

# The Pirate Speaks

Inside Pirate Country  
December 2014



The Pearl High School Newspaper since 1948



# The Pirate Speaks

It has been my privilege to teach at PHS since 1997 and to serve as adviser for The Pirate Speaks newspaper since 2007. I have enjoyed working with talented young students to help them learn real-world skills while producing our student newspaper.

The Pirate Speaks newspaper was first published in 1948--the year Pearl High School was established. The paper format has evolved from mimeograph copies to newsprint to the full color magazine we have today.

A member of the Mississippi Scholastic Press Association since 2008, our newspaper has won awards in our state competition in the following categories: in-depth reporting, page design, photo pages, sports writing, sports features, feature writing, and team general excellence.

I am honored to have played a role in the rich history at PHS; and I am confident that our tradition of excellence will continue as students use this medium to document accomplishments and tell the stories of Pearl Pirates.

Thanks to my current and previous staff members for your dedication, unique talents, fun personalities, willingness to learn, and acceptance of each other as family. We are a family.

I also sincerely appreciate the encouragement and support of my administrators and colleagues as you work with our young people and give them opportunities to succeed.

As I leave my teaching/advising career and begin the next chapter of my life, I encourage each PHS student to use your gifts, talents and opportunities to help make our world a better place. I pray that you will make wise choices and do great things. I look forward to hearing about your accomplishments and to see "the places you will go!" (Dr. Seuss)

May God bless each of you!

Sheri Carter  
NBCT, M.Ed.

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# Meet Your Principal

*TPS:* What is your role at PHS?

**Mr. Craven:** I am the 11th and 12th grade principal. I am in charge of building maintenance and student parking, and also supervise after school events. I try to be the voice of reason and inspirational to all, and to help everyone's time here be as enjoyable as possible while staying between the parameters set forth by the Superintendent and School Board.

*TPS:* How long have you been at PHS?

**Mr. Craven:** This is my 21st year.

*TPS:* What high school(s) and college(s) did you attend?

**Mr. Craven:** I graduated from Water Valley High School with the Class of 1968, Northwest Junior College in Senatobia with the Class of 1970, Delta State University with the Class of 1972, and Delta State University with the Class of 1989.

*TPS:* What is your most memorable moment from high school?

**Mr. Craven:** My most memorable moments from high school are being the MVP of the basketball team, the baseball team hitting leader, the #1 Tennis Boys Singles, Chemistry class senior year, and my admiration of the high school football coach as who I wanted to pattern myself after.

*TPS:* If you could have lunch with one person, who would it be and why?

**Mr. Craven:** I'd have lunch with Winston Churchill because he was the great inspirational leader of Great Britain during WWII. He stood firm and let the Nazis know that they would fight them at every turn until every countryman's dying breath and that they would defeat the Germans.

*TPS:* Tell us about yourself.

**Mr. Craven:** I've been married to my wife, Cathy, for 32 years, and together we have a son, Jack, who is 27 and a daughter, Emily, who is 21. Cathy works at Hudspeth, Jack is a 2005 grad of PHS and is a Captain in the Air Force stationed in Seoul, South Korea, and Emily is a 2011 grad of PHS and a senior at Delta State University in her second year of nursing school. My hobbies include watching all Pearl Pirate activities, running daily, studying the great game of baseball as well as watching it, listening to the great sound of 60s music, and my weekly visit to Buffalo Wild Wings.

*TPS:* What words of advice do you have for PHS students?

**Mr. Craven:** Everybody should strive for greatness. I want to try to convey that life is a marathon and not a sprint, to be patient, to have courage. Don't whine, don't complain, and don't make excuses. I believe that during tough times all people should talk to their supreme being and gain strength from that belief and the courage they get from that. We all go through tough times, but having that courage to seek someone greater than us is inspirational to say the least and will get them through tough stretches in life.



# Adventures of Adam Frazier

By: Adam Frazier

“Whoa. Now that is cool!” I say to Dominic, a 50 year old British adventurer and photographer, as we watch a massive dust cloud swallow the entire horizon . . . the entire horizon! “Okay, we go!” our burly Ethiopian driver Johannes yells at us. Dominic and I turn and carefully begin walking over the black volcanic rock back to the Land Cruiser. Tonight is supposed to be the last night of a three day tour of the Danakil Depression, a remote desert region in northern Ethiopia. The region is known for its lawlessness, rebels, kidnappers, and the hottest recorded temperature on earth. Survival here is difficult. Even the name of the region, Danakil Depression, is ominous and perfectly fitting. We drive directly into the sandstorm.

Almost immediately, we lose sight of the other two Land Cruisers in our convoy. One Land Cruiser carries the fuel, one carries our guide Jonas, and our Land Cruiser carries the food and water. All three vehicles are needed in order to reach our final destination, the rim of an active volcano. Sightless beyond ten feet, all three vehicles keep driving through the sandstorm, breaking a cardinal rule for when one is lost, the “shelter in place” rule. Our driver Johannes, sweating and squinting, tries to peer through the impenetrable wall of sand. Wrapping his shirt around his face, he gets out of the Land Cruiser and searches for rapidly disappearing tracks through the desert. As he opens the door to get back in the Land Cruiser, we are blasted with hot sand. Relentless and completely lost, he keeps driving and driving. Marco, a funny young Italian along for the tour, turns on his GPS and determines that our driver is going in circles. After an hour of desperate searching, Johannes parks the vehicle. Johannes, Dominic, Marco, his stunning yet high maintenance Ethiopian girlfriend Almaz, and I sit alone with our dark thoughts, the vehicle rocking back and forth with each wave of sand that smashes against the window. Marco, trying to lighten the mood, quotes one of my earlier stories, his Italian accent penetrating the silence, “Don’t worry, Adam! It just looks like we are all going to die!” Nervous laughter. I contemplate writing a last letter or making a video of my last day on earth for my friends and family back home. I’m pretty scared.

Night falls. It’s pitch black. Angry rap music blares from the speakers. Around ten o’clock, tiny LED lights appear briefly in the howling sand. They flicker away. They appear again. Johannes flashes his brights on and off. I flash my headlamp, searching our surroundings, trying to signal whoever or



whatever is out there. We make contact. It is another Land Cruiser, a party of workers who got caught in the sandstorm while returning from a work camp in the desert. The fiercest part of the storm has burned itself out by now. We team up with the work party and notice a single light about a mile away. It's decided that we should drive towards the light; it's either another Land Cruiser or a solid structure, which would mean people. A soldier with an AK47 appears eerily out of the desert like a ghost as we near the light. The light is one of our convoy vehicles, firmly stuck in a sand dune. Two of my friends in the stranded Land Cruiser, Yuko, a Japanese journalist, and Feruza, a local village girl along for the ride, are visibly shaken and ecstatic to see us. After all, we have the food and water. They have the fuel. Thanks to the work party, we also have the manpower to dig their Land Cruiser out of the sand dune. We dig small pits in the sand and then place heavy plastic mats near the tires. Around midnight, they are freed. I'm exhausted. I lay down in the open desert and quickly fall asleep, the landscape bright from a million stars overhead.

The next morning we drive to a small village constructed of concrete, mud, scrap metal, and old rotted pieces of wood. Goats roam the hardpacked dirt streets. We link up with Jonas our guide and hire twelve soldiers, all heavily armed yet wearing sandals, for the final trip to the rim of Erta Ale, the active volcano. Tourists have been killed and kidnapped in the area around the volcano and on the volcano itself. We drive for a couple of hours past Afar villagers and endless camels, eventually reaching a black volcanic rock track that is difficult to navigate. We are tossed from side to side and all over each other until we arrive at a small abandoned village. Soldiers in the lead vehicle sprint from the Land Cruiser, guns drawn, and rapidly search every hut, looking for insurgents or kidnappers. A lunch of vegetables and bread is served and we begin the seven mile hike to the top of the volcano. It's the heat of the day, but everyone's spirits are up.

A sandy path winds its way between volcanic rock and knee high dead grass. We begin our hike up the mountain, clusters of soldiers, Jonas, and us tourists spread out for a couple of hundred yards. I hike with the front group of soldiers and Feruza, making small talk, pointing out dangerous steps, and sharing little jokes. Every thirty minutes we take ten minute breaks underneath short scrubby trees.



Feruzza's English is great, and I ask her where she learned to speak so well. She smiles widely and responds, "From watching dramas about the Koran on television." During a break underneath a small tree, she and Yuko ask me how old I am. In my best Southern drawl, "I'll tell y'all tomorrow." Packing up to get moving again, I offer the soldiers water, trying to establish a bond, a friendship. They refuse and we hike on, the path becoming gradually steeper and steeper. The black volcanic rock looks like a giant burning candle was held upside down and the wax dripped in huge boulders down the mountainside.



Feruzza's green suede dress shoes are almost destroyed as we near the top of the mountain. She's become my hiking partner by default. We are the only two who can keep up with the front group of soldiers. "I can't make it. I'm going to die. A teenage girl is kicking my butt up this mountain," I say to her. Reaching the top, I go to find the soldiers to joke around with them. They are on mats facing north, praying towards Mecca. Not wanting to disturb them, I wait until they are finished, and then I offer them water. It's been a long hot uphill seven miles. They accept water this time.

As dusk approaches and everyone else intermittently straggles to the top, Jonas prepares us for our journey through the crater to the rim of Erta Ale. I've never seen an active volcano before. Strapping my Gopro video camera to my head, I begin the descent into the crater. I can hear and smell the volcano long before I see the actual lava lake. Climbing the ridge to look down into the molten lava, a blast like an oven belts me in the face . . . My eyes won't comprehend and my brain won't believe what I am seeing. Fifty feet below me is a swirling, bubbling, spewing lake of fire, small eruptions periodically bursting from the surface. Many "Lord of the Rings" jokes ensue. Dominic is certain his photos will win him first prize in a travel photography competition that he has entered. Feruzza brings me a plastic bottle. I fill it with rocks and throw it in, triggering a short fiery eruption. A stupid grin crosses my face as I stand on the edge, dumbfounded by what I'm staring at. I have a crazy idea, "Jonas, can I shoot a gun into the volcano?" He translates my question to the soldiers. They erupt like it's the greatest idea in the history of ideas. I think to myself, "only in Africa would this seem like a good idea or even be possible." Ahmert shows me how to hold it, as if I have never handled a firearm before, and instructs me not to point his AK47 at anybody.

The moon rises. This is one great campfire. We hold hands and sing “Cumbaya”. I teach everybody “The National Anthem”. The greatest fireworks show I ever have or ever will see.

It’s eight o’ clock and time to trudge back down the mountain. Realizing I have forgotten my flashlight, I ask if anybody has a spare. Yuko offers to let me use her battery charger flashlight while she uses her iPod flashlight. There will be a three foot cord connecting the two devices, requiring that we walk close together. I laugh, “this is silly,” and opt to make the hike using moonlight. Jonas and I make a bet, “Adam, if you make it back to the village in two hours, I will give you something good. But if you do not make it, you must give me something good.” I set my stopwatch, “Deal.” Feruza and I speed off into the darkness with the lead group of soldiers, seven miles of rocky terrain ahead of us in the darkness. The soldiers keep offering to carry my things. On a short break, Ahmert says something to me and all of the soldiers start laughing and giving me high fives. I ask Feruza to translate, “They said that they only wanted to march down with Adam because Adam is a real man.” It feels like one of my finest moments, but also one of my dumbest moments, flying at breakneck speed down a steep treacherous mountain at night, days away from any proper medical attention. Nearing the end, I find myself laughing hysterically, exhausted from days of physical hardship, hungry, thirsty, and filthy. I think to myself, crazily . . . this is the happiest I’ve ever been.

Disappointingly, we arrive in the abandoned village in two hours, five minutes. I fall asleep on a mat underneath the stars. The next morning I give Jonas a choice of shirts that he can have. He excitedly chooses my expensive Hugo Boss. At breakfast, I say to Yuko and Feruza, “Yesterday, you wanted to know how old I am. Yesterday, I was thirty three years old. Today I’m thirty four. It’s my birthday.”



All photos provided by Adam Frazier

# LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

By: Mackenzie Bell

Team members are in their stations, ready for game time.....

The cameras are set to catch every moment.....

Pearl High School Broadcasting is a class for students who have an interest in technology and behind the scenes action. 2014-2015 team members consist of: Freshmen, Josh Notree, Cole Patrick, Adam Files, and Nathaniel Webb; Juniors, Christian Myers and Nakenbe Fleming; Seniors, Alexis Ware, Allen Dilley, Alex Morris, John David Smith, Sim Stingly and Infinity Wince. The teacher and advisor for the team is Michael Brewer.

PHS students might know them for recording the football games on Friday night but, according to junior Christian Myers, they do way more. He said, “We do Pearl Minute for every Pearl School, edit videos, run the JumboTron and compete in competitions. It’s not easy to be on the crew, you need specific skills that all 12 members possess. Freshmen Nathaniel Webb commented, “You need patience and experience with technology and Adobe”. The rest of the team agreed.

According to most of the team, the hardest part is to roll up the cords on a cold and wet Friday night. One of the members had a very unpleasant experience with that. Alexis Ware quoted, “when I was rolling up the cords, I slipped and rolled down the hill. I was cold and wet.”







The team cannot complete all of their projects with just a camera; they use industry-standard software (Adobe Master Collection), four different cameras, the production trailer, Pirate-Tron, green screen, GoPro and drone. The broadcasting students received an award for their work in 2012. Applying their technology skills as they worked with the dance team, cheerleaders and colorguard, the class produced a video that won first place in the schools category of the International Pink Glove Dance Competition in October, 2012.

Junior Christian Myers plans to use what he has learned and use it toward his future. “I want to be a music producer and this class prepares me for that,” said Christian.

When asked to describe their experience in one word, a few had a something to say: Alexis Ware commented, “Challenging!” Nathaniel Webb stated, “Exciting!” The 2014-2015 Broadcasting Team is truly an example for Pirate Pride because of everything they do for PHS.



# From SEAL to Teacher

By: Jenna Skeen

Captain Timothy Richardt enlisted in the Navy during his senior year of high school because his interests were always military oriented. He felt as if he was not disciplined enough to go straight to college. He considered all branches of the military, but ultimately decided that the Navy was the best fit for him. Due to his occupation originally being a hospital corpsman, his first tour in the Navy was with the Marines as a medic. He attended many different types of training such as deep sea diving school, SEAL training, Army airborne parachute school, Officer Candidate School, and Surface Warfare School.

Former Navy SEAL Captain Richardt served in Desert Storm and helped with the Iran Hostage Crisis. He also did security for President Clinton and President George W. Bush. Among his accomplishments are him becoming an EOD Officer and the commanding officer of the Navy Dive School in Panama City, Florida. He retired from the Navy with 37 years in September of 2014.

Captain Richardt has 4 children, and his two daughters both followed in their father's footsteps and enlisted in the Navy. His oldest daughter is no longer in the Navy, but one is still active duty. His oldest son had no interest in the military, but works for Zumiez, which is a skateboard company. His youngest son is only 13, however, he is very disciplined and he is interested in the Air Force.

Although Captain Richardt has only been at Pearl High School for a short amount of time, he loves it. He ultimately chose Pearl over some of the other job offers he had because Captain John Lewis, a former Pearl instructor, contacted him and invited him to visit PHS. He had an interview with Dr. Brantley and some of the other school leaders and felt like Pearl was a good fit for him. He currently teaches Naval Science 4 as well as physical training on Mondays and Tuesdays. He is establishing an air rifle team, and is designing an obstacle course on the campus.

Captain Richardt's advice for anyone interested in joining the military is to study for the ASVAB, to talk to many recruiters to decide which branch is the best for you, and to take it for as long as you want to take it. In his opinion, if you have the discipline and grades in school, you should look at going into one of the military institutions or going to a university that offers ROTC so that you can graduate and become a commissioned officer into any of the branches. If, like him, you do not have the discipline and grades but still want to serve your country, you should select the service that most appeals to you and that you feel is the best fit.



# The Normal

By: KATIE SIMS

Kyle Morgigno is a freshman at PHS. He is a member of the boys' soccer team, varsity football, tennis, Deca, Beta Club, Foreign Language Club, and Key Club. Kyle is also the Freshmen Class President for Student Council.

Since he was little, Kyle has looked up to member of the Student Council and made it a goal to be a part of it one day. He says one of his favorite things is simply being with the people, and he cannot think of anything he really dislikes about being on Student Council.

"He who is not courageous enough to take risks will accomplish nothing in life." This quote by Muhammad Ali is one of Kyle's favorites, and it is a guide for him when times get rough.

If Kyle's life were a movie, he does not think it would have an overly complex title. He thinks it would be named The Normal: The Stressful Life of Kyle.

"Stay focused. Stay humble. And know the reason you're here," was some advice Kyle wanted to share with his fellow PHS goers.



Thank you to all my friends and teachers for getting me through the first semester.

# *PHS ranked #10 in Best Public High Schools in Mississippi*

Pearl High School is ranked the tenth Best Public High School in Mississippi in the 2015 Niche Rankings. This ranking indicates that PHS is “an exceptional academic institution with a diverse set of high-achieving students who rate their experience very highly.”

Niche compares over 100,000 public and private schools and districts by blending community reviews and opinions with data. These factors contributed this ranking: ***academics, health and safety, student culture and diversity, parent and student survey responses, teacher quality, resources and facilities, extracurriculars and activities, and sports and fitness.***

Dr. Lundy Brantley, principal, said, “This is a tremendous honor for our students, staff, and community. These rankings measure the whole school including our robust course offerings, extracurricular activities and athletics.”

Visit this website to learn more:

<https://k12.niche.com/rankings/public-high-schools/best-overall/s/mississippi/>



# Running the Race

By: KATIE SIMS

Senior Caitlin Pinter is a member of several different organizations. She is the Beta Club President and a member of Mayor's Youth Council, Student Council, and FCA. Caitlin is also a Cross Country Captain.

Caitlin first joined track/cross country because of her friends, and since joining, the team has become like a family to her. While practice at 6:00A.M. is not a favorite of hers, Caitlin said she and the other runners always have fun when running through the rain, even if they get a little muddy in the sandpit.

"You can push yourself further than you ever thought you could," Caitlin said was one lesson she will take with her from being on the team, and winning State Champions for cross country is something she will always remember.

If her life were a book, Caitlin thinks the title would be *Running the Race*. She feels that this would suit her way of always persevering.

A quote by John Lennon is one of her favorites and helps keep her afloat when life gets hard – "Everything will be okay in the end. If it's not okay, it's not the end."

Caitlin would like to share a little piece of inspiration with her fellow students, "Follow your heart. No matter what anyone else thinks, do what you believe in."



*"You can push yourself further than you ever thought you could."*

# The Finish Line

*By Courtney Morgigno*



*How long have you been on XC team?*

**6 years**

*Why did you start running?*

**When I was in Junior High, I was late for class and I had to run across the courtyard to get to my next class on time. Coach Kersh was walking through the courtyard and saw me sprinting across the courtyard. He asked, "Son, do you do any sports?" I was, like, "No." He said, "You should come out here and do track for us, do you have good grades?" And I was, like, "I have A's and B's." He said, "Yea, well, you should come participate in track with us." And that's how it all started.**

*What awards have you received?*

**The biggest, personal award I received is first place at Jessie Owens this year. I ran a 16:16 and I won that race. Also, I got MVP during track and Heart-Of-A-Champion during cross country.**

*What do you think about when you are running?*

**The finish line.**

*What keeps you going when you get tired?*

**Mental toughness; this sport takes more than just your body being in shape; your mind has to be in shape also. When you are running, it hurts so you just have to push yourself in your mind and remind yourself that you are doing this for your team and it only hurts for 16 minutes.**

*When you cross the finish line, how does it feel?*

**Once you cross that line, the pain leaves. Because you just ran that time of your season, the fastest time. The joy of that time just takes away the pain.**

*What keeps you going?*

**Bettering myself, because I consider myself a perfectionist. I always want to get the better at things, even school. I try my best in everything I do. I do it for my team; I always want the best for them too. I think the most comes from my coaches, they really support me and they really encourage me to do my best and they push me to limits that I didn't think I had. They always show me that I can do better than I actually can.**

*How far do you plan to go with running?*

**My ultimate goal is to compete in the Olympics on team USA. My short term goal is to the make the USA team as a collegiate athlete, an athlete in college.**

*What do you want to say to future runners?*

**If you dedicate yourself to something and you really care about it, you can always do good in it. Like, you can't do well in anything unless you really care about it. Do something you love doing, even if it is something nobody else really cares about, as long as you care about it and love what you are doing then do it.**

*What else would you like to add?*

**Thanks for the opportunity.**

# Running is Life

Nakenbe Fleming is a junior here at PHS. He is involved in cross country and track. Fleming just finished cross country season and this was an amazing year for him. He came in first at St. Andrews Invitational, at Madison, and at District. He also won State, making him State Champion.

“It didn’t hit me that I was State Champion until the next day when I was at church singing in the choir; I felt so grateful.” Nakenbe said.

Nakenbe has been in cross country since 7th grade and he talked about how much he has changed since then. “When I was in 7th grade I was 4’8” and I weighed about 100 and something pounds. It was fat, not muscle. It took time to realize I was a good runner. At the end of that year I was the fastest runner in the two mile.”



He has a personal record of 16:30 in a 5K and, even though Nakenbe is only a junior, he has had coaches come watch him and talk to him about running in college. He plans on going to either Ole Miss, State, or Arkansas.

Nakenbe has many goals set for his senior year in cross country. “I want to go to Footlocker South Regional, then get top 16, so we can get to Footlocker National. I also want to boys and girls to win 6A Champs.”

Nakenbe’s favorite parts of cross country are the bonding experiences and the trips. He has a lot of advice for future runners. He said, “ Trust your coach and get enough sleep. And practice.”

He has favorite quotes to motivate him when he runs: “Train like number two and you will always work to be better.”

Somebody may beat me, but they are going to have to

**BLEED** to do it.  
Steve Prefontaine

By: **Mackenzie Bell**

# Class 5A Girls State Champions



The Pirate girls cross country team won the 2014 Class 5A State Championship. They finished the season with a record of 141 wins and 20 losses (87.5% winning percentage).

Hannah Pinter	1st	20:05	STATE CHAMPION	Antwinette McCloud	9th	21:08	(Personal Best Time)
Grace Massey	5th	20:38		Cheri Bishop	18th	21:49	
Javier Hoard	8th	21:02		Cheylya Watkins	20th	22:05	(Personal Best Time)
				Caitlin Pinter	21st	22:07	

# Cross Country Boys Finish Strong



The Pirate cross country team placed 2nd overall in the state with a 94.7% winning percentage (197 wins - 11 losses).

Nakenbe Fleming	1st	16:30	STATE CHAMPION (Personal Best Time)	Chris Gates	11th	17:19	(Personal Best Time)
Shamar Tucker	5th	16:50		Tony Mack	17th	17:50	
Aden Maddox	6th	16:57	(Personal Best Time)	Jalen West	19th	17:55	
				Allen Fletcher	105th	21:52	



# Footlocker South Regional Cross Country Championship

## Junior Class Race

Shamar Tucker	46th	16:41
Nakenbe Fleming	55th	16:48

## Sophomore Class Race

Chris Gates	131st	17:51
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# Southern Association Junior Olympic Cross Country Championship

## 5K Race 15-16 year old

Cameron Bell	2nd	18:27
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## 4K Race 13-14 year old

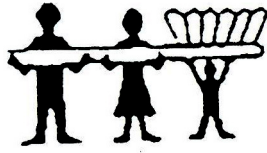
Wyn Grantham	2nd	14:37
Connor Blakeney	5th	15:02



# Exxon Donates to PHS



Two Exxon representatives presented checks for \$500 to PHS for Exxon's Mobil's Educational Alliance Program for the school year 2014-15. Pictured left, Don Simoneaux of Sprint Mart, Ridgeland, presents Principal Lundy Brantley a check for \$500.00. In the right picture, Bob Burns of Waring Oil Company, Vicksburg, presents a check for \$500.00 to Assistant Principal John Craven.

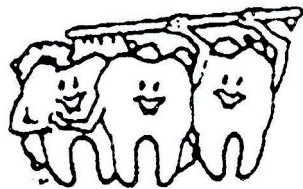


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