

Fort Benton High School

THE CANNON REPORT

FBHS Journalism

May 8, 2025



Russ Strong

Local Bracelets Boost Russ Axtman's Cancer Fight

by Braydee Lehman (sophomore)

Earlier this school year, Russ Axtman, our head of maintenance, voice of the Longhorns, and FBHS extraordinaire, was diagnosed with cancer for the second time. He is currently battling skin cancer and

has already undergone surgery to remove some lymph nodes, completed radiation, and is now undergoing immunotherapy before he begins chemo this summer.

When Caitlyn Axtman learned about her father-in-law's challenging second round with cancer, she knew she had to act. Axtman says, "When we found out how tough this second round of cancer was going to be, I knew I had to do something," Caitlyn explained. "I make bracelets on the side, so it felt like the perfect way to raise some funds and give people a way to show their support."

The response was overwhelming. The community was eager to show their support by contributing financially on a GoFundMe account which reached its goal in less than 12 hours, and buying bracelets. In fact, Caitlyn made approximately 340 bracelets!

"We've been unbelievably humbled by the support we've received through the GoFundMe and bracelet orders," she said. "Some people donated, some ordered bracelets, and some did both — and every bit of it has meant so much."

The impact goes beyond just fundraising, though. "It's been about three months since we delivered the bracelets, and I still see people wearing them out and about. It seriously warms my heart," Caitlyn shared. "Russ is such a selfless person, and seeing all the love and support come back to him has been amazing."

Caitlyn had some support in her efforts, and she stated. "I also want to give a huge thank you to Mrs. Lynch, Mrs. Lords, Mrs. Vielleux, Karen Giles, and the NHS and Leo's students for giving up part of one of their Saturday mornings to help me string beads. And a big shoutout to my mom, Brenda, for spending her evenings helping me too! Couldn't have done it without them all."

Russ has been an integral part of our school and the Fort Benton community his entire life, so it was no surprise that people wanted to show their support in return. Russ, we are behind you every step of the way.

School Support



Student Life



High School Sports

Longhorn Tennis Nears Postseason

by Kailee Fuller (grade 9)

The Fort Benton High School Longhorn tennis team has had an impressive start to the season, showcasing dedication, skill, and sportsmanship. The team, composed of both boys and girls, has trained hard under the guidance of their experienced coaches, participating in several tournaments across Montana and consistently performing well.

The players have demonstrated remarkable improvement in their techniques and strategies. Key players have stepped up, leading the team with strong performances in both singles and doubles matches. Miranda Lynch, the head coach, discusses their notable results so far: "We've seen a lot of improvement across the board. Last season, we had three state qualifiers: Zoe Donner, Alexis Clark, and Paetyn Templet. These three are playing with a lot of confidence this season, which is amazing to see. We also have two seniors, Hanna Bach and Seeli Jameson, who continue to impress me with their progress. Additionally, our underclassmen show strong potential, so the future looks bright! Almost all of our boys are brand new players, but you wouldn't know it! They have pulled off some upsets, learned a lot about the game, and are improving."

Many of the Longhorns display a winning record, in fact, as we head into the postseason. The girls team will have divisionals in Havre on May 13 and 14, and the boys will play in Conrad on the 15th-18th. Any state qualifiers will head to Missoula the following week for the state tournament. We wish them the best of luck in their postseason efforts!

FBHS Junior Class Hosts Vegas-Themed Prom

by Braydee Lehman (sophomore)

On March 8th the Junior class hosted a Las Vegas themed prom. They hosted Grand March in the high school gym and then the dance at the Ag Center. The junior class spent all day Friday, March 7th setting up the AG center and grand march in the gym. The class bought several Vegas-themed decorations for the arch, tables, the dance floor, and more.

Grand march was held at 7 pm, and right after everyone went over to the Ag center to get couples and class photos taken by Miss Disney. There were three nominees from each of the sophomore, junior, and senior classes.

The senior nominees included Hailey Campbell, Seeli Jameson, Ang Reiner, Landon Jacques, Riggan Meckel, and Dylan Reeves. The Junior nominees were Zoe Donner, Cora Johnston, Brinly Reid, Noah Fief, John Lippert, and Jude Robertson. Finally the sophomore nominees were Alexis Clark, Taryn Reid, Mel Starman, Isaac Arganbright, Callum Ballantyne, and Kooper Griffin.

About a week before prom our librarian, Mrs Vielleux sent out an email to each high school student to vote for royalty. Ang Reiner and Landon Jacques were our prom king and queen. From the junior class the princess was Zoe Donner and the prince was Jude Robertson. The prince and princess from the sophomore class was Taryn Reid and Kooper Griffin.



High School Activities

End of school year check in with Mr. Hould

by Bridger Ball (freshmen)

As our 2024-2025 school year nears its end, we would like to look back on all of the great things our students accomplished. From the first day of school, to the final bell a couple of weeks from now, the Longhorns have worked hard in the classroom, on the court or field, and in the community as well.

Principal and Superintendent, Mr. Hould stated, "I am amazed by how busy our students are. Students are actively involved in so many activities, plus students have jobs and very often a hectic family schedule too. I continue to be impressed by our students." As many of our students are athletes, or have jobs, or are even in clubs, they have still continued to thrive. Mr. Hould hopes for this same type of school year to carry over to next year.

There are just three weeks left of the school year, and just a few events left in the busiest part of the year. Most recently, FBHS participated in Longhorn Day, held the academic awards ceremony, the NHS induction ceremony, and students are headed off into various directions for spring sports.

As for the rest of the year, the biggest event still looming is Graduation. Hould stated, "I always enjoy high school graduation because it is such an important moment in the life of any student. It is both a happy occasion and an emotional time for many students and their families. I am especially excited for graduation this year, because my daughter Mary will be in Fort Benton that week, and she will be providing sign language interpretation during the graduation ceremony."

Going forward into the 2025-2026 school year, Hould has many goals for our school and the students. Mr. Hould is excited for all his new ideas, and he stated, "I am looking forward to the full implementation of our new honor roll system

and recognizing students with the Be The Bridge award."

Furthermore, we will have a few staff changes, but all positions are filled, and one staff member even offers a new opportunity. Mr. Hould expressed, "I recently hired a new teacher for next year that knows sign language. She has agreed to teach a sign language interpretation class!" The sports teams are headed into their post season, graduation will be held on Sunday, May 18, at 2:00 pm, and the school year officially concludes on May 23rd, at noon.

High School Activities

FBHS FFA Competes at State Convention

by Hailey Campbell (senior)

On Monday, April 1st, Fort Benton High School's FFA team attended the state FFA convention in Bozeman with all 24 members in attendance. They competed in 8 different team events and one individual event, such events being Agricultural technology and mechanics. All teams placed within the top half of their respective events. Notably, Fort Benton placed in two events: mechanics and agricultural tech. Each team earned a placing of fourth in each event.

Furthermore, Melodie Starman placed 8th for horse evaluation as an individual. Eight of the seniors on the FFA team received their state degree, the highest award given to any member. After the event, the school joined in a celebration of the teams' accomplishments. Mrs. Cunningham expressed that Fort Benton is not competing against other schools of similar size in FFA, but all of Montana schools from AA to the smallest class C school. Considering this, she expressed just how impressive it is to qualify for state and to have performed so well this year.

Though the team this year will become small come May 18th with the seniors graduating, Coach Cunningham proudly says the team is "looking forward to next year" and that next year some of the younger FFA team members will be moving into the spots the seniors will be leaving behind in each different team after they graduate.

High School Activities

2025 East Coast Trip a Success

by Allyson Jacques (Sophomore)

A group of Fort Benton High School students recently went on an unforgettable school trip through the most historical cities of the United States. They started in Boston and made their way through New York City, Philadelphia, Alexandria, Mount Vernon, and finally, Washington D.C.

Amy Hanson was the leader of the trip and she stated, "having the most amazing coach driver, Chang, safely transport us all around the eastern seaboard and having Glenn from EF Tours as our tour guide - he was a wealth of information and really made the entire trip so informative for all of us!" Highlights of the trip included the breathtaking nighttime view from the Empire State Building, a hilarious performance of "The Play that Goes Wrong" on Broadway, and an in-depth look of the early years of the country's split from England.

Mrs. Hanson noted that the group also witnessed the changing of the guards and two wreath-laying ceremonies at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery, they enjoyed the blooming cherry blossoms in Washington D.C., and even a couple of the students performed a self-written rap in front of the White House.

Other memorable moments would include a ghost tour in Alexandria, an in-depth tour of the Capitol Building, and exploring the major monuments in D.C. Among the students who participated in this East Coast adventure were Hanna Bach, Kellan Diekhans, Sadie Cole, Addison Reichelt, Grace Wright, MyCal Lane, Brinly Reid, Cora Johnston, Eli Arganbright, Landon Good, and Hunter Cole.



East Coast Trip 2025: Mrs. Amy Hanson took several juniors and seniors to the east coast in March for a once-in-a-lifetime experience. From Boston to Washington DC, they experienced some of the US's richest history.



Two Weeks until...



JOIN US FOR THE 5TH ANNUAL

FORT BENTON TENNIS ACADEMY

TENNIS CAMP

GRADES K-8

FEE: \$25

HOSTED BY THE FBHS TENNIS TEAM

JUNE 2ND, 3RD, & 4TH

FORT BENTON CITY TENNIS COURTS

INCOMING GRADES K-4 CAMP 9 AM - 10:30 AM
INCOMING GRADES 5-8 CAMP 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM

REGISTRATION:
[HTTPS://WWW.FORTBENTONSCHOOLS.COM/TENNIS.HTML](https://www.fortbentonschools.com/tennis.html)

*WATER, GATORADE, & JUICE BOXES PROVIDED.
*EACH STUDENT RECEIVES A CAN OF BALLS & AN AWARD

High School Sports

Fort Benton Track Team Heats Up as the 2025 Season Progresses

by Allyson Jacques (sophomore)

As the 2025 track season progresses, the Fort Benton Longhorns are working hard to meet their goals and push through a cold start to the season. The Longhorns have 31 athletes participating this year, including 9 freshmen, 13 sophomores, 7 juniors, and 2 seniors. With postseason just within reach, the Longhorns are pushing forward and pushing their limits to reach their end goals.

Coach Kevin Shaw anticipates strong performances, stating, "I expect the boys and girls teams to be vying for a top-three finish in divisional and qualifying as many as possible to partake in the state meet in Missoula the following week." The Longhorns have been working hard at practice to maximize their potential.

The freshmen have boosted the Longhorns track team significantly, with several athletes joining varsity relays and pushing the relays to the best of their abilities. Coach Shaw said, "We have nine freshmen that joined the team this year and are making quite a splash and giving our team a boost in certain areas."

The Longhorns are ready to make a strong push towards the postseason with their last regular-season meet on May 3. The Longhorns will compete in districts this week in Havre to kick off the postseason.



High School Sports

Postseason Putting: FBHS Golf Heads to Tournaments

by Bridger Ball (freshman)

As the school year comes to a close, the high school golf season is approaching its end as well with divisionals and state right around the corner. The Fort Benton golf team had an impressive season with a young team.

Four of the team's competitors prequalified for the state tournament including Addison Reichelt, Emerson Jacobs, Spencer Molinario, and MyCal Lane. In order to pre-qualify, girls golfers must shoot a 100 or below on 18 holes, and boys must shoot below 90 on the same. Addison shot a 93, Emerson shot an 83, Spencer shot an 84, and MyCal shot a 96.

The teams will participate in their divisional tournament where they hope to be able to send more golfers to state. The team is coached by returning head coach, Dave Rominger, and assistant Justin Cartwright. Marta Ferguson is also a volunteer.

Freshman golfer, Amaris Lindeman stated, "The whole team has been cutting off strokes tremendously and we are excited for tournaments." The team will in divisionals this weekend in Bozeman, and then state on May 19-21.



Middle School Sports High School Activities

Middle School Track & Field

by Kailee Fuller (freshman)

The Fort Benton Middle School track season is a short one, but it is bringing a wave of excitement and anticipation among students. This year, the team is excited to build on past success and introduce new talent to the world of track and field.

In the first week of practice athletes were introduced to a variety of events including sprints, running distance, hurdles, and field events such as long jump and shot put. Coaches emphasized the importance of proper technique and conditioning in teamwork.

The head coach Damon Gilbreath explains Some of the team goals this season as, "First of all, our team goals are always the same, and that is to do our very best at every track meet. As you know, track, while technically a team sport, is really all about individual performances. Because of that, particularly this season, I am more focused on the kids accomplishing their personal goals and achieving "personal bests" throughout the season. We have quite a few inexperienced athletes on the team this year, and I just want to see them improve each meet."

The middle school tracksters have the District Track meet coming up this Saturday, May 10th

NHS Inducts 9 This Spring & Hosts Suicide Prevention Walk

by Advisor, Miranda Lynch

The Fort Benton High School's chapter of National Honor Society inducted nine new members into the chapter on May 6th, including two juniors and seven sophomores.

For the first time, we combined the NHS induction ceremony with the academic awards assembly that takes place each spring. In the past, the induction ceremony has always been a quiet ceremony with parents and a couple of school personnel, but we wanted to ramp up the publicity this year.

Last year, students expressed interest in celebrating academic success as much as athletic success. This was a way to do that. The ceremony is a short one and is led largely by the students. The officers discuss the four pillars of the society while another lights the candles. The students then take the NHS pledge, accept their pins, and sign their names in the membership book!

This group of new inductees was able to assist in our annual suicide prevention walk as their first official event as NHS members. The program is graduating three seniors this spring, so our numbers will increase next fall.

We will pick up right where we left off next fall with a highway cleanup and potentially painting the hooves.

Our current officer team includes Sadie Cole (president), Addison Reichelt (VP), Zoe Donner (treas.), MyCal Lane (sec.), and Kailyn Rominger (PR). Members at large include Kellan Diekhans, Landon Good, Truman Giese, and Grace Wright. Newly inducted members include, Layne Wallace, Etta Wicks, Abby Carrell, Alexis Clark, Arrow Hucke, Ally Jacques, Mikell O'Hara, Riley Molinario, and Paety Temple.

I am really looking forward to this next year with a great group of young leaders.



Student Life

FBHS Travel Club Plans a Trip to Europe

by Zoey Calderon (freshmen)

The FBHS Travel Club is organizing an exciting trip for the summer of 2026! They will be taking their passports and heading to England, France, Switzerland, and Germany from June 1st to the 10th. This excursion is going to be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. It's not too late if students are thinking about signing up for the trip either! Students still have some time to sign up for this incredible trip, and if you're thinking about it, see Miss Brown.

While in Europe, the group will be seeing Big Ben, Buckingham Palace, the Palace of Versailles, the Arc de Triomphe, the Eiffel Tower, Lake Lucerne, the Lion Monument, Marienplatz, Dachau, the concentration camp, and many more. To decide where they would go, "The Travel Club had a meeting and several options were presented, and they all were allowed to vote, and this was the most popular," Miss Brown says.

To afford such an expensive trip, the club has been doing multiple things to fundraise, such as selling Krispy Kreme donuts, selling tickets for a big trip, working concessions, selling poinsettias, and they are planning to pick these back up next year with more ideas. For right now, there are ten students of FBHS going, including Isaac Arganbright, Bridger Ball, Aspyn Bogart, Elisabeth Brown, Alicia Good, Elton Good, Kaidon Hull, Ally Jaques, Jojo Manning, Paetyn Templet, along with some parents.



NHS Induction Ceremony:

The National Honor Society inducted 9 new members on May 6th during their induction ceremony. Juniors Layne Wallace and Etta Wicks, and sophomores Abby Carrell, Alexis Clark, Arrow Hucke, Ally Jacques, Mikell O'Hara, Riley Molinario, and Paetyn Templet will join the current members in this esteemed organization led by advisor, Miranda Lynch.

CONGRATULATIONS

FBHS

CLASS OF



2025



Student Life

Longhorn Day 2025

Zoey Calderon (9th Grade)

Longhorn Day 2025 was a hit! This is a long-standing tradition at FBHS where students and faculty give back to the community that gives so much to our school. This event is always a favorite amongst students and staff. Each year during Longhorn Day, the students in grades 7-12 complete various service projects around the community before playing games in the afternoon.

The middle school students spent their morning cleaning up around the Montana Agricultural Center (7th grade) and the Old Fort (8th grade), raking leaves and cleaning up before the busy tourist seasons. The high school students completed work at the fairgrounds, on the highways, at the BLM center, library, Benefis-MRMC, the walking bridge, and multiple other places which was much appreciated. Some of the activities included raking leaves, planting trees, sprucing up flower beds, picking up trash, and more.

Throughout the day, Russ and student council advisor, Ms. Brown stopped by to deliver water to everyone, as the temperature was close to 80 degrees! Several community members expressed their gratitude and appreciation to the Longhorn volunteers. It is important to remember that our community does so much for us, and one morning of service is a great way to pay it forward.

At lunchtime, the Longhorns wrapped up their projects and headed back to the school where Russ Axtman and the student council provided burgers, Russ's famous beans, chips, and dessert for lunch. After lunch, it was the annual Senior vs. Teacher softball game. The seniors won in an extra inning 3-2. The remainder of the day was spent playing various games on the football field. Lots of smiles and tans were happening.

Community Spotlight

Community Spotlight: Moon Eyes Coffee Roasters

by Hailey Campbell (Senior)

Here in Fort Benton, there is a small coffee shop called, Moon Eyes Coffee Roasters, run by couple Jake Berger and Maren Engen. Though Maren also works as a librarian at the Chouteau County Library, she is still very involved in the business. What started out as a joke for the couple turned to a dream of opening their own coffee shop, and now this dream is a reality.

Jake began his career in coffee roasting for the Wake Cup Coffee House, but he wanted to try his own hand. His passion for coffee is contagious, and many coffee aficionados dub Jake's business, "the best coffee in town." The name of their business comes from their beloved cat, Matt, and his big eyes. Jake and Maren are both friends of felines, so it is very fitting. The cafe is located in the back corner of the courtyard and has been open for nearly two and a half years now. It is open from 7:00 to 2:00 PM on Tuesday through Sunday. All the syrup and baked goods made in-house by Jake Berger, who is also constantly working on new seasonal flavors, one of them being Green Tea Chi.

Local regular and teacher, Miranda Lynch stated, "I love Moon Eyes. Jake gives me the boost I need on any given Thursday or Friday, but especially in the spring. He has so many unique drinks that he experiments with, and I have yet to try one that I don't love."

