



South O'Brien High School

The Wolverine Roar

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Jazz Band Takes First Place to Start the Season

By Alexandra Grimm

The South O'Brien Jazz Ensemble traveled to Fort Dodge for their first performance of the season. The Triton Jazz Festival was held on Wednesday, January 15, at Iowa Central Community College. Out of 7 bands, South O'Brien earned 1st place. The following received outstanding solo awards: Asa Flinders on trombone, Chloe Hustedt on trumpet, and Alexandra Grimm on tenor and alto saxophone.

The ensemble also performed at the IHSMA Jazz Festival in Spirit Lake, earning a Division I rating.

The jazz band typically begins rehearsing at the beginning of November. On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings at 7 am, jazz members can be seen practicing improvisation, leading sectionals, and preparing their music for the next competition. Director Mrs. Meyer explained how the season is going so far, "It

is progressing fairly well. We're making strides in the right direction and constantly improving." As rehearsals began, many members set goals for the band, like striving to succeed at competitions and improving their musicianship. Meyer said, "My goal is for everyone to find a way to come together and work cohesively."

This season, the jazz band is taking three songs to contest. The first is a swing tune titled "Ready Freddie" by Mike Kamuf. It features soloists Brennan Billick, Brett Evans, Chloe Hustedt, Anessa Johnson, and Alexandra Grimm. Featuring Alexandra Grimm on tenor saxophone, "Europa" is a ballad arranged by Eric Richards, originally recorded by Carlos Santana. The third song is "Chili Today, Hot Tamale" by Rick Hirsch. Soloists for this fun Latin tune are Asa Flinders and Ashlynn Gunnerson.



The South O'Brien Jazz Ensemble performs their second song, "Europa," at the Triton Jazz Festival.

Senior Brett Evans said, "The music that the band picked this year offers a lot of variety among the three tunes. My favorite tune is 'Chili Today, Hot Tamale.' I've always liked the Latin pieces. I love the melodies and what the drum set is playing." Brett has been involved in this

band for four years. He added, "My favorite part about being in jazz band is being the bass trombone. I love playing the low notes, and I like the sound it produces."

The remainder of the season includes performances at the Morningside Jazz Festival in Sioux City, and the

Northwest Iowa Band Association Jazz Band Festival at LeMars Community High School. If they earn 1st or 2nd place at the NWIBA Festival, they will be invited to the state competition in Ames. Meyer is excited about these opportunities for her students. She said, "My favorite

part of directing the band is seeing the students grow from November to the end of the season." On March 4, the ensemble welcomes community members for a night of jazz at the South O'Brien Elementary School.

Celebrating the 100th Day of School

By Shayli Johnson and Kelsee Warnke

South O'Brien High School celebrated its 100th day of school on Wednesday, January 29. To celebrate, members of the student council hid 100 pieces of candy around the school for students to find throughout the day. Students also

enjoyed popcorn during homeroom. Senior student council member Alexandra Grimm said, "Winter gets long and boring, so I thought we could do something fun to break it up. I asked the student council to meet so we could plan some

fun activities. I think celebrating the 100th day of school made everyone feel like a kid again." Grimm added, "It was also my birthday, so it was extra special to celebrate with popcorn and candy."

Freshmen Kate Dau, Drew Wittrock, and Seniors Ashlynn Gunnerson and Alexandra Grimm smile while handing out popcorn.



Seniors Caden Wittrock, Derek Paulsen, and Athletic Director Heath Reichle present an award to Kiley Yates to commemorate his 400th Win.

Coach Yates Earns 400th Win

By Alex Griebel

South O'Brien Boys Basketball Coach Kiley Yates recently achieved his 400th win as a head coach. He has been a coach for 37 years and has been at South O'Brien for 19 years.

This milestone was achieved on Friday, Jan. 17, in a game against West Sioux at Hawarden. To celebrate the 400th win, Coach Yates was presented with a plaque and a poster of his past teams and accomplishments. Coach Yates stated, "This accomplishment has happened

through longevity. It happens from talented players and great assistant coaches. It also has a lot to do with the supportive community that we live in. My wife Melanie also plays a large part in my ability to coach and do what I need to do to get the team ready."

Athletic Director Heath Reichle presented him with the plaque, and seniors Derek Paulsen and Caden Wittrock presented him with the poster. Coach Yates had this to say about the winning culture at South O'Brien.

"It starts with great kids from great families. I start to build relationships and develop skills with the players while they are young. Programs are built from the top down. If you put together a great varsity team, the younger players want to be a part of that. Getting a varsity uniform is a big deal because kids have worked thousands of hours to earn that uniform." Yates teaches social studies and is currently the president of the Iowa Basketball Coaches Association.

North Campus Student Teacher

By Ethan Schwarz and Bode Bailey

This semester, Shelby Davis joined the 7-12 staff as a student teacher under Mr. Eric Kumm, the ag and industrial tech instructor. She began by over-viewing classes in late January and will student-teach until mid-April. In May, she will earn a degree in agriculture education from South Dakota State University.

Davis has already been hired as the new Industrial Tech teacher and will teach classes such as Woods and Small Engines. She will begin teaching in August of 2025. Davis went to high school at MVAOCOU in Mapleton. When asked why she wanted to be an industrial tech teacher, Davis said, "I would say in part because I wanted to be at South O'Brien because we were moving to Sutherland. I've heard good things about the school. I also enjoy building and creating things and being able to share that knowledge with students." Davis' other interests include reading and hanging out with friends and family. She added, "I love basketball and softball."



Ms. Davis at North Campus

Because of the teacher shortage, South O'Brien was eager to hire Davis before she completed her degree. Principal Denise Phillips said, "In today's world and in a high-need area, it is not too early to hire."

Kumm will continue to teach ag classes and advise FFA. With separate agriculture and industrial tech teachers next year, Kumm envisions more opportunities for new classes in both areas. When asked about what he hoped to teach Davis, Kumm said, "To begin with, how to be more organized than me." Kumm added, "Other than that, some of these classes will be new to her. Since she will be teaching industrial tech next year, I hope she will gather her own ideas for how to run the classes."

Dinner Theater Performance Set for March 21 and 22

By Amelie Wilson and Grace Keen

The South O'Brien Dinner Theater cast will present Claire Demmer's *A Rat Trap* on Friday, March 21, and Saturday, March 22. The dinner theater will permanently relocate to the Elementary School in Primghar rather than the East Gym at South O'Brien 7-12 High School, as it has in previous years. Mr. Kevin Hanlin, social studies instructor, is directing the play. It features junior Anessa Johnson as *Arthur Harringway the Third* and freshman Braylynn Pedersen as *Mason*. JW's will provide the meal before the show. Tickets will go on sale beginning in March. Check the South O'Brien website for further updates on ticket sales.



Director Kevin Hanlin explains a scene from *A Rat Trap* to junior Anessa Johnson.

The play is a comedy designed to give plenty of laughs. It tells the story of an old man who has 24 hours to live but refuses to leave his fortune to his family; instead, he creates little puzzles in an attempt to waste their time.

Cast members will collaborate to build the set. Junior Anessa Johnson stated, "I'm excited to see how things will work with so many new people and a new director. I'm excited to use the new stage in Primghar." This year, seniors Tricia Kilts and Ryleigh Gimer will serve as makeup artists and hair stylists. The cast members are eager to showcase their performance to everyone. "I'm excited to see how the play comes together," said director Kevin Hanlin.

Speech Groups Earn High Rating to Compete at State

By Addison Hedberg

Three South O'Brien High School speech groups earned Division I ratings to advance to State Speech while competing at Districts on Saturday, January 28. Radio Broadcasting, Readers Theater, and Group Improv will now compete on Saturday, February 8, at Spencer High School. Speech Coach Mrs. Kim Poeckes said, "Participating in speech helps students build essential skills like effective communication, creative thinking, and teamwork. Taking it to the next level by competing in a speech contest allows them to join a diverse community of peers from different backgrounds."

Freshmen Kate Dau, Owen Oliver, and senior Bryce Williams make up the Radio Broadcasting team. The contestants create a 5-to 6-minute broadcast about state, local, national, and international, sports, and news. The entries include short commercial videos from traditional radio news, podcasts, audio blogs, or other audio forms. Freshman Kate Dau said, "I went out for speech due to my passion for public speaking, and I especially enjoy creating the podcast." This year the South O'Brien radio broadcast is about history in the state of Iowa. They talk about American Prohibition and highlight the events that happened in Iowa at the time.

Members of the Readers Theater include freshmen Luke Vande Griend, Owen Oliver, Braylynn Pedersen, Lily Brown, senior Hailei Wallinga, and junior

Annessa Johnson. Readers Theater is a performance of a maximum of 25 minutes, and the contestants are judged based on how well they tell a story.

The Group Improv team is made up of Freshmen Luke Vande Griend, Owen Oliver, Braylynn Pedersen, and junior Annessa Johnson. For Group Improv, prompts are randomly selected at

competition and the group develops ideas about how to execute it. The groups are judged on commitment, fluency, timing, creativity, concentration, and characterization.

Coach Poeckes commented, "It's more than a competition, it's a platform where they can share their voice and express their ideas."



Group Improv: Freshmen Luke Vande Griend, Owen Oliver, Braylynn Pedersen, and junior Annessa Johnson.

Radio Broadcasting: Freshmen Owen Oliver, Kate Dau, and senior Bryce Williams.



Readers Theater: Freshmen Luke Vande Griend, Owen Oliver, Braylynn Pedersen, Lily Brown, senior Hailei Wallinga, and junior Annessa Johnson take a group picture after they complete in their first speech competition on Jan. 28.

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Don't be left out when the yearbooks arrive in August!

What celebrity would you want to be your Valentine?



Freshman
Brayden Stines
"Paige Bueckers."



Sophomore
Grace Keen
"Glen Powell."



Junior
Logan Dau
"Sydney Sweeney."



Senior
Abby Nelson
"OG Christian Bale
(As batman)"



Staff
Kris Faust
"Leonardo DiCaprio in
The Great Gatsby."



Staff
Heath Reichle
"Scarlett Johansson."