

The Mainsail

Monday, August 31, 2009

First Coast High School

Jacksonville, Fla.

Homeroom now Navigation class

By: **HARMONY SMITH**

You are most likely familiar with a homeroom. You know, it's the place where you get report cards and vote for important activities.

Along with all the changes this school year comes a new name for homeroom: Navigation Quarters.

Ms. Debbie Smith, the principal, said the new program is for students to "establish a sense of a relationship with an adult or an advocate who can give them academic support and be someone to talk to."

"Your Navigation Quarters will meet once a week for follow up," added assistant principal Mr. Fred Christmann.

"Student activities and lessons will be based on obtaining study skills, test taking strategies, goal setting, and preparation for college," explained Mr. John Bouchard the Omega House administrator.

The way students were placed in their homeroom class was also changed.

"The placement of students in each class is selected at random combined with your house and your grade level, unlike in the past when it was based off your last name," explained Mr. Bouchard

The Navigation Quarters also aims to keep students from falling through the cracks.

"There are students out there who may not be the athletic star

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No off-campus lunch for seniors

By: **JASMINE WHITESIDE**

Bottle throwing riots, non-stop fights, and the constant headache of wondering what will happen next. These are just some of the events that led to the courtyard's new fate and the end to off-campus lunch privileges.

"The courtyard will be closed off from all lunch access," said Marshana Bush, the Sigma House administrator.

In addition to being closed for lunch, the courtyard will be off limits to students during end-of-day dismissal.

Students will be required to use the sidewalk that surrounds the main courtyard to promote faster travel and discourage "hanging out".

Along with the new courtyard procedures

during lunch, off campus lunch passes are no more and a three-lunch policy is back in action. Ms. Bush said she is for any rules and regulations that will increase safety and make everyone's job easier.

Mr. Michael Aiken, a World History teacher, said he feels the ones who follow the rules shouldn't be punished for the actions of those who can't comply with the rules, but said some kind of action needs to be taken to improve safety.

"I think that these new policies will promote a safe, positive environment and encourage students to have respect for their school," he said.

But not everyone is happy about the new

rules. Seniors Michael Foster and Derrick Rhodes said they disagreed with the new policies.

"I think I speak for all seniors when I say since it is our last year here we want to enjoy as many privileges as we can" Foster said.

Senior year or not, the courtyard privileges and off-campus lunch are distant memories.

The giant hangout for the entire school before and after class, and dismissal where students made their final rounds with friends, is no more.

As students enter a new school year, they must also embrace the new courtyard resolution.

Homecoming set for September

By: **BLANCHE GIQUINTO**

Homecoming will arrive early this year for First Coast High School.

The annual fall event is scheduled for September 19 - 25.

The senior class is taking the lead to plan the weeklong festivities by trying to come up with different activities for the student body during homecoming week.

Mrs. Roberta Smith, one of the senior class sponsors, said a tentative

list of events will be released soon.

Darrel King, a 10th grader who plays football, said his favorite part of homecoming is the weekly activities that include dressing up for each day.

One event students can look forward to is the Homecoming Dance. But Ms. Smith said students should keep their eyes and ears open for upcoming announce-

ments and buy their tickets early.

Mr. Richard Black, who was in charge of homecoming last year said, "We did not have a homecoming dance due to the lack of interest of the student body, only three people bought tickets in the two week time scale given by the senior class."

"The officers for the of 2009 were chosen three weeks prior to the home-

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Navigation

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who will get the football scholarship or be the academic student who makes all A's and B's," Mr. Christmann explains. "What about students who try their hardest to make a C average or who struggle in the majority of their classes, or maybe just need someone there to let them know they did a good job?"

The Navigation Quarters teachers will serve as mentors to their students.

"All the students need to

know that you're not just a number, that you are a person as well. These new Navigation Quarters give those students a person to talk to, an adversary, and a person who cares for them, somewhat like a second counselor," Mr. Christmann explained.

The Navigation Quarters will also address student graduation rates.

"It starts with freshmen and their academic success," Mr. Christmann said. "The hope is that they start in 2009-2010 school year and graduate together

in 2013. If this was to happen it would significantly decrease the dropout rate and improve the grade of the school."

Omega House freshman Sydney Wilder, who's an AVID student agrees that this new program will allow the student to know that "they have someone to reach out to. Not every student gets an opportunity like AVID [a college-prep program for ninth through twelfth graders]."

"The program is new and, like every new thing, it

will take time to work through the kinks but with school-wide effort and people working as a team, there are big hopes and plans for this change," Mr. Christmann said.

Ms. Smith said she hopes all students will finally feel like they belong at First Coast.

"There are too many kids who don't feel connected to the school," Ms. Smith said. "[This program will] provide a school-wide family that will continue to move up."

Homecoming

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coming dance so it was hard getting everything ready in such short time," said Justin Senterfitt, the senior class president of 2009. "Plus, with the lack of interest shown from the First Coast students, the

senior class decided to just do without the dance."

In place of the Homecoming Dance, the 2009 senior class planned a Winter Ball.

"Tickets for this year's homecoming will go on sale either the first or second week of September in the ticket booth by the

gym," Mrs. Smith said.

Although homecoming is usually in October, it is going to be early this school year according to Mrs. Chris Collins, First Coast's Student Activity Director. She said the football schedule doesn't have many home games on it and also because of

testing schedules.

"Ms. Smith, [the principal] did not want any conflicting activities around test days so students stay focused."

The big game will be held on September 25 when First Coast's football team takes on Sandalwood at the First Coast stadium.

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Senior staffer welcomes new students

By: JARRIEL PULLIAM

Congratulations! You've made it through your first week of the 2009-2010 school year.

I am excited about this year, especially since this is my last year. The years that I have spent here at First Coast High School have been amazingly smooth and, most of all, enjoyable.

Everyone knows that it is a big step coming to High school, especially for freshmen who have absolutely no experience, but sooner or later they will adapt to the changes and the environment.

First Coast High School is a great place to be. To top it all off, we have a loving principal, Ms. Debbie Smith, who is doing all she can to make this school year the best yet to

come.

But she can't do it alone. She has an awesome administration, who will make sure everything with every student is in order.

Along with the new administration comes the location and color of each house. Alpha House is red, Beta House is black, Episolon is teal, Omega House is purple, and Sigma House is green.

First Coast High School is filled with exciting people and there are always fun activities in store for us.

There's always a lot to do, so get involved and show your stuff.

There's sports, yearbook staff, newspaper committee, band, and

many more, so where ever you feel you fit take a chance and do what is best for you.

"High school is what you make it. You have 720 days to do what you have to do, get involved, don't be a shadow, and make us proud," Mrs. Smith said.

Deidra Hills, who is Miss First Coast of 2010, set her own positive goals to prepare herself to get to this point.

"Keeping a positive attitude with everything that I do, being respectful and keeping up my grades is what I did to succeed," Hills said.

Her advice to freshmen is to stay focused, do your very best, and "keep your grades up because it will pay off in the end."

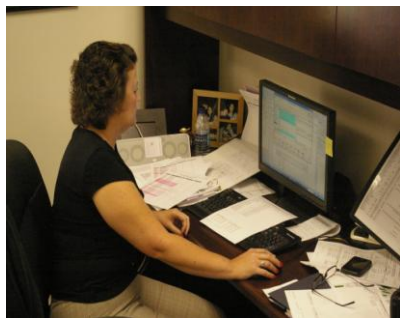


Photo By: HARMONY SMITH

Q&A with the Principal

By: ARIELLE BUTLER

1. What do you expect from the students this year?

I expect every student to set a goal for what they would personally do to improve First Coast High School and stick to it.

2. What are your main objectives and goals you would like to achieve?

I want every student to develop deep relationships with their peers and adults with the students, every student to feel connected to First Coast High School and set personal goals for academic achievement even after graduation.

3. How are you going to make this upcoming school year better than last year?

We have been doing a lot of training over the summer and building relationships...we are going to focus on what every student needs to be successful.

4. What advice, suggestions, or words of wisdom would you give the students?

GET INVOLVED! High school is what you make it!

Let your opinion be heard in

The Mainsail

Our first staff meeting will be held
Thursday, Sept. 3 in room N202

National Honor Society

Second year members: Your first Meeting is Tuesday Sept. 8 @ 2:30 in Room Q204

Seniors and Juniors: Pick up an application in Room Q204. You must have a 3.5 Weighted GPA to apply. Applications are due Sept. 11.

Introducing the 2009-2010 Mainsail Staff

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