



Greta Wooldrik gives her Entertainment speech at GACC's Night of Excellence.

## Wooldrik repeats as state champ

**By Ashley Gaughan**

Guardian Angels Central Catholic placed 6th in this year's Class C2 state speech meet held last week in Kearney.

Greta Wooldrik defended her 2021 state title by winning the gold in entertainment speaking.

Sydney Hutchinson placed 5th in informative speaking, and Isabel Hass placed 6th in serious prose.

"It's pretty unheard of to get all

state qualifiers into finals, so we are just thrilled with these results," said GACC coach Kylie Kai.

Kai noted the returning speech students all had different strengths that led to medaling at the C2 state meet. Wooldrik has a "natural competitive nature," Kai said. "She sets the bar high for herself and works hard to perfect her presentation."

Kai noted Hutchinson's ability

to memorize new additions easily. It enabled her to add a few things to her performance piece leading up to state speech that helped her advance to finals.

Hass was cited as "one of the most coachable students I've had in speech," Kai noted.

Hass performed "Sorry, Wrong Number" by Lucille Fletcher.

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**Above: GACC Sydney Hutchinson performs her Informative speech.**  
**Right: Isabel Hass gives her Serious speech at GACC's Night of Excellence.**



## STATE SPEECH: All three Bluejays capture state medals

### FROM PAGE 1

It was the same piece her mother, Julie Hass, performed at the state speech meet in 1984 for which she received runner-up.

Kai, who coached GACC speech with Emma Stokely, said they knew their district was going to be tough this season and the coaches are proud of all their GACC speech students.

This year saw new students joining the GACC team. Kai noted seeing the growth throughout the season and also watching the finalists receive their hard-earned medals was the most rewarding part.

“The cherry on top? A back-to-back state champion. It doesn’t get much better than that,” said Kai.



**Representing GACC at the Class C2 State Speech meet in Kearney were from left, speech coach Emma Stokely, Isabel Hass, Greta Wooldrik, Sydney Hutchinson and coach Kylie Kai.**



# High School Musical



Gabriella Montez (Campbell Snodgrass) and Troy Bolton (Ethan Baumert) share a moment during the school's joint musical at the Community Theatre.



Snapping and singing are Ryan Evans (Ethan Wooldrik) and Sharpay Evans (Cassie Peatrowsky) in the GACC/WP-B High School Musical.



Jane Scott (Madison Brunsing) makes an all-school announcement.



Waiting in class is Chad Danforth (Caleb Ridder), along with Zeke Baylor (Isaac Wooldrik).



Handing out instructions to her class is Ms. Darbus (Abigail Hase-mann).





**STATE QUALIFIERS:** GACC qualified for the Class C2 Girls State Basketball Tournament. Team members for the state-bound Bluejays are, from left, front: Adyson Luebbert, Kelsy Steffen, Livia Hunke, Taylor Timmerman, Sophia Hass, Erica Engelmeyer, Kassidy Kaup, Izzy Kreikemeier, Isabel Hass; back: coach Kevin Kreikemeier, coach Lexis Haase, Greta Wooldrik, Jocelynn Skoda, Leah Jansen, Reese Throener, Brynn Baumert, coach Kelly Dinslage and head coach Jerry Stracke. GACC lost to Oakland-Craig in the 1st round, and finished the season with a 25-2 record.



Livia Hunke (left) and Sophia Hass handles the ball for GACC at state.





**Above:** Bluejay senior Ethan Baumert picks up a pin at 152 pounds. Baumert notched a 5th-place finish at the NSAA State Wrestling Tournament in Omaha. **Left:** GACC had four state qualifiers. They were, front: Abraham Lopez (106), George Fraher (285), Ethan Baumert (152) and Dax Doernemann (215).

## GACC's 2022 seniors, parents

**Cade Bailey:** Mike & Debra (Brunsing '91) Bailey

**Ethan Baumert:** Tyler & Denise Baumert

**Madison Brunsing:** Don ('93) & Alisa Brunsing

**Francesca Calloni:** Fabrizio & Luisa Calloni (foreign exchange student from Italy)

**Lance Ditloff:** Mark Ditloff and Tom ('85) & Nikki Hagedorn

**Branden Duhsman:** Greg & Brenda (Peitzmeier '89) Duhsman

**Erica Engelmeyer:** Rick & Marla (Evert '92) Engelmeyer

**Kayla Fischer:** Brian ('84) & Doreen Fischer

**George Fraher:** George & Carmen Fraher

**Katherine Gnad:** David & Laurie Gnad

**Abigail Hasemann:** Lachelle (Vrba '96) Hasemann

**Sophia Hass:** Brian & Julie Hass

**Livia Hunke:** Jeff & Missy Hunke

**Cole Hutchinson:** Chris & Christine (Steffen '94) Hutchinson

**Anna Karnopp:** David & Shannon Karnopp

**Kassidy Kaup:** Douglas ('91) & Stacy Kaup

**Aubrey Kreikemeier:** Craig ('06) & Trisha Randel and Bryce & Katie Schlickbernd

**Coy Kreikemeier:** Todd A. ('85) & Leslie Kreikemeier

**Nathan Niewohner:** Steve & Jen Niewohner

**Samuel Ortmeier:** Chad & Becky Ortmeier

**Megan Plagge:** Tim ('86) & Joan (Peitzmeier '87) Plagge

**Mitchell Plagge:** Jeff Plagge ('83) & Jodi Plagge

**Kadin Pojar:** Brian & Kim Pojar

**Reese Schlecht:** Rodney & Dara (Kaup '93) Schlecht

**Cale Schwer:** Steve & Tracy Schwer

**Braeden Steffen:** Kyle ('97) & Kimberly Steffen

**Dylan Steffen:** Adam ('92) & Kristie Steffen

**Taylor Timmerman:** Jeffrey ('94) & Anne Timmerman

**Nikolas Wietfeld:** Amanda & James Colson

**Ethan Wooldrik:** Craig & Wendy Wooldrik

**Alexis Wuestewald:** Todd ('91) & Jenny Wuestewald

*GACC's commencement ceremony was held Sunday, May 8.*



## Wooldrik wins back-to-back gold medals at state speech

**By Ashley Gaughan**

Greta Wooldrik has now tasted the sweet success of claiming a Class C2 State Speech championship for the second year in a row.

Wooldrik, a Guardian Angels Central Catholic junior recently competed at the state speech meet in Kearney. She clinched the gold for her performance of “Loquacious” in entertainment speaking. Wooldrik said the word means “talkative” and it makes people laugh when they hear that because, “it describes me to a tee.”

She credits her dad Mark with helping her choose her speech topics, which are true to life.

Her winning speech last year on “Birth Order Characteristics” allowed Wooldrik to shine in describing her “middle child” status while poking fun at her younger and older siblings in the process.

Wooldrik’s freshman year’s speech was about her tearing her ACL, but a try for a state gold medal that year was not to be after the speech season was cut short due to COVID.

While her father may suggest the topics, Wooldrik writes all the speeches herself. After taking a week to carefully craft her piece, Wooldrik said it comes down to “rehearsal, rehearsal, rehearsal.”

On top of knowing her performance inside and out, Wooldrik said that having success at

competitions comes down to two important factors — having “amazing delivery” and “great energy.”

When Wooldrik performs, listeners are swept along for the ride, laughing and smiling the entire act, nodding as they relate to her points and being charmed by her humorous additions, unexpected props, and well-timed jokes.

At each meet Wooldrik receives written feedback from the judges. One of them said, “Love the topic. So unique.”

She thanks her speech coaches, Emma Stokely and Kylie Kai, for the time and effort they invest into practicing her speeches with her and her speech teammates.

“Both of them have made me the speech contestant I am today,” she said.

And it was the time and effort invested that led to her name being called as the state champion for the second year in a row.

The setting of the large, Kearney High School auditorium made her winning moment surreal as hundreds of speech students, coaches and parents gave a standing ovation.

Wooldrik recalled her reaction: “I was just smiling. Both last year and this year I teared up,” she said. “It just makes you feel like all your hard work has paid off.”



**ISABEL HASS** won 6th place in her serious prose speech. A neat part about that was it’s the same speech her mother, Julie Hass, performed at the 1984 state speech meet where she earned a runner-up finish.

**By Delores Meister:** The 38th anniversary of the Blue Ribbon Dinner April 4 at the Nielsen Community Center featured alum Emily Ridder Mascarello as guest speaker addressing the 150 GACC supporters.

Fellow alum Chef Robert Knobbe prepared the dinner. The committee included: Allan and Michelle Wordekemper, Jim and Judy Perry, Patty and Mike Knobbe & Britney and Brett Kaup.

The next event will be in April of 2023. See page 7 for more on the 2022 dinner.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**Attention: Alumni Banquet will be held June 4, 2022**

**Honor classes: 1922, 1927, 1932, 1937, 1942, 1947, 1952, 1957, 1962, 1967, 1972, 1982, 1992, 1997, 2002, 2012, 2022**

**Note: JayFest will be held June 3, 2022**





# Blue Ribbon Dinner: Foundation of faith

## By Delores Meister

Emily Ridder Mascarello GACC Class of 2009, spoke at the Blue Ribbon dinner Monday evening April 4 at the Nielson Community Center.

Emily, daughter of Paul and Jackie Ridder, said her parents and her school helped her Faith flourish when she stepped out of the “sheltered Catholic bubble and into college life” and beyond.

Emily said, “My faith was able to flourish because of the strong foundation laid by my parents and GACC. The simple foundation of saying the morning offering, going to daily Mass, learning our Faith in religion class and of course being able to prepare for and receive the sacraments alongside of classmates.”

High school “church” trips with soul-searching teenagers from across the country and world were times when Emily found the Holy Spirit could speak to her.

After high school at University of Nebraska-Omaha UNO Emily found Thursday night supportive FOCUS meetings with confession, Mass and having, a place to make quality friendships that surrounded Jesus rather than alcohol.

After college, Emily felt God calling her into nursing rather than accounting. An accelerated nursing program placed her in a position to put her faith into action by serving others. Her faith flourished.

As a bedside nurse with a 12-hour night shift schedule at the



**Emily Ridder Mascarello, left, was the speaker at GACC's Blue Ribbon Dinner. Emma Stokely was the MC.**

medical/surgical unit at University of Nebraska Medical Center with several very ill patients, Emily found she heavily relied on prayer to face the nursing challenges.

“I was diagnosed with depression and anxiety. I tried to pray my way through it and felt defeated when unable to do so. My family encouraged me to seek help and I started medications. Getting myself to be okay with starting depression medication was a challenge though

now I see the Lord was offering me a different solution than I wanted. This was definitely not the first or last time that God has provided a different solution than we ask or look for,” she said.

Through Catholic Match, Emily and Ryan met. Their friendship grew from best friends to courtship, to spending a weekly holy hour in prayer together; they discerned marriage. Today, Emily is a stay-at-home mother to three children and still able to practice nursing two days a month at Boys Town.

Emily had a message for parents and grandparents.

“Catholic education does matter greatly, but parents, godparents and grandparents give the foundation of our Catholic life in the domestic church. Please pray with your kids and grandkids. Make a habit of taking them to see Jesus. Take them to receive the sacraments or do acts of service with them. If your children have fallen away, you could evangelize.

“But as always, pray for them first and give them back to God,” Emily said.

“The faith-filled community of West Point is something I am very proud to call home. I am constantly learning more of the sacrifices you have all made to sustain authentic Catholic education in the community.

“Thank you for your time and thank you for sacrificing so that I could have an education rooted in Jesus,” Emily said.

# Thank you for all your support

## By Kate Hagemann GACC Principal

As another school year comes to an end I want to take this opportunity to say thank you for all the support from Bluejay nation.

These last few years have been challenging and with the continued support of our parents, community

members, and alumni we have been able to keep our students in school and in a somewhat regular routine.

Everything that we do is only possible with the amazing support we receive. Congratulations to the Class of 2022 and Good Luck in your future endeavors. We wish everyone a safe and enjoyable break and look forward to seeing everyone again in August.



# Trading Alps, skiing for cattle, farmland

**By Ashley Gaughan**

For the past nine months, Italian exchange student Francesca Calloni has made West Point her home, immersing herself in a rural Nebraska lifestyle.

The 17-year-old said the change from her hometown of Merano, a city of 40,000 in northern Italy near the Alps, to West Point has been quite the transition.

“Here, it’s so small that everyone knows each other. Even people that I don’t know, when they see me say, ‘Hi, Francesca,’” she said.

She’s been soaking up the Midwestern culture.

“Here, everything is cattle, corn and agriculture,” she said.

But she’s enjoyed the experience, noting that she had wanted to visit the U.S. since she was 14.

She began telling her family, “Ok I’m going to America when I’m 17. And they were like, ‘No way,’” she said.

But she kept repeating her wish every year until her family grew used to the idea.

“After the first two years that I was always saying that, they were like, ‘Ok’ like it was normal,” she laughed.

When she was accepted to her travel group Education First, she learned in June 2021 she would be placed in Nebraska.

It was Francesca’s first time on a plane and she traveled with other Italian Exchange students to the U.S. Some of her fellow students were placed in Omaha and other nearby cities.

Francesca was welcomed to West Point by her hosts she would be living with for a year, Mark and Michelle Wooldrik and family.

Arriving on August 5, 2021, she had a little time to grow acclimated to the area before beginning school.

She attends school with Greta Wooldrik, a junior, and Henry Wooldrik, a seventh grader.

As a Guardian Angels Central Catholic student, Francesca noted, “My family’s Catholic. So it was nice to be in the school, because it



**Francesca Calloni, right, with her host brother Henry Wooldrik.**

gave me the opportunity to practice my faith.”

Volleyball, cheerleading and currently, rehearsals for the high school musical have kept the senior busy this school year.

While she has absorbed American culture, she’s also attempted to teach her host family about her Italian culture as well as some of the language.

“It’s not working,” she said. “Everything they do is sound Italian and make hand gestures.”

“Cibo” Henry said, demonstrating his knowledge. “That means ‘food.’ We say ‘Bon appetit’ a lot.”

But Francesca said her host family has made a good-hearted effort to learn her native language, and in fact, Michelle has picked up on Italian pretty well.

She has loved her experience in the U.S. so far.

“I think it’s amazing,” Francesca said. “Some things are like I expected it to be, some things different, but I really like it.”

One thing she was glad to see were the iconic yellow buses that transported kids to and from school.

“The yellow bus is a super American thing,” she said.

She also loved all the excitement generated around sporting events and the school pride that is shown.

She’s been able to stay in touch with her friends and family—her parents, one older sister and one younger brother—in Italy with zoom calls.

The senior said her time here has flown by.

She went tubing down the Niobrara River and she’s had many fun trips to Omaha for shopping and seeing the city with her friends at school.

Thanks to a few trips, she’ll be able to get a taste of other parts of the country.

During Christmas break she took a family vacation to Las Vegas with the Wooldriks and in the spring will visit Florida with her exchange group—a state she’s always wanted to visit.

She will also sightsee in New York for a few days before she flies back to Italy in June.

“So I feel like I’m going to see a lot of what I really wanted to see in America,” Francesca said.

And there are a few things she wishes she could take back with her to Italy.

“I discovered Dr. Pepper and Runza here. I’m going to miss that a lot,” she said.

She’s also met one of her big goals while living here.

“It’s a lot easier now for me to speak English without thinking first in Italian and translate. I can just speak it now,” she said.

When June 8 comes around Francesca will fly back home, taking memories of what has become her much-loved second family and the people of Cuming County with her.

But when she boards a plane to head back to Italy this summer, she said she’s positive it won’t be the last time she sees her host family.

She noted it will be the Wooldriks’ turn to visit her in Italy next time.



## *GACC in need of elementary school teachers*

Guardian Angels Central Catholic Elementary is in need of filling the following positions for the 2022-2023 school year:

- 1st Grade Teacher
- Resource Teacher
- Art Teacher
- (2) Teacher's Aides
- Substitute Teachers

If you love working with children in a faith based Catholic Community, please contact Paula Peatrowsky at 402-372-5328 or email at ppeatrowsky@gacbluejays.org

### BIRTHS

Amanda (Stratman) '12 & Tyler Albers: son Ace William born on 4/22/22

Amanda (Oligmueller) '09 & Eric Benzel: daughters Etta Rae & Eloise Ruth born on 5/10/22

Patrick '06 & Jenna Knievel: daughter Emma Ruth born on 5/14/22

### WEDDINGS

Krista Fischer '15 married Josh Batenhorst on 4/23/22

### DEATHS

ETERNAL REST GRANT UNTO THEM O LORD  
Bernard Volker '53: Date of death 4/7/22

Leo Diekemper '64: Date of death 4/21/22

### Emails Wanted:

Please send your current email address to ranaeobrien1@gmail.com to receive our online edition of "News from the Nest" throughout the year.



## *Win 500 for coach Stracke*

**GACC girls head basketball coach Jerry Stracke (middle) achieved a coaching milestone as he notched his 500th career win in last night's subdistrict tournament.**



## *Schlecht signs to pitch in college*

**Reese Schlecht, a senior at Guardian Angels Central Catholic High School, signed his national letter of intent to join the baseball program at Iowa Central Community College. Schlecht was a three-year starter for the Patriots' high school baseball team. He signed as a pitcher.**



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