

The Wildcat Echo

A publication by the students of Maquoketa Valley High School

MV reigns at TRC Large Group Speech contest

by Taylor Saunders

Large group speech has been in motion for a couple of months now, our team pulled together a very smoothly hosted Tri-Rivers Large Group Speech Conference. We worked Friday night to put together the rooms and continued into Saturday morning. Even throughout, we still reigned as champions! The participating events included:

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.

Readers Theatre (Hollow): Lanni Beaman, Preston Salow, Addie Bonert, Natalie Ries, Alaina Connolly, and Gracin Harris.

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 Hoefler.

TV News (MOM News): Natalie Ries, Aubrie Althoff, Morgan Hoeger, Maleah Frieburger, Allison Porter, and Maggie Recker.

TV News (WARP (We Are Always Reporting the Past)): Derrick Mohr, Colin Smith, Eli Dougherty, Cheyenne Eike, Alaina Leytem, and Jeanie Teymer.

Radio Broadcasting (Ocean Currents: Adventures of the Sea!): Lucy Hucker, Olivia Begle, and Cecilia Charles.

Radio Broadcasting (Southern Sweethearts): Morgan Clemen, McKayla Weber, and Ryleigh Moriarity.

Radio Broadcasting (BLUE 92.2): Owen Smith, Athena Bradley, Jena Hoefler, and Owen Salow.

Short Film (Worst Best Day Ever): Gabe Saunders, Owen Smith, Charlotte Ludovissy, Allison Porter, and Serenity White.

Group Improvisation: Zach Leytem, Trevor Grimm, and Noah Whalen.

Group Improvisation: Preston Salow, Ella Reicher, and Ruby Recker.



Jeanie Teymer and Lylah Billmeyer rehearse their ensemble acting piece with Mrs. DeVore.

Group Improvisation: Tristen Flanagan, Izzy Cordes, and Owen Salow.

Ensemble Acting (Who Doth Inhabit the Primary Position): Jeanie Teymer and Lylah Billmeyer.

Ensemble Acting (Forever Friends): Olivia Begle, Breanna Bush, Ryleigh Moriarity, and MaryEllen Smith.

Ensemble Acting (Beauty Kweens): Maya Smith, Ever Botos, and Addie Wilson.

Group Mime (Hidden Truth): Carly Dirks, Trish Dietiker, and Abby Nieman.

Solo Mime (Watch Me Bake Cookies in 5 Minutes!): Trish Dietiker.

Musical Theatre (All I Wanna Do Is Eat k): Ollie Hunter, Sellah Ambundo, Breece Hoisington, and Izzy Cordes.

All of these events did extremely well. Performing from 9:00am all the way to 2:05pm, everyone did their very best and worked hard. We received 16 district I ratings and 2 district II rating.

One-Act Play (Arctic Library): Rating I

Readers Theatre (Hollow): Rating II

Choral Reading (We Break, But We Return): Rating I

TV News (MOM News): Rating I

TV News (WARP (We Are Always Reporting the Past)): Rating I

Radio Broadcasting (Ocean Currents: Adventures of the Sea!): Rating I

Radio Broadcasting (Southern Sweethearts): Rating I

Radio Broadcasting (BLUE 92.2): Rating I

Short Film (Worst Best Day Ever): Rating I

Group Improvisation: Rating I

Group Improvisation: Rating I

Group Improvisation: Rating I

Ensemble Acting (Who Doth Inhabit the Primary Position): Rating I

Ensemble Acting (Forever Friends): Rating II

Ensemble Acting (Beauty Kweens): Rating I

Group Mime (Hidden Truth): Rating I

Solo Mime (Watch Me Bake Cookies in 5 Minutes!): Rating I

continued on next page

Speech results, cont.

Musical Theatre (All I Wanna Do Is Eat): Rating I

Not only did we all receive strong ratings, the majority of our events placed high in our centers. We received five Best of Center awards, three events received 2nd Best in Center, and an additional four events received 3rd place.

One-Act Play: 1st Place

Best Actress In One Act

Play: Ollie Hunter

Best Actress In One Act

Play: Taylor Saunders

Best Supporting Actress

In One Act Play: Carly Dirks

WARP TV News: 1st Place

Reicher/Salow/Recker Group Improv: 1st Place

Musical Theatre: 1st Place

Choral Reading: 1st Place

Solo Mime: 2nd Place

MOM News TV News: 2nd Place

Who Doth Inhabit... Ensemble: 2nd Place

The team will compete at Dubuque Senior Saturday at district contest. Groups which receive a Division I rating will go to the state competition in Waterloo.

January School Board Minutes

Regular Board Meeting – January 19, 2026– 5:30 p.m. – Johnston Elementary, Hopkinton, Iowa

The regular meeting of the Maquoketa Valley Board of Education was called to order by President Donna Kunde at 5:30 p.m. on January 19, 2026, at Johnston Elementary in Hopkinton, Iowa. All motions carried unanimously unless otherwise noted.

Board Members Present –Feldmann, Kunde, Overman, Smeins, Zietlow
Board Members Absent – None
Staff Present – Supt. Troy Osterhaus, Brenda Becker, Brian Mangold, Craig Wilson and Erika Vanderloop
Visitors Present – Mike Putz

Motion was made by Feldmann, seconded by Zietlow to approve the meeting agenda as presented. All ayes. Carried.

In a motion by Overman, seconded by Smeins the consent items were approved. All ayes. Carried.

Kindergarten round-up is scheduled for February 6th. There are currently 57 students that are scheduled to go through the round-up process. Preschool round-up is scheduled for April 22nd. There are currently 42 students on the preschool list.

Mr. Mangold discussed the updated 2026-2027 High School Course catalog.

Three open enrollment requests out were

approved in a motion by Zietlow, seconded by Feldmann. All ayes. Carried.

The following personnel recommendations were approved in a motion by Overman, seconded by Feldmann:
Chelsey Klima – employed as Middle School Girls Track Coach
All ayes. Carried.

The 2026-2027 High School Course Catalog has been updated to reflect career clusters. In a motion by Overman, seconded by Feldmann the 2026-2027 High School Course Catalog was approved. All ayes. Carried.

The Kirkwood Community College Contract for Teaching Services was approved in a motion by Zietlow, seconded by Overman. All ayes. Carried.

Speakers for the 2026 Academic Excellence banquet were discussed. The banquet will be held on May 6, 2026.

Mike Feldmann and John Zietlow will serve on the January audit committee.

Supt. Osterhaus gave a brief update on the School Improvement Advisory Committee meeting which was held via Zoom on January 14, 2025.

The February board meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. The meeting was adjourned at 6:17 p.m. in a motion by Feldmann, seconded by Smeins. All ayes.

Fantasy Fiction: The battle of many but few

A series
by Abby Nieman

The leader of the spirits comes forward. He does not look like the others. He is alive, not a spirit, but still the leader. "Your mother was a great help to us when she was here, and so far, you are filling those shoes; there's a reason that the kingdom has not fallen yet. And this generation, you are the key," the lead says as he sits by Lyra. His deep red tail lops around the tree, as the gold spikes travel up the spine to the neck. His wings grow larger as he lies down to expose the yellow accents.

"Are you a dragon?" Lyra asks as she comes back to her senses. "I was told that you weren't real, that you went

extinct a hundred years ago. Am I dreaming?

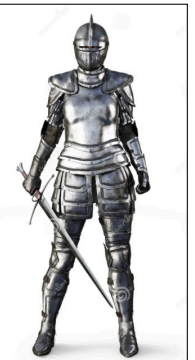
"Yes, I am a dragon. The name is Merdid, and you are somewhat dreaming, but don't be alarmed. It is only my voice talking to you; that is your power," Merdid, the dragon, replies in his deep voice, seemingly echoing through the forest. "There is much yet for you to learn, and I will be your guide through your journey, but let the spirits help you with your arm. It may feel a little weird." At this, the spirits come around Lyra. They take out the arrow which hurts for a second, cleaned the wound, and wrapped a bandage around Lyra's arm.

"What are the spirits? Why do they seem trapped here?"

"They are past warriors, like you, that have completed their earthly duties and have chosen to help the current warriors."

"You said my mom was one?"

"Yes, but you need to head back to the town and help the people, as tragedy has struck."



Sports Connection

Wildcats defeat Bucs, lose to tough Orioles

by MaryEllen Smith

The MV girls traveled to Springville last Thursday to face the Orioles. The Orioles took the Wildcats 51 to 41.

In the first half of the game the Orioles kept the lead, but coming out of halftime the MV girls managed to come back with 19 points in the third quarter. Leading in points: A. Burbridge and Richter 14, Thompson 8. Rebounds Richter led with 12. Assists again led by Richter with 4. Steals: A. Burbridge 4.

We didn't get off to the start we needed against a very good Springville team. Coach Moenck has some words about the game: "When you're on the road, you have to be ready from the opening tip, and we weren't. We dug ourselves an early hole and had to battle back, and to our kids' credit, they did just that. They continued to compete, stayed together, and gave themselves a chance to win the game at the end. This is a great learning experience for our team. We'll take what we learned, grow from it, and get better moving forward. Our kids are competitors, and that showed in the way they fought back."

This Tuesday the girls traveled to East Buchanan winning 63 to 27.

Last night the Wildcats hosted Ed-Co.



Wrestlers are coming on strong



Gabe Halweg gets the upper-hand on his opponent at a recent meet. (photo by Ella Reicher)

by Alaina Mead

Last Thursday the boys wrestling team hosted a quad against East Buchanan, North Linn and Starmont. Maquoketa Valley went 1-1-1 winning against EB (48-15) and tying with Starmont (30-30)!

While wrestling EB, Dalton Africa, Kyle Engleken and Tyler Beitz all won their matches with pins. Maverick Domeyer, Brayden Schuster, Tucker Kemp, Kipton Thompson and Gabe Halweg all also won points with forfeits.

Against Starmont, Tyler Beitz and Kyle Engleken both won their matches with falls in the 2nd period. Dalton Africa, Gabe Halweg and Maverick Domeyer also scored points by forfeit.

During the North Linn match, Tyler Beitz won his third match for the night by pin and Nolan Lahey earned points with a forfeit.

Over the weekend the wrestling team traveled to MFL Mar-Mac for a tournament consisting of 15 teams, MV coming in at 7th with 84 points.

Kyle Engleken had a successful day coming home with 2nd place and a 2-1 record. Tyler Beitz also wrestled well earn-

ing 3rd place with a 3-1 record. Brayden Schuster got 5th place ending with a 2-2 record. Dalton Africa went 1-3 placing 6th.

The boys traveled to Springville yesterday and will head to Midland Saturday with results to come next week!



Kyle Engleken earned a second place spot on the podium at the MFL-Mar-Mac tournament last weekend.

A highlight of the Springville game was Grace Richter scoring her 1000th point.

Boys continue to tear it up on the court

by Maya Smith

Last Thursday, the boys traveled to Springville. The Cats were down by 3 after the 1st, but soon pulled away, winning 58-43. The next day, they competed against the Stars at home. The Stars proved no trouble for them, and they won 58-45. On Tuesday, the boys had a slow start, ending with 8 points but took it away in the second, scoring 25. By the end of the game, the Cats won 69-32.

Coach Conner comments: "Springville played really well in the first half on Thursday night. They moved the ball well and hit a few shots. They were also really aggressive on the offensive glass and we took a little bit to adjust to it. They did a nice job of adjusting their one to take away our scoring opportunities. Trevor Grimm was huge for us in the 3rd and 4th quarter. We were able to play him in the middle of their zone and he did a really nice job of looking to score or making guys commit to him and finding the open guy. This allowed us to build a lead at halftime and extend that lead in the 3rd quarter. I also thought that Preston Salow gave us some really good minutes off of the bench. It was a great road win.

Starmont: Anytime you are playing an opponent a 2nd time during the regular

season, it is always interesting to see how they adjust to the first time you played. We did exactly what we wanted to do to start the game, building an 18-3 lead early. Ty Hoeger was a force inside early and made them adjust to him. Once they adjusted, Brady did a nice job of looking for scoring opportunities as well. To Starmont's credit, They did a really nice job of continuing to play despite their early deficit. They are a tough matchup because of their length and athleticism and how aggressive they are. I was a little frustrated with our guys because once we built that early lead, we relaxed and got away from what allowed us to build that lead in the first place. We adjusted at halftime and did a better job of getting back to our style of basketball and did what we needed to do to win the game. There are a lot of things that we can take away from that game to improve upon, and we will have to get better at playing a complete 4 quarters as we head into the postseason. East Buchanan: We had a bit of a slow start due to the fact that we didn't hit some early shots. I thought we got some great looks but they just didn't fall. Our guys stayed patient and continued to work hard on the defensive end. Trevor Grimm was huge for us in the 2nd quarter. He did a really good job

of being aggressive and getting rebounds and he got us going offensively. I thought we played really well as a team from the 2 minute mark in the 2nd quarter on. When we are playing confidently like we did in the 2nd half, we are a tough team to beat. We just need to be able to put that same effort together for 4 quarters, which is something that we have really been focusing on."

Here are some game stats:

Springville

Points: Brady Wall, 19; Trevor Grimm, 10;

Ty Hoeger, 8

Rebounds: Brady Wall, 8; Trevor Grimm, 6;

Dylan Knipper, 4

Assists: Anderson Holtz, 5; Brady Wall, 4;

Trevor Grimm, 4

Starmont

Points: Brady Wall, 17; Anderson Holtz, 15;

Ty Hoeger, 12

Rebounds: Ty Hoeger, 8; Brady Wall, 7;

Dylan Knipper, 6

Assists: Anderson Holtz, 6; Brady Wall, 3

East Buc

Points: Brady, 21; Trevor 17

Rebounds: Trevor Grimm, 10; Brady Wall,

8; Ty Hoeger, 7

Assists: Dylan Knipper, 4; Anderson Holtz, 3

Athletes of the Week

Name: Natalie Ries

What have you enjoyed most about dance this year?

My favorite part of dance this year is getting our family atmosphere back and being successful at state dance once again.

What's physically the toughest part of dance? Physically the toughest

part of dance has to be working on jumps and kicks and trying to gain flexibility back again.

What's your favorite routine you've ever been a part of? What did you like about it? My favorite routine I have been a part of has to be our scary routine freshman year. That routine was very different from other dances we have done and the crowd's reactions were top notch.

What's your favorite style of dance?

Why? My favorite style of dance will always be a fun hip hop routine. I am a very energetic dancer and hip hop will always be an energetic dance.



Name: Tyler Beitz

What do you enjoy most about wrestling? The

atmosphere and learning life lessons.

What's something about wrestling that others might not know? Wrestling is 90% mental.

How do you mentally prepare for a match? I

go to a quiet area and wrestle my match in my head a couple of times.

What's your goal this season? To win Conference and make it to state.

Who's your wrestling role model? The Big Three (Nathan Beitz, Aidan Salow and Brady Davis)



Name: Zachary Leytem

What do you enjoy most about playing basketball?

The part of basketball I enjoy the most is getting to play 5 on 5 in practice.

How have you evolved as a player? I believe that I have evolved as a player the most on defense. However,

I still have a lot to improve on.

What's been a favorite basketball memory? My favorite basketball memory is the car ride talks that would happen in the van during summer camp.

Who's your basketball role model? My basketball role model is Avery Holtz. I have looked up to Avery every since he would beat Anderson and me in a 1 v 2.



New Chances by Carly Dirks

Say Goodbye to High School

Well, for some of us the title matches the present. Seniors, we're saying goodbye. Now, this isn't a chapter for just seniors, this is for everyone. Let's say you're like me. You were known as the liar, the bad kid, and multiple other things. My childhood was ODR's left and right. When I got to 4th grade is when I really started to grow and learn. I wasn't that person. That doesn't matter here. You can change and you and a couple others know. It's too late. The words have spread and now no matter what you do you will always be the person you used to be. Yeah, that hurts. You've tried so hard to change and when you do, everyone remembers the old you.

Well, to that I say forget what everyone says. You worked hard to change. One day you'll be out in the world with a fresh start. You can be an entirely new person. If you're the nicest person in school you could become the worst person in the community. If you were practically failing you might become successful. One day soon, I'll be out to start a new life where no one knows who I was, they will only learn who I am.

The important thing in this journey is to never lose yourself. Never lose what's important. Don't regress back to old habits once you change. If people can't see the new you then it's on them.

Comedy Corner

—compiled by Grace Richter

What did the horse say after it tripped?
Help! I've fallen and I can't giddy-up!

What do you call a pile of cats? A meow-ntain.

A bossy man walked into a bar...And ordered everyone a round.

How did the barber win the race? He knew a short cut.

What do you call a sad strawberry? A blueberry!

Richter is KCRG Athlete of the Week



Thanks to the voting by loyal fans, senior Grace Richter earned KCRG Athlete of the Week honors. She was interviewed in the gym Wednesday by KCRG sports director Chelsie Brown, and her segment aired Wednesday night.

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!

Meet the Freshmen



Jaxyn Weber, Khloe Stodola, Sierra Eike, & Abram Nolan

Name: Khloe Stodola
 Siblings: Kambira, Kipten, Koralie, and Carter
 Activities you plan to be in: Maybe Track
 Favorite subject: Math
 Career aspirations: Medical field
 Hobbies: Walks and going out
 Something cool about you: I love riding longboards.

Name: Sierra Eike
 Siblings: Brady, Andy, Cheyenne, Austin, and Renee
 Activities you plan to be in: Play and Musical
 Favorite subject: Drawing or Spanish
 Career aspirations: Animal Rehab
 Hobbies: Singing, drawing, reading, and playing outside with my friends or my dog
 Something cool about you: I'm 6'5"

Name: Jaxyn Weber
 Siblings: Laci, TJ, and Mahailey
 Activities you plan to be in: Volleyball, Basketball, and Track
 Favorite subject: English
 Career aspirations: College
 Hobbies: Reading and sports
 Something cool about you: I have good fashion.

Name: Abram Nolan
 Siblings: Arianna
 Activities you plan to be in: Musical, Speech, and Play
 Favorite subject: Math
 Career aspirations: Teacher or meteorologist
 Hobbies: Going on walks and video games
 Something cool about you: I love cats. I have about 13 of them.

—typist: MaryEllen Smith

Cutie



by Kayla Hoeger

This excited little cutie is a Sophomore from Earlville. She is involved in volleyball, basketball, and FFA. A fun fact about her is that her favorite food is tacos. The first to correctly answer the Cutie to Mrs. Temple will receive a prize from her prize box! *The last Cutie was Eva Mensen.*

Fine Artist of the Week

Name: Colt Haas

What instrument do you play in band?

I play the tenor saxophone in jazz, concert, and marching band.

What do you enjoy most about playing in band?

I enjoy the events we get to like all-state state auditions and different jazz competitions.



What life lessons have you learned by being in band? I have learned that good things take time. This especially sticks out in band because when we first get a piece of music, it doesn't sound the best at first but after working at it, it sounds pretty good.

If you could join a famous band, which one would it be? I would chose to join the Blue Note Jazz club because it's filled with the best of the best at every instrument group.

what's up?

by Grace Richter

What's your favorite class this semester?

Derrick Mohr: Ceramics
 Alaina Leytem: My online classes
 McKenna Mineart: My online classes
 Taryn Burbridge: My exceptional learners class
 Lucy Hucker: My online classes
 Brielle Kuhns: Chemistry
 Izzi Moenck: Algebra 2
 Arianna Nolan: Intro to Lit

Deep Dive by Arianna Nolan



Welcome back, Divers, to another edition of Deep Dive! This week, we will be taking a look at one of the hairiest creatures of the sea- the hairy frog fish. This creature inhabits the Atlantic Ocean, particularly in the rocky and sandy areas of the water. A fun fact about this creature is that the appendages that make these creatures look hairy can grow back if cut off! Additionally, these appendages grow longer on male fish than on female fish. These fish lack dorsal fins and instead have three regular fins that have different purposes.

The hairy frog-fish tend to eat small fish and other small creatures of the sea, such as gobies and crustaceans. This fish will watch its prey with its eyes, then uses a set of their fins to mimic the creature, and then finally does a surprise attack and eats it. Predators of this creature are, funny enough, other frogfish and also moray eels.

While there is a lot known about this creature, its conservation status of this creature is unknown. Nevertheless, you should always be wary of what and where you are throwing stuff away, and be cautious of what chemicals you are putting into the air. If you would like to know more about this creature, please check the Florida Museum website, which is where all the information for this article was found. I hope you all have a fantastic weekend and I will see you all next week!