

SOUTH CENTRAL CALHOUN

# FINE ARTS

A Special Supplement to The Graphic-Advocate

# REBUILDING PHASE

*South Central Calhoun Bands focus on constant improvement*

**By Tyler Anderson**  
The Graphic-Advocate Editor

Simply put, band is a large year round part of any junior high or high school in the state of Iowa. Musically inclined individuals head into their designated room at certain times of the day to pick up their respective instruments, practice their specific pieces and transition from marching band to concert band and from jazz band back to concert band.

Band isn't just an extra curricular activity at South Central Calhoun, it's a way of life. For nearly two and a half decades, SCC – and its predecessor in Southern Cal – has been a staple in the landscape, performing at the Iowa Jazz Championships in Des Moines.

Over that time under the direction of instrumental music instructor Tom Plummer, the Mustangs and later, Titans, have accumulated nine state championships – including back-to-back titles in 2015 and 2016.

However, just as the run of state jazz band appearances ended for the Titans, 2020 yielded something greater than music – the COVID-19 situation.

Because of the pandemic, the 2020 Iowa Jazz Championships were cancelled, with any effort to provide make-up experience to take place only through digital media.

However, the South Central Calhoun Bands aren't all about jazz. In the 2019-2020 school year, it was the year of marching band, pep band and concert band.

"In the fall, we were very busy – with six home football games," Plummer said of how the year started. "That's another first in my long career. It kept us occupied for the first quarter, before we shifted focus to our Christmas concert."

Alongside the SCC Titan Choirs, the SCC band presented "Oh Night Divine" on Dec. 19 at the SCC High School Auditorium in Lake City.

"We had a really good feeling about our concert band," Plummer said of the period of time. "We've come along really nice, and we had a successful concert with a great band."

The concert band worked in stride with the pep band, which played hits such as "Seven Nation Army" by The White Stripes and Bon Jovi's "Livin' On A Prayer." From the beginning of the girls' basketball games to the halftime of the boys' games, the pep band showcased the talent of the Titans.

Overall, SCC performed at nine home games – seven at the SCC Middle School Gymnasium in Rockwell City and two at the SCC High School Gymnasium in Lake City.

"The kids and I always enjoy pep band," said Plummer. "We stayed very busy, playing for athletic events and that's always fun. There's always so much school spirit and great crowds at all of our events."

In February, jazz band prepared for a potential 24<sup>th</sup> straight trip to the Iowa Jazz Championships. However, the Titans would come up short in the NCIBA district con-



**Zack Chanchom blasts away on his trumpet during halftime of one of the Titan football games held this past fall at Titan Field in Lake City. [Tyler Anderson/The Graphic-Advocate]**

test, tabbing fourth. In the second chance competition, the Titans narrowly missed out by finishing third.

"I knew that it was going to be a struggle this year," said Plummer. "We were spinning our tires a bit. We proved a lot in our

second competition at Woodward-Granger, but that ended our wild card."

**CONTINUED NEXT PAGE**

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The South Central Calhoun, in marching band mode, travels down Main Street, during the Homecoming Parade held on Sept. 27 in Lake City. [Tyler Anderson/The Graphic-Advocate]

“It seemed like the jazz band season was over with rather quickly,” Plummer added. “We were good, but we weren’t just good enough. There are some bands that are really coming up, as well. I knew that it was going to happen sometime, and this was the year. Then, lo and behold, they didn’t have it, because of what’s going on.”

Plummer took the outlier year in stride. “Or, it might have been because we weren’t there, who knows,” Plummer said, before letting out a chuckle. “We had a good band, but we just struggled at times to get some concepts down that the judges really wanted.”

The all-band concert was next, which set its concert for March 3 and March 4. Sadly, it was the final event that the Titan band was able to perform, before Gov. Kim Reynolds’ order to close schools on March 15.

“That was also really successful,” Plummer said of the all-band ensemble, which consisted of the three junior high bands and the high school concert band. “We had good enough weather to do it, the bands sounded good and we had a great crowd. It was really fun.”

Before school was closed, the band was able to begin work on small groups and solo acts. Above all else, Plummer had high praise for his concert band.

“My concert band was improving more and more, and I was really encouraged by that group going into large group contest,” Plummer said.

The state Large Group Festival is set for



Freshman Samantha Stuart performs during halftime of one of the SCC football games. [Tyler Anderson/The Graphic-Advocate]

May 8 and May 9. Plummer touched on his senior leadership and noted his percussion group as one of the strongest aspects within the band.

“The seniors did a nice job of playing and leading, especially in concert band,” Plummer said. “I want to highlight my concert percussion section. In the last several years, they have done an outstanding job. The concert band improved, and the percussion section were really leaders. It was a fun group to be with.”

“I had a lot of fun teaching this year,” added Plummer. “We worked hard and had fun. So you can’t go wrong with that. My encouragement is definitely my freshman class. I don’t have a lot of sophomores or juniors, but I have a lot of freshmen.”



Senior bass player Gage Cates channels his inner Banana Man during one of the Titan basketball games at the SCC Middle School Gymnasium in Rockwell City. [Tyler Anderson/The Graphic-Advocate]

According to Plummer, the freshmen are going to be his go-to group over the course of the next few years.

“My freshman class is a group to build

around in the future,” Plummer said. “I’m looking forward to quite a few incoming eighth graders, so I’m very excited about the next few years.”

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# DREAM TEAM

*Senior leadership, up-and-coming talent boost SCC cheer and dance squads*

**By Tyler Anderson**  
The Graphic-Advocate Editor

The 2019-2020 school year had been good to the South Central Calhoun cheerleading and dance teams. Starting in July and ending in February, the Titans hauled in awards, made memories and prepared for the immediate future.

The cheer squad placed third in the Class 2A at the Iowa High School State Cheerleading Championships, held this past November at the Jacobsen Exhibition Center in Des Moines.

The Titans then followed up with a third place (Class II Light) and fourth place (Class I Contemporary Dance) showing on Dec. 5 at the Iowa Events Center in Des Moines.

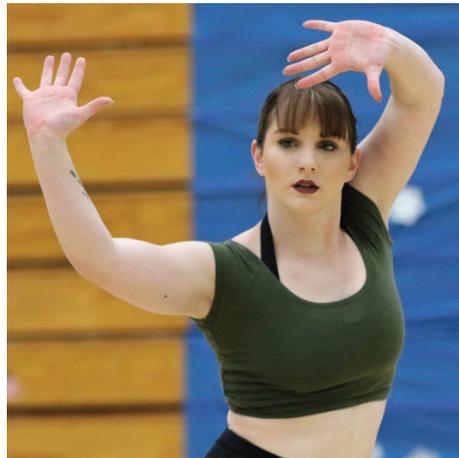
Seniors Kennadie Dowling, Haley Schumacher and Raegan Welander led SCC, who was stacked with returning participants.

The three cheered together in football and competed alongside one another in dance. However, Kennadie and Raegan continued to cheer during basketball season, while Haley capped her season with the end of year winter dance program held in December.

“We started cheer season in the middle of the summer, probably the beginning of July,” Haley said of the process. “We started with the basic stunt progression and learning motions and jumps. Then once we start to know who’s best for which position, we place different stunt groups.”

“For example, I’ve been in each different basing positions: main, secondary, back base and fronting,” she continued. “Flying wasn’t for me, though. After we do all of those things, we start learning game day cheers and seeing who has louder voices and strong voices.”

Dowling touched on the team makeup, which blended experience with youthful



**Senior Haley Schumacher goes with the flow during her solo performance at the SCC Winter Dance Show, held on Dec. 9 at the SCC Middle School Gymnasium in Rockwell City. [Tyler Anderson/The Graphic-Advocate]**

enthusiasm from the start.

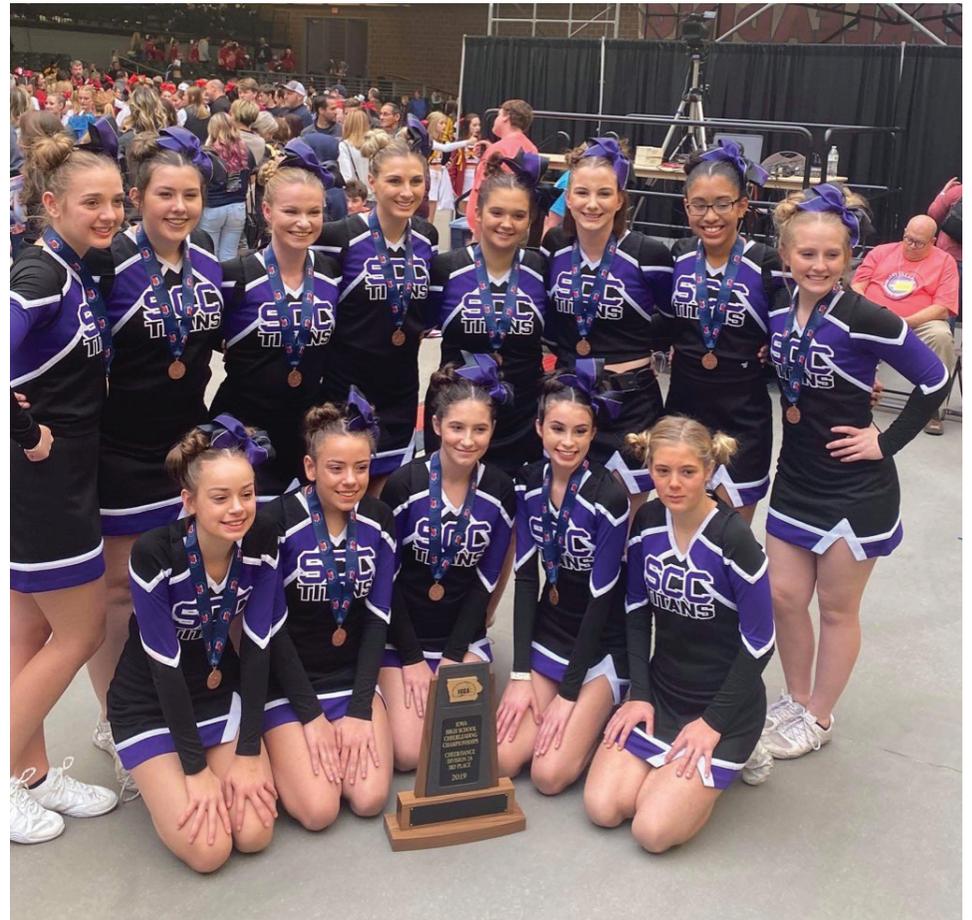
“We knew right away that we had mostly returning participants from the previous year, and so it was pretty easy to build a bond with each other and work smoothly as a team,” Kennadie said of the team’s chemistry. “Our coaches were also a tremendous help to us, because we are such a small school, team and community to where the resources are not always there, yet always provided us with opportunities to get that outside help.”

According to Reagan, the road had its fair share of speed bumps. SCC overcame these obstacles by venturing over to Fort Dodge, trained at the United All-Stars cheer gym alongside the Iowa Central Community College cheerleaders.

One of the coaches for the Tritons is an SCC alumna in Stephanie Hood.

“The cheer season started off strong,” Welander said. “We had our annual Little Titan Cheer Camp and summer practices to get the season started. We had practices with Iowa Central cheerleaders and choreographers to prepare our State routine.”

“We had a few setbacks with injuries and hurt teammates,” Raegan continued. “At times we weren’t even sure if we would be able to make it to state since we didn’t have a full team due to injuries. We all definite-



**The SCC Cheerleaders pose with some hardware after attaining third place in the Class 2A portion of the Iowa High School State Cheerleading Championships, held on Nov. 2 at the Jacobsen Exhibition Center at the Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines. [File photo]**

ly put in our fair share of blood, sweat, and tears into this season, but we ended up killing our performance at state – with everyone attending and zero injuries – and getting third place.”

Compared to the cheer season, the dance team had a later start. Once its coaching staff was in place, the Titans soon got to work. That work paid dividends, as the two routines placed in Des Moines.

“With the help from both of our coaches we ended up getting third at state for our light routine and fourth in contemporary,” Welander said of the results. “Not long after State, we had our winter dance show which was a blast to put on to show our season’s

hard work and teach kids some routines of our own! I’m very happy with how the season turned out.”

Kennadie shared the same sentiment.

“It was a very big accomplishment for the program that we were able to bring home two trophies,” Dowling said. “We wrapped up our season in mid-December with our annual dance team showcase. Everyone did their part, and I don’t think we could have asked for a better last performance.”

Haley credited the coaching staff for the dance team’s success.

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“Theresa’s last year was our freshman year,” said Schumacher. “So, it was super fun to have her come back and coach us for our last year.”

Much of that success came from the Titans’ senior leadership. For the past four years, the likes of Haley, Raegan and Kennadie, along with Sam Fister and Jaylin Jansen were the cornerstones of the program.

“We also work really well together,” Schumacher said. “We know how to solve problems when they come up and when we need to come up with ideas, we can bounce ideas off of each other. I really did enjoy working with the group of people I did this year.”

The senior leadership also enhanced the abilities of their younger teammates.

“Some of our leadership affected the coaches, some of our leadership abilities helped the other teammates,” Dowling said. “I think that the senior leadership really just helped polish things across the board.”

Coming up through the ranks, there are plenty of up-and-comers for next year.

“There are multiple experienced upperclassmen next year that will be more than ready to take on the leadership positions,” Welander said of the incoming seniors. “I think that as long as each girl practices outside of the regular season and keeps a positive attitude, they could all make great lead-



The SCC Dance Squad gears up to begin their Winter Dance Show, held on Dec. 9 at the SCC Middle School Gymnasium in Rockwell City. The Titans took home a third place showing and a fourth place outing at the Iowa Dance Championships. [Tyler Anderson/The Graphic-Advocate]

ers for the underclassmen next year.”

Kennadie named several of these incoming seniors who are bound to make an impact next season.

“During the cheer season, we began to see a lot of potential in the upcoming senior class, including Caitlin Stokes, Morgan Neal and Tatum Rohlfs,” Dowling said. “That gave us hope and reassurance to ‘pass the torch’ on to the next group of seniors in knowing that we can trust their ability as our own. They have a really good

work ethic and are always looking to try something new.”

“As far as the dance team goes, most of us on the team have the incoming freshman class as teammates on a studio team and we know that they hold a similar performance quality,” Kennadie added. “So, we have trust that the dance team program will be in good hands next year with the freshman talent and numbers.”

Haley also boasted Rohlfs, Caitlin and Allison Stokes and Morgan Neal on the cheer side, and praised the Monahan sisters when it came to dance.

“Mackenzie and Mikayla Monahan have been in dance for a while,” Schumacher said. “This year, I watched them step up, so I know that they will be able to lead the dance team next year.”

Even though colleges scouted all three, they decided to pursue their respective fields of study. This coming fall, Haley will go into cosmetology at PCI Academy in Ames, while Kennadie will head to DMACC. Raegan will double major in Ear-

ly Childhood Education and Special Education at Iowa State University.

With their time at an end, the three seniors do aim to eventually return to guide future dance teams.

“I am hoping to be able to come back sometimes and help the cheerleading team with practice and hopefully be able to come back and critique the dance team when preparing for state,” Haley said. “Other than that, I have not considered continuing with cheer and dance.”

Raegan held a different sentiment concerning a continuance of dance.

“I plan to continue to dance recreationally and take some dance classes while in college,” said Welander. “Ideally, I would like to maybe coach a dance team or teach some dance classes once I’ve graduated college.”

Kennadie shared the same sentiment.

“I do plan however to continue taking some basic technique and flexibility classes while in college,” Dowling said. “When I move on from DMACC to a university, I can audition for a dance team or club.”



The SCC Cheerleaders call out to the crowd during the Titans’ home football game against IKM-Manning on Sept. 13 at Titan Field in Lake City. The team earned third place at the state cheerleading competition. [Kinsey Batz/The Graphic-Advocate]

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# INNER POTENTIAL

*Titan Choirs blend experience with youth before premature end of season*

**By Tyler Anderson**  
The Graphic-Advocate Editor

Going into the 2019-2020 school year, the South Central Calhoun Choirs have had a steady hand and consistency. SCC's Choir Instructor Cayla Morton, now in her fourth year, possessed a group who has only known her as a guide and mentor.

With musicals, concerts and competitions, consistency is key. It is that consistency that Morton had been building up for since inheriting the program in the autumn of 2016.

The choir season kicked into gear with a fall musical, before shifting into winter concert mode before the holiday break. The beginning of 2020 was the season of competition...until the arrival of the COVID-19 situation, which did away with the large group and small group events.

While there has been a slowdown in music, Morton remained bright and cheery. After all, music is her main passion – as it shows when going over music and directing sections such as the sopranos, altos, tenors and the bass.

“Starting off this year, the first thing that we always do is a concert in the form of a musical,” Morton said, recapping the



The entire Titan Choir assembled together to perform during the “Hippie Radio Live!” musical, held on Oct. 29 at the SCC High School Auditorium in Lake City. [Tyler Anderson/The Graphic-Advocate]

year. “We have auditions for solo roles and speaking parts, and the theme was ‘Hippie Radio Live!’”

The musical, which showcased popular songs from the 1960s and 1970s, not only brought out the talents of the students, but also connected with the audience who had known of the tunes sung.

“It was pretty cool, because it was the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Woodstock this year,”

Morton said of the hour and a half long performance. “We talked about a lot of peace and love, and the concert was a huge hit. It was something that most of our audience members knew all of the songs. So, it was really fun to do familiar stuff to get the year rolling.”

“They’re also songs that most of the students know, but if they didn’t know, it was easy to catch on to, because it was pop mu-

sic,” Morton added.

All-State Choir auditions were next on the docket, where six students auditioned for the coveted spots. Of those six students, sophomore Joe Wozniak became a two-time All-State performer.

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“For the first time since I’ve joined SCC, I felt like all six of them really gave their best,” Morton said, recapping the auditions. “They all worked super hard leading up to it, and that was something that I’m very proud of.”

Wozniak then sang alongside the best in the state of Iowa this past November.

“Joe made it to the All-State Choir, which was a big honor,” Morton continued, praising Wozniak. “It’s awesome that he was able to do it twice, as it’s huge to make it once. He continues to lead all of the ensembles in school.”

The choir then moved into winter concert mode, taking part in “Oh Night Divine” on Dec. 19 at the SCC High School Auditorium in Lake City. The choir shared the night with the South Central Calhoun Bands.

“I really felt that the choir really took shape right then and there,” Morton said. “They started having a really mature sound, and we focused a lot on music literacy. It was at the point where they could recognize the note without me having to play it for them first. They made a ton of progress going into the winter concert.”

Transitioning from 2019 to 2020, the Titan Choirs began to build themselves up by way of solos and small group ensembles. On March 5, the choir performed the “When We Are Singing” concert.

“It was the strongest concert that I’ve had in my time directing at SCC,” Morton said, praising the performance. “I was super proud of way the choir was sounding.”

Morton then shifted her praise for a large, and highly talented, senior class.

“There’s seven students who are really leading the way,” said Morton. “With those strong and motivated seniors, we had some good stuff going. We had a really good performance out of our most challenging pieces of music.”

The choir was planning to hold its Coffeehouse Concert, set for March 13 at the Lake City Community Building, before COVID-19 put a screeching halt to the school year. It would have showcased 15 solo performances. The small group contest was also nixed.

According to Morton, the senior leadership was indeed the choir’s spearhead. Wozniak, Kyler Sander and Ashlynn Kalous were members of the choir board.

The soprano section was praised, as Morton cited the group as “making her job easy.”

Kellen Dobbins also drew praise from the choir director, along with Tyson Blanchfield.

“I have two or three really strong leaders in every section,” Morton said. “That has been super awesome.”

Corey Hicks and Hallee Maulsby were recognized as leaders in the choir, leading the charge in choir rehearsals. Ben Englin was also regarded as a leader with a big and mature sound, alongside Abby Stelling and Kennadie Machovec.

“When you like doing, it makes it easier to do,” Morton said.

Should there be a possibility to where school resumes, the Titan Choirs will be ready to go and get back to work.

“As soon as I’m allowed to meet with my students again, I’m going to meet with my students again,” Morton said. “There’s something really special about singing with other people. I can sit at home, play on my piano and sing as much as I want, but it doesn’t cut it for me. The act of being with people and singing again has the power to make you a better person. I feel like we found it this year. It’s an elective class, and the people who want to be there are there. We’re at the point where we’re working very well together.”



The SCC Titan Choir performs the National Anthem before one of the Titan basketball games held at the SCC Middle School Gymnasium in Rockwell City. [Tyler Anderson/The Graphic-Advocate]



Joe Wozniak performs a solo act during the “Hippie Radio Live!” performance, held this past October at SCC High School. Wozniak became a two-time All-State Choir member this past fall. [Tyler Anderson/The Graphic-Advocate]



Senior Kayla Grummon belts out her part of Diana Ross & The Supremes’ “Stop! In the Name of Love” during the “Hippie Radio Live!” musical medley, held this past fall at the SCC High School Auditorium in Lake City. [Tyler Anderson/The Graphic-Advocate]

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# FIGURE OF SPEECH

*SCC speech teams enjoy success despite shortened season*

**By Tyler Anderson**  
The Graphic-Advocate Editor

The speech season is often a two-pronged tour de force, beginning with large group and ending with individual competition. Some groups arrive in the early morning to perfect their routines, while others stay after school to prepare for their big day.

The categories are numerous, and the expectations rise with each contest. After all, the goal is to reach All-State Festivals, set for Feb. 22 at Iowa State University in Ames (large group) and for March 30 (individual events) at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls.

Going into the 2019-2020 season, the South Central Calhoun speech teams were relatively small, but experienced. In fact, 12 of the 17 members of the large group team were seniors.

While the large group only pushed into the state competition, held on Feb. 8 in Le Mars, SCC speech coach Marleta Smith deemed the effort as a success. Also, Smith hoped that it would open up the door for those interested in going out for speech.

“Even though the pieces received overall two ratings at state, I would still consider our season a success and a learning experience for next year,” Smith said, recapping the large group’s campaign. “We are hoping other students will give speech a chance, because many find it fun once they jump in. Not only are students working on and improving their lifelong communication skills, but also the competitions allow for an opportunity to meet a variety of students. Speech students are a mix of athletes, musical students and theatre kids.”

Of the individual team, two All-Staters – Katherine Folsom and Miranda Feldhans – were poised to return to Cedar Falls. The benefit of the individual events is that students can enter up to two entries.

“Of the 11 students, ten of them made it to state in at least one event. Katherine Fol-



**Pictured are the state qualifiers for the South Central Calhoun Individual Speech team. Seated in the front row are (from left to right) Kayla Grummon, Katherine Folsom, Savannah Smith-Davis and Lila Stevens. In the back row (from left to right) are Miranda Feldhans, Abby Stelling, Emma Englin, Zach Chanchom and Audrey Hood. Megan Decker and Alli Morenz are not pictured. [Provided photo]**

som and Miranda Feldhans, both returning All-State performers, qualified for state in both of their events. Their pieces were very strong again this year, and I was hoping they would be nominated again.”

Before they could perform in front of judges, the COVID-19 situation prematurely ended the season.

However, there were plenty of standouts this season, which included Folsom and Felhans.

“Katherine has been a great leader, as she has made it to State Individual speech all four years,” Smith said. “She has set a great example in her dedication to practicing and being prepared for the competitions, as well as setting a positive example on competition days. Other upperclassmen, such as Savannah Smith-Davis, Kayla Grummon and Miranda Feldhans, also lead on competition days by demonstrating our competition procedures of checking our center spaces and schedules and warming up for their performances.”

The junior class had a trio of stellar performers, along with a growing list of talented underclassmen.

“The Large Group team has a strong trio of juniors in Arianna Grage, Mag-



**The SCC Large Group Speech team is shown. In the front row (from left to right) are Miranda Feldhans, Kayla Grummon, Kyli Thompson, Alli Morenz, Jenna Wishteyah, Savannah Smith-Davis, Katherine Folsom and Daniel Spafford. The back row consists of (from left to right) Abby Stelling, Arianna Grage, Kennadie Machovec, Kylie Carstens, Audrey Hood, Maggie Armstrong and Zack Chanchom. Not pictured are Mariah Pagel and Bryce Smidt. [Provided photo]**

gie Armstrong and Kennadie Machovec,” Smith said. “They have made it to state all three years that they have participated in, and they have participated in a different event each year. We are looking forward to what category they select next year and how they can step into the leadership positions.”

While praising her three remaining individual group members, Smith was adamant about replenishing the team’s numbers next year.

“The Individual team will only have three returning students next year, so we are looking to recruit,” said Smith. “Abby Stelling is a sophomore who has come alive with her prose piece this year. Abby has really developed in her interpretation and physical delivery.”

“Emma Englin and Lila Stevens are our freshmen competitors,” Smith continued. “Emma is strong in storytelling and performs with great energy and facial expressions. Lila is a talented writer, and I am

excited to see where she can go in the interpretive categories.

With schools closed until April 30 at the earliest, there is a faint hope that the speech season could be salvaged. Instead of going large, Smith revealed that it might be either in-house or shared with nearby school districts.

Sadly, it could also be too late to save the speech season.

“For the sake of creativity and flexibility, I encouraged the students to record their performances and send me a link to their video,” Smith said. “I will share the performances with three local judges to get a critique and score. In case we won’t be able to have a make-up contest later, students will be able to have feedback on their pieces they have been working so diligently on. We will also use the ratings to finish tabulating Speech letter winners and awards. Hopefully, we will be able to reschedule the Speech and Drama awards before the end of the school year.”

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