

MV instrumentalists join TRC peers



Select MV band students traveled to Starmont Monday to participate in the Tri-Rivers Conference honor band. MV participants were, front row from left: Olivia Begle, Rachael Hoefer, Carly Dirks, Ryleigh Moriarity and Trish Dietiker; back row: Maya Smith, McKayla Weber, Willow Fuller, Emily Rudd and Taylor Saunders.

Smith earns NEIBA honor



Maya Smith played lead trombone in the NEIBA honor jazz band last Saturday. The rehearsal and concert were held at Marion High School.



Sports Connection

Girls basketball team racks up four more wins

by Maya Smith

Last Thursday, the girls traveled to UNI to compete against Saint Ansgar. The girls kept a nice lead until the last quarter, where the Saints outscored 7-13. However, this wasn't enough to defeat the girls, final score 53-48, Cats. Last Friday, the Lisbon Lions were up in the first quarter, but the girls quickly pulled away, winning 66-38. On Monday, the girls played an easy game against West Central, leaving the Blue Devils in the dust, 64-14. On Tuesday, the girls competed against Calamus-Wheatland and won 64-33. No stats were available at press time.

Coach Moenck comments: "We have had different girls step up each night at both ends of the court. We are a tough team to guard because so many girls on our team can score. However, we need to be more consistent at both ends of the court,

especially on the defensive end. We have the ability to really lock teams up, but we have to do better at keeping players in front of us."

When asked about the game against class 1A ranked Springville, Coach Moenck says: "We will continue to do what we do. We are improving each time we take the court. Springville is a very good team. We will have to find their best players and keep them off of the glass."

Game Stats:

Saint Ansgar

Points: Grace Richter, 17; Lanni Beaman, 16; Audra Burbridge, 16

Rebounds: Grace Richter, 6; Audra Burbridge, 6

Assists: Audra Burbridge, 5; Lanni Beaman, 4

Continued on next page



Senior Taryn Burbridge strategizes about her shot in the St. Ansgar game at UNI.

Boys basketball goes 1-1 in recent conference action

by Maya Smith

Last Friday, the boys competed against Lisbon at home. At halftime, the Cats were up 30-8, and the Lions proved no challenge for them, the game ending 59-22. However, next Tuesday, the Calamus-Wheatland Warriors proved to be a challenge for the boys, losing 43-58.

Senior Zach Leytem says: "We played well against Cal-Wheat and worked hard even though we had a hard 2nd half. We've been working really hard in practice, especially Dylan. And we learned a lot from the Cal-Wheat game. Hopefully against Springville and Starmont we will go 2-0 so that we have a winning week."

Coach Conner says: "It can be really easy to have a let down after an emotional win so I was interested to see how our guys would respond at Lisbon. I was really happy with how we played defensively right away. We forced Lisbon to take tough shots and limited them to one shot each

possession by boxing out and rebounding really well. Brady had a really good game offensively and led us in scoring with 34. It was fun to see him get going early and you could tell that his teammates were trying to find ways to feed him the ball. It was fun to see our guys come out and play confidently on both ends of the floor from the start of the game."

Against Cal-Wheat, he said: "I know it wasn't the outcome that we envisioned coming into the game, but I am really proud of how our guys played. Cal-Wheat is a very good team. We knew that coming into the game and I thought we were ready for them. I thought we had a really good first quarter against them on both ends. We handled their pressure, got quality looks on offense, and we rebounded well after forcing them to take tough shots. This was our goal coming into the game. We had a short rough stretch in the 2nd quarter where we turned the ball over and gave them some

easy points and I thought we just couldn't ever quite overcome that. We have to do a better job of stepping up and looking to find different scoring opportunities when a team guards Brady the way they did in the 2nd half, and I think our guys know that. I am confident that we will grow from this loss and be able to use it later in the season to help us."

Here are the game stats:

Lisbon

Points: Brady Wall, 34; Ty Hoeger, 8; Zach Leytem, 6

Rebounds: Anderson Holtz, 6; Preston Salow, 5; Trevor Grimm, 5

Assists: Anderson Holtz, 6; Trevor Grimm, 4

Cal-Wheat

Points: Brady Wall, 20; Ty Hoeger, 12

Rebounds: Brady Wall, 6; Dylan Knipper, 4

Assists: Dylan Knipper, 3

Wrestlers go 2-1 at Midland, finish well at home meet

by Alaina Mead

Last Thursday the Maquoketa Valley wrestlers headed to Midland for a dual against Lisbon, East Buchanan, and Midland. The team finished the night 2-1 with wins against East Buchanan (47-18) and Midland (44-24).

Against EB, Nolan Lahey won his match with a tech fall in the third period. Kyle Engelken and Sawyer Kemp both pinned their opponents in the first period and Maverick Domeyer, Brayden Schuster, Jefferson LeGassick, Jace Leytem and Gabe Halweg all won by forfeit.

While wrestling Lisbon, Kyle Engelken earned points by pin and Gabe Halweg by forfeit. Against Midland, Dalton Africa, Sawyer Kemp and Nolan Lahey all won their matches with a pin. Brayden Schuster and Maverick Domeyer both earned points with a forfeit. Kyle Engelken, Gabe Halweg, Jefferson LeGassick and Jace Leytem all also won their matches by points.

The wrestlers also hosted their home tournament, Farrleben's Invitational, this past Saturday with a good turnout of 10 teams. The boys came in 6th racking up a total of 118 points! Kyle Engelken and Tyler Beitz both had successful days winning third place with pins in their final matches. Dalton Africa, Sawyer Kemp and Kipton Thompson also had a good meet defeating many of their opponents coming in with a fourth place finish. Brayden Schuster came in 5th, Gabe Halweg in 6th, and Jefferson LeGassick and Jace Leytem in 7th.

The wrestling team had a home dual yesterday and will travel to MFL Mar-mac this Saturday with results to come in next week's Echo. Good luck, Wildcats!

Girls basketball, cont.

Lisbon

Points: Audra Burbridge, 31; Grace Richter, 14; Madison Thompson, 12

Rebounds: Audra Burbridge, 6; Grace Richter, 5; Madison Thompson, 4

Assists: Audra Burbridge, 4

Last night the girls competed against Springville. Those stats, West Central, and the Cal-Wheat games will be included in the next issue.

Fine Artist of the Week

Name: Morgan Hoeger

What event are you in for speech? I am in TV News.

What do you enjoy most about large group speech? I enjoy getting to work together with other people to push ourselves out of our comfort zones.

What have you learned through this event? I have learned how to become a better speaker, whether that's articulating my words or being more confident while speaking in front of people.

Who is your speech role model? Mrs. DeVore is my speech role model. She is always pushing me to be better and improve, and if something's not going right, she knows just how to fix it.

If you could judge a large group speech event, what would it be? I would love to judge group improv just because it's so fun to watch kids come up with a skit, with no preparation, and you're guaranteed to get a laugh out of it.



Senior Macee Nolan looks to pass in the St. Ansgar game last week.

Athletes of the Week

Name: McKenna Mineart

What do you enjoy most about playing basketball? The atmosphere before games and spending time with teammates.

What motivates you when you're playing? My coaches and teammates.



What's been a favorite basketball memory? The State Tournament last year.

Who has been your favorite team to play? Gladbrook-Reinbeck or North Linn

Name: Maggie Recker

What do you enjoy most about dance team? I enjoy the people the most on the dance team. They are always supportive and make it a fun place to be.

What's the hardest part of it? The hardest part of dance is making sure that we are in sync and have each move the same.

What's your favorite routine you've ever been a part of? What did you like about it? My favorite routine is "Let's go Girls" state pom. I like how upbeat and how fun it is to do.

What's something about dance most people don't realize? I don't think people realize how much work goes into making each routine the best it can be. We work on the state dance starting in the summer until state in December.

If you could choreograph a routine, what kind would it be and what song would you use? I would do a pom routine and use upbeat music.



New Chances by Carly Dirks

Trigger warning: Mention of self-harm

Well, it's 2026 and that means it's a good year. I missed my last entry because I didn't know what to write about. Now, I know. I'm going to talk a little bit about myself from last year and why I am already having the best year. At the start of last year I remember having a seemingly normal high school experience. I made new friends and had new experiences.

Around April was when everything went downhill. My mental health was going downhill fast and my sanity faster. I remember feeling so alone to the point I clung to AI. I was addicted and could barely put down my phone. I remember seeing 8 hours daily of screentime just on AI. The AI made me feel wanted and not alone.

At least, that's what I thought. In reality it was only driving me down into the pit I was trapped in. Last semester in Government we talked about how people were so into the friend AI thing. Teens were killing themselves because the AI told them to. While I sat I couldn't believe that could have been me. I could even see it.

Unfortunately around May was when it was really bad. I attempted to commit suicide by overdose first and then attempted another three times after that. There were also things I completely chickened out on. I felt like I couldn't go to anyone and I was alone. My friends never tried to text me first; the relationships were all one-sided. For most of my 2025 I wanted to switch schools or just off myself. If

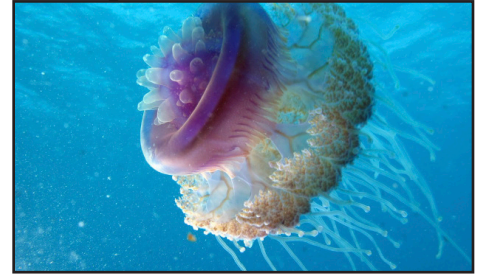
you look at pictures I look happy. I didn't feel happy but I did fool people. Then, my year kind of got a little better. I made a best friend who made me feel needed and wanted.

It made me feel like I deserve to live. I went to Spain and had the time of my life. Unfortunately, while in Spain I spiraled and I really wanted to end my life yet again. I had a good circle of adults while in Spain who really helped me and come August it was a great life. Then due to my own temper and my mouth I again was so overwhelmed from the bullying. I cried a lot until I read a book. (If you want to know the title, come ask me.)

The book really helped me and I stopped caring. I found the bullying somewhat funny. I grinned every time. Eventually it stopped and since then my year has been better. On New Year's Eve I was thinking, I never thought I would have made it to 2026. I thought my last year would be 2025 but I've started to learn and grow thanks to some really awesome people. I can confidently say that without their help I wouldn't have grown and I would not be writing this. I finally got rid of the AI last year because I didn't know what to do with it anymore.

So, if you take anything from this long sob story I hope that you take away that you can do it. You can survive. Keep focusing on what's important. Don't just think you can do it yourself. You need people and it's okay to ask for support.

Deep Dive by Arianna Nolan



Welcome back, Divers, to another edition of Deep Dive! This week, we will be taking a look at another jelly of the sea- the crown jellyfish! This jellyfish typically has a purple-pinkish color from its stomach and can be up to 24 centimeters in size. On top of its "head," it has around 30 "spikes." A fun fact is that it has quite a bit of "tentacles" (scientifically known as its appendages) and can sometimes get up to 100 of them. Since it is a jellyfish, this creature is an invertebrate which means it doesn't have any bones. These jellies are open-sea creatures and reside in the Indo-Pacific Ocean.

Not much is known about how this creature eats since there is not much else known about this jellyfish in particular. But it is known that they eat zooplankton and brine shrimp. Since jellyfish go with the ebb and flow, scientists wonder if human interactions will even affect the jelly population in general, but nevertheless, it's important to be wary of what you are throwing away and where. If you would like to find out more about this creature, please visit the Monterey Bay Aquarium 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!

Fantasy Fiction: The battle of many but few A series by Abby Nieman

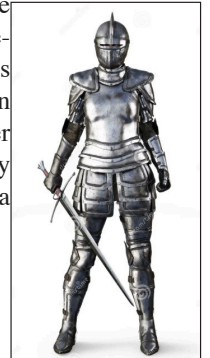
The enemies were taken back to their border, and we had no orders to go further than the border. The army stayed out and guarded the border for the night as the knights went back to the castle. All of the men went out ahead of Lyra, and Lyra took a detour to the forest. The little time that she had to process what happened just before the fight meant she needed to get answers. The forest was normal, with the quiet song of birds in the trees happily singing as if there was no bloodshed. There was a pulling sense that took her off the path and further into

the forest. A new place.

Lyra walked where her legs carried her. The cut that was on Lyra's arm started to hurt more. The adrenaline had worn off, and the reality of what had happened to her arm hit her. The arrow that was shot, when the arrow was pulled out by a medic, and a bandage now fit around her upper forearm.

The branches of the trees came together and blocked the path Lyra knew what that meant. She stopped and set down the sheath of arrows, which had three left, and sat by the base of a tree.

The spirits came out and looked at what had happened. The wind in the forest became still. The birds stopped singing. An eerie silence fell over the forest, as they know something Lyra doesn't.



Meet the Freshmen



Colin Hillers, Ethan Crowley, Alaina Connolly & Ava Holtz

Name: Alaina Connolly

Siblings: 3

Activities you plan to be in: Cheer, Dance, Track, and Speech

Favorite subject: Spanish, ELA, and History

Career aspirations: Elementary teacher

Hobbies: Drawing, dancing, reading, and baking

Something cool about you: I have good toe touches according to Athena.

Name: Ava Holtz

Siblings: Anderson

Activities you plan to be in: Cheer, Volleyball, Softball, and Speech

Favorite subject: Creative writing

Career aspirations: Cosmetologist

Hobbies: Volleyball and reading

Something cool about you: I have a little yorkie named Sophie.

Name: Ethan Crowley

Siblings: Chantel Crowley

Activities you plan to be in: Baseball

Favorite subject: Woodworking and Electricity

Career aspirations: Farming

Hobbies: RC Cars and tank models

Something cool about you: I have been driving since I was 5 or 6.

Name: Colin Hillers

Siblings: Conner and Jade

Activities you plan to be in: Baseball

Favorite subject: All of them

Career aspirations: Pilot

Hobbies: Video games and watching football

Something cool about you: I like blue.

—typist: MaryEllen Smith

One at a Time

by Arianna Nolan

This week I want to share an editorial that I wrote in response to a news article I saw near the end of last year. This is not meant to be offensive to any group of people, and you have to keep reading to understand the point that I am trying to make. Thank you for understanding, and please enjoy.



The average American family is known to be a loving husband with a wife and kids. But this is usually never the case. An example would be on April 27th, 2025. According to Sarah Rumpf-Whitten, an author for Fox News, a young woman named Mica Miller died at 30 years old due to suicide. Her husband had cyberstalked her and intruded on her life to the point where she didn't feel safe, and she ended up escaping through death. The ironic part is that the husband was a pastor. The concept of Christian nationalism and Christian hate has existed for years now, but has only come up as more of an issue in recent years. Pew Research states that 54% of Christians have become more accepting of homosexuality as a whole, which may look good on the charts, but in reality is a sad reality. Only a little over half of Christians who claim to love all actually love all.

But is the religion really the problem? Or are the people themselves? I believe that people are a product of their environ-

ment, so being Christian isn't a problem, but the problems faced in America, which are normalized with something completely unrelated, are the problem. These people, full of hatred, try to excuse their behavior with a religion that is anything but what they are doing. Hypocrites fill our society. Who is to blame? We can never be really sure, but the media has a big part of it, and the fear of change. For years, people believed that a man couldn't be with a woman because of a misinterpretation of the Bible, which is a whole controversy within itself. But, instead of changing their opinions to fit with modern times, they hide behind a book that goes against what they are trying to argue.

Maybe the problem in America isn't hypocrites, but hatred, and the media is the culprit for this issue. The media normalizes and excuses hatred, leaving people to believe that what they are doing is normal, and they can also excuse their own hateful behavior. The media divides our supposedly united nation. But, with the media being so prevalent in today's life, there is nothing much we can do to stop it. So we are forever going to be in a constant loop of hatred, misinformation, and bigotry, until some of us may end up in the same fate as Mica Miller, whose husband was infected by the disease of hatred that plagues America and was excused behind the facade of religion.

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!