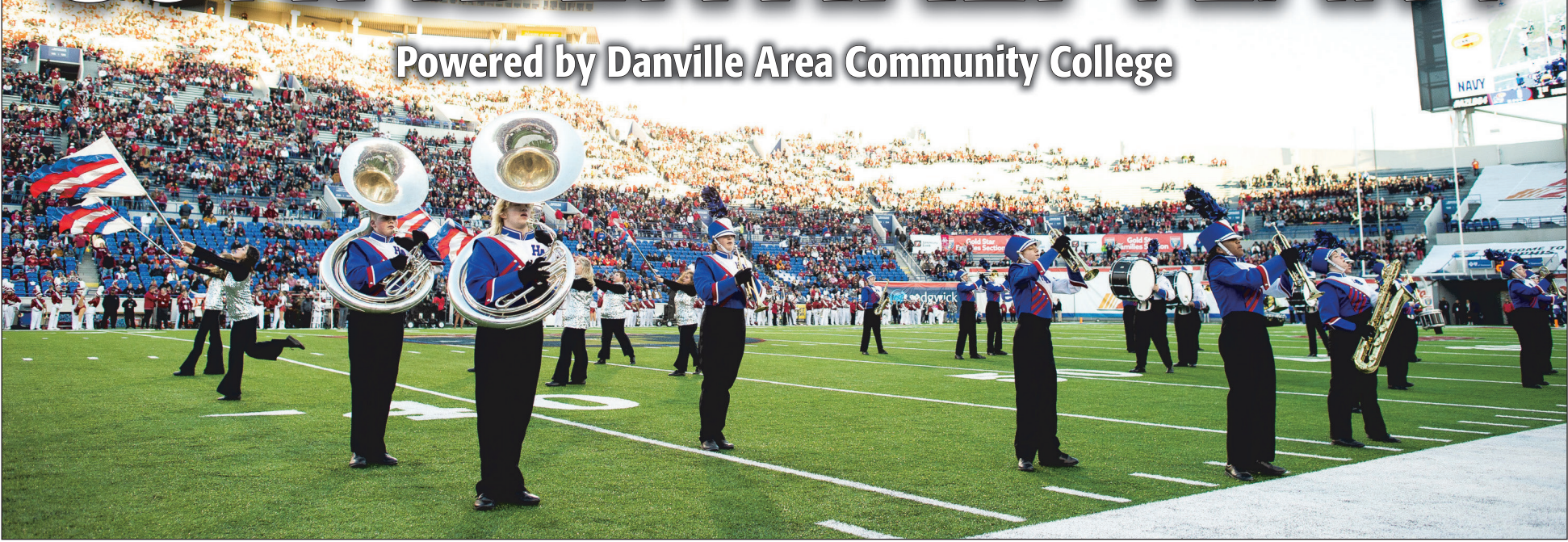


HIGH SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL: YEAR 7

Powered by Danville Area Community College



Photos courtesy Christy Lee/Cee Lee Photography



HOOPESTON AREA: TRIP OF A LIFETIME

The **Marching Cornjerkers** celebrated the end of their season with a bus trip to Memphis, Tenn., to perform at the **Liberty Bowl** on Dec. 28. The group took the field in the pregame and at halftime alongside the band **Starship**. During a five-day stay, the 35 students also visited Graceland, an arcade, a parade and a rodeo. They competed and earned first place for their field show. It was the band's first extensive trip since COVID-19. "It was a great time," band director **Brian Zielinski** said. "The kids had the opportunity to do several musical events and got a chance to hang out with each other and build some rapport within the group."



— Emma Rayls



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About this project



This weekly section contains original reporting by **News-Gazette** correspondents from area high schools. If you are not a subscriber, please consider becoming one, because local journalism is only possible with your support.

A subscription to **The News-Gazette** plays a vital role in making this reporting possible. Thank you for your support and helping us continue to connect our community.

Today marks the start of the second half of Year 7 of **High School Confidential**, an initiative made possible by aspiring student journalists from every corner of our circulation area. For 2022-'23, the project has expanded to 39 schools, including first-year participants Cerro Gordo and Iroquois West (*Interested in contributing? Email Jim Rossow at jrossow@news-gazette.com*). More than 225 high school students — nominated by principals and staff — have participated since 2016, including Joey Wright, a 2018 Urbana High grad who became the first HSC alum to join our newsroom full time (with the hope of more to come). This year's crew:

Academy High: Rosie Atkinson
ALAH: Jacob Adcock
Arcola: Karina Warfel
Armstrong: Gigi Mulvaney
Bement: Emily Parrish
BHRA: Cody Drake
Blue Ridge: Cadin Dozier
Centennial: Elena Reifsteck
Cerro Gordo: Hannah Copeland
Champaign Central: Janani Pattabi
Chrisman: Reese Anderson
Cissna Park: Mikayla Knake
Danville: Josie Hotsinpiller

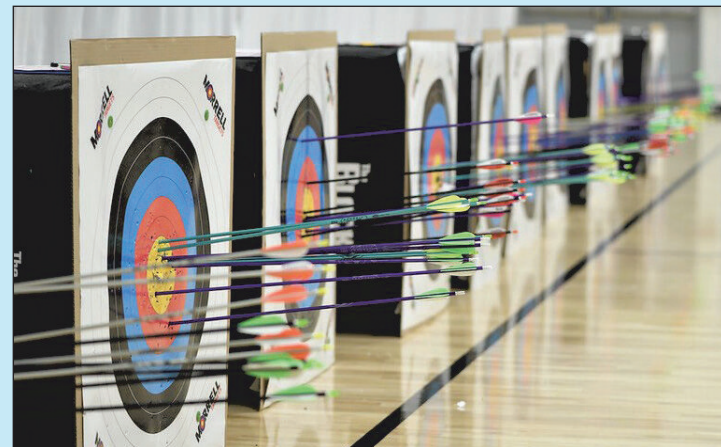
DeLand-Weldon: Abby Trimble
Fisher: Emma McFarling
GCMS: Katherine Steidinger
Georgetown-Ridge Farm: Izabella Wills
Heritage: Katelyn Learned
Hoopston Area: Emma Rayls
Iroquois West: Calli Kraft
Judah Christian: Bethany Jackson
LeRoy: Lily Monigold
Mahomet-Seymour: Madelyn Grindley
Milford: Maddie Hardwick
Monticello: Will Ross
Oakwood: Kalie Tison

Paxton-Buckley-Loda: Kate Wilson
Rantoul: Caya Flesner
Salt Fork: Macie Russell
Schlarman: Lilli Perez
Shiloh: Lydia Richardson
St. Joseph-Ogden: Alyssa Acton
St. Thomas More: Jose Andino Guerra
Tuscola: Kaleb Jeffers, Marley Good
Uni High: Wes Lu
Unity: Jolie Meyer
Urbana: Jennifer Arriaga-Lopez
Villa Grove: Emma Bratten-Noice
Westville: Lilly Meeker



CENTENNIAL Archery team hits fundraising target

Saturday's archery tournament raised \$2,026 — not counting online donations — to benefit St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Principal **Scott Savage** (below) attended to support the team cause and shoot as a guest archer. Online donations as of Tuesday totaled \$1,115.00 and will be accepted through Sunday. The Chargers, coached by **Heather** and **Ryan Miller**, competed virtually against schools from across the country, run by the National Archery in the Schools Program.



DeLand-Weldon
Ryan Pray's physics class is in the process of building spaghetti bridges. Students are enjoying the hands-on activity and are excited to compete to see who can construct the strongest bridge. Pictured: **Jack Schmidt**.

— ABIGAIL TRIMBLE



Unity

Scholastic Bowl matches will begin this month. Before break, the Rockets traveled to St. Joseph-Ogden for a practice match.

— JOLIE MEYER



Cerro Gordo

The extended rest offered by Christmas break did nothing to inhibit the abilities of the Cerro Gordo-Bement girls' basketball team, who took second place in the Macon County tournament. Against Decatur St. Teresa, **Haley Garrett** broke the program's single-game scoring record with 36 points. It's the second year in a row the team earned a second-place trophy.

— HANNAH COPELAND



LeRoy

On Tuesday, the boys' basketball team visits Tri-Valley in Downs. Both schools are working together to help fundraise for **Cole Martin**, a student at Tri-Valley diagnosed with metastatic osteosarcoma. All proceeds will go toward his treatments at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago.

— LILY MONIGOLD



Georgetown-Ridge Farm

The FFA chapter has participated in several competitions, including dairy foods in November. The team, which finished first overall, included **Mackenzie Williams**, **Sam Vice**, **Jayden Haussy**, **Sawyer Willis**, **Owen Clark**, **Haley Carlton**, **Leyla Shelton**, **Morgan Ellis**, **Chelsea Johnson**, **Autumn Roberson** and **Aubrey Roberson**. Top 10 individuals included Carlton (first), Williams (second), Johnson (fifth) and Roberson (seventh).

— IZABELLA WILLS

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Fisher

Six seniors were named Illinois State Scholars. Left to right: **Kylan Arndt**, **Carter Dickey**, **Hanna Laible-Seif**, **Max Bruggman**, **Jordan Claxton** and **Emma McFarling**.

— EMMA McFARLING



Monticello

Ten students were asked to participate in a pie-in-the-face fundraiser for Orange Out Week. Orange Out is a memorial fundraiser for former school nurse **Natalie McDowell**. All proceeds benefit St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Pictured are four of the participants: **Mabry Bruhn**, **Biniam Lienhart**, **Tucker Williamson** and **Ben Williamson**.

— WILL ROSS



CHAMPAIGN CENTRAL

Two clubs acting as one

As students returned from break, members of the Drama Club had their monthly meeting with the school's new Improv Club on Jan. 6. The meeting began with a few announcements from club President **Wade Schacht** and drama director **Ladonna Wilson** regarding the department's upcoming play, "Noises Off," and audition dates for the spring musical. After that, Improv Club sponsor **Aubrey Wachtel** discussed the basics of improv and led students through a variety of improv games such as one-word stories and "Bus Stop." Pictured, clockwise from top: a one-word story in progress; students in the middle of a silent improv scene; Wachtel (red T-shirt) instructing students on how to play the next game; and students playing "Bus Stop."

— JANANI PATTABI



St. Thomas More

The boys' basketball team participated in the Taylorville Shootout last Saturday, beating Pleasant Plains 38-34. Senior **Ryan Hendrickson** was named game MVP.

— JOSE ANDINO GUERRA



Iroquois West

Congratulations to seniors **Cannon Leonard** (right) and **Sam McMillan**. Leonard scored his 1,000th career point against Herscher. McMillan was named WGFA's Player of the Week. The Raiders continue to have another great basketball season with the help of these valuable players.

— CALLI KRAFT



Oakwood

In an exciting week back from winter break, senior **Dalton Hobick** scored 37 points at last Tuesday's game, leading to him being named The News Gazette's Athlete of the Week. Last Friday, the Oakwood-Salt-Fork wrestling team claimed the title of Vermilion County champions.

— KALIE TISON



Tuscola

Congratulations to **Drew Sterkel**, who was named Coach of the Year by Illinois Track and Cross County Coaches Association. He also is the reigning News-Gazette Girls' Track and Field All-Area Coach of the Year. Also, students are gearing up for the school's annual musical, "Grease."

— KALEB JEFFERSON

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Academy High

Last Thursday, the girls' basketball team won its first-ever game, beating Uni High's junior varsity. Pictured: **Hannah Walker, Breanna Patten, Maegen Frye, Sophia Libman and Elisa Frizza.**

— ROSIE ATKINSON



Villa Grove

Deborah Flavin's Spanish classes celebrated the Day of the Three Kings on Jan. 6 with an authentic Mexican rosca de reyes, a sweet bread/cake that was prepared at Panaderia Saldivar in Arcola. The celebration marks the day the Three Wise Men arrived at the manger in Bethlehem bearing gifts for the Christ child. The bread is formed in the shape of a crown and contains a tiny baby doll which represents the child Jesus.

— EMMA BRATTEN-NOICE

ST. JOSEPH-OGDEN Worth the weight



With school back in session, students were able to get in the new weight room that was recently finished. Students have enjoyed getting to use the new features that were put in the weight room. Pictured: **Corbin Smith, Lucas Skelton and Ethan McElroy.**

— ALYSSA ACTON



BHRA

Student council, led by **Kami Russell**, raised money through shirt sales to purchase gifts for those in need. It was a community-wide cause organized by **Kerry Hall**, the Bismarck social worker, and Bismarck United Methodist Church. The rest of the community participated in donating gifts that student council wrapped. Members pictured: **Allie Garfield, Amber-Christine Reed, Isaiah Tidwell, Joshua Gernand and Madeline Thorlton.**

— CODY DRAKE



Gibson City-Melvin-Sibley

The Civics and Government class full of seniors kicked off the new year by learning about the origins of our country's government, as taught by **Chad Augspurger.**

— KATIE STEIDINGER



Shiloh

Student council hosted Winterfest, which allowed junior high students to participate in games, dress-up days and decorating as well. Included was a walk-in and dance that many students enjoyed. This year's theme: Enchanted Masquerade.

— LYDIA RICHARDSON

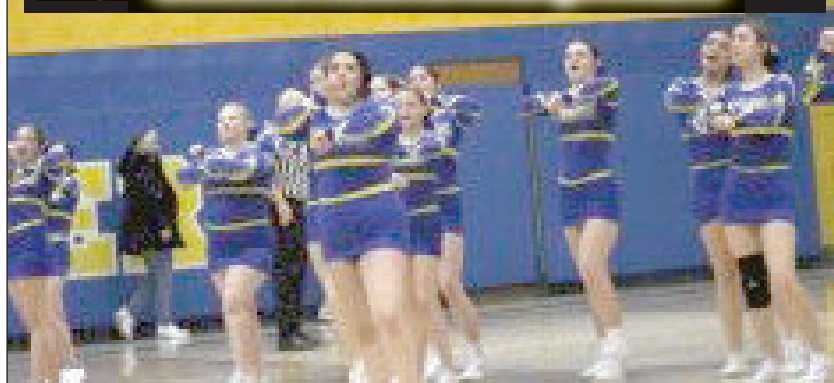


Paxton-Buckley-Loda

The boys' basketball team fell short in its home game against Rantoul.

— KATE WILSON

At news-gazette.com
GALLERIES: Dozens from winter sports season.



Rantoul

Paxton-Buckley-Loda and Rantoul cheerleaders stood together for the national anthem before a recent boys' basketball game.

— CAYA FLESNER

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Milford

Students, staff and community members participated in Minute to Win It games and a pie-in-the-face contest Dec. 17. Students in National Honor Society hosted the activities as a part of their St. Jude Children's Research Hospital fundraiser.

— MADDIE HARDWICK

WESTVILLE

Getting the band back together



The school's tradition of inviting alumni to perform with the pep band resumed at Tuesday's boys' basketball game.

"It's a lot of fun," band director **Melissa Pinter** said. "It gives students who graduated a chance to come back and relive their high school days and gives the younger students a chance to talk to them."

The idea, which plays out in early January each year, was put on hold in 2021 and 2022 due to the pandemic. Tuesday's pep band included "students ranging from May '22 grads to one who graduated nine years ago and still comes back to play," Pinter said.

Photos courtesy guidance counselor **Johnnie Hull**.



Schlarman

The Scholastic Bowl team marked the return to school by competing at a tournament at Lincoln. The students included: **Paul Hurley, Jonas Lane, Jack Barber, Dillan Hempker, Konnor Andrews, Kayley Williams, Cheyenne Lutz, Anna Lamien, Maya Jenny, Evy Kelsey and Madison Brazelton.**

— LILLY PEREZ



ALAH

Drama Club cleaned out the prop room after what seemed like decades of being unused. **Faith Rund**, the drama director, had members of this year's production help clean for four hours in hopes of having a better environment for the actors. Pictured, left to right: seniors **Bianca Corona** and **Faeryn Davison**.

— JACOB ADCKOCK



Arcola

Journalism and yearbook class let no time go to waste as they continued working on the 2022-2023 yearbook. From taking pictures at games and events to creating and designing the yearbook itself, this class taught by **Emily Coombe** will continue to capture life at Arcola during the second semester. Pictured: seniors **Reyli Vega** and **Emilye Gavis**.

— KARINA WARFEL



Salt Fork

The Oakwood/Salt Fork wrestling team kicked off the new year by bringing home the Vermilion Valley Conference and county championships.

— MACIE RUSSELL

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Judah Christian

To start off the new semester in the Independent Art elective, students began their first project: personalizing name tags using stencils and markers. Pictured: (left) Judah Ruhlig, Tucker Bailey, Gloriana Bell, Justin Farkas, Aidyn Beck and Nehemiah Williams; and (right) Grace Bailey, Amina Fairley and Josiah Taylor (photos courtesy Tucker Yasunuaga).

— BETHANY JACKSON

MAHOMET-SEYMOUR A night to remember



A year ago, **Ty Andracke** was hospitalized in Memphis, Tenn., undergoing chemotherapy treatments when Mahomet-Seymour High School hosted its annual Coaches vs. Cancer basketball doubleheader. On Tuesday, however, the 7-year-old was front and center as the Bulldogs hosted Mattoon (above).

"A very special night for our family," said **Eric Andracke**, Ty's dad and a teacher and coach at M-S.

Diagnosed with leukemia in April 2021, Ty "is continuing his fight and has a little over a year left of treatment remaining," Eric said.

Sports have become therapeutic. Ty played baseball last summer and currently is in a basketball league. In December, he became an official member of Illinois State's men's basketball program through Team Impact, joining the Cardinals for practices, games and off-court activities (right).

Tuesday's return to M-S was another mood-lifter. "Our family continues to be blessed and supported by the Mahomet community and Bulldog bas-



ketball family," Eric said. "(Tuesday) was filled with a lot of emotion for me: the cause of what the night represented and the cause of how it has affected my entire family, not just with my own son but the many other people in the community that have had their own battles."

Chrisman
Alivia Brinkley finished off her basketball career last week. She is graduating early, so her final game was played halfway through the season. She ended on a great note with the support of her teammates.

— REESE ANDERSON



Danville
Orchestra director **Gage Womack** (right) brought a cello ensemble to the Danville Noon Rotary on Monday. Members were treated to the melodious strains of holiday tunes. Student cellists: **Emily Garrett, Asiah Brown and Isaiah Easton**. The day's sergeant-at-arms: **Pete Goodwin**.

Uni High

Feeling rested after a cold but enjoyable winter break, students returned to the building they call home. During break, many students traveled, spent time with friends and family and caught up on sleep. The opening days were spent adjusting to early morning alarms and new course schedules. Everyone is eager to start off the semester.

— WES LU



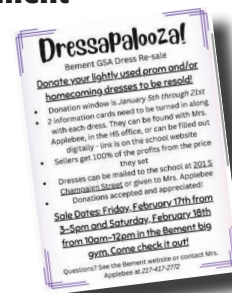
Cissna Park

The Spanish 4 group was assigned to make its own Spanish board games. Students made games similar to Candy Land, Sorry and Monopoly and dedicated three class days to playing each of them. Pictured: **Mikayla Knake, Tricia Karas, Noah Phelan** and Spanish teacher **Gail Lober**.

— MIKAYLA KNAKE

Bement

The school's GSA Club (Genders & Sexualities Alliances) is hosting its first "Dressapalooza" on Feb. 17-18 in an effort to make prom dress shopping less stressful and expensive for high school girls. From Jan. 5-21, the club is accepting donations of lightly used dresses for the project (drop them off at the high school). From 5-7 p.m. on Feb. 17 and 10 a.m. to noon on Feb. 18, dresses will be on display in the high school gym, with try-ons available in the girls' locker room.



— EMILY PARRISH