

THE Drumbeat

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OF PIQUA CITY SCHOOLS

MESSAGE FROM YOUR SUPERINTENDENT

It is with true appreciation that I say, “Thank You” to the citizens of Piqua for supporting us at the polls this November! Without your on-going support, it is simply not possible for us to do our important work to keep students safe and prepare them for their futures. Piqua City Schools takes your support to heart and works hard to protect your tax dollars. We remain committed to conservative spending while striving to build a good education system for our students and community. We are proud of our students and the many wonderful partnerships that we have developed with our parents, local businesses, and community members throughout Piqua. On behalf of the Piqua Board of Education and school staff, I would like to express our sincerest gratitude for all you do! Please join us this year as we showcase our students’ talents with our sports, music, and academic programs. Our staff and students look forward to seeing you at our events! I wish you a Merry Christmas this holiday season and a happy, healthy New Year! ■

#wearepiqua

Dwayne A. Thompson

Superintendent, Piqua City Schools

ALEXANDER STADIUM/PURK FIELD TURNS 20 YRS OLD

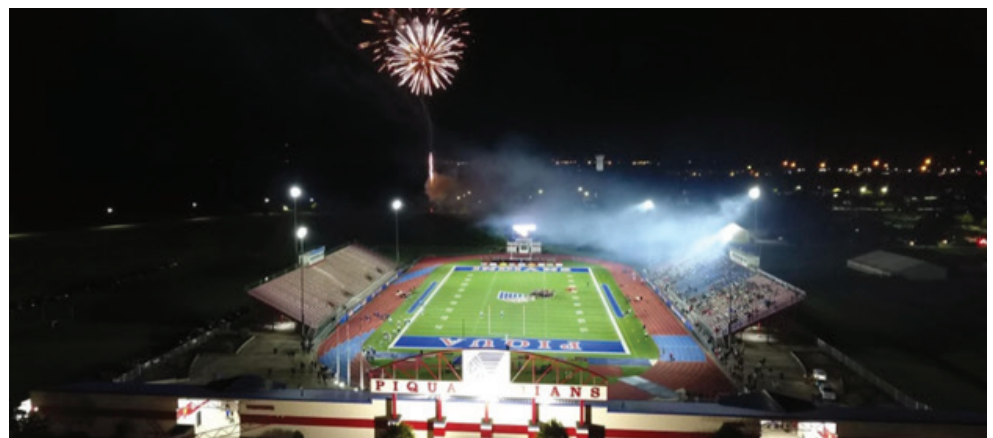
After clearing a spot in the cornfield near the Piqua High School and installing a track in 1985, it seemed inevitable there would be a stadium in that same location one day. Under the leadership of then Athletic Director, Ed Purk, the planning for the stadium would take shape and begin to evolve when Piqua businessman Cliff Alexander would put forth a challenge to match his generous donation for its full construction. It didn’t take long for the Piqua community to rally behind this project to help raise the funds needed for it to become a reality. On August 24, 2001,

fans walked into Alexander Stadium for the first time. Piqua City Schools Superintendent Dwayne Thompson remembers the widespread community participation in getting Alexander Stadium/Purk Field off the ground. “The fact that so many people came together to make the construction of our stadium a reality makes it all that much more special to our community. Twenty Years later it’s still a significant spotlight in our community.” Student athletes and their fans continue to benefit and marvel at this standout

facility all these years later. Current Athletic Director, Chip Hare said, “We continually get positive feedback from visitors near and far about how great our stadium looks and how much it is enjoyed by other district’s athletes and their fans. We still get visits by other districts that want to learn more about our stadium and how it became a reality for our community.” The district is grateful to Ed Purk and Cliff Alexander for their leadership with this project as well as the community at large for all of their support to make this stadium a reality! ■



Cliff Alexander and Ed Purk respond with a smile to a standing ovation by the crowd of fans at Piqua’s first playoff game this season as the community celebrated the Stadium’s twentieth anniversary.



Piqua fans watch a firework display sponsored by the Coca Cola Company as the district honors first responders and military personnel and veterans in memory of the twentieth anniversary of 9/11.

"All children need a laptop. Not a computer, but a human laptop. Moms, Dads, Grannies and Grandpas, Aunts, Uncles - someone to hold them, read to them, teach them. Loved ones who will embrace them and pass on the experience, rituals and knowledge of a hundred previous generations."

~ Colin Powell

STAFF TRIBUTES

Piqua City Schools lost four incredible staff members in 2021. Their service and more importantly, their friendship will be sorely missed by staff, students, and our community at large. The impact they left on our lives is timeless.

KEITH STOLER



Keith Stoler plays 'chef' as he prepares brats and burgers at staff cookout.

Mr. Stoler began working for Piqua City Schools in 2013. He served the district in many roles as a jack of all trades. His work included custodial, maintenance, grounds care, bus driver, mail and food delivery, photography and much more. Superintendent Dwayne Thompson remembered Mr. Stoler by saying, "He was a true asset in every role he played in our district. He was willing and able to help in so many ways as he had such a wide skill set and strong work ethic. More than that, he was so kind and had a great sense of humor." Mr. Stoler was recognized for his contributions to the district in 2016 when he received the honor of Support Staff Member of the Year. Thompson remembered that day by sharing, "He was so honored and emotional when he received that award. It was very well deserved." Mr. Stoler was extremely proud of his family and often shared his photos of them. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Cecelia and his two sons David and Derek.

TONI RILEY

Mrs. Riley began working for Piqua City Schools in 2014 as a Piqua High School guidance counselor before moving to the Piqua Junior High School. She was known for her positive attitude, perpetual smile, and her fortitude to be her best



Toni Riley shows PJHS students how to use an online tool to help them decide career paths.

at all times. She valued her students and worked hard to help them forge paths to their futures. Piqua Junior High School principal Mr. Clark complimented her work by saying, "Toni's impact on her students throughout her career is immeasurable! Her passion and dedication to helping her students will be a legacy that lives on through them." As a fierce fighter against her cancer, she made every day count! Mr. Clark recalls, "Toni was the kind of educator that we all strive to be. She cared deeply for her students and for her coworkers. She made every day better for anybody that she was around. Her fun-loving nature was contagious, we will miss her deeply at PJHS."

Family meant the world to Mrs. Riley. She adored her husband David and their five-year-old son, Braxton. Our thoughts and prayers are with them as they continue to carry on the many family traditions they started together and in Mrs. Riley's own words, "TRULY live." Her zeal for life was a true example for us all.

JUDI NICHOLL



Judi Nicholl shares a story with her first grade students before making a recipe to enjoy.

Mrs. Nicholl taught for 28 years - 26 for Piqua City Schools. She loved her first-grade students and was seldom seen without a smile on her face in the classroom. Springcreek principal, Ross Loudenback remembers Mrs. Nicholl by saying, "Judi will always be remembered as a loving, dedicated, and caring teacher with a giant heart for children. Her passion for teaching was recognized by the many lives she touched throughout her career. No matter the situation, Judi's drive to provide students with great experiences was admired. She wanted each child in her classroom to have experiences that would stay with them for a lifetime. Mrs. Nicholl played piano for her church and served as a Sunday School Teacher, Nursery Director, and Bible School Director. She was also an advocate for adoption and supported others through the process. Her husband, Gary and children Natalie, Andrew, Kathryn, and Haleigh are in our thoughts and prayers. Mrs. Nicholl's daughter, Megan, preceded her in death one week prior to her passing. She will be greatly missed by her family at home and her family at Springcreek!

JOYCE PITSENBARGER



Mrs. Pitsenbarger began her career for Piqua City Schools in 2003 as an aide at Wilder Intermediate School. She transitioned to the Piqua High School in 2006 where she served as an aide before becoming the Nova Net director in 2010 to help students with credit recovery and on-line learning. Vice Principal, Darrell Hite, recalls Mrs. Pitsenbarger as being a very caring and patient person. "Joyce loved working with students and helping them achieve higher levels of success. She had a special ability to build relationships with students and to make sure they were on the right track with their schooling and personal choices. She would always go out of her way to recognize student accomplishments, provide needed support, and make students feel special." Hite added, "One of her biggest joys was celebrating student birthdays by bringing in cookies and cakes on their special day. Joyce helped so many students throughout her career. She will be greatly missed by those that she assisted." Piqua City Schools will keep her family in our thoughts and prayers. ■

#Wearepiqua

2021 FALL SPORTS HIGHLIGHTS

2021 FALL PROGRAMS HAVE GREAT SUCCESS

Before the 2021-2022 school year began, Piqua student athletes and coaching staffs had already spent dedicated hours practicing as they prepared for this year's competitive fall season. There is much success to celebrate!

Piqua Schools would like to thank all the great sponsors and patrons for the wonderful support that is given to our athletic programs. The support our students receive from parents, grandparents, family, local businesses, staff, their peers, and community members is a true testament to our athletes' hard work and dedication to the sport(s) they play. Our sincerest 'thank you' goes out to each and every one of you!

PIQUA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC HIGHLIGHTS

The PHS girl's tennis team finished the fall with another winning season. These graduating tennis seniors set the school record for most wins by a single class from their freshman year through their senior year.

In girl's golf, Senior Kenzi Anderson had an outstanding season tying the school record twice for the lowest score for nine holes shooting a forty. In boy's golf, Senior Evan Hensler had a strong season for the Indians finishing in the top six for the MVL Tournament and shooting an eighty-nine at the sectional tournament just missing the districts by one stroke.

PHS Senior Volleyball players Reagan Toopes and Emily Baker reached major milestones this past season. Reagan became the "Queen of Digs" as she broke the school record for career digs with over twelve hundred. Emily Baker reached one thousand kills in her high school career in a victory over Sidney. Both Toopes and Baker have helped their team reach ten wins this season and earn the team's first tournament victory in four years.



Fans celebrate with Reagan Toopes for breaking the record for the most digs for PHS volleyball.



The team celebrates Emily Baker's record for 1,000 kills in volleyball.

This year's senior night will not soon be forgotten as the girl's soccer team defeated Greenville and honored all five of this year's seniors prior to the game. Coach Kelsey Smith noted, "We had a great group of seniors who will be missed next season".

The PHS boy's soccer team had an outstanding start to the season by earning the program's first trophy in over thirty years by winning the Ben Logan Quest Cup defeating Springfield and Ben Logan. The team also snapped a fourteen-year losing streak over Troy this season tying the Trojans 1-1 in the final game of the regular season.



Boys soccer brings home the Ben Logan cup trophy!

In girl's Cross-Country, senior Cassie Schrubb continued to be one of the outstanding runners on the team but also in the MVL and in the Southwest District. Cassie had multiple top ten finishes including at the MVL Championships finishing seventh. Cassie looks to qualify for the regional cross-country meet for the fourth consecutive year. The PHS boy's cross-country team had an excellent season finishing and placing at many of the meets including third place at the Greenville Treaty Invitational and Piqua Under the Lights, first place at the Sidney Invitational, and an overall third place finish at the MVL Championships. Noah Burg, Nolan Campbell, Paul Hinds, and Jesse Furman were consistently the top four runners for the Indians in many of the meets this season.



The cross-country team celebrates a third-place victory at Piqua's under the light's invitational



And they're off! The girl's cross-county team put their best foot forward

The PHS cheerleaders provided a great deal of energy and spirit in the sidelines this past fall for our football team through regular season and the playoff games. Additionally, they have been working very hard on their competitive cheer competitions. Thus far the team has finished in third place at the Tri-Village Invitational, the Mississinawa Valley Invitational, and the MVL Competition. The team is gearing up for Regional Championships in December.



Piqua varsity cheerleaders prepare to cheer the Indians on to another win!

The PHS football team had big and dominant wins over their rivals Troy 28-7 and Sidney 42-7 this season. The team has qualified for the playoffs for the second consecutive season. This year's varsity football team hit a milestone for the school and district by winning their 700th game in school history. This places Piqua in the top twelve winningest programs in the state of Ohio. The

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Thanks to all of our local business for your great support! Please remember to shop local when you can so we can return the great support they give to our schools and community.

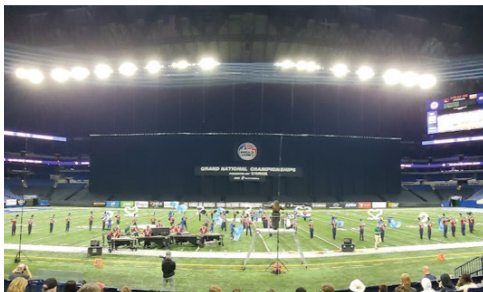
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football team finished their amazing season after losing to Winton Woods in the Division II regional finals. The team finished 13-1 and was back to back MVL champions with back to back undefeated regular seasons and were named regional runner ups. Congratulations to the team, coaches, and athletic trainers for an outstanding season of competition.

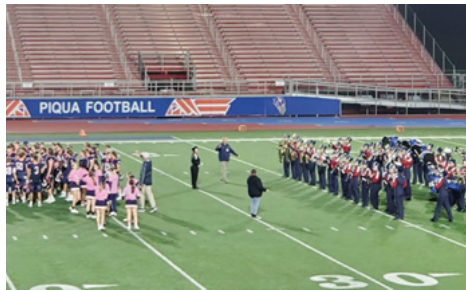


The PHS football team celebrates our district's seven hundredth win with fireworks compliments of the Coca Cola Company.

The Pride of Piqua Marching Band had a stellar year with their OMEA competitions. The Pride earned straight superior ratings at each of their competitions. Additionally, they earned best color guard, front ensemble, percussion, and effects. They earned best in class and overall grand champion trophies at competitions this year as well. The pride qualified for the State OMEA competition where they earned a superior rating for the first time since 1995! Along with competitions, the Piqua Marching Band can be seen at all the football games throughout the season and during playoffs as well as community events and parades. Congratulations to these fine musicians, performers, and their advisors for such a great season!



The Pride of Piqua Marching Band performs their award-winning show, 'It Takes Two' at the Grand National Championships band contest in Indianapolis, Indiana.



The Pride of Piqua Marching Band plays the Pep Song for the football team at the conclusion of each win. To show their support, our football team came to the Piqua Marching Band Invitational to support the band as they competed in the OMEA contest. The football team also showed up at the MVL Cheerleading Competition to support the cheer squad. We are Piqua! ■



PHS Show Choir, The Company, had an outstanding performance for their first competition at Ada. They earned Grand Champion Honors, First in their Class, Best Combo Band, Best Costumes, and The People's Choice Award.



Piqua seniors performed a hype dance at a recent pep rally at PHS.

They had the crowd on their feet!



Piqua bus drivers had fun surprising student passengers with their turkey shirts. The kids loved them! If you are interested in driving a bus for Piqua City Schools, please contact Tony Lyons at 937-773-4321 for more information.

"Let us remember: One book, one pen, one child and one teacher can change the world."
~ Malala Yousafzai

A FOND FAREWELL



Andy Hite prepares to board the General Harrison canal boat at the Johnston Farm & Indian Agency where he serves as the Managing Director.

After sixteen years as a member of the Piqua City Schools Board of Education, Andy Hite is retiring. During his tenure, Mr. Hite served as the vice president and president for two separate terms in each role. In addition to his service on the Piqua City Schools Board, he was also a member of the board for the Upper Valley Career Center for the past sixteen years. As Mr. Hite reflected on his years of service, he cited the extraordinary work done by the district's staff that kept him motivated to remain on the board all these years. "Our teachers and administrators are amazing." He went on to say, "Our whole staff has the best interest of our students in their hearts and minds when they come to work each day." Mr. Hite also fondly remembers the many educators that he has met across the state while serving three terms as a delegate for the Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA). "It was during this time that I learned just how committed people are to the success of public education in the state of Ohio." When asked about his most memorable accomplishment as a member of the board, Mr. Hite recalled, "I am extremely proud that our community came together to support the building of our new schools." He added, "We have the best facilities in our area and that's a true credit to how wonderful our community is and how they value education." Among the most challenging times on the board were the most recent years. "We have had a great deal of unexpected and difficult work that has come our way through the COVID pandemic. Dealing with policy and the consequences of everything surrounding COVID has made for some interesting times. Schools have much work ahead in the years to come as they progress through the challenges that students, their families, and the schools faced during these past few years."

While not engaged in his role as a board member, Mr. Hite serves as the Managing Director of the Johnston Farm and Indian Agency. He is proud of the fact that it is one of the top visited Ohio historical sites in the state. Along with welcoming visitors from all around the world, Mr. Hite fondly shared, "Each year we reach our maximum capacity of student groups that come to visit the site." Mr. Hite plans to retire from his position there in 2022 after working for the Ohio Historical Society for thirty years. Prior to his work with the Ohio Historical Society he served as a secondary social studies teacher for fourteen years. After retirement, he plans to continue to travel with his wife of forty-seven years, Carolyn. Together they enjoy spending time with their three grandchildren, Chandler, Andrea, and Natalie. Mr. Hite also plans to continue to play tuba for the many local and area community bands as well as cheer on the Ohio State Buckeyes when you will often hear him cheer, "O - H!"

Mr. Hite summed up his thoughts, "It has been quite humbling to be a part of such a great district and all that it has accomplished. I often wonder if people truly understand the great opportunities our students have in all that is offered to them by our district and staff. I am also honored to have had the pleasure to serve alongside such knowledgeable and caring board members." He finished by adding, "I very much appreciate all the support I received as a board member over the years. I truly wish the district and new school board lineup much success as they continue to do their very important work."

Superintendent Dwayne Thompson shared, "It has been a true pleasure working with Mr. Hite these past 16 years. As a former educator and engaged community member, he has brought a wealth of knowledge and support to our board as well as our staff and students. He will be greatly missed in this role." ■



Piqua basketball players assist families with a recent food drive prior to Thanksgiving. Their help was much appreciated by the community. We are proud of these students for helping on a cold, early Saturday morning.

PIQUA PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP

The Piqua Education Foundation (PEF) is a non-profit that is focused on enhancing the Piqua education experience for our students. Annually, PEF provides up to \$25,000 in education grants to the Piqua staff for student programs and awards over \$300,000 in scholarships to our Piqua graduates.

The Piqua Promise Scholarship is one of the named scholarships administered by the Piqua Education Foundation for our Piqua graduates. Each fall Piqua City Schools staff generously participates in a fundraising campaign that supports the Piqua Promise Scholarship. This campaign is close to the hearts of many of our district employees. The Piqua Promise fundraising provides an opportunity for them to come together as a team to continue their support of our students, as they continue their educational journey towards earning their professional certifications and degrees.

This year, 94 individuals participated to raise \$5,000.00 for the 2022-2023 Piqua Promise Scholarship campaign. This is a great tribute to our students and the value Piqua City Schools staff members place on their futures. Though, we are one united district, there was added competition by having the buildings compete against one another based on funds raised and total participation in the Piqua Promise Campaign. It was a closely fought competition, with the leaderboard wavering from week to week. Congratulations to the Piqua Junior High School staff for contributing over \$1,000 to the Piqua Education Foundation Piqua Promise Scholarship Campaign this year.

Soha Shah, Piqua Education Foundation's Vice President, shared that the Board of Directors are "very grateful to each Piqua Promise donor and she sends particular recognition and thanks to the PJHS Building Champion Chairperson, Elly Snapp and the PJHS staff!" ■

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The Drum Beat is published and distributed by the Piqua City Schools for district residents, and is also posted on the district website.

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DATES TO REMEMBER

DECEMBER

- 12: 2:30 and 4:30 PM – PHS Holiday Concert at PHS
- 13: 6:30 PM – PHS and PJHS Holiday Band Concert at PHS
- 14: 7:00 PM – PJHS Holiday Concert at PJHS

JANUARY

- 3: Christmas Break Ends/ Classes Resume
- 14: Teacher Records Day/ No Classes
- 17: Martin Luther King Jr. Day/ District Closed



The band and cheerleaders lead high school students in a recent pep rally celebrating fall sports. #wearepiqua



Please visit PiquaEducationFoundation.org to see a short video from Hailey Cremeens, one of the 2021-2022 Piqua Promise Scholars.



Piqua City Schools Superintendent Dwayne Thompson (middle) and Piqua High School sophomore and Boy Scout Tommy Grise (right) hold the U.S. Flag with retired U.S. Army Sergeant Major Fred Navarro (left). The district is retiring the flag that had draped over the coffin of William H. Pitsenbarger after his death in 1966. The flag has hung in Garbry gymnasium for many years and will now be retired in a place of honor at Piqua High School for students and visitors to view. Pitsenbarger was awarded the nation's highest military award, the Medal of Honor, for his actions while serving as a U.S. Air Force pararescue specialist during the Vietnam War.