



Coming out of the water for a breath, junior Demarkus Darensbourg swims in the 100 yard breaststroke during EKL at BVSW Feb. 5. "I felt like I had a good swim season as well as dropping in all of my events," Darensbourg said.

While shooting swim I often would look for areas where the light was shining over the swimmers for the best lighting, when shooting this meet I noticed his swimmer would come up for a breath under one of these light spots so I waited until he came up and took the photo. I made sure my shutter speed was also high enough to get the water frozen in the frame.

---



Kicking in celebration, senior Maggie Bunch as her character Katherine/Ellie, gets excited by a good idea that could help her get the magic hourglass she needs Jan. 29. "[Ellie] is the most comedic character I've gotten the opportunity to play," Bunch said. "It was fun, but it was also a challenge to get the comedic timing right."

When shooting live theatre I tend to look for moments of action or expressive emotion about to happen and shoot them. In this photo I could tell the actress was about to kick out while singing the song so I quickly snapped this shot, making sure my shutter was high enough to capture her frozen in the frame while still allowing for the movement to show through.



Senior Sree Nagaraj donates blood for the National Honor Society blood drive, Feb. 28. "I donated blood because it can help save someone's life and with the blood shortage it was the perfect time to donate," Nagaraj said. "I think if anyone has the chance to donate and they can, they should because it can help so many people."

When we had the blood drive being held at our school I thought of some creative ideas for shots before even going in to shoot them, I know I wanted to capture the moment the needle went into someone's arm because you could capture their raw expression. I was talking to this student and he seemed nervous about the needle so I decided I would take the picture right as it was going in to be able to get this shot.

---



Senior Jaclynn Pickens plays air hockey with her friend during her fifth hour Connections field trip to the College Lanes Bowling Alley, March 2. "I had fun just being with everyone," Pickens said.

I was given the opportunity to go on the Special Education program's field trip to a bowling alley to take photos. The students got to skip school and play games with their friends and student mentors. The student in this photo had the largest smile on her face while playing air hockey with her friend, and I wanted to be able to capture her joy so I took this photo after she had just scored a point.



Students at Blue Valley Northwest struggle with various negative body image issues. For many, the summer can be challenging and many find themselves having a hard time with the way they see their bodies and comparing them to what they see around them.

This was for my story on body image issues in the summer, so I knew I had to handle the shooting delicately. I wanted to be creative with how I shot it so I decided to not include names or faces anywhere to take away the identity and make it more geared toward the issue and not the people. I also shot entirely in black and white to again take away distractions and really focus on what the story was really talking about.

There were many things that I was able to learn in my two years of publications that helped me get to the place I am now. One of the main skills I learned was bettering my photography skills from a journalistic perspective. Being a part of both publications, meant double the work, but also double the opportunities to learn and strengthen my craft. I was able to shoot a variety of things, from the sports and student life of the yearbook to the portraits, photo illustrations, and editorial of the newspaper. With all of that, I was able to strengthen all aspects of my photography and continue to develop my style. While I had to shoot specific photos for stories while doing so I was often able to take creative liberty with some shots to better tell the story as I wanted to make sure it could be told. I was given the opportunity to shoot some harder-hitting topics that our staff wanted to cover during my senior year. Being able to tell those stories through my images was something that started out as a challenge but I quickly gained a love for doing so. Even with student life photos that can sometimes seem repetitive to take, I was able to continue to shoot them in new creative ways and I focused on my own style of shooting rather than just using the basic shooting methods I had initially learned when I first joined.

Another great thing I learned alongside finding my shooting style was working on my editing style. We were taught how to edit a photo in lightroom and in photoshop so we could make them look cohesive for the yearbook because that is the look you want to have, but in the newspaper, we were able to take a little more creative liberty, and I would use that opportunity often. With stories that had specific tones, I not only wanted to display them in the contents of my photo but the colors used. One example was shooting an entire story in black and white, while it was a risk to do that I stood by my decision and it paid off when it was all put together because it fit with the story so well I could not have imagined it in color. Through my two years, I gained so many skills that I will be taking with me to college, but I am also so happy I was able to share what I learned with the other members of my staff to help them grow as well.

Starting my senior year I knew that I wanted our publications to be the absolute best they could be, and I was going to do everything in my power to make sure that would happen. I want others to feel my love for photojournalism and grow theirs too. When the new staff members joined I took one of the leading roles helping them learn all of the basics of photography. But I did not feel that teaching them the basics was enough, so I often would go with the new people on their early shoots and help lead them and teach them in the environment how to shoot different things. I would go with girls on their early sports shoots and teach them skills that would help them get the best photos possible, helping them in their understanding of not only the sport but what things to look out for when shooting them. I was very hands-on helping with camera settings and editing as well because being able to have a great understanding of the settings helps when in an environment where the lighting is changing often, and knowing how to edit helps when you shoot in lighting that is now good. Knowing my journey of slowly finding my creative styles helped me lead the other staff members in finding their own, I encouraged the other photographers to shoot what they need to but also shoot what they want, how they want, and shoot events where they feel they can be the most creative with their shots. Because I was on both staff I was able to be a bridge between the two, when someone had an idea that would be helpful for both staffs I would help them bring the idea to the other so we would all benefit from the idea, growing the publications as a whole! I had so much fun being a photojournalist for my school and I am so proud of all my not only I accomplished with my photo staff.