



**You may contact *Chatterbox* at [chatterbox@lincolnschools.org](mailto:chatterbox@lincolnschools.org) if you have suggestions or comments.**



## RHS Principal's Message

Hello fellow Bearcats! What an exciting time of year with the Thanksgiving holiday approaching, playoff football beginning, and a change in the weather! The end of the 1st semester will be here before we know it so please stay on top of your academics.

Continue to support your classmates, whether that be our football team, basketball team, band, choir, cross country, or debate team. If you are not involved in a club or organization I encourage you to find one that fits your needs. We have something for everyone here at RHS.

Thank you for being great representatives for Ruston High School. Keep up the good work! Go Bearcats!



# Growing Gratitude for RHS

**Sophie Mae Smith/ *Student Council President***

This school year has truly been a whirlwind thus far. Despite some of the craziness, I am extremely thankful for this school and many moments that I've been able to experience in the last few months. I am so grateful for my teachers, we do not even realize how much work they put in and I am so thankful to have the opportunity to learn from them. I am also grateful for the clubs and organizations that I get to be a part of like volleyball and student council.

I have enjoyed football season immensely and have loved seeing an increasing number of students at volleyball games. But, now that those seasons are coming to an end I want to see that same support for our other sports like basketball and soccer! I am also incredibly grateful for the hard work and dedication of our local healthcare workers to improve the situation that we have been in.

With that being said, I hope you all stay healthy as we enter the winter months. Now, let's finish the semester strong!

## Jason Willis – RHS Student of the Year

## STAFF REPORT

Ruston High School (RHS) senior Jason Willis was covered last month in *Chatterbox* for his recognition as a semifinalist on this year's National Merit Scholarship Program and qualifying for the next level. This month, Jason returns to be featured once again, only this time, as the Ruston High School Student of the Year. With several worthy applicants from RHS, Jason is honored to have received this recognition.

When asked about Jason and his selection as this year's RHS Student of the Year, RHS Principal Dan Gressett stated "Jason embodies what it means to be a Bearcat. He's involved in numerous clubs and activities, is an exceptional student in the classroom, and is a high character person. We are so proud of him and know that he'll be successful at the next level of competition."

Without repeating all his many accomplishments listed in the last edition, Jason's selection was largely influenced by his involvement in community and civic activities and services. From being an active leader at Trinity United Methodist Church, participation in youth camps and mission trips, to the many service projects that he participated in in the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), Jason has been steadfast in his commitment to serve.

Jason's educational pursuits have led to a GPA of 4.30 and a 35 composite score on the ACT. He has already completed 21 hours of college via AP/Dual enrollment and continues to add more hours this year. Jason serves as an officer on the Student Council and as a member of the National Honor Society. His other accomplishments include being selected as a student of the month in September 2021 by the Ruston Rotary Club as well as placing in the District Literary Rally, Louisiana Tech Cybersecurity Camp, and in the Environmental Awareness Student Art and Language Arts contest. When asked about Jason, Mrs. Jaimee Gressett stated "Jason is a wonderful student. He was in my English I Pre-AP class his freshman year, and even though his work was exceptional, he was always receptive to feedback and willing to improve. Jason was also a great classmate who worked well with other students. I have also worked with Jason in my role as Student Council co-sponsor, and he has been an outstanding member. Jason loves supporting his school and is often seen cheering on the Bearcats at numerous events."

In *Chatterbox*, Jason is in his 3<sup>rd</sup> year and serves as the Editor-in-Chief. He has earned recognition twice as the *Chatterbox* Journalist of the Year and as last year's 2020-2021 *Chatterbox* Member of the Year. Tyin in with this, Jason serves as the RHS FBLA Reporter, where he has placed in Journalism, Business Communication, and Mr. FBL. He has earned the FBLA Business Achievement Future Award and has assisted in every FBLA community service project. This year, he is a team member of this year's RHS FBLA Community Service Project "A Little Help for Little Helpers" and will help present the project at the state conference. As both the *Chatterbox* and FBLA Adviser at RHS, Mr. Lloyd R. Bruner stated "Jason has always been professional and respectful. He always performs to the best of his ability, and I always feel confident that he will get the job done. I am thrilled for him as his selection marks the 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive year that the *Chatterbox* Editor-in-Chief and an FBLA officer have been honored with this title. This reflects highly on him academically as well as with respect to his involvement in community service, one of the four FBLA pillars that ensure success."

Jason's selection as the RHS Student of the Year is a credit to his continuing efforts as he was previously selected as the Ruston Junior High School Student of the Year in 2018 as well as the Lincoln Parish Middle/Jr. High Student of the Year in 2018. Jason now moves on to the next level of competition where he hopes to be selected as the Lincoln Parish High School Student of the Year and become eligible to compete for the title of Louisiana High School Student of the Year for 2021-2022.



## Ruston High Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Ashlee Bell

by Jason Willis/*Editor-in-Chief*

Recently, Ruston High announced its Teacher of the Year for the 2021-22 school year: Mrs. Ashlee Bell. Mrs. Bell, a teacher of 11 years, has worked at Ruston High since 2017, teaching both Pre-AP and CP English II for 4 years before taking on a new role this year as the English IV teacher, instructing both Dual and AP senior students--an opportunity she has greatly enjoyed, as she is teaching the same students that she was forced to part with early in 2020 due to the pandemic: her "COVID kids." Prior to coming to RHS, Mrs. Bell taught for 6 years at West Monroe High School. In her own education, Mrs. Bell has attended Louisiana Tech University for her B.A. in History, as well as her Masters in both English and Teaching. At Ruston High, not only does Mrs. Bell give quality instruction every day to her students, but she also takes on numerous other roles in the school: she is a sponsor for the Student Council, working closely with the President and Vice President, and also helps plan graduation. In addition, she is certified by the Louisiana Department of Education as a Mentor Teacher, meaning she works to coach and support new teachers and student teachers locally.

The decision to name Mrs. Bell as Teacher of the Year for the school was made by school administration, who looks at past teacher evaluations and student success data to narrow down a capable staff of teachers to just one per year. RHS Principal Dan Gressett said of Mrs. Bell, “she is a wonderful English teacher, a great asset to Ruston High School, and has had such a positive impact on countless students. She is a great representative for Ruston High.”

Mrs. Bell came to teaching somewhat unconventionally. Although she came from a line of public educators--her mother taught math for 33 years, and both of her parents, in retirement, now teach at the community college level--she was initially resolved not to go into teaching, witnessing firsthand how difficult of a job it was from her mother. Mrs. Bell instead had many other ideas--being a journalist, going to law school, or getting a PhD in literature--but eventually realized that she wanted to make a positive difference in students' lives and settle into teaching. Though she admits that her first few years were rough, Mrs. Bell says that "as I became more comfortable in the classroom, I realized that this is an opportunity to do a lot of good."

When asked what she would attribute her success to, Mrs. Bell pointed to the strong support system at Ruston High. "It is much easier to teach in a place where you have administration that is supportive, where we're all moving in the same direction, and where you have other faculty who are on the same page and want the same things." However, she also attributes some to her mother, who showed her that hard things were possible and "who doesn't know how to quit."

For every student that passes through her class, Mrs. Bell hopes to help them “be able to approach a complex text and access that complex test.” More than that, though, she wants them to be able to think critically and reach a level of self-confidence intellectually: “knowing that they can do hard things.” Remarking on the difficult tasks Mrs. Bell asks her students to complete, she says, “yes, it’s hard, but being able to walk away from a class like that and know you can do it—that’s more rewarding than just the grade.” More than anything else, Mrs. Bell doesn’t want her students to be “so afraid to fail that they don’t try.”

Going forward for the Teacher of the Year process, Mrs. Bell will compete at the district level against other teachers in Lincoln Parish. She will have to submit a *curriculum vitae* (essentially a built-out resume) and a 15-minute video of her teaching on a certain day, which will include an introduction of a lesson, clips of instruction, and a debrief of the lesson. Should Mrs. Bell advance to the state level, she will have to write several essays concerning her philosophy of teaching and submit student success data.

*Chatterbox* would like to extend its sincerest congratulations to Mrs. Bell and wish her good luck as she continues on in the Teacher of the Year competition.

2021-2022 Ruston High School <i>Chatterbox</i> Staff		
Position	Name	Classification
Editor in Chief	Jason Willis	Senior
News Editor	Alexis Thompson	Sophomore
Arts/Clubs Reporter	Lainey Bowen	Sophomore
Education Reporter	Kevin Gipson	Junior
Sports Editor	Briley Kent	Senior
Sports/Cheer Reporter	Moriah Jackson	Senior
Student Council President	Sophie Mae Smith	Senior
Adviser/Sponsor: Mr. Lloyd R. Bruner Publication Adviser: Mrs. Jennifer Ham   Assistant Publication Adviser: Ms. Joanna Ham Proofing and Editing: Mrs. Jaimee Gressett		

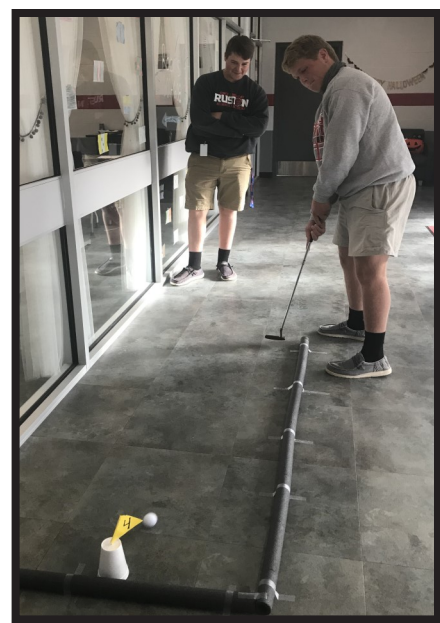


*Chatterbox* is the official newspaper of Ruston High School, “the Voice of Ruston High.” *Chatterbox* is sponsored and managed by the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), and is published monthly on the RHS webpage, in the *Chatterbox* Google Classroom, and shared by many. The purpose of *Chatterbox* is to promote Ruston High School and allow students the opportunity to explore journalism and share the abilities and ideas. Please send any articles or other submissions for print to [chatterbox@lincolnschools.org](mailto:chatterbox@lincolnschools.org). and any comments, critiques, or suggestions to [lbruner@lincolnschools.org](mailto:lbruner@lincolnschools.org).





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In Mrs. Welch's class, Dutch Russell hits the ball while Harrison Deason observes the action.

## RHS Geometry Classes “Putt on a Show”

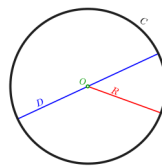
### STAFF REPORT

Information Provided by Mrs. Amy Heirs

The geometry classes of Mrs. Amy Heirs and Mrs. Allison Welch had the opportunity to play a couple of holes of mini golf this past 9 weeks as an educational opportunity. This fun lesson incorporated what was being taught at the time in class. Students were able leave their usual learning environment in the New Tech building and participate in a fun filled game of putt-putt.

During 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> period classes, students were able to apply the concept of reflecting a point over a line when they reflected the hole through the glass wall. To conduct the learning, one student would hit the golf ball with the club while another student placed where the reflected hole should be. As such, students were able to see exactly where to bounce the ball off the wall to make it in the hole.

The golf course was brought to the students, so no traveling was required. Further, students didn't have to pay to play nor fall victim to the many traps faced in mini golf. In addition to learning this skill, perhaps a few of the students can now apply this concept should they again face a mini golf encounter.



In Mrs. Hiers' class, Nya Miller and Avrion Lawson hit the ball while Gabe Gaudet and Delanie Carty placed the reflection cup for them to aim at.



## Aliyah Clark Captures Writing Title

### STAFF REPORT

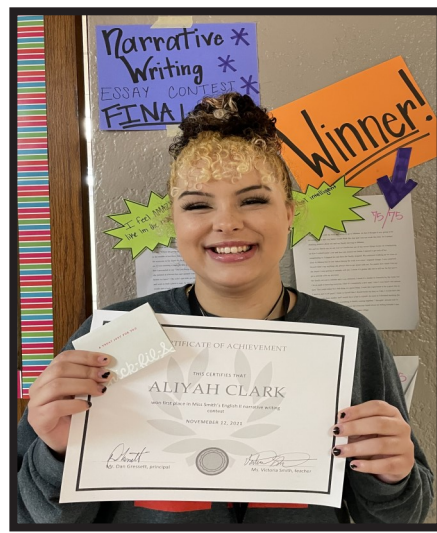
Information Provided by Miss Victoria Smith

Miss Victoria Smith's English II sophomores recently competed against themselves in a narrative writing task turned essay contest as they work through complex issues about the danger of a single story. Students were to analyze the behavior of our main character, Okonkwo, throughout the first part of the book. Then they were to apply this character knowledge and write a chapter 13 1/2 which told a missing part of time from the novel. They had to flip the point of view--writing as if they were a man who had murdered two young boys and been exiled from the community in which he had held much esteem.

Through this writing, students competed not only against their classmates, but against all of Miss Smith's students to be crowned a finalist and ultimately a winner. The finalists chosen were Trinity Carr, Aliyah Clark, Aylhen Ibarra, and Donicka Veasey.

Once finalists had been chosen, Miss Smith sought out the help of fellow English II teacher and speech & debate coach, Miss Sydney Phillips, to judge the final winner. All stories were submitted anonymously to Miss Phillips, and she ultimately decided the story in which Okonkwo turns on his family and himself to be the winner.

The winning writer was Aliyah Clark. She was awarded a Chick-fil-A gift card as well as a certificate of achievement and bragging rights. Miss Smith is very proud of the finalists as well as the winning writer and looks forward to hosting more contests in the future!



## RHS PTA Works to Support Teachers

by Jason Willis/Editor-in-Chief

The Ruston High Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is hard at work once again this school year to provide support to the Ruston High faculty and staff and show their appreciation for the hard work they do in any way they can. The PTA is currently in the middle of their annual Family Membership Drive. There are several different tiers of membership within the PTA, which are earned depending on how much you donate as you join. A Family Membership is earned with \$1-- the minimum amount to join--while the White Level is \$25, the Red Level is \$50, the Red/White Level is \$100, and the Bearcat Level is over \$100. Members can pay through the SchoolCash Online, which can be accessed through the student's account on the Lincoln Parish Schools app or online at [lincolnschools.org](https://lincolnschools.org).

On Friday, December 17, the PTA will launch their Faculty Christmas Coffee event, which they annually do for teachers around the holidays. They provide coffee, hot apple cider, and various breakfast treats to the Ruston High faculty and staff, who say the event is one of their favorites of the year and a great way to transition to Christmas break.

In the spring, the PTA will have their annual Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week, which similarly aims to show appreciation towards the faculty and staff by providing delicious lunches for them throughout the week. The week normally takes place towards the end of the second semester.

The work PTA does is not seen as work so much as paying forward the immense effort that the faculty and staff puts into creating a safe learning environment for students. PTA's president, Adrienne Smith, says, "Ruston High is truly blessed with great teachers, administrators, and support staff. They deserve to be celebrated." She encourages people to join in on the PTA's events: "Each event is always a great way to get to meet our faculty and form relationships with other RHS parents." If you would like to get involved with the PTA or are interested in helping out with any of these various events for the teachers, you can contact Mrs. Adrienne Smith at [atsmith4@att.net](mailto:atsmith4@att.net).



registry has over 23 million people. However, searching patients only have a 29%-79% chance of finding a match when in need of a blood stem cell transplant. With "Be The Match", the chances of finding a match obviously increases the opportunity to help save people who suffer from a variety of blood-borne diseases such as Sickle Cell, Lymphoma, and Leukemia.

On Friday, October 22, 2021, participants who registered to help showed up at the station in the boulevard and had a simple cheek swab performed during both lunch shifts. The goal was to have 30 participants, and the goal was surpassed as Bearcat students, faculty, and staff aged 18-40 stepped up to contribute. Anyone interested in helping can still do so by simply registering at <https://bethematch.org>.

## Ruston High School Promotes “Be the Match”

### STAFF REPORT

When the Bearcat Nation sees a need, the Bearcat Nation steps up. Recently, Ruston High School (RHS) participated in "Be The Match" to help save lives and build relationships in our community. Mr. Eric Bolton, the son of former RHS special education teacher Mrs. Betty Bolton who taught for many years at RHS, contacted the school to see if we would be willing to help, and RHS welcomed the opportunity.

"Be The Match" is the world's largest marrow donor registry. Currently, the



## RHS Joins 2021 Christmas Cheer Jingle Drive

Seeks Donations for The Food Bank of Northeast Louisiana

### STAFF REPORT

The 2021 Christmas Cheer Jingle Drive started on November 17, 2021, and Ruston High School (RHS) is once again stepping up to support a worthy cause – The Food Bank of Northeast Louisiana. With the number of families who are at risk of going hungry continuing to be a grave concern in our area, Bearcat Nation is joining many others in the area to seek donations from those who can contribute and help local families face the holidays and beyond without going hungry. This is especially true for those families with children who will be out of school for an extended period over the holidays.

Taylor Costa, Marketing and Communications Officer with the Food Bank of Northeast Louisiana, encourages anyone who can to participate in this year's drive to reduce hunger. Mr. Costa and others have worked with RHS and many other area schools to help set-up special fundraiser webpages where secure monetary donations can be made. **Chatterbox encourages everyone in the Bearcat Nation to share our link with friends and family and help RHS lead the way this year in this drive. The link for the RHS webpage is <https://foodbanknela.salsalabs.org/christmascheer2021/t/rustonhighschool/index.html>.**

Once accessing the link, you will know you are making your contributions on the Ruston High School page as the Christmas Cheer photo (pictured above right) will be at the top of the page with our Bearcat (pictured above left) featured as well. Simple click on the donate button and make a difference. Every \$10 donation helps the Food Bank provide 55 meals to children, families, and adults living in the 12-parish region served by the Food Bank of Northeast Louisiana.

Although contributions are needed and welcomed all year, the holiday season is the biggest push to ensure that no one goes hungry over the holidays. The 2021 Christmas Cheer Jingle Drive ends on December 17, 2021, so please go to the RHS webpage and give with a generous help to those in need. Also remember to pass this on through all your social media platforms and let's do our part to make the holiday season better for everyone.

<https://foodbanknela.salsalabs.org/christmascheer2021/t/rustonhighschool/index.html>





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ORDER YEARBOOK

## Resume - Ruston High Yearbook

Order Your Copy Today - Submit Your Pictures Too

by Alexis Thompson/News Editor

The Resume staff works hard to make the yearbook a memento of your high school years. As most activities return to some resemblance of normal, students will have many opportunities to be captured in all the organizations and happenings at Ruston High School. The yearbook has a new sponsor and staff making this year's edition special, and students can get involved and personalize it as well.

The cost for a yearbook is \$55 until January 7, 2022, so students are encouraged to order by that deadline. After that date, the cost will increase. To order your yearbook now, use the QR code (left of this article) to scan with your phone camera or QR code-scanning app and take advantage of this low price and order your yearbook.

The yearbook sponsor and staff cannot be everywhere, so students are encouraged to get involved and send in contributions! Pictures at school events such as sports games, pep rallies, conferences, classroom activities, or anything else that highlights this year's students could be included in your yearbook! Scan the indicated QR code (right of this article) to send your pictures to the yearbook.

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UPLOAD PHOTOS

## SHARP CATS

### RHS Freshman Academy Recognizes September and October Sharp Cats

The Ruston High School Freshman Academy is proud to recognize some of our outstanding students each month by naming them Ruston High Sharp Cats. The academy faculty feels that honoring exceptional students is an important part of supporting and encouraging our freshmen.

The Freshman Academy has four teams of students, and at the end of each month, two students from each team are nominated by their teachers to join the ranks of the Sharp Cats.

Through their accomplishments, the students selected for this program have set an outstanding example in some aspect of campus life. Some students have exhibited an intense rigor for academics or demonstrated their love of learning. Some have enhanced their grade point average standing while others have shown exemplary attitudes and behavior. They are determined to learn and genuinely lead and inspire others on our campus. It is with great pride that we present to you these students...for they are truly Sharp Cats!

We are so proud of our freshmen, and we hope that you will join us in our appreciation of these extraordinary students: Z'Rikca Clemons, Lucy Figueroa, Melodi Frazier, Brokhia Gray, David Griep, Zheric Hill, Siri Kilpatrick, Severin Kirbow, Monterrio Marshall, Samantha McCumber, Sam Nations, Reginald Sanders, Abby Seney, Mahlek Stringfellow, Carter Tims and Micaela Xochichal.



## National Honor Society (RHS) Holds 2021-2022 Induction Ceremony

submitted by Jed Denny/ National Honor Society Member

The purpose of the National Honor Society (NHS) is to create enthusiasm for scholarship, to stimulate a desire to render service, to promote worthy leadership, and to encourage development of character in the students of RHS.

To be considered, students must have a cumulative 3.0 GPA and should consider serving in the community and assuming leadership positions in any organization in which they are members; all students with a 3.0 GPA or higher and sophomore or higher status with no referrals the previous year will receive an application packet to complete. Membership is granted to sophomore, junior and senior students selected based on outstanding scholarship, character, leadership, and service. There are also monthly service requirements that must be met.

On Wednesday, November 17, 2021, Ruston High School's National Honor Society chapter welcomed their new members in an induction ceremony held in the auditorium. The event began with a welcome from club sponsor, Mrs. Susan Williams. Current members Jason Willis, Lucy Bennett, Cade Williams, and Rosie Bennett then shared the principles of National Honor Society: Scholarship, Leadership, Service, and Character.

The new 2021-2022 NHS inductees were then called by name and greeted NHS president Kelly Caston and RHS Principal Dan Gressett. After the National Honor Society Pledge was recited, the ceremony concluded, and a small reception followed. NHS members now look forward to working with the newest members as all members ensure that they remain vigilant in their service and studies, and that they demonstrate the character required as NHS members.

## National Honor Society Service Project

### Repaints RHS Bearcat Paw Prints

submitted by Kelly Caston/ National Honor Society President

On November 14, 2021, the National Honor Society repainted the paw prints on James Street. The NHS members volunteered to repaint these paw prints in hopes to give back to Ruston High School and enhance the experience of Bearcat Fridays. The paw prints have served as a reminder to all that the path to greatness is at RHS.

With the help of Mrs. April Winstead and Mrs. Susan Williams, they were able to repaint all the paw prints on the street in about an hour. The National Honor Society hopes to be able to repaint the paw prints on the home side of the football stadium and the ones in the senior parking lot that lead up to the front of the school soon.



### 2020- 2021 National Honor Society

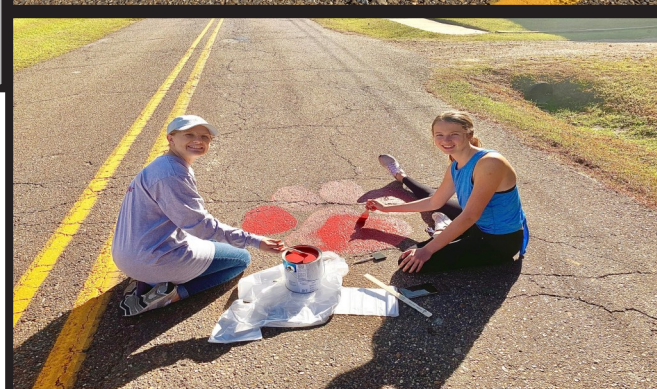


Pictured top left: Cade Williams, Kelly Caston, Audrey Seney, Sophia Koskie, Maggie Ambrose, and Sarah Margaret Davison.

Pictured top right: Audrey Seney, Cade Williams, Kelly Caston, and Sophia Koskie.

Pictured bottom left: Carmen Bishop and Maggie Ambrose.

Pictured bottom right: Sarah Margaret Davison and Kelly Caston







November 26, 2021

## Haunted RHS--Teacher Dress-Up Day!

by Alexis Thompson, News Editor

This Halloween, RHS was filled with frights as our wonderful teachers participated in the annual Teacher Dress-Up Day! Both teachers and students have lots of fun with this day--teachers in preparing and wearing their costumes, and students in interacting with them, as well as voting for their favorites! This year was Student Council's Second Annual Halloween Costume Contest, and Ruston High School's faculty and staff really brought the thunder--or the ghouls, at least!

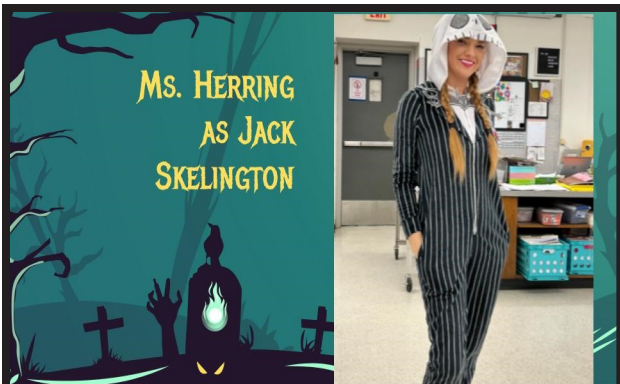
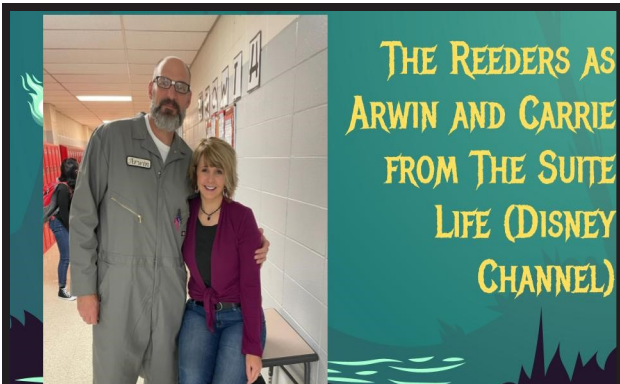
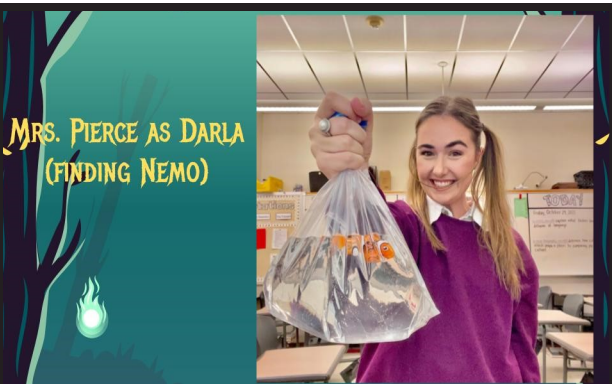
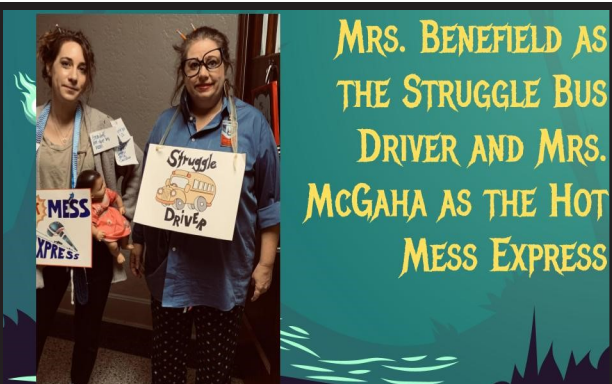
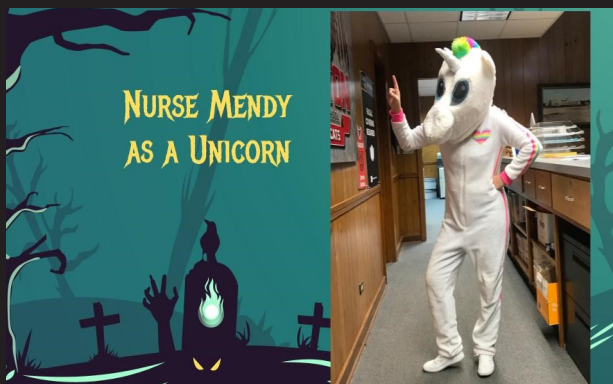
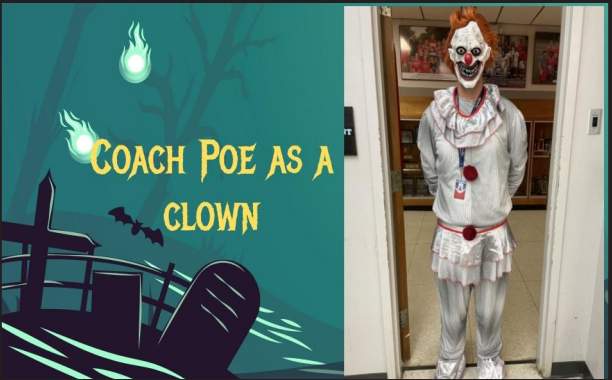
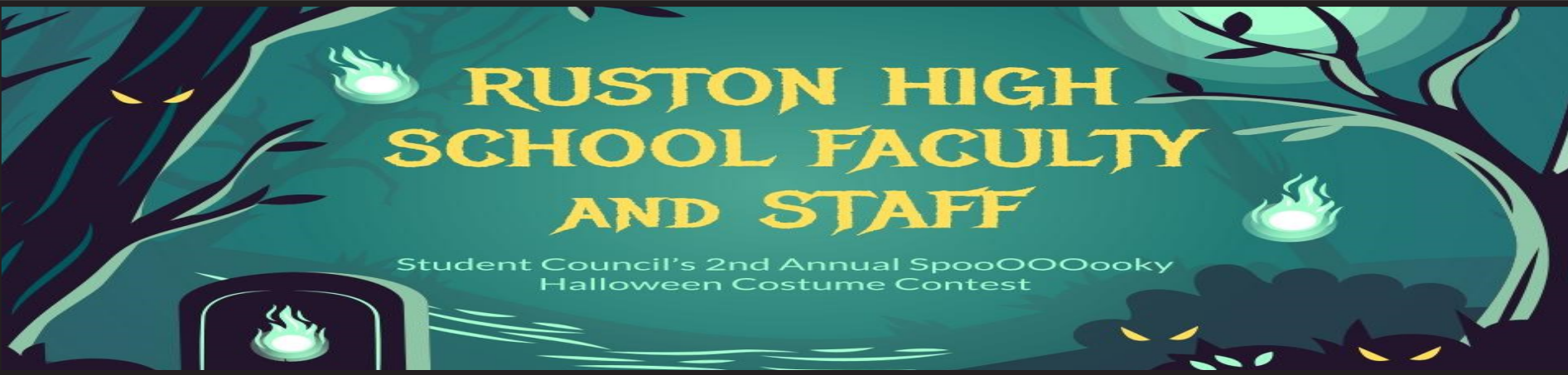
Notable costumes were:

- Coach Poe's iconic clown costume,
- Mrs. Williams' hysterical Joker,
- Mrs. Martin's Miss Universe costume (which, if we may say, was out of this world),
- and Coach Guin's excellent impersonation of our own Mr. Gressett!

However, not every costume can win StuCo's Costume Contest, although competition was fierce. After deliberation by our wonderful judges, the winner was chosen!

Coach Reeder's costume, Arwin from *The Suite Life of Zach and Cody*, paired with Mrs. Reeder's Carrie from the same show, took the cake at this Costume Contest!

We want to congratulate and thank all that took part in this Dress-Up day. Spirit days like this one and those that contribute are really what make RHS magical. Next Halloween comes much more quickly than anyone expects though, so begin preparing your next costumes!







November 26, 2021

## A Busy Fall for the Ruston Choir Includes “In the Sing of Things”

by Nathan Trahan Choir Director, edited by Alexis Thompson/ News Editor

The RHS Choir had a very busy start to the Fall semester. In September 2021, the choir performed for the Homecoming Court presentation at the stadium. Everyone in attendance could feel the magic as the choir helped celebrate this special occasion.

The choir students also competed in the first round of All-State Choir auditions which was held on November 13, 2021. The Louisiana Music Educators Association will have the annual convention and All-State Choral, Band, and Orchestral activities in mid-February in Baton Rouge.

On Thursday November 18, 2021, the RHS Concert Choir worked together with the Grambling State University Choir to perform “Gospel Mass” by Robert Ray at Trinity United Methodist Church at 7 p.m. (see below).

The Rotary Club of Ruston has invited the RHS choir to perform for their annual Christmas Luncheon on December 8, 2021, at the Historic Fire Station. The choir looks forward to showcasing some holiday music with the Rotary Club in preparation for the holiday concert in mid-December. Check back in the next edition of *Chatterbox* for more information on the concert dates.

The Spring semester will be jam packed with performances and events for the choral program. Information about the Spring Concert, Bearcats on Broadway, performances for area schools, as well as additional events and performances will be shared as those dates approach.



“Gettin in the SING of things!”

## RHS Choir Performs “Gospel Mass” with the GSU Choir

by Nathan Trahan Choir Director, edited by Alexis Thompson/ News Editor

As mentioned above, the RHS Concert Choir performed with the Grambling State University Choir to perform “Gospel Mass” by Robert Ray at Trinity United Methodist Church. The concert was held at 7 p.m. on Thursday, November 18, 2021. RHS students were given free admittance with their student ID.

The “Gospel Mass” is a moving and impressive major work that sheds light on the importance of the Mass in music history while putting a very contemporary spin and sound on it. Those in attendance were delighted as they enjoyed a night of incredible singing and an inspirational music experience! Pictured is the RHS Choir performing for their guests.



## Band Undercover - RHS Band at Competition

by Alexis Thompson/ News Editor

Last month came the culmination of weeks and weeks for our Ruston High School Bearcat band as they attended their first Competition Assessment, and then followed that by competing in the 2021 Classic on the Cane Marching Contest at NSU in Natchitoches, LA. For the past few months, the band has been preparing a marching show chock full of classic secret agent tunes, such as the Bond theme, the Mission Impossible theme, and Live and Let Die. All of these were preceded by a wonderful performance by the Ruston High band percussionists and Sydney Moss, performing Moonraker, as the band took the field.

Competition Assessment, which was held at Sterlington High School on October 23, 2021, featured 15-20 bands. One of several assessments going on at the same time around the state, it was the steppingstone to the Classic on the Cane Contest that was planned for. During this assessment, judges skilled in each aspect of marching band watched and provided commentary on the bands’ performances. At the end of the night, the results were released, and each band returned to their home schools to listen to the critiques and adjust their performances before the next week. At the assessment, the Ruston High band won Best Overall band in their division.

The next Saturday, on October 30, 2021, marching bands throughout the state of Louisiana assembled in Natchitoches, Louisiana, for the biggest competition of the year. Along with each band came countless supporters, who made the day all the better for everyone in attendance! The RHS band would like to thank everyone who came out to support them and hope they enjoyed the show!

The Ruston High band didn’t capture the top band honors overall at the Classic on the Cane, but they gave a performance to remember. Everyone in attendance watched many incredible performances from students all around the state, and that included the NSU Demon marching band in their fiery Inferneaux performance!

The Ruston High School band performed well and was thrilled to have the opportunity to not only compete and travel, but to perform at such a large event. They not only appreciated the ability to participate, but also the chance to interact and watch other performances along with the many supporters for all the bands. Next year promises to even more exciting, and they hope to see more Bearcat band fans in attendance and cheer them on.



Pictured above left and right: The RHS Bearcat Band performs at the 2021 Classic on the Cane Marching Contest at NSU. Photos courtesy of Mr. Bob Sikes

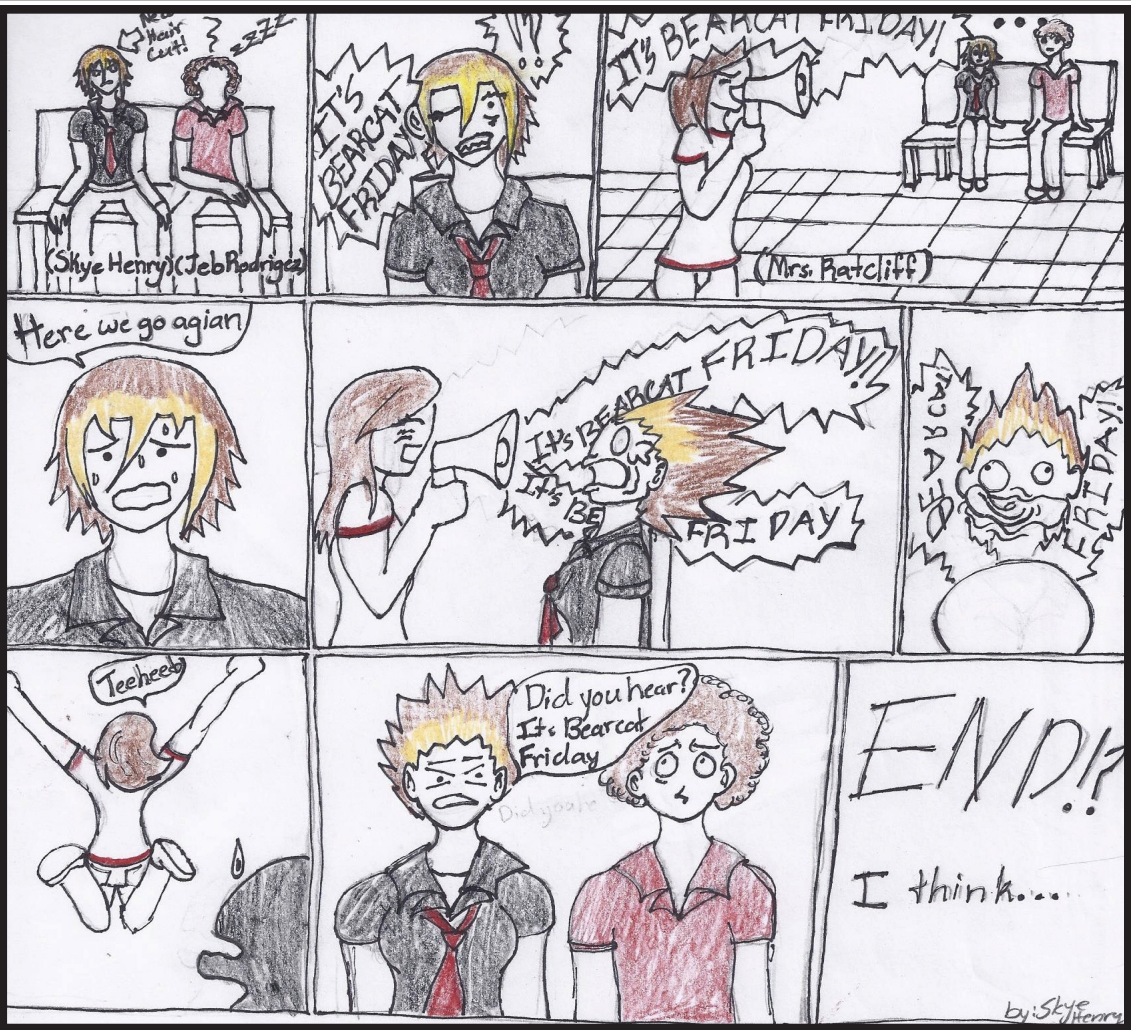
## Blast from the Past!



The comic strip posted to the right was created by Skye Henry (pictured above). This “Blast from the Past” was originally posted 10 years ago in the November 11, 2011 edition of *Chatterbox*.

Note from the current *Chatterbox* staff:

This “blast” remains a tradition - only the students in the halls have changed.







November 26, 2021

# Know Your Basic Human Rights

by Moriah Jackson/*Sports Reporter*

Everyone has fundamental human rights. We may have heard of some human rights but never considered these fundamental rights for the youth. We all, regardless of age, should know our basic human rights. According to Youth for Human Rights, every person is entitled to certain rights simply by being human. They are “rights” because they are things you are allowed to be, to do, or to have. These rights are for your protection against people who want to harm or hurt you. They are also there to help us get along with each other and live in peace. Not knowing these rights usually results in discrimination, oppression, injustice, intolerance, and slavery. Below is a list of your fundamental human rights. You can find out more about basic human rights and how you can get involved by visiting [www.youthforhumanrights.org](http://www.youthforhumanrights.org).

YOUR HUMAN BASIC RIGHTS ARE:

1. We Are All Born Free & Equal. We are all born free. We all have our thoughts and ideas and should all be treated in the same way.
2. Don’t Discriminate. These rights belong to everybody regardless of our differences.
3. The Right to Life. We all have the right to life and to live in freedom and safety.
4. No Slavery. Nobody has any right to make us a slave nor do we have the right to make another a slave.
5. No Torture. Nobody has any right to hurt us or to torture us.
6. You Have Rights No Matter Where You Go. I am a person just like you!
7. We’re All Equal Before the Law. The law is the same for everyone and must treat us all fairly.
8. Your Human Rights Are Protected by Law. We can all ask for the law to help us when we are not treated fairly.
9. No Unfair Detainment. Nobody has the right to put us in prison, keep us there, or send us away from our country without legal cause .
10. The Right to Trial. If we are put on trial, this should be in public. The people who try us should not let anyone tell them what to do.
11. We’re Always Innocent Till Proven Guilty. Blame should not be assigned until it is proven. When accused of a bad thing, we have the right to show it is not true.
12. The Right to Privacy. No one should try to harm our good name nor has the right to come into our home, open our letters, or bother our family or us without legal cause.
13. Freedom to Move. We all have the right to go where we want in our own country and travel as we wish.
14. The Right to Seek a Safe Place to Live. If we are frightened of being badly treated in our own country, we all have the right to run away to another country to be safe.
15. Right to a Nationality. We all have the right to belong to a country.
16. Marriage and Family. Adults have the right to marry and have a family if they want. Men and women have the same rights whether married, separated, or single.
17. The Right to Your Things. Everyone has the right to own things or share them. Nobody should take our things from us without just cause.
18. Freedom of Thought. We all have the right to believe in what we want to think, to have a religion or not, and to change it if we want.
19. Freedom of Expression. We all have the right to make up our minds, to think what we like, to say what we believe, and to share our ideas with other people.
20. The Right to Public Assembly. We all have the right to meet our friends and to work together in peace to defend our rights. We cannot be forced to join a group.
21. The Right to Democracy. We all have the right to take part in the government of our country. All adults should be allowed to choose their leaders.
22. Social Security. We all have the right to affordable housing, medicine, education, and childcare, enough money to live on, and medical help.
23. Workers’ Rights. Every adult has the right to do a job, to a fair wage for their work, and to join a trade union.
24. The Right to Play. We all have the right to rest from work and to relax.
25. Food and Shelter for All. We have the right to a good life. Mothers and children, people who are old, unemployed, or disabled, and all people have the right to be cared for.
26. The Right to Education. Education is a right and public primary school should be free. We should learn about the world and how to get on with others. Our parents can choose what we know.
27. Copyright. Copyright is a special law protecting one’s artistic creations and writings; others cannot make copies without permission. We all have the right to our way of life and enjoy the good things that art, science, and learning bring.
28. A Fair and Free World. There must be proper order so we can all enjoy rights and freedoms in our own country and worldwide.
29. Responsibility. We have a duty to other people, and we should protect their rights and freedoms.
30. No One Can Take Away Your Human Rights.



# The Editor-in-Chief's Editorial

## The Sad Stigma of Trying Too Hard

by Jason Willis/*Editor-in-Chief*



Every student knows the incredible value that is placed on reputation at high school. Everyone of us, whether consciously or not, is concerned with how we are perceived by others. More than at any point in a person’s life, high school is a time where people are worried about social status, popularity, and public perception. This unfortunately means that many of us will go to great lengths, do anything to ensure that we don’t stand out. Differing from the norm is often the scariest thing we can think of. Somehow, a standard is set for what is considered cool and what isn’t, and people homogenize and conform to fit that standard. Social trends such as these are entirely understandable, and even natural--in large groups, we tend to want to stay in our comfort zone.

Unfortunately, though, one social standard that has become increasingly prevalent is the idea that trying too hard isn’t cool. Putting forth effort or caring about something is frowned upon; instead, indifference has become the popular thing to display. This extends from academics, with people not working their hardest in the classroom, to school spirit, where getting loud is awkward to do when no one else is doing it with you.

Especially as it pertains to school spirit, people should make a concerted effort to encourage others to get into pep rallies and participate in chants. Though it may seem weird when so few people are doing it, people must find the strength to take that next step out of their comfort zone and convince others to do the same. The more people that get into it, the more that will join in, like a chain reaction. High school is a time of your life you only have once, and as paralyzing as social status may seem now, it will mean very little in the long run. So why not get loud? Why not risk embarrassment? Why not try “too hard?” Having a good time is what school spirit is all about, and you can’t do that sitting down.

Every one of us has had to struggle with social standards at one point or another during our time at high school. It is truly unfortunate that trying your best is so often unpopular to do, but it’s important that we nevertheless do just that. Of course it’s important just to support the various spirit groups and sports teams of our school, as well as the staff who put work into said events, but more than that, it’s rewarding to stick your neck out, take a chance, and have fun doing it. Though diverting from the norm may seem unimaginable in theory, it’s worth it.

# Ask the Chatterbox Staff

## Question: With *Chatterbox* shared across social media, how do you plan to get alumni and the community interested or maintaining interest and ties with Ruston High School?

It almost seems as if someone is reading our emails or listening in on our conversations as this is yet another great question. As we no longer print as we have in the past due to costs and many other reasons, we have actually been working on this very idea. As shown on page 1, *Chatterbox* is accessible to those who are in the LPSB system by simply joining the Google Classroom set-up by Mr. Lloyd R. Bruner at class code 3hww6uk. Mr. Bruner also emails each edition to all RHS faculty to share, and to the LPSB.

Adding to the above, Mrs. Jaimee Gressett has already shared *Chatterbox* on the official RHS Facebook account and she is also in the process of updating our school website for easier access for readers to find us by promoting our logo on the homepage. Mrs. Jennifer Ham is working on posting *Chatterbox* to the RHS Alumni Facebook.

The above actions are taking place to ensure that everyone in the Bearcat Nation can keep tabs on the many outstanding things that our students are doing in classrooms, in sports, in organizations, and in the community. We do this to provide information on what happens at RHS that past, current, and future Bearcats may want to know, and to present it in a positive manner that brings dignity to and a positive image of RHS in the community. With today’s ever increasing use of technology and instant access to information, we feel our actions best serve our school as well as our readers.

Starting this month, *Chatterbox* is bringing back the “Where Are They Now” section where we plan to highlight one or more past students and their accomplishments. Mr. Bruner has already reached out to many past students through LinkedIn and other sources and has received responses. We hope by doing this, current students see how valuable their education is at RHS as well as how valuable it is to get involved. We also hope other past students see this and contact us to share their stories. By having our past students share their successes, *Chatterbox* will from time to time publish a “Blast from the Past” article from past editions of *Chatterbox*..

We believe that all the above actions will bring interest to all of Bearcat Nation - past and present. We hope that answers your question satisfactory. Keep reading each edition each month, keep interested in RHS, and please share *Chatterbox* to others. As we mention every edition, any member of Bearcat Nation may submit items, especially with pictures, and help make *Chatterbox* even more enjoyable for everyone. This is a student newspaper, and we want to see all students receive recognition for success.

If you have a question that you’d like published and answered in *Chatterbox*, send it to [chatterbox@lincolnschools.org](mailto:chatterbox@lincolnschools.org) from your school account. Questions will be answered by a staff member or the adviser depending on the depth of the question and answer. Questions will remain anonymous unless you wish to be known.

This month’s edition was delayed due to the holidays and a large number of articles added over the week. We hope the wait was worth it for the Bearcat Nation!

### Chatterbox 2021-2022 Publication Plan Published Online in Google Classroom: 3hww6uk

YES/NO DAY	ARTICLE DEADLINE	PUBLICATION DATE
December 9, 2021 January 13, 2022 February 10, 2022 March 10, 2022 April 13, 2022 May 18, 2022	December 13, 2021 January 18, 2022 February 14, 2022 March 21, 2022 April 19, 2022 May 23, 2022	December 16, 2021 January 20, 2022 February 17, 2022 March 24, 2022 April 21, 2022 May 26, 2022





# Ruston High School: Where Are They Now?



November 26, 2021

Often, current students are so busy thinking of where they are today and planning ahead that they may forget that many others have already traveled these same sacred halls at Ruston High School (RHS). With alumni around the world having access to *Chatterbox*, we reached out to some to offer them a chance to enlightened today’s students on their experiences at RHS and perhaps offer some advice. We decided to simply call this “Where Are They Now?” and see where it takes us. Past alumni were given the chance to respond in any form of their choice, and we are hoping many more will reach out to *Chatterbox* with their submission and provide guidance, information, and inspiration to all of Bearcat Nation. We also hope that the students of RHS enjoy this section, and perhaps even send us suggestions on other alumnus that they would like to hear from. We begin with the first two alumni who responded: Mr. Carlos S. Wilson II, CPA (Class of 2010) and Mr. Matthew Manning, MBA (Class of 2011).



## Mr. Carlos S. Wilson II, CPA Class of 2010

Carlos is a native of Grambling, Louisiana, where he is also a member of Mt. Zion Baptist Church. He attended Ruston High School (RHS) from 2006-2010. As a freshman at RHS, Carlos was a member of the Speech & Debate team, winning first at several intra-state competitions, and a member of the Bearcat football, baseball, and basketball teams. During his sophomore through senior years, he also earned All-District designations as a lettermen member of both the Bearcat varsity football and varsity soccer programs. He was also a varsity member of the men’s basketball team and track & field team during his junior and senior years. Carlos graduated from RHS with honors in 2010, before attending Tulane University in New Orleans, LA, where he was a 4-year varsity letter on Tulane’s Green Wave football team and served as President of the Student-Athlete Advisory Council (SAAC). At the 2016 Graduation Ceremony, Carlos was Tulane’s Commencement Student-Speaker. During his time at RHS, Carlos was also a very active member of the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) club amongst other clubs, including Key Club, Fellowship of Christian Athletes (“FCA”), French Club, National Honor Society, Student Council President and President of FBLA.

As an active member, FBLA State and National Convention attendee, and chapter President of FBLA, Carlos worked to not only grow and better his professional skills that have helped him thrive in corporate America, but he also worked to help his peers, mentees and friends realize the impact and importance of developing their professional skills. Amongst the most valuable lessons learned from his time in FBLA, Carlos believes the most invaluable takeaways were around effective communication and creating a strong personal brand rooted in professionalism. “Communication as key”, he explains, “is indeed a vital understanding that many young professionals do not [fully] grasp until way later (if not too late) in their careers; however, through FBLA I was able to not only learn how to communicate in business, but also to master how to become an effective communicator in every aspect of my life and career.” He continues, “An effective communicator is someone who not only speaks to be heard, but speaks to drive action, to deliver progress, to inspire and to effect change.”

With regard to creating a personal brand tooted in professionalism, Carlos directly attributes this takeaway to his time and duties discharged as RHS’s FBLA President, which, he firmly believes, separated him from his peers early in his career: *After graduating from Tulane, I wanted to go to New York City, the ‘Big Apple’—because I wanted to work in Finance on Wall Street and where Finance is the toughest and most competitive place. Further, I did not just want to ‘work’ in Finance; I wanted to win in Finance and be the best. And what I learned, very quickly, was that how well you do / how much you succeed is highly correlated to the opportunities to you receive. And the opportunities you receive are also highly correlated to the image you portray and how you are perceived. And the best way to be both perceived well and viewed as a competent financier was to govern yourself with precision and professionalism. Simple things: Be on time, be confident, take notes, don’t be late, dress well, speak clearly...and did I mention be on time? Those are all things that I watched my peers and colleagues learn later in their careers or had to learn the “hard way”; whereas I—having already been trained and groomed and having gained experience in this mannerism through my time in FBLA—was able to focus less on learning how to be professional and more on how to crush the opportunities that my afore-learned professionalism had already granted me. This led me to receiving two “early-promotions” throughout my career, not just because my work product was solid, but also because when the Partners and Managing Directors assessed whether or not I was ready for the next roll I always was granted favorable reviews because—from a professional readiness standpoint—I was ahead of my peers and the firm felt that I should be promoted as such, even it was faster than the traditional timeline.*

To those currently navigating their high school career and evaluating their next steps, Carlos has the following advice: *If you’re not in FBLA, I highly recommend joining. I think FBLA is the single-most valuable club in any high school environment because its skills are applicable in every phase of your life, not just work. For example: Working for a large corporation? You need to learn email etiquette, meeting room etiquette, dress etiquette, etc. Taking over your family business? You need to learn stakeholder and customer management, brand management, etc. Running a business / starting your own business? Need to learn the functional skills (computing, accounting, etc.). Not interested in business / finance / corporate America, but just want to be successful at whatever you do? Need to learn communications skills and sharpen your interpersonal skills; need to learn brand awareness to ensure you’re perceived in line with your goals and brand. What about if none of the above interests you, and you want to be a famous Youtuber / Instagram influencer and just want to meet Beyonce? That’s fine; but you still need to learn how to be a professional, how to hold a conversation, how to dispense the proper etiquette, how to communicate, etc. And FBLA is the single most comprehensive experience that, by learning now, will pay you insurmountable dividends later and forever throughout the course of your life and career no matter what that may be or where your interest may lie.*

***Lastly and most importantly, Go Bearcats, Beat West Monroe, and Neville!***

Today, Carlos is a Manager in PricewaterhouseCoopers (“PwC”) M&A Advisory practice and has cross-industry experience, supporting Financial and Corporate buyers on operational due diligence and pre-close engagements. As a Merger & Acquisition (M&A) Consultant, his experiences include executing buy- and sell-side due diligence, carve-out, divestiture, and integration management strategically aligned to drive consulting solutions growth within the PwC’s Delivering Deal Value (DDV) / Deals Transformation workstream—which executes as enabler of inorganic growth strategies to fuel value creation for corporate and private equity clients using an agile mindset and through sector expertise. Carlos has been with PwC for 5 years, during which he has specialized in finance and accounting matters, and wherein he specialized in leading the day-to-day execution of audit engagements for private REITs, investment companies and investment advisors; executed audits of fair value measurements for real estate investments, and financial reporting for real estate investment funds (open-end, closed-end, and single investor account structures). His prior experience in PwC’s audit practice has allowed him to hone his cost modeling, data analytics, and critical thinking skills, while offering a uniquely holistic viewpoint to each phase of the deal continuum. He has worked in PwC’s New York City, NY; Phoenix, AZ; Los Angeles, CA; and Chicago, IL offices and has served both domestic and international clients. Carlos earned both his BSM in Finance and his Masters in Accounting from Tulane University’s A.B. Freeman School of Business. Additionally, Carlos is a Certified Public Accountant having received licensures from the New York State Board of education and the Arizona State Board of Accountancy.

## Mr. Matthew Manning, MBA Class of 2011



Being active and staying involved. These two actions laid the foundation in high school for me to grow into the person that I am today. For me, the busier I am and the more I have going on, the more productive I am and the less trouble I find myself getting into. That was true in high school and still holds true today. Ruston High School provides their students with countless opportunities to become active and stay involved, and I encourage all students who are reading this to take advantage of those opportunities. Whether it be sports, choir, band, FBLA, etc., find something that you’re interested in and become involved. For me, this included being a member of the football and baseball teams, as well as an active member of FBLA. Not only did being active and staying involved within sports and FLBA keep me out of trouble growing up, but it also taught me four valuable traits that I continue to use and develop daily.

**Accountability**  
Being involved in teams or a member of an organization such as FBLA empowers you to be accountable. When something is bigger than yourself, you will work harder, as others are relying on your input to reach a goal. Within every role throughout my career, I have had to be an accountable and responsible contributor to my organization; and this trait was firmly established within me during my time at Ruston High through the organizations that I was involved in.

**Adversity**  
Life is not always an easy ride. My career path has been full of ups and downs. I’ve been told “no” more times than I’ve been told “yes” and I have failed more times than I have been successful. However, one thing I learned quickly at Ruston High through sports and FBLA, and continue to remind myself today, is that failures are really opportunities to improve and better yourself. Use the hard times and challenges you face to motivate you to become the person you want to be.

**Integrity**  
Do the right thing, even when no one else is watching. It’s easy to skip a rep in the weight room when your coach isn’t watching, or to take the easy way out on an assignment just to get that passing grade. However, it’s the smallest things that make the biggest difference. That extra rep or ten more minutes you put into an assignment could be the difference between a win/loss or scoring the highest in your class. Do what others won’t, so you can achieve what others can’t.

**Healthy Relationships/Connections**  
You’ve probably heard the phrase “it’s not what you know, it’s who you know”. While education and intelligence are extremely important, the relationships and connections you make with others will pay dividends throughout your life. Some of the opportunities I have had and the jobs I have landed came directly from relationships and connections I have made with people throughout my life. You never know... the person whose locker is right beside you or the contact you met at a FBLA convention could be the person who offer’s you your dream job or gives you the opportunity of a lifetime in the future.

**Professional Summary**  
Success-driven and results-oriented business analyst and project manager, with extensive experience in providing in- depth, analytical analysis of impacts from multiples strategic initiatives and delivering insights on how each initiative contributes to an organization’s bottom line, as well as the effects each initiative has on all operating areas within an organization. With the goal to create a collaborative work environment aiming to inspire, evaluate, and drive data-driven strategic decisions; career accomplishments demonstrate successfully delivering growth and retention to an organization, while ensuring all internal operating areas remain efficient and effective. Currently responsible for leading, supporting, and tracking the execution of strategic customer experience initiatives from design to implementation by efficiently coordinating work and deliverables between internal cross-functional subject matter experts and third-party vendors to ensure consistent delivery through our people, technology and networks. After implementation, responsible for tracking the ROI to determine feasible opportunities to continue and/or expand initiatives.

**Education, Skills, and Knowledge**  
Graduated from RHS in 2011. After earning his Bachelor of Science in Business Marketing at Louisiana Tech University in 2015, he remained a Bulldog and earned his Master of Business Administration (MBA). In the process, he enhanced his skills and knowledge in many way, including relationship management between internal and external stakeholders of an organization and strategic analysis and decision making. He is proficient in all Microsoft Office Suites and trained in SQL, Oracle, and SAS database management platforms. He experience also includes working in Adobe, Google analytics software, as well as with Spotfire, PowerBI, QlikView, and Tableau applications.

## Employment and Career Accomplishments

**FedEx**  
• Surprise and Delight program expansion across pilot and nationwide launches to drive emotional connection and brand awareness within consumer recipients.  
• Hack-a-Thon Lead Analyst: Synthesizing and socializing ideation of 2% initiatives to leadership for adoption and implementation.  
• Departmental Budget Lead: Strategically tracking and reporting analysis related to expenses, invoices, and deliverables of projects across the organization.

**Terminix**  
• New Sales Channel Implementation; Retail Sales (Sam’s Club/Costco/Home Depot) End to end development/launch of new sales channels.  
Relationship management of retail sales channel partners.  
• Development/launch of new sales application software for internal and external sales reps to sell products and generate leads for Terminix.

**CenturyLink**  
• Relationship management between CenturyLink and vendor contact centers to ensure alignment of strategic goals and metrics to measure success.  
• Creation of Consumer Markets KPI reporting dashboard using multiple databases, queries, and logic to report out key performing indicators to all levels of leadership within the organization.  
• Reassignment of contact center reps across owned/operated centers and vendor centers to drive ~1.5 million in annual savings, while maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness of each center.

# Attention RHS Alumni!

If you are interested in sharing your story, please email us at [chatterbox@lincolnschools.org](mailto:chatterbox@lincolnschools.org). We ask you to simply provide us a basic article on your experiences at RHS, where your life and/or career having taken you, and of course, a current photo to accompany the article. We will try our best to format it well and do it justice. Depending on the number of articles received and space, we will try to publish 2 in every edition that we publish. Before we actually publish, we will email you the page and layout in PDF format for your comments and/or edits if time permits.





November 26, 2021

## RHS FFA Captures District Titles

Information Provided by Mr. Landon Wade/FFA Advisor

On November 16, 2021, RHS FFA members participated in the District 2 Leadership Development Event, held at the Douglas Church. FFA members let early that morning after school started, and before the school day had ended, had returned with multiple placements, among them, 5 district championships.

In Creed Speaking, Kolby Sonnier brought home the first district championship with his first-place finish. In Employment Skills, Morgan McLeod brought home her district championship with Harrison Deason placing 3<sup>rd</sup> for RHS FFA. In Gulf of Mexico Speaking, RHS FFA finished 1-2 as Nigel Kinsey captured the district championship with Alyssa Inman finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> right behind him. With a history of championships in the past, the RHS FFA Parliamentary Procedure Team did not disappoint as they brought home the team district championship. Members of the team were Caleb Granger, Raymond Granger, Carter Gay, Miles Willis, Andrew Corley, and Dylan Trevillion.

The winning continued as RHS FFA placed 1-2 once again, this time in Extemporaneous Speaking. Kassidy Kelley brought home the district championship followed by Dutch Russell in 2<sup>nd</sup> place. Rounding out the placements at district, Bri McLaughlin placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in Prepared Speaking. Future competition continues and updates will be provided on all RHS FFA success.



RHS FFA Competitors at the District 2 Leadership Development Event



District Champion: Creed Speaking  
Kolby Sonnier



District Champion: Employment Skills  
Morgan McLeod



District Champion: Gulf of Mexico Speaking  
Nigel Kinsey

## RHS FFA Plans Construction Project for FBLA

Information Provided by Mr. Lloyd R. Bruner/FBLA Adviser

The Ruston High School FFA Organization and the Ruston High Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) have always been two of the larger co-curricular organizations on campus. Although they represent two distinct organizations, many students have been members of both. RHS FFA and RHS FBLA have had a friendly and professional working relationship and have worked on some service projects together, and the advisers, leaders, and members show support for each other. A few years ago, both organizations even made a little history as each chapter had the distinction of having the state president serving in the same year.

Continuing their strong relationship, RHS FFA is currently planning construction work to build a half wall/divider and gated entrance in Room 332, to separate the actual business classroom from the back-room area used as the headquarters and officer meeting area for the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA). FBLA adviser Mr. Lloyd R. Bruner contacted FFA Adviser Mr. Landon Wade on the project as FBLA needed a secure area for storage and meetings that still provided visibility to the entire room. Years ago, a sliding wall separated the two areas as the back of the room was used for storage of computers and for the computer repair and architecture classes. The old sliding walls were taking down and are too costly to replace, and further, a solid wall would prevent the adviser/teacher from monitoring both areas as needed.

RHS members Kassidy Kelley and Nigel Kinsey joined Mr. Wade in discussing the needs of the project with Mr. Bruner. Measurements were taken and ideas shared, and they are currently working the planning of the construction. Adding to the plans, Carter Gay will also use his talents to paint the project, to include the official colors and emblems of FBLA. FBLA will pay for the materials needed and any other expenses, and FFA will gain valuable training in construction that will benefit both them and FBLA for years. Once constructed, *Chatterbox* will ensure that our readers get a view of the finished project, which we are confident will be outstanding.



## Keywanettes Select Members to Service

by Moriah Jackson/Sports Reporter

It was time once again for applications to be turned in for those interested in becoming a member of the Keywanettes at Ruston High School (RHS). The Keywanettes are a girls' service organization for juniors and seniors at RHS. Their purpose is to provide exceptional services for the school and the community. The organization's staff sponsor and leader is math teacher Mrs. Jill Benefield, and they meet once a month during the regular advisory hour.

The application process is highly selective and being admitted is a great honor. At long last, the wait is over, and the Keywanettes are not wasting any time planning for the school year. The Keywanettes recently announced this year's new members, including 4 seniors and 12 juniors. The 4 seniors selected to become Keywanettes are Roselyn Bennett, Moriah Jackson, Kiona McCallister, and Sophie Mae Smith. The 12 junior members selected as Keywanettes are Maggie Ambrose, Carmen Bishop, Taryn Davidson, Lorelei Freling, Brooke Jackson, Ginger Johnson, Jordan Jones, Landry Grace Nelson, Mia Claire Rabb, Emma Jane Reeves, Hannah Reeder, and Callie Stegall.

RHS organizations typically design their own unique t-shirt, and Keywanettes chose a design they feel sets their members apart. Their shirts include a quote by Anne Frank: "No one has ever become poor by giving." The t-shirt design indeed embodies the core of the organization. Keywanettes are looking forward to a great and rewarding year serving their school and community.

## RJHS FBLA Prepares for the Year

Information Provided by Mrs. Christina Watts/FBLA Adviser

Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) is an organization that helps students prepare for their future careers and serves the community through various projects. Chapters with students in grades 6-8 are members of Middle-Level FBLA and participate in middle level activities to include competing against other Middle-Level FBLA chapters at the regional, state, and national level.

The Ruston Junior High School (RJHS) ML-FBLA chapter is currently focused on our holiday community service project. RJHS ML-FBLA has teamed up with the Louisiana Methodist Children's Home this year to help wrap Christmas presents. The chapter is also planning additional service activities.

Fundraiser efforts are also underway to help raise money for the chapter as well. The "duct tape challenge" is the group's most talked about event of the year! Students will donate money to duct tape a teacher to the wall; each dollar raised equals one piece of tape. Members are responsible for advertising and coordinating the event.

RJHS ML-FBLA meetings are led by the school's junior leaders: President Taylor Roller, Vice President Joshua Daulton, Secretary Oli Deal, Reporter Laini Holloway, Treasurer Preston Parker and Parliamentarian Jamildria Goldsmith. Each meeting consists of the Pledge of Allegiance and the FBLA pledge. The group then focuses on planning for fundraisers and future community service projects. The Ruston Junior High ML-FBLA is sponsored by Christina Watts.



Pictured left to right: Treasurer Preston Parker, Reporter/Historian/Photographer Laini Holloway, Secretary Oli Deal, Vice President Joshua Daulton, and President-Taylor Roller. Not shown: Parliamentarian Jamildria Goldsmith.

## New Officer Team for IAL FBLA Chapter

by Marirose Spillers/ I. A. Lewis FBLA Reporter

This month, the FBLA-ML Chapter #19447 of I. A. Lewis hosted our chapter elections. On October 6, 2021, our chapter had six positions filled by the members of the chapter who best demonstrated leadership, punctuality, professionalism, and dedication towards the chapter. On the day of the election, the chapter members, one by one, stood at the front of the room and presented their presentation to the chapter. After the presentations, the members from the chapter filled out a document choosing the scholar that would best represent the chapter.

We are proud to announce this year's winners. In the position of the president, Emily McGuirt was elected. For the vice president, we have Anna Simmons. Eli Clark has the role of secretary. Marirose Spillers has the position of reporter. For treasurer, we have Amyrie Jackson. Lastly, we have Jax Taylor as our parliamentarian. The officers that were elected are very responsible and accountable. The members of the chapter would like to thank Mrs. Levesque and Mrs. Collins for being our teacher sponsors. All the newly appointed officers are excited and looking forward to representing the school and chapter throughout the remainder of the 2021-22 school year.



Pictured left to right: Jax Taylor, Elijah Clark, Marirose Spillers, Emily McGuirt, Anna Simmons, and Amyrie Jackson.



I.A. Lewis ML-FBLA members take part in the officer election process.



I.A. Lewis ML-FBLA member Marirose Spillers gives her election speech to the chapter.





## RHS FBLA: The State’s Top FBLA Chapter Aims to Prove It Again

### Service/Leadership Retreat/Fundraisers/Competition

The Ruston High School (RHS) Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) has finalized its membership and is now working hard towards meeting service, fundraising, and competition requirements. As the Gold Seal Chapter of Merit (top chapter overall) winner three of the past four years, including the past, this year’s chapter, has much to live up to. RHS leads the state with three state officers once again and remains the only chapter to have ever had three state officers.

To prepare for this year’s goals, RHS FBLA will be conducting its **4th Annual Leadership Retreat on December 9, 2021, at The Gospel Inc.**, which will also double as our December chapter meeting this year. Local Lincoln Parish FBLA chapters, to include middle-level chapters from Ruston Junior High School and I.A. Lewis, will also be participating. RHS FBLA members who register for the Leadership Retreat will leave that morning by 8:30 a.m. and return at approximately 2:15 p.m., with officers meeting there early and out for the entire day. The Leadership Retreat will ensure that members receive valuable training in FBLA procedures and events, to include and focus on this year’s many changes to competitive events. Mrs. Jessica George will be representing Louisiana Tech and providing updates on the regional conference. In addition to the valuable training that all members will receive, members will bring donations to support this year’s main community service project (featured later), socialize, enjoy Johnny’s Pizza and special RHS FBLA cookies from our own Mrs. Melanie Garrison, and have a chance to ask questions and make final changes to their competitive events for the year.

**In the area of service**, the main pillar in FBLA, the chapter is already working on this year’s Community Service Project (see article below). In addition to the main project, the chapter has already raised funds for our annual donation to **Christian Community Action (CCA)**, as well as the **Arkansas Children’s Hospital (ACH)**, in which the chapter will purchase items for the patients and families who are being cared for in the Cardio-Vascular Intensive Care Unit (CV-ICU). The chapter is also planning the annual **Appreciation for the Ruston Police Department and the Ruston Fire Department** immediately after the Leadership Retreat. The usual visit to the local Louisiana Army National Guard to show appreciation for their service will be different this year, as officers and select approved members will instead **welcome home members of the local units who will be returning from overseas**, among them SSG Josh Bruner, graduate of RHS and son of Mr. Lloyd R. Bruner.

**In the area of fundraising**, RHS FBLA has wrapped up our **World’s Finest Chocolates** fundraiser, raising almost \$400 (25% of profits) towards our main community service project. We are currently working on our **Country Meat Snacks** fundraiser, where we expect to earn around \$250 (10% of profits) for the ACH project, as well as \$500 (20% of profits) for our main community service project. With a huge range of flavors, everyone is encouraged to purchase these for treats, snacks, or maybe those hunters or for holiday stockings. Members have them, and if anyone is interesting in purchasing these direct, feel free to visit or email Mr. Lloyd R. Bruner at [lbruner@lincolnschools.org](mailto:lbruner@lincolnschools.org) to arrange your purchase and help our causes. The other percentages of profits are being allocated between the members who earned them and the chapter to assist with future conference costs. In February - March 2022, FBLA members will pre-sell **Popcorn** to earn profits for their conferences and the chapter. Our final fundraiser as far as selling will return to **World’s Finest Chocolates** again from March-May 2022, with profits designated primarily to cover costs for the members to attend the FBLA National Leadership Conference. Members qualifying and attending nationals will also be seeking sponsorship forms using official RHS FBLA forms specific for this.

The **FBLA Northeast Regional Conference on January 28, 2022, will be held at Louisiana Tech**. To attend, members should sign up for their events by the end of this month, with one last opportunity to make competitive events changes after our Leadership Retreat. Once locked in, these cannot be changed. Members will be competing against schools in District I and District II this year (basically all of northern Louisiana) for the opportunity to qualify for the **Louisiana FBLA State Leadership Conference that will be held March 26-29, 2022, at the Cajundome at the University of Louisiana - Lafayette (ULL)**. Those qualifying for nationals will then have the opportunity to compete at the **FBLA National Leadership Conference held this year in Chicago from June 26 - July 3, 2022**.

RHS FBLA appreciates the support and hard work that our 5 advisers put in to make our chapter the best. Our advisers Mr. Lloyd R. Bruner, Mrs. Jennifer Ham, Ms. Joanna Ham, Mrs. Dori Lewis, and Mrs. Lillie Williams all play a part in ensuring that our chapter is able to continue at such a high level. From providing administrative support and coordination, managing funds, traveling and working the with state officers and the state chapter, and even working the concession stand at RHS, each adviser ensures that all members have the best chance to succeed in FBLA and works hard to help everyone reach financial goals and for money to never be a reason not to be involved. The chapter also appreciates the support and understanding of all teachers at RHS for ensuring that our members have the opportunity to attend and fully participate in meetings and all aspects of FBLA. The support of the Lincoln Parish School Board is also appreciated. Not to be forgotten, the chapter also recognizes the support and participation by its members and especially the parental involvement and encouragement of members.

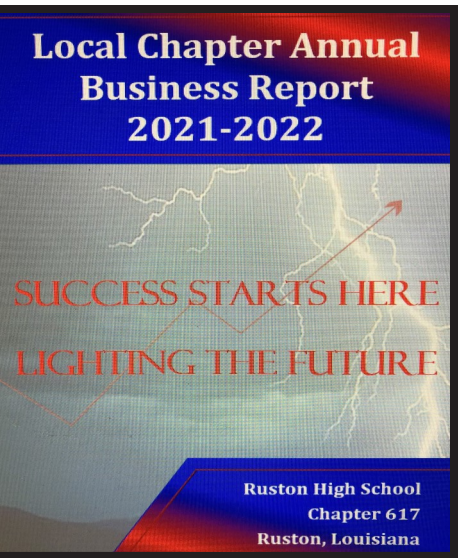
Finally, RHS FBLA hopes that everyone who can will support our three primary chapter projects this year that help form our fourth chapter project, the Local Chapter Annual Business Report, all of which are big components of the Gold Seal Chapter of Merit. Although these chapter projects are led by a chapter officer and presented by a team of 2-3 members, each of these require participation by chapter members to be a success. Each of these are summarized and publicized in this edition of *Chatterbox*, but are far from covering all of the planning, effort, and hard work put into these projects by our chapter, especially the team leaders assisted by our advisers and parents.

Provided below is an overview of each of our four projects, beginning with the Local Chapter Annual Business Report, led by Louisiana FBLA State Secretary/RHS Chapter President Moriah Jackson; followed by our Partnership With Business Project, led by Louisiana State Parliamentarian/Chapter Parliamentarian Peter Owen, and our American Enterprise Project, led by Chapter Treasurer Kimberly Gardner.

As always, service remains the cornerstone of FBLA, so the chapter always reaches out to the community for a need that may be overlooked but deserving of support. As such, our Community Service Project, led by the Louisiana District II Vice President/Chapter Historian Matthew Daulton, has many layers and details. As such, this will be covered on the next page, and we ask that anyone in Bearcat Nation who can and is willing to please contribute and help us give “A Little Help for Little Helpers”



RHS T-shirt logo designed by President Moriah Jackson.



## RHS FBLA Local Chapter Annual Business Report

authored by RHS Chapter President Moriah Jackson/LCABR Project Manager

The Local Chapter Annual Business Report (LCABR) is submitted each year to the Louisiana State FBLA adviser to be judged as far as the accomplishments of local chapters. This report provides an overview of all the activities and involvement of the chapter during the current year, starting from the previous year’s State Leadership Conference to this year’s current State Leadership Conference. It is also important in determining the Chapter of Merit Award given to the state’s top overall chapter, as it is used as the tiebreaker if needed. This is a chapter event that is judged on its own, to include not only the report, but also a presentation by the team selected to represent the chapter.

All team, presentation, and chapter events are judged using rating sheets, like what we know as a rubric. The four major components of the written report are 1) Describing the chapter’s program of work and summary of the year’s activities, 2) Describe activities to benefit the chapter and its members (with 6 subcomponents), 3) Describe activities to benefit other individuals and organizations (with 2 subcomponents), and 4) Describe conferences attended and any recognition received (with 3 subcomponents).

The presentation of the written report is judged using 3 criteria as far as presenters: 1) Statements are well-organized and clearly stated, 2) Demonstrates self-confidence, poise, assertiveness, and good voice projection, and 3) Demonstrates the ability to effectively answer questions. Presenters, of course, must be heavily involved to present as the judges will ask questions, and as always, all FBLA members are to be dressed in proper business attire.

## RHS FBLA American Enterprise Project

### Project SNAAE

authored by Kimberly Gardner, FBLA Treasurer/AEP Project Manager

The American Enterprise Project (AEP) is a chapter project designed to promote an awareness of some facet of the American enterprise system within the school and/or community. The project is submitted in written form upon completion, and then presented by a team from the chapter at the State Leadership Conference. Both the project and the presentation are judged using a rating sheet.

The six major components of the written report/expectations are that the project 1) Describing project development and strategies used to implement the project, 2) Describe research into school or community needs, 3) Appropriate level of chapter member involvement in the project, 4) The degree of impact on the community and its citizens, 5) Evidence of publicity received, and 6) Student evaluation of project effectiveness.

The presentation of the written report is judged using 3 criteria as far as presenters: 1) Statements are well-organized and clearly stated, 2) Demonstrates self-confidence, poise, assertiveness, and good voice projection, and 3) Demonstrates the ability to effectively answer questions. Presenters, of course, must be heavily involved to present as the judges will ask questions, and as always, all FBLA members are to be dressed in proper business attire.

This year, our AEP is called Project SNAAE (Spreading News About American Enterprise). We decided to do a fun activity with the intent of spreading awareness about the American enterprise system, which consists of a game of Jeopardy where students in teams of 3-4 teams answer various questions regarding facts and information about the American enterprise system. We have already worked on some of this in different classrooms at Ruston High School and will be continuing to work towards the goals we have established. Teachers, we will be asking some of you for some class time and provide you with the plans for each activity. This project will not only support our FBLA project but spread the news on the American enterprise system and hopefully get students more involved and understanding not just the way it works, but how being members of FBLA can also teach them valuable skills for the future.



RHS students participate in Project SNAAE

## RHS FBLA Partnership with Business

### Teaming Up with Tommy’s Tees

authored by Chapter Parliamentarian Peter Owen/ PWB Project Manager

The Partnership with Business Project (PWB) is a chapter project designed to demonstrate the development and implementation of an innovative, creative, and effective partnership plan. The project is submitted in written form upon completion, and then presented by a team from the chapter at the State Leadership Conference. Both the project and the presentation are judged using a rating sheet.

The six major components of the written report/expectations are that the project 1) Describing project development and strategies used to implement the project, 2) Explain the responsibilities of the business and chapter leaders, 3) Appropriate level of chapter member involvement in the project, 4) Show evidence of information learned from the partnership, 5) Evidence of publicity received, and 6) Student evaluation of project effectiveness.

The presentation of the written report is judged using 3 criteria as far as presenters: 1) Statements are well-organized and clearly stated, 2) Demonstrates self-confidence, poise, assertiveness, and good voice projection, and 3) Demonstrates the ability to effectively answer questions. Presenters, of course, must be heavily involved to present as the judges will ask questions, and as always, all FBLA members are to be dressed in proper business attire.

This year, our chapter has decided to partner with Tommy’s Tees, an integral part of the Ruston community. In 2019, they produced hundreds of “RUSTON STRONG” tee shirts as a fundraiser for disaster relief, and they are constantly helping around the community. They have always handled our and many other RHS T-shirts orders and have always been fair and ethical in working with us. Our chapter has decided to work with Tommy’s Tees to learn their business plans, community relations, and become knowledgeable in their operations as we promote both their business and our chapter. We plan to learn the process of customizing apparel and effective target marketing and to become more familiar with ethical business practices and the way local businesses interact with their communities.



This year’s RHS FBLA T-shirt was designed by President Moriah Jackson. Proofed and printed by Tommy’s Tees.





# RHS FBLA Community Service Project

## A Little Help for Little Helpers

submitted by the RHS FBLA CSP Team:  
Matthew Daulton (Project Manager), Aaron Fallin, and Jason Willis

Every year, the Ruston High School (RHS) Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) conducts a major Community Service Project (CSP) in addition to supporting the Arkansas Children's Hospital (ACH) and many other service projects. This year, we have selected **Little Helpers Pediatric Day Health Center** located in Ruston, Louisiana, as our project. We have named this project "A Little Help for Little Helpers."

Little Helpers Pediatric Day Health Center's mission is to provide medical day health services to infants, toddlers, and children from birth to age 21 whose medical conditions require technology based and/or skilled nursing intervention. Many patients have multiple medical conditions and receive on site educational assistance and physical, occupational, and speech therapy, and some will require constant specialized care for life. Little Helpers serves patients within a 50-mile range to include providing transportation for patients in Ruston, Farmerville, Dubach, Homer, Quitman, Jonesboro, Hodge, and Choudrant. They also accept patients beyond the 50-mile radius if they can provide their own transportation to and from the facility.

Little Helpers Pediatric Day Health Center is an LLC licensed through the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, owned/managed by Mr. Todd Craighead and Mrs. Stella Craighead. Mr. Craighead is a Louisiana Tech graduate with over 25 years' experience as an RN. Seeing that there was no local facility to meet the needs of local patients, he opened the facility to fill that void. Staff members are certified to work with pediatric and special needs patients, and they are registered nurses (RN), licensed practical nurses (LPN), and certified nursing assistants (CNA). The transportation staff that operates their buses/vans have certified drivers' licenses (CDL) and a nurse is always assigned to the transportation staff every day.

The entire staff at Little Helpers Pediatric Day Health Center works hard every day providing quality care for all their patients. Our adviser, Mr. Lloyd R. Bruner's daughter, Case Jane Bruner, was a patient there for almost 6 years, receiving quality care and love as she recovered from a major heart condition requiring 3 heart surgeries. She needed daily managed care, to include special feeds via a G-tube, and extra care, supervision, and assistance due to multiple fractures due to osteopenia. She is doing well now and attends Bethel Christian School, "promoted" to kindergarten after a delayed education. She still has her G-tube, but thanks to Little Helpers Pediatric Day Health Center, she is moving forward. Unfortunately, many patients are not as blessed and may either stay longer or no longer be able to continue in a non-residential setting.

In August and September 2021, RHS FBLA members began extensive research on this project. We obtained approval from the school and from Little Helpers to move forward. We also had to obtain approval with select government agencies due to privacy and health restrictions. We received valuable information from Mrs. Terry Frazier, who is our main point of contact for this project. This included vital information on the facility, its staff and patients, and a list of needs and services that we could offer.

In October and November 2021, we conducted (and continue to conduct) various fundraisers and sponsorships to assist us with the project. On November 23, 2022, project members toured the facility and visited with Mrs. Frazier, many staff members, and many patients. Afterward, we established a more defined plan of action focused on replacing / repairing their playground area, which was damaged by the 2019 tornado and is no longer usable due to safety and security concerns. This would include basically gutting the entire floor area, replacing all padding on top of the concrete floor as a safety cushion/padding, and installing new outdoor coverings/carpet. We will also provide a new water hose rack and water hose, repairing the outside gates, and replace the hinges and lockable devices for safety and security, and to satisfy any code requirements to enable the patients to again have a play area outside. We will help redecorate the facility while specifically catering to each patient's needs in their own special areas and on their own special walls, and assist with general maintenance of the facility and grounds. With a more specific list of needs and items that would best benefit Little Helpers, we will continue obtaining and/or purchasing what is needed. We will also continue to seek items and donations with our chapter sponsor/donor forms, and are making existing funds accessible as needed to accomplish our goals and purchase items as needed as we repair and replace and decorate as we work.

In December 2021, we will implement most of the repair, remodel, and repair activities with limited disruption of the routines of the patients or facility. We will continue to seek funds and items to assist in the project. We will add some fun and holiday spirit into the project by donating a Christmas tree and ornaments for the patients. We are also obtaining a "make-a-wish" type list of small gifts that each patient desires. Our Dec. 9, 2021, FBLA Leadership Retreat being held at The Gospel Inc. is also being used as a source for items, as chapter members as well as members from other local FBLA chapters will attend, with the admission cost being a simple donation of an item or funds for the project.

On Dec. 20, 2021, RHS FBLA will make our first presentation to Little Helpers on items donated and purchased to date, review the work status of our construction type projects, and plan for more items and completion of the work still needing completion. That same day, the patients (and staff) will receive a surprise visit from good old Santa Claus himself, who will present gifts to all the patients and take pictures with them.

This project requires much patience and planning and our chapter is ready to make a difference and do our best. If anyone is interesting in making donations of any kind, items that could help are listed below and could be sent to the attention of RHS FBLA, CSP-Little Helpers, at 900 Bearcat Drive. If needed, you could contact us and we would be happy to pick up donations as well. If you'd rather have a donation sheet sent to you, please email our adviser, Mr. Lloyd R. Bruner, at [lbruner@lincolnschools.org](mailto:lbruner@lincolnschools.org) and he will be happy to send you a sponsorship/donation sheet that has a list of items most needed for this project. We look forward to this being a great project and seeing the patients of Little Helpers, as well as the staff, see that we care, as does the community.



RHS FBLA Community Service Project team members Matthew Daulton (left) and Aaron Fallin (right) pose at Little Helpers.



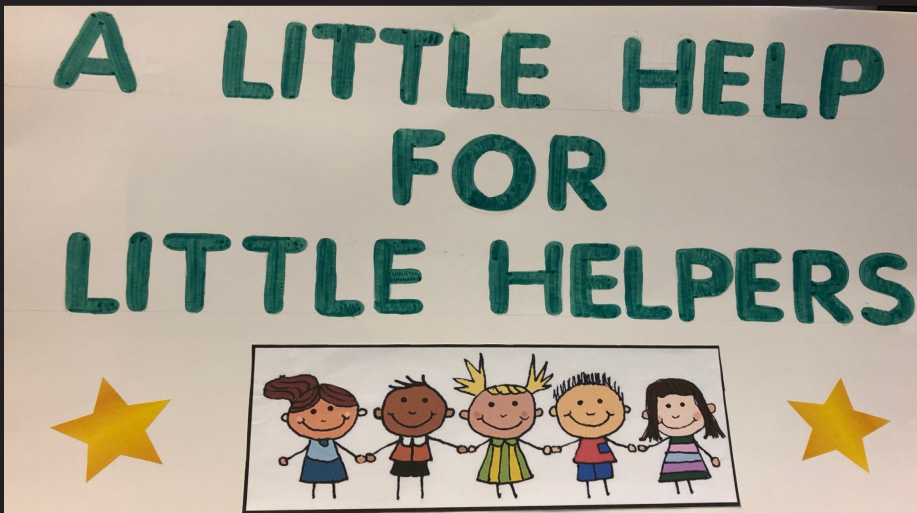
Matthew Daulton and Aaron Fallin calculate the flooring to be replaced outside.




Mr. Bruner looks on as Matthew and Aaron sift through the old playground equipment.




The CSP team surveys a damaged gate.



Casey Jane Bruner plays at Little Helpers.



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### FBLA 2021-2022 Community Service Project "A Little Help for Little Helpers" OFFICIAL SPONSORSHIP AND DONATION FORM

Anticipated dates for donations and delivery for the project:

1<sup>st</sup> Donation Period: Oct 20, 2021 – Dec. 17, 2021, FBLA Delivers: Dec. 20, 2021 2<sup>nd</sup> Donation Period: Dec. 21, 2021 – Jan. 15, 2022, FBLA Delivers: Jan. 17, 2022

Name of sponsor/donor: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell/Email: \_\_\_\_\_

FBLA Member Who Obtained Donation/Sponsorship: \_\_\_\_\_

I/we wish to donate/sponsor to the RHS FBLA Community Service project and show our support for the patients at the Little Helpers Pediatric Day Health Center. My donation(s) is/are checked below and we (do/do not) wish to be listed as donors.

\_\_\_\_\_ Monetary Donation in the amount of \_\_\_\_\_

Medical/Food Supplies: Please ensure that donations are in new condition or thoroughly cleaned and sealed to assist in ensuring the safety of staff and patients.

☐ Thermometers ☐ Hand Sanitizer ☐ Hand Soap ☐ Gloves ☐ Fragrance Free Baby Wipes ☐ Paper Towels ☐ Alcohol Wipes ☐ Cleaning Supplies ☐ Disposable Diapers (All sizes)

Stock Foods as listed below:

☐ Juices ☐ Mac & Cheese Cups ☐ Ravioli ☐ Cereal ☐ Chips ☐ Apple Sauce ☐ Pudding ☐ Baby Cereal ☐ Baby Food ☐ Chicken Ramen ☐ Other (please list): \_\_\_\_\_

Other special Needs/Supplies: Please ensure that donations are in new condition or thoroughly cleaned and sealed to assist in ensuring the safety of staff and patients.

☐ Children's books ☐ Coloring books ☐ Crayons ☐ Light up toys ☐ Teething Toys ☐ Twin Bed sheets ☐ Crib Sheets ☐ Pillows ☐ Blankets ☐ Bed Pads ☐ Wash cloths  
☐ Nail Clippers ☐ Bibs ☐ Crescent shape pillows/covers (Boppy) ☐ Baby Swings ☐ Educational Toys/Games/Activities ☐ Therapeutic Toys/Supplies  
☐ New Changing Table Pads ☐ Floor Covering Pads ☐ Children's/Baby Dishes/Utensils ☐ Other (please list): \_\_\_\_\_



THANK YOU FOR HELPING US PROVIDE  
"A Little Help for Little Helpers"







November 26, 2021

## Bearcat Belles Hold Mini Clinic

by Briley Kent/*Sports Editor*

The Ruston High dance team, the Bearcat Belles, held a mini clinic on October 17, 2021, from 2 p.m. – 5 p.m. At the mini clinic, the girls learned dances that they would perform at the football game the following Friday. This is the 8th year that the Bearcat Belles have held a mini clinic for girls in grades pre-k to 6th grade.

During the halftime show at the Ruston vs. ASH game on October 22, 2021, the group of pre-k girls danced to ‘Best Day of Our Lives’ by American Authors. The girls learned basic dance moves with the Bearcat Belles. To teach some of the younger girls, different activities had to be included to keep them attentive to the music. Emma Fernandes, captain of the Bearcat Belles, said that she hopes that by going to the mini clinic, the girls will become intrigued with the idea of dancing with the Bearcat Belles and continue to pursue dancing.

The middle group of girls were the 1st - 3rd grade girls. This group tends to work more on the technical aspects of dance and basic dance moves. Some technical skills such as keeps and turns help the girls learn the aesthetic body form of dancers and basic dance terminology. The girls danced to ‘Run Away Baby’ by Bruno Mars, where the “keeps and turns were expressed in the performance. Sophia Koskie, the co-captain of the Bearcat Belles who worked with the 1st - 3rd grade girls, said that she loved doing mini clinics and believes that it is a great opportunity for the girls to learn and experience what it is like to be a Bearcat Belle. Koskie also mentioned how she also attended the mini clinics when she was younger and how she loves to see other girls be interested in dance just as much as she was at that age.

The oldest group were the 4th - 6th grade girls. These girls learned basic dance moves, dance terminology, and more technical moves such as beat counting and pivoting. The girls performed to “Confident” by Demi Lovato. Jalyne Walsworth, a senior on the Bearcat Belles, said that this was her first year with the older girls’ group after being in pre-k the past 3 years. The major difference to her was that the older girls tend to learn faster and stay more focused on the dance techniques that were being taught. She also said that the older girls were more open and comfortable, which made it easier to teach them skills that they would later learn if they chose to try out for the Bearcat Belles.

Mrs. Heirs, the Bearcat Belles coach, said she loves the opportunity for the younger girls to learn different dances with the girls on the team, hoping to inspire them to keep dancing and one day join the Bearcat Belles. Like Koskie, these girls are motivated to perform and inspired to express themselves through dance.



Above pictures: Bearcat Belles mini clinic girls perform at halftime on October 22, 2021. Photo Credits: Bret McCormick/RHS Class of 2000



Above 6 pictures: Bearcat Belles mini clinic prepares the girls for their upcoming performance . Photo Credits: Kylie Bruner/ Class of 2011

## Bearcat Cheer: Spirit and Service

by Moriah Jackson/ *Sports/Cheer Reporter*

On November 5, 2021, the stands were packed to capacity as the local community came out to cheer for the Ruston High School Bearcats. Led by the Ruston High School cheerleaders, spirits were high and everyone was fired up. The Catbox was rocking and there was standing room only for Friday’s night game against West Monroe Rebels. RHS cheerleaders showed spirit and support at a game that meant so much to everyone.

Friday night’s football game took on even more meaning for many as it was the last game of the regular season and designated as seniors’ night. RHS cheerleaders kept spirits up throughout the game. On this special night, five RHS cheerleaders celebrated seniors’ night with all the emotions and nostalgia expected as they were introduced to the fans in the stands while standing alongside the parents, friends, and family members on the field. For seniors Hasson Brown, Lyndajah Burton, Moriah Jackson, Sidney Millage, and Greer Young – this would be a night to remember, as it would be for every senior recognized at halftime. Senior night has passed, but the cheering goes on.

In addition to providing spirit, RHS cheerleaders also took the time on November 11, 2021, to volunteer at the Ruston Veterans Day assembly. The assembly, held downtown at Railroad Park, was our small measure of appreciation to honor all our local veterans who have served our great nation.

With all that our nation’s veterans have sacrificed, it is only proper that we never forget what they have done, and always honor and remember that we are free not because of the words of the U.S. Constitution, but because our brave veterans have ensured that those words, and therefore, our many rights as free citizens in a free country, remain safe.



RHS Senior Cheerleaders on Senior Night.



Both pictures above: RHS Cheerleaders motivate the fans at every RHS Bearcat football game, from pyramids to poms.



RHS Cheerleaders attended the Ruston Veterans Day Assembly at Railroad Park on Nov. 11, 2021.



Taryn Davidson sews one of her garments.

Taryn stated, "When I was asked to participate in the fashion show I was ecstatic! I’m so grateful for the opportunity and experience. Having my work featured in a fashion show has been a dream of mine for as long as I can remember. This was an event that I’ll never forget and hope to participate in again!"

Each designer chooses his/her own models, and Taryn had several RHS students who were her models. When asked about her peers participating in the show, Taryn replied, "I’m also very thankful for my classmates that volunteered to be my models: Lucy Bennett, Caroline Estes, and Brooke Johnson. They were the perfect ladies for the job!"

## Taryn Davidson: Guest Designer

submitted by Mrs. Jaimee Gressett/*English Teacher/Chatterbox Proofing/Editing*

Every year, Louisiana Tech University’s Fashion Merchandising Event Planning class produces an upscale fashion show that features designs from their students and guest designers, as well as industry leaders in our community. This year, Ruston High junior Taryn Davidson had the wonderful opportunity of being a guest designer! The show was held on Monday, November 9, 2021, at the Davison Athletic Complex, and the theme this year was "Find Yourself through Fashion."

Clothing design is a hobby of Taryn's, which led to her being invited to participate in the ANS fashion show. To prepare for the event, Taryn prepared 4 vintage styled garments ranging from the 1920s to the 1970s. She designed and sewed each garment and some of the accessories. It took about 5 months to complete all the garments. Taryn said that the 1920s flapper dress took the most time due to the hand embroidery and beading. Taryn explained that she started learning how to sew at a very young age while spending time with her grandmother, but it wasn’t until Taryn started high school that she began taking sewing seriously.



Taryn Davidson, Guest Designer, with her models, at the ANS fashion show at Louisiana Tech.



Mr. Lloyd R. Bruner  
SFC (RET), U.S. Army  
Ruston High Teacher

## RHS Family of Service

**Mr. Lloyd R. Bruner and Sons: Justin, Josh, Jordan**

*Chatterbox* sought out veterans on the RHS staff so we could recognize them as Veteran’s Day is in November. We knew about Mr. Bruner but thought there were more at RHS, but we did not get any responses. **Mr. Bruner was clear that we give a shout out to Mrs. Dolly Weir, a U.S. Army veteran who served as a combat medic.** Mrs. Weir and Mr. Bruner served together years ago.

Mr. Bruner retired from the U.S. Army after serving 24 years in the 527th Engineer Battalion (Combat Heavy), Louisiana Army National Guard. He began in communications but changed over to logistics. He went on multiple deployments to Belize and Panama, and even found a chance to visit Norway. During his years of service, he was deployed for Desert Shield/Desert Storm in 1991 and to Afghanistan in 2001. His weapons qualifications were always expert (and still are) and he was awarded the Bronze Star for service in Afghanistan. He started teaching at RHS straight out of retirement in 2005.

All three of his older sons attended RHS. Two of them graduating from RHS and one from Choudrant. Justin served in the U.S. Army and should return (service connected medical). Josh was recently promoted to Staff Sergeant and is currently serving in the U.S. Army and should return

home soon from his 2nd deployment overseas. Jordan decided that the ground game wasn’t for him and joined the U.S. Air Force, where he returned from deployment earlier this year and is station in the western United States.

Mr. Bruner is in his 17th year of teaching business at RHS and serves as the adviser for both the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) and *Chatterbox*. He teaches dual accounting for Louisiana Tech at RHS, is the site administrator for Certipoint (Microsoft Certification), and is a lead certifier for FEMA. He serves on the Louisiana FBLA State Executive Council and has been a recipient of the Louisiana FBLA Adviser of the Year Award. At RHS, Mr. Bruner has been honored with the Regional Apple Teacher of the Year Award, and has been awarded the RHS Teacher of the Year Award as well as the Lincoln Parish Teacher of the Year Award.

Mr. Bruner is married to Kylie Mercedes Bruner, a graduate of Ruston High School, and they have 2 children who both attend Bethel Christian School: Carson Wyatt Bruner and Casey Jane Bruner. Carson is 8years old and loves anything math and STEM. Casey Jane is a heart patient at the Arkansas Children’s Hospital (ACH) and recently completed her 3rd successful open heart surgery and is now working on a feeding program to get her eating better so she can have her g-tube removed. Casey Jane has served as an inspiration for FBLA members with our FBLA Community Service Project at ACH that captured the state championship and eventually place 2nd in the nation. This year’s FBLA project is working with Little Helpers Pediatric Daycare Facility, where Casey Jane spent over 5 years under their care as she required additional medical care that could not be provided in a normal daycare or school setting. (See FBLA CSP—Little Helpers). The Bruner family attends worship at The Gospel Inc. located in Ruston.



Justin Bruner  
PFC, U.S. Army  
Ruston High Graduate



Josh Bruner  
SSG, U.S. Army  
Ruston High Graduate



Jordan Bruner  
SRA, U.S. Air Force  
Choudrant Graduate





November 26, 2021

## RHS Cross Country Results

by Lainey Bowen/ Arts and Clubs Reporter

The Ruston High School (RHS) cross country team competed at the 5A Region 1 competition held by Parkway High School on November 4, 2021. Both the boys' and girls' team did an excellent job of representing RHS in this event as they competed for qualification for the state championships scheduled later in the month.

In the top 10 for the boys' 3-mile run, six of the ten were Ruston High School students: Caleb Babineaux came in first place with a time of 15:04; Thomas Rogers followed in second place with a time of 15:18; Bryar Madden came in fourth place with a time of 15:34; Nelson Blackburn followed closely in fifth place with a time of 15:43; Andrew McKaskle finished in sixth place with a time of 15:45; and Landon Byrd closed out the Bearcat boys' top 10 finishers as he placed tenth place with a time of 16:04. Ruston High School boys' cross country team's effort led to them placing in first in the 3-mile run a total of 18 points.

The top ten for the girls' 3-mile run also featured six RHS students. Lily Garrett led the way with her first place finish with a time of 17:27. Anna Naff was the next Bearcat girl to finish as she placed fifth place with a time of 18:50, followed by Parker Nations in sixth place with a time of 19:13; Sydney Owens in seventh place with a time of 19:21; and Zoie Holstead in ninth place with a time of 19:32. Sara Naff rounded out the Bearcat girls' top 10 finishers as she placed tenth place with a time of 19:32. The Ruston High School girls' cross country team's effort matched those of the boy's team as the also placed first overall in the girls 3- mile run, with a total of 28 points.

On November 4, 2021, at Parkway High School, the North Louisiana Last Chance Meet was held. This would be the last opportunity for cross country runners to qualify for the state meet, and 3 of RHS cross country runners placed in the meet. In the boys' 3-mile run, John Davis Vessel placed fifth with a time of 16:52 and Jeff Weatherford placed ninth with a time of 17:00. In the girls 3-mile run, Marina Givens placed sixth with a time of 20:24.

The RHS cross country team took all their training and experience and applied it to all they had at state. This led to an incredible meet at the Ochsner Health LHSAA 5A State Championship 2021 held by the LHSAA at Northwestern University. Caleb Babineaux paced the RHS boys by placing 3rd in the event with a time of 15:41. The RHS girls were led by State Champion Lily Garrett's first place time of 18:08. Joining her in placing at the state meet was Anna Naff, who placed tenth with a time of 19:22. Overall, the Ruston High School Bearcat cross country team placed second in the competition with 66 points in total.



The RHS Bearcat cross country girls' team poses with their 2nd place state plaque.  
Photo credit/courtesy of Dr. Amy Vessel

## Lady Bearcat Basketball: Blazing the Court

by Moriah Jackson/Sports Reporter

Excited fans soared in to support RHS Lady Bearcat basketball team as they blazed the court on October 27, 2021. The basketball scrimmage was played in the boy's gymnasium against Carroll High School Bulldogs. The Lady Bearcats were excited about their win and continued practicing and scrimmaging as they prepared for a fantastic season of girl's basketball.

The Lady Bearcats opened non-district play at home on November 15, 2021, against Benton Tigers. Although Benton pulled off the victory with a 44-31, the team played hard and continued to learn in the young season. Undeterred, the Lady 'Cats went on the road on November 19, 2021, to face non-district for Airline Viking in Bossier City. The offense came alive and the Lady 'Cats took the victory 51-37, improving to 1-1 on the year.

On November 22, 2021, the Lady 'Cats hit the road again in non-conference play to take part in the St. Thomas More Tournament in the Cougar Dome. Taking on Lake Arthur Tigers, the Lady 'Cats improved their record to 2-1 with a 51-41 victory. Continuing in the tournament, the Lady 'Cats fell to the # 2 ranked Hathaway Lady Hornets (who ended up winning the tournament) in a close contest, 62-59, evening their non-district record at 2-2.

The Lady 'Cats look to close out November and improved on their 2-2 non-district record as they hit the road again for a non-district game against the Bossier Bearcats, where it will be the battle between the Bearcats and the Bearcats. Non-district play will continue in December 2021, with a home game against Winnfield on December 6, 2021, followed the next evening on December 7, 2021 at home again against Union Parish. The Lady Cat's will then hit the road again on December 13, 2021, to take on Arcadia, and again find themselves on the road against GCHS (Gibbsland-Coleman). On January 4, 2021, the Lady 'Cats will close out non-district play at home against Richwood.

Entering district play on January 7, 2021, the Lady Cat's will take on Alexandria at home, followed by a road game at Pineville on January 11, 2021. A tough district schedule follows these games, and although game dates may change, the Lady 'Cats will enter each game ready to play their best. Coach Graf and the Lady Bearcats appreciated all the support from their fans, and encourage everyone to come out and support Lady Bearcat basketball. Go, Lady Bearcats!



Senior Kiona McCallister takes a shot at the Oct. 27, 2021, scrimmage against Carroll.

## Boys' Bearcat Basketball Shooting for State

STAFF REPORT

It may be early to be thinking about state, but everyone knows that it is ultimate goal every season for all sports. The Ruston High School boys' basketball team, led by Coach Ryan Bond, is playing one game at a time, but knows that goal is true for them as well. With outstanding practice and scrimmages, the 'Cats have surely shown that they are well coached, well disciplined, and primed for the season. The 'Cats must now focus on keeping that discipline and drive going as the season unfolds.

Opening the season in non-district play on the road, the 'Cats traveled to Minden to take on the Crimson Tide on November 15, 2021. The season started out with the 'Cats record at 1-0 as they finished with a decisive victory over Minden with a score of 62-35. Hitting the road again, the 'Cats kept their momentum going against the Airline Vikings, extending their record to 2-0 with a 57-45 triumph. In the Saline tournament held November 19-20, 2021, the 'Cats won big against host Saline with a score of 60-27, and followed that with another offensive burst and big win against Ringgold, 74-20, bringing their official record to 4-0. The Natchitoches Central Tournament held just two days later saw the 'Cats drop their first game of the season to Bossier, 46-62, leaving the #8 ranked 'Cats at 4-1 heading into a short holiday break.

When the 'Cats resume play, they will begin on a road trip to Neville on November 30, 2021, before staring a busy schedule in December 2021. On December 4, 2021, the 'Cats head to the Carroll Shootout, and then 2 days later, they return home to face off against Winnfield on December 6, 2021, followed the next night at home against Union. The Southwood Shootout follows on December 10-11, 2021, and after that, the schedule includes several home and away games until the end of 2021. This includes several tournaments, including Ruston's own Remington Butler Classic scheduled December 16-18, 2021.

Coach Bond and the RHS basketball 'Cats remain optimistic about this year's team, and is ensuring that they continue to push themselves to achieve their goals. Bearcat fans are encouraged to show up at each game, home or away, and give the 'Cats even more motivation as the season progresses. District play will begin on the road this season as the 'Cats will face Pineville as the begin their quest for the district and state title that all teams seek. Go 'Cats!



# Lady Bearcat Volleyball - District Champions

## RHS Volleyball Ends Season in Playoffs

by Lainey Bowen/Arts and Clubs Reporter

The Ruston High School volleyball team has had an outstanding season which recently concluded with a regular season record of 28-11. The Lady Bearcats established themselves as probably the best Division I volleyball team in north Louisiana--their ending ranking of 13 was the highest of any Division I team north of Baton Rouge. As such, they dominated in district play: they earned a perfect record of 10-0 against other District 1 teams (which consists of Airline, ASH, Benton, C.E. Byrd, Captain Shreve, Natchitoches Central, Parkway, Pineville, Southwood, and West Monroe). In fact, only one of Ruston's 10 district games went past the minimum three sets; in short, they were dominant.

However, whenever RHS would face volleyball teams from south Louisiana--who have been historically the best in the state -- the Lady Bearcats found the teams to be more ready to challenge them. This was seen more in tournament play this season (which almost exclusively featured matches against south Louisianian teams), as the Lady Bearcats were just short of wins over loss (10-11-good, but not great). Those matches were close, and Ruston would always hold their own. However, it was clear that once playoff time arrived, the playing field would present a quite different challenge than district play.

As the Lady Bearcats entered the 2021 LHSAA Volleyball Playoffs, they had their work cut out for them. Their first-round matchup as the 13<sup>th</sup> seed was a home match against the 20<sup>th</sup>-ranked St. Amant Gators on November 3, 2021. In front of a huge crowd, the game delivered a great fight in which St. Amant gave the Lady Bearcats all they could handle. Ruston won the first set, 25-17, but would lose the second as St. Amant settled in, 18-25. The third match was incredibly contentious, and Ruston would reach match point, getting to 24 points first, but could not seal the deal, and narrowly lost the set, 26-24. That very near loss put the Lady Bearcats on the brink of elimination and deflated the energy out of the gymnasium; however, Ruston responded with strength, winning the final two sets and, ultimately, the match. The win was a very emotional one and was the first playoff win in team history.

The next match on November 6, 2021, placed the Lady Bearcats on the road to face 5<sup>th</sup> seeded Dutchtown. The Lady Bearcats saw their season end with a 3-set loss. This was heartbreaking and disappointing for the team as they had hoped to make it to the quarterfinals, where the state tournament has all teams face each other in Lafayette, with games played in the Cajundome. However, the team still has plenty to be proud of after going further than any other team in school history. The Lady Cats ended the season ranked 12<sup>th</sup> with a 21-7 overall record.

The Lady Bearcats will be saying goodbye to an outstanding group of seniors. Theses seniors include Sophie Mae Smith, named District MVP; Kaylyn Brazzel and Mariah Hintze, both District 1st Team selections; Riley Oakley, who was named for the District 2nd Team; McKenzie McFadden, named a District Honorable Mention; and Natalie Beason.

However, the Lady Bearcats will welcome the return of juniors Lorelei Freeling, selected to the District 1st Team, and Hannah Johnson, selected as a District Honorable Mention), and all returning players will bring this year's experiences back with them, to include playoff experience. Despite those losses of many key seniors who were a vital part of this seasons success, the program is clearly headed in the right direction. We're excited to see what this team does next year!







## RHS Bearcat Football Begins Playoff Run

by Jason Willis/*Editor-in-Chief*

The Ruston High football team opened district play on October 8, 2021, at Pineville. Ruston got off to somewhat of a sluggish start, failing to really pull away. Nonetheless, they held a 21-0 halftime lead and would win 41-0, pitching a shutout. Junior running back Dyson Fields finished with 171 total yards and 3 TDs--a down game by his standards--while senior fullback Devian Wilson amassed 78 yards and 2 TDs of his own.

The next week, on October 15, 2021, Ruston would travel to Ouachita to take on the Lions in a game with plenty of intrigue: Ouachita's head coach, Todd Garvin, previously worked as an assistant coach on the Ruston staff. Several lightning delays pushed the start of the game back, but the match proved worth the wait. The game was extremely back and forth, with Ouachita opening up a 28-14 lead early in the third quarter only to see it become 35-28 Ruston before the end of the quarter. Ouachita responded, though, and the score would be 42-35 in their favor with only a few minutes remaining. The Bearcats managed to drive down the field and junior quarterback Jaden Osborne dramatically completed a toe-tapping touchdown pass to senior receiver Dawson Willis in the corner of the end zone with 7 seconds left in the game. That play led to overtime, and, after exchanged touchdowns, the game would go to double overtime. Ruston scored on its offensive series, and Ouachita had no problem responding. With the score 56-55, though, the Lions rolled the dice and called a fake extra point to score a two-point conversion and win the game. The play failed, with Garvin later regretting the call--specifically going for the fake, not letting his best offensive players go out there and make the play. Ruston would hold on to win, despite three Bearcat turnovers that made the game closer than it needed to be. Fields gained 170 yards and 4 TDs, with Wilson adding 190 and 2 TDs.

The following week on October 22, 2021, Ruston would play host to Alexandria Senior High (ASH), a team that had spent some time ranked #1 in 5A this year but was recently coming off a loss to West Monroe. Needless to say, it was a matchup of heavyweights. Despite ASH's passing game putting up 311 yards on the Bearcat defense, Ruston closed strong, outscoring ASH 15-0 in the fourth quarter to turn a slight 23-22 deficit into a 37-23 win. RHS looked very prepared in taking care of an extremely capable opponent. Despite nursing an injury, Fields once again was the engine of the offense, with 167 total yards and 2 TDs, while Osborne's dual threat ability saw him rush for 114 and 2 TDs.

On October 28, 2021, in a rare Thursday night game, Ruston travelled to West Ouachita to play the Chiefs. In advance of the matchup with West Monroe, RHS opted to rest its star running backs (Fields and Wilson), both of whom were dealing with slight injuries and feeling the wear and tear of the season. With all the new faces, the Ruston offense was out of sync--they had 3 turnovers, all in the first quarter. Fortunately, not only did Ruston find its groove and clean things up, but the Bearcat defense was able to come up with 6 turnovers of its own. After a scoreless first quarter, RHS finally opened things up and would win 38-7, nearly holding a shutout until a touchdown in the fourth quarter. Five Bearcat running backs saw action--most of them their first snaps of the season--the most impressive of which was freshman Jordan Hayes, who flashed great speed and put up 140 yards and 2 TDs.

On November 5, 2021, Ruston hosted West Monroe at L.J. Hoss Garrett Stadium in an incredibly anticipated game in front of a sell-out crowd. Ruston had not beaten West Monroe since 1990, a dubious 31-year streak that RHS was determined to snap. West Monroe had lost to Catholic BR, Neville, and Ouachita (ending a 100-game district winning streak) that season, all understandable losses against fantastic teams, but still losses that were out of character for the Rebels. RHS, riding an 8-game winning streak, had hope that it could put the past behind them. Instead, West Monroe slammed the door shut. The Bearcats' first three offensive drives resulted in a three-and-out and two fumbles, leading to an immediate 21-0 hole that Ruston had no chance of climbing out of. Despite a good response out of halftime that saw Ruston claw back to a 28-14 deficit, the Bearcats ran out of gas and could not sustain their run. RHS was left to lick its wounds and forced to wait until the playoffs or next year for another shot at the Rebels.

After a 8-2 regular season that technically yielded a share of the District 2-5A Championship, Ruston was named the 5-seed in the LHSAA 5A Football Playoffs. That earned them a first round home matchup against #28 Covington on November 12. Ruston did not start strong, only leading 10-3 at halftime, but 28 third-quarter points paved the way to a comfortable 45-10 victory. RHS's halftime adjustments proved key, as the offense was much improved, putting up 473 total yards. The running game was potent as usual, with Fields gaining 251 yards and 2 TDs while Wilson pitched in 187 total yards and 3 TDs.

The Bearcats now look ahead to hosting the 12-seed Benton Tigers on November 19, 2021, and then a matchup in the quarterfinals against either Destrehan (one of only three remaining undefeated 5A teams and the team that ended Ruston's season last year) or Woodlawn BR (the only team with a win over Catholic this season). The semifinals would likely provide a matchup against 1-seed Zachary (who controversially knocked Ruston out of the playoffs in 2019) or 8-seed West Monroe. Whatever the path that lay ahead, these Bearcats are ready to take the challenge.



The stout Bearcat defensive front lines up, ready to disrupt the ASH offense on Oct. 22, 2021. *Photo credits to senior Annelise Robison of the Yearbook Club*

## Keeping the Bearcat Spirit During the Playoffs

by Alexis Thompson/*News Editor*

At Ruston High School, football is kind of a big deal. As the number 5 team in the state, Ruston High students and faculty alike can get excited over a good game, along with the citizens of Ruston that pack the stands every week! Entering the playoffs only boosts that energy, bringing exciting pep rallies and incredible performances by our Pom Squad, Cheerleaders, Bearcat Belles, and Ruston High Bearcat band. At every game, you can expect a glow of excitement over the whole stadium as fans cheer both from the stands, the Catbox, and the sidelines.

However, there is a downside to this energy. During the games, when the energy and excitement are both so high as to be at a breaking point, any tiny loss can shift the mood. Whether it's a fumble, a touchdown by the opposite team, or indeed a lost game, it's easy to become angry and resentful at the team and the circumstances.

Now, we at *Chatterbox* are not here to tell you that staying in the swing of the game is a bad thing. Nevertheless, everyone at the game has a job to do - we have all come out to support our football team, and the incredible work that they have done all season! No matter what happens at a game, we must stay proud and supportive of our wonderful team. We in the stands are responsible for the mood of the entire game and need to cheer on our team no matter what!

So, as we continue into the playoffs, and closer to the Mercedes Benz Stadium in New Orleans, remember that an unlucky fumble is no reason to give up on our team! In fact, it is a reason to cheer louder and encourage those on the field to keep hope and bring home a win for Ruston High School.

Our hearts are with our team, regardless of what happens in the playoffs and beyond. We know these players, and they put it all out on the field. We should put it all out as well and stay proud and supportive as we cheer our amazing football team on to victory on the sidelines and in the stands, whether at home or on the road. Go Cats!



## RHS FOOTBALL UPDATE: RHS Bearcats Defeat Benton, Advance to the 3rd Round Playoffs

STAFF REPORT

On November 19, 2021, most schools around the state closed down to celebrate the Thanksgiving holidays. For Ruston High School Bearcat football staff, players, fans, and support groups, this date would not begin the holiday season completely as a showdown awaited that night on James Field at L. J. "Hoss" Garrett Stadium between the 5th seeded Ruston High School Bearcats and the 12th seeded Benton High School Tigers. The game gave the Bearcats a 2nd home game in a row in the playoffs, and gave local fans the opportunity to see them in action once again. Further, the winner would head to the third round of the LHSSA playoffs.

Unable to move the ball on their first possession, the Tigers punt took a favorable roll for them and the Bearcats were forced to start their first offensive series at the one-yard line. 99 yards later, the Bearcats opened the scoring on a touchdown run by Dyson Fields, giving the Bearcats an early 7-0 lead. The Tigers answered with a field goal on their next possession to make the score 7-3, and that would turn out to be the closest they would get to catching the Bearcats. Devian Wilson took the ball in from a yard out to end the scoring in the 1st quarter, with the Bearcats up 14-3. In the 2nd quarter, Jaden Osborne faked a handoff to Devian Wilson and kept the ball himself to go the distance and give the Bearcats a 21-3 lead. The Tigers answered with a touchdown pass but failed on the 2 point conversion, cutting the Bearcat lead to 21-9; however, Devian Wilson rushed for another touchdown giving the Bearcats what would be a 28-9 halftime lead.

The 2nd would never get better for the Tigers despite their best efforts as the 'Cats were steady on both sides of the ball. The Tigers opened the 2nd half trying and failing for a second time with an onside kick, and the Bearcats took advantage. Devian Wilson once again scored, this time from 9 yards out, and the Bearcat lead was extended to 35-9. The Tigers then drove down inside the Bearcats' 25 yard line, but Ray Owens was in the right place at the right time to intercept an overthrown pass, turning it into a pick-6 and giving the Bearcats a huge 42-9 lead about midway through the 3rd quarter. The Tigers did manage to score again right before the end of the 3rd quarter to make it a 42-16 game, but that would be a close as they would get. Dyson Fields ran for a 57 yard touchdown just before the end of the 3rd quarter, making the score 49-16. To end the scoring, Devian Wilson once again found the end zone about half way through the 4th quarter, leading to the final score of 56-16. In addition to the outstanding play by both the offense and defense sides, special teams play was also solid and Brady Beason was 8 for 8 on extra point attempts.

The attention now shifts to the third round of the playoffs, where the 5th seeded Bearcats will travel to take on the 4th seeded Destrehan Wildcats. The seedings won't decide the winner of this game any more than the current state rankings, as the Bearcats are ranked 3rd, one spot ahead of Destrehan. Destrehan looks to win again at this level after defeating the Bearcats last year 6-0 in a defensive struggle, and the Bearcats know that they will be facing a very good and very motivated team. However, the Bearcats are also a very good and very motivated team. This playoff game should be a classic battle of strength, conditioning, play calling, and execution of the plays by both sides, as there can only be one team moving on.

High School Football Champions: There have been 6 National Champions from 5 different high schools from the state of Louisiana. These were: 1969: Bogalusa High (14-0); **1990: Ruston High (14-0)**; 1998: West Monroe (15-0); 1999: Evangel Christian (15-0); 2000: West Monroe (15-0); and 2012: John Curtis Christian (14-0). ***Of these, only the Ruston High Bearcats were chosen by the National Sports News Service (NSNS)***, which was considered the primary poll for selecting the national champion until 2000, when multiple agencies began selecting different champions, to include at times separating schools by size, public, private, and other criteria. National champions were not always selected in the early years and world wars.

