

HIGH SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL

Powered by Danville Area Community College



MIXING BUSINESS WITH PLEASURE

AT SALT FORK: 28 FFA members spent a busy week at the **99th National FFA Convention & Expo** in Indianapolis. **Kaitlyn Woodard, Devin Ehler, Ryker Williams, Tucker Pabst** and **Tripp Huffman** (bottom right) presented on the Student Showcase Stage, touching on the diversity of Illinois agriculture and displaying an educational video they created. **Anna McCollum**, Illinois FFA Section 18 president, attended with the Illinois Association State Team, helping run contests and convention setup. **Ellie Brooks** and **Charlie Shortz** (top right) represented Salt Fork on the main convention stage, where they were awarded as a Gold Star Chapter — the highest ranking for an FFA chapter at the national level. Students also went on tours, where they had opportunities to gain knowledge on careers within the agricultural industry, had fun at the Three Hills Rodeo (below) and improved leadership and communication skills at workshops that included inspiring retiring addresses from national FFA officers.

— Anna McCollum



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YEAR 11 OF HIGH SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL: POWERED BY DACC



This year's group includes a record 46 students from 44 schools (*visit news-gazette.com for our photo gallery*). We'll spotlight each correspondent in Top of the Morning on Wednesdays.

Academy: Nicolle Scifres
ALAH: Leighton Poulos
Arcola: Aymara Leal
Armstrong-Potomac: Myah Bartlow
Bement: Makenna Kindred
BHRA: Addie Kruse
Blue Ridge: Cheyanne Smith
Centennial: Kayla Boyd
Cerro Gordo: Jessa Cross
Champaign Central: Sophie Nixon-Gasyna
Chrisman: Morgan Simpson
Cissna Park: Ava Henrichs
Danville: Ashanti Conaway
DeLand-Weldon: Michael Rogers
Fisher: Emily Coulter

Georgetown-Ridge Farm: Liz Walls
Gibson City-Melvin-Sibley: Kasen DeFries
Heritage: Micah Sommer
Hoopeston Area: Hallie Allen
Iroquois West: Jordyn Meents
Judah Christian: Kelsi Drollinger, Xavier Russell
LeRoy: Adrienne Underhill, Jacey Hageman
Mahomet-Seymour: Abby Eden
Maroa-Forsyth: Riley Hackleman
Milford: Kami Muehling
Monticello: Rory Cooper
Mount Zion: Macie Veale
Oakland: Olivia VonLanken
Oakwood: Sidney Dunavan

Paxton-Buckley-Loda: Alex Jones
Rantoul: Jayla Allen
St. Joseph-Ogden: Alivia Learned
St. Thomas More: Quinn Miller
Salt Fork: Anna McCollum
Schlarman: Reagan Troglia
Shiloh: Ali Cash
Sullivan: Claire Kursell
Tuscola: Emma Spillman
Uni High: Krishna Jaswal
Unity: Grace Wherley
Urbana: Sophia Sheyko-Frailey
Villa Grove: Maya Garner
Watseka: Vanyasah Hickman
Westville: Myla Mackiewicz



School tours

Carrying on a social-media tradition, each student will take over The News-Gazette's Snapchat account to go behind the scenes at their school (**above:** GCMS homecoming).



Academy High

Students, friends, family and faculty gathered at The Yard on Broadway in downtown Urbana for an informal homecoming meet-up organized by Principal **Erin Smith**. English teacher **Megan Hutchison** invited several students to participate in the 'How's it Hangin'?' game.

— NICOLLE SCIFRES



Oakwood

During the second annual Salt Kettle Classic, senior running back **Kyler Johnson** ran for 330 yards and scored three touchdowns in the Comets' 41-28 win over Salt Fork. Setting a school record for single-game rushing yards and total yards, he received WCIA's Athlete of the Week. Photo via **Shannon Wallace**.

— SIDNEY DUNAVAN

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ST. JOSEPH-OGDEN MYSTERY SOLVED



Last weekend, the drama department put on two showings of 'Too Many Detectives at the Murder Mansion,' a play where a group of famous detectives have to uncover who killed the owner of the mansion they are in. A lot of time was put into this show by not only the cast and crew, but also family and community members. The play was an amazing success, a great mix of humor and suspense. Photos courtesy **Mataya Thaman**.

— ALIVIA LEARNED



Rantoul

State Sen. **Paul Faraci** visited, taking time for a picture with the yearbook class and teacher **Rebecca Westbrook**.

— JAYLA ALLEN



Centennial



Spooky season hit the school's parking lot at the annual trunk-or-treat. It was led by local businesses and student clubs like Interact, Tri-M and Charger 4-H. Pictured (above): **Ruby Landry, Isabella Valera Castro, Nico Percoco, Octavia McQueen and Sadie Warne**.

— KAYLA BOYD



St. Thomas More

On Friday, the Sabres won a boys' soccer regional title with a 3-1 win against Uni High. **Raphael Dongo Kengue** had a hat trick to lead the way.

— QUINN MILLER

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What's COOL in SCHOOL

Maroa-Forsyth
Ashlyn Britz's eighth-hour design class is in the process of making 3D masks. They were coming along nicely as students paper mache'd them last week.

— RILEY HACKLEMAN



PAXTON-BUCKLEY-LODA
ONE FINAL SERVE

Volleyball had its Senior Night on Oct. 19, celebrating **Hallee Johnson, Rowan Caposieno, Josie Kaufman, Kylie Rust and Emmy Bagwell**. After the match against Iroquois West, each senior was served the ball by their parent, where they went and spiked it over the net for a wrap-up of their high school careers.

— Alex Jones



BHRA

FFA students attended the 99th National FFA Convention & Expo in Indianapolis. Students **Cami Carpenter, Madison Heidrick, Tinley Siddens, Kandace Behrends, Maddy Dillon, Danielle Behrends, Kyle Judy, Benton Brown, Addison Smith, Kaitlyn Powell, Heather Lucero, Gracie Lucero** and FFA adviser **Lindsay Hagley** celebrated achievements, learned more about the FFA organization and connected with other FFA groups.

— ADDIE KRUSE



Champaign Central

National Art Honor Society (NAHS) adviser **Shane Rodems**, club secretary **Beatriz Yoo** and adviser **Carol-Lynn Comparetto** teamed up for the organization's ice cream fundraiser at Cold Stone Creamery. Last Wednesday's 'Teacher Scoop' helped fund its annual spring all-student art exhibition. NAHS received 20 percent of the proceeds from each purchase.

— SOPHIE NIXON-GASYNA



Watseka

On Sunday, 15 members were inducted into the Watseka chapter of National Honor Society. Family members, friends and faculty were given the opportunity to attend as 124 guests were invited. NHS sponsors **Christopher Augustine** and **Casie Hanson** along with previous members were among those to congratulate inductees.

— VANYSAH HICKSMAN



Heritage

On Oct. 15, the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America club (FCCLA) raised over \$3,000 for **Megan Lewis**, a mother of three district students who is battling breast cancer, during the volleyball team's Pink Night. FCCLA sold T-shirts, raffle baskets and baked goods to raise the funds. Every year, FCCLA and the volleyball team work together to raise money for breast cancer awareness and treatment.

— MICAH SOMMER



At news-gazette.com
GALLERY: Photo Editor Rob Le Cates attended Pink Night.



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Danville

Students from National Honor Society and Key Club volunteered at North Ridge’s annual PBIS Carnival Celebration, making sure stations of games, tattoos, food and drinks ran smoothly. The celebration encourages the students of North Ridge to strive for greatness in an academic environment. Pictured: **Kali Bacys**, **Ava Foster** and **Sam Wagner**.

— ASHANTI CONAWAY



Cissna Park
Mady Marcott is helping kindergarten with math during her teacher’s aid class. **Kelsey Maul** practiced her biology vocabulary through a fun scavenger hunt. **Easton Boyce** presented slides about World War II in English class.

— AVA HENRICHS



ARMSTRONG
MORNING MOJO



Chrisman

The volleyball team won its last match at home, sending seniors **Emma Williamson**, **Remington Laughhead** and **Lyndsi Smith** out on a high note. Also, congratulations to freshman **Willia Martinez** for finishing third at the conference cross-country meet.

— MORGAN SIMPSON



On Oct. 20, senior fall athletes in volleyball, cross-country, golf, soccer and football were celebrated between the junior varsity and varsity volleyball matches. Due to parent-teacher conferences, students had Friday off. That morning, soccer players **Gage Foster**, **Miles Learned**, **Wyatt Boyden** and **Mattisyn Newnum** joined cheerleaders **Myah Bartlow**, **Jaiden Gentry**, **Brooklynn Hunt** and **Layla Reardon** for a visit to Gifford Grade School for Fist Bump Friday. They greeted grade-school students with high-fives and fist-bumps. That night, the volleyball team went against the boys’ basketball team in a ‘Pumpkin Off,’ where each player tried to paint the best pumpkin.

— Myah Bartlow



Mt. Zion

Students in Advanced English III classes took a field trip to the American Writers Museum in Chicago on Oct. 19. They were able to see and interact with the exhibits and learn more about the authors of famous literature, even using real typewriters. Students also had the chance to visit the Bean and see other Chicago landmarks.

— MACIE VEALE



Monticello

For their final competition of the season, the Marching Sages attended the Bands of America Super Regionals in St. Louis. With a 4 a.m. call time and three-hour bus ride, the Sages made the trek to be the first of 64 bands to perform. They placed seventh in Class 1A preliminary performance, enjoying the experience of performing and watching fellow bands from across the country. Photos courtesy **Noah Hettinger**.

— RORY COOPER



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Sullivan

Student council organized the annual Fall Blood Drive and collected 30 units of blood, which can save up to 90 lives. The hard work of **Marsha Kirby, Daisy Richardson, Emma Drake, Julia Moody** and **Atleigh Stollardmade** — as well as every donor — made it possible. Student council members also had a blast attending the EIDASC Fall Workshop last Tuesday.

— CLAIRE KURSELL



GIBSON CITY-MELVIN-SIBLEY
TAKING OVER INDIANAPOLIS

FFA members traveled to Indianapolis on Wednesday through Friday to attend the 99th National FFA Convention & Expo. Members explored the Expo Hall, connected with businesses and colleges, and attended a general session at Lucas Oil Stadium with nearly 69,000 FFA members. They heard from keynote speaker and retired National FFA Secretary **Scott McKain**. Members also participated in the National Days of Service at Cool Creek Park, removing invasive honeysuckle to protect native plants. On the final day, they toured the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD) and learned how mounted officers and horses help patrol downtown Indianapolis.

— Kasen DeFries



Uni High

Homecoming week came later than usual, but students still made the best of it. The week featured dress-up days, including 'Pajama Day,' 'Iconic Meme Day' and 'Dressed for the Wrong Occasion.' On Monday, students showed up to support the volleyball team at its Senior Night match. The team brought home a win and celebrated its seniors. Student council hosted a flag football tournament in Uni's greenspace. The winning team received a trophy to pose with and a cookie cake to share. The homecoming dance was organized by senior student council officers **James Yan, Robenas Tadesse, Jenny Nham** and **Irene Kim**, along with senior student council sponsors **Ben Leff** and **Bridget Hughes**. The dance took place Saturday at the Orpheum, with the theme 'A Tale as Old as Time.'

— KRISHNA JASWAL



Judah Christian

Senior Nights for soccer, volleyball and cross-country took place last week. On Oct. 12, soccer celebrated home-schooler **Michael Kaap** in his last home game against Calvary Christian. On Oct. 19, volleyball senior **Kelsi Drollinger** and cross-country seniors **Paige Martin** and **Ivey Webb** were recognized at the last home volleyball match against Heritage.

— KELSIE DROLLINGER, XAVIER RUSSELL



ALAH

The eco team attended a meet at Lake Shelbyville. The students took tests over River Ecology, Watersheds, and Edible and Medical Botany, finishing 14th out of 25 teams. Pictured: **Cassidy Rohachs, Dustin Hodge, Nathan Rafferty** and **Max Boddy**.

— LEIGHTON POULOS

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Villa Grove

Cheer moms came together to host an amazing fundraiser in honor of the football team making the playoffs. Cheerleaders also got involved by painting cars to help bring excitement to the community. Villa Grove hosted a playoff game for the first time since 2015, making this a truly special moment for the school and the entire community. Pictured courtesy Sara Carroll: Brisey Briones, Maggi Clodfelder and Taylor Duke.

— MAYA GARNER



Tuscola

At last Wednesday's fundraiser for the Class of 2030, four teams played donkey basketball: the Dunkin Donkeys (staff and administrators); Badonkadonks (seniors); Hoofin' Hoopsters (students); and the VIPs (Very Important Pack Mules), made up of town celebrities like the mayor. The Hoof-in' Hoopsters took down the Dunkin Donkeys in the championship game.

— EMMA SPILLMAN



DeLAND-WELDON
READY FOR TAKEOFF

Students attended the 99th National FFA Convention & Expo in Indianapolis. Also, the school's Career Fair included a Blackhawk helicopter.

— Michael Rogers



Mahomet-Seymour

There are many clubs offered to students to participate in, including the Finance Club. The Finance Club was started last year by current seniors Will Bao, Kyce Shihabi and Jack Van Hoorn to encourage students' financial literacy and give them opportunities to learn about careers in finance and business. Last week, the club hosted guest speaker Nate Evans, who shared about real estate: buying vs. renting, ways to make money through real-estate assets, and careers within the industry. Meanwhile, the Drama Club is currently working on its fall production: a play titled 'Cycle in Wonderland.' The show has three 45-minute one-act plays and will be performed in late November.

— ABBY EDEN



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Blue Ridge

Seniors from cheer, football and marching band were celebrated at the final home football game of the season. From left: Aerilyn Johnson, Addie Browning, Cheyanna Smith, Trevor Gembecki, Shawn Christie, Kamdyn Hindshaw, Maxwell White, Drake Hardesty, Elias Nolan and Renn Light. In a 42-20 overtime loss to Metro East Lutheran, Christie had five sacks, and junior Chase Ellis scored a touchdown with two seconds left to force OT.

— CHEYANNA SMITH

LERROY
NICE ACOUSTICS



Music teacher Bridgette Wells has always dreamed of singing in an empty grain bin to hear the acoustics. The choir had the opportunity to make her dream come true. The choir performed 'And So It Goes' by Billy Joel, arranged by Kirby Shaw. To watch the full video, visit the Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom Facebook page.

— Adrienne Underhill and Jacey Hageman



Urbana

The annual Latin Heritage Assembly included performances from the Mariachi band and Ballet Folklórico dancers. The assembly featured guest speaker Jose Vazquez, a local artist, and games to engage the student body. Photos courtesy Maria Poblano: America Salome-Rivera (blue dress with roses) and Gisselle Juarez-Alquicira (blue and yellow skirt).

— SOPHIA SHEYKO FRAILEY



Bement

Homecoming was celebrated last week as students participated in many fun activities. The theme this year was 'Space,' voted for by the high school student council, led by Jill Clodfelter. On Wednesday, high school girls played in an upperclassmen vs. underclassmen powderpuff game, where the underclassmen took the victory. Friday's parade was filled with the marching band, class floats, Bement alumni and the 2026 homecoming court. The junior class won the float-building competition with their Area 51 theme. Friday night's game was filled with students and members of the community who brought their Bronco pride.

— MAKENNA KINDRED



Westville

The high school's Leo's Club made a trunk for Westville's Trunk or Treat. They had an amazing turnout with many helpers.

— MYLA MACKIEWICZ

A large group of people, including men, women, and children, posing for a group photo. Many are wearing bright pink t-shirts and hoodies with the "PINK OUT FOR HER" logo. The group is gathered in front of a building with blue doors and pink balloons. A woman in the center holds a bouquet of pink flowers.



The volleyball team had its Pink Out match. Leading up to it, the team and booster club sold shirts to raise money for breast cancer awareness. At the match, the team and booster club donated the proceeds to a local person fighting cancer.

— OLIVIA
VONLANKEN

FISHER FIELD TRIP



— **Emily Coulter**



On Oct. 21, the volleyball team celebrated Senior Night against St. Anne. **Navaeh Medina, Kailey Vaske and Milla Martinez** were honored for their hard work and dedication throughout their four years as part of the program.

— **JORDYN MEENTS**



Football made the playoffs, volleyball celebrated Senior Night, and the chess team brought home great results from its tournament. Pictured, from left: (back row) **Kayne Morgan, Franklin Sullivan, William Runyan, Reece Walls, Anthony Lee and Nickolas Tedrick;** and (front row) **Hanley Nichols, Cullen Jones, Daniel Scott, Tegyn Grant, Maggie Scott, Angel Romos Torres and Sterling Liles.** The JV team earned second place overall, with **Reece Walls** (bottom right) placing fourth on Board 2 and **William Runyan** (left) second place on Board 3.

— LIZ WALLS



The volleyball team celebrated Senior Night, honoring **Irene Rangel, Addison Forsyth, Reagan Trogia** and **Kamilia Malone**.

— **REAGAN TROGLIA**

