WRAPAROUND SPECIAL REPORT

THE RED & BLACK

Florida's first high school newspaper

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R&B Special Report

By Zack Peterson, Editor in Chief

Larsen's Legacy

The Hunt household looks just like every other on Seminole Avenue: quaint, comfortable, cozy even.

The grass looks neatly trimmed, fallen acorns dot the driveway and the mailman stops by on his usual jaunt, dropping the mail into the box to the sound of birds chirping.

On Thanksgiving week, a chilly wind sweeps through the neighborhood, but the birds' notes still carry a lovely tune that floats through the marked sidewalks, the open garages and over the tops of parked cars.

Unless it's a busy school morning, traffic is kept to a minimum, and the occasional car will cruise by, traveling with a faint, rumbling hum. Life – as we know it – carries itself about casually, changing with the seasons and growing older with age.

But, while the world carries on like it's a normal day, behind the door of the Hunt household, everyday is anything but normal.

For the Hunt family, there isn't a day where the sun doesn't give off an extra ray of light to help lift the spirits of those grieving, or a night where the moon doesn't shed an extra tear of silent pertinence.

There isn't a day where the sky burns with new energy or a night where the lonely, shimmering stars don't give way to painful, vivid memories. And there certainly isn't a day where the Earth doesn't move faster during the morning or a night where everything doesn't come to a grinding halt.

It's been almost two months since the tragic death of Larsen Hunt, and there isn't a day where the community doesn't take action and respond.

While the Hunt household sits quietly, frozen in the fold of time and thawing itself out slowly, Larsen's friends, Hillsborough students and staff and other activists remain in a flurry around them.

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"It's been a tremendous amount of support," said media center assistant Susan Hunt, the mother of the late Larsen Hunt, who was murdered by her ex-boyfriend in late October. "I can't even begin to tell you. Honestly, we could tell you for hours. I can barely wrap my head around it."

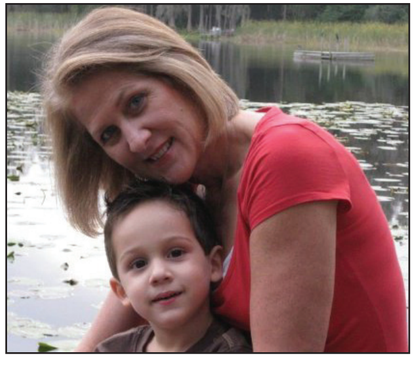
According to Hunt, people – all kinds of people – stop by their home on a daily account to offer their condolences, their donations and most of all, their love.

"Everywhere you look there's somebody there," Hunt said. "It's just a constant flow of love."

Since that dark day, the support of the community has been rampant, off the charts even. Donation groups, charities and private funds have sprung up everywhere, at an exponential rate. Facebook pages such as "RIP Larsen Hunt" were formed overnight and billboard signs, such as the one seen on Hillsborough Avenue were built to spread hope and raise awareness. Even a Bank of America trust was opened entitled: The Aidric Hunt Assistance Fund, with the intent to raise $ 100,000.

"People are good. People are really good," said Hunt. "We haven't initiated any of the fundraisers and we would have never thought of this."

Aidric is Larsen's 5-year-old son. He is now being raised by his grandparents, Susan and Dick Hunt.



PHOTOS FROM FAMILY AND HILSBOREAN YEARBOOK
Clockwise from above: Larsen was full of energy during her high school years, a trait that she would carry later in life; Larsen in her senior picture from the 2003 Hillsborough yearbook; Aidric plays with a toy in the bathtub. Although he's been diagnosed with autism, he's unusually energetic for a child with his diagnosis; Susan Hunt with Aidric, the grandson she is now raising.

Larsen, "As a person, she truly was something else," said Hunt. "The world has truly suffered a loss."

She was passionate, gifted and hard working. She juggled school with her job at Tampa General Hospital as a nurse, alongside her full-time job of caring for Aidric.

"Larsen was unique the moment she was born," Hunt said. With Larsen, there was always this "spark," always some electric personality ready to push through whatever difficulties laid ahead of her. In her youth, Larsen participated in school plays, the choir – she even played a musical instrument.

"Whatever she picked up, she was able to do beautiful things with," Hunt said.

Driven, Larsen graduated from Hillsborough High School in 2003, the fourth of five in her family to do so. Then, she went on to study in a nursing program at Hillsborough Community College and because of her scores and impressive interview was hired to work in the NICU at Tampa General Hospital.

For Larsen, trying new things was all part of the regular routine. There was no such thing as something she couldn't do because it was simply something she hadn't yet attempted.

"Her dreams always changed a lot because she was always trying new things," Hunt said. "But I wanted for her what every mother wants for their daughter: to be happy."

Once Aidric was born, Larsen's dreams and aspirations took on an entire new level. From then on out, her focus now had a new direction; the birth of Aidric changed absolutely everything.

"Of course everything changed," Hunt said of Aidric's birth. "That's what children do, they change things."

But Aidric didn't just change the dynamic fabric of Larsen' life, he completely changed the direction of it forever. He changed her approach to life, her way of thinking, and the way she loved.

"It was in that moment that she grew up – she became a woman," Hunt said. "From then on, she put all her energy there."

If it's possible, people would say that she put more than that. Larsen's main objective in life was to help Aidric recover from autism. Until the day she died, she maintained that belief, surpassing all known boundaries in an attempt to find a cure.

"So many people don't realize how varied the autism spectrum is. How do you reach these children -- what will open the door of understanding for them?" Hunt asks. "That was her priority for her son. Her firm belief and main goal was that her son could recover from autism."

That elusive door was the one Larsen endlessly searched for.

It was around the age of one that she noticed the strange behavior Aidric was displaying. After a "gauntlet of tests" according to Hunt, he was diagnosed with PDD-NOS (pervasive development disorder not otherwise specified).

"She had to take him many times to get evaluated," Hunt recalled, aware of just how many times it took to the doctor's office to receive an official diagnosis recgonizing Aidric's disability."

After consulting a Defeat Autism Now doctor and specialists, Larsen was convinced she could turn Aidric's situation around.

"There are a lot of success stories," Hunt said. "And for us, it was wonderful because you saw such passion."

"She was a good mother; she worked really, really hard."

"He was her life," said Tyler Hunt, Larsen's brother, and the closest sibling in age. "We were very close and I lived with for awhile. I cherished that time looking back now."

Now, not only does the spirit of Larsen live on forever in the hearts of the community; but she also reminds people of her presence everyday through the prolific amount of pictures she took during her life.

"She always loved pictures," Hunt said, while glancing at one of Larsen and Aidric running together and holding hands. "She took a lot of them and I'm so glad she did."

Clutching the arm of her youngest, Tyler, Hunt can only fathom all the achievements her daughter could have accomplished during her lifetime. Now, she's frozen in time forever, always offering a bright, wide smile in one photo or a warm embrace with Aidric in another. Though the pictures help recall better memories from better times, their tangible value can only do so much.

After gazing into the photo, Hunt recalls a tale about Larsen from her earliest days working at Tampa General.

"She was hired straight out of school and the sickest baby on the ward was the primary one she cared for," Hunt said. Just six to eight months out of school, the rookie Larsen was working around the clock to do whatever it took to care for her assigned infant.

Whether it was toiling long, busy hours during the day, or cold, hard hours by the night, Larsen ensured that the child received the most adequate care – and then some.

According to Hunt, Larsen quickly established herself as one of the most adept nurses on the staff. More than that, she proved she had one of the biggest hearts.

"She was such a good person," Hunt said. "And now she'll forever be memorialized."

Following Larsen's death, the new NICU (the natal intensive care unit) department opened at Tampa General – a brand new $35 million dollar expenditure that is "half a football field long," according to Hunt.

The huge project debuted on Nov. 30 and was filled with complimentary state of the art equipment. Throughout the ward, long hallways run up and down the area, and the walls are painted with nautical sea creatures.

"They realized at the end of the building that one corridor didn't have a name," Hunt explained. "It was a respite area and during her time there [at TGH] she made such an impact – such an impression – that they named one corridor Larsen Lane and the other Aidric Alley."

"It's an honor and just another great thing that happened in support."

The anecdote brings small, bubbling tears to Susan Hunt's eyes, but the moment Aidric buzzes by with shrills of jubilation, the hesitation is gone and the remnants of the tears dry up completely.

Since Larsen's passing, Aidric's life has been twisted inside out, with a large, gaping hole sitting right in the center of it. Aidric found out about his mother through a social book – a little children's story book that was designed to help aid him through the devastating news.

But according to Hunt, the reaction was minimal.

"He has processing issues," she explains. "Sometimes it takes minutes to understand something, sometimes it takes days."

As a result of his autism, Aidric also has difficulty using and understanding language; it's nearly impossible to tell what the child's constantly going through. But as he meanders around the living room, he stops at a counter where a picture of he and his mother sit, propped up.

No one can predict what the child is feeling, but the contemplative gaze in his eye's – as if he's trapped in a deep thought – seems to reveal that he's entirely aware of the great loss in his life.

"He's only been away for a couple of months," Hunt said. "This is home. Being here with us is normal. Being here without her…"

Hunt's voice trails off as she seems to be at a loss for words. Her eyes fall upon Aidric once more, who is going about his traditional greeting pose.

First, he opens his mouth, expanding his cheeks upward as much as he can. Then he puts a slight twinkle into his eyes, and welcomes his visitor's with an unusual sense of camaraderie.

"He's really showing off right now," Tyler jokes snagging Aidric with a playful grab as he makes a pass by the young man. He lift's the young boy up, and places him on his lap where Aidric sits with a content smile.

"He's extremely social for his condition," Hunt said. "And he's a real smart kid. He's always go-go-go, but it's not a one-time teaching thing. You really, really, really have to stay on top of him."

For the ever energetic Aidric, every day brings a new test of mental trials to hop through. Over the week's he's consulted various professionals, and even the pastor at the family's local church, the Seminole Heights United Methodist Church, who is medically certified.

"I think through love and prayer he's doing great," Hunt said.

However, despite the bountiful donations from the community, and the love and support from everyone, nothing can replace that broken bond that he and Larsen intensely shared.

"They had such a good bond, a very strong bond," Hunt said. "She was constantly trying to teach him how to show affection."

But affection – such an underappreciated value by today's standards – is something many people struggle to embrace, until it's too late.

"It makes you realize what you have at the present," Tyler said. "Now, it's even more so. You see what you have and what you could ultimately lose."

For young Aidric, life has always been an ever present series of challenges. Before this year, Aidric attended the Child Development Center at the Tbor HCC campus, where he the only child with this disability. He is now enrolled in an ASD class similar to those here at Hillsborough. On a frequent basis he sees numerous counselors and therapists. Aidric even has to maintain a gluten-free, cassin-free diet.

Every day is a challenge; everyday is a test of the young child's strength. His ability to overcome this adversity is not only remarkable, but inspiring.

When a visiting reporter came to visit his grandmother, Aidric was overjoyed and thrilled to please his crowd. He scooted up and down the hallways, clutching his swinging monkey toy all the while, and twirling it in large, looping circles. Reaching into his pile of toys, Aidric selected a plastic toy gorilla, and offered it to the visiting reporter with a silent exchange.

"Monkeys are his favorite," Hunt said. "One of Larsen's best friends came to our home and painted a mural of a monkey in his room."

What's more amazing is the child's giving attitude. Despite the devastating events shrouding his life, Aidric still showed off his huge heart – the same huge heart his mother had too.

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Clear Channel Outdoor donated several billboards to support the Aidric Hunt Assistance Fund. The billboard depicts Larsen and Aidric and provides details on how to support the family.

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In the corner of the living room sitting in a chair next to his mother, Tyler watches Aidric play with the protective eye of an older brother.

Suddenly, his phone buzzes and he reaches into his pocket to find that he has one new message. After typing out a reply – to one of his cousins, actually – he notes how much closer the family has grown over the past month and a half.

"As a family, we've bonded over this a lot more" Tyler said. "Now, I'll talk to all my relatives almost every day and we'll make a point to hang out more often."

Ever since Larsen's death, Tyler has stayed at his mother's house to help take care of Aidric. Being familiar with all his mannerisms, habits and symptoms of his mental illness, he's aware how difficult the job it and what credentials it requires.

Today's task, however, is to sort through all the furniture, trinkets and possessions from Larsen's old house.

"We're basically trying to move two houses into one," Hunt said. "This is where Aidric and the family need to be. We're working [on custody] of him right now, and until then he's staying with us." According to Hunt, the boy refers to her as "Ya-Ya" and Mr. Hunt as "Pa-Pa."

"We're really just hoping to continue what she [Larsen] started," Hunt said. "The only way we can do that is together."

Although Larsen's goal during her lifetime was to bring awareness to autism and raise money towards finding a cure, out of her death came something more.

Larsen was killed by an estranged former boyfriend, who died himself that day after crashing his car into a house across the Bay. There had been a restraining order requested, but it would have been difficult to expect anything near what happened that day.

"It was not an abusive situation till the end," Hunt said. "He had everybody fooled. He said all the right things and did all the right things."

Hunt, who was at school at the time, called it, not surprisingly, "the worst day of [her] life."

"To be honest, that day is not all that clear to me," Hunt said. "Maybe it's a defense mechanism, but I prefer not to revisit that day."

Instead, Hunt plans to move forward by raising a new level of awareness to domestic violence. According to the U.S. Department of Justice's report: "Violence by Intimates: Analysis of Data on Crimes by Current or Former Spouses, Boyfriends, and Girlfriends," 4 million women every year are physically abused by their husbands, life partners or ex-boyfriends.

Hunt hopes to change this by spreading a message of hope out of this event. "Listen to your inner voice. Talk to people about your concerns," Hunt advises.

Sadly, according to Medline, most reports of domestic violence are never reported. In the case of Larsen, no one even anticipated the event, and no concerns were expressed until the day she left him.

The family spoke to Larsen about the relationship numerous times and even meet with the two of them together when there were concerns about Aidric, Hunt said.

And the entire time, they were there for her, by moving her out as soon they found out about the violence and encouraging her to file a restraining order. Hunt's goal is to prevent these issues by striking them early on. She said the key is communication.

"We're so busy, busy, busy. Our lives are just so busy and it's not right," Hunt said. "Be there for your friends and family. Care. Listen. Talk. We all become so detached, and it's just not for the situation. It's for life."

And above all, she believes that young women should be respected at all costs. According to Hunt, high school girls these days "are already allowing young men to treat them badly."

"I see it," she explains. "I see it walking through the halls every day. It breaks my heart. It breaks my heart to see girls being mistreated and think, 'this is all you think you're worth?'"

"If they start know, think about it. Think what could happen…"

It's been almost two months since the death and not a day goes by where the wind doesn't carry the echoes of her laughter.

There is hope. Hope that someone will speak out with concern for an abusive relationship they are trapped in. Hope that there will be a helping hand and a friendly ear to greet them.

Hope that someday, with the diligence and strength of everyone, a cure for autism can be achieved. And hope that a broken household can be repaired once more with the love of thousands.

How to help

-- Go to hope4aidric.org to donate to the "AIDRIC HUNT ASSISTANCE FUND." Donate directly to the website or buy the Hope 4 Aidric Christmas ornament. All proceeds go directly to the fund.

-- You can also follow the fund on Facebook, where upcoming events are promoted.

About this story

-- The death of Larsem Hunt wasn't just a death felt by her immediate family. The entire Seminole Heights and HHS community was touched by her tragic death. But what's more, her link to Hillsborough is inescapable. This story was written to capture her legacy and the dynamic of her life.

Community college enrollment rises

By Elizabeth Gwilt
News Editor

While high school seniors are waiting for their acceptance letters to their dream universities, millions of students will choose to take an alternative path.

Community college is a growing option for students seeking higher education. Recent trends in the last few years show that more and more people from all age and background demographics are enrolling in two-year colleges.

Dr. Emery Alford, the Dean of Academic Affairs at Hillsborough Community College's Ybor Campus, said that enrollment has been the highest he has seen in his nine years at HCC.

"We have been getting all types of students- from young high school grads to 40 year olds going back to school," Alford said.

According to Alford, the fresh surge of enrollments is related to the state of the economy.

"There is this terrific irony that when the economy is bad, the enrollment — especially in community colleges — goes up," he said.

Though the student body is diverse, Alford said community colleges are especially welcoming to certain groups of people.

HCC accepts all students who have a high school diploma, certificate of completion or GED, Alford said.

"Part of our mission is to give these students a second chance at receiving higher education," he said.

"We have a lot of students who didn't pass the FCAT or who read at a third-grade level. Community college helps prepare them and earn an Associate of Arts degree before moving on to a four-year college or university," he said.

Increasingly though, some community colleges are beginning to offer four-year degrees, including St. Petersburg College across the Bay.

HCC has not yet joined its neighbor in that practice.

"HCC doesn't have any bachelor's degrees because state laws prohibit community colleges from having the same degrees as surrounding four-year colleges," Alford said. For HCC, the University of South Florida prevents them from offering many popular degrees, he said.

But for junior Nicole Arias, local community colleges are still a possibility.

"HCC is definitely an option. I've always said I would want to do two years at a community college and then go on to my dream school," Arias said.

"It makes more sense to me, since as an 18 year old, I have no idea what I want to study. You don't need to jump into a four-year school to get a quality education," she said.

"HCC is definitely an option. I've always said I would want to do two years at a community college and then go on to my dream school."
-Nicole Arias, junior

Along with easing into the transition, saving money is another major reason why more people are attending community college.

Sophomore Quinton Davis points out, "We are in a recession. Why not save up for a few years before going to a university?"

However, even with the rising enrollment numbers, community colleges receive a stigma against them.

Junior Brenda Torres said community colleges have earned a reputation of being easier than four-year colleges.

"A person with a really low GPA can get in, and a lot of people look them as a last resort school," Torres said.

But that is exactly what Alford doesn't want people to think about community college.

"HCC's courses are not any less rigorous from other colleges," he said. "We have smaller class sizes so students receive better training—not to mention we are way cheaper."

Alford said, "While community college isn't for everyone, I just want students to know our doors are open to all."

And eventually, HCC's doors will open in another location. The college recently received permission from the state to begin planning a campus in the Lutz/Northwest Hillsborough County area.

by the numbers

$94.32	HCC cost for Florida residents per credit hour
$6,750	average tuition for community colleges
$9,800	average tuition for public four-year colleges
$21,240	average tuition for private four-year colleges
6.9%	of 18-24 year-olds enrolled in a two-year college in 1973
10.9%	of 18-24 year olds enrolled in a two-year college in 2007
11.8%	of 18-24 year olds enrolled in a two-year college in 2008
0	number of bachelor's degrees offered by Hillsborough Community College
18	number of bachelor's degree's offered by St. Petersburg College
26,964	number of undergrads at Hillsborough Community College in 2010
3.4 million	adults enrolled in community colleges in 2008

Robotics encourages student involvement in team

By Eddie Samuels
Multimedia Editor

FIRST is not only a number, but also an organization formed in 1989 to spark student interest in science and engineering.

This organization is the foundation for the FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) robotics competitions that take place across the country.

On Nov. 13, Hillsborough hosted the second competition of the year where school teams could qualify for state finals in March. The competition involved four robots, under remote and autonomous control, trying to score points by depositing batons into goals.

Since team Hydra of Hillsborough hosted the competition, they automatically qualified for state finals even though they placed 13th out of the 14 teams.

The team works on their robot about 2-3 times per week in the school's workshop. Regarding the competitions results, senior Zach Pearson said that this year is "a learning experience."

"Rather than having a professional engineer work on the robot, like many other schools do, we want to have as much student involvement as possible", Pearson said. "Since our robot will be built by students, we will be trying new robot build designs that may fail, but it will be a learning experience for the future."

Club sponsor Marian Manganello explained, "We compete, see what we did wrong and modify our robot for the next competition."

"It's interesting to see ideas come to fruition," she said.

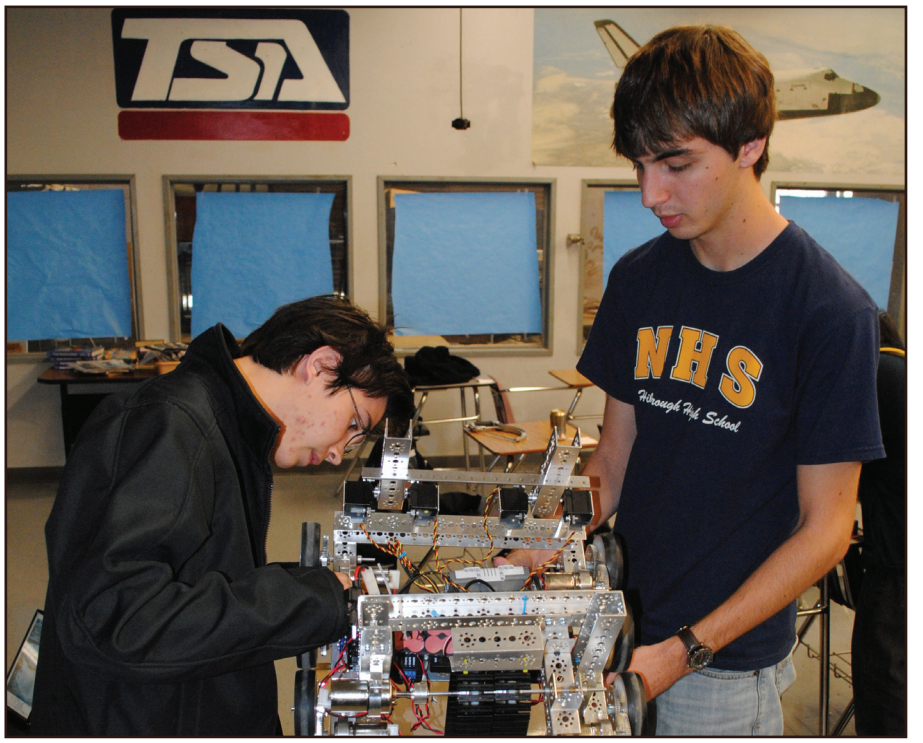
In 2008, Hydra won the state finals competition and this year, Pearson said, "We hope the team can do as well."

Another competition also took place on Dec. 11 at Spruce Creek High School in Port Orange.

Club president, Zachary Dawson said that the team was getting ready by "writing autonomous code, doing mechanical work, and trying different ways to get over the ramp."

The overall goal of the team is to advance to the national finals in Atlanta. "This competition will be a true test for how our robot is doing" Manganello said.

Visit www.hhsredblack.com for information on the most recent competition.



JIMMY HERD-BOND

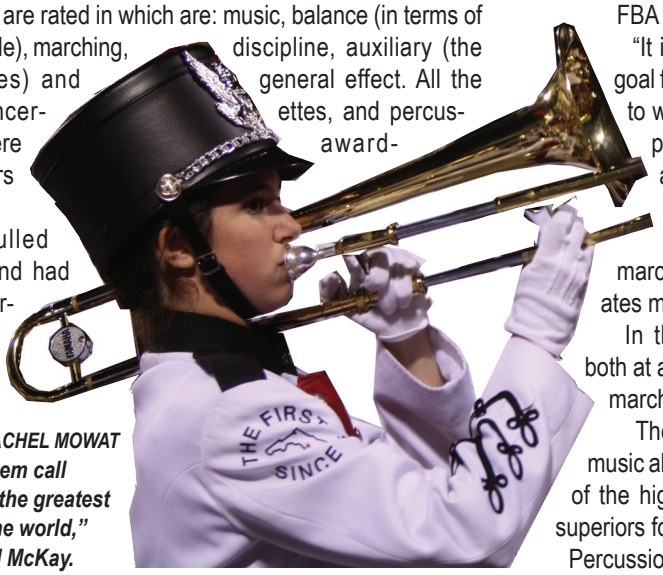
Micahel Clarke, left, and Zach Pearson work on robotics project after school for one of the club's various competitions.

Big Red Band wins straight superiors at marching competition

By Eric Martin
Senior Editor

The Big Red Band was awarded straight superiors at the Florida Band Association last month. There are six subjects that performers are rated in which are: music, balance (in terms of musical style), marching, discipline, auxiliary (the dancerettes) and general effect. All the band, Dancerettes, and percussionists were awarded superiors overall.

"We pulled together and had a truly inspiring performance," said drum major Coley Stelter.



RACHEL MOWAT

"Hearing them call superior is the greatest feeling in the world," said Rachel McKay.

The band has essentially been practicing since summer. The music of Earth, Wind & Fire was the music showcased at the competition, which was the same music that was performed at football games.

FBA is viewed as a good benchmark for the band.

"It is a professional obligation as well as a great goal for us to aspire to. You have to have something to work for besides just the weekly football game performances at halftime. It makes all that work and practice worth it," said band director Kim Mieder.

The Big Red Band is first and foremost a marching band. This is the competition that evaluates marching as part of the assessment.

In the spring season, band members perform both at a solo and ensemble district competition and a marching setting.

These evaluate the performance of the band on music alone. The band has delivered consistent results of the highest degree, having been awarded straight superiors for the past four years.

Percussion won its first superior last year. "It meant a lot to the senior class because all four years we've had straight superiors. Hopefully next year they'll uphold this tradition and maintain superiors," Stelter said.

The band is not the only section that is proud of what they have done. "This means that we're one of the strongest bands," said senior Tom Travis, a member of the drum line.

Each motion and musical performance is called a "set."

Sets can have eight to 32 counts of music, and there were a total of 38 sets at the Big Red Band's performance.

"Students memorize where they move as well as what music to play from set to set. It is very demanding physically and mentally and requires tremendous effort and practice and repetition," Mieder said.

The band has a very regular, even exhausting schedule to maintain the success that they have had for years.

FBA is a benchmark to show that their work has paid off, as they are receiving the highest possible evaluation across all measures. They have strained themselves and worked to achieve this recognition.

"The music is really a high art. There is so much to it, much more than people realize. A discipline of the mind, the body, the heart, the soul. I don't know of any other activity that encompasses so much at once," Mieder said.

JROTC Raiders work as one at Gulf Region competition

RACHEL MOWAT

Sophomore Sandy Tran, from left, senior Kimarie Kiley, freshman Beverly Ramirez, seniors Tahvory Cabrera, Katrina Webb and sophomore Ciara Lis Ronda run a 5K at last month's Raider competition at Alonso High School. Cabrera called it the toughest part of the day.

By Katie Lutton
News Editor

For many students, that someone would voluntarily choose to give up weekend time for hours of sweat and hard work is inconceivable.

However, for 28 dedicated teens, being able to compete in the 2010 JROTC Gulf Region Raider Competition on Saturday, Nov. 13 was the exciting climax of months of conditioning and practice.

Hillsborough sent ten males and ten females to the Gulf Region Raider Competition, hosted at Alonso High School.

For the competition, contenders woke up at 5 a.m. on a Saturday morning to complete rigorous physical challenges in the hot sun for more than 12 hours straight without any breaks for meals. The top three team finishers at the competition qualify for the state meet in Lake Wales.

Sgt. Maj. Oscar Cunningham, coach of Hillsborough's Raiders, noted before the meet that inexperience would be a great weakness of the team. Unlike the Alonso team, which gets unlimited opportunities to practice on the actual course, the Hillsborough Raiders had to try to simulate the activities in the school parking lot.

> "When you're part of a team, you do anything for that team, and that includes getting up at 4:30 a.m."

Many members of his team had never been in a canoe before. Cunningham tried to keep his team energized for the nonstop ordeal. "I give them trail mix and granola bars to slip in their pockets."

The day began with push-up and sit-up competitions, followed by the 5K run/walk, the event deemed most difficult by members of Hillsborough's Raider Team.

"[It was] the worst because we had to do it in our full uniform. We also had to carry a 25-pound rucksack, which is a weighted backpack," said senior Tahvory Cabrera, leader of the female team.

In the next event, each team had to treat a pretend patient with "maladies" like chest wounds or open fractures, then carry the 130-pound patient one mile in a stretcher.

Many Raiders identified the team obstacle course as their favorite part of the day. Senior Shannon Moss agreed. "If you work together, it's really fun because you get to do a lot of different things," she said. In the obstacle course, all members of the team must complete such challenges as traversing a body of water in a canoe, crossing a 45 foot long rope bridge, climbing up and over the dangerous water wheel, and negotiating obstacles like the low wire crawl, the cargo net, and the log.

At the end of the daylong competition, Hillsborough did not win a top prize. "We didn't bring any trophies back, but they did very well," Cunningham said.

So after all that, why would someone still be excited about forsaking sleep for toil in the sun? "When you're part of a team, you do anything for that team, and that includes getting up at 4:30 a.m." Cabrera said.

School raises grade from C to B

By Elizabeth Gwilt
News Editor

School grades for the 2010 were released on Tuesday and the majority of Hillsborough County high schools show improvement from last year.

Blake raised their D to an A, Chamberlain went from a D to a C and Hillsborough attained a B — which is an i mprovement from the C they earned in 2009.

Countywide, 77 percent of schools received an A or B, with eight schools earning an A compared to the two last year.

Principal William Orr says there are two reasons behind Hillsborough's better grade.

"Students and teachers have decided they want to improve, so their hard work is reflected in this year's grade," Orr said.

The second cause, he said, is the new criterion that was used to grade the schools.

"The new criteria is factored in the number of AP and IB tests taken, which improved our grade," Orr said, "The new system makes it easier to get a higher grade."

Even with the improvements, Orr is not satisfied with the grade.

"While I'm happy that we raised our grade, I know we can get an A," he said. "In actuality, we scored enough points to get an A, but there was not enough growth in the lowest quartile of students, so we got penalized for it."

Orr has a plan and high hopes for next year's report card.

"We are going to identify the skills that the students in the fourth quartile need to work on, and just make sure they're reaching their full potential," he said.

"We have been an A school in the past, and I'm confident we can earn that grade again," Orr said.

The higher grade qualifies the school for bonus money.

By state law, teachers and the School Advisory Committee gets to decide how to divide the money.

OPINION

THE RED & BLACK
Florida's first high school newspa

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Our View

Single-sex not worth the trouble

With the many physical and mental changes of middle school come many new challenges and problems, and the Hillsborough County Public School District believes these complications can be solved by creating gender-segregated schools.

This is a good experimental approach to distracted students and it shows that the district cares about the students.

However, the idea isn't the problem.

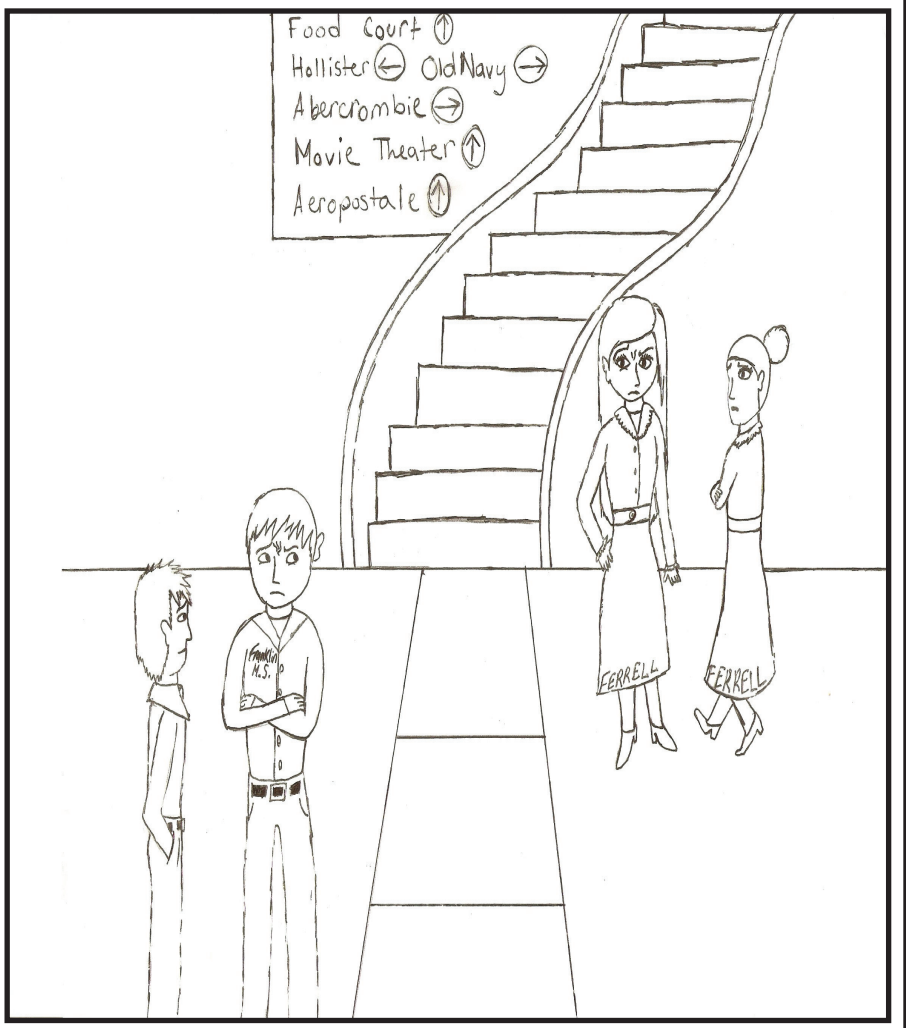
Regardless of the school board's current efforts to transform Ferrell Middle School into an all girls' school and Franklin Middle School into an all boys' school, partly by a recent $11.5 million federal magnet school grant, the natural feelings of adolescent boys and girls will continue to grow and there will always be problems arising from these changes.

By going against nature, as these single-sex schools do, the school district is only setting up more problems for students than we already have to deal with.

Children who are enrolled in single-sex middle schools have a much more difficult transition into coed high schools than those who have been in coed schools all their lives. This gender isolation causes students to miss the growth of social skills that takes place only during those crucial middle school years. Making it through high school is hard enough with the extra hurdle of fabricating social skills out of thin air.

To solve this transition problem, the Hillsborough County School Board would have to start single-sex high schools as well. This solution would cost both money and the social ability of the remaining coed middle school students. This wouldn't be solving the problem, only ignoring it.

If the district didn't hide this problem, there would only be one other solution: these students would simply have to adapt to a world they have never encountered in their sheltered life. Rather than solving coed-school problems, single-sex schools create new problems. Basically, this process is simply way more trouble than it's worth.



Instead of trying to sweep the social problems of middle school under the rug, the school district should try to improve these conditions through such methods as enforcing a zero-tolerance bullying policy. Easing the social conflicts of students would prove to be much more beneficial than putting off these issues.

Single-sex schools simply set students up to fail as soon as the safety net of segregation is dropped.

It's because of this that we urge the Hillsborough County Public School District to reconsider their decision of turning certain middle schools into schools of all one gender. If students are given deeper water to swim through, there's a greater chance that more students will drown before reaching the end. Instead of making school life more difficult, the school district should be focusing its money on helping more students succeed.

Pat-downs now will save behinds later

"We're going to touch your buttocks now."

Generally, on your average day, you won't hear these words. That is, unless you've been selected by TSA personnel to undergo the new "pat-down" policy.

Zack Peterson
Commentary

The last I traveled by plane, I was with my journalism peers returning from Kansas City.

We had been there for the weekend attending a national convention and everyone was in good spirits on the walk through security.

I went through the whole ordeal of hefting my carry-on bag up onto the conveyor belt, removing my jacket and taking off my shoes (to the dismay of my traveling mates) in order to pass my test.

Unknown to me at the time were the new airline policies. When I was selected to go through the full-body scanner, I was caught off guard, but not nervous.

> Yes, I would have preferred not to have my "junk" touched ... However, my personal safety means more to me than a simple pat-down or a graphic projection."

The fear crept into my bones though when the security personnel began whispering amongst themselves and pointing at a screen I couldn't see. They said, "Come with us son. We have to perform a pat-down on you."

All the while, no one informed me of what was occurring. TSA's new policy had only been in place about two weeks at this point, so we were both rookies – the TSA personnel and me.

In a closed off, cramped little room, they performed their "expansive" test, and that's where we are now.

After informing me that they had successfully scanned my golden buttocks, they prepared me for the next crucial search they had to perform: "My genitals."

For the security personnel, this test has become an everyday procedure; a normal thing so to speak.

I won't go into the graphic details, but their search down below was entirely unpleasant and for airline traveling passengers, this new procedure has millions on their feet in protest.

My dad's a frequent flyer, and goes out of town for his job enough that he provides us free airline tickets with his frequent flier points whenever we fly. He'll often come home from a long, tiring trip complaining of the new policy.

"It's an infringement of our rights," he'll grumble, as he takes a stab at his dinner with a new fury of anguish.

And as much as I tend to agree with him, I think the uproar's gone overboard. I'm no right-winged "fascist" with the intent to suffocate human rights; but, a look to the past is more than enough for me to justify TSA's intrusive tests.

Terrorism is no joke. Just ask the families who lost their loved ones in the 9/11 catastrophe, or ask the firefighters who perished in the deadly debris and the scorching fires.

Ask the pilots who had their own crafts overtaken from them in that airline jacking, and the Pentagon personnel who saw their lives flash before their eyes.

As a country that's experienced its deadly lash on a personal scale, why are we so hostile about protecting our safety?

I've had the opportunity to look the photos that the full-body scanners produce. The images produced from the backscatter units are merely opaque blobs, with no real composition of an individual's unique features.

Sure, you can see the outlines of a woman's chest, the general shape of a man's genitals and the "buttocks" all clenched up. But they're not selling these projections to third-party perverts, and it's certainly nowhere half the disgusting material that's looming around on the Internet.

As for the "pat down," I caught myself giggling every time the officials used an official term; I couldn't help it, the whole idea was amusing.

Yes, I would have preferred not to have my "junk" touched, in the words of John Tyner (the infamous protester who's built up a significant YouTube following after refusing to submit to a pat-down at the San Diego International Airport).

However, my personal safety means more to me than a simple pat-down or a graphic projection.

While some freedom fighters might argue that I'm an ignorant oaf, unaware that the government will pull more conspiracies over my head until I'm mangled in manacles based on the jurisdiction we've given TSA, until I see the day where terrorism no longer exists and I don't have to worry about my plane crashing, I will support this policy.

The TSA officials don't want you to pat them down anymore than you do. Remember that next time if you're selected to undergo the pat-down. It might just save your "buttocks."

Holiday meaning lost in new age of commercialization

The word "holiday" has a history of invoking the warm, fuzzy feeling of being surrounded by those who loves you as you celebrate some traditional idea of simply the company of others. Yet over the past decade, this comforting image has been pushed out of the way and replacing it are those repetitive super-market songs and shelves loaded with whatever holiday season is approaching next.

Nico Tavella
Commentary

This slow decline from age-old traditions to the more recent commercialization is all for the one thing we cannot live without: money.

Simply put, businesses are realizing they can exploit the popular themes of our holidays in order to increase profit.

While this has never been a problem in the past, the recent dramatic increase in this corporate strategy has begun to infringe on what these holidays are really about: family, friendship, community -- ideals that are major ingredients in the recipe of a functional society.

Holidays have always been like extra doses of these necessary feelings that occur in everyday life. Christmas brings children and adults together to decorate the family tree. But this commercialization is removing these iconic scenes we look forward to each year.

Pre-lit, pre-decorated fake Christmas trees remove the hours of family bonding through decorating. Thus, family bonding is exiting most homes in this country.

People are giving in to these corporate temptations because they promise more "efficient" and "time-saving" holiday celebrations. However, we as a society need to realize that we are sacrificing the entire meaning of Thanksgiving or Hanukkah for the sake of having a few extra minutes at the end of the day.

I completely believe in selling holiday merchandise; it gets people into the holiday spirit and spreads the word that it's almost time for that much sought-after time of the year.

Modernization is important, but we shouldn't sacrifice the comfort of each other's company for the surface-luxury of spending less time on something. It's those extra minutes working together with others on that Thanksgiving meal or those Easter eggs that create closer families and ultimately a closer nation.

12 duds of Christmas

By Eddie Samuels & Devin Lee
Multimedia Editor & Staff Writer

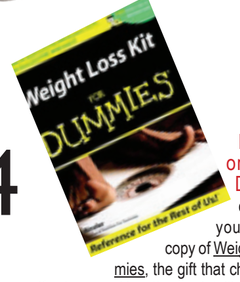
Talk about Ho Ho No! Unfortunately, there are some downright terrible options out there for holiday shoppers to choose from this season. With this in mind, The Red & Black presents the 12 Duds of Christmas, the most dreaded gifts of the year. Watch out -- and hope these gifts don't end up in your stocking this year.

1 Video Games for a system you don't own – "How am I supposed to fit this Nintendo 64 cartridge into my XBox 360?"

2 Seasonal school supplies - "I really can't use this Santa pencil at all during the other 11 months of the year."

3 Fruitcake – An urban legend claims that there is actually only one fruitcake in the entire world, and people just keep getting rid of it by re-gifting.

4 Diet books or weight loss DVDs – Worst case scenario, you unwrap a new copy of Weight Loss for Dummies, the gift that chips away at your self esteem and insults your intelligence at the same time. And anyone who gives you the "AS SEEN ON TV" Shake Weight just wants to see you look ridiculous when you try it out.



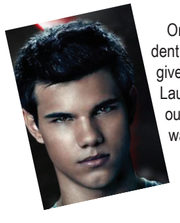
5 Holiday sweater or sweater vest – Christmas sweaters are well known for their ugliness and a sweater vest just makes it look like you're expecting a very narrow cold front.

6 Facebook gift cards – "Those things exist?" Is the common response when these puzzling gift cards are discovered in the checkout line of Walgreens. High schoolers are well aware of the fact that Facebook is already free, it causes millions to waste hours upon hours online.

7 "Beauty" Products – Another form of passive-aggressive gifts that give you the suspicion that your family is trying to tell you something. They present you with some fancily disguised soap or Head and Shoulders dandruff shampoo, giving everyone the impression that your hygiene is not up to par.

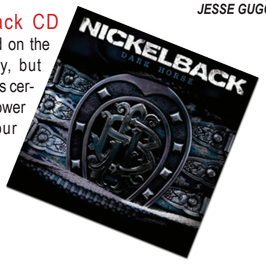
8 Gifts with no receipt – As if it's not bad enough that you got a gift that you want to return, the person who gave it to you was cocky enough to not give you the receipt.

9 One anonymous student reports that he was given a life-sized Taylor Lautner cardboard cut-out by his grandma. He was very unhappy.



10 Coal- The classic bad gift for bad kids. Many mischevious childhood activities were canceled out of fear that their bad karma would result in coal for Christmas.

11 A Nickelback CD – The worst band on the planet? Possibly, but these terrible tunes certainly have the power to obliterate your holiday spirit.



12 Homemade coupons- A thoughtful, but overdone gift. It's like, "No thanks Grandpa, I think I'll pass on the back massage this year."

Traditional Winter Florida style

By Katie Lutton
& Brittany Valencic
News Editor and Life Editor

Instead of sipping steaming mugs of hot cocoa to keep warm in the cold winter season, in Florida we enjoy refreshing glasses of iced tea.

One of the greatest joys of the holiday season in the cooler states is the sound of a warm crackling fire. Here, it's the whirring of the air conditioner.

On a typical winter day, Northern children love to go outside and build snowmen. Florida kids overcome the challenge of having no snow by making sandmen at the beach.

Playing ice hockey on the frozen pond behind the house is a winter tradition of our brethren to the north. In Florida we adapt by ice skating in 80 degree weather. Check out Curtis Hixon Park in downtown Tampa to skate on a temporary outdoor ice rink.

Conflicts in Northern society in the winter are resolved through cut-throat snowball fights. Here in Florida, we resort to water balloon battles to settle our differences.

Up North, the unprepared and underdressed face suffering excrutiating frostbite, while here in Florida, forgetting sunscreen usually just means a blistering sunburn.

Every winter, Northerners face the curse of donning Grandma Ethel's unique creation, while us Floridians get away with tank tops and flip-flops in warm holiday weather.

JESSE GUGGINO

A Different Kind of Sugar Bowl

Tis' the season for college football postseason games, but more importantly, tis' the season for scrumptious pies cooked by loving relatives. For the benefit of those not able to wait for the holidays or for home cooking, The Red & Black called on favorite hangout Village Inn to help us find the season's top pie. About a dozen tasters (including Jake Gagne, pictured at right) worked their way through a "sweet 16."

-Nick Bennett

(1) Holiday French Silk

(16) Candy Cane

Holiday French Silk faced its biggest challenge, ironically, against the upstart of the contest, Candy Cane.

Dressed for seasonal success in its green and red chocolate chips, a dominant-looking (and tasting) Holiday French Silk overpowered Lemon Meringue pie. One taster described it as "the Bloodbath Bowl." Indeed, tartness never stood a chance.

(8) Lemon Meringue

(9) Lemon Supreme

Lemon Meringe easily prevailed over Lemon Supreme, which tasters criticized for its toothpaste-like consistency.

In one of the biggest matches of the contest, Holiday French Silk emerged victorious from a pitched battle with Triple Berry (affectionately known as "TB.") Ultimately, the tasty, rich Holiday French Silk showed itself to have the panache necessary to win the whole thing. Triple Berry, facing a foe not at all similar to itself in taste or consistency, could not woo enough votes with its multiple-flavor thrills.

(4) Triple Berry

(13) Strawberry Rhubarb

Triple Berry won handily over Strawberry Rhubarb, impressing tasters with its surprisingly rich mix of flavors.

Tasters' Florida bias wasn't enough to sway the unanimous decision: Northern favorite, Triple Berry beats Key Lime. The former pie was praised for its balance of sweet and sour, and in a contest that could well have been called the Tart Bowl, that was the winning edge.

(5) Cherry

(12) Key Lime

Key Lime won an upset victory over established favorite Cherry in a key North vs. South rivalry match.

In the final match-up of the contest, the stakes were set for a hard-fought battle, pitting against each other two pies, Holiday French SIlk and Pecan, that each have plenty to offer.

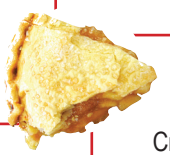
There were fans in both camps, but ultimately the score, 5-2 in favor of Holiday French Silk, reflected tasters' enjoyment of the pie.

If you should get the sweet tooth this holiday season, a safe bet is Holiday French Silk, a scrumptious, delightful treat.

(2) Apple

(15) Cinnamon Apple

Apple won in a lopsided contest against Cinnamon Apple, which was deficient in both cinnamon and con-



There was no underdog story to be found in this matchup, as Banana Cream fell to Apple. Banana Cream probably only advanced to this round due to the pie it faced (Coconut? In a pie? Blechh.) Apple proved that an old favorite can triumph over an upstart.

(7) Banana Cream

(10) Coconut Cream

Banana Cream, a relatively strong entry, defeated cousin Coconut Cream with nothing less than a shutout.

How does a nutty, decadent pie such as Pecan defeat a contender as strong as Apple pie? From the beginning, Pecan won a following among tasters for its sweet taste. "It's like candy," one taster even said. The Apple pie was sweet too, but it paled in comparison to the mult-layered savoriness of Pecan.

(3) Peanut Butter

(14) Caramel Pecan Silk

Caramel Pecan Silk rolled to an upset victory over Peanut Butter, the latter of which was weaker than expected

Turns out that Henry David Thoreau wasn't the only one to enjoy simplicity. Tasters confirmed the transcendentalist's words true by voting Pecan better than Caramel Pecan Silk. The victorious pie, sans caramel and chocolate mousse, offered a richer taste.

(6) Pecan

(11) Pumpkin

Pecan proved a stronger pie than it was seeded as it handed a defeat to a surprisingly weak Pumpkin.

Check out the "Sugar Bowl" video online @www.hhsredblack.com

CALL OF DUTY BLACK OPS

WE DECLASSIFY THIS SEASON'S HOT NEW GAME

By Luke Votzke and Jimmy Herd-Bond
Sports Editor & Photo Editor

Call of Duty: Black Ops. For most, an explanation is not needed. A video game? Hardly. Black Ops, the long awaited installment in the Call of Duty series, created by Treyarch, blew up the sales charts, selling more than 7 million copies between XBox 360, PS3 and PC on its opening day. Many hardcore fans spent the night outside of stores, pre-order receipts in hand, waiting for the midnight release of the game.

There is also a whole new set of games to play online. One of the new arenas is the Wager Match. The wager match lets you buy into certain games and the top three winners get a victory prize. There are three types of wager matches: Sticks and Stones, One in the Chamber and Gun Games.

In Sticks and Stones, players are equipped with an Explosive Tip Crossbow, a Ballistic Knife, and a Tomahawk.

The One in the Chamber game starts every player off with a pistol and one bullet and players must shoot someone else to get another round of ammo. If the player wastes their only round of ammo then they must use the melee knife instead.

Like almost all video games Black Ops has an online aspect to it. But the online play has had some major updates from the creator, Treyarch. The online play is a lot different from all of the Call of Duty predecessors. One of the major updates is the return to the 50-level system which is reminiscent of Call of Duty Modern Warfare.

One of the most radical changes in the online play is the introduction of the Black Ops Credits. These are credits that players earn while playing online and are used to buy better weapons once unlocked or new perks.

Another new feature of Black Ops online play is the ability to customize your weapon beyond picking out attachments. In Black Ops, the player has the ability to change the sighting on the Red Dot and Reflex sights. There are options for the reticule including the Smiley Face, the Skull, Three Dots, the Treyarch symbol and many more. The reticule color and lens color can also be changed to red, green, blue, teal, purple, yellow or orange. One can also opt to have their clan tag engraved on their weapon.

Black Ops features multiple game modes, including single player campaign mode, zombies mode, and multiplayer mode which can be played online, split screen, or as a LAN party.

The campaign takes us back to the days of JFK, during Vietnam and the Cuban Missile Crisis. Players assume the role of Alex Mason, a captain in the U.S. Army, an elite soldier who flashes back to missions while strapped into a torture chair. As you progress into the game, you advance behind enemy lines, pilot attack helicopters, drive armed river boats, crawl through spider holes, and fight your way through the deadly Nova 6 gas. Black Ops also features trophies/achievements for the PS3 and Xbox 360, which allow you to advance your online gamer profile. Most of these achievements are completed in campaign, although all game modes have special goals that will unlock them.

The campaign takes us back to the days of JFK, during Vietnam and the Cuban Missile Crisis.

CALLOFDUTY.COM

A trademark of Treyarch, Zombies mode, first appeared in Call of Duty: World at War, debuting as Nazi Zombies. In the new installment by Treyarch, there are two different maps for zombies, featuring a German theater and the pentagon, as well as an arcade-style zombie game. In Zombies, up to 4 players defend the map from endless waves of the undead, gaining points from killing brain-eaters and repairing barricades. Points can be used to purchase weapons, expand the playable area of the map, and purchase perks and ammo upgrades. And yes, the ray gun is back.

In the Gun Games, each player starts out with the same weapon and each time you kill someone you receive the next weapon on the list.There are 20 weapons on each list and the point of the game is to get to the end of the list and get a kill with the final weapon first.

In the traditional online game play, Treyarch has created some totally new maps that include Nuketown, WMD, Hanoi and Villa.

There are a total 14 maps to play online. The guns have been revamped too, with some returners such as the AK47, M16 and SPAS-12 and others modified, such as the fully automatic Famas. There are also some totally new guns such as the G11, Stoner or HS10.

For the most part, the reception of Black Ops has been exceptionally well and it's well liked.

"I like the campaign levels," freshman John Garza says, "It goes into the mind of a character."

The online play is even more popular. Freshman Adam Montgomery says "It's like no other [game]."

On the other hand, senior Carlos Flores likes the online but said, "I hate the claymores," referring to the updated claymore equipment that is more lethal and harder to avoid.

Overall, the game has created quite a stir with the multiple new features it offers. It's sure to be a holiday smash and bring months of thrill to come.

5 swimmers, 2 runners qualify for state meets

Nirja Patel, freshman swimmer

Breakdown: My swim went well. It wasn't my best time, but it was good for a morning swim. I swam next to a bunch of fast girls, so I was really motivated.

Preparation: I did a 3000-4000 yard warm up and a few sprints to help me go faster.

Experience: The atmosphere was really similar to Junior Olympics and senior championships. It was nice and very exciting to go to states as a freshman and be the only girl on the team to go. Also I got $86 from the school.

David DeSena, senior swimmer

Breakdown: For my butterfly, I started out pretty fast and just did the best I could. For my freestyle, my main event, there was a kid next to me who went a 4:41, so I only got ninth place. In the relay, I did pretty well since I'm not a sprinter and still got a best time.

Preparation: I went to sleep early at night, woke up early and took a five hour energy. Beforehand, I also bought a $300 LZR Racer suit.

Experience: I got a best time, so it's not that I had bad swims. It was good for my senior year, but it would have been nice to get a second medal.

Louis Go, senior swimmer

Breakdown: It went pretty smoothly, but it I had dived in right and had a decent dive, I could easily have gone a 23.0 instead of around a 24.0.

Preparation: Definitely bars and carbs. Lots of pasta and a good night's rest.

Experience: I was actually pretty neutral about it. I wasn't excited or scared, just there.

Jaime Perez, senior swimmer

Breakdown: Well my prelims swim went a lot better, I went a 55.12. There are fewer heats in the finals, so the events I swam were back to back, so I didn't have much rest. I led off the relay and then had to swim the backstroke two minutes after.

Preparation: We've been working really hard over the summer, basically looking forward to this meet. We swam a lot of long course to get ready for the shorter events. We worked hard for about four months and then tore it up.

Experience: I was pretty happy we got a medal, that was always something I've wanted. It was a goal I feel like I've definitely achieved, I'm pretty content.

Katie Lutton, junior runner

Breakdown: At regionals I went a personal best of 19:49:12 and at states looked to drop my time even further, but that didn't happen. And it's not an excuse, but I kind of lost my head, like worrying about the other girls and not the race.

Preparation: We've been working on speed and endurance since the beginning of summer, so we trained up until after regionals. The week before states, we took it easy because if you didn't have the endurance by then, you weren't going to get it in a week.

DILTON DESENA

Coach Tom Paloumpis, Danny Arnone, David DeSena, Louis Go and Jaime Perez pose with their sixth-place medals.

Experience: I kept trying to get myself motivated and excited, but when I got out there, it was way bigger than I thought it was going to be.

Fabian Woodard, senior runner

Breakdown: I did all right, but i was sick before states, so it could have been better, and I didn't run my best.

Perparation: We did alot of six-mile runs, running to Al Lopez Park and back, things to build up our base (milage).

Experience: It was alot of pressure. Eveyone expects you do do what you did at states, but better against harder competition.

Danny Arnone, junior swimmer

Breakdown: My swim went really well, I really don't think I could have done better. My split was a best time and was one of the fastest at states.

Preparation: A couple of months prior, I had two day practices where I get up at 4 a.m. to practice at 5:30 a.m. and then again at Berkeley after school. The night before states, we had a kind of team bonding where we hung out, shaved heads and ate some food.

Experience: I tried not to be too excited. I just got in the zone so that I knew what I was going to do before I did it.

- Jake Gagne

FALL SPORTS WRAP-UP

RACHEL MOWAT

Senior Nick Morrow leaps over the offense at Homecoming.

HANNAH SEWELL

Sophomore William Clark practices his driving skills.

HANNAH SEWELL

Freshman Kourtney Melindi ran a 22:21.15 at regionals.

DREA SLOAN

Sophomore Rachel Mowat readies herself to serve.

Golf: The boys finished sixth at districts with a final record of 9-6. The girls season finished 0-6, featuring novice golfers.

Cross Country: The highlights of the season were junior Katie Lutton and senior Fabian Woodard's impressive run at states.

Volleyball: The team finished 3-9. Led by captains Roxana Cruz and Carissa Kortum, the team looks to rebuild a team of mostly sophomores.

Football: With a final varsity record of 8-4, the Terriers beat Largo in the first round of the playoffs only to fall short in the second round to Armwood 39-6.

-Jake Gagne

inside corner kicks: both sides of the play

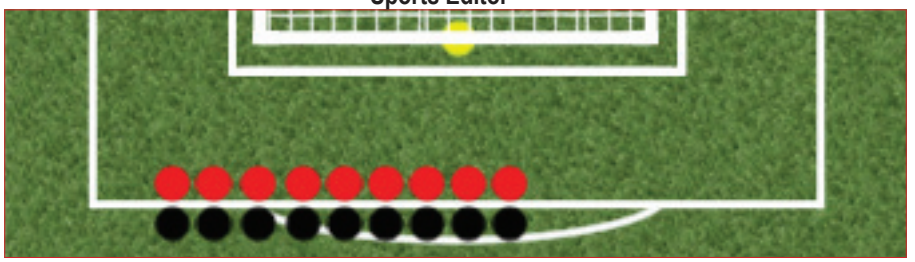
VICTORIA RUSSO

Sophomore Matthew Szabo takes a corner kick, a play where the attacking team attempt to score by crossing the goal.

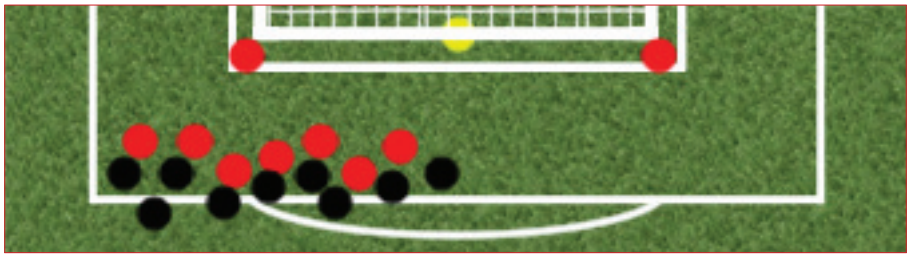
By Jake Gagne
Sports Editor

OFFENSE

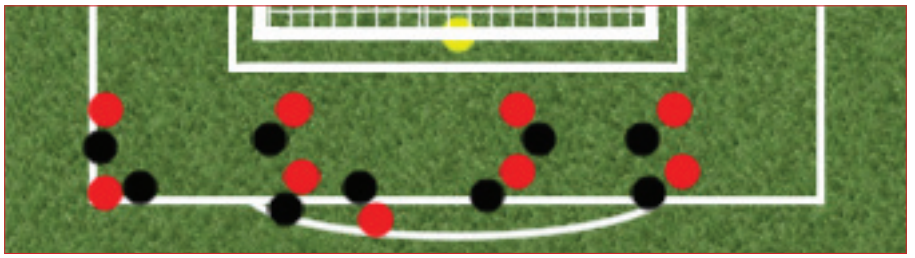
1. The attackers line up on the further part of the line of the penalty area, trying to distract and evade defenders and ready to rush the box.



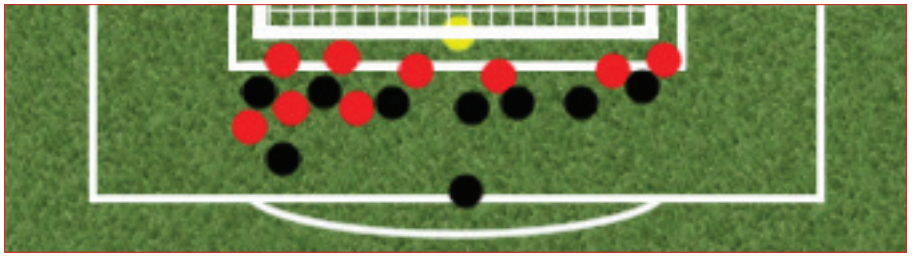
2. Ball is kicked and motion starts. They begin to crash the box, following their predetermined paths while still trying to confuse and elude their man.



3. The real action starts. One breaks for the back post with another following him in case of a rebound, the same happening for the front post. 4 or 5 crash the goal area (small box) and the goalie, trying to block the goalie and be in position for the cross.



4. Now they're in their positions and ready to head or kick the ball in, depending on if the cross was in the air or on the ground. A man stands at the top of the penalty area and high far post in case there's a long rebound and they can shoot it in.



GRAPHICS BY DOMINIC BROMLEY

DEFENSE

1. Playing a man to man defense, each defender, except two (one stationed on each post of the goal) and the goalie picks up and tries to stay with his man, staying between him and the goal.

2. Doing their best to stay with the man they marked, the defenders try to block the attackers by staying on them tight without fouling and giving them little room to move.

3. One of their main jobs is to protect the goalie and give him enough room to move and punch the ball out if necessary. The post defenders stand firm, ready to hit the ball out. The defenders still follow their man.

4. Trying to get a touch on the ball out, any tip or tap that'll prevent the offense from getting a touch on it is essential. The goalie tries to punch it out if he can. Once the ball is out of the danger zone, they push up the filed to attack.

Boys basketball team faces early challenges, starts 1-4

Coming off the 2009 season that saw a new coach succeed in her first year but also an early exit in the district tournament, the players didn't know what to expect from a new season. But each year, the team starts slowly.

Practice got under way early this year for the players, who saw over ten seniors from last year's team graduate.

With underclassman being abundant on the roster, experience is something the Terriers will need to gain for success.

A 64-28 loss to the Sickles Gryphons on Dec. 8 was the first wake-up call.

However, the roster will be helped, as it is every year, in the beginning of December when football season ends and players leave the fields for the court. With luck, these athletes will give depth to a team whose only measurement of success is the 1-4 record the team sports in the first part of the season.

WINTER SPORTS UPDATE

Terrier wrestlers earn top spots at Cougar Invitational meet

The Terriers wrestling team participated in the Cougar Invitational on Dec. 3.

LIFETOUCH

Senior Frankie Ramos competes in the Cougar Invitational at Durant High School.

Along with the district tournament, this is what the wrestlers practice and train for all year long. The degree of competition, however, means that not every wrestler on the team gets to participate.

The intensity of the competition was shown in the results -- the Terriers finished 26 overall out of 32 teams.

HHS wrestlers Martin Tidoe, Deshaun Brown, Kyle Knauer, Connor Dobbs, Frankie Ramos and Jesus Garcia all lost their first matches in their respective divisions.

Demetrius Hill won his second round match after receiving a bye in the 189-pound division. Finally, Senior Ben Richards got to the semifinals in the 215-pound division, a notable feat for the Terriers in this tournament.

-Nick Cullen

New head coach brings experience, enthusiasm

By Chrissy Geshel
News Editor

She teaches HOPE in that classroom by the teacher parking lot. Her highlighted brown ponytail swings as she walks around campus, usually from her classroom to the gym to the field and back.

Now that it's winter, she can almost always be found in the gymnasium after school, teaching plays and giving instructions to a group of teenage girls. Meet new girls basketball head coach Babita Artabasy.

Artabasy replaces last year's coach, math teacher Yolanda Whitehead-Driskell, who decided to focus only on coaching volleyball.

Artabasy's long basketball career has given her experience both on the court as an athlete and on the sideline as a coach.

LIFETOUCH

Artabasy and her team captains, from left seniors Vaisia Barnes, Tashana Bludsaw and Cassie Nevarez, confer with a referee before a game.

After playing high school ball, she went on to play at the collegiate level at California State University.

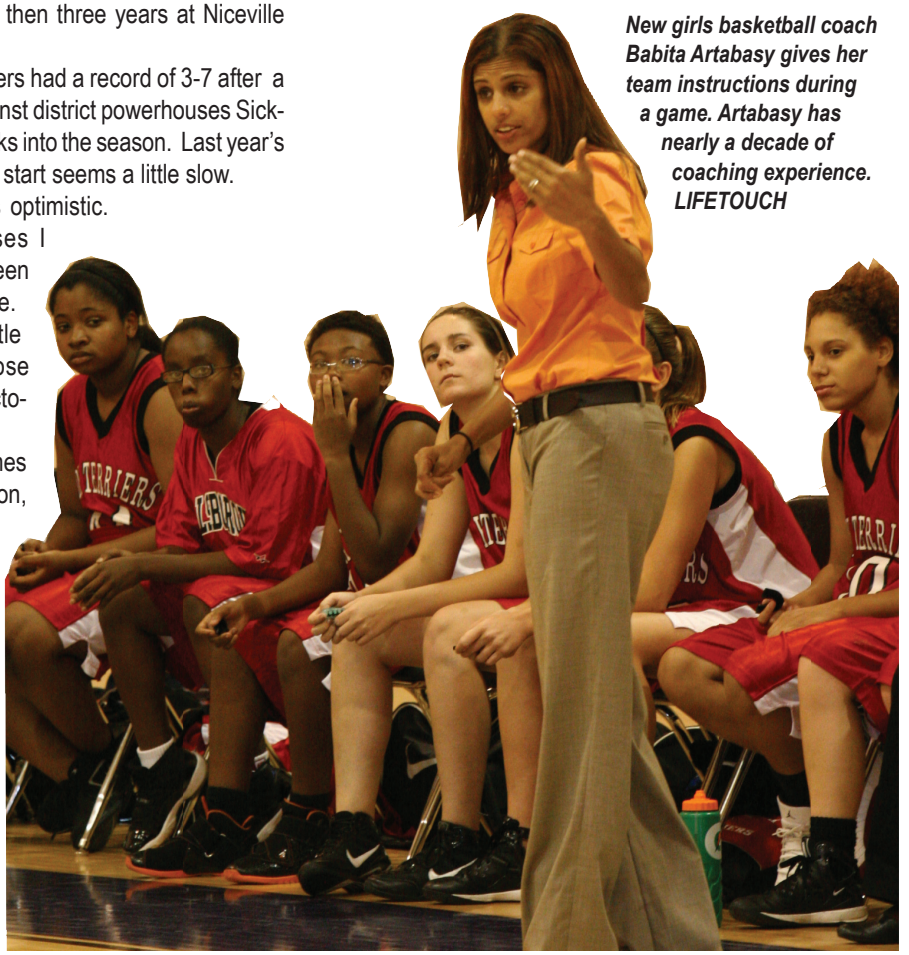
This is Artabasy's first year of teaching HOPE at Hillsborough, but before this year she taught and coached for seven years at a school in California, then three years at Niceville High School in North Florida.

At press time, the Lady Terriers had a record of 3-7 after a tough schedule pitted them against district powerhouses Sickles and Freedom only a few weeks into the season. Last year's team went 18-10, so this year's start seems a little slow.

However, Artabasy remains optimistic. "In regards to wins and losses I am disappointed, but I have seen strides being made each game. We have improved little by little each game and hopefully those improvements will lead us to victories," she said.

The team has almost 10 games left to play in the regular season, and Artabasy clearly expects her team to continue to progress and develop.

The basketball team typically plays between one and three games a week. On school days without games the team usually practices after school until 5:30. Often Artabasy even holds Saturday practice sessions. In practice Artabasy stresses discipline and defense, according to team captain Vaisia Barnes. "[Artabasy] says offense sells tickets, but defense wins games," said the senior, who leads the team with an average 9.6 points per game. Artabasy's goal for the year is to make the post-season.



New girls basketball coach Babita Artabasy gives her team instructions during a game. Artabasy has nearly a decade of coaching experience.
LIFETOUCH