



# Blue & White

A Weekly Production from the MHS Journalism Class

P.O. Box 580-Montezuma, IA 50171- [www.montezuma-schools.org/BlueWhite.aspx](http://www.montezuma-schools.org/BlueWhite.aspx)

## A Newsworthy National Convention

FFA Business team hauls home national hardware.

By Chase Talbert

Two weeks ago, Montezuma's own FFA chapter won the National Farm Business Management contest in Indianapolis. So, as Ms. Aoife Lyons and Mr. Rick Swenson put it, this year's National Convention went great and absolutely fantastic.

Ms. Lyons has been involved in FFA for the entirety of her high school career. Throughout those four years, she has learned how to speak and present better, as well as how to be a more professional individual overall.

Mr. Rick Swenson has been involved in FFA for 37 years. The most important thing he has learned is that, hard work combined with leadership skills can accomplish almost anything.

This year's Farm Business team was comprised of Vance Bushong, Ashley Armstrong, Aoife Lyons, and Shelby Helm, with Zach Henry as an alter-

nate. Their victory this year was due to their hard work, leadership skills, and intelligence, hard work is probably most of it though, as they had been preparing for this since the fall of their junior year.

In order to prepare for National Convention the students took a plethora of practice tests and studied the test's resource information. Mr. Swenson also had to mentally prepare Ms. Lyons and her teammates for taking a three hour test by providing encouragement to them, and coaching them through the entire process.

Ms. Lyons' favorite part about National FFA, besides getting first, was going to a restaurant called "Pizza King," because it had a miniature train that brought drinks to their table. Mr. Swenson's favorite part of National FFA was the group discussions with the students, and seeing how nervous they were

before the results were announced at the banquet.

Ms. Lyons' favorite part about FFA as a whole is bonding with your team throughout practice and competition. Mr. Swenson's favorite part about being an FFA advisor is getting to work with students and to see how much they progress throughout their career in FFA.

This year's Business team was great, and their victory is a great thing for the Montezuma FFA chapter, but why should students join FFA? Ms. Lyons thinks that people should join because FFA teaches you life skills, it's fun, and there is no greater feeling than learning that all your hard work paid off.

Mr. Swenson believes that students should join FFA, because there are lots of scholarships for being in FFA, you get to meet people and go places you may not otherwise, and FFA teaches you great leadership skills



**NATIONAL CHAMPIONS:** (left to right) Ashley Armstrong, Shelby Helm, Aoife Lyons, and Vance Bushong. The team was the national winning team for the Farm Business Management Contest at the national FFA Convention.

Photo courtesy of Montezuma FFA

## English class connects with Taiwanese students for project

By Carrie Jennings

The students in the Communications English class have been granted an amazing opportunity this semester. For the last two weeks, the students have gotten to speak with students in Taiwan through a website called "Slack."

Elizabeth Van Gorp, English teacher here at Montezuma, was able to set this experience up with a friend of hers' from Pella.

Her friend had received a Fulbright scholarship and was placed in a school in Taiwan to teach English to students there. They came up with this idea over the summer and decided to do a three-week session.

"We wanted the students to have a cultural experience," says Van Gorp, "that relates to communications in a much broader sense."

Charles Bowen, senior and student in the Communications class, states that there is also another reason for conversing with the foreign students: "They are learning English in their class, and we want to help them."

So far, Van Gorp says that the experience overall has been quite positive as the students come into class excited to converse with

the Taiwanese students.

The students began their conversations with simple introductory topics such as names and hobbies, but they will begin talking about more complex topics.

The students have learned a lot from this experience. Sam Yarbrough, senior, says that she has learned that "just because we know and speak a language, it doesn't mean we fully understand it."

Bowen says that this learning experience has taught him to be more empathetic towards people whose culture is different from his own.

Van Gorp believes that all of her Communications students now understand what learning a language looks like, and how communication between people who are different is vital.

Yarbrough and Bowen both agree that they would like to do something like this again. Van Gorp says that the experience has been "experimental."

She would advise other teachers to try to arrange something like this in the future, as she states, "Being exposed to cultures and different people makes us better human beings."

## Missed an issue? No problem!

The Blue & White is now online.

Go to [www.montezuma-schools.org/BlueWhite.aspx](http://www.montezuma-schools.org/BlueWhite.aspx) to see our previous issues!

## MHS Pep band preparing for upcoming season

By Brayden Stockman

As the upcoming basketball season comes around the corner, another Montezuma High School staple comes with it: the Montezuma pep band. Directed by Carri Burnett, it performs at halftime for every home football

and basketball game.

Burnett, who graduated from Iowa State University after studying at Iowa Central Community College, has directed Montezuma concert and pep band since August of 2015. Before teaching at Montezuma, she taught at

Pocahontas Area Community Schools in Pocahontas, Iowa and West Marshall in State Center, Iowa.

Burnett stated that she decided to become a band director because, "I like children, I like teaching, and I like music. Put them all together and directing band is the best thing I could do."

Since her arrival in 2015, the band program has grown in equipment and students. Currently, there are 46 students in high school band, 35 in junior high band, and 57 in elementary band, which starts at 5th grade. However, only high schoolers are allowed to play in pep band, though some junior highers have performed in the past.

Though pep band is currently a staple of the sports games, it wasn't always like this. Previously, the Montezuma High School had a marching band, who would perform at the football games. However, in the early 2000s, interest in band declined and the marching band couldn't continue. "Marching band carried a huge tradition here, but when numbers declined it became a

pep band," said Burnett.

Currently, the pep band performs songs separate from the concerts, though the concert band students also perform for pep band. "Everybody in the band plays in pep band performances except for football and basketball players, and cheerleaders share time. But with basketball, the players will play when they're not playing. For example, a boy will play with the pep band while the girls play their basketball game," stated Burnett, who mostly chooses the songs the pep band performs, though some students will assist her.

Burnett enjoys directing pep band, saying, "The students always make it a lot of fun. It's rewarding to pick music that they love and succeed at, but students are very busy and shared among all the busy, which can make it challenging to keep them motivated for band."

The Montezuma pep band will next perform on December 5th at the half time of the home basketball game. Burnett is ready for the basketball season, saying, "We are excited to debut new tunes and reinvent old ones."



CARRI BURNETT, above, is in her third year as director of the MHS Pep Band. She is looking forward to a great pep band season this winter.

Photo credit: Brayden Stockman

## The Blue and White Staff



## Calendar of Events

Thursday  
No Activities

Friday  
No Activities  
Saturday  
HS Musical: "The Sound of Music" - 7:00 pm

Sunday  
HS Musical: "The Sound of Music" - 3:00 pm

Monday  
V Girls BB Jamboree @ Lynnville-Sully - 6:00 pm

Tuesday  
No Activities

Wednesday  
No Activities

Thursday  
JH Wrestling @ English-Valleys - 4:15 pm