



BURLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

54 earn diplomas at outdoor commencement

BURLINGTON — After a more than month-long delay due to the coronavirus pandemic, members of the Burlington High School Class of 2020 received their high school diploma Saturday morning, June 20, in a commencement ceremony held at the Burlington High School Wildcat football stadium. Fifty-one of the 54 members of the Class of 2020 took part in the ceremony, which was shortened but included messages to the graduates about overcoming and persevering and about making new unforgettable memories in the future.

Seniors processed onto the Wildcat football field to the tune of “Pomp and Circumstance,” by Edward Elgar. A recording of the song was played over the stadium sound system, as the BHS band was not able to attend the ceremony due to the pandemic. In addition to giving the welcome, Principal Stacy Reed offered four suggestions for the graduates as they start on their new paths into the future and a message about calendars that ended with a challenge for the Class of 2020.

Reed’s first suggestion was to be kind and nice.

“While this may seem overly simple, remember that generally, people do not have streets or buildings named after them, or monuments or statues built in honor of them,” Reed said. “For most of us, the legacy we leave will be the relationships we build with others and how we treat them.”

Secondly, Reed advised the graduates to keep their friends close, but their family closer.

“I think you will find that friends in life will come and go, but your family will always be family.”

Reed’s third and fourth suggestions dealt more with life.

“Remember that success in life means more than how much money you make,” he said. “Find your niche, and happiness will follow.”

He continued, “Please, understand that from this day forward, life speeds up. Make sure to stop every now and then and smell the roses.”

Reed said it was such a pleasure to share in the intensity of emotions filling the stadium as the graduates closed a chapter of their life’s story.

“I would like to tell each of you that the day I received the school calendar last August, the graduation date was immediately highlighted, circled and starred for me and you seniors, as was every other important date and ‘last’ event leading up to this day,” Reed said. “I personally was so excited for all the things the school year held for you as seniors and the other students. All the sporting events, plays, band concerts and the many other types of events BHS offers.”

Then, on March 15, Reed said he received a call from Superintendent Craig Marshall telling him they needed to meet as administrators the next morning. It would start the process of preparing for online learning, the continuous learning plan.

“Wow, you talk about changing everyone’s world upside down,” Reed said “By the end of the week, I decided to take my calendar and cross

out everything and start from scratch. It was very hard to do at the time, but looking back, it was the right thing to do.”

Reed said he found a new 2020 calendar and set it by his computer.

“It seemed to stare at me every day with all its blank squares,” Reed said. “No ‘events’ to look forward to. Life seemed to pause in regards to events except for

to go. I hope by having this graduation you seniors and family members celebrate and move forward in life. One big square can now be checked off on that new calendar. You deserve it!

“Remember, ‘life is short, always live it fearlessly and resiliently,’” Reed concluded. “After having spent four years with you, I’m confident your future has never looked brighter.”

brought into a world of disruption and chaos,” Hess said. “We were taught by our parents, teachers and loved ones to be resilient and strong through tough times and through the rubble, we opened our eyes to a world of opportunities and possibilities.”

“We, as a class, had to overcome the loss of a fellow classmate and a dear friend,” Dalby continued. “From this,

and petty disagreements and our need to commiserate the fact that his was truly coming to an end,” Hess said. “We didn’t have a chance to have that experience.”

Hess went on to state how that had not stopped the class.

“In light of that, we are here to say our journeys are not finished, and we, the Class of 2020, will overcome not because of the pandemic but in spite of it,” Hess said. “We

are living history. What we have endured, many won’t understand. What we have persevered, many would be proud.”

The two thanked their class for the memories and laughs, saying they’ve enjoyed being able to experience everything with their classmates, and wished them the best. They closed with a quote from Dr. Seuss, “You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose.”

Diplomas were awarded by USD 244 Board of Education president Monique Hart, and Reed then presented the Class of 2020. The graduates celebrated with a cap toss, followed by a recessional to conclude the ceremony.

“You’re Gonna Miss This,” by Trace Adkins was the class song, a red rose was the class flower and red was the class color. The class motto is “We have the memories of yesterday, we know the reality of today, we hold the hope of tomorrow.”

BHS Class of 2020

Members of the Burlington High School Class of 2020 are Andrew Adstitt, Zaccari Allen, Trevr Bahr, Collin Birk, Kyrie Boswell, Shelby Boyle, Grace Breshears, Brennan Brown, Carlee Broyles, Gabriella Burger, Easton Burns, Kameron Cole, Shawn Crouch, McKenzie Dalby, Kenyon Duffy, Abigail Dunn, Brooke Faimon, Abbigale Finlayson, Sabrina Flynn, Zachary Garner, Ivana Gerow, Jalyn Griffith, Haley Haines, Andrew Haselhuhn, Carter Hegwald, Topainga Hernandez, Mary Grace Hess, Dakota Jesse, Cael Johnson, Taylor Jones, Keegan Kuhlmann, Alissa Lank, Breea McManus, Emilea McManus, Parker Meats, Kaitlyn Mefford, Hannah Meierhoff, Linnea Mowry, Delani Nichols, Christina Peters, Aryn Raymer, Brenna Reavis, Matthew Rouse, Megan Saylor, Molly Servaes, Noah Smith, Rose Spence, Kristyn Tompkins, Timothy Totty, Alexis Warkentine, Kianna Wight, Johnathon Williams, Blayne Wilson, Devin Wonsler.

Graduates with Honors

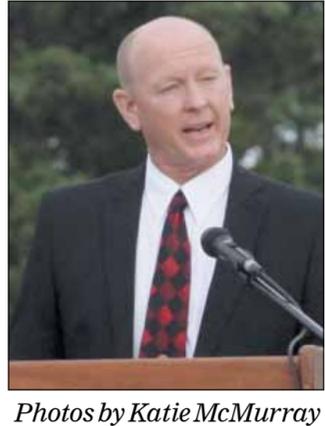
Summa cum Laude: Trevr Bahr, Brennan Brown, McKenzie Dalby, Abigail Dunn, Abbigale Finlayson, Jalyn Griffith, Andrew Haselhuhn, Mary Grace Hess, Dakota Jesse, Cael Johnson, Linnea Mowry.

Magna cum Laude: Easton Burns, Brooke Faimon, Sabrina Flynn, Haley Haines, Topainga Hernandez, Taylor Jones, Alissa Lank, Parker Meats, Delani Nichols, Aryn Raymer, Megan Saylor, Noah Smith, Kiana Wight, Blayne Wilson.

Cum Laude: Collin Birk, Grace Breshears, Carlee Broyles, Kameron Cole, Zachary Garner, Carter Hegwald, Kaitlyn Mefford, Brenna Reavis, Alexis Warkentine.

National Honor Society: Trevr Bahr, Brennan Brown, Easton Burns, McKenzie Dalby, Abigail Dunn, Abbigale Finlayson, Jalyn Griffith, Haley Haines, Andrew Haselhuhn, Topainga Hernandez, Mary Grace Hess, Dakota Jesse, Delani Nichols, Aryn Raymer, Megan Saylor, Noah Smith.

Photos from BHS Graduation



Photos by Katie McMurray



getting the online process up and going for me. No dates were put in the calendar for my students for almost a month. I was down and frustrated for all my seniors and other students. But more so for you seniors, because of what you would miss out on this last quarter of the school year.”

From there, Reed issued a challenge to the Class of 2020.

“Wake up each day and fill those blank squares in your calendar,” Reed said. “Make new memories and new ‘lasts’ you’ll never forget. Create a bucket list of what you want to do and where you want

In the senior address, Mary Grace Hess, class president, and McKenzie Dalby, vice president, shared their thoughts on the resilience of their class.

“For the last 13 years, we have put in much effort into being able to stand here today,” Dalby said. “It was by no means easy. We were not even sure if we were going to be able to walk across this stage, but we have prevailed, and that has only made this moment of graduating even sweeter.”

“Being born into the shadow of 9-11 and through the recession of 2008, we were

perhaps, we gained a sense of what it truly means to overcome.”

More recently, the class had to overcome losing the last quarter of their public education career.

“We lost a moment where we could have reminisced about the good times,” Dalby said.

The two bantered back and forth about performances on the golf course and the softball field that never had a chance to happen and about the senior prom they missed out on.

“We lost a time where we could throw aside our judg-

are resilient. We are strong, and we understand life isn’t always fair. Instead of mulling over what we would have had, we are going to celebrate what we will have.”

The two shared thoughts on how, as a class and as individuals, they have been underestimated but fulfilled and exceeded expectations and have pushed boundaries and used barriers put before them as rocks to climb higher.

“Today, if you would have told me a couple months ago we were going to be swept with a widespread disease, I wouldn’t have believed you,” Hess said. “Now, we

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