



Portage Post

Committed to the success of every student.

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Wisconsin's first lady visits to honor Fort students

What started as a need to help students learn table manners at Fort Winnebago Elementary School has blossomed into a lesson in kindness and an opportunity to honor big-hearted children in a special lunch regularly, featuring celebrity guests.

Secretary Debbie Bell said initially the idea for the Gold Star Café sprouted from some peculiar lunchtime habits, like eating mashed potatoes without a fork or using a straw to eat applesauce.

This prompted a concern for the students' safety, so Bell teamed up with District Nurse

Valerie Hon to create a system to recognize kids for being polite and thoughtful, even when they thought no one would notice. What has developed is a change in the environment at the school among its students.

"The students are becoming more courteous to others, whether it's to another peer or an adult, and hopefully it trickles down to home," Hon said.

This café's honorees are Emma Calkins, Leah Huser, Seth Zimmerman, Logan Wilcox, Alexis Brauner, Madi Hebl, Natalie Kopecky and Eva Frank.

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First Lady Jessica Doyle visits with Fort's February Gold Star winners.

Thank you!

On April 6th, the Portage Community Schools passed an operational referendum that will enable us to continue to make great strides in improving student achievement, and we appreciate the tremendous support we have received from the community and our families.

While many school districts have been forced to greatly reduce opportunities for children because of budget restrictions, we have been able to not only maintain but strengthen our programming.

This referendum was based on our ability to increase student achievement and the necessity to continue this improvement process. The great strides that we have made in the last two years would not have been possible without our dedicated staff, volunteers and families. On behalf of the children we serve, thank you for your support!

PHS AP classes offer challenges, advantages

Words of advice from an experienced AP survivor meant to help others

By Daiva Sulas

Anyone can take an AP class. They can also take two, or three, or four, or however many will fit into their schedule! So, how does one balance multiple AP courses in one school year? Isn't that insanity? That much homework and studying can't be good for

one's health, can it? But, taking multiple AP courses is exactly what many colleges are looking for. Knowing that you have the capability of passing these classes – not only passing that but *excelling* at these classes – is very satisfying. This can be within your grasp if you keep a few

tips in mind:

The "AP" part of the class name is not a joke. They're called "advanced placement" because the creators of these classes assumed you would be willing to think and study. These classes are supposed be at a college level; treat them as

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River Crossing racks up more accolades

By Christy Apo

The second annual Wisconsin Charter School Association Awards Gala proved to be a very exciting gala for Victoria Rydberg, the head teacher at the River Crossing Environmental Charter School.

River Crossing received the gold award for High Achievement Charter Schools of the year. But that was not just the only award that River Crossing received. Rydberg earned the 2009 Teacher of the Year Platinum Award.

Rydberg was definitely shocked about the awards; even her students were surprised. She sent text messages to the alumni members of the school and also current students that were programmed in her phone after they

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A day at the opera for John Muir students

Unique cultural event made possible by Portage couple dedicated to arts

John Muir Elementary School will be having a group called Opera for the Young come and perform Rusulka: Tale of a Mermaid on April 9. Opera for the Young is a group of professional opera singers from Madison who perform mini-operas to introduce the students to the theater style of Opera.

To make the production more interesting for the students they ask the school to choose a 14-member chorus and two child actors to perform with the opera singers in the production.

The students that will be performing are Travis Miller, April Weatherbee, Madyson O'Neil, Emily Bates, Sydney Petty, Antwanette Ellis, Sadie Schuetz, Zoe Mauer, Rachel Hammer, Tylar Holtan, Katrina

Kopfhamer, Monica Derr, Kelsey Ebert and Aaliyah Garzah.

Jesse Long and Mckenzie Brandsma will be the two actors who will play the part of the Spiny Urchins.

The alternates for this productions are Hannah Ness and A. J. Somer.

All of the students learn the opera chorus songs and are encouraged to sing along with the opera chorus during the performance. This show is performed for the students, by the students.

Through their generosity, Dr. Robert and Kathryn Curtis made this wonderful experience possible for the students of John Muir. The students and staff are anxiously awaiting their stage time.

AP adventures continued

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such.

Some classes can assign over one or two hundred pages to be read by the next class. So, I hope you like reading, because there's a lot of it.

Manage your time well. If you manage your time the homework load and everything else an AP class entails won't be quite a shock. As long as you don't fall behind, the homework load each night can be less than half an hour!

Do **NOT** leave assignments for the last minute. Doing an assignment as you're walking into an AP class is practically a death sentence. If you're not finished with an assignment-talk to your teacher before class. If you have a reason, like honestly forgetting your assignment at home, your teacher will understand. Unless it happens everyday. Then you might have a problem.

Sometimes making a list of what you need to get done can be helpful. It sounds a little lame,

but it gives you something to look at when you forget what you need to do. Seeing at Portage High hands out agendas, why not take advantage of them? Being organized never hurt anyone.

Remember, these classes aren't as scary as they're made out to be. I mean, I'm in four AP courses right now, and I participate in curling and multiple clubs, and yet, I still have time to write this nice short list of tips. These classes are not necessarily *hard*, but they require a *lot* of *work*. If you stay on top of that work, you'll do fine. They're also not that stressful, except for at finals and AP test times. Just remember to not leave studying until the last minute! Start studying weeks ahead of finals and the AP tests. The studying doesn't even have to be intense; a little reviewing every night will make it more likely for the material to be banked in your long term memory as well as keeping it at the front of your mind.

Lotsa pasta for picnics

Annual dinner raises \$1600

Lewiston Elementary School held their annual Spaghetti Dinner Fund-Raiser & Raffle in January. The event was a huge success, raising over \$1600.

The money will be used to purchase picnic tables for the Lewiston playground.

The staff & students of Lewiston School would like to sincerely thank all of the area businesses from Portage & Wisconsin Dells that donated gift certificates for the raffle. The entire Lewiston community is also greatly valued for their continued support of the school.

It was a fun-filled evening that brought the entire community together. Thanks for your continued support!



Current affairs, public speaking goals of PHS JSA

JSA gives chance to develop critical thinking, debate skills

By Chrisdy Apo

Recently, a new club has been introduced to Portage High School. That club is called JSA also known as Junior Statesmen of America. Even though the organization has been around since 1930s, it was just last year when the club started in PHS. Former PHS student, Jena Daggett first introduced the club, and now that she has graduated, the baton has been passed on her younger sister.

The members participate in and help out with debates, go to conferences, and keep up with recent topics in the world.

“It’s different because it’s the only debate club, and it offers students an opportunity to practice their speaking skills while debating their opinion on current worldly issues,” states current President Alexis Daggett.

Along with that, members learn how to become better public speak-

ers and apply their skills in the real world and at conferences where JSA members from all over the country meet with each other.

As of now, JSA hold debates every Monday after school. They have three conferences every year; one in the fall that takes place in Madison, then a Winter Congress in February which takes place in Washington, D.C. and is the biggest convention within the clubs. Their final convention is in spring in Chicago.

“It’s a great, fun and exciting club, and if they want to learn more, just come to a meeting.” Any student at PHS can join JSA at any time. Group meetings are during access period in the Social Studies pod every Friday. “This club is perfect for those who want to improve their speaking, debating skills along with those who are interesting in learning why politics affect everyday life.”

Online registry to help parents track shots

Here’s how you can access your child’s shot record from the Wisconsin Immunization Program.

As part of the Public Immunization Record Access feature, parents and legal guardians can now have access to look up their child’s immunization record in the Wisconsin Immunization Registry (WIR). Many children in Wisconsin receive immunizations from more than one provider. Without access to a child’s immunization information, it can be difficult to know which vaccine a child needs at any particular time.

You can now access the registry at <http://dhfsWIR.org> to check for immunization information. In the Public Immunization Record Access section you will find a blue "Public Immunization Record Access" hyperlink. When you click on the hyperlink a screen will appear that will require you to enter a first name, last name, birth date and either a Social Security or Medicaid number. If your immunization provider is using the registry and has entered your child’s Social Security number or Medicaid ID, you will be able to access their record.

If you receive a message stating that one of these numbers is not entered into the system, you will have to contact your health care provider to have them enter that data for you. Your health care provider does need approval from you to enter the social security number into the system.

All the hoopla about hoops on horseback

Well... donkeys actually— All to help FFA

By Halie Wiersma

Donkey Basketball is a fundraiser that the Portage FFA Alumni puts on every other year. It was held on January 24th at the Jr. High.

There were four teams that competed for the title of Donkey Basketball Champion.

The first game was the FFA members vs. the High School teachers. The FFA

members won with a comeback! The second game was the FFA Alumni vs. the Junior High and Elementary School teachers. The FFA Alumni won by a landslide!

After the two games, we had a short half time, where the FFA members took all the children under 12 on a free donkey ride up and down the court.

After half time, it was back to the battle for the championship! It was the FFA members vs. the FFA Alumni and was a very competitive game. However, the FFA members came up short in the

end and the winners of the game were the Alumni.

The younger FFA members who did not get to play showed their support by being the “go-to” teammates when the donkeys “went.”

This was a lot of fun to do and the crowd seemed to enjoy it too. Thank you to everyone who was involved and who came to show their support at Donkey Basketball.

Left, PHS Senior Harrison Cummings and right, Junior High Spanish Teacher Nicole Heimerl do their best to maneuver their four-legged teammates.

Parking advisory for visitors, staff

As a reminder, all visitors and staff parking vehicles on school grounds are asked to obey posted parking signage.

Parking enforcement will be conducted by local law enforcement throughout the school day and at events after school hours at district buildings. Thank you for your cooperation!



Your Portage Post contributors

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Pucker up Miss Piggy!



Photo by Katie Chapman

PHS Assistant Principal Brian Seguin snuggles up to a pig, all for a good cause. Junior High staffers Amanda DeVries and Jeff Good also puckered up to help raise \$450, which will go to an orphanage in Haiti. The pig kissing contest was coordinated by FFA Junior Advisor Alex Harvey.

(River Crossing Continued from page 1)

had won the awards. "...Within a minutes I got more than 60 replies from very very happy students."

With this honor, Rydberg plans on displaying the awards in the school. "It was nice that the publicity of these awards helped the community and the state recognize how River Crossing helps students be successful."

Sophomore Emily Perkins, a former student of Rydberg states, "I think she has put forth an extraordinary of time and effort and she really loves what she does, you can't top that."

About 200 charter schools are in the state, and Wisconsin has the most charter schools in the state than any other state. At least 20 schools were nominated for these awards.

Greek adventure meets modern day challenges

Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief
By Rick Riordan
Reviewed by Amanda Baxter

Percy Jackson is just a normal kid. Well, not exactly. Having attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and dyslexia, he has moved from school to school, usually screwing things up in some way or another.

But this time, things get really weird. On a school field trip, his math teacher, Mrs. Dodds, turns into a Greek monster who really

needs a breath mint. This sets off a chain of events, sweeping him into a world of adventure, where he finds out he is a demigod, his best friend is half goat, and his teacher is the famous trainer of heroes, Chiron.

I think this book is a wonderful read full of action. Anyone would enjoy this book. An added bonus, if you are interested in this story but don't want to read it, you can always watch it. It was released earlier this year as a major motion picture.

One scout's work to help track history

By Luke Malkowski

I am a member of Boy Scouts of America Troop 70. I have completed my Eagle Scout project.

I have to go in front of my council members to get it checked off. I then have a ceremony, and I am an eagle scout.

I had to earn 21 merit badges, be active in my troop, complete a service project, and have an active position in my troop. I have achieved all of these requirements, and now I am ready to get my eagle.

My project was to catalog tools from a shipman's tool chest. I

cataloged a total of 120 items. I inputted those tools into the database at the Surgeons Quarters.

My project took a long time, but I think that it was worth it in the end. I just feel I did something good for my community in so many ways.



Fort Gold Star Café

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Even though they represent different ages and grade levels, they all understand the importance of trying to make their school a better place.

Emma Calkins said she's noticed more of her classmates are getting along better. Calkins was able to find something Mrs. Shaben was looking for.

Leah Huser, who brought a ball in from the playground after school without being asked, said she likes the Gold Star idea because it encourages people to take care of each other.

"If you have a problem with a friend, you can go to them and you know they're going to help you," Huser said.

Seth Zimmerman said taking the time to volunteer to do extra work, opening doors for other people, or just saying please and thank you is important.

"It builds character and it makes you seem more responsible," said Zimmerman, who received his gold star by complementing a classmate on a story.

The latest Gold Star Café guest was Wisconsin First Lady Jessica Doyle, who visited with each Gold Star drawing recipient about their good deeds and chatted with the school about life in politics and education, her career and true passion.

Throughout the school year, staff members give students gold stars for their kind actions.

Those names go into a drawing, and the students randomly selected each time get to have lunch with the guest celebrity. Past celebrities have been Sheriff Dennis Richards, Principal Robin Kvalo, and Santa Claus.

Past recipients include Lauryn Calkins, Alisa Clemmons, Abby Zellmer, Joseph Clemmons, Emily Kowalk, Nick Trojanowski, Morgan Miles, Genna Garrigan, Jordan Burkett, Adrian Kopecky, Dylan Horn, Sydney Arnce, Austin Zellmer, and Kaylin Brandsma. Because of the luck of the draw, some students may be picked more than once if they have multiple gold stars.