



# Portage Post

*Committed to the success of every student.*

# P

1st Quarter 08-09

Volume 2, Issue 1

## R & R time - good or bad?

New district initiative takes time out for students, staff to read daily

By Ciera Sugden

Monday through Friday, from 1:27 to 1:47, the High School building is surprisingly quiet as students and teachers read in their classrooms.

There's no talking, no listening to music, no homework-just

sitting down and reading a book.

Portage High School students all have their own opinion on the new Reading and Reflection time, or more commonly called "R&R."

Some students think of this newly implemented time as a

chance to relax or catch up on school reading assign-

ments. Others are opposed, thinking it takes time away from important classes. And, occasionally students choose to sleep through the 20-minute period.

Kevin Searock, a teacher at

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## PHS goes pink to help spike breast cancer

*Teams, fans, staff turn everything pink to draw awareness to disease*

In recognition of October's Breast Cancer Awareness month, the Portage Girls' Volleyball teams did their small part to bring a message to PHS. The girls' volleyball team understands that any one of them could be affected directly by breast cancer during their lifetime.

October 9<sup>th</sup> was the day picked by the volleyball team to recognize October as Breast Cancer Awareness month.

Coach Rachelle Murphy said the team was thrilled with the response this year, and they have already turned their thoughts to growing the event next year.

She said the significance of breast cancer awareness was proudly displayed among many supporters.

"Even men weren't afraid to wear pink," Murphy said. "That was great."

During the school day, all students and staff were encouraged to wear pink during the school day. Jane Hemming's Food Service class sold pink dirt cups and raised \$96 for the Pink Ribbon Angels.

For the volleyball match, fans were encouraged to fill the gym with pink for the volleyball match

*(Continued on page 3)*



## German exchange program in the works

*Students to enjoy greater immersion in German, U.S. cultures during visits*

By Daiva Sulas

Most high school students in Portage know of the German Exchange Program. It's a great way to see German culture and to experience the German language in a different way.

Portage High School's German Exchange Program was established about 30 years ago with a school in the town of Gütersloh by Laura Freitag, a former German teacher.

The next exchange will begin in the fall of 2009

when PHS will be hosting their German students. They will stay for three weeks with students and their families. The host families will be established this spring. People who are interested in hosting a German student, but won't be able to travel to Germany are still encouraged to

*(Continued on page 3)*

### Readers Wanted

The Special Needs Early Childhood program housed at Clough would like to invite you to be a guest reader in our room. You may bring your own book or we can supply you with one. Times to read can be between 8:30 and 10:30 and 12:15 and 2:30. Contact Barb Dodd at 742-4879 extension 161 to set up a time.

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### All Shook Up

The music department of PHS is presenting All Shook Up, the musical inspired by the music of Elvis Presley. Although the plot does not revolve around the real Elvis, it is reminiscent of those old Elvis movies of the early 60's. The show includes all of his number one hits, plus many more. The audience members will certainly remember Blue Suede Shoes, Jailhouse Rock, Love Me Tender, Hound Dog, and many more Billboard Hit Tunes.

The musical will be presented in the PHS Auditorium on Nov. 13-15 at 7:30 p.m. and on Sunday, Nov. 16 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$8 for seniors and students. Tickets are available now in the High School office.

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# Portage's ideas go to Washington

Federal rep tours schools, visits with students, staff about what works here

By Ciera Sugden

A member of President George W. Bush's administration got an up-close view of life in Portage Schools to take back to Washington recently.

Todd Zoellick, the Department of Education's Deputy Secretary's Regional Representative, visited schools earlier this fall.

Zoellick is one of two educational representatives of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin. His job is to act as a spokesperson between the government and the country's school superintendents, principals, and teachers.

He said communication is important between the two levels of education because federal officials need to know what's really going on in big and small town schools in order to make new policies to better the education process.

"I enjoy working with superintendents, teachers, and students because it's where all the work is happening," Zoellick says.

The Portage School District was put on this year's agenda because Zoellick and his officials know that it's important to see both urban and small-town schools.

The River Crossing Environmental Charter School was one of the first stops Zoellick made. Standing in front of the class, he asked the students about what they were learning, and advantages to the program they were able to participate in.

Students gladly answered his questions, and posed some of their own.

Zoellick also visited Caledonia Elementary School and Portage Junior High School.

At each district he sees, Zoellick takes note of the challenges of each area as well as new programs and ideas they have. He says that many things he and his colleagues discover are put on the website "Doing What Works," where teachers and others can find teaching strategies and the best practices used around the country.

However, he says that there are still things that are causing a negative impact on our nation's schools.

The United States' economy is causing problems for many school districts. One problem is declining enrollment. Because of historically high gas prices, many people are moving closer to the big towns they work in and are leaving smaller districts. This is affecting the school's funding, as a lot of it comes from property taxes. Mr. Meicher, the Junior High principal, acknowledged this as a problem that the Portage Schools are dealing with.

Another thing affecting schools in Zoellick's eyes

is the Global economy, and the fact that jobs are harder to come by. He said there are changes in teaching styles, and now there's more focus on math, science, and other subjects directly related to a student's future. The big change, he thinks, is that almost everyone needs post-high school education now for a higher-end job. He thinks it's very important for parents, as well as students, to understand this.

"College is no longer something optional for most students," he says.

For more information on Zoellick's job and education in America, check out [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov) and click on "Doing What Works."



*Dept. of Education Regional Rep. Todd Zoellick tackles some challenging questions from Amanda DeVries' writing class during his Portage visit.*

## Yearbook selling ad space—room still available for businesses

By Sebastian Ingram

Along with seemingly everything else these days, the cost of the high school's yearbook is getting more expensive too. In order to get those precious memories in print, it costs nearly \$30,000 to publish the yearbook.

While the \$40 cost of purchasing each yearbook helps offset printing costs, there is still a gap in revenue vs. expense. The yearbook staff is utilizing extra space in the yearbook to sell ad-

vertising to generate income for the yearbook. Any business is welcome to advertise in the yearbook and by doing so, making those memories available to students and staff.

The yearbook publicity is available for as little as \$5, but the yearbook staff will work with businesses and other supporters who want ads of any size.

If you contribute any money, businesses will have their names printed in the back of yearbook.

When you think of it as a yearbook, it is not just for students, but it is also a place for businesses to get noticed. Contact Mrs. Crum at Portage High School for more information.

The PHS yearbook staff will gladly sell ads of any size, and the potential is limitless. Businesses and PHS supporters can help the school while showing their support in print to serve as a lasting reminder of their commitment to the high school and its students.

## Feathers flying - PHS clubs help poultry show

By Luke Malkowski

Two PHS clubs helped an international poultry show take flight while earning funds for their clubs at the same time.

FFA and Key Club helped set up and take down poultry cages for the Wisconsin International Poultry Show in September.

"Students learned cooperation, working with adults, and manual labor," FFA Advisor Brad Gefvert said. "It's a community service event that benefits agriculture and the community."

Key Club has participated for a number of years, and FFA joined them three years ago.

Organizers Byron and Laura Kershaw, who are active at the fair and the parents of a PHS alumnus, coordinate the event.

The poultry show hosted 1800 birds, including chickens, ducks and geese during the two-day event.

Club members can raise funds toward their own activities, including conference or convention costs.



*Alex Schieber of the PHS Key Club and FFA puts the finishing touches on a poultry cage while setting up for the recent Poultry Show at the fairgrounds.*

### Pink out continued...

*(Continued from page 1)*  
against DeForest.

Portage athletes tie-dyed socks and wore pink ribbons in their hair. DeForest teams also joined in by wearing pink uniform tops, pink shoelaces, or pink socks.

Pink Portage Volleyball t-shirts were worn by all volleyball athletes and coaches. Parents and fans were able to pre-order shirts as well. A total of 256 pink Portage Volleyball t-shirts were sold.

A donation of \$721 from the t-shirt profits and Food Service sales was presented to the Pink Ribbon Angels of Columbia County. The athletes and coaching staff were overwhelmed with the turnout and appreciated all the support given by students, staff, fans, parents, and athletes.



*Pretty in pink— The girls' Varsity (front page) JV (top) and Freshman (bottom teams went pink from head to toe, all in the name of breast cancer awareness.*



### Your Portage Post Staff

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Have something you'd like to see in *The Post*? See anyone listed above. We welcome all ideas and independent submissions! We're always looking for new staff members too. For more information, contact Suzi at 742-4879 or E-mail [yencheskys@portage.k12.wi.us](mailto:yencheskys@portage.k12.wi.us) !

### What's your problem?

Got a question and you're not sure who to ask? Well ask us!

In the next issue of *The Portage Post*, we'll take your questions and do our best to help! Submit your questions to your school office and stay posted for answers.

### German exchange continued...

*(Continued from page 1)*  
participate. Host families are needed, even if students are not able to travel abroad.

The Portage students will travel to Germany in June of 2010. They will stay for three weeks with the students they hosted in the fall.

This exchange program is set up

differently than others. While some travel abroad programs stay in hotels, eat in restaurants, and speak a lot of English amongst themselves, this one is different. It focuses on experiencing the daily life of Germans. One would go to a German school, talk with their host mother and father, and they would still get to see all the

sights such as the Berlin Wall and the castles. It is also more affordable because students would not have to pay for hotels or restaurants.

Students who are interested in participating can start preparing for interviews in spring and saving money to fund the trip. Expense estimates are not available yet.



## St. Mary's welcomes new principal

By Chrisdy Apo

St. Mary's Catholic School has introduced Jamie Hahn as the new principal this year.



Lynn Koresh, the former principal, had announced in the beginning of the 2008 school year that she would be leaving Saint Mary's School at the end of school year.

Hahn is St. Mary's third principal in recent history. Diane Vesley was the principal for many years before her retirement in 2003. Lynn Koresh came to St. Mary's in 2004.

Hahn graduated from St. Norbert's College in Green Bay. She was a kindergarten teacher at St. Jerome's Catholic School in Columbus before her hiring as the principal of Saint Mary's.

"Hahn is a great asset towards the school," said Jackie Rostad, one of two pre-school teachers at St. Mary's. "The students all seem to be much closer

and some love Hahn."

Other teachers agree with Rostad. Heather Hibner, the school's physical education teacher, described her as "fabulous".

Hahn had good first impressions of St. Mary's.

"The school was the quietest school in my entire life; the students are very respectful towards the other teachers," said Hahn.

Because of her time as a kindergarten teacher, she was more familiar with younger students. But now that she's had a chance to get to know the junior high school-aged students, she enjoys them too.

Hahn has ideas in store for St. Mary's, including an addition to the school to rearrange the younger classes.

Hahn is well aware of today's world and the need to put safety as a main concern of all. She has

improved the school's security system and procedures.

The new principal is already making a lasting impression on staff and students alike.

Hannah Malone, a seventh grader, said Hahn is strict, but nice.

"She has a very good head on her shoulders and is a good principal," Malone said.

Hahn also showed the students that the principal of a parochial school can be fun, too. Hahn comes into the classrooms to "hang out" with the junior high students working on their science experiments or learning how to find the area of a circle and also comes to the younger students who are learning how to read, write, and depicting colors; showing how much their principal really cares about her students.

St. Mary's is one of several schools that work closely with the Portage Community School District in a range of ways, including 4-year-old kindergarten and special education services.

## Reading and reflection continued....

(Continued from page 1)

PHS, is a supporter of the new program. He explained the reason this daily reading came to be.

"At the beginning of last year, principal Karin Exo identified 'building a climate of literacy at PHS' and 'reviewing grading practices at PHS' as our building goals, and as a staff we are continuing to work on these goals this year," Searock said.

During the 2007-2008 school year many teachers visited other schools with similar reading programs to Reading and Reflection.

"They came back with good things to say about R&R time," said Searock.

After researching the program and discussing it many times, the staff took the issue to a vote, and the proposal was accepted, with many people strongly behind it.

Zack Shumate, a Senior at the High School, was glad R&R time was cre-

ated.

"It gives me a chance to relax," Shumate said.

One argument that affected the passing of R&R time was that there was a strong possibility daily reading would help with literacy rates and standardized test scores.

"We also feel that putting an emphasis on reading every day will help our students to score well on state and federally-mandated achievement tests," Searock said.

But, many students don't believe 20 forced minutes will help at all.

"I think it's enjoyable because I like to read, but personally, I don't think it's going to raise test scores or anything because I see people sleeping," said Daiva Sulas, a sophomore. A number of PHS students seem to have this attitude toward the program.

"I guess I like it but I don't think it matters to the juniors and seniors," said

junior Brittany Remhof, pointing out that the majority of upperclassman have already taken most of their standardized tests.

While there are some students who are not enthusiastic about the program, others see the opportunity to read books that they otherwise would not have time to read.

Even with all the differing opinions on the daily reading time, it still comes together every day. Students sit down in their fourth hour class, read a book of their choice or select something from materials provided in classes, and have a chance to escape routine.

Overall, it seems most students enjoy the time.

Opinions about the program can even vary quite regularly, like whether sophomore Erin Quigley enjoys R&R time.

"Depends on the day," Quigley said.

## Girls' golf team tees its way to strong season

### Donohue wins Badger Conference title, goes to state

The Portage Girls' Golf team had a very successful season in 2008. The Warriors finished 4-1 in the Badger North Conference, which earned them a second place finish.

Improvement was the main focus for the Warriors in this year's campaign, and the girls did not disappoint. The varsity team of Mary Donohue, Karisa Harris, Alex Schieber, Chelsea Lambert, and Holly Harris combined to shatter the school record for season 9-hole scoring average (199.6) by 7 strokes as well as breaking the program low 18-hole team score (384).

In addition to the team accomplishments, Portage also had some incredible performances turned in by senior Mary Donohue. Mary became the first Lady Warrior to win the Badger Conference individual title, advanced to sectionals as an individual, and broke the 18-hole individual program record by shooting 80 at the Hayward sec-

tional.

Her round at sectionals earned Mary a berth in the WIAA Girls' Golf State Tournament at University Ridge, a first for any girl in the history of the golf program.

Donohue did not disappoint at state, finishing in 28th place out of 78 competitors in Division 1. 2008 was definitely a season of accomplishments for the Portage Girls' Golf team, and the program appears to have a bright future as the team's participation numbers continue to increase.

There were 18 girls on this year's team, making it one of the largest squads in the Madison area, and the coaching staff is anticipating those numbers to remain up in the coming years.

For more information on joining the golf team, contact Head Coach Ed Carlson or Assistant Coaches Rick Maass and Matt Denure.

## One-on-one: talking politics



Jena Daggett presents a case for Barack Obama's campaign, while John McCain supporter Matt Rohrbeck listens during the first-ever debate held at PHS through the school's history department. Many students got involved, from watching the debate to making campaign posters and conducting polls among other students. (Photo courtesy of Jen McCoy, Portage Daily Register)

## Ryan's rant—a range of topics to gripe about

By Ryan Carney

Ok, not to sound too much like the show *Family Guy*, today I'm going to write about what grinds my gears. For a disclaimer, this column won't make a whole lot of sense, so sorry to waste your time if you have better things to do. First off, Happy Halloween! Yes, it is officially the witching season. In honor of the season, I have taken it upon myself to watch one horror movie each night. The most recent one was a movie called *Killer Clowns from Outer Space*, and I promise you this is not a movie to see. In my opinion it was a total waste of an hour and a half. However, if you want something to laugh at it may be worth consideration.

If Halloween isn't your thing maybe sports might be more up your ally. Recently the eighth grade spelling bee championships were on ESPN2. Now if you want to feel stupid, this would be the show for you. I watched this for about 15 minutes and wow, I don't think I've ever felt more like an idiot. These kids are three or more years younger than I am and they are spelling words that I swear were made up. Plus, the kids competing kept asking questions -so many questions- and it took five minutes to spell one word.

Anyway, it was lunchtime the other day and I was feeling the mid-day hunger so I

decided that I would take the daring endeavor that we all choose to take and get into the lunch line. I was in line for 20 minutes. I don't mean to complain, well I sort of do, that's the point of this column, but standing in line for more than five minutes in my opinion is too long. I know that the school can't do anything about the masses but something should be done.

Now my life experiences are limited so this is the part of the column where I looked up random words in the dictionary and developed an opinion about them. The first word- exaggeration, meaning to represent something as greater than it is. Used in a sentence; both candidates that are in the election like to exaggerate...A lot. Now I could easily write a whole other page on the election, but I'm beginning to ramble. So to conclude this on a high note, my opinion on the election is to forget about Obama and McCain; there's one better, one that has something that neither candidate has: persistence....Ralph Nader all the way!!

*Editor's note—Ryan's Rant is a column meant for entertainment purposes only. He's got a lot of opinions. After all, he's a senior. If you have stuff Ryan should rant about, let him know.*

## PHS CC chases state dreams, sprints to strong finish

The Portage Cross Country Team recently qualified the entire team for the State Meet for the second time in three years. The team finished in 16th place with 393 points to finish a very respectable season by the boys.

Four out of the seven boys on the team set a personal record for the season. Three of the seven athletes were freshman for the team so the outlook for the next few seasons looks very promising.

On the girls' side, Kassie Vaness finished in 34th place (15:49 for the 4K course) with a personal record for the season.

Although she finished in 10th place at last year's state meet, she was happy with her performance as she was injured during the past track season and was bouncing back from that.

This marks her third straight year at state and next year she will try and make it a perfect high school record of qualifying four straight years.

## Hit the books— reading suggestions from students

By Chrisdy Apo

*The Host* by: Stephenie Meyer

Ever had a dream where the world was taken over by aliens? If you had one of those dreams, then I suggest that you read this book. *The Host*, by Stephenie Meyer, who is mostly famous for writing *The Twilight Saga*, is her first adult novel.

The story is put into the eyes of Wanderer, one of the souls that is put in the body of Melanie Stryder, one of the “wild” humans who thought by throwing herself off an elevator shaft would stop the Seekers from catching her. Of course, it didn’t work and now Wanderer is inside Melanie. But Melanie is a fighter and won’t stop showing Wanderer her memories. Wanderer does get outraged and thinks that she is weak, but she then learns of a man who Melanie loves and the rest of her family. She has a lot of compassion inside of her to not harm the humans that Melanie loves and decides to help Melanie in finding the man of her dreams.

Of course, she has to fool the Seekers, seeking out the ‘wild’ humans and escape to the Arizona Desert where Wanderer could’ve died! A group of humans lead by Melanie’s crazy uncle find Wanderer and take her, but don’t trust her incredibly. Wanderer also meets the man who Melanie loves, Jared, along with many other humans such as Melanie’s brother Jamie and Ian.

Though, there are people who don’t like Wanderer, or Wanda for

short, and try their way to get rid of her. Wanda and Melanie work together and survive life with the humans, but there’s just one big question: can Wanda be released from Melanie and can Melanie return to society? Read *The Host* to find out!

Review—

I believe that this was a great book. I had a feeling that I was there with Wanderer and Jared and Ian in the darkness of the caves and the worry of survival. It had very strong emotions, as all of Stephenie Meyer’s books have expressed. Unlike *Twilight* and the other books, this isn’t as “bloody,” since the aliens are very peaceful and do not hate each other. I recommend this book to everyone of all ages, but I do warn that in the beginning, it does get confusing but on the bright side, it does not get even more confusing in the middle section of the book. The only backdrop to *The Host* was the fact that most of the book happened in the dark caves and when you are really into a book this deep, it was kind of hard to imagine a very dark place and where you are going. According to stepheniemeyer.com, she is planning to write two more sequels to *The Host*.

Hey, do you want to have your own voice in the book reviews? Then have your voice be heard, e-mail Chrisdy Apo at [apochrisdy@portage.k12.wi.us](mailto:apochrisdy@portage.k12.wi.us) and your name might be in the paper! Note: due to the thousands of shelves filled with books, some books may have been already reviewed by the reviewer.

By: Rachel Jensen

*Twilight* By: Stephenie Meyer

Isabella “Bella” Swan is a 17- year-old girl who lives with her mom in Phoenix ever since her parents separated and since then, life for has always been normal. But everything changes when her mom decides to remarry. Bella decides to move back in with her dad in Forks, Washington. Despite her hate for Forks, she moves there out of desperation. In Forks, it’s always raining and the place is covered mostly in green. Bella spent the last couple of days getting ready for school and now her first day begins and there’s a mix of people surrounding her. But one person sticks out: Edward Cullen. A

mysterious fair-skinned boy with black eyes. Little does she know there’s more than meets the eye. In her science class, Edward is in her class and soon becomes her lab partner. But to her dismay, he has an issue with her. He grows angry and disturbed until the class ends and he sprints out the door.

Time passes and things change. Soon, Bella and Edward are hanging out and Bella feels like she is in a dream. How could someone like him want to be with someone like me? She couldn’t get over it. Then one night while walking alone in a neighboring city, she is being followed, or so she thought. She was really being herded and there was no way

out! To find out what happens, read the book!

I absolutely love this book. There is so much suspense and romance. If you like romance and adventure, you will love this series. I have read *Twilight* and *New Moon*. The Series goes on to *Eclipse* and then on to *Breaking Dawn*, which has been recently released this last August. I would love to be in Bella’s situation; going through great adventures and doing a lot of cool stuff. I love this book and suggest that anyone should read it.

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### Veterans Day programs coming

Two Veterans Day programs are scheduled for Tuesday. The City of Portage’s program is set for 11 a.m. at Blue Star Park. The rain site is at the Portage Junior High School.

Portage High School will host its now-annual Veterans Day Program beginning at 1:45 p.m. Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin is the featured speaker.

Both programs are open to the public, and everyone is invited to attend.

### Applications now being accepted for building trades house

Area residents who want an affordable, well-built home are encouraged to apply for Portage High School’s Building Trades house on Grove Street.

The ranch house, which broke ground earlier this fall, features three bedrooms, a first floor laundry, two bathrooms with a third plumbed in downstairs, a two-car garage and about 1,360 square feet.

This year’s house project is targeted towards constructing a manageable house at an affordable price to open the door to home ownership for people who might not otherwise be able to afford a new home.

The district has received a great amount of support from area contractors who are offering materials and supporting labor at very affordable rates in order to keep the house reasonably-priced.

The house will be sold for the price of the materials, subcontracting and lot, estimated at about \$135,000-\$140,000.

Applications are available at the District Office, 904 DeWitt St. and will be accepted up to winter break. The application must also include a pre-qualification letter from a lending institution. The new owner will be chosen by February.