

RCHS junior lives music dream

BY JESSICA DENNY

Most kids dream about being on stage with thousands of screaming fans and blinding bright lights. One student at RCHS found this dream when he played at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, TN.

Banjo playing junior Joe Wagers is a member of the band The Mason Jars. They played in the Ryman Auditorium January 5. Other members in the band include Kyle Farmer who also plays the banjo, and David "Bass Boy" Mayfield, who plays the bass fiddle.

The opportunity to play in Nashville came when The Mason Jars won first place in the Siring Bean Memorial Youth Band Competition. They played two songs, then waited one hour to find out they won.

"It was unbelievable, but I felt like we worked really hard for it," said Wagers.

Wagers said the hard work paid off when they received their prize from the contest. The prize for winning the contest was the chance to play in the Grand Ole Opry.

After finding out the Mason Jars would be playing in Nashville,



Wagers's family was in shock.

"I didn't believe it," said Wagers's grandmother Gail Kirby.

According to Wagers's uncle Tony Mazon, it's a day they'll never forget.

"It's a once in a life time experience," he said proudly.

A once in a life time experience, for some, but Wagers had other ideas.

"We played one song and got a standing ovation," said Wagers.

He went on to say Mike Snyder, a member of the Grand Ole Opry, invited him back to play in the new

auditorium this summer.

"I was really surprised they invited us back."

Wagers' passion for the banjo was inspired by his late grandmother, Dora Mae Wagers.

"When I was about 12 years old my grandmother had a banjo lying in the corner," he ex-

plained. "She asked if I wanted to learn how to play, and eventually I learned."

Since then Wagers has entertained many students at RCHS. Most students heard him play in the talent show last year.

"Joe is the best banjo player I've ever seen. He can really move his digits," said junior Ross McClure.

Wagers has dreams of being part of a full-time string band.

According to freshman Megan Parker, "He's going to make it to the big time."

Students know the positive effects of peer pressure

BY TIM TYLER

Peer pressure is a common cause of poor decision making skills that exist among teens. However, some teens disagree with the common stereotype of peer pressure: that it's bad.

"Peer pressure is when someone your age tries to convince you to do something," stated senior Josh Ramsey, who believes that peer pressure is mostly a good thing because good things come out of peer pressure more often than not.

Ramsey began to explain some of the bad effects of peer pressure starting with how he spent last summer.

"I spent a lot of time hanging out at a college. Now that's a place where peer pressure makes a world of difference. That's the summer that I first tasted alcohol," explained Ramsey.

He hesitated to tell some of the more personal bad experiences with peer pressure. But to find some more serious encounters with it he thought on back to a few years before the college experience.

"When I was younger I was pressured into smoking marijuana

by some of my friends."

Sophomore Heather Adams believes that peer pressure can be good also.

"It's a good thing because you need to experience the good and the bad side of things," explained Adams.

Ramsey stressed that peer pressure can be bad; but in the right situation or with the right people, it can change your life for the better.

"I've changed because of peer pressure, when my 'new' friends started telling me not to do that kind of stuff," explained Ramsey.

He went on to explain how his girlfriend has helped him overcome some of this pressure.

"My girlfriend is really great too. She kept me from going out and being pressured at the parties. She's my peer pressure that keeps me out of all the drugs and alcohol."

"Peer pressure can be positive or negative. I think a lot of people go on to college because of peer

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