

The Wildcat Chronicles

Durant High School

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Majority of students for new smoking age

By Nicole Brown

A majority of Durant students support a new federal law that raises the legal smoking age to 21.

A recent *Wildcat Chronicles* poll asked students if they supported the legal tobacco buying age being raised to 21. The law was signed by President Donald Trump in December.

Out of 101 students, almost 60 percent supported the new law.

According to current Iowa law, anyone 18 years of age or older is not considered a minor. This means that they are allowed to use tobacco products, and they can legally smoke them just as before, but they will not be allowed to purchase them until they reach 21 years of age under the new federal law, according to Sgt. Mike Meier, the school's resource officer.

Citing a directive from the Iowa Attorney General's office, Sgt. Meier said local

and state authorities will not be able to enforce the new age restriction until the Iowa Legislature amends its own laws to match the new federal law.

To legally sell tobacco in the state of Iowa, a business must have a tobacco license registered with the state.

"The state gets their regulations from the feds, so the feds have to get it to the state, and the state has to get it down to the retailers, and sometimes it takes a little while," said Sgt. Meier.

Durant businesses started enforcing this new federal law quite quickly, but Sgt. Meier said the illegal selling of tobacco products might not disappear overnight in the state.

"At first probably, but then everybody will get used to it again just like they did with alcohol," said Sgt. Meier.

He also feels this law could have some very major health benefits across the

board.

"I believe that for some of my classmates that are already smoking, it will be a bit of a challenge, but I think that this age change is a good thing," said Durant senior Kody Koberg.

"Nicotine is a dangerous and life-threatening drug that kids should not get hooked on at a young age."

President Donald Trump has already taken action against vaping by banning all flavored nicotine products; however, this new federal law banning the sale of tobacco products to anyone under 21 years of age seems like an ever more drastic step, and one that doesn't sit well with one 18-year-old Durant senior.

"I think it's going to affect people because for the people that are like 20 and they've been smoking for years, it's going to not be good," said senior Darrell Melton-Grage. "I think people are going to start pro-

testing about it."

One Wildcat sophomore simply feels that the government should not have the power to dictate legal substances once a person becomes an adult.

"If you can go serve your country when you are 18 and die for your country when you're 18, you should be able to buy cigarettes or vape. I understand why they raised it, but I think it'll cause more illegal activity," said Cooper Bein.

Sophomore Ethan Woodhouse also brought up an interesting perspective.

"If you think about it, Prohibition happened and illegal activity rose, and it caused more drinking accidents," he said.

He believes that the new federal law will cause a rise in illegal activity among those under 21 years old, similar to Prohibition because people under age will go to extreme measures to obtain nicotine products.

Cards pitcher invites sophomore to meet team

By Koby Paulsen

With Major League Baseball starting in a week, Durant sophomore Jaelyn Heald has a special reason to celebrate the start of a new season. Two years ago, he met his favorite team, the St. Louis Cardinals.

On July 30, 2018, Heald and his grandfather, Bruce Heald of Davenport, were attending a Cardinals game at Busch Stadium and sitting near the father of Cardinal pitcher Daniel Ponce de Leon. The father noticed that Heald's grandfather was wearing a special homemade Ponce de Leon shirt. This shirt was made to honor Ponce de Leon after he was struck in the head by a line drive in 2017, causing a fractured skull and a brain bleed.



Heald

Bruce and Jaelyn were sitting in a section behind home plate. When Ponce de Leon came into the game in the fifth, he gave up a grand slam to his second batter, Rockies third baseman Nolan Arenado. Jaelyn said that Bruce acted like any other fan would.

"My Grandpa went from waving Ponce's jersey around to, wow, that really just happened," said Jaelyn.

Ponce de Leon went two more innings, finishing with two earned runs and two strikeouts, keeping the game in reach for the Cardinals.

The Cardinals fought back in the

seventh, tying the game at 4-4. The game went into extras, where Cardinal left fielder Marcell Ozuna walked it off with a solo home run to center field in the bottom of the 10th inning.

As if a thrilling Cardinal win wasn't enough for one day, Jaelyn's story gets better.

After the game, Ponce de Leon's father went up to the Healds and noticed Bruce's shirt, offering to get it signed by the pitcher. Bruce and Jaelyn then went to the clubhouse entrance where Ponce de Leon met the two and signed the jersey.

Jaelyn explained that Ponce de Leon was very professional about himself and very thankful for the support.

"Even after giving up a grand slam, he made it seem like another day in the office," Jaelyn said. "He was very professional. He even told us that he had never felt anything like that support."

The three continued talking for a little bit until Ponce de Leon offered to take the Healds inside the Cardinal clubhouse. Jaelyn said he met some of his favorite players including Adam Wainwright, Yadier Molina, Marcell Ozuna, Matt Carpenter, and Kolten Wong.

Jaelyn said he and his grandfather go to at least one Cardinals game per year with the rest of their family. Jaelyn wasn't even a year old when he said he attended his first game: Game Six of the 2004 NLCS when Cardinal center fielder Jim Edmonds hit a walk-off two-run home run.

The Cardinals' spring training will



Photo by Taka Yanagimoto / St. Louis Cardinals

Durant sophomore Jaelyn Heald met St. Louis Cardinals pitcher Daniel Ponce de Leon and other Cardinal players after a baseball game at Busch Stadium in July of 2018.

start on February 11th when pitchers and catchers report to Jupiter, Florida. Their first workout will be the following day. All other position players must report on the 16th, with the first full workout being the 17th.

The Chicago Cubs will report to Mesa, Arizona, with the same schedule.

Jaelyn acknowledges that at Durant High School, there seems to be an even divi-

sion between Cubs and Cardinals fans.

"Being a diehard Cardinals fan, you have to respect the Cubs. And being a Cubs fan, you have to respect the Cardinals," Jaelyn said.

"Watching the Cubs win the World Series in 2016, there was one thing I never thought I'd hear my grandpa say: 'They deserved it.'"

Drama club doubles cast for spring production

By Danielle Paulsen

Cast numbers have doubled for the spring play *No Body to Murder*, causing some pleasant headaches for first-year theater director Ms. Cinnamon Kleeman.

Ms. Kleeman explained how the play she originally planned for this spring was suited for similar numbers as the fall play, but with cast numbers going from 12 to 25, she had to make changes.

The play *No Body to Murder* is something different than what Durant audiences are used to. With a sudden boom in in-

terest in the drama department, Ms. Kleeman had to find a play that had enough parts for everyone who tried out, since she originally picked a play to fit a very small cast.

"It is a murder mystery mellow drama," said Ms. Kleeman.

Doubling the cast causes many changes within the process and production itself. For many cast members, it makes things easier for the fact that they don't have to memorize multiple parts.

Sophomore Jenna Krause, who was a part of the play last fall, is excited to see

how different it will be with so many more people.

"I thought there would be more competition," said Krause, "but it's really nice having people I don't usually talk to. We have a lot of fun."

Ms. Kleeman is getting used to all the changes happening this spring. Attendance with the large cast is more difficult to figure out, and there is a much bigger set included, but these are all things Ms. Kleeman is excited to figure out.

"I am very glad to see crew members now being involved in the cast and having a student director is really helpful," she said.

The cast looks forward to putting this show on and encourages students and the community to come enjoy it on March 6, 7, and 8.

"We have a great director," said Krause. "It should be fun for students to see their classmates up on stage in a different way."