

the liberator

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what's news



photos courtesy of David Walker

Walker on the Move

Planet Earth and Organic Chemistry teacher David Walker traveled north this summer to research factors contributing to climate change. Along the way, he reported his findings to students.

see **ARCTIC** page 7

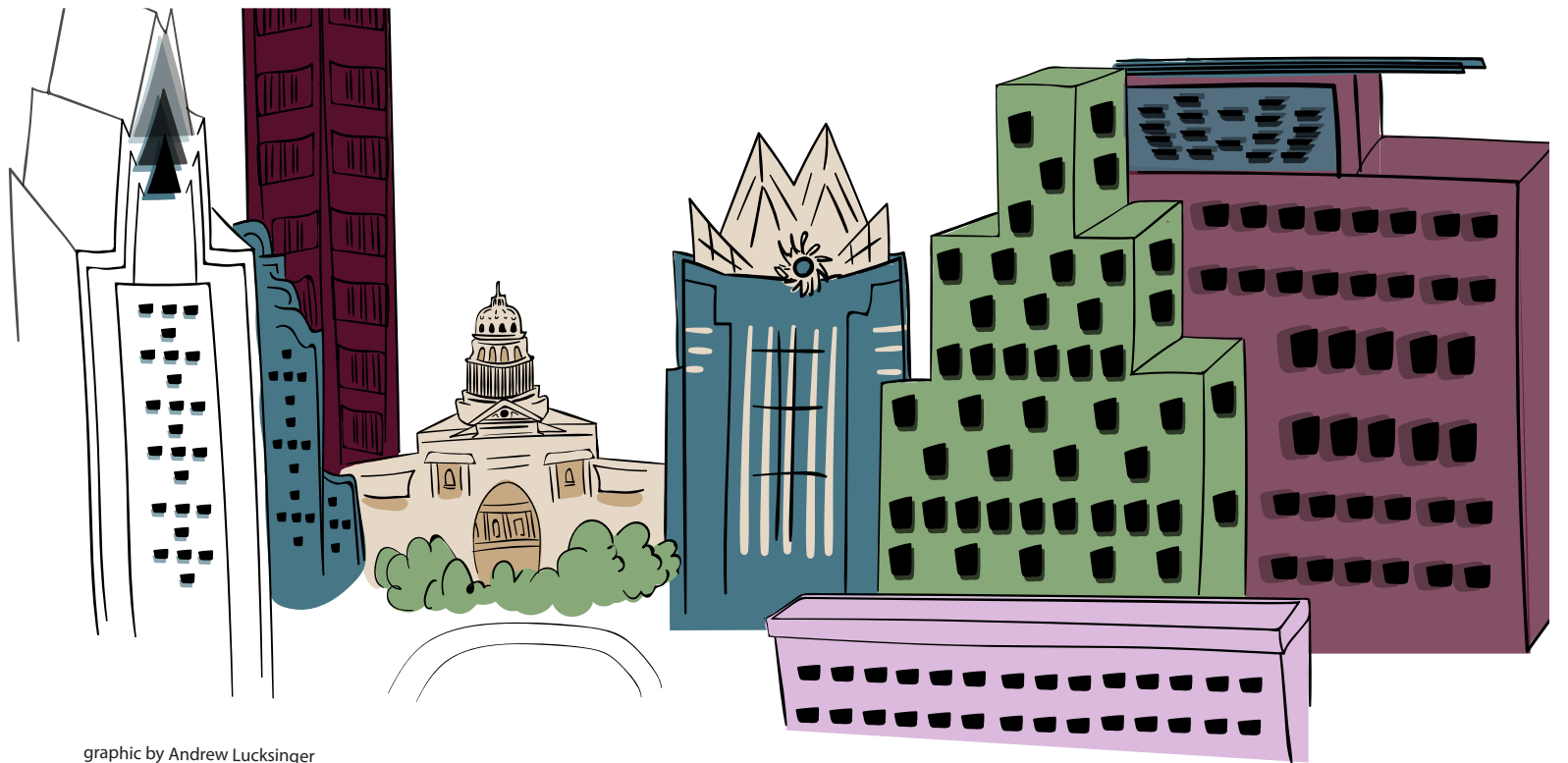


photo by Sarah Mines

In the Pool with JV

After a recent increase in swim team interest, coaches and captains implement a new junior varsity team. This addition will allow swimmers to compete in more meets.

see **SWIM** page 15



graphic by Andrew Lucksinger

Austin Faces Rising Rates of Urban Homelessness Services Provide Housing, Aid to Those in Need

ABIGAIL JACKSON | staff writer

Homelessness is on the rise in America. In Austin, there are over 2000 homeless people in need. Many of the homeless resort to living on the street or living in temporary housing provided by charitable organizations. The Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH), which is run by Front Steps Organization, is on the front lines of assisting the itinerant population in the city.

Front Steps is an Austin based organization that helps the homeless find safe and affordable housing. They feed and house around 100 homeless every night at the ARCH and provide services to over 150 people during the day. The organization's scope of involvement is limited by its infrastructure which does not have enough capacity to serve all of the people in need each day. Amy Price is the Communications and Development Director at Front Steps.

"Front Steps is a nonprofit that helps provide safe, secure housing," Price said. "We help people get things organized so that they can get housing or pay off bills, or get an I.D. so that they can get a job."

According to Price, the most direct cause of homelessness is that wages are not keeping up with the cost of living in Austin. Price said that while some of Front Step's money comes from donations, the majority of their funding and support comes from the city of Austin. According to KUT, Austin has \$62 million set aside for helping the homeless population.

"We operate ARCH, but the city of Austin owns the building," Price said. "They provide funding based on how many people we serve."

The Ending Community Homelessness Coalition, or ECHO, completed a survey in March

of 2019 to inform the city of the current homeless situation. The study showed that since 2015, the number of homeless people on the street has steadily increased, jumping from 1,832 homeless in 2015 to 2,255 homeless in 2019.

"They weren't born homeless," Price said. "Something happened that knocked them off of the path [they] expect to be on."

Religious organizations all around Austin are also doing their part to help the homeless. Vicki Matustik, the Director of Connections and Services at Oak Hill United Methodist Church, said that one of the most impactful programs that Oak Hill UMC runs is their freeze shelters, which provide warm housing on cold winter nights.

"[The homeless are] welcome to sleep [at the church] and have a hot dinner...we also let them take a hot shower and change into dry clothes," Matustik said.

Oak Hill UMC works with other churches around Austin to provide more long term shelter to the homeless as well. In these shelters, guests have access to a shower, bathroom, enough food for three meals a day and clean water. However, this is not always available to everyone in the homeless population. According to the ECHO survey, 51 percent of the homeless population does not have constant access to these necessities.

"They would move everything they owned into our church... at the end of the week, they would go spend the day at the Interface Hospitality Network and then move into another church," Matustik said.

The shelters give the guests basic necessities, in addition to a chance to connect with other people. Matustik and the other volunteers who worked with the IHN found a connection between themselves and the homeless guests.

"We found ourselves thinking, 'We're the

caregivers, they're the recipients,' but every night, we found that instead of it being us and them, it felt like a community," Matustik said.

While these temporary houses can offer interpersonal connections and basic necessities, long term housing is much more difficult to secure. Due to the lack of affordable housing in Austin, not all homeless families can get into a permanent shelter after their first time through the program. Affordable housing has become a growing problem in Austin as the population continues to grow.

"They could be in the program for 12 weeks," Matustik said. "Sometimes families come through more than once because it didn't work out."

The shelter often faces difficulties in finding enough volunteers to staff and run the shelter. Matustik said the connections and relationships homeless people make with shelter staff and volunteers can be as important to their well being as the basic necessities the shelter supplies.

"People are afraid of what they don't know," Matustik said. "Getting people to take the first step is the biggest challenge. Once they're in,



graphic by Andrew Lucksinger

see **HOMELESSNESS** page 6

Dress Code Changes Perspectives

LUCI GARZA | staff writer

Dress codes are inherently restrictive of students' clothing choices, especially when implemented in a system that already heavily mandates student behavior. The manner students choose to dress is one of the ways they are able to express themselves and their interests.

New Austin Independent School District (AISD) dress code policies were introduced and put into effect during the 2019-2020 school year with assistance from senior Daylyn Gilbert. Before the recent change, AISD's dress codes had not been altered since 2007. Gilbert's efforts to change the dress code began with an experience she had with the previous dress code.

"I got the motivation to speak out against dress code when I was personally dress coded, and I felt it was invalid," Gilbert said.

After this experience, Gilbert began to look into dress coding policies throughout the district to gain more information. She says the results she found motivated her to speak about what she saw.

"When I looked at the data, it showed how many kids were discriminated against due to gender, race and religion," Gilbert said. "It made me want to speak out for everyone who

couldn't."

She created a petition that gained hundreds of signatures and caught the attention of various media outlets. She was interviewed by KXAN and The Austin American-Statesman, among other Austin publications. As the dress code petition gained more and more signatures, other students began to voice their opinions.

"I felt really excited when it started to fully gain momentum, but even with that I faced a lot of backlash from people," Gilbert said. "Teachers and administrators were very hesitant because of the school policy and didn't want it to change or to get in trouble for supporting it."

Senior Sruthi Ilango van worked with Gilbert on the petition. She supported Gilbert throughout the process of revision.

"I had worked and talked with Daylyn about the dress code change... since we sat in chemistry together, and that's where she was dress coded," Ilango van said. "She talked to me about how she felt it was invalid and we came up with things to change it."

and other LASA students supported Gilbert throughout the process of revision.

see **DRESS CODE** page 10

"I felt really excited when it started to fully gain momentum, but even with that I faced a lot of backlash from people"

-Senior Daylyn Gilbert



IN THE SPOTLIGHT Senior Alex Villareal acts as a stand-in to test the lighting and camera focus for an Advanced Audio Visual Production (AVP) film. AVP classes educate students on how to write, film, and edit videos through hands-on projects and lessons. photo by Hanif Amanullah

Preparing Future Faces In Entertainment

BECK WILLIAMS | staff writer

Students huddle behind the camera in silence as the actors take their positions. "And, Action!" a voice says and the actors begin to recite their lines. In Audio Visual Production (AVP), students learn about filmmaking and collaborate to create films of their own. Students who take the beginner course are introduced to all of the equipment and skills necessary to make a short film, which they then create in the spring. Those in the advanced AVP classes build on what they learned in the intro course by spending both semesters on multiple films.

AVP teacher Vanessa Mokry has taught the class since LASA's creation in 2007. She described the class's appeal to students who are new to filmmaking and want to learn more about the processes involved in creating a short film.

"[AVP] is where you learn a little bit about every aspect of the filmmaking process," Mokry said. "Everything from writing to directing to cinematography to editing; so you learn all the skills so that you can then produce a short film in

the spring."

AVP offers students interested in the filmmaking process an outlet to explore filmmaking with the same equipment and techniques that are used by professional film studios. Students have a wide range of filming equipment available to them: state-of-the-art cameras, sound systems, and editing software. Students can experience every aspect of filmmaking in both the intro and advanced classes, and once students learn about equipment usage, everything they need to make a film is at their disposal.

"We have filmmaking equipment, just like any other independent filmmaker would have," Mokry said. "We have DSLR cameras for the intro classes and separate sound recorders—so we do sync sound just like professional filmmakers. And the advanced class has better equipment. They have...better cameras...better sensors on their cameras...[and] very nice cinematic cameras. We have a drone [and] we have a couple of stabilizing gimbals."

see **FUTURE** page 6

editorial **Climate Change as a Threat to Developing Nations**

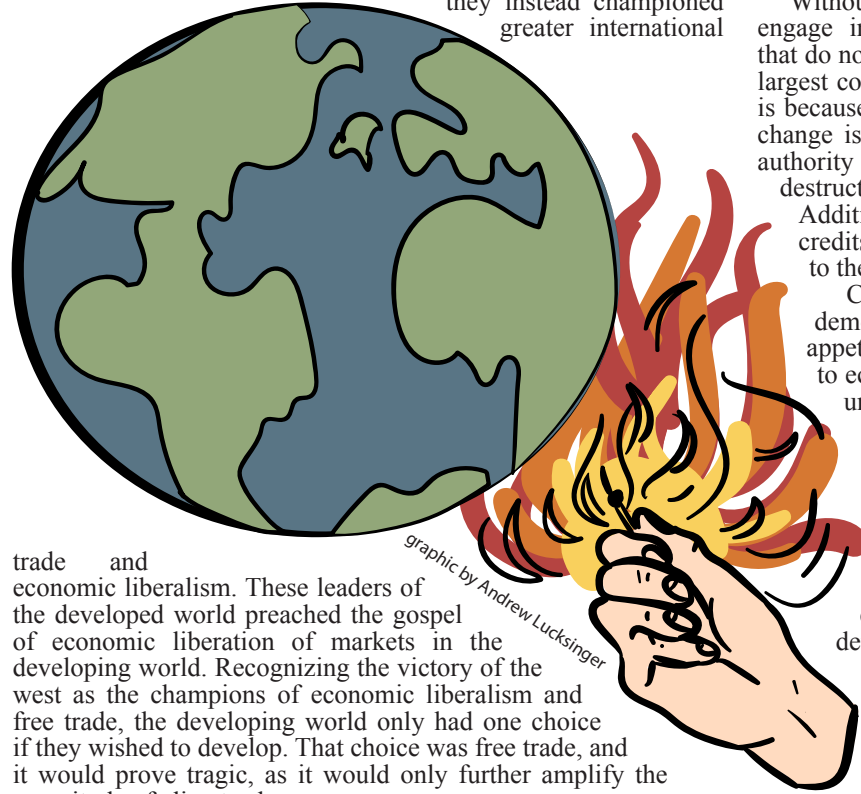
Fires are catching in one of the most precious ecosystems on Earth. The Amazon Rainforest is currently under siege from a variety of unsustainable practices ranging from mining and deforestation to urbanization and farming. This destruction prompted a surge of international support in response to the fires. Many offers were monetary, but Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro rejected most offers of assistance, earning him scorn and resentment from supporters of climate change reform. While recent media outlets have motivated an increase in class consciousness for combating climate change, we often forget the nuance that maintains climate change as an issue that disproportionately affects the developing world. Having called the Amazon Rainforest home for centuries, the indigenous peoples are now being silenced by the Bolsonaro administration. Profits have been placed over the lives of people, as the administration engages in unsustainable practices for the purpose of generating economic growth. For instance, the banking titan JP Morgan Chase finances the operations that allow meat and soy producers, JBS-Beef and Cargill Soy, to initiate slash and burn techniques for the purpose of farming. The products from this are then shipped to consumer markets like Costco and Walmart. Yet, this is just one of the countless battles, led by multi-billion dollar conglomerates operating internationally without fear of governmental consequences that is being executed with a worrisome lack of remorse.

The crisis of the Amazon rainforest is not an isolated issue. It represents a much wider problem that has amplified the effects of climate change. Countless attacks are being waged on the developing world reaching from dangerous mining operations within African countries to carbon emissions internationally to oil refineries on the coast of the Southeast Asian Pacific. All of these tend to be on account of corporations undergoing environmentally unsustainable practices for the means of increased production to acquire further capital. Unfortunately, these assaults have only recently started to come to light in the eyes of the average citizen with the emergence of globalization and mass media. As the world transitions further into a more interconnected global community, the plights of the citizens of the developing world become more recognized, making it much harder for those in the developed world to ignore them.

Since the Industrial Revolution, the leaders of western Europe such as Germany, the United Kingdom, France and Spain have been desperate in their quest for economic dominance and moved to acquire territories capable of providing the raw resources to fuel their development as emerging global powers. The violent age of imperialism which followed led to the economic exploitation of numerous colonies in Latin America, Africa and Asia. As hostile

colonial powers seized the natural resources from these regions, a relationship of dependency and exploitation to fuel economic development was established. While imperialism is often remarked as a problem of the past, the subsequent results paved the way for the greatest humanitarian crisis felt today: climate change.

Climate change originated with the economic exploitation of the developing world, and the reason it has grown to even more of a threat is because this exploitation never stopped. As world leaders moved from outdated notions of isolationism and protectionism, they instead championed greater international



trade and economic liberalism. These leaders of the developed world preached the gospel of economic liberation of markets in the developing world. Recognizing the victory of the west as the champions of economic liberalism and free trade, the developing world only had one choice if they wished to develop. That choice was free trade, and it would prove tragic, as it would only further amplify the magnitude of climate change.

Through the consolidation of markets unrestricted by governments in no position to decline, the internal markets of the developing world were eviscerated by the invasion of foreign corporations with immense economic and technological superiority. With this came the eradication of competition that has allowed big businesses to take advantage of already economically disadvantaged people,

further escalating the situation. Workers from the developing world became cogs in the machine that was free trade, forced to work in awful conditions as their governments are incapable of exercising authority on these corporations. This lack of authority occurred out of fear of halting the economic stimulation that these organizations bring out of the country. This would prove catastrophic as it would grant these multinational companies immunity from inquiry or accountability for their actions, allowing this problem to spread to the rest of the developing world.

Without any fear of governmental intervention, corporations engage in environmentally destructive practices. Corporations that do not have to fret over carbon emissions represent one of the largest contributors to growing levels of greenhouse gases, and it is because of this lack of accountability that the threat of climate change is allowed to grow unencumbered. The lack of political authority provides no incentive to not engage in environmentally destructive processes such as hydraulic fracking of natural gas.

Additionally, these global enterprises are even provided carbon credits by the government because of the revenue they provide to the economies in various developing countries.

Corporations within the developing world have demonstrated an inability to quell their carnal economic appetite. Due to corporations threatening economic prosperity to economically stagnant countries, developing countries are unable to confront the issues that maintain climate change.

Corporate entities motivated purely for profit can not be trusted to demonstrate restraint in their quest for economic domination. While the developed world displays a willingness to invest in environmental accords, it greatly undermines progress by its refusal to target the entities responsible for climate change, essentially rendering their efforts useless. If the developed world can not work towards the economic liberation of the developing world from hostile corporate powers that engage in unsustainable activities, then humanity can never hope to defeat the greatest existential threat our species has ever faced. If we seek to preserve our species, then we have to hold governments accountable for their refusal to go after the culprits who are getting paid to destroy the planet: corporations. Environmental agreements need to include coordinated attempts led by the developing world to push for regulation of businesses. Proponents of climate change activism need to understand that in order for any real change to be accomplished, it must coincide with action against neo imperialism and empower developing world governments with the authority to ensure sufficient accountability.

STAFF STANCE: Every six-weeks the Liberator staff present their opinion on an important current issue in the form of an editorial written by the Commentary editors. The opinions in the piece represent those of the staff.

LASA's Liberated Minds Speak Out: Do you think climate change is a greater danger to people of developing nations or to inhabitants of developed countries?



Sophia Moore, 12th

Yes, most of them are in places that are going to be more heavily impacted. Its going to be worse for them as they don't have things to fall back on like we do.



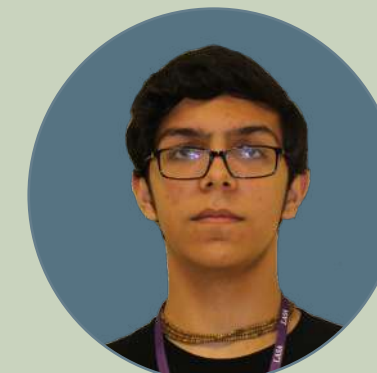
Lucia Gentile, 10th

I definitely think so, certain underdeveloped countries will get hit harder, particularly coastal cities on account of rising sea levels.



Martin Aguirre, 11th

Yes, well we have A/C, so if stuff starts getting really hot, I feel like they are probably going to burn before we are.



Kush Groover, 9th

Yes, the people in the undeveloped countries do not possess the means to adapt, or the technologies to adapt to climate change.

- Advisor** Kevin Garcia
- Editors-in-Chief** Sarah Mines, Gabrielle Jabour
- Managing** Jordan Jewell
- Copy** Trevor Anderson
- Commentary** Aaron Booe, Alec Lippman
- News** Somaya Jimenez-Haham, Sophia Blaha
- Student Life** Nia Orakwue, Malena Heineman
- Entertainment** Hanif Amanullah, Max Domel
- Sports** Helena Lara, Charles Taylor
- Photo** Emma McBride, Alex Watson
- Graphics** Andrew Lucksinger
- Web** Ainsley Freeman, Catie Graves
- Finance Director** Zoe Klein

Staff Writers Ahnsa Campbell, Sophia Chau, Luci Garza, Wrenny Collamer, Diya D'Souza, Ava De Leon, Abigail Jackson, Jake Matz, Eve Nyguen, Skylar Sidensol-Denero, Grace Woodruff, Lucia Garza, Yahir Gomez Betancourt

Club Contributors Kye Kane, Isabel Zavaleny

If you are interested in writing for the paper and becoming a club contributor then be sure to stop by Portable 5A to find out more!

the liberator
Editorial Policy

Responsibilities of a Free Student Press: Serving the primary communication link within the Liberal Arts and Science Academy and between the school and the local community, this newspaper accepts the responsibilities inherent in being a free press. *The Liberator* staff strives to produce a professional-quality publication that follows the Code of Ethics of the Society of Professional Journalists. The objective is to print the news in a fair and objective way with the utmost regard for integrity.

- Editorial Content:
1. The students on *The Liberator* staff will print articles which have been researched to the best of their ability to obtain most complete information.
 2. The information will be presented in an objective, truthful and fair manner.
 3. When personal commentary is given it will be in good taste on issues that have been researched, analyzed and where expert opinion has been sought, and then presented with the best ability of the writer. In addition, all opinion or commentary will be clearly labeled as so.
 4. No material which is obscene, libelous or that will cause an immaterial and substantial disruption of the school day, according to accepted legal definitions, will be printed.

The Editorial Boards and its Functions:
The Liberator staff will be governed by an editorial board comprised of the following individuals: editors-in-chief and section editors.

- The Editorial board will:
1. Determine the content of the publication (with input from other staff members).
 2. Stress the editorial policy.
 3. Ensure the accuracy of the publication.
 4. Address disciplinary or other inappropriate behavior of staff.
 5. Vote on removal of staff members.
 6. Change or add policy as necessary with three of four board members voting favorably.

Viewpoints: Printed material which is a view of a staff member or a contributing writer will be labeled as such. These views are not intended to reflect the view of the administration of Liberal Arts and Science Academy nor the School Board of the Austin Independent School District. Viewpoints will be given in two areas in the newspaper.

Editorials: These will be determined by the staff consensus. The editorial will be unsigned and will represent the viewpoint of the publication.

Letters to the Editor: Letters to the Editor are accepted for topics of general interest to the readership of the newspaper. Letters must be submitted typed or neatly printed in ink and must have the signature of the writer and the writer's grade level. Editors reserve the right to determine which issue the letter goes in, with every effort made to print the letter as soon as possible. The editors also reserve the right to edit the letter for grammar, length and repetition.

Non-Staff Contributors: Bylined contributions are welcome.

Correction of Errors: The staff makes every effort to print accurate information. In the case of errors, a written correction will be made in the following issue of the newspaper.

Sources: In general, no anonymous sources will be used in reporting. Sources from within the school, as well as those not connected with the school, will be used. Under no circumstances will gifts, including coupons, etc., be accepted by the staff members from sources or advertisers.

Note: *The Liberator* is an open forum.

Hey Jags! The Liberator staff is always appreciative of suggestions and feedback about the quality of the paper!



Have an opinion about a new school policy? Got an issue with this issue? Anything else on your mind? Email us at lasaliberator@gmail.com or DM us @[lasaliberator](https://www.instagram.com/lasaliberator).

The Uniqueness of the Past 100 Years

ANNA THOMAS | staff writer

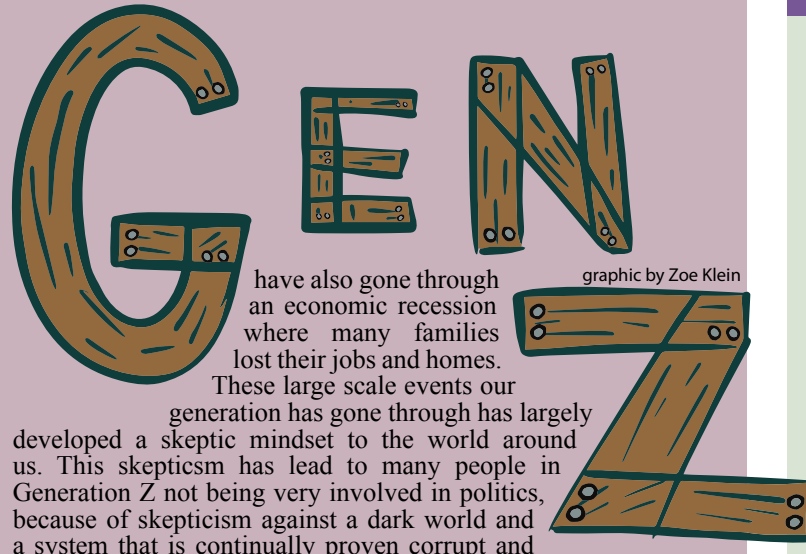


Generation Z is growing up in an incredibly unique time in history. One of the most notable differences is that Gen Z has grown up squarely in the digital age, immersed in technology older generations have difficulty grasping.

We have grown up with smartphones, tablets, streaming, surfing the web, sharing and uploading pictures to the internet and using social media to communicate with our family and friends. We are addicted to our phones, so much so that they have become an extension of ourselves. A majority of people will admit that one of the few things they could never live without is their smartphone. In contrast, Generation X and Generation Y grew up watching television and had much less access to digital technology compared to Generation Z.

Being constantly bombarded by texts, Snapchats, Instagram Direct Messages, Tweets and YouTube videos may have reduced our attention span but at the same time it has created a generation that is able to multitask. We are masters at multitasking, making us more productive and efficient while we go about our daily lives. This technology has also taught us to be more inventive and autonomous than the previous generations by enabling us to condense our lives online.

Looking at another aspect of life unique to generation Z is growing up in the aftermath of 9/11 and living in a generally more polarized world. Growing up in a post 9/11 world has given us the sense that the world we live in is scary and unsafe. In recent years, there has been an increase in hate crimes throughout the world. This keeps us all on edge, particularly in large crowds or touristic areas. We



have also gone through an economic recession where many families lost their jobs and homes. These large scale events our generation has gone through has largely developed a skeptic mindset to the world around us. This skepticism has led to many people in Generation Z not being very involved in politics, because of skepticism against a dark world and a system that is continually proven corrupt and driven by greed. Most of Gen Z wants change, but only if they system in which they participate is functioning and fair.

We want to use technology and our entrepreneurial spirit to change the world. We are proactive and we are ready to tackle the root of these problems which plague our society. Every unique piece that comes together to make generation Z are crucial elements in defining the mindsets, daily habits and other characteristics of our generation. Technological and political developments All the above issues have helped shape the values, concerns, motivations and characteristics of our generation, which will continue to impact the future of the world as we grow up and begin to pursue these strong passions.

Ask the Jag



How do I find a balance between school and outside life?

One of the best ways to balance school and your life outside of school is to set deadlines and schedules for yourself. Personally, I like to spend my Sundays doing school things like homework and getting ready for the upcoming week, whereas my Saturdays are devoted to doing things I'd like to do outside of school. Hanging out with friends or trying new things around Austin always ends up being much more relaxing when you know you don't have to worry about school assignments because you already allocated time for that. Something easier said than done is committing to working primarily school-related activities. Through arranging activities in terms of difficulty, starting with your most immediate assignment and working your way down. Sometimes you just have to realize that school isn't the biggest deal in the world and shouldn't be the focal point of your life. Once you realize that, it will be so much easier to find time to do things you enjoy rather than having your time sucked up by something enjoy less.

How do I find clubs that I will like?

One of the coolest things about LASA is that we have a club for virtually anything you can think of. Most of these clubs have informational meetings at the beginning of the school year. Walking around the halls during lunch, there will always be a handful of classrooms hosting some kind of meeting or space for people to eat with a shared interest. LASA has more laidback clubs such as "The Office" club and Chess Club, alongside serious clubs such as Women in Media Arts Club or Model United Nations. LASA is a school composed of countless unique individuals who recognize the varying interests on campus. No matter who you are, LASA has a club for you. The best ways to find one are by simply walking around the halls during lunch and poking your head into the various clubs to find a club you are interested in, checking the halls for posters announcing clubs, or visiting the LASA website for the complete list. If LASA somehow does not have a club that you want to join, you can always make your own! All you need is a couple friends, a teacher sponsor, and approval from Principal Crescenzi.

How do I submit to the advice column?

Just send a DM over instagram to @Lasaliberator to hear more about the things you care about.

ADVICE COLUMN: Every six-weeks the Liberator staff present their opinion on a series of questions written by the Commentary editors.

Ethical Consumerism in Today's Society

GRACE WOODRUFF | staff writer



In a capitalist society, our strongest asset is our credit card. In a society ruled by the classical argument that wealth is finite, we must ask how we can make businesses more ethical. Our spending habits are how we show our support, and by buying from corrupt businesses, we further encourage immoral practices such as environmental irresponsibility, child labor, and tax evasion, whether or not it was the original intent.

Thrifting is extremely ethical, as it keeps clothes from being thrown away.

It allows shoppers to purchase unethically produced items from a thrift shop which removes financial contribution to the company which produced it. If you like to shop in person, Buffalo Exchange is the best for thrifting. Offering bold vintage clothes, jewelry, bags, and shoes, it's pricey but worth it. You also can sell your unwanted clothes to them for in-store credit. If you aspire to be an Instagram influencer, they have some designer items. All of their merchandise is very on-trend because they only accept recent clothing.

If you prefer shopping online, Depop, Poshmark, Mercari are all places where you can sell your own clothes online and buy other clothes and accessories. Even though many of their products are cheap, they are also poor quality. These apps carry fast fashion, meaning that their merchandise is produced quickly in response to trends, and often prioritize the speed at which they can produce items over their quality. One large part of being an ethical shopper is only buying things you need and that will last, rather buying items that are considered trendy that don't serve a purpose and that you won't wear a month later.

Ethical shopping also extends to grocery shopping. Buying organic foods that don't use pesticides is a way to mitigate pollution since the potential for harmful runoff is reduced. While this limits your product options to what is in season, you are shopping in an environmentally conscious way.

Better World Shopping Guide is a great starting point to learn

about navigating the world of ethical shopping. It tells you about the ethical or unethical practices of a business and give it a score based on things like child labor, eco-friendliness, and tax evasion. This way, you can always be informed about potential stores to buy from.

People with limited means can't afford to buy more ethical things, which are more expensive because their workers are paid fair wages for their labor. It is important to recognize that in this case, purchasing unethical items is not the fault of the shopper. Some have limited options and being able to pick and choose where you shop and what you buy is a privilege. Rather than critiquing individual consumers for shopping habits they may not be able to change, turn to the companies themselves.

Shopping ethically is a difficult but rewarding choice. It requires money, time and research in addition to boycotting brands that are unethical. However, this moderately inconvenient choice can change the lives of others who don't have the power to change their situation. By utilizing our most powerful tool as a consumer, money, we are able to loosen the grip of morally reprehensible businesses on industries we care about.



Addressing the Hate Driving Deadly Acts of Gun Violence

SOPHIA CHAU | staff writer



There have been almost 300 mass shootings in the United States in 2019 thus far; that's more than 1 shooting per day. Odessa, El Paso, Parkland, Orlando, Las Vegas--the list is never-ending.

But instead of addressing the issues concerning regulating guns, we need to address the issue of hate. I believe to best address the situation, we have to try to both quell hate and regulate weapons in this country. The root causes of gun violence are not going away, and while we sit idly by arguing about which problem to address, people are dying.

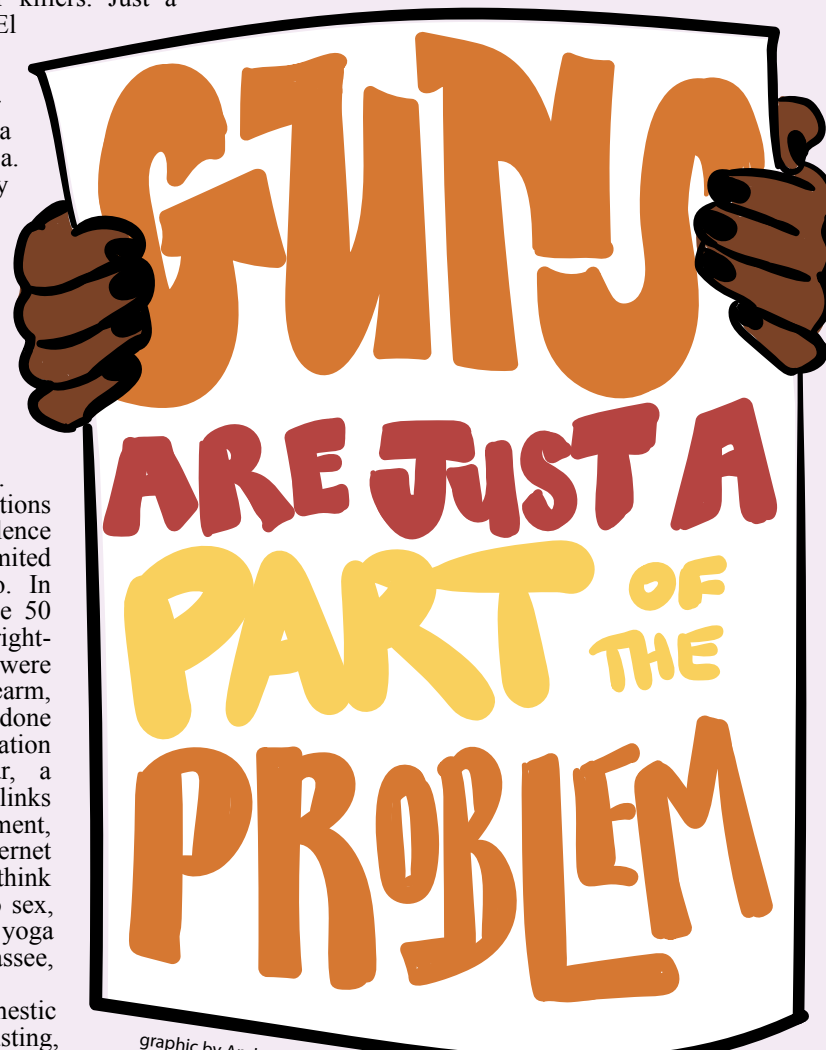
175 people have been killed in the past eight years worldwide as a result of terrorism linked to white supremacy. Last year, nearly 100 percent of race-based domestic terrorism attacks, disrupted plots, threats of violence, and cases of weapons stockpiling were perpetrated by white supremacists. It's clear to see that people who have been indoctrinated by hate-based ideologies have a greater chance of being violent.

More and more people are being radicalized by far-right terrorist groups, and the problem doesn't seem to be stopping soon. Communities are popping up all over the internet for these groups to collaborate and recruit people. An analysis done by The New York Times showed that a third of white supremacist killers were

motivated by other killers. Just a few months ago, El Paso was attacked by a man who saw Hispanic or Latinx people as a threat to America. The vast majority of immigrants to America are fleeing violence, not coming here to cause more. Despite the hateful absurdity of his views, the El Paso shooter went on to kill 22 people and injure 24 others.

The connections between gun violence and hate are not limited strictly to El Paso. In 2018, 42 out of the 50 people killed by right-wing extremists were killed with a firearm, according to a report done by the Anti-Defamation League. Last year, a gunman who had links to the incel movement, a misogynistic internet culture of men who think that they entitled to sex, shot six women in a yoga studio in Tallahassee, killing two.

These acts of domestic terrorism are disgusting,



abhorrent, and above all, preventable. Some of these terrorists tipped off the FBI, yet nothing was done to prevent their access to firearms. Gunmen's friends and family members said that they had histories of violence and abuse. They were allowed to buy guns because of loopholes in background checks or a lack of regulation surrounding the purchase of firearms.

Four years ago in Charleston, a man was able to kill nine people with a gun he was able to buy because his arrest record was entered in the wrong database. If that mistake hadn't been made, lives would have been saved. The shooter in Odessa failed a background check when he tried to buy a firearm. However, he was able to buy one through a private transaction and then killed seven people. This gun transaction wasn't illegal, as Texas does not require background checks through the private sales of firearms. Domestic terrorists are becoming increasingly more radicalized, all the while their access to obtain a gun and carry out mass shootings remain largely uninhibited.

After most of these tragedies, all most officials could come up with were thoughts and prayers rather than legitimate reform and change. We need gun control. Government buy-backs, universal background checks and limiting ammunition capacity are solutions that are minimally invasive but make it more difficult to carry out mass shootings.

These acts of gun violence are not fiction and they are happening everywhere. The most detrimental thing we can do right now is stay silent when there is so much to be done. The victims of gun violence were silenced with death, and it's time that we start speaking up for them.

The Limits of Conditional Love in the Christian Community

KYE KANE | club contributor



“See, you have to think about it like alcoholism,” she said. “Nobody chooses to have an addictive personality, but you make the choice to continue alcoholism every time you pick up a bottle”. The ice cream I had been

eating suddenly made my stomach turn as my former Young Life leader casually talked about the morality of being gay. When I came out to her, I expected the love and acceptance that Christianity promises, but was instead met with homophobia disguising itself as love.

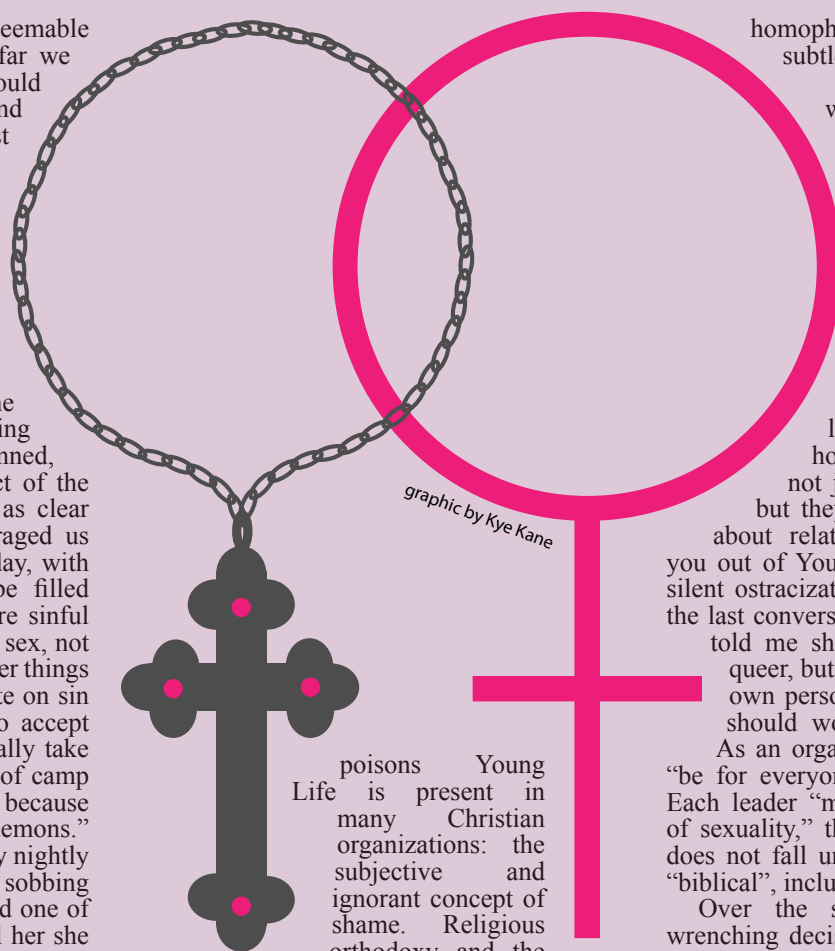
I was 15 when I was introduced to Young Life and joined the program. It offered the stability that no other area in my life did. Once a week, I would meet with a leader over breakfast, talk about what was going on in my life and we would talk about faith for a short amount of time. My leader was a student at The University of Texas at Austin and was incredibly nice. I was never judged for what was going on in my life, the things I did or the conflicts I had. She accepted my struggles at home and with mental illness, making me feel safe in a way that my friends and family could not. Relating her life to mine, she offered an older person’s perspective on the happenings in my life.

When I went to a Young Life summer camp, the first five days were devoted to love and forgiveness. Lessons focused on these topics exclusively, as we read popular parables such as the Prodigal Son and the Bleeding Woman. Leaders shared personal testimonies of their periods of hardships full of binge-drinking, drugs, self-hatred or self-harm. We were told

nothing we could do would be irredeemable in the eyes of God. No matter how far we strayed from God, or how often, we could always return. My school friends and cabinmates shared stories of the most challenging things that had happened to them and how they reacted. As stories about mental illness, death, infertility, alcoholism and abuse were discussed, we held each other, commiserating in our shared trauma. Together, we swore we would be alright, that things were going to get better and we would find our happiness eventually.

The next day was devoted to the subject of sin. Questions included defining sin, ponderings about why we sinned, and how we could repent. The subject of the previous day’s sermon suddenly was as clear as day. The previous day had encouraged us to reveal our trauma so that the next day, with our wounds still fresh, we would be filled with shame. We were not told we were sinful explicitly, but what sin was. Premarital sex, not believing in God, partying, amongst other things fell into this category of sin. Yet, debate on sin was discouraged, and we were told to accept what the speaker said as truth and “really take it to heart.” We felt guilty for the rest of camp and were told, “it’s good you feel guilty because it means you’re grappling with your demons.” One night as I left our room to make my nightly trip to the vending machine, I saw a girl sobbing on the communal couch. Her leader and one of her friends tried to console her and tell her she wasn’t going to Hell for her sins, but she was inconsolable. She had sex with her boyfriend and was convinced she couldn’t redeem herself in the eyes of their God.

I don’t believe that religious camps or groups are inherently damaging, but in my experience, Young Life as an institution has pervasive issues that need to be addressed before I would be willing to ever consider them a well-intentioned organization. The same problem that



poisons Young Life is present in many Christian organizations: the subjective and ignorant concept of shame. Religious orthodoxy and the hateful sentiments that fuel it are often viewed as something that only occurs in groups such as the Westboro Baptist Church that are explicitly vocal about their hate towards marginalized communities. It’s viewed as rural billboards that announce “HOMOSEXUALS REPENT!” or parents who throw their child out onto the streets for being gay. The truth is,

homophobia is present in a much more subtle way.

In my time at Young Life, I was never met with explicitly homophobic comments, yet there was always a muted air of hostility towards the idea of it. As much as I love my former leaders and believe that they genuinely care about the kids, they still believe being gay is immoral and are not shy to voice that opinion. They will not “cast the first stone,” yet they will let you know that the Bible says homosexuality is a sin. They will not judge you for your orientation, but they will refrain from asking you about relationships. They will not kick you out of Young Life for being gay, but the silent ostracization will force you to leave. In the last conversation I had with my leader, she told me she believes that God made me queer, but “God made everyone with their own personal struggle in sin,” and that I should work towards not living in sin. As an organization, Young Life claims to “be for everyone, regardless of background.” Each leader “must display a biblical lifestyle of sexuality,” therefore excluding anyone that does not fall under the restrictive category of “biblical”, including me.

Over the summer, I made the heart-wrenching decision to leave the church I now felt unwelcome in. Religion aside, knowing that some of your closet friends view the way you love as “sinful” and “deviant” will fill you with guilt, self-hatred, and religious shame. Young Life breeds an environment that lures people in with the promise of acceptance and love, and when trust is built, they passively shame you until you conform to their idea of godliness. For an organization that so frequently preaches unconditional love, they have a lot of footnotes.

The Extent of Anti-Semitic Rhetoric on the Left

BECK WILLIAMS | staffer



In February of this year, Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.) sparked controversy with a tweet that used apparent anti-Semitic stereotypes to describe the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, or AIPAC, a pro-Israel organization with the quip “It’s all about the Benjamins, baby.” The

tweet implied that Republican support for Israel is backed by AIPAC’s money, recalling oft-repeated prejudices concerning Jews and money. These are prejudices that my Jewish family has been hearing for centuries. What should have been an easily fixable mistake soon became a pattern of anti-Semitic tropes and stereotypes perpetuated by Omar and Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.). Liberal politicians such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) refuse to call these representatives out on their anti-Semitic marks, and with their lack of regard, the Democratic Party as a whole demonstrates one of its most worrisome issues: anti-Semitism.

Omar and Tlaib have consistently leveled vicious attacks against Israel and its supporters, often employing anti-Semitic tropes in doing so. The two have chosen to affiliate themselves with multiple anti-Semitic and anti-



Israel entities, such as the Palestinian organization known as Miftah and Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS). These groups have expressed explicitly racist views and have supported terrorist organizations. In doing so, Omar and Tlaib have contributed to the marginalization of Jews by refusing to acknowledge the State of Israel.

Both congresswomen have utilized Twitter as a platform to reinforce anti-Semitism among the left. Along with Omar’s tweet accusing AIPAC of bribery that promotes an ignorant stereotype, both congresswomen have shared an anti-Semitic cartoon by Carlos Latuff, a former winner of Iran’s International Holocaust Cartoon Competition. The cartoon depicts Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Donald Trump with their hands over the mouths of Omar and Tlaib with a Star of David. I took great offense to the cartoon which clearly implies an attack on Judaism and the Jewish people because it perpetuates the rude and arrogant assumption that a Jewish hegemony is influencing the political realm. I was disgusted by the ignorance of the congresswomen who claim to champion the underserved people of America, yet give a platform to what is unequivocally an anti-Semitic work. It is a cruel mockery of the Jewish people, and to promote such an awful cartoon is to humiliate the legitimacy of Israel as the only state vested in the interests of Jews.

The purpose of Omar and Tlaib’s trip, organized by Palestinian separatist group Miftah that is known for anti-Semitic comments, was no less nefarious either. They planned to visit the West Bank to support the BDS movement. BDS has repeatedly shown anti-Israel tendencies by attempting

to pressure companies into not doing business with Israel. The organization has a clear opposition to the state of Israel’s right to exist. Israel’s stated reason for existence is to offer a homeland to Jewish people, and since the movement explicitly denies Israel’s legitimacy, it erases the idea of Jews as being indigenous to the Levant.

Supporters of Omar and Tlaib have attempted to separate their opposition to Israel from anti-Semitism, saying that they can oppose the state without being opposed to Jewish people. However, this argument is clearly flawed when looking at the affiliations the pair have with those who are explicitly opposed to Judaism. Miftah, one of the groups supported by the congresswomen, has accused “Jews,” not Israelis, of continually acting against the rights of Palestinians. Furthermore, Omar and Tlaib’s reluctance to recognize the only democratic country in the Levant, which was created for the protection of the Jewish people, shows opposition to the advancement of the Jewish people. This is even more concerning considering they would instead opt to support a Palestinian regime, which is largely controlled by Lebanon and Hamas which regularly attacks Israel through the use of missile strikes.

Being Jewish myself, I am especially concerned with the rise of anti-Semitism in the Democratic Party. I see anti-Semitism not as a thing of the past, but as a current threat to American values of freedom of religion and the need for cultural diversity. It is an issue that deserves more attention, especially from the left, as members of Congress have become increasingly comfortable putting their anti-Jewish sentiment out in the public. While Americans continue to enjoy freedom, we must always be vigilant for those who wish to take this away from us.

GEMINI

Although drama can be exciting for you, Gemini, it is important to realize that it can also be toxic. Make sure to keep away from pettiness and take time alone to take care of yourself. This will be a good month for personal enrichment.

CANCER

You might be going through a rough time right now, Cancer, but everything is going to be okay. Take time to do what makes you happy. You need to make sure that you are doing what you can to be comfortable and secure.

LEO

Check in with the people around you, Leo. Make sure that your relationships are as healthy as possible. It can be difficult to realize when you need to make a change, but it will be important for you to be ultra-aware of the feelings of the people around you.

VIRGO

It’s your season, Virgo! This is a time for you to make sure that you are secure right now in life. If you’re feeling like it might be time for you to go back to the basics and do what you know works for you, then do that! Positivity is in the cards for you.

LIBRA

You’re going to have an exciting month, Libra. The 15th is going to be an important day—make sure not to turn down any positive opportunities, and make room for growth and development in your personal life.

As things begin to slow down, Taurus, you must remember that stability is something to cherish. Take time to recognize the importance of staying grounded, and use this period to get in contact with a new side of yourself.

This month, Pisces, it is your responsibility to keep yourself comfortable. While taking that jump or leaving your comfort zone might be satisfying, if you don’t think it’ll make you happy, then don’t push yourself! Take the time to connect with your true emotions and gut feelings.

This is an important couple of weeks for you, Aquarius. As changes begin to take form, it is important for you to recognize the value of rough edges. Although they might be stressful, they will wear down over time.

This month is an integral one for you, Capricorn. It might be nerve-racking, but it’s important for you to take that leap! Whether it be letting go of something or taking a step to develop a relationship further, it can only be a good thing.

This month, Scorpio, it is important for you to keep track of your words. You may be feeling a little bit off, but this is not a reason to take it out on others. In fact, keeping your relationships positively charged is especially important.

This is going to be a good month for you, Sagittarius. If you can make sure that you’re choosing your words carefully, then you will be nothing short of a people-magnet this month. This attention will be therapeutic for you.

HOROSCOPES

ZOE KLEIN | Finance Director

ARIES

Although you might be nervous, Aries, it’s time for you to take that leap! Whether it be in developing a relationship or taking an opportunity to do something you love, jump right in! How bad can the consequences be?

PISCES

AQUARIUS

CAPRICORN

SAGITTARIUS

Bonjour Madame Cledelin LASA's New AP French 4 Teacher

AVA DE LEON | staff writer

Over the summer, LASA lost one of its French teachers, leaving the LASA administration hunting for a replacement before the start of the 2019 school year. Students who were scheduled to take AP French 4 were assigned a substitute teacher for the first two weeks of the year. A new teacher wasn't officially instituted until the week of September 2, when most of the other language courses were already starting their regular curriculum.

Catherine Cledelin is the permanent French 4 teacher. Cledelin said taking the role of the French teacher when the school year had already begun was a struggle, especially considering it was a last-minute role to fill and she was given little time to prepare. "I didn't start on the first day so that's been a bit challenging," Cledelin said. "I always have a problem with remembering names, but



FILLING IN AP French teacher reviews the homework for the next class. After an impromptu appointment, Cledelin is the new French teacher, photo by Hanif Amanullah.

getting settled, getting a badge, getting a parking permit has been difficult. Finding my way around to making photocopies or getting books and things like that, that's a bit challenging."

Some students currently in lower levels of French said they were concerned with how this will affect their future in the language. Hailey Ripp, a freshman in French 2, explained her unease about having a new teacher who has not been at LASA long enough to establish a reputation.

"With a new teacher, there's always going to be anxiety about what they're like because there aren't upperclassmen to warn or console you about the teacher," Ripp said. "Overall, a new teacher could be a nice change of pace."

Freshman Martin D'Andrea said he hopes for a teacher who is passionate in the way they teach. He also enjoys teachers who can keep students engaged.

"It's good that they build a relationship with the students," D'Andrea said. "They should really actually enjoy teaching French. They should teach it because they love the language."

Road Work Ahead?

Well Yeah, I Sure Hope It Does

SOPHIA BLAHA | news editor

AHNSA CAMPBELL | staff writer

The blaring of car horns, the lull of cars moving at the slowest rate possible. Swearing, frustration, and making excuses as to why you're late. This is Austin traffic, something all its residents have experienced at one time or another.

Austin's growing traffic epidemic is the root of countless problems. This traffic is caused by extensive construction going on in multiple parts of Austin, from high rises to the freeways themselves. The ongoing construction interferes with many people's commutes, to the point where a drive that would normally be 15 minutes might wind up taking 45 minutes. Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) employee Chris Bishop sympathizes with commuters, but believes not much can be done to improve the traffic. "1,000 people move to Texas each day," Bishop said. "Some move [to Austin]. That puts more demand on the highways. We do what we can."

LASA students, like freshman Jocelyn Lee, see this problem firsthand on U.S. Highway 183, one of the main highways used to get

to LASA. At the moment, U.S. Highway 183 is under construction and has been for some time, which makes getting to LASA harder for a lot of students, including Lee.

"Traffic is mostly condensed around the LASA area," Lee said. "Going to school takes me about 20 minutes. I live 10 minutes away."

Once construction is completed, U.S. Highway 183 will be a tolled expressway. Bishop believes that even though this construction project has taken more than 3 years, the end result will be worth it and will save the commuter's time.

"Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority is expanding U.S. 183 to be a tolled expressway," Bishop said. "It will be better than what is there now."

Even when the U.S. Highway 183 project is fully completed, Bishop said that commuters will still have to deal with some traffic on the highway. Despite construction projects around town that aim to mitigate the effects of traffic, congestion is inevitable.

"This is going to succeed in providing alternatives," Bishop said. "On 183, you're never going to get to drive 70 miles an hour during rush hour. People are going to have to make some adjustments."

Looking for extracurriculars? Join the club

SOMAYA JIMENEZ-HAHAM | news editor

SOPHIA BLAHA | news editor

Several students have created new extracurriculars since last year. The Liberator has spotlighted several of them here. Programs that aren't featured here and are interested in appearing in a future issue should contact the Liberator.

Book Club

When: Tuesdays at lunch
Where: Room 254 (Gritte)

Book Club connects members and novels, encouraging students to read outside of the required curriculum. Senior Hallie Jane Richeson formed the club after taking an elective, also called Book Club, with a similar setup and aims to involve other students with a passion for reading.

"The club format is largely based off the Book Club class, which I took last year," Richeson said. "It's group and conversations driven, but everyone is encouraged to try different ways of connecting to the book."

To start off the year, members chose to read *Your Heart is a Muscle the Size of a Fist* by Sunil Yapa, and chose a discussion leader to draw up questions about the reading and lead group conversation. Richeson hopes to choose books that fall outside the standard English curriculum and explore a wide variety of genres and literary styles.

"The club is meant to introduce members to different perspectives, so we focus on books with characters that would not be included in the Western canon," Richeson said. "Past that, book choices are based on availability and group suggestions."

As the school year progresses, Richeson says it's often difficult to find time to dedicate to reading for fun. Members decide together how much to read each week and who the leader will be. According to Richeson, Book Club allows for a flexible schedule.

"I hope book club makes it easier to make time for reading, since I know that I at least really miss reading when I let books fall to the wayside," Richeson said.

Richeson hopes to help keep reading a priority for students even in busy times. Book Club members purposefully explore books they otherwise might not have read in an effort to learn more about the literary world and the physical one.

"Reading has continuously been one of the most reliable methods for making me want to connect to and learn about the world," Richeson said. "I hope reading books based in lots of different circumstances will encourage members to be more curious about the world and accepting of other people in all their diversity."



READING FEST Citlalli Soto-Ferate catches up on her reading, photo by Hanif Amanullah

Fire Academy

When: B5 and B6
Where: Portable 2A

In Fire Academy, a program for Juniors and Seniors from around AISD hosted at LASA, students learn the technical and physical skills they would need to fight a fire. Senior Drue Gillentine believes the real fun starts once their work in the classroom has taught them the textbook basics of firefighting, and they can head outside to put those skills to the test.

"As you move past the basics the instructors do their best to teach you by example and practice, so at the end of junior year we were spending class by the hydrant in the band parking lot attaching hoses and running streams through them," Gillentine said.

During the school day, students learn practical skills like how to work with ladders, tie knots, their radios effectively and roll a hose properly. For the more dangerous and flammable part of their training, Fire Academy members travel to Austin or Pflugerville's Fire Department training facility for Skill Days.

"Skill Days are used to practice skills that we can't at school, like

putting out a fire (as our instructor likes to joke - "the school gets mad when we set the building on fire") or using tools to dismantle a vehicle to potentially remove a victim," Gillentine said.

There are six Skills Days throughout the school year, and at the end of two years of this program, members will earn an EMT and firefighter certification. According to Gillentine, the program teaches members how to work with the stresses of a live fire incident and the stresses of the classroom.

"They expect us to step up and take charge, both in an emergency scene and also with our schoolwork," Gillentine said. "The class is very self-driven, no one reminds you to do your work until it's too late, so it's important that everyone is on top of it."

Gillentine believes this classroom culture of self-advocacy and leadership is important because of their work in the field. In their training, program members experience things few other high school students have, and for Gillentine, this unique experience has made her step outside her comfort zone.

"I would say the main reason for my interest in Fire Academy would be my desire to push myself completely out of my comfort zone and learn a new skill from start to finish, which I feel people don't do too often in high school — we like to stick to things we already know we are good at," Gillentine said. "I wanted to teach myself that it's ok to be uncomfortable, especially when learning something brand new."



SKILLS FOR DAYS Fire Academy members battle a live fire at one of their weekly training sessions at the Austin Fire Department training facility, photo by Salma Bora

French Club

When: Tuesdays at lunch
Where: Portable 1B (Pate)

At the start the 2019-2020 school year, the French club was revived after it disbanded last. Juniors Lena Birkholz, Juliette Cloutier, Annie Franklin, Shreya Ramanathan, Emily Thompson, and Sophia Syed are the new French club officers. This year, they want to focus on teaching about French culture, especially with a less Eurocentric focus.

"I really think that French club can be a really important thing that people can do because you don't learn that much culture in your language class," Birkholz said. "And even then you only learn the culture of your language class."

Cloutier said there are many stereotypes attached to the club that she would like to dispel. Additionally, Cloutier said one of the main goals this year was to bring more attention to Francophone countries other than France to open up more perspectives on different parts of French culture in different parts of the world.

"French class is just so focused on France, and you really need to widen our perspectives, but especially with like the whole Francophone world, because France was a superpower," Cloutier said. "If we can just take this lens of looking at the Francophone world, then we can do all these parts of culture that you wouldn't really think of, just get to have fun with it."

Cloutier and Birkholz said there were looking forward to exploring different parts of French culture. They were specifically excited for comic book day and days such as fairy tale day and chocolate day.

"I've been reading Tintin since I was like a little kid," Cloutier said. "And it's like a really popular like Belgian, like comic books, and like some people know it from like the movie, but it's not very likely something really popular in the U.S. So I just wanted to bring more awareness to it, because it's so it's such a good comic series. And it's so historically significant to, I guess, French culture, and the comic book world."

French club is open to anyone interested in Francophone culture, not just those who are taking French. Activities will be led in English.



CULTURAL DISCUSSIONS Club members Cloutier, Annie Franklin, and Shreya Ramanathan talk about Francophone architecture, photo by Somaya Haham

Wake Me Up Before You Go Go – Off Campus

ALEX WATSON | photo editor

While underclassmen bring lunch from home or eat from the cafeteria, seniors have the freedom to go off-campus for food during the lunch period. This freedom allows upperclassmen to choose from many different restaurants in the area. Senior Ella Plowman has her own personal preferences on the best spots for lunch. “My friends and I go to this place called Snow Monster a lot,” Torrini said. “There’s also a Dairy Queen nearby. And I know

there’s a KFC and P. Terry’s not too far away.” While chain restaurants abound, non-fast-food options, like Snow Monster, are available as well. Mod Pizza is one of many restaurants in the Mueller area. Phillip Schull, an employee at Mod, said that he sees both LASA students and teachers coming in on a regular basis. “Students need to be able to get in and out of here for their lunch break,” Schull said. “We have a lot of high turnovers. People don’t stay here long, so the speed is definitely a part of it. We also have freedom of customization.” Schull said that part of Mod’s appeal

is the large number of toppings it has and the fact that customers can choose as many toppings as they want for the same price. If LASA students are limited by time or money, Mod’s toppings allow for a wide variety of choices. Torchy’s Tacos, which started as a food truck, now operates a location right next door to Mod, in the Mueller shopping center. Michael May, an employee at Torchy’s, felt that it was a fun and easy place to hang out. “I see all kinds of people here,” May said. “There’s not really a specific type of customer. The people that work here are also

very diverse. So students see themselves in the restaurant, and they see food they like.” Lunch spots are not lacking for those interested in going off-campus. Based on a student’s mood, there is a wide array of available to suit these cravings. “I love that there’s such a variety of options close by,” Plowman said. “It’s nice to have restaurants for whatever I’m interested in.”



PIZZA PARTY Mod Pizza is in Mueller. Seniors enjoy Mod because there is something for everyone, offering quick and unique lunches. photo by Sophia Blaha



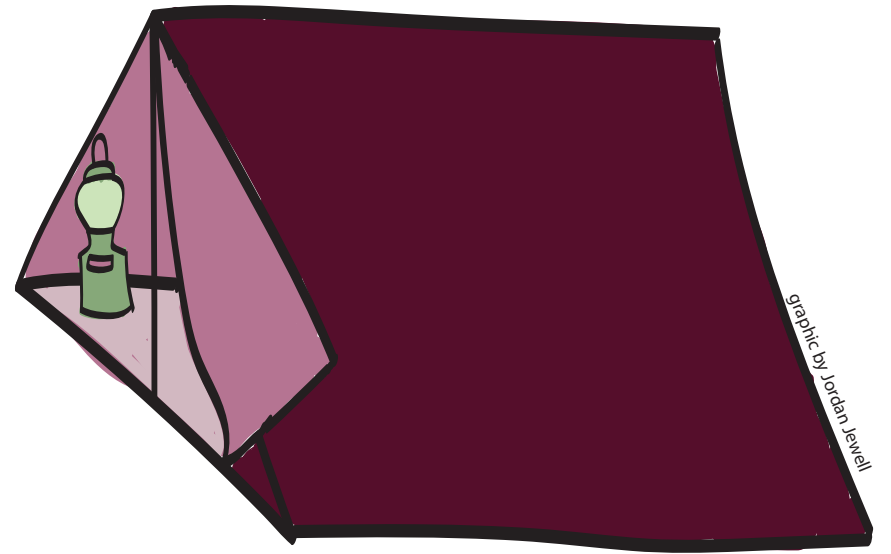
TACO TUESDAY Torchy's Tacos is a popular lunch spot in Mueller. Students praise Torchy's for its variety of choices and online menu. photo by Sophia Blaha

HOMELESSNESS

from page 1

they’re in. I’ve learned from working with people that what homeless people miss or need more than anything isn’t shelter or food, but just to be acknowledged as a person. If you watch people on the corner asking for money, most people are uncomfortable and won’t even make eye contact. Homeless people will tell me that makes them feel like they don’t even exist.” Many students have found ways to get involved and help the cause. Junior Daniel Resendiz has volunteered to help the homeless with his scout troop. “We gave them soup and gave them bags filled with basic necessities,” Resendiz said. “It’s rewarding because they don’t have support from anyone, and

when you help them, you get to bring them joy.” Price stressed how important it is for citizens to recognize the homeless population and to get involved in any way they can. Most organizations that help the homeless rely on volunteers, and without them, these organizations would be inoperable. “I think it’s really important to help people understand how easy it is to help people,” Price said. “They are not horrible people. They have stories too.” Matusik has learned that the best way to help the homeless is to treat them as equals. “Start seeing the things you have in common with them instead of the things that are different,” Matusik said. “That begins to break down the walls.”



graphic by Jordan Jewell

What’s the TEA on AISD’s Grades? TEA sends out school and district report cards

SOPHIA CHAU | staff writer

Over the summer, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) released its scores for the 2018-2019 school year. The rating, called the Accountability Rating System, assigns districts and schools with a score on a 100 point scale. Three metrics factor into the overall score: Student Achievement, School Progress, and Closing the Gaps. The Austin Independent School District (AISD) received an overall score of 89, with LASA receiving a score of 97.

According to released data, Student Achievement measures three things: graduation rates, how well students are doing on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) test and how prepared students are after high school and graduation rates. School Progress measures how schools and districts have grown academically and whether their scores on the STAAR exam have improved, while Closing the Gaps measures the percentage of different groups of students that performed above state goals. However, according to AISD superintendent Craig Shapiro, this score doesn’t necessarily measure everything that a district or school does.

“The measure that they give is only a small subset of all that we do in AISD,” Shapiro said. “We take it into account for sure, but we want to do more and measure more than the measures that are used to create those ratings.”

According to Shapiro, AISD high schools performed well overall, but he doesn’t believe that means that there isn’t room for improvement. The district has outlined what subjects schools need improving in.

“Where I still think we need work is writing, and we’re rolling out some more strategies to incorporate more writing across the curriculum,” Shapiro said. “We have a dashboard system that breaks it down into areas that we need to be

proud of and then areas that are needing help.” Shapiro said that breakdown takes into account more than the test scores and graduation rates that the

rating from the TEA does. The TEA measures numbers, while the breakdown incorporates a more holistic view.

“We are bigger, and we measure ourselves with plenty more indicators at the end of the day,” Shapiro said. “We’re very proud of our SEL program, we’re very proud of athletics and academics and our teams and our fine arts.”

None of those things are indicated anywhere in the report card from the state, which is why you don’t want to just limit your measuring of success to that report card. You need to broaden it locally, so that we know that we’re getting everyone prepared for their future.”

The accountability rating can also be affected by how well the individual schools within a district are performing. If one school fails, the entire district receives a lower score.

“As long as there’s one failing school anywhere in the district—it could be one elementary, one middle, one high, anywhere in the system—the highest score you can get would be an 89,” Shapiro said.

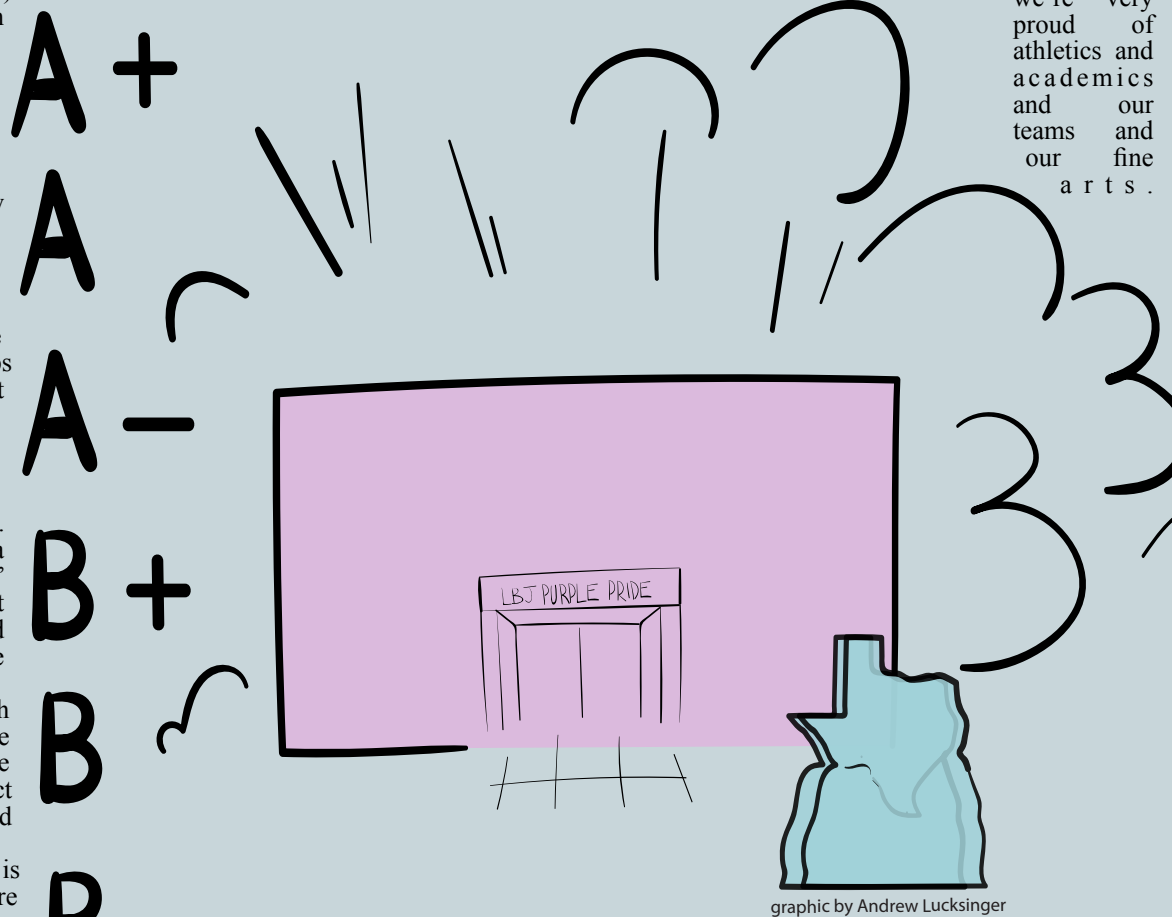
Stefanie Nelson is the president of Parents and Friends of LASA, an organization for LASA that plans events and raises funds for material. Nelson said that the organization does not take into account LASA’s score when planning for funding.

“The things that we fund through PFLASA would be more around what would benefit the students and what would benefit the faculty as they support the students,” Nelson said.

As for the Liberal Arts and Sciences Academy, principal Stacia Crescenzi said ratings do not drive anything on campus. While scores are looked at, they aren’t a focal point for planning.

“What I want out of teachers is for them to create interesting, rigorous lessons about subjects that they’re passionate about and to create good relationships with students so that students feel comfortable asking questions and delving into things that are maybe complex and difficult,” Crescenzi said. “In doing that, if we happen to do good on tests, bonus.”

T.E.A. RANKING



graphic by Andrew Luckinger

Introducing The Challenger News

a Paper Published by the Homeless in Austin

DIYA D'SOUZA | staff writer

When homeless advocate Val Romness heard about a local street newspaper fizzling out, she decided to take over the newspaper, The Challenger, herself and bring it back to life with the help of a staff of the homeless all around Austin. The Challenger is an Austin-based newspaper with homeless writers, contributors and distributors. While the Challenger employs a unique staff, the paper is similar to any other newsletter with opinion pieces, art, ads, obituaries, joke columns and informational resources for

its readers. Romness spends several hours twice a week working with her staff and spends her nights putting together the layout of the paper. Her main goal is to

of writers 95% homeless so that she could give a voice to a population that isn't often heard. According to Romness, she hopes to empower them and raise their morale. "Writing raises their self-esteem and increases their literacy, and increases their dignity," Romness. "They feel like they are heard, and when they go out and distribute the paper they can tell people about it. To a group of people who have been silent so much, it is very powerful to

Jennifer Hecker said that it is important to give all people a voice. Hecker found out about the paper in 2018 when The Challenger applied to participate in the Zine Fest for the first time. "The Lone Star Zine Fest's mission is to reveal to the local community the breadth and variety of self-published work being created here in Central Texas, and



empower local homeless people. "People who are on the street feel invisible and so I wanted to help them get independence, so they can buy their own lunch so they don't have to stand in a food line," Romness said. "The people on the street who have been out there for years are so pushed down by society and they're unable to get out of homelessness, so I am just trying to empower them." Romness works with a unique demographic of writers. She decided to make her staff

watch them get stronger and work through their issues of why they're homeless and prepare them for being housed or giving another more traditional job." Jesse Griener is a staff writer for The Challenger. He has been writing for the paper for several years, and says that writing for the paper has changed his life. "It opened up my horizons," Griener said. "It's a good starting point and it helps sell papers. It gives me an outlet to speak my mind. It gives me a way to make money, and do good for my community." The local organizer of a convention of independent publishers called Zine Fest,

elsewhere," Hecker said. "The Challenger is a collaborative project, rooted in the DIY ethic. It empowers folks by centering their voices and creates a positive space for a collaborative enterprise. While some may argue that the paper is not a zine, I believe that its mission is closely aligned with zine culture." The Challenger not only gives empowerment to the homeless but also gives them a way to earn money. After a writer is published in the newspaper, they are given papers to hand out and sell. The papers are sold to the distributors for fifty cents and the distributors, who are also homeless writers for the paper, charge two dollars per paper. The Challenger is available in the editorial section of public libraries, on their website or via a subscription.

Ice Ice Baby: Walker in Arctic

EVE NGUYEN | staff writer

The Dalton Highway, a 414-mile dirt road, starts near Fairbanks, Alaska, and travels north past the Arctic Circle, ending at the Arctic Ocean. About 9.5 hours north of Fairbanks, up the Dalton Highway, is the remote Toolik Field Station. Planet Earth and Organic Chemistry teacher David Walker stayed there over the summer during his research trip to the Arctic.

For almost two months, Walker worked with a program that connects teachers with researchers to study the natural Arctic and share this research with others. The program, known as Polartrec, stands for polar teachers and researchers exploring and collaborating.

Walker collaborated with a research team of three scientists that studied how thawing permafrost in the Arctic contributes to positive feedback loops, which worsen global warming. Permafrost is carbon-heavy organic material that has been frozen in soil for over two years. Thawing permafrost causes positive feedback loops to occur, meaning that it causes a cyclic reaction that amplifies change. "The melted permafrost becomes part of the rivers and streams in the Arctic, which is a problem because now it's exposed to microbes and sunlight, and those two factors serve to break down that organic carbon into carbon dioxide," Walker said. "Carbon dioxide is the fuel of global warming, so that yields more

carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, which makes global warming worse, which yields more thawing of permafrost."

While Walker learned a lot more about permafrost and positive feedback loops while in the Arctic, he gained more from his trip than just factual knowledge. Walker came away from the experience wanting to raise awareness for

an Instagram so that he could share his research and its significance with others.

"Mr. Walker told us that in order to raise awareness, he was going to start an Instagram page so that he could inform and educate his students about his trip while he was there in an easily accessible way," Gilbert said.

Junior Vincent Kang said that in class Walker emphasized the importance

of his research to his students. Kang followed the account to stay up-to-date with Walker's travels.

"He did keep everyone up to date through live streaming on Instagram when he got the chance," Kang said. "He would answer people's questions along with creating cool polls about the research he was doing. Personally, I joined in for the live stream a couple of times, and they were pretty informative even though I wasn't able to retain all of the scientific information."

According to his past students, Walker found it important to not only learn new information but to also circulate this information to emphasize the urgency of climate change. Overall, Walker's new research will allow him to teach in ways that convey new information on global warming and inform his students about the dangers of it. "The main way that I participate in outreach is by teaching, so I would design lesson plans involving or incorporating the research," Walker said. "I would be more informed myself, so I would learn more while I was up there [in the Arctic] about how these things happen, and I would be better off as a teacher because of it."



DIGGING DEEP Walker dug a meter down into permafrost. Down there, he took soil samples to study the wet sedge tundra on the North Slope.. photo courtesy of David Walker

the negative impacts of climate change. "It's cool what I did, but I care less about that than informing people about what's happening [with global warming]," Walker said. "In all honesty, it's neat that people hear about me going to the arctic, but I think that the message that would be more important for people to read is one that is currently being unfortunately debated at the national level." Even before his trip to the Arctic, Walker had expressed the significance of his trip to his Spring semester Planet Earth students. Junior Olivia Gilbert helped Walker create

NEWS

briefs

Global News

Sept. 18

On September 14, missiles and drones attacked Saudi oil facilities, shutting down over half of their oil production. While a Yemeni rebel group called the Houthis have claimed responsibility for the attack, both Saudi and American governments are blaming Iran for the attack, displaying the wreckage of drones from the attack on September 18 as proof. The Houthis are based in Yemen but are supported by Iran, and some claim the group was armed by the Iranian military. The Iranians have denied involvement in the attack and Saudi Arabia has since repaired half of the damage to the oil facility. The attack originally prompted President Trump to threaten Iran, saying the U.S. was 'locked and loaded', and sent more troops to Saudi Arabia.

Sept. 17

The second Israeli general election of the year ended with a razor thin margin. Incumbent Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party won 32 seats in Knesset while challenger Benny Gantz's Blue and White Alliance won 33. President Reuven Rivlin stood by Netanyahu and tasked him with creating a government. In the first general elections in April Netanyahu was unable to unify the parties behind him, and he now has six weeks to succeed at this mandate.

National News

Sept. 15

After the collective bargaining agreement from 2015 expired on September 15, GM employees with the United Auto Workers (UAW) union decided to strike to preserve fair wages, health care benefits and job security. The strike comes amid GM's decision to close five North American plants, and while the company is debating closing down more. After eight days on strike, the strikers became eligible for compensation from UAW, receiving \$250 a week. UAW and GM met to negotiate for terms to end the strike, UAW advocating for the relocation of the production of some vehicles to factories in the U.S.

Sept. 5

On September 20, arms manufacturer Colt announced a suspension of production of its AR-15. Colt president and CEO assures consumers that the manufacturing capacity has exceeded demand, so there will still be Colt AR-15s on the market, just not in factories. Semi-automatic AR-15s have frequently been used in mass shootings, and their public sale has been a point of concern for gun control advocacy groups. According to Colt, they are suspending commercial manufacturing to focus on private and military contracts.

Sept. 18

Since the Clean Air Act of 1970, California has had a waiver that allows them to set their own vehicle emissions standards that are tougher than the national standards. Since California's vehicle market is the largest in the country, the state's regulations drive the standards of the national market. On September 18, the Trump administration that it's revoking this waiver and making California conform to the national standards. This revocation comes as the EPA plans to roll back Obama-era standards that promote fuel-efficient cars.

State News

Sept. 17

Tropical storm Imelda made landfall on September 17, and by the 20th, 2 had died and the storm dumped 3 feet of rain over southeast Texas. Governor Gregg Abbott declared a state of emergency for 13 counties and evacuated Jefferson and Hardin counties as the storm flooded southeast Texas. Imelda is Texas' fifth 500-year flood in 5 years.

Sept. 21

Though the school year has started, asylum seekers in border towns in Mexico often don't have access to public education. Volunteers in Matamoros, Mexico have started 'sidewalk schools' on Sunday mornings. These volunteers teach students letters, numbers, and arts and crafts. These schools not only teach students some basic skills, but give their parents time for tasks like meeting with immigration lawyers.

Local News

Sept. 12

Back in August, the City Auditor's office reported that while the city was adequately prepared for wildfires in the city's urban core, but unprepared for fires in more rural or suburban areas. The Auditor's concerns proved true on September 7, when a 50 acre brush fire caught in southern Travis County by Onion Creek Parkway. This fire has now been fully contained, but its rapid expansion corroborated a new report from a California-based research firm that found Austin fifth on a list of cities at risk of potential wildfire damage.

Sept. 20

At an August school board meeting, audience members protested against proposed changes to the district's sex ed curriculum that would include LGBTQ terminology and experiences. Resident Naomi Wilson responded by chanting "trans lives matter", but seeing as she spoke out of turn, a police officer tried to get her to stop talking and Wilson eventually left the room. Later, one of the protesters claimed that Wilson was verbally aggressive towards her and police began investigating charges against Wilson for disrupting a meeting, interference with public duties, and assault.

Proactive Not Reactive

Taking a look at LASA's changing safety system in

NIA ORAKWUE & MALENA HEINEMAN | student life editors

Approximately 3 million American children are exposed to shootings every year. Whether that be in school or at home, according to Everyton Research

There were 94 gun violence incidents in 2018, 59% more than in 2006, according to the US Naval Postgraduate School

55 people were killed in school shootings, including shooters in 2018. The worst on record, according to US Naval Postgraduate School

85% of shootings tracked involve handguns while only 7% involved rifles, according to US Naval Postgraduate School

The Liberator feels the topic of school safety is important, and that the student body should be educated in what concerns their own well-being.

In the first seven months of 2019, 22 school shootings occurred. As incidents of violence similar to these shootings flood the news, school safety has come under unique scrutiny. LASA and LBJ's respective administrations have been working with the AISD Police to ensure the campus is a safe place for all students and staff.

One safety procedure being implemented this year is the screening of precautionary educational safety videos during LASA's new homeroom periods. During this time, students watch videos detailing how to react during dangerous situations that could take place at school, such as a fire, shooting or natural disaster. According to LASA principal Stacia Crescenzi, this program was supposed to be implemented in the 2018-2019 school year, but was delayed due to .

"Last year it got done halfway through the year and everybody said that's silly—it should be one of the first things kids see, because there's no reason something couldn't happen at the beginning of the year," Crescenzi said. "It makes sense that the same way you give them basic information about everything else at the start of school, you give them basic information with these potential situations."

Safety regulation on student whereabouts must be actively enforced and monitored, especially considering the expansive nature of LASA/LBJ's campus. At any point during the school day, students can be found on the top floor of the building, in the fine arts hallways or within the school's two sets of outdoor portables. Ray Ephraim, LASA's head of security, handles the majority of the school's security concerns.

"It starts in the morning with directing traffic out front, making sure everybody gets across the street and so forth," Ephraim said. "In the mornings, there are not supposed to be any students in the hallways until 7:30, because no staff is on campus until then... so I make sure [students] go to the library or the cafeteria and stay there... I check and make sure all the cars have parking permits on them. Not only that, but to make sure they are inspected and licensed"

Currently, one of the campus' largest security threats is that unauthorized and unidentified people could gain access to the campus. Administrators are aiming to combat this issue by requiring students to wear student ID badges. These badges have a photo of the student, their unique student ID number, their year of graduation, a barcode and the purple LASA logo.

"We've had students in the cafeteria who came to visit their girlfriends or boyfriends, and they were not even students here, and had been here sometimes for weeks until we finally realized who they were and who they were not," Ephraim said. "Making sure that we are ID-ing people who are not supposed to be on the campus, and more of that, is important. That's why both principals, LASA and LBJ, are

making sure we push the ID. It's a hassle, but it helps us in the long run."

According to Crescenzi, IDs are not unique to schools. They are a practicality commonly found in other places of work.

"It's just a basic safety thing," Crescenzi said. "I would love to believe that any one of my staff or any one of the LBJ staff could



DON'T LOOK BACK Students participate in an evacuation fire drill, one of the various types of safety drills practiced during the day. AISD safety protocol requires schools to conduct evacuation, reverse evacuation, shelter-in-place, and lockdown drills. photo taken by Nia Orakwue

recognize every student and realize who's supposed to be there and who's not, but the reality is we're sitting around 2100 students. That's just an impractical suggestion. So, in order to keep students safe, we have to have a quick and easy way to recognize that you're allowed to be on campus... That's really the basis of it."

A fairly recent addition to LASA's security is James Ockleberry, who sits at the campus's back entrance. Ockleberry provides students with access to and from the portables, verifies that each student is allowed to be on campus, watches for strange activity and helps to enforce student IDs. Because of the nature of his position, Ockleberry notices the amount of students who actually wear their badges during school hours.

"With the LASA kids, a lot of the kids do have badges," Ockleberry said. "I don't really ask for it, but if they don't have it I ask them for their student number, because we may have someone from a different campus...and if they don't know that, then I don't let them in."

Crescenzi said that not many students have shown opposition to the student ID requirement. She also said that badges are something that students may end up using in the workforce.



CRUISIN' IN THE COURTYARD Members of LBJ's security staff keep an eye on students eating lunch in the courtyard and make sure students go to class when the period ends. School safety procedures have been

"There hasn't been a kid who I've asked to put their badge on that hasn't said 'okay' and then put it on," Crescenzi said. "No one wants to do it, it's nobody's idea of a fun accessory, but that said, I haven't had anybody not get why we need to do it.... [IDs are] kind of just the norm for most companies now regardless of what job that is. I think students get that too. It's not even about them or being a teenager, it's just sort of a basic safety precaution anywhere right now. I don't plan to be a jerk about it, but until we get people in the mindset, we're gonna be reminding them."

In addition to student IDs and assemblies, LASA and LBJ has already had a number of fire, lockdown and lockout drills. According to Ephraim, there will be more to come.

"We will have more drills this year because of all the things that have been happening around with mass shootings," Ephraim said. "My thought is that people are always tensed up until [a violent event] happens to them, and when it happens, that's when we let our guard down. I'm always trying to stay on watch, look for things out of the ordinary."

Within the Austin Independent School District (AISD), four different types of drills are conducted: evacuation, reverse evacuation, shelter-in-place and lockdown. Texas state laws mandate that campus evacuation drills are conducted at least once per month when students are in class for 10 or more days. Specific AISD policy states that campus reverse evacuation drills, shelter-in-place drills and lockdown drills must be conducted at least once per academic semester.

May 2018, which killed 10 people and injured 13 others, the Senate Select Committee on Violence in Schools and School Security was formed as a part of the Texas Senate. The committee aims to improve school safety by studying innovative methods for improving security such as armed school personnel and "Red Flag" gun laws. Texas lawmakers have made an effort to adjust school safety procedures in response to recent school shootings. However, Crescenzi is not convinced that there has actually been an increase in school shootings and school violence recently. She said students may just be more aware of modern day incidents.

"I think that if you go back generationally, you didn't know everything that was happening," Crescenzi said. "[Gun violence] still may have been happening, but now everything large, small, no matter where it is in the world makes your feed. I do think students feel like



graphic by Andrew Luckinger

e Safety

a new climate of violence

they live in an environment that is more violent. I don't know that they actually do. I think there is a sense of that, and I think it's because they have a more honest awareness of everything that's going on in their local community but also around the world."



WALKING Students travel up one of the back staircases, after a fire safety drill. According to AISD policy evacuation drills must be conducted at least once per semester. photo taken by Nia Orakwue

A few months after the mass school shootings in Santa Fe, Texas in Other, more extreme options been suggested to increase school safety, such as metal detectors or clear backpacks. According to Ockleberry, they have proved useful at other schools he's worked at.

"I worked at an alternative school and we actually searched our kids before they came in and it was very effective," Ockleberry said. "A metal detector would be great because the visual eye really can't catch the weapons that may come in that could cause damage along the line. I think a metal detector would be able to detect that."

While metal detectors and searches may be effective, they can have unintended consequences for the students. According to Crescenzi, precautions of this type would negatively affect the environment of the school.

"I'm anti-metal detectors," Crescenzi said. "I don't think you need to make it feel like a prison. I love it when students feel like school is their second home. Most kids spend more waking hours here than they do at their own homes. I don't need the place to feel more unfriendly... I want a culture that is welcoming and makes students feel like 'I enjoy being here'. If you walk in everyday feeling like



en more strongly enforced in recent years. photo taken by Nia Orakwue

someone is suspicious of you you're not gonna want to be here after a while. There's got to be another way."

Despite a variety of available safety precautions, Crescenzi believes the most important safety measure is awareness of the people around you. She encouraged students, families, and staff to know their surroundings and look for atypical signals.

"If someone feels out of sorts... even if that person just seems like they're having an awful day, tell somebody," Crescenzi said. "I think that the best thing we can do is realize we are this larger community



IN THROUGH THE OUT DOOR LASA security guard James Ockleberry lets sophomore Jane Fulton in from the portables at the school's back door. Ockleberry's job is to sit at back doors to and give students access to the building from portables. photo taken by Nia Orakwue

that takes care of each other. If I notice you're out of sorts, acting in a manner that's atypical for you, I'm gonna tell somebody. I think that's the number one thing we need to be doing. Be observant, take care of each other."

Word on the Street...

Students give their perspective on school safety



Champ Turner, 12th Grade

Do the school safety assemblies make you feel more or less safe?

"I think there are better ways to address the issue. When you get all of those kids together in one place it kind of just turns into one giant class meme, which is what happens usually at any assembly, which is not the point that the admin is trying to make. I think we need a different approach to the issue."

McKenzi Popper, 10th Grade

If lanyards were fully enforced, would that make you feel safer?

I don't think there's really a way to make a school completely safe because of the fact that it's public, it just has thousands of kids walking in and out of it everyday. But I think if it were enforced, it would be safer.



Ben Baskin, 12th Grade

What do you think of LASA's current school safety structure?

The security guard behind the school, in front of the portables is a nice guy and does his job well. When he doesn't he locks the door so in that sense it's gotten better.

Do assemblies and safety procedures make you feel more safe or less safe?

I don't know if they make me feel less safe, but they're certainly whack. I mean, it just feels unnecessary to have us do all of those things because one way or another it's gonna happen and no matter how far we can think ahead some one else can think farther. It's not gonna help to have an occasional safety video.



Skylar Jones, 9th Grade

How important do you think safety procedures are, like ID badges, drills, etc?

I think it's important for students to experience drills so that they know what to do in case of an emergency, so that we're consistent throughout the entire year on what to do. With what's happening around the United States, it's kinda sad, and knowing that if it ever happened to us we have something to do that helps. ID badges, I feel like sometimes they're unnecessary, but it also helps separate the schools and make sure we're in the right place at the right time.



Max Weinreb, 11th Grade

Do you think you'd be able to use the procedures for dangerous situations at LASA?

I think that since there's stuff that we'll never really be able to practice. I don't think we'll ever really be prepared if something was to happen. Nobody is going to remember a video that they watched on the first day.

Do safety procedures make you feel more or less safe?

Definitely less safe. Even though they probably shouldn't. They make it feel more real. Like this is something that we have to prepare for which feels kind of ridiculous and they probably wouldn't even help. I don't really feel unsafe, but more unsafe than safe I guess.



Grayson Brewster, 11th Grade

Would the safety procedures you learn help you in a real life situation?

Probably not. There are way too many scenarios and variables for you to predict and crazy people are crazy people who do crazy things.

Do you abide by current safety rules? How well do you think they are perceived by students?

I don't do anything unsafe in school. People don't wear their IDs because it's annoying and people just don't like having their IDs on their necks.



DRESS CODE

from page 1

The dress code reform received backlash from staff and others. They found issues with the student-made petition or the changes it suggested to the dress code.

“Teachers and other people would tell me it was stupid and would never change, but it wasn’t on Daylyn’s level,” Ilangoven said. “People from all over Austin would voice their opinions on the dress code change, and Daylyn became the face of [the movement].”

Soon enough the petition drew enough attention to become successful. The district adjusted the dress code for the 2019-2020 school year.

“When the dress code was changed, it made me feel free and relieved, like any change could be possible,” Ilangoven said.

Assistant principal San Czaplinski enforced the previous dress code. Throughout her career, Czaplinski has seen both sides of the dress code debate.

“When I was a teacher, I just told kids that if they came to school, I would be happy,” Czaplinski said. “But when I got into administration, I saw the other side of that, and how if the school or campus has rules, I want to enforce them. If you’re going to make a rule for me to follow, you have to support it too.”

Czaplinski worked at other schools before coming to LASA, and she believes LASA has a more relaxed environment than other schools. These restrictions were not limited to strictly clothing, either.

“At the campus I was at kids couldn’t wear headphones, they could not have a beard, they couldn’t wear hats, it was much more strict than it is here,” Czaplinski said. “Really, I was often the teacher that would get in trouble because they would have these dress code checks and in the middle of class they would come over the announcements and say ‘teachers at this time, please have every student stand in your classroom’ and then we were supposed to send kids out that were out of dress compliance. We were supposed to call students out... it was absolutely ridiculous. And at that point I used to get really frustrated with that.”

Glen McNeil, a teacher who has worked at LASA for over a

decade, noted a difference between the way students dressed in previous years and the way he’s seen them dress recently. He feels the new dress code is too relaxed and can distract some students.

“They don’t ever voice it, but there are more instances of comments and things about people and how they look than there ever have been,” McNeil said. “But more people are caught up in how they look, and yet they are wearing less and less.

In order to be fashionable, they still make themselves uncomfortable. And to me, that makes no sense whatsoever.”

McNeil believes that while the district listening to students is generally a good thing, they shouldn’t agree to implement changes solely because those changes are popular.

“This present administration, not Ms. Crescenzi, but the ones downtown-- they actually listen to the public a lot more than others did before,” McNeil said. “Obviously it’s good in a lot of ways, but if you let a mob rule, sometimes bad things happen that nobody intends to happen... Sometimes they don’t always know what’s best for them, and that’s a weird way to think about it, but in my opinion that’s still true in some cases.”

School administrations may have different reactions to the new policy updates. However, Czaplinski believes changes will be beneficial for LASA as a campus.

“Every campus is different, so in some campuses it won’t matter, and in some campuses it will matter more than others, but I think LASA is very relaxed, so I think for us, it can be a good thing, but for other campuses it might not be,” Czaplinski said.



graphic by Malena Heineman

The Fight for Family Land on the Texas Border

SKYLAR SIDENSOL-DENERO | staff writer

The border between the United States and Mexico has historically been a disputed place. The issue of building a border wall becomes even messier when generations of family land sits along the border lines.

Before Texas became a part of the United States, it was a part of Mexico, and before Mexico was a country it was New Spain. When people began to come to New Spain from Spain, Spanish royalty offered settlers free land to start colonies and towns. Portions of this land would later become the border between present-day Mexico and the US. Beginning in 1990, partial fences were put on the border. Now, President Trump is trying to build a 50 to 80 foot high structure across the entire border of Mexico. In order to build a fence, land is required. However, part of that land is private.

In order to obtain the privately owned property, the government must do one of two things: convince the owners to willingly sell their land or take the land by the process of eminent domain. Eminent domain allows the government to seize land and pay the owners for it. So, when a landowner doesn’t want to sell, he or she may be forced to sell a portion of their landowner’s property. The family of freshman Quintyn Zoghby is currently faced with this conflict. His family owns land very close to the border, and because of the new wall being built, that land could be seized.

“The land has been in my family for generations, and we’ve had a lot of trouble with the government acting unfair and actually taking it,” Zoghby said.

Earlier this year, Zoghby’s family received a letter from the government saying their land would be taken to build a fence along the border. Later, they were visited by officials from the Department of Justice.

“On top of it, they’re harassing family. I have a blind grandmother, and she has hearing issues. The Department of Justice was at both of her doors blocking her in, knocking and acting aggressive,” Zoghby said.

Luis Ramirez, a Spanish teacher at LASA, also has ties to the land by the border. Ramirez’s grandfather was the previous landowner until he tragically drowned on his family’s land. There is now a memorial on the land in remembrance of him. According to Ramirez, family land can create and hold memories for everyone

involved.

“This is my great-uncle, my grandpa’s brother, and it’s the land my grandfather died on,” Ramirez said. “I’ve seen his memorial maybe once. But it would be sad to lose that, to never be able to see the memorial, to never be able to show my kids...this is where [their] great grandfather passed away. I think it would be

“It would be sad to lose that, to never be able to see the memorial, to never be able to show my kids...this is where [their] great grandfather passed away. I think it would be very sad.”

-Teacher Luis Ramirez

very sad,” Ramirez said.

Losing the land would not only rob the family from land that is tied to their historical heritage, it would displace current inhabitants. According to Zoghby, this displacement would be especially hard on the older generation.

“My great-grandfather is ninety,” Zoghby said. “If he’s alive

and they take away the land it’s going to be heartbreaking. He’s effectively the one in charge because he is the elder and everybody chips in to help him.”

The fate of the land is still undecided. The Ramirez family’s rights versus the rights of the federal government are unclear and contested.

“My second cousin is one of the lawyers that’s in charge of working with that,” Ramirez said. “He’s had a lot of issues about what they can do and how to go about that. They’re trying to figure out what’s legal and what’s not, but it also depends on the administration. What does the administration want to do? And what can they do?”

Trump’s goal is to finish the wall by the 2020 election, which marks the end of his term. Trump has said that the wall is necessary because illegal immigrants are coming into the United States.

“The immigrants aren’t malicious at all,” Zoghby said. “I think people need to realize that these are just humans trying to get to a better city action.”



FAMILY TIES LOTE teacher Luis Ramirez sits at the entrance of his grandfather’s threatened land located near the Texas-Mexico border. photo courtesy of Luis Ramirez

Senior Influence on School Culture Reigns Supreme Influence of each grade level on LASA culture discussed

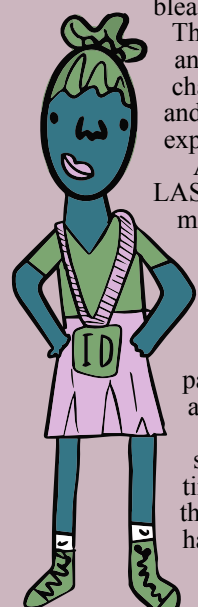
EVE NGUYEN | staff writer

A drum lets out a loud boom as a senior raises her arms in the air, setting off a chorus of voices that echo throughout the stadium. In unison, freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors alike stomp their feet on the bleachers and cheer on the LBJ football team.

This atmosphere is one of LASA’s traditions and events. Between the milk gallon challenge, LBJ football games, Spikeball and spirit week, each grade level is able to experience LASA culture.

According to senior Jackie Meisel, LASA places a great emphasis on academic merit. However, the school also takes pride in its distinctive student culture, which consists of specific student-led traditions. Meisel said attending many LBJ football games has allowed her to observe and take part in the excitement that revolves around student spirit.

“LASA students have a lot of school pride,” Meisel said. “A lot of times, our students are so academically focused that the only time they have free time or time to hang out with their friends is still at LASA events, so at football games, people get really into it, and they have a sense of freedom that they



don’t have at school.”

Junior Nadine Sauer thinks that LBJ football games and student-led LASA traditions are inclusive of all grade levels, but added that student traditions would not be possible without the class of 2020. Sauer said the senior section leaders at football games, who lead chants and hype up the student section, are arguably the most influential people at games.

“The seniors are the section leaders, so it’s kind of up to them if they want to lead the student section at football games or not,” Sauer said. “If they decided they didn’t want to do it, then we just wouldn’t have [section leaders] because you can’t have a leader from another grade.”

Meisel agreed that common traditions would not be possible without the senior class. She believes seniors heavily influence student spirit because they are the ones who carry on activities and lead the younger grades in classic customs. She said that the tradition of protecting the Texas statue from McCallum students who might attempt to vandalize is an important senior tradition.

“We sleep over outside at a giant campout and wrap [the Texas statue] up in saran wrap so you can’t spray paint it,” Meisel said. “Even though [McCallum students] basically never come

anymore, it’s still really fun to campout on campus. So stuff like that I want to continue, and it’s up to the seniors to keep pushing.”

According to Sauer, seniors play a critical role in setting and maintaining student traditions at LASA. However, Meisel said that the customs and traditions vary year to year based on the personality of each senior class.

“I think that each class of students brings their own culture, which is really important,” Meisel said. “Then whenever they lead as seniors when it’s their time—when it’s their graduating year—it’s going to be different, which I like a lot.”

As a new student, freshman Kyra Kleiman appreciates LASA’s school spirit. While she has only seen a small percentage of LASA’s traditions and customs so far in the school year, she said that the environment and atmosphere surrounding student traditions seem very unique to LASA.

“I know if I went to any other school the culture would definitely be different,” Kleiman said. “I would feel like I would have to fit in more, but I feel like at LASA, I can be who I am.”



graphics by Zoe Klein

Review **WU-TANG** : Enter An American Saga

graphic by Max Domel

Inside Hulu's Nostalgic Show on '90s Staten Island Rap

MAX DOMEL | entertainment editor

Hulu has brought New York's beloved and influential hip-hop group Wu-Tang Clan from Staten Island to the world of television with the new miniseries "Wu-Tang: An American Saga." Although the Wu released the less dramatic documentary "Of Mics and Men" several months before the Sept. 4 premiere of the miniseries, "An American Saga" brings to life a version of the story of the group's formation with actors and a script.

The kung-fu and comic-book-loving group is made up of 10 members: The RZA, Ghostface Killah (GFK), The GZA, Raekwon, Method Man, Masta Killa, Inspectah Deck, Cappadonna, U-God and Ol' Dirty Bastard (ODB), who died tragically in 2004. The group has many close associates and honorary members throughout the rap game as well, such as Nas and Redman. The group's founder, RZA, whose real name is Bobby Diggs, started making beats in his basement and brought everyone together to rap and record tracks. RZA also serves as a co-creator of the show and does writing and executive production with Method Man.

RZA is played by Ashton Sanders in the show, who starred as Chiron in the Oscar-winning film "Moonlight." Raekwon is played by Shameik Moore, who is best known for voicing the character of Miles Morales in "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse." Siddiq Saunderson plays GFK, starring alongside TJ Atoms and Johnell Young as ODB and GZA, respectively. New York rappers Dave East and Joey Bada\$\$ play Method Man and Inspectah Deck, adding a layer of depth to the cast.

There are 10 episodes in total, with the finale set to come in late October. Each hour-long episode is named

after a song from group projects and members' solo albums, such as "Can It All Be So Simple" from their 1993 debut "Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)." Whether you already listen to rap music or are just curious to listen to classic '90s Wu-Tang Clan, I recommend you check out the album.

The series opens on a rainy night in Staten Island with Bobby (RZA) constructing the beat to "Wu-Tang: 7th Chamber" in the famous record-filled basement of his home. Meanwhile, Dennis (GFK) and Sha (Raekwon) find themselves involved in an intense, violent rivalry. Shurie, Bobby's sister, is in a secret relationship with Dennis. Bobby's older brother Divine's business is selling drugs in the streets, and his later incarceration leads to Bobby being forced to take over with Dennis. However, Bobby's dreams are to make music and get out of a world filled with drugs, guns and frequent conflict.

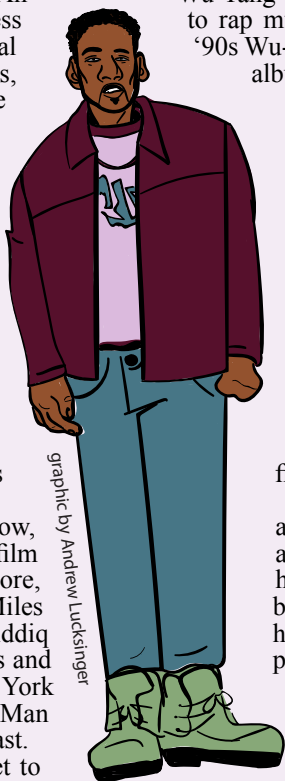
He goes to a music shop and falls in love with an SP1200 beat-making-machine that never makes a time error and decides he must have it. Later on, he comes back and tries to steal it, but is caught by the store manager and puts it back. Eventually, he acquires enough money from his dealings to purchase it. However, he chooses to return it in a few days because of the angry comments he gets from his brother and Dennis, who tell him to quit living in an imaginary world and do work that can actually help them survive.

Another important part of episode one

comes from flashbacks to Bobby's childhood. These flashbacks depict Bobby being sent out to his uncle and aunt's house in the country for getting into trouble in the city. He is beaten by them for sleeping with his lamp on due to his fear of the dark but is consoled by his uncle who tells him it's only his imagination, something that can be turned into a strength.

Over the course of the next episodes, Method Man makes more appearances rapping, while Bobby cooks up more beats in the basement. They make a short mixtape together, but sadly the tape is lost when Bobby, Dennis, ODB and GZA have to escape a fire set by Sha. Although some of the members start to form relationships through music early on, conflicts and obligations in the street continue, making their music dreams difficult to pursue. Dennis and Bobby even fight over the music when Dennis makes a mixtape with another producer after telling an invested Bobby that he didn't want to rap. Wu-Tang fans watching the series know they prevailed to be legends, but "American Saga" is about the hardships and distractions they faced on the way to becoming an established group.

Most reviews of the series have been mixed. For example, Rotten Tomatoes gave "An American Saga" a 73% and a CNN article said that while the pace is too slow, it effectively combines nostalgia and an interesting story. For Wu-Tang and hip-hop fans, it is still an inspiring look into the lives of the iconic and influential group, and the show is a win for hip-hop in popular culture.

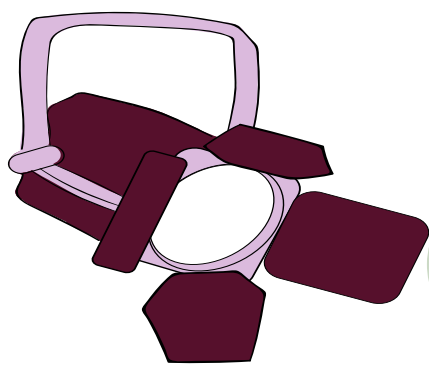


graphic by Andrew Luckinger

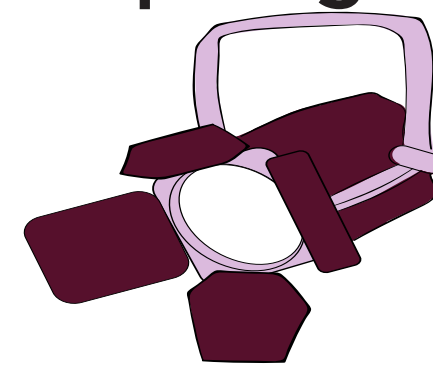


graphic by Andrew Luckinger

Review Examining the Trials of a Life in the Spotlight



once upon a time in



graphic by Andrew Luckinger

HOLLYWOOD

WRENNY COLLAMER | staff writer

"Once Upon a Time in Hollywood," directed by Quentin Tarantino, follows the story of Rick Dalton, a declining actor, and his stunt double Cliff Booth. The pair navigate a changing Los Angeles movie industry that looks increasingly unfamiliar to the two long-timers. Rick struggles to break through from his previous television triumphs to Hollywood success, and the movie chronicles his emotional turmoil as he comes to realize the fragility of his career. At first, the movie presents a nostalgic Hollywood scene, but as the movie progresses it gives viewers a deeper look inside the world that swirls around Rick, encouraging viewers to question the legitimacy of Hollywood's values.

Much of the first half of the movie Rick and Cliff are frittering time away as their careers stay at a standstill. And yet, even when Rick does give effort and place significance on his job, he always ends up driving home to the same house and sleeping in the same bed. This cycle, which seems to persist no matter what Rick does,

gives the initial dazzle of Hollywood a distinct monotony, one that Rick and Cliff are unaware that they are trapped in.

Furthermore, the embodiment of Rick's goals, which takes shape in the form of celebrity Sharon Tate, is portrayed as laughable. Rick looks up to Tate's success and wants what she has, but all the viewer is shown is her blind self-obsession. So, if everything is on a constant loop and their end goal is something to be laughed at, it begs the question: does the environment and life that Rick and Cliff are constantly caught up in actually hold any value?

But it's evident that Rick does place value on his life in Hollywood: He bangs his head against the wall when he messes up his lines, screams at himself in the mirror when his alcoholism gets the better of him, and he envies the lavish success of his neighbors. Rick is set up to be relatable; his struggle to pick himself up off the ground below the daze of Hollywood is something that is inherent to the human experience. A melancholic soundtrack adds weight to Rick's struggles, contrasting an otherwise upbeat setting.

Despite Rick's genuine struggle, the fact remains that the world around him was set up as superficial, so what is all this for? Why

are Cliff and Rick so consumed in the artificial existence that Hollywood is feeding them?

By the end of the movie, it's apparent that Hollywood's purported superficiality is arbitrary. The movie simply uses Hollywood as the backdrop for an experience that shows how everyone finds it difficult to manage change, regardless of setting. That's where the viewer may uncover a true connection with the story.

The movie questions why Hollywood's inhabitants are so worried about their status in such a pointless place, but in the process, it gives the viewer a chance to grow close to the characters and reach a place of understanding with their struggles.

Tarantino's fairytale portrayal of 1960s Hollywood juxtaposed against the very real struggles of its inhabitants drives home the fact that many personal battles are universal. Furthermore, by shining a light below the surface level of Hollywood's glamour, the film says that the superficiality of Hollywood is acceptable because it fills a void of meaning in people's lives that would otherwise remain empty.

The E-Boys, The VSCO Girls and The Class of 2023
How a New Video App is Affecting High School Stereotypes

ABIGAIL JACKSON | staff writer

From lip-syncing to popular songs and copying popular dances, to dressing up in cosplay and showing off your drawing skills, TikTok, a popular platform and social media app, has become popular and has garnered a widespread fanbase. Through the platform, everyday creators can film, upload and interact with short videos. Many of these videos, however, perpetuate common stereotypes, especially stereotypes about high schoolers.

Since 2017, TikTok has rapidly gained popularity and over one billion phones worldwide have downloaded the app. New features have enhanced the creativity in videos uploaded, too. Users can now add text to their videos and use entertaining special effects. With the addition of many new in-app effects, TikTok has developed into a way for teenagers to make viral memes from popular songs.

Over the summer, a trend emerged on TikTok about the high school class of 2023 and what the students would be like. According to freshman Zoe Barilla-Deuschle, there were some strong opinions about how the freshman class would act, dress and speak going into the school year.

Junior Elena Gareau agreed with Barilla-Deuschle that she was expecting the freshman class to conform to the stereotypes that they are given online.

"I feel like TikTok has portrayed a really negative image of the class of 2023," Gareau said. "I was expecting to see more e-boys and VSCO girls on the first day of

school. But a lot of them were just normal high schoolers."

VSCO girls are commonly depicted as wearing scrunchies, using Hydro Flask water bottles and saying phrases like "and I oop." E-boys, on the other hand, are associated with wearing chains, lots of black clothing and using colored lights to add effects to their TikToks. Both stereotypes are commonly joked about on the app by the creators of the videos by dressing up to portray an e-boy or VSCO girl.

At first, Sophomore Frankie Gigliotti expected many of the freshmen she saw to fit those stereotypes. Instead, she was shocked to find so much originality within participating students.

"Some of the jokes were funny," Gigliotti said. "But I found that [the stereotypes were not] a reality."

As the school year began, TikToks began shifting from videos on the students to classes. However, according to Gareau, students found that some of the jokes made in TikToks didn't apply to LASA.

"High schoolers portrayed on TikTok are way more stereotypically divided into groups like jocks or skaters," Gareau said. "I feel like at LASA, so many of us fit into so many different groups based on interest."

Barilla-Deuschle agreed that attending LASA is very different from the experiences people share on TikTok. She also touched on the fact that other schools around the country may have different cliques than LASA due to the

demographic or location of the school.

"Compared to other schools I see on TikTok," Barilla-

TikTok

graphic by Max Domel

Deuschle said. "LASA is way more diverse and has more homework."

Another interesting feature on Tiktok is that the platform makes recording videos simple, which gives people the ability to film anywhere. People can create transitions to jump from one location to another, giving the videos a teleportation effect.

"Today I saw a bunch of freshmen making a TikTok in the hallway," Gigliotti said.

Tik Tok's easy accessibility allows users to gain followers quickly. According to Barilla-Deuschle, this leads to great opportunities for people to showcase their personalities on the app.

"I like how Tik Tok is a pretty open domain, and it's really easy for people to see your videos," Barilla-Deuschle said. "A lot of people are super funny and can express themselves through Tik Tok really easily."

Spiderman Swings Out of the MCU

Fight for Ownership of Famed Superhero Reaches Breaking Point

JAKE MATZ | staff writer

After a brief departure in the events of Marvel's "Avengers: Infinity War" and "Avengers: Endgame", Tom Holland's Spiderman has made a return in 2019's summer blockbuster "Spiderman: Far From Home". However, with the breaking of a contract between Sony and Disney, he may not make another appearance in the MCU in the foreseeable future.

The Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) is the property of Disney, and before Marvel began producing films they had already sold the rights to Spiderman to Sony. Based on the contract, Sony would create two film series before Spiderman would integrate into the MCU with "Captain America: Civil War" (released in 2016).

However, Disney strained the contract with demands for a share 10 times larger than what was originally agreed on. The deal fell through, and recently, Disney and Sony officially terminated their contract over their concerns with earnings from the character and his appearances. Since then, Sony has placed many limitations on Spiderman's appearances in Marvel movies.

LASA sophomore Carly McKinney is happy with how the character has been portrayed in the past. She also thinks Spiderman was portrayed

well (despite the limits Marvel was given), because unlike other characters in the MCU, Spiderman's character is not as ingrained into Sony's specific universe.

"[Spiderman] is not as immersed as Iron Man because Sony owns him," McKinney said. "I think that Marvel Studios did a really good job of introducing the character and weaving him into the MCU story with what they were given, though."

Though he was inserted artificially after the deal was established, Spiderman's presence in the MCU has still been a fruitful addition. The recent film "Spiderman: Homecoming", was well received, rated at 92 percent on Rotten Tomatoes. So far, the first two installments have been released. A trilogy had been planned when the deal went through, and therefore it's creation status is now up in the air. Although Sony may not make a more successful Spiderman 3 than Marvel, McKinney believes they were "justified in their actions."

With the break, Sony is not allowed to reference major Marvel characters like Tony Stark or Happy Hogan in any way, shape or form—regardless of how much influence they have had on the plot—as two of Peter Parker's father figures.

Junior Liam Boone feels that Spiderman's alignment with the MCU had already started to fade after events in "Avengers: Endgame." According to him, removing the character of Iron Man was only to be expected.

"Spiderman's only real connection to the rest of the MCU has been through Iron Man," said Boone. "[Spiderman] almost feels like a spinoff of Iron Man now that Tony Stark is dead."

However, Boone appreciates the relatability of Spiderman's "young-character-on-the-cusp-of-adulthood" story, as well as the fact that it has become a coming-of-age story, which he says could make it more popular amongst a younger audience. Boone also remarked on what he thinks is Spiderman's increased likability.

"I like how comedic [Spiderman] is," Boone said, "and how relatable some of his problems are, with him portrayed as a high

schooler.

The ending of Marvel and Sony's contract has left a gap to be filled with a new agreement. Sophomore Soren Colfax believes that the terms of negotiations won't make it easy for a new contract to be created soon.

"5% of input and profit is not enough for Disney, but 50% is far too much," Colfax said. "I think it will be years before [the contract] is revisited."

Both Sony's and Disney's proposed offers are vastly disproportionate, according to students, and finding a balance will take a while. Colfax doesn't think that only one party is at fault for the tug of war the deal found itself in.

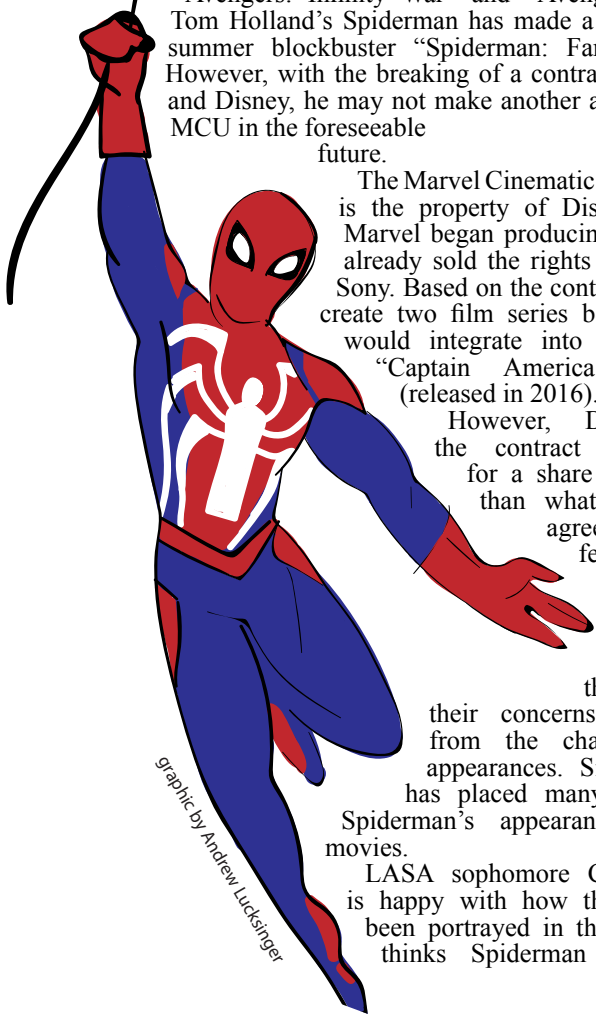
"I think that both parties are at fault," Colfax said. "Disney for essentially bullying Sony into a much higher price, and Sony for stonewalling any further negotiations over the character."

Disney was firm on a revised contract that gave them half of any future movie's profits, but without any deal at all, they technically cannot make any money from Spiderman. Sony did not seem to want Disney to yield this much capital, and because of this, there was no room to budge in the deal.

"It was very upsetting to find out about," Colfax said. "Especially considering the great potential additions to the MCU, and Sony's own universe at the same time, that could have been if the deal never collapsed."

While the current deal is void and no future proceedings have been announced, LASA students believe all hope is not lost. With billions of dollars at stake, plenty of crestfallen fans and a potential Spiderman 3 planned, it's possible the two companies can come together to put the famous teen superhero back on the big screen.

EDIT On Friday, Sept. 27, 2019, it was announced that Spiderman would stay within the MCU and that a third Spiderman film starring Tom Holland, co-produced by Marvel and Sony, will come to theaters in July 2021. This story was written, edited and finished before this announcement was made.



graphic by Andrew Lockinger

"It was very upsetting to find out about, especially considering the great potential additions to the MCU"

-Sophomore Soren Colfax

FREAKY FILMS!

COMING OUT THIS FALL

READY OR NOT - SEPT 27
ZOMBIELAND: DOUBLE TAP - OCT 11
GIRL ON THE THIRD FLOOR - OCT 25
DOCTOR SLEEP - NOV 8
BRAHMS: THE BOY 2 - DEC 6

graphic by Hanif Amanullah

Soundcloud Opens New Doors for Aspiring Rappers

DIEGO PROZZI | staff writer

Technological advancements allow teenagers to more easily experiment with online music production programs. A group of LASA students use digital programs to create music to upload to the streaming program SoundCloud.

Aspiring rapper and freshman Arjun Yenamandra (AJ), also known by his stage name "SuffGod" frequently makes songs and posts them online. He makes his music at home over the weekends with his own personal equipment and collaborates with Austin High student Luke Foster (Lukedrank), McCallum students Eli Betton and JD Jordan who formed Kachang Beats, and LASA freshman Saint John Naftel (SJ, SaintJBeats). Whenever Yenamandra wants to make a new song, he usually reaches out to one of these people first. He has a few songs featuring Lukedrank and many produced by SaintJBeats and Kachang Beats. Although he posts the majority of his music on SoundCloud, he also has some songs available on Spotify and Apple Music.

Currently, Yenamandra makes music mainly for friends to hear. However, he would eventually like to expand to bigger audiences.

"I make music for fun, but it would be nice to get a big song once in a while," Yenamandra said.

Yenamandra said that at his old school he would work on his music during a music production class. Unfortunately, there is no class available at LASA that teaches students how to use music software such.

SJ Naftel says that his ambitious nature has helped lead himself into a passion to be a successful producer. This would

also allow for a prosperous life, according to Naftel.

"I want to change the world and music," Naftel said. "Money and fame come with that. I've always been ambitious, this is just an extension of that."

Naftel's passion for making music came from hearing artists talk about production. Some of his major musical influences have been rappers Kanye West and Travis Scott.

"Listening to Kanye West and Travis Scott talk about their process [was inspiring]," Naftel said. "I already loved music so it was just a matter of learning it."

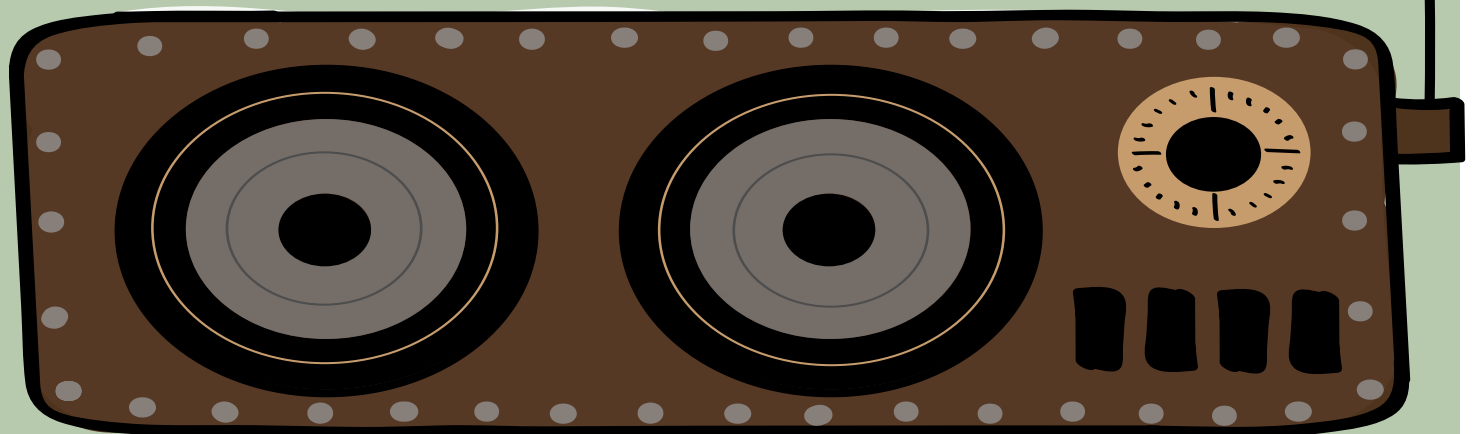
SJ has sold his beats to about 25 people so far. SJ also said that it has been a hassle for him to manage his time between music and school.

Freshman Rohan Shah has known SJ and AJ since middle school, where he would often provide input and participate in the music production studio. Shah believes that SJ has a future as a musician.

"When he drops something new I always have to listen to it," Shah said. "I think [his beats are] really good. I think he has a future in music."

Freshman Myra Karpinski wasn't a fan of SJ's music in the past. With the freshman progressing as a producer, she is willing to give him another try.

"He hasn't released new music in a while," Karpinski said. "His other music was pretty bad, but I think he might be improving. I think that he should write another song."



graphic by Hanif Amanullah

HEADING TO ACL THIS YEAR AND DON'T KNOW WHAT TO BRING?

- DO'S**
- PHONES | EMPTY WATER BOTTLES | SUNSCREEN
 - BLANKETS | BINOCULARS | BATTERY CHARGERS
 - TOTES BAGS | POINT N' SHOOTS | BUG REPELLANT

- DON'T'S**
- DETACHABLE LENSES | BACKPACKS | DRONES
 - VAPE PENS | DRUG PARAPHERNALIA | TENTS
 - PETS | FRISBEES | GLASS CONTAINERS/CUPS

HEADLINERS

- CHILDISH GAMBINO
- GUN'S N ROSES
- MUMFORD & SONS
- ROBYN
- CARDI B
- BILLIE EILISH
- TAME IMPALA
- THE CURE

graphic by Hanif Amanullah



ALL SMILES Seniors Jamie Corum and Garrett Urbach edit videos they filmed earlier during fourth period Advanced AVP class. photo by Hanif Amanullah



BEHIND THE SCENES Senior Alex Villareal sits at a desk for a brief scene in the Advanced AVP rendition of "Fight Club" photo by Hanif Amanullah

FUTURE

from page 1

Mokry also explained the career fields that alumni of the course had gone into, which range from college media programs to internships with major producers. Even if a student does not go into a related career, Mokry feels confident they have learned skills that can help them anywhere.

"It's not a lot [of students], percentage-wise, that are going exactly into a film or TV related job," Mokry said. "There's one right now that has a number of credits as a director and she's moving towards continuing that career. Then I have another one that just graduated from UCLA's TV program. Another one's working in town for a reality TV show. So it's kind of all over."

Junior Gaelila McKaughan is currently in her second year of Audio Video Production and is in the advanced class. She was drawn to the course by the added freedom it gave her as opposed to photography.

"I'm not sure whether I want to do film as a career... I'm not sure if I want to dedicate myself yet," McKaughan said. "I feel like the skills that you learn in film production are useful to other things that you do in your future."

Whether McKaughan decides to take up a career in film or not, she agrees that the skills learned in AVP are applicable to many fields. In fact, she joined AVP for the photography aspect but later realized how working on videography was connected.

"Last year I went into AVP because I was really into photography, but then I realized that I liked the idea of doing something with a little bit more in motion because I felt like photography was limiting," McKaughan said. "So, I joined the class to learn a bit about how to get into film."

Students also use a professional-quality editing software for their projects. Both advanced and intro classes have Adobe

Creative Suite and related programs available to them, which they use for inserting all manner of effects into their films. While Suite programs like Premiere Pro are used for editing films, others, like After Effects, enable a user to create motion graphics and animation.

"Last class we worked on using a [software] program called After Effects," McKaughan said. "And then we're also working on lighting and mimicking movie scenes."

LASA senior Nabeeha Ghani is also in the advanced AVP class and took intro to AVP last year. She took AVP because of the opportunities students are presented with to get into both the film and photography industry.

"I joined AVP because I always wanted to explore film but never had the space to do so, and I heard a lot of good things about Ms. Mokry and the film program at LASA," Ghani said. "In this class, we learn a lot of technical skills as well as a lot of storytelling skills. We learn how to use the equipment, but we also learn what makes a good story, and what makes a good plot."

In both classes, screenwriting crash courses are also available, and general film-writing opportunities are abundant. By the time students have finished either class, they find the knowledge they gained is useful for a career or future in the filmmaking industry.

"Being a director has been my dream job since I was in fourth grade," Ghani said. "I think I've learned a lot already and narrowed it down to 'I do want to do it in the future.'"

After taking the film class, Ghani, like past AVP alumni, realized that she wanted to move further into the world of film. However, she was not sure whether she wanted to do it professionally or not.

"I think that being in this class with Ms. Mokry really showed me that I want to continue it in the future for sure, whether that is as a hobby or as a full-on career," Ghani said. "I think I've learned a lot already and narrowed it down to I do want to do it in the future."

Besides providing cameras and computer programs, AVP provides the mentoring students need to delve into the world of filmmaking. There are multiple examples of successful graduates who have helped to produce films in the professional world. According to the interviewees, one thing is for sure: AVP is one of the coolest classes at LASA.

"I felt like photography was limiting, so I joined the class to learn a bit about how to get into film"

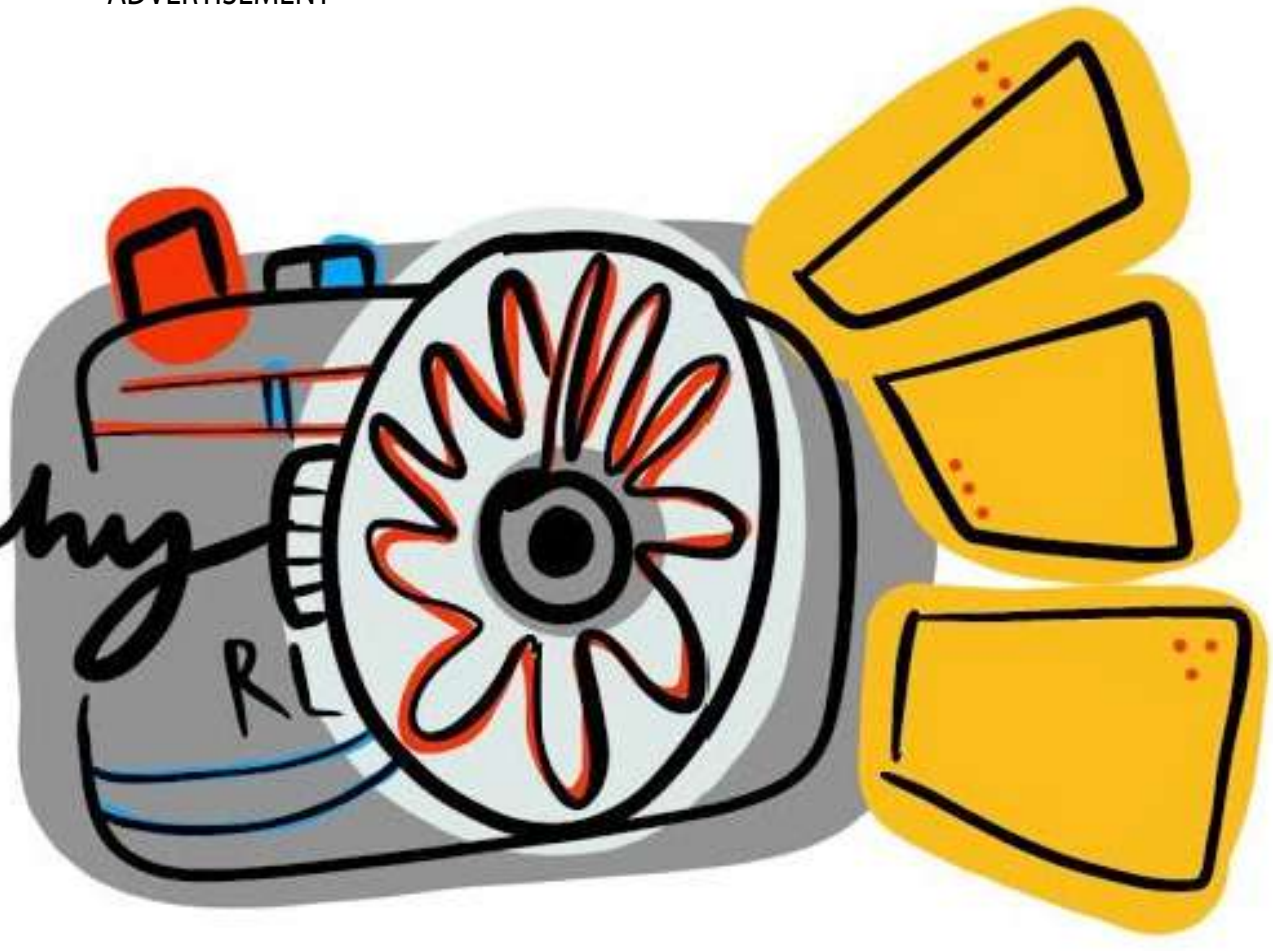
-Junior Gaelila McKaughan

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TARGET ACQUIRED LASA senior and quarterback Hunter Scott throws a pass during LBJ's game versus McCallum on Sept. 19, 2019. LBJ defeated McCallum 56-0. photo by Emma McBride



DROPPING BACK LBJ junior and free safety Jaikeam Maxwell drops to cover a receiver during LBJ's game versus McCallum. LBJ and McCallum are rivals that square off once a year. photo by Emma McBride

Jaguars Football Lined Up for 2019

ANNA THOMAS | staff writer

As the new season starts and the district's decision games approach, LBJ varsity football players get ready to take on a new season. This year, the Jaguars aim to win district 12-5A D1. LASA sophomore and offensive lineman Jack Long said that in order to achieve sustained success this season, LBJ must prepare adequately for its games. When analyzing the key elements in what it takes to win, Long said more practice could help the team become more consistent.

"As for the team, we want to just be consistent throughout the games," Long said. "And I'm sure more practice reps will help us improve significantly throughout the oncoming season."

Long also said it's important to integrate newer players into the team. According to Long, this can be achieved with practice too.

"This season [there are] a lot of sophomores and juniors that are doing well and I can tell they're gonna be even better next year," Long said. "We've been working hard to come together and have smooth plays, but it really just takes practice."

Long believes that there are still a few areas LBJ needs to improve on over the course of the season. To improve on these elements, Long said it is essential to build muscle in the weight room in order to get stronger and faster.

"We lack strength in the offensive line, so really I think the best thing we could do to improve that right now is to get in the weight room and keep working," Long said. "Bigger players will give us better results in our games."

While the Jaguars must work on improving themselves individually, the team also studies its opponents to prepare for each game. LASA junior and offensive lineman Diogo Ledesma said he is worried about a few other teams and the direction the team must follow in order to defeat its rivals.

"Dripping Springs is probably the team that is going

to give us the hardest time, so is Seguin," Ledesma said. "Drip is really a very disciplined team and we had trouble playing against them last season pretty much in all general areas. As long as we stay on top of our practices, I am confident we can pull together some really good games this season."

According to Ledesma, injuries must also be taken into account when considering the success of the team. Some LBJ players have had to sit out games which can alter the outcome.

"We've had quite a lot of injuries so far this year," Ledesma said. "Oscar Goron broke his ankle, one of our players broke his wrist, someone tore their ACL."

According to Long, players need to take into account is juggling their love for this sport and their workload at school. Long said he hopes to learn to manage the stress of school combined with the pressure football adds.

"My goals are to balance football and school work during the season and get bigger

"As long as we stay on top of our practices, I am confident we can pull together some really good games this season."

-Junior Diogo Ledesma

and stronger," Long said.

Along with balancing academic and athletic pursuits, coaches encourage players to stay fit. LASA senior quarterback Walker Kohler said his primary goal this season is to avoid injury.

"My personal goal is to not get hurt," Kohler said. "I make sure to avoid getting hit during games and take caution when we practice."

Despite the challenges players face, LBJ athletic trainer Sue Torres said the team could succeed in the future. Torres projects the team to do well this season if they can avoid more injuries.

"We should do well," Torres said. "Although we've had some pretty serious injuries so far. However, if our team keeps working diligently, we are looking at a promising season ahead of us."

Sculpting the Future: Statue of Althea Gibson Revealed

GRACE WOODRUFF | staff writer

Althea Gibson was the first African-American to win a Grand Slam in 1956 and paved the way for African-American female athletes today like Serena Williams and Coco Gauff. In light of her contributions to the sport and equality, a statue of Althea Gibson was unveiled at the start of the 2019 US Open on August 31, 2019. Despite prejudice, Gibson managed to break through cultural barriers as the first black tennis player to win the US Nationals in 1950. A year later, she won the US Open, and did so again, in both 1957 and 1958. Despite her success, Gibson faced constant discrimination, being forced to sleep in different hotels than her white counterparts and having to use different water fountains.

AP US History teacher Kimberly Pettigrew has studied the effect sports has on society. According to Pettigrew, historical context is important in analyzing Gibson's career and successes.

"She's competing in the 1950s, that's sort of at the beginning of the modern civil rights movement, which would make it all the more impressive that she's getting any sort of recognition," Pettigrew said.

Sophomore and junior varsity player Soren Colfax and senior varsity player Vishwa Aduru said that Gibson shaped the future of tennis, not only because of her success, but because she led the way for other minority players.

"She's paved the way for a lot of other black tennis players who are extremely successful,

like the Williams sisters," Colfax said. "It must've been an extremely important step, especially at the time."

Coco Gauff, a black female 15-year-old tennis player, became the youngest finalist in the Junior US Open after coming in runner-up in the girls singles event at 13 years old. Gauff, who played in this summer's US Open beat Venus Williams, a tennis superstar. This victory got attention from the media and people all over the world.

"[Althea Gibson] was probably a big role model for [Coco]," Aduru said. "These wins are just really good for the whole sport."

LBJ teacher and tennis coach Ryman Barnes believes that Althea Gibson's new recognition and her struggles are part of an effort to make the sport more inclusive.

"A person the first of anything has to break down



graphic by Andrew Lucksinger

and assuring those that follow can succeed and be inspired by this.

"Particularly for people who are outside the norm," Pettigrew said. "If you see someone who looks like you or who has the same characteristics as you performing and succeeding, that really helps motivate people, inspire them, to move forward."

Despite these advances in the professional tennis scene, lots of work still needs to be done specifically in the amateur tennis world according to Colfax. He dislikes the lack of diversity on the LASA/LBJ tennis team.

"I don't think I can think of a single student from LBJ on the tennis team," he said. "Most sporting teams are kind of both, but it seems like the tennis team is just LASA's tennis team."

Pettigrew offered a potential solution to this problem. She suggested that more professional tennis players of color should encourage diversity in high school teams.

"I think, African Americans have a large percentage in certain sports," Pettigrew said. "So having more African Americans in sports like tennis or golf or individual sports will encourage more African American students to maybe participate in those sports."

LBJ Tennis Aces New Season with Completed Courts and Confidence

WRENNY COLLAMER | staff writer

LBJ's tennis team is looking forward to an exciting new year, according to head coach Ryman Barnes. Over the summer, construction was completed on LBJ's new tennis courts, giving the team access to renovated playing and practice space for this new year.

Senior Champ Turner gave voice to his excitement regarding the renovated facilities, saying they are much improved from previous years.

"I'm looking forward to the new courts," Turner said. "That's going to be huge. Last year we only had four courts that actually functioned and they were still in poor condition. Now we have eight beautiful courts complete with the Jaguar logo and benches and windscreens, so that's going to be good."

Turner said he believes Barnes has settled in and stepped up to his role after beginning his tennis coaching career three years ago. He also said that the team seems to be adjusting well to a new season.

"I think [the team] has for sure settled in," Turner said. "Very few of us, just the seniors, remember coach [Corey] Snyder. Coach Barnes has been here for three years and he's established himself as the face of the program. He's been really good to have, and even though his primary sport isn't tennis, a lot of his coaching skills have carried over."

Barnes was previously the coach of the school's basketball team, but when he had his youngest child he had to step down for a year and the position of basketball coach was filled. Barnes said



STAYING ON THE BALL Junior Reagon Kohler prepares to return a serve during practice. The team is practicing on LBJ's newly completed courts. photo by Charles Taylor

he has been able to grow as a leader by coaching tennis.

"When this job became available to me it was a blessing," Barnes said. "My main sport is basketball...I had to learn how to transition from basketball to tennis. They have some of the same movements and techniques, but it is a different sport so I have learned a lot. I've studied books on coaching tennis and YouTube has helped a lot with learning different coaching styles and techniques."

According to junior varsity player Saira Khan, Barnes has been successful as a tennis coach considering his transition from basketball.

"Coach Barnes has been an excellent coach in my experience,"

Khan said.

Barnes has made an effort to develop his own coaching style. However, he takes inspiration from other coaches.

"I have to be Coach Barnes," Barnes said. "I can't be Coach Walker. I can't be Coach Snyder. Even though they were fantastic coaches I had to learn how to be my own coach and my own person. So I have learned a lot these years and I have accomplished a lot."

Turner said that he's looking forward to seeing how the new players contribute to the team's success. He said the upperclassmen players hope to pass on their success from past years.

"We've got some good new players; new freshmen, I'm looking forward to playing some doubles," Turner said. Barnes also has high hopes for the new team this year. Barnes said this is because of the team's work ethic and comradery.

"These kids always work hard," Barnes said. "They come to work. They come to learn. They come to be respectful. They come to be good teammates... They're really fantastic kids."

The team's first scrimmage was Friday, September 12th. Khan said she is excited for the year to come and future matches.

"I'm looking forward to playing more games and meeting new people and just getting better at tennis and going to practice," Khan said.

Turner said he is excited as well to see how the team does. This year, Turner is looking forward to participating in team spirit during his last year.

"[I'm eager to] get in that groove and let off stress," Turner said. "and [I'm excited about] the comradery that comes with being on the team for four years."

FALL SPORTS

ALEX WATSON | photo editor

Now that the school year has begun, fall sports are ramping up, including cheer, football, ultimate frisbee, and swimming. Teams held tryouts in early September with athletes going straight from summer to the competition arena.

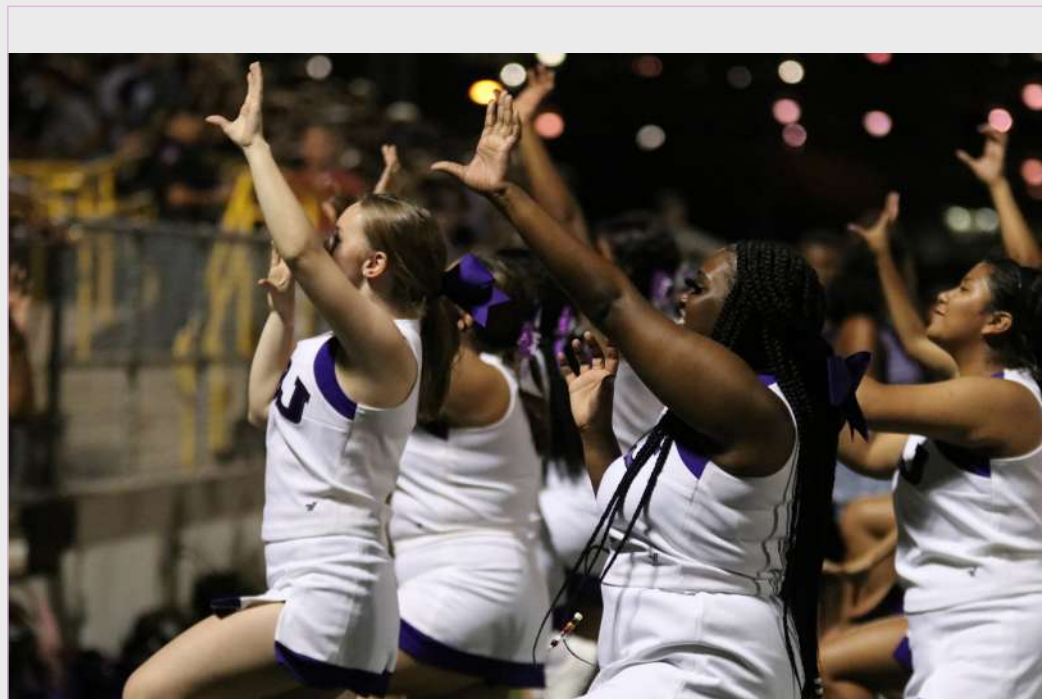


photo by Emma McBride

cheer!
LB JO

football!



photo by Emma McBride

ultimate!



photo by Emma McBride



photo courtesy of Pool Jags

swim!