

# THE LEON HIGH LIFE

In This Issue...



Leon alumns make it to Hollywood  
Pg. 4



Sarah Folsom loves everything about music  
Pg. 6



NFL Star Tamarick Vanover makes Leon proud  
Pg. 9

Leon High School 550 E. Tennessee St. Tallahassee, FL 32308 (850) 488-1971 Vol. LXXXVIII No.5

Celebrating 87 years as the voice of Leon.

January 2007 Issue

## McHenry moves to Mag Lab

By Danielle Spisso  
High Life News Editor

Richard McHenry came to Leon in 1976 for the primary reason of being the school's head basketball coach. Despite serving in that position for 10 years, McHenry's lasting Leon legacy was formed in the classroom as a science teacher.

Now, after 31 years, McHenry's full-time high school teaching career is coming to a close as he transitions from the classroom to Florida State University's Magnetic Lab.

Because of his experience in biology, earth science and chemistry, McHenry was approached with an offer from the "Maglab" at the end of last semester. He took the job soon after because he felt this was the right time to make a change in his career.

"In life, you need to take care of yourself first," Leon Principal Rocky Hanna said. "This is a good opportunity to make a change at the end of his career."

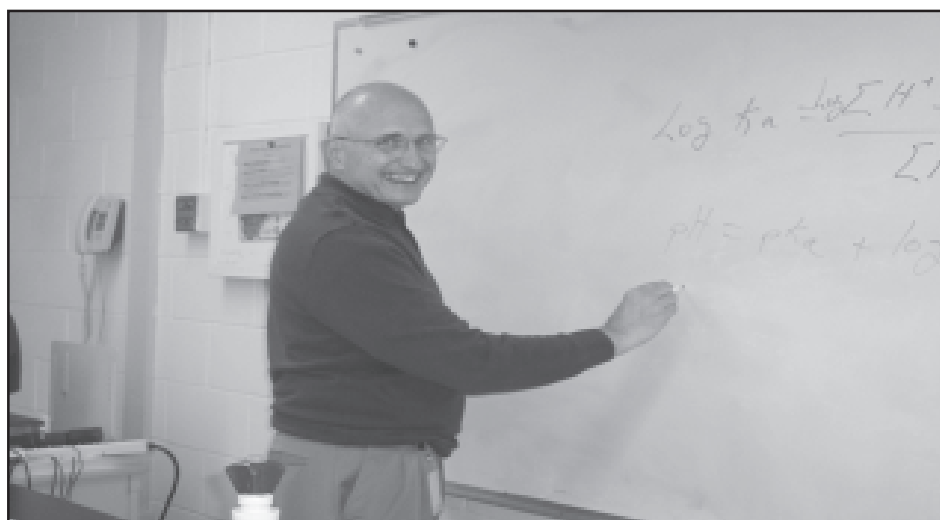


Photo by Eden Joyner

**Richard McHenry enjoys teaching his fifth period AP Chemistry class.**

McHenry's new job will consist of developing programs and workshops for science teachers around Leon County.

"I think I'll be doing a good job as far as helping other science teachers," McHenry said. "But I've always enjoyed being in the classroom and forming the lasting relationships with my students."

That is one reason why McHenry

volunteered to continue teaching one period a day, his Advanced Placement Chemistry class.

"He felt like it was an obligation to his students," Hanna said. "He wasn't going to abandon them."

Furthermore, hiring a teacher with enough experience would have been an issue.

"Finding a teacher that can teach general, honors and AP chemistry

classes is not an easy task," McHenry said. "So I volunteered to come and teach AP."

For his AP students this was good news.

"I'm glad he stayed for us," junior Robert Draper said. "He's a good guy and a great teacher."

McHenry's favorite part about teaching is, indeed, the students, but he has also enjoyed the relationships he has formed with his colleagues.

"We'll miss him," chemistry teacher Alan Rice said. "But in the long run it'll be beneficial for other students and science teachers in Leon County."

Although McHenry is starting a new chapter of his science career, he will miss the bond he developed with Leon in his many years of teaching there.

"He has taught here for as long as I've been alive," biology teacher Matt Guyton said. "The school will not be the same without him."

## Performing on Broadway, teaching in Tallahassee

By Elizabeth Nelson  
High Life Features Editor

When long-time chemistry teacher Richard McHenry decided to become a part-time teacher this past winter, Alice Bergeson jumped at the chance to teach at Leon.

Bergeson, a petite blonde with a bubbly personality, is quick to laugh at her experiences. The funniest thing she ever did was dress up like a dancing shrimp for a television special in Germany.

Bergeson attended the North Carolina School of the Arts for high school and college and majored in ballet. After graduating, Bergeson traveled to New York City to pursue a career in dance.

While there, Bergeson worked with world-renowned choreographers Bob Fosse and Jerome Robbins. She was also in the movie version of *A Chorus Line* and danced in a Billy Idol music video.

Once Bergeson got married and had a baby, however, she and her ex-husband moved back to his hometown of Seattle. She began teaching at the Pacific Northwest Ballet School and received her bachelor's degree in chemistry from the Univer-



Photo by Angelina Colao

**Chemistry teacher Alice Bergeson awaits her students' arrival outside of her room before class.**

sity of Seattle.

But Bergeson began to miss where she had grown up.

"I was in Seattle missing my family [and] missing the South," Bergeson said. "I wanted to come

home."

Bergeson's son John refused to leave his friends, so she and her daughter Victoria moved back to Tallahassee and Bergeson began to teach dance at Florida State University for a semester.

At the same time, she began to intern at the Magnetic Lab photographing cells. When the time came to start full time, however, Bergeson was offered no benefits and turned down the job.

So Bergeson got her temporary teaching certificate and turned to Leon County schools to look for teaching jobs. She found one at Leon and is currently working on getting her teaching certificate.

But as she has found out, following in McHenry's footsteps isn't as easy as one might think.

"I feel like it's a tough act to follow," Bergeson said. "But everyone's been really supportive, especially Mr. McHenry."

Though Bergeson does not want to take the place of McHenry, she does have some goals to fulfill while she's at Leon.

"I'd like to do a good job. I'd like to be an effective teacher," Bergeson said. "When my students are successful, I feel successful."

# Change is in the air, if you are willing to fight for it



By Kelsey Stevens  
High Life Editorial Editor

Around Leon it is probable that you will hear someone talk about either the lack of school spirit or someone speaking about the faults of the school, which there are. But what you will most likely never hear is how to bring change.

I am one of the people here who wants change. There are things about this school that aren't perfect.

The attendance policy, for one, needs at least some assistance. Sure, the administration is attempting to make improvements, but how long will it be before it is efficient? And how long will it be before a student can get the same information from different secretaries in attendance?

The point is the attempt to make change. Letters to the administration, teachers, clubs or even just the High Life can start that change. The point of Letters to the Editor is to get your opinion out there. Let people know that there is something you don't like and think should be changed.

Some aspects of this school will never change (the off-campus policy for example), but at least trying to have your opinion heard

is a start for future issues.

It may seem that some students around the school may not openly show school spirit during homecoming weeks, but who says those students aren't showing up after hours for different school events that aren't involved in homecoming.

There's boys and girls soccer during the early winter months. Softball and baseball start their try-outs and practices, and the art departments have concerts and other performances. So, those students who aren't showing school spirit during school hours may still be showing it in their own way.

That is what matters. Those students show that they care, even though they may not want to openly say

it.

But, if you are one of those students who has something to speak for, then do it. Stand up and make your voice heard. If there is someone who bothers you, you confront them, don't you? So, why not confront these problems the same way.

If your issue falls with attendance and you don't feel as though your lone voice will matter, send a letter that has been signed by a large group of students who feel the same way. Don't just complain about the trash around the school, make an effort and pick it up and throw it away.

Stereotypically, teenagers are seen as the laziest and most apathetic group. Let's prove those supposed statistics wrong and take up

for our beliefs. Our future doesn't depend on the "adults," it depends on us and how much effort we'll put into it.

Starting now will pave the way for our future and change it into a better one than we are promised now.

I know it must sound like I am just lecturing and spewing out empty words, but I am willing to act upon the grievances I have. Just letting such emotions fester on the inside does nothing for the person or the outside world.

If you want change, fight to make it. Use your voice. It is one thing that only you can control. You tell it what to utter. Let your voice be heard and not fall back into the crowd. It is the least that you can do.

## Letters to the Editor

As much as I love Leon and the people in it, I think the student body as a whole lacks a lot of school spirit. I'm not excluding myself because I also don't attend the majority of events, but it is very disappointing when only 13 to 20 students attend a homecoming dance.

I think there should be new activities and new ideas to try to catch the attention of more participants. Maybe a new event that is similar to Winterfest, but different at the same time. Maybe even add some fan participation at sporting events to try to attract more people.

Leon is a wonderful place, but it would be even better if the students were actually a part of it.

**Ashley B.**

Leon is okay and everything, but

why doesn't the Student Government Association and administration allow non-SGA members vote on school events?

SGA was wondering why not that many people dressed up during the homecoming weeks. The answer is that the dress-up days are dumb.

If you looked around the school on homecoming weeks, one out of 10 people might have dressed up for the day's theme.

If you expect us to wear costumes, let us help choose.

**Kendrick Brown**

Though I am not on the Leon Crew team anymore, I still do not think it is being recognized fairly. It is considered a Leon Club, but the crew team works just as hard as

the football or basketball teams. The "club" is never recognized around the school or even supported by Leon. I think crew should be a sport and be respected more.

**Elizabeth Whigham**

Being a freshman, you should be excited about going to homecoming and other school events. But when I asked my friends if they were going to the last homecoming dance, all of them said "NO!" None of them liked the first homecoming because we were in the gym and we were hot and sweaty. You spend about \$35,000 on a place for senior prom why not spend about \$1,500 for Homecoming and maybe more people will come.

**Shelby White**

When was the last time that you actually went to the pep rally? Most of us just leave and come back after lunch.

Of course the pep rallies are getting better but are they truly enough to keep us entertained? And we never have them! There is only a pep rally every two months or so.

**Bridget Wesson**

Send letters to  
the editor to

[leonhighlife@gmail.com](mailto:leonhighlife@gmail.com)

Limit letters to  
100 words

## The Leon High Life Staff

### Editors

**Editor-in-Chief:** Eden Joyner

**Business Editor:** Jessica Moody

**News Editor:** Danielle Spisso

**Editorial Editor:** Kelsey Stevens

**Features Editor:** Elizabeth Nelson

**Sports Editor:** AnnaLaura Rehwinkel

**Photography Editor:** Holly Johnson

**Adviser:** Kevin Record

### Writers

Angelina Colao

Caitlin Dilks

Ursula Ible

Michael McKinnon

Kyle Muller

Ashira Morris

Karis Needham

Terrance Riggins

Isabel Wilson

Caroline Whitney

## The High Life

*The High Life* is the official student newspaper of Leon High School. The newspaper staff controls all aspects of content and design. Kevin Record, the journalism teacher and adviser, provides guidance, supervision and assistance.

*The High Life* strives to serve as a forum of public opinion. In keeping with that goal, the publication does not publish material that is libelous, obscene or that may cause a substantial and material disruption of school activities.

Questions and comments:

[leonhighlife@gmail.com](mailto:leonhighlife@gmail.com)

550 E Tennessee St., Tallahassee, FL 32308

Phone 488-1971 ext. 2630 Fax 922-5311

[www.leon.leon.k12.fl.us](http://www.leon.leon.k12.fl.us)



Photo courtesy of the Leon website

Principal Rocky Hanna rings in the new year with the historical Leon bell during a press conference regarding the Grand Reunion 2, set to take place on May 14th.

# Successful year comes to a close

*Record-breaking fundraisers and jaw-dropping FCAT scores, Leon has something to brag about.*

By Isabel Wilson  
High Life News Writer

The year 2006 was one for the books for Leon High School. With recently-hired principal Rocky Hanna and records broken, it will surely not be forgotten.

February came with a bang. A scandal broke loose after the distribution of flyers across campus that read 'Be Prepared.' This frightened some students because the flyer had a picture of three snipers aiming their guns at what looked like a group of people. There was also a website at the bottom. This flyer raised enough concern that administration contacted the Leon County Sheriff. This went into a full investigation. In the end, the flyer was merely an advertisement for a video game survival guide called Zombi.

March was less scandalous but equally eventful. The sophomore class of 2005 put together a concert, Sophrock, featuring Leon bands. The event was a big hit with the student.

Another big story of March was Leon's dance team, the Leonettes, taking home first place at Ameridance, an emerging dance competition. The Leonettes had won many awards, but this was the first time Ameridance held a competition. The Leonettes were

the first to win first place at that national competition.

April was another prize-winning month for Leon students. Then sophomores Robert Draper and Max Sheperd brushed up their old, successful science fair project, a motorized hovercraft, and created a human powered craft. Only four other teams in the world have attempted to do that, two of which were unsuccessful. This made Draper and Sheperd the youngest people in the world to have accomplished such a feat.

There was also the infamous tree accident in the junior bowl. A tree fell on several cars, leaving some totaled and others just slightly damaged. The tree was alive when it fell though, which meant that the students insurance had to pay for all of the damage.

May introduced two new leaders: Student Body President John Coppins and Vice President Christine Kessler. Both had goals which have been accomplished. Kessler wanted to and did create a pep club: The Pride. Coppins' goal was to improve pep rallies and have more homecoming events.

While June, July and most of August were spent out of school, September made up for lost time. After two years of being a "B" school, Leon High School was finally recognized as an "A" school. Schools receive their grades by their

FCAT scores. When a school is of "A" status, the school will receive \$100 per student, which calculates to about \$182,000 for Leon. Then there was Homecoming. This year's theme was "Lions, Lollipops and Gumdrops." Homecoming week and the dance were very successful.

October was also a wildly successful month for Leon. Hanna and Dean of Students Mark Feely bargained with students, saying that if Leon raised \$1,500, they would jump out of a plane. Leon wound up raising \$7,500. On October 1, every dollar raised by Leon was presented at the Fourth Annual Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk by Coppins.

In November and December, two new clubs were added to Leon. The Pride, and The Fashion Club, Leon's aptly named fashion club, were recently assembled. Towards the holiday season, many clubs participated in raising goods for those less fortunate, something which Leon has proved to be good at in the past.

"I was on cloud nine in 2006," Principal Rocky Hanna said. "but 2007 is going to be a special year too."

## Thespians break lengthy record

By Danielle Spisso  
High Life News Editor

The Leon Drama program received a record-breaking five Critic's Choice awards for the District Thespian Festival held in Niceville, Saturday Feb. 13. This feat proves the gains Leon has made in excelling in all three areas of the Performing Arts.

"Leon has always excelled in the areas of Chorus and Band," Principal Rocky Hanna said. "But this achievement completes our performing arts program and puts Leon on the map for all three areas."

A Critic's Choice award is awarded to the judges' favorite entry in every category. This year, Leon received Critic's Choice for Costume Design (Whitney Melton), Solo Musical Number (Pierce Cassedy), Small Group Musical Number (Karen Campbell, Erin Grubbs, Tessa Kleck, Marisa McInnes-Taylor, Ryan Young and Waylen Roche), Large Group Musical Number (LiToyia Allen, Teddy DeVore, Jay Frazier, Brit Garner, Sarah George, Erin Grubbs, Sarah Kunkler, Katheryn Lloyd, Katy McGowan, Marisa McInnes-Taylor, Colin Wulff and Ryan Young), and Contrasting Monologues (Pierce Cassedy).

"I am thrilled and incredibly proud," Thespian Sponsor Rod Durham said. "I take very little credit; it was the students' talent and the help from Dr. (Judy) Arthur, (Tabitha) Hall, and Millie Seckel.

However, Hanna feels that a lot of the success can be credited to Durham.

"What (Durham) has done for the program is incredible," Hanna said. "To see how the program has grown in the seven years he has been here is amazing."

"Durham is really supportive and really excited about what we are doing," junior Pierce Cassedy said. "We all knew that we had to bring it this year, and we did."

Cassedy received two of the five Critics Choices for Leon this year.

Students who have been in the Drama program for four years also feel as though the program has developed not only because of Durham but because of the support of the Music Program.

"We get the best of both worlds when Chorus and Drama work together," Garner, senior and four year Drama member, said. "We have a lot more support from Dr. Arthur and Ms. Hall and it allows us to be more confident."

Along with the help of the Choral teachers, Drama also has immense support from Seckel who was hired to aid Chorus, Band, and Drama. She choreographed the musical numbers and also gave advice to the other drama students who entered District Thespians. Seckel is excited to take the Critic's Choices as well as five other entries to State Festival.

"I'm really happy to be working with such talented kids," Seckel said. "But it's very important not to go (to States) expecting anything. You just have to do your best and be open to the opinions of the judges."

Chiles High School will be hosting a production on Friday Jan. 26 that showcases the materials Leon, Chiles, Rickards and Lincoln will be taking to States, April 21. Leon will be showing their one act, Boy on Black Top Road as well as their other entries.

Admission to the event is a \$2 donation to Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. This is the non-profit organization adopted by Florida State Thespians that also collects donations by passing the bucket at Broadway shows. Last year, Florida's drama students raised over \$30,000 for BC/EFA – the highest single donation by any group.

