

# The Scratching Post

Winter Edition 2025

## *Growing Future Leaders*

On November 19th, FFA members Makynna Boettcher, Tack Cross, Micah Dittbenner, Kambree Hottell, Kassie Loutzenhiser, Shawnie Mason, Leeigh McGowan, and Luke Olsen participated in FFA Leadership Development Events (LDEs). In these competitions, the students were challenged to push themselves in many different ways. The events in which FFA members participated were job seeking, creed speaking, and an agricultural demonstration.

Job seeking is one of the most helpful and realistic activities for the students to participate in. It helps students learn to apply for jobs, prepare resumes, and create cover letters. The members completed a mock interview with a panel of judges. After the interview, they wrote a follow-up letter. Although it was stressful for the students, it taught them what the job process entails and how to be more professional.

In creed speaking, students recite the FFA creed word-for-word and then answer questions about agriculture and the meaning behind the creed. They had four minutes to recite the creed and five minutes to answer questions. They were judged on accuracy and presentation. This event helped the students with memorization and staying calm while speaking in front of an audience.

The agricultural demonstration event focused on teaching through interactive demonstrations. Demonstrations must be under ten minutes and can be about any agricultural topic, as long as they are not lectures. Judges ask questions to ensure the students understand what they presented. This event builds confidence levels within the student presenters and emphasizes the importance of clarity when explaining their topic.

All of these LDEs are valuable because they push students to think critically and communicate their understanding efficiently. Student awareness increases from these events which allows the students to develop skills to handle different types of pressures. These events are called Leadership Development Events for a reason: they encourage students to grow as leaders. We can't wait to see how these young FFA members continue to develop into leaders for our community and school. Keep up the great work! -by Kyrie Roldan



**BANNER COUNTY SCHOOL**

**PREPARING THE STUDENTS OF TODAY FOR THE WORLD OF TOMORROW!**

# Setting the Stage

The One-Act team entered the season with energy, dedication, and a sense of confidence as they prepared for their upcoming performance. This year's group included seventeen students, with four 8<sup>th</sup>-graders stepping up to help with the High School crew. The students were inspired to join for different reasons but one anecdote highlights the strong sense of encouragement within the group. Makynna Boettcher was motivated to keep coming back to One-Act because of Alumni, Nate McGowan, who said that he wished he did One-Act all throughout high school.



Putting together a one-act play requires commitment both onstage and behind the scenes. The cast rehearsed daily after late night basketball practices focusing on memorizing lines and getting into character. Meanwhile the back stage crew played a crucial role in organizing props and managing lighting and sound. Even though many students were new to the experience, they showed determination to improve on their skills throughout the season.

This year's play tells the powerful story of Dana, a trouble 19-year-old girl who finds herself lost and confused in an airport. As she tried to make sense of the strange events unfolding around her, the audience slowly discovers the truth-Dana is actually dead. A few other characters can see her including an elderly woman named Edith. Guiding souls of the deceased are three characters with important roles. Makayla and Gabby are responsible for taking people to Heaven, while Rick takes them to the "other place." Throughout the play, travelers move about the airport, each revealing more of the mystery. When the last person boards their flight, Makayla and Gabby explain to Dana that she has a choice to make about her eternal future. Dana is the only one who makes this crucial decision. In an emotional twist ending, Dana suddenly wakes up, realizing it was a dream and a warning. Dana then calls her mother to ask if she can come home and "start her life over."



To show that their hard work paid off they placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in their MAC competition and 4<sup>th</sup> in their district competition. Coach Stephanie Farro said that "my expectations for this group are high and I hope to help the students step out of their comfort zones, build confidence, and to grow as a team." Her long-term goal was to see the group qualify for state and finish the season strong. The powerful story of Dana resonates with the audience, giving the team a unique opportunity to show emotion, teamwork, and talent. -by Leigh McGowan



## Senior Spotlight — Abby Jones

This month's senior spotlight features Abby Jones. Abby is described as helpful, creative, and conscientious. We asked Abby about her high school years and what her plans are for after graduation.

**Q: What extracurricular activities have you participated in?**

**A:** I participate in Volleyball, basketball, track, one-act, speech, stucco, band, choir, FFA, and quiz bowl.



**Q: What are your goals for this year?**

**A:** I want to graduate and do well on my MEPS test so I can join the military.

**Q: What are your plans for after high school?**

**A:** I want to go into the Army National Guard and then study to become an elementary teacher.

**Q: What is one of your favorite classes and why?**

**A:** English is my favorite class because of the way Mrs. Knaub teaches and how she acts while she teaches.

**Q: What is one piece of advice you would give to younger students?**

**A:** "Keep going. Don't give up because in the long run, you will appreciate what you don't enjoy now."

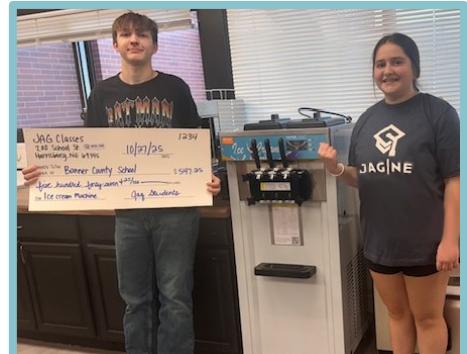


During the last weeks of October, Banner County School purchased an ice cream machine. Mr. Lecher noticed that ice cream machines at other schools made a lot of money and thought, "We could make our money back quickly." This ice cream machine will also add more variety to our fundraising and concession sales.

The money for the ice cream machine came from two main contributors. The JAG class voted to donate the money they raised from concessions to the school, and that contribution helped. The school's firewood sale also helped pay for the machine. Additionally, several donations were sent to the school to go towards the overall cost of the machine. The ice cream machine cost about \$1,400; even with this funding, it is not entirely paid off yet. As a result, half of all sales go to the machine fund to pay it off and to prepare for repairs.

Currently, three types of ice cream are being sold: vanilla, chocolate, and twist. Each bowl of ice cream is being sold for \$5. This price may seem steep, but it is comparable to ice cream prices at other schools. This price yields a profit of about \$2 per bowl; the only ingredient used is a gallon jug of liquid ice cream mix.

Overall, the ice cream machine will help raise funds for the school and add variety to concessions. With that said, we would like to officially introduce "Wildcat Swirls" to Banner County School. Be sure to try a bowl at the next basketball game! - by George Teeple



## Livin' Life Drug Free

Banner County students said "no" to drugs during the week of October 27th-31st. This week is also known as Red Ribbon Week. Red Ribbon Week is an annual drug-prevention campaign that started in 1988. U.S. parents and students created the campaign after the abduction and murder of DEA agent Enrique Camarena by drug dealers in Mexico. The Red Ribbon "serves as a catalyst to mobilize communities to educate youth and encourage participation in drug-prevention activities."

Cats Committed, led by Mrs. Hilbert and Mrs. May, planned a week of drug-prevention activities. These activities began with a presentation by Tammy Wheeler, who spoke about the loss of her daughter to a drunk driver. This solemn presentation emphasized how much power comes with a single choice. In addition to the presentation, the week also included theme days such as Color Wars, Meme Day, Dynamic Duo, and Pajama Day, all of which encouraged students to say no to drugs. For example, the Pajama Day theme was "Let's put drugs to rest."

Mrs. Hilbert said Red Ribbon Week is important because "drug use diminishes every person's ability to be at their best. It will ruin that person's life if they use drugs and alcohol." Elementary students Bert Olsen, Delilah Hughes, and Bexlie Groves all agreed that Red Ribbon Week encouraged them not to use drugs or alcohol. Thanks to the Cats Committed students and the activities during Red Ribbon Week, Banner County students are now better prepared to say no to drugs and alcohol. - by Luke Olsen



## Remembering Those Who Have Served

Each year, we come together as a school and community to honor those who have served our country. This day is known as Veterans Day. The local NHS chapter hosted a bountiful breakfast for our veterans and their family members. Following breakfast, our guests were invited to the gym to watch our annual program.

This year's program included more musical opportunities for our students to display their talents. The high school and junior high bands opened the program with a musical number, followed by an all-school choir performance. Audience members then witnessed the 13-fold ceremony and received an explanation of the significance of each fold as the flag is retired. The program then transitioned to a video discussing the importance of Veterans Day across the nation, followed by a slideshow highlighting students and staff members with familial ties to the military.

Veterans Day is a time to remember those we have lost, be grateful for those we still have with us, and honor all who have sacrificed for this great country. Thanks to Mrs. Cooper, Mrs. Hilbert, Mr. Holmberg, Mrs. May, and NHS members, our annual Veterans Day program was a success.



## Sounds of the Season

Banner County School celebrated the holiday season with a Christmas concert on December 11th. The concert featured performances by all grade levels, both instrumental and musical. There was even a play integrated into the concert this year! Thanks to Mrs. Cooper's efforts, Banner County students and patrons enjoyed a festive evening to help bring about holiday cheer.



The concert opened with "Crazy Christmas," performed by the fourth and fifth-grade band. The high school choir then sang "Mary, Did You Know?" and the combined sixth through twelfth-grade bands performed the *Peer Gynt* and "Santa Suite". Sixth-grade entertained the audience with a skit about Mr. Stooge, a grouchy, Grinch-like school principal who wanted to cancel winter break; the elementary choir added musical touches to the skit. As the concert was coming to a close, the audience enjoyed the enthusiastic Pre-K and kindergarten choirs. To round off the concert, the high school band performed "The First Noel," accompanied by the all-school choir.



Thanks goes out to all of the teachers and school staff for their support in the preparation of this festive venture. Without Mrs. Cooper's efforts this evening wouldn't have been the same. We hope all of the Banner County Nation is now in the holiday spirit. Happy holidays, Wildcat Nation! Thank you for all of your support. -by Luke Olsen



## PIN IT TO WIN IT!

This year's junior high wrestling season was a success, with last year's assistant coach, Ryan Olsen, stepping up to the head coach role. Assisting him was Bo Reichenberg. The team had a busy schedule, with six wrestling meets in about one month.

There were eight wrestlers combined in sixth and seventh-grade, and three in eighth-grade, making a total of eleven wrestlers on the team. The students had to keep their grades up to stay eligible for each week's tournament. With limited practices and many tournaments, practices had to be both instructional and enjoyable. The wrestlers shared that conditioning was made fun with certain games, such as tape ball, which teaches agility and builds strength for their meets. The participants also enjoyed practicing some of their favorite moves. Trenton Knaub said, "My favorite move is probably the tilt." While many others stated that the half nelson was their go-to move. With such a short and accelerated season, the coaches molded these kids into great wrestlers by teaching them fundamental values such as work ethic and dedication. Coach Olsen stated, "The real thing I try to do in the practice room is teach the boys hard work and respect."

This year's group of wrestlers all experienced success in one form or another, with many placing in tournaments while others continued to develop their fundamentals. Overall, the students had many enjoyable moments: friendships were made along the way, memories shared, and achievements earned. - by Tack Cross

