

FANTASTIC FEASTS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM



A Thanksgiving dinner spread on a table like the one depicted here, can be one of the most delicious and comforting sights of the year. This issue, *Liberator* photojournalists documented Thanksgiving food traditions of different LASA students.

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BOOKS, YES, AND SO MUCH MORE

The new Austin Central Library, left, held its grand opening this October. Senior Clara Bogard is acting as an Austin Public Library social media ambassador this fall. Her job is to promote the new library online to the Austin community. photo courtesy of Gary Huff.



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STUDENT SECTION GETS CLAWS OUT AT HOMECOMING GAME

LBJ senior Akili Pool, who was the Jaguar mascot for the first half of the fall football season, roars at the Homecoming game against Reagan. The Jaguar student section was kicked out of their own homecoming game for disobeying game rules. photo by Jorge Villa.

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the liberator

Liberal Arts and Science Academy High School

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Bo[u]nd for the future?

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Crescenzi said. "It was incredibly time consuming, and the members of FABPAC, I can't even begin to understand the hours that they put into combing through all the reports and the details and the information. So I think that was different. I think the district did its best also to be as transparent as possible."

The choice of the district to keep the bond as one package, and not split it up, was also controversial. The 2013 election featured four propositions, two of which failed. Crescenzi said she thought the decision to avoid splitting the bond contributed to the passage.

"They didn't split it up," Crescenzi said. "Keeping it as one bond, so that in the end what AISSD was asking the voters is, 'Do you believe in this vision we have for all schools and all students, or not?' was a really wise decision."

However, the bond had its share of controversy. Monica Loera Sanchez, who co-founded anti-bond PAC Save East Austin Schools (SEAS) and advocated against the bond's passage, said that she was troubled by the lack of community input on both the LASA move and the bond in general.

"In my experience with AISSD they don't take community input seriously," Sanchez said. "With all honesty, even though Austin ISD says that 5000 people contributed to this conversation, in reality they only include community participation so they can check that box. In reality, community participation is not genuinely considered at all."

Sanchez explained although SEAS has disbanded as an organization after the bond's passage, individual activists would continue to work for equity in future AISSD bonds. The 2017 bond is the first one in a series, as per the district's lengthy Facility Master Plan, with future needs to be addressed in several more planned bonds. She said the perceived lack of community engagement was contributing to the district's declining enrollment.

"I've seen it time and time again," Sanchez said. "And not only have I seen it but a lot of other community members have seen it. There's a lot of people that are basically set up with this district, and I happen to know that because they're set up they pull their kids out of the district. And that's why we have a shrinking enrollment that continues to this day. It's unfortunate that the community doesn't have a say in how AISSD operates, even though it's operating off of taxpayer funds."

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District bond approved by 22-point margin

CLARA MORSE
Editor-in-Chief

Voters approved the \$1.1 billion AISSD bond with comfortable margins this Election Day. Almost 72 percent said "yes" to the bond, the district's largest ever, and 28 percent opposed it. The bond's passage means that the facilities projects on it will move forward, including the LASA move to the Eastside Memorial (ESMH) campus and LBJ's planned health science academy.

The bond's 44-point margin of victory was especially welcome to many at the district after the results of the last bond in 2013: two of the four propositions failed, and the ones that passed did so by razor-thin margins. LASA Campus Advisory

Council (CAC) member Ann Phipps said she was excited to see what the bond led to.

"It's exciting that voters across the district in this era of anti-tax, anti-everything, have just resoundingly expressed support for the future of our public schools in Austin," Phipps said. "And that's going to be great for all the schools, everywhere across the city."

"Methodical and Lengthy" Development

The bond's planning process, which both Phipps and LASA Principal Stacia Crescenzi also pointed to as a reason for its excellent performance, lasted for over two years and was sold as much more data driven than previous bond plans.

In 2015, engineers analyzed the safety, security and educational suitability of all district buildings. It was during this process that critical safety deficiencies were discovered at T.A. Brown elementary school. The Facilities and Bond Planning Advisory Committee (FABPAC,) composed of unpaid citizens, then utilized the engineer recommendations to create more detailed recommendations for each school.

The process, which Phipps called "methodical and lengthy," was also distinguished for many by the greater quantity of community outreach meetings held; the district website touts that over 5,000 individual pieces of feedback were received over the course of 500 engagement opportunities.

"The process itself was just so much deeper,"

Care Closet creates comforting environment for girls at LASA

HELENA MARTELELO-LARA
Staff Writer

Junior Ava Ponder took direct action to support a cause she cares about—and the results benefitted many at LASA. This school year, girls at LASA have been able to use the Girl's Care Closet, which Ponder created. The closet is a storage drawer located in the women's bathroom of the purple and white hallway which contains free tampons, pads and general feminine products.

"We always have pads and tampons available," Ponder said, adding the closet creates a safe, comfortable and stress-free environment.

The initiative is empowering because it is based on community donations, explained junior Rachel Horowitz.

"I think that it's a really amazing idea," she said. "It's very community based, which I feel like makes it a stronger

environment, a more comfortable environment for girls."

Aside from feminine products like pads and tampons, the closet also contains hair ties and bobby pins. Horowitz believes the closet can save students from period mishaps and help with other basic needs.

"They have extra hair ties, and I forgot some and I had track practice after school, so I went and borrowed one," Horowitz said.

Ponder said the Girl's Care Closet relies on donations to remain stocked, whether they can't afford their own supplies or even if they're just in a pinch. Before creating the Girl's Care Closet, Ponder met with Ms. Crescenzi. Ponder then made the closet, and promoted it on social media.

"We talked about the logistics and how we were going to pull this off, and then I painted it with my little sister and I did it, I

got it up here," Ponder said. "I spread the word of the Girl's Care Closet and just basically shared this list of things we would accept."

She believes the school received about 1000 tampons and about 600 pads. Apps like Instagram provided a message which reached most donors. Horowitz found out about it online and decided she wanted to donate.

"I saw on her social media about it and I thought it was such a great idea," Horowitz said.

Although the closet is a great idea and benefits all LASA girls it also has some ways in which it could improve, including its publicity, Horowitz said.

"Maybe if they had more publicity in it then people would be more motivated to donate," Horowitz said.

However, Ponder said that putting together the closet was altogether a positive and uniting experience for her.

"Everyone really came together," Ponder said.



Artist Rubina Anjum presents her art at the East Austin Studio Tour (EAST) in front of her art. Anjum said she is "thoroughly enjoying" her first year of involvement with EAST.

Artists head EAST for fall art bonanza

SOPHIA BLAHA
Staff Writer

Throughout the winding streets of East Austin, countless artists prepared their works for viewing by art aficionados. Austinites wandered through shops and studios, talking with artists and admiring paintings that interest them.

For over a decade, during the second and third weeks of November, a nonprofit organization called Big Medium hosts the East Austin Studio Tour (EAST). Big Medium is dedicated to promoting contemporary art in Texas and supporting artists and their communities. EAST embraces Austin artists practicing all styles of art. This means that on November weekends, denizens can look at and interact with a wide variety of art from all across Texas.

Local artist Francine Funke participated in EAST for the first time this year. She said EAST was a great opportunity to present her art to the Austin community and meet other artists from across Austin who are doing similar things.

"The East Austin Studio Tour is a huge event which gives over 500 Austin-area artists a chance to show and talk about their artwork to a large and diverse audience," Funke said.

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The Girl's Care Closet, created by junior Ava Ponder, is located in the women's bathroom between the purple and white hallways.

the liberator

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

Editorial Content:

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.

STATE OF AFFAIRS

Power to the period!

To be sure, 2017 has brought a bevy of heartbreak and outrage, and bold attacks on women's health, rights and political voices are the cresting apex of this tsunami of injustice. But, as public discussions of, and references to, menstruation have gone mainstream, 2017 has also been "the Year of the Period."

Low (period) moments include candidate Donald Trump's criticism of Megyn Kelly's presidential debate moderating performance, particularly his less than oblique comment that she had "blood coming out of her wherever." She was out to get him, he implied, because she was on her period, and therefore, obviously emotionally unstable. More tragically, earlier this year, a 12-year-old girl from Tamil Nadu in southern India committed suicide after her teacher made fun of a period stain on her clothing during class. And recent reporting has revealed that even here in the United States, girls with limited access to menstrual products are missing school and even dropping out. Tampons and pads are not cheap and it would be pretty hard to stay focused on school if you can't keep yourself from bleeding through your clothes.

Luckily, the tide (if you will) is beginning to turn. This past year saw Fu Yuanhui, a Chinese swimmer at the Rio Olympics, shattering a longstanding sports taboo with disarming casualness when she noted on camera that she was on her period. Her period wasn't the whole story of her race experience - just a facet she shared, albeit especially noteworthy given China's persistent reluctance to acknowledge menstruation publicly. We have also seen an advertising campaign for maxi products that replaces, for the first time, the faux blue dye that typically represents menstrual flow, with a more realistic red dye. The television commercial even features a shot of period blood running down the leg of a woman in the shower. Campaign take away: period blood is red. And normal.

Closer to home, LASA has begun stocking its restrooms with community-supplied menstrual products. No student at our school needs to miss class - or stress out - for want of tampon. We can and should make sure of that.

In keeping with this trend, legislators across the political spectrum are beginning to bring forward legislation that aims to ensure that menstrual products are accessible for free at prisons, workplaces and public schools. Additionally, numerous bills have been filed to eliminate the "tampon tax," a sales tax on feminine hygiene products, because they are not considered necessities. Four states (New York, Connecticut, Illinois and Florida), of the forty that tax menstrual products, have voted to end the "period penalty."

Yes, the period has made some notable advances. But there clearly remains a great deal of work to ensure "menstrual equity." Indeed, opponents of the recent tampon tax legislative efforts have contended that the exemption is not warranted in that, unlike food and medicine, which are understood as imperatives, and

which are therefore tax exempt, menstrual products are not "life-sustaining."

They are wrong.

Menstruation should not prohibit anyone from full participation in society. And yet it apparently still does with all too tragic consequences. We at the *Liberator* want to add our voice to the chorus of activists fighting for the normalization of the period and the disruption of the veil of silence associated with menstruation. The personal and political costs of concealing this fundamental and regular reality of human bodily functions is too great. Fellow students, period-having or no, the battle to normalize the period is ours to win. We cannot afford to be timid as we reconfigure our shared understanding of the experience and meaning of menstruation. So let's talk about it, write about it, read about it. And no more tip-toeing to the restroom with tampon hidden discretely - agreed? Hold your tampon high as you elbow your way through the halls to the bathroom. You have places to go! Periods can seem endless, but passing periods are way too short.



liberated
minds
speak

What is your
opinion on the
tampon tax?



Benjamin Appel
Sophomore

"I think the tampon tax is ridiculous that women's hygiene products have a tax and are higher priced than men's things that they need."



Lina Tiblier
Senior

"I think that it is unfair because we cannot control that we bleed for a week straight every month. Plus, there is already a pay gap so it is negatively affecting women."

John Kilfoyle
Junior

"The tampon tax is stupid because it is sexist and only affects women and not men."



Amber O'Rourke
Junior

"I think that it is biased because it only affects women, and women's things are already generally more expensive than men's stuff."



Have an opinion about a new school policy? Have a bone to pick with something the *Liberator* has published? Anything else on your mind? Anything exciting happen to you over the summer? We work year round! Write us a letter and drop it off in portable 5A or in the boxes in the school offices. It is the policy of the *Liberator* to not respond directly to letters to the editor.

Dear Editor,

LASA is always too cold. Everyday I have to bring a sweater to class. I think if there was a way for teachers to adjust the thermostats in their rooms that would be best.

- LASA Junior Lily
Woytek

Dear Editor,

The boys bathroom is terrible because paper is always in the sink, the urinals are disgusting, and the trash is always broken.

- LASA Junior True
Pham

#MeToo: bringing awareness to the prevalence of sexual assault

Following the publicity of sexual misconduct by high-profile celebrities, people across social media share their stories



ALIA SHAUKAT
Commentary Editor

By this age, I should probably know better. I should know that the man at the 35th street crosswalk will stand too close to me, and breathe the gross words into my neck as I wait for the “walking man” signal to flash in front of me. I should know that he will inevitably follow me home, and I should dart through various streets and end up at the Kerbey Lane near my house for safety.

I should know to never walk home alone at

night, or walk home alone during the day, or walk with friends, or with my family, or wearing a short skirt, or wearing sweatpants, or wearing four winter coats; I should know to not exist or else I will suffer the “consequences.”

Unfortunately, millions suffer the consequences.

Although we are at a point in our society where we are growing and developing our definitions of gender equality and sex positivity, sexual assault is a topic that isn't exactly recognized. Women are taught that it should be private, unspeakable, even shameful because it was their “fault” to begin with. Men are taught that it only ever happens to women and that “sexual assault” should just equal “sex” in their eyes. Even in the LGBTQ+ community, sexual assault is covered up, leaving the victim to fend for themselves if they decide to take legal action. It's clear that the definition of sexual assault is shrouded by misconceptions, but thankfully, movements such as #metoo are spreading awareness.

Following recent accusations of sexual assault on high profile celebrities such as Harvey Weinstein, Louis C.K., and Kevin Spacey, #metoo began to spread across social media. The hashtag was started by actress Alyssa Milano so people would have a platform to share their experiences with sexual assault. Immediately,

thousands of stories began flowing in, shedding light on its prevalence. From there, the conversation has become more public than it's ever been before: the initial intention was to take the focus away from the accusers and instead give power to the victims. Milano described how oftentimes, reports of sexual assault only concern the accuser and their repercussions, especially if they are a high profile celebrity.

Weinstein was first accused of sexual assault by Rose McGowan

Spacey. Spacey was initially accused in late October by Anthony Rapp, and 15 other men have since accused him as well. Many people in the LGBTQ+ community have criticized his use of the allegations as a way to come out, taking the focus away from the issue of sexual misconduct at hand. The accusations aren't limited to just the film industry: many athletes have been exposed recently as well. A well-known example is of Brock Turner, a swimmer for Stanford University, who was accused of rape and was eventually sentenced to six months in jail, far from the punishment of 14 years. Unfortunately, athletes and people in the film industry are often given a “get out of jail free” card by the general public in these situations, justifying their actions.

Yet, there is currently little to no conversation about the victim's experience: fear of revealing the truth, verbal abuse from strangers who don't believe the story, extreme bouts of shame, and sometimes years of PTSD and other mental health issues. #Metoo is allowing victims to speak out about their experiences and their lives, creating a community of support. Even if some don't feel comfortable sharing their story, waking up to a social media feed filled with other people coming out and saying that “I have experienced this, it was not a shameful thing, it is never a shameful thing,” provides a wealth of encouragement and love. Thanks to the nature of Twitter, victims are able to share their stories in 140 characters, allowing for them to briefly share their stories without feeling pressured to elaborate.

Personally, I'm grateful to see a world in which people work to support one another. I have never seen a time so wonderfully filled with recognition and affirmation, and I am proud to stand among these strong people that acknowledge and accept the truth. #Metoo.

Protect Title X, protect women's rights : Making the case for paper books

Why Title X defunding will be detrimental for healthcare



NIA ORAKWUE
Staff Writer

The fact that women's rights is an issue in the end of 2017 still manages to surprise me. The Merriam-Webster dictionary Human rights are defined as rights that fundamentally belong to all persons. If America as a country believes in human rights, then shouldn't we also believe in women's rights?

Women simply want the right to make their own medical decisions and have access to necessary medical procedures.

Women's ability to access these medical procedures and basic rights is overwhelmingly and increasingly difficult. When these decisions are made there often is enough or any influence of women.

The lack of Title X funding to Planned Parenthood and other publicly funded clinics will undoubtedly negatively affect the 4 million women who cannot afford their own health or reproductive insurance and rely on these types of organizations.

Title X funding goes towards services that provide family planning and other protective and preventive health care for people who cannot afford insurance.

It is not secret that low-income and minority women tend to have less access to health and reproductive care in general which is why they will be the percentage of people who are affected the most.

Things like pap tests, breast exams, full range of contraception, sexual education, and abortions were all being provided to millions of women who will now go without them due to the defunding of Title X. According to Womenscenter, the amount of women going without these needed health benefits will definitely have consequences that may not be what was intended when the decision to defund was made. 2.4 million people will be without the healthcare they need, without necessary health care screenings, and the mortality rates of abortions will dramatically increase.

Male politicians who have no knowledge of the importance of access to these resources have all the power to take them away. Women have far too little involvement in such a huge decision which will affect them in such personal ways. The amount of access to the services that women need can literally determine

life and death for someone. Planned Parenthood alone provides thousands of pap tests and breast exams per year as well as millions of STI tests which can actually save someone's life. Whether it's scanning for breast cancer or a standard check-up it's a matter of a person's health.

Much of the reason why Title X funding is being taken away is because some organizations that receive such funding perform abortions. Even though abortion is a controversial issue, the fact remains that by taking away the funding to these types of clinics politicians are disregarding all of the other resources that are benefiting low-income women all over the country. Not to mention sexual education classes that can reach 1.5 million people in a single year and help prevent approximately 1.9 million accidental pregnancies. According to the CDC, in 2016, Texas was ranked 4th worst state in teen pregnancy rates with 31 births per 1,000 women age 15-19. Women are going without access to the most reliable forms of birth control which could greatly help efforts to eliminate the need for abortions in America, which seems to be the main factor in politician's desire to take away title X funding.

While abortions are an extremely personal choice, there is no evidence that suggests that banning abortions will actually keep them from happening. The effects of this may actually cause women to revert back to old practices of abortions that are potentially fatal and an increase of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. There are too many immigrants, low-income, and women of color who will suffer from the defunding of title X.

Being connected to health and reproductive care is important for everyone. Especially women, who have more physical health needs than men. Limiting funding to these types of institutions will have detrimental effects to all of the women who depend on them, their families, and the country as a whole. What we really need is more education and knowledge for people to make better decisions on their own. With this clinics like planned parenthood can better serve their purpose and their services can be more properly used.



MEGAN RAMSEY
Staff Writer

Books are an escape. The reading experience is like taking a train through magnificent landscapes to an undiscovered place. The experience is one of being drawn through bookstore aisles by the awe of all the stories and lives packed into the colorful shelves around you.

It's the feeling of light pages grasped between fingers while excitedly preparing to continue the story on the next page. It's getting to curl up on a rainy day, under a light drawn cover, reading the day away while raindrops tap on the window. It's being drawn into a paper world that you've given your complete attention.

Thi s experience is in its purest form only with paper books. If you truly appreciate reading, the best way is the paper form. Electronics destroy the world of books. They destroy the magic of the stories, which burst off of paper pages. A book can't be a proper escape when it's on the same device that sends notifications about the world you're supposed to be leaving. There has to be a separation between the two worlds. No distractions. Paper books allow that separation— it's just you and the words.

Online bookstores have been slowly increasing their control over the format in which we get our stories.

We need large bookstores and libraries with two levels and balconies that overlook millions of bound books. Bookstores provide a presentation you can walk through and touch. You can read the first pages and admire book covers. You can gather books one by one and hold the comfortable weight of the stack of books to buy. Books that can then be loved and shared. They can be dedicated to someone and signed by the author. They get passed on and re-read. Shared books reveal the journey another person took through the same pages. Another person met those characters, cried over those pages. Books get passed through families where they gather meaning and significance. They can be hurt, so they have to be cared for.

An electronic device means charging. It means endless scrolling or tapping on a cold glass screen. The end is never in sight when there are no page numbers or actual pages. There's no browsing of new books you've never heard of. It's becoming more dependent on technology. Online chats with librarians decrease face to face interactions. It's not the same as a book. It doesn't let you feel the pages or mark them or flip back and forth easily. A book has a great feeling. Each book has its own story and its own purpose. You can set it in a bookshelf and say that there's the book you read and laughed at or cried about.

I love my phone and my computer and tv, but an electronic device could never meet the expectations that a book does. They have their purposes, and reading is not one of them, unless it's boring school readings. If you read on the same device that you watch tv shows on, what's keeping you from doing that instead? Going to the bookstore is a show of how you want to read those books, then they're out and waiting to be read. You have the physical copies and there is nothing else in them. I love going to bookstores, I love looking at the books and then getting to take home the ones I want. I leave the store wanting to just sit down and go. It's nice to hold a book in two hands or prop one over into something and hold the other side.

Even if the last bookstore was closed and books are overpriced, I would never read anything but a paper book. A paper book is special. Mine sit within reach of my bed, stacked high and ready to read. They can be thrown and displayed and that's important. They give me an outlet to go on adventures and learn about new people and places. Paper books are perfect and lasting. They never need anything but a pair of eyes and an eager reader in order to transport you to faraway lands.

Thumbs Up

- Pumpkin pie
- Hot Chocolate
- Newspaper Club
- The new library
- Whiteboards

College applications

- Empty waterbottles
- Bad wifi
- Allergies
- Eggnog

Thumbs Down

Above are the opinions of The Liberator staff

Growing Up in Trump's America

Reflections on the political climate post-election



TREVOR ANDERSON
Staff Writer

I experienced both of Barack Obama's presidential terms, and though I was too young to truly grasp the importance of each election, I could always recognize that the overall sentiment of the country seemed civil and somewhat calm, at least significantly more so than today. As I'm sure many others were, I was shocked and disappointed when I found out the result of the election, but that was only the beginning. Donald Trump's campaign and presidency will always be only one thing for me; polarizing.

The extent to which this country is divided is appalling. Political climate has shifted from being tense to downright hostile. Trump's actions on Twitter have made things all the more divisive, and it's clear that there are only two options when it concerns the president and his administration: you're either for him or against him, there is no middle ground.

I've leaned democrat my whole life, but I would never even consider voting straight-ticket. I evaluate each issue separately, and I would consider it foolish to blindly believe one side or the other on all issues. The polarization and near-hostility of Trump's election continues to leave their marks on my life. In fact, I was called out as being "wishy-washy" for not aligning myself completely

and utterly with one side or the other. The message is clear: in Trump's America, people who don't blindly devote themselves to one side or the other are marginalized and pushed to the side. A person who leans Democrat but has views that align more with the Republican ideology on a few issues are cast out by both, as 'true loyalty' isn't expressed, and vice-versa. If I were to say I think that the Russian Collusion story is overpromoted and shouldn't be the only thing presented by certain news networks, I'm sure at least a couple of people reading this would question my status as a Democrat-leaning person.

It's sad that the political climate has become so polarized. On more than a few occasions, I've had to modify or silence my opinions so I wouldn't immediately be alienated as 'the other' in the discussion primarily including people who were completely Democrat. I'm not a big believer in taking people solely at their word, but it's simply astounding to see the things that people will unquestionably support or vehemently deny in relation to Trump. If I question arguments made by either party or political platform, I'm immediately called out as an antagonist. It's disgraceful what people will blindly believe or deny and stand by unquestionably. But I suppose it's as people say: if you tell big enough lie and keep repeating it, people will eventually believe it.

Simple facts can't even be agreed upon anymore. Rival news outlets fight to portray Trump as either a savior or a monster, and editorialization is painfully evident in stories that are supposed to be unbiased. Trump, with the help of his fanatical base, has forced

the hand of virtually every news outlet in the country. Fox News has a view on him that's much too lenient and favorable, while networks like MSNBC have what seems like permanently negative opinion on him. Everyone seems to be working to either idolize or demonize him to make him seem like the worst person to ever live. To me, independent and generally more unbiased news networks, like their supporters, are being pushed aside or swallowed up by the tides of polarization that sweeps through the country. Left and right-leaning news outlets have discovered the same thing Trump was lucky enough to discover; appeal to your base and they'll keep you in power, or in the case of news outlets, on the air or in print. Both news outlets and the president alike don't have to pander to both sides; each only has to say what will appeal to their base in order to keep support and funding going. It's sad and disillusioning that I can't find a single story about Trump that attempts to tell just the facts, without editorializing or biases. Yes, I recognize that completely unbiased news writing is difficult if not implausible, but I feel that anything is better than the hyper-polarization we have that came with the onset of the Trump administration.

Trump's America is grimly divisive. You're either working towards impeachment or attending the President's 'victory' rallies, and this attitude has been adopted by the media. In a frenzy of animosity and to some extent, fear, people have reverted to primal tactics of validation, and the modus operandi is clear: pick a side and stay with it. If you don't, you're going to be marginalized and rejected by both sides, and ultimately left without a say.



graphic by Lochlyn McClure

Small Talk

Diversifying the comic book world



ISABELLE AMANUEL
Staff Writer

Most would understand the difference between the two main types of comics found in the world, mainstream and indie. The main definition of the latter is a comic that is made independently by a smaller company and usually focuses more on the content rather than price. I care more about content rather than popularity because the comic gives me something with substance that I could share with my friends.

Even though both content and profit come hand-in-hand when selling and producing such comics, mainstream comics are quite the opposite in terms of having a bigger budget, employee count, and factory for pumping out the goods. Indie comics aren't normally the mass-manufacturing type like other more or less efficient companies when it comes to printing their comics, but the piles of issue after issue begin to rise anyways. These colorful stapled stacks of thin-numbered papers filled with plots of heroes and villains deserve the attention typically reserved for one of the two major comic book producers in the US: Marvel and DC. I think that making indie comics for a living or a hobby is a good way for an artist to get his or her idea out there without having to beg for one of "the big guys" to give notice.

This past year, I attended an indie comic book expo called Staple! where independent writers and illustrators display what they have created as well as sell their memorabilia and artwork. As I walked into the roller rink where the expo was being held, I was in utter awe. There were tables filled with posters, photos, and books as far as the eye can see (or as far as the wall opposite to me). I had never recognized or understood this side of the comic book world before until that very moment and I loved every second of it. Being at Staple! showed me a bigger community of artists in Austin that feel the same as me about the best kept secrets of the graphic novel/comic book world.

My favorite book series that I found at Staple! was "The Dimensionals!" by Pathway Comics, a group of female superheroes with superpowers living in a science fiction world. The very existence of this series proves in itself that there are comics out there that go beyond the regular content that many of us are over. The few that chose to go beyond the norm like Bryan and Selah Douglas, creators of "The Dimensionals!", demonstrated that indie comic creators everywhere can truly change the world, one illustration or speech bubble at a time. From the growing popularity of indie comics comes more popularity from other types of books like manga which the world could most definitely benefit from.

Got sleep?



JORDAN JEWELL
Staff Writer

With the workload LASA students are faced with, late nights have become an expected evil. While they are sometimes necessary to get work done on time, the idea that sleeping less gives a student superiority over their peers is unhealthy and generally obnoxious.

Even when I keep up with my work, there are nights where I end up spending hours on assignments because I underestimated how difficult or tedious they would be and go to sleep around midnight. My sleeping schedule gets even more disturbed when I procrastinate on large assignments, and I'll end up going to sleep at three, four, or five. This is a universal problem I've seen from the absolute last minute procrastinators to the strictly organized honors students. Everyone has late nights, the difference comes in how they're talked about and treated.

A strange phenomenon I've observed at LASA is how with the frequency of late nights comes the idea that they're something to be proud of, a testament to a student's devotion to their work rather than a desperate measure. Students will complain about how they stayed up until one, only to have another student say they stayed up until three, and other students will chime in with their own stories of sleeplessness in a joking game of one-upmanship. There's always someone who talks about how they never got to sleep at all, and that's the most concerning.

As I've been told time and time again by parents and school counselors alike, teenagers need to get at least eight hours of sleep a night to be fully functional. But, at LASA, a culture has been created where it's perfectly normal to get barely any sleep a week, and tiredness is often worn like a badge of pride. The passive peer pressure that comes from this bragging can cause students to feel they are supposed to lose sleep for every assignment, and cause them to stop making an effort to get a full eight hours because they don't think that sleep is incredibly vital.

Without sleep it's easy to make silly mistakes on tests and quizzes and to get overwhelmed over little issues in class, but the potential repercussions are even larger than that. With less sleep comes a higher chance of depression and anxiety, things that can last even once the teen years are over.

I believe that LASA, as a community, should make an effort to treat late nights with more hesitancy and do everything they can to ensure students are getting a full night's sleep. That may mean asking teachers for extensions on projects and doing more work on weekends, but in the long run I believe it's worth it to be a happier and healthier student body.

Ovarsisters: connected since birth



SARAH PORTER
Photo Editor

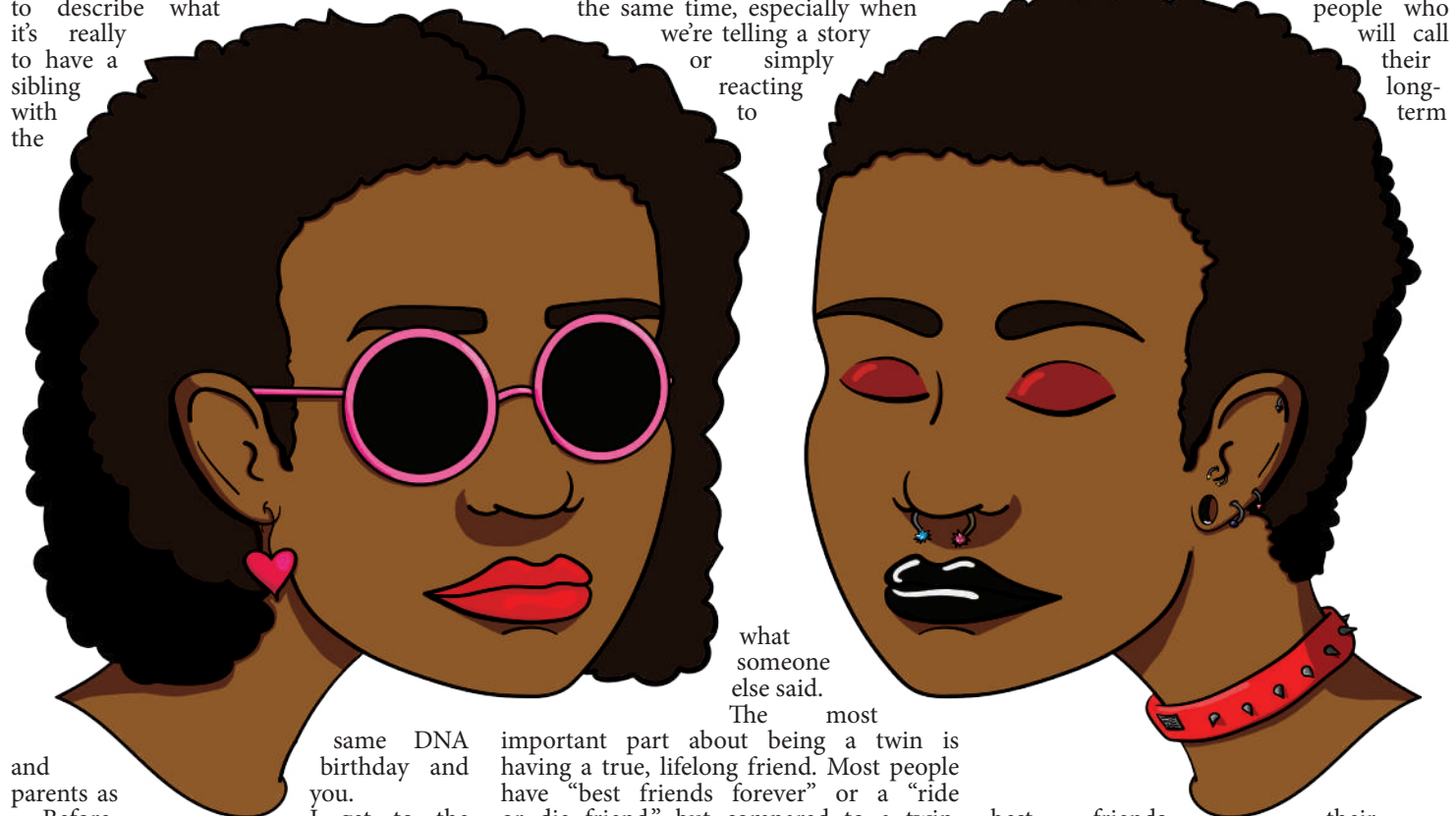
Philosophers from Aristotle to Confucius have contemplated some of the most complicated questions of life, death, and society. One crucial question that remains unanswered is what life is like having a twin. If you're a part of the 3.3% of the world population that does have a twin, you have most likely been asked this question countless times in your life. For all those non-twins (or singletons, as my dad calls them) out there who are curious about the twin life and haven't just asked asked out of fear of saying something wrong, I will use my 17 years of experience as a twin to describe what it's really like to have a sibling with the

don't really know what life is like without one, so twins have nothing to compare it to. I think the semantics of this question are important to consider because twins around the world are put on the spot every time someone asks that question. There are a lot of amazing aspects of being a twin, but asking what the twin life is like as a conversation-starter makes it seem lame because there are no good short answer.

There are several twin myths that are also important to discuss. For example, twin telepathy, or the ability of one twin to feel the other's pain, is obviously a hoax. I can, however, confirm that my twin sister sometimes knows what I'm thinking. This is mostly true in awkward situations when something very specific comes to mind. Another common occurrence between my sister and I is that we'll say the same thing at the same time, especially when we're telling a story or simply reacting to

two twins who would get into physical fights with each other everyday, but even that kind of conflict doesn't change the fact that in a certain sense, they are best friends. I think my relationship is fairly normal besides the twin fact, because we don't spend every minute of the day together and I wouldn't even call her my absolute best friend, but we don't fight all the time either. However, there is a different level of closeness between us that can't be shared with anyone else.

One way to describe this bond would be to imagine if you had a friend who you somehow knew for your whole life. You two aren't inseparable, but you share many of the same personality traits, dislikes, and interests. When you're together, you sometimes can tell what the other is thinking and you pretty much have identical senses of humor. I know people who will call their long-term



same DNA birthday and you. Before I get to the deep emotional aspects of having a twin, I'll like to discuss how puzzling this question really is. Asking someone what life is like as a twin is just like asking someone what life is like without one because it is my reality. I've had a twin for my entire life and

important part about being a twin is having a true, lifelong friend. Most people have "best friends forever" or a "ride or die friend," but compared to a twin, those friends are just acquaintances. One characteristic of friendship is the length of time the relationship lasts. Twins have been roommates since nine months before they were even born. And they'll at least know each other for the rest of their lives. I knew

best friends their family. To answer the question, "what's it like to have a twin?", in simple terms I would say "It's like having a best friend who is actually related to you."

Book it to the new library

SARAH LUCAS
News Editor

On Saturday Oct. 28, the new Austin Central Library held its grand opening to the public. Located downtown at 710 W. Cesar Chavez, the new location replaces the John Henry Faulk Central Library, decommissioned this past September. Prior to the public reveal, Austin Public Library (APL) social media ambassadors were given an exclusive preview on Oct. 22. One of these individuals was LASA senior Clara Bogard.

As an APL social media ambassador, Bogard receives occasional email updates about events and other library happenings. There is no application process; those interested simply have to join the email list. Her main role is to help promote APL to the community through social media postings—Bogard's platform of choice is usually Instagram.

"The main reason I wanted to be an ambassador is that it's an extremely easy way to benefit the library. All I had to do was sign up for the emails and I could start giving back to an organization that was and is central to my daily life."

Bogard, alongside other APL ambassadors, was able to preview the Central Library in advance. According to Bogard, this experience was special because she was free to explore the space with others who were just as interested in the library. When considering what to share with her followers, Bogard said she tried to capture compelling details about the new library that would pique their interest and encourage them to pay a visit.

"I knew there are other people out

there who would be just as excited as I was about the Central Library, but might not know the opening date or be very motivated to go," Bogard said. "I shared many pictures on Instagram to give people the push they needed to actually go see it."

At almost 200,000 square feet and six stories high, the Central Library is significantly larger than any of the other branches in Austin. It also boasts a number of non-literary attractions, including a teen area, a rooftop garden, and a "technology petting zoo" that allows people to explore technological innovations.

"The size, architecture, decorating, and sheer number of books was dizzying to me," Bogard said. "Even if libraries are not your thing, I would recommend that everyone go at least once."

Bogard said she anticipates that the library's layout could prove valuable to students, as there are meeting rooms and study spaces, ample amounts of seating, and there will eventually be a cafe on one of the lower floors.

"The study and meeting spaces, equipped with whiteboards and other resources, are great for study groups or tutoring," Bogard said. "While many people think libraries are becoming obsolete because information and reading materials are available online, libraries, especially this one, have so much more to offer. The Central Library has technological resources,

including many computers, a 3D printer, a VR set, and informational TVs. There is also no way to access the physical space and beauty of the library online, even if you can find the books there. And while some people may be able to find the resources of the library elsewhere, it is important that everyone, regardless of wealth, has access to the information, education, and physical resources the library has to offer."



The interior renovations of the new Austin Central Library provides many attractions for study-goers and visitors. The library includes whiteboards, informational TVs and more. photo courtesy of Gary Huff.



Novel writing in November

MARLEN AVILA
News Editor

November is known for its festive Thanksgiving traditions, however it is also known for the annual writing challenge. Writers across the globe gather around their laptops, journals, and typewriters to join in. The National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) gives the opportunity for casual and professional freelance writers to start writing their own novel. With this goal, writers have completed numerous novels.

According to the official NaNoWriMo website, this event focuses to encourage participants to diverge into creative writing. The event lasts for the entire month of November with the goal to write a 50,000 word novel. Additionally, there are prizes given to any participant who have confirmed their word count. Starting in 1999, NaNoWriMo has expanded across the globe and reached over 30,000 participants. LASA junior Ella Castro is one of the thousands who participated in this year's worldwide challenge.

"Mr. Sharp [said], 'you don't have to do anything this November--any class assignments--if you write a novel,'" Castro said. "I was like, 'yeah that sounds good, no class assignments.' So I decided to write a novel."

Initially offered as an alternative assignment option for the Creative Writing classes, Castro decided to take on the challenge. Creative Writing gives juniors and seniors time and space to develop their narratives and craft. LASA junior Evan Hochstein uses this class as a way to continue his previous creative writings.

"I really like creative writing and I really wanted a class where I can do whatever, especially because I feel like English III is so much different from English II," Hochstein said. "We actually did a lot of creative writing in English II so I missed that."

Although she has attempted NaNoWriMo in previous years, this is the first year that Castro

has progress close to completion. Castro said the process is not without difficulties.

"I started out with an actual long form novel and realized I hated writing long form novel so I wrote an anthology of short stories instead," Castro said. "That was nice. By the time I actually started working, I needed to write three to five thousand words a day which has been a problem because it's been an hour for every thousand words."

Through the NaNoWriMo challenge, writers have faced troubles with meeting the goals. Castro strived to fit time for writing sections of her novel daily and advises participants to have efficient time management.

"[I'd] probably start earlier, like actually write," Castro said. "I don't know if I would actually do that, it's something that I would theoretically learned but I'm not sure if I have the patience to do."

Hochstein, who participated in NaNoWriMo last year, acknowledges that the challenge requires continuous strong effort to reach the necessary word count.

"I have no idea how I managed it last year because it's so hard this year," Hochstein said. "But there are definitely a lot of late nights and that meant that the quality of it was probably not as good because I was late at night, half asleep writing. But it's okay, I can still go back and look at it and think, 'It's not so bad.'"

Despite hardships faced during the writing process, Hochstein said writing a novel could still be a manageable task.

"It seems very daunting but honestly, if you just sit at your keyboard late at night

and slam something out, you can get it done," Hochstein said. "You might be surprised. There were times I got stuck, it was actually easier than I thought because sometimes the words really just started coming and it was about getting them down fast enough."

NaNoWriMo officially ends on Nov. 30 and writers should have ideally completed their 50,000 word novel by the deadline. However, Hochstein found another reason to be proud of his creation other than completing the deadline.

"[It's] actually a pretty collection of stories. I'm actually proud of it," Hochstein said. "It's not just written just to be written for the word count."

That collection of stories is 15,000 but it's a good 15,000."



What you need to know about the bond

THE VOTING RESULTS

72.06% voted in favor to the bond proposition

\$1,050,984,000

will be spent in future school renovations and upkeep projects

MORE THAN **15%** of registered voters voted in the election

"Austin Independent School District Board of Trustees unanimously approved the bond election."

9.21% election day voting turnout

5.84% early voting turnout

OUR PROJECT

LASA MOVE TO EASTSIDE

minor renovations at Eastside to receive LASA

Technology \$1,191,000

Network System Improvements \$ 504,000

Student Mobile Computers \$ 442,000

Teacher Computers \$ 130,000

Computer Lab Improvements \$ 115,000

Miscellaneous \$783,000

Districtwide Fire and Intrusion Alarm Upgrades \$ 285,000

Security System Replacement \$ 211,000

Districtwide Security Camera Replacements \$ 209,000

LASA HS Campus Master Planning \$ 78,000

\$4,000,000

is the projected total cost for LASA move

1 to 6 years

until the full modernization of campus

SOURCES

Austin ISD
Travis County Clerk

AISD BOND

continued from page 1

the ESMH campus, and a significantly expanded LBJ medical program. This plan will now be going forward after the bond's passage. However, Phipps said there is still significant work to be done to ensure a successful move package.

"We look forward as a CAC to helping in any way that we can, and basically just being super modest about the whole business," Phipps said. "And trying to engage in a way that will help us have a successful move-in to our new future home, but that's the last thing to be concerned about. We really want to make sure that Eastside succeeds, and that LBJ is positioned for success, and then we'll move and of course we want our own success but we have to be a part of this multidimensional move effort, and help everybody involved."

Committees for every AISD school affected, including LASA, will be assembled to organize logistics; schools with construction such as LBJ, ESMH, and LASA would consult with architects and engineers, as well as discuss possible questions the move would bring up. However, Phipps said she's not quite ready to break out the celebratory champagne yet.

"In a sense, when the voters vote for a bond proposition, things defined in the bond proposition are supposed to come to pass," Phipps said. "So to the extent the LASA move is in the bond proposition, yes, it's going to happen. However, there are other things that have to happen first. They have to happen on a schedule. Schedules can get protracted. I'm too cautious to say 'it's done, we're out of here.' I'm not gonna say that."

In addition to the discourse inherent in moving a school, the move attracted controversy because of its late addition to the plan. Although plans for a LASA move had been discussed for most of the bond planning process, this specific iteration of the move plan was new.

"The LASA move was made behind closed doors and basically it was told to the community once the bond passage was adopted by the board that LASA would be moving out of LBJ through the bond passage," Sanchez said. "So people really didn't have an opportunity."

However, Crescenzi said that overall, the bond's passage was positive and that she looked forward to the future, mentioning the planned modernization of Rosedale school, for AISD's most medically fragile students.

"I think that it's a wonderful thing [and] a really positive direction for all the students in AISD," Crescenzi said. "I think that particularly for schools like Rosedale and T.A. Brown that it's gonna be really exciting to watch what they do in the future."

Technology teachers from China visit LASA

CAROLINA GOKINGCO
News Editor

presentations in SciTech to engineers.

"The classwork the school provides to students is professional and makes fairly close connections to the real world, so the student sees the value of what they learn," Shen said. "For example, you have SciTech, and you have the experts from the fields sitting in the class to do all the judgements. [This] basic type of learning makes connections to reality."

Shen noted that one of LASA's strengths is that it not only focuses on academics, but also considers the wellness and emotional development of its students. Teacher Chengying Gao saw a few differences between LASA and her school.

"The big differences I observed; there are several aspects," Gao said. "The first is the classrooms are fairly student-centered, meaning the student has a lot of space and flexibility to be actively engaged in the learning process."

The second aspect where LASA differed, according to Gao, was the focus on the learning process.

"The teacher's and student's learning in itself, being paid a lot more attention to than the final outcome," Gao said. "But in China, possibly we pay a lot more attention to the final, the test scores—the final results. So the process is paid less attention to than the final outcome."

Gao and other teachers were surprised by their visit to the Anatomy and Physiology class, where they watched students participate in cat dissections. Gao said that such hands-on learning experiences did not occupy a sizeable portion of her curriculum.

"We were impressed with this kind of opportunity being provided to the students, and for the students to have the opportunity to observe this," Gao said. "[Cat dissection] is something that doesn't happen in my school."

Despite the distance between them—the two schools are half a world apart—they do have some things in common. Teacher Jianping Heu said that in touring LASA, he noticed how both schools consciously take measures to ensure

students value learning.

"Both schools pay very heavy and close attention to the students' learning and development," Heu said, "That's the common thing. In terms of how to make that happen, there are differences in terms of the approach being taken and the variations of the process, but the goal is the same because the students are the main body of a school. That's why we have schools; if there were no students, it would make no sense to have a school."

Xin Qiu, the head of information technology at Hangzhou Second High School, one of the top schools, said in terms of technology, the schools were similarly equipped.

"There are no actual differences in terms of technical equipment between the schools," Qiu said. "And in terms of quantity, it looks we have more, but in terms of networking and intercomputer web networking, it's possible LASA has more hotspots and network technical equipment provided to students."

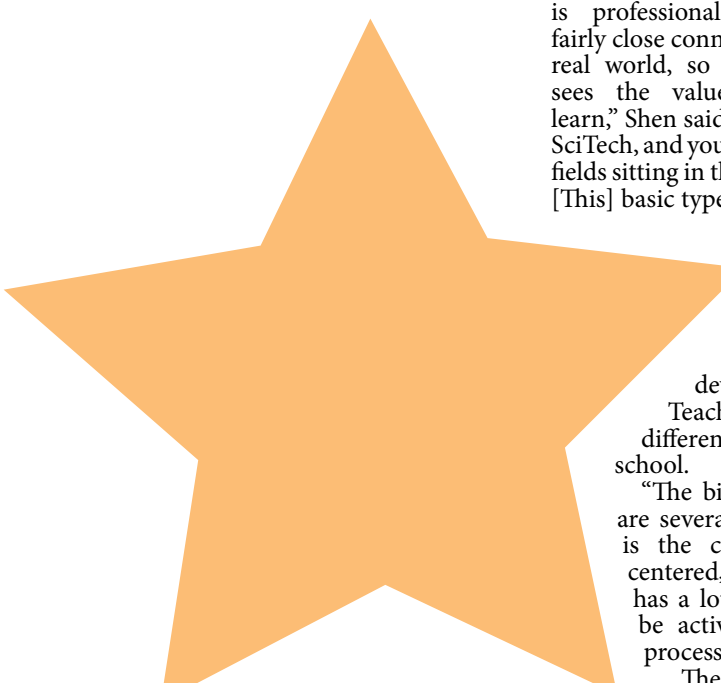
This experience, according

to Crescenzi, would hopefully be a learning experience for all involved.

"For myself and the LASA teachers who were able to participate during lunch, we were able to have a better understanding of the strengths and needs of the Chinese education system today," Crescenzi said. "It was also interesting just to experience some of the basic cultural differences when interacting informally."

谢谢

LASA principal Stacia Crescenzi talks to a group of the teachers from China. Yeping Li, professor from Texas A&M University, stands beside her as translator. photo by Carolina Gokingco.



Note: The interview and subsequent responses from the teachers in China were translated courtesy of Texas A&M University professor of the department of teaching, learning and culture Yeping Li.

On Oct. 30, technology teachers from different schools in China visited LASA and other schools in Austin Independent School District (AISD).

Students enrolled in Chinese acted as translators and guides for the group of teachers, showing them a variety of classes, including SciTech, AVP, Great Ideas and Forensic Science. The teachers from China were able to see specific classes and identify similarities and differences between their schools and LASA. According to LASA principal Stacia Crescenzi, the teachers from China were particularly interested in the types of pedagogical options that teachers have when planning a lesson.

Xiaopian Shen, an information and technology teacher from Hangzhou, was impressed with the real-world experiences given to LASA students, specifically when giving





How LASA spends Thanksgiving

NIA ORAKWUE
Staff Writer

The holiday season is a busy time of giving, receiving, and spending time with family. Many people use this time to reunite with distant family members, others spend time giving to those in need. This could take the form of volunteering, donating or remembering to be grateful to the people around us.

LASA freshman Dawson Phillips spends his Thanksgivings at home. His family comes together with games and team sports. Thanksgiving, like Christmas, is an opportunity for bringing families or others together.

"I like all of my family coming together for one day out of the year and we can all just be there and talk," Phillips said.

For those who give back to their community, in addition to spending time with family, there are many volunteer opportunities in Austin that students learn through National Honor Society (NHS) or LBJ Cares.

Senior Isabelle Blaha helps improve her community through volunteer work at

the Austin Area Food Bank and other volunteer opportunities.

"The Austin area Food Bank is my favorite because I can go with a group of friends or with my family and it feels like you're really making a big impact," Blaha said.

LASA senior Akshara Anand goes a step further by volunteering for the Thundercloud Subs Turkey Trot to help benefit Caritas of Austin. She also founded The STEMInnovation program to teach young women about coding in Title 1 middle schools and plans to give back to those kids this Thanksgiving.

"I'm planning to use Thanksgiving to create care packages for the dedicated students who spend their valuable free time learning how to code," Anand said. "These students come from low-income families and...their passion for learning how to code is incredible considering their circumstances."

Anand enjoys Thanksgiving to be able to help others and spend time with family and friends.

"Thanksgiving has always been a time of the year where I feel the need to make a difference," Anand said. "I am very thankful for the fact that I get to spend time with my family and friends during this season, but I'm well aware of the fact that not everyone has this opportunity."

No matter how a Thanksgiving is spent, the main theme throughout the holiday is

to always be grateful for the things that we have and the people we have supporting us. Helping to better the lives of others is always a great idea to try this Thanksgiving.

"I enjoy Thanksgiving because it also puts a focus on spending time with your loved ones and thinking outside of the 'all-about-yourself' bubble you usually reside in throughout the rest of the year," Anand said.



Tis the season for a hands-on cat dissection

MAX IRBY
Staff Writer

Every year, the Anatomy & Physiology class at LASA brings in cats for a dissection, a learning experience that gives students an opportunity to learn class material through a hands on approach.

Dissections are a unique experience for many students, most of whom have only done a few or none at all in previous classes. LASA junior Shreya Gupta was eager to participate.

"I was pretty excited before the cat dissection because learning about something in a textbook and seeing it in real life is so drastically different," Gupta said. "I was a bit nervous as well because it's not something that is inherently comfortable

it's a really good supplement to lecture. I don't think this would be as pleasant of an experience if we dissected the cat blind. Realistically, anatomy is a very memorization heavy class and actually being able to see the digestive system was personally more helpful to me than only lecture."

In addition to gaining new insight into what has already been learned in class, dissections can also bring new material to light, according to Journey.

"One of the things that's always interesting about doing the cats is that when you open one up you never know what you're going to find," Journey said. "This year we had a pregnant cat that had a bunch of little tiny embryos inside. At the very end of the dissections, once we

are basically through, I let students go in and we actually cut into the organs and look at the inside of the organs, and you find parasitic worms and all kinds of strange things on the inside of the bodies that you would have never dreamed

Learning about something in a textbook and seeing it in real life is so drastically different.

-LASA junior Shreya Gupta

or normal, but that went away relatively quickly. During the dissection, I was surprised how recognizable everything was. It felt somewhat like going to a place after studying the map extensively, and it was incredibly satisfying to recognize things."

While some students may have been nervous before going into the dissection, according to LASA senior Sophie Dreslinski, that didn't last long.

"I think I was a little intimidated before the dissection because I was worried that I would cut the wrong thing or butcher some part of our cat, who later became Frankenstein, but when it actually came down to it it was really helpful to have Mr. Journey there and it worked out well," Dreslinski said.

Including dissections is a necessary part of the class's curriculum, and its importance was emphasized by Dave Journey, who teaches the class.

"Very few of us have ever seen the inside of our own body, or the inside of anybody's body for that matter," Journey said. "To really understand how we're put together and therefore how you work, I think it's really important that we need to actually see a body. My comment is always: would you want a surgeon operating on you that has never seen the inside of a body, who used a computer simulation instead? My answer would be hell no."

The importance of having hands on experience was also a view shared by Gupta.

"I think that the experience was definitely positive," Gupta said. "I don't want to go so far as to say that it's better than lecture, but I think

of. We've actually dissected cats before that have had kidney tumors, and things like that, without doing the dissection, you would never see. It opens up the door to actually see things way beyond just the inside of the body."

Preparing for a dissection isn't as simple as some might think, as explained by Journey.

"Getting a body to dissect is an expensive proposition, and we're in a situation right now where it's kind of good and bad in that most of the cats that we end up getting to dissect are cats that somebody dumped, that didn't have a home, that got turned into an animal shelter which can't take care of them and end up euthanizing them. This past year we got emails from the supply companies that said, 'we don't have that many cats. It's bad for the course in that we would have to figure out something else to do, but at the same time it's a good thing because it's saying that people are being a little more responsible about taking care of their animals, not letting them get turned loose into the wild and reproducing like crazy, and creating all these animals that nobody wants. So there's kind of a good side and a bad side to it."

Becoming PALS with hot chocolate during midterms

AARON BOOE
Staff Writer

The Peer Assisted Leadership and Service (PALS) class began hosting the annual hot chocolate social three years ago, under the sponsorship of social studies teacher Josephine Skaer. The social serves to alleviate the stress that accompanies winter midterms.

According to Skaer, PALS is a highly selective class only available to juniors and seniors. The resulting small class size made it difficult for their outreach efforts to successfully reach the student body, especially in the class' earlier years. In order to gain recognition after the class was created, students came up with the idea to host the hot chocolate social. Ever since, the tradition has been a hit among LASA staff and the student body.

"One of the goal for PALS when it was first started was to have more of a presence on campus, so I suggested a service project on the campus," Skaer said. "One of the things the class came up with was the social."

The idea gained traction as an opportunity for stress relief during the end-of-semester rush.

"The social was created with the goal of boosting morale during the stressful times that midterms manage to evoke, in addition to

providing donations to the schools PALS operate at," Skaer said.

Making sure the social runs smoothly requires a considerable amount of behind-the-scenes effort. Skaer and the PALS students generally start out with trying to acquire monetary donations approximately a month in advance. This fund goes toward obtaining the necessary materials.

"We have to plan fairly early," Skaer said. "I usually have to send a letter to the PFLASA asking for donations."

Once the materials are acquired, PALS students decorate the cups for the social, adorning them with various motivational slogans and holiday messages.

"The PALS Class works really hard each class to hand decorate the cups and write little compliment on it," Skaer said. "Part of it is that they say the compliment to the student or teacher so they not only get a free hot cocoa but also something to lift your spirit."

Skaer believes the social's popularity is not only a result of the hot chocolate it serves but for the spirit of community it promotes.

"I enjoy the sense of teamwork it manages to provide and the smiles it puts on the [PALS] students' faces because they get really pumped up about planning holiday music and giving cheesy compliments to students," Skaer said.



graphics by Carolina Gokingco

STUDENT-MADE STYLES:

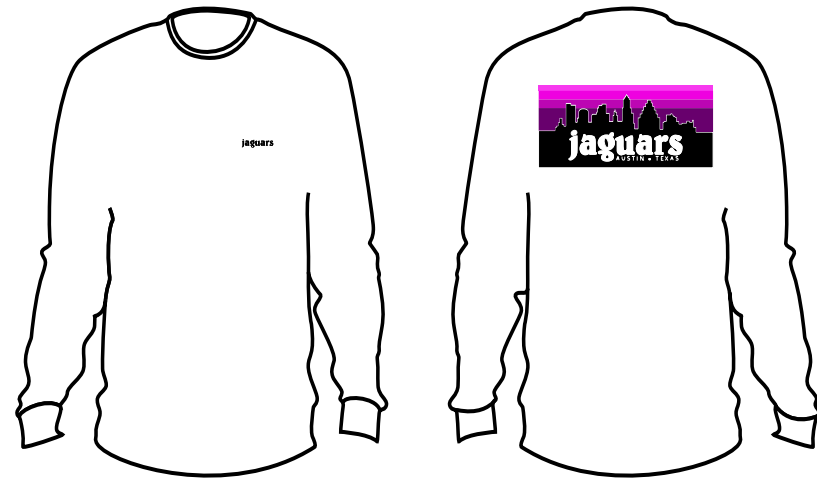
captions by Isabelle Amanuel and Jordan Jewell



LASA Robotics

Each year, new robotics students receive the iconic purple button down as a rite of passage on the team. The shirts have also been sold as a fundraiser for the Robotics team. Adithya Kumar, a Robotics For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) Challenge (FRC) member does not personally sell shirts at school but has received one of LASA Robotics' infamous button down shirts for being a member of the team.

"The shirts are for members of the team, but we welcome people to join robotics in order to get them," Kumar said. "We don't [have an original design every year] because we want to recognize alumni of LASA robotics and cheer them on when we catch them wearing one!"



Independent School Pride

Tayo Ezekoye, a junior, started his shirt-selling business with a group of friends for the upcoming football season.

"I thought it would be fun and I was making designs for a couple of years and I thought it would be cool to sell them and make some money," Ezekoye said.

Ezekoye designed the shirts himself and distributed them to some of his friends to spread them throughout the halls at LASA. He decided to focus on selling during the football season because it was one of the biggest times of year for students to buy articles of clothing. He hoped that students would buy the shirts to wear to the football games. He found that this method was a successful way to make a profit.

"I sold 60 shirts and and I made, I think, \$300," Ezekoye said.

The designs, which were based around Kanye West's "Life of Pablo" tees, aimed to reach the teenage audience by combining pop culture and school spirit. Ezekoye was later approached by the student council to design a shirt for them but declined their offer so that he could focus on his own personal designs instead of creating something for the school.

"I didn't really want to because I wanted to keep the whole shirt-design thing for myself and I didn't want to do it for anyone else," Ezekoye said.

A Long-Standing Tradition

As is tradition at LASA, every year a group of senior girls design a shirt and then offer all the other senior girls a chance to buy it. The practice is approved by administration, though not managed by it. Joanna Ma managed the logistics of getting money and selling the shirts for the class of 2018, while other girls did the design.

This is a tradition at LASA that Ma heard about as a freshman. It's been around for years, and every year a new set of senior girls handles the making and distributing of that year's shirts. This year many shirt designs were pitched and then voted for through a private Facebook group open to any LASA senior who identified as a girl. The tradition focuses on all senior girls, not focusing on a particular sports or extracurricular group.

"I'm glad we do it because it is a way for all of the senior girls to come together and just have the same shirt," Ma said. On the first official game day of the year, many senior girls wore the shirts together, and got to see just how far their influence carries. The mantle isn't passed down to any specific girl, so the girls of every future senior class have opportunities to take part in this tradition.

The shirts don't make any profit, according to Ma. She kept extensive records of all sales and she even paid money out of pocket for shipping to ensure total fairness. The focus on breaking even and not making profit is to ensure that the administration allows the girls to sell shirts at school, despite their policy against selling things for profit on campus.

all teched out

LASA senior Sawyer Timco tests the facial recognition feature on the iPhone X in a Techie Grad video review titled "iPhone X First Impressions/Tips & Tricks". As of November 2017 TechieGrad's YouTube channel has over 140,000 channel views and has partnered with brands such as Case Studio and Samsung. "The iPhone X is a \$1,000 foreshadowing of the future," Timco said. "It was really cool to be able to review it so soon after its release." photo courtesy of Sawyer Timco

GABRIELLE JABOUR & SARAH MINES
Life & Feature Editors

For many high school students, juggling schoolwork, extracurricular activities and social events is difficult enough by itself. Meanwhile in the adult world, professional entrepreneurs can dedicate all of their time to manage their budding businesses. For seniors Alec Schultz and Sawyer Timco, those worlds collide; producing videos and reaching out to large corporations is just a part of their daily routine.

In 2015, then rising sophomores Timco and Schultz discovered their mutual interest in iPhones and, posted their first video to Techie Grad, a YouTube channel and website dedicated to giving honest reviews of the latest tech by and for students. Over the past two years, the pair has grown their business, receiving new releases from brands like Samsung and handing out customized fidget spinners with the Techie Grad logo emblazoned on the center. The two friends started the business as a way to keep up with the ever growing and changing tech industry.

"We started Techie Grad because we're both really interested in technology and wanted to see how it would develop over the next couple of years," Schultz said. "We mainly post reviews on YouTube, and we do reviews of different phones and different technology." The partners found that they were able to utilize their previous knowledge and experiences with technology from their time working in the digital field. While most companies start with the intention of bringing in revenue, Techie Grad began for fun. "We both really like phones and stuff and we always talk about it so we figured we might as well make a website and see where it goes," Schultz said. "Also, we both have previously worked at a lot of websites before we started it and have done YouTube channels, so we thought we could try it ourselves. I think it really just started as a hobby."

While they both contribute to the operation of the company, Timco films and appears in most of the videos produced and Schultz handles the outreach and script-writing. According to sophomore Patrick Connor, Techie Grad is known for their unique style of filming and editing high quality videos, both in commissioned reviews and original content.

"I think one of my favorite things about Techie Grad is that there's definitely a high production value," Connor said. "The videos seem really well done and there's a clear amount of effort put into them, which I think is definitely worth it."

In addition to tech reviews, the pair has also found success in producing more comical videos, such as their popular iPhone diss track with over 13,000 views. They aim to reach a unique audience and add a touch of humor to the online tech industry.

one of the main factor that plays into selecting products for their reviews.

"We look mainly at price and then for some phones we look at interesting features that students would really be able to take advantage of," Schultz said.

One of the company's biggest challenges is appearing serious and legitimate when interacting with large companies. According to Schultz, it took the team a while to reach the point where companies would take them seriously, especially as students.

"You have to be convincing," Schultz said. "Calling a company like Samsung and asking them for thousands of dollars worth of tech stuff is weird to do because you have to be able to talk fast enough, and learning how to do that was difficult. I was actually surprised at how quickly we were able to get devices. I was worried that we were going to be having to buy our own devices and then returning them but we're able to get the devices directly from the company pretty quickly."

As the company became more experienced and established, outreach became less of an obstacle, especially as they began creating more content and reaching a larger audience. In addition to receiving devices, they have also begun to make some money from their videos and partnerships.

"We do get ad revenue, but that's not very much," Timco said. "If we do a sponsored review for someone that will get more money than ad revenue will, but that's not really our goal to make money."

Along with sponsored videos and ad revenue, Techie Grad has made money selling over 80 of their custom Techie Grad logo t-shirts and have leased a line of phone cases in partnership with Case Studio.

"We had a really good response when we were selling shirts; we sold a lot more shirts than I would have ever thought we would," Timco said. "We also gave away a bunch of Techie Grad fidget spinners."

Overall, the response from fellow LASA students has been positive. Many look to Timco and Schultz for recommendations, and find their feat as entrepreneurs admirable.

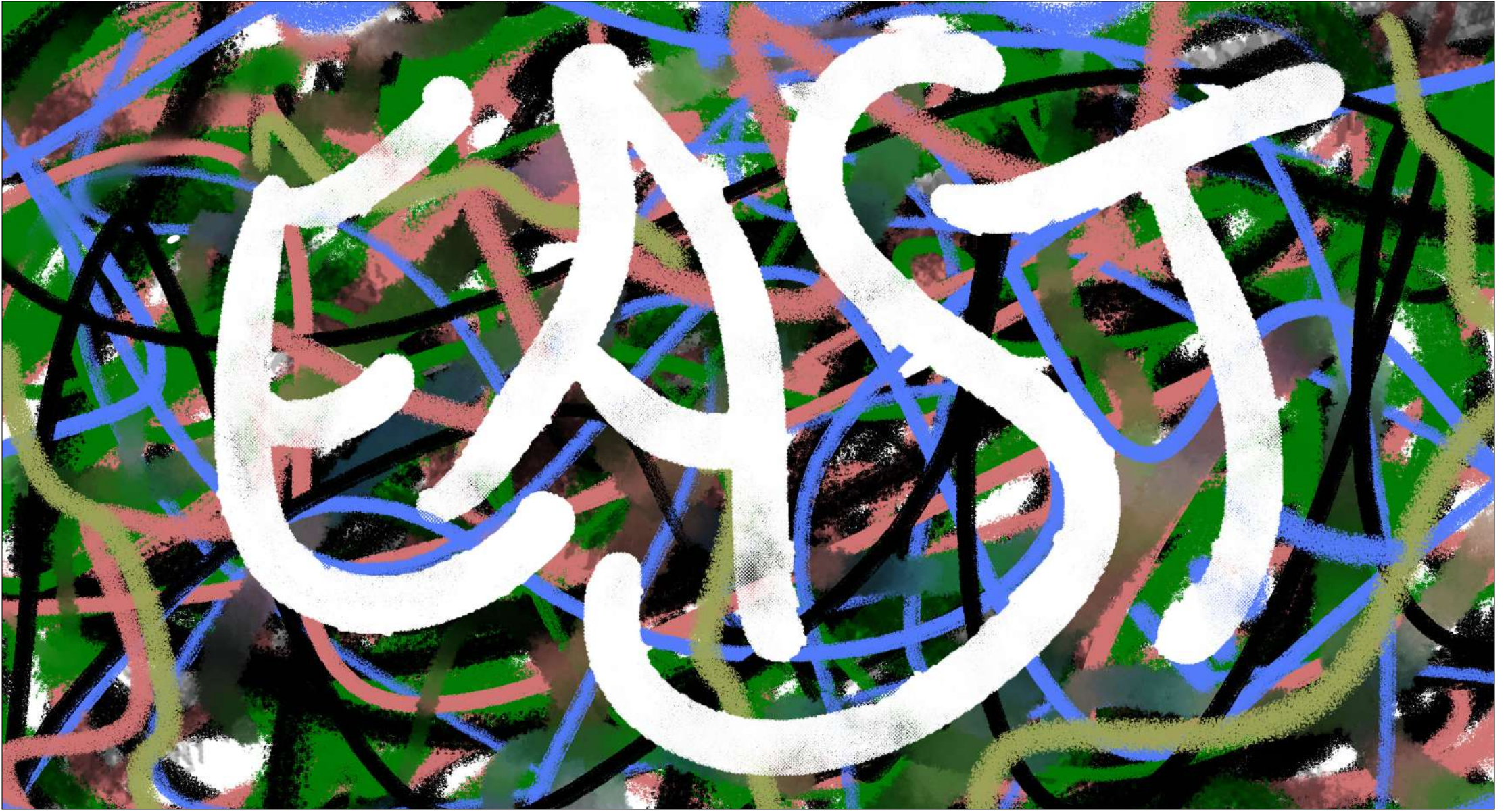
"I think they're definitely following in the footsteps [of successful channels], it's very similar to MKBHD (YouTube personality) and other YouTube channels with high quality tech videos as opposed to quick coverage," Connor said. "I definitely trust their opinions."

You have to be convincing. Calling a company like Samsung and asking them for thousands of dollars worth of tech stuff is weird to do because you have to be able to talk fast enough, and learning how to do that was difficult.

-LASA senior Alec Schultz

"There's a lot of people who do technology reviews so we thought we would try to do something different than that," Timco said. "We did a diss track which was pretty successful. It got us on the cover of the Statesman. That was fun. We weren't really expecting it, we just thought it would be funny."

Understanding that their main audience is teens and college-aged students, Techie Grad's reviews are often on products that are either popular or affordable for this demographic. According to the partners, pricing is



graphic by Kye Fisher

East Austin Studio Tour

continued from page 1

During the tour, artists open their studios to the public and display their work for the community. Residents see artists in their natural spaces and are able to converse with artists and get a tour of their studios.

LASA sophomore Carly Atwell attended EAST on Nov. 11, and was able to see many artists in the community. Atwell visited The Canopy, an open air collection of artist studios and cafes open to the community during EAST and a popular social spot. The Canopy hosts one of the main hubs of the Studio Tour.

"When I went to EAST, I saw all these artists open up their studios, so people can come in and look around," Atwell said. "I think this encouraged people to interact with the art and the artist more than the typical festival setup."

Artists are encouraged to show their studios and workspaces to passersby. Rubina Anjum, a local artist who takes inspiration from natural beauty, said she liked this aspect of the festival as it allows her to display some of her larger pieces. She also said EAST gave her opportunities other festivals couldn't provide, as she can now show some of her signature pieces.

"Through EAST I was able to display the large scale oil on canvas paintings that I have made in the 'Planet Earth Series 1,'" Anjum said. "My paintings are very large and the space where I am displaying them in my home gallery is spacious. This would not have been possible even in any other art gallery."

EAST both allowed the community a chance to participate in the arts and encouraged publicity and interest from the community. The festival appealed to up-and-coming artists to gain publicity and established artists to connect with a wider viewership and even other artists.

Funke joined the East Austin Studio Tour for the first time this year after moving to Austin from Connecticut. Being new to the city's art scene and community, she wants to publicize her works and start a support base in the populace interested in her work. She said EAST is one of the ways to accomplish this goal.

"This being my first EAST, I can't really say [what

will happen], but hopefully my artwork will gain more exposure in Austin and Texas," Funke said.

EAST is one of the largest local art festivals of the year. People from across the nation come to Austin to interact with artists. According to Atwell, the festival brings out the creative side of the community.

"I think it's really cool that we have so many creative people in Austin," Atwell said. "What makes Austin unique is how creative and artistic our people are."

According to Atwell, EAST captures the true spirit of Austin's originality. EAST pulled over 500 artists from across the city and the state to help them promote their art and increase viewership.

"I think EAST really contributes to the uniqueness of Austin and the Keep Austin Weird slogan, because it's made up of only local artists and you get to see this other side of Austin art up close and personal," Atwell said.

Austin prides itself on being unique and culturally enriched. EAST is one of the many festivals that the City of Austin hosts throughout the year to capitalize on this identity and further the customs of the community. Anjum said that the festival supplies something that is otherwise missing in daily life. She said the arts are incredibly important to the city and our community at large.

"We need the arts to experience unusually point of views that can elude us in everyday lives. These unique perspectives are enriching and informative," Anjum said.

According to Anjum, the arts are a critical cultural aspect of Austin, from musicians to painters, and EAST preserves and promotes this. The City of Austin consciously supports and develops its art scene in order to involve the whole community in something that is integral to Austin's identity.

Anjum's not alone in that belief. "I don't think I 'became an artist' – It is more like, I am an artist," Funke said. "I do not think that being an artist is something that can be learned. It is inborn. An artist can perfect his or her craft, and explore different paths of expression, but an artist's unique vision has to come from within."



EAST artist Rubina Anjum and EAST attendees pose in front of paintings by Anjum. "We need the arts to experience unusually point of views that can elude us in everyday lives. These unique perspectives are enriching and informative," Anjum said. Photos by Sophia Blaha.

Behind the curtain

Alley Cat's theater tech team shines in the spotlight

JORDAN JEWELL
Staff Writer

Theater actors are a common clique on any high school campus.

Slightly less well known are the theater technicians, the group behind the production of the shows. Though the stage crew may be less well known than their stage gracing counterparts, the work they do is just as important in regards to the final production.

While technical theater is distinct from acting, the two function with very similar principles. Both study storytelling, but while actors make stories come to life by portraying characters on stage, techs tell stories through sound, lighting, makeup, and hair design. Techs construct a physical representation of the events told in a play that works in complement to an actor's body representation.

Junior Perry Estes, who serves as assistant tech director and a theater officer said she enjoyed the experience of drawing something in her notebook and being able to go into the shop and watch it transform into a 10 foot tall set piece.

"I really love working with my hands, I really love being able to fix problems, and it is super tangible," Estes said. "I did this thing, and now it's here, and that's really cool."

Estes isn't the only tech who feels proud of the things she's accomplished in tech. Sophomore Emily Cochran said she enjoys the palpable achievements of going into the shop and coming out with something brand new.

"The fun bit is that you're just getting it done, you're seeing the whole project come together and by the end of the work days you see your progress and that's what's really fulfilling," Cochran said.

"It's satisfying to be able to be like, 'Yeah I built that set, I worked

"It's such a great community of people who want to work together and I really love sitting around and getting to hang out and also getting to work, and it's really just a lot of fun."

-LASA junior Perry Estes

hard on that set, and now that set looks amazing."

Many students don't confine themselves to working on just one aspect of a show. Swings, who work with both the actors and tech, are incredibly common in the theatre department, and underscore the similarities: the two groups aren't as different as their playbill credits might imply.

According to theater teacher Alexandra Driscoll, while tech-focused students might swear that they can't sing or act, the truth is that the skill of storytelling is present in all the students she teaches. Driscoll said almost all theater students share acting and engineering skills, although affinities may be different.

"It's not always what people think it is," Driscoll said. "It's really, really fun. Theater isn't all acting or singing and being really, really loud, but tech is a perfect opportunity for everyone."

The bonds forged in the tech program are a major draw, especially because of its unique mentoring program. With Driscoll unable to instruct tech-focused and acting-focused students at the same time, upperclassmen are given the task of teaching new techs how to do everything safely.

"It's such a great community of people who want to work together and I really love sitting around and getting to hang out and also getting to work, and it's really just a lot of fun," Estes said.

While the weeks leading up to a show are frantic for everyone in the theater program, the crew in particular are rushed by the sheer scope of their duties, which include everything from the building of sets and props to designing costumes to doing paperwork. According to Cochran, the demanding level of work is something that not only strengthens connections within the theater tech community, but also builds a better final product for productions.

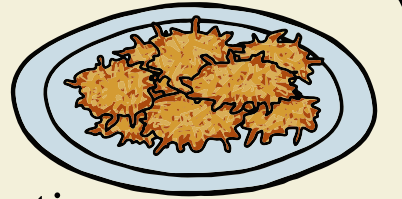
"In theater you just have a closer unspoken bond because you do things together, but don't necessarily talk to one another all the time because you're working, but you're instantly good pals," Cochran said.

HOLIDAY RECIPES

ERICA MOOMAW
Staff Writer

Potato Latkes

"My favorite holiday recipe is probably latkes for Hanukkah. The recipe represents how happy I feel when Hanukkah comes around because it's really nice to be with my family and celebrate it all together." - Junior Emily Baker



Ingredients

- 4 large potatoes
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 3 tablespoons flour (On Passover, substitute matzo meal)
- 1 tablespoon grated onion
- ½ teaspoon baking powder (eliminate on Passover)
- 1 teaspoon chopped parsley
- Oil for frying

Instructions

- Peel and grate potatoes.
- Rinse in water and drain most of the liquid.
- Beat eggs and add to potatoes. Add all the other ingredients (except oil).
- Drop spoonfuls of the mixture into a hot well-greased frying pan with the oil.
- Turn with a spatula to lightly brown on both sides.

LASA MUSIC CORNER

graphic by Kye Fisher

MAX RANDALL
Entertainment Editor

Top 5 Movie Soundtracks

1. Purple Rain

First time viewers may feel like they're purifying themselves in the waters of Lake Minnetonka in mini auteur Prince's semi-autobiographical take on his supposed struggle to stardom. As ridiculous as the film's premise and plot seems, this movie can only be described as "Prince." Prince's big haired, purple wearing, motorcycle driving character, the Kid, sings, dances, and struts his way to local Minneapolis notoriety, while facing off against equally sexy rivals Morris Day and the Time. Every song on the almost two hour movie was either written, recorded, or produced by Prince himself, and the soundtrack spawned some of Prince's biggest hits, including "Let's Go Crazy," "When Doves Cry," and the illustrious track that shares the film and the accompanying album's namesake, "Purple Rain."

2. Judgment Night

From the depths of the '90s rose "Judgment Night," an otherwise forgettable "on the run" flick with an unforgettable soundtrack, one that is almost entirely comprised of collaborations between popular rap artists and heavy rock/alternative acts of the early '90s. These have included Slayer and Ice T, Mudhoney and Sir Mix-A-Lot, Helmet and House of Pain, and Sonic Youth and Cypress Hill. Spawned from the growing rap-rock crossover movement of the time, this album is a '90s child complete with a grunge goatee and a do-rag.

3. Velvet Goldmine

Velvet Goldmine offers a portal into two distinct time periods: the era in which the film was produced, and the one the film is depicting. The film loosely depicts the genesis of '70s glam rock, with characters based off of David Bowie, Iggy Pop, and Brian Eno. The film's soundtrack is a homage to '70s music by '90s performers and features covers by members of Radiohead, the Stooges and Ewan McGregor and original music by Pulp. The movie is about as weird as one can expect, but delivers a powerful message about sexual identity and nonconformity, including a very heartfelt, romantic scene portrayed by glam-clad Ken dolls.

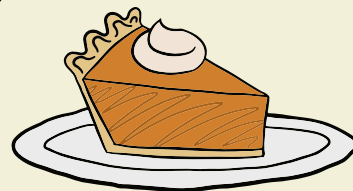
4. Baby Driver

Edgar Wright's contemporary heist film is one in which the music drives the movie in the same way that the film's protagonist, Baby, drives a car. The soundtrack is central to the film, as Baby requires an iPod to drive a getaway car. The Jon Spencer Blues Explosion's "Bellbottoms" and "Neat Neat Neat" by the Damned are two of the tracks that help propel the film. Cinephiles and regular movie-watchers alike can enjoy the ride in this music and adrenaline driven caper flick.

5. Yo Gabba Gabba

Now I know what you're thinking, but trust me, this soundtrack is a bop. The two albums currently on Spotify, "Yo Gabba Gabba! Hey!" and "Fantastic Voyages," both contain music from the kid's television show and feature iconic artists such as The Roots, The Killers and The Flaming Lips. Chromeo's Nice 'N' Clean, Weezer's All My Friends are Insects, and Biz Markie's Pancakes and Syrup are especially fire.

Pumpkin Pie



"We eat pumpkin pie every year as a family, and it's special to us as a family because it means coming together as a family and sharing a pie every Thanksgiving." - Sophomore Parker Wheeler

Ingredients

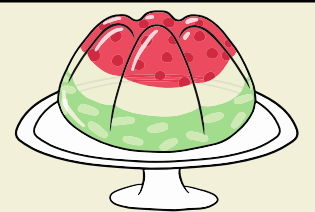
- 1 can pumpkin
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk
- 2 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 unbaked pie crust

Instructions

- Preheat oven to 425 degrees
- Whisk pumpkin, sweetened condensed milk, eggs, spices and salt in medium bowl until smooth
- Pour into crust and bake for 15 minutes
- Reduce oven temperature to 350 degrees
- Bake for 35 to 40 minutes
- Set out to cool

Gelatin Salad

"My Grandma makes this really gross Jello that's bright green and has olives and carrots in it. It's kind of gross, but it's a tradition." - Freshman Alden Little



Ingredients

- 1 package lime gelatin
- Carrots
- Celery
- 1 can crushed pineapple
- Pimento stuffed olives

Instructions

- Make lime fruit gel; use less water than package requires
- Mix in shredded carrots and sliced celery
- Stir in can of crushed pineapple
- Slice green olives and place them on top of gelatin
- Put in fridge to set

graphics by Lochlyn McClure

Choir and Acapella Club band together for winter performance

GEORGE GUCKENBERGER
Staff Writer

The LBJ and LASA choir prepared a forty minute long requiem to be performed before a large crowd at the Don T. Haynes Theater in Latin. This was the first time the choir has performed a requiem at one of their concerts. The class had participated in the regional competitions throughout the semester, and then put on this concert with the Acapella club on Dec. 4. Choir Director Deric Lewis has been teaching at the schools for four years, and has helped revive the program since he joined.

"This year we are going to do something different," Lewis said before the performance. "It will be the first time, that I know of, that the choir has performed a requiem, which is a large work consisting of multiple movements, soloist choruses.. the whole nine yards."

The choir has two concerts a year, one per semester. Preparing for the show, Lewis chose for it to be formal, which is different from the one in the spring which will be more informal because it happens after all of the choir University Interscholastic League (UIL) competitions are finished.

"You will see students dressed formally in tuxedos, dresses.. all of that formal atmosphere," Lewis said. "We will decorate the stage in a holiday way but it definitely will be formal. They will be singing on risers and the music, for the most part, will be music from the classical domain."

Several of the choir members are also in Acapella club, a group sponsored by Lewis that performs festive pieces with the choir. LASA senior Lia Wiese founded Acapella club as a freshman with a few of her friends.

"I arrange and teach most of the music that we do," Wiese said. "We meet twice a week during lunch. Mr. Lewis is super supportive and will help us out if we want, and he lets us perform in concerts."

The choir mainly focuses on classical western tonal music such as Mozart and Beethoven, Lewis says. They prefer to stay away from pop music because those genres are different from what they sing for UIL.

LASA senior Alex Siegenthaler has participated in choir since sixth grade. He says the choir concerts generally have different groups performing various songs, and that there are also mixed pieces where everyone sings.

"So for our upcoming concert we will be performing a requiem which is forty minutes or something crazy," Siegenthaler said. "So that'll be like solos and larger pieces and all that. After that we will have some smaller songs and maybe some smaller groups."

The choir mainly sings songs in languages other than English, including this requiem, which was in Latin. Most of what they sing in Latin tends to be religious mass music.

"We do a lot in Latin, and then there is Italian, German, French and English," Wiese said. "After you've sung in all of those five languages you start to get the hang of how things sound. When I sing in a different language I don't tend to know what I'm singing at any point, it's not like I'm speaking the language or anything. But it definitely feels like the more I sing in a language the sounds become more natural."

Singing in other languages can be difficult, Lewis added, but it is necessary for competitions. It also provides opportunities for working with the foreign language teachers to teach correct pronunciation.

"It is supposed to be a challenge," Lewis said. "One time we were doing a French piece and had the French teacher come down. It's really cool to work together, because most of the students are taking some form of foreign language at the time. So they get to use that, but it is a little bit different singing in a language compared to speaking a language, but the principles are still there."

The program has grown and improved over the past four years. Lewis said before he started teaching, choir was basically forgotten. According to choir students, they did poorly at competitions before Lewis came along, but since then they have progressed and scored highly at competitions. Two years ago, the choir achieved their first sweepstakes in the history of the program, scoring all division-one ratings at the competitions.

"The way that Mr. Lewis approaches choir is a little different from your standard choral program," Wiese said. "It seems to be a little more focused on individuality and holding down more complicated parts... it is less about blending as a group and more about working on your own or working with just a couple other people to have a very unique part. This was hard to get used to at first but I think it helps you with a lot of different skills, it teaches you how to be independent and strong and sing out."

Because there are only two concerts a year, Siegenthaler said they usually have a strong turnout. Attending the concert helps the choir program gain attention, and it was open to any attendee, not just those affiliated with LASA.

"The concert is for everyone," Wiese said. "We open it up to the city. We don't charge because we've been building the program. The first concert we did, I was trying to save the program which was sort of waning, but in years, as we have grown, the audience has grown."



The German class poses with their exchange students after a field trip. German junior Engelina Mde Winder and her friends spent their time in Austin exploring the city and attending LASA classes. "I really like the high school because there's so much space and the downtown with the big streets," Mde Winder said. "Everything is so cool about America. I liked everything here." photo by Jorge Villa.

From Berlin to Austin: a German abroad

EMMA JANE HOPPER
Life & Feature Editor

Four exchange students play cards and chatter in German. The game's round ends and German junior Joe Hackel lays out the cards and pushes them against each other on the floor before pushing them back together into a neat pile. He deals his friends in but is promptly rebuffed: he did a terrible job of shuffling.

Staying with exchange families, 20 LASA students studying German spent some of their summer of 2017 in Berlin, Germany. Many staying with their summer guests, 27 German high school students then came to Austin. Usually they attend the Johann Gottfried Herder Gymnasium in Berlin, but from October 22 to November 10, the Germans were honorary LASA students.

A German "gymnasium" isn't the same as an American high school, and cannot be translated as such, according LASA senior and German student Davis Benson. Benson explained it to be a stronger high school, similar to LASA in rigor.

LASA junior John Kilfoyle hosted Herder junior Engelina Mde Winder after she hosted him in Germany in the summer. Mde Winder said that while she came to America in part to work on her English fluency, her main focus was seeing more of the world.

"I have never been to America, and America is cool," Mde Winder said. "In this exchange, you can see the

high school life, which I really wanted to see."

This exchange program is about experiencing different countries and cultures, according to Mde Winder and Kilfoyle. A big difference in German and American culture includes, apparently, school. Kilfoyle said that the "gymnasium" was a lot more lax compared to American schools.

"The periods were shorter, also the school was a bit more free on whether we were in class or not," Kilfoyle said. "So in LASA, they definitely want them to be in class, but at their school we didn't have to be in class."

The idea of a bathroom pass particularly confused Mde Winder. The LASA bathroom passes, quirky objects decided by the teacher, were not like anything she'd seen in Germany. After seeing a student lugging a whole cello, courtesy of math teacher Mathew Deram, Mde Winder was particularly baffled.

"School is so different, so many new rules," Mde Winder said. "So what I was really like 'what?' is when you go to the toilet during a period, you have to take a thing with you. We don't do this, so I was like 'what are you doing there?'"

Despite many differences, there are still similarities. Hackel's card game, for instance. The name of their game is unprintable, named after the expletive title of the loser, but it's similar to the American card game Presidents. There are less rules, so the game really just ends up being a game of playing cards in order in a circle. It's

a more peaceful game, reliant more on dumb luck than skill. Hackel turned down the offer to teach them the American add-ons that make the game more interesting, like completing the sets.

"No, no," Hackel said, "We're playing the German way."

About three games into the increasingly boring German version of Presidents, Americans overran the game of Hackel and his friends. LASA senior Lara Williams stole the role of shuffler from Hackel to speed things up and spearheaded a game of ERS, or Egyptian Rat Screw. ERS involves slapping a pile of cards violently under the right conditions. Hackel and the other Germans present picked up the game quickly.

"This is a very capitalist game," Hackel said.

The overtly competitive nature of the game may have caught the Germans off guard, but it didn't seem to alienate them. By the end of the second round one of the Germans had actually beat Williams, the self-proclaimed master of ERS. Everyone was smiling or good-naturedly yelling, hands red from slapping the tile. When Hackel had run out of cards he began to stare angrily at the pile, waiting to slap in, ready to redeem himself.

Earlier Hackel was asked why he chose America for his study abroad location. He had scoffed in response.

"What do you mean, why did I want to go to America?" Hackel said. "It's America... Everyone wants to go to America."

One (model) nation, under MUN

JORDAN JEWELL
Staff Writer

Standing tall, speaking clearly and representing a nation is the mission of every member of Lasa Model United Nations (MUN). MUN prepares students who want to learn about international relations, interpersonal relations and confidence. Formally, MUN is a series of conferences in which members imitate the UN by representing countries in different situations and on different topics.

Senior and MUN Secretary General Piper Neulander is the highest ranking officer in the club. According to her, MUN primarily involves simulating the United Nations. There are conferences like Model UN San Antonio (MUNSA), the three day long conference in San Antonio in early January, and smaller ones like UNLASA, a day at the LASA campus. A school hosts anywhere from five to 30 different committees just like the UN has different committees.

"You're a delegate for one of those committees," Neulander said. "You basically just try to represent your country as best as you can."

The concept of having to speak to a full room of people can be daunting, especially for those joining in their freshman year. Beyond the public speaking aspect, there is a specific etiquette that must be followed called parliamentary procedure, which students often come in without knowing.

But beginners aren't just thrown into the deep end, according to LASA senior and MUN officer Pranathi Bingi. LASA MUN also goes to many beginner

conferences and to more relaxed conferences like UNLASA.

"It's for people who get nervous in large rooms, so they can feel rewarded by the ability to collaborate and communicate with others in a smaller, more relaxed committee," Bingi said.

Meetings are held outside of conferences for beginners to learn parliamentary procedure from the officers and history teacher and MUN teacher sponsor Kimberly Pettigrew. There's an entire conference dedicated to letting beginners try out the experience, called JUNTA. According to Pettigrew, once students get the hang of it, they usually stick around.

"Model UN kids tend to stay in Model UN once they've joined it," Pettigrew said. "We tend to have a lot of kids who join in their sophomore or junior year."

According to Bingi, this pattern isn't necessarily consistent. Retention follows a general trend but seems to vary year to year.

"For the most part my year actually started increasing as the years went by, so it kind of just depends on the year and people's interest in it," Bingi said.

No matter the specific interest level of the current grades, MUN remains one of the largest clubs at LASA. With around 60 to 80 students involved at any given time, LASA's MUN is much larger than a high school's typical 20 person MUN. The large number doesn't change the actual program much, though it does mean that LASA's MUNSA turn out is massive.

MUNSA is the largest conference MUN attends in

terms of how many LASA students attend. Almost the entirety of the club attends, meaning that all 60 to 80 students are there to represent LASA. The students stay in a hotel in San Antonio for multiple nights and go for several days of committee, making it one of the most memorable conferences of the year.

"It's high schoolers running this huge conference and we're able to go talk in committee rooms that are like a hundred people big and convey our ideas and collaborate with people from all over the world," Bingi said. "I think that's kind of fun."

In many aspects of MUN, students are tasked with handling proceedings themselves, with officers taking responsibility for training beginners as well as running the major conferences. They can build up different kinds of skills, Neulander explained.

"People gain confidence," Neulander said. "It's kind of empowering to get in front of a room of a hundred people your age and tell them your ideas and work together."

According to Neulander, diplomacy and tact are skills that will benefit students throughout their lives, and students can gain those skills through an extracurricular like MUN.

"When you're trying to practice diplomacy you're really not trying to argue," Neulander said. "You're trying to find compromises and solutions."

Anyone interested in joining Model UN should talk to Ms. Pettigrew. MUNSA will be coming up in early January 2018.

The ghosts of practices past

ANDY DEGRASSE
Staff Writer A collection of some funny moments from various LBJ sports practices and tryouts, written by the athletes.

Football: Nathan Reed

One time during football tryouts, we were doing the Oklahoma drill, which is where you have two different players run at each other, and both try to knock each other over. The winner is the guy who is left standing and the loser the one on the ground. Anyways, somehow during the drill a tiny freshman, who I think was from LASA, got matched up with an LBJ senior, who was one of the biggest players on the team. When we first realized that these two were matched up together, most of us just laughed. We didn't expect them to actually go up against each other. However, our laughter quickly turned to shock when the Freshman didn't back down. The LBJ senior looked confused, but once the coach blew the whistle, the drill was on. The freshman barreled forward at full speed, his head cocked back, his eyes squinting in focus. The freshman through all his weight forward, executing a perfect tackle... and was thrown backward like a ragdoll by the Senior. Brushing himself off, the freshman got up, smiling good naturedly. While we liked to make fun of him after that happened, I think it helped bring us together as a team

Swimming: Maddy Havranek

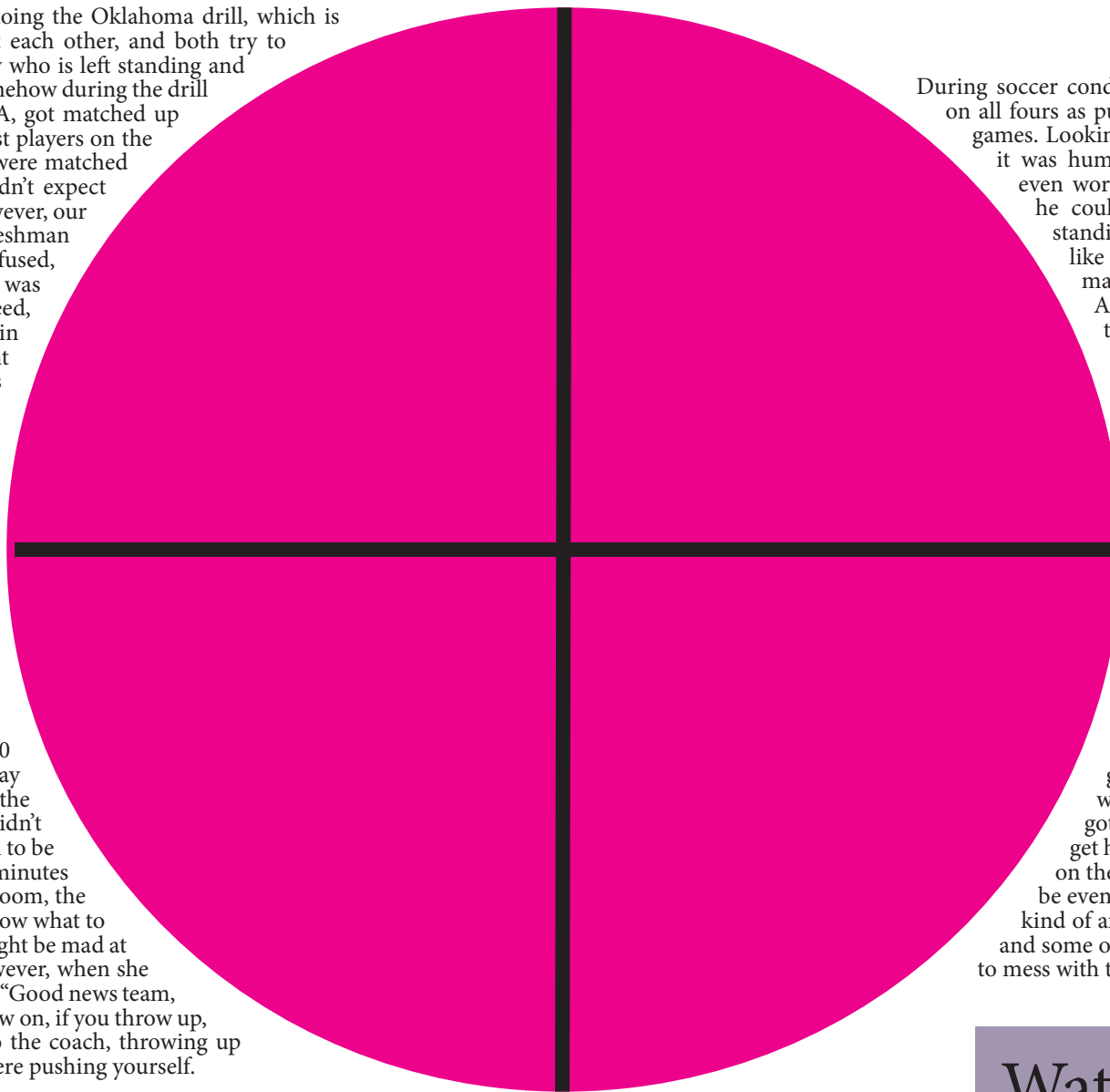
One time we were doing this drill where it was like "pyramid" of butterfly, so it was like a 100 butterfly, then a 200 butterfly, then a 300 butterfly, and so on, and then part of the way through, one of the girls on the team ran to the bathroom and started puking. The rest of didn't really know what to, but the coach didn't seem to be bothered by it, so we just kept going. A few minutes later, once the girl came back out of the bathroom, the coach gathered us around. We didn't really know what to expect, and we thought that that the coach might be mad at us for not helping the girl or something. However, when she had all of our attention, the coach announced, "Good news team, we've had our first puking of the year, from now on, if you throw up, we'll buy Jamba Juice for you!" According to the coach, throwing up wasn't a bad thing, and just meant that you were pushing yourself.

Soccer: Diego Landry

During soccer conditioning, coach made us crawl across the field on all fours as punishment after we played poorly in one of our games. Looking back, it was funny experience, but a the time it was humiliating and annoying for us. However it was even worse for our teammate Miguel. For some reason, he couldn't stay all fours the whole time, and kept standing up to get a break. Obviously our coach didn't like that very much. After everyone had finished he made Miguel go again, until he could "get it right." After two more tries, Miguel still hadn't been able to complete the exercise a full time through. He told us that if Miguel couldn't finish a lap, we'd all have to run another three more laps. Now the pressure was on for real. Miguel sprinted across the field and back. When he finally made it back, Coach gave him an approving nod, which may not seem like much, but was equivalent to a hug and a kiss from Coach.

Volleyball: Ella Carlander

During the volleyball season, the coach would always get really mad if we didn't yell "Got it" whenever two people were going for the ball, because sometimes people would forget to call for it. Sometimes, if she got mad at us for it during practice, we would get her back by all yelling "Got it" simultaneously on the next time around. At first, she found this to be even more annoying, but eventually, this became kind of an inside joke between members of the team, and some of us even wanted to do it in a game one time to mess with the competition.



graphic by Kye Fisher

Personal foul on the student section

Jaguars students kicked out after getting too rowdy at homecoming football game.

MAX IRBY
Staff Writer

On October 13, at this year's LBJ versus Reagan homecoming football game, the student section was ejected from the stadium during a 48-0 blowout win. As the points stacked up, the student section's excitement rose, culminating in them getting kicked out for a multitude of reasons.

The LASA and LBJ student section has become known for their energy at games, which doesn't often result in them being asked to leave, according to LASA junior Omar Carrasco, who regularly attends games.

"Every time I've been to an LBJ football game, I've always tried to stand in the middle where the juniors are, mainly because the student section is always so energized and crazy when it comes to chanting and yelling for the team," Carrasco said. "I love being in it because I love the energy and spirit we have. It makes a name for us."

The homecoming game was unlike any regular season experience, according to LASA senior Sawyer Timco, student section leader.

"I have always loved going to the football games since I was a freshman," Timco said. "The Reagan game was probably one of the biggest student sections of the season just because it was homecoming."

The high score and shutout for LBJ also contributed to the excitement, according to

Carrasco.

"We were destroying the other team," he said. "We were getting touchdown after touchdown so we just kept getting more and more hyped, it was great. We scored so many touchdowns that we just didn't care if we got kicked out because it was a win for us anyway. I was pretty shocked because I didn't know that could even happen, but it did."

Even before the Reagan game, stadium staff had voiced concerns about the student section throwing things like powder, water, or bottles during games, explained LASA Principal Stacia Crescenzi.

"The last couple of games, the student section had been quite a mess at the end of the game, and so that creates a lot of extra work for the stadium staff the next morning, because that's when they come in and clean, and so they were frustrated by that," Crescenzi said. "I guess they said among themselves that if we see anything happen, we're getting rid of them. The game before, because people were spraying water, it got all over the track and almost hit the players, and the coaches were upset about that."

During the game, some of the students threw powder into the air. This was one of the main reasons that stadium staff asked administrators for permission to kick the section out, according to Timco.

"The reason that we got kicked out was because someone threw powder, and the one incident was what got us kicked out," Timco said. "The event staff was being very strict

that game, but it is technically against the rules to throw powder so I suppose it was fair that we were kicked out. It was just a bit unexpected because the student section had thrown powder for a few games before the Reagan game and nothing had happened, so we weren't expecting to get kicked out."

While it did result in them having to leave the game, some students still feel that the energy and excitement generated at the game was worth it, a feeling shared by Carrasco.

"Even though we were restricted of a tradition and something fun that we always do, we still did it because it's a great way to show how excited we are," Carrasco said. "Everyone screams and jumps when it flies in the air, it's great."

Having students be aware of their surroundings and the experiences of others at the game is important, Crescenzi emphasized.

"The two things I would say is one, to really be considerate and thoughtful of everybody at the game," Crescenzi said. "I think sometimes it's easy to be in the student section and feel like you're in your own little zone, and not recognize that the things that you're throwing, the things that you're saying impact the other people that are trying to enjoy the event. The second is, my expectation is that the student section is listening and following the lead of the student section leaders, and so if they turn and say, 'We're not gonna do that,' then my expectation of the group is that they don't do that. You need to take your lead from your student section leaders."



The LASA and LBJ student section getting excited and cheering during the Homecoming football game against Reagan, which the Jaguars won convincingly 48-0. photo by Alisa Grieve

Water Polo misses UIL by just a drop; LASA plays on

JEFFREY KOVAR
Sports Editor

The list of University Interscholastic League (UIL) sports includes many notable names such as: football, volleyball, and soccer. A key sport not present among the UIL roster: water polo.

The UIL Legislative Council voted on adding a number of sports to those under their sanctions, which would have made those sports adhere to UIL guidelines. Options as diverse as boxing, gymnastics, water polo, lacrosse, table tennis, bass fishing and cooking were considered. None of the events were passed to be under sanctions, however water polo garnered the most support out of the sports considered, with 43 percent support.

LASA junior and water polo captain Bryce Yeazell said he was glad water polo was not added right now because it would have been a lot of work to restructure the system.

"I wasn't really disappointed that they didn't add water polo because that would add a lot of complications for us in figuring out our game schedule," Yeazell said. "We are a mostly student run organization. That adds just more difficulty to it."

Yeazell said he hoped that water polo would one day be under UIL sanctions as long as they kept the same structure for how the games work.

"I think water polo should be a UIL sport so that it will get more recognition, but most of the structures TISCA had already set up for it work and it would be better if they kept those," Yeazell said. "water polo already has a fairly good set up with the regional to state system, and it does a good job of breaking up the state based on power, so I think they should keep that the same."

UIL has not sanctioned a new sport since 1999, when they added wrestling. LASA junior and water polo captain Aldo Ordonez thought water polo should have been added by UIL because it is very similar to the other sports under their jurisdiction.

"Water polo should be a UIL sport because it is as physically demanding as the other UIL sports," Ordonez said. "It has the same physical benefits as swimming, but it also incorporates team cooperation and leadership, along with other skills that are necessary to be successful."

Water polo season occurs in the spring, after the swimming season has finished, with most water polo coming from the swim team, according to Ordonez. LASA junior and water polo captain Amber O'Rourke joined the team because her teammates from swim encouraged her to.

"I started playing water polo because when I was a freshman a lot of the upperclassmen on the swim team spoke really highly of it," O'Rourke said. "At first, I was scared to join because I heard it was a violent sport, but now I love it and the aggression of the sport is really distressing."

O'Rourke said she plays water polo because she likes the physical demands of the sport.

"I love the physical aspect of the sport," O'Rourke said. "Swimming is very self driven because you are always doing your own thing but with water polo you have to get in people's face and work with a team to win."

Though water polo was not sanctioned by UIL this year, talks of adding it in the near future did occur, as water polo remains one of the fastest growing sports in Texas. Yeazell said he would like there to be more competition around the state.

"If we can get it more like swimming where we have district, regionals, then state, then it would be a little more competitive," Yeazell said. "Having it more spread out, not just in Houston and Dallas, would also help with the competition level."

University of Michigan Fab-Five member Ray Jackson returns to his roots at LBJ

A question and answer session with a past star athlete

TREVOR ANDERSON
Staff Writer

Jackson's Responses

What was your favorite memory from being at LBJ?

"I have several great memories from the team. I think my best memory was making it to the Final Four. Being able to play at the Erwin Center was a dream come true; I wish we could've brought closure by winning the state title, but being the first team in LBJ history to make it to the Final Four was an amazing experience in and of itself."

How did LBJ prepare you for your time in college?

"LBJ basketball prepared me very well for my college career at Michigan. At LBJ, we're always somebody's favorite team in the preseason; we're the team that everybody gets up for, so I was prepared. College makes you play or practice everyday. At LBJ, you've gotta be prepared to play consistently and intensely. The education alone; we had great teachers then, as we do now, but high school was just a total learning time for me, and it gave me a great opportunity to mature. I don't think I would have been as successful in another situation."

What made you choose Michigan as your college?

"Growing up, I loved Michigan football. My dad was an all-American in football and he was a football coach when I went to LBJ. He's a big reason why I am who I am. I was always a football fan and I loved Michigan helmets, then once I fell in love with the football program, I started finding out about the basketball side of things. Once I realized they had a good basketball program, everything took off from there. I also chose Michigan because I wanted to be different. No one from Austin had ever been to Michigan on a basketball scholarship, so I wanted to be a groundbreaker in that sense."

How did you get recruited for Michigan? Who originally reached out to you for college?

"I started in summer league. I had an AAU coach by the name of Larry Alexander, and he took me to Houston. I met a man named Harvey Rhodes, and he actually used to coach at LBJ. But he took me to an AAU tournament in Houston against some of the best players in the state of Texas and the country, and I went there and played them, and that set me on the path to college. I got letters from places like Texas Tech and others. I was excited to get something from Tech, as a kid from Austin, I was just happy to get my college education paid for, so when I got the opportunity to play at a higher level, I was thankful and grateful."

How do you feel now about your status as a member of the Fab Five?

"I'm excited about it. I still relish in the accomplishments of the team, I think what we did as a team, as a family, was great. I wish we could've won it, but I can celebrate what we did now. It's hard to celebrate it when you're going through it but as an adult, I can really appreciate all the things we accomplished."

What do you think about the play with Chris Webber where he tried to call a timeout when Michigan had none left? What's your opinion on that? What do you think happened?

"You know, I have a lot of thoughts on that play. My first thought it, we shouldn't have been in that situation, first and foremost. We didn't play our best basketball that night, and we actually lost to a team that we were a lot better than. But, that's my biggest thing that I take away from that. I wish he would never have called it, but as a team, we should've never put ourselves in that predicament. We should've been up and winning that game easily. I hate that it happened; it changed the course of our relationship as teammates, it led to some other things with our banners being taken down, so it was a tragedy in a lot of ways."

When did you move to Austin and what made you come back?

"Well Austin was always home, but what made me stay home was that my mother ended up being diagnosed with cancer and ended up passing away, so I stopped playing ball from that point on, started my nonprofit, and started a business, so actually my mother's sickness and illness was what kept me home, that's what changed my life."

What made you want to coach at LBJ? In addition to it being your home school.

"When I walk in this building, I know how it changed my life, and the effect it had on my life, so I know what these four walls can do for a kid if they take advantage of it, you know, I was able to see the world because of LBJ basketball and the great support system, so if the students take full advantage of what is available to them, the sky's the limit. This is an area that I cherish, and I want to be of help here; I want to be able to give my community some form of support and give back."

LBJ Pool Jaguars ferry high hopes going into the postseason

AARON BOOE
Staff Writer

The water splashes and the East Community YMCA is filled with swimmers from Freshman to Seniors all of whom are currently practicing for their next upcoming swim meet.

The varsity boys swim team relay currently remains undefeated mid season. The boys team recently managed to go 3rd and the girls 4th at their latest meet. They also landed fifth place at the AISD Invitational District Swim meet.

"I'd say that this year we have a lot more fast swimmers especially because we have had a lot more sophomores join the team," Havranek said. "I think we're going on to have a lot bigger representation at state this year."

The team has managed to also grown an impressive amount over the recent years gaining more and more swimmers. Many swimmers see this as a possible highlight as to the advantageous position it puts them over other teams. When asked about how the team has managed to grow, Havranek mentioned the recent increase in swimmers and its effects.

"Our team is a lot bigger and we have to accommodate for that, but still just let on people that we like because of their attitude on the team. We have to kinda go for a bigger team, we have about fifty five or so. Its bigger, faster and just getting better."

However, given the recent expansion of the swim team, many swimmers including Havranek possess some lurking concerns with making sure everyone is given a fair representation District.

"Just with the bigger teams sometimes it's harder for everyone to swim the events they want to and so especially with things like District because, there, entries are limited, so that's kinda a concern that I have," said Havranek.

The LBJ Swim Team has a generally friendly and open minded attitude in regards to its swimmers, a view often echoed by its swimmers.

"One of the best things about swimming is that even if you're not necessarily the best swimmer but if you're really committed to the sport and have a great attitude you're guaranteed a spot on the team," LASA Sophomore Jules Hayes said.

The team itself is repeatedly described by countless swimmers, including Havranek, Hayes, as being an amazing experience as well as an overall fantastic experience for anyone and everyone looking to join.

"It's honestly a great experience that I would definitely recommend," Hayes said.

The team also faces competition with the recent division placing of Austin High moving down a district.

"Swimming isn't really like a rivalry sport. I mean we definitely have some competition ever since last year when Austin High moved down to our district," Havranek said.

Despite the new competition that currently faces LBJ, the team remains optimistic in its hope to have a great season.

"We've definitely gotten more competition, which is exciting, but were not huge on being like, 'hey we won the meet,'" Havranek said. "It's mainly about just getting out there and having fun with the whole team. So yeah, that's pretty much just excitement."

Swimmers love that the team is about more than just competition.

"One of the things I really love about swimming is how I can have a great time and enjoy myself all the while getting better as a swimmer," LASA freshman Charles Cagle said.

The team is genuine in its commitment to perform athletically and go above and beyond in making sure the swim team is equal parts work and play according to Cagle.

"Yeah, we had a pretty fun Halloween practice today so that wasn't necessarily preparing us for meet and we mainly joked around and played, but it was a overall great time," Havranek said.

With regards to the current season's state, LASA sophomore Ava Longi had good outlook.

"So far swim has been overall an amazing experience and has done really well, I just hope we will keep it up," Longi said

On the same topic Cagle had a similar positive opinion.

"The LBJ Swim Team has been pretty successful so far in the middle of the season. We're definitely managing to perform well, so I think we'll be good moving forward."



The Paper Jaguar

with Elan McMinn

The Paper Jag is an experiment in "participatory journalism" which was pioneered by George Pimpton. Pimpton wrote a book called The Paper Lion detailing his tryout with the Detroit Lions professional football team.

Inspired by the idea, intrepid former sports editor Jake Stewart practiced with a different LBJ athletic team each issue and cataloged his experience here. In this issue of The Liberator, sports editor Elan McMinn tries an electronic sport with the game Counterstrike.

Loading into the Middle Eastern-style map of Dust 2, I didn't know what to expect. The graphics of the game created a surreal environment as if I had physically put myself into this foreign land with four teammates surrounding me. A timer audibly ticked down marking the beginning of the game, and before I knew it, the contest was in motion.

I had thrown myself into the game Counter-Strike: Global Offensive. It's a five versus five, first-person shooter that has been around for more than five years. Each game is a best-of-thirty grudge match filled with teamwork and communication in the best of times, and all too often, a treacherous sea of toxicity and salinity. This combination creates a hit or miss environment that makes you question accepting each and every match.

I began the game with a friendly spur of jokes about my teammate's usernames hoping to start it off with my best foot forward. I thought that if I could create some chemistry from the start maybe I could avoid the normal discomforts of internet gaming. From the beginning I could feel how outclassed I was in every aspect of the game. As I did worse and worse, my team's hostility grew. Attempts to console me quickly shifted from "nice try" and "you'll get 'em next time" to "why don't you just leave" and "how can you even be this bad." This went on for round after round, but despite the mean jabs and passive aggressive comments what could I say. This was a team based game and quite frankly I was letting them down.

After verbal abuse to make me mad, I screamed into the microphone telling them that I needed a timeout. Seeing that I had finally snapped, they reluctantly agreed and I was gifted a one minute mental cooldown. Not knowing if I could make it through another possible 10 rounds with this, I took my headphones off and took some deep breathes. I decided that I needed to just focus so hard that my brain would hurt afterwards, and hopefully it would let me just play well enough to make it out of this game with my sanity. The clock ticked down again marking the re-entrance into the game. With new resolve I realized that I couldn't be upset at my team if I wanted to pull a victory out of the game. No matter how upset they had pushed me to be, I felt like a bigger man looking beyond that even though it was still just a match in a meaningless game.

The rounds started to go by at the same pace as before, but something was different. I just ever so slightly started to carry my weight; helping each round with a little bit here and a little there. Not anything to earn some special recognition, but the silenced comments were enough to know I had shut them up. Beyond this, not only were we no longer in a quarrel, but we started communicating as a group: covering each other's backs, clearing angles and calling out enemies. With each passing round I found myself realizing that the game could have some redeeming qualities. The match finally ended in a 15-15 tie which, though left me unsatisfied, I felt accomplished in my own right for my performance. Even if it would normally be considered subpar, to me it was a feat of emotional control.

CS:GO was definitely a rollercoaster of emotion and a test of my patience, but surprisingly it made me want to jump right back in and keep playing. Playing this game I can easily see the appeal. This might come as shock after the recounting of my story, but the game comes with such an addictive nature that it is easy to look past and even forget that even happened. Yes, this experience came close to making me scream, but what good comes easy.



The Counter-Terrorists logo. photo courtesy of CSGOLotto



Quick Hits



Volleyball wraps up year with high hopes for future

SOPHIA BLAHA
Staff Writer

The LBJ Lady Jags Volleyball season ended on October 30. The team finished with a 12-12 overall record (8-6 district), and a trip to the playoffs for the first time since the 2013 season. The team lost in the first round of playoffs, losing a match against Dripping Springs high school, who were undefeated in district play.

Though the volleyball team lost 3-0 in the game, LASA sophomore and a varsity volleyball player Peyton Atchison was more excited that the team even made it to the playoffs.

"Since we were in 4th place, we lost to dripping springs, who actually made it to the 4th round of playoffs," Atchison said. "LBJ volleyball hasn't made it to playoffs in many years so this was a really big achievement for us."

However, according to some of the best matches of the season came before the team ever went to playoffs, where the team was still figuring out how to deal with the changes.

"The best game of the season was definitely the Travis game right before playoffs. We had underestimated how hard Travis would fight," Atchison said, "They kicked our butts the first two sets which really brought the team together leading us to win three consecutive sets."

The game against Travis high school determined whether or not the team would be able to make it to playoffs, so tensions were high throughout the night. The game was one of the closest of the season, with the LBJ Lady Jags ending the night with a score of 3 to 2. However, the team won the night and the ability to make it to playoffs, marking a highpoint in their season, according to LASA sophomore and varsity volleyball player Ronnie Ashley.

"This year was great," Ashley said. "We've had new coaches every year and they came in with so much enthusiasm and dedication and everything really fell together. The girls all meshed and we really worked as a team. We had our ups and downs, problems to get through, but we worked through it as a team. We made it to playoffs for the first time in a while so something obviously clicked."

The new coaching staff and majority underclassmen team made the beginning of the season rife with difficulties. All adapted to the changes as the season went on, including player and LASA sophomore Laura Beth Greytok, who thinks that the team grew closer with each other and more successful as the season went on because of their ability to overcome these challenges.

"This year our season was super successful," Greytok said, "We got a new coach this year, so it took a little time to adjust, but once we did everything really clicked. Our team bonded really quickly and I feel really close to them."

The season may have ended on a loss, though Atchison is looking forward to next season.

"Next year I think that we can make it even further and break even more records," Atchison said.

Greytok predicts more success like this past season for the Lady Jags volleyball team in the future.

"I think the friendships that we made helped us to win so I'm excited to see what will happen next year," Greytok said. "We did really well this year and went to playoffs, which is exciting because that hasn't happened in a long time. Next year I think that we can make it even further and break even more records."

Sky High Hopes

Ultimate frisbee soars above expectations

OLIVER POWERS
Sports Editor

A gaggle of students gather around a set of hard plastic discs in the field behind the portables. After a moment of whispered instructions, a cheer goes up and players run to opposite sides of a haphazardly set up cone field. The frisbee is "pulled" for the kick off (or more accurately throw off) of sorts.

This odd dance is a bi-weekly ritual for the members of the LASA Vertikills Ultimate Frisbee team. In spite of having only one regular season win, LASA senior and Vertikills player Oscar Hernandez remains optimistic about their chances in this upcoming season.

"I would say the season is going great so far this year," Hernandez said. "We have a lot of talented new players. We have a bunch of people who're going to do good things. We've been practicing a lot and it's going to be fun."

The Vertikills also hope changes off the field will provide advantages.

"This is also going to be a good season because a lot of the other teams have lost their senior players, they've graduated, but our team is full of senior players this year," Hernandez explained.

On Dec. 2, the Vertikills competed in a tournament in Waco, tournaments being a relatively common occurrence for frisbee teams getting ready for the regular season. LASA senior and Vertikills captain Zoe Czarnecki isn't looking for wins however. She looks instead for these early tournaments to be building experiences.

"This tournament we approached with a goal of development," Czarnecki said. "We split into an X and a Y team instead of an A and a B team. So we have players of all levels on each team. So we went in with the idea that everyone gets catches on the disc and a lot of playing time and hopefully win some games but it's not a priority, but I think we will."

According to LASA junior and assistant captain Kimmy

Wilson, the wins that come this season can, in part, be attributed to new players with an abundance of enthusiasm.

"There's a bunch of people who have never even played frisbee in their life, but they are athletic and they're excited to play," Wilson said. "That's going to be good for the team, and that's a good starting point to have."

New players and enthusiasm are not solely responsible for the entirety of the success the Vertikills hope to find this season. Czarnecki considers returning players a major factor.

"We have a lot of seniors and juniors, which is a good sign because I don't think we graduated anyone last year," Czarnecki said. "That's really good for the development of the team. We also have a lot of numbers right now, we're starting off our first tournament of the year with two teams, which is pretty exciting. And we're working really hard."

Increased numbers and varying skill level does pose a challenge for Czarnecki, in so far as designing a practice that is beneficial for everyone.

"It's definitely hard, especially when we don't have a coach," Czarnecki said. "It's hard to pick ways to run the practice in ways that are going to be fulfilling for everyone. Everyone has different things that they need to work on but something like fundamentals like stationary throwing is going to benefit you even if you've been playing for years. We try to pick things that new players will be able to understand and learn from, but also that vet players will still be able to benefit from."

Even with these struggles in mind, Czarnecki is hopeful about the success of the team this year, especially as compared to last years team.

"I think we're going to be in a developmental stage for a little while at least, so I think that's going to make us stronger when the season really gets going," Czarnecki said. "I think it's not going to look as good from the outside for a little bit, but I think we're planning on playing mixed at the state tournament, so I think we'll end up ranking pretty high. I have high hopes, especially on the trajectory that I think we're going."



Zoe Czarnecki, LASA senior and frisbee captain, is defended by Kimmy Wilson, LASA junior and frisbee assistant captain, in a drill at the beginning of practice. The Vertikills team practices every Tuesday and Thursday in preparation for the beginning of their season in Mar. and the state tournament in May. photo by Oliver Powers

Dance shows off their moves in winter performance

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Staff Writer

Lights dim on the stage and the audience quiets as people take their positions. The song starts and the dancers start their performance, moving their bodies gracefully and elegantly to the music. The LASA and LBJ dancers finish the dance with a flourish, showing off all of their hard work and practice they put in while in dance class.

The Winter Showcase is a LBJ and LASA performance for the dance classes to showcase what they have been learning for the past semester. Shelby Miller, the dance instructor who has been teaching dance at LBJ and LASA for two years believes that it is an opportunity for the students to show everyone what they have learned and worked so far.

"All five of my fine arts classes get to show off what they have done this semester," Miller said.

The showcase will be held December 12 at the Don T Hayes Performing Arts Center and Miller believes it is an important performance for the students, who have put two months of dedication and practice in specifically to showcase their talents and what they have learned for the year.

"For a lot of them it's something they have never done before they have never performed in front of people, and it's a lot of hard work and commitment to do it so I think it really helps people get out

showcase where all classes come together to perform. The opener to the performance will be danced along to a Shawn Mendes' "Nothing Holding me back".

"The actual song for our class

The performance consists of the grand opening with all the classes together in one dance, along with the six different fine arts classes that will all be dancing to a different style of dance including Broadway, hip hop, jazz,

things instead of the same lessons over and over again, with a lot of variation between each style and dance, making them unique. Some dances are more lyrical and expressive while others are merely just for the dancers to go out and have some fun.

"Some of our lyrical and our contemporary dances are more for storytelling and then our hip hop is just more for fun," Miller said.

Ranjit's class is dancing to hip hop which she believes has taught her many new things about dance and diversified her dance experience.

"I have never done any western dance so I am learning new things styles and dance terms," Ranjit said.

Some students in the classes are taking the class as their first experience to dance and Miller believes that it has helped them move out of their comfort zone and try something new.

"A lot of the dancers had never taken a dance class before in their life and now they are actually trying and they are actually excited to do it so it's really cool to see them grow over the past couple months," Miller said.

Ranjit believes that the class is fun because you are participating in physical activity without thinking about it, enjoying yourself and spending time with friends.

"Learning dance is fun," Ranjit said. "You actually get exercise without thinking about it as exercise."

A lot of the dancers had never taken a dance class before in their life and now they are actually trying and they are actually excited to do it so it's really cool to see them grow over the past couple months

-Dance Teacher Shelby Miller

of their shell and do something that they have never tried," Miller said.

There will be an opener to the

dance is 'Team' by Iggy Azalea," LASA freshman and dance class student Akshaya Ranjit said.

lyrical, contemporary etc. The varying styles of choreography created by Miller means that classes are learning new

1



photo courtesy of by Zayan Vohra

2



photo courtesy of Zayan Vohra

Guess who's coming to Thanksgiving dinner

3



photo by Sarah Porter

4



photo courtesy of Ulan Notzon

1-2) LASA junior Zayan Vohra had naan with boti nu saac for Thanksgiving dinner. Boti nu saac is a traditional Indian soup made of various meats, gravy and various Indian spices usually eaten with naan as a side.

3) LASA senior Sarah Porter had gumbo before her Thanksgiving dinner. Gumbo, a Creole soup commonly eaten in Louisiana and Mississippi, is made with rice, pork sausage, shrimp, crab, okra and other vegetables.

4) LASA senior Ulan Notzon ate various types of sushi, including tuna rolls, sashimi, and rainbow rolls as her Thanksgiving meal. Although sushi is native to Japan, it is a dish enjoyed by many cultures, including her own Filipino family.

5) LASA junior Jorge Villa had pozole and arroz along with his Thanksgiving dinner. They are two traditional Mexican dishes commonly found at family get togethers because they are easy to cook and can be served with any other dish.



photo by Jorge Villa

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