



Seniors Grace Jensen, Luke Mueller-Oden, Caeyln Moon, Jeremy Brinker and Harrison Kuczaj research at the UT Classics Library. photo by Quinn Simpson

see page 5

Beloved former band director Don Haynes returned to LASA in February to help the LBJ Full Orchestra prepare for their UIL competition. photo by Riley Murphy



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LBJ senior Marcus Collins prepares to pass the ball in the March 3 regional semifinal game against Veterans' Memorial from Corpus Christi. The Jags lost 48-50, ending their season. photo by Oliver Powers

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the liberator

Liberal Arts and Science Academy High School

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HOUSE OF CARDS

Immigrant students and families navigate a turbulent reality and face an uncertain future; amid crackdowns on legal status, Austin promises sanctuary

ROXY BONAFONT
Editor-in-Chief

Erik Benitez was two and a half months old when his parents illegally crossed the U.S.-Mexico border in search of a better life for their son. Today, he's a senior at LASA with plans to attend Iowa State University in the fall, and has never returned to the country he was born in. But he and the extended family he lives with remain undocumented.

"They just didn't want me to grow up the way they did," Benitez said.

Benitez is one of the estimated 100,000 undocumented immigrants living in the Austin-Round Rock metro area. And according to Wellness Counselor Marissa Rivera, he's far from the only undocumented immigrant attending LASA.

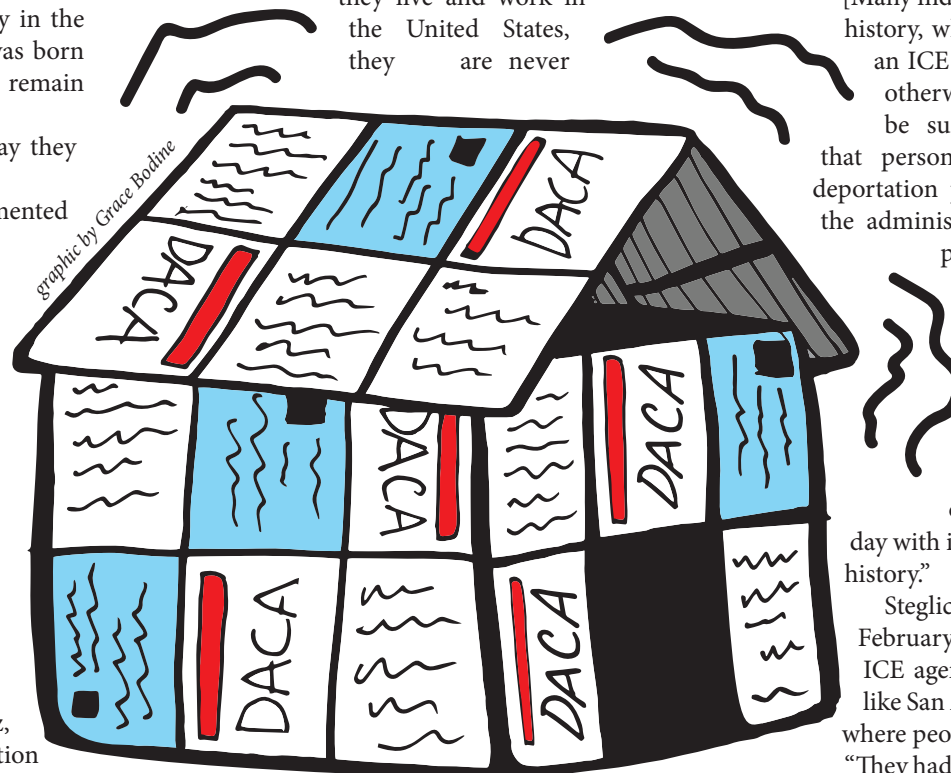
"I think that people tend to assume that undocumented equals Hispanic, and there definitely are students that are undocumented and Hispanic, but immigration is also a big piece for a lot of our South Asians, Southeast Asians families and Middle Eastern families and just families of Arabic descent," Rivera said. "So when you put those two demographics together that's actually a pretty significant percentage of LASA students."

Many of these students, including Benitez, are eligible for protection under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), a policy introduced in 2012 that extends temporary privileges to undocumented immigrants brought into the country as minors. Individuals awarded DACA status, which can be renewed every two years, are temporarily exempt from deportation and are eligible for a number of rights typically not extended to undocumented immigrants, including work permits. Benitez, who earned DACA status in late November of last year, said that the policy meant he could get a driver's license and afford college.

"I wouldn't have to pay international tuition," Benitez said. "It would've been in-state or out-of-state. If I [didn't have DACA], then I would've probably not been able to

go to college."

The lives of undocumented immigrants have always been tenuous. Their homes are built on an unstable foundation — the inescapable truth that their existence in this country is illegal, and no matter how many years they live and work in the United States, they are never



without risk of deportation. In recent months, however, that uncertainty has grown: as a new administration settles in, generally perceived to be essentially anti-immigrant but also highly unpredictable, not even those with DACA status can be sure of where they stand.

The Trump administration has emphasized its focus on the deportation of undocumented immigrants with criminal histories. But Austin made national headlines in February after a series of raids conducted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) resulted in the arrest of 51 undocumented immigrants, over half of whom were

not criminals. According to Elissa Steglich, a professor of immigration law at UT Austin with a background in defending immigrant rights, it's not unusual for an administration to make a targeted show of force. What's different, she says, is who is being targeted.

"[Many individuals arrested] had no prior criminal history, who under the Obama administration if an ICE officer encountered someone who was otherwise undocumented, there wouldn't be such a strong mandate to apprehend that person, detain them and place them in deportation proceedings," Steglich. "So now while the administration has said, 'Yes there's a super-priority on individuals who have been charged with crimes, who have been convicted of crimes, but use of full force of the law against everyone,' on the ground that means an ICE officer who goes out is equally rewarded if all 10 arrests in the day end up being individuals who have no criminal history versus 10 arrests in the day with individuals who have extensive criminal history."

Steglich said that the enforcement actions in February were promoted by a proliferation of ICE agents assigned to Austin and other areas like San Antonio, who identified areas in the city where people might be out of status.

"They had lists of individuals with old deportation orders, individuals who had been released under the new anti-detainer policy, and so we didn't see what we've seen in other enforcement actions prior, which has been kind of home raids or workplace raids, but this was more street level surveillance and additional officers being on the ground and going to locations," Steglich said. "What really terrorized people was ICE's appearance in locations such as the criminal court here in Austin and other areas in their community, apartment complexes and the local Whataburger, that was different from the past. These were places where people otherwise thought they were safe."

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French students exchange culture, language at LASA

LISA MOOMAW
Staff Writer

Like most students, 17-year-old Clara Denis had no idea what to expect when she entered the school building on her first day at LASA. New faces and unfamiliar classes all felt daunting. Unlike the hundreds of new freshmen who experience these feelings every August, however, Denis's past educational

English-learning students from Denis's school did the same.

"I wanted to travel to the United States first for the experience in this country," Denis said. "It was really my dream to go here and it was a way for me to improve my English, but really it was for the experience, not for my English."

Horowitz said that she was motivated to participate in the program for similar

"I feel like I have gotten a little bit of France by seeing her."

-sophomore Rachel Horowitz

experiences were completely different: from the day she began primary school to the day she first set foot in LASA, Denis has lived and learned in Lille, France.

Denis is one of eight French high-schoolers who spent two weeks with LASA students and their families as exchange students in February. Accompanied by her host, sophomore Rachel Clubine-Horowitz, Denis shadowed Horowitz through her classes and extracurricular activities and lived with her in her home for the duration of the trip. Seven other

reasons. Like Denis, a desire to explore other countries and cultures was what drove her to host an exchange student.

"I have been wanting to travel the world and I feel like this is the closest I can get to traveling right now," Horowitz said. "I feel like I have gotten a little bit of France by seeing her."

Originally, the French students had planned to shadow at Hendrickson High

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Water polo dives back in



Freshman Isabel Kilday defends the goal in a March 30 scrimmage against the Anderson water polo team. LBJ Water Polo, which was founded two years ago by a former LASA student, hopes to make it to state this season. photo by Emma Jane Hopper

CURRIE LARRIMER
Staff Writer

The captains of the relatively new LBJ Water Polo program have worked hard to recruit new players for the 2017 season. Over the past two years the team has grown a lot due to the dedication of players like Girls' Water Polo captain and senior Grace Jensen.

"Swim team has recently ended, and I wanted to be doing something active, preferably in the water, but without too much required practice time," Jensen said. "Ben Taulli, one of the senior swim team captains when I was a sophomore, got super excited about water polo and started the guys team, so a couple sophomore girls and I started playing water polo on the longhorn aquatics team to try it out."

Many of the players this season are newcomers, but there are a fair share of returning players as well. The team practices up to three times a week, but according to Boys' Water Polo captain and junior Ming Zhao, most players feel that it's worth it.

"I practice about four and a half hours a week and it is incredibly worth the time," Zhao said. "Water polo is a great full body workout and is very fun to play."

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the liberator

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Editorial Policy

Responsibilities of a Free Student Press: Serving the primary communication link within the Liberal Arts and Science Academy and 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.

Correction: In the previous Feb. 10 issue, LASA Latino Outreach Co-Chair Ms. Torres was misidentified. Her first name is Yolanda, not Elisabeth.

STAFF STANCE

Freedom of the press essential to our democracy

Since his Jan. 20 inauguration as 45th President of the United States of America, tensions have escalated between President Trump, his administration and the mainstream news media. Over and over again the President has questioned the legitimacy of journalists' reporting, and declared on several occasions that reporting critical of his administration ought to be dismissed by the public as "fake news." Hostilities between the Trump administration and the media intensified further on Friday Feb. 24 when White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer barred CNN, The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, Politico and BuzzFeed from an off-camera White House press briefing, limiting the press's access to a selected "pool" of reporters. The White House Press Office asserted that they were simply expanding the traditional pool of reporters. However, it is widely believed that the exclusion of these media outlets is a product of their critical reporting on Trump, and, specifically, their investigation of his interactions with the Russian government. Indeed, the continued visibility of the President's social media campaign against news organizations and individual reporters whom are critical of him has heightened many observers' concerns that this event signals a very troubling and explicit attack on the freedom of the press. As such, now more than ever it is important to consider the role, value and significance of a free press generally, and investigative journalism in particular, to ensuring the vibrancy of our democratic republic.

Since the inception of the United States, freedom of speech and freedom of the press, which is enshrined in the First Amendment of our Constitution as a fundamental liberty, has been understood as a paramount right. The First Amendment explicitly identifies these rights as essential to a healthy and functioning government. The First Amendment was designed by our Founders as a critical check against authoritarianism and dictatorial rule. One of the hallmarks of oppressive regimes is the institutionalization of strategies to limit protest and public assembly, silence the media and stifle their citizens' voices.

We at the Liberator are concerned that in the United States today, President Trump's statements about, and actions towards, the news media are indicative of an emerging threat to our first amendment rights. This threat is not conceptual; the President has referred to the media as "the enemy of the American people." Moreover, in this environment, Republican legislators seeking to quell protest and critique of the current administration have been emboldened. As of Feb. 24 lawmakers in 18 states have proposed legislation that would criminalize peaceful protest and permit law enforcement to preemptively arrest and charge citizens who may be organizing such constitutionally protected activities with a criminal

offense.

Adding to the complexity of the current moment is the Trump administration's appropriation of the term "fake news." Politically charged fake news is not new. In the modern era, it gained traction during World War II, as German anti-Jewish propaganda deployed to drum up populist support for Hitler via the identification of Jews as the common enemy. The term emerged during the 2016 presidential campaign following reports detailing the presence of websites based in Eastern Europe that were pumping out patently false political content and leveraging social media platforms like Facebook to spread inaccurate stories. Fake news is inherently extreme and radical, and Trump's critique of the mainstream media as "fake news" and the "enemy of the people" is a recognizable manipulation that is designed to undercut critics of his presidency.

Pushing back against one's critics is a valid political and presidential tradition. For Trump, this constituency includes the mainstream political press. The President and many of his supporters are concerned that the media has a liberal bias. They point to the occasions where leaked sensitive material or anonymous insider perspectives on the Trump Administration have been published. In this view, the media is part of the "opposition party," actively invested in undermining President Trump and his agenda. In this context, Trump's charge of "fake news" is both literal—the press is publishing made up, false and purposefully inaccurate stories—and figurative—stories unflattering to the President should be understood to be inherently fraudulent.

However, delegitimizing the mainstream press, undermining journalists' access to the Administration and retaliating against investigative journalists when their reporting is displeasing cannot be tolerated in our

democracy. Journalism supports the duty to question and critique its representatives and to express opinions robustly. Journalism is also rooted in the notion that facts are discoverable and unassailable. Not everything is up for debate. Whether or not Trump won by an electoral margin that exceeded every other presidential contest, as he has claimed, is not a matter of "opinion." It is untrue and can easily be fact-checked and objectively invalidated.

As journalists, regardless of our personal politics, we *The Liberator* staff seek to uphold the ideals of the profession of journalism. We aim to disseminate facts and distinguish fact from perception. We strive to express honest and thought provoking opinions, to be fair in our reporting, and to not shy away from engaging with difficult and complex topics. We demand that the White House preserve and defend the freedom of the press and we urge our fellow citizens of all political persuasions to insist that our representatives do the same.



graphic by Grace Bodine



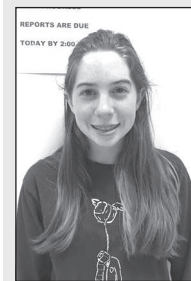
liberated
minds
speak

Is it acceptable for news sources to be denied access to press events?



Clara Gibbs
Sophomore

"No, because that is not freedom of the press and that's not giving full coverage. It's only allowing biased news to be disseminated into the public."



Sarah McGee
Sophomore

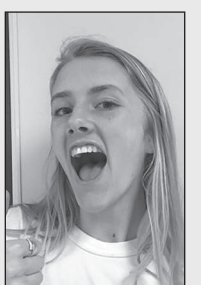
"No, because then it's a biased source of news for the American people. You can't ignore something just because you don't want to hear it."

Amber O'Rourke
Sophomore

"I think that is unfair because it is causing certain people to not have the story firsthand. This also means that there is less interpretation of important events."

Hannah Porter
Junior

"I don't think so because we have to have freedom of the press and speech and without that the whole First Amendment crumbles into pieces."



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.

On the old ice cream machine

Dear Editor,

"I wish the school would bring back the ice cream machine, they had one when I was a freshman and it was the best thing ever. It used to make me feel more excited to go to school."

-Ames Jewart
Junior

Student questions new policy

Dear Editor,

"I don't like that they close the bathrooms at 3:50, it makes it really inconvenient for people in sports who have to change after school."

-Rajan Topiwala
Sophomore

Is sleep week effective?

Dear Editor,

"Sleep week isn't very effective. I appreciate the initiative that the counselors are taking, and I appreciate the idea, but the fact that teachers don't let up on homework or anything to actually allow us to get sleep is unhelpful."

-Anonymous

Call for more trees

Dear Editor,

"I wish there was more shade in the courtyard and overall more trees. It makes sitting sort of unpleasant to have to be in the sun all the time."

-Isha Singh
Junior

In new political climate, intense debate over sanctuary cities ensues

Student defends sanctuary cities, believes they should be protected in US



GUS ALBACH
Staff Writer

Roughly 300 cities across the United States are directly breaking federal law. These cities, known as sanctuary cities, go against federal immigration law, largely meaning that when an undocumented immigrant is arrested or pulled over they are often not deported. They were created in the 1980s to help provide a safe place for Central American citizens fleeing from violence to live. The government was often slow to grant citizenship status to these people due to harsh immigration policy or the large number of people asking for citizenship. Thus local counties and cities allowed these people to live in a county free from deportation as they were working through the difficult process of gaining citizenship.

I stand with these sanctuary cities as they have many positive benefits such as encouraging local undocumented immigrants to work with law enforcement as they no longer run the risk of deportation, and, in general, sanctuary cities create a better relationship between the city and the undocumented immigrant population. It is important that a city keep a good relationship with every group of citizens, and a poor relationship with the undocumented immigrant population doesn't only lead to flight of undocumented immigrants but also people of similar ethnic origin who are here legally in the United States. Economically speaking these cities play a big role in ensuring that undocumented immigrants can continue to work as they move towards citizenship. The common argument against undocumented immigrants is the notion that they steal jobs from Americans who are here legally. Although undocumented immigrants do take jobs that arguably could be taken by American citizens the reality is that American citizens tend to not take these jobs.

In September 2011 House Bill 56 was enacted in Alabama that severely hurt undocumented immigrants and led to a large decrease of Hispanic immigrants in general working. The law discouraged the hiring of undocumented immigrants and allowed for the questioning of a suspect's citizenship by police. Following the loss of workers many Americans tried their hands at the jobs. Often these Americans didn't last long, and many quit after just one day. Although some Americans did end up with the jobs the immigrants had once held, the poultry farms, the melon farms, the you-name-it farms of Alabama simply didn't have enough people working hard enough. The local farmers themselves complained that the average local population was a pitiful replacement to the immigrants that had once worked on the farms. Some farms even employed prison workers, yet, in the end, the farms were hit hard by the lack of people willing to work.

Farms weren't the only place hard hit by the bill, as a result of the bill there was less enrollment by Hispanics as a whole in public school, and a flight of somewhere between 40,000 to 80,000 Latinos, many of whom were not even undocumented immigrants. This is important as it shows the action that was taken against undocumented immigrants had a negative effect on other groups that was not intended. This law is a clear example of the negative effects deportation of immigrants can have on a population.

This is why sanctuary cities are necessary as they protect undocumented immigrants and the state itself from the negative effects of massive deportation. It is understood that HB 56 had little directly to do with sanctuary cities, yet the bill still remains as a reminder of what happens when strong stances are taken against undocumented immigrants.

The law was eventually repealed piece by piece and today serves as a very strong example of life without undocumented immigrants. Undocumented immigrants are commonly placated as the 'job stealers' of small towns throughout America. They are used as scapegoats by politicians when a particular region isn't having success or when there is a high unemployment rate. In reality, undocumented immigrants should be celebrated for the hard work they do for us. They should be provided with amnesty from deportation while moving towards full citizenship. Without the protection of sanctuary cities many of these immigrants may be deported which would be bad for not just the immigrants themselves but for the state as a whole.

Student against sanctuary cities, argues not a viable option for our country



MAX IRBY
Staff Writer

Earlier this year, Governor Greg Abbott chose to withhold \$1.5 million in federal funds from Travis County in response to Travis County Sheriff Sally Hernandez' refusal to hold undocumented immigrants until federal immigration officers could deport them, which has led the general public and media to define the county and the city of Austin within it as 'sanctuaries'.

What exactly might have driven Governor Abbott to take this action? Illegal immigration is a highly controversial topic in our country. Estimates of the number of undocumented immigrants currently in the U.S. range from 11 to 20 million, and while many of them are undeniably decent people, a reasonable question to examine is who benefits from the presence of undocumented immigrants in our country? In this case, America's successful capitalist economy now also proves a detriment to its citizens; corporations are the main beneficiaries of the cheap, readily available labor that undocumented immigrants provide, at the cost of jobs for its populace. Why hire a legal American citizen, for whom you would have to follow labor laws and pay legal wages, when there is a growing population of unregulated, low-skill unemployed undocumented immigrants who are eager to work? As a result of this influx of cheap labor, jobs that might normally have been occupied by American citizens are taken instead by undocumented immigrants. Researchers at the Pew Hispanic Center place estimates for the total number of undocumented immigrants in the workforce at eight million, which is a significant sum when placed next to the 15 million plus unemployed American citizens who might have otherwise occupied these jobs.

Undocumented immigrants have also been found to absorb more benefits than they contribute. In 2013, the Heritage Foundation conducted research and concluded that undocumented immigrants contribute an average of \$10,000 in total taxes, but use almost \$24,000 in welfare and services. With an estimate of 11 million total undocumented immigrants living in the U.S., that number comes out to \$1,050 per person, far less than rates in even low-tax states like Tennessee. This means that the average undocumented immigrant is not in fact a contributor to the economy, and is cheating tax-paying Americans out of a fair deal. In addition to this imbalance, a study conducted by the Federation for American Immigration Reform estimated that illegal immigration costs American taxpayers about \$113 billion. This is undeniably a large, unnecessary burden on the American populace, and one that could be mitigated by the enforcement of immigration laws in 'sanctuary cities' such as Austin.

Americans however, aren't the only population to be unfairly impacted by illegal immigration. The adherence to the law by millions of legal immigrants who have to come to this country, in addition to those currently going through the documentation process, is undermined by undocumented immigrants coming into this country unchecked and without repercussions.

As a matter of principle, sanctuary cities represent a clear disrespect for the rule of law. If the elected officials of city government are allowed to simply ignore laws that they dislike, and even go as far as to order their police force to turn a blind eye to crime, where does their power stop? If immigration laws can be so easily compromised, what would stop the same officials from making their cities sanctuaries for tax evaders, or drug traffickers? The foundation of democratic self-government is an adherence to the laws set in place by the electorate. Any individual can make attempts to change the law through their own legal means of persuasion and through their votes for representatives who share their beliefs, but this does not mean that it is within the bounds of the law for leaders to pick and choose which laws they wish to uphold in their area.

Why should undocumented immigrants be given sanctuary in cities by leaders who are doing so in noncompliance with federal law? If the justification is that these local government officials are merely doing their duty to their citizens by protecting undocumented immigrants from deportation, the evidence for the undocumented populations' detriment to the economy would surely prove a worthy counter. The injustice to the legal American population by illegal residence seems to render the enforcement of federal immigration law justified.

Women's rights: Human rights



SOPHIE WYSOCKI
Staff Writer

Women in the United States and all over the world have been denied rights to their own bodies for centuries.

Only after a long and difficult fight for reproductive rights in the last 50 years or so, more choices and freedoms have been given to women. After the election of now-president Donald Trump, women are (rightly) afraid of losing autonomy over their bodies. In the first week after the election, Planned Parenthood saw a 900% increase in women seeking IUDs for fear of affordable, safe, and legal contraception options being taken from them. New abortion laws are being passed in state legislatures that limit the already restricted options that people have. I believe that now more than ever, it is

imperative that women raise their voices and demand to be heard. Instead of omitting the half of the population that these laws affect the most, all reproductive rights discussions and decisions must include women.

Donald Trump, a man who has openly bragged about allegedly sexually assaulting women and has little to no knowledge on women's reproductive health, will be making many major decisions, along with other men, about women's reproductive rights. Not only is he changing these freedoms within the U.S., he has already reintroduced the Global Gag Rule, or the Mexico City Policy, which stops all federal funding to organizations that offer abortions around the world, even if they provide abortions with their own funds. These decisions will impact millions worldwide and give them less opportunities and options for how to take care of their own bodies. The U.S. government should not be able to dictate whether women in other countries receive reproductive health care options. All women deserve to be adequately educated about all of their choices, regardless of nationality.

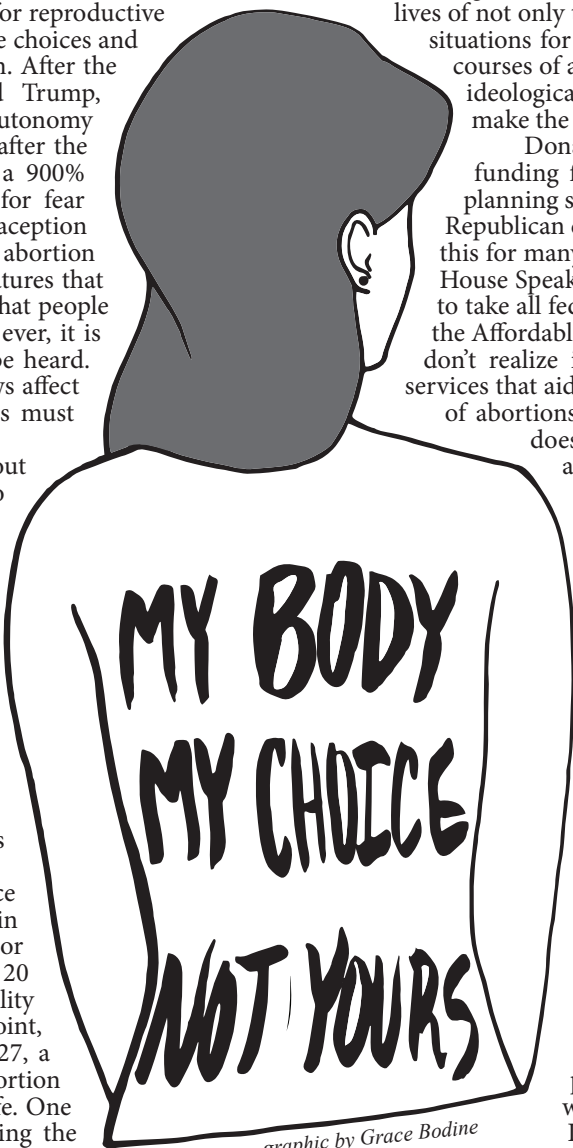
In the last few months since the election, more anti-choice legislative actions have been gaining prominence within Republican-majority states. In December 2016, Ohio governor John Kasich approved a law that prevents abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy. The new regulations don't allow for viability tests around that time and just ban all abortions past that point, only allowing exceptions for women's health. On January 27, a new law was passed in Arkansas to ban dismemberment abortion completely, only allowing exceptions to save the mother's life. One part of the law says that the husband of the woman getting the abortion and the father of the unborn child can sue the doctor to stop the abortion. By doing this, a woman's right to control her own body is taken from her and given to someone else entirely. This law disregards a woman's autonomy completely. There is no exception for rape or incest, so a woman's rapist could theoretically sue in order to force the woman to carry his child to term. My issue with both of these laws is rooted in the lack of options given to women who were raped or sexually assaulted. Rape itself is one of the worst experiences that anyone could ever

endure and it can cause extreme harm to the mind and body of the victim; then after the fact being forced to keep the child of your rapist adds more pain and agony to the lives of not only the mother, but the child as well. It will create unnecessarily awful situations for victims of sexual assault, as well as prohibit them from possible courses of action for unfounded reasons. The restriction of options, based on ideological preference instead of medical evidence, is unfounded and can make the quality of life for both the mother and child much worse.

Donald Trump has spoken about his urge to take away federal funding from Planned Parenthood, an organization that provides family planning services, contraceptive methods and also provides abortions. Many Republican congressmen and congresswomen have also been pushing hard for this for many years, and the moves to do so are speeding up after the election. House Speaker Paul Ryan has announced publicly that Republicans are trying to take all federal funds from Planned Parenthood in order to help fully repeal the Affordable Care Act. However, what many people and congressional leaders don't realize is that Planned Parenthood provides essential family planning services that aid low-income women, men and families immensely, and provision of abortions is only a small percentage of everything that this organization does. Defunding Planned Parenthood will only serve to increase the amount of Americans who don't receive adequate sex education or reproductive health care, and these safe and legal abortions will turn into illegal procedures that will endanger the lives of even more people. Women and families have a right to affordable healthcare and family planning services, and taking away funds from an organization that provides all of these services is barring these people from the education and provisions that they deserve to remain healthy and safe. The U.S. government is overstepping their say in what options and choices women have for the own bodies, and the result of that is the dissolution of rights imperative to women's lives.

Post-election, restrictions on the rights that women have over their own bodies are increasing in number. Although the idea altogether of not allowing women to make their own choices is completely awful, my biggest complaint about the anti-choice movement is that these people who support the birth of all children will not actually actively support any of these mothers that aren't allowed to make their own choice. If a child is born into a family without the financial or physical ability to care for the child, these "pro-life" people won't be willing to help out financially to take adequate care of the child. If a child is born with a mental or physical disability which makes their life much more difficult, these people won't help pay for the medical bills. Being pro-life doesn't mean just being pro-unborn-life—you have to be willing to care for that life when it enters the world.

I want to live in a world where women, men and people of all gender identities have equal rights to their bodies and their reproductive choices. Despite anyone's personal belief system or ideology, women deserve adequate sex education, reproductive health provisions and contraceptive options, whether that include abortion or not. Safe, affordable and legal options must be provided for women when it comes to reproductive health. Women deserve adequate protection from their abusers and rapists. Women deserve control over their own bodies. Women deserve the right to choose.



graphic by Grace Bodine

Thumbs Up

Puppies
Horchata
Netflix
Late starts
Raspberries



LASA freshman Spencer Wallace



Tests
Mondays
Allergies
Flu
Raisins

Thumbs Down

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

The injustice of marijuana criminalization



ASHLEY THOMAS
Staff Writer

The battle for legalizing marijuana throughout the United States comes from the stigmas that surround it. Overlooking the many economic and health benefits that marijuana provides, America seems to be stuck on stereotypical perceptions of those who smoke pot. The state of Texas is no exception from this, and it's time for a change from America's history of improper race relations of minorities and racial profiling.

The criminalization of pot has a long history of being profoundly racist and bigoted such as so many things in America. In 1934 Harry Anslinger, first commissioner of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics and former employer for the Drug Enforcement Agency, used the argument of race to convince his jury that marijuana would be dangerous to society, claiming that when white women smoked marijuana they would find black men more appealing (Harry Anslinger, CSPD transcript). This set the tone of the targeting of minorities, specifically Hispanics and Blacks, in America for possession leading to a controversial war on marijuana that has created a staggering image of persons of color and members of low income communities.

In 1970, Richard Nixon passed the Controlled Substance Act, which has been crucial to the criminalization of persons who have been caught in possession or under the influence of narcotics. America actually hadn't fully understood marijuana as we know it to be today, so Nixon decided that it would go into the list of Schedule 1 drugs, drugs that were deemed the most harmful by the DEA, due to the fact that at the time it was thought to have no medical value, to be highly addictive and have no accepted safety requirements under medical supervision (Drug Enforcement Agency, Schedule 1). Two years later the National Commission on Marijuana and Drug Abuse issued a claim that marijuana was indeed none of those things, but rather than remove it from the Schedule 1 drug list, Senator James Eastland, a Democrat from the state of Mississippi, claimed that it was something far more detrimental to American society because when people would see a country promoting a sluggish zombie like state for America's youth we would be seen as weak. The DEA saw it necessary for marijuana to remain a Schedule 1 drug to "tame" ("IBTIMES," Why is Marijuana A Schedule 1 Drug) Blacks and Hispanics throughout the country and retain the upper hand under the law. Under this authority officers and government officials were able to continue to discriminate against Blacks and Hispanics legally. This didn't just create a problem in the incarceration rates of minorities in America, but it changed the perception of Americans' views on low income communities. The government was able to blame the failing rates of students in school and lack of job opportunities presented to these communities ("The Washington Post," The Black/White Marijuana Arrest Gap in Nine Charts) on lack of compliance, which was false. One criminal charge for the possession of marijuana can be detrimental to the future of a student or employee's future, especially of a minority and/or low income background.

52 percent of drug arrests in 2010 were for possession of marijuana, clocking that precisely every 32 seconds someone in America was busted for pot possession. African Americans are four times more likely to be stopped for suspicion of possession even though whites in America are more prone to being in possession of pot at any given time. Over three billion dollars in state fundings were put towards the enforcement of marijuana regulations in 2012, three billion dollars that could have been spent in literally any other sector of spending, such

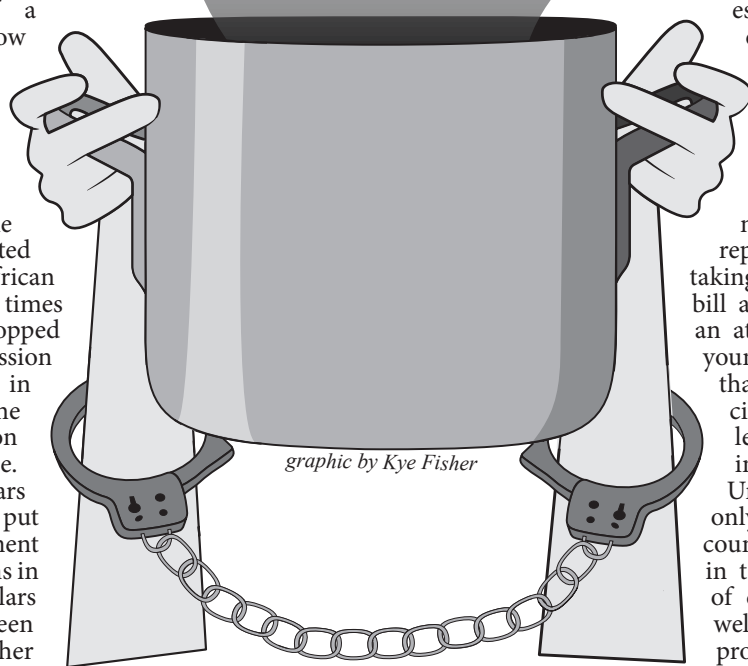
as education (ACLU, War on Marijuana). Even though over 50 percent of Americans support the legalization of pot in America, the battle at this point is all up hill due to decades of stigma built up around racial concerns and biblical theories, which is an argument that got Texas to seriously consider medical marijuana legalization last year.

Republican representative and conservative from Texas David Simpson was brought forth to testify on House Bill 507, which sought to make marijuana a fine-only citation that would remove the factors of arrest, jail time and a criminal record from possession. Simpson had one of the most successful runs with the bill, only being overlooked largely because of the fact that they were submitted very late in the session (Texas Observer, Marijuana Decriminalization Growing In The House, But Democrats Needs GOP Help). Simpson's argument was that pot shouldn't be illegal because God has put it on this planet to be consumed. As proven by Simpson, it's more about knowing your audience than the facts that you present them with.

The difficulty of persuading the House comes from members such as Donna Campbell who have argued in court with false facts and closed minded biases. When vets were brought forth to testify on behalf of medical marijuana legalization benefits she told them, "Thanks for forwarding these posts, but I am looking for far more than anecdotal [sic] evidence." (Donna Campbell, HB 507 Hearing Transcript). Donna Campbell claimed that they shouldn't even be arguing for the legalization of medical marijuana in Texas because it was already legal here, which is false. Cannabis oil is legal in the state of Texas solely for patients that have epileptic tendencies, and while it's legal the bill makes it nearly impossible for patients to actually obtain these oils.

Not only would marijuana legalization bring economic prosperity into the US economy with states making over \$6.7 billion last year in marijuana sales, but Texas could bring in one of the largest per capita marijuana tax revenue incomes with over \$519 million dollars in revenue as calculated by the Wall Street Journal, while Colorado brought in only \$102 million last year. Related violent criminal activity in areas of legalization actually decreases (The Effect of Medical Marijuana Laws on Crime: Evidence from State Panel Data, 1990-2006). The drop in marijuana seizures across the border has steadily dropped since the beginning of marijuana legalization in Colorado and California. With the promotion of locally grown and organic products, local manufacturers are able to drive customers away from supporting the Cartels and gang related narcotics. As criminal activities are pushed out of the area you're able to see a drop in not only the sale of related harmful schedule one and two drugs such as cocaine and heroine, but also illegal gun sales and sex trafficking.

One of the most beneficial aspects of the legalization of marijuana would be the dramatic decline in charges of possession. In 2010 Colorado had filled over 11,000 charges of marijuana possession and by 2016 that number has dropped to less than 2,500 (The Weed Blog, What You Should Know about Marijuana Charges). House Bill 81, essentially an exact replica of HB 507, appeared in front of Texas senators on March 13 at 3:30pm. The House is set to debate upon the subject this current session with new Dripping Springs representative Jason Isaac taking the lead, giving the bill a more youthful face in an attempt to appeal to the younger crowds in Austin that have turned the city blue. All in all the legalization of marijuana in Texas and across the United States can really only bring good into the country with abundance in tax revenue and the fall of criminalization rates as well as a decrease in racial profiling.



Student reflects on 21st century feminism



ASPEN KISSINGER
Staff Writer

There has always been a certain patriarchal paradigm in society, describing women as the lesser, making them disadvantaged in most cultures. The popularity of feminism has fallen in waves of enlightenment; as many of us are told, "history repeats itself". As we become more aware of the prejudice, women find power in numbers, and with their first amendment rights, do something about it. This has been shown throughout the past year or so, especially, and has brought a prominence of a feminine appearance.

The recent rise of feminism has brought to our attention how equality is important for a morally humane society. We can see almost anywhere in our history how women are objectified and given roles and expectations they do not want or choose to have. These roles often have worse conditions and less rewards. My mother often makes the joke of how "baby reveals" should have a piggy bank; the mother would break it and if there's a dollar it's a boy, 75 cents if it's a girl. I must admit it's a funny idea, but it's disturbing that's the difference being a certain gender makes in the future. Even now, females being at the best place they have ever been, women are looking for a path closer to absolute equality, where both piggy banks will hold a dollar. We recognize that we do not want to take a step down, we want to keep climbing. We recognize that our rights will be taken away if we don't take a stand.

Being my mother's daughter, I was raised with strong beliefs of equality and a platform of "women can do anything". During my, and almost any member of Generation Z's, childhood, major changes have been made regarding civil rights for people of different religions, sexual orientations and races. I, and surely many others, recall learning about Rosa Parks, hearing about the legalization of gay marriage, and being lectured on how every religion and belief should be respected. Now I can see the bias against women that has always been present and reflect back on how specifically anti-feminist opinions and actions occurred in my life. What does the phrase,

"fight like a girl," mean to you? The correlation of the phrase "like a girl" and weak, shows a seriously deranged flaw in our society. Could we not make up a better simile rather than insult half of the world's population? I can finally relate and recognize the inequality that affected me directly as a woman.

These last few years have been marked by the rise of third wave feminism. This wave proves to highlight women's sexual objectification, sexual violence against women and rights to abortion. This wave also was brought to attention after the recent election with Hillary Clinton.

When I was eight I remember the primary president election with Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama. This was an amazing opportunity for our country, an amazing chance for equality to take a step up: we had a real chance to have the first African-American president or the first female president. Personally, being the stubborn little girl I was, I was rooting for Hillary, wanting all the little girls, like me, to be represented. That was the same year my sister started having aspirations to become the first women president. This was a far off feat for being six years old, but who could argue that she would be anything less than great?

Throughout the recent campaigns and election, people were surprised by President Trump's tweet stating that Hillary Clinton had the women's card, even more so when these kinds of statements were being accepted by a percentage of the public. People became passionate about showing society how strong and superior women are, and how their rights need to show it. This passion formed some sort of a popular movement that no one wanted to disagree with. I can proudly say I'm a feminist and cannot imagine anyone who would readily disagree with the logic of equality for everyone.

At this point feminism is present wherever we look. This popular feminism presence got the press, social media and stores' attention. On Jan. 21, the Women's March took place nationally showing the strength of women. Social media boomed with pictures from the march; everyone wanted to be there to support the movement and express their views. Feminism rose up, showing the real signs of a fad of popular feminism, that hopefully, will never go away. Feminism, in fact, became cool, and everyone agreed.



Millennial stereotypes are untrue



JEFFREY KOVAR
Staff Writer

Lazy, entitled, narcissists, materialistic, the worst generation yet: these are just a few of the many entries in the list of negative stereotypes to characterize Generation Y, or the millennial generation. These stereotypes are demeaning towards the generation, and an inaccurate representation of the group.

One incorrect millennial stereotype is that they do not know proper dating procedure. In a New York Times article titled "The End of Courtship?" the author, Alex Williams, illustrates his point that millennials do not know how to properly date someone, instead immersing themselves in the hookup culture that dominated the college dating scene. Williams goes on to further imply that the world is witnessing the end of dating at the hands of millennials and technology. Williams cited some millennials' personal experiences with dating post-college, as well as criticism over the development and usage of dating apps. The old way of courtship, where the people would take their dates to a gaudy restaurant and movie is being replaced with people going to a bar, or staying in and "Netflix and chill"-ing. I find this negative stereotype to be wrong. There are still Millennials who believe in the old way of dating, such as Cheryl Yeoh, who was mentioned in the article as someone who still appreciates a dinner and a movie. Confining people into stereotypes is not only incorrect in describing individuals, but can also be offensive, especially when those stereotypes are negative towards that group.

Another false millennial stereotype is that they are all narcissists who love themselves too much and resent authority. This convention is furthered in the Time Magazine article, "Millennials: The Me Me Me Generation" by Joel Stein. In this article, Stein elaborates on his views of how data and science illustrates the perceived notion that all millennials are narcissistic, do not respect authority and are all too much entitled. Much of the data Stein presents are that of polls conducted by psychologists from either a private firm or a university, and commentary on this analysis from psychologists at a number of universities.

These two stereotypes illustrate multiple common themes within millennial stereotypes. They try to illustrate their point that society is declining at the hands of the millennial generation. This pessimistic view on change drives these negative stereotypes of millennials. The introduction of texting may have altered how young people date, but that does not trigger the end of society, as the stereotype makes it out to seem. The introduction of front facing cameras on phones has caused an increase in the production of selfies, but that does not mean the world will be filled with greedy, self-entitled people running the society with only their views in mind. Personal self-worth is not a bad thing, as long as it is kept in moderation. An over inflated ego is never good, but a sense of self worth can drive people to accomplish their goals.

Another glaring problem with millennial stereotypes is they try to place generalizations on a broad and diverse group of people. No two people are alike and placing broad stereotypes to confine similar peoples into one group is wrong. There are 74.9 million millennials within the US alone, according to Pew Research Center and the US Census Bureau, and though some may share similar work habits, and similar thoughts on the proper courtship method, there is a wide range of opinions within people, and trying to generalize will only offend those who do not fit into those categories.

Unique take on group projects



ANDY DEGRASSE
Staff Writer

I'm sure most people can relate to this situation: you are placed in a group, ready to collaborate and succeed as a team, but it turns out that your group is nothing more than a bunch of Lazy Larrys and Silly Sallys. This is the risk we all take when we enter a group project. But is it worth taking the chance? This issue has been very controversial over the last few years.

There are many upsides of group projects, but there are also many drawbacks. An upside is that your group can play to each others strengths. For instance, if one member of the group is a great artist, and another one has a way with words, then you can split the work equally. Another positive benefit of working together is you can make friends. Although sometimes you may have a Silly Sally in your group, other times you will have an Amazing Alex, or a Funny Fred. These are the kind of people who you can form life time bonds with. Personally many of best friendships I have today are a result of group projects. These are the kind of friends that I will never forget, and they are the result of simple Spanish project. I will never forget that fateful day in seventh grade, when I was placed in a group with a couple of total strangers, and ended the year in a group some of my best friends. Even if you don't become best friends with the people you work with, it's still good to get to know more people in your school.

Obviously the biggest downside to group projects is the risk that you are placed with people who may be substandard partners. These are the kind of who may be good intentioned, but at the end of the day aren't going to hold up their end of the deal. If you are placed with these kind of people, you really have very few options. You can try to make these people work, but we all know that when the dust settles you are going to be up late doing their side of the work. As a freshman, I experienced this struggle in many different classes, from Sci Tech to World Geo. I trusted my group member to get the work done, but I was still forced to carry them.

In this reporter's opinion, the final decider in this issue is how much you choose to trust your fellow men and women. If you don't want to take a chance on someone you may not know, then group projects are bad for you. But if you choose to trust your the people, then group projects are the perfect option. Who knows, it may even work out great for you.

immigration

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Although a period of increased enforcement activity is not uncommon, it can still cause anxiety in immigrant communities, especially when paired with President Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric while on the campaign trail. Benitez said his own parents weren't overly concerned because they're familiar with how to handle ICE, and have no trouble with the law. But the extended family he lives with were more affected.

"Since we live with other family members who've been here for less time, they didn't know exactly what to do," Benitez said. "For my aunt, she was really scared. It got to the point where, when she picked me up one day from school, we had to wait at my school because the ICE people were nearby where we lived and her husband has an arrest order."

It may not be evident to the outside observer, or even to many within the school population, but similar anxieties are pervasive in the LASA community. Rivera and the rest of the counseling team have noticed a significant increase in the number of students approaching them with concerns related to the immigration status of themselves or their families.

"I think the biggest source of anxiety is that things seem to be changing at a rapid pace and there is a lot of ambiguity in the executive orders as far as enforcement and what these executive orders mean," Rivera said. "And I'm not going to tell a student, 'Don't worry about that, because the truth is I don't know how these executive orders are going to be enforced and at what extent."

So I think a lot of anxiety is about that, about not being able to predict what else is going to change and what other countries are going to be added to this list or how intensely does my family need to monitor their going abouts and stuff like that."

If an undocumented immigrant is arrested and detained, they are not provided an attorney. If they are able to secure legal counsel, there may be some options available to them in avoiding deportation, depending on their circumstances. Steglich said common defense strategies involve applying for refugee status, special visas for victims of human trafficking and violent crimes and special juvenile status for abandoned or abused minors.

"Most of our relief options are humanitarian-based or there might be family-based relief, although that is fairly limited," Steglich said. "And then even those who have found themselves in the criminal justice system, either with charges or with actual convictions, depending on what the conviction is for, there may be relief that we are able to assist them with in defending against deportation. But then again for a lot of people there isn't anything. Just being here in the U.S. for a long time and being a pillar of the community is not a defense for deportation."

For many immigrants, including Benitez, the prospect of deportation is genuinely frightening. Benitez said the past few months have elevated his level of concern but not left him feeling overly unsafe, in part due to his DACA status. However, he recognizes the possibility that he may not be able to renew his status, and the idea of returning to Mexico scares him.

"I've spent essentially all my life here, I've never gone back," Benitez said. "I don't know anything about Mexico aside from its history. I don't physically know

Mexico, so being in a place that I don't know, especially with the cartels and all that other stuff that's very prominent. From where my parents grew up in, it's very prominent. I would have to go where they used to live, because that's where my grandparents live."

President Trump has said that he won't touch DACA, but some remain skeptical, especially after the detention of a 23-year-old DACA recipient in Washington made headlines earlier this year. The policy remains controversial among conservatives, and Steglich referred to it as a "bandaid" intended as a temporary fix in place of legislation that could offer young immigrants a path to Green Card status.

"[DACA] was always weak in that it was the product of executive action and that it could be taken away by executive action, and really what has made it feel more permanent than others has just been the amazing organizing and political power that DACA recipients and their allies have built and maintained," Steglich said. "I think we've seen it in that we don't have any sense of what the administration plans to do about DACA, which I think is a very good sign that it will kind of continue until we have at least some hopefully legislative action. It's still lacking in that it's not permanent and in individual cases as circumstances may change for an individual the administration might decide that they don't warrant an exercise of discretion in their favor anymore."

Benitez says his family is more cautious than before, but that the situation seems to have calmed since the ICE raids in February. The city of Austin has publically allied itself with its undocumented immigrant community: Mayor Steve Adler published an open letter on Feb. 14 condemning the "overly broad" measures of ICE agents and promising, "There is help in Austin

if you need it"; days later, the Austin Independent School District (AISD) Board of Trustees voted unanimously in support of a resolution asserting that classrooms are a safe space for all students, regardless of documentation status. The district also makes resources available to refugee and immigrant students on its website. Rivera said that when she speaks to concerned students, she emphasizes the importance of making a plan with their families and knowing their rights, but recognizes that she can't provide much more than district-approved resources and a safe space to talk.

"I think it's important that we don't promise our students that we will do things that we may not necessarily be able to fulfill," Rivera said. "I can't tell a student, 'We won't allow ICE to come into the school and talk to you,' because the truth of the matter is if ICE did come on campus, Ms. Crescenzi would have to talk to them and go through that whole ordeal. I can't lie to students, I have to be factual with them. Do I wish I could tell them that it's going to be okay and this is a safe place and they have nothing to worry about? Absolutely, 100 percent, I wish that that was true."

On the Feb. 16 "Day Without Immigrants" protest, over 80,000 AISD students were absent from school, KXAN reported; that's nearly a quarter of the district's student population. Benitez didn't participate — he had a physics test.

"It's really tough, issues like this, because they are politicized, which, from a personal standpoint, is sad because these are humans. There is no such thing as being an undocumented human," Rivera said. "A lot of my conversations are, 'I value you, you deserve to have rights, I will fight for you in whatever way I can within the constraints of my profession, and talk to your family, have a plan, here are the resources.' This is a tricky dance right now."

LASA Latin Club travels to UT Library

GABRIELLE JAROUR
Staff Writer

Students in Latin V and Latin VI classes traveled to the UT Classics Library at Waggener Hall to gather materials to assist with an in-depth classical research project. At the Classics Library, students were able to access detailed scholarly materials containing information that may not be available online. The project, which takes place once every semester, was created by LASA Latin teacher Byron Browne in 2008 after the College Board eliminated the second Latin AP exam. It aims to give students the opportunity to explore their interests in more detail by focusing solely on one classical topic.

"I found that even without a second AP exam available, we had several students who wanted to continue their Latin studies," Browne said. "This sort of project just seemed the best way to allow the students to pursue their own interest within the classics area."

Once students choose a topic, such as Roman hair trends or Roman modes of transportation, they work to acquire a thorough understanding of the subject through



LASA senior Jeremy Brinker looks at a bookshelf in the UT Classics Library. Photo by Quinn Simpson

weeks of research. The end result is an comprehensive accumulation of images and text fully illustrating everything the student learned on their subject. At the end of the semester, students present their research to a lower level Latin class. According to junior Mirah Gordon, who is researching Diocletian's monetary reforms, research initially begins online and then progresses towards sources from the UT libraries.

"For the first month, when we're doing research, we use the internet, but after a while your resources dwindle, especially because a lot of what we're doing is research into classical fields," Gordon said. "We go to the classics library at UT and they have a lot more available resources, especially books that are more specific and relate better to the topics. That way, we can continue our research but on a broader and more specific level."

Browne feels that as a college preparatory academy, it is important for LASA students to visit a library with physical books and journals so that they can become more familiar with college environments and expectations and experience a different method of research that can be very beneficial in college.

"When LASA students get to college, I'd like to know that at least my students know how to maneuver through a library's catalogue system, interact with real people and understand what to ask when they need help," Browne said. "I hope these students will proceed to college with a better understanding of university life."

During the two hours at the library, students use catalogs to search for books and then proceed to take notes and scan or take pictures of pages that contain valuable information. LASA senior Caelynn Moon, currently in Latin VI, believes that this experience is beneficial because it allows students to spend more time understanding the information they find.

"Today, when we get assigned a project, we pretty much do all of the research online," Moon said. "But when you actually take the time to go pick up and flip through a book, you take in more information than you would otherwise, and you might even find another subject that you're interested in. It is so easy on the internet to find a source, do Ctrl + F, and flip to the part you need, scribble down a note real quick and move on to the next one. Something about that just feels so superficial and uninterested."

For most students, a majority of the presentation is composed of research done at library. According to Gordon, going to the library is essential in moving forward with the project.

"I think just being able to proceed with our research, you need to have... some sort of access to higher education materials than what we have available at the school, so going to UT is definitely a necessary part of being able to do our projects and have them turn out really well," Gordon said. "I would say probably 60 or 70 percent of my research came from the library."

Moon says that she always feels much more knowledgeable and comfortable with the information when she walks out of the library. Her favorite part of the experience is getting to spend time with and grow closer to her fellow Latin students.

"The experience is fantastic, without a doubt," Moon said. "I think ... that people in the Latin program become a sort of family to one another. I would say it's just like going out with my giant nerdy family to learn about all sorts of things in one common area where we all happen to be interested. The food is always good, getting to see a college campus, and doing some good old fashioned research is studiously invigorating."

In the years that Browne has created the project, he says it has been a success. He believes that the trip has allowed students to find an enjoyable balance between both learning about college life and investigating deeper into a topic of interest.

"I would say that overall the students appear to really enjoy the experience," Browne said. "Additionally, and more importantly, they all seem to enjoy the learning process, the experience of just walking around and through a college campus and of course, the lunch we share afterwards before returning to school."

AISD fights restrictive recapture laws, encourages state to support local schools

GRANT MCCASLAND
Staff Writer

Austin Independent School District's (AISD) Chief Financial Officer Nicole Conley testified before the Texas House of Representatives' Public Education Committee regarding recapture on Feb. 28. AISD has been petitioning the state legislature in recent years to change the Chapter 41 recapture law, also known as "Robin Hood". This year, AISD paid over \$400 million dollars in recapture payments to the state, money that is then redistributed to "property-poor" school districts. This is done because not all districts have the ability to collect enough money in taxes to pay for their expenses, while districts like AISD, because of higher property values, can collect ample funds and then some.

AISD is also the largest payer of recapture in Texas, giving 13 percent of the \$2 billion the state collects annually. Because of this, reform for the school finance system is on top of this year's legislative priorities for AISD. AISD's District 4 Trustee and Secretary Julie Cowan is a critic of the recapture system, and is hoping that the state will offer a more equitable system. For now, AISD must sit back and offer improvements to the system before expecting the state legislature to get on board.

"The real challenge for us is that what's coming down the road has grown exponentially over the last three years," Cowan said. "Our payment to the state of Texas, and it's gonna grow even incredibly more with the way it's looking. As long as our home values and property values, commercial land, residential land, continue to go up, and as long as our student number, if it goes down or even stays the same, they're just going to keep taking more and more."

This money mostly comes from taxpayers through

property taxes, almost 40 percent of which actually goes back to the state. This number is projected to increase—the district is expected to pay half of its tax income to the state in 2019. AISD would like to stop that projection before it's too late, and instead keep taxpayer dollars at work helping students within the city.

"Austin is in a unique and unfortunate circumstance," Conley said. "We are taxing people out of their homes in Austin and pushing them out to surrounding school districts. As a result, the district is losing enrollment, which further exacerbates our recapture obligation."

The combination of rising property values, the needs of AISD's student population and the state's over reliance on the recapture system make for a large burden on Austin taxpayers. About 55 percent of AISD students live in poverty, 28 percent are learning English and over 50 percent are at risk of dropping out—all of which require extra money to supplement their education. However, the recapture formula has also not been updated since its original implementation in 1993, undercompensating districts with more low-income and English learning students, and the outdated numbers are taking their toll on AISD. This could be attributed to the state's inefficiency or simply being a low priority issue.

"The lack of additional state funding to address these areas of need for our students places an unfair burden on property taxpayers, renters and school districts because even though we are considered to be a property wealthy community, the families we serve are not," Conley said. "A few weeks ago, the Texas Education Agency submitted its Legislative Appropriations Request and requested \$2.1 billion less than what was budgeted for the 2016-17 biennium. This is due to rising property values, which siphons more funds from local communities and lowers the state's obligation."

School districts in Texas already spend around \$9,000 per student, and LASA receives under \$5,000 per student. The funding is a mix from the state and federal government, and that would be subject to increase. AISD must cover costs not all districts have, such as social security and transportation, which together cost the district over \$60 million a year. LASA Principal Stacia Crescenzi acknowledges the funds could be spent on many school programs or creating new opportunities, but that won't happen until recapture is more fair to AISD.

"Particularly when students come in, when we talk them from all over the district, they have holes in different places," Crescenzi said. "It would be great to have some kind of tutoring system that is individualized enough to get everyone up to an even playing field in a year. I could certainly conceptualize the program, it wouldn't be hard for me to create, but I don't have any funds."

Crescenzi said she hopes for a more equitable version of recapture in the future, and that it's a good idea but it needs to be reevaluated or else AISD will feel the burden even more. She acknowledges that spreading the money fairly is a complex problem, but it would get better if the state was willing to change their priorities and put more money into public education. Cowan has a similar point of view with Crescenzi that the issue is intentional ignorance by legislators and more money needs to be allocated to public education.

"The challenge is that no one knows what it really costs [to educate a child], and the state is unwilling to," Cowan said. "I think there's legislation out right now to study the cost of educating a child, but even if they [study it], I don't know if the state has the wherewithal and leadership to put those additional dollars into the system. Because they're going to find out it takes a lot more than they want."

LBJ/LASA student group develops, advocates ideas to build bridges between the two schools

CLARA MORSE
News Editor

Walking through the hallways, eating in the cafeteria, passing in the stairwell— at the moment, this limited sample is more interaction than many LASA and LBJ kids ever have. In recommendations released in early February, the Jaguar planning group of five LASA and five LBJ students composed suggestions, including a completely aligned bell schedule, to build bridges between the two schools. LASA Principal Stacia Crescenzi said the group was initially formed by Austin Independent School District (AISD) Associate Superintendent of High Schools Craig Shapiro to address space sharing issues.

“Because we’re so tight on space, last year [Shapiro]... hired an architecture firm to look at both LBJ and LASA and how we use the space to make suggestions on how we could better use the space to meet the growing demands of our total student population and the programmatic demands of both schools,” Crescenzi said. “After that was completed, Mr. Shapiro wanted a group of students... to review that information and make suggestions about how we could better use space to meet everybody’s needs.”

The group began the process by reviewing data about the two schools. LASA is currently overcrowded, at over 115 percent of its capacity, while LBJ needs space for its early college program and its career and technology education programs, such as health technology. The student group worked to address both space issues and culture issues together. LBJ senior and Jaguar planning group member Hannah Gronwald said that space sharing could alleviate overcrowding and misutilization concerns.

“We have a lot of space that is not being used,” Gronwald said. “There are certain classes being used for the wrong reasons, like there are reading classes in science labs [at LBJ] because there is nowhere else to put them... [Right now at LBJ] you have a class that can hold 35 but only has six students, and there are LASA students that may have wanted to take that class but can’t because they’re on different schedules, and then they’re stuck up there taking a class that can hold 25 kids but has 35. I figure [space sharing] would definitely help with the cramped spaces and classrooms.”

However, the group did not only focus on classroom space usage, also writing extensively in their report about culture and community issues which they said revolved around a lack of interaction. Every student involved in the group had first hand experience with the tension and separation which LBJ and LASA students experience daily, and LBJ junior and Jaguar planning group member Katia Galicia Bautista said that opportunities to interact would go a long way towards easing tensions between the

two schools.

“The major thing that goes on between both schools is that we don’t come together, we don’t communicate,” Galicia said. “We’re in the same building but we don’t talk, we don’t have any relationship between each other. That’s basically been my experience... I think that we should have an opportunity for students from both schools to get to know each other.”

Currently, because of out-of-sync schedules, it is difficult for LASA and LBJ students to interact outside of certain shared UIL athletics and electives. LASA senior and Jaguar planning group member Oscar Newman said that the primary recommendation had been complete

If we want to survive as two schools on one campus we can’t do it in our current state.

- Jaguar planning group member
Oscar Newman

bell schedule alignment because it would give the Jaguar planning group a chance to address many of the issues they had discussed, from space usage to student tension.

“Everything we wanted to solve came back to the bell schedules, into aligning our schools that way because overall we want to bring our schools and our communities closer together but without having aligned classes and shared periods that’s just not possible,” Newman said. “So we really centered around that as our most important focus, and we looked at what could come out of that; how could we start sharing clubs...and having more community events together largely as a result of having that shared schedule.”

The group plans to release a survey for students about schedule options, in order to determine the factors each school finds the most important, such as LBJ’s 9a.m. start, or LASA’s hour-long lunch. Crescenzi said that the survey is important so that policies can be efficient and tailored to the needs of the schools’ populations.

“I think both the student voice for LASA and the student voice for LBJ have to be clear that they want this, and what are they willing to give up to get it and what are they not

willing to give up to get it,” Crescenzi said. “Knowing those lines in the sand, from the student perspective, from the staff perspective, are equally as important as knowing the students’ ultimate goal. Or else there’s just going to be more frustration when we’re done.”

Other recommendations, which are slated to be rolled out beginning next year, included standardizing the color coding of the hallways, completing joint campus improvement projects and making common space more facilitative of collaboration. Crescenzi said that these spaces, as well as possible shared clubs at lunch, could help form genuine relationships between LASA and LBJ.

“If you want people to come together and know each other in a sincere and authentic way, you have to do it on mutual interests,” Crescenzi said. “[In] clubs, which are purely based on your interest[s]... you can walk in the door and already have something to talk about. That’s organic, and I think that’s where real friendships are built from, and I think that’s been something that has been hard for us to do.”

In addition to their recommendations, the Jaguar planning group outlined many caveats to their plan, the most notable being that the process stay student-centric, with minimal control given to AISD or the Campus Advisory Councils which represent parents and community members of each school. LASA senior and Jaguar planning group member Maria Rivera said she appreciated the value of the student-driven process.

“In prior decision making, there [were] always parents involved or outside people involved, and it’s very difficult for people that are not living the problem to know how big the problem is,” Rivera said. “You can’t really bring in opinions that will help to alleviate the stress that the teachers and students have to go through in their interactions between both schools if you aren’t living it. The only way we thought that the problem would be solved was if the students themselves took charge.”

Newman emphasized the necessity of their plans for the health and vitality of both schools, noting that even if plans for LASA’s move are approved, the two schools will share the campus for several more years before the move.

“If we want to survive as two schools on one campus we can’t do it in our current state,” Newman said. “We can’t do it as two entirely separate schools fighting over the same resources. It’s just not sustainable. We have to be able to at least come together a little bit and be able to recognize that we may be two schools but we are one community.”

The Jaguar planning group’s complete recommendations can be accessed at goo.gl/JDSvPA.



Jaguar advisory group members, from left to right Hannah Gronwald, Quinn Simpson, Christina Douglin, Oscar Newman, and Maria Rivera, pose with members of the District Advisory Council and the Austin Justice Coalition in early February. photo courtesy of Austin Justice Coalition

Diversity Council recognizes achievements of minority groups

MARLEN AVILA
Staff Writer

February marks the time in which celebrating and remembering the significant achievements and events contributed by African Americans in U.S. history is monumental. At LASA, Diversity Council is making efforts to celebrate and recognize these accomplishments. Wellness Counselor Marissa Rivera said Diversity Council worked hard to acknowledge Black History Month.

“[During the] month of February, I know that Diversity Council has been doing those announcements with facts and quotes from different African-Americans who have made history in the U.S. and have been really impactful,” Rivera said. “They also made sure to put out information about different African-American heritage events that are going on this month.”

Throughout the school year, Diversity Council has been celebrating heritage months for different ethnicities.

During each heritage month, Diversity Council promotes literature that relates to that month’s celebrated ethnicity. In addition to the quotes shared over announcements, this also includes a display in the library with literature and profiles of famous figures of that culture. Senior and Diversity Council member Caitlin Wilson said she wants everyone to have the opportunity to be more informed about other cultures.

“Ultimately, our goal is to make this just as accessible for other students as possible because with this. It’s easily accessible for anybody to get involved, and understand more what’s going on without having doing as much work as you would have without Diversity Council,” Wilson said.

In the spring semester, LASA celebrates not only Black History Month in February, but Women’s History Month in March. Various clubs such as Fempowerment and Feminists of LASA help special celebrations on International Women’s Day. On March 8, club members and the LASA Pride Alliance design cards and hand-deliver flowers for all the women in faculty. Wellness Counselor Meagan Butler said that this tradition shows friendly support for women.

“I think it’s a fun way to celebrate International Women’s Day,” Butler said. “The United States typically doesn’t celebrate that as much as other countries in the world so I think it’s a good way to put that date on the map for us.”

In addition to celebrating various heritage months,

Diversity Council will be holding a Cultural Day to celebrate many different cultures on April 12. Events will be held involving different cultural issues and cultural performances during an extended FIT period. Diversity Council plans to invite professors to discuss ways culture impacts school environments, such as cultural appropriation and discrimination.

“I would describe Cultural Day as one day concentrated to what Diversity Council is doing in one year and making sure that students get involved into the issues,” Wilson said. “So often, it’s really easy to avoid topics that we don’t necessarily want to approach. With this Cultural Day, we’re able to attack and face the issues we have at hand, not only in our school but as a society. I feel like this is helpful not only with dealing classmates and teachers but also going out in the real world pass college and careers.”

With so many minority groups celebrated, Butler said that it is also necessary to look at the overall importance of heritage within the school environment.

“It’s a cool idea to put a spotlight on a cultural group, but I think our end goal is to have more inclusive education that incorporates different voices throughout the year,” Butler said. “It’s cool to have posters and celebrate our heroes and have awareness days, but I think even more important is... to have the

women’s voice and have women’s history be represented throughout the curriculum and not have just one day where we celebrate people. It’s fun to have celebrations, but it’s even more important to have it integrated into an inclusive curriculum.”

Prominent efforts to increase diversity at LASA have been occurring recently. With this context, Diversity Council have been trying to bring people from different backgrounds together. Diversity Council has been providing and representing student voice in issues such as racial and ethnic diversity on campus, and creating a safer environment for all at LASA. This allows students to become more involved and be informed about themselves and their peers.

“I think anywhere, not just LASA, has room for improvement when it comes to diversity and inclusion, including different voices in our community and amplifying those voices,” Rivera said. “I am really impressed with how much passion students have around this topic and I think it’s really great. My hope is that students continue to feel more and more empowered to speak up and let their ideas be known.”

THE SKINNY

Save the Dates:
New AISD Calendar

ASPEN KISSINGER
Staff Writer

Calendars for the upcoming school year were finalized on Jan. 23 by the AISD Board of Trustees after the public voted between three suggested calendars presented by the AISD Calendar Task Force. All three suggested calendars this year included a waiver that has the school year start and end a week earlier than years past. Calendar A, which retains the week-long Thanksgiving break and the 10-day winter break, was selected by the public.

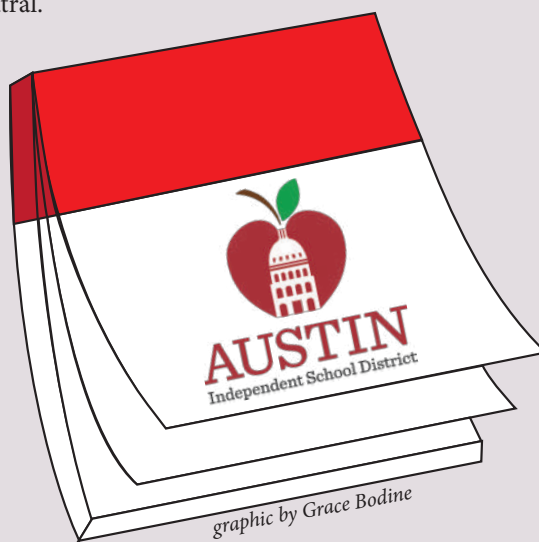
The AISD Calendar Task Force includes parents, teachers, staff and other education related administration. These members met several times in fall 2016 to create two to three calendars that match the state and district’s needs, along with the community’s wants. After these calendars were approved, they were disclosed to the public for voting. Jim Wetter is a parent representative in the task force.

“The calendar usually stays very much the same from year to year, I believe that most people want this consistency so they know what to expect and can plan their own schedules,” Wetter said. “At the same time, I believe that we should change with the times. The task force always develops multiple calendars that include new or innovative options.”

This year each calendar varied lengths of Thanksgiving break, weather make up days, winter break and staff development days. Out of the three calendars presented— A, B, and C— A received the largest number of votes in an online poll and was subsequently selected. In calendar A, students start on Aug. 28; Thanksgiving break is Nov. 20 through Nov. 24 keeping the break one week long, copying the 2016-2017 calendar. Make-up days are Feb. 19 and March 30 in case school has to be canceled for bad weather. Winter break is Dec. 20 through Jan. 2; staff development days are Aug. 21 through 23, Jan. 2, and March 30; and the last day of school for students is June 6.

Chair of calendar task force Dr. Gloria Williams is in charge of presenting calendar options without her own bias and representing the task force.

“This year, more than 20,000 ballots were tallied for the 2017-2018 Calendar,” Williams said. “During my tenure, I am not aware of a previous year’s vote this large. I have only worked with the Task Force for six years. Each of the three calendar options had appealing features. The popular vote helped determine the outcome for option A, as chair I am forced to remain neutral.”



Homework clocks help students balance schedules

GABRIELLE LABOUR
Staff Writer

Every year as the time to choose classes rolls around, students rush to their counselors to receive guidance in selecting classes that will allow for a balanced and manageable schedule. However, beyond this, students are not given many quick and simple tools to assist in making informed decisions. LASA's Instructional Cabinet (IC) noticed the need for such a tool and has worked to create a system to provide students with more information about the expected workload in different classes. The result came in the form of homework clocks, a simple system that depicts the expected amount of homework in a class through the use of a quick visual: a clock. The system, which has been recently integrated into the LASA course guide, utilizes averaged data and feedback from students to create a uniform chart that can be used to compare the expected amount of homework across various classes.

The idea for the homework clocks was originally introduced by LASA principal Stacia Crescenzi after speaking to counselors and realizing that students needed a better indicator of the workload involved in different classes.

"I think the more information

students and parents can have about classes, the better job they can do having a balanced schedule," Crescenzi said. "It's not going to help A day versus B day, but in terms of if you know next year you plan to [be involved in extracurriculars] you can make better decisions about your time so you can be a healthy and sane person, which I think is a great goal."

According to LASA's Social Studies department chair Maricruz Aguayo, the IC responded positively to the idea and worked to brainstorm the best way to develop the system so that students could be involved in the creation process.

"In the end, it was decided that we'd develop a survey for students to take," Aguayo said. "Teachers and admin would then review the responses for their specific courses and modify them if necessary, and finally, these designations would be printed in future course guides as tools for students to use when developing their academic schedules."

In late January, an online survey was sent out to the majority of LASA classes asking students to give an estimate of the amount of time they spent on homework in a particular class.

The results from the survey were then averaged and condensed into a simple clock visual. According to Crescenzi, some of the results varied widely. Her hope is that students can interpret the clocks and relate it to themselves and their work instead of analyzing them in a more literal sense.

"Figuring out what the average was obvious in some classes and really not obvious in others," Crescenzi said. "My hope for the future is that students start figuring out what those clocks mean for them. If I'm a freshman this year and let's pretend that English 1 is three clocks and I notice English 2 has three and a half clocks, then regardless of what those clocks mean in terms of minutes, I know I should have slightly more homework in English 2 next year. That way you interpret it based on what 3 clocks means to you."

LASA counselors and IC are listening to student feedback and hope to continue to improve the homework clock system so that it can become even more informative and helpful. Next year, they plan to be more explicit in survey instructions so that students know to include all homework, including homework that is

completed during the school day. Due to popular demand, they also hope to modify the system so that it includes how much outside reading is required for each class and designates whether homework is sporadic or consistent throughout the year.

"I think our students are right in wanting a consistent v. sporadic explanation," Aguayo said. "Of course, some teachers might expect their homework load to be consistent and have no control over students who, say, put off reading until the last minute and so those students feel that they have lots of homework sporadically."

According to Aguayo and Crescenzi, most students have reacted positively to the homework clocks and have found it to be a useful tool when picking classes. Freshman Jacob Graves looks forward to seeing future improvements and credits the system with helping pick his classes for the 2017-2018 school year.

"I think they've been very beneficial because you can see how much homework a class will have," Graves said. "The homework clocks helped me figure out how much work was in a class and they really gave me insight into how much homework I really want[ed] to do and will be able to do."

graphic by Carolina Gokingco

New LASA Electives 2017-2018

LISA MOOMAW & SERGIO FLORES
Staff Writers

Psychological Makeup of Hitchcock Characters

After arriving at LASA in the 2015-2016 school year as a semester-long course, Psychological Makeup of Hitchcock Characters is back as a yearlong class. While the semester version only involved watching and analyzing Hitchcock's films, English teacher Chloe Cardinale plans to add to the course by having students watch and create their own inspired films. "I love Hitchcock, and I love movies, so it was the best of both worlds," Cardinale said. "The kids really like it, and they're really skilled at making movies, so it's just a fun class." The course is targeted towards individuals interested in anything from filmmaking to writing. Cardinale also believes the class provides better understanding for American culture. "[Hitchcock] is a really famous American artist, and I think we should be aware of that," Cardinale said. "He's inspired so much other art, so it's good to understand where that comes from." The course will not involve homework. "You guys stress yourselves out taking too many AP classes," Cardinale said.

How to Be an Adult

Succeeding in adult life requires many skills that aren't explicitly taught in school. English teacher Corey Snyder aims to alleviate this lack of adult knowledge with a brand new course called How to Be An Adult. "People can make it to adulthood having never managed a checking account, done their taxes, filled out a job application or a lease. That is unfortunate," Snyder said. "Everyone should know how to do those things. And how to vote, what insurance is, how to jump start a car and how to find a place to live." According to Snyder, the curriculum will be determined as the class progresses. "The class is new, [so] there are no expectations," Snyder said. Homework load for How to Be An Adult will be "light, but steady."

Commercial Photography/Fashion Design

Commercial Photography and Fashion Design will be added to the CTE class roster in the upcoming year. The class is for "anybody who already has their own camera and wants to learn more and really figure stuff out about [photography]" said AVP teacher Ms. Mokry. "If fashion design goes forward it's going to be taught by an art teacher, so I bet it would follow similar art class homework. If commercial photography goes forward it would most likely be taught by one of our publications teachers, which would probably follow their other classes' homework load." said Mokry. Therefore, there will be little to no homework based on past art and publication classes. And similar to other art and publication classes, students will be able to express themselves, but through slightly different mediums. "It's just another expression of art mediums. I hope that they learn to express themselves in a way that connects with people."

Native American History

Social studies teacher Kimberley Pettigrew plans to introduce a brand new course in Native American History. "Native American History is frequently not covered in class to any particular depth, so I thought this would fill a gap in the history department," Pettigrew said. Research, discussion and lecture will be the driving forces for the class. According to Pettigrew, the curriculum will be structured around learning about a specific tribe "which [students] will study for the semester." The course has been designed in such a way that students won't have a lot of work outside of class. "[Homework] should be relatively light, as there will be research days built into class," Pettigrew said. "I hope this will be a fun and informative class, and anyone who wants to learn more about our country's earliest ancestors should make sure to sign up for it!"

AP Art History

LASA will offer AP Art History again for the first time in two years. Taught by art teacher Elizabeth Hewitt, the class has been noted for being an honors 5.0 weighted fine arts credit. According to Hewitt, "anyone that wants a fine arts credit that involves intensive study in place of performance or creation should consider AP Art History." The course will feature an interactive workbook that allows students to study the relationship between time periods and mediums and subjects. Additionally, students will have the opportunity to exercise their creativity and recreate artwork themselves. Hewitt predicts that the class will be especially successful with the new curriculum: "It is a class LASA students can do really well in, especially in combination with or just after WHAP, and the new AP test structure emphasizes a holistic world view on art history that has been missing in art curriculums for a long time," Hewitt said.

Wicked Problem Project II

Wicked Problem Project I is an open-ended problem-solving class taught by science teacher Amy Moore where students come up with a problem they'd like to solve and create a solution over the course of the year. According to Moore, Wicked Problem Project II was born because some students in the class asked for an extension of the course to finish their projects. "Those kids whose projects are extremely complex or have a lot of intricate parts to it will be able to continue on their project to get it actually implemented," Moore said. Unlike Wicked Problem Project I, this course will be more independent. Since the two levels of the class will be in the classroom the same period, the students in Wicked Problem Project II will have free work time on their projects instead of redoing the more structured activities the students in Wicked Problem Project I participate in. Furthermore, students will also have the time and opportunity to address previous mishaps in their projects. "It's a good process for them to see that things don't always happen the first time around," Moore said. "There are setbacks, but you can overcome those setbacks and keep going."



BELL SCHEDULE EXHAUSTING

LASA math teacher Ryan Bailey stands with his routine cup of coffee, preparing for the new 2am start schedule. He says he is loading up his body with caffeine and is not ready for the new bell schedule, but he is happy to minimize his commute. This new schedule will also affect his math classes. "We will begin learning about the math of time and clocks to better understand this schedule. Pre-Calculus turned practical," Bailey said. photo courtesy of Litigator Staff

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the litagator

Liberal Arts and Science Academy High School

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WIND TUNNEL PROM WAS A BLAST

QUINN SIMPSON
News Editor

Splooosh! There's no better sound to describe LBJ/LASA Prom 2017 than human bones grinding against massive steel blades. The danger was palpable (and exhilarating!) as attendees clawed floors, walls, and each other in futile struggles to hold their ground. LASA Student Council president Quinn Simpson says it was a night to remember.

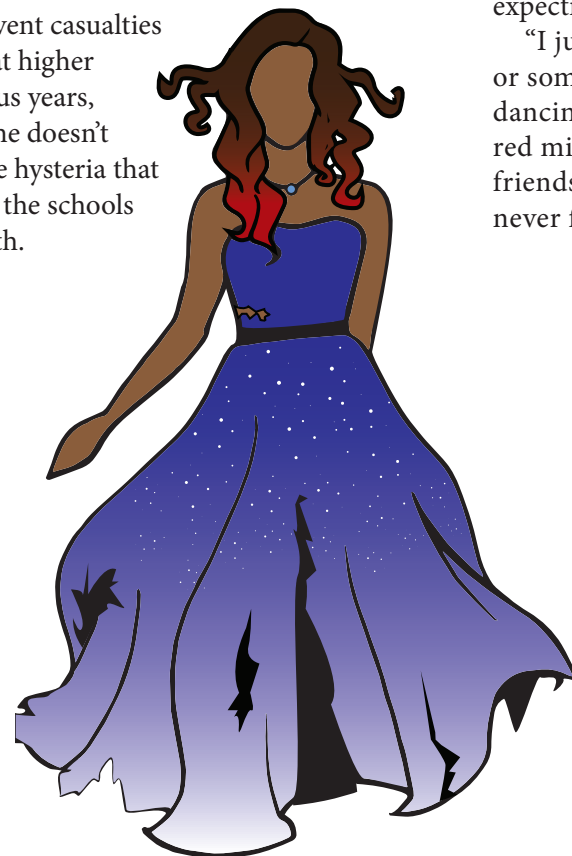
"We promised to sweep people off their feet this year and I think we absolutely accomplished that," Simpson said. "You don't usually see amenities like wind tunnels at high school proms, so that was really a big draw for the student body."

Usually used to test fighter planes, NASA's Transonic Wind Tunnel at the Johnson Space Center

was apparently excited to host the high schools' event after being told it was a sort of science experiment. Some administrators appear to be having second thoughts.

"Wh... WHAT??" aeronautics director Jay Shepard screeched. "This is a tragedy. Why are you writing about this?? I'm going to lose my job. I'm going to jail. You know who else you shredded last night?? MY FUTURE! MY WIFE! MY KIDS!"

Although event casualties were somewhat higher than in previous years, Simpson said he doesn't understand the hysteria that has consumed the schools in the aftermath.



graphic by Grace Bodine

"I mean honestly, who goes to prom hosted at the NASA Transonic Wind Tunnel expecting to have a routine experience?" Simpson said. "We budgeted for biomass disposal, stain removal, everything is very much under control."

One attendee was in the restroom during the climax of the event. He said Prom went a different direction than what he was expecting.

"I just wanted or something," dancing alone in a cloud of red mist that friends is an never forget."



2AM Starts Approved

News Editor
CLARA MORSE

After proposals for mass helicopter transport were rejected by the Board of Trustees, LASA Principal Stacia Crescenzi announced the 2017-2018 bell schedule for LASA, which features a 2 a.m. start time.

"For years, we conformed to conservative, prescriptive standards on when schools should start and stop," Crescenzi said. "Now, we're breaking outside of the box. A 2 a.m. start time is ideal for everyone—it helps students, it helps staff, it helps transportation. I really don't see the downside."

The new schedule would maintain much of the traditional aspects of LASA's schedule, such as the 90-minute block, moved six hours and 10 minutes earlier.

"After spending hours and hours on trying to work around traffic with an 8:10 a.m. start time, we just all threw our hands in the air and said, 'Why not?'" Crescenzi commented on the origins of the new start time. "We wanted to do something with that nobody had ever done before, whether or not it was 'logistically possible.'"

The bell schedule immediately created controversy within the student and faculty body, although a majority of the population acknowledged the benefits of the new schedule. "I mean, the vast majority of LASA students and faculty go to sleep at one or two in the morning anyways," said one student in a 10 a.m. interview, imbibing what she confirmed to be her sixth cup of coffee that morning. "This new bell schedule just cuts out the remaining couple hours of nightly 'sleep.' And it's really like Einstein believed— sleep is fake. It doesn't

really serve a purpose in our lives. I'm glad to be cutting those wasted unconscious hours out of my life with the new schedule."

The student, who requested anonymity in order to preserve her dignity, was cut short in her mumbling tirade about the "sleep conspiracy" when her eyes began to droop in her English class. Her support of the policy was echoed by LASA teacher Elisha Adelman.

"As a LASA teacher who has to deal with traffic daily, this new start time is going to be a lifesaver," Adelman said. "We've really been cheated of seeing these opportunities in the past by taboos on early start times. But now that we're defying those taboos, we can see the opportunities in the 2 a.m. start that we couldn't before."

One group of LASA freshman has been advocating against the schedule change, presenting a counter-proposal which would start school 12 hours later.

"They can call us dweebs, and frosh, and extra," said the founder of the group. "But we sleep almost every day, and we're not afraid to stand up for the rights of sleeping people everywhere to sleep in late!"

Other concerns included whether "late start" days, which begin school at 4 a.m. on the new schedule, could ethically be called "late" if the first bell still rings before sunrise; food service workers questioned the practical feasibility of making 750 cups of coffee each morning to support the new start time. However, Principal Crescenzi brushed past these concerns.

"All these fake 'issues' with the new schedule seem so incredibly shortsighted to me," Crescenzi said, rolling her eyes. "We're redefining education! We're cutting hours upon hours out of transport time! What more do you people want?"



graphic by Grace Bodine

RAGE DANCING REALLY WORKS

MAX RANDALL
Entertainment Editor

In response to increasing amounts of stress among LASA students in recent years, a brand new elective is being offered for the 2017-2018 school year. Titled "Rage Dancing for Dummies", the class focuses on relieving the anxiety that manifests itself in many students minds through a year long instructional course on the benefits and practice of dancing one's heart out. LASA World History teacher and choreographer extraordinaire, Adam Escandell said that the class offers a balance to the hectic academic life that many LASA students face over their high school career.

"I can see the stress on the kids faces, especially the freshmen," Escandell said. "This school needs an avenue for stress relief, and that's what I'm going to provide."

The decision to make the class a semester elective was emphasized heavily by Escandell, who, according to him, stresses that rage dancing is something that requires a full year's worth of practice to master.

"We rage 24/7 bro," Escandell said. "Expressing yourself through sweaty, hate fueled choreography is something that takes years and countless hours to master. Over the span of my life I've spent hundreds of nights punching warehouse walls and smashing bottles to the Moving Pictures classic 'Never'. This class is designed for students to appreciate my skill and to provide a safe space for kids to hone their own angst."

The elective, which is open to grades ten and up, is set to feature multiple varieties of rage dancing.

"Skank, circle, stomp. You name it," Escandell said. "We're even going to spend a whole grading cycle on Kevin Bacon. The art of rage dancing is something that spans cultures and stretches across

borders, and we're going to study all forms."

Breakable items as well as ceiling chains will be provided for upcoming students, but according to Escandell, safety is one of his top priorities. LASA junior Calvin Coulbury is a prospective rage dancer and looks to use the class as a safe and legal alternative to the rough and dangerous world of street raving.

"I am excited to be able to express my inner rage that is always there with me in a way that would allow me to not get multiple felonies, which has happened to me in the past," Coulbury said. "You see this would be a peaceful and legal alternative to my past actions."

Escandell is also looking to foster other electives in the future. Prospective courses include "Hip Hop for White Guys", "Sarcasm 101", and "Dungeon Masters Anonymous."

"I got a whole mess of that ****," Escandell said. "Raging is just the beginning."

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW FROM MR FLOWERS

MEENA ANDERSON
Life and Feature Editor

After enduring decades of being rejected and avoided by him, staffers on *The Litigator* have finally uncovered the mystery that is LASA U.S. History teacher Jason Flowers.

"This seems sketchy..." Flowers said as soon as the staffers approached his desk, slowly starting to gather his papers.

He had to be taken by surprise (ambushed) to give *The Litigator* this exclusive interview. "How did you get into my classroom?" Flowers said as he slowly backed away from the reporter. "I purposefully locked the door so that you couldn't get to me."

When asked why he wouldn't let *Litigator* staff interview him for such a long time, Flowers said he likes to lead a life of anonymity, with the exception of journeying outside briefly for Quiz Bowl.

"I've been in hiding from the staff of *The Litigator* for almost a decade," he muttered, pacing around his room while he clearly looked for an escape route. "I'm not sure how you found me, I set traps and everything... I'll have to figure out how

to cover my tracks better next time."

The staffer pressed for more information, but Flowers had hastily gathered his things and attempted

my cat."

As Flowers left, the team of staffers sent to interview him was left nearly speechless.

"He was there one moment and gone the next, like some sort of sly, disappearing panther," said a staffer who chose to stay anonymous. "Or cat."

Later that day, staffers visited apushlaba.blogspot.com and discovered interesting facts about the U.S. History teacher. Shockingly, he lives in Austin, Texas, and has blogged about classroom assignments since 2007.

"I can't believe that he lives in Austin," junior Ulan Notzon said. "This is such groundbreaking information, it changes everything!"

Staffers returned to Flowers' room the following morning to ask him about his living in Austin, but all they found was a note that read:

"I've gone into hiding, good luck finding me next time."

“ He was there one moment and gone the next, like some sort of sly, disappearing panther. Or cat. ”

-Anonymous *Litigator* staffer

to flee the room for the seventh time.

"Go to my blog, all the information you need is right there," he said. "I have to go home so I can video

Criticism of call for mirrors

Dear Editor,

Every time I go to ask people for letters to the editor, Kyle O'Rourke always says that there's no mirrors in the boys bathrooms? Why is that such a pressing issue for him? Does he not have access to mirrors at home? Does he want us to buy some mirrors?

Eva Strelitz-Block
Commentary Editor

Against student activist group

Dear Editor,

Students have started an activist group against me going into Flowers' classroom. I feel personally attacked. I'm going to start an activist club against student activist clubs against social studies teachers interrupting each other's classes.

Mr. Escandell
History Teacher

Against interrupting teachers

Dear Editor,

In almost every one of my social studies classes, another one of the social teachers will walk in, they'll make eye contact, and laugh for minutes on end. I'm going to start a student activist group against social studies teachers interrupting each other's classes. If anyone wants to join, come to portable 5A at lunch on Thursdays.

Sarah Porter
Junior

Garage band causes devastation

Dear Editor,

I sit in newspaper minding my own business, and every class I hear the sound of a GarageBand keyboard being played in a mediocre (at best) fashion. I've had enough.

Meena Anderson
Feature Editor

Administrator Hits Unexpectedly

QUINN SIMPSON
News Editor

An Assistant Principal who will remain unnamed has declared that he will retire at the conclusion of the 2016-17 school year. Bearing a facial expression not unlike that of a man who finally mustered the courage to estrange his manipulative father, he told *The Litigator* that multiple factors combined to prompt his career change.

"I'm... free now. I am a free man," he muttered before lifting his arms and circling them in the air. "I AM FREE!!! HA HAAAAAAA! HALLELUJAH RINGS DOWN FROM HEAVEN ABOVE! HE HEEEEEEEEEE!!! YOUR AUDIENCE IS CONCLUDED, CRETINS!!!"

Peering into his office through the narrow window in his door, our reporters picked up bits of Fitnessgram instructions, names of current seniors and Byzantine administrative procedures laced into the subsequent sputtering tirade. The AP concluded with a histrionic performance that he delivered before collapsing on the floor.

"Out, out, brief candle! Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and is heard no more," he bellowed, mimicking life's lurching path with his gesticulating form. "It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing!"

The last student to speak with him, a member of the class of 2017 who will remain unnamed per her request, apparently had a relatively routine interaction with the administrator.

"Well yeah, it was the middle of the week and I really needed to scratch that 'desire to cause emotional pain' itch, so I scheduled a meeting with my AP," the senior said. "I went in with a bunch of posters for my new club where we watch videos of people being crushed to death by escalators. I wanted to see if I could convince him that it was my life passion."

The senior said that at this point, the administrator produced a permanent marker from a desk drawer and drew a large "X" across his own face. He invited her to kick him squarely in the indicated area.

"I don't really understand why he was acting so weird," the senior said. "Just last week I brought a teacher to tears again by dispassionately analyzing her life decisions. He played it pretty cool... although, I will say... are stress balls designed for chewing?"

Reached for further comment via email, the mystery assistant principal sent *The Litigator* a confirmation for a June 2 flight to Fiji as well as a rambling didactic allegory in which himself and the class of 2017 appear to be the main characters. The manuscript has been sent to leading literary scholar Dick Sjoquist for analysis.

Students reveal outfits for celestial Prom night

TALIA WILCOTT
Staff Writer

The students are shopping, the cameras are charging and the excitement is thriving. It's prom season, the most intoxicating time of the year. The enchanting idea of spending an unparalleled night of pure, high school bliss with the perfect person is too contagious to fend off. The whole school is glowing with anticipation. But one crucial question transcends the rest: what should I wear?

Senior Aidan Henderson has been planning her prom outfit since the beginning of the year. After months of searching, she finally found the perfect dress.

"My dress is a high-necked two piece long dress," Henderson said. "It has a white bottom with a beaded/embroidered top with some pretty designs. I plan to get some nude heels to wear and have minimal jewelry. I will probably have some basic earrings and a bracelet."

Henderson explained that the dress is a good representation of her personal style: minimalist, clean and girly but not flamboyant. She also believes prom is a good place for trying new things, like wearing colors you normally wouldn't wear.

"[The dress] is also white which is kind of the opposite of who I am," Henderson said. "Normally I wouldn't get a white dress since I am constantly spilling food on myself."

Following in Henderson's footsteps, Henry Trentham has been anticipating his senior prom for over a year. Although he does not have such a solid plan, according to Trentham, he has a pretty good idea of what he wants.

"I want to convey style and class and sharpness," Trentham said. "I want to show up to prom looking like James Bond or Jason Statham; or the Future Sex/Lovesounds Justin Timberlake vibe."

Trentham knows exactly how he is going to accomplish this.

"I am probably going to wear a full tux because it's senior prom and everything," Trentham said. "Although if I can I'm going to get a matching black slacks and jacket super tailored, real fitted, and then a really skinny black tie in a sort of Burberry 90's throwback type thing."

Alabel Chapin, a junior at LASA and fashion enthusiast, is very excited about prom.

"For my prom outfit, I went to a liquidator store and bought a dress for pretty cheap because I didn't really want to spend a lot on my prom dress," Chapin said.

Chapin decided to go with a dress she felt confident in.

"I am going to wear a short white dress that looks like something a Kardashian would wear because it is super tight and low-cut and sexy," Chapin said. "I haven't picked my shoes yet, but I will also try to get them from a thrift/vintage store."

There are many approaches to picking out the perfect prom dress, and everyone has

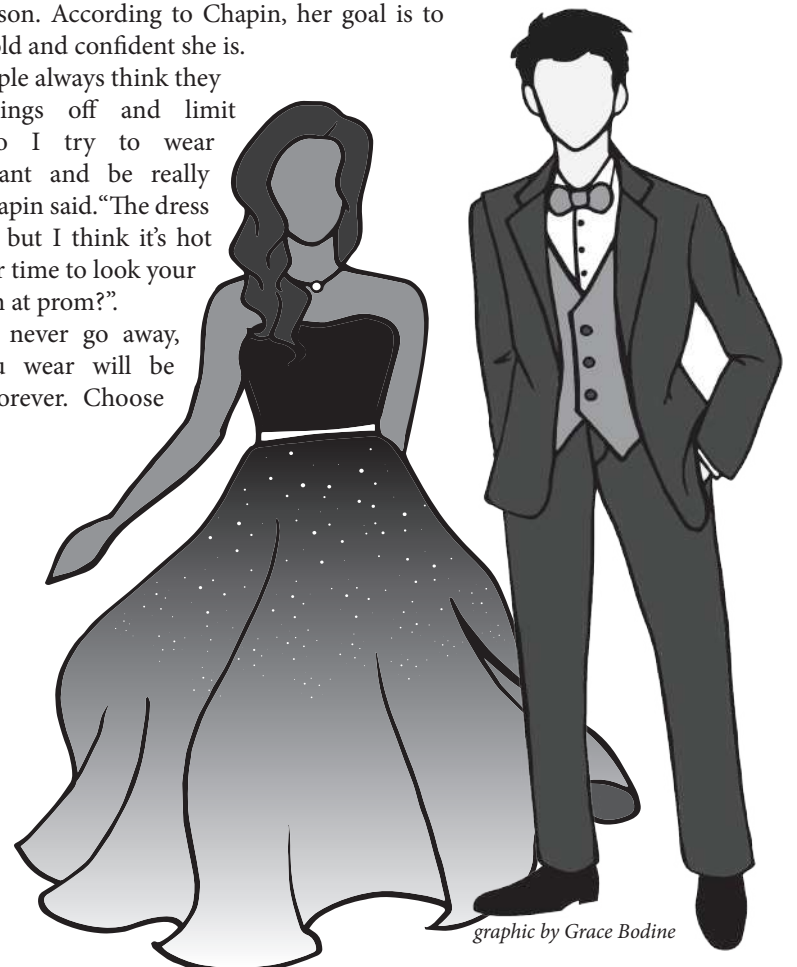
their own way of doing it.

"I really just went and tried on a bunch of things and picked whatever I felt the best in," Chapin said.

Chapin believes a girls prom dress says a lot about who she is as a person. According to Chapin, her goal is to express how bold and confident she is.

"I think people always think they can't pull things off and limit themselves, so I try to wear whatever I want and be really expressive," Chapin said. "The dress is a bit risqué, but I think it's hot and what better time to look your sexiest self than at prom?"

Pictures never go away, and what you wear will be remembered forever. Choose wisely.



SAVE THE DATE!!!

Coffeehouse 2017

Friday, May 12th

Doors open at 6pm

Showtime: 7-10pm

Tickets will be on sale at school prior to the event and also at the door



Check out Coffeehouse's New Home

The American Legion

404 Atlanta Street, Austin 78703

Parking: Austin High School

1715 Cesar Chavez Street



Bachelor not looking for love?

ASHLEY THOMAS
Staff Writer

This season of *the Bachelor* has been a roller coaster to say the least. Nick Viall is this season's Bachelor. Not only is this not his first time appearing on the multi-million dollar franchise, but he's actually been on this show a whopping three times (*Bachelor In Paradise* included).

In a house with 30 women you can almost guarantee that there will be some sort of drama occurring throughout this elimination process, but what sets this season apart from the others is how shocking Nick's decisions were when it came to the dates and rose ceremonies. Viall has pulled some of the biggest shockers in *Bachelor* history including falling in love with the season's villain, holding intimacy at a higher value than love and blatantly threatening to just not pick anyone period. New *Bachelor* viewer and LASA junior, Clarissa Bird, described her biggest shocker of the season to be just how far the designated villain, Corinne Olympios, made it this season.

"Usually the designated villain of the season doesn't make it down to the final four," Bird said. "I think a lot of the criticism she got was pretty valid, especially about her being immature and entitled."

Olympios surprised us all by making it to the second to last rose ceremony. On her first group date she took her top off in front of Nick as well as all of the other girls to try and set herself apart from the rest of the group. The spoiled daddy's girl who, at age 24, still has a nanny, managed to use her powers of manipulation to win over Viall. I was personally shocked just to see Olympios' sheer falsehood towards Viall about her relationships with other contestants in the house and how Viall couldn't seem to separate sexual attraction from being emotionally compatible with her. Olympios blatantly lied about her feud with fellow contestant Taylor on a two-on-one date with Viall where Taylor then called her out saying she had never

called Olympios any foul names. Viall sent Taylor home unjustly during that date, saying that her going home had nothing to do with Olympios. Nick claims that he simply didn't have the same connection with her that he had with some of the other girls. The only impression Olympios had left by that point was that she was the fun girl who would take her top off to not go home.

Fellow *Bachelor* spectator, junior Holden Hunter, felt as though Nick consistently made this error over and over which led to both Nick and the girls feeling a sense of hesitance towards their connections.

"After each rose ceremony you could sense that the girls were holding themselves back from truly connecting with Nick," Hunter said. "Most of the girls felt scared that he wasn't ready for a serious relationship."

All of the final three contestants had expressed these concerns throughout the show, and it was clear to see midway through the season that maybe there was a reason he hadn't been chosen in previous seasons. Finalist Vanessa Grimaldi expressed her fear of this early on. The women Viall consistently kept choosing weren't women who he had made connections with, but rather the prettiest. On her home town date Grimaldi's sister had called her out for how little her and Viall had actually talked about their future. Viall is planning to propose to one of these women yet he's making minimal effort to seriously talk to them about personal concerns.

In a shocking ending, Raven was sent home and Vanessa became the future bride of Nick Viall. Overall this season provided a whole lot of excitement, but as a recommendation for next season, maybe try and search for someone who's looking to be in a relationship.

Former band director returns

CURRIE LARRIMER
Staff Writer

In order to prepare for the LBJ Full Orchestra for their UIL competition on February 28, where they received all superior rankings, former LBJ Band Director Don Haynes came back and visited his former students and the current LASA and LBJ students in full orchestra. Senior Coralie Huibregtse is in the LBJ Band and says she was excited to see her former director return.

"This is his home and he created everything here," Huibregtse said. "We're just as much his family as he is ours, and I think he loves to see us grow and prosper, even if he's not always with us anymore." The impact Haynes has had on the LBJ Band is evident through the actions and words spoken by his students. He left LBJ in 2015 after teaching for 39 years and is now the Interim Fine Arts Director for Austin ISD. During his time at LBJ he left a lasting impact on his students according to Huibregtse.

"I really liked his positive attitude and how comfortable and welcomed he made everyone feel," Huibregtse said. "He embodied the spirit of the LBJ entirely and gave us all a lot of school spirit and pride, unifying us to work towards bettering our performance level. He is also a god in all of our eyes, since everything the LBJ Band is

is because of him."

All of Haynes' students indicate that he was extremely dedicated to his work while at LBJ and continues to be through maintaining strong relationships with his former students. It is clear through Haynes words as well that his students were the most important part of his work as the LBJ Band Director.

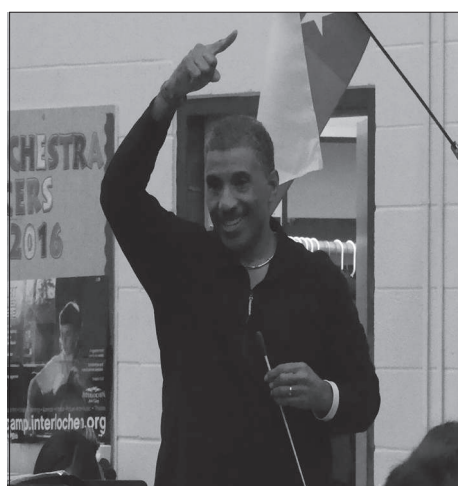
"I most of all miss being actively involved in helping shape young lives," Haynes said. "My vehicle was band; making music; creating memories; and spreading good feelings on campus. I miss the creating music and incredible experiences with my fabulous musicians. We had many great times in travels and all the band experiences. Top of my list of what I miss most is the remarkable relationships that I had with the students and staff."

According to senior drum major Shawn Lee, the presence of Haynes was encouraging both during his time as the director as well as when he has come back to talk to and mentor his students.

"Because he's been a music educator for decades, Mr. Haynes can give us professional insights that are beneficial to the bands," Lee said. "Also, his dedication to music inspires us to perform better. Mr. Haynes was always passionate about music education and valued personal connections he developed with students. He made learning music fun for us."

Even though Haynes has been gone for almost two years, his legacy lives on at LBJ through his students and their accomplishments. Senior band member Kendall Brice says Haynes has inspired her and the rest of the band with his care and attention.

"One of my favorite things about him was that no matter how busy he was he would always stop to say hi and ask how you're doing," Brice said. "Even though he's not a director anymore I'd say he's the spirit of the LBJ band."



Former LBJ band director, Don Haynes, conducts the LASA and LBJ students in both band and orchestra for old times sake. photo by Riley Murphy

Orchestra goes to Carnegie

RILEY MURPHY
Staff Writer

Over spring break the LBJ Orchestra took their yearly trip to New York City and were given the chance to play in Carnegie Hall. Along with performing in this prestigious venue, the students also had an extensive tour of the New York area. According to students such as LASA senior Devin Ryan, who went on the trip, this was a once in a lifetime opportunity.

“Carnegie Hall was beautiful, and the acoustics were wonderful,” Ryan said. “Playing there was an amazing experience and we sounded really good according to the judges. It was a really great experience, especially since playing at Carnegie Hall is not an opportunity many people will ever get.”

The orchestra played in front of a panel of judges who listened to score their performance. In order to improve their show, a team of directors including the director from MIT was present during rehearsal to give advice that would help boost their score.

“We had an ensemble clinic with the orchestra director from MIT which was very helpful for rehearsing our pieces for Carnegie Hall and doing any more improvements before the competition,” Ryan said.

The orchestra holds a large cross-country trip like this every year, and play at Carnegie Hall once every four years.

“For me, this was my first trip with the LBJ Orchestra, and this was my first school trip that was in a different state so that made it much more new and interesting for me and probably most of the other students in the orchestra,” LASA junior James Oh said. “The orchestra has a tradition of going to New York and performing at Carnegie Hall every 4 years. This year was our turn to have this experience, so it was pretty exciting to represent the school away from home.”

The LBJ Orchestra toured New York the four days they were there, stopping in many different locations all around the city. They stayed primarily on Manhattan Island, but branched out to different city boroughs over the duration of their stay.

“We mostly just toured the main attractions near Times Square, but we also saw the Statue of Liberty on Ellis Island, Central Park, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Lincoln Center and The Rockefeller Center,” Oh said.

One of the major stops on the tour was the ‘Top of The Rock’, or the Rockefeller Center, known for its all around views of Manhattan. Students were able to go all the way to the top floor to experience these views.

“We got to go all the way to the top [of 30 Rockefeller Plaza], 70 floors up, to see the whole city. The view from the top of the building was beautiful, and it was cool getting to see how tall all of the buildings are and trying to find where different locations are, like Times Square and Central Park.”

While this trip allowed for many new experiences, the orchestra members were required to pay for this trip on their own. The students were provided chocolates to sell in order to raise money for the trip. While most sold chocolate, LASA junior Jesus Uresti decided to take a somewhat different, unconventional route to help raise money for his excursion.

“I did a lot of busking, which is playing my violin in the streets downtown for donations,” Uresti said. “I was also able to get a lot of help from friends and other organizations who were willing to help send me on this trip.”

According to members of the orchestra, the trip and performance was something that will always be looked upon fondly.

“Having the opportunity to play great music with my best friends from the orchestra really allowed me to see how lucky I am,” Uresti said.



The LBJ orchestra performs inside Carnegie Hall's Stern Auditorium, the main hall within the prestigious music hall. Photo courtesy of Luzvik Backstrom.

TV brands worth the bucks

GEORGE GUCKENBERGER
Staff Writer

Everyone's been there; bored out of their minds flipping through TV channels until they stumble upon an infomercial. Suddenly, one week later they end up with a MSA 30X Sound Amplifier - Discreet Sound Amplifier at their doorstep when they don't even have a hearing impediment.

There are mass amounts of as seen on TV products which are a complete waste of money, such as the Contour Kabooti Ice Cushion, or the Night View NV glasses, but not every product is bad. The infomercial market is incredibly saturated, which means companies are constantly producing creative products to set themselves apart from their competition. Sadly many of these products end up being junk, but there are some good ones out there. For example, no product will ever compare to the Donald Trump Chia Pet. Over the course of two weeks little Donald will grow a full beautiful green head of hair (unlike his real life counterpart), and will live up to its promise to serve as a conversation starter while its counterpart serves as the president.

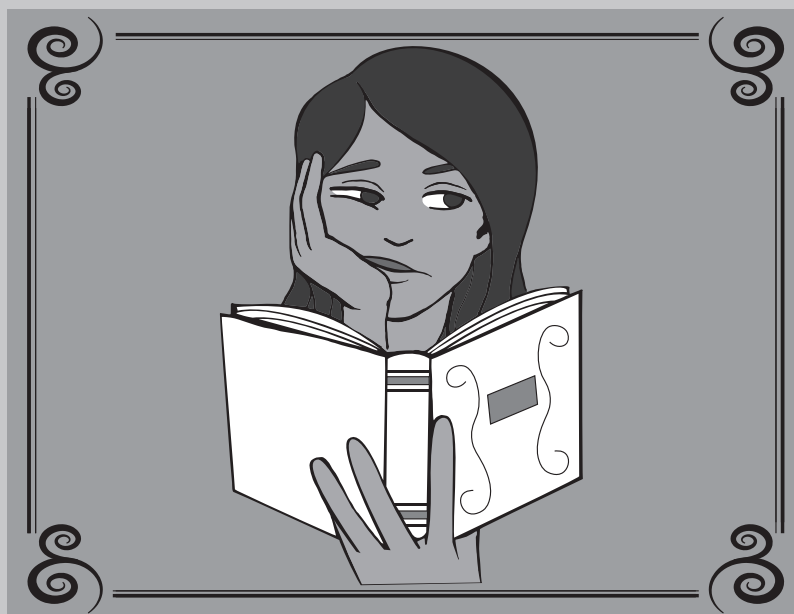
Other more serious products include the Pocket Power Plus device, which is probably one of the most versatile and useful of the as seen on TV products in the market at the moment. It boasts that it can double your laptop's battery, keep an iPhone running for 64 hours straight, or jumpstart your car in a time of need. It also claims to have enough raw power to be able to jumpstart 20 cars in one charge. This one pound device has 16 different ports which can be used to charge nearly anything imaginable. It can do all of this and still fit comfortably in your pocket! One might want to immediately go and buy this product which is reasonably priced at \$120, but wait there's more! The product

also comes with a built in flashlight and tracking device which will provide peace of mind and could potentially be life saving.

Another popular infomercial device that many are adding to their car emergency kit is the Air Dragon Portable Air Compressor, but sadly it does not live up to its promise of being the fastest easiest way to fill your car tires, and apparently it is incredibly slow and does not work half the time. This is not surprising seeing that it is coming from a company with a C- rating from the Better Business Bureau, and sadly this product is all smoke and no fire. It claims to fill tires accurately and rapidly, but in reality cannot be trusted to fill a basketball.

Reviewers tend to say a bad product well apologized for will be more successful than a good product, but there is one quirky accessory that proves that assertion wrong. The True Touch Pet Deshedding Glove is incredibly simple and effective. Simply slip it on your hand, pet your cat/dog and voilà, all their loose hairs are gone and can easily be peeled of the glove. It won't even disturb your pet because it feels just how it would when you pet them normally! This high quality product lives up to its infomercials, and can easily replace all of the sharp metal combs that pets hate, and will definitely make a difference in the amount of loose pet hairs on sofas.

Although many infomercial products are misleading junk, there are a few that are actually helpful that are definitely worth the money. Before ordering a device that promises to solve all life's problems, a little background research will pay off. Because of the large and diverse audience, there are as seen on TV products that can appeal to everyone. The variety in this market means there is a product for nearly anything one can imagine, and in general as seen on TV products are some of the most creative devices out there. There's a lot of fish in the sea, but only one Donald Trump Chia Pet.



graphic by Grace Bodine

Novels for novices

Student reviews books recommended for the occasional reader

AMANDA PHARES
Staff Writer

In my search for the best books to read if you don't read that much, I went out and interviewed three kids who all expressed that they don't read for pleasure that often. Each person recommended a book for me, and I read each one in order to decide whether or not their recommendations were worth reading or not.

“A Thousand Splendid Suns”

by Khaled Hosseini

When asked for a recommendation, senior Aidan Henderson said, “I think the best novel to read is A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini. It weaves together the stories of two Afghan women whose lives eventually intersect. I love it because it gives the reader a look into a culture they may not know much about, while at the same time creating a genuinely interesting and intense story. The syntax and writing style is also easy to read because it flows really well, which makes this book a good read.”

It's hard to imagine a life in a culture very different from America. Set in Afghanistan in the 1960s, A Thousand Splendid Suns follows two teenagers named Mariam and Laila, setting the tone for Hosseini's novel about the relationships between women—specifically mothers and daughters. After learning that her mother has committed suicide, Mariam marries an abusive man named Rasheed, the same man who Laila marries after her family was killed by a missile. The story follows the two girls' lives in Kabul during and after the rule of the Taliban. The novel started out very slow, and it took a long time to get to some action and exciting parts. The novel follows a very standard story outline: a beauty in the form of Laila, an underdog shown in Mariam, and an evil villain shown in the abusive Rasheed. Although this novel picked up towards the middle and was pretty easy to follow, I would not recommend this book if one isn't interested in foreign life or tragic events. It is a pretty intense story because of the wartime ties it has, so if that is your cup of tea then I definitely recommend.

“The Harvard Psychedelic Club”

by Don Lattin

Sophomore Aly Hirani said, “The Harvard Psychedelic Club by Don Lattin is really interesting to read because the storyline is pretty unique, since it follows the story of a few scholars and their psychedelic drug-research project. It's just kinda something that you never really hear much about so it's interesting to read about how certain drugs are used in academic research. Plus, if you're not really that inclined to pick up a book, this one is a good one because it's not very long and the writing style isn't hard to follow.”

In the time of the 1960s, American culture was changing on many levels in terms of drug knowledge and these changes are clearly seen in The Harvard Psychedelic Club. Lattin's ability to turn a Harvard sponsored drug research project into a story that can be read for pleasure is quite admirable. Four men, for research purposes, experiment with LSD to explore the expanded consciousness, which was interesting for me to read about because I've never known that certain drugs were actually used by academic scholars to try to expand their knowledge and minds in a way people hadn't thought to do before. The novel illustrates how the members of the Harvard psychedelic club were able to influence not only each other but America by launching the mind/body/spirit movement which actually introduced a lot of aspects of regular day life such as yoga classes and alternative medicine. While this novel is fairly academic sounding when you read it, there was still jealousy and betrayal between the four men at times that blew my mind due to the sheer plot twists of it all. I would recommend this book if you are interested in reading novels that have a slightly more non-fiction feel rather than fiction, but ultimately I think that the topic of the book is so interesting that it's 10/10 completely worth reading.

“The Last Song”

by Nicholas Sparks

Nick Venn, a LASA sophomore, “I think [The Last Song] is really great to read if you don't read that often because the syntax is really easy to understand and follow, it's a relatively fast read, and it follows a romance between two people which is exciting to read about because stuff like that actually happens in real life. There's also a lot of drama in it which makes this book a real page turner, and it's easy to put yourself in as the main character.”

Nicholas Sparks' romantic novels with tragedy sprinkled in here and there have taken to the movie screen many times. His novel, The Last Song is no different, following the unexpected love story between an angsty, troubled teen girl and a young man with a lot of cash to blow. The first part of the story is about the chase, as young man Will pursues Ronnie, a troubled teen he keeps running into in their small beach town. The second half of the novel touches on some deeper aspects of life, such as cancer, death, and the uppity status of some elites. I found this book to be a fairly good read, not only because the actual writing was really easy to read and didn't contain any vocabulary I didn't know, but because it was about teenagers hanging around the beach and having a summer romance. This is something I think a lot of people can relate to, making it a topic of interest. On a more serious note, after learning that Ronnie's father had fatal cancer, my heart was broken. Starting out, Ronnie and her father had a terrible relationship because of Ronnie's reluctance to maintain a good daughter status, but towards the end I was glad to see their relationship blossom until his death. Ultimately, I agree with Venn in that this is an exciting and easy novel to read if you aren't that into reading.

Top 5 Spring Activities for Austinites

KENZA MCKERRIHAN
Staff Writer

1. Kite Festival

If you've never flown a kite before it's not too late. At the annual Austin Kite Festival the you are bound to run into at least five people you know and enjoy a nice day at Zilker park.

2. Pictures in Bluebonnets

Get dressed up with your friends and enjoy the beautiful Texas state flower.

3. Paddle Boarding

When it's 90 degrees in mid March a great way to cool down is by going down to Town Lake and renting a paddle board or kayak with some friends.

4. Free SXSW Shows

There are always tons of free SXSW shows and events that you can go to during spring break. In the past free shows have ranged from Spoon to Childish Gambino!

5. Rodeo Austin

Quite possibly the most Texas activity you could take part of, the rodeo is always a good way to remember that not all of Texas is a big city like Austin.

graphics by Grace Bodine

Students orchestrate music concert

ALDO ORDONEZ & SARAH LUCAS
Staff Writer & Life & Feature Editor

Senior Noah Simon sits down in his attic armed with his laptop, pencil and paper. He writes down some notes, then scratches them out and starts over. After repeating this process several times to no avail, he pulls up a two-bar rhythm from a Bach fugue, and on a whim decides to create a different melody using an octatonic scale. With the more modern scale giving the piece an ambiguous and unorthodox harmonic structure, Simon quickly finds himself consumed by his creative process once again.

The Second Annual Young Composers concert, an event which provides a forum for high school student composer-producers in the Austin area to present their music, took place on Sunday, March 26 at The North Door in downtown Austin. The concert was the culmination of a joint effort between three organizations — the Austin Chamber Music Center, the Golden Hornet and the Hear No Evil ensemble — to showcase original music produced by students.

“Golden Hornet is a non-profit organization concerned with the commissioning and performance of newly composed music, and they’ve been the engine behind the concert, dealing with all of the organizational, financial, and administrative aspects of the show,” Simon said. “Hear No Evil are the performers, so they dedicate their rehearsal time to learning and rehearsing our music and they’ll be performing it at the show.”

The student composers hail from high schools all over Austin, including two LASA students, Simon and sophomore Sarah Jackson. Because of his previous participation as a junior in the first annual concert, Simon became the student curator for this year’s showcase. According to Simon, fulfilling this role has involved extensive planning.

“I’ve been involved in the planning for the concert and communication with the composers since around mid-August,” Simon said. “I’ve led and hosted meetings approximately once a month, helped workshop everyone’s music, and organized each of the students’ jobs for the concert. I’m on the press team, the social media team, and the programs team, so I’ve been involved in most of the production and publicity as well.”

The task of putting together the concert provided Simon with a means to improve his production skills. He said the chance to produce the concert was beneficial to him personally because it enabled him to become more independent and self-sufficient as a composer, as well as inspiring him to pursue studying composition. The importance of developing these two qualities, according to Simon, is heightened when considering that their absence

can have a harmful impact on a musician’s success.

“Working on the concert has been hugely helpful to me,” Simon said. “Learning how to produce concerts is hugely important for all composers. I’m learning a ton of practical skills that I’ll need to let people hear my music, whether or not I decide to go into a career as a musician or composer.”

The other LASA participant, Sarah Jackson, joined the concert for the first time, and said she believes this could be a positive experience. In addition to orchestral music, Jackson identifies her primary inspiration for composing

Music has always been a big part of my life. It was only natural that I would want to create some of my own, too.

-LASA sophomore Sarah Jackson

as the music she’s encountered by playing multiple instruments from a young age.

“I was inspired by the orchestra music in my class, particularly the chorales that we were playing, and decided that I could write some music of my own,” Jackson said. “I started playing the piano when I was 5 and started on the cello at 11, so music has always been a big part of my life. It was only natural that I would want to create some of my own, too.”

It was actually Jackson’s orchestra teacher, LBJ Orchestra Director Luzvic Backstrom, who would pique her interest in the concert, as Jackson had written a lot of pieces for the orchestra and she let her know about the opportunity, thinking Jackson might enjoy the experience. With a holistic approach in mind, Simon said that he and other members of the Golden Hornet staff contacted teachers from all around the district to solicit student interest, and got around 15 responses — one of them being Jackson’s. Along with reaching out to high schools, the concert’s organizers also tapped into other student musician groups. For example, Graham Reynolds, the co-founder of Golden Hornet, is the composition teacher at the Austin Chamber Music Center, so several of the chosen composers had previously studied music there. As time went on, a couple of the students lost interest, so the final group consisted of 12 student composers.

“We tried to avoid an overly competitive selection

process to foster a positive creative environment because it’s scary to put your music out there and we wanted everyone to feel good about it,” Simon said.

According to Simon, the concert does not mandate a particular style of music in an attempt to encourage the composers’ growth. As a result, the scope of the music being performed widely varies. Simon’s piece, for example, is entitled “Mouse,” a reference to a part in the piece where everyone exclaims the word and its scampering, discordant style. It features a quick tempo with syncopated rhythms and a straightforward 4/4 beat. Simon said he aimed to strike a balance between confusing and entertaining. On the other hand, Jackson said she is more sectional and linear in her composing, which reflects in the organized, classical style she gravitates to in orchestral selections. Her piece is called “Fantasy in A Minor,” and Jackson describes it as having a dramatic, adventurous mood carried by an engaging, brisk tempo.

“Stylistic confinements restrict the originality and the imagination of the composers, which we try to foster as much as possible,” Simon said. “We’re writing everything from tango music to cinema-inspired music to music in the vein of crazy 20th century classical music. Contemporary classical music (often called “New music”) is a little bit post-stylistic in general.”

Another distinguishing feature of the concert is that it allows student composers to interact and seek guidance from well-established, professional composers. Both Jackson and Simon gained mentors from the experience, which they said helped with improving the quality of their final pieces and thereby their skills as composers.

“I really enjoyed getting to write this piece, but the best part of the experience was getting to write it with the help and mentoring of the other people in the concert, as well as the Golden Hornet and my assigned mentor, Joshua Shank,” Jackson said. “Getting feedback from different musicians has helped me to improve my own composing.”

While Simon and Jackson don’t have the same level of experience in having their music performed, both of them said that the feeling of accomplishment that comes from creating something others can enjoy doesn’t fade. Simon said that witnessing composers debut their original music is quite meaningful to him.

“There’s a really strong sense of camaraderie and togetherness in new music performance, because I’m ecstatic to hear my music performed by other people, and they’re (at least I hope they are) excited to play new, original music,” Simon said. “I love going to Hear No Evil’s rehearsals because we collaborate to make the music sound better and convey itself more clearly. There’s something magical about that sort of collaboration.”

LASA senior distinguished as a teen tycoon

ELENA VENEGONI
Staff Writer

Holding down various internship positions, working in an office setting, and being in charge of various media programs are all things that LASA senior Elena Barrera-Waters has experience with. These experiences were recognized when she was named one of Mogul’s Top 30 High School Moguls in the United States.

“I was definitely surprised to have gotten the award,” Barrera-Waters said, “I had never heard of Mogul or the potential to gain this recognition previously, so getting a message from the CEO telling me I had been named a Top 30 Mogul was a huge deal.”

Barrera-Waters received word of her achievement in early 2016, even before that she has undertaken multiple internship and writing positions since her freshman year of high school, accumulating a large amount of experience.

“Getting this recognition was definitely a big deal for me,” Barrera-Waters said. “It’s nice to put in so many hours of work and try so hard to make change, even if on a small scale, and to have that be something that people are noticing even from across the country. It definitely helped me to realize just how much what I was doing mattered.”

Barrera-Waters has held a variety of job titles and has a lengthy resume of previous work places which include: Smart Girls Group, Inking Writing, Latinitas, and You Got Into Where?. While working at these positions she found a passion for writing and working for women’s health.

“[Taking on these positions] gave me my first glimpse into what it was like to have people hear and be impacted by what I have to say,” Barrera-Waters said.

Prior to being named a Top Mogul, Barrera-Waters dedicated a lot of her time to working with Conceivable, a local startup that helps women track and learn about their fertility. After working with Conceivable for almost two years, Barrera-Waters received

the opportunity to take a leadership role and be in charge of a new product they were marketing called Viv. Viv was targeted towards teen girls to help better inform them about periods.

“When the product was developed, the CEO put me in charge of getting it out into people’s hands, so I was able to hire my own interns, create an ambassador program, and run the entire company’s marketing and blogging platforms,” Barrera-Waters said. “Reaching out to girls across the country, I was able to help them realize that the symptoms so commonly referred to as normal are actually just the opposite, and seeing the lives of girls change when their symptoms disappeared was so incredibly rewarding to see.”

Working for internships while also maintaining her life as a high schooler posed a unique set of challenges for Barrera-Waters, most of which were tied into balancing her various interests.

“In general, the biggest obstacle in getting this recognition was finding balance in my own life, schoolwork, and extracurriculars,” Barrera-Waters said. “In the end, though, I’ve been able to figure out ways to make sure my homework is done and the demands of LASA are being met while still working with Conceivable and finding time to have fun, too.”

From her four years of working every internship available and learning about business and marketing, Barrera-Waters has picked up some knowledge about what it takes to get involved in the business side of a cause or movement.

“If I could give any advice to other people wanting to get involved in things like I’ve done, I’d say to just put yourself out there as much as you can,” Barrera-Waters said. “Apply for as many internships as you can and reach out to businesses and organizations you want to be involved in, even if you aren’t sure if you’ll get the positions you’re wanting. The worst that can happen is they say no, and then you can just move on to the next one.”

FOREIGN EXCHANGE STUDENTS

continued from page 1

School in Pflugerville, but when the exchange fell through at the school district level, French and Spanish teacher Tania Shebaro organized for eight of the students to come to LASA instead.

“These kids had already had their tickets and were already supposed to come; they were already getting excited,” Shebaro said. “It first started with ‘well, we’ll try to get five families,’ and then there was enough interest to host eight of them.”

From there, Shebaro had to assign each LASA host to an exchange student. Although she explained that the matching requirements are fairly lenient due to the short length that the students are in the United States, putting together students and hosts with similar interests was a priority for her to ensure the experience is ideal for both individuals.

“If somebody says they’re allergic to dogs and that family has five dogs we’re not gonna put them with that family,” Shebaro said. “But for example we had one of our students play the saxophone and one family whose parents are both music professors, so that seemed like a good match because their interests are both music.”

Once Horowitz had been paired with Denis, there were a few logistics to straighten out. Overall, however, Horowitz says that the process was surprisingly simple.

“There was some stuff like, ‘Oh, how would I finish my homework because I’d want to be hanging with her all the time,’ but it worked out,” Horowitz said. “My mom would bring her out shopping, and I would just finish my homework and my parents would do stuff with her while I was working.”



Junior Kyle O’Rourke and his exchange student sit on a couch in the theater, both sporting clothing items from O’Rourke’s brand. photo courtesy of Kyle O’Rourke

While Horowitz, who is currently taking French 2, said she decided to apply to host mostly for the experience, hosting Denis was also positive for her French language skills. According to Shebaro, the opportunity to have students from a different country attend LASA is especially beneficial for language learners.

“For [the LASA students] to be on the opposite end where they are the ones who are understanding and the French students are having to figure out communication, I think is a really rewarding thing,” Shebaro said. “It’s good for them to experience that communication breakdown and to realize that it’s okay to not know every word, and you can still have a meaningful conversation.”

Junior Kyle O’Rourke was also a host to an exchange student. According to O’Rourke, his shadow, Jules Baviere, encountered many experiences in the United States that surprised him.

“He’d never been swimming in February, and he did that,” O’Rourke said. “He also said it had never been sunny in February or warm--the weather was really different.”

The transition was significant for the hosts, too, as O’Rourke pointed out. The French students remained with their hosts at almost all times throughout school, extracurricular activities and family meals.

“It was really weird at first because having someone follow you around all the time is really strange, but you get used to it after awhile,” O’Rourke said. “They kind of just become like a good friend.”

Horowitz said that the everyday experiences were what were most valuable to the French students. While she did make sure to take Denis to enjoy the typical Austin

experiences of stand-up paddleboarding on Town Lake and watching a UT basketball game, it was also important for her to learn about the menial parts of American life.

“Ms. Shebaro told us, ‘don’t not do your homework, don’t try to change your schedule, because they want to see what it’s like for a typical American student,’” Horowitz said. “Mostly I think they’re just happy to be in America, so I don’t really have to go out of my way that much, except we did some fun touristy stuff on the weekend.”

Denis said that she got everything she wanted and more out of her trip. In addition to being able to understand English conversation much better thanks to the immersion, she also enjoyed getting to know the country.

“I’m so happy to have now had an American experience for two weeks in [Horowitz’s] family,” Denis said. “I am now sure that I will come back to the United States, because it’s so cool and very different than France. I love America.”

Shebaro hopes that this is the first of many times that LASA will be able to implement an exchange student program, and would like to extend it to other countries as well. According to Shebaro, the interest in hosting students from any country has increased thanks to the French students.

“Several students have asked, ‘when are the Spanish kids gonna come? When are the Mexican kids gonna come?’ and I’m like ‘well, it just depends on what comes through,’” Shebaro said. “Hopefully, we’re opening doors for different groups to come and have that experience as well.”



Sophomore Rachel Horowitz and her exchange student Clara Denis attend a basketball game together after school. photo courtesy of Rachel Horowitz



Sophomores Rachel Horowitz and Kimmy Wilson take pictures with their exchange students before they left to go back home. photo courtesy of Rachel Horowitz

LBJ Swimmers: dive into state competition

JEFFEREY KOVAR
Staff Writer

The sound of splashing water echoes around the Texas Swim Center as swimmers dive first into the water at the UIL State Swimming competition on February 17 and 18. LASA Junior Aidan Dulaney, LASA Freshman Ava Longi, LASA Junior Andrew Stowers, LASA Freshman Lucas Abounader and LASA Junior Alex Mancevski, all LBJ Swimmers, all qualified for State swimming after strong finishes in the regional competition. The 5A State Championship occurred February 17 and 18 for both girls and boys. Dulaney finished fourth in the B final for the 500 freestyle, Mancevski finished sixth in the 200 individual medley final and Longi finished 4th in the B final for the 50 freestyle and sixth in the championship final for the 100 freestyle. Unfortunately, the boys 200 relay medley was disqualified by an early start in the final; Mancevski was still happy with the results.

"[State] was very fun," Mancevski said. "I was especially glad to be joined by four of my teammates for the first time. At State, the competition is really tough but that's what makes it such an interesting experience."

Along with her finishes in her respective finals, Longi also broke two school records in both the 50 and 100 freestyle for girls. The record for the 50 freestyle was previously held by Kylie Ternes and M. Flanagan in the 100 freestyle, according to the LBJ sports website for swimming and diving. Longi hopes to continue setting and breaking records in her competitions.

"I didn't actually know we even had school records to break until regionals, and someone told me I was really close," Longi said. "I didn't realize until after state was over that I had broken them, so it was a pleasant surprise. One was 17 years old and another was I think nine years old, so it was also a big accomplishment for the team. I hope to break more of the records next year."

The LBJ swim team had a very competitive district competition, according to Head Coach Chloe Cardinale. Both the boys and the girls team placed 5th in total points scored at the District Championship meet. Cardinale was pleased with how district and regionals went.

"It was awesome," Cardinale said. "It was the most competitive team I've ever had. Our district is so much harder now that they've added about four new

teams in the district. We placed very well at districts and at regionals we had a lot of kids there, it was the most number of kids I've had go on to finals at regionals, and then also move on to state. It was the most competitive season I've seen in my six years."

LBJ swimming and diving has a strong history of competing at the state level. In 2000, they finished first in the district championship, regional and state meets that year. According to Cardinale, LBJ swimming were not as competitive for the next ten years, but due to an influx of competitive students, they have seen a resurgence in their qualifiers for Region and State meets.

"In the early 2000's we were very competitive, and there was a swim coach that took a lot of effort to recruiting specific swimmers to this school, so we did really well," Cardinale said. "You don't really come to LASA to be an athlete, so for the next ten years, it wasn't the most competitive team. They changed the district boundaries my second year I believe. We had a much less competitive district. We only swam against Ann Richards, McCallum and like our other team. We would do really well but we wouldn't do well outside of our district. Now, we have an influx of super competitive kids into this school and they are good at everything they do, so the level of competition is ramping up again."

With the season over, the swimmers and coach have looked to next season for hopefully a strong swimming and diving story this year. Cardinale wishes for the swimmers to just have a fun extracurricular activity to de-stress with. Mancevski hopes to become a better captain and swimmer for next year.

"I hope to become a faster swimmer by training more over the summer, but I also hope to become a better captain as this year I was able to learn a lot," Mancevski said.



LASA junior and LBJ swimmer Alex Mancevski swims in the 200 IM at 2017 Regionals. Mancevski went to State and placed eighth. photo courtesy of Marcella Cannatti



LASA freshman Patrick Connor and LASA sophomore Kimmy Wilson scrimmage during LBJ Ultimate Frisbee practice. photo by Oliver Powers

New year, new coach

JORGE VILLA
Staff Writer

The sound of frisbees slicing through the air can be heard across the field as the LBJ Ultimate Frisbee team practices their throws and running long distances to catch the frisbee. This is a recent drill introduced by Tom Atchity, the new ultimate frisbee coach. Unlike previous coaches, Atchity has decided to make running and conditioning one of his key points for this season as he is eager to improve and win games as one team. He also said that another major point is to make sure everyone is having fun because the rest falls into place if everyone is enjoying themselves.

"This is actually my first year as a coach," Atchity said. "I have been the captain of several club teams in Kansas City and Austin, which requires a lot of the same skills as coaching I really love teaching frisbee and interacting with people, so coaching is a natural fit."

The ultimate frisbee team has two team captains, junior AJ Marks and junior Zoe Czarnecki. They practice twice a week from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Like other teams, they are also forced to share fields with the LBJ girls lacrosse, track, boys soccer and girls soccer. With that in mind, they only occupy a small portion of the field, but that does not stop them from practicing positioning, playmaking and conditioning as enforced by Atchity. Czarnecki is an experienced player as she has been playing since sixth grade at Kealing Middle School. She said that she is very happy with Atchity as he is getting them to work harder and getting them be more serious about the sport.

"I think the whole team is...really happy with our new coach," Czarnecki said. "I think he is getting us to work hard and be a little more serious which is something I am really excited about. We're actually still working with our coach from last year so it's been great to work with both of them together. We've got some new plays and styles of running our offense."

Czarnecki said that her role as a team captain is that she has to organize registration for tournaments, get waivers, and order jerseys. She also has to help make sure practice runs smoothly. During games her responsibility is to

organize the team, tell people what to do and be a role model in front of the other athletes. Another new idea implemented by Atchity is that this season they have been splitting up teams into an A and a B team, which is new for the program. With that in mind, the ultimate frisbee team has already participated in preseason tournaments that have enabled them to see the things they have to improve on throughout the spring season.

"All of our games up to this point have been about development," Czarnecki said. "The main season is just starting with our bigger tournaments and spring league play on the way, so games up to this point have been kind of like preseason I think we're looking forward to improving more this spring season. I've been pretty happy with games up to this point, but we definitely have a lot of room to improve our performance."

Ultimate Frisbee players sophomores Alex Winter and Shahin Masoumi have said that they have created many new long lasting bonds all thanks to ultimate frisbee. Being Winter's first time playing competitive ultimate frisbee, he said that he is glad he had the opportunity to be coached by Atchity as he is in a better shape, both mentally and physically. Winter said that his playmaking skills are better now due to all of the drills they have to do during his practices. On the other hand, this is Masoumi second year playing for the ultimate frisbee team at LASA. Masoumi said that thanks to coach Atchity, his positioning has improved along with his ability to catch as he is moving around the field. He thinks that Atchity has definitely change ultimate frisbee here at LASA in the sense that he now doesn't feel to be part of a team anymore, but a part of a united and happy family.

"The most I enjoy about playing ultimate frisbee is the bonds that I have created throughout the season," Winter said. "They are friendships that are deep in my heart and friendships that I will keep forever. That is what motivates me to stay after school after a hard day at school. Ultimate frisbee here at LASA is unique and memorable which will create lasting bonds and friendships that will last for your entire life."

Winter Guard shields the realms of LASA

TREVOR ANDERSON
Staff Writer

Trophies are arranged along the back wall and various practice instruments are stacked almost to the ceiling. This impromptu monument to the Winter Guard team's victories and dedication are easily visible in new LBJ/LASA Winter Guard Director Nick Roman's office. His office is where the majority of the technical aspects of the Winter Guard show are created.

The LBJ/LASA Winter Guard team meets in this same office to discuss and prepare for their upcoming season. In light of a recent victory in the team's first competition of the year, the team is now having to practice harder than ever in order to be successful in their competitions. Luckily, Roman is no stranger to Winter Guard, even if it is his first year working with LBJ and LASA. He has years of experience and plans to take the group in a challenging, but still fun direction. For Roman, perfection simply doesn't exist. He said that in order for the team to be successful they need to constantly improve themselves and their peers.

"We are going to continue working on the show that we have, and we're going to work and enhance it to its fullest potential," Roman said. "Some aspect of our show can always be improved, and the team works hard to make sure that they're getting better at something every day."

One of the things that Roman thinks is most crucial to a good performance is communication. No amount of practice can prepare you for the real thing according to Roman, and he believes that the team has to have nearly flawless communication if they want to do well; everyone has to be on the same page.

"I feel like it's mostly going to come down to solidifying our form of communication, and having, like, a stronger sense of who we are as a team, with me in charge of them," Roman said. "Communication is critical, and if anyone single person doesn't know what to do during a show, it makes us look bad. Our team will need to be at the top of their game with communication- it may be the thing that makes or breaks our show."

LASA freshman and first year Winter Guard member Emma Rodriguez thinks that the team's win at the first competition of the year was exhilarating, but that there is always work to be done.

"It felt amazing to get first in that first competition," Rodriguez said. "This the first time I have ever competed in a more athletic competition, so, personally, knowing that I had contributed to that and being a part of that was really encouraging. [Practice] takes a lot out of you but it's definitely worth it in the end!"

LASA junior and Winter Guard member Thomas Reyes says that the win in the first competition was unexpected but welcome.

"[The win] was surprising. We got a new director this year and it usually takes a few shows or even seasons sometimes for everyone to fall into groove with one another but that wasn't the case. It was validating for sure but the best thing was seeing everyone feel so good because they did something impressive," Reyes said. "It was especially nice to see the freshmen's reaction to it all since it was their first show which was probably both exciting and nerve wracking for them."

According to Rodriguez, practices are as frequent as they are important, are valued time for the team.

"We have practices three times a week for around three hours a day. It's tough to balance that with my schoolwork, but I'm managing," Rodriguez said.

For now, the team's biggest concern is the Championship competition of the Texas Color Guard Circuit, or TCGC, at the end of March. Roman says he enjoys creating the whole show from the ground up and says he will be working extensively to make sure that the show in March will go smoothly. One of the things that the team is really good at is timing; Roman said that in their recent competitions timing has been really important and a good grasp of it helped the team immensely.

"On the floor, our kids do a good job of moving from place to place on time and being in their spots when they're needed there," Roman said. "Timing is probably the most important aspect of our show, and it is good that the students are internalizing it and working well together."

In order to get ready for the big competition, Reyes said he expects nothing less than 100% from themselves and the rest of the team.

"I expect everyone to put forward as much as they can," Reyes said. "I want everyone to be kind to one another, foster a learning environment and practice hard. If we can perform like I know we can, we'll have no

issues."

Overall, Roman is feeling very confident in the group's chances of success. He believes that if they perform like they are capable of performing, nothing can stand in their way.

"This is definitely one of the strongest groups of kids that I've ever worked with in that they're very committed to the goal, which is finishing our product and making sure that it's the best it can be," Roman said. "I'm proud of our kids, they internalize a lot of the things I used to have to stress, and I think that their determination and commitment will take us far in these upcoming competitions."



LASA Winterguard freshman Shyloh Dytrich performs the routine "To Paradise" during a competition. Photo by: Allen Butt

On track for a great season

SARAH PORTER
Staff Writer

Whether they are a veteran varsity athlete or a student looking for a fun P.E. credit, the season for the track team is already looking up, and Girls' Head Coach Jamal Fenner and Coach Leslie Riggins can explain why. With this year's population boom within LASA's freshman class, the LBJ track team population has also seen an increase. More football players have also been recruited to the track team and almost all of the girls' varsity sprinters have returned to the team as well. Not only does this mean that there are more people competing, but there is more room for the track team to improve.

"Our chances of winning any meet are much greater when we have numbers," Riggins said. "If everyone performs well and does what they're supposed to do, we're more likely to win. I don't think there's any real disadvantages to having a big team."

More athletes generally means more people competing in different events. This increases the chance of having athletes that get higher placements in each event. The higher the placement in an event, the more points the team gets. That's why having more competitors on a team increases the chance of winning a track meet. There are other added benefits that contribute to the success of the team and the success of the individual as well.

"When you have numbers, it's always a good thing," Fenner said. "You have athletes that are going to push each other and try to get better. Depth is another thing. Never turn your back on having depth, because you never know when someone won't be able to run a relay. So you'll always want to have someone that can compete at the same level as the person that went down."

Riggins has been coaching track and field for 32 years, and has a lot of experience with different team dynamics, but he always sets high standards for his athletes. There was a time when his team would win the state track meet every year. His team was sponsored by Nike, and they would be invited to compete around the country. Riggins has coached two Olympic athletes and coaches Junior Olympic national champions in the summer, so he is used to achieving high-levels of success.

"Hopefully we can win district and regionals this season," Riggins said. "We came close last year to winning the regional meet, and we missed winning the district meet by less than 5 points. But I think we can win district this year too."

Competing at State competitions is challenging enough, but with an experienced coaching staff and hard-working athletes, Riggins may reach his goal for another State Championship ring. And the Jaguars have

more than just numbers on their side to do this. Last year the varsity boys and girls qualified for the Texas Invitational Relays, an annual track meet that selects and invites high school and college teams from across the country to compete against each other. Most of the varsity athletes also have also competed in at least one regional track meet. LBJ Sophomore Caroline Anyatonwu, LASA Sophomore Rachel Horowitz, LASA Senior Kendall Brice and LASA Junior Hannah Porter competed in the 2016 UIL 5A State Track Meet. This experience with high-level competition has been working to condition the Jaguars for high-level success.

"Last year, everyone was pretty young," Riggins said. "We didn't have any seniors on our relays. But this year we have a lot more experience on the team and we have faster girls this year, so we don't have to coach as hard. Most of them know how to run a relay pretty well in terms of handoffs and starting and things like that. So this year I'm making sure they're strong and able to compete even better."

Although the Jaguars experienced a lot of success last season, it wasn't all rainbows and sunshine. Instead, there were several cases of shin splints, pulled muscles,

relay mix-ups and other problems that set the team back. This season the team has recovered and learned from these set-backs, and they're ready to tackle new obstacles according to Fenner.

"One of the most exciting things is having all of our girls back," Fenner said. "We're looking healthy and we were able to have all of our relays at the first track meet. Now I'm excited about later in the season and getting out there and getting through relays and getting to state."

According to Fenner, it's safe to say that this track season will be filled with first, second and (maybe) third place medals. He has a motto to reflect the Jaguars' journey to success. Last season, the motto was "if you grind you will shine." This season, the team has an updated motto.

"We're all we need," Fenner said. "That's the motto. There's a lot of teams gunning against us because last year, we were the only Austin team to make it to State. We know that there are people in our area that don't want to see us be successful, so we wanna go out and show them that we're the best team in central Texas."

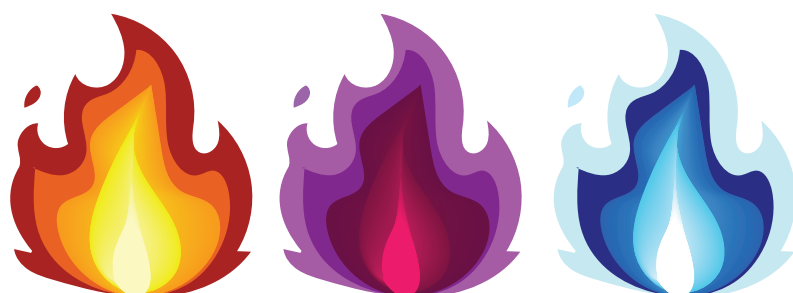


LBJ Sophomore Latrell Stevenson and LBJ Freshman D'Vante Gay practice handoffs for the 4 by 100 meter relay at the Bastrop Bear Relays. photo by Samantha Porter.

MARCH MADNESS PREDICTIONS: FROM NOT TO HOT

This year, just like every other year since 1939, the NCAA held a tournament to decide the best team in the country. The LBJ Liberator has compiled a list of

predictions on March Madness from a group of "experts": LASA sophomores Dima Pokinboroda and Ian McIntosh as well as LASA senior Eli Breston.



ANDY DEGRASSE
Staff Writer

Sleepers

In a bracket with so many teams it's hard for the experts down at the NCAA to give all the credit that every team deserves. As a result a few teams every year end up a lower seed than they belong. These teams entering the tournament with a chip on their shoulder and something to prove often end up going the furthest even against big name opponents.

Busts

Just as teams enter the bracket lower than is warranted, others come in higher. While they may progress, some teams just aren't cut out for life in the dance. Whether they're perennial power houses or just flavors of the month, high hopes and over inflated egos earn these teams a quick trip home along with broken hearts and broken brackets.

Stand Out Players

Each year some players come into the tournament with lots expected from them, and some come to try and make a name for themselves. From buzzer beaters to 30 point games, these players are the ones who show up big when their team needs them most. While their team may not progress, they gave all they had to put their team in position to win.

Dima Pokinboroda

What They Thought

Xavier-Their frontcourt is really strong, and they've got some really great passers. Also I really like their point guard.

How It Happened

Xavier was one of the most successful teams of the ones picked by this group of experts. Led by Trevon Bluiett, the Musketeers made it all the way to the elite eight, very impressive considering their seeding.

Eli Breston

What They Thought

Middle Tennessee-They had a lot of momentum coming into the tournament, and they had some really underrated players. I also thought their first first opponent was pretty weak.

How It Happened

Mid Tennessee won decidedly, partially due to Minnesota missing their starting point guard. Mid Tennessee played like a more balanced team, and didn't depend on any player specifically.

Ian McIntosh

What They Thought

Michigan-I thought that they could expose Louisville with their 3 point shooting, which is something Louisville is bad at defending.

How It Happened

McIntosh correctly predicted this upset, but this upset wasn't a singular coincidence. Teams all across the bracket in the Big 10 Conference were seemingly underseeded as these upsets seemed to keep happening.

What They Thought

Duke- I've always hated Duke, so I root against them as a rule. Also I think they've just gotten really lucky so far, and I can tell one of their players will choke.

How It Happened

This was another great call by Dima. Duke was exposed by a balanced and strong South Carolina team, shooting extremely poorly, with their frontcourt getting physically dominated.

What They Thought

Cincinnati- They were playing Kansas State, who I knew were really based on the times they played Texas. I also thought that Kansas State's offense could expose Cincinnati.

How It Happened

Cincinnati dealt with Kansas State handily, and were able to shut down their offense relatively easily. Kansas State was also hurt by the fact that several of their key players picked up early fouls.

What They Thought

Villanova- Usually defending champions aren't able to follow up on their success two years in a row. Also I think that Josh Hart is overrated and will probably choke.

How It Happened

This was another razor sharp pick by McIntosh. Villanova went down in the second round, a big upset. While no one on the Villanova team choked specifically, Wisconsin outplayed them decidedly.

What They Thought

Jawun Evans-when he played Texas, I saw how athletic he was, and I think his whole team is really strong. I think they're really underseeded at the 10 seed.

How It Happened

Evans' team went down in the first round, barely getting beat by an unstable Michigan team. However, Evans played a stand out game, scoring 23 points.

What They Thought

Semi Ojeleye- I'm a big SMU fan, and Ojeleye is really underrated, I think a lot of people are sleeping on him because he's really athletic.

How It Happened

Semi Ojeleye-While Ojeleye's team was upset, he did have a memorable putback dunk in the one game he played in, so while he may not have broken out in the tournament, he did leave his mark.

What They Thought

John Collins-I saw how well he played while Wake Forest was able to help Wake Forest make the tournament, and even though they can go far, even though they're just in the first four

How It Happened

Despite Collins' great effort to will his team into the tournament, they were unable to make it past the first four. While Collins didn't play poorly, his team being knocked out early prevented him from breaking out

Dance team shows off more than just First Ladies

Annual spring show to include members of dance classes and possibly other clubs in an effort to give dancers a chance to perform and First Ladies a chance for costume change

SARAH MINES
Staff Writer

Hip-hop music rings loudly through the dungeon hallways as the First Ladies and Gentleman laugh and dance in the mirrored room, preparing for the

[The spring show]’s worth it and it’ll be something that we can look back on.

—LBJ Junior and First Gentleman David Meriwether

upcoming Spring Showcase. The theme for this year’s spring show, Youth, was chosen a year ago, even before LBJ dance teacher and First Ladies director Shelby Miller was hired. To follow the theme, the dances will incorporate youthful characters such as mermaids, fairies, and cowgirls.

“The seniors do it themselves, the vets do it themselves,” Miller said. “They totally pick themes and choreograph dances on their own. I just monitor and make sure everything is appropriate.”

The spring performance, a showcase, had previously been just for the LBJ drill team, the First Ladies. This year Miller hopes to include the fine arts students as well.

“They are more than welcome to try out for the dance and learn it because the First Ladies will need changing time and time offstage, so I want to offer that to my dance classes if they’d like,” Miller said. “The fine arts students already had the winter show which they did for a grade, so this will be

more of an opportunity for if they want to perform and promote what they do as well.”

Besides dances for the fine arts students, most of the performances are choreographed by the First Ladies themselves. LBJ Junior and First Gentleman David Meriwether said that the team has just finished preparing for and competing in their competition, so they have just begun making up dances and practicing.

“[Making up dances is] both fun and stressful because not only do we have to choreograph dances, but we have to make sure it’s clean and that it looks good,” Meriwether said. “But when it all comes down to the spring show it’s worth it and it’ll be something that we can look back on. I’m both nervous and excited for the showcase because I did the new members dance, but this year now that I’m actually on the team it’ll be really exciting.”

The show, open to everyone on the 27th and 28th of April in the theater, is something returning members look forward to sharing with the many new members on the team. According to LASA junior and First Lady Junior Lieutenant Zoe Troy, practices have been going well so far and the team is preparing well for the performance.

“I’m really looking forward to it. The spring show is my favorite show of the year,” Troy said. “Depending on how our practices go, I think it should go really well.”

Veterans and rookies each choreograph and perform their own dances in addition to participating in numbers with the rest of the First Ladies. Miller also plans to ask other dance groups, such as K-Pop Dance Club, to be featured in the performance.

“The spring show is kind of a compilation of a lot of things that we’ve

done throughout the year as well as spotlighting certain groups,” Miller said. “For example, the vets do their own dance, the rookies do their own dance, seniors do a dance. It’s just a chance for the dance to really show off everything they’ve done this year and kind of have their own creative liberties on dances and stuff like that.”



LASA junior and First Lady Zoe Troy performs during half time during football season. Troy has been a First Lady since her sophomore year and will be performing in the Spring Show with her teammates. photo courtesy of Zoe Troy

Water polo

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Jensen speculates that water polo practice is more than just work. She finds enjoyment in working out and hopes to spread her feelings with those on the team whether they are returning or new players. Although practices aren’t required, Jensen thinks that a majority of the team should participate because it is a good use of time.

“Our practices are about two hours, three times a week,” Jensen said. “Practice attendance isn’t required, but I usually go to three a week. I really enjoy practices—much like swimming, you are constantly moving in practices. We basically tread water for two hours regardless of the specifics of what we’re working on in practice, so I always leave feeling I’ve gotten a good workout.”

Although there is not a pool close to LASA, according to Jensen, the team has no problem practicing somewhere that is both convenient and fun. Girls’ Water Polo player and sophomore Kathryn Christian, who has rediscovered her love for the game, is a big fan of the practice locations.

“I played in like fifth grade and I like to swim so I thought it’d be fun,” Christian said. “We practice at the UT Swim Center and it’s cool because a lot of club teams play at the same time as we do, and a lot of famous athletes have swam there.”

The long practices may be worth it because of the intense workout but there are other benefits to coming out to the UT Swim Center three times a week to practice as well. The Lee and Joe Jamail Texas Swim Center is located on campus which puts it right in the middle of many restaurants making it a hotspot for after practice hunger right before students go home to do homework.

“Our team is a really fun group so it’s the best of both worlds: a good workout and getting to talk with friends,” Jensen said. “Plus we reward ourselves with froyo or Chick-fil-A after!”

The captains have worked hard to improve the team and get the players ready to compete in games. According to Jensen, she and her fellow captains are hoping to take their teams to state this year. The girls team captains are seniors Jensen, Emma Steyaert, Finlay Scanlon and Casey Dawson. For the boys, juniors Zhao and Alex Manchevski and senior Isaac VanEenoo lead the team.

“Our team this year is quite strong, as we have had a couple of player practices throughout the summer, and I fully expect us to be top three in the region,” Zhao said.

College football players from around the nation showcase their skills in this year’s NFL Combine

MAX IRBY
Staff Writer

The NFL Scouting Combine, an event which has been held annually since 1982, is a way for the top college prospects in the nation to display their athletic prowess in front of scouts from all teams. In effect, the event is a job interview, and the 330 potential draftees that were invited and came this year were all candidates. With only an estimated 1.6 percent of college football players making an NFL roster, the stakes are high for players who need to make a good impression on their potential employers. Beginning on February 28 and running throughout the following week, the 2017 Combine showcased the skills of college stars like Deshaun Watson, Leonard Fournette and Myles Garrett.

Offensive linemen are key to any offense’s success, and many teams in the league have holes to fill at this position. Some of the top performers in the combine this year were players Cam Robinson of Alabama, Forrest Lamp of Western Kentucky and Garrett Bolles of Utah, all of whom were top college performers at their position due to their elite athletic abilities including foot quickness and explosiveness off the line.

A few teams in the NFL are still searching for a solid quarterback to lead their offense, and, failing to find a suitable one through trades or the free agent market, look to the draft for a suitable candidate. Such teams include the Browns, Jets, 49ers, Bears, Bills and Texans, who have all struggled to find a solid player at the position in recent years. The top prospects for the draft this year are shaping up to be Mitchell Trubisky of North Carolina, Patrick Mahomes of Texas Tech and Deshaun Watson, who has lead Clemson to consecutive National Championship games, one of which he won.

The 2016 draft class was rich in talent at the

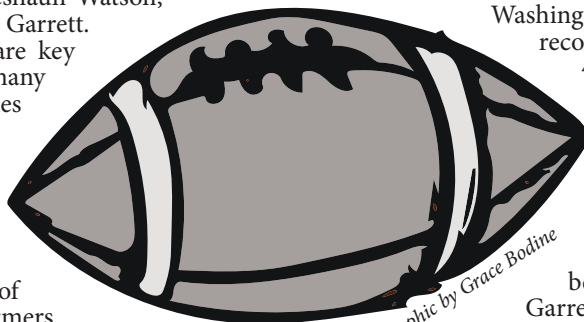
running back position, and this year’s class is no different. The top prospects in this year’s draft class are lining up to be Leonard Fournette, who went to LSU and is widely considered to be one of the top prospects in recent years, as well Dalvin Cook of Florida State and Christian McCaffrey of Stanford. D’onta Foreman is another top back, and despite missing of the combine due to injury has his candidacy helped due to the winning of the Doak Walker award as the nation’s top running back.

The wide receiver position is much more difficult for rookies to fill, with many roles already having been filled by teams, and the transition from college to professional play being especially hard. Even so, elite college athletes such as Corey Davis of Western Michigan, Mike Williams of Clemson, and John Ross of Washington who recently set the combine record for the 40-yard dash at blazing 4.22 seconds making him hard to cover by even the most elite defensive backs.

On the other side of the field, many teams still have weaknesses in their defensive lines. These could be remedied by what is arguably one of the best prospects in the draft, Myles Garrett of Texas A&M, who impressed scouts at the combine and is a contender for the first overall pick, as well as Taco Charlton of Michigan and Derek Barnett of Tennessee.

Other needs that teams have on the defensive front are those of the linebacker. Top prospects at linebacker are Reuben Foster of Alabama, the best defensive team in college this year, Zack Cunningham of Vanderbilt, and T.J. Watt of Wisconsin who is the younger brother of the Texans’ star defensive end J.J. Watt.

For many teams with subpar defenses, the solution to their problems can be found in this year’s draft. With a defensive back heavy draft, many teams including the Dallas Cowboys and Chicago Bears among others. The top prospects are Marshon Lattimore of Ohio State, Marlon Humphrey of Alabama, Fabian Moreau of UCLA.



graphic by Grace Botine

Boys’ basketball a bust in state bracket



LBJ junior Shasirae Harvey handles the ball facing Corpus Christi team Veterans Memorial High School during Mar. 3 playoff game in San Antonio. The Jags ended up losing the game by two points after surging from a double digit deficit. photo by Oliver Powers

MARLEN AVILA
Staff Writer

The squeaks of rubber soles and the warning shouts can be heard across the basketball court. The time on clock keeps counting down and more pressure is building on the LBJ boys’ basketball team to earn another point. However, as the air horn blares and the timer runs out, the game against Corpus Christi Memorial High School is over. It’s 48 to 50. LBJ Boys’ Basketball Coach Fred Roland said that the score is what disappointed him that night.

“We lost by two and turned around and lost last year by one,” Roland said. “So back to back, it’s kind of disappointing. It takes a while to get over it and I’m kind of glad for spring break, that way you can have a way to get away from everything and get yourself together. But it was fun, it’s always fun. The team played well and they played that many games and get to that level.”

The outcome of this past basketball state game was familiar to the players who faced the same situation last year as well. This season was the second time that the boys’ basketball team lost at the same round. According to LBJ basketball player Shasirae Harvey, the loss will motivate the team to do better next season.

“We went to the same round,” Harvey said. “That’s why it hurts even hard because we kept losing by one or two points. Next year, I think we’re going to make it to the state’s tournament pretty easy because we got some dogs.”

Although the basketball season ended in defeat, the overall accomplishments of the team outshines the negativity. This

was their second consecutive year going to state and reaching the final four which means they were the last four teams in the whole state of Texas playing for the right to be the best 5A team in the state of Texas. Harvey believes that their team was able to overcome major difficulties this season, despite the occasional slipups.

“At first, it started off a little shaky but then we started winning games and had us number two in state,” Harvey said. “So we were doing good, we were killing and then we got upset by Reagan. But we needed that though, after we lost to Reagan, we turned into some dogs.”

According to Roland, the outcome of the game provides an acceptable learning experience for the team. This season, six seniors will be graduating so there will be more inexperienced players. However, Roland said that how the team plays the game at the moment is what decides if a team is good or not.

“We get to what we call a ‘win or go home.’ Roland said. “You lose and you’re out of the tournament. So when you get to that situation, it’s tough to lose a game that way. That’s basically how I feel about it. It’s good giving kids the experience of being away from home, stay at hotels and learn how to work well in an environment that is not at home.”

After the game, Roland and LBJ basketball player Keyvon Tyler expressed gratitude for the team for the impressive efforts throughout the season. Although the season is over, there will be more opportunities for the players to excel in other sports and academics.

“We did pretty good, we did the best we can,” Tyler said.

GETTING IN THE Zzzzone

LASA Sleep Week was a health awareness week to promote the importance of beneficial sleeping habits that included a hashtag contest, raffle and pajama day. In a Wellness Survey distributed by the counselors, 74 percent of students listed sleep deprivation as a major concern. In response to this, Wellness Counselors Meagan Butler and Marissa Rivera planned Sleep Week and spread information by putting posters in the hall, starting a social media campaign, emailing students and through various other announcements.

Students pledged to try implementing three habits to improve their sleep some of which included adding one hour to the usual amount of time a student sleeps, avoiding using digital devices within one hour of going to bed, spending more time in natural light, exercising 30 minutes at least three times per week and creating a bedtime routine that would increase

relaxation before going to sleep. All students who took the sleep pledge were entered into the raffle with the chance to win wellness raffle items such as fuzzy blankets, socks and sleep masks. If students used #LASASleepWeek, they were entered to win a gift card to Snooze. According to Butler, all the activities had the same goal in mind. "We want to raise awareness about how to improve sleeping habits and encourage self-regulation and responsible decision making in terms of sleep," Butler said.

Sophomores Michelle Su and Danika Luo said they looked forward to wearing their pajamas to school. "I wanted to wear my birthday present for the first time and this was the perfect opportunity," Su said. photo by Olivia Lee

Seniors Karina Gaul and Erin Teal agreed making classrooms darker would help students catch up on sleep. "It would be nice to get more couches at school," Gaul said. photo by Olivia Lee

The poster, displayed in the hallway, outlined the various ways students could improve their sleeping habits. photo by Olivia Lee

Rivera enjoys a cup of tea as she heats water. photo by Roxy Bonafont

Senior Julia Bradley participated in sleep week, because she wanted to have more energy at school. "Look at my socks," Bradley said. "I tried to get close to 8 hours of sleep every night, because I don't function without at least seven hours of sleep." photo by

