

# the liberator

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## opinion Transgender Athletes Face New Bill

How Texas State Senate Bill 29 (SB29) Will Impact Transgender Athletes' Participation in Athletics

**MALVIKA PRADHAN** | staff writer

On April 14, 2021, the Texas Senate passed Senate Bill 29 (SB29). If this bill were to become law, it would prohibit transgender students from participating in school sports teams that match their gender identity. For example, a trans girl, a person whose assigned gender is male but whose gender identity is female, would be required to participate on the boys sports teams in their school. Proponents of the bill argue that it promotes equality and fair competition in sports, and that it wouldn't be equitable to have biological females competing against biological males.

Those who oppose the bill say that it purposely discriminates against trans youth and excludes them from athletics. SB29 was a very partisan bill, with 16 Republican senators voting in favor of it, and zero Democrats. Currently, Gov. Greg Abbott has not signed the bill into law. If he does, the law would take effect in the 2021-22 school year. This is one of many similar bills sweeping the country. 30 other states have passed or introduced similar bills, including Tennessee, Montana and Mississippi.

SB29 is discriminatory and excludes trans students from participating in sports. It doesn't let them express their identity freely. Many trans students would not want to participate in school sports if they were forced to play on a team of the opposite gender, like trans student Landon Richie. Richie said, "Trans kids belong in Texas and deserve the same rights, access to health care, access to sports, access to public facilities, as any other Texan." This bill is also unnecessary as this issue is not widespread across Texas schools. Jamey Harrison, deputy director of the University Interscholastic League (UIL) asserts that the bill was already "not an issue in our state" under the current UIL rules.

One of the supporters of the bill, State Senator Charles Perry, a Republican from Lubbock, acknowledged that he doesn't know any transgender athletes in Texas.

Many professional sports teams and organizations do not have such rules surrounding trans athletes. In the Olympics, for example, if a trans female wants to compete on the female

team, they need to have identified as a female for the past four years and their testosterone levels need to have been below 10 nanomoles for at least one year before the competition and during the entirety of the competition period.

One of the hormones that help men gain more muscle mass is testosterone, hence the Olympics' rules about the limits of testosterone levels in trans female athletes. If trans women athletes were taking hormone blockers to pause the testosterone production in their bodies, this growth of muscle mass would be reduced significantly, making the playing field more level. Trans males who want to compete in the Olympics have no restrictions. This is a much more reasonable way to go about this because the competition is still fair while including trans athletes. School sports teams could implement these guidelines for trans athletes.

Even the American Association of Pediatrics (AAP) has spoken out against these bills and argued that they are discriminatory and harmful towards trans students. "As experts, pediatricians are uniquely positioned to advocate for and support these young people," AAP CEO and Executive Vice President Mark Del Monte said. "Politics has no place here.

These are individual conversations between clinicians, patients and families about what's best. The AAP applauds the hard work of our chapters focused on protecting transgender youth at the state level." The AAP has also said if trans females are taking hormone treatments, they shouldn't have the levels of testosterone that are normal for males, and therefore, the competition should still be fair.

The Associated Press, who reached out to state lawmakers who sponsored such bills and conservative groups that supported the bill, found that not many of them could cite instances of this issue. "The Associated Press... found only a few times it's been an issue among the hundreds of thousands of American teenagers who play high school sports." While such instances are not widespread, the rise of proposed bills such as SB29 highlights the urgent need for the federal government to enact legislation that invariably protects the rights of trans youth as well as other minority groups. The lack of overarching, federal legislation protecting the rights of trans youth is what allows the state by state bills that threaten trans people.

see **TRANSGENDER ATHLETES** page 14



graphic by Andrew Lucksinger

## what's news



photo by Alec Lippman

### A Noche To Remember

Noche de las Estrellas premiered this spring in a virtual format on YouTube Live. Watch the performance at [lasanoche.com/watch](http://lasanoche.com/watch).

see **NOCHE** page 11



photo by Emma McBride

### Regaining A Lost Season

Baseball players wrap up their first season returning from a season cut off three weeks in due to COVID-19.

see **BASEBALL** page 15



photo by Emma McBride

### Back In the Classroom

More students return to school in wake of new 44% in-person attendance rule and increasing vaccinations.

see **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE** page 6

## Lip Dub Filming Persists Despite COVID-19

**EDITH HOLMSTEN** | staff writer



**JAMMING OUT** Anastacia Loiko plays her keyboard before filming begins for Orchestra's portion of the Lip Dub. The Lip Dub filming is done at LASA and a variety of other locations throughout Austin. photo by Emma McBride

Every other year, LASA films a Lip Dub video featuring students and staff lip syncing or dancing to music. Each video is about five minutes long and showcases LASA clubs, electives and school spirit.

"Dreams" by Beck was chosen as the 2021 song, and the full video was split into 17 different clips that are each less than one minute long. Students participated in this LASA tradition by filming either in-person at school or by submitting videos of themselves in quarantine. The Lip Dub took weeks to produce, but important decisions were made all along the way to create the video, according to senior and Lip Dub director Ella Glasscock.

The process started with Glasscock choosing the theme of dreams because it connected to how this past year has felt. Glasscock said she was inspired by one of her classmates saying that the COVID-19 pandemic felt like a bad dream.

"It just triggered this vision that I had to make a video for LASA that's a giant dream sequence representing that this whole year has felt like a very strange dream," Glasscock said. "There have been some good parts of the dream, some weird parts of the dream and maybe some nightmarish parts of the dream, so that's why we decided on this theme for the video."

see **LIP DUB** page 10

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## The Art City Austin Festival Moving Forward

**ELIANA LEGATT** | staff writer

Austin is a city known for its vibrant art culture, and both residents and visitors alike can usually see a variety of art galleries and festivals. However, residents and visitors this year were denied these chances to experience artistic catharsis and wonder at Art City Austin, a festival that hasn't been hosted since 2019.

Art City Austin is a festival organized by the nonprofit organization Art Alliance Austin. The festival was planned to have its 70th annual event in the spring of 2020, but due to the pandemic, the event was canceled for both 2020 and 2021. The festival brings together artists from around Austin by providing booths for them to sell their work, and the festival has also expanded in more recent years to have live music and food.

Meredith Bossin is a consultant with Art Alliance Austin. Bossin began working with the organization in the fall of 2019 and is currently working with them to rework their business model.

"They're kind of assessing what is the next move based on the pandemic," Bossin said. "A lot of their programming was event based, and so they are rethinking those programs based on the pandemic and the possibility of being able to do in-person events again soon."

Bossin said a large portion of Art Alliance Austin's funding comes from money from the cultural arts funding from the City of Austin. Since a lot of the cultural arts funding comes from hotel occupancy taxes, they have had

a decrease in funding. However, Bossin said a silver lining to the pandemic has been the opportunity to fix issues and plan for the future.

"They definitely intend on bringing the event back," Bossin said. "I think it may have a slightly different format. We would definitely want to maintain a focus on local art."

Bossin said that in the future, Art Alliance Austin plans on keeping different types of attractions such as food, music and the incorporation of different aspects of Austin's history and culture. Bossin also said they may be adding an additional event in the fall alongside a larger-scale event in the spring.

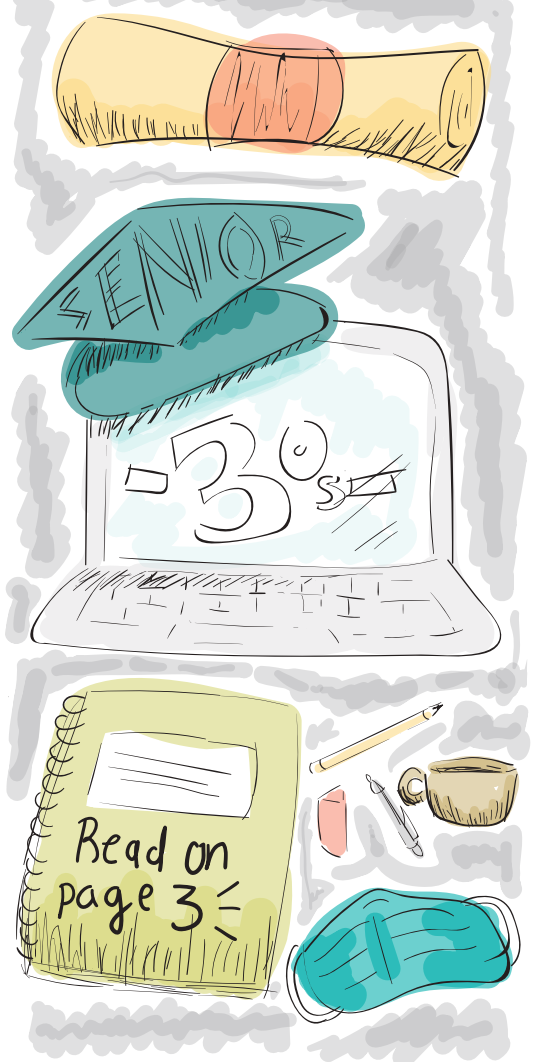
Adreon Henry is an artist in Austin who has participated in the Art City Austin festival for two years. Henry graduated from the University of Texas at Austin in 2002 with a degree in graphic design and advertising. Before 2020's festival was canceled, he was supposed to be the spotlight artist, a position where an artist has their work displayed on the Art City Austin website and whose work sets a theme for the event. Henry also worked with Art City Austin on some of its temporary art installations.

"Being able to produce art and share ideas with a community and the public in general, as well as being able to share ideas and thoughts and really represent local communities where installations or art pieces are installed, is probably my underlying mission as an artist," Henry said.

see **ART CITY AUSTIN** page 12



**SUNSET PAINTING** This work of art is made by Bruce Bitter using an art technique called screen painting. Bitter is a frequent participant in the Art City Austin Festival. photo courtesy of Bruce Bitter



graphic by Emma McBride

editorial Confronting the Canon
The Need to Diversify the Literature We Consume

Staff Stance: Every six weeks the Liberator staff presents their opinion on an important current issue in the form of an editorial written by the Commentary editors. The opinions in the piece above represent those of the staff as a collective, not of each individual member.

If a modern high school student were to have a conversation with their parents about the content of their English class curriculum, the student would probably find that the books they are reading are, by and large, the same that their parents read when they were younger. With a few exceptions, American schools generally teach traditional classics — books like “The Iliad” and “The Odyssey” all the way through to “The Great Gatsby” and “The Grapes of Wrath.” While these books are foundational to Western culture, many argue that there is a problem — they are almost all authored by one demographic: white men.

According to book publisher Lee & Low, multicultural content represents only 13% of children’s literature in the last 24 years. Considering 49.7% of Americans are white, a literary canon heavily stemming from white people and white experiences does not accurately encompass the unique perspectives of the nation as a whole. In a time when race and its role in history, as well as the broader concept of demographic diversity, have come to the forefront of the national dialogue, many hope to see a more diverse array of books and authors represented in the American literary canon.

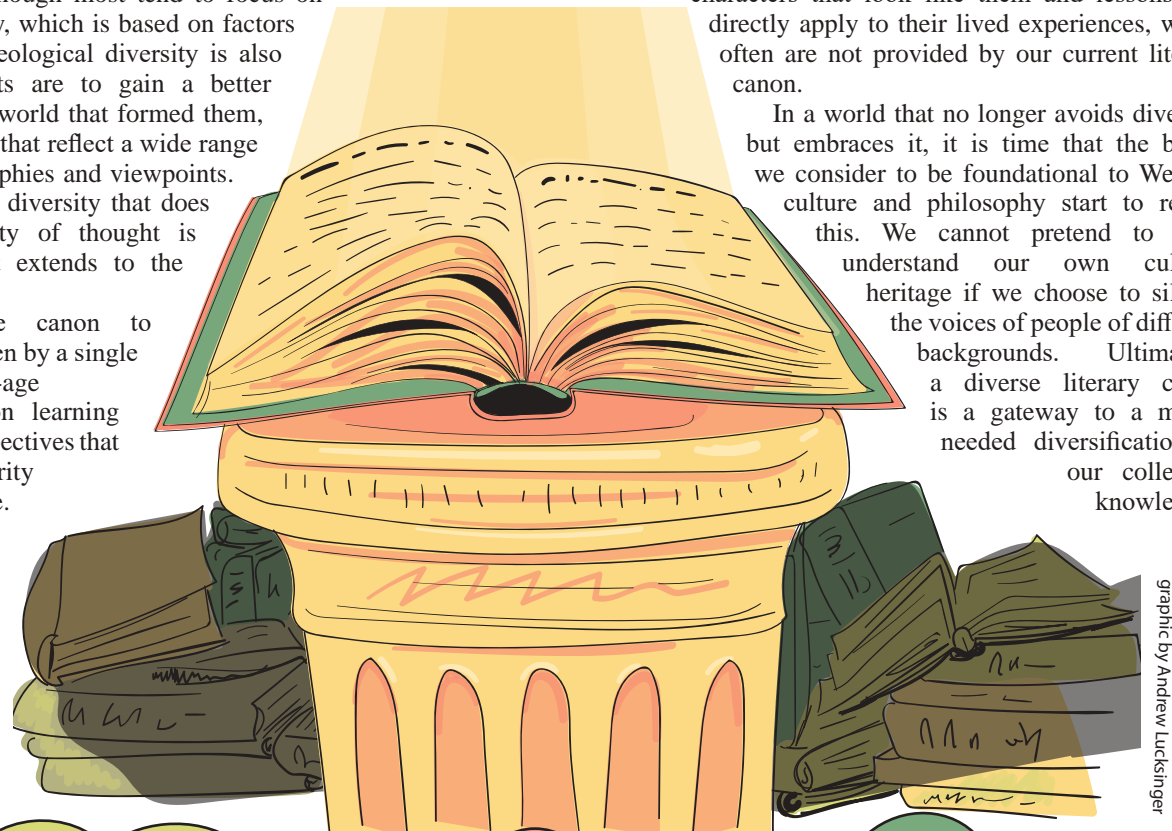
Looking at recommended high school reading lists such as the one provided by the Texas Education Agency, one notices a pattern of white male authors. Works by William Shakespeare and Charles Dickens can be found in almost any classroom. But these works fail to fully represent the men and women who built the America we know today, which, according to World Population Review, is one of the most racially diverse nations in the world. It only makes sense that a literary canon meant to reflect American values and culture should include voices from a wide array of American communities,

not just those that have historically been the dominant narrative. There is another factor that must be considered when discussing literary diversity. Although most tend to focus on demographic diversity, which is based on factors like race and sex, ideological diversity is also important. If students are to gain a better understanding of the world that formed them, they must read books that reflect a wide range of ideologies, philosophies and viewpoints. A conversation about diversity that does not consider diversity of thought is incomplete, and that extends to the world of literature.

By limiting the canon to primarily works written by a single demographic, school-age children miss out on learning about the unique perspectives that result from a minority American experience. We should introduce these diverse American experiences to students through literature early on in the classroom so the white male perspective is not

perceived as the default. Nonwhite children deserve the opportunity to read books in school that feature storylines they can relate to, characters that look like them and lessons that directly apply to their lived experiences, which often are not provided by our current literary canon.

In a world that no longer avoids diversity but embraces it, it is time that the books we consider to be foundational to Western culture and philosophy start to reflect this. We cannot pretend to fully understand our own cultural heritage if we choose to silence the voices of people of different backgrounds. Ultimately, a diverse literary canon is a gateway to a much-needed diversification of our collective knowledge.



graphic by Andrew Lucksinger

Setting the Example:

The Lib’s Picks when it comes to expanding the canon with literature written by a diverse array of perspectives.

“Sister Outsider” by Audre Lorde

A collection of essays and speeches by Black poet and feminist Audre Lorde, “Sister Outsider” explores the various facets of her identity as a Black woman, a mother, an activist and a cancer survivor living in America.

“How Much of These Hills is Gold” by C Pam Zhang

An intense story of survival, “How Much of These Hills is Gold” is set during the immigration of Chinese-Americans following the Gold Rush in the Western frontier. With a unique and powerful voice, Zhang pens the journey of two young siblings who are set on the run in the wake of their parents’ death and their search for a home.

“The Plague of Doves” by Louise Erdrich

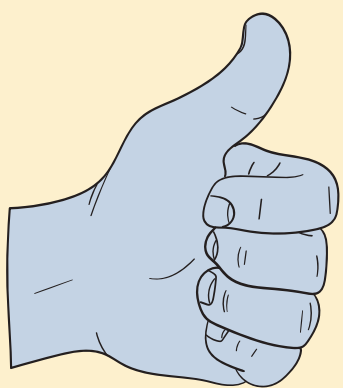
At the center of “The Plague of Doves” are the townsfolk of Pluto, North Dakota, on the edge of an Ojibwe Indian reservation, whose lives remain intertwined by a mysteriously unsolved murder from generations before. A story of family and loss, Erdrich explores the implications of the past on the present.

“The Bluest Eye” by Toni Morrison

Morrison’s debut novel set in Lorain, Ohio, follows the story of young Black girl Pecola. Exploring themes of abusive households and conventional beauty standards, this heart-wrenching tragedy set in post-Great Depression America forces the reader to consider questions about race, class and gender issues.

graphics by Malena Heineman

Thumbs Up



- COVID-19 Vaccines
Whataburger
Costco
Headphones
Summer

Thumbs Down



- Parallel parking
Finals
Airline Food
100 degrees
Weather

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Club Contributors Ahnsa Campbell, Kayla Le, Eva Schwarm
If you are interested in writing for the paper and becoming a club contributor then be sure to stop by Portable 5A to find out more!

the liberator

Editorial Policy

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

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

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

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

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

Editorials: These will be determined by the staff consensus. The editorial will be unsigned and will represent the viewpoint of the publication.
Letters to the Editor: Letters to the Editor are accepted for topics of general interest to the readership of the newspaper. Letters must be submitted typed or neatly printed in ink and must have the signature of the writer and the writer’s grade level. Editors reserve the right to determine which issue the letter goes in, with every effort made to print the letter as soon as possible. The editors also reserve the right to edit the letter for grammar, length and repetition.

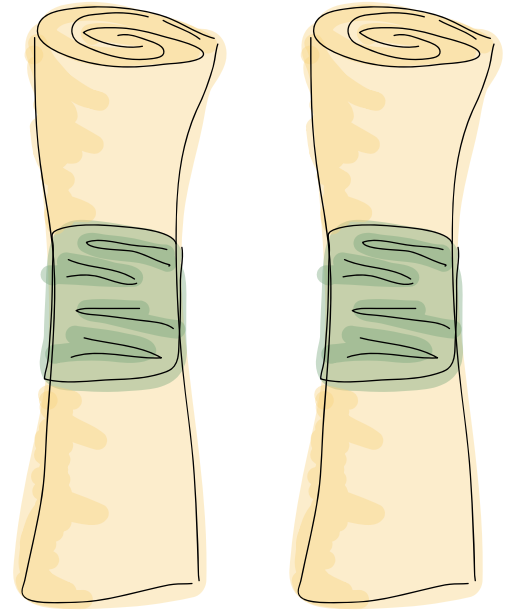
Non-Staff Contributors: Bylined contributions are welcome.
Correction of Errors: The staff makes every effort to print accurate information. In the case of errors, a written correction will be made in the following issue of the newspaper.

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

Thank you for reading the last Issue of the Liberator for the year! We can’t wait to see you again next year.



Have an opinion about a new school policy? Got an issue with this issue? Anything else on your mind? Email us at lasaliberator@gmail.com or DM us @lasaliberator.



## What Are -30s-?

Here at the LASA Liberator, 30s are a tradition. The name comes from the journalistic practice of putting -30- at the end of an article that is ready to be set for print. Our graduating seniors are ending their stories with the Liberator, so they get the chance to write one last article, about themselves and their journey with the paper.

OK



Malena  
Heineman

### Signed, Sealed and Delivered

This week, my English teacher passed back letters we wrote to our future selves, an assignment from freshman year. As I drove back to campus to pick mine up, I couldn't help but wonder—*who am I? Am I the person, or the idea of a person, my freshman self wrote to and aspired to become?*

I was thrust into high school as one of only three people coming to a public magnet school from my very small middle school. With few to rely on but myself, I realized pretty quickly how little I really knew about myself and what my true passions were. I spent the majority of the year wading through the treacherous waters of pre-AP classes, new friends and new drama, as well as a multitude of short-lived careers in various clubs and extracurriculars. Nothing felt right, but there were so many stones unturned and paths undiscovered ahead—high school, and LASA specifically, has so many opportunities to find your specific niche and little communities,

and you just have to be patient and diligent before one inevitably comes across your individual path. And that's how I found Newspaper.

I signed up for the newspaper on a whim after seeing the passion of student editors during a club fair and was instantly hooked by the excitement of a working publication. As a member of the Liberator, I have created graphics, written feature stories, done countless interviews and managed teams of staffers and editors. But beyond that, I found a family here of people of varying backgrounds and viewpoints who have seen my highs and my lows and always pushed me to realize my own capability and unique voice.

Now, here I am, 18 years old, entering the world of adulthood and fully prepared to face the unseen opportunities ahead. The uncertain hopefulness in that letter, written by a younger me that now seems so far away, made me realize that I accomplished exactly what I set out to do in my four years at LASA and more. Through the Liberator, I unearthed a confidence in myself, and my voice, that I know my freshman self would be proud of.

### The Best of Both Worlds

I've always loved sports. I've played soccer for the past 14 years, I closely follow professional sports and there's no other way I would want to spend my day than at a live sporting event. I have a ton of school spirit, went to almost every LBJ and LASA football game, and I've played for the LASA soccer team all four years of high school. Reading and writing have also always been some of my favorite activities, so signing up to join the newspaper only seemed natural.

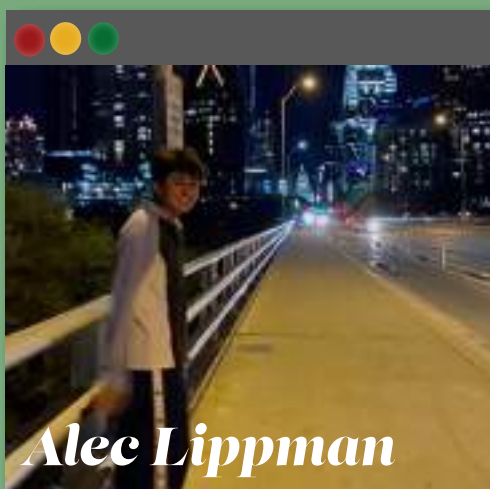
The first article that I ever wrote for the Sports section was about the Houston Astros' devastating loss to the Washington Nationals in the final game of the 2019 World Series. Astros fandom runs in my blood, and I was so excited to get to write about something I was really passionate about. I worked so hard on that article and finished it in just a few days, and I was

already hooked on writing for Sports. I enjoyed interviewing athletes and coaches across the school, and I learned a lot about the LASA/LBJ split and about what it takes to establish a school's athletics program. In the process of all of this, I learned about journalistic practices and how to improve my writing.

Becoming a Sports editor in my senior year was the best of both worlds. I got to be a part of the Liberator and to contribute to an amazing publication, and I got to keep up with LASA and with professional sports. Throughout my time as a Sports editor, I've learned a lot—not only about what it takes to create the newspaper, but about the different athletes around LASA. I'm going to miss the community here at the Liberator, but I can't wait to see what the future holds for both me and the Lib!



Abigail Jackson



Alec Lippman

### Ecdysis, Literally and Figuratively

Today, I shaved my head. Mediocre Target clippers pulled on my scalp as they struggled to slice through my thick hair. 30 minutes later, with hair seemingly everywhere in my bathroom, I stared at my not-so-cleanly-shaved head in the bathroom mirror and saw a reflection that was me, yet also not me at the same time.

I began high school as an extremely regulated, robotic, and organized person, the blueprint of a perfect LASA student. I persistently scurried through the tubes in the rat race, continually chasing numbers and metrics. I will leave high school not by reaching the end of the rat race, but by not participating at all. My sense of identity and self had been defined for so long by what others told me or what I would view or interact with

online. My careless cosmetological act symbolizes perfectly how I want to move forward in my life: as a person motivated and acting out of their own goals, free from the influence and manipulation of ventriloquists with their own personal motives. LASA taught me the only way to reach this independence is by fierce self-advocacy and finding ways to let the environment I am in amplify my own goals.

The shaved-head version of myself is the person I have grown into from my freshman year self. My freshman self could never act so spontaneously or without a fully fleshed-out plan. I entered high school letting school define, control, and outline my identity. I will leave high school as my own individual, recognizing that school is simply a supplement to my goals. I am proud of what I have achieved through LASA and cannot wait to continue forth into the world.

Charles Taylor



## Bowls and Bolstering Confidence

My brain starts to tune out the belt sander's incessant whirring as I watch the bottom of a clumsily-constructed bandsaw box slowly dwindle through billowy waves of fine sawdust. It's October 31, 2019, Halloween, and I'm still in the shop all alone, putting the finishing touches on my project before it's due tomorrow. "Alright, you have 15 minutes to finish," my teacher alerts me. My palms start sweating as I glance up at the clock. 5 p.m. A rushed frenzy of sanding renders a slightly better-looking box. Still not amazing, but it'll have to be good enough. Relieved but not particularly satisfied, I hand him my project and leave, the flickery black wave of fluorescent lights shutting off leaving the shop where I labored for hours in cold darkness. Despite being an elective, Woodworking was probably the

most stressful class I took at LASA. Unlike a lot of my classmates, I had no experience in the subject, and projects were graded under the assumption that we all did. For a grading period or two, it was by far my lowest grade. But out of all the classes I took during my time in high school, Woodworking had the greatest impact on me. Relics of this difficult but pivotal time, the hastily sanded bandsaw box, gently scuffed tasting spoon and unevenly layered bowl I made definitely aren't perfect – maybe a nick or imperfection here and there – but they're definitely useful. I think that, in a way, they symbolize my lasting memories of my high school years in general. My time at LASA was not without its bumps, but looking back on it will be a useful reminder to work hard but also to look up and enjoy the moment for a second, to relish in new, exciting experiences without letting stress related to work and grades take over.

Somaya Jimenez



## Writing for Rights

I joined the Liberator my second year at LASA. Looking back on it, I wish I had known about it during my first. Aside from practical skills such as learning the ins and outs of Adobe InDesign, how to write an email or how to manage my time, I got an amazing sense of community. I was able to meet a variety of students in different grade levels who I normally would not have interacted with much. Being able to delve into a topic I am especially passionate about, something I was able to do much more once I became a News editor, was one the highlights of writing for the Liberator. When writing stories, I was able to hear all these amazing perspectives from interviewees and learn all about their lives. For example, earlier this school year, I wrote an article with my co-editor that was looking into the way the COVID-19 pandemic was disproportionately impacting various communities of color, disabled communities and those in prisons. I was able to conduct a very extensive

interview with Amreeta Mathati, a staff attorney at the ACLU's Racial Justice program, learning about various factors I had rarely thought of previously. For example, she discussed how housing quality might impact the health of individuals of varying socioeconomic levels throughout their lives. I am so glad I was able to share this information with others, among many other topics throughout various issues printed. My goal when I started as an editor was to increase the number of readers of the News section and help make others as passionate as I am about topics covered in our section. Though it might not yet be to the standard I would like, I have absolute faith in the future News editorial teams that it will keep improving to reach its full potential.

Helena Lara



## It's Hard to Imagine

It's hard to imagine myself at 14. I don't even remember much of freshman year. Or sophomore year. A happy blur of evolving, of innocence and confusion. But memories stand out amongst the blur, and people stand out even more. Nia, Aaron, Sophia, Elan, Trevor – names that became part of a patchwork in me as I grew. That was my first Newspaper class. I thought I would be learning about journalism, but I was not even slightly aware I would become a journalist. And a new person. I know the Liberator has made me the writer I am today, but it has also made me more than a writer – the paper shaped and inspired my photography, art, design, thinking and analysis. Above all, it was a space for my mind to wander. I had no bounds on what I could think about, discuss and write. The paper was a space to share it all. I think there's something extremely valuable in publishing a polished product as a teenager, forging my opinions as I forged myself and having

these opinions change as I changed myself. Adobe InDesign pushed my creativity and opened to me the world of design. People pushed my ideas and worldview, and writing and editing pushed not only the complexity of my texts, but of myself. I was exposed to fashion, art, politics and literature, and was inspired to delve into it all myself. Writing and the people it fostered were an important focus, a different one from the day in, day out of grades and toxicity that results when hundreds of academically competitive kids are put into a little building together. I have a couple distinct ideas of where I'd like to be when I grow up careerwise. Maybe I'm a lawyer, making money and helping people. Or maybe I'm designing and analyzing markets, having majored in business or something like that. But throughout these projections, writing and people have to be constants. I want to be journaling, thinking and exploring the world. Making connections with people and ideas different from my previous experiences.

# Fresh out of high school

At the Liberator, each year's seniors hold a very special place in the community. As they graduate, the Liberator takes time to reflect on their experience throughout high school – including how different they look. Can you figure out who's who?



- 1. Andrew Lucksinger
- 2. Wrenny Collamer
- 3. Helena Lara
- 4. Nia Orakwue
- 5. Alec Lippman
- 6. Malena Heineman
- 7. Charles Taylor
- 8. Abigail Jackson
- 9. Somaya Jimenez

## Looking Back

Seniors (and Mr. Garcia) recap their favorite newspaper memories

My favorite memory is definitely walking around to briefly interview people for the question for Liberated Minds Speak associated with the staff stance. I loved being able to walk around LASA and find people I did not know to go talk to for it.  
- Alec

My favorite Liberator memory is spending time with my co-editors at late nights debating current events and making late night H-E-B runs to get hot pockets and jolly rancher chews.  
- Nia

My favorite memory of the Liberator has to be the tradition of our post-paper circle, where the entire staff gathers around to go through the most recently published paper. We all say each page number together as we flip through, and get to look back on and admire our hard work together!  
-Malena

The best part about newspaper is always walking around the school distributing the paper each publishing cycle. Talking with other editors and seeing friends in the hall, showing them what we've made each time.  
- Helena

I enjoyed doing the photoshoots for the fashion story that ran in the first issue of this year. It was really fun being able to meet up with people after not seeing them, and to take pictures of them in their handmade clothes.  
- Wrenny

My favorite memory of newspaper is the end-of-year party! There's such a sense of camaraderie and mutual appreciation, and having everyone together is always a fantastic time.  
-Andrew

My favorite memory from newspaper is sitting with the juniors in class and bothering Mr. Garcia! We would always be laughing and chatting while we worked on our articles and it made newspaper class so much fun!  
-Abigail

I told them not to do anything too extreme with the Ezine, only to have them turn in a 56-page magazine with filled with hand-drawn images. It's still my example of the try-hard Ezine, but dang if they didn't do a good job. Plus, we got a graphics editor out of it!  
- Mr. Garcia

### Wrenny Versus LASA

The first time I took part in a Liberator newspaper critique, everyone looking lazily seated in a jumbled circle of chairs, I remember my voice quivering. I ducked my head below the newspaper I held, beginning to sweat – not because of the stuffy portable, but rather the nerves: the nerves that came with the feeling of responsibility to say something worthwhile about the newspaper in front of an intimidatingly knowledgeable community that I felt like was already fully fleshed.

While it can be difficult to feel like you belong anywhere, it is especially difficult trying to find belonging at a strange magnet school. It was sometimes hard to fight back against the energy of the tired, windowless rooms of LASA's halls, but joining the Liberator on the heels of sophomore year turned out to be an important step in finding my footing at LASA. It gave me a chance to work with other students on something that felt so real – and it

helped shift my thoughts away from "me versus the LASA students" to "OK, fine. I guess I'm a LASA student."

It is sad to think that LASA will move to a new building. I'm almost nostalgic for that lingering staleness in the air that we all became numb to. That building changed me: the years-long suffocation by study material pushed me away from the anxious, studious pupil I once was. My daily morning scramble to arrive to class on time grew to a casual stroll, and my planner that once intricately tracked assignments became marked with doodles and my own thoughts. LASA helped teach me how to work efficiently but more importantly taught me the importance of not working. But really, LASA was an overall unifying force: It helped me form so many positive relationships and has been a time I will never forget.



Wrenny Collamer

### How Dr. Martens Changed My Life

Stepping into Garcia's portable freshman year, I didn't have any idea I'd be staying past the spring semester Ezine course I had yearned for after a torturous semester of SciTech. At the time, I had a multitude of varying realistic career paths planned out. But then, Ence, the lead editor of the Lib at the time, came into class to tell us about the paper with short hair, winged eyeliner and Doc Martens, and being an award-winning journalist shot to the top of that list. Ironically, in three years, this is the first time I've ever written for the paper.

So coveted is the job title of graphics editor that I've been the sole official member of the section since I started in my sophomore year. As an underclassman, I tried quite a few extracurriculars, attempting to make

the most of LASA's many clubs, but newspaper was the only one that stuck. Walking out of Late Nights each evening during the week before deadline and hearing a chorus of cheerful goodbyes and cries of "We'll miss you!" was the first time I felt I really belonged anywhere at LASA.

I won't lie; there have been times I've looked at the graphics spreadsheet in despair – anguish, even. Possibly devastation, when the requests got past row 30 on my lovingly crafted spreadsheet. Still, it doesn't compare to the mood in Portable 5A at 7:30 on a Wednesday night, complaining about Mr. Garcia's music choices and tuning into the six or seven wildly different – though equally impassioned – discussions happening in the same 20-foot space or the feeling of picking up a finished issue. I'm so grateful to have been a part of the paper, and more than that, a part of the group of people behind it.



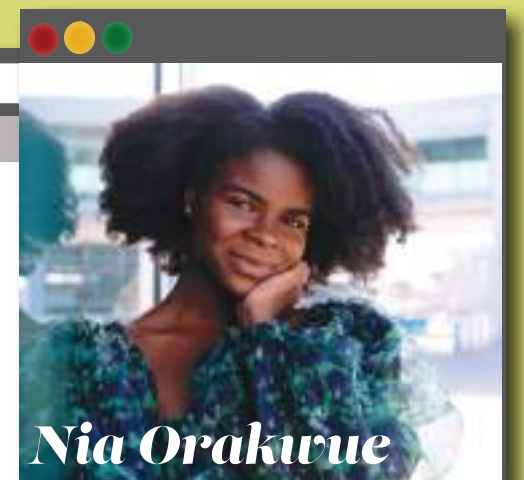
Andrew Luksinger

### Finally Thriving

Now that we're approaching graduation, I am able to reflect on my experiences at LASA with much more clarity. Like many others, high school was nothing like what I had learned to expect from teen movies and YA novels. As one of few Black students here, I was forced to learn lessons of sacrifice, resilience and believing in yourself despite seemingly constant doubt from others in order to succeed. I'm glad I learned these lessons early, but I'd be lying if I didn't admit that it wasn't easy. For many months at a time a supportive, uplifting or familiar figure at school was hard to come by. So I built up my own confidence solely on the support of my parents and all the self-generated, internal confidence my 15-year-old self could muster.

That all being said, I could not be more grateful for what my experience at LASA has afforded me. I am a completely different person from who I

was when I first arrived, from the way I approach problems and see the world to the way I view myself. I was lucky enough to have many passionate and extremely intelligent teachers who exposed me to different modes of thinking. I was able to explore my love for sciences and later seamlessly shift my focus to writing and poetry. I found a family on the lacrosse team and on the Liberator staff that have never failed to lift my mood when I need it. While some days were definitely more isolating than others, I am so grateful to have received an experience that pushed me to grow in so many unforeseen ways. I was faced with situations and environments that may not be meant for me, and I am proud to say that not only did I get through it; I am thriving.



Nia Orakirue

# In-Person School: Funding, Safety and Classrooms

EDITH HOLMSTEN | staff writer

Each year, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) provides funding for school districts based on the number of students enrolled in each district. Due to changing enrollment this year, TEA provided the Austin Independent School District (AISD) the opportunity to gain about \$30 million worth of funding contingent upon a certain percentage of in-person enrollment. With staff, students and families concerned about COVID-19 safety, the requirement for in-person attendance has been more difficult than in past years.

During the 2019-2020 school year, AISD had about 80,000 students enrolled on campus, so the district hired teachers for the 2020-2021 school year anticipating 80,000 students, according to Jacob Reach, the AISD Chief Officer of Governmental Relations and Board Services. Reach said AISD lost enrollment of about 5,000 students during the 2020-2021 year, which meant AISD qualified for less funding from TEA than the amount of money the district needed to pay its staff. To make up for the difference in AISD's funding eligibility and their actual monetary needs, TEA utilized their pre-existing Hold Harmless funding system where TEA gives certain districts more money than their eligibility due to natural disasters or events out of the district's control. TEA agreed to give AISD about \$5 million per grading period during the 2020-2021 school year if AISD meets standards for in-person attendance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In total, the district could gain \$30 million from TEA from Hold Harmless funding, which is only a small portion of AISD's budget of over \$1 billion. Still, Reach said the money is necessary to pay

**"There's no doubt it's tricky, but I have faith in the teachers. I absolutely believe in them and their ability to do that."**

-Liberal Arts and Science Academy  
Principal Stacia Crescenzi

for staff members, whose paychecks account for about 87% of AISD's budget.

"We're just talking about a little bit over 3% of the overall budget, but that 3% actually translates to actual staff," Reach said. "The only way that we can make up that difference is by either not paying staff, but we have already kept them, or we just have to take that money out of our savings...Our fund balance is a little over \$200 million, but obviously, if we took \$30 million out of there, we may have the money to do it, but that's money that we don't have later to spend on other things."

Reach said that to determine the standards for AISD to gain \$30 million, TEA took a snapshot of in-person attendance on Oct. 30, 2020. On the snapshot day, AISD had about 23.6% of its students across the district learning in person, which meant AISD had to maintain the 23.6% in-person attendance during

the first and second grading periods. For a student to be counted present in person, a student would need to come to school during their second or sixth period class for at least 13 days of the grading period, according to Reach.

However, AISD went completely remote only the week after Thanksgiving break for COVID-19 safety, and the district did not offer an in-person option for students. TEA then ruled that AISD would lose about \$5 million during the third grading period for not having an in-person option. Reach said AISD can regain the money through having 43.6% in-person attendance during the sixth six weeks.

"To make up that third six weeks, the one that included the Thanksgiving break, they said that we can do 20 percentage points higher, so 43.6%, then they'll provide us that period also," Reach said. "In order to receive Hold Harmless funding for the entire year, the district would need to have 43.6% on-campus enrollment during that sixth six weeks."

Reach said AISD is fortunately close to the goal of 43.6% in-person attendance, but there is still a large percentage of students learning online. Reach also said the district is noticing a stark difference in the percentage of in-person enrollment based on age groups.

"What we know is that our elementary is already well above that percentage, and our middle school is very close," Reach said. "Our lowest percentage is in high school. They're in the teens on the percent of on-campus enrollment."

LASA principal Stacia Crescenzi said she also noticed that LASA has fewer students learning in person than elementary or middle schools. Nonetheless, Crescenzi said that more students have been coming to school during the last grading period.

"We're not currently at 44%, so it's good that we can average K through 12 across the district," Crescenzi said. "However, since the last six weeks have started, we've quadrupled the number of students that are back, maybe even a little higher than that."

With more students in-person recently, Crescenzi said that the school has needed more staff members helping with student health checks to prevent any student with COVID-19 from entering campus. Each student who goes to campus has to fill out an AISD health form to confirm they do not have COVID-19 symptoms and have not been exposed to anyone with COVID-19.

"I'm really fortunate to have a staff that's incredibly supportive of having students back," Crescenzi said. "Every staff member has agreed for one day in the mornings to man one of the check-in stations for students and do the screening and do the temperature check, so we can have more students back and not too much of a burden on the school."

Crescenzi also said that teachers are adapting their classrooms for having more students in-person to reach TEA's goal of attendance.

Multiple teachers are trying new technology during their lectures to conduct concurrent teaching where about half of a class is in-person and half of a class is learning online, according to Crescenzi.

"Although it's tricky, I've been really impressed with the teachers who have already figured that out, particularly figuring out how to use the big TVs that they have in their classrooms so that everybody feels like a class, and they can make that concurrent teaching work," Crescenzi said. "It's tricky. There's no doubt it's tricky, but I have faith in the teachers. I absolutely believe in them and their ability to do that."

Sophomore Kate Starkloff is one student who said she has benefited from concurrent learning. Starkloff said she started to go to school in person more recently because of the advantages of being in the classroom with her teachers.

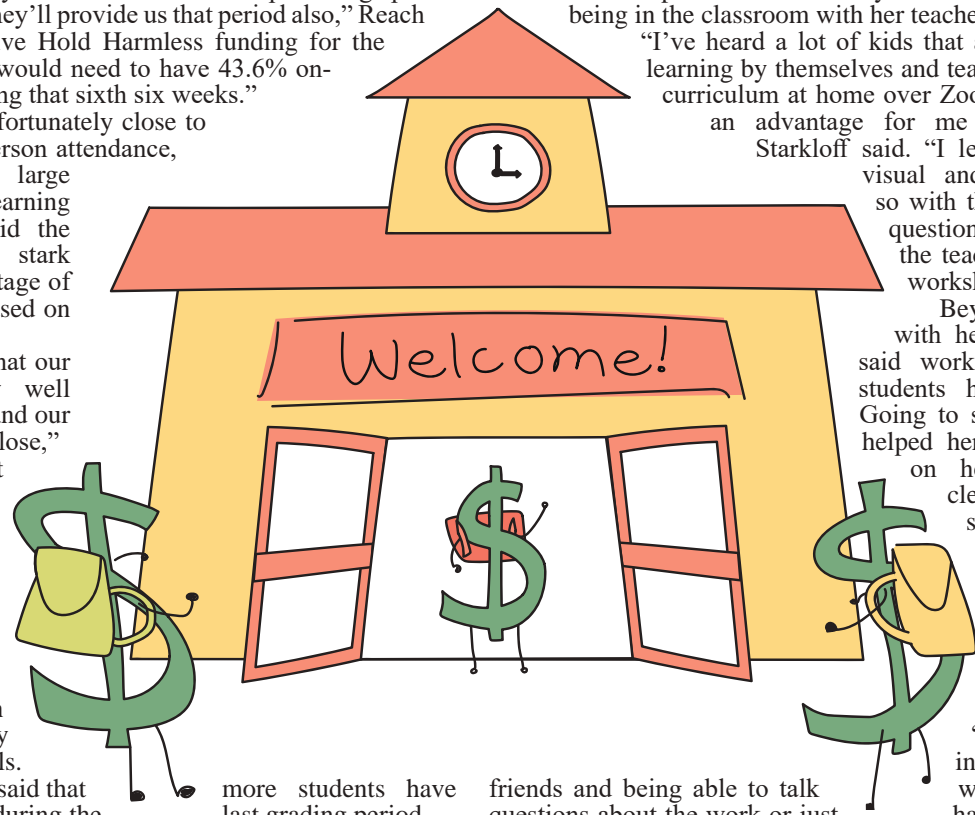
"I've heard a lot of kids that actually benefit from learning by themselves and teaching themselves the curriculum at home over Zoom, but it's definitely an advantage for me to be in school," Starkloff said. "I learn way better with visual and physical learning, so with the teacher, I can ask questions and actually see the teacher teaching and do worksheets."

Beyond her relationships with her teachers, Starkloff said working alongside other students has been beneficial. Going to school in person has helped her stay more focused on her schoolwork and clear up confusion that she might have about the assignments, according to Starkloff.

"The social aspect is a huge thing for me," Starkloff said. "Being able to work in the library with my friends with them if I have any questions there to help motivate me to actually do my work has been great for me."

TEA will decide on June 3 if AISD met the attendance requirement to receive money later in the summer. No matter what happens with the funding, Reach said he hopes students will feel safe coming back in person to reach TEA's attendance threshold and also to have the education benefits of in-person learning.

"Overall, we do believe that we have some students that can be better served in person," Reach said. "We want to make sure that they know that we have a safe environment for them, that we want them on our campus, that they are welcomed and that they're going to receive the great education being in person, so we certainly recognize that for many students, that's going to be the best place to be served. But also for many students, there's a personal decision that needs to be made."



## Local Austin Propositions

DELIA RUNE | club contributor

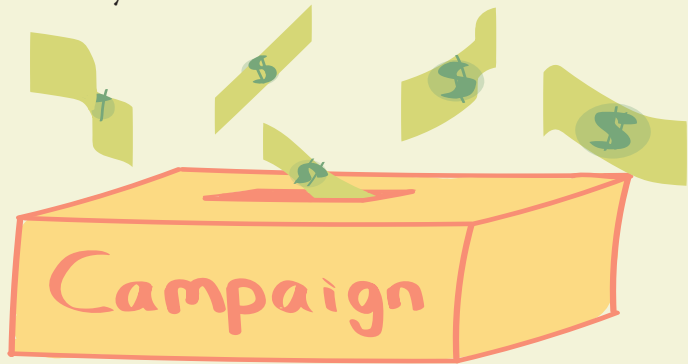
Prop H



Proposition H would have added another district to Austin, allowing the City of Austin 11 council members instead of 10, preventing ties in the city council votes. This proposition did not pass, with a 56% vote against the addition of a new district as of May 1.

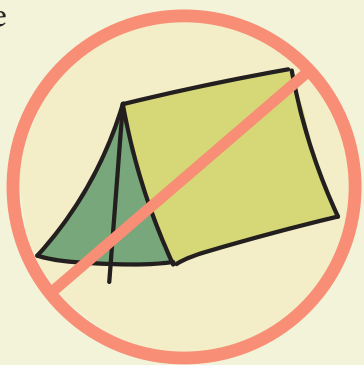
Prop G

Proposition G would have given every registered voter in Austin a \$25 voucher to donate to a political campaign of their choosing, giving them more power in supporting their favorite politicians and causes, according to the Austin American-Statesman. Proposition G did not pass, with a 57% vote against it as of May 1.



Prop B

Proposition B reinstates the camping ban in Austin and makes it illegal for homeless Austinites to camp in public places. According to KVUE, Proposition B passed with a 57% majority on May 1 despite a large campaign against it.



graphics by Somaya Jimenez-Haham

## Texas Senate Pushes for Anti-Trans Bill

NORAH HUSSAINI | staff writer

On April 16, 2021, Texas House Bill 1399 was advanced to the House, which is just one of over 115 similar bills being circulated throughout the nation. The bill, which targets trans youth, prohibits health care providers and physicians from performing gender-affirming surgery, and prescribing puberty blockers and hormone treatment to minors. In addition to this bill, Texas lawmakers have also introduced other bills, like Senate Bill 1311, that would revoke a medical professional's licensing if they perform or prescribe any gender-affirming treatment. Penalties vary for people who offend these laws but include 2-10 years in prison as well as trans children being put into foster care. Jaime Zapata, a board member at the Transgender Education Network of Texas, said she wouldn't be where she is today if she wasn't allowed to receive hormones or other medicines.

"I transitioned as a teenager back in the '80s, and for me personally, if I wasn't allowed to transition or if my parents weren't able to take me to get hormones and those kinds of things, I would've run away," Zapata said. "Luckily, that didn't happen, and I had the support of my family and friends and doctors, and I was given the treatment I needed."

The largest survey of transgender youth, including nonbinary youth, from the Trevor Project in 2020 shows that more than half have considered suicide, but it also shows that gender-affirming medical care can decrease both depression and suicidal thoughts among trans kids. Rachel Hill, a member of Equality Texas, said she believes that this care can be extremely helpful to transitioning children.

"We have seen terrible reports coming from Arkansas, where the healthcare ban has already passed, about kids who have already attempted suicide directly because of this bill," Hill said. "[Trans care] decreases suicidal ideology in the population, which is already high."

Hill said that she believes the misconceptions about what trans care includes are one of the main reasons these bills are moving forward. She said that misinformation from the bills is causing people to develop incorrect beliefs.

"It's something that folks don't know a lot about, transition care," Hill said. "The puberty blockers and the suppression and all of the healthcare that trans youth receive, because people don't know about it, it's an easy issue to get riled up on."

On Sept. 27, 2019, a news post on a Catholic news website that stated that trans health care was linked to "thousands of deaths" went viral. This post has since been debunked, and studies show that when youth receive the medication, the odds of suicide decrease by 70%.

"Puberty blockers, in particular, act as a pause button, and we hear a lot from folks about how this is irreversible treatment, it's not," Hill said. "So if somebody decides to change their mind halfway through, they can just stop taking

the puberty blockers, and puberty just continues as it normally would."

Sam Clubb is a group staff therapist at Outyouth, a local organization for the LGBTQ community that offers a safe space for people of different gender orientations to express themselves. They said that puberty blockers are also especially important to trans youth because they can help transgender kids feel good in their own skin.

"Puberty blockers in minors with doctor and parental guidance are a good thing," Clubb said. "It helps combat dysphoria, and it corrects an imbalance that is being perceived by the brain."

According to the Child Mind Institute, gender dysphoria is a significant problem in trans youth and can prevent transgender kids from receiving the help they need. Clubb said they believe that in addition to the gender dysphoria many trans kids already experience, these bills will make the struggle of dysphoria worse.

"Basically, someone feels like they're not in the correct body, or certain aspects of their physical being do not match up with how they identify personally," Clubb said. "This can be any physical body part, a lot of times there's also voice dysphoria about how someone's voice sounds, and these bills, in particular, will make it a lot harder for youth to combat dysphoria."

According to the Mayo Clinic, most children categorize their own gender by the age of three and are able to tell different gender groups apart by 18-24 months. Zapata said that taking children's gender identity seriously is very important.

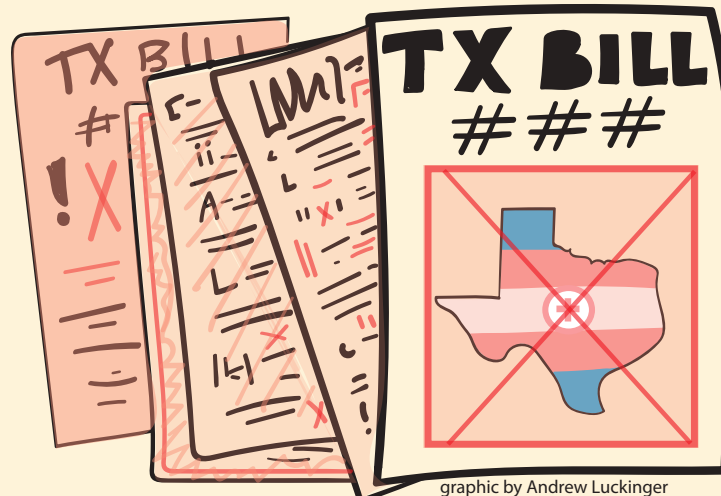
"We all know who we are at a young age, and no matter what people try to instill in us, our feelings of who we are there," Zapata said. "When a child tells us who they are, we should listen to them and not try to stop them from being who they are."

A survey from the U.S.-based National Center for Transgender Equality showed that, of the 28,000 people that responded to the survey, only 8% reported detransition. The survey also showed that 62% of that 8% only detransitioned temporarily, and the most common reason for detransitioning was pressure from a parent.

"They have false statistics saying that transgender kids detransition, but most of that detransition is from public pressure," Hill said. "Pressure from families, pressure from their schools, and they keep talking about things that just don't happen."

According to the Human Rights Campaign, more than 115 bills have been introduced that target the transgender community. Research from The 519 shows that transgender youth, including nonbinary youth, face more discrimination than any other youth group.

"It's been a very, very frustrating time in particular for my organization as well as the youth that I serve. It's been a very scary time," Clubb said. "We just hope people listen to evidence, and they do their research, and they don't try to solve problems that aren't problems to begin with."



graphic by Andrew Luckinger

# Gentrification in A Growing Austin

MALVIKA PRADHAN | staff writer

The city of Austin is rapidly growing, as cited in the Austin Business Journal. From 2010- 2019, it was the fastest growing metro area in the country. From 2018-19, about 3,840 people moved to Austin each month, according to local news website Austonia. Texas, as a whole, attracts new residents, especially from California, because of its lower cost of living, according to the Kinder Institute at Rice University. According to Redfin, these new people have \$200,000 more to spend on real estate than locals. Parts of Austin, especially the east side, are already seeing the effects of an increase of residents, according to archaeologist and community advocate Fred McGhee.

Gentrification occurs when several wealthier people move to a low-income neighborhood, like the new residents from California moving to the east side of Austin, according to Katherine Way, a clinical professor and researcher at the University of Texas at Austin. Way said gentrification is an issue with far-reaching effects.

“Gentrification is reshaping our city in ways that have lots of very negative impacts for who our city is, what our city is now, what our city will be in the future,” Way said. “And what I’m most concerned about as a researcher is an impact that gentrification has in driving displacement of vulnerable populations and reshaping our city to become a place that’s very exclusionary and that doesn’t provide for, specifically, African American and Hispanic residents.”

Rachel Stone is the assistant executive director of the Guadalupe Neighborhood Development Corporation (GNDC). The GNDC works to give housing to those in need in the rapidly changing Guadalupe neighborhood of Austin. Stone said the group used to work to protect the neighborhood from gentrification, which caused local businesses and residents to move out for chains and higher income residents.

“Gentrification is the loss of culture, neighborhood ties or housing in a neighborhood that is seeing increased housing prices due to wealthier people moving into the neighborhood,” Stone said. “So not just that somebody’s property taxes have gone up, but their property taxes have gone up, and they’ve seen neighbors and local businesses have to move away, and that that’s led to a change of culture in the surrounding neighborhood.”

Strong Towns Senior Editor Daniel Hurriges said that the parts of cities that tend to experience gentrification the most are poorer and underdeveloped neighborhoods, and according to Way, in Austin, this is the east side. Hurriges also said many cities’ poorer neighborhoods have been disinvested in, where nonwhite residents were unable to get loans for mortgages and home improvements. These neighborhoods have historically been seen as bad areas due to racism that started in the 1930s.

“When you see [gentrification] happening really rapidly and really disruptively, which I think is the case in some parts of Austin, for example, actually what has happened is that you’ve had neighborhoods that have really been disinvested in for a long time,” Hurriges said.

Way said this disinvestment in certain neighborhoods leads to lower real estate prices in one part of the city. This lower cost of living in the center of the city is exactly what attracts wealthier residents in what is referred to as the “Great Inversion.”

“Now, the center of the city is the place to live, and so you have folks moving into Austin with higher incomes and even people who live here who no longer want to have the 45-minute commute, and traffic makes it even worse,” Way said. “So you have this demand for houses in the center of the city, that people with higher incomes want to live in the center of the city, and at the same time, we have these lower real estate prices. It’s just a recipe for gentrification.”

Gentrification doesn’t just affect people’s homes; it also affects local business and a neighborhood’s overall culture, according to Way. Sometimes, local businesses can no longer afford their rent in gentrifying neighborhoods.

“Longtime businesses are absolutely impacted by the increase in property values that occurs as part of gentrification,” Way said.

“Business owners are largely renters, and renters are typically more vulnerable than property owners. As prices and housing values go up, rents go up, and at some point, many businesses can just no longer afford to stay in their communities where they are located.”

Parts of Austin, mainly the east side, have been gentrifying for almost 20 years now, according to Way. He said that with companies like Tesla moving to Texas, gentrification of Austin’s east side will most likely continue.

**“Gentrification is reshaping our city in ways that have lots of very negative impacts for who our city is, what our city is now, what our city will be in the future.”**

**-University of Texas at Austin clinical professor and researcher Katherine Way**

“Those companies bring in higher-wage workers, and higher-wage workers can afford to pay more for rent or to buy a home,” Way said. “And when you have hiring and a push to pay more, the market is going to respond to that by increased rents and by increased home sales prices. So versus a restrictive amount of housing supply that we have in the city at these price points and as people come in with higher incomes, it drives up [the price].”

Recently, many large companies like Tesla, Oracle and Hewlett-Packard have announced they plan to move to Texas. According to Stone, there is a solution to the housing crisis caused by these moves: large tech companies should fund affordable housing in the areas they plan to move to.

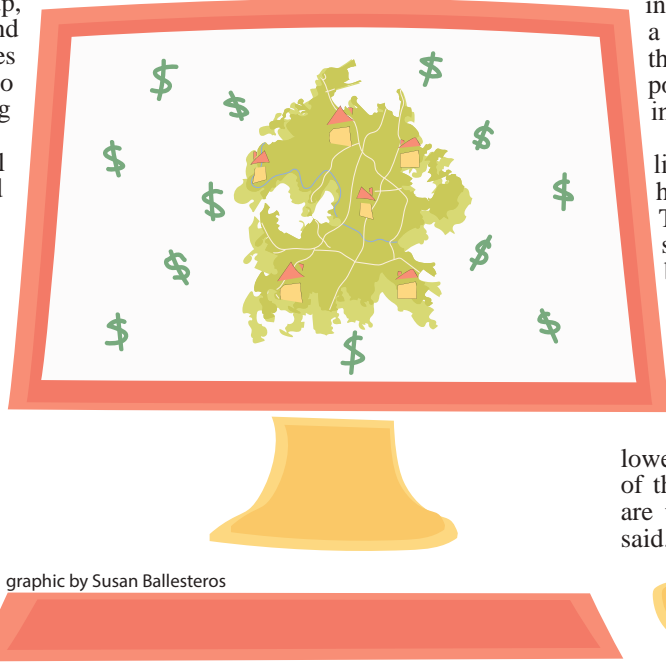
“If Tesla was willing to build affordable housing or work with an affordable housing developer to try to make housing for some of their lower-income workers or help keep some of the people in the neighborhoods, there are ways we could get around it,” Stone said.

Hurriges said that a way to reduce the effects of gentrification is to spread out development throughout a city. If the entire city develops as a whole, it prevents certain neighborhoods from changing too fast.

“One of the things that we say at Strong Towns is that every neighborhood needs to be allowed to add people to add to your buildings to gradually evolve to the next level of urban density because if you allow growth everywhere, then you don’t get the firehose of explosive growth in a few places,” Hurriges said. “And if that fire hose is where people really get mad about gentrification because their neighborhood is rapidly changing, in a way, that pushes people out.”

Stone said the best way for the average Austinite to help is to speak out about the issue. Those living in a gentrifying neighborhood should talk to their neighbors about what they want for their neighborhood.

“I think people have to look at what they want,” Stone said. “I don’t think it’s possible to just stop gentrification because it is sort of like an economic wave. I do think there are ways to help people remain in their neighborhoods and to help make good asks of these companies and of the city to establish resources to help people stay.”



graphic by Susan Ballesteros

## Spotlight on Community Member Vincent Tovar

ELIANA LEGATT | staff writer

In Vincent Tovar’s own words, he is an advocate for both public education and the Austin east side community. Tovar is currently working with the Austin Independent School District (AISD) on creating more affordable housing in the east side by working to see if they can locate or co-locate low income housing on some of AISD’s unused lots. Tovar said the new change would allow children to stay in the schools where they want to be, help schools to stay open, keep enrollment in schools in the area more stable, and give teachers more housing security. Tovar has lived in Austin for over 20 years, having graduated from the University of Texas at Austin and acquired his first teaching position at Piccolo Elementary School in 2005.

“My role is, I would say, first and foremost, as a parent,” Tovar said.

“I’m proud to have sent our son and our daughter to Govalle Elementary, and my partner, their mom, is the librarian at that school.”

Tovar has helped multiple candidates campaign for the AISD school board, including Gina Hinajosa, Carmen Tilton and Piper Stege Nelson. In 2016, Tovar was Jayme Mathias’s official campaign manager. Tovar also worked on the 2017 bond campaign, which was a \$1 billion bond that passed in Austin and was intended to improve all school facilities in the district.

“When I was a [college] student, and even when I was a high school student, my passion was to work with the most marginalized communities,” Tovar said. “And those that were the most impacted, historically disrespected, which usually looks like our low-income families of color. So that’s where my heart is.”

Tovar was in a group that was part of the movement to keep the Individuals Dedicated to Excellence and Achievement (IDEA), a

charter school that former superintendent Meria Carstarphen supported, from moving further into the east side. IDEA was planning to move into Eastside Memorial High School, Martin Middle School and some elementary schools in the area. According to Tovar, charter schools have unregulated admission processes and behavioral policies, as well



**COMMUNITY UNITY** Vincent Tovar is an active community member who is fighting to help preserve the east side of Austin and its schools. He was even featured in the 2015 documentary “Killing Ed,” photo courtesy of Vincent Tovar

as false advertisements. The movement against IDEA chose the name “Pride of the Eastside,” a name that was previously used for the Johnston Rams, the mascot for the now-defunct Johnston High School. Later, with the blessing of Johnston alumni, the group took the name.

“I shouldn’t say I co-founded Pride of the Eastside but that I helped to lead a resurrection of that name as part of a new group formed to save the vertical team from being privatized,” Tovar said.

LASA, in its current form, was created

when the Liberal Arts Academy high school at Johnston, founded in 1987, merged with the Lyndon Baines Johnson Science Academy in 2002, and the school became independent in 2007. In the coming 2021 school year, LASA will be moving to the current Eastside Memorial High School campus.

“For [the Johnston alumni], I could see it being a bad joke because it’s really sad and infuriating,” Tovar said. “Because what happened, if you talk to a lot of folks, is that when the Liberal Arts Academy... was at Johnston and then taken out, there was a big notice of academics dropping.”

According to Tovar, after LASA left the Johnston campus, their test scores dropped, and a few years later the school was repurposed. Before the vote in the 2017 bond campaign, LASA offered to take the mascot and colors from Johnston Highschool to keep their memory, but after the vote those conversations stopped happening. This later created a controversial divide between Johnston alumni and LASA, according to Tovar.

Tovar said, more than anything, that the work and history of the east side is not forgotten as many people leave or new people enter. Tovar also said that with gentrification in East Austin, there is less authenticity, but the history of the area and the people living in it are what make East Austin special to him.

“There are very real aspects to the life and the people here,” Tovar said. “And by real, I think that a lot of communities mask or hide...who they really are and are trying to live on airs and create some kind of front, whether that’s through resources or wealth or clothes or status, and I feel like there’s a lot more just real connection that you can have with the original East Side community.”

# NEWS BRIEFS

## Global News

May 4

In Colombia, the pandemic’s hit to the economy forced the government to increase taxes on its citizens, according to NBC News. The protests in Colombia opposing this increase have become increasingly violent over the past several weeks, and hundreds have been injured. In the city of Cali, where the majority of the protests have taken place, 11 people have been killed.

Early May - Present

COVID-19 has spiked to an all-time high in India this month, according to the BBC. Currently, more than 3,000 people die of the virus in India every day. In addition, though vaccinations are decreasing COVID-19 cases in most of the world, only 2% of India is vaccinated, weakening the government’s ability to slow infections, according to the BBC. Foreign nations and experts such as Dr. Fauci are advising India to impose stay-at-home orders and a full lockdown to prevent more cases.

May 5

The Biden administration has begun to put limitations in place that will limit the number of hydrofluorocarbons, chemical byproducts created by most air conditioning and refrigeration systems that contribute to climate change, the United States is allowed to produce. This is the first time limits on hydrofluorocarbons have been put in place in the United States, and the Biden administration is looking to make drastic cuts by reducing emissions by 85% over 15 years, according to the New York Times.

## National News

May 4

President Joe Biden plans to make July 4, typically a day focused only on America’s independence, an opportunity to give to other countries. By July 4, Biden is aiming to have 70% of Americans vaccinated and has pledged to begin donating 10% of U.S. vaccines to other nations. According to U.S. News and World Report, this decision is largely supported, but there are some who believe the Biden administration should begin donating vaccines sooner, especially as the United States moves into vaccinating low-risk groups like children.

May 5

Former President Donald Trump has been banned from Facebook, adding yet another name to the growing list of social media sites that have removed him from their platforms. Facebook maintains that Trump’s tweets about the Jan. 6 Capitol riots violate the site’s guidelines and force it to lock his account, according to U.S. News and World Report. However, Facebook has offered to review his case in six months.

## State News

May 1

In April’s election, the city of Austin voted to reinstate its camping ban, which, according to KXAN, is controversial. This camping ban will prevent people who are homeless from setting up tents or campgrounds in public places and will force them to seek shelter elsewhere or sleep exposed to the elements. Supporters argue that this ban will put pressure on city government to find homes for the homeless, but others claim that it puts the homeless at a higher risk of being attacked and adds another layer of difficulty to their lives.

Early May

The Texas Senate recently approved a new bill that would allow Texans to carry guns on their person without a license. Though the bill has not yet been signed into law, according to the Texas Tribune, it is expected to pass, and Gov. Greg Abbott has given his approval. This law will allow Texans to carry guns — either openly or concealed — without any special permissions or background checks from law enforcement.

## Local News

May 14

According to CBS, a new abortion law has been passed across the state of Texas. Commonly known as the “heartbeat bill,” this law outlaws the abortion of fetuses with audible heartbeats. Should abortion clinics violate this law, the bill also allows private citizens and pro-life groups to sue the doctors and any other parties responsible for aiding abortions. Under this new bill, women will not be able to get abortions after six weeks of pregnancy.

Spring 2021 - Present

Tour guides and students at the University of Texas at Austin have been striking against the school’s anthem, “The Eyes of Texas.” Previously played during blackface and minstrel performances, the song has been critiqued by students for its racist roots. However, the university maintains that the song is not racist and refuses to give it up, according to the New York Times.

# "Stand Up, Fight Back!"

Black Lives Matter: What Happened, What Didn't and What Needs to

SOPHIA CHAU  
AVA DE LEON | student life editors

In the past two years, America has undergone a series of events that opened many people's eyes to what was happening around them. As a result, the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement was propelled to national attention.

Since 2013, the BLM movement has been gathering support from citizens all across America after the murder of Trayvon Martin in 2012. Founders Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi started the movement in response to the growing concern of racially motivated police brutality. On May 25, 2020, George Floyd was murdered by a Minneapolis police officer, which then sparked a wave of protests, riots and speeches by outraged Black people and their allies. Over the next few months, the movement would only continue to grow as more instances of police brutality would surface with little to no action taken by governments to hold the officers responsible accountable. Today, the BLM movement has spread all over the country from the streets of Los Angeles, California, to the

**"Just because something is uncomfortable or hard doesn't mean we stop talking about it after like a month."**

-Sophomore Hana Hussaini

sidewalks of Washington, D.C., and has even reached communities around the world, including protests in the United Kingdom and South Korea. The movement has been an important topic for students at LASA recently, especially for Black students. Sophomore Kayla Lassiter explained how the BLM movement directly impacted her and how it relates to her personal experiences.

"As a Black person, the things that are going on right now in the Black Lives Matter movement can very well affect me," Lassiter said. "And I'm not a stranger to racism. I've experienced it before. It was unfortunate, and it was also a very scary thing to endure."

In the past year, the movement has gained a lot of attention, with an estimated 26 million people protesting, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation. Lassiter believes that the country-wide shutdown allowed people who might not have previously had the opportunity or time to show their support to actively participate in the movement.

"A lot of people at the time were working from home. They had the opportunity to go outside and protest," Lassiter said. "So that might have helped it gain a lot of traction online. And since a lot of kids were out of school, they could also participate in spreading information via the internet, like TikTok and Instagram."

After Floyd's death was publicized, more instances of police brutality surfaced, including the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Jacob

Blake and Daunte Wright. According to sophomore Hana Hussaini, it was extremely frustrating and disappointing to see so many more murders take place despite supporters' efforts.

"It gets kind of exhausting for me, looking through my phone and seeing all of these murders on my feed," Hussaini said. "But just because something is uncomfortable or hard doesn't mean we stop talking about it after like a month."

Hussaini and Lassiter both agreed that technology and social media have been crucial in the spread of information about BLM and how people can help. According to Lassiter, compared to the '60s, when there were relatively limited means of communication, today's activism has been elevated by ever-improving technology.

"I think it's really different because you have access to technology," Lassiter said. "People in the '60s could send out flyers, talk about it and stuff. But I think it's much more impactful if you have internet access because that's how the Black Lives Matter movement gained a lot of attention on the world stage."

Sophomore activist Jaxie Niles Arguello also mentioned how important social media is not only in sharing information, but also in providing students the chance to connect with prominent BLM activists. She explained how she had recently been checking out Black content creators and supporting their work while also listening to their opinions and views on the world.

"Diversifying the media I consume opens up my life to so many new perspectives and stories I didn't even know I was missing," Niles Arguello said.

As the movement has brought to light harsh truths about police brutality, students at LASA have been able to develop their own thoughts and beliefs regarding the politics of the situation. Students like sophomore Oscar Thompson have used the movement as an opportunity to voice their opinions and hone in their passion about what they believe in.

"The Black Lives Matter movement, in conjunction with all the other stuff that's been going on this year, has made me more outspoken as a liberal," Thompson said. "I have political views but before, I was pretty passive about it. Now, they are a lot more nuanced because of this recent rise in political tensions. I've found myself becoming more political."

Similar to Thompson, the BLM movement helped Lassiter to face what was going on around her.

She mentioned how she had previously been less aware about the tensions that had been rising between the Black community and law enforcement.

"I gotta be honest, I wasn't really that into what was going on in the Black community or what was going on in the world, really, politically," Lassiter said. "So I think it might have impacted me by really making me look into what's happening right now and what kind of oppression is still being faced by minorities."

Hussaini explained how she found it difficult growing up in a country divided by race and ethnicity and how she never understood white privilege. Niles Arguello also talked about her experience with racial bias and how the BLM movement has changed her view of the world.

"In the short term, it has certainly impacted how I navigate the world," Niles Arguello said. "It is hard to see how white-centered your world is when that is all you know. Now, when I look at the world, I can question why things are the way they are and the privileges I have."

According to the New York Times, Generation Z is more open to changing its ideals than older generations, which has proven to be a substantial benefit for the BLM movement. Hussaini, among other

students at LASA, believes that Generation Z should be involved in the Black Lives Matter movement because it will directly affect its future.

"I think that Gen Z and millennials really should be at the top of this," Hussaini said. "I feel like they are already the generation that is focused on fixing these things, but I think that we should make sure that the focus stays Gen Z and millennials. Obviously, we want all of the generations to learn about this movement and try and stop it, but I think that it would be really effective if Gen Z



graphic by Andrew Lucksinger

really hopped on that bandwagon and said, 'Hey, we are going to make changes.'"

While the BLM movement has been able to bring attention to the issue with law enforcement, Lassiter believes that there is still much to do. She has hopes for the future of the movement but sometimes finds it difficult to imagine the end to police brutality.

"I mean, I'm hopeful that it can change things," Lassiter said. "Honestly, it's a little hard because somewhere deep down, I think many of us who believe in the Black Lives Matter movement want it to be this thing that will fix everything that's going on. Not just police brutality, but other things that contribute to racism. I appreciate what they're doing, but I don't think that this is going to end everything."

For Hussaini and other supporters and activists, it is hard to determine and put into practice genuine efforts that will help change the course of racism in America. According to her, an issue that has been affecting a country for so long will not change overnight, but with the help of laws and the support of Congress, she believes that there can be a safer world for people of color.

"This isn't one person saying racist things, this isn't one police officer being a bad apple," Hussaini said. "This is a government thing, and it needs to be changed with policies and with laws, and we need to have better systems in place to really dismantle the racism in America."

On April 20, 2021, Derek Chauvin, the police officer responsible for Floyd's death, was found guilty of second-degree unintentional murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter. There are still many police officers who have yet to stand trial for their actions, but the Black Lives Matter movement continues to affect Americans and demand justice for those who have lost their lives due to the color of their skin.

"It's as much as they can do," Lassiter said. "Because we can't really make effective change unless we get some laws into Congress, unless we get some awareness throughout all of our civil and federal governments. It takes more than just one movement."



graphic by Kayla Le

**"I now have a better understanding of the way my whiteness gives me advantages that I never understood before."**

-Sophomore Jaxie Niles Arguello

**"I can see my privilege and the privilege of others more clearly. I've also lost faith in the political systems of this country."**

-Sophomore Oscar Thompson

## Race and Police in Legislation

Movements for change are not just about the protests themselves. Inside the halls of legislatures across the country, progress, or lack thereof, is being made through the legal system.

### Texas SB2202 and HB3979

Senate Bill 2202 (SB2202) and House Bill 3979 (HB3979) are two bills from the Texas legislature that seek to limit the teaching of critical race theory in public schools. Critical race theory states that race is a social construct and examines how certain American institutions are inherently racist. SB2202 passed in the majority Republican legislature in early May, while HB3979 passed in the House and is expected to pass in the Senate. The passing of these measures would mean Texas would join states like Oklahoma, Idaho, North Carolina and others that have similar bills. These decisions come after President Joe Biden reversed a Trump-era executive order in early January prohibiting the federal government and its contractors from having diversity training. SB2202 and HB3979 were proposed by Sen. Brandon Creighton, R-Conroe, and Rep. Steve Toth, R-The Woodlands, respectively.

In addition to limiting the teaching of critical race theory, SB2202 and HB3979 would ban teachers from being compelled to “discuss current events or widely debated and currently controversial issues of public policy or social affairs” and ban private funding for the development of a teacher’s or school’s social studies curriculum. It would also ban schools from requiring training that “presents any form of race or sex stereotyping or blame on the basis of race or sex.”

### Proposition C

Proposition C, which passed May 1 with 62.8% of the vote, will allow the Austin City Council to appoint or remove a director of police oversight. The proposition would only transfer the management of the Office of Police Oversight from the city manager to the Austin City Council, and it does not change the scope of its duties. The current director of police oversight is Farah Muscadin. Muscadin has been reviewing complaints and investigations about the Austin Police Department as the director since November 2018. As part of her duties, Muscadin also gives recommendations through an annual report.

The proposition was submitted by Council Member Greg Casar and advanced by the City Council with near unanimity, Council Member Mackenzie Kelly being the only member who opposed. According to the Austin Monitor, Kelly argued that Proposition C was advanced too quickly and without proper community input, but Casar rebutted that claim by pointing out the city charter can only be modified every two years, meaning that the time window for these reforms was closing.

### Texas HB4111

Texas House Bill 4111, proposed by Rep. James Talarico, D-Round Rock, would require all large public school systems to hire an officer to oversee diversity, equity and inclusion. This officer would need to have experience including, but not limited to, working with students who speak a language other than English and students in special education programs or certification in diversity, equity and inclusion, according to the bill.

The officer would “lead the district’s efforts to establish and sustain a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion” and “ensure that each student receives the necessary opportunities and resources to meet the student’s unique needs, abilities and aspirations,” among other duties.

Some districts in Texas, such as the Austin Independent School District (AISD), already have officers like those outlined in the bill. For example, AISD has the Council on Race and Equity in addition to the Equity Office, which is headed by Stephanie Hawley.

### George Floyd Act

Named after Houston native George Floyd, who was killed by a Minneapolis police officer, Texas House Bill 88 (HB88), also known as the George Floyd Act, aims to reform policing in Texas through common-sense reforms, setting reasonable limits on police use of force and improving both transparency and accountability for local law enforcement.

Filed by Rep. Senfronia Thompson, D-Houston, this bill offers up a variety of reforms, including a stipulation that officers should provide aid immediately to anyone needing medical attention as a result of force by a fellow officer. It would also require training in de-escalation and racial sensitivity as well as removing certain legal protections for officers. It also bans chokeholds and implements more disciplinary practices for officer misconduct.

“Above all,” Thompson said to the Texas Committee on Homeland Security and Public Safety, “this bill is about ending systemic racism... George Floyd wasn’t the first person to be brutalized and murdered by police officers in our criminal justice system. And he won’t be the last if the state doesn’t do something to correct that problem now.” With days left in the session, HB88 was left pending in committee.

### United States HR7120

Sponsored by U.S. Rep. Karen Bass, D-CA, the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act (HR7120) represents a comprehensive package of reforms designed to hold law enforcement accountable for misconduct, improve transparency through data collection and reform police training and policies.

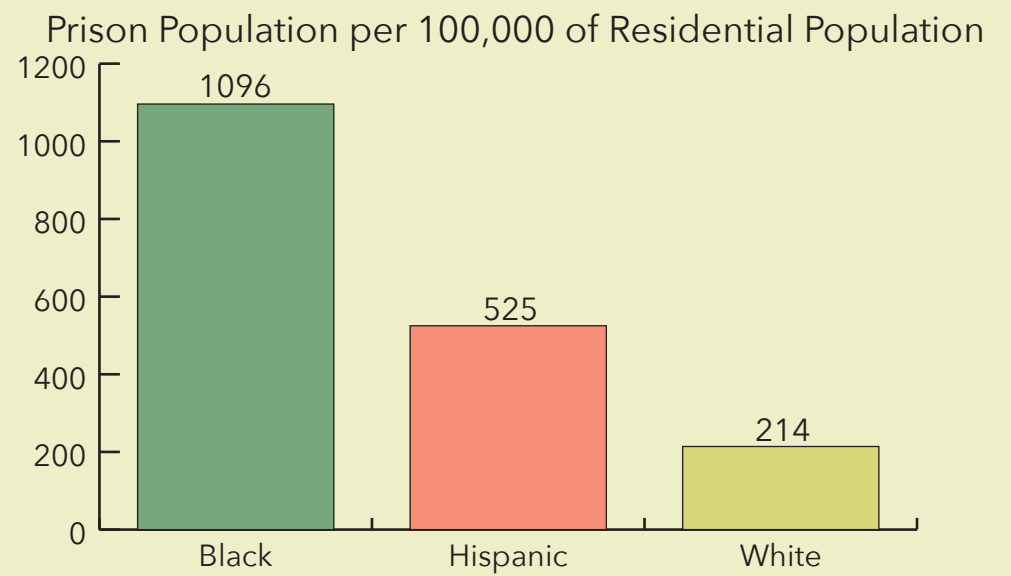
Among the many measures considered, this legislation limits the unnecessary use of force and restricts the use of no-knock warrants, chokeholds and carotid holds.

To improve the public’s awareness, the bill also creates a national registry — the National Police Misconduct Registry — to compile data on complaints and records of police misconduct. It also establishes new reporting requirements, including the use of force.

Finally, the legislation seeks to strengthen accountability and improve prosecution as it directs the Department of Justice to create uniform accreditation standards for law enforcement agencies and requires law enforcement officers to complete training on racial profiling, implicit bias and the duty to intervene when another officer uses excessive force.

With 230 co-sponsors, all of whom are Democrats, HR7120 has been left pending in the Senate since last summer.

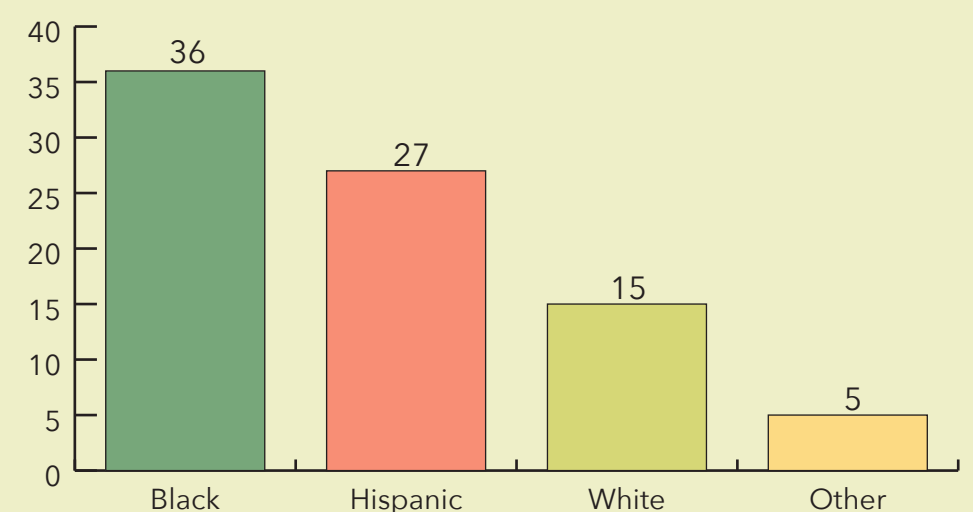
## Racial Inequality in Numbers



Source: Department of Justice

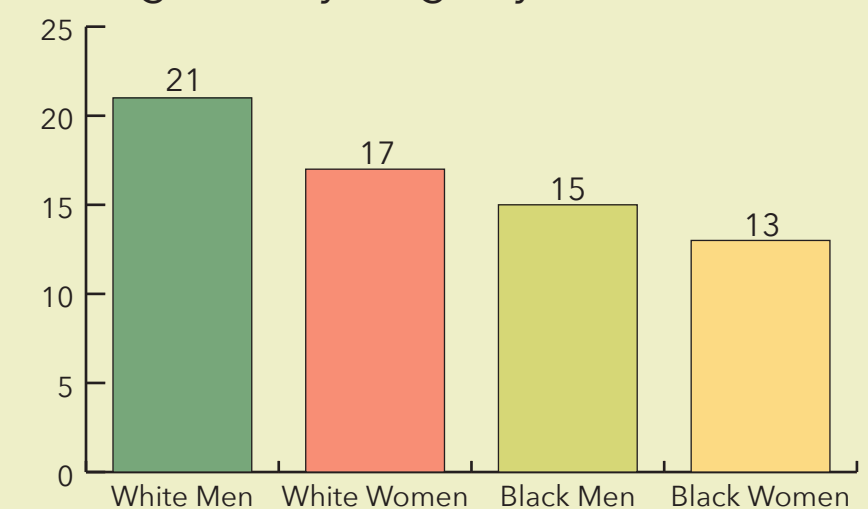
graphs by Sophia Chau

### Number Killed by Police per One Million of Population



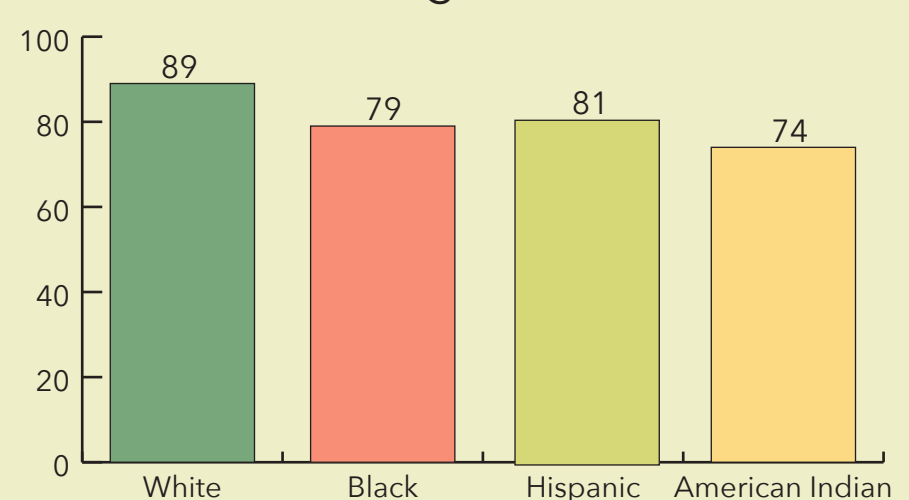
Source: The Washington Post

### Average Hourly Wage by Race and Gender

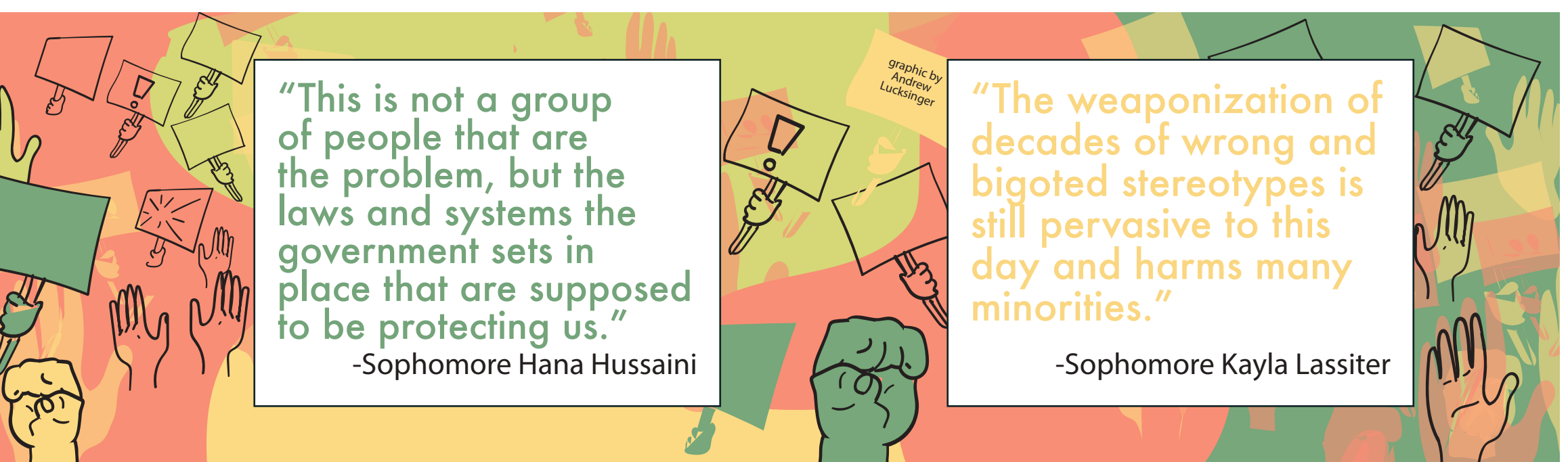


Source: Pew Research Center

### % That Graduate High School in Four Years



Source: National Center for Education Statistics



“This is not a group of people that are the problem, but the laws and systems the government sets in place that are supposed to be protecting us.”  
-Sophomore Hana Hussaini

“The weaponization of decades of wrong and bigoted stereotypes is still pervasive to this day and harms many minorities.”  
-Sophomore Kayla Lassiter

graphic by Andrew Lucksinger

## The Raptors Give Back

ANNABEL ANDRE | staff writer

Volunteering is something many high school students do to help better their communities, participate in school events or get volunteer hours. According to students, giving back to the community through volunteer work, like mentoring children, can be rewarding in more ways than one.

At LASA, students can find many opportunities to volunteer, such as joining one of the many charitable clubs at school like Helping Hands for Children, Bowls of Hope or Help the Homeless Club. Others tend to utilize different opportunities for volunteering through working with organizations like Generation SERVE, Austin Humane Society or Habitat for Humanity. According to students and teachers, volunteering provides students with a new outlook on the world and teaches them to be selfless.

Counselor Ashley Rios believes volunteering is very important and has many benefits. According to her, volunteering not only gives back to the communities that students are involved in, but also teaches students humanitarian skills that can't necessarily be taught in school.

"Giving back to the community is just a great way to stay connected and also realize how thankful we can be by giving back," Rios said. "There's the internal part of feeling proud of yourself, and you could really develop some skills that you can't develop in a classroom through community service."

Volunteering work can provide a multitude of beneficial support systems and necessary products for a neighborhood in need, according to Rios. She said even the smallest amount of work can make a huge difference and encourage more people to work for their community.

"I feel like it's a domino effect — one person does something good, and they impact people, and then those people might feel empowered to then serve their communities as well," Rios said. "So I think it's just a good way to give back but also a good way to get other people thinking."



**VOLUNTEER WORK** Sahana Sudarsan volunteers to help bag groceries at a food bank. She devotes much of her time to helping wherever she can. photo courtesy of Sahana Sudarsan

Senior Georgia McLeod is one of the founders of the LASA club Helping Hands for Children in Need. The club's mission is to support children in shelters and hospitals all across Austin by creating educational and crafty activities for them. According to her, it is not only important that volunteers be passionate about the cause they are working for; they should also be passionate about volunteering in general.

"I don't know if volunteering should necessarily be required because I feel like it should probably come out of the goodness of your heart and not necessarily doing it simply for the credit," McLeod said. "That's probably not going to be as beneficial."

Sophomore Sahana Sudarsan volunteers for Generation SERVE, a nonprofit organization that tries to promote volunteerism in kids. Similar to McLeod, Sudarsan believes that volunteer work should not be done with the motivation to get hours to graduate or look good to colleges but rather out of kindness and compassion.

"I think volunteering is something that colleges look for because it's beneficial for colleges, but it's also not something that you should be doing for the sole purpose of looking good to colleges," Sudarsan said. "I think that you benefit from volunteering only if you're doing it so that you can help other people. They're not looking for people who just do volunteering for volunteering's sake — they're looking for people who actually care about it."

Sudarsan has been volunteering since she was four years old thanks to the encouragement of her parents. She said she continues to volunteer today because it makes her feel good to have had a direct impact on the community around her.

"I keep volunteering because it really just makes me feel good, and it makes me feel accomplished, that I am having a direct impact on somebody else's life and I'm improving, and I'm impacting their life in a positive way," Sudarsan said. "I think that that's a really satisfying feeling to know that you are making somebody else's day better."

## Students Balance 9-to-5 Jobs

MADLINE VAN SLYKE | staff writer

High school students have many obligations. Homework, studying for tests, college applications and volunteering are all time intensive activities, but on top of all that, some students decide to take on outside jobs. In Texas, minors can be legally hired as young as 14, giving even freshmen a chance to begin working. Junior Frankie Gigliotti worked at Chili's, a chain restaurant.

"Basically, I would take people to their table, I would work the waitlist, I would clean tables and help people around the restaurant," Gigliotti said. "If they needed refills on their drinks or needed some sauce brought out, little things like that."

There are many ways that teens can begin to work and, according to a study done by Walden University, jobs can provide teens with insight into how to manage their time and earn their own money. Small businesses, which are independently-owned and typically centered around a specific product or service, are a way for students to earn money doing something that they enjoy, according to sophomore Thea Shanghani.

"I had a lot of free time on my hands, and I didn't really know what to do with my time," Shanghani said. "Then school got out, and all of a sudden, I had this huge amount of free time, so I began to crochet. I really liked it, and then I found out that my friend also liked it. So we decided to start a crocheting business together."

The Resilient Educator is a coalition working to provide strategies to help teachers and students navigate the work-life balance, through their website. According to the organization, budgeting time is an important skill that many students don't learn until they're in college or have begun their actual careers. Going from school to extracurricular activities and then to a job can mean having to do homework late at night or, in some cases, working ahead during the weekends to ensure everything is complete for the coming week. For Gigliotti, the balance between work and school wasn't an issue.

"I was able to make it so I didn't have to work during school nights except for Sunday," Gigliotti said. "I'd be able to do all my schoolwork during the week, and I'd try to get it done in the morning

before I had to go into work. I think that it helped a lot with time management knowing I had to do something later, so I could get my homework done now."

Working for their own businesses allows students to choose their hours, so the school-work balance was a nonissue for Shanghani. She found that creating her products enriched her school time.

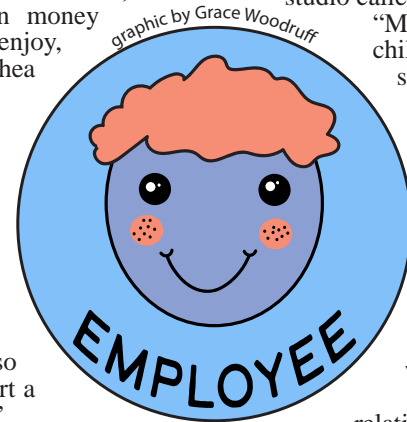
"The good thing about virtual school is you can join the lecture while still crocheting because it doesn't interfere with each other," Shanghani said. "It actually helps me focus when I am listening to a lecture, so it's good to do it."

Students' unique skills can help them in their jobs. If a student is knowledgeable about a specific subject, they can become a student tutor. If a student is in a sport, they can participate in leadership positions, teaching basics to younger learners and watching over them. For example, freshman Leyla Redfield works at a dance studio called Dance By Carly.

"My job is to be a supervisor of children and teach them certain skills it takes to be a dancer," Redfield said. "I am currently a full-time competition dancer at Dance By Carly, and it takes a lot mentally and physically to be in the competition world as a dancer. I teach my children how to handle all of the mental and physical strains that being in the competition world can cause."

Having a job can teach the relationship between earnings and education, the value of money, the importance of budgeting and can help build confidence, according to a resource article written by Walden University. However, the benefits are met with some cons, such as hurting academic achievement or instilling negative views about work.

"Students out there that are looking to get a job should know that you are going to have to sacrifice some things," Redfield said. "I would say it's worth it, but I don't know where your priorities are at, and it really depends on that. There can be a lot of pressure with a job, and making sure you can handle the school-work balance is important. I still think that I've learned a lot and that it is helpful to me to sort of dip my toes into working."



graphic by Grace Woodruff

## Staying Cool For The Summer

As the Pandemic Winds Down, Students Plan Long Awaited Vacations

KATIE BUSBY | staff writer

As the weather gets warmer and cars become uninhabitable again, students are starting to make their summer plans. While safety measures are still in place, and the pandemic is not over, people have more freedom with the vaccine to do things, such as seeing people and going places, that weren't options before.

Junior Amanda Li said that many things have been different online from in-person, including summer band camp. Summer band camp is a time during the summer when the band meets to practice and prepare a show.

"I'm looking forward to having a summer band season because last year, our summer season got canceled," Li said. "Not fully canceled; we did virtual, but that's not the same. So I'm excited for our summer band thing to start preparing for our fall show."

Freshman Ramona Gonzalez said she is looking forward to many things this summer, starting with being able to get vaccinated due to the Pfizer vaccine's emergency use authorization for 12 to 15-year-olds. Things like sports and travel, which may not have been available last summer, are also coming back.

"During the summer, I plan on being vaccinated," Gonzalez said. "I also plan on playing in the softball summer league with a few LASA softball people and then some people from the LBJ team. Also, I can see some of the family I haven't seen in about two years due to COVID-19 now that we can travel more safely. I'm also looking forward to hopefully doing some cross country summer training for the next season."

Freshman Lucy Pigford said she's planning to travel this summer. However, in addition to staying safe on planes, she has some concerns about the availability of things like rental cars after a year of not many people traveling.

"I am planning to go to Utah, and we're flying," Pigford said. "So I

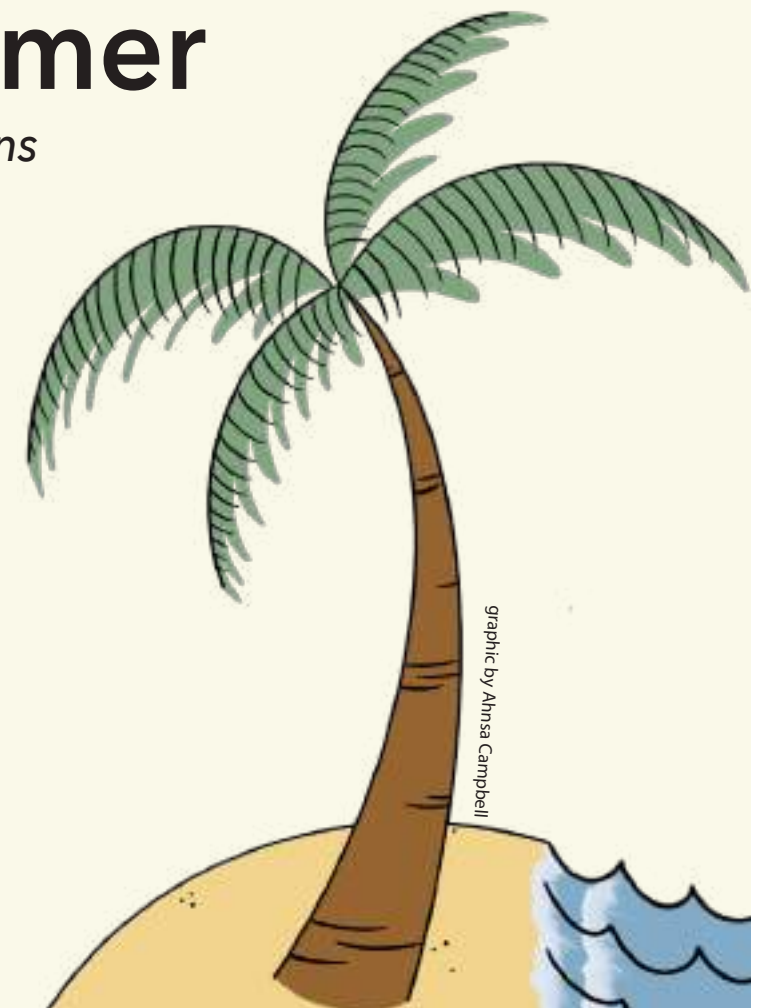
definitely think that with social distancing, and that kind of thing, that might be kind of an issue, plane capacity. I have heard that some rental car companies have sold all their cars to get money because last year, no one was using them, but now there's more demand, and they have no cars, so that might be a problem for us."

Not only has COVID-19 affected plans because of the preparation needed to take proper safety precautions; it has also had some big long-term effects. Places have had to shut down because of decreased customer demand amid COVID-19. Unfortunately, these places may have been part of people's summer plans. For Gonzalez, it was her summer camp that got shut down due to COVID-19.

"I do think that COVID-19 will change my summer plan in some ways because my summer camp got shut down forever due to COVID-19 and how hard it was on the camp," Gonzalez said. "I was planning on going there."

Overall, Li said that she's excited for this summer because while it might not be fully back to what we think of as normal, there are a lot more opportunities to do things. According to her, it's different from last summer, and we have come a long way.

"I'm glad to see our lives start to go more normal than it was this last year," Li said. "I think we've come a long way from the beginning of the pandemic. I'm excited to see more people do more things and have more opportunities that we didn't get to last summer."



graphic by Anisa Campbell

## LIP DUB

from page 1



**LIP DUB ANTICS** Newspaper class, Yearbook class and Audio Visual Production clean up after shooting. Some clubs and classes used props like newspapers in the video. photo by Emma McBride

Glasscock also made the choice to use photos of Zoom screens as the connection between each shot to represent the year. She said that she wanted to incorporate Zoom into the video without it being the main element.

"It's not that we are looking at an actual Zoom screen the whole time, but it is the medium which we pass through in order to connect the scenes," Glasscock said. "I thought that was super relevant because of the crazy year we've had and how much we have been on Zoom."

After the vision was decided, the Lip Dub crew began to film sections of the video. Audio Video Production

teacher Vanessa Mokry said the crew split up the video into different sections to ensure COVID-19 safety.

"We figured that we would not be able to do it all in one take because we would not be able to get 1,000 kids to come to school one day to do it," Mokry said. "We just didn't think that was feasible, but we thought they would come in smaller groups and then we could just put it together."

The split video changed the schedule of filming, according to Mokry. Instead of working in multiple days to film one video, one clip is filmed in about two hours.

"Usually, when we do a Lip Dub, we get everybody in position for one day, and then the next day we do a dress rehearsal and then the next day we do the real thing," Mokry said. "Shooting the people that came today, they do all those things on the same day. They figure out where to go. They figure out how to be arranged. Then they do a little bit of a rehearsal, and then they shoot for real."

Senior and Lip Dub assistant director Melody Main agreed that having separate videos to film has made scheduling film times challenging. Main said that it has been particularly difficult to film larger groups of people.

"We have some really big sets for Theater,

Orchestra and Band," Main said. "Those are big rooms that we have to get permission for. Then the library, the gym [and] lots of different locations that we have to worry about and then also scheduling for teams like the dance team or sports teams, making sure that we're not overlapping with anyone's sports practice or band practice."

While the scheduling portion is difficult, Main said that splitting the video into different parts has allowed for more variety in the video. Each clip can have separate characters and locations, which Main has enjoyed.

"In a regular Lip Dub year, everyone would be lined up in one long stretch," Main said. "We're going to just replace that with several smaller

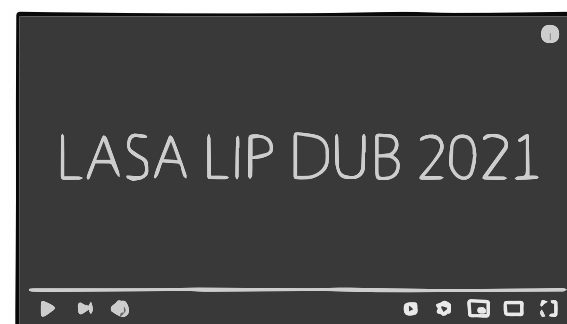
stretches that I think will look really nice when all put together. I think that this allows us to be more creative with our concepts because we can change our concepts 17 times and our main characters."

Smith said, "so you get a nicer-sounding product to listen to."

The Lip Dub required weeks of planning, filming,

editing and decision making to finalize. Lip Dub filming ended on May 21, and the video is expected to be released during the first week of June. Glasscock said she is glad that the tradition was continued, and she hopes that the video process has helped students connect with each other.

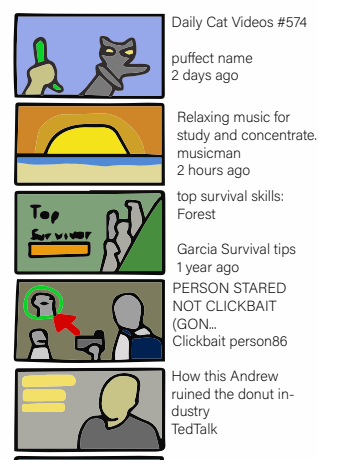
"It's important to have a Lip Dub in 2021 because for the majority of the year, most everyone has been online for LASA, so this is an opportunity to really bring the school together and have everyone in video," Glasscock said. "Even though we're filming at different times, I think it'll be a great way to showcase the school, and it might even give people a sense of community that maybe they felt they've been lacking for this year."



LASA Lip Dub 2021  
0 views June 1, 2021

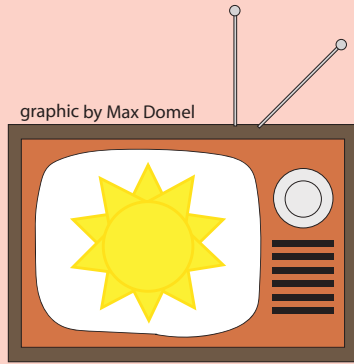
Educational Channel

graphic by Juan Ramirez Delgadillo



## Entertainment Picks

TV Shows for Summer 2021



"Elite"

Season 4 Out June 18

WRENNY COLLAMER | entertainment editor

"Elite" is set against the backdrop of Las Encinas, a fictional high school amongst Spain's most prestigious academies. All the allures of a teen drama are there — the extravagance, the romance, the murder — but "Elite" manages to pull off a poignancy that is rare in the genre because its themes feel relevant and impactful. The show follows three scholarship kids as they become intertwined in the glamorous tragedies of the wealthy Las Encinas students, and the story eventually ends in murder. The concept allows the show to immediately comment on the wealth imbalance that pervades the fictional Madrid of "Elite," highlighting differences and conflicts between the scholarship students and the world that they are thrown into. Further into the series, themes of sexuality, drug abuse and loss are emphasized. Of course, the show's glossy coating is always there — a stimulating, vibrant soundtrack and eye-catching outfits add to the entertainment. Ultimately, "Elite" is a brain-candy mystery-thriller that is perfect for summer. Who doesn't want to escape their own struggles with the attractive problems of the students of Las Encinas? Season 4 of "Elite" comes out June 18 on Netflix, with new members including Manu Rios, Carla Diaz, and Pol Granch. Its release is preceded by four short stories of characters from previous seasons.

"Ted Lasso"

Season 2 Out July 23

MAX DOMEL | entertainment editor

"You know what the happiest animal on Earth is? It's a goldfish. Got a 10-second memory. Be a goldfish." Coach Ted Lasso, played by American actor and comedian Jason Sudeikis, often gives this sort of inspirational advice in Apple TV+'s soccer comedy show "Ted Lasso" and, in many ways, is that goldfish himself. Ted is more than just a football coach from the states taking on the job at fictional English Premier League side AFC Richmond. Despite facing harsh criticism from local fans who think he's a joke and others who want him to fail, Ted is always a source of light and warmth for his players and co-workers. He uses his charm when telling various funny expressions, analogies and pop culture references to try to win the doubters over, even when his marriage is in trouble or when he constantly has to deal with locker room drama and losing games. Ted's inexperience with soccer plays a part in some great comedic moments in the series' first season, but is also surprisingly accompanied by a lot of well-developed character arcs and emotional beats that make for a fun and heartwarming viewing experience that is rewarding both for those familiar with the game and non-sports fans.

"Nathan for You"

All Seasons Available Now

WRENNY COLLAMER | entertainment editor

"Nathan For You" follows an aspiring businessman as he comedically attempts to help struggling companies. From proposing a new poop-flavored frozen yogurt as a publicity stunt to save a struggling yogurt chain to creating a coffee joint deemed "Dumb Starbucks" that becomes a trendy success when it captivates Los Angeles, Nathan's concepts stretch far into absurdity. What makes the show truly stand out is Nathan's character. His tolerance of awkward situations is unmatched — it can be hard to watch as he blunders business decisions and forces people into uncomfortable situations, but the discomfort holds a strange appeal. The rotating dynamics between Nathan, played by comedian Nathan Fielder, and each new business owner keep the episodes fresh, and the short lengths of the episodes make the show great for a quick summer laugh. "Nathan For You" blurs the line between what is real and fake; part of its appeal is the fact that reality is never made clear. It forces the viewer to think, "How did Nathan pull this off?" It's important, though, not to think too much about "Nathan For You" and instead just sit back and soak in Nathan's irrationality.

"Loki"

Season 1 Out June 9

MAX DOMEL | entertainment editor

The Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) is already off to a strong start in 2021 with the releases of original Disney+ shows "WandaVision" and "The Falcon and the Winter Soldier." The third installment this year of "Loki" will hopefully be able to continue what its two predecessors have accomplished in regard to visual effects and compelling storytelling, as well as fostering the creation of memorable fan theories and memes aplenty. While we'll have to wait and see what exactly will unfold in the six episodes coming out this summer, the basic premise seems to revolve around an alternate version of the God of Mischief himself — played by British actor Tom Hiddleston — who is brought to a mysterious organization after stealing the fluorescent blue Tesseract stone in the 2019 movie "Avengers: Endgame" and may have to travel across different timelines to solve some problems. And similar to "Endgame," we may be given another look at events from previous MCU movies — and possibly new versions of them — as Loki switches between timelines throughout the season. No matter what, though, you can certainly count on "Loki" to be an entertaining adventure full of personality and action.

## Spanish VI Students Get Creative with "Noche"

MADELEINE VAN SLYKE | staff writer

"Noche de Las Estrellas," often referred to as "Noche," is the Spanish VI class's annual production to showcase students' talents and passion for the Spanish language. Students in Spanish VI, the highest-level Spanish class at LASA, work together to create a program that exhibits Latin American culture through song and dance.

Senior Emily Kahn has been to the production in the past and participated in it this year. Her small group created a video based around Celia Cruz's song "La Vida es un Carnaval." The video used transitions inspired by popular techniques on TikTok and showcased alternating costumes.

"It's basically a celebration of Latin American music and culture, learning about different kinds of music genres and then showcasing those through a sort of colorful and exciting celebration," Kahn said. "Students lip-sync to songs and wear really crazy elaborate costumes that they've been working on creating throughout the school year."

COVID-19 has brought changes to this LASA tradition. Because large, indoor gatherings have been canceled or postponed, the students had to find a new way to present the program. Senior Alisha Morejon worked with her small group to create a music video instead of the usual dancing and lip syncing on stage.

"This year, because of COVID, we couldn't do an in-person performance, so we recorded music videos lip-syncing and dancing to the songs," Morejon said. "A lot of it was sort of the same, but it was cool because we could have more creative freedom."

With the original uncertainty of an in-person show, the class was presented with options. Teacher Luis Ramirez posed a vote to the students to decide whether to do Noche. The class originally voted no. However, following more discussion about what the year was going to look like, a second vote changed the decision to a yes. In a conversation with a student, Ramirez voiced his excitement in the class's choice to undertake the event.

"The previous class was extremely bummed out because they were working on an in-person show, and then COVID happened, and everything got canceled," Ramirez said. "I didn't want a repeat of that same energy, and I wanted you guys to show off your talent and show off your passion for the Spanish language, so I was very disappointed that you would resort to taking the easy route. I was really, really happy that the second time around you voted yes."

Keeping the main components of past years was important in planning the virtual event. Students, such as Morejon's group, worked together to create the videos and took on new roles that had not been previously viable.

"We split into groups based on what song we were going to do," Morejon said. "My group had four people, so we split the work just like any other group project. Then, on top of that, we split into groups based on promoting the show and other roles, such as the host. I was in charge of the social media with another student. Some people had to write the script for the host, and some people had to work on YouTube and edit the videos."

According to Kahn, there were drawbacks to Noche's new format. She said that the class as a whole, though close because they had gone



BARBILLAS CANTANDO Senior Diogo Ledesma's chin turns into a party singer for one of the Spanish VI class's "Noche de las Estrellas" music videos. People chime in with their reactions in the premiere's live chat. photo courtesy of Diogo Ledesma

through previous Spanish classes together, had a disconnect. The lack of a live audience also had an impact on the energy and feel of the individual recorded performances.

"I've been going to Noche since I've been at LASA because it's so much fun," Kahn said. "The live performances definitely have a different sort of energy because the audience loved it. This is a huge fun school event. It definitely took some getting used to the lack of that energy to feed off of and to overcome how much it has changed."

This year, students were able to choose more of what they were doing and how they wanted to present the music. Khan said she enjoyed branching out from the traditional composition of the performances.

"We had more flexibility in terms of the way in which we showcased our songs," Kahn said. "In the past, it has typically just been one structure: you choreograph it, you lip-sync it and you dress up in costumes. It was cool that this year we were able to tell the story of the song as opposed to just dancing to it."

Now that Noche has happened online, there may be some new aspects integrated into future years. Ramirez said he believes that the virtual format gave students some creative advantages. He said he expects there to be a wider variety of media incorporated into coming shows.

"I think you would see more multimedia integrated," Ramirez said. "For example, you may have someone performing in the front, but you may have a creative video that they did for the background, or you may have a superimposed version of them, like you would see at an awards show. You may also see students on stage playing live music."

Ramirez said that the reaction to this year's show has been very positive. Though he is looking forward to next year when the show will be able to be back in person, he said he is very satisfied with the quality of production that the students were able to achieve this year.

"I've gotten comments from all different kinds of people and teachers saying how much they enjoyed the show, enjoyed the music, enjoyed the production and how excited they are for when we get back in person and how the show is going to advance and change," Ramirez said. "The students really liked it, and, like I said, the teachers have given praise, as well as the administrators."

Noche de Las Estrellas can be viewed on YouTube under the channel "LASA Noche de Las Estrellas" or by scanning the QR code to the left.

QR code by Wrenny Collamer



## Movie Lovers Rejoice as Theaters Begin Reopening

REBECCA SCARAMUZZI | club contributor

Dim lights, loud speakers, a large screen, fresh popcorn and a cold soda have been staples of the movie theater experience since it's become a mainstream outing. Whether you go once a year or once a week, there is always something to watch at the movie theater.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit and movie theaters were forced to close, plans to go to movie theaters have been limited. However, starting a couple of months ago, more and more movie theaters have started to re-open.

This has likely been welcome news for frequent moviegoers who were unable to visit their favorite theaters during the pandemic. First-year Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary student Sydney Harkrider, who enjoys movies and used to work at several different movie theaters, said she was deeply impacted by the widespread closure of theaters.

"It was honestly tragic," Harkrider said. "I was actually at an Alamo Drafthouse watching Sonic last year when I got the notification that businesses were starting to close. I had no idea that moment of being in a movie theater, something so completely normal for me, would be something I genuinely couldn't do anymore. It was heartbreaking as someone who has tons of friends and even family who work at different movie theaters. Everyone lost their jobs and were all wondering when life could continue again."

Junior Shivani Regan hasn't been to a movie theater since the COVID-19 pandemic began. With theaters starting to reopen, though, she is looking forward to finally being able to have the movie theater experience again soon.

"Just being able to watch a movie uninterrupted and in a quiet space and on such a big screen; because watching a movie on a big screen that's four times the size of the one you have at home is a really cool experience," Regan said.

However, people planning to return to theaters are still aware of possible health concerns. According to Regan, though, there shouldn't be too many problems if everyone follows basic safety practices.

"I think there are always concerns," Regan said. "I think just making sure people are spaced out enough. Also, there are so many people that don't want to get vaccinated or take a vaccine for whatever reason, so that definitely scares me. I think for the most part, we figured out how to be pretty safe, getting our lives back with COVID. I think that if everyone wears masks and maybe sits at every other seat, I think it'll be okay."

Freshman Manuel Gasper recently went to an AMC movie theater and followed the health precautions implemented by the theater. The presence of smaller crowds allowed his experience to be safer with more manageable social distancing.

"There were only like 10 people in the theater, so there was a lot of social distancing," Gasper said. "I'm not sure if this is a COVID thing, but they also did not accept cash, which is weird to me."

To ensure that movie theaters are as safe as they can be for attendants, additional safety measures must be developed behind the scenes. Customers have needed to be more diligent with online registration as well.

"Most theaters have brand-new cleaning procedures and even schedule the movie times further apart to ensure their cleaning crew can be diligent," Harkrider said. "When you buy the tickets for your party, the system will automatically have two seats on either side of your party blocked off so no one else will sit next to you."

Now, with more people getting vaccinated and having a better understanding of how to prevent the spread of COVID-19, it seems like things might finally be looking up. Moviegoers finally have hope.

"My hope is that this simple joy can be normal for us all again soon," Harkrider said. "There are so many films that were missed in the past year because it wasn't safe for us to return to the movies just yet. But now, with vaccination rates going up, everyone learning how to do their part and businesses ensuring safety, all I want is to grab some popcorn, dim those lights and see the latest blockbuster hit."



BACK ON THE BIG SCREEN Alamo Drafthouse's South Lamar Austin location awaits its newest visitors now that local Alamo theaters, along with other theater chains, have reopened their doors to the public. Alamo theaters implement seat buffers for greater social distancing, mask requirements and even MERV-13 air filtration systems among other things to diminish guests' and workers' potential exposure to COVID-19. photo by Emma McBride



**NATURE** Freshman Art I student Marin Maycotte made a landscape painting for her art class. Maycotte said she is good at drawing, but new mediums, like painting, have challenged her this year. photo courtesy of Marin Maycotte



**DIFFERENT MEDIUMS** Freshman Art I student Sofia Francis holds up two pieces she has created this year. Despite distance learning, art teachers have prioritized keeping projects and materials diverse. photo courtesy of Sofia Francis

## Art Curriculum Finds Workarounds

### How LASA's Creative Department has Adapted to Online Learning

LILI XIONG | staff writer

Walking into LASA's library, one might stumble upon a set of pointe shoes decorated with colorful flowers or a pair of running shoes encrusted with shiny metals. Despite the struggles distance learning brings for a class that involves physical drawing, sculpting and creating, LASA's art program has put together a curriculum that has produced a variety of student work.

Freshman Sofia Francis is taking Art I this year and said she is especially excited for the class's current project. The class has utilized paints, graphite and other mediums of art for their projects, but now students are using crayons in class for the first time.

"Right now, we're doing this wax crayon portrait project," Francis said. "I'm really interested in it because we're using a kind of unorthodox method to do it where we shade in a cool color and color in with a warm color to match the color of our skin. I think that the portraits are really coming together and really showing what we've learned in the class over time."

According to Art I teacher Elizabeth Hewitt, students have used the year to figure out their specific art styles. She has taught art at LASA for 11 years and has witnessed the curriculum, as well as the students, evolve.

"Our students, especially in upper-level classes, are developing more of a unique style," Hewitt said. "Students are focused on emphasizing that even more now that we're online. We definitely have more students taking ownership of their voice in the art process."

When Francis was choosing her elective, she didn't know if Art would be virtual or not, but she said the course has gone fairly smoothly. An art supply kit was provided in the beginning of the year when students picked up their textbooks.

"LASA has put together a really great art program this year, even with the boundaries of being at home, then in-person, and then at home," Francis said. "Honestly, the only issue has been not being able to get the teacher's advice during class. You don't always have someone constantly over your shoulder saying, 'Hey, you should change this.' It's hard to get feedback, but otherwise, it's been very good, and we all have the resources that we need."

Remote learning for Art at LASA involves a combination of

recorded and live examples and students taking pictures of the progress they've made with their projects. According to Hewitt, even with all the technology at her disposal, there were still parts of the normal curriculum she had to cut out.

"In a typical year, we would bounce between 2D and 3D mediums a lot," Hewitt said. "For example, students might draw a house for one unit, and in the next unit we would sculpt a house out of clay, and that gives people an option on what to choose if they want to do something on paper or make something out of clay for their bigger piece or work. We haven't been able to do that this year, but we've been trying to incorporate as much push and pull of styles as we could this year."

Freshman Art I student Marin Maycotte has enjoyed this push and pull of styles. According to her, it's been an interesting experience because it tests everyone's strengths and weaknesses.

"We don't just do drawing," Maycotte said. "We once made shoe sculptures, and I think that the next unit is crochet. I'm good at drawing, but I wasn't good at some of the other projects, so you explore all different types of mediums."

Despite the obstacles art classes have faced due to the unconventional school year, many students, such as Maycotte, have found time at home and isolation to be inspiring for their art. She said that art became a social outlet for her as well.

"Isolation gives me more time to focus on art," Maycotte said. "In the summer, I had nothing to do, so I spent two weeks straight just creating art. It gave me more opportunities, like going on Zoom calls with my grandmother once a week and creating art together. We also got a few friends to join in on that."

According to Francis, the pandemic has allowed her, too, to spend more time on her art. The extra time and continued practice have helped her improve her skills as an artist.

"When I get bored, I definitely have a tendency to want to draw," Francis said. "So the pandemic has been very good for that. I've drawn a lot more than I usually do. Also, there's been improvement. I don't usually improve very much in my art because I don't practice it so much, but this year I've had a lot more time to practice it."

Hewitt said she believes that resilience is key to keeping the creative juices flowing. Even with online learning, she said that she continues to appreciate being able to teach at LASA.

"Teaching here is wonderful," Hewitt said. "I love it. I literally wouldn't teach art anywhere else. The student body is so different and more passionate, hardworking, persevering and resilient than any other campus I've ever been at. It's a joy to work here with you all. We can set the bar way, way, way high, and students will keep jumping to meet it, no matter what that bar is. Also, we've always gotten the support that we need financially from students, parents and the admin to make sure that we have this lovely little art world here."

**"We've been trying to incorporate as much push and pull of styles as we could this year."**

-Art I Teacher Elizabeth Hewitt

## Fanfic Hobby Fuels a Community

### Enthusiasts Use the Medium to Add Personal Content to Fictional Works

EWAN MCINERNEY | staff writer

Fan fiction refers to fictional writing based off of an existing work of fiction made by fans of the original work. Fans can write their own continuations or prequels of these original stories, sometimes introducing new characters and settings. Fan art, on the other hand, is artwork that usually involves images or animations based off of characters or scenes from already-published works. Fan art is spread through social media platforms devoted to sharing images, Instagram in particular. Artists and writers have different reasons for producing works of art and literature based on their favorite movies, books, games and TV shows but often express that fanmade pieces can add to the original work and the community as a whole.

Sophomore Helen Bigge has been writing fan fiction based on games and TV shows for about a year. She said that reading fan fiction that other people have written can add depth to the original story and provide inspiration for her own writing.

"A lot of times, I can get even more involved into the original story because of the fan works that I read," Bigge said. "It's just a whole new layer, and people do completely different things with the same setup and characters. It's a great way to explore things that could have happened or focus on parts of the story that didn't get enough attention before. Sometimes, I have 15 ideas on what to write, and then I read someone else's fanfic, and it gives me 20 more."

Junior Marina Kinzy has created a number of fan art pieces based on several TV shows and books, including "Six of Crows, Shadow and Bones" and "Lost in Space." According to Kinzy, creating and looking at fan art can help create a better visual representation of the source material.

"Sometimes, fan art adds content to the media that it comes from by helping you imagine what a character or place

looks like," Kinzy said. "This is especially true for fan art based off of books. Since you can't see the character you're drawing, it's very interesting to use clues from the book, as well as get ideas from other pieces of fan art, about how different things appear."

Sophomore T-Wolf Nguyen has been writing fan fiction for about a year based on video games, particularly interpretations of characters in "Five Nights at Freddy's," a survival game. Nguyen said that reading and writing fan fiction can deepen people's understanding of the original work.

"I think that fan fiction, as well as other fan content like fan art and cosplays, definitely add to the original content that it's based off of in several ways," Nguyen said. "For one, it helps keep the fandom going, in a sense. Through seeing everybody else's take on what the original author or creator produced, there's a lot of enjoyment that you can get from getting new ideas and finding new understandings of characters, and it makes you appreciate the original work more when you see what can come from it."

Fan fiction is unique in that its general aim is not to make money off of writing a story. Nguyen said they believe that this lack of financial motivation allows fan fiction writers to focus more on representation in terms of character demographics.

"Whenever fan content is made, there's usually a pretty heavy emphasis on minority inclusivity," Nguyen said. "Often, what happens when the source media is being written or produced, there's little financial incentive for most popular platforms to be inclusive. Whenever a fandom comes to life, you have a much more diverse group because the source media can attract a lot of different groups of people from all walks of life, and

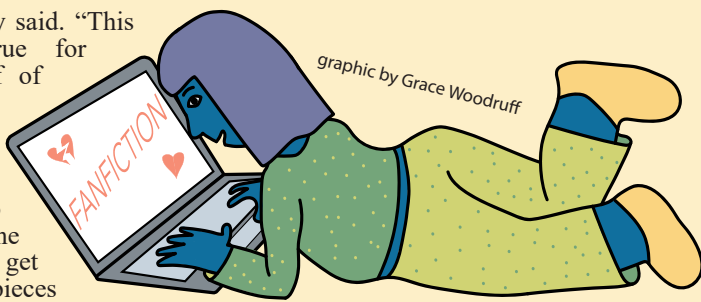
they can promote things like minority representation and LGBT representation by making them come to life in their characters."

Bigge said that the community a fandom creates is what is most enjoyable about fan fiction. A fandom can contribute more to a story than one original writer can, she said.

"The thing that I most enjoy about fan fiction is really just the sheer number of ideas that are being thrown around by everybody else who's writing," Bigge said. "With the amount of people that make up a fandom, there's so much more that can be explored in terms of alternate endings, history and relationships between characters. Of course, the original author is one person, and they have to be pretty good in the first place, but collaboration is always what fosters the most creativity."

Kinzy shared a similar opinion on how fanmade content can enable the spread of ideas within fandoms. According to her, art made by other people can contribute more to her own view of the original character or scene.

"When you see a bunch of different people creating fan art of characters, even if you already know what they look like, they can still be captured in many different ways that you might not have seen before," Kinzy said. "Even if the picture is just from a different angle or a different view, it still contributes to your understanding of the character. It's definitely a very imaginative process where many different people can contribute to a collective idea in a creative way."



graphic by Grace Woodruff

## Coffeehouse

### The Unorthodox 2021 Show

NEVIN HALL | staff writer

Every May, LASA is electrified by talk of who is going to Coffeehouse, who will be performing and what people are most excited for. Without a doubt, Coffeehouse is amongst the treasured traditions of LASA — up there with the Lip Dub, Senior Salute and the myth of the "green hallway." Over time, Coffeehouse has evolved into the event that students and staff across the school know today. This year, though, LASA won't exactly see the same event it has come to expect.

Due to the pandemic, Coffeehouse was harder to plan than during a normal year. Corey Snyder, who teaches the Songwriting elective and is traditionally responsible for planning Coffeehouse, tried to keep the event as close to previous standards as possible.

"I always try to make the focus on the students," Snyder said. "So sometimes, we have a real hard year where there's a lot of tragedy around, and we need healing and positivity. Other years, it's a bummer of a year, and everybody just needs a good party."

COVID-19 did intrude and change this year's event. Coffeehouse this year opted for a produced, online format rather than in-person performances.

"We really, really, really had our hopes set on a big live event," Snyder said, "but because parameters keep changing, it takes months to plan such a thing, and we never know what's going on for weeks."

Of course, it wasn't all COVID-19 that changed up Coffeehouse this year. Coffeehouse on its own is simply different every year.

"I only have six kids in Songwriting this year," Snyder said. "Last year, I had 24 kids in the class, and so putting on a show for 1,000 people with a crew of 24 is way different than trying to put something together with a group of six."

Coffeehouse, like all good traditions, is old and storied. It was imported from the Liberal Arts Academy (LAA), one of the two predecessor academies to LASA — those being the Liberal Arts Academy and the Science Academy — and has undergone all kinds of change over the years. English teacher Brad Sharp is a fervent attendee of Coffeehouse and has witnessed much of the event's evolution.

"We've moved venues several times," Sharp said. "One year, it was in the school gym here and in a hallway. But the last time we did, over 1,000 tickets were sold. I mean, it's the biggest social event of last season outside of prom. And it's a chance for students to showcase stuff that has nothing to do with math or science."

Coffeehouse, like plenty of things, has been caught up in the history of LASA itself. United States History teacher and former LAA student Kimberly Pettigrew recalls the state of Coffeehouse before the two schools merged.

"I don't know when it started at the LAA, but it started [at] the LAA, and the LAA had a [class] cap of 70-ish kids," Pettigrew said. "So because it was really small, we had Coffeehouse in February when you would want a hot drink because it's cold outside. And we had it at the Zilker Park Clubhouse. The stage was inside the building, and there'd be a bonfire outside. But that was easier when you have like 200 kids, max."

Coffeehouse is by no means the only tradition to be imported and changed upon arrival here at LASA. Plenty of the traditions often seen as belonging to LASA can be traced back to the LAA.

"It's interesting thinking about what our LASA is, the traditions and how many of them are actually from LAA traditions," Pettigrew said. "The Composer, the literary magazine, came out from the LAA. We called it the Rampage because our mascot was a ram."

Coffeehouse, regardless of its origins or of any other mitigating factor, consistently receives positive reactions from students and staff. Sharp struggled to choose his favorite year.

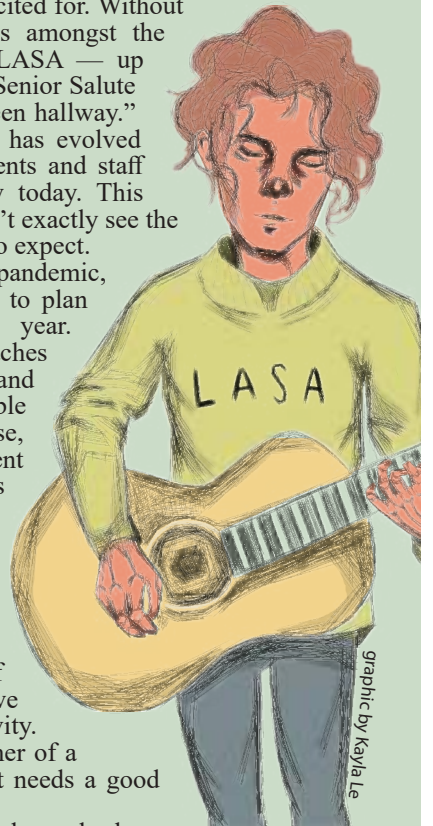
"Oh, I wouldn't know which one was the best, you couldn't know which one was the best," Sharp said. "It's hard to choose."



**VOCALS AND CHORDS** Junior Jaxon Gonzales participated in Coffeehouse, playing his guitar while singing. Gonzales has several original songs. photo courtesy of Louisa McDaniel



**SINGING AT A DISTANCE** Seniors Freddie Uriostegui and Sophia McLaughlin-Diaz are filmed as they run through their performance. This year, Coffeehouse is a pre-filmed video with a planned screening in which seniors will receive priority seating. photo courtesy of Louisa McDaniel



graphic by Kayla Lee

## TRANSGENDER ATHLETES

from page 1

There has been one notable instance in Texas where this came up. Mack Beggs is a trans wrestler, who was female at birth but identifies as male. University Interscholastic League rules forced him to wrestle on the female wrestling team at his high school in Euless, Texas. In 2017, a parent of another athlete tried to file a lawsuit against him to prevent him from competing at all. They argued that because he was taking low-dose testosterone injections as a part of his transition, the competition was unfair. However, Beggs was still allowed to compete and won the Texas state championship two years in a row. Supporters of this bill say that it encourages fair competition, but a trans male competing on a female sports team may have an unfair advantage

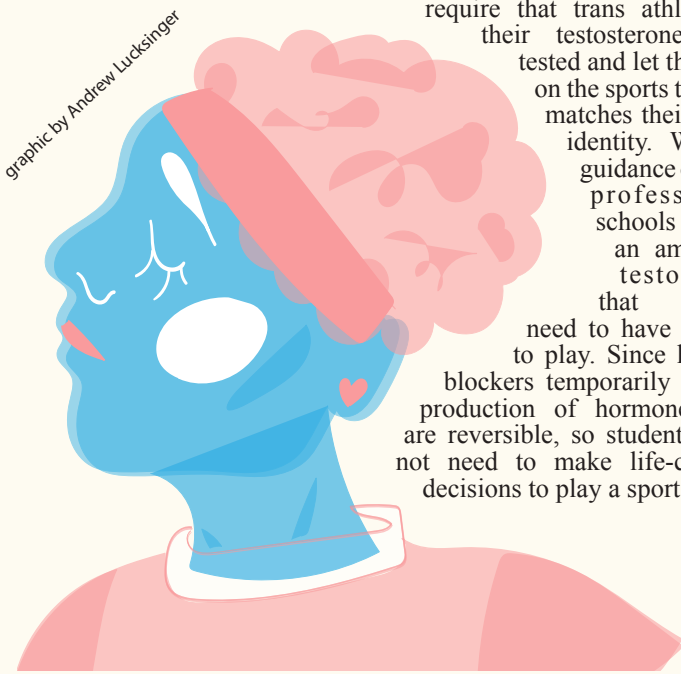
**“Politics has no place here. These are individual conversations between clinicians, patients and families about what’s best. The AAP applauds the hard work of our chapters focused on protecting transgender youth at the state level.”**

- Executive Director Mark Del Monte

over his competitors if he is on testosterone.

The best way to solve this issue in schools is to require that trans athletes get their testosterone levels tested and let them play on the sports team that matches their gender identity. With the guidance of health professionals, schools can set an amount of testosterone that athletes need to have in order to play. Since hormone blockers temporarily stop the production of hormones, they are reversible, so students would not need to make life-changing decisions to play a sport.

graphic by Andrew Luchsinger



## Sports Facilities Fluctuate

Move to Eastside Memorial Brings Change to LASA Athletics

EWAN MCINERNEY | staff writer

The structural and institutional shifts affecting LASA are a big change for a small school.

Athletic facilities, schedules and structures are changing with the move to Eastside Memorial. Students and staff in the athletic department have varying opinions on the advantages and disadvantages of the move when it comes to sports.

In terms of scheduling, drastic changes have already been made to the sports programs at LASA and throughout the Austin Independent School District (AISD) because of COVID-19. Previously, several sports teams used the Delco Activity Center, an AISD sports facility, for practices and games. However, midway through the 2020-21 school year, the activity center was converted into a COVID-19 vaccination site. As a result, this year, some of LASA's basketball and volleyball practices and games were moved to middle school campuses in the Austin area. LASA's future site, however, contains athletic facilities on campus.

Athletic coordinator Bryan Crews is in support of the move and the effect it will have on the school's athletic department. He said that the sports facilities becoming more localized will make it easier to organize and schedule events.

“Lately, we’ve been all over the place with practices,” Crews said. “In addition to the basketball and volleyball teams not being able to use Delco anymore, we’ve been spread out all year in terms of our facilities in general. Scheduling football and soccer practice has been very complicated, and the track team uses Nelson Field, so it’s going to be a great benefit to us because everything is going to be on our campus.”

Crews believes that the move will benefit LASA's sports teams overall, but some students on sports teams have a different opinion on the matter. According to Hadley Wright, a freshman on the varsity volleyball team, issues could arise involving construction at the new campus, which may continue past the summer and stretch into next school year.

“The move is definitely going to make our events easier to coordinate in the long run, but there are a few short-term drawbacks that could happen,” Wright said. “I heard that the gym at the Eastside Memorial campus will be the last thing to be renovated for the next school year, so it’s possible that we could play the first few games, or even completely have the season, at Delco. The new campus is close to LASA, but it’s farther away from Delco, so we could end up with something resembling our current situation but even more difficult to coordinate since we’d have to bus between the two locations all the time.”

Hadley also gave a more in-depth explanation on how the volleyball team, specifically, was affected during the 2020-21 school year and how the logistics of practices and games will be changing next school year. She said that the Delco gym's restrictions were detrimental to the team's performance throughout the year.

“Even when the Delco gym was available to us before it became a vaccination center, it was still the only place where the volleyball team could practice,” Wright said. “This meant that volleyball practices had to be cut short, which made them only one hour instead of two hours. And in addition to that, we had three teams spread out over only two courts, which meant that the freshman team got even less time to practice. The season was cut short, so we immediately had a couple of games right after the

preseason, and we definitely weren't ready. The difference this year is that we'll have two gyms, so all the teams will be able to practice at the same time, and we'll have more time to prepare for games towards the beginning of the year.”

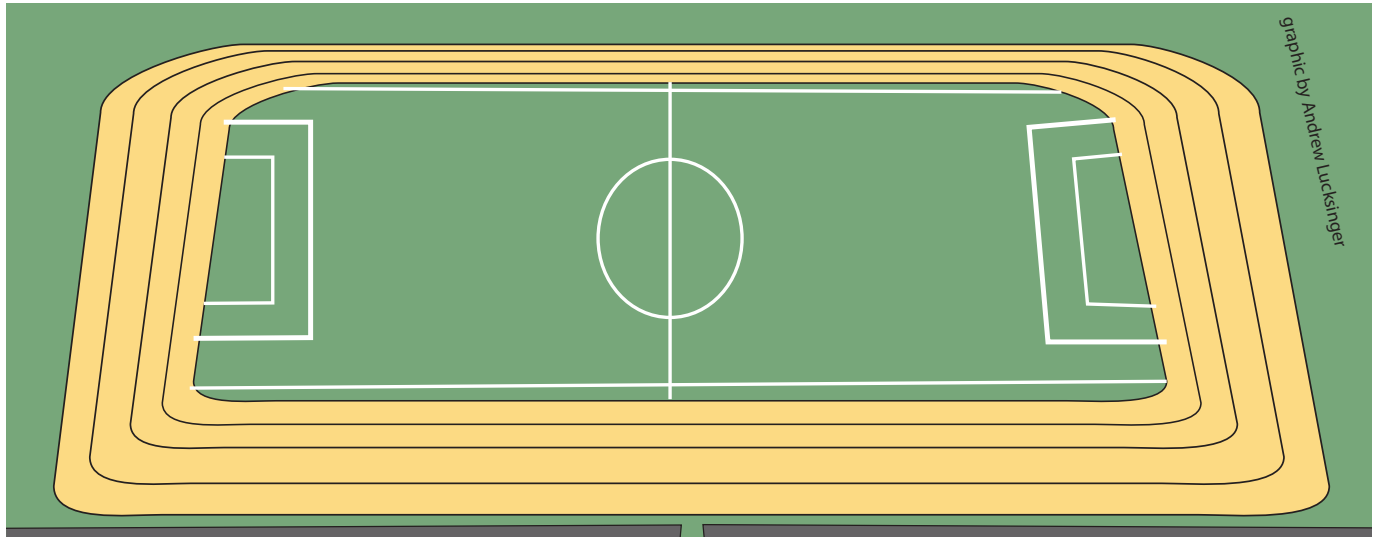
Major McIlvain is a sophomore on the JV baseball team. According to McIlvain, one of the bigger issues that the team experienced in the past school year was not related to logistics or scheduling but to the size of the team itself.

“This year was a tough year,” McIlvain said. “Every two years, UIL evaluates and redesignates the size of the school's sports teams and what sizes of school we can play against. This year, the baseball team fell in between the 4A and 5A groups. The solution was to split the LASA and LBJ teams a year before we moved...On top of that, we weren't even able to practice with the LBJ team because of COVID, and we really struggled because of that.”

In addition to having more sports facilities, the new campus is also larger than the LBJ building, meaning that more students will be accepted, each class size will be bigger and sports teams will get bigger. McIlvain said that the impact of the LASA move will vary across sports based on the number of LASA versus LBJ students that played on the teams originally.

“I get that there's an advantage to having more space and time to practice, but whether the disadvantage outweighs the benefit really depends on which sport we're talking about,” McIlvain said. “A lot of sports are already dominated by LASA students, which meant that when all the LBJ students separated from the teams this year, they didn't suffer that much. It's definitely going to be a long recovery for sports that had a lot of LBJ students before, though.”

graphic by Andrew Luchsinger



## Raptors Run from Regionals to State

JUAN RAMIREZ DELGADILLO | staff writer

It's only the first year of LASA's athletic split from LBJ, and already, a multitude of LASA teams and individual athletes have made it to area and regionals competitions, including the track and field team. The team is smaller this year and undergoing many changes but succeeding nonetheless at the regional and area meet with some runners that made it to state.

Senior Elyse Hall, a varsity cross country and track captain, has been running cross country and track throughout her entire high school career. According to Hall, the training for competitive track meets is based on practices far before meet week.

“Most of the preparation for regionals comes many weeks before the hard workouts that prepare us,” Hall said. “In the week of, training lightens up, and we just try to focus on eating healthy, hydrating and having the proper mindset.”



BRINGING IT AT DISTRICT Junior Kenechi Ezekoye and freshman Aditya Gupta get ready to run at the district meet. LASA is in district 17-5A. photo courtesy of Christopher Parks

Head track coach and athletic coordinator Bryan Crews is in charge of the logistical side of athletics. He plans and organizes which track meets the athletes will run at and signs everyone up to participate. While runners are practicing and working to prepare for meets, Crews is behind the scenes to assist and support the athletes.

“My job as head coach was to organize practices, submit meet entries, supervise the athletes and try to be supportive of their efforts,” Crews said.

To qualify for area, runners have to place high in the district meet. After the area meet is regionals, then state. Runners can qualify for these meets as a team in a relay or individually. Junior and varsity

track runner Lane Loudamy qualified for regionals in the 4x200, where each of the four runners in the relay ran a 200-meter leg.

“At district, we placed third in the 4x100 and first in the 4x200, so we qualified for area in both events,” Loudamy said. “At area, we didn't place high enough in the 4x100 to qualify for regionals, but we placed third in the 4x200, qualifying us to run at regionals.”

According to Loudamy, regionals is a very competitive meet. Because the competition is so high, it gets harder for runners to place on the podium. In these cases, a personal record, or PR, is an important goal.

“Regionals is super fun because it's a huge meet with a ton of insanely talented athletes,” Loudamy said. “We didn't place very high at regionals. However, we ran a PR and had very clean handoffs, so we were happy with the result.”

LASA runs in District 17-5A due to the size of the school and sports teams, as well as the region of Texas it is located in. Before running at the district event, the team participates in invitational meets like the St. Andrews Invitational.

“I was proud of all our kids, but it was great to see such a large group make it to area,” Crews said. “The area qualifiers were Asa Shepard, Kenechi Ezekoye, Tate Smith, Harrison Gregg, Reiko Andrews, Ruby Sulter, Lane Loudamy, Clare Kalapati, Jack Wier, Josef Stone, Kepler Huntress, Emily Thompson, McKenzie Popper, Sophie Dale, Elyse Hall, Philip Metcalf, Abby Goff and Sheridan Wallace.”

Reiko Andrews, Ruby Sulter, Lane Loudamy, Clare Kalapati, Kepler Huntress, Emily Thompson, McKenzie Popper, Sophie Dale, Elyse Hall, Philip Metcalf and Sheridan Wallace also qualified for regionals in their respective events. Because each competition is scheduled to start at a different time, it's a tradition for teammates to cheer each other on as they run.

“The highlight of the regional meet was watching all of the LASA people qualify for state,” Hall said. “It was so exciting to see all of my teammates' hard work pay off because they really deserve those state spots.” The runners to qualify for state were Philip Metcalf, Kepler Huntress and Sophie Dale. According to Hall, making it to state is a huge accomplishment. Half of the AISD runners to qualify for state were from LASA alone.

According to Crews, athletes aren't the only ones who get nervous before meets — coaches feel the same. At important events like regional and state meets, nerves are high for everyone.

“I'm always a little nervous for the kids during meets,” Crews said. “It's always a thrill to see them succeed; it's probably the most enjoyable aspect of my job.”



READY TO RUN Sophomore Sophie Dale and senior Elyse Hall line up to race at the Vista Ridge meet. The girls concentrate to make sure they run their best. photo courtesy of Christopher Parks



RAPTORS IN SYNC Senior Elyse Hall and freshman Sheridan Wallace run in sync with their competitors at the district 17-5A meet. Both girls advanced to area after this meet. photo courtesy Christopher Parks

## LASA Athletes Compete At District

ANNABEL ANDRE | staff writer

As spring sports come to an end, district and regional competitions begin and give athletes a chance to compete against the best of the best. Many LASA teams and individuals made it to regional and state competitions.

In the last few weeks of the school year, teams and individuals first compete in district competitions. Then top athletes go on to regionals. After regionals, the top competitors go on to state and face athletes from across Texas. These competitions give teams and players the opportunity to compete against different, and sometimes more experienced, teams than the ones they've played all year, as well as the chance to be recognized on a statewide level.

Freshman golf player Maxwell McWilliams qualified for regionals this year. In order to qualify for regionals in golf, you have to be in the two top teams or be one of the top two individuals in the district. While LASA didn't qualify for regionals as a team, McWilliams did as an individual and placed in the top 20% of individuals at regionals. He did not make it to state.

"I'm just a freshman, so I'm pretty happy with my performance overall," McWilliams said. "I'm just happy I was able to have the experience to go and play the regional golf tournament. I have three more years to go, and I feel like I can definitely be higher on the leaderboard."

According to McWilliams, the district and regional golf tournaments aren't very different. McWilliams said that the main difference is that the regional tournament has harder competition. He added that competing against and socializing with more experienced golfers was a good experience for him.

"It was a cool experience, just being in a tournament with people all over Texas and meeting new kids every day and talking about golf with them," McWilliams said.

Despite not making it to state this year, McWilliams is determined to make it next year as one of the top three players at regionals. He believes he has plenty of time and skill to make it higher in ranks in the future as a high school golfer.

"I think my goal next year would be to play for state," McWilliams said. "I think I can definitely be one of the top three, so I can qualify."

Senior Crystal Zhou is a player on the LASA tennis team. This season, she made it to regionals as the number one player in the district and was seeded as the number one player for women's singles

at regionals. Zhou is moving on to the state level as second in the region and looks forward to playing in the tournament.

Zhou would have liked more competition at district this year as she is more interested in competing and having a good match rather than just winning, but she found that she takes tennis and competing much more seriously than anyone she played does.

"The district tournament was really easy," Zhou said. "I didn't really have any competition. All the people I played don't really take it as seriously as I do. It didn't really give me a feeling of accomplishment. Because it's my senior year, I'm not interested in the win but competing for the last time. District is like a box I have to check before I go to region."

Zhou is confident she will make it to state as number one in the region, but her biggest goal is winning state. The competition at state will be the hardest because the players will be the best in their region, but Zhou is not too nervous.

"There will be one or two competitors that are good," Zhou said. "I don't know if I'll be playing them, but if I do, my chances will be pretty slim because they're really good. But going to state doesn't seem like it will be a problem. Just overall, the competition is going to be better. It will be harder."

Zhou also enjoys competing in regional tournaments because she gets to socialize with other tennis players. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many students are still attending school online and use athletics as an opportunity to socialize.

"Because of quarantine, [I enjoy] just being with other people and cheering [them] on and seeing how they improve at every single tournament," Zhou said.

Senior Philip Metcalf runs track for LASA, and this year, he won first place in the 3200-meter race and in the 1600-meter race at the district meet. At regionals, Metcalf qualified for state with his time in the 3200. Similarly to Zhou, Metcalf feels like district is easier than the other meets, but despite this, he enjoyed running in district this year because he wasn't able to last year due to COVID-19.

"That was a fun meet," Metcalf said. "A lot of people moved on from that. That was really cool. It was nice because last year, all spring sports got canceled before we had a chance to get to the competitive part of the season. It was nice to have district and [regionals] this year."

For more information and results of the state competitions, look out for the weekly Principal's Messages.



**READY, SET, SERVE** Senior Crystal Zhou prepares to serve the ball as she practices ahead of the regional tournament. Zhou finished in first at district and automatically qualified for regionals. photo by Annabel Andre



**ON PAR** Freshman Maxwell McWilliams takes a swing at a golf tournament. McWilliams qualified for the regional golf tournament as an individual. photo courtesy of Maxwell McWilliams



**THROW TO YOUR BRO** Senior Reagon Kohler gets ready to throw the ball to his teammate. Kohler has played on the baseball team all four years that he has been at LASA. photo by Emma McBride



**NOT SO BASE-IC** After catching the ball, Senior Reagon Kohler turns to throw it to the base. Kohler was one of the captains of the baseball team this year. photo by Emma McBride

## Baseball Strikes Out The Competition

SANWI SARODE | staff writer

UIL sports across AISD were canceled last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, UIL sports such as baseball were able to start practicing and competing once again.

Sophomore baseball player Will Strandwitz said that because most of last year's season was canceled, he wasn't sure what this season would look like. He said he is glad that the season was able to go on despite the circumstances and thankful that it turned out to be an enjoyable experience.

"My first high school season, which was last year, got canceled after about three games, so I didn't get a good foundation for what it was going to look like," Will Strandwitz said. "I went into it with an open mind, and I didn't know what I was going to get, but I've been pleasantly surprised with the amount of quality playing and caliber teammates that I've been able to play with."

Senior baseball player and brother to Will, Tom Strandwitz has played for the team for the past three years. Tom Strandwitz said that he is glad to get to play his last season before college.

"I was really looking forward to getting my last season of baseball in before I closed that chapter of my life and moved on to college," Tom Strandwitz said. "I didn't get a season last year; it got canceled, so I was really looking forward to playing again because I hadn't played a full season since sophomore year two years ago."

According to Tom Strandwitz, the baseball team is a friendly environment to be part of. He said that the easygoing atmosphere is part of what makes it a pleasant experience.

"The team dynamic is a very comfortable atmosphere," Tom Strandwitz said. "Everybody's a family, and everybody's trying to help each other out and teach other people how to get better. It's overall just really fun and a low-pressure atmosphere where it doesn't feel like you have to perform or you'll get in trouble."

Coach Eric Martanovic said that despite this year's many challenges, the team has been able to stick together. Martanovic said that despite the pandemic, the players have still been able to form friendships and show their strength as a team.

"Our team dynamic has always been one of collaboration and togetherness," Martanovic said. "This year has certainly provided challenges; however, I feel the relationships are still strong among the players and a strength that is leveraged during game time."

According to Tom Strandwitz, LASA's baseball season had a strong start this year. He said that their main goal for this season was to make the playoffs.

"So far, we've been doing pretty well," Tom Strandwitz said. "We're third in district right now, which is kinda where we expected to be. There were a couple games where we probably could have edged it out if we had executed a little better. But right now, we're at a pretty good spot, and we're still looking to make playoffs at the end of the season."

The baseball season begins with scrimmages and tournaments against teams outside of LASA's district before intradistrict games begin. Will Strandwitz said that the pre-season games help prepare the team for its regular season.

"We started off with tournament play, which is where, as a program, we would go to different parts of Austin and play in different groupings of teams," Will Strandwitz said. "So we'll play 6A teams, we'll

play 5A teams from different parts of Texas just to get warmed up for the season and we will do district play where every school in Texas is assigned to a different district. We're doing pretty well — I think we're a little over 50% wins, and I want to say we're third in the district right now, but we're working to get our spot in the playoffs."

Martanovic said that many of the younger players had to step up after many of the team's top players graduated. According to Martanovic, these younger players will grow to help the team excel in the future.

"Our season has been going well," Martanovic said. "Last year, we graduated 14 seniors, and some of our younger players have stepped up in big ways. This has paid dividends now in our playoff race and will continue to be a benefit for us in future seasons as they get bigger, faster and stronger."

As LASA's UIL split from LBJ was last year, this is LASA's first ever baseball season with its own team. Tom Strandwitz said that being a senior on this inaugural team makes him a role model for his teammates and he appreciates the responsibility of leading the underclassmen.

"I feel like it's an honor to be an upperclassman on an inaugural team because that really puts me in a leadership position," Tom Strandwitz said. "I enjoy being able to set the standard for how the program will look in the future and what kind of values we want to instill in the younger players so that they can keep those traditions and values going as well."

Tom Strandwitz said that some of the values that he hopes to pass on are community and teamwork. He added that it feels good to be able to rely on your teammates and have a group that understands one another and works well together.

"As hard as you try you can't win baseball by yourself," Tom Strandwitz said. "You're not the only one making plays and you have to rely on your teammates."

According to Will Strandwitz, another important aspect of baseball is having fun. He said that the game is more about working with each other and building a community than winning or losing.

"I'd say the most important thing is having fun," Will Strandwitz said. "Baseball, yes, it is a competition, but it really is just a game. Everyone who plays just has to remember that at the end of the day, we're all just playing to have fun."

Will Strandwitz said that he likes baseball because it's a good opportunity to meet new people since most classes are currently taking place on Zoom. He enjoys spending time with his teammates and working with them during games.

"I just enjoy being out there with people that I know and the sense of almost camaraderie that you get from working together with people," Will Strandwitz said. "It's like we're all overcoming having to be virtual all year, and for all of us to be out there is a really great opportunity, and it feels really good to finally be able to compete after so long of having to wait."

Martanovic is also glad to be coaching again this season. According to Martanovic, watching the team develop is one of the best parts of being a coach.

"I have enjoyed the emergence of new faces and seeing this senior group develop in their final year," Martanovic said. "I feel that they have accomplished so much in their development on and off the field. To see them take the field and showcase their development and ability is certainly one of the most rewarding aspects of being a coach in my eyes."

## Madness In NCAA Tournaments

A look at Gender Inequality in March Madness

SUSAN BALLESTEROS | staff writer

Gender inequality has historically been a problem within sports, from women not being able to compete in the Olympics until 1900 to an ongoing pay gap between men and women in professional sports. This year, during the National Collegiate Athletics Association's (NCAA) annual March Madness tournament, attention was drawn to the inequality between men's and women's facilities and treatment in athletic competitions.

In the 2021 NCAA basketball tournaments that took place in March, athletes in the women's tournament had to deal with smaller amenities than the men did, which raised outrage among fans and athletes on Twitter, where it was mainly reported. Women's and men's NCAA basketball tournaments are held annually in March, and traditionally, games would be played throughout the country. This year, the men's tournament took place in Indiana while the women's tournament took place in cities across Texas, including San Antonio, Austin and Houston.

A lot of the inequalities seen happened behind the scenes, so many fans found out about it when female athletes posted about it on social media. Senior boys basketball player Hobbs McAllister learned about the disparity between the men's and women's accommodations online.

"The NCAA gave way more funding to the men's basketball tournament than the women's," McAllister said. "The men got better rooms, better accommodations and a far superior training facility. The women's teams didn't receive any of that and were outraged, as many people were, when they learned that they were being given far less funding and care than the men's teams."

Because of COVID-19 restrictions, athletes were also expected to stay within the NCAA Tournament bubble. They also regularly underwent COVID-19 testing, which, according to LASA girls basketball coach Holly Tarter, was another thing that was not distributed evenly among athletes in the two tournaments, along with weight room conditions.

"When we [look at] the weight room, from what I saw, all [the women] had were little stretchy bands, and they had a couple of dumbbells," Tarter said. "If you've ever been in a weight room at an NCAA school, you know that you have weight racks, you have a bench, you have a squat, you have a lot of cardio equipment."

That's what really showed the difference. And then I'm sure that the next step was whatever discrepancies they had in the COVID testing. If they weren't receiving COVID tests every day, if it was every other day. So I'm sure the [male athletes] were given COVID tests daily."

In addition to weight room and COVID-19 testing discrepancies, there were also differences in the meals provided to athletes and the goodies they got in the standard "swag bags" athletes got, which ranged from towels to branded sports clothing. According to McAllister, a lower quality of provided accommodations could affect athlete performance.

"I think being given worse facilities, especially worse meal plans and training equipment, could cause a real problem when it comes to playing," McAllister said. "I know from personal experience that performing on the court is a lot easier with good food and access to weights and practice gyms. Without that, people can't be expected to play at 100%."

According to Tarter, athletes' training routines can also be affected when accommodations are not the best. Coaches and female athletes alike spoke out about how their training schedules were interrupted by the lack of equipment provided.

"One or two days can make or break a routine, and one or two days can make or break how the athletes feel," Tarter said. "Just to give you an example, when our kids go home for the weekend, and we come back on a Monday, and they may not have slept as much, or they may have eaten differently, it's tough to get them going on a Monday."

According to junior girls basketball player Adryanna Sanchez, gender inequality can also hurt players mentally. Sanchez said that being given unequal amenities can cause athletes to doubt their performance and their strength.

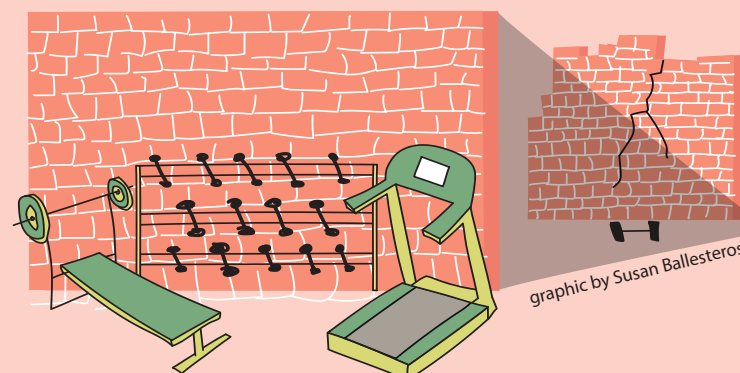
"I think it affects them by mentally putting them at a lower level, and from there, they are only able to give the best at a low point," Sanchez said. "When women, and really any person, [aren't] believed in, that can lower their performance because they don't think they're valuable enough. But of course, some players use that as fuel to be one of the best of the best and to prove others wrong."

After the outrage, the NCAA quickly improved the quality of the accommodations provided to athletes by expanding the women's weight room and providing them with the same quality of meals and handouts as the men. According to Tarter, similar discrepancies between the budgets and quality of women's and men's sports accommodations have always been common, but they recently have been improving.

"I would say that one thing that has improved over my 30 years [in education and sports], it would be just the budget given to the sport," Tarter said. "This is a good example for LASA because this year we started from ground zero, so we had to get everything from the uniforms to the workout stuff to the equipment. We were given pretty much equal budgets to start the foundation for LASA, which is everything."

According to McAllister, increasing viewership for women's sports is necessary to compare gender inequality in sports due to the increase in money that would be available for budgets. McAllister also said that gender inequality in sports starts at a young age.

"Don't discourage girls from playing sports at such a young age," McAllister said. "I've heard many stories of girls being told things like, 'Switch to softball' to tell them to stop playing a specific sport. Let people play what they want, and don't try to force impressionable minds to do something that will be worse for them in the long run."



graphic by Susan Ballesteros

# LIVIN' THE "DREAMS"

photos by Emma McBride



## Planning, Editing and Executing the Lip Dub

EMMA MCBRIDE | photo editor

In 2019, LASA students were saddened to find out that the tradition of the LASA Lip Dub would be discontinued until further notice due to the extensive amount of planning and production that it required. But this year, the Lip Dub is back, and it's a dream come true.

The Lip Dub traditionally takes place every other school year and involves the entire student body and staff. Previously, there would be three days set aside that would be dedicated to filming one coherent shot of all the clubs and student organizations showing off their talents while a senior would lip-sync to the chosen song in the foreground of the shot. This year, while a few things have stayed structurally similar, the process has largely been changed to in accordance with COVID-19 protocols. The Audio Video Production (AVP) students, taught by Vanessa Mokry, are in charge of planning for and executing the entirety of the production. First, the students decided on a song and overall theme for the video.

"There weren't a lot of ideas," Mokry said. "But one kid in the class offered up the idea of 'Walking on a Dream.' And then we talked about the whole theme of dreams and how this year didn't exactly feel real."

Once they had come up with the theme, they singled in on the song options. Senior and Lip Dub director Ella Glasscock was the one to offer the idea of the "Dreams" by Beck, which is the song Mokry's students collectively decided on once the pitching process had ended. Glasscock's job as director covers several subsets of the production.

"For this project, I had to take on a few more things as a director just because of the sheer amount of organization that the Lip Dub took," Glasscock said. "In production, I direct the actors and help block them. In planning, I'm the one who writes all the emails, makes the Google forms, I've written countless, countless emails. And then, mainly, coordinating the people: figuring out when people can do things, when they are available, how schedules line up. And then, scheduling times to actually film people, making sure that my crew is happy because it's a lot of work for them to do."

One of the people that Glasscock works with the most on set is senior Ikhan Marroquin, the director of photography and camera operator. Marroquin has a lot of experience working in these roles on previous AVP projects and said that a lot of his experience has carried over to working on the Lip Dub with Glasscock and the rest of the production crew.

"With camera operating, it's right there in the name," Marroquin said. "I just move the camera, use the camera and record scenes. As director of photography, I work very closely with the director of the production, and I hear out the director's vision and intent and what they would like to do with the scene. I tell them how that's possible, how we can shoot it and how we can light it."

All the while, the editing process has started behind the scenes as well. However, the unique format of this year's Lip Dub posed a few challenges that wouldn't regularly occur in terms of editing the compiled footage into one cohesive video.

"The vision I had for editing is that the way the scenes are connected is through Zoom screens," Glasscock said. "There's a computer at the end of each scene that you go into, and with editing, we put a Zoom screen on there. It looks like the way you're getting from one screen to another is by a Zoom screen. I knew that I didn't really have the skills to do that, so I sent a bunch of tutorials and videos to one of our editors, and he figured it out, and he's been working on that this whole time. It is time consuming putting everything together, but it's looking really cool."

Even though this year has made it difficult to plan, schedule and edit the Lip Dub, Glasscock feels that the crew's goals for the project have been accomplished.

"We have been filming for over a month," Glasscock said. "So many hours, so many emails, so many DMs on Instagram, questions, answers, and it's all finally coming together. I'm just so proud of everyone who's been involved because it's been so much work to make this happen this year."