

Tigertalk

Inside:



**Jaimes win
powerlifting
gold medal**



**Soccer Teams
make playoffs**



**Tiger Dolls
visit LA**



What's Inside

Stories & Photos

Choir.....	Page 2
FBLA.....	Pages 3 and 7
HOSA.....	Page 4
Tiger Dolls.....	Page 5
Electrical.....	Pages 6-7
UIL.....	Page 8
TFA State.....	Pages 8-9
CX Debate.....	Page 9
Cheerleaders.....	Page 10
Senior Spotlight.....	Page 11
Girls Powerlifting.....	Page 12
Boys Powerlifting.....	Page 13
Softball.....	Page 14
Baseball.....	Page 15
Soccer Playoffs.....	Page 16
Ms. Merriman.....	Pages 17-18
Culinary.....	Page 18
Tiger Roar.....	Page 20



Front row from left are Hope Powelly, Emyly Lopez, Litzy Gonzalez, Harley Martin, Alitzel Mendoza and Abril Ramirez. Back row from left are Clayton Miller, Jacori Turner, Eduardo “Joshua” Espinoza, Marion “Joey” Dunn and Kristina Tidwell. Not pictured are Maleah Duenez and John Cardona.

Choir members advance to state

Twenty-two Choir members competed at the Regional UIL Solo and Ensemble Contest singing a variety of art and folk songs. Of those, thirteen earned first division ratings and eight MPHS soloists have advanced to the State contest. To qualify for the state solo and ensemble contest, a student must score a “1” on a Class 1 piece, the most difficult to memorize and perform.

MPHS state solo qualifiers include Eduardo Espinoza, Litzy Gonzalez, Emyly Lopez, Alitzel Mendoza, Clayton Miller, Hope Powell, Abril Ramirez, and Jacori Turner. Non-advancing members receiving a first division include John Cardona, Marion Joey Dunn, Maleah Duenez, Harley Martin, and Kristina Tidwell.

The state contest will be held virtually on May 28 and 30 in Austin. The MPHS Choir is directed by Nancy Vines with accompaniment provided by Deanna Warren.

Tigertalk

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Pictured front row from left are National Qualifiers Natalie Crockett, Monserrat Rivero Sanchez, Joselyn Reyes, Evelyn Rodriguez, Natalia Plascencia and Hope Powell. Back row from left are Luiz Olvera, Anthony Orellana, Taylor Hubbs, Elizabeth Lockett, Perla Guzman, Connelly Cowan, Heidi Ramirez and Clayton Brison. Not pictured are Odalys Adame, Michelle Calderon, Joseline Almazan, Ilse Ojendis, Yasenia Paloblanco and Tiffany Rangel.

FBLA qualifies 20 for Nationals

The Mount Pleasant High School chapter of Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) competed at the State Leadership Conference in Galveston on March 24-25 and had a record 20 students qualify for Nationals with one additional student named an alternate.

This year would see a return to an in-person state conference as the event was cancelled in 2020 and was held online in 2021. Thirty-eight students made the trip to Galveston while seven competed online in tested events prior to spring break.

Participants attended area meetings, took part in workshops such as “Etiquette 101”, “Job Ready Dress”, and “Team Building”, and were treated to an evening on The Strand on their last night in Galveston.

Those advancing to Nationals, their events, and their places at state include:

- Agribusiness: Odalys Adame (3rd)
- Broadcast Journalism: Michelle Calderon, Taylor Hubbs and Anthony Orellana (3rd)
- Business Calculations: Perla Guzman (4th)
- Computer Applications: Clayton Brison (4th)
- Cyber Security: Heidi Ramirez (4th)
- Electronic Career Portfolio: Monserrat Rivero Sanchez (4th)
- Future Business Leader: Hope Powell (4th)

- Healthcare Administration: Natalie Crockett (2nd)
- Hospitality and Event Management: Natalia Plascencia, Joselyn Reyes and Evelyn Rodriguez (4th)
- Journalism: Joseline Almazan (1st), Idania Castanon (5th National Alternate)
- Political Science: Luiz Olvera (2nd), Connelly Cowan (3rd)
- Public Speaking: Elizabeth Lockett (4th)
- Publication Design: Ilse Ojendis, Yasenia Paloblanco and Tiffany Rangel (4th)

In addition, Mount Pleasant High School was recognized as the largest FBLA chapter in Area 6. Senior Taylor Hubbs was named Who’s Who for the Mount Pleasant High School chapter.

Chapter Advisor John Whitten was re-elected to the FBLA State Board of Directors for Area 6.

“Our FBLA students rose to the occasion at state and had an unbelievable showing,” said Whitten. “Having 20 students qualify for Nationals is a remarkable feat considering some of the schools we are going up against are much larger than us. This was a record-setting year for MPHS FBLA, and I am looking forward to taking students to Nationals after not being able to travel for

See FBLA, Pg. 7

Tigertalk Pg. 3

HOSA students advance to state

The Mount Pleasant High School chapter of HOSA: Future Health Professionals competed in the Area 3 Leadership Conference in February. The conference was held at Lake Highlands High School in Dallas and hosted approximately 1,300 students who competed in over 50 events. Four HOSA students have advanced to State.

Seniors Jonathan Tepetate, Carly Cunningham, and Rachel Rodriguez placed 3rd and have advanced to state with their Community Awareness project, Kill the Stigma. Their mission is to raise awareness of those who struggle with mental health issues and to educate people on how to help those who are struggling.

Freshman Denisse Brito Torres placed 3rd and has advanced to state in Job Seeking Skills. This event requires competitors to prepare a cover letter and resume, and participate in a job interview with a judge.

Additionally, junior Madeline Plascencia placed 5th in Medical Art poster. The Medical Art poster category requires students to create artwork that will stimulate others to explore health care and to communicate this interpretation through the development of a creative, artistic, and informational poster.

The Texas HOSA State Leadership Conference will be held April 19-22 at the Galveston Island Convention Center. MPHS HOSA advisors include Kristi Houchin, Angie Ayers, Stephanie Bumpus and Mandy Hutchings.



Denisse Brito Torres was third in area.



Madeline Plascencia took fifth place.



From left are Rodriguez, Tepetate and Cunningham. They got third place at state.



Disneyland was one of the places the Tiger Dolls visited.

Tiger Dolls travel to Los Angeles

The Mount Pleasant High School Tiger Dolls have enjoyed the usual football games, playoff trips, basketball performances, and preparations for their annual spring show this year. But there has been one exciting moment they have been looking forward to all year—a spring break trip to Los Angeles.

The Dolls spent four days in L.A. from March 16-19. On day one they enjoyed a guided tour that covered the Hollywood Walk of Fame and the famous Chinese Theatre, the Dolby Theatre where they were setting up for the Academy Awards, the iconic Hollywood sign, Beverly Hills, Rodeo Drive, and the La Brea Tar Pits and Museum.

Day two was a magical day spent at one of the happiest places on earth, Disneyland. Day three included a dance class at Millennium Dance Complex where celebrities including Britney Spears, Justin Timberlake, and Jennifer Lopez have taken classes or held rehearsals, the L.A. Farmer's Market and The Grove, a VIP tour of Warner Bros. Studios, and concluded with dinner and sightseeing at Santa Monica Pier. Their final day was spent taking another dance class at Millennium Dance Complex and a trip through Grand Central Market.

"I am thrilled we were able to take this trip to Los Angeles," said Tiger Doll Director, Jatón Broach. "The Tiger Dolls take a big trip every four years, and I was nervous COVID would put in a dent in our plans. The looks of awe and wonder and memories made throughout the week will stay with all of us forever. I am so thankful for the dance experiences they had during

the trip---the girls really came out of their shells, tried new things, and learned from some of the best in the business. I want to thank Green Light Tour Groups, our administrators and principals, and my Tiger Dolls and parents for this once in a lifetime opportunity."

Four-year member and Tiger Doll senior, Mackenzie Lide, said, "Not only was dancing at one of the most famous studios and walking down the Hollywood Walk of Fame an incredible experience, but visiting L.A. with my Dolls was an amazing bonding moment for the entire time that I am so grateful for!"

"Traveling is a fantastic way to broaden experiences and put things into perspective by trying new things," said Tiger Doll Captain, Mary Kait Heeren. "Our Tiger Doll Trip to Los Angeles did just that! My favorite part included the dance classes at Millennium Dance Complex, which provided us with challenging, yet super fun dance styles, that were taught by well-known dance choreographers.

"With photos of the past celebrities and dancers who have danced at Millennium hanging up, it was inspiring to even walk through the hallways of the Complex. Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed our visit to Los Angeles & Hollywood and would gladly go back if given the opportunity."

Next up for the Tiger Dolls is their annual spring show on Friday, April 15 and Saturday, April 16 at the Mount Pleasant High School auditorium. This year's theme is fittingly "California Dolls." Tickets and programs will go on sale at www.mpisd.net/athletic-tickets on April 1.

Ten electrical students advance to SkillsUSA state competition

Ten Mount Pleasant High School Electrical Technology students competed in the SkillsUSA District competition on Feb. 25-26 at Texas State Technical College in Waco. All 10 advanced to the Texas SkillsUSA State competition in Corpus Christi to be held March 31-April 3.

In the Construction Wiring competition, MPHS swept the top three spots with Jair Moreno placing 1st, Christian Jaimes placing 2nd, and Miguel Banda coming in 3rd. For this contest, the students were given a written electrical exam.

In the National Electric Code Testing event, Alejandro Nava placed 1st. For this contest, students are evaluated on their ability to apply and/or reference the appropriate National Electrical Code chapters, articles, and calculations.

In the Commercial Electrical Exhibit competition, the team of Gabriel Acuna, Eric Perez, Sahir Ramirez, and Carlos Valdez scored 199 out of a possible 200 points to earn a blue ribbon and advance to state. The students installed a sub-panel and ran branch circuits to a variety of devices using conduit.

The exhibit must have a notebook that contains the electrical working drawings, detailed description of work done by the students in paragraph form, a write-up with a list of materials, current receipts, any materials donated, steps followed in completing the exhibit, and the students' resumes.

The exhibit must meet the

See SkillsUSA, Pg. 7



From left are Jaimes, Banda, Moreno and Nava.



From left are Perez, Ramirez, Valdez and Acuna

FBLA from Page 3

competition for the past two years.

Whitten added, “I am proud of all the work, preparation and dedication the students have put in to succeed. Students have been working and preparing since October with weekly work nights, and they were rewarded for their hard efforts in Galveston. I am looking forward to Chicago and giving our students the experience of what it is like to compete on a national level.”

The FBLA National Leadership Conference is set for June 29-July 2 in Chicago. FBLA advisors are John Whitten, Shanta Lockett, Jackie Scoggins, and Brian Williams.



Mr. Whitten with Who's Who recipient Taylor Hubbs.

SkillsUSA from Page 6

industry standard for creativity and neatness and is judged on the degree of difficulty and must comply with the 2020 National Electrical Code.

And in the Innovative Job Exhibit category, the team of Christopher Bello and Amelin Cardenas scored 197 out of a possible 200 points to win a blue ribbon and advance to state. Bello and Cardenas used old recycled components to build a motion detecting arcade game machine. The motion detecting sensor will automatically shut down the arcade machine when not in use and will preserve energy use. Innovative job exhibits are ground-breaking, pioneering, original, introducing something new, a new way of doing something or the act of inventing.

“These students put in a lot of extra time and worked very hard to get ready for competition and I am thrilled that so many are going to State,”



From left are Bello and Cardenas

said Tim Davis, MPHS Electrical Technology instructor and SkillsUSA Advisor. “They are now focusing on preparing to compete at State against students from across

Texas, including students from Career Tech magnet schools. I know they will be great representatives of MPISD and the Mount Pleasant community.”

UIL students compete at district

By ODALYS ADAME
Tigertalk Editor

UIL teams have recently competed at both district and prior to that at Sulphur Springs and brought back multiple medals.

Teams have been preparing with after-school practices and using supplemental study material to secure a place at regional and hopefully state.

“We have had a great season so far, and I am very pleased with how the students have done this year considering it was the first year for all of our team,” Journalism Coach Mr. Whitten said.

At the district meet, MPHS advanced 10 to the Regional Meet with eight others placing in their events. The following students placed:

Informative Extemp—Connelly Cowan 1st place (Regional Qualifier), Taylor Hubbs 2nd place (Regional Qualifier)

Persuasive Extemp—Anthony Orellana 1st place (Regional Qualifier)

Lincoln Douglas Debate—Angelina Hernandez 3rd place (Regional Qualifier)

Poetry—Madeline Tumey-Simmons 3rd place (Regional Qualifier)

Calculator Applications—(2nd place Regional Qualifying team)—Param Poudel 3rd place, Devin Castaneda 4th place, Isaac Hernandez, Nathaniel Martinez

Current Events—Connelly Cowan 2nd place (Regional Qualifier)

Mathematics—Devin Castaneda 6th place

Ready Writing—Makayla Spigner 4th place

Computer Applications—David Perez 4th place, Javier Garcia 6th place

Spelling—Sophie Greco 4th place, Isabel Gonzales 6th place

Social Studies—Luiz Olvera 4th place

Journalism—Odalys Adame 4th place News Writing

Advancing teams and individuals will compete at the Regional Meet to be held April 22-23 at Prosper High.

Those placing in the top 3 in each event will qualify for the State in May. Regional qualifying coaches are Gina Crouch (Current Events), Osias



UIL district medalists

Hernandez (Calculator Applications), Enrique Martinez (Lincoln Douglas Debate and Extemp), and Angela Priefert (Poetry Interpretation).

At the last meet before district, senior Michelle Calderon placed in four journalisms events including Copy Editing, News Writing, Headline Writing, and Editorial Writing. She secured 2nd, 4th and 5th in the competitions.

“I was really excited to hear that I placed in almost every event I competed in. I’m proud of how much I’ve improved since this is my first year doing Journalism,” Calderon said.

Another successful group of students have been the Math and Calculator Applications team. At the Sulphur Springs meet, Castaneda, Hernandez, Poudel and Jackelin Gomez all placed in the top six for Calculator Applications. For Mathematics, freshman Luke Thurman secured third place. The science team also saw great success with seniors Jonathan Sandate and Esteban Trejo placing 1st and 2nd for the 12th grade category. The science test is a 2 hour long test with 60 questions spanning from biology, physics and chemistry.

Cowan, Orellana excel at TFA State



Orellana and Cowan show off their awards.

Three MPHS Speech and Debate team members competed in the Texas Forensic Association (TFA) State Tournament during Spring Break. The tournament was held at Gregory Portland High School in Portland, a suburb of Corpus Christi, on March 10-12.

The Cross Examination team of senior Connelly Cowan and junior Anthony Orellana advanced out of prelims as the 8th seed out of 52 schools. They finished the tournament as quarterfinalists, ranking in the top 8 teams defeating Houston Memorial, Liberal Arts and Science Academy, Boerne, Coppell, and Jesuit. It is the highest finish for an MPHS CX team at TFA State in

See TFA, Pg. 9

CX Debate team wins silver at state

The MPHS Cross-Examination debate team of senior Connelly Cowan and junior Anthony Orellana competed in the UIL 5A State CX Debate tournament on March 18-19. Held at The University of Texas at Austin, it would mark the return to in-person state competition for the first time since 2019.

The event was cancelled in 2020 due to COVID and was held online in 2021. It would be the fourth and final appearance at state for Cowan and the first for Orellana.

On day one, the field began with 55 teams entered from across the state of Texas. Mount Pleasant CO debated teams from Highland Park, Liberal Arts and Science Academy (LASA), Princeton, and Frisco Independence.

That evening, the teams gathered in the University Teaching Center to learn if they had advanced to the second day. Scores are determined by a combination of wins and losses as well as the speaker points given to each team member.

The first awards given are to the top six speakers in each division. Orellana was awarded the Gold Gavel for having the highest speaker points among all 110 contestants in 5A. He earned 59.9 adjusted speaker points, just .1 away from a perfect score of 60. It is the third year in a row that the UIL 5A State Top Speaker is from MPHS. Cowan got the Bronze Gavel for having the third highest speaker points, just .9 behind her partner. She was the Silver Gavel recipient in 2021.

After speaker awards are presented, the top 16 advancing teams in each division are announced in alphabetical order. MPHS CO learned that not only had they advanced to the top sixteen and would debate for state medals the next day, but they would do so as the #1 seed in 5A.

Day 2 started with octofinals where MPHS would defeat Friendswood on a 3-0 decision. In quarterfinals, MPHS faced Princeton for the second time and were able to win on a 3-0 decision. They beat A&M Consolidated in the semifinals on a 2-1 decision and found themselves in UIL State finals, a feat never before achieved by an MPHS CX team.

They were eventually defeated in the final round by LASA CH, a nationally ranked team from Austin, to take the UIL State Silver medal. It was the seventh UIL State medal and second state speaker award for Cowan, and the first state medal and



Cowan, Coach Enrique Martinez and Orellana. state speaker award for Orellana.

“This year’s state tournament was the perfect conclusion to my UIL debate career,” said Cowan. “Anthony and I have worked hard all year long in hopes of achieving state success, and competing in the final round is a memory I will cherish forever. I am incredibly proud of Anthony for how far he has progressed this year.

“I’m also so grateful for the support of my parents, coaches, and teammates. It’s hard to believe this chapter of my life is over, but I cannot possibly think of a better way for it to end.”

Cowan and Orellana will compete in their final CX tournament together at NSDA Nationals in Louisville in June. Cowan is currently deciding which university she will attend and is the daughter of Collin and Kelly Cowan. Orellana will return for his senior year in the fall and is the son of Vicente Arroyo and Onelia Orellana.

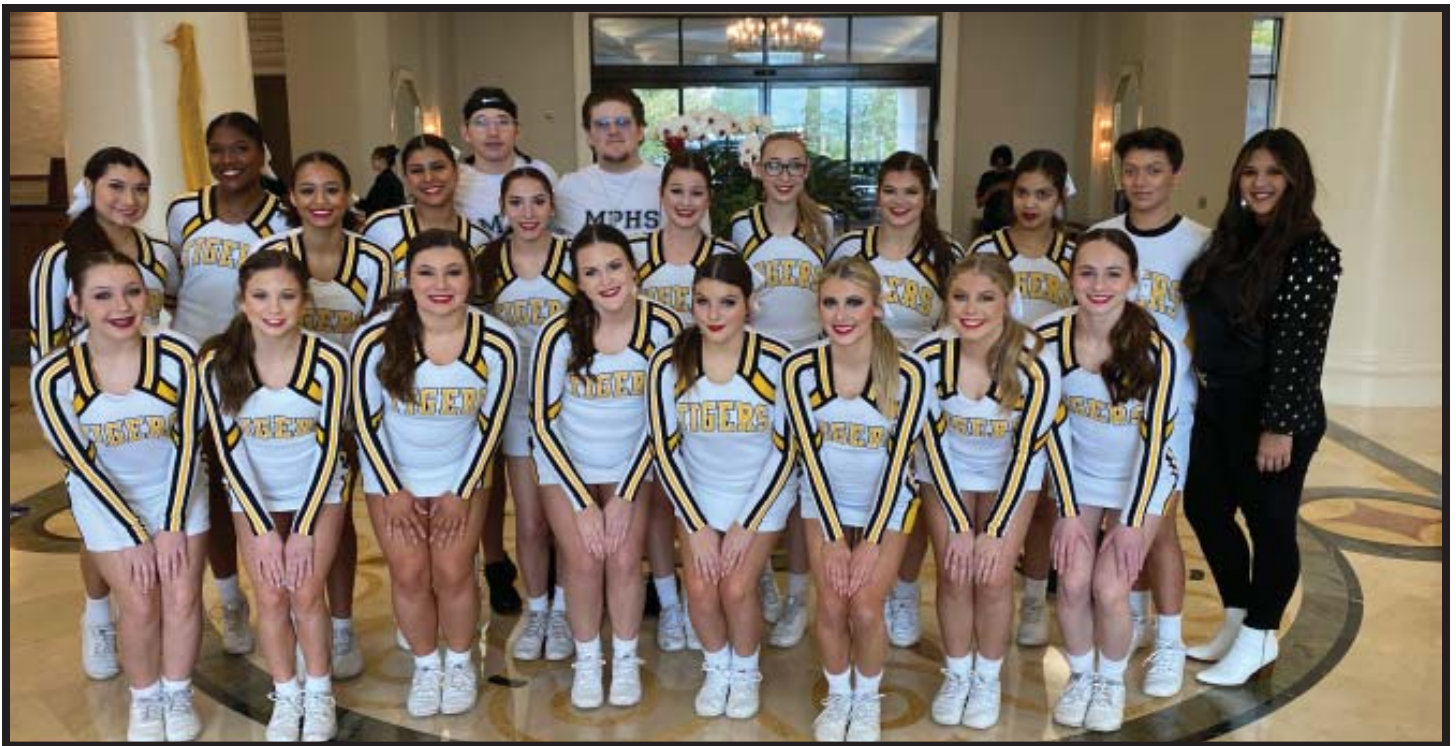
TFA from Page 8

school history. Cowan was recognized one of the top 10 speakers at state, earning 2nd out of 104 competitors, just .4 back of the top spot. Orellana finished as the 13th ranked speaker.

Additionally, Cowan earned the Barbara Garner scholarship, one of only six scholarships presented to graduating seniors. Cowan is a four-time TFA State qualifier and has earned multiple awards in CX Debate and International Extemp. Senior Taylor Hubbs competed in International Extemp. She is a three-time TFA State qualifier.

The Texas Forensic Association is open to all public, private and charter schools in Texas. In order to qualify for the State tournament, team members had to compete at qualifying tournaments earlier in the year and earn 10 points. Points are earned every time a student places in an event at a qualifying tournament.

Students at the TFA State tournament are not divided by school type or school size. MPHS team members competed against private schools as well as large 6A programs from across the state.



Cheerleaders competed in Orlando at the UCA Cheer Championships.

Cheerleaders take eighth in national cheer contest

The Mount Pleasant High School Cheerleaders traveled to Orlando, Fla. to compete in the UCA National High School Cheerleading Championships at the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex.

Competing in the Small Varsity COED Game Day division, day one began with a total of 27 teams. At the end prelims on day 1, the team finished with a score of 81.7 to give them a tie for 5th place overall, a score good enough to advance them to the semifinals the next day.

On day 2, the 13 semifinalists would compete for spots in the finals. MPHS finished day 2 with a score of 89.9, giving them a narrow .02 lead over Charles

Henderson High School. That small lead would give the team the last remaining spot and the opportunity to compete one more time in the finals.

On the final day of competition, after a great band chant and situational routine, MPHS moved on to the cheer portion where a dropped a stunt gave them a 2-point deduction.

And in fight song they earned another 2-point deduction. The team finished with a raw score of 89.3, but after the 4 point deduction, placed 8th with an 85.3.

Competing for MPHS cheer were seniors Anna Claire Wall (Captain), Karigan Fox (Captain), Sam Brown, Alex Van

Rijn, Nevaeh Bardwell, Katie Ochoa, Juliana Perez, and Jordan Neal, juniors Ethan Easley, Jillian Adair, and Emily Shelton, sophomores Hannah Anderson, Allie Sloan, Caroline Currey, Abigail Gutierrez, Alexa Gamble, and Madison Cooper, and freshmen Madison Hargrove, Kate Ball and Kit Thompson.

“We are so proud of our accomplishment and happy to have brought a trophy back to Mount Pleasant,” said MPHS Cheer Coach, Karissa Lopez.

“With so many seniors on our team, we have a lot of work to do for next season, but our returners are ready to get back to Florida and fight for a medal.”

Senior Spotlight highlights color guard captain Tepetate

By ODALYS ADAME
Tigertalk Staff Writer

Each issue of Tigertalk, one senior who excels in school and out is chosen to be covered. This issue features Jonathan Tepetate who was recently voted as Most Changed Since Freshman Year and Most Talented by his class.

Tepetate has been involved in various school organizations including HOSA, FBLA, UIL, NHS, and NTHS. He has qualified for state in HOSA twice and for FBLA once. He has competed with UIL in calculator applications and has been heavily involved in NHS activities.

“So far, my favorite part of senior year is competing in Winter Guard International (WGI). Since I joined color guard, it had been one of my dreams to compete in WGI,” Tepetate said.

“Varsity placed 6 out of 36 in Dallas and 10 out of 29 in Austin! We have beat some of the best 5A and 6A schools in the state and many of them are starting to recognize our color guard.”

Tepetate is currently captain of the color guard team and served as squad leader for one year prior to getting the role. To some, Tepetate is also endearingly known as ‘Potato’. From one practice during his freshman year to still having the nickname his senior year, it shows that Tepetate is an integral part of color guard.

Aside from color guard, Tepetate has excelled in his studies and has maintained his position in the top 10% while juggling after school activities. He is also a part of Upward Bound which is a program that helps high school students develop skills to pursue a higher education. When he’s not studying or choreographing the next guard routine, you can catch him working at the local Starbucks.

“My sister is my #1 supporter and motivator. She has taught me many life lessons about school and how I should give it my all,” Tepetate said. “Another motivation is my parents. As a first generation students, I always want to make my parents proud. I always tell myself that they didn’t immigrate to the US for me not to do well in school,” Tepetate said.



Tepetate is involved in many different school organizations.

His family are not the only motivators in his life. Throughout the years, Tepetate has had multiple teachers of which he says he owes a lot to. This includes his calculus teacher Mrs. Ann Jenkins and color guard director Mr. Christian Gomez.

“Besides traumatizing me with math, I’d say Mrs. Jenkins has impacted me by showing me time management with a busy schedule. She has also inspired me to be a better individual and strive to be better,” Tepetate said.

“Another teacher that has impacted me is Mr. Gomez. He has taught me leadership skills as well as to not give up when I can’t achieve a certain goal. If it wasn’t for his lessons I would not be who I am today.”

Tepetate plans to attend NTCC in the fall to complete his basics then transfer to the University of Texas at Austin to major in nursing.

“Don’t give up one your goals, it’s always worth giving it your all to achieve them. It’s one of the best feelings when you reach your goals!” Tepetate said.

Jaimes win state powerlifting gold

By DONALD WOODS
Special Contributor

For the first time in MPHS history, an MP Lady Tiger stood above the rest and brought home a Gold Medal from the Texas High School Women's Powerlifting State Championships!

After a devastating state meet in 2021, Naylei Jaimes won the the 5A (small school) 181 class on Saturday in Corpus Christi, Tx.

Jaimes not only won the championship in her weight class, but she also set personal records in all three of her lifts. In the squat, Jaimes surpassed her previous total of 375 pounds by lifting a new PR of 395 pounds. In the bench press, she also bested her previous total of 225 pounds by setting a new PR of 235 pounds.

Finally in the dead lift, Jaimes set a new PR of 355 pounds, passing her previous total of 340 pounds. Her total weight lifted was a staggering 985 pounds, a massive improvement from last year of 145 pounds!

Jaimes came into the day ranked 1 in the Region, but also 1 in the State. When asked what her goal was for the day, she said, "I came in ranked 1, my goal is to leave ranked 1! Isn't that what you want Coach?" My reply was, "Nayeli, I would be happy if you finished in the top 5, but if you want to put that pressure on yourself, go ahead. I will do whatever you need in order to give you a chance to stay 1!"

After squats, Jaimes was setting in 3rd place, just 10 pounds out of 1st. Knowing we didn't need to push her beyond her limits in squat because she was the dominate lifter in the bench press, Jaimes was calm and collected. Once the bench was over, Jaimes found herself in 1st place by 30 pounds over 2nd place, 45 pounds over 3rd and 50 pounds over 4th.

Finally, the dead lift would seal the victory for Jaimes who put herself up by 35 pounds on her final attempt, leaving the 2nd place finisher with an attempt of 405 pounds to try and steal the gold away. Today would not be the day for anyone to take what Jaimes had been working for all year, the chance to finish what she started 3 seasons ago. back in 2020, Nayeli Jaimes was a freshman who decided she would powerlift. and she would compete in the 165 class.

At the Regional meet in 2020, Jaimes finished tied for 2nd place with a total of 825 pounds, an automatic qualifying total for State. Unfortunately, the State meet was cancelled in 2020 because of the covid scare. In 2021, Jaimes would not be able to finish at the state meet as she failed to complete an attempt on squat. However, 2022 would be the year she set all things right!

A three time State competitor, Jaimes looks to next year working to go back-to-back and repeat as the 181 State Champ!

Jaimes was not the only Lady Tiger to compete in the State Championships this year, two other Lady Tigers made the trip to Corpus



Jaimes won Class 5A state medal in powerlifting.

Christi also.

In the 114 class, Senior Arlette DeJesus did an outstanding job in her two years of powerlifting. In 2021, DeJesus claimed the 3rd place Bronze at the Regional competition with a 545 lb total, and in 2022, she captured the 2nd place Silver to move on to the State meet. With new PR's in the bench press of 115 pounds, and dead lift of 255 pounds, DeJesus would hit a new PR total of 570 pounds, good enough to give her a 9th place finish overall!

In the 132 class, Junior Alexandra Martinez also pushed herself to new limits in her third year of lifting. In 2020, Martinez would finish the Regional meet in 8th place with a total of 495 pounds, while in 2021, she would finish the Regional meet in 5th place with a 645 lb total! In 2022 however, she would reach PR's in all three lifts and finish 2nd in the Region. In doing so, she would again set new PR's at the State meet, totaling 765 pounds, and finish in 9th place overall!

With their efforts, the Lady Tigers would finish the day in 9th place as a team, out of 50 teams! 2022 has been a tremendous year for the Lady Tigers:

- 10 Regional Qualifiers
- 6 Regional Medalists
- 4 top 3 Regional Finalists
- 3 State Qualifiers
- 2 top 10 State Finalists, and....
- 1 STATE CHAMPION!!!

Congratulations Lady Tigers on a tremendous season! Looking forward to seeing what you do next year!

Shepherd advances to state in first year of powerlifting

By DONALD WOODS
Special Contributor

It is not where you start, it is where you finish.

This statement sums up this season for Junior Micah Shepherd (1st year) who made a run this year even he did not think possible.

Coming off of a season ending knee injury his freshman year in football, Shepherd had a tough time working through the surgery, the rehab and then the uncertainty of a reconstructed knee.

He missed all of his 9th grade offseason, his 10th grade football season and most of his 10th grade offseason. He began basically from scratch in the weight room towards the end of his sophomore year and worked diligently to make up for lost time.

Working through his Junior year in football, Shepherd started at right guard and played some middle linebacker, He continued to improve in his flexibility, strength and confidence throughout the season. Gaining more and more confidence, Shepherd decided to powerlift. Coming in to the season, Shep was already extremely strong, but he had no idea how strong he would become. The first meet he lifted in was in Sulphur Springs. His squat was 475pounds, bench was 275pounds, his deadlift was 405pounds and his total for the meet was 1155pounds.

Fast forward just shy of 8 weeks to the Regional meet, which by the way he came in at 2 in the 242 class. Shep completely and utterly showed how strong he had become. At the Regional meet, he improved his squat to 615pounds, a 150lb increase, his bench press improved to an unbelievable 410pounds, a 135lb increase, and an improved deadlift of 505pounds, a 100 pound improvement from week 1, for a new total of 1530pounds, and the number 1 ranked 242 lifter in the Region!

Shepherd became the first Tiger lifter to make the State meet since Andrew Turner in 2017.

Going in to the State meet, Shepherd was ranked 18th in the state in the 242



Turner had a great first season in powerlifting. class in Division 1, which includes all 5A and 6A schools in the great state of Texas. a total of 498 school!

Shepherd would gain a personal record for his deadlift (540pounds) and his overall total (1545pounds) at the state competition, another increase since the first week of practice. He would end the day as the 17th ranked 242 class lifter in Division 1. Following the meet I asked Shepherd what his goal for next season is going to be and he looked at me with a grin on his face, "Too win it all of course, Coach!"

There is no doubt in my mind he will do exactly that, win it all!

I could not be more proud of the work and dedication this young man has put into making himself stronger and competing at such a high level. I am excited to see what barriers he breaks down next.

Look out for the Tigers next season in powerlifting, especially Micah Shepherd!

Softball hopes for playoffs again

By AUDRIE MENDOZA
Tigertalk Staff Writer

The Lady Tigers softball team is in the midst of district play and has their sights set on making the playoffs once again.

We asked three softball players (two varsity and one junior varsity) various questions about the sport they play.

“How well do you think your team will do in district this year?”

“I think we are going to do pretty good and be like in the top three in the district,” centerfielder Ella Cross said.

Infielder/pitcher Conlee Zachry agreed that the team will perform well and make the top three in district.

JV player Arenia Tigert said, “considering our team and how well we perform together, I think this season will definitely be tough looking at the other teams in our district, but I believe we will do well.”

“What is your goal in softball this year?”

“To hit above 400 for average, make first team all district and make the playoffs,” Zachry said.

“Personally, my goal for this year is to just play to the best of my ability and to just have fun playing the sport I feel in love with at a young age,” Tigert said.

“What is the most challenging thing in softball that you need to get better at?”

“Being able to consistently hit good pitching,” Cross said.

Zachry said it was “hitting hard pitching.”

Tigert said, “So far, one of the most challenging things I have come across is stepping into the batter’s box against an experienced varsity pitcher.”



Zachry delivers a pitch on the new field.

“What is your favorite thing about being on the softball team?”

“Getting to hang out with my team everyday and making memories with them,” Cross said.

Zachry said, “the friendships and getting to play the game with everyone.”

“What made you want to join softball?”

“I started playing softball at 5 so I have always wanted to play in high school,” Cross said.

Tigert said, “Coming into my freshman year of high school, I was bound and determined to play softball because I have played starting at a young age and my cousin was playing as well for her senior year.”



Coach Stewart meets with members of the team between innings.

Baseball hoping to reach playoffs

By **ISAIAH RODARTE**
Tigertalk Staff Writer

After struggling to reach the playoffs the last few years, the high school baseball team has hopes of turning it around this season.

The Tigers are off to a good start in district. Senior Keller Thompson shared his thoughts about playing baseball and expectations for the team.

How well do you think the team will do in district this year?

“I feel like our team will do great in district this year since we are already off to a great start,” Thompson said.

What is your goal for baseball this year?

“My goal for baseball this year is to win district and make a good run in the playoffs,” Thompson said.

What is the most challenging thing in baseball that you need to get better at?

“Since I am a pitcher, every appearance on the mound is an opportunity

to improve,” Thompson said.

What is your favorite thing about baseball?

“I like getting to bond with my teammates, who I also consider some of my best friends,” Thompson said.

Who is your favorite pro team and players? What do you like best about them?

“My favorite is the Chicago White Sox because Michael Kopech plays for them. Not only is he a Mount Pleasant High School alumni, he is also a family friend,” Thompson said.



Thompson, right, talks to Harrison Wall.

Soccer teams advance to playoffs

Both the boys and girls soccer teams had a great season this year as each team advanced to the playoffs.

The boys have won their first two playoff games after finishing as district champions.

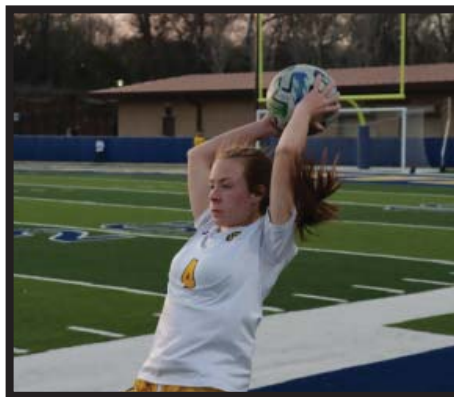
The boys opened the playoffs against Lufkin and won 3-1 at Sam Parker Field. They followed that game up with a 1-0 victory over Midlothian in the area round in a game played at Sulphur Springs.

The Tigers were scheduled to play Whitehouse on Friday, April 1 in the third round of the playoffs.

As for as the Lady Tigers, they reached the playoffs after finishing fourth in district.

The Lady Tigers opened the playoffs by upsetting Jacksonville with a 2-0 victory. Jacksonville had won their district title.

In their second round of the playoffs, the Lady Tigers came up short to Red Oak losing by a 3-0 score.



20 Questions with Ms. Merriman

By CALEB WHITTEN
Tigertalk Staff Writer

In each issue of the Tigertalk, the newspaper staff features a different teacher. This issue spotlights Lindy Merriman, who teaches English.

1. How long have you worked at MPHS and what do you teach?

I teach freshmen English and junior English Dual Credit. I have taught at MPHS for fifteen to sixteen years now.

2. What do you enjoy most about teaching at MPHS?

I love pretty much everything about MP. The students are wonderful, and I love my department and fellow teachers.

3. What is your dream job as a kid?

I am doing it – teaching! But, before I grew up and entered the real world, I wanted to be a National Geographic photographer.

4. What are you most proud of?

My two beautiful daughters, but I am also proud of my educational and work accomplishments.

5. What is your favorite genre of music?

I like a little bit of everything. I tend to pick music off my mood, but I will always fall back on classic rock or really rock of any kind (for the most part).

6. Who is your favorite musical artist?

Tom Petty

7. What is your favorite movie and why?

Pg. 18 Tigertalk



Merriman's favorite book is Lord of the Rings.

This one is hard. I have a lot of favorites when it comes to movies and books. However, if I have to choose, it would probably be... nope, can't choose. I love "The Goonies", "Indiana Jones", "Back to the Future", "Harry Potter", "Lord of the Rings", "Clue", and anything Tarantino

8. What is your favorite book and why?

Lord of the Rings because Tolkien is a genius and simply wrote the best books ever. Out of the series, The Two Towers is my favorite.

9. What is your favorite TV show and why?

It's a toss-up between "Friends", "The Big Bang Theory", and "The Simpsons". I also really love "Stranger Things".

10. What is your favorite color?

Green

11. What would be your dream vacation?

Anywhere in Europe

12. How do you start your day?

With an alarm clock

13. What are you looking forward to in the future?

Going to Harry Potter World again! (Universal Studios)

14. If you could have a superpower what would it be?

To stop time, but... I also want the ability to have anyone I am touching to be in the "time stop" with me while everyone else freezes in time.

15. What is something unique you have done in life?

I don't know if it is unique, but I have bungee jumped. I also have a buckle around my inner, left eye (which is somewhat unusual).

16. Do you own any pets and what kind?

Not at the moment, however, I am planning on getting a new dog this

See Merriman, Pg. 18

Pg. 17 Tigertalk



From left are Counce, Richie, Bush, Chavez and Resendiz. Not pictured is Amanda Brewer.

Six culinary students make state

Mount Pleasant High School Culinary Arts competed at the SkillsUSA District 5 competition in Waco recently.

Six MPHS culinary students will move on to the State competition in the Job Exhibit 3-5 tiered cake category.

The team of David Chavez and Axel Resendiz created a “Tangled” themed cake earning 198 out of a possible 200 points.

And the team of Amanda Brewer, Brian Bush, Rian Richie, and Katherine Counce created a “Lilo & Stitch” themed cake earning 183 out of 200 points.

All six students will compete at the Skill-USA state competition in Corpus Christi to be held March 31-April 3. The MPHS Culinary Arts classes are taught by Chef Kathleen Anker.

Merriman from Page 17

summer.

17. What is your favorite memory growing up?

Honestly, I don't know – you are killing me with some of these questions lol

18. What was your favorite subject growing up? Why?

I have always been an English baby. I love books, reading, games,

Pg. 18 Tigertalk

and movies – it gives one the ability (through imagination) to transcend time, space, and reality, taking on a whole new persona and living in a different world or time.

19. Do you have a hobby?

Several – I enjoy putting puzzles together, playing video games (to an extent), reading, and scrap-

booking.

20. If you could go back in time, what era would you pick and why?

I wouldn't want to go back in time. I enjoy technology and the amenities of modern living too much. I think traveling to the future would be much more interesting. As Lady Macbeth said, “What's done is done.”

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Tiger Roar

What did you think was cool when younger but isn't now?

Tiger Roar page by Nathali Rojas and Isaiah Rodarte



“Fidget Spinners”
-- Dawson Hernandez



“Dora the Explorer”
-- Ke'Aundra Evans



“Kites”
-- Nuria Ortiz



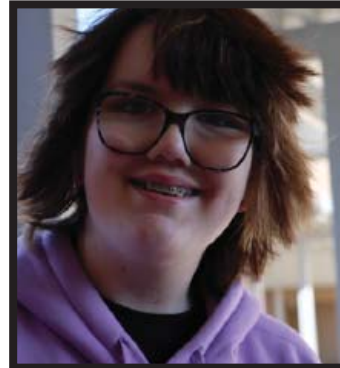
“Flip phones”
-- Andrew Guerette



“Nike shoes”
-- Zachary Haygood



“Sonic or Mario”
-- Thomas Mahoney



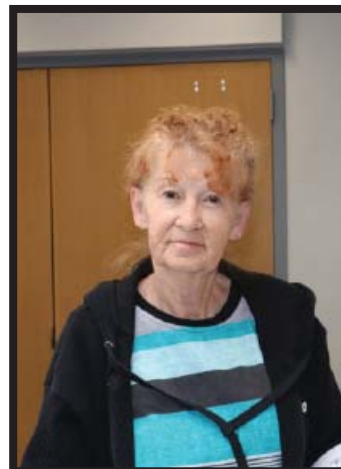
“Little Einstein's”
-- Harley Martin



“High School”
-- Taiga Wellmen



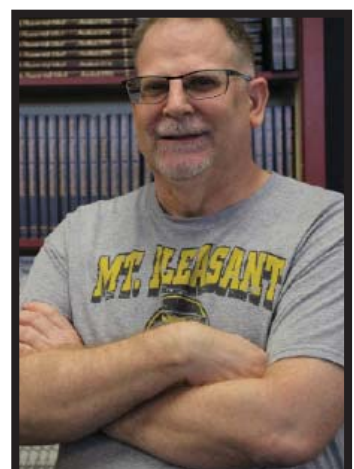
“Sesame Street”
--- Anthony Alford



“Saying Peace”
--- Ms. Young



“WCW Wrestling”
--- Dr. Luckett



“Members Only jacket”
--- Mr. Whitten