



# The Bagpiper

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Reporting Freeman's news since 2009

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## Lisa Phelan steps up as new Superintendent

By **Chloe Kostal**  
*Staff writer*



Principal Lisa Phelan has been chosen as the new Superintendent. Phelan was selected as the elementary principal 19 years ago, and has also been our Assistant Superintendent for the last 4 years.

"I was just ready for that next step, that next challenge for my career," Phelan said of applying for the job. "I'm the type of person that doesn't like to sit still much. What else can I do? I feel like it was just the right time, and I was starting to seek out where other districts might have superintendent openings."

When Dr. Randy Russell announced his retirement earlier

this year, Phelan felt that "this would be the best, perfect situation, if I could complete my career here at Freeman."

As Phelan prepares to step into her new role, she is already looking ahead to issues that she will face.

One challenge is "always those outside things that draw students to [programs] like Running Start and New Tech," she said. "Not that they're not great programs, because they are. If it's what's best for you and your family, then we 100% support you. But one of my challenges will be to find ways that students want to stay on campus and can stay on campus."

She wants to find ways to keep students on campus to continue the culture here at

Freeman

Phelan has set some goals for the district as well.

"I feel like I've always had a really good perspective of the TK-12 system," Phelan said. "So with that being said, implementing the Transitional Kindergarten program on one end, and then helping implement the Freeman Connect Ed with Mrs. Youseph and Mr. Smith, and. So, I feel like that vision of having all students taken care of here, that continues to be my vision."

Phelan is also focused on staff growth.

"Just to ensure that the staff and the community continue to come together and grow as times are challenging. We still have lots of things to

grow through, but I feel like we're in a really good trajectory right now. The staff is doing wonderful. Then, just being able to have a part in all the different programs here, like our nutrition program, our transportation program, Special Ed program."

She also hopes that "students feel like they belong. And I mean all students at Freeman."

Phelan is ready to step into her new role this summer, working with staff.

"We are a small-town school with a deep sense of pride in all that we do," Phelan said. "I'm truly honored to have the opportunity to work alongside such incredible students, staff, and community."

## Superintendent Dr. Russell retires after 15 years

By **Paige Fricke**  
*Staff writer*



After 38 years in education, Superintendent Dr. Randy Russell is officially retiring. Russell had a very long, productive career.

He takes pride in all the relationships forged at Freeman.

"We're focused on treating people with respect and dignity and making sure every student and staff member feels valued, respected, and heard," Russell said.

Dr. Russell has a reputation for being a kind and caring superintendent. He has been here for some students whole school career, and he really takes the time to know student's names, their personalities, and just

overall connecting with them.

If you pass by him, he knows your name.

"It's rare for a superintendent to know every student in their school district, and that's something I'm really proud of," Russell said.

It reflects the kind of environment he has worked hard to build over the years. His focus has always been on making schools a place where students feel comfortable and supported.

"I really wanted to make sure that classrooms were safe and welcoming places," Russell said.

Throughout his time in the district, Russell has helped create a strong sense of community. His leadership has not only

focused on academics, but also on building connections between students, staff, and families. Many people in the district describe him as someone who listens, understands, and genuinely cares about others.

As he prepares to retire, Russell said the hardest part of leaving will be the people.

"That's the one thing I'm going to miss the most is the people, relationships, and connections with everyone," he said.

Although Russell is stepping away from his role, his impact on the Freeman School District will not be forgotten. From fostering meaningful relationships to ensuring every student feels seen and valued, his legacy will continue to shape the district for years to come.

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## FBLA prepares students for future

By Audrey Santman  
*Staff Writer*

FBLA is a club that helps support students focusing on leadership development and preparation for careers. Members compete in to a variety of business-related events. They are tested on their knowledge in areas such as business, social media, finance, economics, and journalism.

"They can take knowledge tests or create presentations about various business and professional topics," FBLA advisor Kyle Monasmith said. "Once they do that, they present them to panels of judges at regional, state, and even the national competition if they continue to qualify."

This year, FBLA has gone on several trips, including their regional qualifier where they competed against other FBLA teams in the northwest to qualify for state.

"23 placed in the top 6, which meant that they qualified for the state competition," Monasmith said.

25 students placed in the top 10 as well. According to Monasmith, the turnout for FBLA this year was very good.

"We have over 40 members," Monasmith said. "Our membership is up from last year!"

FBLA offers some really great benefits to their members. Freshman Audrey Shaw joined FBLA this year and enjoys it a lot.

"I like the professionalism of FBLA," Shaw said. "It also trains you to have a voice and speak out."



Photo Kyle Monasmith

**Michael Valente, Emma Dreyer and Nevaeh Eigenhuis qualify for the State competition.**

Shaw recommends people to try FBLA next year.

"I just really think FBLA is beneficial for someone who would like to have a job in business," she said.

The club competed in State on April 23-24. Freeman finished in the top 10 in 5 events.

Sophomore Emma Dreyer took 2nd in Introduction to Public Speaking, qualifying her for Nationals this summer. Her Intro to Business Presentation team with sophomores Nevaeh Eigenhuis and Michael Valente placed 5th.

Senior Avery Boswell took 6th in Supply Chain Management and 9th in Event Planning. The Coding & Programming team of Eli Cotton (12), Oliver Jones (11) and Jackson Smith (12) placed 9th.



Photo Kyle Monasmith

Freeman FBLA students at the regional qualifier for State.

## School lunches looking to offer new choices next year

By Audrey Santman  
*Staff Writer*

Many students get hot lunches in the cafeteria. Some lunches are more popular than others, though.

"I don't really like most school lunches," freshman Paige Fricke said, a usual hot-lunch eater. "I eat those chicken nuggets, though."

Chicken nuggets are a student-favorite lunch.

"Anything to do with chicken, nuggets or popcorn is a favorite," Nutritionalist Lisa Frazier said.

Most of the time, the left line runs out of chicken nuggets in a couple of minutes. Some other student-favorite lunches include pizza and hamburgers.

The pre-made school lunches are put together every day by the cafeteria workers.

"Every day there is a different grab-and-go along with the lunch," Frazier said.

The nutrition staff makes the lunches for people who can't have the main lunch or don't want it. Additionally, if you cannot drink milk or have sugar, there are other drink options for purchase.

"We have to have either low sugar or no sugar, like in our Gatorades," Frazier said.

Something that the school is working on changing for next year is the milk options.

"Right now our milk, whether white or chocolate, is non-fat or skim milk," Frazier said. "Which means if you were to pour it, it is very watery."

She plans on making the milk whole or 2% fat because it is known to be healthier and gives you more energy.

"We are trying to see about bringing the whole milk back in," she said. "It is better for the

bones."

Another change that might be happening next year is the possibility of new lunches. This is because the USDA is trying to increase the portion of meat.

"They are trying to raise it to where the be products will actually be the main item on the menu," Fraizer said. "Or other things where you do actually need more protien, to make them look like a presentable, nutritional meal."

This introduces the possibility of new lunches like tacos.

## Briley Snyder shines in FFA club

By Chloe Kostal  
*Staff writer*

Junior Briley Snyder is a 3 year member of FFA, and the current club President. Leadership has been an important part of Snyder's involvement in FFA.

"Leadership, to me, means doing the right thing, even when it's hard or when you don't want to or when everyone else is doing the wrong thing," Snyder said.

Snyder has also enjoyed competing in FFA competitions as well as being on the trap

team.

"I have competed in Employment Skills for FFA where you do a mock interview," Snyder said. "I like how it not only gets me out of my comfort zone and allows me to try something new, but also it gets me ready for real life situations and helps me to become more prepared."

Snyder qualified for districts in her competition, which will give her a chance to make it to state.

For Employment skills, Snyder had to create a resume, write a cover letter, fill out a job



Photo Briley Snyder

**Juniors Briley Snyder and Clara Dawe finish 3rd & 4th at FFA Districts in Ag Education.**



Photo Briley Snyder

Junior Briley Snyder shoots at a trap meet.

application, and complete personal interviews, networking activities, and follow-up correspondence.

Snyder encourages everyone to see what FFA has to offer them.

"I would say that you do not need to live on a farm or have animals or

anything to be an FFA," Snyder said. "Anybody can be an FFA,



Photo Greg Vail

The girls Trap members show off their hardware from State.



Photo Briley Snyder

**Junior Briley Snyder lines up a shot.**

and honestly, it's one of the best clubs for anything in life."

Some advice Snyder has for a new FFA member is to come give it a try.

"It'll just make you a more well-rounded person."

## Vantage Point Brewing a must stop when at the lake

By Piper Ramsey  
Staff Writer

Coeur d'Alene's Vantage Point Brewing is a family-friendly restaurant. It has delicious food and yummy drinks. Located at 208 E. Coeur d'Alene Lake Drive, it's the perfect stop when you are in Coeur d'Alene for the day.

I went with my parents, Mindy and Lane Ramsey. The type of food they serve is simple, like pretzels, burgers, salads, sandwiches, wraps.

Vantage Brewing's building looks like a barn with its white, red and brown color scheme.

The barn doors can open up in the summer, so you can sit outside and have lunch or dinner. They have umbrellas that are connected with the tables for

shade when it's sunny out.

"It was a very open space so easy to have a conversation at your table," Mindy said. "They have garage doors that open up outside seating on the grass and chairs."

The restaurant also offers live music throughout the year. When my family and I were there, they had a country artist singing. It was really cool.

They also offer board games that you can play with your family or friends. In the summer, they have cornhole out in the grass where you could play with family.



French dip and garlic fries

"I enjoyed the layout and how you can play games at your table," Mindy said. "They had live music one time when we were there which I enjoyed. And the games

outside as well."

For food, I recommend the pretzel and cheese or the caesar salad. It was delicious.

The pretzel comes with two different kinds of cheese: beer cheese and a creamy cheese. The caesar salad had chicken for protein and it was delicious.

"The food was really good," Mindy said. "I enjoyed their sweet potato fries and a

Mediterranean wrap. The food was very reasonably priced."

My dad also enjoyed the experience.

"Amazing food, it made my taste buds tingle," Lane said. "Lots of games and entertainmentun outdoor seating with fire pits. A great place to hang out with a group of friends. They do have music but it's not very loud. They do have live music on the weekend which would make it tougher to talk."

This restaurant is a great place for meal. It had great food, drinks and entertainment. Go try it out with family and friends in CDA.

I give Vantage Brewing 4.5 stars because they had great food, good drinks, fun games you could play and nice people working there.

## Netflix's hit show *Stranger Things* makes a comeback for the series finale

By Paige Fricke  
Staff writer

Fans have been waiting for three years to finally know the end of *Stranger Things*. Was it worth the wait? Or was it a disappointing wrapup?

Season four was released in two parts in May and July of 2022. The end of season 4 shows that all the work the main characters put in to defeat the main antagonist, Vecna (Jamie Campbell Bower) was useless. The final scene of season four shows the opposite world, described as "The Upside Down," bleeding into the real world. Leaving a large cliffhanger for fans to ponder for 3 years. What would happen next?

Season 5 came out in three volumes. The beginning, volume one (episodes 1-4) aired on November 26, 2025. Volume two (episodes 5-7) aired on December 25, 2025. Finally,

volume 3 (episode 8, the series finale) aired on December 31, 2025. It was strategic to release each volume on holidays. Fans would be busy, but lingering in the back of their minds were new episodes of their favorite

show.

Season 5 starts approximately 18 months after season 4 ends. The government has taken over the small town of Hawkins, yet life seems semi-normal. The cracks between

the real world and the Upside Down were patched with what was described as "big metal band-aids."

It puzzles me a bit to think that the people of Hawkins

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Courtesy IMDB.com

## *Stranger Things* final season review (continued)

Continued from page 6

were just okay with all the government activity, and that no one really questions it at all. Wouldn't you think people would try and move away? Dozens of bad things happen in Hawkins throughout the 5 seasons and yet people seem to just be okay with it.

The special effects and CGI are a little lacking this season. In Episode 6, "Escape from Camazotz," Max Mayfield (Sadie Sink) and Holly Wheeler (Nell Fisher) have to escape the mind of Vecna through their own mental outlet. Max has had to do this before, in season 4, and those scenes were immaculate. It all seemed very real, and the special effects were spot on. But in those same types of scenes this season, they just looked poor and low-budget. The lighting seemed very cheap, whereas in season 4 it just seemed so much more believable and real. It seems like they didn't put that much effort into it.

However, in the very first episode, we see a scene from the timeline of season one. Season one released in 2016, and season five released nearly 10 years later. Obviously, people age, including actors and actresses. So in order to capture a scene from that timeline, you need a look-alike actor that's around the same age as the original actor from the original scene. In the scene, we see Will Byers (Noah Schnapp) being chased in the Upside Down by a Demogorgan, a creature of that world. They heavily used CGI in these scenes, to make it look and feel like the original young Schnapp. I think the special effects team did a great job with this



Courtesy IMDB.com

scene. The young actor picked to play young Will was Luke Kokotek. You will never find someone that looks exactly like someone else randomly, but this was a great pick. Their mannerisms and facial expressions are very similar. So, not all of the special effects were poor.

The new characters introduced in this season are easy to like and notable. Holly Wheeler (Nell Fisher) isn't a new character, we've seen her in all the previous seasons due to being the younger sister of main characters Mike Wheeler (Finn Wolfhard) and Nancy Wheeler (Natalia Dyer). However, Holly's actor switched in the new season. In seasons 1-4, she was played by young twins Anniston and Tinsley Price. But the switch was a good switch, Fisher's acting is really good. She's Australian, and for the role she has to use an American accent. She executed this perfectly. It's really impressive for a 14 year-old actress.

Derek Turnbow (Jake Connelly) is a brand new character this season. He quickly



Courtesy IMDB.com

became a fan favorite, due to his funny personality and catchphrases. I think he was a good comedic addition to the group and a change of scenery.

As for the actual plot, the main plot was satisfying. However, with the plot, there were a lot of plot holes that left a feeling of "wait what happened after that?" This is probably one of the biggest complaints fans have.

The soundtrack of the show in general is absolutely amazing. It features artists from the 70's, and more notably the 80's, when the show is based, such as Madonna, Bon Jovi, Cyndi Lauper, Foreigner, Journey, Micheal Jackson, Prince, Fleetwood Mac and David Bowie. Kate Bush plays a big role in the last two seasons once we find out in season four that music plays a big role in escaping "Vecna's Curse."

Kate Bush's "Running up That Hill" is Max Mayfield's favorite song, first showcased in season four but carried through to season five. In season four, the song proves to be Max's outlet to be able to escape Vecna's Curse. When she gets stuck in a coma at the end of season four, Lucas Sinclair (Caleb McLaughlin) is seen playing Max's favorite song at the end of her hospital bed knowing it can get her out of it.

Other than Kate Bush, a lot of the other songs are by some of the 80's most popular artists. In the epilogue of season five, we hear "Landslide" by Fleetwood Mac. This is a very emotional pick, and really just captures the nostalgia of the show for some. Also Through season five, we hear songs like; "I Think We're Alone Now" by Tiffany, "Rockin' Robin" by Micheal Jackson, "Upside Down" by Diana Ross, "Purple Rain" by Prince, "Fernando" By Abba, and probably my favorite, "Heroes" by David Bowie. The placement of some of these songs are very well thought out. "Rockin' Robin" by Micheal Jackson is referenced by one of the main characters, Robin Buckley (Maya Hawke.) It acts as almost her theme-song, which adds a fun effect.

Overall, it was a good wrapup season. Some things definitely could've been tweaked, but it was a satisfying end to an amazing show. It felt very nostalgic to come back one last time for the finale, considering the gap between seasons was three years. 100% worth watching.

## How To Train Your Dragon fun update to original cartoon

By Piper Ramsey  
Staff Writer

Last summer's *How to Train Your Dragon* was a great movie. It's based on the book by Cressida Cowell.

There is so much that happens in this movie. The non-stop action makes it very entertaining to watch. This version brings the popular animated series to life. My favorite part is when the boy and dragon get along together and become good friends.

In the movie *How to Train Your Dragon*, the main characters Hiccup (Mason Thames) and Astrid (Nico Parker) don't really like each other in the beginning, but then they become friends by the end.

There is a pet black dragon that would hurt humans. Hiccup shows his braveness and confidence and becomes good friends with Toothless the dragon. Hiccup finds him when Toothless tail gets hurt and then decides to help him fly. Hiccup makes him a wing so it can fly starting their friendship.

The main characters in this movie are Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III (Mason Thames)



Courtesy Universal Studios

and Astrid Hofferson (Nico Parker). When it gets to the end of the movie, they have a great friendship together. In the beginning of the movie, Hiccup has a little bit of feeling for Astrid.

The cast is full of your favorite characters from the animated version. Stoick the Vast (Gerard Butler), who is Hiccup's father. Gobber the Belch (Nick Frost) is the veteran warrior. Snotlout (Gabriel Howell) is one of the tritagonists, along with Fishlegs (Julian Dennison). Ruffnut (Bronwyn James) and Truffaut (Harry Trevaldwy) the twins round out the gang.

There wasn't a lot of music in the movie. There is a song called Test Drive in the movie. It's pretty decent though it wasn't my favorite. There was more action happening in the movie than music going on.

Anna Lapwood composed the music for *How to Train Your Dragon*. The score was full of Scottish influence featuring bagpipes, fiddles and whistles to highlight the Viking setting. There wasn't a whole lot of emotion from the songs, it was just cool music that made the movie better.

I think it was a good movie. I would rate this a 5/5. It has

lots going on which made it enjoyable to watch and the characters were funny. How to train your dragon is rated PG. They rated the movie a 97% audience score on rotten tomatoes and 77% critic score. I think it's a great movie to watch with your family and friends.



Courtesy Universal Studios

## Basketball teams finished Wrestling finishes 6th seasons hitting goals

By Piper Ramsey  
Staff Writer

The boys and girls basketball teams had great seasons. Coach Garret Sawyer and the girls varsity team went 21-9, just missing qualifying for state.

"There were a lot of things that went really well throughout the season," Sawyer said. "We saw a lot of different girls step up at different moments in games and practices. Another thing that went really well for us was our team continuing to grow together and develop into the program and culture that we are trying to build."

Sawyer said their goal "will be to continue improving in our discipline and execution of our team principals and philosophies. I am so proud of all our girls and how they continued to grow together as a team and be there to support and push one another to be the best they could be."

The season ended at Districts for the girls team.

"We faced different challenges from different teams throughout the year. Reardan, Lind-Ritzville, and Colfax were all very competitive games. Winning at Colfax was a big win for our team, as it was a good win over a rival and also clinched our spot as League champs for the second straight year."

The boys capped off their season with a return to the state tournament. Coach Kyle Olson's boys varsity team went 15-9, losing in the Elite 8 round of the state tournament.

"I think this year's group did a tremendous job embracing the challenge and the mindset we are 'reloading' not 'rebuilding' this season," Olson said.

"We graduated 8 seniors last season and had every reason to call this season a rebuild season, and that was not the case. I think when you start to have that mindset you put a limit on what your true potential would look like. Although bringing home some Saturday hardware would have been awesome, it was still a huge accomplishment to make it to the double elimination portion of the state tournament."

The boys faced adversity throughout the season as they fought for a spot in the State tournament.

"Key player injuries, playing games shorthanded, and what seemed like a higher than normal amount of sickness throughout the season," Olson said. "Our next man up philosophy was consistently challenged. We never made excuses, never gave ourselves an out to not compete. It was always 'next play' or 'next man up.'"

The team's philosophy also allowed for new players to step up.

"John Mendenhall stood out to me the most during the season," Olson said. "His improvement, willingness to be challenged and vulnerable massively stood out to me. Our young players consistently rose to every occasion and opportunity that was given to them."

The team faced a tough route through state.

"We played in 4 loser-out games throughout the post season and won 3 of the 4. All of those wins were huge and different guys stepped up big in each of those games."

Congratulations to both teams on a great run.

By Chloe Kostal  
Staff Writer

The boys wrestling team took 6th over all as a team, and junior Elle Krug placed 6th in her weight class in the girls tournament.

"We were unranked all season long," coach Matt Smith said. "We finished in sixth place as a team, and we had state placers. Grayson Bake was fourth, Quentin Malone was fourth, Barrett Murphy was fourth, Kope Pedersen was eighth, Quincy Paxton was fifth, Noah Baker was eighth. Elle Krug was sixth."

Though unranked all season, Freeman had 7 state placers.

"Our team goals were to come together as a team, compete really hard," Smith said.

Their number one goal this season was to focus on how they compete, whether they won or lost.

"The highlight for the end of the season, for me, was Noah Baker going into the state tournament after placing eighth in the state qualifier," Smith said.



Photo Pia Longinotti

Junior Elle Krug wins her district championship match.



Photo Pia Longinotti

Senior Quentin Malone looks for an opening.



Photo Nicci Exner

Senior Tucker Hawk circles his opponent on senior night.



Photo Pia Longinotti

Senior Noah Baker finishes 8th at districts to qualify for state.

# Fiona Anderson vaults her way into state #1

By Audrey Santman  
Staff Writer

Junior Fiona Anderson is a great track and field athlete. She is best known for the pole vault- reaching heights over 12 feet.

Her secondary event is usually the 200-meter dash, where she consistently runs in 26-27 seconds.

Last year at state, Anderson was the state champion for pole vault, reaching 10' 6". Her 4 x 200 relay team also placed first place in state. Anderson finished 5th in the 100m dash and 3rd in the 4 x 100 relay.



Photo Lane Matthews

**Anderson's media day picture showing off her state medals from 2025.**

Recently, Anderson went to nationals for pole vault.

"It didn't go quite as I hoped," Anderson said. "I was having a good time though."

Anderson placed 13th, which is still very impressive.

This year, Anderson hopes to be able to set new records and improve on her current records.

"I'm hoping to break the 100m school record, lower my 200m school record, and vault 12 feet consistently," she said.

She also hopes to break the 2B pole

vault record of 12' 5".

Anderson started competing competitively in pole vault her freshman year. Before that, she did gymnastics for 12 years.

The hardest part of track for Anderson is not doing her best.

"But if I don't PR, or get close to my PR, I'm like, why did I underperform?"

Another difficult part of track and field is the workouts.

"Some of the workouts can be rough," Anderson said. "It's hard to get through those, but afterwards you feel really good."

At the recent Ezra Gorden Invention-al, Anderson won the 400, with a time of one minute. She set her the school record in pole vault at the Mooberry Relays on April 25. She cleared a height of 12'.

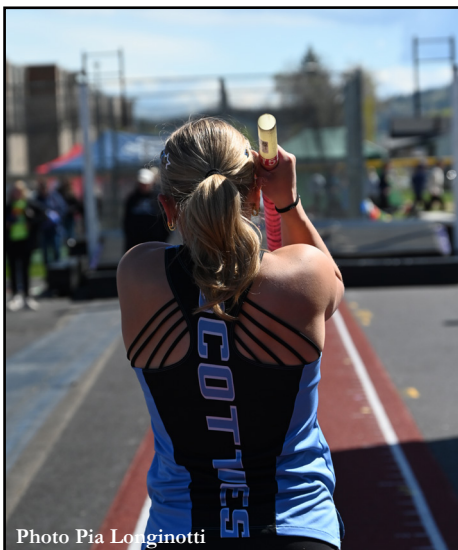


Photo Pia Longinotti

**Anderson sets up for her vault attempt.**



Photo Pia Longinotti

**Anderson sets school record of 12'0" at the Mooberry Relays on April 25.**



Photo Pia Longinotti

**Anderson clears the bar easily as she works her way to 12' at the Mooberry Relay.**