

# The Wildcat Chronicles

Durant High School

May 20, 2021

## Class of 2021 to graduate under the lights

By Zachary Pearlman

For the second year in a row, graduation will be on the football field.

Saturday at 8 p.m. is the last time the Class of 2021 sets foot on school grounds as students.

Durant High School Principal Joel Diederichs said last year's ceremony was also held outside due to COVID-19.

However, he said the school "had a huge return from the town saying that they enjoyed being outside. We took in their advice and their input, and we decided to put it outside again."

Mr. Diederichs said that if a storm

happens around the ceremony, the date will be pushed back to Sunday at 1 p.m.

If there is also a storm on Sunday, the ceremony will be moved inside.

Senior Emily Fargo likes that the ceremony is on the football field.

"Being out in nature is pretty nice, and then it is less confined with COVID," said Fargo.

Senior Aaron Schwarz said he likes that the ceremony is outside as well.

"With the nice weather that is going to be going on, I prefer it to be outside," he said.

The order of events for the ceremo-

ny will follow the normal process and should last between 45 minutes and 60 minutes, according to Mr. Diederichs

The graduating students will walk in and take their seats. Selected seniors will give different speeches.

Mr. Diederichs will give an address to the students and hand out the diplomas.

Last year, the ceremony was held on the football field in July due to COVID-19. Mr. Diederichs said he was "very glad" to get the ceremony in after it had to be postponed in May.

"In a unique year, it gave us a chance to have somewhat of a normal clo-

sure to the year," said Mr. Diederichs.

"I mean when you think about it, when the students weren't back on campus on March 20, when the pandemic started, it gave us the chance to close out the year for the seniors."

Though this is the second year in a row that Durant has had the graduation ceremony on the football field, this isn't a permanent location.

"We evaluate that on a yearly basis," Mr. Diederichs said. "If we still continue to get positive feedback from it, then I believe that it could be continued, but we evaluate that on a yearly basis."

## Survey polls senior class

By Nicole Brown

As graduation is right around the corner, many seniors are asking themselves, "I'm about to walk across the stage to receive my diploma. What is my next move?"

*The Wildcat Chronicles* surveyed the Durant High School senior class of 43 students and got 26 responses. Out of those 26 seniors, 23 students, almost 90 percent, plan to attend college next fall. Two students are taking a gap year, and one is attending a trade school.

After deciding if they want to attend college in the fall, seniors have to decide what college they want to continue their education at.

Seven students, almost 30 percent of Wildcat seniors surveyed, said they plan to attend a private college, and six students, or 25 percent, reported planning to attend Eastern Iowa Community Colleges. Three students each will be attending Iowa State University, the University of Iowa, and the University of Northern Iowa. Two students said they will be attending a college out of state.

Students will also be quickly faced with the cost of continuing their education. Thirteen of the students said they will be paying between \$10,000 and \$20,000 annually.

Five students said they will pay between \$20,000 and \$30,000 each year. Two students reported paying \$30,000 to \$40,000 annually, and two more reported paying \$40,000 to \$50,000 each year.

Three students said their post-sec-

ondary costs will be under \$10,000 annually.

Senior Tony Dillabough wants to avoid college debt, so he will be attending trade school. Dillabough eventually plans to join the union and become an electrician.

Once they choose their college and prepare for the cost, seniors have yet another choice to make. What do they want to choose for their major?

Eight students, around 30 percent of respondents, said they plan to focus on the medical field. Four students each plan to pursue careers in education, business, and STEM.

Wildcat quarterback Keagen Head plans to attend Wartburg College and double major in engineering and mathematics. While at Wartburg, he will also be continuing his football career.

Senior Brian Graves is going to Iowa State University to major in Agriculture. Kaylee Behrensmeyer will be attending Kirkwood Community College to major in exercise science. One senior, Logan Clasen, is not sure what he will be doing after graduation and is just trying to take it one step at a time.

Although senior Aydin Flockhart missed taking the survey, it's likely the survey could not have anticipated his career path anyway. Flockhart said he wants to become a zoo keeper. He is going to travel and find a zoo that wants to take him in and train him.

Flockhart also loves snakes and wants to become a snake charmer in the future while "perfecting his skills."

## Medical field attracts largest number of graduating seniors

By Kiley Stineman

Eight of the 26 seniors who took a *Wildcat Chronicles* survey are planning on pursuing careers in the medical field.

Senior Belle Rockow will spend a whopping 12 years majoring in either biochemistry or double majoring in biology and chemistry to reach her goal of becoming an anesthesiologist.

"I've always wanted to work in this field because I love working with people, and I'm very interested in the concepts behind how things work in the body," said Rockow.

By choosing these different majors, she hopes to stand out among other medical student applicants. Other seniors including Justine Badtram, Abigail Rhoades, and Rayne Mangels, will spend six to eight years

in their chosen fields.

A future forensic pathologist, Badtram watched enough crime shows as a child to envision it as her future career.

"It just piqued my interest because on the shows it was a different story and a different puzzle everyday," said Badtram.

Rhoades's own experiences as an athlete have inspired her to pursue a career in physical therapy.

"I went to physical therapy for my own injury from sports, and that's when I decided I wanted to be a sports medicine physical therapist," said Rhoades.

Mangels initially planned on a career in physical therapy as well, but after researching it more, she discovered kinesiology.

See MEDICAL, page 3



Photo contributed by Mr. Jeff Trask

*The Wildcat Chronicles* staff includes (top row) Zachary Pearlman, Carlie Jo Fusco, Sofia Reyna, Brock Jones, Kiley Stineman, Shannon Head, Ally Happ, Madison Weber, Steve Sands, (bottom row) Luke Abels, Nicole Brown, Keagen Head, Timothy Junis, and Koby Paulsen.

## Staff wins 23 contest awards

By Brock Jones

*The Wildcat Chronicles* is one of five finalists for the news team of the year for small-class high school newspapers in Iowa.

Unknown to many is that the newspaper competes in a yearly journalism contest hosted by the Iowa High School Press Association. The purpose of the contest is to encourage friendly competition among high school journalists as well as to commend those that go above and beyond the competition and write truly interesting or thought-provoking articles.

*The Wildcat Chronicles* submitted three of their best issues to be judged against the other finalists from across the state in the nine-school class A division. Results will be announced in October.

"I take so much pride in the professionalism of my reporters," said journalism advisor Steve Sands. "It's nice to be recognized with awards, but I know their number one priority is keeping our student body informed. That's the true mark of a good staff."

Last year, in the first year of *The Wildcat Chronicles*, the staff collected a total of six individual awards in the contest. The second year, however, has been far more productive with staff members receiving 23 awards from various categories.

In fact, junior Ally Happ, a sports reporter for *The Wildcat Chronicles*, totaled six awards alone. She achieved a complete sweep of the Sports Story category, receiving the first, second, and third-place awards, along with third place in the In-Depth Sports Story category and a shared honorable mention with senior Keagen Head in the same category

Finally, she also received an honorable mention in the In-Depth News Story category.

Happ said that she doesn't have a particular favorite award she received, and

that she's enjoyed writing them all. She plans to continue writing for the sports section next year.

Head and junior Kiley Stineman pulled in four awards each with Head taking third place in the Staff Editorial category and Stineman snagging first place in Social Justice Reporting and two third-place awards in the Newspaper Page Design and Personality Profiles categories.

Head, the newspaper editor, said that he was most proud of his third-place award in the Staff Editorial category for an article about the death of a Wildcat football player's uncle on game day.

"It was a tragic story, and I'm glad that I got the opportunity to convey it."

Head also said that he has learned a lot in his time in *The Wildcat Chronicles* and while he's not currently planning on continuing his career in journalism, he may consider it at a future date.

"It definitely wasn't my intention [to continue] when I first joined," he said. "I've actually really enjoyed it though, and I'll definitely think about it at a later date."

Sophomore Zachary Pearlman achieved three awards with a first and third place in the General News Story category and a second place in the Newspaper Page Design. Sophomore sports writer Carlie Jo Fusco also got three awards, including a coveted first place in the In-Depth Sports Story category. Senior Nicole Brown received a second-place award in the In-Depth News Story category. Junior Brock Jones and senior Timothy Junis both received honorable mentions in the Personality Profile and Covid-19 Coverage categories respectively. Senior Luke Abels received an honorable mention in the Feature Photo category

Juniors Madison Weber and Shannon Head, business managers, received an honorable mention in the ad category.