the youth volleyball clinic, "Crush This."

Rollerbladers roll through P.E. class

by Alicia Munoz

Throughout the weeks of December 3, and 11, the students of Pella Middle School will be rollerblading in their P.E. classes. Wearing helmets, elbow pads, knee pads, and wrist guards, these students are ready to roll, well, almost. First they have to stand up.

The week before students actually got to use the wheels, they had to learn how to stand and how to fall. Yes, they were taught how to fall. For some, roller-blading comes as easily as walking, but for others, it is all new.

The beginners take it slow and fall repeatedly. That is why learning how to fall is important.

Mrs. Belding tells her students, "Stay round when you fall."

That means don't stay too stiff when falling.

In Peer P.E, students are just learning and are quite unstable. That makes it a learning experience for many. The helpers are important.

Pella Middle School is on wheels, and not all know how to stop.



Chase Van Vliet skates during P.E. class.

OPUS contestants sing their way through new songs

by Travis Baker

"I'm Sancho, yes I'm Sancho, I'll follow my master until the end," sang out one of the tenor one soloists at the Twenty-fifth Annual OPUS Honor Choir. OPUS is an honor choir for students from grades five through nine.

Out of the 180 students that made it, ten were from Pella Middle School. Those who made it were Travis Baker, Travis Dingeman, Joel Williams, Colton Bradley, Davis VandeSteeg, Joel Yeager, Mason VanGorp, Eleanor Witt,

Klaire DeVos, and Devin McCain.

Devin McCain said, "I loved it! It's a really big honor, and it shows just how good of a singer you really are."

The students of OPUS practiced all day to sound better and work together for the first time. "Practice was scary at first, but by the end, it was fun!" said Joel Williams.

They had two breaks and a lunch break. The lunch break was a buffet provided by Iowa State University.

Students ended the day with a

big concert which was a huge success. "I thought they did great, and they sang well!" said one of the moms, one of the thousands of people there.

"I thought the OPUS choir did better than any other middle school choir in the state," said Mason VanGorp.

After the concert students got their picture taken, changed, and hung out until their parents came to take them home from the amazing day.

8th grade mock trial competes at state

by Emily Dux

"Mock trial takes a lot of concentration and hard work, which is sometimes hard for our group to do, but we managed and had tons of fun," Mandy Nossaman said.

The State competition was held at the Iowa Events Center on November 18 and 19. There were 32 teams consisting of 8-10 members.

Pella Middle School's team consisted of Nathan Chaplin, Emily Dux, Jennifer Adams, Travis Dingeman, Leah Wilborn, Aaron DeJoode, Mandy Nossaman, Colin



The eighth grade mock trial relaxes before the big court case. (photo submitted by Emily Dux)

Jones, Tom Pettit, and Matthew Sutija.

Pella Middle School didn't place but two students were selected

for special awards. Only 10 people were selected for the Outstanding Attorney award, and Matthew Sutija was one of them. There were also 15 people who were selected for Outstanding Witness, and Emily Dux was one of those.

Travis Dingeman said, "The stories we make are definitely the best part."

"I loved Matthew's 'showdown' with the opposing team!" Leah Wilborn said. "I just wish

Mock Trial lasted longer because it's a bunch of fun, and I had a blast."

Letters to editor

Dear Editor,

Teenagers should go on field trips. Students need to get out of the classrooms and into the real world. Why read it in textbooks when students can physically experience it? No one is ever too old for field trips.

It was John Dewey who once said, "Education is life itself."

Textbooks aren't the only way to learn. According to eHow.com, field trips can inspire students to be excited more about the learning process. Visiting a new place, meeting new people and experiencing the things students learn about in the classrooms provide ways that students can be stimulated by their environment.

Livestrong.com says children learn about different professions, ideas and opportunities when they travel outside their own neighborhoods. There are a lot of strategies to teach students, such as being read to, field trips, games, etc. Going on field trips is one students enjoy.

Signed,
Megan Atkins

Dear Editor,

Block scheduling in schools is a good idea. Students get stressed out because they have ten periods a day, and math and English give homework almost everyday. Having a block schedule would be easier for students by giving them more time to take in information and understand things better.

In a block schedule, a student would have fewer but longer classes. A teacher would see fewer students every day. This would be an advantage because if a student needed help, the teacher could work one-on-one with them. If there are students with special needs in a class, it would also give teachers more time to explain a lesson or assignment in class, rather than having the student be late to their next class or take time out of their study halls.

If periods were longer, and a student had a study hall, it would allow

him/her to get his /her homework done and maybe even work ahead.

This is also a good thing for teachers because if they had a planning period, it would let them get their plans made, and because they have a longer time to do it, they could also get in more detail and add more to it. Also, if a student has a question on an assignment, he/she could ask it during that time, too.

In science class the students do labs, but with periods only being 41 minutes, students don't have enough time to do it so they're rushed at the end of the period. If schools had a block schedule, and periods were longer, it would give students more time to do more experiments and get more into detail with things without feeling rushed before having to stop and pick it up the next day.

Signed,
Lori VanHeukelom

Movie Review: *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hollows: Part 1*

by Colin Jones

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hollows is the first of a two part movie. This is a story based on the best-selling *Harry Potter* series written by J.K. Rowling.

The movie did a very good job at showing the companionship between Harry Potter (Daniel Radcliffe), Hermione Granger (Emma Watson), and Ron Weasley (Rupert Grint).

The story takes place during the uprising of Lord Voldemort (Ralph Fines) and follows Harry, Ron, and Hermione as they hunt down the six horcruxes pieces of Voldemort's soul.

The cast was very talented. It included Alan Rickman (Severus Snape), Michael Gambon (Albus

Dumbledore), and Tom Felton (Draco Malfoy). The actors all came together to make a very convincing wizarding world.

The movie did a surprisingly good job at following the story line of the book and the how and when main events happen, something that the other movies in the series haven't done as well.

The movie also did a good job at enticing the audience back to the movie again and again. I personally have gone three times. It is a movie for all ages as long as you have seen the previous movies.

A possible weakness of the movie would be that the producers

didn't pay as much attention to the small details. They also added a few scenes that were not exactly necessary, such as the part when Harry and Hermione dance, which was supposed to show the "companionship" between the two characters.

Overall it was a very good "beginning of the end" that left audiences wanting Part 2 to come much sooner than July 2011.



Staff review of *The Wizard of Oz*

by the editors of the fall edition of "The Middle Ground"

The 7th and 8th graders went see the high school production *The Wizard of Oz* on November 4th. The play was entertaining, and it was obvious that the cast had spent weeks of preparation.

Dorothy, played by Hanna Martin, did a phenomenal job singing and projecting. Hannah has an amazing singing voice. We enjoyed watching her sing and dance. It's as if she was born to play Dorothy. She led Toto around really well, too.

Toto had a very important part to be with Dorothy most of the time. The well-trained pooch always knew where to be and when to act scared or excited. He never got too distracted or barked or went to the bathroom on the stage.

Another main character, the scarecrow, was played by Jake Anderson. Jake did a very good job with his emotions; he was sobbing when he was sad. Jake did a very good job of staying in character and bringing that character to life.

Jacob Martin did a great job playing the part of Hickory, a worker on Aunt Em's and Uncle Henry's farm, and the heartless Tinman. He was very good at singing and being emotional. We loved how he always acted right after being squirted by oil.

The lion was played by Luke VanderHaar. During the performance he did a great job personifying a lion. He knew his lines and his part very well. Also, Luke is a great singer and had a great, well put together costume.

The wicked witch, played by Sydney Swanson, did a great job. She projected her voice to be scary like a witch. She had a great costume and knew her lines very well.

Ben Palmer did a good job playing the part of the Wizard and Professor Marvel. He made sure the audience could see him. It was cool

how his edited face was on the projector screen.

Glenda, played by Kelly Anderson, did a good job enunciating. She has an amazing singing voice. We loved the part where she appeared out of the pink bubble.

The Citizens from the *Wizard of Oz* were very civilized in the play and were perfect in their performance. They were completely together while singing. One of our favorite parts was when Dorothy went down the Yellow Brick Road, and all the citizens circled. The performance was awesome as they all sang together. It was clear they spent many days practicing their parts.

The Winkies did a great job doing their parts. The Winkie army leader was played by Nathan Clayberg. The middle schoolers who were part of the Winkie army were Mason Van Gorp, Nathan Chaplin, Aaron De Joode, Travis Dingenman, Joel Yeager, Samuel Yeager, Mark Vos, and Davis VandeSteeg.

The Munchkins were a hit in *Oz*! With ages ranging from second grade all the way to high school, there was a good variety of sizes. The girls wore brightly colored dresses, and the boys wore brightly colored jackets and pants. All of them had hats, pointy shoes, elbow length colorful gloves, and bright make up.

The crows were really cool! There were three crows, Tristen Meidema, Tom Palmer, and, Jon Jaarsma.

The poppies really popped on stage. The poppies dressed in sparkling red dresses and flower hats. The younger poppies wore all black with red and white caps. They never missed a cue when to flip their caps. They dazzled on stage.

Talking trees are the kind of trees you'll find in *Oz*. The grumpy and mean trees were played by Faith Van

Wyngarden, Lynae Toom, and Joella Gerber. They spoke loud enough that the whole auditorium could hear. They all moved together really well. It was clear they were having fun, especially when they tossed their apples.

The setting and transitions between scenes were very remarkable. Mrs. Chaplin and the cast did a very nice job getting all of the settings and scenes together, and they were borderline perfect.

One remarkable thing about it was the projector, and that was played perfectly, so that you actually thought that was a wizard one was watching. One setting that stood out was the witch's castle. It was complete with bars. The height of the castle, the color, and the rocky base looked realistic.

The pit orchestra was amazing! They played very well. Seven instruments played in the orchestra. "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" is always a crowd pleaser.

The *Wizard of Oz* is a wonderful piece of literature whether in the form of novel, multimedia, folktale, and now drama as Pella High showed audience. It will certainly be a production remembered for a while.



Winkies guard the lion within the walls of the witch's castle.

16 Stomping Grounds

Ask Sarah- a student advice column

by Sarah DeWolf

Hi, people! This is the advice column where I answer some questions sent to me by the students here at Pella Middle School. So, I guess I'll just let you keep reading.

Dear Sarah,

Should I read *Harry Potter* because my friends do?

-Feeling Left Out

Dear Feeling Left Out,

First of all, you have a very weird, long name. Second of all, I can't exactly answer that question because I haven't read the *Harry Potter* books myself. In the immortal words of me: Don't follow the herd. Be yourself, and if you don't want to read *Harry Potter*, then don't.

- Sarah

P.S. Notice I have a normal name.

Dear Sarah,

What do you do when a guy you really don't like asks you out? I'm going to say no, but I don't want to be mean!!

-Gently No

Dear Gently No,

Saying no doesn't have to be mean. It all has to do with how you say it. If you say to him, "NO, I'M NOT GOING TO GO OUT WITH YOU, CREEPER!!!!" and then you punch him in the face, then he will probably hate you forever.

However, if you say something like, "Sorry, but I'm just not interested in dating right now," then he shouldn't be mad, just a little disappointed.

Of course, the second option is pretty boring. If you feel like seeing the guy cry, then you should go with the first.

-Sarah

Dear Sarah,

I have a friend who likes the same boy as me, but he likes me. What should I do?

-Popzilla901

Dear Popzilla901,

You just have to decide which is more important: the friend or the boy. If you pick the boy, then you're probably the worst friend on the planet. If you pick the friend, then you get to

keep a friend and lose a boyfriend that you never even had in the first place.

I hope I've made your choice obvious because if I haven't, PICK THE FRIEND!

-Sarah

Dear Sarah,

Why do giraffes have blue tongues?

-Confuzzled

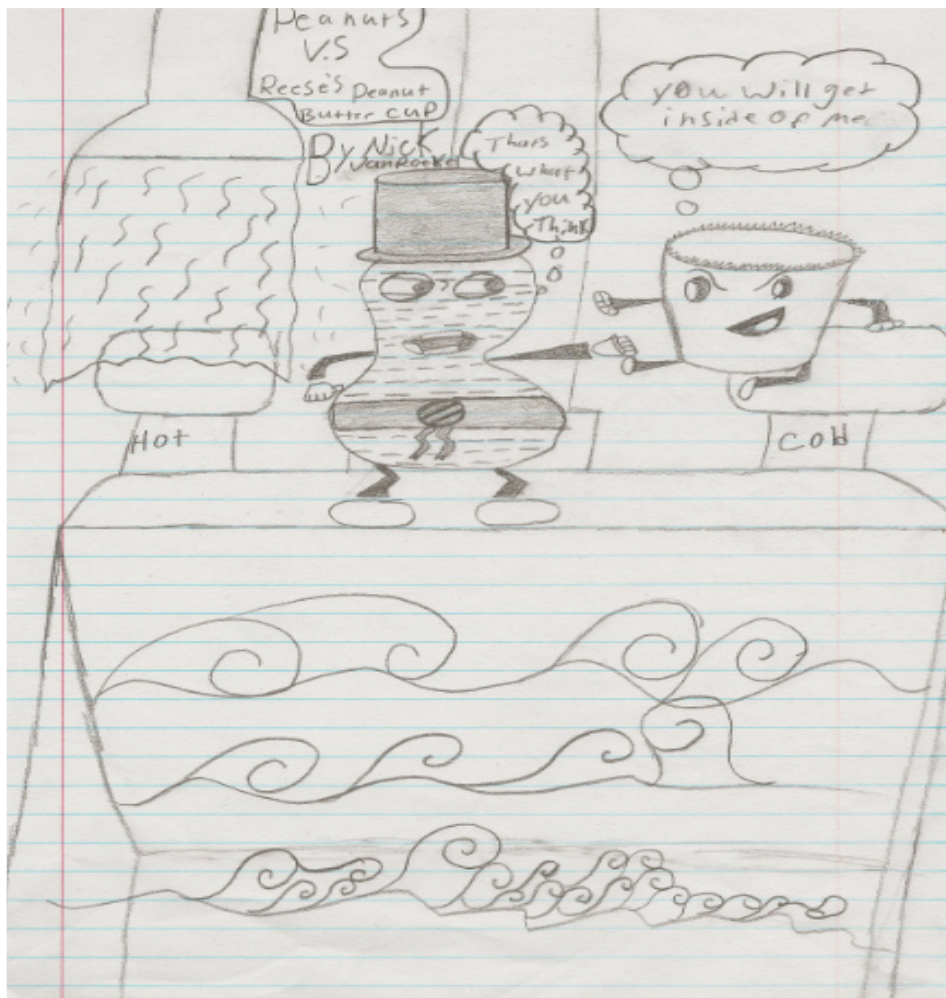
Dear Confuzzled,

Do giraffes really have blue tongues? I know they have very long tongues, but I didn't think they were blue. I guess you learn something new every day.

Of course, I can't answer your question because I didn't even know about their tongues until about thirty seconds ago. So, I'm sorry, but I guess you'll just have to consult an encyclopedia for that one. Or if you don't like books there's always the saving power of Google.

-Sarah

comic by Nick Van Roekel



Spencer Schroder, eighth grader, looks out a middle school window.
(picture by Brian Rundle)



Students work in study hall.