

# The Charger

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[www.thecharger.org](http://www.thecharger.org)

## Students triumph in Scholastic Art Contest

BY VERONICA M.

Every year, Peacock art teacher, Mrs. Dengler, enters her students in the Scholastic Art Contest sponsored by the West Suburban Consortium of Schools.

Both middle and high school students are entered in this contest.

The awards include a golden key, a silver key and an honorable mention.

“The Scholastic Art Contest is the largest student competition of its kind,” said Mrs. Dengler, “Students between grade seven through nine can enter the competition. The artwork is judged on its originality, uniqueness, and quality of work.”

Professional artists in Illinois judge the students artwork. There are about fifteen different categories of artwork that are entered in the art fair. These include ceramics, drawing, photography.

Eighth grader Lara P. won a gold key in photography, and Ashley Kolar, seventh grade, won a gold key in ceramics. There were also three honorable mentions: Eighth graders Alex C., Trish H., and Mari D. All won honorable mentions in photography.

Lara P.’s and Ashley K.’s artwork will go to New York to the National Art Competition. Peacock is honored to have their students’ artwork in the National competition. Many famous artists first started at the New York National Art Competition.

See Art Contest  
Page 3

## Is our school ready for a biological attack?

BY AMY E.

If you have watched the news lately, you have seen the warnings saying that you should have plenty of duct tape and plastic tarp to block your windows. They also said that you should have a three day supply of food for each person in the building. Dr. Nickisch was interviewed to learn if our school had those supplies.

Though recent statements by government officials suggest that it is important for every building to be prepared with basic supplies, Dr. Nickisch said that covering the school with duct tape and plastic was a silly idea. Our school has too many vents to cover up and trying to cover the school wouldn’t save us.

Dr. Nickisch stated that we have food and water stored in the school. We have stored, clean water because the water in Itasca used to be very rusty. We also have canned food left over from past food drives that we couldn’t give away.

Because we don’t have the duct tape and plastic, Dr. Nickisch stated that in the event of a biological attack, we would first call 911 and then go to the basement and wait for help.

Then the fire department would come and take us to a safer place.

New safety flipbooks have been placed in each room in our school. They list new safety procedures for many types of problems. That these brochures were recently provided might lead you to believe that they would have a plan for a terrorist attack. However, the closest thing on the list to a biological attack is a chemical spill.

To console the students who are afraid, Dr. Nickisch said that our whole town was well-prepared if something were to happen.



[www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)

Hopefully, the sure-fire plan the village has will work. It is also important to note that there is a very low chance of an attack happening anywhere near our school.

### Inside

**Band Concert - p. 2**

**Turning against the flag - p. 3**

**Laura Boeche on respect - p. 4**

**Broadcast Studio - p. 5**

**Volleyball season - p. 8**

**Don't miss the second annual  
Literary and Art Magazine  
insert!**

## Band concert swings to railroad theme



Photo by Megan Z.

BY MEGAN AND SARAH Z.

The crowd grew silent, the conductor raised his arms, the downbeat fell, and the concert began.

On February 23, the Concert Band, Varsity Band, and Jazz Band performed three pieces each at the Peacock Middle School Winter Band Concert. The concert featured a railroad theme which was a real hit. Two pieces to support this theme were *Take the Blues Train* and *The Great Locomotive Chase*.

*The Great Locomotive Chase* was based on a true event in which 19 union soldiers stole an important confederate train engine.

The Jazz Band kicked off the concert with three pieces: *Killer Fox*, *Chili Pepper 101*, and *Gospel John*.

Next, the Varsity Band played a composition by Mr. Loest called *Dedicatum*. This piece was dedicated to a beloved school principal Mary Drew who tragically died of pneumonia.

The Varsity Band also played *Take the Blues Train*, and *Sea Song Trilogy*.

The Concert Band finished the concert with *Pevensey Castle*, *Fairest of the Fair* and *The Great Locomotive Chase*.

Overall, Mr. Loest and others thought the concert was wonderful.

When the Jazz Band went to their competition, they got a Division I rating. All Jazz Band soloists did really well.

## What is good and what is right? A lunchbox survey

BY ERIC A.,  
EDITOR

FINISHING

Many people in school see lunch as the freedom time from learning, but are we really getting the nutrition we need from it?

A survey of sixth, seventh and eighth grade students reveals that only two out of eight people feel their lunch is healthy.

Many students rely on the vending machines for lunch. Of course, the students who proclaim their lunch is unhealthy are the ones who bring frozen food from home, and buy snacks at the vending machines.

Because of peer pressure, many students try to eat the same thing as their friends. Only about 25% of students eat a healthy diet, and most students eat the same thing day after day. Most students, however, concluded that they enjoyed their lunch.

Our school supplies vending machines to sell products, and to make some extra money. Is the school doing a good job?

Most food wrappers indicated a fattening six to twenty-four grams of fat. Some had even more.

Many students said they really don't care

about nutrition. They just want the food to taste good.

Students indicated that they would like more variety in the vending machines. They wanted the foods offered to change every couple of weeks.

Many students eat mini Tony's pizza's from the vending machines every single day. This explains the long lines at the microwaves heating up food.

Most students felt that their parents should pack their lunches to make healthy meals. Others felt the school should supply healthier foods in the vending

machines.

Another problem is that some students do not bring a lunch to school and tend to beg others so they can get their hands on leftover junk food.

Although 75% of students have unhealthy lunches we know how to make it better. The school should improve quality of food in the vending machines and/or require that parents provide their students with a healthy lunch.

All most students really care about is taste, and how much lunch will fill you up. Because the school probably will not require us to eat a nutritious lunch, it is up to us students to make smarter decisions on what to eat.

**Most students felt that their parents should pack their lunches to make healthy meals.**

Ken Majkowicz

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## Students move on to nationals in art contest

Continued from page 1

When interviewed recently, Lara explained that her artwork "was a picture of a reflection of leaves floating on water and a reflection of a house. I created it over the weekend for a photography class project."

Lara actually thought another piece of her artwork was better than her reflection picture. Lara is very excited that her work will go on to New York.

Ashley explained that her artwork, "was a ceramic fish." "In art class Mrs. Dengler showed our class how to create a fish," she added.

Ashley also likes to paint and draw. She did not expect it to win a certificate and a pin.

Mari's described her photo as "A black and white picture of my sister pushing a swing."

"I took my little sister to the park and then took the picture of her pushing the swing. I thought that it was cute enough to be an award-winning piece of artwork," she added.

Besides photography, Mari also likes to draw.

Trisha said, "For photography class, I took a black and white picture of my sister. We were at the park and I took a picture of her. I wasn't expecting to win anything!"

Trisha also likes to draw.

Alex said, "I shot a photo of my bike. I took the picture and then I developed it. I did not expect to win this award."

There were over two thousand entrees in the west region competition. Only seven hundred were chosen. These lucky five students from Peacock Middle School were chosen out of seven hundred for their skill, emerging style and originality.

See winning art work in **Silhouette**, the Literary and Art Magazine insert

# Editorial and Opinion

## Turning against the flag It's more patriotic than we all thought

BY CARLY L.,  
OP-ED EDITOR

A few nights ago in the midst of poring over piles of homework, my attention was distracted by the voice on the newscast in the background noise of my room.

"College basketball player turns against the flag, and some people aren't very happy about this stance. More after the break." This little message was followed by a car commercial, but I was still thinking about the news clip. "Why would she turn her back against the flag?"

I waited patiently for the newscast to continue, wanting to understand what was going on.

It turned out that this student was protesting against war with Iraq by turning her back on the flag when the national anthem was sung. But the next video clip showed a local Vietnam Veteran running out on the court and shoving an American flag into the girl's face, screaming at her, as she tried to hold back tears.

I couldn't believe what I was seeing. A veteran of this country was humiliating a girl who was standing up for what she believed

in. How was that veteran being patriotic?

This is America, a place where we are encouraged to express our feelings, where we can stand up for what we believe in, and where we won't be persecuted, no matter which way we are facing.

That man had absolutely no right to go and shove that flag in her face.

What gave him a right to try to make her believe something she was against? Because he was a veteran?

No. Nothing gives him the right to attack her for her beliefs. We are a country built for the rights of the people, and what is one of the most important American rights? Freedom of speech, our freedom to say what we believe in.

This is why people are dying in Iraq. If you are not with Saddam, you are against him. Are we really going to sink to that level when we don't agree? If we let this go on, where is it going to stop?

As an American, I have the right to write this article, to agree with some girl on the TV. Not because of her stance against war, but for her right to say what she believes, even if no one will stand with her.

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Write the editorial board with questions, comments and complaints. Correspondence must be signed.



BY LAURA B.  
COLUMNIST

## Respect... NOT a given

Demanding respect is mindless, shallow and moronic.

The best way to be passionately hated in the three seconds is to say, "I demand your respect!"

Many people think that respect should *just be there* for an adult from a child. I disagree. If any adult chooses to treat a child with a lack of respect, or decides to insult you, you should have the equal right to do the same back, whether it be a teacher, parent, or even a stranger.

Being an adult does not make you more special and especially not any more intelligent. You still hear adults in their 40s saying "That ain't gonna happen," and "That went good."

It is completely outrageous that people who do not treat others with respect demand it as a right because they are older.

**It's as if adults aren't "grown up" enough to be told the truth by a child.**

"Respect is earned not given," is a sign

often seen in classrooms. I find it extremely ironic that a teacher can freely display that sign, and yet, literally demand respect from you.

Knowing that people are pretending to show respect should not make the people who demand it feel any more secure.

The argument that "because I'm older, I should be shown respect" is childish. It's as if adults aren't "grown up" enough to be told the truth by a child.

Respect should rightfully be shown to the respectful, whether it be a child or an adult. Adults who act like the supreme beings to children are in my eyes are frauds.

## What it takes too be cool

BY EVIN S.

Really think about it, what do you do just to be "cool" or "fit-in"?

Do you think your parents would like to see or hear what you are doing and/or saying around your buddies?

Think about what you do and say. Are your friends going to be there to stand up for you when you're getting yelled at by your parent or even getting arrested by the police?

Will they go to jail with you or spend their money to bail you out? You have to make the

right decisions about who you're hanging around with and what you're saying.

Let's say you decide to drive some friends, or even people you hardly know because you want to look good, to a place and one of them is drinking and you get pulled over.

Even though you were not drinking, you will get in the same trouble as everyone else in the car.

You get to choose your friends. Make the right choices. Only you have the power to control what road you take, the easy road to failure or the difficult road to success.

Think about it.

## Where's a kid to go?

BY MONICA M.

After reading an article, "Municipal complex to displace part of arboretum" written by Steven Gregor, in the last Charger, I started thinking about the new police station Itasca is getting.

Do we really need it? Think about it. Is there that much crime going on in Itasca that we absolutely need a new police station?

The worst thing that happens each week is not a rape, a murder, or a shooting. It's a theft; not a car theft, a power tool theft! Isn't that just the biggest crime ever? We are just letting money fly right out of our hands! The money isn't even flying away to homeless people's hands, it's just flying away!

If you look at Itasca, you will notice that there are not many places for kids and/or teens, like myself, to go to. There is a lounge at the park district, which you have to pay for, some playgrounds, and that's about it.

**It's no wonder kids go looking for trouble, there is nothing here to do for excitement!**

It's no wonder kids go looking for trouble, there is nothing here to do for excitement! Outside of school, some hangouts are 7-Eleven, areas by the railroad tracks and parking lots. That's about it. It's sad, I know.

You might be saying, well, if they, as in we the kids, were involved in extracurricular activities, they might have places to go. But what if we don't have enough talent to be on teams? What if we just can't handle the thought of doing the same activity everyday or almost everyday? What if we just don't want an after school obligation? You get my point.

Instead of building something we might not even need, maybe we should spend the money on something we actually do need, which is a place for kids to go. Somewhere with no charge to get into. Let's face it, kids aren't made out of money.

We need a place big enough that we could run and scream in, and a place that no one can yell at us for doing what we do best, having fun.

## Is our school clean?

BY SARAH B.

We've all seen it happen at least once and most of us know the truth. Many of the students and teachers don't wash their hands after using the washroom.

Just knowing everything your teachers or classmates touch could be well...infected...

They have signs in restaurant washrooms asking employees to wash their hands, but why not in schools?

Don't think that I'm saying that the janitors

don't do a good job keeping things clean and disinfected, because they do. We need to get signs to put in all the bathrooms to ensure that we don't spread germs.

Ever wonder why so many people in our school get sick at the same time? I can't believe that our school can't afford little signs asking everyone to wash their hands.

What harm can it do?

# Is the broadcast studio a breakthrough or bust?

BY SHANNON POWERS AND SUSIE SCHECK

A few Fridays ago, the students and staff viewed Peacock's first newscast. It took a lot of planning and hard work, but was it worth it? Was it a breakthrough or a BUST?



"It's very expensive, but it's well worth it."

- Danny R., 8



"It's good for the people in our school who might want to become an anchor in the future. And it seems like it's a lot of fun."

- Rachel R., 8



"It was put together well and the segments were good, but the presentation needs work."

- Ms. H., 8th Social Studies



"I thought it was a good presentation, and the anchors did a good job."

- Veronica M., 6



"It was a great idea. The students seemed very interested while watching it. I look forward to seeing it again."

- Mr. Scaletta, 8th Math



"It was ok. The anchors can't be afraid of the camera though."

- Patrick P., 6



"It was pretty good, the anchors were really good at it."

- Justin C., 7



"I thought it was good, but the presentation needed a little work. Especially with eye contact."

- Jessica D., 7



"It was boring because they didn't talk about the school a lot or very exciting things."

- Ana N. and Lidia T., 8

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## Off the Shelf

Novel News from the Itasca Community Library

By Lori Craft

The library is pleased to have a spot in the Charger in which to recommend great books and to let you in on any upcoming library activities for teens.

### Summer Reading Club

"Lights! Camera! READ!" – the library's 2003 Summer Reading Club – starts May 19. If you participate, you can earn prizes just by reading books. More information on the reading club will be coming your way soon!

### You Be the Star – Fear Factor

Since the Summer Reading Club this year has a movie/entertainment theme, we are featuring programs that highlight different movies and television shows. One such program we would like to hold is a juvenile version of Fear Factor. We need 5 – 10 junior high students who would be willing to be our Fear Factor contestants. These contestants will be faced with gross and disgusting physical stunts and eating challenges! If you have the guts to participate and are available on Saturday, July 19, please contact Lori Craft at 773-1699. Your parents will need to sign a permission form.

## CHARACTER COUNTS!



### April 2003

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Brandon C.  
Brianna F.  
Dana Y.

#### Fairness

Molly C.

#### Caring

Cathy C.  
Frank M.

#### Respect

Megan S.  
Veronica M.

Elizabeth P.  
Shane M.

#### Responsibility

Lauren S.

#### Citizenship

Zack F.  
Jack N.  
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# Sixth and seventh grade volleyball teams

## Fans enjoy competitive season

BY JESSICA L.

Did you go to any of the home volleyball games? Many people who did had a great time. The games were exciting and it was great to be able to see the teams play.

Seventh grader Nick P. went to three games and commented, "I went to watch a great game, support the team and be with my friends."

Alex C., also a seventh grader, went to five games and said, "I went to the games to support the team and see how they did. It was a lot of fun."

On Thursday, March 13, 2003, Peacock played Spring Wood Middle School. The sixth and seventh grade girls volleyball team won their first game 15-5 and then the second 15-9.

Seventh grader Emily G. said, "The team played really well. We all went after the ball and tried our hardest but I do think that we could have improved on our serving."

Her classmate, Rachel M. said, "We won today because we all worked together as a team but we could have done better at diving for the ball."

Kacie A., seventh grade, added, "I think we did ok. We know



The sixth and seventh grade girls volleyball team sets the ball during a home game against Spring Wood on March 13.

(Photo by Mr. Peel)

what we are doing, but when we get out on the court we get scared and mess up."

Sixth grader Stephanie D. said, "I think the team did really well. We had great serves but I think we could have spiked more."

Stephanie's classmate, Michella C., agreed.

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# Eighth grade girls volleyball team dominates

BY TRICIA H.

Peacock Volleyball tryouts were very competitive. Everyone wanted to make the volleyball team, but unfortunately many were turned down. The coaches were faced with tough decisions.

Peacock started the season with good attitude and teamwork in mind. "I enjoyed working with my teammates because we really get along and play well together," stated eighth grader Nicole D. Nicole has been on the volleyball team for three years.

Mike S., seventh grade, is a newcomer to the Peacock volleyball team. He said that the coaches were really nice and helpful. Both Nicole and Mike really look forward to playing volleyball at Lake Park.

Coach Engel said that the entire eighth grade girls team really focused and had excellent athletic ability. "They definitely have what it takes to be winners" she added. Mrs. Engel also said that Colleen M., eighth grade, and sixth graders, Rachel and Valerie K. improved the most throughout the season.

The eighth grade girls team had a 11-1 record, the sixth and seventh girls team had a 6-6 record, and the boys team had a 3-9 record for the season.



Seventh grader Kacie A. serves the ball during a home volleyball game on Tuesday, March 11. (Photo by Mr. Peel)

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