

The GROVE GAZETTE

Vol. IV, Issue 8

Union Grove JH/HS News

May 2023

*Winning
Tradition*

UIL Academic,
Golf, Track, Fishing
Teams Head to State



Cover: Josiah Sturkie (9) runs the mile at the area meet at Pine Tree track meet April 15. Photo by Samantha Swisher

Below: The One-Act Play cast and crew advanced to the regional meet after placing second at district, third at bi-district, and third at area. "I think it was exciting we were able to make it as far as we did and be able to compete at a higher level than most of our district," freshman Parker Haley said.

Between placing third overall and earning All-Star cast and crew awards, the OAP team earned 29 points toward the school sweepstakes. "The OAP cast did an excellent job at region," director Sandy Spears said. "I thought it was one of the best shows they performed this year. At the regional level, everyone is good. I am very proud that we placed and earned UIL points for the overall academic regional award." Photo by Corie Littlejohn



Eight Students Earn Medals, Competitive Seats in State Meet Academic UIL Team Wins Regional Runner-Up

Eight students will compete in the state academic UIL meet May 17-18 after earning gold, silver, or bronze medals at the regional meet at Panola College April 21-22.

"We were the team to beat after our Regional Championship last year," coordinator Rhonda Baker said.

The Accounting team won gold, dominating the competition with 1101 points. (Second place Groveton earned only 628 points.) Gracie Stanford (12) placed first individually, Gracie Winn (12) second and Brendon Fuller (12) third—all three scoring in the 300s and Fuller scoring a personal best. Lainey Ledbetter (12) subbed for Chloe Brooks (9) and without having taken the class placed 16th of the 36 regional contestants. Brooks, who competed on the district championship team but could not compete at regionals due to a conflict with the FFA Food Science team's state contest, will return for the state

meet, which the team began preparing for before even attending regionals.

"We were confident about Regional as a result of looking at the District scores going into the Regional meet," sponsor Gailyn Sutton said. "Therefore, although we worked some on Regional materials—we concentrated on [state level material] because we were reasonably sure that we would make it to the next level of competition—state. There, we will have very tough competition, so we felt we needed to get prepared even before Regional."

Emily Lynch (12) won first place in Ready Writing, followed by Kyler Littlejohn (12) in second.

"I'll be 100% honest; I did not see me qualifying for state," Littlejohn said.

"Writing has always been my weakest UIL event, but fortunately the topic spoke to me and I was able to write better than I

thought I could."

Littlejohn will compete in three events at the Austin meet: Ready Writing and Social Studies, in which she also earned second place, as well as Informative Speaking, where she won gold against the reigning state champ and this year's CX debate champion by using her knowledge of history and debate skills.

"Going in to regionals I felt confident that I could go in SS, but I knew it would be tough to win especially with the Lovelady kid in the mix," Littlejohn said. "And while I was disappointed in not getting gold, I allowed myself to have perspective on the moment and just be glad I'm going to state and got points for my school. And for speaking, that is probably what I am most proud of."

Sydney Pritchett (11) won first place in Headline Writing, her fourth medal of the day. Pritchett also earned fourth place in



Making a Splash UIL Participants Earn Reward Trip

The hours of time and effort academic UIL students put into preparation and practice, often against larger schools and on Saturdays, will earn more than medals this spring. Administrators and coordinators have approved school funds to pay for UIL team members who are not on the state meet trip to spend a day at Splash Kingdom Waterpark in Canton.

"The UIL students, at both the JH and HS Level, worked very hard this year," UIL coordinator Rhonda Baker said. "As a staff and an administration, we wanted to show them how much we appreciate their efforts. We wanted to let the students know UIL is important to us as coaches, but also to us as a district, and we hope this trip not only makes them feel rewarded for their efforts but encourages them to continue their participation in UIL academic and OAP events."

High school participants will travel Thursday, May 18, departing at 9 a.m. and returning around 3 p.m. with four hours to swim, slide, and sun from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Junior high team members will make the same trip but on Friday, May 18. To attend, students must return their signed permission slip by May 12.

"I can't wait to ride waterslides, splash in the water, and have fun with my friends," seventh-grader Landry Harris said. "I'm so glad I did UIL."

Students will receive a food voucher for either pizza, chicken tenders, a hot dog, or nachos and a fountain drink. They should bring their own towels, sunscreen, unopened bottle of water, and extra money for any snacks or souvenirs they'd like to purchase.

"I am excited to take the students who competed in UIL to Splash Kingdom this year," Tina Burns, high school spelling and junior high spelling and science sponsor, said. "Our numbers for UIL event participation have fallen considerably. When we went to the park in the past, the students loved it. Hopefully, when the students who chose not to compete realize the trip they will be missing, we will have a lot more students participate."

The regional champion Accounting team of seniors Brendon Fuller, Gracie Stanford, Gracie Winn and Lainey Ledbetter; senior Tyler Littlejohn, who won three top-two medals in Informative Speaking, Social Studies, and Ready Writing; regional Ready Writing champion, senior Emily Lynch; regional Headline Writing champion, junior Sydney Pritchett; and Current Issues and Events medalist, sophomore Tommy Branscom will all advance to the state academic UIL meet at the UT Austin May 17-18. Photo by Sandy Spears

Editorial Writing and sixth place in both News and Feature Writing, scoring enough points for second runner-up journalism team.

"I was disappointed to see that I didn't qualify in news, but I was even more disappointed I didn't qualify in feature writing since I advanced to state in that last year," Pritchett said. "I had accepted the fact that I would probably not advance to state when I got the call saying that I had placed first in headline writing. I was so relieved and happy to hear that I had qualified and will return to Austin to compete."

Tommy Branscom (10) won third place in Current Issues and Events, and the team of Branscom, TJ Fowler (10), Brayden Pirtle (12), and Ryan Hickerson (9) earned second place. Sarah Clowers (11) also placed fourth in poetry interpretation, and Kameron Townsend (11) fifth in computer science.

The One-Act Play cast and crew also competed in the regional meet and finished in third place as alternates to state. Littlejohn won All-Star Cast, and Hannah Coulter (10) earned a Honor Crew nod. Preston Woodall (12) and Clowers each received honorable mentions.

"Most of the judges gave us good advice after each round, and that helped us improve a little more each time," Coulter said. "Although I was upset that we didn't advance to state, I believe we all did our best and am very proud of everyone."

The team won second place overall and came home with the regional runner-up award, but before judging of the final contest — Headline Writing — was complete, the team was tied with Martin's Mill for the regional title. Although Pritchett won first place in that contest, Martin's Mill placed second and fourth, earning more total points and winning 195 to 190. Third place Latexo trailed with 148.

Sturkie, Smith Advance to State Track Meet

Josiah Sturkie (9) and Allison Smith (10) will compete in the state track meet in San Antonio May 18-21 after medaling in the area meet at Pine Tree April 15. Sturkie won the mile run and placed second in both the softball throw and 4x100m relay, and Smith won the softball throw and placed third in the 400m walk.

“It was really exciting to watch [Josiah] run the mile when we did the district meet because when he finished and realized he got first, he was so pumped,” inclusion aide Serina Head said.

Sturkie competes on the JV track team, and Smith practices with Head during PE class. Head signs “fast” during their walks to remind Smith that they need be fast enough to make it to state, and Smith has cut her original 400m walk time in half.

“I’m super, super proud of Allie,” inclusion aide Serina Head said. “This isn’t something she likes to do, but she’s very excited about San Antonio. We’ve been practicing a lot.”

Head will escort Sturkie and Smith as part of the Upshur Country Crew that includes students from Union Grove, Gilmer, Harmony, New Diana, Big Sandy and Glade-water. The group will stay in cabins at Morgan’s Wonderland, “the world’s first theme park designed with individuals with special needs in mind and built for everyone’s enjoyment” while in San Antonio to compete at Toyota Field.

“I think it’s gonna be a lot of fun,” Head said. “I enjoy getting to see the kids participate and be excited when they do well.”

Meredith Morgan (10) also competed in the mile walk, softball throw and 4x100m relay at the area meet and placed second in each event, and Hannah Boland (7), Sierra Clark (7), and Emma Herring (8) earned medals at the district meet; however, junior high students cannot advance to area and state. Boland won the mile walk and softball throw, Clark placed second in the softball throw and third in the 100m dash, and Herring placed second in the standing long jump and third in the 100m dash.



Photo by Serina Head



Photo by Samantha Swisher



Photo by Tracy Griffin

Hook, Line, and Sinker Anglers Outfish Competition

Sophomores Jacob Griffin and Cason Cowan made school history by winning the Texas High School Bass Association (TASBA) Northeast Texas Regional Tournament on Cedar Creek Lake April 15. The pair will compete next at the state tournament May 20 and 21 on Lake Sam Rayburn.

“As an overall school team, we have met every goal we set this season, even though we didn’t get as many teams as we hoped to get to the regional tournament,” sponsor Tracy Griffin said. “We had three teams make it, and advanced

to state!”

Griffin and Cowan weighed in 19.71 pounds and caught the biggest fish of the tournament, Cowan’s 8.36 lb bass.

“It didn’t feel real,” Cowan said. “Felt like I was dreaming.”

218 teams fished the tournament, including partners Will Wilson (11) and Cade Sullivan (11) and Carson Bogue (11) and Reed Cooper (12). For winning, Griffin and Cowan won a combined \$3,500 scholarship and each received \$250 in gifts cards and a trophy.



The Lady Lions celebrate Alison Yohn, Gracie Winn and Lainey Ledbetter on senior night April 26. The girls won second in district and finished their season April 27 with a playoff loss to Kerens. "Playoffs was exciting because it was my first time advancing that far," sophomore Jamie Webb said. "I love my teammates, which made that so much more enjoyable, but it was a hard end to the season." Yohn and Daytona Vaughn (11) each scored home runs April 15.

Un-fore-gettable Boys Golf Team Wins Regional Tournament

Kayden Day (10), Jaxson Daniels (11), Cooper Vestal (12), Colton Cowan (12) and Peyton Laake (11) will compete in the state golf tournament in Austin May 22-23. Day finished in sixth place individually, and the boys punched their team ticket to state by winning the regional golf tournament April 19-20.

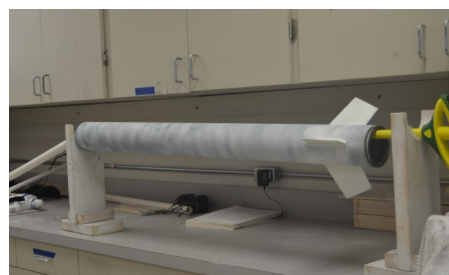
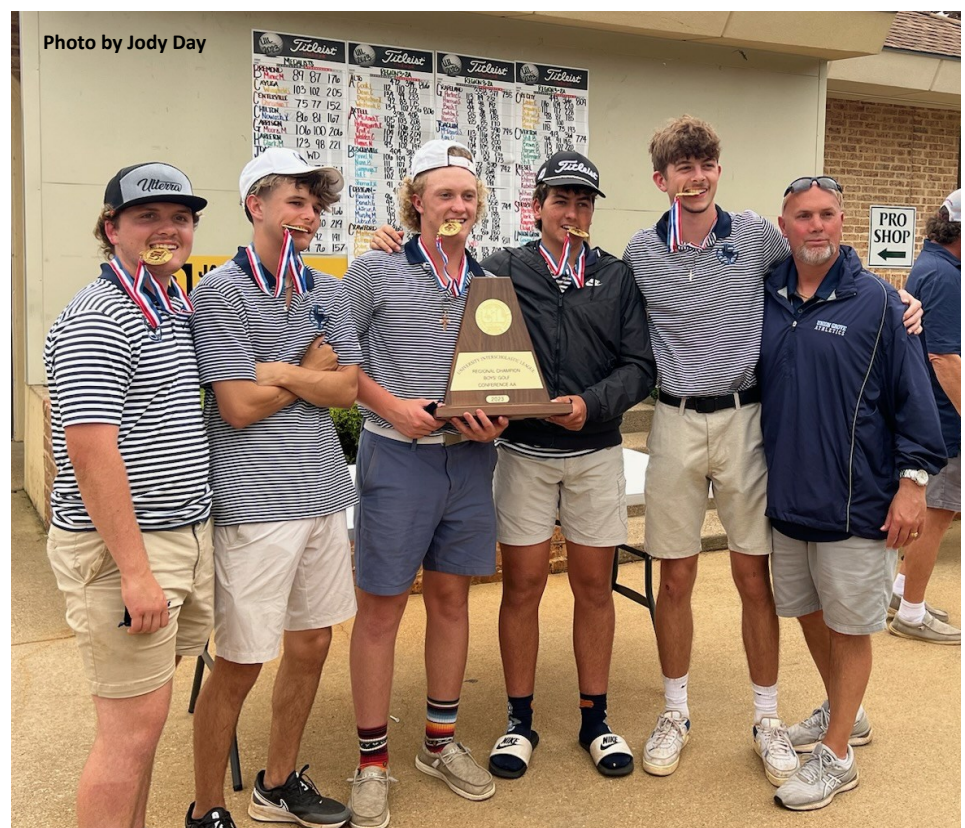
"Going to state in golf is one of my biggest goals to achieve because golf is one of my favorite sports and I grew up playing it," Day said. "I'm proud of my team and glad I got to do it with them."

The boys celebrated by jumping in the golf course's pond.

"We made a bet that if we won, Coach LJ would jump in the pond with us," Day said. "He was the first one in the water."

Sydney Pritchett (11) also represented UG in the girls' regional tournament, where she placed 13th out of 76 golfers.

"I would have loved to go as a team, but I was still excited," Pritchett said. "The first day of the tournament, I didn't play the way I wanted to and ended up very disappointed with what I shot. I came back the second day with a positive attitude. I was determined to have a better day, and I ended up shooting a 101."



Rocket Watch Rocketry seniors will travel to Fredericksburg May 3-6 to launch their transonic vehicle, as well as a second vehicle Coach Park and the team hope will reach 5280 feet in altitude while carrying 1lb in payload. Photo by CreeAnn Bozarth



Lights Out When the power went out and school ended early April 6, the teachers finished their Rock-Paper-Scissors tournament. Eighth-grade ELA teacher Mattie Duvall outplayed Coach Chad Halcumb in the championship round. Photo by Kimber Smith

Been There, Ran That Track Returns to Regional Meet

Faith Woodall

The track team competed in the regional track meet at Palestine April 28-29.

Addison Smith placed fourth in the discus with a personal record of 112' 1", Gracie Stanford placed fifth in the 3200m run and seventh in the 1600m run, and Gracie Winn placed fifth in the 800m run. The 4x400m relay team of Ava Wightman, Winn, Sarah Prince and Taylor Campbell placed fifth, as well.

The girls' team won first place team in their area contest at home April 19. In that meet, Stanford won first place in the 3200m run, second in the 1600m run and sixth in the 800m run. Campbell earned silver in the long jump and high jump, as did Savanna Clark in shot put and Smith in discus. The 4x400m relay team also won second place. Mattu placed third in the discus contest, and Smith placed fourth in pole vault.

Rylee Aiken placed third in the 100m hurdles. Sophie Pyle placed fourth in the 3200m run and sixth in the 1600m run, and Wightman placed fourth in the 200m run.

Winn placed fourth in the 800m run, as did the 4x200m relay team of Wightman, Keira Taylor, Prince and Campbell.

The 4x100m relay of Gracelyn Head, Karen Chavez, Kenia Velazquez and Natalie Woodard placed sixth.

Brendon Fuller (12) led the boy's team by earning first place in the 800-meter run with a time of 2:10 seconds.

Jace Roberts(10) placed third in the 110m and the 300m hurdles, Jacob Griffin (10) placed second and Josh Baker (12) placed fourth in discus. Lane Turner (11) earned third place in the pole vault.

Brendon Fuller (12) hugs Coach Greg Park after winning first place in the 800m run of the area meet. "I think running track has made me learn to be tough and that every track event is extremely difficult," senior Brendon Fuller said. "There is nothing else that gives the feeling of standing on the medal stand and getting the gold medal around your neck." Fuller will run for Ottawa University in the fall.

Photo by Kimber Smith



Baby Got Track

Taylor Campbell (10) celebrates medaling in the high jump. "Finishing second in high jump was very satisfying because I've worked very hard to qualify to go to regionals," Campbell said.

Campbell vaulted 15 feet 8.5 inches in the long jump and cleared 5 feet 2 inches in the high jump at the area meet April 19. Photo by Daytona Vaughn

Right: Junior Lane Turner vaults over the entry height at the area meet April 19. Turner won third place in the pole vault and advanced to the regional meet April 28-29. Photo by Faith Woodall





Hannah Pillow (7) finishes the 4x400 relay at the junior high district meet.
Photo by Briana Bowling

JH Track Teams Medal at District Meet

CreeAnn Bozarth

The junior high track teams competed in their district meet at Ore City April 3-4.

Overall, the eighth grade girls placed fourth with 101 total points. Alana Cox placed third in 2400m run and fifth in the 1600m run, and Jill Taylor placed second in the 800m run and third in the 1600m run. Kadence Frey placed third and Emori Lemming fourth in the 100m dash, Hailey Griffin placed sixth in the 400m dash, and Kaci Pirtle placed fifth in the 110m hurdles and fourth in the 300m hurdles.

Frey, Rachel Potter, Danica Vestal, and Eliana Villamendez placed fifth in the 4x100m relay; Miley Nono, Potter, Vestal, and Villamendez placed second in the 4x200m relay; and Averil Cook, Potter, Vestal, and Villamendez placed fourth in the 4x400m relay. Potter placed second in high jump, Vestal placed first in pole vault, and Mayci Boland placed fifth in shot put. Boland also placed second and Bre Reynolds third in discus.

The seventh grade girls placed third with 104.5 total points. Bree Cox placed fifth in the 2400m run, and Landry Harris placed first and Emma Wadle third in the 800m run. Harris also placed first in the 1600m run, and Wadle placed fifth in the 400m dash and fourth in pole vault. Briana Bowling placed fourth and Aubrie Coulter placed fifth in the 300m hurdles. Coulter also placed third in the 100m hurdles, and Hannah Caperton placed fifth in the 200m dash. Mia Mullican placed second and

Coulter placed fourth in shot put, Natalie Spruell placed first in discus, and Brinley Campbell placed third and Wadle sixth in high jump. Jordyn Bishop, Campbell, Hannah Pillow, and Charlotte Wright placed fifth in the 4x100m relay; Campbell, Caperton, Pillow, and Wright placed third in the 4x200m relay; and Campbell, Pillow, Wadle, and Wright placed third in the 4x400m relay.

The eighth-grade boys' team earned 52 points. Hudson Wightman placed second in triple jump and sixth in the 100m dash, Kody Nutt placed fifth in high jump, and Logan Walts placed second in the 800m run. Nutt, Andy Peek, David Shaver, and Wightman placed third in the 4x100m relay and second in the 4x200m relay. Aidan Jones, Nutt, Shaver, and Walts placed fifth in the 4x400m relay, and Michael Gipson placed 6th in discus.

The seventh grade boys scored 86 points. Daniel Fernandez placed second in the 100m dash, and Konner Long placed second in the 200m dash, as well as fourth in long jump and second in high jump. Konner Messer placed fourth and Liam Mayhan sixth in the 2400m run. Jaxon Ledbetter placed fourth in the 110m hurdles and the 300m hurdles.

Fernandez, Easton Head, Long, and Ryder Martindale placed first in the 4x100m relay and second in the 4x200m. Head, Ledbetter, Martindale, and Connor Stanford placed fourth in the 4x400m relay.

Starting Small JH, HS Cheer To Host Camp After School

Jamie Russell

Varsity and junior high cheerleaders and mascots will host mini cheer camp to teach elementary students cheer skills May 3-6 after school from 3:45-5 p.m. at the high school.

"I love this fundraiser because it brings so much joy to our little lion cheerleaders and mascots to get to perform and learn from girls and guys that they look up to," Coach Rylee Wills said. "I remember teaching when I cheered in JH and Varsity and enjoying seeing the campers' faces as they were learning cheers, chants and dances, as well as me enjoying teaching them. I think that it is so important for our Varsity and JH cheer teams to be involved in activities and fundraisers that involve our UG students."

The cheerleaders will teach campers cheers, jumps, chants, and a mascot skit.

"I can honestly say that I'm so excited," 2023-2024 captain, junior Brady Colby said. "I remember being in elementary school and mini cheer camp being the best week of the year. I always looked up to the older cheerleaders."

High school mascot Hailey Griffin (8) and junior high mascot Briana Bowling (7) are planning a beach-themed routine to teach their campers.

"As the mascot, we're going to have a fun beach routine for all the kids to learn," Bowling said. "We're going to have a water gun and beach balls and leis, but the water gun won't have water because we can't spray water all over the gym floor. Mini cheer camp is a good way for all the little kids to get a feel for mascotting."

On the last day of mini-camp, the students will perform the material they have learned and celebrate with a carnival, including a bounce house obstacle course, face painting, and other games.

"I am excited about having mini camp again this year," Wills said. "We can't wait for that week to come."

2023 Seniors Countdown to Life After Graduation

Jamie Russell

111,744 hours. 4,656 days. 153 months.

The length of time students regularly spend in the school system from the first day of kindergarten to graduation.

Forty-seven seniors will finish their final hours with graduation ceremony Friday, May 26 at 7 p.m. in the Lion Center.

"As I am definitely ready to graduate and start a new stage in my life, it is a bitter-sweet time for sure," valedictorian Gracie Stanford said. "Graduation is going to be so rewarding and quite tear jerking as I know that our class has worked so hard to get where we are."

Seniors will go their separate ways after graduation, with some students attending local colleges, trade schools, large universities, out-of-state colleges, and joining the military.

"We have students going in many different directions after high school," Counselor Jennifer Applegate. "This senior class

has been an enjoyable group, filled with a lot of talent. I look forward to seeing what all they will accomplish."

Preston Woodall plans to attend Kilgore College to get an associate's degree in fine arts.

"I will definitely look back on high school fondly, but I am excited for new opportunities," Woodall said.

Kendall Wennmohs plans to take time to consider her goals and interests, learn some new skills and build her savings before starting college.

"Going straight into the workforce right after high school can potentially be very liberating," Wennmohs said. "I'm looking forward to having many opportunities with my career as a Starbucks barista, and, because I'm a barista, I get to interact with many different people every day. I get to learn new things and be the best human I can be for our customers."

With 25 calendar days until graduation, the seniors' time will be filled with award banquets, prom, UIL award day, exams, state competitions and the senior trip.

"The days leading up to graduation are super busy with celebrations, events, and memory making," Principal Rachel Evers said. "My hope is that each senior will take time to enjoy the time together because these days will go by so fast."

The seniors have impacted every aspect of student life, from fine arts to athletics and UIL academics to club leadership.

"I love the tight-knit community feel, and I love being involved in a lot of Union Grove activities because of the opportunity to promote that Lion Pride value that is so important," Stanford said. "There is no doubt that Union Grove has made a tremendously positive impact on me and my 13 years here. I will forever be grateful for my experience as a Union Grove lion."

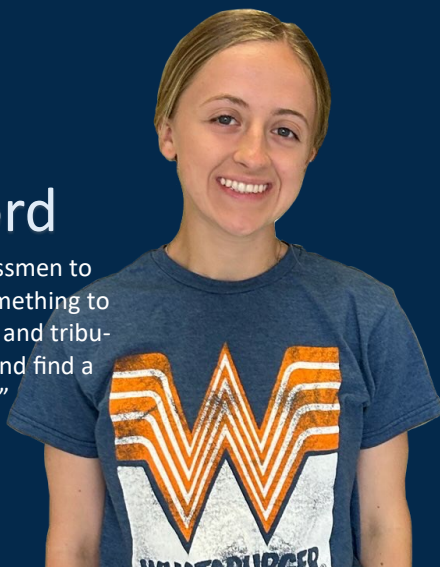
Right: Colter Fowler (12) receives a \$500 scholarship at Kilgore College's Discovery Day April 14. Kendall Wennmohs (12) draws on an art exhibit at the event, where juniors and seniors toured the campus to see available programs, including mechanics, art and medical terminology. Photos by Daytona Vaughn

Below: Photos by Jamie Russell, edited by Emma Holder



Advice from Valedictorian Gracie Stanford

"Something I hope for all underclassmen to remember is that there is always something to find joy in. While there may be trials and tribulations to fight through in life, try and find a way to seek joy constantly."



Salutatorian Emily Lynch

"I want underclassmen to understand that high school is hard, very hard; that's why they say 'congratulations' when you graduate. I want to encourage them to ask upperclassmen, adults in their lives, teachers, and guardians for help."

In the Army Now Evans Enlists in Military

Emma Holder

One paper to sign.

One pledge to say.

One country to serve.

The U.S. Constitution to defend.

Senior James Evans swore in to the U.S.

Army Feb. 7 in Shreveport, Louisiana.

"I would have to say my mom was my motivation," James said. "If it wasn't for her, I would probably have no idea what to do after high school."

James's family has a long history of military service: his

paternal uncle was in the Coast Guard, his maternal uncle was in the Air Force during Desert Storm, his maternal grandfather was in the Army, his paternal grandfather was in the Navy, his two great-uncles were in the Navy, his great grandfather was in the Army during World War II, his great-aunt was in the Navy, his three great-

uncles were stationed at Pearl Harbor when the Japanese attacked, a great uncle served in the Marines on the Pacific front of WWII, and his great, great grandfather fought in World War I.

"Our relatives have fought in wars all the way back to the Revolutionary War," James's mother, sixth-grade teacher Evette Evans said.

James took the ASVAB in November and investigated his options over Christmas break. He and his family even drove to Dallas to meet with a Coast Guard recruiter, but Army recruiter SFC Casillas

sealed the deal.

"SFC Casillas was very helpful and gave James his contact info so he could ask any questions he may have," Mrs. Evans said. "In the end, James decided that the Army was where he should join."



Photo by Evette Evans

Now that's James is sworn in, his next steps include more testing to get a higher rank before leaving for basic training.

"Right now, I'm stuck with doing Human Resources and will probably stick with it if I like it," James said. "but I would want to take my job forward and be a para-trooper or in the special forces."

End-of-Year Events

Daytona Vaughn

Prom

Juniors and seniors and their dates will dance the night away at Shadow Ranch on Highway 300 at 8 p.m. May 20.

Prom will end at 11:30 p.m. Prom royalty will be announced at 11 p.m. After-prom, funded by junior class parents, will begin at Stafford Gym at midnight.

"We have had several very generous donors," junior class parent Tabitha Vaughn said. "We did a parking lot fundraiser, football squares for the Super Bowl, and a very kind parent made fudge and donated the profits. Since the money is still being raised, we don't have a complete total yet, but, right now, it's over \$4000. We are very happy to be able to provide a safe, fun place for after prom!"

To prepare, several juniors and seniors have crafted "promposals" for their dates and will continue to do so throughout May.

"I plan on promposing to one of my very close friends with donuts that say 'prom?'" junior Jeremiah McGee said. "I'm so excited, and I can't wait!"

Senior Banquet

Administrators, coaches, teachers and communities will celebrate the graduating seniors May 22 at 6 p.m. in the Gilmer Civic Center with scholarships, awards and other recognition from teachers and donors.



Historian Gracie Winn

"Everything matters. That extra credit that is only 5 extra points is important, what you say to someone will leave an impact, or that blow off class is actually something you will need later. I think it is also very important to have a healthy balance between being a student and still living your life and making memories. I took everything so seriously I often forgot to relax and have fun."



A Long Time Ago, in a Galaxy Far, Far Away

JH, HS Bands to Perform Spring Concerts

Nick Scavone

Junior High

The junior high band will host their annual spring concert on May 4. The performance will include music from "Star Wars" written by John Williams.

"My parents will be happy when they play 'Star Wars' because that's their favorite movie," seventh-grader Riley Schwieger said.

Then band members who competed in the UIL Concert and Sight-Reading Contest March 31 will travel May 12 to Studio Movie Grill and Urban Air in Tyler.

High School

The high school band's spring concert May 9 will include music from "Pirates of the Caribbean" and "How to Train Your Dragon."

Then Kameron Townsend (11), Elise Daughery (10), TJ Fowler (10), Elijah Parman (11), Carsyn Hudgens (12), Briyanna Blaylock (12), Karen Chavez (9), Torryn Humber (10), Emily Valdes (10), Colter

Fowler (12), Sarah Clowers (11), Angelina Leyva (12), Carson Bogue (11), Jesse Fulmer (10), Aidan Jones (10), and August Vestal (9), who each earned a first division on a solo or ensemble during the Feb. 3 contest, will travel for the state contest May 27 in Pflugerville.

"They have worked incredibly hard this spring semester preparing their solo and ensembles," band director Andy Thompson said. "I expect the contest to run smoothly and I will be very proud of their results."

Townsend, who already earned a seat in the All-State band this year, isn't worried either.

"State UIL for Solo & Ensemble isn't exactly nerve-racking for me, but it's one of the few things I get really conscious about," Townsend said. "I'm excited to go. The state level is always super eventful, especially when it feels like almost every band kid in Texas is getting lunch at the same time"

Parman went last year as both a soloist and an ensemble member.

"This past year, I received a second division solo and a first division ensemble," Parman said. "It is an extremely joyful trip and something I look forward to every year."



Band Boosters present directors Jonathan Stafford and Andy Thompson with a check from the Sleep First mattress fundraiser during the April 17 band banquet. The band will use this money for the end-of-year trip. Photo by Faith Woodall



The FFA Forage team of Brayden Pirtle (12), Aaron Amos (12), Reed Cooper (12), and James Evans (12); Meats team of Angelina Leyva (12), Kenia Velazquez (12), Sam Stanley (10), and Jacob Hart (10); Livestock Judging team of Josh Baker (12), Will Wilson (11), Katherine Potter (11), and Chloe Brooks (9); Vet Science team of Emily Bible (12), Jeremiah McGee (11), Madeline McGee (11), and M'Kenzie Smith; and Food Science team of Calab Day (9), Brooks, Mallorie Cannon (9), and Luis Fernandez (9) each traveled for state contests in April. The Food Science team placed fifth in the state. "I'm proud of my team for making 5th place. If it wasn't for our advisor, Mrs. Shafer, we wouldn't have accomplished what we did," freshman Calab Day said. "I'm so grateful to be on the fifth best Food Science team in the state of Texas." Photo by sponsor Andrea Shafer

It's a Hard Knock Life

JH Theater Class Preps 'Annie Jr.'

Daytona Vaughn

The JH will perform "Annie Jr." May 13 and 14 in the lion Center at 2:30 p.m.

The cast and crew have been practicing since they returned from Christmas break, rehearsing during class and after school and memorizing lines in their free time.

"Everyone is getting prepared, and we all think it's gonna go great," Briana Bowling (7), who plays Duffy, one of the orphans, said. "I feel very prepared. We're pretty sure no one will forget their lines."

The team has been blocking scenes and preparing costumes.

"We've been practicing really hard and Mrs. Spears is a great teacher," Jaxon Ledbetter (7), who plays Rooster Hannigan, said. "Theater has given us many opportunities to express ourselves and teach us responsibility."

All Aboard the ILPC Train

Grove Gazette Staff Wins Big In Annual Journalism Contest

The journalism staff won 34 individual achievement awards after submitting news-magazine content to the Interscholastic League Press Conference (ILPC) annual contest.

Editor-in-chief Faith Woodall (11) won first place news photo, feature photo, entertainment photo, sports action photo and sports feature photo; second place entertainment photo, news feature story and news spread design; and third place photo story and photo portfolio.

Emma Holder (10) won first place editorial writing, student art, infographic and page one design; second place feature spread; third place cartoon and news writing; and honorable mentions for entertainment review and student art.

Daytona Vaughn (11) won first place news feature story, second place sports feature

photo and news feature story, third place sports feature story and sports spread, and honorable mention feature spread and sports action photo.

Jamie Russell (10) won first place sports feature story, second place in-depth news/feature package and photo portfolio, third place sports feature story and portrait, and honorable mention photo story.

CreeAnn Bozarth (9) won first place entertainment spread, second place in-depth news/feature package and honorable mention photo story. Nick Scavone (9) won first place entertainment spread and second place feature writing, and Lucky Woodard (11) won third place sports news story.

This is the third year the journalism class has submitted entries to the contest. In



Juniors Lucky Woodard, Faith Woodall and Daytona Vaughn won 18 medals for photography, writing and design in the annual ILPC contest. Photo by Kimber Smith

2021, the staff earned four individual achievement awards, and in 2022, the staff earned 18.

"The team is really talented. They've accomplished so much already, and we're still getting started," sponsor Kimber Smith said. "I can't wait to see what they do over the next couple years as we branch out to printing issues and enter more contests. And I'm really excited about the growth of this program, as many promising junior high students have expressed interest."

Supply Kit Orders Available Through June

Avoid Back-to-School Shopping in Person with Online Option

For some families, back to school shopping for the cutest notebooks, patterned dividers, and colored pens is a dream.

For others, it's a nightmare.

Young children grabbing items from shelves, shouting, "Mommy, I want this!" The fruitless search for the last orange, plastic, pocketed folder with brads. The cram-packed aisles of overcrowded stores.

But for the 2023-2024 school year, parents of PK-8th graders can avoid that nightmare with a click of their mouse.

The district has partnered with 1st Day School Supplies to offer school supply kits that match each grade level's supply list. Teachers' supply lists have been meticulously entered so that parents only have to select the kit they need and pay a one-time fee at 1stDaySchoolSupplies.com. Then the kits will be delivered to their

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child's campus before Meet the Teacher in August.

No navigating buggy-to-buggy traffic in Walmart or Target. No making sure you got exactly what was on the list. No lugging cumbersome boxes and bags to Meet the Teacher.

Just quality, name-brand products conveniently delivered and one less thing to worry about this summer.

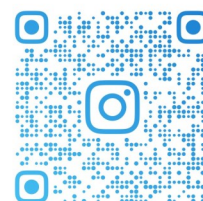
GROVE GAZETTE

The Grove Gazette is published by the journalism team of Union Grove High School at 11220 Union Grove Rd., Gladewater, TX 75647.

Editor-in-Chief: Faith Woodall

Staff:

CreeAnn Bozarth
Emma Holder
Jamie Russell
Nicholas Scavone
Daytona Vaughn
Lucky Woodard



GROVE.GAZETTE

Not All Heroes Wear Capes

Lunch Lady Celebration Planned

Lucky Woodard

School Lunch Hero Day, a national event celebrating those who provide, make, and serve meals to all students around the world, is celebrated on the first Friday of May — this year, it's on May 5.

"I think our Lunch Ladies deserve to be recognized because they are not just Lunch Heroes, they are everyday heroes," Principal Rachel Evers said. "They get here early and begin their day cooking and preparing food; however, they not only cook and serve food, they give their love and attention to our campus."

Evers and Superintendent Kelly Moore have planned a surprise that will help students show their appreciation for our lunch heroes: Denise Patwell, Samantha Hulsebus, Laurie-Beth Rhea and Deborah Linton.

"I think they deserve more recognition

since they are constantly at work, and working very hard at that," junior Chase Crutsinger said. "They make food for junior high, high school, and even teachers. Not only that, but they still have to clean up afterwards, which takes a while, and even after all that they still are able to be sweet and nice to the students."

Students leave the line with a meal and a smile.

"They are always so kind to me and I enjoy having conversations with them," freshman August Vestal said.



Seventh-graders get hands-on vocabulary review before the reading STAAR test. Photos by Lizzy Driggers and Kimber Smith

Favorite Cafeteria Meals

1. Asian Bowl
2. Nachos/Totchos
3. Crisпитos
4. Grilled Cheese and Tomato Soup
5. Sideline regulars: Cheeseburgers, Chicken Sandwiches, Crispy Fries

"As Good as Mew" by Emma Holder



Upcoming Events

May 2
STAAR Testing — 8th Social Studies

May 3
STAAR Testing — 8th Science

May 3-5
Rocketry @Fredericksburg

May 3-6
Cheer Mini-Camp

May 4
JH Band Spring Concert
Letter Jacket Fittings @HS Library — noon

May 5
School Lunch Hero Day
SE Prom @Maude Cobb

May 9
STAAR Testing — Algebra
HS Band Spring Concert

May 10
STAAR Testing — 7th, 8th Math

May 11-13
State Track Meet @Austin

May 12
JH Band Trip

May 14
JH Musical — 2 p.m.

May 15
JH Musical — 6:30 p.m.

May 16
FFA Banquet — 6:30 p.m.

May 17-18
State UIL Academic & Speech Meet @Austin

May 18
Athletic Banquet — 5:30 p.m.
HS UIL Reward Trip to Splash Kingdom

May 18-20
SE State Track Meet @San Antonio

May 19
JH UIL Reward Trip to Splash Kingdom
Senior Trip
The seniors will leave for Six Flags Over Texas in Arlington 7:30 a.m. with sponsors Tamara Merritt and Molly Savell.

May 20
Prom

May 20-21
State Fishing Championship @Lake Sam Rayburn

May 22
Senior Walk
Senior Banquet

May 22-23
Boys State Golf

May 23
HS Awards Assembly — 8:30 a.m.

May 24
8th Grade Promotion Practice — 9 a.m.

May 25
JH Awards Assembly — 8:30 p.m.
8th Grade Promotion — 6 p.m.

May 26
HS Graduation — 7 p.m.

May 27-29
Band UIL State Solo & Ensemble



Fowl Play When Superintendent Kelly Moore and Principal Rachel Evers's plan for the staff to hunt Easter eggs on the football field April 5 was thwarted by inclement weather, Evers moved the party inside. Teachers collected three colored eggs filled with candy and one gold egg with a note indicating their special prizes, which ranged from candy to gift cards and baskets of goodies. Photo by Lucky Woodard