

HIGH SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL

Powered by Danville Area Community College



SHOW GOES ON

At **MAHOMET-SEYMOUR**, the annual Variety Show featured 36 total performers across 20 acts that included singing, dancing, comedy sketches and original speeches. The purpose of the Variety Show is to give students, who aren't necessarily in Drama Club, an opportunity to showcase their talents and to fundraise for the spring musical and other productions.

Emery Parker and **Annika McLaughlin** (left) were the emcees this year. they opened the show by performing 'What is This Feeling?' from 'Wicked.' 'Being an emcee was so interesting and fun. Getting to write the script and make the props was so fun and different from anything I've done before,' Parker said. Added McLaughlin: 'In terms of being an emcee, being able to be on stage and just get to joke and improv with Emery was a really amazing experience, and I'm glad I got the chance to be a part of the legacy of Variety Show.'

— Abby Eden



Scenes from the Variety Show (from left): **Megan Smith**, **Olivia Robinson** and **Audra Bell**; and **Annika McLaughlin**, **Emery Parker** and **Dan Ryan**.

Photos courtesy Kaylee Guth

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BECOME A SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY ASSISTANT

Meet the crew

This year's group includes 43 students from 42 schools (*visit [news-gazette.com](#) for our photo gallery*). We'll spotlight each correspondent in Top of the Morning on Wednesdays.



Academy High: Evie Price
ALAH: London Dugan
Arcola: Addee Mulligan
Armstrong: Aubrey Self
Bement: Kiana Hunter
BHRA: Lahna Benjamin
Blue Ridge: Karly Warner
Centennial: Kennedy Borden
Cerro Gordo: Alexa Rodgers
Champaign Central: Adelaide Kota
Chrisman: Morgan Simpson

Cissna Park: Sophia Duis
Danville: Rylee Jack
DeLand-Weldon: Nathan Smith
Fisher: Kesiah Musick
G-RF: Tiffany Taylor
GCMS: Addison Farmer
Heritage: Rylan White
Hoopeston Area: Willamina Clayton
Iroquois West: Traeh Kissack
Judah Christian: Jack Dalbey
LeRoy: Molly Scheuer

Mahomet-Seymour: Abigail Eden
Maroa-Forsyth: Aubrey Stewart
Milford: Kami Muehling
Monticello: Mady Melton
Oakland: Sophie VonLanken
Oakwood: Sophia Aquino
Paxton-Buckley-Loda: Brayden Kief
Rantoul: Tamia Bell
St. Joseph-Ogden: Katie Ericksen
St. Thomas More: Duncan Oliveira
Salt Fork: Anna McCollum

Schlarman: Isabella Bogen
Shiloh: Ali Cash
Sullivan: Lillian Moxley, Danica Bell
Tuscola: Claire Leonard
Uni High: Simrah Khan
Unity: Claire Meharry
Urbana: Ruby Pittenger
Villa Grove: Eva Piercy
Westville: Olivia Troglia
Questions? Email N-G VP Jim Rossow at jrossow@news-gazette.com.



Danville

National Honor Society began the process of collecting donations for a meaningful scholarship: The **Gary Gritton** Memorial Scholarship. Mr. Gritton, who died in September, had a profound impact on not only District 118 but Vermilion County and the Big 12 Conference, as well. Students from NHS completed the task of emailing over 50 people throughout Vermilion County and the Big 12 Conference spanning Champaign to Peoria. This list included principals, athletic directors, superintendents and soon a mass outreach to all of District 118. The goal is to raise \$4,000 for a scholarship that will be awarded to at least one senior who is involved in athletics and plans to pursue an education in teaching. This money will be awarded to Mr. Gritton's wife, **Meridith**, on Feb. 10 during a home basketball game.

NHS hosts an annual trivia night fundraiser. This year, students will be including a bonus round — with a \$5 buy-in — in honor of Mr. Gritton to contribute to the scholarship fund. The theme will be focused on questions that Mr. Gritton would have gotten right. He was a humble man who loved sports and history and enjoyed listening to music.

For the following year of the scholarship, the high school's newly formed Key Club, along with the help of NHS, will be putting on a charity softball game in honor of Mr. Gritton. The charity game is tentatively scheduled for May 2. Proceeds will go toward the Gary Gritton Memorial Scholarship for the 2026-27 school year.

— RYLEE JACK



Champaign Central

On Jan. 10, the Central chapter of Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) attended the Illinois Central Area Conference at Normal Community High School. Of the 60 members who attended, 14 got first place in their events. Three members ran for and won area leadership positions, with sophomore **Simon Aiuvalasit** (pictured) as area reporter, sophomore **Sohum Gurrapu** as area treasurer and junior **Aanya Rangaiahgari** as area president. Due to her position, Rangaiahgari will represent the Central Illinois Area as a state vice president, and next year's Illinois Central Area Conference will be held at Central.

— ADELAIDE KOTA



Arcola

On Friday, the Purple Riders claimed the legendary horseshoe in defeating rival ALAH 49-43 in boys' basketball, players and fans celebrating afterward.

— ADDEE MULLIGAN



CENTENNIAL EXCELLING IN ACADEMICS



Students' academic accomplishments were celebrated at the annual Academic Letter Awards Night. Sophomores through seniors who demonstrated academic excellence were invited, along with special guests who had impacted their educational careers. The Expressions Choir, led by **Stefanie Eustice**, started the ceremony with a harmonic rendition of 'The Star-Spangled Banner.' Pictured: coach **Courtney Louret** and several members of the girls' swimming and diving team, who were just a few of the many student-athletes honored that night.

— KENNEDY BORDEN



Monticello

Despite freezing temperatures and breezing winds, the Environmental Club took time to get some fresh air. On Friday, students and club sponsor **Emilie Walk** had their first meeting of the new year. There, they went on a nature walk and participated in nature bingo. Photos courtesy Environmental Club officer **Reece Spainhour**.

— MADY MELTON



Hoopeston Area

The boys' and girls' basketball teams competed in the Vermilion County Tournament at Danville Area Community College's Mary Miller Gymnasium. The pep band and cheerleading team were also in attendance, showing strong school spirit throughout the event. During the boys' game, the pep band performed a variety of songs, including 'Iron Man,' 'Carry On Wayward Son,' 'Holiday' and 'Bad Romance.' Pictured (via **Ginger Gonzalez**): the pep band, senior **Cole Miller** and junior **Maddy Klaber**.

— WILLAMINA CLAYTON



YEAR 10 OF HIGH SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL: POWERED BY DACC



Cissna Park

For the girls' and boys' basketball teams' annual Read with the Pack, players read to and listened to elementary classes in small groups. The kids, who had fun spending time with the players and building connections with them, were invited to the girls' game on Monday, where they got to high-five the players as they ran out. Pictured via **Josie Neukomm**: **Sophie Duis** and **Skyler Estay**.

— SOPHIE DUIS



RANTOUL IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Tamia Bell and **Kylie Brucke** earned **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.** scholarships highlighting their dedication to academics and service. This scholarship recognizes students who demonstrate leadership, strong character and a commitment to making a positive difference in their community. The students, who were recognized at Sunday's celebration at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, have been actively involved in school organizations and volunteer efforts that reflect Dr. King's values and dreams.

— **Tamia Bell**



Bement

Yearbook Club has been working hard to get as many pictures as possible as the school year comes to a close. School clubs got their chance to take group photos to be included in the yearbook. Pictured: **Lifesavers**.

— KIANA HUNTER



St. Thomas More

The family of Saint Peter had a food drive as members went door to door in a Mahomet neighborhood hoping to collect cans for our upcoming Construction event.

— DUNCAN OLIVERIA



Westville

The Westville/Georgetown-Ridge Farm wrestling team placed first out of the 17 teams at the Litchfield tournament.

— OLIVIA TROGLIA



Academy High

The newly formed boys' basketball team had its first-ever game on Jan. 13, the Owls losing 46-24 to the Calvary Christian Academy Knights in Normal. The Owls, coached by **Zane Greem**, played a good game, demonstrating sportsmanship, teamwork and dedication. Freshman **Kadair Ouedraogo** was a standout, scoring 11 points. At the end of the game, the Owls coined their chant of 'Hoot Hoot.' Pictured: **Lawrence Booth** (31) and **Kadair Ouedraogo** (21).

— EVIE PRICE



Tuscola

Students Against Destructive Decisions signed thank-you letters to the city's public-service members. At times, public servants get forgotten, even though their jobs are important to the way the town functions. SADD decided to reach out and thank them for the hard work they do on a daily basis.

— CLAIRE LEONARD





Milford

French and Spanish students have been hard at work recording and editing their third annual Bearcat News episode in French and Spanish. The students have done numerous interviews and fun games to show their memorization in their language. Pictured: **Joey Bushnell** and **Lucas Summers** doing an interview; **Taylor** and **Hannah** getting ready for their interview; and **Nolan Garcia** and **Aiden Frerichs** playing a memorization game.

— KAMI MUEHLING



ARMSTRONG FOCUSED TEAM-BUILDING

December's STEM Student of the Month is **Chesney Franzen**. Also, student council went to its winter retreat at the Linden in Rantoul. While there, they played many games and broke out into groups to talk about leadership, student council activities and mental health. For lunch, they had chicken strips with French fries, a salad and a cookie. They had the opportunity to listen to the mayor of Rantoul talk about leadership and mental health, as well

— Aubrey Self



Georgetown-Ridge Farm

Three cheerleaders went 'bows to bows' last week. The girls woke up early to compete in the Vermilion County cheer competition at Danville Area Community College. They hustled to Danville High School to compete in the Viking Classic archery tournament. Finally, they cheered on the boys' basketball team vs. BHRA at the county tournament. Pictured (via **Amanda Taylor**), from left: **Emersyn Willson**, **Cheyenne Orr** and **Tiffany Taylor**.

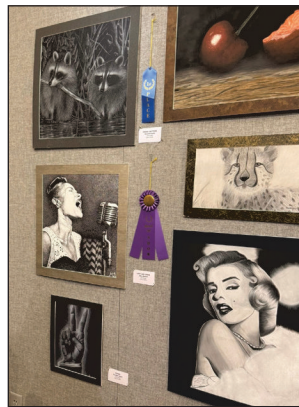
— TIFFANY TAYLOR



Cerro Gordo

Last week, art teacher **Jennifer Thomas** took students to the Decatur Arts Council Show, where the Broncos brought home many awards. **Jake Bolsen** earned Best in Show for the third year in a row and also received a second-place ribbon. **Eli Corpus** and **Autumn Gant** both earned first-place ribbons.

— ALEXA RODGERS



Villa Grove

Student council went to the KDASC winter retreat and made many memories, participating in competitive games, engaging in conversations, and bringing home new ideas to further improve student moral. **Bailey Keith** and **Evalina Kinkade** did the Fruit Roll-Up challenge, followed by the Connect 4 relay race done by **Peyton Ellis**, **Zeva Kirkman**, **Emma Carroll** and Kinkade. They then broke off into different groups to discuss certain topics, including the effects of social media, mental health and goal-planning. They will be hosting Hospitality Night in February.

— EVA PIERCY



Uni High

Last week, executive student council hosted Spirit Week, featuring the annual spirit assembly and many class-organized events. On Monday, students participated in musical chairs and tug-of-war, among other games, at the assembly. On Tuesday, students competed in a heated student-vs.-teacher basketball game. On Wednesday, students enjoyed snow cones. On Friday, students closed off the week with popcorn and a 'Legally Blonde' showing during lunchtime. Throughout the week, Uni students joined together to celebrate their school spirit with themed dress-up days, including 'Class Color Day,' 'Twin Day,' 'Formal Day,' 'Quarter Zip and Matcha Day' and 'Pajama Day.'

— SIMRAH KHAN



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Salt Fork

Oakwood-Salt Fork wrestling has been on a great kick. **Steven Uden**, a Salt Fork junior, recently secured his 100th career win. The program also won its ninth Vermillion Valley Conference and Vermillion County title in a row. At the 62nd annual Lyle King PIT, Salt Fork's **Devin Ehler** placed first, **Mason Swartz** placed third, **Jamison Chambliss** placed sixth, and Uden placed sixth. It was a highly competitive meet, so having multiple athletes place highly was extremely commendable.

— ANNA MCCOLLUM



JUDAH CHRISTIAN MEET ME ON THE ICE

On Saturday, the Judah community hosted its annual ice-skating event at the UI Ice Arena. Families with kids of all ages showed up, filling the atmosphere with laughs and many falling skaters. Some kids hit the ice for the first time, while others showed off their lifelong hockey or ice-skating skills. Overall, the event was a blast, allowing students and families to come together outside of normal school hours.

— Jack Dalbey



Unity

Last Thursday, student council took a trip to Rantoul for the KDASC Winter Retreat. Students interacted with members from other councils, listened in as the mayor of Rantoul gave a speech, and learned about goal-setting, mental health, and how to improve student councils. Pictured (courtesy **Jennifer Meyer**): from left, **Lucille Wiesbrook** (parliamentarian), **Annalise Shunk**, **Mylic Loftsgaard**, **Ella Darnall** (president) and **Vanna Schriefer**.

— CLAIRE MEHARRY



ALAH

What's better than a day off from school? A day filled with school spirit and basketball as students attended the third annual Corn Bowl Classic against the Cerro Gordo/Bement Broncos. The cheer team organized a pep rally and games for students to play to get excited for the day. The Cerro Gordo/Bement student body traveled to ALAH to cheer on the girls' basketball team, followed by the boys' basketball team. Pictured above: **Anna Rawlins**, **Riley Ward** and **Annabelle Vanausdoll**.



— LONDON DUGAN



Oakwood

Several student-athletes were recognized for recent accomplishments. Senior **Boston Serd** was awarded Comet of the Month for his leadership and dedication. Junior **Jasper Pesek** was recognized for showing responsibility at OHS and consistently setting a positive example. Freshman **Madelyn Serd** was named Comet Athlete of the Month for her effort and commitment in athletics. Finally, students and staff enjoyed a long weekend in honor of **Martin Luther King Jr. Day**, giving everyone time to reflect on his impact.

— SOPHIA AQUINO



LeRoy

The boys' basketball team defeated Fisher in a conference matchup. Coach **Jesse Hawkins** is the business teacher at the high school as well as strength and conditioning coach. Many students have him as a teacher while in high school at least once. To show their appreciation, students in his classes decided to wear shirts stating 'I'm just here for the coach' in the student section. Hawkins was unaware of the shirts — until the student section revealed them before the national anthem. Shirts were also made for Hawkins' children, who often sit in the student section at home games.

— MOLLY SCHEUER



Shiloh

Last Wednesday's annual National Honor Society induction celebrated six new members. NHS values academic performance, character and leadership. NHS adviser **Penny Krabel** expressed her pride in the individuals elected. New inductee **Ahlyssa Garwood** said, 'NHS is such a renowned and respected society, I am very grateful that my peers and I have the opportunity to display our charitable skills through this organization.' Pictured, from left: (front row) **Payton Scott**, **Maggie Milburn**, **Hennessy White** and **Brooke Tharp**; and (back row) **Ali Cash**, **Taylor Williams**, **Katie Holmes**, **Zoey Shreeves** and Krabel.

— ALI CASH

YEAR 10 OF HIGH SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL: POWERED BY DACC

Gibson City-Melvin-Sibley

The Future Business Leaders of America attended the Central Area Conference in Bloomington. Eleven GCMS students competed in events and took tests. Several students placed, and top scorers were **Skylar Doman** and **Nolan Lowe**, who both placed second.

— ADDISON FARMER



PAXTON-BUCKLEY-LODA TAKING CENTER STAGE

Congratulations to students cast in this year's production of 'Into the Woods.' Directed by **Tiffany Howard** and co-directed by **Jordan Kinney Muñoz**, the show will be performed April 10–12. 'Into the Woods' is a musical by **Stephen Sondheim** that intertwines classic fairy tales with themes of choice and consequence. A full cast list can be found on the PBL Theatre Instagram page, @pblhsmusical.

— Brayden Kief



Fisher

Scholastic Bowl JV won their tournament on Thursday, 210-70. On Thursday, I had the opportunity to share the latest news headlines on News-Gazette radio on WDWS in Champaign. I am very thankful for the experience and had a great time representing the Bunnies.

— KESIAH MUSICK



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Heritage

The FFA chapter hosted its first meeting of 2026. The theme was 'Neon,' and members participated in seven rounds of glow bingo. The room lights were turned off, and the glow-in-the-dark lights turned on. Streamers, balloons and do-bbers filled the room with decorations. **Coltin Shanks**, **Maddox Odum** and **Kale McComas** (pictured) were among the seven winners in what was a great way to start the new year for the chapter.

— RYLAN WHITE

Blue Ridge

On Jan. 15, the Knights played a hard-fought game against Lowpoint-Washburn. Many points were made by freshman **Jesse Smith** as well as a three-pointer by junior **Austin Clark**. Both JV and varsity had the crowd on the edge of their seats.

— KARLY WARNER



BHRA

On Saturday, the cheer team competed in the Vermilion County Tournament at Danville Area Community College. After weeks of preparation, the team took the mat with confidence and delivered a strong performance that reflected their hard work, determination and teamwork. It paid off as the girls earned a third-place finish out of seven teams.

— LAHNA BENJAMIN



St. Joseph-Ogden

SJ-O's first-ever winter pep rally was put together by math teacher **Kelly Johnson**. Activities consisted of the pep band's performance of the school's fight song, the cheerleading squad's competition routine, a dance-off arranged by the dance team, and, lastly, Spartan games. The rally aimed to energize students for the second semester and maintain their motivation. It was a great success, creating a positive atmosphere for the new semester.

— KATIE ERICKSEN

