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HCHS band students earn All-State honors

By Jennifer Wimmer
Hancock County High School student Abram DeJarnette has earned second chair alto saxophone in the Kentucky Music Educators Association (KMEA) All-State Jazz Band. HCHS student Miles Price earned seventh chair alto saxophone in the KMEA All-State Concert Band, and HCHS student Andrew Owens earned third chair trombone in the KMEA All-State Concert Band.

These students have achieved the highest individual honor possible for a high school musician. They will represent Hancock County at the annual KMEA conference in Louisville in February 2026.

HCMS/HCHS Band Director Zach Buskill and the staff at Hancock County Schools said they are very proud of the dedication, discipline and passion that these students bring to music.

Price is the first student from Hancock County to be selected for any of the KMEA All-State Bands as a sophomore.

DeJarnette, the son of Zach and Malena DeJarnette, is a senior this year. He scored second in the state on alto saxophone for both concert and jazz bands, preparing for and performing in two separate auditions. He was offered the option to serve as second chair in the Symphonic Band, the top concert ensemble, or as Alto Sax 2 in Jazz 1, the top jazz ensemble.

DeJarnette chose Jazz 1 and became the first student from Hancock County selected for the All-State Jazz Band. He also achieved the highest placement of any student in the program's history.

As a junior, DeJarnette earned first chair alto saxophone in the KMEA All-State Concert Band and ranked among the top five alto saxophonists statewide, tying with two other students for the third-highest score. He represented Hancock County at the annual KMEA conference in Louisville in February earlier this year.

Since the Hancock County band program was established in 1970, only six other students have been selected for KMEA All-State Bands.

DeJarnette is also drum major for the award-winning HCHS Marching Band, which has advanced to six KMEA state finals since 2019, including each of the past five seasons in Class 2A.

Over the past two seasons, the HCHS Marching Band has continued to raise the bar. In 2024, the Hornets were named KMEA Class 2A West Regional champions in Bowling Green, advanced to state semifinals at L&N Federal Credit Union Stadium in Louisville and finished third in Class 2A at state finals.

The 2025 Hornet Band season added another string of major wins. The band earned five contest victories, including Best Color Guard, Best Percussion and Grand Champion among all small-class bands at Twin Lakes Marching Band Contest in Grayson County, and Best Color Guard and Best Percussion at Murray State University's West Regional quarterfinals in Hopkinsville and received distinguished ratings in every caption, with an overall score of 84.4, at regional competition.

The Hancock County band program, including marching, concert and jazz ensembles, plays a central role in school and community life. Students perform at home football and basketball games, at the annual Veterans Day events, during Christmas parades in Hawesville and Lewisport, and at themed holiday concerts throughout the year.

They also entertain classmates and staff with lunchtime performances and special programs during the school day. The HCHS Jazz and Concert Bands hosted their annual winter concert last week, featuring music that put everyone in attendance in the holiday spirit.

Sweet Tooth Season: Protecting Your Smile from Holiday Treats

The University of Kentucky Public Relations and Strategic Communications Office provides a weekly health column available for use and reprint by news media. This week's column is by Ingrid Santamaria, D.D.S., assistant professor at the University of Kentucky College of Dentistry.

LEXINGTON, Ky. (Dec. 22, 2025) – The holiday season brings with it trays of cookies, bowls of candy and endless invitations to indulge. While there's no need to skip the dessert table entirely, being mindful about what and how you eat can help keep your smile healthy into the new year.

Sugar and your smile
When you eat sweets, the bacteria in your mouth feed on the sugar and produce acids that attack tooth enamel — the protective outer layer of your teeth. Over time, this can lead to decay, cavities and sensitivity. Sticky, chewy or hard candies are especially tough on our teeth because they cling to surfaces or stay in your mouth longer, giving those acids more time to do damage.

Choose your treats wisely
If you're going to enjoy something sweet, reach for items that are less likely to linger on your teeth. Dark chocolate is one of the better options: it dissolves quickly and can even contain antioxidants that benefit oral health. Shortbread cookies or sugar cookies (without sticky toppings) are also preferable to caramels or taffy.

Try to avoid hard candies that you suck on for long periods or anything you have to chew aggressively — both can crack teeth or damage fillings. Even popular holiday favorites like candy canes fall into this category.

Timing matters
The timing of when you eat sweets can be just as important as what you eat. It's best to enjoy dessert as part of a meal rather than as a standalone snack. Eating stimulates saliva production, which helps wash away food particles and neutralize acid.

After you finish your treat, drink a glass of water to help rinse your mouth. If you're somewhere you can brush, wait about 30 minutes before doing so; brushing too soon after eating sugary or acidic foods can spread acid and wear down enamel.

Don't let busy schedules break good habits
The holidays can throw off even the best daily routines. Between travel, late nights and festive gatherings, brushing and flossing can easily fall by the wayside. Make a point to stick with twice-daily brushing and once-daily flossing and consider packing travel-sized dental supplies in your bag or purse so you can freshen up after events.

If you haven't seen your dentist in a while, the end of the year is also a great time to schedule a cleaning or check-up — especially if you want to start the new year with a healthy, bright smile.

Lewisport City Council

—continued from page 1

Councilwoman Mary Margaret Hawkins expressed appreciation for the Public Works crew's efforts to make the city look beautiful for the holidays and for the Christmas in the Park event and parade.

"It is beautiful," Hawkins said. "The city looks so pretty."

The crew, led by Superintendent R.J. Simpson, prepared for weeks to make the festivities and holidays special for the community.

Lewisport's grand marshal, Hancock County Public Libraries and Chamber Executive Director Tina Snyder, rode in this year's parade on the city's newly restored oldest fire engine. Gregory said Snyder was chosen as grand marshal this year for her ongoing work to enrich the lives of children and adults throughout the community.

Public Works update
Simpson reported that the crew found a water main break early in the morning Thursday, Dec. 11. It was an 8-inch pipe that burst, and they repaired it in about three hours, working in waist-deep cold water.

Simpson and City Administrator Jason Roberts traveled to Centralia, Illinois, on Dec. 3 and 4 with city engineers Matt Curtis and Bryan Lovan, co-owners of Bluegrass Engineering, to tour the factory that will build the wellhouses and other structures for the new regional water plant in Lewisport. The plant will serve all of Hancock County once it is completed.

The city has received an additional \$2 million from Congressman Brett Guthrie's office for the project, bringing total secured funding to about \$24 million. Gregory said the hope is to pay off the remaining balance within 10 years while continuing to seek additional funding.

The design includes wellhouses in small buildings adjacent to the Lewisport Library, with the treatment facility and chemical processes housed indoors and the entire site fenced with controlled access for safety, security and visual appeal.

Lewisport and Hawesville have signed an initial agreement for the shared plant that will replace both cities' aging systems. Construction is expected to begin in 2026, with completion projected about 2028. The plant will use a reverse osmosis process that has been proven effective in Lewisport pilot testing at removing emerging contaminants such as PFAS, providing a more reliable, higher-quality water supply for residents.

Police department update
Police Chief Greg Linn

provided a brief review for 2025.

"Just to wrap up the year, up until today we have responded to 1,112 CAD calls for the year. We have taser recertification later this month. We have in-service training setup for next year. Everything else is going well," Linn said.

Officer Nick Jarboe's training will be in January and Linn's is scheduled for May of 2026. Kentucky police officers are required to complete annual in-service training overseen by the Kentucky Department of Criminal Justice Training. The program includes at least 40 hours of instruction on topics such as defensive tactics, firearms qualification, crisis intervention and community policing. The training helps officers maintain state certification and stay informed about current laws, safety procedures and best practices in law enforcement.

Fire department update
The council approved the fire department's monthly financial statement.

The Lewisport Volunteer Fire Department, led by Fire Chief Troy Roberts, reported on social media that its participation in the 2025 Christmas parade was very successful and that the crew had a great time. Members worked to help make sure everything went smoothly.

Lewisport's first fire engine, a 1943 model, was featured in this year's Lewisport Christmas Parade. The truck was recently restored and the crew is excited to have it running again. The fire engine was originally acquired after World War II.

After the parade, LVFD members and other emergency services personnel attended the second annual Emergency Service Christmas Party, which was created so everyone who works together in the county can gather for fellowship during the holidays. The Hancock County Emergency Services Association and others organized the event.

The department advises residents to keep space heaters and all heating equipment at least three feet away from clothes, blankets, furniture and anything else that could catch fire to reduce the risk of a home fire.

The fire department is recruiting new members. Applications are available at the station or can be downloaded from the pinned post on the Lewisport Volunteer Fire Department Facebook page. Completed applications may be emailed to lewisportfire-recruitment@gmail.com or mailed to P.O. Box 22, Lewisport, KY 42351. Volunteer firefighters must complete at least 20 hours of training each year.

Junior Firefighter Program

The Junior Firefighter Program is open to youths ages 15 to 17. Program details and the application link are posted on the department's Facebook page.

THE BOOK MARK



Debra Gaynor

The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

Beth Moran

Mary is going to have a baby; she is on the run from her past. She has retreated to the deep forest where the world can't see her. The baby decides to make its way into the world during a blizzard. Mary calls for a taxi. Beckett is determined to make his way to her despite the blizzard and hazardous conditions. Little did Mary know the change Beckett would make in her life. Mary and her newborn baby find people she can count on in the local community. Beckett is always close by offering friendship. He proves himself to be trustworthy, reliable and persistent.

The community works together to produce an amazing Christmas pageant filled with humor and most importantly the reason for the season.

Mary had no plans to stay in the area, but the community open their arms to her. She feels safe, like she belongs there. Maybe she has found a place to call home.

A woman named Mary, a newborn baby... of course the birth of Jesus Christ comes to mind as I read this tale. Author Beth Moran has cleverly drawn parallels between contemporary Mary and the Christmas story. She does this in a gentle way. First, let's look at the characters: Mary is a precious, loving person. Beckett is dependable, kind, patient, reliable

and very loving. The community opens their arms to the new mother. They demonstrate kindness, thoughtfulness, validation, belonging, security and extended family. The themes in this book include, new beginnings, second chances, closeness, community, found family, faith, restoration, belief, strength, safety, belonging, and the true meaning of Christmas. This is a Christmas romance; it is written tastefully.

The Crazy Christmas Lady: A Hilarious Tribute to the Women Behind the Magic!

Hailee Oman, Gusty Awan (Illustrator)

Each year as Christmas draws closer, there are people who go out of their way to make the season fun. Usually, it is a woman. The Crazy Christmas Lady is a fun, dynamic, and hilarious picture book the spotlights the women that work behind the scenes to make Christmas magic. This book focuses on the women juggling: decorating, baking, planning, wrapping gifts, hosting parties and keeping the season bright; she does it all at once. This book is filled with overstated tales all told with great fondness and love.

A lot goes into preparing for Easter, Thanksgiving and especially Christmas. Most women, including myself spend days planning. We make spreadsheets and lists of things to do. We plan menus, parties, décor and gift giving. We do what we do to demonstrate our love for our family and friends.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the illustrations and the illustrator, Gusty Awan. Each illustration complements the text.

This is a Christmas book you do not want to miss. It will make a great gift for the "planners" in your life.



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