

THE STAMPEDE

School News Editors: Madison Torres and Blake Warner

Wiregrass's Outstanding Senior



Photo Courtesy of Claire Blazek

On November 1, 2013, Wiregrass Ranch High School announced the Outstanding Senior for the class of 2014.

Senior Grace Olsen, a worthy candidate, was nominated by students and faculty as the 2014 Outstanding Senior. She was one out of over 400 students in the Wiregrass Senior class, and she beat out over 300 eligible students for this award, she is an outstanding person.

A humble Olsen received the award saying, "this is so awesome, I did not even know this award existed and now that I do, I doubted that I would be chosen for something like this...my senior class is all pretty equal and I really don't think there is much that sets me apart."

This humble student may not see herself as someone who stands out, but her application and spending of time says

otherwise. Olsen is a very active young woman with her hands tied in all places of the community. Along with being an above average student, she plays school volleyball, club volleyball, maintains a job at the New Tampa Pet Resort and volunteers her free time for the Wiregrass football team.

Olsen feels that she is just like all of the other students at Wiregrass and she says that all she does to maintain the stress of her life is stay calm and hang out with friends. She also attributes much of her success to her mother who has helped her out in innumerable ways throughout her hectic life.

Olsen will now go on to compete at the district level in mid-December and feels that she is nervous especially since all of this is so new and surreal to her in the first place. Mrs. Kanewa, the Senior Counselor, however, feels that Grace has this competition in the bag. The Wiregrass class of 2014 could not have a better senior representative at the district level.

Some students get bogged down in the stress of school and never come out until the summer, some skirt the stress and opt for the easy route; but Olsen has chosen the hardest road of all in that she takes the stress but maintains it.

Olsen looks to the future with a positive attitude and chirps, "the future is inevitable."

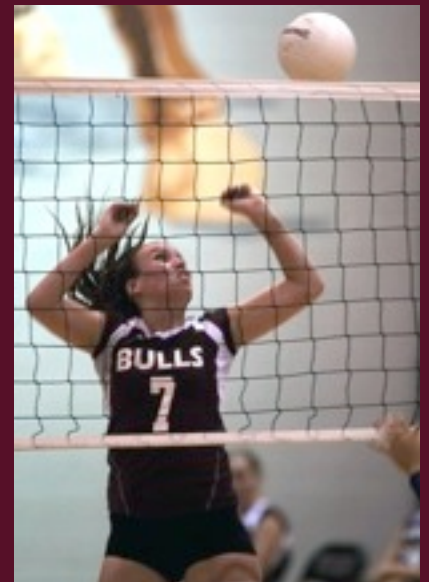


Photo Courtesy of tampabay.com

Living in such a balance has more than qualified Ms. Grace Olsen as the class of 2014's Outstanding Senior.

Wiregrass Signing Day holds the Future for Two Future Collegiates

Two Wiregrass Ranch High School (WRHS) seniors made school history as the first to sign national letters of intent during the early baseball signing period on November 13th.

Varsity baseball players Michael Campoamor and Zachary Drury signed for South Carolina's Furman University and the University of North Florida, respectively. Rather than signing the actual letters of intent, however, they symbolically signed blank papers prior to eating slices of the two celebratory cakes.

Both of the students' friends and relatives arrived en masse for the signing day; Drury's grandparents, parents, and brother attended the ceremony along with Campoamor's parents and sister.

WRHS Athletic Director Dave Wilson discussed the importance of the support given for these baseball players. "Obviously there's a lot of support for both of these athletes and both of these baseball players that we probably could have done it in the conference [room] or the media center as well," said Wilson.

"Both dads especially—not to take away from the moms or anything—but both dads especially have played a huge, huge part in where they've gotten to today," he added. Drury and Campoamor's former coach Jeff Swymer commented on their dedication to baseball.

"For being around these kids since they were eighth graders coming in, they were guys that...listen to everything we did, did everything we asked, dedicated a lot of time, worked really hard. Hard work's going to pay off,



it's going to have rewards, and today's their reward. And I appreciate them for working hard for me," said Swymer.

WRHS' new head coach and former professional baseball player, Marshall McDougall, gave Campoamor and Drury advice.

"Just realize that it's actually the beginning. You guys have planned, you know what you're doing. You don't have to go out there and try to do too much in the spring...just go play baseball. Relax, have fun," said McDougall.

During his congratulatory speech, Wilson also revealed that this was WRHS Principal Robyn White's second signing period since her promotion. Despite being a bit "under the weather," she lauded Drury and Campoamor.

"I just want to congratulate both of the boys," said White. Olivia Sunna

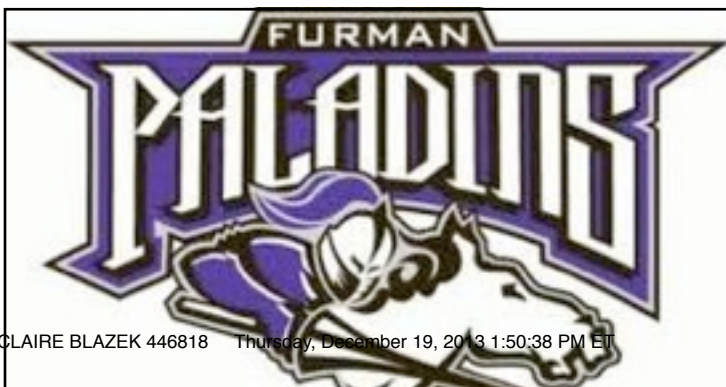


Photo Courtesy of sportslogos.net



Photo Courtesy of sippinonpurple.com

State Swimming Competition

On November 15, Sailfish Aquatic Center hosted the Florida High School Athletic Association's state swim competition for the 3A division in Stuart, Florida.

Three members of Wiregrass's swim team were able to progress to the state completion. Representing the boys was Senior Matt Menendez and swimming for the girls was Junior Athena Cimino and Sophomore Maddie Conway.

This was Menendez first time advancing to the state competition in his four years at Wiregrass. Menendez swam in two events; the 200 yard freestyle and the 100 yard butterfly. Menendez finished 17th in the 200 yard free preliminary with a time of 1:46.82. In the 100 yard fly preliminaries Menendez earned 20th place with a time of 54.32. Menendez was not able to move on to the finals.

Cimino competed in both the 50 and 100 yard freestyle events. Cimino finished 7th in the 50 yard free preliminary with a time 24.32. In the A final she earned 6th place with a time of 24.20. The Wiregrass Junior placed 5th in the state with a time of 53.21 during the preliminary event and finished the A final with a time of 53.63 earning 8th place.

"States was a lot of fun this year because we had the biggest team in school history and we all went best times," says Cimino, who has made it to the state competition all three years a part of the WRHS swim program.

Conway also competed in two events during her first appearance in the state competition, including the 100 yard fly and the 100 yard backstroke. In the preliminaries for the 100 yard fly Conway placed 12th with a time of 59.54, which allowed her to move on to the B finals. There she again placed 12th with a time of 59.50. Conway was also able to move onto the finals in the 100 yard backstroke event earning 9th in both the preliminary and finished with an initial time of 59.24 and a B final time 59.49.

"It is very exciting have had our swimmers compete at the state level and for me their was nothing better than for them to have posted personal beats," stated head coach, Alisa Cimino.

Breanna French



Wiregrass Congratulates its Teacher of the Year: Mr. Skoglund

Each year teachers and staff throughout the Wiregrass Ranch High School are nominated for a chance to be awarded the coveted Teacher of the Year award. This year the WRHS staff chose to honor science teacher Peter Skoglund.

Mr. Skoglund has been a teacher for 17 years and a member of the Wiregrass Ranch staff since the school opened in 2006. Though Skoglund didn't anticipate being awarded this honor, it was a welcome surprise.

"It was an honor to be selected, but I was kind of shocked," stated Skoglund.

Currently, Skoglund teaches both physics honors and AP physics, but he has also taught biology and chemistry in the past. He is also the teacher sponsor for the Theoretical Physics Club, respectfully. Skoglund says to enjoy teaching both his AP and honors students equally, but that the rigor is very different.

"I teach my AP students the same material, but it's more intense."

However, he didn't always want to be a high school science teacher.

"I wanted to be a plant teacher," said Skoglund.

Though teaching was not his first plan Skoglund enjoys teaching science. He says that trying to get people to enjoy science as much as he does is one of his biggest challenges as a teacher. That, and teacher evaluations.

And his love of science shows in his teaching style using hands on examples and bouncing around the classroom and lecturing in a tone so loud it carries out of the class and can be heard down the hallway.

"It's seeing students have as much fun as I do and that moment when a student finally understands the material," said Skoglund, "It's the breakthrough moment."

Breanna French

Getting Rid of FCAT

Starting the 2014-2015 school year, Florida will get rid of the reading and math portions of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test.

Florida is swapping the FCAT with the PARCC, or Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers.

The new test will better help educators align test results with the benchmarks set from what is known as the common core standards. Vince Verges of Florida's Department of Education is responsible for implementing PARCC.

Ashley Quarterman, a Freshman at Wiregrass Ranch High School, addresses the idea of the new test.

"I'm glad we are getting rid of FCAT, but I am just a little worried of how hard the new test will be because the recent change to FCAT already threw me off a lot," says Quarterman.

The new test will determine a school's letter grade, and as many know, Wiregrass Ranch High school is current an A school. Wiregrass is determined to keep that grade performance high.

According to Verges, 8000 teachers across Florida have participated in workshops on how to implement PARCC curriculum into lesson plans.

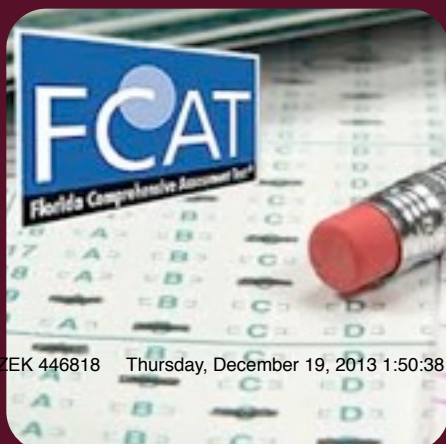
Alyssa Stewart, Junior at WRHS, discusses her opinion on the coming-about of the PARCC.

"Its definitely a smart move to give teachers brand new lesson plans that will teach us the stuff we need to know for the new test because we aren't used to it, most of us have taken FCAT our whole lives," says Stewart.

The state education department conducted a small sized launch of PARCC during the spring of 2013. After that launch was examined by the state, they made the needed tweaks. They now plan to perform a larger test launch in the spring of 2014.

Standardized testing is not going away completely, but it is possibly going to become much better in the coming years.

Taylor Quarterman



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Photo Courtesy of
happycowfrozenyogurt.com/

Class of 2017 Fundraiser

Class of 2017 freshmen this year have already had multiple fundraisers and many more are still to come.

These fundraisers usually take place at the Happy Cow located on Bruce B. Downs Boulevard. Usually the Happy Cow fundraiser starts at five P.M. and ends at around 9:30 to 10 P.M. All the money that they earn goes straight towards their class' needs in the years to come; some of the necessities include Grad Bash, hoodies, and T-shirts.

Wiregrass Ranch High School Freshman Lauren Reed discussed her support for her class.

"It was really good. I feel glad that I'm supporting my class of 2017. They had it at such a convenient place that most people would actually go to support the class of 2017 to get some yummy frozen yogurt, too," stated Reed.

The class of 2017 also had a food drive; however, all the money that they earned was donated to families in need.

The food drives always catch everyone's attention. For the Happy Cow fundraiser, Facebook and Twitter were utilized to notify students at Wiregrass Ranch High School (WRHS) and encourage them to come.

WRHS Freshman Austin Lahey shared his opinion towards school fundraisers.

"I don't go to the fundraisers even though I should...to support my "group" of freshmen, but I think it's a smart idea how they do the fundraisers to get money. If they didn't, then we would have no way to buy class shirts," said Lahey.

Blake Warner

LOCAL NEWS

Florida College Broadens Residential Opportunities with College Hall

Florida College marked a new chapter in its accommodation of the recent student influx with the dedication of the newly-renovated College Hall on September 20th.

Florida College President H.E. “Buddy” Payne provided background information concerning College Hall.

“It used to be a men’s dorm. It’s been standing empty for about six years,” explained Payne. “It’s turned out that one of our other dorms for women has to be remodeled before we can use it...Because of that, we’ve lost eighty-four beds for women. With our increasing enrollment the last four years, we’re getting tight on space for women. So we chose to remodel this old men’s dorm and turn it into a women’s dorm...If you ask what our purpose is for the future, this is going to provide us anywhere from thirty-two to sixty-four beds for women in a beautiful, new, safe, and secure dormitory.”

This one million dollar renovation project was funded primarily by the monetary contributions of Florida College alumni Larry and Joan Coffey. Temple Terrace mayor Frank Chillura praised Florida College at College Hall’s dedication ceremony for the inclusion of Mediterranean architecture in the building’s design, as reported by the Tampa Tribune.

Florida College Admissions Counselor Keri Griffin extolled College Hall’s new features.

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“They absolutely love it,” said Griffin. “It’s quieter for the upper-division girls so they can study...It’s really close to

classes so they don’t have to live off-campus. They have their own parking spots.”

Wiregrass Ranch High School freshman Sylvia McDonald expressed her thoughts towards the women’s dormitory.

“I stayed there for drama camp and when I went into another girl’s dorm, the guy’s dorm was increasingly larger, and we thought it wasn’t fair,” said McDonald. “I’m glad that we have more space for girls.”

The number of Florida College students had increased dramatically in the recent years, reaching over five hundred. To lodge both the newcomers and the current students, Boswell Hall and Terrace Hall were added to the campus’ housing about five years ago.

Florida College is still planning to further improve its campus, beginning with the renovation of Sutton Hall, a potentially three-year-long project. However, residential halls are not the college’s only areas of future expansion; the liberal arts college is developing its academic programs as well.

“We now have eight bachelor’s degrees with seventeen different majors for our juniors and seniors...That has been our biggest area of growth for the last four years,” said Payne.

College Hall also has room for growth; the building currently houses twenty-nine women. However, it signifies an accomplishment for Florida College in the improvement of their students’ lives with an innovative residential complex.

Olivia Sunná



Photo Courtesy of FloridaCollege.edu

One Mistake and a Lifetime Full of Regrets

Hernando mother, Tiffany Mitchell, mother of three, has been charged with aggravated manslaughter by culpable negligence, after her two year old daughter ingested an oxycodone tablet and died moments later, on January 31st, 2011.

After almost three years of waiting for conviction. On November 15, 2013, Mitchell finally received her sentence. She was found guilty and is now looking forward to 13 years behind bars. Many people find the verdict to be unfair. The day of the crime, it was just another normal day at the Mitchell home. On that day, Mitchell told the court jury she picked up her two year old daughter, Kaylynn from her father's house. Then along with Mitchell's boyfriend and two other sons, they spent the day shopping, they had a nice dinner and even went out for some ice cream.

Many close family members and friends describe Mitchell as an "incredible mother that never wished for any harm to her children." On that same night, Mitchell left an 80- miligram oxycodone pill tablet on her nightstand. Mitchell clarified the pill was only to be taken for the use of menstrual pain, and that she had received the pill from her son's grandmother. Mitchell describes to the court, she set Kaylynn down to watch "Dora the Explorer" while she took a quick shower. This was around 10 p.m.. After Mitchell was done taking a shower, she declared she checked up on Kaylynn and everything seemed to be fine. She also noticed that the pill was missing from her nightstand; however, she made no attempt to look for it.

The young, brown-haired, blue-eyed toddler went to sleep that night. Only to realize those were her last moments. The morning of the next day, Mitchell

went to wake her daughter up, only to find her pale and icy to the touched. Mitchell contacted the police and two year old Kaylynn was found dead on the scene. Mitchell was arrested and it was not until two months later she received news of the cause of her daughter's death. After a high percentage of oxycodone was found in her daughter's system, Mitchell plead guilty. Ashley Mongold, Junior at Wiregrass Ranch High School, shared if she believed the verdict was fair.

"I believe the mother should not have been convicted so harshly. It was an innocent mistake, it is pretty clear she had no intention of hurting her daughter in any way. Kids are very curious and they get their hands in trouble almost every day," said Mongold.

Taylor Quarterman, a Junior at WRHS, had a very different opinion from Mongold's statement.

"I do think it was entirely the mother's fault. If she would have paid attention and not have that deadly pill in the first place, her daughter would still be here. She was negligent and should have kept her eye out," said Quarterman.

Kaylynn's father, Kraig Broshears seems to agree with Quarterman. He ranted to the media by speaking of Mitchell saying, "She took a life by being irresponsible," he said. "She'll have time with her boys when she gets out. I have to wake up every day and not see my daughter's face."

Tiffany Calderon

Burn Victim Aids Others

Vietnam War veteran Joe Versaggi counsels patients in Tampa General Hospital's burn unit, aiding those experiencing emotional and physical trauma after their harrowing ordeals.

The catch? Versaggi is a burn victim himself.

On July 16, 2006, Versaggi's airplane crashed in Wimauma, Florida due to a faulty engine, killing his wife Estelle and injuring the other passengers on board. He was spirited to the Tampa General Hospital in a helicopter. Versaggi awoke after a five-week coma to discover burns covered 35 percent of his body; he had to endure over thirty surgeries to repair the damage.

Joe Versaggi converses with ABC Action News reporters concerning his accident.

"The only thing I remember about the accident is that when we hit the ground, the plane exploded into a fire ball," says Versaggi.

Versaggi has been a key figure in the burn unit since that momentous day, encouraging patients to continue living. According to TBO, he volunteers at the Tampa General Hospital about thirty to forty hours a week by sharing his experiences, giving advice, and driving people to the inside of the hospital from the hospital's parking lot.

Joe Versaggi explains his reasons behind volunteering in an interview with ABC Action News reporters.

"The fact they did so much for me while I was here. I felt like I wanted to give it back to help them out. It was the fact they did everything medical for you but they didn't experience the pain and they couldn't really tell you what was going to happen," says Versaggi.

Versaggi is a member of the Survivors Offering Assistance and Recovery (SOAR) program for the aid of burn patients and is a certified counselor. One of the people he had counseled in the past, Vinnie Bruno, was injured in a boat explosion on July 28th. He and Bruno still remain friends to this day.

Vinnie Bruno discusses Versaggi's impact with Bay News 9.

"There are a lot of heroes. But Joe has gone above and beyond, not only for me but for countless others. He's there for them and puts them in front of himself," says Bruno.

Olivia Sunná



Photo Courtesy of TBO.com

WORLD NEWS

The World Remembers Nelson Mandela

On December 5th, Nelson Mandela, South Africa's first black president and anti-apartheid activist, died at the age of 95.

While many around the world are grieving his death, a good amount of people had never heard of Mandela before. He touched many lives and influenced many people worldwide throughout his triumphant struggle to end apartheid in South Africa.

Apartheid refers to any social system in which minority racial groups are denied the same political and economic rights as the dominant racial group in the area. In South Africa, whites dominated blacks with this system; for example, blacks and other minority groups suffered poor treatment and needed permission to travel within their own country.

Mandela was born on July 18, 1918 in Transkei, South Africa. He joined the African National Congress (ANC) in 1944. In 1948, the National Party, a government apartheid group, was formed. Mandela actively participated in anti-apartheid movements, first peacefully, but later resorting to violent methods such as taking charge of a military wing in the ANC. As a result, he was arrested in 1962 and sentenced to five years in prison. On July 16, 1964, Mandela and eight others were sentenced to life in prison for treason.

Word about his imprisonment spread, and Mandela soon became a symbol for the apartheid resistance in South Africa. He was released on February 11, 1990 and continued to strive towards his goals.

After winning the Nobel Peace Prize, Mandela was elected as the first black president in South Africa in 1994, thus ending the apartheid in South Africa.

Even after he was freed from prison, Mandela never displayed bitterness towards those who had oppressed him, according to CNN.

"As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I'd still be in prison," said Mandela.

Dominika Burbul, Wiregrass Ranch High School Freshman, talked about what Nelson Mandela's life meant to her.

"Nelson Mandela was a strong, inspirational, and courageous man for what he did for his country," said Burbul.

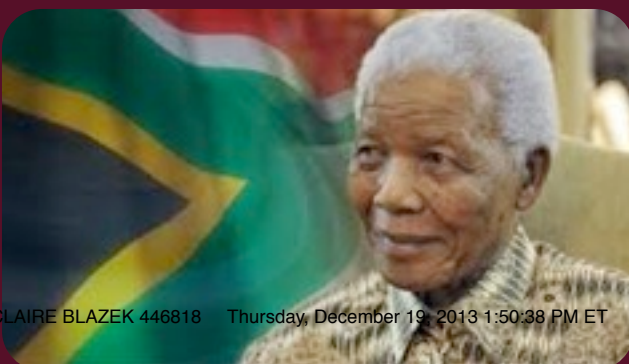
United States President Barack Obama, expressed his views about Mandela's legacy to CNN reporters.

"We've lost one of the most influential, courageous and profoundly good human beings that any of us will share time with on this Earth. He no longer belongs to us — he belongs to the ages," said Obama.

Lauren Reed



Photo Courtesy of imore.com



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Photo Courtesy of SABCNews.com

Paleontological Discoveries

On Wednesday, November 6th, paleontologists in Salt Lake City, Utah revealed a new dinosaur species to the public. As the long lost cousin of the Tyrannosaurus Rex, or “tyrant lizard,” he was named *Lynthronax argest*, or “king of gore.”

A replica of the newly discovered dinosaur was put on display at the Natural History Museum of Utah with 3-D model of his head attached, and a backdrop showing the dinosaur walking on the beach. This discovery has helped paleontologists prove that dinosaurs were actually on earth ten million years earlier than they had previously thought. It has also raised questions about the existence of additional tyrannosaurs.

Remains of this new dinosaur species were discovered in November 2009, at the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, in Utah. It took paleontologists four years to dig up the remains of this extinct animal, and throughout the process verifications had to be made about the new discovery. They traveled all around the world to confirm their discoveries with other paleontologists, and compare the fossils they had found with bones of previously discovered dinosaurs.

NBC news said that research and discoveries of this dinosaur led Mark Loewen, a paleontologist at the University of Utah, to conclude that the *Lynthronax argest* was similar to the T-Rex, besides the fact that he was likely smaller in size at 24 feet long and 8 feet tall and covered in feathers.

“That Skull is designed for grabbing something, shaking it to death and tearing it apart,” Loewen said about the carnivorous dinosaur’s diet.

NBC news also stated that a man in charge of the digging in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, Alan Titus, said that there are 12 other dinosaurs that were discovered along side the *Lynthronax*. He expects many additional discoveries of dinosaurs in the same rock formation in Utah. Wiregrass Ranch High School Freshman, Preston Parilo, spoke about his views on the new dinosaur discoveries.

“I never thought that there would be dinosaur discoveries during this time of the future. I just can’t believe that they aren’t done finding all of the remains of these animals if they are extinct,” Parilo stated.

Jessica DeMarco

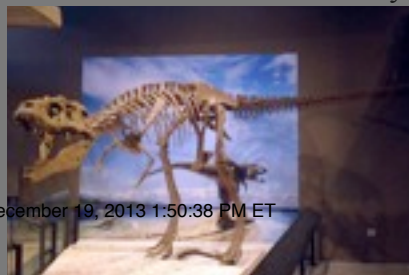


Photo Courtesy of NBCNews.com

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Photo Courtesy of dw.de

Chemical Weapons Organization Awarded Nobel Peace Prize

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) received the Nobel Peace Prize for their work in Syria and elsewhere on December 10th in Oslo, Norway.

The OPCW is an organization that works towards bringing the world closer to peace through the inspection and destruction of chemical weapons. This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the Chemical Weapons Convention; the Chemical Weapons Convention created the OPCW in 1997 and calls on signatories to destroy their stockpiles.

Thorbjorn Jagland, Nobel committee chairman, presented the award, which consisted of a medal, a diploma, and a cash award of eight million Swedish kroner, (nearly 1.2 million U.S. dollars).

OPCW Director-General Ahmet Uzumcu accepted the award and discussed the work that OPCW had already completed; however, he also acknowledged the challenges that still lie ahead for the organization.

"This is the first time that the Peace Prize has been awarded to an organization that is actively engaged in disarmament as a practical and ongoing reality," Uzumcu stated during his lecture. "For sixteen years now, the OPCW has been overseeing the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. Our task is to consign chemical weapons to history forever."

So far, 190 nations have ratified the convention and become members of the OPCW. During his speech, Jagland appealed for the six nations worldwide that have not yet become members of the OPCW to do so.

"The members represent 98% of the world's population and territory as well as 98% of the world's total chemical industry. Eighty percent of the chemical weapons have been removed. Ninety percent of the production capacity has been destroyed," stated Jagland.

Many people had not expected the OPCW to be awarded the prestigious prize as very few people had ever heard of them before it was tasked with dismantling Syria's chemical stockpile. However, in his speech, Jagland defended the committee's choice, stating that they had the group in mind before that development.

"Peace is not brought about by individuals and idealists alone," Jagland said. "We also need practical politicians, capable of moving the world away from confrontation within often narrow limits. We also need institutions, not least the global ones within the United Nations. It is the interplay between all of these that can create peace."

Breanna French

McDonald's is No Longer Using Heinz Ketchup

On Friday, October 25, McDonald's announced that they were planning to stop using Heinz Ketchup in their restaurants.

The breakup ensued after Heinz hired the former Burger King Worldwide CEO, Bernardo Hees, as a chief executive, upsetting McDonald's who rivals Burger King in the fast-food business.

This has not been the first time McDonald's and Heinz have gotten into a "food fight". In 1973 a tomato shortage caused Heinz to focus more on big restaurants and diners than it's fast-food customers, according to the *Washington Post*. McDonald's ended their partnership and while the two companies later made up, Heinz played a smaller role as Heinz Ketchup is only used in McDonald's Pittsburgh and Minneapolis markets in America.

This latest disagreement doesn't appear to be that big of a deal to bystanders, especially for students at Wiregrass Ranch High School. This situation didn't seem to faze Rebecca Goodridge, a ninth grader at WRHS.

"I don't care, as long as the ketchup tastes good, I'm fine," said Goodridge.

Monika Caffier, also freshmen at the Ranch, shared similar sentiments.

"I don't eat out regularly, but I think it doesn't matter the brand of ketchup you have; the real problem [I have] is that just because McDonald's "enemy" BK [Burger King] CEO was hired as the chief executive doesn't mean you have to use a whole new brand. Now they have to find a new company and for what? Ketchup. But who knows, maybe this may be a big deal for some people," said Caffier.

This will be a big deal for Heinz, who gets a lot of business from McDonald's overseas. Heinz sells a variety of sauces though and has partnerships with restaurants such as TGI Friday's, so they will recover.

In an email to the *Huffington Post*, McDonald's seemed rather calm about the matter.

"We value the relationship we've maintained with Heinz for more than 40 years...We have spoken to Heinz and plan to work together to ensure a smooth and orderly transition of the McDonald's restaurant business, and are confident that there will be no impact to our business, our customers and our great tasting food at McDonald's." a McDonald's representative said.

Heinz has not commented on this ordeal as it is part of their policy to not comment on relationships with customers.

Lauren Reed



HEALTH

Re-inventing Prosthetic Legs

The Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago has had a recent breakthrough creating a system that uses neural signals to improve limb control of a bionic leg.

In the past only brain-controlled bionic arms and hands were available. Leg amputees typically relied on robotic sensors and remote controls to move their prosthetic limbs. That is until the creation of a thought-controlled bionic leg.

Levi Hargrove, doctor who led the research project at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago's Center for Bionic Medicine, talks about the abilities of the new prosthetic leg.

"This new bionic leg features incredibly intelligent engineering," says Hargrove, "It learns and performs activities unprecedented for any leg amputee, including seamless transitions between sitting, walking, ascending and descending stairs and ramps and repositioning the leg while seated."

This life-changing new development was designed using years of past research.

Some of the past studies have shown that paralyzed people can move robotic arms using just their thoughts. Other studies showed that able-bodied people can walk using robotic legs controlled just by their brains.

This new research pushes the past developments one step further. The new system uses muscle signals to amplify messages given off by the brain whenever the person wants to move.

Zac Vawter is a 32 year old man who had his knee and lower leg amputated after a tragic motorcycle accident in 2009.

Vawter's life was forever changed emotionally and physically. It was not probable that Vawter would ever be able to do some of the things he loved, like play football.

Vawter, however, has become the first person to control a bionic leg just using brain power.

During Vawter's case studying 2009, he underwent muscle reinnervation surgery, the surgery manipulated the nerves from his damaged muscles inside the amputated extremity

and redirected them to the healthy hamstring muscle above his knee.

The redirected nerves instruct each of the muscles when to contract and sensors lying on Vawter's leg detect the tiny electrical signals given off by the muscles. The signals then go to a specifically designed computer program that analyzes the signals and data.

After the information is decoded signals are sent to the robotic leg and the movement wanted is created.

"The bionic leg is a big improvement compared to my regular prosthetic leg," says Vawter, "The bionic leg responds quickly and more appropriately, allowing me to interact with my environment in a way that is similar to how I moved before my amputation. For the first time since my injury, the bionic leg allows me to seamlessly walk up and down stairs and even reposition the prosthetic by thinking about the movement I want to perform. This is a huge milestone for me and for all leg amputees."

Millions of leg amputees everywhere could soon have a dramatically improved daily schedule, a life where they do not have to worry about their amputated leg every day.

Ashley Allen



Photo Courtesy of Thinkstock.com

Medical Marijuana Support Running High

Currently 20 states in the United States have legalized marijuana for medical uses; Florida is trying to become number 21.

Florida state government has recently put out a petition for supporters of the legalization of marijuana to sign. If the petition garners 700,000 signatures by February 1, 2014 then the state legislature will begin to review the current proposed bill and start the legal procedure to pass the bill.

As of December 18, 2013 about 165,000 valid signatures have been recorded. Around 700,000 signatures have been gathered, but around 25% of them are invalid because people are not registered in Florida to vote which is a requirement to sign the petition. A majority of the signatures have not been checked for accuracy yet; making it impossible to know exactly how many signatures have been garnered.

If the law is passed people with cancer, glaucoma, AIDS, Hepatitis C, ALS, Crohn's disease, Parkinson's, MS among many other conditions approved by doctors, would be able to be prescribed medical marijuana. The clause in the bill that states that "other conditions approved by a doctor" scare many people who feel that this could give doctors an unbounded and unrestricted ability to prescribe marijuana to pretty much anyone who wanted it.

Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi feels that no matter what the outcome of the petition and the voting on the bill, if it ever gets that far, that this bill is federally illegal. Since the federal government has outlawed marijuana, and is considered the supreme law of the land, it is in theory illegal for states to legalize what the federal government has outlawed. Although precedents have been set that say that the federal government cannot incriminate states for legalizing substances, but rather they can only take funding from the states.

The federal government has been cited saying that they have bigger fish to fry than states who wish to legalize marijuana, and has decided to focus on what they have deemed as more important, such as the economy.

Claire Blazek



ENTERTAINMENT

Prisoners will Hold its Audience Captive

The long awaited film **Prisoners**, a thriller about child abduction and the corruption of innocence finally made its debut, and so far has yet to disappoint.

Prisoners opens with a shot in a snowy forest, where a deer searches around for food. Then into the frame comes the sound of a shot being fired. The scene then cuts back to the now dead deer. The camera pulls back to show a father (Hugh Jackman) and teenage son (Dylan Minnette), in hunting gear staring at the deceased deer. On the drive home, the father lectures the son on how to always be prepared for the worst in life. This powerful scene no doubt caught the attention of the audience. Haylee Smith, 11th grade student at Wiregrass Ranch High School, explains her feelings when she first saw this scene.



“When I went into this movie I was expecting it to be very lame and a slightly different version of the movie **Taken**. However when I saw the opening scene my expectations were already proven wrong,” says Smith.

Hugh Jackman and Terrence Howard are the fathers of two missing girls who take the law into their own hands after Paul Dano's prime suspect is released without charge. The detective charged with cracking the case, Jake Gyllenhaal definitely does his character justice with his heart wrenching acting skills. As for Hugh Jackman he huffs and puffs and screams and roars throughout the film giving his character a very crazy appeal. He is basically the foundation of this movie making it very interesting to watch.

As the plot goes on the audience gets a glimpse of vast conspiracies, basement lairs and all of the other drama entangled into this film. Danni Matter, an 11th grader at WRHS, gives her critique on the film.

“This movie exceeded my expectations. Usually in movies I am not a fan of Jake Gyllenhaal but I have to say he was one of my favorite characters throughout the entire movie. I would definitely say this movie is worth watching and it really makes you feel for all the families that have actually lost their child through abduction,” says Matter.

Prisoners, will have audiences at the edge of their seat with violence during every scene.

Jacqueline Jhoda



Catching Fire is Catching On

Starting on November 22nd, 2013, people across the U.S. will flock to the nearest movie theatre just to experience one of the most anticipated premieres of the year, *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*.

For 146 minutes moviegoers in America will be brought into the futuristic ways of Panem in both regular and IMAX theaters.

Christine Allen, movie fanatic and mother of two in Wesley Chapel, Florida, talks about her expectations for *Catching Fire*.

"I absolutely love to read books, so I have already read the entire *Hunger Games* trilogy," says Allen, "I saw the first movie and I thought it was amazing! I just hope that *Catching Fire* remains true to the book."

Far into the future lies a country called Panem. In Panem, freedom is scarce and life is rough; in fact many people are malnourished and starved.

As the government struggles to control the rebellious citizens, each year one boy and one girl from each of the twelve districts is chosen to fight in an arena until only one survives. Whoever is fortunate enough to survive becomes untouchable and can no longer be picked to battle.

At the 74th annual *Hunger Games*, Katniss Everdeen (played by Jennifer Lawrence) and Peeta Mellark (played by Josh Hutcherson) were chosen as tributes from the district 12. Miraculously and controversially, they both manage to survive.

This heart wrenching sequel takes place directly after Katniss and Peeta have victoriously won the 74th annual *Hunger Games*.

Whenever someone wins the *Hunger Games*, they are forced to once again leave

their families and embark on the "Victor's Tour," traveling to each of the districts.

As Katniss and Peeta travel through the districts, it becomes evident to them that they are the fuel for a rebellion against the Capital.

As the population of Panem gets antsy, President Snow prepares to prove his power at the 75th *Hunger Games*. This time no one is safe.

In *Catching Fire*, audiences across the nation will be able to experience at first hand the gut wrenching cruelty of the capital and the infamous President Snow.

The *Hunger Games: Catching Fire* is directed by Francis Lawrence, and based from the screenplay by Simon Beaufoy and Michael DeBruyn. *Catching Fire* is rated PG-13 by the MPAA.

Ashley Allen

What to Expect from Glee

As *Glee* goes into its fifth season it is known that Cory Monteith will no longer appear in the show, this alone will change many parts of the show.

The first episode of *Glee* premiered on September 26, 2013 called "Love, Love, Love" was the first of a two episode that is a tribute to the Beatles. The second episode will premiere on October 3, 2013.

Brittany Pelletier, a Wiregrass Ranch High School Senior, shares her thoughts on the first episode and how it will translate to the second episode and to the death of a main character, Finn Hudson.

"I loved the first episode; it had so many surprising elements in it. The first

episode was a tribute to the Beatles and I know that will go on to the second episode, it's weird because Finn Hudson (Cory Monteith) is supposed to be in the episodes but he's not. So, I think that will all be cleared up in the third episode which is the where Finn Hudson dies," says Pelletier.

As many know Cory Monteith died earlier this year which was caused by a drug overdose. Monteith was dating his co-worker Lea Michele at the time; she will continue to be a part of main cast playing her character Rachel Berry. In the third episode of *Glee* is when Monteith's character Finn Hudson will die in the show. This episode will also be the tribute episode to Monteith which will air October 10, 2013.

With a death of a main character also come some new characters. Four recurring cast members from season four will be joining the main cast. Adam Lambert is also to join the set for the fifth season. Demi Lovato will also be part of the cast for six episodes starting from the second episode of the season. There are speculations that there will be seven new recurring cast members, 3 girls and 4 boys.

There were some setbacks of the death of Cory Monteith. The production was to begin in the middle of July with filming starting on July 19, 2013. Before filming started it was announced that the production of the show would stop so that the writers and producers could rewrite all of the storyline and to find out what to do with Monteith's character. Filming started on August 5, 2013 and the season would premiere on September 26, 2013 a week later than the original date. After the third episode production will stop again so that the creative team can rework the season.

Jacqueline Swartz

OPINION

Batkid Gets his Wish

On November 15th, 2013 hundreds of people lined the streets of “Gotham City” (San Francisco, California) to see five year old Miles Scott’s dream come to life.

Miles Scott was two years old when he was diagnosed with Leukemia, thankfully this young fighter did not give up. He is now five years old and has been in remission since June.

For one day, Miles does not have to think about cancer or being sick because for one day Miles gets to become Batkid! Dressed in a black Batsuit, puffy muscles and all, Miles is ready to fight crime and protect the streets of Gotham.

Christine Allen, mother of two and teacher in Wesley Chapel, Florida, talked about the amazement she felt when she first heard of the news.

“I couldn’t believe how awe-inspiring the whole event is,” said Allen “I have

two kids of my own and just the thought of all of those people gathering around to support Miles brings tears to my eyes.”

Starting his day off with a ring from the Batphone at the Grand Hyatt hotel, Miles was ready for an action packed day. One escorted ride through the streets of Gotham City, in the Lamborghini-turned-Batmobile, and he was on his way!

First stop, a “damsel in distress” at Hyde Park. Tied to a plastic box turned bomb, and sitting on the cable car tracks, Batkid was forced to quickly disable the device and save the innocent women from danger. After rescuing the woman, he was repaid with a hug and off to his next mission he went.

Batkid came to the rescue once again, locking up the Riddler who was attempting to rob a bank. After a quick lunch break at Burger Bar in Union

Square, Miles was on his way to save the city from the last villain, the Penguin.

At the sight of the Penguin, who was holding the San Francisco Giants mascot Lou Seal captive, Miles swooped in and saved the day like the hero he truly is.

Like every good superhero, it was time for Miles to be acknowledged for his helpful deeds. Mayor of San Francisco Ed Lee thanked Batkid for all of his great work and rewarded him with the key to the city!

Miles was also honored in San Francisco as November 15th was proclaimed the annual Batkid Day!

On this special Friday afternoon, the Make-A-Wish foundation, with the help of roughly 12,000 volunteers, helped create a memory that will never be forgotten.
Ashley Allen

The Denigration of Language

Language was once something beautiful and could hold deep expression in its words. Today language has come to match the mentality of the “instantaneous society” leaving out the seemingly superfluous words that really held the value and beauty of language.

English once held “thee” and “thou,” spoke in detail about what it wanted to portray. Think about all the heralded writers; they are prized for their artful use of language and ability to use that language to paint a picture.

Today with the instantaneity of society everything has been cut short. Text messaging is a prime example; “useless” vowels are removed from words to shorten the text making messaging faster. Words that seem to be unnecessary are removed from paragraphs even when they enhance the artistic flow because today’s reader is not going to read more than they have to.

So instead of standing idly by and watching communication reach its lowest point, writers should step up and write in the style they are most comfortable with. They should not back down from the style that they prefer just because they are afraid they will not catch an audience; rather they should press on and someone will appreciate their effort and then the reader can spread it to like audiences.

In a world that cuts writers short, limiting them and pressing brevity upon their works it is up to the writer ultimately to make the decision to stick with the style they like, not what everyone else likes. If you always fit in, you will never stand out; and standing out is what makes people want to know you.