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Volume 62 Number 3

## Lowering the Drop-Out Rate



Dr. Dillon looks over the number of seniors involved in extracurricular activities. School counselor Gina Morgigno stated that the drop-out rates at Pearl High School have decreased every year for the past three years. Photo by Faith Harris.

By Faith Harris

As he prepared to become the principal of Pearl High, Dr. Matthew Dillon already had in mind some methods and ideas to decrease dropout rates, methods he successfully used at South Panola

This year, the administration has made many home visits to meet with parents and students to discuss how important it is to graduate from high school.

"In addition to these visits, the administration and counselors have worked closely with teachers to monitor students and meet with them to discuss their options. It has been a collaborative effort, and we have had some success stories already," said Dr. Dillon.

"Pearl High School is a great place to call home. We have some of the nicest facilities in the state with an exceptional faculty and staff along with an outstanding student body—what a great combination!"

"One of the most impressive characteristics of the student body is the number of students involved in extracurricular activities," he said. "Over 80 percent of the student body is involved in some type of school related activity. I think this [involvement in extracurricular activities] promotes a great sense of school pride and ownership for our students. Students should want to be the best in the classroom and out."

## School Wins PREPS Award

By Faith Harris

Earlier this semester, Pearl High School was awarded the PREPS Value Added Award for performing better than predicted on the school's Quality Distribution Index (QDI) for the entire school, English II, and Biology I.

"These awards could not have been achieved without the hard work and dedication of our students and faculty/staff! Congrats, PHS!" said Dr. Dillon.

PREPS wanted to encourage schools that exceed expectations on the Subject Area Test individually and as a whole to continue to move students to the next level.

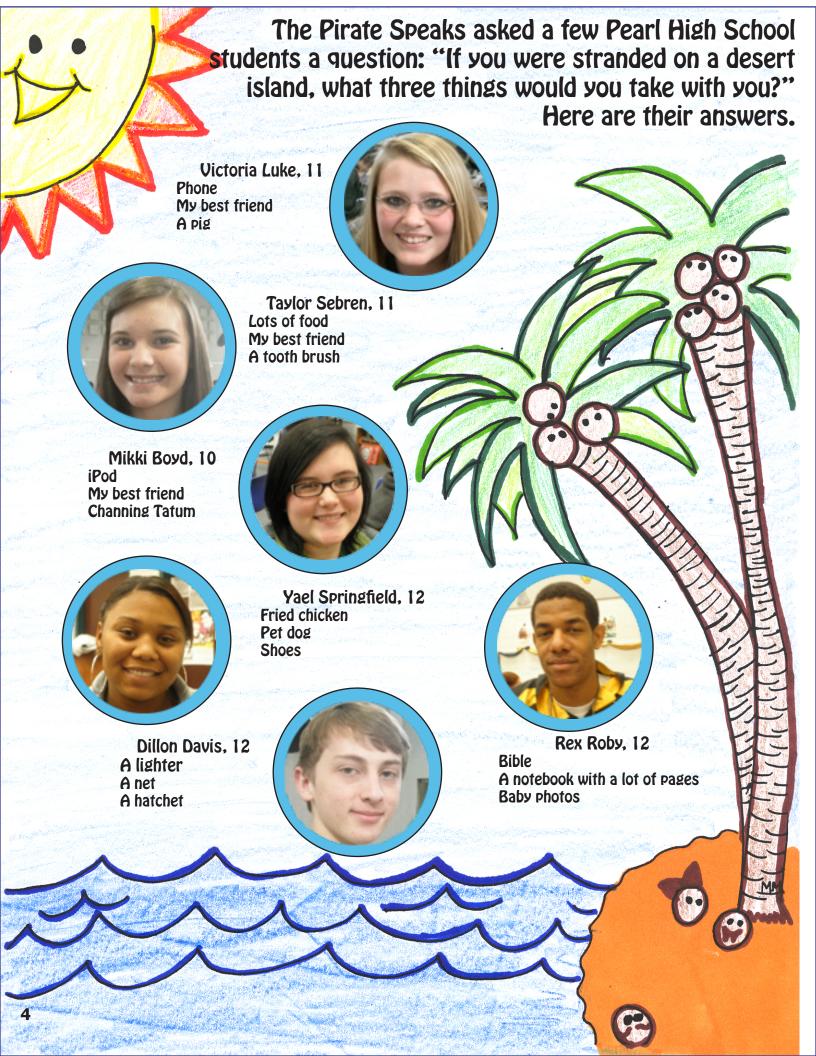
Dr. Dillon said, "Our goal is to be the best high school in the state. We will continue to work toward excellence in ALL areas, and the awards and accolades will take care of themselves."

PHS must continue to have a strong work ethic



Students in Coach Chris Lee's geography class ask questions while reviewing for a test. Geography skills will help prepare them for the U.S. History SAT test. Photo by Faith Harris.

and do all the small things right to make the most of each day. "We are so fortunate to have an exceptional faculty and staff that goes 'above and beyond' on a daily basis and wants what is best for all students," Dr. Dillon said. "Students must take advantage of every educational opportunity throughout the course of each nineweeks, semester, and school year. I truly believe we have what it takes to be the best!"



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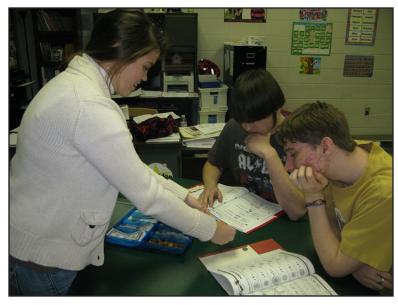


## All About Life Skills

By Ayanna Bloom

Many students at PHS have never stepped foot inside a life skills class. Some don't even know what it is. Life Skills is a class that helps children with disabilities prepare for life after high school and reach their potential. The class only has about 15 students. They take field trips to places like the YMCA and volunteer at the Ronald McDonald House.

Senior Jana Cooper is along for the ride. She spends time in the class on the periods she has senior leave. "I want to go into this field when I get out of high school so I'm getting experience now." She tries to go 3<sup>rd</sup> block twice a week on the days they go to the YMCA. When asked how the class was different from what she thought it would be, Cooper said, "At first I thought I would be shy and stand in the back and watch. It's different now because they know me by name and they have respect for me and listen when I ask them to do things".



Jana Cooper is helping two students from the Life Skills class. She has been with the class since the beginning of the year. She hopes to make working with these kids her career. Photo by Ms. Candice Cole.

Besides volunteering at the Ronald McDonald House, the students also go once a month to the Pearl Public Library to read and do crafts with the pre-schoolers. They also make things in class like key chains that they can sell. To go along with the goal of the class, the students go to the PAES lab and do different jobs that relate to everyday life.



Photo drawn by James Hill

"I am definitely glad I asked to volunteer with the class."

Of course, the class isn't all work. All the students have different opinions on who's the funniest and what's the best thing about class. Ted Mangum and Rhyan Driver both agree that the YMCA is the best field trip they've been on, and Mrs. Felder is their funniest teacher.

"It's a big experience. It changes my day every time I go in there. I was nervous at first because I thought they wouldn't like me, but they are awesome," said Cooper.



#### A Review by Maya Miller

If you've never been inside a crowd of several hundred people cheering wildly, then you missed a spectacular show. *Annie*, the second major PHS Drama production of the 2010-2011 school year was a hit. The cast included Marcy Slowik as an adorable Annie, Seth Romines as loving Daddy Warbucks, Lora Beth Cook as a terrifying Miss Hannigan, Amber Laster as caring Grace Ferrell, Ben Hodges as a conniving Rooster, and Chanci Johnson as a convincing Lily St. Regis. The ensemble had too many members to count, including a crew of orphans, servants, and homeless people. Their renditions of the marvelous songs from the original 1982 production were well performed with choreography from Ms. Kerri Courtney. *Annie* went rather well but not without a few bad patches.

During pre-production, Lora Beth Cook had heart surgery, and drama teacher Mrs. Harriet Matthews had surgery on her eye to repair her retina. That didn't slow them down though, because both,

within weeks of having major surgeries, returned to the stage to make the play the best it could be. Winter weather had another idea, and the Preview Night was cancelled due to the icy conditions.

Opening night had a few upsets too, with the lights being uncooperative. The set, designed by Matthews and Pearl alumnus Eric Weeks, required an extensive amount of an ever-changing lights display. During the first act, the lights failed to illuminate the stage of the orphanage. Drew Lafontaine thought quickly and used his spotlight to light the actors. The Warbucks' mansion backdrop also failed to light, but the actors moved on quickly, as if nothing had gone awry. After intermission, everything was back on track, and the show ended with a lovely chorus of "Tomorrow" by the entire cast.

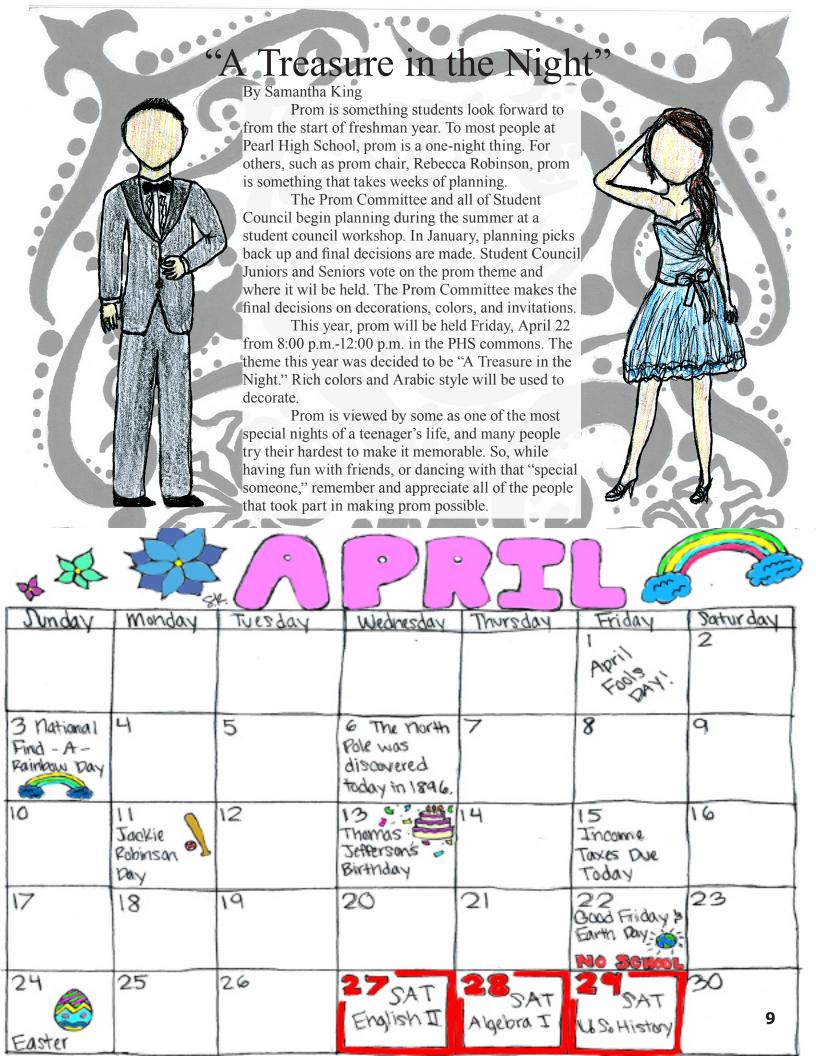
Saturday night was better than Friday, with the lights fully functional and cast fine tuned. Miss Hannigan was as mean as ever and nearly stole the show with her solo song "Little Girls." With special effects for a backdrop of "NYC" performed by Slowik, Laster, Romines, and a cast of New Yorkers, it wasn't hard to be dazzled.

The glitz didn't last long because Rooster, Miss Hannigan and St. Regis had a plan. Daddy Warbucks set a reward for \$50,000 for anyone with information on finding Annie's parents. To make it down "Easy Street," they devised a scheme that included false birth certificates, two farms, and a lovely gray wig. They didn't succeed, but it was humorous, yet heartwarming, because in the end, Daddy Warbucks adopted Annie.

The hard work really paid off. Visually, it was obvious that a lot of effort went into the set. When it came down to it, the actors carried the show along. It was superb, with the right amount of humor, a bit of drama, and touching moments.

All in all, it was a show worthy of all its commendation and more.





# Breakfast With Mamaw

By Juliet Ferrell

The day is Wednesday, the third day of semester exams, and Coach Purnell, having gotten her day off to a good start, is walking into school at 7:55 in the morning, which is unusual for her because she normally arrives before 7:30. She did not over sleep, and she was not caught in traffic.

Katie Williamson, a former student and softball player at Pearl High School, was on Coach Purnell's Slow Pitch softball team throughout Katie's entire high school career. During Katie's junior or senior year in high school, her grandfather became ill, and they don't know what was wrong with him. He spent a lot of time in the Critical Care Unit. Coach Purnell and her husband would go and visit and sit a while, and they got very close with the family.

When Katie's grandfather passed away, Coach Purnell told Mamaw, "I need to keep tabs on you after Katie graduates." Mamaw told Coach Purnell, "Well I cook breakfast every morning for anybody who will come and eat it." That's when Coach Purnell decided that every Wednesday morning she would go to Mamaw's house and have breakfast with her. Even though Katie is now a Junior or Senior at USM, Mamaw is still very supportive of the softball program and of the softball girls.

Coach Purnell has been a teacher and coach at Pearl High School for 21 years; however, she has been coaching Slow Pitch softball for 33 years. She was the 2010 Pearl High School District's teacher of the year and has coached Mississippi's All-Star team for two years. Under Coach Purnell's leadership, the Pearl Softball team won Champ. Although winning is great, Purnell said, "I realize that my goal is not so much to win. My goal is to make Godly young women that make the right choices and right decisions so that when they leave Pearl High School they take a bit of wisdom, knowledge, and God with them so that they can accomplish everything that they want to accomplish."

Coach Purnell's breakfasts with Mamaw have made an impact on her life in many ways. Coach Purnell stated, "Mamaw definitely puts a new light on a situation. She'll tell me that I need to step away and look at the big picture. She has a way of putting things into perspective."



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#### Goff Acts to Perform Heimlich

By Erica Berg

On Wednesday, November 17, 2010, the quick action of senior Trenton Goff potentially saved the life of freshman Dakota Wilson.

"It was around 9:00. We were about to watch a video in Mrs. [Kathryn] Hanks's Spanish I class," Goff remembers. Suddenly, Wilson made a choking noise behind him. When Goff turned around, Wilson was pointing to his throat and looked panicked. Goff saw that he was choking on a lollipop and called for Mrs. Hanks.

Mrs. Hanks tried to do the Heimlich but was unsuccessful. Goff, watching from a foot away, realized it was all up to him. He put his hand under Wilson's ribcage and thrust three times.

Bystander Nick Childers said, "It looked just like it does on TV where the thing shoots out of his mouth." Afterward, Goff said his sister worked at Hudspeth and had talked about the Heimlich. He had seen it on TV, but he never officially knew how to do it.

"My family used to say, Whenever you have a job to do, you can be scared later, but you have to get it done," Goff said. "I was definitely scared later. I was shaking for about an hour!"



Dakota Wilson thanks Trenton Goff for using the Heimlich maneuver to save his life. Over 4,000 people die each year from choking. Photo by Erica Berg.

## National HOBY Leader



Jake Neal serves as vice president of the student body. Neal is one of more than 335,000 HOBY alumni. Photo by Erica Berg.

By Erica Berg

In the summer of 2010, Jake Neal, now a junior at Pearl High, was selected to participate in a world leadership program called HOBY.

HOBY is an acronym which stands for the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Program. O'Brian founded this program, because he felt the media focuses more on the negative than the positive.

HOBY's vision is, "To motivate and empower individuals to make a positive difference within our global society through understanding and action based on effective and compassionate leadership."

By showing leadership skills at the Mississippi HOBY, Neal was chosen as the only one in the state to go. He went to University of California, Los Angeles.

"It was an outstanding leadership experience that teaches kids how to experience the real world and the world today," Neal explained.

### "Confidence not Arrogance"

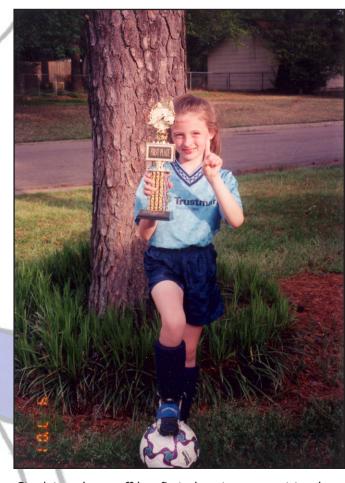
By Ashley Parker

For a girl who many people find to be a "loving, kind, and sweet" person, it is hard to believe she has a fiercer, more aggressive side than what meets the eye. Stephanie Stapleton is a member of the girls' varsity soccer team and unwonted offensive on the soccer field.

Stapleton has been involved in sports including softball and basketball from the age of five and began playing recreational soccer when she was eight. During her first year of soccer, she was a member of the Pearl U-8 team the Hammerheads and was the only girl on the team. She continued in the Pearl Youth Soccer League until she was 12, and then moved on to play Select soccer. Select soccer team is a team in which the members are selected by some sort of tryout process. This differs from a recreational team where members are placed on a team solely by signing up.

When she was in the seventh grade she became a member of the varsity soccer team. Stapleton continues to play high school and Select soccer. Mainly taking positions on offense such as forward and midfield, her aggression and confidence on the field is something that she finds very

valuable in a player.



Stapleton shows off her first place tournament trophy. Stapleton says it is important to have confidence not arrogance on the field. Photo provided by Stephanie Stapleton.

Her two biggest supporters are her parents. She says they are the ones who help her overcome her obstacles and help her improve. "My dad always tells me the truth. I take what he says about a game and try to make myself better. My mom always makes me feel better about myself; I always think I did worse than I actually did."

After high school, Stapleton has plans of attending Mississippi College. She does plan to further her soccer career as a member of the Lady Choctaws soccer team. She is undecided about her major but has a general idea of the field in which she wants to pursue a career.



Senior Stephanie Stapleton stands with her parents at senior recognition night for the girls' and boys' soccer teams. Stapleton has been a member of the Lady Pirates Soccer team since she was in seventh grade and plans to continue her soccer career at Mississippi College. She continues to live by her life motto Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

## "Play Like a Champion Today"



This year, Coach Andy Kivlan and Assistant Coach Chirs Rash, former Pearl soccer player, led the pirate soccer team to their 8th MHSAA state championship title.

By Ashley Parker

Coach Andy Kivlan, Pearl High School Boys' soccer coach, has been a coach for 32 years and a guidance counselor for 16 years. Kivlan came to Pearl several years ago as the soccer coach and ninth grade counselor. "Hurricane Katrina convinced me that living close to the coast wasn't such a good idea. However, after moving up here, the first night I spent in Rankin County, the Civil Defense sirens went off. I was thinking, 'Is there no escape?"

It wasn't always Kivlan's goal to be a school counselor. After running cross country and track in high school and college, he moved on to a career in coaching. He eventually became a guidance counselor. His favorite part of coaching is "working with the kids and watching them grow from 9th through 12th grade."

Outside of Pearl High School, Kivlan humbly claims he does nothing too interesting. "I lead a rather mundane lifestyle. I come to work, do my job, then go home and spend time with my wonderful wife. I also enjoy spending time with my kids and grandkids." Both of Kivlan's sons played soccer.

Under coach Kivlan, the boys' soccer program has won 5 out of the 7 total state championships. This year the boys' team made it to the final round of the playoffs and defeat East Central 6-0 for the 2011 5A State Championship. They also defeated Ridgeland and Hernando during the first and second rounds of the playoffs.



### Racing for the Olympics



Senior, Steve Shoto leads the pack during a race at Lousianna State University. Shoto finished first in this race. "I love track to death. It's my life." Photo provided by Steve Shoto.

By Maria Cannon

Steve Shoto is a member of the Pearl track and cross country teams. Shoto participates in the 800 and 400 meter dash and 4x2 and 4x4 meter dash. He is ranked number 18 in the nation in the 800 meter dash and is the 2<sup>nd</sup> fastest runner in the history of Pearl High School. The only other person to be ranked nationally was Coach George Kersh. Shoto's fastest times are 1:53.81 in the 800 meter race and 48.6 in the 400 meter race.

During Shoto's 9th and 11<sup>th</sup> grade, he won state with the track team and 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> with cross country. For the last three years, Shoto has focused on the 800 meter race and to make his time even faster. He committed to Mississippi State University on January 23 and signed on February 2. Shoto said, "I feel good about my decision and look forward to running for Coach Dudley. [MSU track coach]" He plans on making this his career and take his track records to the Olympics one day. Shoto wants to perform in any event, as long as he makes it to the Olympics. "I love track to death. It's my life."

# First Baptist Church Pearl The Walk

Students in grades 6 - 12 are invited to join us for worship and youth events!

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6:30 pm The Walk
Youth Worship/Praise Band/Fun

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## Work Hard, Hard Work



Robinson works hard every practice to be the best he can be. After hours of vigorous practice and training he expects to reach his goals, of being a great support to his team in this year's playoffs. Photo by Amanda Rogers. By Amanda Rogers

This year the Pearl Pirate Baseball team's main goal is to win the state championship. Second Baseman and varsity starter Toler Robinson said, "Working hard, we can reach this goal."

The team's achievement over the years was winning in their division with their motto "Work Hard, Hard Work". This year Coach Monaghan expects to win over eleven games by intense practice such as running and various other types of training.

Robinson expects to bat well over .400 as his batting average, and for the Pirate Baseball team to win this year's playoffs.

Robinson's dad inspired him to become a player on the team, and to reach high for his goal, which is getting into college on a baseball scholarship. "Being a family," in Toler's opinion was the best thing about being on the Pirate's Baseball team.

## Free to Smile

#### By Amanda Rogers

"Never limit yourself, never be satisfied, and smile—it's free!" This quote, by USA team softball player Jennie Finch, inspired Pearl High School pitcher Carrie Phillips to try to become the best pitcher in the state, but dreams don't just come true with a blink of the eye, Phillips works toward with this goal by practicing every day on both batting and field work.

"My goal is to become a great softball player and role model for young children," says Phillips. Her family encourages her to reach these goals, as they are always there supporting her to do her best. Phillips said, "This year the Lady Pirates are expecting to play the best teams and plan on beating them."

"Being able to play the sport you love with the people who love it too is the best thing about being on the Lady Pirates' team. We have worked hard as a team and practice makes perfect," Phillips says. She plans to play at Mississippi State when she graduates in 2012.



Phillips' family encourages her to do her best in every game as they are always there supporting her. Her grandfather inspired her to play softball, and to become one of the best. Photo by Amanda Rogers.

## **Smart Shot Equals Great Shot**

By Hanna Lewis

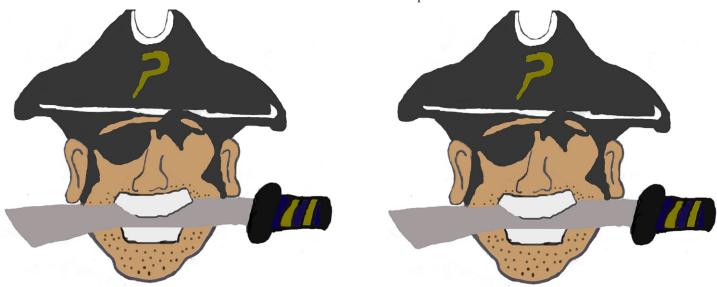
Golf is a game of concentration, hand-eye coordination, and planning. It is also a time for players like seniors Cody Berry and Josh Saulsbury, as well as juniors Tyler Poe and Breeland Brooks, to relax, but also keep up the ability to focus.

These golf team members also play a contact sport. Saulsbury said "Golf is more of a leisurely sport; it's sort of a stress reliever to me." Berry said we get done with soccer right before golf, so we are tired from the soccer season, then golf comes and it is an easy more relaxed sport.

"You have to make a smart shot to make a great shot"

Players also use golf as a way to train themselves to focus during golfing and other sports. "You have to make a smart shot to make a great shot," Brooks said. This saying does not only apply to golf but to soccer as well, because a soccer player must be able to think quickly and stay focused during the whole game.

Coach David Houston, who has coached the PHS golf team for six years and is a former PGA club professional said, "Golf requires the ability to concentrate for long periods of time". Poe agrees that playing golf helps him perform better in other sports. Golf has taught Poe to slow down and really think about the shot and now he can take that knowledge to the soccer field and think about the shot he is about to make under the pressure of soccer.



### The Drive to Lift

"He encourages and drives the students to not just do well but to do more than they think they can do."

By Hanna Lewis

"State Champs!" These are the words you hear from the Pirate Power Lifting Team. "We have people who want to win state that didn't win state last year," said senior Kenneth Johnson.

This year the power lifting team has trained better and longer than before. The team also has stronger lifters this year, said senior Cole Cauthen. The stronger lifters do not just include the upperclassmen. This year there are strong underclassmen as well. "We have a great senior lead team...and we have a few good ninth graders that will help the team for years to come," said head coach Ray Durr.

Every team has a driving force behind it, for the power lifting team that force is Coach Durr. He encourages and drives the students to not just do well but to do more than they think they can do. Johnson said, "I want to thank Coach Durr for pushing me into doing what I didn't know I could really do." The drive from the coaches and themselves (players), the wanting to win state, the harder practices, all of these have contributed to make the team better this year.

## Accomplishment = (Learning)(Winning)

By Maria Cannon



Yates uses her SMARTBoard to teach her Algebra I class the formula to find the area. Photo by Maria Cannon.

2010-2011 Teacher of the Year for Pearl High School is Mrs. Tracy Yates. Yates teaches Algebra I and coaches girls basketball. She was elected by her colleagues. Yates was also selected as Teacher of the Month two times. Yates said, "My favorite part of teaching is helping students see that they can be successful."

Yates attended Simpson Academy and went on to Jones County Junior College for mathematics education as an undergraduate. She then pursued her bachelor's degree at the University of Southern Mississippi. Yates also studied at William Carey for her master's degree in secondary education and is now in the process of receiving her PhD at the University of Southern Mississippi to become an administrator.

Yates's original plan as a career was to become a pharmacist. "I changed my major, so I could teach and coach and help more young people," said Yates. Math department chair Linda Powe said, "Yates goes over and above what she needs to do at remediation. She's very good one-on-one with struggling students. She is a great asset to our department."

#### Living for Something

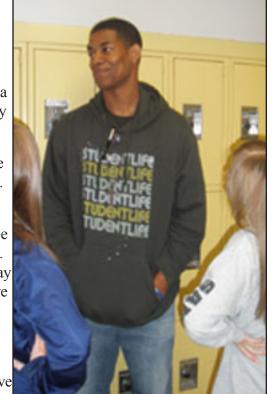
By Erica Berg and Faith Harris

Growing up without a father, Rex Roby knew that he had to be a better person for himself. He says that girls inspire him the most. "They inspire me to be a better guy and person," he said.

Rex has written many movie scripts, plays, poems, and raps. He performed a rap at D-Now and read one a poems at Student Life Camp.

Being an actor is something Rex would love to do as he gets older. "If I could, I'd travel the world and spread God's Word and just be a global inspiration before I die, or before the rapture comes," Rex said. "Being an actor is an easy way to spread God's word. It's the easiest way to inspire people and let them know that we're all humans, and we share similar struggles." Rex would play all the roles to an extent as long as they didn't test his morals and religious stand points.

Rex said that PHS has helped influence his life. "You get to be around so many people; you realize everyone is different. You don't have to change who you are. You just learn to adapt to different situations to help people. Always keep your head up because what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. Even though your feelings are hurt, you have a choice of letting it destroy you or making you into a better person."



Rex Roby inspires others as he looks to a his future. Rex said, "We all live for something. What are you living for?" Photo by Sheri Carter.

# Spring Fun Page

#### PIRATE WORD SCRAMBLE

Directions: Read the articles in this issue to find the answers to the following questions. Write your answers in the blanks provided. Then use the letters that appear in the blocks to spell the answer to the question at the bottom.

2. Who is the second fastest runner in the history of PHS?

3. What is the theme of this year's prom?

4. Which student plans to play college baseball next year?

5. Who did Jennie Finch inspire to try to become the best pitcher in the state?

WHAT DOES LAUGHTER BRING?

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Which President was the least guilty?



Lincoln, He is in a cent.

## Pirate Fun Quiz

- 1. What gets wetter and wetter the more it dries?
- 2. What remains dark when all else is light?
- 3. How do you make 7 even?
- 4. How is the letter A like a spring flower?
- 5. What goes up and down stairs without moving?
- 6.If you have it, you want to share it. If you share it, you don't have it. What is it?
- 7. What guestion can you never answer "yes" to?
- 8. You answer me, although I never ask you questions. What am I?
- 9.Light as a feather, there is nothing in it; the strongest man can't hold it for much more than a minute.

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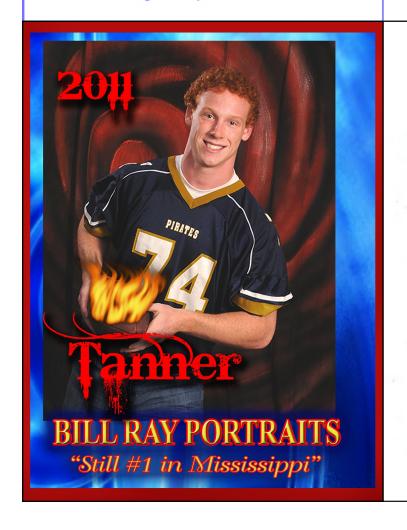
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