

# The LIBERATOR

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## Texas Grid Powers Through

graphic by Amelia Coleman

**ETHAN STERN**  
**LEAH LASHUS** | news editors

As extreme temperatures become a common trend across the globe, power companies and other utility services are preparing for an increase in the demand for new infrastructure and solutions.

According to NASA, climate change has been growing in severity in recent years, with recent studies from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) indicating that Texas has warmed between one-half and one degree Fahrenheit in the past century. This has brought

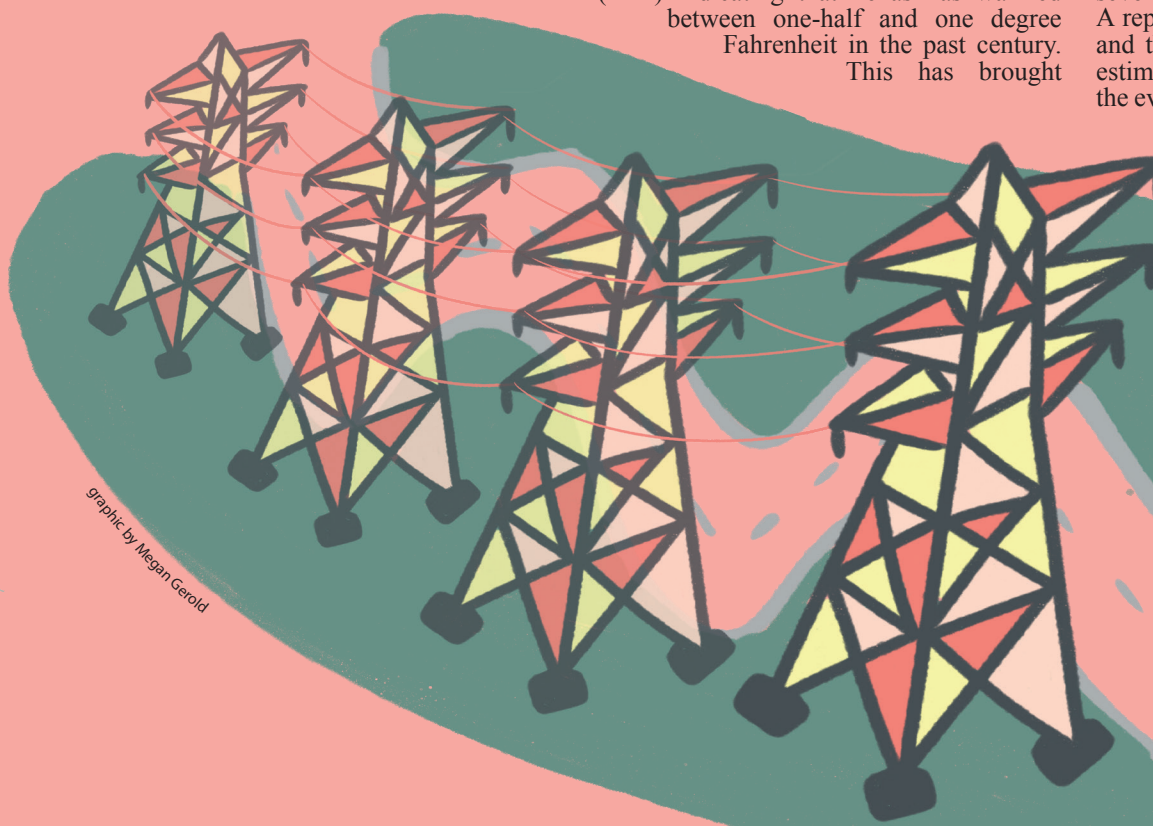
unpredictable and unprecedented weather events like flash floods and freezes, which affects communities and jeopardizes the safety of the electrical grid. Matt Mitchell, a public information representative for Austin Energy, explained the City of Austin's role in energy infrastructure.

"We know climate change is real," Mitchell said. "We know that we're seeing those impacts already, and we're working diligently with the City of Austin to develop and continue to develop our response to that so that we can offset those changes as much as possible."

The need for a response became especially apparent in February 2021, when Texas' power grid infrastructure faced a large amount of failures. Due to a lack of preparation against the severe Winter Storm Uri, many were left without necessities such as water, heat, and electricity. A report from the same year published by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the North American Electrical Reliability Corporation (NERC) stated that there were an estimated 4,124 power outages where "more than 4.5 million people in Texas lost power during the event, and some went without power for as long as four days, while exposed to below-freezing temperatures for over six days."

Texas has another unique challenge: unlike every other state, it's not connected to the rest of the nation's power grid system, and instead relies on the Energy Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT), which controls the power supply. According to Vox, this means Texas can't borrow power from other states when its own infrastructure fails. Due to the isolationist practices of Texas, the grid is very decentralized, meaning it is controlled by many local authorities rather than just one, which makes it challenging to fully control during times of crisis. As concerns over these practices have grown in recent years, initiatives have been introduced in hopes to connect ERCOT nationally.

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graphic by Megan Gerold

graphic by Amelia Coleman

## LASA Football Warms Up

**ELLINGTON TOUGH**  
**PRATIK GURIJALA** | sports editors

Under hot summer days and a burning sun, the LASA football team has undertaken challenges vastly different from years prior.

For the next two years, the team will not compete in the University Interscholastic League (UIL), and in place of former coach Derrick Lewis, United States Army veteran, high school coach, and athletic coordinator Gary Howard will be leading and teaching the players as LASA's head athletic coordinator and football coach. Following the two years after LASA's split from LBJ High School, both sports and fine arts at LASA were not included in UIL competitions, so while the challenge the football team faces now isn't unprecedented, its role as the sole sports team not taking part in UIL has put them in a unique position within the school.

Senior wide receiver Austin Buckley noticed a reduction in the number of players on LASA's team this year. Last year, 17 of the team's players graduated, meaning there are only 21 players returning from last year.

"The big thing is that we're just short on players. So we have at most like 12 people out there, which means we can't really do any big stuff," Buckley said. "This school is not really focused on football. Whereas a lot of other schools, that is their main thing, so they get a lot of funding..."

Senior running back Alec Marintzer attended the summer practices at LASA, which were held in the weight room and outside on the field twice a week. Those practices ended several weeks before the start

of the school year, being replaced by daily sessions Monday through Friday to increase players' ability with higher intensity.

"Because it's a magnet school where academics are the main focus, [athletics are] not really a priority," Marintzer said. "You can't bring people up from middle school. They have to apply and get in. If they don't get in, there's nothing you can do to get them in."

According to Buckley, LASA's summer practices are known for being difficult. He explained that players run, tackle and do drills for hours outside and push themselves further in the weight room.

"We have strength and conditioning first for two hours," Buckley said. "And then every Tuesday and Thursday we have an hour of practice. And that'll normally change based off of what coaches are there, but generally it's a mix of agility, simple form stuff, and tackling, which we've been working on a lot recently."

The new coach made some changes to the offensive playbook, as are necessary during turnover according to Marintzer, though the defensive playbook is staying the same. According to Buckley, some players were initially reluctant about the changes, as former Coach Lewis' routes and plays had previously been popular among them.

"It's [now] a lot more short-game and run-based," Buckley said. "Our last coach was an NFL receiver, so he knew a lot about scheming for routes. Before we get to the actual season, it's a lot of just fundamentals, agility, just trying to get baseline athleticism up."

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graphic by Amelia Coleman

## THE DROP-IN

**GEORGIA FINK**  
**MARGOT MORGAN** | entertainment editors

Amid hectic downtown Austin, through traffic almost impossible to navigate, and over one of the few bridges crossing Town Lake, there is the Long Center, a performing arts venue in the middle of the city.

This summer, every Thursday night, the Long Center hosted a series of free concerts with local artists of various music genres performing on outdoor stages foregrounding the Austin skyline. The Long Center's Drop-In series allows many small musicians to grow and let Austinites experience free live music.

For Caroline Hale, the lead of her band, Caroline Hale, the Drop-In helped draw a crowd interested in her music. This was her first time performing at the Long Center, and she felt that the event was a success.

"[The Drop-In] was so cool," Hale said. "The crowd was amazing. That event is particularly awesome because it draws so many local Austin natives and tourists to it. So there's just a huge audience that wants to listen to music, which is awesome. As any artist would tell you, playing for an audience wanting to listen to your music is the best feeling in the world."

Sara Houser, an artist who performs under the name of S.L. Houser, shared Hale's sentiments about the success of the gig. She believed that both the amenities provided by the Long Center staff and the quality of the center itself, in contrast to Houser's previous shows, made playing at the Drop-In a great experience.

"They took such good care of us

down there," Houser said. "You don't always get the star treatment when you play shows, so it feels really special when they consider your quality of life. They fed us well, and they made sure we had a nice air-conditioned green room to get changed and to kind of hide out until we played. The stage is super lovely, and the sound system was great."

Reflecting on her experience at the Long Center, Hale felt as though the staff treated her very well. In addition to a warm reception, Hale had thoroughly enjoyed the experience she was able to be a part of at the venue.

"The staff at the Long Center was amazing," Hale said. "They were so helpful and hands-on with everything. The facilities were great. We were very taken care of, which is awesome. It was a great summer night of fun, music, and energy."

Graham Weber, singer of the band The Restos, explained that the concert helped his band's publicity. Weber expressed his appreciation for the support of the Long Center staff and the event in general.

"It was nice to have an attendant crew," Weber said. "And the promo was good. We benefited from getting the name of the band out there, and since we had to rebrand, it was nice for us to have another fairly publicized event."

Weber included how the Long Center was the perfect venue for their show because it differed from the venues they had previously played in. The Restos normally performed in indoor venues, such as clubs and bars, so this big outdoor space of the Long Center was a change for them.

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# Texas

from page 1

“There’s been talk among regulatory bodies on what [centralizing the grid] would potentially look like,” Mitchell said. “We’ve not seen that come to fruition yet. Until it does, it’s not something that we can comment on. Right now, it’s an idea.”

Texans might feel powerless against recent outages and weather disasters, but community efforts can help make outages less frequent and not last as long. According to Mitchell, it starts by listening to the power companies when they call for a reduction in power usage.

“Anything that we can do as a utility to communicate with our community about the challenges that we face climate change-related and otherwise, and get their buy-in on conserving energy and knowing how best to use energy efficiently, that reduces stress on the grid,” Mitchell said. “It helps reduce power outages and helps keep us out of a situation where we may be in an emergency as far as power throughout the state.”

Fossil fuels are a main cause of these climate shifts, according to NASA, and Texas is notorious for their reliance on them. Texas’ role as the supplier for 42% of crude oil and 27% of marketed natural gas makes them the top state for oil in the US, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). However, Austin Energy is trying to pioneer the mitigation and reversal of the effects of climate change by leaning towards sustainable energy sources.

“We have power-sharing agreements with wind, solar, biomass, and nuclear,” Mitchell said. “So we have a very diverse energy portfolio. Seventy percent of that is carbon-free. We’ve long been a leader in going green before it was even fashionable because it reflected the values and continues to reflect the values of our community.”

Austin Energy is not the only energy company in Texas focusing on renewable sources. Adam Renz, the Director of Business Development at Pattern Energy, works with his company by reducing the use of fossil fuels and introducing sustainable energy options.

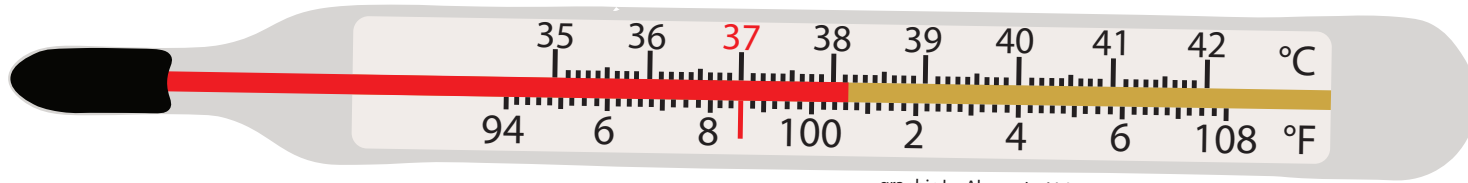
“Texas leads the nation in wind energy, generating over 30 percent of the U.S. total,” Renz said. “The state also ranks second nationally in solar energy and [is] continuing to expand rapidly. Companies are also taking advantage of the infrastructure and training established by oil and gas companies and expanding.”

Since 2021, ERCOT has been rolling out improvements to make the grid more reliable, according to a public statement by the company. This includes more weatherization and inspections to hopefully protect Texas against harsh weather conditions. Renz explained that sustainable sources can provide new advantages to mitigate these events.

“Renewable energy projects can enhance grid resilience by diversifying energy sources,” Renz said. “Distributed generation from renewables, especially when paired with energy storage solutions, can improve the grid’s ability to withstand and recover from disruptions caused by extreme weather events.”

ERCOT’s statement also predicted that electric grid growth demand will become necessary in the next few years, prompting a need for an adaptable grid plan. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) added to this, stating that Texas will only get more populated and experience more unprecedented weather events year-round over the next decade. Mitchell expressed that what matters now is how Texas rises to the occasion and adapts to survive in these conditions.

“We expect the demand and power to only increase,” Mitchell said. “We are seeing more people move here, more businesses requiring energy infrastructure, so we need to seriously think about how we generate and transmit power from different parts of the state to where it’s needed. Our challenge as a utility is to make sure that we have the infrastructure and the equipment in place and the team’s ready to service that and to provide power because we have an obligation to serve.”



graphic by Alexandra Valencia-Serrano

## Pros and Cons Of a Third Party Vote

**Pros and Cons:** Every so often, the commentary section publishes a pair of articles—one pro, one con—that take opposing stances on the same topic. This issue’s topic is whether or not voters should vote for third party candidates in the 2024 presidential election.

SADIE SARRAT | commentary editor

**PRO:** After the chaos that ensued within the Republican and Democratic parties this summer, American voters are having to rethink their votes in preparation for one of the nation’s most historic elections.

On June 28, the two leading candidates, current President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump, traded biting remarks on live TV. The opinionated and tense debate left critics and voters shocked and led many to believe that neither candidate is suited to run the country for a myriad of reasons: increasing age, criminal record, inability to help the economic situation, etc. Additionally, the turmoil between the two leading candidates increased divisions within the two parties and the social fabric of America. Many Americans found they were ready to abandon the two parties altogether and vote for independent candidates.

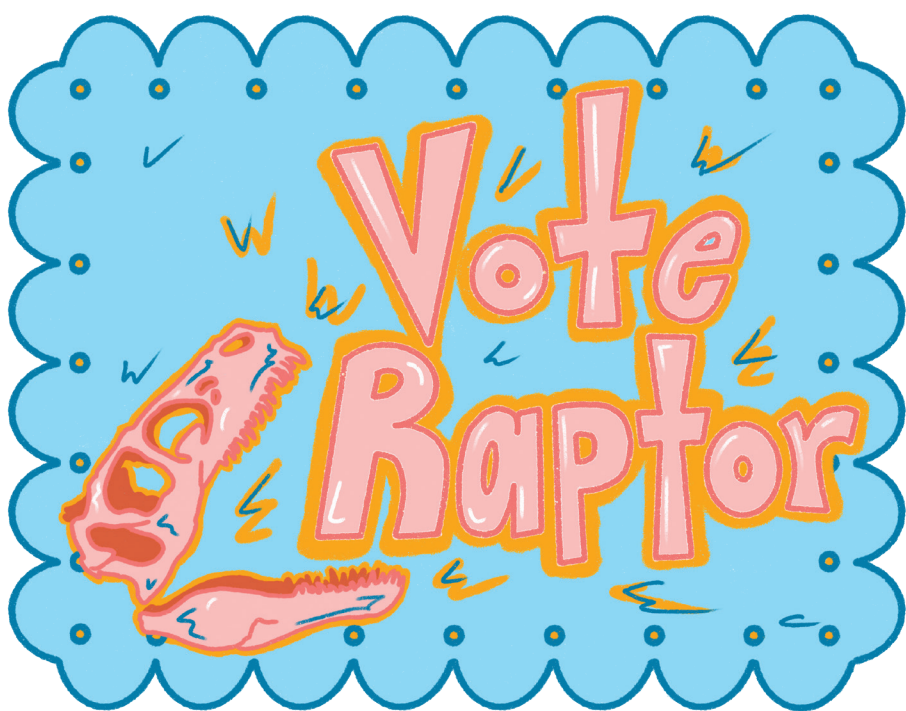
If Trump and Biden’s performance in the debate wasn’t enough to make Americans question where they stand, on July 21, President Joe Biden announced his formal withdrawal from the election. This abrupt change in power inside the Democratic Party left many constituents feeling worried and uncertain at first. He then declared his full endorsement of Vice President Harris as his replacement nominee. Now, with more unknowns than ever, voting for third-party or independent candidates is a valuable opportunity for voters to change the course of the election that should not be taken for granted.

There are two main independent candidates leading in the election: the most popular being Robert F. Kennedy Jr., nephew of American legacy John F. Kennedy, who is an outspoken anti-vaxxer and advocate for restitching America’s society back together. The next most independent candidate is Cornel West, who bases his platform on prioritizing the working class by providing free childcare and a minimum working wage of \$27/hour for everyone. These candidates offer hope to many

by basing their campaigns on the needs of the American people who are often overlooked, a quality many voters find lacking in the Democratic and Republican candidates who are swayed by their largest donors and not the voices of the people. Furthermore, with enough support, third-party or independent voting could become a more trusted option in future elections, transcending the boundaries created by the current political parties that dominate and divide the country.

Not only can third-party or independent voting be used to promote new leaders who support the American people, but it can also be used as a form of ‘a voter rebellion’ to draw votes away from the Republican and Democratic parties. According to the Associated Press, left-winged Green Party candidate Jill Stein gained votes from a pool of voters in the 2016 election, ultimately affecting the votes in the race. This strategy could be implemented into the 2024 election.

Although some might believe that a third party vote might be useless or the equivalent of burning one’s vote, Americans, with enough votes, have the chance to alter elections for the better by potentially bringing more options and freedom of choice outside of the Republican and Democratic parties to the forefront of American politics. Creating a strong third party certainly cannot happen overnight because it requires the courage of all voters to come together and use a tactic that tips the balance against the two leading parties. However, what we can decide right now is whether America will join the fight.



graphic by amelia coleman



graphic by Tita Gonzalez

WINTYR RICE  
—  
commentary editor

**CON:** As the 2024 election draws near, it has become increasingly obvious that for a large percentage of the American people, neither of the candidates are satisfactory.

If given the option, 53% of registered voters would replace both President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump on the ballot, according to a July study by the Pew Research Center. If newly certified Democratic nominee Kamala Harris is to be seen as a continuation of the policies of the past four years, for which she was vice president, it is likely these voters’ resentment for Biden have carried over into feelings of skepticism and reluctance for Harris. It’s no surprise, then, that, according to data from Statista’s research department, over 40% of American voters are open to considering voting for third party candidates. While their grievances are valid, this course of action ultimately serves to largely benefit the far-right by delivering the presidency into their hands rather than creating meaningful and lasting change.

For almost two centuries now, the United States’ politics have been dominated by two primary political parties. While the primary parties have changed over the years, it has been consistently near-impossible for third parties to gain any form of traction; no candidate not affiliated with one of the two major parties has ever won the presidency. It’s been nearly two decades since a third party candidate even received more than five percent of the vote—the last being Ross Perot of the centrist Reform Party of the United States of America with 8.4% of the vote in 1996 according to Britannica. Simply put, the chances of a candidate other than Kamala Harris or Donald Trump winning the presidency are next to none.

Most liberal and leftist voters are tired of voting for the lesser evil, but there is no other viable choice. Under the current U.S. voting system, voting third party has the same effect as not voting at all. In an election as widely broadcasted and contentious as this year’s, the reality of voting third party could have catastrophic implications for the next four years.

Harris is not a perfect candidate—despite acknowledging the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, she continues to support Israel’s genocide by being

# The LIBERATOR

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

- Editorial Content:
- The students on The Liberator staff will print articles which have been researched to the best of their ability to obtain most complete information.
  - The information will be presented in an objective, truthful and fair manner.
  - When personal commentary is given it will be in good taste on issues that have been researched, analyzed and where expert opinion has been sought, and then presented with the best ability of the writer. In addition, all opinion or commentary will be clearly labeled as so.
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The Editorial Boards and its Functions:  
The Liberator staff will be governed by an editorial board comprised of the following individuals: editors-in-chief and section editors.  
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- Determine the content of the publication (with input from other staff members).
- Stress the editorial policy.
- Ensure the accuracy of the publication.
- Address disciplinary or other inappropriate behavior of staff.
- Vote on removal of staff members.
- Change or add policy as necessary with three of four board members voting favorably.

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

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

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

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

apart of the Biden-Harris administration sending billions in weapons to the apartheid state and publicly slandering anti-war protesters as Hamas and Trump supporters. She fails to commit to her stances on universal healthcare or defunding the police force, walking back anything remotely progressive at the first sign of pushback. However, she is leagues better than Trump, who, in addition to having said he would throw pro-Palestine college protesters out of the country, has pledged to implement some of the most dystopian policies imaginable on LGBTQ+ rights, abortion, and especially the war in Gaza. Let’s not also forget that he used ‘Palestinian’ as a slur during his debate with Biden.

Trump also has the backing of a very powerful far-right organization—the Heritage Foundation. They are most widely known for Project 2025, their 900-page plan to remove countless rights from the American public within a month of a Republican taking office. From dismantling the public school system to a nation-wide gender affirming care ban, Project 2025 is one of the most alarming documents to come out of the American right in recent memory. While Harris’s declared political stances—or lack thereof—leave much to be desired, the fact is she is not planning to make life a living hell for marginalized groups the second she takes office.

This is not to say that you should never vote for a third party candidate. Local elections happen far more often than presidential ones, and with a much smaller voter base, there is a much greater chance to elect a candidate who truly represents your views. When choosing the most powerful person in the country, however, we cannot risk electing a man who sees democracy as a secondary priority to his own hatred. If you are 18 this November, I urge you to vote for Harris. We cannot risk sending a dictator to the White House just because the Democratic candidate wasn’t progressive enough.

## Students Get To Work on Internships

ISABEL KRAMER  
REBECA GONZALEZ | student life editors

Instead of days basking in the sun at Barton Springs or staying wrapped in their beds at home, some LASA students decided to spend their summer vacation days working in internships designated to their specific career interests.

Although students commonly intern to improve their college resumes, each student found that their internship also helped them to develop and tailor unique skills for their chosen fields of study. LASA senior Violet Mann spent her summer working at the Saint Davids Institute, a training program for nurses and pre-health training. As one of five interns to her supervisor, Mann would help with daily housekeeping, such as cleaning office spaces and preparing for events. When she had free time, she observed simulations and classes at the hospital.

"I learned a lot of basic healthcare things," Mann said. "Like how to put in an IV."

Yet, Mann's summer experience is rare. U.S. News & World Report states that only 2% of high schoolers complete internships. The article stated that internships are seen as simply a new task on the list for high schoolers to add to their college applications, alongside community service, sports, and clubs. However, the article shows that internships are an untouched opportunity that offers a range of benefits.

Although Mann initially took part in the internship to improve her resume, she learned important lessons from her supervisor apart from medicine. Her supervisor is also currently assisting her in finding a surgeon in the Austin area who Mann can shadow. She felt the internship helped her to feel confident in her future

and career interests.

The internships, while aligning with her career path and interests, also gave Mann a new perspective. She was introduced to many less demanding, non-surgical professions she had not previously considered and discovered social skills for career building.

"[I have learned that] the more confident and well-spoken you are, the more people are going to trust you," Mann said.

While some LASA students completed internships in the Austin area, LASA senior Sadie Henderson spent her summer in North Carolina interning at Peacock Theatre for children, the same as she has done for the past two years. Henderson discovered the internship because she was interested in a job that incorporated art and traveling.

"Before my internship, I wanted to do architecture," Henderson said. "Going into the internship and working with 3D design and building helped me put that into perspective and I think that's now my top major choice."

Henderson's main responsibility was working in set design where she was in charge of creating and painting the theater's backgrounds. Initially starting out as an unpaid intern for her first summer with the camp, she eventually became a paid intern which involved more responsibility and led itself to developing new skills such as teamwork and management.

"I learned how to work with others and manage larger groups of people," Henderson said. "Especially kids."

LASA junior Sanvi Paranjape explained she also wanted to spend her summer interning to improve her resume, and she found openings through the City of Austin's internship program. Since she was interested in design and art, Paranjape decided to intern at the UMLAUF Museum and Sculpture Garden.

According to Paranjape, internships can create a reason for many students to spend their summer outside of their comfort zones and experience new workplaces.

"If I wasn't working I would probably be staying at home most of the time," Paranjape said. "Or maybe going on a longer trip."

Paranjape added that having the job taught her a lot about careers in design. It also helped her develop new skills in teamwork that she would not have learned otherwise.

"My favorite memories while working were when I was helping out with the kids," Paranjape said. "Or when I see something I helped with in the museum."

Between her personal and professional experiences, Paranjape believed she gained a lot from interning. Similar to Mann's and Henderson's, taking on an internship served her purpose of exploring not only her own career interests, but workplaces in general.

"I think doing this internship has helped me figure out what kind of job I want in the future," Paranjape said. "It helped me learn more about all the different kinds of jobs behind an art gallery."

According to Indeed, internships allow people to gain valuable education in a work environment, and they open the door to high school students to find an 'in' in their chosen field. Internships can solidify career path choices, provide real world experience, strengthen college applications, and, according to Mann, allow students to network and form relationships capable of propelling them in a direction built during their high school years that can last throughout their entire career.

"A big takeaway from me was networking and forming relationships," Mann said. "My supervisor was really adamant about how important it is to start your career."

## The Drop-In

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"It was a big outdoor event in the heart of the city," Weber said. "It's got a great skyline view and is a family-friendly deal, which is nice, especially with the community that was there. And I think a lot of people that hadn't heard our band before saw us for the first time there, which was nice."

Houser stressed the importance of live music among children and drawing from her experience, she added that the Drop-In is a great opportunity for that. She explained that the Drop-In allows children's exposure to live music to happen in a safe and controlled environment.

"I think it's great that it's an earlier show and it is family-friendly," Houser said. "Unfortunately, in Austin, a lot of shows are in 21-and-up clubs. And I know personally, for me, getting to see live music was a big deal when I was a kid. I think it's really important for kids to see that—live music in action."

Houser noted that the Drop-In was a great opportunity to introduce her music to new audiences who may not have encountered it before. This allowed her to reach people who had not yet discovered her and her music.

"I need to play in front of people who might not have otherwise heard my music," Houser said. "Events like the Drop-In are great for that because they're promoted on a higher level; they attract a very different demographic than people who come to live shows and clubs. So it's more about getting in front of people who haven't heard me or my band and might not otherwise have found me without events like this. So they're very important."

Although the artists praised the event, they also highlighted some drawbacks. According to Houser, the venue did have one major issue: the distance from her to the audience. The huge distance between Houser and the audience made it much harder for them to connect with each other, which impacted the way her performance felt and how the event went for her.

"Sometimes in those big outdoor environments the crowd can feel very disconnected," Houser said. "For one, it's not a

club rock show. So people are sitting on blankets and they're far from the stage. It's kind of hard to break that fourth wall and get people to engage with you while you're performing."

Even with the audience so far away, Hale felt as though the event was highly energetic. Her enthusiasm and appreciation for the audience and their reciprocated energy only added to how much she enjoyed performing at her set.

"It was probably one of my favorite shows I've played, just because I think the energy was so high," Hale said, "and the people in the audience had great energy too, which is so important and makes every show better."

The Long Center's Drop-In helped many people grow their following and create a bigger feeling of community in Austin. According to Hale, the Long Center's role in fostering community and creativity while also supporting the musicians is what makes the Drop-In so successful.

"[The Drop-In] brings a spirit to a culture that lives within Austin," Hale said. "It's unlike any other city. The music scene in Austin is so vibrant and creatively unique that the Long Center is hosting an event that bolsters our creative cultural community, which is awesome. And it's another layer. It's another sense of community bringing people together for music."

## Editor's picks

### Favorite Movie

#### The Lego Batman Movie

GEORGIA FINK | entertainment editor

Although watching movies has been a major part of my day-to-day activities, finishing movies has always been a struggle. That being said, there is one movie that I can always rewatch and complete: "The Lego Batman Movie". Even if it's a movie aimed at kids, there is always more to discover every time you watch it. The film has jokes that are funny to all audiences alike, making it so anyone, regardless of their age, can enjoy it. One of these jokes is Batman singing about how he does not pay his taxes in the opening song. It is one of my favorites since it exemplifies how the filmmakers are portraying Batman as a self-righteous jerk in this movie compared to other Batman media where he is a— somewhat— great guy.

Another thing I enjoy about this movie is the allusions to the canon material including references to Nightwing, who is the first Robin Dick Grayson's eventual alter-ego, and throwbacks to well-loved Batman movies such as "Batman V Superman" and the silly 1960s "Batman" TV show. The movie also doesn't just stay in the Batman franchise, and ventures into other cinematic universes like "Harry Potter" and "Doctor Who".

Another very important comedic aspect of the movie is Batman's relationship with the Joker. The main conflict of the movie is their relationship, as Batman does not see Joker as his greatest enemy, while Joker wants to be recognized for his role as Batman's rival. This equally toxic and amusing relationship is portrayed as if they were jealous lovers, and it added more comedic value to the movie. This entertaining portrayal of their relationship is one of the best parts of the movie.

Along with being a very silly film, this movie also tackles many meaningful topics ranging from loneliness and isolation to familial bonds and friendships. However, one of the most important themes in this movie is the idea of self-growth. We watch Batman change throughout the movie and become a better person with the help of his friends and family. This arc makes me feel as though this movie is not just crazy nonsense, and the filmmakers wanted to use this film to teach kids something.

The mix of drama and comedy makes this movie insanely rewatchable. The fact that the movie also includes ways for children to learn life lessons like self-growth and respect for others allows for people to find meaning in the nonsense that is "The Lego Batman Movie".

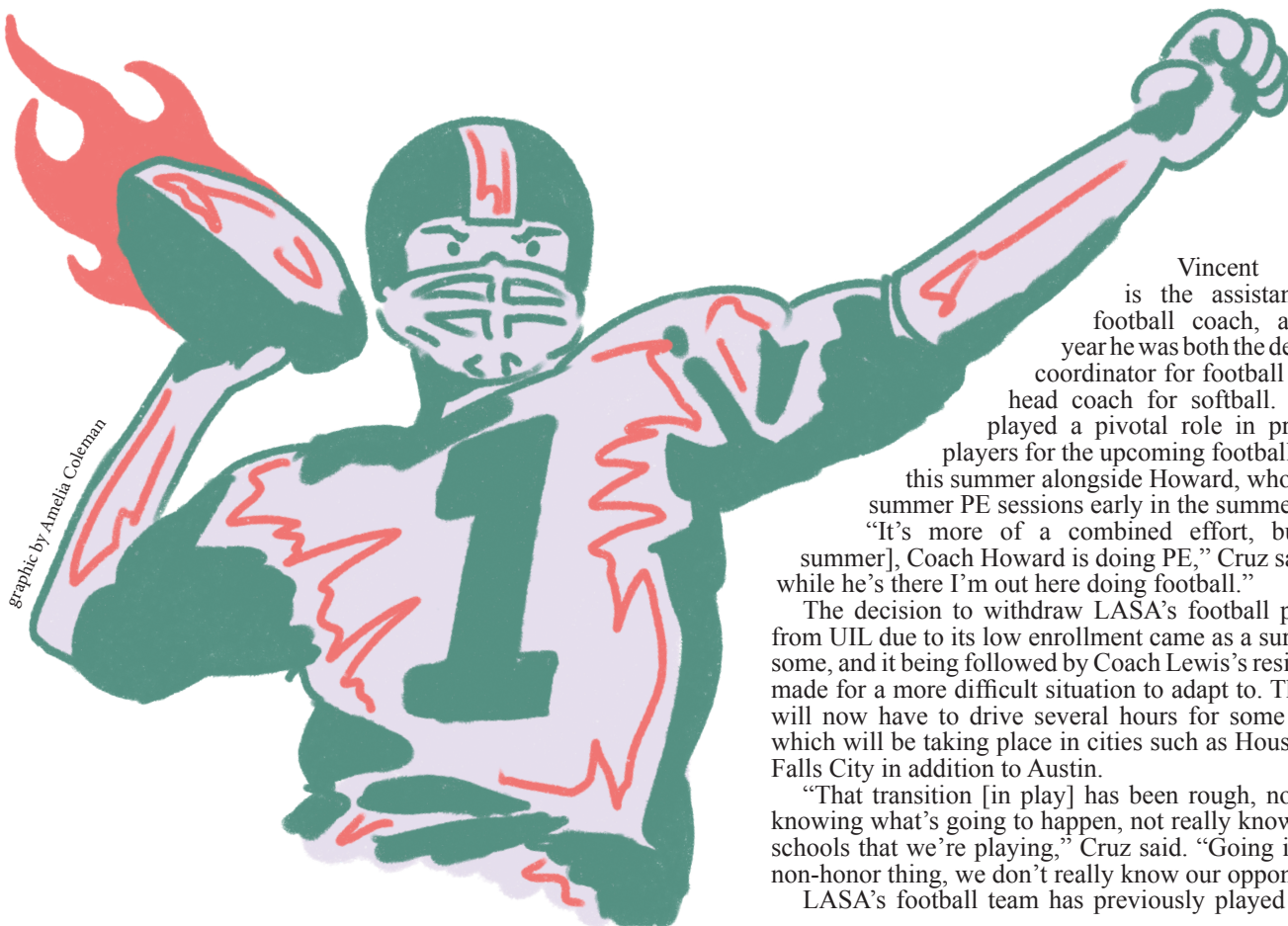
### Inside Out 2

MARGOT MORGAN | entertainment editor

Over the summer, I went to see "Inside Out 2", the sequel to the 2015 Pixar classic. I was expecting just another harmless children's movie, but it was more than that: I was pleasantly surprised at how "Inside Out 2" takes a deeper dive into the more mature side of the emotions.

As much as I enjoyed it, I feel like there are a few problems with the film. The main issue with the new sequel is that it seems to almost repeat the plot of the previous one. Even though "Inside Out 2" goes further in exploring areas of your emotions/brain that aren't talked about in the first movie like streams of consciousness and how a brainstorm works, I feel like it overly relied on the familiar territory of the first film in terms of structure. The new emotions may have added a new layer of complexity to the "Inside Out" universe by discussing new emotions, but I feel it copies and pastes from the first film far too much with how quickly the side plots are resolved without drawing out any suspense for proper thematic effect.

Even though the movie isn't perfect, I appreciate how the movie teaches younger children about mental health issues and how it is okay to feel a range of emotions, including anxiety and depression. Because of this, I would be very interested to see how the plot would continue if there were to be a future third movie.



Graphic by Amelia Colzman

## LASA

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Vincent Cruz is the assistant head football coach, and last year he was both the defensive coordinator for football and the head coach for softball. He has played a pivotal role in preparing players for the upcoming football season this summer alongside Howard, who led the summer PE sessions early in the summer.

"It's more of a combined effort, but [this summer], Coach Howard is doing PE," Cruz said. "So while he's there I'm out here doing football."

The decision to withdraw LASA's football program from UIL due to its low enrollment came as a surprise to some, and it being followed by Coach Lewis's resignation made for a more difficult situation to adapt to. The team will now have to drive several hours for some games, which will be taking place in cities such as Houston and Falls City in addition to Austin.

"That transition [in play] has been rough, not really knowing what's going to happen, not really knowing the schools that we're playing," Cruz said. "Going into this non-honor thing, we don't really know our opponents."

LASA's football team has previously played against

other schools in the Austin Independent School District (AISD), which the rest of the school's teams will continue doing. Having withdrawn from UIL, it will now be playing against a mix of continuing and new opponents ranging from public schools, charter schools and private schools, some of which will include Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP) Northeast, Legacy the School of Sport Sciences, and Fall City.

"There's going to be a lot of changes, a lot of growing together," Cruz said.

There are currently four coaches on staff, and Cruz expected to hire two more. Each coach specializes in training certain players, such as the special teams, wide receivers, or defensive backs.

"We have a chance to go back [to UIL] in two years," Cruz said. "The amount of kids that we have, where we're at program-wise, that's gonna determine whether we go back to UIL."

The team has ramped up their training, having recently transitioned to everyday practices which are now taking place after school. Although summer practices are difficult, according to Buckley, players often say it's that training that leads to the most crucial improvement in their performance later on in the season.

## Ice Cream Across Austin

AVANI GANNE | photo editor

As the heat in Austin continues to climb through the summer months, ice cream shops have become a necessity to keep Austinites cool with their distinct flavors and features.

Many of these ice cream shops have their own special characteristics that make them unique, allowing each of them to individually stand out amongst the crowd. These specific attributes range from the flavors of the ice cream to the music the shop plays during the day. According to Meylin Cepero, a staff member at Gelatorio, these features make ice cream shops adored by their workers and customers alike.

According to Cepero, Gelatorio differentiates itself by its style of ice cream influenced by multiple cultures. She also described other treats the shop sells for those who may not be interested in a cold cone of ice cream.

"This place has Mediterranean style things, like baklavas, which come from Turkey," Cepero said. "So we have Italian, Middle [Eastern], and Mediterranean influence."

This diverse array of desserts in Gelatorio is also shown in other places such as Quack's, a local bakery in Austin. According to Debrah Bamberg, a Quack's ice cream worker, Quack's also sells many desserts aside from ice cream.

"We are an all-encompassing bakery and don't just focus on one thing," Bamberg said. "The variety of desserts we have [stretches] from pastries to cookies to cakes."

Aside from the types of desserts each shop sells, the workers' personal favorites and the most popular items of each shop also varied from each other. According to Jade Friedman, a former Jeni's ice cream worker, their bestsellers range from nationwide favorites to statewide favorites in specific.

"Our most popular flavor nationwide is the Brown Butter Almond Brittle," Friedman said. "In Texas, it's the Goopy Butter Cake. My favorite flavor of ice cream would be the coffee with cream and sugar, because it tastes the way coffee smells. Jeni's steams the Nespresso directly into the cream, giving it a more aromatic and stronger coffee flavor."

Cepero also described a few of the shop's best selling flavors, showcasing the shop's various cultural influences in the differences between them. For Cepero personally, her favorites included more than just the ice cream.

"We have four bestsellers," Cepero said. "The belgian chocolate is one of the most popular and so is the stracciatella, the Italian milk based with chocolate chips. For gelato, I like the blackberry chip. [but] I love baklavas so much."

According to Bamberg, the particular bestsellers of Quack's as well as her personal favorites range across different desserts like cakes, muffins, cookies, among other pastries. Quack's broad array of flavors boasts customer and staff favorites across each section of the menu, with Bamberg noting that favorites are constantly changing and getting re-picked.

"The most popular menu item varies," Bamberg said. "We have a most popular in all of our categories. Our triple chocolate cake is our most popular cake, our marvelous morning muffin is our most popular breakfast pastry, and our decorated shortbreads are our most popular cookies. I would say my favorite menu item is our double chocolate cupcake. It's new, all chocolate, and the icing is a chocolate cream cheese icing which is my favorite kind of icing."

Aside from just their favorite treats to eat while working in their respective ice cream shops, Friedman also described the best parts of working there for her personally. According to her, the best part of working in Jeni's is the people she's met there.

"My favorite thing about working at Jeni's is interacting with the customers," Friedman said. "As well as getting to know my co-workers."

For Cepero, some of the best parts of working in an ice cream shop are the types of treats they serve. However, her favorite part of working there is far from just dessert-based. "I love gelato," Cepero said. "Everyone loves gelato, [but] I also love watching people come here with kids and I just see so much love here in general."



**REFLECTIONS OF ICE CREAM** Quack's is both a creamery and a bakery with a variety of treats, and to many Austinites, it's recognizable by its distinct logo. photo by Apollo Dahmus



**A SCOOP TO GO** A cold scoop of ice cream from Amy's Ice Creams sits on the counter ready to enjoy in the hot summer. photo by Apollo Dahmus

### Gelatorio



**SWEET TREATS** Gelatorio's sugary delights that pull from around the globe stand out from behind their clear casing. photo by Apollo Dahmus

### Jeni's



**POPULAR AND REFRESHING** Jeni's Ice Creams' South Congress location sparkles against the burning sun. photo by Megan Gerold

### Quack's



**READY TO ORDER** Quack's diverse array of sweet treats sits amid their storeroom, ready for customers to purchase. photo by Apollo Dahmus



Graphic by Annella Coleman