



SOARING TRIUMPHS: HONDO CYBER OWLS' REMARKABLE FEATS IN THE CYBER SEASON'S LATTER HALF

As we soar into the second half of the cyber season and welcome the dawn of a new year, it's with great pride and excitement that we share the remarkable achievements of our incredible Hondo Cyber Owls. Strap in for a thrilling ride through their journey in the world of cybersecurity.

In January 2023, the Hondo Cyber Owls Middle School team showcased their prowess by securing a spot in the semi-finals of CyberPatriot XV. Comprising of team members Jessica (a.k.a. Boiled Chicken), Ruby (a.k.a. Danger Chicken), and Brentyn (a.k.a. Flipper), our middle school team emerged in the top 50% of all registered middle school teams. Their success is a testament to their dedication and skill in navigating the challenges of the cyber world.

Following their CyberPatriot success, the Cyber Owls embarked on a thrilling exploration of Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT), Steganography, Cryptography, and Web Exploitation. By participating in the National Cryptologic Foundation's #CyberChats cyber challenges, the team not only expanded their knowledge but also clinched the #CyberChats Season 1 Group Prize. Dive deeper into their journey in the upcoming newsletter.

During the summer, two of our outstanding team members, Sharon (a.k.a. Yarn Wizard) and Jessica (a.k.a. Boiled Chicken), attended the CyberPatriot Standard and Advanced camps. These camps, organized by the CyberTexas Foundation and hosted at the Institute of CyberSecurity & Innovation (ICSI) in Northeast San Antonio, provided invaluable experiences. Boiled Chicken shares her insights on the CyberPatriot Camps in an exclusive article in The Cyber Talon.

While our Cyber Owls may not be advancing to the CyberPatriot XVI semi-finals, we take pride in the unwavering commitment demonstrated by each team member throughout this demanding competition. Get ready for an exhilarating update – our team is embarking on a fresh journey with the "Ethical Hacker" course offered on the Cisco Skills for All site. This 70-hour exploration features web-based labs, providing a hands-on experience that is sure to elevate our team's skills.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to this year's Hondo Cyber Owls Team Sponsor, Inflow Logistics. Your unwavering support is instrumental in our mission to prepare the next generation of cyber professionals. Join us in expressing gratitude to our team sponsor for their invaluable contributions.

Special appreciation extends to our incredible Technical Mentor, Melisa Joyner, PhD, for imparting knowledge and guidance in the intricate world of cybersecurity. We'd also like to extend our thanks to our team host, Elsie Purcell, and the dedicated staff of the Hondo Public Library for providing a space for our cyber competition team to thrive.

Remember to CYBER LIKE A VIKING!

-Head Coach Frank "The Cyber Viking" Hall



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

SOARING TRI-
UMPHS_1

TRIUMPH IN
CYBER_2

SUMMER PRAC-
TICE PICTURE_2

CYBERPATRIOT
CAMP_3

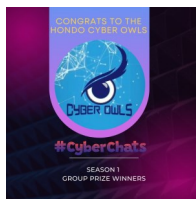
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“MR. LOEPKER GENEROUSLY SHARED HIS INVALUABLE EXPERIENCES AND INSIGHTS GARNERED FROM A DISTINGUISHED CAREER SPANNING THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE, THE NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY, AND HIS CURRENT ROLE AT NCF.”



TRIUMPH IN THE CYBER ARENA: HONDO CYBER OWLS SHINE IN #CYBERCHATS SEASON 1



In a groundbreaking announcement in July 2023, the National Cryptologic Foundation proudly proclaimed the Hondo Cyber Owls as the victors of the #CyberChats Season 1 Group Prize. This news reverberated through the cybersecurity community, infusing excitement and pride as the Hondo Cyber Owls secured their place in NCF's history.

The ensuing celebration was nothing short of spectacular, creating indelible memories for the team. Recognizing the Hondo Cyber Owls' outstanding achievement, the NCF presented them with certificates and a range of exciting prizes, including NCF t-shirts, wooden Caesar Cipher decoder wheels, and commemorative certificates. The festivities culminated in a scrumptious pizza party – an ideal way to revel in success and share moments of joy and camaraderie.



But the story doesn't end there; the Hondo Cyber Owls embarked on an even more exhilarating journey. The team had the unparalleled opportunity to virtually connect with Mr.



CYBER OWLS SPEAK WITH MR. LOEPKER

Mark S. Loepker, the esteemed NCF Education Advisor, through a Zoom meeting. Mr. Loepker personally extended his congratulations to the Hondo Owls, elevating the significance of their triumph. During this enlightening Zoom meeting, Mr. Loepker generously shared his invaluable experiences and insights garnered from a distinguished career spanning the United States Air Force, the National Security Agency, and his current role at NCF.

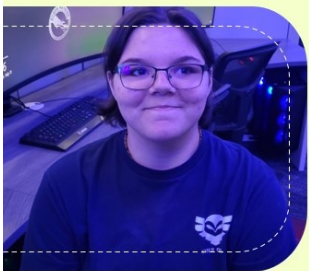
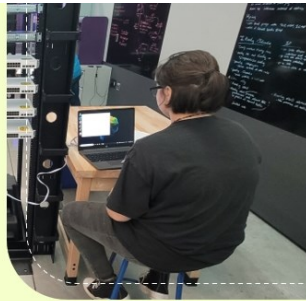
The session was not only informative but also deeply inspiring. The Hondo Owls were delighted when Mr. Loepker expressed admiration for their team logo, adding a personal touch to the celebration. The team extends heartfelt thanks to Mr. Loepker for his time, encouragement, and kind words.

The NCF deserves immense appreciation for orchestrating this remarkable experience. While the gifts, certificates, and prizes were undeniably fantastic, the truly standout element was the enlightening dialogue with Mr. Loepker. This encounter has rekindled a passionate enthusiasm for cybersecurity among the Hondo Owls, motivating them to aspire to greater achievements in this dynamic field.

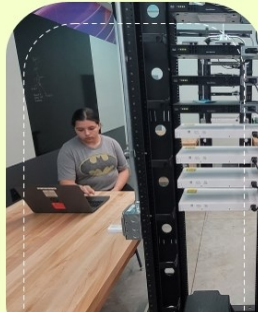
In closing, the Hondo Cyber Owls express their profound gratitude to the NCF for everything – the certificates, prizes, pizza party, and the enlightening conversation with Mr. Loepker.

CYBERPATRIOT CAMP BY JESSICA COUNSELMAN

This year, I had the privilege of attending a CyberPatriot camp led by Frank Hall and Josh Beck. Throughout the program, we learned about a variety of topics including commands, firewalls, and cybercrime. We studied various password policies, encryption techniques, and authentication methods that would prove crucial in the CyberPatriot competition. Our hands on practice included Cisco labs where we learned how to ping other switches and competitions where we utilized the terminal to remotely access and power down other computers. Each day introduced new concepts, and by day four, we were well-prepared to apply our knowledge in a competition designed to replicate the experience of an official CyberPatriot round. The camp was a pivotal learning experience that introduced new concepts and techniques. Those aspiring to participate in future CyberPatriot competitions should most definitely consider attending future camps.



CyberPatriot
Camp at iSCI



“OUR
HANDS ON
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“A CYBER CHALLENGE ACCOMPANIES EACH EPISODE, RESEMBLING A CAPTURE THE FLAG COMPETITION. THESE CHALLENGES COVER SPECIFIC AREAS LIKE WEB EXPLOITATION, CRYPTOGRAPHY, STEGANOGRAPHY, AND THE UTILIZATION OF OPEN-SOURCE INTELLIGENCE (OSINT). IT'S NOT MERELY A DISCUSSION; IT'S AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACQUIRE ACTIONABLE SKILLS.”



the CYBER viking sysLOGs

#CyberChats

In the ever-evolving landscape of cybersecurity, the Hondo Cyber Owls CyberPatriot team is gearing up for the upcoming challenges with a strategic advantage, thanks to their active involvement in the National Cryptologic Foundation's (NCF) Podcast #CyberChats. Spearheaded by the insightful Jennifer Langdon, this podcast delves into the minds of cybersecurity leaders, academic experts, and high school students who are making significant contributions to the industry.

What distinguishes #CyberChats is its unique approach—a cyber challenge accompanies each episode, resembling a Capture the Flag competition. These challenges cover specific areas like web exploitation, cryptography, steganography, and the utilization of Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT). It's not merely a discussion; it's an opportunity to acquire actionable skills.

In the current season, #CyberChats has raised the stakes by collaborating with MetaCTF, injecting an additional level of excitement into the challenges. With 2-3 questions per episode, varying in difficulty and points, MetaCTF introduces a live scoreboard that keeps participants on their toes, highlighting their current standings. Team camaraderie reaches its peak as members strive to surpass their coach's score, turning it into a friendly yet intense competition.

As the Hondo Cyber Owls tackle the cyber challenges presented by #CyberChats and MetaCTF, optimism runs high, and the stakes are even higher. In the previous season, the team secured the coveted #CyberChats Group Team Award, earning them a well-deserved victory celebration—complete with a pizza party, an impressive swag box from NCF, and a virtual conversation with Mr. Mark S. Loepker, the esteemed NCF Education Advisor.



#CyberChat Challenge

Now, with a new season on the horizon, the challenge is crystal clear: clinch the title again and secure another triumph. Stay tuned for updates as the Cyber Owls embark on this cybersecurity journey armed with knowledge gained from #CyberChats and a burning desire to leave an indelible mark on the landscape of cyber excellence. May the bits and bytes be ever in their favor!

For more information about the National Cryptologic Foundation's #CyberChats Podcast, visit <http://cryptologicfoundation.org/podcast>.

PICTURES OF THE HONDO CYBER OWLS

THE HONDO CYBER OWLS!



"IT'S WITH GREAT PRIDE AND EXCITEMENT THAT WE SHARE THE REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENTS OF OUR INCREDIBLE HONDO CYBER OWLS."



HONDO CYBER OWLS CYBERPATRIOT TEAM

WE MONITOR NETWORKS BY SOARING THROUGH CYBERSPACE HUNTING FOR PREY. WE USE OUR TALONS AS A DETERRENT TO PROTECT OUR DATA. USING ADVANCED DETECTION TECHNIQUES, WE SPREAD OUR WINGS AND LAUNCH PRECISE COUNTER MEASURES TO DEFEND OUR NETWORKS AGAINST CYBER ENEMIES. WE FIND, CAPTURE, AND ANNIHILATE ALL CYBER THREATS. WE ARE THE CYBER OWLS!

HONDO CYBER OWLS CYBERPATRIOT TEAM

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E-MAIL:
[HONDOCYBEROWLS
@GMAIL.COM](mailto:hondocyberowls@gmail.com)

ANGELA M. HALL—
CHIEF EDITOR OF THE
CYBER TALON



ABOUT THE HONDO CYBERPATRIOT TEAM



The Vision

The vision of the Hondo Cyber Owls CyberPatriot program is to promote cyber awareness, computer security practices, and cyber ethics. All of these are essential attributes for creating a secure network infrastructure, teaching the students how to detect threats, and how to defend against cyber-attacks in a safe virtual environment.

The skills and knowledge the students will gain from participating in this program will give them an advantage to obtain information technology certifications, scholarships in computer related fields of study, and ultimately provide an opportunity to start a great career in information technology and cyber security.

The Mission

The mission of the Hondo Cyber Owls CyberPatriot program is the proper instruction and implementation of information technology principals and cyber security practices. All students will be taught how to use various operating systems, interconnecting network devices, and how to secure the entire infrastructure. The students will also be taught how to properly use tools and methodologies to assess and troubleshoot problems that range from inoperable workstations to misconfigured networking equipment. These are the skills that will be necessary to compete in the CyberPatriot competitions and will enable us to advance to each round and ultimately to the national finals.