



Halloween 2024 Edition

Cover art by Sadie Boven

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## *Letter From The Editor -*

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The new school year is here, and the Trojan Torch newspaper is back in full swing. This edition features everything from Plainwell's athletic endeavors to our favorite fall media to student-written scary stories. We want to give thanks to our staff for their effort this trimester, our principal, Marvin Taylor, for his continuous support and cooperation, and most importantly, our readers who make this all possible. We hope to not only continue what we built last year, but improve and become the best we can be. Thank you for your support.

Elizabeth Carter  
Editor-In-Chief

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Cover art by Sadie Boven

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# Marvin Taylor: Your New Friendly Neighborhood Principal

By Heidi Ragainis | Staff writer

Plainwell High School welcomed a new principal for the 2024-2025 school year. Meet your friendly neighborhood principal, Marvin Taylor.

Since 2010, Taylor has been in education. He is a first-generation college graduate in his family. He started teaching in his 30's at Paw Paw. He taught both Middle School and Elementary at Paw Paw.

When asked if Taylor has always wanted to work in a school or if that changed as he matured he said that he loves the school atmosphere and if he could be a student forever and get paid to do it, he would. He started out subbing when he decided he wanted to teach and he taught and subbed in elementary, middle school, and high school and ultimately decided that the secondary school is where he wants to be.

After doing a lot of research on the district about the opportunities and athletics students are involved in, Taylor wanted to be a part of all of the fun and he decided to apply. Taylor had said "Half of the student body participates in some sort of athletics and I thought that was pretty cool." The more Taylor kept learning about Plainwell, the more he wanted to investigate it and be part of the interview process and that is when he submitted his application materials.

Taylor was asked how he likes PHS so far, and he had an immediate response of "I don't like it,

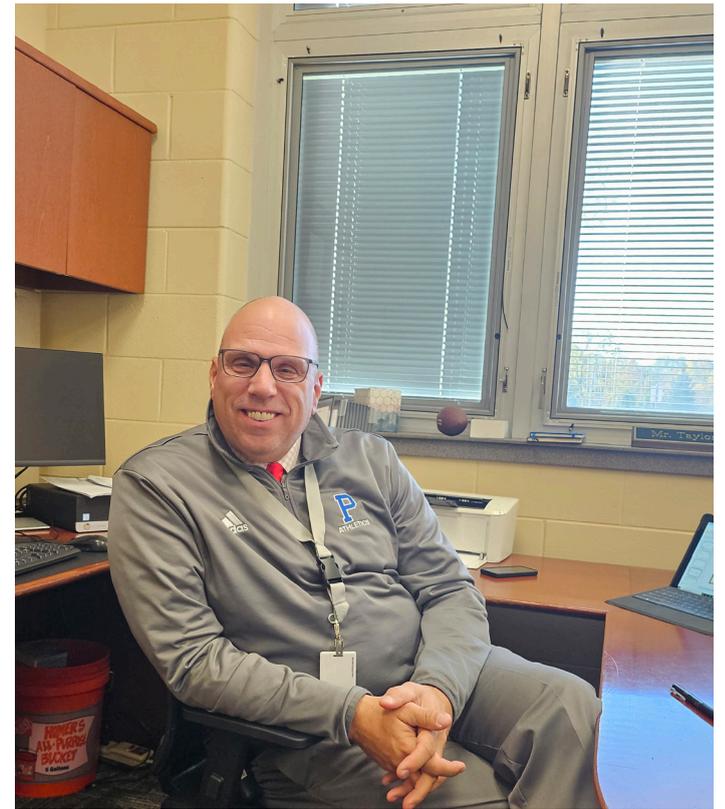
I love it!" He said, "I came from a small school district K-12 with 500 kids in the whole district and this is much different for me." Before Taylor came to Plainwell, he had been an elementary school principal and a superintendent.

The most interesting sporting event Taylor has gone to is "Swim and Dive because it is very fascinating and interesting to watch." He is also excited about golf because he hasn't gone to a golf meet yet but when he does he is looking forward to "hopping on a golf cart, riding around, and having a good time."

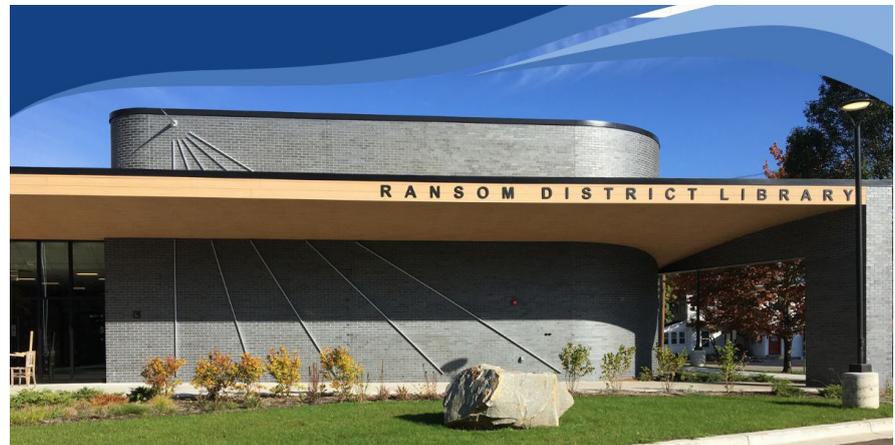
As the new principal, Taylor looks forward to events like homecoming, the Otsego v. Plainwell football game, and holidays because he loves Halloween, Christmas, and Thanksgiving. Taylor has never had a whole week off for Thanksgiving break so he is looking forward to using that time to spend with family. Looking forward, he also is also excited to experience chaperoning prom, graduation, snowcoming, and the basketball season.

There are many great things about PHS and it was hard for Taylor to decide what his favorite thing about PHS was. Taylor came to a decision and said that he loves all of the fun involvements students can be a part of. For example, announcements and how students do them and are involved in them. He also has been impressed by all of the clubs and sports that Plainwell High School offers to students.

One thing Taylor would like the students to know about him is that he is very student-centered, meaning that the students are his priority and that he has meetings throughout the day and is easy to make time with if a student ever needs to talk to him about an issue or concerns that they have. Taylor said he "will always make time for a student to talk to him" even if he is busy because students come first to him.



Marvin Taylor by Karver Hoffman



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## The Fall Play: 'Almost, Maine'

By Brayden Triemstra | Staff Writer

Hannah Skierski is the director of the Plainwell High School drama class fall production. Last year was the first time Skierski was in the director's chair, and she found that she enjoyed her time very much; this year she feels much more prepared. The kid's excitement from last year has carried over, and so many people now want to be part of the program. "Being the director of a play is a huge undertaking but it's an undertaking that I'm happy to do," says Skierski.

This year's fall play is light-hearted and dramatic, titled "Almost, Maine". The story takes place in a fictional town called Almost, Maine. The town brings a group of people together and tells a story of love. It is a series of eight different short stories, which talk about falling in and out of love, and how each story is singled out by the northern lights. It tells how falling in and out of love can be for the good, the bad, and some-

times the in-between. It is a must-see.

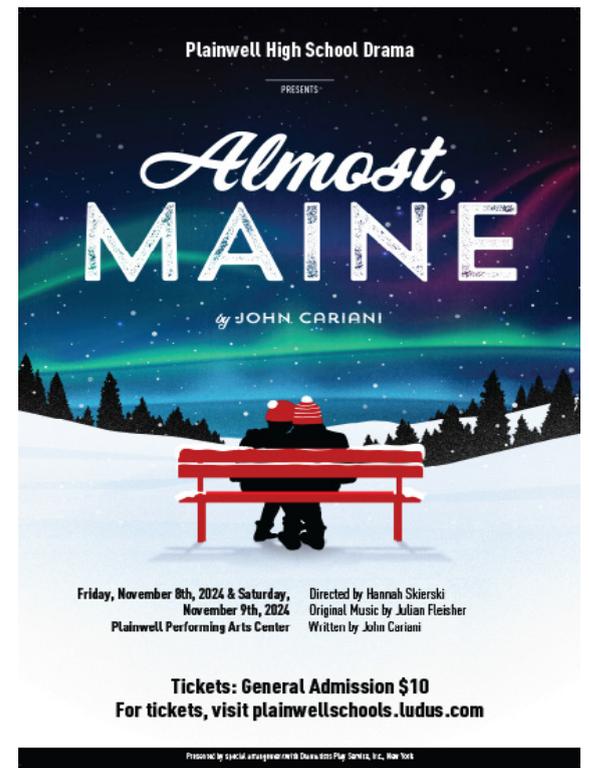
As for what's to come next year, you'll have to wait and see. Skierski says, "I start thinking about next year's show in the spring after the dust settles from this one." Will it be a comedy? Will it be a love story? Or will it be more dramatic? Only time will tell.

You can come see the show November 8th & 9th at the Plainwell Performing Arts Center. Tickets can be purchased online through revtrak. Make sure you come to support the many amazing students that have put in all their effort into making this production happen in just two months! If you want to continue supporting the performing arts at Plainwell, visit Plainwell Community Schools website to see upcoming concerts and performances.

Instagram:

[\\_phs\\_drama](#)

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## • BACK IN GEAR: AUTO SHOP MAKES A COMEBACK •

By Dylan Schmidt | Staff Writer

Plainwell High School brought back the auto-tech program after it was closed for a little over three years. With the auto shop reopening there is a lot of new equipment to use. There are three tool cabinets with brand new husky hand tools, such as socket sets, pliers, screwdrivers, impact wrenches, and torque wrenches all available for the students to use. In the auto tech shop there are three working bays.

Some goals for the auto shop is to open up the other bays. Right now, as previously mentioned, the auto shop only has

three bays and would like to have both sides open for the students to use. In the first three weeks of class, students will learn how to do oil changes, tire exchanges, and wheel balancing. Eventually they are hoping to do brake systems.

Unfortunately, they are having a problem finding cars to work on. As a result of this they are going to have to ask staff members to use their cars as 'guinea pigs' for the oil changes, tire changes, and break jobs. The auto shop would like to invite all students to sign up to get their car worked on; "We are here for them," said

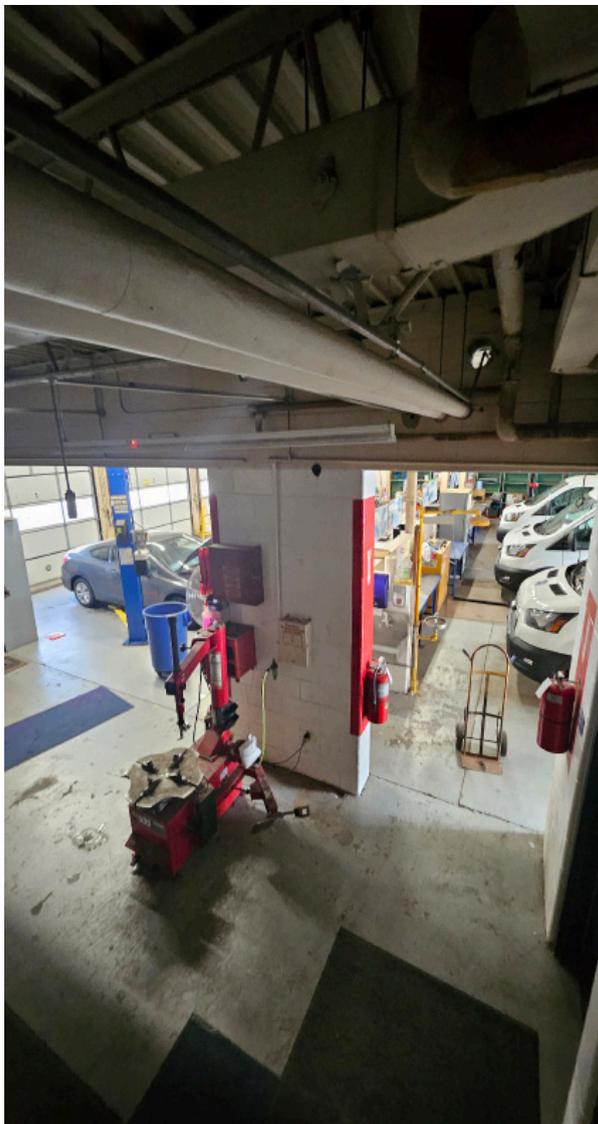
the auto-shop teacher, Fred Beachler. If you sign up to get your car worked on, it is completely free.

Bringing back the auto shop class seems to mean a lot in the first trimester of school. Both of the classes are filled to the max with students. In the third trimester they will have six auto classes. Their goal is to eventually have an advanced auto class and a small engine class. In the small engine class they are planning on working on leaf blowers, lawn mowers, and weed wackers.

With all of the work going on in the auto shop, you might think it would be hard to keep things clean

and organized. Not to worry, "You can eat off the shop floor now," Beachler claims. They mop and clean the floor at the end of the day every day.

The class is designed to teach you to work on your own car and be self sufficient, not to be a mechanic. However, Wayne Haward, the new auto-tech teacher, hopes to come into auto shop for two classes so students can get their SAC certification. If you get one coming out of high school, you can go out in town and get a job anywhere as a mechanic.



Autoshop by Karver Hoffman

# Beetlejuice Beetlejuice

By Owen LaBudda | Staff Writer

36 years after the original film, “Beetlejuice”, hit the theaters, “Beetlejuice Beetlejuice”, the sequel to the blockbuster smash, is finally out. As a self-proclaimed movie connoisseur and viewer of the original, I felt it only necessary to share my thoughts on its release.

## Plot/Story

The story, a continuation of its successor, follows our main character, Lydia Deetz, and her daughter, Astrid, as they return to Winter River after the death of Lydia’s father, Charles Deetz. Astrid’s father had passed away previously, and since then Lydia had met a man and ‘fell in love’. After the announcement of their marriage on Halloween, there was an objection from none other than Beetlejuice himself.

Meanwhile, Beetlejuice was not having the best of times in the underworld. It is revealed that Beetlejuice had been married for a short time, and it did not end well. Beetlejuice and Lydia reunite under unfavorable circumstances.

For a sequel to a movie almost 40 years old, they definitely relied on cameos and references that call back to the original movie, which was very entertaining for OG fans of the cult classic. However, it felt there wasn’t enough time spent in certain areas, and it also felt as though there were some minor plot holes.

## Casting

Only three people from the original movie returned to reprise their roles in the sequel, those being Michael Keaton, Winona Ryder and Catherine O’Hara.

The new addition to the now film series included William Dafoe, who plays Wolf Jackson, a minor role in

the film but an important one nonetheless. The film also includes Jenna Ortega as Astrid Deetz, who resents her mother for being too busy and never around for her. Monica Bellucci plays a new character named Delores, who plays an interesting role in the film and fleshes out the plot. Last but not least, everyone’s favorite, Danny DeVito, also plays a small cameo which moviegoers can look forward to.

## Visual Effects and Comedy

The movie offers amazing spectacles and hilarious moments which are reminiscent of the first film, making it almost as good as the original, but it didn’t feel quite the same. The claymation scenes were also quite entertaining, and they added to the characters in the times they were used.

## Director

Tim Burton has exceeded my expectations on this film, which I did not expect to be as good as it was. He is best known for his claymations such as, “Nightmare Before Christmas”, “Frankenweenie”, and “Corpse Bride”. Burton has not made such a good film in a long time. This is one of his best works for my taste and interests.

## Verdict

The movie offered moments of dark theming, good acting, and good sets. While it had many highs and good moments, it still didn’t land correctly in some areas, and a few parts of the story could’ve used a last correction and revising. Overall, the film exceeded my expectations and was a great continuation of the original film. I highly recommend “Beetlejuice Beetlejuice”, especially if you’ve seen the original, which definitely lived up to the hype and homage.

# TREEHOUSE OF HORROR

By Blake Herbert | Staff writer

The “Treehouse of Horror” episodes are Halloween-themed Simpsons episodes, released once a year, that contain three segments which are three different scary stories. They fit more gore into these episodes, resulting in the majority of episode ratings to be changed from their normal TV-PG to PG-14. The name “Treehouse of Horror” originated from the first episode which shows the siblings telling scary stories in their childhood treehouse. It also takes reference from the movie, “Dr. Terror’s House of Horrors”. Here are the top five installments of the show.

5th Place - “Treehouse Of Horror XXIII”. In this episode, I loved the recognizable parody of the movie, “Back to the Future”, and the fact that I found myself laughing through the entire episode. After discovering that Frink the scientist left his time machine unsupervised, Bart goes back to 1974 and carries out a plot similar to “Back to the Future” with a few twists and turns.

4th Place - “Treehouse Of Horror XIV”. The final segment, “Stop The World, I Want To Goof Off”, is one of the best individual segments of the series. In the episode, Bart and Milhouse found a stopwatch that allowed them to stop time and do nothing but ‘goof off’. This segment was full of ‘knee-slappers’ and a plot that can only be described as magnificent.

3rd Place - “Treehouse Of Horror XXII”. Although the first segment of this episode was subpar, the second and third segments were amazing. The second segment, “Dial D For Diddly”, is based on the show “Dexter”. The third segment, “In The Na’Vi”, is based on

the movie, “Avatar”. The writers and illustrators captured the coordination of the plot, the camera work, and the astounding beauty of the wilderness of Pandora with skill.

2nd Place - “Treehouse Of Horror VI”. Unfortunately, the first and third segments of this episode were not up to second place standards. However, this episode ranked high due to the genius of the second segment, “Nightmare On Evergreen Terrace”. Groundskeeper Willie cursed the town and decided to kill the students in their dreams. The story of what led the kids to come across this realization and Willie’s reasoning will leave viewers astounded.

1st Place - “Treehouse Of Horror XIX”. While all three segments in this episode were amazing, the “It’s The Grand Pumpkin Milhouse” segment takes the cake as the single best segment in the whole Treehouse of Horror franchise and maybe even the whole TV series. Maybe it’s the nostalgia that powers my rating, as the segment is based off the classic Halloween movie, “It’s the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown”. In this segment, Bart tricks Milhouse into believing that there is such a thing as the Grand Pumpkin. Milhouse goes to the pumpkin patch instead of going to a Halloween party located at the school. He waits in a pumpkin field for the Grand Pumpkin to come alive, but once it does it goes on a murderous rampage after realizing humans carve pumpkins. This new take on the classic story will leave a lasting impression on viewers.

# Top Five: Scary Movies

By Drew Nelson | Staff writer  
Scary movies can be a polarizing topic for many. Some people hate them, while others like the thrill and suspense of a good scary movie. The real x-factor is whether the movie is actually enjoyable or not. The five components to a quality horror movie are to build suspense, develop characters well, interesting dialogue, an intimidating antagonist, and creepy sound design. With all that in mind, here are my top five.

First up, “Halloween” by John Carpenter is a fan favorite. It has many different movies in its franchise including the same antagonist ranging from the years 1978-2023. Halloween is considered to have some of the best suspense in horror with Michael Myers being physically intimidating. Standing at six foot seven inches tall, he is a sight you would not want to see chasing after you.

Secondly, “Texas Chainsaw Massacre” also cracks the top five on the list. This film has also had many spin-offs and remakes ranging from 1974-2022. The antagonist, referred to as Leatherface, is also considered to be one of the scariest in horror with his big frame, strength feats, and chainsaw that he carries around with him.

Next on the list is “IT”, based on the book by Stephen King. “IT” is universally known as one of the scariest clown movie. The original released in 1986 with a remake in 2017 and the sequel in 2019 scored above 85% on the rotten tomato scale for both movies which is considered to be excellent. Pennywise, the antagonist, is a clown that feeds off of others’ fear. He can be extremely powerful or weak depending on how scared the characters are of him, making for an interesting plot.

nell and James Wan is next up, and based on paranormal activity with no set antagonist. Insidious has five movies ranging from 2010-2023 and has no chronological order. All the movies average a 4.1/5 stars in the audience rating summary.

Finally, “The Conjuring”, directed by James Wan is a lot like Insidious with its reliance on paranormal activity, but it is based in the 1970’s. The Conjuring has three movies total ranging from 2013-2021. This movie makes the list due to its plot, eeriness, and jumpscars. Two out of the three movies scored over 80% on the rotten tomatoes scale with the most recent one only scoring a 55%.

In conclusion, the top five horror movies in my book are “Halloween”, “Texas Chainsaw Massacre”, “IT”, “Insidious”, and “The Conjuring”. They all make the list due to the five criteria of building suspense, well developed characters, dialogue, an intimidating antagonist, and creepy sound design. But they also were decided by the critics’ scale (rotten tomatoes), popularity, and consistency. Give them a watch!



Ghost holding a clapstick from freepik.com



Scary road from freepik.com

## Hatchet Man Road

By Elizabeth Carter | Editor-In-Chief

Hatchet Man Road, an area of 28th Avenue which lies between M-40 south of Gobles and 9th Street, has enclosed in its pavement and trees an urban legend to make even the toughest of men cower in fear. The legend goes as follows:

In the late 1980s a paranoid man built an underground shelter beneath his house for him and his family to live in. He was said to have built it as some sort of a bomb shelter to be prepared for the worst, already anxious as he was, he convinced his family it was necessary for them to move into the bomb shelter with him and out of their house. The family agreed, and with paranoia and insanity taking over, the man slaughtered his entire family via hatchet.

Now residents of the area and haunt-junkies alike claim

there is something off with the road. Reports of cars tailgating others at night and then strangely disappearing, cars idling and stopping randomly, radios cutting out, and tires suddenly blowing out are extremely common for the road. Some even say they’ve seen the silhouettes of Hatchet Man’s murdered wife and children wandering the road at night, screaming in pain. Hatchet Man himself is sometimes reported to be haunting the road, jumping in front of cars and running them off the street.

Some believe Hatchet Man Road to be one of the most haunted in the area, while others believe it to be nothing more than a silly ghost story. The question is, are you brave enough to face Hatchet Man Road?

# Candy, Costumes, and Caution: A Guide to Halloween Safety

By Claira Pearson | Staff writer

Halloween is one of the most popular holidays, and it's easy to see why - free candy, fun costumes, and time with friends and family. However, with that comes many dangers: kids going out alone, teenagers throwing parties, and it being dark out with no limits to what the night could bring. Things can get dangerous quickly.

Plainwell Community Schools Resource Officer Bob Farris says, "There's many things we get concerned about on the roads; one of the biggest things is the visibility. The kids don't necessarily have bright lights or bright costumes or lighting on them." Visibility has been an issue in the past and as Farris says, people without bright costumes are in danger of careless drivers on Halloween.

Candy is another concern. If it was any other holiday and people were just giving out

free candy, one would be suspicious. So why is Halloween candy any different? Sure it's supposed to be part of the holiday, however it can still be dangerous taking and eating candy from random strangers. Farris states, "Be sure the candy is in sealed wrappers and that the wrappers have not been tampered with. Depending on the age of the student(s) that are trick or treating it is a good idea to have their parent or guardian inspect the candy as well." Even if you think this might be cliché and aggressive, they are trying to keep you safe and healthy.

Overall, Halloween, while being a fun and exciting holiday, can be dangerous. It is always good to stay safe rather than sorry. Wear bright flashy costumes, check candy, go in safe and familiar neighborhoods, and most importantly don't act without thinking. Halloween is meant to be fun, but stay away from unsafe activities.

Happy Halloween Plainwell High school!



Halloween candy by Karver Hoffman

# The Ultimate Fall Playlist

By Alison VanDyke | Staff Writer

Here is the ultimate fall playlist to be the soundtrack for your perfect fall day. Whether that is enjoying an early fall morning, snuggling up with a blanket, or just watching 'Gilmore Girls'.

### The best fall playlist

Early fall morning

alison vandyke

17min

- Goodbye Yellow Brick Road - Remastered...  
Elton John
- All Too Well (Taylor's Version)  
Taylor Swift
- Dreams - 2004 Remaster  
Fleetwood Mac
- 1979 - Remastered 2012  
The Smashing Pumpkins

### The best fall playlist

Snuggling up with a cozy blanket and a pumpkin candle

alison vandyke

11min

- Sparks  
Coldplay
- Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now - 2...  
The Smiths
- Yellow  
Coldplay

### The best fall playlist

Gilmore Girls.

alison vandyke

15min

- There She Goes  
The La's
- Kiss Me  
Sixpence None The Richer
- Linger  
The Cranberries
- Fade Into You  
Mazzy Star

## Kicking Goals: The Rise of Soccer in Plainwell

By Nolan Lindsey | Staff Writer

After a spectacular last season, the Plainwell boy's soccer team hopes to keep up the success. Graduating 13 seniors last year, the boys were given the difficult task of following the path the graduates paved for them. Coach Ryan Beauregard believes that the team can make it far this season, but they still need to work hard to get there. Beauregard says, "Our team is constructed in a way that helps support our chance of success again this year. We are solid defensively and we have enough goal-scoring options where we are a balanced team." The boys all have enough skill to contribute to the success of the group, whether that is scoring or defending the opponents. Beauregard continues to say, "The experience gained

last year helped immensely and the boys seem hungry to make a run in both conference and the postseason." Though they lost the graduates, they gained other assets from the upcoming players, which continues to help them through this season. As always there are some areas that they can improve. Beauregard also says, "The main area where our entire program needs some improvement is in our preparation and consistency." The boys can stay focused on game days but once it comes to practice they disconnect. "We do a great job on game days, but if we can strive for greatness during practices, film sessions, etc. then this will help us take the next step forward."

The coach and players both believe that they can continue the success of last year and make it even further.

Gavyn Steele '26 wants to have an amazing season and believes that this year's team has used last year as fuel. Steele says, "We learned a lot from last year. Since we looked up to a lot of those guys I think that has helped us work harder this season to make it as far, if not further." Steele also mentions some of the strengths of the '24-'25 team, "We have a very good backline when we play, we pass very well to get out of the defensive area. We are an outstanding team."

Along with the defensive line, the team is developed in other areas across the board. "We have a lot of depth on the team, many people who aren't starters can keep up with the starting lineup and can do the same things the starters can," Steele says. It's shaping up to be a good season for the Trojan soccer team this year.



Gavyn Steele '26, by Mia Johnson '26



Team Huddle by Mia Johnson '26



Drew Nelson '25 by Gavin Heath



Team Huddle by Gavin Heath

## Plainwell Trojans Basketball: The Last Dance

By Dominic Anne-rino | Staff Writer

The Plainwell Trojans basketball team has a lot of hype around them this upcoming year. The team faced a tragic loss to Paw Paw in the district finals last season. The team was young, only graduating two senior basketball players. This year, they're returning as seasoned, skillful, and developed athletes. The off-season has never been an important thing in the past for the Trojan basketball team; they started working twice as hard after the tough loss. To add on, before losing to Paw Paw in the district finals of 2024, the Trojans had beaten them twice during the regular season. The team has a chip on their shoulder, to say the least.

When interviewed, Drew Rayman '26 was asked, "As we all know, you guys lost in district finals last year. What is the final hump the team needs to get over to get farther than you guys did last year?" Rayman responded, "I'm gonna go with

leadership; we also didn't have many points, and we had a lot of turnovers." Rayman was also asked, "Who do you expect to step up as a leader for the team?" Rayman answered, "John Amaezechi, he is a senior and he also fit the leadership role last year." This is huge for the Trojans; the team is very talented and has a lot of positive momentum. With Amaezechi being a senior, he will definitely be the clear leader for the team this upcoming year.

To add on, Trason Stephenson '26 is an impactful part of the team. Stephenson was on varsity his sophomore year and looks more developed as a player now. Stephenson is expected to make an impact in a positive way, and the team and many of the fans have high expectations for the junior guard/forward. Stephenson was asked, "What positively changed from last year's team?" Stephenson says, "We are an older team now." He is referring to the amount of underclassmen that were on the

team last year, and how the dynamic has shifted to all seniors and juniors now. With the team having only two seniors last year, competition was tougher when playing older teams such as Otsego and Niles.

The team is definitely looking to make a statement and use last year's tough loss as a building block. With returning star seniors Chad Winenger '25, Drew Nelson '25, as well as Amaezechi '25, the team is definitely looking strong. To add on, all-conference Chib Amaezechi '26 looks to do his thing and make an even greater impact than he did last year. Along with all of the returning stars mentioned, the bench is full of depth, consisting of many seasoned juniors who are ready to make a statement off the bench. The team has high expectations for themselves to be conference champion contenders and finish farther than last year in the playoff run. Fans and students are excited to see where this team ends up.

### *Open Hearts & Open Doors: Clothes Available at a Local Church*

By Vivian Radtke | Staff writer

Plainwell community members in need have a new resource available to them through First Baptist Church of Plainwell. The church is providing a clothing rack available to anyone in the community. The organizers Carrie Radtke and Vicki Harvey opened up the Clothes Rack to provide for anyone in the community. Radtke says, "We are open Wednesdays 11-1 for whoever needs anything, they can just come in, there's no limit to what they can get, and if they need something and if we don't have it, we'll try to make a note and see if we can get donations for that." The clothing rack is geared towards providing free clothing and shoes for those in need but if a request comes in for other items the Clothing Rack will work to provide it. "

For those interested in utilizing this resource, Radtke shares "we only ask for first name, how many (items) they got, and if they wanted somebody from the church to contact you then contact information but it's not necessary."

Anyone is welcome and the rack has clothes for everyone to take and donate. Men, women, and children will all be able to find goods at First Baptist Church. Harvey shares, "I wanted people to know that our church was here, so I thought a good way to be an outreach. We both had the same idea around the same time about having a clothing ministry which is something God laid upon our hearts, and it was a way to let people know that First Baptist Church is on the corner."

The Clothes Rack hasn't been run for multiple years, however the history of how it's been started has seemed to peak some interest. Darlene Kohn was a teacher at the Plainwell High School for 47 years. Her father Roy Shively had four sisters, three of which, Helen Shively, Leona Shively, and Shirley Hawver helped run the clothing rack. Helen started the rack in 1972 and it was run until they got too old to take care of it,

leaving Radtke and Harvey to pick it backup in December 2023.

Radtke had found it helpful before "When we first moved to Plainwell, when I was little, the church had the clothes rack and it was run by the Shively sisters. We really needed it at that time, it was pretty much where I got my clothes cause there was no Salvation Army or Goodwill in the area." The Clothing Rack was reignited after both ladies brought it up at separate meetings and eventually just kept feeling a push to restart it. Radtke states, "we just started it at the beginning of this year just to see how it goes, and so far it's been going pretty well. The first few months were kind of slow because it was winter, and snow covered, and it wasn't really out there yet, but when we started getting people in, we move over 100 pieces of clothing every week."

Both women believe it'd be helpful to anyone with needs, whether it be physically or spiritually. They'd like to reface that the church is always open to anyone if someone needs someone to talk to about anything, as well as the church being open during those times for clothes.

Other resources for those in need include but not limited to: Martin Area Resource Center provides clothing and household assistance. St. Vincent de Paul provides food, limited financial aid, and other resources. Christian Neighbors provides food, finance assistance, and education. St. Stephen Diaper Project under Hope Luthern provides child/adult diapers, feminine products, and wipes. Braden's Closet provides clothing, and supports families that care for their foster and adoptive refugees guardianship. Adventist Community Service Center provides clothing, household items, blankets, diapers, wipes, and other baby items.

### MARCHING BAND. A SPORT?

By Janae Yoder | Staff writer

Is marching band a sport? There's a lot of controversy surrounding this question. In the words of Owen Rushford, one of Plainwell high school's band directors "I think it can be, but it doesn't have to be." Just like a sport, marching band requires a physical, is emotionally and physically demanding, there are competitions and invitationals, and we have practices two times a week. However, marching band is much more than that, it is an art form.

Rushford put it beautifully "Marching Band is a beautiful, demanding art form that can be competitive, but inherently at its core. No one watches a football game and compares it to art but they can still have an emotional experience watching their favorite football team win the big game, much like audience members of a marching band could." You don't realize how much you love something until you've experienced it, for marching band students the tranquility you feel knowing that you left it all on that field, and you did the best you could do, is one of the best feelings ever, for the fans it's the chills that run down your spine when the band hits that impact moment.

Rushford made a good point when stating "Physically it's a demanding activity, but I think the mental fortitude to do marching band well is the most overlooked challenge. It takes confidence and trust to repeat the same seven minutes of music for hours and hours, refining every last detail to the finest point possible. Every step out, every note, every beat meticulously observed and rehearsed." Marching band takes a lot of determination and dedication. Just like every sport we have a band camp, we have four 12-hour days and three eight-hour days. Each of those days is filled with marching, playing music, and lots of sun, and that's not including the other summer rehearsals, every Wednesday of summer vacation.

He goes on to say "Sure anyone can train their muscles to hold a horn for a few hours, but the mental demands are honestly the hardest part about the activity. To identify, isolate, and focus on your mistakes isn't easy at all, but marching band teaches us that to get better we must push ourselves out of our comfort zones to truly achieve something special and unique." Although marching band requires as much if not more work and dedication than a sport it still can be considered a sport, but it doesn't have to be.

Vivian Radtke '25, a student in the marching band, considers marching band to be a sport. Here's why, "We have to focus on doing choreography together, marching with our feet in time, playing difficult music - notes, dynamics, accents, as well as making perfect pictures along with 50+ other people." There is a lot of multitasking involved. Imagine having to march with technique, remember count structures, play music with good tone and dynamics, do choreography, watch drum major hands for tempo, and hit your dot simultaneously. Keep in mind you also have to memorize the music, count structures, and your dots on the field.

From the perspective of Scott Cool, one of the school's coaches, marching band is a sport. Cool's reasoning is "You get the marching and walking in, but I also love the discipline that is involved with it too." When asked what the most difficult thing about marching band is he responded with "definitely having the discipline to be there every time, know the steps, know the music." So even from the perspective of a coach, it's a sport.

Band Photo Credit: Laura Cochran



## NEW PERSPECTIVES AND NEW EXPERIENCES

By Beatrice Fredrico | Staff writer

In the 2024/25 school year, Plainwell High School welcomed 20 exchange students from all over the world. Countries like Italy, France, Belgium, Chile, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, and Spain are just a few of the places these students come from, bringing with them curiosity and excitement about living in the United States for a year.

In recent years, the exchange student experience has become increasingly popular, and as a result, we will likely see more students participating. Having foreign students interested in American culture is beneficial for many reasons. For Americans, it provides an opportunity to share their culture—from food and school life to sports and traditions, like Homecoming. Hosting foreign students can also be a valuable resource for learning about other cultures and building friendships from around the world. Accepting and engaging with these students helps develop an open mind, allowing us to appreciate different ways of thinking and living, which can be both interesting and fun.

Plainwell High School is committed to involving exchange students in extracurricular activities, particularly in sports. Each year, the school welcomes these students and ensures they are integrated into the community by offering support and encouraging participation in various activities.

With the variety of sports available at our school each season, exchange students are always eager to join our teams. One of the things they love most about participating in sports is the chance to make friends, build lasting relationships, practice together, and have fun. They genuinely appreciate the open-mindedness of their teammates, who make them feel included. Kornelia Dranikowska '25, an exchange student from Poland who plays on Plainwell's volleyball team, shared that "everyone is super friendly and very open to exchange students, so this has been a really nice experience for me," and that "it's fun to play together, spend time, and enjoy our practice."

For coaches, having exchange students on the team can positively impact both the group and its technical skills. "It's always nice because it adds new dynamics to the team, brings in new personalities, skills, and culture," said sideline and competitive cheerleading coach Cheyenne Stephenson. Welcoming new

members, whether American or not, adds fresh perspectives and can help improve team dynamics.

It's also beneficial to the sports programs by boosting team numbers. For example, this year, there is a large number of exchange students on the cheerleading team—nine in total—making up a third of the JV team. Exchange students can also help American athletes refine their techniques and better understand the rules of the game, as they develop mentoring skills to help less experienced athletes. Additionally, exchange students bring different perspectives on the game, rules, and teaching methods, which can enhance the sport at our school. By receiving feedback from different cultures, we gain new, innovative insights.

Coaches play an essential role in integrating exchange students into the team. Our school's coaches dedicate time to team-building activities that strengthen bonds among athletes, making the team more united and stronger. Stephenson adds, "We make sure that at the start of the season, whenever they join, they're immediately learning, practicing new skills and stunts, and becoming part of the team. We ensure they feel included and are learning new things." Taking the time to help exchange students catch up with the team shows our openness to other cultures and our commitment to engaging everyone in team activities. These efforts help exchange students feel like part of the team and demonstrate the great empathy of our coaches and teams!

Exchange students are increasingly becoming a key part of our community. Every year, they eagerly participate in our academic and extracurricular programs, including sports. Plainwell High School and its coaches have always shown an open mind towards their involvement, and this is greatly appreciated by the students. Having exchange students at our school benefits both American and foreign students, as it fosters an exchange of culture and new experiences.

With pride and joy, Plainwell High School remains open to this exciting and enriching adventure!



Cheer team by Cheyenne Stephenson



Senior girls cross country team photo



Senior boys tennis team by Shawn Kolhoff



JV volleyball team by Brenda Stewart

# Scary Stories

By Kian Lawson | Staff writer

## Upside Down

I wake up to the familiar but irritating sound of my alarm clock beeping. It pulls me out of my sleep. I stretch as I get up. It's just another day in Telv, Czechoslovakia, but something feels amiss.

I go to brush my teeth, but when I look at my reflection, I see something sinister.

"You're late," he whispers, even though my mouth remains still. I shiver.

"Shut up," I mumble as I turn away. Work is waiting for me, and I cannot be late for a second time this week. I grab my bag and head out, the morning air blistering against my skin.

At the office, my coworkers laugh, but it feels hollow. My coworker John says, "You look pale. You alright?" Maria, another coworker, approaches me with a smile that's just a little too wide.

"I'm just tired," I reply, attempting to fake a grin. When I stare out the win-

dow from my cubicle, I see my reflection, but there's a doppelgänger behind me, smirking with that stupid grin.

"Let me go now," I scream inside my head. Panic starts to build, growing more intense as the day drags on. I feel my grip on what is real slipping away.

When I get home after an unusually long day, I go to the mirror and press my face against it. I almost cry out.

"Let me out!" I shout, louder this time. "Let me out!"

"Why would you ever want to leave?" my reflection steps closer to me. "You're the last one. All of you have been replaced now." He inches closer to the mirror and whispers, "Accept it," his grin widening.

"You're too late to fight it. We can now share this existence." As the walls seem to cave in on me, it sinks in that I would, and will, forever be a spectator to my own existence.

## Under the Bed

My son has always had trouble sleeping. I remember when he was about four, almost every day he would come to my room and say, "Daddy, there are monsters under my bed." He did this every day, and I would have to go to his room and show him there were no monsters.

One night, he came to my room three times, and it started to worry me. My wife and I took him to a doctor to see if we could get him some sleep medicine, so we could all rest—since we both had to work in the morning. The doctor said he could prescribe something, but it wouldn't be covered by our insurance. I told him that was fine.

I just wanted my son to get some sleep.

He started getting bags under his

eyes. For about three weeks, he didn't come to our room at all, until today. In a weak voice, he said, "Daddy, there's a monster under my bed." I thought it was strange because he hadn't had any problems for three weeks, but I shrugged it off and went to his room. He hopped onto his bed and said, "Daddy, there's a monster under my bed."

When I looked under his bed, I saw my son. He whispered, "Daddy, there's a monster on my bed."

# Favorite Fall Activities

By Alyssa Maurer | Staff writer

Whether you are looking for a good spooky haunt or a cozy day with friends and family - here are a few different options to fill up your fall calendar!

### *Gull meadow Farms:*

As a fan favorite Gull Meadows has many activities to keep you busy. Located in Richland, their farm is a go to place for fall fun! Some of the many attractions include a 5-acre corn maze, petting farm, apple and pumpkin picking, and an array of other fun games.

### *Harvest Moon Acres:*

Just outside of downtown Gobles Harvest Moon Acres is a family owned fall attraction. Some of their activities include tractor rides, giant corn maze, animal barn, and lots of fun kids games. They also sell delicious donuts made fresh daily.

### *Haunt Park:*

Voted in the top 10 Halloween Attractions in Michigan, this haunted house is located at the Kalamazoo Speedway. There are a total of four attractions, the Psycho ward, Nightmares Haunted House, Clown Mansion, and Camp Crystal Lake Paintball. Many sources have voted this location the most terrifying attraction in West Michigan, it is not recommended for ages 12 and under but would be a fun activity for teens and young adults.

### *Erebus Haunted Attraction:*

If you are really into the Halloween spirit and getting scared you might want to take a trip to Erebus, located in Pontiac, Michigan. This haunted attraction has been voted one of the top haunts in the nation by many sources. The attraction is indoor, spanning just over half a mile it takes the average group 35-45 minutes to walk through.

## Plainwell High's IT Internship Program Offers Students a Competitive Edge in the Workforce

By Anthony Kolhoff | Staff writer

Plainwell High School has recently begun working with the local tech center to hire and mentor student interns. The initiative was launched to provide students with more hands-on, real-life experience before entering their respective fields after graduation or to prepare them with practical experience for pursuing higher education. Some student interns have even been offered job opportunities by the school to continue working after graduation as official employees. The Plainwell IT Department is the first to partner with the tech center on this new internship program. Currently, it's the only department involved, but there are hopes that other areas will soon open up to offer more opportunities for students.

This collaboration between the Plainwell IT Department and Plainwell High School has been ongoing for two years, with this year marking the third consecutive year of student interns. One student, who started last spring, was hired after graduation and now works full-time for Plainwell. Although the program is still in its early stages, about half of the interns have successfully secured jobs through these internships. Those who didn't obtain jobs have used the experience to help them pursue secondary education.

Anthony Lincoln, Instructor of Computer Information Systems at

the Allegan Tech Center, says that "Where students grow the most in work based learning opportunities actually is their soft skills. They truly learn what is expected of them in a professional work environment and how to communicate with adult co-workers and supervisors to complete projects, tasks, and provide customer support."

The consensus amongst interns was that they found these helpful in giving them real-world experience and securing a position with the field. Despite the program's success, there are still challenges to address. With the biggest concern being the length of the program, it leaves interns wanting more. Many interns share this sentiment, hoping that as the program gains traction, the school will be able to provide more working hours for student interns. Overall, the program has provided students with valuable opportunities and given them a competitive edge when seeking jobs.

Lincoln shares his final thoughts on the program, stating that, "Work Based Learning opportunities help students prepare for the next steps after high school by giving them real world experience within their desired industry. These opportunities also allows these students to build professional references they can use to earn a job after high school. These opportunities are priceless to the students and career opportunities post high school."

### *A Hauntingly Good Halloween* by Cookie

