

Cut to the Bass: Exploring Talents is Vital

By: Brandon Stein
Staff Writer

When I was about 13, I began getting really interested in music.

My dad always enjoyed it and there was never a time when music wasn't being played in the house.

When I would come home from school, I would walk in the front door and the stereo would be on, carrying the sounds of hard rock. As the tunes played, I would set my backpack down in the living room and get settled in at home.

Then I would go in the garage to get something to drink.

The radio would be on in the garage, sometimes even the same song being played in the house.

After getting my pop, I would sit in my room enjoying music through my headphones, I began to really admire the skills and specific techniques required to play an instrument.

The bass guitar especially caught my attention. So deep and innocent, and yet so aggressive at the same time. It just carried the song; it was the backbone.

One random day – and this scene is still burned into my memory – my dad asked me, "If you could play any instrument, what would you play?"

Based on my recent interest in bass, I naturally responded with, "I think the bass guitar is pretty awesome."

Then on a memorable day two days after Christmas, in the basement of my house on my 14th birthday, my dad bought me a starter bass guitar kit. I was absolutely shocked.

It stood in front of me like a glowing pillar. Years and countless hours of practice go into

becoming a great musician.

I knew this, but I was ready to take on the challenge.

Over the years, a lot of my motivation to keep playing bass came from my dad.

The rest came from the professional musicians of bands I listened to.

This remains true today.

Being a bassist for four years, I've learned a lot about sound, technique and, of course, my instrument.

However, let me tell you: I still have a lot to learn. You never stop learning.

Being proficient in a great talent is difficult though. Of course there are always new horizons to meet or hurdles to jump over. There will always be problems in the way and you can't escape that. To get over these problems, it takes time and focus.

For example, when I've had problems playing a song or working with someone else in the past, I usually just step away from it for a few hours and come back to it later.

After that, I calm down and approach my problem slowly until I get it.

Sometimes all you need is a break.

That's why it really baffles me when I meet people with amazing talents and skills who don't use them or even make it known.

These talents are what makes everyone unique. It's what sets us apart from each other. It's what makes us stronger as a society as it creates more diversity among people.

With diversity comes knowledge, and with knowledge comes practice and technique.

You can learn so much about your talent if you really dive into it.

A Collage of Stories: True Meaning of Christmas

By: Brendon Jacques
Staff Writer

It is Christmas morning.

A boy sits with his family unwrapping presents.

Only a slight frown had appeared on his face.

He was hoping for the new iPhone 6 that all his friends had and became very upset when he finally realized he had not gotten it. He was so upset that he lashed out at his parents followed by running to his room in great despair.

Only pity and sadness ran across his parents' faces, as they could not afford to make their son happy on Christmas Day.

Another family, where a boy had gotten everything you could ever imagine. He is loaded with a variety of toys, electronics, sports equipment and much more.

Everything seems wonderful. It is a Christmas that many kids could only dream of.

Regardless, the boy was not given the gift that he truly hopes for: the gift to be able to unwrap his presents under just one tree at just one house.

All the boy wanted to receive on Christmas morning was the gift of his parents to love each other. To be a happy family.

No matter how many gifts he was given that morning, nothing could have been better than the gift of the three of them being together again.

An old man sits alone with only the sound of his harmonica keeping him company.

Nowhere to go and nobody to see, on another cold, bitter night.

Just wanting to have a family to go to or even a place to put a roof over his head.

Maybe even a blanket would be nice as he fights the winter's storm with only a thinly layered coat that hung on his back.

He now searches in desperation for any feeling of happiness, as he sits all alone on Christmas night.

And just a mile away, the tears run down a girl's face as she gazes at a picture, wishing that one day she will be wrapped in her father's arms once again.

The image goes back to when she was a little girl sitting on her father's lap, with the big beautiful tree in the background and the stockings hanging from the fireplace. In the picture, she is just about to open her very last gift when a bright smile is captured on their faces.

But knowing in reality that the day her father comes home will only ever be in her imagination as last year was his very last Christmas.

In the hospital, a woman lays in the bed fighting for each and every second of her life.

All her loved ones can do is sit and wait as

they pray for her to get better, just hoping that she hasn't already spoken her very last words.

As a variety of different people get ready for Christmas time, many are only worried about exchanging and getting gifts with their closest companions.

But do they really know the true meaning of Christmas?

Kids these days are so focused on getting those really expensive shoes to show off to their friends or even to brag about how much cooler they are because they received more presents than others.

However, they should be focusing on their family and the enjoyment of being around the people that care about most.

It's so important to do this because things are not guaranteed in life.

There's only so much time left before your time with the people you love most runs out.

Take advantage of that time you have with them now because when they are gone, you will be wishing to have that just one more moment.

And in the end, no toy, no accessory can even come close to the gift of being around the people you love most.

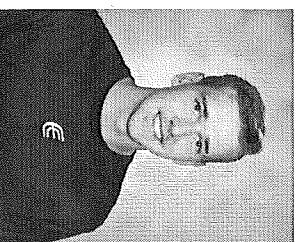
RHS Catcher to D1 College

Evan Kratt Signs With Central

By: Connor Hill
Co-Coordinating Editor

Senior Evan Kratt has recently made one of the most important decisions of his life. He decided what college to commit to for his baseball career in college.

Some of the colleges that offered Evan a scholarship were CMU, U of M and MSU, and with a 1.78 pop time for a catcher, it's understandable.



Evan Kratt

Even Central Michigan University.

"I chose CMU because I wanted to stay close to home," Kratt said. Like most catchers, Evan has an ideal pitcher that he would like to catch for.

"My ideal pitcher can hit spots and has a good curveball," Kratt said.

Kratt has been a catcher for eight years now, and has been playing baseball since he was four. He has also been on the varsity baseball team since he was a freshman.

One notable achievement Evan has had so far is that he was all state first team last year.

Coach Evans, the varsity baseball coach, knew Evan was special from the very beginning.

"The first time I saw Evan was as a freshman. I had never seen him play before. I heard a lot about their class but never saw them perform. As a freshman he showed potential. Since it was my first year coaching and we were not returning a starting catcher, he was our obvious choice," Coach Evans said via email. According to Coach Evans, Kratt has many assets.

"Evan's greatest asset is his feet and arm. He has a gift. His transfer is as good as I have ever seen in this game. I played Division 1 baseball. I stole a lot of bases in at that level. I have not seen anyone with his ability. Todd Winston was a local guy from Marysville who had a cannon. He went to Michigan. Evan's transfer and pop times are far better than him," Coach Evans said.

Coach Evans believes that he has helped prepare Evan for the next level.

"Many of my players and parents think I might be too hard on players. Part of my job is to prepare them for the next level. If I feel they can make it, then I am very hard on them," Coach Evans said. Coach Evans believes Kratt could easily be drafted into the MLB, but only if he adds some weight.

"Evan needs to get stronger. If he had 20-30 lbs on his frame, I am 100% sure he would be drafted in the top of the draft," Coach Evans said.

Kratt plans on submitting his name in the MLB draft.

"I would like to be drafted in the MLB, but I would like to start in the Minor League and then work my way up from there," Kratt said.

Evan is looking forward to meeting the team at CMU and can't wait for his upcoming season at Central. "I'm both excited and nervous for my first season of baseball at CMU," Evan said. "I'm excited because I will be with a new team, but I'm nervous because I will be in college and it won't be as easy as high school."

Evan plans on working hard throughout the rest of his baseball career. His goals are high but he believes he can reach them with hard work.

Evan plans on continuing to follow his dream throughout college while he plays for the Chippewa baseball team. He is also eager to meet the people that he will be playing with at Central.

"I haven't worked out with the team at CMU yet, but I am looking forward to it," Evan said.

There are many goals that Evan has for both his final baseball season in high school and his first season in college.

"My goals for my first baseball season in college are to be a starter and to make all conference," Evan said. "As for high school, my goal is to win States."

Although a man of few words, Evan has a vast knowledge that he can share with other young catchers.

"If I could give any advice to aspiring catchers, I would tell them to work hard and never give up," he said.

There's A New Sheriff In Town

By: Trevor Barrett
Sports Co-Editor

John Wooden once said, "Things turn out best for the people who make the best of the way things turn out." How will the basketball team turn out this year? Wooden would say it depends on how they handle the new coaching change.

Coach Josh Presnell has a vital role of taking over as Head Basketball Coach. After being the girls' varsity coach at Yale, and the boys' varsity assistant before that, he has taken over the helm at RHS.

Dillon McInerney, senior small forward, said, "He knows what he is talking about. He wants us to win." This winning mentality is what makes the atmosphere at practices so great, according to Dillon.

Not only is the mental aspect of the game stressed with Coach Presnell, but so is the physical part. "He has helped me become more comfortable with my shot and has taught me not to be afraid to shoot when I'm open," McInerney said. The only sophomore on the team,

D'Sean Hamilton, has also gained a lot from his limited time on varsity. "Coach Presnell has taught me not to worry and to play like I know how to play. He has also helped my composure so that I do not get nervous," Hamilton, a guard, said. Even with the new coach, goals are still as high as ever.

"I want to win Districts and beat Yale this year," Hamilton said. McInerney, however, has even bigger goals. He said, "It's Breslin Center or bust this year." Brad Pedri, another senior, has similar goals to Hamilton. "We definitely want to win Districts," Pedri said.

These goals will not come easy. They will come through practices, and Coach Presnell has also changed those up too.

The practices are relaxed and they focus a lot on skills that will help them score points, both McInerney and Pedri said.

There is a lot of experience that will also help the team achieve their high goals. Pedri has one year of varsity experience and McInerney has two. Of the 12 players on the roster, eight are seniors. Pedri said, "It gives us a lot of

chemistry on the court, and it will definitely help us in critical games." The underclassmen also play a vital role on the team. One of them, Jordan Cates, describes his role as "the hype man coming off the bench."

With a mixture of upper and underclassmen, there is a lot of competition in practice, but some of the younger players, including Cates, are using this to their advantage.

"I want to gain the seniors' respect," said Cates.

Players are not alone when they think like this. Coach Presnell himself has a lot to hope for this season. "We want to win BWAC, go undefeated, win Districts and possibly Regionals," he said.

How well they perform depends on how well they bond. "Team chemistry is huge. If we have some people that do not like each other, it can ruin everything," he said.

His plan to win games: score, and a lot. He said, "We like the fast break. We want to score 80 points a game and hold our opponents to 40."

The seniors, according to Coach Presnell, have a lot to offer including experience and are great help to the juniors and the sophomore.

New Athletic Director Pushes the Department Further

By: Maximillian Leesch
Staff Writer

From instructing tiny ones to ones that are quite grown, Mr. James Benoit has moved from the Lee School to RHS.

After attending and graduating from Mr. Clemens High School, Mr. Benoit then went to Macomb Community College for a period of time before moving to Central Michigan University. He received his Bachelor of Science degree at CMU and then his Master's degree in Educational Leadership from Saginaw Valley State University. While in high school, Mr. Benoit didn't participate in many sports. There was, however, one particular sport that he enjoyed and that he still continues to play: hockey. In fact, he plays often in a local league. "I discovered I couldn't hit a baseball," he said.

He mostly plays left wing when he's on the ice, but when he was younger, he usually played center. During these times, his father would hose down his lawn to make an ice rink for him and his friends to play on. "We broke a lot of windows in that time," Mr. Benoit said.

As far as pursuing education goes, inspiration struck him from a familiar person. "I was introduced to it through my sister," said Mr. Benoit.

Continued on Page 10

Those same underclassmen bring their own meal to the table. "They bring speed and athleticism. D'Sean is a pure athlete. [Mart] Skoryanc has a lot of defense to bring," he said.

Even with all the talent, Coach Presnell does recognize the not-so-good side of the team. He said, "We need to improve on defense as well as ball movement, but most importantly, we have to rise to the occasion."

The coaching doesn't stop on the court, though. Coach Presnell is also trying to improve the kids in life as well. "We want them to do well in school, and we want to teach them teamwork and camaraderie. This is important because all in life you have to work in a team," he said. "I try to relate with the kids. I'm there for them; they are not there for me. I want them to know I am always there for them," he added. Preparation for the future is also on the mind of Coach Presnell. In a couple years he wants this program running smoothly.

"We want to be like the football and wrestling programs. They both make deep runs in the playoffs and that's where we want to be," he said.