

Purple Paw

February/March 2012



Our Mariah: “No One FIGHTS Alone”

By Hannah Sidebottom

I'm sure most of you have heard about Mariah McFadden...the seventh grader on Team One. She found out at the beginning of the 2011 school year she has liver cancer. Starting seventh grade is hard enough for any student let alone finding out that you have cancer.

But out of the bad news, came good. To help Mariah's family, Mrs. Stacy Rice, Mr. Bill Lee and Team One teachers started the Mariah Fund where those who felt generous and giving or maybe just had a few extra dollars lying around could donate to support the fundraiser.

Mr. Lee said that he “was inspired by what Mariah does, how she carries herself and how strong she is.”

Mr. Lee proposed a deal. If students could collect \$1,000 in two weeks, he would hold a drawing so that one student could shave his head! Since then, three other brave Cortland staff members come forward offering their heads to be

shaved, as well. Mr. Doug Pasquarella, the Dean of Students, Mr. Robert Edwards, a high school social studies teacher, and Mr. Tom Herting, a high school technology teacher all joined the cause. Our community did an outstanding job!! The \$1,000 goal was reached by the third day when \$1,236 was counted.

Each day the total rose as we approached the Celebration and Haircutting Ceremony which was held on Friday, February 17, 2012 in the auditorium. Over 300 people watched and cheered as four students slashed and sliced and lifted the hair from the four educators' heads. Then they wiped tears from their eyes as Mariah's mom thanked students, staff, and community for their generosity and support and a “BIG” check for \$6, 114.

Mariah, her family, and friends are grateful to everyone who donated, did a good deed or even had their head shaved to prove that “No One FIGHTS Alone!” Mariah: Get Better Soon!!!



Fun Facts for February

By Brian Barnes

Valentine's Day is celebrated on February 14 in most western countries. Children give valentines and have a party in school. Young and old exchange cards with loved ones. This custom is hundreds of years old, valentine greetings having been found that date back into the 1400's.

Home run king "Babe" Ruth born February 6, 1895.

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February is the shortest month with only 29/28 days (this year was a leap year)

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The third Monday in February is PRESIDENT'S DAY. Both Washington and Lincoln's birthdays were in February. It is considered a Federal holiday for celebration of Washington's Birthday, but most states also honor all presidents on this day.

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Princess Elizabeth became Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain, February 6, 1952.

FEBRUARY QUOTE

Thirty days hath September,
April, June, and November;
All the rest have thirty-one,
Excepting February alone
Which hath but twenty-eight, in fine,
Till leap year gives it twenty-nine.

Valentines Day

By Hannah Sidebottom

Valentines Day is on February 14th and it is celebrated by many countries all over the world. February is known as the month of romance. Valentine's Day is the exchange of candy, gifts, and flowers between loved ones. The traditional candy of Valentine's Day is chocolate. Did you know that more than 40,000 Americans are employed at chocolate factories? That's a lot!! Another candy is the heart shaped candy with little messages on them like "be mine" or "love you". The most popular colors for Valentine's Day are pink, red, and white. Lots of people show their love for one another with decorated cards, usually they are in heart shapes or lined with lace, ribbon or glitter to make them fancy looking. Approximately 85% of valentines or valentine cards are purchased by women. Valentine greetings have been popular for as far back as the middle ages and the Romans. I hope everyone shares some love this Valentine's Day, even if it's just a hug or simply saying...I Love You!



What to Write About?

By Natalie Moore

Are you like me and you can't think of anything to write about for a report or essay. Well that's what is happening to me right now! So I decided that since I couldn't think of anything thing to write then I would just give advice on how to write something when you don't know what to write about.

When you don't know what to write about you can try thinking about something that you like to do that relates to the topic. Let's say if you had to write about smoking, you could do an essay on why people shouldn't smoke and add facts about it. You could pretty much do that with anything. If it was a free topic you could just think about what should be changed about your school or the activities that are happening around you. You could write about what is happening in our community and the things that you could participate in. Just have an open mind and start brainstorming ideas until you think of something that you really like and that you could write a lot about. You also want to have people interested in the topic that you're writing about so they aren't bored out of their minds while reading your paper. Just make it fun and make it about what is important to you!

Those are my few tips on how to write about something when you don't know what to write about. I did it just now and I think that you can to! Make it interesting, fun and make the reader want to read it again and again!

Lunch Time

Lunch time is ridiculous! It's chaotic, it's stupid, and it's frustrating. Why can't we have the lunch times from last year back? Yes, I understand that it's less work for the lunch ladies, but is it for everyone else? For one, the lines are really long. It takes 15 minutes of standing in line to finally sit down and eat. The lines are so long, so it has driven more and more people to budge. I am one of the people who are respectful and go wait in the back of the line, so when people budge it makes me mad! I have to wait, so why shouldn't they? That also goes along with a teacher being able to just walk right through and get lunch. Maybe they have somewhere to be, but then again, so do some of the students. I believe that yes they are older and an authority figure but, as part of the school, they should have the same rules as the students. Second, they took out one of the registers. With more grades than last year in one lunch period, this doesn't make sense. I also hate how they split the grades up, this isn't fair. They took away the only time we might have with our friends to actually see them and hang out with them throughout the day. At least if you are going to have bigger lunch periods, put grades together. Lastly, I think the times are way too early. The first lunch is at 11. Granted it was like that last year too but I didn't like it then either. By the time the kids get home, they are starving. I hope it isn't the same way next year. Changes need to be made to our lunch periods.

Sports Cuts Response

Dear Editor:

As I am a coach, I was very interested in the article about sports cuts in the current Purple Paw. I wanted to share a few of my comments as well.

Cuts for all sports are never fun for a coach. I like to see each girl improve throughout the season, no matter what skill level they came in with. The truth of the matter, with much of the educational economy in recent years, there is lack of money. The school only has so much money for extra-curricular activities, including sports. Money is needed to pay the coaches, supply the team with uniforms and equipment, official fees, transportation costs, as well as other items.

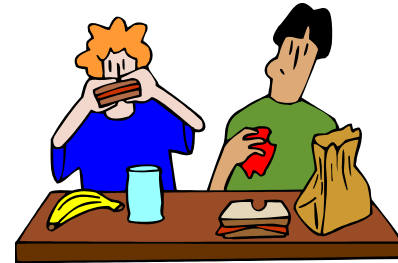
Cortland has been very fortunate to not lose some of their modified sports. Many school districts have cut back their sports programs, most resulting in the modified sports being eliminated. So far, Cortland has not had to deal with this scenario. I can only hope this is the situation in upcoming years.

I can say that there are numerous opportunities for girls to improve their skills in the off season. The easiest is to play with some friends at a park or playground. For soccer there are summer sessions open to all, as well as many camps geared toward junior high and senior high players. The JM McDonald Complex has opportunities to play as well. Basketball has summer recreation leagues. There are always pick-up games going on as well.

Unfortunately, "cuts" are a part of life. When students apply to college many are not accepted. Competing for jobs in today's economy is very competitive. Being able to deal with what happens when being "cut" from a sport, the rejection of not being accepted to your college of choice, or not being offered the job you'd like are all situations that many people will have to handle throughout their lifetime.

Editorial Page

If you have any comments or opinions that you would like to share send to srice@cortlandschools.org



Standardized Tests

Number two pencil, eraser, good breakfast, useless studying. Oddly enough many people find these annual standardized tests useful and necessary. I find them pointless.

There are so many things wrong with standardized testing. For one thing, it stresses out the students; the months of preparation puts loads of pressure on them that make many want to cry or go home. They are also stressful for the teachers. A new regulation says that states can use the grades of students for up to 40% of the teachers' review. These tests also put pressure on the state. The higher the tests scores are, can highly affect the state as well as the school. The higher the scores are of students, the better teachers are reassured for jobs and sometimes even money the state provides for the school. In 2008 New York State got busted for cheating on these tests. They dummed up the tests and used questionable grading to make the state look smarter than it really was. Standardized testing also lowers expectations. The multiple choice that makes up most of the test leads to simple solutions instead of critical thinking. These tests are crammed with every area of the subject it is dealing with but rarely goes in depth enough to show any understanding. The tests are usually based on bare memorization of a topic and rarely ever any perspective. All of this leads to teachers forming lesson plans around the test instead of a guide to nurture a child's learning and growth.

One of the other sides of standardized testing is that it is an efficient way to show a child's progress. But this whole process costs tons of money. The practice tests, teacher training, and of course the test! In 2006 Colorado could have hired 1,500 teachers from what they spent on these standardized tests. Very efficient! Also these tests do not show progress at all; higher scores mean more time spent learning to the test not higher achievement. Another thing is that these tests are objective; they are made by people!

Standardized testing is not good for anyone except the creators. All of the money and precious time spent in these tests could be spent on learning. When you think about it these tests are not worth it.

Eighth- Grade Trip Hershey Park Here We Come!

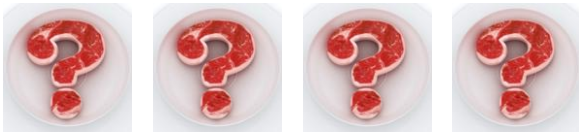
By Kali Oaks

Every year, the eighth grade goes on a class trip to symbolize them soon becoming high school students. The future ninth graders are the class of 2016. The Class of 2016 will be heading to Hershey Park on May 18th. We did a fundraiser to help pay for part of our trip and we did a good job. We will be in groups and will be chaperoned by the eighth grade teachers. We are taking video equipped charter buses. So we're goin' in style!

Mrs. Connelly's says, "Decide now that you want to go, don't wait. The longer you wait, the less room there will be on the buses."

Attention Eight- Graders!

Our first deposit was due February 16th. The rest of the money needs to be in by March 16th. After March 15th the price rises.



Who's Room

By Cassidy Halpin

- Has cabinets
- Has 4 practice rooms
- Has an American flag
- Has a missing tile on the ceiling

Last month's room was Mrs. Connelly and Mrs. Tooley's room.



CHS Relay for life



By Jadah Vaughan

Relay for life, is an annual fundraising event across the United States to raise money to find a cure for cancer. CHS will be participating in this year's Relay for Life in Cortland County. We need people to help... invite your friends and family. You don't need to be in the relay event, you can help by earning money for our team, and our goal is to collect \$1,500. Yes, both teachers and students may attend the event.

Where's the snow?

By GiGi Marks

Where's all my snow? The lack of snow this winter is making me sadder than an SPCA commercial. Winter is my favorite season; all the snow is so wonderful. Snow is so perfect! It's perfect for throwing at people and pushing small children into. This year however there has been so little snow. What am I supposed to throw at people now, grass? What am I going to push small children into, brick walls? It's just not fair, I want snow!



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