



MINDFULNESS

Students learn important skill
SEE PAGE 4

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THE ELYRIA SCHOOLS Pioneer



Press

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 2

Winter 2018

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Oh, oh, oh it's magic



TOM JAMA

Safety starts with us

It seems almost unfathomable, in the wake of yet another deadly shooting, that our country is once again searching for answers to questions that have gone unanswered for far too long.

Who among us can't help but think that the ceaseless plague of school shootings — and mass shootings in general — should have been stamped out, at least substantially, long ago?

After the mass shooting at Columbine High School nearly 20 years ago, something should have changed. The heartbreak after Sandy Hook six years ago should have compelled monumental changes.

Any one of the dozens of school shootings in the past two decades — and mass shootings at public gatherings — should have created unrelenting pressure to change the way this country thinks, talks and acts when it comes to guns, gun violence, mental health and the combustible mixtures of these ingredients.

Even so, there remains a substantial focus on school safety. As there should be.

From the standpoint of school administrators and staff, and students and their families, school safety remains one of the central issues when it comes to mass shootings and other acts of unpredictable violence.

Time after time, incident after incident, death after death, we reel in the wake of news footage of another school shooting, and we ask ourselves: How could this happen? How can we keep



AMY HIGGINS / ELYRIA SCHOOLS

McKinley Elementary students learn science concepts through funny business.

Amy Higgins

Communications director

Magic, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder.

Students at McKinley Elementary School believed it was some sort of sorcery, indeed, that turned clear liquid into colorful shades of the rainbow before their eyes.

But for Dr. Regan Silvestri, the wizard behind the beakers, it was a little bit of

luck and a whole lot of science that made the magic.

Silvestri, a chemistry professor at Lorain County Community College, is the producer, director and star of his own traveling science magic show. McKinley was but one stop for Silvestri on a jam-packed tour of all elementary schools in the district.

Toothpaste for elephants, flashes of fire, toilet paper that unraveled its roll with lightening speed, these and other

similar experiments are delighting Silvestri's audiences, young and old, far and wide.

McKinley teacher Kim Haley saw Silvestri's show in another school district and wanted the same experience for Elyria kids.

"His style is very engaging and interactive with the students," Haley said. "I thought it'd be a great idea to bring it

See **MAGIC**, 7

See **JAMA**, 7

Ohio auditor lauds Elyria Schools treasurer

Amy Higgins

Communications director

The office of Ohio Auditor Dave Yost awarded the Elyria city school district a top award for its outstanding performance in financial reporting.

The Ohio Auditor of State Award with Distinction was presented to Elyria Schools Treasurer Joy Clickenger at the Elyria Schools Board of Education meeting Feb. 21 at the administrative offices on Griswold Road. In the realm of public finance, the award is considered the gold standard in financial reporting.

"This is a real feather in your cap," Lyndsay Kuhn, north-central region representative for the Ohio Auditor's office, told Clickenger and Elyria Schools Board of Education members at the meeting. "You all work together in concert and we certainly appreciate the fact that you are such excellent stewards of taxpayer dollars."

Kuhn said, "This is the top accomplishment that you can receive from our office." Yost and his team audit about 5,900 government entities across the Buckeye State, but few qualify to receive an award — let alone a distinction award, according to Kuhn.

"What you are receiving is the distinction award, which is what

my boss likes to say is the 'gold standard' out of reporting," Kuhn said.

Clickenger said the Elyria Schools Treasurer's office has typically received an "excellence in reporting" award, but this new recognition—unquestionably a step up in achievement—is an indication of the

collaborative effort among employees in her department.

"This particular award is based on everybody pulling together and getting everyone to do everything the way you need it done," Clickenger said. "We don't necessarily make friends every day, but we do keep our thumbs up as much as we can—and that's what made this possible."

Kuhn said the Ohio Auditor's office does not follow a "gotcha" mindset when auditing data from public entities, but they do want to make sure that all the numbers reconcile — "to make sure all your T's are crossed and the I's are dotted."

"There's just so much more involved in having a clean audit," Kuhn said.

Much like public education, the public finance world changes from day to day — and those versed in its rules and regulations must keep close pace.

"This is truly an accomplish-



MARTY YADON / ELYRIA SCHOOLS

Ohio Auditor of State liaison Lindsay Kuhn presents the Ohio Auditor of State Award With Distinction to Elyria Schools Treasurer Joy Clickenger, center, and Elyria Schools Assistant Treasurer Anne Holton, right, at the Elyria Board of Education meeting on Feb. 21.

ment," Kuhn told the Elyria Schools Board. "You have an excellent finance team and, of course, your treasurer, they are

experts in their field and they are working every day to be excellent stewards of taxpayer dollars — and that's really what it comes

down to."

Clickenger has served as Elyria Schools treasurer since February 2016.

MOONDOG OVER PROSPECT



AMY HIGGINS / ELYRIA SCHOOLS

Prospect Elementary welcomed Cleveland Cavaliers mascot Moondog for a dance party after students met their quarterly goals.

Watch out for phishing scams

Jim Kennedy
Systems engineer

One of the oldest and still most effective forms of computer hacking is phishing. Attacks like these often make the news when the mark is a high-profile outfit like Target department stores, the Democratic National Committee and the recent Olympic games.

But it is the strike against everyday people that is still most common in the act of phishing, and most damaging.

Phishing attacks are not sophisticated, nor are they difficult to understand. Scams like these are typically run through email.

Like the blockbuster movie "Catch Me If You Can," a con artist impersonates a legitimate person or entity to gain credibility with a target.

Today's con men are showing up in inboxes, impersonating



Kennedy

someone you know and trust from your place of employment, your bank, or an entity with authority like the Internal Revenue Service. The problem has become so rampant that every email should be considered suspect, forcing recipients to take precautions to verify nearly every email's legitimacy.

Consider this: does the overall content of the email generate a sense of urgency in your mind? Is it warning you of an overdrawn bank account, a password about to expire or an imminent IRS audit, for example?

While these happenings may actually be true, the urgent nature of the email leads us to a mental state of rushing to action,

prompting quick and sometimes poor choices. In reality, a few extra minutes to verify the legitimacy of the message or the sender, won't change the outcome of an audit, for instance.

Here are some tips to spotting a phish.

1) Do not trust the display name in the email. It is easily spoofed. Look carefully at the actual return address. Make sure it is from who it claims to be. If you are not sure, do not reply to the email. Forward it to the correct address and ask if it is genuine. If you reply, it could very well go back to the scammer.

2) Check spelling, grammar and the overall professionalism of the email. An email from your bank is going to have proper grammar, correct spelling and professional looking graphics.

3) Be wary of emails that ask for personally identifiable informa-

tion. Social Security numbers, password requests and any requests of that nature should be extremely suspect.

4) Do not trust the display text of any links to websites. What you initially see is not where the link may take you. Take a moment and hover over the link with your mouse. You will get a pop up showing where that link is actually going.

5) Understand that links are literal. www.fedex.com is not the same as www.fed-ex.com. Misleading links like these are very common. When in doubt, do not use the link in the email. Google for FedEx, and get there that way. Take control of where your browser is going. If you click the link in the email, you are letting the sender of that email control where you are going.

6) If you do click on a link in an email, make sure that you were

taken to where you expected to be. Look at the address bar in your browser, is it displaying the website address you expected?

7) If you are still unsure, contact the sender for verification. Do not reply to the email. Visit their website for contact information and forward the email to them or call them.

Often people that fall prey to attacks realize their error almost instantly. If this happens to you acting quickly is imperative. If you revealed a password or other private information, the attacker will be using it almost instantly. Whatever aspect of your life the attack involved, bank, IRS or email password, for example, contact that institution immediately to minimize the damage.

3 guys, 30 instruments in the house

Amy Higgins
Communications director

Three guys with a big, big sound are returning to the Elyria High School Performing Arts Center for the second consecutive year thanks to the Elyria Public Library Foundation.

The New Odyssey band hits the Performing Arts Center stage Saturday, May 5, at 7 p.m.

New Odyssey is a cover band out of Chicago with a distinctive shtick: three guys, 30 instruments. These masters of music play strings to horns and everything in between, mixing in vocals and even a bit of playful banter.

Tickets are now on sale through the Elyria Public Library Foundation. Call the foundation at (440) 309-7138 or visit www.eplsfoundation.org.

The Foundation is the fundraising branch of the Elyria Public Library. Revenue from the New Odyssey concert will help support existing programs and future necessities of the Elyria Public Library.



From left, Michael Jay, Gary Todd and Gary Polkow, the members of the band New Odyssey.

PHOTO PROVIDED

Molding a message of mindfulness

Annemarie Nosse

Elyria Schools psychologist

How often do we accomplish a task only to realize we remember nothing about how we did it? We arrive at the end so mechanically in our motions that the moments leading to the accomplishment are lost altogether.

With our busy lives and hectic schedules, it's quite commonplace.

But there are methods for living in the moment, and one is the practice of mindfulness.

What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a skill that is learned with the repeated practice of giving full attention to the present moment without being distracted by thoughts of the past or worries about the future. We can be mindful of senses, thoughts and emotions.

With mindful practice, we focus on what is happening right now, and our improved attention gives us the space to deal with daily events and emotions with less worry.

Over time, we improve our ability to respond rather than react and get better at moving through our day with ease. Mindfulness works with children and adults.

Mindfulness at school

Steve Grossman, Crestwood Elementary principal, knows the value that mindfulness brings to improving student focus and managing emotions. This school year, Crestwood students are being introduced to mindfulness with classroom lessons and small group work. Students are learning common mindful language. Teachers are bringing activities into the daily schedule, with more training coming soon. It's an ongoing process, and we are learning together.

Here's how mindfulness works during a typical school day at Crestwood Elementary.

During the morning announcements, fifth grade students take the microphone and lead their classmates and staff members in a school-wide mindfulness exercise. The staff and students pause during that time for a minute of focus before moving on with the day.

After lunch, Bianca Fries, a kindergarten teacher at Crestwood Elementary, invites her students to join her on the carpet and to get



Nosse

into their "mindful bodies," reminding them to choose a comfortable position.

The students sit, some with eyes closed, some with hands raised, and some resting their hands in their laps, while Fries creates a melodic sound using a "singing bowl." The sound signals a calm and helps students center and focus their listening on the pleasantness.

Fries then leads her students in slow breathing — in and out, in and out — as they trace the curves of an eight in the air.

The sound of the singing bowl returns bringing an end to the activity. The students listen fully to the sound until they can no longer hear the tone. With this, the kindergartners are ready to move on with their day of learning.

I asked the students how they felt after this activity, and their hands shot in the air.

"Calm," one student said.

"Tired," said another.

"I feel healthy," another added.

A fourth student replied, "Mindful."

I was intrigued, and I asked, "What does it mean to be mindful?"

"Mindful is working on focusing on the breath while the singing bowl sings," the student said.

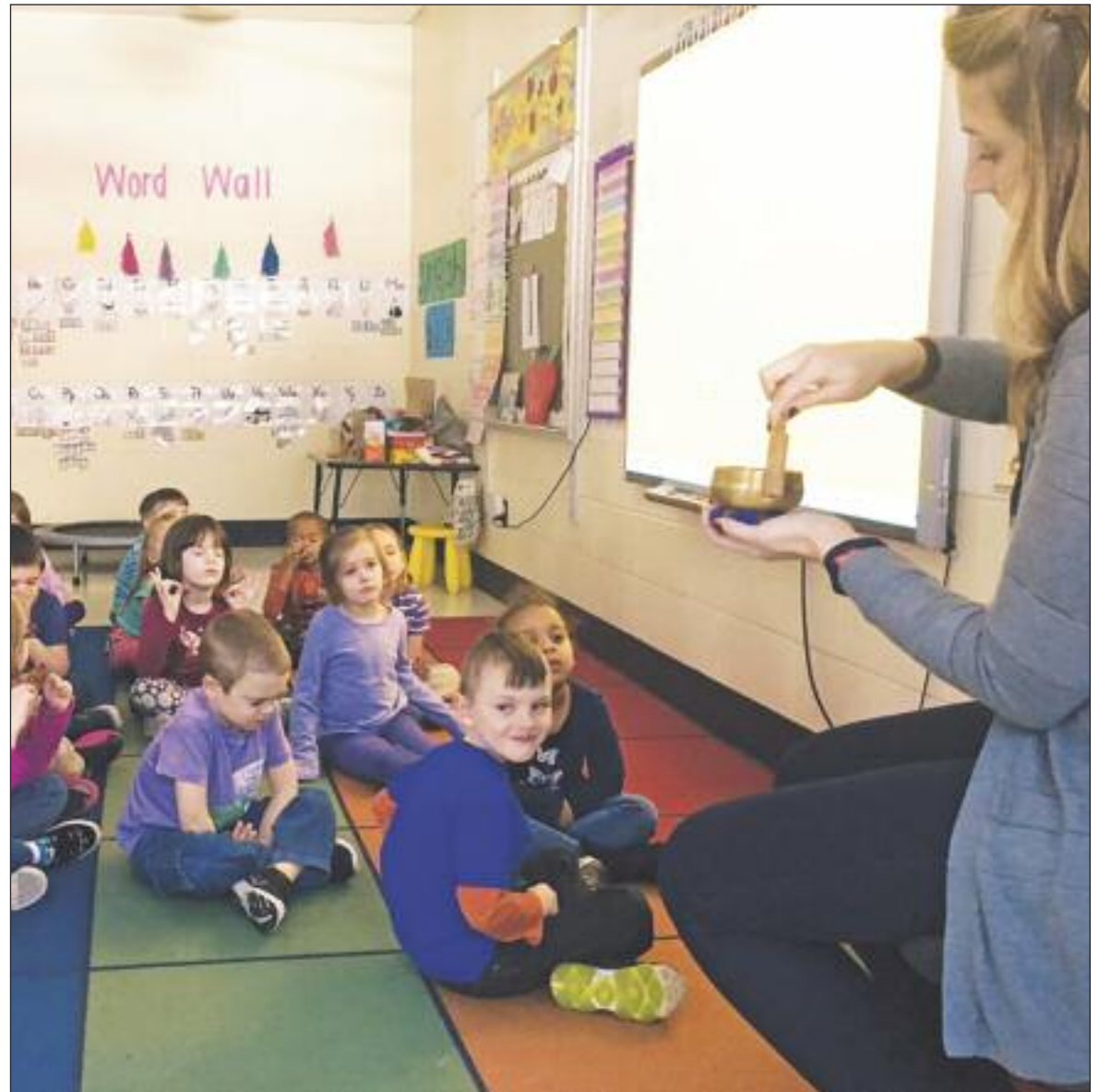
These were powerful, on-target responses from our youngest learners that left me smiling and feeling a little more focused myself.

Model mindfulness

To help children to learn mindfulness, the best thing that we can do as parents and school staff members is to model mindful behavior.

When mindfulness is approached with patience, flexibility, and compassion, students learn. Every opportunity to teach or support mindfulness is an opportunity to strengthen relationships as kids learn to trust the process and see positive results.

My experience with hearing kids of all ages discuss how mindfulness has helped them to achieve better outcomes at home or in school is all the evidence I need to know that the practice of mindfulness works.



ANNEMARIE NOSSE / ELYRIA SCHOOLS

Using a singing bowl, Crestwood Kindergarten teacher Bianca Fries leads students in a mindfulness exercise.

TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED

- Start with five minutes each day to focus on breath, and build over time. When the mind wanders, bring your attention back to the breath.
- Consider becoming more intentional in interactions with others. Pause and choose words carefully.
- Schedule time for yourself and time with family away from the cell phone, social media, or other distractions.
- We're all busy and it can become overwhelming. Avoid multitasking — it doesn't work. Try focusing on one thing at a time with clear intention.
- When completing a task requiring sustained mental focus, give yourself walking breaks to regain mental focus.
- Be kind to yourself, and be patient when learning how to focus attention. "Mindless" habits develop over a long period of time. It may take a while to feel the benefits of mindful practice, and your attention will wander at first.
- Consider exploring Mindfulness apps like Headspace and Smiling Mind for adults and children.

ROBOTICS ACTIVATE



MIKE WEST, EHS ROBOTICS COACH



AMY HIGGINS / ELYRIA SCHOOLS

LEFT: The members of Elyria High School robotics team 11124R, from left, are Deric Martin, Molly Fenik, Calli Fenik and Chris Canonizado — Nate Weese is not pictured. The team will hit the road to compete in the VEX World Championship in Louisville, Ky., April 25 to 28, against more than 500 teams from across the globe, including China, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Ireland and Brazil. The team is currently ranked 87th out of more than 15,000 teams worldwide. Good luck, Pioneers!

RIGHT: Victory! Elyria middle schoolers Edie Manual, left, and Camden Burgess, right, celebrate a victory during the middle school robotics competition.



AMY HIGGINS / ELYRIA SCHOOLS

Elyria Robotics hosted its first-ever Pioneer Classic VEX Robotics Tournament for middle school teams at Elyria High School last month. Elyria was represented by Northwood, Westwood and Eastern Heights middle schools in a field of more than 20 teams from across the state. The team, from left, is Kloe Koepp, Victoria Jones and Mia Yates.

Elyria High School voices ring out



AMY HIGGINS / ELYRIA SCHOOLS

Students of Elyria High School staged a peaceful walkout to remember victims of the Parkland, Fla., school shooting, and all victims of public violence.



SKILLS ON SKATES



AMY HIGGINS / ELYRIA SCHOOLS PHOTOS

Preschoolers from the Elyria Early Childhood Village were granted funding from the Elyria Schools Endowment Board to receive ice skating lessons at North Rec Center. The multi-week program teams preschoolers with special needs, with expert ice skaters from Elyria Catholic High School's hockey team. Ice skating is a sport and exercise that builds muscle and improves gross motor skills, which are essential components of the work through the Elyria Schools Special Education Department in helping students with disabilities.

JAMA

From 1

this from happening again?

Without question, there is a tremendous need for candid discussion about America's gun laws. That is an essential component in this discussion.

But the discussion cannot end there.

Violence exists, in many forms. Threats exist, in many forms. And the fact is, no structure on earth is impervious to harm. It is the horrible, unavoidable truth.

The absolute best that each one of us can do, every day, is take every conceivable step to ensure we have made the safety of our students and staff paramount.

This should force us to ask tough questions, frequently.

That's not a bad thing. We do it at Elyria Schools all the time.

We've been doing it with renewed vigor in the weeks following the school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. School districts across the country are doing it right now — taking a hard, scrupulous

look at their school safety plans.

At Elyria Schools, one of our greatest assets is our partnership with the Elyria Police Department. We work hand-in-glove with school resource officers, police administrators and uniformed officers. The value of this relationship cannot be overstated.

Our district's leaders review and update our school safety plans and take measures to improve our processes and staff and student training, increasing our readiness for all manner of emergencies.

With Elyria Schools constructing all-new buildings district-wide thanks to the voter-approved bond issue, students and staff will soon be housed in state-of-the-art facilities outfitted with unique features aimed at bolstering security.

As one of Ohio's 21 urban school districts, Elyria Schools is uniquely diverse — socioeconomically, racially and culturally. This diversity is, without question, one of our greatest assets.

Our staff and our students are well attuned to the security needs of daily life within our school buildings. Procedures and protocols are developed, re-developed and re-visited frequently.

Consequently, we have developed substantial resources and partnerships to guide our actions and to respond to situations as they arise.

But the fact remains a school district is a part of the community. This means the stakeholder is every single person reading this. And the person next to them. And the person next to that person.

We talk a lot about situational awareness in today's world. What this requires from all of us is an astute awareness and appreciation for the lives of everyone in our community, especially our children.

On that note, we lean on a common phrase when it comes to matters of school safety and awareness about potential emergencies or threats to self or others: "See it, say it."

If you see something that you believe is a threat — on social media, in your neighborhood, in your school, at work, in your day to day activities — immediately report it to police or school administrators.

No question about it: You play a pivotal role in school safety.

Tom Jama is superintendent of Elyria Schools.

New anonymous tip line promotes safer schools

Elyria city school district is registered with Safer Schools Ohio, a multi-agency program through the ODE and the office of Homeland Security.

This registration gives the district a phone number: **1 (844) SAFEROH (723-3764)** for anonymous reports of anything that can be a potential threat to self or others, criminal or noncriminal.

Parents, students, staff and community are urged to always report suspicious circumstances to 911, the Elyria Police Department or the Lorain County Sheriff's

Office, and to school administrators, if it relates to students, school or school neighborhoods. The **1 (844) SAFEROH** number is another resource for reports that can remain anonymous. A call or text to this number initiates an assessment process to determine if it's a criminal or non-criminal threat. A notification process begins and if the threat is criminal in nature, law enforcement agencies are informed. School administration also will be notified of every call that's placed to this number.

— Amy Higgins



AMY HIGGINS / ELYRIA SCHOOLS

This young scientist from McKinley is readying to make 'elephant toothpaste' and seeing the magic of chemistry in the process.

MAGIC

From 1

to the attention of Mrs. Fitch and see if we could possibly bring him over to Elyria. "

Virginia Fitch, principal of McKinley Elementary School, didn't need convincing; she knows well the value of hands-on learning, especially when it comes to an often-complex subject matter like science.

"Not all kids learn in a typical verbal way," Fitch said. "Kids really learn when they can manipulate materials, watch something happen, and then try it themselves. This type of science magic show is awesome because it gives them hope and motivation that they can do it themselves because they get to participate in it.

"He (Dr. Silvestri) also does an excellent job of showing how students can do some of this stuff at home with a parent or guardian," she said. "Hopefully our teachers can even do start to do some of it."

Silvestri's dynamic performance and jaw-dropping spectacles spur the innate curiosity within each child.

"My idea with the Science Magic Show was not so much to teach the kids science, but to get them interested in science," He

said. "All the science magic tricks are fun and exciting and I try not to explain too much of the science of why they work, just enough to get students to understand there's science there."

With the Science Magic Show, Silvestri saw a way to bring math, chemistry and physics to life.

"Traditionally science education was approached by textbooks: you read about it and you solved some problems, but what we are beginning to understand now is once you do it yourself, then you really understand it, and it starts to make sense," Silvestri said. "The demonstrations are a way of showing how the science works and why the science works; it's a more valuable lesson because it's an understanding that is more deep rooted and sticks with the students.

"At the end of the performance, students say it was a lot of fun and, 'I think I'm interested, I think I'd like to pursue that into the future,'" He said. "It's not as much about education and teaching and learning; it's more about motivation, and if the students have the motivation then they'll pursue the education themselves."



The Herald

A supplement
to the
Pioneer Press

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 2

ELYRIA HIGH SCHOOL, ELYRIA, OHIO

Winter 2018

Students stand up



DESTINY TORRES / THE HERALD

EHS students participated in the National School Walkout on March 14 to remember victims of the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., one month earlier on Feb. 14.

From field to court: The EHS Pep Band

Lindsey Miller
Herald reporter

The Elyria High School Pioneer Marching Band has captured the hearts of Elyrians for generations. Band students, parents and fans are disappointed when marching band season ends.

This year Band Director Aaron C. Putka came up with a plan to keep the band in business: Pep Band.

"Pep Band has existed before at EHS," Putka said, "I'm not sure when, but it was run by students."

Pep Band is the marching band we all know and love, but smaller and moved indoors to support the boys and girls basketball teams.

With big hits including, Metallica's "Master of Puppets," Walk the

Moon's "Shut Up and Dance," and Billy Idol's "Rebel Yell," Pep Band wrapped up its first season on a high note.

"Pep Band is fun to direct," Putka said. "We play fun music that's enjoyable to play during a time of year when we spend class time playing very serious and difficult music." Everyone who participated in Pep Band has enjoyed playing their favorite songs.

"It was both interesting and fun," Austin Fugitt, a junior quads player said. "The people that were there made it enjoyable, and being able to play my quads again was a nice experience."

When asked about his favorite part, Aaron Moen, a sophomore trumpet player, said, "Getting to play loud. Since it's a smaller

group, I get to play as loud as I want. That's what our trumpets do best." He added, "Sitting and talking to my friends like it was marching season again was a dream come true."

Not everything was fun and games, though. The students involved put a lot of hard work and effort into their playing, and had a few complaints. One of these was the seating area. "I'd really like better seats next year," Moen said. "We were all pretty cramped into one small section of the bleachers."

Better seating is high on the list of priorities, especially if Pep Band sees a boost in membership.

Said Putka, "I would like to add a few more songs and incentives to increase the turnout."

The account of a black belt editor in chief

I have been a member of The Herald for three of the last four years of high school.

My enthusiasm for The Herald began my freshmen year when I was interested in working with a dear friend of mine and an Elyria High alumni, Audrey Bauer. It was Audrey who introduced me to the club then showed me the ropes. I enjoyed being involved with a club on Tuesdays as I usually took taekwondo on Wednesdays. By the time Audrey graduated, I knew what was going on and was able to make my own contributions to the club. After working with The Herald for the past three years, I earned the title of editor-in-chief. I was so excited and proud. Now when I'm at home, I make my dad call me, "Chief."

Being editor-in-chief gives me entrance into the high school's Presidents Club, where all club presidents enjoy monthly meetings with Principal Tim Brown and Associate Principal Shane Newark. We give updates on what's going on in our respective clubs and we work on leadership skills.

When I'm not covering news for The Herald, I'm often working on a martial art known as taekwondo. It is a Korean martial art translating to, "Way of the hands and feet."

I've been a member in taekwondo for six out of my 17 years on this earth. Only last year I achieved my black belt first dan (the lowest rank of black belt), which I would say is probably the proudest moment of my life thus far. Taekwondo is more than just a martial art, it is truly



RYAN BATES

a lifestyle. It has taught me so many valuable lessons such as patience, perseverance, humility, respect and self-control.

What has had the biggest impact on my school life was taekwondo, along with the support of my family. Both devotions helped improve me not only as a student, but as an overall person. My parents let me make my own mistakes and learn from them, but when the mistakes called for it they would help me recover and return to where I was.

My taekwondo teacher, Scott Smith, has had a huge influence on how I handle situations today. Master Smith is a hard-working, kind, genuine guy who has spent over 15 years teaching kids and adults in the way of the hands and feet.

Master Smith played a big part in making me the guy I am today. Scott was able to teach me a lesson that fixed what I thought to be one of my greatest weaknesses. He taught me perseverance. I remember he came up to me while I was practicing my spin hook kick and said, "I see potential in your kick," and told me to do it 15 times before and after class. After time he saw improvement and said that's the best way to improve anything in life, repetition. Those words echo in my mind still and helped shaped who I am today.