



THE LIONS ROAR

"Lion pride in print"

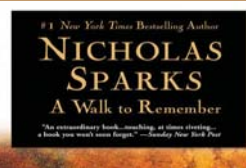
Friday, February 13, 2015

ALBANY HIGH SCHOOL

ALBANY, TEXAS 76430

VOLUME 13 NUMBER 4

Nicholas Sparks books give hope



Students focus on why so many girls are drawn to romance novels.

— See page 3

Love is in the air



Valentine's Day causes mixed emotions among couples.

— See page 5

Spring sports begin

Softball and baseball prepare for spring season

— See page 6



Briefs

Winter Formal results

Winter Formal was held at the Whitney Theater on January 17. Each class nominated three girls and three boys who are then voted on for prince and princess.

The prince and princess for the freshman class were Brian Hamilton and Baley Green, sophomores were Grant Head and Kylea Gardner, juniors were Tyler Miller and Kelsey Tollett, and Mr. and Miss AHS were Teagan Brandon and Shelby Barton.

Each prince was given candy and the princesses received roses.

EOC schedule set

The months of March, April, and May will be dotted with EOC exams for students in Texas. March 30 will be assigned to the seventh grade writing, eighth grade math, and English I tests. March 31 has been scheduled for the seventh grade writing and eighth grade reading tests. April 1 is designated to the English II exam. The seventh grade math and eighth grade social studies tests are set for April 21. April 22 has been scheduled for the seventh grade Reading and eighth grade science exams. The three exams in May are Algebra I on May 4, biology May on 6, and history is set for May 7.

Prom plans, date announced

This year's prom, hosted by the juniors, will be held on Saturday, March 21 at the Whitney Theatre. Juniors and seniors are invited, along with a guest. The senior class will receive two free tickets while the juniors will have to pay. The event is set to start at 8:00 p.m.



Scan QR code to load the SchoolWay app which can be used for both iPhone or Android.

Students prepare for UIL

Participants eager to compete

BY SHELBY BARTON
Photo Editor

With the UIL season now underway, students continue to practice and compete in various contests including their next competition tomorrow, Feb. 14, at Wylie High School.

At a previous meet in Haskell, Newt Koemel placed second in the science competition with a high chemistry score, Michael Cotter placed second in news writing, Genevieve Stunkard placed sixth in news writing, and Riley Scott placed sixth in headline writing.

"This year we have about 30 student partici-



UIL event sponsor Donnie Lucas reviews a schedule for the practice meet at Wylie on Feb. 14 with competitor Newt Koemel.

PHOTO BY SHELBY BARTON

pants, which is a bigger number than last year," UIL coordinator Rick Davis said. "We had a good size group at our first meet with 16 fresh-

men, which it's good to have younger students if we can keep them participating."

Similar to years past, more students are choos-

ing to compete in the journalism contests because of encouragement from the journalism teacher, Donnie Lucas.

"I have an advantage with my journalism students because I require all of my first-year class to participate in at least one UIL practice meet," Lucas said. "Also, I think success of *The Lions Roar* also influences UIL participation."

Participation in math and science events was sparse at the first meet, but coaches are hopeful and optimistic.

"Our math and science departments had the lowest number of students with only one student competing in science and only freshmen competing in math contests at our first meet," Davis said. "But more students have shown interest in competing in those areas in upcoming

meets."

One concern Davis has is the new location of the regional meet.

"Instead of the regional meet being a short drive to Abilene, it will be held in Odessa which will be very new to us," Davis said. "Now we are looking at an overnight meet and finding hotel rooms in that area might be an issue."

Davis believes Albany will continue to be successful at UIL contests.

"I think the students will come through in the competitions just like Albany always does," Davis said.

He encourages other students to become involved because of the benefits it offers.

"I personally enjoy the contests," Davis said. "It is another academic experience that allows students to focus on their

SEE "UIL" PG 8

Stock show season in full swing

Students prepare for major shows

BY LORI DAVIS
Assistant Editor

With stock show season in full swing, grooming, feeding, and cleaning out pens are everyday things for those showing an animal. When it comes to participating in stock shows, there is more than meets the eye.

"It teaches me responsibility," freshman Chase Hill said. "Even if I don't want to go feed my animal, I know that I have to, and this helps me because sometimes in life you have to do things that you don't want to do."

Junior Alex Faith, who has shown pigs since fifth grade, also thinks that it will benefit him in the long run.

"I want to do something stock show related



Senior Sierra Price receives advice from the judge at the Shackelford County Stock Show. Price and her cattle were among 133 students and 260 animals that were presented this year.

PHOTO BY SHELBY BARTON

when I get older, so it is good practice having to raise animals and prepare them for the shows," Faith said.

Sophomore Logan Lloyd feels that participating in stock show

opens more doors for her.

"Being in stock show presents many awesome scholarship opportunities," Lloyd said. "You are able to meet so many different people, and they will pass your

name along to others and help you become known among the stock show community."

When choosing a certain animal, it is often based on personal preference, amount of work re-

quired, and availability.

"One of my mom's friends raised pigs and asked us if we wanted to show them the next year, so we decided to try it," Faith said.

This is Hill's first year to show an animal.

"I decided to show this year because all of my siblings and friends did it, and I wanted to try it," Hill said. "I wanted a bigger animal, but I didn't want all of the responsibility of a pig yet, so I chose to show a goat."

Freshman Madison Ratliff is showing heifers and pigs this year.

"Heifers require a lot more work than pigs, and are a year-round project," Ratliff said. "There is a lot of brushing, washing, and walking involved."

There are many different things that have to be done to prepare an animal for a show.

"Before a show, you have to wash your pig

SEE "SHOW" PG 8

The Crucible takes center stage

Actors prepare for a new season

BY CURRY WILSON
Assistant Editor

The stage has been set for the One Act Play production of *The Crucible*, with several actors returning this year hoping for a chance to make it to state.

"I have been participating in One Act since my freshman year," junior Tyler Miller said. "I do it because I get to express myself in a way that is funny or sad, and I also like the challenge to portray a character."

One new comer to OAP is certainly not new to the stage.

"I have been acting since I was about five

years old," freshman Natalie Hayner said. "I went to a performing arts school for two years where two main focuses were acting and singing."

Also new to the program is third grade teacher Chanel Hayner, who has taken over Jennifer Everitt's position as director.

"I did One Act all throughout high school, and I loved the experience," Hayner said. "Once I was offered the position, I eagerly accepted."

Waiting for his chance to finally be on stage is junior Newt Koemel.

"This year is my first year to officially act," Koemel said. "I auditioned for a part my freshman year but didn't get it, and last year I was unable to try out due to sickness."



Tyler Miller auditions for *The Crucible* with Rylie Scott and Natalie Hayner. OAP will have its first competition on March 28 in Anson.

PHOTO BY KYLEA GARDNER

This year the cast is performing the famous play *The Crucible*.

"I wanted to do a

dramatic play that had many roles rather than just a few," Hayner said.

"Once I found out that

several classes had read the play, I thought it would be the perfect choice."

This year's cast and crew have a total of 17 students participating.

"I think having a big cast is more fun, and I like coming together and performing," Miller said.

Hard work and dedication are just a few things that go on backstage.

"It is very time consuming when choosing for roles," Hayner said. "This year was a very tough year to decide who people should play because everyone who auditioned did well. In the end, my co-directors and I had to decide what was best for the play as a whole. We looked for the way each actor in each role would fit together."

SEE "OAP" PG 8

Editorials

Benefits of Involvement

High school is the time to get involved and participate in many different activities with your classmates. Unfortunately, student involvement is very slim and is decreasing in our school in some areas.

There are so many different opportunities in which to become involved: athletics, UIL, one-act play, cheerleading, student council, class officers, FCCLA, FFA, the list goes on and on. Despite all of these organizations, it is usually the same students that are involved in everything.

A high level of student participation helps the school succeed. Therefore, being a part of a school organization is an easy way to give back to your school.

The more activities in which a student participates, the more well-rounded that student will be. Colleges take into account all of a student's extracurricular activities during the admissions process, and quite often that will be the deciding factor. The captain of the basketball team who is also the student council president will have a better chance of getting into their choice school than a slightly smarter student who didn't participate in any organizations.

Joining a team or club is also a great, fun way to make memories with your friends throughout high school.

Many students say that they are too busy to take part in any activities, but this is not true. By prioritizing your schedule to do the things that will help out in the future, there will be plenty of time to become involved in student organizations.

Becoming involved can benefit the student, and the school, and can make the future brighter. And it might just be enjoyable.

Organizations are equal

Although small high schools might have limited options in what is offered as extra-curricular activities, they provide students the chance to be very involved. However, some activities seem to outweigh others in importance and receive more community support.

Some students choose to be primarily involved in sports more than other things, and the community traditionally rallies around the major sports teams. However, there are other activities to be involved in than just sports, and some students get overshadowed because their involvement is focused on academics or other non-sporting activities.

Student involvement is something that doesn't stop after high school. In college, the first thing students are encouraged to do is to get involved on campus. When one aspect of high school receives the most attention, it can make students feel like their activity doesn't matter. Community support is more important than most people seem to realize.

Albany is a town that is based around football. With an incredible season including going to state, it's not shocking that people in the community still talk about it every day. When UIL participants make it to the state level, they are not praised for their success to the same degree. State-level competition is worthy of honor no matter what event or team it involves, whether it be sports, academics, band, FCCLA, or journalism.

Because sporting events have audiences, some say it is just easier to support sports teams than other clubs and organizations. Although that's true in some cases, there are a number of ways and opportunities to support students in all areas.

All organizations deserve to be supported and encouraged. Some students are athletic, some are incredibly smart, some love to write, some are fascinated with technology, and some like to raise and show animals. No matter what students choose to be involved with, support them by bidding on their animal at the county stock show, buying truffles from the FCCLA kids, buying a yearbook, or picking up a student newspaper while continuing to support and encourage athletes.



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ALBANY HIGH SCHOOL

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Love will come around

As Valentine's Day rolls around, I can't help but think back to the time I had an elementary boyfriend on Valentine's Day. We showed up to Wylie Intermediate School, never saying a word to each other, handed each other a box of chocolates, and walked away. I know what you're thinking—YES, it was really romantic and touching.

Now that I'm in high school and my friends are in actual relationships, it is funny to look back at the elementary and even junior high boyfriends that we all have had. There seems to be more and more elementary kids that are "dating" one another. For the sake of all that's good in the world listen to me now---THAT DOESN'T COUNT AS DATING. GET OUT OF THE "RELATIONSHIP" BEFORE YOU LOOK BACK IN EMBARRASSMENT.

For some odd reason, even now when I see my elementary "boyfriend" or his parents, things are STILL awkward. With social media and cell phones being provided to younger and younger kids, they believe that getting a "woman crush Wednesday"



#blessed
by MOLLY LEE

or a "man crush Monday" post about them is this incredibly sweet and romantic gesture. (By the way if that's the sweetest thing that a guy does for you, RUN, GIRL. RUN!)

You don't really learn what dating is until you are older and can put forth the effort into actually making a relationship work. I can promise you it is not showing up at school and sitting in the hallway holding hands and then never talking again until the playground.

Dating is something that is special and actually means something. Relationships are tough to keep because you have to work for them. There is just no way to keep relationships in elementary school because "real life" does not hit you until you are older and start making choices that not only affect you but the person you're dating. To all of the young kids reading this—I know you are offended and heart broken, but read this again as a senior in high school. We all thought we were in love, too. And YES, we're all still embarrassed about it.

Last is better than first

I'd like to believe that in a family the youngest sibling has more of an advantage than a disadvantage. Being the baby of the family I should know, right? Wrong! In my case, the baby of the family translates into the one getting picked on, blamed, and taking the heat when chores aren't completed.

I had a role to play in the "scene of sisterhood." In the movies, the older sibling take care of the younger brothers or sisters by feeding them, bathing them, and always protecting them, no matter what the cost may be. This, too, was my belief until my sisters sacrificed my life by hanging me by my feet outside a second-story window in order to retrieve a bucket that we had dropped to the ground! Can you believe it? I am the baby!

Once you are put into the position of being the baby of the family, that's where you stay. I feel like I have to constantly remind my mother that I am now older and can do a few things on my own. For instance, once my family wanted to watch a movie that was rated "R". Since I was "not old enough", I was banished to the back room with nothing but a fuzzy blanket, all alone again, listening to the



REDHEADED RANTS
by CURRY WILSON

laughter from the other room. The loneliness was scarring. (Well, it could have been.)

Not only am I the baby in my immediate family, but I'm also the baby of seven cousins- "the 7 C's" as we are called. Now I don't mind being the baby of the cousins because I get a lot of sympathy from my grandmother. While everyone else is off doing their thing, she and I are left to enjoy each other. It is hard being the baby of the family, and when times get tough, she is always there to wrap up the loose ends. She and I share a special bond.

Even though there are a lot of downsides to being the youngest, there are also a few perks to being the baby if you play your cards right. First, if an older sibling and I get into an argument, the older one always gets blamed. If someone else picks on me, my otherwise abusive older siblings are there in a second stand to up for me. And that's pretty cool.

Sure, being "the tot" of the family isn't great at times, but I couldn't ask for anything better. And.... you can be assured that this redheaded baby girl is a force to be reckoned with.

Forever an Albany Lion

Being a student athlete takes dedication. Not everyone has the talent or dedication to handle two hours of homework, three and a half hours of practice, and eight hours of school all in the same day. But when an athletic career comes to a close, all of your time and dedication only dissipates. You don't know what to do with yourself anymore. The thing you have been living for for the past eight or so years is gone, and there is no getting it back.

As I took a final bow as an Albany Lion football player Dec. 18, I lay on the ground thinking of all the things I could've done better. This was it. This was the last time I would ever step on the field with the people I had grown the closest to in the past four months. This brotherhood I had formed was gone and there was absolutely nothing I could do to get it back. When someone finally helped me up from the ground because I could not do it under my own power, I saw one of my closest brothers and immediately clung to him. With both of us shedding tears of sorrow, he explained to me that he was sorry he couldn't win this game for me. He was sorry that my football career ended with a loss. It was in that



SPORTS WITH STEVE
by STEVE PHILLIPS

moment that I confirmed that I loved every single one of the guys on my team, and they loved me back.

People who don't play this sport will never understand what it means to be a football player. People who don't play for Albany High School will never understand what it means to completely alter the saying "Boys of Fall" and change it to "Boys of December." The relationships you build with each other will stay with you for the rest of your life. I will never forget my senior season of football. Although it didn't end the way everyone wanted it to, I can still say that I've played in a state championship game.

I will walk into Robert Nail Memorial Stadium with a different pair of shoes next year. I can only hope that I left my mark at this school. I can only hope that the 2014 Albany Lion football team will be remembered for years to come, but I know I will cherish every moment I spent with the rest of the team for eternity. So as I close this story, just as I hung my pads up for the last time, I will thank the coaches, my teammates, and every one who supported us. I sign off as an ex-football player, but forever an Albany Lion...



2¢ worth

What celebrity would you want a date with for Valentine's Day and why?

"I would go on a date with Beyoncé because I think she is sexy."

Brian Hamilton
Freshman



"I would date Evan Peters because I think he's beautiful and would be really fun to be around."

Emmy Shirley
Sophomore



"I would go on a date with Prince Royce. I met him once, and to go on a date would be really awesome."

Leonela Perez
Junior



"I would go on a date with Ronda Rousey so we could train MMA together."

Andrew Brown
Senior



Sparks can fly in romance novels

Students enjoy Sparks' books

BY LORI DAVIS
Assistant Editor

Curled up on the sofa with a box of tissues on the table in front of you, and the latest Nicholas Sparks' novel in your hands, is how many teenage girls love to spend their time. His books and movies are sweeping the nation because of their extravagant love stories and unexpected twists.

"Nicholas Sparks has a way of writing that leaves you wondering, and it makes you want to continue reading his books," senior Sarah Taplin said.

Sparks has written 17 romance novels and one nonfiction book featuring his experiences while on vacation with his brother.

"The books are very realistic and are unlike any other books I have ever read," junior Tobi Nall said.

Librarian Karen Noble makes sure to always have the latest Nicholas Sparks' book on the shelf.

"I order each new book as soon as it becomes available because students enjoy them," Noble said.

Ten of his books have also been made into movies.

"I enjoy the movies more because I am able to see the characters on the screen instead of having to visualize them," Taplin said. "This also makes them more relatable."

Junior Kelsey Tollett on the other hand prefers

the books.

"I like the books better because they have more details that create feelings, whereas in the movies

Noble said. "The stories don't always end happy, but they let us believe that true love is out

there and that it finds us when we least expect it."

Many Nicholas Sparks followers have a favorite book or movie that just tops all of the other ones.

"My favorite would have to be *Safe Haven*," junior Savannah Perez said. "It was really easy to visualize what was going on while I was reading the book, and while I think some of his books are too cheesy, *Safe Haven* wasn't cheesy at all."

Price's favorite book is *The Notebook*.

"I loved that it presented the message about

what it means to be happy in the end," Price said.

Tollett also has a least favorite book.

"I couldn't stay interested while reading *Nights in Rodanthe*," Tollett said. "It didn't meet the standards of all of his other books."

The novels often contain a tragic situation that

is intertwined throughout the whole story.

"The only thing I dislike about the books is that some of them are very sad, and sometimes it doesn't work out for the better," Nall said.

For some people, messages from his books can be translated into real life.

"All of Sparks' books and movies set a standard for what girls deserve," Price said. "They make you realize what kind of love is possible and give you an idea of what you should expect from a boy."

However, Taplin just views them as stories.

"I enjoy reading all of the books, but you can't base your hopes off of them," Taplin said.

Some people want Nicholas Sparks to explore new territory with his writing, while others want him to stick with what he does best.

"I want to see him write from a different perspective than true love," Taplin said.

Tollett would like to keep seeing more love stories from Sparks.

"He has done well with what he has written so far, so I think that he should just stick with romance novels," Tollett said.

Junior Savannah Perez reads one of Nicholas Sparks' books, *The Best of Me*. Perez is one of the many students who enjoy reading Sparks' novels. Sparks continually has new books being released, as well as movies made from his novels. One of his novels, *The Longest Ride*, will be released as a movie this year.

PHOTO BY LORI DAVIS



The Boy Next Door
January 23, 2015 R 91 min
Romance | Thriller

Shortly after her divorce, a woman falls for a younger man who just moved in across the street, though their torrid affair takes an obsessive, dangerous turn.

Director: Rob Cohen
Writers: Barbara Curry
Stars: Jennifer Lopez, Ryan Guzman

Staff Review:



The Wedding Ringer
January 16, 2015 R 101 min
Comedy

Two weeks shy of his wedding, a socially awkward guy enters into a charade by hiring the owner of a company that provides best men for grooms in need.

Director: Jeremy Garelick
Writers: Jeremy Garelick, Jay Lavender
Stars: Kevin Hart, Josh Gad

Staff Review:



Jupiter Ascending
February 6, 2015 PG-13 127 min
Fantasy | Action

In the future, a young destitute human woman gets targeted for assassination by the Queen of the Universe and begins her destiny to finish the Queen's reign.

Director: Andy Wachowski
Writers: Lana Wachowski
Stars: Channing Tatum, Mila Kunis, Eddie Redmayne

Staff Review:



American Sniper
January 16, 2015 R 132 min
Biography | Action

Navy SEAL sniper Chris Kyle's pinpoint accuracy saves countless lives on the battlefield and turns him into a legend. Back home to his wife and kids after four tours of duty, Chris finds that it is the war he can't leave behind.

Director: Clint Eastwood
Writers: Jason Hall
Stars: Bradley Cooper, Sienna Miller

Staff Review:



THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

BY RACHEL HILL

Into the Woods

Into the Woods, released December 25, 2014, is a classically clever, frequently funny, sometimes somber and ultimately uplifting take on the basic fairy tale stories. With characters like Cinderella, Prince Charming, and vicious wolves preying on young children, the movie keeps viewers thinking and on their toes. It is mostly emotionally attached stuff. Children are separated from parents, likeable characters die, handsome princes aren't all they are made out to be, and there is no promise of a happy ending for any of the characters. Meryl Streep, the wicked witch, is quite terrifying and giants terrorize residents, but the scares are mild for the most part. There is no language to fret over. Like all fairy tales, the characters do kiss, and there is a dishonest encounter between couples that are married to others. All in all, teamwork, family and moral dilemmas will resonate with viewers.

Unbroken

Unbroken is a World War II story of survival, resilience, and redemption. The non-fiction book was written by best-selling author of *Seabiscuit*,

Laura Hillenbrand. As a boy, Louie Zamperini was always in trouble. With the help of his older brother, he turned his life around and used his bottled-up energy for his love of running, later qualifying for the 1938 Olympics. After breaking and setting many records, Louie then enlisted in the military when World War II broke out. Louie survived an incredible 47 days with his partner and best friend in a raft when his plane crashes in the Pacific. Quickly facing starvation, the men saved themselves by eating albatrosses (birds) that used the raft as a perch and by catching an occasional fish. They cut up fabric from a second raft to protect themselves from the scorching sun. Storms quenched their despairing thirst. Throughout, sharks floated expectantly alongside and beneath them, rubbing their backs against the raft and, sometimes, lunging up into it. The men beat them off with oars and even managed to kill a couple — and eat their livers. The stranded men were shot at by Japanese planes hovering above their raft hundreds of times with neither man being hit.

Eventually, the Japanese army rescues them and Louie becomes a target of cruelty at various POW camps. This story is about fighting and strength in the darkest of times with

the spirit of Louie Zamperini never being broken. With the book being very graphic, the ideal readers are teens and older, but it makes for a heartfelt read that will captivate readers.

The Hobbit: Battle of the Five Armies

Released Dec. 17, 2014, *The Battle of the Five Armies* is the third installment in the three-part film adaptation based on the novel by J.R.R. Tolkien, following *An Unexpected Journey* and *The Desolation of Smaug*.

Having reclaimed Erebor and treasure from Smaug, Thorin Oakenshield sacrifices friendship and honor in seeking the Arkenstone, despite attempts by the Hobbit Bilbo to make him see reason. Meanwhile, Sauron sends legions of Orcs in a sneak attack upon the Lonely Mountain.

As the fate of Middle Earth hangs in the balance, the races of men, elves and dwarves must decide whether to unite in order to prevail or all die.

The title suggests there will be five armies duking it out on the battlefield, but the bloody scenes makes it feel like six or seven or eight.

With only a few crude words, this move is a must-see for the action seeking moviegoers.

Regional UIL sites relocated

Realignment puts regional activities farther away

BY CURRY WILSON
Assistant Editor

Every two years the University Interscholastic League realigns schools into districts and regions based on enrollment for the purpose of both academic and athletic competition.

Albany was shifted from Region II to Region I this year which is causing some considerable changes, especially for academic contests and playing sports.

"The region that we were moved to now is Region I," Principal Kevin Hill said, "So all of our regional level activities will be moved to the Midland-Odessa area."

Because of farther travel distances, the school will have to pay more money for transportation, hotels, and meals.

"In the past we only had to drive to Abilene for regional meets," Hill said, "so the budget will cost more for transportation purposes."

Ricky Davis, the UIL Academic Coordinator, is making future plans for the regional meet.

"Odessa has been booming lately and my biggest concern is the hotel rooms because they are expensive there," Davis said.

Davis is hoping that the recent drop in the price of oil will help with reserving rooms.

"I think the fact that the

price of oil is dropping, means things might slow down, so we will have a better chance of getting rooms than we did six or nine months ago," Davis said.

"My biggest concern is hotel prices in Odessa because of the oil boom," Davis said. "I hear the prices are really inflated." Not only has the change

in regions affected the school's budget, but there are also other complications.

"Before, students who were doing multiple events could travel to one place and be back the same afternoon, whereas now there will need to be more tedious scheduling since there will be more traveling and moving

around," Hill said.

For several years the boys' and girls' track teams have advanced to the regional meet in Abilene. Now they will have to make the long journey to Odessa.

"We have always competed against good teams in Region II, so I don't think that this year should be any different

this year," head girls' track coach Ginger Norton said. "The competition level shouldn't be any harder."

Senior Kendra Dockins feels that Albany will still be competitive.

"I actually think that the competition will be easier because we were in the toughest region last year," Dockins said.

Weather can also play

a big factor in competing at the regional meet, especially out west.

"I do think that the athletes have an advantage who live in the panhandle," Norton said. "They are used to the colder weather and higher winds which can make them stronger, whereas, we are used to the heat and the dry weather."

Junior Levi Britting, a pole-vaulter, thinks that the competition won't affect his chance to go to state again this year.

"I actually think that the competition will be easier in the new region this year than in Region II," Britting said.

Scheduling plays a big factor in the new region.

"The district track meet will be earlier than we have ever had it," Hill said.

Also, new competitions have been added because of the change.

"We now have a bi-district One-Act Play competition which we never had before," Hill said. "And it falls on the Saturday that we usually have prom, so instead of having prom in April, we now moved it to March."

The earlier date for prom has caused conflict for student Chelsi Freasier.

"I don't like that prom is now in March," Freasier said. "I'm already busy during the spring because of softball season, so now I won't have time to shop for a dress."

Senior Valerie Gandara feels the same.

"Prom gave us something to look forward to right before graduation," Gandara said. "Plus, it's too soon because we just had Winter Formal in January, and now I have to find another dress for prom."



REGION I SPRING CONTEST SITES		
Academic Site	Odessa College Odessa	April 23-25
Golf Site	Ratliff Ranch Golf Links Odessa	Girls: April 13-14 Boys: April 15-16
Tennis Site	Ratliff Stadium Odessa	April 20-21
Track & Field Site	Ratliff Stadium Odessa	May 1-2

Principal Kevin Hill reviews a map of where organizations will be traveling for regional competitions this spring. The past two years, regional level competition has been held in Abilene. With the region change to Region I, students will now compete in the Midland-Odessa area for spring sports and academic competitions.

PHOTO BY CURRY WILSON

Football fans rally together for the bowl

Feed store hosts Super Bowl party

BY RACHEL HILL
Copy Editor

With Super Bowl XLIX in the record books, die-hard football fans rallied together on Super Bowl Sunday.

Among various Super Bowl traditions, Grant Zeller and The Feed Store put on a Super Bowl party for local students.

"Hosting the party was a lot of fun," Zeller said. "We had about 67 kids total, and everyone enjoyed it whether their team won or lost."

Tisha Wilkins helped provide the assortment of food, ranging from chips and dips to pulled pork sandwiches to brownies and cookies.

"We could not have done it without the Feed Store board and Tisha providing the food," Zeller said. "I know that no one went home hungry. It was an awesome night!"

For many, the Super Bowl isn't just another football game.

"Having a Super Bowl party is a time to get together and enjoy some friendly rivalry and competition," Michael Cotter said. "Teasing Steve (Phillips) and Andy (Andrew Brown) about the Seahawks loss was a lot of fun."

Andrew Brown, a Seahawks fan, agrees.

"My favorite thing is to get to feel the satisfaction of your team winning," Brown said. "But if they lose, you still share in their sorrow."

The Super Bowl commercials are usually a big hit, but partygoers thought they were lacking this year.

"The commercials weren't as good as they have



Students react to the final interception by Malcolm Butler that sealed the victory by the New England Patriots during Super Bowl XLIX. Seahawks fans were hopeful for a repeat of last year's game, but left disappointed.

PHOTO BY RACHEL HILL

been," Cotter said. "There were a few that were alright, but they didn't compare to previous years."

Hunter Owen shared the same opinion.

"This year they were more serious," Owen said. "They used to be funny."

"I don't like the commercials at all" Dax Neece said. "They're all too long and there's too many of them. I just want to watch the game."

Another big hit during the Bowl game is the halftime performance. Katy Perry was in the spotlight this year.

"Katy put on a great show," Stevie Phillips said. "She went throwback with some old songs to spice it up. I knew every word to every song."

Perry made a grand entrance on a huge robotic lion,

and featured Missy Elliot and Lenny Kravitz.

"Her performance almost seemed like it was from a kid show," Cotter said. "She had a scene where she played with beach balls and had dancing sharks in the background. However, it was still good"

Although the night was enjoyable, there was a bit of friendly tension in the air.

"The only thing I didn't like about the game was the team I am not going for," Steven Ford, Patriots fan, said. "No one enjoys watching a team they don't like."

Brian Hamilton, Seahawks fan, has a different opinion.

"The only thing I don't like about the Super Bowl is Tom Brady," Hamilton said. "Period. There's too much

hype about the Patriots. Tom Brady is a whiny pretty boy who needs to be shut up once and for all."

In the playoff game between the New England Patriots and the Indianapolis Colts, the Patriots were accused of deflating the balls, which were used in the game.

"I think the Patriots cheated, but it wouldn't make a difference because the Patriots rushed for three touchdowns, so whether the ball had air or not didn't matter," Ford said.

Neece, also a Pats fan, had a different view on the rumor.

"The whole thing was dumb," Neece said. "There's no way they could have gotten away with it, even if it did happen. It was just some rumor the Colts made up to get the media involved, but

it doesn't matter anymore."

Hamilton disagrees.

"The scandal is just another reason the Patriots don't deserve to win," Hamilton said.

Scoring Summary

The first quarter ended with the two teams tied at zero. In the second, the Patriots took a 7-0 lead after a Brandon LaFell touchdown catch. Marshawn Lynch scored on a short touchdown run that was set up in the play earlier by a beautiful catch by Chris Matthews to tie the score at 7-7. Tom Brady connected with tight end Rob Gronkowski to put the Patriots up by 7. The Seahawks drove 80 yards in 29 seconds to tie the score once more. Another long reception by Matthews led to a Seattle field goal, to put

Seattle up in the fourth 17-14. Doug Baldwin scored to give the Seahawks a secure lead, 24-14. Brady connected with Danny Amendola for a Super Bowl record breaking TD number 12, cutting the Seahawks lead to 24-21. Receiver Julian Edelman scores for the Pats, putting them ahead 28-21. Russell Wilson threw the game-ending interception to Malcolm Butler. New England wins Super Bowl XLIX 28-24.

WHAT'S HAPPENING!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY

13- Varsity/Jr. Varsity Boys basketball vs. Anson @ 5:00-there

13- Jr. Varsity II Boys basketball vs. Anson @ 4:00-there

16- FAFSFA night for seniors and parents @6:00

16- Jr. Varsity II Boys basketball vs. Eula @ 4:00-Moran

17- Varsity/Jr. Varsity Boys basketball vs. Hamlin @ 5:00-here

19- Varsity Girls Softball Eastland Tournament @ TBA

26- Varsity Girls Softball Stephenville Tournament @ TBA

26-28- Varsity/Jr. Varsity Boys Baseball Albany Tournament

27- Seniors to Abilene for "When Sean Speaks" presentation

27- Boys/Girls Track @ Breckenridge

MARCH

3- Varsity Girls softball vs. Stamford @5:00-here

3- ACT workshop in Anson

3-Internet safety/current trends PTO program for parents @6:00

4-Internet safety program for students

5- Boys/Girls track @ Clyde

5-7- Varsity Boys baseball Sundown tournament

10- Varsity Girls softball/ Varsity/Jr. Varsity Boys baseball vs. Haskell @1:00-here

13- Jr. Varsity Boys baseball vs. Haskell @7:00-here

14- Girls/Boys track @Hamlin

14- SAT at AJSH

17- Varsity Girls/Boys softball/baseball vs. Anson @ 5:00-there

19- Boys/Girls track @ Eastland

20- Varsity Girls softball vs. Eula @ 5:00-there

20- Varsity Boys baseball vs. Eula @ 5:00-there

23- Motivational Productions Multi-Media presentation for AHS/ NSES students

24- Varsity Girls softball Varsity/Jr. Varsity baseball vs. Hamlin @ 5:00-here

26- Boys/Girls track @ Cisco

Viewpoints vary about Valentine's Day

Girls cling to celebrating love, gift giving

BY KYLEA GARDNER
Features Editor

Valentine's Day is the universal symbol for all things dealing with love, happiness, and fairytale endings, although not everyone has the same warm feelings toward the annual celebration of love.

The importance and meaning of Valentine's Day varies among people's opinions, but for the most part girls are more interested in sappy occasions than boys.

"I like the idea of Valentine's Day because it is a whole day dedicated to the person you love, and I feel like that is very important," junior Tobi Nall said.

Sophomore Michaela Reames also agreed that a day dedicated to love was beneficial.

"A day full of showing how much you love and care about people is so important," Reames said. "I think that at least once a year the people you care about should know how much you love them."

Some were more negative about the idea.

"I feel like it is just a long, drug out holiday that never ends up the way that girls expect it to," sophomore Logan Lloyd said. "Everyone makes a big deal out of it, but I don't feel like it is all that important."

Sophomore Rachel Hill agreed. "Valentine's Day is a pointless holiday," Hill said. "It's a waste of time and money on candy and gifts. Having a boyfriend slightly changed my opinion on it because now I do get involved, but if I didn't have him I would just completely ignore it."

Eighth grade student Haley Stewart focuses on more than just relationships with a significant other in the spirit of Valentine's Day.

"I believe that Valentine's Day is a great time to appreciate all the people you have in your life that love you," Stewart said.

Junior Sarah Rogers concurred. "Sometimes we take advantage of the ones we care about, and I believe that Valentine's Day is a great day to show your loved ones how much you care about them," Rogers said.

Some students came up short of being shot by cupid's arrow this year.

"Every Valentine's Day just reminds me of how pathetic my love life is, which makes me sad," sophomore Sydney Key said. "At least chocolate is on sale, though."

Girls grow up building high expectations about their 'knights in shining armor' showering them with symbols of love and affection, including expensive gifts. Although, when it comes down to the expectation versus reality, it doesn't always end up in the females' favor.

"If I were to get any gift I wanted, it would be getting as many chocolate covered strawberries as possible, and some of my favorite candy," sophomore Emmy Shirley said.

Junior Nita Perez also has an idea of what her ideal Valentine's gifts would be.

"I would want chocolates, a life-sized teddy bear, a room full of roses, and a heartfelt love letter," Perez said.

Sophomore Kaleigh Clevenger is hoping for a more extravagant gift.

"I would really appreciate \$200 and a whole lot of my favorite candy," Clevenger said. "Hopefully that won't be a problem."

Although some wish for gifts fit for queens, Hill is hoping for a more affordable gift.

"All I really want is some fuzzy socks," Hill said. "I don't care about huge gifts, and I definitely don't want to make anyone spend tons of money on me."

Key is looking to hopefully get a pleasant Valentine's Day surprise.

"Just a simple flower would be super cute," Key said. "A boyfriend would be pretty nice too. Whatever works."

As well as focusing on the gifts, girls also picture going on an ideal date.

"If I could pick my ideal Valentine's date night, it would be dressing in formal clothes and going out to eat in a fancy restaurant. Then either going to the movies or going dancing," Shirley said. "Afterward, I would love to go to Dave and Busters and play games and win prizes."

Reames is also hoping for a fun-filled Valentine's date.

"My ideal date would be playing laser tag, going bowling, going to the drive-in movie theatre, and eating Subway all day," Reames said.

Sophomore Lexi Munden is hoping for a more relaxed day.

"The date I would pick would just be lying in bed all day eating pizza and truffles while watching 'Gossip Girl' on Netflix,"

Munden said.

Junior Kelsey Tollett is hoping for a relaxed date as well.

"I would just like to have a nice picnic and have a long conversation," Tollett said. "I want to be able to relax and watch movies, too."

A simple date is sufficient for Key. "Just getting to be together would be the best date," Key said. "I don't need a super fancy romance; cuddling would work just fine for me."

A lasting question in the world today is why girls feel that Valentine's Day is more important to them than it is to boys, or if that statement is even true.

"I think Valentine's is more important to girls because girls love to love, and love to be loved," Tollett said. "We love gifts and kisses and hugs, but boys don't understand that because they think differently."

Nall suggested that

Some guys view holiday as financial burden

BY KYLEA GARDNER
Features Editor

Valentine's Day is widely known as a day when people express their undying love for one another and end up happily ever after...at least until the next day.

"I think it is the best time of the year," junior Drew Neece said. "You can feel the love in the air."

Freshman Chase Hill agreed.

"It's a good day to spread love and joy to everyone," Hill said. "Everyone needs to know how much you appreciate them."

The expectations that go along with the holiday usually consist of a date and meaningful gifts.

"My ideal Valentine's gift would be a date with someone other than my mom," Conde said.

Phillips hopes for a sentimental gift.

"Flowers that I picked myself, a sweet note, and a hug would be a good gift to give to someone," Phillips said.

Others hope to go the cheaper route on gift giving this year.

"Anything I can find at the Dollar Store will most likely be what I get people," Arellano said.

Junior Levi Britting is hoping for anything but a cheap gift.

"A car would be a great Valentine's Day gift," Britting said.

Freshman Kyle Manning wants a gift that money can't buy.

"I want a kiss for Valentines Day," Manning said. "That would be the best gift."

Most girls dream of a perfect date on Valentine's Day, and boys usually go along with whatever that may be; however, some guys do take time and effort to plan ahead.

"I would like to eat a nice dinner and end the night with a slow dance under the stars," freshman Nolan Davis said.

Neece also shared his ideas of the ideal Valentine's date.

"A romantic picnic under the stars would be how I want to spend my Valentine's date," Neece said.

Junior Caleb Masters' idea of a romantic evening is different than most.

"I want to sit and eat corn on the cob while watching the sun set," Masters said.

Although some of the boys didn't much care for the idea of a fancy date, they are reluctantly planning to participate anyway.

"If I could choose for myself, I would just want to go to Wendy's and eat with my girlfriend, but she's not a fan of it, so I usually just end up letting her choose to avoid an argument," Miller said.

Some are hoping for a calm day.

"The only thing that I can afford would either be Dairy Queen or McDonald's, so that is where I would be spending my Valentine's Day," eighth grade student Cutter Cowart said.

Arellano agrees.

"Going to McDonald's and ordering from the dollar menu sounds like a pretty good date idea to me," Arellano said.

A simple date is satisfactory for Owen as well.

"I really don't care what it is that I'm doing during the day, as long as I can spend it with my girlfriend," Owen said. "I'm okay with doing whatever it is that she wants to do."

The reasoning behind why girls place so much importance on the holiday is a mystery to most guys.

"I think that a lot of the reason that girls make Valentine's such a big deal is because they are really needy," Miller said. "They constantly want reassurance that you care about them, so they love all the attention they get on Valentine's Day."

Britting shared similar opinions.

"Girls are very emotional and guys are not, so girls usually enjoy the holiday quite a bit more than boys do," Britting said.

Some believe that girls' love for the holiday is about the gift giving.

"Girls actually care about the holiday because they get good gifts, and boys couldn't care less about it," Owen said.

Phillips agreed.

"I think that girls care more about it because we, as boys, typically give them much better gifts," Phillips said.

While some guys just never get it, there are still a few who think that it's a special day.

"Guys worry about Valentine's Day a lot more than girls do, because they have to worry about whether or not their girl is high maintenance," sophomore Connor Maples said.

In the end, most guys agree that it is more emotional for girls.

"Girls are extremely emotional, so they want all the 'love-y-dove-y' stuff, and all boys are really interested in is chocolate," Conde said.

The one thing that everyone could agree on was that Valentine's Day is a wonderful day to express love to others..



Students Michaela Reames and Grant Head prepare for the annual gift giving and celebration of love on Valentine's Day. Reames is among the majority of girls who think this day is a treat, while Head looks at it as a burden, especially where finances are concerned.

PHOTO BY KYLEA GARDNER

girls' emotions have a lot to do with how much they like Valentine's Day.

"Girls are more emotional than boys, and Valentine's is a day of expressing your feelings. Boys don't get that because they think that girls are that emotional all the time," Nall said.

Shirley agreed.

"I think it is a lot more important to girls because girls are really lovey dovey and want to feel special to a certain someone," Shirley said. "I think boys understand that, but I don't think they really care. High school boys are young, and they aren't thinking about love and romance, but they'll be men eventually and then they will start caring more."

Stewart feels that boys' resentment to Valentine's Day is due to peer pressure.

"I believe boys would take it much more seriously if society wasn't set on saying that if boys show their emotions, it makes them less of a man," Stewart said.

Rogers had similar feelings.

"Valentine's Day is the only time of the year when boys can be really sappy with their girlfriends without getting teased by their friends, so girls make the day super important," Rogers said. "If boys are either really close to their girlfriend, or they are just sweet, understanding people, they understand how important it is to girls, and they respect that."

Believing in fairytales makes girls hopeful.

"Girls dream about a fairytale where a boy sweeps them off their feet, and something about Valentine's Day makes that seem possible," Key said. "I don't think boys understand exactly why we make such a big deal out of it because they have never really bothered to ask. They just resign and go with the flow."

Stereotypically, girls make Valentines a big deal, while boys couldn't care less about the holiday, but that is not always the case.

"I honestly just feel like Valentine's is just an excuse for girls to ask for flowers and chocolate," sophomore Hunter Owen said.

Junior Tyler Miller had a similar opinion.

"To me, Valentine's just means an empty wallet, but I always go along with it just because my girlfriend loves it," Miller said.

Some students have an even more negative opinion toward the holiday.

"It is a pointless holiday, and I don't understand why people even celebrate it," sophomore Dustin Arellano said.

Freshman Weston Vickers suggested that the holiday was "more of a girl thing."

But eighth grade student Colton Box views the day differently.

"It's a lot of fun," Box said. "I like to show that I receive more candy than everyone else."

Sophomore Ryan Phillips looked at Valentine's Day from a different point of view.

"I think Valentine's Day is the most depressing day of the year for people who aren't in a relationship," Phillips said.

Some view the holiday as just another day.

"Basically it is just a normal day, other than the fact that couples try to make their love life look flawless and add stupid love posts on instagram," junior Kyler Conde said. "If your significant other feels like they should only be nice to you on one day out of the year, then they probably aren't loyal anyway."

Although most of the male opinions are negative, some feel differently.

Lions look to clench district title

Boys hope for title, deep playoff run

BY STEVE PHILLIPS
Sports Editor

As the end of a shortened basketball season nears, the Lions are still in the hunt for the district title.

The Lions have posted a 9-2 record thus far in district play, having played only one tournament prior to district because of an extended football season.

"We are finally getting to a point where we have all of our offensive and defensive plays," head coach Ryder Peacock said. "It took us half way through district. The success in football was almost like a direct transition into basketball."

Although the Lions may still be feeling some effects of an extensive football season, Peacock feels they have a certain advantage.

"I think our defense is our strength," Peacock said. "We are pretty solid on that side of the ball."

Peacock will look to his go-to veterans once district comes to a close.

"Anytime you get to the playoffs, you look to your veterans," Peacock said.

"You lean on the experience of seniors and juniors because we have some young players who haven't been in the playoffs."

With playoffs closing in, all teams are gearing up and pinning their ears back to get a chance to continue play. There are certain things the Lions have to do to make a deep run in the playoffs.

"First of all, we have to put ourselves in a good position in district," Peacock said. "Then, once we get to the playoffs, it's all about preparation and execution."

Peacock believes the Lions are in a good position this far in district.

"I think we are doing pretty good," Peacock said. "We finally have pretty much all of our plays in now, so we are just trying to master them."

Whereas Peacock thinks the Lions have a physical advantage, senior Tyler Morgan believes his team has a more psychological advantage.

"We have more team chemistry than anybody else out there," Morgan said. "We have all played with each other for longer than most other teams have."

Morgan believes that his team's district play thus far has set them up well for a deep playoff run, but he knows he will have to step up as a senior.



"When playoffs come up, I just need to help lead the team in the right direction," Morgan said.

Along with Morgan, junior Drew Neece notices a psychological advantage over other teams.

"We have the exact same players as last year, so we have a lot more chemistry than any other team," Neece said.

Neece feels confident about his team's district play to this point.

"I think we've done pretty well," Neece said. "We have put ourselves in a good position, and I believe we have a chance to win the district title."

Although Neece is only a junior, he has been on the varsity team since his freshman year and has es-

tablished his role as a leader who knows he must step up at playoff time.

"I just need to be a leader to the younger guys and always stay working hard if it's in practice or a game," Neece said.

Playoff time is a significant time of the year, and once it rolls around, it is "do or die" time and not a single team wants to go home. The



Lions believe they want it more, Morgan said.

"The atmosphere in playoff games is just unreal," Morgan said. "Everyone is playing for a gold ball, and no one wants to go home without it."

The Lions will first look for a district championship against Anson tonight and against Hamlin Tuesday, Feb 17.

PHOTOS BY STEVE PHILLIPS

Lady Lions fall short of playoff spot

Girls end season fighting to make playoffs

BY MICHAEL COTTER
Sports Editor

As the season progressed, the Lady Lions battled back from a mid-season slump to contend for a playoff berth only to have the chance slip away in the final week of district play.

"We have battled and fought as hard as we could every game," head girls' basketball coach Paul Johnston said. "It finally looked like we were turning a corner, and I'm really proud of their effort."

The girls got off to a slow start, racking in only three wins in the first half of district. "We had a pretty rough start," sophomore Rachel Hill said. "Now we are starting to collaborate more and understand how each girl plays."

With a team just learning to play together, improvements are sure to come.

"Our defense is as good a defense as I've ever coached, and we are starting to shoot free throws pretty well," Johnston said. "However, we still need to work on controlling and taking care of the ball."

The players also thought their defense was a strong point.

"Our defense is really good," Hill said. "We have good hands and our posts play the game well. Defense wins games, and it has won us a couple."

The team is also learning each player's strengths.

"We have all improved in different aspects, and we have grown closer," senior Valerie Gandera said. "We are better at seeing each other on the court and knowing how we all play."

Even with the improvements, the team knows that there is more to be done.

"There are some games where we have a lot of turn-



Sophomore Rachel Hill (above) takes a shot against Stamford. Hill missed some of the first half of the district race due to a knee injury. Senior Thalia Dudley (left) works around one of the Lady Bulldogs' defenders. The Lady Lions have fought through district and finished the season strong, but unfortunately they could not dig themselves out of the hole they were in from the first half of district play. Despite the disappointing outcome, the team will lose only four seniors as they look ahead to the 2015-2016 season. The Lady Lions ended district in fourth place, missing the playoffs for the first time in several years.

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL COTTER

overs, so that's an area we need to improve," Hill said. "We also need to work on staying consistent in our offensive game."

With a competitive district, every game is key.

"We were tied for third with Anson," Johnston said. "We had to win out or Anson had to lose one. Otherwise we had to play them for a playoff spot."

The team was confident of their chances.

"We were in a tight race for the playoffs," Hill said. "I know that my team wanted it more than Anson, but we ended up falling into the fourth place spot."

Hill was out for the first half of the season with a knee injury.

"The best part of the season was when I finally got to play with my team after being out for six weeks with my MCL tear," Hill said. "I was really nervous, but once I got to playing, it felt like I had never left."

The girls finished district in fourth place with a record of 7-7 prior to the Winters game. They ended the season on the progression, but lost a couple key games leading up to falling just short of third place.

"We happened to have a very young team this year," Hill said. "I am sad to see the seniors go, but I know that we will have much more success next season because of all the experiences we had this season."

FOR THE RECORD:

LADY LION DISTRICT BASKETBALL 7-7

Anson	L 32-43
Hamlin	L 30-39
Stamford	W 39-34
Roscoe	L 35-36
Hawley	W 31-21
Haskell	L 27-39
Winters	W 35-31
Anson	W 53-49
Hamlin	L 25-33
Stamford	W 35-29
Roscoe	W 39-32
Hawley	L 44-50
Haskell	L 22-44

Baseball, softball prepare for season

Prospects good despite change in district line-ups

BY STEVE PHILLIPS
News Editor

As signs of spring start to appear, so do the activities of baseball and softball season. The Lions and Lady Lions are looking to follow up successful seasons from last year.

“We are defending district champions, but we lost a lot of our players from last year,” head softball coach Jimmy Fuentes said. “When you throw Hawley into our district mix, it makes this season that much more competitive.”

The Lady Lions went 23-9 last season, losing in the regional semifinals to Windthorst, but they are returning just three lettermen from last year, losing their entire infield.

“I’m looking forward to the challenge to just keep doing what we’ve done, considering we lost a lot of starters last year,” Fuentes said.

The Lady Lions will have

three sophomores and five freshmen suiting up on varsity.

“I’m excited to see if we can get our young guys to mature fast enough,” Fuentes said. “With the situation we are in, we need every person of our 13-girl roster to step up- even the three

players we have coming back.”

The Lady Lions will face roadblocks in the 2015 season with no seniors on their roster.

“We will face a lack of experience,” Fuentes said. “We have a bunch of kids that don’t know what it’s like, so we might go

through growing pains.”

The Lions have different challenges. They have a completely altered district with almost all returning starters.

“It’s going to be a different district,” head baseball coach David Fairchild said. “We have a very competitive district; Anson went to the state tournament last year and Stamford did two years before that.”

The Lions went 16-6 last year, losing to Valley Mills in the area round.

“We are coming into this district not knowing our advantages,” Fairchild said, “but we have a well-rounded group.”

The Lions are returning all but four players, losing three position’s players and just one pitcher. The Lions will need players to step up in these positions.

“We are going to have Steve at catcher, which is a very important position,” Fairchild said. “We will also need our pitchers to step up, because that position is very important.”

The Lions are paired in a district with Anson, Baird, Eula, Hamlin, Haskell, Hawley, Knox City, and Stamford.

“We actually might have the toughest district in Region I and

II,” Fairchild said. “I’m excited to see how we stack up in this strong district.”

Fairchild knows the district will be tough, but he also knows anything can happen.

“It’s a big, challenging district,” Fairchild said. “Anson, Stamford and Hawley are looking like the front runners, but we don’t really know where we stand.”

Hawley is a former 2A team under last year’s classification format.

“We could end up being a front runner,” Fairchild said. “Every team in our district made the playoffs last year except Eula, so we just don’t know right now.”

The Lions will host a tournament Feb. 26-28.

“We will be heading to Sundown Mar. 5-7 for a half wooden bat, half aluminum bat tournament,” Fairchild said. “I’m very excited that our boys are getting to participate in something like this, and I think it will be a lot of fun. It will also benefit the team, as playing in a tournament with wooden bats instead of aluminium forces you to play the ball differently.”



Junior Lori Davis (above) positions herself to catch a fly ball in practice. Despite the cold weather, both teams have practicing daily to prepare for the upcoming season. PHOTOS BY STEVE PHILLIPS

Track program looks to repeat success

Boys, girls returning big groups of competitors

BY MICHAEL COTTER
Sports Editor

With both the girls’ and boys’ track teams being fairly young last year, coaches are expecting a lot from returning participants this season.

Coming off a good year, the boys expect that success to carry over this spring.

“We did better than I thought we would last year,” head coach Rod Britting said. “With only losing a couple seniors, I expect us to be better than we were.”

However, the football season was plagued by injury.

“I think as long as we stay healthy, we will be in good shape,” Britting said. “We know Charles Carter won’t be able to run this year, but we are hopeful that Caleb Masters is 100 percent when track starts.”

The boys have three returners that travelled to state last year.

“I am really excited to run with mostly the same teammates,” junior Caleb Masters said. “I know that we had a good season last year, but this

year is going to be better.”

The boys seem ready for the new season.

“I expect to be healthy and ready to run,” Masters said. “I know that we have a bunch of returners from last year, and I expect to be strong.”

The team expects a good shot at winning district.

“We are in a new district this year that is exactly the same as our basketball district,” Britting said. “I know we are talented enough to win; it will just depend on how willing to work we are.”

The team has many different ways to score points.

“I think if we work and run the way we can, we will be hard to beat,” Masters said. “I know we are talented enough. We just have to prove that we want it.”

As for the girls’ side, they are also coming off a successful year.

“Last year was great,” head track coach Ginger Norton said. “We won the district meet and finished as runner-up at the state track meet.”

Despite the favorable season, the girls are losing three important seniors, including Kami Norton.

“We will have a young team this year, consisting mostly of freshmen and sophomores,” Norton said. “Hopefully, we



Junior Caleb Masters (above) goes through pole vault drills in practice. Due to the refurbishing of pole vault mats, the vaulters are forced to practice in other ways. Despite a bad knee injury, Masters plans to be fit enough to run track this season. Both boys and girls still have most of their atheltes playing basketball, so they are waiting to start full practices. PHOTO BY MICHAEL COTTER

will have more depth in field events.”

Despite being young, the team still has girls coming back from last year.

“We have Valerie Gandara (400/800) and Rachel Hill (100/300h), and I expect great accomplishments from both,” Norton said. “Staying healthy and injury free will make the difference.”

The returners expect the same, if not better, results.

“Last year I made it to the regional meet, and I was so close to advancing,” sophomore Rachel Hill said. “This year my goal is to advance to state and score points there for the team.”

Being in a new region brings changes for both teams.

“I know that we always have a shot at advancing to state,” Britting said. “This year will be interesting running against teams from the Panhandle. It is a completely different dynamic. Either way it will be up to the runners’ work ethics to get themselves there.”

The change of teams isn’t the only thing that’s different.

“I’m honestly glad to see new teams,” Norton said. “However, I am not at all looking forward to traveling all the way to Odessa for the regional meet.”

Tennis, golf swing into spring

Coaches expect large groups of freshman

BY MICHAEL COTTER
Sports Editor

With the new year on the horizon, both the tennis and golf teams prepare for a successful year.

Both golf teams, boys and girls, are coached by the same coach this season.

With the teams competing in a new region this year, hopes for the post season are high.

“We would like to advance to regionals on both sides, and I think we have a very good chance,” head golf coach Ryder Peacock said. “Not only has our district gotten smaller, but the region we used to be in had the two top golf teams in the state.”

Returners are expected to step up and lead on both teams.

“We are going to have a lot of freshmen on both sides,” coach Peacock said. “I know Matthew

Mitchell and Chandler Fields really led for the boys last year, while Molly Lee and Shelby Barton led for the girls.”

The team also desires to improve last year’s results.

“I think we had a pretty good season despite not moving on from district,” senior Molly Lee said. “We had someone place at almost every tournament, and for the most part we improved our scores every week.”

The returners also remembered what golf is all about.

“My favorite part about golf is the relaxation of the sport,” senior Chandler Fields said. “I love going out and spending the day on a nice course with my friends where I can lose myself in the game. I love having the enthusiasm of the younger kids and I can’t wait to start the season.”

Like golf, the tennis team expects a good year from a young team with not many varsity returners.

“Last year was a decent year,” head tennis coach Sara Wilson said. “We won district in girls’ doubles and received a bronze medal in the mixed doubles, as well as some other awards.”

Coming off a rebuilding year, the team hopes to turn a new leaf.

“Savannah and I won some and lost some,” junior Kyler Conde said. “It was more a time of good memories hitting with Savannah. This year I want to be more serious and win a lot more.”

Similarly to golf, tennis will have a large number of freshmen.

“We have around 20 freshmen who are signed up to play,” Wilson said. “They were very successful at the junior high level, and I expect that their success will carry over to the varsity level.”

The teams’ goals are high.

“We want to have as many teams and individuals move on to the regional tournament as possible,” Wilson said. “Our district will be tough, but I know we can do it.”

Like golf, the new region affects tennis.

“Region I will be very competitive, so we will have to be at our best,” Wilson said. “There will be a lot of schools there with a strong tennis program.

Both teams have several athletes participating in other sports, so they are having to wait to start full practices.



Sophomore Kylea Gardner (left) brings up her racket to serve a ball in tennis practice. Both tennis and golf coaches are expecting a large number of incoming freshmen to help boost the programs. Despite this, both coaches are still leaning on the returners and seniors to provide the leadership needed for successful years. Regionals for both teams have been moved to new sites, and the coaches ready to begin full practices after the conclusion of basketball. PHOTO BY MOLLY LEE

UIL

Continued from | PG 1

strengths and interests in an academic field but what I am looking forward to most is the kids finding success in an area they enjoy; that's fun for me," Davis said.

One student participating this year is junior Newt Koemel.

"I'm competing in the calculator, science, and headline writing contests," Koemel said. "Science is my strongest area because I seem to just have a knack for it, and it comes easy for me."

Koemel has been preparing his events by reading the physics book *"The Pluto Files"* and looking over his college

biology notes, taking practice calculator tests, and practicing in his journalism class.

"I think it's important to participate in UIL because it gives people an opportunity to sharpen their skills," Koemel said. "I like to compete and be challenged, and UIL does that."

Koemel encourages other students to join because it's an opportunity for them to do things they normally wouldn't.

"My favorite part is traveling with my friends, and I am looking forward to district in hopes to advance to regionals in science again," Koemel said.

Another participant is freshman Natalie Hayner, who is competing in literary criticism,

UIL singing, history, and science events.

"I study every day, and a voice teacher comes to the school once a week," Hayner said.

Hayner enjoys UIL contests and "thinks it is a fun experience for kids to learn."

"UIL is a group activity to go with friends, and if you do well it looks good on college resumes," Hayner said. "My favorite part is taking the tests itself because I think it is fun and encourages good studying habits so it is easy to prepare for."

The upcoming practice meets include the Wylie meet on Feb. 14, the Plains overnight meet March 7, followed by the district meet in Anson on March 26.

SHOW

Continued from | PG 1

and give it a haircut," Faith said. "Also, depending on what show you are going to, you might put oil on your pig, too."

Rabbits, on the other hand, follow a different pre-show process.

"I put conditioner on my rabbit's fur to make sure that they are nice and fluffed up," Lloyd said.

Stock show often takes up a lot of time for those who show an animal.

"It is a lot of hard work," Faith said. "It can be frustrating when your animal doesn't do what it's supposed to in the ring after you have spent a lot of time working with it."

Lloyd shows year

round.

"There is a lot of politics involved in year-round showing, so judges are often biased based on who they breed with, and that can be discouraging," Lloyd said.

For those that go to major shows, it can be difficult to keep up with schoolwork.

"The day I get back from a show, I get all of my homework and try to finish it that night," Lloyd said.

Faith takes advantage of the tools that the school provides.

"You have to utilize programs like Lion Academy and tutorials," Faith said. "Teachers are very understanding and will stay late or come early to make sure that you get caught up."

OAP

Continued from | PG 1

Hayner has helped prepare the play for the contest.

"The people who are helping me this year are Karen Liming, who has been assistant director, and Ginger Bartee, who helped me with auditions and was also the junior high One Act director."

The cast are preparing for the first competition at district in Anson, and only two teams will advance.

"We are competing against Stamford, Haskell, Hamlin, Winters, Hawley, and Roscoe," Hayner said. "Our biggest competition will most likely be Stamford or Hamlin because I know the directors at both schools, and they're very talented and competitive. As a result, their programs are excellent."

COUNTY STOCK SHOW

Rabbits, pigs, and goats, oh my! The Shackelford County Stock Show was held Jan. 29-31. A total of 260 animals were shown by 133 students as a result of their hard work and responsibility.

Photos by
Shelby Barton and
Molly Lee

Story by
Shelby Barton



Freshman Nolan Davis (left) sets up his rabbit before show time. Seniors Blayne Cauble and Teagan Brandon (above) clip a pig in preparation for the county show. Showing animals involves hours of work and dedication before the big show day.



Eighth grader Cutter Edgar (above) walks his pig into the ring to be judged. Judges look for the most muscle and best bone structure in the animals presented in the ring. The pig show grew the most of any division this year in total number of animals shown.



Seventh grader Blaine Kayga (above) shows his goat while the judge gives his a once over. Freshman Ryan Phillips, Nolan Davis, Bryan Hamilton, Efen Comacho, and junior Tyler Miller (left) place their rabbits on the showing table to be presented to the judge. Many students chose to show rabbits this year because it involves less investment of money and time during an already busy school schedule. Projects were sold during the auction on Saturday at the show barn.



Seniors Colin Heath and Teagan Brandon (above) take a break from showing to grab a bite to eat. The stock show concession stand is known for large variety of foods and desserts that parents cook on site to raise money for the program.

