

# TURKEY TALK

MARCH 5, 2009  
VOLUME 2, ISSUE 5



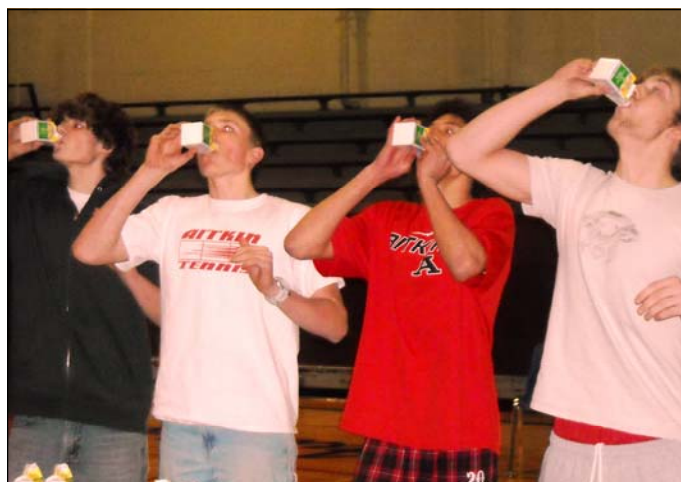
## FFA Week was a success

By Ashley McMurray  
Staff Writer

Our FFA week consisted of Overall and Suspender Day on Monday; Blue and Gold Day on Tuesday; Rubber Boots Day on Wednesday; Camo vs. Flannel on Thursday, and on Friday Belt Buckle, and Drive Your Tractor to School Day. The only person who drove a tractor to school was Miranda Paulson, due to the cold weather. Mr. Lake said, "The kids did marvelous! They are a good club."

The final milk chugging contest was held at the FFA Olympics. We thank Mrs. Sandberg for donating all the milk. The final participants were DuVaughn Schroeder, Alex Anderson, Albert Peterson, and Cody Daun. The final winner was DuVaughn Schroeder; he won a bag of Vic's chocolate chip cookies.

Mr. and Mrs. Irwin sponsored a FFA Sloppy Joe Dinner in Mrs. Irwin's room on Sunday, Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>. Mr. Carlson



Cody Daun, Alex Anderson, DuVaughn Schroeder, and Albert Peterson (left picture) participated in the final milk chugging contest. Mr. Novak (right picture) was drenched after bobbing for apples.



said, "I think FFA week brought awareness to the school about the FFA Organization."

The FFA Olympics consisted of barrel racing, roping, milk chugging, gunny sack racing, hot potato and an apple bob-

bing contest between Mr. Carlson and Mr. Novak. Mr. Novak won the contest. Mr. Carlson decided to cheat and take his apples out with his hands, while Mr. Novak dove in head first. Mr. Novak said that he thought National FFA

week went very well and students should be commended for getting the FFA out there. A good job goes out to the FFA members and students who participated in the FFA week.

## Student Council offers movie night for students

By Ann Rhodes  
Staff Writer

Thursday, Mar. 12, the student council will be offering a free movie at 7 p.m. in the cafeteria. The movie showing will be "Bolt." Students are free to bring snacks, pillows, and blankets.

On Friday, Feb. 27, the Gobbler mascot took a trip to Rippleside to help the elementary students find their school spirit.

There are plenty of upcoming

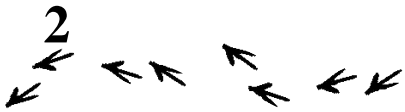
events the student council is organizing as well. The student council is starting a school store in March in the concession stand. Mr. Wagner said that if it goes well this spring, then next year the store could be open all year.

The student council is hoping to have a contest for Saint Patrick's Day. It would be during planning room to see who is wearing the most green. Currently, this is not set up for certain. However, show your

Irish spirit by wearing green on March 17.

Later this March, there will be a retirement party for Jack Berg. The custodian, who has been here for more than thirty years, is retiring this year. The party will be in the cafeteria on March 31 at 2 p.m.

In April, the student council is planning a spring week before prom. The events are not certain as of this time.



## No schmaltziness for seniors

By Allie Carlson  
Staff Writer

As our third trimester starts we all become a little more lackadaisical and become more excited for summer. People are getting their summer plans ready, and are hoping that next year will go by even faster. But how do the seniors feel about this year's last day of school? One would think that the seniors would be sad to leave A.H.S. and friends behind, but it looks like the complete opposite. There are 85 days until graduation for the seniors and they aren't sad at all or freaking out, they are pumped to get out of here. Most of the seniors are excited to go to college and meet new people, continue their education, and just get out of the small town of Aitkin. Senior Lauren Landrus said, "I'm excited to finally move on with my life, even though I will miss the easy going life of high school." Another senior Abby Palkie exclaimed, "I am so excited to get out of here finally!"

The only thing the students said if they were to miss anything, it would be the sports, friends, and some of the teachers. Some feel a little weary about next year, like Megan Larson. She said, "I'm excited to certain points, mostly excited but somewhat sad because I will miss my

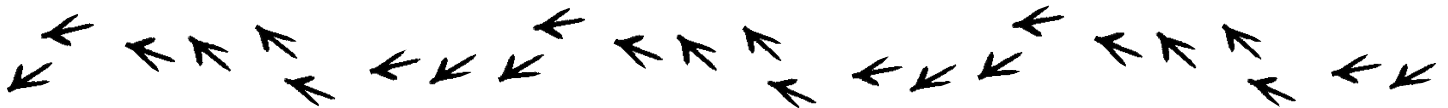


The seniors posing for their class picture earlier this year at the court house.

friends." Or you could be like Lacey Pospeck who said, "I will miss the routine, meaning I will miss the knowing of exactly what I am going to be doing the next day, and what time I will need to get ready for everything."

Most just seem excited to get out of here and be done. When asked what memories they will miss from high school, most said they would make new and better ones after high school is done.

So forget all the sentimental stuff because none of them our going to be heartbroken 85 days from now. All they have to say after being in school together since the age of 5 through the best and worst of times is, "It feels like I am finally breaking out of jail," according to Bryant Cox. So watch out world, the senior class is ready to get on their high horse and leave this small town and get out into the real world.



## Spaghetti dinner was a Blast of a fundraiser

By Kylie O'Neil  
Staff Writer

The 2009 Aitkin Grad Blast committee held their spaghetti supper fundraiser Friday, Feb. 20th at the Aitkin Moose Lodge.

Many people came out to attend the spaghetti supper. Approximately 300 tickets were sold with \$1800 dollars raised. Seniors from Mr. Miller's class sold tickets for this event.

The money made from this fundraiser will be used for the expenses that make Grad Blast happen.

Students from the senior class and Grad Blast committee members worked at the event by selling tickets, preparing and serving food, setting up tables and cleaning up.

"It was a nice get together for the school and the community," says Ashley McMurray.





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# NEWS



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## Arthur, a new senior for the year

By Doug Kommer  
Staff Writer

Arthur Campos is an 18-year-old foreign exchange student from Brazil, who is here for the whole year. Arthur is staying with the Sprague family. When I asked Arthur what is the biggest difference from Aitkin and Brasilia (his hometown), it was that Brasilia is way bigger than Aitkin, a 2.5 million population compared to only 2000 people we have.

Back home in Brazil, he can't ride the bus home from school. Arthur doesn't like the fact that there is no public transportation in Aitkin, and he also doesn't like the curfew here.

"The food is so much different here," commented Arthur. In Brazil, the main meal there is lunch, and the meals are much bigger than they are in America. But some food Arthur likes are waffles, and of course McDonalds. He also says that even though they have McDonalds in Brazil, it is so much cheaper here in America.

**"The food is so much different here."**

Arthur Campos,  
exchange student

Arthur does like the school though. He likes the fact that the classes are better, and easier. And he also likes the people because they are so nice.

To become a foreign exchange student, all Arthur did was go to the agency and tell them that he wanted to become a foreign exchange student. But the downside was that he had to pay a lot of money to come to America; however coming to America was cheaper than going to Australia.



Arthur is one of many foreign exchange students enrolled at AHS.

## Taka takes a taste of Aitkin at AHS



Stop and talk to Taka and find some new thing out about him.

**Ice fishing is one of his favorite activities in winter**

By Doug Kommer  
Staff Writer

Kano Takahiro, or Taka as he is more famously known, is a 17 year old foreign exchange student from Nagoya, Japan. He lives in Nagoya with his mom, dad, younger sister and about 2 million other people. Taka is currently staying with T.J. Landrus and his family. When I asked Taka what he liked most about Aitkin, he said he liked the grocery store, Pamida, and ice fishing. His most favorite memory is snowmobiling with T.J.

Taka's favorite food is deer meat in Aitkin, and back home in Japan, he loves sushi.

He doesn't like the fact that there aren't a lot of people in Aitkin, and that there is no public transportation. Some things that people may not know about Taka are that he plays guitar in a band, and his favorite word is super. His favorite class is physical education.

One food that Taka has had enough of is mashed potatoes. One of the grossest things that he has eaten is old deer meat. I asked Taka to describe the old deer meat he said, "super disgusting." Taka is here for the whole school year. He can't wait to go back home and see his 19 year old "super hot" girlfriend.

# Double Standards in our Classrooms?

**Lacey Pospeck**  
Staff Writer

As the end of the trimester is nearing I hear dozens of students asking about turning in their late work and doing some extra credit to get their grades up. Extra credit is kind of bogus. The way I see it, extra credit is a way to quickly make up your grade because either you didn't do your homework or didn't do well on your tests and projects. Then what is the point of doing the homework? Why should I struggle to balance several classes, go to work, turn my homework in on time, and work hard when I could just do some extra credit instead? Why am I wasting *my* time when it doesn't matter if I do the homework and can make it up later with one big project? Every teacher has a different policy on their late work. Basically they either accept no late work or have

a policy on how many days and points you can earn if it's not in on time. I know I've been grateful for those teachers who have accepted my late work, but I think when they do that they become vulnerable for being taken advantage of. If they have a one day late policy and begin accepting them past that, they are showing that we do not have to respect their rules. This is unfair that teacher's policies are forever changing because it does not treat all students fairly.

My question is... should there be a consistent school policy for late work? Should there be either no tolerance or a certain limit to the days and points you can accumulate for turning work in late? My answer is yes; there should be *one* policy for the entire school that must be followed. I believe that late work should have a limit of two days and the student should

lose a percentage of points from the assignment for being late. This would help teachers gain more respect and have less late homework to deal with. This would also help the student by allowing flexibility, but there are still strict guidelines. In the world outside of school if you don't get your done you won't have a job for long!

Concluding, extra credit should not be allowed either. This encourages students to not do the material in the curriculum approved by the school board. Extra credit is a loop hole in school that we seem finding constantly. Obviously it also would be hypocritical to add a late work policy and still have extra credit.

The idea of another policy added to our 30 page student handbook seems ridiculous, but it would be beneficial to all the parties involved. It may take awhile to get the ball rolling, but



it would make life less stressful and would add to the quality of our education. We wouldn't be wasting our teacher's time with assignment from weeks before and showing that we only care for the grade not the meaning of the assignment. Rushing to turn in homework takes away from the intended significance of the assignment and that does not serve its purpose. Allowing this type of policy would make a student choose between either doing the work or not; it's black and white and leaves no gray areas for *I can do it later*.

## Is It Time For a Day Off??

**Elizabeth Mattson**  
Staff Writer

If you haven't noticed already the absence list has been growing everyday due to illnesses. Everything from a common head cold to severe influenza, almost everyone has a little bit of something. But we aren't doing much to prevent it. Things that you could do to prevent illness is to not

share water bottles, wash your hands after you sneeze into them, and covering your mouth when you cough. Most importantly, stay home when you are sick. Rest is the best medicine. Not doing these things just spread germs and gets other people sick. Be considerate of others and take the extra step to keep you and your peers healthy for school. Drinking lots of fluids is one of the

best things you can do for your body, especially if it contains lots of vitamins to support your immune system. If you do cough, cough into your arm and if you sneeze cover your face. Be aware of what you are doing while coughing. I just saw someone cough onto the drinking fountain without realizing it. They just spread more germs for everyone to worry about.

## Being a Senior

**Ashley Riggs**  
Staff Writer

I can't believe I'm a senior this year! To be honest I thought being a senior would be easier, less stress, and more relaxing. Boy I was wrong! Being a senior is way more different then I thought it would be; it seems like there is more stress and loss of sleep. I feel more stress being a senior than I did in any other grade. These are just my feelings

though. It's true that it's harder, but it seems to be going by faster than any other grade and I feel it's important not to take this short time here for granted. I asked Shannon Westerlund on what she felt on being a senior and this is what she said. "It feels like we missed out and we don't have the privileges of open lunch; it just feels like we missed out and we don't get to do as much as we use to." I asked Lacey Pospeck how she felt

about being a senior, "Its really not that bad if you stay organized and work hard and stay positive; you can accomplish anything even if you have college classes, yeah you lose out on a little bit of sleep but welcome to life." I decided to talk to one more person to see how they felt and if they had an advice on being a senior. "It feels great to be a senior, yes it's harder than I thought to be a senior, there's a lot more work and a lot more stress but

staying positive is important. Take time to relax and stay positive." Sam Kujawski. Being a senior may be hard but its worth it in the end because you feel so proud of the work you accomplished, the friends you made, and the work you did during this short life of being a senior.

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# OPINION

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By Kayla Lampson  
Staff writer

## Chew in the school

**Attention All Chewers!** Most of Aitkin High School students and especially staff don't like to see your chew. First of all, you're not even supposed to have it in school. If you're going to chew, spit it somewhere else besides floors and walls. Better yet, maybe leave it at home. I don't think that you would like it if someone spit their gum out on the stairs and it got stuck to your shoes. Why do you think others have no objection to your nasty wad?

I think that anyone that gets caught chewing should have detention, should have to clean it up and have to sweep the school. If you chew and you spit in the toilet **FLUSH IT!** People don't want to see it.

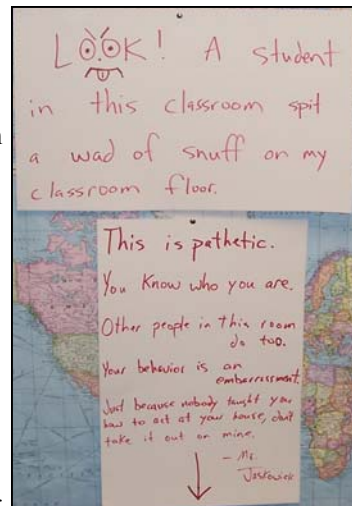
I talked to Mr. Carlson, and asked him how many times during the school year students get busted for chewing? "Not enough. They get busted about every couple of weeks."

In my ninth grade year, people were chewing in class and they left spit stains on the brand new carpet. In Mr. Jaskowiak's room there are two big wads of chew on the floor.

The janitors have to work hard enough around this

school and they don't need your making it worse for them. The janitors are not your mothers; they are not there to hold your hand and take you to the bathroom and make sure you spit your chew in the toilet and flush the toilet.

Next time before spitting your chew out where it doesn't belong stop and think. Think about if you had to clean this up and people were spitting out their gum. Be courteous and spit it somewhere where people won't have to look at it. Also, your smile will be a lot prettier without nasty tobacco stains and you won't get mouth cancer if you give up the dirty habit.



A sign that is in Mr. Jaskowiak's room.

By Megan Monse  
Staff writer

## We Are One

Coming from a small school, many of the students here have friends in multiple grades. Unlike higher populated schools, we know almost all of the athletes participating in the weekly games or events which give us the opportunity to cheer on our classmates. It seems that often times there are bigger rivalries among the various teams within the school than between the other teams in the conference, section or class. Teams often compete for the media spotlight when multiple teams are excelling during a given season and representing the town. There can sometimes be minor disturbances among them also.

Unity is the state of being one. That's what a school is. We are all working our hardest to be the best we possibly can be. Everything we are doing now is giving us a lesson in life for our futures. So, why not support your fellow student athletes while you can? I don't know who would want to look back on their high school years remembering the drama between friends

because they were a hockey player or a basketball player and their friends were in a different sport and none of us were getting along.

Our coaches teach us what it means to be a determined, dedicated, successful and responsible leader. With that being said, we are developing those skills to compete for personal success in the future. Winning is important when it comes to competing, but it isn't all about the points. It's about being a better-rounded person on and off your stage and holding your head up high when things get rough.

We will not always be residents of the Aitkin community. Many, if not all of us, will live somewhere other than here at some point or time in our lives. With that being said, we need to learn to get along with people of different talents, skills, backgrounds, minorities, and just overall appearance. How could you get through a day at your job ten years from now if you don't like a co-worker because of their opinions or views? I'm guess-

By Dayna Pearson  
Staff writer

## Life after High school

Some people know from an early age, what it is that they want to do when they grow up and how they plan to get there. However, not all of us are so sure of are plans, and that's ok. School is not just about careers and getting a high-paying job, it's a place for learning about yourself and the world.

If college is in your plans for the future, it is important to dedicate time and effort into your GPA, test scores, class rank and any extracurricular activities. They want to know how well-rounded you are and what makes you stand out from everyone

else. When selecting a school, you must ask yourself questions such as: What are my strengths?, Do I want to stay close to home?, Would I prefer a city environment or a small college town?, What kind of learning environment is best for me? These questions are important for asking, to narrow your choices and decide on a school. Once you've narrowed your choices make arrangements to visit, find out more about the school. Remember in the end you're not the only one making a decision, schools are picking from a large variety of applicants.

# Social Castes: When You're In You're In When You're Out Your Out

By: Samantha Meyer  
Staff Writer

For the 5 ½ years I have spent in the Aitkin High School, I have seen the full spectrum of bullying. I have heard a lot of crude names called, and I have seen a lot of hurtful actions directed at other people. But how are we supposed to be a community when we don't act like a community? I believe it started in 7<sup>th</sup> grade for me, and lasted until about 9<sup>th</sup> grade. I would dress a certain way (the way everyone else was), act a certain way (the way everyone else acted), and even talk a certain way because the media portrays a vision that you are meaningless, or nothing, if you are not "in". What a waste of time! I am so glad that in 9<sup>th</sup> grade I finally learned how to think for myself, and learned to be the person I wanted to be, and not anything other than that. Have you ever noticed how there is a group of girls, twig thin, blue eyed, maybe even blonde haired that giggle when you walk by? I've seen this before - in this very high school. I see people obsessing over the new fashion or the new technology and if you don't

have it, you are not "in".

But what is so important about being "in" anyway? What is the purpose of belonging to one social caste instead of just belonging to a bunch of them? Heck, I thought that if people hadn't learned from their own common sense that they would have at least learned from the movie Mean Girls.

Sure, the movie was exaggerated; I am pretty sure that one of us is not going to get hit by a bus, or anything of the sort. But how vicious the different social classes were against each other; Yup, those are definitely possible things that happen. In Aitkin? Well, no, I don't see some crazy bunch of girls making a stupid childish thing called a "Burn Book", but I do foresee things getting out of hand at times. I am in no way saying I am perfect; I too have looked at someone and said something bad about them, or made a cruel remark about something they were doing, or wearing.

It's human nature, survival of the fittest out there. And, if you don't grow a backbone you will never make it. No matter what, you are going to be made

fun of by someone and not everyone is going to like you, but all you need to do is suck it up, and grow a backbone.

On a different page, Aitkin also is a pretty good school for social classification. Such as, I can walk around the hallways and hear people of different ages, social classes, and personality types say "hello" to me, and in return I say it back. But it is marvelous how those select people that will take the extra step to say "hi" to someone not in their social class, will actually do it and not care who hears or what they say. But as stated before, Aitkin is a very dramatic place, and when you say one thing, it travels at the speed of light. So, I only hope that people some day see how their actions do affect others.

(This could be overly dramatic) But teens commit suicide, or engage in other acts of violence every year because they are picked on or not accepted by others. So, to the "jocks", "preps", "geeks", "skaters", "emos", "gangsters", "hicks", wherever you are, I am encouraging you to take a step out of your



comfort zone, and say "hi" to someone you normally wouldn't say "hi" to. You only have 6 years of High School; you might as well enjoy it instead of spending your time trying to impress people. A very vague statement, but being yourself will get you further than being a mannequin.

So, in closing, before I graduate I am laying this on the line: To anyone I have ever said something about, that may have might not been the nicest, I am sorry. To anyone I may have snubbed off because I "thought" I was better than you, I am sorry. To anyone I may have lashed my pathetic teenage anger at, I am sorry. I only hope that before you graduate, or before you leave this place, you make amends with the people you hurt. Because you can not sit and tell me that someone has not made fun of you at least once, and when they did, I am positive that you did not like it. So please, make amends with the ones you have hurt over this stupid social class garbage and realize that it is better to have many friends, than many enemies.

## Opinion Poll: How do you feel about the internet blocks in our school?

By: Jace Goodmanson  
Staff Writer



Colton Anderson-  
It disappoints me.



Spencer Nutting-  
It's not cool because I don't get my education.



Brett Skattum-  
First of all, I think we need to declassify and use our resources of America.



Levi Stifter-  
It's worthless and they serve no point.



Tom LaLond-  
It really grinds my gears.



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# SPORTS



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## Look at How Far They've Come

Lacey Pospeck  
Staff Writer

On Friday, February 27<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, February 28<sup>th</sup> Aitkin wrestlers went to sections in Braham and came home with 5 individuals qualified for the State Wrestling Tournament. Wrestlers winning section titles and qualifying for state were Keith Wasserzieher and Taylor Wilke. Finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> place and also qualifying for state were Jordan Chouanard, Ryan Skinner and Travis Tuege. These wrestlers left to wrestle at the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul on Wednesday March 4<sup>th</sup> and will be staying there until Saturday March 7<sup>th</sup>. Taylor Wilke remarked, "I'm anticipating going to state and it's a good end for my final year in wrestling now that I'm graduating." The wrestlers who did not make it to state consisted of Isaac Novak and Taylor-Thomas Bitker who placed 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> were Dalton Stevens and Levi

Stifter, 5<sup>th</sup> was Doug Kommer, and 6<sup>th</sup> place was Jeff Moe and Brian Wold.

The boys will be staying at the Marriot hotel in Roseville. On Wednesday weigh-ins begin at 3:00; team



The Varsity Wrestling Team matches start at 4:00, and individuals are at 6:00. Awards will be held Saturday morning. The honors being awarded will be given to place winners, participants, highest academics, and a \$1,000 scholar-

ship. In their free time they plan to swim, eat, and play videogames in their hotel rooms.

The year started out rough for the boys because they weren't doing as well as they were expected to, but as momentum picked up, they began to find solutions to their problems and are sending five young men to state. They also narrowly missed the team entrance to the State Tournament as well. All of the wrestlers worked diligently towards their goals and did an amazing job this year. I congratulate the seniors and wish the best of luck to the next year's wrestlers.

A quote to sum up the pride and dedication I'd like to leave you with is, "I'm a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work the more I have of it." Thomas Jefferson. This is certainly true of our 2009 wrestlers. Go Gobblers!

## Boys Basketball Heads into Sections

By Taylor Wilke  
Staff Writer

The boys B-Ball team is in their last week of regular season before they head to sections. For seniors Dan Catlin, Neal Thornbloom, and Albert Peterson this is their last year and their last chance to make a run at State. All the boys I talked to were having fun, despite the way things had been going for them. Through the season the boys came up with some big wins against Onamia, Ogilvie and Hinckley-Finlayson who are all Great River Conference opponents. The boys have two games left in the regular season, Deer River on the fifth, and Crosby on the sixth. In Tuesday night's game vs. Rush City the boys fell short with a 43-64 finish. This was the last home game in the high school careers of the senior boys. And respectfully Neal Thornbloom and Dan Catlin were selected as the Office Shop players of the game. Leaving this game early were Nick Sundholm with a foot/ankle injury, and Albert Peterson with an unknown illness. The loss of two was noticeable as the game pressed on. This will leave the

team at 5-16 heading into their road games to end of the season.



The Varsity Boys Basketball Team

# Postseason hopes for Girls Basketball

Sam Dally  
Staff Writer

The Aitkin girls' basketball team's regular season has come to a close. Their last game of the season was cancelled last week due to the weather and wasn't rescheduled. They achieved a lavish record of 23-1 and are ranked at fifteenth in state.

Now they are on to their next challenge, making a run in the postseason. They are the first seed in the race to get to the state tournament. The girls will have to win four grueling games to make it all the way. Being first in the section, they have clinched a home game for the first round that will be played on Thursday, March 5. They will be playing Rush City, a team that they have beaten twice already this season. If they win, they will be heading

up to Duluth to take on the second round. The teams will be increasing with skill as they get further into the tournament. When asked about the road to state, Captain Emily Mehr said, "We're excited about the games but we're going to take them one at a time."

The team has had an outbreak of influenza the last week. Many of the players have gotten sick. They are trying to take care of it before it gets to out of hand, having all been put on a team antibiotic. Lets all hope they get healthy before their games so they can play up to their capability.

## Boys Athlete of the Week Nick Sundholm

Arika Fairchild  
Staff Writer

Nick Sundholm is this week's Boy Athlete of the Week. He's a junior on the Varsity Boys Basketball team and has been on varsity since the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. I asked him when he first started playing basketball and he said he started in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. His brothers are the ones he credits his skills to and he

said that they were the ones to get him into the sport. Seeing them play, he decided he'd try it too. The ends of the games are the hardest part for him and he also says his favorite memory is the section game against Pine City last year. Nick also plays tennis in the spring, when he's not busy with a sport Nick likes to hang out with friends and snowboard. Congratulations Nick and good luck with the rest of the season!!



Nick Sundholm

## Girls Athlete of the Week Brittany Bordwell



Brittany Bordwell

Shannon Westerlund  
Staff Writer

Brittany Bordwell is this week's female athlete of the week. She put a lot of effort into her first year as an All Star and accomplished a lot. I asked Brittany what made her join dance and she replied, "I have a passion for music and have always wanted to dance." Her favorite thing about dance is the bond that you share and make with your team and the rush of

performing. Brittany stated, "My biggest highlight of the season was taking 2<sup>nd</sup> at state. We all worked really hard and for my first year it was very exciting." Brittany enjoys singing and is really busy with Musical right now. Johnny Depp is her favorite celebrity because "he becomes the character that he is casted as." Her favorite food is buffalo wings with bleu cheese and her favorite color is blue. After graduation Brittany plans to attend college at Masters Recording Institute.



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# SPORTS

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## Track Season is Warming Up

**Kyle Hansen**  
Staff Writer

Spring is around the corner and you know what that means. For some, it is trying to get the guts to ask that special girl to prom, and for others it is the glorious feeling of taking a run in the warm spring sun up to the track field. That's right; track season is soon to be upon us.

Track is a great way to make new friends. If you are new to this school or you just want to meet somebody new, you can join the track team. The meets are very competitive, but it has a very fun, and friendly atmosphere. You can make some very good friends at home and away from home when you join the team.

Track can build confidence just like any other sport. But running naturally makes you feel good about yourself. You will get a nice tan and a nice skin complexion, and you will sure love the uniforms. The medals and ribbons will also give a great feeling of pride and it is something that you don't get in other sports.

Haven't you ever had that feeling that you practice very hard for a

game but you barely get off the bench? If you join track, you get to compete in up to four events which is better than sitting on the bench. You do have some time to mingle, relax, eat something, warm up and blast music; you don't have to just sit with regret on the bench. Why waste all the exercise and training you had been doing when you don't get to apply it earlier in the year?

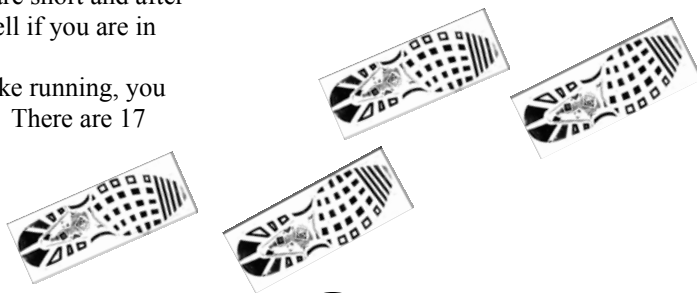
Last year we did not have as many athletes and we even had to recruit some junior high students to compete with varsity. The main reason why many drop out of track or just don't want to join track is that, it's harder than it looks. The practices are very intense sometimes and you will only get one chance to compete. "They all think you have to run 5 miles every day, but you really don't," said Mr. Carlson, our girl's track coach. But the good thing is that the practices for track are short and after school, and it works well if you are in other activities.

If you don't like running, you are not required to run. There are 17 different events at a meet and you can do

field events such as the long jump and discus, hurdling, and of course, running, if you do like to run. You can even choose your race. If you like to get it done with and go very fast, sprinting might be good for you. If you go lots of stamina and determination, a mile or 2 mile will be great. If you just want to take a nice run, an 800 will be great. If you love competition and love being part of a team, the relays will be good for you.

It's up to you. If you are not doing anything in the spring, or you are already in a spring sport such as softball and you are looking over the fence, track is an excellent choice.

Track might not be the sport for everyone but if you like to run, build confidence, and make new friends; track is the sport for you. Come and join us in a few weeks!



## Swinging into a New Season

**Dayna Pearson**  
Staff Writer

The Aitkin Softball team's season is underway. Open gym has been provided for the girls to start warming up and practice for the season. This year there are a total of five seniors on the team; these girls are more than ready for the season to start. The teams' positive attitudes and eagerness has helped them do well in the

past. They are the returning champs of the Great River Conference, and have high expectations for the outcome of this season. "We are a strong team that is excited to dominate the competition of the GRC teams," commented Sara Hoge and Kelsey Klucas.

Most of the girls on the team have had a close bond since Jr. High. They work well together and they know each others strengths and weak-

nesses on and off the field. Good Luck girls and enjoy the rest of your season.



# Mr. Lake, the true tale of a legend

By Laura Peggs  
Staff Writer

Mr. Lake is a true Aitkin Gobbler. In the beginning Mr. Lake didn't care for Aitkin county let alone the city, he was tarred and feathered out of the place and didn't plan on coming back. The important thing is, he did come back and has been teaching at Aitkin High School for 30 years.

When Mr. Lake was young he didn't want to become a teacher, but when he got a little older there was a goofy teacher named Mr. Durued that made him consider the idea. Mr. Lake studied at South West State and graduated out of the University of Minnesota. What really pulled him towards becoming a teacher was when he met his wife. She was a teacher in the Aitkin area and he stayed here for her. When he met her he decided that he needed to do something with his life. He wanted to find a place in the world, and teaching was that place.

Out of all the things that he could have taught he picked Agriculture. He likes the subject and also grew up on a farm, and when the position opened up in Aitkin for an Agriculture teacher he took it. When he came to Aitkin it wasn't an easy job. He kicked it old school and came up with "Lake's Laws" and his students haven't stepped too far out



We are going to miss you next year Mr. Lake. You left a great legacy behind.

of line since. Aitkin High School Science teacher Mr. Cox said, "He is the most student devoted teacher on the staff."

Teaching in Aitkin was his first job starting in 1979 with the class of 1980 and will end this year 2009. He did receive other teaching jobs along the way, but stuck by Aitkin. Mr. Lake said that it was purely dumb luck that he happened to be back in the Ait-

kin area. He wouldn't change anything about it. The people are his favorite thing about Aitkin. He said, "Where else can you go down the street where everyone waves and smiles, and knows you by name." He loves the Aitkin area, and believes that the best kids are here. When Mr. Lake was presented with a purple heart from his years in the marines, almost the whole town showed up to support him.

Mr. Lake has done a lot of different things throughout his life. He has been in the force from 1968 to 1970, and traveled to all of South East Asia except Guam while he was enlisted. Mr. Lake is a father, uncle, brother, husband, grandpa, but did you know that he played in a rock band for 10 years and still plays the piano. He also wants to learn how to fly an airplane while performing acrobatic stunts during flight. Ashley Venne, one of Mr. Lake's underground members said, "Mr. Lake is a fun teacher, I remember a time when everyone was taking and he wanted their attention, he goes into his huge closet pull out a kid's toy megaphone and got everyone's attention"

As his last year he hopes that the kids really learn something, because he wants to go out with a bang!

## Nara Saraggananda faced long, scary journey to U.S.

By Abby Palkie  
Staff Writer

Nara Saraggananda went to the Suvannapumi Airport in Bangkok with her friend. She flew from Bangkok to Japan, which took about six hours. Then she flew for 14 hours from Japan to Minneapolis, Minnesota. They arrived at the airport at around noon. She didn't feel like she was in America. Her and her friend departed at the airport in Minneapolis, and they both went their separate ways. Nara sat and waited at the Minneapolis airport for 9 hours. She felt alone after her friend left, and started to feel nervous. "I felt sick in the stomach while sitting and waiting, the seats were so uncomfortable." She then flew about an hour to Brainerd, Minnesota by herself, where she was picked up by the Dauns, her host family.

Nara is a foreign exchange student at Aitkin High School. She speaks two different languages, Thai and English. She's been speaking English since she was 5 years old. She learned the English language in her



Nara Saraggananda

school. She said, "The language was hard to learn. The alphabet was easy, but it was the communicating and the conversations that made it more difficult." Back in Thailand, Nara lives with her parents, sister, and brother, along with her four dogs. She attends the Bodindecha (sing sing hasanee) School in Thailand. They treat her well there but the teachers are very strict. Her school is about 1-2 miles away from her home, and there are about 4,000 students who attend her school. She plans on going to college for a business degree. Nara is a Buddhist, and has been since she can recall. In Thailand, she enjoys spicy food, such as curry and rice. Thailand

is very warm and has three seasons; summer, rain, and winter which is usually only about 60 degrees.

Nara wanted to come to America to study and improve her English. She also wanted to learn about the different cultures and the language here in America. America was the only place she was able to go to as a foreign exchange student. In order to become a foreign exchange student, Nara had to take tests for her language skills and she also had to have an interview. She is very glad she came to America, but wouldn't want to live here because she would miss her family.

She enjoys many things here in America. In Thailand, she has to study more subjects than she does here in America, and they have different schedules every day. In America, she enjoys baking, and her favorite food here is wild rice soup. Her favorite activity is dancing, and she loved her visit to Chicago. "I don't regret coming here to America," said Nara.

Mar. 5, 2009

# NEWS



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## BPA Goes To State!

By Lacy Watkins  
Staff Writer

BPA is headed to the Hyatt in Minneapolis on March 12-14. They will be leaving the school on March 11 and will stay at a hotel awaiting their next day of high stress competitions.

They will do all their competitions during the day and not only will they be competing for Nationals, they also have to do at least two General Events where they can get State Awards, but don't qualify them for Nationals. They don't want this event to be all competition and stress, so there will be a dance held on Friday night, where all BPA members can hang out and get to know everybody, out of competition mode. Aitkin

BPA would have the chance to see the Timberwolves play but they decided not to.

The following students will be competing at State: Alex Baumgartner in Information Technology Concepts and Legal Office Procedures, Alicia Panchyshyn in Fundamental Word Processing Skills and Legal Office Procedures, Grace Anderson in Interview Skills, Heidi Voller in Advanced Office Systems and Procedures and Advanced Word Processing Skills, Janelle Holte in Desktop Publishing and Interview Skills, Megan Rubbelke in Advanced Interview Skills and Prepared Speech, Michael Flowers in Basic Office Systems and Procedures and Legal Office Procedures, Sarah Chute in Interview Skills, Todd

Baumgartner in Legal Office Procedures and Medical Office Procedures, Zsafia Simon in Keyboarding Production and Fundamental Spreadsheet Applications and Gabe Courier in Banking and Financing. Hopefully these events can take our fellow students to Dallas in May for Nationals.

These students will be doing general events to get state awards but will not qualify for Nationals: Heidi Voller in Management/Marketing/human Resources Concepts, Laura Peggs in Insurance Concepts, Megan Rubbelke in Administrative Support Concepts, Sarah Chute in Parliamentary Procedures Concepts and Todd Baumgartner in Administrative Support Concepts.

## Speech is a lot more than you might think it is

By Karisa Glanz  
Staff Writer

Speech a talent that one might have or one has to lead up to. When the word speech comes up, most people picture it as getting up in the middle of a class or audience and performing. That's not all it's about though. Mr. Lindgren, the coach along with Erling Ellison tells students, it's not like that at all. Yes you do have to get up in front of people and speak but that is why you practice in front of your teams and go to meets. There is a great variety of students that are from 7<sup>th</sup> grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

Speech is not like a sport, if you miss one practice you will not get penalized. The coach encourages people to try to come and practice but if they don't come to a meet, they will not get in trouble. They understand that there is a lot of stuff that goes on during the week. When they are going to meets, they are practicing for when they have to go to state or a big meet where you will have to act out what you are doing. Speech is for everybody, anybody can do well and enjoy what they are doing. They can have fun and choose what ever they want to perform. They can be themselves. There are a few requirements though that you do have to meet such as come to the practices

that you can, say the speech to the coaches, say their speech to other adult judges and come to the mandatory meetings where they will tell the judges their schedule for the week and talk about the upcoming events and where they will be held.

There are a total of 13 categories which you can choose from. The hardest Category is the Extemporaneous speaking which is the judge pulls out a topic and you get 30 minutes to respond to it. The topic that they draw it is a current events topic where they have 30 minutes to talk about their subject. This year there is one person that chose that topic and it was Alice Browning. The easiest topics range from Creative Expression, Duo Interpretation, Humorous Interpretation and many more.

Mr. Lindgren tries to motivate the team by positive reinforcement, that they can do and accomplish anything that they set their minds to. He wants the team to know and understand that he is here for them and not for himself. That he wants people to know that speech is an individual activity, that any one can do it.

There recent meet was in Virginia and did a vocal challenge speech on Saturday February 21. The winning places are:

Alice Browning received 1<sup>st</sup> place medal in Discussion.



AHS Speech Team members posed for a picture earlier this year.

Sonia Ellison received 2<sup>nd</sup> place medal in Serious Prose.

Kori Flowers received 2<sup>nd</sup> medal in storytelling.

Zsafia Simon placed 4<sup>th</sup> place ribbon in Informative.

Kyle Daun received 6<sup>th</sup> place ribbon in Serious Pose

The other speech students that participated received a Honorable Mention ribbon were Steven Kurtz in Serious prose, Molly Franz and Shawnee Skaj in Interpretative Duo, Michael Flowers and Todd Baumgartner in Interpretative Duo and Alex Baumgartner in Informative





# Knowledge Bowl gears up for final competitions

By Lauren Landrus  
Staff Writer

Aitkin High School's knowledge bowl teams were back in action this past month at meets in Rush City and Brainerd. The first competition of the month was held in Brainerd at Washington Middle school; here the teams faced off against 27 other knowledge bowl teams.

The Å Les Fils Napoleon team, which consists of Steven Kurtz, James Salmonson, Michael Hanson, and Todd Baumgartner, triumphed and placed second out of the 27 teams and first in their bracket. The Bruce Dickenson Experience, which consists of Jeff Moe, Emma Reeves, Sarah Stauffer, Alex Baumgartner, and Matt Johnson, took third in their bracket as did the Toxic Megacolons. The Toxic Megacolons consists of Ann Rhodes, Shaun Hanson, Mitch Collins, Jack Reeves, and Kyle Seever. On Feb tenth the teams traveled to

Rush City for the Great River Conference Knowledge Bowl competition. It was a day filled with success for the three knowledge bowl teams. All three teams placed within the top ten. The Å Les Fils Napoleon team took second place. The team of Emma Reeves, Sarah Stauffer and Alex Baumgartner followed in third place, and the Toxic Megacolons placed eighth.

The teams finished off the month with another tough competition at Washington Middle School in Brainerd, this time against 30 teams. The brainiacs battled against teams from Verndale, Nevis, Henning, Pine River- Backus, Royalton, Pierz and Pequot Lakes.

Although it was very tough competition the, Å Les Fils Napoleon team topped the competition and took first! The Ultraviolet Catastrophe team of Alex Baumgartner, Matt Johnson, Emma Reeves and Sarah Stauffer came in fourth place.

The Toxic Wooden Spoons (also known as The Toxic Megacolons) had their best results of the season, despite being short two members of their team.

The teams will be back in action this month; their next competition is at Washington Middle School in Brainerd on March twelfth. This competition could be the last one if the teams do not score high enough, but Mr. May said he was confident that his teams would advance and continue to compete into subsections and sections. When asked how his teams prepare for the strenuous competitions, Mr. May replied, "They have a diet rich in omega and fatty acids, good brain food." Mr. May also said he is very proud of his teams this year and that "It has been fun to see the kids do well and try their hardest." Keep up the good work Knowledge Bowl!

## Sports Calendar

Thursday, Mar 5  
Career Fair For 11<sup>th</sup> graders at Itasca Com. Collage  
Boy Varsity, JV, C squad basketball game at Deer River starting at 5:00p.m.  
Girls Varsity Basketball in Aitkin against TBD. Starting at 7:00p.m.  
Wrestling at State Time TBD

Friday, Mar 6  
End of trimester  
Boys Varsity, JV, C squad Basketball at Crosby starting at 5:45p.m.  
Wrestling at State Time TBD

Saturday, Mar 7  
Boys' 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade tournament at Milaca time TBD.  
Girls Varsity Sections at UMD. Time TBD.  
Varsity Speech Meet

in Park Rapids at 8:30p.m.  
Wrestling at State Time TBD

Monday, Mar 9  
Beginning of 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester

Thursday, Mar 12  
Varsity Speech Meet Quarter Finals at Grand Rapids High School time TBD

Friday, Mar 13  
Teacher Workshop / no school for students

Saturday, Mar 14  
Commerce Show Varsity Speech Meet vs. Eveleth-Gilbert @ Eveleth-Gilbert High School starting at 8:30a.m.

Sunday, Mar 15  
Commerce Show

## Gobbler Gaffes

