

# HIGH SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL

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# SMASH HIT



**DANVILLE HIGH SCHOOL'S CHOIR** put on its annual Madrigals dinner show as St. James Methodist Church was transformed into a medieval time piece.

Students from the high school's choir program presented classic Christmas songs, including "12 Days of Christmas" and "Silent Night," along with modern music like "Mary Did You Know?" and "When you Believe."

Directed and managed by choir director **Jeffery Thomas** and choir accompanist **Jennifer Lewis**, the Madrigals also includes live music with the help of the high school band and cello choir. Along with classical music, a fun twist (left) was added: A medieval rendition of popular Smash Mouth song "All Star" was performed by (from left) **Dayo White**, **Ainsley McLaughlin**, **Brooklyn Warfield** and **Bryce Martin**.

Said Thomas (below with senior students):

"Madrigals is a wonderful tradition in Danville. This was our 51st event and was possibly one of the best! The students have been working so hard since early August to learn the music and develop the show. We added some new music this year that really showcased some amazing solos and took the show to a whole new level. The students and I want to thank everyone who bought a ticket and came to the event this year. It was truly special to perform all three nights to a fully sold-out audience."

— Rylee Jack



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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



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. Last week, **Leroy's Molly Scheuer** and the Madrigals showed us around.



## Georgetown-Ridge Farm

National Honor Society students helped serve at the annual Senior Citizens Luncheon, taking advantage of a half-day to serve the community. During this event, the group talked to many interesting people and learned their stories. Photos via **Lisa Cramer:** **Tiffany Taylor** and **Jaidyn Portis;** **Jordyn Fourez** serving guests; and (from left) **Ruby Fraser-Soule, Katie Wersich, Spencer Ray** and **Maddie Spesard.**

— TIFFANY TAYLOR



## Judah Christian

Students spread holiday cheer by caroling in Savoy on Tuesday night.

## Rantoul

Juniors met last week to kick off ACT prep. Teachers explained the test and its components for each subject, discussed the ACT prep classes that start Jan. 12, and outlined incentives students can win by attending.

— TAMIA BELL



Last Friday, the boys' basketball team hosted its annual Youth Lock-In Night where second- through fifth-grade boys attended the game and cheered on the Rockets to a home victory. Afterward, the kids ate pizza with the team and played games with the players in the program. The night concluded with a movie on the video board in the gym. Pictured courtesy **Dallas Porter** and **Anna Vasey:** **Dane Eisenmenger** facilitating a game with the kids; and **Austin Wiersema** shooting with kids.

— Claire Meharry



## DeLand-Weldon

The wrestling program checked another box: its first meet since bringing back the sport. The Eagles took on Mahomet-Seymour and celebrated Senior Night (**Joseph Schum, Nate Smith**) on Dec. 2.

— NATE SMITH

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## Mahomet-Seymour

The Drama Club performed their holiday play called 'Santa's Spectacles.' The play was student-run: Underclassmen performed, and upperclassmen directed. Matinees took place last Friday as students from Middletown Prairie Elementary visited for a preview of the show.

— ABBY EDEN



# SHILOH SPICIN' THINGS UP THIS YEAR

Staff celebrated the 67th day of school with 67 shirts and accessories. Students loved seeing their teachers in 67 gear. Staff has been doing random underground dress-up days to spice up the school year this year.

— Ali Cash



## Champaign Central

Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) held an ice-skating social. Members enjoyed an afternoon of skating at the UI Ice Arena and partook in boba afterward.

— ADELAIDE KOTA



## Blue Ridge

At the first home girls' basketball game, the power went out before the starting lineups were introduced. Using their phone flashlights, the pep band, cheerleaders and student section made light out of the situation. Students pictured: **Kaylyn Eliason, Crystal Chambers, Renn Light, Taylyn Watterson, Indra Nolan, Gavin Ozee, Bentley Choate, Charleigh Brining, Presley Hardesty, Addie Browning, Tori Eads, Kale Weedman, Kelly Weiss, Ava Paullin, Gideon Craft, Carmen Ellis, Ollie Yeagle, Broden Soliday, Allison Brown, Samantha Matakas, Kip Hardwick, Brayden Hallowell, Preston Jiles, Henry Freden, Logan Coffey, Makenzie Woliung and Olivia Jones.**

— KARLY WARNER



## Gibson City-Melvin-Sibley

At its 53rd annual Thanksgiving Turkey Tournament, the boys' basketball team beat Tri-Point, the Iroquois West Raiders and Prairie Central. The last day of the tournament was cancelled due to weather, however. GCMS won its pool, and to kick off the season on a high note, **Graydon Leonard** and **Logan Ward** were named to the all-tournament team.

— ADDISON FARMER



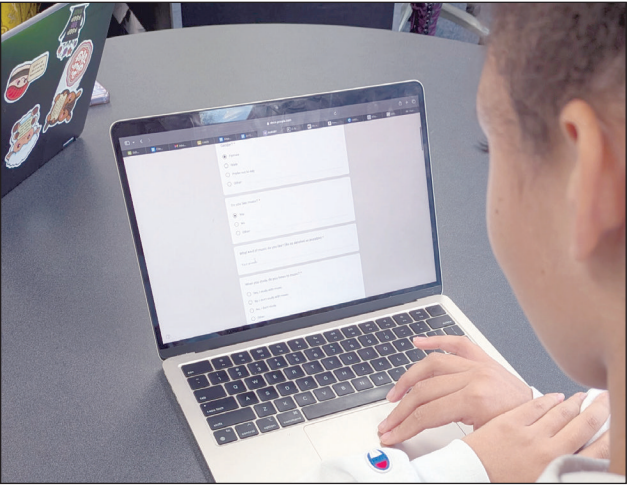
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## Urbana

Last Friday's annual Winter Assembly was filled with tons of tunes to get everyone in the holiday spirit. The chamber orchestra performed 'Sevimon,' with accompaniment from dancers with dreidels. The chamber orchestra and concert choir teamed up for a Broadway songs medley of 'Found' (from 'Dear Evan Hansen') and 'Tonight' (from 'Hamilton') with senior **Jimmy McCumber** as soloist. VCR A-Capella sang a beautiful rendition of 'Mary,' and the wind symphony performed 'Choose Joy' and 'Sleigh Ride!'

— RUBY PITTENGER



## Academy High

Students in experimental design are collecting data for their final project. Taught by **Natasha Capell**, the class teaches students how to design, run and present their own experiments using the scientific method. Most students are running surveys in a wide range of topics, such as music and body image. At the end of the year, students will present their findings at the End of Semester Showcase.

— EVIE PRICE



## Bement

To get into the holiday spirit after break, students in Math Club decorated their geometree. On Dec. 3, students enjoyed sweet treats during their lunch period while cutting out paper snowflakes used to decorate the tree.

— KIANA HUNTER



## Cerro Gordo

During Thanksgiving break, Cerro Gordo hosted its annual boys' basketball Turkey Tournament that included Cerro Gordo/Bement, Warrensburg-Latham, St. Thomas More, LeRoy, Hartsburg-Emden, Uni High, Windsor/Stew-Stras, Heritage, Aregenta-Oreana, Heyworth, Cowden-Herrick and Unity Christian. The boys played Thanksgiving week but, because of snow, had to push the rest of the games to Friday to finish off the tournament. LeRoy took first, W-L second and Stew-Stras third. Next up: the Macon County tournament.

— JESSA CROSS



## Westville

On Sunday, the band and choir performed their annual Holiday Concert. Band director **Melissa Pinter** and choir director **Ellen Howie** worked very hard with students to prepare for the performance. The junior high also took the stage. Finally, the marching band performed at the Night of Lights Parade in Danville on Friday.

— OLIVIA TROGLI



# MONTICELLO SAVING LIVES

On Nov. 21, student council hosted its annual Fall Blood Drive, sponsored by the American Red Cross. Throughout the day, students and faculty, as well as other members of the community, donated time and blood in hopes of making a difference. Nearly 50 units of blood were collected, with each donation having the possibility to save up to three lives. Student council plans to host another blood drive in the spring. Pictured courtesy **Meg Cassel**: student council President and Treasurer **Ashley Stiverson** and **Mady Melton**; and faculty member **Ashley Burton**.

— Mady Melton



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## Uni High

On Saturday, the girls' basketball team attended the Illinois women's basketball game against Indiana at State Farm Center. Every year, the team attends a UI women's game with coach Joel Beesley. "It's always such a great experience," senior Chloe Noronha-Hos-tler said.

— SIMRAH KHAN



## Tuscola

Student council organized a toy drive for Toys for Tots. Each grade level competed against one another to see who could bring in the most toys. The grade level that won received an extra 10 minutes of lunch. The staff also participated in the challenge. Pictured, left to right: student council officers Claire Leonard, Gwen Boyd, Morgan Callow, Kalen Shinn and Callie Cook.

— CLAIRE LEONARD

# LERROY MAGIC MOMENT



The cafeteria was transformed into the castle of Leroyshire last weekend as over 50 Christmas trees were displayed, each sponsored by a local company or family. There were also over 50 nutcrackers at the madrigal dinners that are a longstanding tradition at LeRoy — this marked the 62nd consecutive year of performing. This year's story was "The Battle of Christmas." The central theme was a debate over which Christmas movie was the best: "It's a Wonderful Life," "Elf," "Gremlins," "Rudolph the Red-Nose Reindeer" or "A Christmas Story." Madrigals singers debated throughout the dinner, and ultimately held a competition to decide the winner. Just as the final score was to be revealed, the Lord (Isaiah Schertz, senior) and Lady (Molly Scheuer and Addi Creech, seniors) shared that maybe Christmas isn't about what we watched or received. Perhaps it means a little bit more, a time for good cheer and love to all. To decide what movie to watch, the audience was given the opportunity to vote for their favorite. On Saturday, the winner was "Elf," and Sunday the winner was "It's a Wonderful Life." Many groups were showcased throughout the dinner: madrigal singers, carolers, the Jester and Squire, brass and recorders. Music director Cathy Dunafin, in her second year, taught the madrigal singers since August. It truly was a magical weekend.

— Molly Scheuer

## Salt Fork

Seniors Brycie Hird and Payton Cox started a Fellowship of Christian Athletes group in October. Since then, students have been coming in early to school once a week to pray, connect and read the Bible. The program continues to grow as more students attend the huddles each week. At the most recent huddle, students brought in donations so FCA could do an angel tree and spread holiday cheer. Some of the past huddles have also included a Friendsgiving, coffee ba and dirty sodas. The high school FCA program also has encouraged students at Salt Fork Junior High to start up an FCA group, too.

— ANNA MCCOLLUM



## Armstrong

Math and science teachers introduced a new award: STEM Student of the Month. This award is designed to identify students who meet difficulties or struggles in either math or science and overcome them. It is meant to encourage students to have a growth mind-set and reward those who work hard to improve their current stand-ings in their class. Each month, math and science teachers nominate and discuss students in contention. Pictured: August, September, October and November STEM Students of the Month — Isabel Bullington, Justin Petrice, Brianna Strohl and Karsyn Lamar.

— AUBREY SELF



## Centennial

Centennial hosted its annual Artisan Fair on Friday night. Vendors from Centennial and the community had the opportunity to set up shop in the school. Numerous booths offered a variety of goods, including aguas frescas, tamales, chai, crocheted stuffed animals and handmade scrapbooking kits. This event has become a longstanding tradition and a great way for students to fundraise and share their talents.

— KENNEDY BORDEN



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## Oakwood

Students returned from Thanksgiving break to help at the school's annual tradition of hosting the Senior Citizens Dinner. The event continues to be a meaningful opportunity for the school to connect with community members and show appreciation for the generations that came before us. Thanks to the choir and **Madeline McQueen**, whose musical performances added a special touch to the event; and to student council sponsors and students, who dedicated their time to organizing, serving and ensuring the dinner ran smoothly. Additionally, the kitchen staff played an essential role in preparing the meal and supporting the overall success of the evening.

— SOPHIA AQUINO



# ARCOLA GIFT OF SONG

Student council visited Carriage Crossing Senior Living of Arcola for Christmas caroling.  
— Addee Mulligan



## St. Joseph-Ogden

We The People, a club of driven seniors, focuses on court cases and debate precedents. The club held its first rehearsal at the Champaign County Courthouse, dividing into groups of six to recite well-prepared speeches. Judges, including Champaign Mayor **Deb Feinen**, provided feedback on their work. Seniors celebrated a successful rehearsal with lunch at The Yard On Broadway in Urbana. The group is prepping for state with the goal of reaching nationals in April in Washington, D.C. If successful, it would be their seventh time at nationals, continuing a strong tradition.

— KATIE ERICKSEN



## Sullivan

Students in Family, Career and Community Leaders of America volunteered with the National Guard party at the Armory. They helped with crafts like making ornaments and gingerbread houses as well as with face-painting for kids.

— LILY MOXLEY



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## Milford

Character Count Week was Dec. 1-5 and included dress-up days to express good character and an essay to show the six pillars of being a good human being. Students enjoyed 'Pajama Day' (pictured: **Emily Steele, Jalynn Shelton and Mallory Hudson**), 'Dress Like a Teacher Day' (**Coby Brown, Trevor Woodby, Vargas Torres, Joey Bushnell and Maddox Muehling**) and 'TV Show Day' (**Nolan Garcia, London Snyder**).

— KAMI MUEHLING



# PAXTON- BUCKLEY-LODA SEASON OF GIVING

Student council hosted the Fall Season Food Drive. Thanks to the generosity of students and the community, the high school was able to donate over 1,200 items to the PBL Area Food Pantry. The goal of this event was to support those in need during the Thanksgiving season.

— Brayden Kief



## Chrisman

The girls' basketball teams — varsity and junior varsity — won their first games against Georgetown-Ridge Farm on Monday. The boys, playing in front of a blackout-themed crowd (the Booster Club paid for students who wore black), lost their home opener to La Salette. Both games included a shoot-out at halftime hosted by the Chrisman Booster Club. Participants could shoot from halfcourt for \$1 per shot with the first one to make it receiving a \$20 gift card for Casey's. Finally, the annual Christmas parade had a great turnout at the square as the FFA chapter — along with the Grinch — joined the school's band.

— MORGAN SIMPSON



## St. Thomas More

Students participated in door decorating in which houses decorated their house mentor's classroom door in an attempt to win house points. The Madrigals also performed from Thursday to Saturday.

— DUNCAN OLIVEIRA



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## Fisher

The pep band played during the girls' basketball game on Thursday. Band member **Sophie Moore** shared advice: 'Don't let someone steal your passion.' Also, students are collecting gifts for the Angel Tree so kids can have presents this year. Fellowship of Christian Athletes met this week. Said **Olivia Jackson**: 'Don't worry about prayers being perfect, but be honest with God, because he already knows, sharing things with him builds relationship.' **Sophia Stauffer** added: 'Do something creative everyday, strengthen your mind, body and soul, and pray a lot.'

— KESIAH MUSICK



## Hoopeston Area

The marching band braved the cold Saturday to celebrate the beginning of the holiday season at Bloomington's Christmas parade. Students wore festive lights and costumes, and some even decorated their instruments. The parade route was approximately 2 miles long, but children and parade onlookers seemed thrilled to see this small town's marching band turn out and support their parade. A few middle-school students were also in attendance to help pass out candy.

— WILLAMINA CLAYTON



## Cissna Park

FFA's crop team won its competition with **Trent Schmid** placing first, **Sawyer Kaeb** second, **Evan Feuchtenberg** third, **Ashlyn Schmid** fourth and **Daniel Maul** fifth. Students had to identify seeds and weeds and judge the quality of crops like wheat and corn. Pictured: students identify seeds; **Hailey Kaeb** judges soybeans; and students work to discover the faults of the crops.

— SOPHIE DUIS

# HERITAGE MEAL DISTRIBUTION



Students and staff gathered and bought items to provide a meal for Thanksgiving to those in need. Heritage partnered with local donors as well as the Homer Food Pantry to make the food drive possible. Students and community members brought in stuffing, gravy, mashed potatoes, canned veggies and fruit, marshmallows, canned yams, noodles and pie filling. The school's Family, Career and Community Leaders of America chapter took the lead in distributing bags with all of the Thanksgiving goodies in them, around 50 people enjoying a Thanksgiving meal as a result. Pictured: sophomore **Willa Tatman** checking off the items that are in the bag; sophomore **Micah Sommer** loading items into the bag; freshman **Joao Vega** loading items into the bag; the FCCLA chapter making decorations; and food items that were in the bag that were distributed.

— RYLAN WHITE



## BHRA

Last Thursday, the choir and band presented their annual Christmas concert. The combined BHJH and BHRA chorus performed 'White Winter Hymnal,' 'Winter Song' and a 'Go the Distance/Defying Gravity' medley. The BHRA band followed with festive selections including 'Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas,' 'As Twilight Falls' and 'Sleigh Ride.' The junior high band also joined the high school ensemble for a powerful performance of 'Christmas Eve/Sarajevo 12/24.' The full program was recorded and will air on WITY on Monday. It is also available on the BHRA YouTube channel.

— LAHNA BENJAMIN

