

The GROVE GAZETTE

Vol. VI, Issue 3

Union Grove ISD News

Nov. 2024

Is Cell Phone
Overuse
Making Us
Miss Out on Life?



Cross Country, Band
Return to State
Yamboree Results

On the *Cover*

Eighth-grader Zoey Johnston uses one phone to take a picture of eighth grader Maddison Bower serving the volleyball at Ore City High School and another phone to take a picture of the first.

This page: Eighth-graders Kale Reeves, Malachi Martin, Ian Adams and Brady Pritchett learn how to use the yearbook staff's Canon cameras as part of their Principles of A/V course. The boys then completed a photo scavenger hunt with specific requirements such as a wide shot and a photo taken from worm's eye view. Photo by Kyleigh Blackstock

The GROVE GAZETTE

Published by:
Union Grove High School
11220 Union Grove Rd.
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Editor-in-Chief: Jamie Russell
Photo Editor: Briana Bowling
Business Manager: Hannah Caperton
Sponsor: Kimber Smith

Olivia Dabreu	Jaxon Ledbetter
Bella Foster	Alexis Lee
Hannah Haggard	Konner Long
Alley Hale	Natalie Pritchett
Peyton Hancock	Connor Stanford
Bailee Hosak	Charlotte Wright



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Explore the *Future* Career, Technical Education Programs to Host Showcase

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Calendar of Events

CTE programs will host a showcase during school on Nov. 20 for students and that evening for parents, giving young students and their families a chance to learn about each program before they have to choose a pathway for high school.

Agriculture

Agriculture students develop knowledge and skills regarding career and educational opportunities; industry standards; and details, practices, and expectations related to livestock, veterinary practices, mechanics, design and fabrication and wildlife management. Students compete in LDE and CDE events and various Ag/FFA shows throughout the year.

Accounting

Personal Finance students learn life skills relating to checking and savings accounts, establishing credit and keeping a good credit score, and investing for retirement, and accounting directly connects to a college degree in business or future entrepreneurship.

Arts, AV Tech and Communication

The journalism program offers students realworld experience publishing their writing, photography, design and art in the monthly Grove Gazette and Lions Roar yearbook. Students can receive recognition through ILPC, compete in UIL, gain certification in Adobe PhotoShop or InDesign, and build general job skills like time management, communication, and audience engagement.

Marketing

The marketing and advertising program utilizes creativity, critical thinking, and real-world application to gain hands-on experience, industry-relevant skills, and a pathway to diverse career opportunities. They find success through collaboration, problem-solving, and a drive to make an impact.

Health Science

We currently offer dual credit and non-dual credit options for the upper levels of health science classes. The majority of students who stay in health science classes are interested in a career in the medical field, such as nursing, dental hygiene, PT/OT, and medicine. Many health science students will have a certification upon completion that will allow them to enter the workforce, and many of these students will gain employment while furthering their education.

Hospitality & Tourism

Culinary Arts helps get kids ready for college or a career by weaving together the employability skills needed for both, learning real world skills, and getting hands on experiences. Classes are enjoyable, and students connect with teachers.

STEM

Rocketry takes real world experiences and brings them into the classroom, from problem solving skills to technical writing skills, presentation and public speaking opportunities. Students interact with professionals in the engineering fields and make authentic presentations at places like NASA, Boeing and SAIC. They learn to design, fabricate and test vehicles ranging in capabilities of carrying a one pound payload to an altitude of one mile to one with an altitude goal of 50,000 feet launching under the guidance of the US Army.

LETTERS FROM THE PRINCIPALS

Wow! Fall is such a busy time of year at Union Grove Elementary!

Here are some of the awesome things we've been doing:

- » Our moms joined us for Muffins with Mom, and dads did the same for Donuts with Dad.
- » We had a great turnout for Open House, where our students and teachers showcased all the things we've been working on.
- » Our annual Scholastic Book Fair earned over \$10,600! We get to keep almost half of that! Thank you to our wonderful librarian, Mandy Cox, for setting this up and working so hard to make it successful! Thank you to our parents and grandparents who came and shopped with us! Thank you to the volunteers who gave their time to work in the Book Fair.
- » Our first-grade students went to Ecoland in Kilgore.
- » The second grade took a field trip to Piney Park in Marshall.
- » We had three days off for Yam-boree, where several elementary students showed animals.
- » We had Red Ribbon Week and dressed up each day in a different theme to support being DRUG-FREE.
- » Our PTO sold Boo Grams for Halloween.
- » We had our Annual Harvest Carnival, where our wonderful PTO and many, many parents helped make a wonderful environment for our kids to have fun.
- » In the meantime, lots of learning has been happening in our classrooms!

Y'all, it takes a village to be successful, and Union Grove Elementary has the BEST village!

Thank you to all our staff, students, parents, grandparents, and friends who have helped us make this season so successful.

We appreciate you!

As always, if you need anything, my email is ballards@ugisd.org and my number is 903-845-3481.

Sherrill Ballard, Elementary Principal

It seems like the year is flying by! We are already in the second nine weeks. Wow!

A few highlights and shout outs:

- Great job band! Fourth at the state marching competition! Lion Pride!
- Shout out to girl's cross country - state qualifiers! Awesomeness!
- Shout out to volleyball for being playoff bound!
- Shout out to the Rocketry kiddos presenting at NASA!
- Shout out to all of the UIL kiddos and their amazing performances to start the UIL season at Pine Tree!
- Shout out to everyone working hard for the upcoming Veterans Day Program!

A few reminders for our kiddos:

- Stay on top of your absences. We are already having Saturday school as a make-up opportunity.
- Do not procrastinate with grades and assignments. Things have a way of piling up.
- Seniors make sure you are dotting I's and crossing T's with all of the requirements that come with your last year in HS. See Mrs. Applegate with any questions.

I hope everyone has a great November!!

Go Lions!

Brian Gray, JH/HS Principal
grayb@ugisd.org / 903-844-3900



Wyatt Clift (7) wins a Whataburger gift card in the junior high Perfect Attendance drawing.
Photo by Jamie Russell

Community Pride, Patriotism to Shine at Annual Veterans Day Celebration

by Jamie Russell



Senior Sirena Loven prepares a dish in Tamara Merritt's culinary class. "To me, preparing food for the veterans day program is very important and special because it is a way I can give back to those who fought for our country, fought to protect us, and fought to protect the freedoms we have today," Loven said. "And what I love the most about the class is the creative freedom, even if there is a certain theme we have to follow."

Photo by Jamie Russell

This year's annual Veteran's Day program will begin around 9 a.m. on Friday, Nov. 8 after a welcome breakfast for all veterans in attendance.

The district invites veterans of all branches to attend the program, which will be followed by lunch.

The program, a tradition started by Barbara Mackey 26 years ago, has grown and evolved over the years. Past programs have featured a variety of elements, including sheets sewn together and covered with red, white and blue handprints; politically powerful guest speakers; even a horse named Cody.

While the program has moved from the junior high gym to the Lion Center, student performances have replaced guest speakers, and no horse will be present this year, one thing remains the same: students of all ages will do their best to honor the community's veterans.

"Beyond the shadow of a doubt, the Grove Veterans' Day Program is always the best compared to any school I've been at," Principal Brian Gray said. "When I was here as a superintendent, the Veterans Day Program was my second favorite day of the year. I love it."

Students will show their gratitude through cheer, theater, band, and fifth and sixth grade

musical performances during the program.

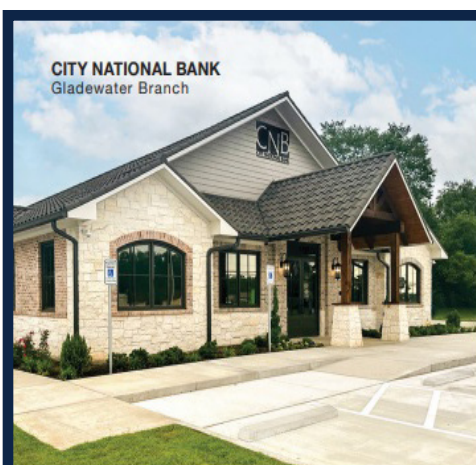
"Performing for Veterans Day is so fun, because we play the best music," senior percussionist Gracie Lawrence said. "It is pretty personal for me because my great grandpa used to be a marine and my brother is one right now. I love showing how we are proud of the veterans and value them."

Younger elementary students have already contributed letters and artwork, Student Council and NHS members will escort the guests to their seats and culinary students will prepare and serve the veterans and their families pulled pork sandwiches with baked beans, chips and a variety of desserts.

"Ms. Tammy always picks out the best recipes, so I know what we make is gonna be good," junior Emma Searcy said. "Because my brother is a army veteran, I personally understand what some of the songs we sing are talking about. I'm glad I get to honor everyone with food that tastes good and a great show."

FFA officers will post the colors to honor branches of service while the band plays each branch's anthem behind them.

"If you think about it, 95% of the student body is involved with [the program] in some form or fashion," Gray said. "We pride ourselves on going above and beyond, so we're going to keep going as long as we can."



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In A&P, junior Nicole Carloni views a microscope slide she made with a living ant she named Annie. "It was so cool to see her moving and punching up close," Carloni said. "I could see every part of her arms and stuff." She caught the ant while trying to get a dirt sample and returned him afterward.



Photo by Jamie Russell

HS Theater, Campers to Perform 'Oklahoma!'

by Jamie Russell

The high school theater cast and crew will present the musical "Oklahoma!" Nov. 10 and 17 at 2 p.m. in the Lion Center.

The musical will feature guest performances from elementary students who attend The Lion Players theater camp on Saturday, Nov. 9. Kindergarten through sixth grade students can sign up for the camp by submitting the flyer sent home in Tuesday folders, by contacting director Hunter Ballard directly at ballardh@ugisd.org or on-site the day of camp.

"We started drama camp back when I was in high school, so I worked it as a student, and now as the director," Ballard said. "It's a lot of fun to get the kiddos involved and hooked into the theater world. Oftentimes, something like drama camp is their first experience with theater."

The camp gives upcoming students the opportunity to experience theater before they can actually take the class.

"I love working with the elementary kids because you get to show them how amazing theater is and get them really involved," junior Hunter Rogers, who plays Carnes, said.

Other key roles include Makynlie Young (11) as Aunt Eller, Brendon Deary (12) as Will Parker, Jamie Russell (12) as Ado Annie, Callysta Reeves (11) as Laurey and Colton Mead (12) as Curly. Hannah Coulter (12) and Lyndsey Wallace (11) on sound and lights.

"This is my first year doing [tech], so I'm still figuring it out," Wallace said. "I'm so excited but also nervous at the same time because lights run the show. I'm sure everything will go well with the show once it's all put together completely."

The cast and crew have already completed one full dress rehearsal and will perform another before showtime, but Ballard knows the team is ready.

"I think that there are some brilliant moments in the show where you're sitting and you're watching and you're having a lot of fun, and you can see that the actors are also having a lot of fun," Ballard said. "There are a lot of students who truly want the show to be something that they can be proud of. When I watch, I get to see that pride and that work on display. It is something that the community can come and watch and be proud of, too."

The Lion Players Theatre Camp

DATE: November 9th - Saturday

TIME: 9:00 am - 11:15 am

PLACE: UGISD - The Lion Center

GRADES: K - 6th Grade

COST: \$ 40.00 -

\$ 45.00 - Morning of CAMP
(Special Price for more than 1 sibling & shirt included in price)



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LET'S GO LIONS



Eighth grader Haven Stevens prepares to introduce "Creepy Crawlies" during the junior high concert on Oct. 22. Photo by Susanna Sturkie

Director Jonathan Stafford leads band members in "Ten Marches in Two Minutes", a medley of famous marches that lasts exactly two minutes. Photo by Blaiklee George



Photo by Jamie Russell

Band, Cross Country Return to State

The band advanced to the state marching contest at McClane Stadium of Baylor University after earning straight ones at the regional contest at Mt. Pleasant Oct. 15 for the 35th consecutive year.

Bands from Price Carlisle, Shelbyville, Hawkins, Union Grove, Pineland West Sabine, Beckville, Hemphill, Timpson, Ore City, Harleton and Overton competed in the 1A/2A contest on Oct. 29. Union Grove marched at 9:45 a.m. then had to wait until around 12:15 to learn they advanced to finals and would compete again at 7:30 p.m.

"I was pleased that we got to compete in finals," senior Elise Daugherty said. "I'm a senior, so I was just happy to spend as much time as possible with the band."

Commentators noted the difficulty of the music and that having drum majors Hannah Coulter (12) and August Vestal (11) play their instruments instead of whistle to indicate movements made memorizing the marches more important.

"I just do what I can to make our band better," Vestal said. "If that means I have to march in the block, so be it!"

Around 10 p.m., judges announced the winners. Union Grove placed fourth, down two spots from last year's second-place finish.

"We have put in so much hard work and came so far," sophomore Ashlyn Heard said. "It may not be the outcome we were hoping for but we are still one of the top bands in Texas."

One of the top bands in the state with over 20 freshmen who will continue the legacy.

"They are young, never marched before, and this was their first taste of participating at state," Superintendent Kelly Moore wrote in a district-wide email. "Many directors would have probably played it safe with the drill and with the music, but not our directors. They set the bar high and they knew our kids would rise to the occasion. The sound was tremendous, and the routine was great!"

With the end of football season approaching and state marching contest complete, seniors have already started to reflect on their journey, which began for some back in sixth grade.

"Marching band has been such a huge part of my life, and it's strange to think that this is my last season," Coulter said. "I'm proud of how far I've come, and I'm grateful for all the memories and friendships I've made. We all put in so much hard work, and it's amazing to see it all pay off. I couldn't be happier to be part of this band!"

The varsity girls cross country team will compete in the state meet at Roundrock on Nov. 1 for the fifth consecutive year after placing fourth in the regional meet Oct. 21 at Huntsville.

At Huntsville, freshman Landry Harris placed fourth with a 12:51.83 two-mile run, qualifying for the state meet as an individual. Danica Vestal (10) placed 20th, Rachel Potter (10) placed 37th, Jill Taylor (10) placed 62nd, Olivia Dabreu (11) placed 102nd, Emma Wadle (9) placed 109th, and Kadence Frey (10) placed 111th out of 178 runners.

Sophomore David Shaver also ran the regional meet, finishing the five-kilometer course in 55th place at 19:25.60.

In the district meet at McLeod on Oct. 9, the varsity girls took second place as a team. Harris placed second individually, four seconds behind the first-place runner from Hawkins. Vestal placed third, Potter placed 10th, Taylor placed 11th, Wadle placed 15th, and Dabreu placed 21st.

David Shaver (10) earned his spot in the regional meet by placing fifth in the varsity boys' division, where Liam Mayhan (9) placed 12th, Waylon Clift (9) placed 17th, Kenneth Flanagan (12) placed 20th, Josiah Sturkie (11) placed 34th and Isaac O'Neal (9) placed 38th.

Bree Cox (9) placed fourth among the junior varsity girls, followed by Charlotte Wright (9) in seventh, Briana Bowling (9) in eighth, Hailey Griffin (10) in 11th and Arianna Gibboney in 14th. The team placed second behind Hawkins.

Brady Pritchett (8) won the junior high boys' race. Kynan Birlew (8) placed fourth, Wyatt Clift

(7) placed 15th, Kayson Forster (7) placed 25th and Bentley Smith (7) finished in 34th.

Susanna Sturkie (8) won the junior high girls' event, followed by River Martindale (7) in second. Jillian Russell (8) placed eighth, Phaedra Cole (7) placed 15th and Aubree Cooper (7) placed 16th. Breanna Badgett (7) finished in 21st, Kyleigh Blackstock (8) 30th, Cooper Littlejohn (7) 34th and Isabella O'Neal (7) 47th.



Right: Cooper Swinford shows his gray Brahman in the heifer show.

Below Right: Kaki Pharr (11) and Bre Reynolds (10) show their raised flowerbed at the Ag Mechanics show. Several projects won awards. Brady Gordy (10) and Ryder Johnson's (12) smoker was Non-Sale Ag Mech Project, and Sebastian Bonilla (3), Ryan Adams (10), Ty Cook (11), and juniors Garrett Staley, Kendal Sartain and Ayden Johns won Reserve Division Ag Mech Awards. Kayden Day's (12) tree deer stand won third place, Corbyn Mullins (11) and Jayse Swigart's (11) hay feeder won third place, Julianna Navarro's (4) firepit won fifth place, Jacob Hart (12) and Riley Schweiger's (9) Santa Maria Grill won sixth place, and Morgan Mayhan (12) and Cason Cowan's (12) deer feeder won sixth place. Braxlee Dinkins's (4) also showed a firepit, Melaney Hulsebus (3) showed a wooden bench, Kadence Frey (11) and Arriana Gibboney (11) entered a porch swing, Colton Jamison (12) and Andrew Jacobus (12) entered a duck blind, and Kody Nutt (10) and Kolby Nutt (10) entered end tables. Photos by Olivia Dabreu



Yamboree Results



Rachel Potter (10) shows her pig in the Oct. 16 market show. Rachel, Boyd Potter (6), Brinley Campbell (9), Liam Mayhan (9), James Lemming (4) and Bre Reynolds (10) qualified for the market hog sale. Reynolds also recieved Champion Senior Swine Showman.

Rachel won Champion AOB Heifer, and Boyd won Champion Maine Anjou. Madison Byers (12) won Champion Hereford Heifer and Champion Senior Heifer Showman, Chloe Brooks (11) won Champion Red Brangus and had a sale-qualifying market steer, and Merritt Montelbano (1) won Champion Shorthorn Heifer.

Gauge Hulsebus (5) also qualified for the chicken sale, and Emma Dabreu (9) qualified for the goat sale. Photo by Olivia Dabreu



Emma Dabreu (9) dances in the Yamboree Corination on Oct. 16-17. Averi Cook (10), Rachel Potter (10), Landry Harris (9), Danica Vestal (10), Miley Nono (10), Bre Reynolds (10), Gracelyn Head (11) and Olivia Dabreu (11) also danced in the coronation. Photo by Olivia Dabreu



Varsity cross country team members Danica Vestal (10), Rachel Potter (10), Averi Cook (10), Landry Harris (9) and Olivia Dabreu (11) finish the Yamboree's annual Tater Trot with Ava Wightman and Emma Dabreu (9) as preparation for the regional meet on Oct. 21, where they qualified for state for the fifth consecutive year. Photo by Bre Dabreu



Taylor Campbell (12) rides in the Queen's parade. Taylor was named the 87th Yamboree princess in the coronation and participated in the queens parade. Photo by Olivia Dabreu

Students Enjoy Yamboree Festivities

by Bella Foster and Connor Stanford

Upshur County celebrated the 89th Yamboree Oct. 16-19 in downtown Gilmer.

"The week of Yamboree for my family means a 80+ hour work week," Ag teacher and FFA sponsor Andrea Shafer said. "Early mornings and late nights in the barn, but it is rewarding to watch students' hard work come to an end at the 'showcase'."

FFA students participate in the livestock show, ag mechanics show and speaking contest. This year, sales of qualifying animals totalled \$34,000, and the ag mech projects all sold over \$2,500. But the Yamboree is about more than just its agricultural namesake. Students also enjoyed the carnival, and -of course- the days out of school.

"It's always fun getting out for the Yamboree," junior Kendal Sartain said, "We got a break, and I felt like it was around the perfect time. I love being able to laugh and spend time with family and friends at the Yamboree."

Yamboree also means coronation of a new queen. On Thursday, viewers celebrated queen Katie Ella Henson of Harmony and her court, including princess and senior Taylor Campbell.

"When I was asked to run for Yamboree Queen, I was super excited," Campbell said. "I had just had surgery on my ACL and meniscus, which meant I couldn't participate in any sports like I normally would. So when this opportunity came up, I jumped at the chance! Looking back, I realize that maybe this was God's way of showing me there's more to life than just athletics. Being named the 87th Yamboree Princess is one of the biggest honors of my life."

Harvesting Candy

Elementary students enjoyed the annual Harvest Carnival in the elementary gym on Oct. 31.

"The kids have a great time at the Harvest Carnival, and I love watching them enjoy themselves," principal Sherrill Ballard said. "It's a great time for everyone!"

This year's carnival featured a movie theme and booths focused on "The Wizard of Oz", "101 Dalmatians", "Alice in Wonderland", "Ghostbusters", "Stranger Things", "Scooby Doo", and "Charlie & the Chocolate Factory".

"I enjoy playing all the games," fifth grader Kohen Birlew said. "They always have the coolest games and prizes!"

Parents sent candy for prizes, decorated, created games and ran the carnival from 7:45-3:30.

"I like playing the games with my friends," sixth grader Brody Gumm said. "I am sad that this is my last year because I will be in JH next year."



Above: Sixth grader Hunter Hogue tries to toss rings on hooks on the ghost board. Photo by Hannah Caperton



Abby Hogue tries her hand at the Putt-Putt booth. Photo by Hannah Caperton

First Quarter Elementary Honor Roll

A & B's

Third Grade – Fynlee Bill, Abigail Dougherty, Finley Edwards, Kennedy Gravley, Anthony Hampton, Sophia Hankins, Abby Hogue, Hudson Payne, Blakely Poole, Zaiden Ryan, Rayce Shelton, Lee Smith, Ashton Sweaney, Raegan Thomas, Loyal Trice, Parker West, Brynlee Whitmire

Fourth Grade – Weston Acton, Elena Archer, Brooks Brantley, Skylee Cary, Leighton Donaldson, Amelia Dougherty, Aubrey Ducote, Dillon Ferrell, Caleb Freeman, Jameson Gable, Maycee Gipson, Jack Handorf, Trachell Hare, Irish Hill, Dylan Himes, Jake Hooks, Melany Hulsebus, Karson Kent, Jake Kessler, Phoenix Knight, James Lemming, Jayden Mireles, Jace Monk, Eric Mullins, Ariel Ow-

ens, LeBron Ramey, Jaykob Rivera Jimenez, Jesslyn Sweaney, Maren Thomas, Riley Velin, Everly Wadle, Oliver Yaktiyol

Fifth Grade – Beau Bayne, Kohen Birlew, Skylar Coddington, Gunner Coppedge, Alayna Dole, Devin Ferrill, Raynlee Head, Gauge Hulsebus, Ashlyn Jones, Hadleigh Lake, Abigail Lakey, Daniella Navarro, Eliza Oxford, Konin Pharr, Kylii Pharr, Lucas Puentes, Raylen Ravellette, Owen Smith, Maddox Strong, Cooper Swinford, Emma Tarkington, Rylann Venn, Alexander Warren, Conner Westmoreland

Sixth Grade – Ethan Archer, Jase Chamberlain, Olivia Diaz, Faith Druschke, Trenton Easley, Brody Gumm, Harley Herrin, Hunter Hogue, Mya Hooper, Kristopher Kent, Amber

Third graders Liam Morvan and Finley Edwards play tic-tac toe. Photo by Hannah Caperton



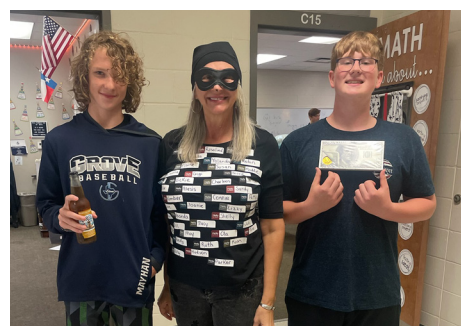
Ashton Sweaney and Adilynn Cooper roll dice to find out which jar of jelly beans they will taste then try to guess the flavor of at the Bean Boozled booth. Photo by Charlotte Wright



Above: Sophomores Alexis Lee, Emma Diviney and Ashlyn Heard wait for the cross country send-off to begin on Halloween. Left: Seventh grader Phaedra Cole went through the school day as an Oompa Loompa for Halloween. Photos by Wesley Ratcliffe



Photo by Hannah Caperton



Teacher Gailyn Sutton dressed as a concept from her Personal Finance/Money Matters class. She paraded through the breezeway and cafeteria and told the students that "the first student who correctly identified her depiction would win a prize". Sutton taught an entire unit on the concept last year, and her class had watched the movie "The Michelle Brown Story" about a woman who had her identity stolen. Freshmen Liam Mayhan and Lane McBride correctly identified Sutton's costume: Identity Thief. Photo by Kimber Smith

Lee, Charles Lelong, Gabriel Lormand, James Madding, Khloe Payne, Jayden Perdue, Skye Perez, Lucie Pirtle, Boyd Potter, Gavin Pritchett, Elijah Torres, Kris Villamendez, Adyn West, Joseph Wilson

ALL A's

Third Grade - Sebastian Bonilla, Karissa Brazil, Adilynn Cooper, Elliot Garcia, Brynlea Hallman, Liam Morvan, Rhyder Mullins, Laurel Thomas, Adrianna Valenti, Teagann Venn

Fourth Grade - Ryder Adkinson, Gunner Allen, Gabriella Bowling, Ryker Canagui-er, Karah Crump, Lylah Delaney, Braxlee Dinkins, Leah Guthrie, Allie Halcumb, Jacob McDougal, Olivia McGilvraray, Maddox Moore, Juliana Navarro, Elliott Orr, Leslie Ramos Gomez, Aerilyn Reeves, Madalynn Rickey,

Madison Ryan, Garrett Saye, Reagan Steele, Harrison Wright

Fifth Grade - Ember Burnett, Caitlin Daugherty, Eli Fleming, Jaxon Glaze, Jim Hogue, Aristyn Johns, Avery Johnston, Skye Love, Halle Martin, Sophia Norris, Teller Nykamp, Emmett Orr, Braxton Rich, Ryder Caviness-Russell, Lilyanna Salazar-Thornton, Charles Shelton, Charlze Spruell, Jaidyn Whitmire

Sixth Grade - Ian Adams, Olivia Barbee, Landon Caperton, Kaydence Deller, Noah Dippold, Trinity Haydel, Embrie Long, Colsen Manley, Ryleigh Phillips, Brooklyn Scott, Rayson Smith, Jake Steele, Xavier Tennison, Steffan Wallace, Reagan Walts, Scarlet Webb, Cade Williamson

Top 3 Accelerated Reader Students

First Grade - Charley Wallace (12.4), Adam Lumbert (9.3), Connor Brazil (9)
Second Grade - Lucy Johnston (16.4), Emory Reeves (14.1), Emery Gillette (13)
Third Grade - Adrianna Valenti (16.8), Rhyder Mullins (16.5), Liam Morvan (13.1)
Fourth Grade - Olivia McGilvraray (59.1), Trachell Hare (43.4), Aerilyn Reeves (32.1)
Fifth Grade - Lucas Puentes (56.1), Eliza Oxford (53.6), Braxton Rich (33.3)
Sixth Grade - Olivia Barbee (160.1), Adyn West (111.4), Kaydence Deller (93)

Seniors Cason Cowan, Andrew Jacobus, Morgan Mayhan, and Alston Mullins prepared to run out of the tunnel against Oct. 25 before the game against the Harleton Wildcats. "I felt confident that we would upset them on their homecoming," Cowan said. However, the Lions lost 35-14 after previously defeating Ore City 45-14.
Photo by Jaxon Ledbetter



The Battle for *Playoffs*

Varsity Teams Vie for Position as Subvarsity Finish Seasons

The varsity football team is 5-3 going into the last two district games against Beckville and Big Sandy. The boys are currently on track for their most successful season since 2018, but their playoff chances depend on which teams win in the last two games.

"We've got a great group that has battled all season long," coach Lance Loewe said. "To keep our playoff hopes alive, we need to win at least one of these last two games. This team's ready to give it everything and take this season as far as we can."

The JV Lions were 6-2 before the Beckville game scheduled for Halloween, and the eighth grade team is undefeated in district play. The boys most recently beat Harleton 38-0, with touchdowns from Brady Pritchett, Malachi Martin and Kale Reeves.

"Our boys put in a lot of hard work this season," freshman Brycen Porter said.

"Ending the season with a winning record, I believe this group has a bright future ahead of us."

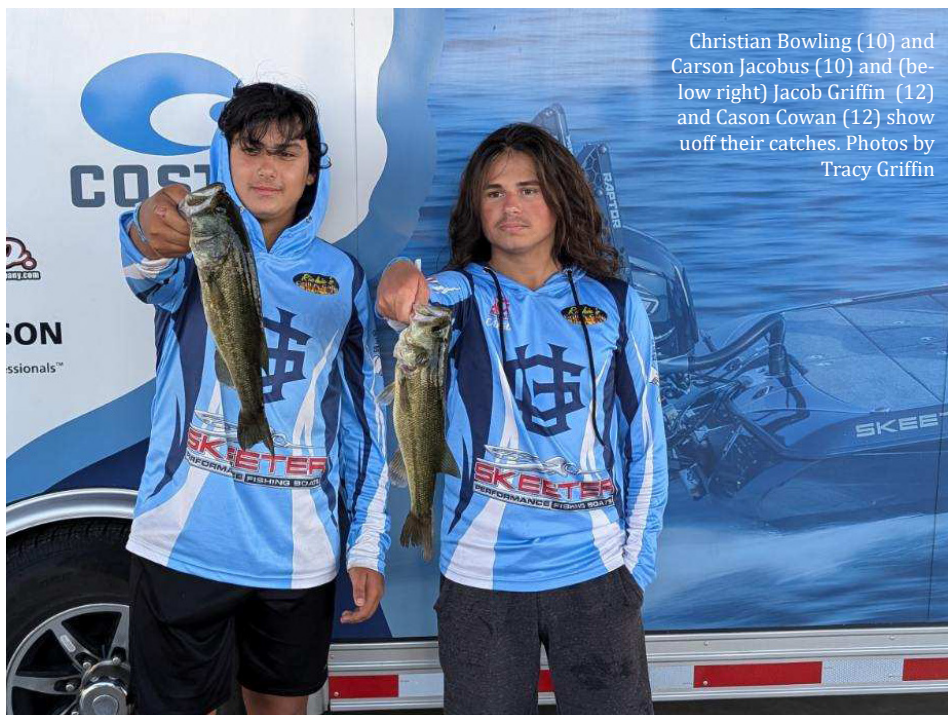
The varsity Lady Lions clinched third place in district play by beating previously undefeated Linden Kildare on Oct. 22. The girls advance to the playoffs, which will begin with the bi-district round against Detroit at Chapel Hill Mt. Pleasant on Nov. 5.

"I feel great about our game, and I am confident that we will all work together as a team and pull off that win," junior setter Karen Chavez said.

The JV team went undefeated in district play and only lost one game in preseason - Sept. 10 against Cumberland Academy.

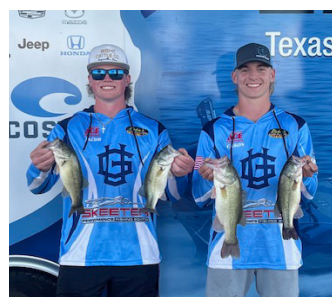
The three junior high volleyball teams finished their season Oct. 28 with home games that resulted in victories against Hawkins.





Christian Bowling (10) and Carson Jacobus (10) and (below right) Jacob Griffin (12) and Cason Cowan (12) show off their catches. Photos by Tracy Griffin

The fishing team has competed in three tournaments at Lake Palestine, Lake Tawakoni and Lake Bob Sandlin. Of the six teams -- Jacob Griffin (12) and Cason Cowan (12), Andrew Jacobus (12) and Colton Jamison (12), Gaige Polen (12) and Kaden Polen (10), Christian Bowling (10) and Carson Jacobus (10), Easton Head (9) and Jaxon Hobbs (9) and Hudson Wightman (10), who fishes solo. Of the six teams, two teams stand in the overall top 50 and two more sit just outside the top 75 in the overall standings. The teams will not compete again until March.



Above: Freshmen Brinley Campbell and Mia Mulligan take target practice with coach Bobby Painter. Photo by Michelle Painter
Left: The FFA shotgun team of Hudson Wightman (10), Cason Cowan (12), TJ Fowler (12) and Travis Steele (12) won the Simms ISD Trap Shoot at Ben Wheeler on Oct. 2 with a score of 280 out of 300. Wightman placed third individually after shooting a personal best of 96, losing the shoot-off for second place by one target. He scored a 24 out of 25 in the tiebreaker. Cowan and Fowler both scored a 92, and Steele shot an 84. Photo by Bobby Painter



From left: Addyson Woodfin (8), Breanna Badgett (7), Kassidy Pharr (7) and Danica Veestal (10) receive serve during various games. Photos by Kimber Smith

Is Cell Phone *Overuse* Making Us Miss Out on Life?

Snapchat. TikTok. Dress to Impress.

Students bumping into one another in the hallways and sitting on breezeway benches or even with friends in the cafeteria and at sporting events are focused on the phones in their hands instead of the people and events around them.

Fear of missing out online is causing people to miss out on real life.

In the past, most people watched the news once or twice a day and went about their lives the rest of the day. Now, cell phones and other technology provide a constant stream of information.

This new information is just a click away, and the need to keep up distracts users from completing even the simplest tasks.

SWNS Media Group reported that 4 in 10 Americans polled say they have not truly experienced milestone moments, such as a child's first steps or graduation, because they were too focused on capturing that moment with their phones. 24% of people admitting texting in the theater during a movie, 16% during a wedding, and 12% in church.

SOCIAL INTERACTION

Constantly checking a phone reduces authentic social interaction. MIT sociologist Sherry Turkle spent the last 20 years studying the impacts of technology on human behavior and found that using a phone during a conversation decreases the quality of conversation topics (due to people only wanting to talk about things they wouldn't mind being interrupted) and decreases the connection between people. When people use their phones during meals, meetings or hangouts, conversations become one-sided or superficial instead of intellectual or emotional. People don't develop empathy or understanding of social cues. Basically, overdependence on cell phones costs people their ability to have deeper, more spontaneous conversations and develop meaningful relationships.

ATTENTION & FOCUS

Constant screentime has changed the way users' brains work. Scientific studies have found that just having a cell phone present



Photo by Jamie Russell

reduces attention and performance, especially for tasks with high cognitive demands, and that once attention has shifted to a cell phone for one purpose, the user's attention remains on the phone as they engage in a sequence of unrelated tasks.

BRAIN CHEMICALS

Checking a phone frequently can alter the chemicals in a person's brain by training it to release dopamine or cortisol.

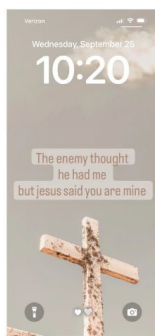
If notifications trigger a stress response, the brain releases cortisol, which can cause anxiety, but, if notifications and/or content are pleasurable, the brain releases dopamine. While dopamine gives the person a temporary boost, the brain always wants more. This addiction causes people to

check their phones constantly to avoid the letdown. Dr. Anna Lembke, a world-leading expert on addiction, calls smartphones the "modern-day hypodermic needle" because of the way people turn to them for these quick hits of dopamine.

FATAL CONSEQUENCES

The addiction to never being bored can even be fatal. Many drivers can't stop looking at their phones long enough to drive from place to place. The distraction obviously reduces focus on the road and surrounding vehicles and often results in preventable accidents. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 3,308 people died in 2022 due to distracted driving.

How Long Do You Spend on Your Phone?



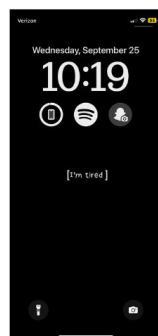
Age of Phone:

1 Year

Screen Time:

4 Hours and
35 minutes

Kinleigh Birlew



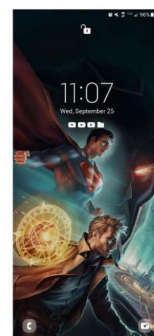
Age of Phone:

2 Years

Screen Time:

5 Hours and
51 minutes

Lyndsey Wallace



Age of Phone:

2 Years

Screen Time:

5 Hours

McClane Handorf



Age of Phone:

3 Months

Screen Time:

1 Hour and
30 minutes

Elise Daugherty

Choosing the Lesser of Two Evils

Voters Should Research All Candidates Before Voting

Op./Ed. by Briana Bowling and Konner Long

Vice President Kamala Harris has been accused of putting on a variety of accents to speak to different groups along her campaign trail, seemingly trying to relate to everyone. Former President Donald Trump will now forever be associated with the racist jokes made at his October rally at Madison Square Garden, seeming not to care who he upsets. The two 2024 presidential candidates represent extreme poles of the political spectrum.

Many Americans may not feel truly excited about either candidate in the presidential election. They may not trust the politicians running for congressional seats or many of the local elections, for that matter.

What should voters do when they don't believe in the candidates available? When they don't think any of the choices are ideal?

The most responsible course of action is to choose the lesser of the two evils - to research the candidates and their policies and pick the one that aligns more closely - however slightly - with the voter's values.

Of course, it's important to research what the candidates say they'll do: the things they hope to achieve and the action they plan to take to achieve them.

It's also important to look at what candidates have already done - in political roles, their personal lives and in other business matters. But where would one find this information?

The politician's voting history is a good place to start. VoteSmart.org documents senate and congress votes, and interested parties can easily access politicians' histories to see how they voted on past bills relating to spending, Supreme Court nominations, human rights, and controversial issues like abortion. Voters can also see when these politicians abstained from voting, leaving the decision-making to someone else.

Politicians' own websites, speeches, debates and rallies are also useful sources of information for the discerning viewer. For example, Gov. Greg Abbott made it clear he would only add teacher raises and public school funding to his agenda if the Texas Legislature passed vouchers.

The one thing voters should not do is choose political candidates based on what friends or social media influencers say. A person's vote should reflect his or her own core values.

Several elections, including the presidential election, will be close this year. It's important to cast a vote, but it's even more important to know who you're voting for.



Upcoming

Events

Nov. 1

Dress Up Day: White Out
Makeup Day for Senior Portraits
FFA @Alba-Golden LDE
State Cross Country Meet @Roundrock
V Football v. Beckville - 7 p.m.

Nov. 4

FFA Greenhand Ceremony, LDE Showcase
JH Girls Basketball v. McLeod

Nov. 5-6

Rocketry Goddard Review @NASA

Nov. 5

FFA @State Officer Workshop
JH/JV Football @Elysian Fields - 5 p.m.
HS Girls Basketball v. Pewitt - 5 p.m.

Nov. 7

FFA @Lindale LDE
JH/JV Football v. Big Sandy - 5 p.m.

Nov. 8 - Early Release

Dress Up Day: Patriotic
Veterans' Day Program - 9 a.m.
V Football @Big Sandy - 7 p.m.

Nov. 9

UIL Twirling Solo & Ensemble
The Lion's Players Theatre Camp - 9 a.m.
HS Girls Basketball @Mt. Enterprise - 11 a.m.

Nov. 10

HS Musical Performance

Nov. 11

FAFSA for Parents - 6 p.m.

Nov. 12

HS Boys Basketball @Troup - 5 p.m.
HS Girls Basketball v. ETHS - 5:30 p.m.

Nov 14

JH OAP Double-Showing - 6 p.m.

Nov. 15

FFA @Daingerfield District LDE Contest
HS Boys Basketball v. Kings Academy - 5 p.m.
HS Girls Basketball @Gladewater - 5 p.m.

Nov. 17

HS Musical Performance

Nov. 18

JH Boys Basketball v. Hawkins - 4:30 p.m.
JH Girls Basketball @Hawkins - 5 p.m.

Nov. 19

FFA @Area VI LDE
HS Boys Basketball @Carlisle - 5 p.m.
HS Girls Basketball v. Kilgore - 5 p.m.

Nov. 20

CTE Showcase
TSIA2 Testing (High School)

Nov. 21-23

JV, V Basketball Tournament

Nov. 25-29

Thanksgiving Break

Nov. 25

HS Boys Basketball v. Cumby

Nov. 26

HS Girls Basketball @Beckville - 11 a.m.
HS Boys Basketball v. Christian Heritage - Noon

Nov. 30

HS Boys Basketball v. Tenaha - 1 p.m.



Contact us at:
(903) 930-3934
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CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION, LLC

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12014 State Hwy 300
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for more information.



J.T. Barnett
Owner Operator
John.Barnett903@gmail.com

(903) 932-5316
128 Dearing Creek Rd.
Gladewater, Texas 75647

PEC Consulting Unlimited LLC