

The Wildcat Echo

A publication by the students of Maquoketa Valley High School

Speech team brings home 14 I's, choral reading to All-State

by Taylor Saunders

This past weekend our Large Group Contest Speech Team traveled to Waterloo West for this year's district contest. We left the school bright and early around 5:50am.

All of our events did extremely well. Performing from 8:00 am all the way to 4:10pm, everyone did their very best and worked hard. We received 14 district I ratings and 4 district II ratings.

One-Act Play (Arctic Library): Carly Dirks, Ollie Hunter, Arianna Nolan, Taylor Saunders, Sellah Ambundo, Cheyenne Eike, Alaina Leytem, Tommie Cole, Mallori Ambundo, Abram Nolan, and Serenity White. Rating: Division I, I, II → Overall: I

MV Cat Snacks is up and running

by Nathan Otting and Jaelyn Butikofer

Starting in January, students in Ms. Bolsinger's Cooking Class 1 opened a snack business called MV Cat Snacks.

Each week, students choose a dessert recipe, make a list of ingredients, and go grocery shopping in Manchester. On Mondays, the students send out a Google Form to HS teachers and staff to take their orders. At the end of the week, the students make their recipe and deliver orders of desserts, chips, pop, Bubbl'r, or hot chocolate.

Both students and teachers are enjoying this new adventure!

Pictured: Nathan and Jaelyn make their rounds to deliver treats on Friday.

Overall: I

Choral Reading (We Break, But We Return): Arianna Nolan, Taylor Saunders, Maya Smith, Ever Botos, Lena Lewin, Eva Mensen, Rylee Reed, Addie Wilson, Mallori Ambundo, and Jena Hoefer. Rating: Division I, I, I → Overall: I

TV News (MOM News): Natalie Ries, Aubrie Althoff, Morgan Hoeger, Maileah Freiburger, Allison Porter, and Maggie Recker. Rating: Division II, II, II → Overall: II

Radio Broadcasting (Ocean Currents: Adventures of the Sea!): Lucy Hucker, Olivia Begle, and Cecilia Charles. Rating: Division I, II, II → Overall: II

Radio Broadcasting (Southern

Sweethearts): Morgan Clemen, McKayla Weber, and Ryleigh Moriarity. Rating: Division I, I, I → Overall: I

Short Film (Worst Best Day Ever): Gabe Saunders, Owen Smith, Charlotte Ludovissy, Allison Porter, and Serenity White. Rating: Division I, I, II → Overall: I

Group Improvisation: Zach Leytem, Trevor Grimm, and Noah Whalen. Rating: Division II, II, II → Overall: II

Group Improvisation: Preston Salow, Ella Reicher, and Ruby Recker. Rating: Division I, II, I → Overall: I

Group Improvisation: Tristen Flanagan, Izzy Cordes, and Owen Salow. Rating: Division I, II, I → Overall: I

Ensemble Acting (Who Doth Inhabit the Primary Position): Jeanie Teymer and Lylah Billmeyer. Rating: Division II, I, I → Overall: I

Ensemble Acting (Beauty Kweens): Maya Smith, Ever Botos, and Addie Wilson. Rating: Division II, II, II → Overall: II

Solo Mime (Watch Me Bake Cookies in 5 Minutes!): Trish Dietiker. Rating: Division I, II, I → Overall: I

Musical Theatre (All I Wanna Do Is Eat k): Ollie Hunter, Sellah Ambundo, Breece Hoisington, and Lylah Billmeyer. Rating: Division I, I, I → Overall: I

After a long, stressful weekend we staked out the IHSSA website until 5:00pm on Monday night to see the All-State Nominations. Please congratulate our Choral Reading: We Break, But We Return for their performing nomination to the All-State speech competition on Saturday February 21st.

Choral Reading (We Break, But We Return): Arianna Nolan, Taylor Saunders, Maya Smith, Ever Botos, Lena Lewin, Eva Mensen, Abby Nieman, Rylee Reed, Addie Wilson, Mallori Ambundo, and Jena Hoefer.

We would love for everyone to join us there and cheer us on. Everyone who participated in Large Group Contest Speech this year should be very proud of themselves.



FFA takes a look back on a successful and busy year

by Kayla Hoeger, FFA Reporter

Maquoketa Valley FFA is having yet another successful year. This year the Maquoketa Valley FFA chapter is led by President Natalie Ries; Vice Presidents, Ty Hoeger and Kyle Engelken; Secretary, Ella Reicher; Treasurer, Abby Neiman; Reporter, Kayla Hoeger; and Sentinel, Morgan Hoeger.

As these members' serving on the 2025-2026 officer team is coming to a close, there are so many accomplishments to be proud of.

The team has been busy with various competitions. Going back to May, five members competed at the NE District Horse Evaluation CDE. Team 1 consisting of Khloe Glew, Kayla Hoeger, Lacy Reth, and Tracy Reth "reined" in their back-to-back titles as District champs. In June, nine members headed to Kirkwood Community College to participate in State Horse Eval., State Floriculture, and District Livestock Evaluation. Kayla Hoeger, Lacy Reth, and Tracy Reth were the 2025 Iowa FFA horse evaluation state runner-ups. A team consisting of Olivia Ronnebaum, Tyler Beitz and Alison Schulte placed 7th at district livestock.

At the end of June, the 2024 National Dairy Judging team, who placed 5th at Nationals got the opportunity to travel to Scotland and Ireland for the International Dairy Judging Tour. For two weeks, Ty Hoeger, Caden Kremer, Ford Domyer and Bianka Ronnebaum got to judge dairy cows in Scotland at the Royal Highland show, and tour many monuments, castles and more!

Flipping to July and August, many members exhibited animals and static projects at the county and state fairs. Kelsey Hoeger's and Lacy Reth's proficiencies were moved on to the national level after they received first place in their category at State Convention. Lacy received a silver rating for her Equine Science entrepreneurship proficiency. Kelsey received a gold rating for her Dairy Production placement proficiency.

In September, Iowa FFA held the state Dairy Cattle Evaluation and Milk Quality & Products in Manchester at the fairgrounds. The Dairy Cattle team of Karly Kerch, Braden Ronnebaum, Alison Schulte, and Karl Zumbach placed 3rd. Braden placed 2nd individually and was 1st place oral reasons. The Milk Quality team of Ty



The 2025-26 MV FFA Officer Team consists of, front row from left: Natalie Ries, Ty Hoeger, and Kayla Hoeger; back row: Morgan Hoeger, Kyle Engelken, Ella Reicher, and Abby Nieman

Hoeger, Morgan Hoeger, McKayla Weber and Kayla Hoeger placed 8th. McKayla placed 4th individually and was 1st place knowledge test taker. At the Tri-State Dairy Expo, Alison Schulte placed 1st individually for Dairy Cattle Evaluation.

On September 20th, we held our first annual pickleball tournament, where members were able to play pickleball and engage with people of the community. A week later, eight members attended Greenhand Fire-Up and were able to communicate and work together with members from other chapters.

Ten members got to travel to the World Dairy Expo in Madison, WI, and

compete in Dairy Cattle Evaluation, World Forage Cup, and Dairy Products. Seven members traveled to the 98th National FFA Convention and Expo and got to network with FFA members from all over the US.

Now members are busily preparing for sub-districts, districts, and state competitions. Something that members always look forward to is state convention in Ames. This year, Ty Hoeger, Lukas Chestnut, Natalie Ries, Olivia Ronnebaum, Tracy Reth, Bryce Vaske, McKenna Mineart and Ella Reicher will earn their Iowa Degrees at the 98th Iowa FFA Leadership Conference. Spring and Summer bring the Plant Sale, MV Market, and many more contests.



You afraid?

Lilly Kraft and Alaina Leytem choreographed the scary hip hop routine performed by the dance team Monday night.

Sports Connection

Battles of the 'Cats: Girls defeat Lynx, Panthers

by MaryEllen Smith

Maquoketa Valley girls traveled to North Linn Friday to face the Lynx. They fought hard, matching points with them, losing only by three points. North Linn won scoring 47, Maquoketa Valley 44.

Coach Moenck commented on the girls' playing, "We didn't get off to a great start in this game and that's on me as the head coach. I have to get my team ready to play. Against good teams, on the road we have to be ready to play from the opening tip. We were down at half and our kids really played and battled in the second half. We took the lead under a minute but couldn't hold on to it. This will be a great game to learn from for coaches and players going forward."

Rebounds were managed as follows: A. Burbridge 6, Richter 5, Thompson 4.

Leading in points: Richter 14, and both A. Burbridge and Thompson 13.

Richter had 3 steals.

Assists: A. Burbridge 3 and Richter 2.

The girls hosted the Monticello Panthers Tuesday night, matching Monticello in the first quarter, but shooting 23 points in the second quarter. They emerged



Madison Thompson puts the defensive pressure on a Monticello player Monday night.

victorious. Maquoketa Valley 47 to 28.

The Wildcats start postseason play the winner of Lisbon and Northeast on Tuesday at home.

Wrestlers prepare for state-qualifying meet

by Alaina Mead

Last Thursday the Wildcat wrestlers hosted a quad against Clayton Ridge, Dike-New Hartford and Postville. While wrestling Clayton Ridge the Wildcats won 48-16. Dalton Africa and Kyle Engelken both won their matches with a pin and Nolan Lahey, Domeyer, Kipton Thompson, Sawyer Kemp, Tyler Beitz and Gabe Halweg all won points with a forfeit. Against DNH the Wildcats faced hard matches, losing 24-54. Engelken and Beitz got a pin and Lahey earned points with a forfeit. While wrestling Postville, Lahey and Kemp were able to pin their opponents and Engelken, Africa and Thompson won with forfeits ending with a score of 27-49, Postville.

The boys also had a good weekend at the Iowa State Tournament earning 3rd with 120.5 points! Engelken and Beitz both had great days coming home with first place 3-0. Africa and Kemp also both placed 3rd going 3-2 for the day. Thompson and Landon Helmricks also placed 4th.

This Saturday the wrestling team will travel to their final meet at MFL for districts and a chance to punch their ticket to the state tournament! Good luck Wildcats!

Ronnebaum, 'Big Three' presented with Hall of Fame plaques



Four more alumni have been celebrated for their athletic achievements. Bianka Ronnebaum, left, was recognized Monday night for her contributions to the basketball program. Last Thursday night at the home wrestling meet, Nathan Beitz, Brady Davis and Aidan Salow were recognized for their wrestling achievements. These plaques will be added to the hallway display.



Boys finish regular season as conference champs

by Maya Smith

Last Friday, the boys basketball team competed against the North Linn Lynx. It was a close game, but the boys won 49-43. On Monday, the boys played Monticello. After a slow first quarter, the boys took it away, winning 64-58.

Coach Conner comments on the games: "We knew that North Linn was going to be ready to play and that we were going to have to execute our game plan really well to win on the road. I can't say enough how proud I am of our guys for gritting out this win. We didn't play a real clean first half and we talked through some adjustments at halftime that we thought needed to be made. We lost Anderson Holtz in the 2nd quarter to a knee injury and we got a phenomenal effort from Trevor Grimm to fill those shoes. Trev made 6 free throws in the 4th quarter to seal the game and just did a really nice job of running the show for us. I thought the defensive effort from the whole team was really good, and I thought we rebounded really well.

"I told the guys in the locker room after the game that this was the type of execution and effort that it takes to win in the postseason and we proved to ourselves that we can do what it takes.

"On top of it all, we were able to seal the TRC West outright for the first time since 2010, so it was fun getting to celebrate that with the guys in the locker room. I am so proud of this group for staying the course throughout the season and sticking



Coach Conner was recognized Monday night for earning his 100th career win after Jan. 29 Dunkerton win. Coach Conner is in his eighth year as head coach.



Eli Dougherty works his defensive magic against Monticello Monday night. MV boys defeated Monticello for the first time since 2011.

together to accomplish one of our goals!

About the Monticello game, Coach Conner notes, "I was excited to see how our guys would respond to our big win Friday night at NL. Monticello is a very well-coached team and we knew that we were going to have to play our best basketball to compete. I was very impressed with how we competed all night. We executed our game plan really well and were able to take a 5-point lead at halftime. We made a few adjustments at halftime and came out and shot it really well in the 2nd half. Trevor Grimm had another really nice game and put the game away for us in the 4th quarter from the free throw line again. Brady played really well after forcing some shots early, and I thought Ty had a really nice game inside. As a team, we rebounded really well again after forcing Monticello to take some tough shots, which is something that is going to be huge for us to continue doing in the postseason."

Game Stats:

North Linn

Points: Brady Wall, 13; Ty Hoeger, 13

Rebounds: Ty Hoeger, 6; Lukas Chesnut, 6; Brady Wall, 6

Assists: Lukas Chesnut, 3; Anderson Holtz, 2; Trevor Grimm, 2

Monticello

Points: Brady Wall, 21; Trevor Grimm, 21; Ty Hoeger, 12

Rebounds: Trevor Grimm, 9; Dylan Knip-

Athletes of the Week

Name: Lanni Beaman

What do you enjoy most about playing basketball?

I enjoy playing defense the most in basketball and being able to have fun with my teammates on the court.

How have you evolved as a player? I have evolved a lot as a basketball player. I

wasn't very good my freshman year, sophomore year I was okay, and then I kept improving from there. I feel like I have become a more confident player overall.

What's been a favorite basketball memory? My favorite basketball memory was going to State last year and staying in the hotel.

Who's your basketball role model? My basketball role model would either be Kylie Chesnut or Emerson Whittenbaugh.



Name: Trevor Grimm

What do you enjoy most about playing basketball? Competitive practices

How have you evolved as a player? Become more patience

What's been a favorite basketball memory?

Summer team camp sophomore year

Who's your basketball role model? Lebron



per, 7

Assists: Dylan Knipper, 3

When asked about moving onto post season, Conner comments: "We got to see our postseason draw this week. We get to host Central City in the first round. At this point in the season, it is one game at a time. All of our focus needs to be on CC. Playing a team three times in a season is a double-edged sword. It is a good thing because we are really familiar with them and what they may try to do on offense and defense. The bad part is that it is tough to beat a team three times in a season. I am confident that our guys will be ready to play when we tip off on Monday."

Name: Lylah Billmeyer

What event are you in for large speech?

I'm in ensemble acting in musical theater.

What do you enjoy most about large group speech?

I really enjoy going to the contests and meeting new people.

What have you learned through this event?

I got asked to be in musical theater about three weeks ago and it just made me realize that When somebody presents you with an opportunity to take it because you never know it can come out of it.

Who is your speech role model? My speech role model is Ollie Hunter. When I got put in a musical theater, I was really nervous because I'm not a singer, but she always keeps me motivated and tells me how proud she is of me and it just means a lot.

You've shown leadership with the team this year. What motivates you to help?

Something that motivates me to help others is knowing that a simple compliment or a correction can help someone tremendously. It's honestly just a simple things that can make someone's day.

Name: Maya Smith

What events are you in for large speech? I am in ensemble acting and



Fine Artists of the Week

choral reading.

What do you enjoy most about large group speech?

I enjoy having fun with my groups and seeing our hard work come together. It's great to see how far we've come since the first practice.

What have you learned through this event?

I've learned a lot about listening and blending. In choral reading, no one is most important. You have to listen and blend together.

Who is your speech role model? Mrs. DeVore. She's guided and influenced me greatly in my speech journey.

You've shown leadership with the team this year. What motivates you to help others? I love seeing people grow and get better, especially during speech. Speech is a great way for people to get out of their comfort zone and grow, so I love helping others come out of their shell. This year, it's been awesome seeing all this growth from the freshmen and sophomores in choral reading. They've gotten so much better and I'm excited to hear about what they do next year.



Name: Taylor Saunders

What event are you in for large speech?

I am in both One Act and Choral Reading.

What do you enjoy most about large group speech? I enjoy working with my peers and putting together productions that I wouldn't be able to accomplish on my own.

What have you learned through this event?

I've learned how to build off of one another's ideas and bring them together cohesively.

I do believe that I have also learned to step back and experience what my peers are doing. This makes for a more cohesive group that can work together and become one.

Who is your speech role model? My speech role model has been Mrs. DeVore for a few years now. She's always pushed me to my fullest potential and believed in me when I definitely didn't believe in myself. She has given me so many opportunities to grow and I greatly appreciate it. I also enjoy watching her act and speak because it's so captivating. I've learned so much from her.

You've shown leadership with the team this year. What motivates you to help others? The biggest thing I want in a large group speech event is to have a cohesive and healthy team. I strive to create an environment where everyone feels comfortable and safe so that we can be successful. My goal is to create that same environment that I had when I was a sophomore and brand new to the speech world. That's what motivates me to be a leader.



Dance team awards presented

Monday night, the dance team and coaches recognized all of the special contributions each member made to the team this year.

Coaches pick "What would we do without you?": Tessa Intorf and Alaina Leytem

Rookie of the Year: Alaina Connolly & Maggie Recker

Choreo Queen: Alaina Leytem

State Superstar: Tessa Intorf

Talented Technique: Taylor Salow

*Heart of the Team: Alaina Leytem

Sassy but Classy: Tessa Intorf, Serenity White, Maggie Recker

Everyone's BFF: Ella Reicher & Emma Brockhohn

Fantastic Facials: Cheyenne Eike & Maggie Recker

Dance Clown: Alaina Leytem & Tessa Intorf

Most Encouraging: Alaina Leytem & Natalie Ries

Most Dedicated: Lilly Kraft

Most Improved: Maggie Recker

Awesome Attitude Award: Alaina Mead & Alaina Connolly

World's best manager: Izzy Moenck



One at a Time

by Arianna Nolan

One moment you're a student in high school, and the next you're getting ready to retire. Life goes fast, and none of us realizes how precious the moments in life are until they have already happened. Time is something we can never get back, but it is something we can learn to utilize. To stop wasting time, you should consider the following solutions: creating schedules, stopping bad habits, and creating good habits.

To stop wasting time and make the most out of your life, a good first step would be to create a schedule. Planning from the moment you wake up to the moment you fall asleep can help you to utilize all the time throughout your day, and stop impulsive decisions that waste your time. But with these schedules, you need to include time for breaks. Keeping yourself busy for hours on end can lead to burnout, and you will keep wasting more time than you were planning for.

A second step you can take is to stop bad habits. One of the habits that consumes the most time and is also very common throughout all generations is screentime. A study on teenagers' screentime done by the CDC from 2021 to 2023 says that teenagers spend more than four hours a day on screens, and this has probably increased exponentially since then. Instead of spending this time on the screens, you can spend it on starting a new hobby, taking care of yourself, or learning a new skill.

A third step you can take is to create new habits that benefit you. Some of these habits include exercising for at least 30 minutes a day, a goal to drink a certain amount of water, eating healthier, and practicing self-care. By spending your time doing these activities, you will feel more fulfilled about life and yourself in general. Even if you can't think of anything that would benefit you, the Internet is always at your fingertips to look for some ideas.

To conclude, a lot of people feel that they waste a lot of time participating in bad habits or not planning their day. Therefore, creating a schedule, quitting bad habits, and replacing them with new ones can help you to feel fulfilled about your life. Then, when the day comes when you are telling your story, you can say that you lived a good life. I hope you all have a great weekend, and I love you all! Go Cats!



Jaelyn's Journeys



photo by Jaelyn Butikofer

Where in the school can you find this object? Be the first one to correctly name the place to Mrs. Temple to win something from the prize box!

Comedy Corner

—compiled by Grace Richter

Here are some Valentines Day jokes for this week!

What did one spice say to the other on February 14th? Will you be my Valentyme?

What's pink, oinks, and shoots arrows on Valentine's Day? Cu-pig

What flowers gets the most kisses on Valentines Day? Tulips

What do you call fish in love? Guppy Love

What did the gardener say to his date? I dig you

On Special At Taste Oasis This Week:

Jumbo Blueberry Muffin



Fresh Baked Chocolate Chip Cookies



Strawberry & Yogurt Boba



**Pre-Order by 7AM
Pickup Only**

