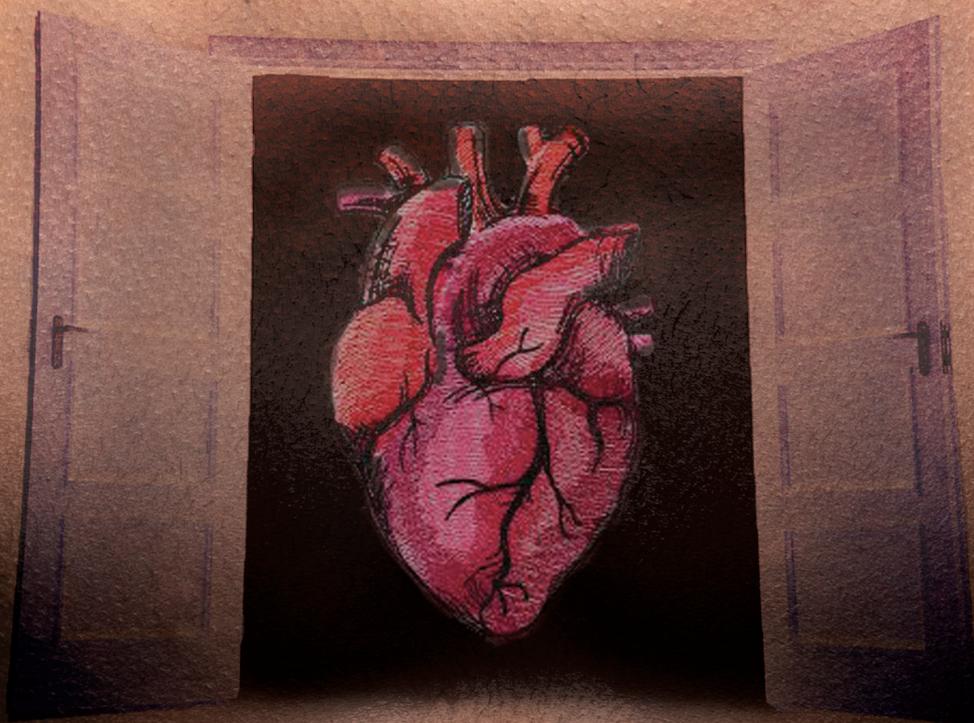




TIGER TIMES

TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL
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heart *of the* matter

Three lives lost in three years
prompts need for awareness
of sudden cardiac arrest

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the rundown

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High school senior discusses how growing up in her household was different than friends of different ethnicities.



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HighStepper director talks about her experiences becoming a dance coach.

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Texas High graduate comes back home to promote his new book. Jerry Mitchell is an investigative reporter that reopened several civil rights cold cases.



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Onto the next lap

The Tigershark boys and girls teams won the regional championship on Feb. 1. Several swimmers will move on to compete at the state level.

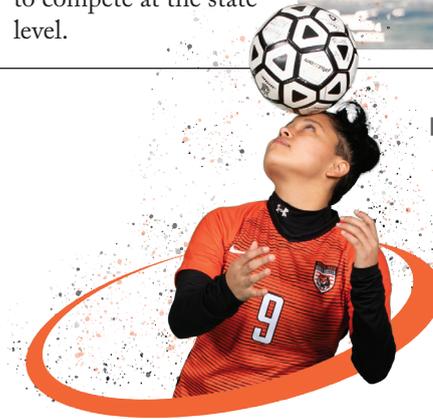


How lovely

Students give an input on what they find attractive and what they look for in a relationship.



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Senior Dulce Bustamante recalls her time on varsity soccer.

what's up next...

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Valentines Day

This annual holiday celebrates couples celebrating their love for each other.

Feb.

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Sadie

The Sadie Hawkins dance will be hosted in the Dan Haskins Student Center. Ticket prices will be \$8.

Feb.

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Dinner Theater

Student Council has worked to produce the annual dinner theater performance in the Performing Arts Center. StuCo will be performing many classic songs.

Feb.

28

Author returns to THS

Jerry Mitchell, a 1977 THS graduate and author, will speak to students from 10-11:20 a.m. He will also be signing books at Books-A-Million at 7 p.m.

March

9-13

HighStepper Tryouts

Drill team tryouts are open to all eighth grade to 11th grade girls. A clinic will be hosted at Tiger Center from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. with tryouts at 4:30 p.m. on March 13.

March

16-20

Spring Break

Enjoy the break.

March

25

Anti Vape Campaign

THS is hosting other area schools to discuss and plan how to discourage teens from vaping.

A handy pantry



COME AND GET IT
Principal Carla Dupree stands in the food pantry that seniors Olivia Lower and Jenna Williamson began as a service project. Food, clothing and hygiene products is available for students.



photos by p. sims

Pantry provides clothes, food, hygienic products

BY PEYTON SIMS
culture editor

Not all students have a form of transportation to get them home after school, a roof to sleep under or know when their next meal will be. To address some of these conditions, two seniors started the Tiger Pantry to provide clothes, food and hygienic products for students in need.

Seniors Jenna Williamson and Olivia Lower proposed the idea as their leadership service project.

“I started it because there is such a need in our school, or every school for that matter, to help students that might need basic necessities. We may never know who needs basic essentials, but there is always someone,” Williamson said. “I also believe that if we can help one person, we will have made a difference. For the future, we hope the pantry will grow immensely. Unfortunately we may always have students in need, we just hope the pantry gives them a place to go.”

The idea for the pantry came up during discussions in the summer while talking about needs that different students might have.

“It’s not just the food, it’s about the clothing, the blankets, the hygiene products,” Lower said.

Most of the items have been received from donations.

“We started getting a ton of stuff, like hygiene stuff, from Q-tips to deodorant to body soap for men and women,” Lower said. “And then theater had a canned food drive. That gave us hundreds of cans.”

In order to utilize the pantry, students can talk to a

teacher or Principal Carla Dupree to schedule a time to visit the pantry.

“The teachers fill out the form with the student’s name and student ID,” Dupree said. “We ask [the teacher] if they’ve spoken to the student about the pantry to see if they’re comfortable with receiving item.”

In order to help sustain the pantry, the TISD Education Foundation donated \$10,000. There are additional plans to move the pantry to a larger location and have it working fully with additional services.

“Mrs. Dupree came to the Public Schools Foundation meeting that we had in December. As she talked about the need for our students to have food, dental hygiene materials etc., we knew right then that we as a foundation had to do something,” Executive Director of Public Relations Tina Veal-Gooch said. “We decided to give them \$10,000 that can only be used for the [pantry]. We hope by the time school starts next year that the Tiger Pantry will have completely evolved into something bigger and better.”

Dupree hopes to see the program continue to grow in the upcoming years.

“We’re hoping to enlarge the program in the future. We’re also hoping to one day be able to provide a washer and a dryer and a laundry service on campus, so that students who don’t have access to a washer and dryer at home [can clean their clothes],” Dupree said. “Our TISD foundation actually gave a generous gift, so that we can replenish and keep the program going.”

peyton.sims@tigertimesonline.com



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Comfort the afflicted

afflict the comfortable

Author, Texarkana native discusses new book

BY GREY JOHNSON
staff writer

An open secret is the worst kind, and there has never been a more offensive open secret than the hate crimes committed during the Civil Rights Era. Hate, violence, and murder were all ignored, covered up and left untouched. Years later, investigative reporter Jerry Mitchell dug up the evidence to pursue justice and give a voice to stories that needed to be heard.

“Our job is to expose these things, to shine a light into the darkness,” Mitchell said. “You want to be able to give people a voice that don’t have a voice, and that’s how we can help, for lack of a better term, balance the scales.”

Mitchell graduated from Texas High in 1977 and became a reporter for the Clarion-Ledger in 1986. Mitchell’s reporting led to the reopening of many cold cases from the Civil Rights Era. His work was inspired by a film he saw in 1989, “Mississippi Burning.”

Although “Mississippi Burning” is a fictional movie, it is based on the killing of the three civil rights workers in Mississippi in 1964 by the Klan.

“There were more than 20 men involved in these killings of these young men, but nobody would prosecute for murder and that was very stunning to me,” Mitchell said.

Mitchell reopened four cases: the assassination of Medger Evers, the fire bombing of Vernon Dahmer, the 16th Street Church bombing in Birmingham and the Mississippi Burning Case. These cases are discussed in his new book “Race Against Time: A Reporter Reopens the Unsolved Murder Cases of the Civil Rights Era,” which was released Feb. 4.

“It’s a story of how these unsolved murder cases for the Civil Rights Era came to be reopened and reprosecuted,” Mitchell said. “It started in [1989] and now there are 24 different convictions in these cases.”

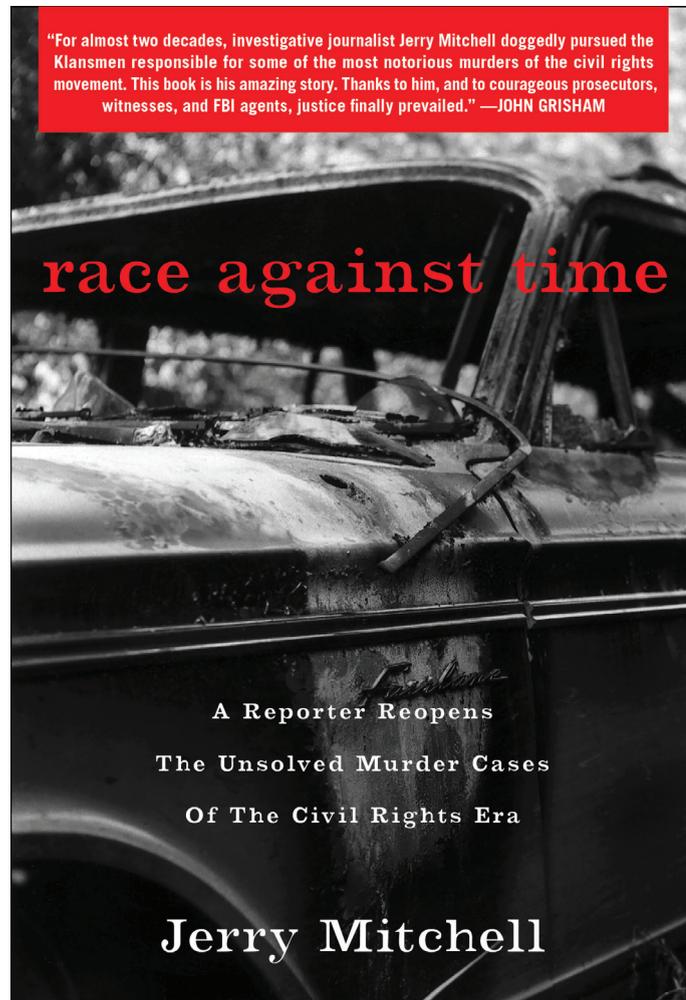
The book follows Mitchell in his journey for justice. Along with discovering the truth behind the stories, Mitchell describes the people he’s met while investigating the cases.

“I got to meet these wonderful families, and I think that’s the great thing about the book,” Mitchell said. “I think my book is an important book, not because of me, but because of the stories it tells [of] incredible courage and the families that I got to meet.”

Despite the truth behind the story, Race Against Time isn’t written similar to a stereotypical history book in the slightest. The style that the book utilizes resembles an episode of Law and Order more than a social studies textbook.

“It’s a detective story. I don’t want people to think this is some kind of boring history book,” Mitchell said. “This is written more like a detective story, or if you watch the shows that are like procedurals, you know that they kind of show you how a case came to be solved.”

Mitchell’s book is a tale of justice, hope, and redemption.



Readers will walk away from this experience with true American tragedies and hope for a better future.

“So, it works on a detective story level, and then on a deeper level, it hopefully fills in people with information that they may not have known about the civil rights movement about this nation’s history and about Mississippi’s history and Alabama’s history as well,” Mitchell said. “I think now we’re in another race against time which is really whether we as a nation are going to be able to live with each other.”

Mitchell will be visiting his hometown in February. He is scheduled to speak at Texas High on Feb. 28, sign books at Books-A-Million that night and speak at the Twin Cities Black History Banquet on Feb. 29. Mitchell is currently working on another cold case, unrelated to the Civil Rights Era, and continues to shine a light to expose the truth.

“Our job is to expose these things: to shine a light into the darkness. So, that’s what I see our role as journalists is doing,” Mitchell said. “The old quote on journalism, anyway, is to ‘comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.’”

grey.johnson@tigertimesonline.com



“Our job is to expose these things, to shine a light into the darkness. You want to be able to give people a voice that don’t have a voice, and that’s how we can help, for lack of a better term, balance the scales.”

Jerry Mitchell
1977 THS Graduate

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Lauree Romero
 Director of Operations

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 Cell: 903-748-5808

www.millercountyabstract.com
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Texas High School
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editors in chief

Addison Cross
Anna Grace Jones
Molly Kyles

news editors

Logan Diggs
Sophie Spakes

opinion editor

Margaret Debenport

feature editors

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Kate Morgan

sports editors

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copy editors

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video editor

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staff writers

Raelyn Albert, Joseph Asher,
Aislyn Echols, Bailey Hawkins,
Ruth Heinemann, Makenzie
Hofert, Grey Johnson,
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Zverina

photographers

Abigail Bunch, Cayli Clack,
Abigail Elliott, Jonathan Naples,
Caden Rainwater, Hollan Reed,
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Cameron Alcorn, Elizabeth
Debenport, Logan Diggs, Kara
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Carla Dupree

members

ILPC, CSPA, NSPA



illustration by a. smith

They call it the senior curse. In the past three years, five seniors have had their lives cut short; three of those from heart-related issues. They were young, active teenage boys—two were members of the football team. Until after death, neither they nor their families realized they suffered from heart disease or defects. Despite their unawareness, such conditions can sometimes be detected during a physical.

Sports physicals were put in place to ensure that athletes are in healthy physical condition to play and exert themselves on the field or in practice. The pre-participation physical examinations (PPE) that student-athletes are given, however, does not include heart testing. Athletic physicals should incorporate more thorough cardiac testing that may save the life of another student.

While the medical history form is an important part of the physical, it is not an adequate indicator of cardiac health. The basic form asks 12 questions about heart health for athletes to check a yes or no response. Although the National Athletic Trainers' Association states that the history portion identifies approximately 75% of problems that affect initial athletic participation, there are problems with the forms and the process itself. The information on these forms is often unreliable because parents and student athletes aimlessly check boxes. Additionally, many symptoms of cardiac problems are not presented prior to sudden cardiac arrest.

After the medical history form comes

To protect students, athletic physicals should include heart testing, CPR training for staff

the physical examination. These physical examinations have been around for years but have not adapted or kept up with advancements in technology. According to Cody Stephens from the Cody Stephens Go Big Foundation, current physicals detect approximately 3% of heart abnormalities that can lead to sudden cardiac arrest. Adding an electrocardiogram to the standard physical exam can increase the odds to 86%.

Despite seeming to have only positive effects, many do not support EKG testing during physicals because of the cost included. However, there are many foundations and partnership programs that offer free or reduced cardiac testing during sports physicals, and having those organizations come to schools can be only a phone call away. Testing through the Cody Stephens Foundation is free the first year. After that, it's

\$20 a student.

Some claim that even if athletes receive EKG tests, the screening will not be able to catch many of these conditions. Yet, studies have shown that receiving the EKG screening, along with the other parts of a physical exam, dramatically increases the likelihood of finding some sort of irregularity.

In addition to EKG testing in physicals, another way to be proactive in protecting student health would be to require CPR certification for all faculty. Training can be conducted as part of a teacher inservice and be conducted by district trainers. Coaches and athletic trainers are already required to be certified, so enforcing the certification of all faculty members benefits everyone on campus. According to the Sudden Cardiac Arrest Foundation, death from SCA can occur in minutes and only one in 10 survives SCA. However, with immediate attention with CPR or the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED) can increase the survival rate to five in 10. With every school employee CPR certified, the minutes that matter can increase.

While there is no definite solution to finding these diseases and conditions, knowing that all possible methods have been explored can make students and their families feel safer. The mothers of those we've lost would certainly think so. The extra effort and cost to include cardiac testing in physicals as well as CPR training for faculty would be worth it, even if it saves just one.

sound on

Should athletic physicals include more thorough heart testing?



Never Know

"Yes, it needs to be more thorough because of the recent deaths that are heart related. You don't really know who can be next because we don't have enough testing for it."

Kai Boyce, 10

Failed Job

"Somebody has died every single year, so it's not really doing its job of preventing people who probably should get checked out and treated, because people have been getting checked and they're still dying."

Seth Whittington, 10



Strain

"Yes, I know they're putting a lot of strain on their hearts when they're participating in sports, so I think it should definitely be a thing they look into."

Victoria Taylor, 10



Stay healthy



"I mean, we want healthy athletes, so they should test the athletes more thoroughly because you don't want an athlete to have something wrong with their heart and then can't play."

Tori Ferguson, 11

Professionals

"Yes, because lots of basketball players, even if they don't know it, they'll have like heart problems sometimes brain problems, and there's just stuff that you have to get tested out by professionals."

Jakholbe Johnson, 10



Not Enough

"They don't test enough for that, and then anything could happen whenever you're on the field or in the middle of just working out, and what if there could be not enough time to help you."

Aubrey Egger, 10



Student safety

"Yes, I think they should be more thorough because the more thorough the physicals are that just ensures the student safety even further."

Gabriella Daniels, 11



Do More

"With as many deaths as there have been in the past couple years, I think doctors should do more thorough checks to make sure everybody's doing OK."

Rian Cellers, 11



Take it Serious

"If the physicals we go and take clear us to actually play sports or do other athletic things, then they should actually be taking it more serious and really looking at you to see if you could actually handle all the hard work and running and just being able to work out."

Valeria Perez, 10



Conditions

"I think they should due to the fact that many athletes could probably have heart conditions, that they don't even know of. Most of them could end up having like a heart deficiency out of nowhere, and it could provoke a lot of things in games. So, I think you should."

Briseyda Rojo, 10

Two cultures, one story

‘I am an imperfect blend of both’

BY ANDREA LOREDO
staff writer

Most people live their lives knowing only the streets that they grew up on. While others go from one place to another, and sometimes that’s not the easiest thing to live with. I grew up with a blend of two different cultures; the one I was raised in and the one was born into.

I was born in San Luis de la Paz, Mexico, but I was raised in various cities in Texas. I received my citizenship at birth because my father was a citizen before I was born. My life was divided in two; my whole life has been a series of driving, or taking the bus, from here to Mexico and back. We make sure that we go at least once a year, if not twice. It became my family’s thing just like it is for other Hispanics.

I was brought here at a young age, but before we began living here, my family would visit often because this is where my dad would work. When we officially moved here in 2005, it was because of my dad’s job. He worked in a power plant in Fulton, Arkansas.

We spent the first four years moving around a lot because of my dad’s job. One year in Houston, one year in Dallas, two years in Baytown, and then I started the third grade in Texarkana and we have been here ever since.

Our entire life had been a bilingual road trip until we got here. We went from speaking Spanish the majority of the time to having classes that were only in English. That made things a little difficult considering that we had no prior experience that were completely in English. Our whole lives we had someone helping us with the few things that were in English, but now our whole lives were in English. It was something that my siblings and I had to adjust to quickly.

Some days it’s Spanish. Others it’s English, but most of the time, it’s Spanglish.

I was raised in a Mexican household, but when I went to school, I tried my best to fit in with the rest of the kids. I wanted to dress like them and listen to the same music that they would listen to, but deep down I knew that I wasn’t like them, and my parents made sure that I knew that too. They made sure that I knew where I came from and knew about my roots and my culture. They wanted my siblings and me to make sure that we never forgot where we came from, and I guess now that’s the reason why I take so much pride in my roots and culture.

My parents were a bit strict when it came to certain

things, but I guess they were just worried about my safety. When I was little, I was not really allowed to go to sleepovers and when I would get invited to birthday parties, my mom would go along. Most of my friends would think that it was weird, but now I don’t do too much without my family.

I never really understood why, but overtime I began to realize that they just wanted the best for me and that my dad’s strict behavior was because he didn’t want me to go through what he had gone through.

As I got older, however, they became a bit more trusting with letting me go out with my friends, but my dad’s words never leave my mind when I am not home or with them. His words are like a good corrido; they always have a way of sticking with me.

As much as I love the two cultures that rule my life, I went through a time where I just didn’t know who I was. I was divided into two very different cultures. I didn’t want to be the ‘perfect’ Mexican daughter that my parents wanted me to, but I also didn’t want to disappoint them. I was too scared to stray too far off the path that I thought was so carefully laid out for me, that I never saw the other paths that my parents had also laid out for me. I was too caught up with trying to be more of something that I already was.

I learned from a young age that you can’t please everyone. I was too Mexican to hang out with my American friends and too ‘white-washed’ to hang out with my cousins in Mexico. I felt like I didn’t belong anywhere. I was too much of something to be anything.

The things that I liked and disliked were a blend of both cultures. And when it came to my music, it was even more of a mix. Some days it is pop with reggaeton mixed in, others it’s all banda or all kinds of different genres. Music has always been a big part of Mexican and American culture, and part of the reason as to why I listen to such different genres is because in one way or another, I found a way to relate to the lyrics on both sides.

The food I like, the clothes I wear, the music I listen to and even the way I talk became a window into my life that showed just how much these two cultures had influenced me.

As I got older, I began to realize that I didn’t have to get rid of any parts of myself to feel okay with who I am.

I learned that both of these very different cultures had become a big part of who I am as a person and that I couldn’t live without either side nor would I want to. These two cultures are the reason why I am who I am. I am an imperfect blend of both.

andrea.loredo@tigertimesonline.com



photo illustration by p. sims, m. debenport

Saddling up for Success

Equestrian describes challenges of competing in marginalized sport

BY DOUG KYLES
staff writer

Training an animal triple one's size to move gracefully with just a pull of the reins is no easy feat. When the movements are scrutinized by a panel of judges who are trained to notice every mistake, the process becomes even harder. Junior Macy Sloan takes on the challenge every time she saddles up for dressage competitions.

"It's like horse ballet, with the horse doing the movements," Sloan said. "That is the best explanation I can think of. Your goal is to complete a series of specific movements."

Most people are quick to associate any equine based sport in the south with the rodeo, but Sloan is quick to point out how dressage is different than the rough and fast-paced sport so many are used to.

"To compete, you have a series of tests. Each test is a series of patterns that you and the horse must complete," Sloan said. "You start out with a simple circle. Then, it moves to trotting and cantering in specific paths. It gets more complicated from there, with figure-eights and leg-yields."

Since competitive dressage isn't what most would consider typical for the area, very few are introduced to the sport in their youth. Sloan was an exception, and taking to the sport early is what gave her a competitive edge.

"[I started dressage] in the sixth grade. I had just joined Texas Middle School but didn't really know anyone or join any clubs, so I had a lot of extra time," Sloan said. "And since I always liked horses going back to elementary school, my dad started looking at places for me to ride."

Considering the scarcity of dressage in the area, it is a challenge for many to find places to train. Western forms of riding dominate the majority of stables in the area, making it difficult for those in dressage to find anywhere dedicated to their niche.

"I used to do Western riding, which is wildly different," Sloan said. "But I was lucky when my dad

found an English riding stable. I gave it a try and I've stayed there at Red River Riding Academy since sixth grade."

Like any competitive sport, there are rigorous standards to be met. In dressage especially, much of the competition will involve specific formal uniforms that make riders stand out.

"[Uniforms] depend on which level you are competing at," Sloan said. "If you're really new, you can wear chaps, tall boots or polos. At my level, I have 'show shirts' which are sold at shows that I go to. You can make your uniform as fancy or as dull as you want."

While uniforms are an important component to the sport, dressage is more than dress-up. An average competition is tiring, stressful and competitive like any other sport. Over the years, Sloan developed a process to prepare for every competition. The horses can make this process difficult if they have a hard time adjusting to the new environment, possibly lashing out or ignoring commands.

"I will usually leave the day before so [my] horse can get used to the arena," Sloan said. "Horses are kind of like toddlers that are prone to temper tantrums. When they see a new thing, it can be really scary, but unlike toddlers, horses can kill you."

Tensions run high at the show grounds for the horse and its equestrian. On competition days, part of the challenge is managing the stress both the rider and horse face.

"Show days are chaotic. There a lot of horses crowding the area," Sloan said. "[Everyone's goal] is just not to run into each other. There is a lot of yelling. Once you feel like you are warmed up, it's showtime."

When luck and preparation come together for Sloan, she has a shot to leave with first place.



ONE WITH THE HORSE Junior Macy Sloan takes the opportunity to bond with her horse during a weekly practice. Sloan competes in dressage, a skilled form of riding. "Your relationship with the horse is just so important," Sloan said. "Without a deep level of trust, there's no shot at winning."

Many times, she has come out on top; after years of competing, she holds an impressive track record.

"I don't want to sound pretentious, but I usually do pretty well," Sloan said. "There are not many shows where I'm left completely disappointed with the results. Usually, I'll get first or second. For the past couple years, I've gotten champion, but it depends on the show."

Similar to any competition, there will always be an element of uncertainty. For Sloan, there have been many occasions where freak incidents or tough competition prevents her from performing her best.

"There are a lot of factors that can go bad," Sloan said. "Once, my old horse refused to go through a puddle, and the judge had to coach me how to deal with it. Another time at competition, I was left only one test away from advancing. These things can definitely be frustrating."

Even taking into account these unfortunate scenarios, Sloan loves the sport and plans to continue competing. The sport's scarcity in the South can be challenging, but Sloan is optimistic of its future.

"[Dressage's small presence] is really unfortunate because there are so many people around here who would really enjoy it," Sloan said. "But, the more it gets offered, the more people who get interested, so it is growing. But I still wish it would get more representation in the South."

doug.kyles@tigertimesonline.com

5 QUESTIONS FOR...

Amber Reynolds

BY RUTH HEINEMANN
staff writer

IN A NUTSHELL

Many people refuse to regard dance as a legitimate career. Even though it often starts off as a hobby, there are people, like HighStepper director Amber Reynolds, who decide to take the risk and pursue a career in dance. Reynolds became the HighStepper director in 2015 after her graduation from Texas State University. By taking that risk, she inspires others to follow their dreams.

3

Did you always want to make a career out of dance?

Actually, no. My mom, being a drill team director, had busy weekends, really late nights and early mornings. So growing up, I swore that I would never do this because I would never get to be home and I would never spend time with my family. Whenever I met my director when I got into high school, she immediately changed my mind and made me want to do it and here I am.

4

How has your director influenced you and are you trying to have a similar influence on your team?

[My drill team director] was a good role model. She gave us really good expectations and she held us to those expectations. I mean, she taught me a lot dance-wise, but at the same time, she taught me how to be a good human being and I think that's what turned me around. I still talk to her a lot, and I will go to her for advice, not even just about the drill team but anything really. There's been some girls over the past couple years that will still reach out to me and in those moments, I feel like maybe, hopefully, I've had the same impact on them as [my director] had on me.

2

Were you in the drill team when you went to school?

I did drill team for four years in high school, and then, I was actually in college drill team as well. So, from my freshman year of high school to my senior year of college, I wore hats and boots and did high kicking on the football field.

1

How and when did you start dancing?

I started dancing when I was 7. I took gymnastics for a year and I was OK with it, but then I joined the dance studio and I just immediately fell in love. My mom was actually a dance teacher, so I knew the dance world before I started taking classes. It was always just kind of part of my life. At that age, I got to start with jazz. A lot of times 3, 4, and 5-year-olds have to do ballet, but my mom told me later in life that she knew I wouldn't sit still long enough to be in ballet, so I started jazz.



5

What are your favorite moments as HighStepper director?

I love football season. It's so high paced. It's also really fun to see [the girls] progress over time. We start at camp and not everyone is skilled the same. It makes you nervous for what the year is going to look like. So, watching them get just a little bit better every single week is so exciting for me. I also love competing. I'm highly competitive, so going to competitions and them knowing how much I want them to do great makes them want to do great. In those times, they honestly become a big family.

ruth.heinmann@tigertimesonline.com

UNDERDOGS

is an

UNDERSTATEMENT

Boys, girls soccer teams discover newfound success

Earning Their Stripes



"I wanted to come here and make an impact. That's basically what coaching is, impacting athletes by improving them on the field and hopefully off it too."

-Zak McCarthy



"Belonging to a team is so much more than playing soccer, and my girls really value that."

-Hillary Cloud

BY CADEN RAINWATER
sports editor

Author Mark Twain once wrote that it's not the size of the dog in the fight, but the size of the fight in the dog. The boys' and girls' soccer teams have begun to turn away from their past struggles and find their fight for the 2019-2020 season.

The boys take on the new season, already winning more games than they won the entire 2018-2019 season. They're also returning with their previous coach, Jesus DeLeon, a privilege they were not given last year.

"There was a tough barrier to get around our first year with coach [DeLeon]," junior Oscar Hernandez said. "I guess there were some trust issues and the team just really struggled to connect to the coach which really hurt us."

Notably, the girls soccer team is mostly comprised of underclassmen taking over the varsity squad. Opening the season with a tough schedule, the girls have had a shaky start since they've taken on strong teams such as Longview and Hallsville.

"We're young, but we're also filled with so much talent," head coach Hillary Cloud said. "My favorite part about the team and the season is getting to watch the girls grow as players and as teammates."

The boys hope for greater results this season after amounting a total of two district wins from the previous three seasons. A strong strategy the boys' team has taken on is learning not only from mistakes in previous seasons, but aiming at what they struggle on during each game.

"We hope to make it far this season by focusing hard and working towards our goal," sophomore Austin Miller said. "After each game we look to improve and focus on our flaws."

Also with large goals, the girls' soccer team hopes to break their streak of winning no more than six games in district for the past couple years. Starting her second year with the Lady Tigers, Cloud has plans to be coaching the girls far into the season on a special day for her.

"I tell the girls I want to be playing on my birthday, which would mean we have made it to the regional quarterfinals," Cloud said.

MAKE A PASS Sophomore Emma Hickerson advances the ball down field during a game against Longview. The Lady Tigers participated in this showcase tournament.



"That is our goal for the season, to make it multiple rounds into the playoffs."

Most underclassmen who are committed to an extracurricular imagine their senior year as the year they stand out and become leaders to turn their programs around, especially the multiple senior members of the boys' soccer team that have kicked the ball around with each other since they were in middle school.

"This is our year and we're going to do everything we can to stay on top of the district and make this season special," senior Alejandro Simon said. "Every single senior on the team is going to go out and give it everything we've got."

caden.rainwater@tigertimesonline.com

"We learned from our mistakes last season, so this year we can focus and prove ourselves."

-Austin Miller, 10

photo by M. Stanfill

Dulce Bustamante

Senior soccer player talks passion for game, future plans

BY TJ WALL
sports editor

How did you get into playing soccer?

Well, really everybody in my family plays soccer, so I would hang out with my brothers. That's how I got into soccer.

What do you like most about soccer?

I like that it's about teamwork. If somebody fails, you'll be there to pick them up and make them not feel so bad. If you mess up, you have your family. It's really like a family thing.

How is the girls soccer team doing?

We're doing very well this year. I feel like we have a strong team. We're still getting to know how we play, but it's going by faster than I thought it would. Although sometimes we do butt heads, at the end of the day, they're like sisters to me.

Who have y'all faced so far?

We've played Jacksonville, Spring Hill and [Pleasant Grove]. [Pleasant Grove] was a very important game for us. The score was one to zero and the boys won two to one.

Who are some standout players on the team?

I don't really want to say any names because we all do a part on the field, but I work a lot with Mya Bowers and Allison Garza, who is our forward. But like I said, everybody has their own job; if it wasn't for [any one player] we would not be the same.

What is the role of a midfielder?

[Midfielders] try to start and finish the plays and also try to defend. I feel like we're not the most important position on the field. The most important position is defender. [Midfielders] just have to be aware of our surroundings because we go back and forth and up and down the field.

What are some important traits of a midfielder?

You have to have good communication. Sometimes you really want to give up, but then you remember "I can't give up because if I give up I'm going to let my team down." You have to control your anger a lot because it's kind of stressful sometimes, but you just have to relax and think about how nothing bad is going to happen and everything is going to be good. But it's not just on the field; off the field, you have to be a role model to anybody no matter if there's just one person that's looking at you. You still have to be that role model.

What are some of your goals for your future in soccer?

I actually want to play in college. I will probably go to Texas A&M - Texarkana for criminal justice and as a soccer player. I hope this is not my last year playing soccer, and I hope that if I do play college soccer, it will go well. It really doesn't matter if I don't go pro. I mean, I love the game. I have a love-hate relationship with the game, but I mostly love the game. If this is my last year, I will probably like just [find] a team or something, but if that doesn't happen, I will just study criminal justice and become a police officer.

What do you hate about the game?

Sometimes you mess up and you feel like all the pressure is on you. Sometimes you don't know how to get rid of [the ball] or you don't know how to push it up. Also, there is a lot of running and it's tiring.

Sometimes you try to do the right thing, and it's not always good enough, so you always have to try harder.

Why do you want to become a police officer?

I've been living here for 14 years, and you see so many things going on. I feel like if you know a person from the community that's a police officer, you can talk to them more than you could talk to a police officer [who you don't know]. I feel like it would make things safer and more comfortable.

Strengths and weaknesses of the team?

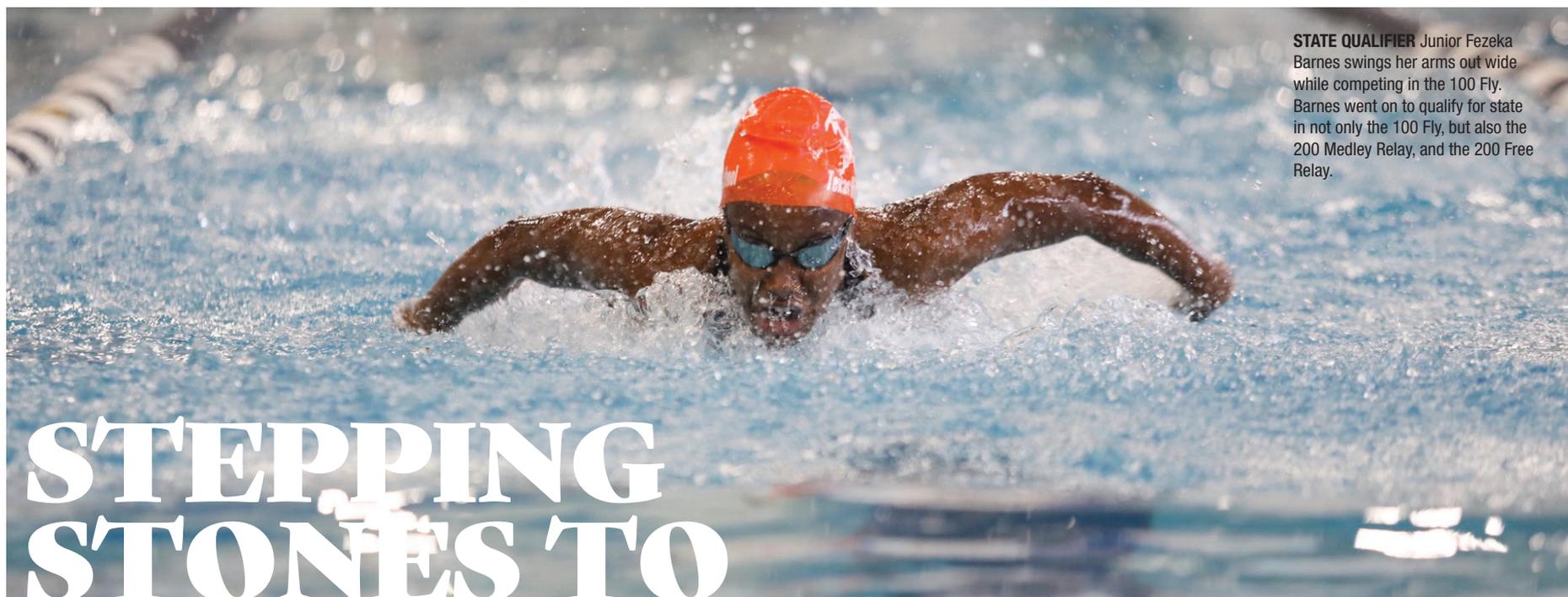
Some of our strengths are that we have a very young team that is very smart. They know how to play. We're still trying to connect when it comes to trying to figure out how each other plays. I feel like our weakness right now is really trying to figure out how we're trying to play this season.

What advice would you give to the younger soccer players coming up who may look up to you?

I would tell them don't give up. Don't give up. It doesn't matter what happens. Do not give up. If you get hurt, don't give up. If you're failing, go pick up your grades. I would say don't take it too lightly. Just play the game you love and go have fun on and off the field, especially on the field.

tjwall@tigertimesonline.com





STATE QUALIFIER Junior Fezeka Barnes swings her arms out wide while competing in the 100 Fly. Barnes went on to qualify for state in not only the 100 Fly, but also the 200 Medley Relay, and the 200 Free Relay.

K. ROGERS

STEPPING STONES TO STATE

Tigersharks dominate regional championships



Owen Likins, 12

BY LOGAN DIGGS
news editor

Eight swimmers stand on the blocks. The crowds roar until they are silenced by the announcer. Once the three words “take your mark” are played through the speakers, they lock themselves on to the board, ready to burst off with hopes of gold. On Jan. 30 and Feb. 1 the TigerSharks travelled to Lewisville to compete in their regional meet.

Sweeping their regional championship on both the male and female side of the team, the TigerSharks have now won Regionals 21 times in a row. However, the swimmers continuing to state will spend the next two weeks narrowing in on their tunnel vision. The team aims to place higher on the state level than last year, and with the current team’s roster, big goals seem to be in reach.

“Going forward into state is always the part of the season to where bodies start to burn out and people start to approach this last meet thinking ‘I just want to be done,’” junior captain John Cass said. “But this year it’s different. I feel like our state team is ready to not only participate in state but actually compete amongst some of the best teams in Texas.”

In the past three years, the boys’ team has been able to place in the top 10 with every year moving up in ranking. With a strong group of mainly juniors and seniors, they plan on leaving their mark at State and paving the way for the lowerclassmen beneath them.

“Going into the last meet of my high school career, I actually feel more confident than ever in our team. The amount of hard work myself and others have put into this year will show come time for State,” senior Max Young said. “It’s been a long three and a half years of 5 a.m. practices building up to this very moment, and I’m confident that me and fellow seniors will go out with a bang.”

Since last year the team has picked up a new assistant coach, Susan Likins, who previously coached local swimming organization Area Texarkana Aquatic Club. Like many other team members, Likins is also preparing

for her first year at state.

“I am so excited about the state meet this year. This is my first year as a TigerShark coach, and this team has made my job so easy and so much fun. I feel confident about the work these kids have put in,” Likins said. “State is a very tough competition, but our kids have put the hard work in and are prepared mentally and physically. We just have to do what we know how to do, go fast.”

The state meet will be held in Austin on today through Saturday. Going into it, the boys’ overall team goal is to place top 5 at State and bring home a banner to hang from their aquatic center’s ceiling.

“This year I never thought I’d learn as much as I did from coaching these kids, throughout all my years of doing this job, I’ve never dealt with a group as special and as talented as these,” head coach Eric Vogan said. “Although our girls team is currently in a rebuilding phase. I feel like they will place better this year at the state level than last year. As far as our boys go, we have two relays we believe can set the school records and a few individuals who can rack up some major points resulting in us bringing home that banner, I think well do fantastic this go around.”

logan.diggs@tigertimesonline.com



Madison Frost, 10

BOYS QUALIFIERS

Senior Cameron Alcorn
200 Medley Relay, 200 Free

Senior Owen Likins
200 Free, 500 Free, 200 Free Relay, and 400 Free Relay

Senior Joshua Oldham
200 Medley Relay, and 100 Breast breast

Senior Max Young
50 Free, 100 Free, 200 Free Relay, and 400 Free Relay

Junior John David Cass
50 Free, 100 Fly, 200 Free Relay, and 400 Free Relay

Junior Logan Diggs
200 Medley Relay, 200 IM, 100 Breast, 400 Free Relay

Sophomore Evan Likins
200 Medley Relay

GIRLS QUALIFIERS

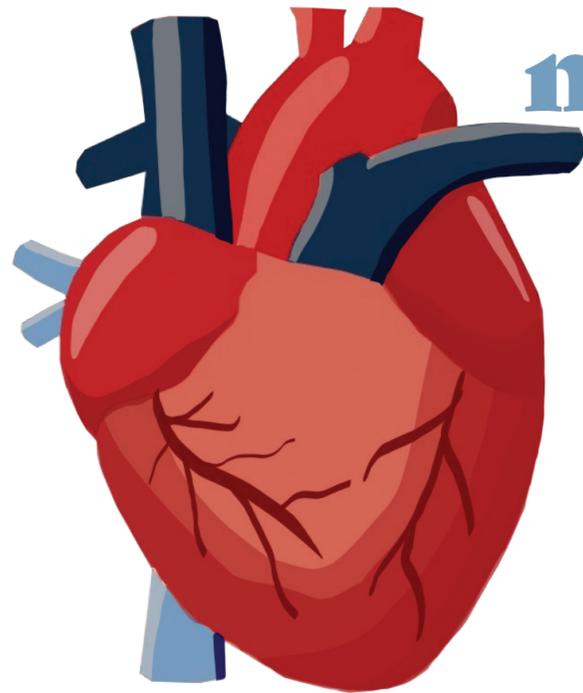
Senior Kaitlyn Rogers
200 Medley Relay, 100 Fly, and 200 Free Relay

Senior Avery Morrill
200 Medley Relay

Senior Haley Wood
200 Medley Relay, 200 Free Relay, and 100 Breast

Junior Fezeka Barnes
200 Medley Relay, 100 Fly, and 200 Free Relay

Freshman Helen Chen
200 Free Relay



matters of the heart

Instances of sudden cardiac death spark debate over effectiveness of physicals

BY ANNA GRACE JONES, ADDISON CROSS
CATE ROUNDS
editors in chief, culture editor

It can hit anytime. It can hit in the first minute of practice. It can hit at the first play of the game. It can hit going into the locker room. It can hit away from the school, away from the field or court when there's nobody there to respond.

Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) is an electrical malfunction within the heart that often results in death. Annually, SCA causes the deaths of over 2,000 children and adolescents in the United States. Immediate and drastic symptoms of SCA include sudden collapse, lack of pulse and breathing and a loss of consciousness. Without immediate action, only 10% survive.

I would caution athletes about paying attention to your body. If you have something that just doesn't feel right, if you have something that feels different, if you get over exerted, don't blow it off and think that it's just nothing. Say something to somebody. Pay attention to something different in your body."

-Kelly Rowland, Miller County Deputy Coroner

"The bottom line is they don't give you much warning," said Dr. Mike Finley, chief medical officer for CHRISTUS St. Michael Health System. "It's very sudden. It's very unpredictable."

Despite the rarity of these conditions, three students have died from heart-related issues in the past three years—Leonard Parks in 2017, Dee Lewis in 2018 and Damian Coats in 2019. All three were physically active black males, two played on the football team.

Each one died suddenly, leaving a hole in the lives of their family and friends and a community asking

if there was a way their deaths could have been avoided.

Detecting conditions that can lead to sudden

cardiac arrest is often difficult. A combination of blood tests, electrocardiograms (EKG) and echocardiograms are the most common tests used. However, these are not part of the routine physical exams for student athletes.

"You'll see that there are about 30 million sports physicals done every year in this country, and they are woefully inadequate to spot the extremely rare person that has a problem," Finley said.

An EKG is a test done on the heart that measures the electrical pulses of the heartbeat. Although the test is an improvement from prior techniques, it is not a catch-all method. There have been multiple attempts to try to find what Finley calls the "golden nugget," the solution to effectively identify heart irregularities.

"A good physical exam is limited when you're doing sports physicals because, typically, they're done on one evening, and you line up literally hundreds of teenagers," Finley said. "They've talked about doing ultrasounds of the heart called echocardiograms. They've even talked about doing stress tests. And none of those have panned out. These are so rare that you would have to screen so many people."

Even with these tests, Finley said catching abnormalities is not 100%.

"Sometimes [abnormalities] are very subtle," Finley said. "When you're looking at 300 or 400 student athletes in line coming in, you just hope that you pick out the one, maybe two, that need a little something else done."

As heart abnormalities become a more pressing issue in the realm of student health, there is a movement to include EKGs and echos as regular components of student physicals. However, feasibility and cost are a concern.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16



"[Leonard] didn't just give it his 100%, this boy gave his 110%, and it just feels like everything he did was in vain. But I guess it wasn't because if [telling his story] can help one student—I wish I could help them all, but if I could just save one, that would do my heart some good."

-Yolanda Parks, mother

Her baby boy

Parks shares story in hopes of saving others

BY ADDISON CROSS & MOLLY KYLES
editors in chief

Leonard Parks had big feet.

In fact, his mother claims that he went up one shoe size every year. When he was 9, he wore a size nine, at 10 he wore a size 10, and so on. At 17 years old, he wore size 16 and a half shoes, on his way to a size 17.

When his mother finally found a pair of Air Jordans big enough, she had to get them.

"[He asked how much they cost and he said] 'No, that's too much,' and I said 'Don't worry about that,' but he said no."

Yolanda Parks sits at her dining table, a soft smile painted across her face as she recalls Leonard, or as she knows him, her 'baby boy,' refusing those Jordans. Just one example of the boy's kindness and willingness to sacrifice for his family, even if he didn't have to.

"So I told his brother to go take Leonard to get some shoes for school. He came back with Adidas in size 13 and I [wondered] how he was gonna get his big foot in a size 13," Parks said. "When I came back home that Monday those shoes were in the middle of the floor. We laughed about that."

That's when Parks' tone suddenly shifts; what was a nostalgic memory becomes tragic. Even if those shoes had fit, Leonard would have barely had a chance to wear them.

"School had started Aug. 22, and he died Sept. 2," Parks said. "He didn't even live but two weeks into the school year."

Leonard died after a night on the football field. His dedication to the sport garnered him much success, including a commitment to play for Southern Methodist University's football team.

"I didn't even want him to play football," Parks said. "But he wanted to play football, so I told him [I would be his] number one fan."

Autopsy results showed that Leonard had an enlarged heart and concluded that he died from a genetic heart condition. However, Parks casts doubts on the findings.

"The autopsy lady said [he was a] 17 year old healthy boy, [they couldn't] find [anything]," Parks said. "[They couldn't] find [anything] but [they] came up with genetic heart disease, so it just didn't make sense."

Parks said heart disease does not run in their family.

"Of course, they wanted me to get tested,

and I went and got tested," Parks said. "But I already knew that wasn't it. It seems to me that if it was his heart, that boy couldn't do what he did."

With Leonard's death so sudden, his mother is caught in a torturous cycle of wondering if it could have been prevented.

"I just think, Lord, what could I have done to save Leonard?" Parks said. "I haven't gotten the answer to that yet. I'm still waiting on that. I did want comfort, I did want peace, I did want understanding, you know?"

Unfortunately, the tragedy of losing a child is not an isolated event. Dee Lewis and Damian Coats, two other seniors, died within the past two years. Parks has reached out to their mothers, Carla Lewis and Shykovia Coats.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

LOOKING BACK Yolanda Parks, Leonard Parks' mother, hopes that sharing her son's story will bring awareness to heart health. "Leonard was my baby," Parks said. "That's my baby boy."

Glossary

Echocardiogram: Also known as an echo. An ultrasound of the heart to evaluate pumping functions.

Electrocardiogram: Also known as an EKG or ECG. A test that measures the electrical activity of the heart.

Sudden Cardiac Arrest: The heart suddenly stops beating and blood stops flowing to the brain and vital organs.

Athlete's heart: A change seen in the cardiovascular structures of an individual who endures regular athletic training. The heart is enlarged and the resting heart rate is lower than normal.

Enlarged heart: Also known as cardiomegaly. A heart can become enlarged when the muscles work so hard that it thickens or the chambers widen.

Heart rate: The number of times a person's heart beats per minute. A normal resting heart rate ranges from 60-100 beats per minute. An athlete may have a resting heart rate closer to 40 beats per minute.

Heart murmur: A swishing sound of blood flowing through the heart throughout the heartbeat cycle. A normal heartbeat makes two sounds, often described as "lubb-dupp."

Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy: Disease in which the heart muscle becomes abnormally thick, preventing efficient and proper blood flow.

Beyond the story

Scan the QR codes to read memorial stories on tigertimesonline.com



'The legacy you leave behind'



'A smile we will never forget'



'The gentle giant'



The cost of a life

continued from page 14

“The cost is astronomical when you add it all up,” Finley said. “If you have a family member that has one of these sudden deaths, you wouldn’t mind what the cost was, but in order to pick one of these up, there’s nothing that shows that it’s predictable and cost effective.”

To perform a screening with an EKG and echo on all student athletes during physicals would be difficult to do, Finley said, and requiring them to go to a doctor or outpatient facility would cost several hundred dollars per person.

“It would be a stretch for a school system, or even a family, to afford that,” Finley said. “Some families have three or four kids doing these.”

In order to make it feasible, Finley suggested finding donors to offset the cost.

“I wish I had a great answer for this,” Finley said. “If we were going to do this in this community, for example, I would recommend that we have a campaign and that we have support from donors that would want to be involved in this and get the right thing done in the most efficient and the most cost efficient way.”

The Cody Stephens Go Big or Go Home Foundation is a Texas nonprofit organization that helps schools perform EKG testing for all student athletes. The organization was founded in memory of Cody Stephens, a Crosby High School senior and football player who died in 2012 from sudden cardiac arrest.

“We lost Cody right before he graduated from high school,” Cody’s father Scott Stephens said. “He was getting ready to go play college football. He was a 6’9”, 290-pound kid that had the world by the tail. There was no indication, that we recognized, of any kind of heart abnormality that might lead to sudden cardiac arrest.”

Stephens said he wished that EKG screenings had been part of athletic physicals when Cody was alive.

“The current sports physicals are wonderful tools,” Stephens said. “They have been in place for a lot of years, but they really haven’t progressed. Cody had probably basically the same physical that I had in 1978. We’ve made a lot of medical advances over the course of 40 years, yet, we haven’t really applied it to our physicals.”

According to Stephens, adding an EKG test to sports physicals increases the likelihood of detecting heart abnormalities that can lead to sudden cardiac arrest from 3% to 86%.

“I wish it was a perfect test,” Stephens said. “I wish it caught them all, but it’s not ever going to catch them all. We’re coming up on 170,000 kids that we’ve

screened since my son passed away. We’ve found that about one out of 900 needs some sort of medical intervention, heart surgery or medication. They don’t know it, but their lives can be saved.”

Following Cody’s death, the foundation lobbied for the passage of House Bill 76, also known as Cody’s Law, which requires high schools to distribute information about sudden cardiac death and the opportunity to request an EKG screening as part of the University Interscholastic League (UIL) standard physical. The law went into effect Sept. 1, 2019.

“Everybody, by law, has to implement

“[UIL’s] team of doctors and medical staff are highly trained as to best protect our state. Our trainers and our doctors locally are very well trained as to what protects kids here, so I think we can continue to measure those things and have conversations as to what’s best for our students and how to best protect TISD.”

—Gerry Stanford,
athletic director

[House Bill 76] this school year,” athletic director Gerry Stanford said. “So everybody has to print and send out [the UIL form] that goes out into the athletic packet that every kid gets from entering seventh grade all the way through entering 12th.”

In an email from UIL Deputy Director Jamey Harrison, school athletic departments were informed of a change to the Pre-Participation Physical Examination form that includes a section where parents can check “yes” that they would like EKG testing.

According to the email, “the law does NOT require schools to begin offering EKG screenings. Additionally, schools are NOT required to pay for or arrange cardiac screenings for students who check the ‘yes’ box on the PPE form.”

Though a parent may check yes to request an EKG, students may still be cleared to participate in athletics unless a district policy says otherwise.

“As long as the student would be able to participate based on the answers to the

questions on the Medical History form, the student may participate,” the email states. “The student and his/her family are responsible for having the ECG conducted and read. Schools MAY assist in this process and MAY provide cardiac screening opportunities. Schools are NOT required to do so.”

Although TISD has not created any new policies, Stanford said the athletic department is looking at their options.

“We will continue to meet with our team doctors and trainers to formulate a plan that is in the best interest for all of our students,” Stanford said.

With that in mind, the Cody Stephens Foundation attempts to make the EKG testing cost efficient and readily available for schools.

“Our policy is that if your school district has never screened before, we come in the first year and screen anyone that is required to have a student physical, and we’ll do that for free,” Stephens said. “And then we ask that you find a way to continue the program for the next year. [At that point], it’s at a cost of \$20 which helps us sustain the program to go to other places and do it for free.”

While cost varies widely, the average cost of an EKG without a partnership with a program can be up to \$50 a person, and it can be up to \$175 for additional exercise stress tests. With the partnership, at least some of the burden of paying for their child’s safety is alleviated from parents.

“It’s a big state. Obviously, resources are limited, and we can’t do it for free forever,” Stephens said. “But we want to give it away the first year and show that it works and how easy it is.”

Indicating on the medical history form if there have been any signs or symptoms related to cardiac problems is the first step in diagnosing heart conditions.

“We have kids who get [diagnosed] through our physical tests,” Stanford said. “They end up with some type of heart doctor or their own doctor that can do these things.”

Even with improved testing, there is no guarantee to catch every problem, and there is the issue with accuracy.

“EKGs don’t solve the problem. They just give you some clarity, but don’t give you the answers. There’s plenty of history that shows how many false positives come out of an EKG that create a lot of problems,” Stanford said. “Obviously, there is also another percentage that shows where an EKG can catch certain things.”

Science teacher Kelly Rowland, who also serves as the Miller County Deputy Coroner, said cardiac testing should be a required component of athletic physicals.

“We expect our athletes to push themselves to the brink, as far as they can go, to athletic physicality,” Rowland said. “If you have an underlying cardiac issue, that’s when you’re going to see a problem with that, and I think that it’s super important that if we expect them to go to those extremes that we make sure they can do so safely.”

Even though EKG testing may result in false positives, many regard having more advanced testing as safer than not.

“I’m not a doctor, but I do think there are some tests that they could do that are not terribly expensive or invasive that would give us an idea of their hearts performance under stress,” Rowland said. “I do know that there are always going to be some conditions that won’t be able to be detected by testing, but if we could pick up on just one or a few that would be better than missing them.”

According to Rowland, the boundaries student athletes are expected to push call for an even greater emphasis on health.

“There needs to be a way to make sure that every athlete that is asked to push themselves to their limits is taken care of and protected,” Rowland said.

Testing alone, however, cannot completely protect an athlete. Athletes must also, in Rowland’s opinion, take it upon themselves to be at the forefront of their health.

“Yes, [heart conditions are] rare. How rare is it for a teenager to not treat their bodies with the best respect that they can? That’s not so rare,” Rowland said. “Some of the teens that are doing athletics are consuming some substances that push their cardiac system beyond its limits. Some of the sports drinks, the energy drinks, some of the substance abuse that we see, they do strain the cardiac system, along with other body systems.”

Sports industries have made advancements in the past, whether concussion protocol or preventing overheating and dehydration, when issues have affected large groups of people. The rarity of heart conditions, though, has often led to their under representation.

“Do I think it needs attention? It needs attention if it’s just one student. And we’ve seen already it applies to way more than one student,” Rowland said. “So, the fact that it’s not hundreds or thousands of students is a little bit irrelevant, because if it just applies to one or a few it’s important to make sure that it’s checked.”

*Caden Rainwater, Grey Johnson and Andrea Loreda contributed to this story.
cate.rounds@tigertimesonline.com
addisoncross@tigertimesonline.com
annagraceyones@tigertimesonline.com*

One day at a time

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“My heart just goes out to Carla and Damian’s mom, it goes just out to them,” Parks said. “When I think about Carla and Damian’s mom, I just think that we’re kind of strong in a sense. I have my days. It [gives me comfort] to talk with Carla [Lewis and other moms who have gone through this].”

Damian Coats had an enlarged heart and died on June 19, 2019. His mother urges students to be accountable for their health.

“I advise everybody to make sure they get their hearts checked,” Coats said. “Too many young men are dying from heart attacks. [Students should] get checked twice a year.”

These deaths come with painful abruptness, and many times without any warning at all.

“Damian never showed any signs, it was just sudden death,” Coats said. “If I could go back and notice the signs, I would have got him help.”

Parks’ grief, much like the other mothers, has led her to a cause: keeping the memory of her son alive.

“Some days I can talk myself to death about Leonard, other days if somebody would bring up his name I would cry a river,” Parks said. “It won’t ever end because I won’t ever, ever forget him.”

Parks is a strong advocate for taking care of athletes and their health, whether it be remembering them once they’re gone or doing everything possible to keep them here.

“They need [cardiac testing for athletes] very, very much. I think that would be so helpful, I think it could have saved Carla [Lewis’ son], I think it probably could have saved mine,” Parks said. “I don’t think physicals should be every two years. I think they should be annual.”

As far as the price tag, Parks believes no amount is too much to pay for the lives of students like her son.

“Wow, ‘costs too much.’ I don’t think they should be concerned about how much it costs,” Parks said. “They should be concerned about the athletes’ lives. I wouldn’t focus on how much it costs if you can save a life.”

Above all else, Parks wants athletes to be seen as people, not just players in a game or a means to a win.

“These athletes, they have families they go home to. This is a sad situation. I pray for every athlete, not even just for Texas High, even now I pray and I pray and I pray,” Parks said. “When I lost my son, I [prayed] Lord, please do not let another mother go through what I have gone through.”

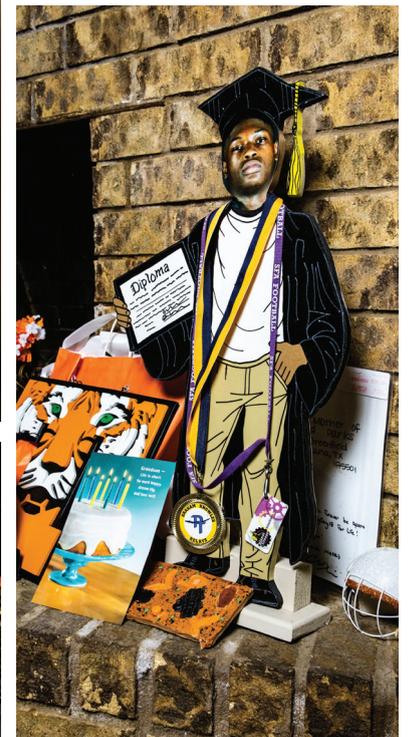
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“I’m making it through. You have to take it one step, one moment at a time. As time goes by now, I can take it one day at a time, when normally I couldn’t.”

-Yolanda Parks,
Leonard Parks’ mother

COMFORT ZONE Sitting at her home, Leonard Parks’ mother, Yolanda Parks, shows a mug containing pictures of her son that someone gave her as a Christmas gift. Leonard, a senior, died from sudden cardiac arrest on Sept. 2, 2017, at his home. “Everybody is like, ‘Oh, you’re still in the house?’ Parks said. “He passed here in his room. This is my comfort zone.”



NEVER FORGOTTEN Memorabilia from her son, Leonard Parks, time in high school sits on the fireplace mantel in his home. Yolanda Parks is determined to keep his memory alive. “It’s still tough. It’s been two and a half years, and it’s still tough,” Parks said. “This is the hardest thing I’m ever going to have to go through ever in my life.”

Editor’s note: Scheduling conflicts prevented us from photographing and interviewing Shykovia Coats in person. Her interview was conducted by text message.

Her heart still beats

Mother recounts son's experience with heart condition

BY ADDISON CROSS
editor in chief

He is everywhere. He is embroidered on the quilt draped across the sofa, memorialized in the gallery of photos hung on the wall and, most strikingly, the subject of the massive portrait on the wall. A painting of him in his cap and gown. A senior who never lived to wear his.

DeQuavion "Dee" Lewis died at age 17 of Long QT Syndrome, a heart defect that extends the amount of time between electric currents recharging the heart's beat, often resulting in fainting or chest pains, but sometimes resulting in sudden cardiac arrest and death. The condition is especially worsened by intense physical activity.

"Dee played basketball every day just about. I mean, for hours," Dee's mother, Carla Lewis, said. "He was a neighborhood basketball star."

Dee's hours of physical activity didn't end with his consistent basketball playing. His obsession with fitness was rooted in his childhood and branched out into his work life. In elementary school, Dee used to be chubby.

"I'm not going to be like that anymore," he would say.

So he worked out constantly and played basketball for hours everyday.

"He just made sure he wasn't going to get big anymore," Lewis said. "That's probably where his enlarged heart came from."

Autopsy results revealed that, in addition to LQTS, he had a condition often referred to as "athlete's heart," a condition in which the heart muscle grows to keep up with the growing muscles in the rest of the body, resulting in a lower resting heart rate than normal.

In addition to constant workouts, Lewis said Dee worked at Super One grocery store "outside in the heat, pushing the buggies and toting groceries." Throughout all the intense physical work, however, Dee never complained.

"Dee didn't worry people," Lewis said. "If something went wrong, he would just try to push through."

On one occasion, he complained of chest pain. "Yeah, my chest is hurting, but I'm OK," he told her. "Can I go to a friend's house?"

Lewis worried. "Are you OK? Are you sure?" she asked. She even wanted to take him to an urgent care facility.

"Nah, mom. I'm good. I'm OK," Dee would reply, asking her to just bring him allergy medicine because he thought that was the cause of his discomfort.

"Well, allergy medication is not good for people with LQTS," Lewis said, something they didn't know at the time.

continued on page 19

CAUSE FOR CONCERN After the death of her son DeQuavion "Dee" Lewis from a heart condition, Carla Lewis hopes to raise awareness about heart-related illness.



m. debenport

photos by m. debenport



UNANSWERED QUESTIONS Carla Lewis displays reminders of her son DeQuavion "Dee" Lewis in her home. Dee died July 7, 2018, from Long QT Syndrome prior to the start of his senior year. "I don't know what triggered it," Lewis said. "I'm just trying to figure out that day. What happened that could have triggered it? It's just something I might not ever know."



Long QT syndrome (LQTS):

A heart rhythm condition that can potentially cause fast, chaotic heartbeats. These rapid heartbeats might trigger a sudden fainting spell or seizure. In some cases, the heart can beat erratically for so long that it causes sudden death.

A matter of time

continued from page 18

All of these factors culminated on July 7, 2018. Years of exercise, hard work and improper care for a disease he didn't know he had led to Dee's death. His mother recounted her last face-to-face encounter with him, a quick stop by his work before leaving on vacation.

"I remember seeing him and thinking Dee looks so hot, so I went to get him one of those cooling towels," Lewis said. "I gave him a hug, told him I loved him. He said 'Call me when you make it.'"

"I'm not understanding how a perfectly healthy kid just drops like that."

-Carla Lewis, mother

Lewis left on a plane for New York, unaware that her vacation would be cut short. She laid down, but woke up to chaos reaching her from thousands of miles away.

"They're working on him," Lewis' sister told her in a frantic phone call.

"Working on who?"

"They're working on Dee."

Lewis didn't understand what they were talking about, thinking Dee had a car wreck because he was a beginner driver.

"Then I talked to one of my bosses who worked [at the hospital]," Lewis said. "She said, 'We're doing all we can.'"

Soon after, she received news that changed her life.

"Maybe 10 minutes later, they said, 'He's gone,'" Lewis said.

In the days that followed, guilt consumed Lewis. She wondered how she could be a nurse and not have seen what was going on with her son. As Dee seemed completely absent of health issues, Lewis searched for answers.

"I'm not understanding how a perfectly healthy kid just drops like that," Lewis said.

An autopsy discovered that Dee went his whole life with a rare variation of LQTS. This variation was almost undetectable until death, but could have been caught using blood tests and electrocardiograms.

"I did research on it, and his kind is only 0.1% [of those found], and it's usually diagnosed when someone dies," Lewis said. "When I took [my other son] to get his

physical after this happened they did an echo, an EKG and blood work. The echo would've shown where his heart was large, and the EKG sometimes can be helpful with diagnosis only if it had that rhythm at the time they were doing it."

Lewis has shared her story in hopes of helping other mothers with young athletes that may have heart conditions. After posting on Facebook, Lewis said another mother contacted her about her son's problems.

"She said, 'Do you think I need to wait to take him or I need to take him now [to be tested],'" Lewis said. "I said, 'You need to take him to the ER.'"

The boy was diagnosed with an enlarged heart and was prescribed medication.

"She follows up every now and then," Lewis said. "She just says, 'Thank you for saving my son.'"

As far as her advice to other parents goes, paying attention to even the smallest warning signs is Lewis' number one piece.

"If I had to do it all over again, I would take him [to the doctor when he said his chest was hurting]," Lewis said. "Maybe they would've done their chest X-ray and found it."

LQTS can be treated with medications and possibly an implantable cardioverter-defibrillator.

"You know, it would've given him more time," Lewis said.

Lewis is also an outspoken advocate for enhancing the physical system for student athletes.

"It's important especially for athletes. We've had plenty of physicals when they go for their checkup," Lewis said. "Those physicals don't really do anything. You know, they check your reflexes, they don't really do a lot that you need them to do when you get the physical."

There are a multitude of online resources available for parents and students to use to assess their heart health, including questionnaires about signs and symptoms. Lewis advises other parents to use these with their children.

"If they answer so many questions yes, you need to go get checked out, or something that will prompt them to say, 'Hey, you need to look at this a little further,'" Lewis said.

Heart conditions are going undetected in all groups of people, beyond student athletes and teenage boys. Lewis is continuing to raise awareness.

"I've been reading a lot of stories since Dee passed," Lewis said. "And there's been a whole lot more kids that have just dropped. Not all of them are athletes. They're kids, you know."

addisoncross@tigertimesonline.com

slow and steady wins the race

Graduate shares story of heart health, finding safety

BY ADDISON CROSS, RAEYN ALBERT
editor in chief, staff writer

Stepping into the ring, discus thrower Alyssa Higgins practiced the art of a powerful, high speed throw, but one place she did not anticipate high speeds was her heart rate. A high speed heart beat can be normal for an athlete like Higgins, but when she quit track her junior year and her heart continued to race, she knew something was wrong.

"I was in track until junior year, and once I got out of track, my heart was still racing and my mom thought [it] was dehydration," Higgins said. "We went to the doctor, and they said that it couldn't be dehydration, that my heart rate would not jump around like it did."

The doctors concluded that she had Wolff-Parkinson-White (WPW) syndrome. This "accessory pathway" in the heart transports electric currents alongside the normal pathway. WPW pathways, however, are not made of muscle tissue designed for electricity, which can lead to an accelerated heart rate.

"Whenever I do any type of exercise, my heart rate gets into the 190s," Higgins said. "I think [my doctor] said during one of the appointments that we should get it under control because once it gets into the 190s and 200s, it's too fast for my heart, and that it can weaken in the walls of my heart."

Luckily for Higgins, her Apple Watch served as an unexpected aid to monitoring her heart rate.

"[My heart rate] depends on the day. Most days I would get 180 [beats per minute]. But then some days it would get up to 213 [bpm]," Higgins said. "[My Apple Watch] did keep track of my heart rate and the

doctors also looked at that, but they mostly looked at the heart monitor that they put me on."

Much like in the cases of many student athletes affected by heart issues, Higgins' earliest signs were written off as no big deal or ignored completely.

"Sometimes I would just be doing some simple thing and my heart rate would just start racing," Higgins said. "I would have to lay down in order to not pass out."

Higgins and her mother didn't immediately suspect a heart condition.

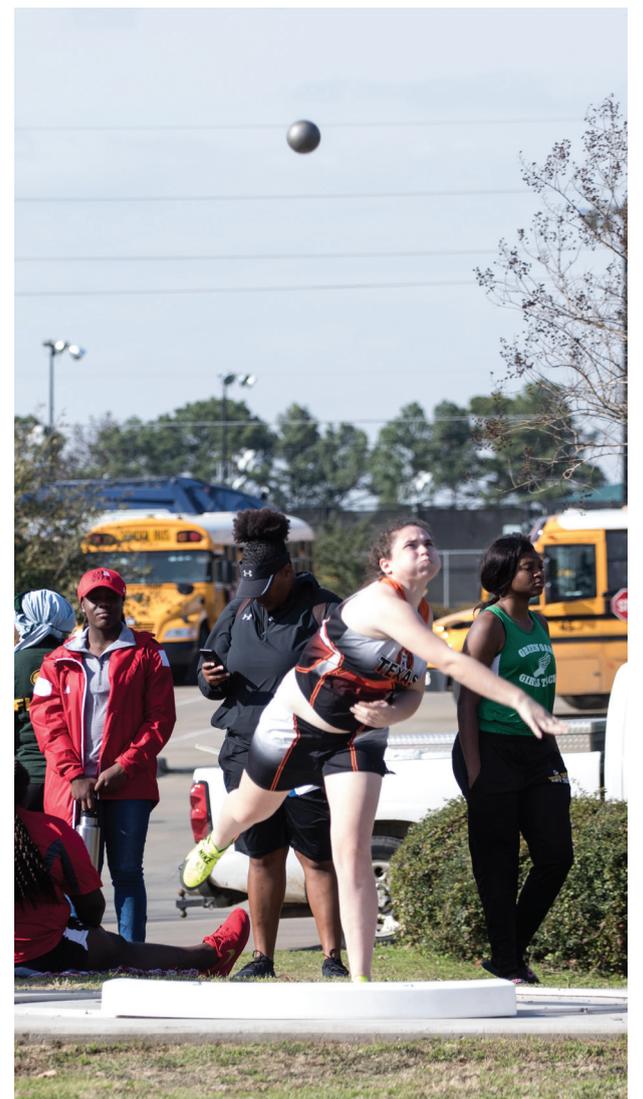
"She thought it just had to be dehydration because there's nothing ever really been wrong with [my heart] before, until I started to show the signs after working out," Higgins said.

WPW must be diagnosed through an invasive surgery in which the doctors have to look at the heart and determine what is causing the rapid heartbeat.

"And then once they were in there, they saw I had an extra wire. It was canceling out one of the wires in my heart that was supposed to slow [my heart] down," Higgins said. "During the surgery they would give me adrenaline and electrocute different parts of my heart in order to get it to race. Then they would try to set it into the rhythm, and it would get into whenever the extra wire was affecting it. They found out what was causing it, and then they burned it."

Despite efforts by doctors, though, the issue has not been completely fixed. Higgins surgery was an insufficient solution to the problem.

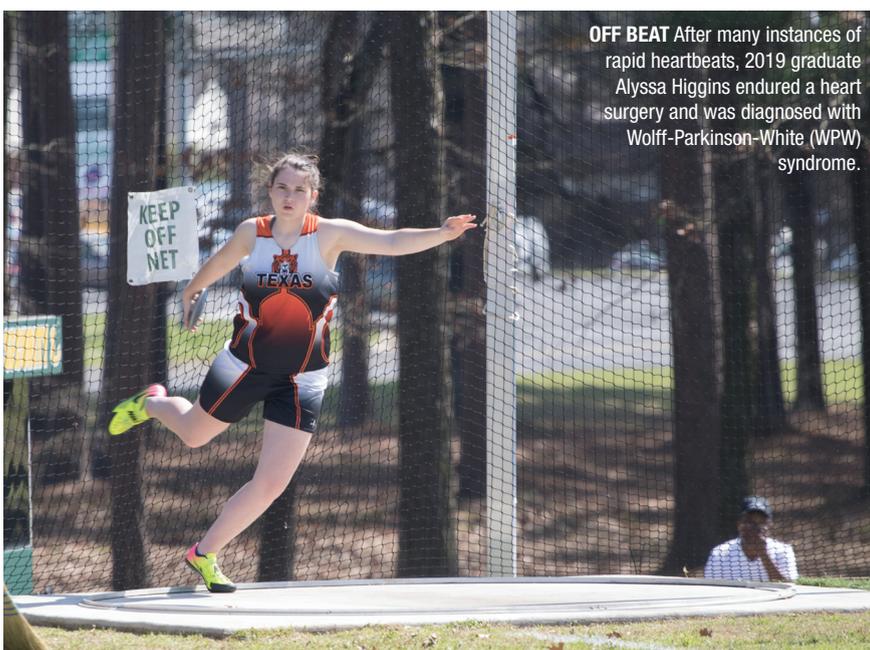
"It's not fully corrected. I had my heart surgery, and right after we got back from spring break they burned the extra nerve in my heart," Higgins said. "That was supposed to correct the problem, but whenever I got out



Wolff-Parkinson-White syndrome (WPW):

A heart condition present at birth in which an extra electrical pathway between your heart's upper and lower chambers causes a rapid heartbeat.

ON WATCH Graduate Alyssa Higgins' athletic lifestyle led her to wear an Apple Watch, which assisted in monitoring her heart rate once her condition was diagnosed.



OFF BEAT After many instances of rapid heartbeats, 2019 graduate Alyssa Higgins endured a heart surgery and was diagnosed with Wolff-Parkinson-White (WPW) syndrome.

"Sometimes I would just be doing some simple thing and my heart rate would just start racing, and I would have to lay down in order to not pass out."

-Alyssa Higgins, graduate

of surgery, like the next day, it was already racing again."

Heart rate is among many things tested on a school physical exam, yet Higgins' condition went unnoticed through years of athletic involvement. Although Higgins' heart rate was abnormally high, doctors conducting her physical did not advise further testing.

"Every time I got my physical they were like, 'Yeah, your heart rate is elevated, but it's still OK,'" Higgins said.

For a senior in high school, applying to college and managing extracurriculars are typically the center of one's thoughts, not heart health concerns. Higgins found it was sometimes overwhelming.

"[Dealing with a heart condition so young] is a lot. Senior year was one of the hardest times of my life. There's a lot going on, and my emotions were all over the place," Higgins said. "They still are. It feels like they're not really trying to fix it, but they're just trying to put a Band-Aid on it."

addisoncross@tigertimesonline.com
raelynalbert@tigertimesonline.com

What to do in the case of SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST

Call 911



Perform CPR by pushing on the heart with your hands



If available, use an AED to shock the heart back into rhythm



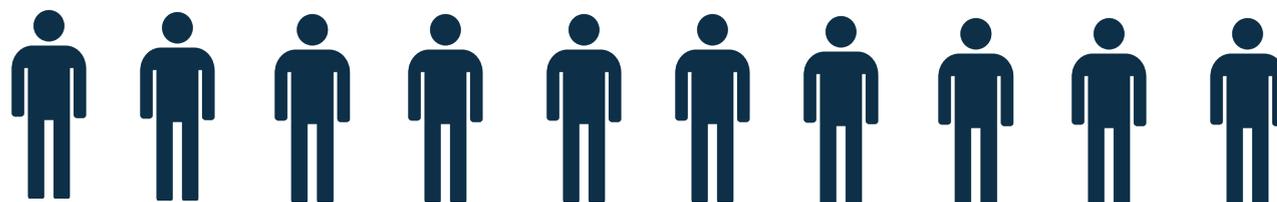
A victim of SCA may:

Become unresponsive

Collapse on the ground

Shake & gasp uncontrollably

graphics by c. powell



With immediate CPR and AED use, the survival rate could go from

1 in 10
TO
5 in 10

ELECTROCARDIOGRAM

– measures the electrical activity of a person's heartbeat

– 10 electrodes attached to the

body measure electrical activity of heart

– graph of heart activity appears on screen

– 77-82% accurate



ECHOCARDIOGRAM

– ultrasound that graphs outline of heart movement

– uses handheld wand to scan the chest and produce a picture of valves and heart chambers

– observes heat pumping

– 86-90% accurate



Don't just check the BOXES

Questions from medical history form may be first indicators of cardiac issues

Have you had **prior testing of the heart** ordered by a physician?

YES	NO
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Have you ever **passed out** during or after exercise?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

Have you ever had **chest pain** during or after exercise?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

Have you ever gotten unexpectedly **short of breath** with exercise?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

Do you **get tired** more quickly than your friends do during exercise?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

Have you ever had **racing of your heart** or **skipped heartbeats**?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

Have you had **high blood pressure** or **high cholesterol**?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

Have you ever been told you have a **heart murmur**?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

Has any family member or **relative died of heart problems** or of sudden unexpected death before age 50?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

Has any family member been **diagnosed with enlarged heart**, (dilated cardiomyopathy), **hypertrophic cardiomyopathy**, **long QT syndrome** or other **ion channelopathy** (Brugada syndrome, etc), **Marfan's syndrome**, or **abnormal heart rhythm**?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

Have you had a **severe viral infection** within the last month?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

Has a physician ever **denied** or **restricted** your participation in sports for any heart problems?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------

graphics by m. hofert



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Dangerously DEVOTED

Signs your club might be a cult



k. rogers

BY STEPHANIE JUMPER
staff writer

It starts out innocent enough. You see a sign up sheet in the cafeteria, write your name and attend the next meeting. You're greeted with words of encouragement and endless handshakes from returning members. From that moment on, your new club takes over your life. Eventually, you start wondering if what you joined was even a club. Maybe what you joined was really... a cult.

There are many extracurriculars that seem harmless. However, if you're observant, you'll realize they have suspiciously cult-like qualities. Here are some signs your after school activity may soon turn sinister.

They All Look the Same

If you ever see packs of pale blonde boys lurking the hallways, proceed with caution. You've just bumped into the boys' swim team. Every year, they bleach their hair for good luck for their upcoming meet, making them all look like clones of each other. That money and time spent at the hair salon is then wasted when they all shave their heads together.

They All Dress Alike

Every football game, the cheerleaders tumble across the field all dressed in the same ensemble: an orange skirt and

matching shirt that reads "Texas." They also wear white bows half the size of their heads. The weight of these bows raises an important question: Are they actually mind control devices? Sadly, we may never know the answer.

They Have a Hierarchy

Every good cult needs a good leader. Student council is known for their various ranks and titles, which range from grade level representatives to the omniscient student body president. They take leadership roles in the cult meetings, as well as spread their agenda through "community service projects." They also plan activities with mysterious titles like "Painting the Pit."

There are Branches in the "Club"

Some cults have different sects within their main group. In band, these sects are called instruments. When a band kid decides on their instrument, they decide on their personality for all of high school. Clarinets are timid. Trumpets have more ego in their mouthpiece than the entire band combined. When dealing with this cult, it's important to know who plays what instrument. Mistake a saxophone player for a baritone and a civil war might break out during halftime.

They Act Strange

Walking down the Performing Arts

Center, there's no escaping the chants that echo from the stage. It sounds like a bunch of people repeating the same phrases in eerie unison. "Red leather, yellow leather. Red leather, yellow leather." Theater kids call these battle cries "vocal warm-ups," which prepare their voices for rehearsals. If one enters their rehearsal room, they'll see that they say this while standing in a circle. There's something about circles that cults can't get enough of.

They Have Weird Traditions

Even if you haven't devoted yourself to an extracurricular, you're probably still in a cult. Every club in school sometimes joins forces to form an all powerful mega cult. A prime example of this is the bacon fry, where we feast upon the flesh of our enemies on the morning before the Texas vs. Arkansas game. The pep rallies also fall into this category.

Cults are found all around school. They're mesmerizing the stage with hypnotic musical numbers. They're charming the public with their many chants and traditions. When thinking about joining one of these clubs, we need to realize what we're getting ourselves into. Most of all, we should be prepared for the commitment when we decide on the cult of our choice.

stephanie.jumper@tigertimesonline.com



"During marching season this year, it was a big brass vs. woodwind thing. It got aggressive."

-Micah Rayburn, 10



"[The bacon fry is] a pep rally to get the team pumped. I wouldn't really consider the pep rallies a cult. The whole school's involved instead of a group."

-Will Carter, 10

STUCO

"I think [student council] is [like a cult] because it's a bond of people [who] work together to get things done."

-John Thomas Borowitz, 9



"Honestly, I'd say [the uniforms are cultish] because I feel like when we all put them on, we're like robots."

-Keilie Lyons, 10



"There are really normal vocal warm-ups and then there are ones like 'Moses Supposes,' which I find a little bit strange, but they're fun regardless."

-Gabrielle Boswell, 9



"When you're first getting [into] swim as a freshman, they basically tell you, 'You're going to bleach your hair because we've been doing it for 20 plus years.'"

-Dane Bullock, 10

BOYS

“She has to have a head on her shoulders. She has to be real with things that I understand, she can’t be fake about a situation.”

-Paden Wright, 12

“I find affection and loyalty the most important because you need to not just be told you’re loved, but feel it as well.”

-Christian Rogers, 11

“I need my girl to be goofy so she can cheer me up when I’m sad.”

-Evan Cobb, 10

“I want someone I can hold on to and trust. I don’t want someone that will break up with me over something stupid.”

-Daniel Lee, 9

Last minute Valentine’s gift ideas

It’s the day before Valentine’s. Love is in the air and everything seems great until you suddenly realize that you have yet to buy your significant other a gift. No need to fear! The following list will provide you with affordable last minute gift ideas to help save your relationship.

Sugar, sugar

What do students look for in a relationship?

BY PEYTON SIMS
culture editor

GIRLS

“I want someone who likes me for who I am and respects my morals; someone who I can have a good time with no matter what we are doing.”

-Carleigh Sharp, 12

“I look for a guy that’s Christian, funny and sweet. I look for a good personality. Looks don’t matter.”

-Bailey Reinsch, 11

“I like someone who can get my sense of humor. I like to joke about stupid things, so I need someone to understand what I’m talking about without thinking I’m weird.”

-Alison Head, 10

“I look for someone who is willing to give their all in the relationship and know they care about me.”

-Ashley Short, 9



peyton.sims@tigertimesonline.com

hand written letters



There’s not a more personal gift than writing from your heart to the one you love. While this gift may cost no money, it’s priceless. A handwritten letter can help your relationship grow stronger and it can be held on to forever for sentimental reasons.

photo collages



Another personal gift could be a homemade photo collage that displays pictures of you and your partner. There’s numerous different ways you could create a sentimental collage. You could put pictures on a poster board, make a photo album, write a note on the back of each photo and more— be creative!

open when cards



Open when cards are letters with a phrase like “Open when you miss me” or “Open when you need motivation” and so on. These cards make great gifts. Who wouldn’t look forward to opening encouraging letters written by their significant other?

date night jar



If you and your partner constantly disagree about where to go on a date, this gift is for you. Find a mason jar and write ideal date ideas like “Go to the movies” on a piece of paper. Then, pick at random to avoid wasting time trying to decide what to do.

THE CULTURE 10



LATimes/MCTcampus/Genaro Molina

Celebrities

The world was taken aback when the news broke that famous basketball player, Kobe Bryant, and daughter Gianna Bryant were tragically killed in a helicopter crash. The pair, along with the seven others who died, were on their way to a basketball game for Gianna's team, Mamba Academy. Kobe, Gianna and all others who died will remain in the hearts of all of us.

Trends



photo by c. daak

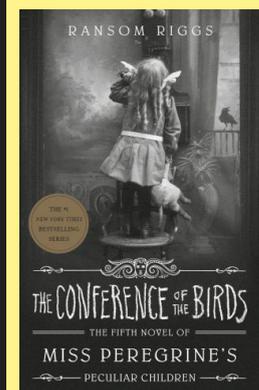
With the new update on Snapchat, people can now take photos using the self timer. This has allowed for more humorous streaks pictures and hilarious videos on TikTok to songs like "Break My Stride" by Matthew Wilder.



Imdb

TV Series

The highly-acclaimed television series, "You," is back for a second season on Netflix. The new season follows Joe as he finds a new obsession with a girl named Love and begins to fall into his old patterns of stalking and violence. This season takes place in Los Angeles, rather than New York, and stars Penn Badgley, Victoria Pedretti and Jenna Ortega. The show is a favorite among the public for its chilling plot and intense twists.



Books

"The Conference of the Birds" is the fifth book in the "Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children" series. After its release on Jan. 14, it quickly rose to a No. 1 New York Times Bestselling Novel.



Justin Bieber Home

On Friday, Justin Bieber will release his new album, "Changes," after a four year hiatus. The album will feature popular singles such as "Intentions," "Get Me" and "Yummy." He released the entire setlist Feb. 4 with a clever Instagram filter to get more people to buy the album.

Music

Memes



Instagram @dollyparton

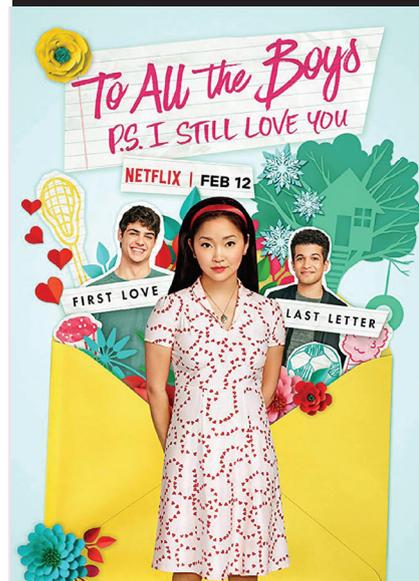
Country icon Dolly Parton took over the internet when she took to Instagram to post this picture that hilariously shows the different sides of herself she posts on different platforms. People left and right are now jumping on the back of this trend.

Apps



App Store

If you're looking for an app to update your pictures, Dazz Cam is the app for you. This photo editor gives the perfect vintage photos and even gives the user 3D moving pictures.



Imdb

Movies

The long-awaited sequel to the famous teen rom-com, "To All the Boys I've Loved Before," is finally here. The sequel, entitled "P.S. I Still Love You," follows Laura Jean as she navigates a love triangle between current boyfriend Peter Kavinsky, and John Ambrose, who she wrote one of her love letters to in middle school. The film stars Lana Condor, Noah Centineo and Jordan Fisher.

Food



Facebook/ Urban Tea Town Home

Locally owned businesses have been taking over Texarkana. Among the most popular is Urban Tea Town on Arkansas Boulevard. The cafe features high quality teas and coffee, a variety of desserts including macaroons and even bagels imported from New York. The company strives to bring literature and art to Texarkana. They even host poetry nights throughout each month.

YouTube



Instagram @nikkietutorials

Famous beauty guru and YouTuber, Nikkie Tutorial, recently came out as transgender after being blackmailed. She has received an outpouring of support from fans.

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Getting to Neverland

A little more than faith, trust and pixie dust

“The first day of flying wasn’t that bad, but as the days went on, the harness started hurting more. It was difficult because being up in the air holding all your body weight took a toll on my body. It took me forever to recover each time.”

-Cate Rounds, 11

p. sims



SECOND STAR TO THE RIGHT During rehearsal, junior Cate Rounds practices flying in the harness provided by the company Flying by Foy. “A hard part was landing because my shoes were slippery,” Rounds said. “The funniest part was the way I walked like a cowboy in the harness.”

LISTEN UP Junior Mason Smallwood plays with an attendee of Peter Pan’s Pirate Adventure, a fundraising event for the production. At the event, the cast play taught kids to sword fight using professional stage combat skills by the cast of “Peter Pan.” a. elliott



k. rogers



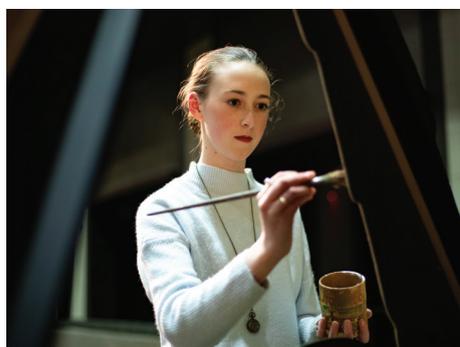
a. elliott



k. rogers

INKED Sophomore Journee Dobby applies a temporary sleeve tattoo to junior Jacob Kaminsky. Many of the pirates wore fake tattoos to add to the effect of their costumes.

SWORD FIGHT Texas Middle School student Garrett Johnson and an attendee of Peter Pan’s Pirate Adventure “fight” during an activity. The kids at the activity colored pirate flags, watched “Return to Neverland,” and learned how to sword fight like a professional.



k. rogers

BRANCH OUT The night before the show’s opening, junior Lia Graham puts finishing touches on the set. “The trees were just green and brown, so I asked if I could add more details to them,” Graham said. “After I got done painting them, the trees looked a lot better.”



p. sims



k. rogers

SOUNDS GOOD Sophomore Doug Kyle works in the sound booth during tech rehearsal. “Watching the show progress from the booth is so impressive,” Kyle said. “After seeing all the work that goes in, it’s so satisfying to witness the final product play out.”

COLLAR FULL As she adjusts her necklaces, sophomore Maddie Frost, who played Mrs. Darling, admires her costume. “My favorite thing about the dress is just the story behind it,” Frost said. “Robin [Townshend] made my costume. She had a dress that was used for another production, and she transformed it into a whole different story.”

STARS ARE BEAUTIFUL Adding the final touches to her makeup, senior Addison Cross prepares to get her makeup approved for her role as Wendy in “Peter Pan.” It was Cross’ last musical.

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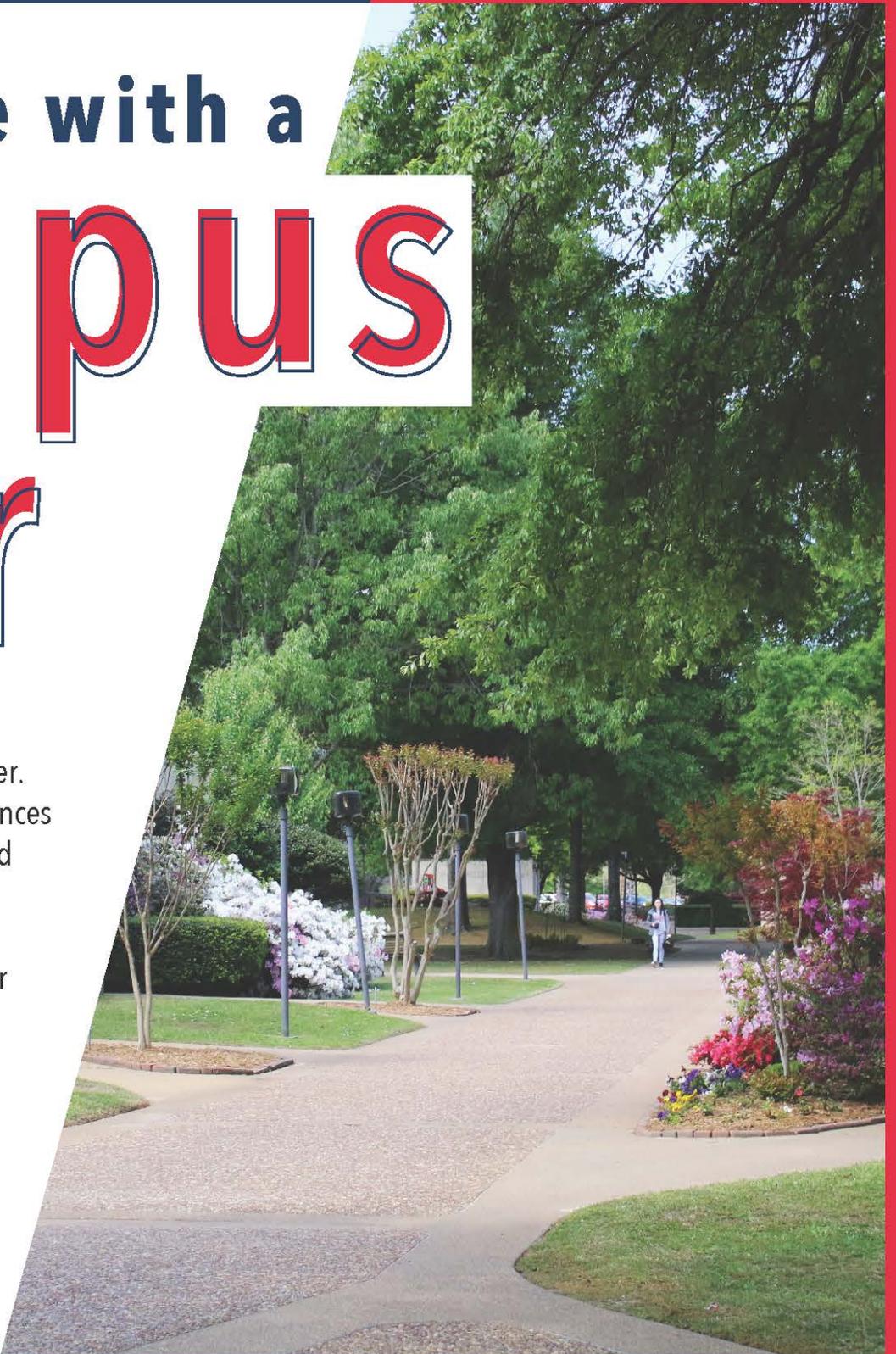
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