

GROVE GAZETTE

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Union Grove JH/HS Newsletter

April 2022

FFA Tours Texas For State Contests

Hunter Fraker

Huntsville, A&M, and Denton—all within the first weekend of April. Later, Commerce, Leon County, Texas Tech, Sam Houston State University, and Texas A&M for livestock judging and more CDEs, then the state wildlife contest. FFA will tour most of the state for April competitions.

In March, three FFA teams competed at the Tarleton invitational. The livestock judging team of Avery Brooks (12), Katherine Potter (10), and Will Wilson (10) competed against more than 260 teams. Brooks won first place individually out of 995 students, earning a \$2,500 scholarship. The veterinary science team of Emily Calhoun (12), Allie Calhoun (10), Emily Bible (11), Jeremiah McGee (10) and Madeline McGee (10) placed 37th out of 228 teams and improved on their previous scores. The meat judging team of Angie Leyva (11), Kenia Velazquez (11), Mad-die Byers (9) and Sam Stanley (9) placed 24th out of 94 teams.

JH Band to Perform at Concert, Sight-Reading Contest

Olivia Hudgens

Junior high will compete in Concert and Sight Reading Contest April 1 at Gilmer High School.

The band will perform the concert portion around 11:35 a.m., including “Captain Dane March”, “Japanese Pictures” and “Odyssey”. After the concert, the band will perform their sight reading piece in the gymnasium.

Lions Strike Out Competition Baseball Team Continues Streak

Sydney Pritchett

The varsity baseball team starts their second round of district competition with the April 1 home game against Hawkins. They hope to use the momentum of their current winning streak of four district games to repeat their previous victory over the Hawks.

“We have really started to click the past couple of weeks,” Coach Chad Halcumb said. “I think defensively we have big-time potential to be really good.”

On March 29, the boys beat Union Hill 9-6. Carter Smith (12), Hunter Cannon (12), Kayden Day (9), and Cooper Vestal (11) led the team to victory, with support from over 30 kids who came to the “youth night” game to participate in the national anthem run-out, a team picture, and the pre-game pep-talk huddle.

Before Union Hill, the boys beat Big Sandy

10-0, Carlisle 14-2, and New Summerfield 21-0.

The JV team has a 3-1 district record with victories against Hawkins, Carlisle, and Big Sandy. The boys also played 3A White Oak on March 26, which provided greater competition than the in-district teams.



PHOTOS: FAITH WOODALL The JV baseball team faced White Oak Saturday, March 26.

The Sweet Science of Success

OAP Advances To Area Meet

Olivia Hudgens

One-Act Play cast and crew will compete in the area contest April 2 at the Lion Center, where they will face competition from Mt. Pleasant, who placed second at state last year.

OAP previously won first place in the district contest, where Emily Melton (12) and Tyler Rodgers (12) won Top Performer awards; Davy Branscom (11), Kyler Littlejohn (11) and Katelyn Vaughn (12) earned All-Star Cast honors; Hope Rogers (12) received an Honorable Mention; and Bailey Clowers (12) received a Tech Award.

They also placed second at bi-district, where Sarah Clowers (10) and Vaughn received All-Star Cast, Rodgers received Honorable Mention, and Keeley Rust (10) received a Tech Award. From region, Hawkins, Mt. Pleasant, Gary, Colmesneil, and Shelbyville also advanced to Area.

JH Track to Finish Season at Hawkins

Sydney Pritchett

Junior high track will compete in their final meet of the season—the district meet at Hawkins—April 4 and 5.

“For most of the season, we have been competing well against teams from bigger schools, so I am interested to see how we stack up against the other schools in our district,” boys’ track coach Kristopher Kelley said.

The teams previously competed at Harmony on March 28, where seventh-graders Eliana Villamendez, Alana Cox, Bre Reynolds, Rachel Potter, Kody Nutt, Logan Walts, Parker Johnston, Kolby Nutt, and David Shaver and eighth-graders Mallorie Cannon, Madyson Lowe, Kaki Pharr, Kendal Sartain, Kohl Sirmans, Mason Stanley, Lucas Diviney, Carter Cooper, and Dalton Hawkins earned medals, as did all relay teams.

Going Green at Pine Springs Golf Team Prepares for District

Faith Woodall

Boys’ and girls’ golf will take a shot at advancing to regional competition during their district tournament Monday, April 4 at Pine Springs Golf Course. Players will tee off beginning at 8:30 a.m.

“I think our boys’ team will have a chance to advance to regionals, and our girls will hopefully have an individual or two advance,” Coach J.B. Littlejohn said. “Kayden Day and Sydney Pritchett should be in position to compete for individual district champion if they play well.”

Blake Moore (11), Cooper Vestal (11), Reed Cooper (11), Day (9), Harley Kirbis (12), and Jaxson Daniels (10) won 2 of 3 matches and Pritchett (10), Olivia Hudgens (12), Sophie Pyle (10), and Brady Colby (10) won 1 match against Hawkins March 28.

The school sponsors players’ membership at the Gilmer Country Club for practice.

“Players are at different levels of ability, so, for some, we work on the swing fundamentals and simple shot execution,” Littlejohn said. “Our more advanced players work on course management, distance control/identification and shot making.”



PHOTO: KELLY MOORE

HS Band Shares Sounds of Spring

Taylor See

The annual band Spring concert is planned for April 25 at 6 p.m. and will contain pieces “Rampage”, “Them Basses”, “Queen City March”, “Lassus Trombone”, “Harry’s Wondrous World”, “Arabian Dances”, and “Jurassic Park”.

“It will be a very fun and entertaining evening for the students, and I expect it to go very smoothly,” Director Andy Thompson said.

Fishing Team Casts Lines at Regionals

Jaycie Mullins

The fishing team of Jacob Griffin (9), Andrew Jacobus (9), Jax Daniels (10), Cole Barkley (10), Reed Cooper (11), Carson Bogue (10), Will Wilson (10), and Gary Dacus (10) will compete in the regional tournament on April 9 at Lake Palestine.

The boys will begin around 6:45 a.m. and finish around 3 p.m., aiming to catch enough fish to earn the highest combined weight and win the tournament.



PHOTO: KELLY MOORE The softball team boasted a 6-0 district record after their 16-1 win over Carlsile March 29. In true Teacher Appreciation spirit, Mrs. Vickie Collins threw the first pitch for the Lady Lions’, who scored 14 runs in the third inning. The second round of district games begins April 5.

Running Toward Regionals Track Team Prepares to Win District Meet

Jaycie Mullins

High school track will compete in the district meet April 11. Those who advance will compete next in the area track meet in Beckville on April 20, followed by the regional meet scheduled for April 29-30.

“The team is working hard for Area and Regionals,” Coach Greg Park said.

“Everyone has made great progress since the beginning of track season. There is still more to work on, but I am proud of these kids for their hard work and dedication.”

The team competed in Tatum’s annual Eagle Relays on Thursday, March 24, where the Lady Lions took third place overall with a total of 99 points. Gracie Stanford (11) and Sophie Pyle (10) started the girls’ point tally with gold and silver in the 3200m run. The 4x100m relay team of Rylee Aiken (9), Taylor Campbell (9), Kayla Pullen (12), and Ava Wightman (10) took sixth and the 4x200m relay of Sarah Prince (9), Pullen, Keira Taylor (9), and Wightman fourth. The 4x400m relay team of Campbell, Prince, Taylor, and Gracie Winn (11) won third. Winn also brought home third in the 800m run, and Campbell placed fourth in the 300m hurdles, fourth in the triple jump, and third in the high jump.

In the 1600m run, Stanford placed third, Pyle fourth, and Jenna Scott (10) sixth. Addison Smith (10) placed fifth in shot put and fourth in discus, where teammate Macey Roberts (12) placed second. Bailey Clowers (12) placed second and Gracie Lawrence (9) third in the pole vault.

The boys’ team accumulated 36 points. 4x100m relay team of Aubrey Woodard (12), Colton Cowan (11), Isaiah O’Neal (10), and Judson George (9) finished in sixth place, as did the 4x400m team of Woodard, O’Neal, Jacob Griffin (9), and Sabetay Fernandez (12). Woodard also won first in the triple jump, fourth in the long jump, and fifth in the 200m dash, and Fernandez won first place in the 110m hurdles and third place in the 400m dash.



PHOTO: KIMBER SMITH Junior Jayden Chavers runs the 200m dash in the Dee Mackey Relays meet March 4.

The varsity Lions won second place team behind Harmony. Brendon Fuller placed sixth in the 3200m run, and the 4x100m relay of Judson George, Colton Cowan, Jaden Chavers, and Aubrey Woodard placed fourth. Sabetay Fernandez won first place in both the 800m run and the 400m run. Bubba Hammett placed fourth in the 300m hurdles, Matthew Gipson took sixth in the 200m run, and Woodard won second place in the long jump at 20’2” and first in triple jump with 42’. Cowan finished sixth in triple jump with 38’11.5”, Blake Moore placed fifth in discus with a throw of 114’10”, and Trevor Moore won first place in the pole vault by clearing 12’, followed by teammate Lane Turner in fifth, who cleared 9’6”.

Russian Invasion of Ukraine Unacceptable Putin Commits Act of Aggression

Casey Bogue

President Vladimir Putin of Russia has, as of February 24, 2022, launched an invasion of Ukraine. He claimed it is because the people of Ukraine and Russia are one people, divided by the western superpowers.

His actions against Ukraine and it’s people are unacceptable, and his justification worse.

Putin’s reasoning for his invasion of Ukraine raised more questions than answers. He claims that the citizens of Ukraine are being saved from the “Nazis” that run Ukraine, and that the western powers are forcing anti-Russian sentiments upon Ukraine.

Putin fabricated claims that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is expanding to attack Russia and force their western idealism upon not just Ukraine and Russia, but the entirety of Eastern Europe. He appears to believe that Eastern Europeans all stand united, that these borders tear apart one people, and that the western powers want to westernize and indoctrinate these people against Russia and communism.

It is well known that Russia’s economy is lacking, to say the least. And by invading Ukraine, he assists the economy in three

ways: ease and cost of transporting petroleum products to other countries, access to Ukraine’s natural resources, and redirection of investments commonly known to boost economies.

Putin’s claims about freeing the people of Ukraine from their government and political borders is ridiculous and almost insulting to a degree that it’s obviously fabricated. Keep in mind that Russia has been shelling apartments, homes, and other buildings housing citizens. Ukrainians have been fleeing to Poland and other Central European countries in search of refuge. If Eastern Europe was one united people, would citizens be fleeing the homes set afire by their so-called brothers and sisters? Ukrainian people are fiercely defending their land, even to the point of attacking Russian vehicles and military with Molotov cocktails. People have been recorded stealing Russian tanks with their tractors, and Putin still claims to be the victim.

Putin’s actions against his so-called united people are unacceptable, and the Ukrainians have proven they are not friends. You may not be able to defend Ukraine in the field, but you can still help by donating to charities helping Ukraine, such as the [Ukrainian Red Cross Society](#).

PHOTO: SANDY SPEARS



Cheer Squads, Majorettes Secure 2022-2023 Spots

Olivia Hudgens

2022-23 cheerleaders, majorettes, and drum majors won their spots on next year's spirit teams during March tryouts.

Cheerleader candidates auditioned March 11. Gracie Winn (11), Analiece Jones (11), Ava Bouldin (11), Katy King (10), Sydney Pritchett (10), Ava Wightman (10), Brady Colby (10), Sophie Pyle (10), Rylee Aiken (9), Gracelyn Head (8), Natalie Woodard (8), and Makynlie Young (8) made the high school cheer team. Winn will be captain, and Kaki Pharr (8) will don the lion suit as mascot. Averi Cook (7), Arianna Gibboney (7), Landry Harris (6), Konner Long (6), Amelia Mullican (6), Miley Nono (7), Kaci Pirtle (7), Emma Wadle (6), and Charlotte Wright (6) made the junior high cheer squad, for which Briana Bowling (6) will be mascot.

Majorette line and drum major tryouts followed on March 12. Briyanna Blalock (11), Alana Cox (7), Bre Cox (6), Ashlynn Heard (7), Nadia Ibarra (7), and Natalie Spruell (6) made majorette. Blalock will serve as feature twirler, and as drum major, along with Sarah Clowers (10).



PHOTO: BRITTNEY HEARD Majorette candidates await the start of tryouts March 12.

UIL Teams Advance to Regional Meet

Staff

At least one student from each academic UIL event will represent Union Grove at the regional meet April 22-23 at Panola.

The Accounting, Current Issues, Computer Science, Social Studies and Spelling teams won first place at the district meet March 21, advancing to region as complete teams. Although the Calculator Apps team placed second, these students were the highest-scoring second-place team in the region and therefore earned the wild card to advance. The Mathematics, Number Sense, and Science teams also placed second.

Gracie Stanford (11) won first place, Avery Brooks (12) second, Gracie Winn (11) third, and Brendon Fuller (11) fourth in Accounting. Stanford earned second in Calculator, followed by Winn in fourth, Anna Flanagan (10) in fifth, and Rowdy Williams (10) in sixth. Winn also won silver in Mathematics, and Stanford placed third in Number Sense.

Jeremy Stewart (11) won silver in Current Issues, and teammates Tommy Branscom (9) and Katy King (10) took fourth and fifth respectively. Gavin Boutin (11) won gold in Computer Applications. Brendon Fuller (11) placed second, and Jordan Lee (11) placed third. Jesse Nemeth (9) won the Computer Science event, followed by Kameron Townsend (10) in second, Boutin in third, and Fuller in fourth.

Mia Rust (12) placed third in Literary Criticism, and Kyler Littlejohn (11), Sarah Clowers (10), and Emily Lynch (11) went 1-2-3 in Ready Writing. Littlejohn also won gold in Social Studies, followed by teammate Car-

son Shott (11) in sixth. Freshman Elise Daugherty not only placed third in Science but also earned top biology points. Colton Mead (9) earned his first seat at regionals by placing third in Spelling with debate partner Emily Melton (12) in fourth.

The Journalism team won top team, with individual awards for Katy Vinson (12), Taylor See (12), Payton Haley (12), Sydney Pritchett (10), Faith Woodall (10), and Mead. In Copy-Editing, Vinson won first, See took third, and Woodall earned sixth. In News Writing, Pritchett won first, Haley second, and Vinson fourth. In Feature Writing, Haley won first, Pritchett second, and Vinson third. In Editorial Writing, Pritchett placed second, See fourth, and Mead sixth. In Headline Writing, Pritchett won first, Vinson third, and See fifth.



PHOTO: KIMBER SMITH

Speaking events took place separately, at East Mountain Baptist Church March 29. The speech team won first place overall. Littlejohn, Fuller, and Daytona Vaughn (10) swept Informative Speaking 1-2-3, as did Kendall Wennmohs (11), Preston Woodall (10), and Savanna Clark (9) in Lincoln-Douglas debate, Melton, Mead, and Woodall in Persuasive Speaking, and Vaughn, Hope Rogers (12), and Brendon Deary (9) in Poetry Interpretation. In Prose Interpretation, Melton won first, Katelyn Vaughn won second, and Mead took fifth.

UIL
Academic Meet
by the numbers

33

TEAM MEMBERS

857

TOTAL POINTS

Including Academic meet, CX Debate, OAP

60

DISTRICT MEDALS

573

POINT LEAD

Over Second Place Longview Chadwick

48

REGIONAL SEATS

22

EVENTS

Advancing to Regional Meet at Panola

Upcoming Events

April 1

**FFA State Applied Ag. Contest
JH Band UIL Concert & Sight-Reading Contest
Baseball @Hawkins — 4:30pm**

April 2

**Area One-Act Place Contest
FFA Area VI CDE @A&M**

April 3

FFA @North Texas Stockman's Contest

April 4

**District Golf @Pine Springs
JH Girls District Track Meet @Hawkins — 3:30pm**

April 5

**STAAR English I
JH Boys District Track Meet @Hawkins — 3:30pm
Baseball @Leverett's Chapel — 4pm
Softball v. Big Sandy — 5:30pm**

April 7

**STAAR English II
JV Baseball @Beckville Tournament
Band Whataburger Fundraiser — 5pm**

April 8

**HS Track @White Oak — 9am
Softball @Overton — 4pm
V Baseball v. Overton — 6pm**

April 9

**JV Baseball @Beckville Tournament
Lake Palestine Fishing Tournament**

April 11

**HS District Track Meet
Band Banquet @Firehouse 9 — 6pm**

Mr. Thompson and Mr. Stafford will distribute grade level awards, senior awards, and solo and ensemble medals. Attendees who are student band members must pay \$20 for their dinner.

April 12

**FFA Area VI CDE @Commerce
Baseball @Beckville — 4:30pm
Softball v. Hawkins — 5:30pm**

April 14

**Softball @Union Hill — 5pm
V Baseball v. New Summerfield — 6pm**

April 15

FFA @Leon County Livestock Judging

April 18-19

Boys' Regional Golf Tournament @Cherokee Ranch

April 19

**FFA @State Wildlife Contest
Baseball @Carlisle
Softball v. New Summerfield — 5:30pm**



PHOTO: RICK MCCAW Eighth-grade history teacher Justin Waddle taught his last lesson March 31. "I never pictured myself leaving Union Grove," Waddle said. "I love it here, and everyone has become a family member. However, I received a great career opportunity that I cannot pass up." The junior high teachers, happy for him but upset at losing a beloved coworker, gave him a going-away present and desserts during lunch.

April 20

Area Track @Beckville

April 20-21

Girls' Regional Golf Tournament @Cherokee Ranch

April 21

Regional One-Act Play @Panola College

April 22

**JH GT Robotics Competition @Region 7
Softball @Carlisle — 4pm
Senior Meningitis Clinic — 10:30am**

Seniors who need their Meningitis shot must [register](#) by April 20 to attend. The shot costs \$10 cash or is free with insurance.

April 22-23

**Regional Academic UIL @Panola College
FFA @Texas Tech State CDE's**

April 25

**FFA District Speaking Contest @Gilmer
Athletic Physicals — 9:45am**

Free physicals for next year's extracurricular activities will start with sixth grade at 9:30 a.m. Students must bring the required paperwork.

April 26

**Baseball v. Big Sandy — 4:30pm
HS Band Concert — 6pm**

April 29

**Regional Track @Palestine
FFA @SHSU State CDE
V Baseball @Union Hill — 6pm**

April 30

**Regional Track @Palestine
FFA @Texas A&M State CDE**