

# The GROVE GAZETTE

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Union Grove JH/HS Newsletter

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PHOTO: TAYLOR SEE

## Seniors Lead Basketball Team to Playoffs

**Taylor See and Katy Parman**

The girls and their escorts gather at the base of the stairs, waiting for the JV boys' halftime to begin. Tears threaten to spill as Coach JB Littlejohn and the underclassmen honor the team's three seniors — Macey Roberts, Bailey Clowers, and manager Katy Parman — with shared memories and gifts.

But seniors say the real gift is the team.

"I have known both Bailey and Katy since kindergarten, and I love that I have gotten to grow up with them," Roberts said. "The basketball team is like our own little family, and I am going to miss all of these girls."

The senior night took place Jan. 28, when Roberts and Clowers led their team to victory. Gracie Stanford (11) and Sumeet Matttu (11) contributed three-pointers and steals, with additional steals from Roberts

and freshman Taylor Campbell. All the girls worked together to get the 35-23 win.

"The one thing basketball has really affected is how I work with others," Clowers said. "It has taught me a lot about how to support those around you in a way that only team sports can teach you."

After senior night, the team is 6-1 in district, and Littlejohn expects "a nice run in the playoffs", which begin Feb. 14 after district games against Overton Feb. 1 and Beckville Feb. 4. JV will also play Beckville Feb. 4 for their district championship.

"Our girls have made tremendous improvement since Christmas Break and are playing their best basketball at the right time of the year," Littlejohn said. "I expect us to continue playing well and get a good playoff seed position."

## Paw-to-Paw Coverage Lions Basketball To Face Bearcats For Senior Night

**Faith Woodall**

High school boys' basketball will play five district games in February, but only one is at home — the Feb. 4 game against Beckville. In addition to being senior night, the Beckville game poses possible competition for the district championship.

"This will be a big game for us because we split with them last year but still pulled out a district championship," head coach Cody Wilson said. "[The championship] is our goal again."

According to Wilson, the team is working on "taking care of the basketball better", including cutting their average of "20+ turnovers a game" to less than 15.

"Our whole team has stayed after practice to put up extra shots, but I feel like our defense is our main priority," senior Aubrey Woodard said. "I think we are going to come out locked in, understanding our job, and with a better mentality, and show Beckville that we are the better team on our home court."

The boys last played Big Sandy Jan. 28, an 83-49 win that put them 4-1 in district on a three-game win streak.



PHOTO: TAYLOR SEE

# Chadwick Named New Athletic Director

## Sydney Pritchett and Faith Woodall

Superintendent Kelly Moore recently announced coach Bobby Chadwick as new athletic director and head football coach.

Chadwick brings a wealth of experience to the table, having previously coached for Pleasant Grove, Ore City, Spring Hill, and Gladewater, and he has a plan to improve the athletic programs: recruiting athletes willing to compete.

“We need to have our program full of kids that want to be in athletics,” Chadwick said. “In order to do that, you have to have a product they want to be part of.”

According to Chadwick, “not a lot” will change about off-season, as “Coach Laymance did a tremendous job”.

# JH Basketball Finishes Season

## Jaycie Mullins

The junior high basketball boys play Carlisle in their last game of the season on Feb. 7 at 4:30 p.m.

“The junior high guys have made a ton of progress throughout the year,” Coach Cody Wilson said. “As for the last game, we look to go out on a high note with every group winning. That is our goal.”

The girls finished their season Jan. 31, with a win for the undefeated seventh grade team and an eighth-grade loss at Hawkins.

“We are excited to get a win for our last game to finish out the season undefeated,” Coach Julie Martindale said. “This is a great group of girls that I look forward to watching do great things in high school.”



PHOTO: KIMBER SMITH



PHOTO: DAYTONA VAUGHN Jessica Hobbs (11) unracks the bar to successfully squat 320 lbs, a new personal record.

# New Year, New PRs Powerlifters Raise Bar for Teen Athletes

## Daytona Vaughn

The girls' powerlifting team competes at home Feb. 7, followed by the boys' team Feb. 14.

The girls previously competed at Harmony Jan. 13, their first meet of the year. In the 165lb. weight class, Addison Smith (10) took first place with a total weight of 590lbs. and Katy King (10) second with 585lbs. In the 181 class, Paige Parman (10) came in second with 605lbs., Daytona Vaughn (10) third with 595lbs., and Savanna Clark (9) fourth with 575lbs. In the 198 class, Jessica Hobbs (11) took first place with a total 785lbs., and Lainey Ledbetter (11) came in second with 735lbs.

Some of the girls hit personal bests at the meet, including Hobbs's 320lb. squat and 300lb. deadlift. According to Hobbs, her success at the meet made her “even more determined to push [herself] more to make it to state again.” Hobbs qualified for state in spring of 2020, her freshman year, but was unable to attend due to Covid-19 closures. Ledbetter qualified last year but was also unable to attend due to injury. Both girls plan to make the trip this year.

The boys also competed at Harmony but in a separate meet on Jan. 20. Reed Cooper (11) won the 242lb. division with 1090lbs., and Tyler Rodgers (12) won first in the



PHOTOS: DAYTONA VAUGHN Sophomore Addison Smith braces to complete a heavy squat during the Harmony meet Jan. 13. (Bottom) Lainey Ledbetter (11) wraps Paige Parman's (10) knees before her squat attempt.

220lb. weight class with 1055lbs., followed by Tommy Branscom (9) in second with 845lbs. Davy Branscom (11) won the 181 class with 1145lbs, and Jacob Griffin (9) followed in third with 915lbs.

Four more boys brought home silver in their divisions: Lane Turner (10) in the 123lb. class with 660lbs., Isaiah O'Neal (10) in the 132 class with 755lbs., Carter Smith (12) in the 148 class with 855lbs., and Vincent Miller (12) in the 165lb. class with 1045 total pounds. Mason Byers (10) took third in the 165lbs. division with 775lbs. and Josh Joyner (12) third in the 198lb. class with 885lbs.

# Musical Chairs

## Townsend, Fowler Earn Honors

**Olivia Hudgens**

Kameron Townsend (10) and Colter Fowler (11) will perform at the state band clinic and concert February 8-12 at Lila Cockrell Theatre of the Henry B. Gonzales Convention Center in downtown San Antonio.

The boys earned their seats at the ATSSB Area Contest Jan. 8, where Townsend placed 1st chair bass clarinet and Fowler placed 1st chair clarinet.

"I had set a goal for every day to practice and run through all scales and etudes twice without making mistakes, which took a while sometimes, but it definitely was worth it!" Townsend said. "[I] never

thought I'd make it this far. I just wanted to get to state more than [the competition] did, and so I put in the effort."

More than 10,000 high school band students from across Texas auditioned in twenty-two different regions for a place in the all-region band, and only 286 students made it to state. Still, when Townsend and Fowler get to the clinic, the boys will have to audition once again for chairs.

"I know Colter and Kameron will audition very well and represent themselves and Union Grove at the highest level possible," director Andy Thompson said. "These



**PHOTO: TAYLOR SEE** Colter Fowler (11) practices his clarinet in preparation for the upcoming solo and ensemble contest and all-state clinic and concert.

young men are going to have a tremendous experience that they will cherish for the rest of their lives."

# Straight Shooters

## FFA Team Takes Aim At Solo Prizes

**Taylor See**

The shooting team will compete Feb. 17-20 at the San Antonio Rodeo Junior Shoot-Out at the National Shooting Complex.

Jeremiah McGee (10), Colton Jamison (9), TJ Fowler (9), Rowan Moore (10), and Cason Cowan (9) make up the team. While only the top three scores will count for the team's points, team members could also win individual prizes, which may be why so many students are willing to pay their own \$100 entry fee.

"Each contestant has the possibility to shoot for prizes on Sunday, depending on scores that are determined by a formula," sponsor Bobby Painter said.

According to Painter, the oft-over 1200 students will break into Lewis class divisions, ranges of initial scores. Then shooters in selected divisions will compete within their division for prizes. Historically, these prizes have included up to \$10,000 team scholarships, lifetime hunting licenses, shotguns, and ammunition. Since selection of prize divisions is beyond teams' control, all the boys can do is their best.

"I expect each [team member] to achieve a personal best score," Painter said.

# Craving Variety

## Students Seek Language Options

**Olivia Hudgens and Sydney Pritchett**

Due to lack of personal choice, many students have no inspiration to actually learn Spanish, the only foreign-language class our school currently offers.

Students should have the opportunity to choose what language they want to learn.

Students with the opportunity to choose their elective would be more inclined to put forth the effort to actually learn the language, but when students are thrown into a class without any choice, they feel like the course is not worth their time. Having intrinsic goals and expectations leads to increased motivation, which in turn leads to a higher level of language competence.

Our school only offers Spanish, but students will likely run into people who speak

another foreign language in their lifetime. In fact, according to the [Center for Immigration Studies](#), Chinese, Arabic, and other foreign-language use is on the rise in America. Speaking other languages, even French or German, could be an advantage for students who want to travel or work internationally.

Furthermore, since Spanish 1 and 2 are offered online through Edmentum and not taught by a teacher, the school could add one or two more languages through Edmentum and not have to worry about hiring additional staff.

Our school should give students options for their foreign-language courses because choice promotes effort and achievement, Spanish is not the only useful language, and the change would not affect staffing.



**PHOTO: DAYTONA VAUGHN** Emily Melton (12) and Preston Woodall (11) work on choreography for the upcoming one-act play production of Joy Wilkinson's "The Sweet Science of Bruising". The play surrounds a group of women in Victorian England who fight both physically in the boxing ring and metaphorically against female oppression.

# Ready or Not: Here Valentine's Day Comes Staff Recommends Activities

Faith Woodall and Jaycie Mullins

Just around the corner lurks what some consider the best, or the worst, day of the year. For those who enjoy celebrating Valentine's Day, the holiday is a time of gifts, loving gestures, and spending time with a special someone. For others, the day of "love" can bring reminders of loneliness and unhappy memories. Whether you're in the spirit, or looking for a distraction, if you don't have plans for Valentine's Day, we have suggestions.

For couples, we recommend writing a couple's bucket list, recreating your first date, taking a hike, or stargazing.

For the unattached, we suggest having an

at-home spa day, cooking a favorite meal, playing board games with friends or family, learning a new dance, or singing karaoke (preferably loudly and off-key).

And for movie-lovers, our Valentine's Day recommendation is "How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days" (rated PG-13 for sexual references and profanity) because even people who don't like the romantic holiday will enjoy laughing at Ben's expense as he tries to make Andie fall in love with him—as she actively tries to drive him away.

Looking for a way to show your love? A hand-written note could make your friend, family member, or date's day.

## Baseball Warms Up Against Jefferson

Sydney Pritchett

The baseball team will compete against Jefferson at home on Feb. 21, a special pre-season game for Coach Chad Halcumb.

"My old high school coach just got the head baseball job at Jefferson," Halcumb said. "This will be my first time playing him as a coach, so it should be a really fun experience."

The team graduated out crucial players last year, and coaches admit that there

are some "big shoes to fill from last year's seniors". However, Halcumb expects a large group of freshmen and key returners to "prove themselves" in attempt to fill those shoes. This game will give the team a chance to work together before district.

"Jefferson is a 3A, so they are a little bigger than us, and I know they will be well coached," Halcumb said. "Hopefully, we get solid live reps in our preparation for district play the following week."

## UIL Teams Win Lindale Invitational Events



**PHOTO: SANDY SPEARS** The speech and debate team won first place at Lindale, where Kyler Littlejohn (11) and Emily Melton (12) won first place team in cross-examination debate, Brendon Fuller (11) and Colton Mead (9) second CX team, Melton first place in persuasive speaking, Littlejohn third place information speaking, and Katelyn (12) and Daytona Vaughn (10) first place duo acting.

### STAFF

The current events team of Gracie Winn (11), Preston Woodall (11), Tommy Branscom (9), and Jeremy Stewart (11) won first place team at the Lindale invitational UIL meet Jan. 14. The accounting team also won first place team, with individual medals for Gracie Stanford (11) in second place, Winn third place, and Avery Brooks (12) fourth place.

In journalism, Taylor See (12) earned fifth place and Faith Woodall (10) sixth in copy-editing, Sydney Pritchett (10) fifth in news writing and second in editorial, and Olivia Hudgens (12) fourth in editorial. The journalism team finished third overall, behind 4A 2021 state champions Lindale and 2A 2021 state champions Martin's Mill.

## "How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days" Review

Faith Woodall and Jaycie Mullins



Journalist Andie Anderson (Kate Hudson) is dissatisfied with her "How to" column, but then her friend's break up leads to work on "How to Lose a Guy in 10 days", for which she will commit common mistakes that lead to break-ups. Advertising executive Benjamin Berry (Matthew McConaughey) wants to break free from being his company's "Sports Guy", so his boss (Robert Klein) offers him a diamond account if he can make a woman fall in love with him within ten days. The two find each other, and shenanigans ensue. The movie is basically a battle of the sexes between Andie and her friends finding ways to terrorize Ben, and Ben's friends coaching him into keeping her long enough to sway their boss.

Both actors play their parts convincingly (and beautifully), but our favorite part is Andie's over-the-top break-up-with-me antics, which amp up as the movie progresses, including Andie's interruption of Ben's poker night. Andie gives Ben a "love fern" a few days beforehand and then comes over to find it dead. She proceeds to overreact about the symbolism of the fern to their relationship, then makes him blow into a Kleenex while saying "Blow! Nobody likes a minister sniffles" - all in front of his manly friends. Her behavior is totally cringe-worthy and will crack up even the most stoic, romance-hating viewers.

Yes, it's predictable, but not having to pay too much attention to the plot means viewers have plenty of time to laugh about it with friends.

# Upcoming Events

Feb. 1

**HS Basketball @ Overton — 5 p.m.**  
**Softball v. Harleton — 5 p.m.**

Feb. 2

**JH Solo & Ensemble Band Contest**

Around 50 junior high soloists and three ensembles will perform for judges, followed by 50 more soloists and three ensembles in the high school contest Feb. 4. High school students who receive a first division on a class one ensemble or a class one solo will move on to the state contest May 28-29.

Feb. 4

**HS Solo & Ensemble Band Contest**  
**FFA Area Tractor Tech Contest @ Huntsville**  
**HS Basketball v. Beckville (Boys Senior Night) — 4**  
**Softball @ Marshall 5 p.m.**

Feb. 5

**One-Act Play Workshop @ Carthage — 1 p.m.**

Critiques will help the cast and crew gain insight into how to improve their performance and ensure readiness for the district competition next month.

Feb. 7

**Girls Powerlifting @ Harmony — 4:30 p.m.**  
**JH Boys Basketball v. Carlisle — 4:30 p.m.**

Feb. 8-12

**All State Band Clinic and Concert**

Feb. 8

**HS Basketball @ Hawkins — 4 p.m.**  
**Softball @ Sabine — 5 p.m.**

Feb. 9

**TSI Testing**

Feb. 11-13

**FFA Gilt Shows @ Kerrville**

Bre Reynolds (7), Emori Lemming (7), Alana Cox (7) and their certified Texas-bred animals will compete in this elite showcase at the Hill Country Youth Event Center. Walton's Webcasting will live-stream the show and sale.

Feb. 11

**HS Boys Basketball @ Carlisle — 5 p.m.**  
**Softball v. West Rusk — 5 p.m.**

Feb. 12

**UIL @ Hallsville Invitational Meet**

Feb. 14

**Boys Powerlifting @ Harmony— 4:30 p.m.**

Feb. 15

**HS Boys Basketball @ Big Sandy — 5 p.m.**  
**Softball @ White Oak — 5 p.m.**

Feb. 15-19

**FFA @ San Antonio Heifer Show**

Feb. 17

**Girls Powerlifting @ Pine Tree — 3:30 p.m.**

Feb. 17-19

**Softball @ Carthage Tournament**  
**Skeet Shooting Team @ San Antonio**

Feb. 18-20

**FFA @ San Antonio Jr. Barrow Show**

Feb. 19

**Baseball Alumni Game — 11 a.m.**

Feb. 21

**V Baseball v. Jefferson — 6 p.m.**

Feb. 22

**Softball v. Troup — 5 p.m.**

Feb. 23

**Blood Drive — 10 a.m.**

Feb. 24

**V Track @ Winona**  
**Boys Powerlifting @ Maud**

Feb. 24-26

**Softball @ TLSUC Tournament**  
**V Baseball @ Harleton Tournament**

Feb. 25-27

**FFA @ San Antonio Jr. Ag Mechanics Show**

Feb. 26

**FFA @ Gilmer/White Oak Invitational CDE**

Feb. 28

**FFA Area VI Convention @ Sulphur Springs**  
**JH Track @ Union Grove**

Junior high track athletes not involved with basketball began practice in November, but this is seventh-graders first chance to show off the skills, strength, and speed they've acquired since elementary field day in actual competition.



## Hands-On Learning

**PHOTO: JAYCIE MULLINS (LEFT)** Matt Lynch and his fourth-period print shop class make signs to celebrate students who have been accepted to various colleges.

**PHOTOS: KIMBER SMITH (ABOVE LEFT)** Gracen Graham (8) and Carter Cooper (8) work on volume of cylinders and cones during Mrs. Winn's ice cream lab Jan. 14. **(ABOVE RIGHT)** Eliana Villamendez (7) and Arianna Gibboney (7) use sentence strips to learn comma rules for appositives and introductory phrases. "It was a fun learning experience," Gibboney said. "The sentence surgery activity made it easier to understand how to make correct sentences."