

# VIKING PRESS

Volume 3 Issue 4

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### *Snowed Out of School*

Winter brings many things; skiing, boots, coats, and ice scrapers. But mostly, it brings hope to students that they will get a free day off of school. They wait for the call that school is cancelled or for their school name to be shown on television. Students are excited when they hear it is a snow day and usually go back to bed.

Junior Savannah Parmley said, "I sleep in, watch movies, baby sit, and hang out with friends."

Bed seems to be the favorite thing to return to once students find out there is a snow day. "I stay in the

same place in my bed and play video games. Snow days are cool," said senior Evan Bultema.

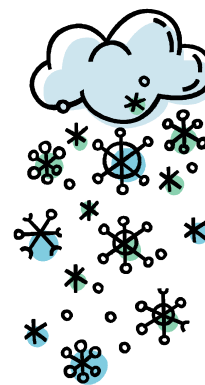
"I watch movies," Jonna Johnson laughed, "Snow days are just a good day to sit down and chill."

Students get excited about snow days, but they might not know the extensive process it is to have one declared. Kip Medendorp, the transportation director, starts the process at 4 a.m. if the weather was forecasted as heavy snow and ice. He drives approximately 60 miles of district roads and keeps in radio contact with nearby forecasters to concur his findings. He has to make his recommendation by 5 a.m. to superintendent Jerry McDowell. McDowell communicates with the

other superintendents and transportation directors of other school districts. He said that, "Ice is the biggest factor. Dirt roads are the worst as the holes can fill with water and freeze. Fog is another factor as we're right by the shoreline. The problem is, in Whitehall, weather is rarely the same in two different spots. Deciding whether to cancel school isn't always easy. The most important thing to consider is the safety of our children who attend our schools."

Snow days in Whitehall have

(Continues to page 2)



always been rare. The weather has to be pretty crazy, or sometimes students are just lucky. Medendorp said that, "One of [my most memorable years] with snow days was when we had a snow day just before Christmas vacation and a snow day the day we were supposed to come back. We had a two-day extended vacation."

McDowell describes one of his most memorable years, "Personally, I remember the blizzard in the mid-70s when we did not have school for days as the snow was up to the roof tops."

Important decisions are made to determine on having a snow day. McDowell and Medendorp work hard to make sure weather conditions are right to allow students to attend school. When the decision is made to have a snow day, students sleep in and relax. They have a planned day of watching tv and sleeping. It's what they've been hoping.

Writer: Adam Warren

*From the Canvas  
to the Field*

The 2013 football season is rapidly approaching. The Super Bowl may be over, but Whitehall High School is already planning for the 2013 football season. To start it off, the varsity football team has a new coach, Mr. Tony Sigmon. When Sigmon found out he was the coach, he said it was very humbling. "Whitehall is a great community, and I am very proud to be a part of it," said Sigmon. Sigmon recently joined the Whitehall District Schools' staff. He currently is the art teacher at the

middle school. His favorite part about teaching art is that he has an opportunity to teach so many different kids, and it allows him the chance to get to know the students well during class as they work on their projects.

Before Sigmon came to Whitehall, he taught students in the classroom and coached football in Fort Meyers, Florida. He and his wife taught for five years in Florida. They moved back to Michigan to be closer to family. Sigmon has been part of a football team since 5<sup>th</sup> grade. He played high school football at DeWitt, and he played football at Alma College for four years.

Football is a big part of Sigmon's life. He has many plans to help improve the varsity football team. "Some of the plans I have to improve our football program include introducing a new offense and emphasizing getting representatives at our new offense this summer, along with making sure we have as many numbers in the weight room as possible this off season." said Sigmon.

Sigmon really enjoys the overall sport of football. "I enjoy the

total team concept of football. Likewise, as a player I got so much out of playing football. I want to make sure our players have the same opportunities I had and more." Sigmon said.

With the upcoming season approaching quickly, the new varsity coach is looking forward to working with the team. "I am very excited to work with our athletes at the high school and for the upcoming football season. We have a great group of kids to work with, and we are going to surround them with an excellent coaching staff." said Sigmon.

The upcoming football season will be looked forward to by members of the community. Sigmon and the rest of the coaching staff will work hard to prepare the players for the first game of the season. Even though it is still winter, plans for next season are under way.

Get ready for some Whitehall football.

Writer: Leah Thompson



Pictured: Whitehall Varsity Football Team

# Charlotte's Web

On February first and second, students from Whitehall High School captured the audience with their reenactment of the popular children's story, Charlotte's Web. Although Whitehall's student directed-play is usually in November, the dates of the musical and student-directed play were switched this year in order to increase the attendance at the musical performances. Mr. Greg Boughton and English teacher Mrs. Lindsay DeRose selected a small group of seniors in the fall to direct the play. Director Libby Gillhespy, Co-Director Karly Griffin, and Stage Director Patrick Gilland then chose a play they wished to direct.

The children's classic, Charlotte's Web, is a story about a runt piglet named Wilbur (played by Kaitlin Skoglund), whose life is saved by a young girl named Fern (played by Meagan Myers). Fern raises Wilbur from a bottle until he is old enough to survive by himself, and

she then sells him to her Uncle Homer (played by Scott Murphy). Wilbur lives on Homer Zuckerman's farm for a few weeks before the old sheep (played by Mitch Boyce) warns him of his tragic fate: to be made into ham and bacon. Wilbur panics and tries to think of many ways to fight for his life. Wilbur's friend, Charlotte the spider (played by Kara Potter), weaves messages into her web to distract the Zuckermans from Wilbur's death by drawing attention to what a "Terrific Pig" Wilbur is. These messages end up winning Wilbur a bronze medal at the county fair, where Zuckerman proclaims that Wilbur will never be killed.

Auditions for the play were held the last week in November. Once the parts were assigned, practices quickly began and continued nearly every day until the performances. Gillhespy said, "I am very thankful for the opportunity to work with all the amazing people who helped make this play happen!" According to Gillhespy, Charlotte's Web had a larger revenue than average for the student-led plays. Senior Sidney Norris said, "It was a great play for

little kids." Potter, who played Charlotte, loved having the opportunity to play the part of a spider.

Writer: Lauren Throne

# Student Teachers

Each year, Whitehall High School is the host to a select number of student teachers. These teachers come to Whitehall from local colleges to teach in a classroom to complete their teaching degrees. They arrive during the middle of the school year, and teach for a portion of the year until they return to their college and receive their teaching degree. This year, Whitehall is the host to two student teachers; Ms. Krista Peterson and Mr. Kyle Gleason.

Peterson is currently a student at Western Michigan University. She began college at Muskegon Community College and transferred to WMU after two years. She is student teaching for Mrs. Eileen Stoffan's English. She will return to WMU in the spring and graduate April 27. Peterson originally planned to major as an elementary major, but switched her major to secondary English so she could teach speech and yearbook. Her minor is communications. Peterson has always wanted to pursue a career in teaching. She began teaching dance classes at the age of 14 when she found she enjoyed teaching. She also has a passion for English and believes she is good at explaining standards in a way that makes it easy



Pictured left to right: Kaitlin Skoglund, Scott Murphy, Jake Gillhespy, Mitch Boyce, Hannah Uithoven, Claire Beaman, Ryan Shields

for younger people to understand. She said that when beginning her internship at Whitehall, she expected to enjoy it, but to be stressed and overwhelmed at times. However, she said the enthusiasm from the students and support from the staff make every day an enjoyable day of teaching. So far Peterson said she has enjoyed her time at Whitehall. She said the students and staff are very welcoming and have made this a great experience for her. By the way things are going, she said she would not be happier doing anything else.

Kyle Gleason is also currently attending WMU. He is student teaching in Mrs. Jody Romine’s Spanish classes. Gleason majors in Spanish and minors in English and mathematics. Gleason has also enjoyed his time at Whitehall, and concluded that it has been a positive experience in his teaching career. When he began his internship at Whitehall, Gleason expected to experience issues and classroom distractions while teaching. However, he was pleased to say the school surprised him with helpful staff and respectful students, which makes classroom management easy for him. Like Peterson, Gleason will also graduate this spring. He has always had an interest in teaching. He enjoys being in the classroom setting and educating all of his students. Along with student teaching, Gleason will also be the assistant varsity baseball coach at Whitehall this spring. He is very excited to begin the season and cannot wait to meet the team.

Both student teachers agreed Whitehall High School is a great school

with many warm and welcoming students and staff. They are both excited to complete this last step of their education. Along with both teachers enjoying the experience, many students have also enjoyed having them there. Junior Sarah Schmiedeknecht said, “It is nice to have two different perspectives taught in the classroom.” Another student and baseball player, Ryan Bluhm, said that Gleason seems like a good guy, and he looks forward to getting to know him over the season.

Romine and Stoffan have also enjoyed the student teachers and agreed it is a great experience having them in the classroom. Stoffan said she enjoys having the opportunity to learn new techniques, philosophies, and ideas from the student teachers. Romine said that although it is nerve wracking at times to watch someone teach her students, seeing the students so enthused by the lessons makes it an exciting experience. She

said it is rewarding to watch them achieve their goals of pursuing their dream of becoming a teacher, and she feels privileged to be a part of their journey to accomplishing such achievements. Overall, many of Whitehall’s students and staff would agree Whitehall is the host of two great student teachers this year.

*Writer: Sam Sawyer*

*Love to Connecticut*

Of all the things that winter brings, perhaps one of the most exciting is Valentine’s Day. With love to share, everyone’s day can be brightened by sweet messages, handmade cards, or flowers. Two Whitehall students, Cassie McAllister and Hannah Zwemer, had an idea to send valentines to the children at Sandy Hook Elementary. McAllister

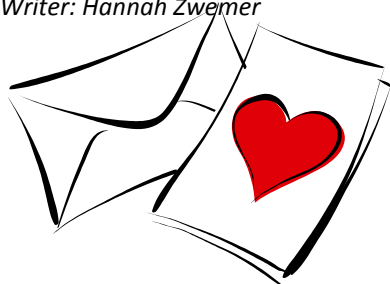


Pictured: Cassandra McAllister and Hannah Zwemer



orchestrated the project. "I was just along for the ride," Zwemer said. The girls sat at both lunches for several weeks and invited students to decorate hearts to send to the children. McAllister organized for hearts to be available to the students at Shoreline, Ealy, and the middle school; teachers received bags and were instructed to have their students make valentines. Although the exact number is unknown, there were many valentines sent to Connecticut. This project was a successful attempt in showing these young children that they are loved.

Writer: Hannah Zwemer

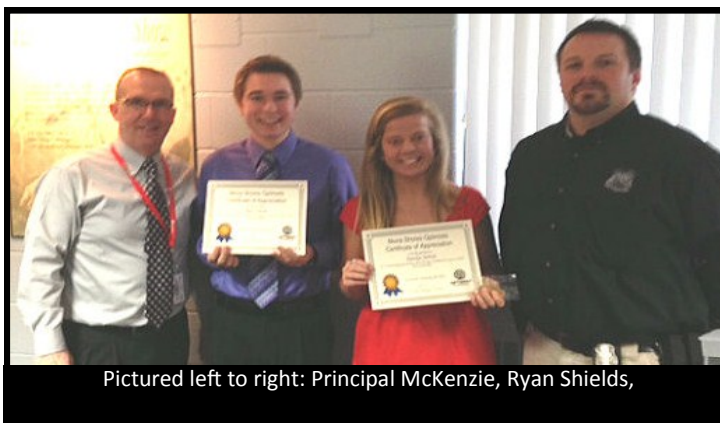


### Outstanding Optimists

Principal Dale McKenzie nominated a boy and a girl senior to attend an Optimist Club Luncheon that was January 30. Ryan Shields and Katelyn Jelinek represented Whitehall District Schools by giving a speech about what they want to do with their lives, emphasizing on giving back to children. Jelinek said that she would

like to become a children's psychologist in hopes of one day managing her own practice. Shields plans on becoming a mathematics teacher. During the luncheon, they discussed the topic of giving back to children and how they could accomplish this in their lifetime. After the luncheon, Jelinek and Shields received a plaque and certificate for being a member of the Optimist Club. Shields said, "It was an honor to have been picked for the award."

Writer: Samantha Huebler



Pictured left to right: Principal McKenzie, Ryan Shields,

# February

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 	2 
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14 	15 	16
17	18 	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28		

### Events to Remember

- ◆ February 1 & 2... High School Play *Charlotte's Web*
- ◆ February 15-18... Mid-Winter Break

This year's month of February was an unusual one because students did not attend school on a single Friday. The first, eighth, and the twenty-second were all snow days. The fifteenth was a part of mid-winter break.

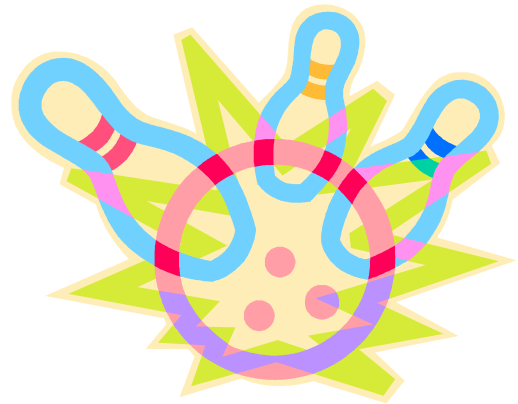
# The Link Letter

The Link Leader program is still in effect on the sixth month of its progress. They have socialized, tutored and got their freshmen involved with activities all during the school year. At the latest meeting, the Link Crew Leaders made birthday cards for their freshmen so that Mrs. Goodrich could send to the students with their Leader's signature and wishes signed on the cards. They also stapled the papers stating the freshmen's future events onto a linked paper chain that symbolized the group's name. Along with all the other holidays that the Link Crew has gotten their freshmen involved in, Valentine's Day was also an affair for the freshmen and the link leaders. All the senior and junior pairs made 8-10 Valentines for their group of freshmen. They included certain surprises such as candy and locker ornaments to make a day of love more special for their freshmen.

The latest development of the Link Crew was the trip

to a local bowling alley on February 21. All the freshmen had the option to leave school three hours early and join their Link Crew for a fun day of bowling and socializing. Students got into groups of four to six people along with a Link Leader and played an enjoyable and fun game of knocking down pins.

*Writer: Amber Kelley*



This newsletter is produced by the Viking Communication Class of Whitehall High School. Students in grades nine through twelve learn various skills producing this newsletter. Writing, photography, layout, interviewing, and communication skills are just some of the advantages students gain from participating in this class.

## -VALHALLA-



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