



# THE PANTHER PRESS

Issue 1  
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Mr. Rose and office staff dressed up for the "Surf to Victory!" football game theme.

## YOU CAN'T HIDE THAT PANTHER PRIDE

By The Panther Press Staff

The 2024-2025 school year is like no other here at Smiths Station High School, including the new electives, lots of new faces, and exciting school spirit events. This year is all about showcasing our Panther Pride.

“  
What’s your favorite  
class and why?  
”

Barr Harris- Automotive class because it is useful for life and for the future.

Kiley Sherrer - Ms. Hughes’ Government class because it is laid back and interesting, and she is a great teacher.

Sophia Sehrage- Honors History because it is interesting learning about the past.

Zeraya Dudley- Weight room because we get to practice.

Emily Barr- Psychology because it is interesting learning about the brain.

Anthony Lugo - Math class because I enjoy math, and Mr. Scott is a chill teacher

Alysa Sanders - Gym class because I get to work out with my friends, and I enjoy seeing them.  
Nolan Patten - Math tutor because it helps me with math, and it also helps me get my grade up.  
Aron Whitener- Firefighting class because you learn to save lives and put out fires.

Mahalie Davis - Mrs. Perkins’ Dual Enrollment History because it is a calm discussion and not a lecture.  
Damarriah Joyner - My theatre class because I get so many field trip opportunities.  
Dameon Iddings - History because you get to learn about the past.

Domonick Todd - English Comp 1 because the class feels so interactive.  
Brooklyn Chmielewski - Psychology because when I’m older, I want to be a clinical psychologist.

“  
What’s your favorite  
part of this year so far  
and why?  
”

Hannah Craig- The pep rallies and football games because they are fun and exciting.

Dustin Merritt- The 9/11 tribute with ROTC because we were able to honor all the people who died in 9/11, and it was amazing that the students came and supported us during the mile walk.

Kinzlee Groves- Homecoming week because it is fun to dress up and be silly.

Mr. Goshay- Helping the sophomores and juniors girls win the flag football tournament.

Blake Turberville- Being able to be around the older people; it gives me the opportunity to make more friends.

Tristan Youngblood- Bringing back the homecoming parade because it brings back a lot of memories.

Kallen Bell - Hanging out and enjoying time with the cross country team.

## Poll: Student ID's

Should SSSH bring  
back Student ID's?

101



66



167 students & teachers were polled

Ms. Long - My favorite part is being able to interact with the kids.

Makayla Bolling - So far, the football games because it has all the students, and it is fun and everyone is positive.

Mrs. Brown- I love starting every day with Mr. Rose’s upbeat announcements. He brings lots of energy so we can “make today great on purpose!”

Reese Williams- All the friends I’ve made and the extracurriculars I have.

Brayden Holden - Having Mr. Goshay’s class has been my favorite part of the year.

# Features

## THE IMPORTANCE OF FINDING YOUR CIRCLE

by Adalee Bradshaw

Healthy friendships can have a major impact on your health and well-being, but it's not always easy to develop or maintain friendships.

To find true friends, you may need to be willing to be yourself and share your thoughts and feelings with others. It can be hard to trust others and to let them see the real you, but this

is often a critical step in building true friendships. There are some core traits friendships need to be successful.

**Respectful-** Do you and your friends respect each other and their boundaries?

**Shared interest-** Do you and your friends have common interests that you enjoy together?

**Loyal-** Being loyal means being honest with your friends, and not being two-faced. You receive what you give.

"I support my friends and friend groups by being there for them and helping them make the best decisions for themselves."

Arianna Robinson, Junior

**Supportive-** Do you guys support each other? Even when times get rough, you should still ALWAYS be there for your friends. It helps create and maintain a steady friendship.

**Trustworthy-** How much can you trust each other? Austin Baker says, "Being trustworthy means keeping everyone up to date."

**Effort-** No genuine friendship comes easy, you WILL have to work through the arguments drama and learn from them. Olivia Phillips said, "It is important to have a group of people you trust in order to fit in, thrive, and feel like you have a purpose."

## TEACHER SPOTLIGHT: MR. CARDEN

By Taylor Pierce

In January 2023, after going through an entire semester without a choir director, Smith Station High School's choir program was revived. During Mr. Carden's time as a student at SSSH, the choir program was at its peak, but after he graduated, it slowly started to dwindle down.

After graduating from the University of Montevallo in 2021 and teaching in the Birmingham area for about a year, Mr. Carden decided he would come back to SSSH. When asked why he decided to come back he said it was mostly to be closer to family, "If I was going to propose to [his now wife], I needed to not be two hours away."

When he came back to SSSH to teach, he only had 17 students in the entire program; since then, he has amassed more than 50 students.

Mr. Carden's dedication to his program has amazed students, faculty, and parents. Since Mr. Carden's time here, nothing much has changed. He states that the only major thing that has changed is the freshmen joining the high school.

On the other hand, there are teachers that taught him still working here and the band program is still strong. Carden believes the addition of the freshmen will help the choir program in the future, but we, as a school, are still adjusting. Mr. Carden always says that last year was the first year the choir program was really back setting an extremely high bar for this year's choir. "Being able to surpass expectations, work on more difficult songs, and tell a story with

## ADMIN CORNER



By Katelynn Vogel

With new changes, comes new administration in Smiths Station. Mr. Adam Johnson is the new principal at the high school; though he is new in this role, he does have roots within Smiths Station.

"I am from the area, but I did not go here." Mr. Johnson says. "My then girlfriend, now wife, graduated here, my kids went here, and then I spent 15 years here."

He might have spent some time here, but he was also principal at another school in the Lee County School System. Johnson would like to bring out the best in Smiths Station like he did with Beulah High School.

"One thing I am most excited about this school year is our potential," he remarks. "I feel like we can really have an excellent year this year."

Not only is he our school leader and a role model, he does have a fun life outside of school.

"I go out hunting sometimes; I also enjoy traveling." You can also find him watching football on Saturdays. Johnson says, "I am also a big Auburn fan; although, I am disappointed that they lost the last game."

Mr. Johnson is looking forward to a great year at SSSH.



Top Left: Chamber Choir  
Bottom Left: 2023 Choir Ensemble



Top Right: Chamber Choir Seniors  
Bottom Right: Freshmen Choir



our singing is going to be some of our biggest challenges," says Mr. Carden.

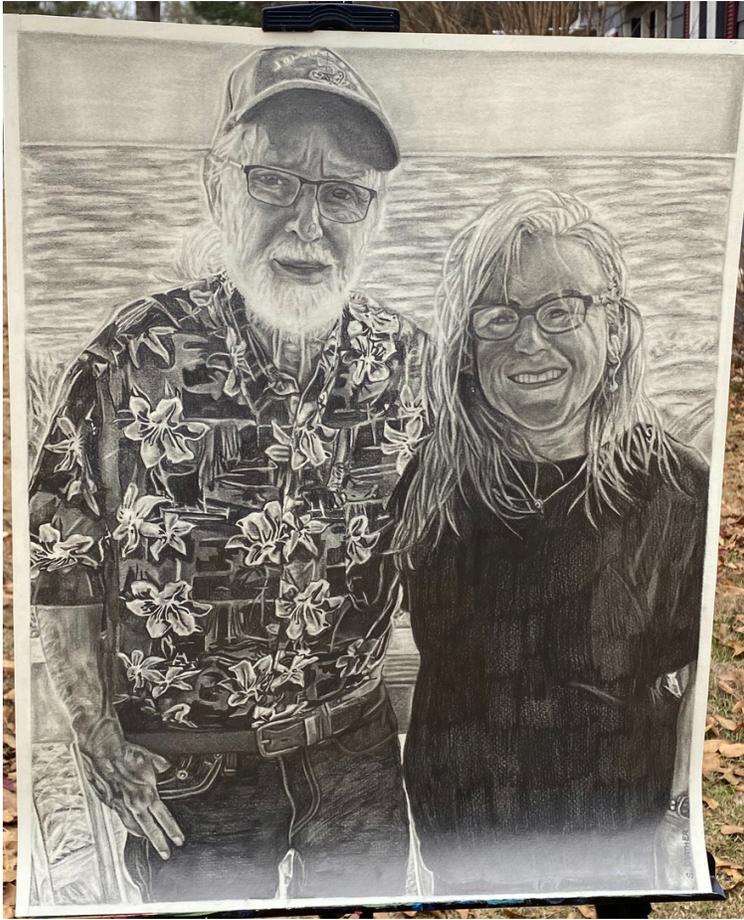
Another big challenge the choir is facing has to do with Mr. Carden himself. Over the summer, Mr. Carden was diagnosed with thyroid cancer, meaning he would need surgery on his neck in order to get rid of the cancer.

Unfortunately, during the surgery, one of Mr. Carden's vocal cords was paralyzed, dramatically impacting his singing. A week after his surgery, school started up again; he knew he needed to come back, but he needed time to rest. Two weeks after Mr. Carden's surgery, he came back to teach

music even though it was very difficult for him to even speak. It has definitely been hard for him, and the choir, but time is proving that no matter what, the choir will always persevere and that it is because of Mr. Carden's dedication.

Mr. Carden has put so much time and effort into his program that it leaves many people stunned that the choir has come so far since January of 2023. It is because of his commitment to his students that many of them are learning how much they love music and want to pursue it in the future. Thank you Mr. Carden, for your time, dedication, and commitment to your students and your program!

# Features



Prather's artwork ranging from portraits to abstract renderings.

## PORTRAIT OF A PORTRAIT ARTIST

By Makayla McLeod

Sara Prather was in the 5th grade when she entered an art show for the Sara West Gallery. Prather is a 12th grade art student and one of the most talented artists at Smiths Station High School.

Prather says "I knew I was good at art when I was about 8 years old." She adds, "My dad was the one who inspired me. When I was little, he used to draw little things."

Prather is driven to continue to draw because she loves to see the finished product.

"Even though it is a tough process, I love seeing the finished product and how good it turns out," she explains. Just like many students, she finds that working in her room

with music or a good show on is where her creativity is best. She says, "Seeing other artists' work inspires me to reach their level."

Prather's favorite style of drawing is portraits. One of her favorite portraits that she has done is one of her grandpa that she made for her mother (pictured left).

Prather says "I love to draw portraits because I love to draw people that I care about, and I love to give people a great gift."

When asked if she plans to pursue art in the future, she said, "Most likely that is what I will do." Prather will graduate in May 2025.



## WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

Interviews with some of our foreign exchange students by Lenna Spraggins and Landon Wright



**Karl**  
**Germany**

Q: Why did you go into the foreign exchange program?

A: "To work on my English and make new experiences."

Q: What's the difference between your old school and here?

A: "This school is much easier than my old one."

Q: What's different from your home country to here?

A: "The food is much different, a lot more fast food. In Germany, I walk a lot more and have more public transportation. The people here are much kinder than those from Germany."



**Gabriela**  
**Brazil**

Q: Why did you go into the foreign exchange program?

A: "I wanted to know more about the future of the American people and to see the difference between America and Brazil."

Q: What is the difference between your home country and the U.S?

A: "The classes are much different here from Brazil, and SSHS is much larger than the one I went to in Brazil."

Q: What are your hobbies?

A: "Volleyball and watching TV."

From France to Germany to Brazil, seven students are attending SSHS this year through a foreign exchange student program. A major cultural difference is yellow school buses which are mainly an American thing as almost every student said they had to walk or carpool to school or they would take public transportation. They marveled about how much fast food and junk food we eat.



**"Sainom"**  
**Thailand**

Q: Why did you go into the foreign exchange program?

A: "I wanted to try something new"

Q: What's different here from your home country?

A: "In Thailand I have to ride the public bus to school."

Q: What are your hobbies?

A: "I read manga, and speak three languages (Thai, English, Learning Japanese)."



**Timeo**  
**France**

Q: Why did you go into the foreign exchange program?

A: "To improve my English"

Q: How is it different here from your home country?

A: "The classes are much different, and so is the food."

Q: What are your hobbies?

A: "Drawing; playing soccer for the school."

# Arts

## LIVE AND IN COLOR

By Taylor Pierce and Landon Wright

The halftime show is one of the highlights of every football game. In fact, it's the reason some people even come out to the games. This year, the show theme is "Live in Colors," with songs, "Red" by Taylor Swift, "Paint it Black" by the Rolling Stones, "Pink" by Lizzo, "Black and Yellow" by Khalifa, "Over the Rainbow" made popular by Judy Garland, and "Blue" made popular by Eiffel 65.

Many people wonder how a halftime show like this year's is put together; well, it first starts off as an idea. Dr. Butler and Mr. Cox are the two people who come up with every year's show; they choose the music, props, visuals, and just about everything else. Along with creating the show, Dr. Butler and Mr. Cox put together the show by directing the band during rehearsals and band camp. During band camp, students learn an entire 6-10 minute show in just two weeks. Over those two weeks, students learn the music, visuals, and choreography; students also learn how to work together as a team and work through multiple challenges, like the immense heat.

It isn't only Dr. Butler and Mr. Cox that lead the band: drum majors Jonny Roberson and Morgan Masters conduct the band and keep everyone in time. When asked, Jonny and Morgan said that being drum major comes with a lot of responsibility; not only do they have to keep everyone in time, they have to find mistakes and help the band fix it. They also have to be leaders and role models for those who need it.

In addition to performing at halftime, the band also performs at competitions around Alabama. These competitions host a number of different bands, meaning the competition can be very intense. This year's show is meant to be fun and get the audience excited; with well-known songs, fun choreography, and amazing visuals, this year's show is definitely one of the best. The band has already proven to be tough competitors at the two competitions they have attended, earning "Best in Class" awards and superior ratings for various sections of the band and performance.



Row 1: Flute, Tuba, Trombone, and Saxophone sections  
 Row 2 Left: Drum Majors, Morgan Masters and Jonny Roberson  
 Row 2 Right: Majorettes  
 Row 3: Color Guard (left) Pantherettes (right)

## THEATRE: FALL SHOWCASES

Photos by Landon Wright



Brooklyn Woods, Jakel Richmond, Avalynn Gore, Kayla Brooker, Colton Scroggs, Lilly Allred, Genesis Arnold, Daijiah Wilson, and Kaitlyn Hudson performing "Holding Out for a Hero"



Jakel Richmond and Genesis Arnold performing "Friends" by Colby Ave



Lily Allred and Avalynn Gore performing Act 1 scene 1 of "The Crucible" by Arthur Miller



Brooklyn Woods and Kaitlyn Hudson performing "Ascension Day" by Timothy Mason

Look for dates to the upcoming show in November featuring stories of Vietnam Nurses and War Heroes.

# Sports



## COACH MANDERSON

Along with new assistant coach, Beth Parkman, Coach Amber Manderson leads the JV and varsity volleyball teams. She's been coaching volleyball for three seasons. Manderson also teaches 9th grade math. She has three daughters, Kelsey, McKenzie, and Ally.



## VOLLEYBALL

By Svetlana Cervantes

Volleyball got straight into practices shortly after tryouts and started to work very hard from the beginning to be able to have an amazing season. On September 5th, the team hit off its season against Harris County.

The girls put their all on that court. They know they have things to improve on, but they know they have what it takes to have a successful season.

They had a rough start, but the team knows there is better to come.

Regarding these losses, senior Ashlyn Sellers reflects, saying, "We can look at how we lost and what caused us to lose and focus that more at practice."

Sellers said, "We can also focus on becoming a team." That is exactly what they did, too. They honed in on their weaknesses to overcome them, and it showed with their next matches against Spencer and Beulah when they won all three matches between both teams.

"With each game, I get less nervous but more excited, and I can see improvement with each game," said Kianna Mendez. This just shows that they have what it takes to win and to have a great season. Volleyball has continued its season with a determined spirit.



Ashlyn Sellers moves to set up the ball to earn a point.



Libby Parkman serves the ball.

Photos submitted by Allyson Patten, Amy Zeh, and Lauren Holland

## Cross Country PR's at the Starr's Mill Meet

To start off the season, Morgan Parks finished in first place in freshman girls in the Stars Mill Meet in Fayetteville, GA. Layla Williams finished in third place. Layla Williams said the most challenging part of running cross country is "the last mile because your body will start to hurt but you know that you are almost done."

The ninth grade boys also finished 4th place at the meet. Many members of the team set personal records.

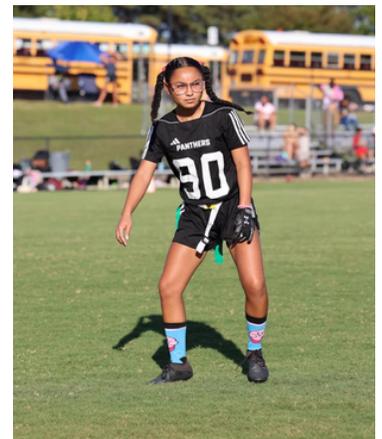
The team will compete in two more meets this season before heading to the state meet in November.



## Flag Football vs. RCHS

The flag football team started its season with 3-3 overall record, and a 3-0 region record. The senior night game was held on Thursday, Sept. 19, and the girls got a major win over Russell County.

Mi'Asia Bennet said, "we ran all of the plays right and with intensity like we wanted to win." So far in the season, Madison G. has had the most receptions while Olivia Ashford has had the most flag-pulls.



# Man on the Street

## If you could be any celebrity, who would you be and why?

**Mr. Rose** - Jackie Robinson because he was a courageous leader.

**Mr. McGonegle** - Steve Erwin because he was full of passion and full of adventure.

**Kailyn Summers** - Selena Gomez because she does a lot of charity work.

**Mr. Cole** - Drake because he is a good singer.

**Ethan Farrulla** - Mr. Beast because he makes a lot of people happy.

**Julius Ruiz** - Max Verstappen because he gets race cars and he is rich.

**Jules Latasso** - SZA because she is confident and puts her real emotions into her lyrics.

**Elise Culepepper** - Bruce Wayne so I can be batman.

**Riley Bowle** - Adam Sandler and Will Smith because they are both funny.

**Kinzee Groves** - Zendaya because I wanna date Tom Holland.

**Mrs. Scrushy** - Jennifer Lawrence because she is a ray of sunshine, smart, and pretty.

**Mrs. Davis** - Michelle Obama because she is an intelligent, down to earth, go getter, and I admire that.

**Karly Beasley** - Zendaya because she is really pretty and can do everything.

**Stella Banks** - Nina Dobrev because she is really pretty and is in one of my favorite shows.

**Madison Maxwell** - Zendaya because she was in the *Spiderman* movie.

**Brooklyn Woods** - Jennifer Aniston because she's really pretty.

**Keyanna Markmann** - Beyonce because she is the queen.

**Rylie Forgath** - Jenna Ortega because she is gorgeous.

**Graeson Brown** - Ryan Reynolds because he is cool and does cool stuff.

**Layla Williams** - Madison Beer because she gets boys.

**Mason Lawson** - Ronald Acuna J.R. because he is a good baseball player and very athletic.

**Jack White** - Adam Sandler because he is very funny and makes money.

**Julia Mathis** - Albert Einstein because he is very smart.

**Landyn Reeves** - Steve Urkel because he is a very funny actor.

**Landon Colwell** - Scotty Bloomquest because I would get to drive a racecar, and he has so many championships, he is one of the best of all time.

**Lola Lashley** - One of the Kardashians because they have a bunch of money and sisters.

**AJ Eldred** - Christaina Rinaldo because he is a famous soccer player.

**Lillie Rutkowski** - Ruby Rose so Kevin Gates would make songs about me.

**Hayden Whale** - Reese Witherspoon for her looks and popularity.

**Peyton Huckelba** - Grimace because I love the color purple.

**Katie Miles** - Jacob Elordi because of his looks and popularity.

**Jeyla Morgan** - Frank Ocean so I can drop another album.

**Serenity Corley** - Anna Wohlers so I can play for Auburn University.

**Jaden Gonzalez** - Rod Wave so I could drop another song or album.

**Natalie Seymour** - SZA because she's so beautiful and creates great music.

**Landon Mathis** - Ryan Reynolds so I could be Deadpool.

**Trey Griffin** - Will Smith so I would have picked a better woman than Jada.

**Mary Peterson** - Stevie Nicks so I can be a queen forever and haunt Lindsey Buckingham forever.

**Lexi Simpson** - Selena Quintanilla Perez because she was very inspirational and changed many lives.

**Tayana Wright** - Kim Kardashian so I could fix her style. Also she's really rich.

**Jenni Maddox** - Taylor Swift then I'm dropping Rep and Debut and gonna give me a million dollars.

**Chip Hacking** - Adam Sandler because he lives his life carefree not letting the money get to him and wearing dad clothes, bro's the goat.

**Nayi Espinosa** - My dad, Leif Espinosa, because of how inspiring he is!

**Abi Bunker** - Youngblood because he's so confident in himself.

**Kinsley Kilpatrick** - Adam Sandler because he is so carefree, loose, and just himself.

**Kayleigh Goodson** - Sydney Sweeney because she is pretty and is good at making movies.

**Kamiya Miles** - Zendaya because she's very inspirational and helped a lot of people.

**Ms. Taylor** - Simon Biles because I admire the dedication and hard work that goes into dreaming and achieving such a lofty goal. Not to mention, you get to boast that you are the best in the world!

**Khloe Mcardle** - Laney Wilson because her songs are good and relatable.

**Hunter Whale** - Tom Brady because he is one of the best football players to ever play in the NFL, and won so many rings.

**Ben Chelf** - Mr. Beast because he does good things.

**Katelyn Britton** - Billie Eilish because I want her singing voice and also because she's pretty.

**Gyma Slone** - Rhea Ripley because she's pretty amazing.

**Carlee Shelton** - Jenna Ortega because she supports mental health awareness and has acted in the scream movies.

**Rylan Schrecengost** - Selena Gomez because she is very pretty, and she has a good makeup brand.

**Alyana Morfi** - Olivia Rodrigo because I can sing then.

**Cecelia Maldonado** - Megan Moroney because she is awesome sauce.

**Jamuan Mills** - Brooke Irving because she has my heart.

**Charlie Randall** - Zendaya because she is kind, courageous and doesn't let the media and Hollywood get to her. She has a life outside of everything going on and I feel like she's more at peace in that way. That's how I would want to be.

**Brianne Oden** - SZA because I like her.

**Ariisa Miles** - Zendaya because she's rich and famous.

**Sydney Simpson** - Katy Perry because I like some of her music.

**Brooklynn Stewart** - Nicki Minaj because she can rap fast.

**Caiden Cummings** - Donald Trump because he was our president.

**Coach Yslava** - Steve Harvey because he has fun every day and has an awesome mustache.

**Katie Lee** - Jennifer Aniston because she is funny and pretty.

**Isabella Reuber** - Cardi B because she is rich and cool.

**Annabelle Aaron** - Ariana Grande because she is super famous.

**Daniel Parish** - The Rock because he's in a lot of movies.

**Nattaley Davis** - Adam Sandler because he dresses comfortably.

**Angelhina Hnatyshyn** - Bruno Mars because he's a good singer

**Ayden Cox** - Mary Frances because she's pretty and sweet.

**Chris Ballard** - Glorilla Ballard because she's good looking.

**Emerson Robertson** - Savannah Averette because she's pretty and gives good hugs.

**Summer Crunk** - Jennifer Aniston because she's an iconic woman, I've always looked up to her, and she has really nice hair.

**Jazmin McCormick** - Blake Lively because she's a sweet person.