



# The Bagpiper

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Reporting Freeman's news since 2009

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## Boys Cross Country brings home first state championship

By Piper Ramsey

Staff Writer

Boys cross country had a great season. The boys had a great team. The boys team won state championships. Micah Bessire (6th, 16:56.6), Elijah Beck (9th, 17:03.3), Josiah Kann (12th), Owen Offereins (16th). Four runners placed in the top 16: junior Micah Bessire (6th), freshman Eli Beck (9th), junior Josiah Kann (12th) and junior Owen Offereins (16th).



Photo Nicci Exner

**Micah Bessire (11)**

The girls team finished 7th place in state Freshman Audrey Santman placed 5th overall.

"It was such a fun season," coach Mallory McDonald said. "The team has grown so much and gotten closer as a team. It was very cool to see all their hard work pay off. The girls team qualified for State for the first time in 12

years and placed 7th, and the boys team was State Champs for the first time in school history!"

According to McDonald, the team's strongest race was at Regionals.

"Everyone stepped up and brought their A game," she said. "There were tons of PRs. It was amazing to see how much everyone has improved throughout the season."

McDonald was "proud of the positive culture within the team. Everyone is so supportive and encouraging of one another. It's a really special group. I

think that's a big reason why we were so successful this year."

Freshman Stella Dawe was very proud that she beat her sister in most of her races this season.

"The best race was the Colfax race," Dawe said. She had a PR on that course.



Photo Mallory McDonald

**Freshman Audrey Santman places 5th in girls state.**

Freshman Eli Beck had a great showing as first-time varsity runner. He said he was most proud of "qualifying for state and getting sub 17."

According to Santman, her best race was the Hole-In-The-Wall. It was wet and there were steep hills, but she said not really slow, she placed 2nd place in that race.

Santman said the team's biggest hurdle was that "we only had nine people, so we couldn't lose a lot of people. Everyone had to show up at practice."

Junior Micah Bessire said his best race was "at regionals. This was the race I claimed the #1 spot on the team. I ran a personal record of 16:07 giving me the teams #1 spot, 3rd all time in Freeman history, 5th in state rankings, and 3rd at the meet."

He added that "I was extremely proud of Eli Beck for stepping up half-way through the season. To win the title we needed a little more points, and him coming out of nowhere to take 9th overall at state was exactly what we needed and amazing to say the least."

Congratulations to both teams on a record setting season.



Photo Audrey Santman

**Audrey Santman (9) takes 2nd at Hole-In-The -Wall.**



Photo Mallory McDonald

**The boys team win their first state championship.**

## The Bagpiper Staff 2025-2026

### Staff Writers:

Paige Fricke, Chloe Kostal,  
Piper Ramsey, Audrey Santman

### Adviser:

Pia Longinotti

### Principal:

Jeff Smith

### Superintendent:

Dr. Randy Russell



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## Art Corner: Fauvism animal portraits

Art teacher Brooke Forkner's classes have been exploring Fauvism in art this month. Here are some examples of the oil pastels her students have created in class. Go to the art room hallway to see more of these outstanding creations.



Photo Brooke Forkner



Photo Brooke Forkner



Photo Brooke Forkner



Photo Brooke Forkner



Photo Brooke Forkner

Art students work on their Fauvist oil pastels.

## Wild Robot a classic in the making



Photo IMDB.com

Roz, Brightbill and Fink

By Chloe Kostal

Staff Writer

*The Wild Robot* is a movie I would recommend to anyone looking for a sweet story of found family. The editors did a very good job editing the movie, and the writers created a great adaptation from the novel.

*The Wild Robot* follows a robot named Roz (Lupita Nyong'o) who is programmed to be obedient and efficient. While trying to complete a task, she gets lost and meets Brightbill (Kit Connor), a runt with small wings. He overcomes his physical limitations through sheer determination as he and Roz create a family.

Some key scenes are the "migration sequence" and the "goodbye scene." The migration shows how much Brightbill has grown to try to fit in with the flock, but with not fitting in he fits in his own way.

The goodbye scene shows the bond between Roz and Brightbill. Even though she's told by other animals that kindness is not a survival skill, Roz has chosen compassion over efficiency, which ultimately helps her build a community and survive in the harsh and untamed environment.

I recommend this movie to anyone who likes kid's movies or animated movies. It's a story I will watch again.

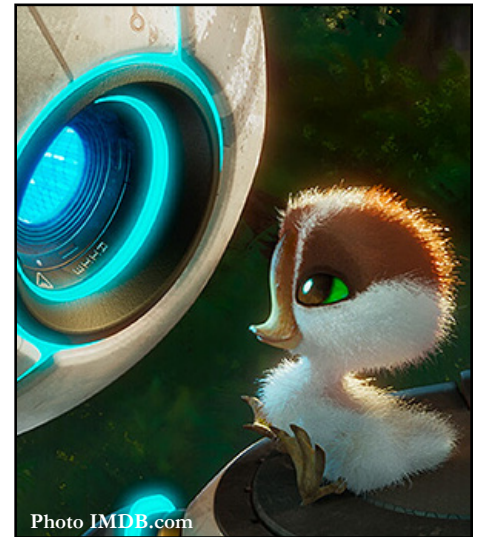


Photo IMDB.com

Roz holds Brightbill.

## Raising Canes proves you don't need a big menu to win

By Paige Fricke

Staff Writer

The popular fast food restaurant Raising Canes recently opened in Northern Spokane. Social media has been loving it, but how good is it really?

Raising Canes is a fast food chicken restaurant that quickly gained popularity by the media in 2024-2025. It opened September 9, 2025, and Spokane got to taste it for themselves.

The menu consists of one thing; chicken, specifically chicken fingers. They have a meal of 3, called "The Three Finger Combo," a meal of 4, "The Box Combo," and a meal of 6 "The Caniac Combo." They also have "The Sandwich Combo" which is just

three fingers with a bun and lettuce, and "The Kids Combo" with two fingers.

Every meal comes with their crinkle cut fries and their signature Cane's sauce. I ended up getting the 3 finger combo, and I believe the portions are perfect for one. The Cane's sauce is one of the main things that started the rise in the Raising Canes popularity. I think it's a decent sauce, but also really overrated. It could be better.

However, the rest of the meal is a different story. The chicken and fries were crispy and hot, and the Texas toast was buttery and crispy golden-brown. I was impressed with the punctuality, considering the fact that they were super busy, it was only about a 5-10 minute wait.

The Raising Canes in Spokane is located

on the Newport Hwy. Considering the location of where most of our community lives, that drive could be a 30 minute to an hour drive. Is it worth the time and gas money? I would say it depends. On a weekly or monthly basis, I would say no. If you've never tried it, I would say it's worth trying, and if you really like it, maybe go on special occasions; like birthdays.

So is it really THAT good? It's not the most groundbreaking food ever, but it's good. I think considering the hype, it's a bit overrated. But I definitely think it's a new thing for people to try. So if you like chicken, and you like to drive, Raising Canes might be a restaurant for you.

## Zootopia 2 takes us on Hopps and Wilde's next adventure

By Piper Ramsey  
Staff writer

Released in November 2025, *Zootopia 2* was a fun addition to the franchise. It continues the humor found in the first movie. There is always something crazy going on which makes the movie enjoyable to watch.

The movie opens with Judy Hopps (Ginnifer Goodwin) and Nick Wilde (Jason Bateman) are now partners at the Zootopia Police Department. They've discovered a snake is present in the city, something that hasn't been present in a 100 years. Chief Bogo makes a decision to separate Nick and Judy if they can't resolve their problems. The pair use their partnership and try to find the snake family. They stick together and solve the problem together.

Judy and Nick make a great team and their friendship is the focus of movie 2. They do a great job playing off each other throughout the movie, adding lots of humor in their banter. The cast includes some new characters as well, including Gary De'Snake (Ke Huy Quan), Nibbles Maplestick (Fortune Feimster), Pawbert Lynxley (Andy Samberg), Dr. Fuzzby (Quinta Brunson), and Mayer Winddancer (Patrick Warburton). Some favorite characters from the first film are also back Chief Bogo



Photo IMDB.com  
Wilde and Hopps follow De'Snakes trail to the swamplands.



Photo IMDB.com

(Idris Elba) and Gazelle (Shakira). The directors of the movie are Jared Bush and Byron Howard brought our some great performances.

There wasn't a whole lot of music in the *Zootopia* movie, but the music they did include was very good. The song choices went well with the scenes where they occurred. A few song highlights were "Zoo" was performed by Shakira, "The Fox" (What Does the Fox Say?) performed by Ylvis, "Bella Notte" performed by Bob Garbeah., and "Down Under" performed by Colin Hay. I didn't have a favorite song in the movie, I think they were all good songs.

The animation in the movie was a highlight. Judy's ears were very well animated and realistic. There were lots of new characters introduced, bringing in some fun personalities. All of the places around Zootopia they travel to were very cool. We got to see some of the other climates in the city like the desert region and the swamps where outcast reptiles lived. It was fun to see more of the world developed.

This movie was a fabulous movie that I will be watching again. I think the first one was better than the second one, because it had more going on in the movie as Judy and Nick met and became friends. I would rate the *Zootopia 2* movie a 9/10. It's a perfect animation movie to watch with the family.

## Lilo and Stitch Live

By Audrey Santman  
Staff writer

I think that *Lilo and Stitch* (live-action remake) is a good movie. It has a distinct Hawaiian feel and it is very fun to watch. It follows the same plot and general ideas as the original, the 2002 animated film 'Lilo and Stitch'.

The plot of this movie follows a young Hawaiian girl, Lilo (Maia Kealoha), who adopts a 'dog' Stitch (Chris Sanders). What Lilo doesn't know is that Stitch is actually a extraterrestrial convict that is being hunted down by the genetic-scientists that will not stop at anything to



Photo IMDB.com

find him. After his crash landing on Earth, Stitch goes on many adventures and learns what it is like to care for others in this fun, light-hearted movie.



Photo IMDB.com

Maia Kealoha stars as Lilo. Kealoha was raised in Hawaii and received a Saturn Award Nomination for Best Younger Performer in a Film 2026.

She played her role very well and looked very similar to the animated Lilo.

Stitch was voiced by the original voice actor, Cris Sanders. Some other main actors in the film were Sydney Agudong as Nani Palekai and Zach Galifianakis as Dr Jumbo Jookiba. Overall, I think the casting was fairly accurate, and they did a good job.

The music in this film was mostly the same as the music in the original. They included the iconic "Hawaiian Rollercoaster Ride," which is in the original Disney soundtrack. The song was redone for the film and included a Hawaiian kids choir and lead singer Iam Tongi. The movie also included some classic Elvis songs that were also featured in the original, such as "Heartbreak Hotel" and "Sus-

picious Minds."

I think that the animation and costume design for this movie was also very good. The design for Stitch is very hard to replicate and make cute but also lifelike, but the animators did an incredible job. Another great design for characters was Dr. Jumbo Jookiba. The designers made him look like an alien but not so scary as to scare away younger kids, which are the target audience.

Overall I think the movie was quite good. I would watch it again. I think this movie is very appealing to younger kids and pre-teens (9-12). I recommend watch this movie on Disney+ or renting it on Amazon.



Photo IMDB.com

## Fall sports wrap up

By Audrey Santman  
Staff Writer

This year was a great year for Freeman fall athletes had a great year, with all teams qualifying for state playoffs.

### Football

The football team had an amazing season this year. They went 9-3 and made it to the quarter finals. Although they were knocked out in the round of 8, the coaches were still happy with their performance.

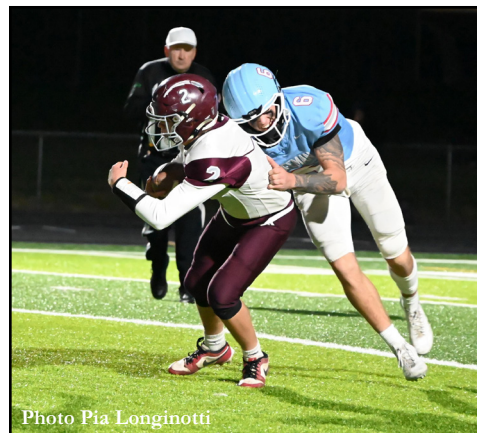
"I am beyond proud of the resilience and toughness the team showed this season," coach Michael McKeown said. "We had many players get injured and have to miss games, and other people stepped up to the challenge and played well."

A highlight from this season was their game at Colfax where they won 34-13.

"We did everything that we needed to in order to win, and our players played hard," McKeown said.

A star player on the team this year was senior quarterback Logan Shultz, a top scorer for Freeman.

"A big challenge we overcame was just playing with different guys and having young guys have to step up," Schultz



Logan Schultz (12) sacks Reardan's quarterback, Hunter Flass (12).

said.

### Soccer

The Scotties came off their undefeated season state championship last year to take second in state.

The girls scored a total of 140 goals this season, with senior Rylee Russell scoring 66 goals, making her the second in the nation for the most goals scored.

Russell thinks that the team had a great season and went against the odds when the state seeds came out.

"When state seeding came out, we were third, and knew that we were better than that," she said. "We eventually proved that at state."

The team had some injuries, but according to coach Dave Ellis, "they kept battling regardless."

The team qualified for state

for the eighth year in a row, and won district champ for the third consecutive year. One of the best games was the district championship game against Northwest Christian.

"Gabiella had the game-winning kick, and goalie Kelsey Hollen had a great save," Ellis



Nora Gass (10) scores in the Scottie's 8-0 victory over Newport on Nov. 5.

said.

Although the team fell short in the championship game, they had a great season.

### Volleyball

Freeman volleyball finished 2nd in state, capping off a great season.

This year was a very special team. "Everyone got along so well," coach Keala Straw said. "It made for a fun season."

A hurdle the team overcame was injuries.

"Although no one ever wants to deal with injury, I do think it made us stronger in the end," Straw said.

According to senior Greta Van Gemert, the team was "always pushing each other, which made us such a good team."

The progress this year was shown when the team beat Manson in the semifinals, a team they lost to last season.

Every game, different players stepped up.

"It felt like every game, we had a different player step up," Straw said. "It didn't matter if they were a senior or a freshman."

Overall, the team played great and had an impressive season finish.



Greta Van Gemert (12) hits through Lake City's block.

## Basketball teams charge into District tournament

By Chloe Kostal  
Staff Writer

### Boys Basketball

The boys have had a great season, finishing 3rd in league, and 4th in Districts (15-9, 6-4).

"My role is to be a leader and keep our team's energy up," senior Micah Hodges said.

Micah returned to the team during their January 27 Asotin game after being sidelined with an injury to his arm. He had to find a way to lead from the bench while he was out.

"My personal goal for the year is to get my broken arm healed and help the team in all the ways I can off the court with my arm being hurt," Micah said.

The team earned their spot in the state tournament after placing 4th at Districts. They started their tournament run with wins over Chewelah (72-56) and a double OT victory over Reardan (62-60) where freshman Madox Hodges put the boys ahead with a jumper with seconds left on the clock. Madox also hit the shot to send the boys into double overtime against Reardan.

"The best shot I've ever hit," he said. "That was also was the best feeling ever."

They lost to District champions Colfax 42-63 in the semifinals. They finished the tournament with a 63-56 win over Liberty and a 57-64 lost in a rematch with Reardan.

Our "biggest goal this season is to get this group and these seniors back to the Spokane Arena and finish out their high school career at the state tournament and bring home some hardware," coach Kyle Olson said.

You can see the boys take on Auburn Adventist at Cheney HS on February 28 (8:00 pm start) in their first round of state.

### Girls Basketball

The girls team finished their season in 1st place in league (13-9, 9-1). Their biggest goal is to continue growing as a team.

"My biggest goal for our team is to continue growing together and buying into the culture that we are trying to establish here as Freeman High school girls basketball," coach Garret Sawyer said

The girls were knocked out during the District tournament, just missing out on state this year. They started the tourney with a 46-43 win over Saint George's. They then lost in the semi-finals to Reardan (32-39). They lost a tight match to Colfax (49-50) in a loser-out game to advance to state.

The girls only loss in league was to Ritzville at home (57-60).

"It is a lot of fun seeing the girls have the drive to work hard and compete to help not only make themselves better, but their teammates as well," Sawyer said.

With lead scorer senior Taylee Phelps out with injury, the girls have looked to each other to step up.

"My role is to be a good leader and teammate, and someone anyone can come up to if they need anything," sophomore Kelsey Hollen said.

Sawyer is extremely happy to have this program and hopes all the girls return next season.

"I am extremely proud of and thankful for our girls that we have in the program, my amazing coaching staff, and all of the students and community members that show their love and support!" Sawyer said.



Madox Hodges (9) drives in for a layin against Reardan on Feb. 10.



Logan Pecht (11) goes up for 2 in their victory over St. George's.

## Spotlight: Finn LaPointe

By Audrey Santman  
Staff Writer

Senior Finn LaPointe helped lead the team to a third place finish in league as the Scotties play for a chance to return to the state tournament.

His height of 6'4 allows him to dunk the ball, helping him average 20 points per game for the Scotties.

He thinks his best game this year was against Asotin.

"I scored 33 points and had over 10 rebounds," LaPointe said, making him the top scorer for the game.

This season, the team had to overcome some obstacles.

"A challenge that the team has overcome is the number of injuries," he said.

This year, the team has also faced stiff competition against teams like Colfax. To succeed in this league, you have to "be a team that has the grit and a competitive mindset to grab every rebound, and the calmness to play in the crazy high-energy games," LaPointe said.

LaPointe plans on continuing his basketball career in college.

"It doesn't matter the level of competition," he said. "I just want to play."



Finn LaPointe (12) puts up a layin against Chewelah.

## Spotlight: Elle Krug

By Chloe Kostal  
Staff Writer

Junior Elle Krug finished her first year of wrestling, trying it for the first time in July. She's found her rhythm on the mat, with a record of 25-7 heading into the state tournament.

Krug swept her district bracket on February 14 to punch her ticket to the Mat Classic with a victory over Republic-Curlew's Annalisa Bouge.

"I would say just a friend of mine told me to get into wrestling," Krug said. "I tried it and I really, really liked it and just the environment."

Krug has brought a competitive spirit to the team.

"She is a hard worker," coach Matt Smith said. "She is very mentally tough and good at technique. I think that all those things combined creates an athlete."

Krug's favorite moment this season "was our first black flag practice."



Photo Pia Longinotti

**Elle Krug works for a pin over Analisa Bouge (Republic-Curlew) in her 10-8 victory to take 1st at Districts.**

"She has been a great addition to the team because of all those things I would expect out of any wrestler that I have," coach Matt Smith said. "But in the first year having her, she has checked all of those boxes."

Krug finished 6th at state. She racked up wins over Taylor Van Winkle (Cashmere), Linley Wolfard-Henry (Klahowya), and Leandra Agee (Omak). She lost her final round in a rematch with Bouge (5-6).

## Spotlight: Tansey Coyner and Capri Collett

By Piper Ramsey  
Staff Writer

Last year, senior Capri Collett tore her ACL and meniscus at the end of her sophomore year. They were both completely in half. She had the same injury at the end of her freshman year as well. She spent most of her junior year recovering and trying to get strong.

"Recovery is going well," Collett said. "It's a long process with lots of struggle, difficulty, and pain but I was able to recover stronger and get back to playing the sport I love."

Collett has had two years off, so she is very thankful to be back and playing with her friends.

"I just enjoy being back out on the court and being able to play with such great teammates and friends," Collett said.



Photo Cierra Hayek

**Tansey Coyner (11) plays defense in the Jan. 16 victory over Liberty.**

Junior Tansey Coyner also rejoined the team after a knee injury in the team's final game of last season.

"To prevent the injury from happening again, I'm continuing to workout, wearing my brace,

and listening to my body," Coyner said. "I hope to prevent anything further from happening"

Coyner loves the team dynamics this year, and the community they've built.

"It feels great to be back in the game playing with my friends," she said.



Photo Cierra Hayek

**Capri Collett (12) supports her teammates during the Liberty game. Also pictured: Addy Agee (10).**