

# The Pony Express

The student newspaper of Center Hill High School

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Center Hill High School

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## Trivial Pursuit

# Knowledge Bowl team quizzes to success

By Sarah Claire Miller  
and Abigail Penfield  
Staff Writers

Nothing is too trivial for the Center Hill High School Knowledge Bowl team.

"It's kind of like 'Jeopardy' but with high schoolers," senior Grace Eskridge said. "There's questions about anything from math to Human A&P to celebrities."

Eskridge was an alternate on the team that participated in a competition sponsored by WREG Channel 3 and hosted by Jim Jaggers. According to wreg.com, the Knowledge Bowl is the station's most successful local program and has awarded nearly \$4 million in scholarships since 1987.

"I love going to competitions because it's rewarding when you know the answer to a question," Eskridge said. "The club is especially fun because of the other people in there and Mrs. Burgess and Mrs. Denham."

Knowledge Bowl is co-sponsored by Jessica Burgess and Jennifer Denham. They meet with students to practice twice a week before school.

"We have been getting together every Tuesday and Thursday for four years now," Burgess said. "Usually we have very relaxed practices where we just enjoy getting together as a group and blowing off steam while quizzing each other. This is a very hard competition to prepare for. Preparation comes from years of education in and out of the classroom. I just help them learn formats, gain confidence in their answers and prep them for being on TV. They are so smart!"

Burgess said that the team's recent success is a far cry from their first trivia contest.

"When we first competed on the WREG Channel 3 Knowledge Bowl



Photo by Katie Whitaker

**Randi Terry, second from left, answers a trivia question from co-sponsor Jessica Burgess, right, during Knowledge Bowl practice before school Dec. 6. Cooper Jordan is pictured at far left. "Usually we have very relaxed practices where we just enjoy getting together as a group and blowing off steam while quizzing each other," Burgess said.**

competition, we got creamed," she said.

Earlier this month, Center Hill defeated Lausanne Collegiate School of Memphis, Burgess said.

"I was so proud of the team for beating Lausanne," she said. "After four years of coaching them, it was amazing! It slowly dawned on me throughout the last portion of the competition that not only were we pulling ahead, we were staying ahead. It was so hard to keep my composure in the studios at the very end. The look of astonishment on the team's faces was the best part of it, and something I will remember for years to come. Lausanne has

always been a Knowledge Bowl powerhouse, and in fact, they tied for first two years ago."

William Wright, who competed in the WREG competition along with his brother Jacob Wright, Mary Lindsey and Randi Terry, described the win as euphoric.

"I was on cloud nine," he said. "All of our work has gone towards this. We're all seniors, and we've been striving for this for four years for some of us. To have all of that practice and hard work come together and beat the reigning champion Lausanne the way we did was an absolutely perfect moment. I'm so proud of this group and what

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— William Wright, a member of the CHHS Knowledge Bowl team that beat Lausanne Collegiate School of Memphis in the WREG Knowledge Bowl

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we've accomplished this season and hope we can continue this success."

Burgess said each WREG team member won a \$500 scholarship to the University of Memphis through

this competition. The team will also compete at the University of Mississippi Academic Invitational Tournament and at the DeSoto County competition in February.

## Youth and Government students learn legislative process

By Emily Merz  
Editor-in-Chief

Arming teachers, outlawing gay conversion camps, and requiring all American adults to own a colony of bees. These are just some of the many topics Youth and Government Club members debated on their trip to the state capital.

The Mississippi Youth Legislature Conference was held from Nov. 14-18 in Jackson. At the conference, students from all over the state took on the roles of elected representatives and learned all

about how the state and national governments work.

"It is a conference that's been around for 60 years," sponsor Toni Coleman said. "Different districts have teams that meet up every November to compete and legislate with each other."

Each student created a bill that they presented and argued, hoping to get it to the elected student governor's desk, to possibly be signed.

"My bill was raising the tobacco age from 18 to 21 years old in order to decrease tobacco in high schools

and premature death," Hailey Ellis said.

This was Ellis' second time going to the conference, and she said she had a great experience.

"My bill passed all the way to the governor, but once it got to him, it was rejected due to a contradicting definition which I believe was due to when someone amended it," the senior said.

Even though her bill was rejected, Ellis won the Outstanding Senator award. Many other CHHS students won similar awards, including Landon Bello, Kyle Heath, Cooper

Jordan, Ana Le and Mary Lindsey.

"I got an award for Outstanding Representative," Cooper Jordan said.

This was the sophomore's first year in Youth and Government, and his bill did really well. It passed both houses and was signed by the governor.

"My bill was about net neutrality, which prevents Internet Service Providers from throttling data based on what that data is," Jordan said. "My bill would implement Net Neutrality in Mississippi."

Coleman said she was satisfied

with the performance of the CHHS group, which was also named a Premier Delegation.

"We were one of only two schools from North Mississippi to go," she said. "Every year we go, we perform phenomenally and I hope to continue that."

The students enjoyed their time at the conference, and are hoping to continue to improve.

"This experience taught me how our government is really supposed to run," Ellis said. "The youth of our country is the future, and we are going to change it for the better."



# Volleyball All-Star



Photos by Ana Le

Zakhia Taylor, center, motivates her teammates during a series of matches against Southaven High School on Aug. 23. Known as “Z,” Taylor will play in the 2018-2019 Mississippi Association of Coaches All-Star Volleyball game this summer.

## Taylor named to all-star team

By Billie Boyd  
Staff Writer

Zakhia Taylor, a middle hitter for the Lady Mustangs, has been selected to play in the 2018-2019 Mississippi Association of Coaches All-Star Volleyball game this summer.

“It’s been one of my dreams since freshman year,” said Taylor, who is called “Z” by her friends, teammates and teachers at Center Hill High School.

Twelve players each were chosen for the North and South teams announced in November. Taylor is the only Center Hill player from DeSoto County, which is also represented by players from Lewisburg, Lake Cormorant, DeSoto Central and Hernando. Players from Caledonia and Clinton will round out the North Team.



Taylor, a middle hitter for the Lady Mustangs, serves against Southaven Aug. 23.

Taylor, who also plays competitive volleyball for Southern Storm, said she is grateful for her selection to the all-star team.

“I give all my thanks to God and to everyone who has pushed me to be a better person,” she said.

Among her supporters is teammate Emma Freeze.

“She has a passion for the game that others don’t, and you can tell that she wants to take it farther,” Freeze said. “It’s not just a game to her.”

Coach Robbie Veazey, who called Taylor’s selection to the all-star team “a huge honor,” said Taylor is one of her most experienced players.

“She has all the skill, is a main contributor on offense, and is a leader,” Veazey said. “She has positive energy and is seen as one of the best in DeSoto County. She has high expectations for herself and so do others.”

The all-star game will be July 17 at Millsaps College in Jackson.

# Opinion

## Measure of success not one-size-fits-all

By Emily Merz  
Editor-in-Chief



Emily Merz

How do we measure success? Is it based on money or popularity? Is it where someone goes to college? Is it having the highest ranking job? Biggest family? Everyone’s definition of success is different, so how can we say someone is more successful than another?

As a senior, the pressure to succeed is extreme. But what does that even mean? Does it mean getting the highest ACT score? What if person A can make a 30 without trying, but person B can study for weeks and weeks and only pull off a 20? Does that make person A more successful?

Maybe success is based off of where you go to college. But that isn’t fair either. What if two people are both accepted to Harvard, but one winds up going to community college because their family just can’t afford to send them to an Ivy League school? Is one person successful and the other isn’t?

What about people who don’t go to college? Are people who join the military after graduation less successful? What about people who take over family businesses, or start families? Someone who is finally able to take over the family farm is very successful in the eyes of that family, so why are they seen as less in our society?

We need to break the habit of classifying people based on numbers. People are more than ACT scores, scholarship offers and salaries. Success is different for everyone. Every person has a different story. Different family. Different goals and different abilities.

For many people, just graduating

**People are more than ACT scores, scholarship offers and salaries. Success is different for everyone. Every person has a different story. Different family. Different goals and different abilities.**

high school is success. We make big deals over people scoring high on tests and getting good grades, but why don’t we recognize the student who finally earned a promotion after working at their job for over a year? Or the student who battled depression or another hidden illness and won?

How come we only measure success in numbers, when really, success can’t be measured at all. Success is on so many different scales that it’s impossible to compare apples to apples.

So for all the students who will be successful in “non-traditional” ways, keep on being successful. And for the students who are successful in “traditional” ways, you keep on being successful too.

## Honor Band

Members of the Hernando DeSoto Honor Band from Center Hill High School are, from left, Gwen Riecke, who plays bassoon; Joshua Armstrong, who plays trombone; and Logan Ross, who plays tuba. The Honor Band clinic and performance will be in January.

Photo by Candice Buford



## The Pony Express

Emily Merz  
Editor-in-Chief

William Wright  
Sports Editor

Ginny Shikle and Michelle Jones  
Advisers

Doug Payne  
Principal

The purpose of The Pony Express is to inform the students and faculty of Center Hill High School of events and issues that affect them. The Pony Express is an after-school club that is supplemented by students in the Foundations of Journalism class.

As student writers, we try to reflect the thoughts of our most important readers – the students of Center Hill. Because of this, we attempt to approach many issues, some more controversial than others. The newspaper staff hopes to inform, to educate, to entertain and to question for the betterment of Center Hill, its students and faculty.

All opinion pieces are the views of the individual writer, with the exception of staff editorials, which are unsigned and reflect the consensus of The Pony Express staff.

The Pony Express is a member of the Mississippi Scholastic Press Association, which named our publication Most Improved High School Newspaper for 2017-2018, and the Southern Interscholastic Press Association.

To advertise, contact Ginny Shikle at ginny.shikle@dcsms.org. Submit questions, comments and letters to the editor to ponyexpresschhs@gmail.com.



# Mustang Spotlight

## More than a pretty face: Meet aspiring model Faith Williams



Photo courtesy of Faith Williams



Photo by William Wright

Faith Williams wants to be on “America’s Next Top Model.”

By Mariah St. Clair  
Staff Writer

A member of the 5A state championship 4X100 relay team, Faith Williams is more than a track star. The Center Hill High School senior also wants to be America’s Next Top Model. The Pony Express sat down with Williams to find out more about her future plans.

**Q:** When/how did you start modeling?

**A:** I started when I was 17 years old and I got contacted by Barbizon. I went to the tryouts, and if you make it you move on to the next steps which is paying for it and taking classes.

**Q:** How did you feel at the tryouts?

**A:** I went to the tryout and was very

afraid. I knew I had it in me. The next day I received a call that I made the cut and August 2017 is when I started my classes.

**Q:** What were your classes like?

**A:** I graduated in January. It was 6 months and I went one Saturday out of each month. They were 9-hour classes, and I learned something new each time like table etiquette and 5-minutes face. Those classes taught me a lot of discipline. I had to want it way more than ever. I had to practice runway walks, turns, etc. alone.

**Q:** What things helped you in modeling?

**A:** I took speech my 11th-grade year with Mrs. Shikle, and it played a major role in my modeling because in modeling you have to introduce yourself and we also have

Faith Williams, who models for Barbizon, would like to be a fashion model but isn’t tall enough. “I am a commercial model due to my height,” the CHHS senior said. “I am 5’6” and you have to be 5’8” or taller to be fashion.”

commercials.

**Q:** Do you have anything coming up?

**A:** I have been called for three auditions in the past, and a really big one that I was unable to complete due to school and track. I had a modeling audition last year the same day I had district, and I was able to attend both so I am capable of doing both. I just want to focus on school now. When I graduate I will be attending more auditions and hopefully pursuing the career while in college. I also have an upcoming audition in January.

**Q:** How do you juggle school, track and modeling?

**A:** My family is very supportive and I stayed ahead on school work. Coach J.J. was very understanding. Track plays an important role in my life as well as modeling. There were times I thought I couldn’t do both and would have to pick.

**Q:** Who do you model for?

**A:** Barbizon.

**Q:** What type of modeling do you do?

**A:** I want to be a fashion model but I’m not tall enough. I am a commercial model due to my

height. I am 5’6” and you have to be 5’8” or taller to be fashion.

**Q:** Do you hope to start a career in modeling?

**A:** Yes I do, but I will always have school to back me up cause it’s not a major thing. It is just something to do on the side.

**Q:** Is your modeling more like a job or hobby?

**A:** It’s more like a hobby, not a job for me. My long-term goal with modeling is to get on ‘America’s Next Top Model’ and get an agency.

## Bowling

### Center Hill teams prepare to strike

By Candice Buford  
Staff Writer

The Center Hill High School bowling teams are getting better with every frame.

“Consistent scores is one thing we struggle with this year, but we manage to improve each match,” said first-year head coach Jake Faust, whose goal for the two-year-old program is to “get some consistency and bring the team together.”

Like Faust, sophomore Tommie Williams is also new to the bowling team.

“It’s fun and good family time,” said Williams, who has bowled off and on since he was eight years old. “It can get competitive.”

One of the teams to beat, Faust said, is Lewisburg.

“Our biggest rival is Lewisburg, for obvious reasons, but we also try to play each other more than once since we are rival schools in general and that adds to the competitiveness of our matches,” he said.

Faust said he is grateful for the support of CHHS administration, as well as a volunteer coach.

“I would like to thank my assistant coach Marvin Jackson (Kymberly Jackson’s dad) for all his help and support,” Faust said. “Coach Jackson volunteers his time to not only help our athletes become better bowlers but also become better people, and I am very thankful for that.”

Faust said Kymberly Jackson, a senior on the girls team, is one of the better bowlers in the region.



Photo by William Wright

Jonathan Greganti, a senior, prepares to roll the ball during a recent bowling match at Strike Zone in Southaven. Center Hill High School has had a bowling team for two years.

“I’ve been bowling since I was five,” she said, describing the sport as one suitable for

individuals as well as teams. “Since there’s three games I have a chance to redeem myself. Since

there’s a team I have to push myself. There is more logic to it.”



# Soccer at The Hill

## Boys soccer focuses on division win, state championship

By Jacob Brewer  
Staff Writer

The Center Hill boys soccer team is chasing a state championship.

“We have an expectation to win the state championship in 5A and continue to win titles,” head coach Andrew Yeoman said. “We have two straight division titles and are going for a third.”

The players are also feeling good about the season and their 6-1-1 record.

“I am very optimistic about how it will go,” said junior Diego Valenzuela, who scored a goal in the 4-0 win against Lafayette and has had several assists so far this year.

Center back Dylan Riley shares Valenzuela’s optimism, especially after the team’s 4-0 defeat of Caledonia.

“I think one best game we have played so far was the game against a really good Caledonia team,” Riley said, adding that the Mustangs are looking for respect. “We feel like we have a lot to prove to other teams that doubt us.”

Junior Ashton Taylor, who is responsible for 11 goals so far this season, is confident the team will succeed.

“From my perspective as a team captain, I believe our team is a very good team this year and that we have put in the work on and off the field,” Taylor said.

“Our team is focused on the main goal this year, the state championship. I believe our team will accomplish this goal by staying humble, staying focused, and staying mentally prepared for every obstacle that comes our way. One thing this team faces most is adversity, and our team is very good at overcoming that adversity. If we stay on top of our game, and accomplish our goals, then we will be successful.”

Staff writer Candice Buford contributed to this story.

## Girls soccer looks to get better, improve as team

By Jacob Brewer  
Staff Writer

After an undefeated summer season, the Center Hill High School girls soccer team has gotten off to a rocky start and is working to improve.

“We won our first game, lost the next four, then won the most recent one,” head coach David Burgess said.

Mallory Gaines, a midfielder and forward for the Lady Mustangs, is optimistic.

“I’m expecting us to do well throughout the season,” the senior said.

On a personal note, Gaines said she would like to score more. So far this season, she is responsible for 10 goals. Teamwise, Gaines said her goal includes playing more together, which Burgess would also like to see.

“At this point, we need to improve communication,” he said.

“Our expectations for the year are to improve as a team and get better throughout the season.”

Bre Jimenez, a junior whose positions are left defense and center defense, also wants to see the team improve.

“[My goal is to] have a better season and to improve as a team and hopefully make the playoffs,” she said.

Senior Abigail Penfield shares the same outlook.

“We have a lot of potential,” said Penfield, a midfielder and forward. “If we work really hard, I think we can do really well this season.”

Staff writer Sarah Claire Miller contributed to this story.



Photo by Nancy Toche

With goalkeeper Michael Floyd ready, Spencer Reynolds helps defend the goal from Brayden Hel-lums’ kick during soccer practice Nov. 7. The boys soccer team is 6-1-1 so far this season.



Photo by Nancy Toche

Laurel Allen, an attacking mid for the Lady Mustangs, crosses the ball during soccer practice Nov. 7. After an undefeated summer season, the girls soccer team has gotten off to a rocky start and is working to improve.



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