



# THE BEAR

## Student Newspaper

November 21, 2024 WBHS Volume 28 Issue 2

900 W. Main St., West Branch, IA 52358

## HAMANN MAKES HISTORY WITH XC STATE

Cassie Swisher  
Staff Writer

Cross Country at City High for the 2024 season found various successes with varsity, junior varsity, and fresh-soph. The fresh-soph team completed their season undefeated, while JV won against 62 teams and lost to 4. At the championships, City High's varsity team finished 8th overall in the state.

At the state meet, City High competed with 15 other schools on the Fort Dodge 5k course.

The commuting runners are fondly named Bearhawks, consisting of senior Nora Zeihr, juniors Addi Schultes, Caitlyn Harrison, and Lynden Macgillivray, sophomores Grace Hamann, Cassie Swisher, Preston Mayhew and Joe Schlitz, and freshman Olivia Becker.

Grace Hamann is in her second year of running varsity and attending State cross country for City High. Her 2024 season was filled with several personal wins across the board. She earned three personal records with her lowest time of 18:55. Hamann also added that her personal goals for herself include going sub-19:00 and humorously "Improve all the records I already hold."

The young runner made waves in her first years of high school competition with a successful freshman track and field season leading her into cross country training for her sophomore year.

Hamann has a remarkable story of perseverance in athletics as she surpassed a torn ACL, meniscus, and broken distal femur due to a track and field accident in 7th grade.

"I'm grateful that it happened when it did because it shaped my athletic career... Instead of being the best at everything I possibly could, I learned that I had something that not a lot of people had which became my focus," Hamann thoughtfully answered in response to being asked about her injury.

The Hamann family showcases strong athletic abilities with West Branch alum and Grace's brother Joe Hamann, who carries several accolades in soccer, track and field, and football. However, Grace states that the pressure never bothered her.

"I know that me and Joe are different people and I can't base my whole life on what he has done because I am my own person."



Hamann rushes to the finish line.  
Photo contributed by Cassie Swisher.

## BEAR NEWSPAPER NAMED ALL IOWA NEWS TEAM FOR THE SECOND YEAR IN A ROW

Cameron Waters  
Staff Writer

On Oct. 24, the West Branch High School newspaper and yearbook classes took a trip to the University of Iowa for the Iowa High School Press Association fall conference. 47 other schools from around the state were represented by 750 students.

During the afternoon portion of the fall conference, the Iowa High School Press Association gives out awards to various newspaper and yearbook staff. To earn these awards a school must first apply.

For the 23-24 school year, West Branch's The Bear Student Newspaper won the "All Iowa News Team of the Year." Only five schools are awarded this honor, so this is a big deal for the newspaper staff.

The other four schools that received this award included: The Little Hawks, West Side Story, Warhawk Insider, and the Spartan Shield. All four of the other five schools receiving this award were 4A schools. Currently, Keaton Norfleet, Miley Shields, and Caitlyn Harrison are the three newspaper staff members who were also on the newspaper staff last year.



Co-Editor-in-Chiefs Caitlyn Harrison and Keaton Norfleet and Miley Shields Head-Editor-in-Chief pose with the banner.  
Photo by Kara Heick.

Co-Editor-in-Chief Keaton Norfleet said, "I wanted to write my stories to be the best they could be, I put a lot of effort into them. When writing them, I wanted them to stick out and be as unique as possible."

The process to apply for awards takes time and input from all students is important. Miley Shields said, "Last year Mrs. Krall would ask us for the best examples of stories from some of our issues, one for the first half of spring and one for the second half of the year. Then we send them in and hope for the best that we can get a good award."

The Iowa High School Press Association hosted keynote speaker Lucy Rohden from the Dan LeBatard Show with Stugotz. Rhoden travels to college football games to interview fans and report on the game itself. After the keynote speaker, students were able to attend breakout sessions. Some of the sessions featured ways to get better at writing stories, photography tips, and more. Due to West Branch having an early out day, students had to leave early to return to school.



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THEBEARSTUDENTNEWS





# Clubs and Orgs.



November 21, 2024

## STUDENT GOVERNMENT RETURNS FROM LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE WITH 2 PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS

**Anthony Heitzman**  
*Staff Writer*

Officers and class presidents from WBHS Student Government attended the Iowa Student Leadership Conference on Monday, Oct. 28, 2024, to learn about leadership skills and acquire new ideas for future projects.

The event was put on by the Iowa Association of Student Councils and took place at the Iowa State University Campus in Ames, Iowa. The conference started with guest speaker Tei Street, who talked about stories from her life, self-image, and thinking for yourself.

Afterward, students attended various breakout sessions on topics such as maintaining order during day-to-day operations, becoming a state officer, and promoting kindness in the school and community.

Treasurer Keegan Hansen said, "They talked to us about how to keep things organized.

within our council, such as having a Google Drive with different sections for different things."

After the breakout sessions students attended the closing ceremony where they were awarded the Honor Council Award for the fourth consecutive year.

They were also presented with the Vicki Carstens Vision Award for their Clawset project in which they set up a donation bin and clothing rack so students could donate used West Branch apparel.

West Branch is the first student council to win the award which

was recently created after the retirement of IASC Executive Director Vicki Carstens whom the award is named after. Students were surprised to win the award, as unlike with the Honor Council Award, the winner was not announced ahead of time.

Social Media Chair Caitlyn Harrison said, "I feel really proud of winning that award! The Clawset has been a huge success at WBHS and getting to have that recognized at the state level is really special and something to be proud of."

Normally the entirety of Student Government would attend, but this year was limited to officers and class presidents after the admission price was raised for the event.

Advisor Abby Noelck said, "I'm always bummed not to be able to take every student. It is a shame they make it so cost-prohibitive."



Jordan Waters, Keegan Hansen, Josh Kroemer, Lincoln Naber, Anthony Heitzman, and Caitlyn Harrison pose with their awards after the closing ceremony. Photo contributed by Abby Noelck.

## STUDENTS "DIVE" INTO THE NEW LEGO LEAGUE SEASON

**Keaton Norfleet**  
*Co-Editor-in-Chief*

Students are challenged to apply creative thinking and problem-solving skills to solve real-world issues in the FIRST Lego League ocean-based game.

The 2024-2025 FIRST Lego League season introduced the ocean-themed game, "SUBMERGED", the middle school program of the FIRST 2024-2025 season, "DIVE".

The game encourages students to research and analyze a current problem in the world's oceans, ranging from pollution to habitats for sea life, and much more.

The season began on August 17, and members watched the season announcement video which taught students about the game.

Matt Cain, the Lego League senior mentor, said, "They are working hard on preparing for the robot game by getting missions completed and practicing plans for how they are going to run their missions."

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 SPIKE PRIME brick, and other SPIKE accessories, such as motors and sensors, and other LEGOS. This robot must perform tasks

such as pulling, pushing, lifting, turning, and grabbing game elements on the field.

Livia Mueller of team "Starfish Stars" said, "We faced the problem of over-complicating some missions. Maybe we can look at other team's builds and take inspiration from them to enhance our own add-ons."

The second part of the competition is the innovation project. Students are tasked with creating a unique solution to a problem by 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.

These values are what 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. The fourth-grade team, 64899 "The Krakens" innovation project will attempt to create an insulative cover to help keep regulators

on scuba.

The fourth-grade team, 64899 "The Krakens" innovation project will attempt to create an insulative cover to help keep regulators on scuba equipment from freezing when divers explore the arctic waters.

The sixth through eighth-grade team, 65635 "StarFish Stars" innovation project will feature a better method of catching and trapping jellyfish for study, such as using a tank or suction device.

The first fifth-grade team, 65633 the "Big Boys" innovation project will present a swallowable device to collect data on the digestive systems of sea animals. This device would then be excreted by the animal for device recovery.

The second fifth-grade team, 65634 the "Aqua Bears" innovation project will display a concept design for a flexible and soft robot for reaching hard-to-reach areas in small marine habitats like coral reefs that can get into cracks and crevices while not damaging the area.

"There are four teams, which is a lot more than I've ever done before, but I have a significant amount of more adult help and coaching," Cain said. To help the large number of members, many high school students in the robotics program and veterans of the Lego

League program work to assist and encourage members with any difficulties during the building process or project creation.

The high school mentors are seniors Eli Hansen and Keaton Norfleet, juniors Wyatt Chapman, Audrey Watt, and Lillian Waters, sophomores Anthony Heitzman, and freshmen Eli Garrett and Lila Finzel.

The West Branch Lego League plans to participate in the Quad City Qualifier in Davenport, IA on December 7 at the Putnam Museum.

"They are busily preparing innovative solutions to their problems. Each group chose a different kind of problem-related to researching and studying the ocean," Cain said,

"The projects will have presentations, something they have yet to start on, but something we will focus on in these last few weeks before we have some guest judges come in."

"We may have some extra bonus meetings to help catch up in this last month of Lego League since they are running a little behind in terms of preparation, but I think a lot of them will have some really good stuff to present to the judges when we get there."



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## COUNTRY SHOW CLOSSES AT CORRIDOR MARCHING CLASSIC

**Keaton Norfleet**  
*Co-Editor-in-Chief*

West Branch High School band director Samuel Ogilvie said, "One of the things that I was nervous about this season was the memorization. Would that affect our confidence? The fact that we were able to play three performances with that level of confidence was really great. It pushed some students in a way that was maybe a little bit stressful for them, but it ended up being good in the end."

"The band did admirably with the first performance. It's the first week of school, it's going to be a work in progress. To see that amount of progress was amazing. The stand-out game to me was homecoming. I was nervous that our confidence was going to suffer due to having no music, but I think the biggest jump between games was between our second game and our third game. It was tremendous to watch that progress."

With the wrapping up of the marching season, the West Branch Bands are gearing up for the 2024-2025 concert, pep, and jazz band seasons.

Ogilvie said, "We represented our school well, and the crowd seemed very entertained with our show. I do think it was the band's best performance. We got great compliments from Mike Coball, one of the band directors at City High. Arlen Ottmar said that it's the best we've sounded in years. It was a great way to end the season."

I was pretty happy with it."

The Marching Bears opening performance at Liberty High School marked the final event in the marching season.

The West Branch Marching Bears participated in the third annual Corridor Marching Classic; an event hosted by the directors of participating bands.

The Corridor Marching Classic took place in North Liberty, IA, on Wednesday, October 16.

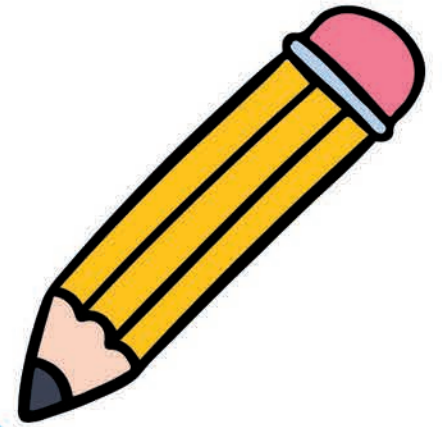
In total six bands participated, ranging from 1A to 4A schools. These schools included West Branch High, West Liberty High, Clear Creek Amana High, City High, Liberty High, and West High.

The Marching Bears performed their "Country Show" for the final time, commencing the Corridor Marching Classic.

Junior Nolan Staker said, "I thought that it was our strongest performance of the year. We had a lot of people who wouldn't usually be there at half-time like the football players. I thought we were pretty sharp that night."

"We definitely improved. We had all of our music memorized by the homecoming performance, and we had an overall better sound. The freshman had a good sound and got comfortable with their music. I think we did a lot better than last year."

The Marching Bears performed five times in the 2024 season and introduced the challenge of music memorization.



## WBHS STRENGTHENS TEACHING PRACTICES WITH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAYS

**Naeomi Shimon**  
*Staff Writer*

The West Branch Community School district staff all attend professional development most Wednesdays and roughly one full day a month. The Paraeducators are also invited to professional development days to help learn new content and expectations with the teachers.

Currently, West Branch's professional development at the secondary level focuses on UDL, or universal design for learning. This is separated into categories: engagement, representation, action, and expression. This is helping teachers learn how to improve a lesson and make it more engaging. Staff also plan for the six days of J-Term in January.

Decisions about what to have in meetings are put into place by the lead learning community.

They are the voice for all staff to help ensure that professional development is meaningful and helpful for all.

Jessica Taylor is one of the instructional coaches for the West Branch Community School District. She strongly believes that having professional development days strengthens the staff's work and helps them to prepare their students at WBCSD.

Taylor said, "These days benefit teachers by giving us new ideas and validates the content and things we do to improve our day-to-day work."

In addition to having time to work together, there are also guest speakers brought in. Most recently, Lynn Kleinmeyer with the Grant Wood Area Education Agency has been helping coach and educate staff about the UDL structure.

Having professional development is important in any job but especially for all staff at West Branch Community School District who continue to learn and grow for their students.

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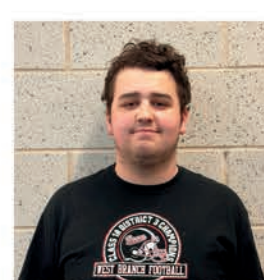
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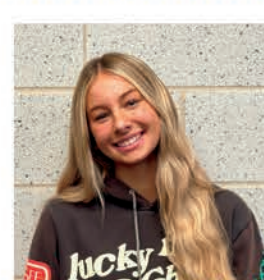
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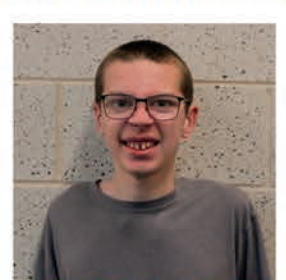
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### THE BEAR STAFF BOX





# Opinion & Entertainment

November 21, 2024



## THE RISE OF OVERCONSUMPTION: HOW MICROTRENDS ARE SHAPING TODAY'S CULTURE

Cassie Swisher  
Staff Writer

In today's media, a new recognition of the overspending and romanticizing of microtrends is officially named overconsumption.

Overconsumption, by definition, is the overuse of available goods and services available to people beyond their living essentials. On social media, the term is being widely applied to the issue younger generations are facing with microtrends.

Microtrends, as seen on Tiktok, are like fast-food in the fashion industry which hyper-focuses on a new "thing" regularly.

It is generally pretty easy to spot the new thing teenagers and young adults like to obsess over due to the instant widespread posts going out daily online.

For example, during the fall of 2023, consumers saw those cozy Tasman Uggs slippers that weren't even waterproof.

This year; however, rarely will you see these out and about as a lot of people are hopping on those Adidas Sambas this year.

These clothing choices go beyond a simple popularity period in consumption. The amount of waste that goes into second-hand stores and trash dumps is unstable.

America has an estimated 16 million tons of textile waste yearly. Next to clothing in overconsumption is makeup, which is not solely dependent on female culture, but is largely supported within it.

According to waste research, there are over 120 billion units of cosmetic products, from plastic packaging to metals and papers that all end up in landfills.

Overconsumption can also manifest in other ways aside from material goods. Parents are being faced with a new concern of internet time for children.

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Just a few months ago, hundreds of pre-teens became infamous for flooding the Sephora makeup stores for overpriced skincare products created by Drunk Elephant.

The effects of this had Sephora workers questioning their jobs after sample testers were left in sticky messes by the immature crowd.

Recently, a new competition has surfaced amongst users online as a solution to the overconsumption of goods.

Underconsumption, the opposing force, brings up odd results as well. In a new attempt to appear cheaper, Tiktokers show their one pair of shoes and their vaseline-only makeup routine.

Neither of these lifestyles are realistic or sustainable in today's society, but I believe that there can be a healthy balance between the two. However, only you can make that choice for yourself. Do you really need a fifth Stanley in the newest color, or should reusable water bottles actually be reusable? That is up to you.



### ART FEATURE BY SABREE DEPOORTER

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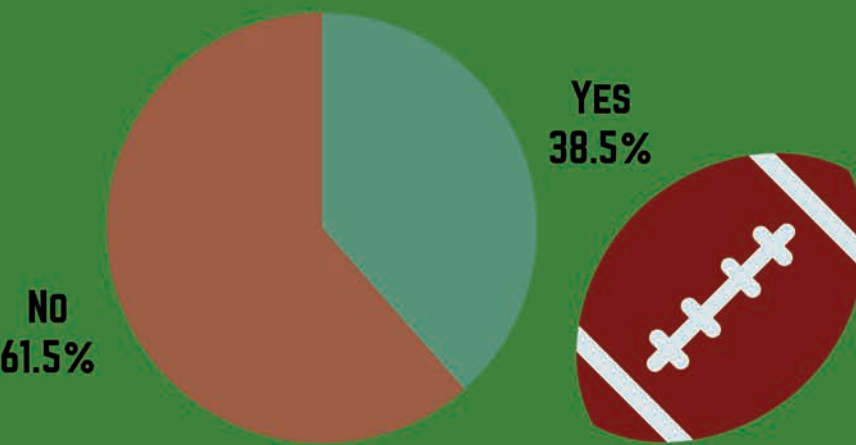


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WEST BRANCH SHOW CHOIR IS ON TRACK TO BE AMAZING

Evan Highly  
Staff Writer

With West Branch Show Choir season starting, director Chris Reed, discusses his plans for the upcoming show choir season.

Reed said, “My goal is always the same. Put together the best, most entertaining show.”

The theme of the show this year is trains and the costumes are inspired by science fiction.

The show choir will present the songs: “Go Far,” a song about wanting to leave the city, “Happy Train,” a song about progressing to a new place and having fun while letting go, “Crazy Train,” a ballad, is changed to a deep and slow song, “Free Ride,” an upbeat song that invites you to join our journey, and lastly, “Enjoy the Ride,” wraps all the songs together

by reminiscing on the group's journey.

With competitions on the horizon, there are many dates and opportunities to watch the show choir. Feb. 1 the show choir will be in Anamosa. Feb. 3 is a state contest in Keota. Feb. 8 will be a competition in Mount Pleasant. Feb. 22 is in Pella, and March 1 is taking place at Central Lee.

As the director of the show, Reed faces a big challenge when setting up shows.

Reed said, “Balancing the act of getting the singer’s vocals to be good, choreography good, the band good, the crew knowing what they’re doing, the people building the set, people doing costumes, everything just lands on my shoulders.”

“I plan to focus on the people that give their hundred percent and not focus on those who are not trying because I can't do it

for them.”

During show choir season, everyone competes as a group. They start their day by going to school, they try to practice the show beforehand, they pack up and travel to the competition.

Once arrived, they unpack and get ready for warm-up, they then go and perform. After they perform, they do critiques. If they make finals, they do everything again.

In the summer, members are expected to show up for camps to work on the next year’s show choir performance.

The camps themselves consist of some team-building exercises, and after that, the choreographer shows up. They then start learning the dances until the end of the day. The camps happen for three days.

Miley Shields shares her favorite parts of the show choir, saying that her favorite show

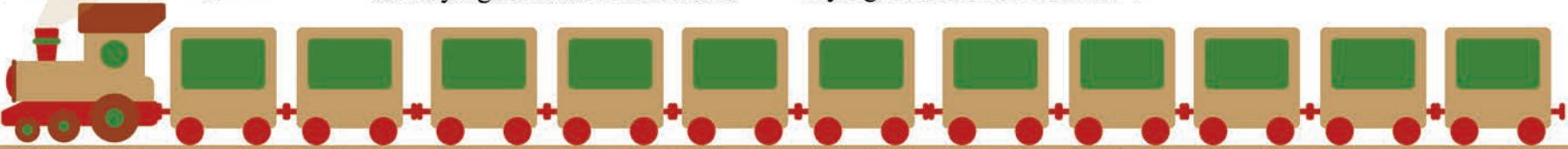
choir was the jungle theme, her sophomore year.

Shields is thinking this year will be her new favorite theme. Though Shields wouldn't be able to do another year, she was hoping that one of the years they would do a La-La Land show. Shields advises people joining show choir to work hard.

She said, “Try hard. It may feel embarrassing at times to be over the top, and being loud when you're singing, but it's so important. Be there, be fully into it.”

Shields discusses what makes West Branch’s show choir so great, saying,

“I think it's a very positive environment. There are times when things are not so great, a few disputes. It's never anything that I wouldn't want to be a part of. It's a lot of fun to perform with these people.”



TALE OF SUCCESS: WEST BRANCH FINE-ARTS, PERFORM “SHREK”

Sabree Depoorter  
Staff Writer

Shrek the Musical Jr. brought excitement and laughter to the stage on November 2nd and 3rd, captivating audiences with its enchanting story and memorable characters.

The production sold an impressive 786 tickets, showcasing the community’s enthusiasm for this delightful adaptation.

With vibrant performances and catchy songs, it was a magical experience that left both kids and adults smiling.

Shrek and Donkey performing “Travel Song” TV-LP



Fiona performing “I Know It’s Today” -AB



Dulocian people performing “Duloc”-AB



Fairytale creatures performing “Freak Flag-Shot by Ava B



The Ogre family performing “Big Bright Beautiful World”-Shot by Tori V and Lyla P



Dragon performing “Forever”-AB



Gingy getting tortured-AB



Fairytale creatures performing “Finale” TV-LP



Rats performing “Morning Person”TV-LP







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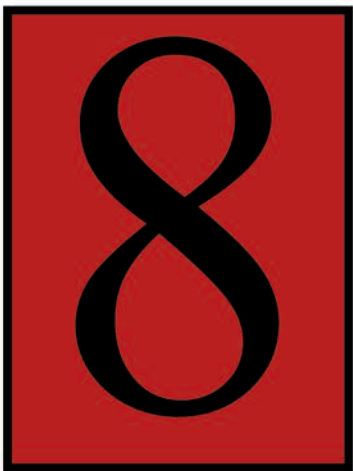
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# Spotlights

November 21, 2024



STUDENT

## SPOTLIGHTS

### ETHAN MILLER - FOOTBALL

Q. How old were you when you started playing football?

A. I was 6 or something, preschool.

Q. What was one of your biggest struggles with this activity?

A. When I was an underclassman I was smaller and the other kids were really big.



### NORA ZIEHR - BAND

Q. What was your biggest struggle this year?

A. My biggest struggle is remembering to go to my lesson lol.

Q. In your opinion, how do you think this season went?

A. I was really happy with how this season went. It was the first time we'd ever memorized the show and we did it with two games left.



### MADDY FALCO - VOLLEYBALL

Q. How old were you when you started playing volleyball?

A. I had just turned 10 when I started playing for an official club team, Iowa Rockets. Before all of that, I always was just one step behind my older sister, JaLynn. She was someone I always watched and wanted to be like.

Q. What advice would you give to the incoming freshman?

A. Advice I would give to an incoming freshman, is to be yourself! It's much easier said than done, but truly be yourself.



### JORDAN WATERS - BAND

Q. What is your favorite memory?

A. Freshman or Sophomore year, our section leader, Baylee Piegors adopted us like her kids.

Q. Why did you want to become a drum major?

A. I saw upperclassmen do it as best friends and thought it would be really cool to do with Nora.



### NOLAN STAKER - MUSICAL

Q. What was your biggest struggle for this season?

A: Finding Shrek as a character; he's kinda odd.

Q. What is your favorite memory?

A. Watching us get better each night as we developed.



### MILEY SHIELDS - MUSICAL

Q. What is your most favorite memory from this year?

A. I really liked to learn to tap dance and it was super fun but random.

Q. What made you want to do this?

A. I really love show choir and performing and singing.



### LYNDEN MACGILLIVRAY

Q. What made you want to start participating in this activity?

A. I was forced by my mom...

Q. What is one of your biggest challenges with this activity?

A. Keeping my legs healthy, I have struggled with shin splints for a few years now.







# Clubs and Orgs.



November 21, 2024

## FROM VISION TO REALITY: THE FORMATION OF WBHS'S DANCE TEAM

Caitlyn Harrison  
Co-Editor-in-Chief

WBHS has many clubs and organizations, yet as a small school, it is easy to miss out on some exciting niche sports due to a smaller student body. Activities like dance, cross country, swimming, bowling, and tennis could greatly enhance the school community.

Just recently, some students decided to come together to create change. Cassie Swisher and Grace Vincent took action and began forming a dance team at WBHS. This prospective team will perform once a week at halftime of a home basketball game.

Swisher and Vincent are not new to leading at WBHS. The two have also worked together in leadership roles for both show choir and the school musical.

Swisher said, "I am used to assuming a natural leadership role due to the nature of the group and I feel like I know how

to get things done effectively. Within show choir, we have our own methods of learning the dances and figuring out who needs to learn what. This helps to give everyone a focus, individually, which makes the group a better team."

A meeting took place on Tuesday, Oct. 22, where Swisher and Vincent shared their vision for the team. They are considering doing morning practices to not interfere with other sports or work.

This year, their focus is on mastering the basics and gaining some performance experience. They will not be going to any competitions this year, but they would like to explore that more in the years to come.

During the meeting, they welcomed any questions. A common question that arose was how the dance team would differ from a winter cheer team.

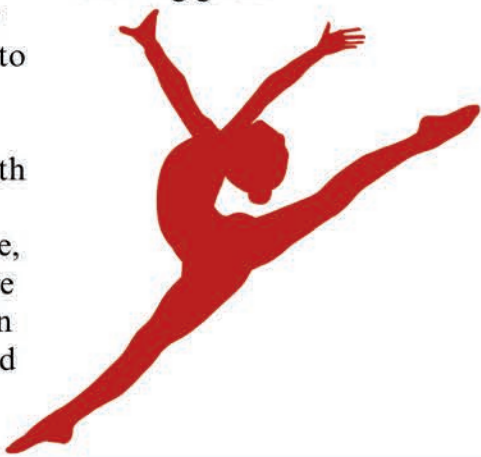
Vincent answered, "Our dance team will not involve cheering or interacting with the

crowd during games. For these performances, we will be using a variety of styles of dance, including jazz, lyrical, and hip-hop, which differ from a typical cheer dance. Additionally, we won't be using poms or stunting which would most likely be part of a winter cheer team."

Dance is a fairly common activity for students at WBHS. In fact, many students travel to West Liberty to practice and perform with the West Liberty Dance Studio. Some continue to dance there, while others seek new beginnings and enjoy sharing their previous skills with newcomers to the sport

Vincent shared, "I enjoy dance, and I want to bring a team here to get more people interested in it and share my experiences and knowledge with others."

A few things remain undecided. The group is currently in need of a coach and is actively looking to fill this position. They plan to reach out to the University of Iowa dance team to see if they would be interested in helping get the program started. Their main goal is to attract more students to the team, which will make it easier for them to follow through with their big goals.



## SKILLSUSA COMMITS TO REAL-WORLD LEARNING: HIGHLIGHTS FROM RECENT FIELD TRIPS

Miley Shields  
Head-Editor-in-Chief

SkillsUSA has been working hard behind the scenes and took time to attend a couple of field trips. These field trips include visiting an oil factory, Goodwill oil products, and Magna on Oct. 17 as well as another on Nov. 14 to Grant Wood AEA. SkillsUSA advisor and ACE teacher Randy Robertson elects his SkillsUSA students to attend these trips for many reasons.

Each of these field trips has a purpose for students and something they can learn at every place they visit. Robertson said, "I want everybody to see it. The more you see it... the more you might want to do that."

For this reason, as well as many others Robertson has held and plans to hold many field trips to expose students to as much of the outside world as possible.

On Oct. 17 the SkillsUSA students traveled to Williamsburg to visit Magna. Magna is a facility where automotive parts are manufactured. While there, members were exposed to many different aspects of the field such as seeing the way that robots can

function and more efficiently weld parts and giving members the opportunity to see the large scale that these products are produced on

On the same date of Oct. 17, members also ventured to Goodwill Oil Factory. The Goodwill Oil Factory produces vegetable oil enriched with vitamins A and B made from soybeans. Their oil is packaged in the factory and then shipped worldwide for people to use. In the factory, they have robots that automate the process of filling and sealing the cans. This allowed the students to see a side of factories that they might not have seen before the field trip.

Nov. 14 the SkillsUSA team traveled to Grant Wood AEA to attend a construction apprenticeship fair. While on the Grant Wood AEA field trip, they saw many different construction-related jobs including bricklaying, forklift operation, backhoe operation, plumbing, and many others. The goal for this field trip was again to open the eyes of students to allow them to experience and see what is really out there in the world for them to do.

## ART CLUB BEGINS 2ND YEAR AT WBHS

Wyatt Chapman  
Guest Writer

Art club, facilitated by art teacher Lukas Jordan, is in its second year. Jordan is looking forward to having more students in art club in the 24'-25' school year. Jordan started art club to support students who didn't have time to learn different mediums on their own. He wanted to expose students to art galleries, different art techniques, and artists to show the different styles that artists all over have.

Art club is a student-run program like many of the programs within WBHS. The art club members have elected their president sophomore Lizzie Eckert, vice president senior Kayla Garret, and treasurer junior Adelyn Hetrick.

"I like being president because it's nice to be able to help and support others with their art and plan things for the art club to do." Eckert said.

Students in art club are able to experiment with different mediums of art to enhance their artistic abilities. In art club, students have the ability to bleach clothes, printmake, draw, create yarn art, resin art, or work with pastels, watercolors, and acrylics, and that's only scratching the surface. There are many more mediums the members can work with.

Pay attention to the posters that pop up around the school if you're planning on joining art club. For those interested, the art club meetings are held every Tuesday immediately after school. "Art club is great. It's a safe space, and even if you're really busy, you can still be in art club," said junior Aizlyn Marsh.



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A SNEAK PEEK INTO THE UPCOMING BOYS WRESTLING SEASON

Halia Gade  
Staff Writer

The 2024-2025 boys wrestling season is fast approaching. Many great wrestlers are returning to compete for another great season.

Senior Tate Frantz, Juniors Cooper Gates and Logan Christoffel, and Sophomore Ethan Humphrey all advanced to the state competition last year.

Frantz went 34-12 on the season, and 0-2 at state, ending his season. Gates went 36-5 on the season, and 1-2 at state. Christoffel went 36-10 on the season and finished out his season going 2-2 at state.

Humphrey went 36-4 on the season, and 3-3 at state, advancing through blood rounds

and placing 8th overall.

This year's preseason rankings have Humphrey ranked fourth in the state.

Humphrey says, "It doesn't put any pressure on me at all. It's just a ranking, it doesn't mean much to me. That's not what I'm focused on."

He said, "I want to win state, to do this I will have to work on my strength and mental game."

Gates has many goals for the upcoming season. He said, "My goal is to get on top of the podium and just grind in the weight room to get in shape and dominate."

The WBHS boys' wrestling team will have their first competition on December 5th at Beckman Catholic.

SENIORS HARTZ AND LACINA READY TO LEAD GIRLS WRESTLING SEASON

Cameron Waters  
Staff Writer

This year for the West Branch girls' wrestling season, Seniors Teagyn Hartz and Hanna Lacina hope they can work hard and get better. Last year, Hartz had gone 31-4 and qualified for the state tournament as well.

Hartz has been in wrestling for 3 years. She has advice for freshmen wrestlers.

Hartz said, "Whatever you put into wrestling is what you will get out."

Coach Brian Driscoll is entering his second year coaching the girls wrestling team.

Driscoll said, "All the girls have a great chance to have a very successful season and look to qualify many for the state tournament."

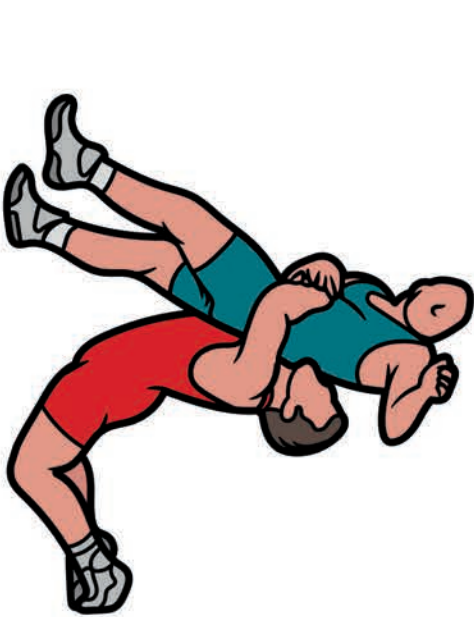
Driscoll said that he has a main goal for this season. He said, "Main goal this season is to keep improving on last year's success and keep the sport fun."

The joining girls who are freshmen are Karly Shelton and Lyla Snyder. During an interview, Shelton explained how she feels transitioning into high school.

She said, "I feel good, I'm pretty excited for it and I think the team will do pretty well this season."

Shelton said her main goal is, "Just to have a good mentality and do my best."

Girls wrestling started up in Iowa in 22-23. This is Iowa's third season hosting girls wrestling. West Branch Girls Wrestling has their first competition on the 4th of November!



GIRLS BASKETBALL HOPES TO MAKE A COME BACK

Karlee Hansen  
Staff Writer

In the 2023-2024 season for girls' varsity basketball, they won 3 out of 22 games. The team hopes to make a comeback this year for the 2024-2025 season.

Only two seniors are returning to the court this season, Alyssa Pierce and Katelyn Essington. Senior foreign exchange student Romy Springensguth plans to join, making this her first season.

This is head coach Justin Liddle's second year coaching girls varsity basketball.

Liddle said, "My goal is to be able to create a culture that incorporates our core values, the 3 C's. 1. Connect- every athlete experiences a sense of belonging. 2. Compete- the team competes at a high level regardless of the opponent. Athletes have a great attitude and effort and can overcome adversity. 3. Contribute- Each player has a valued role on the team, and uses their talents to contribute something positive to the team. We are looking forward to playing a more fast-paced and aggressive style

of basketball this year. I'm looking forward to what we can build and improve from week to week throughout the year."

Coaching along with Liddle is Assistant Varsity Coach, Morgan Mason. This is her first year being assistant coach for West Branch.

Senior Alyssa Pierce shared some advice she would give to incoming freshmen. She said, "It's a really long season so if you get hurt don't try to play through it. Enjoy the little moments because it goes by very fast."

Freshmen Lander Malloy, Kendra Rarick, Delaney Blindt, Greta Voss, and Cora Hernandez will join the girls' basketball team this year.

Malloy said, "I hope to get a lot of playing time and improve a lot this season, and become a better shooter and be able to shoot around more this year."

Voss said, "I want to play basketball because I enjoy it and it makes me happy. This season I hope to improve as an individual and be a good teammate. The transition from middle school to high school means you have to take your sport more seriously and give more time and effort."

BOYS BASKETBALL LOOKS TO FILL NEW ROLES AFTER LOSING VALUABLE PLAYERS

Halia Gade  
Staff Writer

Last year the West Branch varsity boys basketball team went 17-7 and 11-1 in the River-Valley Conference. February 20th, 2024, the team took on the West Burlington varsity boys basketball team at West Liberty in the 1st round of the playoffs. West Branch ended up losing 44-61 which ended the season. Although many great players graduated last year, many new players are taking the court this upcoming season.

Senior Nate Hills has many favorite memories from last season.

He said, "My favorite memory was beating Regina, and winning Conference South. I'm looking forward to getting back in the gym with my teammates and getting some wins."

Junior Nolan Staker has many goals for the upcoming season.

Staker says, "I would like to maintain a winning record, and make a playoff round".

This is head coach Jason Kern's seventh year coaching boys basketball at West Branch.

Before he coached at West Branch he coached at a high school in Louisiana as well as a college in Louisiana. He has not only coached basketball but also football, track, and baseball.

Kern loves to coach because he likes to see the development of the athletes and he enjoys developing relationships with his athletes.

In the upcoming season, there are a few things Kern will do.

"We need to get guys to fill new roles. We have two great players out with major injuries. We also have to find people to replace Holden Arnaman and Reese Trep. They scored an average of 45 points together per game."

Kern has one main focus for the season. "I need to find a group of guys that are willing to play hard on both ends, especially defensively. We need to be able to score the ball in a variety of ways, we really need to push the pace this year."

With the season quickly approaching, the team will have to practice hard to make this season one to remember.