



Page editor Jake Grundey

Sports Complex breaks ground

by Elizabeth Lovell

On September 13, 2013, the ground breaking for the new Pella Sports Park was held. At the ceremony were members of the Field for Our Future committee, including Rob Bradley, Tim Brackin, Tony Briggs, Jerry Brummel, Ryan Davis, Bill DeMeulenaere, Joel Dorman, Verlan Nikkel, Wendy Sims, Dan Tauke, Sam Van Maanen, and Craig Wassenaar.

Refreshments were served, and miniature bats with the Pella Sports Park logo on them were given away. Before the ground was broken, speeches were made by Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds, Mayor Jim Mueller, Fields For Our Future Board-member Bill DeMeulenaere, Mary Andringa from Vermeer Corp., and Pat Meyer from Pella Corp.

Jerry Brummel, one of the representatives from Fields For Our Future, said "It's good to see ground moving. It's been a long time, and it's good to see it finally happening."

The Vision Iowa awarded the project a \$1 million dollar grant, and in memory of Blake Van Vark, the Kyle Korver Foundation donated over \$80,000 from selling their SEER themed shirts during Tulip Time. Along with many other commitments, over \$6.3 million has been raised. The project is estimated to cost around \$8 million.

The Pella Sports Park's mission is to "create a recreational complex that strengthens and unites our youth, family, and community by

providing an entertaining, safe, and high quality Sports Park." The park has focused on four "Pillars of Progress".

The pillars include: places for youth to play, community involvement, safety and accessibility, and economic vitality.

Pella Sports Park will include baseball, softball, soccer, football, and even cricket fields, along with a playground and concessions. Craig Wassenaar, Fields for Our Future committee member, said, "We wanted to get a situation where we could get families together, have them all playing on the same facility so that we could have a community with our families and also other families." The park is set to be done sometime in 2014.



Bill DeMeulenaere and Tate VanVark break ground on the new complex planned to open in 2014.

(photo by Jake Grundey)

Also in attendance to the ceremony were representatives from the class of 2018. As seventh grade students, they held concession stands and earned money, of which they donated \$200 for this project.

In addition to the excitement of important guests and the speeches, the student reported greatly enjoying the breakfast provided.

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.

School district receives lap tops

by Andrew Roozeboom

After a two year wait they have finally arrived! Students of the Pella School District have received brand new lap tops. They received these lap tops at the Pella High School on August 26 and 27. During that time each student had to go through an orientation on how to use the lap tops and care for them properly.

The total cost for this project was approximately 1.3 million dollars which included the lap tops, software, bags, and infrastructure. Each lap top with the bag and the charger costs \$1000.

Students will now be able to search the web for information, send e-mails to teachers and take AR tests without using bulky library computers or textbooks. With lap tops, students have them all of the time. Although these lap tops can be used for information searching, textbooks are not out of the picture. Students are still required to have their own textbooks for each and every subject.

"It was exciting when the final

decision came from the superintendent and school board that we were going to purchase the laptops," said Jay Murphy, computer technician.

There are some downsides to having these devices as well. Librarian Jill Roberts said, "Many students may have troubles downloading the software that they need."

As well as downloads the laptops can be easily broken if stepped on or dropped. The first time you break it it costs \$100 for repairs. Then the cost can reach upwards of \$1000 for a brand new laptop. Also if a student loses a lap top, he/she may lose lap top privileges.

These lap tops can help kids in the long run by helping them in the future workplace. The lap tops can teach kids how to organize their assignments, as well as important dates and emails. Overall students here at Pella Middle School seem to be enjoying the new addition to the district.



Students enjoy their new lap tops.



Very few desktop computers remain in the school. These computers sit in the media center.

(photos by Andrew Roozeboom)

New faces greet students



The school received a new face with gold paint and black trash containers with the Pella Dutch logo.

(photo by Jonothan Gualtieri)



Helpful new faces have joined the teaching staff . Pictured (l-r) are Josh McCollam, Kellie Dykema, and Kelsie Sheets.

(photo by Lauren Miller)

Students like new lockers

by Suzy Brackin

“Most students are trustworthy so the locks haven’t been used for a while” - Mrs. Pentico, Middle School Guidance counselor.

The school’s new lockers and locks have been placed throughout the school to replace/update the old lockers. Lockers are important in schools, without them, things couldn’t be as well protected. In the school some of the lockers are old ones, some are from the high school, and some were newly ordered.

Mr. Manning and the janitors chose which ones needed to be replaced and updated. Most students have been trustworthy. The locks on the lockers weren’t always used in the past. This year all locks are used because lap tops have been given to the students, and students need a safe place for their lap tops. Most years it has been easier to not have the locks on the lockers.

“One struggle with the new lockers for the students is that some kids aren’t use to padlocks,” Pentico said.

It makes it harder for students

to get to class within the three minutes. Also, some students feel like they have to hurry to get to class. “Otherwise the lockers have gone pretty well,” Pentico said.

A positive thing about having the locks on the lockers is that things are more secure. Also, people have their own lockers so there is no worrying about if the locker partner shut the locker, there’s more space, and things aren’t falling out like last year, so, the appearance is better.

There have been some negatives about the new lockers. Some examples are that the janitors and Mr. Manning had to decide which one did and didn’t work. There is some nervousness about the time in between each class and trying to get the lockers open which can cause anxiety.

Overall the new lockers work well for most people. The new lockers were well needed throughout the school. They also give the school a newer look and help students keep their things safer.



(photo by Suzy Brackin)

New bleachers installed

by Jon Gualtieri

New bleachers were installed in the gym Sept. 2-6. These new bleachers were originally going to be installed the first week of August this year, however the installation crew was delayed with various projects.

However, they made sure to get the bleachers installed before the first home volleyball game. The staff knew that it was time for new bleachers, as the last bleachers were installed when

the school was built in 1978. “I noticed the bleachers were old and worn out my first year of working at the middle school. We had electrical issues and physical structure issues that needed addressed, but due to the bleachers being so old, we were unable to get parts for them,” said Principal Josh Manning.

There are many reasons why the school chose these bleachers, such as the reliability and durability.

“These are very similar to

the current East High School gym bleachers, and we have had a lot of success with them in regard to wear and tear, reliability, electrical durability, and the colors were a color that we felt would be easiest to keep clean and accent our current color scheme in the gym,” said Manning.

Bleachers were installed on both the east and west side of the gym. However, the bleachers on the west side are smaller.



Students enjoy the new bleachers at a school assembly. The new seats accommodate wheelchairs, or chairs on the floor, so everyone can sit together and enjoy the events.

4 Home Ground

Cross country runs smoothly

by Noah Chaplin

The 2013 cross country season is in full swing. Although on September 10th, the meet was cancelled for both middle school and high school,. It was later made up on September 12th. Despite the hot weather, the middle school boys and girls represented Pella well and both teams placed second. The reason for the success in meets is clearly from the practices that they have daily.

Coach Tangen said, "I believe that running workouts should be a combination of fun, yet intense. You can't go your fastest all of the time, or you will get injured. You have to make your running fun to continue to progress. There are also

cross training activities to enhance performance without simply running." The team has two morning practices a week which usually begin at 6:30 A.M. The rest of the week they have practice from 3:30-5:00 P.M. Seventh grade runner Nathan Leathers said, "I actually like the morning practices better than after school, even though you have to wake up early, because it's not as hot and you don't sweat as much."

Many other students also agree with Leathers on how morning practices are better than afternoon practices. Many of the students consider cross country as one of their favorite sports, such as Newton Yee,

Nathan Leathers, and Keaton Brenizer. "It includes running ,which I like, and it is less dangerous than other sports, like football even though I still like it. Plus, many of my friends are in it which makes cross country more fun," said Yee.

The coaches are always working to make cross country more fun for the kids. Coach Tangen said, "We try to spend time to get to know the students, run with them, and allow them to be social, play games, and be a kid for a little bit of the day in order for them to enjoy it more." To see the cross country team running hard and having fun, those interested can check out their meet schedule at www.pellacrosscountry.com.



Ethan Poulter strides to the finish line.
(photo by Noah Chaplin)



Lily Roozeboom finishes strong.
(photo by Noah Chaplin)



Cross country runners ready for the race. (photo by Noah Chaplin)



Caroline Bradley runs hard.
(photo by Noah Chaplin)

7th football
performs well
against
Knoxville



Pella Dutch football
tested in Carlisle

by Landon VanderLeest



Players line up on the line waiting for the play to start.
(photo by Lexi Van Haaften)

The Pella Dutch 8th grade football team started off the season strong on Tuesday, September 17. The Carlisle Wildcats scored a touchdown on their opening drive of the game. They did not complete the two-point conversion, however, which brought the score to 6-0. The opening drive for the Dutch was looking good as Avery Van Zee ran for a 50 yard touchdown run but was unfortunately called back for offsides.

The next drive turned out much the same way for the Dutch as Van Zee scored on a 10 yard touchdown run that tied the game at 6-6. The next touchdown wasn't scored until the end of the half when Pella linebacker Lucas Warner scored on a 77 yard interception for a touchdown. Then Warner ran in the two-point conversion to put the Dutch up 14-6.

On the opening drive of the second half the Dutch increased their momentum as nose guard Jake Heerema recovered a fumble from the Carlisle quarterback. Although, the Dutch were not able to score on the drive. A few drives later, Dalton Chapman recovered a fumble from the kickoff. The Dutch capitalized on that opportunity when

running back Grant DeMeulenaere scored on a touchdown run that put the Dutch ahead 20-6.

The game wasn't over as the Carlisle Wildcats scored on their next drive and completed the two-point conversion to put themselves back in the game 20-14. The Pella Dutch held them after that and went on to win by the score of 20-14. "I feel that we are growing stronger as people, and as a team this year," said Pella quarterback Van Zee. "We have more teamwork and have more respect and trust in each other this year."

The B game was back and forth the whole game with no score until, in the last minute of the game, Carlisle scored on a touchdown run and two-point conversion that put them ahead 8-0 which would stand for the final seconds and give Pella its first loss of the season. "We seem to have better commitment and athleticism this year on the team and hopefully we can keep the image of Pella Football high," says wide receiver Brayton Douma. "Pella has a strong football past, and we want to keep it going in the future; we just need to work hard."

On October 8, 7th grade boys football performed well against Knoxville.



7th girls volleyball benefit from practice

by Brenna Hildebrand

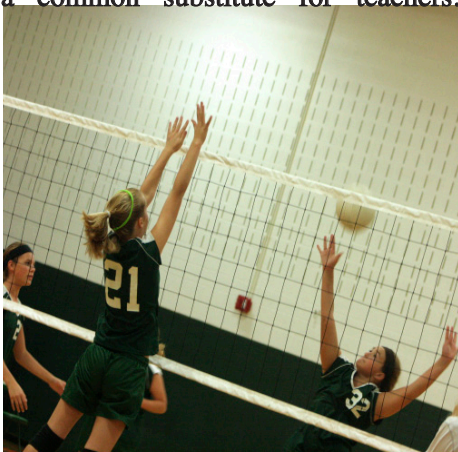
This year there are 42 members on the seventh grade volleyball team, one being Molly Wheeler.

When asked on how she likes volleyball so far, she replied, "I think it is fun. I've learned a lot and we play well as a team."

Another member is Shelby Hancock. When asked if she was going to continue playing volleyball next year, she said yes.

The girls usually practice in the afternoon from 3:30 to 5:00. Sometimes though, they practice in the morning from 6:30 to 7:30.

They have missed some practices, which caused the coaches to have to change up some times. The coaches are Mrs. Belding, the physical education teacher, and Mrs. DeHaan, a common substitute for teachers.



7th grade volleyball girls warm up. (photo by Chelsea Roose)



8th grade volleyball gathers to celebrate a point. (photo by Ava Rowe)

Troubles occur during volleyball season

by Chelsea Roose

There has been a lot of craziness going on with volleyball this year. Such as the fire alarm went off and the lights went out in the gym. Some of the practices have been canceled due to heat.

Coach Brenda Ver Steeg said, "The heat has given us some challenges, but we have persevered through them."

There has been some other craziness that has been happening. The girls had their first game at Knoxville where Pella won 13 out of 20 matches. Apparently somebody had either pulled the fire alarm or the concession stand workers burnt the popcorn. Everyone in the gym had to go outside, but only for about one minute because they knew there was no fire. After about three minutes, the concession stand workers got the fire alarm turned off, and everybody continued playing.

The next game the girls had was in Oskaloosa where the teams won 8 out of 9 games. That Thursday night, when the girls were playing,

there was a big storm. The lights went out in both of the gyms, and the lights took 15 minutes to turn back on. While the A team was playing, the ball hit the fan on the ceiling. The fan had a metal cover around it, and a metal bar from the fan cover came down flying and almost hit Coach Ver Steeg.

After the A team got done playing, there were several leaks in the ceiling, and one leak was on the court which left the court wet so the B team, never got to play. The C team and the D team got to play all of their games. Piper Klyn, a teammate on the B team said, "I was frustrated and thought it was a little unfair for the B team but it was fun watching all of the other teams."

The girls finally had their first game at home. There was no craziness that night. But, the girls lost all their games. Brooke DeNooy said, "That was a bummer but still fun to get some playing time."



7th grade volleyball prepares for games to begin.

(photo by Chelsea Roose)

Sports injuries affect students

by Ava Rowe

Sports related injuries are one of the most common type of injuries for middle school and high school students. So far this 2013 school year, the Pella Middle School has had over ten injuries of which five of those have been sports related.

Over 3.5 million students in middle schools around the U.S; ages 13-14 have sports related injuries. Almost half of those injuries may be career ending. According to stopsportsinjuries.org, of those people injured, about 40% play again.

When athletes are injured, they are often out of that sport from an

average of 1-5 months, depending on the severity of the injury.

Eighth grader Joseph Bacon, member of the football team said, “I injured my hand playing football, and I am out of that sport for two and a half weeks.”

Football has caused the largest number of injuries. Over 600,000 cases of injuries reported in the U.S. come from football. 60-70% of those students will not play that sport again competitively.

It has been shown that players might never play again because they think they will injure themselves again.

“I can play football again. I just have to make sure my finger doesn’t hurt,” said Bacon.

Volleyball is the organized sport with the least amount of injuries with just over 400,000 injuries per year. Most volleyball related injuries are in the hand and ankle areas.

Nurse and 8th grade volleyball coach, Mrs. Brenda Versteeg said, “To prevent injury you need to warm up and make sure your area is safe and clear.” As you can see sport related injuries are very common. Players are willing to take the risk to play the sport.



These students have sports related injuries: Rebecca Piersma with a foot injury, Grace Held with a wrist injury, and Kaden Miedema with a knee injury.
(photo by Bailee Meyer)

Upcoming Events:

October 15
7th Grade Football @Newton
4:15
8th Football vs Newton 4:15

October 17
7th Volleyball vs Newton
4:30
8th Volleyball @ Newton
4:30

October 21
7th Volleyball @Oskaloosa

4:30
8th Volleyball vs Oskaloosa
4:30

October 22
7th Football vs Grinnell 4:15
8th Football @ Grinnell 4:15

November 8
NO School

November 12 Band Concert @High School 7:30

Minute-to-Win-It challenges staff and students

by Heather Parr

Homecoming is officially over. The very first event for that exciting week was *Minute-to-Win-It*. There were five different challenges, and twenty-seven randomly selected people participated in this event.

The first challenge was the Oreo challenge. The participants had to get the Oreo from their forehead to their mouth without using their hands. The teachers who participated in this event were Mr. Scott Tjeerdsma and Ms. Chelsea Noble. The 8th graders who participated were Kaleb Lyons and Ben Anschutz. For 7th grade it was Olivia VanderLeest and Bobby Sheil. Almost right away, Mr. Tjeerdsma completed this challenge first.

Tjeerdsma, the winner of the Oreo Challenge, said, "It wasn't terribly difficult because I had done this challenge before at a Christmas party. I had also seen someone do it on the actual game show. For this challenge, you really have to tilt your head back and use the muscles of your face to move the cookie. If you try and tilt your head forward, it will typically just fall off. The energy from the students in the crowd made this challenge even more fun. I would definitely do this challenge again as long as there are Oreos involved."

The next challenge was the Block Balance. In order to complete this challenge, participants had to put a paper plate on their heads and stack five building blocks on top. The participants were Sabrina Tallman and Jake Heerema for 8th grade, Carter Briggs and Luke Diers for 7th grade, and the teachers, Mrs. Catie Brand. After a couple tries, the first person to complete this challenge was Carter Briggs.

Briggs said, "It was hard and confusing, so I tried stacking the blocks on the plate before I put it on my head

and it didn't work. But in the end, I had a lot of fun and I would do this again."

After that was the Puzzle Challenge. Participants had to put the pieces together to make a picture of a cereal box. The participants were Hanna Blom and Alex Hackett for 7th graders, Jaden Ruth and Colton Edwards for 8th graders, and Mrs. Lindsay Brandt for the teacher. Right away, Mrs. Brandt had a good strategy, and she won the challenge.

Brandt, winner of the Puzzle Challenge, said, "The challenge was definitely not as hard as some of the other challenges. My strategy was to turn over the pieces as quickly as possible and look to match up letters first. I would do this again because I love puzzles, and I love competitions. I definitely had fun because it was fun to watch students and teachers both complete little challenges."

If somebody loves M&M's, then this is the right challenge for them to be in. It was the M&M Challenge. Each participant had two cups, one was filled with M&M's, and the other was empty. They had to use a straw and try and get the M&M's to the other cup by using only their breath. The thing was, they had to fill the cup to a certain mark to win this challenge. The participants were Ross Karnowski and Mark DeBruin for 7th grade, Maddie Canfield and Heather Parr for 8th graders, and Mr. Joseph Atwell for the teachers.

Atwell, winner of the M&M challenge, said, "The challenge was tricky at first, but later I got a hold of it. I spaced my breath out and had an order on how I took my breaths. I would definitely do this again and hold my title, but I am open to let others do it. I had a blast out there and the energy from the crowd also helped me."

To end the first day of

homecoming events was the Balloon Pass. Participants had to use a paper plate and pass a balloon back and forth to their partner. They could not let the balloon drop or they had to go to back to a marking.

The participants for the final challenge were Kaeleigh Dewaard and Alexis DeJong for the 8th graders, Kaylin Vos and Nate Kleven for the 7th graders, and Mr. Jason Anderson and Mr. Ross Way for the teachers. Way and Anderson were the very first ones to complete this challenge, and they each said they had a very good strategy to get the balloon faster to each other.

Anderson, one of the winners in the Balloon Pass said, "It was difficult at times because Mr. Way and I aren't the best coordinated people. We tried using our strong hand to push the balloon and our off hand to guide it. I had a lot of fun, and I would definitely do this again. Anytime I can get out of my classroom and have fun with students, I am all for it. It shows everyone that we are people and not just robots that teach."

Way, Anderson's partner in the Balloon Pass said, "The challenge of the balloons was almost the hardest thing to compete in out there! Mr. Anderson and I have practiced this event for years. We practice daily to make sure we compete at the top level all the time! I would definitely do this again because I just love the challenge of passing balloons back and forth. It's a very intense activity, not for the weak of mind! I had a lot of fun and that's a huge understatement!"

In the end, it was a very exciting day and very full of excitement. Most people in the crowd and the participants looked like they were enjoying this event.



Mr. Tjeerdsma and Ms. Noble competing in the Oreo challenge.



Students cheer on the participants for *Minute-to-Win-it*.



Alex Hackett hurries to complete a puzzle.

Fun-filled homecoming week promotes school spirit

by JordanMarie DeArmond

With the energy filled week coming to an end, the best way to finish the day was with a pep assembly. Instead of having the high school students come to the middle school, something new was tried.

With a whole new plan and adjusting the schedule, there was one pep assembly for all students, grades 7-12. All students went to the football stadium for the pep rally.

Cheerleaders and Forte' preformed and sport captains spoke to encourage people to support their teams. Because time ran out, assembly was cut short. Queen Sami Wassenaar, King Aaron VanMaanen, and the homecoming court handled the adjustment perfectly and still got everybody to perform and get the audience on their feet.

The cheerleaders got the whole audience pumped up and ready for the football game.

The senior leaders of the football team, volleyball, and cross country teams all had time to give their speeches, but they also had to cut it short.

Despite struggles of the microphone not working, running out of time, and cutting the assembly short, the homecoming full of excitement.



Students join in a cheer competition between the grades at the high school pep assembly.

(photo by Lexi VahHaften)



Jackie Wieser dresses up for Pella Pride Day.

(photos by publication staff)



Eszzy Ramirez, Angelina McCoy, Kaeleigh DeWaard show off their school spirit.



Audrey Denekas Trystan VanStryland and dress for twin day.

10

Meet in the Middle

Meet the Singer

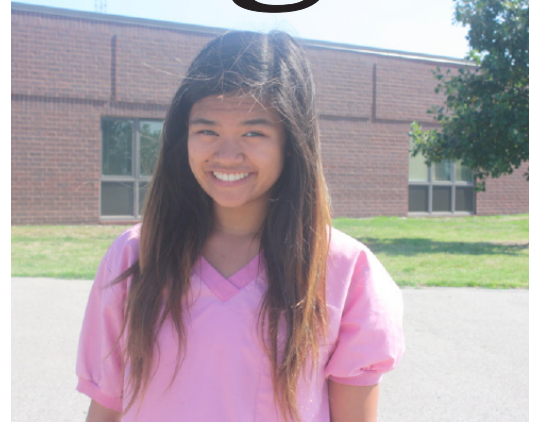
by Lexi VanHaaften

Pauline Lopez is involved in music and singing. Pauline goes to choir practice every Tuesday, Thursday and every other Wednesday.

Lopez said, "I like the singing part of choir, but sometimes we do the same thing over and over again, and that gets kind of boring."

Lopez has been in choir since the 6th. In choir they learn songs and, according to, Lopez some of it is boring some of it is fun.

When asked specifically what was fun about being in choir, Lopez said, "I like learning the new music and performing it at many different concerts."



Pauline Lopez (photo by Heather Parr)



Meet the Musician

by Lexi VanHaaften

Adam Davis is in band and plays percussion. He started band in the 5th grade.

Davis said, "I like band because it lets you express other talents than sport talents."

Davis says he started band because his brother was in band and it looked really fun. Davis attends three different band practices at school and a few times a week at home which is required.



Adam Davis (photo by Heather Parr)

Meet the Athlete

by Alexis Franzen

Aaron Hardine is a 13 year old soccer player who has been playing since he was four or five. He liked soccer from the start. He has had many helpful coaches over the years.

Hardine plays soccer everyday and practices with his team during seasons on Saturdays. His dad helps coach him. He has learned from watching Youtube how to do tricks. His best achievement in soccer is going to State for Knights of Columbus.



Aaron Hardine (photo by Alexis Franzen)

McCollam joins math staff

by Ava Rowe

"Math... I love it!" said Mr. Josh McCollam, new 7th and 8th grade math teacher at the Pella Middle School.

This is his first year teaching in the district, but sixth year teaching all together. Mr McCollam started his teaching career at Chariton High School in 2008 through 2012. He also taught at Knoxville High School from 2012 to 2013. Over those years McCollam taught pre-algebra, Algebra I, geometry, basic geometry, trigonometry, calculus, and applied math. This year he has added two more subjects to his list: seventh and eighth grade math.

After graduating from Central College McCollam, got started with his career. McCollam made a home in Pella because of his love for the town. Even while teaching in Knoxville he made the short commute back and forth from Pella to Knoxville.

"I heard how great the Pella Community School District was, and I knew if I had the chance, I would love to work there," said McCollam. As soon as there was an opening in

Pella, he applied. McCollam thought it would be great career opportunity.

McCollam has always liked working with and helping students. Along with is passion for math, he knew teaching was what he wanted to do in the future. "One of my favorite things is to see students succeed and reach their goals," McCollam said. He also wanted to share his knowledge and love for math with each group of students he has the opportunity to teach.

When McCollam isn't teaching math, he loves to do many activities. Two of his many hobbies includes the sports of golf and tennis. He not only loves playing sports but watching them too. "I love watching sports: Minnesota Vikings, Iowa Hawkeyes, Chicago Bulls, and Atlanta Braves," McCollam said. He loves to cook, but hates doing the chores that come with it, mainly doing the dishes. When McCollam is not watching or playing sports he enjoys spending time with his fiancée and taking his dog for walks.



(photo by Lauren Miller)

The Pella Middle School student body would like to welcome Mr. McCollam to the Pella Community School District. We look forward to learning math for years to come.

New students share thoughts on school

by Justin Van Steenwyk

There are five new students in the Pella Middle School. The new eighth graders are Guy Martin and Hope Solomon. We also have three new seventh graders. Their names are Dawntrina Hodge, Josh Rivers, and Gunner Reed.

Mrs. Pentico works hard to help students feel welcome to the school and community.

Pentico said, "There are a couple of things that we do to help new students feel welcome. When they first come in to register, we give them a tour of the building, show them to their lockers, answer any questions they may have, and try to match them with another peer who can "mentor" them for the first few days/weeks they're here (i.e. eat lunch with them, invite them to join

their group activities at recess, etc.).

Often times, I will meet with new students as a small group at the beginning of the school year too, to help them get acquainted with the school community, including the middle school building, activities they can get involved with, and their classmates."

Rivers moved from Lake Park, Minnesota. Rivers likes to play

soccer and football in his free time. Rivers likes the arrangement of the school day.

Rivers said, "I like the transitions of classes and not just staying with one teacher the whole day."

Dawntrina Hodge moved from Des Moines. Hodge's favorite part of Pella is the people.

Hodge said, "I like meeting new people. I find it fun to learn about people."

Hodge enjoys sports in her free time. When asked to describe her favorite sports, Hodge said, "Volleyball, swimming, volleyball, and volleyball."



New students include: Guy Martin, Hope Solomon, Dawntrina Hodge, (front row) Josh Rivers, and Gunner Reed.

(photo by Justin VanSteenwyk)

Instagram provides instant contact

by Bailee Meyer

Instagram is a social networking site used to share photos of daily activities and events. *Instagram* is one of the top social networking sites in the world.

The site was first aimed toward teenagers and young adults. *Instagram* has now spread to many wide variety of adults, both young and old. It has made the top most downloaded app in both the app store and the Apple store. *Instagram* has over one hundred million *Instagram* users all over the world. It was a small site until it became more popular and started to grow.

Instagram is a site that allows you to take photos, give it a filter, and share it with whomever a person would like. Users can change privacy settings on your account to either private or non-private to make sure strangers can not view a person's photos.

"*Instagram* is a very great way to kids like myself to get connected to

our peers and get social." Juliana Van Gorp, a registered *Instagram* user, said.

Instagram makers report, "Middle school students and high school students are our main users."

There are many good reasons to why *Instagram* is good for students, but there are also many bad reasons.

Instagram has reported that many people post inappropriate pictures which shouldn't be shared over the internet. In the 2013 generation, many people are bullied over the internet. Like other social sites, *Instagram* has had many negative feedback and comments on pictures.

"*Instagram* is a great way to be connected, though it can make people feel left out or upset about what other people post," said Erica Nossaman, also a registered user of *Instagram*.

It has been reported that over 8 million people have been bullied or abused over *Instagram*.

Sameer Hinduja, an *Instagram* maker, states things that people can or have done over *Instagram*.

People can caption a gross or disgusting or otherwise insulting or demeaning photo with a target's user name and perhaps a negative sentiment (for example, uploading a picture of a sumo wrestler and then captioning with something like "this reminds me of @hinduja").

2. People can add hateful hashtags under a photo that you post (in the caption or comments) or that someone else posts (in the comments). For example, #dork or #loser or #tryweightwatchers or #cantbelievesheworethat.

Instagram is very popular all over the world. There are many good and bad side effects. It is also the way a person uses it. *Instagram* is used about 20 million times a day by users all over the world. A person may even say, "It takes up an one 'insta' bit of my life."

Students fight for their *Minecraft* right

by Jake Grundey

This school year at Pella Middle School, lap tops are all the new rage. Their purpose is to be an educational tool and help prepare our students for the future world, but is that the case for games like *Minecraft*?

Minecraft is a very popular PC game played by many. *Minecraft* is a game where a player can defeat monsters, build almost anything he can imagine, and mine for valuable materials in a pixel world.

The idea of playing *Minecraft* at school was thought up by a group of PC gamers which consisted of Kaleb Lyons, Austin Adrian, Isaac Zeimetz, Isaiah Martin, and Caleb Gaylor.

Originally they downloaded the game onto flash drives; this enabled them to re-download the games and to share it with their friends.

When the word got out, more and more people wanted to play. When the teachers saw the students playing

Minecraft, the question was asked if this was helpful.

Ms. Noble, middle school health and study hall teacher, shared her thoughts about the game playing.

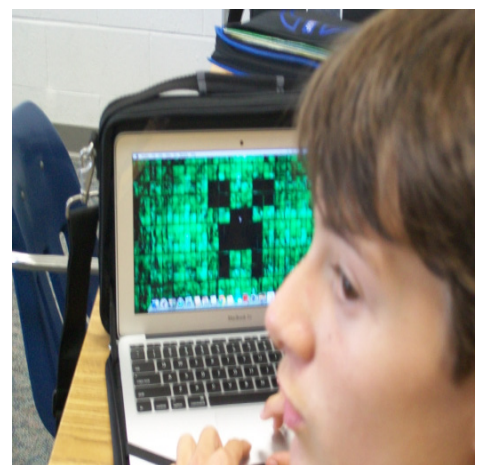
"The biggest distraction for students during study hall is being off topic with their computers," Noble said.

"If this game were to be available during school, I don't think that students would be able to get much work done. They would be more focused on their game than on their work," Noble said. "I think this could be a useful tool, but it will most likely be used in the wrong way. I could see this being useful in a class like robotics."

With all the controversy, it remains an unanswered question. Kaleb and the other gamers decided to set up a meeting with Mr. Manning, the school principal, hoping to get *Minecraft* ap-

proved.

They talked about it, but never set on a definite answer. Mr. Manning said in order to have many students play *Minecraft* on their lap tops they would have to improve the system which is currently in place.

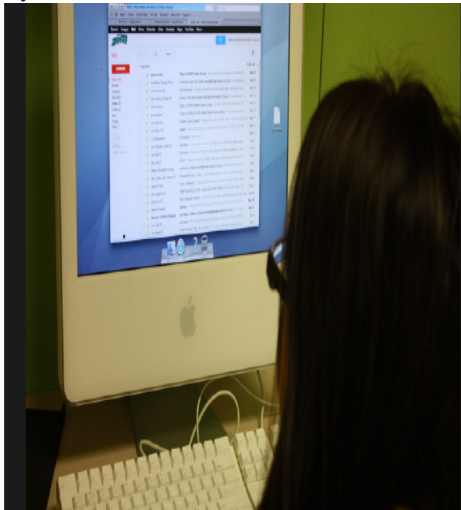


For now, students will have to play *Minecraft* on home electronics.

(photo by JordanMarie DeArmond)

E-mail survey lacked responses

by Lauren Miller



A student checks her school e-mail.

(photo by Laruen Miller)

The school student body does not appear to respond to e-mail requests in large numbers. Recently an e-mail was sent out asking students what they thought of posters in classrooms. Not many students replied though, and that led to another question: How many students actually use their e-mails accounts? Or are computers just left to be filled with e-mails never to be seen by the intended student?

This e-mail was only a cover to disguise what one reporter on the *The Middle Ground* staff was trying to find out.

Some staff were interviewed to get their opinion on this subject. Mrs. Nikkel, the seventh grade literature teacher, said that she sends e-mails everyday. Not always academic, but still she uses her faculty e-mail.

Mrs. Schulz uses e-mail to send out reminders to help keep students on track.

This research demonstrated that only 77 students out of 304 replied, forty 8th graders and thirty-seven 7th graders.



This fall the middle school received a new air conditioning system in the gym area. The two units were so large, they required a crane to place them. Pictured is one small part being placed.

(photo by Landon VanderLeest)

7th grade visits prairie, outdoor classes



On September 20, 7th grade students and teachers spent the day at Fiffeld Park. The students learned about prairie plants, team work, tree growth, nature writings, leaf identification, scatology, and other fun-filled, learning experiences.

Cell phones should be allowed

by Travis Aldrich

Students should have their cell phones in class. Students can use phones for many purposes, and are very helpful in some class situations. It is a valuable study aid for some students. Additionally, cell phones have many helpful qualities in a classroom.

First, cell phones are, for students, a very helpful study and research tool. Some cell phones have internet access so when they are in a classroom situation in which they are researching something, it can be very helpful. Also, there are many study helpers such as Study Boost, a free resource that connects with a mobile device. The app also provides many helpful study questions and guides that would be great for reviewing topics covered in class. A cell phone is a very helpful study tool.

Also, cell phones can provide many other helpful apps, and by the nature of the phone the students can receive text reminders. Teachers should not be expected to type two hundred texts every day, but there are other ways such as *Remind101*. *Remind101* is an app that can connect with the school and send text reminders to every student to remind them of tests, assignments, and class activities. There are also the more obvious helpful apps, such as calculators.

Finally, cell phones allow students to contact people. An example is if something bad happens and he/she needs his/her parents to come and get him/her. But there are a few bad aspects of having a phone in a classroom such as games. Students may choose to play a game or text a friend, rather than listen to the teacher. If students forgot something at home they could text their parents, and parents could drop it off. It also allows students to contact people that they need to talk to. This is possibly the most rudimentary aspect of the phone, and that is the reason it should be in school.

Cell phones are a huge necessity to succeed at school by allowing students information and reminders that they need. Cell phones should be allowed in every school, as all students need a cell phone. So, in conclusion, cell phones should be allowed in schools.

NSA is unconstitutional

by Bronwyn Metcalf

You've been watched for a long time, longer than you would know. Though maybe not in the way you think. The National Security Agency, or NSA, has been tracing emails, texts, phone calls, and more. Many questions have arisen on this topic. Is it worth being unconstitutional just for a little safety?

First, the NSA is playing too big of a role in everyday people's lives. My privacy and freedom are two of the most important things to me. Many people would agree with me on that. Ben Franklin said, "They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety." This quote really puts this topic into perspective. Franklin was clearly saying how much his rights meant to him. In the American Revolution, the colonists had safety, but little to no liberty. Our founding fathers risked almost everything for freedom instead of safety.

Secondly, the government is overusing their power. Many people complain that the NSA has been given utmost power. It is extremely expensive, unconstitutional, and just ineffective. Yet, it is still here, and causing an uproar. At first, NSA's interest in the general public was kept secret. Even when a reporter asked the NSA if they were monitoring cell phones and listening in, they simply replied, "No." However Edward Snowden, a former CIA and NSA worker, intentionally

gave out top secret information. He gave out information on internet and surveillance programs. It is called the most significant leak in U.S history. It made it worse to most people because the government lied to the citizens, making the whole privacy topic even worse.

Finally, security should be based on reason, not fear. Fear has fueled terrorism, homicides, and bad people in general for many years. People should not be monitored this closely if they have done nothing unconstitutional. Normal and hard working people are getting monitored and watched daily. They have done nothing wrong. The government can not keep doing this. They should have a clear reason why they are closely watching this person. Not just in fear that a regular person, could be a random terrorist. Even with no motive or mental disability. If people feared too much, nothing would happen. People wouldn't dance in the rain with the fear of getting struck by lightning. Or not swimming on the beach, fear of getting attacked by a shark. Fear should not run peoples' lives, and it shouldn't run our government.

People need to take control of their own lives, protecting themselves, their friends, and their family. Our government needs to get their act together and fix the rates of terrorism, homicides, and fugitives. Though not in the way they are doing it now.



Controversy surrounds human cloning

by Elizabeth Lovell

Human cloning is the creation of a genetically identical copy of a human. It is strictly prohibited in many places, including Serbia, Australia, Romania, the UN, the EU, the US, Canada, and the UK. But should it be? Human cloning has many benefits that could help our lives. It could be the answer to cures for diseases that are currently incurable.

First, human cloning has many medical benefits. For example, with cloning, we could bring endangered or extinct animals back. If you had a damaged or missing organ, it could be cloned and replaced. Some researchers believe that human cloning could be used to reverse heart attacks. The healthy heart cells could be cloned and injected into the areas of the heart that were damaged. A lot of cells could be replaced with cloning. Skin cells could be cloned for burn victims, and there are many other problems that could be helped if cloning was legalized.

For my second reason, some people have a child who dies at a very

young age because of an accident, such as a fire or car crash. The parents are heartbroken and wish that their perfect child was back. Human cloning would allow the parents to have a twin of their original child. The parents would have their child who was lost under heartbreaking circumstances, and they are happy once again.

Lastly, for my third reason, some people feel cheated of their lives. The Human Cloning Society has been written by many people saying that they would like to have a clone so that it may lead the life that was meant to be theirs. If they were in an accident, developed disabilities at a young age, or were abused by parents, they may feel unhappy with how their life turned out. With human cloning legalized, they would be able to get a clone made and get a say in who the parents would be. The parents would raise the clone, and the clone would hopefully get a better life than you had. For example, one boy graduates from high school at age 18, and goes to a

pool party to celebrate. He confuses the deep end and the shallow end, dives into the shallow end head first, and breaks his neck. He has many other problems growing up, and at the age of 40, he puts in his will to have his DNA stored for future cloning. His future mother will be paid 1 million dollars to have and raise him, he donates 5 million dollars to spinal cord research, and his future clone will inherit a trust fund.

In conclusion, human cloning has many benefits that could drastically improve our lives. With many medical reasons helping doctors and scientists save lives and make new discoveries to help save lives, cloning could make huge breakthroughs in science, medicine, and daily lives. There are three different types of cloning: human, therapeutic, and replacement. All are useful and beneficial in their own ways. From medical, scientific reasons to personal reasons, legalizing human cloning could make our lives easier and better.

Kids should be encouraged to play sports

by Landon Vander Leest

There are many mixed opinions about kids playing sports at a young age. Many kids can feel pressured to play sports, especially if their parents have played sports and are into it. Sports can also add stress that many parents do not feel is necessary along with school and other activities. It is also very costly; some families do not have enough money to be spending it on things like sports and need to use it for other reasons. There are also many benefits of playing sports at a young age.

The first reason why kids should be encouraged to play sports but not forced is sports provide exercise which will help improve their overall health and well-being. It is scientifically proven that kid who are involved in extracurricular activities get better grades in school and live healthier, happier lives. This alone can change a child from being a troublemaker into a disciplined, young adult and improve their athleticism and health at the same time. This will improve their home

life by making it a happier, healthier environment.

The second reason why kids should be encouraged to play sports but not forced is sports teach character, confidence, independence, and work ethic. "It is good for kids to play sports," said J. Tod Olin a pediatric pulmonologist who specializes in exercise tolerance in kids. Kids who play sports are known to be more socially active and have a higher self esteem. This will also improve their social, spiritual, and intellectual health and give the kids a chance to express themselves. It will also push kids to their limits and see how tough they can be and how much they can handle physically and mentally which can improve the parent's views on teaching their children and interacting with them.

The third reason why kids should be encouraged to play sports but not forced is because sports help teach kids valuable life lessons, such as life isn't always fair. Kids who play sports

have been shown to handle difficult situations better than the opposition. Kids who play sports get to experience first-hand what it feels like to fail, lose, and be defeated and also what it feels like to win, do well, and excel in something. This goes back to the self-esteem issue which will help kids with the everyday challenges of life. They will also have reasons to move away from peer pressure and other difficult situations that may occur. It will give them a place where they can find who they truly are and what they are made for and capable of. It is a great way to give kids a great experience and to push them to be their best in life.

Overall, starting sports at a young age can be a bad thing and be costly to the family. But, there are also many good things about starting sports at a young age that can help kids become stronger in many aspects of their life.

10-11-13
The Middle Ground
Page Editor Alexis Franzen

16 Stomping Grounds

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POETRY CORNER

Feel sad or
Excited, but you
Eat when you're happy,
Love anybody,
Ignore people who annoy you.
Now you know what feelings are. Now
Go!!
Share your feelings with the world.

by JordanMarie DeArmond

Life is Like a Leaf

Here the trees blow in the wind
Here it is impossible to forget
Leaves twist and bend
Kind of like life; do you get it?

Life is always twisting and turning
It's hard to get it to stop
So you have to keep going
No matter where you might stop,
That's where you belong.
You will be in the right place

by JordanMarie DeArmond