

The Wildcat Echo

A publication by the students of Maquoketa Valley High School

FFA students celebrate a year of success

by Anna Feldmann, FFA reporter; and Kayla Hoeger, past FFA Reporter

This past Sunday, April 26th, the Maquoketa Valley FFA chapter hosted its annual banquet. Many awards were handed out, several CDEs and LDEs were recognized for their achievements, and the 2026-2027 officer team was elected.

We held the banquet in the gym this year, so when parents and guests walked in, they were able to check out the Silent and Live Auction items, as well as the reporter's scrapbook, chapter display, and all of our awards from this past year. They entered the food line where we served maidrites, cheesy potatoes, macaroni salad, and cake.

After everyone was served their meal, we began with a live auction. Braden Ronnebaum auctioned off many desserts, pies, a quilt, and a few other fun items. Then the long-awaited awards for degrees, LDEs, and CDEs in the past year started. This year, 11 Discovery Degrees were handed out to Middle School FFA members, 11 Greenhand Degrees, 14 Chapter Degrees, and 8 Iowa Degrees were recognized. The Star Greenhand was awarded to Anna Feldmann for her involvement and dedication to the chapter. The Rising Star award went to Kayla Hoeger, also for her dedication and involvement this year.

This year, the Maquoketa Valley FFA Alumni and Supporters group present-



Anna Feldmann was named the Star Greenhand.



FFA president Natalie Ries presents Ty Hoeger with the Leadership Award.

ed three seniors with scholarships. The recipients were Tyler Hoeger, McKayla Weber and Karly Kerch. These scholarships were awarded to them for their hard work and dedication to our chapter. These scholarships will help with future schooling costs.

This past year, many members spent countless hours serving the community. One member was recognized for his community service. Ethan Crowley was recognized for his dedication to the community. The Maquoketa Valley FFA chapter has many great leaders; however this year, Tyler Hoeger stood out as an awesome leader and was honored with the leadership award. The chapter also recognized its Blue and Gold recipients. Craig Wilson and Randy Darrow were awarded for their great support of the chapter. Both Craig and Randy are always willing to help when the chapter needs it. The chapter needs people like this who help with behind-the-scenes jobs, and we can't thank them enough. Our Honorary Chapter Degree recipients were the MV Kitchen Staff. We want to thank them for their support this year, especially when they helped Miss Lau unload the fruit truck back in December when the officer team could not be there due to a 2-hour delay.

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Spring play opens tonight!

by Taylor Saunders

What happens when an entire cast of high school students is left to fend for themselves when their play director runs off to become a professional minigolf instructor in Mexico? Well, I can't answer that quite yet. However you can find out for yourself at *Just Another High School Play* on May 1st, 2nd, and 3rd.

Just Another High School Play written by Bryan Stratchman follows our Stage Manager (Taylor Saunders) and our Assistant Director (Emily Ann Rudd) on the journey of piecing together what they might call a masterpiece—but what others might call a disaster. After finding out that they've been outright abandoned by their director on opening night because she wants to become a minigolf instructor in Mexico, they are distraught. In order to put on a show these two flustered seniors must gather old scripts and perform various classic scenes—to the best of their abilities along with the rest of the cast (McKayla Weber, Arianna Nolan, Carly Dirks, Willow Fuller, Ollie Hunter, Cheyenne Eike, Tommie Cole, Izzy Cordes, Abby Nieman, Abram Nolan, Owen Smith, Sierra Eike, Desi Banks, Mileea Damico). This show is infused with humor and we added our own Maquoketa Valley Drama flair.

The show will take the stage on May 1st at 7:00pm, May 2nd at 7:00pm, and May 3rd at 2:00pm in the High School Auditorium. There will be a short 20 minute long intermission with food and drinks available! Tickets can be purchased through bound for \$8 but they can also be purchased at the door, again, through Bound or with exact cash.

We are extremely proud and excited to perform this production. Between the adventures of having new directors (Michaela Saunders and Ann Cooksley) and the freedom of this show, we are ecstatic to show off our talents. We can't be more grateful for Michaela and Ann to have helped us bring this show together and we hope you'll join us for the experience.

Continued on next page

More FFA celebrations



The 2026-27 officer team includes, front row: Anna Feldmann, Abby Nieman, Morgan Hoeger, Kayla Hoeger, Kyle Engelken; back row: Tyler Beitz, Linken Stansberry, Ethan Crowley and Jefferson LeGassick.

FFA, continued from page 1

Each year, MV FFA does many fundraisers to support the cost of everything the chapter does. The chapter proudly recognizes the top three salesmen for Fruit Sales: Ty, Morgan, and Maggie Hoeger.

This year, the officer team decided to add a new award category in the spirit of fun and good times. Lots of these awards were based on personalities, energy, and the impact these members have left on the FFA Chapter.

Frequent Flyer: Tracy Reth, someone who is always present, in a good mood, and on time.

Early Bird: Brody Ries, he was always a solid 15 minutes early waiting for Lau to open her door.

Holy Cow: Trent Timmer, big reactions with a bunch of HOLY COW moments.

Fashionably Late: Anna Feldmann, always showed up with a positive attitude, whether she was 5 or 15 minutes late to practices or events.

Miss Enthusiastic: Ava Holtz, always in a good mood and spreads positive vibes

Feed Efficiency: Tyler Beitz, always at the trough(except during wrestling season), you could catch him living off of Little Debbie's at events!

Gas Station Guru: Karl Zumbach, always ready to stop at Casey's



Kayla Hoeger was awarded the Rising Star Award.

I Can Build That: Lukas Chesnut, first to have a tool in hand when Miss Lau needs help, even if it's an attempt to help with one of Miss Lau's crazy ideas.

Untucked Tallywacker: Jace Leytem, for those that don't know, a tallywacker is the zipper on our blue corduroy jackets. This person may have needed a few reminders to tuck in his tallywacker.

Professional Tie Tier: Jeff LeGassick, tied a countless number of ties before Sub-Districts, Districts, and even State.

To conclude our program, we

Spring play, cont.

Cast:

Emily Ann Rudd
McKayla Weber
Arianna Nolan
Carly Dirks
Tommie Cole
Desi Banks
Abram Nolan
Sierra Eike

Taylor Saunders
Ollie Hunter
Willow Fuller
Cheyenne Eike
Abby Nieman
Mileea Damico
Owen Smith
Izzy Cordes

Crew:

Stage Manager: Derrick Mohr

Stage Crew: Kien Leppert, Rousch Lamers, Jaelyn Hadley, & Kolin Cole

Light Crew: Kinze Kuhlman

Sound Crew: Gabe Saunders

Tech Booth Honorary Manager: Cece Trenkamp

Again, a huge thank you to our directors for everything that they have done. We hope that they are just as proud of what they have accomplished as we are. We hope you'll all join us to see this chaotic but fun performance. As always, Go Cats!



The Community Service Award was presented to Ethan Crowley.

elected the 2026-2027 Officer Team. Starting at the position of Officer at Large: Tyler Beitz! Your 2026-2027 Sentinels: Ethan Crowley and Linken Stansberry! Your Chapter Historian: Abby Nieman! At the office of reporter: Anna Feldmann! Your chapter Treasurer is Jeff LeGassick! For the position of Secretary; Morgan Hoeger! Your 2026-2027 Vice Presidents: Kayla Hoeger & Kyle Engelken! And, for your Chapter President: Natalie Ries! Congrats to all!

Fine Artists of the Week

Name: Emily Rudd

What is your role in the spring play?

I'm one of the two leads, the "assistant director" or the tad bit confused but enthusiastic character of the show.

What do you enjoy most about being a part of this show?

I enjoy the amount of leadership and quality time I've had with my other cast members, like spending time with friends while creating set or practicing lines.

What will audience members enjoy most about the play? This show is FILLED with humor. I hope for many giggles on opening night as many jokes have become so huge with the cast

What will you miss most about being involved in the drama productions? I'll miss the bonds made and the excitement of an opening night. The rush of adrenaline when walking onto a stage with spotlights on you seems scary at first, but you realize it's what's keeping you going each day.



Name: Taylor Saunders

What is your role in the spring play? I am the Stage Manager (the cast role—not the crew role!)

What do you enjoy most about being a part of this show?

I enjoy the creative freedom that the seniors and I have had. It's truly felt like our show. It's such an amazing last performance for us and I can't wait for everyone else to see it.

What will audience members enjoy most about the play? I think that the audience will enjoy the funny and carefree atmosphere that this show embodies. It's a very lovable show because we get to showcase our personalities and experiences.

What will you miss most about being involved in the drama productions? I think what I will miss most is the friends and family I have created on the stage and off the stage. We have so much fun bringing these shows together even though sometimes tensions are high. Either way the process is so worth the product.



Name: Derrick Mohr

What is your role in the crew in the spring play? My role is the Stage Manager.

What do you enjoy most about being a part of this show? I enjoy bossing people around.

What will audience members enjoy most about the play?

They will enjoy the relatability and the humor in it.

What will you miss most about being involved in the drama productions? I will miss laughing backstage about dumb stuff.



Name: McKayla Weber

What is your role in the spring play? Tom and Ghost

What do you enjoy most about being a part of this show?

I enjoy the fun I get to have within each of my roles; they fit pretty well with my personality, and it's just a lot of fun.

What will audience members enjoy most about the play?

I think in the grand scheme of things, this play is full of laughs. The whole show has jokes for everybody, and it's just a good time.

What will you miss most about being involved in the drama productions? I will miss working with my close friends and peers. We're like a family, and we love to try to make the best of each situation we face.



Band, choir to put on spring concert Tuesday

by Maya Smith

The band and choir have been working hard on their last concert music of the year! Come listen to their hard work Tuesday, May 5th in the high school auditorium! It is free entry.

The treble and mixed choirs will both sing two songs, and the tenor/bass choir will sing three.

Senior Ollie Hunter advises coming to the concert. "I think that the audience will enjoy the wide range of classical music we've prepared and see how much we've grown."

Mr. Ford says: "I'm incredibly proud of the work the band has been putting in this concert cycle. The band gets better every day and continues to strive for excellence during rehearsal. It's been great to see the growth we've had throughout the year. We have two wonderful pieces of music to present on Tuesday night and a great senior class to recognize. We hope to see you there!"

Some senior awards will also be presented.

MV earns runner-up finish at NE District

Ag Mechanics

by Kayla Hoeger, past FFA Reporter

Wednesday April 29th, three FFA members went to Calmar to compete in the Northeast District Ag Mechanics CDE. Shannah Smith, Ethan Crowley and Karl Zumbach earned reserve champion team. Shannah placed 8th individually and also placed as the top individual in the valve section!



Shannah Smith, Ethan Crowley and Karl Zumbach pose with their ribbons.

Sports Connection

Golf teams find their groove

by Maya Smith

On Tuesday, the girls traveled to Buffalo Creek CC to compete against East Buchanan and North Cedar. The Buccaneers shot 177, our Cats shot a 202, taking 2nd, and the Knights shot a 287. Coach Zietlow comments: "We traveled to Buffalo Creek for a triangular with East Buchanan and North Cedar. Ever Botos set the pace for us. We showed improvement off the tee, which is a big step, but we left too many chances out there after good drives. This team has so much potential. I believe in what they can do, and we're close to putting it all together."

Here are the meet scores:

5th - Ever Botos: 47

6th - Maya Smith: 48

7th - Eva Mensen: 54

8th - McKenna Mineart: 54

9th - Olivia Begle: 54

11th - Morgan Clemen: 56

Tonight, the girls have a triangular with MFL Mar-Mac and Marquette Catholic at home.

The boys golf team competed against the East Buchanan Buccaneers and the North Cedar Knights. The boys took

home a narrow 4 stroke win with a 155, East Buc shooting a 159, and North Cedar a 224. Trevor Grimm took home medalist with a 34. Coach Conner comments: "I think our attitude after our meet vs. East Buchanan and North Cedar is a sign of where our boys golf program is at. Three years ago we were ecstatic if we could break 170 as a team. Our team score at EB was 155, which is a great team score for us. However, our attitude as a team was that we could have shot much better. All of our guys played really well at times in their rounds. Trevor recorded his 2nd under par round of the season, shooting a 34 and was the meet medalist. I am really happy with how we are playing right now and look forward to see how we can score at our Conference Meet on Monday."

Here are the meet scores:

1st - Trevor Grimm: 34

3rd - Eli Dougherty: 39

6th - Zachary Leytem: 41

8th - Anderson Holtz: 41

11th - Dalton Africa: 43

13th - Braden Gardner: 49

Last night the boys golfed at Pin Oak. Results will be in next week's issue.



Ever Botos makes her way through the course Tuesday night.

Boys get in some meets between storms

by Lanni Beaman

Our Maquoketa Valley Boys Track and Field traveled to Monticello last week; however, the meet was cut short due to storms in the evening. The meet was canceled at the 800m run, but our boys still performed greatly. They finished 2nd up until the 800 with a team score of 57 points. Here are some of the results from the Monticello meet:

400m Dash: Owen Smith, 55.04: 1st; Jaxson LeGassick, 55.42: 2nd

4x200m Relay: Keegan Rahe, Colin Smith, Preston Salow, & Tyler Beitz: 1:44.19; 6th

4x800m Relay: Owen Smith, Owen Salow, Carter LeClere, & Colt Haas, 9:58.86: 4th

Sprint Med.: Dylan Knipper, Kash Hunt, Carter LeClere, & DaShawn Strickland, 1:39.36: 2nd

Distance Med.: Dylan Knipper, Kash Hunt, DaShawn Strickland, & Kenyon Baker, 3:45.98: 1st

Shot Put: Preston Salow, 49' 10": 2nd; Gabe Halweg, 39' 00": 5th

Discus: Dylan Knipper, 115' 8": 4th

On Tuesday, the team traveled to Aplington-Parkersburg to compete at an advanced meet since the MV meet was canceled Monday due to rain. We ran great with two huge meets coming up in the next few weeks. Here are the results (no names were included in the relay results):

400m Dash: Owen Smith, 55.10: 4th Place
800m Run: Owen Smith, 2:22.54: 6th Place
1600m Run: Kenyon Baker, 5:06.93: 6th Place

4x100m Relay: 47.85: 5th Place

4x200m Relay: 1:38.04: 3rd Place

4x800m Relay: 9:59.93: 5th Place

Sprint Med: 1:41.78: 5th Place

Distance Med: 3:50.38: 1st Place

Shot Put: Preston Salow, 48' 11": 2nd Place

Shot Put (JV): Tyler Beitz, 34' 6": 5th Place

Discus (JV): Tyler Beitz, 105' 3": 2nd Place

Last night the team competed at Cascade. Results will be in next week's issue.

Girls track teams run at West Delaware, Anamosa

by Alaina Mead

Last Thursday the girls track team traveled to West Delaware for a short meet before weather interfered. The following events scored points for the team:

100m Hurdles- Natalie Ries; 6th; 17:80

200m Dash- Camryn Paris; 6th; 27.91

400m- Lanni Beaman; 3rd; 1:00.18

800 Run- Anna Feldmann; 4th; 2:29.63

3000m Run- Breanna Bush; 6th; 13:20.99

Discus- Sellah Ambundo; 1st; 115

Shot Put- Sellah Ambundo; 2nd; 36-11

High Jump- Taylor Salow; 1st; 5-00

Shuttle Hurdle- Flannagan, Ries, Salow, Recker; 6th; 1:16.69

Sprint Med- Paris, Kraft, Burbridge, Beaman; 2nd; 1:52.76

Distance Med- Paris, Mead, Burbridge, Burbridge 2nd; 4:29.09

4x200 Relay- Reed, Kraft, Burbridge, Paris; 6th; 1:53.76

This Tuesday the team also traveled to Anamosa for a Coed Meet against 11 other teams placing 4th with 93 points! Results are the following-

200m Dash- Taryn Burbridge; 5th; 28.01, Lilly Kraft; 8th; 29.17

400m- Lanni Beaman; 1st; 1:00.43, Payton Lanni; 6th; 1:08.55

1500m- Breanna Bush; 5th; 5:58.57

3000m Run- Anna Feldmann; 6th; 12:44.64 Breanna Bush; 7th; 13:11.14

Discus- Sellah Ambundo; 3rd; 108-9

Shot Put- Morgan Hoeger; 5th; 30-1

High Jump- Taylor Salow; 2nd; 5-00

Long Jump- Khloe Glew; 4th; 14-9.5, Magda Petermann; 7th; 14- 2.25

Shuttle Hurdle- Flannagan, Recker, Salow, Wilson; 46h; 1:17.51

Sprint Med- Paris, Kraft, Burbridge, Beaman; 1st; 1:52.25

Distance Med- Paris, Reed, Burbridge, Burbridge; 6th; 4:22.96

4x100 Relay- Reed, Kraft, Beaman, Paris; 4th; 51.88

4x200 Relay- Reed, Kraft, Burbridge, Paris; 2nd; 1:501.56

4x400 Burbridge, Lanning, Burbridge, Beaman; 4th; 4:20.43

4x800 Relay- Weber, Freiburger, Hatfield, Hoefler; 7th; 12:26:29

The girls track team had a meet yesterday at Cascade and will have another next Tuesday with more results to come!



The 4x100 team of Rylee Reed, Lilly Kraft, Taryn Burbridge and Lanni Beaman get a send off from the elementary students last Friday. The team ran Saturday morning in the Drake Relays and finished 90th out of 96 teams. They were seeded 93rd. They ran a 52.14.

Athletes of the Week

Name: Eva Mensen

What is your favorite part of playing

golf? My favorite part of playing golf is before the meets when Lena draws funny things on my golf ball that I will be playing with for good luck.

What's your favorite course to play in high school competition?

My favorite course to play on is Hartridge.

If you could golf anywhere, where would you golf? I would want to golf at Augusta even though I would never be able to make it to the green but it seems like a very magical place.

What's been a favorite golf memory? My favorite golf memories are the van rides to and from meets.



Name: Anna Feldmann

What do you enjoy most about track?

One thing I really enjoy about track is my teammates. We have a great team and I have a lot of fun being around all of them.

What do you think your best event will be?

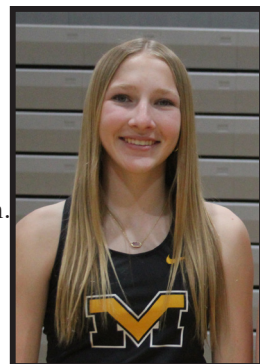
My best event right now is the 800 meter run.

What life lessons have you learned through track? One life lesson I have learned through track is you have to work hard in order to reach your goals.

What's the hardest part of practice?

The hardest part about practice is all the stretching we do because I get bored of it quite fast.

Who is your track role model? My track role model is Taryn Burbridge because she is a great athlete and teammate.



6th Annual MV Market

Maquoketa Valley CTE Department

Wednesday, May 6th

Delhi City Park

2:30-6 PM

Booths will not be open for shoppers until 2:30

All proceeds help to support our school Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Student Organizations (CTSOs) FBLA, FCCLA, FFA and Skills USA members by providing more opportunities for the members of these organizations.



Jaelyn's Journeys



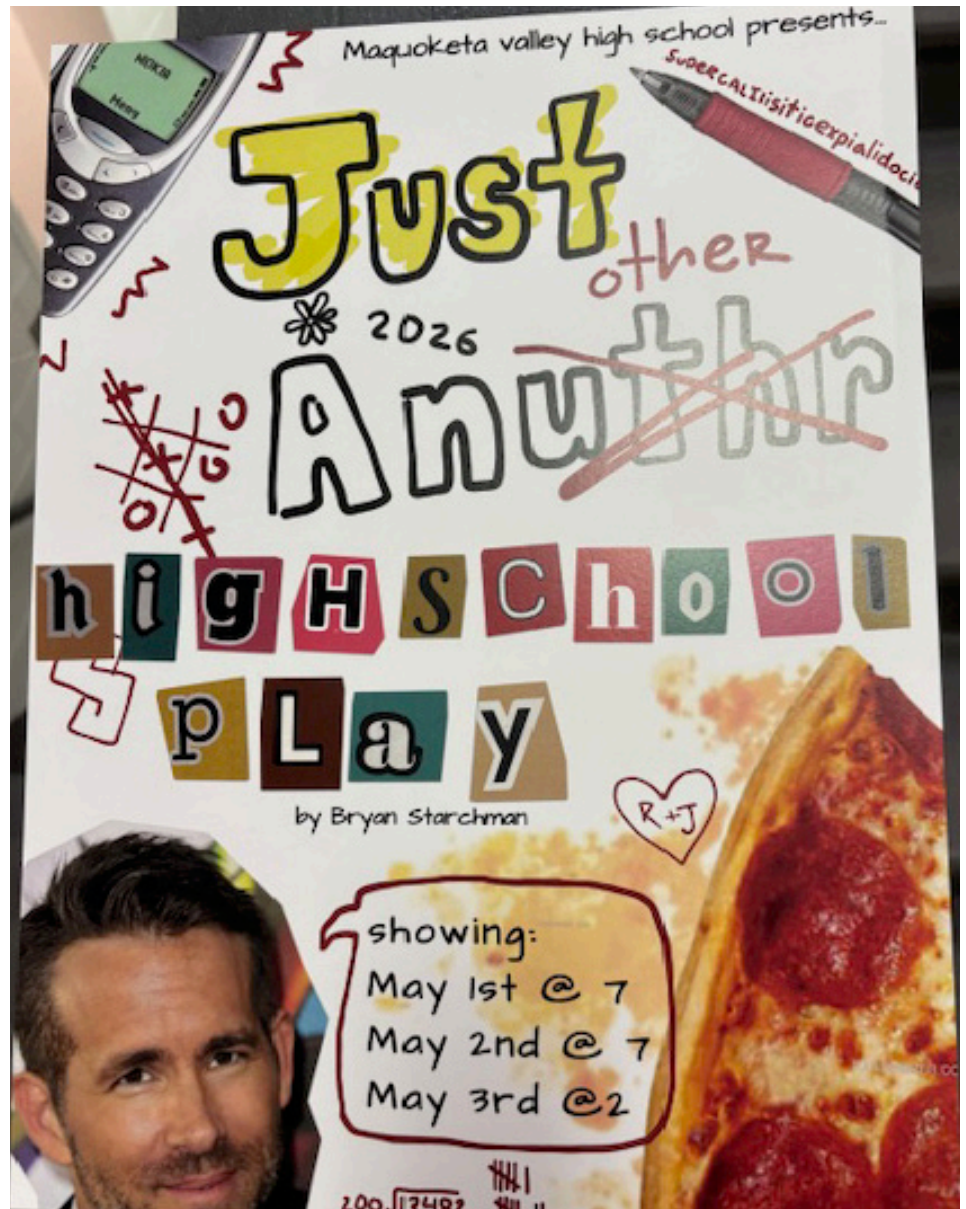
photo by Jaelyn Butikofer

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!

Greenhouse opens today!



Olivia Ronnebaum poses with some of the hanging baskets that go on sale today from 3:30-6:30.



Fantasy Fiction: The battle of many but few

A series by Abby Nieman

When the fox stops, it looks like he led me to a military camp near the border. The walls are stone with windows every 10 feet. The compound appears to be about 33 acres. The gates block my view as we approach from a corner.

When we make it to the gates, which are somehow open, we can see in. Numerous tan tents fill the area against the walls. There are little walkways that separate the tents. We walk into the compound, and the fox heads for a tent on the far side of the compound. There is very little vegetation on your way there. The most I see is Velvetleaf that grows

between the tents and the wall. The fox changed into its spirit form. "You know, Elysia, her tent is farther up this way,"

"What is your name?" I ask as we walk down the path.

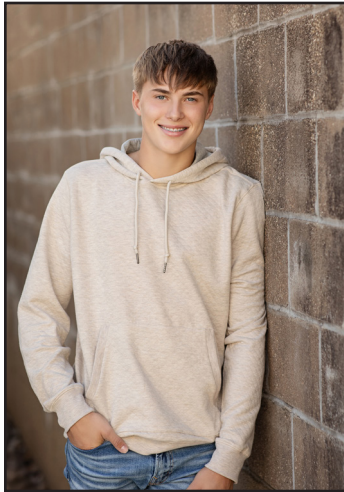
"Warin, that is what the dragon dude said. At least, he added, "I was a blacksmith's son." Before what Warin had just said had time to hit me, we were at the tent that Elysia and the others were in. Warin phases through the tent as if there was nothing there at all. I grab the edge of the tent's tan cloth and duck under it.

There is nothing fancy in the tent, just a table with chairs around it. There is also a lounge chair along the wall. At the ta-

ble sits a female person with silver hair that is messily hanging down. She wears a uniform different from the others in the room with light, flowy pants with a white blouse that has ruffles at the collar and the end of her mid-length sleeves. Her clothes look a little dirty, as if she has been in them for a while. There are two others in the room with tight-fitting military uniforms, a tan-green shirt, and pants. On the table, there is an empty wrapper of an MRE and a crystal ball sitting in front of the silver-haired girl.



Brady Wall



Activities involved in during high school: Football: 4 years, Basketball: 4 years, Track: 4 years, Baseball: 5 years

Which activity affected you the most? How? Basketball has taught me the importance of hard work. If you put in extra time you will get the results you want.

What advice do you have for freshmen? Enjoy your time in high school because it goes by fast.

What do you appreciate most about Maquoketa Valley? How close the community is and the amount of support you get from everybody.

If you could relive any moment in high school, what would it be and why? I would relive homecoming week because you get to spend time with all of your friends and the whole school participates in multiple activities.

What class have you enjoyed most in high school? I enjoyed statistics the most.

Who is your most inspirational high school teacher? Why? The most inspirational high school teacher was Mr. Cassutt. I had him as a coach and as a teacher and he has taught me multiple things that have prepared me for my future.

What does your future (college and career) look like? I am attending the University of Dubuque to study Flight Operations and Aviation Management. After college I will become an airline or corporate pilot.

Dexter Dietiker



Activities involved in during high school: Baseball and FFA
Which activity affected you the most? How? Baseball. Playing 5 years of varsity baseball pushes you to be better

What advice do you have for freshmen? You can learn a lot more outside of school.

What do you appreciate most about Maquoketa Valley? Shop classes

If you could relive any moment in high school, what would it be and why? Going to Mr. Palmer's shop classes. They were always interesting.

What class have you enjoyed most in high school? Shop classes

Who is your most inspirational high school teacher? Why? Mr. Palmer. He showed us the ins and outs of learning good trades.

What is a favorite elementary/middle school memory? When we were done with school early because of COVID

What does your future (college and career) look like? Full-time workforce

When you're not in school, what are you most likely doing? Working

What event from high school do you hope your classmates still talk about at your five-year class reunion? Baseball

Lainey Deutmeyer



What advice do you have for freshmen? I recommend taking as many college classes as possible and staying involved.
What do you appreciate most about Maquoketa Valley? I appreciate how much the teachers care about each student

and how close all of us are. It's just one big community where people are always willing to help and give advice when needed.

If you could relive any moment in high school, what would it be and why? I would relive this past year's homecoming week since it was so much fun especially the pep rally and I enjoyed how close our whole class was.

What class have you enjoyed most in high school? My favorite class throughout high school was Physical Science. We all always had so much fun joking around and getting in trouble.

What does your future (college and career) look like? Attend college to become a Rad Tech and hopefully work in pediatrics or critical care.

What's your favorite school lunch? My favorite school lunch is orange chicken and fried rice.

What song will always remind you of high school? One song that will always remind me of high school is "Good Riddance" by Green Day.

When you're not in school, what are you most likely doing? When I'm not at school, I am most likely working, hanging out with friends, shopping, or taking a nap.

Meleah Burr



What advice do you have for freshmen? Have as much fun as you can in your four years of high school.

What do you appreciate most about Maquoketa Valley? I appreciate how much the teachers truly care about their students and how willing they are to help you with anything.

If you could relive any moment in high school, what would it be and why? I wish I could relive homecoming or prom. It was fun spending time with our class.

Who is your most inspirational high school teacher? My most inspirational high school teacher is Mr. Dunlap. He can always put a smile on my face and puts me in a good mood.

Who is your most inspirational elementary or middle school teacher? Why? Mrs. Dutra was the most inspirational teacher in elementary school. She always showed how much she cared for her students and made school fun.

What does your future look like? I am going to Kirkwood for Nursing and then will obtain my BSN. With this I plan on becoming a nurse practitioner.

When you're not in school, what are you most likely doing? When I'm not in school I am most likely working at the Good Neighbor Home or spending time with friends and family.

Olivia Hunter



What advice do you have for freshmen? You have more potential than you think you do; don't waste your high school experience trying to fit in with everybody else.

What do you appreciate most about Maquoketa Valley? I love the community. From staff to students, Maquoketa Valley has supported me and made me feel important. That's what we do, we look out for each other, and always will.

If you could relive any moment in high school, what would it be and why? I would want to relive my sophomore year musical and play. That was the year I was saying goodbye to a lot of my role models and good friends. It was such a special time, a year where we really were making the most of it, and it paid off. I'd give anything to do one more show with those people, but that's life.

What class have you enjoyed most in high school? I've taken a lot of classes and elective classes, but my favorite will always be Choir. Since the first day of choir freshman year, I knew that the choir room was where I belonged. All of my bestest of friends are in choir, people that I'm so, so very sad that I won't be able to take with me.

Who is your most inspirational high school teacher? Why? Speaking of choir, the teacher who has completely changed my life is Ms. Megan McCrary. Choir wouldn't be choir without her interesting way of playing the piano, or her bright smile, or her little nerdy interests. McCrary has been one of my biggest inspirations and motivators in high school, because she believed in me in ways that I never even believed in myself. Because of her and her belief in my abilities, I was able to attend honor choirs and camps to help build me as a musician and as a person. She is always there if I need to have a rant or an existential crisis with her and her fish, or if I need advice on literally anything.

What does your future (college and career) look like? This fall, I will be attending Wartburg College for Secondary English Education and Elementary Education. While there, I plan to be involved in a few of their music ensembles as well as their theater program. When I graduate, I'd like to eventually come back to Maquoketa Valley to teach and give back to the community.

What song will always remind you of high school?

"Stand By Me" by Ben E. King. We sang it in choir my freshman year, and the lyrics have always stuck with me. I think that it could also apply to graduation in a way, "No, I won't be afraid," talking about the unknowns of adulthood, and "No, I won't shed a tear," being the goodbyes we'll have to say, because they will be sad.

When you're not in school, what are you most likely doing? Outside of school, I'm most likely hanging out with my friends and nerding out about a book, TV show, or movie.

Activities involved in during high school: Concert Choir - 4 years, Vocal Jazz - 3 years, Fall Musical - 4 years, Large Group Speech - 3 years, Individual Speech - 2 years, Spring Play - 4 years, and Literature Club - 1 year.

Which activity affected you the most? How? I'm happy to say that all of these activities have really changed me a lot, and for the good, I'd say. If I had to pick one activity, it would be the fall musical. Musical was the first activity I ever did in high school, and throughout all four years of high school, it has been something that I always looked forward to. All summer, I would stew on what Ms. McCrary would pick for that year's musical. Musical has helped me grow so much, both as an individual and as a team member, but it always helps when you have directors and peers who believe in your abilities. I have been able to blossom in theater, be more confident in my skin, and find my people and my sense of self.

Xander Smock Carly Dirks



What advice do you have for freshmen? Time flies. Might as well have fun

What do you appreciate most about Maquoketa Valley? The way the teachers are willing to help

If you could relive any moment in high school, what would it be and why? Moving here Sophomore year and meeting a good group of friends

What class have you enjoyed most in high school? Engineering

What's your favorite school lunch? Chicken Tetrazini

What song will always remind you of high school? "Springsteen"

When you're not in school, what are you most likely doing? Working or seeing friends



Activities involved in during high school: Musical, play, large group speech, individual speech, track, band, choir

Which activity affected you the most? How? Musical, it helped me learn to come out of my shell. It's helped me grow as a person and it's taught me discipline.

What advice do you have for freshmen? You can be anything you want to be, but you should be kind. Don't be the reason someone is miserable.

What do you appreciate most about Maquoketa Valley? I think what I appreciate most about this school is the teachers; they're always so nice and open to not only learning about their students but also being there for them. Not to mention, they work hard to find time for everyone.

If you could relive any moment in high school, what would it be and why? This is a hard question, but if I had to choose, it would be the first day of my freshman year. While I am ready to be out, I'm

a little sad that my years don't last forever. People might call me crazy for that, but it's okay. I don't blame them.

What class have you enjoyed most in high school? I think my most enjoyable classes were always my science classes. I am a huge science geek and a biology nerd. It's hard for me to pinpoint just one science class.

Who is your most inspirational high school teacher? Why?

Mr. Huegel is my most inspirational teacher. I might not have enjoyed his class, and I don't think he quite enjoyed my late work or how I used to fall asleep, but I remember how he would always read us a chapter from a book he had titled *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff*. I always liked it when he read that because it helped me through some tough times. I also like how he never tried to give up on me and urged me to fix some of my writing. He's an inspiration to me and really helped me be a better person with more integrity.

Who is your most inspirational elementary or middle school teacher? Why? I would say that Mr. Helle was my most inspirational teacher because he was the one who encouraged me to start being honest about my work. He helped me realize that I should play the honest game, and he was always a good man.

What is a favorite elementary/middle school memory? I think my favorite memory was one of the funniest moments of my life. Back in first grade, I killed a wasp; it was lunch time in the cafeteria. I picked the wasp up with a napkin, and as I walked to the can to toss it, the wasp moved (It was actually me, but I was like 5). So I screamed, and everything went silent. Now I laugh at it.

What does your future (college and career) look like? I'll be going to Kirkwood to get my associate's degree in biology and then transferring over to UC Santa Barbara. Then I will go on to become a marine biologist.

What's your favorite school lunch? Hard to choose, probably the mandarin chicken though.

What song will always remind you of high school? The next paragraph has a bit of a trigger warning. I think the song that would remind me of my high school years is "When I Grow Up" from the hit musical *Matilda*. I use this one because all I can think of is my years of high school. When I was a freshman I was so excited to start this new journey and excited to be hitting this part of my life. In my sophomore year I still couldn't wait to be done, I started to think about the future and what I wanted. Then came junior year. I didn't think I was going to make it here. I went through tough times and attempted to take my own life. Now, I'm proud of the progress I made from my freshman year to now. I feel like I'm both ready and not ready to leave.

When you're not in school, what are you most likely doing? I'm usually at school always, at least that's what my parents say. When I do get home I usually rot in bed. It's not pretty but it's sometimes really nice to just relax once in a while and not do anything.

What event from high school do you hope your classmates still talk about at your five-year class reunion? Oddly enough it's the first home football game. The band went out for the national anthem and Mr. Besler accidentally forgot the R on my last name. It was really funny and probably really hard not to laugh. However, it became a thing and a fun joke and I loved it. I just want people to remember that nickname for old times sake.

McKayla Weber



Activities involved in during high school: Musical (3 years), FFA (4 years), Large Group Speech (2 years), Individual Speech (3 years), Band (4 years), Jazz Band (3 years), and Play (1 year)

Which activity affected you the most? How? The activity that I think of when it comes to the biggest impact it has had on me is FFA. If it wasn't for watching Kaya Knipper perform in Ag Broadcasting, I never would have had the heart to do it myself.

After competing in Ag Broadcasting, I fell in love with the aspect of broadcasting, which led me to a career at KMCH and the passion to compete in broadcasting contests in speech.

What advice do you have for freshmen? Go out and try new things; you may find something you love to do. Just have fun, make new memories, and make new friends.

What do you appreciate most about Maquoketa Valley? I like the small community that we have at Maquoketa Valley. Everybody knows each other, and the teachers are always there to rely on.

If you could relive any moment in high school, what would it be and why? When I won Top Individual 2025 Knowledge Exam and Problem Solving and 4th Place Individual at the State Milk Quality & Products Contest, my senior year.

What class have you enjoyed most in high school? Any class with Mr. Cassutt has been top-notch. He can go from talking about some major historical event to turning it into a story about a life lesson in a matter of seconds. He's a very down-to-earth guy and will always give it to you as it is. Classes with Ms. Lau also rank very high in my eyes. The ag room holds a lot of memories for me and is a good place to have some fun.

Who is your most inspirational high school teacher? Why? Mr. Cassutt has always been someone I can reach out to for advice, just to talk to, and the occasional letter of recommendation or job application reference.

Who is your most inspirational elementary or middle school teacher? Why? Mrs. Rudd has always been a staple in the middle school for me. As Emily's mom, I got to know her super well, and she has been someone I can chat with whenever.

What does your future (college and career) look like? I will be attending Northeast Iowa Community College to double major in Ag Business & Finance online while working full-time.

What's your favorite school lunch? Mac and Cheese.

What song will always remind you of high school? "A Christmas Carol, Yo Yo Yo" or "Stop and Stare" by Treaty Oak Revival. I got Taylor hooked on them, and it's been great. It reminds me of summer car drives to county fairs or unnecessary shopping sprees.

When you're not in school, what are you most likely doing? Working, shopping, with friends, with my boyfriend, sleeping, or drinking a \$7 coffee somewhere.

Maya Smith



Activities involved in during high school: Golf, Band, Jazz Band, Pit Band, Student Council, TEL, Echo, Spanish, Large Group and Individual Speech, Play, Volleyball, and Softball.

Which activity affected you the most? Band affected me the most because it provided me with many leadership activities and I had the most fun while still learning and growing through playing my instrument.

What advice do you have for freshmen? Don't worry too much about the future. Enjoy what's going on around you.

What do you appreciate most about Maquoketa Valley? The community and support.

If you could relive any moment in high school, what would it be and why? I would relive the times with my friends.

What class have you enjoyed most in high school? Spanish, there's always so much going on.

Who is your most inspirational high school teacher? My most inspirational high school teacher is Señorita because she has pushed me outside of my comfort zone and led me to minor in Spanish.

Who is your most inspirational elementary or middle school teacher? Why? My most inspirational elementary teacher is Mrs. Bonert. I had a lot of fun in her class.

What is a favorite elementary/middle school memory? My favorite elementary memory was the read and feeds, when we would read all day and bring our snacks and drinks.

What does your future (college and career) look like? I'm attending Drake for Business Law and then attending law school. I hope to get a job in the Des Moines area in litigation.

What's your favorite school lunch? Macaroni & cheese and cinnamon rolls.

When you're not in school, what are you most likely doing? Out with friends or reading at home.

Ian Krogmann Nolan Honkomp

