



# Happy New Year, PHS!

## The Pioneer Post

### Coaching Room: Punishment, or Reward?

By Caianne LaSota

The coaching room; it's Poughkeepsie High School's new-found disciplinary method. Many schools hand out demerits or set up detentions for tardy students who are unwilling to cooperate, but not PHS. Instead, a new punishment is being handed out by the dozens to students caught wandering the corridors in the latest teacher/assistant principal hall sweep craze.

Many students have found themselves suddenly standing in a cluttered room jammed with other students. Tensions are high, with angry students raving about how they had been inappropriately sent to the coaching room.

Exactly how many students are sent to the coaching room on an average day? Student requests for this information were denied by administration.

Ms. Miller, a PHS security guard whom students see patrolling the hallways every day, wasn't reluctant to provide an estimate. "Per day, I send about three or

four students to the coaching room. For an average day, though, I'd say thirty to forty are sent there."

Many students claim to have been sent to the coaching room at least once. "[I was] caught going back into class," explains Laney Newton, a senior. "My teacher was too lazy to write me a pass.

First Mr. Mazetti sent me to the coaching room, but I didn't know where it was. Mrs. Pinero ended up having to escort me there."

Some students find themselves being sent to the coaching room more than once. Some have been sent there almost daily since new disciplinary tactic broke

into full effect.

"I was there three days in a row; I was cutting class," Christopher Havens, a sophomore, declares. "I had to stay in the coaching room the whole day, not just a period. One of the days I was in there, I got work. The other two days I just sat there and counted the ceiling tiles. There's somewhere

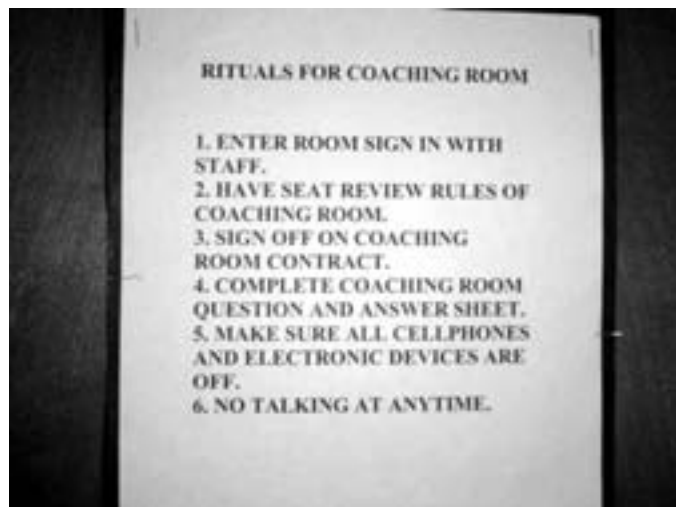
near 136 of them. [That experience] just made me hate the rules here more. Plus, I missed three straight days of review because of it."

"I've been sent [to the coaching room] at least six times," claims Dorian Cummings, a junior. "I'm either late to class or the teachers tell me I'm a disturbance." He adds with a smile, "I don't think I am. I usually just go to the coaching room and sit there or talk to someone else who's in there. No work is ever sent there for me to do, either."

But how is this supposed to be sorted out? Is this any good? Is this helping our student body at all?

Though many teachers and other adults wouldn't agree with the teenage mindset of "who cares if you're thirty seconds late so long as you make it there relatively on time," many students feel that the coaching room is an excessive form of punishment. Some students wonder if teachers wouldn't prefer them to be a

**Continued on Page 2**



Rules posted on the door of the Coaching Room. Photo By Nathaniel Jackson

**RITUALS FOR COACHING ROOM**

1. ENTER ROOM SIGN IN WITH STAFF.
2. HAVE SEAT REVIEW RULES OF COACHING ROOM.
3. SIGN OFF ON COACHING ROOM CONTRACT.
4. COMPLETE COACHING ROOM QUESTION AND ANSWER SHEET.
5. MAKE SURE ALL CELLPHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES ARE OFF.
6. NO TALKING AT ANYTIME.

### Happy Holidays, PHS!

By Natalia Williams

Sure, it is great to get the latest iPod or a brand new phone or a cute winter outfit. It's fun to go to holiday parties and have a break from school. It's wonderful to have an excuse to indulge in chocolate, fruit cake and spiral ham. But what is the true meaning of the holidays?

Reflect on what is truly important to you. Is it family or friends or other loved ones? The holidays should be a time to celebrate what is important. Take the time to gather and share special moments with those who are closest to you.

Try not to get caught up in everything surrounding you. All of the materialism won't last as long as strong relationships. So, instead of worrying about presents and the festivities, focus on celebrating life and be thankful for what you have.



### Black Friday Turns Dark

By Sheri Reid

As frigid temperatures took their toll, eager bargain-hunting shoppers prepared for the greatest sale of the year. Endless lines extended from malls around the country, and tensions ran increasingly high. This sight, not uncommon, signaled the beginning of Black Friday.

With some sales starting as early as 4 a.m., many consumers spent the night in mall parking lots with the anticipation of being the first ones at the door. Unfortunately, goodwill towards men was not the intention of the shoppers in Valley Stream, Long Island. The weight of materialism in American society revealed itself as Jdimytai Damour, a temporary employee, was smothered to death by stampeding buyers while attempting to open the doors to a Walmart. Other injuries such as neurological damage and multiple fractures were also reported occurring at the same scene.

The desperation to obtain the 42-inch Polaroid HDTV for \$598 (one of many items advertised at the Walmart specifically for the Black Friday sale) was, sadly enough, to reveal the true colors of selfishness over the value of human life and well-being.

Fortunately, no such incidents

were reported at the Poughkeepsie Galleria, although PHS freshman Lawrence Featherston reported more demonstrations of tension and violent behavior.

"It was crazy," Featherston recalls. "I almost got into a fight with this random guy because he said that I was cutting in line when I returned to my spot from looking for my chaperone." This was then followed by an example of 'mob mentality' as numerous members of the crowd began to chant "Cutter! Cutter!" Mall security arrived and removed Featherston from the mall.

"All I wanted was my iPod," Featherston mourns.

Black Friday has come and gone, but not so the underlying values Americans have demonstrated.

**The desperation to obtain many items was, sadly enough, to reveal the true colors of selfishness over the value of human life and well-being.**

### Basketball Team Gears Up For Season

By Matt Guarnaccia

Here come the Pioneers! The PHS basketball team is ready to go for another season under head coach Brian Laffin. The Pioneers have a minimum of twenty-one games on the schedule this year, and have just competed in the Pioneer Classic Tournament in the middle of December. The Pioneers will also be involved in a tournament around the New Year, where they will play Kingston High School, Beacon High School and others.

"There are no easy games on our schedule," said Coach Laffin. "Every game is as important as another."

The Pioneers are coming off a good season last year with a record of 18-4, which ended in a loss to Mount Vernon in the regional finals. The team graduated four seniors last year, all of whom were very important to the Pioneers' success. This year, the team is led by Brandon James and Malik Dennard, who will have to fill the spaces left behind by last year's seniors.

The Pioneers will again play in Section 1 North, which includes local rivals Our Lady of Lourdes, Peekskill and Beacon. The road to the playoffs will not

**Continued on Page 8**

# School News

## Club Spotlight: Breakfree

By Jessica Susser

Hiking boots, rain jackets, power bars, flashlights; these are only some of the items needed for the Breakfree club's December hike.

Breakfree club members participate in a variety of outdoor activities throughout the year including hiking, snowshoeing, and skiing. Some students have even slept outdoors in the snow with only a tent and a sub-zero sleeping bag for protection against the cold. The club has visited prime hiking spots in the greater Hudson Valley area including the Catskills, the Adirondacks, and Lake Placid.

The Breakfree club advisor is Michael Suidy, who is helped by Tara Suidy, Bob Ellsworth, and Fred Lauf. The club is sponsored by 4h, Cornell

Cooperative extension, and Adirondack Mountain Club. It is also supplied with equipment by Eastern Mountain Sporting Goods.

According to advisor Michael Suidy, the Breakfree club stresses leadership, teamwork, and preparation. Students are given opportunities to experience nature in a way not always readily available to city kids. The Upward Bound summer program awards scholarships to Poughkeepsie students through the Breakfree Club.

Students have had positive experiences in the Breakfree club. Junior Cleo Stewart asserts that the Breakfree Club provided her with "life changing and outstanding experiences."



Breakfree Club members break the ice

Photo by Steven Turissiy

## Let's Debate: Should Popular Music Be Censored?

*This article is a position paper written for Mr. Bueti's Economics class. The statement given was "Popular music, and rap music in particular, should be censored because of its violent and sexually-explicit content."*

By Lorenzo Baggett

Music throughout the years has been soothing to the mind, body, and soul but NOT RAP. Rap throughout the years has been used to send violent messages to one another or to another group or gang. The generation who experienced the beginning of rap was quickly influenced to follow or become rappers themselves. That generation paved the way for many rappers today such as Ice-T, Tupac, Snoop Dogg, Nas, Lil Wayne, 50 Cent, and many more. Rap music with violence, strong adult language, and sexually-explicit content should be censored because of its strong influence on the generation of today and tomorrow. Children with "potty mouths" are often recognized as "bad seeds."

In the 1970s, DJ Kool created rap music when he fused feel-good go-go music with hip-hop's original block party aesthetic together. Rapping was often referred to as "MCing." MCs such as MC Jazzy J, MC Grand Master Caz, and MC Shoeshine paved the way when they began mixing tracks together to create a rhyming beat. It was not until the 1980s that rap music began promoting violence, promis-

cuity, drug use, and strong adult language upon children. NWA was the first rap group to perform, sell, and promote rap even further. This new promotion of rap music was called gangsta rap. Gangsta rap was a heavier form of rap that discriminated against people, the government and other genres of music. NWA's number one hit, "Straight Outta Compton," (1988) promoted drugs, violence and sex.

Murder music is derived from gangsta rap. Murder music describes the homophobic work of certain music artists who called for and encouraged physical violence and the murder of homosexuals. According to rapper Kanye West, "Everybody in the rap industry discriminates against gay people." Murder music, however, was banned by new anti-gay laws here in the U.S.A. Peter Gary Tatchell, gay rights activists, campaigned with various organizations such as "Outrage," "The Black Gay Men's Advisory Group," and "J-Flag" to stop murder music. The organizations accused rappers such as Ice-T, Beanie Man, Elephant Man, Eminem, Capelton, Dr.Dre, 2Pac, Biggy, Diddy, NWA, Snoop Dogg, Mase, Nas, Busta Rymes, The Wu Tang Clan, Lil Wayne, and countless other rappers of today and of the past of performing and promoting murder music. Most of the rappers agreed to sign and adhere by the

*continued on page 7*

## Brother to Brother

by Nicholas Jackson and Joe Alfonso

Brother 2 Brother, a group with a mission to better men, is currently discussing its members' goals. Participants are making their plans for future, such as 12<sup>th</sup> graders' efforts to get ready for college or begin careers.

Participating in Brother 2 Brother can get very intense. Members dress in business attire on meeting days to demonstrate their serious attitudes and determination to achieve.

Last year the group went to Brooklyn and we participated in classes on a college campus, which focused on elements of African American History like the Black Panthers.

Similarly intense experiences are in the works for this year.

## Sister to Sister

by Shakala Potter

Sister 2 Sister is planning a lot of good events.

Previous activities included giving to the needy on Thanksgiving day as the sisters, along with Mrs. Clyburn and Mrs. Williams, served meals at a soup kitchen. The group also went to Saint Francis Hospital on December 12th to sing for patients.

On December 18th, Sister 2 Sister had planned a trip to Mardi Bob Bowling Alley to wrap gifts. The following day the group is scheduled to have a Christmas party with Brother 2 Brother.

Sister 2 Sister members have arranged a community celebration on Noxon Road for December 20th. Scheduled events at this celebration include a talent show, skits, and praise dancing.

## Coaching Room

*Continued from page 1*

minute late compared to not there at all. Is it possible to delay the beginning of the hall sweeps until five minutes into the class period, as to stop a *real* disruption rather than limit your education entirely based on crude assumptions?

Jesus Contreras, a junior, explains his view on the current situation. Although he's never been sent to the coaching room himself, that doesn't stop him from having a strong opinion. "School is a place where you're supposed to be working. You're not supposed to be sent to another room. Public school is meant to help us communicate with others while getting our work done." He also questions if the coaching room is affecting our school's averages. "Somebody should take the average of all the kids sent to the coaching room and compare it to last quarter's grade."

Not everyone is against this new punishment. Many teachers and staff have seen a drastic improvement in the hallways as well as their classrooms since the hall sweeps began.

Ms. Schorr, an art teacher at PHS for a little over ten years, feels the coach-

ing room influences both herself and her students. "I think the coaching room should be used more as in-school suspension, and called such. It makes it so that students are in an environment with their peers, but can't participate with them, as opposed to staying home and hanging out."

"It gives us [the staff] an option in between suspension and detention, and allows us to use that as a way of continuing education instead of sending students home," assistant principal Rick Pardy illustrates. "We've had the coaching room since the beginning of this year. The hallways have had their ups and downs, but it works at times. The students and the staff inform us that the halls have been quieter. I think the coaching room helps us work together as a school. The security staff, APs, and teachers all help clear the halls. It's a team effort."

Though this new system has inspired much teacher-student controversy, one thing is certain – the coaching room is here to stay. You all know what that means, of course. Don't get caught!

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# Outside Walls

## Obama Watch: The Dream Team

By Jamar Cummings

Outside Walls Editor

President-elect Barack Obama is moving quickly to transition into the White House.

He has begun by putting his Cabinet Members together. Some of his picks are people we have never heard of, and some are the people who we expected to be part of the Cabinet.

Since President-elect Obama is a lover of basketball, his Cabinet would be like his own basketball team. Listed below are the top players on Obama's "Dream Team."



President-elect Barack Obama



Vice President-elect Joe Biden  
Photos from wikipedia.org



Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

#1 Vice President-elect

Joe Biden

#2 Secretary of State

Hillary Clinton

#3 Secretary of the Treasury

Timothy Geithner

#4 Secretary of Commerce

Bill Richardson

#5 Secretary of Defense

Robert Gates

#6 Secretary of Homeland Security

Janet Napolitano

#7 National Security Advisor

James L. Jones

#8 Attorney General

Eric Holder

#9 Chief of Staff

Rahm Emmanuel

President-elect Obama has made some crucial moves to begin the transition progress. Look for more developments in next issue's "Obama Watch."

Most of these appointments are not official until Congress approves them.

## College: How Do I Do It?!

By Matthew Guarnaccia

With today's economic problems many people are faced with certain choices. One of the choices that more and more people have to make is if they are going to college or not. This dilemma is due to the fact that people are in trouble financially and cannot find enough money to afford college tuition.

"The cost of college tuition is between \$16,000 and \$50,000 per year," says Poughkeepsie High School guidance counselor Ms. Thomas.

College is obviously an expensive endeavor, but fortunately there are different ways to pay. A scholarship is a great way to earn money for college, and can be gained through athletics, academics or other ways.

Athletic scholarships are given out by the top athletic colleges in the country and are very hard to obtain because they are for the highest athletic performers in the country. The second way to gain a scholarship is through academics. These are a great way to pay for college, but are usually only available to students with above average grades and tests scores. An academic scholarship does not give as much money to the student either. There are also a variety of other scholarships available for a wide range of topics and monetary values. Many of them can be found at [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com), and are a great way to obtain money for college.

Other ways to pay for college are through government grants, and loans, and this is known as financial aid. Grants are given out by the government, and loans are money borrowed through a bank that will be paid back with interest. The loan can be paid back in one of four ways: standard, where it is paid off over a ten year period, extended, where the loan is paid off for up to 30 years, graduated, which means there will be a gradual increase in payment amount every few years, and income contingent, where the time it takes to pay off the loan ties into the income level. For more information [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)



can help. This is a good way to pay for college, but if it is not paid back, the person with the loan will face serious consequences, which may include jail time.

There is also financial aid which is given out through the college. Half of all students who attend college get some sort of financial aid. This is for people who need a substantial amount of help financing their college education, but most likely this will only cover part of the cost. This can include something called a work study program where the student automatically gets a job to pay for college expenses instead of on the side like it would be for someone without financial need.

Still, if paying for college is not in the budget there are other options. Joining the workforce is another option, and there are others.

"I would apply for scholarships and grants, but if I couldn't get into college I'd probably try the military," said Senior Vaughn Hardge. This is an option that people have open to them, but it is one that some are not willing to try.

In today's turbulent world people are faced with many hard decisions. Everyone should be entitled to go to college, but this is unfortunately not the case. There are still ways to help pay, and hopefully everyone can someday go to college.

## A National Problem

By Fatima Jones

What do you get when you divide the amount of unemployed workers by the total labor force, all multiplied by one hundred? A person will get the devastatingly high unemployment rate.

With the unemployment rate so high, we are forced to ask ourselves, "Where have all the jobs gone?" When asked this question, Nick Long, a manager at the local Subway in Poughkeepsie, answered, "Overseas. Even here, I had to let go four people because we don't have enough money to pay them."

This high unemployment rate increased competition between workers. "We only needed to fill two spots," Chandra Wilkins at Wilkins and Co. temp agency, "and 250 people got turned down. I feel bad because I know some of those people must have to support families."

Even this year's presidential election has emphasized the issue of the high unemployment rate. "By giving more money to smaller business and bringing the jobs back from overseas will allow more jobs for our citizens," says presidential candidate John McCain.

In the U.S., the top five states, with the highest unemployment rate are: California, Texas, Florida, New York, and Missouri, as stated on Wikipedia.com.

How will this high unemployment rate affect local business? Most businesses profits are going down because the percentage of the unemployed (75% of the states' population) isn't having enough money to buy things and the businesses resources aren't being used.

With the high unemployment rate, how long will the economy last without its jobs? "Not very long, I guess," comments Amy Silvia, who has been unemployed for three years. "The jobs need to come back because if it doesn't then who will buy anything with no money? People need jobs and families need money. The next president needs to do something about this."

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the Pioneer Post?**

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**OR**

Use the Pioneer Post link on  
the school homepage.

**Include your name and grade level.  
THANK YOU!**

# Features

## Holiday Food Issue

### Don't Be Afraid to Indulge this Season

By Sheri Reid

Co-Features Editor

Whether you celebrate Christmas, Hannukah or Kwanza, food is an integral part in the gathering of any group of people. It brings together similar tastes, diverse cultures and full stomachs.

However, we must remember that not everyone is fortunate enough to have these privileges. Volunteer at a local soup kitchen or food pantry to make sure that Poughkeepsie's appetite is being met.

Have a great holiday vacation PHS!



### Teacher Spotlight:

#### Mrs. Bailon and Mr. Zinsley

By Sabrina Sucato

By Collin Malone

*The Pioneer Post apologizes for not providing a picture for Mrs. Bailon due to technical difficulties.*



Hopefully most of you know Mrs. Bailon, one of Poughkeepsie High School's amazing Spanish teachers. Although she works here now, Poughkeepsie is nowhere near where she started her life. This Spanish teacher of six years got her start in Ecuador, South America.

Senora Bailon grew up in a town in Ecuador, and was constantly surrounded by family. Most of her relatives lived on the same street, so she was never lonely. She lived with her grandmother for a while, and went to a private school that had high expectations for its students. When she was fifteen, she moved to the United States; specifically Brooklyn, New York. It was very different from Ecuador. Although she didn't have to wear a uniform in school, she was lonelier than before. Most of her family still lived in Ecuador, and she only had her parents. Eventually she got used to the country and adjusted to her new life. After high school, she became a student at Suny New Paltz, where she got her teaching degree. She began by teaching for younger students, but found her niche when she taught in the high school.

These days Mrs. Bailon can be found in one of the classrooms in the Spanish wing. She goes home to a husband and two children. In her spare time, she loves to watch movies with her family, hike, and go shopping. One thing you'll never see her doing though, is cooking. She leaves that to the rest of her family. Every summer, she and her family take a trip to Ecuador to revisit Mrs. Bailon's family and old home. She likes to stay connected to her culture.

Working as a Spanish teacher was her perfect fit because she enjoys teaching and the language reminds her of her childhood. She is happy about her job and feels as though she gives back to her students. Mrs. Bailon is a great teacher and we should all hope that she can keep up the good work for years to come.

I was determined to find out all there is to know about the man behind the glasses, inside the Ralph Lauren shirts and the answer to so many questions of "Who's your favorite teacher?" We are of course not speaking any ordinary teacher, however he often responded to my questions with a funny voice and an anxious, sly smile on his face. These are answers to questions that would appear as teasers on the cover of Star magazine.

Let us begin with the basics: His favorite food is lamb, favorite color is blue, favorite ice cream flavor is French vanilla and his favorite band is a quartet of mustache wearing fellows called "The Moody Blues."

Mr. Gregory Zinsley attended Fordham University and later graduated from Columbia University with a masters degree.

His favorite movie is "Dr. Strangelove" starring Peter Sellers. His favorite television show while growing up was "The Honeymooners" and his favorite show now is "The Colbert Report" (Comedy Central; 11:30pm - 12:00am Mon - Fri). He says that he'd be cruising in a Mercedes Benz two seater. His childhood dream, as was many boys' growing up in the Micky Mantle era, was to play central field for the New York Yankees. His favorite sports teams are, obviously, the New York Yankees (although he is reluctant to admit it thanks to the absurdity of paying players 161 million dollars to play baseball) and the New York Giants. His favorite subject other than global is, not surprisingly, philosophy. And his celebrity crush... Diana Rigg.

Mr. Zinsley is a great guy and a great teacher. He has so much to offer this world and someone can learn and hear endless tales from speaking with him just for a short period of time. PHS is lucky that he decided to come teach young minds here.

### Cooking with Coach

#### Coach Laffin's Favorite Recipes

##### Bacon Stuffed Burgers

4 slices of bacon  
 ¼ c. onions, chopped  
 1 (4oz) can mushroom pieces, drained & diced  
 1 lb. lean ground beef  
 1 lb. pork sausage  
 ¼ c. grated Parmesan cheese  
 ½ tsp. pepper  
 ½ tsp. garlic powder  
 2 tbsp. steak sauce  
 8 hamburger buns  
 Lettuce

Cook bacon until crisp. Drain all but 2 tablespoons drippings and sauté onions in drippings. Crumble bacon and add with mushrooms to skillet. Crumble beef, add with mushrooms to skillet. Set aside. Combine beef, pork, cheese, pepper, garlic powder and steak sauce in a large bowl. Shape into 16 patties. Divide bacon mixture and place over eight of the patties. Place remaining patties on top and press edges tightly to seal. Grill over medium coals until well done. Serve on buns, with lettuce, if desired.

##### Blue Cheese Stuffed Burgers

7oz. ground beef, sirloin  
 2 tbsp. finely chopped scallion  
 1 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce  
 ½ tsp. chili powder  
 1/8 tsp. pepper  
 1 oz. blue cheese, crumbled  
 2 hamburger rolls, split.

In small mixing bowl combine beef, scallion, Worcestershire sauce, chili powder and pepper, mixing well. Divide mixture into 4 equal portions and shape each into a patty, about ¼" thick. Onto center of each of 2 patties arrange ½ ounce cheese, and then top each with remaining patty, firmly pressing edges of patties together to seal.



### Seasonal Specialties

By Olivia Williams

Co-Features Editor

One of the best parts of the holiday season is indulging in the delicious and traditional desserts that are both fun and easy to make.

##### White Hot Chocolate

1 cup white chocolate chips  
 1 cup heavy cream  
 4 cups half-and-half  
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
 Whipped cream, for garnish

In a saucepan over medium heat, mix white chocolate chips and heavy cream. Stir until white chocolate chips have completely melted. Stir in the half-and-half and vanilla extract. Stir together until heated through. Pour into mugs and top with whipped cream.

Recipe from the Food Network.

##### Basic Sugar Cookies

4 ½ cups all-purpose flour

½ teaspoon salt  
 1 cup vegetable shortening  
 1 cup sugar  
 ¾ cup white corn syrup  
 1 egg  
 2 teaspoons vanilla extract  
 Royal icing  
 Cookie cutters  
 Sprinkles

In a large mixing bowl, combine the flour and salt and set aside. In a bowl with a heavy duty mixer, beat the shortening at a low speed until fluffy. Add the sugar and corn syrup and beat until well blended, then add the vanilla and the egg, beating on low. Slowly add the flour mixture, about 2 tablespoons at a time. Place the dough in the refrigerator in a plastic bag for 2 hours.

Preheat the oven to 350° F. Roll out the chilled dough on a lightly floured surface. Cut out the dough using cookie cutters and place on greased cookie sheets and bake until golden brown, about 10 to 12 minutes. Cool the cookies on racks before decorating.

Recipe from the Food Network.

# Opinion

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Pioneer Post,

The Board of Education has the responsibility to make appropriate decisions on how the school system should be run. However, I feel that it is also important for the general public to give an input on how to improve the school system. The first meeting I attended was very interesting. There were many topics that caught my interest, but I had a strong opinion on the Circle of Courage proposal. In my opinion, the proposal was very persuasive. Even though there were some discrepancies throughout the presentation, I strongly agreed with the educational programs that will provide special help to those in need of it.

The Circle of Courage has a great health outreach program for physically disabled and mentally challenged students. I feel that this program is very helpful because many "special" students are not able to function in an ordinary public school. Not every student learns at the same pace. Some students may be easily distracted by another classmate that may lead to frustration, and anger, or possibly violence. Having separate schools for challenged students not only gives them special attention, but it also helps their ability to learn. So I am very thankful to have attended the meeting and I appreciate your time.

Sincerely,  
Aisia Townes

To the Editor:

Recently I attended a Dutchess County Legislature Meeting on Monday, November 10, 2008. Before the meeting started I thought it was going to be boring, and didn't really know what to expect; however as the meeting went on, I thought differently as people stood to the public and poured out their hearts.

When those people affected by the budget plan got up and spoke, they put their hearts and souls into their speeches. Hearing the number of women, children, and men who will be soon affected by the budget plan was sad. What really touched me was when a woman named Denise got up and spoke. I had tears in my eyes just listening to her tell everyone that she was homeless, jobless, and had no health insurance that can help her. I know it was difficult for others to sit there and listen to people like Denise, and then have to make a decision.

Overall, I liked going to these meetings because it allows the public to be apart of what's going on in the area. It also allows them to voice their opinion. I know that I can truly say I will attend more of these meetings in the near future.

Sincerely yours,  
Shavannah M. Strack

*continued on page 6*

## Skeletons in the Closet: Thanksgiving

By Antoinette Thomas

What do you think of when you hear "Thanksgiving?"

Do you think of historic pilgrims and Indians, food, turkey and the act of sharing? Throughout the years we have come to create an image of Thanksgiving that more or less fits this frame. The goodness out of our hearts to share, explains the sentiment behind this annual tradition.

I remember reading history books, and looking back on the events of how good the Native Americans were to the pilgrims; helping them out through the winter with supplies of food and resources. Although it seemed fine and quite generous of the Indians, the pilgrims later killed these Indians. Now, blood spilled upon a national holiday doesn't sound right does it? What a fair pay for their aid.

Are our values being questioned? Well, they are. To be plain and blunt, our ethics do appear as questionable and bizarre. How is it that a nation could turn a crime as fierce genocide into a holiday? Maybe we thought we needed another holiday to find a new use for turkey on the market in a way to profit from the past. I don't know. What I do know is history has its twists, but the fact is it's been twisted into such a hypocritical holiday, and is disturbing.

Maybe it's just me, although who cares if Indians had to die when we have a full weekend to stuff ourselves with food. Past is past and to treat it, or appreciate it as if it mattered in the present would be foolish. Right?



The Poughkeepsie City School District Administration building  
Photo by Nate Jackson

## The Harsh and Unruly Meet Forgiving Authority

By Brittney Ellis

When walking into a school building, most people expect good moral behavior from students. Of course, students are not perfect. However, they are expected to demonstrate some pride with their actions, and maintain positive reputations in the grace of the authorities around them.

As a student here at Poughkeepsie High School, you should know what is expected of you when you walk in the building. However, the real problem is that we do not follow through with these expectations. Since we all walk the same halls, we should have the same expectations, shouldn't we?

We all have the ability to control ourselves, and history has shown that students do not always choose to restrain themselves. Sometimes I would see students not obeying their teacher's rules. There is one situation that I can remember clearly that supports my argument.

One day I was sitting in class when my classmate's cell phone rang, and she answered it.

"Off and away, please," the teacher kindly directed.

"It's my grandmother," the girl said, answering the phone and rolling her eyes. "Hello? Grandma?"

The teacher repeated herself, "Off and away please."

The student continued to speak on her cell phone.

"Off and away please!" demanded the teacher for the third time.

"I'll call you back, Grandma," the student said and closed her phone.

Believe it or not, some students do not listen to many of their authorities, whether it is a teacher, a substitute, or an administrator. The only question is why don't they listen?

"For some students it's just something they do because its like second nature to them. Others students probably do it thinking it makes them look cool in front of their friends," said Kevin Booth, grade 11.

Everyone has their own opinions, and we are entitled to them. Where does it say that we have to express those thoughts and opinions by acting disrespectfully towards our dear teachers and administrators.

Most students do not realize who they are hurting when they act rudely towards others; truthfully, they are only hurting themselves.

## A Few Moments for Reflection

"Until the great mass of the people shall be filled with the sense of responsibility for each other's welfare, social justice can never be attained."

--Helen Keller (1880-1968)

Shirl Davis-Susser, Psy.D.  
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*Do You Have an Opinion You  
Want to Share?*

**Share with us by submitting to the  
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# Editorials

## Kicked Out of the Library...Again!

By Tiara Miller

Opinion Editor

After long mornings of sitting through lectures, rushing to finish last night's homework, and last minute studying; there is not enough time to relax. You are probably stressing about how you are going to have time to do homework when you have other obligations to attend to such as; work, practice, or chores. Thank God for the school library right? Wrong.

I am sure many students at Poughkeepsie High School would agree that the library is not always available when they need it. The majority of the time, the library is closed because another class is signed up to use the computers. However, even when a small class is on the computers, there are still seats available for students to come in and use other resources like the encyclopedias, and textbooks. I understand the saying, "first come first serve," but I believe the library should be open to all prospective students; despite if there is a class using the computers.

In some situations, there are times when students are being kicked out of the library for not having a pass 9th period. Instead of sitting at a table in the library doing research, and trying to decrease their work load before going home; they are forced to sit in the cafeteria, and stare at the wall. Surely it is easy to find a pass, but often teachers get disrupted when they are in the middle of teaching, and a student asks them for a pass. I just don't understand why a student with a pass has to go

out their way to get another one signed if they have two free periods in a row. In my opinion, that is a waste of time, energy, and paper that we do not have. I commend the librarians for making sure that students are not cutting their class, but many students are still being asked to leave when they have a free period, and working productively. If you ask me, for a student with no 9th period class to go all the way home for 45 minutes than have to return for extracurricular activities after school is bogus.

Trust me, going to the library can be a hassle at times. Sometimes it seems as if you have to be on a V.I.P list just to have access to get in. Luckily, I have a few tips you can follow to spare yourself stress when visiting the library.

**Tip 1.** Always have a pass signed by a teacher. Passes signed by a substitute teacher are not accepted.

**Tip 2.** Make sure that you have a real pass slip. No signed scrap pieces of notebook paper.

**Tip 3.** Be polite when you are told to leave the library if a class is watching a slideshow or power point presentation.

**Tip 4.** Be prepared to walk to the cafeteria if the library is closed. There may not be any books, or encyclopedias, but look at the bright side, at least there are snack machines.

Good Luck!



Sophomore John-Paul Silva being kicked out of the PHS Library  
Photo by Sheri Reid

## 'Obama' Does Not Equal Scapegoat

By Sheri Reid

Managing Editor

"We have arrived."

Since Barack Obama's appointment to President-elect of the United States, this seems to be the mindset of numerous African-Americans. There is no denying the significance of a Black man holding what many consider the highest and most important office in the world, but that certainly does not mean that Obama may be used as an excuse for ignorance and/or just plain laziness.

After November 4, 2008, Obama's name has been on everyone's lips but unfortunately it has not always been used in a positive context. Would Barack be proud if he was to walk into the hallways of Poughkeepsie High School today and see the young people of his race skipping class and claiming it was okay because "we have a Black man in office"? Obama told the youth of this nation to "pull your pants up, brothers" yet pants waistbands continue to be worn low by the very young people that swear by his name.

The perception of the Black family, however, continues to be shaped. The image of a man and woman happily married with children is unfortunately not a depiction commonly seen among African-

American youth. Barack Obama and his interactions with his daughters are inspirations to the Black community in the way that standards have been set for African-American fathers. Too long have men been praised for doing what is simply their paternal duty and nothing more. Hopefully, the image of Sasha and Malia Obama playing on the White House lawn will instill a reality check throughout the nation of the magnitude of this accomplishment.

A historic new era has been opened by this past election. It is now possible for African Americans to gain equal opportunity socially, economically and finally, politically. However, there is no getting around the fact that racism still exists. Young men will continue to get pulled over by the police simply for 'driving while black.' The Ku Klux Klan will continue to hold meetings and burn crosses in the justifications of white superiority. Hopeful executives will continue to get denied promotions, even with proper qualifications, in favor of lighter counterparts.

No, we have not arrived. Our foot is just entering the front door.

## Letters to the Editor

continued...

To the Pioneer Post:

I'm writing in regards to the November 12, 2008 Zoning Board Meeting. One topic of the meeting that really caught my eye was the gas station off Baighn and Washington, the parking spaces surrounding it and also the construction of some apartment buildings. After two families that came to the meeting to express how they feel, I agree with what they say about the problems. The family had really good points about why these things will not better their neighborhood.

Some problems were that there weren't enough people enforcing littering laws. Mr. Lopez, of the Lopez family, stated that he's so tired of trash, that he and his daughter go clean up when it's not their job. The owner should be responsible for the wrappers that are being sold out of his establishment. The other problems that a family had was that in order to construct the apartment buildings they would knock down two trees in her backyard that meant a lot to their family. Other problems that the residents in their area had were the parking spaces. Although the gas station asked the zoning board for more parking, it's still not enough and one of the families say that the parking slots they have mowed are being taken by the construction workers. I feel as if the thought of this construction should go no further unless there were people there to enforce the laws to keep the neighborhood clean. Also I feel as if the

meeting ran really smooth and professional.

Sincerely,  
Che-la Devonshire

Dear Sir or Madam:

My name is Jonathan Williams. I am a senior at Poughkeepsie High School. I recently attended a Dutchess County Legislature meeting, Thursday, October 16, 2008, for my participation in government course. The meeting was very exciting because I got a chance to get a good example of participatory government. The public spoke with great facts about the topic of the Electrician License Law. The board was very respectful, except a gentleman in the front, Mr. Weiss, who was very disrespectful by having bad posture and having side conversations. The rest of the board was quiet, listened to the public then took vote to the Electrician License Law.

My overall opinion on the Dutchess County Legislature meeting is that the meeting was very organized. The seating arrangement was great because I could see all the views of the room but there wasn't enough seating because many people were blocking the exit and many people were outside the meeting, in the hallway. Most of the population was electricians and the electrician company representatives. The meeting was very interesting and I can't wait for the next meeting.

Sincerely yours,  
Jonathan Williams

# Coming in the February issue: Valentine's Day

Purchase an ad for your sweetie.  
Details to be announced.

# Black History Month!!!

# Arts and Entertainment

## Bond...James Bond

By Malik Dennard

Unstoppable. That is the word you will find yourself saying after you watch the latest James Bond movie, "Quantum of Solace." Daniel Craig proves his chops and definitely earns his right to be called 007.

James Bond is back for revenge, taking out anything in his path. He does not cease whether it be members of a secret organization, government official, or members of MI 6 itself; he is utterly unstoppable.

This movie goes straight to the top, no questions asked. But really, what did you expect? It is Bond, James Bond.



Photo by www.comingsoon.net

## "Saw V" Thrilling, But Fails to Live Up To Predecessors

By Malik Dennard



Photo by www.en.wikipedia.org

### Terror at Your Fingertips

By Malik Dennard

If you are a fan of extremely scary science-fiction movies, "Dead Space" is the game for you. Starting off like a real sci-fi film, "Dead Space" begins with a mechanic, Issac Clark, as he flies towards an empty ship floating in space. As you guessed, something goes terribly wrong. After your ship crash lands, most of your crew is ripped apart except for you.

Moving through the ship with dramatic music and varying lights will send chills up anyone's spine. You will find yourself trembling with the controller in your hand as you slowly walk through blood-filled hallways. The game is pretty simple and easy to learn. Besides a few bugs you have to work out on your own, you'll be fighting mutated aliens in no time.



Photo by www.data4u.ch

Have you ever watched a spider as it crawls through its web towards a fly? The indescribable feeling pulsates inside you while you watch nature takes its course. It is a horrible scene that, for some strange reason, you can't tear your eyes away from. That is the crazed feeling you get when you watch "Saw V."

Back for its fifth installment, director David Hackl shows an intense suspense film that reveals the heir to the killer, Jigsaw's, throne. Picking up exactly where "Saw IV" left off, this film is an intense thriller that will have you on the edge of your seat. Although the movie falls a little short of the fourth film and you can probably guess the ending a few minutes before the shocking conclusion, "Saw V" is a compelling movie that makes you look forward to "Saw VI."

## Popular Music

*continued from page 2*

Reggae Compassionate Act. This act states that the signers of the act must "respect and uphold the rights of all individuals to live without fear of hatred and violence due to their religion, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity or gender." It also states that, "There's no space in the music community for hatred and prejudice, including no space for racism, violence, sexism or homophobia" and "agreed to not make statements or perform songs that incite hatred or violence against anyone in the community."

Rap music needs to be censored to protect children from gaining the negative influence in which rap music provides. Censorship of such things in the past probably would have saved many rappers from dying of violence towards one another (i.e. Biggie versus 2Pac). It would have stopped the West Coast versus East Coast killings. Rap music with violence, strong adult language, and sexually-explicit content should be censored because of its major influence on the generation of today. This generation of children, if not for the violence, language, and explicit content of rap music, has the ability to do extraordinary things in the marvelous fields of anything.

## Fashion Flakes

By Brittney Ellis

This winter is fashion in motion. Girls and guys, are you caught up with the latest trends? This year, people will be walking around as if there were a snow-covered runway below their feet.

Layers are not just for keeping warm. Layers have become the fashion of every season. They keep you colorful and actually (for the ladies) looking slimmer if you wear them right. Have some spring clothes you just cannot bring yourself to pack away? Don't bother! Throw on a bomber jacket with a belt around your waist (3"-4" wide) and you are on the go!

Don't you just despise going jean shopping? The biggest struggle for many women is to find a jean that fits right and looks elegant. Well there is a solution. Dark color jeans never seem to fail when you're looking for that slim and trim, classy look.

If sweaters do not keep you warm enough you can always throw on a hooded vest. They come in various styles whether cotton-lined or fur, all the way to military and houndstooth styled. So bundle up!

Scarves galore! They are coming back and they are everywhere. Scarves are no longer just for outdoors. They have become the latest fashion; a scarf is the new necklace! Don't be afraid to brighten up your style a bit with a colorful scarf.

Boots, let's face it, will always be in style. Just what kind of style? Double buckled heels are in this season, along with the platform wrap boot. Looking for a more comfortable fit? Try some quilted wrap-arounds or a pair of lace ups, even a pair of UGG boots. If you want to know the whole truth about boots (with the exception of tans and whites), the fact is the best pair of boots is a dark pair of boots.

Most people avoid wearing dress-

es in the winter because of the frigid air. Now you can confront your problem because leggings are your solution! They are perfect for keeping your legs warm and sticking to school dress code. You can wear them with any dress you choose. Don't forget about plaid, it is making a comeback! Cow-necked dresses are the best way to stay elegant even with a pair of skinny jeans.

Hey guys! How is your style search going so far? Well search no longer. ½ Zip Mock Neck sweaters are in as well as your average zip hoodies. Pullovers are always nice for the winter. Even you can layer up! Drag out some T-shirts from this past summer and throw it under a hoodie. You can choose from various colors and patterns, take a risk and go for the stripes!

Ever thought of a crew graphic tee, boys? It is great for that layered look that you want. It is the combination of a comfortable tee and the warmth of a thermal shirt.

There are so many jeans, so little time, and so many to choose from. You want to look for bootcut leg opening jeans.

The loose-fits are great for comfort. Those vintage washes are looking good, right along with the Destroyed Artisans.

You too, boys, have your selection of belts, except yours are best worn in the belt loops of your pants. Leather belts used to be and still are roaming in the fashion world. If you are looking to add a little style, you could go for the check plaid print, studded, herringbone web, or even striped belts.

Fashion trends should always be first-priority to keep up on if you want to step outside of your house. Those that do not pay so much attention to trends pave their own path to fashion. Either way, bundle up fashion flakes because this winter is going to be a chilly one!

## Award Season is Here!

By Natalia Williams and Malik Dennard

It's that time of year again! The time of year when the red carpet is unrolled and gowns and tuxedos are picked. It's the time to honor the year's best music. Nominations were announced for the 51<sup>st</sup> Grammy Awards. Who do you think will win?

Record of the Year:

Chasing Pavements by Adele

Viva La Vida by Coldplay

Bleeding Love by Leona Lewis

Paper Planes by M.I.A.

Please Read the Letter by Robert Plant and Alison Krauss

Album of the Year:

Viva La Vida or Death And All His Friends by Coldplay

Tha Carter III by Lil Wayne

Year of the Gentleman by NeYo

Raising Sand by Robert Plant and Alison Krauss

In Rainbows by Radiohead

Song of the Year:

American Boy by Estelle and Kanye West

Chasing Pavements by Adele

I'm Yours by Jason Mraz

Love Song by Sara Bareilles

Viva La Vida by Coldplay

Best New Artist:

Adele

Duffy

Jonas Brothers

Lady Antebellum

Jazmine Sullivan

Best Female Pop Vocal Performance:

Chasing Pavements by Adele

Love Song by Sara Bareilles

Mercy by Duffy

Bleeding Love by Leona Lewis

I Kissed a Girl by Katy Perry

So What by Pink

Best Male Pop Vocal Performance:

All Summer Long by Kid Rock

Say by John Mayer That Was Me by Paul McCartney

I'm Yours by Jason Mraz

Closer by NeYo

Wichita Lineman by James Taylor

Best Female R&B Vocal Performance:

Me, Myself and I by Beyonce

Heaven Sent by Keyshia Cole

Spotlight by Jennifer Hudson

Superwoman by Alicia Keys

Need U Bad by Jazmine Sullivan

Best Male R&B Vocal Performance:

You're the Only One by Eric Benet

Take You Down by Chris Brown

Miss Independent by NeYo

Can't Help But Wait by Trey Songz

Here I Stand by Usher

Best Rap Solo Performance:

Roc Boys (And the Winner Is)... by Jay-Z

A Milli by Lil Wayne

Paris, Tokyo by Lupe Fiasco

N.i.\*.e.r. by Nas

Sexual Eruption by Snoop Dogg

# Sports

## Basketball Teams Strive for Success

### Girls Basketball Determined to Win

By Chevon Hunter

"Hard work!" This is the motto for the PHS girl's varsity basketball team.

The girl's team, now 1-1, continues to work hard to change their record into their favor. The team this year has a great amount of potential from younger star athletes.

The team consists of only two seniors, and one junior, leaving the majority of the team to be dominated by six sophomores, and by another young talent from our very own Poughkeepsie Middle School.

As the team continues to practice diligently, there is enough confidence to believe that the team will be accomplishing a lot this year. Tanayzha Augustine, one of the two seniors on the team, states that

"The team has been working really hard this year, and I think we might have an opportunity to do something big this year."

Another sophomore, Kelsey Roa, now injured, states that she hopes that

"I can learn from all the upper-classmen and with all the experience they have.

This very determined Lady Pioneers team will be competing against several local teams which include Beacon, Arlington, Lourdes and Peekskill, with hopes of victory.

### Undaunted Spirit

Often Overlooked, Cheerleaders Continue to Show Support

By Joe Alfonso

With all the winter sports in the midst of the early season, the cheerleaders of PHS have been practicing as well. Although the cheerleaders don't have special sporting events as other programs do, they are still essential to the Pioneer's morale as well as boosting their energy

The Pioneer cheerleaders are once again ready to support the basketball teams and help them to victory



Poughkeepsie High School cheerleaders  
Photo by Nate Jackson

"I cheer just to cheer," said junior Jasmine Rodgers. Rodgers is one of several returning cheerleaders from last year, and is an experienced leader for the team.

Although the cheerleaders dutifully try to rally the crowds at basketball games, one cheerleader voiced her frustration

"Some people don't care about us, as if we were just a group that was there."

This frustration is not unwarranted, because the cheerleaders are the unsung heroes of the basketball games. Without the cheerleaders, the basketball games would not be as loud and exciting.

The next time you go to a basketball game, don't just cheer for the basketball team, but remember to appreciate our cheerleaders as well!

### Boys Basketball

Continued from page 1

be easy, but the Pioneers are certainly up to the challenge.

"We are looking for contributions from our younger players and looking for senior leadership from Malik and Brandon."

Malik and Brandon are the only seniors on the team this year, and are two of the five returning players to the varsity squad. In addition, the team is made up of seven juniors and three sophomores, who will also be very important to helping the



Brandon James shoots a foul shot in the season opener against Ossining  
Photo by Nate Jackson

Pioneers to victory.

The Junior Varsity team is also doing well, with an impressive 6-0 record.

The Pioneers have set high goals for this season, and are looking to go even further than they did last season. The road to the playoffs will not be easy, but the team is up to the challenge.

The Pioneers are now 4-0, and have won three of the games by ten points or more. With hard work and dedication they will be able to continue their winning ways.

## Splash! A Successful Season For The Swim Team

By Tyreece Stokes

Splash!

For many, the winter season means nothing more than opening presents and making snow angels, but for the members of the PHS swim team it means the start of a grueling season. This includes a rigorous schedule and weeks of preparation for the tough competition that stands before them.

The swim team is already one meet into their schedule. The Pioneers are lead by three senior captains: Joey MacElveen, Curtis McCabe and Matt Guarnaccia.

MacElveen commented on the current swim season by saying, "This year will be significantly harder. We moved up a division and every meet is going to be a challenge. We are a very young team with only five returning seniors. Hopefully as the year progresses we can grow and develop some of this young and amazing

talent."

In their new division, the PHS swim team will face excellent teams like Arlington, Scarsdale, Keio Academy, Our Lady of Lourdes and Lakeland.

PHS senior and captain Matt Guarnaccia said, "In a higher division, no meet on the schedule will be easy this season. I am very impressed with younger, less experienced swimmers and the way they've stepped up during the first meet.



### The Marathon Project by Vaughn Harge

Do you want to be part of an organization that helps kids set and accomplish goals? Are you a dedicated individual? Then the Marathon Project may be for you.

Suzanne O'Neil, a member of the Council on Addiction Prevention and Education (CAPE), began Project Marathon in Poughkeepsie after she saw a program called Students Run L.A. in California. She was inspired by the student-to-adult ratio and focused mentoring.

"Even though there is so much violence in Los Angeles," says O'Neil,

"these students still are motivated enough to make better choices and keep themselves out of that lifestyle." She felt these lessons would also work for Poughkeepsie students.

The Marathon Project has adult advisors from several walks of life, including probation officers, lawyers, counselors, and IBM employees.

PHS teacher Bernadette Wiggins is one such advisor. She feels that the program "helps students to see teachers and adults in a different light."

The Marathon Project meets three days a week from March to November. At each session participants complete two runs, one at 3:15 pm and another at 5:15

### Big Team, Big Expectations

By Joe Alfonso

Winter track has started for the Pioneers and there is much to discuss.

This year, the team is very big. One past year there were only six people on the team, but this year brought in almost sixty. With some key departures and returns, it should be interesting to watch how the team develops.

"Last year, we lost Darrell (Carter), number two in the state...a big loss to the team," says Coach Rother, who begins his thirteenth year as PHS track coach.

"Doing relays, we will do well, long jumps and the 55," says junior Danny Weathers. Speaking of Coach Rother, Weathers asserts, "He won't let us give up."

The big kickoff meet was last Sunday at the Armory in New York City, and Coach Rother was very pleased with the outcome. His runners won a total of fifteen medals at the event.

"We have good relays, one of the best in the county, if not *the* best," says coach Rother in regards to his girls team.

#### Track Preview

##### Girls Top Runners:

Nate'ya Lassic -- Sprinter  
Khriissy Geigel -- Mid-distance

##### Boys Top Runners:

Bishmi Thrasher -- Sprinter  
Enow Neba Ayuk Ebott -- Distance  
John Johnson -- Mid-distance

One goal I would love to achieve as a team this season is seeing everybody swim up to their full potential. Individually, I am working towards breaking six minutes in the five hundred yards."

With all of the young talent and senior leadership, the PHS swim team has high hopes for a very successful and fun season. All of the challenging opponents the Pioneers will face will bring a great season of heated competition.

pm. During the summer months they meet at 7 am to train. This helps participants prepare for the Philadelphia Marathon.

PHS Senior Leary Williams, a Marathon Project participant, attended the Philadelphia Marathon and complete all 26.2 miles.

Williams says that Project Marathon "helps you find out your limits so you can surpass them by running."

Patricia Duhaney, another PHS senior, completed the half marathon in Philadelphia, running 13.1 miles.

"Just the feeling of accomplishment when you cross the finish line is...awesome," Duhaney says with a smile.