

The Pony Express

The student newspaper of Center Hill High School

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Center Hill High School

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Winterfest

Week of activities leads up to Lewisburg game

By Randi Terry
Staff Writer

One of Center Hill High School's most valued traditions is its second semester Homecoming known as Winterfest. Just like Homecoming in the fall, Winterfest is a week packed with dress-up days, a pep rally, and a ton of school spirit to prepare for the basketball games at the end of the week of Jan. 29-Feb. 2.

This year's theme was "A Week of Wars," and the hallways of Center Hill were festive and colorful on Monday with "Holiday Wars." On Tuesday, the students had a throwback to their early childhood with "Disney vs. Nick." Wednesday gave everyone a chance to feel like a superhero with "Marvel vs. D.C.," and on Thursday, there were senior citizens and toddlers alike hobbling through the halls with "Diapers vs. Dentures." Friday, of course, was spirit day, also known as "Color Wars."

Friday was kicked off with a pep rally where the student body was treated to seeing their typically no-nonsense assistant principal Brenda Case dressed in a black formal gown and tiara as their "Winterfest Queen." Later that night, the action really began with girls basketball team, currently undefeated in the district, which beat Lewisburg 32-28. Senior Carrington Kneeland led the team with a total of 17 points, while junior Kaylen Morris had 8.

See Winterfest on page 2



Photo by Abigail Penfield

Seniors Chris Buford and Savannah Steen were crowned Winterfest King and Queen during halftime of the boys basketball game against Lewisburg on Feb. 2.

Winterfest

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“Our goal at the beginning of the season was to be undefeated in the district and we accomplished that,” head girls basketball coach Chase Brown said, adding that he was “very proud of the way we have battled all season.”

At halftime of the girls game, the Sweethearts and Beaus of Center Hill were presented. One girl and one boy from every club and sport in the school were chosen by their sponsor or coach to represent their organization.

“Winterfest provides an opportunity for over 35 students in school teams and clubs to be recognized by their peers through our Sweethearts and Beaus presentation,” head Student Council sponsor and Winterfest coordinator Meredith Smith said.

After the girls game, the boys took the court. With a final score of 104-49, the Mustangs defeated the Patriots. Senior Brien Kimmons led the team with 22 points, and also scored his 1,000th career point. Kimmons is the second player in Center Hill history to reach 1,000 career points. Freshman Kaeden Laws scored 12 points, and senior Kentrell Dorsey scored 11.

“Even with all the distractions that come with Winterfest, our team remained focused on the task at hand,” head boys basketball coach Newton Mealer said. “It’s always great to beat our crosstown rival Lewisburg, especially in Winterfest.”

At halftime of the boys’ game, the Winterfest Court was presented and the student body-elected royals were crowned. Seniors Savannah Steen and Chris Buford were chosen to reign as the 2018 Center Hill Winterfest Queen and King.

“I was not expecting it at all,” Steen said. “But I’ve been involved and worked hard and I think that is what the face of Center Hill should be.”

Buford said he is blessed to be named Winterfest King.

“Thanks to all of my teachers and



Photo by Tanika Kounhavong

As a surprise, Assistant Principal Brenda Case was introduced as Winterfest Queen during the pep rally Feb. 2.

fellow classmates for voting me in,” he said.

feel included.

Smith said the week of Winterfest is very important to the students and staff of Center Hill because it is a chance for everyone in the school, no matter their level of involvement, to

“Overall, it’s just a great chance for us to come together and have some fun,” she said, noting that Center Hill is not just a school but a family.



Photo by Nadia Sumlar

Nancy Toche, from left, Paige Brick, Raven Wallace and Lizzie Philips dressed as children for Diapers vs. Dentures Day on Feb. 1.

#CHWinterfest18



Photo by Abigail Penfield

Winterfest coordinator Meredith Smith, at center of top row, poses with the Winterfest Court before the boys game against Lewisburg.



Photo by Randi Terry

Nyah Gaston and Christian Harris wore matching Captain America outfits on Disney vs. Nick Day.



Photo by Emily Merz



Photo by Sherrice Wright

At left, Amy McCormick and Megan Patterson participated in Disney vs. Nick Day, while Tineal Banks, at right, wore Christmas garb for Holiday Wars.



Photo by Paige Brick

Head boys basketball coach Newton Mealer fires up students at the Winterfest pep rally Feb. 2.



Photo by Nadia Sumlar

Principal Doug Payne and English teacher Devra Hampton were among the staff who participated in Diapers vs. Dentures Day.

Students must make up one of five snow days

By Nadia Sumlar
Staff Writer

DeSoto County students will not have to make up four out of the five days missed from school because of inclement weather in January.

“I heard that we did not have to go to school on March 30 and Feb. 16 was going to be a makeup day,” said Kaitlin Moore, a sophomore at Center Hill High School. “I only care about March 30 because it is my birthday.”

Due to the snow on Jan. 12, the only day students have to make up is Feb. 16. Jan. 15 was the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, but icy road conditions the rest of that week kept schools closed.

“The snow was not bad on the 12th and the roads were not iced over,” Moore said. “It was not a state of emergency.”

Gov. Phil Bryant declared a state of emergency Jan. 19. The Mississippi Department of Education followed suit, and the DeSoto County School Board voted on the issue Feb. 1.

According to the revised school calendar for 2017-2018, students will attend school Feb. 16 to make up for missing Jan. 12. Students will retain their Presidents Day holiday on Feb. 19, which is now a staff development day.



Photo courtesy of Jaci Kimble

Senior Jaci Kimble, a member of Indoor Winds Visual, took advantage of one of her snow days to work on her routine. She shared this photo with The Pony Express Twitter account on Jan. 12 with #CenterHillSnowDay18.

Students and staff will be off March 30 for Good Friday and April 2 for the Monday after Easter Holiday. Students' last day will be May 23.

In a Feb. 2 email to parents, district officials said makeup days in case of

inclement weather in the future will be Feb. 19, April 2, May 24 and May 25.

Editor-in-Chief Sherrice Wright contributed to this story.

Dance team nationally ranked for second year in row

By Sherrice Wright
Editor-in-Chief

On Feb. 4, Twitter exploded with news of the Eagles beating the Patriots in Super Bowl LII. The Center Hill Twittersverse was also alive with news. The Center Hill Dance Team became nationally ranked for the second year in a row, placing ninth in the competition

held Feb. 3-4 in Orlando.

“9th in the nation,” coach Kerry Matthews tweeted. “So proud to have competed against such amazing teams this year! So proud of our girls and what they’ve accomplished this year.”

This year has been quite the historic one for CHDT. In December, the team won a historic double title at their state

competition, winning both large varsity hip hop and pom. This double title made the team nine-time state champions.

The team, led by seniors Madelyn Miller, Niyah Odum and Jordan Sandridge, will be recognized for their many accomplishments this season on Feb. 6 at the basketball game against Olive Branch.

Students recognized at Honor Roll breakfast

By Jake Lankford
Staff Writer

More than half of Center Hill High School's student body was treated to breakfast on Jan. 25 to celebrate their academic success for the second nine weeks.

"There are 1,040 students," counselor Danielle Brown said. "It shows how hard our students work and how much emphasis our teachers put on hard work and giving the best effort every day."

Jonathan Jolley, a sophomore, was one of the 571 students recognized.

"I was pretty happy that I made Principal's List," Jolley said. "I went in, had orange juice and doughnuts, and sat with my friends."

Assistant Principal Brenda Case said the purpose of the Honor Roll breakfast was to recognize and reward students who have earned outstanding grades.

"It shows the students' commitment to excellence," said Case, who encouraged all students to do their best. "I would tell them to continue their good study habits, to build a strong work ethic, and to continue on the path of academic excellence."

Jolley agreed with Case's advice.

"I would tell students to strive to go to it – make good grades and study,"



Photo by Sherrice Wright

More than half the CHHS student body was treated to breakfast on Jan. 25 for making the second nine weeks honor roll.

he said.

The Honor Roll breakfast is just one of many ways to honor CHHS students. Case said other ways students are praised are the

student of the month, the ACT 30-plus wall, and recognition at Rotary luncheons.

Emily Merz and Sherrice Wright contributed to this story.

Book review: Andre Breton's surrealistic romance, 'Nadja'

The following is an excerpt of the "Nadja" book review. Read it in its entirety at chhsponyexpress.com.

By Jake Lankford
Staff Writer

What can one say about André Breton? He was childish, arrogant, egotistical, incredibly controlling – but he was certainly talented at poetic and surrealist writing – and his 1928 surrealist romance "Nadja" is proof of this.

Though "Nadja" is a romance, it is an incredibly unconventional one. For starters, the titular Nadja isn't even introduced until page 60.

During these first 60 pages, André, the narrator, ruminates and philosophizes on a number of ideas while wandering Paris. After these first 60 pages, André runs into Nadja. He notices her and she

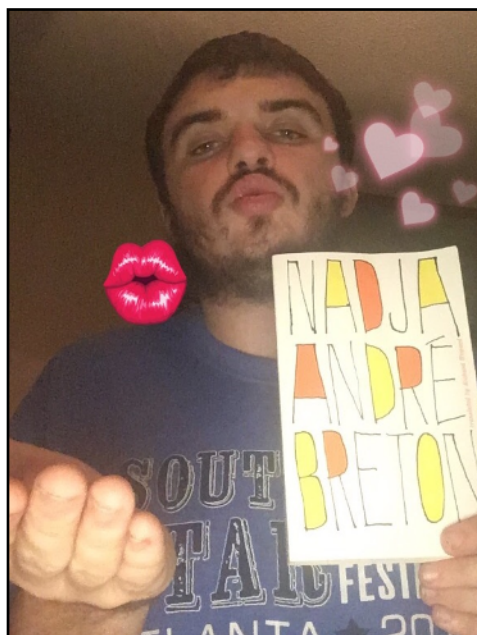


Photo illustration by Jake Lankford and Sherrice Wright

For your Valentine's Day, Jake Lankford recommends "Nadja."

notices him, they strike up a conversation and after this, they begin a 100-day-long relationship that is incredibly awkward.

Though "Nadja" does get the awkward romance down to T, it fails in another department, the philosophizing. Breton is an incredibly talented writer, but he goes on these tangents that go on for pages at a time and eventually become a chore to get through.

Remember these first 60 pages? Those were the absolute worst when it came to the philosophizing.

In short, "Nadja" is the perfect read for Valentine's Day because it chooses to subvert every last thing about romance. It's not a glittering, mass-market romance novel you find tucked away in the back of a bookstore. It's something else entirely.

Teachers dunk on students in basketball game

By Emily Merz
Staff Writer

On Jan. 26, students from different clubs and teams at Center Hill High School joined together in hopes of defeating their teachers, sponsors and coaches in basketball.

Band director Jared Ross was one of the teachers recruited for the team.

“It was fun and also exhausting for people like me who don’t exercise,” Ross said.

Ultimately, the students were defeated 45-28.

“I wasn’t expecting anything less – another day another dollar,” Ross said with a laugh.

Even though his team lost, sophomore Chapman Droke said he had a great time.

“It was fun and I got to guard Coach Hall and he’s really good and it was hard to score,” Droke said. “I thought I’d be nervous but I wasn’t.”

Droke said his biggest competition was Luke Chapman, who he plays basketball with outside of school.

While the student-faculty basketball



Photo by Randi Terry

The Student Council raised \$3,600 at the Student vs. Faculty basketball game on Jan. 26. The teachers won, 45-28.

game is a fun activity for students, Student Council sponsor Meredith Smith said it is also a huge fundraiser for Student Council. Smith said 720 tickets were sold, and at \$5 each, that is \$3,600 raised.

“The money funds the names

painted on the 30-plus club wall and the PSAT plaque,” Smith said. “A couple of years ago, it was spent on the tarp for the softball field. (It pays for) all of the stuff the school wants to do but can’t afford. Student Council picks up the slack.”

Boys soccer new division champs

By Nadia Sumlar
Staff Writer

With their 1-0 win over Lake Cormorant on Jan. 25, the Center Hill High School boys soccer team is now division champs.

“It was a good all-around game and when we won I felt really good,” goalkeeper Dustin Brown said.

The Mustangs will play Olive Branch on Feb. 1, he said.

“I feel like we could beat Olive Branch if we keep focus and try our best,” said Brown, a junior who had 11 saves against Lake Cormorant. “Diego Valenzuela scored the game

winning goal with an assist by Erick Mendoza.”

The team’s record is now 16-2.

“We remain undefeated in division with five wins and zero losses,” boys head coach Andrew Yeoman said. “The division playoff would happen on Feb. 6 if we defeat Olive Branch.”

UPDATE: Since defeating Lake Cormorant Jan. 25, the Mustangs lost to DeSoto Central 0-1 on Jan. 30 and beat Olive Branch 2-1 on Jan. 31. They will host Germantown High School of Madison, Mississippi, at 5 p.m. on Feb. 6. The team record is 17-3.

Drama students earn Allie nods

Six members of the cast and crew of “A Christmas Carol” – Autumn Gable, Keegan Hendrix, Ava Hogan, Megan Patterson, Ben Rickman and Logan Vandevender – have been nominated for Allie Awards. The Allies, also known as the Oscars of DeSoto County, were presented Feb. 2.

Gable and Patterson were nominated for Best Costume; Hendrix and Vandevender were nominated as Best Featured Actor; Hogan was nominated for Best Set; and Rickman was nominated for Best Lead Actor.

From staff reports

Bowling team has historic first year

By Sherrice Wright
Editor-in-Chief

Center Hill High School recently started a bowling program. With a group of experienced and inexperienced bowlers, this season promised to be one of learning and set a precedent for future bowlers. The team, coached by Kurt Pinnix, has had a successful season thus far with building the program.

“It’s a great opportunity to set things up how we want,” Pinnix said. “It’s always a great opportunity to have a new program.”

The teams have gone far this year, even competing in the regional bowling tournament Jan. 29. The boys team finished their season strong at regionals. The girls team had two members, Victoria Dailey and Kymberly Jackson, to place at district in third and first place respectively. The girls team has also



Photo by Annie Chan

With a group of experienced and inexperienced bowlers, this year has been one of learning for the brand-new CHHS bowling team.

earned a wild card spot in the state tournament.

Junior Jonathan Greganti said the team’s only goal this year was improvement.

“We had a lot of guys come in bowling under 100 and left bowling 150,” he said, adding they were able to lay a solid foundation for next

season.

“We did pretty well for this being the first year, and everyone learning how to bowl properly,” Greganti said.

William Wright contributed to this story.

Center Hill students, staff not immune to flu epidemic

By Emily Merz
Staff Writer

Like the rest of the state and much of the nation, sounds of coughs and sneezes are echoing through the halls of Center Hill High School as the flu epidemic takes its toll on students and teachers.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports flu cases in all 50 states, and has tracked more than 60,000 positive flu tests since Oct. 1. According to the Mississippi State

Department of Health, “During week 03 (01/14/18- 01/20/18), the overall state ILI (influenza like illness) rate (9.5%) decreased from the previous week (10.9%), (10.9%), but was above this time last year (4.2%).”

In District I, which includes DeSoto County, the rate for week 3 is 11.4%, which means about one of 10 DeSoto County residents has some form of influenza.

Common flu symptoms include fever, chills, cough,

sore throat, funny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches and fatigue. According to CDC.gov, flu prevention tips include frequent hand washing and covering your nose and mouth when you sneeze or cough.

According to CHHS attendance clerk Cathy Dawson, there were 917 absences in the 14 school days of January, many of which were because of the flu, and these absences have continued into February. One of the notable recent absence is

that of Assistant Principal Brenda Case.

“The epidemic has taken one of our fearless leaders,” Dawson said. “You know it’s bad when she’s out.”

Health and school officials caution that the flu spreads very quickly, and the symptoms do not always show up right away.

“Many students feel fine in the morning and then they’re out sick with a fever that night, and by then they have already infected someone else,” Dawson said.

Boys and girls powerlifting teams push the limits

By Sherrice Wright
Editor-in-Chief

With the loss of two coaches and a state championship-winning senior, this has been a year of transition for the Center Hill powerlifting program.

“It’s been great,” said Jake Faust, who is coaching powerlifting along with Leslie Cliburn. “I was very lucky Coach Ingram laid a great foundation for the program and made the transition easy.”

The powerlifting program was created by Case Ingram in the 2015-2016 school year. It quickly gained notoriety when Center Hill graduate Jamie Hernandez earned a state title in 2016, which he defended in 2017.

“Losing Jamie Hernandez was someone you can’t replace easily,”

Faust said. “We are very excited to see where the 2018 team takes us.”

So far, the 2017-2018 season has been successful for the boys and girls teams alike. On Feb. 3, the girls competed in regionals, with senior Jamyah Graham placing first in her division. Graham deadlifted 510 pounds; she had a 115-pound lead over the second-place lifter, who lifted 455 pounds. The boys’ regional competition will be Feb. 8.

Cliburn said he is very proud of the leadership by the seniors on the girls team, and said he is hopeful that the team will place at the state competition later this year.

One of the senior boys vying for a spot at state is Ja’Shun Adams, who said he has been a part of the powerlifting program for three years.

“I have a great love for lifting weights, and I can lift a combined weight of about 1,300 pounds and more,” Adams said. “It’s my last year, and I have a goal to hit. My goal this year is to place in the Top 3 at state.”

With such large numbers as these, powerlifting may seem as if it is only for the most athletic or the strongest. However, Faust said that is not true.

“Understand that it’s not always about strongest or biggest,” he said. “My hope is to make every lifter on my team a better student, athlete and overall person.”

Both Faust and Cliburn said they would like to encourage more students to try powerlifting.

“If you’re interested, come talk to me,” Cliburn said. “You don’t need experience.”

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

This letter’s purpose is to inform the students, teachers and the administration of a new concept: a one-hour break during the school day.

The break would begin promptly at 11:30 and last an hour. This

break would allow students to make up work, receive tutoring, attend club meetings, visit the library, work on projects and homework, and eat lunch in a relaxed manner.

The break would give students a chance to have more time for

sleep and/or prepare for school.

Students would be kept in check by both the teachers on their respective halls and the cameras placed at various points around the school.

Jonathan Masters
CHHS junior

The Pony Express

The Pony Express student newspaper was established in order to keep Center Hill High School updated on the latest stories and events while promoting creativity, individuality and freedom of speech. Editor-in-Chief is Sherrice Wright. Advisers are Michelle Jones and Ginny Shikle. Follow us on Twitter and Instagram at @chhsponyexpress. We are online at chhsponyexpress.com. Contact us at ponyexpresschhs@gmail.com.

