Cheer team goes to state competition

BY AMARI BROWN

Evergreen Park’s varsity co-ed cheerleading team qualified for state this year on Jan. 27, competing at Andrew High School. They were in the top five final teams to qualify for state. The team went on to perform at the Grossinger Motor Arena on Feb. 2 in Bloomington. This was the EPCHS cheer team’s first state competition in the co-ed division in school history.

Cheerleader Rachel Witte said, “The moment I found out we made [state], it was the best moment of my life.”

“I was overjoyed when I found out,” added fellow cheerleader Kassandra Martinez. “My team is the first team to make it to state in nine years. We deserved it so much.” Martinez went on to say, “We balance each other out. We are always willing to go the extra mile to help each other.”

Head cheer leading coach Rachael Mayo has been coaching for a total of eleven years; this is her eighth year at EPCHS. “They are a team who defies the odds,” said Coach Mayo. “They are a team that does not give in to the forces acting against them. They fight for every inch.”

Looking back on their experience at the state competition, Martinez says, “The state experience was great. And I couldn’t have asked for a better one. We all had so much fun.”

Male and female students who are interested in joining in on the fun and success of the cheer team should mark their calendars for Apr. 24 when tryouts begin. Come be a part of something amazing!

The cheer team celebrated an exciting conclusion to a memorable season. The team arrived in Bloomington on Feb. 2 ready to make EPCHS proud.

Cheer Tryouts:
Apr. 24, 26, & 27
7:30-9:30 pm in the large gym

Final tryout
Apr. 28
8 a.m.-12 p.m.

NHS benefit showcases teens’ talents

BY KENZIE TELSTAD

On Mar. 9 the National Honor Society’s (NHS) sponsored by Mr. Ben Nesler, held a Talent Benefit Show in the auditorium. There were approximately 270 tickets sold with a total of $1150 collected! The money will be donated to the Wounded Warrior Project and the Ronald McDonald House in Oak Lawn.

There were twenty great performances, such as Faith Kokoska and Brian Gutrich singing "Rewrite the Stars" from the musical The Greatest Showman, Lakeela Prince singing "Epoch," the Dana Kahn Band performing three songs, (two of which were in Spanish, plus “More Than a Band” from Lemonade Mouth), Benas Alcauskas performing a comedy routine, along with many others, showing the audience their wonderful voices and amazing dance moves.

Aryianna Coleman captivated the audience with her vocal talent at the NHS Talent Benefit Concert, which raised over $1000 for charity.

Male and female students who are interested in joining in on the fun and success of the cheer team should mark their calendars for Apr. 24 when tryouts begin. Come be a part of something amazing!
Students lead efforts to celebrate Black History Month

BY MYA WHITTON

The month of February is the shortest month of the year. This month is packed with events like the Winter Olympics and Valentine’s Day; therefore, the prominence of Black History Month can easily be forgotten. Evergreen Park Community High School wanted to change how students view the month.

This year, a student-led Black History Month club created an awareness of black historians’ legendary role impacting civil rights, racial equality, and African American cultural discoveries.

Senior Honors Branch has made tremendous efforts to show school-wide what the foundation of Black History Month means to today’s society. “When I first decided to talk to Principal Sanderson about Black History Month, I felt like [Black History Month] was downplayed and not celebrated enough,” remarked Branch. “We should do more to involve the students in celebrating heritage and growing to bridge the cultural gap.”

--Honor Branch

“We should do more to involve the students in celebrating heritage and growing to bridge the cultural gap.”

BY MYA COOPER

Reading Roundup is under way in the month of March. It’s a fun challenge where students compete against the student body and faculty and staff to see who can read how many pages can be read in a month. This challenge both celebrates and encourages reading. Prizes are given weekly and winners will be announced at the end of March.

“The challenge makes students aware of how much reading they do in a day, week, or month,” explained Dr. Tina Ward, who is organizing the event. Students received an invitation to join the challenge via email; participants simply update their page total by filling out a Google Form each week. The results are posted on the television screens in the cafeteria and main entrance.

Reading Roundup has been going on for four years. In the past, it was limited to students in the reading classes. This year, however, the challenge has been expanded school wide.

Reading Roundup is one part of a widespread effort to increase student reading across the school. In addition, many English classes have incorporated daily independent reading to encourage a love of reading, while also helping students to increase their reading comprehension, fluency, and stamina. Plus, the LRC has already hosted two high-interest author visits this year to foster a love of reading.

Meet ‘the next big thing’: Local author takes YA world by storm

Hinsdale native Tomi Adeyemi’s debut novel, Children of Blood and Bone, is making waves in the publishing world in just the first week of its release. In the midst of a worldwide promotional tour for the book, whose rights have already been purchased by a major film studio, Adeyemi stopped by EPCHS on March 9 to discuss her passion for writing, her life as an author and her inspiration for her novel.

Many critics are calling the book a cross between Black Panther and The Hunger Games. Children of Blood and Bone is the first in a trilogy inspired by West African culture and mythology.

Adeyemi talked about how becoming a professional author has changed her life. At the age of 24, she has already had the opportunity to travel the world while promoting her book. Not only has Adeyemi acquired a huge contract with her publisher, Macmillan Children’s Publishing Group, but also the rights to turn her novel into a film were recently purchased by Fox 2000 for a seven-figure sum. She appeared on national television earlier this month with an interview on ABC’s Good Morning America. During her visit to EPCHS, even more exciting news: Her agent received a call confirming that Adeyemi will be a guest on Comedy Central’s The Daily Show soon.

BY MYA WHITTON

The brand new Mustang Fitness Center is now open! In addition to use by physical education classes and athletic teams, all students and staff are invited to work out from 3:30-5:30 p.m. Mon.-Thurs.

Fitness Center now open!
Snow Dance goes glam

17 EPCHS students participated in the South Suburban Art Show, which concluded with a festival and awards presentation on Feb. 23. Paige Ocasio was named Best of School winner. Participants included: Kashara Bennett, Kierstin Brannigan, Allyn Coleman, Emily Doran, Naya Gilmore, Kathleen Jacobson, Kassandra Martinez, Marina Martinez, Dominique McBride, Sarah Meyer, Margaret Miller, Paige Ocasio, Giana Pietkiewicz, Gizelle Serna, Hope Shannon, Brianna Stoppa and Nyssa Wagner.

Students had a blast at the dance, largely due to the efforts put forth by Student Government members. “The decorations were really cool and made the room look like Hollywood,” said senior Kierstin Brannigan.

Nyssa Wagner, senior, also agreed that the decorations worked really well with the theme and the glitter curtains helped. Wagner also went on to say, “This year’s dance was one of my favorites.”

Next year, the Snow Dance will likely remain largely the same. Student Government will help to decide any changes for next year. Any students with input or suggestions should speak to their class representatives or consider running for class office next year.

Culinary experience has French students saying ‘Bon appetit!’

Students in Mr. Alan Wax’s French language and culture studies program were recently treated to a novel experience. On March 1, they had an in-school field trip whereby the whole event came to their doorstep. Vincent Colombet, propriétaire of Cook au Vin as well as La Boulangerie, shared his culinary fame and secrets with the young French chefs. The menu consisted of the well-known café staple, croque monsieur, accompanied by a variety of beverages using sirop de MONIN, followed by petits fours, a dessert delicacy.

After watching and participating in the creation of all of these dishes and learning about the étiquette of the table in a private dining area, students had the opportunity to chat in French with the chef before receiving gift bags with an assortment of items to take home to try some of the newly learned cooking skills for their families.

La Boulangerie, voted Chicago’s best French-style café and bakery, is located on Belmont Ave. and Wilson Ave., adjacent to Lycée Français, Chicago’s only French baccalauréat school. Cook au Vin is a French catering company, also offering cooking lessons by the famed chef. As well, one can also visit the La Boulangerie food truck located in downtown Chicago. Luckily, EP’s French students didn’t have to travel outside of their high school to get a taste of the finest French food Chicago has to offer.
Scholastic Bowl finishes in 2nd

BY BRIAN GUTRICH

The Evergreen Park Varsity Scholastic Bowl team just finished off its season with an impressive second place finish in conference. They lost the championship match in triple overtime to Argo High School in a tense contest. Leading scorers Kayla Benson and Stella Tarrin were selected for all-conference honors.

When asked how the season went, Coach Krist Enstrom had this to say: “Well, first of all, I always love Scholastic Bowl. The kids are a ton of fun, I think it’s a lot of fun and that’s our main rule— just to have some fun. So I think this year was as successful as ever.”

The team would like to shout out the senior members of the team for their services: Benas Alcakisas, Stella Tarrin, Cooper Nolan, Ryan Kompare and Logan Kantzler.

Now that the current season is over, the team looks to next season and hopefully a conference championship. If you are interested in joining the Evergreen Park Scholastic Bowl team, contact either Coach Enstrom or assistant coach Mr. Jim Smith.

Mathletes ready to take UIUC

The Mathletes, coached by Ms. Maria Vinci and Mr. Jamie Pembroke, are looking forward to representing EPCHS at the state competition in Urbana-Champaign in May. The Algebra 2 team (pictured above) consists of Hannah Rahm, Kayla Benson, Brooke Scanton, CJ Kompare, Lindsay Measner and Isabella Villamil. In addition, Kayla Benson qualified as an individual for Algebra 2 and Collin Brennan (not pictured) qualified as an individual for Geometry. Good luck at state!

New Game Club starts off strong

Game Club, a new club at EPCHS, is fully operational! With weeks of its inception, the club is quickly becoming one of the most popular and widely-attended in the school. Game Club, a new club at EPCHS, is fully operational! With weeks of its inception, the club is quickly becoming one of the most popular and widely-attended in the school.

This club is open for all types of gamers. Gamers have a chance to play Dungeons & Dragons, take on expert Super Smash Bros. tournament, embarrass their friends in a Mario Kart race and defeat Mr. Truffa at Injustice 2.

Game Club meets every Thursday in the LRC. Gamers of all skill levels are invited! See Mr. Truffa, Mr. Burns or Mr. Codiamat for more information.

Spring Spirit Week: March 26-29

Monday: Pajama Day
Tuesday: Disney Day
Wednesday: Decade Wars (Srs: 90s, Jrs: 80s, Soph: 50s, Frosh: 70s)
Thursday: Mustang Pride

BY BRIAN GUTRICH

Evergreen Park Community High School
District 231

Superintendent
Mr. Tom O’Malley

Principal/Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Bill Sanderson

Assistant Principal/Director of Discipline
Mr. Robert McCarthy

Director of Curriculum
Ms. Maria Vinci

Director of Athletics
Mr. Jim Smith

Director of Activities
Ms. Beth Spezia

Mustang Monitor Staff
Kate Berman ’18
Amari Brown ’19
Colleen Burns ’18
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Dana Sanders ’18
Kailie Schillo ’18
Kenzie Telstad ’21
Mya Whitton ’18

Mustang Monitor Advisors
Mrs. Mary Kate Mikulskis & Mr. Nick Codiamat

EPCHS proudly presents SCREENERS:
GROWING UP IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Wednesday, April 25
7:00-8:30 p.m.
Boys bowl shows EP pride

BY DAN NOVAK

Another fantastic bowling season is coming to an end. Throughout the season, the members of the EPCHS bowling team showed their Mustang Pride.

"There were many tough times and many good times," shared sophomore Charlie Novak. "The challenge was getting to conference for the JV team and getting to state was a challenge for the varsity team."

This was Novak’s first year on the team. He spoke at length about getting to know the coaches and the members of his team. According to him, the team knew how to have fun. "It was a blast," he said. "Just socializing with the team and the buses home were lots of fun." Novak plans on joining the team again next year.

The bowling team also said goodbye to Senior Conner Suszynski. Suszynski has been described by multiple teammates as being a high energy and consistent teammate.

The varsity team did outstanding in both performance and spirit. They were unfaltering, confident bowlers who gave it their all. The JV team did well in the first part of the season and Thomas Murphy kept all of their spirits up when times seemed dark. Murphy states, "We kept it up all the way to conference. We were proud that our scores were in the top twenties and thirties on the Individual Persons Roster." The team did their best to keep positive throughout the season. Charlie Novak comments, "We didn’t get a chance to go to state this year and wouldn’t have gotten this far without each other. Next year we will make it to state."

Novak and his fellow teammates are eager for the next bowling season, where they had not beaten before, such as Hillcrest, Lemont and Oak Forest to give them a conference record of 12-1, which ranked them second in conference for the second consecutive year.

Coach Scaduto says, "This was the best group of girls I’ve ever coached." This year they won the Suburban Side of Chicago and after a tough loss to Argo dropped to 8th. Coach Scaduto states they are a team that will always be remembered.

Although the ladies came just short of a regional championship, that did not define their season. They placed first in a winter tournament at Chicago High School for Agricultural Science and took second in a Thanksgiving tournament at Immaculate Conception. Kacey Gardner, the team captain for three years, was very proud of her teammates and the improvements they made as the season progressed. Gardner stated the team bonding and long practices brought the team closer and she enjoyed every moment of the memorable season.

Girls bowl makes it to regionals

BY MAKHAILA JORDAN

The Lady Mustang bowling team started the year off on a rough note. They always worked hard and made improvements with great coaching from Jason Fundukian and Mike Markowitz. Most of the ladies’ score averages increased over the season.

This year our Lady Mustang bowlers made it to regionals and took fifth place overall, with the frosh/soph squad taking first place at conference. Three of the girls made it to sectionals as individuals: freshman Kiara Smith and sophomores Katrina DelRosario and Morgan Markowitz.

The Lady Mustangs hope to advance to the state competition next season. With the roll they’re on, everything seems like it will be on track for more success next season.
Boys basketball says goodbye to seniors

BY MALLORY BURKE

Goodbye winter sports, hello spring sports! Spring season officially began on Feb. 27 and includes girls and boys track and field, softball, baseball and girls soccer.

Boys track and field

Parallel to the girls team, the boys track and field athletes have been working since December! Senior Dan Meza talks about the difficulties he experiences during practice: “1000 meter repeats always hurt [and] 2 mile warm-ups and cool downs aren’t always liked.” Meza also explains that even though the team is looking small this sea- son, the coaches are pushing them hard in order to bring their A-game to meets. Coach Rickert said, “Our season has been one where we have not had much practice due to numbers in talent, it’s a very realistic goal to advance our 4x100, 4x200, and 4x800 relays.”

Girls soccer

Girls soccer has also been hard at work, according to senior Nysaa Wagner, who describes her season as “in- tense right from the start.” She adds that the team’s most difficult drill so far was their 2-mile warm-up for tryouts. “Our coach is trying to have a strong team this year,” Wagner adds. Check our their first home game on Tues. March 27.

Wrestling wraps up

BY DANIELA SALAZAR

The wrestling team had a phenomenal season, defeating many schools and winning tournaments. Although the team was successful, they had many challenges thrown their way. Not only was keeping weight difficult for some wrestlers, but also arriving at school before dawn and departing from tournaments around the time of dusk was a challenge. Putting aside the difficulties that were hard to overcome, the wrestlers achieved many personal highs. The season ended with a varsity record of 14-6.

Senior wrestler Manuel Cumba reflected, “Being my last season, I take pride in how far we’ve come as a team, and I know the team will have faith in how far they can go for upcoming seasons.” In addition to Cumba, the team also says goodbye to seniors Robert Hicks, Kal- El Witherspoon, Jaelin Cole and Ronald Fasion.

Boys swim sees success

BY KALLIE SCHILLO

It was a memorable season for the boys basketball team. The players trained hard for the season and made every game count. Whether it was a win or a loss, these boys stuck together and showed consistent sportsmanship.

The Herd made sure the stands were full every home game and enjoyed cheering on the team. Senior Kenny Rickert said, “Our season had its ups and downs, but it was a great group of guys, and I’m glad I was a part of it.”

Some other key players, including Pat Doran, Declan Smyth and Desari Tyus, end- ed their time on the team on a successful note. Smyth added, “This season has been a lot of fun; I’ve learned a lot and am thankful for the memories and relationships I have made. I wish the best of luck to Coach Flanno and the talented sophomores and juniors as they prepare for next season to win another conference championship!”

The juniors are looking forward to their upcoming season and will work hard without the seniors. Despite losing the exceptional se- niors, the future of the bas- ketball program looks bright.