

VOLLEYBALL PASSED TO NEW COACH



Jaguars fought it out Sept. 9 and took a difficult loss against Crockett after playing three close sets. The Jags are now 2-5 with eight games left in the season. photo by Olivia Lee

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FORENSICS THINKS INSIDE THE BOX

Thank America's Teachers awarded LASA teacher Amy Moore a \$2500 grant for a storage container which will house mock crime scenes. photo by Quinn Simpson



see page 7

IM[PAC]TFUL ACTING

LASA senior Tristan Ketcham plays Mr. Darcy in the Alley Cat Players' (ACP) production of Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice". Their performances were held in the black box theater of the AISD Performing Arts Center (PAC). photo by Quinn Simpson

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the liberator

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South magnet attracts ongoing discussion

ENCE MORSE
News Editor

Currently, LASA is the only magnet program in the Austin area, but that could all change soon. Members of the AISD board of trustees have continued to deliberate about the possibility of a magnet school in South Austin. Austin Independent School District (AISD) Assistant Superintendent of High Schools Craig Shapiro said that originally, the call for a South Austin magnet school came from LASA families located in South Austin who were concerned about the travel time.

"Some of the students that go to LASA come from the southwest of the city and as traffic is increased, kids are in buses longer and the routes are getting longer," Shapiro said. "They're saying 'Hey, LASA [is] a wonderful school, [but] the travel time [is long]... couldn't we have one closer to us?' That's been discussed for a while."

While building the idea for the magnet school, AISD has considered several options, including a comprehensive magnet like LASA or a specialized magnet in areas such as law and civics, world languages, and health science.

"I know that they've discussed it being specialized, they've discussed the science, they've discussed the computer science, they've discussed entrepreneurship," said LASA Principal Stacia Crescenzi. "Honestly, I'm not taking bets on anything at that point. I'm really not. That's where I would like them to listen to the community and truly ask, 'What does the community want?'"

Community input regarding this and other issues surrounding the magnet, such as the actual high school that would be the location of the magnet, Shapiro said, was an important part of this AISD decision-making process. Crescenzi said she was glad the district was reaching out to the community.

"I guess my hope and my expectations for anything that the district would do in terms of the new school, would be [first, that they] meet the needs of that particular community," Crescenzi said. "As well [that] they do... something that also meets the needs of our mission to give choice to students and provide high [level], rigorous academic programming."

A new magnet school and its expansion of options for AISD students would not heavily affect enrollment at LASA, Crescenzi said, because the amount of qualified students turned away from LASA and the amount of qualified students who don't apply to LASA because of travel concerns are both significant.

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VOICES of TEXAS

ROXY BONAFONT
Editor-in-Chief

Voices of Texas is a new initiative aimed at improving voter turnout in Texas, especially among students and young people. The initiative launched this summer with the announcement of a video competition for high school and college students emphasizing the use of social media as a platform for advocacy. Voices of Texas was founded by Breakthrough Austin board member Dr. Hector Ruiz in the interest of utilizing peer-to-peer interaction to promote voter turnout and is run by LASA alumni Daniel Reyes and Joseph Ramirez. Reyes, now a political science major at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, said that the program is unique in its focus on voter awareness rather than voter registration.

"What we want to do is just spark that interest or spark that conversation, or even plant that seed that this is why you should be doing this, this is why you should be physically engaged, this is why it's good," Reyes said. "Even if you have excuses like, 'Oh, my vote doesn't count' or anything like that, our program is mainly to make people aware of what they have at hand."

Students interested in participating in the Voices of Texas contest are asked to submit a minute-long video that advocates the importance of voting. Reyes said submissions will be evaluated primarily on how creative and viral they are, since the fundamental objective is for the content created by students to reach as large an audience as possible and have a meaningful impact. After the general election in November, the videos will be evaluated and scholarships of \$5,000, \$3,000 and \$1,000 will be awarded to the creators of the most impressive submissions.

"We tell students, 'You don't have to have a fancy camera or editing software, all we want is something with a good message that gets to other students or other people who are non-voting,'" Reyes said. "The good, the beauty thing about this is you can submit as many videos as you can, as you want, and we see it... not as chance to win but as inspiration to other people."

Reyes and Ramirez brought the initiative to the attention

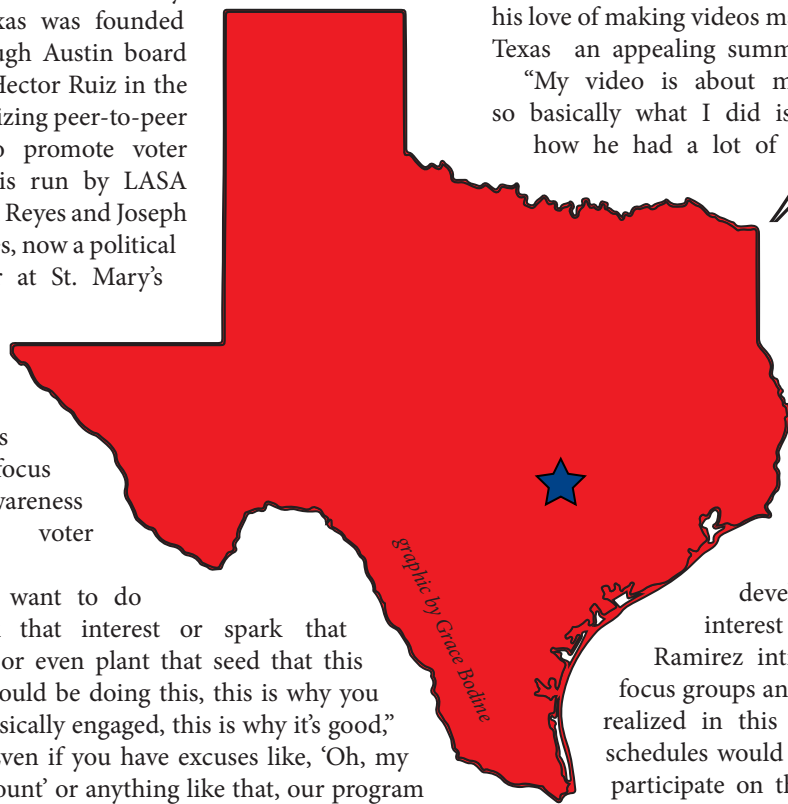
of several LASA over the summer while guidance and interest, and since received a number of from LASA students. One is LASA junior Sawyer Timco, his love of making videos made Texas an appealing summer "My video is about my so basically what I did is how he had a lot of

teachers and staff seeking out the contest has submissions such student who said that Voices of project. dog Polar, and I talked about different opinions on stuff, but he can't vote and you can so you should vote," Timco said. "I think it's important because it is a way to show your views on things that can actually change things versus just talking about it which doesn't really do anything.... [W]hen you vote you can actually make a change in the world."

While continuing to develop the initiative and generate interest over the summer, Reyes and Ramirez introduced Voices of Texas in focus groups and workshops. Reyes said they realized in this process that students' busy schedules would make it difficult for them to participate on their own time. To make the contest more accessible and effective, Reyes and Ramirez are hoping to integrate Voices of Texas into classroom curriculums. They recently pitched the initiative to social studies department heads from around AISD, and Reyes said the response was positive. He hopes that exposure to a project of this nature will empower students to interact with each other constructively instead of being lectured on the democratic system by adults and other authority figures.

"What we figured is that, there's no way these kids are gonna do this for extra credit, but we figured if we at least can put it in your curriculum... I think it would be more appealing," Reyes said. "We didn't want it like, 'Oh just another dang assignment.' I think it's relevant in today's political cycle because of specifically the 2016 election; it's unprecedented, too negative, and now you see the effects of voter turnout and voter efficacy, in students."

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MR. RISINGER GOES TO CLEVELAND

KENZA MCKERRIHAN
Staff Writer

Decked out in red, white and blue shirts paired with cowboy hats, the members of the Texas delegation are hard to miss. Among the bustling crowd of Texans clutching signs that shout "Make America Great Again" is LASA government teacher Ronny Risinger. On July 18, Risinger was in Cleveland, Ohio to attend the 2016 Republican National Convention (RNC) because of his deep roots in the Republican Party. "While I was going to law school in Houston in 1992, the Republican National Convention was held there," Risinger said. "At that time, I was already a staunch Republican, but I was not active in the party. While reading the paper one day, I noticed an ad from the GOP requesting volunteers to serve as ushers and other helpers. I convinced my wife to sign up and voila...we were both ushers at the 1992 Republican Convention."

Risinger has been an active member of the Republican party ever since the 1992 Republican Convention. He has had the opportunity to experience and witness the political process up close and personal.

"After waiting politely, I asked [George W. Bush] for a photograph to which he graciously agreed," Risinger said. "Over twenty years later, I printed out that photo and gave it to a friend that worked closely with President Bush (43) and he autographed it for me. That photo sits behind my desk in my classroom. A great memento from my time volunteering at the 1992 GOP National Convention."

Risinger has been a member of the Williamson County Republican Party since 1998, and was also a member of the Electoral College in 2008. He said he felt gratified to know that the other delegates had such faith in him so that he could be one of the 155 Republicans to represent Texas at the Republican National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio.

"[For] the first vote at the Republican National Convention, my vote was announced as supporting Trump," Risinger said. "So, the bound Delegate count alone pushed Trump over the top and he became the Republican nominee. Of course, it must be said that being elected as a Delegate only allows you to go to the National Convention. You have to pay for all of your own expenses, though. Depending on airfare, rooming arrangements, meals, and souvenirs, one can expect to spend between \$2000 - \$3000 on this adventure."

Risinger said that one is handed four credentials when arriving to the Convention, one for each day. The credential grants you entrance to the secure perimeter around the Convention, which was at the Quicken Loans arena in Cleveland this year, and eventually the Convention Hall. Being a delegate means you can walk anywhere on the arena floor. Risinger said he spent his time walking around the arena meeting famous officials or media members.

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Risinger stands with other delegates from Texas at the Republican National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio this July. photo courtesy of Ronny Risinger

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

Editorial Content:

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

The Editorial Boards and its Functions:

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

The Editorial board will:

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

Viewpoints:

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

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

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

Non-Staff Contributors: Bylined contributions are welcome.

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

Sources:

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

Note: *The Liberator* is an open forum.

STAFF STANCE

[Insure] healthcare for all people

Even though the World Health Organization has declared that healthcare is a fundamental human right and the United Nations High Commission on Human Rights has found that the right to healthcare and human rights are inextricably linked, in the United States in 2016 we are still debating whether or not individuals' access to healthcare is a right or a privilege.

We, the *Liberator* staff, believe that healthcare is indeed a basic human right. No one should have to pay for the care necessary to be a functioning human being, and everyone deserves medical assistance when needed no matter their ability to pay. We cannot be a thriving democracy, we cannot live true to our constitutional principles of life liberty and the pursuit of happiness, we cannot hold other nations accountable for human rights violations unless we own this fundamental responsibility to each other at home. The current US healthcare system as it is now is not functioning or adequate, and something needs to change, both structurally as well as ideologically.

In the United States, the healthcare system is employer based, largely privatized and very expensive. In order to get access to affordable health care most people need to have a job that offers healthcare benefits. Our "safety net" has lots of holes. Medicaid and Medicare programs are supposed to provide healthcare to people that are unemployed, disabled, or elderly, yet today, there are still approximately 28 million Americans who are uninsured, down from around 47 million without coverage pre-ObamaCare. Texas ranks 44th out of 50 states in terms of the number of uninsured. This is in large part a result of our state's refusal to expand Medicaid. Given the way in which access to care is provided in the US, the remaining uninsured are predominantly poor, working families. The current United States healthcare system still reflects the idea that healthcare is an entitlement, a commodity that is provided based on individual's ability to pay, and is therefore a privilege of the working and wealthy.

There are many financial and health consequences

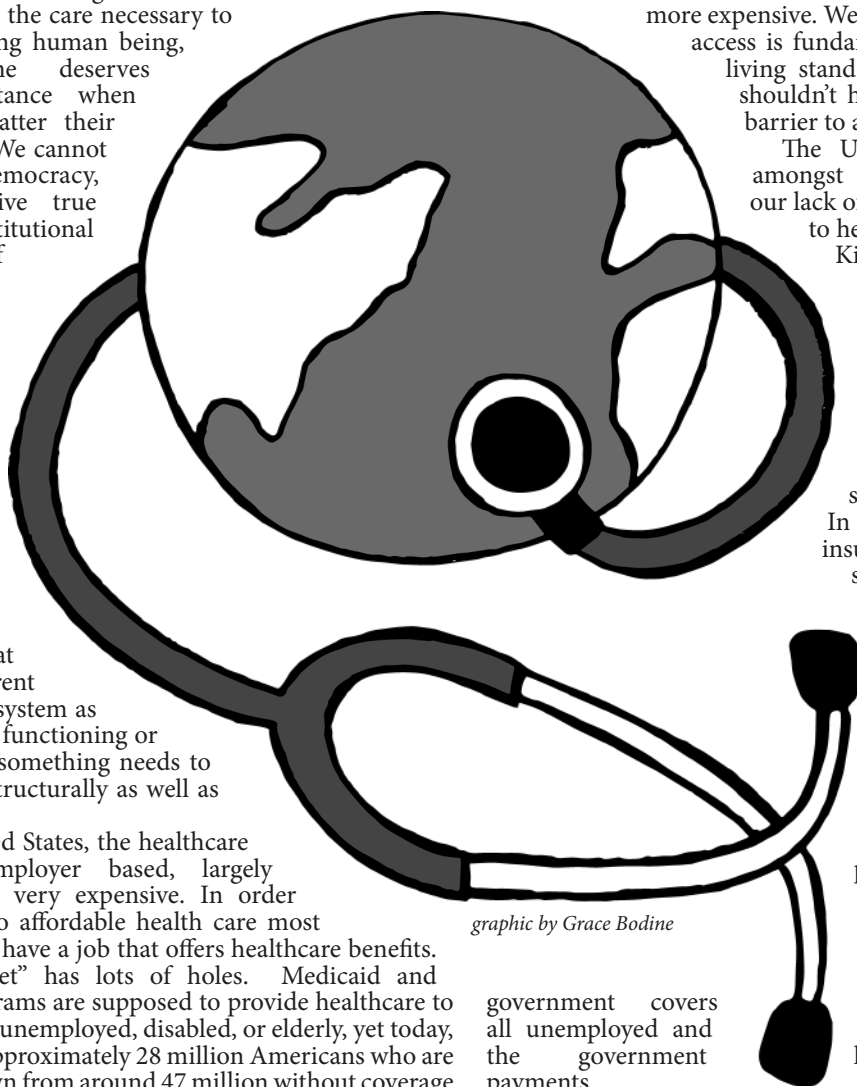
related to lack of access to care. For example, in Texas, recently, there has been a big increase in maternal mortality rates which is exacerbated by lack of access to healthcare and family planning services such as those provided by Planned Parenthood. Also, lack of access to care means that people delay seeking care and are then treated for more serious and costly conditions.

Additionally, often times people seek out basic services from ERs instead of a family physician which is more expensive. We believe that healthcare access is fundamental to an adequate living standard. Therefore, people shouldn't have their income as a barrier to access.

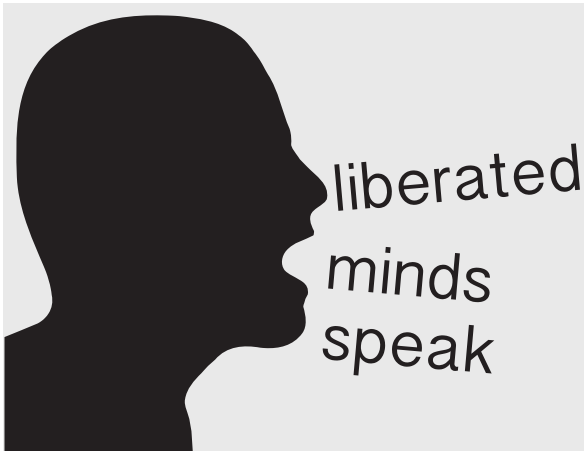
The United States is alone amongst developed nations in our lack of comprehensive access to healthcare. In the United Kingdom, healthcare is mainly offered through the National Health Service (NHS) which provides free healthcare to all citizens and paid for by general taxation that is adjusted due to socioeconomic status.

In Germany, everyone is insured through one of several Sickness Funds, which is Germany's version of a public health insurance system. However, unlike the US, Germans have to ensure access to care regardless of income or health history. Workers pay half the cost of enrollment in their Sickness Funds and employers pay the rest. The German enrollment costs of children. Additionally, limits out-of-pocket government covers all unemployed and the government payments.

Some politicians have made repealing ObamaCare their primary agenda; this enshrines the notion that healthcare is an entitlement and moves us further away from healthcare as a basic right. Our perspective on the role of healthcare as a right or privilege will shape our identity as a nation. Even though healthcare is just one of many current political issues, it deserves recognition as core decision factor. The health of not just individuals, but our country as a whole, hangs in the balance.



graphic by Grace Bodine



Should healthcare be a basic human right or a privilege?



Krishanu Ray
Freshman

"I believe that if it's available from the government then it should be a human right, but some governments can't have it so throughout the world it is a privilege and in the United States it would be a human right."



Rebecca Brackin
Sophomore

"I think healthcare is a human right because all people should have equal access to medicine so that they are able to protect themselves and their family. The current system is kind of functional, but there should be someone new elected who will strive to create a better system."

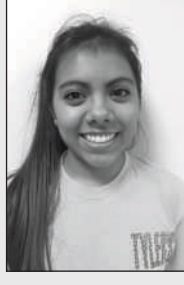
Noah Gershoff
Sophomore

"I believe that healthcare is a basic human right because everyone should be treated equally. I believe that the current system is functional for the most part, but it definitely has its flaws and it can easily be worked on in the next presidential session."



Mikaela Rodriguez
Senior

"I believe it's a human right because everyone should have access to care, and people should have equal opportunities. From my perspective, I've found the system pretty functional, but I can see how different families with different struggles that come from their healthcare getting messed up wouldn't find it functional."



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 portable 5A or in the boxes in the school offices.

Insufficient time for FIT

Dear Editor,

"I think that FIT is a pretty good idea, but it definitely should be longer so we could have more time to work."

Kimmy Wilson-
Sophomore

On teacher-student interactions

Dear Editor,

"I love how teachers can say "you guys are weird," and it's true, and we are proud of it."

Maggie Walker-
Sophomore

Need for mirrors in bathrooms

Dear Editor,

"We need to put a mirror in the boys bathroom in the front hallway, it's annoying that we don't have one there."

Kyle O'Rourke-
Junior

Call for more late starts

Dear Editor,

"Even though the time we have to be in school has been extended, I still prefer if we have late starts and half days."

Sarah Chieng-
Sophomore

Tackling the issue: football

Touchdown!



ANDY DEGRASSE
Staff Writer

High school football brings us all together. If you spend your weekends playing fantasy and supporting the UT football team, it will be right up your alley, but even people who normally find football barbaric or too sweaty are able to put these differences aside and support their team. Love it or hate it, you can't deny that football is the great unifier for us all.

The hype surrounding the season is seen in almost no other sports. And that makes a lot of sense, especially in Texas. Our state is one of the big three football "powerhouses," states that continuously produce far more four and five-star college recruits than any other state, so competition is fierce.

Every single game day, during school, you can find almost every student of LASA at one event: the pep rally. These are events designed to generate hype. Loud music, people dancing, chants, contests, all for the purpose of bringing in excitement. I doubt that anyone who walks into a pep rally walks out without wanting to go to a game.

For all of this hype to be worth it, it has to have some type of payoff, right? Well that all comes at game time. The atmosphere is electric. Fans cheer at almost any play. The sound is deafening. On paper, it should be more scary and confusing than fun, but when the adrenaline is pumping through your veins, and the roar of the fans pounds in your ears, the experience is completely different. You are no longer a confused student surrounded by sweaty teenagers, you are a soldier fighting for your team, and the people around you are your comrades. You are driven by the love of the game. Sure it's easy to nitpick the little annoyances of the game, but your love for your team should override that. The highs and lows create a roller coaster of emotions that make three hours feel like too little time. By the end of the game you will likely be exhausted, but you'll know it was worth it to support your school.

Others may argue that at the end of the day, you really have no impact on the game. "Why do you even bother?" they ask. "The players don't care about you at all."

To this, I would simply ask them to imagine it were them. Imagine being surrounded by hundreds of your peers, all of them full of adrenaline, screaming at the top of their lungs, their emotions running high. Now imagine that they are all cheering for you. Imagine that all of this energy is being put into supporting you. You are living out the dream of every eight year old on a pee-wee team. How can you not get a little excited? The players' emotions are just one of those intangible things that can change a game.

Hopefully after reading this, students can understand just how important football games are to the culture here at LASA, and how much of an impact students can have on the game, while still having a great time.

Fumble!



SOPHIE WYSOCKI
Staff Writer

Football games are a huge part of the fall semester at many high schools and college campuses. It's part of American culture, and Friday night football is a tradition rooted deep in the South. They're supposed to be fun social events that everyone can enjoy and can support their team. In theory, it sounds like a great way to hang out with your friends and watch a good ol' game of football. Most people tend to forget about the reality of these games. They can be very awkward and uncomfortable. Overall, football games aren't always what they're made out to be.

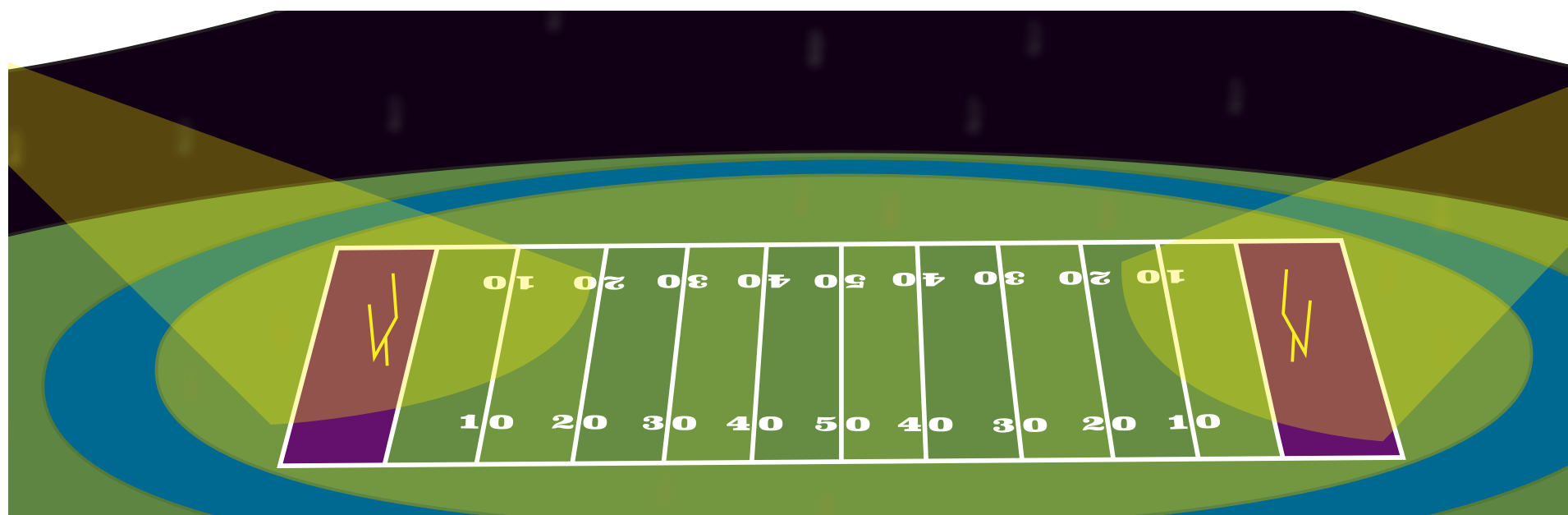
Many high school students, especially at LASA, over-exaggerate the greatness of football games. People wear school spirit items to school and talk about how great the game is going to be all day. When you first arrive to the football game, you see a packed student section with what it seems like an infinite amount of people. You try and squeeze into a spot on the stands, sometimes around complete strangers, and are finally ready for

the game to start. Unless you're superhuman, you're sweating and awkwardly close to the people around you. I've been in this situation too many times to count and it's always a weird start to something that's supposed to be fun. This is all before the game even starts.

When the game starts, everyone starts doing some cheers and things start to get a little more interesting. This also means that people are moving a lot around you and because of the small amount of space on the bleacher, it's likely that you will fall off or get pushed off by somebody else. The section leaders try their best to keep the crowd excited by continuously leading the chants. Although I applaud their effort, it's hard not to get tired of yelling so much. After going home from games, my throat is always sore and waking up the next morning with the voice of a 50 year old smoker isn't preferable.

Sure, it looks fun to go and be around your friends, but the reality of it is that football can be really boring. There are few touchdowns in the game as a whole so you end up just standing there for a large percentage of the game. Many people just don't understand how the game works or its rules. These people either end up being bored the entire game or end up asking the few people that do understand the game what's going on, making it much less enjoyable for both people involved.

Going to football games seems like it can be a lot of fun. There is a lot of hype around them and people constantly talk about how exciting they are, while realistically, they're just not that great. It's not hard to pick which you'd rather do: spend a couple hours standing up watching a boring game, or spending your night with good friends doing something you actually like. The choice is yours but it doesn't seem like a difficult one to me. Football games just aren't worth the hype.



graphic by Laurie MacQueen

Let's talk about sex [ed]



TALIA WILCOTT
Staff Writer

In 2014, a total of 249,078 babies were born to women ages 15-19 in the United States and the most important reason is the absence of efficient sex education among students. Teen pregnancy in the US is unreasonably high and the stance that the country is taking to prevent this is ineffective.

said they don't have any pregnancy or STD prevention programs; they just provide the textbooks which are deficient in information about contraception.

Because 94% of school districts in Texas restrict sex education to abstinence, teen birth rates for the state are the third in the nation. 80% of Texas voters want to teach about contraception and different forms of birth controls as well as abstinence, but Texas policy makers ignore these requests.

By comparing our means of executing sex education in the United States to ways other cultures believe are most effective, we can get more accurate results about the information kids retain and what is most useful to them. Some of the lowest teen birth rates are found in Korea and Switzerland. In South Korea, sex education begins in kindergarten. They are the first country to use government level sex education

We can fix this by transitioning the focus in sex ed from abstinence to contraception and providing young minds with information that they will use, like how to prevent pregnancy and how to handle an intimate relationship responsibly. The

primary focus in sex ed is abstinence, which projects the idea that refraining from sex is the only way to prevent pregnancy. By doing this, districts are denying students valuable information that they could use

“ Making abstinence the primary focus of sex education only puts off teaching students about sex and leaves it to them to figure it out for themselves. ”

later in life, especially to avoid possible consequences, like contracting a sexually transmitted disease or accidental pregnancy. Making abstinence the primary focus of sex education only puts off teaching students about sex and leaves it to them to figure it out for themselves.

In the United States, all state districts are required to provide a course covering sex education, but the states allow the districts freedom to choose either 'abstinence only' or 'abstinence and more' courses. Most states accommodate districts with textbooks but they lack correct, up-to-date information. While the current textbooks include basic anatomy and puberty lessons, they lack any information about contraception and family planning. The United States doesn't monitor any sex ed classes. They only require them to be taught, and if that means flipping once through an abstinence only textbook then that's enough for them. In Texas, 27% of districts rely on vendor-produced abstinence programs and 47% of districts

nationwide. Choi Ran, head of the Korea Sexual Violence Relief Center, believes that sex education exists to educate kids about sex, not to hide the facts. In Switzerland, sex education begins at the age of four. Their education courses include dolls, puzzles, books and a 'sex box' that comes equipped with a wooden penis and fabric vagina to allow kids to become familiar with the human body, theirs and the one of opposite sex. Switzerland's straight-forward approach on educating kids about sex has granted them the title of second lowest teen pregnancy rate in the world.

Although teen pregnancy in the US is one of the highest in the world, it has improved over the past 60 years. To lower the teen birth rate even more, I believe sex education in the United States, and especially Texas, should transition their focus from abstinence to providing any and all information about sex that kids need to know about or could use in the future.

Campus carry shot down



AMANDA PHARES
Staff Writer

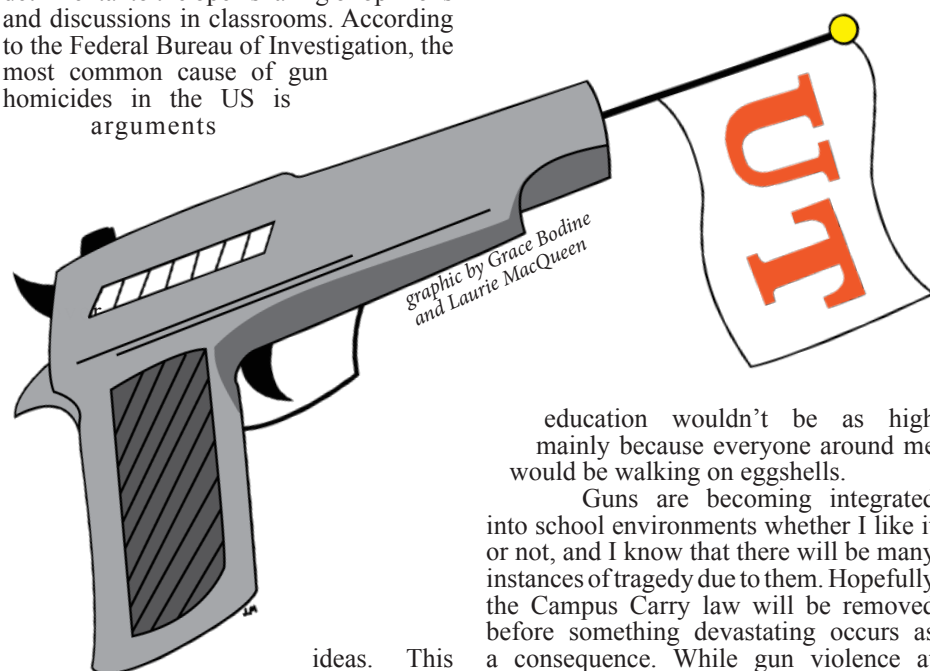
Imagine you're sitting in class on your first day of college and wondering how many people around you currently have a concealed handgun with them. You are sitting in what is supposed to be a safe, learning environment, and then witnessing a student pulling out a handgun and threatening another for disagreeing with

allow students to feel more protected by having a concealed handgun. I do not think that approving this law and allowing guns on campus is going to make the UT any safer; if anything it only makes the campus more dangerous. There are many pre-existing safety measures put in place by UT to actively make the college campus safer for students, so there is no need for concealed carry. I believe that having a gun will make it more likely for students to get into a situation where the gun would be used.

them. This is a very possible scenario that we, potential students at UT, now face due to the new Campus Carry law, which allows license holders to carry a concealed handgun on university campuses. I believe this law to be incredibly dangerous, unnecessary and detrimental to the learning environment present at UT.

College is supposed to be a place where the teachers, faculty and other students are there to challenge you, to help you grow as a person and disagree with you on many ideas. College classrooms are an environment where learning is encouraged, and also where well-informed debating and the discussion of controversial topics is essential to becoming a well rounded person. Introducing guns into the carefully cultivated environment at college is detrimental to the open sharing of opinions and discussions in classrooms. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the most common cause of gun homicides in the US is arguments

The implications of the Campus Carry law are detrimental to the campus. With this new law, UT could lose potential applicants who would apply if there was no campus carry. Many faculty at UT have been protesting the new law, and according to the Gun Free UT campaign, 42 academic departments at UT have published statements opposing the use of guns in classrooms. Distinguished professors have quit their jobs at UT altogether due to the law. The dean of the College of Architecture, Fritz Steiner, stated in February of 2016 that he would be leaving UT to become a professor at the University of Pennsylvania because of the new law. Hearing that prominent professors have been leaving UT is discouraging to hear as a potential student, and I'm not sure I even want to apply to UT anymore. I wouldn't feel comfortable voicing my ideas on a controversial topic during class, especially if I didn't share the popular opinion. I feel like the quality of



graphic by Grace Bodine and Laurie MacQueen

ideas. This especially frightens me because arguments and debates are a major form of learning, but when mixed with guns, they could plant a seed of fear in students minds.

One of the reasons that the Campus Carry law was approved was to

education wouldn't be as high mainly because everyone around me would be walking on eggshells.

Guns are becoming integrated into school environments whether I like it or not, and I know that there will be many instances of tragedy due to them. Hopefully the Campus Carry law will be removed before something devastating occurs as a consequence. While gun violence at UT is only a probability right now, it is ubiquitous in the US and the only way to reduce gun violence from continuing to occur in schools, the workplace, and metropolitan areas is by preventing the use of guns in the first place.

Sitting in solidarity



MEENA ANDERSON

Staff Writer

As football season ramps up, fans from all across the country prepare their fantasy leagues, set their TVs up to record Thursday-night games and have parties to watch their favorite teams. But it's not fun and games for everyone this NFL season. On Sept. 26, in a pre-game against the Green Bay Packers, 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick sat down during the national anthem, and has since been slammed by people like Donald Trump and Eric Bolling. Kaepernick has also been supported by

other athletes, like NBA all-time leading scorer Kareem Abdul-Jabaar and Megan Rapinoe, the U.S. Women's international soccer team's midfielder. It's caused a stir, but athlete activism isn't new. Athletes like Tommie Smith, Muhammad Ali and Jackie Robinson have all protested the national anthem for the same reason that Kaepernick provided for sitting: "I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color. To me, this is bigger than football and it would be selfish on my part to look the other way. There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave and getting away with murder."

I agree with their protests. I sit in solidarity with Kaepernick. The mistreatment of minorities in America is a huge problem. It has been a problem since Christopher Columbus sailed over in 1492, and will continue to be one if people follow these athletes' examples and stand up.

One of the problems is that whenever these athletes have stood up and tried to start conversations about racism, those conversations are often diverted into criticism of their actions. In some cases, athletes have been punished standing up for what they believe in. When they were being presented with their medals during the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico City, track and field athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos raised their fists during the national anthem, and were quickly escorted

refused to stand during the national anthem when he played baseball in the 1940's and 50's. As a black man in a white man's world, Robinson's decision to sit during a time of intense racial turmoil was incredibly brave, and people resented that bravery. When athletes use their celebrity to protest against America's unfair treatment of minorities, the public is quick to express their disdain and denial that racism still exists. People who have criticized Kaepernick for not being black enough, poor enough or oppressed enough are entirely missing the point that his protest was to be a voice for those without one. The idea that you have to be black and poor and oppressed to be an activist is completely ridiculous. People of privilege are in a uniquely powerful position to advocate on behalf of those without power.

Many athletes who don't speak out about racial issues are put up on a podium for all of America to admire. Take O.J. Simpson. A former 49er and the first player in the NFL to rush 2,000 yards in a single season. He was a man who wanted to rid himself of his blackness, and mostly succeeded. O.J. wanted to be known as O.J., rather than a black man. He surrounded himself with white friends and never spoke up about issues of race in America. While Muhammad Ali protested the Vietnam War, when Rodney King was brutally beaten by Los Angeles police officers, when Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, O.J. was aggressively silent. The only thing he would say regarding these issues is that he wouldn't say anything.

And the people loved him! Simpson never protested, never spoke up, and the public was happy with that. He maintained lucrative endorsement deals with companies like Hertz, RC Cola, and Wilson Sporting Goods. It wasn't until O.J. went on trial for the murder of his wife and her friend, that he reclaimed his own blackness, and it was to save his own skin. So many black people are railroaded by the criminal justice system, and when O.J. wasn't convicted, a large part of the black community was overjoyed. Many whites didn't understand how he could be acquitted with what appeared to be overwhelming evidence against him.

When black athletes protest, they know that they're going out on a limb because they'll be treated differently

than those who don't speak out. These athletes saw injustice, and rather than ignoring it, they chose peaceful protest during the national anthem. It's a moment when people feel proud of being American, and affirm that pride and respect by standing, pledging and singing. America has some things to be proud of, but that pride should not be blind. We have democracy, but we have never elected a woman for president. We have a free economy, but that economy has real and historic roots in the

systemic oppression of black people. We have a powerful military, but we also have rampant gun violence. One of the founding principles of our country is that we have the right to be free in our expression. And we can disagree; where some see law and order, others see police brutality. Where some see a flag full of heritage, I see a symbol of the racist south during the Civil War. Colin Kaepernick was simply exercising his first amendment right to express his opinions through peacefully protesting the national anthem.

I don't support the way this country has been built on the dehumanization of minorities and I don't support how American society still benefits from the remnants of systemic oppression of people of color. I also peacefully protest. I don't feel moved to make public displays of patriotism. I sit during the pledges, and I don't sing the national anthem. I honestly don't even know all of the words. I never have felt the need to pledge my allegiance daily to--when it comes down to it--a (symbolic) piece of fabric.

I don't support the way this country has been built on the dehumanization of minorities and I don't support how American society still benefits from the remnants of systemic oppression of people of color.

out and had their medals confiscated soon after that. Boxer Muhammad Ali was a conscientious objector of the Vietnam War. He stated: "Why should they ask me to put on a uniform and go ten thousand miles from home and drop bombs and bullets on brown people in Vietnam while so-called Negro people in Louisville are treated like dogs and denied simple human rights?" Ali refused to come forward when his name was called for the draft three times and was arrested. The New York State Athletic Commission suspended his boxing license and stripped him of his heavyweight title, other organizations quickly followed suit. At the game after Megan Rapinoe took a knee during the national anthem, the anthem was played while the teams were in the locker room so she couldn't do it again. When swimmer Simone Manuel made history in Rio as the first black woman to win an individual gold medal, NBC didn't air the medal ceremony, where she talked about the importance of the Black Lives Matter movement, until an hour after it happened.

Athlete and Civil Rights activist Jackie Robinson also



Small Talk

Falling Short of Expectations



MARLEN AVILA

Staff Writer

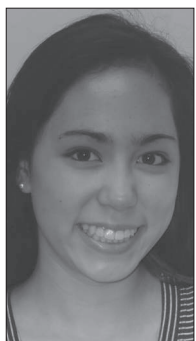
I knew I should have anticipated it when school started. Along with the stress of taking WHAP and starting each morning at 5:30 a.m, this was one of the things that I was going to dread. I realized that moving through the hallways would be hard for someone my size. I am considered relatively short compared to everyone else at this school. I do not have the strength nor height to push people out of the way; I feel too intimidated by them. This is rather sad considering the fact that I am a sophomore and there are freshmen in this school who I still mistake as seniors.

Do you know how it feels like to be mistaken as a freshman on your first day back? I am past that point in my life. I want to be seen as someone who had completed the SciTech challenge and (surprisingly) passed the Biology final. Not as a freshman. I'm not saying that there's something wrong with being tall, or short. Well, sort of. I am not about to write a 500 word hate-filled rant on why being short sucks at school. I simply want people, mainly freshmen, to realize that they should appreciate their height since there are people in this world who long to be 5'3" too.

I believe that one of the core reasons why older students are mistaken as freshmen is their height (and quite possibly the fact that they shudder when SciTech is mentioned). Height can tell a lot about a person. Over time, it becomes part of your personality. Your friends begin to associate you as either the tall one who they can rely on for guiding through the hallway or in my case, sadly, as the cute person. From my experience, your height instantly becomes a disadvantage when you are being shoved left and right when walking down the hallway. Because of this, I am forced to avoid the freshman hallway since it always becomes a disaster in the minutes leading up to the beginning of first period. The entire hallway is packed with students who are either just standing there or students who actually need to be on the move for class. It really doesn't help that this hallway is in the center of the school and therefore one of the main routes to classes. It's been six weeks and many students, including myself, are tired of struggling to get to class on time.

I sound like the stereotypical short person. Always full of hatred and constantly feeling betrayed by tall people. The stereotype is not completely true. Coming from someone whose feet still dangle when they sit in a chair, I would like to express that there are times when being short doesn't feel too bad. And even nice, at times. Blankets and over-sized sweaters are perfect to wrap around yourself and you are always justified in fussing tall people for help. I know that being short has some (well, many) disadvantages, but there is good that could come out of it. There are always compliments from friends about how cute I am and how I could fit into small places. I mean, all these comments are nice but they're just making me feel even smaller.

Student reflects on high school hierarchy



LISA MOOMAW

Staff Writer

As my friends and I debated what area of the campus to claim as our lunch spot on the first day of school, I innocently suggested that we sit in the same spot as last year: that giant expanse of concrete in front of the theater. My proposal was immediately shot down, because, unbeknownst to me, someone had heard from an upperclassman that "only freshmen sit there, so we can't anymore." Well, my bad.

Last year, of course, one of those freshmen was me. The slab was a magnet for disoriented

14-year-olds, given that it was easy to locate and easy to sit on. During that tumultuous first year, a wide variety of still-evolving groups all sat in one large, communal clump. I thought that arrangement was a beautiful display of solidarity.

Throughout my life, I've always both taken pride in and hated that I've never been completely ingrained in a single clique. Obviously I'm friends with some groups more than others, but throughout middle and high school I've straddled multiple. Because of this, the combining of multiple social circles during lunch on that symbolic slab was a gift that I took for granted. It protected me from having to choose a faction because I could wander from circle to circle, chatting with different people without walking halfway across the campus. Of course not every freshman sat there, but there were enough of us that it felt like a big, happy, diverse squad. To me, leaving that spot means mourning the loss of this freedom not to choose.

Now, all those little clumps that made up the big one have spread across the school and away from that prized spot in front of the theater. The social laws of LASA that are unspoken but never broken have caught up to me and demanded that

I finally drink the kool-aid of a singular lunch bunch. Of course, I'm far from being the only one who's been forced to sacrifice their dual citizenship in the name of conformity. The social fluidity of freshman year has pretty much been officially replaced with the rigid cliquishness of sophomores.

Unfortunately, we're paying the price for this transition. The pressure to identify with just one group means valuable friendships outside of one's number one squad are often weakened. In my eyes, one of the most painful realities of sophomore year is losing friends for a reason as trivial as that we're kept apart by different cliques. Additionally, birds of a feather may flock together, but spending time with only people who have similar interests to us is surely damaging to our understanding of the variations in people around us.

I firmly believe that people should be able to choose who they spend their time with, and I'm under no illusion that it's realistic or ideal for the entire grade to be one giant friend group with absolutely no dividing lines. However, I also think that the idea that everyone needs to be in one group is something that we all think we need to stick to because everyone else is. I know that I've wanted to expand my social horizons, but have been too afraid to because it

seems to be a social faux pas. And here is where the real problem is: our fear of each others' judgment is completely unnecessary. By not giving ourselves permission to fully enjoy the diversity of LASA, we are giving up so many chances to see the world in different ways. I see this as the worst effect of divisiveness, because isn't learning about others' perspectives what the true value in friendship is?

I'm not asking anyone to declare to the world, "screw cliques!" as soon as you're dismissed from first period for lunch and spend the entire fifty minutes attempting to converse with all 256 sophomores (although that could be an interestingly fun form of speed dating). Rather, I'm suggesting that our class stop worrying about how other people view our social lives.

So next time you're reminiscing over the concrete slab in front of the theater, ask yourself what it is you're really missing. Perhaps if you're feeling brave, you won't go straight to the vending machines where you always sit, stopping by the purple hallway to talk to that person you've been silently wishing to get closer to. Reaching outside of your tightest social circle will surely make for a richer high school experience. So if it's what you want, take the advice I learned during my brief stint as a girl scout: make new friends, and keep the old.



graphic by Grace Bodine and Laurie MacQueen

South Austin Magnet

continued from page 1

"I don't know how much it will [affect LASA enrollment] given the amount of students we turn away who were perfectly reasonable applicants who we feel would be successful here," Crescenzi said. "I could fill another magnet and have the same numbers, so I think the demand has hit a point where it's so high that there's more options for kids, which is a wonderful thing."

One of AISD's mission statements is to prepare all their students for college, and studies have shown that advanced high school academics are one of the most effective ways to achieve college readiness. A new magnet would allow AISD to expand their advanced academic programs significantly, and Crescenzi said that a new magnet would aid that goal by providing more advanced academics to a greater number of students.

"I really believe that advanced academics set kids up for that success," Crescenzi said. "It forces them to work hard so that they can take notes, so that they learn how to study, so they learn how to debate and argue with other smart kids. They learn how to work in groups and share the load, interact with their professors, that sort of group of soft skills. If you don't have that going into college, you can't manage your time."

These sorts of advanced magnet academics are available at LASA to hundreds of students currently, and could be expanded to hundreds more students with the addition of another magnet in South Austin. Crescenzi said that a large part of the student population for the magnet school would be South Austin students who might have otherwise not attended a magnet school because of the long distance to LASA.

"Because of the number of applications that LASA receives, we would like to serve more worthy students and we want to make absolutely sure that if kids want this experience, that we can provide," said Shapiro. "Again, it's a very difficult decision because it has impact just beyond LASA and budget, finance, buildings, right? So every decision has an implication, it has a cost, and people are trying to massage that and see which one is

the best for Austin."

However, even aside from the debates about the specific type of magnet and the discussions about the impact on LASA enrollment, there are other questions about the potential new magnet that are currently getting resolved.

"We have more kids than we do have seats and we [would] like to serve more kids to have this experience, and there are kids who want the experience," Shapiro said. "And I think it's critical that we look at it. The question I don't

Crescenzi said. "We need to give permission to whatever that new school is that amount of time to create their own culture and create their own curriculum. So I also think that there will be some growing pains... people can't expect that [the new magnet] is gonna be LASA."

In addition, she said, it would be important to be sure to meet the needs of the school's and district's communities when thinking about another magnet high school. Many AISD schools are under-enrolled, but a magnet school is not necessarily the best solution for that under-enrollment.

"It seems to me that it's a mistake to think that you can use the desire for a magnet to solve a different problem, such as an under enrolled school, because then you're not actually solving the problem," Crescenzi said. "You're just creating a problem for ten years down the road. So I think there are ways of maybe to do it but I think we have to be thoughtful and honest about what's worked and what's not worked since this movement started in the 80s."

Crescenzi also said that it was important to learn from experiences with LASA and LBJ in the past, as well as other magnet schools around the country, and to make sure that the magnet school is genuinely the right thing to do with a high

school. "How are you going to ensure that the needs of the magnet kids and the need of the kids in the community are both met?" Crescenzi said. "Because that's really hard to do and [Austin] hasn't been successful at that yet. Nothing against Austin, it's hard. I don't know across the country that there are a lot of places that have been successful doing that in a school model."

Shapiro said that one of the best things students could do if they were interested in this would be to participate in committees looking for community input on the topic of the new magnet. There are still many student, parent, and teacher committees for South Austin residents and those who are LASA-affiliated.

"I've been very proud that we've had... community members, parents and students on those committees," Crescenzi said. "I'm very proud of that because that's the way to get your voice heard, and understand the greater process because I think it's significantly more complicated than the average person would recognize."

I really believe that advanced academics set kids up for success.

-Principal Stacia Crescenzi

think for anybody is [if] that proportion [of interested students] is there... How do you do it? And that's where the conversations are."

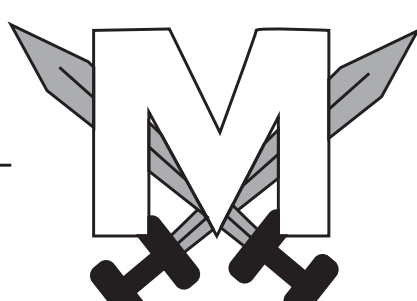
Crescenzi said that she was interested in making sure that the board and AISD took into account the experience of LASA and LBJ before putting another magnet school-within-a-school program, and to make sure that they built

upon that experience with the new magnet. She also said that, although of course the possible South Austin magnet will be similar to LASA, the two will not provide be the same experience.

"We needed decades to become the culture that we are now and have the curriculum that we currently have,"



graphic by Grace Bodine



McCallum

FIT Activities	
•	Complete makeup work
○	Retake quizzes and exams
•	Work on homework
•	Conference with teachers
•	Get extra help on difficult lessons
•	Learn more about different topics
•	Work on group projects

graphic by Alia Shaukat

Updated Teacher Accountability System may result in adjustments for teachers

CAROLINA GOKINGCO
News Editor

In the state of Texas, all districts are given the choice to adopt the state appraisal system or create their own. The Texas Education Agency's (TEA) state-mandated teacher accountability system for the 2016-17 school year, called Pathways for Professional Teaching (PfPt), aims to improve teacher practice through measures including classroom observation, goal-setting, professional development planning and implementation of student learning objectives (SLO). Austin Independent School District (AISD) Superintendent Paul Cruz says they decided to create their own system for all AISD schools, which is a combination of the old and new systems designed by the TEA.

"Ours is very much based on professional learning, professional development," Cruz said. "It's about making sure that we respect the profession of teacher as a profession. Ours is different from the state because we include different measures, so that that appraisal is a holistic appraisal."

LASA Principal Stacia Crescenzi said that although PfPt is substantially similar to previous years' accountability programs, it also brings meaningful change. According to the TEA's website, SLOs are long-term goals for student learning in teams with peer, school and district support. With frequent measurement of student progress in meeting the goals, teachers are expected to devise instructional strategies that improve learning by better understanding students' strengths and what success looks like on a per-student basis.

"[The system] is much more nuanced than [last year], looking at sort of where teachers are strong, where there are places they can still grow [and] how do we give support to them," Crescenzi said. "There are walkthroughs, observations [and] professional development requirements that teachers have to do. There is an overall score that every campus gets based on EOC scores."

Under PfPt, all teachers are required to administer diagnostic pre- and post- tests to measure a the effectiveness of their curricula and instructional strategies. According to LASA teacher Maricruz Aguayo, the accountability system requires teachers to create these tests only for the course they teach most frequently.

"Given that quite a few teachers at LASA teach multiple courses, we're asked to focus on the course we teach most often, so I'll be focused on AP World History this year-- and yes, that means my WHAP students will be taking a pre- and post- test," Aguayo said. "I think it's important for our students to know that these tests are meant to measure a teacher's effectiveness; teachers aren't using these diagnostically or, at least in my case, for a class grade."

Some teachers have expressed concerns about the assessment of students through pre- and post- tests. According to LASA teacher Ronny Risinger, students might not take them seriously since the tests, in most cases, won't count for anything in regards to their grade or GPA. Teachers could also manipulate the assessments to inflate measured performance.

"Depending on the teacher, the exam may be purposefully difficult so that students 'fail' and then the teacher can teach the exam and

have students show growth," Risinger said. "As a result, the test is not measuring 'value added' so much as student apathy levels... Check back at the end of the year and find out how many teachers showed no student growth via their assessments. That will tell you all you need to know about the effectiveness of this task."

Risinger said the PfPt also uses in-class observations to evaluate teacher performance. However, due to the limited scope of the evaluation criteria, he predicts most LASA teachers won't adjust their instructional strategies to accommodate the guidelines. According to Risinger, teachers may not be willing to "put on a show" during PfPt assessments because the results of the assessments aren't tied to financial incentives.

"Because the rubric for classroom observations is, as far as I know, the only thing the administrator can use to access the teacher's performance, [PfPt] only encourages 'dog and pony shows' whereby teachers do a special lesson to get points, but that does not truly reflect their teaching practice," Risinger said. "If [the PfPt assessment includes a salary next year], I can assure you that teachers will game that system... Since most LASA teachers and students tend to use their classroom time effectively, I suspect most will just continue to do their normal lessons for their observations. But, when money is on the line, that may change."

Aguayo has generally positive feelings about the new accountability system because it intends to evaluate teachers based on what they do in their own classrooms. She believes, if implemented accurately, teachers may feel more empowered in their own classroom with the opportunity to control their own "raise" year to year since the system could ultimately be accompanied by increased pay. Likewise, Cruz shares similar sentiments.

"I believe in our system," Cruz said. "I do believe; now this is our first year that we're going to implement the system why we have them implemented in certain campuses you know over the past few years to try it out but I do think it's important because it's really about professional development. We have over 12,000 employees in Austin ISD; over 6000 are teachers, counselors, librarians, and we have to hire 800 every single year. So there are a lot of teachers that come; 800 leave, and we have to make sure we're training and developing our workforce."

Cruz believes the system is about the delivery of instruction and having essential conversations about what AISD wants their classrooms to look like, how to deliver instruction, for the teachers to engage in that dialogue, and to look at student work and products. On the other hand, Risinger has some concerns with the effect of the evaluations on low income schools.

"Even if the teacher is outstanding, so many variables beyond the teacher's control may affect student performance," Risinger said. "Also, if teachers are held to account for 'failing' schools, experienced teachers will never want to teach at those campuses. As a result, struggling students will meet a wall of new teachers with no experience. In the end, the new system is just another step by bureaucrats to show that they are trying to 'hold someone accountable' for the struggling public school system... [It will] cause a lot of work for teachers and administrators and detract from the daily task of education."

Flexible Instruction Time brings bene[FIT]s for LASA students and staff

JORGE VILLA
Staff Writer

Last year, a new Texas law changed schedules for schools around Texas. House Bill 2160 was presented last winter and was later made official this summer. House Bill 2160 mandates a change in attendance requirements for students advancing to the next grade level or graduating high school. Instead of having to go to school for 180 days, the new bill mandates a school year of 75,600 minutes. Because of this, the Austin Independent School District (AISD)'s schedule has changed. After AISD sent surveys to every family, LASA administration designed a schedule that made LASA start five minutes earlier. Along with starting five minutes earlier, school for LASA students ends ten minutes later, and incorporates a period of Flexible Instruction Time (FIT). LASA senior Tony Lopez thinks that FIT is a perfect time to get closer to his teachers, especially now in his last year at LASA.

"This is an amazing opportunity to be able to talk to my teachers and build some sort of relationship," Lopez said. "I can already see myself in the future spending this time to focus on my college applications." The new schedule has addressed the needs of LASA students in several ways. For the past few years, students have requested time during school to be able to talk to their teachers or study during school. FIT is a session that lasts 25 minutes everyday except on Mondays, which are homeroom days designated for signing up for the coming week's FIT periods. FIT is held after third period and before last period. On Mondays, students are able to sign up for whatever teacher's FIT period they want. LASA sophomore Rajan Topiwala said he thinks that FIT is a perfect way to use the 25 extra minutes of school.

"I've heard that this year is the hardest and I'm glad that LASA was able to create a study time during school," Topiwala said. "Last year there were times when I wanted to ask for help, but I just didn't have time, and I

never liked staying after school."

Teachers have the opportunity to call students into their FIT if they see that they need help or are struggling with that particular subject. Some teachers allow students to have individual study or homework time. Teachers may also use FIT to help students prepare for upcoming quizzes and tests. LASA sophomore Alex Summer thinks that FIT is perfect for students like him who are slow learners and don't always have time to ask questions during class.

"I'm the type of student who always gets behind because I find LASA really difficult. I am from [a] small middle school, and of course, it wasn't as good as the magnet program at Kealing," Summer said. "I know that FIT was built for students like me that always ask [for] help. I sincerely thank LASA because now I have more time during school to ask teachers and my classmates for help."

According to LASA geometry teacher Glen McNeil, FIT should be longer because there are days that students don't get the opportunity to ask all of their questions or do all of their homework. LASA world geography teacher Cody Moody and LASA sophomore Michelle Su also mentioned that FIT should be longer because there's not enough time to make up a quiz or get help from you peers and teachers.

"I would definitely make [FIT] longer [if I could]," McNeil said. "I feel like students don't have enough time to ask for help, study, or do their homework."

Overall Moody and McNeil stated that so far FIT has been a time where students come up to them and ask them questions over their lectures or homework, and that FIT had been a positive change, but that a longer FIT could make even more of an impact.

"I think it's going to help improve student's grades for classes they are struggling with and due to the fact that we have FIT during school it ensures that more students will be able to get more help for the classes they are struggling the most," Moody said.

THE SKINNY

The fault in our [STAAR]s

GABRIELLE JABOUR
Staff Writer

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has fined the Education Testing Service (ETS) \$20.7 million, the largest fine the state of Texas has ever placed upon a testing vendor. The \$20.7 million fine accounts for a multitude of complications that came up during the spring administration of the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) testing. Problems with the mandatory STAAR tests were first reported in March by school districts when a series of online and technical issues surfaced. Additionally, over 14,000 students were affected by a computer glitch that caused exam scores to be lost. LASA Academy Director Andy Paulson said that LASA was not seriously affected by the STAAR glitches.

"[LASA] did not have any problems or issues with the STAAR test," Paulson said. "We received all of our results. I think most of the issues were online. We still do the paper copy tests and always fight to do the paper copy tests. I've been through TOSS and TAKS and STAAR and never once had an issue with misrepresented scores or lost scores. This was kind of an interesting year."

In addition to the problem with lost test scores, many schools noted delays in receiving scoring results and mix-ups in the delivery of materials and paper exams. Several administrators and teachers in Austin Independent School District (AISD) had to work through the weekend prior to STAAR testing because tests were showing up later than the standard expected date.

"We were receiving late, Thursday and Friday," Edmund Oropez, AISD Chief Officer of Teaching and Learning, said in an interview with CBS Austin. "Typically we like to have the testing materials over a week in advance so we can prep."

According to Texas Education Commissioner Mike Morath, ETS will pay \$15 million to improve areas such as online testing, shipping, system enrollment, pre-coding, scoring and reporting. The other \$5.7 million of the nearly \$21 million fine will be paid to the state in damages. ETS must implement fixes by December 2017. If sufficient improvements haven't been made by then, further penalties may be awarded.

It sounds like \$21 million is a fair price to pay, but I think it's pretty hefty," Paulson said. "One of the reasons I think the [ETS] struggled is because they bid on California and Texas to take over their testing, and they weren't expecting to get both states. My understanding is that they received both states, so they were just too much over and inundated with all the work."

In a news release, Christine Betaneli, a spokesperson for ETS, apologized for the 'operational shortcomings' that impacted this year's STAAR tests. In an effort to provide support to affected schools and students, ETS spent an additional \$20 million on top of their already large fine.

"I've been doing this for 22 years, and I've never seen anything like that at any level. It was a colossal mistake by them," Paulson said. "We were lucky that we've never dealt with any issues related to the STAAR."

Three new portables provide needed space

QUINN SIMPSON & ALDO ORDÓÑEZ
News Editor & Staff Writer

LASA high school accepted over 300 students to its class of 2020 for the 2016-17 school year, constituting a substantial increase over the school's historical average class size of 250. According to LASA sophomore Henry Brodtkin, this change has already impacted the school's overall climate in a meaningful way.

"I haven't been here for very long," Brodtkin said. "But in the year and a half or so since I started coming here I can already see the huge difference. There are so many freshmen everywhere."

This increase, driven by a rise in both the quality and quantity of applicants to the school, marks a substantial jump over previous years. While the school has been slowly increasing the size of its incoming classes, the class of 2020 marks a noticeable shift.

"I remember hearing constantly when we were freshmen that we were a huge class, the biggest LASA has had," Brodtkin said. "But now when I walk in the freshmen hall, I can't even move. This class is even larger."

According to LASA Assistant Principal San Czaplinski, the school's population growth has had impacts beyond crowded hallways. More students require more faculty and more classroom teaching space.

"[In 2011] we had just a little over 800 students total," Czaplinski said. "Now we are sitting at a little over 1100... the ratio of teachers to students has increased, we've increased our faculty, teachers have to move around more, [and] we have new portables."

The school's population has already far exceeded its built capacity, meaning that new portables were required this year to address the growth. The school has had portables before, but three new ones were added for the 2016-17 school year. According to LASA teacher Glen McNeil, moving out to a portable has real drawbacks.

"I'm not exactly thrilled with [moving]," McNeil said. "I wouldn't mind staying in my room, there's just not enough rooms left. There's no room for a screen, I can't mount the projector. It's also a long way to the department meetings during lunch."

Despite the drawbacks, McNeil acknowledged that moving to a portable ultimately enables a small degree of independence in controlling his classroom environment that wasn't possible in the main building.

"I can control the temperature now," says McNeil. "It used to be freezing in my room, now it's normal in here."

Study abroad program CIEE awards LASA \$20,000 in scholarships for student travel

QUINN SIMPSON
News Editor

The Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE), which offers three- to four-week summer study abroad programs for high school students, has named LASA High School a Global Navigator School for the 2016-17 school year. According to LASA Principal Stacia Crescenzi, the status guarantees LASA families individualized staff support from CIEE as their students complete the trip application process as well as a predetermined amount of scholarship money set aside exclusively for LASA students.

"The advantage is, we are guaranteed \$20,000 in scholarships just for our students and up to \$70,000 in scholarships just for our students because we're a Global Navigator school," Crescenzi said. "It feels significant to me. That feels like a lot of money, potentially, for students who may otherwise, because of finances, never be able to study abroad during high school or travel during high school."

Natalie Elizondo, an International Studies Director with CIEE, said that although students from non-Global Navigator schools are able to apply for these scholarships, they have to compete with the entire global applicant pool. LASA students, on the other hand, will only have to compete with each other for resources.

"It's a good opportunity because they're competing from students from your school, as opposed to a school that isn't a Global Navigator school," Elizondo said. "They would have to compete with students from all over the US for the scholarships, so it better your chances of getting a scholarship and getting accepted."

After Elizondo's organization approached the school as a potential partner, Crescenzi applied for Global Navigator status on LASA's behalf.

"Through research and through reading more about your school, I approached your principal," Elizondo said. "We met with your principal and told her about our programs and our scholarship opportunities. She was really excited about it. I sent her an application online to apply for the scholarship money. She applied,

submitted the application, and your school was chosen."

The application process involved the submission of data, curricula, and a variety of additional supporting information about the school. According to Crescenzi, the application's main objective was to determine whether LASA's culture and educational practices promoted values prerequisite to living and studying globally.

"After they meet you and they think that you are a reasonable applicant, they send you a link to the application...and then Ms. Czaplinski and I worked the rest of spring completing that application, gathering data," Crescenzi said. "We had to show them lessons, we had to show them activities done in various classes, things from the world language classes, things from the core

which program they're interested in before they pick a country to visit, which appeals to Crescenzi because it prompts students to think more deeply about their actual interests and affinities when making their decision about which path to take.

"The other thing I really liked about [CIEE] were their three focus areas...so you don't initially say this is the country I want to go to, you initially start by saying I either want to be in one of the language or culture programs which really focuses on... getting a deep dive into that particular culture, or the community service where you really want to focus in and work with an NGO on community service, or a particular content area," Crescenzi said. "I thought that really broadens the students who this might appeal to."

Broadly speaking, Elizondo hopes that students who go on CIEE trips will be able to take advantage of opportunities to try new things and expand their mindsets.

"I've had amazing experiences living abroad, studying abroad, teaching abroad," Elizondo said. "It changed my life and for me it's important just to

That feels like a lot of money, potentially, for students who may otherwise... never be able to study abroad during high school.

-LASA Principal Stacia Crescenzi

classes that show our commitment to students having an open mind and an understanding of the importance of other cultures' perspectives in being a global citizen."

Students will have until December 1st to apply for the trips that will take place over the summer of 2017. Elizondo said that CIEE offers three different types of trips— Language and Culture, Service and Leadership, and Global Discovery. The Language and Culture program, which at four weeks is the longest of the three options, entails experiencing new places and cultures while living with a host family.

"A student that would go on a language and culture program, most would stay with a host family," Elizondo said. "So they're going to go to the country and study the language and culture of that country. It's a really good program because it's not only classroom time. You're gonna go out and everything you've learned in the classroom, you'll use it in real life situations. You may go to a market and learn how to ask for prices, learn how to order."

Students are encouraged to choose

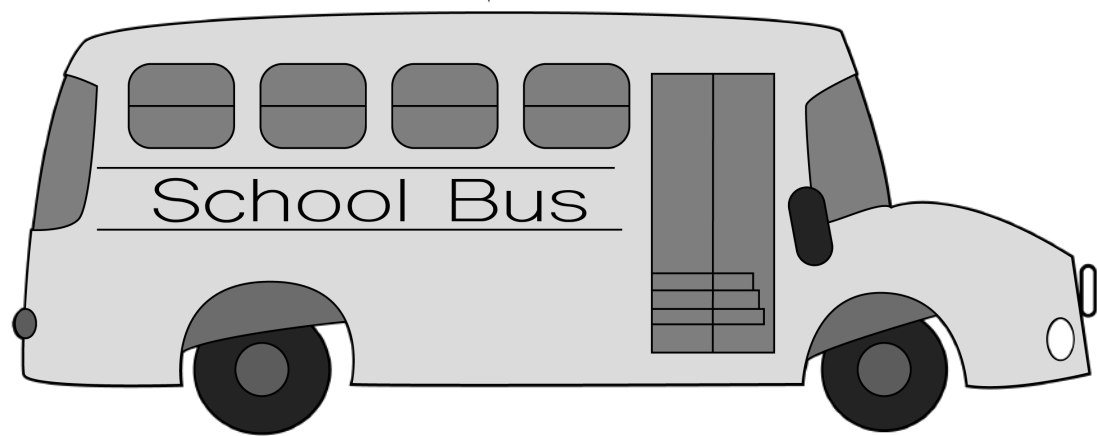
give that opportunity to students to experience these amazing adventures and open their eyes and realize that there are other cultures out there. There are so many different types of people and so many different types of countries that you can explore. For me I like to give the opportunity to students and let them know it's a possibility and to take the opportunities when you see them."

Crescenzi is similarly hopeful that the LASA students who travel abroad in CIEE trips this summer will return to campus with broadened perspectives and a deeper understanding of humanity in its many forms.

"When you're living with a family in a homestay or you are living in another country...you get the nuances of that culture in a way that—I don't think there's any other way to do that," Crescenzi said. "I think that can be a life changing experience, and then coming back and talking to people about it has a ripple effect in terms of people understanding the perspective, the views, the challenges, the strengths of people around the world."

graphic by Grace Bodine and Laurie MacQueen

WHERE'S THE BUS?



New AISD bus-tracking app takes off; both parents and students can track buses in real time

ASPEN KISSINGER
Staff Writer

Austin Independent School District (AISD) has launched a new app called WheretheBus, which helps parents and students know where their AISD school bus is relative to the time and location of their stop. The program was added to the AISD Parent Cloud late this summer to help students, parents and administrators start the school year off smoothly. The program, which is accessible to all parents with students that take the bus to and from AISD campuses, provides live information on location and time for individual buses including estimated times of arrival. The app was created by the AISD Department of Transportation, the AISD IT Department and Tripspark, which provides GPS services for AISD.

"Parents were always interested to know when their students bus arrives to their stops," AISD Director of Pupil Transportation Kris Hafezizadeh said. "We have a live GPS on our buses and our vendor was able to make that happen and create an app."

The creation of WheretheBus started early last year, and has gone through many trials since then by parents and students to prepare the program for public use. LASA

sophomore Robert Yam was one of the student participants in the program's five-month trial program. Yam's father works for the AISD Department of Transportation and managed the planning and the testing of the program.

"I was actually one of the first student users of the program," Yam said. "I provided information about the app concerning issues that could be dealt with at the time. I found it very easy to use before and after its

Parents were always interested to know when their student's bus arrives.

-AISD Director of Pupil Transportation Kris Hafezizadeh

release in August."

Another tester for the program was Lizzorie Pintar, mother of LASA sophomore Megan Ramsey, who tried the program out early last year. It didn't function on her iPhone during the trial period. However, Pintar found the program easy to use after the official release.

"I began using the app this fall.

I was on a trial version the last few weeks of last spring but it didn't work on my iPhone," Pintar said. "My initial thoughts were 'Great! Now we will be able to drive to the bus stop 10 minutes before it arrives, rather than wait at the bus stop at the time listed by AISD on the Bus Finder website.'"

One of the advantages the program has is the ability to show the exact ETA of a student's bus. With the app, students do not have to wait in bad weather. They know when they will be home, and parents know when the bus will be late.

"The bus app is able to tell me when the bus is expected to arrive at the bus stop," Yam said. "Knowing this, I would plan to show up at the bus stop around the time the bus came. This is helpful during rainy days as there is nothing to stand under."

Hafezizadeh hopes that WheretheBus will eliminate confusion on the part of parents and students and ultimately make the AISD transportation system more user-friendly for everyone.

"It should help to reduce the amount of phone calls received in our offices and also it will help our drivers because sometimes our parents and students may get upset [with] them if they have delays," Hafezizadeh said. "Hopefully it will help everyone."

There's [Moore] to Forensics class: teacher uses shipping container prize to model crime scenes

OLIVIA LEE
Editor-in-Chief

LASA Forensic Science and chemistry teacher Amy Moore received a \$2500 grant from Farmers Insurance Thank America's Teachers on July 20. Thank America's Teachers holds contests three times per year in each of which 60 teachers are granted \$2500. Teachers must teach K-12 to be eligible for the contest and must use the prize money within a year of receiving the grant.

website and clicking on her entry.

"With the money, I bought a 20 ft shipping container that I plan on using to build crime scenes for Forensics," Moore said. "This will give me a space, since space is at a premium in the building, that will not be disturbed and I can leave the scene up to be used over the course of a few units or even the year, depending on the scene."

LASA senior Dresden Timco was in Moore's Forensics class last year and she said her favorite part of the class

down there and I think that this is a good opportunity for forensic science."

LASA senior Aidan Henderson is taking Forensic Science this year and she said she thinks that the addition of the shipping container will benefit the forensics classes.

"I decided to take [forensics] because I enjoy learning about crime scene investigation and thought the class would give an interesting insight into the criminal justice system. I voted for [Ms. Moore] because I had her for chemistry and loved having her as a teacher. I am excited to solve the crimes Ms. Moore sets up in the shipping container."

The company that Moore purchased the container from is having its own contest for the best use of a shipping container in education. Moore plans to enter this competition and hopes to win some money to use towards her classes. If she were to win this competition Moore said she is not sure how the money would be allocated, because the money would be awarded to the school, rather than directly to be used for her classes.

"The winner of this contest wins \$25,000 for their school and the runner ups get a container for a year," Moore said. "I feel like I have a pretty good shot considering most people use container for storage, but how many use theirs for a crime scene?"

With the money, I bought a 20 ft shipping container that I plan on using to build crime scenes for Forensics.

-LASA Teacher Amy Moore

Moore submitted a proposal to the organization in hopes of receiving funding for a storage container. She said she will use this container to create mock crime scenes for her Forensics students to investigate.

"I wrote a brief proposal and then had everyone I know and everyone they know vote for the proposal and I was one of the top 60," Moore said.

Voting for the Moore's proposal consisted of going to Thank America's Teachers

was being able to solve crimes that Moore had set up for the students as well as breaking glass to analyze.

"I chose to take forensic science because I think it's really interesting and I took it at Kealing and I wanted to continue my knowledge of forensic science," Timco said. "I voted for Ms. Moore to win the shipping container, because last year during Forensic Science, we had to go down into the basement to set up all of our crime scenes. It was really gross



1. A LASA Forensics students measures broken glass at the simulated crime scene. Collecting evidence on the scene of the crime is an important part of Forensic Science and Moore's program.
2. Supplies to outfit the forensics storage container sit on a cart in the parking lot. Moore is planning to use the box as the site of many crime scenes throughout the year to help her students learn about crime scene procedures.
3. Forensics students take notes and analyze the carefully constructed crime scene. They share their observations to make sure key pieces of evidence are recorded for later discussion.
4. Ms. Moore (left) stands with her students outside of the forensics storage container and looks at another group working across the parking lot.
5. Students analyze the evidence they gathered within the "crime scene" outside the school building. The other students completed the same process at the shipping container.



Voices of Texas voter turnout program

continued from page 1

In people that are barely 18, or college students, or anyone that is not going out to vote that's where you truly see the effects. And if we make this initiative keep going, what we'll see is the effect of, how does student to student contact, telling another student to go out and vote, how is that gonna change it, if we start them out early? How do we change that, how do we turn on that civic switch in their minds?"

LASA senior Kekoa MacAuley is active on YouTube and said that the contest appealed to him as an opportunity to practice his video editing skills and potentially win a scholarship.

"A lot of people in the U.S. don't vote," MacAuley said. "They also complain about the issues with our political system and our economy

and stuff like that, but if they aren't actually voting then they can't really say anything about it, because they could change it but they decided not to."

Reyes said he's interested in targeting Texas because of the sizable population of eligible voters that don't make it out to the polls. In his opinion, Texans have a determinist attitude toward the way their state will always vote that discourages many from bothering to take action.

"If you don't go out to vote, you are giving up your voice," Reyes said. "That's our name, Voices of Texas, and that's what exactly our mission is.... Your opinion mattered before, but you just kept telling yourself it didn't matter, and that goes for anything in life really.... [A]ny kind of discourse you have with people, you lose that ability. You lose your legitimacy. And so therefore we are trying to rehabilitate people's legitimacy

in their discourse. Because we can go out and say, 'I picked this candidate for this reason,' but at the end of the day if we don't vote for them it doesn't really matter what you do." Only 21.7% of Texans voted in the March 1 primary, and Reyes said that turnout tends to be even lower for municipal and federal elections. Many Texans of voting age may not consider their vote valuable, but Reyes argues that on a more local level the impact of participating in the democratic process can be significant.

"If you [vote] you might have a different high school setting," Reyes said. "LASA might not be part of another school, but might have its own school in a different district or same district. Stuff like that where if you vote locally, if you vote federally, things will change. And we're trying to sell that to a lot of people."

all photos by Quinn Simpson

WELCOME TO THE PACK: NEW TEACHERS JOIN LASA COMMUNITY

The 2016-17 school year has brought numerous new faculty and staff to LASA High School. Due to this influx of new teachers and staff, The Liberator staff decided to spotlight the new additions to our jaguar family with a double-truck featuring some of the new teachers. The following teachers are also new to LASA this year but not featured here:

Cindy Dwinells (Registrar), Alli Thomas (Counselor), Mary Kelley (ASL), James Shockey (Computer Science), Clare Crosby (Planet Earth), Shelby Miller (Dance and First Ladies)

Julia Kronenberger, new LASA English I teacher, said that she majored in English because she loved it in college. However, Kronenberger said she didn't always know that she would pursue her current profession. Although she had planned to become a psychologist, she said she dropped the subject to a minor in college after realizing her heart wasn't as into it as much as she had originally thought.



"I think that literature is powerful — it can unite people, bring out the best in us, [and] make a lot of connections," Kronenberger said. "Our stories are sort of the reason we are here, I love literature, and then for [those] reason[s] I think people should get to experience it. I also believe that communication is fundamental to our world, so reading and writing are obviously important."

Elisha Adelman, new Great Ideas and Junior English teacher, previously taught at Vista Ridge High School in Cedar Park. Prior to embarking upon a teaching career, she was a costume designer.



"I read continuously, solve problems, and come up with creative projects in both fields," Adelman said. "Aside from holding public school positions in Virginia and Indiana, Adelman has also participated as an instructor for SIG programs across the country over summer. Because of these experiences, Adelman said she has become somewhat accustomed to environments like LASA."

Kelli Touchstone, new eZine (Electronic Magazine) teacher, was a teacher in Houston where she taught Yearbook, Spanish III, World & Geographical Studies II, and Communication Applications. She said teaching eZine appealed to her because it combines her passion for giving students a voice and her passion for photography, journalism and design.



"I think my students gain skills from this experience that will prepare them for the professional world such business communication, pitching an idea, and advocating for themselves," Touchstone said. "Also, exposing them to working on a long-term project with a team will definitely help them when working with others in the future."

Claire Weaver, new LASA German teacher, said that she has always wanted to be a German instructor. She said she was especially excited about teaching German at LASA, since there are only 4 positions across AISD.

To be totally uncool is pretty cool for me. I used to be able to ride a unicycle. Is it cool?
-LASA Japanese teacher Hiroko Fukuhara-Karch

David Tapscott, new LASA English I and II teacher, said he enjoys teaching because it offers him an opportunity to witness students' learning. In particular, Tapscott said he finds great satisfaction in witnessing students experience that "a-ha" moment of realization.



"The reason I teach English is because it's the most important subject," Tapscott said. "We deal with it in all aspects of life... So it applies to everybody. We have to be able to communicate, and we have to try to understand one another, and English is the language of understanding."

New Algebra II BC and Spanish teacher James Laughead is right at home teaching at LASA. Although the subjects he teaches may seem like opposites, his love for them started while he was a high school student here.



"I teach math and Spanish because I really enjoyed them in school. Spanish made more sense than English to me and I liked the way the language felt and sounded," Laughead said. "I discovered my passion for math originally in how useful it was for physics/astronomy... and then fell in love with its concepts, regardless of application, as I slowly got better at it."

Sandra Woodrow, new LASA counselor, said she has known she wanted to work in education ever since she read A Circle of Children by Mary McCracken in junior high. Woodrow has had a multitude of different positions in education, including: teaching elementary school, junior high math, counseling doing therapeutic work, and academic counseling.



"I have never been a part of a magnet school," Woodrow said. "I love the high regard for learning and the love of knowledge."

New Calculus AB and Physics teacher Matthew Deram, like Adelman, also came to LASA from Vista Ridge High School in Cedar Park. Deram said that he teaches calculus and physics because of his love for the two subjects, which he said was fostered by positive experiences with former teachers.

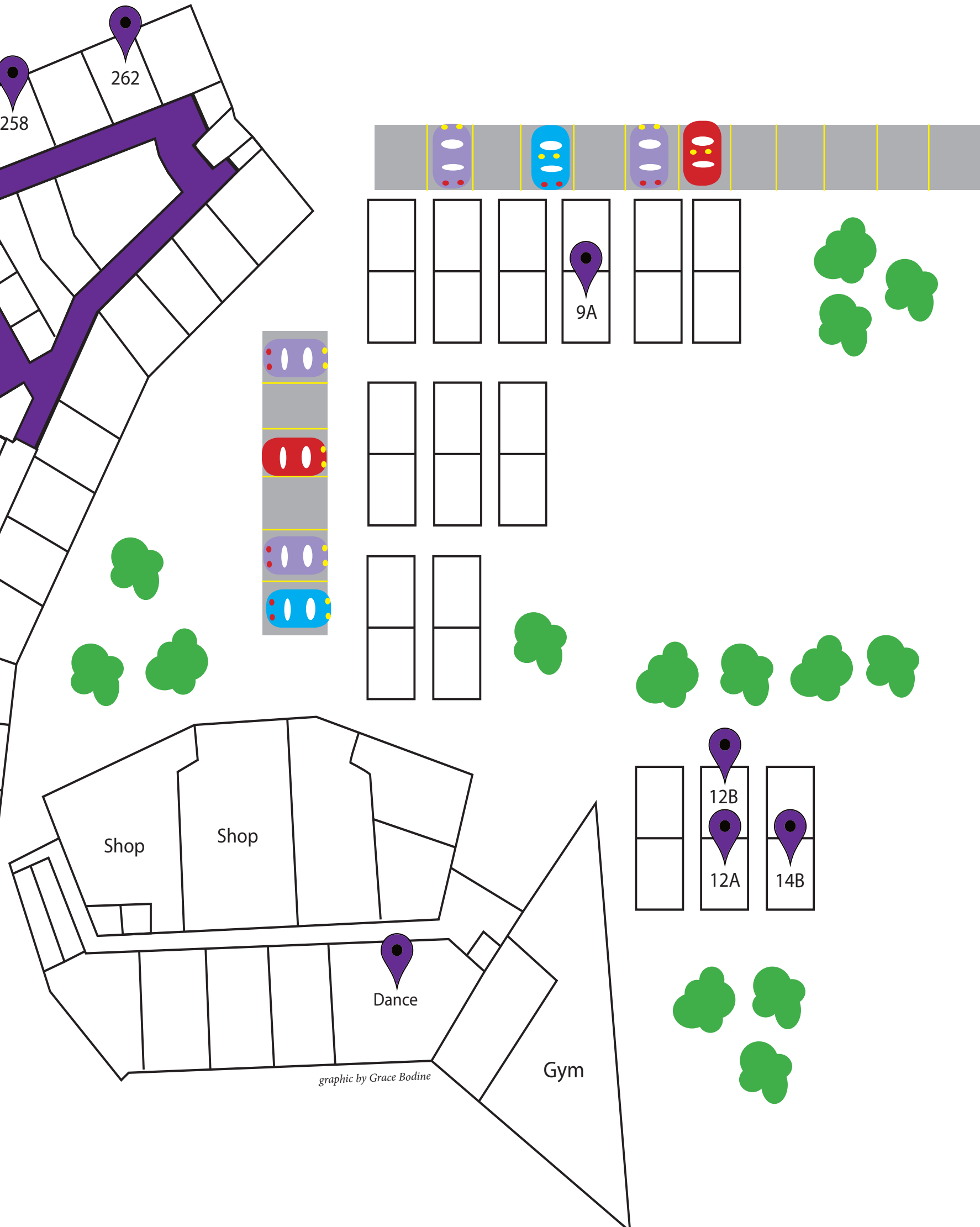


"I enjoy solving problems that show a deeper connection between skills, concepts, and how the world of math and science come together come together," Deram said. "I enjoy most when students reach that 'ah-ha' moment of understanding a new concept, especially if they had struggled with it earlier."

Hiroko Fukuhara-Karch, the new LASA Japanese teacher, was born in Japan to a family of teachers. With almost all of her immediate relatives holding positions in education, it seemed natural for Karch to pursue a similar career. However, Karch said this was not initially the case. It was only after serving as a Japanese instructor overseas that she settled upon being a teacher.



"When I attended a Japanese university, I wanted to pursue something different for my career and resisted being a teacher," Karch said. "Later, I started to live overseas, and taught Japanese [for the] first time when I lived in Taiwan. I found teaching and helping someone's learning rewarding."



I think that everyone should know that Chacos are super comfortable and can be worn for ANY activity, occasion, or event...
-LASA math and science teacher Mathew Deram

all stories by Emily Kolodney, Sarah Lucas, Trevor Anderson, Marlen Avila, Kenza McKerrihan, Oscar Hernandez, Sophie Wysocki, Elena Venegoni & Elena Lucas; all photos by Emily Kolodney, Sarah Lucas, Sarah Mines, Grace Bodine, Sarah Porter & Ashley Thomas

From Austen to Austin

Behind the scenes of LASA's newest theater venture

OSCAR HERNANDEZ
Staff Writer

Everything was dark. The spotlight suddenly animated to show off an array of colors. Antiquated furniture and props surrounded every inch of the stage. The actors came out, showing their costumes off to the audience awaiting their performance. The Alley Cat Players, LASA's theater production company, put on this show the nights of Sept. 15, 16, 17, 19, 22, 24 and 26 at the AISD Performing Arts Center. The play, a dramatization of "Pride and Prejudice", a work by Jane Austen, is a comedic theatre production directed by LBJ theatre teacher Melissa Jane Alexander Driscoll.

"I enjoy Jane Austen's work quite a bit, and her writing," Driscoll said. "I've always enjoyed the adaptations that I've read, and I felt that it was a very fun period piece to do rather than do another older [piece]."

Logistically, "Pride and Prejudice" brought on a whole new challenge for the technical department of the theatre.

"I have a wonderful team of technical leadership that does a lot of really good work designing and helping make my artistic vision come to life with less time than what the actors get from me," Driscoll said.

Instead of performing the play at the LASA/LBJ theatre like previous productions, Driscoll decided to have "Pride and Prejudice" at a different location in order to have access to a black box; a simple large square room with black walls and a flat floor. These theaters provide a more interactive experience for the viewers due to the audience being placed on the stage itself. Due to this, the technical department was given the task of building everything needed for the play here at school, while still making it easy to disassemble and move the production somewhere else at a moment's

notice. Many problems arose in the process. These included having wet paint the day before opening night, to running out of paint and mixing others together to hopefully get the same color, but in the end the techs were able to get everything ready and deliver a finished product in the end. As for the actors, memorizing and rehearsing this play in the context of the period it is set in, while maintaining appeal to a modern audience, was another obstacle to overcome.

"We have to make the time period meet our modern audience so we can't be 100 percent true to the style because nowadays people won't really accept that stiffness in people and really see the comedy," Driscoll said. "So we have to sort of find a balance of what we call period light, a kind of acting to make sure our audience is entertained but also understands the plot of the play."

With "Pride and Prejudice" being an older story, translating the characters and the way they talk was needed before they could even begin rehearsing. This was particularly a problem for LASA junior Erick Medina, who plays Mr. Collins.

"I personally prepare for roles by first memorizing my lines in order to get what the story has to say," Medina said. "Then I analyze what the lines would mean to the character. After that I perform it and try out different kinds of actions till it feels natural."

Despite the struggles that occurred during the preproduction, the technical department and the actors were able to overcome these challenges and deliver a show to the masses of LASA. According to many of the Alley cats, including LASA senior and actor Ivy Smith, the show was a success.

"Performing in this show has been a really great experience," Smith said. "From the incredible cast and crew to the fun new location."



LASA senior Ivy Smith and sophomore Lucy Pierce enact a dialogue between their two characters, Mary and Elizabeth Bennet. "Performing in this show has been a really great experience, from the incredible cast and crew to the fun new location," Smith said.



Challenges for the Alley Cats included adapting the classic play to contemporary audiences. "We have to make the time period meet our modern audience so we can't be 100 percent true to the style because nowadays people won't really accept that stiffness on people and really see the comedy," LBJ theatre teacher Melissa Jane Alexander Driscoll said.



LASA junior Erick Medina's character, Mr. Collins, proposes. "I personally prepare for roles by first memorizing my lines in order to get what the story has to say," Medina said. "Then I analyze what the lines would mean to the character. After that I perform it and try out different kinds of actions until it feels natural." photos by Quinn Simpson

AUSTIN CITY LIMITS



ACL: A Who's Who

Student offers insight into Austin's hottest music festival

OSCAR HERNANDEZ
Staff Writer

1. Radiohead

Headlining ACL this year is Radiohead, an electronic alternative rock band made up of five members: Thom Yorke, Jonny Greenwood, Ed O'Brien, Colin Greenwood and Phil Selway, all of which who have been working together since 1985. Starting out with their single "Creep" in 1992, Radiohead is still hugely followed today and is known for "OK Computer" in 1997, an album Metro calls one of the best albums ever released.

2. Mumford and Sons

Formed in 2007, Mumford and Sons has an alternative/folk rock style that caused their first album "Sigh No More" (2009) to reach number two on the UK Albums chart and Billboard 200 in America. This album was followed by two equally great albums, "Babel" (2012) and "Wilder Mind" (2015). Both LPs made it to the number one spot in the UK and US. A music group that is just starting a huge career, Mumford and Sons are a must-see for folk fans at ACL this year.

3. Kendrick Lamar

A huge face in hip-hop today, Kendrick started out in 2010 with the release of "Overly Dedicated". From that point on, it was all uphill for Kendrick, as he started collaborating with some of the big faces in hip-hop, including Busta Rhymes, Snoop Dogg, The Game and Lil Wayne. Just two years later, he dropped "good kid, m.A.A.d city," which made it to number two on the Billboard 200 and later went platinum. With Kendrick's new albums, "To Pimp a Butterfly" (2015) and "untitled unmastered" (2016), his unique style of hip-hop could be seen, including elements of jazz and soul music, making him a one of a kind performance.

4. LCD Soundsystem

Described as a blast of electronic punk/rock, LCD Soundsystem is back after reuniting last year from a four year split. Their 2005 album simply labeled "LCD Soundsystem" was nominated for the 2006 grammy for Best Electronic/Dance Album. This achievement was followed by their biggest single, "Daft Punk Is Playing at My House," winning the Grammy Award for Best Dance Recording. With LCD Soundsystem returning to festivals like ACL after four years, who knows what to expect, making this lightshow a concert packed with fun.

5. Major Lazer

Dubbed one of the hardest bands to easily describe, Major Lazer's music covers multiple genres, from electronica, to reggae, to trap music. Though one of their members, Switch, left two years after the 2011 release of "Guns Don't Kill People... Lazars Do," Major Lazer continued to make music and is now made up of Diplo, Jillionaire and Walshy Fire. With albums featuring other big artists like Pharrell, Sean Paul and Snoop Dogg, Major Lazer's music style and attitude, accompanied by the biggest names in hip-hop, make them another concert to go enjoy this year.

6. Kygo

Kygo, an electronica deep-house artist, came to be what he is today in 2014 from his release of "Firestone", causing him to go big after gaining popularity through streaming sites such as Soundcloud and Youtube. Since then, Kygo has dropped many singles and continues to gain the attention of other artists, including Diplo and Coldplay, asking him to make remixes of their songs. Accompanied with the release of his album "Cloud Nine" this year, he made what many are calling history for house music, due to his performance at the closing ceremony of the 2016 Rio Olympics. If that's not convincing enough, check him out at ACL this year.

7. Willie Nelson

This outlaw country/rock legend was and remains to this day one of the biggest figures for outlaw country. Starting his career in 1956, "Shotgun Willie" (1973), "Red Headed Stranger" (1975), and "Stardust" (1978), turned Willie Nelson into one of the most well-known faces in country at the time. Born in 1933 and starting music when he was seven, his 83 year old influence is still going strong, making him and his guitar "Trigger" a great addition to ACL.

8. The Chainsmokers

Andrew Taggart and Alex Pall work together to create the DJ-duo known as The Chainsmokers. Starting out by making remixes of indie bands in 2012, they picked up increasing popularity in December of 2013, with the release of "#Selfie". They peaked on the Dance/Electronic Songs chart, and from then on have continued making music, including their single "Closer" (2016), that made it to the number one spot on the US Billboard Top 100. If there's a place full of astonishing remixes this year, it's The Chainsmokers.

9. Flume

This Australian musician started out in 2008 with an uphill trek until he released "Flume" in 2012. This album made it to number one on the Australian Record Industry Awards (ARIA) Albums Chart, including double platinum status in Australia. A mix of electronica, EDM, and Hip Hop, Flume has remixed many songs by artists such as Lorde and Sam Smith. Flume also dropped "Skin" this year, which made it to the top of the ARIA Albums Chart, making him a key addition to ACL this year.

10. Chris Stapleton

A country/bluegrass songwriter with six number one songs, Chris Stapleton has appeared in over 150 albums by big artists like Adele and Luke Bryan. His release of "Traveller" in 2015 led him to reaching number one on the US Billboard 200 and won him the Country Music Association Award for Best Male Vocalist. He has been nominated for four grammys and won two for Best Country Album and Best Country Solo Performance. With the huge success that Chris Stapleton has had in his career, he will be sure to not disappoint.

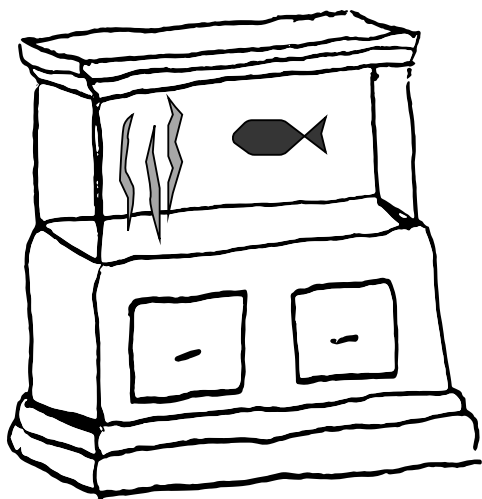
Clubs bring together like-minded students

From reptiles to jam, students can find a club that fits their interests

ELENA VENEGONI
Staff Writer

Even with crammed schedules and lots of homework, LASA students are excelling when it comes to interesting, creative and enriching clubs. Some of these extracurriculars play off of unique interests while others are made to learn something new. Some are meant to benefit those involved, while others are set in place to give back to society. With a wide variety of activities, and new ones being added each year everyone should be able to find a club that suits them perfectly.

For the animal lovers of LASA, the Fish Tank or the Reptile club might be a good match. The Fish Tank club is an extension of the Reptile Club, and is made up of



dedicated students, such as LASA junior Gabrielle Sorrell, who spend their spare time cleaning and beautifying the large fishtanks in the hallways. The group first came about as an initiative to reinvigorate the empty fish tank found in the yellow hallway.

"One of the members of Reptile Club had taken to trying to fix the 120 gallon fish tank in the yellow hallway, and interested students made an effort to help," Sorrell said, speaking of her co-president, Quin Hricik.

This year, restoring the fish tank in the yellow hallway has become the group's main project. Things have also ramped up in the club due to increasing amounts of members.

"Things aren't exactly quiet in Reptile Club," Sorrell said. "But it's a friendly, high-energy, positive environment for both old and new students who have any interest whatsoever in the animals here at LASA."

An extracurricular focused on contributing to our

it's name describes: all things jam.

"It's a very relaxed environment," LASA senior and Jam Club officer, Hannah Grace Jensen said. "People aren't here to put something on their resume, but instead to learn something new and enjoy meeting new people."

Jensen first became intrigued with making jam when the Jam Club served bread and jam to recruit new members in her freshman year. This spring the club is trying something new and organizing a jam making competition. To the cooks and jam enthusiasts of LASA, this club sounds like a dream come true.

With the sheer number of extracurriculars to chose



local community is the Sending Out Support (SOS) club. It was started last year by LASA freshmen Sarah Chieng and Jenny Lu, and works as a service group where each meeting is dedicated towards students' service hours. In the past they've led in-class projects, as well as spent time volunteering outside of school and hosting fundraisers.

"We had ideas for volunteer things we could do, but we figured that it would be more fun if we could involve other people," Chieng said.

This year the SOS club is planning on offering their services to more programs outside of school.

"We are hoping to work with The Settlement Home for Children, Helping Hands, Mobile Loaves and Fishes and others," Chieng said. "We've worked with some of them before, and we are excited to again."

The Jam Club is one of the more quirky extracurriculars that LASA offers. The group's purpose is to do exactly what



from, there is bound to be one for everyone. As of last year, LASA offered almost 100 different clubs, many of which were created by students. Some more clubs that make up this 100 range from embroidery club, conspiracy theory club and board game club to nerdfighter club and beyond.

"I think the reason that LASA can form such unique clubs is due to teachers being open-minded and students being determined and creative," Jensen said. "Together that does so much."

graphics by Riley Murphy

TOP 5

Gifts to give teachers for the best college rec letter

by Kenza McKerrihan

As college app deadlines approach, every senior frantically tries to get their teachers to write them glowing recommendation letters. Many teachers are in high demand, so here are five options:

1 **Homemade baked goods**
If your mom is writing your college essays with you.
Pros: Who can resist a warm baked good?
Cons: Teachers won't know whether it's you or your mom that truly appreciates them.

2 **S-H Donuts**
If you forgot all your deadlines and only have \$5
Pros: Cheap, close to school, and who doesn't like a doughnut?
Cons: Only open until 1, and at times there are extremely long lines--of LASA students.

3 **Torchy's Tacos**
If you are really banking on your rec letters to get you into college.

Pros: If you know which taco is your teacher's favorite, chances are they like you too.

Cons: If this list was on Yelp, Torchy's Tacos would be \$\$\$

4 **Gift Card**
If you still don't understand that everyone likes food in front of them more than food that they have to go get themselves (even if they don't actually have to pay for it).

Pros: Everyone loves \$\$\$\$\$\$

Cons: Where is the immediate gratification?

5 **Coffee**
If you want starbucks, but need to rationalize spending \$8 on a pumpkin spice frappuccino, you can also buy your teacher a \$2 tall black coffee.

Pros: Coffee is what the world (or overworked teachers) runs on.

Cons: Will it get to your teacher or just spill in your car?

Exclusive streaming websites are taking over the music industry

Why sites like Tidal and Apple Music are brought on by the fans themselves

ANDY DEGRASSE
Staff Writer

Kanye West. Chance the Rapper. Travis Scott. Drake. Frank Ocean. If these names mean anything to you, you have probably fallen victim to an alarming new trend: exclusives in the music industry. These exclusives have created a competition between streaming services like Apple and Tidal, and have hurt others like Spotify. Many fans have lamented how annoying this has been and how it encourages fans to download music illegally, but they don't truly understand the issue or see how deep it really goes.

In reality, the rise of music exclusives is the fault of no one but the fans themselves. As streaming has become more popular, fans have become complacent with "supporting" their favorite artist by streaming their new album a few times, which in turn, yields the artist only pennies, in comparison with one purchase of an entire album. Artists have other means of making money through merchandise and tours, but unless you are Kanye West, selling \$400 dollar tee shirts and homeless people clothes, this is still not enough. Artists have been driven to the brink and have been forced to use exclusives, which usually have a solid payout. Over the past few months, the problem has only gotten worse, and fans haven't done anything about it.

Feb. 14, 2016: Legendary Chicago rapper Kanye West

finally releases his album after teasing fans for months, but at the last second decides to put it exclusively on Tidal, a streaming service owned by his pal Jay Z. The release increases Tidal's user base almost twofold, and creates a precedent for the success that exclusives would bring to streaming services.

While this move was the first of its kind, it was not surprising to fans of Kanye, since he has always been known to make baffling moves like this before. Of course, no other artist would ever put their music only on one service, right?

April 29, 2016: The Champagne Papi himself, Drizzy Drake, drops his highly anticipated album, "Views," exclusively on Apple music. This is the first exclusive to drop only on Apple Music, and it is a precursor to the dominance Apple Music would experience in the coming months. Despite only being on Apple Music, Drake still manages to go platinum in the first week, proving to artists that they can still experience commercial success while going the exclusive route.

May 12, 2016: "Coloring Book", Chance the Rapper's follow-up to his breakout mixtape "Acid Rap," is yet another Apple Music exclusive. This is even more significant/devastating to fans due to Chance's reputation for dropping all of his music for free. Chance is widely known for making money only through his merchandise and concert tickets and making his music completely available to anyone who wants

to listen.

At this point we were all forced to consider the unimaginable: were exclusives going to become the new norm? If only we could've seen what was to come.

Aug. 1, 2016: After years of promising to drop his new album, a mysterious live stream appears on Frank Ocean's website, depicting him building an unknown object out of wood.

If it was any other artist, people may have waved this off as a strange publicity stunt, but after the complete silence from Frank Ocean, this was heart-stoppingly exciting.

Fans would watch the stream long into the night, waiting for something to happen, anything to indicate the release of new music.

Aug. 19, 2016: Finally after weeks of waiting, Frank blesses his fans with the release of his new album, "Blonde". Across the world, fans of hip-hop and R&B alike rejoice.

If people were excited when Kanye had dropped his album, it was nothing compared to this. This was it. And yet, this story felt too familiar. The album was another Apple exclusive. What should we have expected? We had no choice but accept this new, strange world.

So what does the future really hold? Will these exclusives continue? Or are they just a fad, that will soon fade away? One can only guess, but based on the trends we are seeing today, things look like they won't be getting any better.

IT'S A SIGN: ASL CLASS ADDED TO LASA

LISA MOOMAW
Staff Writer

In portable 12B, it's business as usual for a LOTE (Language Other Than English) class. Some students struggle with comprehension as they're immersed in a new culture and way of speaking, so they receive help from their teacher and peers. Others rehearse new vocabulary. Despite this flurry of activity, the classroom is dead silent as they practice their language.

The 13 students in LASA teacher Mary Kelley's ASL 1 class all speak without a sound. ASL stands for American Sign Language, and is the primary form of communication for many deaf or hard-of-hearing Americans. The program is brand new to LASA, meaning that there's only one period of it, during 0B. Despite only having existed for a few weeks, however, it's already garnered lots of enthusiasm and support.

"When I heard that the ASL class was made, I was ecstatic," LASA junior Cameron Carr said. "We've been trying to get an ASL class for a couple years."

Starting this year, AISD mandates that all schools offer ASL. Since the program is still small at LASA, Kelley has also launched it at Anderson High School and additionally teaches at Austin High School.

"I'm not sure what plans we may have ahead, but I do hope to see the ASL program continue to grow," Kelley said. "I would like to see them offer more levels from ASL 1 to 3."

Most of the students who aren't freshmen switched to ASL from another language. Carr, for instance, began in Latin. After participating in *The Hands of Its Enemy*, a play about a deaf playwright and her story about childhood domestic violence, Carr became hooked on ASL.

"For the play, the entire cast started learning ASL and it was one of, if not the most, significant shows I've been a part of," Carr said. "Being able to actually be enrolled in a class has been amazing."

Senior Catherine Dickey took Spanish before starting ASL, and sees a lot of differences between the two classes. Since the structure of the languages are different, Dickey said learning grammar in ASL is comparatively simpler.

"Everything is very visual and it makes it easier for me to learn," Dickey said. "You don't have to conjugate any

verbs which is really awesome!"

The class accommodates a wide range of levels, from complete beginners to advanced learners. Some students, like Carr, are familiar with a few essentials of the language. Others, like Dickey, already have a fairly solid understanding under their belt.

"I decided to take ASL because I'm already semi-fluent in ASL, and I really missed practicing it everyday," Dickey said. "It's something I want to pursue as a possible career."

Teacher Mary Kelley also expressed excitement about the program. According to Kelley, teaching the class has helped her raise awareness about the language and Deaf community. When the position opened up, she said it seemed like a perfect way to do so.

"LASA was in need of an ASL teacher and I jumped at the opportunity because of all the rave reviews LASA has," said Kelley. "My goal has always been to show that ASL is a beautiful visual language and convey the sense of fun and excitement of learning the 3D art of signing."

Since Kelley is completely deaf, students are not allowed to use their voices in class. Because of this, they learn exclusively in the target language.



Carr appreciates the challenge because of how it, according to her, makes it easier to grasp.

"ASL is a much more immersive class," Carr said. "I think that enriches the classroom so much, because we actually learn about the culture and the language firsthand."

The total immersion also bonds the class together, according to sophomore Willa Scanlon. Although she considers it difficult, eliminating oral speaking helps the students unite around the task, and, as Scanlon says, can make success feel more rewarding.

"The class already feels kind of like a community since this is the only way we are allowed to communicate," Scanlon said. "It is fun when you get and remember a new sign."

New A team buzzes in

ROXY BONAFONT & GABRIELLE JABOUR
Editor-in-Chief, Staff Writer

Last June, the LASA Quiz Bowl A team beat out 95 other teams from across the country and the world to win the 2016 PACE National Scholastic Championship, as well as coming in fourth at the High School National Championship Tournament. The team was comprised of four seniors: Corin Wagen, John DiCarlo, Ethan Russo and Trevor Binford. Their victory at PACE NSC gave LASA a second NSC title and the school's fourth consecutive appearance in NSC finals. It was also the last tournament the team played before graduating. LASA teacher and Quiz Bowl coach Jason Flowers said that the loss of leadership and continuity in the club is a significant challenge that the remaining members have to meet.

"[We] always look to prepare for the future and to try and insure the continuity of the club and make sure that our teams are gonna have a good future," Flowers said. "We definitely tried to prepare the team last year that we knew was gonna be the A team this year."

The new A team, last year's B team, is comprised of LASA seniors Ujwal Punyamurtula, Cass Plowman and Nishanth Kalavakolanu and LASA junior Graham Stockton. Punyamurtula said that replacing last year's team isn't easy.

"Out of all the schools in Texas, I think LASA has a reputation of winning the national tournaments the most, just because in years past we have had such good teams represent us at nationals," Punyamurtula said. "It's a lot to live up to, there's this thing of recognizing that we are not as good as last year's A team, or the team before that. But we have a lot of potential for improvement, and all of us plan to work really hard this year just to keep it up at a national level."

Quiz Bowl is an academic competition played among two teams of up to four members. Each team member buzzes in on questions that range anywhere from history and literature to the arts and sciences. Each member usually picks a range of topics that interests them to specialize in.

"I focus on science, and lately I've been going into some philosophy. The thing with Quiz Bowl is sometimes you'll find things that you didn't know you liked before," Punyamurtula said. "I wouldn't know that philosophy was such a cool thing if it weren't for Quiz Bowl. I got really interested in philosophy, so that's one of the

main things I'm doing."

One of the challenges LASA's current A team has been facing is broadening the team's range of knowledge. Plowman said it will take time to adjust to the recent loss of experience and perform at a similar level to last year's team.

"This year's A team has a lot more gaps than last year's team, but we are very good at 20th century world history, American history, and Greco-Roman mythology. Some of our biggest weaknesses are American literature and biology," Plowman said. "At the moment I feel like we are not at as good as the LASA A team is expected to be. We are ranked around 10-15, and LASA A should normally be in the top three. If we commit ourselves, we can definitely make the improvements necessary to fix that though. It is very difficult to fill the old A team's shoes. That team frequently dominated their competition to a degree that would be tough to replicate."

According to Punyamurtula, last year's team had a larger base of knowledge and could recall random facts with ease. As the year is progressing, the members of the new A team are starting to figure out what they need to do to improve, both individually and as a team.

"[Last year's A team was] really good with reflexes. To put it frankly, they were better than us in about every aspect of playing Quiz Bowl, so we have a lot of work to do," Punyamurtula said. "Last year's B team is now this year's A team, so we've had a year to sort of gel together as a team. We know how each member of the team functions and how they play. We have an idea of that now because we've had a year to get together and work on issues as a team."

Since the team has gotten used to playing together, they're starting the year having already established an identity. Flowers said that every team has its own personality, and that this one distinguishes itself from last year's in its tone and attitude during competition.

"This team is a lot more loose," Flowers said. "They joke around a lot. They are pretty fun guys, and that's always good. You need to be able to let off some steam in some intense competitions."

As the A team anticipates the coming year, Flowers is already looking further in the future. Since the majority of this year's A team will be graduating, Flowers plans on focusing a lot of attention on developing the potential of younger players that will eventually carry the club's legacy.

"We have a lot of strong underclassmen," Flowers said. "We have a group of sophomores that won the middle school championship when they were in eighth grade at Kealing. We also have some other freshman and sophomore players that have a lot of experience, really strong players. We're very happy with where we are going to be within the next few years."



LASA Quiz Bowl A Team with their 2016 PACE National Scholastic Championship trophy. From right to left: Corin Wagen, Ethan Russo, John DiCarlo and Trevor Binford. photo courtesy of LASA Facebook.

The class follows two curriculums: Signing Naturally, which is the most widely used in the nation, and Masters, which some universities offer. According to Kelley, the philosophy of allowing students to learn organically in a low pressure environment is the most productive, although not always possible.

"An ideal class structure would be to have the students seated in a circle facing in front of the teacher because it would be 'deaf friendly' in a non-auditory environment where everyone can see what others are signing," Kelley said. "Unfortunately, due to borrowed classrooms or how a classroom may be designed, that's not always the case, but I try to make the best out of it by making sure all the students are able to face me and see other signers as well."

Kelley plans to teach students what she calls the "C's" of learning: communities, culture, comparisons and connections. These elements involve signing reception, expressive signing and sign production.

"By the end of this year, they will already know basic vocabulary, possess basic grammar skills for communication, be able to make introductions and share personal information, talk about their surroundings, use basic strategies for establishment and maintenance of conversations and relationships, and [have] a basic understanding of Deaf culture," Kelley said.

Like any language class, ASL 1 incorporates cultural information as well. Kelley hopes for students to learn the norms and general beliefs of the Deaf community in order to be able to communicate effectively within it.

"Students will acquire an understanding of multiple aspects of deaf culture, including its history, alphabet, vocabulary, correct grammatical structures, conversational behaviors and social customs," Kelley said. "Hopefully, students will have opportunities to participate in Deaf community events in the Austin area."

Although the program is still budding, students say its popularity is already evident. Scanlon considers it an especially enjoyable language experience, and Carr recommends it as well.

"It's definitely my favorite class," Dickey said. "I wasn't really sure what to expect from the class just because I've taken classes before but it's really fun and I love it!"

RISINGER

continued from page 1

"This is due to the perception of blatant media bias (e.g. CNN is in the tank for Clinton, and Fox News is all-in for Trump) such that voters become numbered to the 'news,'" Risinger said. "Once the media is dismissed as 'propaganda,' their influence is limited."

Instead, Risinger said that the role of the media has been in some part fulfilled by people utilizing social media. An example he noted was that it was a person with an iPhone, not a TV crew, that was able to capture Hillary Clinton's fainting spell at the memorial ceremony for the September 11 attacks. According to Risinger, the disadvantage of viewing such sources is that reinforces to viewers why their choice is 'right' as opposed to seeking the truth, which he said fuels the division and seeming hatred between liberals and conservatives in our nation.

"As voters use social media to share events in real-time, other voters can view events like a reality show," Risinger said. "No filters. No commentary. Just events, words, and expressions. While it is real and raw, the fact that voters have no context for what they see on social media is a bit scary."

One of the most viral stories from the Republican National Convention was Ted Cruz's speech in which he failed to openly endorse Trump. This story was covered extensively through a variety of mediums, from professional news sources to social media accounts, but mainly angled towards explaining what they witnessed as dissent within the ranks of the Republican Party.

"As Cruz left the stage, I walked quietly back to the Texas delegation," Risinger said. "I felt as if I had been kicked in the gut. I had witnessed a missed opportunity in American political history. And, potentially, I had witnessed a Texas Senator destroy his political career (Cruz is up for election in 2018). I will always remember that sense of loss as I walked back to my seat."

According to Risinger, Cruz's speech was just one of the incidents in which much of the coverage of the convention was not an accurate portrayal. Other

incidents included the protesters, which he said were on a much smaller scale than the media indicated. Overall, he dismissed the claims of a fractured Republican Party, and said that the path for Trump to secure the nomination was cleared.

"As a Delegate, I knew that the media story about protests was a flat-out lie," Cruz said. "But, it made for good pictures and television visuals. It just did not make for a very accurate portrayal of reality."

Risinger said another highlight of his trip to the convention was the opportunity to eat pizza with his congressman. The spirit of the convention was alive and in full effect as congressmen and delegate alike were able to come together for one cause.

"The Williamson County delegation had decided to meet for pizza and our Congressman joined us. How awesome that a Congressman that could be eating at a lobbyist function chose to eat pizza with his constituents in a public park? I thought that was amazing."



LASA Social Studies teacher Ronny Risinger with Mitch McConnell, Senator of Kentucky. photo courtesy of Ronny Risinger.



LASA Social Studies teacher Ronny Risinger with Texas Senator Ted Cruz. photo courtesy of Ronny Risinger.

Coach Croston's conquers cross country comeback

GEORGE GUCKENBERGER
Staff Writer

The ground rumbles as 100 LASA/LBJ runners turn the last corner before the finish line. There are a lot of changes coming to the cross country team this year, a new coach, a new batch of freshman and according to LASA sophomore Cameron Kleiman, a captain of the cross country team, a new attitude.

"The attitude this year is a little different than last year," Kleiman said. "I know for certain all of the other captains love what they're doing and enjoy spreading their love of running to others. This season is about self-improvement."

The new attitude can be attributed to many things, including the new captains and the return of Assistant Coach Jon Croston, after the previous coach, Coach Trejo left the team. According to LASA sophomore Christian Salinas, because Croston is a teacher at LASA, and Head Coach Shannon Bergeron is a counselor, they understand the struggles of the students, which leads them to be a little less demanding on the runners compared to Trejo.

"Trejo was more of a sprinter coach," Salinas said. "He made some iffy comments throughout the year that eventually led to him leaving, but he helped me improve my speed a little bit. He helped me do some sprinting improvements not quite cross country improvements."

Practices are often led by captains, who have several responsibilities. Salinas says they are in charge of the remind group (a notification program to let users in a certain group know about upcoming events or changes), they make sure everyone is focused and on task, and they plan out all of the practices, including the ones in the summer. For LASA senior and cross country team captain Dayln Gillentine, it is important to lead by example.

"The most important part of being a captain is building an environment of camaraderie and support. I have tried really hard to foster a safe environment where everyone is encouraged to do their best and run their hardest, not matter what their time is."

Captains also help the coaches deal with the large amount of runners, and according to Gillentine, the team is the biggest it's ever been. The team has grown from the five female runners in her freshman year to 70 total runners. Other leaders on the team include LASA junior Dylan Cox, the fastest runner on the team.

"I feel like I try to share things I've learned about training and racing with the captains of the team as well as the coaches to try to help sculpt what we collectively believe to be the best way to run the team," Cox said. "I tend to have some

say as to the timing of the workout schedule and what days we do certain workouts but really the captains and coaches do a great job of planning all that out anyway. I try to work specifically with some of the varsity boys runners to help them with individual times to hit for workouts or how to alter the workouts to hit their personal goals."

Other changes this season are apparent at the meets according to Salinas, such as how last year Trejo would lead the warm ups, but this year it is led by the captains. Salinas said the coaches are more there for structure and tips for the race.

"He would lead warm ups, while this year it's a lot more captain and Dylan Cox lead, lead by veterans and leaders of the team," Salinas said. "And they help us with warm ups based on their experiences and what works best for them."

So far the team has had two out of the seven total meets. The first was a 3km run at Lockhart City Park. According to Kleiman the shorter distance was good for the new runners because it helped them get prepared for the longer runs at later meets.

"The short distance helped everyone feel a little more comfortable knowing they wouldn't have to run as far," Kleiman said. "And for most, the promise of barbecue afterward was too substantial to ignore."

The second meet was a 5k official course AISD Invitational meet. The JV boys team took home a first place plaque.

"So far, in the first couple meets, the girls' cross country team has been the top team in our district," Gillentine said. "And I believe the boys' cross country team has as well. We are all working really hard and are hoping to qualify both teams for regionals."

Since Trejo left, several changes have been made to the practices, Salinas says this year the workouts have been more focused on running with form, with lots of longer runs going uphill, compared to the more speed/track based workouts of last year.

"Since the group is larger this year we sometimes divide the group into different levels based on speed, mileage, and experience," Bergeron said. "We are also adjusting workouts based on what the team needs to make improvements."

There are several goals for the team this season. Bergeron would like to see the runners keep track of and improve their times and Gillentine would like to see the teams qualify for regionals.

"I really hope that every runner comes to love running as much as I do," Bergeron said. "We are also a very supportive team and I hope that everyone feels like they are part of the group. And while I want everyone to work hard, I hope we all have fun."



LASA sophomores Antoine Denis and Andrew Thomas run for varsity LBJ cross country at the September 10th St. Andrews meet. Photo courtesy of Liberator staff photographer.

LBJ scrambles to find quarterback in new season

TREVOR ANDERSON
Staff Writer

The LBJ Jaguars are ready for action this season. After overwhelming wins against both Waco and Anderson and a tough fight against Bowie, Head Coach Andrew Jackson and the rest of the team are excited and ready to defend their District title. Last year, LBJ won all of their games in the district, smashing the likes of McCallum and Anderson with ease. This year, there have been some changes. LBJ's old quarterback, DeAndre Wytaske graduated, leaving them with a host of prospects. Aaron Green is the top contender.

Green has been on the varsity team for 2 years, and Jackson said that he has been a great help to the team. Against Waco University High School, Green threw a pass for a 62-yard touchdown, which contributed to the Jags' 46-7 win over the Trojans. Jackson said even with Green's promising performance, a team needs to count on all of its members.

"We can't rely on just one [quarterback] though," Jackson said. "We have to have depth."

According to Jackson, two other prospects for quarterback to look out for are Trylan Tummis and Bryan Batts, both juniors this year. One newcomer to watch this year is Hunter Scott, a freshman who, according to Jackson, has a lot of potential. According to Jackson, Scott likes to work everyone in at practice. With time and experience, Jackson is confident about Scott's potential.

"Scott is the best thrower we have," Jackson said.

Right now, LBJ's 4th year coach is all about consistency. He is looking for the guys that can perform not only well, but do it under pressure. The quarterback has to be a beacon for the rest of the team—without him, nothing would be effective, according to Jackson.

"All of our guys are getting reps, we need to find out who will be the most consistent," Jackson said.



The ball hurtles toward new LBJ quarterback Aaron Green at varsity game against Bowie High School on Sept. 2. Photo courtesy of Liberator web editor Olivia Tung.



The LBJ football team sets up for a snap in their 14-3 victory over McCallum High school. Photo Courtesy of Liberator staff photographer Meena Anderson.

LBJ wins rival game

CURRIE LARRIMER
Staff Writer

No one expects to see fireworks at a high school football game, but when it comes to the LBJ - McCallum High School football rivalry, it's go big or go home. The rivalry has been around for many years. Every year purple and blue go head to head at the epicenter of high school football. Glitter and silly string cloud the stands on both sides in a battle to show who has the most spirit. In preparation for this annual showdown, LASA senior student section leader Jonah Tashjian had a lot planned.

"I want to make the first games really fun so more people want to come to the Mac game," Tashjian said.

This game has almost always brought out the biggest crowd of the season for both teams, so it's always a big priority in the minds of our student section leaders.

"I think it's cool how all of the different people at LASA come together and have a good time," Tashjian said.

According to LASA senior middle linebacker Chris Valentino this game was important because most of the football players know each other through other sports or middle school, so the competition is even stronger. He has played against McCallum the past 2 years, and so he said he expected the game not to be too difficult.

Both teams rely on their fan base to encourage them to keep fighting, and Valentino said that it feels like you have a huge family cheering for you.

"The student section gets pretty crazy for that game and it makes the game more intense," Valentino said.

The student section for both schools prepare all season leading up to this intense rivalry, so things tend to get crazy.

"I'm gonna go around the halls and yell at the freshman, sophomores, and juniors through a megaphone to go to the game," Tashjian said.

The student section leaders of LASA aren't the only ones excited for the game. McCallum senior Gillian McDonald voiced her enthusiasm about the upcoming game.

"I definitely have a more aggressive spirit toward the LASA and LBJ kids around the time of the game because so many bragging rights come along with what happens at the game," McDonald said.

Those bragging rights go to anyone but the McCallum student body this year because the Jags took home the win with a score of 14-3. This makes LBJ the back-to-back champs of this intense rivalry after a similarly satisfying win last year. The past few years the winner of this rivalry has gone on to win the district or at least become co-district champions.

"The student section for the Mac game was the biggest it's ever been and that just added to the excitement," Tashjian said.

After the first touchdown for the Jaguars, fireworks went off across the street and behind the field. Tashjian said he thinks that changed the entire momentum of the game. Neither team scored in the second half though LBJ senior Allie Green recovered a total of three interceptions and Valentino picked off a pass from the McCallum quarterback and returned it to the Mac 18 at the end of the first half.

"I had an interception right before halftime that led to us scoring a touchdown and putting us up 14-3 going into the locker rooms, the effect that play had on the momentum of both teams can't be understated," Valentino said.

Overall the season has brought out an impressive number of student supporters but this game was like no other according to Tashjian.

"I hope the momentum continues and our student section continues to be number one in the district," Tashjian said.



New head LBJ baseball coach Eric Martanovic takes a swing at a baseball during practice. The team starts their season in the spring and has practices every A day until then. Photo courtesy of Liberator staffer Sarah Porter.

Baseball season starts off with a swing and a new coach

JEFFREY KOVAR
Staff Writer

The crack of another bat smashing a home run rings out across the baseball field. Baseball practice for the LBJ/LASA boys baseball team began with the start of school, and with it a cacophony of changes, including a large class of new players, brand new equipment for practice, and a new coaching staff as well.

"I have been really impressed by the level of baseball and leadership acumen displayed across all age levels of the team," new head baseball coach Eric Martanovic said. "I have a great group of young men. I'll never forget having each of the players shake my hand after practice for these first couple of weeks of baseball class. Parents are eager to make an impact and develop the program with me. I am completely thrilled to have this position."

Martanovic, a crime and law teacher at Reagan has a deep baseball past. He played baseball at Bowie high school in Austin, at Texas A&M University Corpus Christi for two years, and played semi-professional baseball for the Houma Hawks of the Southeastern League, and Pensacola

Pelicans and Coastal Bend Aviators of the Central League during the 2003 and 2004 seasons. Martanovic coached baseball during his summers at Bowie, Varsity Assistant/Pitching Coach at C.E. Byrd High School in Shreveport Louisiana and Captain Shreve High School also in

coach in Louisiana."

Martanovic expressed a passion toward a winning reputation. While he was in Louisiana, Martanovic won two district championships, and made two state Quarterfinal appearances with the teams he coached. Martanovic requests a team that not only wins, but also plays with a winning mentality.

"I want this team to have a reputation for winning, to be the example of the way an organization should run," Martanovic said.

"This not only includes tallies in the win column, but mastering the daily work to make those W's happen. There are no cut-corners on the way to a championship and our current players will leave an example for future classes to practice and play with that mentality."

Players share similar goals with Martanovic, according to Greendyk. The baseball team lost 10-0 to Dripping

Springs in the playoffs last season. Kekoa Macauley, a LASA senior on the varsity team would like the team to win that game this year.

"I can definitely see us making playoffs this year with hard work," Macauley said. "To make it further, we would need to make sure everyone is on the same page and always grinding."

The new coaching staff wasn't the only change for the baseball team this year. The team recently had practice uniforms made. Anyone who plays baseball has to purchase one of those uniforms, which generates money for the team. This money is put toward new equipment for the team.

"Butch Thompson and John Cohen at Mississippi State emphasize gaining confidence through skill acquisition," Martanovic said. "Skill acquisition comes through correct repetition of an activity over time. Our new equipment will get our players more reps in the activities that build skill and will lead to an overall increase in confidence during games. It's all about being prepared for what's ahead of us. I also hope the equipment will also attract new players."

I want this team to have a reputation for winning, to be the example of the way an organization should run.

-LBJ head coach Eric Martanovic

Shreveport, and as a Varsity assistant at Reagan for the past 3 years. Martanovic rich baseball past, which has been noted by LASA sophomore Jacob Greendyk, a second year player on the baseball team.

"He's really organized," Greendyk said. "He has a plan for what he wants to do, and he backs it up because he's had a lot of experience and success as a high school

Fresh LBJ volleyball coach sets fans a new season

SARAH MINES
Staff Writer

A shrill whistle echoes throughout the gym as the girls high-five each other before returning to their positions and get back to the game. New Varsity Volleyball Coach, Flirtisha Harris, calls and cheers from the sidelines as the players pass, spike and slam the ball across the net. This is Harris' first year as Varsity Head Coach after assisting the volleyball team for several years.

Harris, a long-time athlete, said when she began to play volleyball in high school she immediately fell in love with it.

"I was a setter on a state tournament team," Harris said. "I wasn't very good at it then."

Harris also ran track in high school and was granted two scholarships to play in college, one for volleyball and another for track. She anchored the winning 4x400 relay at Big East in 1994, won bronze in the USA Indoor in 1995, and competed in the 1996 Olympic trials.

"I was offered a scholarship to a Division One school

to play volleyball, but I chose to accept my scholarship for track and field. My goal was to go to the Olympics, but at the time volleyball was not an Olympic sport."

She then continued to run track and field for and earned her Bachelor's Degree from Stetson Hall in New Jersey. In her first year as head coach, Harris has added different elements to practice to prepare players for games. Ella Nasi, a veteran player, said that practices have become more about game play compared to practices in the past.

"We do a lot of scrimmaging," Harris said. "We watch film so we can better our game and see our low points and high points."

Both Harris and the players seem to be focused on bonding with one another and hopefully making it to district playoffs.

"[I'm looking forward to] getting more playing time with the team this year and hopefully districts," Nasi said. "I've had a different coach every year of my four years, it's difficult because you have to get used to new coaches and they aren't able to build the program," Dayla Woller, a senior who has played since freshman year, said.

Woller said that with the large freshman class, the team is working how to build their team dynamics and learning to work with all of the incoming players.

"I'm optimistic about the season," Woller said, "We have a lot of new talent coming in." Cora Tien, one of the freshman on the team, said, "I really like her, she's dedicated to the team and she wants the best for us. She's a lot nicer than coaches in the past."

Harris notes that one thing that stands out to her about the team is that it is one unit and isn't defined by whether the players attend LASA or LBJ.

"There's no 'I'm LBJ, I'm LASA.' They are one team. I like to see the friendships and comradery that they have," Harris said.

She also hopes that the girls learn more about themselves and grow in character through volleyball.

"The most important thing is self value. Everyone has a role and they were selected for their gift. I want them to be confident young women both on and off the court and I want them to take risks."

LASA senior Dayla Woller sets the ball against Reagan in the team's first and only win of the season. Photo courtesy of Liberator sports editor Emma Jane Hopper.



New season brings new opponents with division changes

SARAH PORTER

Staff Writer

It's 2016 and changes are being made to the classification of UIL schools. Public schools in Texas are organized by their population; division 1A schools have the smallest population and division 6A schools have the largest population. This year, Vandegrift, Vista Ridge, Manor, Leander and Ann Richards have been moved from 5A to 6A. Austin High and Anderson have moved from 6A to 5A, and Eastside Memorial has moved from 5A to 4A. Despite its growing population, LASA/ LBJ has remained a 5A school.

The new UIL division changes have introduced some new competition to LASA/ LBJ. LASA junior, Julia

Wasson, listed Ann Richards, McCallum and Austin High as the varsity volleyball team's main competition this year. LBJ sophomore, Bryce Gabble, said Austin High will be the junior varsity football team's main competitor. Some athletes, on the other hand, are unconcerned with the new competition introduced by the UIL division changes. Vandegrift and Manor are listed as one of the girls' varsity track team's toughest competition, and LBJ sophomore and varsity 400 meter runner Caroline Anyatonwu weighs in.

"I'm not worried about competition this year; I'm focused on improving our times this year," Anyatonwu said.

There are mixed emotions about the new UIL divisions, as different athletes are affected differently by this change. Some athletes, like Gabble, are enthusiastic about the

realignment.

"The new UIL divisions are cool because they've given us a chance to play some new teams," Gabble said. "They motivate us to work harder to beat all those new teams."

Other athletes are more motivated by themselves than the new UIL divisions and the competition they bring.

"The UIL divisions won't change how we perform because we're focused on improving ourselves," Anyatonwu said. "Other teams leaving or entering our district won't affect that."

Many athletes, however, are focused on the bright side of the realignment and are a little happier about it.

"The new divisions have a positive effect on our team because, with our competitors leaving, we'll have a better chance of being more successful this year," Wasson said.

While most athletes seem to be optimistic about the realignment of UIL divisions, others, like Caroline Anyatonwu hold a particularly interesting outlook on this change.

"No team is really faster than us, it's just that sometimes, we get lazy and that affects our performance" Anyatonwu said.

LASA junior and First Lady, Ulan Notzon, provided a lot of insight about the reality of division changes.

"I think the division changes are kind of ridiculous in that they're not very representative of the population that actually participates in some sports," Notzon said. "Especially with LASA and LBJ and how most sports don't pull from both schools."

While Notzon is right about several sports at LASA/ LBJ (such as football and swimming) there are still sports (such as track and field and soccer) that are equally represented by both LASA and LBJ.

"The new UIL divisions actually don't affect dance very much because dance competitions are organized by the size of the dance team, not the size of the whole school," Notzon said. "The main way the divisions affect dance competitions is that bigger schools have a bigger talent pool to choose from."

Although not all athletes are happy about the new division changes, Caroline Anyatonwu has some comforting words for those who may be intimidated by this realignment: "Nothing's changing; it's just a couple additions."



LBJ junior Tyrone McDonald trails Bowie senior Simmeon Nyimpha in LBJ's first game against a 6A. Photo courtesy of Liberator web editor Olivia Tung.

CROSS COUNTRY

Cedar Park Invitational 9/17

Varsity Girls 5,000 M
16th place overall
Suzanne Metcalf-
27th place, 21:05.9
Daylin Gillentine-
71st place, 22:15.7

Varsity Boys 5,000 M
11th place overall
Dylan Cox-
3rd place, 16:18.4
Cameron Kleiman-
14th place, 16:54.8

graphic by Grace Bodine

BY THE NUMBERS

Top LBJ sports statistics from the past 6 weeks

VOLLEYBALL

Regular Season

9/13 0-LBJ VS MacCallum-3
9/16 0-LBJ VS Ann Richards-3

Overall Record 0-8
District Record 0-3

Kicking back with Ethan Lim: Kuk Sool Won style

RILEY MURPHY

Staff Writer

When people talk about sports, more often than they're talking about baseball or football. What may not come to mind is the practice of martial arts, which focuses not only on physical strength, but on mental fortitude as well. Ethan Lim, a junior at LASA, is a martial artist at Kuk Sool Won of Oak Hill holding the rank of Second degree black belt, or Kyo Sa Nim. Kuk Sool Won is a traditional Korean martial arts system that mixes the practices of empty hand forms and techniques with weapons and self defense training. Students learn techniques that can get them out of grabs, locks, and can even disarm attackers. Almost every fight ends up on the ground, so KSW implements wrestling and judo style techniques to immobilize attackers and end any strife quickly. Most forms are executed quickly and explosively, focusing on extreme control of the body and an understanding of every specific movement. Lim has been training in Kuk Sool Won for 11 years, starting when he was five.

"Since I was a little kid, I always liked ninjas and martial arts," Lim said. "And that convinced me to do KSW because I thought I'd be able to do the things that Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan were doing in the movies."

Lim trains at Kuk Sool Won mostly because of its health benefits provided through rigorous training and practicing.

"All the forms and weapons require quick movements," Lim explains. "KSW inherently stresses explosiveness in any movement that you make."

Kuk Sool also comes with many social aspects. As Lim has been training at the Oak Hill branch KSW for so long, he has grown up with many of the black belts and instructors.

"Growing up with most of these people makes for a great community that is super hard to leave [or] not be involved with," said Lim.

At Kuk Sool, Ethan can socialize and train with these people he's known for so long, but he can only go so often, with other responsibilities and distractions pulling him away.

"Usually if there is no work, I go to train and practice three days out of the week. But with school, sometimes I have to cut down on the time I spend there due to homework, tests, and the various other things that teachers assign," says Lim.

As a student at LASA, Ethan has to be able to strike a balance between his ability to attend Kuk Sool classes and keeping up with his academics.

"In martial arts, being a black belt isn't just having a title and a higher rank. It means that you have a responsibility as a mentor, as someone who is expected to help, and this is not always easy" says Tim King, Head Instructor at Oak Hill KSW.

Ethan works with many different people of all levels in the system. He has to be able to do his forms and techniques in such a way that anyone from a white belt to a brown belt can learn from.

"All the lower belts look up to you," Lim said. "I guess because of this, you have to strive to do everything perfectly which puts a lot of stress on me. Everything I

do is scrutinized so that the lower belts can try to become better martial artists or better people, and being a role model for them can be difficult."

Ethan has made many friends at Kuk Sool Won during his training, including Lily Ang, a junior at Bowie High School. She is a first degree black belt that has trained with Ethan since he began at KSW. The two regularly paired up for the techniques section of the annual tournament, and continue to train together to this day.

"In Kuk Sool we say that a Black Belt is a White belt who never quits. Ethan has trained consistently in Kuk Sool for many years and didn't give up, even when it got tough," Ang says.

One of the most important aspects of any martial arts system is determination and dedication outside of classes, according to Lim. Lim and Ang have both stuck with their training, no matter the difficulty. They have even participated in rank tests that have lasted for four hours or more. Every year in October, the World Kuk Sool Association holds a Tournament in Houston that KSW branches from around the world compete in. Lim won the 2010 World Championships for first degree black belts, the same year he promoted to first degree.

"Each year, all of the competitors keep getting better and better which makes placing in tournament much harder. When you see someone do their form a little bit better than yours, you feel obligated to one up them, and the only way to do that is to go out and do your form better than they did," Lim explains.

Kuk Sool Won doesn't just focus on learning techniques and perfecting forms, but also allows people to gain experience as an instructor. Lim is regularly tasked

with leading classes and working with all the students of varying levels.

"I work a lot with those of lower ranks, whether it be teaching them how to do a form, guiding them through techniques or doing falling. I would definitely say that it's very rewarding in that it allows me to meet people who would normally be afraid of talking to me, which then eases the tensions in the school when a new student comes in," Lim said.

KSW welcomes new students regularly, and trains everyone with the intention of taking them to tournament. But the connection between students goes deeper than just training partners, according to King.

"Kuk Sool Won of Oak Hill is a large group that resembles more of a family than a school. Ethan is one of the faces that students look up to when they come in, and everyone enjoys training with him," King said.

Martial arts can bring people together in ways other sports might not be able to, since students entrust their safety to their peers. Mutual respect and understanding are an absolute necessity to work with others in martial arts, says King.

"I would recommend the practice of martial arts to others because not only does it keep you fit, but it introduces you to different cultures. No matter what kind of martial arts you do, whether it be KSW or Judo, you gain some knowledge of their respective culture just by participating in classes. Martial arts teaches etiquette and how to talk to more experienced members of society, as well as guiding you in how to live a healthy lifestyle," Lim said.



Ethan spars with his instructor at class one night. Photo courtesy of Liberator staffer Riley Murphy.

[Grass]ping the importance of the environment

On Saturday, September 10, LASA student volunteers assembled to do some maintenance on the Mindfulness Trail built last spring, because it became overgrown over the summer. In order to pay for the equipment needed for this project, LASA wellness counselor Marissa Rivera set up a DonorsChoose page and was funded within 36 hours. She was able to purchase a weed whacker, seeds, a trimmer, a small mailbox and a garden hose reel.

“The mindfulness trail is all about having a quiet place to be on campus where you can relax and take a moment to yourself.”



1 LASA senior Laurie MacQueen volunteered because she cares about the environment and enjoys helping out. “We pulled out an invasive species of grass called Dallisgrass,” MacQueen said. “When we walked up to the field it was like a fence of grass around the trail. It was like 2 or 3 feet high. It outcompetes the native grass, because it is taller than it, so it starves it from sunlight. We got about a quarter of it out. We’re going to have another work day in October.”



2 LASA senior Gabe Alvarez works to clear the mindfulness trail. Alvarez said it was also cool opportunity to get some sponsored National Honor Society hours. “We were utilizing rakes and hand tools to scrape the upper layer of St. Augustine grass to reveal the underling mulch to reveal the trail,” Alvarez said. “It’s nice to have a cool spot on campus where people can walk around and enjoy nature.”



3 LASA senior Sameer Pusapaty said he is interested in environmental activism and he saw this as an opportunity to help with the problem of invasive species. “We were actually pulling out something called Dallisgrass which is an invasive species of a plant taking over the mindfulness trail... to allow for more native species to actually grow over,” Pusapaty said. “We were clearing out the ground and pulling out the weeds. Mainly it was pulling out the weeds. We also cleared the underbrush to let the mulch of the trail come out so it looks more like a trail. We worked on also cleaning a lot of the other invasive species and a lot of the ant piles as well. And we dumped it all in these big basket things. Me and Ben mainly worked on part of the disposal unit. So what we did was after everyone cleared all the weeds and everything, they put it into these bags. Me and Ben were mainly focused on putting it on the recycling bin.”



4 According to Rivera, the trail was left alone intentionally over the summer in order to see what would naturally happen and to see what was invasive. “[The Mindfulness Trail] is supposed to be a safe natural area where they can interact with native plants but also notice butterflies and bees and wildflowers that naturally occur, and just take the time to really be, and kind of get away from the stress that happens in this building,” Rivera said. “But in a safe way that’s on campus and provides a healthy way to cope with that stress while still thinking about the environment.”

5 LASA senior Dayla Woller said she found peace in restoring the trail by ridding it of the various invasive species. “Initially we were getting rid of Bermuda Grass, but there was this really big chunk of Dallisgrass that was annoying me, so Abbe, Lilly and I decided that we were going to get it out, and it took a lot of pulling and a lot of shoveling and I was very proud,” Woller said. “I really like the idea that Ms. Rivera for the Mindfulness trail, because I feel like it is really good for LASA students to be able to get out of the school and stop thinking in terms of fluorescent lights and gross plastic chairs for a couple minutes and to go out and be able to sit outside especially in the spring or fall when it’s really nice weather in Austin.”



6 Kelly said she and Anderson started helping out with the mindfulness trail last year when it was being built. “The mindfulness trail is all about having a quiet place to be on campus where you can relax and take a moment to yourself.” *all photos by Quinn Simpson*

