

The Messenger

New Richmond High School, 1131 Bethel-New Richmond Road, New Richmond, Ohio 45157

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*Life off the grid:
NRHS family
finds serenity in solar power*

New Richmond readies for PARCC

More rigorous, high-stakes testing on the way

By: Claire Burns

This year is the beginning of something new at New Richmond High School as the district prepares to adopt the “next generation assessment system” in order to prepare students for the future end of course assessments.

The PARCC Assessment, or the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career, provides an evaluation of a student’s abilities and indicates where further help may be needed. In order to further ready students in their future careers, gaps shown in results are noted to make sure to be addressed prior to one’s graduation.

“The PARCC states have committed to building a K-12 assessment system that: builds a pathway to college and career readiness for all students, creates high-quality assessments that measure the full range of the Common Core State Standards, supports educators in the classroom, makes better use of technology in assessments, and advances accountability at all levels.” (www.parcconline.org/about-parcc)

New Richmond is one of the districts chosen to pilot or “field test” this assessment and principal Mark Bailey believes that the PARCC tests will better ready our students for not only when we are required to take the “real” assessments, but also to better prepare our students for their futures.

“The PARCC tests are a great opportunity for us because I believe that they will give us the upper hand in the near future by getting a feel for the new testing format,” he said.

The PARCC assessments are unique as they test a whole new level of critical thinking and analytic skills. The new structure of the questions on the assessments play a major role in why Bailey is a strong supporter of taking these tests.

“These tests are not going to be easy and each question is going to require deep thought. Predictions for the test scores are envisioning the test scores to be dramatically lower, dragging many schools down to the 60th percentile. Therefore, any chance that we have to get a feel for these new tests will give us a major advantage,” he said.

The question is; so what made these PARCC assessments come about? Bailey simply stated that it’s due to the Common Core State Standards.

“The Common Core is quickly becoming prevalent as it has been adopted in 46/ 50 states. The PARCC assessments have been design to fully assess all of the material included in the standards of the Common Core. There will be a total of ten exams which are replacing the current Ohio Graduation tests including; three English, three math, two science, and two social studies exams, which cover the required curriculum based on the Common Core.”

Even though the PARCC assessments that the district is field testing this year will not have a direct effect on students’ grades, Bailey expects both the students and teachers to take these tests very seriously.

“I want students and teachers to take these assessments seriously because we want to use the tests to our best advantage. We will be able to see what is expected for the future by getting a glance at the tested material; therefore, allowing us to better prepare our students and keeping us on level; however, there is no need to be anxious about these tests; if you put forward your best effort, you are going to have a leg up when the end of course exams arrive.”

With the several changes involving the PARCC assessment test structure as well as its in-

creased expectations for student achievement, Bailey has some tips for students prior to the field test.

“With the new standards we are learning a deeper level of thinking especially concerning the mathematics and the English assessments. The tests will also be more analytical in nature; for example, instead of summarizing, students will be expected to analyze and put the material into context. My advice to students is to be sure to read all directions carefully and fully answer the questions.”

The PARCC assessments are strategically structured to get rid of summative questions in order to provide accurate results. “With this information, educators can: more efficiently provide students with appropriate instructional support, and better identify students who require intense interventions or enrichment activities in order to meet (or exceed) grade level performance targets.” www.parcconline.org/about-parcc

Bailey and several of his colleagues; however, are still in a predicament concerning the issue of how and when the field test PARCC will be taken.

“We are currently looking at our test window and have decided that the PBA (Performance Based Assessment) will be administered in the time frame of March 24 through April 11. Following the PBA, the actual PARCC assessments will be administered toward the end of the school year. I am still in the process of working with the counselors and Mr. Pritchard, the director of technology, while looking at the devices we have and the time frame to develop a master schedule for when to implement the tests.”

When the actual assessments take the place of the Ohio Gradu-

ation tests, several changes will be made.

Bailey stated, “Changes will be made in the requirements for graduation here at New Richmond High School. Following the completion of specified courses, an end of course exam will be administered to the students, which will be graded on a scale from 1 to 5. In order for a student to pass the graduation requirements, he or she needs to have scored at least a total of 25 points or higher. All of the end of course exams will need to be completed in order to receive credit for the course; therefore, any course with an end of course exam will not be able to be exempted. No, this does not mean that there is an end to exam exemptions due to the fact that not every course requires the completion of an end of course exam. If a class does not have an end of course exam, exam exemptions will be accepted.”

New Richmond High School’s counselor, Carol Ann Coulter, believes that the PARCC fields tests will mostly benefit the teachers of the district.

“The teachers will be able to benefit from what the content and determine whether their teaching content is on track. The students will also be able to see their expectations across the nation to see how they compare with other students.”

Coulter’s only worry concerning the tests is their lengthiness. “Even though the English and mathematics tests are just being administered to the students, each test is going to take up to two and a half hours to complete. There’s really nothing that the students can individually do to prepare for the tests besides not stressing out, making sure that they get enough sleep the night before, and to try their hardest.”

The following pages are a sample of what students will be asked to read and write on the English-Language Arts portion of the PARCC assessment. They are instructed to read the two pieces of poetry, then answer multiple choice questions dealing with the works as well as write an essay. The segment we have reprinted here can be found in its entirety on the PARCC website. You can also go to the PARCC web site and actually take this test online with seven sample questions at <http://www.parcconline.org/computer-based-samples>.

Ovid's Metamorphoses: Daedalus and Icarus

But Daedalus abhorred the Isle of Crete--
290 and his long exile on that sea-girt shore,
increased the love of his own native place.
"Though Minos blocks escape by sea and land."
He said, "The unconfined skies remain
though Minos may be lord of all the world
295 his sceptre is not regnant of the air,
and by that untried way is our escape."
This said, he turned his mind to arts unknown
and nature unrevealed. He fashioned quills
and feathers in due order -- deftly formed
300 from small to large, as any rustic pipe
prom straws unequal slants. He bound with thread
the middle feathers, and the lower fixed
with pliant wax; till so, in gentle curves
arranged, he bent them to the shape of birds.
305 While he was working, his son Icarus,
with smiling countenance and unaware
of danger to himself, perchance would chase
the feathers, ruffled by the shifting breeze,
or soften with his thumb the yellow wax,
310 and by his playfulness retard the work
his anxious father planned.
But when at last
the father finished it, he poised himself,
and lightly floating in the winnowed air
315 waved his great feathered wings with bird-like ease.
And, likewise he had fashioned for his son
such wings; before they ventured in the air
he said, "My son, I caution you to keep
the middle way, for if your pinions dip
320 too low the waters may impede your flight;
and if they soar too high the sun may scorch them.
Fly midway. Gaze not at the boundless sky,
far Ursa Major and Bootes next.
Nor on Orion with his flashing brand,
325 but follow my safe guidance."
As he spoke
he fitted on his son the plumed wings
with trembling hands, while down his withered cheeks
the tears were falling. Then he gave his son
330 a last kiss, and upon his gliding wings
assumed a careful lead solicitous.
As when the bird leads forth her tender young,
from high-swung nest to try the yielding air;
so he prevailed on willing Icarus;
335 encouraged and instructed him in all
the fatal art; and as he waved his wings
looked backward on his son.
Beneath their flight,
the fisherman while casting his long rod,
340 or the tired shepherd leaning on his crook,
or the rough plowman as he raised his eyes,
astonished might observe them on the wing,
and worship them as Gods.

Upon the left
345 they passed by Samos, Juno's sacred isle;
Delos and Paros too, were left behind;
and on the right Lebinthus and Calymne,
fruitful in honey. Proud of his success,
the foolish Icarus forsook his guide,
350 and, bold in vanity, began to soar,
rising upon his wings to touch the skies;
but as he neared the scorching sun, its heat
softened the fragrant wax that held his plumes;
and heat increasing melted the soft wax—
355 he waved his naked arms instead of wings,
with no more feathers to sustain his flight.
And as he called upon his father's name
his voice was smothered in the dark blue sea,
now called Icarian from the dead boy's name.
360 The unlucky father, not a father, called,
"Where are you, Icarus?" and "Where are you?
In what place shall I seek you, Icarus?"
He called again; and then he saw the wings
of his dear Icarus, floating on the waves;
365 and he began to rail and curse his art.
He found the body on an island shore,
now called Icaria, and at once prepared
to bury the unfortunate remains;
but while he labored a pert partridge near,
370 observed him from the covert of an oak,
and whistled his unnatural delight.
Know you the cause? 'Twas then a single bird,
the first one of its kind. 'Twas never seen
before the sister of Daedalus had brought
375 him Perdix, her dear son, to be his pupil.
And as the years went by the gifted youth
began to rival his instructor's art.
He took the jagged backbone of a fish,
and with it as a model made a saw,
380 with sharp teeth fashioned from a strip of iron.
And he was first to make two arms of iron,
smooth hinged upon the center, so that one
would make a pivot while the other, turned,
described a circle. Wherefore Daedalus
385 enraged and envious, sought to slay the youth
and cast him headlong from Minerva's fane,--
then spread the rumor of an accident.
But Pallas, goddess of ingenious men,
saving the pupil changed him to a bird,
390 and in the middle of the air he flew
on feathered wings; and so his active mind--
and vigor of his genius were absorbed
into his wings and feet; although the name
of Perdix was retained.
395 The Partridge hides
in shaded places by the leafy trees
its nested eggs among the bush's twigs;
nor does it seek to rise in lofty flight,
for it is mindful of its former fall.

TO A FRIEND WHOSE WORK HAS COME TO TRIUMPH

By Anne Sexton

Consider Icarus, pasting those sticky wings on,
testing that strange little tug at his shoulder blade,
and think of that first flawless moment over the lawn
of the labyrinth. Think of the difference it made!

5 There below are the trees, as awkward as camels;
and here are the shocked starlings pumping past
and think of innocent Icarus who is doing quite well:
larger than a sail, over the fog and the blast
of the plushy ocean, he goes. Admire his wings!
10 Feel the fire at his neck and see how casually
he glances up and is caught, wondrously tunneling
into that hot eye. Who cares that he fell back to the sea?
See him acclaiming the sun and come plunging down
while his sensible daddy goes straight into town.

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Sample Questions from the PARCC web site

1. Which of the following sentences best states an important theme about human behavior as described in Ovid's "Daedalus and Icarus"?

- a. Striving to achieve one's dreams is a worthwhile endeavor.
- b. The thoughtlessness of youth can have tragic results.
- c. Imagination and creativity bring their own rewards
- d. Everyone should learn from his or her mistakes.

2. Select three pieces of evidence from Ovid's "Daedalus and Icarus" that support the answer to question number one.

- a. "and by his playfulness retard the work/his anxious father planned" (lines 310-311)
- b. "But when at last/the father finished it, he poised himself" (lines 312-313).
- c. "he fitted on his son the plumed wings/ with trembling hands, while down his withered cheeks/the tears were falling" (lines 327-329).
- d. "Proud of his success/the foolish Icarus forsook his guide" (lines 348-349)."
- e. "and, bold in vanity, began to soar/rising upon his wings to touch the skies"
- f. "and as the years went by the gifted youth/began to rival his instructor's art "
- g. "Wherefore Daedalus/enraged and envious, sought to slay the youth "
- h. "The Partridge hides/in shaded places by the leafy trees...for it is mindful of its former fall "

3. What does the word vanity mean in these lines from the text "Daedalus and Icarus" ?

" Proud of his success, the foolish Icarus forsook his guide, and, bold in vanity, began to soar " (lines 348-350)

- a. arrogance b. fear c. heroism d. enthusiasm

4. Which word from the lines of text in Part A best helps the reader understand the meaning of vanity?

- a. proud b. success c. foolish

5. Use what you have learned from reading "Daedalus and Icarus" by Ovid and "To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph" by Anne Sexton to write an essay that provides an analysis of how Sexton transforms Daedalus and Icarus.?

As a starting point, you may want to consider what is emphasized, absent, or different in the two texts, but feel free to develop your own focus for analysis.

6. Develop your essay by providing textual evidence from both texts. Be sure to follow the conventions of standard English.

Use what you have learned from reading "Daedalus and Icarus" by Ovid and "To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Triumph" by Anne Sexton to write an essay that analyzes how Icarus's experience of flying is portrayed differently in the two texts. Develop your essay by providing textual evidence from both texts. Be sure to follow the conventions of standard English.



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After-Prom promises big night

A special night to remember

By Stacey Tucker

After-Prom 2014 will surely be one to remember. New, crazy, and fun activities will be sure to keep students entertained hour after hour. Prom may be over but the party is just beginning, and our NRHS PTO encourages all of you to join your classmates this year at New Richmond High School's After-Prom.

This year, NRHS Librarian Joyce Montgomery has set up a fun-filled After-Prom you won't want to miss. "This year's going to be good with new activities that'll pique everyone's interests." Montgomery has worked hard to make sure our After-Prom tops all this year. With new activities, new food and helpful students she will be sure to do that.

From the Souper Fundraiser during a home basketball game, to selling spirit wear, this year's After-Prom has had plenty of

fundraising, and the PTO continues to raise money with more activities coming up. "Every year money from the Easter Bunny Breakfast goes to After-Prom as well as fundraising during basketball games."

There are some crazy ideas for activities this year: bungee run, toilet racers, human bowling, sumo wrestling, and much more. These activities will keep the students occupied and if not, there are other options that will be sure to entertain them. "We tried to think of out of the ordinary, fun things that the kids wouldn't complain about. We try to make After-Prom fun to assure that the seniors will have a senior Prom night to remember like toilet races and human bowling."

This year's After-Prom will be held at the Beechmont Racquet Club. There will be plenty of room for students to run around

and no one is packed into too tight of a space. The pool will also be available. The event will be held from 12 a.m. to 3 a.m. Anyone who attended Prom may go to After-Prom.

This year there will be a lot of "yummy" food to offer the students. "This year we're having a coffee bar, not just for the students but for the chaperones who need an extra kick at two in the morning." There will also be wings, a chocolate fountain, pizza, doughnuts, a nacho bar, etc. We're sure no students will go home hungry.

The Talent Show is also a big fundraiser for After-Prom. PTO members sell tickets and manage the door. Montgomery said "Mrs. Griffin is kind enough to donate the profits made from the evening Talent Show to After-Prom." The PTO also might have a bake sale during the Talent Show, which is Friday, April 4 at 7:00 p.m.

Most of the volunteers for the Bunny Breakfast are student volunteers or parents. To raise money for the Bunny Breakfast, the children bring in plastic eggs and candy. Someone also brings in waffle mix for the breakfast. "Most of our volunteers are students from the high school or PTO members. They work hard to set up a nice breakfast," said

Montgomery.

There are activities at the Bunny Breakfast also. Children can participate in face painting, coloring and other crafts. There are many crafts they can do depending on what the advisors choose. There will also be made to order waffles and omelets, bacon, orange juice, milk and coffee available. Children can also take pictures with the Easter Bunny.

Most of the people who volunteer or chaperone the After-Prom stay until it is over. Some people work the doors and check off names, some collect tickets and sign students up for the drawings, and others watch over the food and run the activities. A lot of the volunteers are PTO members and parents. Without their help, After-Prom wouldn't be possible.

Montgomery and all of the other volunteers and PTO members have worked very hard to make this After-Prom one to remember. With all of the fundraising and work they have put into it they've really showed their dedication to the students. "We look forward to events like this. It helps us know our students enjoy and appreciate the effort we put into the events we throw for them," Montgomery said.



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'No more snow' Talent Show

NRHS gears up to start spring with annual showcase event

By Chelsey Fawley

It's getting around to that time of year again! Though the snow seems like it will never go away, spring is nearly here. Along with the season comes the annual talent show, this year's being triumphantly named the NO MORE SNOW Talent Show. With the winter play in wrap up and the middle school musical soon to be over, nothing stands in the way of the talented individuals of New Richmond preparing to show their stuff on April 4th.

Nearing it's decennial, the show will be held once again this year by English teacher Sue Griffin and hosted by the warm personalities of seniors Nick Gilman and Chelsey Fawley. There will again be two performances, one occurring during the school day from 1:20 to the end

of the day. "The daytime performance is a big hit with students," said Griffin. "It's shorter, at about eight acts, but we try to fit in some cupcake raffles and other fun between the performances."

The later performance will start at 7pm the same evening and will feature as many acts as possible, usually around 15. All tickets will remain at five dollars - for good reason. The day time show funds will be added to Lion's Reach Out to help needy students for Prom and graduation expenses. The evening show profits will go to support the New Richmond PTO After Prom.

Though signups have just started, several students have already shown interest in exhibiting their special talents. There

will be return acts, as participants hope to top themselves. Junior Jenny Roberts is planning a new song to perform, while seniors Skylar McDonald and Priya Patel prepare a brand new Indian dance.

Preparations have just started, but there are some grandiose hopes for this year's talent show.

"I really want this to be a truly community event," Griffin said. "I'm encouraging students, faculty, parents, community residents, alumni--anyone with a New Richmond connection to try out."

Griffin added that she hopes to include acts from every school in the district. "It's important to me that this isn't just a show for high school students," she said. "I love it when we can include

elementary and middle school students and show off the talents at all grade levels in the district."

This year's lineup is far from being determined as of yet, but so far interest has been shown by adult alumni as well as a possible '60 Seconds of Science' challenge to be performed by our science teachers. Hopefully more new, creative acts will continue to sign up and make this year's show a blast.

Griffin is still actively seeking performers and will have audition and rehearsal times finalized in the next couple of weeks. Anyone interested in performing should contact Griffin at 553-3191x10204 or email at griffin_s@nrschools.org.



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New school board member loves her position

Kristin Bennett thankful for being elected

By: Lily Cahall

Kristin Bennett is one of New Richmond's newest school board members and she plans on making our school district the best it possibly can be.

Bennett is a stay at home mom but used to be a Lt/Paramedic/Firefighter. She is married to a 1990 NRHS graduate, Michael Bennett, and has two children: Anna Bennett, a freshman at NRHS, and Rebecca Bennett, a third grader at Monroe Elementary. Bennett attended The University of Cincinnati, and studied EMS management. Her family also attends The First Baptist Church in New Richmond, and she is very active with the youth softball organization in New Richmond.

Bennett said she chose to run for school board because she sees many changes coming to the NREVSD. "I wanted to be able to help the schools cope with the loss of revenue (with the pend-

ing closing of Beckjord Power station), and to help direct the district in a fiscally responsible route. With all the new testing requirements being given to our students, I want to ensure the level of education/service increase while funds may decrease." stated Bennett.

Bennett's role on the school board is an important one to our school district. "I am part of a five member board who is responsible for setting the policies used by NREVSD, and overseeing the superintendent and treasurer," said Bennett.

Bennett said that the NREVSD has too many positive things about it to name, but here are just a few: "We have excellent students, staff, teachers, administrators, and community. Seeing the strength of the community and our schools provide for families in need due to illness, hardship, natural disasters, etc, is amazing!

The district has set a great foundation of learning and I hope to continue it and work on improving areas that may need improvement," said Bennett.

Even though NREVSD has a bunch of positive things about it there are some things that Bennett thinks need improvement. "We need to improve our graduation rating, and provide students with personal finance courses to be ready to step into college, the skilled workforce, or any direction a graduate chooses to go. Also, I would like to see improvement in school safety and student safety education through a School Resource Officer (who can be in all five of our schools and is a certified SRO). This could be a valuable tool to help students, preschool-senior be aware of the serious issues they face daily: drugs, strangers, issues with dating, vehicle safety, and school safety,"

stated Bennett.

Bennett has many goals while she is a part of the school board. "I want to provide the best education while being fiscally responsible, to improve the graduation rate, and increase school safety and education," said Bennett

Bennett has some additional information she would like you to know. "I am thankful for the community for trusting me to serve as a NREVSD school board member and I want to make the right decisions needed to direct our district into the future. I am active in fundraising for Childhood Cancer Research and serve as Co-Coordinator of Becca's Legendary Run For A Cure. The community can contact me at bennett_k@nrschools.org. Thanks!"

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Criminal justice program preps students for real world

Curriculum addresses several service careers

By: Sadie LaRocque

The criminal justice program at Grant Career Center is taught by Officer Doug Flamm. Flamm had been working with the sheriff's office for many years before retiring and becoming the instructor for the program at Grant. "Before I became the criminal justice instructor at Grant I served as the School Resource Officer (SRO) for 13 years. On June 30th of 2013, I retired from the Clermont County Sheriff's Office after 21 years of service to become the Criminal Justice Instructor," said Flamm.

The criminal justice was designed as a two-year program to introduce students into criminal justice. It teaches students many things in the field of criminal justice such as training for police and private security, criminal

law, criminal behaviors, forensic science, and more. "My hope for my students is to get a sound foundation and understanding of the entire criminal justice system; law enforcement, judicial and corrections," Flamm said.

The criminal justice program was just introduced this year and a lot of juniors from all the home schools decided to be in the program. Some students had been influenced by family members to be in the criminal justice program at Grant, while others just joined it because they were interested in it.

Junior Ashley Redmond is in the criminal justice program to help her in the future. "I decided to be in criminal justice because it would help me achieve my goal of becoming a juvenile probation officer," she said.

"I want to be a security forces officer in the United States Air Force, which is why I wanted to be in criminal justice. Even if I wasn't in the criminal justice program at Grant, I would still be interested in it as a career choice," said junior Annie Patrick.

For some people it's more about the interest than future goals. "I've been interested in criminal justice since I was young and personal experiences are my motivation," junior Desirae Murphy said.

Even teachers have a favorite part to the class. "Without a doubt, my favorite part of teaching is the students and my least favorite part is all the extra paperwork," Flamm said. "My advice to students is to make sure to ask plenty of questions while visiting Grant and to attend the many parent nights that are offered. Those interested in Grant can follow us at www.grantcareer.com"

Many of the students who decided to go to Grant for criminal justice would still be thinking about criminal justice as a career choice even without the existence of this program and most of the students have had their minds set on criminal justice for a while.

"Being a cop has always been my dream so even if I wasn't in the program, I would still be interested in it as a career choice,"

junior Cody Helbling said. "Both of my parents are cops and have influenced my decision to be a cop."

As with any normal class at school, there is learning involved along with the hands-on activities and students tend to have a favorite part of the class.

Junior Wendy Appelmann likes the hand-on part of the program most. "My favorite part of the program is doing defensive tactics and combatives. I don't want to stay behind a desk," Appelmann said.

The class does hands-on activities and training along with exercises every day. The class uses an online book and learns some of the Ohio peace officer curriculum. "We do various types of workouts; if it's warm outside, we may run or play flag football, inside workouts consist of circuit training, strength training, or boxing. I have many different tools to use for teaching; we have a shooting simulator, we work on defensive tactics, physical conditioning, and role playing, and our Army recruiter teaches our students combatives. Our book is online and every student is assigned a computer and I use the Ohio Peace Officers Academy curriculum," Flamm said. "A typical day might start out with some type of physical training. We then move into academics and finish with something physical like shooting, handcuffing or a criminal justice related video."

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Preparing for the Ohio Graduation Test

Teachers give tips on how to get ready for important assessment

By: Raven Miller

A requirement for graduation for all students in the state of Ohio is pass all of their Ohio Graduation Tests (OGT).

An important aspect of all five of these tests is preparing for it in class. There are a lot of techniques to get ready for the OGT. New Richmond High School science teacher, Pat Crowley provided information on how he prepares his sophomore students for the science portion of the OGT.

"In science, we utilize the Ohio Department Of Education website called OGT Success. This allows students to take past OGT test, the computer scores them immediately. This website does not score extended re-

sponses, so we do those the old-fashioned way with paper and pencil. Students are taught to re-read the question, and follow the standard rubric given in the OGT test booklet," said Crowley.

In the past few years, New Richmond High School has been taking OGT's in smaller groups in individual classrooms rather than as a large group in the theatre. Crowley thinks it is beneficial to take them in smaller classes.

"I feel that taking the OGT in smaller groups has shown to be beneficial. Our science scores have improved each of the last two years when taking the test in smaller groups. I feel it has been a positive approach," said

Crowley.

When students are preparing to take a big test, such as the OGT, it is hard to know what to focus on and what exactly what to study. Crowley said that he makes sure his students know exactly what they need to focus on. "Our students are given a variety of study guides and old test questions as practice. Each subject area has a list of core content that needs to be covered for the OGT. If teachers and students focus on these core areas throughout the year, that is the best approach," said Crowley.

Crowley said he uses various tools and techniques to prepare his students for the science portion of the OGT. "In addition to

the OGT Success web site, I also teach some test-taking skills, such as skimming for key words in the question. We also use a lot of the old test questions from past years that the Department Of Education gives us. In science, it is essential to focus on the vocabulary use and meaning, so we focus on vocab throughout the year; however, the best preparation technique I have seen is hard work and positive effort from August to March by the students. This is the best way to prepare for the OGTs."

Crowley said that most students at New Richmond do well on their OGT, "The data shows that a majority of our students pass all five parts of the OGT the



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first time. This shows positive effort and focus by the students and the teachers.”

English teacher Susan Griffin gave some of her tricks she tells her students about taking the writing/reading portion of the OGT. “Take your time with the test; you have over two hours--use all of it if you need it. Make sure you read the questions before you read the selection. For reading, mark up and annotate the text as you go--that will really help with comprehension and keep you focused and alert. For writing, write at least a page, make sure your handwriting is legible, double check for basic spelling and grammar errors,” said Griffin.

Griffin gave her opinion on whether she thinks that taking the OGT in smaller groups is benefiting the students. “Small groups is much better! It's much more personal and the whole environment is much better than when we used to have everyone in the theatre. Students have bigger desks, more room to spread out and far fewer distractions. The classrooms are also usually much warmer than the theatre used to be,” said Griffin.

Griffin gave some recommendations for students who are having trouble while taking their OGT's.

“I recommend taking short breaks if students feel like they're falling asleep or losing focus. Doodle in the margins--sit for five minutes and refocus, even take a short nap (just remember to wake up). You can also do the test questions in any order, so if you get to something that you really don't understand, skip it and go on to something else.”

Griffin does believe that the majority of the students at New Richmond High School will pass all five of their OGT's.

“I think most sophomores at NR are definitely prepared for the test and academically capable of passing all five parts. Make sure to take it seriously and try your best; if you blow off a part or two, you're going to end up re-taking it and that's no fun at all,” said Griffin.

There are a lot of tips that Griffin gives her students and these are just a few. “Probably discussed above, but I emphasize annotating and taking notes throughout the reading section and for writing, I have Mrs.

Griffin's guide to success--1-3-5-7-9: that stands for one page, three sub-topics, five paragraphs, no more than seven grammar and spelling errors, and at least nine complex sentences,” said Griffin.

Algebra teacher, Carla Corbin gave some advice for students preparing for the math portion of the OGT. “My first suggestion for all the OGT's is get enough sleep. For the past few years, the OGT is always the week following the time change. It is very difficult to take a major test when you are tired. The other suggestion is to answer all questions. Students should have plenty of time, so make sure to attempt and answer all questions. If you don't know how to do a problem, try plugging the answers into the question to see which one works. On extended response questions, students should show all steps and try to get an answer. If you know multiple ways to solve the problem, use all the ways. If you get different answers, leave them all. The graders are supposed to count the question correct if it contains the correct work and answer, even if it has some incorrect work somewhere else,” said Corbin.

Corbin also agrees with the other teachers that the smaller groups help the students. “I like the small groups. It simulates the classes students take, which makes students more comfortable and hopefully makes the testing conditions better,” said Corbin.

Studying for math is a difficult thing to do, said Corbin, and

she gave some of the most important things to worry about for the OGT. “The big thing in math is knowing how to use the formula sheet. This sheet will not be needed for every question, but it is helpful for the area and volume questions,” said Corbin.

Corbin has a lot of techniques for preparing students for the OGT. “In Math 10, we just covered the area and volume problems for the OGT. We will be reviewing trig and probability before the OGT's as well. In Math 10, we are also going to use OGT type questions for the problem of the day to get students more practice with this style of questioning.”

History teacher Brian Benzinger gave some tips for preparing for the social studies OGT. “My belief is that students need to expand their vocabulary in all fields of social studies. It is also important to have the ability to become an effective and skillful writer in order to answer the extended response questions. Preparation for the social studies OGT begins in my class during the freshman year, as we are constantly introducing, reinforcing, and quizzing new terms that will be helpful to do well on the OGT. It is my belief that the majority of students that have good attendance in school and that have put forth an honest effort will pass all five OGT's in their first attempt. Attendance problems and/or poor effort in school will no doubt inhibit success on the OGT.”



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Greed, selfishness taking over

No one cares about anyone but themselves

As humans... we staaank! But that is probably not the best way to get you to read this. It is human nature to be greedy and selfish, but have you stopped to think about how self centered people are these days? It is absolutely ridiculous. I know that I am only sixteen, but seeing how my peers treat their parents and their constantly expecting something out of them, it seems to me that no one is happy these days unless there is money involved.

Greed has been around since Adam and Eve in the good old days. Most of us may be aware of the story that has been told for generations; Eve took a bite of the apple from the one apple tree God told her not to touch, yet Eve went ahead and did it anyway because of temptation. And so the cycle of greed starts.

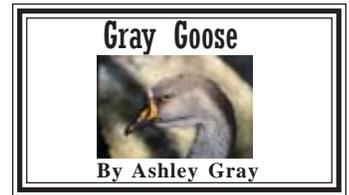
As you know, we live in a very competitive world. Some struggle to be the best and on top, while others struggle to just survive and get by. Greed is the desire to have more than one's equal share and ultimately the desire for domination. Today, it seems that the world seems to solely revolve around who has the most money, who wears the best clothing, has the newest up-to-date technology and material goods in general.

Question is, what has happened to peoples' morals? When did it become overrated to do something out of the goodness of one's heart rather than what one is going to get out of it. Seems today that people do not want to do something that takes up their time if they have no personal gain from it. It's sad.

I remember from the age I be-

gan to start understanding concepts like greed and selfishness, my parents have always taught me that sharing is caring. It's the best road to take in life because life is more rewarding when you do something for someone else.

Greed and selfishness may just be human nature, but could have been passed from generations of people who experienced hardships. For instance, human beings are born selfish; look at babies always whining and crying for whatever the reason may be. There are many different ways one can break a habit of being selfish and looking for things to go only one's own way. For others, this may be more a difficult concept to catch on to because from a young age parents handed everything to their children without giving them a slightest bit of idea what it means to earn



something.

Instead of scrolling through tweets, or whatever one's life is consumed with these days, put the phone down, volunteer somewhere or donate a couple bucks and save a life.

My point is that obviously we all have responsibilities and there are a million different things going through our heads, but that is no excuse not to take a little time to think about someone else. It is so easy these days to get sidetracked, but doing something, whether it be a small or huge favor for someone and not expecting anything in return, will create an amazingly good feeling. So stop, take a couple minutes, and do something for someone else.

Boredom is bringing trouble

School activities provide safe and healthy lifestyles

Many teenagers don't always participate in after school activities, or hang out with friends. Much of the time they are sitting around with nothing to do, putting off their homework until the last minute.

These teens with boring lives want to liven it up and make their everyday life more interesting, but it sometimes seems like the first option is to do something

that is a little too much fun and causes trouble. Essentially, boredom often leads to trouble.

Teenagers facing the problem of boredom should participate in more school based activities. Things like after school clubs and sports should be considered by these bored teens, or even volunteer work at places like animal shelters or nursing homes.

Volunteering to benefit yourself and not just to get community service hours for school is a good idea. Volunteer work can make you feel better about yourself

because you are helping to improve others' lives. Playing school sports will help you maintain acceptable grades and you will focus on school work as well as the sport. Being in a sport will teach you how to improve your social skills, as well as the skills you need for the sport. Participating in a sport will teach you discipline as well, because you will learn to respect other people like your coach or teammates.

Participating in these activities can have many positive effects on teens, such as a better attitude, wider range of friends, and a healthier lifestyle.

But choosing to be bored and unhappy is the other choice for some teenagers. They may decide that they don't want to change their way of life and would rather sit around. But par-



ticipating in physical activities instead of participating in electronic activities is a better idea. You will make reliable friends that you will be able to talk with more than you would if you just sat around all day. You will agree to activities that are both fun and safe with no negative side effects.

Being a part of these extracurricular and volunteer activities will expose you to more people and you will not be easily convinced to do anything that will come back to haunt you. Overall, being involved is a lot better than being a part of your couch during your teenage years.

Letters to the editor are always welcome and we will print them as space allows. Please submit any correspondence to the high school office or drop off in Mrs. Griffin's mailbox, or email at griffin_s@nrschools.org. Questions should be directed to Sue Griffin, x10204.

Saturday snow shoveling

Early bird gets the worm, or in this case, the twenty dollars

On a fine Saturday morning with no plans, almost every teenager loves to sleep in; as for me, I sleep in until about noon, on average. The best part about it is that I am proud to say it, as well as I am proud to state I will continue this habit as long as possible. So, probably the one thing that irritates me the most is being awakened earlier than my average Saturday waking. Well, this past Saturday, there were several inches of snow on the ground and when snow is on the ground, that means there is snow on the driveway.

Obviously, without someone waking me up, I will definitely not wake up by myself before noon. But this particular Saturday, I was awakened before noon. Before I could shoo a younger brother away or riskily tell an older brother to get out, I heard my dad's voice demand-

ing to get out of bed and get my wallet.

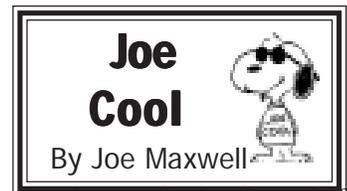
I don't want to call myself a "penny pincher," but I do like money, especially money that is already mine and I don't need to work for any more. This is why, when my dad came upstairs, woke me up and demanded money from my wallet, I was a little upset. The thing that made me even more upset is the reason why my dad was demanding money.

Apparently, a few kids came from down the road and were shoveling our driveway because it had snowed about six inches over the night/morning that I had slept through. My dad was angry that my older brother and me were still in bed sleeping while other kids were shoveling our driveway for the "fun of it" and "not expecting any sort of payment." So he made both of us

give him ten dollars to pay our driveway shovelers.

The reason I was so upset was because when I woke up, I would've shoveled the driveway... for FREE! Another factor that contributed to my small fit of rage is that it was STILL SNOWING! Obviously, meaning that in another hour after they were finished shoveling, I would be the one that would have to go out and shovel up the extra inch or so that was still falling. Luckily, I didn't have to go out later because the sun came out and melted the snow off our driveway, so with how hot the sun was burning, it probably would have melted all the snow by that night without anyone paying or doing physical labor; that's obviously the best way! Plus, it was a Saturday so we weren't going anywhere, anyway!

The big conclusion to this



story is, even having the rest of the weekend to forget about this incident and the ten dollars that I felt robbed of, all those emotions were fired back up after arriving to seventh period on Monday at school and having a classmate say, "Hey Joe, how'd you like me shoveling your driveway for you?"

The funniest part is that I realized I had no idea who even shoveled my driveway until my classmate in journalism, Hunter Gilpin, admitted to his "good deed," which, in fact, I came around to realize really was a good deed and did save me some work anyway. The best part of the whole story: I can have a good laugh about it and realize that the whole event was worth a meager ten dollars plus a very good grade on a column for the paper.

Confronting, coping with loss

Death brings people, communities together

Death is a part of life. As hard as it is to cope with, I've come to accept that. Recently, there has been a lot of death around me; people who I knew, people who were close to me. It's one of the most difficult things in life to have to deal with. Continuing your own life after the death of a loved one is hard.

In a small town like this, huge events impact more and more people. Word gets around, people are affected, and the town comes together. It never fails to amaze me how close this town can become in times of heartbreak and sorrow.

As time passes, things start to get easier for some people. They begin to accept their loss and are able to celebrate the life of the one they lost. They will always

feel that pain inside of them, but as the saying goes: "time heals all wounds". For others still, it doesn't. But as I've seen lately, the whole community stays together. I've seen support and love throughout the town that most of us really don't see every day.

It's sort of ironic to know that sometimes it takes something so horrible to realize how great of a place this is. It takes a tragic event for people to really come together and show how much support they can have.

When people are alive and with you each day, you don't tend to think about how wonderful they might be or how much you appreciate their lives. But then once they leave this place, we celebrate them. It is

just so interesting to see how society works and how odd life can be. But then once those things happen, I continue to see good in this place all the time.

I have had people come in and out of my life multiple times. Some by choice, some not. It is easier to accept the ones that exit your life by choice rather than the ones that are taken away by death. It changes things, it makes people think. For me, it makes me want to live my life in a better way.

After losing a loved one recently, it makes me want to live my life like that person did. I want to enjoy life and make the best of it. It makes me realize how short life can be and how the future is never certain for anyone. It also makes me want



to live my life in a way that I'd be proud of and in a way that other people would be proud of me.

Confronting death is hard. It's hard knowing that you will never speak to that person again, that you will never even see them again. All you have left are memories and photos. It's an odd feeling, one that is hard to really grasp fully. In many ways, death actually brings out the best in us, in a community. Although there is anger and sadness after someone was taken away, death really brings people together. As hard and as strange this fact is, it's true.

Superheroes vs. Misleading idols

The battle of common sense rages on

Everyone has a favorite idol in the celebrity world. Ranging from Justin Bieber to Matt Smith, people look up to many different celebrities, but are these really people to look up to?

Celebrities often become corrupt with the money, fame, and fortune, but fictional superheroes don't get corrupted by these three things (besides Deadpool). Since they are fictional, they can be the perfect role models for our youth. Unlike celebrities, they tell the truth and provide a moral compass. Justin Bieber went to jail recently because of DUI, drugs, and street racing, but you think he took the blame for it? No.

Do you think Batman would admit to it? Yes, because he is honest and he is intelligent, even

though he wouldn't do it in the first place. See, perfect role model.

Superheroes often do heroic things without their superpowers in public life. Most celebrities are forced to give charity so they can keep their positions as "good idols". The Flash did a whole recycling program for his community and really helped his city. Justin Bieber egged a house. Really helped his reputation (sarcasm). Yeah, you really should look up to Bieber (more sarcasm).

Wonder Woman was a crime fighter before she got her powers. She fought back against criminals. Miley Cyrus takes drugs and ruins our childhoods. Way to go Miley, impacting kids from the 90's everywhere...badly.

In all honesty, I think today's celebrities have too much self-entitlement for their own good. Justin thought it was all a joke, until he was in front of the judge.

Now, most superheroes never got arrested. The Hulk couldn't control his anger and had to move into the mountains somewhere. He solved the problem, unlike Justin, who had to get bailed out. That didn't solve anything; in fact it caused more problems between Justin and his best friend. Being a misleading idol causes a lot of problems.

Misleading idol fans think their "idols" are perfect and nothing bad can happen to them. Even Superman went to confinement for destroying half of a city. Now these misleading idols won't do any of this, but they are not per-



fect. Say Justin Bieber commits some heinous crime. Fans: "It's OK, we all make mistakes." Heinous crime is not a mistake, it's intentional illegal and immoral behavior. Superman did his bad deed by accident, apologized and rebuilt most of it.

Misleading idols and Superheroes. It is up to you to decide who is safer to look up to. Sure, there are good celebrities to look up to, but not many. I wish our future youth luck. It's going to get worse.

Is anyone else bored with winter?

Well, fear not, relief has arrived!

If you haven't noticed already, this winter has been brutally cold. This winter that 2014 has brought has carried a mix of swirling winds with below zero temperatures along with several inches of snow. Record temperature and precipitation levels have been broken and we are barely halfway through the winter season. One would be crazy if one isn't tired of this intolerable weather and no one can wait for summer to be here already!

So with these below zero temperatures, what is there to do instead of staying inside and doing nothing all winter? Surprisingly, there are several fun activities to do around Cincinnati to entertain yourself during the grueling winter months. Not far from New Richmond is Cincinnati's Fountain Square where there are many fun filled activities. Ice skating is a very popular activity which gets you

out and active, while keeping your mind off of the bitter cold. If you are not the best ice skater and need some pointers, Fountain Square also offers ice skating lessons weekly.

If ice skating isn't your cup of tea, grabbing a bite to eat at the Montgomery Inn and then heading over to the Krohn Conservatory can also fill a winter day. The Montgomery Inn features many tasteful options for a wide range of appetites, including signature soups, salads, sandwiches, not to mention their irresistible ribs. The Krohn is a beautiful conservatory and changes the displays several times throughout the year, and includes a train display and butterfly exhibit.

If you don't feel like going out, there are also plenty of activities to do right at home. What's more fun than hanging out with friends and baking dozens of sweet

treats? There is a wide variety of easy mouthwatering baked goods that anyone could bake. Of course, the only thing that's more fun than baking the treats, is, of course, eating them, but make sure you catch them right out of the oven!

Finally, for the most enjoyable activity to do in the winter is playing in the snow! This winter, one has had many opportunities for fun filled activities in the snow as Cincinnati has exceeded its annual precipitation level. As many schools throughout the tristate have exceeded their allotted snow days, students have been able to enjoy the snow more than ever. As the first snowflake falls with billions of others following, no one can help but fill with excitement. Snowfall brings excitement to every household along with long days of sled riding, snowball fights, building snowmen and many



more delightful activities. After all the energy has been drained from an eventful day out in the snow, nothing is more relaxing than enjoying a nice cup of hot cocoa by the warm fire.

So the next time one is in a predicament with nothing to do on a cold winter day, one knows what to do. There really are several activities hidden in the midst of the cold, snowy winter which can keep one entertained throughout the day. So the next time one is stuck around the house on a long weekend or just on a snowday, do not just sit around, wasting one's life away, get up and do something. There are plenty of options to choose from such as; ice skating, grabbing a bite to eat at the Montgomery Inn, baking desserts with friends, and many more. One just has to take initiative to get out and explore!

Take what is rightfully yours America

Why America needs to be a little more selfish

Our country is in a ludicrously deep debt, our government is slowly evolving from a Democracy to an Oligarchy, there are still thousands of people who are both homeless and jobless here in the United States. Our infrastructure is in a slow decay, and our education system is falling behind the rest of the world. Now I mean this with all seriousness when I say it: America needs to be a little more selfish.

Hear me out on this one. If we brought all of our armed services home from countries across the world, we'd save billions of dollars alone on defense spending. Then we could build up our defenses here at home, making our country safer on the homefront, and making our country stronger overall.

Then we need to stop sending money overseas, and stop helping every third world country that has a natural disaster. I mean

seriously, why should the people here in America have such a hard time recovering from natural disasters and the like, while our own government gives other countries everything they need in their times of crisis with a 100% effort. And really, what is Haiti going to do for us? Would they be an important ally in a war? Do they give us a valuable non-renewable resource, or one that's in short supply? No? Then why should our government help them and others like them, and force our own country to suffer for it?

Just from all the money we'd have already saved, we could fix our country's infrastructure, take care of the homeless, and improve our education system with more teachers, and better prepare them for keeping up with other countries in the world. Then we take the rest of the money we have left over after-

wards, and start really paying off the massive national debt our country has accumulated.

Now I turn to the people of America on this next set of problems. The last time I checked, the United States of America is a government by the people, and for the people. So should we really idly by while our government runs us into the ground? Should we let the ridiculously rich pamper themselves with our money, which should be spent on the things we need? No. We shouldn't. Our government is turning into an oligarchy, a government ruled by a select few because of wealth or military control. Do you want the government to change its ways? Take matters into your own hands as the people of America, and demand that the government do as the people say. How would you do this? If 90% of the United States poor and middle class all



Tristin's Tales

By Tristin Baumann

decide to go on a countrywide strike. A strike of refusing to work, refusing to pay taxes, and refusing to acknowledge the government as an authority. And then do this until the current government agrees to break apart, and allows the people to reestablish the government with new elections of people from the majority of America, not the wealthy.

If you, the people, want these problems to change, you have the power to change it. You are the future of this country and it's fate lies in your hands. It's time to make a difference. For once, be a little more selfish, and this time it might just be a good thing.

Disrespectful people in movie theaters everywhere

People using phones in movie theaters makes people angry

People in movie theaters have a tendency to be rather disrespectful. The rudeness ranges from cell phone usage to talking during the movie. I hate the disrespectful people who come to the movie and then don't even watch it, just talk to their friends or text, tweet, and instagram.

The light is distracting when people use their cell phones. I come to watch the movie, not to sit there and see people using their phones. People, have the courtesy to turn off your phones or put them on vibrate and not use them, thank you.

Cell phone usage should be allowed in the lobby of the theater, but it's extremely annoying when people leave their phones

on and have the nerve to pull them out and use them when they're watching the movie. Unless it's an emergency, you can wait to text, tweet, or instagram until you're out of the movie.

People in the movie theaters talking doesn't really get to me as much as the usage of cell phones; however, it is annoying and disrespectful. A little bit of talking to ask a question about what happened is understandable, but talking through the whole movie burns me.

If I hear you talking for more than maybe three minutes, it will get on my nerves. If you must talk through the whole movie, why even bother going?

It's a common thing for people

to use their phones during the previews, which is completely okay because nobody really pays any attention to them. But as soon as the movie starts and the lights dim, put the phones away and stop talking. People are too dependent on their phones; it's not that big of a deal to put them down for an hour or two.

Theater employees need to come in and check to make sure people aren't using their phones or phones need to be collected and people can get them back at the end of the movie.

Movie theaters need to do something to control or put a stop to the problem. Schools often have cellular service blocked off in some parts of the

Sassy Sadie



By: Sadie LaRocque

building, which would be a great idea for movie theaters so people can't use their phones other than in the lobby.

A simpler piece of advice: people need to think about the other people in the theater and not talk or use their phones during the movie theater. Just stop talking and stay off the phone in public places.

Let's revise high school reading

To *Kill a Mockingbird*, *Of Mice and Men*, and *The Great Gatsby* are some of the most common books taught in ninth grade classrooms but are they the right choice for teaching students literature? Should students be forced to read books they dislike? No.

Students who are forced to read books they don't like will probably end up just not reading them. If students are going to read, why don't teachers propose alternate reading options similar to the books they assign, such as either one of the most popular dystopian novels: *Fahrenheit 451* or *1984*. Alternate options could open the minds of those who students who repeatedly say 'I hate reading'.

Some students, like myself, do not enjoy the overbearing amount of Southern lingo and the countless boring lessons learned in *A Lesson Before Dying*. I would rather enjoy a book such as *A Raisin in the Sun*. I would still learn the same ideas of racism and segregation in the 1930's South, but have a lesser dosage of hard-to-comprehend southern speech.

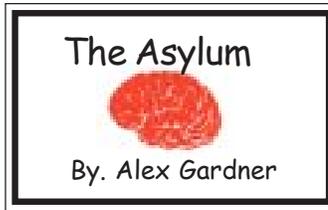
William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is one of the most necessary works of literature for all high-schoolers to read. But what

if the depressing love story is absolutely boring and bonkers to a particular student. Perhaps that student could try another Shakespearean play like *Othello*; again, a similar piece of literature.

These alternate books could only be a problem for teachers, but not when done right. Teachers could create assignments such as short analyses exploring theme, plot, dialogue, etc., that could cover every book without having to do book-specific assignments.

Tests could be longer essays or literary analyses that wouldn't have the teacher creating a different assessment for each book.

Weighing out the pros and cons, the pros outweigh the cons. The option of extending reading choices could open the minds of those students who 'hate' reading and possibly renew their interest in it altogether.



Ted Talks' terrific things LIFESAVER Bottle aptly named

If you're an avid *Messenger* reader you likely have noticed the excess of Netflix themed reviews and stories. Though the glorious website has greatly popularized such programs as *Family Guy*, *The Walking Dead*, *House of Cards*, *Grey's Anatomy* and *Derek* - it has also recently added a slew of informative documentaries to cater to the nerdier of viewers.

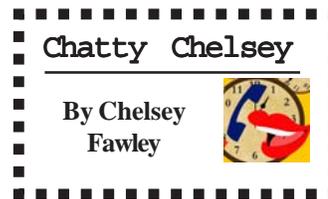
Being one of those nerdy viewers, I recently stumbled across a program I'd never heard of before: *Ted Talks*. It is a scientific themed show that lasts about ten minutes an episode and each time a different scientists demonstrates whatever it is he or she specializes in. There are several different variations of the program, but a device demonstrated on the original version opened my eyes and made me want to share it with the world.

Inventor Michael W Pritchard won the Ted Talks award with his brilliant invention, The Lifesaver Bottle. In a shocking demonstration, Pritchard created some of the nastiest water that I have ever seen. He then proceeded to use his amazing technology, a bottle that contains 15 millimeter pores to filter ANYTHING and everything out of wa-

ter. Though the water he had made appeared to be black in color and definitely contained some feces, after a few quick pumps on the bottle, there is fresh water. Pritchard then drinks it and shares with some audience members who are quite impressed.

More impressive though, is the fact that one Lifesaver bottle can filter 6,000 liters of water before needing to be replaced. A larger canteen designed with the same technology has the ability to filter 25,000 liters - an astonishing quantity that is enough to supply a family of four with water for three years.

This amazing new invention and short informational video has opened my eyes to the incredible items that are available to the general public. This potentially life saving (ha, no pun intended) invention is just the beginning when it comes to the astonishing devices shown on *Ted Talks*. The program is fantastic and absolutely worth a watch.



The Messenger
New Richmond High School
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The Messenger would like to remember Mrs. Betty McKenney as we begin our 74th year, and once again, thank her for her many contributions to our paper.

We would also like to remember Ms. Diana Spinnati, for her support and encouragement of our student journalism program.

The Messenger appreciates our administrators, both past and present, who have supported both the newspaper and the journalism program at NRHS.

Opinions expressed in *The Messenger* are the opinions of the writers only and not necessarily the opinions of the adviser or administration of New Richmond High School.

The Messenger accepts letters to the editor and guest columns and will publish both at the discretion of the newspaper staff and as space permits. Both items must be signed by the writers.

The *Messenger's* regular monthly issues are now online only and are available on the high school's and district's web sites. The Senior Issue will be printed, and will be available for purchase at school at the beginning of April. The cost of a senior issue mailed directly to your home is \$8.

Please direct comments or questions about the paper or its contents to the adviser, at 553-



Faces in the Hallway

By Ashley Gray

Zach Fields

Senior Zach Fields seems to be keeping busy through the winter. "I have been whining, twittering, freezing my butt off, running to my car every time I have to step outside, staying inside as much as possible, and living the thug life," said Fields.

The first chance Zach gets to run outside without a coat on he is going to run. "I am going to play some soccer, soccer, and more soccer," Fields said.

There are various different things Zach is anticipating about the spring. "I am excited for track, soccer, flowers, and more soccer that consists of breaking records and scoring goals," said Fields.



The longest Zach has spent outside during this ridiculously cold weather is thirty seconds mostly to run to his car.

As for the *Farmer's Almanac*, Zach honestly feels there is a pattern to weather trends. "If you don't like the weather in Cincinnati, just wait a minute."

Nick Kirby

In our coldest weather since 1994, sophomore Nick Kirby has been doing just about the only two things he can do. "It has been entirely too cold outside to go do something, so I stay cooped up inside doing a lot of sleeping and playing video games," said Kirby.

When it is warm enough to run outside, Kirby has quite a few things in mind he would like to do. "I am going to run outside, kiss the dirt, and praise the sun for its warmth and Vitamin D," he said.

Nick is looking forward to everything about spring, saying he will feel alive again. Just like many of us, Nick has not spent much time outside this month.

"The most amount of time I have spent outside this month is no more than ten minutes be-



cause of the fear of imminent death," said Kirby.

The *Farmer's Almanac* predicted a very snowy winter this year, and Nick believes the people that compile the *Farmer's Almanac* are very intelligent, knew there was going to be a snowy winter this year and our frozen winter was definitely not a coincidence.

Micha Brumbaugh

As for junior Micha Brumbaugh in this ridiculously cold weather, she has been pre-occupying herself by catching up on some sleep and watching a little bit of Netflix.

Micha is anticipating the first time she is able to run outside without a coat on. "I mostly anticipate being able to walk around outside with my friends and being more social instead of being cooped up inside," said Brumbaugh.

As for the time spent outside this month, Micha has surprisingly spent thirty minutes. "As crazy as it may be, I was jogging with my friend Kendal because we missed softball due to the



snow day," said Brumbaugh.

Micha believes there might be a science of weather trends to the *Farmer's Almanac*. "I don't know what that science is, but if you looked at the *Farmer's Almanac*, it was right," said Brumbaugh.

Anna Hamilton

As for this zero degree weather, freshman Anna Hamilton, has not been up to much of anything, but staying inside because she can't stand the cold.

"I have just been spending time with my friends when they come over, on the computer and my phone A LOT, and it is basketball season so I have been spending a lot of time on the basketball court," she said.

The longest amount of time Anna has spent outside lately is five minutes. "The time it takes me to go from my house to my car is the only time I will allow myself to be outside because I hate the cold and I do not find it enjoyable to be out there any longer than I have to," she said.

According to Anna, when the weather has reached about 70 degrees, she will go outside. "The first thing I am going to do is go out and enjoy the outdoors, maybe go up in my woods, bump



the volleyball in my front yard, or shoot some hoops in my driveway," she said.

Since Anna hates the cold, there are many things she is anticipating about the weather being warmer. "I am looking forward to the smell outside, flowers, and I absolutely love the rain," she said.

Lastly, Anna shares her view on the *Farmer's Almanac*. "Uhh.. Hummm... Well.. I'm going to take a guess that it is a coincidence.. At least we don't have to worry about global warming," she said

Students cope with an overflow of snow days

NRHS attendees' opinions on copious calamity days

By Joe Maxwell

For the first time in years, not only has our school district hit the limit for calamity days, but almost doubled it and we're only halfway through the second semester! Depending on how teachers are assigning their work, students are either overloaded with extra days for relaxation or extra days for teachers to pile on make up work. "Snow days" or calamity days have always been known to be some of students' best friends, but this year, could it be too much time off? So, the real question is, how are the students coping with all these days off.

Senior Zach Fields said, "Snow days are making us miss too much school! I like relaxation, but it is getting kind of boring sitting at home all day so much, plus, I have a lot of make up work for the days off. As for these new blizzard bags, depending on the work given, they can be okay or totally miserable for students."

"Honestly, I think snow days are fun and are completely worth the make up work we get for the day off," said freshman Bradey Strunk, "but I don't even have too much make up work; we have some, but not a lot. Besides, the stuff we have to do is easy, and with these blizzard bags, I think they are worth it, too, and a good idea so we don't have to make up even more school at the end of the year."

Junior Dylan Hayward commented, "I am lovin' all these snow days! I don't even mind the make up work because I hardly do homework anyway!"

There are obviously some very different attitudes toward and mixed opinions about all the snow days this year, as well as, the new blizzard bags idea.

"Snow days are fun, I love them!" said sophomore Hali Stamper, "I don't think the make up work is too much of a burden either because it is just as much, if not less, than we do on normal

school days and the blizzard bags are a good idea, too. I just see it as it's better than adding school days to the end of the year.

Freshman Keaton Montgomery added, "Yeah, snow days are a nice break, but when they add up too much they end up taking away part of the beginning of our summer and then there is less summertime to enjoy. On top of it, I have a lot of make up work and extra work to cover for the day we missed and these blizzard bags are much more time consuming than a class period, I think."

"It is nice to be off school; we get a little bit behind, but I think the teachers are doing a good job at getting us all caught up and thanks to that I don't have too much work to make up at home," said sophomore Paul Jaehnen. "The best idea was blizzard bags, though. I think it is awesome, we don't have to make up school days because of blizzard bags."

So far, it seems like just about everyone asked seems to love the snow days, but are not too enthused by the fact of having to do make up work or blizzard bags, but most can tolerate it.

"Snow days and calamity days are a nice break, but are really annoying to make up and I have a lot of make up work to do. Blizzard Bags, so far, take

up a long time, but are about the same amount of work as an actual school day, so it's not too bad," said freshman Chris Nazareth.

Sophomore Ally Lutz said, "I have a love/hate relationship with snow days because I have a decent amount of work to make up and the thing I don't like about blizzard bags is that they were poorly explained before we were expected to go do them."

"I feel okay during snow days, but it gets kind of boring when there is nothing to do at home, but it's alright because I don't have a lot of work to make up," said sophomore Darik Page, "but, I really don't like these blizzard bags. I would rather make up extra school days. What are a few more days of school compared to our entire summer?"

Students here at NRHS have mixed feelings when it comes to doing work on their days off, but it seems a lot of them are glad they are not having to add extra days to the end of the year, thus taking away from their summer break. Students seem to approve of the idea of blizzard bags, and although, they don't like some of the aspects of them, the overall concept is appreciated. We have two blizzard bag days left; let's hope we don't have to use them.



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Veterans tell their war stories

A sniper, foot soldier and a mechanic explain their experiences

By: Hannah Slye

Veterans and soldiers are a huge part of America; they are one of the most important parts of history and the future of the United States. Veterans were and still are helping the United States become better and stronger. Veterans and soldiers mean a lot to most Americans, which is why they get so much respect from everyone.

Veterans can hold many positions as they serve their country, from being up front shooting, to working in the kitchen to make meals for everyone, to working on ships and planes. Veterans can also be from the first World War all the way to the most recent war in Afghanistan. Veterans will always be veterans, no matter what war or job they were supposed to do during their tour.

Victor Carter I is a veteran from World War 2. He went into the war at age 17 and spent six years defending our country from the enemies. "I was stationed in Omaha Beach at first for training and then was sent to Berlin, Germany," Carter said. Carter was a sniper when he was in Omaha Beach. Carter explained that conditions in Berlin were, "cold, lots of snow, very muddy. We were always hungry, too. We usually had to hunt wild boar to eat."

When asked about some interesting things that happened to him, Carter said, "Once I was run over by a tank and smashed into a bunch of really soft mud. I broke practically all my ribs that day. I was lucky that it didn't kill me; although, I didn't have much time to recover, because a few days later one of the buildings where my friends were staying caught fire, and I went in and helped rescue them." Carter received a Medal of Honor and a Purple Heart for bravery later

that day.

Carter left the war because his tour was over and he left with an honorable discharge. Carter is and was very respected for all he has done. He ended up killing a total of 119 people from the enemy's side. Carter left with a bullet hole still in his left calf. After the war, Carter got married and had six children with his wife. Victor Carter's name can be found on the Liberty Wall at Omaha Beach.

John Slye is another veteran from World War 2. Slye first began going to University of Oregon. There, he was in a program for nine months called ASTP, which was Army Specialized Training Program. He later began basic training in California.

Slye left for Belgium, Germany in January. To get there, Slye rode one of the biggest ships to cross the ocean during WW2. In Belgium, Slye says that, "some people were very standoffish and really didn't want anything to do with us soldiers. Then there were others who were very appreciative of what we were doing for them."

The conditions in Belgium were very rough. Slye said, "The temperature was probably eight below, not counting the wind chill. Also, there was probably at least a foot of snow on the ground." Slye also said that during this time, he had to dig fox holes. "I probably dug nine fox holes in 24 hours. Once you got past the eight inches of frozen ground, the rest went by pretty quick. To my commanders, sometimes daylight and darkness didn't mean anything. We were always working." Slye said.

When asked for an interesting story about his time there, Slye had this to say: "Once, in the Battle of the Bulge, we got too close to the firing positions.

The Germans started shooting, killing many of my friends. I said to myself, 'We can't keep this up, they're going to kill all of us including me. I have got to do something.' I slowly got up from where I was hiding and bent around to get my sights and shot one of the men standing still on top of the hill, where they were shooting from. They don't die like they do in the cowboy movies. They don't just fall, and it's over. It's much worse than that. His friend who was with him quickly ran away from where they were standing, and I couldn't see him any more."

John Slye only lasted in Belgium for 66 days. He had to return home because he was terribly frostbitten. He stayed in a rehab hospital, where he then became a mailman. When John Slye was able to come back home, he married and had three children. From them, he was given six granddaughters. John Slye continues to live to this day in the same place he came home to after the war.

Robert Henry Ross is a veteran of the Vietnam War. Ross was drafted into the war on August 13, 1957. Ross went to boot camp in Fort Knox, Kentucky. Ross finally had to go to Japan for additional training, then Vietnam in February, 1968. Robert Ross was a crew chief who would work on the airplanes and helicopters for the pilots. He was a part of the team called the "Ol' Bird Dogs."

Ross said that the conditions in Vietnam were not very good at all. "We all lived in barracks, which were little metal houses. We all also slept on thin cots. Also, we were all given two pairs of shoes: dress shoes and boots. My pair of boots were size 12 and my dress shoes were size 10. Both were too small for me and

very uncomfortable." Ross also said that the meals were, "all pretty good meals like hamburgers, grits, eggs, bacon, potatoes, etc."

When asked for an interesting story, Ross said, "Once when I was in a plane, we got shot at. Someone else was driving the plane, I was in the back trying to defend us. I was shooting and also throwing grenades out the plane. The third grenade thrown got them. There were 15 confirmed kills that day."

Robert Ross also had another story about how he met his wife. "When I was in the war, I had a pen pal. Her name was Donna Elliot. I started writing her in October of 1968. We wrote to each other for a year, until March 1969. When I came home, I went straight to her. We first saw each other on March 25, 1969. I asked her to marry me on April 17, 1969. We married each other on June 14, 1969. We have been married since then." Robert and Donna Ross have two children, one girl and one boy. They also have five grandchildren.

When Ross came back from the war, although he gained a great life with Donna, he also had some bad losses. From being exposed to Agent Orange, he has liver and kidney troubles, as well as loss of hearing and very bad trauma from the memories in the war.

These veterans all served an important part in defending our country. They all still continue to serve today. Veterans gave the United States the freedom and independence that we have today. Thank you to all veterans who have served, are serving or future veterans who are training now.

Let it snow no more

How teachers cope with calamity days

By Tristin Baumann

We are currently sitting on nine snow days, in one of the toughest winters we've had in a long time. Teachers and students are both way behind in schoolwork, and we are now using these appropriately named "Blizzard Bags" to make up some of the time lost.

English teacher Susan Griffin explained where she and her students are in her sophomore English classes. "Obviously, I'm behind in all my classes and we haven't covered the material that I really wanted to cover. I did start *Macbeth* on schedule, but I had to eliminate some of the non-fiction I had planned to read. Students did do a big writing assign-

ment, but not on my original schedule and I couldn't fit in a project I wanted to do."

Chemistry teacher Laura Prescott also explained how she is adapting to the high number of days off we've had. "I am having to speed up how I teach and now review information that has been forgotten during the breaks."

Griffin also had to cut out a few things that were missed because of snow days. "Yes, but only with the elimination of a couple of things I wanted to do. I won't be able to just add back in the things I didn't do; I thought it was more important to move on to *Macbeth* and forgo a couple of

other things."

Prescott said is not where she needs to be with her classes, and is not caught up yet. "It will be a long time before I am to where I need to be. I am afraid that by the end of the year I will not have covered as much as I would like to have."

Social studies teacher Bill Harris said that the increased number of snow days impacts his honors and AP classes the most. "I'm way behind in all my classes. Unfortunately it means we do few activities and simulations because they are time consuming. In a class like Western Civ that's less important because I'm not teaching to the test. It's killing me in AP Geo."

English Teacher Michelle Senter has been stuck on the same lessons for a while. "I feel like I have been teaching *Hamlet*, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, and *The Adventures of Huck Finn* forever! Honestly, though, my 9th and 11th grade classes didn't get too far behind on their reading assignments. Any time there was a prediction for snow, I made sure the students had an assignment to complete in the event school was cancelled because of the weather. I didn't want my classes to get too far behind. I'm definitely going to have to pick up the pace in my senior Brit. Lit. class, though, thanks to the snow days and my bout with the stomach virus."

Griffin said that students seem to suffer as much as teachers when their routine is disrupted.

"I think students are as confused as I am! My weekly plan for the past few weeks has gone through at least one revision and I feel like I have to introduce myself to my classes every time

we come back from a snow day!"

Prescott also noticed her kids having trouble in and out of class. "They seem like they are having trouble getting motivated. I am worried that students are not taking the Blizzard Bag work serious and doing it ASAP."

"It's tough on students when the routine is disrupted. It's twice as tough on them because it's all new information and there is no flow or rhythm to any courses. It's natural that they would have a difficult time buckling down when things get cancelled, pushed back or rescheduled time after time," added Harris.

Griffin had mixed feelings about whether or not our number of calamity days should increase. "I'm a big fan of getting out for the summer before Memorial Day, but missing this many days can't be good for students because they're missing so much. I know that at the end of the school year, it's hard to keep students motivated and actively learning, but I honestly wouldn't be opposed to adding on a few days at the end of the year."

Prescott doesn't mind making up snow days. "I just think it has been a strange year. Making them up at the end is fine, but I know it creates problems with graduation, vacations and most of the state and AP testing not getting the time to prepare that they need."

Harris mentioned that there are some problems with simply adding on days at the end of the school year.

"I don't see as much value to days after testing is over. I do think that there it a lot of learning that goes on here that doesn't

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show up on the OGT or an AP test. More days would equal more learning but a day in May is probably less productive than one in January.”

The Blizzard Bags, homework that is posted online and assigned to student during a snow day is something new to the district this year. Griffin isn't sure about whether or not she likes the “Blizzard Bags” yet.

“I do like the idea of students doing classwork while they're at home on yet another snow day, although I worry about the ones with no internet. I tried to make my blizzard bags either something truly relevant to what we're doing in class or something to prep them for the OGT.”

Senter likes the idea of the “Blizzard Bags”. “The Blizzard Bags are a good idea, and I think the students appreciate (for the most part) getting the chance to use these assignments for 3 potential snow days. I do have to wonder, though, how the kids whose parents are at work on snow days manage to get through the assignments without the help of their parents, especially students in elementary school. If you are an elementary

school student, that Blizzard Bag is a lot of work, and even the best of students needs supervision and assistance to make sure they keep their focus.”

Although Harris said he sees some benefit to Blizzard Bags, he would like to see one alteration.

“I think there is value to those assignments although they would be much more effective if they had to be turned in in a timely manner. Maybe everyone can't get them done on the snow day but two weeks is way too long. There is no course where you're doing the same thing two weeks later.”

Griffin doesn't think that the state of Ohio or the district could prepare for this kind of winter any better. “I don't think anyone can plan for Mother Nature--she is a cruel, cruel mistress and we're all at her mercy. We haven't had a winter like this in at least a decade, so I don't think anyone expected snow, ice, sleet, freezing rain, etc.”

Prescott doesn't think preparation will matter next year. “I have been teaching 16 years and I have never experienced a winter like this. Either way, next year I don't think it will matter. We are

going to an hourly system instead of counting the school year by days. Our district is way over for hours if I am understanding correctly on that issue, so we should be good to go.”

Harris agreed that the hourly calculation for calamity days should benefit our district. “It's been an unusually severe winter. It's a moot point now. Next year the school year will be based on hours not days and we should have plenty to spare even in a tough winter.”

As for what teachers do at home to keep themselves occupied, the NRHS staff is probably no different from its students.

Griffin said she hates being stuck at home in the winter. “I'm tired of spending so much time cooped up in my house and there's nothing to do! I want time off in the spring when I can be outside in the garden, not looking at snow and ice in my driveway. I'm amused by *That 70s Show* reruns in the morning, but

I want to come back to school!”

Senter's home life has been mixed in with getting caught up at school because of the high number of snow days. “The one day I had hoped to get caught up on my grading, my son had his first Blizzard Bag assignment. Needless to say, I didn't get around to that big stack of grading that day.”

Harris, meanwhile, has enjoyed some quality family time. “If anything it's meant more time with family (my grandson in particular)”

Vocal Music Director Doug Heflin is split on his opinion of snow days. “Snow days are an interesting breed....A day off now and then can be nice, but on again / off again schedules are rough. Unfortunately, if we make the days up at the end of school, my performances are over, so it doesn't help. On the other side, a snow day can be a beautiful sight, and I usually get some composing in, which is nice.”

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NRHS family takes on new, big adventure

Fetchaks move into eco-friendly house

By Josie Buckingham

As the world is changing with the times, new types of houses seem to be popping up everywhere. These new houses include new types of technology. NRHS secretary Julie Fetchak and her family recently moved into one of these eco houses. The house has brought on many changes for the family.

“Our new house is completely off-grid (except for a water pipe, the road and of course, internet). We have solar panels covering 1/2 of the roof that charge a battery pack; when the sun isn’t shining (or a few other variables), we use a diesel-fuelled generator to charge up the same batteries. We heat the house using an outside Hardy heater which heats up a tank of water that is then pushed through pipes under the floors. When we run out of wood (or like most recently, my husband cut 2 fingers pretty bad), we can use propane to heat,” explained Fetchak.

Fetchak and her family were

looking for something different in their lives. They would watch various TV shows like Wild Alaska, Bear Grylls, Survivor Man, and about people living off grid or off the land. “We moved in to this home in October after only searching for a few months for ‘the perfect home’. We always thought it might be something we could do and could thrive in,” said Fetchak.

The Fetchak’s former home was sufficient but the family longed for something more, she said.

“We had been living in the same house for over 10 years and wanted more land and some sort of water (pond, creek, lake). My husband, a Navy veteran from the Persian Gulf War (he did five tours during the war), my son (a rambunctious eight year old) and myself are all avid fishermen, so some sort of water was almost as important as the house itself. Our old house was a three bedroom ranch and we are big

people so needed something more...something bigger,” said Fetchak.

Like all adventures, the family has faced their share of difficulties and obstacles as they have set off on this new journey. They have had the generator not start at night in the below zero temperatures, bad cell phone service, the endless amount of wood needed, and must be energy conscious when using anything electrical in the house. The issues that they have faced so far have all been fixable and they’ve learned to cope with their various problems.

Fetchak said that her favorite part of the house is the nature and adventure. “We love the drive to the house. You pull off the main road onto a gravel road that meanders alongside a creek for a mile before reaching the house. It is nature at it’s best; we’ve seen so much wildlife here it is amazing; from owls and hawks to squirrels, deer, coyotes, bob cats

and of course fish. I love watching the creek that is ever-changing. It is my serenity; I will watch the creek or just sit on the porch and watch life go by instead of turning on the TV any day of the week,” said Fetchak.

The family doesn’t mind being so far away from really anything else. They enjoy being secluded and off on their own. “It has brought and dropped us off right smack dab in the middle of the wilderness. Some who have seen it wonder why would anyone want to live so far away from the nearest neighbor and wonder how we do it. So, I guess living where we do isn’t for everyone and I can appreciate the ones who say we are too far out and too disconnected; I can appreciate but not relate any longer. Being on a forever camping trip (with real beds to sleep in, bathrooms, showers and amenities of home) brings you to nature and to a way of life of yesteryear that we have yearned for and didn’t even know it. We are at peace, we wake up in peace and go to bed in peace,” she explained.

While the new living environment has changed things for the family physically, Fetchak said that it has also had emotional effects. “On top of all the physical attributes of the house itself, we have gained emotional as well as spiritual blessings. The house kind of brought us back to a pioneer mindset of necessities, what is really a necessity and what is not. When I grew up, there were no cell phones, no internet, no computers; we were forced to play outside and actually speak and play with friends. We, with everyone else now, have computers, internet, cell phones, Facebook, Twitter, but at the end of the day, we rely on



There’s no place like home! The Fetchak estate in one of our frequent winter snows. Photo/J. Fetchak

face to face contact. This has brought us closer as a family; but don't get me wrong, at any time you can find any of us with our heads buried deep in our iPad or phones/laptops seeing what the rest of the world is up to," she said.

When the family first learned about the house, they were just returning from a camping trip. "We went on a camping trip this summer back to my husband's hometown, Monaca, Pennsylvania, for a few weeks. When we got back, we had emails with all sorts of houses for sale from our realtor. I no longer unpacked our stuff and was looking for a house. I found the latest email from the realtor and scrolled down to the first listing. I knew right away it was ours. I hurriedly scrolled through all the pictures and called to make an appointment to see it. I won't bore you with all the details, but a couple of months later we were packing and planning the move," said Fetchak. "We searched the internet high and low for re-

sources on solar panels and battery packs and anything and everything we might need to know about solar and living off grid. We moved in thinking, 'we got this!'. I'm here to tell you that in four months, we know nothing. Literally. As much as you can read about something, it is nothing like living it day in and day out."

Aside from simply understanding the solar energy process, Fetchak said the house presents a couple of other challenges, especially in such a cold winter.

"The Hardy heater is a hungry monster which constantly needs to be fed. We gather wood on a daily basis and have become quite obsessed with it as wood has moved from last place to first place in importance," she said. "The Hardy heater needs to be fed every six or so hours, which means someone has to get up in the middle of the night to feed him and check the battery."

Fetchak's family members have begun to look at every downed tree they pass and think

about how to cut it and transport it back to their home, and although their electric bill has dropped to zero, that savings has been offset by diesel and propane costs.

"We've had to order diesel three times and propane four so far, which by far exceeded the costs of no electric," said Fetchak. "We're obsessed with watching the battery level on the Trimetric, and we are now people who turn off a light when leaving a room and look at the Energy Star sticker very closely when buying an appliance."

Moving into this new home and new lifestyle has been a huge change for the Fetchak family. Even though it comes with many issues that they face every day, the family says they wouldn't change their minds if they were to do it again.

"When I explain issues to my mom and complain about this and that, she always asks me if we would still buy it knowing what we know now. The answer has always been YES, a resounding YES! The pros by far outweigh the cons on any day- good or bad- and this is only the beginning of our new journey. A journey that is somehow taking us back in time to pioneer days but is always still moving forward at record-pace. More than ever I want to slow down time



Feed me! The Hardy heater heats water that is then pushed through pipes to heat the house. It requires round the clock attention and an enormous amount of wood to keep it going. Photo/J. Fetchak.

but the more I try to slow it down the faster it flies by me. Because of this, I am thankful for the move to our new house and to be able to appreciate everything God has provided for us!" said Fetchak.

The Fetchak family is loving this new adventure that they have set off on, and to sum it all up, there is one thing that they love the most. "I guess what I like most is the change of lifestyle we were 'forced into'. It is the serenity that as soon as I open any door to the outside world, peace is waiting for me, calling me," Fetchak said.



The trimetric shows the percent of battery and how many amps/volts are being used. If it drops below 25%, it is set to automatically shut down the house, which also means it shuts down the blower for the heat. Photo/J. Fetchak.



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Athlete of the Issue: Frankie Taulbee

Sophomore sensation constantly turns heads in each sport he plays

By: Chandler Cochran

Sophomore sensation Frankie Taulbee can be heard loud and clear throughout the halls of New Richmond High School, but it's what happens on the court that really gets people talking. Taulbee plays three sports here at NRHS and has been known to turn some heads when he starts to play.

Taulbee got started playing football, basketball, and baseball at a young age because he enjoyed them a lot and his family was heavily involved in sports as well.

"My dad was probably the biggest influence on me getting into sports," said Taulbee.

Having a varsity spot on the basketball team his freshman year was a surprise to most people, including Taulbee him-

self.

"It was a shock at first," said Taulbee, "but it was nice to see hard work pay off."

You can also see Taulbee on Friday nights under lights as starting middle linebacker. This year was his first year on varsity, but a year he will not soon forget.

"Playing varsity football this year was a lot of fun. Starting for this team as a sophomore meant a lot to me. It felt good knowing the coaches knew I could handle the job."

When asked about his motivation to succeed as an athlete, Taulbee responded with, "The hard work and dedication you put into something like this can sometimes be a lot to take on, but the payoff you get from it can mean more than the world to

you."

Just like every other athlete in the world today, Taulbee is no different in the sense that he has his own idols in the sports world. Taulbee is proud to say he looks up to LeBron James.

"He is the man. I look up to him because he works hard and is one heck of an athlete. I am also a big fan of him because he is just amazing and doesn't let anything get into his way.

The best part of being on a team, for Taulbee is the opportunity to play for his high school, and the bond he creates with his teammates.

"It makes me feel good about myself to share all of these memories with my teammates. Succeeding as a team feels a lot better than succeeding on my

own because I'll always have someone to share these memories with."

The creativeness, and relentlessness of some rival schools' student sections have been known to point out Taulbee while on the court and make a lot of noise when he gets the ball in hopes of trying to distract him.

"I don't buy into all that stuff," explained Taulbee. "You can't get mad at them for showing some school spirit, but I just focus on the game and I never let that stuff get to my head."

You will continue to see Taulbee and the rest of his teammates, on the field, court and diamond doing what they do best, working hard and having fun.

Is this finally Cincinnati's year to shine?

The Reds have all of the pieces to the puzzle to finally get a World Series title

If you haven't noticed already, it's cold outside, like really, really cold. This weather has got me thinking about two things: snow days and more importantly, Opening Day, which needs to get here fast! Most people associate the start of baseball season with the start of spring and I cannot wait for both of these things to happen.

Last season, the Cincinnati Reds left us hanging when they "choked" in the playoffs losing to the Pirates in a one game wild card. Now, I always have high hopes for my favorite teams, but I honestly think that the Reds could make some serious noise this season. With the firing of manager Dusty Baker just after the playoff loss, and the promotion of Brian Price from pitching coach to head skipper, the Reds finally have someone who I think will make all the right moves to put us back into the playoffs.

During the off-season, the Reds were also trying to trade Brandon Phillips, which was a bad idea from the start. If you want to win more games than you did last year, you have to keep your best player, especially when he wants to stay on the team. The organization offered a proposal to trade him to the Yankees but they declined, thank God.

I'm not totally convinced Phillips is here to stay, but for now I'm going to let myself think that because when you have the best second baseman on your team, life is better. Apparently, "management" and Phillips had some issues and it was in the best interest of the team for him to leave, and now that he is still here I hope it doesn't cause problems in the clubhouse. That's the last thing this team needs.

The Reds have all the right ingredients to be the best team in

baseball this year. Our pitching could use some help, but at least they are working on that. Having Votto, Phillips and Bruce defending the diamond almost flawlessly, and having young guns like Billy Hamilton and Todd Fraser boosting the offense, there is no excuse not to make the Cardinals and Pirates look like minor league teams when we play them this year.

I know there is a difference between a team on paper, and that same team actually going out and playing, but this team has a lot of talent that, if it's used to our advantage, will have us in first place and we will be almost unstoppable. These are some pretty bold predictions, but when was the last time Cincinnati had a great playoff team, and were loaded with talent? The point is, it's been way too long since we have had a post season to talk about.

Bow Tie Brigade



By: Chandler Cochran

With pitchers and catchers already reporting, I am very excited and anxious to see what Brian Price and the Reds will be able to do this season. Hopefully, it involves a division title, playoffs, and a World Series title. It has been too long since a team from Cincinnati has actually lived up to preseason expectations, but this year I'm betting that will change. Maybe it's because I really have high hopes for this team, but it's probably because I am a desperate Cincinnati sports fan who really wants to see one of our teams succeed. So, when this dreaded snow finally melts and spring is on its way, everyone get ready to play ball!

Kicking the ball into the Hall of Fame

Hopewell winningest soccer coach in NR history

By Ciera Moore

Former NR soccer coach and ISI supervisor Denny Hopewell has been inducted into the New Richmond Sports Hall of Fame this year. Hopewell had 20 years of coaching experience when he came to coach New Richmond's soccer teams in 2000. He had also coached Madeira, Indian Hill and a Southeast District select team, The Cardinals, for more than 20 years.

Hopewell coached boys' soccer from 1998 to 2004, as well as girls' soccer from 2005 to 2006. He was named Southern Buckeye Conference coach of the year about nine times. His teams won a league title every year, except for his final season when the girls' team finished second.

Hopewell didn't exactly play soccer while he was in high school. "When I was in high

school there was not a soccer team, so I played football. After joining the service, I was sent to Germany for three years. After watching my first soccer (futbol) game I was hooked. The skills they had were incredible. We had pickup games and rec games and that was the extent I played," he admitted.

Hopewell didn't start out being a soccer coach. Before he started coaching, he was in the service then he was an officer on the Madeira police force. But after retiring from being an officer he became a coach. "My daughters all played soccer on select teams and the club needed a coach. I was a soccer nut and said yes. That led to twenty years of coaching and playing teams across the United States."

Being a coach for that long,

Hopewell said he definitely learned a few things. "The things I have learned from coaching are numerous. How to deal with players and parents, accepting my own limitations, and accepting what I can control," he said.

Having been a very successful soccer coach, Hopewell has many tips to give other coaches. "My advice to other coaches is very simple. Enjoy the time you have with the players and love the game," he explained.

For students thinking of joining their school soccer teams, Hopewell has advice for them. "Before you join a soccer team, realize that it takes commitment. If it is not fun, don't do it. You can be as good as you want but it takes practice," he said.

While participating in a sport athletes go through many experiences that will help them maintain their physical fitness and keep their friends while making new ones. "Being on a sports team gives you the experience to deal with life in general. It teaches you diversity, adversity,

and being able to cope with emotions. Also, to be successful, it takes work," he explained.

Looking back at his career, Hopewell has many accomplishments that he is proud of, along with many memories. "I have so many good memories of NR that it is hard to point out just one. The fondest memories are of the players and the dedication they had to start a tradition," he said.

Since retiring from coaching, Hopewell served as New Richmond High School's in-school suspension monitor from 1998 until he retired in 2012. "Since retiring I have done a lot of fishing and spending time with my grandchildren. It is really nice not having a set schedule," he explained.

Having accomplished so much in his life it is no wonder that Denny Hopewell is in our Sports Hall of Fame. Hopewell is a great role model for all the soccer coaches who want to inspire their players, like Hopewell did his own.

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Cute, funny film about modern relationships

That Awkward Moment gets great reviews

By Josie Buckingham

That Awkward Moment is a romantic comedy that had me laughing and aw-ing the entire time. The film stars Zac Efron, along with Miles Teller and Michael B. Jordan. The three team up in this film as best friends living in New York City who make a bet to stay single.

This film is shown from the odd male perspective and goes inside the minds of different types of

dudes. It delves into the romantic lives of modern-day people, and more specifically, young adults. Picking up women, holding relationships in today's world, and dealing with heart-break are all touched on throughout the film.

Efron and Teller's characters are trying to stay away from love and just have fun. The two have always lived by this and didn't

really want it to change. Jordan's character had always led his life how he thought he was supposed to- college, medical school, marriage- but that ends badly when he learns of his wife's unfaithfulness and he begins dealing with divorce. This is when the three make the bet to not fall in love, but to just stay single and have fun with women.

This plan doesn't work out so

again, ending badly yet again.

The title of this film is based on the moment in a relationship after a few weeks of dating when one begins with "So..." and follows with the awkward question: "Where is this going?" or, "What are we doing?" It's the point where someone has to define what the relationship is and if there is any point in really moving on with it.

The actors and actresses fit well in their various parts. This unique film brings new faces to the screen. Each one seemed sort of perfect for the role they were playing. The three lead men, Efron, Teller, and Jordan, all join together to make a great modern-day trio of men in the dating scene. I really liked how they all portray laid-back characters and how they fit so well into their selected parts. They all also experiencing what love is all about.

I really enjoyed the entire plot. It was a different type of film from a different perspective, showing how men are today and how they think in modern relationships. It fits well with how relationships and the dating scene are today. Relationships now are sort of more relaxed and dating isn't how it used to be. This modern touch is great and allows the new generation to relate. It is a movie that I would recommend to others, especially to young adults. It kept me laughing and had a big cute factor at many points.

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Modern Family becomes a hit

Hectic lives of different families are quite hilarious

By: Claire Burns

Modern Family, a popular American comedy series, aired on ABC, is a very entertaining and fun-filled television show. It tells the story of exactly what the title describes: the hectic life of the modern-day American family. The series features three related families and their private, yet constantly connected lives.

The families include Jay Pritchett, who lives with his second wife, along with their sons including one who is his stepson. Jay's son and daughter also

have their own individual families; Claire, and her husband, Phil Dunphy, have three children themselves: Haley, Alex, and Luke; Jay's son, Mitchell, lives with his partner, Cameron, with their adopted daughter Lily. As you can tell, this family is constantly caught up in action and full of life.

Each episode begins with the response of a family member of a particular, yet humorous question while showing clips of the upcoming episode. The episode

then follows the many adventures and mishaps of each family as they navigate through daily and often complicated lives.

The families featured on *Modern Family* are fairly relatable to the lifestyles of many of the viewers of the show. As many shows these days try to portray the picture of the "perfect family", the families on *Modern Family* hid none of their flaws. The hectic lives of the families on the series and their stumbles along the way are what provides the entertainment to the viewers.

While the lives of these families are hectic at times, they are always there for each other in the end which adds to the touching part of the show. The advantage of a large, close family is that there is always someone there for everyone else, and the parents always provide good role models.

One of the hilarious parts of the show's premise is the marriage of Jay and Gloria with the significant age difference of 30 years.

Jay's daughter, Claire, has a pretty interesting family of her own coping with her husband's sometimes immature personality, and she is constantly having to get Phil out of his troubles. Claire's children play polar opposite personalities. Haley plays the role of a stereotypical ditsy high school girl as the only

things that are always on her mind are parties and boys. The middle child, Alex, is the exact opposite of Haley as she plays as a nerdy, bookworm teenager. Finally, Luke, plays an amusing role as the only son as he copes with his ADD and at times acts more mature than his father.

Notably comical is the family of Mitchell and Cameron, who set a humorous mood as they struggle to fit in the mostly "straight" society as they raise their adopted Vietnamese girl. The actors perfectly play their roles as gay partners, which really adds to the charm of the show.

Modern Family continues to receive praises and critical acclaim and the show is known for its humor, notable acting, and writing. The first season of the show received a Metacritic score of 86 out of 100 and an A- rating from Entertainment Weekly while calling it "immediately recognizable as the best new sitcom of the fall" (modernfamily.wikia.com).

Modern Family is a highly addictive series which combines all the aspects of the lifestyle of a typical family. The variety of personalities intertwined in the family adds to the comedic mood. Each episode tells of the hectic lives of the large family, but always ends in the reuniting with and appreciation of the family.

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Throwback Thursday every day

"Sit right back and you'll hear a tale, a tale of a fateful trip..."

By Ciera Moore

Are you tired of these new, drama-ridden TV shows? Well, instead of waiting for the next new episode of a cliché soap opera or reality TV, watch a more vintage show. If you've ever seen shows like *I Love Lucy* or *M*A*S*H*, then try *Gilligan's Island*.

Gilligan's Island started on September 26th, 1964 and ended April 17th, 1967. The show started in black and white and by the second season it was being filmed in color. There were a total of three seasons in *Gilligan's Island* with 98 episodes altogether.

Gilligan's Island starts with the cast on a three hour tour, but the boat gets caught in a tropical storm, blowing them way off course. The crew is stranded on an island in the Pacific after that.

Throughout the season's the passengers try to come up with ways to get off the island, from befriending natives to tricking a famous movie producer.

It confuses me how the passengers have enough luggage to keep them clothed for years. Why did they pack so much for a three-hour tour around the Hawaiian islands? I would bring the necessities, like sunscreen and maybe another outfit, but they brought almost four bags per person.

But then you have the characters like the Skipper and Gilligan that wear the same exact thing through the whole show. It might be because they are the crew of the ship and did not bring clothes with them, but why would they wear the same thing all the time?

The crew of the S.S. Minnow was the Skipper, and his first mate Gilligan. The passengers that day were the Professor, Mary Ann and Ginger, as well as Mr. and Mrs. Thurston Howell the III.

My favorite character out of *Gilligan's Island* would have to be Gilligan himself. Gilligan is just so carefree and innocent for a middle-aged man. He tried his best to get everybody's approval, especially the Skipper, who was like a father figure to him. If you are clumsy, or goofy, you will easily relate to Gilligan.

My second favorite character would be Mary Ann; she really didn't get much recognition on *Gilligan's Island*. She was more in the background or tagging along with another character, but she did get a few episodes to herself, and these expressed how sweet and helpful she was to everybody.

Even though *Gilligan's Island* is an old 60's TV show, it definitely was good. I watch it be-

cause it is entertaining watching the characters' attempts to leave the island fail because of Gilligan, most of the time. But it's funny watching the silly antics of Gilligan and the rest of the cast-aways.

Viewers can also see how different shows today are compared to back then, like the special effects or just the way the characters talk. Compared to TV shows of today, special effects have definitely improved. The background of *Gilligan's Island* is a noticeably fake jungle, making it a little less enjoyable as a show.

Watching *Gilligan's Island* makes me feel like I'm being transported to the 60's era, like I'm a teenage girl back then. I get a taste of the way that America used to be, and I get all this just by watching an old TV show. Watching *Gilligan's Island*, I am able to see what my older family members watched for entertainment as well as how people acted back then.



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Remake of *Carrie* still filled with suspense

Go watch the newest version of the classic novel and old film

By: Collette Gibbs

I recently watched the 2013 remake of the classic horror movie, *Carrie*. **Carrie** was originally a novel written by Stephen King in 1974. The novel has been remade into movies and musicals multiple times. The recent movie stars Chloe Grace Moretz, a prominent young star, as Carrie White, and Julianne Moore as her religious mother.

In this version, Carrie is an unusual high school student with an extremely religious mother and telekinetic powers. Her mother is not completely sane; when Carrie does something wrong, her mother locks her in a small closet and orders her to pray. In the beginning of the

movie, viewers begin to see signs of Carrie's powers, as does she. The first signs of her telekinetic powers are the exploding lightbulb in the shower and the exploding water jug. Through the movie, Carrie learns more about her powers and they eventually lead to a huge catastrophe when Carrie is pushed too far by her peers.

Chloe Grace Moretz does a great job of portraying Carrie White, who is a complex character. Moretz does a good job of showing a lot of emotion. Julianne Moore also does a wonderful job of portraying Margaret White, Carrie's psychotic mother. Moore makes it very be-

lievable that she is a psychopath. I think that the actors that were cast for the movie really brought the story to life, and I do not think that anyone could have played the characters in the movie better.

The director did a wonderful job of keeping the movie's plot similar to the plot of the original novel. Even most of the small events are the same; for instance, the shower scene at the beginning of the movie where Carrie's peers torment her for being so naive. While the movie does show Carrie being tormented by her peers in the showers, it does not show her mother beating her, but only shows Carrie being

locked into a closet and being ordered to pray for forgiveness. I think that these were good changes to the movie, but I would have preferred that the movie was more like the book.

Overall, the movie was great, although I would not recommend it for children or people who do not like gory movies because there is a lot blood and death. The movie was suspenseful and managed to capture my attention for the whole duration of the film. There was not one scene of the film that was boring; the entire movie was action packed and thrilling.

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The dead are returning from the afterlife And the government is not at all pleased

By Alex Gardner

The first novel written by Jason Mott shows he might be one of bestselling authors of the twenty-first century, that is, if premise sells.

One day, elderly couple Lucille and Harold are surprised when their son, who died several decades ago at the age of eight, returns to their doorstep, still eight years old. But the couple are not alone; thousands upon thousands of people who have died are coming back. As the book goes on, this blessing of a second chance turns into a nightmare. As more and more people return, and places to put them run out, Arcadia, Missouri, the setting, becomes a concentration camp.

One of the book's biggest flaws is not explaining how the people were coming back. I was drawn to the book when the premise caught my eye and by the thought of how the resurrections were occurring, but the ma-

lor plot hole, when nothing was explained, drove me insane after I finished, but was not even close to how angry I was when the climax was reached. Even though it fit the rest of the book's slowly-paced story, it wasn't as 'game-changing' as I expected it to be. The character who tries to defy the government kills an unimportant character representing a dramatic breakthrough, but killing the entire subplot of the character's previous breakdown over the church.

With the flaws aside, *The Returned* is a pretty well book. The main character, Harold, is the best part of the book. His wisecracks and constantly varying parenting skills bring humor to the book and balance his wife's, Lucille's, dramatic change. Lucille is partly to blame for the problematic climax. She constantly seems completely psychotic, bringing the weird edge modern-day books like *The Five*

People You'll Meet in Heaven, by Mitch Albom, are missing, but she still has the sweet, old lady vibe, making you love and hate her at the same time.

She's Margaret White from *Carrie* meets Betty White. She'll bake you a cookie, feed it to you, tell you to pray, then beat you with a revolver when you refuse, sending you on a rollercoaster of emotions. The author unfortunately uses her as a tool to portray how he thinks conservative views could lead to bad things, and this causes Lucille to be an unrealistic character (in the sense she blurts out random unrelated thoughts at times of importance.)

The text itself is well written and behind the premise is the strongest item in the novel. Full of poetic similes and metaphors, it sounds like you're reading a long beautiful poem. "As if cued by a stage director..." But the most fascinating thing about the

way Mott writes are the two page 'Bridges' between chapters. These segments are set in many different parts of the world ranging from Germany's harsh 'big-stick' way of dealing with the returned to the Canadians' peaceful way of controlling the returned, and throughout the book, these bridges show the slow collapse of a world without complete hysteria.

The book was so intriguing it has already sparked a television show adaption within weeks of release. The show, starring Omar Epps, Devin Kelley, and Frances Fisher, will air on ABC in the upcoming fall season.

The Returned is not a *War and Peace* but is better than ninety percent of the books published in the past two years. Jason Mott proves he may be one of the next great novelists of the twentieth century.

Bates Motel is no 'Norm' of a show

The *Psycho* prequel is definitely worth the watch

By Chelsey Fawley

As a horror movie buff, Sir Alfred Joseph Hitchcock is one of my favorite movie directors of all time. He falls shortly behind Tarantino, but not for lack of amazing stories. One of the most acclaimed films Hitchcock released (possibly one of the most acclaimed films ever), *Psycho*, started the psychological thriller movie phase. Since its' release, hundreds of films that boggle the minds of their viewers have been put out. A (horrid, albeit) remake was even released in the seemingly distant 90's featuring Vince Vaughn.

Nothing has put a hand to the original display of Norman Bates

though, at least, not until recently. A&E deserves recompense for their fantastic prequel style show to *Psycho* called *Bates Motel*. Though it is set as a prequel to the 60's flick, *Bates Motel* takes place in current time. The show follows a young Norman, his mother Norma, and his brother Dylan as they try to start a new life in a new town after the death of their father.

As one could guess, however, things do not exactly go peachy keen for the Bates. Even the younger generation of horror buffs can understand the turmoil the family goes through. Within

the first episode, one can easily see that Norman was not the only lunatic in his family. With a seemingly sociopathic brother and a painfully overbearing mother, it's easy for viewers to see how the young man snaps into a serial killer. If the viewer isn't familiar with the original film, the conclusion can still easily be drawn that something is wrong with Norman.

As he fights to fit in his new town and deal with a mother who won't let him out of the nest, Norman spirals more and more into a darkness. He begins to lose himself, and the artistic display of lunacy shown by A&E

holds a candle to the shocking displays used by Hitchcock himself in the original.

The show has already been approved for a second season which airs in March. Though the story is a prequel, it takes place in the current time. Hopefully it will lead up to a (good!) modernized remake, but the producers have not disclosed if that is their intention.

Until then, I suggest every horror fan tune into A&E or Netflix to 'catch' the young serial killer in action.

The Bachelor doesn't appeal to viewer

Looking for "the one" on TV is just pathetic

By Ashley Gray

The Bachelor, have you seen it? I don't care if it is loved by millions of people, I think it needs to go. Who needs a show about a bunch of women competing against each other for the same guy? Basically, *The Bachelor* is a television show about a man who is attempting to find love with a dozen women who all compete to be the bachelor's one true match. This show consists of women dying for the affection of the lovely bachelor and his taking them on one-on-one-dates and the camera catching their every move. Definition of pathetic.

My question is, why is there a need to even have a show like this? We all know people anticipate their future fairy-tale dream of love and romance to become true, but why should it be televised? Everyone struggles to find the one true love to spend

the rest of his or her life with, but this show is portraying the exact opposite of what people should do during that search. Exploring your options is definitely a good choice, but not the way *The Bachelor* does it.

What is more pathetic is how these women succeed in making themselves look like low-class high school girls. Their gossip and jealousy, along with debating who is getting the most attention from the bachelor at the time or what extent they will go to to get attention is just more proof that this show doesn't portray love one bit. This is just a show about a bunch of women who think they are in love at first sight, but it is solely based on lust. How can you be in love with someone who you don't even know? Beats me. The only reason these women are chasing after this man so hard is because

of his good looks, charm, confidence, and big hunk of money.

Another factor that makes this show unbelievably awful is how shallow these women are. Some of the women who are on the show have children and have left them to go find love with this mystery man. What kind of example is that showing their children if they watch this show?

Most of these women have looks, but barely any personality, and their looks go away as soon as they open their mouths. Just like in real life, these women take sides and back stab each other. It is amazing what these women resort to, attempting to find their 'Mr. Perfect.' Along with all of this commotion, this one man has to choose one of these women that he can marry and live happily ever after with.

It is quite comical how the show unravels and how the bachelor seems to believe he can find true love in the selection of all the unappealing women on the show.

You are not going to find your perfect match with someone who is basically cheating on you with other participants on national television. This show is not based on finding true love, but it's a competition to see who can one up each other for more attention. Millions of people have found their match without being on reality TV. This show is not realistic and it is obviously scripted. Don't fall for this garbage; turn something else on. If you thought internet dating was bad, this reality TV show just took it to another disgusting level.



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Flappy Bird, the newest way to break your phone

Why must people produce things like this?

By Hunter Gilpin

Ladies and Gentlemen, we bring you another horrible, pointless app, Flappy Bird! We will waste your life and crush your dreams with this app. It is extremely addicting; everyone is like, "Ohh, need to beat my high score of 1,000,000." No, you played too much, stop it.

Flappy Bird came out on January 30, 2014 and was developed by Dong Nguyen. Way to go. It was not as popular until famous YouTuber, Pewdiepie, played it in a video. Then 15,000,000 people downloaded it and became obsessed with it. Darn you Pewdie, corrupting us with a

pointless app! Anyway, Flappy Bird is a huge time waster and people need to stop it. It's annoying hearing everyone's high scores of 1000, 1,000,000, and 1.53 billion. Once you gone too far with it, it has been 50 days since you last seen sunlight (exaggeration).

Flappy Bird also has in-app purchases. Why do you need those if it's a distance game with no checkpoints? What could you possibly buy? A checkpoint, useful to not die but wasteful: A life for your bird, still wasteful: How about a delete app, yeah? There is no point to buy waste-

ful things in an app that gives you now benefit. Also, when you do buy something, how long are you going to have it for? Once you die, you will not have it again and have to buy it again. In Clash of Clans, you buy gems which upgrade things that you will have until you delete the app. Haha, useful to an extent.

To all the people that argue against me, yes Flappy Bird can be a great time killer upon waiting for someone, but is it healthy to get addicted? Flappy Bird is like the new heroine. Just came out there completely honest. It is so addicting, you won't be

able to get work done. It honestly cost grades in school. Once you downloaded it, you lost your straight A's.

Flappy Bird was horrible, life ruining addictive, and waste of storage. Then, out of no where BAM! Flappy Bird was taking down and removed from the app store. Why? I don't know but, most convincing story is Nintendo was going to sue them for copyright. There is also the story of it's too addictive and I'm going with that. Good night.

Oblivion obliterates the box office

Tom Cruise shines in new futuristic movie

By Tristin Baumann

The movie *Oblivion*, starring Tom Cruise, is one of the best movies he's done, and by far one of my favorite movies from the past year. The movie starts off in 2077 with Jack, a member of a two-person team keeping watch over massive fusion reactors that continue to draw power from the nuclear devastated Earth's water in the aftermath of an alien invasion that occurred 60 years ago. The humans won the war, but lost the planet, and the moon, destroyed by the aliens at the start of the war. Jack is the tech-

nician who keeps everything running, while Victoria (the other team member) runs the base of operations. However, both have had their memories wiped 5 years prior for security reasons, but as the story moves on past the exposition, things begin happening that make the viewer realize that not all is as it appears to be.

This is one of my favorite new movies from the past few years, and probably my second favorite Tom Cruise movie behind only *Top Gun*. I like this movie so much because he sells the part

so well, you forget that his character is not a real person. And the movie has a lot of action, but a good amount of storytelling that just builds and builds until the climax. And the climax is a plot twist most people will not see coming.

Not to mention that Morgan Freeman is in this movie and that alone makes it worth seeing. Put that with Tom Cruise and the great story of the movie and this movie becomes Oscar-worthy. The sheer realism of the movie is something that very few post-

apocalyptic movies can pull off. Unlike the movie *Warm Bodies*, for example, *Oblivion* doesn't sugar coat anything in a harsh reality.

If you're looking a movie that brings you something different, something you haven't seen before, with believable actors and story that twists and turns right up until the dying seconds of the movie, with an ending that you won't see coming, then *Oblivion* is definitely a movie you should go watch.



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