

THE

NORSEMEN NEWS

Big News for FFA!

Between cooking porkchops, ribeyes, and porkburgers to feed hungry students and community members during FFA week, preparing for the annual FFA banquet, and even sharing their FFA experiences with younger kids on Ag Immersion Day, there's not much our NCHS FFA Chapter can't do.

However, recently, members of the Newark FFA chapter have pioneered the cultivation of the school's first bioluminescent plants, which consists of petunia flowers that "glow in the dark." According to NCHS FFA adviser, Mr. Joe Steffen, these petunias were, "genetically engineered from glow-in-the-dark mushrooms" and are currently being housed in the school's greenhouse.

Mr. Steffen also says that the petunias will be the first bioluminescent plants to hit the chapter's market and that "more will be coming".

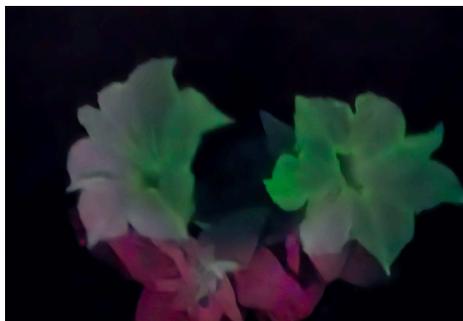
Extraordinary FFA achievements, like bioluminescent plants, are not new to Mr. Steffen, who will be retiring this June after teaching at NCHS for the past thirty three years.

Mr. Steffen and his FFA chapter members recently held their 88th annual banquet, during which senior Toby Steffen, Mr. Steffen's son, delivered an emotional speech to honor his dad, and Mr. Steffen delivered his final banquet address.

If you know Mr. Steffen, you may recall the fond memories of his ag classes or field trips, or you may even recall seeing him drive around town, easily identified by his license plate, "1 WZ OWL". This year, Mr. Steffen was once again honored as a district winner and state finalist for the Illinois Agricultural Education Association's Golden Owl Award for his efforts as a high school Ag teacher. During National FFA Week, Mr. Steffen was presented with a plaque and a check for \$500. From all of us here in Mrs. Reardon's PubPro class, we wish Mr. Steffen luck in his pursuit of the state award! Thank you, Mr. Steffen, for all of your hard work!

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Left: The NCHS FFA Chapter's Bioluminescent petunias

Right: Mr. Steffen celebrates his Golden Owl Finalist award with his wife, NCHS Board Member, Tracey, and son, senior Toby



Spring Into Victory

By: Daniel Venegas, Kolton Rizzo, Emma Dierzen, and Heather Buhle

A new season arrives as our track, baseball, and softball teams begin practices. All three sports will compete outdoors starting this month until May, and our players are excited for the startup of a fresh season with new team members, and even some new coaches. They are ready to take their game to the next level by transitioning from their hard work during open gyms and strength training to positive, successful, gameplay.

As the new season begins, spring sports athletes are getting ready for their upcoming matches. After putting in work during the offseason, our athletes are ready to compete and see how it all pays off. From the start of their seasons, all the way through their last game or race, these teams will be focused on improving, staying consistent, and representing our school the right way. Both baseball and softball started their season on March 17 at Aurora Central Catholic, while track season for both girls and boys started on March 14 at Reed Custer.

Among those setting goals this season is junior Kenzie Doss, who is aiming to improve her times on the track. She says, "I hope to PR in the 800 and get faster. I just want to get under 2:40." Another goal setting Norsemen is Freshman Teagan Britz. He is looking to improve his long distance times and pursue a school record. Teagan says, "I am hoping to get



Above: Junior Kenzie D. studies ballistics during Forensics class, wearing her track jacket to stay warm!

close to 11:30 in the 3200m and probably get close to 5:20 in the 1600m. I want to get close to the 3200m school record. And for the mile I just want to get better at it." Since this is only his first year on the NCHS track team, Teagan has plenty of time to break that school record!

While our track athletes are aspiring to achieve a new personal record this season, Newark's softball and baseball players are learning to work together and discover their drive. Junior Adelaide Johnson explains that her assistant coach, Paige, inspires her most. She says, "She's so much fun and a friend to everybody. She balances being our coach and making things fun very well."

Anyone can see that Adelaide is especially driven because she also participates in travel softball and acts as a leader for her school team. She says that her favorite drill is "Pot of Gold," which is similar to "knockout" in basketball, but transferred onto the field. Like Adelaide, some of our NCHS baseball players are also preparing themselves for the challenges this season might bring.



Above: Senior Travyn H. enjoys a nice sip of sweet tea while working on his yearbook spread in Pub Pro class.

Senior baseball player, Travyn Holmstrom, shares his worries regarding mastering aspects of the game, saying "I think being consistent is going to be the hardest thing - especially when you make a mistake, it might get to your head." However, despite the difficulties he and his team may face this season, Travyn is most excited for the bus rides this year because he likes the sound of blaring music and everyone laughing. In addition to that, Travyn is also hyped to see what how his

team will overcome whatever this season my throw at them. Travyn's teammate, junior Caleb Morgan, says that putting in the work outside of practice is crucial to being a team player. "I'm finding time to put in extra work and practicing time management to be the best I can be."

As we open a new season of athletic competition, we welcome in new opportunities for victory. Our players are more than ready to win and fly the Norsemen flag proudly. Whether they are on the track or on the field, come out and support our Norsemen this spring!

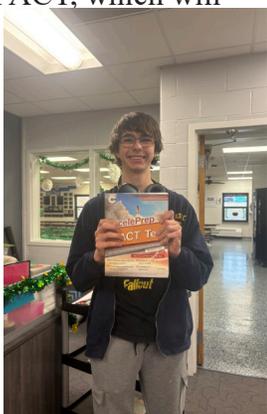
Act Fast the ACT is Coming!

By: Hadley Hergenbahn, Makaylee Minnis, and Blerim Berisha

Ever wonder what goes on before the ACT? The pre-ACT is a practice test that is designed to stimulate the ACT experience, provide predicted scores, and help identify areas of academic strength. It is an online exam focusing on English, Math, Reading and science, which offers insights into college and career readiness.

The practice ACT, which the junior class took on Friday, February 13th was an opportunity to for students to prepare themselves for the actual ACT, which will be held next month on Wednesday, April 8th. Using the PreACT and ACT practice materials is highly recommended to ensure content and formatting accuracy, as these materials are designed by the same organization that produces the actual exam.

In addition to giving students an inside look that the ACT, the Pre-ACT can also help students figure out what they are going to be doing after high school. Junior Austin Brown shares how the exam might impact his future, saying “The ACT will either get me into college or it won’t” While taking the ACT some students might experience test anxiety. According to Junior Owen Underhill, a good way to decrease anxiety during testing is a technique he has mastered, He says, “I just try

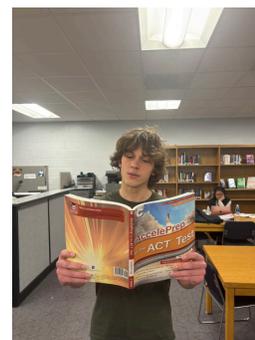


Above: Junior Austin B. feels confident about the upcoming ACT, showing off the book he is using to help him study. He says, “This book has helped me prepare and study for the ACT”

to keep my pace still and not try to think about it that much. If I don’t get all the questions done, I don’t get it all done.”

If students are unaware of the content on the ACT or have not been actively studying for the exam, the Pre-ACT was a much needed wake up call. Austin says, “The Practice ACT gave me a pretty good idea of what the real ACT should look like” Now that juniors have completed the Pre-ACT, they should have a better idea of what areas they might need to study a little more before the real exam next month.

The ACT is a long exam that tests students on their knowledge in multiple subject areas, and some students might do better in one section rather than the other based on their strengths, Owen says “The reading and language section should be easiest for me, because that is my strongest subject”. However easy you might think a section on the ACT will be for you, you still might want to prepare for the exam. Austin says, “ I’m going to look over my notes a few minutes before the test and study the night before”



Above: Junior Owen U. studies for the ACT. He was feeling confident during the Pre-ACT, saying “I felt very prepared to take this test.”

Just like the Pre-ACT, the ACT has 4 sections: Math, English, Science, Reading. To Owen Math is the hardest, because, “I don’t know a lot of math. I know addition and subtraction but now with complex formulas, I’m cooked.”

Whether you’re taking the ACT this year or preparing for it next year it’s always good to practice because it’ll be here before you know it! Please encourage your classmates and friends to study! Good Luck Everyone!

FFA Week

By: Malia Maddox, Evan Toftoy, and Yaimara Martinez

National FFA week brings communities together to support local farmers, and demonstrates why FFA is important to schools across America. During this week, students from across the country celebrate their school's FFA organization. From Section 7 Dodgeball matches to Camo day, FFA week is one of the largest events within the entire FFA organization and helps raise funds for next year's FFA chapter.

For NCHS, National FFA week started on Monday, February 23, and ended Friday, February 27, and each day throughout the week had its own theme. Additionally, FFA chapter members participated in a variety of annual events including the Porkburger Lunch, the Petting Zoo, and the Dodgeball tournament.

FFA stands for Future Farmers of America, which means that this organization helps students plan for their future in agriculture. Senior Vice President of the NCHS FFA Chapter, Logan Bols says, "Being a member and officer in the FFA has impacted my future career plans by providing me with a foundation for responsibility, leadership, team building, and drive. I plan on eventually running the family farm one day, and FFA has helped me to recognize the sheer importance of agriculture in all aspects of life." While Logan has built a solid foundation during his time as a chapter member, Junior Avery Wickens, who has one more year here at NCHS, continues to advocate for new members.

Avery plans to incorporate lessons from FFA later in his life, and he encourages other students to join. He says, "I would say to get their name out there. Talk to members. Talk to their Ag advisor, and see what it is about. If they have a genuine interest, consider joining. Participating in activities, meetings, and conventions are always fun and provide great opportunities for growth as an individual." FFA is great for incoming students who work with their hands and want to be involved in agriculture.



Above: Sophomores Wren W., Scarlet H., and Ellie L. enjoy the annual FFA Petting Zoo on Thursday, Feb. 26th.

Immersion Day is one of the most important days of National FFA week. It is a day to share the insights of Agriculture to the community, including details about what it is like to be an FFA member. Senior Lily Westphal says her goal for her senior year as a part of FFA was to help get more people involved with FFA. She says "going to the Newark grade school and serving ice cream" was part of her Ag Immersion day experience that helped her achieve this goal.

FFA helps the community see why agriculture is important to not only us, but the nation as a whole. FFA week is a staple to Newark High School, and some students who look forward to it all year. The events during this week help inspire the next generation of students to join FFA. We hope to see continued success during FFA week for many years to come. Many students have created a foundation for their future while reinforcing skills and education in FFA, and we are excited to see their future in agriculture.

Right: The 2025 Newark FFA Chapter on Official dress day.



SPRINGing into Break

By: Miranda McBroom, James DiClementi, Travyn Holmstrom, Matthew Underhill

The Sun is shining, birds are singing, and flowers are blooming. This all indicates one thing: Spring Break is almost here! As the days stretch out and the weather gets warmer, it's the perfect time to relax, recharge, and make lasting memories with family and friends. Whether you're traveling to a sunny beach, exploring a new city, or enjoying a well-deserved stay-cation, Spring Break offers a refreshing pause before the final stretch of the season.

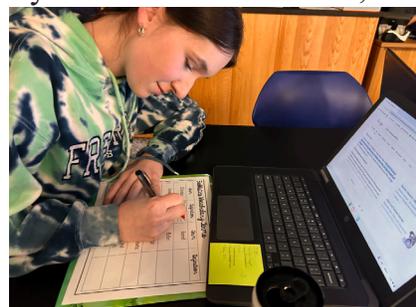
After months of early mornings, packed schedules, and unpredictable winter weather, this break provides a chance for students, families, and teachers alike to step away from daily routines, reconnect with family and friends, and return with brand-new energy, and this year's Spring Break is coming up next week, from March 23rd to the 27th.



Above: Senior Emma D. shares her excitement for break by smiling at passing PubPro photographers.

Among one of the students traveling for break is Senior Emma Dierzen. She says, "I'm going to Florida to see my family in Fort Myers." Spring break gives students plenty of time to spend with their loved ones, especially those they cannot see as often. Family time often provides a good way to refresh and unwind; however, some prefer the company of their close friends.

Hanging out with her friends is Senior Shae Cotton's plans for break. She says, "Because the only time I get to see my friends is during school, so now I can spend time with them outside of school." During school, it's hard to talk to your friends in class. Spring break gives us more time to spend with friends without the repercussions of missing class. Kids need to burn off their energy and move around. Sitting in school for seven hours a day can limit the natural urge to be social. Hopefully, next week, the weather will be nice and sunny so the students at Newark High School can run around and burn off their energy before returning to school for the final stretch of the semester. Or, if you prefer, you can roll your windows down, put on your sunglasses, and turn up those summertime tunes. One of the students who plans on jamming out to music over break is Junior Connor Fitzgerald. Connor chose the song "Crawl" by Linkin Park to describe his Spring Break. He says, "it really soothes my mind, and with the warm weather, it will be a great time."



Above: Senior Shae prepares for break by working dilligently to forensics homework finished, so she has more time to spend with her friends.

As spring break approaches and the days start getting longer, everyone seems to have sunshine on their mind. When it comes to the ultimate spring break destination debate (going south to soak up the sun or north for a colder escape), Sophomore Hadley Hergenhan is firmly team south. She says, “I would rather go south because I like to be tan and it makes my hair a lighter blonde.” Whether you prefer beach vibes or cool breezes, it’s clear everyone is counting down the days to break in their own way.

Spring break is typically filled with visits to many vacation and tourist spots all across the country. Some people take in the mountain scenery, others live for the hustle and bustle of different U.S cities, and a couple of people even live for the warm sand and gentle breeze of the seawater air. Wherever you end up on your break, with your friends or family, we, as Mrs. Reardon’s Pub Pro class, hope everyone gets a well-deserved break, and we are excited to see you afterwards!