# The Cadet Courier

*October 2nd, 2026*




## *First Parent Teacher Conference*

Learning about the importance of parent teacher conferences

By Roberto Perez

Parent-teacher conferences are something that teachers have to do every couple of months to allow parents to see how their child is doing academically. They allow teachers to communicate with parents and determine how their child has been doing in class and if there is anything parents can do to help their child improve. Parent-teacher conferences are a great way for both parents and students to understand where they stand in the classroom and determine if changes need to be made.

During parent-teacher conferences, it can be difficult to communicate with parents because of what the teacher may have to say to them. English teacher Mr. Carter Ossian experienced a positive time at the parent-teacher conferences. Do you think you were able to have quality conversations with parents? “I felt like I was able to have good conversations with students from each of those classes and each of my sections.” Connecting with students is a great way for teachers to talk to them about their academic work. This allows students to understand what their teacher is trying to do to help them.

Parent-teacher conferences are important because they give parents an opportunity to see how their child is doing in class. What do you think are the reasons we have parent-teacher conferences? “It’s an important time for teachers to communicate with parents about what they are seeing in class and how well the students are doing emotionally.” Teachers take the time to understand how students are doing both inside and outside of the classroom and whether they are doing okay. It is a good way to determine if changes need to be made to help students be successful in school.

Art teacher Mrs. Kim Anderson also experienced a positive time at the parent-teacher conferences. Understanding parents is an important part of helping students. Do you think you were able to have quality conversations with parents? “Yes! I really enjoyed talking to parents about how their child is doing at school and the progress they are making in my class.” Showing parents their

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child's artwork is a good way to show them what their child is doing in school and what projects they are working on in class.

It is important to attend parent-teacher conferences to see how you are doing in class. If you are struggling, the teacher will talk to you and your guardian to try to find ways to help. What do you think are the reasons why we have parent-teacher conferences? "It's a good way to allow parents to see where their child is in school and how they are behaving in the classroom." Checking in with parents about how their child is doing is an important way to allow them to see if any changes need to be made. That is why it is important to attend parent-teacher conferences. They help parents understand what their child is doing in school and whether any changes need to be made.




## *No Place Like Home*

West Point-Beemer prepares for Homecoming Week

By Sebastian Perez

Homecoming Week is just around the corner and students have been ecstatic in the days leading up to it. Starting Tuesday, school will be filled with more energy and creativity as students and staff join in on themed dress-up days, the football game on Friday, and the Homecoming dance Friday night following the football game. This annual tradition is more than just a week of fun; it's a chance for everyone to come together as Cadets and make memories with friends.

Since there's no school on Monday, the festivities begin on Tuesday with Country vs Country Club Day. On Wednesday, the hallways will be filled with students wearing casts and walking on crutches

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for Fake an Injury Day. Students will get creative with bandages, dramatic limps, and casts. This fun theme will be remembered for a day of laughter and fun. Thursday brings Decades Day, where you can travel back in time through your fashion. Whether you prefer funny patterns from the 60s, the disco theme of the 70s, the bold styles of the 80s, the calm laid-back style of the 90s, or the early 2000s' iconic trends, this day is a chance to show your favorite style from an era. The week's final dress-up day is Friday's Cadet Pride Day, where everyone is encouraged to wear school colors and gear to show how proud they are to be a Cadet.

Each class will receive points based on how many people in their grade dressed up and the amount of creativity that was expressed throughout the week. On Friday, the pep rally will start at the end of the day to decide which class can rack up the most points and win the spirit stick in the end.

The atmosphere will be electric as students and staff prepare for the Homecoming game that evening. Fans will pack the stands to show support and give encouragement for the players.

Following the game, students will be showing back up to school for the Homecoming Dance. Homecoming Week is more than just themed days and events as it is a tradition and week of fun and energy. It is a way to break from the usual routine of just arriving at school like it is an ordinary day. You get to show up to school dressed up with your friends and showing off your creativity. With all the days and themes for the week, there is no reason not to join in. Start planning your fits and get ready for a week of excitement.

## *Sophomores to UNO*

Sophomores took a college visit to University of Omaha

By Javier Berganza

With the fresh smell of a campus, opportunities are shining, and students are wondering "What is so special about this place?" West Point Beemer's sophomore class took a visit to University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO) last Tuesday.

Sophomores took this trip to prepare themselves for college, and see firsthand what it is like to be a college student. Teacher Mrs. Meyer talked about the sophomore's opportunity to visit UNO, "We wanted the sophomores to experience what it's like at a 4 year level college just so they can see what it will be like when they graduate, and we've had many students attend UNO before and they have been very successful in their endeavors."

Along their trip, students realized the opportunities that can come from attending UNO." UNO provides many opportunities for kids academically, so we want our students to realize and see the opportunities that this college can provide them." Mrs. Meyer states that she wants students to experience the college itself, and realize the opportunities that they provide for students.

Upon visiting students were surprised by the set things. "What surprised me was the amount of opportunities that they had, various different things to attend, as if you were to become a teacher it can allow you to get various opportunities for your career" This is what Sophomore Carlo Montenegro had been surprised by the visit at UNO.

While walking around the campus students had been surprised by the quality of the dorm rooms " Dorms are pretty great, they have a great amount

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of space, overall the great condition of the campus". UNO is exceptionally known for the cleanliness of the campus itself and how it's kept clean throughout the whole entire school year. This is what Carlos Montenegro said about how the campus is kept clean, and the space it provides to its students.

Although dorms are great and all Sophomore Ryan Wuestewald said "I wouldn't see myself going to that college, although the dorms are nice and you don't always have to share it with another student at the same time is a pro of going to that college, but, me personally, I don't see myself going to that college—due to me liking a different college".

While getting tours around a campus, the number one thing you want to have is a good tour guide. Ryan spoke about the tour guides, "The people that gave us tours were really nice, I didn't really like the food that was offered at campus, but overall the experience was really good."

While heading back on the bus, the distinct chatter of kids' newfound ambitions filled the bus, as they headed back from Omaha not just with a college visit, they headed back with a clearer vision of what they wanted their future to look like. These students have turned their long-viewed dreams into real possibilities. By going to a college campus so early in their high school career, they can start looking into careers that they want and the college experience they desire.

## *Gutter Ball*

The Unified Bowling team has its interest meeting

By Blake Wegner

The West Point Unified Bowling teams had their interest meeting on September 29. At this meeting in Mrs. Hochstein's room, we learned about possible practice dates and who will be on the team.

Many students are excited for the upcoming season. Katlyn Hittle, a senior, is excited for her fourth season of Unified Bowling. As Katlyn said, "I'm most excited about getting back into bowling, and I am really excited to get back out there and get better because there is always room to improve."

The bowling team has been waiting to come back for this next season. Many of the team members were disappointed with last year's district results, so they are coming back with a passion. Many members are excited to bowl regularly again and possibly get a personal best.

These team members have many hopes. As Katlyn said, "as a team, we can get around 200 per game and achieve more medals than last year."

In Unified Bowling, you are put into teams of five, but only 3 bowls per game. Also, in the game everyone on the team bowls as one, so everything relies on everyone working together and doing their best.

These hopes, though, can only happen if the team can overcome some difficulties. As Katlyn said, "In the past, some people didn't listen when others told them things to do to try to improve."

The team wants to accomplish many new feats, yet this only happens if everyone

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takes in advice. This hope of doing better will help the team overcome many obstacles and hopefully allow everyone to listen and approve.

The person who gives the most advice and helps the team overcome many difficulties is a volunteer. This volunteer is senior Samantha Francis's dad, Josh Francis. Josh does league bowling down at Main Street Bowl and helps out the team anytime he doesn't have work. As junior Natalina Dominguez said, "Josh is really good when it comes to teaching new Unified bowlers."



With help from an experienced bowler, many team members are hoping for a new personal best. While many members want a new personal best, it isn't the main reason why they are excited for this upcoming season. Most members are ready to be able to communicate with the team again.

Unified Bowling is an interesting sport because it brings in a group of kids who may never talk to each other outside of the sport and helps them connect. As Natalina stated, "When I was a freshman and first started, it helped me expand friendships with people other than my grade. To this day I believe it is a good starter on making long lasting friendships and exploring different activities that you may love or hate."

Having a connected team is one of our team's biggest strengths, and the members hope this continues. This year, the team sees many returning members, and everyone hopes they can grow and make new connections. Since the West Point Unified Bowling team has a strong connection, it allows students to branch out and try new activities and possibly help students go out for more activities later on.

The West Point Unified Bowling team had its first meet on October 31, 2026. Let's wish this team a successful and fun season.

## *A Test at Kearney!*

The Cadets take on Kearney as runners face a challenging meet

By Joshua Gonzalez

Emerson had previously raced on the Kearney course twice at state, but competing on the course again gave her a much different experience this time around. After a long break from racing because of rain cancellations, getting back into the routine of competition was not easy. Emerson noticed this meet was not like the others. “Yes, the race felt very different!” Emerson said.

Emerson discussed that she felt sore and tired during the race, which made it challenging to match times she had previously run on the course. All things considered, she said the course felt harder than she remembered it being at state.

The bigger number of runners at the meet also brought excitement along with some nerves. Emerson was looking forward to racing many people, but she said the nerves started to affect her in the days leading up to the race. To manage that stress, she spent time studying the Bible and praying the night before and the morning of the meet.

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Before the race, Emerson tried to focus on her normal routine rather than letting the little things bother her. Seeing friends from other teams and laughing during warmups also helped her relax and focus on enjoying the experience.

After finishing, Emerson was not completely satisfied with her time, but she chose not to dwell on the result. Instead, she found people she knew near the finish line and talked with them. “I see joy and fun in my race and I’m so grateful for the people I got to see and meet!” Emerson said.

Unlike Emerson, Matyx was stepping onto the Kearney course for the first time. When he first arrived, the course did not look as difficult as he expected. However, seeing the number of teams and runners quickly changed his expectations for the race.



Matyx knew the size of this meet as soon as he started to look at other teams. He said he would need to get out in front early and stay with teammate Hector Cabrales. Once the race began, the long hill proved to be more intense than he anticipated. “With the crowd and the long hill that kicked my butt, I realized I should have paced myself a little differently,” Matyx said.

Matyx wanted to stay close to Hector throughout the race as he worked toward improving his times. Although the race did not go as he planned, he came away with lessons he can use in future meets.

Moving forward, Matyx said he wants to stay more positive during races, focus on runners around him and continue pushing himself. He also plans to wear his spikes more often as he looks for ways to improve.

This meet showed Matyx how important pacing is, staying positive and learning from each meet as he continues competing.

Coach Burtis also had his own perspective on how the Cadets handled the meet. When asked if meet cancellations played a part in how the cadets did at the race, he said he doesn’t think that it impacted them much. Coach Burtis said even though our runners did struggle, he firmly believes the struggle was due to how tough the State course truly is. He added that this sport is hard and there are many hard courses but this was just the toughest course we ran this year. “One tough course does not define who we are as a team, how we react to these situations is what defines us,” Burtis said.

Something Coach Burtis wanted the students to get out to truly see how competitive cross country really is. Burtis knows out of anyone else that here in Northeast Nebraska, we see a lot of the same teams and he thinks that makes it pretty easy to see our competition as just West Point and the surrounding area when Cross Country is a lot bigger than just our town’s area.

When it came to the outcomes of the meet, Coach Burtis was impressed with what

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his athletes were able to take away. “While this course was tough, I truly am proud of the effort they put in,” said Burtis. Additionally, he said you cannot expect to PR at every meet, especially with cross country being so different on where you run every week. To finish off, Burtis said “If they gave their best effort on a tough course, then I believe we did well and that is a win.”



## *From “Narcissistic” to Speech Coach*

*Mrs. Sarah Jones Returns to the Speech World*

By Zaq Leslie

Why should you be narcissistic? According to Mrs. Sarah Jones, there are plenty of reasons. At least, that was the argument she made during her senior-year persuasive speech. Now, years later, Mrs. Jones is back in the speech world, this time standing on the other side of the podium as a coach.

Mrs. Jones's love for speech started in a rather unexpected way. Her older sister, Emma, was involved in speech, she was already spending plenty of time at school for practices and competitions. Eventually, her English teacher and speech coach noticed that she seemed to have a natural talent for talking.

“One day, my English teacher and speech coach pulled me aside and told me, ‘Sarah, on multiple occasions I have caught you in class talking to yourself or to your textbook. I think you would love the speech team because you can talk to brick walls and still make it sound like the most fun conversation you have ever had,’” Mrs. Jones said.
And apparently, the teacher was right.

Graduating from Ponca Public Schools after attending the district from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. During high school, she competed in OID, Duet and Persuasive. Her speech career, however, was anything but normal.

Her freshman year of district speech was canceled because of snow. Her sophomore year was canceled because of flooding. Then, her junior year was canceled because of COVID-19. After three straight years of missed opportunities, finally she got her chance during her senior year.

“It was the first time in three years that we were able to compete at district speech,” Mrs. Jones said.

Her OID group took advantage of the opportunity, finishing as district runners-up

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and qualifying for the state tournament. Their qualification was historic, as they became the first OID in Ponca High School history to qualify for state. At the state tournament, the group finished 11th, narrowly missing the finals.

Although the placement was impressive, one judge's comment may have been even more memorable.

“One of the judges told us we were ‘too loud and too dramatic,’” She said. “Which honestly makes me laugh now because being dramatic was kind of our thing!”

Throughout high school, she competed in OID for three years, Duet for three years and Persuasive for all four years. While she took the competitions seriously, she also made sure to have fun with her performances. That was especially obvious during her senior-year persuasive speech.

The topic? “Why You Should Be Narcissistic.”

“It was genuinely one of the most fun persuasive speeches I have ever done, and the judges loved it,” She said.

Although the speech may sound unusual, it represents exactly what she enjoyed about speech: having the freedom to take an idea, make it entertaining and turn it into a performance.

After graduating from Ponca, she continued her education at Midland University. She earned a bachelor's degree in PK–12 Music Education with an emphasis in 7–12 Theatre. She is also currently pursuing her master's degree through Midland in Education with a concentration in Classroom Management and Behavior.

During college, Mrs. Jones continued finding ways to get involved and make an impact. She served as president of Midland's National Association for Future Music Educators chapter. During her time as president, she created an event called “Night of Music.” When she first started the event, there were only about 10 acts. By the time she graduated, that number had grown to more than 45 acts.

Mrs. Jones was also selected as a “Who’s Who of Midland University” recipient. The award is given to 10 students each year who go above and beyond during their time at Midland while demonstrating the university's core values. Students are nominated, complete an application and are then anonymously selected by a committee of professors and advisors.

Now, after years of competing and performing, She is returning to the activity that started it all, but this time as a coach.

“I am EXTREMELY excited to be back in the speech world as a coach!” Mrs. Jones said. “I have missed speech very much, and I cannot wait to be back.”

For her, coaching isn't just about teaching students how to write a speech or perform in front of a judge. She wants to help students discover abilities they didn't know they had.

“I want to help students discover what they are capable of and find new ways to push themselves into places they didn’t know they could reach,” she said.

Mrs. Jones is also looking forward to working alongside Mr. Ossian and Ms. Bowland to continue building the speech program.

“I can’t wait to work alongside Mr. Ossian and Ms. Bowland to build one of the largest and most competitive speech teams in the state of Nebraska!”

From talking to textbooks in class to

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performing a persuasive speech about narcissism, Mrs. Jones has always found a way to make her voice heard. Now, she gets to help students find theirs. And while she may have once argued that everyone should be a little narcissistic, she is putting the spotlight somewhere else now, on the students she hopes to help succeed.

## *Ask Jazzy Joan*

Issue No. 3

Dear Jazzy Joan,

*I don't know why but I feel like one of my friends truly does not care about me. I feel like her therapist 24/7, but I don't want to betray her trust. But shes also bringing me down like a lot. What do I do? I've tried talking to her about it, I've tried ignoring her, but she just keeps doing it.*

Thanks,
Therapist Friend



*Dear Therapist Friend,*

You are not their therapist. Taking the role of a therapist rather than a friend in a friendship can be significantly detrimental to your mental health. In my personal opinion, I think it would be wise to *step back*. Sometimes people need true professional help, and you could potentially guide them there. But, if you still want to be friends with them, I suggest setting VERY clear boundaries and talking about it.

Keep Magically Thinking,

Jazzy Joan

## *Ask Audacious Andy*

Submission #13

Dear Audacious Andy,

*I have a crush on a freshman, but I'm a senior, is that weird?*

Thanks,
Cradle Robber



*Dear Cradle Robber,*

Yes.

Audaciously yours,

Audacious Andy