



**Elementary  
Holiday Concert**  
Jaimie Randle

On December 4th and 5th, the Elementary School students showcased their musical talents at the Holiday Concert. Led by Mrs. Brown and Mr. Dare, the students performed songs they have been working on for much of the school year. In classes, students work to master melody, harmony, rhythm, and many other elements that were displayed at the concert.



**Boys Basketball**  
Lucas Sondgeroth

The temperature in Central Illinois may be decreasing, but high school basketball is starting to heat up, and as the holiday season approaches, so do the holiday tournaments.

Even after all of the early season injuries, the Illini Bluffs Tigers are off to a solid 6-1 start with two upcoming rivalry games, at Lewiston and Farmington, as they prepare for one of their biggest mid-season tests: The Macomb-Western Holiday tournament.

The Tiger's open with Canton on Friday, December 26th at 9:00am at Western Illinois University. If they win, they play on the 27th at 5:00 pm and at 9:00 am if they lose.

The Tiger's finished 2nd at the Peoria Heights Thanksgiving Tournament with their one loss coming to Peoria Christian. The Tiger's got off to a shaky start in the first half to the Chargers, who some believe are the favorite to win 1A state this year, and trailed by 19 points at half. The Tiger's outscored them 45-26 in the second half but came up just short, losing 78-70.

**The Art of Science:  
Middle School Teacher Builds Afterschool Organizations**  
Jeston Rademaker



This year marked many changes in Illini Bluffs. New students replaced the graduates of the previous year., and the same can be said of staff.

One of those new staff members worthy of note has taken a teaching position in the middle school. Matthew Hagaman is doing an exceptional job as the new Science teacher for the seventh and eighth graders.

Mr. Hagaman has always had a love for science and wanted to pursue a career in the field. After earning his undergraduate degree at Eastern Illinois University, he taught at two schools before finding a home at Illini Bluffs. Currently he is earning his graduate degree at Western Illinois University.

Mr. Hagaman has brought with him new ideas and contributions to the school, such as reviving the Science and Art Clubs in the middle school. "We get to do cool projects that we wouldn't normally be able to do either because of class size or budget," states Mr. Hagaman.

On the subject of Art Club he adds that the afterschool program "offers [students] an opportunity to explore different types of art and different mediums."

Hagaman is a well-rounded, fun individual, and we are very lucky to have him in our school district.

**Christmas Play**  
Veronica Lee

When the holiday season comes round, the IBHS Drama Department is busy working to create a production that will entertain and inspire.

Each year the theater puts on a Christmas show, but instead of charging money for admission, the department asks for the donation of a toy for a child in need. Those toys are then given to families who receive a basket from the Community Christmas Basket Organization.

This year's show was a break from the classic "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever," which had seen 8 wonderful years of stage time.

Mr. Bell, the IBHS Drama director, felt it was time for a change and decided to host a night filled with a medley of acts. Their main show, "Merry Christmas Charlie Brown," was accompanied by a holiday themed dance from the IBHS Dance Team and a seasonal cheer from the IBHS Cheerleaders.

All three shows went off without a hitch and did a wonderful job spreading holiday cheer throughout the audience, and raised roughly 200 toys for the community.



**Thank You  
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The Publications Staff

The Publications Staff would like to thank the sponsors of our yearbook. As we'll be doing weekly installments in the Glasford Gazette, we will include several ads from our sponsors each week. For now, we'd like to say a special thank you to those businesses:

- Country Relics**
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Without their support, our yearbooks would not be in color! These businesses generously give each year, and because of this our yearbooks have not increased in price for over 6 years.

We encourage you to support those who support our local school.

Page 2 of this publication consists of articles the **Publications** staff has archived throughout their first semester class. Some are opinion pieces.

## This PARCC is No Playground

Emma Overton

In many states, including Illinois, the PSAE has been recently updated to a new form of assessment called the PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career) testing beginning during the 2014-2015 school year. This new form of testing will be used to investigate the performance of students between grades 9-11 in critical thinking and understanding of how and why the problems within the test are solved.

Although there is a limitation to what teachers and students have been informed, what we do know is this: Students will be required to take this test twice a year in nine session intervals over Common Core subjects. The students will be tested over two types of skills, one being summative skills which is the acquisition of knowledge and developmental skills. The other is Interim skills; these are the skills that students gain between the first and second test, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each student. These tests will consist of multiple choice, fill in the blank, and extended response questions.

The majority of the students will take the test in an online format with the fill in the blank, multiple choice, and extended response questions. However, it is likely there will be a paper and pencil alternative for some students. Most students and teachers are apprehensive about the changes. Mrs. Coulter, an Illini Bluffs High School English teacher, states, "I have never done anything like it before, so I don't know what to expect, and I certainly have a lot to learn." While there is much to find out about this new testing, the state and national government hopes that this new form of assessment will improve the students' educations.

## Renovations

Abbi Schafer

Illini Bluffs has undergone numerous renovations since June 1, 2014: a new track; a new gym floor for the high school; and restoring the boys' baseball diamond's sod, dugouts, and infield.

The cinder track was installed in the 1960s and has never been improved since then; if no further complications due to the weather occur, it will be completed by the end of this spring.

The budget was laid out for the track by board members, the previous superintendent, and the current, Dr. Alvey. Athletic Director Steve Schafer states, "The grant for the baseball diamond took care of most of the funds, but what really got the job done was the time, effort, and equipment from many community members."

He also informed the community that the gym wasn't scheduled to be redone, but it had dents and cracks, so they had to find somewhere in the school's budget to fit it in and fix it. The three renovations are expected to last as following: indefinitely with maintenance every 12 years (track), about 15 years (gym), and 10-15 years (baseball field). The cost for the three renovations was over \$430,000, with the track using the majority.

## Why, Michelle?

Jeston Rademaker

At 17 years old, you must make decisions that will affect you for the remainder of your life, such as the college you'll go to or what career you want to pursue. However, even though a 17 year-old is expected to make these decisions, they can no longer choose what they want to eat.

Due to federal tampering, children can no longer be trusted to eat what they see fit. Because of the battle against obesity by Michelle Obama, healthier foods are forced on our children.

This may seem like a good thing, but it leads to worse tasting and smaller portions of foods. The smaller portions are also more expensive than the larger, slightly less healthy portions. For example a normal set of Kellogg's Pop-Tarts (2 Pop-Tarts in a single package) costs around \$.50 but a single whole wheat Pop-Tart costs \$1.

Instead, regulations on the food industry itself would force the food corporations to make healthier foods at lower prices. It would allow the people to become assimilated with healthier foods instead of forcing them on us at a later age while simultaneously making healthy foods cheaper because the industries will want to keep their food cheaper to compete with the competition.

Over 500 schools find the new menu too expensive and have dropped off the federal school lunch plan. Many of these schools claimed the new regulations as the reason for their leaving.

According to Food Research and Action Center the purpose of the reforms is to "Increase the amount of fruits and vegetables served, emphasize whole grain-rich foods, require only lower fat and nonfat milk, limit calories, and reduce saturated fat and sodium." While a good goal to have, forcing healthier foods is the wrong direction to take as it doesn't change our eating habits in the long run. As soon as we can, we will return to our unhealthy ways.

Another problem the regulations are causing along with less food is that proceeds are down in sales. At Illini Bluffs we have the "Candyman," the affectionate nickname we've given Pat, the man who runs our vending machines. Because of the regulations, he has been forced to replace his candies with granolas and other healthy treats. Because of this his sales have dropped drastically. Also, "Granolaman" just doesn't have the same ring to it.

During my sophomore year of high school, I spent an average of about fifty cents a day on a cookie from the vending machine to accompany my lunch. This year I have not bought a single item in the machine. This same thing happens to the schools. Children are choosing to bring their own lunches more frequently.

The government's regulations are even creating more wasted food. Usually, a main entrée with a fruit and milk constitutes a complete lunch in the government's eyes, and if you don't buy milk or a fruit it is actually more expensive than if you buy the entire lunch. Many students will buy a lunch only to throw away the fruit or milk before they even sit down.

Because of this, many students are still hungry after lunch. I must eat after school at

home because federal regulations mean there isn't enough for me to eat. Many athletes like me don't get enough for their active lifestyles. Not getting enough is nearly as bad as getting too much but if federal regulations are less restrictive and once again let the students make their own choices, we could get exactly what we needed.

## Wider Roads Means Safety

Laenie Swardenski

About 35,200 automobile related deaths occurred in the year of 2013, with an additional 3.8 million injuries. Every day a key is inserted in the ignition of a motorized vehicle, and the driver and their passengers are put at risk of severe injuries and/or death. Many factors can contribute to car accidents, as well as those factors that can prevent them; supplying drivers of Illinois with wider roads could prevent said deaths.

Over three million miles worth of two-way highways travel across the United States, and of those highways, 90% have over 2,000 vehicles travel on them per day. It is 2014; the standards of these roads are far below updated criteria. A fourth of the two-lane highways have lanes of 9 feet and two-thirds have shoulders of 4 feet.

On rural roads, with s-curves and tractors wider than 7 feet, 9 feet lanes are not wide enough for safe travel while reaching the desired destination of the driver.

As far as pedestrians, such as people out for a morning jog, they are certainly not safe on a four foot wide shoulder either. Simple safety precautions, such as widening our roads and shoulders of the United States, or simply Illinois, will ultimately decrease the number of car accidents and deaths we face every day. Giving maintenance to our roads can ultimately supply our nation with more jobs for both men and women across the United States and create a safer environment for both younger and older drivers.

According to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), as of the year 2012, 875 fatal car accidents related to the width of lanes occurred on rural roads of both Minnesota and Illinois. It has been shown through studies by FHWA's Charles V. Zeeger, Timothy R. Neuman, Richard Stewart, and Forrest Council that reductions of crashes were significant when the shoulder of the roads exceeded 4 feet and the lanes were larger than 9 feet.

The way I look at it, if it is a proven fact that the width of our roads plays a substantial role in the number of accidents across our nation; the United States need to continue to widen these highways. Funding for the construction to continue with such safety precautions can get expensive rather quickly; however, you can't put a price on the lives already lost and those lives that will be lost in the future due to the dangerous 9 feet lanes with which our country provides us. Money given to protect those lives of every citizen of the United States behind the wheel is money well spent.

Widening our roads can save the lives of not only those close to home, but those all over the country. Simple safety precautions can be made every day to help prevent accidents, and we need to take as many of those precautions as we possibly can.