

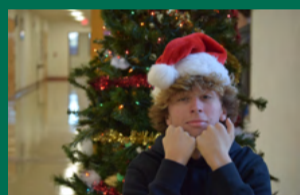
Merry Christmas from the staff of the Purple Clarion!



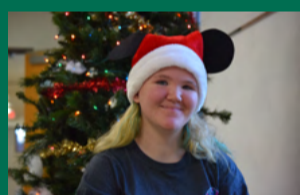
Drew Hawkins



Paxton Garbel



Ryan Wilson



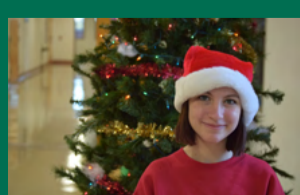
Kelee Mills



Braxtyn Baugher



Francesca Messerschmidt



Sarah Girtman

Students join Wreaths Across America to honor vets

Francesca Messerschmidt

Wreaths Across Southern Illinois, a local branch of Wreaths Across America has teamed up with several local organizations and HHS students to honor those from the Harrisburg area who served in the military and are buried in Sunset Lawn and Sunset Gardens.

This is also the site of Harrisburg's Little Arlington.

Key Club and White Hats will both be participating in the wreath laying ceremony, along with donating to the organization.

Key Club pledged \$300 to purchase wreaths, and White Hats pledged \$300 plus donations equalling \$475.

Wreaths Across America is a non-profit organization that serves all across the country. The organization was formed after a photo blew up of wreaths being laid in Arlington National Cemetery in Washington D.C.

According to their website, their main goals are to "Remember our fallen U.S. soldiers, (and) honor those who serve and teach our children the value of freedom."

This year is the first that Harrisburg will be participating in the wreath-laying ceremonies to honor veterans. Location coordinator Kristy Wissinger was inspired to get involved by her veteran father, who is buried in a Harrisburg cemetery.

"The two locations that Wreaths Across Southern Illinois focuses on are Harrisburg and Mt. Vernon," said Wissinger. "Harrisburg was my main priority because that's where my dad is buried."

Along with being a first for the community in general, this event is a first for HHS's service clubs, White Hats and Key Club.

"We (the teachers) got an email asking for help and letting us know this was going on," said Key Club adviser Cathy Wall. "Mrs. (Janet) Hughes and I thought it was a good idea and took it to the Key Club board of directors who enthusiastically agreed to become part of the project, especially since White Hats had already committed."

White Hats secretary and Key Club vice-president Sofie Brombaugh feels that it is the duty of clubs like the ones to which she belongs to participate in events that show honor to those who have served.

"They sacrificed to keep us safe," Brombaugh said. "There are many things our community can do to help honor them. This is just the start. I would encourage everyone that is capable to come out and join us on the 18th."

The clubs also hope that this event will spread some joy this holiday season.

"The community will appreciate the beauty of the graves as a show of respect to those who died for our country," said White Hats adviser Heather Mandrell.

This event has the added potential of promoting unity and working together. Key Club president Mollie Freed thinks this is what makes it a great service project idea.



Photos by Phil Nyberg.

Eighth graders cleaned at Little Arlington in advance of Veteran's Day. Student were chosen on the basis of essays written for eighth grade social studies teacher Lindsay Dunn. The wreath-laying project will begin at Little Arlington Dec. 18. All are welcome to help.

Student Council Claus returns after COVID-forced absence

Ryan Wilson



Photo by Drew Hawkins.

Junior Grant Wilson shops for his assigned person. According to adviser Hilary Ford, none of the students know the name of the person for whom they are shopping. They are assigned a number to protect the privacy of the recipient.

After missing a year due to COVID, the student council went shopping for Christmas gifts for 10-12 students. The program has been going on for several years. Student council sponsors Hilary Ford and Krystal Wilson thought about what this would be like for students in need and decided to try to do something about it.

"Service projects are really important to us in student council," student council sponsor Krystal Wilson explains. "Several years ago, we used to do service projects out of town. Then, our circumstances changed, and we had to think about who we could help closer to home. The more we thought about it, the more it became clear that we had plenty of students right here in our own school that could use some help at the holidays."

On the surface, this service project looks more like a really fun field trip. The student council officers usually travel to Evansville, Indiana to complete Christmas shopping.

Even though members say the trip is a lot of fun, it's for a very important cause.

"During our trip we usually shop for about 10 high school students," student body vice-president Kirsten Eversmann said. "We try to pick out things that we think they would really like for Christmas."

By the end of the day, the student council officers have all completed buying Christmas gifts. All of the gifts return with the council back to the high school. Then, they are carefully wrapped and labeled and given to various students in the school.

Wilson maintains that the project is very important because students are often experiencing things that others know nothing about.

"Everyone's circumstances are constantly changing," Wilson said. "It's important for us to all be kind to each other because we have no idea what we are all going through back at home. Sometimes people just need a little help especially around the holidays. It's great for the students to get to experience what it's like to help others."

The entire project remains completely anonymous. When the students wrap up a gift, they don't know who the gift is going to. And according to Eversmann, that works out just perfectly.

"I like that we don't know who the presents are going to," Eversmann said. I like to think that it will be a really fun surprise for them to find out they have some special gifts to take home and open up on Christmas day."

Band hosts annual Christmas concert as semester closes

Braxtyn Baugher

The annual Christmas concert was held Sunday, December 12. Last year's Christmas concert happened virtually due to COVID protocols. Saying that the band was excited to get redemption from last year is an understatement.

The band's director Hannah Drake feels the same way.

"I'm excited to have a concert in person," Drake said. "It's nice to be doing normal things and have a pretty normal fall semester. We're almost back to the way life was before the pandemic."

Band members feel the Christmas concert is a big deal because of the effect it has on the audience. Everyone knows at least one Christmas song, and Drake always makes it a priority to pick a playlist that contains well-known classics.

"I think it's nice to hear quality performances of classic carols. This year's performance (had) a variety of classics with a fun, interesting twist," Drake said.

According to band members, the worst part of the process of getting something together is the rehearsals. The band takes place during the school day which means there is limited time to rehearse.

"We started Christmas right after the variety show," Drake said. "We've had 3-4 weeks to prepare music, starting with a harder piece, but I knew it would be most of the kid's favorites. Then, as they got more comfortable, we moved on to other songs," said Drake.

Jazz band is most definitely a fan favorite, but their rehearsal time is even more limited.

"The most challenging part was easily jazz band because it's not built into our school schedule," Drake said. "We've been meeting during advisory and we will be performing with a total of five practices under our belt for a total of 2-3 songs."



Photo by Krystal Wilson.

Seniors Ryan Wilson and Luke Miller performed as part of the jazz band at the annual variety show fundraiser hosted earlier in the semester.

Wilson and Miller also joined the other members of the jazz band at Sunday's performance in playing "Let it Snow" and "Baby, It's Cold Outside."



Speech team success continues

Braxtyn Baugher

The speech team netted another third place at their most recent tournament. Their at Waterloo.

The next appearance will be at Mt. Vernon.

Team members feel the season is going fairly well as there have been at least four people who have received first place at each tournament thus far.

"I feel like we're doing really great so far," senior Neva Wasson said. "We're consistently placing well in our individual events, and the team as a whole. I'm genuinely so proud of us."

Even though the team is doing really well, practices continue as team members look to improve their performances and work out any remaining problems before the post-season begins.

Senior Madison Hall feels that attitude is an important factor in finding continued success.

"Keeping a positive attitude and remaining confident throughout the tournament and just the season as a whole will ensure that we continue to do well," Hall said.

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Editorial

Student think “no snow days” is a flake-y idea

With winter right around the corner, snow is surely coming, but the snow days are not coming with it. According to the school board, Harrisburg schools will be going remote when we are snowed in.

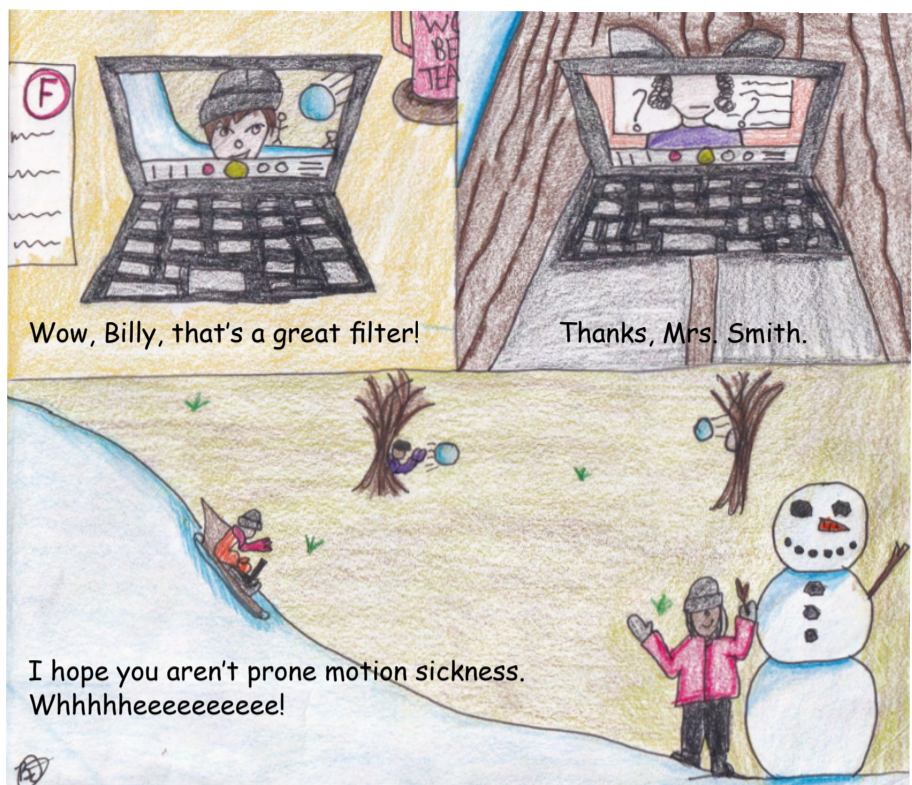
While getting rid of snow days altogether might give us an extra week of vacation in the summer, it will probably be a week of wasted school. Many students already don't show up to school, so expecting them to show up to online class while there is snow on the ground is a dream. The school is better off giving the students a snow day, especially when in the middle of winter and spring they are given very few days off. Not only do the students not support remote days, many of the teachers don't like it either.

English teacher Elizabeth Dawe has mixed feelings about the new policy. “Remote learning days for bad weather should be based on enrichment activities,” Dawe said. “Too many of our students do not have access to reliable internet, so I don't think teachers should assign a new concept or assignment for those days.”

Dawe believes snow days would be a great opportunity for students to work on skills they already know and master them rather than introducing a new subject.

What is most likely to happen when a heavy snow comes is that the teachers are going to start their Google Meet, and there will be about five students on the call. The other students will either be out in the snow or sleeping. With there being no finals this year, students are not punished for missing school if they have an excused absences. The attendance requirement will not matter. As a student who loves playing in the snow, I can probably say that I will not attend the classes that aren't that important to me.

When Harrisburg went remote last year due to quarantine, few students showed up to class resulting in less learning and worse grades. The only way teachers might get students to show up to class on a snow day is if they give them a grade for attendance. And if a teacher has to give a grade on attendance, then is their class really that engaging?



Cartoon by Bailee Clifton.

Being a student is hard. It is especially hard when there is snow on the ground. By giving the students their snow days back, there would be a shared happiness between both teachers and students.

Dog Pound support should extend beyond varsity boys sports



Ryan Wilson

Imagine playing the biggest game of your life in a sport you have played since you were a child. The score is tied, the competition is fierce and it all comes down to this moment. Gathering your thoughts, you look over to the stands. You see your best friends painted purple and screaming your name. You look further into the crowd and see some students you know from class and even a few of your teachers. Then you take a deep breath and refocus. This is your moment.

Now re-imagine this same scenario. But this time, there is no crowd, there is no roaring, there's no one there to support and cheer you on in this really important moment. For some high school sports, particularly girls' sports, this sort of situation happens all the time.

You might think that having a packed out section for fans at a high school sporting event isn't important. But that simply is not true. In fact, according to Sports Illustrated for Kids writer Yoni Monatmay, “High school sports can go a long way in boosting the collective morale of the school's students.” So having great fans is not only great for the athletes, it is great for the students of the school as well. It helps us all grow together and work as a group for a common goal— supporting each other.

I think the Dog Pound should be there to support all of our sporting events, both boys and girls. I've learned through my experience, especially being a big part of the Dog Pound at volleyball games, how important having a student section really is for all athletes. Monatmay goes on to say that, “a cheering high school gym uplifts a player's spirits far more than a professional's when he sees a sold-out arena.” I think there is a lot of truth in this.

It has to be hard for athletes in some sports to see the loud and huge crowds at varsity football and varsity boys basketball games and then compete in a quiet and nearly empty gym for their own sports. I have personally felt this sting before as a theatre participant. One of the best parts of being in a show is getting to see all your friends, family and support after the curtain closes. Don't get me wrong, the theatre following is great, and we have awesome fans. But there are times I have wondered, where are all the students? Where are all the athletes that I yell and scream for on weekend games? Why aren't they all here to support us?

I love to go all out for the Dog Pound. Our student section seriously has no competition from any school we have ever faced. But, sometimes I wonder what it would be like if we supported more sports and events. How awesome would it be for the Dog Pound to show up and support the HHS Golf team next year? I mean, just show up and make those team members smile Happy Gilmore Style. Or maybe it's gathering up some friends and watching a bowling match. Or making posters to support the speech team. Either way, I think we can do more. I think we can do better.



Paxton Garbel

CAUTION: Coaching strategy can suppress student sign-ups

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you had immense passion for a sport but the coaches make you want to never play again? This is a common problem among high school students.

The problems include things such as favoritism over talent, inexperience in coaching at that level, or demanding respect but not giving it back.

A study published in 2015 by George Washington University found that the main reason students quit sports is they don't feel as if they are having fun anymore.

The students in the study defined the top three components of fun as “trying their best, being treated respectfully by coaches, parents and teammates, and getting playing time.” These don't seem like an unreasonable expectation for someone playing sports at the high school level.

Believe it or not, winning ranked number 48, indicating that a team can lose and still have fun.

Not surprisingly, the study listed “respect and encouragement” as the number one quality possessed by someone they see as a good coach.

Personally, I have yet to meet anyone who enjoys being disrespected instead of corrected. I understand that sometimes coaches have to get on to a player to get their point across. This is something that every athlete has gone through and is often called constructive criticism.

Yet, there is a fine line between fixing an error and breaking someone down to the point that they give up. I was recently watching a professional volleyball game, and I noticed that they too are making common mistakes that high school players make, but not once did I see the coaches throw a fit. Instead, you see the coaches correcting and encouraging them to do better next time.

So, why are high school coaches losing their temper when their players make a similar error? It stands to reason that if the pros mess up, so will students.

To prevent students from leaving a sport, coaches need to build a relationship with their players and show that they are there because they care about the students involved, not just to have a little extra money coming in. Ultimately, I find that if we don't change how student athletes are coached then there won't be any students to coach.

Have an opinion you would like to share? Log on to The Purple Clarion website @ hhspurpleclarion.org and submit a letter to the editor or vote in the polls featured there.

Students pack shoeboxes for needy children

Braxtyn Baugher

Dorrisville Baptist Church annually participates in the Samaritan's Purse project Operation Christmas Child. The project is done throughout the general public. There are several places throughout Harrisburg but one specific site is Dorrisville Baptist Church.

"At Dorrisville alone we had a total of 2,049 boxes turned in at our collection point" said the pastor's wife Judy Taylor

This tradition has been going on for many years. Since the year 2000 to be specific. The reason the project is still up and going is because of the positive impact it has on the lives of those the items are being donated. The point of this organization is to help children in need all across the world. By donating a shoebox you can change a person's whole life.

"We believe it is important to love others and leave the world better than we found it. When we are able to help those who are less fortunate, specifically those in other countries, we should."

When donating a shoebox you select which age group you would like to sponsor, and depending on which age group you select you purchase certain items. Some general things someone could buy are toys, hygiene products, clothing apparel, and school supplies. Once all items have been purchased you will gather them and put them into a shoebox. This entire project is such an amazing way to spread Christmas cheer to those in countries all over the world who aren't as fortunate as us.

"When others feel loved and cared for, they are encouraged. They begin, perhaps in a small way to feel value and respect. To know someone cares about you enough to send you a shoebox, is very moving and motivating, and it gives you hope."

Christmas time is all about happiness, and loving one another, but for those in certain countries, things such as that aren't always easy to come by. Something so small is so impactful and could make someone's whole life.



Photo provided.

Members of Dorrisville Baptist Church pack shoeboxes of gifts collected by their members.

Student Council hosts a competition for charity

Paxton Garbel

Student Council is hosting their annual canned food for the holidays.

The council members worked together with others in their grade level to create a cheerful Christmas scenery table for students to place their canned goods on.

The drive is also a class competition designed to bring not only excitement but food for a good cause. The food

will be donated to "The Four C's" which is a local charity unit in Harrisburg.

The student council wants to bring in enough food to help out the local families that are in need of food during the Christmas season.

"I'm hoping that by turning this food drive into a competition it will bring more students to donate food. The competition isn't the important part though. We just want families to have enough to have a Merry Christmas," Student Council President Ryan Wilson said.



White Hats will join many others in collecting for the Salvation Army

Braxtyn Baugher

White Hats will be taking a turn ringing the bell at the famous red kettle this holiday season.

The Salvation Army's Kettle Campaign is a program that works through the people of a community.

By putting even 10 cents into the bucket, contributors are helping to raise money that is used to purchase shelters, meal programs, Christmas toys, after-school programs, and emergency assistance.

All of the things that are purchased with the donation money are given to those who aren't as fortunate as others.



White Hats members also participated in bell-ringing two years ago before the COVID shut-down.

Students, faculty spread compassion for Christmas

Paxton Garbel

Several students and teachers sponsor a child through Compassion International. This organization offers great way to spread Christmas cheer across the world.

Many students and faculty members donate year round to this organization. Children are "adopted" by a sponsor family that sends money each month, at birthdays and at Christmas.

This project has been around since 1952 helping more than 1.9 million children.

During the Christmas season, the organization publishes a catalog where things like vaccinations, farm animals and hygiene kits can be purchased for those in need as a "gift" for those who have plenty.

Compassion believes that it's important to uphold the dignity of the poor, so much of what they do is train children to be successful as adults.

On Compassion International's website, they offer lots of information about them as a company and even have a blog where you can see pictures and stories of children who have been helped grow so much from generous people's donations.

Donating to this organization is not only a gift that will honor a friend or family member, but a chance of a better life for a child.

Students, residents light up Harrisburg's streets

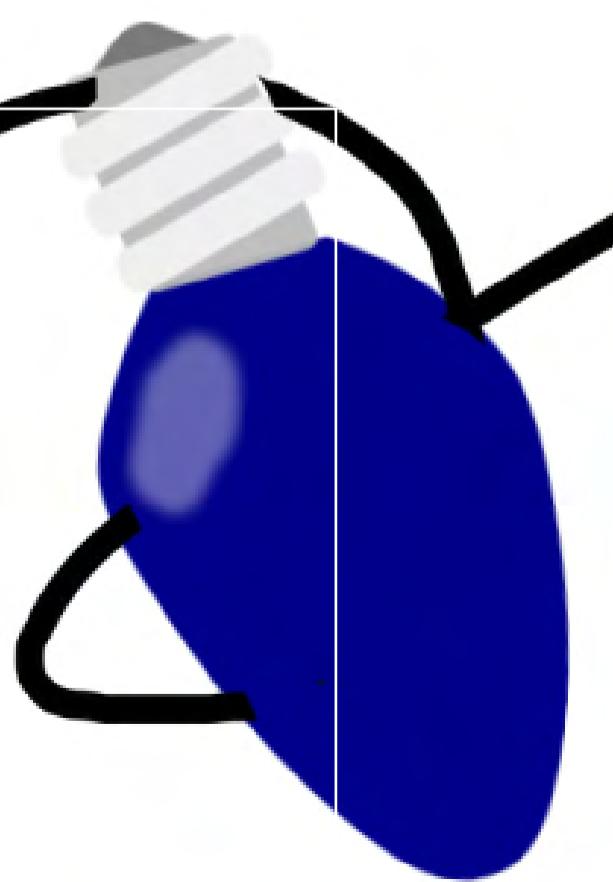
Paxton Garbel

The annual Harrisburg lights Parade is a huge tradition for the residents of our town. The parade has been around for over 60 years and the local Lions Club has been apart of it every year.

The parade starts at Harrisburg's Fire Department where numerous floats decorated in bright lights and other cheerful accessories get lined up to light up the streets of Harrisburg. This parade consists of candy, lights, and a whole lot of town history.

Participants include Harrisburg's very own fire and police departments, local businesses, churches, and many other people who are excited to impress and advertise.

"I love this parade due to all of the Christmas cheer that it brings and how it keeps the traditions of Harrisburg alive," junior Braxtyn Baugher said.



Holiday Tournament season approaching

Drew Hawkins

Boys Basketball

Holiday Tournaments are on the horizon. The EHT has been a cake walk for Harrisburg teams in the past but has also included heartbreaking performances. This year though, the teams are hoping to take home the first place trophies again.

The boys are building off a positive 2020-21 season even though they lost three seniors who greatly contributed to last year's team in Andrew Bittle, Ben Brombaugh and Jesse Lawler. Though there are two returning starters this year, seniors Michael Godsey and Christopher Allen, the three players who are filling the remaining spots will have some big shoes to fill.

Head coach Randy Smithpeters thinks the biggest struggles will be "lack of experience."

"The only person that we have in our locker room that has ever experienced a crowd is Michael Godsey," Smithpeters said. "The players need to adjust to varsity type play."

While Smithpeters sees a bit of weakness within the team, he also sees places where the Dogs are strong.

"I think we are fairly athletic," Smithpeters said. "We have a little bit of size, and I think we have competitors. We have to be tough."

Smithpeters' strategy for the tournament is the same as previous years.

"My annual goal for EHT for every team is to make it to the final four and let the chips fall," Smithpeters said. "If you make it to the final four, you get to experience the excitement of a big crowd which helps for later on in the season when Regionals come around."

Girls Basketball

The Lady Bulldogs started the season with an appearance in the Lady Bulldog Classic Preview Tournament championship taking second place after losing to Eldorado in the championship game.

The Lady Bulldogs lost one senior from last year's roster while also losing a starter in senior Stream Black.

"Our biggest struggle this year will be our size," head coach Jake Stewart said. "We had to move (senior) Chelsea (Davidson) down low on defense, and she's a very good defender out front. We also need her to play in the post more which she has never done. We are just a small team this year and will have to do the little things a lot better in order to be successful."

The team's tallest girl is Davidson listed in the roster at 5 feet, 10 inches.

Davidson has mixed feelings about her new assignment.

"It is definitely out of my comfort zone," Davidson said, "but it is also kind of exciting to be put in a new position. I will admit I wasn't too happy about having to play the post position at first because I'm not the best at it, but I know if I work hard enough that it will all work out."

Being a small team usually guarantees quickness and some good conditioning.

"[We] will be quick, and I think we can really guard people," Stewart said. "We should be a good three-point shooting team if we take rhythm threes and not just the first one we see."

Even though the Eldorado Holiday Tournament is still far off, the girls are hungry for some hardware.

"Our goal is to make the championship game," Stewart said, "and at the very least, a trophy game. We have had a lot of success over there in recent years and look forward to competing there again after having a year off from it."



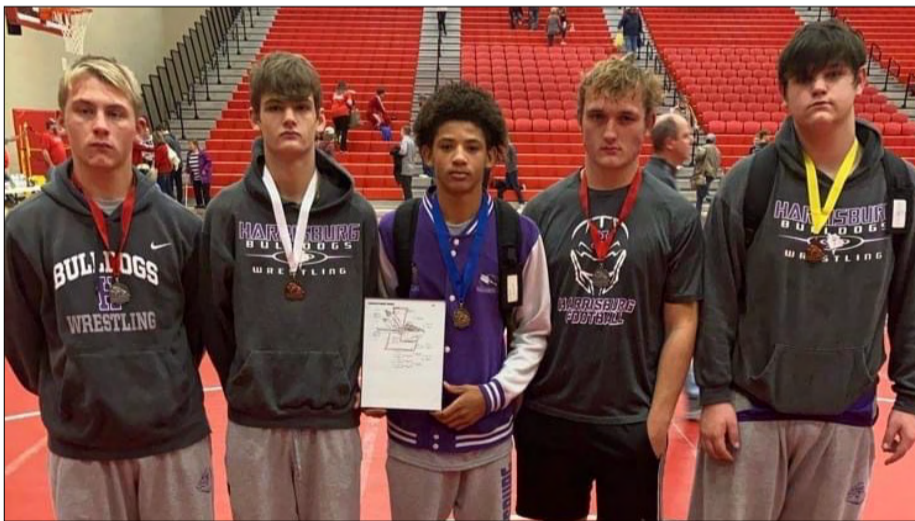
Photo Provided.

Top Row : Head Coach Randy Smithpeters, Assistant Coach Richard Dwyer, Cameron Ande, Nathan Lawerance, Christopher Allen, Colten Wheeler, Owen Rann, Ross Rider, Karmello Downey, Tina McCabe,
Bottom Row: Allen Scaggs, Malachi Black, Reed Rider, Michael Godsey, Vaundre Macintosh, Myles Crank, Tevin Godsey , Kayla Laurance.



Photo provided.

Volunteer coach Brittney Hutchinson, **Manager** Ryii Fulkerson, **Head coach** Jake Stewart, Keeley Hines, Frankie Leigh Nicholas, Mackenzie Boyd, Abby Stacey, Laynie Kleinfeldt, Kailyn Harbison, Kaylee King, Hannah Jones, **Assistant Coach** Jacob Morse, Kinzleigh Stewart, Gabby Adams
Bottom Row: Adalynn Stewart, Cameron Adams, Riley Harrison, Kailyn Moss, Chelse Davidson, Vershay Guyton, Sidney Neal, Kinzleigh Smothers.



Harrisburg wrestlers brought home hardware from the Lawrence County Wrestling Tournament Dec. 4 Medaling were Josh Stewart (170, 2nd), Sebastian Brown (132, 3rd), Tony Keene (113, 1st) Bryant Lester (195, 2nd) Kenneth Martin (285, 4th)

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The Santa Experience of Southern Illinois brings Saint Nick to life for children

Sarah Girtman



Going to the mall to see Santa is a fond childhood memory for many. Who doesn't remember waiting in that excruciatingly long line for 15 seconds in which to tell Santa a secret Christmas wish, snap a picture and go back to shopping.

But times have changed, and The Santa Experience of Southern Illinois offers children a chance to have some real time with the jolly old elf and his wife.

"We wanted a little bit more of an experience," photographer Stephanie Susie said, "which is why we named our event that...we wanted them to be able to experience Santa, and everything else that goes on with this event."

The Santa Experience has been going on since 2018.

"Dave (Bartok), Trina (Bartok), and I, are kind of the ones that came up with the idea, and then we got Santa into the mix," Susie said.

The event is incredibly popular.

"We sold out within two hours," Gary Ellis, aka Santa, said.

Ellis, who can be found as the featured Santa at many other locations during the hol-

iday season, agrees with Susie's opinion that the Santa Experience is more than the average photo op with Santa.

"We wanted to bring something to this community that the moms and dads could experience with their kids, and bring that spirit of Christmas to a little bit more space."

Everyone has an important role to play.

"It takes the whole team to make it work," Susie said. "We would not be able to do it if one of these people were not here."

The time children spend with Santa is definitely different from the experience children have at a shopping mall.

"When kids come to see me, they enjoy that part of the Santa visit," Ellis said. "They really get some time with me. I get to spend time with the children, and we kind of get to know each other a little bit better."

One child, Marie, who came in says her favorite part was getting her picture taken.

The staff enjoy it as much as the children do.

"It's magical, even on our end. We're the ones that put it on, and even to us, it's magic everyday," Susie said. "It's a labor of love for all of us."

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Local seamstress sews unique costume for Santa

Kelee Mills

With Christmas coming right around the corner some people like to dress up in Santa suits. Santa suits can be purchased online, but they can also be handmade out of anything.

Harrisburg resident Grace Stephens recently crafted a very special Santa suit.

Stephens has been sewing for "50 plus years." She has sewed all different kinds of things in that time

"I have made wedding dresses, prom dresses, just about anything and now Santa's suit," Stephens said.

The complexity of this type of sewing requires special skill, but according to Stephens, she is "self-taught" and considers her talent a "gift from God."

This was her very first time sewing for Santa. Mitchell made the costume for Harrisburg resident Tim Mitchell.

"They called and asked to make his costume and suggested to make the old time costume and use his mother's 50-plus year old mink coat," Stephens said.

Mitchell is happy with the results.

"It is tailor-made. It fits; she did a fabulous job. She took measurements, so it feels good wearing it, not uncomfortable, and a little hot to wear. It is real fur," Mitchell said.

Mitchell came up with the idea of using his mother's mink coat. He asked Stephens to make him a traditional suit.

"I got the idea from The Christmas Chronicles movies," Mitchell said

Using an heirloom added a little something special to the project.

"It is a very enjoyable experience," Stephens said.

Mitchell has been playing Santa for "35 years."

"I lived in Mt. Vernon, originally, went to all the churches and did the programs. After having the suit at churches, I kept the suit," Mitchell said.

To further hone his skills, Mitchell went to Santa school in Georgia where there were "about 100 Santas" in attendance.

In addition to the real mink fur on his costume, Mitchell sports his own white beard and hair.

"Kids love the real beard," Mitchell said.

Playing the role is fun for Santa Mitchell.

"I enjoy seeing the kids smile...the adults usually want to have pictures with me. I once had dogs come in. I had fun with the dogs taking pictures," Mitchell said.

Children and pets aren't the only ones who enjoy photos with Santa though.

"I had an elderly man who was 70, his son was 50 that came in once," Mitchell said.

Once he had "75 kids at a church picture session."

Mitchell's favorite part about being Santa is "the joy it brings to families, get-togethers."

"Once you put the suit on, you feel like a magical being. The adults enjoy Santa, and it brings joy to my face to see everyone happy," Mitchell said.



Photo provided by Tim Mitchell

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