

Ready Set Teach aid rescues student

Cade Spencer  
Managing Editor

On Mondays and Wednesdays, senior Cyn'torreyia Smith spends first and second period as a teacher's aid for a second grade class at Baranoff Elementary. Although Smith spent weeks in CPR and First Aid training, she never believed that these skills would be called upon in the classroom.

However, on Dec. 4, while at lunch, Smith performed the Heimlich maneuver on her second grade student Moxie Maxwell.

"At the moment I wasn't nervous at all because I knew that I had to take the initiative and jump into action," Smith said. "I was taught how to do these things, so I wasn't scared."

As a member of the Ready Set Teach (RST) program, Smith spent six weeks training to be a teacher's aid before she began her position at Baranoff.

"During the [first six weeks] we teach our students classroom management, how to write a lesson plan, and how to give lessons," RST teacher Kelly Langdon said. "All of my students in RST are already CPR certified from Child Development, so we kind of revisit First Aid and CPR in the first six weeks to refresh their memory."

When Smith recognized that Moxie was choking, she immediately put her training into action.

"Ms. Tory pushed on my belly so that I wouldn't have something stuck in my throat," Moxie said. "It made me feel better."

When the Baranoff students go to lunch, they are under the supervision of lunch monitors and the RST aids.

"In this situation, Cyn'torreyia didn't have her mentor teacher to turn to and ask for help because she was on her lunch break," Langdon said. "Thank goodness she acted the way she did, quickly and swiftly, to take care of the situation."



FROM TEACHER AID TO HERO: Senior Cyn'torreyia Smith embraces her second grade student Moxie Maxwell. On Dec. 4, Smith performed the Heimlich maneuver on Maxwell when she began choking during lunch. PHOTO BY Anika Scoma

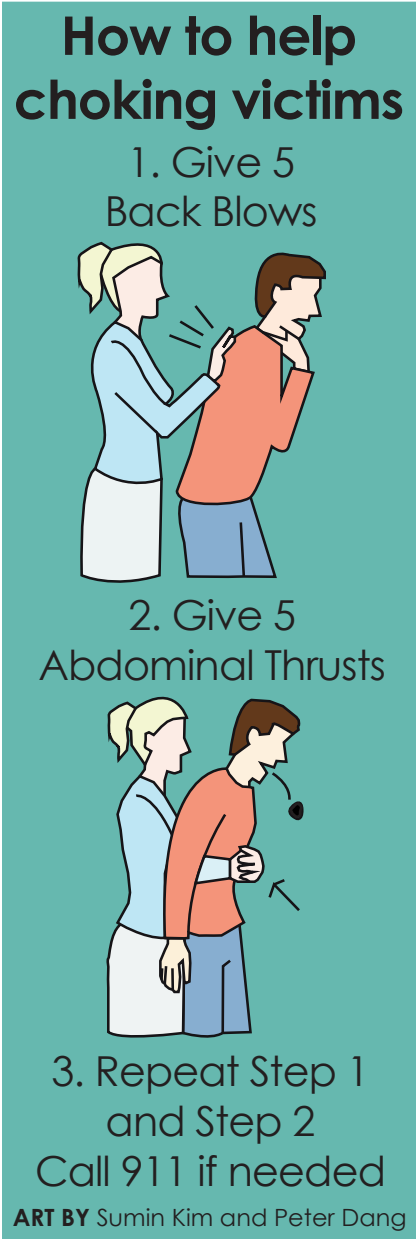
When Jamie Maxwell, Moxie's mother, heard of the incident, she was grateful for Smith's quick actions.

"Up until this, I thought Ms. Tory was a college student teacher, and I was very impressed to find out that she was a high schooler," Jamie said. "She could have asked a school lunch monitor for help, but she took matters into her own hands because

she knew it was urgent to do so, and I am very thankful for that."

After Smith ensured that Moxie was no longer choking and okay, she reported the event to her mentor teacher Kris Higgins.

"[When I heard] of her actions, I was very proud of her," Higgins said. "I continue to be amazed by her and couldn't make it through the year without her."



After Smith saved Moxie, another teacher at the school approached her and thanked her for the life-saving actions she had performed.

"[After I helped Moxie], my students all got up and just gave me a big hug," Smith said. "Knowing that they're appreciative of me being there really means a lot."

In order to make sure that Moxie was okay, Higgins sent her to the nurses office.

"If I ever met Cyn'torreyia I would give her a big hug and thank her for being there for Moxie when I couldn't be," Jamie said. "Moxie is very lucky that she has people looking out for her."

Smith described how she would review the poster on the wall that illustrated the steps of the Heimlich maneuver during lunches at the school. She said this simple act helped keep her First Aid skills sharp.

"I learned a lot about Cyn'torreyia in that moment, and I learned a lot about how the elementary school handles emergency situations like this when they arise," Langdon said. "I have already been thinking about next year and how we might change our First Aid curriculum a bit because I want to make sure my students are prepared and confident for a situation like this."

In addition to Child Development and the RST program, the required Health Education class offers CPR and First Aid training and certification for all Bowie students.

"First Aid Training and CPR would be very valuable additions to any high school's curriculum," Jamie said. "As seen with this, you just never know when you're gonna need it."

As Smith approaches the end of her senior year, she hopes to use her experiences from RST to launch herself into a nursing or teaching career.

"My advice for anyone who has to perform the Heimlich is to jump in," Smith said. "You never know when you could save a life." ■

New internet filter identifies students in need of support

Dylan Ebs  
Dispatch Reporter

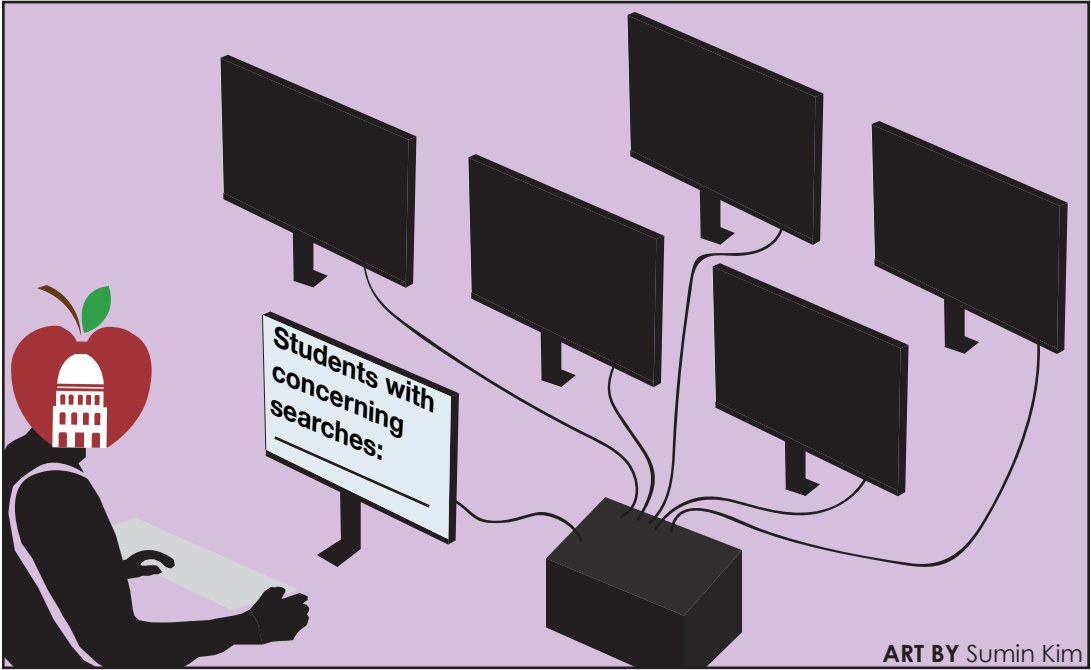
Following the passage of Texas Senate Bill 11, a school safety bill including measures for mental health initiatives, Austin ISD implemented a new filter on AISD-distributed Chromebooks and the AISD network. The filter helps monitor mental health when students make searches on their Chromebook or the AISD network. Through the use of artificial intelligence (AI) technology, AISD can detect when a student may need help based on the student's searches.

Austin ISD Technology Officer for Learning and Systems, Kevin Schwartz, believes that AI technology has been an important part of the filter.

"AI is really useful when we are trying to identify very special situations quickly with-in vast amounts of data," Schwartz said. "We route these data points to appropriate AISD staff that put this information into a more human context and then take whatever steps are most appropriate."

Problems may arise when AI is depended on to filter through web searches, as there is no context given to the searches. A student searching for something potentially concerning could be researching for health class or science class. To address this, some human input has to be made.

"It has been interesting to help train the AI system in the differences between a student researching mental health issues as part of a class and a student who is reaching out for help," Schwartz said. "This is one area where humans will always be the most valuable part of the process."



The AISD technology department is working closely with the AISD Health Services department to implement the new software.

"We're a team, much like a sports team where individuals serve a role on that team for the success of the entire team," AISD Health Services Director Tracy Spinner said. "Our collective goal is to help connect students to the resources and support they need before they escalate their behaviors to harm themselves or someone else."

When a student makes a concerning search, whether that be about self-harm, harming others, or other concerning searches, an alert is shared with the principal and counselors. After the alert, the school counselor will check-in with the student to determine if the student needs additional resources.

The student's parent or guardian will also be contacted when a student makes a search that concerns administrators.

"I just hope that if students need somebody to talk to, we can help support those students," lead counselor Nicole Hepburn said. "I think students now know that you can type that stuff in and you'll be sent down [to the counselor], so maybe students will actually type stuff in because they know that they'll be called down here."

Because the Chromebooks are public property, Hepburn explained that AISD has the right to implement the filter, and junior Nicolas Bastos believes that despite concerns about the software, it will be beneficial.

"There's a lot of uncertainty with AI, but if anything, there will just be false positives,"

Bastos said. "However, it is probably better to think a student is not okay, reach out, and find that they are actually fine. I think that's better than not finding out if they were actually trying to hurt themselves or others."

The district has worked with counselors, principals, and other staff to implement the filter and to make sure it is successful.

"We've been working as a team that includes our counselors, principals and other key support staff and this is the case at all of our secondary schools," Schwartz said. "Each situation that arises may need a different approach, but they all hinge on a relationship and a human connection."

The cost of counseling services may be too expensive for some people, but Bowie offers expansive resources at much lower costs than most local counseling or therapy services.

"We meet with students all the time and then get them help and then we also have the Vida Clinic on campus which is private therapy and it can be inexpensive," Hepburn said. "They do a sliding fee scale, and there's also a lot of free resources in the community, so each student's different on the amount of resources they may need, so it just really depends on the student."

So far, the district indicated that the new filter is having a positive impact on students.

"We are pretty confident that we've helped a number of students," Schwartz said. "The whole goal is to support students and provide help much more pro-actively whenever possible, so we may never have a measurement of how effective this is, but the individual feedback we are receiving tells us we are doing the right thing." ■



Behind the Fence

Engineering class visits construction site

Behind the Fence that separates the old and new parts of Bowie, construction workers are building up. The third floor slab of the parking garage is being poured. The column forms on top of the third floor that supports rooftop tennis courts are being set up and concrete is being poured into those forms. The crane seems to always be moving, indicating the productivity of the crews. Plans and drawings for the renovated fine arts building are being finalized.

Engineering classes received a tour of the construction site, classes went to the contractor trailer where they were shown 2D drawings and 3D renderings of the building. Afterwards, the class walked outside the fence and the project engineers explained the ongoing construction to students and then answered their questions. “We showed them the 3D rendering of the building so they can actually see all the pieces and parts and I think that helped them see what the final result was going to be,” JE Dunn project engineer Amber Sanders said. “We explained what the structural members are and seeing the rendering was very helpful.”

Sanders was impressed by the knowledge students in the engineering class possessed. She said she wishes there was an engineering class when she was in high school.

“I never imagined that high schoolers have engineering classes. It is not something that I had in high school, but it's just awesome that they have it,” Sanders said. “They're able to put their eyes on something that's being built and they're relating it to the class.”

Students like sophomore Chelsea Palecek learned more about the management of a construction project of this size. They were amazed at the complexity of the project.

“I learned it takes a lot more people and effort to design and build a parking garage than a lot of people actually think it does,” Palecek said. “They are balancing workers, materials, the weather and so many other things to make sure this project is moving along.”

The material students learned about at the construction site corresponded with the classroom curriculum.

“The students learned more about how things get built, the project engineers talked about piers, beams and columns,” Madden said. “We're going into that now and they are also learning about deflection so that was good exposure for them.”

A memorable part of the visit for students was when the crane operator lowered the crane hook down to the ground by where the students were standing outside the fence so they could get a better look at how it worked.

“When we were on the outside of the fence, they called the crane operator and asked him to bring the crane down,” Palecek said. “When he brought it down, there is this massive hook that things attach to, there were also many pulleys attached to the hook. We had just covered our simple machines course.” ■

STORY BY Peter Dang

FFA livestock strut at the show

Students present their prized animals at the Travis County Youth Fair

Arushi Sharma  
Dispatch Reporter

As a person thinks about beauty pageants, they usually do not imagine livestock as the contestants. However, in FFA contests and shows, farm animals, such as goats and pigs, are directly in the center of the spotlight.

The annual Travis County Youth Show (TCYS), occurred from Jan. 16 to Jan. 18 and Bowie brought home over 50 individual awards. In addition to awards, students competed for scholarships and auction funds.

“This year at the show I competed with one goat and I received ribbons for my goat and my youth fair projects,” junior Grace Burden said.

When a student enrolls in the FFA program, they are able to choose the type of livestock they raise and show.

“We showed a variety of animals such as chickens, turkeys, swines, lambs, goats, rabbits and cattle. Throughout TCYS, they all go through shows by breed and weight class,” freshman Falyn Crenek said.

TCYS had a variety of different contests such as Poultry Shows, Market Steer Shows, and Market Swine Shows.

“The [TCYS] days are really long because we stay with our animals until about 10 p.m. without any sleep,



ONE GREAT GOAT: Senior Brianna Acosta works with her goat Hennessy to prepare for TCYS and other FFA contests. When a student participates in the FFA program, they are responsible for all of the care their animal requires. PHOTO BY Rae Gray

and they can be challenging but worth it in the end,” Burden said. “It’s a really good way for students to bond and make memories.”

Senior Kaitlyn Cinque has found a way to make tedious contest preparation fun and exciting.

“With my steer, I work with placing his feet in the correct spot and keeping his head up high so that he gets used to holding his head up during the show,” Cinque said.

Prior to the contests, the

competitors spend hours working on walking and posing so that they can put their best foot forward.

“All year our minds are set on making our animals the best that they can be for TCYS,” Burden said.

Shelby Stephens has been an Agriculture teacher and FFA advisor for the past three years.

“TCYS and showing animals is important for Bowie students as they learn responsibility and life lessons that are not taught in the

classroom,” Stephens said. “I believe the barn sometimes teaches students more valuable life lessons than the classroom.”

When FFA members prepare for competitions such as TCYS, they have to dedicate about two to three hours every day after school prepping and training their livestock.

“My favorite part of being in the shows is that it’s a way to see all of your hard work from the previous months coming together and paying off,” Burden said.

Citizens debate how to solve the homeless crisis

Dylan Ebs  
Dispatch Reporter

After two stabbings involving homeless individuals in Austin, the controversy around the homelessness crisis has entered the mainstream again. In early January, a homeless man went on a stabbing spree, leaving one dead and three injured. Later that month, a homeless woman stabbed five people at 6th Street. In October last year, Texas Governor Greg Abbott threatened to intervene if the city did not make improvements to the homeless crisis by Nov. 1.

Since then, Abbott has directed the Texas Department of Transportation to conduct weekly cleanups under highways in Austin. Abbott’s response has varied from that of the City Council, who lifted a ban on camping in public areas much to the governor’s dismay. In October, the council revised the plan and placed a ban on camping on sidewalks. However, sitting and lying down is still allowed in public areas.

“Getting rid of the camping ban and bringing it back has caused a lot of confusion downtown,” social studies teacher Charles Stampley said. “They tried to buy a hotel in South Austin to use that for a homeless shelter, but that deal fell through because the people that live around the hotel didn’t want [the shelter] in their neighborhood.”

As sophomore Duren Wilson observes the increasing amount of homeless camps around Austin, he feels concerned for his safety.

“Homelessness has made me feel insecure about the safety of me and my loved ones,” Wilson said. “Due to the recent spike in attacks by homeless people, I worry about my family. My sister goes to Ann Richards, which has a very large homeless camp right next to it.”

The solutions to help fix the homelessness problem in Austin vary substantially, with some people preferring more government involvement and some wanting less.

“I think that homeless people should be given all the assistance that they need,” freshman Hunter Benson said. “It would be ideal if the homeless would be given a home and basic necessities by the government, however, I think that is unlikely to happen anytime soon.”

A 2015 assessment by the U.S. Department of Housing and

Urban Development found that 45% of homeless people were dealing with some mental illness.

“The city needs to try to find housing, but it isn’t more of a city problem, it’s a nation-wide problem, and we don’t take care of our vulnerable people enough,” Stampley said. “Especially mental health. When you were mentally ill at one time, you could stay in the hospital for a longer period of time until you got stabilized on your medications and now, what they do is they put people in the hospital for a week and put them back out so there’s no place for them to go.”

The most visible homeless populations are ones who camp in public spaces, they are typically chronically homeless. Other people experience vehicular homelessness where they sleep in their car. Other types include episodic homelessness where people frequently go in and out homelessness, and transitional homelessness, the most common type, is where people are homeless once for a short period before finding stable housing, according to the National Coalition for the Homeless.

“One of our family friends has been homeless for the past couple of years,” Benson said. “Soon, we will also start to volunteer to help

homeless people.”

Community First Village is an organization that uses volunteers to provide sustainable residency to the local homeless population.

“I think there are great organizations in Austin that are doing a good job of handling the homeless crisis,”

sophomore McKenna Couch said. “I know of an organization called Community First that is a community that provides housing, food, employment and other basic necessities for homeless people. This is already helping the homeless crisis and will just continue to improve it.” ■

HOMELESS In Austin

2,255 Homeless individuals in Travis County on any single day in 2019

1,086 Homeless individuals in Travis County were unsheltered on any single day in 2019

109 The amount of hours a minimum wage worker would have to work every week to afford a one bedroom home in Travis County

70% Percentage of homeless individuals in Travis County that attribute past trauma or abuse as the cause of their current homelessness

ART BY Sumin Kim, Cade Spencer, and Peter Dang

SOURCE www.austinecho.org





# Students get crafty in the MakerSpace

Brianna Lopez  
Dispatch Reporter

A new program hosted by Librarian Tara Walker-Leon grants students the opportunity to express their creativity and produce unique crafts. The designated craft time, called MakerSpace, is offered in the library during FIT sessions and student's off periods.

"This month we started the MakerSpace where students can make jewelry and earrings that are made out of felt," Walker-Leon said.

During the beginning of each month, the MakerSpace will have different sets of activities for students to learn, master, and design.

"We will also be able to make bracelets and we will be using resin, which is a clear gel," Walker-Leon said. "First, we are going to dry flowers, and once the flowers are dry, we will put them in the resin so it dries clear with flowers in it. This will allow students to make a necklace, a key-chain, or something like that."

Although the program has just begun, Walker-Leon has already made some plans for the supplies she will need for the activity happening during the month of February.

"Next month, throughout February, we are going to make buttons, and we have two different sizes," Walker-Leon said. "Then we are going to make stuff with Perler beads and you can make



**VALENTINE'S CREATIONS:** Librarian Tara Walker-Leon demonstrates how to use a heart-shaped hole puncher to juniors Megan Shaver (left) and Amara Robertson (right). In order to promote creativity and art production, Walker-Leon hosts the MakerSpace every Monday and Friday during FIT. **PHOTO BY** Cade Spencer

any design you want."

If a student wants to sign up to attend MakerSpace, they should register for the Walker-Leon FIT class through the AISD Learn FIT Portal.

"I was just looking for FIT sessions and I usually like to go to the library and I looked up Walker in FIT and on

Monday it was jewelry making," junior Amara Robertson said. "So I went to that one, and I invited my friends, and we plan to keep going to MakerSpace."

Robertson has enjoyed the opportunity to express her creativity, and she has even felt challenged by some of the crafts they have de-

signed so far.

"At first I was like this is going to be really fun and easy but I also kind of really like things to turn out well," Robertson said. "Making jewelry is a lot harder than I thought, so I am kind of struggling, but it's okay because it's just for fun."

The MakerSpace currently

has supplies for cardboard creations, Perler beads, and button making.

As the program expands, Walker-Leon hopes to invest in Sphero robots, a green screen, Adobe Creative Cloud Suite, and large amounts of paint, markers, clay, and other items for her students to use and enjoy.

"I spent the last semester ordering supplies for the MakerSpace," Walker-Leon wrote in an email. "If anyone wants to design a lesson around any of the [MakerSpace supplies mentioned above] let me know, and I am happy to prepare any needed space or supplies."

Although Walker-Leon has encountered no problems so far, if a student were to break any MakerSpace equipment, they would be responsible to pay for the replacement.

"I am hoping that everyone will respect the space and that they will not break things on purpose," Walker-Leon said.

Junior Hope Bigbee has enjoyed MakerSpace as it provides a place for her friends and herself to relax and create art in the school day.

"I think it is a good opportunity to try making stuff even if you do not have the supplies at home," Bigbee said. "The supplies are accessible here and you have people to show you how to do it."

On Feb. 10, Bigbee enjoyed the Valentine's Day MakerSpace as she created classic heart shaped crafts.

"I do not think there has really been something like this at school that is during school hours," Bigbee said. "Although I know there is art club, the club is after school and not as accessible as MakerSpace to all students." ■

## Construction on La Crosse delayed

*A recently discovered cave system has prolonged the La Crosse Bridge project*

For many people of the Circle C community, the MoPac construction on La Crosse has felt like it is dragging on. The construction project began in January 2018 and initially was planned to take four years to complete.

However, after the discovery of 72 different sections of caves during the initial stages of construction, the Texas Department of Transportation may be forced to change the estimated completion date. Consequently, the delay could be an inconvenience to anyone who passes by the La Crosse Bridge daily.

"I am very upset about the La Crosse Bridge and how long the construction is taking," sophomore Addison Todd said. "It has made my drive home from school a lot longer than it should be, and I can not wait for them to finally finish the prolonged construction."

Renovations on La Crosse and MoPac are long overdue and could substantially impact the amount of traffic on MoPac. MoPac was first built in 1992, but the population of Austin has doubled since then,

requiring a larger highway.

"I live off Brodie and after the completion of the SH-45 toll road more of the Hays traffic goes north that way instead of using Brodie," social studies teacher Wendy Uzzle said. "We notice big differences and increases in traffic, especially in the mornings, when different sections of MoPac are closed or have limited access due to construction."

According to TxDOT, the bridge construction should only take a few more months despite the substantial cave system they discovered while building an underpass at La Crosse Avenue. Therefore, the construction is expected to still be finished in 2021.

"I do think the construction will be worth it when it is finished. Austin has historically been reactive instead of proactive in terms of planning for growth. I saw just a few days ago that Austin is set to double in population by 2040," Uzzle said. "We have to prepare for that, whether we are excited about the future growth or not." ■ **STORY BY** Lauren Joy

## A new way to explore classes

*Informative videos offer students insight on available courses*

The Bowie administration and counseling team has implemented teacher-made course videos, which provide information about a specific class to aid students in their course selection for the next school year.

The videos are a new resource this year, providing students with guidance on which classes they might want to choose. They are located on the school website, jbhhs.org, under the Guidance and Counseling and Course Scheduling tabs.

"The videos provide information about what the class is about, what projects are involved, and you know, the activities and workload," Counselor Kim Gilbert said. "I like it because you get to see the students who are currently in the class in action."

Sophomore Zoya Faisal explained that the videos have allowed her to better understand the classes offered in the 2020-2021 school year.

"[The videos] have opened up my eyes to many more courses I didn't even know Bowie offered," Faisal said. "Thanks to the videos, I have a much better idea of what courses I plan to take, specifically for sci-

ence because there are a lot of science options."

Although she has enjoyed the videos, freshman Fiona Tanis has concerns about the new leveling down policy. The new policy requires students to remain in an advanced class for a full six weeks and have an average below an 80% before "leveling down", according to the Advanced Course Acknowledgment Contract.

"I feel like the videos have everything you would need," Tanis said. "However, I don't like the new level down policy because it really makes me reconsider taking all Pre-AP classes."

In order to address all of these concerns, counselors are scheduling meetings with students, where they can meet one-on-one to discuss course options.

"I am really excited about how we are going into classrooms and talking with all of [the students]," Gilbert said. "We also have our 10 minute meetings coming up so it's more individualized attention to what choices you want to have for the 2020-2021 school year." ■ **STORY BY** Sammie Thompson

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# Shoe reselling kicks up a major profit

Mia Folkers  
Feature Editor

Walking into the store, you imagine the perfect pair of shoes in your head. Searching through every pair, you finally find the perfect pair of kicks. You quickly ask for the pair in your size, to find they are sold out, and you hopelessly put the shoes back on the shelf. Pulling out your phone, you find the only available pairs left are being sold from multiple resellers online.

Two years ago junior Blake Guerra started buying and selling well-known brands of shoes and clothes.

“Since I was a little kid, I always liked shoes, it was the main part of an outfit I was always drawn to,” Guerra said. “In seventh grade I entered a raffle for a pair of 2016 power Black Yeezys. I ended up winning and once I had the shoes, I ended up never really wearing them. So I decided to sell them and that brought the idea of doing this with all kinds of apparel and shoes.”

Running his own business offers him lots of opportunities to sell a variety of brands and styles. Guerra decides on these purchases by keeping up to date with research. “Well the types of shoes

I choose are dictated by the market, like what people are commonly buying and what people like in that particular year,” Guerra said. “Like a year ago I would say the older chunky type of shoes were best to buy, but now I look for more deconstructed and bright colored shoes, similar to what Off White and Nike have been producing.”

Completing transactions from seller to customers can be a very complicated process, so Guerra uses a company to help sort the selling and buying business.

“The Middleman website is a company that gets me in contact with buyers,” Guerra said. “Once I have a price I’ll ship the shoes to the company so they can verify it, then when the purchase has been made, the company will pay me.”

For each shirt or pair of shoes, there is a specific process Guerra follows to sell the products he finds to customers.

“So first I identify the type of clothes or shoes I want to sell, and research the certain retailers, stores, and websites that this product is coming from,” Guerra said. “Then I buy as many of that shoe or apparel as possible, and I look at the Middleman



**EYES UP:** Junior Blake Guerra glances at his growing collection of shoes he plans to sell. Guerra's reselling business focuses on selling what is commonly bought or trending in the market. **PHOTO BY** Rae Gray



**HANDS FULL:** Blake Guerra poses with his hen and his rooster pair of shoes to match with her. Guerra finds reselling shoes as a way for him to share his interests with others. **PHOTO BY** Rae Gray

website to decide whether I should wait for the value to go up, or if the value is going to dip and I should sell.”

The reselling business is quite a job to take on, but Guerra sees this individual challenge as an advantage for his sales.

“It is definitely fun working on your own, you get total control on what is going on in the business, along with what is bought or sold,” Guerra said. “I can take my own risks which is a nice freedom to a business.”

Guerra’s success as an individual entrepreneur is proof that he has found a successful high school job according to his mother, Stephanie Guerra.

“Blake handles the business really well,” Stephanie said. “I’ve been so impressed by his initiative, he took the role to take on all of the shipping and financial transactions on his own. As far as I know, he decided to get involved in the resale market without any outside influence.”

Reselling shoes, unlike buying from a store, is a more

exclusive type of shopping, and junior Nick Van Lente believes that it is more popular than just buying from any clothing or shoe store.

“I find it harder to buy from stores now that I’ve shopped with sellers like Blake,” Van Lente said. “The transactions are less personal in a store, but with Blake, he knows what I like and can keep an eye out for things I would want to purchase.”

Taking care of all his customers is something Guerra takes seriously, according to his mother Stephanie.

“Blake is often able to get shoes or apparel before they are available to the general public,” Stephanie said. “Sometimes, he sets an alarm in the middle of the night just to jump on a spe-

cial release sale.”

Although Blake finds success through his customers and satisfaction from his mother, there are still small challenges he faces in his business.

“At first the hardest part was buying the items and going through the process to get them at a good price,” Guerra said.

“Now, knowing the trends is the tricky part, because selling clothes and shoes has become harder to

make a successful amount of profit, so making sure you have well known items can make things harder for the business.”

Even with the challenges regarding the ongoing trends in the year, Blake has a good reputation that customers like Van Lente appreciates.

“Verification is really important when buying high end shoes and clothes,” Van Lente said. “So Blake always being able to do that is really good for customers who frequently are purchasing these expensive brands.”

Guerra never expected the reselling business to be something he enjoyed so much, but his mother believes it has become the perfect job for her son.

“This has been a great business for Blake because it is something that he can do when he has the time and that he can just let sit when he is busy with other things,” Stephanie said. “The business also allows him to indulge in some specialty brands in ways that could never occur otherwise.”

The success of the business is not the most important part, for Guerra believes the opportunities he receives is what makes reselling so significant.

“I see shoes and clothes like a piece of art, so reselling them is sharing my passion with other people,” Guerra said. ■

“I see shoes and clothes like a piece of art, so reselling them is sharing my passion with other people.”

**Blake Guerra**  
Junior

## The rising “flex” culture changes customers purchases

Amelie Hayne  
Dispatch Reporter

With the rise of social media taking over society and the constant craving for something new to show off, luxury items have started to consume the lives of students. This has slowly become known as “flex” culture, which does come at a hefty cost.

Although for some students it is not just about purchasing and wearing these items to participate in flex culture, but rather they value the quality and worth of each item. One of these students is senior Ethan Ramirez.

“I prefer to purchase investment pieces, so basically items that will appreciate in value over time,” Ramirez said. “Meanwhile with some other people they like to wear and purchase things to make it look like they’re worth more just to flex.”

For Ramirez owning and purchasing such items, is rather not about the “flex”, but instead he focuses more on the fashion aspect. He makes sure to spend time considering what he is purchasing and taking into account the quality and value of each item.

“I shop for items daily, both in store and online, but personally I like to shop in store more. When you shop in store for luxury items you get the full experience, and sometimes they will give you stuff for free, if you come in often enough,” Ramirez said. “At every store I go to I have a specific person that I go to, since they get paid off of commission and I love to support them.”

However for some, purchasing more expensive brand name items, provides a feeling of accomplishment. For senior, Riley Hughes appreciating her expensive items is something she makes sure to do.

“I really do value all of the designer items that I own, I understand their worth and for that reason I treat all of my items with ex-



**KICKED BACK:** Senior Ethan Ramirez poses in front of his father's orange Lamborghini. Although Ramirez does not drive the Lamborghini to school for safety reasons, he does drive a 2005 Toyota Tacoma truck. **PHOTO BY** Mia Folkers

treme care,” Hughes said.

However, being a part of “flex” culture doesn’t just limit students to purchasing over-the-top expensive items. Ramirez also shops for more affordable clothing pieces as well.

“So I have definitely leaned more towards affordable items of clothing, but with higher quality like Lululemon and Outdoor Voices,

still luxury athleisure brands. But I am leaning away from major fashion designers just because they are starting to become cheaper quality because they are mass producing their products now.”

For many students the expense of luxury items, becomes worth the cost because of the feeling that they receive after getting the item makes it worth it. For junior Vincent

Nguyen, he is always on the lookout for the new items

“I feel good when I make one of these purchases, but a little unsettling since it’s so expensive and I feel like I could’ve gotten more with the money I had then just one item,” Nguyen said. “But it’s a good feeling like a feeling of anticipation to when you can wear it and ‘flex’ it to your peers.”

According to English teacher Jaqueline Gonzales, in high school it can become easy to get accustomed to being able to afford more pricey items, if your parents are paying for it or even saving money to purchase such items. She believes that students need to make sure that what they don’t become too invested in “flex” culture, because it can lead to bad financial choices down the road.

“Generally, my opinion is that if you are able to spend money and you have the means to go for it and do what you want, but I think sometimes I think it’s better to be more proactive with saving and making sure you are secure and safe, especially outside of high school context,” Gonzales said. “I would not put my bills at jeopardy for buying a hydro flask personally, but anything goes, I won’t knock people for choosing to do that but there are other things that you should think about like big money questions.”

In some cases people view purchasing such expensive items as an achievement and something that they are proud of and have worked towards. Gonzales reflects on the money aspect of this concept of “flexing” and believes people should keep in mind the effect of the decisions they make.

“If you have earned money and you have worked really hard for it, it’s totally valid to spend it on what you want,” Gonzales said. “If that is something that is important to you, like showing your work in that way.” ■



# Student band builds a musical Empire

Miranda **Cardenas**  
Feature Editor

Bright multi-colored lights flood the faces and stage of a new up and coming band as they perform their set. Pre-show jitters melt away as instincts take over to sing vocals and play instruments while mesmerizing a crowd at the same time.

Alternative rock band 'Empire' has found a passion for writing, practicing, and performing their own music to share with others for the past six years. Senior lead vocalist Ava Neilsen has been inspired by music from a young age.

"I've always been surrounded by music growing up and to bring other people together who love music the way I do, was what my goal was," Neilsen said. "I strongly believe that music can create a bond that brings people together in a really interesting way."

Being lead singer allows Neilsen the creative freedom to explore her talents in a way that personally fits her.

"In the band being the lead singer, it's a big rush of excitement whenever I get to perform with the band at gigs," Neilsen said. "I like it because I can see how my voice has changed and formed over the years through the music."

Lead guitarist, senior Frankie Caballero recently joined 'Empire' to further pursue his musical interests.

"I play rhythm and lead guitar for the band," Caballero said. "I've been apart of 'Empire' since the beginning of last semester so the first semester of senior year."

Caballero got the opportunity to join after 'Empire' was looking for a new lead guitarist and he wanted to get musical experience in a band.

"I had just quit my other band and I heard that the lead guitarist of 'Empire' had just left too so I decided to join them and I think I made a great decision because the whole dynamic of the band is super cool," Caballero said. "I really like our sound because we have a lot of fun creating unique sounds for each song."

Frankie's little brother, sophomore Lucas Caballero plays bass for 'Empire' and started playing in the band before his brother.

"I'm the bass player for the band and I picked up playing bass freshman year and I



**PERFORMING FOR AN AUDIENCE:** The band 'Empire' shows off their talents at a live show in front of friends and family as well as local spectators. The band has existed for six years so far, but there have been different members throughout the band's history. **PHOTO COURTESY OF** Ava Nielsen

really clicked with it," Lucas said. "I joined when I was still a sophomore because I thought it would be a cool team effort to be apart of."

Lucas appreciates the creative freedom he's given and being able to play whenever he wants.

"It's nice having the freedom to have a designated time to work on music that you want to work on and play whatever you want to play," Lucas said.

Working with different types of creative minds can sometimes be a difficult task, but 'Empire' proves that teamwork makes the dream work through friendship.

"The biggest thing I've learned so far is how to collaborate with such strong-minded and talented individuals who each bring something different to our creative process and band as a whole," Neilsen said. "The whole process flows fairly well because we

all support each other."

With support being shown within the band, Neilsen has learned overall how to appreciate the creativity present within the band, and enjoys spending time with her band-mates.

"I really enjoy meeting with my friends every week and creating music that we have all contributed to and worked on instead of just separate pieces," Neilsen said.

Having such a strong connection with music Neilsen plans to follow music into life after high school.

"After high school I am pursuing performing arts in college and hopefully as a career if all things go well, so I'm super excited about focusing more on that," Neilsen said.

Frankie enjoys being apart of the band to also improve his skills on the guitar as well as enjoying the presence of the group as a whole.

"My favorite part is just playing the guitar and always improving but at the same time getting to do it with people who appreciate music as much as I do," Frankie said.

The band's music is accessible to people on many different streaming platforms, and Lucas enjoys the bond that is built within the band.

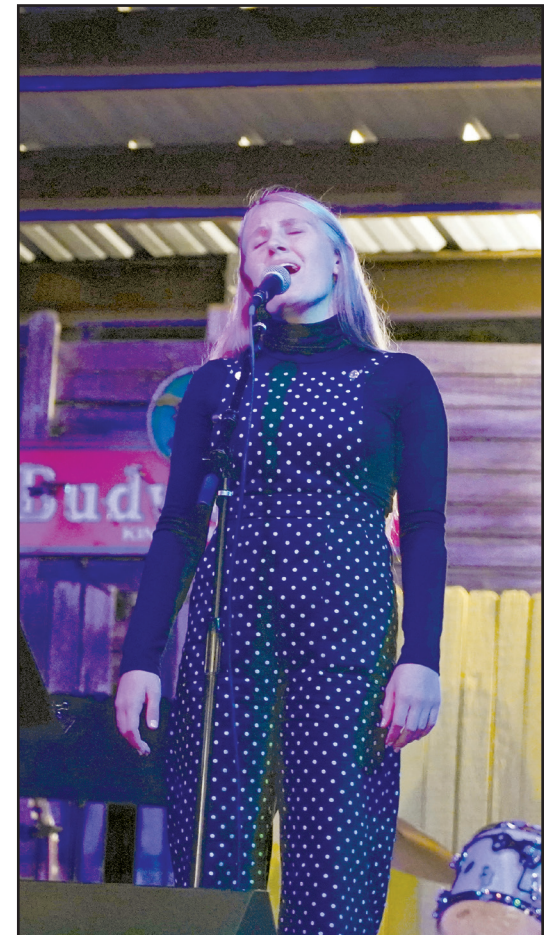
"Our music is accessible to everyone on Spotify, Apple Music, and Amazon Music," Lucas said. "Getting to hangout with your friends and enjoying being with each other while also making music is a great way to strengthen our bond."

Stage fright is fairly common amongst performers in all kinds of ways, but Frankie has found a way to combat it.

"Stage fright comes with most performances, sometimes I just have to look down and try not to look at people, but everyone who comes out to see us is very supportive," Frankie said.

Being apart of the band comes with goals for the future, but also enjoying the moment is important to Frankie as well.

"If we really took off that would be a great opportunity but it's already a nice opportunity too because you can get more musical



**BELTING OUT LYRICS:** Senior Ava Nielsen sings lead for her band. Nielsen's musical background has inspired her to continue pursuing music and singing. **PHOTO COURTESY OF** Ava Nielsen

experience," Frankie said.

A strong support system comes to Frankie from not only the band and his friends, but also his immediate family.

"My whole family is a big support system for my brother and I in the band because they're familiar with the process," Frankie said.

The band does a couple of performances a year at local venues and hopes to branch out soon.

"I would really wanna see the band maybe get together a little more and play at other venues too besides Graceland or Rusty Mule but I'm grateful for every experience," Lucas said.

Frankie encourages everyone with a music curiosity to follow it and see where it leads them.

"I recommend music to anyone who is at all curious because it teaches you how to work with other people and skills you can use in everyday life, not just when playing music," Frankie said. ■

**LISTEN TO 'EMPIRE'  
ON SPOTIFY NOW**



**PERFORMER PASSES IN HAND:** All group members of the band 'Empire' pose with their all access-passes. The band has performed at venues as big as the Dell Diamond in Round Rock, Texas. **PHOTO COURTESY OF** Ava Nielsen

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# ADOLESCENT



Faith Lawrence  
Managing Editor

You wake up on a Saturday morning and take out your phone to scroll through TikTok for several hours before getting out of bed. After getting ready, you make a cup of coffee and go back to bed, turning on your computer to re-watch episodes of The Office, eyes switching back and forth between screens as you check your phone for any Snapchat or iMessage notifications.

Addiction Treatment categorizes all addictions into two categories: substance addictions, which include addictions to different types of alcohol and drugs, as well as behavioral addictions like exercise, gambling, technology and eating.

“When we get the mentality of ‘I wish there were more hours in the day’ instead of ‘I need to take some things out of my day’, we’re really setting ourselves up to need something to be an escape,” psychology teacher Kris Grandinetti-Johnson said. “The phone is an escape, the computer is an escape. Something that lets you zero out, and that’s what you kind of unwittingly do.”

## TECHNOLOGY

According to an article by the Newport Academy Teen Treatment Center, 92 percent of teenagers surveyed go online daily, 50 percent say that they feel addicted to their phones, and 59 percent of parents surveyed felt their teenager was addicted to their mobile device.

“I would say I have an addiction to technology because I am constantly connected to my phone,” junior Andrew Barre said. “I get home, I put my stuff down and immediately turn my computer on. I feel as if I always have to be connected, even if that’s not really the case.”

In June 2018, a teenager in the United Kingdom was diagnosed with the first case of internet gaming addiction according to a newspaper in the UK, The Trumpet. A d d i - t i o n a l l y , O r -

ganic discusses a study in Britain that concluded at least half of teenage suicides were related to bullying both in-person and online.

“I noticed there is this kind of subtle effect when you are looking at somebody having more fun than you, even if you know that’s just their highlight reel,” Grandinetti said. “It’s still such a strong visual to your brain that even the strongest of wills can start to compare themselves or be envious.”

Grandinetti believes that the increased use of technology in schools has added to teenagers being addicted to technology. She said the use of technology in classrooms has become part of a large problem with addictions and the physical toll excessive use of technology can cause, light the back-lighting of screens affecting your vision and posture problems from looking down at phones.

“[Technology] is just like an escape,” Barre said. “When I’m playing video games or watching some useless video on YouTube, I’m not worrying about school and I’m just living in the moment. It’s just an escape from the pressures of the real world and pressures from school.”

## CAFFEINE

Many energy drinks are loaded with sugar which is good for short-term performance but, according to Body Nutrition, will eventually lead to a sugar crash shortly after a person’s insulin levels peak in response to the excess amount of sugar. CNN Health reported on the death of a teenager from South Carolina due to the consumption of excess levels of caffeine.

“Drinking caffeinated drinks can cause an irregular heartbeat and cause kids to bounce off the walls,” health teacher Sam Degelia said. “If you’ve got a health issue and don’t know it, drinking excess levels of caffeine can kill you. Even though it’s addictive, I would recommend trying to stop drinking caffeine. The longer you stay away from that caffeinated stuff, the more your pallet becomes used to it.”

Despite knowing the negative implications that highly caffeinated drinks can cause, students such as junior Ben Floyd\* continue consuming the products.

“I drink caffeine because it gives me energy so I can focus on other things,” Floyd said. “[Energy drinks] are like

happiness in a liquid form. I would probably say I have an addiction to caffeinated drinks because I will always be drawn toward buying them while at the store since I know that [the drink] is going to make me feel good.”

## PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The abuse of prescription drugs can lead to many negative implications: anti-anxiety medication, such as Xanax, abuse can cause memory problems, slurred speech, poor concentration and dizziness and abuse of stimulants like Adderall can cause high blood pressure, irregular heartbeat, insomnia and anxiety as stated by Mayo Clinic.

“Prescription medication is probably a bigger issue than anything because they have a big physical effect on a younger body,” Grandinetti said.

High school students attending public schools, according to Floyd, have easy access to such prescription drugs they are not prescribed to, like Adderall and other stimulants, as well as anti-anxiety medication and painkillers.

“Adderall kind of addicted me because of the energy and other in-the-moment positives the drug offers,” Floyd said. “However, sometimes when you come off of Adderall, every emotion that you felt before you took the drug multiplies and rushes back toward you at a higher degree.”

## RECOVERY

The Phoenix House, located in south central Austin, offers prevention and education services, assessment and evaluation services as well as residential services for teens struggling with substance-use disorders or mental health problems. Additionally, Sober Austin offers treatment centers and outpatient programs for teenagers in recovery from substance abuse.

“We offer a very simple assessment process by licensed staff to determine how Phoenix House can best help the adolescent,” Phoenix House Director of Residential and Outpatient Services Kelly Aubry said. “If a teen is motivated to get help with their recovery they can call [us]. I think it’s important to note that if [students] are concerned that they may have a problem, the earlier

they ask for help, the better.”

\*Ben Floyd is a fictional name used to protect an anonymous source.

## ENERGY DRINK DAMAGE

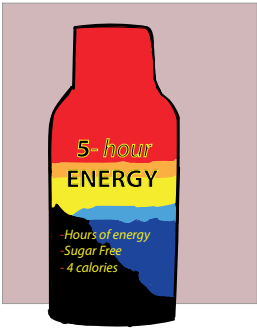
A health comparison of four common energy drinks, comparing the caffeine levels as well as other prominent information about each drink.

**1 Red Bull:** The original and most popular energy drink brand, Red Bull, contains about 80mg of caffeine but lots of B-vitamins that help enhance energy production and taurine, an amino acid that helps nerves grow and remain healthy. Red Bull also offers a sugar-free version.



**2 Monster:** The containers Monster is packaged in are 16 ounces, relatively large in comparison to other energy drinks making the drink meant for longer sustained consumption. Monster contains 160mg of caffeine but has an excessive amount of sugar, around 210 grams per drink.

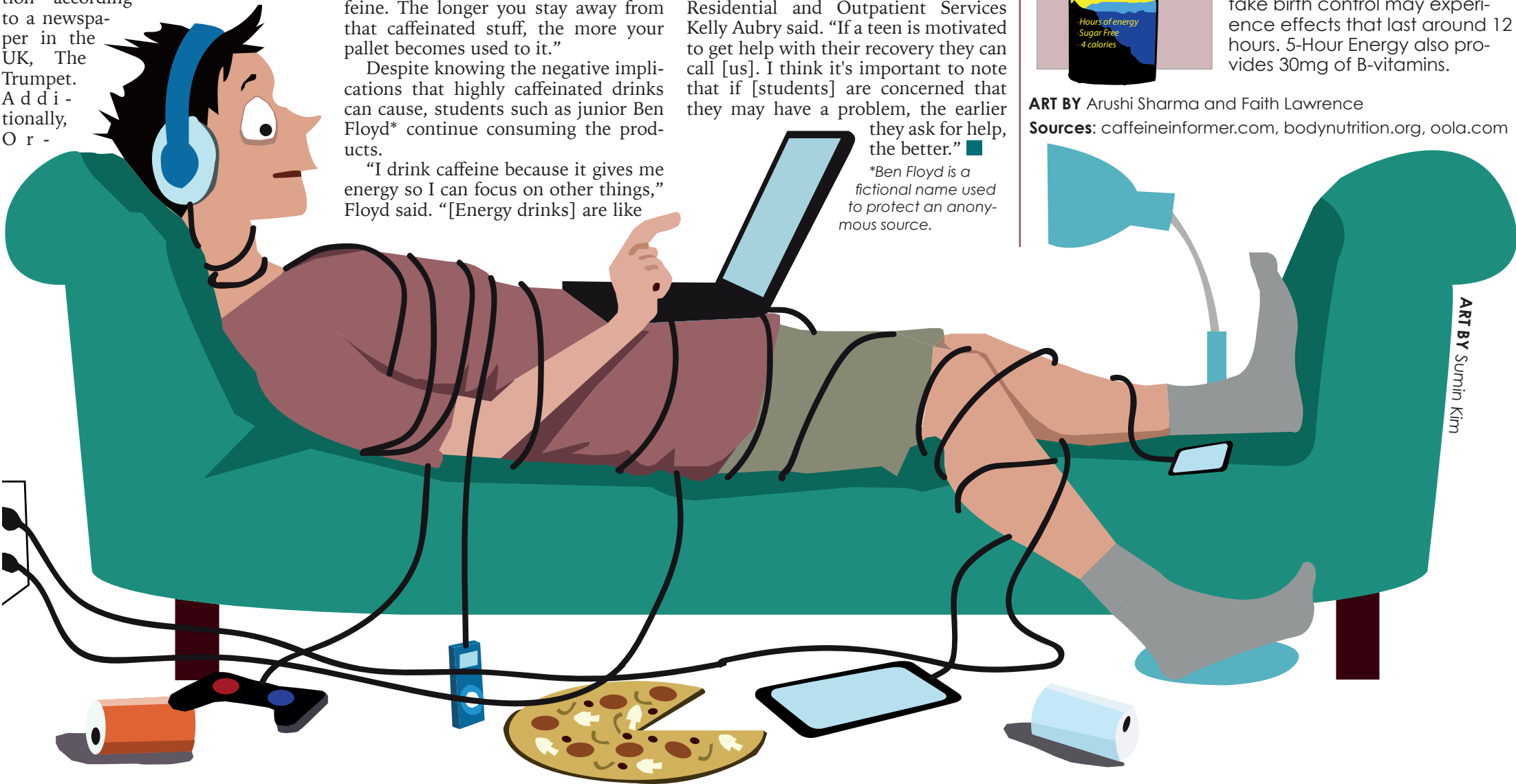
**3 BANG:** BANG is sugar free and calorie free, and instead is sweetened with the artificial sweetener sucralose. BANG has around 300mg of caffeine per drink, making it one of the highest caffeine content per can energy drinks available and gives consumers a high energy boost.



**4 5-Hour Energy:** This energy supplement has around 200mg of caffeine and, true to its name, offers an energy boost that lasts around five hours. However, women who take birth control may experience effects that last around 12 hours. 5-Hour Energy also provides 30mg of B-vitamins.

ART BY Arushi Sharma and Faith Lawrence

Sources: caffeineinformer.com, bodynutrition.org, oola.com



ART BY Sumin Kim

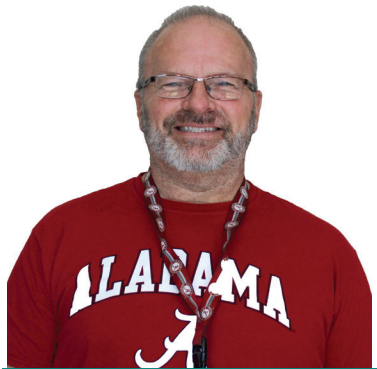
## OPPOSING OPINIONS

Teachers and students share their opinions on whether or not cell phones should be taken up by teachers at the start of class. **PHOTOS AND INTERVIEWS BY** Faith Lawrence



**Renee Keyes**  
Anatomy/Physiology

I think by the time you're a junior or senior, you are mature enough to pay attention and not be on your phone when taking notes. But with freshmen, I would make them put phones away.



**Joseph Walding**  
Chemistry/Physics

Phones are a distraction. Students can't be effective in learning things while they are on their phones. Students don't have the strength to put them away, so teachers have to take them away.



**Kate Scarboro**  
Junior

When teachers take my phone, it feels like they are invading my privacy and taking what belongs to me. I feel like they should just have kids keep phones in their pockets or backpacks.

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ART BY Sumin Kim





# School sculptors prepare to ace VASE



**SLAPPING THE CLAY:** To help prepare the clay for the potter's wheel, senior Mason Lane rounds it into a ball. Lane has been involved in the sculpture class since sophomore year. "Art is really fun and I'm good at it," Lane said. "So I've chosen to stick with it." **PHOTO BY** Abbey Repka



**SMOOTHING DOWN THE CLAY:** Using his hands, senior German Julbe works to level down the clay on the face he's making for a project. Julbe is one of many students attending the VASE competition. "I took sculpture because I just love working with my hands," Julbe said. "I love making and being around art." **PHOTO BY** Abbey Repka

*Students in all visual art classes make dazzling work to compete in state wide competition at the end of February*

Abbey Repka  
Photo Essay Editor

Starting with just a chunk of clay, sculptors are able to mold it into a beautiful piece of artwork with minimal effort. Students in all art classes are creating original pieces of work for the Visual Arts Scholastic Event (VASE) competition at the end of February

Senior German Julbe is one of many sculpture and art kids to be going to VASE. "For VASE, I'm entering a little demon frog and a giant face," Julbe said. "Well, I was thinking, for the first giant face I ever made I said: This could probably be good

enough to enter into VASE." Being in an art class allows students to be creatively independent with their projects and to produce the art they want to make.

"It's just a fun environment in the classroom," senior Julie Lacey said. "And since I'm in an AP art class, I get the freedom to work on what I want."

Students take art and sculpture classes for various reasons including to grow their skills or just for fun.

"Really, it's just because I wanted to improve," Lacey said. "Especially with a sculpture class you get an opportunity to work with materials you don't typically

work with like a kiln, clay, and plaster and a bunch of other stuff you don't usually have access to."

VASE allows students to show and talk about art and their works to other art students from different schools across the state.

"We let any student that wants to compete, go to VASE," sculpture teacher Ryan Logan said. "It's like football for Art students."

VASE is a part of the Texas UIL events so students can only enter through their art classes.

"It is great for students that want to go to college for art and good to have on your college applications," Logan

said. "It is a UIL event so students have to be passing all their classes to attend."

According to senior Mason Lane, students always walk away each day with a fun memory of the class.

"Throwing clay on the walls was probably one of my favorite memories in this class," Lane said.

As well as teaching sculpture, Logan coaches boys soccer for all grade levels.

"Seeing students progress and finding interest in the arts that continues past the class room [is probably my favorite thing about teaching some of the art and soccer classes]," Logan said. ■



**LAUGHING WITH FRIENDS:** Senior German Julbe hangs out in the art garage, laughing and joking with friends. According to Julbe, he has created many memories from the class over the past couple years. "Just being with and hanging out with my friends in class is probably my favorite memory," Julbe said. **PHOTO BY** Abbey Repka



**RECEIVING ADVICE ON THE ART:** Getting help from teacher Ryan Logan, junior Andrew Maddox watches intently. Some of the sculptors kids are going to VASE, however Maddox chose not to. "We let any student that wants to compete, go to VASE," Logan said. "Student's artwork will be scored 1-4 and the top 10% of top score of 4 will move to the state event." **PHOTO BY** Abbey Repka

**PAINTING FOR A CAUSE:** During sculpture class, senior Julie Lacey works to repaint her artwork. Lacey is not going to VASE, however she is participating in the No Place For Hate Art Gallery. "I just needed to simplify the color scheme a little bit on the piece, so I'm repainting it," Lacey said. "It's two hands, one hand is kind of hurt and shaking and it is taking the other hand that is more stable and is offering support for the first hand." **PHOTO BY** Abbey Repka



**ON THE POTTER'S WHEEL:** Senior Mason Lane sits at the potter's wheel and molds his clay. Lane is going to VASE with some of his other classmates. "For VASE I created a flower pot," Lane said. "However, I had no inspiration for it." **PHOTO BY** Abbey Repka



Global human rights violations and social issues lead student activists to take action by advocating on a personal level

Marisa Salazar  
Editor-in-Chief

As the 2010's came to a close, young people began taking an active voice against oppression and issues they deemed important. From social justice to environmental advocacy, adolescents have organized and revitalized movements to garner change on large and small scales. Names like Malala Yousafzai and Greta Thunberg are now famous.

Amnesty International is a human rights advocacy group founded in 1961 to provide support for anyone whose basic freedoms may be threatened. Sophomore Malaika Beg, President of the Amnesty International Club, explains how the student members further the humanitarian efforts of the organization they are partnered with.

"[In Amnesty International Club] we work with the Amnesty International non-profit organization by following their projects and campaigns, some of which have to do with things such as refugees or ending gun violence," Beg said.

"We try to focus on more recent issues going on and how we can fix these problems."

A c - cording to Amnesty International's Student Group Starter Guide, the goal of forming a local human rights movement is to 'mobilize your community to be a powerful force for dignity and justice.'

For freshman club member Jake Stachura, advocating non-partisan issues not only leads to positivity on a wider scale, but also on a personal one.

"I've always been into activism and wanting to change the world," Stachura said. "I had this general idea of wanting to do something to change the world, which I know sounds cliché but that's what I want to do— help people."

One of the main platforms of campaigning in Amnesty International is writing letters demanding action from the institutions who can influence change in different parts of the world. Kam Magor has been a member of the organization for twenty years and explained the appeal of such a straightforward and effective form of advocacy.

"[Amnesty International] wasn't political," Magor said. "It wasn't left or right, or liberal or conservative. There was no fault you could find about what they were doing and you couldn't say it was too radical. It is just a simple thing like writing a letter, but it actually makes a difference."

ACTIVE IMPORTANCE

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a document published by the United Nations in 1948 which outlines a set of fundamental human rights necessary for universal protection, such as life, liberty, and security. Activist senior Rachel Chambers believes that it is the duty of young people to advocate on behalf of

those whose basic rights are violated.

"A lot of time, groups struggle with getting the best representation because they're often minority groups that get overlooked," Chambers said. "As young people, we're the future, and if we're not representing our issues and our peers then we're letting older generations take control of what's going to happen for us, and we're going to end up missing out on what we really need."

According to a 2017 National Youth Survey of young people ages 15 to 24, 35 percent of young women and 40 percent of young men feel like their advocacy will not make a difference in various campaigns or causes. For Stachura, he believes that young people are the backbone of change since they are the next generation to be in control.

"Some believe that young people don't have the power to change anything, but I feel like that's completely wrong and young people actually have more power for change," Stachura said. "If we all unite under this idea that somethings wrong and we need to change it, eventually things are going to change— whether that's us changing it or the people in charge making those changes."

With the rise of social media and mobile technology, various groups have labeled 21st century youth as the "Me Me Me Generation," reflecting the projected belief that current young people are only focused on their own lives and desires. Beg challenges this outlook, stating that more adolescents are beginning to have concern with others who face challenges separate from themselves.

"I feel like sometimes [young people] focus so much on themselves that they are never able to see the big picture and what's going on all around the world," Beg said. "It feels great to help out other people and know that you can really make a difference in someone's life who is less fortunate."

In the same 2017 National Youth Survey, 55 percent of young women and 41 percent of young men feel like they don't know enough about the issues surrounding different campaigns and causes. Magor suggests that by studying history, young people can become mobilized in pursuing different noteworthy causes.

"You can look at history and feel empowered," Magor said. "Study history and see all of the positive changes that have been made starting with just a few

people being activists. You have to stick with it, you have to keep going."

Sixteen percent of young men and 29 percent of young women choose not to participate in various campaigns or causes because they don't want to face criticism. Stachura expressed his view that activism does not have to be some big action with an immediate outcome, rather it is small actions that over time make a greater impact.

"Activism is about changing the world, not being a big media star," Stachura said. "Every little bit helps. It's like a staircase, you can't go up if there's no stairs. Each little piece is like another step, and as you climb over time everything gets better."

Chambers understands that young people can have the tendency to only focus on themselves rather than expanding their view to other people in different parts of the world, however, she encourages her peers to read the news and become aware of things going on everywhere.

"It's so easy to put the blinders on and just think about what you are doing next weekend or which person is having a party," Chambers said. "You're totally able to have a part of yourself that pays attention to the news and stays educated on what's going on. The best thing we can all do is better educate ourselves and others and always remember that there are other people in the world and it's not just about you."

YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

According to the 2017 National Youth Survey, over the last 12 months, 50 percent of young women and 39 percent of young men liked or followed a campaign or organization online, reflecting a large group of youth interested in following change efforts. While 77 percent of young people believe the United States is divided, 59 percent think America's best days lay in the future.

"I feel like it's important for young people to become active [in change] because young people are the future," Stachura said. "Eventually, young people are going to be in positions of power and have the real power to change things. We want people to have the right ideas and help change the world for the better."

For Beg, a key reason why activism is so important lies in the uncertainty of life and how someone's situation could change, potentially putting them in need of help and support from others.

"If someone is young and has the courage to put their energy and time into something, it shows effort and that young people are taking what's going on around them seriously," Beg said. "You never know what situation you are going to be put in, so it's always great to show em-

mat - ters, a n d even if an issue is not directly affecting you it could be affecting a lot of people who have gone through worse."

Magor has been an advocate for 50 years and after all this time she feels heartened that there is a large group of young people who are advocating for causes they are passionate about.

"My generation is sort of on its way out," Magor said. "That doesn't mean we can't still be strong advocates, but we know we're not going to be around forever to keep [activism] going, so it's a really good feeling to know that young people are taking up the baton when we eventually leave."

Stachura expressed that having strong feelings toward major issues around the world is what keeps advocates like himself involved and engaged and explained the satisfaction one can receive from supporting a cause.

"It's an anger towards unjust actions and it's this anger that fuels us to want change," Stachura said. "We don't want to be angry, we don't want there to be things that make us sad or make us angry. It's like a fire that fuels you and then you can rest knowing you've helped people and you've changed the world." ■

Write For Rights

Amnesty International Club hosts the 'Write for Rights' event where students write letters for humanitarian causes

"[Activism] imposes good ideas on youth that it's important to always fight for what you believe. There's a lot of and problems that can be fixed, which is why [activism] is more important than ever."

Freshman Nicolas Ospina

"I joined Amnesty International Club because I care about human rights abuses all over the world, especially in China. Youth activism is powerful and important, just look at Greta Thunberg."

Sophomore Caroline Rasmussen

"Writing letters seems like such a simple thing to do and yet it turned out to be very effective. Often prisoners of conscience are freed, or governments stop harassing people."

Advocate Kam Magor



PHOTO BY Marisa Salazar



PHOTO BY Marisa Salazar



PHOTO BY Marisa Salazar

Timeline of Youth Activism		Social issues lead young activists to take a stand in support of humanitarian and social justice movements	
A brief series of youth activism movements of the 2010s— a decade of change. Source: <a href="http://www.teenvogue.com">www.teenvogue.com</a>		The Harvey Weinstein sexual misconduct scandal led to the #MeToo movement, prompting both men and women to discuss their own experiences with sexual harassment.	
2013 Trayvon Martin & Black Lives Matter		2017 Harvey Weinstein & #MeToo	
Following the shooting of 17-year-old African American teenager Trayvon Martin, the Black Lives Matter movement launched a national campaign advocating against systematic racism against black people.		2018 Climate Strikes & Greta Thunberg	
The construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline projected to run under Lake Oahe near the Standing Rock Indian Reservation began a series of protests for the possible threat to the clean water supply in the region.		2018 Parkland Shooting & March for Our Lives	
The construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline projected to run under Lake Oahe near the Standing Rock Indian Reservation began a series of protests for the possible threat to the clean water supply in the region.		2019 ICE & Never Again Action	
		Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids resulting from President Trump's immigration policies spurred Never Again Action from young Jewish activists calling for the abolishment of ICE detention centers.	



ATHLETES  
ASSERT

The Astros were  
unfairly penalized  
for cheating

Jada Scott  
Guest Sports Columnist

The Houston Astros, a MLB team from Texas, have undoubtedly been successful in the past few years, winning two World Series championships just two years apart. Unfortunately, they were recently exposed for cheating, which has ruined their brand.

In baseball and softball, signs are usually used when hitting and on defense when pitchers and catchers are communicating non-verbally about what pitch is coming next. Generally, a combination of numbers are used to define the oncoming pitch in a way that is difficult for the opposing team to pick up on. The team on offense will often try to catch onto the signs, but the angle of the dugout or strategic placement of the catchers' hand makes it difficult.

The Astros were found guilty of using cameras to see pitch calls from opposing teams. They had a camera in center-field angled to read the catcher's signs, and they were relayed to the players in the dugout who communicated the pitch to the batter by banging on a trash can in a specific rhythm. This gave the hitter a clear advantage over the opposing team and pitcher.

I agree the Astros took the whole idea of sign stealing to extreme levels. However, even though I am not particularly an Astros fan, I don't believe this should have become a scandal that ruined the Astros name.

As someone who's played softball for ten years now, I can confidently say that sign stealing is normal. Each team wants to take advantage of anything they can, and although a lot of people don't want to hear it, most teams do this. Any tips telling the batter where the ball will be can be a game changer. In select, club, or high school sports, this isn't illegal or turned into a scandal.

I think that the prior negative light shone on the Astros is the reason this whole incident blew up. People were already against the Astros brand. They haven't shown the most sportsmanship, and they are known for doing whatever it takes to win, hence the sign stealing. Regardless of their reputation or past incidents, it shouldn't have caused this normally innocent way of gaining a competitive edge to blow up this severely.

I understand the Astros probably took it too far by using cameras, but there is nothing against stealing signs from the opposing team in the written rules of baseball. If they choose to make a rule now due to the Astros being a little too competitive, I can understand that. But until there is a written rule, what the Astros did is technically not unethical, and was blown up unnecessarily.



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# Equestrian jumps to new heights

Naya Tillisch  
Sports Editor

She gracefully bounces up and down while trotting through the course before flying through the air in the perfect position to help her horse jump as high as it possibly can. Junior equestrian Juliane Payne and her beloved horse, Bee, clear the jump by a mile to win the approval of the crowd as applause fills the air.

Payne rode horses when she was very young, but she picked it up again in middle school after taking a break from it for a couple years.

"I rode Western for a couple years in elementary school," Payne said. "A friend of mine got me into Jumpers in middle school, and I've been doing it since."

Between school and being a member of the JV basketball team, Payne has to dedicate a lot of time to caring for her horse.

"I usually see her two to three times a week during the school year and nearly every day in the summer," Payne said. "Most of the upkeep for the horses is done by the owner of the stables, but I keep my horse groomed and keep her tack/equipment clean."

Laurel Heiden, Payne's trainer at Creekwood Stables, has been around horses since she was a young girl and knows how big of a responsibility it is to own a horse.

"Daily care and upkeep of the horses would be the most obvious [duties]," Heiden said. "Keeping the riders safe has always been my top priority, and that means different things in different situations. Also, keeping the horses happy is very important."

Payne rides competitively and specializes in jumper shows.

"[Competing is] an all day event and often lasts multiple days," Payne said. "One rider goes into the ring at a time and completes a course of jumps. You are scored based on your time, but if you knock over a jump or go off-course, you are automati-

cally disqualified."

Junior Ella Roddenberry has attended some of Payne's competitions and practices.

"I've got to see Juliane ride her horse multiple times," Roddenberry said. "At competition I got to see Juliane feed her horse, put all her gear on her horse to get it ready for the competition, [and] then [warm] up on her horse in the practice area."

To prepare for competition, Payne practices a lot and focuses on establishing a good relationship with her horse.

"To be successful at horseback riding, you need to be physically fit, but what's really important is that you can't hesitate and [must] make decisions quickly," Payne said. "You have to make decisions for both you and your horse."

A typical practice involves a trainer and small group of riders going out to work on jumps.

"During lessons, me and a few other riders are in a group and take turns jumping mini courses our trainer sets up for us," Payne said. "Sometimes we jump multiple jumps in a row, and sometimes we push for height."

Payne usually performs fairly well with Bee and often places high at competitions.

"[Bee] has a really big heart but an equally big ego," Heiden said. "Jules has the ability to convince Bee to do what she wants while making Bee believe that it is all her idea. Her ability to connect and communicate with Bee is really beautiful to watch."

Roddenberry was surprised by how fun horseback riding was to watch and loved seeing Payne work with her horse in competition.

"I was impressed by Juliane's horseback riding skills and how she could control her horse and get it to [perform so well]," Roddenberry said.

Heiden notes how one of the more difficult aspects of horseback riding is that they



**JUMP FOR JOY:** Juliane Payne practices jumps with her horse, Bee, at practice. She began riding horses in elementary school and now rides at Creekwood Stables. **PHOTO BY** Abbey Repka

are wild animals, so riders must communicate with them at all times.

"I think that the most challenging part for riders is being able to leave your emotions behind when you get on the horse," Heiden said. "If you've had a bad day, you can't take that into the saddle with you. Learning how to leave all of that behind when you climb into the saddle is a hard lesson."

Payne recommends horseback riding to others because it can be very rewarding.

"The most rewarding part is [either] when you complete a jump really well and it feels like you're flying, or the really strong connection I made with my horse," Payne said. "She is a really talented horse, and I trust her not to put me in harm's way."

As a trainer, Heiden enjoys seeing her riders succeed and push themselves.

"When a rider comes off of a jump that they were maybe a bit nervous about doing or that you knew would challenge them and they have a

giant smile on their face... that's the best," Heiden said.

Both Payne and Heiden's lives have been positively impacted by horseback riding.

"Obviously riding is great exercise, but beyond that, horses are amazing creatures," Heiden said. "They have the ability to look deep inside of a person and see the real you. Connecting with an animal and being able to communicate with them through body language is really exhilarating." ■

## Student gamers impress at eSports competition

Carter Scruggs  
Dispatch Reporter

The newly formed eSports club has attracted some attention. Acer, a company most commonly associated with their laptops that they make, has been organizing an event for local groups that meet and do things involving eSports.

"This is the first time that the school has ever had something to do eSports," junior eSports Club president John Demopoulos said.

The Bowie eSports club and other students participating in eSports were invited to attend a competition for the first time.

"I have competed in small online tournaments, and I'm always looking for more competitive opportunities," Demopoulos said. "Currently I have been on the grind streaming as a Twitch affiliate."

The event is just one of many examples showing the current growth of eSports. With the growth of game streaming platforms like Twitch, competitive gaming is becoming increasingly accessible.

"I have been working with my teammates, trying to get them prepared," Demopoulos said. "There is a lot of stress having to balance my hobby that I'm passionate about with school, tests, and school work."

The majority of the other participants are part of eSports club, a club that meets in technology teacher and club sponsor Andrew Nourse's room

every Wednesday.

"For the first time, instead of sports teams like football or soccer, Acer is letting Bowie represent itself in something unique in eSports, it's a big opportunity," Demopolous said.

Principal Mark Robinson received the invitation from ACER and ultimately enabled the team to attend the event.

"I'm not surprised [in the club's success] at all," Robinson said. "I think we are competitive creatures, and it's a very engaging thing that stimulates our real mind and competitive instinct."

Other schools competing and attempting to push eSports to the next level include Austin High and LASA .

"I think that it's an honor people I've known, in and out of eSports club, [are taking interest] because [it] is a chance for them to take it to the next step," Demopoulos said.

There were 13 students that attended the Acer event, including junior Jack Vinson who competed in rocket league.

"I'm excited because I'm going to be able to test my ability to see if I can do this as a job or profession in the future," Vinson said.

Vinson is considered a seasoned veteran of Rocket League as he is ranked as a grand champion.

"To prepare I'm refining my mechanics, and I'm going to play with my new teammates more," Vinson said. "I'm also trying to teach my

teammates better mechanics."

He is part of the three-person team that will be competing in the rocket league competition for Bowie.

"I feel proud to represent bowie, because I'm proud [of] this area and this school," Vinson said.

When Bowie arrived at the event, many students were extremely nervous, and some even said their hands were shaking.

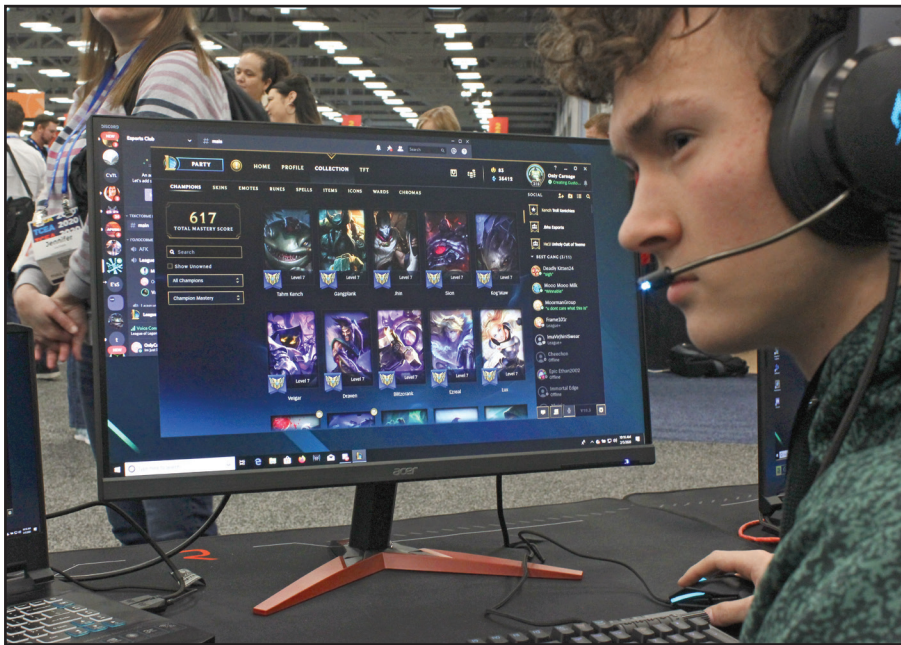
"I was quite nervous," Demopolous said. "At some points upwards of 50 people were all watching us,

[and] my hands were shaking."

The only other team at the competition was Austin High School. In the event, Bowie swept the competition, winning 36-1 in League of Legends, and 10-0 in Rocket League.

Robinson supports the eSports club and hopes it will continue to grow in the future.

"I think there's a lot schools can gain as [eSports is] a growing field," Robinson said. "It is our job to help students prepare for the future." ■



**DEATHMATCH:** Eli Buerger plays League of Legends at the eSports competition. He is a member of the eSports club and helped the team beat Austin High 36-1. **PHOTO BY** Carter Scruggs



**February 14** Varsity boys basketball vs. Lake Travis @Bowie

**February 21** Varsity boys soccer vs. Hays @Hays

**February 25** Varsity boys lacrosse vs. Anderson @Anderson

### coming UP in SPORTS



**March 3** Varsity girls soccer vs. Austin High @House Park

**March 7** Track meet @Round Rock HS

**March 10** Varsity softball vs. @Liberty Hill HS





# Juniors step up as little league coaches

Izzie **May**  
Dispatch Reporter

Around the school, he is known as Atticus Kohler but to his young baseball team the kids know him as Coach Kohler.

Attending after school practices and traveling on Saturdays for games are all part of this junior’s regular routine. Kohler got into baseball at age six which is when he discovered his love for the sport. After 10 years of playing the game, he decided to take a leap and help some younger kids learn to play.

“I started coaching the kid’s team because I had played for 10 years and I umpire there so I knew most of the kids who were interested in playing for the new season,” Kohler said.

Kohler coaches the Emerald team at Oak Hill for kids aged three to ten years of age.

“The kids are about the age I was when I started playing,” Kohler said. “It has been really cool to be on the other side of it.”

Kohler had a very busy schedule as he

schedules and attends every practice and game. He started coaching in early August but games and practices didn’t start until the middle of October.

“We would have one practice a week which was held on Monday and then we’d have a game every Saturday or sometimes on Sunday,” Kohler said.

The team was very successful and by end of the season they had made it into the playoffs. Kohler explained that he was proud of his team and the kids were very excited about the opportunity to be playing double games in the playoff tournament.

“When we got into the end of the season we started playoffs which are a big deal compared to the single games we usually played,” Kohler said. “We would have games every weekend with double games throughout the day.”

As a baseball player Kohler had always appreciated the sport but during his time as a little league coach he was able to see the other side of baseball and make connections

with the adults involved in making it all happen.

“Coaching was a good experience because I got to interact with a lot of kids in an age group that I’ve never seen before,” Kohler said. “I got to meet a lot of new parents and build a lot of connections in that world.”

Kohler wasn’t in the game just for the connections though, he was excited about being able to teach kids about the sport he fell in love with at their age.

“I really liked teaching kids the fundamentals of baseball and working with them to give them skills to grow and become better players in the future,” Kohler said.

Keeping younger kids interested and focused throughout practices presented a few challenges of it’s own but Kohler overcame that by making sure to keep it fun and engaging for the players.

“We would play games at practice and hand out prizes for the winners which really got them excited to play,” Kohler said.

Kohler’s dad, Marc Kohler, coached his team when he was about the age of the kids he is coaching now. As the season progressed, Marc saw a difference in his son as he was able to better understand the extent of the work that goes on behind the scenes of baseball for both coaches and parents of players.



**CHECKING THE ROSTER:** Kohler reviews the teams' roster on his clipboard. The team consists of boys aged three to ten years old. **PHOTO BY** Lainey Combs



**PROUD FACES:** Juniors Atticus Kohler and Caden Cooper look out at their little league team with proud smiles. The two co-coach the Emerald Team at Oak Hill. **PHOTO BY** Lainey Combs

“He told me that he never realized how much work went on when preparing for a game throughout the week,” Marc said. “He said he had a deeper appreciation for what I did for him through the years of coaching his team.”

Marc also described how the kids were able to look up to Atticus as a mentor while he coached them. He explains how it made him proud to see how well his son was connecting with the kids.

“They saw Atticus as a grown-up, not a parent,” Marc said. “They seemed to listen to him well and apply what he was teaching them without the need for heavy-handedness that often comes from parents whose fuse has been shortened over the years.”

Atticus couldn’t take on the huge responsibility of coaching alone though. His old teammate and long time friend Caden Cooper helped with the team as co-coach. Cooper is a junior here at Bowie, and he also plays lacrosse.

“I like working with little kids,” Cooper said “I coached lacrosse over the summer and had really gotten into it, so when Atticus asked me if I wanted to coach baseball I was really excited for the opportunity to coach younger kids again.”

The kids weren’t the only ones gaining experience and growing as players throughout the season. Atticus explains how he was able to take a lot of valuable lessons out of coach-

ing when he was given the opportunity to be coaching the younger kids this year.

“One thing that I took out of coaching was that you always have something to learn from your players, in the games,” Atticus said. “It’s not just about what you want them to do to win, you also have to think about what the kids want and how to make it fun for them while still giving them a good experience from playing baseball.”

There were some ups and downs to coaching a team with little experience as could be expected, but Atticus was always able to say that even with that obstacle, it was really rewarding watching the kids grow as players. Even though he doesn’t know whether or not he will continue to coach for upcoming seasons he explained how it was great for him and the team and was a really fun way to experience a manager type position.

“The most rewarding part of all this was watching how the kids progressed towards the end of the season,” Atticus said. “Watching every kid get better and seeing where they started and where they finished was really fulfilling and made me feel proud as a coach.” ■

# Track team trains for a season of competition and victory

Kateri **Jaquette**  
Sports Editor

Speed, strength, and power are some of the core characteristics of the sport of track and field. Although the sport is thousands of years old, it still prevails as a highly competitive part of high school and college athletics. With the season approaching the Bulldogs have begun preparing for the upcoming months of track meets and competitions.

With the season fast approaching, Rey Torres, the head track coach, began preparing his team for the upcoming season back in January. The team had their first meet of the season on February 13.

“Our priority is to get everyone

on the team back in shape,” Torres said. “Some of them have been off for months without doing any exercises so our main focus is to get them all back in shape.”

There are many members of the track team who participate in sports throughout the year other than track which keep them in shape for the season in the spring. Sophomore Ashley Salas is one of these people. Salas has been on the team for the past two years competing in the 4X400 relay and the 300M hurdles.

“I am in volleyball on top of track,” Salas said. “Being in another sport keeps me active during the fall so when we start track practice in the spring I am already in pretty good shape for the season.”

Once Torres has his team back at their best physical shape he begins having everyone work on their

goals in terms of what they want to achieve for themselves.”

The main competition during a meet is the students from other schools in your event, however many of the team members are competing against themselves and their own goals that they have set for themselves.

“I have always liked how competitive the sport is,” Salas said. “You’re not only competing against yourself every race but you are also trying to be better than your teammates and who you are competing against in that event.”

Salas’ determination to be at the top of her game has led to much success during meets. The sophomore has set personal goals for herself that she hopes to achieve by the end of this season.

“Last year when I was a freshman I made it to area which was re-



**ON THE MOVE:** Junior Avery Cano and sophomore Ashley Salas run laps during warm up. The team had their first meet of the season this past Thursday. **PHOTO BY** Abbey Repka

ally exciting,” Salas said. “This year I would really like to make it to area again and maybe go even further.”

Senior Jacy Lim is on her fourth year on the team and explains that there are rigorous workouts and practice everyday after school.

“I am a long distance runner so the workouts I do during practice are different than the ones that the short distance runners do,” Lim said.

Each part of the week focuses on a different key aspect of the sport with workouts of varying difficulty. There are days of practice entirely dedicated to the improvement of speed and endurance.

“The days we work on speed and endurance are usually the hardest part of the week,” Lim said. “We will run around the area near Cost-

“When your times start to improve throughout the season and you become better and faster which is really what makes it all worth it.”

**Jacy Lim**  
Senior



**ALL SMILES:** Sophomore Ashley Salas and her teammates crack jokes during practice. The sophomore competes in the 4X400 relay and the 300M hurdles events. **PHOTO BY** Abbey Repka

co or Davis and run about four miles but however far you go out you also have to run that back.”

Lim explains how after completing many days of rigorous workouts, everyone on the team must take days for recovery so their body and muscles can heal properly.

“We will usually only do a 30 minute run or something simple like that so we don’t push ourselves too hard.”

Lim explains how the sport re-

quires regular conditioning that can be hard and painful but the gratification she receives from becoming better than herself through the training is what keeps her returning to the team every year.

“The best part of the season is seeing the hard work you put in pay off,” Lim said “When your times start to improve throughout the season and you become better and faster which is really what makes it all worth it.” ■



# Little fish are cast for leads in ‘Big Fish’

*In a rare move, theater directors pick two freshman for important roles in play*

Callie **Payne**  
Entertainment Editor

The audience applauds in awe as freshman Lainey Killian and freshman Javier Lozano bow, concluding their first high school musical.

The Big Fish Musical was showcased on January 16-19 and January 23-26. This year, two freshmen were cast as the leads in the show, which in most cases, is uncommon at Bowie.

“Being one of the two freshman leads in the musical makes me overwhelmed with graciousness,” Killian said. “I feel really honored and it just inspires me to work even harder.”

For this musical there were two casts called the Larson and Davis cast which were separated by switching every other day. Killian was on the Davis cast.

“I play Josephine Bloom who is Will’s wife,” Killian said. “I get to wear a wedding dress and later she is pregnant. I am very thankful for my role.”

Killian has been acting for six years and first started at the Mosaic Children’s Theatre. She has starred in seven musicals and five plays so far.

“My first play was in fourth grade and it was for How the Grinch Stole Christmas,”



**BRIDE AND GROOM:** Lainey Killian and Jayden Davis perform their dance. Killian had to pin her dress from the back in order for her to dance with Davis. **PHOTO BY** Faith Lawrence

Killian said. “It was so fun and I learned so much just from that one play.”

Lozano played Karl the Giant who goes on a series of adventures with the main character, Edward.

“My role entailed a lot of singing and dancing, obviously,” Lozano said. “But something that was really cool was walking on stilts because I had never done it before. My double and I immediately started practicing because we both knew that would be the hardest part.”

The casting for Big Fish started in early November.

“I freaked out when I saw the cast list,” Lozano said. “I just couldn’t believe it, it was such a big deal to be so young but still be a lead.”

Betsy Cornwell is a theatre teacher and one of the directors for Big Fish.

“I always focus on directing some of the group scenes and costuming,” Cornwell said. “We have six stock rooms of costumes, and I know what is in most of them. This makes it easier for me to decide what we can pull and what we’ll have to make to fit the production.”

There were five directors who helped work on and produce the Big Fish Musical.

“I can’t even remember what it was like to direct a musical by myself,” Cornwell said. “Mr. Bazan and I joked about the amount of work it takes to mount a musical and can’t remember how we did it by ourselves. Having five directors participating in preparation for a musical helps us to focus on the technical areas that we are most adept at.”

The rehearsals for leads were every day after school due to how complex their parts were.

“It has been such a process but it was really rewarding to see how much it progressed,” Lozano said. “I have been able to improve my acting and singing ability which is very helpful so I am thankful for that.”

Freshmen are not usually cast as leads due to the fact that there are so many upperclassmen who are interested in participating.

“We double and triple cast leading roles to give more opportunities to start learning what it’s like to have to carry a show,” Cornwell said. “Javier and Lainey had the right skills to play the minor roles, and both were double cast with a senior.”

Lozano has performed in five musical and eight plays.

“After being the nutcracker in my school play in fourth grade I just knew it was for



**HIGH AND MIGHTY:** Javier Lozano stands straight, balancing on his stilts with his staff. For many weeks, Lozano would practice walking up and down aisles in the theatre in order to be prepared. **PHOTO BY** Faith Lawrence

me,” Lozano said. “From then on I just kept on going and as the years progressed I kept getting more and more roles. I like being able to entertain people and becoming someone new is just a super fun thing to do.”

Big Fish in total had eight shows and earned a standing ovation each night.

“I was very happy with how Big Fish turned out,” Killian said. “Everyone worked hard but also had a lot of fun.” ■

# Silver Stars start competition season with hard work

Callie **Payne**  
Entertainment Editor

As the Silver Star dancers get ready for their rigorous competition season ahead, they rehearse hundreds of times before they are able to get their routines to be flawless.

After the football season is finished, the Silver Stars start practicing until their competition season, which starts in February.

“Competition season is always a hectic time of the year for the Silver Stars,” senior captain Jade Fattouh said. “We are always on crunch time, as we are trying to get our dances perfected for competition season.”

The Silver Stars have practices that are held at the Toney Burger stadium at 7 a.m. and three mornings a week and two practices at Bowie that start at 8 a.m.

“Morning practices require a lot of time commitment,” junior Lauryn Armstrong said. “They are very efficient though, and when we practice at Burger we make the best of our time. They also aren’t at Burger Stadium ever day, which makes it easier sometimes.”

During the season, the entire team will travel to local high schools to display the hard work they’ve put in this season.

“These competitions are important for us because when we are participating we represent Bowie’s dance team for other schools to see,” Fattouh said. “It’s also a great opportunity to watch all the other dance teams from different schools and meet new people. This season can require a lot of effort but in the end I have so much fun and miss it when it is over.”

Fattouh is a captain on the Silver Stars, which requires organization



**FLYING HIGH:** The Silver Stars jump into a fire bird in the middle of their team jazz. The team has been practicing this piece since early December. **PHOTO BY** Lainey Combs

and several skills as a leader.

“During this season, my role as a captain is to make sure we are on schedule with all of our dances,” Fattouh said. “I have to make sure everyone is stage ready, which means their hair has to look clean, each dancer has enough makeup on, and everyone’s hairpiece is in. I also count for each dance as we enter the floor before we are about to perform.”

The Silver Star hip-hop and jazz companies, officers, seniors, and many individuals have solo performances, including Armstrong.

“Having a solo can be nerve wracking especially when you cho-

reograph it yourself,” Armstrong said. “I get nervous every time I do my solos but it’s also really rewarding to finally do it and know you worked your hardest on it. Each time I do a solo, I get more and more confident.”

The processes of these early morning practices are put in place to adjust flaws to assure improvement as the competitions approach.

“When we practice we run our dances and make changes if needed,” Armstrong said. “We also clarify small details and counts to make the show look its best.”

The Silver Stars have two competitions at Hendrickson and Van-

degrift High Schools on February 22 and 29, which consists of their competitive season.

“A typical day at a competition starts very early in the morning,” Fattouh said. “We arrive at the site, drop our belongings off in our dressing room, and immediately start running formations in the gym. After we have finished running our formations, we make sure our hair and makeup is done and our first costumes are on, so we can be prepared.”

The Silver Star competition season can bring some disadvantages to some of the dancers.

“I think the toughest part is try-

ing to balance your dance schedule with school work and getting sleep,” Armstrong said. “I am always sore during the season but I have learned from last year that it’s really important to get enough sleep, roll out your muscles, and stretch really good before dancing because we’re doing so much of it.”

Silver Star director Leanne Bilnoski puts together the routines as well as making sure the dancers are ready to perform.

“All of the dances that we performed at the Contest Showoff on February 4 will be performed at both of the competitions,” Bilnoski said. “There will be other Austin area high schools as well as schools from out of town at the two competitions.”

As soon as competition season is over, the Silver Stars begin to work on their routines for their Spring Show, which is held in April.

“I also love the Spring Show because it’s the last show we put on as a team and it shows how far we have come all year,” Armstrong said. “We do much hard work to make our dances for the show to look as clean and sharp as they can, so when we it’s time to perform on stage with the lights down on us it feels totally worth it.”

Even though the competition season can have some disadvantages, it also has many advantages as well.

“A fun part of this season is when we have secret buddies who get us snacks and candies who we get to find out at the end of the season,” Armstrong said. “Even though during the season it can be difficult at times, I am so appreciative for the opportunity and being able to learn so much.” ■

## coming UP in ENTERTAINMENT



**Feb. 20** Carnival Concert for Steel Band  
**Feb. 22** Orchestra Pre- UIL

**Feb. 22** Austin Cave Festival  
**Feb. 29** Central Texas Percussion

**Mar. 8** Trippie Redd Concert  
**Mar. 13-20** Ireland Trip for Band, Orchestra, & Choir





# Cable cutters switch to streaming

Katie Holme  
Managing Editor

Streaming services have taken over television by offering an accessible, vast library of popular TV shows and movies. Since the dawn of some of the earlier streaming services, such as Netflix and Prime Video, entertainment companies have been eager to and successful in making new services for viewers. Modern technology has allowed these services to popularize through the use of the internet, in which these services can be accessed anywhere from your smartphone to your flatscreen TV.

With the popularization of these services, the demand for cable TV has decreased and many consumers have gotten rid of ‘old-school’ cable altogether. This movement is popular among many households since streaming services have become more affordable and user-friendly than an old cable box. Those who participate in this movement have been popularly called ‘cord-cutters’ and many believe this is the new age of TV.

As I made the switch from cable TV to streaming services, I found that there was an overwhelming amount of them to choose from, which made me wonder what service was worth the hype? On my quest to find the best streaming service, I narrowed down my choices to the most popular forms of television on the market: Hulu, Netflix, Prime Video, HBO Now, Disney+, and YouTube TV. Each one of these services has many unique things to offer, but which one will reign supreme to others?

Beginning with Netflix, one of the founding fathers of internet entertainment, I found that the service had a plethora of TV shows and movies, but the layout seemed cluttered with some nonsense shows. Although there were a few questionable selections to include with the service, there is so much original content produced by Netflix themselves that is extremely enjoyable. Some of their more popular original content includes popular shows like Big Mouth, You, and Black Mirror. Netflix has a range of pricing to make streaming accessible to all. I find that Netflix is a haven for reliable content, and easy to afford which makes it one of my top picks.

I find that Hulu is very similar to Netflix but they differ in the selection of shows and movies. While Hulu provides many FOX shows while Netflix has almost none. Hulu is also similar to Netflix due to its affordable pricing, and it’s very own Hulu original content. Although Hulu has produced some award-winning shows like The Handmaid’s Tale, Netflix has a far superior selection of original content produced by the service.

Netflix and Hulu tend to be more generic services that do not specialize in a single kind of movie or show, but HBO Now and Disney+ are two streaming services that tend to be more niche. I would recommend Disney+ for children of course, but other than the show the Mandalorian and some nostalgia, Disney+ has little to offer. I was excited to see some of my favorite TV shows

WHAT STREAMING SERVICE IS RIGHT FOR YOU?			
<b>PRICE:</b> 49.99 a month	<b>OFFERINGS:</b> Most common cable channels	<b>DEVICES:</b> Up to 6 devices	
<b>PRICE:</b> 9.99 to 13.99 a month	<b>OFFERINGS:</b> Variety of TV shows, movies and Netflix originals	<b>DEVICES:</b> 2-4 devices	
<b>PRICE:</b> 5.99 to 9.99 a month	<b>OFFERINGS:</b> Variety of TV shows, movies, and Hulu originals	<b>DEVICES:</b> Unlimited	
<b>PRICE:</b> 14.99 a month or free with cable	<b>OFFERINGS:</b> All HBO TV shows and movies	<b>DEVICES:</b> 3 devices	
<b>PRICE:</b> 14.99 a month or free with cable	<b>OFFERINGS:</b> Most Disney channel TV shows, movies, and Star Wars.	<b>DEVICES:</b> 4 devices	
<b>PRICE:</b> 14.99 a month or free with cable	<b>OFFERINGS:</b> Variety of TV shows, movies, and Amazon originals	<b>DEVICES:</b> Unlimited	
ART BY Katie Holme			

from when I was a kid, but the only thing that came close to keeping me entertained as a young adult was the collection of Star Wars movies available. Disney+ is affordable which almost makes it too easy to subscribe to, but to me, it isn’t worth the money I could spend on other services.

HBO Now is also a niche service that provides little variety because it is a single network creating and streaming content. Although HBO Now is a niche, it does have some of the most popular shows like Game of Thrones that other services do not offer. I would recommend HBO Now to an older generation due to their more adult content. Lastly, Youtube TV is different than other ser-

vices because it provides subscribers with live television along with a selection of videos. I believe that Youtube TV is not worth the hefty double-digit price tag of \$50 a month, nor is it a true streaming service due to their cable-like features that make this service outdated.

Although choosing a service(s) depends on what you enjoy watching, the most popular, and my favorite combination of services includes Netflix and Hulu. Both services offer some of the most popular shows on TV, along with both companies creating their own ‘original’ series’ which allows viewers to have a wide variety of entertainment options. ■

ators of Rick and Morty did a great job of keeping their viewers engaged and interested. There wasn’t a time when watching the show where I felt bored or uninterested. The jokes this season land decently well too, and there were plenty of times I audibly laughed while watching.

On the other hand, I have one grievance about the new season. Mainly, how I feel it has started kind of slow in terms of a narrative. Personally, it feels like all the episodes are isolated from each other, and that there’s no unifying factor. Every episode is good, they just feel like spacer episodes for a non-existent main plot. Overall, the show feels a little more choppy in comparison to the earlier seasons, which were smoothly transitioned from episode to episode and season to season.

I can’t say I’m fully surprised by the slight awkward nature of the show at the moment. It was to be expected after so much time that it would take a while for the show to fully get back into the swing of things. After so much time, the amount of viewers watching the show has dropped as well, and I think the momentum created with the success of season three has dwindled, to a point where the exposure isn’t as high.

Overall, I liked part one of season four of Rick and Morty a lot. I believe that as newer episodes and seasons come out (hopefully with more frequency), the show will revive its old charm and storytelling abilities.

Long story short, I would recommend season four to people, and regardless of its sometimes confusing narrative, this season (and the whole show for that matter) is well-made, and it is apparent that the show’s creators (Justin Roiland and Dan Harmon) put extreme amounts of effort into their work, which is proven throughout the show and it’s fan base. ■

## Around Town with Amelie

Discovering the streets of West Campus and exploring the Drag

Amelie Hayne  
Dispatch Reporter

Located on the western edge of the University of Texas campus, lies Guadalupe Street more commonly known as the Drag. There are plenty of fun and exciting things to do and is home to a variety of different local shops and restaurants.

If you are looking for a good bite to eat, tucked away just behind the University Co-op bookstore and Guadalupe street on 411 W. 23rd St is a collection of food trucks at the Co-Op Food Court. The food trucks provide budget-friendly options with a wide range of styles of food to choose from.

There are plenty of different food options, but a fan favorite is the Don Japanese Kitchen truck, which is known for its donburi, aka Japanese rice bowls. Another good choice is Song la, a Taiwanese truck that provides authentic street food, that offers pork belly buns, bubble tea and other traditional Taiwanese snack foods.

If you’re looking to feed your sweet tooth, try Ice Scrapers, which sells fancy rolled ice cream creations and shaved ice. Make sure that you don’t miss out on the great and affordable food offered and check out the University Co-Op Food park.

Space 24 Twenty is an event space, shopping center and dining experience all in one, every month they host yoga in the yard at sunset and have had pop-up markets, live shows, tarot readings, and so much more. Space 24 Twenty is also home to Urban Outfitters, Lucky Lab Coffee Co, and Left Wing.

Make sure to check out Monkeys Vintage & Thrift, for all your thrifting needs, the store provides affordable prices, a wide variety of unique items, and new pieces are added weekly. Just down the road, you can find Buffalo Exchange and Flamingos Vintage Pound, which are located right across the street from each other.

Buffalo Exchange is filled with a wide range of clothing, accessories, shoes and more for any occasion. The store is full of a selection of vintage, new and gently used pieces, the store also allows the opportunity for customers to sell their clothes for cash or store credit.

Flamingos Vintage Pound is relatively new to the Drag, Flamingos sets itself apart by selling their clothing and accessories by the pound. However some items are sold individually, the store is home to styles and pieces from the 40s to 90s. The store also does alterations to make some shirts and sweatshirts into cropped items, that are available to purchase at around \$10 to \$15.

For over 30 years, Antone’s Record Shop continues to be a local treasure and popular attraction of The Drag. With a wide selection of CDs, used vinyl records and accessories, and an emphasis on blues and local artists, Antone’s is a great stop for music lovers of all kinds.

West Campus is home to all of these amazing hot spots, and it is definitely worth the trip too. ■



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# Rick and Morty returns for season 4

Anna Holme  
Dispatch Photographer

Finally, after over two years of waiting, the first half of Rick and Morty season four has finished as of late December. With the last episode of season three airing on October 1, 2017, and only a few teasers to excite fans, it’s finally back.

I re-watched the whole show, all the way through the most current episode of season four (episode five). Let’s just say, that while these new episodes have the same classic Rick and Morty style as before in terms of art, world-building, and creativi-

ty, the two-year hiatus has created a little awkwardness getting back into the show, and the popularity of the show as a whole has taken a hit.

That’s not to say I don’t like season four. I enjoyed it a lot, and I was only slightly disappointed. But to say that it holds up to the hype created by the long waiting period, and the success of the three seasons before it, I’m not so sure. Going through the episodes, I should start with the parts of this season I thought they did right.

Creativity-wise, these episodes continuously surprised me with new interesting concepts they creat-

ed, that were simultaneously really entertaining and extremely fun to watch. The third episode, “One Crew Over The Crewcoo’s Morty” felt like there was a lot of planning involved to create a complex yet hilarious parody of the classic heist movie. The constant montages, mixed with double-crosses and intricate plot-lines, made this one of my favorite episodes so far.

This is what I enjoyed about season four the most. The way new settings and unique characters are created each episode makes the show feel way more fast-paced and interesting. Unlike some other shows, the cre-



ART BY Sumin Kim



# The new generation of youth activism

Analyzing how adolescent culture has caused a shift in advocacy and desensitization.

## EDITORIAL

With the rise of modern technology, social media has become a platform for the youth of today to express their ideas, exchange information, and virtually do anything one’s heart desires. Although technological advances, such as the advent of social media, have been mostly positive, the instant access to media has come with it’s fair share of consequences. Youth culture is regularly desensitized to major global events which is becoming very detrimental to an entire generations

definition of what a crisis is considered. This has caused a decline in true youth activism, and if the lack of empathy within youth culture continues, it could potentially diminish the voice of the future. The way the youth reacts to crisis is unacceptable and inefficient to create change.

The accessibility of media has caused desensitization due to today’s young people constantly being bombarded with frequent exposure of violent or explicit content. Because it has become so easy to express one’s viewpoint on modern issues on the internet, it enables those who believe a single post is enough action to create change. Memes may be

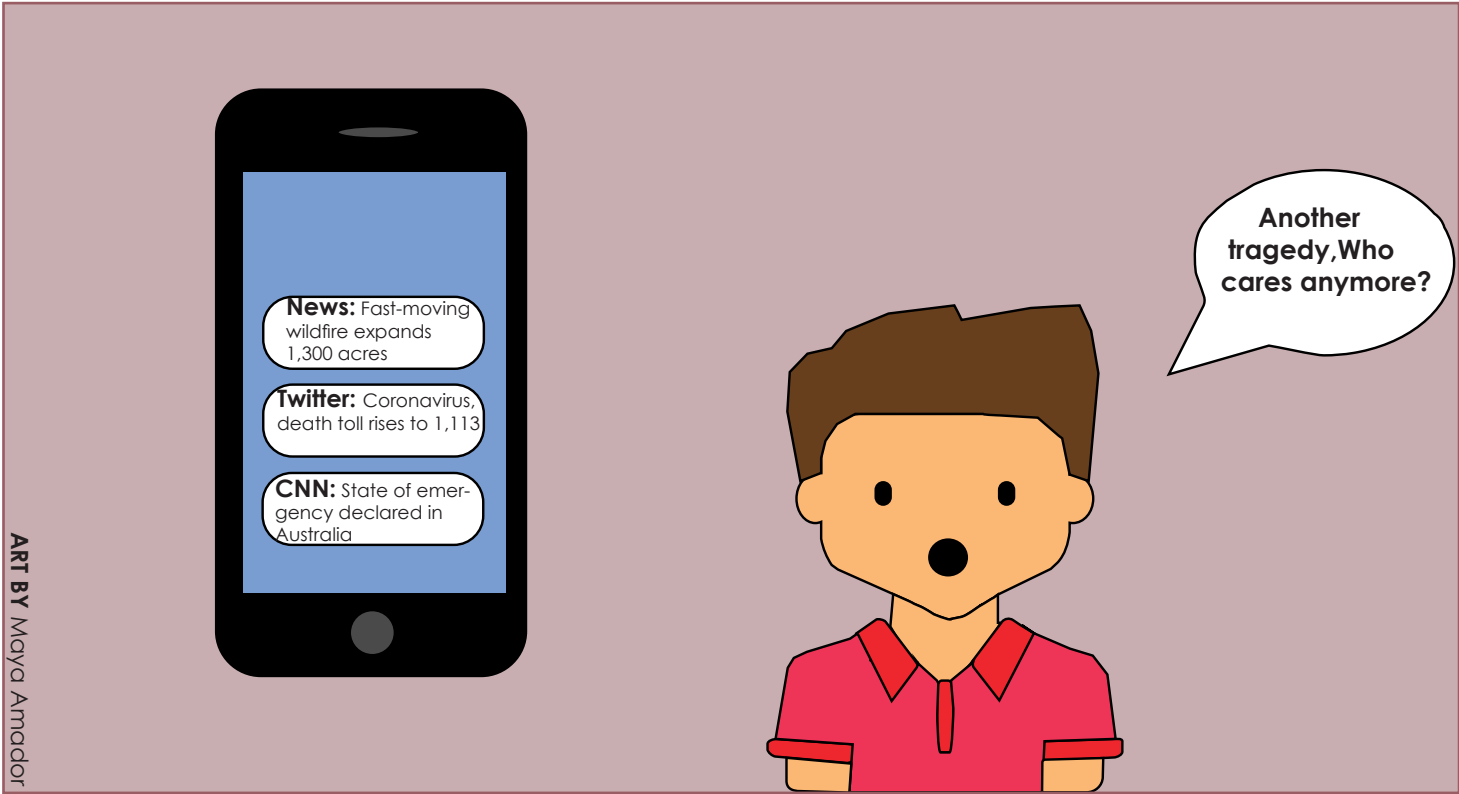
a quick fix or a way to cope with crisis, but it is insufficient when creating worldwide change.

In comparison to older generations, youth today have strayed from the typical rebellious acts than those of their parents or grandparents. For example, Baby Boomers popularized civil disobedience during the civil rights era was the common form of youth activism. Newer generations have differentiated from this form of youth activism because of the rise of the internet which has isolated young adults from connecting with older generations who are in the position to create change.

Although the rise of the internet has caused many issues when creating the new generation of “culture,” there are some positive outcomes when utilizing these networking tools. The mobilization of activism through technology has never been easier or more convenient due to social media sites. For example, the assembly of climate strikes during the fall semester would have not been possible without the use of social media. Because modern technologies were accessible to a passionate few, they were able to get entire student bodies involved at several schools to boycott in response to the climate crisis. The select few that initiated these strikes are a smaller population of a younger generation that faces scarcity of a community of student activists in real life.

The solution to the desensitization of youth culture is the acknowledgment of crisis and the validation of other’s despair. Instead of being a bystander and creating content that is not useful (other than when to cope with humor such as memes or pointless tweets) youth activists should rise as a community and create platforms that encourage civil disobedience, legal action, and respectful communication with older generations.

All young people possess the ability to be activists, and youth activism is essential to societal progression. However, desensitization has made true youth activism more scarce, and it has been replaced with internet content that is simply not enough to create change. Youth culture has shifted to the internet in response to advancements made in the early years of the 21st century. ■



# How compassion fatigue is taking over social media

Maya Amador  
Commentary Editor

Unlocking your phone and opening Twitter to see the trending hashtags can be an anxiety-inducing task for some. With the overuse of social media comes the onslaught of sharing which in turn makes your problems not only your business but your followers’ business as well.

While being able to know about issues all around the world can be seen as blessing there is, of course, a downside, compassion fatigue. Compassion fatigue is described as an extreme state of tension and preoccupation with the suffering of those being helped to the degree that it can create secondary traumatic stress for the helper, by the Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project.

Since compassion fatigue seems to be becoming more common, we must learn ways of combating the harmful effects it could have on mental health.

Caring for the people and things around you is always an admirable feat, but don’t let it consume your every thought. Knowing how to pick your battles can help in the long run, instead of overwhelming yourself with other people’s pain and suffering.

Although first responders have been dealing with compassion fatigue for a long time, the problem is seeing new light due to the fast-paced news that circles social media. The problem of fake news or misleading headlines has been a

topic of discussion for the past couple of years, but what most fail to talk about is how this dramatized information affects people’s mental health.

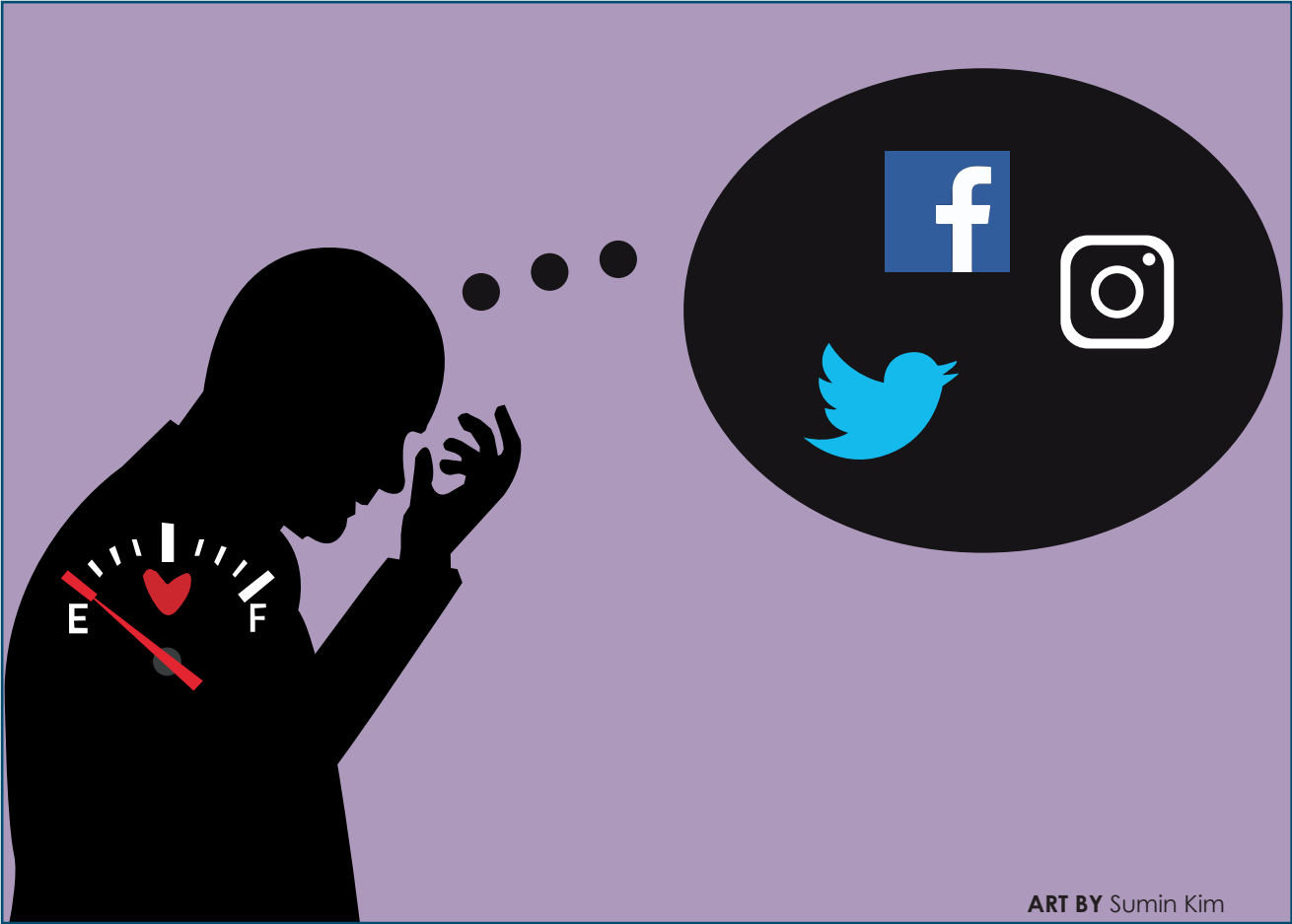
We tend to share the sadder, more heartbreaking news with our friends and family online and the news often gets sadder as it’s passed on like a depressing game of telephone.

According to a study by the Department of Psychology, the University of Warwick in the UK, the news we share on social media gets less accurate and worse sounding as the information is passed from user to user.

One recent example of this is a picture of Australia during the brushfires, the picture was an artist visualization of the scale of the fires. It showed the country from space and looked similar to a picture that might have been released by NASA but it made it look as though Australia was about to be burned off the face of the Earth.

Many took this photo as fact which led to the photo going viral and even being shared by celebrities. Although it was shared with the intention of saving Australia from the very real climate crisis, the photo was not accurate.

While sharing the news, even if false, often has good intentions, it can have a different effect than what was originally intended. Some users have become dissociated from the news they see online to a point where they become almost numb to it. They see no point in sharing or figuring out ways to help because



of how often bad news plagues our time-line, it seems never-ending.

Because of the nature of social media, this new form of compassion fatigue seems almost unavoidable.


However, a lot of the solutions can be rather simple, things like taking breaks from social media, check your sources, and asking questions can lead to a lower stress

level.

Also knowing when to pick your battles can be extremely helpful, taking it upon yourself fix every world issue is unrealistic and extremely stressful so pick and a few issues that you are passionate about you go from there.

It can be hard not to share such heartbreaking news but making sure the news is accurate should al-

ways come first along with yours and others mental health. ■



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- **The Dispatch** works to avoid bias and/or favoritism. We strive to make our coverage and content meaningful, timely, and interesting to our readers. Our articles reflect our genuine objective of reporting news and will be held to a high standard of quality.
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- NSPA Print Pacemaker winner, 2019-20
- NSPA Print All-American 1st Class, 4 Marks, 2019-20
- NSPA Online Pacemaker Finalist, 2018-2019
- SIPA Print All-Southern, 2018-19
- CSPA Hybrid Gold Medal, 3/3 All-Columbian, 2019-20
- \*SNO Distinguished Website 2019-20
- UIL/ILPC Online Silver Star, 2018-19
- UIL/ILPC Print Bronze Star, 2018-19
- TAJE 1st Place Best in Show, 2019-20

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# Colleges snoop through student socials

Corinne Piorkowski  
Commentary Editor

Recently, colleges have begun to look at social media accounts of applicants as reference for their acceptance to the school. This is somewhat controversial because some college administrators see the logic in searching social media, while applicants feel as if the searching is unfair to the acceptance into the school desired.

I think colleges searching applicants' social media is unfair because it is an invasion of privacy, and does not display the character of a person and their abilities to succeed at a university.

According to an article published by Scott Jaschik at Inside Higher Ed, Harvard University rejected ten applicants because they were found on a private Facebook group discussing obnoxious, inappropriate sexual topics. This is unjust because the universities should have relied on their applications and school-related aspects for the acceptance, rather than their private life, which wouldn't be discussed in classes at Harvard. This makes the situation none of their business.

Although it is unacceptable for colleges to snoop in applicants' social media, they don't look through every student's pages, according to the Jaschik article. It is more likely for a college to look at social media profiles if they are unsure about acceptance, which is even more unfair because that means they are going to look even deeper for something negative in a student's personal life.

On the bright side, recent surveys show that 68% of colleges that routinely check applicants' social media profiles are slowing down in doing so, and the majority of the universities that do check applicant's socials, are smaller schools, according to Jaschik. With that said, students on social media act differently there than in class or in full view of schools, and should ultimately be given the privacy of keeping the two platforms separate, no matter how large or picky the school is with acceptance.

Research by IvyWise College Blog shows that 70% of colleges believe that checking students' social media is "fair game" and would be open to checking applicants for any negative, or positive, posts online. This includes West Texas A&M, which claims that high schools should teach applicants to begin to be "professional," or be aware of what is posted on social media, before turning 18. West Texas A&M will look deeply into one error in judgment of an applicant, and it could severely impact whether they are accepted into the school or not. I believe schools should focus on the side




that they intend for the college to see in the first place.

Harvard University has claimed in recent years that they want to accept students with high character into their schools, which is why they check social media accounts for inappropriate posts. It is also taught in schools, specifically Bowie through assignments and restrictions on technology, that social media doesn't define one's character. In my opinion, this is hypocritical of Harvard to say, when high schools have also said that a person's character is not shown through their social media, which is what Harvard is looking for when looking at social media posts.

It is apparent to me that colleges need to be completely certain that students they are accepting will represent their school in a scholarly way, but I don't think checking social media is the correct way to interpret an applicant's character. A better way to address this issue would be for colleges to conduct in-person interview any applicants that they are unsure about accepting. This makes them able to view the applicant's character in person, and can then see how the

person would represent the school fairly, as far as what they are doing in school goes. In my opinion, this is enough to be accepted into the school.

When applying for colleges and even in general with posting on social media accounts and platforms, colleges should steer away from snooping through their students' social media accounts and pages. It is completely unfair for colleges to snoop in applicants' social media accounts because it is invasive and not an accurate representation of their character. ■



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# Businesses support any political charity of their choice

Maya Amador  
Commentary Editor

Moral dilemmas plague our everyday life. Wondering if you should buy a musician's newest album even though they were recently exposed for problematic tweets, or shopping at your favorite clothing store even though you know they contribute to fast fashion. Since people aren't perfect, we

are all guilty of doing something that goes against our moral code.

Multi-million dollar companies will often participate in philanthropy which reveals where the company stands on certain social issues. As a consumer, you determine a company's success and failure, so allowing the success of homophobic companies, like Chick-fil-A is rumored to be, might not always be worth the chicken sandwich. View-

points like this can be extremely harmful, especially when they are being supported so openly by companies with huge influence and large amounts of money. Companies have the freedom to support whoever they want, but ultimately it's the consumer who has to decide if they also want to support that cause.

Chick-fil-A has been one of the biggest companies to openly support controversial charities. In 2017, they donated to the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, the Paul Anderson Youth Home, and the Salvation Army; all three of these organizations have had controversy regarding their views on the LGBTQ community.

In 2012, a public statement was made by the CEO of Chick-fil-A, Dan Cathy, where he says that "We are very much supportive of the family—the biblical definition of the family unit."

These actions have caused a lot of people to boycott the restaurant, which seems to have led to recent statements in 2019 made by the Chick-fil-A Foundation, saying that Chick-fil-A "will deepen its giving to a smaller number of organizations working exclusively in the areas of education, homelessness, and hunger."

They also released a Facebook statement saying "The Chick-fil-A culture and service tradition in our restaurants is to treat every person with honor, dignity, and respect -- regardless of their belief, race, creed, sexual orientation or gender...Going forward, our intent is to leave the policy debate over same-sex marriage to the government and political arena."

The wording in this statement makes it

more of a "we are doing this because we have to" rather than "our views and opinions have changed." They mention a policy debate over same-sex marriage which politically, isn't true. There isn't a policy debate on same-sex marriage, there's a law.

It comes off as backhanded to call same-sex marriage a debate and then go on to say you respect it in the same breath.

Consumers are the only ones who have the ability to hold Chick-fil-A accountable. Chick-fil-A can give money wherever they choose and do as much damage control as they deem necessary, but ultimately customers have to try and see through it.

The argument could be made that large profile companies should stay out of political and social issues. However, companies, like people, have the right to give money and support whoever they want. It's the consumer who has to decide what is morally correct. The occasional hypocritical action is understandable, but make sure you aren't making these decisions while being clueless. Staying ignorant due to fear is worse than putting your morals on the back burner.

Educate yourself and learn about the restaurants and stores you shop at so you can make an informed decision before spending your hard-earned money. ■



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# BULLDAWG SPEAK OUT

What are your feelings on colleges searching your social media?

9th



Dean Roggenbauer

"I think it's good because then it will tell if you're respectful and will represent the college well."

10th



Noah Camacho

"I don't think colleges should do this because people are portrayed differently over social media than in person."

11th



Abbie Brien

"I think it's fair because whatever is put out on social media represents one as a person and colleges should see it."


12th



Jade Fattouh

"I think it's good for colleges to see, and it's good for organizations like sororities to be able to see who they're taking in."

TEACHER



Kim Wiedmeyer

"If colleges want to, they should be able to because social media is an image students choose to put out of themselves."



# Big Fish makes a spectacular splash



**WALKING IN TUNE:** On their way to a great adventure, the giant Karl and Edward Bloom, played by freshmen Javier Lozano and junior Jaden Davis show off their traveling step. Bloom lived in a small town, and he was ready to get out of it with his larger-than-life-pal. "Working with the stilts just takes practice," Lozano said. "I started getting in them all the time any time I had a chance." **PHOTO BY** Rae Gray

## Fine arts works hard to put on their whimsical musical

Rae Gray  
Photo Editor

As the lights flicker in the theater signaling to the buzzing audience that the show is ready to commence, the actors ready themselves for a show of a lifetime.

Technical managers and actors had spent countless nights at rehearsals and

hours perfecting the show. Through countless rehearsals and late nights, participating in the musical is not for the faint hearted.

"It takes a different level of dedication just as much as you would put into a sport," senior Eric Larson said. "This is also something where you should train like an athlete, and where you

should be at these rehearsals at these work days working hard to make the show, the best it can be."

Working on the musical from 6-10 p.m. every night is not an easy task, and juggling everything is even harder. Senior Kamryn Morales has created her own method to working around the madness.

"I think after doing it for four years I've kind of figured out what works for me," Morales said. "I never stopped doing something during lunch or during FIT or during any sort of free time I always have to find time and make sure that I'm doing something because I know that I'm never going to have downtime."

With those countless rehearsals comes a unique bond that the participants in the musical have with each other.

"It's a really special bond that you get whenever you spend so much time with people," Morales said. "You get to see something that is just words and music on a piece of paper, and bring it to life and make something so emotional and beautiful. Getting to do with your friends, is just incredible."

Larson who plays Edward

Bloom, the father with a bigger-than-life personality, believes that the audience was able to form a special bond with the story.

"I think that Big Fish really captivated the audience because it is a story that people can relate to," Larson said. "A father-son relationship that isn't quite there, and all of the self discovery that comes with it."

As well as a captivating story line, the cast of Big Fish created strong bonds with one another to draw the audience in to the story they were portraying.

"Big Fish was centered around a family, and focused on a lot of relationships," junior Jaden Davis said. "I think that by us forming a bond with one another we were able to make a more genuine performance."

For our leaving seniors, Big Fish was a big deal, and gave them the chance for one last performance.

"I saw all of my friends crying because the show was over," Larson said. "The audience couldn't see me so I was able to get to all of them and have a special moment with each of them. That was important because it was my last night as a senior to do this." ■



**THE SMOOCH OF A LIFETIME:** After three years of waiting, Edward Bloom played by junior Jaden Davis, finally finds the love of his life, Sandra, played by senior Gillian Griffiths. He worked for a circus master during those three years and every month he would give him a clue of his mystery girls identity, with his last clue being that she loved daffodils. "Before walking on stage for daffodils I take a second to get in character and fall in love with this man in front of me," Griffiths said. "And the music carries me away to the last second and just like any other piece of blocking, we kiss." **PHOTO BY** Rae Gray



**A DARING RESCUE:** At the U.S.O. show, a deadly assassin tries to kill the general, but Edward Bloom, played by junior Jaden Davis, stops him. Bloom goes on a number of different harrowing journeys throughout the play. "I absolutely loved the big tap sequence at the end of the scene," Davis said. **PHOTO BY** Rae Gray



**SEEING THE FUTURE:** After seeking the Witch, played by senior Connor Reilly out on a dare, Edward Bloom played by junior Jaden Davis sees how he will die in her magic ball. After learning how he will die, Bloom becomes fearless in his adventures. "The scene with Edward and the witch is really important because it sets up the whole play," Reilly said. "Knowing his death makes him fearless." **PHOTO BY** Rae Gray



**SWIMMING WITH MERMAIDS:** Telling all of his stories, Edward Bloom played by senior Eric Larson, captivates Josephine Bloom, played by senior Anna Smiley with his stories of a mermaid played by senior Tayah Savoy. Bloom learned to swim from the mermaid. "The magical elements kind of take you back to the adults childhood," Lawson said. "Even though you are all grown up there is still a child that is still alive in you." **PHOTO BY** Rae Gray



**A TENDER MOMENT:** Sandra Bloom, played by senior Kamryn Morales, sings an emotional solo to her husband Edward, played by senior Eric Larson. Edward is suffering from cancer and is on his death bed, and his wife comforts him with a loving embrace. "I would really try to process what the character would be feeling based on what she's saying in the song since the song itself is so emotional," said Morales. "At that point in the show we're usually very in-the-zone so channeling the emotion needed isn't too difficult, especially when knowing what is about to happen to Edward." **PHOTO BY** Rae Gray