

the liberator

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Music TO MY EARS

SXSW Boasts Wide Lineup of Musical Artists

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South By Southwest (SXSW) was initially founded in 1987 by Roland Swenson, Louis Jay Meyers, Louis Black, and Nick Barbaro, who were all united by the belief that Austin's local music and creative communities were talented enough to perform for more people, but were limited by a lack of exposure outside of Austin. Today, the festival has grown to be a week-long film and music festival that is accompanied by interactive elements such as technology exhibitions and keynote speakers. The SXSW music festival has grown to feature prominent international showcases, with hours of performances by artists from Taiwan to Australia, according to the SXSW schedule. Although many musicians travel from all over, there are also many local artists that are able to share their music to a large global audience. SXSW has a diverse range of musicians, giving smaller and local artists a chance to find their footing and achieve their creative goals according to the website.

Kevin Gately is a local musician and drummer in the band Plastique, a band that focuses on a subgenre of rock called noise rock. According to Gately, Austin's music scene has had a huge impact on his life since he was a high schooler in San Antonio and throughout his college experience at University of Texas at Austin (UT). Gately said being immersed in the live music in Austin encouraged him to experiment with his own music.

"When I was in high school myself, in San Antonio, when [my friends and I] were just getting into rock music and forming our own opinions about music, we would often sneak out of our houses and drive from San Antonio to Austin to see bands play, and then drive back that same night," Gately said. "It was a rebellious thing that we did, and it just seemed so cool and fun to be in a band, and then in college my friends and I would just constantly go see bands play."

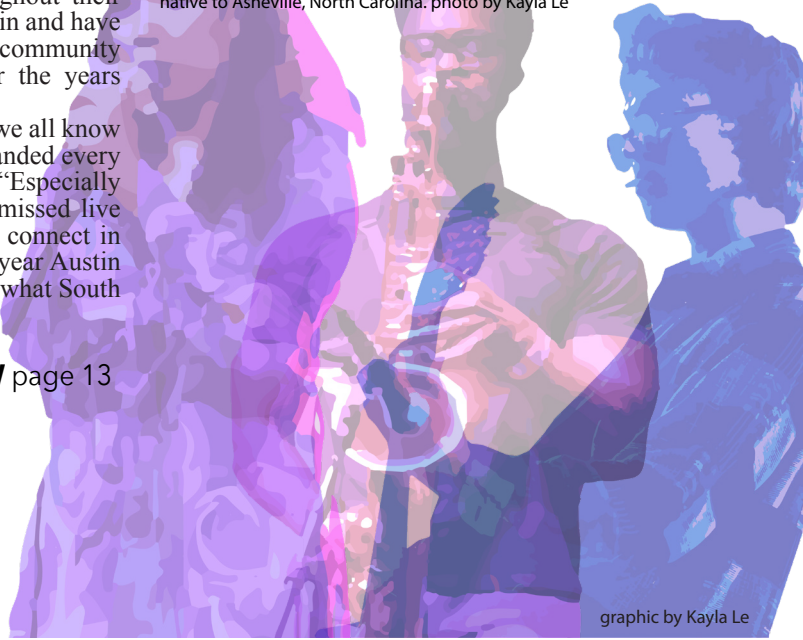
The Tierras are another local band made up of three sisters, Sophia, Tori, and Tiffany Baltierra, who have influences of Latin, reggae, and indie throughout their music. The trio grew up in Austin and have gotten to see the Austin music community change, adapt, and grow over the years along with SXSW.

"SXSW is something we all know is going to happen, but it's expanded every year," Tori Baltierra said. "Especially after the pandemic, we really missed live music, and we weren't able to connect in that way... I think this was the year Austin really got to fully tap back into what South By was before the pandemic."

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BLINDING LIGHTS SXSW Headliner Indigo De Souza performs songs from her newest album, All of this Will End. De Souza is an indie rock artist native to Asheville, North Carolina. photo by Kayla Le



graphic by Kayla Le

what's news



photo by Zia Harvey

Purple Haze dominates competition and qualifies for state

see **ENGINEERING** page 18



photo by Griffin Beam

AVP films LASA Lip Dub to 'Lets Go Crazy' on new campus

see **LIP DUB** page 14

HATS OFF, SENIORS

Students Commit to Athletics in College

ROBBY COLE | staff writer

Two years after opening as an independent high school, LASA has produced multiple students who will continue their athletic career at the college level next year. On March 30, 2023 LASA held its official signing day in which students showed off their college colors and finalized their athletic commitments for college.

Senior Sophie Sun is captain of the LASA girls' softball team and has played on the varsity team for four years. After receiving an offer from Harvard

University, her lifelong dream school, Sun committed in December 2022 to play Division One (D1) softball there.

"It was definitely very exciting," Sun said. "It was my first D1 offer, and I had seen them come to watch me before. Harvard has been a dream school since I was in middle school, so obviously when I got that offer I was very grateful, [and] very excited."

According to Sun, students recruited by colleges have been working hard for years in high school to improve their skills and present themselves to possible recruitment coaches and scouts. This not only means displaying one's your best abilities, but also working to get exposure by contacting coaches and attending camps years before graduation. Depending on the division level, coaches can begin contacting students in their sophomore or junior year, according to Sun.

"It's just hard work and work ethic," Sun said. "If you practice for 15-20 minutes more than everybody else you're gonna get better over time. You [also] need to send a bunch of emails, [and] you need to get into contact with coaches and make it known that you want to be recruited. September 1 of your junior year is when every Division One school can start contacting you. Before then, D2s and D3s can talk to you. So that's what happened with me, and September 1, Harvard was one of the schools that called, and then I committed in December."

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photos and graphics by Kayla Le



THE Weeping WILLOW

Biden Approves Oil Drilling Operation in Alaska

MEGAN GEROLD | staff writer

On March 15, President Biden approved a nearly seven billion dollar expenditure called the Willow Project. This proposal will allow the ConocoPhillips company to drill oil and gas in Alaska's largest undisturbed plot of land, almost 23 million acres. According to the AP Reuters, the Willow Project is set to take place on the northern slope of Alaska where three pads will be constructed by the company to extract nearly 600 million barrels of oil.

The Willow Project is on an area of land within the National Petroleum Reserve, which is the largest piece of public land within the United States, so the project has faced many disagreements and arguments over its environmental impacts, according to the Washington Post. The project that was originally proposed to and approved by the Trump administration, and then the idea was redrafted with review from the government and with regards for the environment. Eventually the project was approved by the Biden administration.

Due to the investment in the Alaskan economy, Nagruk Harcharek, the President of VOICE of the Arctic Inupiat, recognizes the benefits of the plan. Harcharek said while many believe that the negatives far outweigh the positives of this project, the funding for

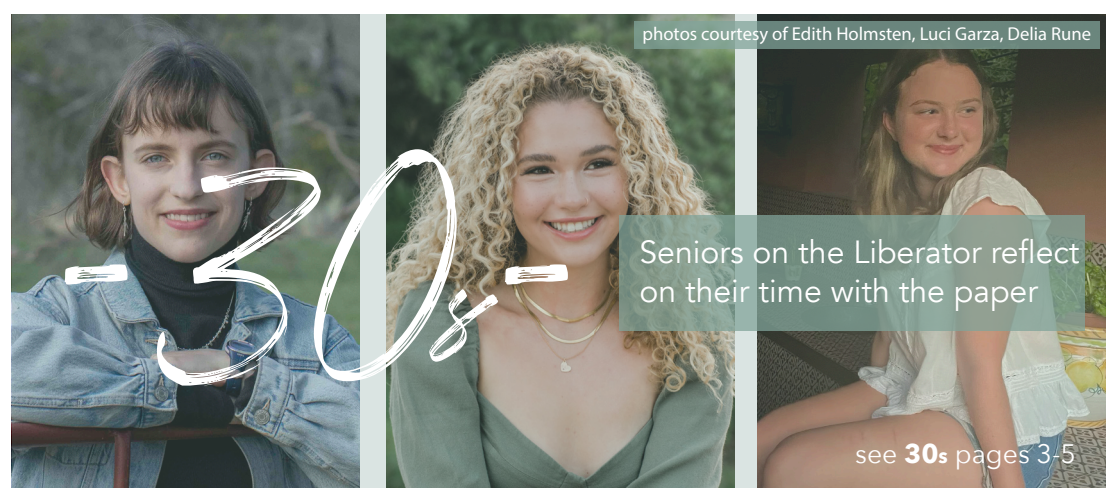
Alaska projects does provide jobs and money.

"Without projects like Willow, and previous projects that have come to fruition on the North Slope, we wouldn't have those opportunities, or we would be reliant on the state and federal government for providing those," Harcharek said. "In a way we are self determined, we can make our own money and reinvest that money into our own communities and move forward into the future in a way that we feel it's beneficial for us without outside influence."

Harcharek said for those that live in Alaska, the Willow project is a source of large economic opportunity, and a chance to grow, but many that live in and outside of Alaska are concerned about the environmental impacts the drilling will bring. For LASA geography teacher Cody Moody, decisions like the Willow project aren't so black and white.

"As an outsider to Alaska, so to speak, all that I'm really reflexively thinking is that this environment needs to be protected at all costs, without understanding the local realities of people who live there and work there and have lived there for multiple generations," Moody said.

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photos courtesy of Edith Holmsten, Luci Garza, Delia Rune

Seniors on the Liberator reflect on their time with the paper

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