

## Could AI change the classroom?

By Kylee Hahn

Artificial intelligence (AI), through ChatGPT, has made its entrance into Durant High School, and one general education consultant from the Mississippi Bend AEA says teachers must embrace its possibilities.

Mr. Aaron Maurer, who serves as the STEM lead at the AEA, says there are three major iterations of ChatGPT, the current version being ChatGPT-4.

"ChatGPT-4 has demonstrated remarkable advancements in the AI's ability to understand nuanced requests and provide relevant sophisticated responses," said Mr. Maurer.

Initially teachers expressed concerns towards AI, with the main one being cheating on assignments. However, as the teachers themselves used the tools AI offers, they soon realized the benefits it has, Mr. Maurer said.

"This shift is crucial; without it, we risk creating a culture of distrust, where students feel undervalued and teachers may underestimate their students' capabilities," said Mr. Maurer, who relayed a story he had heard at a conference where two college stu-

dents were accused of cheating with AI, but it was determined they did not cheat.

Mr. Maurer remembered the words a professor said in the conference about the incident.

"If we are going to spend energy and time trying to bust kids cheating, what is our gain in this?" said the professor. "The minute we accuse students of cheating, we no longer have a cheating issue. We now have a broken-down learning culture space where trust is violated."

One of the three high school English teachers at Durant, Mrs. Cathy Pearlman, said she has encountered students using AI to plagiarize assignments in her classes about seven times in the past year.

"It was bad during the fourth quarter last year and again during the first quarter this year," said Mrs. Pearlman.

Mrs. Pearlman addresses the issue by following the Durant Community School District handbook.

Mrs. Pearlman sends emails home and alerts administrators when she finds use of plagiarized AI assignments in her classroom. She gives students 24 hours to write

on a new topic, and students can only earn a maximum of 60 percent of the original grade.

Mrs. Pearlman helps students prepare for an essay, so they don't feel like they have to use AI.

"We talk about paraphrasing and use outlines in class discussion, so students know key details and where to find textual evidence," said Mrs. Pearlman.

Mr. Maurer believes that AI will alter the traditional English essay but not make it obsolete.

"Instead, it will likely lead to an evolution of the essay format which is quite honestly way overdue so thank you, AI," he said.

"As AI encourages reflection on educational practices, it may prompt a shift towards assignments that better reflect the analytical and creative skills needed in contemporary society."

Mr. Maurer said this could include hybrid assignments that integrate AI into the drafting process, while still emphasizing the student's original thought.

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## 3 seniors enter growing electrical field

By Katelynn Toft

As the demand for industrial power grows higher, those who are in charge of supplying it are needed even more.

Three Durant seniors are chasing that trend.

Mason Badtram, Ryan Wulf, and Grady Claussen have plans to become electrical linemen after they graduate this May.

New technologies like artificial intelligence, combined with existing technology, eat up more gigawatts of power now than ever seen before, according to Durant shop teacher Mr. Tim Rouse.

"AI systems take an enormous amount of power to run," said Mr. Rouse. "While we are just starting to use AI more, the enormous need for power is already being seen."

According to a March article in *The Washington Post*, AI is "also part of a huge scale-up of cloud computing. Tech firms like Amazon, Apple, Google, Meta, and Microsoft are scouring the nation for sites for new data centers, and many lesser-known firms are also on the hunt."

To accommodate this energy surge,

the number one priority is additional power plants, Mr. Rouse said.

"We currently are generating a lot of our power from coal burning plants," said Mr. Rouse.

The country is trying to limit the amount of coal and fossil fuels used to generate power, but there are not many other options for sources of power, Mr. Rouse noted.

Along with the increased construction to build the power plants, there is an increased need for linemen who are in charge of repairing and maintaining power lines along with telecommunication cables, according to interviews with the three seniors. They build new lines and get rid of the old ones. They also work with transformers, conductors, voltage regulators, and the switches. There never seems to be a quiet day. They even have to wash the trucks and clean up the gear.

Companies are working hard to make the career of a lineman known and available to students. They say that after training, a job is almost guaranteed, according to Badtram.

"As a whole, the trades are current-

ly where many of the new jobs are coming from," said Mr. Rouse. "The Baby Boomer generation is at the retirement stage in their lives. Many are being asked to stay on working longer because we don't have enough replacements for them."

Mr. Rouse, who guided each of the seniors through his shop classes, said trade jobs are also a cheaper alternative to college.

While college costs around \$21,000 a year, apprenticeships pay you as you learn. You are making money while going to school for a short time.

The three Durant seniors all decided to become electrical linemen, but each of them found the career in different ways.

"I thought about a four-year degree and changed my mind," said Badtram. "I wanted something more hands on, less school, and high pay."

Badtram will be getting his associate's degree in power line technology before going to school to get the training to be an electrical lineman.

Wulf will get an associate's degree for the business side of the linemen field.

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## Sophomore signs NIL deal with local gym

By Josh Peel

A Wildcat football player has received a Name, Image and Likeness (NIL)



Photo contributed by Austin Bowman  
Austin Bowman, owner of Midwest Iron Addicts, has offered an NIL agreement to sophomore Tate Mckinley.

deal from a gym in Walcott, the first of its kind for a Durant athlete.

Sophomore Tate Mckinley goes to Midwest Iron Addicts four to five times a week, and he hopes to play football at the collegiate level.

Mckinley hopes the NIL could get his name out to colleges and other brands. Mckinley must take one to two photos of himself per week, tagging the Midwest Iron Addicts social media account on Instagram.

"I think it's a good thing due to the recognition you could possibly get from colleges, and it could help the brand that gave you the NIL," said Mckinley.

In return for promoting the gym, Mckinley receives nutritional supplements and merchandise. Mckinley did some initial research before accepting the offer.

He checked out the requirements

listed by the Iowa High School Athletic Association (IHSAA).

According to the IHSAA website, a student may earn compensation for using their Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) with these IHSAA requirements.

The NIL can not provide financial incentives based on stats, and it cannot influence the student to attend a particular school. In addition, compensation can't be provided by the student's school or a school agent.

"The student should not promote activities nor products associated with the following: gaming/gambling; alcoholic beverages, tobacco, cannabis, or related products; banned or illegal substances; adult entertainment products or services; or weapons (e.g., firearms)," stated the IHSAA website.

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Junior Wyatt Cole holds a photo of his great-grandfather Elliott Cole.

## Junior has tie to D-Day observance

By Colby Gast

As the 80th anniversary of D-Day approaches on June 6, a Durant junior has a special connection to the momentous invasion.

The great-grandfather of Wyatt Cole, Elliott Cole, came ashore in the second wave of the tide-turning invasion on Omaha Beach, the bloodiest of five beaches that the Allied forces took.

Elliott was only 20 years old when he came in around 7 a.m. to the beach, according to his son Dick Cole, a resident of Fruitland Park, Florida.

In an interview with *The Wildcat Chronicles*, Dick talked about his father's war story, indicating he also fought in the Battle of the Bulge later that same year.

Elliott was born on December 27, 1923. After he graduated from Wilton High School, he entered the military in 1943, soon to be sent off to fight in Europe during World War II.

"He was in the second wave at Omaha," said Dick, "so if you've ever seen the movie *Saving Private Ryan*, when he came in, that's what it would have been like at the beach."

Bill Cole, Elliott's brother, also took part in D-Day coming ashore on Utah Beach.

Dick stated his father wouldn't really talk about his experiences much, but he does recall a time when they were watching the 1962 movie about D-Day, *The Longest Day*, his father pointed out things he remembered.

Elliott was an infantryman when he first came into the Army, but he returned stateside in February 1945 when his mother died. He came back to Europe in April 1945 and joined the 75th Fighter Wing. Then finally in November of 1945, he returned stateside for good.

He later married his wife Jacqueline, who still currently lives in Durant at the age of 96.

Elliott, who passed away in 1979 at the age of 55 due to a heart condition, never got to visit the D-Day cemetery at Normandy, and his son said that is one thing he would have loved to do.

Joining the military is a com-

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