

The Wildcat Echo

A publication by the students of Maquoketa Valley High School

Sub District contests held, several entries advance

by Kayla Hoeger, FFA reporter

We hope you all had a fun FFA week! Let's get hype for the Ag Olympics this afternoon!

Last Monday, 20 members traveled to Star-mont to compete in their contests at Sub Districts. Parliamentary Procedure team consisting of Natalie Ries, Lukas Chest-



nut, Ty Hoeger, Jefferson LeGassick, and Kyle Engelken received a Gold and placed first, punching their ticket to districts on March 7th. Creed Speaker, Karl Zumbach, also received first place Gold to advance to districts. Chapter test takers, Kayla Hoeger (1st place) and Morgan Hoeger (2nd place), both received a Gold. Receiving a 2nd place Gold and advancing to districts was the Conduct of Meetings team. The team consisted of Billy Krapfl, Jace Leytem, Tyler Beitz, Linken Stansberry, Ethan Crowley, Ava Holtz, and Anna Feldmann. Receiving Silver was Alison Schulte (Ag Broadcasting) and Ella Reicher (Public Speaking). Receiving Bronze was Braden Gardner (Ind. Ag Sales) and Abby Nieman & Emma Weets (Chapter Website-alt. to districts).



Individual contest speech students reign in the TRC

by Taylor Saunders

Individual speech has been in motion for a little while now, battling the harsh weather just to get a couple of practices in. Our team just traveled to Central City on Monday night for this year's Tri-Rivers Individual Speech Conference. We loaded the buses at 2:45pm, filled with nerves, but we came home champions. The participating students are listed below, along with ratings. All of these events did extremely well. Performing from 4:00pm all the way to 8:30pm, everyone did their very best and worked

hard. We received 43 district I ratings and 7 district II ratings.

- Abby Nieman: Poetry: Division I
- Abby Nieman: Public Address: Division I
- Abram Nolan: Prose: Division I
- Addie Wilson: After Dinner Speaking: Division I
- Addie Wilson: Storytelling: Division I
- Alaina Connolly: Storytelling: Division II
- Allison Porter: Poetry: Division I
- Arianna Nolan: Expository Address: Division I

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Preston Salow puts his improv skills to the test in rehearsal.

Speech results, cont.

Lucy Hucker rehearses her Reviewing speech with Mrs. DeVore. She won a Best of Center award at the conference meet.



Arianna Nolan: Original Oratory: Division I
 Athena Bradley: Original Oratory: Division II
 Athena Bradley: Public Address: Division II
 Aubrie Althoff: Public Address: Division I
 Ava Holtz: Public Address: Division I
 Carly Dirks: Improvisation: Division II
 Cecilia Charles: Reviewing: Division II
 Cecilia Charles: Storytelling: Division I
 Ella Reicher: Spontaneous Speaking: Division I
 Emily Rudd: Improvisation: Division I
 Eva Mensen: Poetry: Division I
 Eva Mensen: Radio News Announcing: Division I
 Ever Botos: Prose: Division I
 Gabe Saunders: Prose: Division I
 Gracin Harris: Radio News Announcing: Division II
 Jeanie Teymer: Expository Address: Division I
 Lucy Hucker: Reviewing: Division I
 Lucy Hucker: Videocasting: Division I
 Lylah Billmeyer: After Dinner Speaking: Division I
 Lylah Billmeyer: Storytelling: Division I
 MaryEllen Smith: Spontaneous Speaking: Division II
 MaryEllen Smith: Videocasting: Division I
 Maya Smith: Original Oratory: Division I
 Maya Smith: Radio News Announcing: Division I
 Morgan Clemen: Acting: Division I
 Morgan Clemen: Reviewing: Division I
 Olivia Begle: Reviewing: Division I
 Ollie Hunter: Solo Musical Theatre: Division I
 Owen Salow: Improvisation: Division I
 Owen Salow: Storytelling: Division I
 Owen Smith: Expository Address: Division I
 Preston Salow: Improvisation: Division I
 Preston Salow: Spontaneous Speaking: Division I

Rylee Reed: Acting: Division I
 Rylee Reed: Literary Program: Division I
 Ryleigh Moriarity: Literary Program: Division I
 Sellah Ambundo: Poetry: Division I
 Sellah Ambundo: Solo Musical Theatre: Division I
 Taylor Saunders: Acting: Division I
 Taylor Saunders: Original Oratory: Division I
 Tommie Cole: Literary Program: Division I
 Trish Dietiker: Prose: Division I
 Trish Dietiker: Videocasting: Division I
 Not only did we all receive strong ratings, the majority of our events placed high in our centers. We received 11 Best of Center awards as a whole. The students who received these honors are listed below.
 Arianna Nolan: Expository Address
 Ava Holtz: Public Address
 Emily Rudd: Improvisation
 Lucy Hucker: Videocasting
 Lucy Hucker: Reviewing
 Lylah Billmeyer: Storytelling
 Maya Smith: Original Oratory
 Sellah Ambundo: Solo Musical Theatre
 Sellah Ambundo: Poetry
 Taylor Saunders: Acting
 Trish Dietiker: Prose

To further show our talent and dedication to speech, we were able to bring home the Eagle as the 2026 Tri-Rivers Conference Individual Speech Champions, a reign we've held since 2002. We greatly appreciate the hard work from our students as well as our beloved coaches. Wish us all the best as we go into this weekend for Districts at Postville this Saturday. We would love for everyone to join us there and cheer us on as we compete to travel to State! As always, Go Cats!

Athlete of the Week

Name: Morgan Hoeger

What do you enjoy most about playing basketball?

I enjoy winning games and being able to have fun on the court.

How have you evolved as a player from last year?

I have been working on new post moves and getting better at my free throws.



What's been a favorite basketball memory from this season? Wartburg summer basketball camp, when Aubrie slept on top of the desk, or when the seniors pranked Aubrie about getting ice cream, and she was the only one who fell for it.

What's your favorite warm-up song? "That Should Be Me" by Justin Bieber

Fine Artist of the Week

Name: Taylor Saunders

You've been nominated because of your great work in vocal jazz. What do you enjoy most about it?

Vocal jazz has been an amazing experience for me. The most enjoyable part is the community that I have been in. The group's I have



been in the last couple of years work very well together and we enjoy rehearsals.

How does your vocal jazz participation complement what you do in choir?

It's given me so much experience as an individual singer. I've learned how to hear chords and notes as one person but blend as a group. These are things you can't always learn in a full choir group.

What song would you love to see arranged for vocal jazz? I think it would be fun to hear "All of Me" by John Legend as a vocal jazz piece.

What's been a fun vocal jazz memory?

The trips to and from jazz competitions are my favorite part of this community. The experiences I'd had with the other students in vocal jazz have been amazing. It's all laughs and chaos, but these are adventures I wouldn't give up for the world.

Basketball seasons come to an end, one game from State

Boys basketball by Maya Smith

The boys ended their season at District Finals playing against the Bellevue Comets. It was a tough game, and despite a second-half surge, the Cats walked away with a loss, 59-64.

Coach Conner comments: "We did not get off to an ideal start in the game against Bellevue. Everything is magnified in the postseason, and your start to the game is crucial to your success. Bellevue shot the ball really well to start the game and we dug ourselves into a 10-point hole right away. Our guys did not flinch though and battled back for most of the first half. Bellevue seemed to answer every shot we made in the 2nd quarter and we couldn't cut into their lead like we would have liked. I thought we outplayed them in the 2nd half, we just didn't have a single break go our way in most of the game. With a better start to the game, I think we are playing for a chance to go to the State Tournament this weekend. I am so proud of how we battled until the end of the game. We played our tails off all night and gave ourselves a chance.

"We have been in the District Final 5 out of the last six years, which speaks to the state of our program. That is in large part to the work that gets put in during the offseason by our players. I thought this year's team lived up to their expectations. Our first goal was to win the TRC West, and we accomplished that goal. We came up short of our second goal of making it to the State Tournament, but again, I am so proud of what this team accomplished this season, and our guys should hold their heads high

and be proud of themselves for all that they accomplished as well."

Here are some game stats:

Points: Brady Wall, 23; Anderson Holtz, 18
Rebounds: Brady Wall, 6; Dylan Knipper, 6
Assists: Anderson Holtz, 4; Brady Wall, 3; Lukas Chesnut, 3

When asked about the seniors, Coach said: "This Senior group....where do I begin? It has been an absolute honor to be their coach these past 4 seasons. They have won 70 games in 4 years and have played in the District Final each year. That is a very impressive resume for this group. While I am very proud of everything they accomplished on the court, I am most proud of who they all are as young men. I am hopeful that they were able to take something away from this season or previous ones that will help them be successful husbands and dads down the road. I love these guys like they are my own kids and will miss getting to go to war with them every day. I wish them nothing but the best and will talk about them to future MV players for years to come."

Girls basketball by MaryEllen Smith

Friday Maquoketa Valley advanced further into the playoff bracket after defeating MFL MarMac's Bulldogs. After only scoring 4 points in the first quarter the Wildcats came back, winning the game 45 to 42.

The stats are as follows:

Rebounds: Audra Burbridge 5, Lanni Beaman and Grace Richter 3, and both Taryn Burbridge and Madison Thompson 2.



Grace Richter looks to make a play during the Emmetsburg game. She became the #3 top scorer this year in MV five-on-five history with 1140 career points.

Assists: Thompson 3, A. Burbridge, T. Burbridge, Macee Nolan, Richter all had 2

Steals: A. Burbridge 4 and Richter 3

Points: Richter 15, Thompson 13, and A. Burbridge 9.

The girls season came to an end after playing Emmetsburg Wednesday night in Hampton, with a score of 64 to 43.

In a Facebook post, Coach Moeck expressed his gratitude to all those involved in the program. He also reflected on this year's team: "We graduated a big group last year, and there were plenty of questions about what this season would look like. Our kids answered every single one of them. They came together and put together one heck of a run. They believed in one another. They worked hard for each other, they pushed one another each day and most importantly, you all bought in. Both JV and Varsity had outstanding seasons, and that doesn't happen by accident — it happens because of commitment, trust, and heart.

"This season may be over, but this group continued the standard that so many help build before them,— the culture, the standard, the belief, the team first attitude — will carry forward. The future is bright because of the foundation that was laid."

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Anderson Holtz gives it his all to get around a Bellevue defender Tuesday night. He had 18 points that night. (photos courtesy of Mr. Dunlap)



Basketball, cont.

Coach Moenck had a few words to commemorate the season. This group battled through adversity, competed every single night, and most importantly, played with heart. They represented our program, school, and community with toughness and togetherness.

“Coming into the season, we knew we had big shoes to fill. We graduated a tremendous group of seniors last year, and many outside of our locker room weren’t sure what this season would look like. But what they didn’t know was the character of the young men in this program.

“This team didn’t make excuses. They didn’t focus on what we lost. Instead, they focused on what we could become.

“They worked. They trusted each other. They played for one another.

“Because of that, we had an opportunity to compete for a conference championship and gave ourselves a legitimate chance to punch a ticket to the state tournament. That is remarkable. It speaks volumes about their resilience, commitment, and belief in one another.

“While every season ends short of the ultimate goal for all but one team, success is measured in more than trophies. It’s measured in growth. It’s measured in relationships. It’s measured in how you respond when things get difficult. This team passed every test. They no doubt made me a better coach!”

The girls finished the season with a 19-5 overall record.

Girls All-Conference Basketball

First team

Audra Burbridge (unanimous)

Grace Richter (unanimous)

Second team

Madison Thompson

Honorable Mention

Lanni Beaman

Boys All-Conference Basketball

Player of the Year: Brady Wall

First team

Anderson Holtz (unanimous)

Ty Hoeger

Second team

Dylan Knipper

Honorable Mention

Trevor Grimm

Coach of the Year: Coach Conner

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!

Fantasy Fiction: The battle of many but few

A series by Abby Nieman

The fact that Warin is dead hits Lyra hard as she sits there cradling the lifeless body that was found in the square. This was the one thing that was supposed to stay a steady constant, not die when she needed him the most. The overwhelming rage and grief sits heavy on Lyra’s chest as she gets up and goes into the castle. “Lyra, hey, Lyra, you need to listen to me. I am Elysia, and I have intel on what the opposing side is trying to do as they have captured me and are using me to their advantage. Knut wants you to either join them or give up the king’s secrets. If you allow me to help you, we and the rest of the kingdom can defeat Knut, save those of us who are captured, and may bring some peace into your life.”

Elysia. Who is Elysia? “Why should I trust you? You only come to me after the person I need in my life more than my Dad is gone!” Lyra screams as she enters the castle, where no one can hear her. “Because I did not know the plan til now. I have been watching you and Warin through a crystal ball by the orders of Knut and wish that you will never end up as I have, so please give me a chance and see what I can do.”

“What do you get out of helping me? Something Knut gave you?” Lyra is calmer at this point and coming to the idea of having a new friend that could help, even if it’s just her imagination.

“I get nothing. This is if you don’t want to lead your army and definitely Knut and his crew, as if you do, you will free not

only me but at least two others that are now stuck in here with me, so Knut is giving me nothing for helping you. I and Oroin want to help you not end up like us.”

“Okay, this plan and partnership would let me seek revenge on Warin?”

“Yes, and much more.”

“What needs to be done because as soon as I can fight Knut face to face, I will be the reason he takes his last breath?” The feeling that Lyra had felt before was now gone and replaced with fire running through her veins as her adrenal spikes.



Damico, Nolan named outstanding soloists



On Monday morning, MV's vocal jazz ensembles traveled to Coe College to perform at their Vocal Jazz Summit. Both Jazz X-Press (pictured above) and Smooth Harmony performed their sets and received feedback from the clinicians. Congratulations to Mileea Damico and Arianna Nolan, who were each awarded Outstanding Soloist for their performances. Now the vocal jazz groups wait to see if they qualified for state. They will also perform at MV's Night of Jazz Mar. 12.

Deep Dive by Arianna Nolan



Welcome back, Divers, to another edition of Deep Dive! It's been a while since we have looked at some fish, so I thought today we would explore the world of the California sheephead! This fish is located in the kelp forests of the Monterey Bay in California, as it prefers to be in the warm waters of the ocean. The California sheephead can get up to three feet and can weigh up to 36 pounds. These fish differ based on their gender. The male California sheephead is bigger and has a black tail with a

reddish-orange midriff. But the female is a solid dull pink all over its body.

The diet of this creature is very interesting, as they prefer to eat hard-shell creatures. Some of these creatures include sea urchins, crabs, and lobsters. This fish tends to hunt during the day, and at night it moves along the crevices of caves while wrapping itself in a mucus cocoon. Predators can smell the California sheephead because of the scent of the mucus cocoon.

Due to overfishing of this creature, specifically in Asia, the conservation of this fish is "vulnerable." To help with the protection of this creature, please be wary of what you are throwing away and practice conservation techniques. If you would like to find out more about the California sheephead, please visit the Monterey Bay Aquarium website, which is where all the information for this article was provided. I hope you all have a fantastic weekend and I will see you all next week!

One at a Time

by Arianna Nolan

Walking through the hallways of the Maquoketa Valley High School, you see a variety of different faces and personalities. When you look at certain people, some thoughts or words come to mind to describe them. Some good, some bad. You might think you know them, but in reality, you don't. We don't know anybody. Because, in the end, we don't know what goes on behind closed doors.



According to the Iowa Health and Human Services, 36% of students in Iowa felt depressed. The same source states that half of the students struggling with major depressive disorder were not receiving any aid for it. They fight the battle alone – relying on endurance or denial alone. They hide in hopes nobody will notice or that it will go away – until one day it catches up to them and they are just another person that everyone misses.

The National Eating Disorder Association states that every 52 minutes, a person dies from a direct consequence of an eating disorder. They also claim that about 30 million Americans will experience an eating disorder sometime in their lifetime. Approximately 22% of adolescents worldwide have shown symptoms of eating disorders. Eating disorders affect everyone. Making those comments about someone's body only makes it worse. They will become a statistic.

The Iowa Health and Human Services surveyed 32,857 children, and of those children, 64% of those kids were experiencing child abuse in some way. Neglect was among the most common of cases. These kids go to school feeling unloved and come back feeling even worse. Child abuse increases the chance of mental health problems.

You don't know what is going on behind closed doors. Someone could be dealing with abuse, bullying, mental health problems, or more. Making judgments about people's entire characters based on one interaction or appearance leads to stereotypes and increased bullying. Don't contribute to someone becoming a statistic. If you see something, say something. I love you all, and if you need a shoulder to lean on, there are many people, including me, that you can go to. Go Cats!

On Special At Taste Oasis This Week

Donuts



Freeze Dried Candies

Scotcheroos

