

**THINK TANK** Practicing after school for literary competition, Alicia Saltsman (11) takes notes from Literary adviser Kevin Daiss. "I ended up placing in the top five out of the other writers and I was proud of myself for that," Saltsman said. Because of encouragement from close friends, Saltsman enjoyed her overall experience. *Photo by Brandon Brooks.*

**SONGBIRD** Jaycee Hughes (9) rehearses her song for literary competition alongside pianist Anna Hatch. "I got involved because I enjoy singing a lot and thought this would be a fun experience," Hughes said. "It was difficult because my songs were in Italian and had really high notes but I got through it." *Photo by Brandon Brooks.*

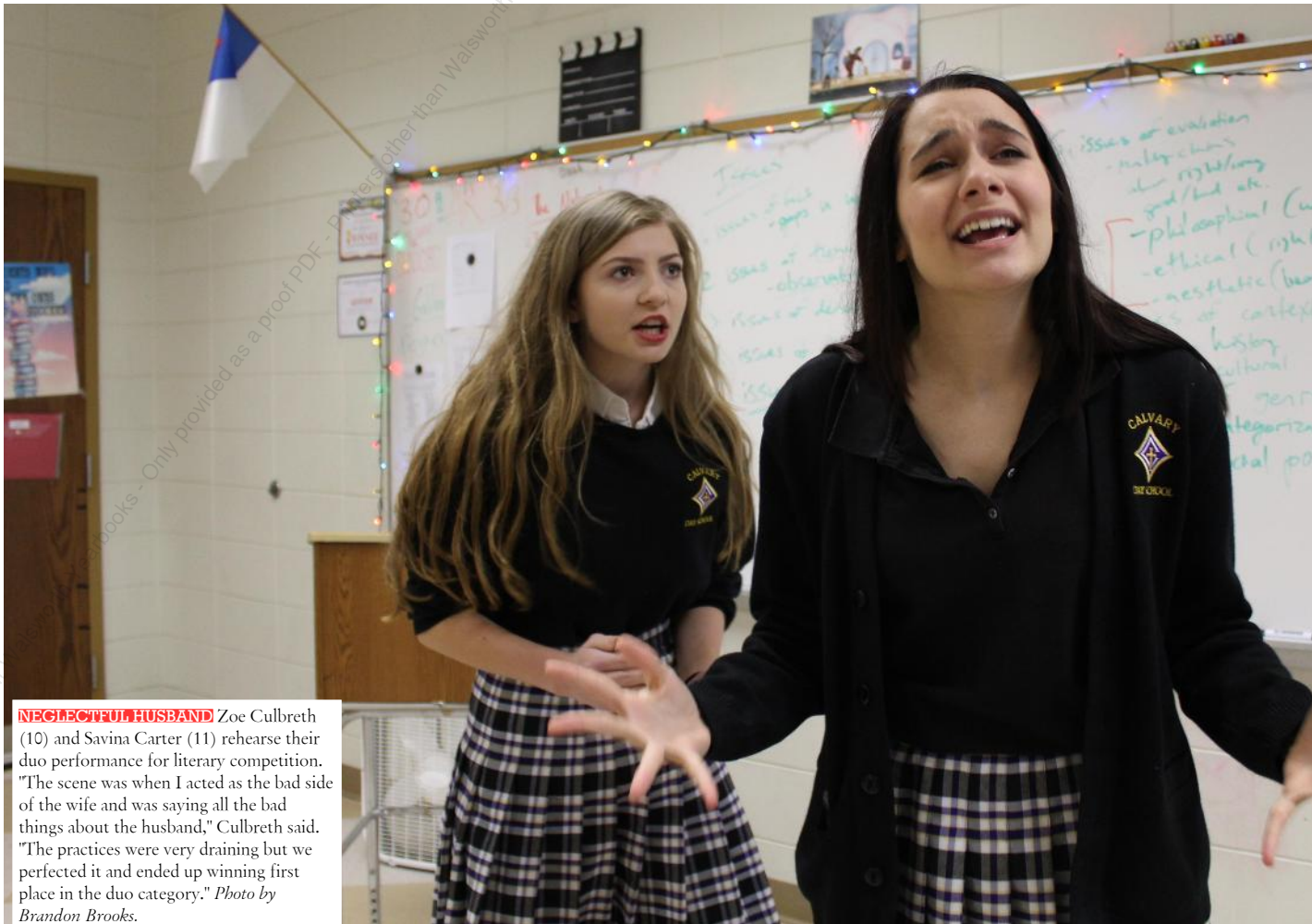


**MY LAYER**

**Jalen Scott (6)**  
 "If I was president I would make more jobs for everybody so homeless people can have something to do for themselves."

**MY LAYER**

**Joey Gonzalez (11)**  
 "My biggest pet peeve would have to be when people chew their gum loudly."



**NEGLECTFUL HUSBAND** Zoe Cullbreth (10) and Savina Carter (11) rehearse their duo performance for literary competition. "The scene was when I acted as the bad girl of the wife and was saying all the bad things about the husband," Cullbreth said. "The practices were very draining but we perfected it and ended up winning first place in the duo category." *Photo by Brandon Brooks.*



## WHO DID WHAT?

Literary competitors describe team rolls



**SAVINA CARTER (11) & ZOE CULBRETH (10)**  
Dramatic duo



**SYDNEY DAVIS (12) & ALICIA SALTSMAN (11)**  
Essay



**CATHERINE ANDERSON (12)**  
Dramatic monologue



**JAYCEE HUGHES (9)**  
Female soloist



**ABIGAIL JENKINS (10)**  
Extemporaneous speech

SPEECH  
LESS

Design by Brandon Brooks.

**Abigail Jenkins (10) places first in region literary**

“SCHOOL number six.”

Upon hearing her number called, she closed her computer. She stopped reading the articles stored on her hard drive—articles on climate change, Zika virus outbreaks, the Syrian refugee crisis, and foreign relations with China. She stood from her chair and walked out of the waiting room, now completely empty with the absence of its final competitor—Abigail Jenkins (10).

“I was the last [extemporaneous] speaker to go at region,” Jenkins said. “At region, I was not allowed to watch my competition, so I sat in the waiting room with all the others for my chance to draw my topic. As I was sitting in the classroom waiting for my chance to go, I just read over all the articles I had saved, trying to prepare my brain for all the possible topics.”

She walked to podium at the front of the room, only inches away from the judges’ table. One judge—a middle-aged female who reminded Jenkins of her mother—watched and waited. She presented Jenkins with her topic: Is there progress being made in the fight with ISIL? Why or why not?

“I was able to draw three different topics and I ended up picking [the] one [on ISIL] because it is the topic I was the most passionate about and felt I could provide the most evidence for,” Jenkins said. “As soon as I selected that topic, I immediately knew that I felt there was little to no progress being made in the fight with ISIL.”

With the timekeeper’s final approval, she began to speak.

“I approached the topic with a sense of urgency,” Jenkins said. “I wanted the judge to understand exactly how I felt. I was more comfortable with this topic than I thought I would be because I felt I had a question I could talk about in such a way where the judge understands exactly why it is I am so convinced of my stance.”

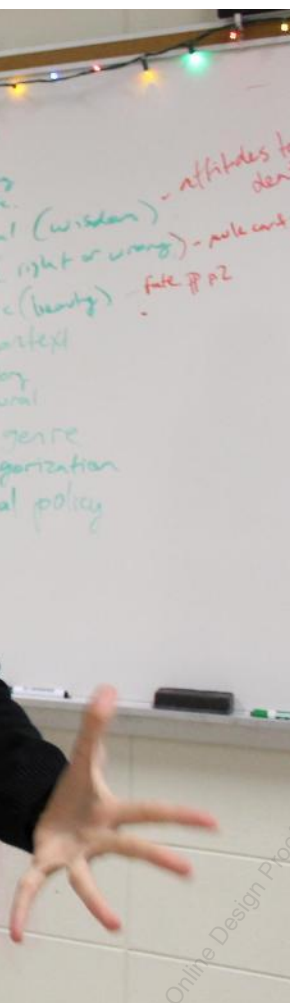
After delivering her speech centered around ISIL’s social media influence, civilian ignorance, and unsuccessful Middle Eastern attempts to deploy ground force troops, Jenkins left the room. She returned to the auditorium where teammates and literary adviser Kevin Daiss waited for awards to be announced.

“After my speech, I thought I had just done alright. I knew that I had not done terrible, but at the same time I thought it was only mediocre,” Jenkins said. “I felt I could have used a little more emotion in my voice. I definitely did not think I could receive first place. I thought maybe third or fourth place if I was lucky.”

Results said differently—Jenkins and teammates jumped out of their seats. Her name was called—this time in first place, again a week-and-a-half later in second at the state competition.

“When they called my name for first place, I know that I was just as shocked as Mr. Daiss and everyone else was. Being that I had never done anything like this before, I was really excited but even more surprised,” Jenkins said. “I would say my reaction was even more shocked than at region, which is amazing considering how shocked I was at region. At state the announced fourth place and then third place. So when I was not called for either one of those, I thought that I had not placed at all. I know the look on my face must have been really funny to look at because I was speechless.” *Story by Abby Brunn.*

**“I know the look on my face must have been really funny to look at because I was speechless.”**  
**Abigail Jenkins (10)**



**KEEP ON GOING** Rehearsing for her extemporaneous speaking, Abigail Jenkins (10) talks out her speech. “My topic involved international questions where I was given three and had to choose one,” Jenkins said. “When I first started I wouldn’t know what to say but as I kept talking I got through it and ended up placing second at state.” *Photo by Emma Zipperer.*