

The Cat's Dispatch

Walnut Ridge, Arkansas
Lawrence County School District
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~ Walnut Ridge High School supplement to The Times Dispatch since 1976 ~

HOMECOMING 2025: *Shine Bright Like a Diamond*



The Homecoming court consisted of the Queen Layla Nunally, Maid of Honor Cameron Brown, Senior Maid Madison Blaylock, Senior Maid Abby Rogers, Junior Maid Sarah Maguire, Sophomore Maid Whitley White, and Freshman Maid Jordyn Long.



The Sweetheart Royalty consisted of the King Collin Andrews, Knight of Honor Jayden Saulsbury, Senior Knight Johnathon Hughes, Senior Knight Robert Dettman, Junior Knight Cash Baker, Sophomore Knight Riley Richey, and Freshman Knight Jagger Brady.

The Walnut Ridge Bobcats celebrated the new year with basketball homecoming. This year's theme was *Shine Bright like a Diamond*. The Bobcats faced off with the Manlia Lions for the homecoming game. After snow cancelled the original Homecoming games, they were rescheduled for the following week.

Homecoming Day activities were celebrated on Friday, January 17.



Los Angeles Wildfires

By Abby Staples

Los Angeles and the people of Southern California have experienced multiple fires caused and fueled by strong Santa Ana winds (sometimes reaching 80 mph) and heat from the desert. Recently, residents are being forced to evacuate their homes and watch as entire neighborhoods burn.

Firefighters work tirelessly doing everything they can to contain the blazing flames. Authorities have told residents to remain calm and to evacuate in an organized manner. Many donations have been made to help pay for everything that has been lost and to help fund the reconstruction.

The thick smoke has become a health risk, leading to air quality warnings and the closure of schools and public facilities. Investigators are searching for answers to why these fires keep occurring. Many criminals have been arrested for looting mansions and contributing to the horrific fires. Lastly, other countries such as Mexico, Ukraine, and Canada, have sent their fire troops to help relieve Los Angeles.

Mystery Students

By Sydney Henry

*This quiet junior walks around so positively with ease.
She's easy to talk to and easy to please.
She's a trustworthy friend and will never lie to your face.
Her curly browns locks might get in your space*

*She's the funniest girl; her laugh is contagious and roaring.
When you see her jet-black hair, your days will never be boring
This sophomore will laugh until you think she's done,
But hang around her long enough and I promise you'll have fun*

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The staff of *The Cat's Dispatch* dedicates each issue to the memory of David Brady, Editor 1991-93.

"Working with Fire, to Fight Fire"

By Jaysey Grooms

Eric Smith (Mrs. Linda's Smith husband) works for the Arkansas Forestry Commission. He is a Wildland Firefighter who goes wherever the need is greatest as determined by the Department of Agriculture.

He has traveled all over the country fighting wildfires when circumstances require "all hands-on deck" to combat dangerous fire situations. With the devastating fires in Southern California, I spoke to him about his personal experience fighting wildfires.

He enjoys working outdoors, working with fires, and trying to figure out how fires work; so, while this is his passion, it is also very dangerous! While "Working with fire to fight fire" sounds strange, he learned how to do exactly that.

There is danger in the unknown: What is going on with the fires? What is causing them to burn? What is the fire fuel source and how to stop it. He said, "Once you can figure out the source, then you can work on stopping it."

In 2007, while working as a Dozer Boss in a Montana wild-fire, he was injured while the putting in the fire lines. As the dozer was pushing several pine trees down, the top of one of the trees came down and hit him in the mid-section causing him to fall backwards. This incident caused him to spend six hours in the emergency room.

Fighting fires is not only physically taxing, but emotionally, also. In 2013, it hit him hard as he and his friends were working on the fires in extremely volatile conditions. Knowing that his friends and coworkers might get hurt or even killed is one of the most difficult realities of the job.

As a firefighter, he knows the risk that he might get hurt or even killed, but he does this type of work anyway. Although they may never meet those whose property they worked to protect, they continue to answer the calls.

Sometimes, after a traumatic event, some people realize they are not suited for this job. Counseling is available as needed. Smith continues to do this type of work knowing that he can't save everything, but it is satisfying knowing you helped saved lives and property.

I asked him, "Do you consider yourself a hero?" He answered, "I think everyone is a hero to some extent, but I don't consider myself one just because of the job I have chosen to do."

Disclaimer:

The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors named, and are not necessarily those of The Cat's Dispatch, Walnut Ridge High School or any other students/employees. While we try to ensure that the information we provide is correct, we are a student newspaper, mistakes do occur and we cannot always guarantee the accuracy of our material. If you do notice mistakes, please let us know.

We welcome letters to the editor or guest writers. Contact Stacy Rice, advisor.



A GLISTENING WINTER NIGHT

By Irissa Bounds

Winter Ball was held on Saturday, December 14. The theme was “A Glistening Winter Night.” Reese Tate and Abigail Staples were crowned King and Queen. First Runners up were Wesley Staples and Kennedy McVay, Second Runners up were Jace Blake and Karlee Broadway, Third Runners up were Jaxton Brady and Mary Collins, and Fourth Runners up were Haylen Moore and Ayden Binkley.

The food was provided by the parents of the Junior class. It consisted of finger foods like ham and cheese sliders, sausage balls, cocktail weenies and veggies with dip.

Winter Ball always starts with the receiving line consisting of members of Lawrence County School Board, WRHS administration and the reigning King and Queen of Winter Ball 2023, Gunner Thielemier and Marlee Lady.

To create “A Glistening Winter Night,” the decorations were mainly black and silver with pops of white added making it classy and elegant. The black background of the stage allowed the beautiful dresses and tuxedos to pop on stage.



Softball Girls off the Field



Cheerleaders after Dark



You've Come a Long Way, MHTay

By Kaitlyn Milgrim

Maung Htay was born September 21, 2005. His parents are Ashley and Chris Riggs. (His name is pronounced "M-Tay." The H is silent.)

He has two brothers: MA, 19 and Kai, 20, and two dogs, Ralph and Rollo. His best friends are Anthony Hughes, Jayden Ward and Payton Crum.

MHTay has attended Walnut Ridge since 9th grade. His favorite teacher is Coach Fisher.

His most embarrassing moment was when he missed the ball during a football game. MHTay's advice for underclassmen is "don't be dumb."



MHTay Favorites:

App – TikTok
Pizza Topping – Meat Lovers'
Class – Coach Fisher's
Drink – Water
Store – Hays
Food – Burmese
Random Fact –
He once had a pet raccoon
Red Flag – He talks to everyone
Restaurant – Any Thai

If late to class, he was usually finishing work for another teacher. One thing MHTay cannot live without is his family. He will miss the teachers the most after high school.

The best advice MHTay has received is "You can do it!" His biggest fear going into high school was not making the grades. His biggest fear upon leaving high school is living in the real world. MHTay is looking forward to starting his own family after graduation.

BOOM! There goes a Tesla.

By: Dakota Timms

As always on New Year's Day, people were enjoying themselves around the world, including on Bourbon Street in New Orleans and the Las Vegas Strip. That afternoon, an armed man drove a Ford F150 onto and then down Bourbon Street killing at least 15 people and injuring more than 30.

Earlier that morning, an active-duty Marine rented a Tesla Cybertruck, filled with fireworks and other cheap explosives including gasoline and camping fuel. He then parked the Tesla in front of the Trump Hotel located on the Vegas Strip. He left notes on his phone

Kaitlyn's Done Waitin'

By Dakota Riggs



Kaitlyn Alexis Milgrim, who some call Kait, was born May 18, 2007. Her parents are Ashley Ditto and Chris Riggs, and the late Steven Milgrim. WRHS freshman, Zaiden Milgrim is Kaitlyn's little brother.

Kaitlyn loves dogs and rabbits so much; she has two of each. She has two dogs, Ralph and Rollo; her two rabbits, Apples and Smokey. Besides her animals, she also loves her best friends who are Samantha Diehm, Kayla Woodard, Aubrey Monroe and Dakota Riggs.

Kaitlyn has attended the wonderful school of Walnut Ridge for as long as she can remember. Throughout those years, she learned how to be the best student she can be. Her advice to underclassmen is "Work as hard as you can."

In addition to learning to be a good student, she has also learned some of the best excuses for being late to class. Her most favorite one is "I was helping Mrs. Rice."

Kaitlyn can't live without her dog. Her biggest pet peeve is "When someone refuses to repeat themselves when I didn't hear them the first time."

After high school, Kaitlyn will miss the routine the most. She is active in National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta (Math Club) and Journalism. She has heard some memorable quotes throughout her lifetime, but her favorite is, "Everything happens for a reason." If she could restart high school, she would be more social.

Kaitlyn's biggest fear going into high school was not making the grades. As she prepares to leave, her biggest fear is becoming an adult. Even though becoming an adult is scary, she is excited for college after graduation.

Kaitlyn plans to attend BRTC for her basics then go to law school. Her unpopular opinion is "School is not that bad!"

Kaitlyn's Favorites:

App – TikTok
Pizza Topping – Cheese
Classes – Math and Journalism
Drink – Sweet Tea
T.V Show – *Master Chef*
Food – Chicken Alfredo
Random Fact - She is 4'10
Ice Cream – Chocolate

with his reasons for his actions.

He pulled up in front of the Trump Hotel on the Vegas Strip and sat there for a minute before the truck blew up.

The explosion caused minor injuries to seven people. There was no serious damage to the hotel; the driver was pronounced dead by a self-inflicted gun shot.

I'd Rather be Duck Hunting

By Emerson Callahan

I love duck hunting. Duck hunting it is a fun and crazy sport, but danger is always just around the bend. Hunting gets me out of the house so I can go and do without having to worry about the usual teenage problems and it gets my mind off of other things.

I grew up in a hunting family and have hunted with my family since I was very young. They taught me everything about the sport and showed me what it is about. It's not just about killing a lot of ducks; it's also about making memories with your friends and family.

Public land. It is super fun to hunt public land, but it is also more dangerous because there are a lot of crazy people out there. You must race boats at the same time, so it is something that is definitely nerve-wracking, but it is really fun to do.

Private land. It is also fun to hunt on private land, where you have a chance of killing more birds. However, you don't have the fun boat races and all of that, but you get to go out in peace and spend time with your friends instead of worrying about crazy out-of-staters disrupting your hunt.

Wicked: From Broadway to the Big Screen

By Dakota Riggs

On November 22, the long-awaited *Wicked* movie hit theaters. Thousands of fans flooded theaters to see the lead actresses Cythina Erivo and Ariana Grande play Elphaba and Glinda.

Wicked is a spin-off of the cult-classic *Wizard of Oz*. With an unlikely friendship between Elphaba (the Wicked Witch of the West) and Glinda (the Good Witch.) The movie takes viewers through the trails and triumphs of their friendships.

Fans were not disappointed in this rendition of this classic Broadway musical. The director Jon M. Chu wanted to dive deeper into the Broadway musical, with his own spin on it. With the movie running for two hours and forty-five minutes, it is no shock that nothing was left out.

Even though the movie runs for more than two hours, it has been divided into two parts. On November 21, 2025, *Wicked: For Good* will hit theaters. Many fans are waiting with excitement as they hear more and more about part two of *Wicked*.



Walnut Ridge Choir performed six *Wicked* songs at their *Night on Broadway* performance as a result of the movie's huge success.

Grief Never Ends

By Breanna Gibson



February 15, 2024, is etched into my memory. Not as a date, but as a gaping hole torn into the fabric of my life. Noah Morris was one of my best friends. A flicker of distraction, a glance at his phone. That's all it took. One careless moment stole him -- not only from me, but his family, and anyone who loved him.

The silence left in the room after the knowledge of something like that will always haunt me. I look for him everywhere: every crowded room, every street we used to go down, and in every white Silverado that drives by. But most of all, in the empty chair left in Mrs. Rob's room after he passed. I would always look back at him in Mrs. Rob's class, laughing because we both knew we had no idea what was going on. In other words, we were cooked!

When you are grieving, people say you go through these five stages: First, Denial. Denial was the hardest one for me. Waking up, forgetting that it happened, then checking my phone just to see if he texted. Hoping it was all a misunderstanding, because you never believe something so awful could happen to someone you love.

Then, Anger. Lots of Anger. You look for answers, but there are none. You can't come to any conclusion about how or why something like this would happen and the final stages are bargaining/depression, and acceptance.

Things that will stick with me are the thoughts of him not getting to experience the "hype" of an 18th birthday or never getting to experience his junior or senior prom. Most of all, Graduation Day. Eleven of his 17 years of life he spent working toward something he never got the chance or opportunity to complete.

They say time heals all wounds, but some wounds are too deep, too profound to ever fully heal. Losing Noah taught me the fragility of life and the devastating consequences of a single, unintentional act.

His absence is a constant reminder to cherish every moment to tell the people I love how much they mean to me, because you never know when your "Goodbye" might be the last.

My hope through all of this is that you will learn: Let the message wait, control your fate.

Seniors

Fast Forward to College By Reagan Loftis



Elisabeth Nicole Granger or better known as “Lizzy G,” is a senior at Walnut Ridge High School. She is 16 years old and her birthday is July 30, 2008. She is the daughter of Abigail Granger and the sister of Adam, Hannah and Uriah. She has three dogs named Princess, Pumpkin and Jax.

Her best friend is Talia Wheat and her favorite teacher is Mrs. Linda Smith because she is “not just a great teacher, she is also a great support system for anything.”

In her 12 years at Walnut Ridge, her most memorable moment was passing her college classes allowing her to graduate early.

Her best advice for underclassmen is “Take high school serious but still have fun and join clubs” and the best advice she has ever received is “Focus on yourself because relationships might fall apart — but you can’t!” by her mom. Her best excuse for being late to class was that she was in the bathroom.

She cannot live without her beauty accessories. Her biggest pet peeve is incompetent boys and the one thing she will miss most after high school is choir. She is involved in TRIO, FBLA, Key Club, Choir and National Honor Society.

Her favorite quote is, “The single most powerful thing I can be is myself” by The Rock. If she could start high school again, she would take more college classes.

Her biggest fear when beginning high school was harder classes and keeping her grades up; now, her biggest fear upon leaving high school is college debt.

After graduation, she is looking forward to going to college. She plans to get her bachelor’s degree, then go to law school and eventually becoming a criminal lawyer.

Her unpopular opinion is, “Sugar coating things is overrated,” and she’s not talking about sweets.

Elisabeth’s Favorites:

App – TikTok
Pizza Topping – Cheese
Class – Choir
Drink – Diet Dr. Pepper
Band – Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons
Entertainer – Matt Rife
Store – Burlington
T.V. Show – *Friends*
Food – Alfredo
Random Fact –
Youngest girl in senior class
Celebrity Crush – The Rock
Red Flag – Not liking The Rock
Song – *What Was I Made For?*
Restaurant – Chili’s
Ice Cream – Sherbet
Biggest Ick – Gym Bros
Deal Breaker – Mommy’s Boy

I Scream, You Scream, We all Scream for Mallie Jean!!! By Marley Coleman



Mallie Anne Jean, daughter of Adam Jean and Jennifer Jean, was born January 19, 2007. Mallie is the little sister of Maddox Jean, 19, and Darren Tribble. She has three best friends, Jadyn Clark, Karlee Broadway and Layla Nunally. Mallie has attended Walnut Ridge since Pre-school.

Mallie has four dogs, Dooter, Bella, Waylon and Gus. Her favorite teachers are Mrs. Rob and Mr. Haynes. Her advice for underclassmen is to take Rob’s senior year. Mallie’s most embarrassing moment was getting ISS during

her freshman year. Something she can’t live without is her bestie, Jadyn.

Mallie’s biggest pet peeve is Jagger Brogdon. Her club involvement includes Key Club, FBLA, volleyball and softball. Her favorite quote is “Be kind to the world and the world and the world will be kind to you” - Collin Andrews.

If Mallie could start high school, she would try harder during her freshman year. Her biggest fear going into high school was Mrs. Rob. Her biggest fear upon leaving high school is failing.

Mallie’s Favorites:

App – TikTok
Pizza Topping – Pineapple
Movie – *The Hangover*
Class – Coach V’s
Drink – Dr. Pepper
Store – Target
Ice Cream –
Mint Chocolate Chip
Deal Breaker –
Rapping on SoundCloud
Celebrity crush – Tom Holland
Red Flag – People who think they are too cool to be nice

Annual Talent Show SHINE LIKE A STAR

Thursday, March 20 @9 am
WRHS Community Center

\$2 per student
\$5 per community member

Fe Fi Fo Fum – What Beanstalk did You Come From? By Kendy Jackson



Collin Patrick Andrews is 18 years old; his birthday is January 4. His parents are Jenny and Aaron Andrews; he also has a 20-year-old brother named Mason. Collin's nickname is Co. His best friends are Sarah McGuire, Johnathan Hughes, Caleb Roark and Jersey Cunningham. He has attended Walnut Ridge since Pre-K.

Coach Ward is his favorite teacher because, "he is the best!" Collin's most memorable moment in school was anything that happened in the student section.

His advice for underclassmen is: "Work hard, trust the process, nobody cares about your excuses and work harder." He never needed an excuse for being late be-

cause he is never late.

The things he can't live without are air, oxygen and Diet Coke. The social aspect of high school and sports are what he will miss most about high school. His biggest pet peeve is people who always want to argue.

He is involved in basketball, football, track and field, Future Business Leaders of America and Key Club. His favorite quote is "God did" by DJ Khalid. The best advice he ever received was from his dad, who said, "Keep your gratitude higher than your expectations."

If Collin could start high school over again, he would try harder - in both his classes and athletics. He had no concerns entering high school, but his biggest fear upon leaving high school is losing touch with his friends.

After graduation, he looks forward to taking a summer break and his plans for college are going to play football and getting a physical education degree. An unpopular opinion for Collin is that you can wear crocs for any occasion.

Collin's Favorites:

Movie – *The Green Mile*
Class – Chemistry
Drink – Diet Coke with easy ice
Entertainer – LeBron James
T.V. Show – *Young Rock*
Song – *Burn, Burn, Burn* by Zach Bryan
Ice Cream – Cookie Dough

Ready to Run with the Big Dawgs By TJ Owens

Caleb Brady Roark (also known as Ropup) is a senior at WRHS; he has attended WR for 12 years. He is involved in FBLA, National Honor Society and basketball. He is 18 years old, and his birthday is August 22, 2006.

His parents are Jennifer and Phillip Roark of Walnut Ridge. He has an older brother, Noah, 21.

Caleb's best friends are Collin Andrews, Kyle Slusser, Jax Doyle, TJ Owens, Ellis Thomas, Trevor Augustine and Jersey Cunningham.

Caleb's favorite teacher is Mrs. Mary Smith because, "She's just the best." His biggest fear of going into high school was his brother, who was a senior at the time.

Caleb says that the thing he is most ready for after he graduates is getting a job. The biggest fear he has upon leaving high school, well, Caleb says he doesn't have one.



Caleb's Favorites:

App – TikTok
Pizza topping – Sausage
Class – Mrs. Rob
Drink – Dr. Pepper
Store – DNW
T.V. Show – *Land Man*
Food – Mexican
Ice Cream – Chocolate

Caleb's best excuse for being late was blaming it on a train. The one thing he cannot live without is his phone. His biggest pet peeve is doing work in class.

Ropup's unpopular opinion is "ketchup goes on spaghetti." His favorite quote is, "Women are the devil" by Mrs. Boucher. The one thing he would've done differently in high school was play golf.

Spring Break:

Friday, March 21 through

Friday, March 28

Return to school on Monday, March 31



Happy Valentine's Day From Paws



Love is in the Air By Dakota Riggs

Valentine's Day is known for cards, love and chocolate. Yet, its history is not exactly filled with these staples. In fact, historians do not have a clear view of its full history, although there are a couple of different ideas of where it came from.

Cupid, the iconic mascot of the lover's holiday, is the Greek god Eros, also known as the god of love. Eros was a handsome immortal who played with the emotions of both gods and mortals by using golden arrows. During the Hellenistic period, he was portrayed as a chubby cherub (baby) in a diaper.

Many believe the holiday originated with the Feast of Saint Valentine, honoring one of the early Christian martyrs, called Saint Valentine. It wasn't until centuries later when traditions shifted making it more of a celebration of romance and love.

Other historians believe Valentine's Day commemorates the death or burial of Saint Valentine, around 270 A.D. At the end of the fifth century, Pope Gelasius declared February 14 St. Valentine's Day.

During the Middle Ages, it became associated with love and compassion, because in France and England early February is birds' mating season, hence the term "love birds."

Who is Your Valentine? By Kendy Jackson

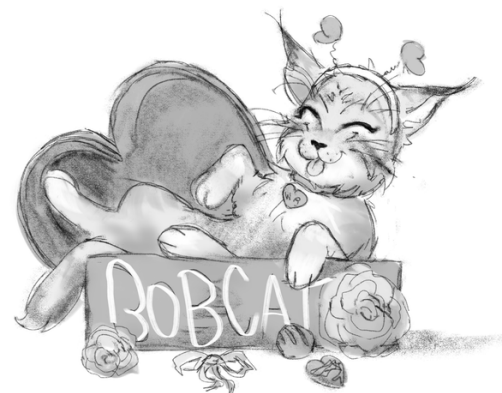
Makenzie Milton – Kale Searcy
Maddie Milton – Lyla Woods
Breanna Gibson – Dakota Timms
Candace Morgan – Cristian Gonzalez
Sarah McGuire – Collin Andrews
Layla Nunally – River Davis
Mrs. Mary – Denny Smith
Izzy Smith – Robert Dettman
Troy Owens – Caleb Roark
Aubrey Monroe – Samantha Diehm
Carlie Priest – River Hancock
Jaxson Nunally – Mackenzie Raymon

What's your Favorite Sweet Treat? By Marley Coleman

Corbin Gilliams – Any and All!!
Paris Goodman – Twin Snakes
Charlie Tribble – Baskin Rob-
ins' Peach Cobbler Ice Cream
Trevor Augustine – Lindor Dark
Chocolate
Haylen Moore – Laffy Taffy
Cash Baker – Ice cream
Hayden Black –
Caramel M&M's
Jaslene Gargia –
Skittles and KitKats
Henley Black –
Albanese Gummy Bears
Sadie Holland -
McDonald's Cookies
Meg Mullen – Twizzlers
Skylar Cagle – Reece's

Describe Valentine's Day in One Word By Emerson Callahan

Riley Richey- Stupid
Brice Bullard - Goofy
Riley Martin- Silly
Lucas Light- Heart
Jersie Cunningham- Love
Jack Thomas- Sweet
Ellis Thomas- Aura
Drake Smith - Eventful
TJ Owens- Overrated
Candace Morgan - Fun
Irissa Bounds- Love
Katherine Skinner- Romantic
Audrey Girard - Lovely
Marley Coleman - Sweet
Corbin Guilliams - Expensive



Be Kind Like Carlos

By Reagan Loftis



Carlos J. Aguilar is the 18-year old son of Betty Aguilar and Carlos Aguilar. His birthday is October 9, 2006. He has two brothers, Cameron and Cristo Aguilar. His best friend is Trevor Thompson.

He has attended Walnut Ridge since kindergarten, and he has no favorite teacher because he likes them all and enjoys being around each of them.

His most memorable moment in high school was being voted by his classmates as having the Best Attitude.

His advice to younger students

would be, "Never give up and always work hard." His go-to excuse for being late was he was caught by a train.

He cannot live without his phone. His biggest pet peeve is when people smack their gum and pop bubbles. He will miss his teachers most after high school.

If he could start high school again, he would want school subjects to be easier.

Carlos' Favorites:

App – TikTok
Pizza Topping – Pepperoni
Class – Mrs. Milton's
Drink – Sweet Tea
Food – Cheeseburger
Red Flag –
Getting in trouble a lot
Restaurant –
Cheesecake Factory
Ice Cream – Red Velvet

Trevor's Endeavor

By Samantha Diehm



William Trevor Thompson was born October 18, 2006, to Jennifer Nance and Billy Thompson. His nicknames are Big T and Willy, but he is known as Trevor. He is the younger brother of Tyler, 32, Courtney, 31, Caitlin, 26, and Natalie, 21. His best friends are Carlos Aguilar and Kaylee Slagley.

He has attended Walnut Ridge since 10th grade. His favor-

Trevor's Favorites:

App – Facebook Marketplace
Pizza Topping – Pepperoni
Movie – *Happy Gilmore*
Class – Mo's
Drink – Sweet Tea
Band – Treaty Oak Revival
Store – Harbor Freight
T.V. Show – *Young Sheldon*
Food – Steak
Song – *Mr. Weatherman*
Ice Cream – Chocolate
Restaurant – Longhorn
Steakhouse

ite teacher is Mrs. Trish and his best excuse for being late is to blame a train or a stoplight.

Trevor's favorite part of school is welding; he cannot live without it. He plans to go straight to work after graduation, with hopes of becoming a welder. He looks forward to starting work after high school is over.

His advice for underclassmen is "Don't be stupid, or cocky, and take it seriously."

Takin the Tahoe to Town

By TJ Owens



Riley Jason Henry, a senior at WRHS, is the son of Jason Henry and Jennifer Lewis. He has attended Walnut Ridge Schools for 12 years. His best friends are Jeffery Whitlow and Britten Whitlow.

The one thing that Riley can't live without is his vehicle, "The Tahoe." His biggest pet peeve is when people talk badly about the Tahoe.

His biggest fear coming into high school was Mrs. Rob's class. The thing Riley is looking forward to after high school is "simply working."

His plans after high school are going to pipe welding school and working on the farm. His unpopular opinion is, "I'd rather drive the Tahoe than basic looking vehicles that blend in with traffic."

Riley's favorite form of entertainment is working on the Tahoe. Riley works part-time at Walmart and he is a member of FFA.

Riley's Favorites:

Class – Advanced Mechanics
Store – Walmart
Drink – Root Beer
Food – Steak
Entertainment –
Working on the Tahoe

Seniors

Just Another River Rat

By Irissa Bounds

Jaxton Eli Doyle is 17 years old and was born on April 14. He is the son of Susan Doyle and Terry Doyle. Jaxton has an older brother, Garrison, who is 21, and a cat named Jasper. Jax's best friends are Kyle Slusser, River Davis, Caleb Roark and Emerson Callahan.

He has attended Walnut Ridge since pre-school and his favorite teacher is Mr. Rice because he gets to "make cool stuff in his class." His best excuse for being late to class is, "I was in the AG shop and didn't hear the bell."

Jaxton's advice for underclassmen is, "Just do enough work to pass." One thing Jaxton cannot live without is his boat, which is also where you will find him during his free time.

His biggest pet peeve is when someone has their volume all the way up. One thing Jaxton will miss about high school is seeing his friends every day. Jaxton is a member of FFA and if he could start high school again, he would "enjoy it more and have more fun."

Jaxton's biggest fear going into high school was "having Mr. Ford." After graduation, he is looking forward to making money. Jaxton's nickname is "Jax" and his unpopular opinion is "Pineapple on pizza is good."

Jax's Favorites:

App – TikTok
Class – AG
Drink – Pepsi
Band – Eagles
Store – Mack's Prairie Wings
T.V. Show – *Dexter*
Food – Steak
Song – *Teenage Dream* by Katy Perry
Restaurant – Zaxby's



Matt Matt's Final Year

By Audrey Girard

Matthew Todd Hampton was born on October 28, 2006. His nickname is Matt Matt and his parents' names are Chrystal and David. His siblings are Joseph who is 18, Amelia who is 14, and Elijah who is 4. He has a dog named Gidget and his best friend is Weston Arnett. Matthew has attended Walnut Ridge for 10 years and his favorite teachers are Mrs. Leslie and Mrs. Malissa. His most memorable moment in school was when he made

his cardboard boom box.

The advice he would give to underclassmen is "treat people with respect" and his greatest excuse for being late to class was that his dog ate his homework. One thing he can't live without is his family and his biggest pet peeve is when people make a mess and don't clean it up. The thing he will miss the most about high school is making Christmas ornaments with Mrs. Malessie.

Matthew is not in any clubs. His favorite quote is "Every accomplishment starts with the decision to try" by Brian Littrev.

The best advice he had ever received was "Always try your best" He says he wouldn't change anything if he got to redo high school. Matthew didn't have any fears going into high school. He is looking forward to working on Twitch streaming.

Matt Matt's Favorites:

Pizza topping – Pepperoni
Class – Math
Drink – Coke
Band – Micheal Jackson
T.V. Show – *Transformers*
Random Fact – He has a twin brother named Joseph Hampton
Song – *Billie Jean*
Food – Pizza
Restaurant – Chinese
Ice Cream – Vanilla



Amelia is Ready to Graduate

By Skylar Cagle

Amelia Madison Vaughn, or you may know her as Maddie, is a senior at WRHS. She was welcomed into this world on March 21, 2007 by her parents, Britney and Anthony Vaughn. Her siblings are Carlee, Gabe, Landon and Olivia. Her best friends are Jersey and Riley.

She has attended Walnut Ridge

for three years and her favorite teacher is Mr. Ford because he is kind. Amelia's advice for underclassmen is "Reach your goals." One thing Amelia cannot live without is her cat, Lily. Her biggest pet peeve is people looking at her weirdly.

Amelia will miss her friends most when she graduates, and if she could start high school over, she would listen more to the teachers' advice. Her biggest fear when entering high school was not having friends. She looks forward to going to work after school.

Amelia's Favorites:

Pizza topping – Olives
Movie – *Happy Death Day*
Class – EAST
Drink – Pepsi
Band – Slip Knot
T.V. Show – *Family Guy*



Double the Trouble, Double the Fun

By Jaysey Grooms

Jack and Ellis Thomas are the 16-year-old twin sons of Amanda Tiece and Brandon Thomas and brothers to Mari. They were born December 19, 2008.

They both play basketball and baseball for the Bobcats. Jack is slightly taller than his brother.

Jack's says his dad was a big influence when he started playing baseball; his mom and older brothers were the reasons he picked up a basketball. Ellis followed in his older brother's footsteps started playing both sports because of them.

Ellis' college plan is uncertain, but he would love to continue to play ball in college. Jack wants to go to University of Arkansas to study sports science.

For Jack, what best prepared him to succeed is his dedication to sports, and for Ellis his dedication to basketball is what makes him succeed

Ellis' advice for young athletes is, "You miss 100% of the shots you don't take." Jack's advice is, "Have fun and always do your best."

Jack's loves "Winning and getting to play with friends." His biggest sports accomplishment is winning state championship with his in travel baseball team. Ellis' favorite memory is winning the Lawrence County tournament last year.

Jack's keys to success are his friends, family and God. For Ellis, it's "practice makes perfect."

The professional athlete Ellis admires is Kyrie Irving; Jack's is Steph Curry. Jack draws inspiration from his family and Curry; Ellis' inspiration comes from his brother, Mari.

The best advise Jack recalls receiving was, "They make sidewalks for a reason — the streets aren't for everyone." These are the wise words of Asher Johnson, a fellow WRHS sophomore.

Ellis lives by the motto, "What's it from? It's from the heart." Jack turns to Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me."

Growing up, the WR athlete they both looked up to is Mari Thomas, their brother. The two things on Jack's bucket list are going to the new Chase Center in San Francisco, the home of the Golden State Warriors to watch them play, and playing baseball in college.



Super Bowl LIX

By TJ Owens

Super Bowl 2025 will be an electrifying event that will captivate millions around the globe. It will be held at the Caesar's Superdome -- home of the Saints -- in New Orleans on February 9. Kickoff is set for 7:30 p.m. CT. It will air on FOX.

The atmosphere will be charged with excitement as fans from all corners of the country gather to witness the clash between the Philadelphia Eagles and the Kansas City Chiefs.

The *Apple Music Super Bowl LIX Halftime Show* is sure to bring another show-stopping performance, keeping the audience entertained and on their feet. The famous rapper Kendrick Lamar with guest SZA will perform during the halftime show.

The Eagles took on the Washington Commanders in the NFL, NFC championship game. The Eagles pulled off a huge win with the final score of 55-23. While the NFC was more of a blowout game, the AFC championship was nothing short of a nail-biter.

The Chiefs played Josh Allen and the Buffalo Bills. The Chiefs won the divisional rivalry 32-29. For the second time in three years, the Eagles will take on the Chiefs in an intense battle to see who's on the top of the NFL world.

Players of the Week

By TJ Owens and Mallory Moore

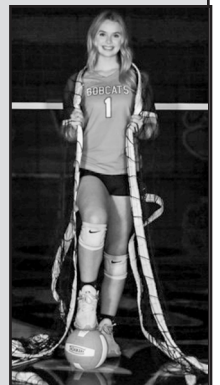


Enrique Perez:

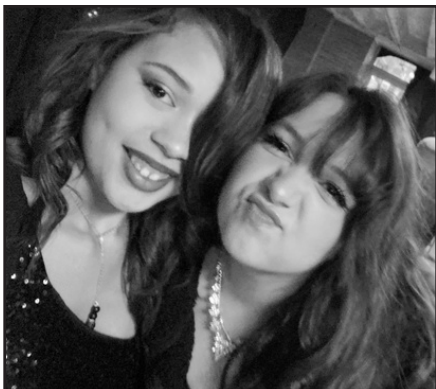
What's your favorite sport? - Football
What's your favorite position to play? - Wing
What's your favorite drill? - Cone Drill
Who's your favorite coach? - Jason Ward
Describe your pregame ritual – Listen to music and vibe
Least favorite bus trip? - Osceola
Favorite sports memory? - "When I took it back about 60 yards against Newport. I really wish y'all could see the video!"

Mallie Jean:

What's your favorite sport? – Volleyball
What's your favorite position to play? – Middle
What's your favorite drill? – 5 Kill Drill
Who's your favorite coach? – Coach Moore
Describe your pre-game ritual? – Me and Jadyn taking the sophomores to Casey's
Least favorite bus trip? – Central West Helena
Favorite sports memory – Watching Karlee hit Jadyn in the face with a ball in practice



Winterball



Bobcat Bio: TJ Owens

By Haylen Moore



Grade – Junior
Clubs – Baseball, Basketball, and Football
BFFs – Collin, Caleb, Riley, Jessie, Kadem, Brogan, Jace, Brice, or any of my teammates.
Favorite Teacher – Mr. Price
Favorite Quote – “If you need me... don’t call”
Pet Peeve – Being disrespectful
Favorite TV show – *M.A.S.H*
Your red flags – Will ghost you
Immediate ick – Ketchup
“Go to” restaurant order – Steak
Random fact about yourself – I’m

a third generation Troy

Last person you texted – Jason Belcher

Favorite fast food – Taco Bell or Subway

What would you choose for your last meal – Seafood boil

Freshman Flop – Dating my ex

Bobcat Bio: Layla Nunally

By Haylen Moore



Grade – Senior
Club involvement – FLBA, Key Club, Art Club
BFFs – Mallie Jean, Jayden Clark and Kendy Jackson
Favorite teacher – Mrs. Rob
Pet peeve – People who don’t act their age
Guilty pleasure – Coffee
Last person you texted – River Davis
Favorite fast food – Taco Bell
What would you choose for your last meal – Steak and Potatoes

Bobcat Bio: Sadie Holland

By Skylar Cagle



Grade – Sophomore
Clubs – Choir, Art Club, Key Club
BFFs – Skylar Cagle, Jasmine Jackson and Jozlynn Ramirez
Favorite Teacher/Class – Jamie Farrar/Art
Describe yourself in three words – Audacious, chucklesome, artistic
Pet Peeve – Slow walker, and when Skylar has the volume on her phone all the way up
Favorite Movie – *Dumplin’*
Guilty Pleasure – Speeding
Most awkward moment – Waved at

someone who was waving at the person behind me

Red flags – Stubborn, cannot spell, argumentative, “always right”

Immediate “ick” – Bad Hygiene

“Go to” order at a restaurant – Chicken strips

Random Fact – Ambidextrous

Last person you texted – Skylar

Favorite Fast Food – McDonald’s

Job – Babysitting

What would you choose as your last meal – Gigi’s mac n’ cheese and chicken

Bobcat Bio: Jaslene Garcia

By Skylar Cagle



Grade – Freshman
Clubs – FBLA, Choir and Alleycats dance team
BFFs – Holli, Hayden, Henley, Alivia, Marley, Samantha, Aubrey, Ashlynn and Langley
Favorite Teacher/Class – Mr. Haynes/Geometry
Describe yourself in three words – Hard-working, bubbly, loud
Pet Peeve – Slow Walkers
Last person you texted – Holli
Favorite Fast Food – Chick-Fil-A

CHOIR

A Night on Broadway By Samantha Diehm

On February 3rd, Walnut Ridge Choir presented *A Night on Broadway*! This was a concert filled with 22 Broadway songs. The night was filled with fun, laughter, and dance.

Each choir member worked hard to learn a specific song. Some students were ready and performed on Monday night while others fell ill or simply could not attend.

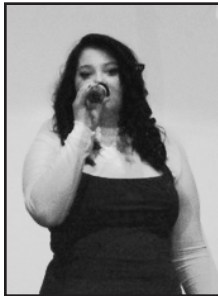
All soloists and groups did amazing jobs and we are so proud of our musical Bobcats.



Sadie Holland and Skylar Cagle in
The End of The Line



Talía Wheat in *No Good Deed*



Elisabeth Granger in
The Anonymous Ones



Madilyn Swaffar in *Do-Re-Mi*



Aubrey Monroe in
Defying Gravity



Kaylee Slagley in
The Wizard and I



Ashtyn Bradley in
Never Enough



Jaslène Garcia in
Pulled



Dylan Colburn in
Epiphany



Kaylianna Mondragon in
Once Upon a December



Samantha Diehm and
Aubrey Monroe in *Popular*



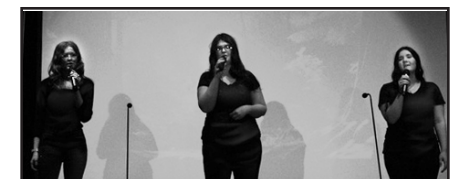
Tuesday Johnson in
I Can't Stand Still



Skylar Cagle, Hayden Black and
Henley Black in *Meet the Plastics*



Skylar Cagle and Haylen Moore
in *What is This Feeling?*



Jasmine Jackson, Sadie Holland
and Gabriel Pritchett in
I'm Not That Girl



Elisabeth Granger and Samantha Diehm attended the *UCA Arkansas Small Schools Honors Choir* on February 1



Kitty Camp, an Alleycat activity, was held February 1



Karlee Broadway signed with Central Baptist College for Softball season 2025-2026!

Career Corner By Samantha Diehm

Career Coach

Ms. Samantha Mitchell
How can she help?

- Career Planning
- Academic Planning
- College Planning
- Financial Aid Assistance
- Work Based Learning
- Apprenticeships

Contact:

Samantha.mitchell@bobcats.
k12.ar.us

Samantha.mitchell@blackri-
vertech.edu



Important Dates:

- FASFA Night - BRTC Pocahontas
February 18 @ 4:30 in Admin Building, Room 150
- Craighead Electric Lineman Scholarship Essay
due on February 28
- BRTC Foundation & Private Scholarship Application
due March 1
- TRIO Meeting
Monday February 24
4th Period Seniors 5th Period- 9-11th Grades
- BRTC Annual College Signing Day
May 3 @ 10:00



River Hancock signed with Bethany College in Kansas for football season 2025-2026!

Collin Andrews signed with Southern Arkansas University for football season 2025-2026!



Remember When...

By Audrey Girard

...When Pizza Hut used to be a sit-down restaurant
...When McDonald's was by Tractor Supply
...When we took naps in elementary school
...When Mrs. Essman was still the music teacher
...When we went on field trips to the zoo
...When Wal-Mart had a Subway inside.
...When they didn't ask for a mobile order or if you were using the app in drive throughs.
...the very distinct smell when you walked through the kindergarten hall.
...When the 4 for \$5 at McDonald's was 4 for \$4.
... When we made Valentine boxes in elementary and everyone gave everyone a valentine?

CEO Murder and Manhunt

By Breanna Gibson

Brian Thompson, the CEO of the American health insurance company, UnitedHealthcare, was shot and killed in Manhattan, New York City, on December 4, 2024. The shooting occurred early in the morning outside the New York Hilton Midtown. Thompson was in the city to attend an annual investors' meeting for UnitedHealth Group, the parent company of UnitedHealthcare.

The shooter remained unidentified for days as he consistently wore a facemask and hoodie in every image as his steps were followed on security cameras located throughout NYC. Finally, as days turned to weeks, he let his guard down. He revealed his face to a girl and suddenly, he created a fan following from his surprisingly good looks.

Withing days of his image being released to the public, an alert employee at a Pennsylvania McDonald's called in the tip, leading investigators his location where he was arrested.

For several days, law enforcement from multiple agencies conducted a manhunt for this unknown shooter who was later identified as Luigi Mangione.

Prior to his death, Thompson faced criticism for the company's rejection of insurance claims causing lots of disruption. His family reported that he had received death threats in the past. This time someone followed through and executed Brian Thompson.

Mangione, was found in Altoona, Pennsylvania, is accused of first degree murder, murder in furtherance of terrorism, criminal possession of a weapon and stalking.

His next court date is mid-February.

Mystery Students Reveal



Maddy Luster



Riley Loftis

Searching for Love

E S E F C E D E E R E T D F K
Y R K L R I T E O A B N E E L
M E N I M E B S E C N A M O R
C T T R S O E T K W P T E I K
R T E T A S A R V R T T H L A
V E E E O L T D N C U P I D E
E L D O O I R E F O R E V E R
S E E C E E S W D T S E A R B
C L O A S R T B S D O K E D T
A H I R Y T A R Y E Y F I Y R
C N L E S E L V F E A B I D A
E N I F A O Y W K L T T E N E
O E S O V F E B R U A R Y A H
D E D E N I T N E L A V L C R
E E V F S W E E T H E A R T E

Kiss	Be Mine	Valentine	Flirt
Roses	February	Romance	Chocolate
Love	Letters	Teddy Bear	Heartbreak
Candy	Cupid	Sweetheart	Forever