

GROVE GAZETTE

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Union Grove JH/HS Newsletter

September 2021

New Faces, New Places FFA Teachers Plan Busy Schedule

Caden Handorf & Hunter Fraker

With the August 30 kick-off meeting out of the way, the FFA department is ready to hit the ground running with goat and swine exhibits at the Gilmer FFA Labor Day Blowout. New Ag Science/FFA teachers Joshua and Andrea, newlyweds coming from Hallsville ISD, call this first show “really good practice as we prepare for the Yamboree in mid-October”.

FFA members will also show heifers and hogs at the Four States Fair Sept. 10-11 and the State Fair of Texas Barrow Show Sept. 29-30. Other students have big plans for shop projects.

“We’ve actually already started working on our projects for the Yamboree,” junior Reed Cooper said.

Preparations for the annual Fresh Country fundraiser — which will run Sept. 8-21 and include the sale of meat, cookie dough, and fruit — have also begun.

Cross Country Sets Course, Season Goals Runners Hope to Maintain Streak

Faith Woodall & Jaycie Mullins

Running at 6:15 a.m. three days a week is a lot easier with a goal in mind. And the 35 cross-country runners in grades 7-12, led by Gracie Stanford (11), Sophie Pyle (10), Preston Woodall (11), and Brendon Fuller (11), have big goals.

“The varsity girls’ goal is to defend our district championship as we go for our seventh in a row, as well as defend our Region III regional championship from last season. We want to improve on our state meet finish of ninth from last year, possibly top five this year,” Coach Littlejohn said. “The boys’ goal is to defend our district champi-

FFA members have even selected chapter officers. Senior Avery Brooks will serve as president, with senior Emily Calhoun as vice president. Junior Kenia Velazquez will be student advisor, sophomore Jeremiah McGee secretary, junior Brayden Pirtle treasurer, sophomore Will Wilson reporter, and sophomore Allie Calhoun sentinel.

“Students seem to be excited to learn and participate in everything the Ag Science program/FFA Chapter has to offer,” Joshua Shafer said. “We are looking forward to a lot of success this school year.”

This year, more teens — all 9-12 Ag Science students — have the chance to participate in FFA activities without paying annual dues, thanks to the Texas FFA affiliation program. Students in grades 3-8 can sign up for a junior FFA membership to show livestock projects for \$5, and graduates can join the FFA Alumni Chapter.

onship as we go for our fourth in a row. We will look to continue the streak of a top ten regional team finish and qualify individuals to the state meet.”

Junior high boys and girls also hope to win their district meet, and the whole team knows that goals can better be achieved through teamwork. That’s why they use motivational sayings like “Running is Our STATE of Mind” to hype each other. The team will also use big meets like the Hallsville event Sept. 11th, with its wide range of participants and similarities to the regional and state meets, to prepare.

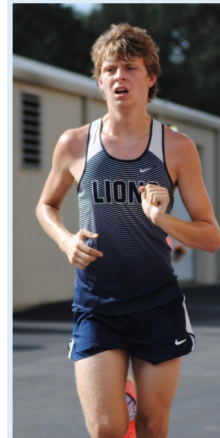
TSI Testing Open for Aspiring College Students

Taylor See

TSI testing will begin September 8 during second period. Students must sign up with new counselor, Mrs. Jennifer Applegate, before Sept. 1 in order to take the test.

The TSI test consists of math, English, and writing and must be passed in order to enroll in dual credit classes as a junior or senior.

Applegate plans to administer the TSI every 4-6 weeks. The initial test costs \$20, and retakes will cost \$5 per section.



PHOTOS: FAITH WOODALL
Gracie Stanford (11) and Sophie Pyle (10) race to the finish at the August 21 UG Cross Country Invitational, finishing almost neck-and-neck for 18th and 17th places. Varsity girls placed third overall with medals for Taylor Campbell (9)-11th, Pyle, Stanford, and Keira Taylor (9)-23rd. Preston Woodall (11) and Brendon Fuller (11-at left) medaled for the boys’ team, finishing in 22nd and 24th.



Donate Blood at First of Three Yearly Drives Senior Donations Earn Red Cords

Sydney Pritchett

The year's first blood drive will span from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sep. 15, when the Carter Blood Care bus will park in the student parking lot.

Registration is accessible via students' emails. Students must weigh at least 110 pounds and be at least 16 years old to donate, and 16 year olds must have a parental consent form signed in black ink. Students must also present a photo ID or driver's license to donate. Those who do not have an ID or driver's license may see the nurse or Mrs. Amos.

The school will hold three blood drives during the school year, and students must donate at least twice in their senior year to

earn the red cord for graduation. Students who have activities that prevent them from being able to donate during these drives may visit a local Carter Blood Care center to donate, but they must let the facility know if they are donating to earn their red cord.

Donors should eat a healthy meal before their appointment and make efforts to stay hydrated.

Just one donation can save up to three lives, and donations have become increasingly vital during the pandemic, as many blood drives have been cancelled and, while people may call off elective procedures, emergency care hasn't tapered.

JH Students Test STAAR Readiness

Staff

Seventh and eighth grade students took beginning-of-year MAP tests between August 25 and 27. These tests gauge students STAAR-readiness and aptitude levels, as well as identify specific areas of potential weakness that students will target with explicit Education Galaxy and IXL lessons during DEAL time.

This process will help satisfy new law HB4545, which requires accelerated instruction in addition to normal grade-level classwork. The law also affects STAAR testing requirements and dates. More information is available on the Texas Education Agency [website](#).

Homecoming Festivities Planned

Taylor See & Olivia Hudgens

Most homecoming festivities will precede the Sept. 17 varsity game against Maud, starting with Sept. 13's Marvel Monday dress-up day. Other spirit-attire includes Twin Tuesday, Neon Wednesday, Throwback Thursday, and Blue-Out Friday.

A bonfire is tentatively scheduled for Sept. 16. Day-of activities will include the traditional parade and pep rally, pre-game festivities at 6:45 p.m., and kick-off at 7:30.

"We have several younger players and some inexperienced varsity players that are going to be put to the test," head coach Scotty Laymance said. "As long as the players continue to come with the right attitude and work as hard as they can, the season will be a success."

Fireworks will follow the varsity game. Junior high and JV players will also face Maud, but on the Cardinals' home turf Sept. 16. All three football teams have been preparing "to be successful", according to Laymance.

"We've really had a whole new different mindset on how we take practice and games," senior Sabetay Fernandez said. "I feel like as a group we have all made it our priority to make Union Grove football what it can be."



Back: Arianna Gibboney (7), Laklie Waller (7), Kaci Pirtle (7), Mascot Kaki Pharr (8), Gracelyn Head (8), Makynlie Young (8), Emori Lemming (7); Front: NCA Staff, Kimber Brooks (7), Miley Nono (7), Danica Vestal (7), Averie Del Peschio, NCA Staff

Junior High Cheer Earns Camp Accolades

Staff

Seventh and eighth grade cheerleaders put in 14-hour days at the NCA Cheer Camp at SFA University this July. Despite being the youngest team at the camp, the squad won the chant division of competition, a stunt safety award, and three spirit sticks. Miley Nono (7), Gracelyn Head (8), Kimber Brooks (7), and Averie Del Peschio (7) earned nominations for All-American Team, and Kaki Pharr (8) won both an All-American mascot award and Most Improved Mascot. New sponsor Kim Mayhan was named Outstanding Rookie Coach.



PHOTOS: KIM MAYHAN

Upcoming Events

Sept. 1

Shooting Team Meeting

The team's first meeting will take place during B lunch in Mrs. Shafer's room and is open to 8th-12th grade students.

Sept. 2

JH/JV Football at Queen City — 5 p.m.

This match-up against the Bulldogs marks the first game of the season for junior high players. "They're going to be a pretty good team, but we're going to try as hard as we can," seventh-grader Joel Pavlovsky said. "I feel really good about this game."

Sept. 3

V Football v. Queen City — 7:30 p.m.

Sept. 4

HS Cross Country at LeTourneau University

Sept. 7

HS Volleyball v. Jefferson — 5 p.m.

Sept. 9

JH Volleyball at Grace — 4:30 p.m.

JH/JV Football v. Alba Golden — 5 p.m.

Sept. 10

FFA—Four States Fair

Avery (12) and Chloe (8) Brooks, Rachel Potter (7), and Maddie Byers (9) plan to participate in this Texarkana junior heifer show open to exhibitors from Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, & Louisiana Sept. 10-11.

V Volleyball at Leverett's Chapel — 4:30 p.m.

V Football at Alba Golden — 7:30 p.m.

Sept. 11

Cross Country at Hallsville Invitational

JH Volleyball at Hawkins Tournament

The only junior high volleyball tournament of the year will pit A-team members against Mineola and then the winner of the Winona/Harmony match. This tournament replaced the Spring Hill tournament originally scheduled for Sept. 4.

Sept. 13

JH Volleyball at Leverett's Chapel — 4:30 p.m.

Sept. 14

HS Volleyball v. Hawkins — 5 p.m.

Sept. 15

Blood Drive



PHOTO: TINA BURNS After ten weeks of intense training, alum Kole Burns graduated again August 27, 2021, one of 814 recruits to finish this boot camp in Waukegan, Illinois. His mother, eighth-grade science teacher Tina Burns, took the day off to observe the patriotic ceremony. "If you ever get a chance to go watch a Navy Boot Camp Graduation, I highly recommend it," Burns said. "The joy and absolute honor that those young men and women display as they march by is incredible. It is an experience I will always cherish!" Now

that he's finished with boot camp, Kole is headed to San Antonio, where he will study to become a hospital corpsman in the United States Navy.



PHOTO: FAITH WOODALL

Kody Nutt (7) runs the UG Cross Country Invitational August 21. The junior high boys placed second overall after Kohl Sirmans (8), Nutt, Mason Stanley (8), Celson James (8), and Hudson Wightman (7) medaled individually. Rachel Potter (7), Jill Taylor (7), and Madyson Lowe (8) earned individual medals for the girls' team.

Sept. 16

HS Cross Country at Quitman Invitational

JH/JV Football at Maud — 5 p.m.

Sept. 17

V Volleyball at Carlisle — 4:30 p.m.

Homecoming Pre-Game Festivities — 7 p.m.

V Football v. Maud — 7:30 p.m.

Sept. 18

JH Cross Country at Quitman Invitational

Sept. 20

JH Volleyball v. Hawkins — 5 p.m.

Sept. 21

HS Volleyball v. Big Sandy — 5 p.m.

Sept. 23-25

FFA at East Texas State Fair

Sept. 24

State Fair of Texas

V Volleyball at Union Hill — 4:30 p.m.

Sept. 25

Union Grove Invitational Cross Country Meet

This meet will be a milestone event for cross-country runners as it will allow them to gauge individual progress in comparison to the Aug. 21st home meet.

Sept. 27

JH Volleyball at Carlisle — 5 p.m.

Sept. 28

JH/JV Football v. Linden-Kildare — 5 p.m.

HS Volleyball v. Overton — 5 p.m.

Sept. 29

FFA at State Fair of Texas Barrow Show

Sept. 30

FFA at State Fair of Texas Barrow Show

V Football at Linden-Kildare — 7 p.m.

Harlen the Sports Guy and Pigskin Bob will visit for the KYKX Game of the Week. Shenanigans and scholarships will ensue.