



Journalism at GHS

New extracurricular provides opportunities to share stories

By: DULCE MURILLO

This year, Gibbon Public Schools has added Journalism as an extracurricular activity, giving students the opportunity to enhance their writing and creativity skills. Journalism is organized by the Nebraska Schools Activity Association (NSAA), meaning that students can submit their projects to participate in state competition.

In Journalism, there are 25 competition categories that allow students to practice many of their skills. Two of the categories involve photography. Action photography and feature photography have been the most popular categories in Gibbon so far.

Senior Reuben Reyes said, "The thing I am most excited about in Journalism this year is photography. I think I have great skills and talents and can be successful at state. Photography helps to capture the best

shots of athletes or events at school."

There are also several types of writing categories, such as newspaper news writing, entertainment review writing, editorial writing, and headline writing.

"I am excited about the writing categories because I have always been a good writer. We get to learn new things and use our skills to talk about what is happening in our school," said Junior Andrea Montanez.

The new Journalism program is an exciting chapter for Gibbon High School, offering the students more opportunities to develop their skills and be involved.

Advisor Meredith McQuay said, "A strong journalism program not only helps students build their communication skills, it shines a light on what a school is doing well. Through photography and writing, our student journalists will document what our athletes, musicians, actors, and staff

are up to this school year."

The program's goal is to keep the community informed by publishing student work each month both in school and through social media.

As students begin this new extracurricular activity, the Gibbon Public Schools community is excited to see all the creativity and skills the students have this year. Students are also eager to send their projects to the NSAA on March 1, hoping that many will qualify for state in April.

McQuay said, "What I love about Journalism is that there is something for everyone: writing, photography, video, and creative projects. I am so thankful that our administration was willing to add Journalism as a new activity for students. We have a lot of students who are excited about photography and artistic projects. It will be fun to see what they can accomplish this year."

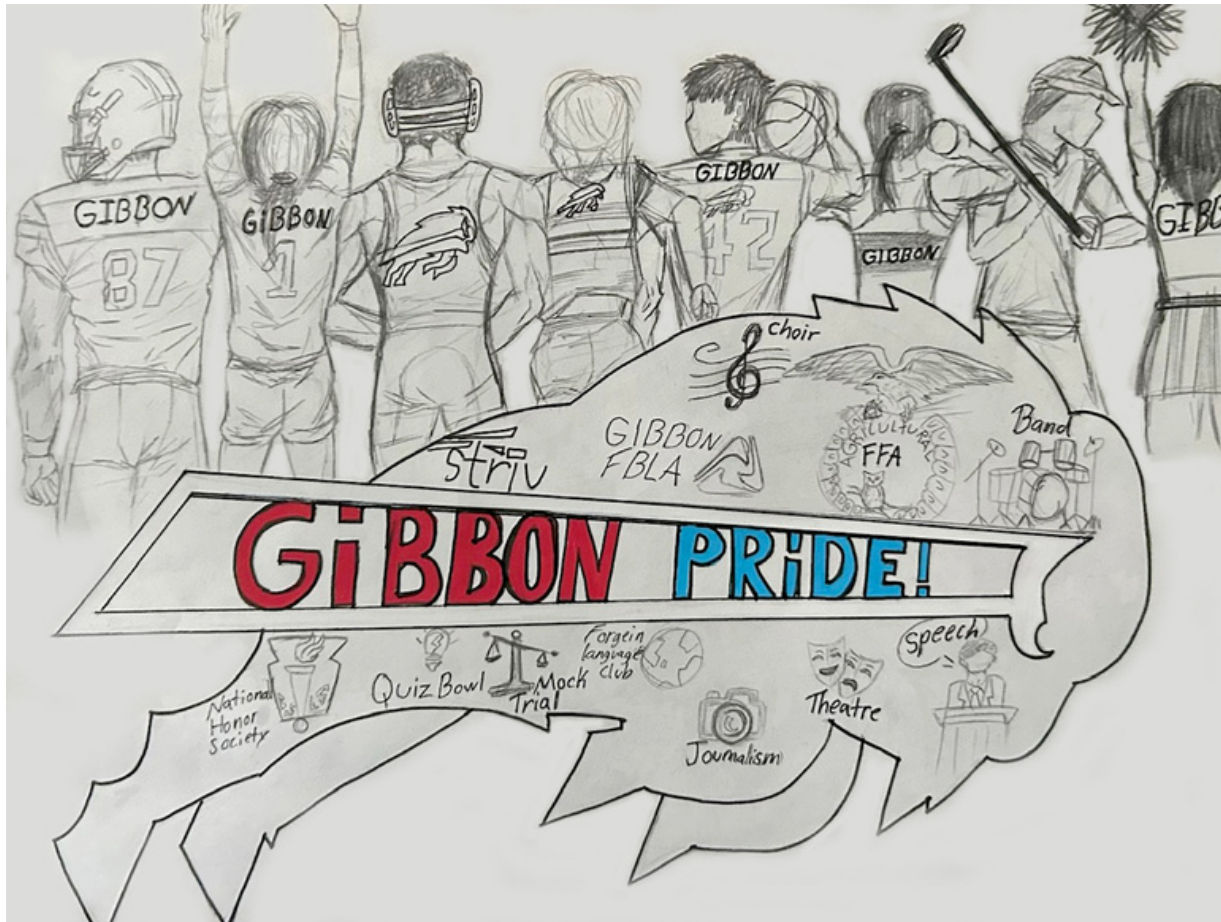


Photo Illustration by Bayla Rodriguez

ARTIST STATEMENT: After brainstorming to figure out what I wanted to do with my illustration, I decided to represent my school's activities through my drawing. I used Canva to plan out where I would put people and where all the activities would be placed inside my piece. I took inspiration and reference from actual players on my school's teams, then putting them into my own personal style when I started drawing them. I hand drew the buffalo and all elements of the illustration and inked in the lettering and buffalos after I finished drawing, adding our school colors to the main text.



ABOVE: Kasey Ackley takes junior high volleyball pictures. (photo: Caleb Isackson) The first home game for high school football against Cross County. (photo: Maricela Raymundo) Brynn Baxter jump serves (photo: Dulce Ramirez) The student section gets into a cheer at the Harvard volleyball game. (photo: Bailey Weldon) Breckyn Carstensen sets in a junior high volleyball game. (photo: Kasey Ackley) Elementary night at the high school football game against Gordon-Rushville. (photo: Kenzie Ackley) Kacie Jarmin and Norah Sloan cheer at a volleyball game. (photo: Flor Tejeda)

Stronger together: Clark twins turn sisterhood into teamwork

By: ANDREA MONTANEZ

Coaches often try to create an atmosphere where teammates are like family. However, for 16 year old twins Emma and Claire Clark, it's a reality to balance their lives and sports. The twins are homeschooled but attend Gibbon Public Schools for two periods a day and also participate in athletics. Because they are both three sport athletes, the twins spend most of their time together; however, that doesn't mean it's easy.

"If we're disagreeing about something, sometimes I think it's harder to leave it outside off the court," Emma said.

The twins push each other to be the best they can be.

"I know I can be harder on her than my other teammates, but I'm pushing her to be better," said Claire.

This isn't the only challenge the twins face.



Twins Claire and Emma Clark are in serve receive at the home triangular on September 4. (photo: Bailey Weldon)

"Comparison is a struggle because we're compared to each other a ton," Claire said. "I found myself trying to be better than her. I have to remember I'm not competing with her, I'm working with her towards the same goal."

Being able to have a connection in team sports is an essential key.

"She gives me confidence because I know that she believes in me and I believe in her so we can rely on each other," Claire said.

Having someone who is there on and off of the court can be very beneficial.

"Even if everyone else is having a rough day, I think just what a blessing it is to have someone going through the same things as me who understands it the same way. I think I take it for granted sometimes," said Claire.

"I get to spend a lot of time with her. Also, our connection is better than with just another person. We are able to

have good chemistry with each other," said Emma.

The team benefits from having both of the twins on the court. Angela Smallcomb has been the head volleyball coach for two years. Throughout the season she's been able to see the twins' chemistry spark on the court.

"It's really special. Emma and Claire aren't

The Clark twins celebrate with teammates after a Buffalo point. (photo: Bailey Weldon)



just twins; they're the workhorses and leaders of our team. Claire runs the offense as our setter, and Emma anchors the defense as our libero."

Having one strong leader on a team is exciting for any coach, but having two who are juniors is incredibly rare.

"They feed off each other's energy, and that connection makes our team stronger," said Coach Smallcomb.

Emma and Claire have gone through many challenges on and off the court, but the twins don't miss a beat.. They brighten the atmosphere everywhere they go.

"She's my built-in best friend. It's just fun being able to be teammates with her," said Emma.

St. Paul Girls Golf Invite: Bendfeldt takes gold, team finishes as runner-up

By: XIMENA URBINA GONZALEZ

At the St. Paul Golf Invite held on September 4, Junior Natalie Bendfeldt took first place. The course at the St. Paul Country Club is a nine hole course meaning the Gibbon girls played the nine holes twice. In addition to Bendfeldt's success in the tournament, the team also had a strong day.

The Gibbon girls golf team consists of five athletes: seniors Bianca Corona and Sahara Vasquez, junior Natalie Bendfeldt, sophomore Ximena Urbina Gonzalez and freshman Kasey Ackley. Bendfeldt won her first individual title. Corona placed 13th, along with Vasquez who got 14th. The team finished as the runner-up at the meet.

Coach David Bengé said, "They improved at a rate I have never witnessed as a coach. Every girl improved their score from [the previous meet] by 19+ strokes. I'm incredibly proud of them."

Bendfeldt said, "It felt really good considering I still didn't play as well as I wanted to play. When I struggled with a hole and it got into my head, it was mentally challenging for me to recover."

The challenges didn't stop Bendfeldt. Even though golf is an individual sport, the team played a big role.

"I love my team with everything in my heart. They are the most uplifting and caring girls and Coach Bengé is always an encouragement."

This win was just the beginning for the Buffaloes. There is a lot of golf left to play this season. The team has been working hard and improving.

Bendfeldt said, "My goals are to get better everyday and become a better teammate to my team. I want to be able to be a role model for little kids and adults on the golf course!"



LEFT: Coach Bengé and Natalie Bendfeldt after the St. Paul Invite. (courtesy photo: Jodi Bendfeldt)
RIGHT: The runner-up team including Kasey Ackley, Natalie Bendfeldt, Bianca Corona, and Sahara Vasquez. (courtesy photo: Coach Bengé)



By: ABBIE MILLER

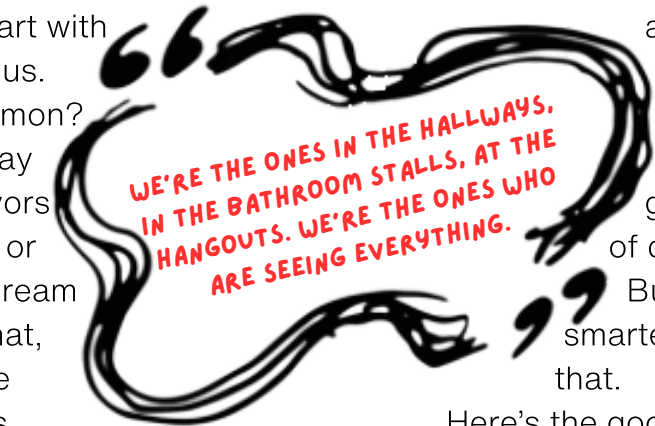
If you walked into almost any high school in Nebraska and asked a student if they know someone who has vaped or currently vapes, they'd probably say yes. For a long time, it seemed like *everyone* was doing it. But here's the truth: fewer teens are vaping now than a few years ago. According to a 2019 survey conducted by the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE), about 17% of Nebraska students said they vaped regularly. By 2023, though, the NDE reported that the number had dropped to around 7%. That is progress—but there are still thousands of teens in our state who are hooked.

Here's the thing: this isn't a problem for the adults around us to try and figure out. It's all on us. We're the ones in the hallways, in the bathroom stalls, at the hangouts. We're the ones who are seeing everything. If fewer and fewer of

Change starts with us: why vaping should not be normalized

us pick up a vape and speak up when we see people doing it, then we can prove it's not normal anymore. Change doesn't start with rules on paper; it starts with us.

So, why is vaping so common? One primary reason is the way they are advertised. The flavors are usually sweet like candy or fruits, which don't exactly scream "adult product." On top of that, some of the newer vapes are starting to get touch screens on them, allowing people to play games or play music from their vapes. You read that right,



they can now play games from them. Once again, it seems that those companies are targeting us to be their customers. Add in all the influencers on TikTok that make vaping look fun or harmless, and it's no wonder so many high schoolers have tried it before. On top of that, even though you're supposed to be 21 when you buy them, teens still get them from older friends, stores that fail to check an ID, or online shops that have a

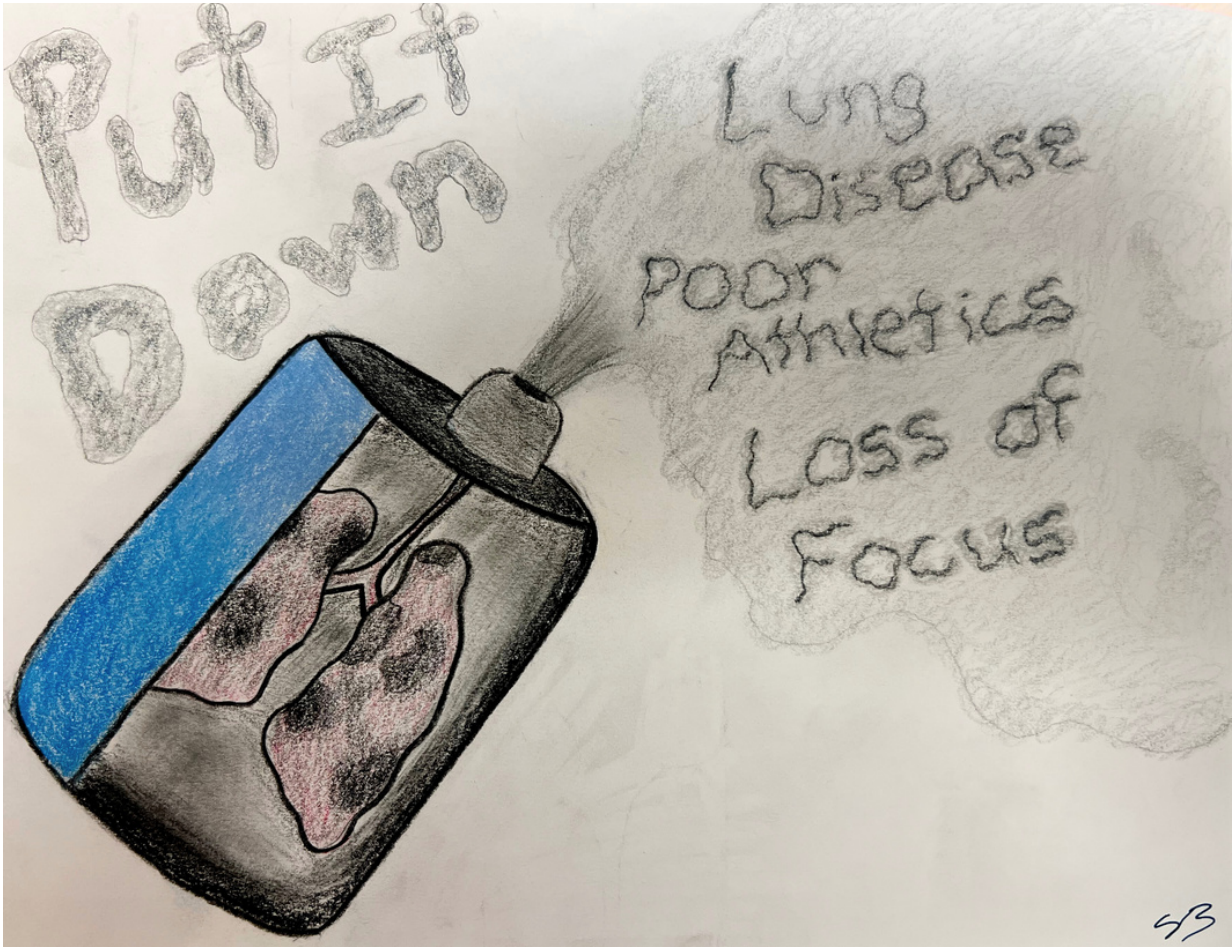
very sketchy age verification.

Companies have never had our health in mind; all they care about is our money. They make vaping look fun and cool, but in reality, they're just trying to hook their next generation of customers. But we're smarter than that.

Here's the good news. Nebraska teens have been quitting. Many are beginning to realize that it's not worth the money, stress, and health risks. If you or someone you know wants help quitting, many resources can guide you on the path to being vape-free. And if you don't vape, speaking up and being honest with your friends matters way more than you think. Vaping might feel normal right now, but we don't have to let it stay that way. We all have the power to change what feels normal and make vaping something Nebraska teens leave behind.

CALL
1-800-QUIT-NOW
(784-8669)

CALL (Spanish Speaking)
1-855-DÉJELO-YA
(335-3569)



Cartoon by Scarlett Bragg.

THE HIDDEN DANGERS OF E-CIGARETTES

Nicotine Addiction

- Nicotine affects brain development, especially in teens, leading to long-term dependency
- Increases anxiety levels and leads to intense cravings

FDA Oversight & Risks

- Most e-cigarette products are NOT FDA-approved for safety
- The FDA is working on regulations, but many products remain untested

Lung Damage

- Vaping can cause inflammation and severe lung injuries like "popcorn lung"

Harmful Chemicals

- Vape liquids contain heavy metals such as nickel, tin, and lead, as well as volatile organic compounds and toxic flavorings

Targeting Youth

- In 2024, nearly 90% of youth e-cigarette users chose fruit or candy flavors, sparking addiction and health concerns

Heart Damage

- Over time, vaping raises the risk of heart disease and stroke

information from (<https://www.lung.org/>)

Information graphic by Jacqueline Ramirez Estrada

Harry Potter Krispy Kream doughnuts: a magical look without a pleasing flavor

By: IVY NOLLER

The Harry Potter series by J.K. Rowling has long been inspiring a sense of magic for many children and adults. Even today, over twenty-eight years since the release of the first book, it is still a hugely popular series. As many fans may know, HBO is doing a remake of the original movies as a series, so many companies are doing collaborations with Harry Potter. One recent example is Krispy Kreme and their new Harry Potter doughnut collection released in August 2025 and available until September 14. While I wasn't able to try their Sorting House doughnut, I did have the opportunity to try their four House doughnuts and have my honest ratings and opinions on both taste and looks.

First of all, I tried their Gryffindor doughnut. This doughnut was a plain shell doughnut with cookie butter flavored creme inside and a biscoff cookie crumble on top with red and gold icing, and the Gryffindor crest. Now, normally, I'm not a fan of anything cookie butter, but this doughnut was delightful and earned itself an 8/10 for the taste. On the visual side of things, it was very pretty and had both of the house colors, so I'm giving it a 9/10 for how the doughnut looked.

Second, we have their Hufflepuff doughnut. This was another plain shell doughnut, but it had a brown butter toffee flavored custard inside and on top it had yellow golden icing, black



chocolate drizzle, cookie pieces, and the Hufflepuff crest. I have to say, this doughnut started off good, until I got to the custard inside, which just wasn't my thing as it tasted a little too sweet and a little too rich for my personal liking. Overall on flavor, it got a 6/10. The coloration was very nice and fit the House, but it could've used a little more black, so I'm giving it an 8/10.

Third, we have the Ravenclaw doughnut. This doughnut was a glazed ring doughnut dipped in blueberry icing with sprinkles and the Ravenclaw crest on top. It was a simple doughnut, but it had a good flavor, if you like

blueberry. I personally do not, so I rated this doughnut a 5/10 on taste. The doughnut design was very simple when it came to looks, and I think it could've used a bit more magic, so I give it a 7/10.

Finally, we had the Slytherin doughnut. This was another glazed ring doughnut, this time with chocolate and green buttercream swirls, as well as a chocolate cookie-sugar mix. As a Slytherin myself, I was very excited for this doughnut, but it did end up being my least favorite, as I found it way too sweet and with a slightly gritty texture. I rated it a 3/10 for taste. The design of the doughnut, however, was gorgeous and very pleasing to look at, definitely a magical 10/10.

So, while maybe the Krispy Kreme doughnuts weren't really my favorite collaboration, it's obvious to see that Harry Potter is still popular even today. The new HBO series in particular has really heightened popularity yet again, and it's clear to see that this beloved classic still holds a place in many, many hearts all across the world. So, if you're a true fan of the Harry Potter series, while I may recommend skipping the doughnuts, there are plenty of other collaborations out there in stores I think you should keep an eye out for this fall. One thing is for sure, Harry Potter and its collaborations are still out there keeping the magic alive.

Live action *Lilo and Stitch* falls short of fan expectations

By: ANDREA MONTANEZ

Excitement hit theaters in May 2025 for the live action remake of Disney's *Lilo and Stitch*. In the movie, viewers get to see the challenges Lilo faces in her life. Then an alien fugitive which she later names Stitch becomes her dog. Their friendship begins to develop throughout the film and they later learn more about Ohana and what it means to be a family.

Despite the initial excitement for the movie, criticism sparked when fans found out that Captain Gantu, the main antagonist from the original, was removed from the film. Disney replaced this role with Dr. Jumba Jookiba as the main villain which contradicts Jumba's character in the original animated movie. In the animation, Jumba is presented as a scientist that is in-depth with his experiments. Later, in the movie his character shows us how he learns about the profound meaning of Ohana. The remake destroys the original narrative of his character and changes the overall story line.

Additionally, the ending of the remake had fans questioning the central theme of "Ohana." Disney switched the ending to Nani giving up Lilo for foster care. In the original film, Nani decided to not attend college to be able to keep Lilo. Several fans felt divided on whether or not the change was the best move in the film. I personally thought it did contradict the overall theme of the movie. It felt as though the whole theme that was supposed to come across to the audience was not achieved.

However, for younger audiences this movie did appeal to them. The younger generation never got to see the original film so they were not distracted by the changes in the live action version.

If you missed the movie in theaters, it is available to watch on Disney+.

