

the liberator

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Music TO MY EARS

SXSW Boasts Wide Lineup of Musical Artists

KATIE BUSBY | entertainment editor
LILI XIONG | student life editor
ANNABEL ANDRE | sports editor

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

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

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

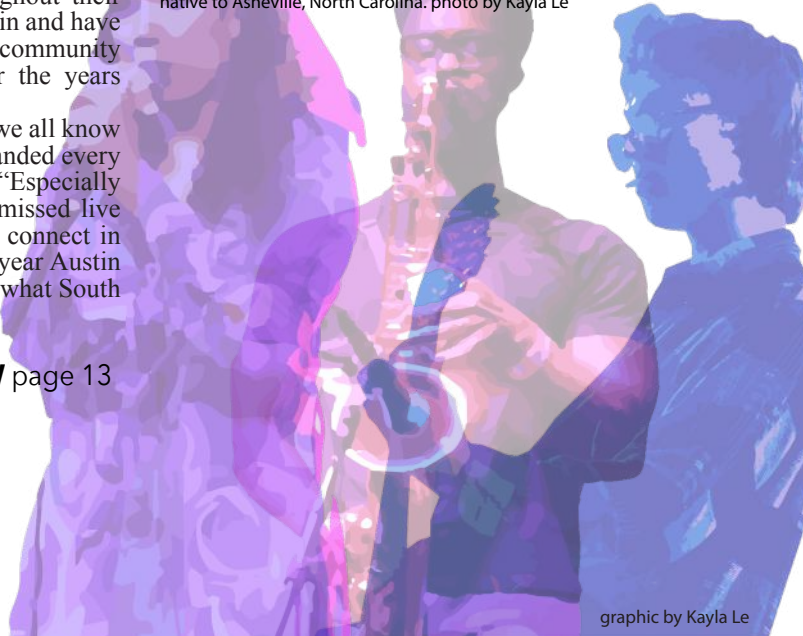
The Tierras are another local band made up of three sisters, Sophia, Tori, and Tiffany Baltierra, who have influences of Latin, reggae, and indie throughout their music. The trio grew up in Austin and have gotten to see the Austin music community change, adapt, and grow over the years along with SXSW.

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

see **SXSW** page 13



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



graphic by Kayla Le

what's news



photo by Zia Harvey

Purple Haze dominates competition and qualifies for state

see **ENGINEERING** page 18



photo by Griffin Beam

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

see **LIP DUB** page 14

HATS OFF, SENIORS

Students Commit to Athletics in College

ROBBY COLE | staff writer

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

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

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

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

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

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

see **HATS OFF** page 16



photos and graphics by Kayla Le



THE Weeping WILLOW

Biden Approves Oil Drilling Operation in Alaska

MEGAN GEROLD | staff writer

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

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

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

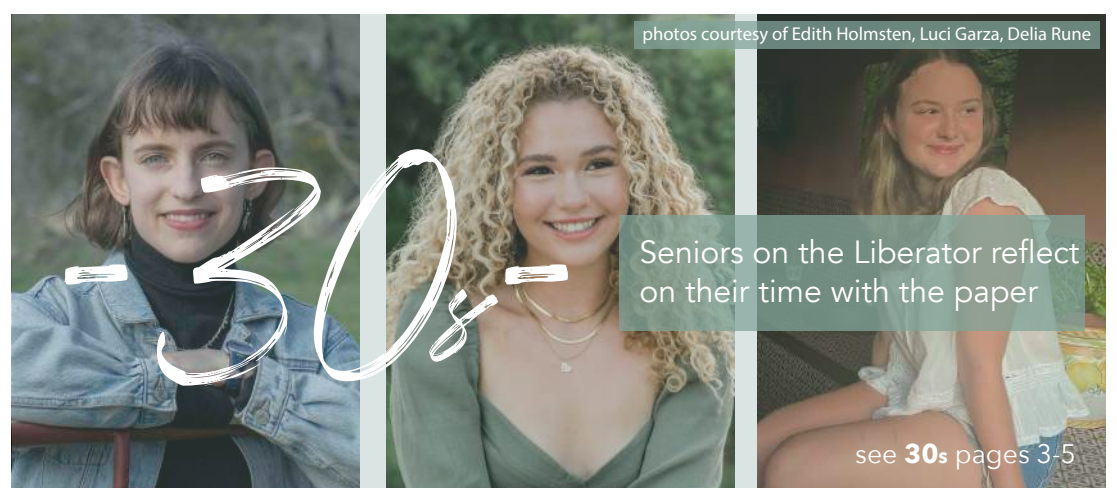
Alaska projects does provide jobs and money.

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

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

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

see **THE WEEPING** page 6



photos courtesy of Edith Holmsten, Luci Garza, Delia Rune

Seniors on the Liberator reflect on their time with the paper

see **30s** pages 3-5

editorial Youths Push for the Polls
Teens Nationwide Fight for a Lower Voting Age

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

From 1947 to 1973, the United States' Selective Service System called more than three million young men for compulsory service in the Korean and Vietnam wars. Though they were expected to lay their lives down for their country, until 1971, many were not permitted to participate in the representative government of that country. It was only in that year that the 26th Amendment to the United States Constitution prohibited age-based limitations on voting for those above the age of 18, yielding to the demands of those who claimed that they were "old enough to fight, old enough to vote."

Though 18 is generally considered to be the age at which adolescents can be expected to take on adult responsibilities, some claim that the standard no longer applies as it once did. Today's teenagers work and pay taxes well before 18, and are exposed to the brutal realities of the modern world, ranging from racism to school shootings, from childhood. Given the new opportunities for civic participation presented to young people by the internet, some have advocated granting the vote to those over 16 years of age.

Among those in support of lowering the voting age at the national level is U.S. Rep. Grace Meng of New York's sixth congressional district. In January Rep. Meng reintroduced legislation to amend the Constitution to prohibit age-based voting discrimination against those over 16 years old. Though the proposal has not gained significant traction in Congress and is unlikely to lead to any real constitutional change in the foreseeable future, it is one of the most visible examples of a move toward including younger people in the broader push for expanded voting rights. Additionally, legislation to allow 16-year-olds to vote in state elections has appeared in legislatures including those of California and Massachusetts, and some towns and cities, including multiple Washington suburbs in Maryland, have extended the vote to younger teens in local elections. Internationally, 16-year-olds have attained voting rights in Austria, Brazil, and more than a dozen other countries.

Vote16USA is an organization, affiliated with the nonprofit Generation Citizen, that advocates for lowering the

voting age to 16 across the country. One of the foremost arguments that Vote16USA puts forth for lowering the voting age is the opportunity to instill a habit of voting in teenagers before they leave home. According to a study published in the American Journal of Political Science and conducted by Alan Gerber and other authors, voting in one major election may increase the likelihood that one will vote in the next by more than 25%. However, the majority of Americans do not vote in the first election in which they are eligible, leading to lower rates of voting in early adulthood. According to Youth Service America, the major life changes that come with turning 18, along with the lack of logistical support for young voters, deter voters from voting at first eligibility. Advocates of lowering the voting age argue that allowing teens to vote for the first time while still living at home would increase the likelihood of them voting, thereby creating habits of civic participation that would last throughout their lives.

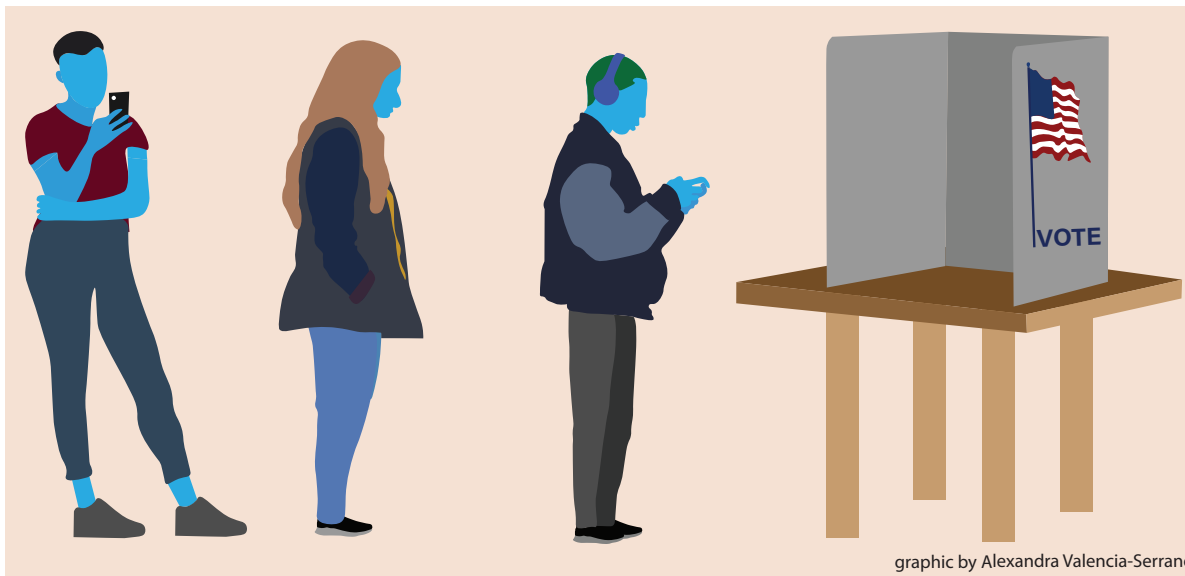
The case for a lower voting age also takes into account the effects of the political process on young people. 16 and 17-year-olds are directly affected by local, state, and national debates on education funding, gun control, fiscal policy, and climate change, among other issues. Considering that, according to the Census Bureau, the majority of American voters are over the age of 45, and that voting rates invariably increase with age, the share of the

American population with the most sway over the government is not that which is most affected by its decisions. Bringing more young people into the political process could reorient the government toward forward-thinking, long-term solutions that are more likely to serve the nation's future.

There are, of course, serious concerns about the negative effects changing the voting age could have on the health of democracy in America. 16 and 17-year-olds are unlikely to have finished their states' civics education requirements, making them less qualified to participate in representative government. Additionally, according to a study published by the Political Studies Association and written by Tak Wing Chan and other authors, 16 and 17-year-olds tend to demonstrate lower interest in politics and less civic knowledge than their older peers, a concerning characteristic among any voting demographic. Even the youngest age group of those currently allowed to vote, Americans 18 to 24 years of age, only exhibit about 50% participation in elections, according to multiple studies and Census Bureau statistics. Of 18-year-olds, only 13% choose to vote, demonstrating that the youngest among the American population are less likely to be politically engaged and informed.

Finally, there is the consideration that the vast majority of Americans, even young ones, oppose lowering the voting age. A Hill-HarrisX poll found that a whopping 84% of American voters do not want to see the vote extended to 16-year-olds, with a solid majority opposed even in the youngest age group polled. This view transcends party lines, with large majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and independents supporting maintaining the current voting age. While numbers are subject to change, support for a change is not currently anywhere near what it would need to be to make a constitutional amendment feasible.

While the voting age is unlikely to change anytime soon, the conversation can still serve as a useful catalyst for engaging young people in civic participation. If 16 and 17-year olds are more engaged with the life of their nation, they are more likely to make informed and responsible decisions when voting as adults. As the United States relies on a healthy republican government, increased youth involvement would be a boon for the country as a whole.



graphic by Alexandra Valencia-Serrano

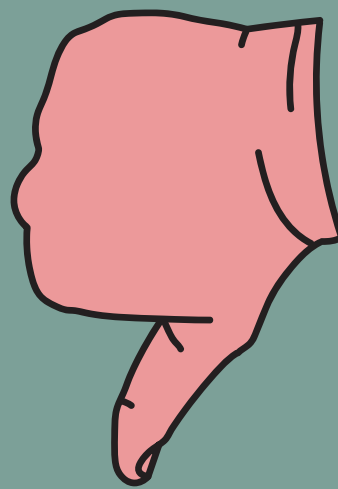
Thumbs Up



graphics by Amelia Coleman

- Pentel erasers
- ABBA
- Popsicles
- Lucky numbers
- Cheesecake

Thumbs Down



- Chem
- Loud breathing
- 2% milk
- Spinach
- Germs

Thumbs Up Thumbs Down: Every grading period, the commentary editors of the Liberator select a few objects, things, places, or current events that they are either liking or disliking at the moment. Likes are placed under Thumbs Up and the dislikes under Thumbs Down. These items are chosen randomly, meant to be taken in a lighthearted manner, and are not meant to offend anyone.

- Advisor** Kevin Garcia
- Editors-in-Chief** Luci Garza, Edith Holmsten
- Managing** Kayla Le
- Copy** Ava De Leon
- Commentary** Norah Hussaini, Beck Williams
- News** Malvika Pradhan, Ava Spurgeon
- Student Life** Delia Rune, LiLi Xiong
- Entertainment** Katie Busby, Sarah Garrett
- Sports** Annabel Andre, Sanwi Sarode
- Web** JC Ramirez Delgadillo
- Photo** Ella Lilly, Zia Harvey
- Graphics** Amelia Coleman, Alexandra Valencia-Serrano
- Staff Writers** Alondra Aguirre, Griffin Beam, Helen Bigge, Sadie Cravotta, Robby Cole, Aidan Gannon, Megan Gerold, James Graham, Jolie Grogan, Mars Leslie, Beatriz Marteleto-Lara, Victor Martinez, Wintyr Rice, Lasya Sangana, Charlotte Whalen, Lily Wilkerson
- Club Contributors** Ben Josephs
- If you are interested in writing for the paper and becoming a club contributor then be sure to stop by Room 701 to find out more!**

the liberator
Editorial Policy

Responsibilities of a free student press: Serving as 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 strive 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 manner 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 the most complete available information.
 2. The information will be presented in a 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.
 4. All commentary will be clearly labeled as such.
 5. 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 composed of the following individuals: lead editors and commentary 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 inappropriate behavior on the part of the staff
 5. Dispense disciplinary action to staff members
 6. Change or add policy as necessary

Viewpoints:
Printed material which contains the opinion 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 majority viewpoint of the staff.
Commentary: Commentary articles represent the viewpoint of one member of the staff, and are signed as such. These articles do not represent the opinions of the entire staff.

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 will be published 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. No letters which are obscene or libelous will be published.

Non-Staff Contributors: Bylined contributions are welcome.
Correction of Errors: The staff makes every effort to print accurate information. In the case of substantial 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 will attempt to publish a range of opinions within reason.

Power through, Raptors. Happy summer!



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 at [lasaliberator](https://www.instagram.com/lasaliberator).

The Tradition of -30s- at the Liberator

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.

Senior Superlatives

As we've gotten to know our seniors over the years at the Lib, we've noticed that some have characteristics, talents, or mannerisms that are particular to them and that they're best at. Here are our senior superlatives that share what we think those things are for each senior.

Helen Bigge: Most likely to write an Owl House fanfic.

Ava De Leon: Most likely to hum the entire soundtrack to a movie from 2008.

Luci Garza: Most likely to play Cupcake 2048 in class.

Edith Holmsten: Most likely to schedule a meeting.

JC Ramirez Delgadillo: Most likely to become Mr. Garcia.

Delia Rune: Most likely to have a spreadsheet for it.

Ava Spurgeon: Most likely to be in the top 1% of sudoku players.

Beck Williams: Most likely to use a word like zeitgeist in a regular sentence.

Don't Tell Anyone, But I'm Actually a Spy



photo courtesy of Helen Bigge

Staff Writer

Helen Bigge



I don't really read the newspaper. I absorb the absolutely massive amount of text occasionally broken into chunks by stunning photos and graphics, just staring at its immense presence while imagining what powerful beings must exist to create such an important occasion as to be featured in an archive like this, let alone to compile it all in such a cohesive way. And then I turn the page, and there might be a headline that catches my eye, and I might even muster up the courage to parse its story out, line by line. So to those of you who have taken all of this time and effort to read this silly little column among these 18 vast expanses of text, thank you. I applaud your valor. And to those of you who might say, "Oh, I can read the whole paper in under ten minutes, it's not really a big deal," you suck.



For legal reasons, that last sentence was a joke. But in either case, I'm here to tell you, dear public, that after going undercover as a staffer for the LASA Liberator for my final year at this school, I have discovered their secrets to producing these tens of thousands of words every few

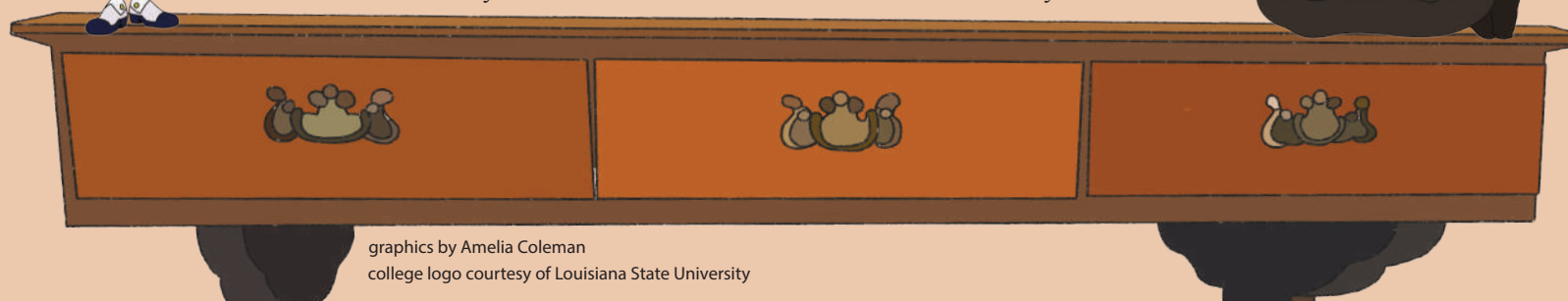
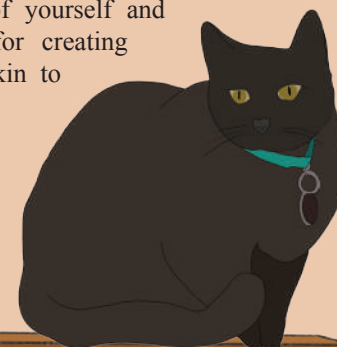
months and feel compelled to reveal them.

The differences between newspaper and E-Zine are numerous. For example, apparently you don't need 30-minute interviews from each person in order to write a cohesive story; leeching just five minutes of someone's time is enough to harvest an entire third of an article. If you'd rather critique people's lousy job than be the one writing, there's an easy solution! Just become an editor. And if you feel really strongly about not writing anything, working with graphics or photos will guarantee that you don't have to put a single word down all year (I would advise you to assume one of these roles over other editor positions because they do not have to deal with late articles from staffers such as yours truly).

As a staffer, your job includes finding three people who are willing to talk to you with the knowledge that anything they say can and will be used against them, unless they specify that they would rather not have that part be included in whatever you end up writing. This, along with the rest of the process, is nearly identical to freshman year and will give you flashbacks. Just spend hours replaying the same 0.2 seconds of audio until you're sure that word could not possibly be part of the English language. Oh, what's that? You didn't need to go that far? Excuse me while I scream into my keyboard. That's taken care of? Good. Now for the easy

part; just askfdisdjfaosiefjeij across said keyboard, and you will have a masterpiece in no time.

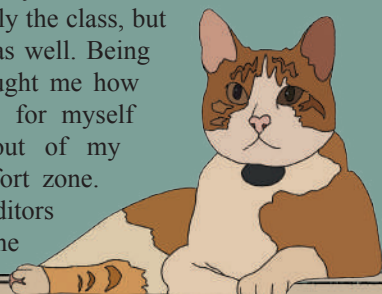
...A masterpiece that is maybe half-written at best, must go through many trials and tribulations, be pounded and reshaped before emerging from the flames as a blade newly forged. Even then, there will be cracks in the steel; when it is on display you may notice certain peculiarities that hadn't existed when you first lifted it out of the blazing fire, such as a misspelled name or a shortened paragraph. But the hilt is also stronger, and the blade is polished, so can you really complain? The lede didn't even exist before the editors revised it to fit within the rest of the newspaper that you hold in your hands. You slowly scan the rest of the page, venturing off to examine another sword in the stack. It's gilded with dazzling images, the words feel just as impressive as every other article you've seen prior to becoming a part of this strange process, and you can't help but feel proud of yourself and your team for creating something akin to magic.



graphics by Amelia Coleman
college logo courtesy of Louisiana State University

My first day at LASA, someone handed me what I thought was a faulty newspaper because the ink got on my hands and made them sticky— so I threw it away. In fourth period, I thought I was cursed because every newspaper I picked up left black smudges on my fingertips. Apparently, all newspapers do that.

News flashes just became a regular part of being in Newspaper, like when I learned people don't respond to emails or that InDesign sometimes decides you've offended it and will no longer cooperate, or that candid shots are impossible to capture because everyone chooses to stare directly into the lens— no smile, just a hollow stare. Despite the unnerving experiences I encountered while being a part of the newspaper, I can confidently say that I have learned so much from not only the class, but the people as well. Being a staffer taught me how to advocate for myself and step out of my social comfort zone. Past editors taught me the

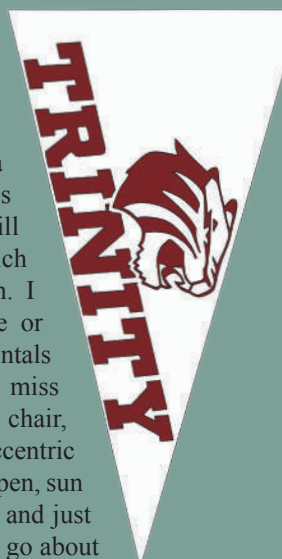


value of networking, communication, and collaboration. Current editors have taught me patience and distress tolerance. Just kidding... sort of. In all seriousness, the editors I've had the pleasure of working with are genuinely some of the most talented, creative, and kindest people I have ever met.

Coming to newspaper class is consistently comforting, and late nights are the highlights of my week. As Copy Editor, I know that I may have come off as critical or harsh or even passive aggressive as I leave "icky word" comments on 30 articles each nine-weeks, but every time an issue is published, I cannot help but feel proud of every single editor and staffer who worked together to create such a profound piece of art.

People outside of Newspaper may never understand the time and diligence we put into each issue, but I know that there are special people who do understand, and that's all that matters. Maybe I'll be remembered for my passive aggressive comments, or for my obsession with ABBA, or my obvious facial expressions, but either way, when people look at my name on an issue of The Liberator, I hope they remember how much I loved it.

I will miss watching weird movies and commenting on every scene with fellow editors. I will miss eating pizza and playing silly games during late nights. I will miss not remembering which editor is in which section. I will miss singing karaoke or "conducting" instrumentals from kid's movies. I will miss sitting in my yellow chair, listening to Mr. Garcia's eccentric music, with all the blinds open, sun streaking across the room, and just watching everyone as they go about their day, writing stories, designing pages, smiling as they chat and laugh with one another. If I could freeze time just to be there in that moment I would, but what I think I'll miss most is picking up a freshly delivered newspaper, flipping through the pages, and smiling to myself when I look at my fingertips—covered in black smudges.



Black Smudges and Icky Words

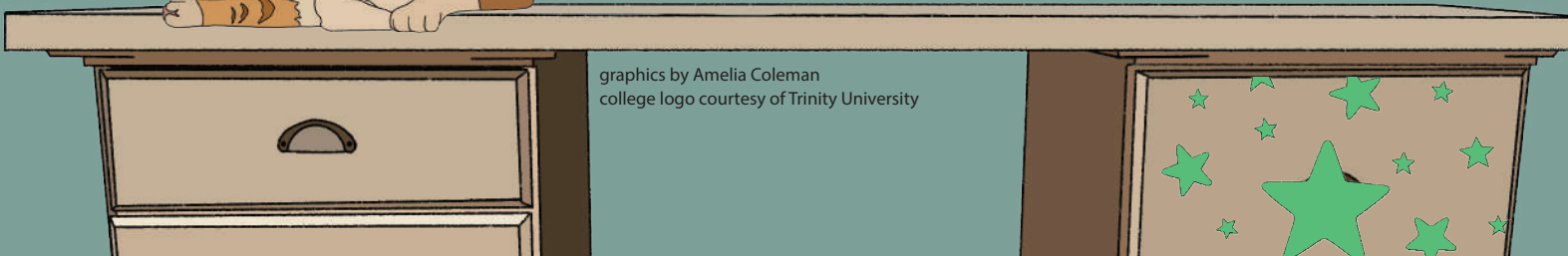


photo courtesy of Ava De Leon

Copy Editor

Ava De Leon

graphics by Amelia Coleman
college logo courtesy of Trinity University



As the purple and silver confetti littered my kitchen counter falling out of my LASA acceptance letter, I had two initial reactions. The first were tears. To this day I don't think I will ever be completely sure if they were tears of joy, fear, relief, or something in between. More often than not, they feel like the first signs of preparation my subconscious was taking for the emotional rollercoaster I was about to subject myself to.

The second was a premature longing to be done. As I religiously stalked the website of the new place I would call home for four years, I looked at every senior and wished to be in their place. As more people gained knowledge of my acceptance, I heard more horror stories of what my life was soon to be. Yet, plastered all over a dated purple website were smiling, happy, teenagers that had made it to the other side of the magnet endorsement rainbow. I anxiously awaited for my turn to be in their shoes, and writing this, I realize the time has come.

People have many names for their four years

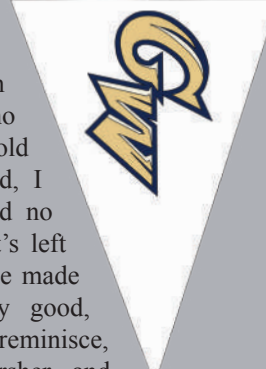


graphics by Amelia Coleman
university logo courtesy of The George Washington University

of highschool. Golden. Awful. Painstakingly mediocre. Somehow, mine seem to fit in all three categories. While a global pandemic flipped my entire world upside down, I have also experienced very little out of the ordinary. The years I have had on campus, shared between LBJ and LASA, feel truly like public school. PDA in the hallways, broken AC in the summer, and leaky ceilings all bring me a sense of normalcy, aiding in the true high school experience. However, what sets LASA apart is the fact that despite these obstacles, each class I have taken is filled with the minds full of potential. Each classmate, from friend to enemy, is deeply gifted in one way or another. Since coming here, I have realized, and now truly believe that there is no other place in the world like this school. There is no other place where hours of sleep are compared so deeply, or where the students write poems about the prom after party. To say I'll miss it might be a stretch, but I certainly doubt I will come close to being able to experience anything like it again.

I think I imagined the end of my time here would be more special, in some way. I'm

not sure what exactly my eighth-grade self had in mind, but I can certainly say there are no unicorns or pots of gold waiting for me. Instead, I look behind me to find no rainbow at all. All that's left are the memories I have made along the way, plenty good, bad, and ugly. As I reminisce, reality trickles in harsher and more saturated than expected. The journey of starting brand new all over again is right around the corner, and this time my body has taken a much milder approach to preparing. It's true what the teachers tell us, that LASA leaves you ready for just about anything. While it might not be completely due to their influence, an environment full of intense academic rigor mixed with high school drama is no joke. At times, I thought I would never make it out alive, yet I'm leaving a survivor of them both, stronger than ever, ready to take on whatever might come my way.



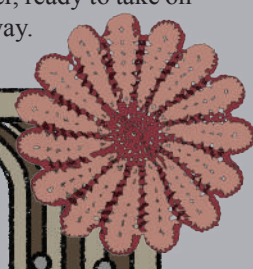
The Grass is Always Greener



photo courtesy of Luci Garza

Editor-in-Chief

Luci Garza



Daily Newspaper Things



photo courtesy of Edith Holmsten

Editor-in-Chief

Edith Holmsten

I first thought about joining the newspaper when a few editors made a presentation during freshman year to encourage students to join. All I really remember from the presentation was two years of the class could count as a tech credit, and it was a weighted class. The only articles I had ever read from the newspaper were the senior 30s, and I only knew one student in the entire newspaper staff. I honestly thought I was going to take the newspaper class for a year or two and then move on to something else. I definitely did not expect that three years later I would be writing my own 30, looking fondly back on my time at the paper.

When I first joined the newspaper staff, I always thought I would remember the large things, like seeing my first article printed in the paper or designing the graphics or photos on my first in-depth, but the things that will stick with me are the smaller moments in the paper, the day-to-day newspaper things



graphics by Kayle Le
university logo courtesy of University of Washington Seattle

which have helped me find a community at LASA and grow more confident in myself.

Going into my first year on the newspaper staff, I knew few things about the newspaper process. I felt nervous conducting my first interview, and I read my interview questions over and over in my head, worrying that the questions were not complex or unique enough. Once, I got through a whole interview just to realize my phone had not been recording, so I had to redo the entire interview. When I got my draft of my first article back with edits, nearly every other sentence I wrote had a bold yellow comment with newspaper style edits about which numbers are supposed to be spelled out or how quotes should be formatted in articles. I definitely had my work cut out for me to adjust to the newspaper, but learning how to bounce back from mistakes and having the editor team there to support me has taught me a new kind of resilience. The editors were always there answering my questions and helping me see how my writing was growing throughout the year. As I wrote about more diverse topics, I gained more confidence in reaching out for interviews and writing articles.

Interviewing students and teachers during my first year with the newspaper also helped me feel more connected to the LASA community. With each article on student activism or

clubs adapting to online school or the new campus, I heard interesting stories about club initiatives or projects students were working on, like starting their own t-shirt design companies or interning with local nonprofits. As I took photos at football games or read articles about teams traveling for competitions, I have learned more about our campus and neat opportunities students are investing in.

When I became an editor the following year, I gained more responsibility with the paper but also found my place among the staff. I stayed at school until 8 or 9p.m. some evenings working to revise a few last words in articles or collect a handful more photos for a spread. The editors all sat together in the newspaper room prying our brains for creative headlines or funny alliteration for photo captions. During dinner, we laughed at terrible puns for the article headlines and grimaced at our terrible singing voices while belting karaoke to some songs we knew all too well. As we shared stories from our week and snacked on microwaved pizza bagels, we built a community from different grade levels and interests all working on one paper. Thank you to all the editors and staffers who have made my past three years such an amazing experience!



There is so much or so little I can write about the newspaper. Similar to my current editor position, I can put in as much effort as I want into this, but just like my work ethic I'm writing this rushedly, but I promise what I have to say about the Liberator is meaningful.

It was my sophomore year of high school. I had a teacher who may or may not have been obsessed with Marvel-related content, but he was interesting. Because of a class I took with him the summer before freshman year I wanted to take the newspaper class. Now in case you don't remember, there was a certain pandemic that made it hard to go outside, which made it harder to do interviews for the class, but I got through by conducting zoom and phone interviews. Something about working with people to publish a paper every six weeks was something that I saw as very rewarding. It's what kept me going and it is why I applied to be an editor.

Working as the photo editor helped

me rediscover my passion for photography. In middle school I was in a photo club for one year. We competed against other schools and I brought first place awards and best of show awards. Working with the photo essay gave me the creative freedom I wanted because I got to design a page that wasn't like the others. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to fully express what I wanted and ended up just having the same format for about two issues.

Some of my worst experiences with the Liberator included doing inventory and writing pitches. When it comes to providing ideas on what to write about, every single event I know about leaves my mind. I can write an article and ask staffers to write stuff, but I can't pitch in ideas. Inventory? Don't get me started on inventory. I despised that job so much. Like why was it given to the photo department? I will not rest until every other department has tried doing that job. It takes a painfully long time looking for a single camera piece and I'm sick and tired of...

My favorite part of working with the Liberator is getting to work with so many

amazing and talented people and getting to learn from them. I enjoyed every time I went out to cover events such as SXSW with Katie, LiLi and Annabel, and I appreciate every time that I learn something new about photography from Kayla.

I feel that I have played a major role in the rise of the paper's popularity. As the Web Editor-in-Chief, I have kept our social media posting somewhat regularly. I have come up with creative ways to increase our online presence such as food reviews and highlighting people of LASA—things that would have not happened if I didn't push for them to be published. The Liberator has had such a big impact on me and it is a stepping stone for greater things to come, like winning a Pulitzer award or being killed by the CIA (I think those are big achievements for journalists right?).



I Don't Get Paid Enough



photo courtesy of JC Ramirez Delgadillo

Web Editor-in-Chief

JC Ramirez Delgadillo



graphics by Amelia Coleman and JC Ramirez Delgadillo
university logo courtesy of University of North Texas

Hyphens, commas, and apostrophes— small dots on a page that, four years ago, mattered very little to me. In fact, they kind of bothered me. Who cares about whether there’s an apostrophe in the decade ‘1930s’ or if there’s a comma splice in the middle of a sentence? I definitely didn’t see what the big deal was— the reader understands what you’re saying either way.

But, in 2020, I signed up to compete in my first newspaper UIL competition: UIL copy editing. The competition only lasts 15 minutes but, by the time I was done with the first round, I knew it was an experience that would permanently alter the way I thought about grammar.

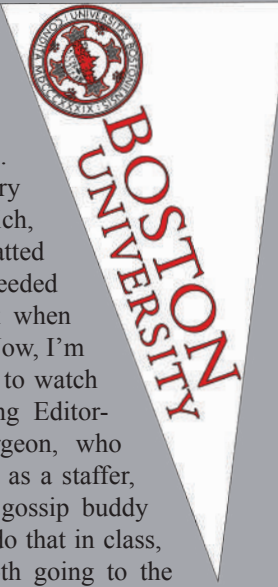
In the spring of 2021, I began self-studying for the UIL copy editing competition. I discovered that my baseline grammar knowledge was decent, but that there were a lot of AP Style rules I didn’t know. I made quizlets and took practice tests and, when the district competition finally rolled around, I placed first. I then won at regionals and advanced to states, where I placed sixth. But, by the time I had made it to states, I

didn’t really care how I did—I knew that a new passion had formed.

Even after the UIL competition season ended I found myself researching AP style guide changes. I wasn’t all too interested in the really tiny punctuation details— really, I became fascinated with the intersections of politics and grammar. What are the implications of removing the hyphen in Asian-American? Why does AP style encourage journalists to opt for the word ‘racist’ over ‘racially motivated?’ Now, three years after my first UIL copy editing competition, I still think about these grammar questions—I even wrote college essays about AP Style!

The way my passion for grammar and AP Style has developed mimics the trajectory of my passion for journalism. The *Liberator* started off as something inconsequential that I saw littered across the LASA hallways every now and again. But, once I started to write for the paper, I discovered how interesting journalism could be. I’ve loved getting the chance to learn everything from how to write a feature story to how to format pages on InDesign.

And, of course, the people I’ve met on the *Liberator* have been such a big part of my LASA high school experience. Luci Garza edited the very first story I wrote (which, by the way, was formatted completely wrong and needed probably 100 edits) back when she was the news editor. Now, I’m an editor, and I’ve gotten to watch her grow into an amazing Editor-in-Chief. And Ava Spurgeon, who started the paper with me as a staffer, has become my favorite gossip buddy (though we would never do that in class, obviously), and we’re both going to the same college as journalism majors next year. Of course, those are just a few of the incredible people I’ve met while writing for the Lib—the entire newspaper class has been an amazingly supportive community, and I feel so lucky to have had the opportunity to learn alongside (and from) the editors and staff of the *Liberator*.

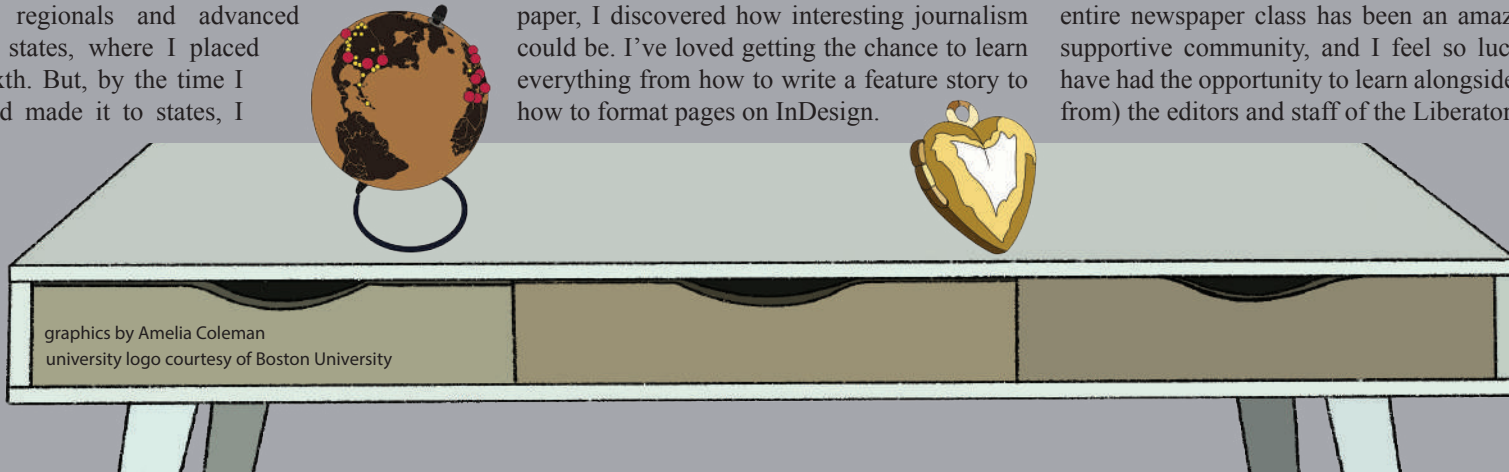


Hyphens, Commas, and the *Liberator*



photo courtesy of Delia Rune

Student Life Editor
Delia Rune



graphics by Amelia Coleman
university logo courtesy of Boston University

Ava and the Terrible, Very Bad, Class



photo courtesy of Ava Spurgeon

News Editor
Ava Spurgeon



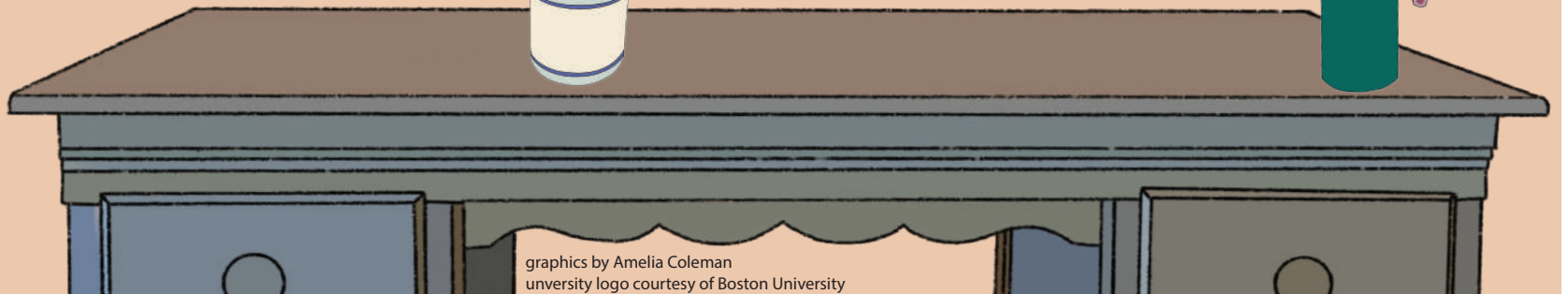
I never expected to be in newspaper. On my first day of junior year, after a day of finding my way around the new campus, starting all new classes, and figuring out where to sit at lunch, I just wanted something normal to end my stressful first day. When I had done my choice sheet the previous spring, I learned that I still needed to get my tech credit. I decided yearbook seemed like a good choice, although not for any particular reason. I followed my schedule to room 701 that afternoon, expecting a bright and cheerful yearbook room. Instead, I walked in and was met with cardboard boxes everywhere, not a single person I knew, and a horrifying lack of air conditioning. When Mr. Garcia began class, I discovered that I was not, in fact, in yearbook. Most people think newspaper and yearbook are the same thing, and I was

one of those people, which is the reason I never went through with a schedule change.

Very quickly I decided I had made a grave mistake. I hated newspaper. Every day walking to fourth period, I felt an overwhelming sense of dread. Not only was it 100 degrees in the room, but I knew that I was going to have to write three articles that needed three interviews each. It was inevitable. It sounds simple enough, but it was something I had never really done, and interviewing strangers was not something I had ever particularly wanted to do either. Eventually I bit the bullet. I eased into it, at first only interviewing my friends, or other people I already knew.

Asking someone if I could record our conversation felt weird. It was weird to have to then write 1,000 words on it. It did not feel normal to have editors I had never spoken to before texting me. “Hey Ava! Any progress on your interviews yet? Just a reminder that articles are due this week!”

At some point, the weirdness faded, and I found that I enjoyed the things I had initially hated. I was excited to talk to school board members, or UT public health professors, or even the managers of the girl’s soccer team. My walk to fourth period was no longer filled with dread. The air conditioning in room 701 got fixed. I even liked the things I learned in newspaper. I learned how to properly format stories, how to ask the right questions, how to play Touchdown 1, 2, 3. The little things I picked up from newspaper bled into the rest of my life, becoming so normal I didn’t even notice that all of a sudden, I had started to love journalism.



graphics by Amelia Coleman
university logo courtesy of Boston University

For as long as I can remember there has been a book on my shelf that looks as though it came from a dusty antiques store or the dingy stacks of a university library. The pages are brittle and yellow, the spine moans when opened and floods the nose with the scent of a foreign time. I’ve not read the book -- it’s in Yiddish -- but the rudimentary knowledge of Hebrew characters I attained while preparing for my bar mitzvah was enough to make out the name of the author: Sholom Aleichem.

Solomon Rabinovich, better known by his pen name meaning “peace be with you,” was one of the foremost Yiddish novelists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and his character Tevye has been immortalized in the musical *Fiddler on the Roof*. Sholom Aleichem’s impact on the Jewish collective identity and national movement was profound during his lifetime, and only grew after six million European Jews (including my Litvak ancestors from whom I inherited the aforementioned

book) were murdered by the Nazi regime. Though Sholom Aleichem did not live to see the horrors of the Holocaust, his words echoed off the walls of Treblinka, crept as a whisper through the abandoned shtetl of Shkud, and boomed in the hearts of those who made it out alive.

“No matter how bad things get, you’ve got to go on living, even if it kills you.” The words were salient to the downtrodden Jews of the Pale of Settlement, even more so to those who saw their friends and families carted off to oblivion by the Germans. Though few alive today have seen anything approaching the brutality of the Shoah, Sholom Aleichem’s words are still germane to the world of 2023. To hold our heads high through a pandemic, the most explosive political upheaval in decades, a torrent of school shootings, and the disintegration of collective and individual identities before our very eyes requires the same humorous, willful cognitive dissonance exhibited by Sholom Aleichem and five thousand years of Jews.

You may wonder, reader, why I have chosen to dump freezing water on the lighthearted tradition of *Liberator* editors sharing memories of their time at the newspaper. I have done so because my Jewish identity and the blessed memories of those who went

before have shaped my time at this publication more than even I knew. My very first article published in the *Liberator* was an expression of my concern with growing anti-semitic trends in American politics. Last quarter, Sholom Aleichem and the memory of the Babi Yar massacre against Ukrainian Jews inspired me to write an article about religious discord and Putin’s invasion, of which I am particularly proud. Jewish philosophy and cultural heritage have informed my writing on social issues dear to me throughout my tenure at the newspaper.

This, I suppose, will be my fondest memory of the *Liberator*: it has consistently allowed me to partake in the fullness of self-expression, as it has done the colleagues I have had the pleasure of working with and those who were here before me. I have every confidence that it will continue to provide a stable platform for those who come after me while not letting them leave unchallenged. I believe that, like Sholom Aleichem and the Jewish dream, the esteemed tradition of journalism at LASA and beyond will go on living -- it is needed now more than ever. And so I will leave the *Liberator* with a toast to its bright future: I’chaim, to life!

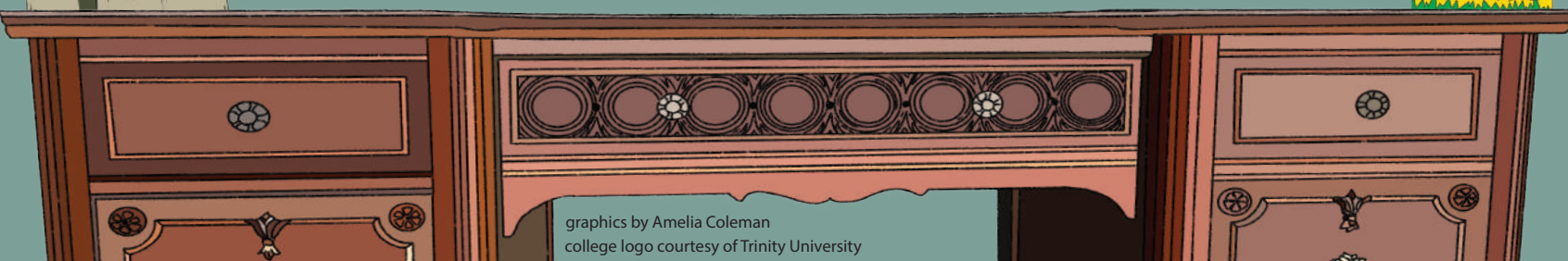
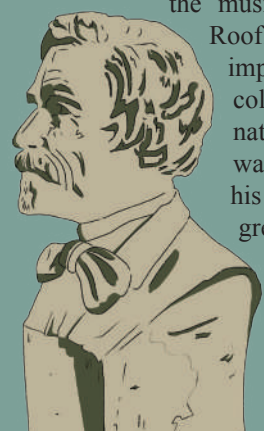


Notes From the Old World



photo courtesy of Beck Williams

Commentary Editor
Beck Williams



graphics by Amelia Coleman
college logo courtesy of Trinity University

The Weeping Willow

from page 1

According to ConocoPhillips the Willow project will bring the state of Alaska and the North slope Bureau a combined \$2.5 billion, however according to PBS, 263 million tons of greenhouse gasses will be produced over the project's 30 year span. This positive and negative has been the spark of a hot debate, and for junior LASA environmental club member, Mia Larson, the positives aren't enough to outweigh the repercussions that will come with it.

"To me, the approval of the Willow project is very disappointing as it means the US is valuing oil drilling and profit over the best interests of its citizens and our environment," Larson said.

When President Biden was first running for president one of the promises he made was that there would be no more drilling on federal lands, but with the approval of the Willow Project, President Biden juxtaposes this. For young and soon-to-be voters like Larson it shakes their confidence in the president.

"Biden's decision to approve the Willow project is very disheartening and suggests he may not prioritize the environment when making future decisions," Larson said. "... Furthermore, it sets a dangerous precedent for other lawmakers in the US and around the world- that it is acceptable for them to prioritize profit and economic growth over the voices of their constituents and the well-being of future generations."

For Harcharek, the oil resource and moral quandary following the United States turning away from Russian oil due to the war in Ukraine is one of the major reasons he decided to support the project. While

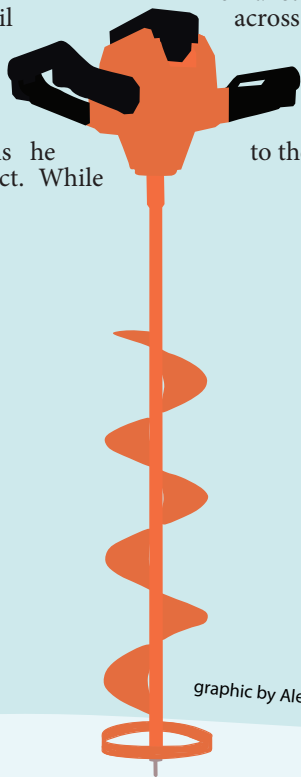
Harcharek understands the environmental implications of the project, he said current events have had more of an effect on his opinions regarding the project.

"The question becomes where do you get the resource," Harcharek said. "Do you do it within the United States where we have control over the environmental regulation, where we have control over the mitigations, where we can realize the benefits locally on the North Slope within the slate of Alaska? ... Then from an energy perspective, do you outsource those responsibilities and those benefits to other countries?"

The impact of this project is not only environmental and economical, but social as well. For Harcharek the go ahead means a step forward for Alaskan culture and the people of the Arctic Slope

"It's going to help us move our culture forward into the future, and allow us the opportunities to define what that means going forward without having reliance on the state and feds," Harcharek said. "If we're not limited by just the support from the state and federal government, we have our own money we can invest into our own people, into our own programs, and into our own communities to make sure that from a cultural perspective we are protected."

The Willow Project is a complicated arrangement that provokes the questions of economy over environmental, welfare of a state/place, and political issues across the world. The Willow Project is ready to go, and it will be enacted over a 30 year time period bringing a host of jobs and newfound resources to the people of Alaska.



graphic by Alexandria Valencia-Serrano

Austin's New Light Rail

MARS LESLIE | staff writer

In Nov. 2020, Austin voters approved Proposition A, funding Project Connect. Project Connect is a 7.1 billion dollar budget to add two light rail lines and three rapid bus routes to Austin, according to Community Impact.

The planning process has taken time and project leaders are faced with key decisions regarding the scope of the project. For example, the city of Austin had to reduce the number of lines being built due to concerns with the COVID-19 pandemic and rising construction costs. Also, the city is still deciding on the designs of each rail line, so Austin has not broken ground yet on the proposed system. The project's goal is to add more accessible public transportation to the city.

The city government and the officials behind the project in Austin recently released a set of five options, each with a different initial segment of rail operating first. The promise of a tunnel segment through the downtown area, introduced in the first stages of planning, is only included in one of these options. According to the city, cost estimates of the project have increased, which resulted in the new options and delays.

Anna Martin is the Assistant Director of the Transportation Department at the City of Austin and is in the middle of the light rail project. Her role involves managing how the project is planned and how it will fit into the city.

"Project Connect is a transit system that expands options throughout Austin, including light-rail, bus rapid transit, commuter rail, park and rides and other supportive elements," Martin said. "The complete system will follow the Project Connect System Plan and will be built out over many years. Light rail is a high-profile element of the overall plan."

Martin said many elements are considered during the design and planning process in order for the system to be useful. One of those elements is train capacity, as the lines will stretch between multiple largely populated areas.

"The overall system capacity is still a work in progress, but light rail was chosen as the preferred mode because it can move the most people through the densest part of the City," Martin said. "While the light rail will be the spine of the transit system, we expect that local buses, bus rapid transit, and express/commuter buses will continue to carry millions of people each year."

Another party involved in the light rail project is Austin Transit Partnership, which shares responsibilities with the city regarding planning and the construction of the system. Danielle Kaigler, part of ECPR Texas, a public relations firm formerly known as Elizabeth Christian Public Relations, now works with the company and has been involved with the process so far.

"This has been a project long in the making," Kaigler said. "There have been plans to consider light rail in Austin over the years, dating back to 2000. Though earlier plans for light rail were not approved... Voters then supported the tax rate election in 2020 to invest in expanding Austin's transit system, including light rail."

After approval, the plans hit roadblocks as challenges with budget and fitting the tracks into the city arose, causing the need for more discussion, according to Kaigler. Austin Transit Partnership [ATP] is an independent company that has contracted with the city of Austin to help guide project connect.

"As ATP conducted thorough diligence on iterations of the initial light rail vision, costs increased due to three major factors — scope of the project, real estate cost increases, and inflation," Kaigler said. "Each of the options presented comes with different ways it will fit into the city. Some include segments with light rail elevated above the ground on a bridge. Some have a portion of underground light rail, and most options consist primarily of light rail at the street level in its own dedicated lanes next to vehicular traffic lanes."

Residents of Austin, like sophomore Maverick Segura, have been expressing feelings of uncertainty and unawareness as to how the city is moving forward with light rail. Segura lives in an area underserved by public transportation and said he doesn't use the existing system.

"There are two bus stops about a half-mile walk from my house," Segura said. "I don't ride them because the places they go are limited and at very odd times, usually just for early mornings and evenings so people can get to work."

The goal of the light rail system is to serve as many people as possible, as quickly as possible. However, Segura is skeptical, and believes that it will come with benefits and downsides.

"I think this system could be great for the city... it's a faster way of transportation and in some instances, cheaper," Segura said. "I just don't know how well it's going to be put in effect. The plan has shrunk for the next couple of years, and even though they plan to expand it, I don't know if they're pushing themselves to the limit."

The estimated first time the system will be open to the public is in 2030, depending on which plan the City of Austin and Austin Transit Partnership decide on.



graphic by Alexandria Valencia-Serrano

Texans Elect New Pakistani American Legislators

LASYA SANGANA | staff writer

With the 2022 Texas Legislature voting cycle concluding, Texans have made history by electing two Pakistani Muslim men to serve as state representatives, according to NBC. Salman Bhojani, an attorney and business owner, and Dr. Suleman Lalani, a medicine practitioner, both were recently sworn in as Democratic representatives for District 92 and District 76. As they were officially sworn in this January at Texas's 88th Legislative session, supporters packed into overflow rooms in the Capitol to witness the occasion.

However, becoming one of the first Pakistani Americans to be elected is not to come without its own challenges, according to the representatives. Rep. Bhojani, representative for District 91, said that getting to this stage, especially as a South Asian immigrant, wasn't an easy path. For him, coming to a completely new country at 19 years old and juggling three minimum-wage jobs was just a part of the struggle he had to work through.

"As a kid, I was always told that the United States of America is the place where dreams are made," Rep. Bhojani said. "Through it, I raised two kids, worked from 9-5, and took night classes for four years. I started my own businesses and helped my community members through my law firm. My journey into politics was not one I took lightly."

Rep. Bhojani said that a major factor that pushed him into politics was the aftermath of the 2016 presidential election. The election forced him to have hard conversations with his kids about the country's politics. Eventually, in 2017 during the Muslim ban, which was a travel ban that banned people from major Muslim countries from coming to the United States, Rep. Bhojani drove to the Dallas Fort-Worth Airport to utilize his law skills to help people reconnect with their families.

"My mentor taught me that, as lawyers, one of the most important things we can offer is giving back to our communities," Rep. Bhojani said. "By 2018, I knew I could do this by stepping into local politics."

Eventually, after a tough campaign, Rep. Bhojani got elected to the Euless City Council as the first minority council member. According to Rep. Bhojani, in 2020 he was unanimously elected Mayor Pro Tempore of Euless, which meant he temporarily served as a mayor. Two years later, after knocking on 45,000 doors, making 10,000 calls, and bringing out 1,000 first-time voters, Rep. Bhojani was finally elected to the Texas Legislature. Rep. Lalani, representative for District 76, had a similar awakening that led to him getting involved in politics.

"I have always had a passion for public service and a desire to help others through my work," Rep. Lalani said. "I became a doctor because I wanted to make a positive impact on the lives of the people in my community. I have seen firsthand the injustices that can occur, and I feel passionate about ensuring that everyone has equal access to opportunities."

Rep. Lalani emphasized the importance that he gives his job as a legislator, and how highly he regards the ability he has to create and support policies in people's lives. As a result, Rep. Lalani participates in every way he possibly can, filing around 40 pieces of legislation and working to build lasting relationships that will make sure his bills become laws.

"I hope to leave a legacy of perseverance for change," Rep.

“I would want to be remembered as someone who worked tirelessly to improve the lives of my constituents and promote policies that benefit all Texans.”

- DR. SULEMAN LALANI, TEXAS STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Lalani said. "I would want to be remembered as someone who worked tirelessly to improve the lives of my constituents and promote policies that benefit all Texans."

Especially as a Pakistani American, Rep. Lalani feels like this is a monumental step for his community and takes great pride and honor to be among the first in his community to hold this position. He said it is a historic moment, not just for him, but for all Pakistani Americans who have worked hard to overcome barriers and make

their voices heard in the political arena.

"As a Pakistani American, I have a greater appreciation for the importance of cultural diversity," Rep. Lalani said. "At the same time, being Pakistani American has presented certain challenges, such as dealing with prejudice from those who may not understand or appreciate the contributions of Pakistani Americans to our society."

Understanding these challenges, Rep. Lalani said he views them as an opportunity to educate others and promote greater understanding and acceptance of different cultures. With Texas growing so widely, Rep. Lalani said this could just be the beginning of minority representation at the Texas Legislature.

"With Texas being one of the most diverse states it is time that our legislators reflect our population," Rep. Lalani said. "I think the new generation of legislators will make a more inclusive legislative process that takes into account the needs and concerns of underrepresented communities."

LASA Freshman Ananya Raghav said she had experienced witnessing the election unfold and learning about it through her Pakistani American neighbor who is very interested in politics and Pakistani culture. Raghav said that to her, the whole situation seemed pretty amazing because it was a form of South Asian representation in her government. When her Pakistani family friends found out that this was going on, they were similarly impressed.

"I think when we all think of politics, old white men come into our mind," Raghav said. "So seeing faces that represent us was something we all thought was cool. I think this whole thing is a really good catalyst for the gate for more people to get inspired and more comfortable getting into politics."

Raghav said she is very hopeful that the inclusivity will encourage more people from different backgrounds to get involved in politics. Ultimately, Raghav also hopes that this might even lead to a Pakistani or South Asian woman to be elected to the legislature.

Likewise, Rep. Bhojani also hopes to reflect this in the legacy he wants to leave behind. Similar to Rep. Lalani, Rep. Bhojani said this is just the beginning and wants to pave the way for more Pakistani and South Asian elected officials for future generations.

"My election marks a new era of representation in Texas," Rep. Bhojani said. "Still, it is a victory that does not belong to me, but to our immigrant communities whose children will hear their stories echoed by their elected officials. It is a victory for all Texans who will benefit from a new perspective at the decision-making table."

3D Printing Technology Builds New Homes

MARS LESLIE | staff writer

Home companies are utilizing new 3D printing technologies to meet demands of growing cities in America, according to the Economist. One example can be seen in Austin, where some of the first 3D printed homes were built by ICON, a company specializing in this kind of construction. An entire suburb north of Austin will be constructed entirely with 3D printing by ICON in the future. This method of constructing buildings is currently being tested by companies around the world to see if it can be more efficient and affordable than traditional homebuilding.

The architectural firm Lake Flato constructed one such home on a plot east of Downtown Austin. Lewis McNeel is a member of the firm and worked on the design of the house.

“Designing with [3D printing] is fairly similar to a traditional house design process, just learning a new construction process with new rules, and learning the parameters of a new material,” McNeel said. “If you can learn and follow new rules, you can design with 3D printing.”

The new technology is limiting, though, and only certain kinds of buildings in certain locations can be constructed with a 3D printer. According to McNeel, the firm didn’t run into any major issues while constructing the house, opening up speculation regarding further design opportunities.

“3D printing should be put to use to build more dense and more diverse housing options like multi-story apartments and to enable those projects to be built faster, cheaper, and with higher quality,” McNeel said. “The printing technology will get there soon enough to help build multi-story buildings, enabling walkable, transit-oriented urban density everywhere. For now, single story printing is what’s being tested out most heavily.”

Arami Rosales is a SciTech teacher at LASA and works with 3D printers in her class. According to Rosales, there are a lot of things that set normal-scale and house building printers apart.

“The largest difference between a traditional 3D printer and one capable of printing buildings is the scale,” Rosales said. “Typical hobbyist material extrusion 3D printers have print beds and can only print shorter structures. For instance, the 3D printers we use in SciTech have a print volume of 150 by 150 by 150 millimeters. The 3D printers used to create concrete houses are huge with a build volume of 10 by 38 by 100 feet. Additionally, instead of using spools of PLA filament, like we do in class, these 3D printers extrude concrete.”

While the technology behind it is an aspect of the push for 3D printed buildings, sustainability and city design come into question. Jacob Wegmann is a professor at the University of Texas and specializes in city planning.

“Conventionally, sustainable architecture means that the building is designed in different ways to minimize energy usage, whether that’s the energy that’s embodied in the materials or the construction...” Wegmann said. “I think sustainable architecture, in some cases, has come to be a symbol of gentrification. I think that is just because gentrification happens, and it’s often accompanied by new construction.”

According to Wegmann, with the potential that it has, 3D printing may become more and more popular over time. The effects of this building method on a larger scale are still unknown.

“I think we just don’t know what potential this technology has,” Wegmann said. “Is it solving any real problems? The technology is predicated on building houses in concrete... What’s the carbon footprint of building houses out of concrete? How does that stack up, or may there be other savings that are happening as a result of using 3D printed houses that perhaps offset some of the increased carbon intensiveness of using concrete?”



graphic by Alexandra Valencia-Serrano

OH The Places You’ll Go

Teachers and Faculty End Their Chapter at LASA

AIDAN GANNON | staff writer

Several LASA faculty members will be leaving at the end of this year, from teachers, to counselors, and even an administrator. World Geography teacher Neil Loewenstern, U.S. Government and Politics teacher Ronny Risinger, Academy Director Andy Paulson, and College Counselor Jamie Kocian are among those leaving the school.

Both social studies teachers have been teaching for over a quarter of a century. Loewenstern said he’s been teaching for long enough that he is satisfied with his career, and very few things could tempt him into continuing to teach as he is content with what he’s accomplished.

“Well, I’m eligible to retire,” Loewenstern said. “I’ve been teaching for over 30 years, and I’ve been paying into the retirement system for 27 years. It’s been a great school.”

Over the time Loewenstern has been at LASA, things have changed significantly. Loewenstern taught at the Liberal Arts Academy (LAA), teaching both students in the magnet program and students at Johnston High School. Loewenstern moved with LASA to LBJ’s campus, then back to the current campus.

“The biggest change is having our own campus the past couple of years now and having our own room,” Loewenstern said.

Risinger, who teaches AP Government, Constitutional Law, and Street Law, has similarly been at LASA since it was the LAA, before the school combined with the Science Academy. He noted that the sheer growth of the school and its programs was one of the major changes that he has experienced in his career.

“When I first started, the LAA was about 300 people total,” Risinger said. “We are now a big, big school, and so you lose a lot of that intimacy in that classes used to be smaller, and teachers would know everybody, and now we’ve lost a lot of that. That’s the biggest change I’ve seen.”

Despite the changes LASA has experienced, Risinger has served the school for years. He looks forward to seeing what happens both with his future and the future of LASA’s social studies department.

“Well, after you’ve done something for over a quarter of a century, it’s like, what’s next,” Risinger said. “Older people get entrenched in their ways, so maybe it’ll be a chance for a fresh start. I’ve done my part. Now it’s time for somebody else.”

Even though Risinger is ready to let other teachers take the lead next year, he said he hopes he has influenced the school. Risinger said if he could have an impact on the school, he would want students to be more active in the community via their education and have students focus on learning by taking action.

“I would love to be able to see students take more active involvement in the community as far as helping the community do something and learn by doing as a part of a school mission,” Risinger said. “A lot of the stuff we do is academic, but we don’t really see how it really works. If I could make anything change, I would try to be more active, involved in the community through educational endeavors.”



Working with some of the best, brightest, and most talented students in this district is personally fulfilling and thrilling to be a part of.

-Jamie Kocian, LASA College Counselor



Unlike Lowenstern and Risinger, Paulson said he is retiring because he believes he is at a place in his life where moving is more plausible. Having no more children living at his home has allowed Paulson to consider living out his retirement somewhere more comfortable.

“Both of my kids are leaving Austin as my daughter is graduating from UT this year and moving to San Francisco, and my son is going out of state to college,” Paulson said. “So, this is a great time for me to retire and move to Florida.”

When reminiscing about how LASA has been for him, Paulson was rather positive. Despite changes the school has gone through, Paulson has still said working at LASA was a great experience.

“We have lost some excellent teachers, but, we have hired some excellent teachers and we of course have more staff compared to when I first started,” Paulson said. “I have loved working at LASA!”

Kocian, unlike some of the other faculty leaving the school, is not retiring. Kocian has plans to continue her career working as a college counselor.

“I had a right place-right time moment where I was presented with an opportunity I couldn’t pass up,” Kocian said. “It will allow me to do more of what I love about this job: working with students to find their best fit colleges and walking them through the application process in an intentional and authentic manner.”

Kocian has been a part of LASA for 15 years, and in college admissions for 21. According to Kocian, she has loved working as a part of LASA’s counselor group.

“I love the people I work with,” Kocian said. “The counselors are amazing. We’re all working on our own areas of expertise, i.e. academic, college, and wellness, but it’s such a collaborative group willing to bounce ideas off of each other.”

Kocian has also experienced countless changes throughout her time with LASA. Changes to the school, particularly the increasing size, has led to shifts in the more personal side of her job.

“I came to LASA when the student population was about half the size it is now,” Kocian said. “An advantage of that size was the opportunity to really get to know the students I worked with. Over time, my interactions and conversations with students tend to focus solely on college applications, the school list, and essays. It’s harder to foster those relationships with all the demands on my time.”

Despite this, Kocian still considers working at LASA to have been a great experience. According to Kocian, the most fulfilling part of her time with LASA has been the students she’s worked with and the community she’s been a part of.

“I have absolutely loved working with LASA students over the years,” Kocian said. “Working with some of the best, brightest, and most talented students in this district is personally fulfilling and thrilling to be a part of.”

THE SKINNY

Global News

April 14

On April 14, the Russian army attacked Ukrainian homes in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine, killing at least eight civilians, according to the BBC. The region’s governor, Pavlo Kyrylenko, said the attack was most likely done using recycled S-300 missiles and hit five blocks of residential housing. Following the attack, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky posted on social media, saying “The evil state once again demonstrates its essence. Just killing people in broad daylight. Ruining, destroying all life.”

April 15

In January, French president Emmanuel Macron put forward an initiative to raise the retirement age in France from 62 to 64. According to NPR, this initiative was very unpopular among both the French people and legislatures, who are upset about the change in pension plans. However, Macron was able to use an executive power delegated to him under the French constitution to force the passage of the act, sparking widespread protests in France. On April 15, Macron signed the act into law.

April 15

Atiq Ahmed, a former Indian Member of Parliament, was shot dead on live television on April 15, 2023 according to the BBC. Ahmed was a member of the Indian Parliament’s Lok Sabha from 2004-2009. However, for the past 20 years several accusations of murder, extortion, kidnapping and other things have been filed against Ahmed. On Saturday, while giving an interview, three assassins posing as journalists walked up to Ahmed and shot him at close range, killing him. The three suspects were taken into police custody immediately afterwards. According to the New York Times, the murder has sparked concerns over the rise in political violence in India.

National News

April 13

On April 13, a Massachusetts National Air Guardsman was arrested by the FBI. Jack Teixeira, who is 21 years old, was arrested for his role in leaking classified documents over the social media platform Discord starting in January of 2023, according to AP News. These documents included detailed information about the Ukrainian and Russian militaries and battlefield positions, as well as information about the United States’ intelligence activities in foreign countries. Teixeira is a “cyber transport systems specialist” for the National Guard, which means that he was responsible for military communications.

March 27

Following the Covenant School shooting on March 27, when a gunman entered the school and killed six students and staff, protestors marched to the Tennessee State Capitol to advocate for tighter gun control laws. While the legislature was in session, three Democratic legislators stood up and interrupted the legislative proceedings to join in a chant with the protestors, according to the New York Times. Shortly after the protests, Republicans in the house ordered the expulsion of the three lawmakers, two of whom, Justin Johnson and Justin Pearson, were voted out of their positions, and the third narrowly was able to keep her position.

April 14

On April 14, Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito paused the decision of a lower court regarding access to the popular abortion pill mifepristone, according to CBS News. The fifth circuit court of appeals had requested an administrative stay from the Supreme Court, which Alito granted. The stay means that mifepristone will remain accessible while the Supreme Court decides whether to get involved in the case.

State News

April 7

In a trial on April 7, Army sergeant Daniel Perry was found guilty for the murder of Garrett Foster. The incident happened in July of 2020 during a Black Lives Matter protest in downtown Austin. During the protest, Perry, who was driving for Uber at the time, drove his car into a crowd of protesters after repeatedly honking at them. Foster, who was legally open-carrying an AK-47 rifle, approached Perry’s car, and was quickly shot by Perry, who was also legally armed. Perry claimed the shot was fired in self defense, utilizing Texas’ “stand your ground” law. Perry has been sentenced to five years as of April 7, but could be sentenced to life later.

April 13

On April 13, a dairy farm explosion in Dimmitt, Texas killed about 18,000 cows and left one employee critically injured. According to the New York Times, this explosion was the deadliest barn fire in the history of Texas. The cause of the explosion is still under investigation, however, according to Vox, the cause may have been due to the managing of manure at the farm. The Castro County Sheriff, Sal Rivera, said the explosion could’ve happened when the manure management overheated and ignited with the methane.

Local News

April 15

Following several deaths near Rainey Street in Lady Bird Lake in the last six years, the Austin City Council says they have been working to make safety improvements to the area. These measures include EMS staging, setting up surveillance cameras, park ranger patrols, and more. However, according to Fox News, a recent body pulled from the lake on April 15, was the second one in two months. The high number of deaths in the area has sparked rumors among Austinites that a serial killer is preying on the city, however the Austin Police Department has said that no foul play played a role in any of the deaths.

Making Their Mark On Art

LASA Students Show Their True Colors Through Their Creations

DELIA RUNE
LILI XIONG student life editors

One artist feeds fabric through a sewing machine, while another stomps her feet, the decorative bells at her feet shaking and ringing. One student brushes swaths of bright colors across a painting, as another places the tip of a calligraphy pen to a piece of paper. All of these artists have something in common – their use of art as a means of cultural and self expression.

Senior Abasifreke Udosen is a budding fashion designer at LASA. She has always had a love for fashion but, as she's gotten older, she feels that her Nigerian heritage has influenced her designs more. "I have been working with my mother, a fashion designer herself, since I was in grade school," Udosen said. "However, it was only when I reached middle school and started forming my own sense of style that I was inspired to design my own clothing, which led me to where I am today."

Udosen said that the clothes she makes are a way for her to express the different cultures that have influenced her identity. She combines styles from different countries and time periods to create unique multicultural pieces.

"A major theme in my fashion and my clothes is the duality of culture that I have experienced and my attempt to express how those two aspects can be combined," Udosen said. "I like to play with a combination of black streetwear and early 2000s fashion with Nigerian prints, and I like to highlight the systemic separation that has occurred within the Black diaspora between Africans and African Americans."

According to Udosen, Nigerian culture has had a huge influence on how she thinks about designing her clothes. She likes to utilize trends and styles she has seen in Nigeria.

"The influence of my culture is quite clear because I make Nigerian clothing with American patterns," Udosen said. "On a deeper level, I make this clothing and wear it because it allows me to express my identity in a way that is very true to my spirit. The clothes I make appeal to me, and I believe that my specific tastes are rooted in my culture and the pieces that I would see people wearing when I visited home."

Sonali Srikanth is a sophomore who also tries to combine different cultures through her art. Srikanth is a Bharatanatyam dancer, a form of classical dance that originated in southern India, and she has been dancing for nearly 12 years. According to Srikanth, there are a lot of opportunities within dance for her to play with cultural expression and fusion.

"We have a lot of these fusion-type dances, which are a little bit of Bollywood and a lot of Bharatanatyam, and they've actually gotten a lot of traction," Srikanth said. "We do group dances with fun choreography, and it's different from the traditional style."

According to Srikanth, Bharatanatyam dance has helped her connect more with a culture that she feels geographically removed from. It's been a valuable way for her to feel more a part of Indian culture even though she isn't able to visit India often.

"A lot of times, I'm not really close with my culture," Srikanth said. "My family doesn't follow every tradition to a tee, and we don't celebrate every holiday all the time. Dance helps me feel connected to my roots because I wasn't born in India. I go there for vacation, and it's not like I live there. So this is the closest I get to my culture."

Dance isn't just a way for Srikanth to connect with her culture – it also provides an outlet for her emotions, according to Srikanth. She loves dancing and getting to be part of a larger community.

"I like stomping," Srikanth said. "It helps with my life, like with anger, and you wear bells on your feet. I love hearing the clean sound of a stomp that hits the beat, and that's really beautiful. I also really like doing expressions and telling a story through movement."

Srikanth also loves that Bharatanatyam dance has allowed her to be a bigger part of the Austin community as well. Through dance, she gets to engage in many celebrations and performances in Austin.

"We get invited to a lot of places to showcase our dance, a lot of Diwali festivals, and a lot of Indian festivals in general," Srikanth said. "... And then this summer, I have my Arangetram, which is

my big dance graduation of all my years of learning coming to a single performance."

Tracy Li is a junior who practices Chinese calligraphy. She agrees that her art has also allowed her to feel more connected with her heritage.

"I feel like cultural expression is really important, especially with my family since we're so disconnected with the [Chinese] culture," Li said. "Because my parents miss their time in China, my calligraphy is a good activity to help keep in touch with my culture. It's also important because it allows myself and other Chinese people to form a better connection to our culture through art."

Li thinks it's especially important to find ways to connect with one's culture when one lives far away from it. She said that learning calligraphy has brought her a lot of joy.

"Because there's such a geographical distance between me and China, and especially my heritage, engaging in cultural activities such as calligraphy really helps me keep in touch with that cultural aspect," Li said. "It gave me peace within myself when I decided to get into calligraphy."

Akhila Jallepalli is a junior at LASA who plays the violin and performs both classical music and Carnatic music. Jallepalli explained that Carnatic music is a classical Indian type of music that is difficult to compare to Western music genres.

"It's kind of hard to describe the music because there are so many different styles and genres," Jallepalli said. "The most mainstream music I can compare Carnatic music to is like the Quran or the Torah."

According to Jallepalli, Carnatic music has allowed her to meet new people and be inspired by other musicians. Indian vocalist Bombay Jayashree and American violinist Hilary Hahn are artists Jallepalli looks up to.

"Music makes me feel more connected to my culture," Jallepalli said. "I learn more about my religion and traditions, which is cool. I also meet many other musicians. It's really inspiring to meet others who are so accomplished in their art."

Jallepalli knows that Carnatic music is not very popular in the United States, and that some LASA students don't know what it is. However, she thinks this only goes to show how many unique art forms from other cultures LASA students might not be aware of.

"I guess it shows art that is not really 'mainstream,'" Jallepalli said. "There are so many wonderful styles of music around the world that I feel need to be better known."

Udosen agrees that many art forms from other cultures aren't smaller art forms and artists of color in particular.

"As is with many disciplines, in the art industry there has always been a systematic marginalization of artists of color from the mainstream," Udosen said. "It is so important to work to dismantle these aspects because it often leads to artists not getting recognized for their excellence and talent."

Erika Torii-Karch is a junior artist at LASA. She loves to paint and is currently working on a portfolio that features a lot of realistic images and bright colors.

"My portfolio right now is about joy and how it's expressed in different ways – how I express myself and a little bit of how joy is expressed in people in general," Torii-Karch said. "I'm especially trying to portray how you can use color to express joy within art. That's one of my main themes because like I said, I really like using bright colors, and those are usually kind of joyful."

Torii-Karch said highlighting artists of color whenever possible is necessary to uplift those communities. According to her, it is important that people get exposed to art from different cultures so they can learn new things.

"People of color are obviously just kind of going to be oppressed no matter what they do in some way or another, so it's always important to try and elevate them where possible, especially because art is such a culturally diverse and significant form of expression," Torii-Karch said. "Every culture has such distinct ways in which they create art, and it's important to be able to see all of that because a variety of inspiration is obviously just going to make anyone a better artist."

“A major theme in my fashion and my clothes is the duality of culture that I have experienced, and my attempt to express how those two aspects can be combined.”

– SENIOR ABASIFREKE UDOSEN, DIGITAL ARTIST AND FASHION DESIGNER

STEPPING IT UP Sophomore Sonali Srikanth poses dressed in traditional attire for Bharatanatyam, Srikanth's arangetram, or dance graduation performance, is coming up this summer. photo courtesy of Sonali Srikanth

MOTHER NATURE Junior Torii-Karch enjoys creating art depicting joy. This piece is a part of her AP 2-D Art portfolio. photo courtesy of Erika Torii-Karch

VIBRANT HUES Junior Erika Torii-Karch used markers and colored pencils for this piece. She gravitates towards bright colors, which is reflected in her artwork. photos courtesy of Erika Torii-Karch

A STROKE OF BRILLIANCE Junior Tracy Li practices calligraphy with traditional brushes and ink. She gets a lot of her calligraphy inspiration from her grandfather. photo courtesy of Tracy Li

DRESS OF YOUR DREAMS A model wears a dress designed by senior Abasifreke Udosen. Udosen's fashion is inspired by Black streetwear, early 2000s fashion, and Nigerian prints. photo courtesy of Abasifreke Udosen

graphic by Lili Xiong, Alexandra Valencia-Serrano, and Amelia Coleman

LIBERATOR EDITORS TAKE ON BIPOC POP!



BIPOC BANNER A BIPOC Pop promotional banner, with artwork by Stacy Robinson, could be seen at the entrance of the venue. Many of the event's promotional content featured artwork created by speakers at the event. photo by Sarah Garrett

The BIPOC Pop event is an event designed by Professor Frederick Luis Aldama, the Chair of Humanities at the University of Texas (UT) at Austin. BIPOC Pop 2023 brought creatives, scholars, and industry leaders working in comics, gaming, animation, and multimedia arts together to focus on strengthening the community and sharing creative knowledge. Sessions included topics focused on decolonizing learning spaces, forging paths for BIPOC creators to access publishing and media, and celebrating Indigenous superheroes. As panels were going on, many creators also hosted creative workshops like "Scrapping: Comics, Zines & Reparative Justice" and "Making BIPOC Board Games." The event spanned three days from March 9-11 at UT's Patton Hall and was free and open to all. This year was the second annual event, having debuted in 2022.



SPEAKING THEIR TRUTH University of North Texas professor Sasha Sanders, electronic magazine and newspaper teacher Kevin Garcia, and comic artist Corey Robinson (left to right), speak at a panel titled "Everyday Rituals as Sites of Cultural Affirmations." Garcia was also the moderator for the panel "LASA Students Take on BIPOC Pop"; photo by Sarah Garrett

for more, see **BIPOC POP** on page 14

The Experiences of Editors as Event Panelists

The Power of BIPOC Pop event planning all started a few weeks leading up to spring break. The Liberator staff was busy filling out forms and getting ready for South by Southwest when Garcia announced that there would be another event going on the Friday before spring break, which was the BIPOC Pop event, which would take place at UT. When I first heard about it I was immediately intrigued – getting to meet and interview a variety of artists has been something I've always wanted to do, so I signed up as soon as possible to cover it.

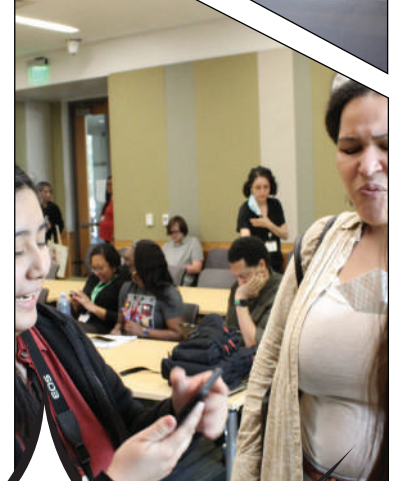
In the days leading up to the event, I was informed that the organizers of the event wanted some students from the Liberator to be panelists. As someone eager to cover the event, Garcia asked if I would be interested in being a panelist. When I think of panelists, I usually think of people important in their communities, such as actors in a movie answering audience questions, so I would be up in a panel.

When I got to the venue I was surprised by how many people were there: in one of the

rooms, artists with a variety of unique styles were selling their art. I recognized some of them from social media, such as Emmanuel Valtierra, who I recognized from their aztec style based art. I was able to meet up with him, as well as other artists, and talk about their works and what inspirations they took to do art.

When I was in front of an audience, I didn't feel nervous – I believe that I have great public speaking skills – but I did feel a sense of importance on the stage. People wanted to hear what I had to say, especially in topics important to me, such as representation in the media.

Getting to meet so many people after the panel was particularly fun because I got to meet professors and staff from the university I am now committed to, the University of North Texas. Overall, getting to participate in the Power of BIPOC Pop event taught me that I have a voice and that I can speak up on topics that matter to me.



JC RAMIREZ DELGADILLO



ALEXANDRA VALENCIA



SHOWCASING THEIR CRAFT Artists at BIPOC Pop display and sell their work. While panels were happening, audience members could also stop by and purchase comic books, stickers, and other art. photos by Sarah Garrett

AN ACTIVE AUDIENCE Audience members at the event ask questions and chat with panelists. While the event took place at UT Austin, both students and members of the public participated. photos by Sarah Garrett

On the Friday morning of BIPOC Pop, I got lost. I wandered around the UT campus, trying to find Patton Hall, feeling a bit on edge, not because I was lost (it happens on the regular), but because I was walking towards a public speaking opportunity, or in other words, my utter demise. It wasn't really the public speaking that worried me; it was the fact that I was to be giving a talk on a panel about two deeply important facets of my life: my racial identity and the writing that I create.

However, after floundering around for about 15 minutes, I eventually found Patton Hall, and some of my co-editors. The first panel was about the power of BIPOC storytelling in Young Adult Fiction and featured notable speakers such as comic artist Eliamaria Madrid, author Pablo Leon, and writer Julio Anta. As the audience laughed at jokes, expressed their agreement with what was being said, and asked questions, I noticed that the energy in the room felt electrifying. The most remarkable aspect of the event really was that it was a networking and creative space created by, and for, artists of color. Many of the panelists expressed that throughout their careers, they'd walked into countless rooms and professional spaces in which they're one of the only people of color. BIPOC Pop allowed these creators to relate to each other on the struggles they face in their respective fields, as well as exchange ideas on how to uplift each other's art in spite of those struggles.

When it was me, Web Editor-in-Chief JC, and Graphics editor Alex's turn for our panel, "LASA Students do BIPOC Pop," I was surprised at how many people seemed genuinely interested in what we had to say. I think most of them probably hadn't had a single interaction with high schoolers in years because not only did we answer questions about our creative work and journalism, but we also talked about our experiences going to school in the current political and social climate in the U.S. in general. I also rambled on about everything from JK Rowling's absolutely abysmal naming of characters of color (even though she was able to come up with some pretty killer names for white characters) to how I use "cultural connection to my heritage and language" as an excuse to watch hours upon hours of C-Dramas. So really, I think the moral of the story is to never give me a microphone, or a sense of self-importance. But in all seriousness, I do think I made a meaningful connection with the audience.

After our panel concluded, author Curtis Chin came up to me, and we chatted about his upcoming memoir, "Everything I Learned In A Chinese Restaurant." I also had a conversation with an audience member about "Crying in H-Mart" by Michelle Zauner, a memoir which we both deeply resonated with. Alex and I also had an extremely giddy conversation with another audience member in which we obsessed over our favorite Chinese and Korean dramas, and exchanged recommendations. I left Patton Hall feeling excited about the direction the artistic industries were headed and much fonder of public speaking.

At first I was very hesitant and afraid to be a panelist at the BIPOC Pop event, as I felt I didn't have a story to tell, or something to contribute to my panel's discussion. However, during lunch before the start of my panel, two women noticed how nervous I was, and asked me about it. I let them know that I was very scared of public speaking and had many insecurities regarding speaking my personal thoughts and opinions out loud. I also confessed to them how I felt like I didn't know or have anything to talk about. It was then that they asked me my thoughts on my panel's theme and in what ways I connected with it. It was after verbalizing my thoughts that I came to the realization that I did have something, a story to tell and talk about. After the surprising but reassuring talk, I was much calmer and when it was time for my panel it passed by like a breeze. I truly enjoyed it because I felt like I said what I wanted to say and I felt heard. That conversation demonstrated what the event is all about, which is to encourage people of color, especially African Americans and Indigenous people, to tell their stories and create a community where BIPOC creators will feel comfortable and heard talking about their passions and voicing out their thoughts and opinions.

During the event, Stacey Robinson, a comic artist and painter whose art speculates futures where Black people are free from colonial influences, really impacted my views on what it means to be a BIPOC creator. At the event, he talked about how he wrote comics and created art that depicted narratives he wanted to see in the world. He expressed wanting to see African Americans survive at the end of a movie and have a love interest where at the end of a movie they're able to stay together and have a happy ending. He expressed how he wanted to see more of what he didn't get to see during his childhood, so that his children wouldn't have to grow up the same way he did. His story really made me think about what I wanted to see more of in the media. I had never realized or expressed it, but I want to see more narratives about the perspectives of the daughters and sons of hispanic immigrants who were born in the United States, and allow them to have a voice on the hardships they also go through when assimilating into a country that their parents don't really know a lot about, and one where they're just trying to survive in. I want more stories on what it takes to not simply survive in a country, but to move forward and become someone in it.

If anything, the one thing the event and the people there taught me is that everyone has a story to tell, and no matter how nonexistent a person believes their story to be, they have one. When the time is right, they'll learn to embrace their narrative, and freely express it through a variety of platforms. It is the power of BIPOC people to always continue telling meaningful and impactful stories.

Flexible Elective Helps Students Stretch Their Schedules

SADIE CRAVOTTA | staff writer

The yoga class at LASA is designed by dance director and yoga teacher Paige Edwards for students to find a moment of peace and relaxation within their busy schedules. The class is open to students of all experience levels. Additionally, LASA has recently introduced a yoga club for those interested in taking their practice further.

Sophomore Sadie Henderson took yoga as her elective last year. She had no prior experience before joining the class, but ended up appreciating the class more than she expected to.

"I think it's a really peaceful class, and I think that it gives you a lot of free time for studying," Henderson said. "I think that mentally it helps to clear my mind, and also I think it's made me a lot stronger, and more flexible."

Edwards said she carefully considers her students' abilities and limitations, creating a safe and inclusive environment for everyone to practice yoga. She shares resources such as Headspace and Calm, apps that come with guided meditations and relaxation techniques, to supplement the course.

"I check in with students often to gauge what we need for the class time," Edwards said. "I understand some days, students aren't up to a more intense workout, so I try to tailor each day to fit the needs of the class. I encourage all students to listen to their bodies as I guide through movement classes, breathe fully, and take time to care for their entire wellbeing."

The class varies from gentle to fast paced yoga positions, with time for meditation and rest at the end, according to Edwards. She also emphasizes the philosophy and history of yoga, as well as the benefits of exercise and mindfulness.

"The benefits of yoga are vast," Edwards said. "Taking time to focus on your breath can help you become more aware of where you hold tension in times of stress and provide movements of introspection to check in with yourself."

"I understand some days, students aren't up to a more intense workout, so I try to tailor each day to fit the needs of the class. I encourage all students to listen to their bodies as I guide through movement classes."

- PAIGE EDWARDS,
LASA YOGA TEACHER

Sophomore Chelsey Pence founded the yoga club this year after taking the class last year. She said she found the class to be a source of calm in her day.

"We were able to move and stretch and meditate," Pence said. "It helped my mind and body."

Pence said she started the club because she wanted to continue experiencing the benefits of yoga and share them with others. The club takes place every Monday in the dance room for the last 30 minutes of lunch.

"I decided to start the club because after last year, knowing the class was a one-year thing, I didn't want this calmness in school and everyday life to go away for me," Pence said, "and I also wanted other people to experience it too."

In the club, members dim the lights and pull out mats to go through a series of stretches and poses to help their bodies, according to Pence. The club ends with Shavasana, or meditation to help their minds be calm and positive.

"I think yoga last year was so much fun, and it really helped me stay calm and keep my day positive with all the tests and work that I had during that time," Pence said. "People should join this club because I believe, from my past experience, that it can truly make your day brighter and put you in a better place with school stress and other stress from life."



CIRCLE UP! Yoga students sit on yoga balls before class. At the start of class, students like to take time to warm up and stretch so they are ready to move for the rest of class. photo by Sarah Garrett

Social Media and Attention Span: Students Feel Effects

VICTOR MARTINEZ | staff writer

On many social media platforms, there is a form of video known colloquially as "Family Guy TikToks" or "Subway Surfers videos", due to the fact that they feature multiple different subjects on one half of the screen and a mobile game on the other, effectively splitting the attention of the watcher. The popularity of these videos have been criticized by many as contributing to social media's detrimental effects on attention spans, which, according to interviewees, could eventually lead to negative changes in the entertainment industry and adolescents as they continue their development.

For freshman Liam Harris, watching multiple pieces of content simultaneously in a short amount of time easily becomes distracting and addicting. According to Harris, despite how harmless the videos may seem, their easy access can lead users to consume many of them in quick succession, losing track of time in the process.

"I have found that some of the most creative and least creative things appear in short, attention grabbing video formats," Harris said. "I often am looking for something or accidentally click on one and suddenly find myself gain consciousness around an hour later once I realize that I have been stuck in the same position and proceed to leave whatever social media I am on at the given moment."

According to Harris, these short, attention grabbing videos have been growing in popularity exponentially in recent times. In his opinion, it is how easily digestible the videos have become that has allowed them to be pumped out more rapidly over time online.

"I think it is the constant feed of videos flowing at the viewer," Harris said. "The 'Funny Family Guy Clips' and 'r/AskReddit Text-To-Speech' videos have been a YouTube phenomenon for a while now, but because short-form content has grown and attention spans have shortened, singular clips from the show along with another easily understandable video, usually Subway Surfers or Minecraft parkour, match the need for a constant rush of dopamine."

According to Harvard University, dopamine is a neurotransmitter that causes a feeling of reward or pleasure when

released into the brain which can play a role in furthering addiction when released excessively by doing one activity. As freshman Auden Sandvik claims, short-term content has been linked to excessive release that can lead to higher levels of tolerance, which can make other activities seem unexciting over time.

"You have receptors that receive the dopamine, and the more dopamine you receive, the higher tolerance to dopamine they have," Sandvik said. "So, when you do things not on TikTok, your dopamine receptors, they do get some dopamine, but they just don't feel anything. You're not going to be happy when you do things because your dopamine tolerance is so high. How that ties in with attention span is when you sit down, do something like homework, and you listen to music, or pretty much anything else, you don't get any dopamine, so you're not happy."

Brad Sharp is an English teacher at LASA and he has noted that decreased attention spans among adolescents has carried over negatively into the real world. He said the most likely cause of the phenomenon is social media.

"Because of [social media], we have lost any ability to have sustained attention," Sharp said. "...Your teachers are not your social media content or entertainers. We have 90 minutes, and to sit still for 90 minutes is an anathema to most students, to pay sustained attention."

According to Wired, attention spans have been severely affected by social media, with internal TikTok survey data showing that 50% of users considered videos longer than one minute stressful and a third of users watch online content at double speed regularly. As Sandvik testifies from personal experience, attention spans can also affect what daily tasks and activities people can find stressful or daunting to complete.

"For me personally, sometimes getting homework done or going to the gym can be harder if I've watched a lot of YouTube," Sandvik said. "Getting to sleep can be hard. Doing homework can be hard sometimes, but generally I've gotten better at those things."

Due to the sheer effect short, attention-grabbing videos and social media has had on individuals as a collective, it is likely that, according to Sandvik, the entertainment industries will adapt their content to decreased attention spans in the near future. In Sharp's opinion, they already have.

"You can look at any entertainment industry," Sharp said.

"Look at popular music: song links are shorter, no one can consume an album of 12 songs, 55 minutes. Every major movie is a comic book of some sort with timed laugh lines, explosions, bright lights, and jump cuts because we can't sit still. No one is making content anymore that forces even a child to sit still for 22 minutes."

Sharp's view that industries are already adapting to decreased attention spans is echoed by Harris. However, unlike Sharp, Harris said this decreased attention span is a sign of what he calls an impending burnout of this form of content.

"I think that with the lack of a strong attention span in the average consistent viewer of these sorts of videos shows that there has to be a point to how short or bright or flashy videos have to become," Harris said. "...Overexposure nearly always leads to burnout. I think that if the entertainment industry feeds into this more than it does through ads and promotional videos, then the speed at which this burnout can happen is significantly increased."

While social media's addictiveness has the potential to be its own downfall, Sandvik feels that there are benefits social media brings that cannot be disregarded. In Sandvik's view, information from social media can be as authentic as from mainstream sources.

"I don't necessarily think social media is all bad because it's very useful as a first person news source," Sandvik said. "Sometimes the news sources can distort things, and that's why it's important to have social media, but understanding the effects of it and how it works can help with those issues."

With the interconnectedness of the internet and social media comes not only addicting content and real-time news, but also an ability to learn massive amounts of knowledge with relatively little effort. For many like Sandvik, the latter aspect of the internet is arguably its best in spite of its other negative features.

"If you're going to YouTube, and you're watching Minecraft videos or YouTube shorts, then that's not helping," Sandvik said. "You're not learning anything: the videos are shorter, and they're just funny. They're just there to spike your dopamine. However, if you're looking at news sources on social media, if you're looking at things that actually affect real life that you're not getting so much dopamine from, then it's not going to make you necessarily addicted to it."

Busy Bee Students Give Helping Hands

ALONDRA AGUIRRE | staff writer



BUSY BEE Shantala Todaha crochets animals for her non-profit, FurPaws. One of the animals she likes to crochet are bumblebees, as pictures above. photo by Shantala Todaha

Throughout the school year, LASA students have engaged in various activities to get involved in causes they are passionate about. From forming their own organizations to participating in school-wide community events, several LASA students have furthered their involvement with the community.

Many schools, like LASA, encourage their students to help out and volunteer. Programs such as National Honor Society (NHS) require students to obtain a certain amount of community service hours per semester and according to junior Elizabeth Halloran, programs like this are what led her to start volunteering.

"In middle school, I went to Ann Richards, and I was required to do service every year," Halloran said. "Now here at LASA, as part of NHS, I'm required to continue doing service. Now it's become a pastime that I try to do at least once a weekend."

Sophomores Shantala Todaha and Saharsa Arabba founded a business, Austin FurPaws, where they create and sell homemade crafts. All of their proceeds are donated to an animal welfare center in Bangalore, India. According to Todaha, giving back to her Indian community is very important to her.

"My community is basically India, where my family is with all my relatives, and I really care about it," Todaha said. "I also feel like I have this connection with dogs, and I really speak to them. So by doing this, I'm giving back to not only the people of India but also to the dogs of India."

Junior Aurna Mukherjee has also found ways to give back to her community through founding Harmonies for the Elderly, a club where students go to nursing homes and sing for seniors. She has seen how these small acts of community involvement have impacted people.

"It helps for a lot of these senior residents to have daily entertainment," Mukherjee said. "It allows patients with dementia or Alzheimer's to remember what kind of songs or music they listened to in the past, so helping the community has a really important impact."

Not only does helping the community have a positive impact on others, according to Todaha, it can also be spread awareness. According to the Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organizations, there are over 62 million stray dogs in India, and over 34% of Indian dog owners have abandoned their dogs. The stray dog crisis in India is a situation Todaha hopes to mitigate through FurPaws.

"I feel like when you give back to the community it not only just makes you feel good, but it also gives you the sense of awareness that there are people out there in the world who might not have the same things as you do, and that they need an extra helping hand in order to overcome an obstacle that they are facing," Todaha said.

Similar to Todaha, Halloran believes that helping the community helps broaden her worldview. She also said that volunteering helps her create connections with adults who volunteer.

"Giving back to the community definitely puts my life in perspective, and helps me better understand what other people are going through," Halloran said. "I also get to meet new people like adults, and we talk about the service that we do. I just think it has the effect of being able to create connections."

There are numerous ways in which people can start getting involved with helping the community. According to Todaha, choosing an issue that stems from passion is a good first step.

"If you see something that really strikes you as not right with the system, or anything that really just touches your heart, if you really want to fix something, then definitely go out and volunteer," Todaha said. "Help those in need. It will really make you feel good in the end."

Mukherjee has always been passionate about singing, which is what led her to the idea of singing for seniors. According to her, it has been rewarding to get more of the student body involved.

"I've been passionate about singing for a long time," Mukherjee said. "So I started doing this a while ago, just individually performing for some residents because I wanted to give back to my community. Being able to become president of Harmonies for the Elderlies allowed me to reach a different group of people and also get LASA involved in it, which I think has a bigger impact."

Halloran believes that volunteering has had a positive impact on her life. She feels that community involvement of all kinds can make a big difference.

"I think the impact and the effects that I've gotten from volunteering have only made my life better," Halloran said. "I have helped make other people's lives better. I think that helping the community, whether it's your school community or neighborhood, it's just nice, and a little goes a long way."



Seniors Say Sayonara

LILY WILKERSON | staff writer

Seniors have a wide variety of traditions, particularly at the end of the year. From events like senior salute and project graduation to long-running traditions like senior pranks, the year is full of traditions and activities for seniors to enjoy.

One senior tradition is senior skip day, which fell on April 24, this year. Senior William Thiesing said that skip day might have been less successful than past years due to its scheduling.

"From what I've heard, it seems like the participation rate might be a bit down," Thiesing said. "I'm going to participate, but I don't think I have any plans with my friends yet... Considering APs are so early, and they delayed senior skip day for some reason, I think a lot of people are going to choose to stay in school."

Senior Lucas Kim, who participated in senior skip day, said that he was planning to use the time off to study. He had higher hopes for participation than Thiesing, predicting that it would be a successful event.

"I'm excited for senior skip day, because I'd like to skip a day, but also I'm kind of worried about APs," Kim said. "I need to study for them... Our senior class is the laziest class at school right now, so I think it's going to be successful."

One of the last traditions of the year is Senior Salute, part of LASA's graduation process. On May 31, the day before official graduation, students will gather in the evening for a ceremony to receive their magnet endorsement certificates. The event will also include a video prepared by LASA faculty and staff along with a skit by students. Thiesing, who favors the event over the official ceremony, said that it's one of the school's more exciting traditions.

"It's this ceremonial thing where you get awards and your physical copy of your magnet endorsement from LASA," Thiesing explained. "There's a bunch of skits and music that's going to be performed by a bunch of people from LASA composing stuff. It's pretty fun. I'm excited to have more of a LASA graduation than a stock-standard one, something I can do with my friends and peers."

There are multiple people helping with the preparation of Senior Salute, according to Assistant Principal Jessica Cherry. The Parents and Faculty of LASA (PFLASA) has been meeting once a month throughout the year to work on planning Senior Salute.

"They are involved in a lot of the logistics, like they decided where they wanted to have it," Cherry said. "I go with them to look at different venues, and I have the ultimate say in most things, but they do most of the leg work throughout the year. My responsibility is to do the auditions for all the positions, so I send out all the communications to the students."

Along with the faculty and parents helping with the event, there are also student volunteers. The event has Emcees, which are student leaders that welcome the audience members to the event and introduce each act during the show. According to Cherry, this year's Emcees are seniors Sam Church, Ellyce Davis, Nic Gallego, and JC Ramirez Delgadillo. Cherry said there are also three thespian leaders who write the student skit and help to pick which students will act in the show.

Cherry said she has encouraged many people to join the event, even if they have less experience with theater or hosting events. Cherry said she hopes Senior Salute will give students one last opportunity to participate in LASA events.

"What we heard from a lot of our students who auditioned was I wanted to be apart of this because it's the last thing for our senior year," Cherry said, "so it gives people a chance to have this stage for a minute for the last time potentially in front of all of their friends, so that's neat."

Though LASA's many traditions play a big role in its students' final year, there's more to being a senior than the events that come with it. Senior Major McIlvain said that he enjoyed his final year, and encouraged rising seniors to make the most of it.

"Being a senior is great, especially if you don't make it too hard on yourself," McIlvain said. "If there are any juniors reading the Liberator, take some easier classes, would be my recommendation. Just enjoy it."

Edith Holmsten contributed to this article.

AAPI Heritage Month

ALONDRA AGUIRRE | staff writer

May marks the start of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, a time to honor and recognize the diverse culture, history, and traditions of the Asian Americans and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community in the United States. According to National Public Radio (NPR), the celebration of AAPI Month in May references two key historical dates: May 7, 1843, which marks the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants in the United States, and May 10, 1869, which recognizes the completion of the first transcontinental railroad in the U.S., which had significant contributions from Chinese workers.

LASA is a school with a 23.2% Asian population, according to U.S. News and World Report. As such, Japanese teacher Hiroko Fukuhara Karch believes that AAPI Heritage Month has a big impact on students, especially at LASA.

"For AAPI students in our school, this month is a positive representation of their history and culture," Karch said. "It can also empower them to speak up and advocate for themselves and their community."

According to junior and Chinese club secretary Ana Garfield, being of AAPI heritage isn't required in order to understand the impact that this heritage month has on people. She believes it is important to celebrate different cultures in the U.S., a country known for its diversity.

"The United States is full of different cultures," Garfield said. "It's what makes the United States a unique country and an interesting country to live in. I think this month allows us to celebrate a group of people that for a long time in American history, are often ostracized."

According to Garfield, AAPI month encourages students to be proud of their background and culture. There are many people with different cultures in the United States, and heritage months help shine a light on certain cultures and communities.

"Sometimes people can forget to be proud of their culture," Garfield said, "so I think that a month like this just gives different people the opportunity to be proud about themselves."

Karch, an immigrant who arrived in the United States eight years ago, has felt welcomed in the community. However, she believes that this month serves as a reminder of the cultural diversity that the United States has.

"I came to Austin eight years ago," Karch said. "Although it was a painfully long process to get a green card, I always appreciate how I am accepted as a community member here. This month will be a time for me to especially recognize and appreciate the cultural diversity in this community."

The AAPI community includes people with all sorts of backgrounds – those from different regions, first or second generation immigrants, and even multiracial people. According to junior Diya Patel, AAPI Heritage Month provides students with the opportunity to educate themselves on all the different Asian and Pacific Islander cultures.

"I think that AAPI Heritage month is a great opportunity for students to feel represented and heard in the United States," Patel said. "It also teaches students more about different Asian and Pacific Islander cultures, which helps broaden their worldview."

Similar to Patel, Garfield believes that AAPI Heritage Month also has a positive effect on those from non-AAPI backgrounds. According to Garfield, this heritage month helps remind people of their culture.

"If a student is part of the AAPI community, they might feel like they're being celebrated by reminding them about all the great things about their culture," Garfield said, "and students that aren't getting to learn a lot more about other cultures because they're often a lot of events surrounding AAPI months."

Garfield has already started thinking of ideas for the Chinese club to honor this heritage month. Throughout the year, Chinese club has organized cultural events such as the Mid-Autumn Festival and Lunar New Year celebrations.

"The way I personally envision an event like this is something that has food involved because I think food is a good way to show different cultures since it's often a very important part of the culture," Garfield said. "It also gets people interested, and maybe students will learn something in the process."

Overall, according to Karch, AAPI Heritage Month is a very important event that is significant to many people in the United States that come from different countries. Karch is looking forward to seeing how students at LASA will honor this month.

"Students always surprise me with their creative ideas," Karch said. "So, I'm looking forward to seeing how they celebrate this month... it is a great opportunity to celebrate the diverse history and culture of the AAPI community."



photos courtesy of (left to right) KA Sports Photos, NBC Television, Brothers Le, and Lawrence Jackson
graphic by Ben Josephs

Students on a Lucky Streak Win Big with Bullock Prom

JOLIE GROGAN | staff writer

Every spring, LASA's student council organizes a prom for juniors and seniors. Prom is traditionally held at hotels or other similar venues, but this year, prom was held at the Bullock Texas State History Museum for the first time. Juniors and seniors attended the Ocean's '23 themed prom, a take on the Oceans 11 and 8 movies, on April 22.

Senior Samantha Mason was inclined to go to her second prom this year after attending last year's prom. Mason enjoys prom and appreciates all the effort the student council puts into planning it.

"Last year, getting to attend prom was an amazing experience," Mason said. "The student council always does a wonderful job of putting together and planning the event down to the last detail. It's a fun chance to spend time with friends, dress up, and ignore a lot of the additional stresses of LASA for a day. I really enjoyed the entire process of it, and the actual event at the Sheraton downtown was well put together and overall a great experience."

LASA's prom is open to both juniors and seniors, which is different from McCallum and Anderson's prom which are seniors only. Mason likes that LASA's prom is open to more grade levels.

"I think juniors and seniors attending the same prom is how prom should be," Mason said. "I may be biased because the only prom I've attended was as a junior, but I can't imagine the evening without seeing my senior friends or imagine prom this year without seeing my junior friends."

Mason was very excited about this year's choice for prom venue. She thinks that having prom in a museum was a really unique idea.

"I'm so excited about this year's prom being held in the Bob Bullock Museum," Mason said. "The idea of prom being held in a museum is great for LASA in general. The Bob Bullock is a beautiful venue. I think it'll make for a special senior prom."

While the students that attend prom are an important part of the event, there are also many people who make prom happen behind the scenes. Student council is heavily involved in the process of prom setup and preparation. Ana Zhao is the sophomore student council vice president and helps organize some parts of prom.

"Generally we discuss prom items during our Wednesday meetings or have little assignments for each person," Zhao said, "So we don't really have specific tasks depending on the role."

This is Zhao's second year being a part of the student council, so she was involved with prom last year as well, which was held at the Sheraton Hotel in downtown Austin. According to Zhao, a lot goes into planning prom and making it a special night.

"Before prom day, we discussed the vendors and many

different factors we needed during prom," Zhao said. "We arrived at the Sheraton Hotel in the morning and started setting up, and once prom started, freshmen and sophomores had different shifts between check in, ticket sales, voting, and coat check."

According to Zhao, having prom at the Bullock Texas State History Museum this past year meant that prom would look a little different. Zhao said that the venue would make it easier for the student council to organize and decorate for the theme.

"I think that it'll be easier to work shifts because we organized the stations closer to each other," Zhao said. "The dance area will be separate from the tables or eating area, so there won't be as much crowding around. ... I also think this venue is really good for our theme."

Even though Zhao has not formally attended a prom as a guest, she still has the experience of being there in the fun environment. Zhao thinks that prom will be even more enjoyable when she is able to attend as an upperclassman next year.

"I think prom is a really good experience for juniors and seniors, especially for seniors because it gives a little celebration for them ending college applications and the stressful high school life," Zhao said. "Even just working at prom is really fun and creates lifelong memories for people."



PROM POKER FACES There were a variety of activities at prom for LASA students to enjoy. Some of the games included poker and a caricature artist to represent the Ocean's '23 theme of prom. photo by JC Ramirez Delgadillo



PROM LIGHTS UP THE NIGHT Large letters spelling out "prom" decorated the Bob Bullock's rotunda. Other decorations included fake pears, poker chips, and balloons. photo by JC Ramirez Delgadillo



NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM This year, prom was held at the Bob Bullock Museum. The entrance to the museum was decorated by a colorful black and gold balloon arch. photo by JC Ramirez Delgadillo

Global Innovators Showcase at South By Creative Expo Displays Innovations in Tech and Business

JC RAMIREZ DELGADILLO | web editor-in-chief

South by Southwest (SXSW) is a city wide conglomeration of a variety of events ranging from film screenings, musical performances, and other creative events such as flatstock, an art exhibition, and the Creative Industry Exposition (Expo). The Creative Industry Expo is home to many innovations such as food technology that can extract stronger flavors out of plants without the use of sugar. Global innovations are a big part of the Creative Industry Expo due to many foreign investors and innovators gathering to showcase their country and what it has to offer.

Flanders Investment and Trade is a government agency from Flanders, the northern region of Belgium. According to Alexander Bleyaert, representative of Flanders Investment and Trade, the agency helps companies from Flanders grow internationally.

"We're basically governmental agencies that represent the interests of our region, Flanders, northern part of Belgium, but also our companies," Bleyaert said. "If companies want to internationalize into some other place in the world, we help them. I help companies in the digital tech field, so everything related from Mechatronics to ICT [information and communication technology]. So one day, it could be a gaming company, the next day, a semiconductor company. So every day is a new, exciting company to work with."

Shauna Zajac is the Head of Client Engagement for Menacom Group, a company that handles the Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship in Jordan. Zajac believes in the importance of advertising internationally to promote young entrepreneurs.

"We have a lot of young, really talented entrepreneurs, and a lot of young tech savvy talent," Zajac said. "I think over half the population in Jordan is under the age of 24, so it's a very vibrant, youthful population. They're highly educated, and one of our main goals is to really promote our young, innovative, and creative talent."

In order to promote the company and its partners, the Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship travels to many different events similar to SXSW. Jordan is a developing country, according to the World Trade Organization, and one of the goals of the organization is to promote both Jordan as a country and its companies, according to Zajac.

"We try to engage Jordanians who live abroad in helping spread the word about Jordan, because it's a small country, not many people know much about it," Zajac said. "So we do a lot of events like this. ... After we finish South by

Southwest, we're actually headed to Silicon Valley, we're going to meet with some companies and potential investors there, as well as members of the Jordanian diaspora."

There are many benefits to investing in companies outside of the United States, according to Brian Bourgerie, Enterprise Manager at Invest Puerto Rico. Bourgerie explained the benefit of investing in companies in Puerto Rico.

"Invest Puerto Rico is a public private partnership and is the official business and Investment Attraction agency for Puerto Rico," Bourgerie said. "Everything comes down to whether we bring new money to the island and create good jobs. Puerto Rico is a very unique part of the United States as a territory, that actually gives it a lot of very interesting benefits for US citizens, and just business owners and investors all around the world."

Another country that has a growing economic importance is Jordan, a country in southwestern Asia. According to Zajac, Jordan has a booming gaming and Internet Protocol (IP) sectors that have a lot of potential.

"We've had a couple of our own local gaming companies that have been acquired by Stillfront, which is a huge mobile gaming group," Zajac said. "We have a big Jordanian delegation with us for SXSW. Aside from gaming, we also have a really big IP and business process outsourcing industry. So a lot of companies use Jordan for things like call centers like that. ... Jordan is also the biggest creator of Arabic content online, so that is something that has a lot of potential."

For Flanders, the business model they are using is the business-to-business model, used by companies that produce more of their transactions with other companies. According to Bleyaert, Flanders works to understand each company's individual needs.

"In Belgium, especially in Flanders, we were very strong in B2B, this business to business

model," Bleyaert said. "So we're not doing much with consumer products. We try more to find other businesses here to partner with, we try to network as much as possible, we try to understand their regions. We have six offices in the United States. And if a company comes in the gaming sector for example, we try to know as much gaming context as possible and know all the big studios or investors and that's how we hope to bring them in contact."

The event took place March 12-15 at the Austin Convention Center. Next year investors will return from March 8-16 at SXSW 2024, according to SXSW.



review "Beef"

HELEN BIGGE | staff writer

Road rage is something I've seen on the road very often. Whether it's due to running late, heavy traffic, or a person cutting you off, there will be times where you want to curse out the other driver. No series exemplifies that feeling better than "Beef", a Korean-directed TV series where two people's involvement in a road rage incident pits them against each other, leading to both parties becoming increasingly involved in the other's life.

The dark comedy series' first two episodes aired at South by Southwest (SXSW) this March and received highly positive feedback. The series makes the two main characters relatable by showing contrasting aspects of their personalities, such as their different reactions to stress and their different economic backgrounds. Each character deals with issues that the other doesn't know about, which allows the audience to empathize with each of them and adds to the humor when they interact with hostility. Amy Lau (played by Ali Wong) is a chronically busy, hard-working business-owner and mother "in a zen maze of her own creation" as described by the actor during a Q&A after the screening. Meanwhile, contractor Danny Cho (played by Steven Yeun), is also hard-working but bitter at his inability to afford bringing his parents to

the United States because of his cousin's illegal actions. Their first encounter, in which Amy blocks Danny's path and flips him off, sends both of them into a state where they take out all of their pent-up stress and anger at their situations on each other, all road rules be damned. The audience watches as their ensuing obsession with vengeance becomes entangled in their lives, subverting even their own expectations of themselves.

Wong and Yeun both do an amazing job at portraying a character that is trying to keep their cool through stressful problems that life throws at them and yet is slowly cracking under the pressure. For the most part, "Beef" does a great job of balancing the emotionally heavy elements with funny dialogue and facial expressions on the part of the actors. During the screening we watched on March 18, laughter punctuated a good portion of the characters' reactions to their own emotions and situations, including a scene where one of the characters is visibly battling urges of self harm. While their struggles with mental health are portrayed in a realistic and relatable way, the laughter can feel unsettling due to the serious nature of the topic.

Overall, "Beef"'s first two episodes were well-executed and fun to watch. We definitely recommend this show to anyone interested in dark comedies or connecting to deep internal struggles.

JC Ramirez Delgadillo contributed to this article.



Exploring Technology New Inventions in Education Show

GRIFFIN BEAM | staff writer
VICTOR MARTINEZ | staff writer

This year, South by Southwest (SXSW) exhibited new technology to potentially be used in the education field via its SXSW Education convention (SXSW EDU). As a part of the SXSW EDU expo, convention goers were shown new ways for teaching students using technology conceived in recent years, and demonstrators were, in turn, given more exposure to potential investors.

SXSW EDU is an event that takes place annually at the Austin Convention Center, this year taking place from March 6-9. Technological advancements presented at the expo involve virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR). VR is where a user puts on a headset and sees an imaginary place, but in AR the normal world remains visible, but the user can put what they want over it on a screen.

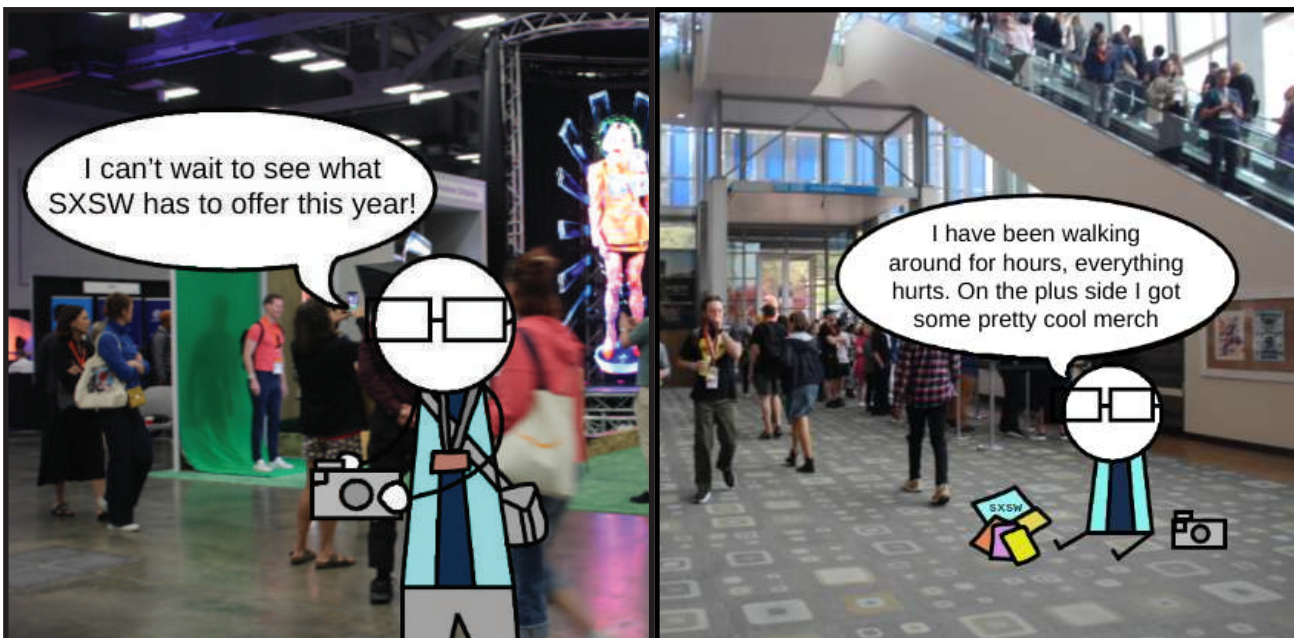
Seb Ji is a developer for Proteus VR, a Canadian tech company specializing in creating virtual reality environments of classrooms and chemistry labs. Ji presented an AR game at SXSW EDU that, utilizing multiple different headset models, inserted the user into various educational classrooms, such as labs used in science classes.

"Currently we have a chemistry lab, an electricity lab, and are working on a biology lab," Ji said. "We also plan on working in a physics lab. We hope to work on several other mods. VR development is complicated. We are doing a lot of tests and user feedback."

Another example of a new technology showcased was Pixicade, an application that allows users to scan drawings they create and make them into virtual obstacle courses. Alysha Horstman showcased Pixicade at SXSW EDU, and she hopes the publicity will allow the product to break into the educational technological field and get students invested in game design and storytelling.

"We've met a large group of teachers that teach teachers or teacher coaches, and that has been really wonderful to have to help us get the information about our brand out there," Horstman said.

Horstman is only one of the multiple educational and technological developers



comic by JC Ramirez Delgadillo

Music to My Ears

from page 1

SXSW has a combination of badge-required and free events throughout the city which gives everyone access to a lot of different genres and musicians. The mass amount of exposure, according to Gately, gives local musicians the opportunity to share their music to a vast audience all while staying in their hometown.

“During SXSW, people from other cities are coming to Austin, and so [artists] are able to accomplish sharing their music without having to leave Austin,” Gately said. “They can make a name for themselves without having to go anywhere. There’s still so many bands and so many artists. There’s so much noise that it would be hard to cut through, but I think for the most part it is a good thing for local bands to be a part of it as much as it is for out of town bands to come to Austin.”

This year, The Tiarras were able to perform in a showcase at Stubb’s BBQ restaurant hosted by Diversity Awareness and Wellness in Action (DAWA), an organization that empowers, supports, and creates space for Black, Indigenous, people of



POWERFUL PERFORMANCES A musician performs at SXSW on Mar. 14. This year, SXSW took place between Friday, Mar. 10 to Sunday, Mar. 19, showcasing various musical artists, speakers, and inventions. photo by JC Ramirez Delgadillo

Latinapalooza, which began six years ago as an unofficial SXSW Day Show, are also fundamental to the Austin music culture.

“Austin artists are very resilient,” Tori Baltierra said. “Even when we’ve gone through periods where we don’t get a lot of shows, or when we’ve had to fight for reasonable pay, even at local shows, even at shows run by the city. We are just very persistent, and we really cling onto our purpose. Because Austin calls itself the live music capital of the world, we hold everyone accountable for that title, even ourselves. We work hard. We try to connect with other artists, and see what we can do for them.”

Gately agrees that Austin being known as the live music capital of the world holds a weight to it. According to him, the music created by local artists is what draws people around the world to the city.

“There’s a magnetism, a gravitational pull about Austin that is pulling young musicians from other parts of the country, other parts of the state,” Gately said. “Austin has a reputation that kind of perpetuates itself. People hear that Austin is where musicians are, so other musicians want to come whereas other places don’t have the same oasis appeal for musicians.”



photos by JC Ramirez Delgadillo, Kayla Le, and Hunt Andre

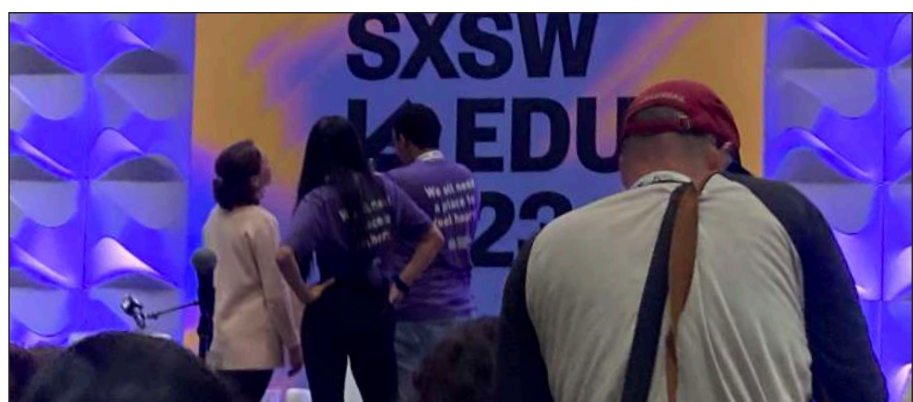
Workshops at SXSW EDU Showcased at South By Southwest

bolstered and given exposure by SXSW EDU. Another speaker was Sally Trainer, the chief content officer for MyShakespeare.com, a site which helps highschoolers comprehend Shakespearean plays through modern translations.

“We saw the direction of education and made a website version of Shakespeare and including translations and video resources,” Trainer said. “We don’t have a marketing team, so we rely on word of mouth, and we try to get in conferences and show teachers this new technology so they switch over to digital.”

Because of the audience at SXSW EDU, both Trainer and Hortsman have been able to reach larger audiences. According to the SXSW EDU website, this is the goal of the event, to empower the teaching community.

“We’ve met some incredible people, whether it’s principals, or leaders in edutech that are trying to help companies like us to reach more people,” Horstman said.



MOODY COLORS SXSW EDU speakers prepare to take a selfie of them and the panel attendees. SXSW EDU took place from March 10-19 this year. photo by Griffin Beam

Color (BIPOC) creators. The event, hosted at Stubb’s, spotlighted many important charities and musicians of color such as The Tiarras.

“It was just nice to be a part of a showcase that showcased artists of color, and people in Austin, because these are big artists, but not everybody knows about them,” Sofia Baltierra said. “And with SXSW, a lot of the time you think of artists from Australia, or artists with big names, and people want to see them, but these artists are in our backyards. Their voices deserve to be heard. Their art deserves to be seen, so it was nice to be a part of that too.”

Tori Baltierra said being an Austin artist goes beyond music – it’s about community. According to her, locally run festivals like



graphic by Amelia Coleman

editorial Accessibility in Education

WINTYR RICE | staff writer

For large portions of my life, I’ve felt at least partially defined by other people’s expectations about me, especially relating to my autism and hearing impairment. After attending several panels at South by Southwest EDU (SXSW EDU), I was reminded of just how common this feeling is.

It often feels like people will have this idea in their mind of a singular marginalized person -- of a singular disabled person, a singular trans person, a singular anything, and instead of actually taking the time to get to know a person, people will just superimpose that marginalized idea on top of disabled people, regardless of whether or not it’s even based on any factual information or even applies to that person. One presentation I attended that dealt with this idea was by Aya Waller-Bey, a doctorate candidate at the University of Michigan who interviews Black students about the pressure to write college essays about trauma.

“In most predominantly white schools in this country, [students] often felt like their identities were linked to struggle,” Waller-Bey said. “There was an assumption that to be Mexican in this country or to be Black in this country meant that you’ve had to endure some type of struggle or trauma.”

According to Waller-Bey, this assumption is part of the reason that students of color are often pressured to write essays about whatever traumatic experiences they might have experienced. As a white student, this is something that I have never had to face, however, I have dealt with similar expectations relating to my hearing impairment where people will assume that because I wear a hearing aid, my life must automatically be filled with suffering and hardship.

There are also numerous assumptions that come with being neurodivergent, a term that refers to having any difference in brain function from what is considered

‘normal’. In my case, that’s Autism and ADHD. Because there are so many different diagnoses that fall under the umbrella of neurodivergence, there is no one neurodivergent experience. I’ve lost count of the amount of times I’ve had people assume that I don’t have autism because I can talk and make eye contact. The CEO of Texthelp, Martin McKay, is seeking to help solve this problem with his company, which provides accommodations for people with dyslexia.

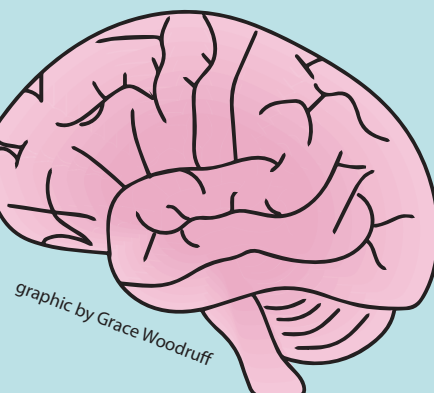
worse among marginalized groups.

“Universities use stories and narratives of the most vulnerable and marginalized,” Waller-Bey said. “Meanwhile, the very students on campus who might have disabilities or different ranges of ability, or the racially minoritized students, they still are very underrepresented on campus, and the university is not creating the support systems, the resources to support them.”

Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and 504 plans are documents that can provide disabled students with accommodations that they need, but they require a diagnosis to access-- something that is becoming increasingly expensive and difficult to obtain. The gatekeeping of these resources doesn’t just affect undiagnosed individuals but also people who need the resources for reasons other than disabilities.

“There are lots of people who aren’t dyslexic, but they’re working in their second language,” McKay said. “...There are going to be a ton of people who have Spanish as their first language, and they’re learning in a second language, and [they use] the same tools that are useful for dyslexic people.”

Making assistive technology generally available is something that helps everyone. People should be able to access whatever tools they need to thrive, but doing so requires us not only to take active steps to include diverse perspectives, but also to challenge our ideas of what those perspectives could look like. When we stop filtering people through our own preconceived notions, it leaves everyone more room to live and thrive.



graphic by Grace Woodruff

“If you speak to a lot of people, they correlate dyslexia with low intelligence, and they think that because people have difficulty reading they’re not smart, and that’s not the case,” McKay said.

The majority of neurodivergent people are still just as capable of doing work as their neurotypical (non-neurodivergent) peers. Including diverse perspectives on teams is also becoming more of a priority for job seekers. According to a 2020 study by Glassdoor, 76% of job seekers use diversity as an important factor when considering job offers. Despite this, unemployment and college enrollment rates are consistently

What's Brewing for Coffeehouse?

BEATRIZ MARLETO LARA | staff writer

Coffeehouse, the annual entertainment festival planned and performed by LASA students, has been a long-standing tradition at the school since its Liberal Arts Academy (LAA) days. While the musical performances span four hours, planning the event takes a semester of work from LASA's songwriting class.

The semester-long class focuses not only on developing and furthering students' songwriting skills, but also organizing, publicizing, and running Coffeehouse. Corey Snyder, the Coffeehouse director and songwriting teacher, says the festival is almost entirely planned by the students.

"It's only twelve kids in the songwriting class, twelve people that put together this big festival," Snyder said. "They put a lot of work into it and this show is as good as they make it."

Catherine Verdict is a junior in the songwriting class and the head of the Coffeehouse Arts Committee. Verdict said Coffeehouse is a great opportunity to highlight students' unique abilities, and after the success of last year's show, the songwriting team is trying to keep this year's show similar.

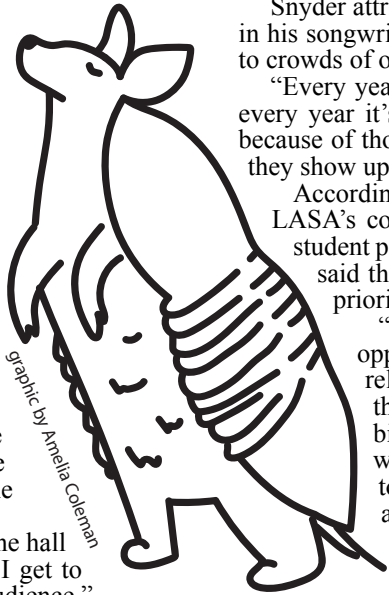
"We're trying to keep some of a similar feel to what we had last year because if it was not broken, don't fix it," Verdict said. "We love having this very open music festival feel, so what we're mainly changing is our advertising and posters."

The nature of Coffeehouse is different every year, as the performers and audience change. Seeing all these different audience members and performers, enjoying the performance, is a highlight for Snyder.

"All of these students that I know from the hall or from classes or from just being around, I get to see them do their art and I get to see the audience," Snyder said, "... I can see a thousand people laugh. I can see a band really start to rock and I can see the audience dance and move."

Coffeehouse is scheduled to take place in between AP tests and finals. This way, the music festival offers a chance to spend with friends without the pressures of academics in the forefront, according to Verdict.

"My favorite part is seeing everyone coming off APs and just before finals, and everyone is just relaxing," Verdict said. "LASA's a very high strung community. We're all very overwhelmed all the time, so seeing people come together and share music and talent is really nice."



graphic by Anna Coleman

Kristy Neff, the parent volunteer coordinator for Coffeehouse and a member of Parents and Friends of LASA (PFLASA), also appreciates that Coffeehouse is after AP tests. Neff said Coffeehouse is meant to strengthen the community.

"This event occurs on the last day of AP testing and is intended to be a community building event as well as a way for the students to celebrate the completion of AP testing," Neff said.

Verdict believes that one of the reasons Coffeehouse is so successful at LASA is its timing being after AP tests. According to Verdict, her favorite part of Coffeehouse is seeing the high-strung community of LASA students relax after testing.

"[It's rewarding] to see all of the work that we've put in this semester all come together," Verdict said. "It's all from the talent and an amazing work ethic of the team."

Snyder attributes the festival's annual success to the students in his songwriting class. He said it's their work ethic that leads to crowds of over 1,000 people each year.

"Every year it is successful, and I'm very proud to say that every year it's not because of what I did," Snyder said. "It's because of those kids and what they did, and every single year they show up, and they do a great job."

According to Neff, Coffeehouse is also a vital part of LASA's community, as it unites all students and helps the student population through a stressful time of the year. Neff said the event promotes interscholastic unity which is a priority for PFLASA.

"To me, it seems like Coffeehouse is a great opportunity for the students to simply have fun and relax with each other," Neff said. "It is so close to the end of the year, and there seem to be a lot of bittersweet emotions that naturally come along with that, especially for the seniors. I think it helps to promote a sense of community because the audience is so supportive of all of the performers."

According to Snyder, Coffeehouse attracts over 1,000 students every year. Snyder said its popularity is due to how long Coffeehouse has been around.

"It's been going on for such a long time and everybody who was there last year knows what happens," Snyder said.

Coffeehouse returned this year on Friday, May 12 continuing the long running tradition. Snyder said it provides an escape for students in the audience and performers to give each other a chance.

"Every year we try to make [Coffeehouse] very audience focused," Snyder said. "... Sometimes they need healing. Sometimes they need hope. Sometimes they need a party. And so what the songwriting class tries to do is figure out what LASA needs and then put together the show that gives them [that]."

BIPOC Pop Hosts Diverse Artists

SARAH GARRETT | entertainment editor

From March 9-11, an explosion of stickers, posters, and comics filled Patton Hall at the University of Texas at Austin (UT). The art ranged from Aztec inspired comics to cartoonish stickers to animated short films, each piece a creation by one or more members of the Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) community.

BIPOC artists met at BIPOC Pop, a comics, gaming, and animation arts exhibition held annually at UT. According to the event's website, BIPOC Pop brings together artists, scholars, and industry leaders in gaming, animation, comics, and multimedia art in the hopes of strengthening community through collaboration. One artist at the event was Immanuel Valtierra whose illustrations are inspired by Aztec culture.

"I just met a bunch of interesting people," Valtierra said. "They're very smart, like professors and writers, so it's really cool."

According to Valtierra, he has been an artist all his life. During high school, Valtierra read the book "Aztec" by Gary Jennings, which helped inspire his current art style.

"Because of the love that I have for that book I started drawing in an Aztec style," Valtierra said. "[...] What I have on the table is because of that book."

Valtierra's table was covered in comics and superhero stickers in Aztec designs. On the other hand, Theresa Rojas, a professor of ethnic studies and English at Modesto Junior College, had a table covered in poetry and zines, which are small self-published magazines.

"I've published 10 books and zines," Rojas said. "I have three and a couple more on the way, and [my books] really highlight lots of people of color."

Unlike Valtierra, Rojas began her art journey later in life. Though Rojas liked art as a child, she was only able to pursue art as an adult, after overcoming her fear of criticism. Rojas recommends that other artists shouldn't preoccupy themselves with asking for permission to create artwork, but instead they should just create.

"100 percent, do not ask permission to do your art, whatever it is, whether it is visual art, writing; if you want to create something, [...] no one needs to give you permission," Rojas

said. "Putting [art] into the world is a way of connecting with the world. Somebody will connect with your work. Somebody will understand what you're trying to say, so I encourage you to do that."

Jaime Crespo, an autobiography cartoonist currently working on a new graphic novel called "Sinners and Saints", showcased stickers and comics at the event. Prior to his 41-year-long career as a published cartoonist, Crespo said he spent most of his time drawing.

"By the end of grade school I had one teacher saying that I seemed to spend more time on the left side of the margin doodling pictures instead of the right side of the margin doing the lessons, so all through high school I drew in every single class except Art," Crespo said.

Crespo's major inspirations have always included authors like John Steinbeck, Octavia Butler, and both classic and modern cartoons. Crespo, who is from California and grew up speaking Spanish, said he has brought his bilingualism into his work since the beginning of his career.

"I live in a world; it's a bilingual world," Crespo said. "My household was that way and everywhere else, and it was lonely for the first 30 years. I mean, this [event] didn't exist, say, 10 years ago."

J.M. Hunter's biracial identity also directly inspires some of his artwork. Hunter said he uses his human experience as inspiration for his wide variety of creations.

"I feel like being mixed race, you're always searching for identity, or trying to figure out where you fit in, so when I do my art, I explore multiple mediums, multiple approaches, [and] multiple disciplines," Hunter said. "I work a lot of mediums because I think it's just something that I'm used to doing, having to pivot."

Hunter encourages aspiring artists to try out different mediums like him. According to Hunter, it is important to embrace the process of exploring art.

"Allow yourself to make mistakes so that way you can learn from them," Hunter said. "Enjoy the different experiences, some are more tactile, kinesthetic, some are more visual, sensory wise. ... I would encourage you to try and test everything out until something really screams out."

Helen Bigge contributed to this article.

Lip Dub Filming Brings the Campus Fun

CHARLOTTE WHALEN | staff writer

During the advisory session on April 28, the students and staff of LASA participated in the school Lip Dub video, filming throughout the halls, and outside, representing school clubs, and activities. The Lip Dub occurs every two years, with the last one taking place during the lockdown, in 2021. Due to the pandemic, many students were unable to participate in the online Lip Dub, but this year, filming will return to its traditional format.

The video tradition started ten years ago, when Audio Video Production (AVP) teacher Vanessa Mokry asked the administration if she could create and supervise a schoolwide music video. While at the gym, she heard the song "Under Pressure" by Queen and could envision her and the students making a schoolwide video with the song in the background. Since then, there have been numerous Lip Dubs, with the hope that every student will be able to participate at least once.

"Every year I ask the students if they want to do a Lip Dub, and they don't necessarily have to say yes, but they have always said yes," Mokry said. "They get excited because they feel as if it's their turn."

The Lip Dub is a one-take music video filmed around the school. According to junior Adrian Ching, one of the students in the advanced AVP class, the Lip Dub will be harder to film this year due to LASA's new location.

"It will be harder to film [this year] because of how big the freshman population is and how small the school is, so we plan on using as much outside space as possible," Ching said.

Regardless of the new location, planning the Lip Dub takes the entire school year, starting in the fall semester and continuing until the video is finalized. Ching's role is to make sure people stay on task during filming.

"I make sure the Lip Dub gets done production wise, and I make sure everyone is on task during the production," Ching said. "I am basically in charge of making sure everything comes together in the end."

In order to put on this production, throughout the month of April, there were three mandatory advisory sessions spent rehearsing the Lip Dub. After rehearsing and filming, the AVP class edits a song that they've chosen, over the video.

"We've been beat up these past couple of years, and we considered songs like 'I'm Still Standing' by Elton John, songs about people getting help and fighting," Mokry said. "The two finalists were 'Sabotage' by the Beastie Boys and 'Let's Go Crazy' by Prince. The students choose the song in the end, and my role is to make sure they choose a dignified song."

Junior Katie Tarin is another one of the producers of the Lip Dub. She feels that the mainly student-run event is a good way to bring the student body together.

"There's not very many events that we have that are so well organized," Tarin said. "It's just so much fun. Everyone shows up in their uniforms and brings so many props, and it's just such a fun experience. It's honestly kind of like a party just getting to film a music video."

Griffin Beam contributed to this article.

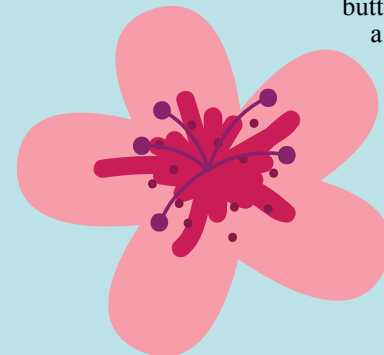
Editor's Picks

Summer Activities

Wildflower Center

SARAH GARRETT | entertainment editor

While I am not a fan of insects in any form (I was told as a child that ladybugs could bite me), I am willing to sacrifice my discomfort to see beautiful flowers. Lilypads in a small pond, bluebonnets, and indian paintbrushes decorate pebble pathways with their petals about ten miles southwest of downtown. Oranges, pinks, and reds add bursts of color to the otherwise green environment in sunset hues of daisies and azaleas. The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center is not particularly large, but it does boast art exhibits, pleasant ponds, and plenty of local butterflies. Despite the heat of a Texas sun beating down on me, the flowers seemed perfectly lively when I visited in past summers. To anyone missing a bit of brightness in their lives, a trip to the wildflower center will provide just that.



graphics by Sarah Garrett

Jim-Jim's

ANNABEL ANDRE | sports editor

I have always kind of despised Texas summers. Texas summers are unlike any other. I couldn't possibly get a non-Texan to understand the torture of the swarms of mosquitoes and the dozens of red itchy lumps they leave behind or the weeks of back-to-back 100-degree weather that actually feels like 200 degrees. But for me, one thing makes it all worth it: Jim-Jim's. For those who don't know what Jim-Jim's is, you've never experienced true joy. Jim-Jim's is a small 'water-ice' store on East Sixth but they also have locations at both Deep Eddy and Barton Springs. The amazing icy treat (it's better than a snow cone, trust me) is perfect after swimming for hours, and it helps to forget about the stench of chlorine that seems to stick to everything. Every summer, Jim-Jim's is my number one stop. It is a little treat that motivates me to get through each burning day and is maybe just a little better than the feeling of standing in front of the open fridge and facing the full blast of cool air after venturing outside.



The Drag

NORAH HUSSAINI | commentary editor

Once a substantial portion of University of Texas Austin students file off campus for the summer holiday, a whole new world of possibilities opens. I drudge through the blazing heat with sweat rolling off my face and feet burning in my shoes every summer down to Guadalupe. The temperature that bounces off the scalding pavement is instantly muted once I step foot into an air-conditioned thrift store. The gems are everywhere. Each rack I turn to hasn't been picked to shreds by vulturous students and boasts a glittering array of items that are actually not horrendously atrocious. Once I've left the crisp store with a bag full of finds, I only have to brave the sweltering weather for a few seconds, as I go to the next store with its own trove. And the next. And the next. The process continues and the walk back in the deathly sun becomes worth it when I dump the bags out on my bed and sort through all the things I've discovered.



Central Library

SANWI SARODE | sports editor

Located in downtown Austin, the Central Library boasts one of the best views of Austin's skyscrapers and city line, with its sixth floor directly overlooking the bustling municipality below. Inside the library, gorgeous stained glass windows and sleek, polished furniture fill the room. The place is bubbly with warm conversations and laughter, derived from the various activities the Central Library offers, from writing and music labs to anime watch parties and reading clubs. To say that the Central Library is the perfect summer spot to relax in would be an understatement; the tranquility and joy contained within its walls would give anyone a sense of fulfillment. The Central Library even has a special area dedicated to teenagers, with shelves of relatable young adult books, computers, desks for working, musical instruments, and an abundance of plush chairs that are all perfect for relaxing. In all, the Central Library's diverse range of activities, peaceful setting, and welcoming community make it the perfect place to hang out during the summer.





Tennis Team is an Ace on the Court

ANNABEL ANDRE | sports editors
SANWI SARODE

This past fall season, the LASA tennis team became the first Austin Independent School District (AISD) tennis team to ever make it to state competitions in the team season. During the playoffs, they competed against A&M Consolidated, Georgetown, Foster Wallace, and Friendswood and were able to advance to the state championships after winning against Friendswood with a final score of 10-9 in the Region III final. In October, the team went to College Station to compete in the state semifinals against Amarillo, who ended up being the state champions.

Head tennis coach Vincent Vizcaino went to state with the tennis team for the first time in his 27-year-long coaching career. According to him, the team's success in the fall season continued into the spring season, with 12 team members qualifying for the regional tournament, three of whom won first place at regionals and advanced to the state competition to win third place.

"This is the first Austin Independent School District school to make it that far in history," Vizcaino said. "Ever since they started team tennis, I don't know anyone from AISD that has made it that far, so I would say we made history for the Austin Independent School District. And then for individuals, we had 12 qualifiers for regionals and three qualifiers for state."

To prepare for state, the team captains and Vizcaino had many meetings about how to structure the tennis roster to maximize the amount of wins the team would have in each round of the playoffs. Boys' tennis team captain and senior Ted Gershon made spreadsheets and calculated the probability of each match using the universal tennis rating (UTR) system, which gives a player a numerical rating based on their total wins and losses.

"A lot of our preparation went into how we structured our lineup in our roster heading into state," Gershon said. "I don't know that we had that much preparation beyond focusing on our roster and moving around a couple of lines to give us a better chance at winning."

Compared to LASA's previous seasons, Vizcaino said the team was able to overcome the obstacles of injuries and technicalities that prevented some players from playing during essential matches earlier in the year. Particularly, Gershon and freshman Claire Zhou were unable to play in the area tournament due to not playing in the previous round of the playoffs.

"We're a little bit more determined to go farther than we've ever gone before, so we played up to our expectations," Vizcaino said. "Injuries did not help us last year, so I think we got stronger as a team. Because Friendswood and Georgetown were pretty formidable, ... I think we came together as a team. The past experience of losing helped us out. We knew what to expect, [and] we knew what we wanted to do."

Being able to advance to high level competitions during the playoff season in both the fall and spring seasons, according to Gershon, allowed the team to bond and created special moments and inside jokes that brought the team closer together. For example, senior Rishi Rajesh promised to shave his head if the team advanced to state—a promise that was fulfilled in a Walmart parking lot by sophomore Rakesh Ravi.

"I feel like the most exciting part was just being able to have a team bonding experience where we were all at the same hotel and for that, like three days stretch we all did pretty much the same things," Gershon said. "We bonded a lot, and we had a lot better chemistry as a team compared to the last two years where we didn't really have that opportunity. Shaving all of Rishi's hair off was at the top of that list. I think that was a pretty exciting experience. We didn't know that Rakesh was that good of a barber. There was not so much care and emphasis on the result [at state],

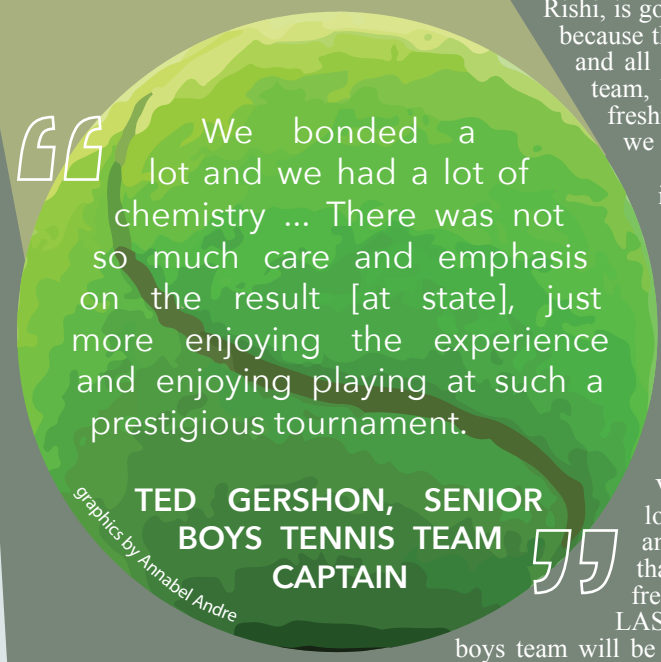
just more enjoying the experience and enjoying playing at such a prestigious tournament."

With the end of the season nearing, many members, including sophomore Sophia Porter, contemplate the impact of the current seniors and how the absence next year will affect the team. According to Porter, this year there are more seniors leaving the varsity team than in previous years with captains Ted Gershon and Karly Shi as well as other team members Rishi Rajesh, Neel Kumar, and August Bohmer graduating.

"I love Karly very much," Porter said. "She's one of the sweetest people I've ever met. She is genuine towards all of us and has our best interests at heart. Ted as well. He's a great tennis player. He's very much suited to be a captain. I feel like losing them, as well as Rishi, is going to be a little devastating because they're all very good players and all very important parts of our team, but hopefully with the new freshman it should be okay, but we definitely will miss them."

Even though the team is losing many seniors, Vizcaino believes that next year's team will come back just as strong as new players join the team next year. According to him, LASA should have a good chance of qualifying for state again next year.

"I think we'll be pretty strong again next year," Vizcaino said. "We are losing two of our boys, Ted and Rishi, but I do understand that we have a couple of freshmen that have applied for LASA that have high UTRs. Our



graphics by Annabel Andre

TED GERSHON, SENIOR BOYS TENNIS TEAM CAPTAIN

We bonded a lot and we had a lot of chemistry ... There was not so much care and emphasis on the result [at state], just more enjoying the experience and enjoying playing at such a prestigious tournament.

boys team will be pretty strong, probably not as strong as this year. But our girls team should be as strong if not stronger. LASA will probably be returning the best girls team that we've ever had, so we'll be a very formidable team against anybody."

According to Porter, throughout the year, with overnight trips for playoff competitions, afternoon practices, and weekly tournaments, the team has grown incredibly close. Porter hopes the team will continue to grow together as they have over the last year.

"I hope that we just continue this sense of family because I feel like every time I see one of [my teammates] in the hallway, I say hi," Porter said. "I hope that we're able to keep up this friendship and relationship that we have between our teammates."



STATE The varsity tennis team made it to state for the first time in AISD team tennis history. They competed against teams that have dominated the competition for decades and held their own as first time state qualifiers. photo courtesy of Vincent Vizcaino



MAKING HISTORY The girls tennis team, according to head coach Vincent Vizcaino, has been the best the LASA program has seen. Five girls placed at district and competed at region. photo courtesy of Vincent Vizcaino



SHOWING SUPPORT After completing their matches at region in the spring, the boys team supports the remaining LASA players on court. According to sophomore Sophia Porter, the team has become much closer over the past year. photo courtesy of Wendy Geng



CHAMPS During the spring season, LASA sent 12 qualifiers to region and three players placed third at state. Junior Sanwi Sarode competed in girls singles and junior William Gu and senior Ted Gershon competed in boys doubles. photo courtesy of Vincent Vizcaino

Lacrosse Keeps Their Eye on the Ball

JAMES GRAHAM | staff writer

The LASA girl's lacrosse team is one of the two non-UIL sports at LASA but maintains a size of 20 players and two coaches. As a result of being a non-UIL sport, the team does not receive funding from the Austin Independent School District (AISD) or the benefits that a UIL-sponsored sport normally would, which includes reserved field time and physical education (P.E.) credit. Lacking the benefits a UIL sport receives effectively gives the team the status of a club instead of a true sports team, although the team practices two or three times a week and plays games regularly, just like a typical LASA sports team.

Senior Kyra Kleiman has been a part of the LASA lacrosse team since she started playing as a freshman. Kleiman enjoys some of the physical peculiarities of the sport, such as cradling. Cradling is when the player, holding the ball in their stick, rapidly moves the stick in half-rotations, using centrifugal motion in order to keep the ball from falling out while staying primed for accurate throwing. Although Kleiman had never played lacrosse before playing at LASA, she decided to join when her friend asked her to carry her lacrosse stick for her.

"It was really random," Kleiman said. "I was walking with my friend and I grabbed her stick, and I was like, 'Oh, this is cool.' I had a couple of friends on the team, so I just decided to join."

According to Kleiman, one of the many challenges that comes with not being sponsored by UIL is the lack of field space. Due to multiple sports using the same practice field, Kleiman said it can be difficult to find a designated practice spot.

photo courtesy of LASA Lacrosse
graphic by Annabel Andre



"The main thing is that we don't have an assigned portion of the field," Kleiman said. "There wasn't a lot of space because soccer was playing, so we'd have to practice on a tiny part of the field. Right now we just practice behind the tennis courts because that's where no one else is."

Being an unofficial sport makes lacrosse more student-run, according to Kleiman. She remains committed to lacrosse due to the close relationships she has with her team members.

"I was always committed to just learning and getting to play with my friends," Kleiman said. "It's definitely a different feel because it doesn't feel super official sometimes. [But], it's just a fun environment to be with the people that were like all friends together."

Vivian Butler, a senior and another member of the lacrosse team, has been playing since she was in middle school. However, Butler didn't know that LASA had a girls' lacrosse program until she stumbled upon an announcement by chance during her freshman year.

"I didn't know much about the lacrosse program since it wasn't publicized or on the course schedule," Butler said. "I saw a random poster in the hallway, and I knew I wanted to join."

Although Butler was excited to join the lacrosse team, she was less than enthused to face the reality of the sport not being a part of UIL. She had been counting on lacrosse to give her a P.E. credit during her senior year but later found out that it wasn't possible.

"It has been really tough," Butler said. "I waited to get my credits until [senior] year, so I think it's unfair that lacrosse isn't counted as a UIL sport. It has just made it really hard to balance two sports since I have to do two extra credits."

Ellyce Davis, a senior on the lacrosse team, has been playing since seventh grade, when she went to Kealing Middle School. Since she was already familiar with lacrosse before she enrolled in high school and her friends also played, it was an easy choice for her to join the team. Like Butler, Davis agrees that the lack of UIL support has made her high school lacrosse experience more difficult.

"[The lack of recognition by UIL] definitely made it harder to play because we don't get funding or anything like that," Davis said. "It's not a P.E. credit, so we have girls who still need to get a P.E. credit outside of lacrosse as well, which made it harder to convince people to join."

Davis also listed the absence of pay for coaches as a challenge for the logistics of the team. According to Davis, it was hard to find a coach for lacrosse since it was not officially recognized.

"It was harder to find someone to coach the sport because teachers get paid to coach UIL sports, but they don't get paid to coach club sports, so we had to find coaches elsewhere," Davis said. "It's a little bit different from UIL, and it makes it more of a hassle to find people who are willing to [coach lacrosse]."

However, Butler believes that these challenges have resulted in a more cohesive team identity. According to Butler, overcoming these challenges together has brought the team closer.

"I think the teamwork factor is the biggest part," Butler said. "Since we are not getting credit for being there, we are all super close and passionate about the sport itself, not where it gets us."

graphics by Kayla Le and Annabel Andre

graphics by Kayla Le and Annabel Andre

RUNNING THE NUMBERS

LASA'S WINS AND LOSSES
as of April 27

WINS	LOSSES
11	0
varsity softball	

WINS	LOSSES
19	10
varsity baseball	

WINS	LOSSES
5	5
varsity lacrosse	



OFF TO COMMITTED SENIORS

from page 1

Senior Hays Turner has also been preparing for years to play sports in college. Turner said he's been playing soccer for almost 13 years and has been able to play for an Early College National League in Austin, making him no stranger to the pitch and has built up the soccer team during his four years at LASA. This year, the LASA boys' soccer team won district in their division for the first time in history, with Turner leading the team as captain to a 14-0 win streak.

"I am the attacking midfielder for the team, so my role is to score goals and to also help the team attack and defend," Turner said. "[Our] proudest moment was winning district for the first time in LASA boys soccer history. This year we won the game against Northeast, the second best team in our district, and we beat them 3-1 in a very intense game."

According to Turner, his contributions to the soccer program at LASA did not go unnoticed, and he was soon being recognized for his talent as both a player and captain. Turner said he was quickly contacted to continue playing soccer at Carleton University last year.

"I was a little nervous as to whether Carlton would work out," Turner said. "Then I got the letter of acceptance and was just

happy and excited to start this new process in my life. The coach was excited to have me, and he said he could help me get into the school, and it's a very good school, and I could also be on the team."

Senior Kepler Huntress is a track athlete who specializes in the 800 meter and 400 meter events. Huntress won first place in the 800 meter event at state last year and has gone on to compete at national level competitions such as the New Balance Nationals this year, having recently set a personal record in the 800 meter: a minute and 52 seconds. This past year, Huntress's talent was recognized by multiple colleges looking to add him to their teams. For him, the decision to commit to Michigan University was easy and he officially committed as a D1 track athlete in 2022.

"The Michigan coach, he's amazing," Huntress said. "He seemed a lot more personal about the whole situation than a lot of other coaches across the country and seemed like he knew his stuff and could understand where I was coming from, which made it easier for me."

Huntress said he'll miss his time spent on the LASA track team but is looking forward to his future at Michigan. Huntress said his work is paying off after reaching out to coaches for months to get offers.

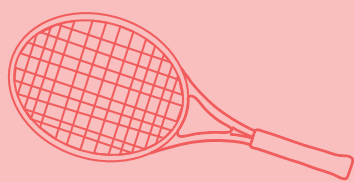
"[College track] is like a breath of fresh air," Huntress said. "It's a bunch of new people I get to be around that care about it as much as I do and where the main focus is track, where it's not where I'm having to deal with a bunch of other stuff going on. They make sure that I'm able to compete, and that's a priority, which is really nice."

Sun said her time playing softball and helping guide new players has been very beneficial to her progression as she continues to improve. Now, moving onto a new stage of her softball career, Sun is looking forward to the benefits of college sports and the new environment.

"I'm very excited because with collegiate softball you're able to train every single day," Sun said. "They help you schedule your labs, and your classes, to ensure that you have enough time to pursue the major that you want. Everyone around me is also going to be very motivated, and I really am looking forward to how there's a whole coaching staff dedicated to helping you improve."



RISE AND SIGN Sophie Sun (left) and Kepler Huntress (right) were present at the signing event on March 29th in the large gym. Many students and parents attended to watch these athletes and many others hard work come to a head. photo by Lasya Sangana



THE RAPTOR RUN DOWN

graphic by Annabel Andre

Every issue, The Liberator sends a reporter into the field to try a new sport and write about their experiences.

KAYLA LE | managing editor

I remember my first experience with tennis. I was watching pre-season matches over the summer, and the sun was unforgiving. Bright, hot rays beamed down on me from overhead, and the dreaded reading of 98 degrees Fahrenheit was another punch in the gut. Players clad in muddied visors and nylon-strung bags shuffled past me, seemingly unphased by the heat. My ears perked up when I heard a loud "pop!" behind me. Upon turning around, what I expected, as well as desperately hoped, to be a soda can with a broken tab was instead a plastic canister of three tennis balls.

Though it had been quite some time since my minimal involvement in tennis, the experience inspired me to attend a practice. Sports editor and LASA varsity tennis team member Annabel Andre stuck by me through it all and guided me through the team's regimen.

Practice began with serving the ball. Andre instructed me to align my body with where I wanted to aim the ball, throw it up, and hit it over the net - making sure to strike with the center of my racket. After watching her run through the proper form, it didn't seem too difficult. I attempted to follow her steps; everything seemed to be going to plan. However, when it came time to hit the ball over the net, I quickly realized that I was just blindly swatting the air. Clearly, tennis required a certain degree of hand-eye coordination that I did not possess.

After serving, the court was covered in loose tennis balls. Honestly, perusing the court and piling the balls on the surface of my racket, like a glorified game of Jenga, might've been my favorite part.

Once the court was tidied from the fallout of my failed serves, it was time to practice groundstrokes, which were essentially how

I would hit a ball hurtling toward me in a tennis match. The first stroke I learned was the forehand, in which the player uses only their dominant hand to strike the ball back to the opponent's side. In this section, making contact with the ball was much easier, but another problem arose. Though I was hitting it, I had limited to zero control over its trajectory. All I could do was take the credit with unwarranted bravado when the wind carried the ball to a far corner of the court.

Learning the backhand stroke was where my previously dormant tennis potential was awoken. I'd say this was the turning point of my tennis career if you could even call it that. Initially, Andre was reluctant to teach it to me as it's notorious for being a player's weakest move. However, I was insistent on learning it. I'd already made friends with failure, and the worst that learning a backhand could do was strengthen that bond.

When the ball came toward me, it felt surprisingly natural to respond with a backhand, with a two-handed grip on the racket, with the back of my right hand following the direction of movement. I made consistent contact with the ball and could feel the gratifying redemption from my lackluster serves. It felt like my success was driven more by me than the breeze. This sudden uptick in tennis competence fed my delusions of making it to a Grand Slam.

At the end of practice, I was left with shortness of breath and excessive lactic acid build-up in my forearms. I was surprised by how much strength it took to hit the ball. For something as small as a tennis ball, I was taken aback by just how much recoil I endured when I hit it (occasionally) over the net.

My experience with tennis made me realize that the sport demanded a lot more cardiovascular endurance than I initially expected. I learned that there was a lot more to tennis than simply making contact with the ball; it also required balance and timing, and a type of agility that could only be achieved through years of continued practice. Nevertheless, I enjoyed my tennis experience and definitely will be playing more tennis in the future.

LASA'S TOP TEN SPORTS MOMENTS

The sports editors collected the best moments of LASA sports team from coaches and team captains. This list is not ranked.

ANNABEL ANDRE | sports editor



1 LASA's ultimate frisbee A team, over the MLK weekend in January, competed in a statewide tournament with the best ultimate teams across the state. The team pulled through with some exceptional performances from Vance Mader and Solomon Moon and impressively won the tournament, claiming the title of best in the state.



3 In the beginning of April, the boys 4x400 relay team of LASA's track and field team participated in the Texas Relays at the University of Texas at Austin. The relay team was made up by Tate Smith, Asa Shepard, Charlie Gardner, and Kepler Huntress and they ran a new school record of 3 minutes and 24.8 seconds. This time got them 48th place overall among the best relay teams in the state.



2 During this year's spring season, LASA's tennis team was able to place third at state for the first time in LASA tennis history. The team fought hard throughout the playoff season and advanced to regional finals where they played against Friendswood and won 10-9. This win was possible thanks to a close match win from freshman Shone Sarode, junior Sanwi Sarode who persisted through an injury and won, and sophomore Sophia Porter who won the last match of the day, bringing the team to the state competition.



4 The swim and dive team had a very successful season throughout the playoffs, and the highlight was many members of the team advancing to state. Some notable performances came from Aaron Lee, Helen Singletary, Auggie Sefcik, and two boys relay teams, who all placed at the Region VII championship and advanced to state. The state competition was a great bonding experience and was accentuated by the cowboy hats and inflatable dinosaur provided by Singletary.

LASA Archery Club Hits the Bullseye

WINTYR RICE | staff writer

A shrill whistle sounds out over the grassy plain, as the archer knocks an arrow and pulls back the bowstring, eyes trained on the target. They let the arrow fly and it pierces the bullseye.

Though LASA has over a dozen sport teams, archery has never been one of them, something that a few students hope to change. LASA's archery club was founded earlier this year by sophomore Annabelle Davis, however, Davis is hoping to go one step further and form a LASA archery team along with freshmen Camilla Bosquez and Amelia McRoberts.

"Amelia and I wanted to start a team, because we've both been doing archery half our lives, and we've been doing it competitively together since 5th grade," Bosquez said. "LASA didn't have an established team, but we knew there could be a market of sorts for a sport like it."

Four elementary and middle schools in the Austin Independent School District (AISD) have archery classes and teams. These schools include Brentwood Elementary School, Highland Park Elementary School, Kealing Middle School, and Lamar Middle School. However, McCallum is currently the only high school in the district that offers the sport. According to McRoberts, the archery club is the first step to diversifying archers' high school options.

"So far, Archery Club has been a jumping off point for the team so that we have a starting point once a range is set up," McRoberts said. "We go through form, cool things about archery, how to prepare, and generally just hang out!"

Archery club meets every Friday in room T214 during lunch, but as of now, there is no set time frame for when students can start joining the team. When the team is eventually created, Bosquez said it will accept archers of all skill levels and economic backgrounds.

"We haven't been able to get shooting for this semester for reasons out of our control," Bosquez said. "However, we did get a \$20,000 grant, I believe, so we can use it to buy bows, arrows, targets, and a curtain backdrop."

The grant, which comes from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, will amount to \$70,000 split between Blackshear Elementary School, Brentwood Elementary School, Kealing Middle School, and LASA. According to McRoberts, LASA

will likely get a slightly larger portion of the funds to cover the upfront costs of starting an archery team.

"We will use it to buy equipment, probably hire a coach, fund state and nationals, and waive fees for people who can't purchase their own bows," McRoberts said. "We will have team bows for people to use if they don't want to purchase one."

Archery is a combination of a team and individual sport as archers shoot for both their own scores and to improve the team's. Each archer can score up to 300 points in a tournament while the team score is made up of the top four boys scores, top four girls scores, and next best four scores from either the girls or boys. The heavy teamwork dynamic is what draws people to the sport, according to Davis.

"Archery is a very repetitive and monotonous sport, and the most fun aspect of it for me is getting to shoot with other people," Davis said. "It sort of takes away the pressure and adds some friendly competition."

Freshman Simon Windler participated in archery throughout elementary and middle



photo courtesy of Megan Yenter
graphic by Annabel Andre

school, but stopped the sport during the COVID-19 pandemic. They attend archery club meetings and hope to join the team when it starts up.

"I started archery at my elementary school in third grade at my school's archery program," Windler said. "I joined my school's team in fifth grade. We got first in state and then fourth in the country... I liked being part of a group that is working towards a common goal as a team, I also liked meeting all the different people who love archery as well."

Archery also encourages positive mindsets, according to McRoberts. It requires immense mental control, to the point where it is considered a type of meditation by McRoberts due to the amount of focus and self-control it requires.

"You've got to work on staying calm, taking your time, and moving on if you have a shot that's not great," McRoberts said. "If you do poorly one round, you focus on the next thing, you work on what's in front of you because you can't let it drag you down."

Similarly to McRoberts, Windler supports the claim that perseverance is necessary for archery, but it isn't the only thing. According to Windler, emotional control can also make a large difference in an archery tournament. "The trick to archery isn't being the fastest or the strongest or even having the best strategy," Windler said. "It's about being able to stay calm, stay in the zone, and prioritize consistency and being able to go with the flow."

Despite the fact that physical strength isn't a main factor in archery skill, that doesn't mean that the sport is automatically easier than others. According to Davis, taking shortcuts and ignoring technique can hurt archers in the long run.

"My favorite part of archery is the aspect of getting what you put in," Davis said. "If you slack on consistent form, it will be increasingly apparent in scores. There's no cheat code to success."

editorial Title IX Creates a Path for Women in Athletics

LASYA SANGANA | staff writer

Title IX undoubtedly changed the landscape of sports when it passed on June 23, 1972. The law required all educational institutions in the United States (U.S.) to reward male and female athletes equally. In a broader perspective, it prohibits discrimination based on sex in educational programs, and federally funded activities. The impact of Title IX was very significant because it caused women to get more involved in sports which paved a path for American women to progress in other aspects of their life. In fact, it's important to acknowledge that it is to the credit of Title IX for the famous athletes that we can look up to. However, we should equally acknowledge the limitations of the law itself.

When Title IX originally passed, it was muffled by the two other landmark provisions that extended women's rights: The Equal Rights Amendment and Roe v. Wade. Now, Title IX is the only one that's technically still standing. When it was first passed by President Richard Nixon, an outcry began in early 1973 by many groups whose mission was to preserve traditional roles of women and the ideal American family, such as Concerned Women for America. According to the Harvard Gazette, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) was also opposed to the legislation because they were concerned that giving more money to women meant there would be less money for men, and even less for men of color. There was also prolonged opposition over certain guidelines, according to National Affairs, about male-female interest in sports. Title IX made it so that the number of female varsity athletes should reflect the proportion of females in the entire school. Everything was finalized in 1979, but the debate about whether sports were an appropriate place for women continued.

Title IX has had many impacts since then. Currently, according to the New York Times, Title IX has given three million more high school girls the opportunity to play and participate in athletic programs compared

to before Title IX. Today, women make up 44% of the total number of college athletes, a vast increase in comparison to the 15% involvement before Title IX. This is impressive, especially considering that Title IX continues to be the only law in the United States that addresses sex discrimination in education.

Though Title IX has caused a lot of change and is still standing after more than 50 years of being passed, it is important to reexamine the reason why it is the only one of three still standing. Title IX's advantage is that the law itself was relatively vague which gave it a fighting chance over time. While it is something to celebrate that the law is still in existence, it is also reasonable to say that we should take a moment to consider what Title IX has not addressed.

Even if access to college sports has increased, inequality still exists. For example, other elements like race and disabilities are notably not included in Title IX's text. Additionally, while Title IX has positively impacted women in sports, it is important to look at how the ideas that aren't addressed in it may flaw it. For instance, the rules being vague means that institutes can work around them.

An important instance where this is shown is Perdue v. City University of New York in 1997 where the school paid Coach Perdue less than the combined salaries of the two other coaches she worked with. More than 20 years after Title IX, the school was able to keep doing this even though Coach Perdue and her co-workers coached the same number of games, players, and practices.

exemplifies the point that as strong as Title IX is, it isn't strong enough to address all forms of discrimination. The vagueness of the law allows institutes and programs to continue discriminating against women under the radar for years at a time.

Additionally, according to Athlete Director U, many schools are capable of manipulating rosters to make it look like they have more female athletes than they do, showcasing another weak point in Title IX. In fact, when the New York Times interviewed female players on athletic rosters at the University of South Florida, they found that more than half of the female players listed weren't athletes and didn't even know they were on the team. Furthermore,

they also found cases at colleges such as Cornell in which



graphic by Alexandra Valencia-Serrano

part of the women's roster, sometimes almost up to 50%, for sports such as fencing, were composed of male players.

Title IX has done a lot to address discrimination in sports, and that fact should be well acknowledged. But, we should also focus on the weaker, vaguer points in the law that allow women to be overlooked even after 50 years. When we look at Title IX and admire the resilience it has through its vague wording, we should also look at how we can improve its legacy to stop discrimination.

But, we should also focus on the weaker, vaguer points in the law that allow women to be overlooked even after 50 years. When we look at Title IX and admire the resilience it has through its vague wording, we should also look at how we can improve its legacy to stop discrimination.

The varsity softball team finished their season Tuesday, April 18 in a game against Travis with a final score of 13-3. This game was not only the one that won them the softball programs first district championship title in two decades and let them advance to the playoffs, but it was the final game in their undefeated season of eleven straight wins. Amazing performances came from senior Sophie Sun who committed to Harvard for softball earlier this year and freshman Rose Harrelson.

On Jan. 13, during the district playoffs, the girls basketball team was able to defeat Travis 31-26, allowing them to win their three-way tie for third in district. The game was notable not only for the amazing performances from the players – specifically sophomore Francie Sarrat and freshman Carly Gonzalez – but due to their previous loss to Travis earlier in the season. The team's win was quite incredible and was a part of a five win streak.

On boys basketball's Senior Night, they competed against Travis, and despite losing against them earlier in the season, they fought hard and won by 27 points. The first game against Travis was a 55-53 overtime loss, but the team needed a win to qualify for the playoffs, and the second game against Travis was the win they needed. They won 75-48 and qualified for the playoffs for the first time in LASA boys basketball history.

On March 23, LASA's boys soccer team played an intense and hard-fought game against East View in the first round of the playoffs. After losing one point to East View in the first half, seniors Hays Turner and Tyler Brannon both scored, bringing the final score to 2-1. This game was not only the first win for the boys soccer team in the postseason, but it was the first time the boys soccer team had qualified for the playoffs and it won them the bi-district trophy.

LASA's girls soccer team played a close game against McCallum in late February. The game-winning goal was scored by junior Fiona Randazzo – the offensive MVP of the district – after a throw-in by senior Jaelin Su. Not only was this goal an amazing end to the game, but it was the first game LASA has won against McCallum, and it marked the first goal scored against McCallum by LASA during head coach Chloe Cardinale's career.

In November, the football team played their final game of the season against Travis. The team played hard and came through with a final score of 28-15. During this game and throughout the season, some amazing performances came from the players. Quarterback and junior Roman Edwards completed 17 out of 23 passes and sophomore Alexander Marintzer scored one touchdown and rushed for an additional 85 yards.

photo courtesy of Sarah Hernandez

photo courtesy of Isha Sheth

photo courtesy of LASA Girls Soccer

photo courtesy of Isha Sheth

photo by Kayla Le

photo by Kayla Le

Engineers of LASA

WOODWORKING

ELLA LILLY
ZIA RAY | photo editors

Over in the engineering and art wing of LASA, during second period on A days, one can hear the rumbling of machines. Before entering, one must don some safety glasses and then they can walk into a room filled with wood and students figuring out what seems like a million different ways to cut, shape, and put wood back together. The woodworking class at LASA may be small, but it is loved by the students.

Junior Mailys Schupp appreciates the many different projects they've worked on from bowls to puzzles to screwdrivers. Right now, the class is working on a special type of stool.

"We're working on take-apart stools," Schuppe explained. "It basically means that they're stools that we can put together without using glue, nails, or anything else."

Woodworking teacher Carl Seagren heads the class and creates projects for students to enjoy. Junior Jonah Wang likes that while the class is assigned projects by Seagren, students have the opportunities to make creative decisions as well.

"I really just like the creativity," Wang said.

"Mr. Seagren gives you the thing that you need to build, but he gives you freedom in everything else according to the design."



SANDING AND SAWING Juniors Will Basham and Nathaniel Enis work on their current project, building take apart stools. Basham is using a rasp tool to sand the edge of the slot in the seat. photos by Ella Lilly

ROBOTICS

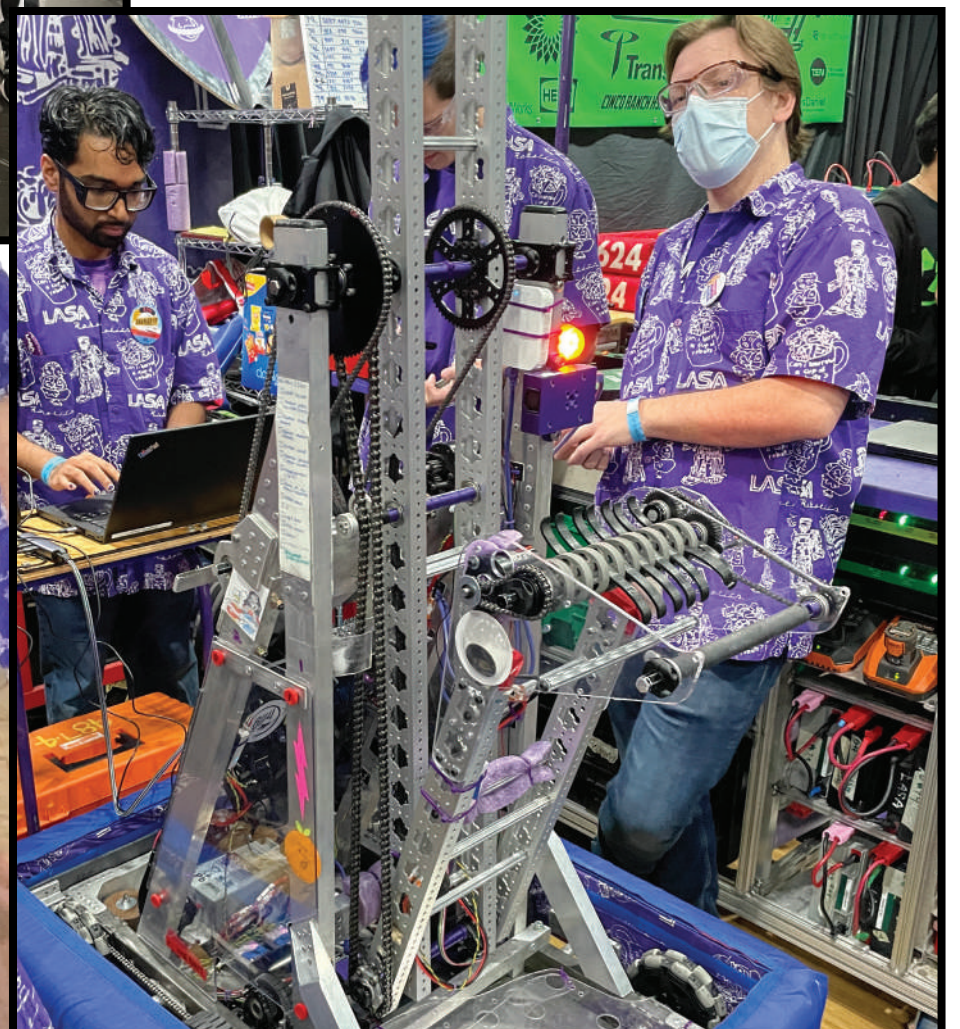
The LASA Robotics team, "Purple Haze," had their first sponsored competitions, and the team made it to state during March and April. Robotics member and sophomore Sonali Srikanth said that the comradery the team has built up over the course of the year helped them go further in competitions.

"During the playoff rounds, the cheering from both our team and our teammates was deafening," Srikanth said. "I felt like the team was very connected."

At competitions, teams must design a robot that completes a task assigned to them by the judges. This year, each team was placed in an alliance with three teams, and the goal was to retrieve cones or cubes.

While the team was disappointed with their final results at state compared to their results at the previous competition in Belton, they continue on in good spirits and pleased with the reward they received according to Srikanth. The team's last competition date was April 8.

"The autonomous period of a robotics competition is the first 15 seconds of a match, where the robots have to play the game on their own without a driver controlling it," Srikanth said. "We won an award for our autonomous coding, and it was cool to see everything come together."



LOUD AND PROUD The team stands together for a group picture after completing the Space City Competition in Houston, TX. During the competition, they visited the NASA sponsored showcases like a ship. photos courtesy of LASA Robotics

