



The GROVE GAZETTE

Vol. V, Issue 5

Union Grove ISD News

Jan. 2024

BASKETBALL
SEASON

Heats Up

Band Members
Advance to Area

Elementary, JH
Academic Teams
Win District
Championships

On the Cover

Freshman Danica Vestal scores a basket in the varsity girls' game against Carlisle. Vestal's proudest moment of the season so far is how the girls "stayed in the game against Hawkins and how hard our team fought." PHOTO: Bre Reynolds

This page: Returning to classes Jan. 10 gives students 83 more days of class before the school year ends May 17: 83 days to develop mentally, physically, socially and emotionally; 83 days to achieve their goals and set new ones; 83 more great days to be a Lion. PHOTO: Kimber Smith

 GROVE GAZETTE



Published by:
Union Grove High School
11220 Union Grove Rd.
Gladewater, TX 75647

Editor-in-Chief: Faith Woodall
Business Manager: Sydney Pritchett
Sponsor: Kimber Smith

Kadence Frey	Lillie Phillips
McClane Handorf	Bre Reynolds
Emma Holder	Jamie Russell
Bailee Hosak	Lucky Woodard

Junior Staff

Anissa Barton	Connor Mead
Kinleigh Birlew	Konner Messer
Briana Bowling	Natalie Spruell
Hannah Caperton	Connor Stanford
Bree Cox	Emma Wadle
Bella Foster	Charlotte Wright
Jaxon Ledbetter	



IN THIS ISSUE

4

Elementary, JH Academic UIL Teams Win Big



PHOTO: Briana Bowling

6

GT Students Ready for Model United Nations

7

STUCO Helps at Young Athlete Olympics

8

Band Members Score All-Region Seats

11

Penny Wars Provides Gifts for Local Kids

12

Basketball Season Heats Up

14

Cartoons and Calendar

LETTERS FROM THE PRINCIPALS

What a busy December!

The Elementary won district at UIL! I am very proud of our students and UIL coaches. They got a reward trip and pizza at the Gilmer Skateplex on Dec. 19.

The PTO ran a stellar Santa Shop! Thank you to all the volunteers who helped with this. We appreciate you!

Thank you to all our PTO and all the parents who helped with Christmas parties. We couldn't do it without you!

I hope you had a wonderful Christmas break. I hope you had time to rest and relax. I am looking forward to the second semester. These events are coming up in January:

- MLK holiday January 15
- Archery tournament January 17
- Awards Assemblies January 19
- 100th day of school January 30

Our campus note will continue to go home each Tuesday. That will give you more specific information about these events as well as other items of interest.

As always, you can contact me at 903-845-3481 or ballards@ugisd.org if you have any questions.

Sherrill Ballard
Union Grove Elementary Principal

As you are reading this I will have already begun my new adventure. Although I am very excited about meeting new people and becoming part of the OCISD family, I will miss UG. UG has been a second family to me, and I have enjoyed every minute of the last 9 ½ years as a part of this Lion family. Thank you for that opportunity.

I wish you all the best! Keep demonstrating that UG LION PRIDE in all that you do!

Mrs. Evers

What a great first semester!

I know the second semester will be equally successful, and we have some major program milestones coming up:

- Basketball season is well underway, and powerlifting, softball, baseball, golf and track are just beginning or will begin soon
- Band members will perform in their All-Region concerts and begin preparing for UIL Solo and Ensemble
- FFA will compete in big shows, including the Ft. Worth Heifer Show and SFA's Tractor Tech contest
- High school UIL Academics are competing in invitations to prepare for their district meet

I know our UG students will work hard and represent us well. Please come out and support the Lions and Lady Lions in each of these and all our other endeavors.

David Chatterton
JH/HS Assistant Principal
903-845-5506 / chattertond@ugisd.org

Raising the Bar Powerlifting Season Begins

By Lucky Woodard

Powerlifters will compete in their first meets of the season Jan. 18, 25 and 29.

"We had a lot of success with the boys and girls program last year," Denman said. "We plan to further advance and bring back more honors to Union Grove this year."

The team began preparing with intense workouts focused on strength and getting in a lot of reps on the three lifts they need to compete: bench press, back squat and deadlift.

"The powerlifters are lifting in athletics four days a week and also doing a powerlifting specific program three to four days a week," head powerlifting

coach Donnie Denman said. "We have had a big showing of young athletes in the mornings who want to get stronger and have an athletic advantage, and we are excited with the response and willingness of the students to do what is asked of them to push their limits."

As always, the goal is to advance to state, but also to grow over the course of the season.

"I want to continue to get stronger and work even harder so I can exceed the expectations of my coaches and fellow lifters," senior Daytona Vaughn said.

Citizens Bank
We Stand For Your Success!
www.citizensbanktx.com

LUKE KIMBROUGH
GLADEWATER CEO
NMLS #924726

678 N MAIN ST. GLADEWATER, TX 75647
903.845.5566

Member FDIC
Equal Housing Lender

Elementary, Junior High UIL Dominate District Meets

Art

Fourth Grade: 2nd Place Team
—5th: Daniella Navarro
—6th: Rylann Venn
—Also competed: Braxton Rich, AJ Dole
Fifth Grade: 2nd Place Team
—3rd: Embrie Long
—6th: Brooklyn Scott
—Also competed: Scarlett Webb, Xavier Tennison
Sixth Grade: 1st Place Team
—1st: Kenadie Holder
—2nd: Aubree Cooper
—3rd: Kinley Smith
Seventh Grade: 3rd Place Team
—5th: Ian Adams
Eighth Grade: 2nd Place Team
—Tie for 3rd: Hailey Carter, Isaac O'Neal
—6th: Bree Cox

Calculator Applications

Sixth Grade: 2nd Place Team
—2nd: Landon Wadle
—3rd: Cooper Littlejohn
—6th: River Martindale
Seventh Grade: 1st Place Team
—1st: Kale Reeves
—2nd: Brady Pritchett
—4th: Kynan Birlew
Eighth Grade: 3rd Place Team
—5th: Hannah Caperton

Chess

Second Grade: 1st Place Team
—1st: Liam Morvan
—2nd: Kennedy Gravely
—Also competed: Finley Edwards
Third Grade: 3rd Place Team
—1st: Oliva McGilvary
—6th: Juliana Navaro
—Also competed: Ryder Adkinson
Fourth Grade: 2nd Place Team
—4th: Jim Hogue
—Also competed: Braxton Rich, Zander Warren
Fifth Grade: 3rd Place Team
—2nd: Iker Uribe
—5th: Ian Adams
—Also competed: Xavier Tennison
Sixth Grade: 2nd Place Team
—3rd: Kayson Forster
Seventh Grade: 2nd Place Team
—2nd: Kale Reeves
—3rd: Wyatt Stanley
Eighth Grade: 1st Place Team
—1st: Liam Mayhan
—2nd: Jaxon Ledbetter

Creative Writing

Second Grade:
—1st: Adrianna Valenti
—2nd: Liam Morvan
—6th: Brynlea Hallman

Dictionary Skills

Fifth Grade: 1st Place Team
—1st: Brooklyn Scott
—2nd: Brody Gumm
—5th: Khloe Payne
Sixth Grade: 2nd Place Team
—3rd: Emmett Wright
—4th: Kashton Stanfield
—6th: Iliana O'Neal
Seventh Grade: 1st Place Team
—1st: Brady Pritchett
—3rd: Madison Bower
Eighth Grade: 1st Place Team
—Tie for 1st: Hannah Caperton
—4th: Aubrie Coulter

Editorial Writing

Sixth Grade:
—2nd: Kianah Smith
—6th: Iliana O'Neal
Seventh Grade:
—1st: Susanna Sturkie
—4th: Blaiklee George
—5th: Ian Adams
Eighth Grade:
—1st: Kinleigh Birlew
—4th: Briana Bowling
—5th: Bree Cox

Impromptu Speaking

Sixth Grade:
—1st: Coleton Burnett
Seventh Grade:

—1st: Susanna Sturkie
—3rd: Zoey Johnston
—5th: Jacob Rodgers
Eighth Grade:
—1st: Landry Harris
—2nd: Briana Bowling

Listening Skills

Fifth Grade: 2nd Place Team
—Blakely Prince, Camryn Morrow, Nate Wilson
Sixth Grade: 1st Place Team
—Tie for 1st: River Martindale
Seventh Grade: 3rd Place Team
—2nd: Brady Pritchett
Eighth Grade: 1st Place Team
—1st: Ryder Martindale
—Tie for 4th: Brycen Porter, Daniel Fernandez

Maps, Graphs & Charts

Fifth Grade: 1st Place Team
—1st: Landon Caperton
—2nd: Ian Adams
—Also competed: Steffan Wallace
Sixth Grade: 1st Place Team
—2nd: Gunner Davis
—4th: Brooklyn Scott
Seventh Grade: 3rd Place Team
—6th: Zoey Johnston
Eighth Grade: 3rd Place Team
—Tie for 3rd: Connor Mead

Mathematics

Seventh Grade: 1st Place Team
—1st: Kale Reeves
—4th: Jillian Russell
—6th: Brady Pritchett
Eighth Grade: 2nd Place Team
—3rd: Ryder Martindale
—4th: Hannah Caperton
—6th: Charlotte Wright



JH One-Act Play cast and crew learn they've won the district contest for the 11th consecutive year with their production of "At the Bottom of Lake Missoula".
PHOTOS: Jamie Russell



Modern Oratory

Sixth Grade:
 —2nd: Maycee Lewis
 Seventh Grade:
 —1st: Lilly Lane
 —4th: Zoey Johnston
 —5th: Jacob Rodgers
 Eighth Grade:
 —1st: Kinleigh Birlew

Music Memory

Second Grade: 1st Place Team
 —1st: Laurel Thomas
 —2nd: Fynlee Bill
 —3rd: Liam Morvan
 —4th: Brynlea Hallman
 —5th: Brayson Rich
 Third Grade: 1st Place Team
 —1st (Tie): Allie Halcumb, Juliana Navarro
 —3rd: Maren Thomas
 —4th: Place Leslie Ramos
 —5th: Reagan Steele
 Fourth Grade: 1st Place Team
 —1st: Kenslee Steen
 —2nd: Macie Langley
 —3rd: Jim Hogue
 —4th: Ember Burnett
 —6th: Halle Martin
 Fifth Grade: 1st Place Team
 —1st: Hunter Hogue
 —2nd: Ethan Archer
 —3rd: Lucie Pirtle
 —4th: Khloe Payne
 —5th: Cameryn Morrow
 Sixth Grade: 1st Place Team
 —1st: Brooklynn Scott
 —2nd: River Martindale
 Seventh Grade: 1st Place Team
 —1st: Lori Lormand
 —2nd: Nevaeh Bean
 Eighth Grade: 1st Place Team
 —1st: Isaac O'Neal
 —2nd: Alley Hale
 —3rd: Shooter Mitchell

Number Sense

Fourth Grade: 2nd Place Team
 —2nd: Charlze Spruell
 —5th: Skye Love
 —Also competed: Eli Fleming
 Fifth Grade: 2nd Place Team
 —3rd: Xavier Tennison
 —6th: Iker Uribe
 —Also competed: Paul Shreves
 Sixth Grade: 2nd Place Team
 —4th: Kenadie Holder
 —Tie for 6th: Alex Moncada
 Seventh Grade: 1st Place Team
 —1st: Susanna Sturkie
 —2nd: Kale Reeves
 —Tie for 4th: Wyatt Stanley
 Eighth Grade:
 —Tie for 4th: Ryder Martindale

One-Act Play

1st Place Team
 Top Performer: Landry Harris
 All-Star Cast: Konner Long, Jillian Russell, Kinleigh Birlew
 Honorable Mention All-Star Cast: Ryder Martindale
 Tech Awards: Bella Foster, Hannah Caperton

Oral Reading

Fourth Grade:
 —3rd: Avery Johnston
 Fifth Grade:
 —1st: Blakely Prince
 —3rd: Boyd Potter
 —6th: Oliva Barbee
 Sixth Grade:
 —1st: Cooper Littlejohn
 —2nd: River Martindale
 —6th: Aubree Cooper
 Seventh Grade:
 —1st: Susanna Sturkie

—2nd: Adalynn Orms
 —3rd: Haven Stevens
 Eighth Grade:
 —1st: Landry Harris
 —2nd: Mia Mullican
 —3rd: Konner Long

Ready Writing

Third Grade:
 —1st: Kieralyn Smith
 —6th: Ryker Canaguier
 Fourth Grade:
 —3rd: Jim Hogue
 Seventh Grade:
 —1st: Jillian Russell
 —3rd: Zoey Johnston
 —6th: Lilly Lane
 Eighth Grade:
 —1st: Konner Long
 —3rd: Emma Wadle

Science

Sixth Grade: 2nd Place Team
 —2nd: Pistol Mitchell
 —Tie for 4th: Trenton Dwyer
 Seventh Grade: 2nd Place Team
 —1st: Kale Reeves
 —5th: Addison Ellis

Social Studies

Fifth Grade: 1st Place Team
 —4th: Skye Perez
 —5th: Rayson Smith
 —Also competed: Noah James
 Sixth Grade: 2nd Place Team
 —Tie for 3rd: Cooper Littlejohn
 Seventh Grade:
 —5th: Jillian Russell
 Eighth Grade: 2nd Place Team
 —2nd: Bree Cox
 —6th: Weston Tison

Spelling

Third Grade: 1st Place Team

—1st: Leah Guthrie
 —2nd: Kieralyn Smith
 —5th: Ryker Canaguier
 Fourth Grade: 1st Place Team
 —2nd: Skye Love
 —4th: Lucas Puentes
 —Also competed: Ember Burnett
 Fifth Grade: 2nd Place Team
 —3rd: Ryleigh Phillips
 —4th: Reagan Waltz
 —6th: Hunter Hogue
 Sixth Grade: 1st Place Team
 —3rd: Matthew Delaney
 —5th: Brooklynn Scott
 Seventh Grade:
 —Tie for 3rd Place Team
 —6th: Izabel Parham
 Eighth Grade: 3rd Place Team
 —3rd: Connor Mead
 —Tie for 6th: Konner Long

Storytelling

Second Grade:
 —3rd: Karissa Brazil
 —4th: Lily Williams
 —6th: Sebastian Bonilla
 Third Grade:
 —1st: Karah Krump
 —6th: Gunner Allen

Overall Point Totals

Elementary: 723.3 points
 (239 pts above 2nd place)
 Junior High: 1241.2 points
 (616 pts above 2nd place)



Zoey Johnston (7) quizzes Bree Cox (8) before the Art Smart test. "It was exciting to go to Region 8 for the UIL meet," Johnston said. "I was proud of myself for placing in every event I did." PHOTOS: Briana Bowling

Sixth-graders Coleton Burnett and Ruston Roberts wait for results during the junior high meet at the Region 8 Service Center in Pittsburg Dec. 13.

HS Teams Medal at UIL Invationals

High school UIL teams have begun competing in preparation for their district meet in April with plans to do as well as the elementary and junior high teams and repeat last year's success at the state meet.

Speech and debate students competed in their third meet of the year on Dec. 2 at Lindale. Brendon Deary (11) placed fourth in Poetry Interpretation, Colton Mead (11) placed fourth in Prose Interpretation, and Mead and Jamie Russell (11) finished in fourth and fifth place respectively in cross-examination debate speaker points. Each competitor finished closely behind students from Pine Tree, Sulphur Springs, Hallsville or La Vernia — 5A and 4A schools. Parker Haley (10) and Alana Cox (9) and Kenneth Flanagan (10) and Peyton Hancock (9) also competed in CX debate. The speech team also competed at Chapel Hill Mt. Pleasant, where Deary won the poetry division, Russell placed second in prose, and Daytona Vaughn and Haley placed second and Flanagan and Russell placed third in duo acting.

The journalism team competed in the virtual Centex meet Dec. 7. Sydney Pritchett (12) placed third in Feature Writing, fourth in News Writing, sixth in Editorial and fifth in Headline Writing. Bailee Hosak (9) placed second in feature, seventh

in news and seventh in Copy-Editing, McClane Handorf (9) took fourth in Headlines and sixth in Copy-Editing, Russell placed sixth in News and eighth in Feature, Daytona Vaughn (12) placed ninth in Feature, and Lucky Woodard (12) placed 10th in Headlines.

The current events team participated in the November/December Virtual Chal-

lenge meet. Elise Daugherty (11), Tommy Branscom (11), and Sirena Loven (11) won fourth place team in 2A, outscoring many 3A, 4A and 5A schools, including Sabine, White Oak, Carthage, and Longview. Daugherty won fifth place individually in 2A out of over 150 students and outscored all of district rival Ore City's team members.



Model Citizens

JH Students to Compete in UN Event

By Konner Messer and Bree Cox

Junior high GT students will represent delegations from Somalia and Turkey at Region 7's Model United Nations event Jan. 18-19.

Bree Cox (8), Abby Daugherty (8), Susanna Sturkie (7) and Haven Stevens (7) will represent Somalia, and Kale Reeves (7), Jacob Rodgers (7), Wyatt Stanley (7) and Brady Pritchett (7) will represent Turkey.

The groups have been working for about four months, researching their countries and preparing their resolutions. The groups will present their resolutions to different committees on Jan. 18, and if the resolutions pass, they

will present again at the general assembly Jan. 19.

Daugherty says she's "confident" their resolutions will pass based on the work they've done and her experience last year, when her team from Haiti won third-place in impromptu resolution writing with their work on lead poisoning.

In addition to impromptu resolution writing, the teams will compete in the Parade of Delegations and committee meetings.

Sponsor Tina Burns said the Jan. 18-19 event is also "an opportunity for [the group] to observe the general as-

sembly format" before six students hold leadership positions at the final Model UN conference Jan. 30-31.

The students interviewed for their positions and attended a leadership conference Nov. 16 to prepare for their roles.

"Model United Nations is a fun and interesting experience that will teach me responsibility," Sturkie said.



PHOTO: Jamie Russell

STUCO, Young Athletes Enjoy Day of Fun

By Jamie Russell

High school Student Council members got a taste of childhood fun while helping with the Young Athletes Special Olympics on Dec. 6.

"It was so cool getting to watch the kids play and try new things together," sophomore Callysta Reeves said. "It's mind blowing that playing catch could bring so much joy to a child."

Each STUCO member ran a station — including hopscotch, basketball, bocce ball, balance beam, bowling, soccer, t-ball, ball toss and juggling — which the kids rotated through.

"I ran the bocce ball station, so I was able to help the kids learn and enjoy a game they might not normally partici-

pate in," sophomore Parker Haley said. "I loved seeing the kids enjoying games most have never played before."

Between stations, young athletes and student council members danced the Reindeer Hokey Pokey. The silly dance brought smiles to everyone's faces.

"I look forward to this event every year," STUCO president Katy King said. "I love being able to help bring kids together to play games and make new friends. I'm so proud to offer our time as Student Council to such a meaningful event."



PHOTO: Jamie Russell

Joyful Noises

JH Band Members Make All-Region

By Kinleigh Birlew, Hannah Caperton and Charlotte Wright

The clock strikes 5:00 and the students' emotions start to take over. Bodies fill with adrenaline, nerves, worry.

When names are called, the butterflies in their stomachs take flight.

Twenty-four junior high band members auditioned for the All-Region band on Dec. 1. Sixteen students heard their names during the announcement of seats,

"All Region is very stressful because you worry about messing up in the audition room," seventh-grader Izabel Parham said. "I know everyone wants to place high during the tryouts because no one wants to let their peers down."

Kinleigh Birlew (8-first chair bass clarinet), Weston Tison (8-first chair trombone), Alley Hale (8-third chair Bb clarinet), Lori Lormand (7-fourth chair trombone), Trenton Wallace (8-fifth chair tuba), Konner Long (8-sixth chair trombone), Isaac O'Neal (8-sixth chair alto sax), Nevaeh Bean (7-eighth chair Bb clarinet), Brady Pritchett (7-eighth chair trumpet), Parham (7-eighth chair euphonium), Aubrie Coulter (8-14th chair trumpet), Shooter Mitchell (8-15th chair Bb clarinet), Susanna Sturkie (7-21st chair

Bb clarinet), Lilly Lane (7-alternate French horn), Mia Mullican (8-alternate flute) and Avelyn Wendel (7-alternate flute) did not let their peers or their directors down.

"We could not be more proud of these students and look forward to a fantastic clinic and concert experience January 12," director Jonathan Stanford said. "Hard work definitely pays off, and these students worked very hard for this accomplishment."

To help prepare, the students performed for the directors, who provided tips for improvement.

"As a teacher, you prepare your students to the best of your ability and hope they shine on tryout days," Thompson said. "It can be nerve-wracking seeing the students after they audition, knowing they might have messed up something during the audition, but it comforts me after seeing their faces once they see the final chair results."



PHOTO: Bailee Hosak



PHOTO: Natalie Spruell



PHOTO: Natalie Spruell

Practice Makes Progress

From top to bottom: Emily Valdez (12), Kinleigh Birlew (8), and Shooter Mitchell (8), Natalie Delaney (7) and Isaac O'Neal (8) prepare for All-Region Tryouts.

Junior high band members auditioned Dec. 1, and high school band members auditioned Dec. 9.

Five HS Band Members Advance to Area Audition

By Bailee Hosak

The loud beating of hearts.

Excitement, nervousness and competitive energy radiating off every body in the room.

The sounds of musically gifted students of all ages coming together into a beautiful symphony, but not everyone can make the cut.

Eleven high school band members traveled to Winnsboro's new high school Saturday, Dec. 9 to audition for a chair in the All-Region band.

Of those eleven, five members — senior Kameron Townsend, sophomore August Vestal, junior TJ Fowler, senior Elijah Parham and junior Travis Steele — secured a chair in the All-Region Wind Ensemble and Symphonic Band. Townsend

won first chair bass clarinet, Vestal sixth chair French horn, Fowler fourth chair trombone, Parham fourth chair baritone, and Steele sixth chair trombone. These students will compete next on Jan. 6 at Chapel Hill for a chance to play in the area band and move on to the state contest.

Senior Emily Valdes, sophomore M'Kenzie Smith and junior Elise Daugherty were named alternates to the All-Region band.



All I Want for Christmas is to Win at the Auction
Isaiah O'Neal secures an outdoor heater during a live auction segment of the Dec. 7 concert. PHOTO: Kinley Smith



No Silent Nights Here
Junior high band members play "Jingle Bells Fantasy", "African Bell Carol", "In the Bleak Midwinter" and "Christmas Can-Can" in the Dec. 7 concert. PHOTO: Anissa Barton

Left: Superintendent Kelly Moore helps with the live auction. PHOTO: Kinley Smith

The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

Sophomore August Vestal and the rest of the high school band play "Christmas Festival", "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas", "Celtic Carol", "All I Want for Christmas is You" and "Trombones on the Housetop" during the Dec. 7 concert. PHOTO: Natalie Spruell

Santa Babies The sixth grade beginner band waits to play "Jingle Bells", "Beethoven's 9th" and "Jolly Old Saint Nick" at the all-band Christmas concert Dec. 7.

PHOTO: Anissa Barton

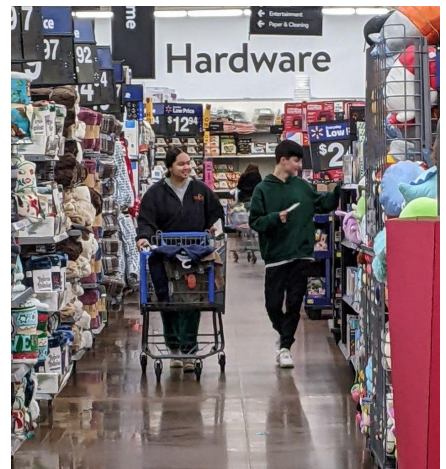


Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree

Third graders sing "Blitzen's Boogie", "There's Someone in the Chimney", "Grandma's Chicken Soup" and "Eight Tiny Reindeer" at their Dec. 14 music program.

"It was a great experience," Ryley Phillips said. "I wish I could have been a main part instead of being in the background, but even being in the back was fun."

PHOTOS: Lillie Phillips



Seniors Esmeralda Escobedo and Colton Taylor peruse squishmallows to fulfill a sixth-grader's request for a shark. PHOTO: Faith Woodall



Seniors Will Wilson and Paulina Navarro-Gonzalez wrap gifts purchased by NHS with money raised by the annual change challenge. PHOTO: Faith Woodall

Season of Giving

Change Challenge Raises Over \$1,600 to Provide Gifts for Local Children

By Faith Woodall

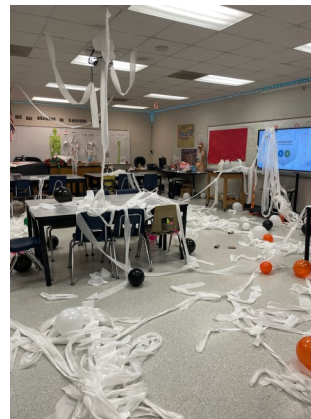
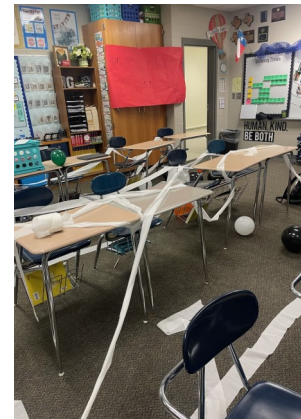
Each year, students battle by grade level to see who can collect the most change, fill up their “Penny Wars” jar, and maybe win a pizza party — all while helping the community have a brighter Christmas.

This year’s friendly competition raised \$1,649.63, money National Honor Society members took to Walmart Dec. 3 to buy gifts and necessities for 26 underprivileged children. Armed with a notecard listing their child’s wishlist and needs, NHS members shopped the aisles to find the best items within their budgets to make this Christmas extra special.

“Getting a child with the same interests as me when I was a kid was so cool,” senior Elijah Parham said. “After I retrieved all of his needs, I was able to throw in some extra gifts that I’m sure he will love. I can only imagine his face on Christmas morning when he sees all of the gifts I picked for him!”

With the shopping complete, NHS members returned to school. Almost half the students had to take a final exam for their dual credit English class, but those remaining wrapped the gifts.

“Unloading the bus of all the toys was overwhelming, then we found out most students did not purchase a box to put their items in to make it easier to wrap,” senior Will Wilson said. “That’s when the stress set in, but we began to find boxes around the school and helped each other wrap the gifts that needed it.”



Left: Senior Rowdy Williams shops for a board game he thinks a 10 year old will like. PHOTO: Faith Woodall

This is War Because the junior high “bombed” the twelfth grade’s change challenge jar, causing eighth grade to take first place and the seniors to come in dead last, some seniors and their sponsor, Elizabeth Foster TP’d seventh-grade sponsor Kimber Smith’s English classroom and eighth-grade sponsor Tina Burns’s science lab. However, the teachers, who arrive early each day, gathered the toilet paper and balloons and, with help from a few students, returned the favor in Foster’s room. PHOTOS: Kimber Smith

Right: Jamie Webb (11) brings the ball downcourt during the Nov. 17 home game against Carlisle, when the girls won 52-19. MaxPreps named Webb the Player of the Game for the Dec. 29 game against Overton, when the Lady Lions won 41-37.

Below: Sarah Prince (11) shoots a free throw during the Carlisle game. The Lady Lions also played the annual alumni game Dec. 28. Sixteen alumni worked together to defeat the current varsity team 40-32. PHOTOS: Bre Reynolds



Above: Preston Travis (10) prepares to shoot around his Hawkins defender during the JV's Dec. 19 home game. PHOTO: Bre Reynolds



Right: Cason Cowan (11) takes a jump-shot during the varsity game. Cowan scored four points against the Hawks, Peyton Laake (12) scored 18, and Jace Roberts (11) scored 17. The boys lost the rivalry game 62-50. PHOTO: Bailee Hosak

Laklie Waller (9) leads the JV team down the court during the Dec. 12 home game against Harleton. "We kept our fight til the end and never gave up," Waller said. PHOTOS: Bre Reynolds



Jamarr Martin (12) pushes past his Hawkins defender on Dec. 19. PHOTO: Bre Reynolds



Hudson Wightman (9) scores a layup in the JV game against Hawkins. PHOTO: Bre Reynolds

HS Teams Score Key Wins in First Round of District

Varsity Girls

18-4 Overall/4-1 District

- W (34-31) v. Harleton
- W (55-39) v. Linden-Kildare
- L (54-50) Hawkins
- W (43-11) Ore City
- W (67-25) Big Sandy

1/12 McLeod

Varsity Boys

9-10 Overall/2-1 District

- L (62-50) Hawkins
- W (47-24) Ore City
- W (73-72) Big Sandy

1/12 McLeod

1/16 Harleton

1/19 Linden-Kildare

JH Basketball Takes Shot at District Teams Prep for Final Games of Season

By Bella Foster

The junior high boys and girls basketball teams will play at home against McLeod on Jan. 11 starting at 5 p.m.

"I think it's going to be a tough game because we have been on winter break and we haven't had much team practice," eighth-grader Charlotte Wright said. "We need to put more shots up. Then we would have a better chance of winning. I think if everybody keeps their spirits up we can accomplish more."

McLeod is known as a basketball-oriented school.

"So it might be tough, but we are im-

proving fast," eighth-grader Jaxon Ledbetter said. "I am very confident we will get the win."

In the boys' home game against Ore City on Dec. 4, the seventh grade lost 10-13 and the eighth grade won 21-8. The junior high girls also defeated Ore City.

The eighth grade boys noted during their game against Ore City that they needed to work on getting more shots up and be more aggressive. The seventh graders decided to work on ball handling as well as lay ups.

"We are not just going over plays,"

eighth-grader Connor Mead said. "Right now, we are doing more drills to work on spreading the floor and attacking the rim. We've mostly been doing two-on-two, teamwork, and five-point shooting, just getting more aggressive."

Including the McLeod game, the junior high girls have four remaining games this season, with their last game in Hawkins Jan. 29. The boys will play four games in January and travel to Ore City Feb. 5 for their final game of the season.



Hungry for a Prequel?

New 'Hunger Games' Film Engages Audience With Snow's Origin

By Connor Mead and Connor Stanford

"The Hunger Games: Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes" is the perfectly haunting origin tale of President Snow.

Prior to becoming the tyrannical president, an ambitious 18-year-old Coriolanus Snow is chosen to mentor the "songbird" Lucy Gray in the 10th annual Hunger Games. Desperate to restore the Snow family's wealth and status, Coriolanus ensures Gray's survival through the Games then sacrifices those close to him to escape his punishment for doing so.

This movie does a wonderful job of adapting Suzanne Collins's book to the screen, and if you're a Hunger Games fan, we definitely recommend this movie.

Making Snow — a quintessential villain in the original trilogy — relatable had to have been challenging. Viewers who have read or watched the series already know he turns out to be the bad guy, but showing President Snow gradually turn from a good-hearted, well-intentioned character to merciless and evil through a series of conscious decisions is great.

The newest installment provides insight into why the citizens of the Capitol think and behave the way they do and where the system of donations and rewards for tributes of Katniss's Games came from. (Hint: It was all Snow's idea.) Those who are familiar with the series will also enjoy how this movie ties to the others with characters like Tigress, references such as the Katniss plant, and Lucy Gray's "The Hanging Tree", which Katniss sings in "Mockingjay".

But viewers do not have to be familiar with the series to enjoy this movie. Everything about this movie, from the music to the immersive visual effects to the actors' realistic portrayals, was high caliber. "The Hunger Games: Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes" has enough action, enough romance and betrayal, and enough character and plot development to keep pretty much anyone entertained.

The Lionsgate movie, rated PG-13, has grossed over \$145 million and runs two hours 37 minutes.

Top Movies of 2023

1. "Oppenheimer" and "Barbie" made history at the box office as an unlikely double feature.
2. "The Super Mario Bros. Movie" brought the beloved Nintendo plumbers to life and became the "most successful video game adaptation of all time" with over \$1 billion at the box office, according to IMDB. Bowser's (Jack Black) "Peaches" also made the Billboard Top 100.
3. "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3" provided closure for fans of the trilogy and made over \$845 million.

"Big" by Lucky Woodard



"Entering the Year Well-Rested" by Emma Holder



Upcoming Events

Jan. 2
HS Basketball @Ore City — 5 p.m.

Jan. 5
HS Basketball v. Big Sandy — 5 p.m.

Jan. 6
ATSSB Area Band Auditions
FFA District/Area Officer Testing

Jan. 8
FFA State Officer Testing

Jan. 9
V Girls Basketball v. Christian
Heritage — 5 p.m.
School Board Meeting — 6:30 p.m.

Jan. 11
JH Basketball v. McLeod — 4 p.m.
Athletic Banquet — 6 p.m.

Jan. 12
JH All-Region Band Clinic/Concert
HS Basketball @McLeod — 4 p.m.

Jan. 16
East Texas Communities Foundation
Presentation to Seniors
HS Basketball @Harleton — 4 p.m.

Jan. 17
Archery Tournament

Jan. 18
Boys Powerlifting @Home
JH Boys Basketball v. Harleton,
Girls @Harleton — 5 p.m.

Jan. 18-19
Model UN @Region 7

Jan. 19
HS Band All-Region Clinic/Concert
Elementary Awards Assemblies
HS Basketball v. Linden Kildare
— 4 p.m.

Jan. 19-22
FFA @Ft. Worth Heifer Show

Jan. 22
JH Boys Basketball @Linden Kildare,
Girls v. Linden Kildare — 5 p.m.

Jan. 23
HS Basketball @Hawkins — 4 p.m.

Jan. 24
TSIA2 Testing (HS)

Jan. 25
Girls Powerlifting @Union Hill

Jan. 26
FFA Area Tractor Tech Contest @SHSU
HS Basketball v. Ore City — 5 p.m.

Jan. 27
HS Accounting Team @Palestine

Jan. 29
FFA District Convention @New Boston
Boys Powerlifting @Home
JH Boys Basketball v. Hawkins,
Girls @Hawkins — 5 p.m.

Jan. 30
100th Day of School
HS Basketball @Big Sandy — 4 p.m.

Jan. 30-31
Model UN @Region 7

Strength in Numbers Evans Fills Vacant Geometry Position

Former UGISD teacher Evette Evans returns this month to instruct the Geometry students who had to learn online last semester when no teacher was available.

Evans previously taught at the elementary campus for twenty years — three years in second grade, 14 years in third grade and, most recently, three years in sixth grade — before leaving last May to work for Sharon Wells Consulting, traveling to teach teachers math programs. Around Thanksgiving, Evans discovered a family member was ill and knew travelling for work was no longer an option.

“I decided it was best to stay closer to home,” Evans said. “It actually worked out better.”

Being off work allowed Evans to care for her daughter, alum Amanda Evans, as she recovered a major injury and finished her semester exams.

“She had a bucket-handle meniscus

tear, the worst meniscus tear you can have,” Evans said. “Within a week, she was having surgery. When they got in there, they found out it was worse, because they actually had to move her meniscus back into place after they stitched it up. It was a blessing I was able to stay home and take care of my daughter the entire month of December.”

She also began her job search during this time. Without an ESL certification or Region 7’s Reading Academies, Evans thought her options may be limited, but Algebra teacher Paula Adkison and former Pre-Cal teacher Rhonda Wilcox told Evans about the Geometry position.

“I texted [superintendent] Kelly [Moore] and said ‘Hey, I don’t know if y’all have anything available. If not, I understand. You know, it’s semester,’” Evans said. “The next afternoon I got a call from [then principal] Rachel [Evers]. I talked to my husband and prayed about it, and here I am.”



Evette Evans prepares her Geometry classroom before students return Jan. 10.
PHOTO: Kimber Smith



Shifting Gears Elementary principal Sherrill Ballard packs speech therapist Megan Adams and counselor Katie Smith's lunches.

Administrators moved the staff's Dec. 15 Christmas lunch due to threats of rain. Instead of meeting outdoors, staff members drove through of the maintenance shop for Butcher Shop burgers and Christmas bonuses from the board. PHOTO: Kimber Smith



Katherine Potter (12) and Bre Reynolds (9) show their pigs in the Dark Cross Grand Drive at the Branded by Christ Coverall Classic in Henderson. Reynolds's pig Ramone won champion. PHOTO: Katie Nugent

START YOUR DAY WITH REVIVE
brew to revive

Thank You!
See our full menu and order ahead online, anytime!
WWW.BREWTOREVIVE.COM

@brewtorevive

821 N. Main Street
Gladewater, Texas 75647

CAPPUCCINO | AMERICANO | FRAPPE
ITALIAN CREAM SODA | ENERGY TEA
SMOOTHIE | SNOW CONES & MORE!

WINCO

MACHINE & REPAIR, INC.

Winn King

Office: (903) 844-2200 1011 E. Commerce Ave.
Fax: (903) 844-1834 Gladewater, TX 75647
Cell: (903) 720-2516 wking@wincomachine.com

WTIC

WELD TRAINING, INSPECTION & CONSULTING

We Love Our Lions!

WTIC is dedicated to creating engineered welding solutions that positively impact the bottom line through training, inspection, and consulting.

Contact: Joseph@weld-consulting.com
for more information.

ABC Auto Proudly Supports Union Grove Lions

LET'S **G**  **UNION GROVE**

Supporting East Texas Communities for Over 50 Years



28 Locations Throughout
East Texas & Shreveport-Bossier
www.abcauto.com
Your Neighborhood Parts Store!