

# HIGH SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL

Powered by Danville Area Community College



## CHEERS! GCMS camp 'super enjoyable'

**Gibson City-Melvin-Sibley** cheerleaders hosted the 'Fly with Fergie' cheer camp, with proceeds benefiting a local individual battling cancer. Kids from pre-K to fifth grade learned a dance, along with a crowd cheer. The high school and mini cheerleaders performed for the crowd during halftime. The dance was to the 'High School Musical' classic 'We're All In This Together.' The camp was led by high school cheerleaders **Addi Farmer, Maryn Berry, Lizzy Goodin, Alyssa Morgan, Hadley Doman, Chloe Tjarks, Jordan Kaeding, Kelsey Whitehouse, Jodi Bauer, Cheyenne Welhoun, Makayla Evans, Lilly Giourx** and **Emery Summers**. The camp was a great success, and everyone had a great time. Said Goodin: 'The camp was super enjoyable to be a part of. The kids put in a lot of hard work to learn some cheers and a dance. It was exciting to see the kids be able to show off what they learned at halftime of the varsity game.'

— Addison Farmer



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# YEAR 10 OF HIGH SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL: POWERED BY DACC

## Meet the crew

This year's group includes 43 students from 42 schools (*visit [news-gazette.com](https://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](mailto:jrossow@news-gazette.com).



# CHAMPAIGN CENTRAL GATHERED IN PROTEST

Students organized a walkout in protest of current government policies. Equipped with signs, students rallied together and marched around the school.  
— Adelaide Kota



### Maroa-Forsyth

Boys' basketball hosted the 12-team BSN Sangamo Shootout on Saturday. Each game had a AAA Player of the Game. Junior **Caebrian Lee** received the award after a 63-49 win over Pleasant Plains.

— AUBREY STEWART

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### Urbana

The high school media group (including the UHS Echo and Rosemary) had their annual Crush Can sale for Valentine's Day. The group sweetened up school spirit by giving students the option to purchase as many cans as their heart desired and write blissful notes to their peers or significant others. The tradition is always adored throughout the school. To add to the Valentine's Day celebrations, student council created post-it notes to put on every locker in the school. The notes had kind messages on them that reminded students how special they are.

— RUBY PITTENGER



### St. Thomas More

Family and school captains introduced the next house competition, March Madness Dodgeball. Each house will compete over the next two months in an NCAA tournament-style tournament where the last house standing wins. Houses were also asked to make one bracket per house, and the house with the most accurate bracket at the end of the competition wins house points.

— DUNCAN OLIVEIRA



### Westville

On Monday, the girls' basketball team celebrated senior **Madison Duke**. Everyone dressed up in a Hawaiian theme for game night and came to support her.

— OLIVIA TROGLIA



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Centennial

In **Amy Irles'** woodworking classes, students' creations are always put toward a good cause. Her advanced woodworking students recently finished building a bookshelf that will be gifted to a family with a new home from Habitat for Humanity. Centennial has also partnered with the Illini Reading Council to provide books to go with the artisan bookshelves. The woodworking program received a generous lumber donation from Armstrong Lumber this year, allowing them to focus more resources on future supplies and necessary equipment. Among those pictured: senior **Mia Boitnott** and teacher Irle.

— KENNEDY BORDEN



Fisher

FFA members competed in the state Vet Tech and the district Horse Judging CDEs. Also, jazz band had a concert and auction to raise money for the band boosters. The crowd was given a complimentary meal along with beautiful jazz. Finally, pep band had an amazing time performing at the girls' and boys' basketball games.

— KESIAH MUSICK



Unity

Student council had its Sweetheart event for Valentine's Day last week. Members wrote cards and made cookies, which were then delivered to local residents. It was a great way to spread love and bring happiness to community members. Pictured: **Ally Shaw** delivering her card and cookies; and **Grace Wherley** making a delivery to a local nursing home.

— CLAIRE MEHARRY



DANVILLE PASSION FOR CHOIR



Show Choir started their season off strong. Last Thursday, Danville hosted Prima Vista, the first showcasing of both the high school and Northridge Middle School's show choirs. At Prima Vista, two scholarships were awarded on behalf of the late **Aniyah Davis**. As former delegation president and her major impact on the program, her parents awarded the scholarships to two aspiring seniors who showed passion for the show choir program and who embodied Aniyah's positive and uplifting spirit: seniors **Serenity Reed** and **Dayo White**.

On Saturday, Show Choir — led by new director **Karrin Estes** — traveled to Southmont, Ind., for their first competition of the season. The all-boys group, the Executives, won best show concept, second runnerup, and senior **Bryce Martin** was awarded best performer. The all-girls group, the Contemporaries, qualified for finals and made first runnerup. Reed was awarded best performer. The mixed group, Delegation, qualified for finals and won second runnerup. Junior **Chaise Ferguson** was awarded best performer, and White was awarded best male soloist. In solo competitions, White was the grand champion of the Southmont competition. Upper right: Reed, Estes and White.

— Rylee Jack



Georgetown-Ridge Farm

The Scholastic Bowl team is off to a 3-1 start, beating Chrisman (250-180) and Milford (260-170) last week. **Cale Cavanaugh** had 26 tossups and **Kayne Morgan** 12 tossups. Pictured (via **Travis Tate**), from left: **Dierks Lewis**, **Logan Pearson**, **Cavanaugh**, **Morgan** and **Scarlett Rife**.

— TIFFANY TAYLOR



Mahomet-Seymour

The boys' wrestling team hosted and won an IHSA Dual Team Sectionals meet. The Bulldogs advanced with a 42-25 win over Bloomington, marking the 23rd — and sixth straight — Elite Eight dual team berth for the Bulldogs.

— ABBY EDEN



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## Armstrong

Five FFA members competed in the Section 18 Proficiencies competition. **Kayla Wernigk's** Supervised Agriculture Experience project was Poultry Production; **Suzanne Hawker's** was Equine Placement and Equine Entrepreneurship; **Adisyn McCarty's** was Agriculture Education Placement; **Isaac Kennel's** was Speciality Animal Production; and **Cala Reifsteck's** was Food Service Placement. Wernigk and Hawker advanced to District 4 competition. Pictured, from left: Wernigk, Hawker, McCarty and Kennel. The STEM Student of the Month for January is **Li'terr Beasley**. He was awarded for his hard work to figure things out on his own and his dedication to raise his performance level.

— AUBREY SELF



## Paxton-Buckley-Loda

On Friday, the cheer team did an outstanding job at the IHSA State Cheerleading Competition, showcasing months of hard work, dedication and training.

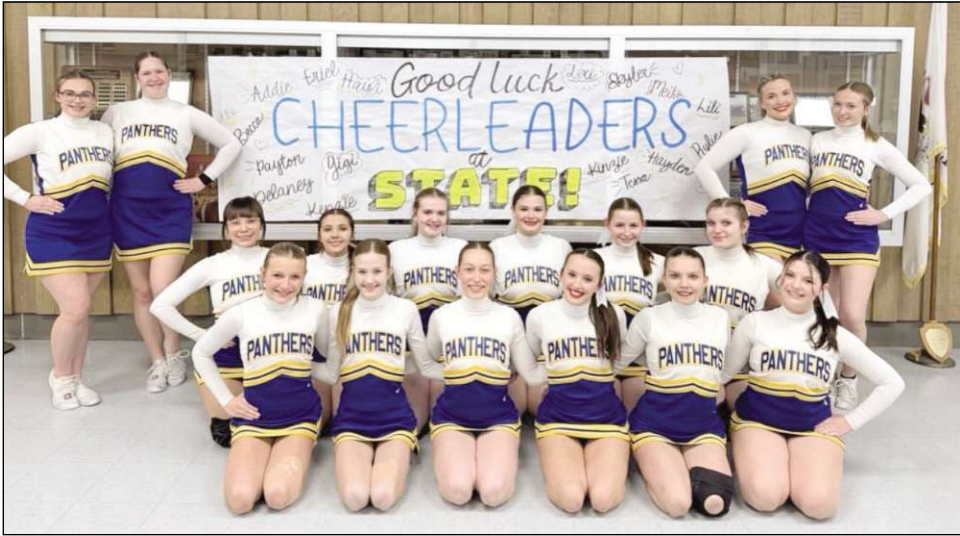
**Payton Lackey**, a junior flyer who has been on the team since the start of high school, said it was 'truly an out-of-this-world feeling' when the results were announced. 'As we were sitting there waiting for the state qualifier names to be called, we were all holding hands and feeling all of the emotions. When our name was called for fifth place to qualify, all of us instantly started crying and hugging each other, completely full of joy.'

When asked what helped the team reach state, Lackey credited positivity, consistency and gratitude. 'We always focused on finding the positives instead of being negative,' she said. 'We made sure to stay consistent with both our skills and our mindset, and we were always grateful for what we had and everything we accomplished throughout the season.'

This achievement would not have been possible without the dedication and leadership of coaches **Madison Warner**, **Kailyn Kleinsteiber** and **Courtney Ann-Schwing**, as well as choreographer **Kyle Williams**.

When asked to describe the team in just one word, Lackey said 'family.'

— BRAYDEN KIEF



## DeLand-Weldon

As the wrestling season comes to end, it is only the beginning of an amazing program at D-W, which brought back the sport this year. Thanks to head coach **Justin Urnst** and assistant **Kayla Ross** for stepping up and spending many hours leading the team.

— NATE SMITH

## Hoopeston Area

Track-and-field coach **Erika Seidel** said her main goal this season is to qualify athletes for state during both the indoor and outdoor seasons — but success isn't only measured in medals. Seidel focuses heavily on helping runners grow as athletes as well as teammates. The team will graduate 10-12 seniors in May, making it the largest graduating group in recent years. Many of these athletes have been part of the program since middle school. They've helped shape the team's culture and leadership.

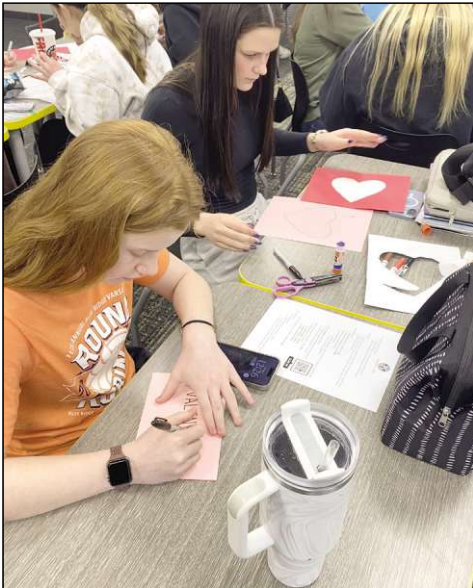
— WILLAMINA CLAYTON



# BEMENT DRESS ON THEME

Students looked forward to FCCLA Week. On Monday, it's 'Sweet Dreams,' where students can come to school in their pajamas (pictured: **Madelyn Somers** and **Payton Somers**). Tuesday was a fan favorite: 'Rhyme without Reason.' On Wednesday, students could show their love for their teacher by dressing like them. On Thursday, students can bring anything but a backpack to school. The week ends right before Valentine's Day, as students will show their love by wearing red or pink.

— KIANA HUNTER



## Tuscola

Key Club had a meeting to make Valentines for the teachers, an easy way for students to show appreciation. Pictured: **Phoebe Wilkins**, **Lilly Kurtz**, **Stella Spencer**, **Margaret Ford** and **Sawyer Cleland** making the special cards.

— CLAIRE LEONARD



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Milford

On Saturday, FFA held its 13th annual Milford FFA Alumni Scholarship Auction at Town and Country Events. The group raised \$67,000 and provided the community great entertainment. Pictured (back to front, from left): **Bradley Barrett, Jackson Lavicka, Garrett Koester, Jack Van Hoveln, Xavi Cintora, Madysyn Laffoon, Molly Coffey, Hagen Hoaks, Koltlen Hiskes, Eli Hornbuckle, Carter Land, Wade Homerding, Brady Brassard, Joie Girdler, Sydney Seyfert, Abigail Beckman, Madelyn Grimaldo, adviser Quentin Schaumburg, adviser Dylan Payne, Waylon Champion, Braydon Forbes, Bentley Walwer, Sesilia Salinas, Erica Felton, Aleigha Rudisill, Hannah Potter, Lucas Bonds, Alex Martin, Gage Mann, Noah Brittenham, Jason Moore, Sophie Newman, Hailey Rieches, Dylan Potter, Isaac Schaumburg, Cohen Cheever and Liam Lafoe; Mann and Forbes; and Koester, Brassard, Cintora, Potter, Beckman and Coffey.**

— KAMI MUEHLING



HERITAGE JOB WELL DONE



Seniors involved in boys' and girls' basketball, cheerleading and pep band were recognized last week for their dedication, hard work and leadership. The girls' basketball team recognized Heritage/Academy High co-op student-athletes **Bre Patten** and **Maegan Frye** (pictured with parents) before their game against Unity Christian on Monday. On Friday, **Rylan White, Joshua Stierwalt, Lukas Miller, Anthony Happ** and **Andriy Bilyi** were recognized from the boys' basketball team (pictured with parents). **Mary Bensyl, Kiara Jones** and **Breanna McGarigle** were recognized for being a part of the cheer team. **Payton Parrish, Eli Denmark-Collins, Leigha Tatar, Kaydynn Curry-Varner** and **Brenley Sands** were recognized for pep band. It was a great two nights to recognize seniors in the Class of 2026!

— Rylan White



Villa Grove

Student council hosted a Winter Workshop for elementary students, bringing together fun activities and creativity for all ages. Students were divided into two groups, pre-K through second grade and third grade through sixth grade. Throughout the event, they made beaded snowflakes, colored wooden snowflake ornaments, decorated coloring sheets, enjoyed tasty snacks, listened to music and played games. **John Morrow** helped lead the older group by showing students how to complete their craft, while **Skylar Sanders, Zeva Kirkman, Lily Wyant** and **Blake Swan** prepared the snacks. The event was a huge hit, leaving parents asking if another workshop could be held in the future.

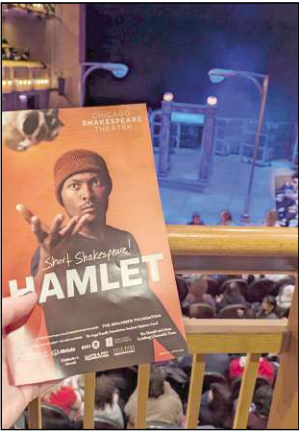
— EVA PIERCY



Judah Christian

At last Thursday's Discover Night, prospective students and parents were welcomed to the school. Students and teachers shared information about life at Judah and featured displays and activities that highlighted different subjects and programs. The event gave families a chance to see what daily life looks like at the school and built connections with the students and teachers.

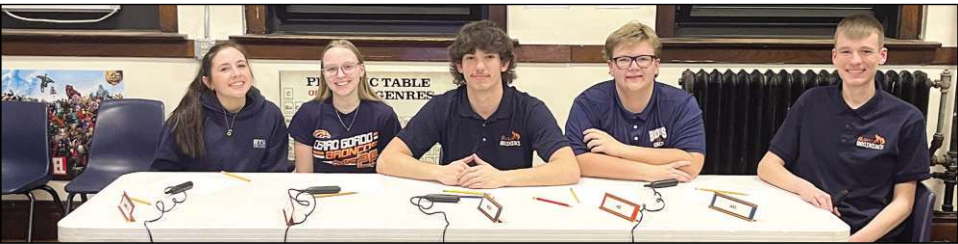
— JACK DALBEY



Academy High

Last Thursday, students traveled to the Navy Pier to watch Chicago Shakespeare Theater's abridged production of 'Hamlet.' The program, called short Shakespeare, is designed to make Shakespeare accessible to high school students and allow them to see it performed live. The show was set in the modern day, with phones, guns and a VR duel. There were several moments of audience interaction, and an interview segment with the actors at the end, allowing the audience to be active participants in the story. This trip will likely continue as an annual event at Academy High for many years to come.

— EVIE PRICE



Cerro Gordo

The Scholastic Bowl teams wrapped up their regular season with strong performances. JV (**Ayden Tuel, Knox Shackelford, Makenna Liming** and **Alex Looper**) finished 6-4, scoring 1,890 points and correctly answering 190 questions. The varsity team (**Abe Nixon, Jake Bolsen** and **Mickey Tirpak**) also ended the season 5-6, earning 1,840 points with 184 correct answers. Pictured, from left: **Samantha Sterling, Maddie Gant, Tirpak, Nixon** and **Bolsen**.

— GRACELYNN OSBORN




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## Monticello

Ahead of Valentine’s Day, the media center has been making big efforts to spread the love. From Feb. 2-6, the Library Advisory Board sponsored a simple and sweet craft: be-dazzling books. The activity was open to any student at the high school, allowing them to wrap library books in brown craft paper and decorate them with their favorite supplies. An abundance of stickers, ribbon, cardstock paper and, of course, gems were available for use. This week, the media center will host a ‘blind date with a book’ event, where these wrapped books will be available for checkout. Pictured: students **Addie Johns, Kinley Fink, Lauren Good, Sophia Austin** and **Ashley Stiverson** taking part in the craft.

— MADY MELTON



# SULLIVAN SING INTO 2ND



Show choir — the Sullivan Singer — competed against 13 teams at Crete-Monee. The choir got second in our division. Also, a shoutout to **Kylee Agney** and **Lily Moxley** for competing in solo competitions.

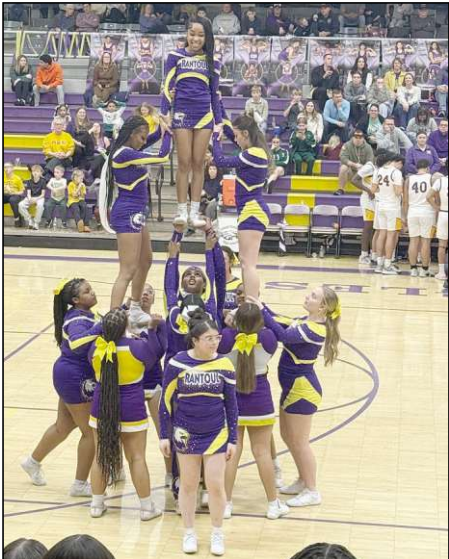
— *Lily Moxley*



## Rantoul

Last Friday marked the third senior night for the Class of 2026! The gym was filled with energy as the boys’ basketball team, cheerleading and the Eaglette dance team were recognized for their hard work and dedication — a memorable night that celebrated not just the basketball game — the Eagles won! — but the lasting impact these seniors made at the high school.

— TAMIA BELL



## Blue Ridge

To raise money for their upcoming trip to Florida, the band held a spaghetti supper. Students played pep band songs while community members had their dinner, and the event was enjoyed by all. Picture courtesy of **Melissa Craft**.

— KARLY WARNER

## LeRoy

Seniors **Laila Carr** and **Morgan Fleming** signed national letters of intent on Friday to play softball at Parkland College. These two have been leaders in the softball program since their freshman year: Carr as the catcher and Fleming as the shortstop. They are also high-achieving academic students, both being members of the National Honor Society, Illinois State Scholars and more. Carr has also had success in volleyball, breaking the career kill record with 1,136. Fleming is involved in volleyball and golf as well, helping build the girls’ golf program and still being a viable player on the volleyball court.

— MOLLY SCHEUER



## BHRA

Last Thursday, motivational speaker **Terrence Lee Talley** visited to lead a school assembly alongside the band 10 Talents. Throughout the presentation, Talley shared messages centered on encouragement, respect and the importance of uplifting one another, engaging students through both speaking and music. At the conclusion of the assembly, students were invited onto the gym floor to participate in an interactive activity. A long sheet of paper was placed out for students to gather around and sign, writing positive and affirming comments about their classmates. The activity aimed to foster kindness, build confidence and strengthen the sense of community within the student body.

— LAHNA BENJAMIN