

HIGH SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL

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BEST OF TIMES

AT HERITAGE: Scoring record, career first and game ball for coach

It was a special week for Heritage High's boys' basketball team, which beat ALAH, Neoga and Blue Ridge. Against Neoga, **RYLAN WHITE** broke **BRAD WILSON's** career scoring record (1,471 points) that had been standing for 28 years.

Said Rylan's dad and Heritage coach **COREY WHITE**: 'Rylan had a goal when he came into high school that he wanted to break the school scoring record. After last season, we realized it could become a reality. At the beginning of the season, he

hurt his ankle, and it came into question again on whether or not he could do it. Not only the fact that he was still able to accomplish it, but also to be able to break it at home was amazing to see. I know all the hard work he has put into being the player he is, and it was nice to step back for a moment as coach and enjoy it as his dad.'

Against Blue Ridge, there were a couple of special moments.
— Foreign exchange student **ANDRIY**

BILYI scored for the first time in his career (bottom left). He picked up a basketball for the first time in early November and has improved dramatically throughout the course of the season. He got the opportunity at the free throw line and swished one out of two.

— After the game, Corey White was recognized for coaching his last game at Heritage. It was his 139th win in 10 years as head coach. He was recognized with a ball his final team signed, capping an

emotional night for him and the team.

Said coach White: 'Receiving a game ball signed by the team at my last home game was special. I do not like to be in the spotlight, especially when it comes to coaching. The game is about the players, and I always want them to receive the recognition they deserve. It was nice to hear the things that were said and see some past coaches and players. My hope is I have impacted their lives in some way.'

— *Rylan White*



Adrien O'Neal Photography



RYLAN WHITE, BRAD WILSON

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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.



Tuscola

On Friday, each grade level received the opportunity to hear from **Janette Van Meter**. She spoke on suicide awareness and stressed that it is OK to reach out to others to receive help. She also passed out tokens to help give someone the courage to ask for help. Pictured: **Neal Garrison** and **Nicholas Ross**, who are counselors at Tuscola and who aim to help students with whatever they may be dealing with.

— CLAIRE LEONARD



Villa Grove

The junior and senior art classes are continuing a meaningful tradition started by art teacher **Larry Hermosillo**: painting ceiling tiles to leave a lasting mark before graduation. Each senior designs a tile that reflects their personality and interests, creating a colorful collection of student creativity overhead. **Isabella Dodd** is designing a detailed Minecraft mural, while **Jackson Smith** is painting his favorite car, a Corvette. **Cora Wilson** is also brainstorming ideas as she plans what to create on her tile next.

— EVA PIERCY



LEROY TUNED IN

Thirteen students were selected to attend the HOIC honor band and chorus festival at Tri-Valley High School. The attendees spent the day learning various songs alongside students from other conference schools. At the end of the festival, they performed for family and friends. Representing LeRoy in the band: (from left) **Henry Thayn, Maggie O'Brien, Macy Dean, Madison Hearon, Ben Thayn, Brett Helfrich, Gabe Sutter** and **Caleb Wells**. In the choir: (from left) **Jase Hobson, Addi Crech, Devan Heap, Emma Weichman** and **Isaiah Schertz**.

— MOLLY SCHEUER



Urbana

Winter guard finished its competitive season at the IDTA State Finals in Springfield on Feb.14. The team placed fifth in the AA Lyrical Flag category with their routine to Lady Gaga's 'Hold My Hand.' Eight team members were named IDTA Scholar Athletes. Pictured are lyrical team members **Triintee Davidson, Blaivine Mbala, Annabelle Jordan, Charity Muth, Chloe Rogers, Alayna Pettway, Quinn Lyon, Gwen Logsdon, Evaine Harms-Aronoff** and **Annie Nicholson**, along with coach **Kristi Kaplan** and Principal **Jesse Guzman**.

— RUBY PITTENGER



Salt Fork

In honor of the six athletes who made it to state in wrestling, there was a recognition send-off in the gym before school last Thursday. The ceremony included confetti cannons, a video filmed and edited by **Lainey Ehler** (another Salt Fork wrestler), and tons of support from family and friends. Pictured: boys' qualifiers (from left) **Devin Ehler, Steven Uden, Pedro "Fivie" Rangel** and **Mason Swartz**; and girls' qualifiers **Kate Wochner** and **Taylor Owens**.

— ANNA MCCOLLUM

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Westville

The boys' basketball team finished the regular season at 31-0 with a Vermilion Valley Conference title. Also, a special shoutout to seniors **Grant Beckley** and **Lincoln Cravens** for signing with Illinois College.

— OLIVIA TROGLIA

JUDAH CHRISTIAN



SOAKING UP SOME RAYS

Seniors in the AP rhetoric class took advantage of the beautiful weather last week by writing their impromptu essays outdoors. Rather than staying at their desks, they chose to write outside, enjoying the fresh air and a change of scenery. Thanks to the small class sizes and the unpredictability of Champaign weather, teacher **Michael Himick** was open to the idea and willing to work with the students. Next year, Judah will double its college-prep courses, giving students more opportunities to earn college credit and create more personalized academic schedules.

— Jack Dalbey



Monticello

Since the beginning of the winter season, happiness, hot chocolate and coffee have been brewing in the media center. With a partnership between Sages Cafe and the MHS Life Skills program, students have been able to support their peers while sipping on a nice, hot beverage. Life Skills teacher **Mandi Isaac** said: '(Life Skills) students are responsible for checking supplies, filling the machine, cleaning the cafe area and communicating needs with staff.' Throughout the collaboration, students have developed fundamental skills in problem-solving, communication, teamwork and money management. Their tasks provide them with the space for creativity as well. 'One of their favorite tasks is decorating the coffee sleeves,' Isaac said. 'Last year, they added drawings to the sleeves with a simple saying like "have a good day." This year, they have expanded to add other sayings, creating holiday sleeves, writing jokes, or anything else they feel would add a bit of cheer.' With the funds earned from the cafe, the Life Skills program is able to take part in exciting experiences. One was the opportunity for students to buy Christmas gifts for their family members at Five Below before enjoying lunch at Freddy's. 'We hope to expand upon the activities our students are able to try in the future, like bowling, painting and other exciting field trips they might not otherwise experience,' Isaac said.

— MADY MELTON



Rantoul

On Saturday, the track and field team went to the limited entry Circuit Chicago Meet at Gately Stadium. The girls who attended: **Tamia Bell**, **Aubreyana Thompson**, **Tywana Grayer** and **Khloe Winston Fischer**. Next up: today at the Olivet Nazarene University in Bourbonnais.

— TAMIA BELL



Bement

Feb. 19 marked the last pep band of the school year as well as Senior Night. Before the start of the varsity game, several seniors were recognized, including **Ella Corum**, **Avont Jackson**, **Kiana Hunter**, **Will Fuson** and **Addie Roberts**. All five students have all been active in their school for many years, and they received the send-off they deserved.

— KIANA BUNTER



Academy High

In U.S. history, taught by Isabel Scott, students finished their foreign policy unit with a wax museum. Students portrayed a wide variety of historical figures, from **Helen Keller** to **Ho Chi Minh**, answering questions from their perspective and explaining how they were (or are) connected to foreign policy. The museum was open to other students and faculty, allowing the class to share what they learned with the school community. Pictured, from left: **Judson Kerlin**, **Qinyi Zhao** and **Max Milling**.

— EVIE PRICE

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Hoopeston Area

Pep band joined forces with Paxton-Buckley-Loda during a boys' basketball game on Feb. 20. The combined band performed selections from both schools' repertoires, including 'Viva La Vida,' 'Up-rising,' 'Shout It Out,' 'Smells Like Teen Spirit' and 'Thriller.' Directors **Joshua Breen** (PBL) and **Sophie Small** (Hoopeston Area) took turns leading the group. The collaboration was a fun, first-time experience that opened the door for future partnerships.

— WILLAMINA CLAYTON



Georgetown-Ridge Farm

Band hosted a chicken noodle dinner, several volunteers helping from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. Every band member made a dessert for guests. After serving meals, the students ran a concessions stand at the Miss Piggy Pingo event, serving leftover meals, water, popcorn and desserts. Pictured via **Paige Smith**: (from left): **Tiffany Taylor**, **Nichole Waterman**, **Makayla Waterman** and **Emerson Willson**; **Maddy Willis**; and **Chloe Schrader**.



— TIFFANY TAYLOR



UNITY SHOW OF SUPPORT

Three wrestlers competed at last weekend's IHSA state wrestling finals at State Farm Center: **Abe Davidson**, **Josh Heath** and **AJ Daly**. Students were excused from school to go cheer on and support the wrestlers at state. Photo via **Aria Battaglia**.

— **Claire Meharry**



At news-gazette.com

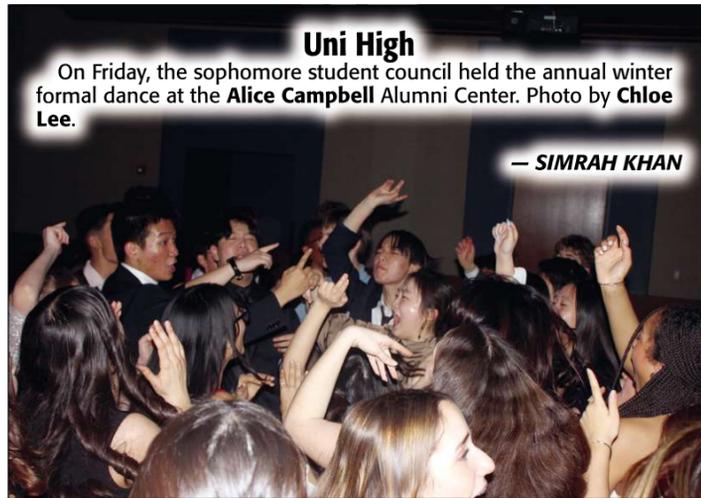
WRESTLING GALLERIES: Photo Editor Robin Scholz spent three days at State Farm Center.



Centennial

In celebration of Black History Month, teachers and clubs participated in an annual door decorating contest. This contest has been an ongoing tradition the past couple years that allows students to get together and celebrate moments or people in Black history. Among the many groups that participated was Rho Kappa Honor Society, a club for upper-classmen who excel in history. Rho Kappa sponsor and teacher **Carolyn McMenam** said: 'The door contest is a fun way to celebrate Black history and culture through artistic collaboration.' Each door was graded on three criteria: artistry, impact and theme. The event goes beyond just being a competition, though. For students, it's been a hands-on way to learn about Black history.

— **KENNEDY BORDEN**



Uni High

On Friday, the sophomore student council held the annual winter formal dance at the **Alice Campbell Alumni Center**. Photo by **Chloe Lee**.

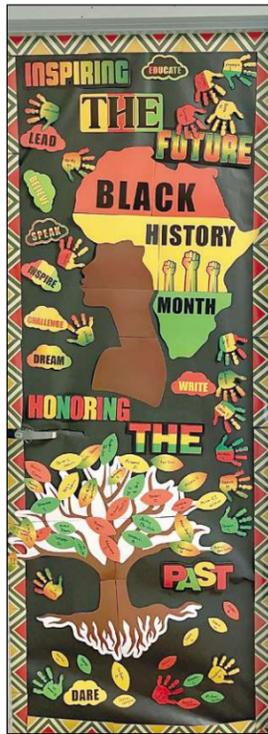
— **SIMRAH KHAN**



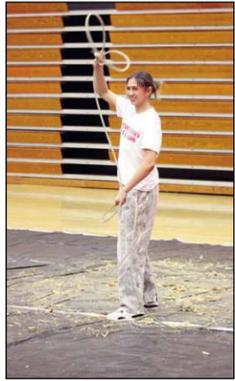
Fisher

FFA officers appeared on WCIA. It was also Senior Night for the senior band/cheerleading members. The band members also got to perform in an honor band event where they had only a short period to learn a song and then later that day perform it.

— **KESIAH MUSICK**



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Mahomet-Seymour

To celebrate increased attendance, lowered discipline referrals and academic success all year long, a PBIS Incentive Day was held last week. Students participated in two activities: an appearance by professional magician, Mahomet-Seymour alum **Joel Shoemaker**, and the FFA's Ag Olympics. Pictured: **Vance Clark, Ariana Ujueta, Cash Bryan** and Shoemaker and **Alex DeAtley**.

— ABBY EDEN



From left: Leah Pruitt, Kellyn Irwin, Trevor Ames, Alyssa Osterbur, Keegan Roberts, Leigha Larson, Ethan Sanders, Delaney Nekolny, Henry McCannon, Mitch Riesel, Lydia Huckstadt, Korinne Travis, Chase Mabry, Emma Wells, Hailey Phillips, Ava Bronowski and Morgan Huls.

ST. JOSEPH-OGDEN HIGH ACHIEVERS IN AGRICULTURE

At the Section 17 State FFA Degree and Proficiency interviews held at the Farm Credit building in Mahomet, 18 FFA members showcased their skills. **Trevor Ames, Lydia Huckstadt, Delaney Nekolney, Ethan Sanders** and **Emma Wells** were among the students recommended to earn their degree at the upcoming State FFA Convention. Adding to their achievements, Ames, Huckstadt and Nekolney were also named Section Stars, highlighting their excellence in their Ag categories. Additionally, Ames, **Ava Bronowski, Charlie Hale, Huckstadt, Morgan Huls, Kellyn Irwin, Leigha Larson, Chase Mabry, Henry McCannon, Nekolny, Alyssa Osterbur, Mitch Riesel** and **Korinne Travis** excelled in their individual proficiency areas. The students will now compete in the District 4 Competition in March.

— Katie Ericksen

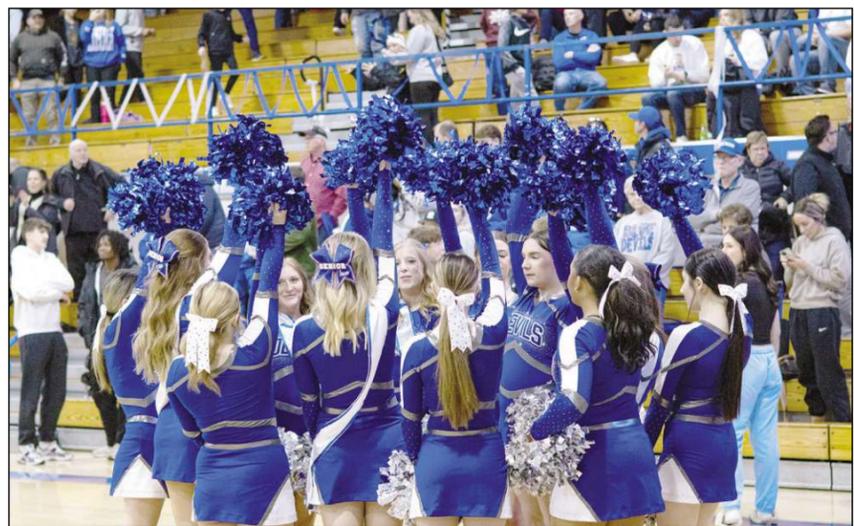


Morgan Irene Photography

Cisna Park

Six players were recognized at girls' basketball Senior Night: **Josie Neukomm, Faith Bohlmann, Sophia Duis, Lauryn Hamrick, Addie Lucht** and **Macy Sinn**. The players — and role models — were recognized for their hard work and dedication.

— SOPHIE DUIS



BHRA

On Friday, basketball and cheer seniors were recognized at the boys' basketball game against Monticello. The Blue Devils took down the Sages 63-50, completing a memorable Senior Night.

— LAHNA BENJAMIN



St. Thomas More

Students started Lent with an Ash Wednesday Mass to honor Jesus' 40 days in the desert, with the three main goals being prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Each person is supposed to think of something to give up for 40 days to enrich their faith life.

— DUNCAN OLIVEIRA

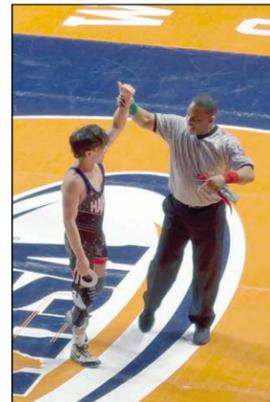


Arcola

The boys' basketball team celebrated Senior Night along with band, cheer and managers. Pictured: cheer seniors with superfan **Justin Otto**.

— ADDEE MULLIGAN

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Milford

Senior **Aiden Bell** finished fifth in the IHSA state wrestling competition (126 pounds) last weekend at State Farm Center. On Thursday, over 20 students came to support his first match. Hard work and dedication helped him go 113-54 in his Hoopston Area/Milford wrestling career. Pictured, from left, back to front: **Juan Santoyo, Izzac Williams, Damian Salinas, Caitly Hayes, London Snyder, Gage Mann, Cohen Cheever, Mario Martinez, Bryson Crow, Dylan Potter, Noah Bennett, Eliana Salinas, Lilly Carter, Anna Mann, Molly Coffey, Brinlynn Gredy, Madisyn Laffoon, Sydnee Longest, Brady Brassard, Waylon Champion, Emerson Johnson and Xavi Cintora.**

— KAMI MUEHLING



Cerro Gordo

On Feb. 8, a select group of art students — **Jake Bolsen, Eli Corpus, Brooklyn Dupont, Autumn Gant, Aiden Miller and Joana Ramirez** — had their pieces presented at the Millikin Art Show, thanks in part to art teacher **Jennifer Thomas**. Gant won honorable mention, and Bolsen won Best 2-Dimensional Piece.

— AUTUMN GANT

BLUE RIDGE SENIOR TRIBUTE

A big crowd showed up for the Senior Night game against Tri-County.

At halftime, the cheer team performed a senior dance to honor each senior cheerleader. Pictured (courtesy **Payton Heiser**): **Devin Wrestler, Benjamyn Clevenger, Jakob Kristensen, Taylyn Watterson, Ava Paullin and Karly Warner.**

— Karly Warner



Paxton-Buckley-Loda

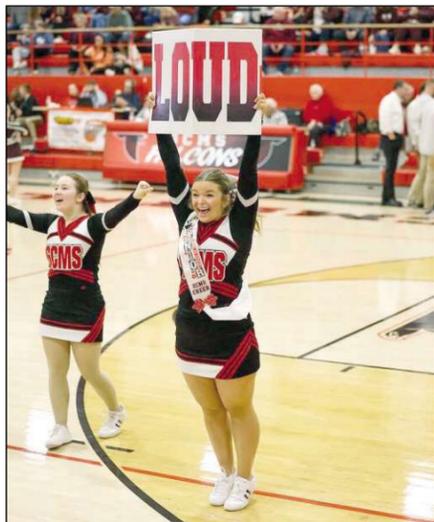
Students gathered in the commons for this year's Winter Formal on Saturday night, transforming the space for an event that brought together students from all grade levels for a night of dancing, laughter and celebration. The commons area had a photo area, along with lights reflecting off all the walls, creating a space where students could dress up, take photos with friends and enjoy time outside of the usual school routine. As music filled the room, the dance floor quickly became the center of the night, with students forming circles, singing along to favorites, and making the most of every second. The Winter Formal would not have been possible without the efforts and support of individuals such as **Madeleine Wachowski, Brock Neibuhr and Hannah Eshleman.** Also, student council members worked behind the scenes to plan, set up and ensure everything ran smoothly throughout the night.

— BRAYDEN KIEF



Armstrong
At the Cupid Classic on Feb. 7, senior archers were honored. The students were given a box of baked goods and a bag of goodies, along with a banner with their name and picture on it hanging in the gym. From left: **Makenna Ackerman, Kassidy O'Brien, Levi Saathoff, Suzanne Hawker, Sydnee Scott, Cheyenne Howie and Tesa Millburg.** On Feb. 12, girls' basketball had Senior Night. The only senior, Ackerman, got a night all to herself. On Feb. 17, it was Senior Night for boys' basketball (**Luke Townsend, Ryan Edwards, Aidyn Deck, Aiden Blackford**), cheerleading (**Tinley Parkerson, Mia Carpenter, Helena Brandenburg**) and wrestling (**Caden Fitzsimmons**).

— AUBREY SELF



Gibson City-Melvin-Sibley

During Friday's Senior Night celebration for boys' basketball, cheer and band, players and cheerleaders were introduced before the varsity game. Seniors were recognized for their academic, athletic and service accomplishments and shared their plans for after high school — an amazing and fun-filled night. Boys' basketball seniors: **Anthony Maloney, Lane Beyers, Mason Doman, Zeb Greer, Logan Ward and Dev Patel.** Senior cheerleaders: **Hadley Doman, Maryn Berry, Chloe Tiarks, Lizzy Goodin, Addison Farmer and Alyssa Morgan,** who is part of band. Other band seniors: **Ara Burgett, Jack Gormbel, Aiden Killian, Caylynn Embery and Natalie Aberle.**

— ADDISON FARMER

