



# THE BEAR

## Student Newspaper

October 19, 2023 WBHS Volume 27 Issue 1  
900 W. Main St., West Branch, IA 52358



**Grease Cast Members.** *Front Row:* Nolan Staker (Danny), Nina Torkelson (Sandy) *Middle Row:* Robby Boaz (Doody), Eli Farmer (Sonny), Josh Kroemer (Roger), Nate Hills (Kenickie), Olivia Naber (Rizzo), Miley Shields (Jan), Kaylee Kettler (Frenchy), Maddie Reed (Marty), Peyton Braddock (Patty), Jenie Gomez (Cha Cha). *Back Row:* Lynden MacGillivray (Eugene), Diego Carillo (Vince Fontaine), Lincoln Naber (Johnny Casino), Terri Zumbahlen - standing in for Ellie Walsh (Mrs. Lynch). *Photo By Brooklyn Nash.*

## ADMIT ONE ALL: GREASE TAKES CENTER STAGE OCT. 28 & 29

Miley Shields  
Staff Writer

For the first time since 2014 with the show *Tarzan*, WBHS has restarted the musical theater program under the direction of Chris Reed and Mary Denmead. Many students are excited for this year's musical, *Grease*.

*Grease* tickets are now on sale in the HS office. The dates of the musical are Sat., Oct. 28 at 7:00 p.m. and Sun., Oct. 29 at 2:00 p.m. in the Performing Arts Center. The price to attend is \$10.00 for adults and \$5.00 per student.

Students in grades 3-8 will get a free performance of *Grease* on Thurs., Oct. 26 at 9:00 a.m. This also serves as the the musical dress rehearsal.

While there is a class for it (choir), musical participants have also had to meet in the evenings from 6:30-9:30 to put together the big show.

There are several leaders in

charge of different parts of the show.

Reed takes care of vocal direction for ensemble and solo work.

Denmead works with blocking the stage and the acting portion of the musical.

Arlen Ottmar, the accompanist for the choir in previous years, works with the onstage orchestra.

Reed also mentioned that a large part of what goes into having a good show is prop work and stage setup, and parents of the cast have been helping out with the set.

The orchestra will be directed onstage by Ottmar; he will be conducting while playing keyboard.

Since the orchestra will actually be on stage, it will be small and will consist only of a piano, electric guitar, drums, bass guitar, and two tenor saxophones.

Band Director Samuel Ogilvie will also help out alongside Lou Pine with the individuals in the orchestra,

which includes junior Eli Hansen on bass guitar, juniors Nora Ziehr and Keaton Norfleet on tenor saxophone, sophomore Ewan Arlen on drums, and alumni Baylee Piegors playing electric guitar.

Senior cast member Maddie Reed said, "I am looking forward to all

of it! I am happy for the challenge of playing Marty, and I am excited to sing her solo. I think it will be a new experience and a lot of fun! I especially think the bigger dance routines will be really cool once they are all put together."



Director Mary Denmead (right) helps *Grease* hopefuls Jordan Waters and Diego Carillo enhance their characters during musical theater auditions. *Photo By Olivia Naber.*

## MAIN STREET WEST BRANCH DEBUTS NEW GRADUATION HONOR CORD

Katey Noble  
Co-Editor-in-Chief

Jessi Simon, executive director of Main Street West Branch, has worked alongside the development group's organizational committee to create a new graduation cord for students to earn within their four years at WBHS.

Simon said, "Eligible 'colorful cord' hours can be earned by assisting Main Street West Branch with downtown projects and events."

According to Simon, this consists of "volunteer shifts at events, including Hoover's Hometown Days, Summer Kickoff, Fall Fest, Sweets for Success, and Christmas Past; and volunteer work assisting the Main Street director with office tasks [based on skills, interests, and current office needs]."

Office tasks could be hanging posters or delivering brochures to promote an upcoming event, assembling 'Welcome Kits' for new residents, decorating Christmas trees in preparation for the Festival of Trees, creating social media content, assembling gift baskets for a silent auction, or cleaning out a closet.



Students could also help out with seasonal downtown beautification projects, like street sweeps, watering flowers, and holiday decorating.

Serving on a Main Street Committee of your choice (meet monthly via Zoom) is a great way to get your voice heard and help shape events and activities in the community. Check out each of

the committees and what they focus on at:

[mainstreetwestbranch.org/support](https://www.mainstreetwestbranch.org/support)

To earn a "Colorful Cord," students will need to devote 50 hours of volunteer time at these Main Street events during their four years of high school.

The 50-hour policy does not apply to the class of 2024 or the class of 2025. As for the class of 2026 and beyond, they must complete the required 50 hours.

The class of 2024 is required to volunteer for 20 hours, and the class of 2025 is required to so 35 hours.

Similar to the Silver Cord, once a student volunteers for the required amount of hours, they will receive the cord to wear at graduation.

Simon added, "The best way to learn about upcoming opportunities to earn Colorful Cord hours is to join our E-Mail List by visiting <https://www.mainstreetwestbranch.org/cords> and then also follow us on social media for announcements about upcoming events and projects. Main Street West Branch is active on Instagram and Facebook."



Main Street West Branch's new "Colorful Cord" can be earned by dedicating service hours on behalf of Main Street West Branch. *Photo provided by Jessi Simon.*

### Trick or Treating for St. Jude

WBHS National Honor Society members will be coming around and collecting donations to send to the St. Jude Childrens Research Hospital during the hours of trick or treating. Students will have more info. at this time. **Thank you for supporting this cause.**



### NHS PUMPKIN CARVING CONTEST

BEST OVERALL  
MOST CREATIVE  
MOST DIFFICULT



All submissions due October 24th

Voting: October 25-27

Winners announced October 27th



### WBHS National Honor Society Fundraiser

**\$8**

Students will be available for purchase. The \$8.00 price is for the glasses only. The honor society will be on Monday, October 23rd.

Show your school spirit with a new Pura Vida Bracelet! Your purchase will fuel our organization and all the awesome events we host.

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October 19, 2023

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# WBR

## WEST BRANCH ROOFING

### GO BEARS!



## STUDENT GOVERNMENT ORGANIZES HOMECOMING WEEK

Reese Trepanier, Peyton Braddock crowned 2023 King & Queen

Ashlynn Nash  
Co-Photography-Editor-in-Chief

Larkin Brown  
Staff Writer & Photographer

WBHS began its annual Homecoming Week festivities with a bang on September 24 with the PowderPuff games.

Seniors took the win after two games. They first played the freshman team, followed by the sophomore team. Quarterback Kylie Pickett threw mainly to lead running back Emily Coleman.

"You know, I just went out there and did my thing," said Coleman. Coleman ended her night with five touchdowns and one interception.

After Powder-Puff wrapped up, the next event for students PJ day on Monday. Many students and staff enjoyed this by wearing their comfiest pajamas.

Along with the dress up spirit day, there were F/S and JV Volleyball games against Lisbon. At Lisbon, JV Bears had a hard fight but took the win in five sets.

"At times we didn't play as well as we could've, but we ended with a strong finish," said senior Madelyn Stout. Stout set primarily throughout the match, but was a middle hitter as well.

F/S Football played against Beckman Catholic at Dyersville and won 20-14.

After Monday, Tuesday was Groutfit Day. Students participated by wearing all gray.

Senior Katey Noble said, "I liked groutfit day because mostly everyone could do it. Everyone was included!"

A swim meet took place at Mercer against Iowa City West High. Our only Bearhawk swimmer Larkin Brown, sophomore took part in the 200 medley free and the 100 free. City High lost the meet to West High.

Wednesday was a big day. At school, students were encouraged to dress up in their best Barbie or Ken attire. Many wore pink, but some students took the next step, and dressed up as specific characters, or Barbies over the years.

Senior Maryam Martin said, "I feel like nobody really dressed up for this theme, there could have been more school spirit."

Senior Caleb Pedersen described, "I thought it was a good idea, and it was fun."

While students had an enjoyable day, they were also looking forward to the evening. Student Government had its annual Homecoming Parade throughout the town, with the Coronation ceremony held afterwards at the Little Rose Bowl.

Homecoming Queen candidates were Madelyn Stout, Claire Jarrett, Alyse Klinkkammer, and Nina Torkelson. Homecoming King candidates were Logan Wright, Trenton Schutte, Reese Trepanier, Diego Carrillo, and Cameron Gingerich. Joelle Haas, a foreign exchange student from Switzerland, was also an honorary court member.

Along with this year's court members, alumni Aiden Dingbaum and Karley Staker were also invited back for the ceremony, as last year's king and queen, Carver Boelk and Bailey Walker, were not able to return. Accompanying them were crown bearers Avery Rogers and Emmet Lewis.

Olivia Naber and Caleb Pedersen emceed the dance. They began by greeting the community and celebrating the 2023 Grand Marshal selections. WBHS Student Government chose to honor the Butch Pedersen family this year.

Next, court members were commemorated and descriptions of each were



Homecoming Court. Diego Carrillo, Cameron Gingerich, Joelle Haas, Nina Torkelson, Alyse Klinkkammer, Reese Trepanier, Peyton Braddock, Claire Jarrett, Madelyn Stout, Logan Wright, Trenton Schutte. Photo by Ashlynn Nash.

read as they walked the field. The envelope was handed to the emcees with the official king and queen results inside. The moment everyone had been waiting for was about to arrive.

The 2023 Homecoming King was Trepanier. Reese Trepanier is a football captain, a part of Student Government, SALT, and much more.

Congratulations to Trepanier and all other king candidates!

Braddock is the official 2023 Homecoming Queen. Peyton Braddock is a varsity cheer captain, active in choir and show choir, and Student Government senior class president, amongst other activities. Congratulations to Braddock for being nominated as queen!

The dress up day on Thursday was BBQ Dads vs. Soccer Moms.

Sophomore Lexi Isabel said, "I play soccer, so it made me feel included because I play and I want to be a mom as well."

Our West Branch bears volleyball team took on the Durant wildcats for Senior Night. The bears trailed 17-25 on the first set. Then the bears took over and won the second set 25-23. The bears still took the win on the third set 26-24. With the last and final set, the bears took the win 25-18.

The dress up day Friday was sprit day.

Sophomore Brenna Benskin said, "I enjoyed seeing everyone support the school and showing school sprit."

After the Friday Pep Rally, emceed by Olivia Naber, Julia Herring, and Anthony Heitzman, the Powder Buff volleyball games began in the gym, along with a variety of other activity options.

Freshman Keaton gates said, "Everyone showed up and I think it was a good time."

Sophomore Reese Gingerich said, "I think it was fun, but I don't think the girls should coach anymore."

In the week-long school spirit competition, the winning class was Sophomores with 1,486 points. In a close second were the Freshmen with 1,372 points. In third place were Juniors with 1,281 points. and in fourth place was the Senior class with 970 points.

The school donated 126 items to the local food pantry, and also had two overflowing boxes of bear apparel that was donated for the apparel drive.

The West Branch Bears Football team took a win for the big homecoming game against Regina; the final score was 21-17.

The last homecoming event that took place was the dance. Since the Sophomores won the spirit competition, they earned half-price tickets to get into the dance. The dance started at 8:30pm and went to 11:00pm, ending a week of Homecoming festivities.



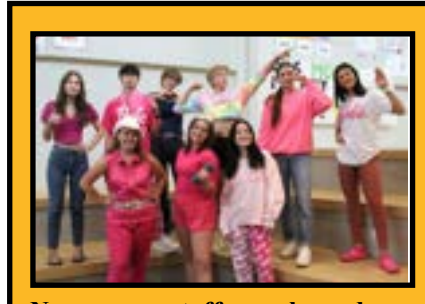
Student Government. Top Row: Elliot Hinkhouse, Will Tidrick, sophomore class President Lincoln Naber, junior class President Josh Kroemer, Alex Cantrell, freshman class President Anthony Heitzman, Nolan Staker, Lynden MacGillivray, Nate Hills, Reese Trepanier. Middle Row: Addi Schultes, Lexi Skay, Caitlyn Harrison, Whitney Spratt, Larkin Brown, senior class President Peyton Braddock, Miley Shields, Keegan Hansen, Maddie Reed, Maryam Martin, Kaylee Kettler, Ashlynn Nash, Caleb Pedersen. Bottom Row: Claire Jarrett, Alyssa Pierce, Kennedy Simpson, Lyla Popkes, social media coordinator Jordan Waters, treasurer Nora Ziehr, secretary Nina Torkelson, president Olivia Naber. Not pictured: Julia Herring, Saylee Gingerich, Calvin Clemens, Layla Samuelson, Madelyn Stout. Photo by Brooklyn Nash.



Homecoming King and Queen Reese Trepanier and Peyton Braddock. Photo by Ashlynn Nash.



Senior Alyse Klinkkammer and freshman Grace Hamann face off during PowderPuff. Photo by Ashlynn Nash.



Newspaper staff members dress for Barbie and Ken Day. Top row: Katey Noble, Caleb Pedersen, Keaton Norfleet, Olivia Naber, Kya Montgomery, Claire Jarrett. Bottom Row: Brooklyn Nash, Ashlynn Nash, Maryam Martin. Photo by Larkin Brown.



Sophomores Audrey Watt and Aizlyn Marsh dress up in animal onesies for PJ day. Photo by Brooklyn Nash.



Miranda Schwickerath passes the ball to a PowderBuff teammate. Photo by Olivia Naber.



Abby Noelck, Kristen Westpheling and Jessica Taylor dress for BBQ Dad vs. Soccer Mom day. Photo by Larkin Brown.

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# Student Life

# 4

October 19, 2023

## THREE NEWSPAPER EDITORS ATTEND U OF I JOURNALISM SUMMER CAMP

**Olivia Naber**  
**Ashlynn Nash**  
**Brooklyn Nash**  
*Co-Editors-in-Chief*

Over the summer, *The Bear* editors Olivia Naber, Ashlynn Nash, and Brooklyn Nash attended the Iowa Summer Journalism Workshop in Iowa City, Iowa. From July 23-27, the three Bears were stationed on the Iowa campus, hard at work on various workshop assignments. When registering for the camp, students were asked to choose from six different sessions that they wanted to partake in.

**Ashlynn Nash, Photo Editor-In-Chief for *The Bear*, chose the Photojournalism session with instructor Miranda Meyer. Read below for her personal account.**

### Ashlynn Nash

When I signed up for ISJW, I was unaware of the experience ahead of me. I had built up excitement for the camp, but nerves as well. I didn't know what to expect.

On the very first day, I carried my bags up to Catlett Residence Hall at the University of Iowa, which is where us campers would be staying over the course of the camp. I signed in with the camp counselors, and made my way to my room. My first impression of the room was that it was very nice, and I enjoyed the view.

The day we arrived was not scheduled as an academic workshop day, so once I settled into my room the only other thing to do was attend dinner at Burge Dining Hall. Brooklyn and I were roommates, so we navigated ourselves down to dinner and were impressed with the meal.

While at dinner, we sat and chatted with other campers. We were shocked to find that people around us were not from Iowa. Our dinner table included a girl from Wisconsin, a girl from Chicago, and a girl from New York.

After the first night and all of its socialization, I started to understand that ISJW was bigger than I had thought. The University of Iowa is a largely respected writing and journalism school, and I was beginning to see how lucky I was to have been there amongst these talented students.

Every moment from then on was intensely eye-opening. Between the workshops, the people, and the overall experience. I feel incredibly thankful for my decision to attend ISJW.

My instructor, Miranda Meyer, was very calm and friendly. She taught Photojournalism, the session I registered for, and focused on manual camera settings in our earlier days. After introducing this, we worked on

numerous photo prompts.

My favorite prompts included the one color assignment and the abstract assignment. The one color assignment consisted of picking a color of your choice, and then going out and capturing things only of that color. The abstract assignment required us to search for things out of the ordinary, and illustrate our own personal creativity within the photos we took.

I chose green as my color, and had great success in finding subjects and locations that worked for my taste. The abstract assignment was a bit harder as I was out of my comfort zone and was unsure of what to shoot. However, I ended up pleased with how my abstract photos turned out.

When we were not in the focused photography mindset, we could be caught at Burge Dining Hall, Catlett Residence Hall, or out exploring the streets of downtown Iowa City. At Burge we were fed breakfast, lunch and dinner between workshop sessions. At Catlett, we spent nights doing optional group bonding time.

During the duration of the camp, we did a lot of walking around. While most of the walking was for photography purposes, others included team bonding time. Over one instance, we had a scavenger hunt around the campus. A few things we searched for included Barb Wilson's house, a bird, and the Daily Iowan mural.

While I was only at the camp for around five days, I made some really good friends. Not only did Brooklyn and I get closer, I also made two other friends who I will always hold dear to me. They were both in my session, and both so incredibly talented.

Lily and David are their names. Lily is from Mt. Vernon and David lives in Finland. We were not close as a trio, but rather I spent a good amount of quality time with each of them.

It was so cool to meet so many people who share the same passions as me, and could make me feel like I had known them forever. It was beneficial for me to branch out of my hometown, and expand my understanding of not just photo taking, but of journalism as a whole.

The exposure of the camp also relit the fire I had inside of me for photography.

So came my time to leave, and I was extremely saddened. But, like they say, all good things must come to an end. Luckily, I was able to leave with newfound friends, ideas, and a refreshed passion.

I will always cherish the moments I spent at ISJW. If you are ever considering trying something new, take this as encourage-

ment to do so. You might just end up with positive lifelong memories.

**Brooklyn Nash, another Photo Editor-In-Chief for *The Bear*, was in the same session. Read further for her personal opinion.**

### Brooklyn Nash

When I was told that there would be a camp offered for Journalism at the U of I over the summer I became very excited. After discussing this opportunity with my parents and getting registered as a camper, all I could think about for days was how amazing this was going to be for me.

While the months went by after registering for the camp, the first day finally came. Once I got checked into my room, I decided to explore Catlett Residence Hall a little bit. Catlett Hall is one of the newest dorms on the U of I campus. It was very nice and had an amazing view of the Iowa River.

Once I got back I waited a little bit longer for Ashlynn's arrival. When she arrived we chatted for a bit before heading down to dinner. As Ashlynn and I

were waiting to get food from the buffet we started chatting with some of the girls at our table. I was shocked to find out that the majority of the girls at our table were not from Iowa.

After breakfast the following morning, we went to the Adler Journalism and Mass Communications Building. There, everyone in the camp gathered into a room where we met the counselors, workshop instructors and the host. All of the staff seemed very friendly and all had amazing stories about how they got involved with journalism.

While at this meeting we also learned everyone's names and where they were from. To my surprise, there were several kids from Chicago, three girls from New York City, a kid from Miami, and several more from other big cities.

Throughout the week in class, we were taught new techniques for taking better quality photos. To test these techniques, our instructor gave us a few photo assignments each day. For most of the assignments we were given a certain category for photos to experience different types of photography. Some of the categories included: One color, sunrise/sunset, shadows, abstract, and nature. Most of the photos for these assignments were taken in downtown Iowa City.

The whole camp took a trip to the Johnson County Fair where we also took some photos. We attempted to make a trip to the Coralville farmers market, but unfortunately, it was almost 95 degrees outside, so not many of the vendors showed up.

My favorite part of the camp had to be becoming closer to Ashlynn and meeting new people. Since Ashlynn and I were roommates, we spent a lot of time together in our dorm. There were a few nights that we stayed up pretty late and had some good laughs. Even outside of our dorm for the first few days we spent most of the time together before we started meeting new people.

Out of all the kids I met, there were a few that stuck out to me. Some I only got to talk to temporarily, but I got there socials afterwards so we could still talk. I still talk to quite a few of them today. There was one kid specifically, besides Ashlynn, that I enjoyed spending my time with. His name is David and he lives in Finland, Europe. David was very sweet to all of us at the camp, and he had some of the most amazing stories to tell. He has also traveled to several countries in his life, and he spends a lot of his time taking outstanding photos.

As the end of the camp arrived, I was sad, but I was very pleased with how the camp went. I wasn't sure what to expect at first, but I knew I would enjoy it no matter what. I definitely did enjoy it, but a lot more than I thought I would. It was a very good opportunity for me to increase my photography skills and I will forever remember the wonderful memories and friends that I made.

**Lastly, Olivia Naber, Head Editor-in-Chief of *The Bear*, took a different route. Naber journeyed into the world of personal writing, taught by Robert Peck.**

Read on for Naber's thoughts.

### Olivia Naber

For my entire high school career, I've been eagerly awaiting what comes next. While many are uncertain about what the future holds for them (and rightfully so—deciding what to do with the rest of your life is a daunting task), I've had my path laid out for me since elementary school. Writing, particularly creative writing, has always been both my strong suit and my greatest passion.

Little did I know that one of the foremost writing colleges in the world was right in my backyard.

From the moment I found out about the University of Iowa's prestigious writing programs, I knew that was where I wanted to end up. When I saw that Iowa was hosting a summer camp for high school journalists, it piqued my interest immediately, and I set about applying as soon as I could, eagerly awaiting more information. Imagine my delight when I heard that I had won a scholarship to attend the Personal Writing session of ISJW for free!

As I checked into my dormitory at Catlett Residence hall, the butterflies in my stomach fluttered frantically. I had never done anything like this before—stay away camps were foreign to me—and I had no idea what to expect.

I hit it off with my roommate right away and quickly realized the scope of Iowa's literary and journalistic influence; she had traveled all the way from her hometown of New York City solely to attend this camp.

Throughout the course of the camp, I met plenty of others who hailed from far-away places, from Chicago all the way to Finland. It astounded me that people were clamoring to visit a place I had known my whole life.

I had a lot of fun in the Personal Writing session with Robert Peck. We spent the first day defining personal writing and the editing process, testing out our revision skills on an unexpected medium: paper airplanes.

We created our initial aircrafts, threw them off the second floor of the Adler Journalism Building, evaluated their performance, and set off to create new "drafts," building off of what worked and what didn't to create something even better.

My plane, unfortunately, didn't perform very well (planes just aren't my strong suit), but it was a valuable lesson in not setting on the first draft.

I won't lie, getting the rest of my assignments for the week done was not an easy task. Over the course of the week, I worked on six different personal writing pieces, learning the full scope of what a personal writer can do.

Among my pieces was a piece on different types of English I speak, a mock-serious playground review, an interview of a fellow camper, an art criticism, a photo story about the Johnson County Fair, and an op-ed about blossoming through difficult times.

Making sure I got everything done to the standard I knew I was capable was a challenge, but the experience taught me to work under pressure to create a stellar piece.

When I didn't know how to move forth with my writing, I turned to Robert Peck, our session leader, for advice. I'm very grateful for him being there to help get ideas flowing and my words polished; being stuck in a writer's block is no fun for anyone.

Everything that I learned about writing at ISJW, I hope to bring back to *The Bear* to improve not only my writing, but the writing of all of our staff members.

Not only did I hone my writing skills, but I built lifetime connections with my fellow campers. Being around people who think and work like me allowed me to both learn from them and impart my knowledge. Because many of them also plan on attending the University of Iowa, I know that I'll have some familiar faces as I begin my journey.

All in all, my ISJW experience was well worth it and well-rounded, making for an experience that I'm unlikely to forget.

In a way, ISJW has given me the opportunity to have a trial run of my future life as a Hawkeye. The literary and journalistic culture at Iowa excites me to no end, and I can't wait to see what's in store for me.

Of course, I'm savoring every moment of high school that I can, but my camp experience enhanced my excitement for the college life that awaits me next year.



Ashlynn Nash, Brooklyn Nash, Olivia Naber

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## ROBERTSON AND THOMPSON RECEIVE LONG-AWAITED UPGRADES

## ALL ABOUT NEW SCIENCE TEACHER AUSTIN CURTISS



Students in animal science enjoy new FFA and agriculture room. Photo taken by Caitlyn Harrison.

**Maryam Martin**  
Staff Writer

WBHS has been under construction since 2020, and building a new school comes with a lot of work. There are many improvements still happening around the new school since its grand opening in the 2021-2022 school year. One area that has been pushed off until recently are the Agriculture and ACE rooms. The rooms began construction this year when school was let out and continued construction throughout the whole summer.

Randy Robertson's ACE room was one of the rooms that went into construction. Many different things were added and revamped in his room. To name a few: new lighting, downdraft welding tables, electrical reel drops, lab tables, and a foundry area.

More space was added to the room which allowed space for more new machines.

Robertson said, "Storage has been nice with new cabinets and drawers. We now have room to use some other machines that we did not have room for

earlier."

With more space and new things being added to the room, this gives students more opportunities. Students seem to be more involved and interested in their learning.

Robertson said, "The students have taken great pride in this new CTE facility and I have noticed they do extra work to keep up with daily project work. They take more pride in doing quality work on projects which is a very important trait to get students to understand."

Robertson expresses great gratitude and loves all the new equipment his new room holds.

Robertson said, "This is a beautiful facility and we are very thankful for all the support from the administration, school board and the entire community. We have really enjoyed the first four weeks of school being in such a great updated facility."

Renee Thompson's Ag room was the second room that underwent construction. One main improvement that got added to her room was a wet lab space with sinks. There was no proper area to do labs in the old classroom. This

will allow her students to become even more hands-on.

Space utilization is another thing that has played a big role in the improvements.

Thompson said, "The biggest improvement is the space utilization between career and technical education classrooms, labs, and shop spaces. The old configuration left a lot of unused space/difficult to use space and the new setup is much better for that." The old classrooms had lots of awkward closets and spaces.

One main event Thompson puts on every year is the plant sale that raises money for the FFA. The greenhouse has started to deteriorate due to two hail storms hitting. This has raised questions about a new one, but that will come with a pricey tag. Thompson said, "Funding is a limitation as greenhouses tend to be very expensive. There are grant opportunities that I am currently looking into but my guess is that improvements would not be made this school year." She will work around the greenhouse and keep her classes going as planned.

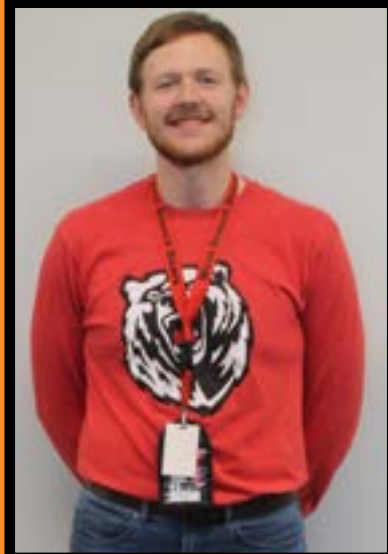


Photo by Olivia Naber.

**Q: Where are you from?**

A: I grew up in Coralville

**Q: Where did you attend high school and college?**

A: I went to Iowa City West High and then the University of Iowa.

**Q: How are you enjoying West Branch?**

A: It's been great. I feel like the staff and students have all welcomed and accepted me and I've really enjoyed all the relationships I've started to build so far.

**Q: What have the newly offered science courses been like? Are you enjoying them?**

A: Absolutely. We now offer a Project Lead the Way class called Human Body Systems where you can learn all about the anatomy and functions of the different organ systems that make us up. My favorite part of the class so far is the 2 foot tall skeletons called "Manikens" that the students receive and can add clay to, showing the muscles and other body parts. It makes for a really good hands-on activity to help learn the content.

**Q: What is your favorite animal and why?**

A: I love dogs. My family has a 2 year old golden retriever named Quincy. The biggest reason to like dogs is that they are so loyal and just love the attention from humans. It's like having another family member.

**Q: What is your favorite science topic/term to teach and why?**

A: I really like teaching about the body systems, mainly because that's a topic that students love to learn about. It is something they can see with their eyes, rather than microscopic processes, so it feels like a more interesting and worthwhile topic to learn about.

## GET TO KNOW NEW HISTORY STUDENT TEACHER COLBY VOS



Photo by Olivia Naber.

**Q: What's your major(s)?**

A: Secondary Education and History

**Q: What made you want to become a teacher?**

A: I think that my impact on the world boils down to the impact that I make on students and that is what I can do to make the world a better place.

**Q: What classes are you helping with?**

A: World History, Government, Women's History

**Q: What are your hobbies/interests?**

A: Reading, Movies, Dungeons and Dragons. I have recently got into running and want to attempt a half Ironman in June.

**Q: What vegetable do think you most resemble and why?**

A: Bell Pepper because it is versatile.

**Q: If you could change your first name, what would you pick and why?**

A: I would probably just change it to my middle name, Ryan. I wouldn't want to do something too out there because I'm

so used to the sound of my own name.

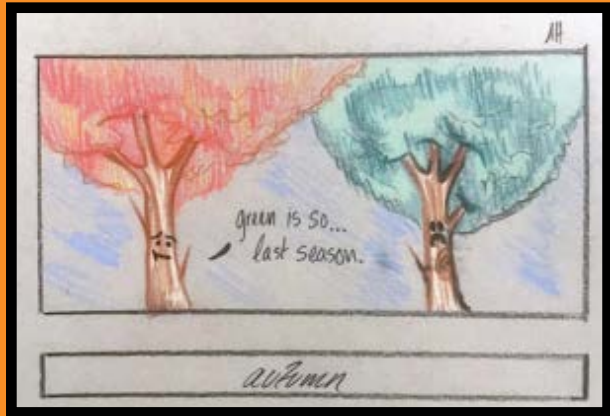
**Q: If you could be any animal, which one would you choose to be and why?**

A: A bear. They seem like they enjoy their sleep and also just have a pretty chill life out in the wild.

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Comic  
Corner

Created by  
Ava Hazelwood.





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## FOOTBALL SEASON BRINGS MANY CHANGES

Miley Shields  
Staff Writer

The Bears have had high expectations this year after coming off of a winning season the previous year. The season started by losing the first two games, but as the season progressed they redeemed themselves.

Coach John Hierseman said "The schedule is extremely hard this year and that could be looked at as a negative, but really it's made us better by playing better competition."

It can be seen already that starting the season with some really difficult games has helped the football team improve their skills to gain a few more wins.

This year is a big change from previous years after the loss of head coach Butch Pederson. All of the coaches this year have had to step up and help handle responsibilities that Butch passed down to each of them along with their previous coaching jobs. Oftentimes when decisions are being made, they think, "what would Butch have done?"

This season the captains for the team are Trenton Schutte, Logan Wright, Reese Trepanier, and Cale Seydel. More

people than the captains have been stepping up this year. Many different players have been leaders not only in games but in practice as well. Some players get highlighted at games and mentioned in



Zach Capper runs the ball in for a touchdown against Beckman Catholic. Photo by Keaton Norfleet.

interviews but there are also so many players that are stepping up in practice everyday and getting better and better each practice without the spotlight.

The football team this year seems to have much more depth than pre-

vious years. Many of the players are capable of so much, especially when it comes to being able to play their position while also being able to back up another position, which allows for so much work

Not all teams have the same type of close-knit family environment as the West Branch football program. The bears have something that a lot of other teams don't—the flexibility to work hard in different positions and play them all well. This gives the team an advantage over the teams that may not have that ability.

For many players, the team they wanted to beat most was Regina, and they succeeded. Regina was originally ranked third in the state as an undefeated team until they played the Bears.

A part of the team many think helped lead them to this success is sophomore quarterback Brennen Dale. Although Dale's skill in the position is leading the team to victory, every win is earned by a team of tough players and their ability to play their positions well.

The West Branch football team has proven to be a family throughout the program and this year is no different. Each player can always improve with the help of their fellow players. Each year players come and go but there is always one constant on the team and that is that it will always be a family.

## FOOTBALL

Q&A  
Miley Shields  
Staff Writer

Q: What team do/did you want to beat the most? Why?

**DIEGO CARILLO:** "Regina, they are tough people and why not beat our main rival?"

**GRIFFIN SEYDEL:** "Wilton because we beat them last year so they are going to try to beat us."

Q: Do you have any football superstitions? ("Lucky" clothes, things that are bad luck, etc.) If so, please tell us yours.

**REESE TREPANIER:** "I usually do the same things everyday during football, superstitions are always the highest. I re-

member last year me and Tye Hughes were driving and a black cat ran in front of us. So we stopped the car and got out and walked backwards where it passed us and spun in a circle three times then said something because online it said that is how you reverse bad luck from a black cat."

**MICHAEL MONTGOMERY:** "Big Poppa and Hypnotize by Notorious B.I.G have to be my last two songs I listen to before I take my headphones off."

Q: Who is the most fun person to hit on the team in practice and why?

**KEATON GATES:** "Cale Seydel because it just something different each time. He knows how to run the ball."

**REESE GINGERICH:** "Ethan Miller because he's small."

to be done in practice and on the field. Hierseman says "This group works hard and... there's a lot of depth so that helps make practice competitive as there are so many good players going against each other in practice."



Kya Montgomery joins the huddle with the team after getting a kill. Photo by Olivia Naber.

Kya Montgomery  
Staff Writer

What do you do to get your head in the game? Do you have any pre-game rituals or things you do to hype yourself up? If so, tell us.

**EMILY COLEMAN:** "I usually listen to music and also doing my teammates hair really helps me just relax and I just tell myself this is the last time I play this team do your best. and also that I'm good enough and to trust myself."

**KYA MONTGOMERY:** "Before every game I have to drink an Alani or some type of energy drink and I also listen to

## VOLLEYBALL

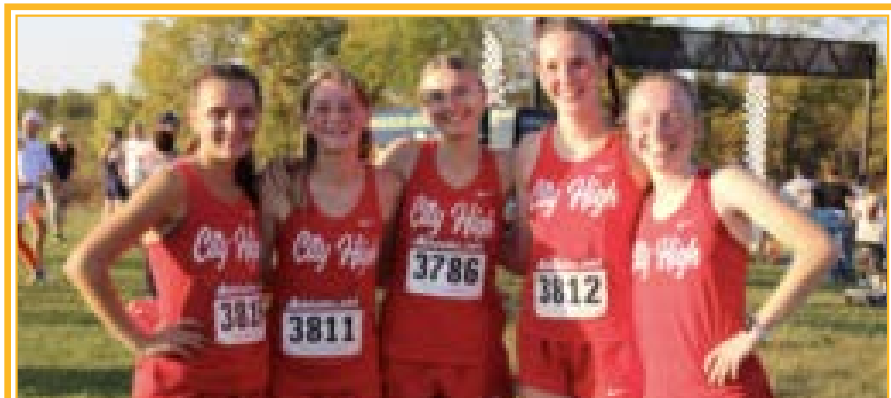
Q&A

the same playlist before every game. I do almost the same stretching routine before every game as well."

What is/has been your favorite team to play against and why?

**CLAIRE JARRETT:** "So far this season, Mid-Prairie has probably been my favorite team to play. We all played really well together and continued to play hard till it was over."

**EMMA WOLF:** "My favorite team to play was Regina because we won and we all played really well."



From left to right: Nora Ziehr, Cassie Swisher, Joelle Haas, Nina Torkelson, and Addi Schultes. Photo Contributed by Addi Schultes.

## CROSS COUNTRY

Q&A  
Caitlyn Harrison  
Staff Writer

Q: What course is the most difficult to run? Why?

**NINA TORKELSON:** "The hardest course to run is probably at the Pleasant Valley meet in Bettendorf. It's also the most fun though. There are three massive hills that are named: The Exterminator, the Exasperator, and the Incinerator. It's also harder because these hills come later

on in the race when you're already tired."

**CAITLYN HARRISON:** "Pleasant Valley is definitely the hardest course to run. The hills there are steeper than any other hills I've ever seen. The hills have street signs with names such as: incinerator, exasperator and exterminator."

**LYNDEN MACGILLIVRAY:** "Pleasant Valley, because there are hills that need netting to help you grip on to the trail."

**PRESTON MAYHEW:** "The most difficult course was Pleasant Valley in Bet-

tendorf, the three hills were very steep. The hardest of the hills was the Exterminator, it was like you were trying to run up it but all you could do was walk."

Q: What is running through your head while you're running? How do you stay focused?

**CASSIE SWISHER:** "I usually think about how I don't want to be running right now and I stay focused by thinking of the food I get at the end."

**NINA TORKELSON:** "To be honest, I sometimes accidentally zone out while I'm running. I usually have a song that get's stuck in my head and keeps playing over and over. To stay focused, I usually watch the people in front of me and work on trying to catch up and pass them."

**PRESTON MAYHEW:** "I think it's only 20 minutes of your life, push harder and catch the next teammate, then the next and so on."

**TIMMY HOSIER:** "Just keep up with the guy ahead of you."

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# Sports

October 19, 2023

# 8

## FALL SPORTS FEATURES

### Peyton Braddock

**Q.** If you could select any WB teacher to join the cheer team, who would you pick? Why?

**A.** I think Ms. Noelck because she's got great dancing skills!!

**Q.** What is your favorite cheer and why?

**A.** My favorite cheer is "We Got That Beat" because the crowd really enjoys it! It gets energy going.

### FALL CHEER Q&A

#### Olivia Schlitz

**Q.** If you could select any WB teacher to join the cheer team, who would you pick? Why?

**A.** Ms. Noelck because she would be good at getting the crowd hype.

**Q.** What is your favorite cheer and why?

**A.** Any cheer that ends in a stunt.

#### Chloe Branch

**Q.** If you could select any WB teacher to join the cheer team, who would you pick? Why?

**A.** Ms. Noelck because she is positive and nice/energetic.

**Q.** What is your favorite cheer and why?

**A.** "Red Hot" because it's fun.

#### Miley Shields

**Q.** If you could select any WB teacher to join the cheer team, who would you pick? Why?

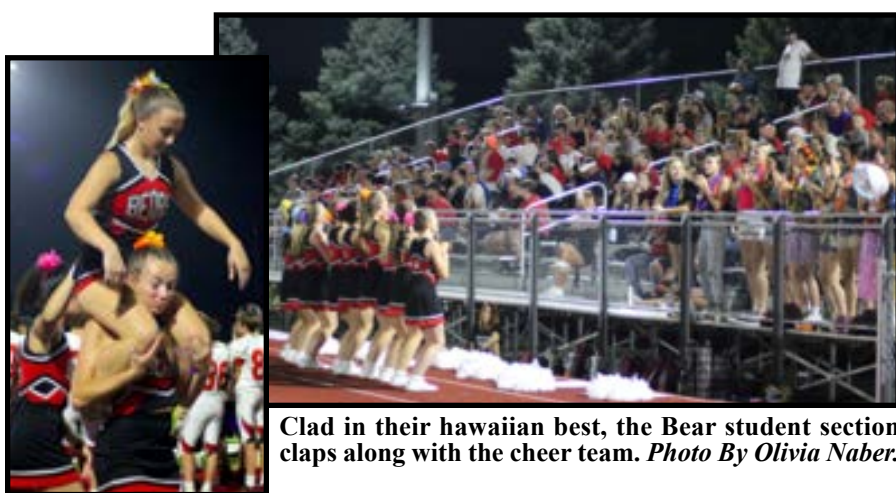
**A.** Mrs Cummings because she did gymnastics

**Q.** What is your favorite cheer and why?

**A.** I really like "WBHS What?" . It's always been one of my favorites because the crowd seems to like it and it's just a lot of fun to do!



Cheerleaders Maddie Reed, Jenie Gomez, Kiley, Peyton Braddock, and Rena Holmes display their Bear pride during the Bears' debut game at Williamsburg. Photo By Olivia Naber.



Jordan Waters gives Miley Shields a boost onto her shoulders. Photo By Olivia Naber.

Clad in their hawaiian best, the Bear student section claps along with the cheer team. Photo By Olivia Naber.

### IN CASE YOU MISSED IT: SUMMER ATHLETICS



Senior Max Lodge brings in a home run against Regina. Photo By Brooklyn Nash.

Coached by Reid Bonner, the Bears lost to West Liberty in the first round of the state playoffs with a 6-20 end of season record.



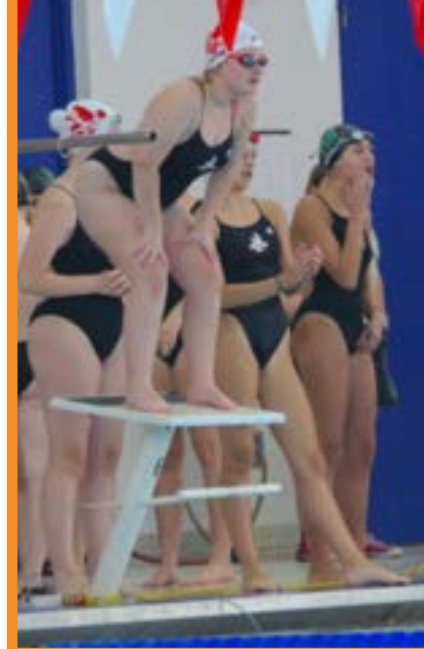
Junior Juliana Lang slugs the ball. Photo By Brooklyn Nash.



Senior Alyse Klinkkammer faces down an opponent. Photo By Brooklyn Nash.

Coached by Eric Stenberg, the Bears lost to Cardinal in the second round of state playoffs with a 7-25 end of season record.

### SWIMMING Q&A



Larkin Brown steels herself for her next race. Photo By Brooklyn Nash.

#### Larkin Brown

**Q.** What animal would you describe your swimming with?

**A.** I would describe my swimming as cat-like sometimes.

**Q.** What races do you do, and what are your best times?

**A.** I swim the 200 medley relay; my best time is 52.84 seconds. Then I swim the 50 freestyle, and my best time for that is a 42.45. The last race I swim is the 100 free, and my best time is 1:38:84.



Larkin Brown gasps for breath as she races through the water. Photo By Brooklyn Nash.

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## WB WELCOMES FOREIGN EXCHANGE STUDENT FROM SWITZERLAND

**Joelle Haas**

**Caitlyn Harrison**  
Staff Writer



Q: Where are you from?  
A: Switzerland

Q: What are your parents names?  
A: Guido and Barbara Haas

Q: How old are you?  
A: 16

Q: Do you have any siblings? If yes, how old are they and what are their names?  
A: I have a twin sister named Noemi

Q: Why did you want to be an exchange student? Are you enjoying it so far?  
A: Because I want to travel around the world, improve my english, and have a nice time. I really enjoy being here!

Q: What are some big cultural differences that

you first noticed after coming here?

A: The food is really different. You can get a lot more food for the same price. School is also a lot different. In Switzerland, you can't do sports through the school and you have to take PE.

Q: Do you enjoy your host family?

A: My host parents are Keith and Dianne Schultes. They are funny and it is a perfect match!

Q: Is a small town, like West Branch, where you thought you would end up?

A: I didn't think about where I could end up but I knew I didn't want to be in a big city.

Q: What are the major differences from your school compared to yours back home? Explain.

A: It is way harder back home and more strict. We can't choose classes and a schoolday is very stressful. Class is from 7:45-5:10.

Q: What is your favorite thing about WBHS so far?

A: People just come up to you and start talking. You don't have to worry about making friends.

Q: What activities/sports/clubs have you been a part of and which others do you plan on participating in during your time here? How are you liking them?

A: I do cross country and will do basketball, soccer, and track and field. I am really liking xc, the community is always excited.

Q: How do you feel your English skills are?  
A: 7/10

Q: What are your plans for the future once you return home?

A: Return to school. After that, I want to go to university and study medicine.

## LEGO LEAGUE CREATES FINE ARTS MASTERPIECE

**Keaton Norfleet**  
Staff Writer

Members of the FIRST Lego League team finished building their playing field on the first day of their season.

Lego League sponsor Matthew Cain held the 2023 season kickoff in the Project Lead the Way room on September 9.

Students watched the 2023-2024 FIRST IN SHOW season announcement video and learned about the Lego League game.

Students then spent the majority of the rest of the time building the missions, which when finished, would be attached to the playing field.

Cain split the students into two teams. This year, he decided to make an all boys team and an all girls team.

Cain said, "I actually had some female students who asked if they could have an all girls team, and I was willing to try that so that I could give female students a space they felt more comfortable in to engage in STEM activities."

"It is a general problem with getting female students engaged in both STEM work and women in STEM careers. It was completely student impetus that started that, it was not my idea."

The boys' team, named, "62613

Craftosauruses", holds ten students, and the girls' team, named, "61374 Crafty Patties", holds five students.

The boys' team includes eighth graders Eli Garrett, James Haack, and Noah Gray, sixth graders Rhys Arlen, and fifth graders Eli Finzel, William Nash, Jaxon Gray, Jack Seiberling, Alex Heintz, and Rafe Meppelink.

The girls' team includes eighth graders Chloe Kleinmeyer, Lila Finzel, Cora Hernandez, Kendel Hudson, and Oliva Becker.

The 2023 FIRST game is "FIRST IN SHOW", a game about the inclusion of the arts, such as music, film, painting, photography, dance, etc., into Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) as STEAM, (Science, Technology, Art, Engineering, and Mathematics).

There are two parts to the FIRST Program: Robotics, Tech Challenge, and Lego League, all have their own theme; The theme for Lego League is "MASTERPIECE." Students will imagine new ways to create and communicate art across the world.

There are two parts to the Lego League competition. The first part is the game. Students will design, build, and code a robot using a LEGO MINDSTORM EV3 brick, and other MINDSTORM accessories, such as motors and sensors, and other LEGOS. This robot will have to perform tasks such as pulling, pushing, lifting, turning, and grabbing game

elements on the field.

Haack said, "What I hope to do this year is to make a more compact and smaller robot design from last year's robot, because last year's robot was very big and bulky, and it was hard to move around."

The field is a game mat laid on a 4'x8' table. It is a top-down view of a landscape. The missions are placed in specific places on the field that are marked with an X.

Missions are connected to the field using double-sided tape or command strips to ensure that the missions do not move when the robot comes into contact with pieces that are a part of the mission task.

Students cannot create a robot that is over twelve inches tall, and it must be small enough to fit inside a designated robot station on the game field.

During a match, students can not touch the robot, unless it is in the robot station. If the robot is touched outside of the station or interrupted during the match, a referee will remove one of six precision tokens from the field. Precision tokens are small, red LEGO cylinder bricks that are located on the corner of the game field. Each token is worth ten points.

The second part of the competition is the innovation project. Students are tasked with creating a unique solution to a problem with sharing or distributing art and media.

Students can create a document, presentation, or poster, and can even build a model of their solution, and are encouraged to collaborate with their peers, be creative, and have fun with the project.

At the competition, students will present their projects to the judges, who will award points for creativity and the inclusion of the six FIRST core values.

Discovery, Innovation, Impact, Inclusion, Teamwork, and Fun are the six core values that FIRST uses to express the philosophies of Gracious Professionalism, which encourages high-quality work, emphasizes the value of others, and respects individuals and the community.

Lego League, and all other branches in the FIRST program, use the core values to model the behavior of their students for a better work atmosphere.

Lego League members have the help of mentors, who are former Lego League members who assist the students.

This season, students have the help of Junior Keaton Norfleet, and sophomores Audrey Watt, Ewan Arlen, and Wyatt Chapman.

The goal is for the team to compete on December 9, 2023, at the Quad Cities Qualifier. The 2023 FIRST Lego League teams are making steady progress, and are on track to have an exciting 2023 season.

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# Op. Ed.

October 19, 2023

# 10

## LITERARY CIRCLE CHANGES COURSE AFTER IOWA BOOK-BANNING LAW TAKES EFFECT

Olivia Naber  
Head Editor-in-Chief

If you had told me a few years ago that Iowa would be rolling out a book-banning law in school libraries, I wouldn't know whether or not you were serious.

Book bans bring pyres with stacks of books withering to ash to mind, an image that seems utterly archaic and foreign to me. While Iowans aren't holding book bonfires, the reality is that Iowa is one state where book-banning legislation has become a reality.

Governor Kim Reynolds signed Senate File 496 into law on May 26, 2023. This law, lauded as "parental rights" legislation, restricts what books and materials are to be made available in school libraries, banning materials discussing gender identity or sexual orientation in grades K-6, as well as non-"age-appropriate" materials in grades K-12.

But what constitutes "age-appropriate" material?

According to SF 496, any material with "descriptions or visual depictions of a sex act" is unlawful for schools to provide. However, the lack of details provided by this description has left schools scrambling to interpret and enforce the law. By not thoroughly defining the guidelines schools must use in evaluating materials, the law is largely up for individual interpretation.

Jenni Olson, the librarian in charge of material selection for the WBCSD, is one such librarian who has had a difficult time figuring out how to apply the law to the school district's libraries.

"Part of the frustration and the challenge is—what does this mean?" she explained as she flipped through the copy of SF 496 she had annotated, trying to make sense of its vague language. "And the Department of Education has not given us any concrete definitions yet that I know of... As far as I know, nothing has been defined."

Librarians and administrations around the state have been left to define how the law will come into effect at their schools, and every school differs in attempting to comply with the law.

Olson has been using the Iowa Criminal Code, specifically section 702.17, to guide her through this process. This section defines what counts as a "sex act" by the law.

"I don't [have books with those in them]," said Olson. "Of course we don't, we wouldn't."

Even so, Olson pulled out half a dozen books that she was unsure about just to be safe. Currently, she's in the process of reading through or listening to the books that have been pulled to see whether or not they

are "age-appropriate" by the standards of the law.

"I can see where there might be a couple that need to stay off the shelf until such time as the law is changed, but not very many," she acknowledged. "Which I know is actually pretty frustrating because that means that there are books that [students] want to read that we don't have access to."

One concern Olson brought up about the phrase "age-appropriate" is that the interests and abilities of readers vary on a person-to-person basis.

"What might be appropriate for some eighth graders might not be appropriate for other eighth graders, which is why, along the way, what we try to teach the kids is how to choose a book," said Olson. "And if you're reading something that you're uncomfortable with, put it down or ask questions of your trusted adults."

By setting restrictions and removing books from libraries based on "age-appropriateness", the law doesn't give students the chance to decide for themselves what they're ready to read. The beliefs of certain groups shouldn't be pushed upon school libraries because they believe they know what's right for every kid.

Kids need to be given the chance to explore new worlds through literature, not told to only read about the world other people think is right for them. Young people are more capable than legislators realize, in part due to the skills and knowledge given to us by our schools.

As someone who has been taught library and material selection skills for my entire school career, I want to be trusted to put my knowledge to use to pick out the kind of books that are right for me. With the passing of this law, state legislators are rescinding their trust in both students and those who teach them book selection skills.

To that point, Olson explained another provision in SF 496 that eliminates the requirement for school librarians to hold a master's degree, highlighting contradictory ideas within the new law.

"It feels like somehow school librarians are not doing our jobs. And the part I find most upsetting is that to be a school librarian you have to have both a teaching certificate and a master's degree in library information science," said Olson. "But I'm not being trusted to do my job. I'm not being trusted to use my training, that I'm going to buy materials that support the curriculum, that I'm going to buy materials that are interesting to students. And in fact, because of the teacher shortage, one of the provisions of this law... is taking away that requirement for a master's degree... That's why I think it feels so targeted to librarians... you're saying 'Well, any-

body can do your job. But we also don't trust that you have the education to do your job' and I'm caught in the middle of a catch 22."

Before the passage of SF 496, WBCSD already had procedures in place for anyone wishing to challenge books or other learning materials in schools, something the law now requires.

"We have always had a material selection policy and a materials reconsideration policy, which is a process by which anyone can challenge a book's inclusion in the school library," Olson stated. On the school district website (west-branch.k12.ia.us), the "Objection to Instructional and Library Materials" document can be found under the heading "Parents". The form can also be found in the school offices.

Within the document, any person or group/organization can fill out the "Reconsideration of Instructional and Library Materials Request Form" to submit to the school for further action, citing what material should be reconsidered in the school district and why they believe so.

When a material has been disputed, it is brought before the Reconsideration Committee. They make a recommendation to the superintendent, who issues a decision on whether or not the material in question should be removed from the district libraries.

The reconsideration committee is made up of eight members appointed by the superintendent and school board, but SF 496 has also changed how reconsideration committees like this one are made up. In the past, students were allowed to be on the committee, but under the law, students are no longer allowed to do so.

Students no longer have a seat at the table when it comes to discussions about the materials that they're allowed access to. This is an issue that directly affects what is made available to us, and all of the decision-making is happening in a way that we can't share our thoughts. As much as it's important to let parents have a say in their kids' education, isn't it also important to let the ones being educated have a say?

Olson emphasizes the importance of student contribution, saying, "So something gets reconsidered, and there's no student input to say, 'That book was amazing and it changed my life' or 'Yep, that book drove me crazy and I never want to see it ever again.'" Despite the challenges and frustrations she faces in interpreting and enforcing SF 496 in the WBCSD, Olson remains hopeful that librarians like her can continue to serve as a light for their students.

"I'm still here because sometimes I think having a person who's an advocate is just as powerful as having a book that's the advocate, and I'm hoping that I can be that

person for some of the students," she beamed. "Even if I can't get them the materials, there's somebody behind them cheering them up."

### Effects on the Literary Circle

As the time came closer for the literary circle to begin ordering books for its members, concerns over whether the club's first selection, *Firekeeper's Daughter*, would be considered lawful began to arise.

Although the novel's target audience is high school students and is in the young adult genre, a scene of sexual assault against the main character lead the book to be reconsidered for this year's discussions.

It was a tough decision on book club advisor Elizabeth Gallagher's and principal Sara Oswald's parts to put *Firekeeper's Daughter* on hold. Despite the book being highly acclaimed, they had to consider the attention it may have brought the school with the law currently spotlighting and scrutinizing Iowa schools.

"There's no obligation to read the book that we pick," said Gallagher, "but the two of us just decided together that it wouldn't be the best option for this year."

Gallagher does note that it wasn't a difficult transition to the book the club recently voted to read: *Black Chalk* by Christopher J. Yates.

"I feel that there are so many good books in the world that it was not a hardship to change books for this," she said.

This doesn't mean, however, that Gallagher didn't feel the club was capable of handling the book's more sensitive topics. From past experience, she holds a deep trust in the club to handle mature topics.

"I feel that if we had read *Firekeeper's Daughter*... we would have handled the rape scene in a mature way and we certainly wouldn't have dwelled on that," insisted Gallagher.

As a whole, Gallagher has faith in all of her students' abilities to hold mature conversations around difficult topics, saying, "I've never had difficulty with any student just rising to the level that they need to rise to... I haven't had any immaturity."

The literary circle hopes to be able to read *Firekeeper's Daughter* in the future once they have a better understanding of the law. They will reevaluate the novel later in the year, once they've finished reading *Black Chalk*, to see whether it will be an option for the second semester.

Although the year began with disappointment, the club has plenty of opportunities for rich literary discussion and bookish fun on the horizon.

### Previous selection: *Firekeeper's Daughter* by Angeline Boulley

The literary circle's initial selection was the highly acclaimed debut novel by Angeline Boulley, *Firekeeper's Daughter*. The best-selling book, which is now being adapted by Barack and Michelle Obama's production company for Netflix, has garnered numerous awards and was named one of the "100 Best YA Books of All Time" by *Time* magazine.

One of the biggest factors considered when the club initially chose the book was to dive into a story about another cul-

ture. The novel centers around 18-year-old Daunis Fontaine, an Ojibwe girl. By reading such a highly-praised book featuring Ojibwe culture, they hoped to highlight and analyze another culture.

Olson, who has read the book, explained the significance of representing Ojibwe culture, saying, "There are so few Native American authors that to have a Native American book with a strong female character written by a female of Native American ancestry is huge, and she's writing a very realistic 'caught in two worlds' story. I loved it."

### New selection: *Black Chalk* by Christopher J. Yates

Despite facing challenges in selecting materials for this year's club, the literary circle began reading their first novel for the year, *Black Chalk* by Christopher J. Yates. The psychological thriller is reminiscent of the club's book from last year, *If We Were Villains* by M.L.L. Rio, which was well-received by the club.

"I felt like [the literary circle] must have liked the mystery intrigue," speculated Gallagher about why they were drawn to *Black Chalk*. "And I also think that

it was college-aged kids who were the protagonists... I think that this group of readers likes to read about at least kids their age, or adults. They're all strong readers, and I feel like they liked the idea of the college setting, because the book we read last year was a college setting as well."

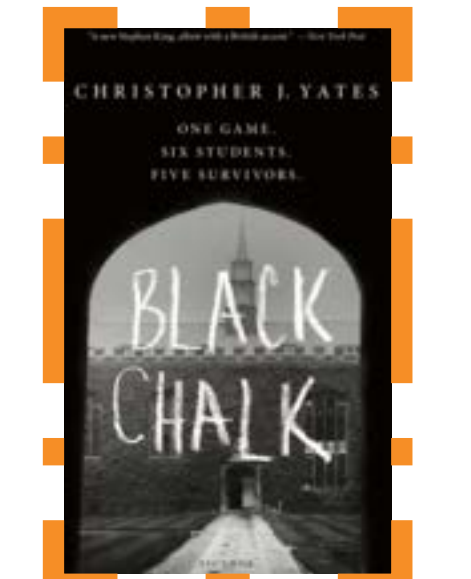
The students agreed with Gallagher that the intriguing mystery aspect was what drew them in.

"I am a sucker for a good thriller and this book seems to bring more of a twist to the idea," said member Katey Lenocho. "A group of friends doing fun truth or dare gone wrong and now they come back years later for the final round. My cup of tea!"



### Black Chalk Synopsis

It was only ever meant to be a game played by six best friends in their first year at Oxford University; a game of consequences, silly forfeits, and childish dares. But then the game changed: The stakes grew higher and the dares became more personal and more humiliating, finally evolving into a vicious struggle with unpredictable and tragic results. Now, fourteen years later, the remaining players must meet again for the final round. Who knows better than your best friends what would break you? A gripping psychological thriller partly inspired by the author's own time at Oxford University, *Black Chalk* is perfect for fans of the high tension and expert pacing of *The Secret History* and *The Bellwether Revivals*. The author's background in puzzle writing and setting can clearly be seen in the plotting of this clever, tricky book that will keep you guessing to the very end.



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## MARCHING BEARS PREMIERE NEW AVENGERS SHOW

Peyton Braddock  
Co-Editor-in-Chief

Marching band has started the season off strong. During the half-time of football games, the marching band plays 3 songs—all themed around Marvel.

The 3 songs include “Captain America March,” “Spider Man,” and “Avengers.”

The drum majors this year Maddie Reed and Nina Torkelson, and the section leaders include Kaylee Kettler (flutes), Nora Ziehr (clarinets), Jordan Waters (clarinets), Maddie Tygrett (alto saxes), Josh Kroemer (lows), and Olivia Naber (drumline).

Director Samuel Ogilvie explained all of the hard work the band has put in throughout the summer to make their performances possible. The annual band camp lasted four long days, and started at 9 am and finished by 3 pm from Aug. 15-Aug. 18.

In just the span of a few days,

the marching band learns the basics of marching, posture, instrument carriage, etc. It came with a lot of different aspects, including a roll step, backmarching, sliding left, sliding right, box drills, an 8 to 5 step, and a 16 to 5 step. They also learned all of their halftime songs during the duration of the camp.

Sophomore Bari Sax player Lincoln Naber said, “We had so much fun during band camp. It was very beneficial to our season. Because of camp, we can spend less time in rehearsals learning the music, and more time on perfecting it.”

There is a lot of critical planning when it comes to the formation of the marching band for halftime performances. Ogilvie said, “Writing the drill for the marching band involves considering multiple factors.”

Because of that, the formation process includes; becoming familiar with the music, identifying who plays the melody in each section and big moments in the music, fun ideas that fit the theme, and the times when certain groups should

be brought closer to the audience.

Ogilvie added, “With all of that information, I began to design forms that will create visual interest through contrary motion while lining up with the music.”

On Sep. 19, the West Branch High School marching band traveled to Mount Mercy to attend a clinic. This was crucial to their season. Jenie Gomez said, “Our clinic at Mount Mercy was such an amazing experience. It was so cool to be able to get a different perspective on what we could change in our music. Incorporating all of their corrections have helped our marching band become so much better in such a short amount of time. I would 100% go again next year!”

Ogilvie announced that the marching band made their second appearance at the Corridor Classic Marching Band Invitational on Oct 9. The Iowa Hawkeye marching band was at the clinic, which was also beneficial to their season. Ogilvie is hoping that the marching band continues to improve each performance.



Keaton Norfleet shreds the tenor saxophone during a Bears halftime performance. Photo by Brooklyn Nash.

### MARCHING BAND Q&A

1.) Which of this year's songs is the most difficult to play and march to? Why?

Answer: Olivia Naber: “So far, Captain America March is really difficult to memorize musically because it seems longer than our other songs. However, we’ve improved a lot, and it’s now our cleanest song so far.”

Answer: Kellen Dykstra: “The most difficult song is definitely Captain America March because it has a lot of hard rhythms to play and it is complicated to put together with marching.”

Answer: Rylee Grace: “The last song we play, Avengers, is the hardest to play because some of the rhythms are hard to play the same each time.”

2.) If you could choose any song to be played every time you walk into a room, what song would you choose and why?

Answer: Kellen Dykstra: “If I could choose any song, I’d probably want Tank by the Seatbelts. I would want it because it’s a fast-paced jazz song that I think work well as an entrance theme.”

Answer: Nina Torkelson: “Definitely ‘Sir Duke’ by Stevie Wonder. It’s such a groovy song and I would totally want it to be the backup music wherever I walked in.”

Answer: Lincoln Naber: “I wouldn’t want a song, I would want the guitar sound from when a scene transitions in Phineas and Ferb.”

### ALL-STATE SHOW CHOIR/BAND Q&A

1.) Describe what All-State was like in regard to collaborating with talented musicians from other schools.

Answer: Nina Torkelson: “It was such an amazing experience. I had no idea of what to expect going in and it certainly exceeded anything that I could have planned for. It was so exciting to get to sing and perform with so many talented students from places I’d never even heard of in Iowa. It was actually insane that we put together and cleaned an entire show choir performance in 3 days, when normally we would be practicing it for many months. It was definitely hard and a bit exhausting but I was very impressed with the end result and I definitely hope to do it again next year.”

Answer: Lincoln Naber: “It was fun to meet other skilled musicians from other schools and learn how their school does stuff.”

2.) If you had the chance to become immortal, would you take it? Why or why not?

Answer: Olivia Naber: “Yes- I would be able to read everything I wanted to without worrying about never finishing my To Be Read list! Also, it would be cool to see how society changes over time.”

Answer: Nina Torkelson: “Definitely not. I feel like that would be torture if you could never die and just finally have peace. Not to get too deep but you would have to watch everyone you love die which would be terrible.”

## 14 STUDENTS CHOSEN FOR ALL-STATE SHOW CHOIR/BAND

Keaton Norfleet  
Staff Writer

Two West Branch students earned the opportunity to perform solos at an honor show choir during the summer.

The 2023 Iowa All-State Show Choir took place from July 14 to July 17 at Central College in Pella, Iowa, and featured 14 West Branch Fine Arts students. 71 students from all throughout Iowa took part in the event.

Eight West Branch students performed in the Choir portion of the All-State Show Choir, while six students performed in the Show Band.

Dr. Sarah Van Waardhuizen, the creator of the Iowa All-State Show Choir, made this event possible.

Waardhuizen teaches music education from elementary to college and received her Ph.D. from The University of Iowa. She is the current Iowa All-State Show Choir chair for the Iowa Choral Directors Association.

The Choir members, seniors Olivia Naber, Nina Torkelson, Maddie Reed, and Diego Carrillo, juniors Jordan Waters and Luca Hahn, sophomore Nolan Staker, and alumni Lukas Guetzko, all loaded into a van and traveled to Central College on July 14. After their arrival, each student received a room key, dorm keycard, and a meal

pass, and they checked into a dorm room. Rehearsals started at 7 that night and ended at 10 p.m.

Naber said, “I got to meet people from all over the state of Iowa who are passionate about the same things as I am, that are really talented performers. I got to learn from them, I got to teach them things I knew, and we all just had a really good time together.”

The next day, students practiced for 10 hours, starting at 7 in the morning, and ending at 10 at night, with small breaks in between.

Staker said, “It was fun. We had pretty long practices, but I feel like it was really productive, and it was really fun to work with such an advanced group of people because you could tell right from the start that everyone’s voices blended well together, people were coordinated and didn’t need extra help with choreography, so it was nice.”

Choir members worked with

Kevin Chase, the choreographer, and Nancy Allen, the choral director.

The Band members, juniors Josh Kroemer, Keaton Norfleet, and Nora Ziehr, sophomores Ewan Arlen and Lincoln Naber, and alumni Lynzi Dykstra arrived on July 16. Rehearsals started at 1 p.m. and ended at 9 p.m.

West Branch High School Vocal Music instructor, Christopher Reed, led the All-State Band. C. Reed said, “I was super pleased with the band, I mean, within two hours we were able to go with the singers, that’s pretty impressive. So all-in-all I was very pleased with how everything went.”

The 2023 Iowa All-State Show Choir show consisted of three songs which accompanied the theme of the show, “Home: A Place To Be, A Place To Leave, A Place To Come Back To.”: The opener, “Kyrie”, by Mr. Mister, the ballad, “Wherever I Go, by The National

Parks, and the closer, which combined Home Sweet Home, by Mötley Crüe, and Rock This Town, by Stray Cats.

On the final day, students checked out of their dorm rooms, returned their keys and meal passes, and met for one final rehearsal at 8:45 a.m.

The band and choir members took the stage at Dowstra Auditorium at 1 p.m. Waardhuizen introduced the choir and gave a brief rundown to the packed audience of what the last three days consisted of for the students, and Chase and Allen gave short speeches about their experience with the students.

Afterward, Waardhuizen, Chase, and Allen exited the stage, and the performance began. The show lasted around 12 minutes long.

O. Naber said, “Putting together a show in three days of that high caliber was incredible. Last year we had a really awesome show, but this year was a step above.”

C. Reed said, “I was really pleased that so many of our students were able to have that experience.”

When the performance ended, students grabbed their luggage, said their goodbyes, and left with their families, concluding the Iowa All-State Show Choir of 2023.



Back Row: Ewan Arlen, Keaton Norfleet, Diego Carrillo. Second Row: Nora Ziehr, Jordan Waters, Josh Kroemer, Lincoln Naber, Olivia Naber. Front Row: Maddie Reed, Luca Hahn, Nina Torkelson. Photo by Ashlynn Nash.

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# Clubs & Orgs

# 12

October 19, 2023

## FFA MEMBERS WIN BIG IN FAIRS OVER THE SUMMER

Lauren Keeler  
Staff Writer

There were 11 FFA members exhibiting livestock projects at the Cedar County Fair and one at the Johnson County Fair.

The Cedar County Fair kicked off with the open swine show. FFA Members Kyle Harold, Wesley Neuberger, Maddie Neuberger, Lauren Keeler, Logan Keeler, Cadence Hansen, Shawna Lindemann, and Max Lodge showed a total of 13 entries between the breeding gilt and market shows.

Top placements from the chapter include Kyle Harold's 3rd and 4th overall breeding gilt, Shawna Lindemann's 4th overall purebred breeding gilt, and Logan Keeler's 5th overall breeding gilt.

Harold won Champion Senior Showmanship and M. Neuberger received Reserve Champion

The 4-H and FFA swine show included many class winners, overall placements, and the Grand Champion breeding gilt.

Those to mention include Harold's Grand Champion breeding gilt, Reserve Champion market hog, 5th overall breeding gilt, and 4th overall market barrow, as well as Cadence Hansen's 4th

overall breeding gilt. Gingerich participated in the sheep show with her purebred Dorset Lamb. She placed second in

Gingerich also received Reserve Champion Senior Showman.

Harold showed his two market

class, and Champion.

M. Neuberger also received Reserve Champion Senior Showman.

Garrett Spevachek represented West Branch FFA in the Johnson County Fair. In the advanced feeder pen competition, he placed 4th overall.

The Iowa State Fair took place from August 10th-20th and West Branch FFA Members participated in a wide range of contests.

In the poultry show, Tygrett, Maddey Hartz, and Teagn Hartz showed their chicken projects, all receiving a purple rating.

In the horticulture show, Tygrett and M. Hartz each received several top placements. In the Floriculture show, M. Hartz had over 50 entries, and placed in the top 8 in nearly all of them.

Sylvia Skriver showed her horse in three different classes; in two she received a blue ribbon but in her Aged Mare class she received a purple ribbon.

In the swine show, Harold and Logan Keeler both received a purple and third in their classes for their breeding gilts. Then in the purebred gilts show M. Neuberger and Lindemann both received purple ribbons and third in their classes for their duroc gilts.

Gingerich showed her market lamb and placed 10th in class. Then she received a 7th place in her class with her purebred dorset breeding ewe, and a 5th in class purple with her blackface breeding ewe.

In the goat show, Harold received a third in class purple.



Graduate Logan Keeler shows off his gilt at the fair. Photo contributed by Logan Keeler.

her class and was Reserve Champion Purebred Breeding Lamb.

In the crossbred breeding lamb show Gingerich received first in her class and won Grand Champion Crossbred Breeding Ewe Lamb with her blackface.

wethers, receiving 2nd and 4th in his classes, he also received Reserve Champion Senior Showman.

In the poultry show, Maddie Tygrett showed several pullets and cockerels. Her top results included: American-Dominique-that received 1st in class, and Reserve Champion, Asiatic-White-Cochin with 2nd in class, and Reserve Champion, Asiatic-Black-Cochin, receiving 1st in class, and Champion, and her Mediterranean - Single Comb Brown Leghorn Cockerel- that received 1st in

## 3 NEW ACADEMIC POLICIES INTRODUCED

Caleb Pedersen  
Staff Writer

West Branch High School has implemented some new policies and here are the opinions from the student body.

While students used to have 10 full school days to reassess an assignment, it has now been cut down to 5 school days after the initial grade is handed back. This change has sparked different opinions in the students at West Branch.

Senior Cameron Gingerich explained, "I don't like it, it doesn't give us enough time."

Senior Olivia Naber felt quite a bit different, "I actually think that changing the reassessment deadline is a great idea. It's a privilege to be able to reassess in the first place, as many schools and colleges don't have that. If someone isn't on the ball to reassess and pushes it off until ten days later, the material has probably faded from their memory a little. I do, however, recognize that it can be difficult to schedule a reassessment time when students have other responsibilities during IS, especially since we aren't able to go anywhere during a Wednesday IS."

Although most students were one-sided and quick to decide whether they like this new policy or not, some students see both sides.

Senior Katey Noble stated, "I think that it works for some people, but for others it's hard because it can take them longer to complete things, and they might need extra help."

Another policy new to WBHS is

a pre-excused absence form. This form requires students to receive signatures from teachers whose classes they know they will miss in the future. Teachers will sign the paper on one side allowing the student to be absent and explain on the other side what the class will be doing on the day they are gone.

Freshman Tori Vikel stated, "I like it because now we have a list of what work we need to do from classes ahead of time."

Freshman Anthony Heitzman on the other hand explained, "I think it's a good idea on paper, but in reality its just unnecessary and it would be easier to just email the teacher and ask what work you need to do."

Third, academic medals are now only handed out to students that have passed certain classes with a B or higher. Before this change, students were awarded this medal just by passing these classes with a C or above. A majority of students are in agreement that this change is for the better.

Senior Olivia Naber expressed, "This makes total sense to me. If someone is just barely scraping by academically, do they really deserve the same honor as someone who pushes themselves more? I don't think so. A medal shows that you've put in the work to be academically strong rather than having done the bare minimum."

Conversely, freshman Ellie Olmstead stated, "I think this should change because it may make people feel bad if they're trying and can't get a high score even when they're trying."



Graduate Kyle Harold (left) takes pride in his award-winning gilt. Photo contributed by Kyle Harold.



23-24 FFA Officers. Back Row: Treasurer Saylee Gingerich, Vice President Max Lodge, Secretary Maddie Neuberger. Front row: Reporter Amber Wolf, President Layla Samuelson, Sentinel Lauren Keeler. Photo by Larkin Brown.

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