Theater Insanity Hits OHS

By Adam Aderman
The Greek Mythology Olympiaganza, produced by the Coterie Theater in Kansas City, Missouri, was performed at 8:30 a.m. on February 23 at OHS in the auditorium. The performance lasted an hour, and this is the first time that the Coterie Theater has performed at OHS. Usually OHS students have to travel to performances. The cost was $3 for students, but Drama students were able to get in for free.

Olympiaganza is a play about Greek mythology and all the various myths and characters who helped shape Ancient Greece. The play has famous characters such as Cyclops, Oedipus (the King that solved the riddle of the sphinx), Achilles (hero of the Trojan War) and the Greek Gods Zeus and Hades.

Philip Ricketts, student teacher from UCM, said that Drama students study these Greek characters, including Dionysus, God of Drama, who also is in the play.

The play cost the Drama Department approximately $1000 to host, but they received a foundation grant for $750 to reimburse them for part of the production costs.

“It ties to my curriculum in a fun and exciting way. I like puppets and togas and theater insanity!” said Sarah Esser, drama teacher.

Ricketts added, “It’s a great opportunity to introduce culture into the high school.”

What is your favorite part of Valentine’s Day?

By Bailey Clutter and Lesley Kleyh

Heather Cobb’s Kindergarten Class
“Getting to give cards,” Aubrey Murry
“Giving cards,” Richard Jackson

Kristi Gudde’s First Grade Class
“Candy!” Ryan Hallier
“Telling everyone happy Valentine’s Day, giving cards, and decorating my box,” Lexi Moody

Melissa Hall’s Second Grade Class
“My favorite part of Valentine’s Day is the party,” Alexa VanSickle
“The chocolate,” Zak King
“The games,” Lilah Bane
“Getting to see my family,” Karissa Stark

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Drew Roncelli and Richard Jackson, kindergarteners in Heather Cobb’s class, enjoy their Valentine’s Day party. Leslie Roncelli helped with the party.

Third-Graders Create Classroom Ecosystems

By Lori Addington
Third graders at Odessa Upper Elementary are learning about Missouri ecosystems. The students are learning how animals interact in their ecosystems, as well as animal needs, food chains and what destroys the ecosystems.

Each student will be assigned an animal to research, and they will make a model of that animal and create its habitat. After all the students have completed their research, they will put them together and create a larger ecosystem in the classroom.

The different types of ecosystems are ponds, lakes, wetlands, streams, rivers, creeks, grasslands, prairies, caves and forests.

The project helps teachers and students accomplish one of the Grade Level Expectation for science. The ecosystem project is expected to last approximately two or three weeks.
By Bailey Kram & Syndey Carlyle

OMS will participate in the KC Reading Challenge on March 8. The KC Reading Challenge is a field trip to the Philips 66 Big 12 Women's Basketball Tournament for sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders. This will be OMS’s tenth year of participating.

To qualify for the trip, students read at least 12 books and completed two fitness logs. Becky Ford, seventh grade Communication Arts teacher, is in charge of organizing the event. Ford said that she loves organizing the event each year, and the students have a lot of fun. “It is a great way to motivate and reward students for reading,” said Ford.

Colton Howard, seventh-grader, attended the trip last year and is looking forward to attending this year, too. Howard qualified by reading 13 books. “I am looking forward to the game this year. The game was my favorite part last year, too.”

By Lexi Ryan

JV girls basketball team ended the season on February 18. According to Tia Saxon, coach, their toughest opponent was Grain Valley.

“They have been a fun group to work with. They kept me on my toes, and we didn’t have to deal with any drama,” said Saxon. Saxon said that Kristen Lang and Ashley Ficken were most improved for the season.

Saxon also recognized Clara Scott for sticking with the team throughout the entire season even after suffering from an injury. Scott was only able to play in four games.

Saxon said that a strength of the team was their great teamwork, and a weakness was their low shooting percentage. She also added that the team improved their understanding of the plays, increased their intensity, and improved on boxing out.

“I enjoyed playing with the team. They made my first season great,” said Lang.

By Justin Howard

JV Boys basketball team has a 1-10 record after their recent loss against Pleasant Hill on February 10. The team ended their season February 18 against Pleasant Hill.

Nahowan Saxon, coach, is a paraprofessional at OMS. Saxon said, “The team’s weakness this year is their knowledge and understanding of the game, and their strength is their work ethic.”

Saxon also said that the season was tough because they spent so much time in practice working on the little things like lay-ups, passing, etc., that there was not enough time left to work on the big things like offensive plays, defense strategies, etc.

Saxon said that he is encouraging the players to take advantage of the summer to work on their game and to improve their personal performance. He believes this will help the team come together for next year.

By Hetti McMillian

Molly Catlin, OMS Special Educator, is the director of Dawg Designs along with Mary Pierce and Gina Scott, OMS paraprofessionals. Dawg Designs is a jewelry company where the items are made and sold by OMS special education students.

This program was started to help the special education students improve their motor skills and gain work skills for the future.

Catlin’s students make beaded bracelets, lanyards, necklaces and key chains and sell them for approximately $1 to $5. Items have been sold in all buildings in the district. All proceeds go back into the program.

“My favorite part of Dawg Designs is seeing the children improve their fine motor skills while enjoying the job that they are doing,” said Catlin.

Catlin went to Kent State University in Ohio and received her master’s degree at CMU.

By Tia Saxon

The Girls JV basketball team ended the season on February 18. According to Tia Saxon, coach, their toughest opponent was Grain Valley.

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By Hallie Spaar

The Growler Staff

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Foods Classes Attend Harvesters Field Trip

By Kelsie Dale

OHS foods classes attended a field trip February 16 to Harvesters Community Food Network, a food bank for the Kansas City area. All students with good attendance were eligible to attend.

The students volunteered for approximately three hours, watched a short film about the BackSnack program, and then toured the facility. While working, OHS students made more than 2,000 bags for the BackSnack program Harvesters runs for the Kansas City School District.

The BackSnack program feeds more than 11,000 children every Friday, and they serve more than 90,000 food pantries. Approximately 4,700 people volunteer at Harvesters each month.

Tricia Ward, OHS FACS teacher, has been going to Harvesters for years now. She volunteered for Harvesters in high school and has been interested ever since. She hopes to help her students recognize the need for food donations and how this organization impacts people’s lives.

“I want to open my students’ eyes on how many people actually need food,” said Ward.

Harvesters accepts donations of food and redistributes it to groups such as soup kitchens, churches and homeless shelters. OHS students brought their own donations as well.

“I was impressed, and I think this trip really opened the students’ eyes. They were surprised by the amount of food,” said Ward.

PTO Supports Reading at McQuerry

By Bailey Clutter and Lesley Kleyh

PTO recently sponsored “Burning to Read,” where more than 250 McQuerry students participated. The event was held on Tuesdays, January 25, February 8, February 15 and February 22.

During the program, students stayed after school for an hour to read. The event was created in order to encourage winter reading at home. During this hour, students were given a snack while they had time to silently read. Students who attended all four days and read 30 books received a T-shirt.

The top readers will be brought to school one day in March on an Odessa Fire Department fire truck. The date is to be determined.

Ernie Cockrum, PTO president, said, “I encourage reading as a life-long leisure activity.”
**Freshmen Boys Basketball Team Defeats Lexington**

By Morgan Waibel

Freshmen boys basketball team ended the season February 10, with a record of 2-8. The team was coached by Kyle Barkley, OHS P.E. teacher, and assisted by Michael Atteberry, OHS graduate.

Barkley said that he enjoyed the season even though it was frustrating at times. The team prepared for games by working on getting fundamentally sound during practices. Barkley also said that his favorite part of coaching is watching the boys develop from their freshman year to their senior year.

Barkley believes that the boys improved the most before Christmas break because all the snow days following break did not allow them to get to practice consistently. The most improved player, according to Barkley, was Andrew Walquist.

The team's best game was their win against Lexington, and their toughest competition was against Pleasant Hill.

Barkley is looking forward to next year's new players and the challenges the new season will bring.

"The season was fun even though our record wasn't as good as I had hoped," said Alex Kurtz, freshman.

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**Freshmen Girls Basketball Team Ends Season at 4-4**

By Josie Rickey

Freshmen girls basketball team ended the season with a win against Harrisonville bringing their record to 4-4. The girls won 37-23 at home in what Rachel Ritter, coach, called, “the biggest game of the year.”

“There was a lot of pressure going in as underdogs. The girls didn’t know what to expect,” said Ritter. The team only had five girls and several injuries during the game, according to Ritter.

According to Ritter, the toughest opponent during the season was Richmond. The score was 29-28 with Odessa winning by only one point. Ritter recognized Kennedy Neville and Jillian Bertz as strong leaders for the team.

“They both stepped up, and they have strong morals, values, and are outspoken,” said Ritter. Neville also scored the most points in a single game against Clinton earning 16 points.

Ritter noted that the most improved player of the season was Jordan O’Malley. She improved her shooting and knowledge of the plays. As a team, the girls improved on working well as a team.

Ritter is looking forward to the next season. As a coach, Ritter believes that she has improved on interacting with the girls, stickiness, and using constructive criticism.

“I’ve got to say that this was the best year that I’ve had,” Ritter said about her third year of coaching. Ritter teaches art at McQuerry and Upper Elementary.

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**JV Wrestlers Look Forward to Earning Varsity Spots**

By Sydney Carlyle

JV wrestling season ended February 7. Adam West, coach, said the season was successful, and that all the wrestlers improved and could be looking at varsity positions next year.

West said, “The team was very strong this year. We can only hope for more next year.”

West said that while everyone improved, Brody Hughes, sophomore, stood out as being one of the most improved wrestlers of the season. West also noted that he was pleased with the progress of the new wrestlers.

West hopes to increase the numbers for the next school year. He also hopes for more competition from other schools next year, so all JV wrestlers get an equal chance to wrestle.