Dalton achieves Eagle Scout rank



Louisburg High School junior Tommy Dalton (middle) received his Eagle Scout Award during his Eagle Scout Court of Honor on Feb. 20 at First Christian Church. Dalton presented scout master Rodney Kasitz (left) with a mentor pin, while fellow scout master Dave Rogers (right) was the master of ceremonies.

Tommy Dalton has taken his final step in his long journey to becoming an Eagle Scout.

Tommy, a junior at Louisburg High School, received his Eagle Scout Award during the Eagle Scout Court of Honor on Feb. 20 at First Christian Church. Eagle is the highest rank given in the Boy Scouts of America.

“I am pretty proud of it,” he said. “Going through the process, I am almost humbled by it. It teaches you to be a leader and I put in everything I had into it.”

During the court of honor, scout master Dave Rogers was the master of ceremonies and John Cisetti gave Tommy his Eagle Charge. Tommy also presented his Parent Pin to his parents Greg and Shelly Dalton.

Dalton also gave his mentor pin to scout master Rodney Kasitz, who has helped guide him on his journey.

“I remember when I was a lot younger and we went on our first camp out and I wasn’t all that thrilled about camping out,” Dalton said. “I couldn’t sleep and I got up and saw (Kasitz) around the fire so I went and talked to him. He basically just told me to stick with it and he calmed a lot of my fears. He has helped me a lot along the way.”

Another requirement in becoming an Eagle Scout is to perform a service project in the community. The project is designed to have the scout plan, organize, lead and manage the project.



Tommy Dalton built shelves like this one for the Agape Food Pantry as part of his service project to earn the rank of Eagle Scout.

Tommy’s first idea was to construct shelves for the Agape Food Pantry and also hold a food drive. Unfortunately, the food drive was unable to happen, but his idea of shelving was approved by the Paola district.

“I just noticed when I was there that they didn’t have enough shelving to store some of the items, so I thought it would be beneficial for them,” Tommy said.

Tommy, who is member of Troop 101, earned 24 merit badges on his way to receiving his award and 21 is required to receive Eagle rank. There were a few that took several days to

accomplish.

He earned a Personal Fitness and Personal Management badge that requires the scout to create a 90-day log for each.

“A lot of Eagle Scouts probably have more than I do because a lot of them go to summer camps to get those badges,” Tommy said. “I haven’t been able to do that because of football and weights, but it does take a lot of time to get those.”

Approximately 54,000 scouts have received the Eagle Scout Award this year, which is the fourth largest Eagle class in history. More than 2 million have become Eagle Scouts since 1912.

LHS forensics wins title at Osage City



The Louisburg High School forensics team won the Osage City tournament Saturday and finished the day with 15 finalists and a pair of gold medal winners. The Wildcats also hosted their home tournament at LHS.

OSAGE CITY – Although it was hosting its own tournament last

Saturday, the Louisburg High School forensics team sent a group to Osage City for a tournament of its own and it turned out to be a good day all-around.

At Osage City, the Wildcats took home first place honors and had 15 finalists in the process to go along with a pair of gold medalists.

“I was very proud of this group,” Louisburg coach Brian Weilert said. “Many of our state qualifiers stayed back to help host our tournament so this group was made up of those who have either been close, or looking to breakout. “We had several who became first-time medalists this year and others who double-broke (two events in finals) for the first time as well.”

Ashley Allen brought home gold with a first-place finish in Informative Speaking. Nathaniel Mason won gold for his performance in Poetry and also finished third in Impromptu Speaking.

Chloe Philgreen finished runner-up in Humorous Solo Acting and McKenzie Vanmeerhaeghe also won a silver medal in Serious Solo Acting.

Demi Vanmeerhaege finished third in Informative Speaking and later took fifth in Duet with Sydney Vanmeerhaeghe. Sydney also medaled fifth in Original Oration.

Dalton Knipp also medaled in two events as he took fourth in Serious Solo Acting and fifth in Poetry. Stephanie Rose was fourth in Duet with Eddie Murphy and Rose came in fifth in Serious Solo Acting.

Jordan Shaner was fourth in Impromptu Speaking, while Jacinda Collins and Sam Traffis finished sixth in Prose and Poetry, respectively.

As for the Wildcats’ home tournament, Weilert recruited

several volunteers from within the community to help along with several of his state qualifiers.

“I love when our community comes together to aid in hosting a tournament of this size,” Weilert said. “We had 50 people give up their Saturday to come in to judge and help out. Without this type of support we wouldn’t even be able to host. I want to thank everyone who volunteered and to my amazing team that pulled it together to make it all run smooth.”

LHS forensics team has three champions at Lyndon

The Louisburg High School forensics team continues to rack up honors during its early portion of the schedule and it continued Saturday.

The Wildcats traveled to Lyndon for a 19-team tournament, which drew teams from all classifications. Overall, Louisburg finished second in the sweepstakes competition, just a few points behind champion Topeka Seaman and just ahead of third-place finisher Washburn Rural.

Louisburg ended the day with 10 finalists and three champions that contributed to the Wildcats’ runner-up honor.

“Along with those who placed, we had several other students

have a good day and just miss out on finals," Louisburg coach Brian Weilert said. "Although they didn't earn any individual medals, their performances helped the team to its overall sweepstakes placing."

Senior Abigail Bergman remained undefeated on the season as she won the Prose competition for the fourth consecutive time. Fellow senior Spencer Rogers took first in Humorous Solo Acting and Bergman and Rogers teamed up to come in second in Duet.

Julia Walker won her first gold of the season as she won the title in Serious Solo Acting and the Wildcats had several other placers as well.

Kyle Green finished just behind Rogers to take second in Humorous Solo Acting, while Rio Sierra and Carson Tappan took third in Prose and Original Oration, respectively.

Anthony Strickling and Jonathan Ventre were fourth and fifth, respectively, in Serious Solo Acting and Riley George was fifth in Informative Speaking.

The Wildcats won't have to travel far for their next tournament as they host their home competition Saturday at Louisburg High School.

Wildcats compete in two tournaments, take second in Baldwin

The Louisburg forensics team branched off in two directions on Feb. 13 when it competed at tournaments in Baldwin and Lawrence.

The Wildcats found a lot of success in Baldwin as it finished runner-up in the sweepstakes competition thanks to nine finalists.

Rio Sierra had a big day as she won two titles. Sierra was

crowned champion in Serious Solo Acting and Prose. Beckett Rasmussen also had a strong performance as he won Humorous Solo Acting.

Zach Waite and Dalton Knipp each took third in Original Oration and Serious Solo Acting, respectively. Alex Richardson earned two medals with a fourth-place finish in Serious Solo Acting and fifth in Informative Speaking.

Maya Hites came in fifth in Serious Solo Acting and Basia Ayers was seventh in Original Oration.

At Lawrence High School, the Wildcats finished fourth out of 17 schools and they also had nine finalists.

Abigail Bergman won the title in Prose, while Carson Tappan won a gold medal for his performance in Original Oration. Spencer Rogers was second in Humorous Solo Acting and teamed with Bergman to take third in Duet.

Ashely Allen came in second in Informative Speaking and Emily Ventre earned two medals as she took third in Prose and fourth in Program of Oral Interpretation. Nathaniel Mason finished fourth in Poetry and Tappan earned his second medal of the day as he took fifth in Impromptu Speaking.

LHS cheerleaders, Jazzy Cats get top rating



Members of the Louisburg High School cheerleading team that won all-squad honors are (front row, from left) Brooklyn Southard, Maddie Holloway; (middle row) Hanna Becker, Gracie Key, Jacob Jensen, Racheal Bellinger, Claire Houchen, Abby Reedy, Avery Aust, Megan Eberhart, Lauren Becker, Lyndon Smith; (back row) Hallie Hutsell, Shaylor Whitham, Allie Drew, Avery Barber, Billy Casebeer, Payton Shaffer, Leia Shaffer, Ashley Stuteville, Kaitlyn Lewer, Kaitlyn Urban, Addie Katzer and Randa Lewis.

BALDWIN CITY – Weeks were spent making sure they were in the right place, they got every move right and every stunt correct.

It meant for some grueling practices to achieve that perfection. All of the hard work seemed to pay off for both the Louisburg High School cheerleading squad and the Jazzy Cats dance team.

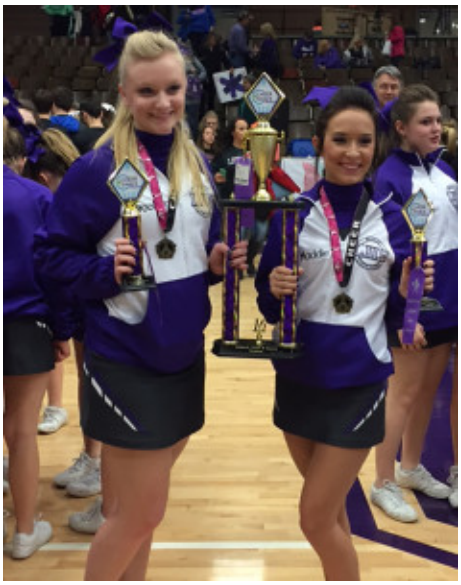
Both teams ventured to the Baldwin Cheer and Dance Festival on Saturday at Baldwin High School and each squad came away with high marks to show for it.

The LHS cheer team received a ‘1’ rating for its all-squad routine in the high school division. The cheerleaders, which competed against 17 other high schools, were also recognized as one of the judges’ top four teams of the competition.

The all-squad team includes Brooklyn Southard, Maddie

Holloway, Hallie Hutsell, Shaylor Whitham, Allie Drew, Avery Barber, Billy Casebeer, Payton Shaffer, Leia Shaffer, Ashley Stuteville, Kaitlyn Lewer, Kaitlyn Urban, Addie Katzer, Randa Lewis, Claire Houchen, Hanna Becker, Gracie Key, Jacob Jensen, Racheal Bellinger, Abby Reedy, Avery Aust, Megan Eberhart, Lauren Becker and Lyndon Smith.

They tested out their routine at halftime of the Wildcats' homecoming game on Feb. 5 and got a rousing ovation from the crowd, which was a big help for the competition.



LHS seniors Brooklyn Southard (left) and Maddie Holloway pose with the team trophy and medals following Saturday's competition.

"The cheerleaders were not nervous at all about performing," coach Shannon Aust said. "They actually love it. I think our confidence came from performing the routine at the homecoming pep rally and halftime of the boys basketball game.

"Getting the routine in front of a crowd a couple of times before competition really boosts their confidence. That and

their practice schedule makes them know the routine so well they could do it in their sleep.”

Louisburg wasn’t done earning awards from the judges.

The all-squad team also received a specialty award for outstanding stunting, outstanding pyramid, outstanding choreography, outstanding jumps and outstanding cheer technique in the high school division.

Louisburg also had five teams enter the stunt group competition and two groups received a ‘1’ rating.

The team of Southard, Drew, Lewer, Leia Shaffer and Katzer, along with the team of Aust, Urban, Lewis, Hutsell and Lauren Becker each earned top marks.

Holloway, Smith, Houchen, Reedy, along with the team of Key, Eberhard, Jensen, Whitham, Hanna Becker, and another team of Bellinger, Stuteville, Casebeer, Barber and Payton Shaffer each earned a ‘2’ rating.

It has been a long road for the Wildcat cheer group as they have had to deal with adversity, but Saturday’s competition made it all worth it.

“We learned our routine last summer and were unable to compete this fall because of injuries,” Aust said. “LHS practices 10 months out of the year only taking April and July off. Our all-squad routine has been practiced since last June but our individual stunt routines were just made about three weeks ago.”

As for the dance team, it encountered some of the same success their cheer counterparts did.

The Jazzy Cats took two routines, along with several individual and small group events to the competition. They received a ‘1’ rating on their first routine and a ‘3’ on their new routine.



Members of the Jazzy Cats are (front row, from left) Lauren Cain, Melia Rice, Kelsey Traffis, Quincy Rice, Bree Christy; (back row) Teagan Myers, Addison Correll, Katie JoRay, Alicia Leitch and Sami Traffis.

Members of the Jazzy Cats are Teagan Myers, Addison Correll, Katie JoRay, Alicia Leatch, Sami Traffis, Lauren Cain, Melia Rice, Kelsey Traffis, Quincy Rice and Bree Christy.

The Jazzy Cats also earned a dance technique special award at the end of the competition. It was a good ending to what has been a hard-working season for the group.

“The competition last weekend was a great culmination of events for the year,” Jazzy Cats coach Kassy Miller said. “I am so proud of their hard work and the progress that they have made since starting on their routines last April. Many don’t realize that being on the dance team is a year-round activity. They have definitely grown as a group and are so lucky, to not only dance and compete with the band, but on their own as well.

“They had a great experience at their first dance competition in November, and learned a lot from attending the Baldwin competition last weekend. As a dance coach, there is nothing better than watching them perform in a room full of judges and performers.”

Wildcat forensics wins sweepstakes title



The Louisburg High School forensics team won the sweepstakes trophy during the Iola Tournament on Saturday. Overall, the Wildcats won 25 medals over two tournaments and qualified in 11 more events for the state tournament.

It would have been hard for the Louisburg High School forensics team to top the Wildcats’ opening weekend of 38 medalists and 13 state qualifiers.

They came pretty close.

Saturday marked another strong outing from the Wildcats as they competed in two tournaments to capture 25 medals and qualify for the state tournament in 11 more events. The top

two in each competition qualify for the state tournament later in the year.

“Each week I get more excited at what this team can accomplish,” Louisburg coach Brian Weilert said. “If you look at many of the events, we are beating up on ourselves in the finals. We all know we have a long way to go, but I would be hard pressed to remember a better start to a season.”

Several Wildcats made the trip to the Iola tournament, where they competed against 18 other teams. By the end of the day, Louisburg had 15 finalists and captured its second sweepstakes trophy of the season.

The Wildcats also placed eight in the top two, which qualified for the state tournament.



Members of the Louisburg High School forensics team pose with their third-place trophy and medals following Saturday’s Pittsburg tournament.

The team of Kallee Bartlett and Lexie Hubbard finished first in the duet competition and Stephanie Rose won the poetry event. Abigail Bergman took first in prose and was also second in duet with partner Spencer Rogers.

Rogers came in second in informative speaking, while Emily Ventre was runner-up in both serious solo acting and prose.

Rose picked up a medal for taking third in serious solo acting and Andrea Leach medaled fourth in poetry. Zach Waite finished third in original oration.

Ashley Allen came in fourth in extemporaneous speaking and sixth in informative speaking. Skylar Keaton medaled fifth in both extemporaneous and informative speaking.

Louisburg also sent a group to the Pittsburg Tournament where it finished third overall and had three state qualifiers.

Jonathon Ventre took the title in serious solo acting and Chloe Philgreen was runner-up in humorous solo acting. Vonnah LaHue and partner McKenzie Vanmeerhaeghe came in second in duet and qualified for state.

Dalton Knipp and Kyle Green earned medals for Louisburg as they finished third in serious solo acting and humorous solo acting, respectively.

Philgreen medaled fourth in prose and Maya Hites also got a medal for her fourth place finish in serious solo acting. Vanmeerhaeghe took fifth in serious solo acting.

LHS forensics has big opening weekend



Members of the Louisburg High School forensics team pose with their first place trophy and medals from the Neodesha Tournament on Saturday after the Wildcats won the sweepstakes title. Louisburg competed in three tournaments on the day and came away with several medals.

The Louisburg High School forensics team kicked off its season in grand fashion as the Wildcats made a strong statement.

Louisburg competed in three different tournaments Saturday, and when all was said and done, racked up several honors. The Wildcats earned a sweepstakes title, qualified 13 entries into the state tournament and finished with 38 medalists.

“I am very pleased,” Louisburg coach Brian Weilert said. “We had a lot of newcomers this year to go along with a strong returning core, so I wasn’t sure what to expect. Although we have a lot of work ahead of us, this was a great start to the year. Many schools will struggle to fill a full 16-entry state team by the end of the season and to have 13 in the first weekend is a great start.

“This team is really talented, but as a bit of a Gumpism, ‘talented is as talented does.’ In other words, we need to bring the work pail each week and improve.”

The Wildcats shined at the Neodesha Tournament as they won the sweepstakes title and every competitor reached the finals in at least one of their two events. Competitors earn state bids if they finish in the top two of an event.

Emily Ventre had a strong tournament as she was crowned champion in Serious Solo Acting and later finished runner-up in Prose. Ventre qualified for state in both events.

Andrea Leach won the tournament crown in Poetry, and Abigail

Bergman won the title in Prose. Jonathon Ventre also earned a state bid as he medaled second in Poetry, just behind Leach.

Louisburg continued its strong performance at the Gardner-Edgerton tournament. The Wildcats added four more champions and seven state qualifiers to go along with a third-place team finish.

Rio Sierra had a big day as she won gold in both Serious Solo Acting and Prose. Kallee Bartlett and Lexie Hubbard teamed up to win the Duet title and Chloe Philgreen won gold in Humorous Solo Acting.

Stephanie Rose also qualified for state as she was runner up in both Serious Solo Acting and Poetry, while Eddie Murphy and Brooke Talmage finished second in the Duet competition.

The Wildcats also competed in a tournament at St. Thomas Aquinas. Kyle Green earned straight 1's in the finals to win the Humorous Solo Acting title and a spot in the state tournament.

The LHS 2016 Winter Homecoming Candidates



Homecoming week at Louisburg High School kicked off Monday and events are in full swing. With something going on every day

this week, it will be a busy time for students and faculty alike. All of it is of course centered around the crowning of the 2016 winter king and queen. Eight students were selected as nominees and here are their names and profiles.

The crowning will take place on Friday inside the LHS gymnasium in between the varsity boys and girls games against Eudora. The boys game is scheduled to tip at approximately 7:30 p.m.

Cale Schneider

Cale is the son of Scott and Danna Schneider. Cale has been involved in soccer for four years, baseball for four years, Leo's Club for two years, Spanish Club for two years and Math Club for one year. Cale is currently undecided on what college he will be attending, but he will major in civil engineering.

Makenzie Kallevig

Makenzie is the daughter of Eric and Kara Kallevig. Makenzie has been involved in volleyball for four years, track for four years, Letterman's Club for three years, Leo's Club for one year and basketball for one year. Makenzie plans to attend the University of Kansas and major in nursing with a minor in psychology.

Mitchell McLellan

Mitchell is the son of Wade and Angi McLellan. Mitchell has been involved in football for four years, basketball for four years and debate for one year. Mitchell plans to attend Hutchinson Community College to play football and then transfer to a four-year school and pursue a degree in law.

Makenzie Richardson

Makenzie is the daughter of Kelly and Mary Margaret Richardson. Makenzie has been involved in Student Council for three years, Letterman's Club for three years, SADD for three

years, National Honor Society for two years, volleyball for two years, cheerleading for one year and FCA for one year. Makenzie plans to attend Kansas State University and pursue a degree in the medical field.



The 2016 Louisburg High School winter homecoming candidates are (front row, from left) Makenzie Kallevig, Makenzie Richardson, Riley George, Megan Roy; (back row) Cale Schneider, Mitchell McLellan, Spencer Rogers and Cole Kramer

Spencer Rogers

Spencer is the son of David and Genni Rogers. Spencer has been involved in band for four years, jazz band for three years, Scholar's Bowl for three years, Spanish Club for three years, Math Club for two years, Model United Nations for two years, cross country for two years, National Honor Society for two years, track for one year, debate for one year and forensics for one year. Spencer plans to attend the University of Kansas and major in molecular biology and then transfer to Dartmouth

to earn a PhD in genetics.

Riley George

Riley is the daughter of Chris George and Denise Ellison. Riley has been a football manager for four years, she has been involved in debate for four years and forensics for four years. Riley plans to attend Kansas State University and pursue a degree in political science.

Cole Kramer

Cole is the son of Rob and Marcy Kramer. Cole has been involved in football for four years, baseball for four years and Letterman's Club for two years. Cole plans to attend Johnson County Community College for two years and then transfer to Pittsburg State to major in automotive engineering.

Megan Roy

Megan is the daughter of Craig and Laura Roy. Megan has been involved in FFA for four years, Student Council for four years, volleyball for three years, SADD for two years, basketball for two years, FCCLA for one year and cheerleading for one year. Megan plans to attend Johnson County Community College and then transfer to the University of Kansas to pursue a degree in nursing.

Tappan, Conklin win state debate title



Louisburg's (from left) Carson Tappan, debate coach Brian Weilert and Curran Conklin pose with their Class 4A 2-speaker state debate championship trophy following the state tournament Saturday at Independence High School. Tappan and Conklin finished 11-0 on the day as they defeated Bishop Miege in a 2-1 decision in the final round.

Photos courtesy of Michelle Holtzen

INDEPENDENCE, Kan. – After 11 rounds and 17 hours of debate over two days, Carson Tappan and Curran Conklin didn't have a lot more left to give.

But around 10 p.m. Saturday, all that hard work paid off for the Louisburg High School duo.

During the Class 4A 2-speaker state debate tournament at Independence High School, Tappan and Conklin were awarded their first state championship after finishing with an 11-0 record.

"We were super excited once we got some sleep and realized what had happened," Tappan said. "We didn't expect to even place, let alone go undefeated and get first."

They weren't the only Louisburg team to come home with some hardware.

Sophomores Isabelle Holtzen and Grayson Anderson found

themselves among the final four teams as well. Despite a close split-decision loss in the semifinals, Holtzen and Anderson finished third to win their first state trophy..

“The competition at state is tough,” Holtzen said. “There are 72 of the best teams in Kansas participating. We debated 15 hours over the course of 2 days until we finally finished with third. It was a very surreal moment, I am just so thankful to (Coach Brian) Weilert for helping me get this far. He’s a great teacher and I know we would not have been able to accomplish what we did this season without him.”



Sophomores Isabelle Holtzen (left) and Grayson Anderson pose with their Class 4A third-place state trophy Saturday in Indepedence.

Weilert was equally pleased with his group of four teams that made the trip to Independence. The team of Garrett Mills and Lexi Shaner, along with Skylar Keaton and Mikayla Quinn, also competed for the Wildcats.

Mills and Shaner knocked off the No. 10 seed to advance to the round of 16, before losing a close 2-1 decision. Keaton and Quinn missed out on advancing to the double octofinals on a tiebreaker.

“This tournament has becomes so massive over the past few years that navigating it with all the variables in play such as judging and matchups is a tough go,” Weilert said. “Kansas debate is so competitive that there are no easy rounds and with the exception of Carson, who has been debating for three years, the rest of the team has had two or less years of debate under their belts. To have this group do as well as they did made me very proud.”

Although Tappan and Conklin made their way through the tournament with 11 wins, it wasn’t always so easy and part of it had nothing to do with the tournament.

Tappan woke up under the weather on Saturday morning and didn’t have a lot of energy. Add to the fact that he lost his voice in the final two rounds, made it an even sweeter victory – one the duo didn’t think was possible.

“Going into the tournament we really had no expectation of taking first,” Conklin said. “We knew we would do well but we didn’t figure we would do that well. Initially, when we won, it hadn’t really hit that we won. The excitement didn’t come until a few minutes after when Carson turned to me and said, ‘Hey, we just won state!’

“The toughest part of the tournament was knowing that every team you hit would get progressively better, and still having to remain in a good mental state.”

One of those teams was Tonganoxie, and following the quarterfinal match between the two schools, Tappan thought his day was done.

“Our quarterfinal round was definitely the hardest round,”

Tappan said. “We beat Tonganoxie 3-0 but if felt like we lost 0-3. Luckily the judges bought our arguments. The competition varied in regular rounds, but in bracket play it definitely ramped up.”

That included the championship round where Tappan and Conklin squared off with a team from Bishop Miege. The Wildcat squad was awarded a 2-1 decision and the state championship.

Holtzen and Anderson were one win away from squaring off with their teammates for the state crown. They faced the same Bishop Miege team in the semifinals before losing the split decision.

Although what made the run through state tournament special for the Louisburg sophomores was the fact they had never competed together.

“She’s a great friend, so I knew her well but we just hadn’t had a chance to work together,” Holtzen said of Anderson. “We hoped to do well but weren’t really sure what to expect.”

Anderson was equally excited about the opportunity.

“Isabelle and I were stoked about our run at state and we were extremely proud of our team,” Anderson said. “When we started preparing for the tournament, we decided that our goal would be to make it to outrounds and go from there.

“I was super proud to be on the Louisburg debate team. Our team had a fabulous showing at state. I am so thankful to be a part of it and I am thankful that we have Mr. Weilert as a coach. I am so grateful that I got a chance to debate at state and I am incredibly thankful that I had Isabelle as a partner.”

With all the success the Wildcat team experienced last weekend, the best still may be yet to come.

“It was amazing to see another team, Grayson and Isabelle,

place as well," Conklin said. "They contributed so much to that tournament it was a shame we couldn't have shared the title. Both girls are second year debaters with myself and it is great to see such potential coming out of Louisburg. From what I hear, next year's freshmen will bring a lot to the table and I look forward to seeing what happens."

Louisburg FFA shines at nationals



Members of the Louisburg High School FFA who competed at nationals are (front row, from left) Kaitlyn Gaza, Ellie Katzer, Abigail Tucker, Megan Roy, Paige Buffington, Bryn O'Meara; (back row) Megan Eberhart, Gracie Key, Morgan Strumillo, Holly Turner and Madelynn Yalowitz.

The Louisburg High School Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapter ventured its way to Louisville, Ky., in the final week of October for the 88th National FFA Convention and Expo to compete against some of the nation's top agriculture teams.

As it turned out, Louisburg more than held its own.

Louisburg sent its three state championship teams from last spring to compete at the convention and they came home with a lot of hardware to show for it – including its first individual national champion.

Junior Madelynn Yalowitz made Louisburg history as she won the individual national title in Food Science and Technology. Yalowitz, along with Paige Buffington, Bryn O'Meara and Holly Turner, also finished runner-up in the team standings.

The Nursery and Landscape and Floriculture teams also ended its competition strong. Megan Roy, Sara Guetterman, Gracie Key and Morgan Strumillo finished third in the Nursery and Landscape Career Development Event (CDE).

Abigail Tucker, Ellie Katzer, Kaitlyn Gaza and Megan Eberhart came in 13th in the Floriculture CDE.



(From left) Bryn O'Meara, Madelynn Yalowitz, Paige Buffington and Holly Turner pose with their National FFA Gold Team Award in Food Science and Technology.

"I am really proud of these students," Louisburg adviser Jim Morgan said. "They worked really hard. We spent many hours during the summer, after school and on weekends studying the material. They all set the goal to reach the gold division and

they accomplished that goal.”

A goal of an individual national championship wasn’t even on Yalowitz’s radar. She racked up a score of 174 to win by eight points, as she edged out one of her own teammates for the honor.



(From left) Megan Roy, Gracie Key and Morgan Strumillo pose with their National FFA Gold Team Award in Nursery and Landscape.

Buffington was second in the nation with 166 points and O’Meara came in fifth with 156.5. The three competitors also earned gold emblems, while Turner finished with a bronze emblem.

“I felt pretty confident going in but I wasn’t’ thinking about getting first at all,” Yalowitz said. “I just wanted to get in the gold division. Then when they called my name and told me I won it was just a shock. It was definitely an awesome feeling though.

“As a team, I think we surprised ourselves by how well we did. It was nice to see that all that hard work and studying really paid off.”

The Food Science and Technology CDE had the team participate

in a timed product development project and each individual participated in practicums involving food sensory, safety, sanitation and a written exam.

“We did tons of tests, about two binders full, that we did the months between state and nationals to prepare,” Yalowitz said. “We did a lot of practice team activities where we made a food product and do every aspect of it. We practiced aromas, we did taste tests and triangle tests. It was a lot of work.”

Roy, the president of the Louisburg FFA chapter, led the Nursery and Landscape team with a sixth-place overall finish with 507 points. Roy, Guetterman, Key and Strumillo all earned gold emblems.

In the team standings, Louisburg racked up 1,663.4 points to take third place and also finished in the gold division.

The Nursery and Landscape CDE had teams complete a general knowledge exam testing horticultural principles and each participant had to complete practicums involving six different areas.

“We did really well,” Roy said. “We did a lot better than we expected to, that is for sure. It was a lot fun.



(From left) Megan Eberhart, Ellie Katzer, Abigail Tucker and Kaitlyn Gaza pose with their National FFA Gold Team

Award in the Floriculture division.

“It was a lot easier transferring for Floriculture to Nursery because a lot of the plants overlap. We identified plants and trees constantly. To prepare, we made several trips to Suburban Lawn and Garden, Grass Pad and we learned how to lay sod. We also had to identify plants that we go on certain landscapes, so it was pretty tough.”

In the Floriculture CDE, Tucker, Katzer, Gaza and Eberhart recorded 4,056 points to come in 13th and finished in the gold division. Individually, Tucker and Katzer each came away with gold embers, while Gaza and Eberhart received silver emblems.

“We took a lot of practice tests,” Tucker said. “We had a list of 124 plants that we had to ID and then math problem solving and that wasn’t fun. We studied plant disorders and we had to prepare for all sorts of different things in the competition because we didn’t know how it was going to go. Over the summer we went to Johnson County Community College and took a short course on floral design and that helped a lot.”

Students from all three teams put in a lot of work since their state title last year. Some of the students put in more than 350 hours of work over the summer and into the school year preparing for nationals.

“It was definitely a lot of work, and it involved a lot of studying, even at the convention,” Tucker said. “I didn’t like it much at the time, but looking back it was so worth it. I am so glad I did it and I had a great time.”

Debate team wins first league title in 20 years



Louisburg debaters (from left) Zach Waite, Lexi Shaner, Riley George and Grayson Anderson pose with their first place Frontier League medals following their Oct. 31 victory at De Soto High School. The Wildcats won their first league title in 20 years.

While several people were getting dressed up for Halloween or preparing for spooky parties, the Louisburg High School debate team found a treat of its own.

The Wildcat team traveled to De Soto on Oct. 31 for the Frontier League Tournament and left with one of their biggest victories in recent seasons. Louisburg sent its three seniors Zach Waite, Riley George, Lexi Shaner and sophomore Grayson Anderson to compete and came away with the school's first league title in 20 years.

"When we heard Louisburg get called for the title we were definitely all in shock," George said. "There were a lot of really good teams that we had to go up against and none of us really knew what to expect, but it was a great feeling to get to experience with my team."

The league tournament ran a round robin format to help the

team prepare for the regional and state tournaments. Each school has a team that debates strictly on the affirmative side and another team on the negative.

Shaner and Waite debated on the affirmative side, while George and Anderson competed on the negative. Each side then faces the opposite from other league schools.

“The toughest part of the competition was it being my first four speaker competition,” Shaner said. “We saw some pretty tough teams and managed to only lose one. Zach and I were so proud of ourselves. We worked hard for this.

“Last year was my first year, and I have improved greatly. And so has Zach and Riley. But Grayson, the sophomore on our team, means so much to me. She was my first debate partner, and I am so upset that this is my last year with her. Also me being sick didn’t really help, but we made it through and won the league tournament.”

After five rounds were complete, the Wildcat quartet came out on top with a 7-3 record. Louisburg edged Paola, which finished with a 6-4 record, for first place and its first league title since 1995.

“Heading into the league tournament, you just never know what to expect,” Louisburg coach Brian Weilert said. “The judging pool is a mix of the schools who are actually competing in the tournament. Due to the tournament falling on Halloween, I didn’t have a ton of interest from students in signing up. I told the students to go ahead and put their name down if they wanted to be considered and from that short list, and I chose my three seniors and Grayson.

“I really wanted to give the seniors a chance to win the title. To come out on top was a nice end to the day and I was very happy for them. The Frontier League has a lot of talented programs so I was proud of their accomplishment.”

The debate squad will now focus back up and get ready for Saturday’s home tournament, which will help get it ready for the regional and state tournaments in the coming weeks.

“Winning with my senior teammates was pretty cool because we only have three this year,” Waite said. “I was very excited about being a part of the league title, but as cool as it is we still have work to do for regionals and state.”

The week before league, the Wildcat team split to take part in tournaments at Blue Valley North and Fort Scott. At Blue Valley North, the Wildcats didn’t leave with a medal but the duo of Carson Tappan and Curran Conklin came close with a 4-1 record and just missed the quarterfinals.

At Fort Scott, Louisburg finished second overall behind 4-1 records from the duo of Mikayla Quinn and Grayson Anderson and Lexi Shaner and Kris Light.

On Oct. 10, the Wildcats came up with another sweepstakes championship. Brooke Talmage and Garrett Mills, who competed up a division, along with Zach Waite and Calvin Cassida each got medals to lead the way. Novice teams Peyton Shaffer and Leia Shaffer, along with Reilly Alexander and Lilly Mick, also contributed to the win.