

# the liberator

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## Ancestral Remains Returned to the Miakan-Garza Band

SOMAYA JIMENEZ-HAHAM | news editors  
LUCI GARZA

For the last four years, the Miakan-Garza Band, an Indigenous group local to central Texas, has been asking the University of Texas at Austin to return unearthed ancestral remains. The remains were found and taken to the university when discovered buried underground in Hays County over 60 years ago, with a burial date of over 1,000 years ago. Since then, these remains have joined the university's collection of Indigenous and historical artifacts which has grown to become the largest in the state.

Although the Miakan-Garza Band has been able to already reclaim multiple ancestors and artifacts from other institutions, it has been four years since they originally made their request to UT, which denied their request in June, claiming the remains were "culturally unidentifiable," a label given to remains over 1,000 years old.

With this information, the Miakan-Garza Band held a teach-in and ceremony at the J.J. Pickle Research campus, praying for the ancestors to be reburied and educating attendees about the importance of repatriation. In September, UT's previous statement was reversed by President Jay Hartzell, who said UT would begin the legal process of repatriation.

If all goes according to plan with the legal process of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), the remains will be returned. Juan Domingo, the communications representative for the Indigenous Cultures Institute, said they will then get a proper reburial near Spring Lake in San Marcos, Texas, where the remains will rest. According to Domingo, originally, ceremonies for repatriation did not exist, and were created because of colonialism and its effects.

"Spring Lake has big spiritual significance to me personally and also to the Miakan-Garza Band, and a lot of my indigenous relations here, in



that I know it is one of the four sacred springs of these lands in what we call the Edwards Aquifer," Domingo said. "Yana Wana' is the spirit of the water in Coahuiltecan, and that is, essentially, a big source of life, so the springs here in San Marcos are the site of our creation story."

According to NAGPRA, institutions holding remains are not legally required to consult with non-federally recognized tribes. This reason was used by UT to not initially meet with the Miakan-Garza Band, which is recognized on a state level but not federally. However, Maria Rocha, who is on the Board of Elders at the Indigenous Cultures Institute, said that just because the Miakan-Garza Band is not federally recognized does not mean that they do not qualify for reclaiming them. Rocha said the Miakan-Garza Band does not wish to become federally recognized.

"Many of our people do not want to play into the legitimacy game that the government plays with our people," Rocha said. "We see this as a humiliating stamp of approval on our foreheads - Stamp! 'You're an Indian,' Stamp! 'You're an Indian!'"

Rocha said the process of requesting to reclaim artifacts is not new to the Miakan-Garza Band. In the past 40 years, Dr. Mario Garza, the principal founder of the institute, has reburied almost 300 ancestral remains.

"Periodically, we request remains depending on various situations and circumstances," Rocha said. "[For example], we were told that someone was digging up remains at Spring Lake, so Dr. Garza went to investigate. He found Texas State University archeologists and students exhuming our ancestor. Dr. Garza asked if he could stay and pray while they dug up our ancestor and they agreed. He prayed for five days as they carefully dug up our ancestor. We later requested this remain and went through the NAGPRA process and were granted the body which we reburied."

see MIAKAN-GARZA page 7

## what's news



### ZACH Theater is Back!

Austin's ZACH Theater brings back live, socially-distanced shows following a long hiatus over the past year due to COVID-19

see ZACH THEATER page 11



### Adopt a Tree for Free?

Senior Pearl Morosky creates Adopt a Tree program to give out trees for free to students to enrich the environment.

see ADOPT A TREE page 7



### Girls Soccer Preseason

Girls soccer kicks off their first ever preseason in order to prepare for the upcoming season.

see GIRLS SOCCER page 15

## Football Firsts With New Team

KATIE BUSBY | staff writer

Although this year at school feels unlike any other, the football season is proceeding almost as normal. There may not be a student section screaming and cheering or any pep rallies to hype up the players, but the first ever LASA football season is already in full swing.

This year is the first year that LASA has their own sports teams, including an all LASA football team, in its move to a new campus. Because the University Interscholastic League (UIL) only re-aligns every two years, LASA athletics had to split from LBJ this year. This gives players an opportunity to develop as athletes and make a name for the new LASA athletics department.

Senior Dylan Woollard plays offensive guard, offensive tackle, defensive tackle and defensive end for the team. Woollard is positive about the team's potential and is looking forward to the season.

"The LASA-LBJ split gives LASA students the opportunity to forge their own identity," Woollard said. "Right now, the football team is mostly seniors, and I hope by sticking with our program and being a positive presence for my teammates, we can encourage more LASA students to really get hooked on athletics and help form our new culture."

Since the team started from scratch this year after the split, not only did players have to be recruited, but also a new coaching staff. LASA Geometry teacher Glen McNeil is

the offensive coordinator for the new team and was a coach on the LBJ football team prior to the split. According to McNeil, it's been a big adjustment going from coaching for LBJ to coaching for LASA.

"It's been a humongous, humongous change — usually I have the biggest guys on the field, and I have the fastest guys on the field, and I coach them and we squash everybody," McNeil said. "Now I'm coaching the other way around, the other team is bigger, the other team is faster, and it's much more difficult."

Senior Ashton Wong is a wide receiver on the football team. He, like many other seniors, joined the team this year.

see FOOTBALL page 15



ON THE DEFENSE The LASA football team's defense prepares to stop the Lago Vista football team from advancing towards the end zone. The game took place on Oct. 1, the first official match of the season. photo by Emma McBride



GAINING YARDS With possession of the ball, the LASA team pushes forward to make a run. This is the first year that LASA has its own football team. photo by Emma McBride

## Who's a Good Girl? Scout!

REBECCA SCARAMUZZI | club contributor

For a while, LASA students had the privilege of being able to walk down the hallways and see a therapy dog around the corner, there to help lower stress levels and make students happier. But now, that has changed because of COVID-19 forcing people to social distance and stay at home.

Although some people are currently attending school in person as a result of AISD's new plan for campus learning, many LASA students are still learning from home virtually. Scout, LASA's therapy dog, is also taking a break from the busy life at school as a result of heightened precautions put into place on campus due to COVID-19. Scout is staying at home with her owner, counselor Carole McPherson.

Scout used to wander the halls of LASA and visit classrooms to lower the stress of students. Now, according to McPherson, she spends her time very differently, mostly just sleeping.

"She's 13, so that's pretty much it," McPherson said. "But she has come to the front yard almost every night...she meets all the neighbors when they come over, and she rolls around. She likes to roll in the grass and she frolics around and chews on a stick."

It's been a while since most students have seen Scout and since Scout has interacted with the students. COVID-19 has made it more difficult for them to have any sort of interaction.

"She's seen a couple of students," McPherson said. "When I have my advisory and I'm working from home, they see her through Zoom."

Junior Olivia Ashy is one of the many students who misses being able to see Scout in the halls at LASA. She explained that there is something about Scout's presence that is really calming.

"Something that I probably miss most about not having Scout with me in the same building is...you never know when you're going to see her," Ashy said. "You could walk around the corner, and it just brightens your day. I also have two dogs but they're not therapy dogs. Scout's just really calm all the time, and my dogs can be kinda crazy sometimes and not exactly therapeutic. Scout is really a calming presence that I miss having with me at school."

Junior Hanna Lou expressed similar feelings around Scout. What she misses most about Scout is her ability to take away her stress and lift her mood.

"Seeing her in the hallways and getting to pet her and it just being such a bright moment of your morning," Lou said. "Just walking into that dreadful place called LASA and then being able to see a dog and being like 'Yay!' even if it's right before a test or something."

see SCOUT page 10



photo by Alec Lippman

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# editorial AISD Reopens Amidst Backlash

## The Argument for Safety Over Normalcy

The Staff Stance is an editorial written by the Liberator's Commentary Editors. The opinions presented in it are based on those of the Liberator staff as a collective. This story only includes information up until the publication date, but the Liberator recognizes that COVID-19 regulations are constantly changing as more information is added to the public arsenal.

As the nation attempts to recover from the devastating COVID-19 pandemic and begins to loosen restrictions intended to prevent the spread of the virus, the reopening of schools and the reinstatement of in-person instruction have become hotly contested proposals. According to an Associated Press/NORC poll, about 68% of Americans support reopening schools in some way, although they are divided as to the level of precautions they deem necessary. Though it is no question that schools will have to open at some point, it is imperative that the Austin Independent School District (AISD), as well as school boards across the country, do so in a manner that ensures the safety of both students and faculty.

On Friday, April 3, 2020, AISD closed all of its schools indefinitely to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Since that time, instruction has remained almost entirely virtual. However, due to pressure from the State of Texas and AISD parents, students now have the option to return to in-person

has recommended that individuals remain at least six feet apart from each other to lower the chances of spreading COVID-19. This rule is especially important to adhere to when indoors or in a confined space that increases the risk of the pandemic spreading. However, AISD has admitted that social distancing may not be enforceable in classes where a large number of students have opted to attend in person. Social distancing is so important that, according to the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, the United States could have reduced the spread of the pandemic to acceptable levels by the summer had we implemented proper distancing protocols. If AISD does not make an effort to enforce social distancing and CDC guidelines, it is not unlikely that students and teachers could become infected.

been forced to bend the knee to the TEA and open schools without the proper safety precautions. Ultimately, AISD's allegiance should be to the people they serve — not to a government agency with no concern for people's lives.

Although there are major problems with Austin's plan to reopen schools, credit should also be given where it is due. AISD has done what they can to derive the most good possible from a bad situation. While it is unfortunate that social distancing guidelines cannot be followed at all times, schools will still be required to enforce COVID-19 precautions based on CDC recommendations. For example, both students and teachers will be required to wear face masks at all times while attending, a measure that can prevent an infected person from spreading the virus to others according to

Mayo Clinic. Schools will also be required to disinfect commonly used surfaces, an important provision considering COVID-19 has been found to be able to linger on certain surfaces for multiple days, according to the National Institutes of Health (NIH). It is imperative that we take any necessary measures to ensure that returning to school is a safe process for everyone involved.

As Austin prepares to go back to school, we cannot forget that the COVID-19 pandemic is not over. More than 220,000 Americans have died from the virus, with millions more infected, and that number continues to increase by the day. Though the risk of widespread infections due to in-person schooling is low, this is no excuse to let our guard down. We must listen to doctors and the CDC and strive to make sure that we live up to the standards they set. We must not allow those who have no interest in the safety of our students and teachers to

force us to compromise our health. And, most importantly, we must do everything we can to prevent the unnecessary loss of human life. At the end of the day, it is the people who will have to deal with the consequences of our decision making who should have the largest say on the issues. As we go back to school, we must ensure everyone's safety — no exceptions.

schooling after Nov. 2. According to AISD, social distancing will be maintained when possible, and staff and students will be required to wear facial coverings to prevent the spread of the virus.

Thankfully, international studies conducted by Insights for Education and the Polytechnic University of Catalonia have found no link between reopening schools and increased COVID-19 cases. However, this does not mean that we should not be vigilant and take necessary precautions to make sure that Austin's teachers and students are safe. Although they are generally outliers rather than the norm, there have been instances of COVID-19 outbreaks in schools. For example, multiple outbreaks have been reported in Mississippi schools according to the Associated Press (AP). If we are not careful, Austin's schools could be next.

One of the paramount concerns regarding in-person instruction is whether proper social distancing can be enforced. Throughout the pandemic, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

It should be noted that the decision to reopen AISD schools was not made without input from the state government. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has been pressuring schools across the State of Texas to reinstate in-person schooling and threatening to revoke funding for those who do not comply. Specifically, the TEA has vowed not to fund virtual-only instruction in Austin past November. The TEA's attempt to steamroll the school district shows a disregard for the opinions and, more importantly, lives of the teachers and students who are affected by their actions. Instead of making the best decisions for students and teachers, AISD has

force us to compromise our health. And, most importantly, we must do everything we can to prevent the unnecessary loss of human life. At the end of the day, it is the people who will have to deal with the consequences of our decision making who should have the largest say on the issues. As we go back to school, we must ensure everyone's safety — no exceptions.



graphic by Andrew Lucksinger



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## 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.

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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 content.

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.

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## How the White House Became a COVID-19 Hotspot

NEVIN HALL | staff writer



Social media is a force that has reached generally tech-incompetent politicians at a speed that is truly blistering. This trend is exemplified in the tendency of President Donald

Trump to provide the world with a roving window into his mind via the social media platform Twitter. This, however, has major possible repercussions, especially during a global pandemic.

In September, The New York Times ran an article about the current abysmal state of the United States' healthcare communications, or in other words how our government communicates to citizens about public health crises. This is actually used more than you might think — in Austin, zebra mussels inhabited some of Austin Water's pipes for a couple of days, which caused the city to immediately begin sending emergency announcements to families and communities all around the city. However, in this pandemic, a problem that has become abundantly clear — our healthcare communications suck. They effectively boil down to government officials hoping everyone hears about the dangers of whatever's out and about.

All of this comes to a head as a result of Trump's rather horrifying tendency to tweet whatever is on his mind. Normally, this would be a mere embarrassment rather than a risk to the public. However, at this crucial junction of human history, it has become a threat. Trump, on Sept. 1, retweeted an article tweeted by Republican U.S. Rep. Paul Gosar of Arizona, that said lockdowns are "more deadly than COVID itself."

The President was apparently uninclined to note the fact that this article made this claim using a definition of life that has no actual connection to mortality, making it completely void of useful information.

The president seems never to shy away from discrediting many prominent institutions of American society at a moment's notice for being liars, frauds, etc. On July 13, the POTUS's account retweeted a tweet that said, "The most outrageous lies are the ones about COVID-19. Everyone is lying. The CDC, Media, Democrats, our Doctors..." This sounds an awful lot like something out of a satirical movie — presidents aren't supposed to support calling half of America liars and certainly aren't supposed to undermine the public's trust of doctors, whose credibility is crucial to ensuring that public health is maintained.

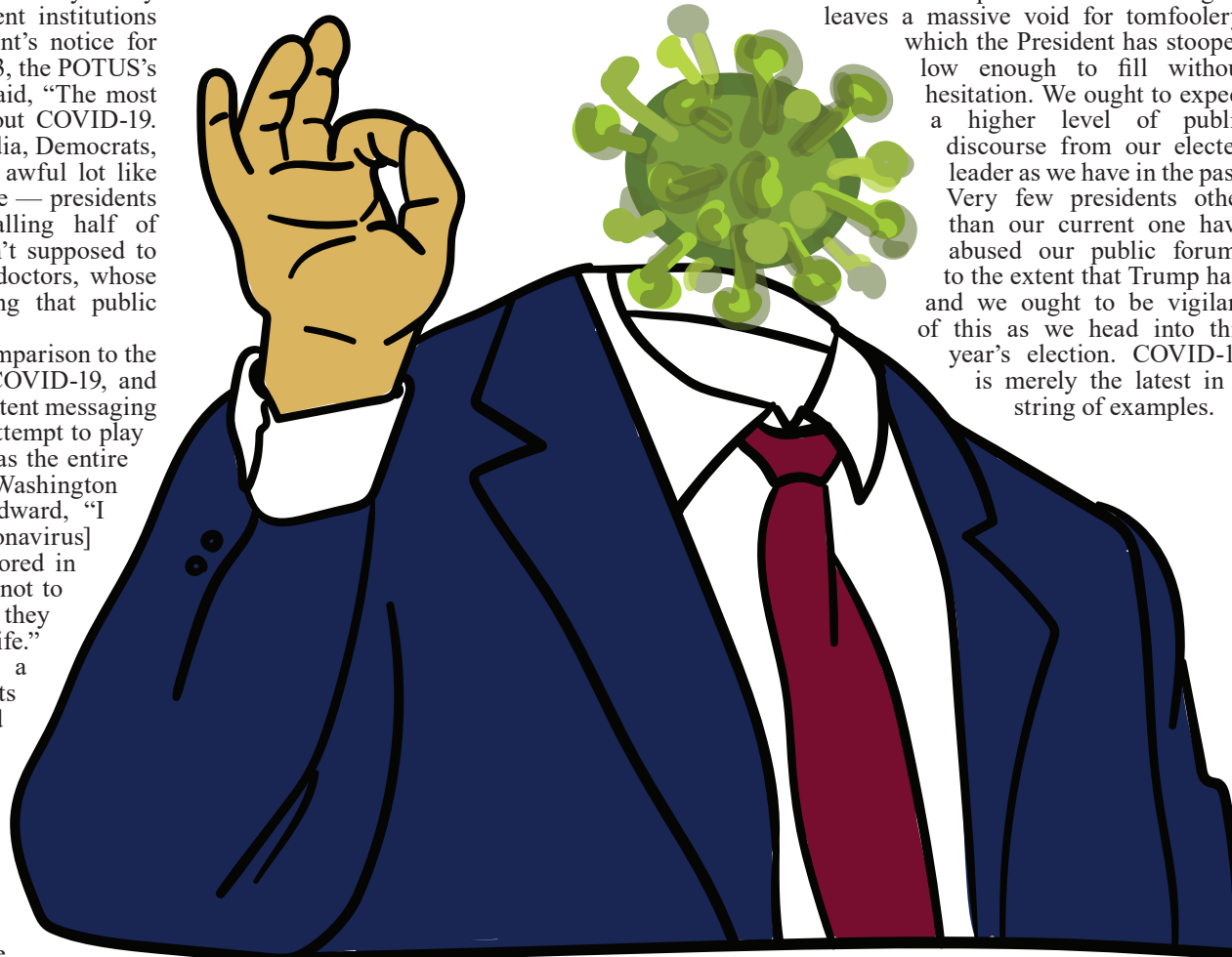
But this is all a sideshow in comparison to the president's actual diagnosis of COVID-19, and the way he treated it. The inconsistent messaging from his administration was an attempt to play down his own diagnosis as well as the entire pandemic itself. As Trump told Washington Post associate editor Bob Woodward, "I always wanted to play [the coronavirus] down." This is consistently mirrored in his tweets which tell Americans not to be "afraid of COVID" and that they shouldn't "let it dominate [their] life." Now, in all fairness, whenever a president gets sick, stock markets around the world crash, and economic uncertainty increases dramatically, so staying upbeat is, to an extent, something that all presidents have done and should do. However, there is a risk that the president hasn't shielded from: lying to make the public believe he is upbeat and running the risk that some people won't take the pandemic seriously at

all or, even worse, lose trust in the administration as a whole.

The administration's messaging around the president's diagnosis left plenty to be desired, but there's also just enough hypocrisy in his treatment to leave America's head

spinning. Trump received four times the normal dose of an experimental steroid cocktail, which was confusing from a medical standpoint but unheard of.

This example illustrates a crucial point — a critical lack of public health messaging leaves a massive void for tomfoolery, which the President has stooped low enough to fill without hesitation. We ought to expect a higher level of public discourse from our elected leader as we have in the past. Very few presidents other than our current one have abused our public forums to the extent that Trump has, and we ought to be vigilant of this as we head into this year's election. COVID-19 is merely the latest in a string of examples.



graphic by Andrew Lucksinger

## The Basis for Boycotts

The Power of the People to Choose Where to Spend Their Money to Support Businesses

LILI XIONG | staff writer



As a seemingly insignificant cog in the wheel of capitalism, it often seems that the public has limited power to initiate systemic change towards a world based on our ideals. However, people often overlook that we have a huge power that cannot be taken away: how we choose what to buy. This power affects every business and by making informed decisions on what to purchase, you have the enormous power to change the practices of these businesses.

Boycotting a business means to stop supporting that business by refusing to buy their products. When executed on a large scale, boycotts can be extremely effective. Boycotts are important in a democracy so that individual voices can be heard in a capitalist society, especially one that so often neglects the working class. The act of purchasing something is an economic act, but it is also a moral one. If

you buy from a business that engages in practices that are detrimental to the environment or are mistreating their workers in horrendous ways, you are letting them get away with it. In a capitalist economy, it is up to the consumers to hold the producers accountable. Making informed consumer decisions empowers you and allows your voice to be heard.

According to a 2015 article from the Guardian, even if boycotts don't immediately affect the sales of a company, they play a vital role in damaging the reputation of that company which can be even more dangerous. The brand of a product is what connects the business to consumers. For example, in 1990, Nike was boycotted for using child labor. To this day, Nike has worked hard to rebuild their reputation and have become leaders in sustainability and human rights. Businesses can change their practices — they just need to see it as a priority in upholding their reputation, which is where the role of boycotts comes in. Also, according to the Guardian, boycotts send a message to possible investors that the boycotted businesses might not be stable enough to invest in. Even if boycotts don't affect short-term sales, they still impact businesses in other ways.

People can think of ways to boycott that have immediate effects on income as well. For example, every time a student in the Austin Independent School District (AISD) is absent from school, the district loses \$58 in funding according to the Austin Chronicle. Many students across the district have already participated in organized absences as a way to protest on behalf of protecting teachers from COVID-19. The Body Shop was boycotted for 11 years due to animal cruelty. The Body Shop used inorganic, harmful substances in their beauty products and tested them on animals. The hashtag #foreveragainanimaltesting was spread across social media, and people came together to boycott the business. Eventually, The Body Shop was bought by Natura and became listed as a cruelty-free brand.

When they come together in an organized manner, it is ultimately the people that have the most power. What many fail to realize is that the world's political and economic systems rely on individuals, consequently, it is in the power of individuals to make those systems collapse. When the individuals of communities that form working class populations come together to impact what leaders hold so dear, their movement becomes dangerous and therefore requires immediate government attention.

Although many businesses today have changed their practices, whether they started treating their workers better or using more environmentally friendly production methods as a result of boycotts, there is still a stigma boycotts aren't necessary or don't work. While this may be true, when boycotting is done tactfully and with a clear goal, its effectiveness is insurmountable. When we support businesses that do good and put pressure on businesses that don't, we are paving the way for an economy that more closely mirrors the people's ideals.



graphic by Amani Ahmad

## The Infowars Empire

How Alex Jones Ignited the Fire of Extremist Doubt in American Politics

NORAH HUSSAINI | staff writer



On Dec. 4, 2016, a 29-year-old man from North Carolina walked into a pizza parlor with three guns. He fired two shots into the air, searched the place, and found nothing. The man was looking for the basement where Hillary Clinton was supposedly running a child trafficking ring, and, of course, was painfully mistaken.

The theory that he was trying to prove was the Pizzagate theory, which was fueled and popularized by Alex Jones, a conspiracy theorist famous for his lies and chaos. His intention in popularizing this theory was to crush Clinton's campaign and boost then-candidate Donald Trump's campaign, but it could have been deadly. Jones was required to debunk the theory due to multiple lawsuits, but if he wasn't required to, he would have continued feeding the story to his fans like raw meat. Jones' narcissistic

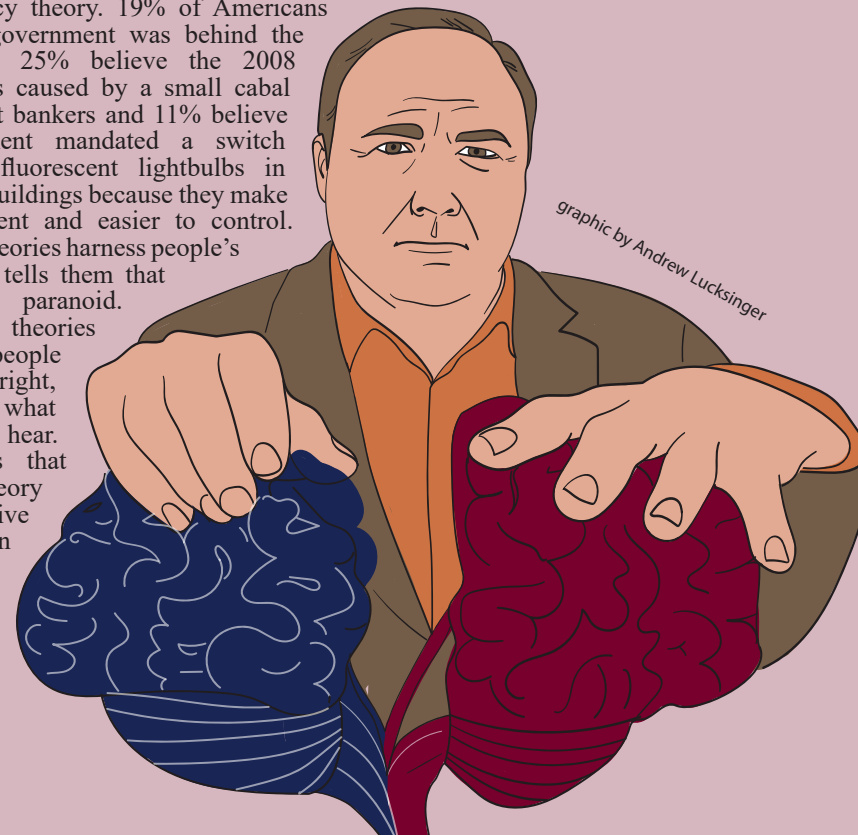
personality may be the cause of this because he has shown time after time that he's apathetic about what happens to the people that his theories affect.

9/11 was an inside job, the Sandy Hook shooting was a ploy to pass stricter gun laws, chemicals in our water are turning frogs gay, and the swine flu vaccine will lead to martial law. These are only four of the many twisted conspiracy theories Jones has repeatedly spread. And although they may sound outrageous to most, other people might lack the knowledge to know that they're not true. These four are indeed shocking, but the ones that have made the greatest impact on America are also the most harmful to people and to our planet. These include theories about vaccines causing autism, climate change being fake, and COVID-19 being fake. Leading an extremely loyal, almost cult-like following of over 70 million people, Jones has also had a huge impact on many topics of debate. He has a thirst for power, fame and money, which he quenches by manipulating his following and feeding them lies and chaos.

Jones' manipulation has made him a rich man. He sells placebo pills and drugs that he swears will make you younger and fitter or that will make you immune to health problems that don't even exist. In addition, Jones sells survival products for apocalypses that he predicts. He has utilized his theories to spark fear, tear people down, con people, send people to jail and wreck lives.

On Dec. 2, 2015, Jones interviewed Trump on his show, Infowars. Because of this interview, Jones' fanbase started to merge with Trump's, creating an entirely new group of people. These people went after then-presidential candidate Hillary Clinton and then-President Barack Obama repeatedly, following Jones' theories and Trump's confirmation of these theories. After partnering with Trump, Jones continued to put out theories with no thought or evidence behind them. Because of Trump's confirmation of these theories, papers and news channels took them as fact. This caused Jones to gain more supporters but also sparked mass chaos and paranoia amongst his base.

At least 50% of Americans believe in at least one conspiracy theory. 19% of Americans believe the government was behind the 9/11 attacks, 25% believe the 2008 recession was caused by a small cabal of Wall Street bankers and 11% believe the government mandated a switch to compact fluorescent lightbulbs in government buildings because they make people obedient and easier to control. Conspiracy theories harness people's paranoia and tells them that they're not paranoid. Conspiracy theories tell those people that they're right, which is what they want to hear. Jones knows that conspiracy theory is an effective tool, and in his hands, it's more dangerous than ever before.



graphic by Andrew Lucksinger

## Unintended Consequences of Lockdown

*Decreased Levels of Pollution and Global Fossil Fuel Emissions Lead Researchers to Find Improved Environmental Conditions*

EDITH HOLMSTEN | staff writer



COVID-19 has forced people across the globe to adapt to increased online communication, lowered airplane travel and limited commutes to work or businesses given safety precautions. The adaptations have caused a significant drop in carbon emissions, so environmentalists hope that efforts to combat COVID-19 can be learned from to mitigate climate change in the future.

A United in Science Report found that carbon emissions dropped 17% during April compared to their 2019 levels. The significant difference in carbon emissions between 2019 and 2020 are mainly because of reduced fossil fuel-burning for vehicle and airplane travel, both of which accounted for over 90% of the U.S.'s total carbon emissions in 2018 according to the U.S. Energy Information Association. By April, the demand for coal decreased by 8% and the demand for oil lowered by 5% compared to the January to March averages in 2019, according to the International Energy Association. The significant decrease in fossil fuels being burned is directly related to cancelled flights and limited commutes to work or stores.

An International Air Transport Association Report showed that the demand for airplane trips plummeted by about 70% compared to last year. Airplane travel alone accounts for about 5% of carbon emissions according to Climate Home News, so the notable difference in the amount of airplanes flying has an effect on carbon emissions.

The limit of planes in the sky have also allowed scientists to do beneficial research on the impact of decreased air traffic and

overall carbon emissions on the atmosphere. According to Climate Home News, NASA scientists have specifically examined condensation trails that jets and airplanes produce which are known to increase greenhouse gas levels. With clear skies, scientists have used satellite photography to gauge how often planes produce condensation trails and, therefore, the impact that planes have on emissions. The study found that given the creation of condensation trails, airplane travel accounts for 5% of total emissions instead of the earlier estimate of 2% of total emissions which can help scientists and policy makers truly understand ways to limit carbon emissions since air travel accounts for more carbon emissions than we believed earlier.

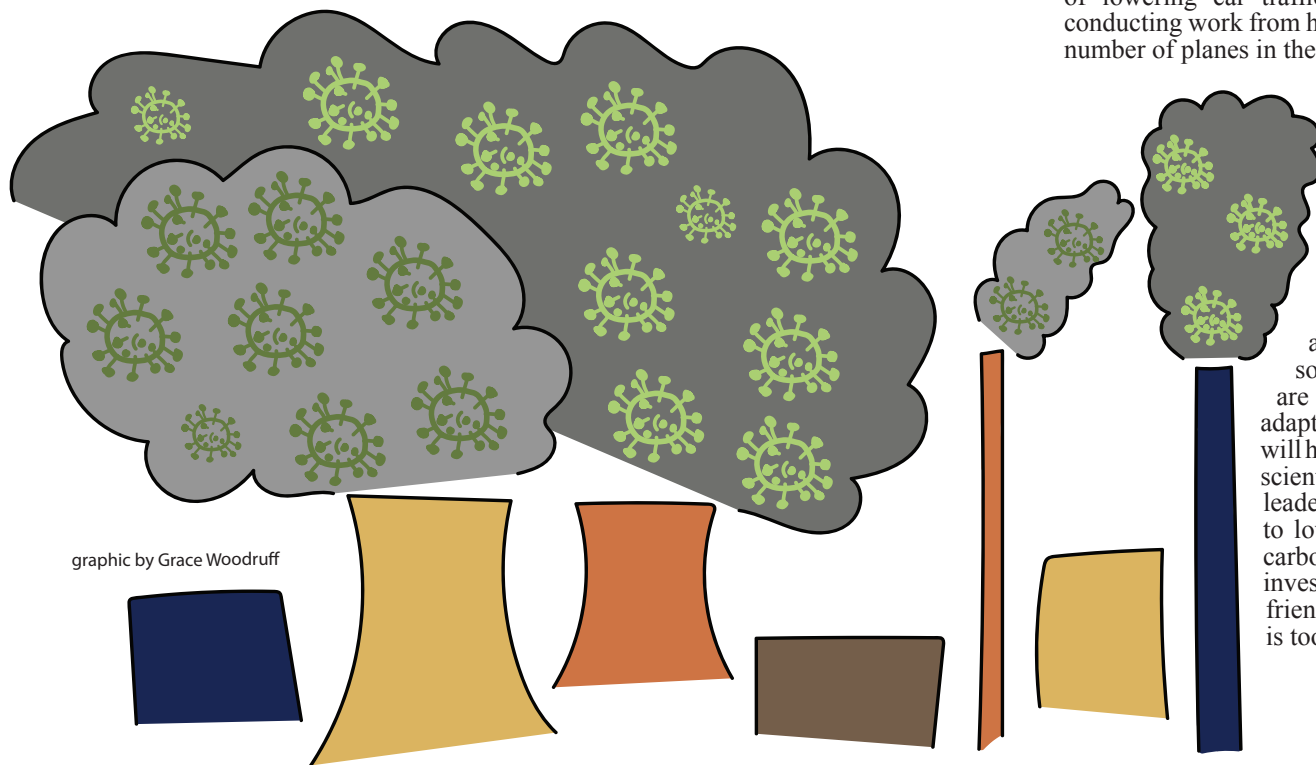
Along with a drop in airplane travel, the total vehicle miles driven in the U.S. dropped an astonishing 64% compared to 2019 according to a Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler (KPMG) report. The report also found that the drop in vehicle traffic was mostly caused by limited commutes to work and decreased driving to shopping centers, which usually account for about 40% of U.S. citizens' driving each year. The limited car travel results in lower emissions and has sparked an increase in walking and biking during COVID-19. The Wall Street Journal found that the bicycle traffic on New York City's Williamsburg Bridge increased to over 60,000 bicyclists in June compared to an average of only 4,500 bicyclists the year before. In Wuhan, China, there was a similar increase in bicycling even among people who do not already own bikes. From January to the end of March, nearly 110,000 people per day used the bike-share program Meituan in Wuhan according to the Wall Street Journal. The increase of bikers and pedestrians around cities plays a role in decreased carbon emissions because fewer people are burning fossil fuels to travel by cars or buses.

As a result of the increased popularity of bicycling and walking, multiple urban cities across the globe are starting to get creative with city planning for bike lanes. Paris, France, has committed to adding 400 miles of bike lanes to their city for people who are trying to avoid public transportation due to COVID-19. Additionally, Mexico City, Mexico, has committed to adding four times the current number of bike lanes they have now. Oakland, California, has closed nearly 10% of their city streets to vehicles in order to promote pedestrian and bicyclist traffic. This investment in bicycle lanes is beneficial because it means that future generations can have safer ways of transportation that reduce carbon emissions and encourage outdoor exercise even after the pandemic.

Without these needed innovations in research and bicycle lanes, scientists worry that we could continue on our path of rising carbon emissions. According to the Washington Post, in June, U.S. traffic rebounded back to almost 90% of what it was before lockdowns began. Given loosened lockdowns, increased businesses opening, and more people traveling, carbon emissions have already risen to a meager 5% below 2019 levels according to the BBC. If we do not learn from our carbon emission reduction during COVID-19 lockdowns, scientists with Nature Climate Change predict that reductions in carbon emissions could only change the world temperature about 0.01 degrees Celsius over the next five years. In comparison, a 2019 report from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) shows that the world temperature needs to drop about 1.15 degrees Celsius to be level with the pre-industrial temperature averages.

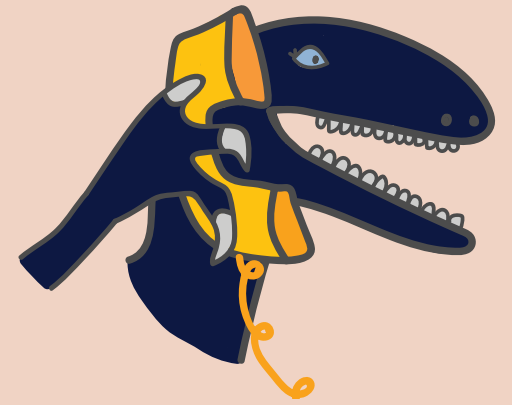
The rebound of greenhouse gases does not need to be the final story of COVID-19. We can learn from COVID-19 measures of lowering car traffic, increasing biking, conducting work from home and lowering the number of planes in the air.

COVID-19 lockdowns and the adaptation of our airplane travel, commutes to businesses and work can be a learning experience for city planners, scientists and participants in society. Environmentalists are hoping that our adaptations to COVID-19 will highlight to businesses, scientists, and government leaders the possible ways to lower our skyrocketing carbon emissions and invest in environmentally-friendly practices before it is too late.



graphic by Grace Woodruff

ask the lib



### How Do I Avoid Feeling Isolated During Online School?

It's important to stay connected right now, but it's a lot more difficult when you don't get to see people at school anymore. However, there's a lot that can help. Making efforts to FaceTime with people during lunch and after school or talk on the phone can be really helpful to make things feel a little bit more normal. I've also found that it's a lot of fun to spend time with people socially distantly, outside, with masks on. There are a lot of coffee shops that have safe ordering, patios and WiFi, and doing homework with my friends there helps to give me a change of scenery and an opportunity to spend time with people I love. Even if you don't have a lot of time to see people because you're busy, sending your friends a quick text asking how they are makes them feel loved and prompts good conversation — and it doesn't take up a lot of time or energy! It's hard, but we're all going through this together.

### How Can I Keep Myself Busy in Quarantine?

Lots of people have started feeling bored during quarantine, so you're not alone! It's pretty common to have started a new hobby during quarantine, which is definitely something I'd recommend. I've started knitting and embroidering, and it's really cool to be able to both have something that helps pass time and allows me to make things I'm proud of! There are also options of hobbies you can do to get outside, like taking up running or gardening. I know someone who took up guitar, and it's really helped them stay happy. I also know people who have fostered animals like dogs and cats, which will definitely take up some time. You'd have to ask your parents, though. Quarantine also makes time for self-discovery through meditation and exercise. Taking care of yourself is important no matter what the circumstance, but it especially is right now. I've also spent more time reading which is good because it lets you escape a little bit. Keeping busy is difficult, but it's important, and it's exciting to learn new things! Good luck!

### How Do I Submit to the Advice Column?

Just DM us @jasaliberator to hear more about the things you care about in future issues of the Liberator.

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

#### GEMINI

There's a lot of change happening around you, Gemini. It's really important that you make sure you're communicative in your relationships so that indecisiveness and misunderstanding don't take ahold of them.

You have to try and open up a little bit, Taurus. Your independence sometimes gets in the way of your relationships. Know that you can be self-reliant while letting your loved ones know they matter.

You feel like you're ready for battle right now, Aries. You're feeling bold and ambitious, meaning it's a great time to invest in the new passions and interests that you've been thinking a lot about lately.

#### CANCER

Don't forget to make time for yourself this month, Cancer. Your extremely loving and loyal personality can come to a fault when you only apply it to others. Self-care is a lot more than taking a bath and lighting candles; don't be too hard on yourself, and take a break sometimes.

Take a deep breath, Pisces. As usual, you've been very in touch with your emotions recently, but try not to let it influence your decision making.

#### LEO

Sometimes, things don't work out, Leo. You have to stay true to yourself and make sure you're not bending too much for others when they aren't doing the same for you.

Going with the flow has been good to you in the past weeks, Aquarius. You can have fun without committing to things as long as you're true to yourself. This means don't overthink everything, and try not to let others' opinions influence your decisions.

#### VIRGO

Maybe it's time to focus on the goals you made earlier this year, Virgo. Your career responsibilities may be ramping up, so make sure your work ethic is too.

Discipline and practicality aren't everything, Capricorn. It's time to take some adventures and explore yourself. Take some advice from the Sagittarius in your life; work hard, play hard.

#### LIBRA

Idealism isn't always the way to go, Libra. Your moral high ground has been rubbing on friends and family the wrong way lately. Try understanding other people's points of view.

You're on top of your stuff, Scorpio. You walk through the world with strategy, which can be a big asset at this busy time in your life. Keep it going, but don't push yourself too much.

Make sure you're relying on those who love you, Sagittarius. You're dealing with a lot right now, and you don't have to go through it alone. Your freedom doesn't have to come at the expense of a little help, sometimes.

## HOROSCOPES

HELENA LARA | sports editor

#### ARIES

#### PISCES

#### AQUARIUS

#### CAPRICORN

#### SAGITTARIUS

TAURUS

SCORPIO

## Railroad Commissioner Candidate Up Close Look

SANWI SARODE | staff writer

The three Railroad Commissioners of Texas “supervise pipeline safety, gas utilities, surface coal and uranium mining, and the regulation of the production of oil and natural gas,” according to Ballotpedia. Similarly to senators, Railroad Commissioners serve six-year terms. A new spot has opened up, with four general election candidates in the running: one Democrat, one Republican, one from the Green Party, and another from the Libertarian Party. Voting took place Nov. 3 and Republican nominee James Wright won.

Below are the two candidates from the primary parties:

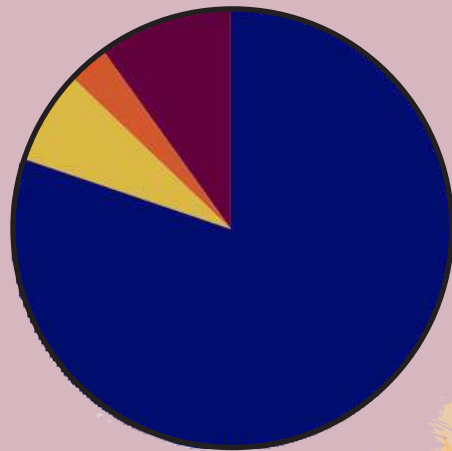
### Chrysta Castaneda (D)

Chrysta Castaneda is a lawyer, an engineer, and a community leader. Castaneda is also the founding partner of the Castaneda firm, which is an energy litigation firm in Dallas. She’s had past experience in and out of the oil and gas industry. Castaneda runs for the election with the following running points:

1. Not wasting natural resources and harming our environment by allowing the flaring of enough natural gas to power the city of Houston.
2. Reducing methane emissions, which are contributing to global warming.
3. Reusing and reclaiming the water that is used in oil and gas operations.
4. Stopping illegal venting, which she says is 30 to 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas.

### Gases released from Illegal venting:\*

- Carbon Dioxide
- Nitrous Oxide
- Flourinated Gases
- Methane



### James Wright (R)

James Wright is a business owner in oil field services and waste management. Wright also has past experience being a member of the Robstown Area Development Commission, a nonprofit corporation that promotes economic development. Wright runs for the election with the following running points:

1. Prevent the ruination of the oil and gas industry that might come by trying to achieve energy goals that he says aren’t attainable or affordable.
2. Create jobs and develop more oil and gas projects.
3. Push for streamlined communications with Texans to educate them about how important this industry is to the well-being of the state.
4. Better prepare the commission to withstand the inconsistent economic trends of industry.

### Texas Gas Records:\*

Gas Flaring	EIA 2017 Flared and Vented (MMcf)	EIA 2017 Associated Gas Production	EIA 2017 Oil Production
Significant	101,001	1,856,908	1,273

\*source from epa.gov

graphics by Somaya Jimenez-Haham

## COVID-19 Impact on Unhoused People Austin Organizations Step Up to Provide Shelter

ELIANA LEGATT | staff writer

Austin’s unhoused population is at high risk of contracting COVID-19, and the City of Austin and various organizations in Austin are giving out food and emergency care, as well as socially-distanced shelter. Monte Osburn, the executive director of the Austin Foundation for the Homeless, is one such person.

Osburn said maintaining connection with clients, donors, associates, and collaborators is a difficult aspect of his job. He said this is especially difficult with clients who don’t have cell phones or cannot receive emails and phone calls because they do not have reliable WiFi.

“Those experiencing homelessness, are at a higher risk than those that are able to stay home and disconnect from the world, and can communicate through phones and internet and those types of things,” Osburn said. “Whereas, those living out on the streets, and those [experiencing homelessness] are not as isolated, and not as protected.”

The Foundation for the Homeless has implemented COVID-19 regulations, and they are also informing their clients of the risks, causes, and methods to protect themselves from the virus. They are also giving out personal protective equipment.

“The biggest thing is, I don’t think people understand that because of COVID, the economic impact and shutting everything down, restaurants and bars and such, has created more homeless families and people because they’ve lost their jobs and you lose your job, you can’t pay rent,” Osburn said.

The Foundation for the Homeless has had no staff test positive for COVID-19 and only one or two clients test positive. Osburn did feel comfortable talking about his opinions on Austin’s policies on unhoused people during the pandemic, but he did say that the organization’s resources are limited.

Kate Moore is the vice president of strategic planning and partnerships at the Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO). She coordinates about \$10 million annually with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and coordinates funding for the federal government’s Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

“We are switched to working all virtually, which has its benefits and its drawbacks,” Moore said. “I think that we’re able to more efficiently, through virtual meetings, go from meeting to meeting with a lot of different kinds of people to coordinate between all of the agencies that are surveying people experiencing homelessness. I think that in general [though], it’s harder.”

According to Moore, the coalition is also shifting its purpose from being an unhoused response system to helping unhoused individuals who are unsheltered or in emergency shelters. They now have 300 hotel and motel units to provide those most vulnerable to the virus with a safe and socially-distanced home. She said that they have

been able to help about 500 people with housing.

“I don’t think we talk about what our community is doing well,” Moore said. “Homelessness is such a visible issue in our community, especially since our community has non-criminalized homelessness and decriminalized homelessness. And now we see people coming out of places where they’ve been hiding to sleep. I think that the public might think, because we’re seeing them, that nothing is being done.”

Moore said that unhoused people are more at risk of contracting the virus because they do not have a house where they can stay socially-distanced. Additionally, she said they need to

interact with people to get necessary services, risking exposure to the virus. Moore said they have distributed hundreds of tents for better social isolation, thousands of meals through the eating initiative, and protective equipment including masks, hygiene products and water.

“I do think [homelessness] should be one of the biggest focuses because I think that people without housing are really

vulnerable to illness,” Moore said. “I think that even if somebody doesn’t approach the situation from a humanitarian, caring about a person being sick with COVID-19 [perspective], if we just think about it from a statistical point of view, it’s expensive.”

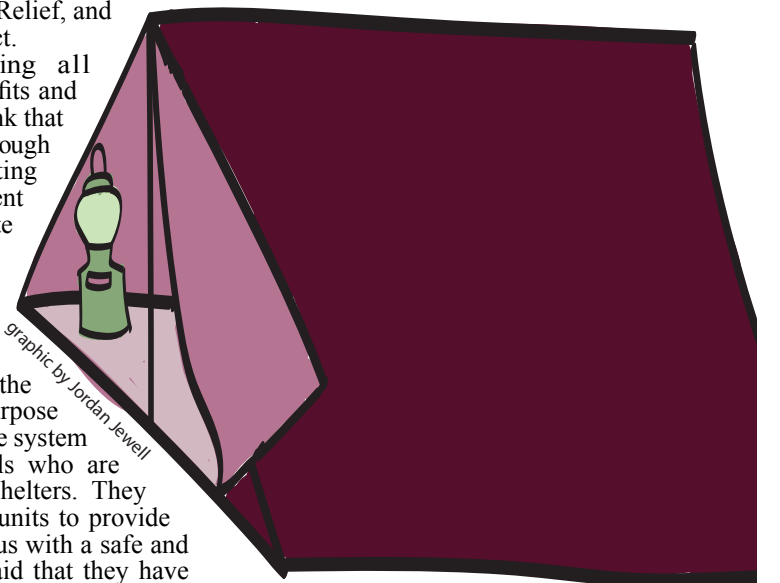
Moore said that the virus spreading through the unhoused community would be bad for taxpayers and the medical system. According to her, a fast increase in the cases of the virus would put this city under a lot of financial stress.

Matt Mackowiak is the co-founder of the non-profit Save Austin Now. His organization involves socially distancing, meeting patients virtually, and following and explaining public health guidelines to the unhoused community in Austin.

“I just think at this point, there has to be a fair balance between public health guidelines, trying to save the earth, the economy, to save as many jobs as possible and to help people who are [experiencing] economic distress,” Mackowiak said.

“I think that people without housing are really vulnerable to illness.”

-VP of Strategic Planning and Partnerships at ECHO, Kate Moore



## Connecting Austin Through Proposition A

EWAN MCINERNEY | staff writer

Residents of Austin voted in favor of going through with Project Connect on Tuesday, Nov. 3.

For weeks, Austinites have seen billboards and mail ads asking for their support of Project Connect. City politicians and residents all around Austin have differing views on the support of the project and how it will affect the city.

According to City Council Member Gregorio Casar, Project Connect is a plan created by the Council to provide better access to public transportation throughout the city of Austin. It consists of a main rail line running north and south down the spine of the city and connecting to the Austin-Bergstrom airport. The plan will also lead to the construction of an underground multi-block tunnel for an autonomous train below part of Austin’s downtown area. The project consists of two main propositions, Prop A and Prop B. Prop A mainly focuses on the construction of the light rail and underground tunnel, while Prop B is more centered around sidewalks and bike lanes. Austinites will decide on Nov. 3 whether to increase their tax rates to pay for the \$7.1 billion, 15-year project.

Casar said that Project Connect will help people who need accessible transportation. He said it will also work toward making transportation more equitable and affordable in general.

“Project Connect is a comprehensive mass transit plan that will serve all the parts of the city where transit is needed the most, including our lower-income areas with buses and trains—plus a \$300 million anti-displacement fund,” Casar said.

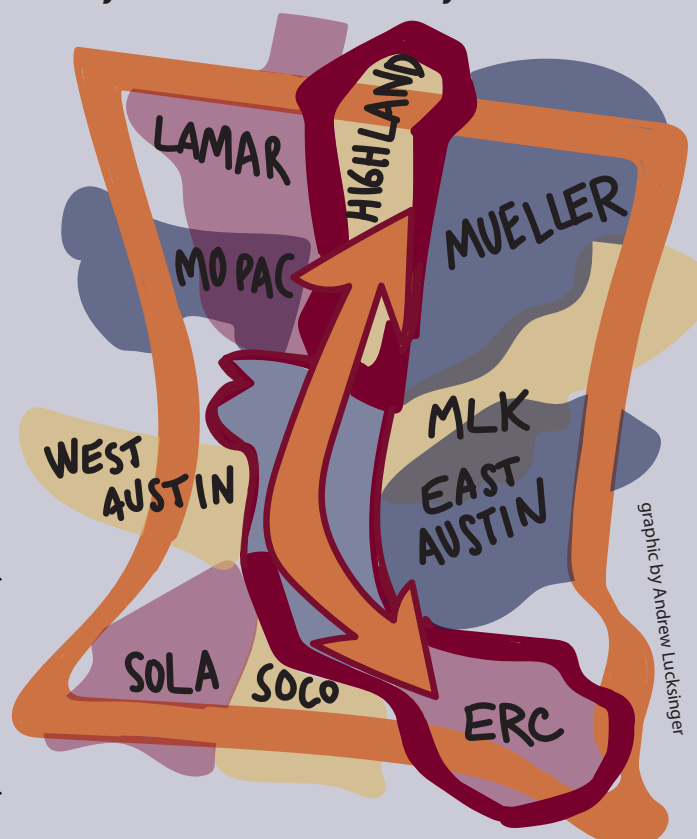
According to Casar, Project Connect has benefits for essential workers who still need to commute for their jobs in the age of COVID-19. Council Member Jimmy Flannigan, however, said that the main advantage of the plan is increased flexibility for everybody.

“It will create options,” Flannigan said. “If you live in a part of town that will have access to this future investment, you will now be able to reduce your reliance upon driving. Some folks may be able to not have a car at all and save tons of money. But it also benefits the people who aren’t going to use it. If you can get 10% of the people off the road, then the 90% are

going faster. So it doesn’t just benefit the people who use it, but it benefits everybody else because it creates more options and more flexibility for people in their choice when it comes to getting around the city.”

According to Casar, one of the main negatives brought up about the project is the amount of taxpayer money that will go into funding and maintaining it. Casar said that it is better in the

### Project Connect Projected Routes



long run to fund the project now before inflation raises the cost even more.

“We needed mass transit in this city decades ago,” Casar said. “If we want to have an alternative to rush hour traffic, if we want to address climate change and if we want to be a more equitable and connected city, then we need to pass Prop A. It comes with a cost, and that cost would’ve been much lower if we had passed this 20 years ago. However, if we continue to wait, it will only get more expensive.”

Flannigan said that one of the main strengths of the project is its stability for the future. According to him, many cities in the past have tried to improve their transportation systems but have failed to set aside enough money to keep their transportation intact.

“In a lot of cities, what you’ll find is that they put a lot of money into building and don’t think about the long-term policies to operate or the long-term policies to do maintenance,” Flannigan said. “They get 20 years in, and they can’t afford to run the service or even repair the service.”

However, some residents of suburban areas of the city disagree with what Casar and Gomez see as beneficial with these propositions. Cynthia Dietz, a former teacher at Patton Elementary School and a member of the disabled community, does not support the proposition.

“Back when I taught, I had to take a bus,” Dietz said. “There is a Cap Metro stop at the end of my street, and it would have taken almost two hours and several bus changes to get to my job. Being in a wheelchair that’s not rainproof, that is an issue for many of the disabled community. The weather affects their different conditions, so we look at a lot of door-to-door stuff—the [Special Transit Services]—and of course, it takes forever for them to get you scheduled, and they don’t always show up on time.”

Concerns Dietz said she had about Project Connect were not only about the plan in relation to the disabled community. According to her, it would not be beneficial to suburban residents of the city in general.

“In southwest Austin, we’ve been often neglected and manipulated by Capital Metro and the city over the years,” Dietz said, “and this doesn’t really solve our transportation needs.”

# All New Faces Running in AISD School Board Election

MADELEINE VAN SLYKE | staff writer

*Ofelia Maldonado Zapata was elected for District 2 trustee and Kevin Foster ran unopposed for District 3 trustee. For elections where no one candidate received 50% of the vote, the top two votegetters will advance to runoff elections. All results are unofficial until Nov. 17, 2020.*

Of the nine-member board of the Austin Independent School District (AISD), four seats are up for election this November. The AISD school board is a group of elected volunteers who oversee policies and finances in the district, such as yearly budget, and select the superintendent of the district.

Kristin Ashy is the District 4 trustee and will be serving on the school board until November 2022. Ashy is a career educator, a parent of two AISD students and a graduate from the University of Texas at Austin.

"The Board of Trustees has three spelled out jobs if you will," Ashy said. "Our job is to hire and fire the superintendent, ... vote on a budget and we have financial responsibility and making sure we're good stewards of taxpayer dollars... The third thing that we do is we clarify policy."

The board's main duty is to control the hiring and the firing of the superintendent, which is decided and monitored through a "superintendent score card." The "superintendent score card" is a scorecard that consists of data and an evaluation document which is given to each trustee, Ashy said. According to Ashy, the documents will be reevaluated in this coming November's meeting. She said there is also a unique factor about this year's candidates.

"None of the people running are incumbents," Ashy said. "So everybody will be new to the board as somebody who hasn't served before, so that's always interesting and exciting to have new and interesting thoughts and ideas that are coming to the school board, and those four positions will then join the five positions that are currently there right now, myself included."

Lynn Boswell is one of the candidates and is running for the District 5 trustee position. The election is nonpartisan, meaning that

no candidate runs with an affiliation towards a political party.

"I'm running to be sure that our schools match the values we say we have," Boswell said. "Right now, schools are working really well for some people, and they weren't aren't working very well for others. I've sent through the PTA and been on many AISD campuses and talked with teachers and principals and families and students from even more campuses than that and really heard people's stories about what's working and what's not."

The school board election is at the very bottom of the ballot. According to Boswell, since there is so much information out there about the many current elections, it's really important to make sure that people are informed and paying attention to everything that's at the bottom of the ballot.

"When you get farther down you're talking about things like City Council," Boswell said, "about propositions like Proposition A, which is a big transit fund, there's Proposition B right now which is about safe streets, bike lanes, more sidewalks, and then the school board is below that at the very, very bottom."

According to Ashy, the AISD school board affects the whole city in many different ways. As of 2019, AISD was one of the biggest employers in Austin.

"Often, the City of Austin that is beneficial and helpful and supportive of our community can have impacts that way," Ashy said. "We [the school board] have an impact on the economy itself, and we are one of the larger employers in the city, with roughly 12,000 employees. So we have a huge impact, financially, on the city as the people, and we are doing everything we can to provide other services and support for families. So making cakes, providing meals for those families that need that kind of assistance and support, providing mental health services."

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, nearly 72% of Americans live in or close to the city where they grew up. Ashy said that giving the future generation the best possible education gives back to the Austin economy, should native Austinites decide to stay.

"We educate the future," Ashy said. "A lot of people choose generally to stay where they grew up, so if we do the job that we all want to do and the job that we are elected to do, we make sure that

we are providing the best education possible for every student that walks in the doors."

According to Boswell, the pandemic is still a main issue for everyone, and the trustees will have a lot of influence on what the Texas Education Agency (TEA) chooses for a plan of what happens in regards to whether students or teachers are required to return in person. Boswell said she believes the school system should collaborate with the city to figure out what's next, but also believes trusting science and officials recommendations are more important than funding.

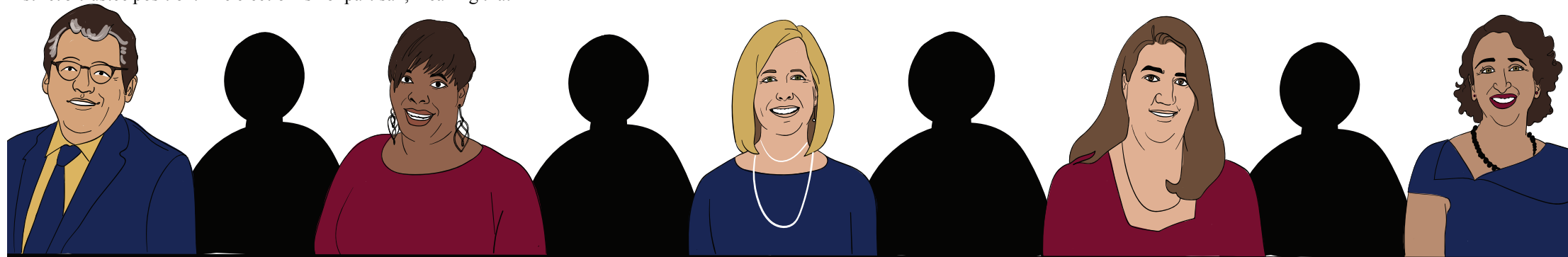
"What I would love to do is...roll the clock back and plan better starting last spring for what we knew would be fall with a lot of distance," Boswell said. "I would love to see not-for-profit institutions, neighborhood associations, families, our schools, universities, all coming together to talk about how we respond to this as a community, because it's an issue for employers, and it's an issue for all of us."

Ashy and Boswell said that there is not a one-size-fits-all solution to education during COVID-19. According to Ashy, there are two essential questions to consider: what to do for the students and what to do for the teachers.

"I want [students] to continue to be challenged academically, I want them to feel the challenge of learning new things, I don't want us to feel stuck, they should feel like they're learning more and more every day, whether they're coming to school virtually or in person," Ashy said. "I also want to ensure that we are paying attention to the social and emotional side of what it means to be within a pandemic."

According to Ashy, the question for what to do for the staff is slightly more complicated. According to the World Health Organization, older people and people with pre-existing medical conditions, such as asthma, diabetes and heart disease, appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with the virus. Many AISD staff fall into this category.

"For our staff, that is an unbelievable question," Ashy said. "My hope is that we do everything we can to support them and still have them feel... able to deliver the highest level of teaching."



graphic by Andrew Lucksinger

# Looking for Extracurriculars? Join the Club

MALVIKA PRADHAN | staff writer

## Baking Club

When: Every other Monday at lunch (Zoom)  
Contact: lasabakers@gmail.com

The Baking Club is a club at LASA where students can exchange baked goods with other members of the club. The club was started by junior Devon Hobbs.

"Me and my friends were actually doing bake swaps up until the last couple months of last year, and at that point, it was too late to make a club," Hobbs said. "We were just so into that we kind of decided that we wanted to start one next year."

At these meetings, members spend time together and arrange which students will be paired together to bake for each other. Junior Zack Disler is an officer of the club.

"We've had a couple Zoom meetings every second Monday at lunch," Disler said. "We just talk a little bit about the Baking Club but mostly just to catch up as friends."

Junior Mari Kinzy, who is also an officer of the club, explains how the logistics of dropping off treats work. After finalizing who they are baking for and what they are baking, members are given two weeks to

bake their sweets and give them to their partner.

"If I have someone for my baking thing, I'll make the dessert for them, and then I'll drive over to their house and drop it off at their door while they're home," Kinzy said. "We coordinate so that we can make sure they are home when that happens."

Members have the opportunity to make anything, but Kinzy said the club tries to stick to baking seasonal items. Members can also ask their partners to make something if they have a specific dessert in mind.

"We all make different desserts," Kinzy said. "It usually has some sort of relation like, of course, last time, we all made fall-related desserts."

According to Disler, the club also helps students bond with other students who share their passion for baking. He said he wants the club to be a community for students who are interested in baking or learning to bake.

"Obviously, with the coronavirus, it can be hard to connect with your peers right now, and so I just like how this is a way for me to interact with and have a good time with my friends and stuff," Disler said. "Of course, getting baked goods is always fun."



MUFFIN MADNESS Baking Club members exchange baked goods. Zack Disler cooked banana muffins to drop off. photo courtesy of Zack Disler

## Minorities in Math

When: Wednesdays from 4:15-5 (Zoom)  
Contact: lasamimclub@gmail.com

The Minorities in Math club was also introduced this year. The club is designed for minority students to have a space to work on math, according to senior Alisha Morejon, who founded the club.

"The reason I wanted to start this club and what I love most about it is just having a space where no one is different," Morejon said. "It's just hard to be the only different one in a class, especially in math where it is such a competitive field. I just love being with other people who feel like that and need that space."

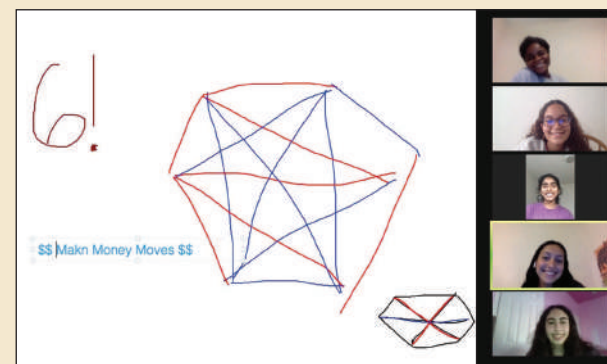
During meetings, members will work on math problems as a group. Senior Noor Elhagehassan is an officer of the club and helps choose which math problems they work on.

"Last time we met, we did Ted-Ed math drills together," Elhagehassan said. "We had two, so we played the videos, and then we pulled up the whiteboard on Zoom, and everybody just wrote down

their ideas, and then we went to the next video and did the same thing."

According to Elhagehassan, the club is designed to be a space where minority students can feel welcomed. However, the club is open to all LASA students who want to join.

"[My favorite part is] the fact that so many people from different backgrounds came to this club for different reasons because we went around one day, and we were like, 'Why did you guys decide to join Minorities in Math?' and everybody had a different reason," Elhagehassan said. "I think that's really cool. I also like the environment. I think it's very welcoming and everybody's supportive of each other."



FACTORIAL FRENZY Club members meet through zoom to discuss a factorial problem. Group 1 solved the problem first. photo courtesy of Alisha Morejon

## Red Cross Club

When: Before service projects  
Contact: lasaredcross1@gmail.com

The LASA Red Cross Club was started this year as a way for students to help their community. Junior Lakshmi Surada helped start the club and is the Co-President.

"My favorite part about LASA Red Cross would be that it's a really lenient club," Surada said. "There's no time limit for people, and there's no, 'You have to be here for this meeting or this many hours.' I really like that it's super lenient, but still gives people really good opportunities for service hours and service projects."

There are a wide variety of service projects that students can choose to participate in, according to Surada, from fundraising to writing cards for veterans. Secretary and junior Sadhana Kumar said she helps the club find safe opportunities to serve the community and that all the available service projects are currently remote.

"We work with the Red Cross Advisor from Central and South Texas Red Cross, and she gives us ideas for what [service projects] we can do,

and one of the main ways is fundraising since we don't have to be in-person to do that," Kumar said. "But other than that, she helps us find opportunities that would be good for remote learning."

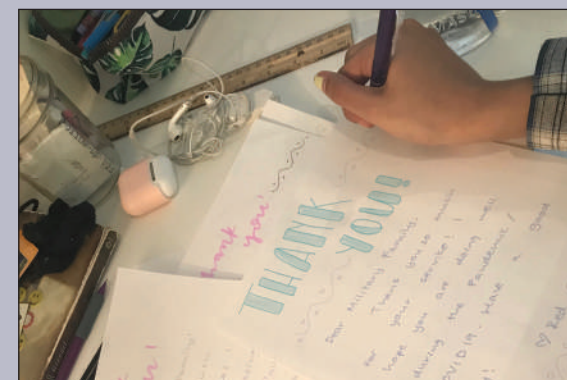
According to Surada, like many other LASA clubs, the Red Cross Club has had their fair share of difficulties due to COVID-19. Kumar said some service projects are impossible to do virtually.

The club's most recent service project was called the Thank-a-Hero project. Students wrote cards to veterans, active military, and their families as a safe way to show their gratitude. The letters were sent to the Central South Texas Red Cross, which then distributed them to the armed forces.

"I really like that project," Surada said. "I think it's low-effort, but I can imagine a card making someone smile, and that's good."

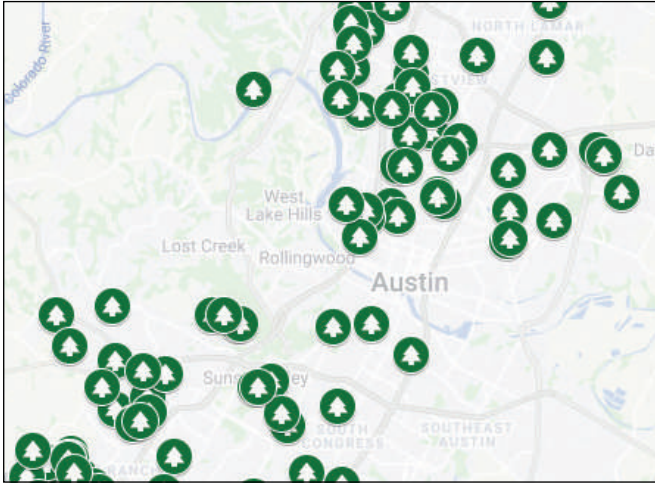
For now, Kumar said the club hopes to continue to give students an opportunity to help their community. Students will most likely also be able to use the hours they get at the Red Cross club for National Honor Society (NHS).

"I think [students] should join LASA Red Cross club because A: it's a great way to help out the community, and B: they can make a lot of new friends through the club," Kumar said.



LETTER WRITING Red Cross Club participates in service projects. Hana Houssaini writes cards for the Red Cross Club's Thank-a-Hero Project. photo courtesy of Hana Houssaini

# Grab a Shovel, Plant a Sapling, Grow a Tree!



**TREES GALORE** Each tree icon is placed at each house in Austin, that received a tree through the Adopt-A-Tree Program. In total, about 120 LASA students and staff from all across Austin obtained a tree. photo courtesy of Pearl Morosky



**GOING GREEN** NeighborWoods Assistant, Ripley Mayfield, planted a five gallon tree over the weekend of Oct. 17. On average, NeighborWoods plants 4,500 trees from October to March. photo courtesy of Ripley Mayfield

**EDITH HOLMSTEN** | staff writer

Trees provide shade cover for neighborhoods, absorb carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, benefit biodiversity and are proven to help emotional well-being. Through LASA's Adopt-A-Tree Program, over 100 new trees will be planted around Austin to do just that.

The Adopt-A-Tree Program is a project designed to help LASA students, faculty and staff plant free trees. A Google Form was open from Sept. 28 to Oct. 12 for potentially interested students to choose a tree. Trees will be delivered from Oct. 26 to Friday, Nov. 13 with help from NeighborWoods' delivery system.

NeighborWoods is a project within the organization TreeFolks that delivers over 4,500 trees a year to citizens of Austin. About 120 LASA students and staff are going to get trees due to the Adopt-A-Tree Program.

Junior Marta Knoll is one of the adopters of a tree this year. Knoll filled out the form to request a pecan tree for her yard, and she said that she liked the simple format of the program.

"We just had to fill out the form and just say what kind of tree we wanted and where our house was," Knoll said. "I thought it was a really great way for someone to be able to adopt a tree because it wasn't a terribly long and confusing process."

Senior and Adopt-A-Tree Program creator Pearl Morosky, said she was glad that the form was easy to use and that Knoll was able to find a tree that she liked. Morosky said she included nine total options for trees: three small trees, three medium sized trees, and three large trees, in the hope that students would learn about different tree species.

"I'm not a big tree biologist, so I was just kind of selecting what I thought people would find fun and interesting," Morosky said. "I have information about

all the trees on my form, so I thought that if there was some cool tree that people hadn't heard about, they would get to maybe learn a new thing or two."

With all of the tree decisions made and forms completed as of Oct. 12, Morosky said she has worked to review each form in a large Google Sheet and verify that the homes are suitable for a tree. Morosky said she checks to make sure that each tree is over 20 feet away from a building, located away from power lines and positioned so as to not block a driver or pedestrian view at an intersection.

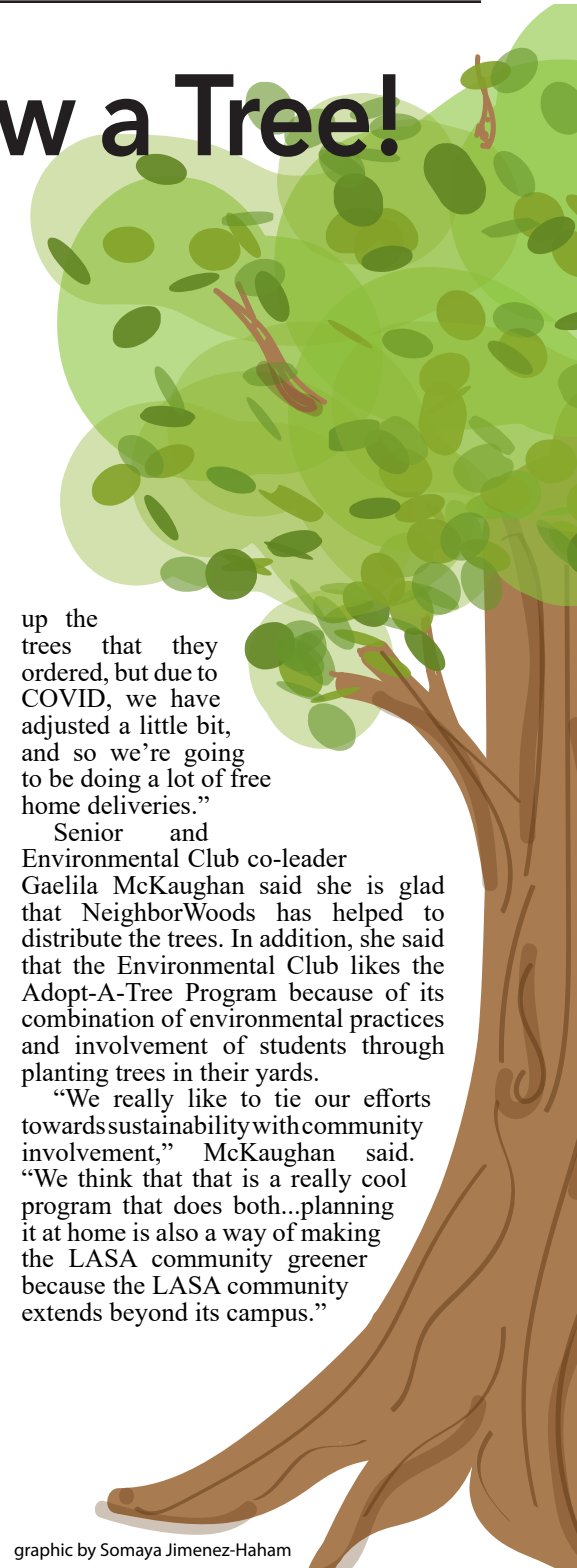
"I have it all in a Google Sheet," Morosky said. "I basically go on Google My Maps, which is basically like Google Earth, and I survey each property and basically check to make sure that there's space available."

Morosky said she has confirmed that Knoll's property met the requirements to gain a tree. The trees can now be distributed, a process Knoll also said she approves of given its safety during COVID-19.

"[The form] said that they were going to deliver the trees to you, which I thought was really great especially during COVID because that meant a lot of people didn't have to go to one place to pick something up, which could potentially lead to people getting sick," Knoll said. "If they were just dropping off the trees at your house, there's less of a chance of exposure, and there's less of a chance of germs being transmitted."

The distribution of trees has been done through a collaboration between the Adopt-A-Tree Program and NeighborWoods. NeighborWoods assistant Becky Woodward said the program has had to adapt their system to home deliveries during COVID-19.

"This year, we will be delivering most of the trees to people's houses," Woodward said. "In previous years, we might hold four events where we'd have 200 [or] 250-plus people come and pick



up the trees that they ordered, but due to COVID, we have adjusted a little bit, and so we're going to be doing a lot of free home deliveries."

Senior and Environmental Club co-leader Gaelila McKaughan said she is glad that NeighborWoods has helped to distribute the trees. In addition, she said that the Environmental Club likes the Adopt-A-Tree Program because of its combination of environmental practices and involvement of students through planting trees in their yards.

"We really like to tie our efforts towards sustainability with community involvement," McKaughan said. "We think that that is a really cool program that does both...planning it at home is also a way of making the LASA community greener because the LASA community extends beyond its campus."

graphic by Somaya Jimenez-Haham

## NEWS BRIEFS

### National News

**Oct. 24**

Multiple members of Vice President Mike Pence's inner circle and staff have tested positive for COVID-19 in recent days, including his Chief of Staff Marc Short. This comes just weeks after President Donald Trump, First Lady Melania Trump and other officials tested positive after attending what is being called a "super-spreader event" by Dr. Anthony Fauci, a U.S. virus expert and member of the White House coronavirus task force. This is the second second outbreak of cases in the White House with Pence as head of the Coronavirus Task Force.

**Oct. 26**

Just eight days before the election, and shortly after the passing of former Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the Senate confirmed the spot to be taken by Amy Coney Barrett, voting 52-48. The addition of Barrett to the court was made possible partly by the Republican Party's domination of the Senate. This was also the first time since 1800 that there were no votes by the minority party favoring the nomination.

**Oct. 28-29**

Hurricane Zeta, a tropical storm over the Gulf of Mexico, has officially strengthened to a Category 2 hurricane and made landfall in Louisiana on Wednesday Oct. 28, after hitting the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico as a Category 1 storm. On Thursday, Oct. 29, the hurricane was declared a tropical storm over Alabama, and then a post-tropical storm over Virginia later in the day. This will be the fifth hurricane to make landfall in Louisiana this year during the hurricane season, breaking a record dating back to 1851.

### State News

**Oct. 13**

Early voting started in Texas on Oct. 13, and since then, voter turnout has been higher than previous elections. Additionally, Texas, a normally Republican state, is seeing an all-time record number of Democratic voters, meaning it could become a swing state. Early voting ends Oct. 30, and voting ends Nov. 3.

### Local News

**Late Oct. - Nov. 14**

As the colder months approach, much of the country, including Austin, is experiencing a spike in cases for the third time this year. Cases in the state are expected to rise 257% between now and Nov. 14, according to UT COVID-19 Modeling Consortium. The U.S. still currently has the most deaths in the world, with around 15% of the population who refuse to wear masks, according to the Pew Research Center. Officials and experts are still trying to enforce social distancing and masks.

**Nov. 2**

After opening up campuses to 25% in early October and having all staff (aside from those with health risks) return, the Austin Independent School District (AISD) is now letting students return to campus. Despite many teachers and other staff's requests for the choice to teach at home and for students to continue at-home learning, AISD pushes for a new phase in their COVID-19 plan. All Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines will still be followed as well as daily temperature checks for all returning to campus.

### Global News

**Oct. 18**

Indigenous socialist Luis Arce won the Bolivian presidential election, with 55% of the vote against six other candidates. Arce belongs to the Movement Towards Socialism party, the same party of former President Evo Morales. Morales was the country's first Indigenous president. 88% of the Bolivian population voted, one of the highest voter turnout percentages in 21st century Latin America.

**Oct. 25**

On Oct. 25, Pope Francis appointed Wilton Gregory as the U.S.'s first African-American cardinal. Last year, Gregory also made history as the first African-American Archbishop in Washington, D.C., and in the U.S. Gregory has guided the Catholic Church through many clergy scandals in the early 2000s and was one of 13 to be elevated in rank at a surprise consistory on Oct. 25 at the Vatican.

## MIAKAN-GARZA

from page 1

According to Paul Figueroa, a professor at the University of New Mexico School of Law, many countries, such as in Latin America, are far ahead in the world of legislation for protecting Indigenous cultural creations than the U.S. or Europe. Figueroa said the main driver of NAGPRA was recognition that federally funded institutions such as universities or museums had remains belonging to Indigenous communities.

"They recognize that it was a result of the conquest and colonization in taking up their land, in taking other property," Figueroa said. "Without saying that much, they basically admitted that it was cultural theft, right?...We go to museums in Europe, and we see African art, and it's behind these beautiful window setups. It's basically stolen art, and it's a similar thing here that these educational institutions and museums were holding remains that oftentimes are sacred, and oftentimes have big significance to the tribes or are human remains, that should be given back to those communities."

The Smithsonian's International Repatriation Specialist Nancy Kenet Vickery also said that the act of repatriation to tribes is important regardless of legalities and other factors. According to her, even though it's a long ongoing process, it's something museums and others should follow.

"I think it's a great way to talk about righting past wrongs," Vickery said. "It's a dialogue. Repatriation is really quite a consultation process that we go through where it's very important that we're working in collaboration with [Indigenous] communities during this process from beginning to end, and it's something I've appreciated about the museum not just in repatriation, but in other departments. Our Conservation Department, for example, does a wonderful job for community consultations to make sure that's a very important part of the process."

Domingo said it is important to be able to have the right to burial as it holds religious and spiritual importance to Indigenous peoples and is a right supposedly granted by the current colonial government. According to him, having to go through the legal process feels like being told Indigenous people are not worthy of burying their dead.

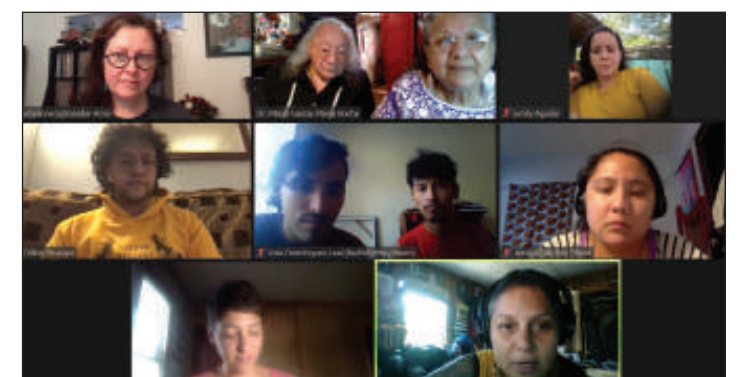
"[The ability to rebury] has been connected to this process and through the history of genocide and [our] status as second class citizens that a lot of people of color have experienced," Domingo said. "[The ability to rebury] is just a part of that narrative, and we just need to build kinship with each other and listen to one another and know who truly has our backs and build community. In the end, it's truly up to us to be accountable to each other versus asking for support or grace or anything from any type of colonial government."



**MIAKAN-GARZA ELDERS** Miakan-Garza Band elders Maria Rocha and Dr. Mario Garza pose after a reburial ceremony in 2017. Both were integral in founding the Indigenous Cultures Institute. photo courtesy of Rene Renteria



**REBURIAL CEREMONY** Participants leaving after burial of an ancestor in 2017. The reburial process of stolen remains is based upon their right to bury unearthened remains. photo courtesy of Rene Renteria



**DEBRIEFING** Event members debrief after the Sept. 7 Demonstration and Teach-in. One focus on the Indigenous Cultures Institute is to raise awareness and stand for the rights of indigenous peoples. photo courtesy of Indigenous Cultures Institute

# Don't Stand Still

## Students and Faculty



**CHECKING IN.** Students wait outside to get screened before going to class, while Mia Ternus fills out a covid screening. All students at school are required to wear masks and get their temperature check before school. photo by Alec Lippman

**SOPHIA CHAU**  
**AVA DE LEON** | student life editors

A worldwide pandemic, national unrest, and murder horns sound like they belong in the description of a dystopian novel set in the 22nd century. Unfortunately, all those events and more have happened in the current year of 2020, and students and teachers around the world have been dealing with it throughout the year.

On March 16, Austin Independent School District (AISD) announced that schools would be closed until April 3, 2020. After many pushed back dates, it was decided that schools would not be opened for the remainder of the school year, and the LASA community got its first taste of online school. In August, it was announced that LASA would be having online classes for the first four weeks of school, and since then, students and teachers alike have had to adapt and adjust to having school entirely online. However, recently, faculty and students have been returning back to campus, changing the school environment yet again.

Students are separated into teacher's rooms, and every person is required to wear masks. WiFi is provided for classes, and students, like junior Ita Hernandez-Hernandez, are on their computers the entire time.

"You sit in the classroom and you have your computer out, and you use the WiFi of the school, and you do online classes, but the teachers are just there to also do your classes, it's very online influenced," Hernandez-Hernandez said. "It's just very bizarre."

Like Hernandez-Hernandez, junior Suhas Gillipelli chose to go to physical school as opposed to staying at home. He had mixed feelings about returning, and talked about the benefits he has experienced by being at school.

"I prefer the convenience of being at home," Gillipelli said, "but being able to focus at school better and having that accountability is very helpful. So I guess it is a tradeoff between convenience and accountability."

Hernandez-Hernandez also talked about how being at school has helped her complete her school work more efficiently and stay focused. She struggled with differentiating between school work and home life.

"I decided to go to school in order to try and find a way to concentrate more on my work because when I was at home, I really wasn't motivated to do my work," Hernandez-Hernandez said. "I wanted to try and separate both my personal room with my work room."

Not only students, but teachers as well, have been struggling with changing their mindsets and adapting to the new norms of school. Math teacher Andrew Stepek, who returned to school, has encountered challenges in changing his teaching methods and curriculum.

"I think the biggest change that we have had to accept and make adjustments for is that the group-based, student-driven learning that we're so fond of, and I'm so fond of, it's just not really happening," Stepek said.

Great Ideas teacher Jack Cunningham teaches a discussion-based required course for sophomores at LASA. Cunningham said that he and his students have had some issues with having discussions in class but that there have also been some upsides to technology features.

"Sometimes, it's hard for students to get their voice heard in that 30-40 minutes that we are in a discussion, so the chat has been a good feature for students to chime in on things

even when there's another conversation happening," Cunningham said.

Science teacher David Walker talked about the faculty-wide improvement of technological understanding and has credited online schooling to helping teachers become familiar with online resources.

"Teachers were motivated to change their curriculum," Walker said. "I think a large-scale modernization took place amongst teachers. A lot of teachers have gotten a lot more acquainted with how BLEND works, with how students can turn in work remotely, and that might be more efficient than doing it real time."

Principal Stacia Crescenzi has acknowledged the hardships that teachers at LASA have had to deal with over the past few months. She talked about the constant changes in the school schedule and how that affects teachers and their courses.

"Every time there's a change in the A/B calendar, every time there's a change in the school calendar, they have to go back and rewrite some of that curriculum," Crescenzi said. "So I think that that's been an ongoing process and one that's honestly very stressful to teachers."

Crescenzi could not say for sure when there would be a definite answer to the situation at hand. Decisions have been made according to the ongoing and upcoming issues and have been changed accordingly.

"Nobody really understands or can predict with certainty the progression of the virus," Crescenzi said. "So we're making decisions about bringing students back, we're making decisions about the logistics of do we use interior classrooms or not, do teachers need extra fans, is there a way to keep the windows open, do we need air diffusers in the classroom, the really basic logistical kinds of stuff, with ever-changing information."

Some teachers, like Stepek, have questioned whether or not it would be plausible to move classes outside. This adaption would allow students and teachers to effectively socially distance from each other.

"What I really just don't understand, not just at the school, not just at this district, but across the state, across anywhere where the weather is nice in the winter, why aren't we not talking about having school outside?" Stepek said. "Because it's the obvious and most important safety precaution that you can have. If we're going to have 20-25 students, we should be outside, not in an enclosed room."

Recently, a new change has been made to the schedule which introduced Flex Fridays, an asynchronous work day for Friday classes. Students and teachers work on their own instead of attending Zoom meetings.

"The adults also needed some breathing room to collaborate with their colleagues, to get papers graded and back to students,

and to be able to put things in place so that if kids have questions, if kids need reviews for things, they can set up blocks of time and meet those needs," Crescenzi said.

Even with the introduction of Flex Fridays, there are still some aspects of the school day that are just not the same as they used to be, according to Stepek. He misses the social interaction that comes from teaching every day.

"A big part of why I like this job is because I get to have fun interactions most of the day with fun and interesting people, and that still happens to an extent, but it's to a far less extent," Stepek said. "Although, it's getting better, with people getting more comfortable with communicating with each other."

Walker has had to adjust to not seeing his students every day, including some of his students from previous years. He talked about the difficulty of not being in his own classroom.

"I just miss seeing students," Walker said. "I miss seeing my colleagues. I miss the advantages of being in a physical classroom in terms of what that allows me to do as a teacher."

Despite the obstacles, according to Walker, students and teachers have handled the situation exceptionally well. He praised the patience and hard work of the students as the curriculum changes online and as more developments are made in terms of returning to campus.

"It's not perfect, it's definitely not as good as it would be if it were normal," Walker said. "There are a lot of problems, but I think that's been the biggest take away for me: is how amazing our student population is in dealing with all this."

On Nov. 2, the school will be allowed to have 100% capacity, which means even more students will be allowed back on campus and able to switch classes during a passing period. Teachers who do not have an accommodation are also expected to return to the classroom, but this poses a problem for teachers who are taking care of an at-risk family member, which doesn't constitute an exemption from returning to school. Cunningham is worried about the risks this might involve and how students will react to this opportunity.

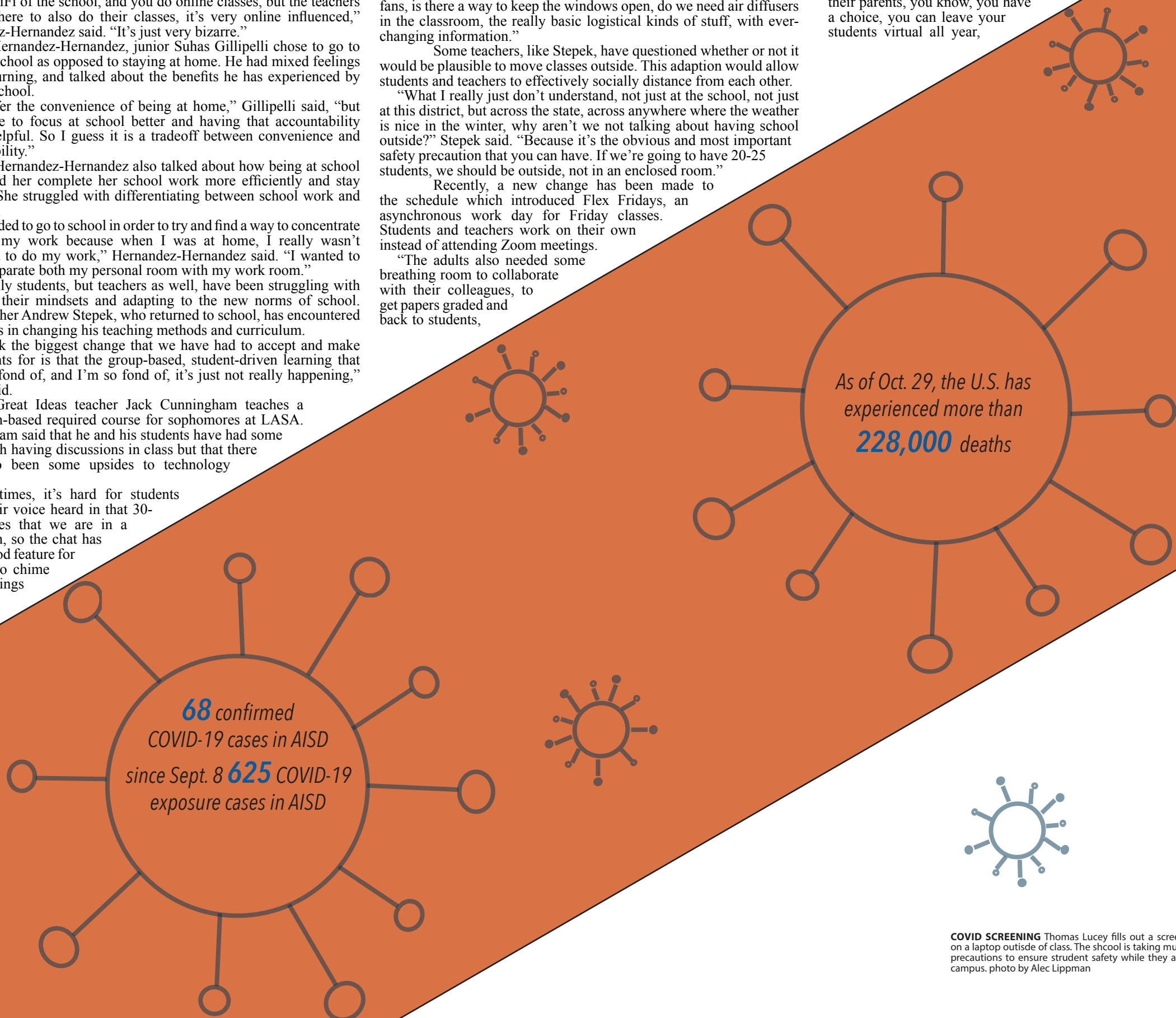
"Part of my worry is that if students are going to be switching classes again, there might be seen to be some academic advantage to going back to campus because you'll be seeing your teachers," Cunningham said.

Crescenzi wants students and parents to be fully aware of the situation and the impact it will have on their schooling. However, she does not want to discourage students from doing something that is absolutely necessary or beneficial for their families.

"You want to be appropriately fearful and cautious, but you don't want that caution to keep you from doing what you know might be in the best interest of many students and many families," Crescenzi said.

Stepek is not thrilled about the fact that teachers are required to go back to school unless they have an accommodation granted by AISD. He voiced his opinion about teachers not being given the same choice as students and parents.

"AISD has made a big thing for all their parents, you know, you have a choice, you can leave your students virtual all year,



**COVID SCREENING** Thomas Lucey fills out a screening on a laptop outside of class. The school is taking multiple precautions to ensure student safety while they are on campus. photo by Alec Lippman

# So Close To Me

## Return to Campus

send them back in person, well, that choice doesn't exist if you're one of AISD's teachers and you're also an AISD parent. You pretty much have to send them back." Stepek said. "It feels very unfair, and I think we're going to potentially lose some good teachers because of that."

Recently, it was announced some teachers from LASA would be forced to resign due to their inability to return to school in person. Walker expressed his concern about the threats of returning to school as early as Nov. 2 and explained how much he values his job.

"At some point, they probably are going to require students to come back to school and require me to come back to school with students," Walker said. "At that point, I am going to have to evaluate my job and how much teaching means to me in comparison to my health and how much my health means to me. Which is an unfortunate position that a lot of people are being put in."

This year has also been marred with concerns about funding. While the remainder of the school year is fully funded, due to predetermined funding, there are concerns with how next year will fare mainly because of lower attendance and higher costs for safety measures.

"A lot of families will say, 'Alright, well if my kindergartener is going to have to do a lot of work virtually, why not just wait a year and send them to kindergarten next year?' And then, you have less revenue," Crescenzi said.

Teachers are encouraging students to stay home and only return to school if absolutely necessary. Stepek understands the challenges his students face with online school but continues to advocate for staying home.

"The best thing that you can do is, unless you have an academic need, or a physical health need, or a mental health need to come back to school, if virtual learning is working for you, stay at home," Stepek said. "That's the best thing that you can do for your teachers right now."

Another thing teachers would like is more information. Teachers like Cunningham are looking for

answers and some sort of confirmation about what will happen with schools in the future.

"I'd just like a little bit more certainty from all levels," Cunningham said. "From state level, TEA, from district level, and from the campus level, too. Just certainty on what's happening."

Crescenzi urged families and educators to be patient with the process and wait for effective and finalized decisions. She also encourages students to provide their teachers with feedback and praise.

"Be patient when things don't go perfectly, and really give teachers feedback when it goes well," Crescenzi said.

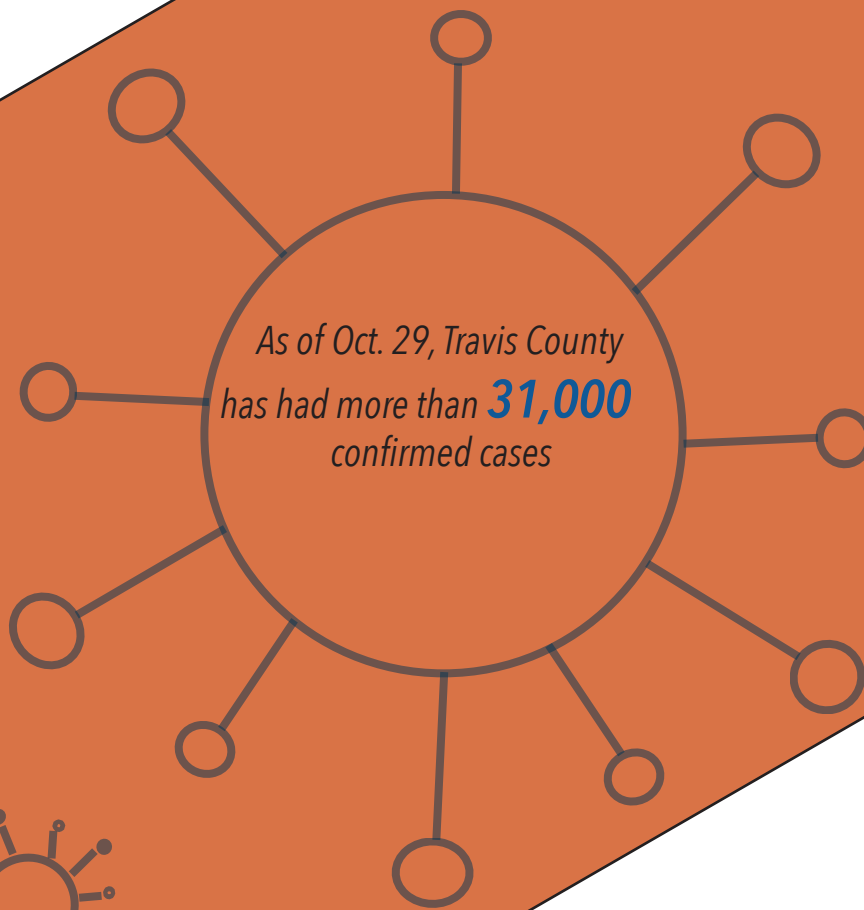
Despite all the challenges, Stepek acknowledged that the blame doesn't lie solely in the hands of the district or LASA's administration. Instead, he put the blame on a much larger source.

"As frustrated as I sound, I do recognize that a lot of these issues certainly aren't coming from our administration," Stepek said. "To an extent, they're coming from a district administration, but to a far greater extent, they're coming from our state government or our federal government, who just like to sit on their hands and they do jack."

## Word on the Street...

### Stats about Covid-19 cases

SOURCES: Johns Hopkins University, Austin Independent School District



**DOORS ON LOCK** The doors outside LASA are covered in several safety signs. Students and teachers are required to follow multiple safety procedures before entering the school. photo by Alec Lippman



graphic by Juan Carlos Ramirez Delgado

Students Find New Ways to Socialize Amid COVID-19 Distancing Measures

NORAH HUSSAINI | staff writer

Due to COVID-19 safety regulations, opportunities for social interaction became more and more scarce. People started isolating themselves, and big events like award shows and concerts were canceled. Now, some students are looking for ways to socialize safely.

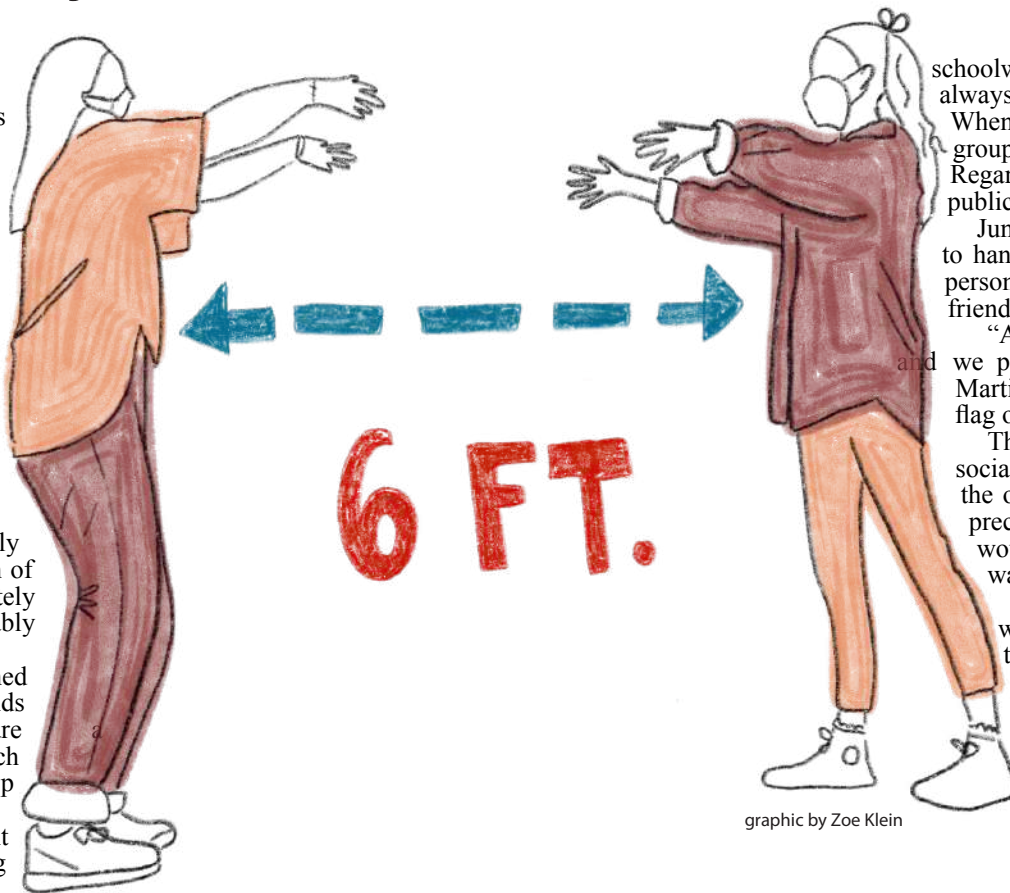
On Sept. 8, students returned to school online. Since then, almost all schoolwork has been virtual, leaving little room for socialization between students. However, that doesn't mean there aren't ways to interact with others, and some have found workarounds to their predicaments.

Sophomore Lola Galindo DeLeon has found a way to always be close to a friend for the entirety of quarantine. Sophomore Jaxie Niles and DeLeon have been seeing each other during the pandemic and have found ways to overcome the challenges.

"We're around each other enough that we're basically in the same germ pod," DeLeon said. "There's as much of a risk as there is with anyone in our family. It was definitely a lot of just trusting each other and trying to be reasonably safe."

Similarly to DeLeon, freshman Mari Parzick joined a germ pod, a common way to hang out with friends without putting other people in danger. Germ pods are group of two or three people that only hang out with each other, meaning they stay away from other people to keep the rest of the people in the germ pod safe.

"My study group, it's inside, so we all stay at different sides of a table, we're somewhat spread out while doing



schoolwork," Parzick said. "When I hang out with friends, I always hang out with them outside, we're not allowed indoors. When I'm hanging out with the people from my study group we can be closer, but with others, we keep a distance. Regardless of who the group of people is, when we're in public, we always wear masks."

Junior Mary Martinez has taken a more careful approach to hanging out with friends during quarantine. Instead of in person, Martinez has mostly been meeting online with her friends.

"At first I was pretty isolated, I FaceTimed with friends, we played games online, and we would do group calls," Martinez said. "We would play Pictionary and capture the flag online."

Though Martinez, DeLeon and Parzick have all handled socializing during quarantine differently, they all share the opinion that big groups of people hanging out with no precautions is very unsafe. All three wondered why people wouldn't just take the extra few steps to make sure no one was harmed during hangouts.

"I get it — you still wanna have fun and hang out with friends, but you have to realize there's hundreds of thousands of deaths from this, and people are actually being affected by it," Parzick said. "Even if you think, 'It's fine if I get it because I'm young, and I'll get over it fast,' it doesn't matter. You have to think about the tons of people you could come in contact with and really affect."

Help! I Need Somebody: Peer Tutors Advise Students

NEVIN HALL | staff writer

One of the first things that new LASA students will read in their syllabi are the days and times of teacher office hours. However, when teachers aren't available or are overwhelmed by the amount of students who need help, they can turn to peer tutors for help. Peer tutors teach a number of subjects, from simply holding study groups to teaching complicated subjects.

Peer tutoring is a large part of LASA academic programs. In some areas, like the LOTE department, study groups run by advanced students can be informal affairs run by the language's club. In other areas, it can be a bit more formal, like in the math and science department peer tutoring programs. In the science department, not only are there LASA student peer tutors, but also college-level tutors assigned to assist students in their classes.

Most LASA peer tutors have prior tutoring experience. Students like junior Pari Latawa started tutoring early in their academic careers.

"I started tutoring other students, like one-on-one sessions with other people in ninth grade," Latawa said. "I actually worked with like a couple girls at Bowie, and I helped them through Geometry in ninth grade. And then last year, I picked up tutoring students at Kiker Elementary and Gorzycki Middle." The form that tutoring takes varies across the school and across subjects. Some people, including junior Mine Ulker, are in a simple study group with their friends.

"It's mostly whoever is in our vicinity," Ulker said, "It's pretty much open to everybody."

Many peer tutors that tutor in a specific subject, rather than in their own group, are very passionate about the subject matter. Junior Shivani Regan, for example, is passionate about math.

"It's always been my favorite subject," Regan said. "Math's just always been my thing. I'd rather help my friends in math than do my own homework."

However, passion isn't the only thing that makes a peer tutor. Peer tutors also need to have lots of experience. In the math department, for example, peer tutors are required to have taken or be taking calculus before participating in its official tutoring program. Some, like Latawa, go above and beyond this standard.

"I'm actually currently in Linear Algebra, and I plan on taking Multivariable Calculus next year," Latawa said.

While tutors are commonly passionate about their subject, that doesn't mean that tutoring is easy. Difficulties with the technology necessary to tutor during the current global pandemic have made it even more difficult, according to Regan. Even without COVID-19, there would still be some challenges, according to Ulker.

"It's finding a good time to actually do things [that's difficult]," Ulker said, "Because I know LASA students, in general, don't have a problem with participation."

Despite these difficulties, tutors like Latawa get some benefits from helping out other students. Tutors can keep in touch with their old friends by creating a study group among themselves, or they can meet new people.

"I just find it interesting and fun because I was like, 'You're meeting new people,'" Latawa said. "I wouldn't know these people at Bowie or Kiker without this. You're learning about other people's lives through tutoring."



SCOUT  
from page 1

Despite not being able to see her in person, students like Lou still have their memories of Scout to help them make it through the day. According to Lou, even the little things like her cute accessories can make them happier.

"I just remember on the holidays, she'd wear a bunch of different bandanas, and it's really adorable," Lou said. "Also, when she would just come into classrooms and stuff like that, everyone clamors for her attention. It's kinda funny but cute."

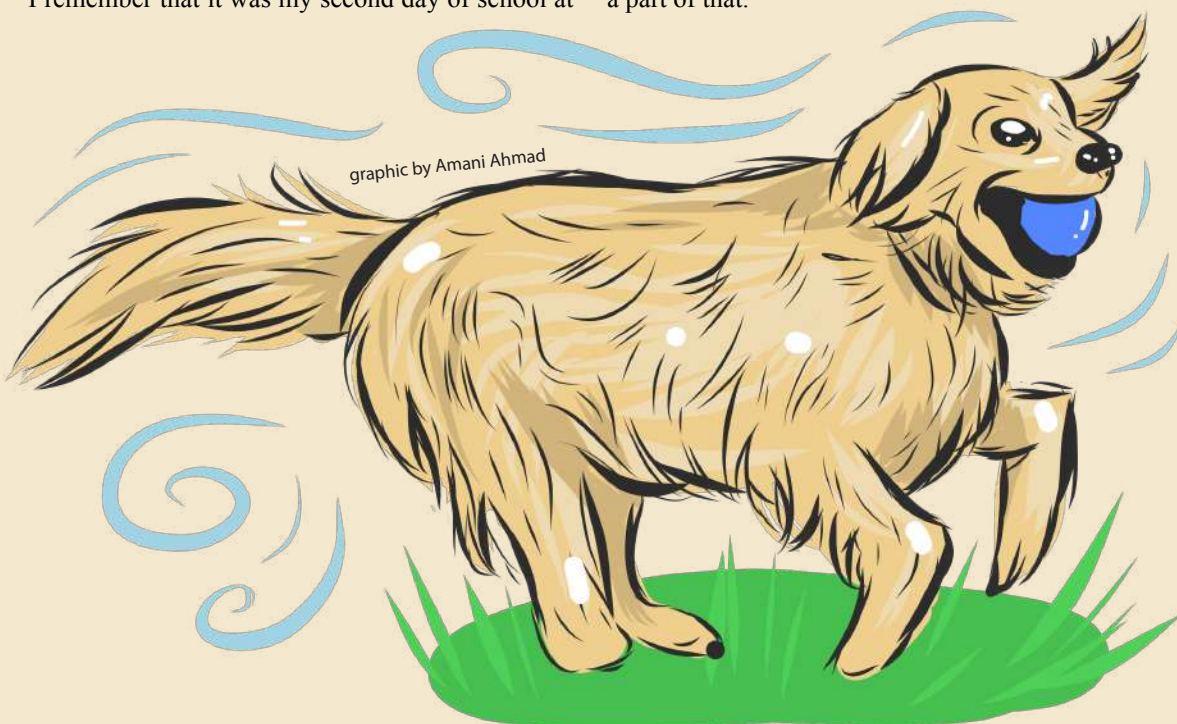
Scout was there for the students when they needed her. According to Ashy, Scout was a big help when she first came to LASA.

"I remember that it was my second day of school at

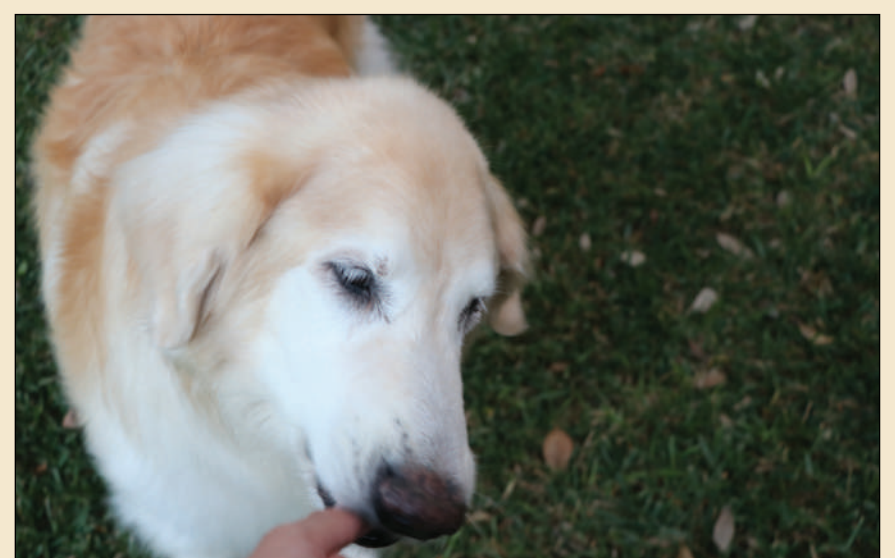
LASA as a freshman, and I was super stressed out because I had gone to a bunch of wrong classes on the first and second days," Ashy said. "I was walking through the halls, and I saw Scout, and we just hung out for a little bit. She really calmed me down. It was really great to see her. That was my most memorable experience with her."

LASA students, like both Ashy and Lou, really miss Scout, but are hopeful they will see her someday in the future. Scout is one of the many things that make LASA unique.

"[Scout] is just a part of LASA, a part of LASA culture," Lou said. "So it's just sad not being able to be a part of that."



SHAKE HAND Counselor Carole McPherson does a trick with Scout at her residence in Austin. Scout, a trained therapy dog, lives with McPherson. photo by Alec Lippman



OUCH! Scout bites the finger of Liberator editor Alec Lippman. Aside from biting fingers, Scout also enjoys frolicking through fields and rolling in the grass. photo by Alec Lippman

## Taking the Digital Stage ACL Goes Online for 2020 Festival

KATIE BUSBY | staff writer

One of the busiest times of the year in Austin is usually early October. People from all over come to gather in the Live Music Capital of the World to enjoy Austin City Limits Music Festival (ACL) in Zilker Park. This year, however, ACL was done a little differently.

To limit the spread of COVID-19, the festival was moved online for 2020. It was held the weekend of Oct. 9 through 11, each night starting at 7 p.m. and ending at around 11:30 p.m. It was a free event that could be attended through a YouTube live stream. The online festival was a combination of reliving ACL history through past acts, performances from the Austin City Limits TV series and a set of performances recorded specifically for this year's festival.

Mélat, one of the musical acts who performed in ACL 2020, was impressed with the festival's competent execution. She said she also appreciated the encouragement of musical discussion.

"I thought it worked pretty well," Mélat said. "People were actually interacting with each other on YouTube, and I thought it was done really well. I honestly didn't really know what to expect when everything is kind of happening for the first time around during this whole pandemic thing, but I think they pulled off a pretty incredible festival."

The festival was organized with acts at specific times and a scheduled talk covering topics related to the Austin community after every few acts. Senior Annie Franklin tuned in to the show and said she appreciated the videos in between each performance.

"I thought it was pretty well done," Franklin said. "Between sets, they had little pre-recorded videos about the community, voting, et cetera that I thought were nice. I did enjoy it. It was definitely a different experience than normal, but it was still fun to watch."

Junior Shivani Regan attended the performance. She said she enjoyed some of the benefits of the online festival, like being able to watch the show from the comfort of her own home, but the online experience was not the same as an in-person festival for her.

"I feel like, besides the music, a lot of people go to ACL for the experience of being in a music festival, and as much as I loved sitting at home watching it, it was not the same," Regan said.

Mélat, who was born and raised in Austin, thought that the festival did a great job of showcasing the city. She said people were given more of a chance to be exposed to many

sides of the city rather than just getting immersed in the festival.

"I thought it was really cool how they showcased so many things that are happening in Austin because I think a lot of times people will come into town for ACL, and then they'll watch all these cool national and international acts but not really interact with the city itself," Mélat said. "I think ACL did a really cool job this year of trying their best to showcase the food spots, businesses, organizations, artists and all that stuff. I think it was really cool how they were actually able to spotlight the city rather than just having people come to the city and kind of getting lost in the festival itself, which is always fun, nothing wrong with it, but I think it was really cool how they highlighted Austin as almost like the featured act."

This year's headliners included Paul McCartney, Willie Nelson, Billie Eilish and Twenty One Pilots. Franklin said that the lineup influenced her decision to attend.

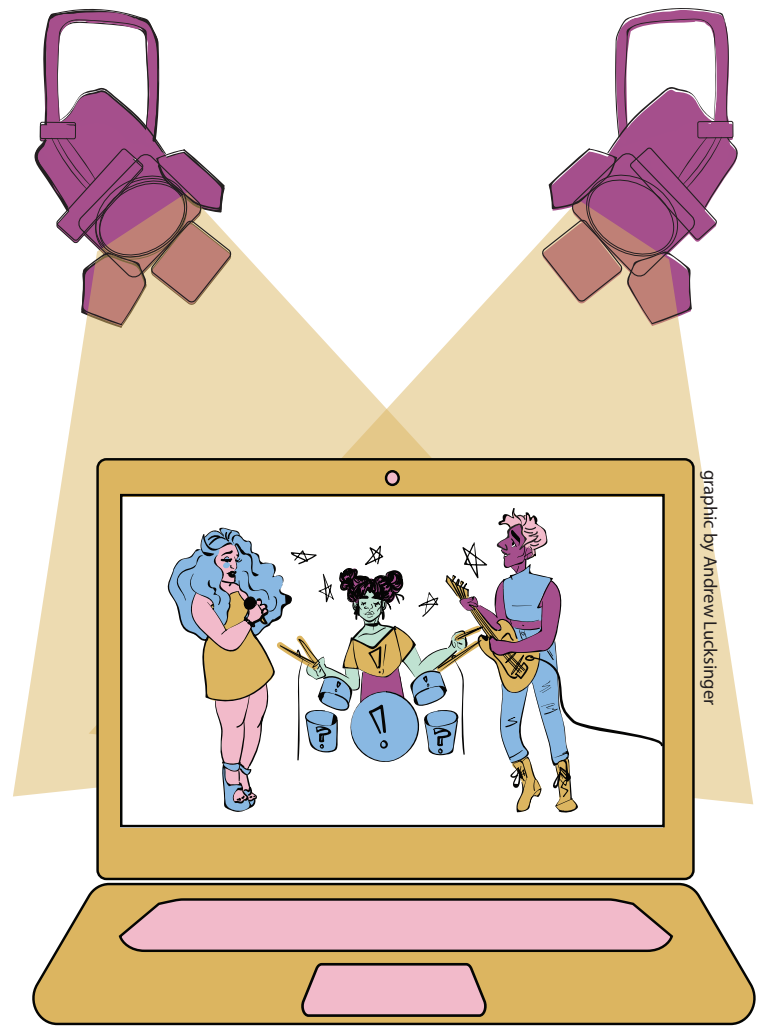
"I decided to attend because I thought it was a cute idea, and they had a pretty good lineup," Franklin said. I was particularly excited for Spoon, Saint Vincent and Paul McCartney."

People who bought tickets to the festival this year received refunds, and the online event could be attended for free. For Regan, who had bought tickets and had them refunded, the virtual festival wasn't a replacement for the traditional ACL, but she still thought it was enjoyable to watch.

"I had actually bought tickets in November of last year to go to ACL this year, but obviously it got canceled, so my tickets were refunded," Regan said. "When I saw that they were doing this virtual ACL thing I thought it might be a fun thing to try out. Obviously it wasn't going to be like the real thing, but I thought it would still be fun."

Mélat said the festival holds a lot of significance for her and that she feels it is a part of the culture of Austin. According to her, performing in the show was a way to provide a form of comfort and normalcy for her in today's strange world.

"I'm born and raised in Austin. ACL has been like a staple here forever," Mélat said. "This is obviously a big year just because we're all living in a world that we didn't really think we would be living in and having to find new ways to function...I'm all about trying to give joy as much as possible and spreading love. I figured this would be a great way to safely be able to bring a little bit of joy in bringing a little bit of normalcy in a not-normal way to everyone."



## The Bedroom Ensemble Inside Virtual Orchestra

JUAN RAMIREZ DELGADILLO | staff writer

With COVID-19 cases still in high numbers, many students remain quarantined and learning virtually. While this has presented difficulties for LASA Orchestra, having to walk around campus carrying a heavy instrument is now a thing of the past, at least temporarily, with students now able to play virtually from the comfort of their bedrooms.

Classes with a foundation of teamwork like fine arts and sports have had to adapt to not being able to play together in person. For Orchestra, a lot of time is spent on learning and perfecting music, which is harder to do as an ensemble over Zoom. Sophomore Julia Ding said Orchestra hasn't been the same.

"At home, we play along with a recording rather than with other students," Ding said. "This poses technical issues due to lag and it's quite different than playing with a real orchestra."

Ding has also experienced benefits from playing virtually, though. She said she has less to carry around throughout the day and a greater freedom with instruments.

"As a cello player, it's harder to bring our instruments to and from school," Ding said. "In normal circumstances, cello players would, most of the time, play school instruments, which, most of the time, were worse than our home instruments. At home, we always have access to our own instruments."

On the other hand, Sophomore Aileen Chow said that a recurring challenge at home is internet connection.

"[Challenges] I face at home are sometimes technical and internet problems," Chow said. "Sometimes, it would take a long time to join a Zoom meeting, or my computer would not turn on because it's doing updates."

Ding said that a big part of Orchestra she misses is the social aspect. However, while time to talk has been replaced by staring at a computer screen, school has been a less chaotic experience, according to Ding.

"Overall, online classes are going pretty well," Ding said. "I miss the social aspect of being in class, but being able to save time commuting has ultimately led to online school being a lot less stressful."

For Orchestra director Luzvic Backstrom, it's been very different to teach online than in school. She said she is used to working with all the students at once rather than hearing everyone one at a time, making it more difficult to perfect the ensemble.

"All our groups...normally work in ensembles, and not having that opportunity is the main difference," Backstrom said. "Also, having the ability to hear the entire ensemble at once is one of the major differences. In Zoom we can only hear one student at the time, and it makes it hard for the teachers to work on musical blend, style [and] dynamics."

Even with the negative elements that have come from being virtual this year, Orchestra students have found some positive takeaways like the added time to practice pieces and the greater variation of material.

"We get to learn more techniques and warmups," Chow said. "At school, we would usually play maybe a scale or two and then hop onto orchestra music. For online school, we have more asynchronous time. Orchestra teachers can spend more time giving technique content or general music content to the students through assignments."

From Backstrom's perspective, some of the value that she has found in her Zoom classes is getting to know her students better through their visual backgrounds.

"You get to know more about the students' lives," Backstrom said. "You also learn names quicker."

With schools having "re-opened" on Nov. 2, orchestra students may be able to work in small groups on campus to perfect songs and receive live guidance without the difficulties of internet lag and Zoom.



**THE SPOTLIGHT RETURNS** The front entrance of ZACH Theatre is all lit-up and decorated for a night show in mid-October. Months of planning were required to ensure shows could come back and be safe for all audience members, performers and the production crew. photo courtesy of Kirk Tuck



**PUTTING ON A PERFORMANCE** ZACH actors Matt Redden and Jill Blackwood perform a scene on stage in front of the theater entrance. The pair are two of patron subscribers' favorite performers, according to Marketing and Communications Director Drew Nebrig. photo courtesy of Kirk Tuck

## ZACH is Back with Socially-Distanced Shows

MALVIKA PRADHAN | staff writer

One of the many victims of the pandemic has been the theater. ZACH Theatre, located just south of Lady Bird Lake on South Lamar Boulevard, was forced to cancel its shows when COVID-19 caused it to temporarily shut down in March. Recently, the theater has started live productions again, but with a twist. These new shows, part of a series called "Songs under the Stars," are outdoors, helping to create a safer environment for patrons.

According to Drew Nebrig, the director of marketing and communications at ZACH Theatre, as soon as COVID-19 case numbers in Austin started to rise, the theater shut down and moved online.

"It happened quickly for us, as it did for everybody," Nebrig said. "It was one of those things where, on a Monday, we were talking about 'is this going to affect us,' and then by Friday we had shut down and canceled over 100 performances. We took a week or two to assess what the overall effect was, what we thought the next three four months were going to look like and what the best pivot for us was."

One of those shows that had to close was "The Very Hungry Caterpillar." Actor Chloe Van De Graaf, who was supposed to play the green leaf the caterpillar eats in the show, said she was shocked and disappointed by the news.

"I was devastated when I heard that they would have to close the show 3 months early," Van De Graaf said.

However, parts of some shows were pre-filmed and customers who had already paid to watch shows were given the option to see a filmed version of the show. In addition, ZACH held virtual practices and classes over Zoom. Van De Graaf said that though this shift to online practicing and performing

isn't optimal, she is glad to still be participating in theater during the pandemic.

"I am extremely thankful that ZACH was able to continue classes and training online," Van De Graaf said. "Of course it is different performing through a computer instead of real life, but I am so happy that I was still able to train even through quarantine."

Nebrig said that throughout the summer, staff at the theater regularly sent out surveys to the community. These asked patrons about their comfort level and brainstorming ways to safely hold a show.

"We got a real sense of, beyond what we know we're going to do regardless, which includes social distancing and masks, what are things that are really critical for our patrons to feel comfortable coming back," Nebrig said. "We got a sense of both safety protocols and how much they meant to them."

In October, when ZACH decided to hold their first live performance since March, much of their decision surrounded the safety of patrons and the desire to support local artists. Renelle Bedell, the Associate Managing Director for ZACH, said that much planning and surveying went into the theater's decision to present this outdoor production.

"Creating theatre experiences is our mission," Bedell said. "Therefore, we have been discussing safe ways to do so since we had to temporarily close our doors in March. After researching case studies across the country, talking with colleagues at other theatres, surveying our patrons and artists and getting plans approved by the city, we determined that a short one-hour outdoor concert was the perfect way to welcome the community back to ZACH, support our local artists, get used to operating under new protocols and generate some revenue to keep the theater afloat longer until we are able to resume operations full-time indoors."

The "Songs Under the Stars" series is set to feature various musical performances. The first show featured a compilation of songs from different Broadway musicals performed by local Austin actors Jill Blackwood and Matthew Redden.

"Almost all of the artists in these concerts are local," Nebrig said. "[Jill Blackwood and Matt Redden] are two of our patron subscribers' favorite performers, and they live here and they're people who have not been able to perform in seven months... we know these people are favorites of our audience, and we want to employ as many Austin artists as we can."

According to Nebrig, the audience reaction at ZACH has been overwhelmingly positive. She said that ZACH's success has the potential to serve as an example for Austin's greater art community.

"Everyone has been so hungry for live performances and for art during this," Nebrig said. "We found some things that work really well, and we are always excited to share that information and hope that other art organizations are able to do the same thing."



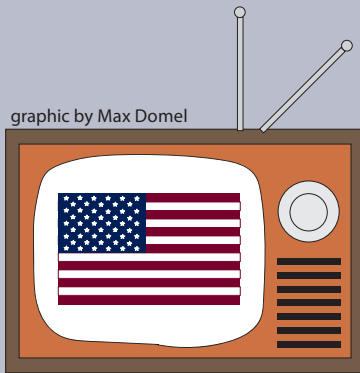
**KEEP YOUR DISTANCE** Austinites gather for a show in ZACH's "Songs Under the Stars" series following social distancing regulations. Due to COVID-19, theater productions were unable to return with soldout crowds. photo courtesy of Kirk Tuck



**VIO(N)LINE** Senior Crista Martinez practices the violin during a Zoom orchestra class. Members of LASA fine arts ensembles have had to learn new pieces independently while school remains virtual for most. photo courtesy of Crista Martinez

Ent. Ed's Picks

President-Related  
Movies and TV Shows



"Veep"

2012-2019

MAX DOMEL | entertainment editor

In 2012, HBO introduced the world to "Veep": a show starring the iconic Julia Louis-Dreyfus as U.S. Vice President (and later President) Selina Meyer, trying to work through a relentless and hectic political lifestyle in D.C. Her coworkers are a very memorable bunch and the heart of the show, from narcissistic politics enthusiast Dan and "shrill" Chief of Staff Amy to Meyer's (very) personal assistant Gary and the often-bullied Communications Director Mike. Meyer and her tight-knit team interact with dozens of other distinct and hilarious characters in their adventurous D.C. world, such as Finland Prime Minister Minna Hakkinen, future Vice President Tom James and, of course, the annoying, insecure puppet that is Jonah Ryan. Whether Selina is in the midst of political scandals, preparing and traveling for events and other duties, caught up in love affairs or blatantly ignoring the existence of her young adult daughter, Catherine, "Veep" is fueled by entertaining drama and tension and shares the experiences of the hardworking, busy people behind national politics, though fictional and more humorous than reality.

"Vice"

2018

WRENNY COLLAMER | entertainment editor

In its portrayal of Dick Cheney's rise to power, "Vice" renders a dark image of American politics. Vice is uncomfortable to watch, punching the audience in each scene with visuals that provoke an emotional response. The unique editing and stark images don't shy away from painting a rich picture of corruption and deceit in the lives of the people on top. It gives the viewer a glimpse into the unique power dynamic of Cheney as vice president and George Bush as president. Cheney, played by Christian Bale, is the one calling the shots, and the film depicts him as sick with corruption, making split-second decisions solely for the purpose of personal gain that were bound to impact millions of lives. In its characterization of Cheney, the film explores how money and politics are deeply interwoven. If anything, the movie demonstrates the scope of the implications of the power that one man can have over Americans and the world.

"All the President's Men"

1976

MAX DOMEL | entertainment editor

Not many political scandals surpass the celebrity of Watergate. Director Alan J. Pakula's 1976 "All the President's Men" follows the heralded tale of Washington Post journalists Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, played by Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman, respectively, as they work together to uncover the infamous scandal with the help of a government official using the now well-known alias "Deep Throat." The film is based on a memoir of the same title by the real Woodward and Bernstein and has had an undeniable influence on many subsequent journalism movies such as "Spotlight" and "The Post." Not only does it excel in plot structure, switching between an effective slow burn (lots of phone calls) and a tense thriller as the duo's methods start to reveal more information, but it also provides visual insight into how their historic partnership formed, going from reluctant coworkers to an unstoppable journalistic team even when their lives were in danger. "All the President's Men" is one of those classic movies that everyone must watch at least once in their lifetimes, both because of the film's quality and the important political incidents it documents, especially now in the context of discussion over election tampering in recent years and a political culture dominated by journalism.

"Election"

1999

WRENNY COLLAMER | entertainment editor

"Election" is a 1999 film that chronicles a ruthless competition to become Carver High's class president. The film draws parallels between American politics and the race for the high school position, taking an initially juvenile competition and adding layers of complex motives to each character. As the election escalates, the archetypal characters provide reliable laughs and the traditional high school setting makes the movie instantly relatable. Viewers will find themselves loathing and loving Carver High's unique set of characters as the election divides the school and brings competitors to their knees, but even in the film's largest moments, it doesn't forget its core satirical message: denouncing the American dream of democracy and highlighting the irrationality and excess of political campaigns. As characters cheat and lie during the troubling campaign season at Carver High, the film is able to criticize the intense focus on campaigning that exists in politics and the corruption that contaminates the process. "Election" forces one to think about division and free will in the world of politics and shows that nobody's morals are absolute.

"Among Us" Bridges Space Between Houses

ANNABEL ANDRE | staff writer

While everyone is stuck at home due to COVID-19, many people have turned to online games that rely heavily on communication to help preserve some form of social interaction. Although "Among Us" was released two years ago, it has only recently become popular.

"Among Us" is a multiplayer game where every player takes on the role of a cartoon character in a spaceship. The players have to complete tasks over a series of short timed rounds while trying to find the imposter, who is a murderous alien acting as a crewmember. The objective of the imposter is to blend in by completing tasks while trying to kill crew members until nobody is left.

Senior Isabelle Saquing was introduced to the game by her sister and has been playing for a couple months. She introduced it to many of her friends and said she thinks it's a great way to connect and communicate with people during the pandemic.

"I really like to problem-solve and use clues," Saquing said. "I think that's the really fun part of the game. I also like that it is a very collaborative game. It brings a lot of people together, and you're able to just talk with people over this fun activity even when we're all in our own houses."

For Saquing, the game has also increased her interest and participation in the online gaming community during the pandemic, mainly through platforms like YouTube and Twitch. According to game analysis site SullyGnome, daily "Among Us" viewers on Twitch averaged around 100,000 people by the end of August.

"I have been looking at YouTube videos of people playing games more often, and I have definitely gotten more into the video gaming world in a sense," Saquing said. "I've definitely gotten more acquainted with streamers or Twitchers and stuff like that."

Senior Christelle Chatelain also only started playing "Among Us" a couple months ago following a recommendation from a friend, and now says she plays it everyday. According to her, unlike some other games, it's easy to start playing even if everyone is separate and you have to work together.

"I think it's different from other games because it's a game that you can play on your phone with a bunch of other people at once, just on a call," Chatelain said. "You don't have to be there in person with your friends. At the same time, you all work together to try to figure something out and it's just fun to have a game that is always different every round."

Junior Vivian Streber agreed that "Among Us" is different from other

games she has played because of the added value of communication in succeeding. She has been only playing the game for about three weeks but said she already really enjoys it.

"I have seen murder mystery games in the past, but the aspect of where it really heavily relies on communication as the main way of solving things, that is kind of a new experience for me in video games," Streber said.

Because Streber has been only playing for a short time, she feels she is at a slight disadvantage compared to those who have been playing since the game started trending late in the summer. However, she hopes that with practice, she will have more fun and become a better player.

"Sometimes I don't know how to start [the tasks] which is a little frightening sometimes because if you do a task for more than 20 seconds, people think you are the imposter," Streber said. "But I think once I play longer and get to know the game better, it will be a lot more fun, and I'll be better at it. It just takes practice."

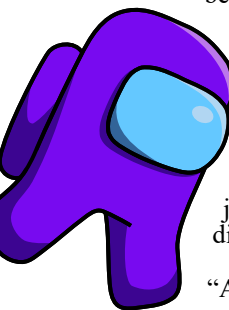
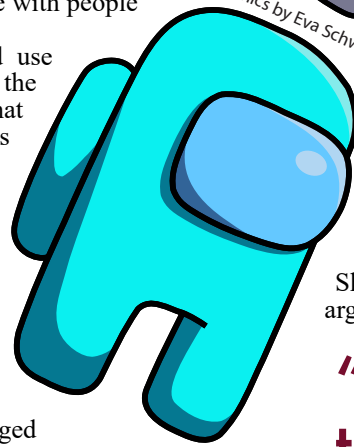
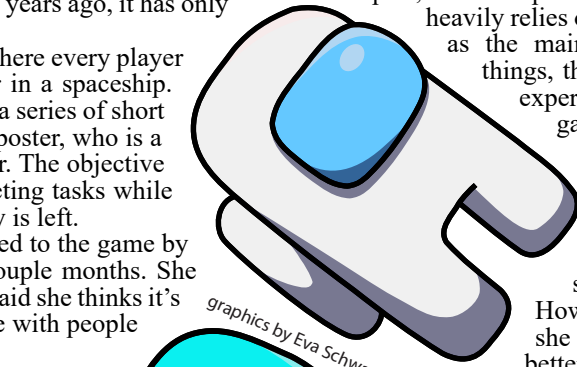
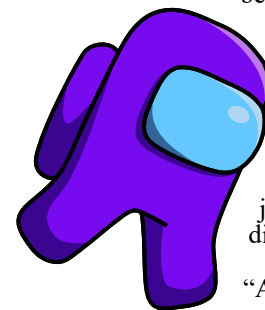
Junior Niomi Rives is also fairly new to "Among Us." She said that her favorite aspect of the game is getting to argue with her friends in emergency meetings where players

**"You all work together to try to figure something out and it's just fun to have a game that is always different."**

-Senior Christelle Chatelain

decide who the imposter is. She encourages LASA students to play it because she thinks it is a great way to spend time with your friends.

"It's just a video game, but I think right now, people have a lot of free time and they don't really know what to do," Rives said. "If you feel like you're lonely right now and you're not really talking to your friends that much, I think "Among Us" makes a really good excuse to just be able to talk to your friends."



At-Home Life Impacts Student Media Usage

EWAN MCINERNEY | staff writer

Throughout 2020, COVID-19 has served as a catalyst for changing social media use among young people and students. In the face of events such as police brutality, Black Lives Matter protests, the 2020 presidential election, and the ongoing pandemic, social media has provided a space for people to be socially active and voice their political concerns while spending an increased amount of time at home.

Senior Alexander Smith has used social media to compile research on current issues concerning the virus, the government, institutional racism and women's rights. According to Smith, his use of social media has increased this past year. He said that social media sites such as Twitter and TikTok have become resources to find information and communicate about current events with friends.

"I would say I've definitely started ramping up my usage of social media this year," Smith said. "It kind of became a method of learning about current events, or what the big new scandal or event was. I usually was able to talk to my friends about these things on Twitter and TikTok."

The internet is a place where trends are constantly changing. Smith said that in the age of the pandemic, what other people are posting has been more influenced by politics.

**"I go outside way more and I just keep myself busy. I just don't want to use technology since I've been on it so much, especially with school."**

-Junior Liliana Castillo

"There's definitely been an upsurge in political support for movements like BLM and making sure that we address the factual information of COVID," Smith said. "It's important to fight the misinformation that gets spread, and I think that social media has done a lot to create a place where people can have a lot of political discourse."

Junior Olivia Griffin-Erickson said that her social media use has decreased over quarantine. She said that the stories and posts that she sees can remind her of life before quarantine, often making social media a negative space.

"As the quarantine has been going on, I've purposely been trying to decrease it," Griffin-Erickson said.

"Every time I go on Instagram, I feel so much worse than when I get on. It's a mixture of seeing people out and about, living their lives, and I'm doing nothing right now."

Junior Liliana Castillo's social media use is also decreasing. She wants to minimize her use of technology in an era where technology is a larger part of school life.

"I've definitely been on my phone and social media a lot less," Castillo said. "I go outside way more and I just keep myself busy. I just don't want to use technology since I've been on it so much, especially with school. I try really hard not to be on any electronics unless I have to."

Social gives students a way to communicate without being together in person. Despite her overall decrease in social media use, Griffin-Erickson said that during a time when school is online, social media can help her connect with other students.

"I feel like it's one of the few ways we can stay connected right now," Griffin-Erickson said. "Social media is an easy way to see what people are doing, to look at other people's stories, and to feel like you're interacting with people."

However, according to Smith, being quarantined is also shortening the attention span of users on the internet. He said that it could have lasting effects on the way that people use the internet and interact on social media.

"I think it's definitely made trends go by more quickly," Smith said, referring to COVID-19. "Our attention spans are shortening, and trends tend to not stick around as long, and we tend to want to move on and find a new cool thing."



## Fashion Students Show Their Style



**STRIKING A POSE** Senior Maricarmen Marquez models a green skirt that she made. She has been taking sewing lessons online throughout the pandemic. photo by Wrenny Collamer

**WRENNY COLLAMER** | entertainment editor

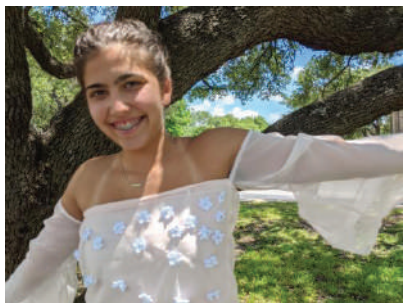
The daze of the pandemic may have it seeming like sweatpants are the only relevant piece of clothing, but LASA has an active community of fashion enthusiasts who put craft, consideration and artistry into clothes. LASA is the only high school in the district with a Fashion Design elective, and the lure of individualism and expression of fashion has managed to captivate students.

For sophomore Lola Galindo-DeLeon fashion design is something that has been a constant throughout her life but something that she said she only recently has started to devote more time towards. This year, she is in the Fashion Design course at LASA and is refamiliarizing herself with the must-know techniques.

"I've done a little bit of sewing for pretty much my entire life," Galindo-DeLeon said. "I've never gone through a phase long enough to really get good at it, so I think that's what this will do, and so far it's mostly the basics."



**STEADY HANDS** Sophomore Jette Morris works on a sewing machine. The Fashion Design course at LASA has been able to more than double the amount of sewing machines they have available for students. photo courtesy of Jette Morris



**FLOWING FABRIC** Sophomore Jette Morris models a flowing dress that she sewed. Morris said she likes loose fitting fabric and feels inspired to brighten up her wardrobe with the pieces that she makes. photo courtesy of Jette Morris

personal style is not confined to a particular genre of clothing. Rather, it is a culmination of various themes and moods.

"It's kind of a combination of vintage and thrifted, combined with a little bit of skater stuff and a little bit of stuff I see certain artists wearing, like ASAP Rocky, Ian Connor or Tyler, The Creator," Schmeil said.

Schmeil said he is excited for colder weather because it allows him to diversify what he wears. He is looking forward to fall and winter trends, but also admits that he likes dressing-down in a classic hoodie.

"I'm looking forward to hoodie season for sure, you gotta love hoodie season," Schmeil said. "Fall and winter are the ideal seasons for clean fits. I think you can do more when you can wear more clothes, and during the summer I am usually wearing shorts and a t-shirt and my everyday shoes."

Sophomore Jette Morris's favorite styles are Bohemian clothing and casual athletic clothing. For Morris, making clothes is a creative escape that is unique from other hobbies.

"What I mostly do is modify clothing that I get from secondhand stores as well as creating stuff for Fashion Design," Morris said. "What I really like about it is you get to use a different part of your brain from what a lot of LASA does. You can use your hands. You still have to use your brain quite a bit, but you are using more of your hands and doing stuff that is tactile. It is relaxing and creative."

Visual Arts and Fashion Design teacher Jessica Fisher said she constructs her class around the interests of the students, prioritizing making garments from day one. Watching students learn the basics and experiment with a new creative outlet is one of her favorite parts



**BOLD BAGS** Senior Lena Horowitz models a hand made bag that uses a denim accent strap to offset neutral tones. She said she has been on the hunt for an under the shoulder bag for a while. photo by Wrenny Collamer

of teaching Fashion Design.

"I would say in each class that I have taught over the past four years, there are maybe two or three students that are very well versed in the sewing machines, techniques and flat patterning, and then everyone else is brand new," Fisher said. "They are learning how to thread a needle or use fabric scissors. That's my favorite part, just watching everybody's face light up when they flip the zipper bag inside out or make a stitch that is actually holding."

Morris initially became interested in fashion in her ninth grade year when she took Fisher's class. She said she didn't expect to become as interested as she is, but the class helped jump-start her hobby.

"I absolutely loved the class," Morris said. "I didn't think I'd like it that much. I was only doing it for a tech credit, and I thought it was going to be something that was really boring, but I just thought it was the coolest thing ever. The class was really well structured. Anyone could adjust their complexity based on what your level was. That was really helpful for me."

This is Fashion Design's fourth year at LASA and the class now has a second level that gives experienced students more room for creative freedom. According to Fisher, persistent student interest pushed her to start the class four years ago as a new CTE offering.

"I was talking to Ms. Mokry three or four years ago and we were just chatting about classes that would be fun to add to CTE...I really love fashion design," Fisher said. "I took it as an elective class a couple times in high school, and I was in charge of the fashion club. I was like, 'This has gotta happen.' I felt like student interest was huge in making that decision to pick fashion design, just because so many people had asked about it previously."

**"I've always just liked to configure outfits that look good to me and that fit my own personal style... When I make my own clothes, I definitely try to add my own touch and try and make it stand out as representative of who I am."**

-Senior Beckett Schmeil

Through the time that Fisher has taught Fashion Design, she has had the opportunity to witness which trends students gravitated towards on any given year. She said it was interesting to see how the popularity of different styles changed and flowed.

"The past two years have had a very, very strong '90s vibe," Fisher said. "People are very into making hats, like visors and bucket hats. There's a lot of denim. That's very different from the year that we started. The first year that I taught fashion design, everybody was interested in little embellishments, like creating little embroidery details, adding buttons and pleats, and more formal elements. Now, it's more the very loose-fitting kind of '90s funky style. I liked seeing where people were leaning towards because people want to create things that they want to wear."



**FUNCTION ON THE GO** Senior Lena Horowitz models a bag that she created for the Fashion Design course. She said that she was inspired by the desire for a functional under-the-shoulder bag and feels that making bags for herself adds a personal and unique touch. photo by Wrenny Collamer



**ALL BLACK** Senior Chloe Brown sports a skirt that she sewed at home. She was inspired by the red and black tones of '90s punk fashion. photo courtesy of Chloe Brown



**FABRIC** Senior Chloe Brown made her skirt from leftover Satin that she had. The fabric provides a shiny, textured look. photo courtesy of Chloe Brown

## From the Lib



## Our Favorite Albums of 2020

### "Lianne La Havas"

By Lianne La Havas

**MALENA HEINEMAN** | editor-in-chief

After a five year hiatus, Lianne La Havas' self-titled EP is an exquisitely languid piece that took center stage in Neo-Soul releases this year. Coming out in mid-July, the album weaves the tale of a love affair — an honest and authentic reflection of all the ups and downs of bliss and heartbreak, in what is her third and most cohesive album. Her smooth and sultry voice perfectly compliments the pulsing, syncopated rhythm of the guitar and the ethereal background of choral voices, resulting in a sound that is spacious and almost infinite. A beautiful illustration of the universal human struggles of longing and emotion, it is an album to listen to, in order, from top to bottom. However, some highlights include "Green Papaya," an earnestly open love letter, "Bittersweet," in which La Havas sings of the bittersweet nature of new beginnings and an initially startling but exceptional cover of "Weird Fishes" by Radiohead.

### "Public Void"

By Penelope Scott

**GRACE WOODRUFF** | web and media editor

Penelope Scott's "Public Void" is, in all definitions of the word, a masterpiece. "Public Void" is Scott's second album of 2020, having been released just this September. TikTok users may only be familiar with Scott from her hit "Herbal Mango Sweet Hibiscus Tea" — but even in that 55 second clip, Scott's haunting vocals and hard-hitting lyrics pop out, and her album is no different. This album perfectly describes what it's like to be a teen in 2020, from the stress and numbness of online school to the terror of watching the world essentially go up in flames. "Moonsickness" captures the helplessness, anger and self-importance of adolescence ("And I'm the worst mistake your God has ever made," Scott croons.) Though she is clearly speaking of herself, it feels as though Scott is referring to all of us. On the other end of the spectrum, there is "Cigarette Ahe-gao," which highlights the struggles of a blossoming adult, specifically someone dealing — or rather, not dealing — with the pressures the world puts upon them.

### "Folklore"

By Taylor Swift

**ZOE KLEIN** | commentary editor

Providing a light in the darkness of 2020 is Taylor Swift's "Folklore," an indie album released in July. "Folklore" explores a much more raw look at human interaction than most of the rest of Swift's discography. Its melancholy lyrics and masterful arrangements create a candid look at the lives of Swift and each person listening. Produced by Jack Antonoff, the album's arrangement is almost as impressive as the words themselves. While the album is a lot less upbeat than many of Swift's other albums, it's still just as catchy. And if you're a fan of Taylor Swift, you know the drill — each lyric tells a different story, metaphors threaded throughout to leave the listener thinking. From the earworm-inducing drum machine of "The Last Great American Dynasty" to the nostalgia-wreaking piano of "Exile" to the familiar guitar of "Betty," "Folklore" is an emotional journey for the ages.

### "Homegrown"

By Neil Young

**HELENA LARA** | sports editor

Neil Young's lost album "Homegrown" from 1975 has been released 45 years later. The story of "Homegrown" starts in 1975 Los Angeles, where Young and a couple of friends were at the Chateau Marmont. He had two albums ready to be released at the time: "Tonight's The Night" and "Homegrown." After listening to both albums back-to-back, Young decided not to release "Homegrown," and instead, we got the deceptively sweet theme that runs throughout "Tonight's The Night." "Homegrown," on the other hand, is a vulnerable look into Young's life. The album is a warm country rock. It was written during his split from actress Carrie Snodgrass, the mother of his first child, and provides insight into the anguish, regret and, at times, bitterness that he felt at the time. It begins with a goodbye; "Separate Ways" is a melancholy and cathartic look into "The love [they] new" as Young sings. "White Line" and "Little Wing" are simpler and softer tunes that reflect memories and loss while "Vacancy" is a stronger rocker filled with anger and questioning, beginning with a churning guitar riff. Nostalgic and quite melancholy, it's a good listen if you are looking for reflection.

### "Notes on a Conditional Form"

By The 1975

**ABIGAIL JACKSON** | sports editor

For fans of The 1975, "Notes on a Conditional Form" has been a long time coming. The first single from the album was released in July 2019, but the album itself wasn't released until May 2020. This is The 1975's fourth studio album, and some call it their most ambitious. The album features 22 tracks spanning genres from rock to electronic and tackles a multitude of topics, including mental health, unrequited love and even climate change, with the opening self-titled track featuring narration by climate activist Greta Thunberg. "Notes on a Conditional Form" has something for everyone: if you like instrumental music, listen to "The End (Music For Cars)," if you like hard rock, "People," and if you like lo-fi alternative music, then "Frail State of Mind" is your kind of song. The album perfectly encompasses the band's sound and takes a deep dive into the social and political issues of today.

## Basketball Begins Again

SANWI SARODE | staff writer

Now that LASA and LBJ have split athletics departments, LASA has been forming its own sports teams to make a name for themselves. A lot of teams under the joint system were made up of mostly LBJ student-athletes, meaning that LASA athletic programs have had to assemble completely new rosters. One of these programs is boys' basketball.

According to senior and varsity basketball player Beckett Schmeil, the split from LBJ has made forming a new team harder. Previously, LASA basketball players played on the LBJ basketball team, which was mostly composed of LBJ players. Due to the split, LASA only has a few players, and they are now facing the challenge of recruiting new ones.

"A lot of the LBJ guys were super good at basketball, and they've been playing it for a really long time, so obviously by splitting sports we're losing a lot of talent there," Schmeil said.

According to senior Hobbs McAllister, who has played on the LBJ basketball team since his freshman year, the main thing that the new LASA team is lacking is experience. There are only a few people on the team who have played high school basketball before.

"There are only three guys on the varsity roster, myself included, that have played organized basketball ever before in their life," McAllister said.

Nevertheless, according to McAllister, the team has been progressing forward well despite the lack of experience. McAllister said that all the guys on the court are ready to learn and work hard.

"Our biggest strengths are the heart and the passion," McAllister said. "I don't think I have seen a single person not walk out onto the floor and give 100%. Every minute they play on the floor, they give it everything they have, which is exactly what you want on a basketball team."

According to head coach Joseph Pendell, the team puts in a lot of effort in daily practices, and the progression of the team has been noticeable.

"I've been really pleased with our progress so far," Pendell said. "We've been able to progress every day and be part of the process of getting better. The attitude and the effort have been fantastic, and that's something that you can't really coach."

According to McAllister, a major aspect of being a successful team is good communication and support. The players agree that this is especially important when you have a new team.

"We're trying to figure the kinks out and communicate as a team," McAllister said. "But the whole point is that we improve together as one. We're a brotherhood; we don't want to put anybody down or dig anyone into a hole."

According to Pendell, having a good team requires many key parts. Pendell

stresses to the team that being tough and persevering through difficulties is a major component of both basketball

"The biggest thing that I've always stressed is toughness, being mentally and physically tough, and having the ability to persevere when you're faced with obstacles," Pendell said. "I think that's the biggest part of life, is having that grit to find a way to succeed. That's what I look for from the kids, whether it's in school or it's in basketball, is finding ways to problem-solve collectively and individually to be your best."

So far, the basketball team has played multiple preseason games to get ready for their first regular-season game in November. According to Schmeil, these matches have been helping the team improve their teamwork and their skills.

"We're in the fall league right now, so we're playing some private schools, and all the private schools have been teams for a long time, and they've got a bunch of huge players," Schmeil said. "But I think that's really good for us. We've honestly been getting so much better and progressing really quickly because of those fall league games. We won the first one, and then we played some harder teams and lost by small margins, but every single game we get better, and you can tell because we're just working on the things that held us back in previous games."

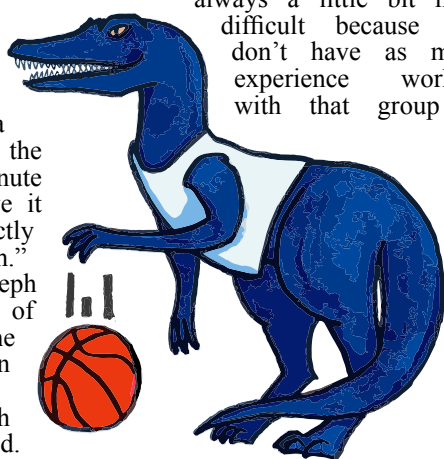
According to Schmeil, the team feels a lot of pressure to set the bar high for future LASA basketball teams. He stressed the importance of making a positive mark as the school's first independent boys basketball team.

"I feel like being the first team is always a little bit more difficult because you don't have as much experience working with that group of

players," Schmeil said, "but I think that everyone on the team would agree that we want to try and make our mark. We're the first LASA team, so we want to set the level as high as we can because we want the teams that follow in our footsteps to continuously get better and grow and develop as a program."

The novelty of the team also means that the boys have a clean slate for their first regular-season game on Saturday, Nov. 14, at Pflugerville High School.

"We're here to play as a team, we're here to have each other's backs, and we're here to win," McAllister said. "Personally, I think we're going to shock a lot of people this season."



graphic by Violet Koepfenhaver

## Time to Get Jacked

### Student Athletes Reflect on the Benefits of Strength and Conditioning

ANNABEL ANDRE | staff writer

Despite what some may think, the many LASA students who play multiple sports or do strength training along with their sports are not superhuman. They have to balance and manage their time accordingly so that they are able to maintain academics as well, but according to them, cross-training multiple sports actually benefits both their mental and physical health. During current times people have less to do, and sports can serve as an escape from school on Zoom according to Senior and football player, Logan Poore.

Poore has learned through his experience in football that student-athletes play multiple sports and strength train for many different reasons. According to him, these include conditioning for their sport, to recover if they have an injury or to better develop themselves for their power and endurance.

Along with varsity football, Poore runs cross country, strength trains, and mountain bikes. Biking has been his main sport for many years, but he has recently joined the cross-country and football teams. Poore said important aspects of his life have changed as a result of working out outside of his main sport.

"I think all of these sports have changed my lifestyle a lot. I'm getting a lot more sleep and I'm just taking care of my body more," Poore said. "It's a good portion of my day. I'm working out about 20 hours a week and I'm dedicating a lot of my life to it."

Recently, because of COVID-19, Poore's schedule has changed, and he has decided to implement weightlifting into his daily routine. Weightlifting has provided him a way to exercise on a daily basis amid social distancing and helps him condition for the other sports he plays.

"The weightlifting is new because of COVID," Poore said. "At first, I wasn't really allowed to go do team sports because COVID was at an all-time high, so I started working out alone, and as I was doing that, I wanted to increase the intensity, so I added weights, and then I started really increasing the intensity."

Junior Jette Morris plays club beach volleyball, strength-trains with her father and runs on her own. She enjoys playing beach volleyball and aims to play in college. She uses strength training to develop her game

and running to help her endurance.

"I am mostly doing all of this cross-training for beach volleyball, so I have goals like to be able to jump higher to hit harder, and my dad is going with me twice a week, and I'm working on leg strength and form, and I'm getting really good coaching from him," Morris said. "And then cross-country, I'm doing that for endurance, so it'll help me through long plays and long days of beach volleyball."

Playing multiple sports requires dedication and is a large time commitment according to Morris.

Senior and varsity basketball player Sam Whitlow believes that students who are constantly academically challenged can find balance in being challenged athletically as well. Along with Basketball, strength-trains to supplement practice and games.

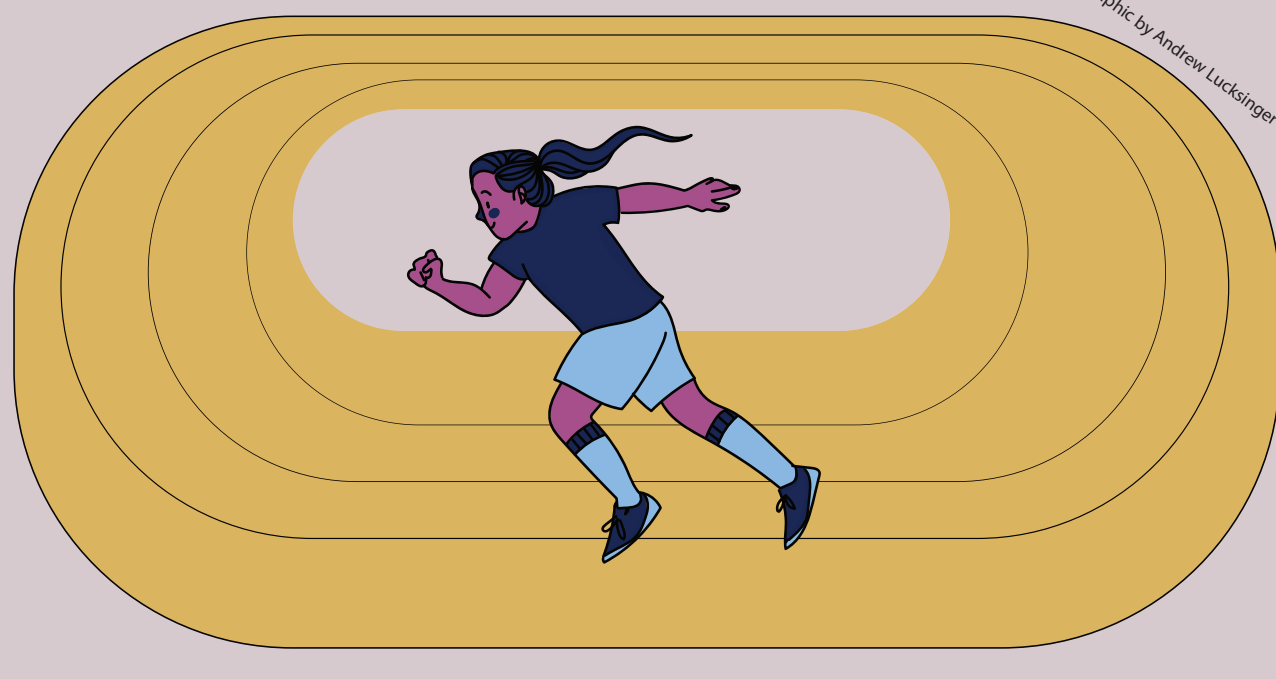
"[Sports] help my academics because a lot of time, when I get home and it's the off-season, I'm pretty lazy," Whitlow said. "But when I'm in season and I'm training, I'm in a pretty good routine, so I come home, work out a little bit, and then I have some energy to do some homework."

Whitlow believes that strength training will definitely be part of his life in the future. According to him, training helps him stay active, improves his mental and physical health, prevents injury and helps him with time management.

"I think strength training is definitely something I would like to continue after high school and after college," Whitlow said. "Doing both a sport and strength training will help in terms of doing time management because, in the future, I will probably be a lot busier than I am now. Making sure to get a work out will definitely be something that translates to the future."

Junior Lane Loudamy plays both club and school soccer and runs cross country. In January, she tore her ACL and began doing physical therapy and strength training to recover from her injury. Loudamy believes that sports can have a big impact on people and encourages other LASA students to experiment with multiple sports to find what they like.

"If you want to play multiple sports, you definitely should do it, especially if you are an underclassman and you want to see what happens, there's no harm in trying it," Loudamy said.



graphic by Andrew Lucksinger

## New (and Returning) Olympic Sports

Surfing July 25-28

Baseball and Softball July 28-Aug. 7  
July 21-27

Karate Aug. 5-7

1 Event: 40 Athletes

Surfing was popularized by Native Hawaiian Duke Kahanamoku in the 1920s. Before he surfed competitively he was a competitive swimmer. Surfing is divided into categories by the type and size of the board the surfer uses (longboards and shortboards are the two options). Shortboards will be used in the Olympics.

Team USA: - Kolohe Andino  
- Carissa Moore  
- Caroline Marks  
- John John Florence

2 Events: 80 Athletes

Skateboarding is believed to have originated in the Western Coast of the United States during the 1940s as an alternative to surfing when the weather wasn't favorable. During the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, music will be played in the skateboarding venue during the event in an attempt to create a youthful air. Both park and street skating will be featured.

Team USA: - Lacey Baker  
- Nyjah Huston  
- Heimana Reynolds  
- Tom Schaar  
- Brighton Zeuner

6 Teams, 54 Athletes

Baseball and softball have similar rules and equipment but a few differences. Softball is thought to have been popularized as an indoor version of baseball. In softball the ball is bigger, the bat is shorter, the field is smaller, and all pitches must be underhand throws. Both sports have previously been a part of the Olympics, but not since the Beijing 2008 Olympics.

The US Softball team has qualified. The US Baseball team has yet to qualify.

1 Event: 40 Athletes

The first official sport climbing events were on natural rocks and cliffs, but athletes later transferred to artificial walls in an effort to protect the natural environment. The popularity of sport climbing has greatly increased in the past 20 years, which can be partially attributed to the accessibility of artificial climbing walls. The Olympics event is a combination of three sport climbing events: speed climbing, bouldering, and lead climbing.

Team USA: - Nathaniel Coleman  
- Kyra Condie  
- Colin Duffy  
- Brooke Raboutou

2 Events: 80 Athletes

Karate originated in Okinawa, a Japanese prefecture, during the Ryukyu Dynasty. It was popularized in the 1920s and spread throughout the world after WWII. Karate was included in the Tokyo 1964 Olympics and will be return in 2021. The two karate events in the Olympics will be split by weight categories according to gender.

Top Team USA Athletes:

- Sakura Kokumai  
- Ariel Torres Gutierrez

Skateboarding July 25-26, Aug. 4-5

Sport Climbing Aug. 3-6

graphic by Susan Ballesteros

# Girls Soccer Team Gets a Kick Out Of First Ever Preseason

LILI XIONG | staff writer

As the new school year begins, the girls soccer season kicks off as well. Despite the hot early fall weather, the LASA girls soccer team met at Noack Sports Complex on Oct. 5 to begin their first ever preseason.

This will be the first year that LASA has a separate soccer team from LBJ due to the University Interscholastic League (UIL) split from LBJ. In the 2021-2022 school year, LASA will move to its own campus, meaning that once-shared athletics and fine arts programs must be split between the two schools. The split was voted on in 2018.

The girls soccer team has had three preseason practices so far. UIL recently changed its rules to allow sports teams to practice at least once a week despite the COVID-19 pandemic. However, safety measures have been put in place to keep the players and coaches safe. Freshman Sheridan Wallace detailed the safety precautions implemented by the team.

"We have to do a screening before we get to practice each time, and we have to wear our masks while we're playing soccer and running," Wallace said. "Also, whenever we get water, we have to spread out a lot."

The team also has to practice social distancing as much as possible, so players try to avoid getting too close to each other off the field. Junior soccer player Caroline Stone said the team has learned to deal with this unfortunate reality.

"I definitely wish I could get together with my teammates and mess around with them, but we've been making do with it," Stone said.

According to head coach Chloe Cardinale, some players find wearing masks while exercising bothersome, but they appreciate that they have the ability to practice during these unprecedented times. All athletic teams are required to wear masks while training.

"The mask wearing is really inconvenient; the girls hate it and they don't want to wear the mask," Cardinale said. "It's Texas, so it's 90 degrees in October, making us hot and sweaty, but I understand and respect why we're doing it."

As COVID-19 cases rise in Austin, it's not known whether fans will be allowed to come to games or not. However, according to Stone, attendance at games has never been very high, but it is more fun to play when it is.

"At the McCallum game last year, we had twice the turnout, which definitely made my adrenaline spike and made things a lot more stressful but also a lot more fun," Stone said. "Not having as high of a number is going to make things a little less fun, but at the same time, we didn't have high turnouts at the other games anyways."

**"All of the girls on the team are super positive and funny and just make practices super fun."**

-Junior Caroline Stone

Since girls soccer plays in the AISD football stadiums, there is a lot of space to spread out and maintain social distance, making it safer for fans. Additionally, soccer being an outdoor sport makes it safer for fans to watch games. Wallace said she supports fan presence at games this season.

"I'd prefer to have fans as long as it's safe for everyone just because it's nice to have people cheering you on and watching the game," Wallace said.

Despite these struggles, Stone is enjoying being able to practice with her team and stay active. She enjoys playing with her teammates and looks forwards to soccer season.

"All of the girls on the team are super positive and funny and just make practices super fun," Stone said. "As an individual, I definitely have been leaning away from soccer over the years and going towards other sports. With these girls, they're making soccer so much more fun. They're the reason why I still play at school."

This is also the first year where the girls soccer team gets an athletic period, which means that team members have the ability to practice during school hours. Due to COVID-19, the team can't properly practice during their class time, but the newly created preseason has been making up for that.

According to Cardinale, the preseason has allowed the team to improve their endurance and stamina. She said, in the past, the other teams have practices during the off season, which gives them an edge when the season starts in the spring.

"We play these teams that practice year-round, and we have the skill, but we don't always have the stamina, so that's why we're focusing on conditioning right now," Cardinale said.

Stone said that though she wishes some practice time could be allocated for technical work, this conditioning training will benefit the team in the long run.

"I don't really like the conditioning and the fact that we don't touch the ball a lot," Stone said. "But it definitely helps us get in better shape as a team so that at the end of the preseason we're at our prime and we can do very well."

Soccer preseason has provided team members with time off their screens and the ability to socialize with new people. Players like Wallace are really enjoying the time they get to spend with classmates outside of school.

"I like getting to know people," Wallace said. "Since I'm a freshman, I don't really know anyone, so it's just fun because everything else is on Zoom."

The official soccer season starts on Jan. 12, two weeks earlier than usual, due to there being an additional team competing in the division this year. Cardinale said the team will take advantage of this extra time to get more prepared than normal.

"I think after the preseason, the team will be better prepared than in most seasons," Cardinale said. "One of the main things is developing chemistry, and the fact that we have the time to do that will be very beneficial to us."



**ON THE RUN** Players run laps around the field to warm up. Although close together, the players wear masks all throughout practices to stay safe. photo by Emma McBride



**WARMING UP** Senior Oasis Aguayo leads the team in high-knees. Players do a warmup before games and practices to prevent injuries. photo by Emma McBride



**CRUNCH TIME** Senior Sofia Syed does a core workout on the field. The preseason will mostly be used for conditioning to build the team's endurance. photo by Emma McBride

## FOOTBALL

from page 1

"The main goal I have for the season is for the team to grow as a true football team, as many of us, including myself, either haven't played football since middle school or haven't played ever," Wong said.

The majority of the players on the team are new to football, so the whole team is learning together, according to McNeil. Some of the players are freshmen or sophomores, while others are seniors who didn't previously play on the LBJ football team.

"We wanted to get some of the younger kids really involved, and that has really happened," said McNeil. "We've got four or five freshmen that are playing all the time, several sophomores are starting, you know, so we have some hold over for next year."

According to McNeil, the team is improving with every practice that goes by. Not only is each practice giving them time to improve, they are also gaining experience the more they practice.

"People should know that we're just getting started," Wong said. "We started from the bottom with little to no experience, and we're getting better with every week."

Woollard said the whole team, especially the new players, has made a lot of progress. He enjoys getting to watch the team grow and bond as the season continues.

"The best part of the season so far has been watching the team develop," Woollard said. "The overwhelming majority of our players have never had prior high school football, or any, experience. A lot of our players came from not knowing what a first down is to communicating plays using abstract terms the coaches coin during practice. I've loved watching my teammates develop and learn while forming a bond with them."

The team is spending more time together since practices started in September, with new safety protocols in place. Prior to their arrival at Noack Sports Complex, the players have to fill out the mobile AISD app health screening, and before they can go onto the field, they have to have their temperature taken. During practice, masks are required whenever helmets are not being worn, and social distancing is implemented whenever possible.

Senior, defensive end, and left tackle Freddie Uriostegui said all the players are putting in a lot of effort and coming together as a team. He values the bond that the team has developed during practices and games.

"The team has developed and are growing together," Uriostegui said. "The best part of the season so far is the family that we've built. We've gotten really close, and everyone is giving it their best, so it really feels like family, and it's an amazing thing to have."

According to Woollard, this team of new players will be the foundation for LASA football in years to come. Many of the players are freshmen or sophomores, and Woollard is hopeful that they will continue to develop even after he has graduated.

"This football season is the program's foundations, and we can only build from here," Woollard said. "Only two of our players have prior varsity football experience, and they are both seniors. I realize that I am old, and my time at LASA is almost over, but I see the freshmen, sophomores, and juniors and can't help but to feel inspired. Our students are persistent. We will not stop until we are the best. Expect this season to focus on improvement. To say that I am excited to see where the football program is at in four years is an understatement."

So far, the football team has only had five games. Although they were shut out in their first two games of the season, they were able to score their first touchdown in a game against St. Dominic Savio Catholic High School, with a final score of 14-57. Despite these unfavorable results and the team's lack of experience, Uriostegui said its heart will allow it to continue to improve and that it appreciates support from fans.

"It's been a rough season," Uriostegui said. "While we do lack experience, we have been giving it our all, and we're only getting better. Also, we really do appreciate everyone who comes out to our game to support us."

The football team's season is far from over — LASA's next game is on Nov. 20 at 7:30 p.m. against Travis Early College High School at Nelson Field, and on Nov. 27 at 2:00 p.m., there will be a game against Navarro Early College High School at the same location. See the Athletic Announcements and UIL Teams schedules on the LASA website, lasahighschool.org, for more information.

# No Gym, No Problem!

## How Athletes are Staying Fit at Home

ELIANA LEGATT | staff writer

Many students turn to fitness as a way to unwind after a long day of school, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, gyms across Austin were forced to close in order to comply with public health guidelines. Without access to a gym, many LASA students have found an alternative by working out at home.

Gyms and school athletics provide students with access to equipment that they may not have at home, making workouts more effective. Students are having to use what they have in order to stay in shape and to stay safe.

Senior Elena Gareau has turned to home workouts in order to exercise while gyms are closed. Gareau has been biking at Veloway Park and following YouTube workouts from her home.

"When school was going on [in the spring], I was super busy and exercising became really low priority for me because I was just trying to get all my work done," Gareau said. "So when quarantine started and I had more time, I just realized that it's good to be healthy."

Gareau has found that there are a lot of benefits to working out at home instead of in a gym, such as privacy and comfort. However, she found that there are still some downsides to home workouts.

"[Working out at home], I guess, is more comfortable, but you don't get that motivation from other people around you, so it's harder to motivate yourself," Gareau said.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, senior Logan Vaz did not workout at the gym and instead played soccer on the school team. Due to the pandemic, he had to stop playing sports through LASA, so he started working out from his house using the equipment he had at home.

"I'm currently not playing any sports, and I don't think I will this year," Vaz said. "Every other year of high school I've played soccer for school, though. My parents have a lot of exercise equipment making it easier to exercise at home."

Similarly to Gareau, Vaz has been able to look at the benefits of working out, whether it be at home or not. In order to encourage himself while working out, he sets goals for himself and works to achieve them.

"Physical activity helps clear the mind because you become focused on what you are working on, which helps with aspects like stress management," Vaz said. "It also feels really good when you reach a goal you hadn't been able to before, whether that's going up in the amount of weight being lifted, the amount of distance being run or something less tangible."

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, school is online, which means that students aren't getting to stand up and walk to their next class or play sports with their friends during lunch. Vaz has found that by working out at home, he is able to still be active although he's not at school.

"The immediate feedback of the work I put in is nice, [but] the other aspect is probably with pain; fitness can help alleviate some of the pain that is caused due to [a] life sitting by a computer," Vaz said.

Junior and varsity softball player Frankie Gigliotti said she values sports and fitness regularly in her everyday life. Not only does she play softball through school and work out at home nearly every day, but she is also a sports editor for the LASA Stetson yearbook.

Gigliotti usually exercises outside, so she is still able to work out as she did before the pandemic began. However, the majority of her workouts took place at softball practices that are now canceled as a result of the pandemic, and Gigliotti is unaware of how the future of the spring softball season will be handled.

"It's harder to motivate yourself, like when softball was in season, we were there at practice, and we had to do what we

were told, but now, there's less of that," Gigliotti said.

Although Gigliotti is ready for the softball season to start, she has begun to enjoy her home workouts. Additionally, she has more appreciation for the benefits of fitness.

"Fitness is important because it makes me happy, and it's a good way to take my mind off things," Gigliotti said.



graphic by Andrew Lucksinger