

## LBJ STUDENTS LEAD DISCUSSIONS



In their new restorative center, LBJ leadership students learn to lead restorative circles and talk about feelings in a safe place. photo by Sessa McMinn

see page 13

## INSTRUCTOR [WYNN]S AREA IV CTE AWARD



LBJ Fire Academy instructor and Austin Fire Department Firefighter Danny Wynn was named Area IV Champion of the Year for his work with the LBJ Fire Academy. "I like being around young people cause I feel it makes me smile more and feel younger," Wynn said. "I feel very blessed to have two jobs that I really enjoy." photo courtesy of LBJ Fire Academy

see page 10

## SCHOOL SPIRIT TAKES OFF

LASA Assistant Principal Marc Hernandez takes part in one of LASA and LBJ's themed days during homecoming week. This year, LASA and LBJ student councils picked new themes for spirit week; Marvel Monday, Tie-Dye Tuesday, Wing Wednesday and Twin Thursday. For full homecoming week coverage and photos, visit The Liberator online at lbjliberator.com. photo by Carolina Gokingsco



# the liberator

Liberal Arts and Science Academy and Lyndon Baines Johnson High Schools

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photo by Chelsea Banawif

## Jags continue 12 year streak versus Raiders

Continuing a more than decade long winning streak, the LBJ Jaguars varsity football team won their homecoming game against the John H. Reagan High School Raiders 32-7. The rivalry game took place Sept. 25 at Nelson field, the home field of both LBJ and Reagan, giving the Jaguars an undefeated district record of 2-0, and a 3-2 record

overall. During halftime, LASA seniors Maisie Sajbel and Carter Pace were named LASA Homecoming queen and king, and LBJ seniors Cynthia Sanchez and Luis Gomez were named LBJ Homecoming queen and king. For more homecoming photos and future sports coverage, check out our website at lbjliberator.com.

## Dell Medical School partners with AISD for summer camps

QUINN SIMPSON  
Staff Writer

The Dell Medical School, due to open in June 2016, is going to focus on exposing local students to health sciences and potential career paths in medicine, according to the Director of Pre-Health Professions Reginald Baptiste. This past summer, the school organized a two-week health sciences summer camp for Austin Independent School District (AISD)

middle and high school students.

"They both did neuroscience experiments, and they were able to participate in what we call a clinical simulation lab," Baptiste said. "That's where we train medical nurses to do stuff like draw blood, start IVs, take vital signs, medicate patients, deliver babies, things like that. They also had professionals in different health professions come and teach them."

The school plans to partner with AISD and other school districts

throughout Travis County in the future to provide similar experiences in health sciences to as many students as possible. Dell Medical School Director of Media Relations and Community Engagement Stephen Scheibal said that he is excited about their initial partnership with AISD, and the opportunities it holds for potential Dell Medical School students.

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## LASA students spend summer working for NASA

QUINN SIMPSON  
Staff Writer

LASA junior Mathilda Nicot-Cartsonis sits in silence, holding her breath as she focuses apprehensively on the computer screen in front of her. Her team members gather around behind her chair, waiting with nearly tangible trepidation for the results of the telescope data analysis. After a brief moment that feels like an eon to the assembled interns, the computer displays the results of the script. Instantaneously, the tension evaporates and is replaced with jubilation that re-energizes the crew of budding NASA scientists.

"I love science, so any kind of science really fascinates me, so this internship really was, I'm not going to lie to you, a way for me not to get bored over the summer," Nicot-Cartsonis said. "I had no idea that I was going to be doing as much stuff as I did."

Over the summer, Nicot-Cartsonis worked in an internship at the University of Texas at Austin Center for Space Research. She and her team analyzed data from NASA's ICESat, or the Ice, Cloud and land Elevation Satellite, which collected two billion ice elevation measurements across Antarctica and Greenland by recording how long it took to reflect laser pulses off the surface of the Earth and back to a receiver on the satellite. Nicot-Cartsonis' team was responsible for figuring out which methods of analyzing the data would work best for different areas of the surveyed land masses. NASA offers students a variety of opportunities to develop their science

and research skills, ranging from summer camps to more in-depth internships like Nicot-Cartsonis'.

"There were three methods of analysis of this data to interpret the points and show us changing ice— repeat track, crossover, and overlapping footprint," Nicot-Cartsonis said. "So what my team was supposed to do, and we did, was to create maps of Greenland and Antarctica that showed which method of analysis was best to use in which sections."

Nicot-Cartsonis and her team faced a steep learning curve as they worked together to become skilled in an unfamiliar programming language and subsequently write scripts that could efficiently process billions of individual ice elevation measurements.

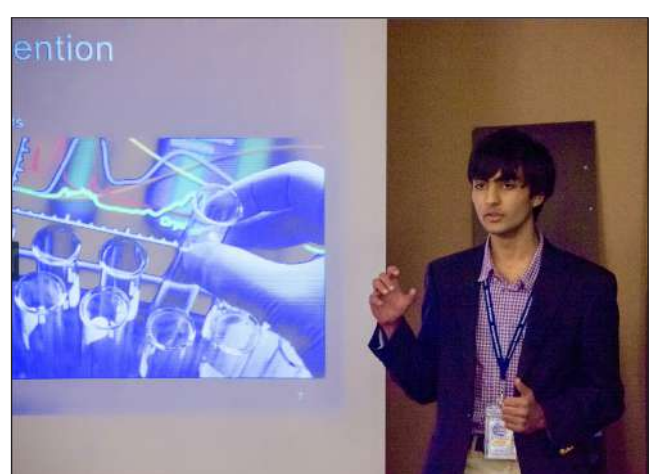
"I really enjoyed working with my team," Nicot-Cartsonis said. "We had to create scripts of code in a language called UNIX, so instead of having to apply every process that we did individually onto each point of data we created scripts that we could run mass amounts of data through, and that was really difficult."

LASA senior Connor Kordes also had an experience at NASA over the summer, participating in NASA's High School Aerospace Scholars program (HAS). The program comprised a nine week online astrophysics class and a one week stay with a group of 40 other high school seniors at the Johnson Space Center. Kordes said the one week camp combined presentations from influential NASA scientists, behind-the-scenes tours of notable facilities at the Space Center and hands-on projects that put participants' engineering and teamwork skills to the test.

"There was one [activity] where they just gave us a bunch of random resources, kind of like SciTech, and told us to build something that we're going to drop from 10 meters high or a little bit more than thirty feet, and whatever has the softest impact is going to win— and you can use parachutes and everything," Kordes said. "I don't know, it was really fun just to go through that kind of SciTech phase again and just put my ideas to the test and work with other people."

Kordes is one of two LASA seniors who took part in the HAS program— Ishan Shah also completed the online class and was selected to attend the week-long camp. Along with his team, he worked on projects that applied research in bioastronautics, a field concerned with studying the effects of outer space on living things, to actual problems NASA faces in safely transporting astronauts to Mars.

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LASA junior Ishan Shah presents his summer work. photo courtesy of Shah

## AISD looks to grow advanced programs in South Austin

SAM ZERN  
Editor-in-Chief

On Sept. 14, the Austin Independent School District (AISD) Board of Trustees opened a board dialogue on the topic of expanding advanced academic programs in South Austin. As it currently stands, all high school-level programs of this nature, including IB and magnet, are available only in the northern side of the city.

The push for these programs has come after years of sporadic meetings and conversations, according to the Associate Superintendent of high schools Kathy Ryan.

"More and more of the community in the south is voicing that that's really something they want and in AISD we do listen to our community and whenever we can make their needs match our needs, we absolutely make it happen," Ryan said. "So I think that's why there's a push this year to try to figure something out."

There is now a committee at the district level, led by Chief Schools Officer Edmund Oropez, focused on making sure there is thorough community involvement across the district. There is not yet any specific proposal to bring advanced academic programming to south Austin, but the district has begun to collect information about the programs that already exist in the south.

"Some of the information we received...included a list of the "advanced" courses already in place at south Austin high schools [such as] Austin, Akins, Bowie, Crockett, Eastside Memorial, Travis," Cowan said. "It appears to me that many of these advanced courses are structured as AP and dual credit classes."

Existing specialty programs in the south include the entrepreneurship program at Crockett, the early college high school at Travis, the global studies program at Austin and AP and dual credit courses at schools throughout south Austin. AP and dual credit courses, while advanced, are not quite the same as the advanced academic programs south Austin is lacking, Cowan said.

"While AISD considers AP and dual credit advanced academics - and they are - the rigor of LASA and my oldest son knows the rigor of IB is more than that of AP and dual credit," Cowan said. "It almost becomes a lifestyle to which a young adult commits himself or herself and not all students are up for that challenge."

In looking at the feasibility of implementing existing programs in southern campuses or using 2008 bond money allocated for the purchase of land for a South Austin high school, the district is collecting information on the costs associated with current advanced academic programs. According to LASA principal Stacia Crescenzi, LASA is one of the least expensive schools in the district.

"We have one of the lowest per pupil student cost of any high school in the district," Crescenzi said. "I haven't seen the numbers in a few years, but when they released them a couple of years ago we were very inexpensive compared with most, though not all, other high schools. In general, our extra costs come from transportation and magnet teacher allocation."

Cowan said the board also received information regarding the number of students from each high school attendance zone who currently attend LASA. Currently, 353 of the students at LASA are zoned to the south Austin high schools Bowie, Akins, Travis and Crockett. As there is currently no formal proposal for an advanced academic program in south Austin, Cowan said that it is unclear exactly the effect new programs might have on those already in place.

"I think that the impact on current programs located in the north should a south advanced academic program open depends on how the south program is structured," Cowan said. "Certainly, some students and families might choose to attend school closer to home, thus opening more spots in the current programs at LASA, Anderson IB and McCallum Fine Arts Academy. Should the decision be to open a completely different advanced program in south Austin, then those three schools might not feel too much of an impact."

Crescenzi said she agreed that the effect on LASA in particular will not be clear until it is decided what type of advanced academics are offered. She said it could either increase or decrease LASA's applicant pool.

"As to how it might affect us, honestly it's hard to say," Crescenzi said. "A lot depends on the type of advanced academics offered. There is certainly the potential for LASA to have fewer applicants from south Austin. There is also the chance that increasing people's awareness of options and advanced academics could increase our applicant pool. Some of this would depend upon the Board continuing to allow students complete choice. If a decision is made that north of the river you attend LASA, south of the river you attend the new school...well, then our applicant pool would be halved."

Liberal Arts and Science Academy and  
Lyndon Baines Johnson High Schools

## the liberator

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### Editorial Policy

Responsibilities of a Free Student Press: Serving the primary communication link within the Liberal Arts and Science Academy and Lyndon Baines Johnson High Schools 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.
- No material which is obscene, libelous or that will cause an immaterial and substantial disruption of the school day, according to accepted legal definitions, will be printed.

#### The Editorial Boards and its Functions:

*The Liberator* staff will be governed by an editorial board comprised of the following individuals: editors-in-chief, section editors and the business manager.

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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 and Lyndon Baines Johnson High Schools nor the School Board of the Austin Independent School District. Viewpoints will be given in two areas in the newspaper.

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

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

**Non-Staff Contributors:** Bylined contributions are welcome.

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

#### Sources:

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

The staff thanks: Fred Cutler

# STAFF STANCE

## Confederate symbols that promote discriminatory values should not be endorsed by the state

Though it has been 150 years since the era of the Confederate States of America came to an end, many Confederate symbols still persist in our society today.

Recently, these very symbols have come under fire as Americans protest against the values they project. Some argue that the Charleston church shooting last June, in which nine African-American victims were killed, ignited the controversy over Confederate flags in the United States. In South Carolina especially, calls to remove the Confederate flag from the state Capitol grew as many residents proclaimed the flag an enduring symbol of hate that endorsed the shooting.

While the flag was finally taken down in July in South Carolina, it wasn't the only reminder of Confederate ideology left in the United States. In fact, Austin itself, despite generally being considered a rather liberal city, has its own share of Confederate memorabilia. Debates continue throughout the city about whether or not to remove these symbols--do they represent the important history of the old South or do they encourage prejudice? We, the staffers of the Liberator, believe that while it is justifiable for city residents to have Confederate symbols in their private spaces, the state itself should not support emblems of a period that was discriminatory.

This summer, the University of Texas at Austin (UT) was pulled into the debate as students protested the location of the statue of Jefferson Davis on the UT main mall. Because Davis was president of the Confederate states during the Civil War, members of the UT student government and community viewed his statue as a constant reminder of the slavery and discrimination experienced by many in the Civil War era.

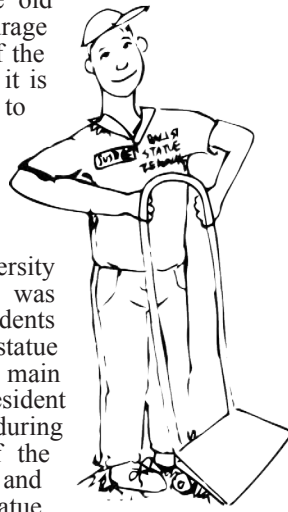
However, this opinion was met by opposition from the Sons of Confederate Veterans of Texas (SCV), a group that strives to honor the memory of the Confederacy and the principles it fought for. The SCV sued to prevent the removal of the statue from UT, and although they lost, their argument was that Davis' statue represents valuable history and taking it away was an attempt to erase that history. But that simply isn't the case. No one is proposing that we forget what happened during the Civil War or that we excise it from textbooks. Most historians agree that the Confederacy was, for the most part, in support of the continued enslavement of blacks. Therefore, Davis, as president, represents these discriminatory values, and his statue's former placement at the main mall gives the impression

to the public that UT holds these values as well.

Another controversial issue was brought in front of the U.S. Supreme Court in June. The SCV of Texas submitted a license plate design that featured the Confederate Flag to honor those soldiers who fought for the Confederacy. When the state of Texas rejected their design, the group complained that they were being denied their free speech rights. In a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court sided with Texas, saying that license plates are government speech, and under no obligation to print a sentiment it does not agree with. The Court's decision makes sense--one of the government's jobs is to promote equality and tolerance. Therefore, they cannot support the values of the Confederacy. And if Americans truly want to honor Confederate soldiers, no one is stopping them from making bumper stickers to put on the back of their cars.

As the Liberator staff, we want to make it clear that we are not suggesting that America destroy important aspects of history. Confederate symbols are simply out of place in schools and Capitol buildings, for example. We advocate moving them to museums which will still allow people to learn about these pieces of history objectively without the state or a public institution having to endorse them. UT has already put this

into practice by moving the Jefferson Davis statue to the nearby Briscoe Center for American History. At the same time, we are not discouraging people from hanging up a Confederate flag outside their home or vocalizing their appreciation of the old South and its values. Free speech is, and should always be, a fundamental part of our country. But free speech that promotes prejudiced sentiments cannot not be upheld by the government.



graphic by Claire Cannatti



liberated  
minds

Should Confederate  
symbols be removed  
from public areas?



**Michael Johnson**

LASA sophomore

I think confederate symbols should not be allowed in schools or in general because they promote ideals that are pro-slavery.



**Me' Aisha Landrum**

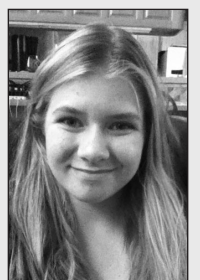
LBJ Freshman

It should be removed only if it is representing slavery in the South back in those days, but if they are representing the South and what they fought for against the North, then it is okay."

**Katherine Jones**

LASA senior

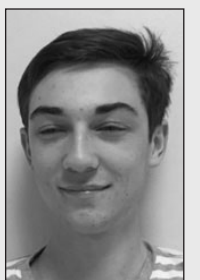
The first amendment allows people to display Confederate symbols privately, but our government shouldn't.



**Harper Shapiro**

LASA senior

I think all confederate symbols should be removed because they just give off evil messages and evil history that we should be trying to forget.



### Call for college period

Dear Editor,

I wish that we could have a period junior year designed for being in the college center. That way, we would be able to work on college essays and applying.

— LBJ senior  
Jacelyn Calderon

### Praise for new library policy

Dear Editor,

I like that you can eat in the library.

— LASA sophomore  
Emma Green

### Poor late start scheduling

Dear Editor,

The unfortunate scheduling on late start days makes it difficult for seniors with off-periods at the end of the day. Lunch should be after 3rd period.

— LASA senior  
Andy Liu

### Insufficient time for lunch

Dear Editor,

The time we go to advisory every day should go to our lunch. Thirty minutes is not long enough for lunch.

— LBJ senior  
Cynthia James



Have an opinion about a new school policy? Have a bone to pick with something the Liberator has published? Anything else on your mind? Write us a letter and drop it off in room 265 or in the boxes in the school offices.

# Living in a high school musical

## Student compares high school education to favorite childhood movie



LANEY PHILLIPS  
Staff Writer

Walking into high school my first day of freshman year, I truly expected students to be high-fiving and grooving all about the hallways. Honestly, I was disappointed. The bland, cream-colored lockers did not compare to the vibrant red ones of East High. The ugly fluorescent lighting made the school seem like a prison instead of cheery and movie-esque. When lunch finally rolled around, no one ate in the cafeteria, there wasn't a single food fight, and nobody jumped on tables and sang. We sat in the cold hallways and ate our less than ideal homemade lunches while watching students hustle to tutorials or pace the hallways. Nothing like "High School Musical."

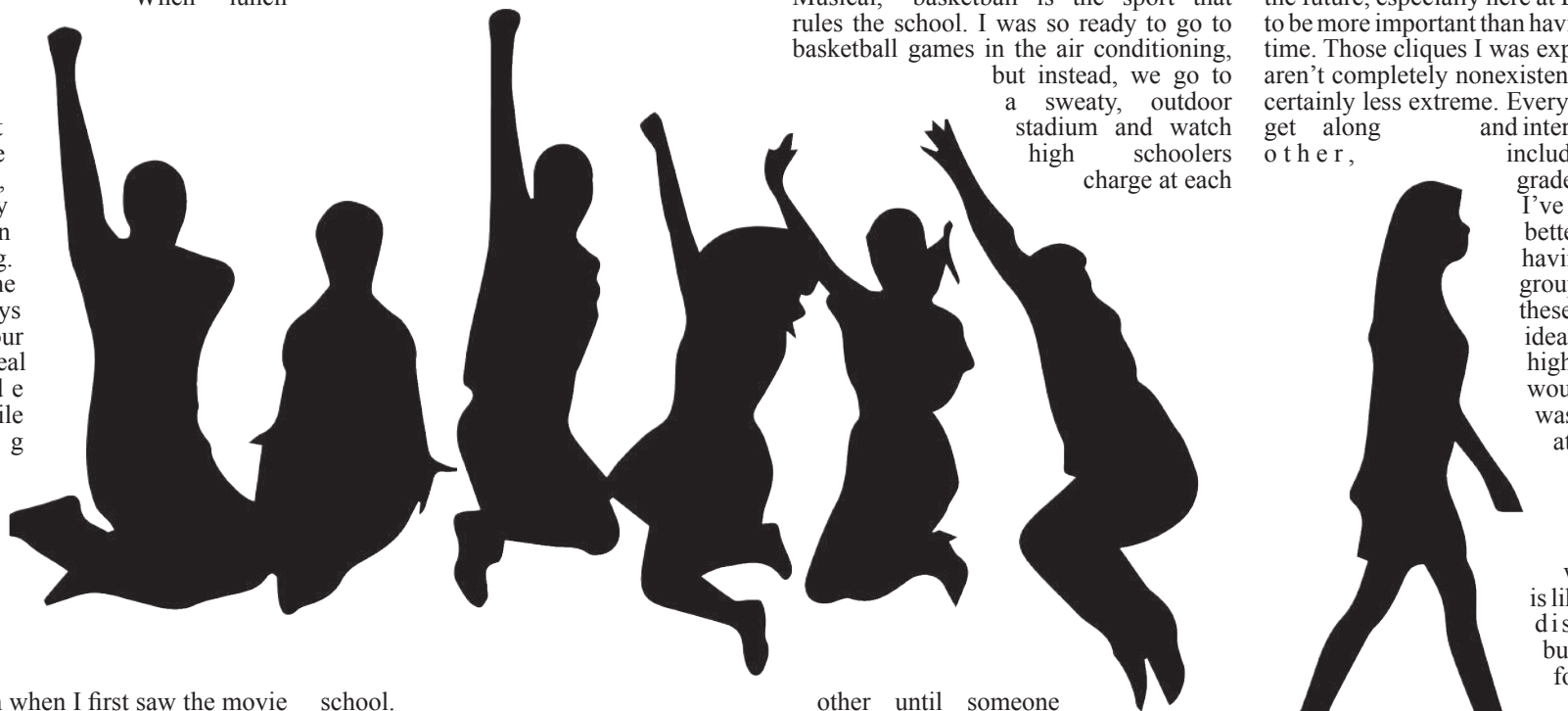
I was seven when I first saw the movie that would change my life. I fell in love and immediately begged my parents to buy me the DVD of "High School Musical." This was almost certainly a mistake because I began to watch it everyday. As a young, ignorant child I became obsessed with Sharpay. Sharpay was the queen bee of East High and also the president of the drama club. Sounds weird, doesn't it? I expected the theatre kids to lead the school and set the standards for everything. I

worshiped her and aspired to be just like her, hoping to be that girl in high school who set the trends for all the other girls. As part of this mission, I even had several birthday parties with the theme of "High School Musical." For my seventh birthday, my parents bought me an abundance of HSM merchandise. They presented me with a journal that provided information about all the characters, and then asked similar questions about myself. I was able to read about Sharpay, Troy and Gabriella, memorize their personalities and imagine how I would interact with people just like them when I was in high school. I devoted my childhood to HSM, and I couldn't help but feel ecstatic for the future when I too would go to high

such an attractive guy who is also sweet and takes Gabriella into consideration in whatever he does. When Homecoming was coming up freshman year, the first thing that came to mind was how my man was going to ask me. Honestly, I expected it would be just like how Troy asked Gabriella to prom; my man would bring me up to the school roof, which would be covered in patches of colorful flowers, and ask me which jacket would match my dress. I was obviously let down because we're talking about LASA, after all. Another essential part of HSM is that Troy makes basketball THE sport to play. Why is it that in actuality, football is the sport everyone watches and gets all riled up about? According to "High School Musical," basketball is the sport that rules the school. I was so ready to go to basketball games in the air conditioning, but instead, we go to a sweaty, outdoor stadium and watch high schoolers charge at each

of depressing. In reality, most students end up moving far away from each other to go to lesser known colleges. The fact that Troy and Gabriella are still in love after high school and end up at Berkeley and Stanford, two schools in close proximity to each other, is extremely unlikely.

Having devoted my childhood to HSM, I had so many false ideas about what real high school would actually be like. I expected it to be like a vacation 24/7 where I wouldn't have to focus on homework all the time. I was also prepared for everyone to have their certain clique, but LASA is nothing like that. These differences were unsettling for me at first, but now I see they're definitely for the better. Staying focused on school work and preparing for the future, especially here at LASA, seems to be more important than having fun all the time. Those cliques I was expecting to see aren't completely nonexistent, but they're certainly less extreme. Everyone seems to get along and interact with each other, including different grades, which I've realized is better than having exclusive groups. Having these unrealistic ideas about what high school would be like was exciting at the time, but now after being here and knowing what it really is like, I'm a little disappointed but excited for what is coming. Even though LASA has an insane amount of work and is very stressful at times, I will always have the HSM soundtrack and DVD to get me through the work as well as get me through the rest of my life.



graphic by Claire Cannatti

# Let's get physical (online)

## Online course more beneficial than in-school PE for students



CAROLINA GOKINGCO  
Staff Writer

My initial reaction when someone told me they were taking online PE went along the lines of "Uh... what?" and "Don't you actually have to be present to do PE?"

But after doing some research on the foreign subject that was "online PE," I discovered it was more reasonable than I had originally thought.

There is a plethora of reasons why someone might take online PE, one of the most obvious being that AISD policy obligates students to earn PE credits in order to graduate. For students who aren't interested in band, dance, colorguard, or simply a particular sport, however, finding the means to get the needed PE credit can prove to be challenging. While the school provides plenty of options, the online course is simply at your own pace. Staying late or arriving early to school isn't a must, and time management is the only tool needed for success.

Online PE isn't only beneficial for high schoolers. According to Jenna Johnson, an exercise physiologist at Sanford Health in Fargo, it's also a good method for younger kids to establish positive mindsets toward exercise, especially with rapidly-growing childhood obesity rates in America to consider. In-school PE horror stories aren't a novel concept either. Almost everyone can relate to those cringe-worthy moments where you mentally cross your fingers and hope to not be the last pick for the dodgeball game.

In addition, although bullying is less prevalent at LASA, some kids are just not comfortable participating in physical activity in plain view of others. Some may argue that online PE is antisocial and can potentially set

the child up for disaster as they won't learn how to be surrounded by others, but PE in general focuses on health and physical capabilities, not social life among peers.

In-school PE also is sometimes nothing more than a social period, an easy A. In middle school, my PE teacher would make us run a lap or two (which took no longer than 10 minutes), then turn us loose for the rest of the period to do whatever we wanted. Every Monday, we'd play football, and even though some kids never attempted to make contact with the ball, they'd still walk out of class with hundreds. Even to this day, I have never met anyone who failed PE. Though this doesn't apply to every in-school PE class, the majority of them are almost useless in middle and high school.

One of the only arguments against online PE is how easy it is to cheat. Brian Mosier, the assistant professor of the physical education

*The online course is simply at your own pace...time management is the only tool needed for success*

department at the University of West Georgia, says instructors use heart rate as an indicator to see if the student really did follow through with the workout, a method that couldn't apply to online students. Luckily, exercise is only half

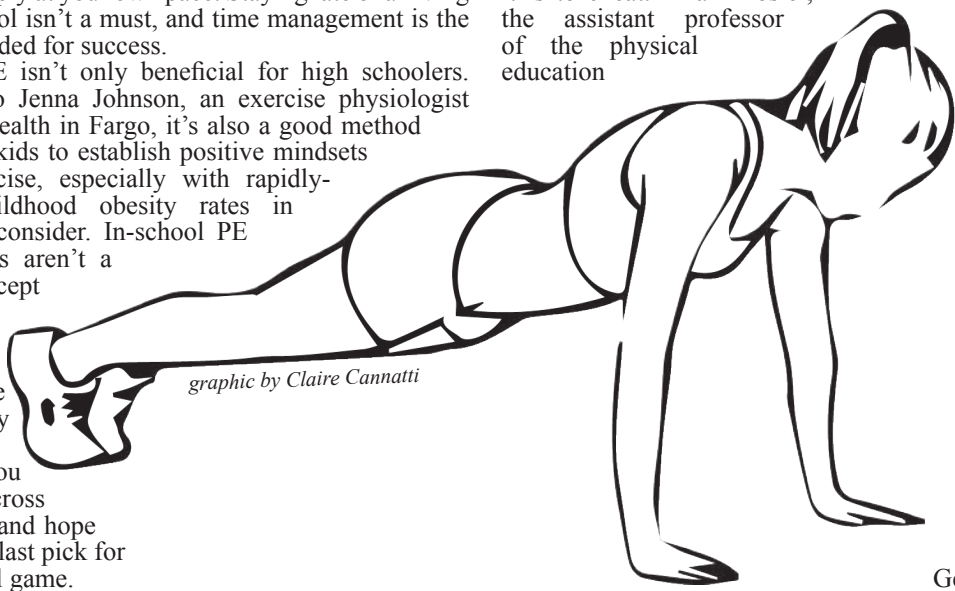
the battle. Online PE students also learn other topics: proper exercise form and technique, basic physiology and anatomy, and the importance of being fit and healthy, which online PE discusses in length.

And sure, cheating on the exercising part of an online course is very feasible, but what's to say students who take regular PE classes don't cheat? Because let's be honest, who actually holds the plank for an entire two minutes and does all 30 push-ups?

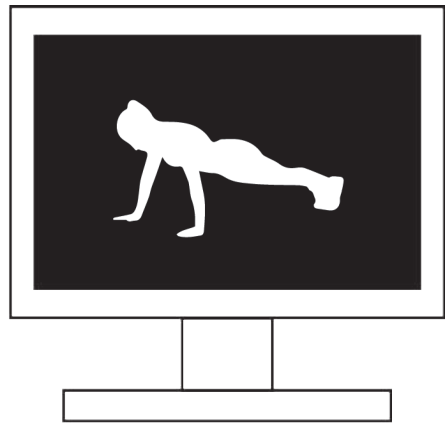
According to Joseph A. Zenel, professor of pediatrics at the Sanford School of Medicine in Sioux Falls, PE serves as a way for kids to take a short break from the classroom, stretch their legs, shake off the restlessness, and come back rebooted and ready to learn, so some argue online PE takes that opportunity away. But at LASA, similar to many other high schools, we have an hour-long lunch which is a sufficient amount of time for a decent break. Plus, students' schedules may hinder them from taking the same classes we used to take in elementary: PE, art and music. It's not reasonable to expect students to make room in their

busy schedules to fit in PE.

Although there are a variety of independent factors, online PE is legitimate. In reality, if a student is dedicated and honest about their online PE assignments, then there's not a doubt in my mind that online PE would be even more beneficial and offer much more than any regular PE class.



graphic by Claire Cannatti



### Thumbs Up

- Lunar eclipse
- Pope Francis
- ACL
- LBJ Step Team
- Airbags



LASA freshman Frances Schwelker



- Road rage
- Wall of Trump
- Selfie sticks
- Volkswagen
- The Whip/Nae Nae

### Thumbs Down

Want to take The Liberator with you wherever you go? Download the lbjliberator app for in the App Store.



Above are the opinions of The Liberator staff and not the individual featured.

# Library praise overdue



CLARA MORSE  
Staff Writer

Six toddlers sat in their pajamas in a lopsided circle on the floor, some of them yawning and leaning on their parents. The youth librarian turned up the nursery-rhyme music and put down the final picture book, asking the kids to clap along to the soft tune. Bedtime Storytime, one of the many free programs at Austin Public Library, was over.

I didn't realize how important libraries were until I took a volunteer position at the Austin Public Library this summer. I learned from the inside just how much libraries give back to the community. Whether it's through community outreach, STEM education or simply encouraging imagination in kids and those around them, libraries are an absolutely invaluable part of our world. And since library funding has dropped nationwide by 40 percent in the last couple decades, according to the American Library Association, we need to make sure everyone knows just how important libraries are.

In this age, computers aren't just fun accessories--they're necessary to daily life. And for many people who don't own a computer, the public library is the only place that offers free computer access in a community. My branch of the Austin Public Library had over 10 computers open to public use which provided free access for the general public. From computer-less students who want to type up an essay, to people who need to fill in a job application online, to people who want to get in touch with loved ones, to someone who needs to claim disability benefits--the usefulness cannot be overlooked. Computers are one main part of what make libraries such important community centers.

Libraries offer diverse programs such as informal lectures on programming and English as a second language lessons. Children can also attend free STEM education programs. As a volunteer, I designed a chemistry program with some of my co-volunteers for younger kids, many of whom had never learned about chemistry before. We explained basic concepts through fun activities like marshmallow-and-toothpick molecule modeling and baking soda and vinegar volcanoes. The kids absolutely loved it. One of them, with a handful of marshmallows,

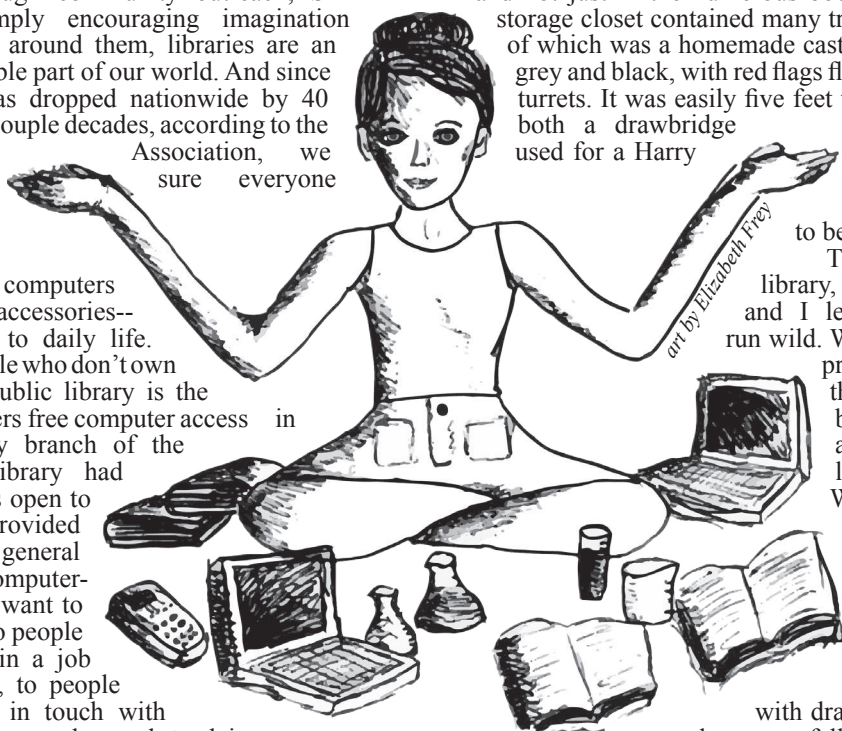
asked me in an awed voice, "So atoms make up everything? Even this table? Even...me?" Libraries, although you wouldn't expect it, are often wonderful places to kickstart children's interest in science.

My chemistry program was not the only one of its kind. When we cleaned out the library's storage room, we found a lot of science-themed materials ranging from a fingerprinting kit to several bottles full of various combinations of kitchen chemicals. We uncovered a papier-mâché volcano model, a labeled drawing of a skeleton and several activity books focused on global warming. And that's not even counting the blueprints for Lego robots that were provided by the biweekly robotics camps that went on that summer, showing middle schoolers how to build and program the robots. The science technology programs at libraries cover almost every topic you can think of. Their value cannot be overstated.

The library is a place that fosters children's imaginations and not just in the numerous books it provides. The storage closet contained many treasures as well, one of which was a homemade castle, carefully painted grey and black, with red flags flying from cardboard turrets. It was easily five feet tall and hollow with both a drawbridge and a door. It was used for a Harry Potter-themed program, so little kids could pretend to be in Hogwarts.

This summer at the library, the other volunteers and I let our imaginations run wild. We designed a whole program based off the Sherlock Holmes books that had been a part of the reading list that summer. We held a fake art show, with the kids participating as the guests, and staged a murder. Librarians played the parts of the suspects, complete with dramatic costumes and makeup; my fellow volunteers and I played butlers. We had the participants race around the library to find clues hidden in books and interrogate the 'suspects'. It was an amazing way to let kids interact with the book they'd read and give them a chance to experience the thrill of a mystery in real life. Libraries are constantly working for better ways to promote kids' imaginations.

Honestly, it is very sad to me that people don't think libraries are necessary in this day and age. Library funding has been going steadily downwards, and many people don't see how important libraries really are. So if you go to a library sometime soon, give your librarian a smile.



art by Elizabeth Frey



## Small Talk

### Student reflects on ups and downs of blended family



ISABEL SARALEGUI  
Staff Writer

When I first met my crisp, clean-cut stepfather, looking like a Just For Men hair dye model, I suddenly imagined a whole new life. My two new step siblings, my 15 year old brother Mateo and I, and my parents would have a Cheaper by the Dozen, Yours, Mine and Ours, Brady Bunch type of family. I figured there would be little disagreements here and there, but I felt sure that we'd all eventually fall into the perfect TV family mode I'd dreamed about. But that's not exactly the way things happened.

When my mom married my stepdad, I gained two new siblings--my 15-year-old stepbrother Charlie and my 9-year-old stepsister Tallie. In the movies and shows I'd seen about blended families, everything seemed so chaotic and adventurous. But those stories aren't realistic. It's complicated to put two families together under one roof.

For one, we all have different pasts. Mateo and I came with our own traditions just like Charlie and Tallie came with theirs. And it's hard to find ways to make memories that can be all of ours. But this is where patience comes into play. Making new traditions is a slow process, and we not only have to get to know each other, we have to see each other excited, sick and anxious before we can be more than friends, before there are traditions.

Patience helped me learn that my little sister loves reading the Magic Kittens books and my brothers love surfing magazines, so now I know what to bring them when they spend the whole night sick on the bathroom floor. It makes me learn the rules of their favorite video games; Mateo loves Skylanders, Charlie loves Grand Theft Auto and Tallie adores Just Dance 4.

Now, after almost two years of sharing the same roof, we've developed those traditions I'd always hoped we would. We have movie nights, diving contests in our pool, and video game marathons. I eat cereal with my brothers and cry while we watch It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia. We all dance to the credits music after a movie.

Of course, we don't always get along. Sometimes they scream while playing video games at three in the morning, sometimes they make me go on late-night Twinkie runs to the grocery store. But most of the time, I don't mind. It's shared experiences like this that make us feel like a family. Now, all of the things that used to make us different mesh and make us the Updebannerleguis.

Those late night, early morning, rooftop, poolside, dinner table, pillow fort, road trip, snowball fight moments are what make siblings the people you rely on for the rest of your life. I'm a little sad that I'll be in college soon, and I won't see them nearly as often. But when I come home to visit, I'll eagerly await those family moments and everything in between.

### Modern dating marked by loss of true connection



ASHLEY THOMAS  
Staff Writer

Modern dating is a concept that baffles me. In a world where people are so socially connected, it surprises me how awfully we communicate with our peers in person. Relationships turn into taunting games of who cares more, and communication between partners is almost nonexistent. We expect feelings to just be there and aren't willing to put in the effort that relationships require. Transitioning from awkward high school relationships to the hookup culture our generation is known for can be a dramatic shift, especially when we're not prepared for it to happen.

Growing up with older siblings has given me a different perspective, and I've learned that no relationship is going to be perfect. When I was nine, my big sister experienced her first real heartbreak. My dad handled it in the typical fatherly way, awkwardly patting her on the shoulder while telling her it was going to be okay. My mother, who has never been the best at consoling, told her there are plenty of fish in the sea, and, maybe she could finally date that cute Asian friend of hers my mother had always liked. I watched my sister go through the "ice cream eating, crying while watching chick flicks" scenario you always see in the breakup scenes of movies. Our age group doesn't experience this type of heartbreak anymore. At the age of 16 we go out and party to forget about guys we weren't even in love with. We don't like to deal with our emotions. We aren't willing to feel life's emotional extremes anymore.

When I was 10, my brother married the girl of his dreams. She stalked him at Starbucks every day for a week until she finally got the courage to ask him for his number. Ever since then they have been inseparable. Over the course of three years, I witnessed them go through the phases of a relationship: the drunk in love stage, the I love you maybe forever stage and the now we're stuck with each other stage. Day after day, I saw the smile on my brother's face grow each time he saw her. This kind of mushy love is a rarity now. We play mind games with our partners by purposefully not texting the other back and playing hard to get. It's almost like the prerequisite of the relationship is to start out with a maybe. Maybe we'll go out, maybe we're dating, maybe I have strong feelings for you.

Our generation must invest more into our emotions and relationships because, believe it or not, we get things out of them. Cell phones can't replace the need for human contact and relationships, so I want our generation to be a little bit more bold. We should experience heartbreak and falling in love and letting our guard down and being vulnerable, because I promise you, in the end it'll be worth it.

# Weighing the liberal arts



EVA STRELITZ-BLOCK  
Staff Writer

While liberal arts and science continue to flourish in partnership at LASA, in the media a debate on the relative value of liberal arts versus sciences is raging, and liberal arts seems to be losing.

Liberal arts education used to be considered the hallmark of higher education. In the United States, the humanities--literature, history, philosophy, arts--were understood as critical to learning and development. Some of the most highly respected scholars in the West are the great philosophers of ancient Greece. Aristotle viewed liberal arts as valuable not only because it was practical but because it helped to develop intellectual and moral excellence. During the Renaissance era, there was an important intellectual movement that focused on humanism, the belief that Latin and Greek classics embodied all of the lessons needed to lead a moral and fulfilling life. The Renaissance era was focused on living a meaningful life through literature, arts, and philosophy; it did not only focus on industrial and technical subjects as the way to build civilization. This era shined a light on the importance of liberal arts to a life of creative discovery.

Today, the public does not seem to appreciate the value of a liberal arts education as much as it has in the past. The percentage of liberal arts bachelor degrees has declined significantly. Since 1971, English Language and Literature degrees have gone down from 7.6 to 3.1 percent of all degrees, said political analyst Nate Silver.

The liberal arts are frequently critiqued as a waste of time and money,

a lost educational opportunity, and therefore a useless degree. Florida Governor Rick Scott's remarks to a crowd in Florida in 2011 capture this perspective when he undervalued the liberal arts saying, "We don't need a lot more anthropologists in the state...I want to spend our dollars giving people science, technology, engineering, math [STEM] degrees."

I am interested in this debate not because I am trying to weigh in on the culture war, but because in my years here at LASA I hope to figure out what learning means to me. After reviewing the LASA course catalogue, it is very clear that the sciences are highly valued. As a student with a strong interest in the humanities, I would hope that the liberal arts and highly regarded are just as critical to all students'

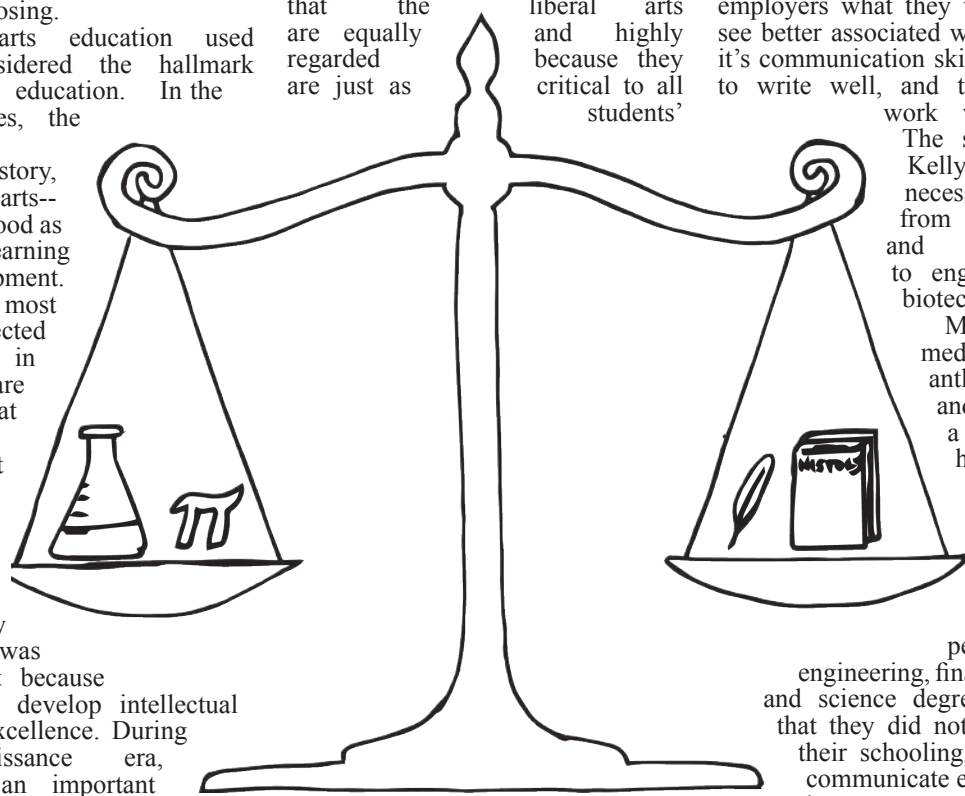
political arguments. Imagine a world in which people only communicated using Twitter length one liners, never stopping to truly examine an issue.

Why has there been an immense shift to science and engineering degrees--which I know are important and necessary in our world today--and simultaneously a huge decrease in liberal arts degrees? Some of the highest paying jobs in our economy today are in tech and oil and gas companies, and this helps to explain some people's preferences towards STEM jobs. However, even these companies want employees who have liberal arts degrees and perspectives. Patrick Kelly, Senior Associate at the National Center for Higher Education Systems has noted that, "If you ask employers what they would like to see better associated with graduates, it's communication skills, the ability to write well, and the ability to work with teams." The skill set that Kelly highlights is necessary to all jobs from journalism and anthropology to engineering and biotech research.

My mom is a medical anthropologist, and she works as a consultant for hospitals and oil and gas companies all over the country. She teaches people with engineering, finance, medical, and science degrees the skills that they did not learn during their schooling, like how to communicate effectively and how to overcome conflicts. I am sure when she was deciding her major, people asked her questions about what she was going to do after college or how she was going to make a living. She has proved Kelly's point: liberal arts degrees are needed in all types of positions.

One of the most important legacies of a liberal arts education is the commitment to pursue one's love of learning. Students need to stop thinking of education as a "means to an end," says Zakaria, but to start thinking of education as the one of the greatest adventures to explore.

I want my education to teach me marketable skills but also to instill in me qualities that will make me more sensitive and compassionate to others' experiences and my responsibilities in our world. I hope my time at LASA helps me to integrate the sciences and the liberal arts in my world view.



art by Claire Cannatti

learning experiences.

A liberal arts education offers lessons on skills, values, and an approach to lifelong learning that helps students throughout their lives. Its goal, then, is not solely to prepare students for the job market, but to ready them for an engaged life as global citizens. According to Fareed Zakaria, author of In Defense of a Liberal Education, the liberal arts teach students how to read and write analytically, and, therefore, how to think critically. We learn how to speak articulately, how to communicate effectively, and how to voice our opinions persuasively. These skills are necessary in public places from the dinner table to the classroom, from cable television to the commentary page of newspapers. Yet these same arenas are often overrun by flimsy and unsubstantial



## LBJ Football: Stepping Up

LBJ junior wide receiver Tyrone Meredith runs the ball during the district game against the Bastrop Bears on Sept. 18th. LBJ beat Bastrop 24-19. "It'll be hard to do what we did last year," head football coach and athletic director Andrew Jackson said. "I think we have a chance to win district. I'm hoping we can do [that] and have that opportunity [to go further]." photo by Roberto Guzman, yearbook staff

**CHLOE EDMISTON & OLIVER POWERS**  
Sports Editors

Players line up at the 20-yard line, bright stadium lights illuminating the field ahead of them. The call is made, and there goes the snap, up into the quarterback's hands and almost instantly out of them, spiraling through the air to the outstretched arms of a receiver. Dodging defenders, the receiver barrels down the field, past the screaming fans and into the endzone. Touchdown.

The LBJ football 2015 season has had no lack of such plays, but the team struggled at the beginning, with upsetting losses to both Vista Ridge and Connally in the preseason. Head Coach Andrew Jackson said these games were disappointing after the success of last season.

"I still haven't really gotten over the game against Connally," Jackson said. "We learned from that game that we really need to defend those kids who are living off last year's success. Some of them haven't really proven themselves. We have to get a little tougher. We're not as tough with the youth to a certain degree, not as mature. We need to bring that out of our kids."

This "youth" that Jackson talked about are the new players who have taken the spots of the class of 2015. The Jaguars lost their star quarterback from LBJ, Avery Jackson, to college, along with LBJ receiver Zae Giles, who together contributed 72 combined touchdowns to the team in the 2014 season. Other graduated leaders on the team, like LBJ defensive end Chris Jones and LBJ outside linebacker Sydney Hairston, left holes in the Jaguar's program that were filled by players moved teams, up from junior varsity and freshman, and even some who had no prior experience in the position. One such player is LBJ senior DeAndre Wytaske, the new starting quarterback. In seasons prior, Wytaske played an integral part of the Jaguar's team as a running back. Wytaske said that being starting quarterback has changed his leadership role on the team significantly.

"[Being quarterback is] a lot of responsibility," Wytaske said. "You have to know what everybody's doing. You have to take control of the game. You just have to be that guy."

Even with the new weight of starting quarterback resting on Wytaske's shoulders, Jackson said he has seen progress in his ability as a playmaker. Jackson recognizes the difficulty of the position that Wytaske has been thrust into and praises his growth.

"DeAndre has been a leader," Jackson said. "His production has been pretty steady. Even though he is in a tough spot we ask him to pass the ball sometimes. He's working at it and getting better at it every week. He's become a threat in that area."

Losing so many starting seniors has made some plays less usable due to the ability of the young players, according to Jackson. Jackson would like to play to the team's strengths and in doing so, he has

closed off calling some plays.

"My playbook is not open much just because of things they can do," Jackson said. "You try to do what your kids can do best. We can do some things well, but we don't run a lot of screens because of our quarterback."

Jackson said he has high hopes for the team, saying that he would like to win district outright and then have a shot at the playoffs. Jackson said he sees the potential of the team and believes they can perform in the playoffs.

"My goal for the season is, to be honest with you, win district championship," Jackson said. "I want to win it outright then I want to have a chance to make a run. I really do believe we have a chance to make it past the first round."

In order to reach this goal, Jackson has been playing the team to their strengths and working to make up for their weaknesses. Jackson has said that during practice the team has focused on polishing areas that need it as well getting everyone reps.

"We try to play to our strengths,"

"We finally started figuring each other out, talking to each other, spending a lot of time with each other, stuff like that."

LBJ sophomore Deon Collins, a wide receiver that Jackson said has grown into a leader on the field, echoes Jackson in his frustrations. Collins said that the season has started out with numerous difficulties, but that the team has grown together since.

"It's rough but we're getting to trust each other more," Collins said. "Hopefully we'll do the same thing we did last year."

By last year, Collins means the unprecedented quarterfinals run that the Jaguars had in the 2014 season, a feat that had not been accomplished by an Austin ISD team since 2001. Jackson said, especially with the preseason losses, the goal more than ever for this season is to recreate the 2014 success with this younger, more inexperienced team.

"I'm most excited about us having an opportunity to prove to people that [the 2014 season] wasn't a fluke," Jackson said. "It's important for us to make a run of it this year so those kids can understand that."

I think they understand now that they really gotta put [work] into [their play] because we didn't have the showing with the new kids this year as we had in the past. The [players need to] show up. I think people are seeing [this] because they see the youth and they see them playing Friday and they're like 'oh man, they're pretty good.'"

To accomplish these goals, Williams said that it's important for the team to train as hard as possible. With freshman on the team who've had no experience playing at the higher level that varsity high school football is, the skill-oriented training and building up of basic physical fitness levels are important.

"We've just been giving [the younger players] the same reps that we've been giving the upperclassmen," Williams said. "I don't think it really makes a difference now because they get the same reps so they're at the same level that we're at. Losing the seniors affected us but not as much because they were getting reps last year too. [The younger players] know what's expected so they're prepared."

Jackson said he has also realized the high expectations that others have for the Jags based on the excellent performance of last season and believes that the team will be able to meet those expectations, despite the lack of an experienced quarterback.

"People's expectations are high," Jackson said. "We started off top 25 in the state of Texas, you know, so people are kind of recognizing that, I'm a realistic coach, I've been around a long time, and we could struggle because of the quarterback situation, because he hasn't played that position. As we cope with the situation I believe we will become more. I think we are gonna start gelling. I expect us to win district championships outright."



LBJ senior quarterback DeAndre Wytaske runs the ball against a Vista Ridge defender. LBJ lost to Vista Ridge 48-20. photo by Ethan Lime, yearbook staff



LBJ junior middle linebacker Jaylon Joiner, #34, runs to meet the Connally offense. LBJ lost to Connally 27-21 in overtime. photo by Abigail Daly, yearbook staff



LBJ sophomore wide receiver Deontay Williams, #5, lines up against the Connally defense in the game on Sept. 11. photo by Abigail Daly, yearbook staff

*I want to win [district] outright then I want to have a chance to make a run. I really do believe we have a chance to make it past the first round.*

-LBJ football coach Andrew Jackson

Jackson said. "We try to pick things we do well and we try to hone in on what we do well and polish it up. If there are things we feel we aren't too far from, we might spend some more time on it over the weekend. Then we understand what our weaknesses are. Our weaknesses are depth so we try to do rotations that are gonna benefit us and make sure we have different guys in the game who are ready for different situations. That's how we work practice making sure we give guys the right reps."

With a much more shallow team than last year, the practices have been more intensive, said LBJ senior running back Ashton Williams. Conditioning has been more important given that there aren't as many players to sub in and out in order to get tired players off the field.

"We've been ripping everything we've been doing," Williams said. "We've been running a lot more. We're a lot more conditioned than last year because we're very very thin. There aren't a lot of people that play but when we do play we play as a team and that's pretty much what helps us."

Just as Jackson predicted, the team has started to come together, with wins in the last two games against Bastrop and Connally. Wytaske has attributed these victories to how the team has grown together since the first game.

"We started bonding," Wytaske said.

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### CROSS COUNTRY SAS Invitational 9/12

Varsity Girls 5,000 M  
20th place overall

Lynnsey Martin-  
81st place, 21:57.7  
Daylin Gilentine-  
83rd place, 22:03.2

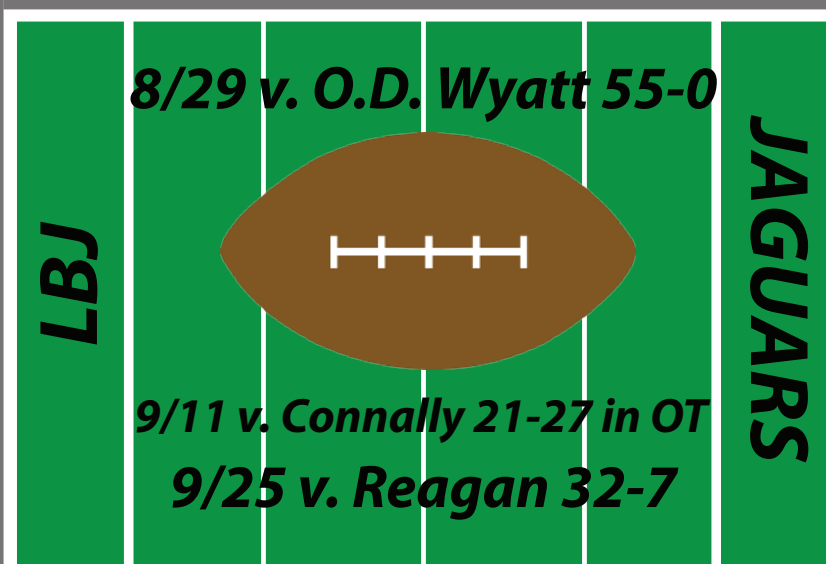
Varsity Boys 5,000 M  
14th place overall

Dylan Cox-  
5th place, 16:39.4  
Isaac Metcalf  
53rd place, 17:50.8

## BY THE NUMBERS

The top LBJ sports statistics from the  
past six weeks

graphic by Chloe Edmiston



### VOLLEYBALL

Regular Season

9/8 v. Crockett 2-3

9/15 v. Travis 3-2

9/22 v. Reagan 3-0

Overall Record

6-11

District Record

4-5

# Tackling football concussions head on

ASHLEY THOMAS  
Staff Writer

Head down, body forward, LASA senior Isaac Ramirez positioned himself at the line of scrimmage ready to snap back the ball. It was a hot Texas summer and the practices were long. The play began and a linebacker came straight on to Ramirez, headbutting him and immediately knocking him to the floor. Commotion set in and Ramirez was brought in for an examination. The result: a concussion. The following season, Ramirez decided it best to retire from football.

Recent case studies on high school football player concussions have caused controversy on the topic of whether concussions lead to long-term brain injury. A 2013 case study by the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) found that there is brainwave activity that never fully returns to normal until years after sustaining a concussion, which has serious effects on attention spans. Although no study has concluded all the serious effects a concussion can cause, for player Ramirez, the aftermath of a concussion made him re-evaluate what was really important to him.

"I left the team because when I got my concussion, I realized

there was more to life than the game being played on the field," Ramirez said. "I'd rather play catch with my kid and enjoy the rest of my life than risk all of that for one more year in a sport that I love."

Ramirez said he chose the path he personally felt was the safest, but according to a LASA sophomore, Keenan Riordan, the safe choice wasn't the one that felt right to him. Riordan suffered from a minor concussion during a practice over the summer, forcing him to stay off the field during the first game.

"They were all shocked," Riordan said. "Then [the doctor], the trainer, went over and examined me and she said I probably had a minor concussion and that turned out to be right when I went to the doctor over the weekend."

A 2014 case study led by the Head Case Company (HCC) said the impact from the first concussion can be problematic or damaging, but after the second or third injury 39 percent of concussions are likely to be catastrophic, leading to permanent neurological

disabilities. Riordan's concussion only left him unconscious for five seconds, but he said that certain ways of playing can decrease one's risk of serious injury after a concussion.

"Concussions are not very much of a problem if you have proper form," Riordan said. "But if you lose that form for a couple of seconds you could end up getting a concussion. I'd know

*"I'd rather play catch with my kid and enjoy the rest of my life than risk all of that for one more year in a sport that I love."*

-LASA senior Isaac Ramirez

because that's what happened to me."

Riordan said form in tackling is the main protection keeping players from suffering a concussion, but much of the research on the effects of concussions surrounds the subject of how supportive football helmets actually are. An article released by Time Magazine on Dec. 1, 2014 suggested that no helmet could be built to sustain a concussion. According to AANS,

top of the line helmets that average a cost of about \$250 only reduce concussions on average by 45 percent. Football helmets are a more lightweight solution that help cushion the impact of a tackle and cater towards protection from more serious and immediately dangerous brain injuries, instead of minor concussions. For Ramirez, one concussion was enough to keep him off the football field for good.

"I just thought it was better to have one than one too many," Ramirez said. "After seeing the hit, it kind of stopped me from playing from my heart. I was afraid [and] you don't ever want to play the game scared."

Neither Ramirez nor Riordan suffered from permanent neurological damage, though some other high school players aren't so lucky. According to LBJ athletic trainer Sue Torres, recognizing the concussion in the moment that it happens is the real value in the situation. Many players without high school trainers continue to play without knowing they have a concussion

or taking the proper precautions or time off.

"The importance of a concussion is that sometimes we don't notice it," Torres said. "It can be very subtle. It has to be a team effort in recognizing it, and once they're brought to me we can get the wheel rolling. But until it gets to me there can be some issues and some serious side effects."

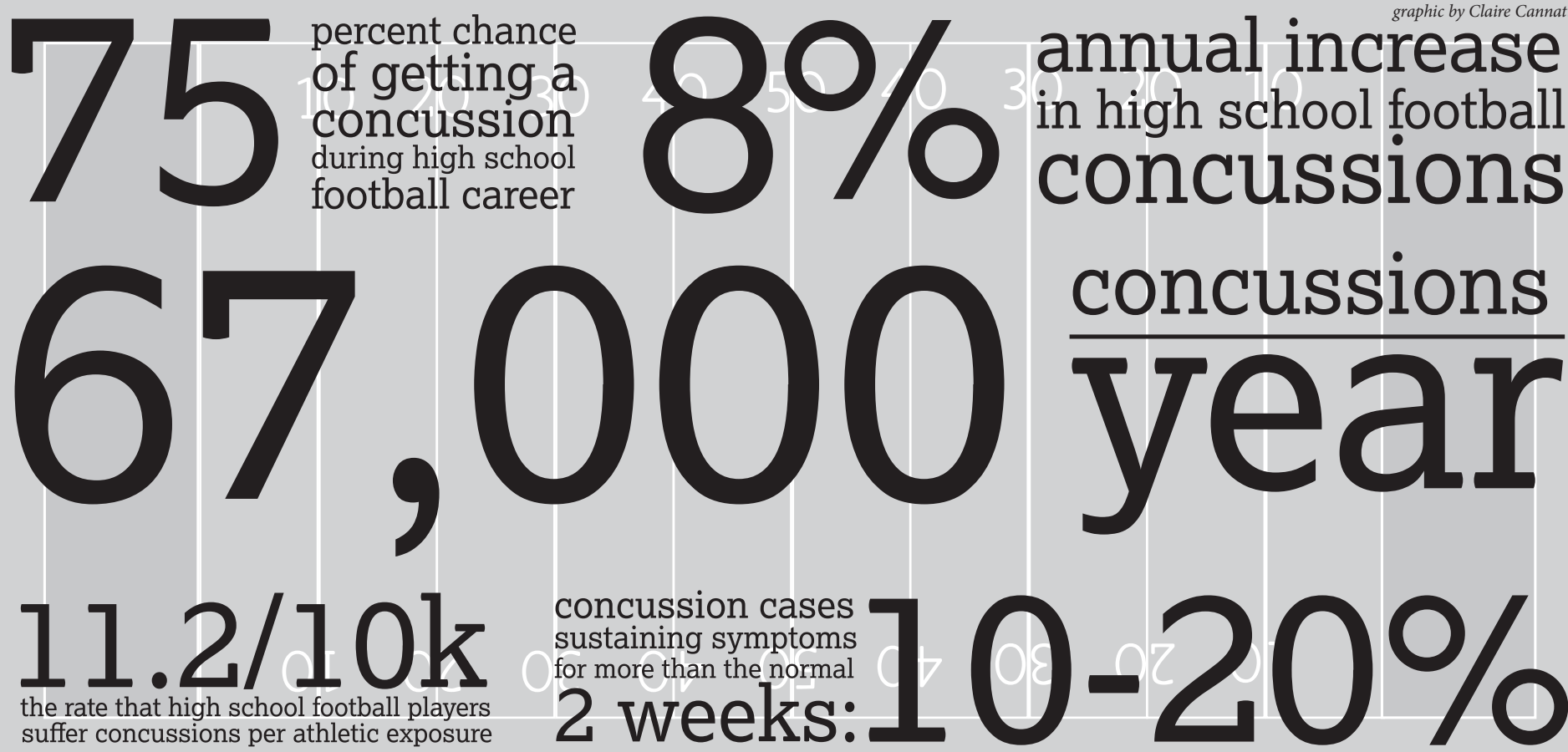
Sports-related concussions cause 1.5 deaths each year out of 150 overall sports-related deaths, according to AANS. Torres said she considers the fact that the sport may not hold its own in cases relating football to debilitating injuries for much longer due to increasing controversy surrounding sports injuries and concussions, particularly in relation to football.

"I believe the rules will change; the rules are changing," Torres said. "The more light that's shed on the hot topic of sports injuries and concussions, the more people will be upset with it and put these rules and regulations in place."

Ramirez said he didn't regret leaving to protect his health and future, but certainly will miss the game he's played for three consecutive years.

"To step away from the game I've loved my whole life was hard, but you just have to decide what's best for [your] future," Ramirez said. "So that's what I did."

graphic by Claire Camatti



## LASA sophomore's journey to All-American track star

CHLOE EDMISTON &  
ELAN MCMINN  
Sports Editor & Staff Writer

LASA sophomore Dylan Cox's first club track race with South Austin Steel almost didn't happen.

"It was a cross-country race, five kilometers, in San Antonio," Cox said. "I got there 10 minutes before the race, and my coach just slapped a bib on me and shoved me to the starting line."

A minute later, the gun shot off and Cox took off on his competitive career. Cox said it was not only a surprise to his coach, Gerald Smith, but to himself as well, when he crossed the finish line first.

"I don't really know how I won," Cox said. "But I did."

After Cox's first race, Smith decided to up Cox's training based on the skill he saw. Smith said that his training became more based on becoming an elite endurance runner rather than running for pure pleasure, and being able to run distance races

at a faster pace.

"Dylan is a very smart runner," Smith said. "He has a very good internal pace clock which makes it easy for him to run any training pace that I may ask for him to run."

Cox started running as a child on the suggestion of his mother, who is also a runner. He said he remembers his first race, at age five, a 1K near the Austin zoo, where he ran as fast as he could as he was scared of the tigers pacing back and forth in their cages. After running on his own until age 12, Cox's mother signed him up for club track. Cox ran with South Austin Steel through middle school and broke an Austin ISD 1600 meter record, then transitioned to running in high school at LBJ. He now competes with the LBJ cross country team, in addition to running with his club. Cox said that this change, however, hasn't affected his running.

"High school actually adds a little bit more time that I am actually running, but my mileage

has stayed about the same," Cox said. "[This] means I do most of the extra running after school on my own instead of with my club."

Cox said he isn't very superstitious, but for him, having a routine before every race is a must, and when it comes to getting in the right mindset, having a pattern before any races is key to his success. His physical pre-race routine includes jogging about a mile, and some dynamic stretching, but preparing mentally is a whole different battle. To do this, Cox said likes to sit away from everyone while he pictures himself doing well. He said that the race requires a big physical commitment, but that a huge part of the race for him is mental.

"I would say at least 50 percent of the race is mental," Cox said. "If you believe that you can win, and you think you can and you envision yourself doing it, then you are going to have a way better chance than if you just tell yourself, 'I can't win' because [if] you think like that,

then your body is going to react the same way... You are going to get tired more easily, and you're not going to push as hard as you should. So I really like to just get in the winning mindset of pushing myself and being ready for anything that comes."

Recently, Cox competed in the 3000 meter race at the USA Track and Field Regionals in Abilene, Texas, and qualified for nationals with his time. He ran a personal best time of 9 minutes 23 seconds, but in the end came in seventh. For this, he received an All-American title in track and field, a badge of honor for outstanding amateur athletes.

"[All-American] has been a big goal for me and my coaches, and that is the point I really wanted to be at," Cox said.

Cox said his short-term goals for now are to make it to at least the regional championship in cross country, and hopefully the state championship. It is this drive to succeed and constantly improve, said Smith, that makes Cox able to compete at a higher

level now and possibly in the future.

"After high school, I would really love to run in college," Cox said. "It would be really special to run there, but I just want to take it as far as I can because it isn't just something I am good at, I do it because I really care about running and I want to be the best I possibly can."



Cox and Coach Smith with his All-American award. photo courtesy of Dylan Cox.



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# Quick Hits



## LBJ volleyball gets new head coach

CHLOE EDMISTON  
Sports Editor

The LBJ varsity volleyball team has a new coach for the 2015 season, the second in two years. Juan Beltran, a club volleyball coach and bilingual elementary school teacher, joined the coaching staff as the head coach in August, three days before two-a-days and the preseason started. Beltran said that his was an obstacle for him in getting to know the program.

"Nobody gave me any information about the program besides some information about last year's team," Beltran said. "I had to try to figure out who was JV and varsity. It was a new world for me, so knowing that some players have experience was how I created [the varsity team]."

LASA junior Dayla Woller said that this is a welcome change, especially for her position, as a setter. Beltran plays sand volleyball professionally, and was a former men's indoor setter in Majorca, where he is originally from. Woller said this experience and specialization is a unique advantage for her.

"Our coach is actually really good at setting. He has been setting for a while, especially because he plays sand," Woller said. "So it's nice to be able to have the perspective of someone who actually sets and not just a coach who maybe played outside or in the middle. I'm getting a lot of insight into how to be at setter."

Reshaping the LBJ volleyball program, as has been attempted by the two previous coaches, will prove to be difficult, Beltran said. He is confident, however, that the work that he and the team put in during practice and games will pay off in a successful season, with a possible run in the playoffs.

"We have beat to Crockett and McCallum," Beltran said. "I'm excited for the playoffs and I think if we play hard and practice hard, we could have a big chance to make it."



LASA junior Dayla Woller celebrates with the volleyball team after scoring a point against Lanier. photo by Keaton Goodwin

## LBJ Tennis Team expects to play well against big opponents

OLIVER POWERS  
Sports Editor

The LBJ tennis team has just recently started playing but already they're expecting big things said LASA sophomore Cade Foster. The team has only had one meet so far against district rival McCallum. Another meet was scheduled against Bastrop but it was canceled. According to Foster, the meet was canceled because Bastrop's coach didn't like their chances.

"They actually cancelled it because they couldn't come up with a team good enough to challenge us," Foster said. "That's how their coach put it. So that makes you feel pretty good about our team."

Last year the Jags lost most of their matches during the area meet. Nevertheless the team saw their potential to grow and become better, said Foster. According to Foster, a large portion of the team was made up of freshman who all had the potential to be good.

"Coach was like, 'we're not super talented but we have this group who can come back and get working,' and that's true," Foster said. "This year we've all come back and we've all gotten a lot better."

Feeling confident about their chances, many of the players are already looking forward to the bigger meets. LASA sophomore Chaitu Aduru feels confident about their chances at the bigger meets and welcomes stronger opponents.

"I'm looking forward to districts," Aduru said. "That's where we can show them that we're the best in this area, I guess. Area is always a challenge because kids from all over the state come and play, so I'm looking forward to that challenge."



LASA junior Vijay Veeraraghavan plays against LASA junior Michael Xu. photo by yearbook staff



LASA seniors Bertram Jernejcic and Pablo Villafuerte run in the Sept. 19 Cedar Park Invitational. "This year is different because we have new coaches, a different training schedule and there are plenty of new runners," LASA sophomore Audrey Davis said. photo courtesy of yearbook staff

## Jaguar XC running wild

KENZA MCKERRIHAN  
Staff Writer

Three times a week nearly 70 LASA and LBJ Cross Country runners speed by in their short shorts as early as 6 a.m. Whether it's the love of the sport or just the desire to get exercise, the cross country team is one of the largest LBJ/LASA teams.

New coach Randy Trejo and assistant Coach Shannon Bergeron are looking for this year to be more competitive than ever. Trejo and Bergeron are there to provide a more disciplined training plan than last year. Bergeron said she is hoping to see the team reach its fullest potential.

"We have moved practice to three times a week but there is a training plan that we ask athletes to do at home so they are working on strength and core and speed and endurance to get them ready," Bergeron said.

LASA senior Sam Lynaugh said that this year is much different than years past in regard to the coaching style and training plan. They now run an additional 3 kilometers after their meets. Because of the change in coaching style, the team attitude as also begun to change.

"The overall team demeanor is a lot more competitive," Lynaugh said. "Last year the captains primarily made the workouts and Coach Croston was there for organization and support whereas Coach Trejo is much more hands on in providing the workouts and training plan."

With a more regimented training plan Trejo and Bergeron are setting the team up to meet their personal goals, as well as meeting their goals for the team. Both Bergeron and students agree that they are working

towards winning districts.

"The goal for the season is to win districts," Bergeron said. "My personal goal for the team is to make running an enjoyable sport and activity for people of all ability levels, so it's very inclusive."

Sophomore Audrey Davis said she started cross country because both of her parents encouraged her to join freshman year. Since her freshman year she has worked her way up to varsity. Being on varsity she has set goals for both herself and her team.

"My individual goals for the

distance to build endurance.

"Ideally I think we should be getting more mileage in but I think that will come with time as the team gains fitness overall," Lynaugh said. "More mileage will make the team more competitive and get people in better shape."

Even as the team is transitioning to be more competitive the students still enjoy the dynamic of the team. Overall, the team expressed excitement over the fact that all members come from varied backgrounds and experiences. At the end of the day, they said, everyone comes together for the team and works hard to be competitive. Cross country is a sport that students can find success in no matter their level prior experience.

"My favorite part of the team is definitely the team spirit," Davis said. "Even though sometimes practice sucks, we always all have fun with each other."

Unlike Davis who joined because she had been running for a while before, Lynaugh joined to try something new and better his athleticism. Now both Lynaugh and Davis are varsity members of the team.

"I started because I needed a PE credit, I was too small to play football," Lynaugh said. "I had some friends on the team so I thought it would be a good place for me."

The LBJ and LASA cross country team may be in a transitioning year but it is getting stronger than ever. Students are working harder with Trejo and Bergeron to take the team as far as it can possibly go.

"I think the team is going to be more competitive this season, and am excited to see how far we can take it," Lynaugh said.

*My favorite part of the team is definitely the team spirit. Even though sometimes practice sucks, we always have fun with each other.*

-LASA sophomore Audrey Davis

season are to improve my personal record and just become a better runner in general," Davis said. "My goal for the team this season is for both the boys and girls varsity to finish first in district."

Despite the fact that the team is changing to be more serious and competitive athletes are still enjoying the team for the same reasons as they had before, as LASA junior Madeline Jones said.

"Even though the coaching changed this year, I still enjoy being a part of the team and challenging myself," Jones said.

Students benefit from cross country in a competitive and noncompetitive setting. Both Lynaugh, who is on the team competitively, and Jones, who is on the team noncompetitively, agree that as the season goes on they would like to be getting in more

## Dreams of fantasy teams

MAX IRBY  
Staff Writer

A group of friends sit on a couch, intently watching a football game. Fingers are crossed, backs are hunched and everyone is on the edge of their seats. It is the last play, and tensions are high for these fantasy football players. The ball is thrown far, and wide receiver Odell Beckham snags it one handed for the touchdown. There are groans, moans and one shout of excitement. That touchdown ended a 'fantasy' football game, one of many that Sunday. Fantasy football involves selecting a team of real football players, and how the players perform that week awards each one a score. People try to beat others in head to head matchups, which can get competitive. Watching the game with things riding on it from fantasy engages people much more than before, and every yard and every point matters, LASA Algebra 2 teacher David Paige said.

"I'm definitely way more engaged in watching the NFL than I used to be," Paige said. "I used to just pay attention to certain teams, like the Dallas Cowboys, but now I feel like I'm a fan of the league or game as a whole."

Some people have money or pride riding on fantasy. For LASA freshman Marcel Gonzales, the game is more interesting with this aspect.

"The football season is definitely a ton more entertaining when you have things riding on it," Gonzales said. "It makes watching the games much more intense because the outcome of the game could impact your entire fantasy football season."

Fantasy also gives people more to

talk about. It adds another layer of depth and strategy to football that makes a lot of people interested in playing it, as Paige said.

"I don't know if I'm more excited; football was always pretty fun and tends to get many of us overworked and underpaid teachers through the fall. However, I feel like fantasy football gives me something to talk about with other people," Paige said. "To me, one of the main attractions of watching sports is



that it builds a common experience for a significant portion of our society. Fantasy definitely adds to that, at least for me."

The buildup to the next NFL season is filled with action for fantasy players. A few days before the NFL season opener, players will draft their fantasy teams. LASA freshman Walker Holmes prepared for this event like many others, studying and researching.

"I'm doing a bunch of research, looking at player statistics

throughout the years," Holmes said. "Who is injury prone, and basically just things to expect from players throughout the year."

Holmes compiled all his research for the draft after months of studying. Like a lot of other players, he made his best possible dream team for fantasy football.

"I'd take Aaron Rodgers at quarterback because he has been the best consistently over the years, Jamaal Charles because he played for UT and has been one of the best," Holmes said. "Eddie Lacy also at running back because he is both good and fun to watch, Julio Jones and Antonio Brown at wide receiver because they are both top receivers, Rob Gronkowski at tight end because he is dominant, and Demaryius Thomas at flex, another great receiver."

While fantasy football is fun, real football is still a lot different. Jeremy Maclin, a professional wide receiver recently tweeted out that it is sad how fantasy football is the only football some people know. This is important to keep in mind when playing, like Paige also remarked, because

"Coach McNiel actually opposes it on philosophical grounds: he believes that football is about many different people working together to fill different roles, in other words, the job of an offensive lineman is vastly different than that of a quarterback but both are necessary to accomplish the task of having a successful offense," Paige said. "To him, fantasy brings the focus on the individual and destroys the beauty and meaning of the game. While I certainly see where he is coming from, I think football adds to the shared experience aspect of football."

# FAMILIES UPROOTED

## High rents, parental abuse contribute to rising youth homelessness, AISD makes effort to help

ROXY BONAFONT AND VICTORIA MYCUE  
Life & Feature Editors

As the rent creeps higher and higher, a single mother's income remains stagnant. Soon, her family's stable home collapses when she receives the eviction notice. She uproots her sons from their home school, and, after two days they're absent during the legal and moving process, they begin attending school on the opposite side of Austin where they're living with a family friend.

"Austin is becoming a very popular city, which attracts more people," Carla Salas, the Social Service Specialist at LBJ High School, said. "So right now, Austin is in demand. That means prices increase, which means our families, who are barely making their rent and barely making their payments, are now being affected by this increase and are no longer able to meet [payments they could meet before]."

A survey released by HousingWorks Austin found that 2,642 Austin ISD students were homeless as of the 2014-2015 school year—a significant rise compared to the 2,490 homeless students in the 2013-2014 school year and 2,030 students in 2012-2013. Homelessness can refer to a number of living situations, from living with another family or in a motel to staying in a shelter or a car. Although Salas' job description is expansive and she meets with families that are in need for a variety of reasons, she said homelessness is one of the most prevalent issues she and her colleagues in the LBJ Family Resource Center deal with.

"An apartment that used to cost \$700, is now \$800 or \$900," Salas said. "That is something that is out of their budgets. So, unfortunately, that means more people are being pushed out of Austin. And, unfortunately, that's directly affecting some of our families here at LBJ and LASA."

Although financial issues and gentrification cause much of family homelessness in Austin, many homeless youth are unaccompanied, meaning they experience homelessness while not under custody of a parent or guardian. Patrick Smith\*, a former LASA student who now attends Garza High School, is one of the estimated 1.6 to 1.7 million youth experiencing unaccompanied homelessness each year according to the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. He chose to leave home to escape the emotionally degrading effects of his abusive father.

"I dreaded every moment and felt confined and trapped," Smith said. "Noticing the patterns of abuse that kept popping up in dialogue and the constant, constant, constant anger, it wasn't something I wanted to stay around for much longer."

Smith began coping with his situation through substance abuse, a habit he said he didn't want to continue, and ultimately decided that the best option was to leave home. Smith initially stayed with his friends, alternating between houses for months. Then, he reached out for help through nonprofit homeless resource center and shelter, LifeWorks.

"For a while I was at a youth center, and I found help around every turn, and I feel like in a way that has kind of made it a lot easier for me than a lot of others," Smith said. "[Then] they moved me up to a shelter in Round Rock called STARRY. It was good, but I had a lot of problems because it was very restrictive, and on top of this it was in Round Rock."

At the time, Smith was earning money doing freelance digital work, writing short tech articles for \$10 per 500 words. The STARRY shelter offered limited internet access, and he was not able to stay after school to work on his projects.

"They picked me up almost immediately after school and dropped me off almost right before," Smith said. "I didn't have a lot of access to stuff. I felt that trapping sensation happening again. The isolation was almost worse because I couldn't see my friends; I could only see the people at the shelter."

STARRY is a Baptist nonprofit, and as Smith isn't personally affiliated with the religion, he said the shelter wasn't the best fit for him.

"There would be sermons every Sunday, and there was a lot of talk about that in the house," Smith said. "It wasn't a bad situation, but it kind of got to the point where it was kind of choking me out, especially because of the isolation back in Round Rock."

Smith said he recognizes differences between him and other homeless youth he has encountered. He left his home not because of financial reasons or eviction, but because of the abuse he was experiencing.

"I can't possibly imagine what it is to go through being forced into that situation, having your family forced into something like that," Smith said. "When I was living in a house, I never had to worry about my next meal, or if I was going to stay where I was... I've met people who've been in that situation and they don't have those aspirations;

they don't have those plans. Their dream is literally of stability. That is their aspiration, [not of] college, not home ownership or a nice car, but of stability."

LASA wellness counselor Meagan Butler has encountered students working full-time jobs to provide for their families while coping with a rigorous education. She said the stress and uncertainty of their situation can be hugely detrimental to the student's mental and emotional health.

"They are totally exhausted and they feel like they have nothing left to give, and it feels like they don't have that net that a lot of people have," Butler said. "I think that there's also a lot of frustration that the students have with their classmates while their classmates are venting about things like, 'Oh my god I had a fight with my mom because she

didn't give me money to do something,' or, 'She wouldn't let me get homecoming tickets,' and the homeless students are like, 'I don't have food!' The strains of

*"If your basic needs are not being met, then it's going to take a lot of extra strength for you to get through the day of your academics."*

-LBJ Social Service Specialist Carla Salas

poverty are hard to get out of your mind; the students carry that with them all the time."

"This financial instability affects students at LBJ, LASA and across AISD, and Salas said it has a direct correlation with decreasing student performance. Students without a permanent home lack access to the technology they need to do homework and are without reliable transportation to attend class regularly.

"Just looking at the big picture aspect of things, if your basic needs are not being met, then it's going to take a lot of extra strength for you to get through the day of your academics," Salas said. "Your mind, as a human being, is thinking about, 'Where am I going to stay tonight? Are we going to be in the car? Are we going to have a hotel, or are we not going to have a hotel? Is my family going to be okay?'"

These concerns, Salas said, often prevent students from focusing on their academics and performing well at school. She said that homeless students also have lower attendance rates because they can't afford gas or bus passes, and their lack of a permanent residence makes it difficult to ride school buses.

"What our center does is try and close that gap as much as we can," Salas said. "If we stabilize the family, will that eventually stabilize the student academically? The answer we've seen is yes. And so that's what we're trying to do—make sure the family is stable enough for the student to be a student and be able to just focus on what the academics are and his expectations or her expectations of behavior and roles and homework and studying, all that stuff that is expected of our students these days."

To this end, the LBJ Family Resource Center's services include connecting families with resources that provide rent and utility assistance, counseling students, and establishing communication between the students and Project HELP (Homeless Education and Learning Program). Project HELP works to protect the educational rights of AISD students under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, a federal law passed in 1987 that ensures enrollment and educational stability for homeless students. Ahlanda Daniz, the homeless liaison and supervisor of operations for Project HELP, said that Project HELP provides transportation for homeless students mandated by the McKinney-Vento Act so that students can continue attending the same school even if they move to another part of the district.

"I met with a parent, and she said because of Project HELP, she's taking classes at ACC, and her children are still doing really well in school," Daniz said. "Since they stayed in their school of origin, nothing was disrupted, and staying in one place really helps students be successful.... If they're staying at a Salvation Army home, they can get moved to another home later, or they can go couch surfing, and they'd have to be moving around to whatever school serves that location. It'd be very disruptive. Staying in the same school is the most effective thing that we can do for them."

Smith said that having lived an economically privileged life prior to becoming homeless, he was horrified to see first-hand the destructive effects of gentrification on low-income families. He believes, however, that things do get better for people experiencing homelessness and instability for any reason.

"There are opportunities to help and to get out of that situation," Smith said. "I've seen people get clean, I've seen people get jobs and they've never even had one, I've seen people go from the streets to a house without having to wonder where their food is, and I want to tell [homeless individuals] that there is hope."

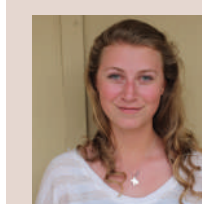
\*Patrick Smith is a fictitious name used to protect the identity of the source.

graphic by Claire Cannatti

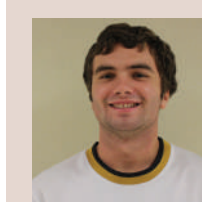
## STUDENTS IN ACTION: Volunteering for the homeless in Austin



••• LBJ junior Yasmín Titus volunteered at the H-E-B Feast of Sharing holiday dinner in 2014 where she helped make plates of food that H-E-B had prepared and served the homeless people attending the dinner. "It felt good knowing that we were volunteering for a good cause," Titus said. "It's important to help the homeless because not everybody is fortunate to have, so you have to be able to show them that you care and there is someone who cares."



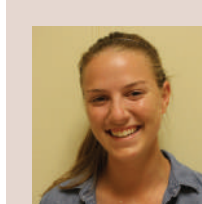
••• LASA senior Chiara Alvisi spent four years volunteering at the Micah 6 Food Pantry, where she first served outside of the pantry bagging groceries and then, when she was old enough, working inside the pantry itself helping homeless persons select and shop. "I remember that when I was little I would always be a little annoyed at it because it meant I had to wake up earlier on Saturday, but as soon as I would get there I would feel useful and know that my two or three hours made a huge difference in someone's life," Alvisi said.



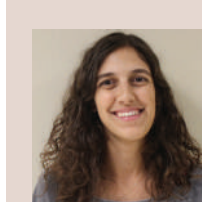
••• Almost every Friday morning at 5 a.m., LASA senior Sam Pastor assembles breakfast tacos at St. Theresa Catholic church with his family before handing them out to the homeless at 6 a.m. "Small actions can make a difference, and, specifically in this instance, the food that we provide can give them energy to go out and find a job, or [it could] save them some money to help them out," Pastor said.



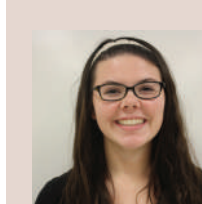
••• For the past two years, LBJ senior Jennifer Cortez has volunteered serving the homeless at the Palmer Event Center before Thanksgiving, and she expects to work the event again this year. She served Thanksgiving meals and administered activities for the homeless who came to the event. "There's a bunch of people, and [volunteering there] really shows that you're giving back to the community," Cortez said. "We have a lot of homeless people, and if you can help out, you might as well do it."



••• LASA senior Claire Morrison was a counselor for a mission trip two summers ago, working with Austin Mission Possible in the free store, as well as with the ARCH (Austin Resource Center for the Homeless) hanging out food and speaking with the homeless. Morrison also keeps bags in her car to hand out to homeless people she sees standing on street corners. "I feel called to help them because people tend to act like homeless people aren't people at all," Morrison said. "They're marginalized and stereotyped by society, which is totally unfair. They're good people with unfortunate circumstances."

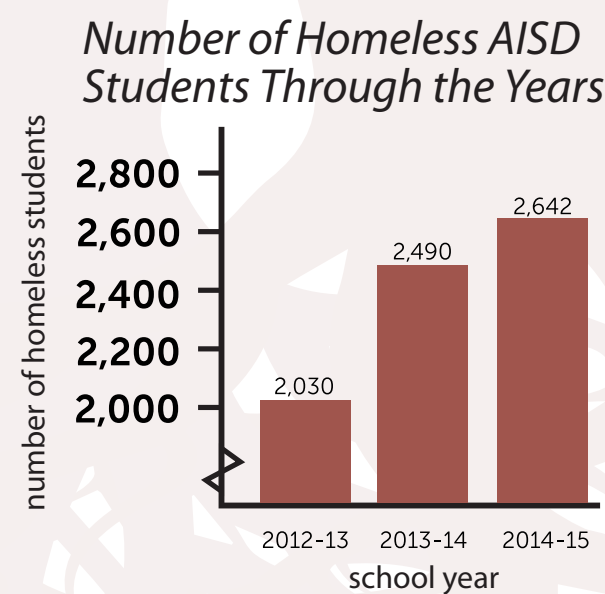


••• LASA senior Zoë Feder organized a "lunchbag" project through Jewish service organization Repair the World, in which she and a group of LASA NHS members made 145 sack lunches to distribute to homeless individuals throughout Austin. "I've been really passionate about helping homeless people for a long time, I've done like fundraisers in the past for it, so I was really happy to take [my project] in the direction of food access because not everyone has access to these foods and people who are out on the street all day asking for money probably don't know exactly what their next meal is going to be," Feder said. "So [it's nice to] hand them something to keep them going through the day and [let them] know people are caring about them."



••• LASA senior Grace Fullerton volunteers regularly at her church's food pantry, where people can come for food and assistance with bills. For her 16th birthday, Fullerton filled tote bags for economically disadvantaged children through the charity organization Project Night Night. "We bought blankets and I asked my friends to bring a stuffed animal and a book to fill the bags instead of a birthday gift," Fullerton said. "We spent a while decorating and filling the bags at my party and then a couple weeks later my friend and I delivered them."

## BY THE NUMBERS



## Pride and Prejudice: LASA students work with shelter to create clothing closet for homeless trans youth

VICTORIA MYCUE  
Life & Feature Editor

Already facing family rejection and the struggles of being a member of the marginalized LGBTQ population, homeless transgender youth seek comfort and confidence in the way they express themselves. Fortunately, those living in Austin have the opportunity to utilize the resources offered at LifeWorks. On the door of this shelter hangs a rainbow-colored poster that reads "We want you, you are welcome here and everyone is safe here."

Austin homeless shelter and resource center LifeWorks prides itself on being an all-inclusive home, but it's rare that donors contribute funding for things like makeup and binding, seen as less necessary than they are to LGBTQ, and specifically transgender, youth. Led by LASA senior and club co-president Sylvie Pratt, LASA Pride Alliance (LPA), formerly Queer-Straight Alliance (QSA), has recently begun planning to work with LifeWorks to provide some of these essential resources to LGBTQ youth at the shelter.

"I've been interested in LGBTQ homelessness especially since seventh grade," Pratt said. "And I, as a lesbian myself, have a lot of compassion for people who are in situations where they feel like they can't be accepted or even have to leave home due to parental rejection."

Club sponsor and LASA counselor Megan Butler, along with Pratt and club co-president Meagan Allgood, have been in the planning process of creating a conjunction program between LPA and LifeWorks. The goal is to create a community closet of accessories that will make transgender and questioning youth more comfortable with their appearance.

"There are a lot of problems facing people who change genders or at least their gender expression," Butler said. "Our first place [that] was going to accept these clothes fell through, so we were looking for a home for all these clothes. The other president, Meagan Allgood, wanted to start a homelessness initiative, and was looking for resources in town. She came across LifeWorks and found out that it was a really inclusive homeless shelter."

LifeWorks provides shelter, counseling and life assistance to homeless and struggling youth and young adults. Butler, Pratt and Allgood have been collaborating with Erin Whelan, the LifeWorks Division Director of Housing and Homeless

Services. LPA determined that one of the most pressing needs at the LifeWorks shelter was providing funds for items that other donors might overlook.

"We'd like to start helping [transgender teens at the shelter] find things that make them feel more like themselves, such as packing and binding material, makeup, clothes or certain things like that," Whelan said.

LPA plans to go about acquiring these highly-demanded materials in a few different ways. The club will raise money to give LifeWorks funding for materials that make people who are transgender feel more comfortable with their appearance, such as binding material to maintain a flatter chest or packing material to fill an otherwise empty space in pants. For these materials, the club will be raising money instead of collecting items.

"We're going to be starting a bi-monthly bake sale, since we just got approval," Pratt said. "If people bring in unused makeup products, bras, underwear as long as it's still in the packaging, [and other] things like that, they can get free baked goods at our bi-monthly bake sale."

The money made from the bake sale will go towards funding for binding and packing materials, while the items LPA collects will be put in the community closet for the homeless transgender youth at LifeWorks. Pratt said it's important to assist this demographic especially, considering as many as 40 percent of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ, according to a 2012 Williams Institute study, which is disproportionate to the 10 percent who identify as LGBTQ in the general youth population.

"[LGBTQ youth homelessness many times] has to do with feelings of rejection," Pratt said. "Even in family environments that are supportive of LGBTQ needs, children can still feel rejected or alienated and that can lead to problems during adolescence and in later life. LGBTQ people are still largely discriminated against; even though in Austin we are supposed to be super liberal, it's still a problem."

Butler said it's important for more privileged people, like the members of LPA, to get involved in assisting homeless LGBTQ who are going through struggles different from people with a home. As an underserved group of people, Butler said it's critical we value their lives and experiences.

"They have been marginalized and been told that they are not accepted and that they are not people, and so we need to do everything we can to go against...all the negative messages," Butler said. "They are people, and they do deserve love and

support, and they do deserve visibility, because their struggle is more difficult. They can't go to stores and shop in the section that they maybe want to shop in without receiving a lot of discrimination...We do need to have clothing closets, and we do need to say that we are looking out for [them] and we care about [them]."

The collaboration between LPA and LifeWorks will only be strengthening the already welcoming environment the shelter has.

"Our shelter and TLP [Transitional Living Program] are known as safe places for LGBTQ youth, meaning they have a place in which they will be respected for their differences and similarities," Whelan said. "Everyone is treated as an individual in that space, and there is a zero tolerance around any sort of verbal, physical, emotional aggression towards anyone and their differences."

Butler said LifeWorks is an important resource for homeless youth who might feel alienated at a less inclusive shelter, which is the same type of circumstance they may have been living in at the home they came from.

"It's very different from other shelters," Butler said. "Some because they are sponsored by religious organizations and there might be a conflict of interest [where they] don't want to create an inclusive environment because it's going against their religious principles. Of course there are a lot of churches that are very welcoming to trans people, but LifeWorks is very purposeful, very openly supportive because not all shelters are like that."

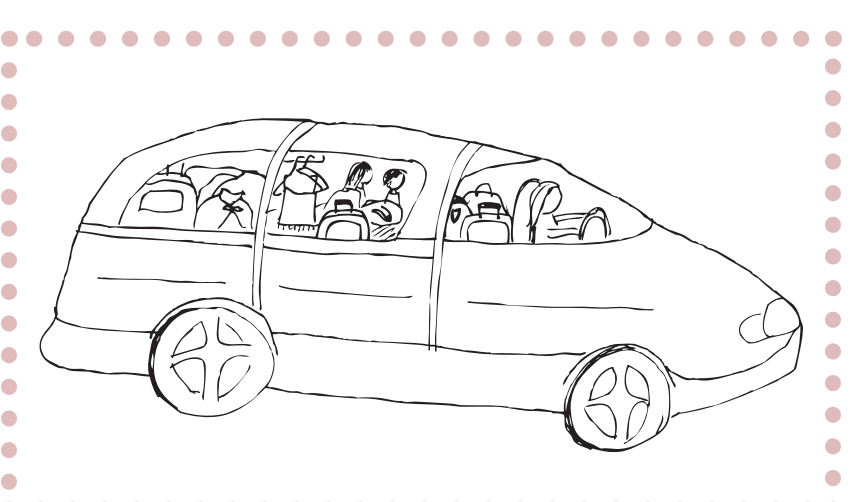
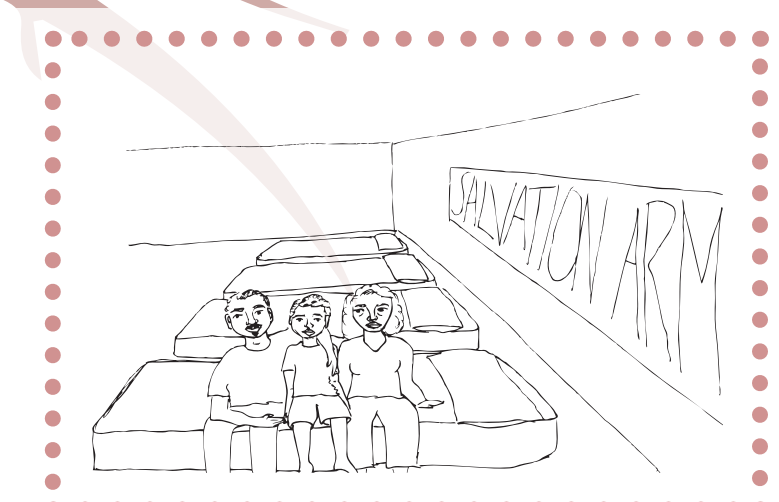
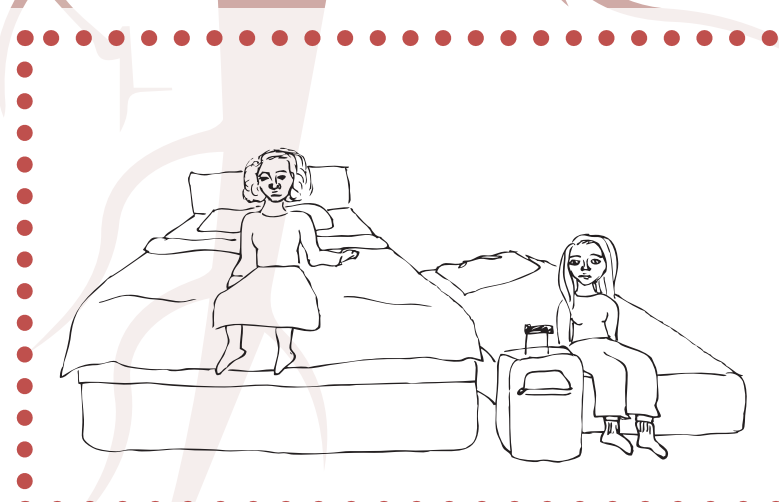
Pratt said that while she sustains humility, it's always important to recognize your privilege and act in accordance with it; if you have room to give, then give.

"I feel like it's part of our duty as privileged people to give back to our community," Pratt said. "...Adolescence is hard enough without being homeless and being LGBTQ, so when you combine all three of those things it's like they need some help."

LPA is creating these collaborative programs with an intent of using their recognized privilege to help the less privileged, a characteristic Butler says she believes is dutiful and honorable.

"I think that anything LASA students can do to own their privilege is important," Butler said. "There was a sign on the wall of the college that I went to that said 'With great privilege comes great responsibility.' I think that's very important for LASA students to recognize, because a lot of us come from privileged backgrounds and with that comes responsibility to help others. I really want to give props to these

graphics by Claire Cannatti and Grace Bodine



graphics by Victoria Mycue

# LASA club synthesizes useful technology

SARAH LUCAS  
Staff Writer

Members of the LASA Synthetic Biology Club are clustered in small groups around the UT Ellington Lab. A few are working at a messy lab bench as they conduct a polymerase chain reaction, a standard biotechnology procedure. The Bunsen burner situated on the counter casts a faint glow beside them. In the lab's adjoining office space, other students pour over documents detailing carbon monoxide research. Some huddled in the corner fiddle with Geneious, an interactive DNA manipulating software. Headed by LASA Synthetic Biology Club president and International Genetically Engineered Machine (iGEM) team founder, LASA senior Isaree Pitakong, the group spent long hours of their summer on a project they undertook last year.

"It was really cool," Pitakong said. "[We went] from experiments in the lab, to an actual design, [and were] able to change around genes, come up with a specific sequence of DNA and see it play out in reality."

The 15 members of the iGEM team, a competitive sector within the club, have spent hours of work engineering bacteria capable of sensing carbon monoxide to implement in an unorthodox carbon monoxide sensor. Instead of changing color or emitting an audible cue, the team engineered the bacteria to release a wintergreen fragrance upon detecting the gas. Unlike commercial carbon monoxide detectors, this biological mechanism caters towards the deaf and blind since it does not rely on sound or a change in color. The club showcased the culmination of over a year's worth of work at the iGEM Jamboree, which is a global synthetic biology competition that took place at MIT in late September.

Synthetic biology is a relatively newer field within the subject of biology and differs from biology in its traditional sense. Rather than concentrating solely on anatomy, it is interdisciplinary in nature and incorporates elements from biotechnology, engineering and molecular biology. Pitakong said it involves lots of problem solving and thinking. The field appealed to LASA senior Anna Savelieva because of its hands-on approach. Synthetic biology focuses on creating new mechanisms to address real-world problems by using engineering techniques.

"It was really exciting to see a field of biology that had more than just testing and observing to it. This type of biology has the added benefits, and perhaps challenge, of designing and engineering a novel biological system for a

specific task," Savelieva said.

LASA Synthetic Biology Club was originally established in January 2013, and aimed to teach students about synthetic biology concepts and basic biotechnology while getting research experience. By 2014, a competitive sector of the club was established with the formation of the iGEM team.

"iGEM is the International Genetically Engineered Machine competition, and in that part of Synthetic Biology Club we work towards that competition," Patel said. "I think Synthetic Biology Club really started to incorporate more members and become more active once

*More than just competing against other teams, we have this project we've created that can maybe help the world in some way.*

-LASA senior Isaree Pitakong

we started that portion of the club."

This year's iGEM project began last year, which was junior year for most of the team members. They began work with a lengthy brainstorming process, as they considered factors such as practicality and the amount of testing required. The team ultimately narrowed down 14 initial concepts to two ideas that were combined for their final proposal.

"Finally we narrowed it down to two: one of which was creating a fragrance, which was originally intended to be creating different odors, and then the other idea was just a plain carbon monoxide sensor," Pitakong said. "But we couldn't really decide, so in the end we kind of combined the two, and it ended up being this carbon monoxide sensor that instead of sounding an alarm or changing colors would create a fragrance that would make up for the lack of smell of carbon monoxide."

Members of the iGEM team put in 50 hour workweeks during the summer towards the project as they designed primers, synthesized the different fragments in a plasmid and attempted to put the construct together. After their research, they put their work together in an organized sequence. This sequence of DNA is known as a construct. The team's construct was around 4,000 base pairs long.

Following standard synthetic biology practice, they then placed the construct in a circular plasmid and effectively injected it into the E. coli bacteria.

"That's what we mean by engineering bacteria," Pitakong said. "We play around with the DNA sequence, we put it in this plasmid that we can then put in a bacteria to make it actually happen and then you walk through the bacteria with the thing you designed inside of it."

The extensive time the team spent in the lab was not just directly working with the bacteria. Many of the procedures the team performed in the lab required considerable lengths of time to produce results.

"Honestly, people underestimate the work," Patel said. "You can't just sit down and do the project because a lot of it is waiting. Let's say when we're doing PCRs, which are polymerase chain reactions, when we're trying to amplify the DNA. It's a three hour process in itself in which we have nothing to do — it's merely just waiting for the machine to amplify the DNA."

While the team hopes that their research will fare well competitively at the iGEM Jamboree, their first major competition, they also have other goals in mind for when they visit MIT.

According to Pitakong, this event is also a platform for the students to present their innovative idea.

"iGEM is really just a way for us to spread our idea — our project," Pitakong said. "Because I see it more as an international conference where people all over the world and professors can see what students have designed."

Although theoretically the team would aim to implement their work in real-world situations, their research is currently in the testing phases and would require many more trials and much more experience to be put on the market. For now, pursuing the iGEM Jamboree allows for the students to collectively present their idea to a wider audience.

"So more than just competing against other teams, we have this project we've created that can maybe help the world in some way and we can share our ideas in a large audience and maybe if someone becomes interested in our project, like then our goal has been accomplished," Pitakong said. "We've come to inspire other people, give them some new ideas, and contribute to the synthetic biology community."

Another reason the iGEM competition is important to the team is that it allows for more publicity for the club here at LASA. The club has been established since January 2013, making it somewhat new, and many people are unaware of the extensive research opportunities it offers. It's also predominantly composed of upperclassmen, especially seniors, and more members are necessary to ensure the continuation of the club in the future.

"Success, hopefully, at this iGEM competition that we're going to in Boston this September means that we'll be able to get some sort of medal or some sort of recognition, but even going to this competition allows iGEM to be more well known throughout the school and hopefully create more members," Patel said. "Even if you're not directly interested in synthetic biology, I bet we can find some part of the project that is relevant to your interest. In this way you're able to bring various sciences into Synthetic Biology and new recruits can always find a mentor who has had experience in those sciences."



The Synthetic Biology Club presents their project to the iGEM Jamboree judges. LASA senior Isaree Pitakong explains the modifications they made to their experiment. The team earned a gold medal at the international 2015 iGEM Jamboree in Boston in September. photo courtesy of Dr. Dennis Mishler

## NASA

continued from page 1

"So there are a couple big problems with long duration space missions—one of them is bone decalcification due to the micro-gravitational environment," Shah said. "I designed a bioreactor that could be implanted within a human that would produce a hormone called calcitonin, and so that's what prevents bone decalcification."

While Shah was at the camp, he talked to a visiting researcher who spoke to the participants about bioastronautics. Partly as a result of Shah's work on the calcitonin bioreactor, Gibson offered Shah a summer internship at NASA in the Biomedical Engineering Department. Shah will most likely be screening physiological readings from ISS astronauts and he may also have an opportunity to actually create the bioreactor he designed.

"Potentially I would be creating the bioreactor that... prevents bone decalcification," Shah said. "I would most likely be screening the blood from... Scott Kelly, who's on the space station. Scott Kelly is the person who is going to be there for one year, and his physiology is being measured."

Shah said that he wants to be a cardiothoracic surgeon. Though he is yet to actually create his calcitonin bioreactor, he said that just his experience in designing it at NASA has confirmed his interest in medicine and, more specifically, surgery.

"I wanted to be a cardiothoracic surgeon, and I still want to be a cardiothoracic surgeon, I just think that it has given me a little bit more interest in surgery and in medicine," Shah said. "Because I got to actually see, I got to actually design, and I got to design a structure that could be

actually implanted into humans... and so that got me more interested into the surgical side of medicine."

Like Shah, Kordes and Nicot-Cartsonis also came away from their summer experiences at NASA with new perspectives on their future careers. Kordes, who is interested in computer science, said that participating in the HAS program left him more open to engineering as a potential major.

"Well, my main interest is in computer science and I really didn't want to do [the camp] at first," Kordes said. After doing it I think I look at engineering as a much more viable major for me instead of just computer science."

Nicot-Cartsonis, on the other hand, has always wanted to be a doctor

for Doctors Without Borders.

However, Nicot-Cartsonis says that after her internship introduced her to a plethora of intertwined and intriguing areas of study she's completely reevaluated her future plans.

"I am now interested in aerospace engineering and perhaps geology—glaciology is actually a fascinating subject," Nicot-Cartsonis said. "It radically changed what I want to do. I had always had my mind set on becoming a doctor and a virologist, and working with Doctors Without Borders, and now I'm seriously considering aerospace engineering or some kind of space research."

While Nicot-Cartsonis, Kordes and Shah each had very different experiences at NASA, their unique opportunities convinced them of NASA's importance not only to their own personal development but also to the future of our generation and humanity as a whole. Nicot-Cartsonis elaborated, explaining how internships like hers will stimulate a new wave of interest in NASA research amid flagging funding and public interest.

"I think a lot of people are starting to doubt NASA, we're getting less and less government funding, and they're saying, 'Oh, NASA's going down,'" Nicot-Cartsonis said. "Space science is just starting—there's so much we don't know about the Earth, even, and the solar system, it's ridiculous! There's so much analysis to do, so many things to discover, and I think internships like these are what get people interested."

## LBJ Fire Academy instructor Danny Wynn named Champion of the Year

ZOE TRUNGALÉ  
Staff Writer

Tables full of firefighters-in-training line the large portable. They are listening to Firefighter Danny Wynn from the LBJ Fire Academy and preparing to go out into the field, where Wynn will teach them about emergency medical treatment and how to deal with every potential situation they will face if they become fully certified firefighters. Wynn is careful to make sure everyone understands what he is teaching, and simplifies his instructions so they can be followed. Wynn's attention to detail and teaching style are some of the many qualities his students love about him, and the reason he was awarded the Champion of the Year Award.

"I have been a firefighter for 14 years," Wynn said. "I spent nine years out in operations [on a fire truck] but have been assigned to the Fire Dispatch center for the last five years. This means I take 911 emergency calls and monitor fire scenes via radio. I wanted to be a firefighter because my uncle was a firefighter in Corpus Christi and would always say what a good job it was. He was correct."

Firefighter Wynn won the Area IV Champion of the Year Award for his work at the LBJ Fire Academy. This award is given out by The Career and Technology Association, in recognition of individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to Career and Technology Education (CTE).

Currently, Wynn is lead instructor and program administrator as well as the training officer for the LBJ Fire Academy. The LBJ Fire Academy began in 2006 and teaches high school students leadership training, fire science education and emergency medical training. Despite Wynn's recent accomplishment, he said he likes to stay humble about his achievement and focus on the students, who say the program is both physically and mentally challenging.

"I prefer that the students get recognized for being a part of this program before myself," Wynn said. "This program provides unique opportunities for students to be exposed to a challenging and fun environment that no other schools in Austin have, and I applaud the students that sign up and remain with us for the whole two years it takes to complete our program. For a 15 or a 16-year-old kid to commit to a two year program and see it through to completion is a big deal in my book."

Wynn said the students at the program are a big motivation for him, as well as his co-workers and fellow instructors. He said he doesn't mind working two jobs at the Austin Fire Department and at LBJ's Fire Academy, because his hard work has been paying off.

"We have been around for 10 years

now and it takes a lot of hard work from instructors to make this program a success and hard work from the students to be successful in this program," said Wynn. "The kids who complete our program are managing both academic work as well as the physical skills necessary to certify as a firefighter. They are also managing seven other classes while participating in our demanding schedule."

LASA senior Ashley Hannah has been a part of the program since her junior year. Hannah has worked with Wynn in the program and said she notices how much he cares about the program and his students.

"Firefighter Wynn has a tremendous impact on the program," Hannah said. "Not only is he the coordinator for the program, but is also the perfect instructor—he has a genuine care for each person in the program and does absolutely anything to help his students in an academic setting and on a personal basis."

The LBJ Fire Academy has served both LBJ and LASA for nine years, and there are currently 31 LASA upperclassmen and 21 LBJ upperclassmen involved in the program. His students say that the wisdom that Wynn holds passes to the students through this program in the instruction and motivation that he gives. According to LBJ junior Omar Gaona, Wynn's general positive attitude in the program is one of the qualities which helps make him a popular and respected teacher.

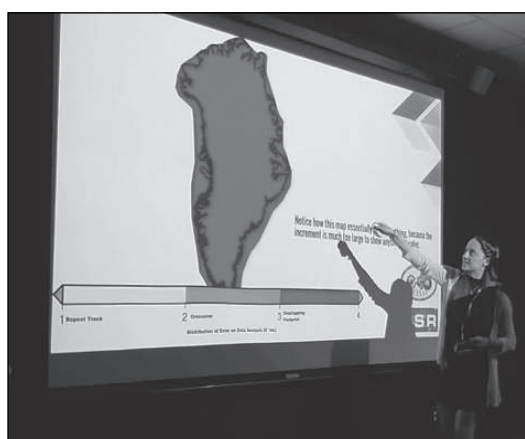
"Wynn is a successful teacher because he enjoys what he does very much," Gaona said. "He's very good at teaching and is always happy to be there with us."

Wynn said that his ultimate goal has never been to gain recognition, but to pass on positive and impactful experiences to his students to help them throughout life.

"I work hard to expose students to the possible career choice of the emergency services and to hopefully pass some wisdom and life skills on to the kids that I teach," Wynn said. "I also hope to pass a bunch of positive, fun experiences on to these kids. I don't do it to be recognized. However, that being said, it is a pleasant, humble experience to be acknowledged for the hard work that I do."



Firefighter and Champion of the Year award winner Danny Wynn. photo by Victoria Mycye



LASA junior Mathilda Nicot-Cartsonis presents her NASA summer research. photo courtesy of Mathilda Nicot-Cartsonis.

## PFLASA fundraises for new LASA computers on wheels

EMMA JANE HOPPER  
Staff Writer

In the spring of 2015, Travis County, passed a bond that will put money towards technology in Austin Independent School District (AISD). Parents and Friends of LASA (PFLASA) president Paula Lee said that LASA will definitely be receiving some of this money, and PFLASA itself will also be raising money to go specifically towards the school's Computers on Wheels.

"There was quite a bit of money that was voted by the Travis County voters that put money toward technology for AISD," Lee said. "So all schools will be receiving a certain amount of money to spend on devices that are already chosen by the school district."

According to PFLASA CAC co-chair Ann Phipps, PFLASA is currently hoping that money gained from passing the most recent Travis County technology bond will go to increasing the ratio of students to computers. The goal, Phipps said, is to have about two students per computer.

"Many other computers throughout the school are in what we'd politely call 'end of life' age, so they are more than seven years old depending on the computers," Phipps said. "Many of these computers should be replaced, so our first goal is to do as much as we can with the bond money."

According to Lee, the poor state of the Computers on Wheels is starting to severely affect students. Lee said some computers are not charging and not connecting to the Internet.

"Last year Mrs. Kinsey was proctoring some AP exams, and I believe while she was in there multiple computers for different students went down during the exam," Lee said.

According to Phipps, this is why PFLASA is raising money. Phipps said that there are only five types of computers the school can choose from, and none of them are the style of computers the school needs for Electronic Magazine (E-Zine), robotics or computer science classes. According to Campaign Coordinator and PFLASA member Marcia Kinsey, the new computers will definitely be an improvement, especially after the computers crashing during AP testing last year.

"We have a one time sort of special opportunity," Kinsey said. "AISD has allocated money for LASA to get new mobile computers. [AISD] told every school that if [they're] interested in providing additional funding you can do that at the same time."

Lee said they hope to have enough money raised within the month, though their exact goal is indeterminate due to the varying prices of devices. She said the goal is to have two computers per person, and even if they do not completely reach it the new computers would still be an immense improvement. The computers should be ordered by Nov. 1.

"The bond money would provide enough computers that you'd have maybe one mobile devices per three students," Lee said. "Ideally what the school would like to have is one device per two students so that more than one class can use those devices during a class period."

## LBJ football booster fundraises, works with Chick-fil-A and UT

OLIVIA LEE  
News Editor

The LBJ Football Booster club worked the Chick-fil-A concession stands at the University of Texas (UT) home football games to raise money for the football team on Sept. 12 and Sept. 19. A combination of parents, students, coaches and players worked both the large and small stand in the stadium, serving fried chicken sandwiches and fountain drinks to Rice, California Berkeley, and a mass of UT fans decked out in burnt orange. The volunteers began serving Chick-fil-A two and a half hours before the game until ten minutes before the end of the fourth quarter. LBJ Booster Club President Holly Sparks-Anderson was responsible for finding this fundraising opportunity.

"I knew that Chick-Fil-A was a company that really gives back to the community because of their Christian background," Sparks-Anderson said. "I contacted them via an online form regarding fundraising opportunities specifically looking to do a 'Spirit Night' at their restaurant where a percentage of the proceeds would be donated to us. But when the marketing director Lyndsie, contacted me, she discussed the opportunity of us helping them with their University of Texas concession stands."

So far the booster club has worked two UT home games. They have made \$1817.20 based on the number of volunteers and hours worked as well as \$137.25 in tips. According to the football coaches, a lot of the machines and equipment in the weight room are outdated and potentially dangerous, which is why the football program is in the process of remodeling. Two years ago, Coach Jackson initiated the refurbishing of the weight room, by implementing a program where donations up to \$10 from athletes and their families were collected every month. The booster club is raising money through Chick-Fil-A for new equipment for the weight room as well as new uniforms. LBJ sophomore Deon Collins said the best part about working the games is talking to all of the UT fans and being able to help raise money for the new uniforms.

"Yes we've gotten uniforms, but we still have to raise 800 dollars to wear them," Collins said. "We're raising that money in order to wear the uniform. We are trying to wear them against Reagan this Friday. The difference [between the old and new uniforms] is going to be that we will look good and by looking good we might play better."

This year the LBJ Football Booster Club became a 501(c)(3) organization, a nonprofit organization exempt from federal income tax, which allows the booster club to be involved in different avenues of fundraising that will better benefit the football team in maximizing the efficiency of the money raised from certain events.

"By having this designation attached to our organization, we're able to reach into different realms of fundraising," Sparks-Anderson said. "We were able to secure Chick-Fil-A as a major donor because of this. Without being a non-profit, you're limited in what businesses will assist you with when it comes to fundraising."

According to Sparks-Anderson, working the UT football games is a great way to make money for the football team.

"This is my first year as President, so for me, this is by far the best opportunity we've had," Anderson-Sparks said. "The owner and staff at the Chick-Fil-A MLK location are a great group of people. They have treated us with respect and they make sure we have fun while working. I'm very pleased with the relationship we have with them."

# Truancy law changes prompt LBJ to create groups focused on keeping kids in school

CLARA MORSE  
Staff Writer

The Texas legislature recently changed its stance on discipline for truant students by passing a bill this summer to decriminalize truancy. Skipping school is now only punishable as a civil misdemeanor, not as a criminal misdemeanor.

Austin Independent School District (AISD) Superintendent Paul Cruz said that this marks an important step in the right direction for truancy laws. Because of Texas' old truancy law, over 1000 students were sent to jail in the past three years for failure to attend school, and many of them could not afford to pay fines.

"The old truancy law was in place for a very long time, and sometimes we have to look at things and ask ourselves, 'is this being effective?'" Cruz said. "Truancy must be addressed, and I don't think it can only be addressed in punitive ways."

According to Cruz, Texas' truancy law has been a source of controversy for several years. Before this year's law change, it was one of only two states in the U.S. that listed truancy as a criminal offense. Senior lecturer at the University of Texas and juvenile justice expert Professor Michele Deitch said that she thought the new law would shift the focus of truancy prevention efforts.

"The new law is going to mean that schools work much more closely with kids and families to find out why kids are truant," Deitch said. "They can try to solve the [truancy] problem rather than just being punitive."

According to Deitch, there are many different reasons that a student may be truant, such as monetary issues with the family that requires the student to work or substance abuse problems, amongst other things. Deitch said that truancy is usually a sign that the family or the student needs some sort of intervention from a social service agency.

"This law still allows... charges [to] be filed against the kid," Deitch said. "They could... refer the child to a truancy court, and ultimately the kid would be able to go to the juvenile system. [It is] still an enormous improvement over the previous law, but I think we need to stop looking to the criminal justice system to solve all of our problems."

LBJ Dropout Prevention Coach Jerrel Blount said that LBJ, as well as other schools, would have to work on creative and often school-specific solutions to minimize truant behavior now that skipping school will not be sending students to court.

"I feel like truancy court was

students have  
**TEN**  
UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

STATE CAN SEND STUDENTS TO  
**COURT**  
IF THEY ARE NOT PREGNANT, HOMELESS  
IN FOSTER CARE, OR THE MAIN INCOME-EARNER FOR THEIR FAMILY

SCHOOLS MAY CHOOSE  
**NOT**  
to file at that time **IF**  
truancy interventions  
are working

students must attend  
school until they are  
**19**  
UNLESS THEY GRADUATE  
OR LAWFULLY WITHDRAW

graphic by Claire Carmatti

## Dell Medical School opens new opportunities for prospective medical students, hosts summer camp

continued from page 1

"I think one of the things we're really excited about is the opportunity to be that kind of community resource where we can expose students all through Travis County [to health sciences]," Scheibal said. "Our first partnership is with AISD but I'm confident it won't be our last one exposing students to the possibilities of going into the health professions and the kind of things they can do and why it's worthwhile for them to consider those professions."

Scheibal said that the school's faculty are currently working to create the school's curriculum from scratch, designing an academic institution that teaches students how to utilize modern research to address systemic problems in the health care system.

"I feel like what we offer students is just the opportunity to really learn and get insight about how to treat patients in a 21st century context, and treat patients with 21st century strategies and models and technologies," Scheibal said

Baptiste said that because the Dell Medical School is still in the process of getting created, it's able to reevaluate outdated systems that are endemic to the medical system and determine whether they can be streamlined or completely eliminated by way of new technologies and data.

"There are basically areas in medicine that haven't been explored- public policy, health disparities, trying to create a new paradigm for delivering health care," Baptiste said. "Right now the health care delivery model, by all accounts, is somewhat broken, so one of the missions is to create a better delivery system for medical care. And we're in a unique position to do that."

In order to accomplish this, the Dell Medical School partnered with the UT College of Fine Arts to create the Design Institute for Health, a program headed up by designers Stacey Chang and Beto Lopez that's focused on finding 21st century design solutions to persistent problems in medicine.

"[Chang and Lopez are] the founding directors of the institute and they're basically taking on a lot of health challenges from the standpoint of finding design-based creative solutions to long-term problems and challenges to the health system," Scheibal said. "We're in the process

supposed to be a deterrent," Blount said. "So I feel like [the decriminalization] will force LBJ, along with any other school, to get creative on ways to keep kids in school."

Several schools have already implemented solutions, such as LBJ's after-school Twilight program. This program is an after-school credit recovery program so LBJ students who are missing credits can graduate. LBJ also has a group called a restorative circle, where students can come together to talk about issues that might be hindering their education. Restorative circle programs in AISD are only a couple of years old, and Cruz said that he believes they are beneficial when it comes to decreasing truancy.

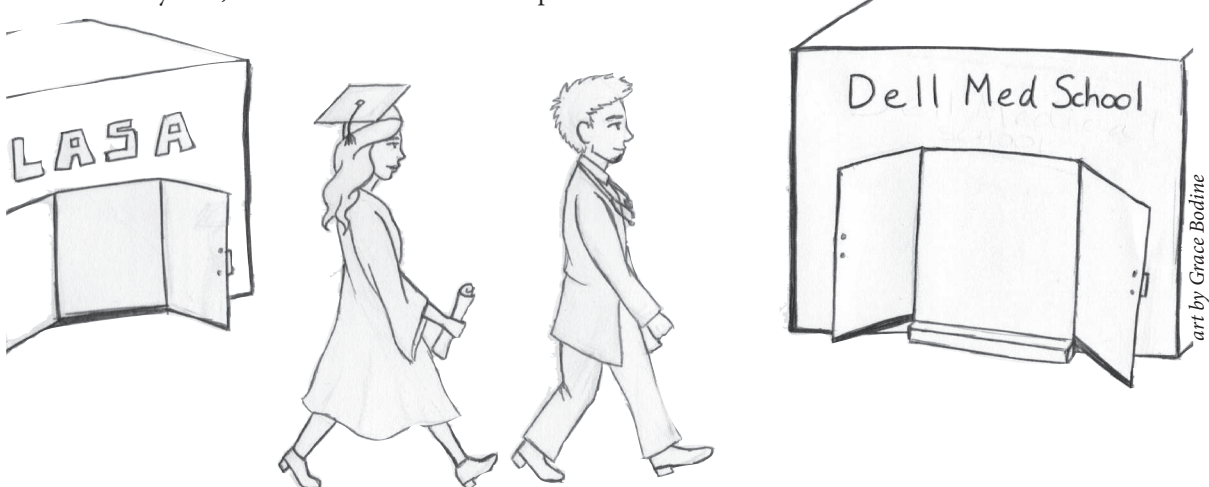
"[Restorative circles are] where students can talk about their issues, and their ideas, views and thoughts, and just share...their experiences," Cruz said. "It's a wonderful approach for students to connect with others. There's a tremendous benefit to the students who are participating because they know they're not alone. And... when a student becomes disconnected from a school, they feel like nobody else is going through what they're going through and they can't find connection, so restorative circles were a great way to [fix that]."

Decriminalizing truancy and initiating restorative circles were meant to help students with a risk of truancy by providing emotional support. AISD Superintendent of High Schools Kathy Ryan said she thought that schools need to make sure the community knows about this and about how highly schools value their students.

"I think there might be some people out there that see it as the community not valuing school by lifting this criminalization of it, and [the community] thinking that it's not important to be in school," Ryan said. "So we need to make the message very clear that just because it's not a criminal offense anymore does not mean that it's not important to be in school any more. It is very important to be in school."

Cruz said that the new truancy law would be an important step forward for students in today's schools, and would help schools to address truancy in a more appropriate way.

"If [a law is effective], then we continue that in many cases, and if it's not, then it takes a review to say 'well what are today's issues,' or 'what's the context of today and why kids aren't coming to school,'" Cruz said. "That's why I think it was good; it was a good time to stop, look and listen, and see if we're actually doing things as we should when it comes to truancy."



# LBJ and LASA welcome new staff to Jaguar family

The 2015-16 school year has brought numerous new faculty: 15 LBJ and ten LASA. Due to this influx of new teachers and staff, *The Liberator* staff decided to spotlight a few new teachers in this issue. The following teachers are also new this year but not featured here:

LBJ: Markus Fuller; Travis Harsch; Abby Lincoln-Hilling; Lavelle Lathan; Brittany Morgan; Keatra Nesbitt; Cesar Ronquillo; Mitchell Shotts; Morgan Ticknor; Daniel Vogt

LASA: Judith Cooper; Xuemei Huang; Marc Karch; Huma Munir; Ellen Owens; Helen Wilson

*all stories by Meagen Allgood & Carolina Gokingco; all photos by Meagen Allgood, Carolina Gokingco, Hannah Marks & Leila Nyandusi*



Andy Paulson, new LASA Academic Director, was a Houston and Pflugerville special education teacher for four years, and a math and science teacher in Del Valle for two more. Since then, he has been an assistant principal in Eanes for nine years and an assistant principal at Lake Travis High School for the last seven years. He said that, though he is not teaching

at LASA, he is excited to aid the student body and the faculty in any way they deem necessary.

"I am not teaching classes, just supporting teachers, placing students in challenging classes, making sure students are appropriately challenged and conduct themselves appropriately, and doing whatever I can to make LASA the best school in the nation," Paulson said.

Paulson said because he used to be a teacher, he understands the struggles that come with the job, and is willing to help the faculty whenever he can. He said that he plans to use his experience in the public school domain to make LASA a better place, while still keeping LASA traditions in mind.

"This is a special place and I am thoroughly enjoying my experience," Paulson said. "I am a teacher at heart, and have worked in public schools for over 20 years, and I look forward to learning the LASA way."

Quote to live by:  
"Always come with solutions to your problems."



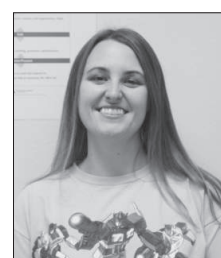
Curtis Clay, new LBJ English teacher, is also the assistant coach for football and track, and is also involved in LBJ's SEA Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Curtis was also previously an English teacher at Lanier High School, and said that reading and writing became his focus just after his final year of high school.

"I had always liked stories and reading, but it wasn't really until my senior year of high school that I had a teacher who really got me into a book and it really led to a lifelong love of reading," Clay said. "I studied broadcast journalism in college and I just saw that fit into the importance of writing and reading well, so I just went down that route."

Clay said that he is enjoying LBJ so far because of how passionate his students are about the school. He said that his students are always willing to put in the work for what they want to do, even if it involves them staying after school to do so.

"I like the school spirit more than anything," Curtis said. "I like how everybody really gets behind extracurricular activities, whether it's the band, and the dancing, the athletic teams are really like the school spirit."

Quote to live by:  
"Anything worth having in life is worth working for."



Meaghan Weichmann, new LBJ English and Reading teacher, said that literature is her passion. She said she loves her job because she is able to spread her love for reading and understanding literature with the entirety of LBJ's student body.

"I love English and reading," Weichmann said. "I love to read, so helping students learn to read or learn to read better is a big deal, and I think it's a skill that everybody has to have regardless of what you do after high school, and that's why I wanted to focus on that."

Weichmann used to live and work in Virginia, where she found Young Life, a non-denominational Christian youth group, that she said she loved working with. While she does not technically sponsor the club at LBJ, she said she enjoys being a part of the group because she gets to see how her students interact outside of the classroom.

"I actually am not sponsoring this year, but I'm working a little bit with Young Life," Weichmann said. "I'm working with them because I worked with the Young Life group when I lived in Virginia, and I really enjoyed doing it. It's a good way to get involved with teenagers outside of school, which is great, and I'm looking forward to working with them again this year."

Quote to live by:  
"Disney fixes everything."



Andrea Gaines, new LBJ World History teacher, is in her first full-year of teaching. After spending the spring semester of 2015 teaching at LBJ, she said that she wanted to stay and teach. She said that she feels connected to her students in that both she and them want to learn and be creative.

"The students are awesome," Gaines said. "They're brilliant students; they're really fun and creative."

Gaines also sponsors the social justice and debate clubs at LBJ. She said that she started these clubs in an attempt to give the students who are passionate about local issues an open forum in which to discuss their opinions. Gaines said that she realized that so many of her students had very strong feelings about issues going on in their community as well as around the world, and, because she enjoyed listening to their ideas and debating with them, thought that creating social justice and debate clubs would be good for her students.

"I have tons of students who are really passionate about issues and things that they want to see change in the world," Gaines said. "I think just a place for them to talk about that and plan ideas gets me most excited."

Quote to live by:  
"Be creative and compassionate."



Abby Lincoln-Hilling teaches Reading at LBJ. This is her first year of teaching. Last year, she was a Sylvan tutor at LBJ.

"It's a very big difference from being a tutor and a teacher," Lincoln-Hilling said. "It's a lot more work being a teacher."

Lincoln-Hilling said that her favorite part of teaching is the unexpected surprises, and that LBJ

offers a lot of them. "There is never a dull moment, but I just like helping kids," Lincoln-Hilling said. "Seeing someone make progress and the fact that I hopefully am a positive influence on all of these kids' lives and that it will help them become a better citizen."

Lincoln-Hilling also co-sponsors the newly formed LBJ Improv Club with LBJ history teacher Mitchell Shotts. The club has yet to have any official meetings, but Lincoln-Hilling has hopes for the future of the group. She said that she plans to use her experience as an improv theater performer and majoring in acting to create a troupe of students willing and able to perform throughout Austin.

"I hope for the group that it will be a performance group doing improvised comedy and that we will perform not just at LBJ, but at the many improv theaters throughout Austin," Lincoln-Hilling said.

Quote to live by:  
"Whether you think you can, or you think you can't, you're right."



Adam Escandell, new World History AP and World Geography teacher, was a Social Studies teacher at Harmony Science Academy North Austin, a charter school in Pflugerville for the last six years. He taught almost every Social Studies course at one point in time.

"There I learned to love World History," Escandell said. "Over

time, it's become my favorite course to teach, because of the unique opportunities it provides to students to learn about people and eras that often go ignored in the United States."

Escandell said that LASA is a really great and unique challenge from him as a teacher. He finds it exciting to have so many great students in one place. He hopes that he has given his students some food for thought. This year, he is getting involved in a few different clubs.

"I am going to be working with the Quiz Bowl club this year," Escandell said. "I've been a Quiz Bowl coach for five years now and love the opportunity it gives us to learn all kinds of new stuff. I'm also hosting a board game club in my room during lunch a few days a week. I have a nice collection of historical and other board games."

Quote to live by:  
"It's called survival of the fittest. If you can't slam with the best then jam with the rest."



Meaghan Hannon, new LASA French teacher and French club sponsor, is teaching at LASA for the second time. In spring 2013, Hannon was a UTeach Teacher for past French teacher Kimberley Jibladze, and said that the experience was one she will never forget. She said that she has a lot of experience working with students and discussing the French

language, but most of this teaching was with young children.

"I most recently worked with the Austin International School's summer immersion camps for children where I conducted lessons, games, and other activities exclusively in French," Hannon said.

She said that she came back because she loved teaching the students being able to rise to the challenges she posed for them. Hannon said that she wants her teaching experience to be one where the students learn and she learns too, and LASA presents this opportunity to her.

"I love teaching at LASA; I look forward to coming to school every day and interacting with my amazing students," Hannon said. "My previous teaching jobs were great experiences, but I always felt like whatever I planned was too challenging for the students. Now, my students at LASA are challenging me to be more creative, more engaging, and better than I've ever been."

Quote to live by:  
"Treat others the way you would like to be treated."



William Kiker, new LASA AP Calculus AB, Pre-Calculus AB, and Dual-Credit (UT) Statistics teacher, transferred to LASA this school year. He said because he loves math as much as he does, he has a lot of experience both studying and teaching math.

"I hold both a master's and a bachelor's degree in mathematics from The University of Texas at Austin where I was a graduate of the UTeach program," Kiker said. "I have previously taught Algebra 2, Pre-Calculus, and AP Statistics at Austin High School in their global studies academy."

He said that he had heard about LASA's reputation before he took the job, and that because of this reputation he was excited to start teaching. He said that he was ready to teach people with as much of a passion for math as he has.

"I [was] most looking forward to teaching at LASA because I get to interact with and learn from not only some of the most driven and talented students in Austin ISD, but also some of the most passionate and dedicated educators I will ever know," Kiker said. "I love the idea of LASA as a comprehensive high school where it is equally cool to be interested in both learning and extracurricular activities."

Quote to live by:  
"Problems worthy of attack prove their worth by hitting back!"

## Out with the old, in with the new, changes to SAT affect juniors

ALIA SHAUKAT  
Staff Writer

College Board is releasing a newly formatted SAT in March 2016. According to College Board's Director of Media Relations Maria Eugenia, the goal of the SAT is to be an accessible, accurate measure of a student's college readiness and this new format of SAT better reaches this objective.

"We believe that assessments must be connected to opportunity," Eugenia said. "To deliver on this commitment, the College Board is redesigning its assessments to focus on the few things that research and evidence show matter most for college and career readiness; to better reflect what students are learning in their high school classes; to be more open and transparent than ever before; and to better connect students to opportunities."

The new SAT will no longer have a quarter-point penalty for incorrect answers, nor obscure "SAT" words. It will have an optional English essay and four instead of five answer choices, making it more like the ACT.

But this change is not welcomed by all. LASA junior Varun Sudunagunta said that he has been studying for years and prefers the old format because he is already used to it.

"I personally like the old format better because I like the vocabulary; that's one of my strong suits," Sudunagunta said. "For some people, who probably haven't taken calculus yet, the new [version] will be best

because there is a non-calculator section, while people who have taken calculus have an overdependence on the calculator."

In order to prepare students for the new SAT, More Than a Teacher, a test preparation company based out of Austin, offered practice tests for LASA students in June and July of this year. LASA college counselor Jamie Kocian said that this has alleviated a lot of stress related to this change.

format, these new types of questions have challenged the test takers.

"We've been giving practice tests since May, so we've already gotten a lot of feedback," Tyner said. "Students agree that the math is much more difficult, but they're also glad that there are no more fill-in-the-blank vocabulary questions. A lot of students struggle with the 'evidence-based' questions on the reading section. These are questions that ask, 'Which choice provides

it does kind of suck that it's changing in my year because that's the test score that I'm going to need for college and there's a lot of data on it so it could be to my advantage or to my disadvantage," Sudunagunta said.

Tyner said that the practice materials that College Board and More Than a Teacher have made accessible should benefit those taking the new SAT in 2016. He said that what is important is practicing the test in the new format.

OLD	NEW
2400 points	1600 points
4 answer choices	5 answer choices
.25 pt wrong answer penalty	no wrong answer penalty
vocabulary questions	evidence-based reading
mandatory essay	optional essay
taken on paper	options for paper or computer administration
administered til Jan 2016	administered starting Mar 2016

graphic by Claire Cannatti

"Students should take all four official practice SAT, in the Official SAT Guide and available for free on the College Board website, and the one official practice PSAT on the College Board website," Tyner said. "I would also recommend taking challenging math classes and reading every day."

To prepare for the test, online learning platform Khan Academy is working with the College Board to give students personalized information about what they need to study based on their scores on the PSAT. Kocian said that she expects colleges to give a bit more leeway in terms of SAT

score this upcoming college application season, but that doesn't mean that students are allowed to be unprepared.

"Although I haven't really sat down with students one-on-one and asked them questions, More Than a Teacher is giving us positive feedback that the students are on track for how well they did last year, and in some cases even higher," Kocian said.

More Than a Teacher's Director of Tutoring Matt Tyner said that this new format poses new sorts of problems for the students to find solutions to. He said that, because students are used to the old

the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?"

Although the practice scores that LASA has been getting back have been relatively high, many students are still unhappy with the changes. Since the SAT score is considered an important part of a college application, Sudunagunta said that he is worried that being the first students to take this version could negatively impact their chances for acceptance.

"I think that that's a little bit unfair, and

"I think that allowing students to see what they need to work on and what they are strong at will help students prepare," Kocian said. "I think that colleges are going to give a bit more latitude in this process this year because it is a change for everyone, and it's going to change college admissions, so it's definitely going to be big for all of us."

# New restorative center on LBJ campus

SESHA McMINN  
News Editor

LBJ has created a restorative center on campus for the 2015-2016 school year. The restorative center is a safe space for students and teachers to talk about anything and feel safe while doing so. LBJ students who are part of the student leadership class have been trained to lead restorative circles and will lead and implement these circles in their classrooms. According to LBJ principal Sheila Henry, the restorative center is a much needed space for LBJ students to feel secure at school and always have someone to talk to.

"We can refer students to go there or they can just go there, just a safe place where they can talk about what they need," Henry said. "It's just going to be a safe place for kids. It's going to be one of those kind of places where kids are free to talk about anything. It's kind of like a student center where you can go... if you just want to."

LBJ student leadership teacher John Fletcher said he is a strong advocate of the restorative center and the support it offers to students.

"In the restorative center what happens is let's say a student has to have an intentional conversation to prevent them from getting into a potential altercation with someone else," Fletcher said. "They can do that so it's a tool that they can use to prevent things from happening. Then in terms of intervention, if there needs to be an intervention for a conflict, then you actually have a space for them to come."

Fletcher led a restorative circle demonstration with Austin Independent School District (AISD) superintendent Paul Cruz and members of the LBJ student leadership class. In the circle, students posed questions for everyone to reflect on and share out to the group. One of the questions posed asked everyone to reflect on a time when they felt judged.

"I've been judged by people not understanding my background because I was Dr. Cruz or whatever," Cruz said. "People [judge me by] not understanding my background and people think I was born [as] the Dr. Cruz [they know] when I wasn't."

In the restorative center, trained students lead restorative circles. LBJ junior Robby Joseph said they begin with an ice breaker, followed by a chance to state their values and then a discussion of times they have judged others and been judged by others. They close with saying something they have learned from others in the group.

"First we all check in, say something good about the week, something bad, say how your day is going," Joseph said. "We [go] around a circle and [talk] about our values and how we use them on a day to day basis to make LBJ better."

Cruz said that taking part in the restorative circle with LBJ students was his first experience doing so. He said that he was impressed with the questions the students came up with and had not been asked to think about these questions before.

"This is my first time participating, so thank you all... for creating a safe space because I don't think I have ever gotten these questions before in my life and I'm 50 years old," Cruz said. "That you're getting these questions out now and having that conversation, I mean when I went to high school a few years ago, I don't know that I ever had an adult that cared about that."

According to Joseph, he enjoys restorative circles because it gives him a chance to make students feel better if they are not having a good day and let them know that the students in the circle are there for each other like brothers and sisters.

"My favorite part about the circle is listening to the other students because I don't know everyone here yet, so when we do the circles it gives [me] a chance to listen, to get to know about their personal lives," Joseph said.

Henry said that one of the best aspects of the restorative

circles is that it gives LBJ students the chance to completely lead the discussion.

"I like when the kids take charge [and] just do it," Henry said. "Our kids have been really leading groups for adults over the summer. They have been doing a lot of training with adults. They are actually going to train us too. I have sat in a circle before and it's really a safe place where you can say what's on your mind, and then get those responses from your peers about how we can wrap ourselves about this and support you."

Joseph said his motivation for joining the restorative circle was to build a sense of community within LBJ and between students.

"I decided to be part of the restorative circle because it's a great chance to help out LBJ," Joseph said. "It's a good way to help out other students."

According to Cruz, the conversation he was part of in the restorative circle was quite different from the support he had when he was in high school.

"Some of the stuff you talked about today..., even when I was your age, there was no place to talk about it," Cruz said. "I don't know that anyone really recognized it or cared about it... in my high school, but to have leadership here is to say 'yes it's out there. We better put it on the table, have these conversations and build a better climate and culture and safe place for kids.' I think it's great and amazing."

Fletcher said that because the restorative center works with the entire LBJ campus, it is a successful tool in perpetuating values throughout the student body.

"The circles have gotten a good reputation because when you have values, it creates a space that is safe for us to share and a lot of times what happens with students and adults is we don't feel like it's a safe place to share, so we build community," Fletcher said. "The other piece of it is that restorative is a whole school approach... In this district we call it restorative practices. So every teacher will be trained on how to have these circles in their classrooms."



LBJ restorative circle member points to the center display in the middle of the restorative circle, the theme of which was based around student values and self-acceptance. photo by Sessa McMinn



AISD superintendent Paul Cruz joined LBJ Principal Sheila Henry and LBJ student restorative circle members to share their values and instances when they were judged and judged others. photo by Sessa McMinn

## Classroom community, new LBJ leadership club

GRACE BODINE  
Staff Writer

LBJ Career and Technology Education teacher Lawanda Epting has started advising a new club called the Family Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA). Epting said the club focuses on teaching young men and women to become leaders in their households and communities, as well as teaching students about real world issues.

"I think that it is important for this club to exist because yet again it focuses on family, work and societal issues, and those are things you don't get a lot," Epting said. "You get core classes that teach you English, history and math, but there are not a lot of clubs that actually focus on things such as domestic violence in the community, sex trafficking, walking for lupus or for any organization you believe in."

The club will be doing different community service projects and multiple competitions including Power One, STAR Events and Stop the Violence, each of which are events focused on helping the community and becoming better leaders. The competitions will be focused on leadership skills, career preparation and societal issues. Students will also be able to win various scholarships. Epting said that she hopes the group will learn a lot from their first experiences at these competitions that they can use to improve the club's performance in the future.

"Hopefully this year will be a learning experience for the years to come and as time goes forward we will actually compete in these competitions, win these competitions and bring some scholarship money to the students that really need it," Epting said.

LBJ seniors Diana Gonzalez and Isabel Trejo heard about the club during their classes with Epting and joined because it sounded interesting. Gonzalez said that she is excited to begin helping her community, and to have the opportunity to learn from new experiences such as the FCCLA competitions.

"[The club activities are] going to be new for me because I'm not used to helping out and doing community service," Gonzalez said. "Then doing competitions like debates and other stuff is a pretty good opportunity to learn."

Trejo said that she is most excited about travelling with the club to different cities for competitions and other team events. Her goal is to visit the colleges in the cities they go to.

"Since we will be going to see colleges, I would like to possibly be able to apply and join one of them," Trejo said.

Epting said her personal goal for FCCLA this year is to make sure that everyone in the club, including herself, knows FCCLA's official competition rules so they can participate in their first competitions correctly. She also said that she would love to expand the club and increase the number of members, possibly reaching out to LASA students in the future.

"A bigger goal for the future would be to have everyone on campus involved, not just LBJ students but have LBJ and LASA come together once I get [the club] going," Epting said.

There are currently about ten LBJ students participating in the club. FCCLA will compete in their first area event Oct. 27, where they plan to learn more about leadership and the competition process in general. Epting said she is excited that FCCLA is already going so well, and that she hopes their first competition will go just as nicely.

"I'm excited to get it started, I'm really looking forward to that," Epting said. "I hope to get as many members as possible as I said earlier. [I'm] just excited to go compete and bring home the gold as they say."

## Trading spaces, LBJ and LASA swap rooms, move tech classes to portables

MEAGEN ALLGOOD  
News Editor

LASA assistant principal Marc Hernandez said that this school year came with a lot of classroom changes, such as moving two LBJ classrooms upstairs, and LASA's Languages Other than English (LOTE) classes to the portables. According to Hernandez, these classroom shifts were due to spatial equity and resource inequality between LBJ and LASA.

"One of the things we want to do in reference to changing schedules and changing classes is keep departments together," Hernandez said. "A lot of our foreign language classes were moved out, and not many of them were upstairs anyway, but now they can collaborate, they can have their Planning Learning Community, and then they can get together and work as well."

LBJ Academy Director Bradley Clark said that the LASA LOTE, journalism and design courses were moved to the portables because there were originally more LBJ courses in the portables.

"It was a matter of space and equity," Clark said. "There were more [LBJ] classes out in the portables, than were LASA, so I think the principals and the district administrators tried to divide those a little more equally."

Journalism and design classes were also moved out to the portables. This involved moving computers outside, some of which were bought recently after school started and have yet to be delivered. Yearbook teacher Yasemin Florey said that she was a bit worried about the move, especially considering how spotty the Internet connection is out in the portables, but it has been working out fairly well so far, she said.

"It's been difficult but you know, life is difficult," Florey said. "It's adjustment, and the students have done a great job of adjusting; I'm adjusting. I think we're over the hump and when we get all of our computers, life will be wonderful."

Moving the journalism classes out to the portables also involved moving the Electronic Magazine (E-Zine) courses. Though the freshmen never experienced having their journalism classes inside the main building, LASA freshman Caleb Caviness said that he likes having the classes in the portables.

"It allows for you to get a more one on one feel because the classrooms are definitely much smaller, so the teacher is talking to everyone at once," Caviness said. "They can talk to one person, but someone across the room can hear it, which I think is kind of good because it helps the teachers and the students connect more."

While LASA was moving LOTE and journalism classes out to the portables so they could continue to be close together, the two LBJ classrooms that were moved upstairs do not have specific departments they are a part of. Hernandez said that these classes were moved upstairs in order to keep LBJ and LASA using equal amounts of the building, and he also said that, considering these two classes are not part of specific departments, it likely made the move easier.

"So this year we had some requests from LBJ and they asked if they could have some of our classrooms and shift things around to maintain some class equity," Hernandez said. "So that's really the main reason why some LBJ classes were moved upstairs."

LBJ's Early College Center and AVID classes were moved upstairs. According to Clark, having these classes upstairs has integrated LASA and LBJ, creating a stronger community than that of last year.

"I think our students like to be upstairs," Clark said. "I think they like to interact with the LASA students and staff members, so I think that as far as upstairs, it has been a real positive impact [on LBJ]."

Classes were also moved around in the dungeon, where LASA science teachers David Walker and Tim Fennell's classrooms were moved upstairs and replaced by LBJ robotics and health science courses. Clark said that having this extra lab space has given LBJ a great learning opportunity.

"The dungeon I know has really helped with our Health Sciences lab, which we created out of room 15," Clark said. "We have a classroom up front and a lab in the back, so that has provided our students with a great learning environment."

Due to LBJ moving into Walker and Fennell's old rooms, LASA physics teacher John Stormberg's old classroom was split in half and now holds their classes. LASA biotechnology teacher Joseph Oleniczak's room is now shared by Stormberg, Oleniczak and LASA chemistry teacher Bob Chin. Stormberg said that this has become an

issue because the new classrooms are small and the resources must be shared.

"The thing is science teachers are sharing rooms, so nobody has their own room as much anymore," Stormberg said. "[When] sharing rooms, nobody can really do what they want with the rooms, so if you're sharing rooms that kind of puts limits on what

*The principals and the district administrators tried to divide [the classes] a little more equally.*

-LBJ Academy Director Bradley Clark

you can do."

According to Hernandez, it was necessary to split the classroom so they could keep all of the science department classes inside. Though the space is smaller, having the classes inside allows the classes to continue doing experiments which they would not be able to do outside. Stormberg's classroom is the only classroom that was split upstairs.

"We tried to find classrooms upstairs that were big enough to split into [two] classrooms, [so] we [would not] have certain science courses in the portables," Hernandez said. "It's really difficult to have science courses [in the portables] because they need science materials, and they need running water and certain ventilations when they are working on labs. It's really challenging to do those kind of things in the portables, so it makes most sense to have them in the large science classrooms. Stormberg's old classroom had those kind of facilities already in place so it was easiest to use his classroom to combine two different classrooms."

Stormberg said that he understands why the classroom was split, but that it is difficult to do labs that involve chemicals and other substances because of the lack of space, ventilation and clean-up materials. He said that the class will still be able to manage with the space they were given.

"I mean it's definitely doable, you teach the best you can in whatever situation you have, but this classroom is too small and it is much harder to do labs," Stormberg said. "The harder it is to do things the less is going to get done, especially for a live class, but we're managing."



# MINDPOPPIN'

LASA students gain arts internships through their fellowships with MINDPOP

**CHELSEA BANAWIS**  
*Entertainment Editor*

After the intense application process for limited positions, a group of ten high school students, including LASA seniors Maya Haws-Shaddock and Antonio Skillicorn, meet their employer for the first time. The fellowship position they earned was with MINDPOP, a local nonprofit organization, who over the summer accepted ten students with creative aspirations and coordinated with internships around Austin to put them in a field related to those interests. Austin Soundwaves, who provides music education to schools that lack the necessary funds throughout Austin, employed LASA senior Maya Haws-Shaddock to be their graphic designer.

"They have a Fellowship program, which I participated in, where they pair creative students with local arts organizations to highlight and encourage students to explore arts in the professional field," Haws-Shaddock said.

MINDPOP's mission is to promote creative learning in education and to ensure that every child benefits from this. According to Haws, they are involved with training for AISD staff, helping plan and commission arts education across AISD and providing grants.

"I was designing a lot of promotional materials for Austin Soundwaves, getting graphic design and marketing experience," Haws-Shaddock said. "I designed a sponsorship packet, some flyers, and helped build a website for Fall Into Music."

For LASA senior Antonio Skillicorn, his interests with architecture led him to GO collaborative, architectural works in development. to Skillicorn, was able to him the of articulating was able to him to interesting "Before internships us learn interviews, us come out of our shells, and set up a lot of opportunities," Skillicorn said.

Aside from working hand-in-hand with their internships, MINDPOP was able to teach them about professional presence, making resumes and how to be a leader. Haws-Shaddock said that partnering with MINDPOP was much more.

"MINDPOP has exposed me to the professional side of the creative industry-- what goes on behind the scenes of the movies, plays or shows," Haws-Shaddock said. "It showed me that you don't have to be some crazy, eclectic artsy person to thrive in this field. You can be a type A like myself that just has an affinity for the creative side of business."

"MINDPOP has exposed me to the professional side of the creative industry-- what goes on behind the scenes of the movies, plays or shows."

-LASA senior Maya Haws-Shaddock

a firm that community According MINDPOP to teach importance oneself and introduce many new people. we got our they helped how to do they helped



MINDPOP CEO, Brent Hasty, talks with "Austin Way" magazine and "Generous Art" at donor event.



MINDPOP interns, including LASA seniors Maya Haws-Shaddock and Antonio Skillicorn, pose with their mentors. Photos courtesy of MINDPOP

## ACP Celebrates 10th Anniversary of LBJ/LASA Theater

The Alley Cat Players celebrate their company's tenth year with revivals productions of every previous show



LBJ/LASA theatre teacher Melissa Alexander-Driscoll made a quilt made of ten years worth of production t-shirts, including "The Boys in the Photograph," "Grease," "The Brothers Karamazov" and "The Outsider." Photograph by Chelsea Banawis

**EMMA JANE HOPPER**

*Staff Writer*

Ten years ago, the LASA/LBJ theater troupe known as the Alley Cat Players (ACP) didn't exist. No one, not even the LBJ alumnus-turned theater teacher, remembered the old name for the theater troupe. When the previous teacher turned the reins over to the current teacher, Melissa Alexandra-Driscoll in 2005, ACP was born.

Now it's 2015, making it the 10th anniversary for the LBJ/LASA theater program, and ACP have something special for students, tech and actors alike. LASA senior and ACP

Vice President Nick Blacklock said that what makes this season different is that every production is a repeat.

"Most seasons have... a bunch of shows that have no particular connection, but this season we're actually pulling a bunch of old shows that we've already done, and we're trying to make it a huge big thing..." Blacklock said.

"We're bringing back the ensemble of the ACP... And we're trying to shout-out to old alumni who were in all these old plays and we're just trying to revitalize the family of the theater."

LASA/LBJ theater teacher Alexander-Driscoll said that this year is special because it is a revival season. ACP President Corey Cochran-Lepiz said that ACP is putting on "Footloose," "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "A Very Potter Musical" this year, as well as a currently undecided UIL play.

"Every single one we've done before," Cochran-Lepiz said. "They're going to be a lot of fun for hopefully the people who are performing and the audience as well. They're great."

The first of the lineup, "Footloose," held tryouts at the end of last school year. The cast labored through the last week of summer at theater boot camp, an intensive week-long rehearsal for the cast and crew.

"We all come to rehearsal every single day of the week," Blacklock said. "There [is] a lot of work that goes into those rehearsals... We usually split off, break off, there's people singing in the choir room, there are people dancing out on stage [and] there are people working scenes in the classroom."

"Footloose" opens in early October, but after that there are still two more shows to work on or watch. "A Midsummer's Night Dream," which holds significance as the first production put on by the ACP and directed

by Alexander-Driscoll, has recently held auditions and assembled its cast. "A Very Potter Musical," the highest grossing production put on by ACP despite not charging admission and instead accepting donations, is the spring musical for this year.

"We're bringing back the ensemble of the ACP... And we're trying to shout-out to old alumni who were in all these old plays and we're just trying to revitalize the family of the theater."

- LASA senior Nick Blacklock

ACP is not only putting on plays relevant to ACP history to celebrate their tenth anniversary. The officers are also planning to put on game nights for the ACP members in an effort to create more of a community.

"We're trying to make it so everyone feels homey," Cochran-Lepiz said. "At rehearsal, whether it be tech or acting, I know that

someone's got my back. Someone's looking out for me to make sure that I have my lines right, that the platform I'm building is built right, make sure everything's going along to plan. I'm not in there by myself."

Ten years of that homey feeling are marked by ten years of banquets and lock-ins and names of graduating seniors painted on the theater classroom walls according to Alexander Driscoll.

"When I got here... I said [to the kids] what would you like to see?" Alexander-Driscoll said. "And a lot of the things they came up with were like instilling traditions, and [choosing] a name."

ACP would not exist if not for Alexander-Driscoll, who has been here for all of it. She even helped named the troupe, truly forming the ACP of today. Alexander-Driscoll said that sometimes it feels like she's in her first year of teaching, and sometimes it feels like she's been here for half a century.

"Sometimes...[it feels] surreal, and there are times it just sort of feels normal," Alexander-Driscoll said. "Here it does kind of feel really special... When you first start being a teacher you always dream of finding a home, but a lot of teachers bounce around for a couple decades before they stay somewhere longer than five [years]. I feel really blessed and lucky that I found the home here."

## TOP 5 Most Embarrassing Moments in High School

By Kenza McKerrihan

**"I decided to wear my jaguar onesie for spirit...but I wore a shirt and spandex underneath... Halfway through the day I forgot I wasn't wearing real pants so as I stood up to do my Spanish presentation I casually stepped out of the jumpsuit."** - LASA junior Mary Farell

LASA faculty administration encourages spirit but also encourages their students to keep their pants on; unfortunately you can't always get everything you want. In this case the pants were sacrificed, but that's okay because our football team would never have been able to win all those games without dedicated fans. You're the true MVP, Mary!

**"So I fall asleep in the easy chair and I wake up and Dave Journeay is walking into the room and it's the next morning... I slept there all night."** - LASA teacher David Walker

A lot of LASA students complain of lack of sleep, too much homework and general fatigue. It turns out the teachers, or at least Mr. Walker, feel the same way. I think if we all just never left we'd get a lot more rest and learn to really embrace each other if we spent every waking (and sleeping I guess) moment together. Who cares that we would all be chronic outfit repeaters.

**"John insists on doing the plunging himself--out of some perverse toilet chivalry"** - LASA senior Ethan Russo

Now McDermott Scholar at UTD, John Chan, and Quiz Bowl hero Ethan Russo may be two of LASA's smartest but when it comes to basic home skills they are far from geniuses. It took an extensive Google search and many failed plunging attempts to unclog their hotel toilet. Maybe Quiz Bowl should have a home-ec category.

**"One time Mr. Sharp sent a kid to my room with a boyfriend application and fake flowers."** - LASA teacher Jessica Michlik

Many students wish they looked as young and hip as Ms. Michlik, some wish they could just be Ms. Michlik and it looks like a few just want to cut to the chase and date Ms. Michlik. Whether this scenario was extremely flattering or just extremely awkward is hard to know. I wonder if this is how all new LASA teachers are welcomed.

**"During my presentation to the engineers for Sci-tech...[they] told my group that our device had no chance of working and on cue I fainted...then a few minutes after that I threw up"** - LASA senior Chloe Carlander

If you're a freshman and in fear of the dreaded engineer presentation in Sci-tech, or really anyone one who isn't ready for a presentation, Chloe has a foolproof strategy for you. It turns out all you have to do is faint a little and then throw up in a proximity of two or three feet to our teacher. I promise you'll at least get an extension until you're a little less volatile.



Graphic by Meris McHaney

**BETHANY BISSELL**  
Staff Writer

The Paramount Theatre stands on Congress Avenue proudly, its red and gold marquee advertising its events. The theatre inside is large and ornate with a rounded ceiling, a mezzanine and a deep red curtain before the stage that has hosted legendary performers from Harry Houdini to George Carlin. On Oct. 11 it officially turns 100 years old, and the Paramount has been celebrating in many ways. Patrick H. Cantilo, a development board member, assisted in organizing the celebrations.

“The theatres are blessed with a fantastic professional staff that is largely responsible for

the design and execution of the wonderful activities through which we celebrate our centennial,” Cantilo said, “However, the board and its committees have been deeply involved in much of the planning for these exceptional events. Of course all matters involving budget issues are presented to and approved by the board’s finance and executive committees and the board itself. The development committee is also involved in the planning of many of these activities.”

According to Jim Ritts, Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director of the Paramount Theatre, the celebrations include closing Congress Avenue for a party for 1500 people, six private parties and a Grammy Award-winning performance by Patty Griffin for 1300 people inside the Paramount. The largest of the celebrations is a historically accurate reconstruction of the Paramount’s blade, a sign that juts out from the building to attract foot traffic from the 1930s; it will be green and yellow and hold 1400 LED light bulbs. The blade was lit for the first time on Sep. 23. On Oct. 11, it will be lit while it is installed for the first time.

“During the initial planning discussions that began three years ago for 100th Year Paramount Theatre Celebration, we wanted to identify a dramatic symbol of the Austin Theatre Alliance’s commitment to historic preservation,” Ritts said. “We had always wondered exactly what were the circumstances that resulted in the Paramount blade ‘disappearing’ in 1963/64. Those initial discussions led to

research and investigations. The more we discovered, the more we began to believe that we should make bringing back the Paramount blade our centennial quest. We think of it as the ‘candle on our 100th year birthday cake.’”

The Paramount Youth Theatre Company, a partnership with Travis County to hire high school students, also celebrated the anniversary over the summer. The ensemble wrote and performed a production around the theme of 100 at the State Theatre. It was titled “The Century Project.” The members of the company, including LASA senior Red Ellisor, did extensive research. They interviewed a woman who had recently turned 100 on what it was like to be that age and John Bernardoni, who restored the

She performed a monologue about her first love for them and the company gave her the confidence to perform it in front of an audience.

“My company was very accepting and encouraging and they helped give me the courage to give that monologue to a live audience, some of which were family members I was not out to yet,” Ellisor said. “This was also my first job, which was pretty amazing, because it helped give me experience in a working environment, even if the job was creating art.”

The Paramount has been a pillar of the Austin community for 100 years. It has assisted arts education, housed world premieres and personally impacted many people including Cantilo.

“Undoubtedly my favorite Paramount experience is that my wife Judy and I were married on stage in August 2013,” Cantilo said, “However, beyond that I have long loved the wide variety of entertainment and cultural events that the theatres bring to our community, including the robust community and educational outreach activities that introduce performing arts to youths that might otherwise never have that element in their education.”

LASA senior Anna Fredland has performed with the youth company and said her most memorable events were the productions they put on.

“I think that The Paramount has helped to preserve an appreciation for film and theatre beyond what’s currently playing in the movie theatres,” Fredland said. “Not only that, the Paramount Theater itself is a direct link to our past that hasn’t been drastically altered. 100 years ago it was a house of entertainment, and it remains so today.”

“The theatres are blessed with a fantastic professional staff that is largely responsible for the design and execution of the wonderful activities through which we celebrate our centennial.”

-Patrick H. Cantilo

theatre in the 1970s.

“These interviews were instrumental in the creation of our show, and we wouldn’t have been able to have them without the Paramount resources,” Ellisor said, “It was also amazing to have access to a professional lighting and sound crew, because even though our show was pretty good by itself, the addition of the tech elements made it amazing and so much more interesting to look at.”

The performance featured several scenes around the theme. One of these scenes was “100 Years of Protest.” It included a song that some of the ensemble members wrote. Ellisor assisted in adapting the lyrics. Her version was adopted for the verses and hers and another student’s was used for the chorus.

“When we performed it, I sang the verses while playing piano, and then Dylan and I had a sort of call and response for the chorus,” Ellisor said.

The song addressed social and political topics that had been protested in Austin over the past 100 years. Towards the end, the song focused on the LGBTQ+ movement.

“It was a beautiful and impactful part of the show that everyone really enjoyed doing,” Ellisor said. “We painted all the protest signs ourselves, and at the end everyone sang the chorus and then flipped over their signs to reveal rainbows and pride flags and signs that said ‘love is love’ that Zoey and I painted ourselves after rehearsal one day. That piece was amazing and a pleasure to perform.”

According to Ellisor, the company is very encouraging.



LASA senior Red Ellisor performs her monologue about her first love while performing with the Youth Theater Company. photo courtesy of Axel B Photography

## Ya Bacon Me Dance

### ACP puts on first production of 2015-2016 theater season, “Footloose”

**EMMA MORANQUI & CHELSEA BANAWIS**  
Staff Writer & Entertainment Editor

The crazy eighties and those infamous dancing feet are coming to this year’s first theater production. The LASA/LBJ theater group, the Alley Cat Players (ACP), are putting on a musical performance of “Footloose,” the famous 1984 movie starring Kevin Bacon. LASA junior Seamus Quinn, who acted in ACP’s last theater production of Boys in the Photograph, will play Chuck Cranston, a main antagonist of the play.

“[“Footloose” is] a celebration of one of the older shows we get to do,” Quinn said. “We get to do a cool revival of it this year and pay homage to some people who have done it before. It’s cool for the alumni of ACP. They get to see things maybe they were in or maybe a part of and see them [reenacted] by today’s actors.”

According to Quinn, “Footloose” brings a lively show with bigger numbers and songs that people will recognize and like to sing along to. The opening night will be on Oct. 9th and run through the following week on Oct. 10th, 16th, 17th and 19th.

“I’ve always loved the movie,” Quinn said. “I’ve always thought of Kevin Bacon as one of my idols in life. I thought it would be fun to give this [musical] a shot too and see what it would turn out to be.”

Chorus auditions for the musical took place on Wednesday, September 2nd, while lead role auditions were held before school ended last year. LASA senior Nick Blacklock, who will play Reverend Shaw Moore, went to the lead role auditions.

“Auditions were pretty stressful, especially because they were held on the last week of school when so much work was due,” said Blacklock. “[But] the theater

community is very supportive of one another and feels like a family. I always feel like at least someone has my back at rehearsals.”

After acting in many ACP productions since her freshmen year, LASA senior Campbell Stuart, who is playing Ethel McCormack, said that acting in Footloose and seeing it come to an end will leave a hole in her heart.

“Footloose is such a big musical, it’s one that everyone knows,” Stuart said. “Last year when we did “Boys in the Photograph,” [it’s not] really a name that’s out there as much as “Footloose.” [Based on] the fact that Footloose is so big and such a big production, I think more people are going to want to come see it. It is a really fun musical because all of the songs are amazing and it’s so 1980s.”



Graphic by Laney Phillips

**AUSTIN CITY LIMITS**

**TOP SHOWS**

FOO FIGHTERS - THE STRICKES - DISCLOSURE - FLORENCE + THE MACHINE - DRAKE  
DEADMAU5 - BASSNECTAR - ALT-J - HOZIER - OF MONSTERS AND MEN - VANCE JOY  
THE WEEKND

P. TERRY'S AMY'S ICE CREAMS MIGHTY CONE  
JUICELAND AUSTIN EATS AUSTIN'S PIZZA  
TORCHY'S TACOS CHI'LANTRO STUBB'S BAR-B-QUE  
EAST SIDE KING

“THE PERSON I AM MOST EXCITED TO SEE IS DRAKE WHO IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE ARTISTS OF ALL TIME. THE REASON I AM ATTENDING THIS FESTIVAL IS BECAUSE I LOVE GOING TO CONCERTS AND BEING OUTDOORS.” - NOEMI SANCHEZ, LBJ SENIOR

“MY DAD IS THE CEO OF MAINE ROOT. WE HAVE A BOOTH AT ACL STARTING WHEN I WAS ABOUT SIX OR SEVEN I STARTED WORKING THERE, BUT I WAS BASICALLY JUST SCOOPING ICE INTO CUPS... JUST LITTLE KID STUFF. IN MIDDLE SCHOOL MY PARENTS WERE LIKE ‘OH YOU SHOULD BRING FRIENDS TO WORK’ SO I BROUGHT A COUPLE OF FRIENDS AND IT TURNED INTO WHERE NOW WE RUN THE WHOLE SHOW. WE CHANGE OUT THE BOXES TO GET THE STRIP IN THE SODA. WE GO GET ICE AND DO ALL OF THE CASHIER STUFF BASICALLY. WE DO EVERYTHING AND AT THIS POINT IT’S A GOOD SOURCE OF INCOME FOR ALL THE KIDS AND WE END UP WORKING 9-10 HOURS OVER TWO WEEKS WHICH IS A LOT.” - ALEX SEIBER, LASA SENIOR

“ONE OF MY FRIENDS FROM SUMMER CAMP IS COMING FROM OUT OF TOWN, AND WE ARE GOING TOGETHER SO I’M REALLY EXCITED ABOUT THAT. I REALLY LIKE 21 PILOTS, WALK THE MOON AND ALL OF THE ARTISTS [ACL] HAS A REALLY GOOD LINEUP THIS YEAR.” - MARCELLA CANNATTI, LASA SOPHOMORE

GRAPHIC BY MERIS MCHANAY INFO BY MAX IZBY

PHOTO COURTESY OF ACP STG.COM

# Jags showing their swag

*LBJ and LASA students celebrate spirit week and homecoming in purple*



1

LASA senior Lisbet Rodriguez and LBJ sophomore Maria Salgado await the music to begin their First Ladies dance routine at the Sept. 25 homecoming pep rally. Rodriguez said that hip hop is one of her favorite genres. "Hip hop is fun to perform and it really gets the crowd going," Rodriguez said. photo by yearbook staff

2

LBJ senior and homecoming queen Cynthia Sanchez jumps into her splits after hearing she won queen while LBJ senior and homecoming king Luis Gomez looks on. "I told my friends... and I was like, 'If I win, I'm going to jump into my splits' and they were like, 'No you're not, you better not,'" Sanchez said. photo by Chelsea Banawis

3

LASA sophomore Nirali Devgan and LASA senior Elizabeth Frey add finishing touches to a homecoming sign just hours before the dance begins. "It was really fun, but extremely chaotic," Frey said. "I ended up spending like six hours setting up, but it was worth it in the end because everyone really enjoyed the dance this year." photo by Chelsea Banawis

4

LASA seniors Maisie Sajbel and Carter Pace exchange a hug after Sajbel was announced as homecoming queen. "I was so nervous and when my name was called it didn't even register at first," Sajbel said. "When it did, I was super excited and all I can remember thinking is, 'I hope Carter is my king.'" photo by Chelsea Banawis

5

LASA sophomores Caroline Diaz and Ames Jewart pose wearing wings for 'Wing Wednesday' during spirit week. "It was really fun to wear wings and to see everyone else's wings," Diaz said. "And it was cool because you could match with someone else." photo by Carolina Gokingco

6

LBJ sophomore Josh Ford takes his turn at a Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA)-sponsored activity with other LBJ football fans at the tailgate before the homecoming game. "My favorite part was the ladderball game we had because I'm a big fan of tailgating games," Sam Pastor, LASA FCA president, said. photo by Chelsea Banawis

*top photo by Chelsea Banawis*