



SENIOR RIDES FOR COMPETITIONS
Senior Ethan Dorer has been freestyle BMX riding since his early childhood

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IT'S FINALLY PROM SEASON
Seniors get ready for this year's prom on Saturday, April 23, 2022

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NO PLACE FOR HATE PARADE
Bowie brings back the annual celebration with a rodeo theme

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coming UP

April 22
Earth Day 2022
April 23
Senior Prom Night
May 2-May 13
Advanced Placement (AP) Exams on campus

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'A call for sustainability'

Earth Day renews emphasis on caring for the environment

Arushi Sharma
Editor-in-Chief

If a student looks at a park bench, a highway, or even the parking lot on Bowie's campus, there are sure to be disposable masks, brown paper bags, and plastic wrappers everywhere. These items are waiting to be run over, rained on, and ignored by someone passing by who does not want to risk touching the contaminated item.

As the climate deteriorates with the immense amount of trash everywhere, the conversation of how to keep the earth more sustainable is constantly occurring. To combat the deadly effects that can occur if the climate dramatically changes, students and staff members take a look at their lifestyle and their attempts to make more small sustainable changes.

"We live on this Earth and it's the only one that we have which makes it immensely important," senior Avantika Tiku said.

"We need to start taking care of the environment. The call of sustainability is more important now than ever before, even if it's something as small as picking up and properly disposing of your trash when you're finished with it."

In an analysis done by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), researchers found that fine particulate pollution, a type of pollution that affects people's health when levels are high, increased by five percent on average across the entire country. While the use of coal has declined over the past few years, the burning of natural gas and an increase in driving has led to this vast increase of this type of pollution in our environment.

"Our society depends on a lot of things that create a lot of pollution in our world," senior Keira Folkers said. "They push aside the fact of keeping our earth clean to continue the things that they want to do. A lot of individuals don't realize how important it is to keep our population alive or even the animal population that exists."

With Earth Day coming up on Friday, April 22, 2022, several eco-friendly Austin organizations have come up with a list of activities that every individual can do to help keep the earth clean and green. Some of these include planting a tree in your backyard, engaging in a trash cleanup, creating signs to educate your peers on recycling, and creating a composting system in your household.

"We live very extravagant lives in this country as far as material resources go," AP environmental science teacher Alonna Beatty said. "With the advancement of technology, it's easier to find ways to become more fuel-efficient. Another one of the changes that need to happen in our society is for us to become a more sustainable global society. This can start with companies need to be responsible for the end of life of their products by creating some sort of reusable system."

According to the World Development Indicators, the world produces more than 400 million tons of plastic every year. Out of these 400 million, the largest industrial sector is plastic packaging which creates plastic items that are immediately disposed of.

"A cleaner earth to me means that our society changes that shift and are less based on profit and greed, and more based on caring about the environment around us," Beatty said. "Everything that consumers use like even when we try to reduce how much plastic we buy, it never ends up working out because every product is covered in plastic."

A National Geographic study found that 91 percent of the plastic that's collected doesn't actually get recycled. This means that only nine percent is being recycled. The main cause of this inefficiency in the recycling system is the problem that items are placed into the wrong bin which contaminates the other items in the actual bin.

"The only option is to try to change the system, which means that we have to do it at a gov-

ernment level," Beatty said. "In order to have it be successful, it needs to be a global government initiative that everyone works together on."

When President Biden entered office in 2021, he developed 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which were comprehensive objectives that were hoped to be completed by 2050. These goals were set to help better understand where the U.S. is on a set of critical economic, social, and environmental dimensions and how far it needs to go in its quest to 'build back better.'

"One of the sustainable friendly activities that I do is having my own vegetable garden in my backyard, which I just recently started," Tiku said. "I've been growing cucumbers, tomatoes, and other vegetables. It's super fun and relaxing to get to plant and watch them grow as the weeks go by."

Aside from creating vegetable gardens, several sources such as the National Ocean Service emphasize that recycling, utilizing reusable bags instead of plastic bags, buying only needs to be used, donating used goods, and not using plastic water bottles can help make your own life environmentally friendly. These actions can assist in decreasing an individual's carbon footprint in the environment.

"Every person can make a difference with the actions that they take in their daily lives," Beatty said. "Continue to recycle, use sustainable products, and continue to take care of the Earth, so we can protect our environment."



ART BY Isabella del Nido

AP testing season is almost here

Amilia Velez
Dispatch Reporter

As Advanced Placement (AP) exam season approaches, fear looms over students. With AP courses in several topics ranging from World History to English to Physics, the stress placed upon taking these exams begins the very first day of classes and only increases as the year progresses.

AP exams will take place at Bowie during the first two weeks of May. The exams are used to assess if students are proficient enough in a subject to earn college credit. If a student earns a three or higher on a five-point scale, they are eligible for college credit. While the test can help students earn credit for their upper-level studying, it can also be a stress factor for many Bowie students, including junior Savi Kulkarni.

"I'm really nervous because I've heard that AP physics and AP US History are some of the hardest exams," Kulkarni said. "I put a lot of pressure on myself because I want to test out of these courses and get college credit."

According to the UCLA psychology department, forty percent of students experience testing anxiety. This can interfere with performance and cause students to score considerably lower than their ac-

ademic ability. Factors such as time and lack of confidence play into students' results on standardized testing.

"I am the most stressed about the time," sophomore Emma Phillips said. "There is a lot of information from many different time periods in the World History course. Doing a lot of multiple choice questions and writing different free response questions in one test is a lot to do in one sitting."

The end of the school year is packed with tests including AP exams, STAAR tests, and finals. Teachers acknowledge that AP testing can be a stressful time with students wanting to perform well and earn credit for AP classes. Many Bowie teachers, including AP World History teacher Carrie Hoffman-Howell, have been spending the year slowly preparing students to feel confident during the tests.

"My biggest piece of advice for all the upcoming tests is to just breathe and relax," Hoffman-Howell said. "Check track and be aware of the time and trust that you know the material. Some kids get so stressed out and it only ends up hurting them."

While a lot of stress can be detrimental to performance, healthy stress has some benefits. According to the Teens Health organization, anxiety leading up to a test

can actually motivate students. Reviewing material and fully understanding the content can address the anxiety while also calming it.

"My teacher gave us some tips having to do with time management which were really helpful," Phillips said. "We were told to not spend so much time stuck on a question since we only have one minute per question on the AP world history exam."

For students wanting to feel more prepared leading up to the exam, AP classroom has many resources including practice tests and helpful videos. Khan Academy has also released videos on topics for various AP exams. Spacing out study time weeks prior to the exam can ensure that all of the content is covered and not crammed into a short amount of time. The College Board recommends studying in groups for optimal information retention. Youtube can also be a good starting point for overall course refreshers.

"I took the AP World History exam last year online, and I hardly studied for it," Kulkarni said. "This year, I feel like I have better time management and know more study techniques. I am going to study to the best of my ability and hope to pass."

Advanced Placement Testing 2022 Schedule

WEEK ONE OF AP TESTING

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
MAY 2ND 8AM: US Government & Politics Exam 12PM: Chemistry/Spanish Literature & Culture Exam	MAY 3RD 8AM: Environmental Science Exam 12PM: Psychology Exam	MAY 4TH 8AM: English Literature & Composition Exam 12PM: Computer Science A Exam	MAY 5TH 8AM: Human Geography/Macroeconomics Exam	MAY 6TH 8AM: US History Exam 12PM: Art History/Microeconomics Exam

WEEK TWO OF AP TESTING

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
MAY 9TH 8AM: Calculus AB/BC Exam 12PM: Computer Science Principles	MAY 10TH 8AM: English Language and Composition 12PM: Physics C: Mechanics 2PM: Physics C: Electricity & Mechanics	MAY 11TH 8AM: Spanish Language and Composition 12PM: Biology	MAY 12TH 8AM: French Language Culture/World History: Modern 12PM: Physics 1: Algebra Based	MAY 13TH 8AM: Music Theory 12PM: Physics 2: Algebra Based

ART BY Amilia Velez

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Restricting rights and infuriating communities

Texas legislature passed bill to stop young transgender kids from being able to transition

Mazzy Warren
Dispatch Reporter

Ding!
Hearing their phone go off, senior Arlo Craft checked their notifications to find a remind message from Sexuality and Gender Acceptance club (SAGA) sponsor Bree Rolfe. It was a link to a twitter thread. Reading further, their heart dropped.

Governor Greg Abbott issued a directive in a public letter, calling on the state of Texas to report parents of trans minors if it seems like their children are receiving gender-affirming medical care. Abbott's letter, released to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) on February 22, 2022, declared it child abuse to allow minors to transition.

"My immediate response was shock and concern," Craft said. "Just the idea that anybody could have so much hatred for such a broad group of people, to try and do something like that to them - especially as a government figure with so much authority and power and people who listen to them - it was almost unreal, and it was scary."

Immediately after hearing about the letter, Craft began research into the topic. To their relief they found that the letter wasn't legally binding; it was more of a suggestion than a demand. They were also glad to hear that Texans, as well as allies nation-wide, were protesting the directive and what it means for trans youth. They shared these discoveries with

their friends, making sure to inform everybody who needed to know.

"When I heard about the 'classifying trans care as child abuse' thing, I was worried," senior Radio Farris said. "My mom's giving me gender affirming health care, I'm on testosterone currently, and it's terrifying to know that my mom could go to jail for supporting my own transition. Learning that it was a suggestion was a relief, but although Austin specifically is super accepting, if we lived in any other city in Texas, we would be in a lot more danger."

According to Craft, Abbott's directive was heavily based on a non-binding legal opinion from Attorney General Ken Paxton. In this opinion, Paxton stated that "each of the 'sex change' procedures and treatments," when administered to minors, "can legally constitute child abuse" under multiple points of the Texas Family Code. Abbott adhered to these ideas, and sent his letter only a day after.

"These ideas on child abuse are dumb," Pride Representative Chelsea McCaffrey said. "It's very bold of Abbott to say that this is child abuse when he let children freeze to death in the storm, and when he's allowing children to be put in cages at the border. Parents that are doing what's right by their children, and caring for them, and doing what is best for them, are not abusive."

Gender-modification procedures include: puberty blockers, hormone controllers, and gender affirmation surgery. Such procedures are



ROARING WITH PRIDE: Sophomore Clyde Warren participating in a protest at the capital and raising his views high and proud. Warren, as a member of the transgender community is fighting for his rights and pushes those around him to pursue and wear their identity with pride. PHOTO BY Mazzy Warren

important to the trans community because they make trans men and women feel more comfortable with their bodies. Farris believes that politicians don't understand the problem

with banning these operations because they only consider the few people who regretted their operations and detransitioned. He believes that politicians take this to mean that everyone is either faking it or will regret it later.

"I was very irritated to hear this," senior El Wechsler said. "It's freaky to think that people know so little about what trans affirming action really is and how much it helps people. A lot of people think that it's this big, dangerous thing that kids will regret when they're older, when that's really not the case. The fact that people (like Abbott) can go so far just because they don't know anything about it is just really scary."

In his directive, Abbott urged the involvement of all "licensed professionals" and "members of the general public." Teachers were especially called on to submit cases to the DFPS, if they suspect their students are transitioning. The DFPS was ordered to "conduct a prompt and thorough inves-

tigation" of any such reports of minors being "subjugated to abusive gender transitioning procedures."

"It's just very concerning to see how much influence one person can have just by saying something," Wechsler said. "Knowing what that could mean further on is really worrying. I wasn't surprised that he supported this, but it really is concerning and disappointing."

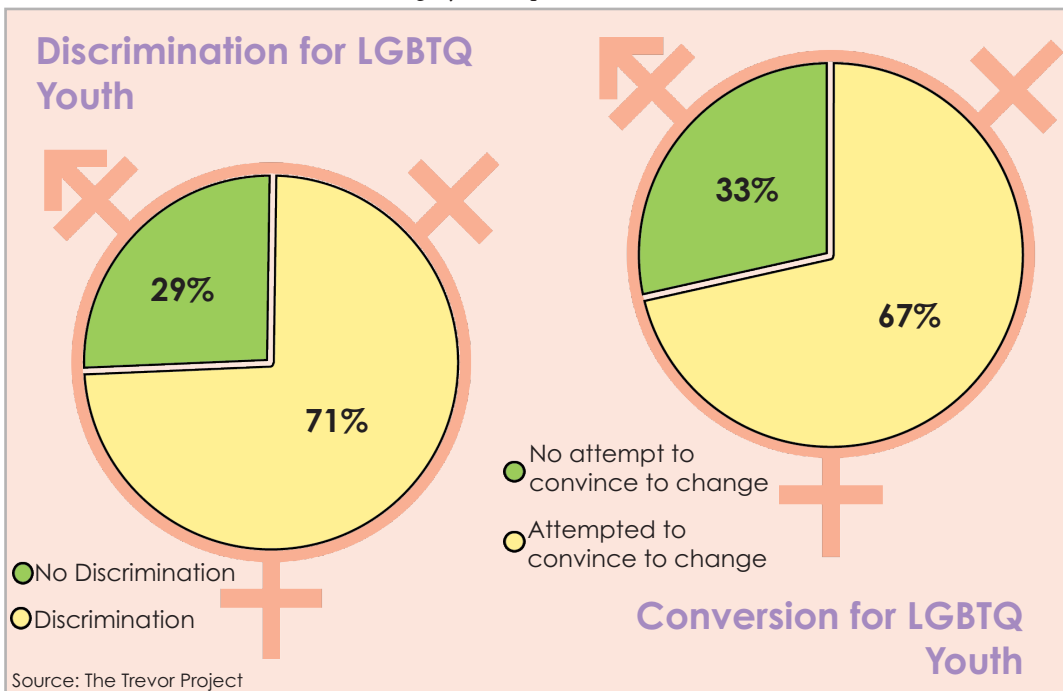
The DFPS said they'd do as the letter demanded. According to DFPS spokesman Patrick Crimmins, nine investigations have opened against families under suspicion of supporting their children's medical transitions. In response, the state's largest pediatric hospital, Texas Children's Hospital, has stopped prescribing gender-affirming hormones. Contrary to those complying with Abbott's demands, AISD spokesperson Jason Stanford released a statement denouncing the letter and policies coming from the governor's desk.

"We are going to do what-

ever it takes to give every one of our students what they need to thrive," AISD spokesperson Jason Stanford said. "And that means every single kid, no matter what, including trans kids. Child abuse is too important to be used to score political points."

Many believe this has had a direct impact on LGBT youths all around Texas. Craft feels that it hurts trans morale and pride, and Farris believes it compounds a feeling of helplessness in trans minors who are already having a hard time coming to terms with their identities. He also fears that it might dissuade children from coming out to their parents, for fear of abandonment.

READ THE FULL ARTICLE AT:
thedispatchonline.net



ART BY Dylan Zellner

Asian-American Allies club celebrates a historical month

Lucille Price
Reviews Editor

It was a normal day in fourth grade. Senior Vanessa Nguyen was excited to eat her traditional Vietnamese fish and cooked salmon her father had prepared for her.

When she opened her box, she received a different reaction from her classmates, who questioned the fish's odor and color. What was a seemingly normal day in fourth grade turned into an embarrassing and defining moment in Nguyen's relationship with her Vietnamese culture from a young age.

"Since I was young, my parents taught me to embrace my culture," Nguyen said. "However, attending predominantly white schools since I was little left me battling with how others perceive me. In the past, I felt the need to conform to American culture and resent my Vietnamese heritage."

The month of May nationally celebrates Pacific-Islander and Asian-American heritage. Specifically at Bowie, the Asian-American Ally Club (AAA) honors and celebrates the students' difference of backgrounds and individuality.

"My personal struggles and ability to share with my peers encouraged me to start the Asian-American and Ally club with a group of Asian students," Nguyen said. "So far, I think we want to make some announcements and hope to host a F.I.T. with games and make posters around the school."

Junior Tommy Morales, as another Asian-American student and first generation Asian-American, believes that this month celebrating his heritage will be beneficial to students trying to embrace their culture more publicly.

"I embrace that I am different from most Americans because I have two different cultures, being born in China," Morales said. "This

month is going to mean a lot to me because I do struggle with stereotypes, and I want the culture I was born into to be recognized and celebrated more than I feel it usually is."

The month commemorates immigration of the first Japanese person to the United States on May 7, 1843. As a sponsor of the AAA club, counselor April Giuffre is able to dive into what being a second generation American means to her.

"I am the daughter of Filipino immigrants and I am proud to represent my culture in the United States and just kind of break any stereotypes," Giuffre said. "I was completely raised here and I've been back to the Philippines, but I think it's pretty awesome that my parents made a life here."

According to the Texas Tribune, Bowie's population of Asian-American students is only 5.8% and 57.9% of the campus consisting of white students. Despite the difference in these numbers, Nguyen has found comfort in fellow Asian-American students in the Bowie community whom she connects with.

"My experience in middle school drew hostility between my conflicting cultures; however, my transition to high school evolved my true identity as I met friends that experienced the same microaggressions as I did," Nguyen said.

Nguyen still faces discrimination and microaggressions, but continues to grow in accepting her identity and both cultures, she is not alone on campus, as Giuffre has experienced similar beliefs in her upbringing.

"I don't think I fully embraced my culture until I was an adult," Giuffre said. "I think I started really appreciating that I just came from a different household."

For Morales, celebrating Asian American holidays helps him to better embrace his own Asian American culture.



SPREADING ACCEPTANCE: Seniors Vanessa Nguyen and Kelly Matthews spend their morning designing posters to celebrate Asian-History month. Nguyen organizes the AAA and pushes her members to join her in celebration of their culture. PHOTO BY Corinne Piorkowski

"For Chinese New Year, my family and I all hang out and celebrate and light fireworks, lots of fireworks," Morales said. "This celebration allows me to see my culture in a positive light and bond with my family."

Even as an adult, Giuffre has continued to experience an increase in discrimination recently and hopes that Asian American History Month will allow students to gain a broader perspective and altogether newfound respect for Asian American culture.

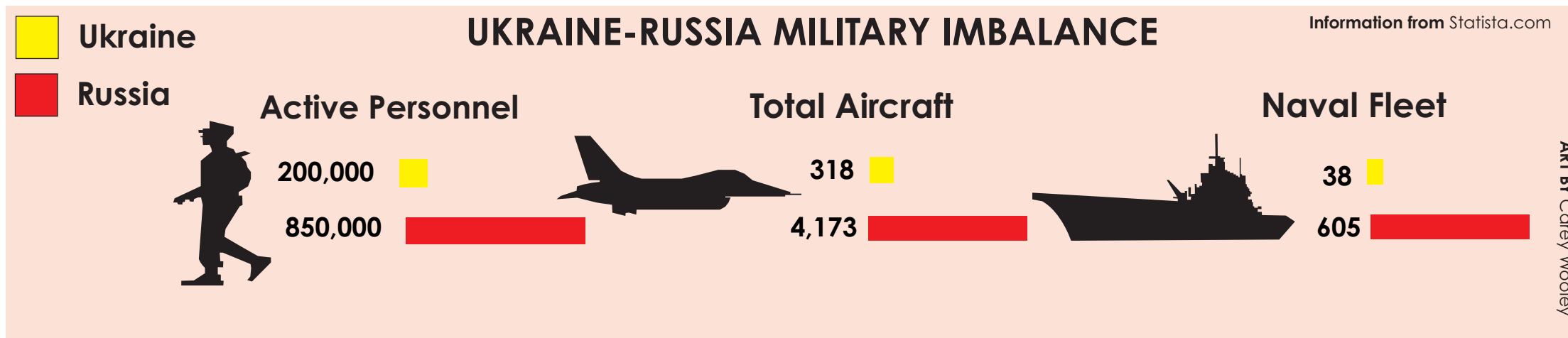
"Recently there has been a lot of hate crimes and seemingly more open discrimination against

Asians," Giuffre said. "I'd love for students to be willing to speak up for others and drive out that hate."

Overall the AAA club is optimistic that Asian American History month will increase the campus's awareness surrounding their culture and continues to proudly share their culture with the communities surrounding them.

"I'm very thankful that I am able to share the community's history, pain, joy and help pay homage to my ancestors and trailblazers to help amplify voices in the AAPI movement," Nguyen said. ■

Russia-Ukraine war impacts students



Ukrainians across the world worry for their families and citizens that are still living in Ukraine

Carey **Wooley**
Politics Editor

After years of threats and attempts at peace negotiations, the world watched in February as Russian troops invaded Ukraine. What felt like a dream was a reality for thousands of Ukrainian citizens as they fled their homes in search of refuge from neighboring countries.

On Feb. 24, after a week of Russian troops waiting on the Ukraine border, Putin chose to move forward with invasion and send in troops to attempt to gain control of the capital city Kyiv, and ultimately the rest of the country. Neighboring countries, like Poland, opened their borders to take in as many refugees as possible.

"When I first saw this news I thought it was pretty disheartening," senior Brodi Tokar said. "Even if I had Ukrainian heritage or not, I think the fact that people want to do such cruel things to humans and cultures and countries is just really horrific."

As Ukrainians across the world watched this conflict unfold, families desperately tried to get in contact with their loved ones and were left pondering if they had gotten to safety or not. Countries

"I think the fact that people want to do such cruel things to humans and cultures and countries is just really horrific."

Brodi Tokar
Senior

across Eastern Europe opened their borders to the Ukrainian refugees, but citizens between the ages 18 and 60 were prohibited from leaving the country to possibly fight.

"Having family there is very hard because just trying to be in contact with them in general is tough," Tokar said. "With all this crisis going on, we tried to reach out ASAP just to see how everyone's doing. Luckily, when we reached out initially they were safe. As far as I know right now, they are still safe, so I'm hoping it stays like that."

Tokar has several family members that never immigrated to other countries and are still living in Ukraine. Part of his family was able to flee the Ukraine and enter Poland, but several members of his family were forced to stay as they were of fighting age per Ukraine's emigration restrictions.

"My dad was born in Odessa, Ukraine, and so his whole side of the family is where I get my Ukrainian heritage," Tokar said. "He was born there and grew up in Odessa for a couple of years. My dad and the rest of his family immigrated to the United States because of USSR rule and it just wasn't safe for them to stay there."

In 2014 Russia invaded the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea, which was then formally annexed by Russia a few months after its occupation. Following this NATO and the rest of the world were fearful of Russia attempting to occupy more Ukrainian territory. "It's

dangerous to rationalize a decision that is irrational in so many ways," AP government teacher Dalton Pool said.

"My best guesses as to why Putin made such a poor decision are that he is perturbed by Ukraine embracing western democracy, concerned about NATO expanding into Ukraine, and wants control of strategic land and sea locations especially in eastern Ukraine."

Putin has not indicated that Ukraine is the only country that he will try to occupy. This has made several former Soviet countries that are now independent and fearful that if Russia successfully gains control of the Ukraine that they may be next.

"The ego of a billionaire autocrat who's been in power for multiple decades most likely played a factor in why Putin moved forward with invasion," Pool said. "Putin is aging and thinking about his legacy and has always wanted to restore Russia to its peak Soviet Union power."

In the week following Russia's invasion, the Western world moved forward with historic economic sanctions. This includes blocking Russia from international markets, as well as prohibiting many companies from doing business with them.

"Right now NATO, the U.S., and European Countries are doing about as much as they can get away with to help Ukraine," Pool said. "The sanctions levied against Russia are severe and have had an effect, but until Europe stops buying natural gas from Russia it will be able to stay afloat economically."

Another Bowie student who is grappling with fear of her family's safety over this war is

senior Anastasia Krasnoriadtsev. Her extended family lives in Belarus which is a former Soviet-controlled country

that is located on the border of Russia and Ukraine.

"I just didn't believe that it was gonna happen. On top of the shock, there was so much confusion that came with the whole situation," Krasnoriadtsev said. "Nobody really understood why Russia was invading Ukraine or what was even going to happen leading up to that point. I myself wasn't

super aware of the situation until it actually happened."

After this invasion, some were angered by this invasion and turned that frustration towards Russian-owned products and businesses. Several New York businesses were vandalized and reserved threats via voicemail.

"I just always say that I'm Russian because nobody really knows where Belarus is, so to save myself long explanations every single time I just say that I'm Russian," Krasnoriadtsev said. "So I definitely was nervous at first that people were going to think that my family and I supported the invasion, when that's not true."

Since the 1990s NATO has been in talks with Ukraine in attempt to build peace and trust between NATO and Ukraine as well as attempting talks with Russia, according to NATO's website. After the Annexation of Crimea, Ukraine was present at numerous peace talk meetings and during this conflict NATO has supplied the Ukraine with military vehicles and weapons. In Putin's speech when he took office as president in 1999, he outlined what he wanted to accomplish which was to

"Putin is aging and thinking about his legacy and he's always wanted to restore Russia to it's peak Soviet Union power."

Dalton Pool
AP Government Teacher

Kharkiv Regional State Administration building

Kharkiv's Freedom district was bombed in March. Many historic buildings, including the one pictured above, were destroyed. This has happened across Ukraine, as many buildings, squares, and homes have been completely demolished.

Insulated statue located in Lviv, Ukraine

Across Ukraine, citizens have isolated and wrapped statues in tape and plastic in an effort to protect these historic pieces of art from destruction.

ART BY Carey Wooley

Crypto craze captures student interest

Sophomore Nick Vega buys his own form of this digital currency to use and invest in

Sammie Thompson
Managing Editor

The dishes are washed, floors are vacuumed, and all is calm in the Vega household.

Cha-ching. Sophomore Nick Vega gets paid for completing his chores. His family does things a bit differently than the average family, however. His hard work isn't rewarded with a crisp dollar bill or Venmo payment, but with cryptocurrency.

Cryptocurrency is digital money that is decentralized, meaning that it does not require a third party, like the government, to maintain its value. Transactions made with cryptocurrency are validated on a blockchain, or a record of information that is updated simultaneously across machines that are using cryptocurrency. The blockchain allows records of cryptocurrency transactions to be accurate and identical across participating machines.

"I'm currently investing in Bitcoin, Solana, and a couple other minor cryptocurrencies,"

Vega said. "I'm was hoping I would make some profit, but so far nothing yet. I decided to start my own cryptocurrency using Solana's blockchain because I thought it would be cool and because I'm using it in my household."

Vega bought his own cryptocurrency a few months ago and has been using and investing in it since. In addition to receiving it as a payment for chores, Vega uses cryptocurrency as a form of currency with his siblings.

"I introduced cryptocurrency to my parents and they liked it," Vega said. "Essentially, they pay us for doing chores around the house, and then we pay them for being able to get our computer after we've done our homework or just free time."

Popular cryptocurrencies, like Bitcoin, Solana, and Ethereum, are becoming increasingly widespread alternatives for online payments. Vega joined the cryptocurrency bandwagon after doing his own research.

"I've always been interested in tech and last year, I started looking into buying stocks from

Tesla, Nvidia, Apple, and more, and then I watched a YouTube video on how cryptocurrency works," Vega said. "I was interested so I started doing more research. Using the Solana blockchain is a lot cheaper than having to buy your own servers to process all the data that's coming through."

Computer Science teacher Bowman Brannon has also bought cryptocurrency in the past. Vega has continued pursuing his interest in technology in Bowman's AP Computer Science Principles class.

"I have some experience with cryptos and bought some Bitcoin, Ethereum, Litecoin, and Dogecoin a few years ago," Brannon said. "It is fun to get excited about tracking their individual progress day-to-day, but the volatility of the market makes this approach stressful."

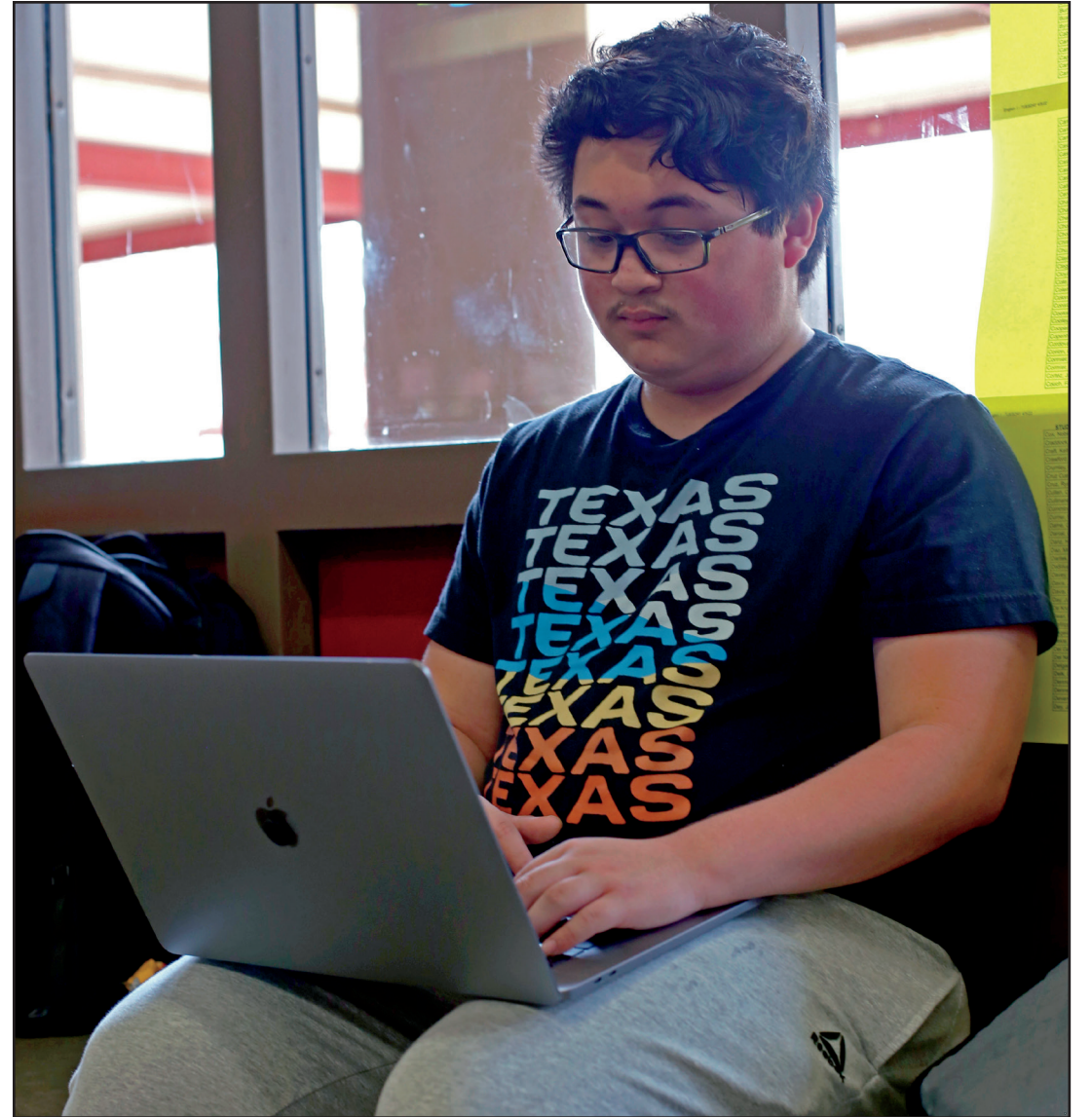
Cryptocurrency is growing among other students in the Bowie community. Penny cryptocurrencies, which are typically cheap to buy but unpredictable, are a popular choice.

"I got my dad into cryptocurrency about a year ago," junior Hank Turner said. "I had him invest \$300 into two penny cryptocurrencies, \$200 into Elongate and \$100 into Safemoon. In two months, the \$300 turned into \$20,000."

NFTs, or non-fungible tokens, are unique digital items, such as drawings or videos, that can be purchased using cryptocurrency. Many people, including Vega, were drawn to research cryptocurrency because of the recent spike in demand for NFTs. However, many also believe that they have their restrictions.

"I think students should have a general understanding of crypto, but I also think the excitement around all digital currencies is starting to feel underwhelming," Brannon said. "NFTs were all the rage, but we are now seeing their limitations. Also, from a practical perspective, the mining related to cryptos and NFTs is incredibly greedy on our resources."

Despite any negative consequences, Vega believes



MAKING BANK: Sophomore Nick Vega checks on the status of his cryptocurrency, a form of online currency that has been increasing in popularity. A few months ago, Vega bought a fork of the Solana cryptocurrency blockchain and has been using an investing in it since. **PHOTO BY** Cyrus Mitchell

that cryptocurrency has had a positive impact on how people deal with money.

"Crypto will change the world," Vega said. "It's already changing the world. It's an easier way for people to carry around money and is harder to be stolen because it's not physical and more secure."

To use cryptocurrency, users need a cryptocurrency wallet. This is a software program that interacts with the blockchain and allows cryptocurrency to be sent and received. For this reason, many retailers do not yet accept cryptocurrency as a

form of payment.

"I wouldn't use cryptocurrency as my main source of currency because it's not accepted with everything for trading," Turner said. "I would advise students to watch media and watch trends in currency to invest at the right time."

After experiencing it himself, Vega also has some advice for students looking to invest in cryptocurrency.

"Do your research," Vega said. "There's a lot of currencies that just aren't worth it or may look like they're very promising but may end up in a

loss."

Outside of school, Vega is an ambassador for a student Artificial Intelligence program. He plans on using his passion for computer science to continue investing in his cryptocurrency.

"I think it's really cool that Nick has done some work in this area," Brannon said. "Like the projects he does in my AP computer science class, Nick is intrinsically motivated. He has his own goals of what he wants to accomplish, and often seeks to go well beyond the requirements of any rubric I put before him." ■

TOP TIPS FOR investing in cryptocurrency:



Read both web-pages for the currency you are investing in (i.e. Bitcoin, Ethereum, etc.) and independent articles to fully understand how it works before getting involved with it.

Use a trustworthy digital wallet that is well known and will allow protection for your currency at a level consistent with your investment.

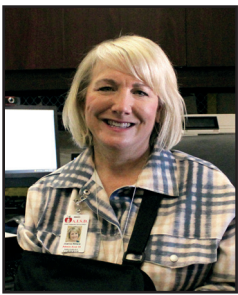
Have a backup strategy if your computer (or wherever your cryptocurrency wallet is stored) is lost or stolen, as you will have no way of receiving your investment back.

Pay attention to media and current trends in currency to know when the right time is to invest and which cryptocurrency you should use.

SOURCE: The State University of New York

ART BY Sammie Thompson

DAY IN THE LIFE:



Joanna Willard, Administration Assistant to the Principal

INTERVIEW AND PHOTO BY Claire Scott

When did you start working at Bowie?
"Around five years ago."

What is your favorite part about working here?

"I love the staff. We are like a family and we support each other, it's nice working with people you can turn to. We really do help each other out."

How have students and staff members impacted your time here?

"I've always loved Bowie, my children attended here and they had a great experience. I've also worked at PTSA before I was a staff member here and I've always loved the atmosphere. Bowie is definitely one of the best schools in Austin and it offers really great education to children. We really try to put the students first and the staff cares about them, we really try to support them as best we can."

What does a typical day look like for you?

"Everyday is busy. I help Mr. Robinson with his appointments and correspondence, he always has a lot of meetings and phone calls."

What is one thing you would change about Bowie?

"I wish the district would assist more with the mental health of our students. We don't get a lot of support in that department so that would be the main thing I would change."

Former Bowie students return as teachers

Julia Arriaga
Dispatch Reporter

It's finally graduation day for the Class of 1997 at Bowie High School. Everyone throws their caps into the air in celebration of the past four years of hard work and dedication. At the time, science teacher Erin Kowalik didn't think that she would ever return to this campus. 11 years later, she found herself doing just that.

"I had the chance to interview to work here," Kowalik said. "That was not something that I think I would have ever predicted as a student. I think my student self would've been really surprised at how excited I was to come back."

According to Forbes, teachers have about 50-hour work weeks. That's a large difference from the average American. According to Statista, the average American has a 37-hour work week.

"When you're in high school, you just don't realize all the work that your teachers are doing all day long, whether before school, after school, or throughout the day," Culinary teacher and former Bowie student Kathryn Mayo said. "I didn't realize that there is so much behind the scenes of being a teacher."

A member of the Class of 2015, Mayo has now been at Bowie for two years: one year as a Nutrition teacher and one year as a Culinary teacher. Before coming to her current job, she worked in hospital administration. After some thought, she decided to change up her career path.

"I pivoted," Mayo said. "I decided that I wanted to pursue nutrition in some way. I wasn't a certified dietitian, which requires more schooling and it's more clinical. What I studied was more holistic, as far as public health, and how food impacts it."

Mayo combined her love for nutrition and cooking in her next job as a personal chef.

I became the personal chef of a student with an eating disorder," Mayo said. "I got to see that student heal through food, and I was really happy to be a part of that. That was

FROM THEN TO NOW

CURRENT PHOTOS BY Cyrus Mitchell. PAST PHOTOS COURTESY OF The Bowie Yearbook

Theater teacher
Matthew Humphrey

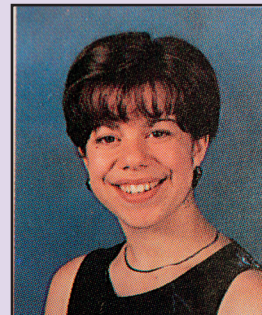


2000



2022

Science teacher
Erin Kowalik



1997



2022

Culinary teacher
Kathryn Mayo



2015



2022

ART BY Sammie Thompson

probably the catalyst of realizing that I really like this cooking thing."

Students at Bowie have a lot to say about her class and teaching style.

"I think Chef B is a perfect example as a teacher," sophomore Will Louis said. "She's very good at cooking and giving directions. Her

notes are fun."

This school year marked year 34 of Bowie's existence. From Bulldogs and Hot-dogs to the No Place for Hate parade, the traditions have changed over the years. Theater teacher Matthew Humphrey graduated 22 years ago and remembers these traditions as an integral part

of his high school career.

"We used to do things like a homecoming parade," Humphrey said. "Each class would be responsible for making a float. It was a big competition and a cool kind of unifying experience."

Transitioning from being a student to being a peer of former teachers is something that each alumni has had to deal with. Kowalik experienced this with her former math teacher, Bill Russell.

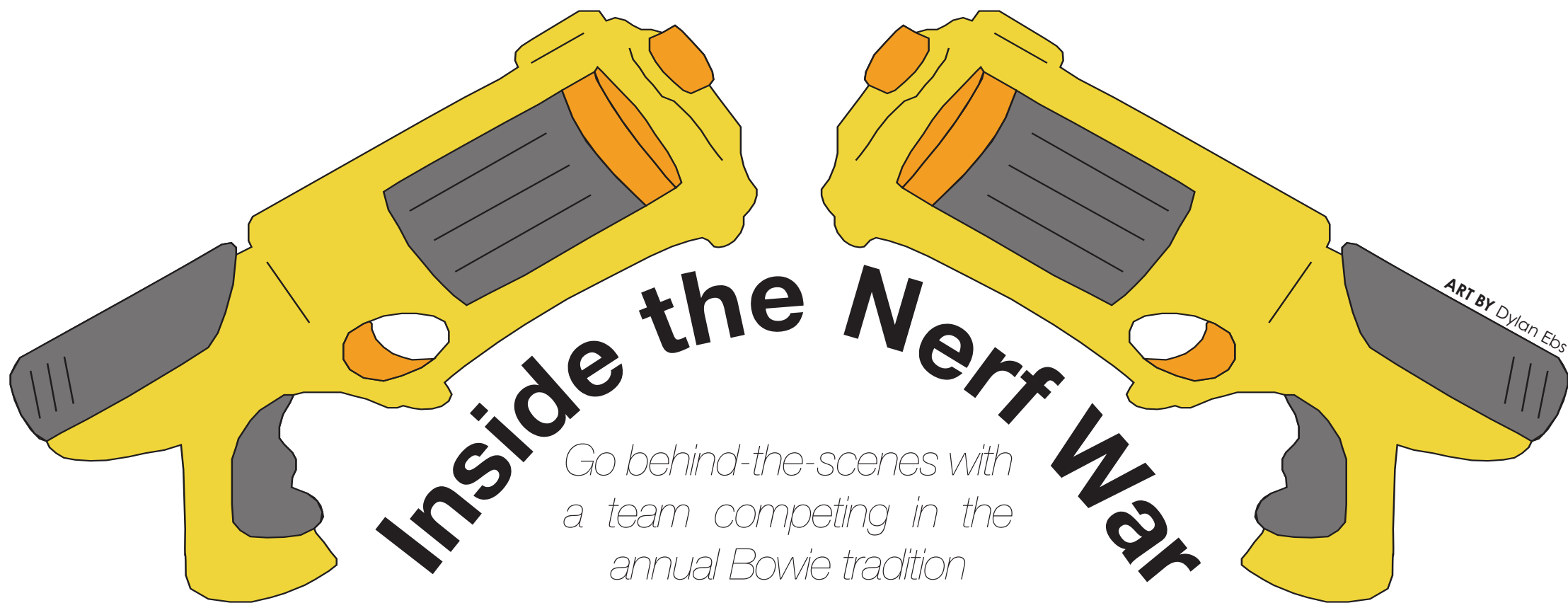
"There was a teacher I had for math," Kowalik said. "I don't know how long it took me to call him by his first name. Every time I did I would run away and hide. So I'd made sure that if I was going to call him Bill, I would say 'Nice seeing you Bill,' and then I could go because that felt so weird. But it's actually been pretty easy to transition to seeing them as a colleague or a peer rather than a superior."

Many alumni do not go directly into pursuing education. Through Mayo's pursuit of medical administration, Humphrey's traveling theater group, and Kowalik's lab work, each teacher has had their own journey.

"We would tour at different educational institutions," Humphrey said. "We would have public performances, and offer workshops in Shakespeare, stage combat, and improvisation. I found that I enjoyed teaching the workshop, just as much as performing the show."

Each alumni has been a part of different programs, electives, and experiences in their time on campus. Returning to Bowie after Kowalik's high school experience here was a large adjustment, but one that she expresses her gratitude for.

"Bowie's changed a lot," Kowalik said. "I came to Bowie midway through high school, and we had moved here, and it was not an exciting move. I was not very school spirited. There were traditions and things I participated in but I really didn't feel as connected to the school as I do now. I get to come back and see people that taught me and work with my family, which is amazing. I think that I feel much more connected to Bowie now as a teacher than I did as a student." ■



Inside the Nerf War

Go behind-the-scenes with a team competing in the annual Bowie tradition

ART BY Dylan Ebs

Dylan Ebs
Features Editor

Before senior Nick Roberts goes home every day, he calls his sister to check her surroundings outside. Her task is simple; look for any opponents waiting to eliminate Roberts. Roberts' task? Try to get to his house before his opponents do, and eliminate any who might cross his path.

Roberts is a member of the Pistol Packin Never Lackin Bitch Smackin Killas (PPNLBSK), just one of 64 teams competing in the Bowie Nerf War. Started in 2019 by alumni Riley McIntyre and Teagan Lopez, the competition features 64 teams consisting of five members each. Every team pays \$25 to enter, with the winning team receiving \$1000 and the second place team receiving \$400.

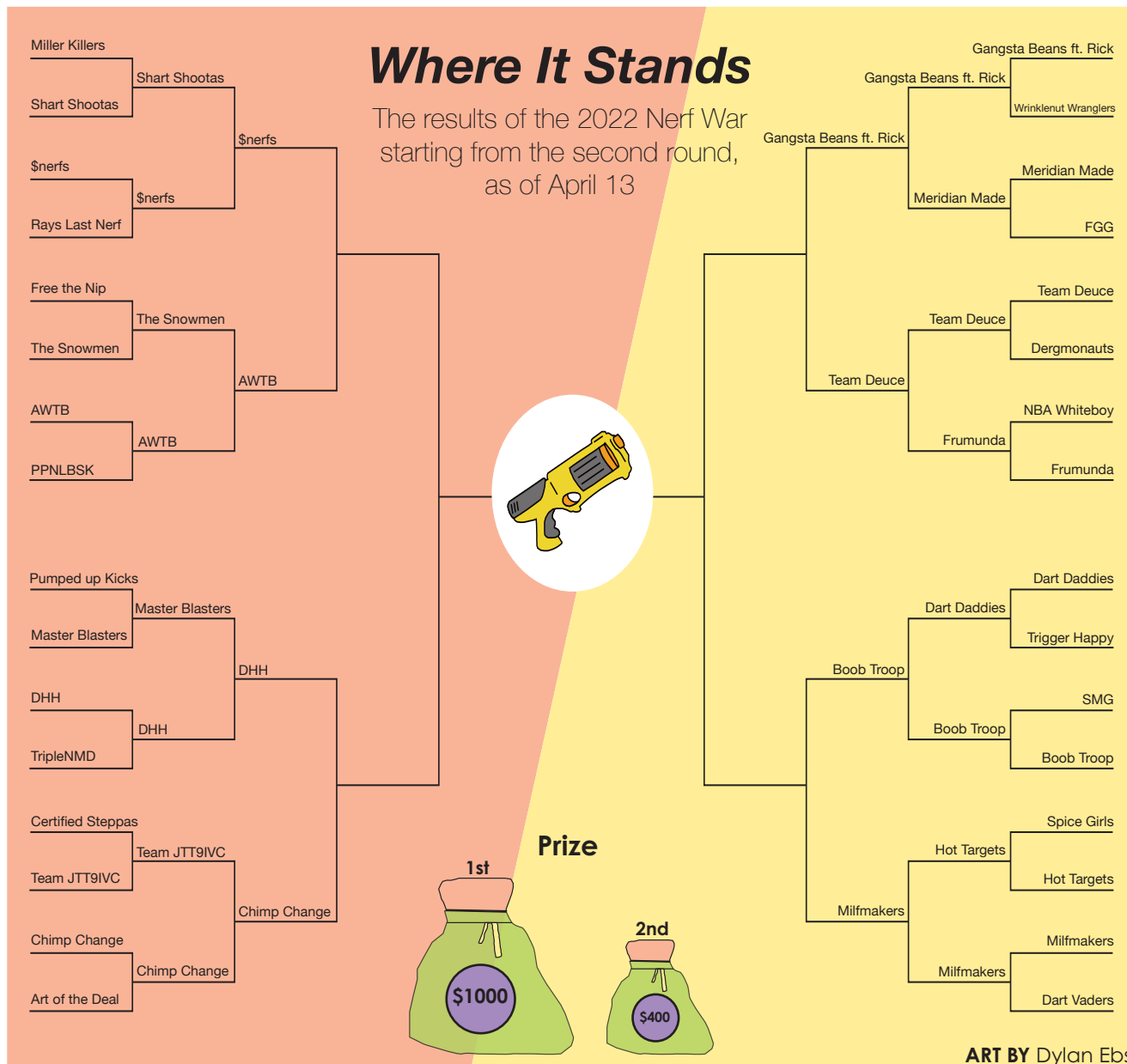
Each team draws an opposing team in the first-round. When the round starts, it's go-time. The team with the fewest members eliminated at the end of the week advances. Competitors arm themselves with Nerf guns, aiming to eliminate their opponents and advance to the next round.

PPNLBSK was assigned their first round opponent, Team 5 Alive, and from there, it was time to plan. They began researching their opponents, scouring the internet for any potential clues to locate their targets. Off-periods turned into planning periods for PPNLBSK, as they would often use the time to discuss their strategy for the tournament.

"We ask around, get addresses, and then we drive past their houses to see if there's any good hiding spots," Roberts said.

Certain areas are off-limits, though. All Austin ISD property, Bowie events, workplaces, and places of worship are designated "Safe Zones" where participants cannot be eliminated. Participants can be eliminated at their house if their opponents receive permission to enter, which teams have used to their advantage.

"The American nuclear family usually fosters lots of resentment, especially in infantile years of a sibling, so we can exploit the relationships that these kids have with their brothers and sisters to our own advantage," PPNLBSK member and senior Will



Weber said. The members of PPNLBSK knew that if they wanted to win the war, they had to stay connected and organized as a team.

"We have a team meal, we strategize, we talk about implementation and execution," Weber said. "Put simply, we game-plan the hell out of it, then we just execute because that's what we're best at."

The team has taken extra safety precautions to protect themselves

from being eliminated, like parking in the garage instead of the Bethany Lutheran Church parking lot. Wolftrap Drive, which connects Bowie to the church parking lot, is not a safe zone, so teams have eliminated opponents walking to the lot.

"You never really know what happens," Weber said. "There's always this palpable tinge of what to expect and you don't know if they're trying to camp you out at the same exact time you don't know where they are. You

don't know when they're coming back. You don't know when this is going to end. So you just have adrenaline pumping through your system the entire time."

PPNLBSK had little trouble winning their first-round. One after one, the team took out their opponents. Outside their houses. At their bus stop. No area was safe for Team 5 Alive.

PPNLBSK tried to eliminate the last player on Team 5 Alive, but fell just

short. Two PPNLBSK members were eliminated, but it didn't matter. The clock hit midnight on Sunday, and the first-round was over. With a 3-1 score, PPNLBSK was moving on.

"One of them staked out one of our group members' houses," Weber said. "Another group member, thinking he was safe, tried to pump gas into his car at night and actually got ran up on at the gas station by the opposition. You're quite literally never safe no matter what day it is, no matter what time it is."

But despite the first round win, it wasn't time to celebrate just yet. Their next opponent, AWTB, consisted of five seniors who would prove to be tougher opponents than Team 5 Alive.

"[AWTB] is definitely much, much, much more invested in the Nerf War than the first team was and their hardware is quite simply unmatched," Weber said. "We just have to outplay them. We have to play tactically."

Several members of PPNLBSK and AWTB are on the lacrosse team, which created an interesting dynamic at practices.

"There's back and forth at practices and then you just have to get home quick," Roberts said.

Despite that, members of PPNLBSK assert that the competition is all in good fun.

"I like that the Nerf War tradition gives people the opportunity to meet new people as you compete against different teams," Roberts said.

Defeating AWTB was easier said than done. Weber, who would walk to school via the greenbelt behind his house, was eliminated after an AWTB member saw him as Weber was walking to the trail. Roberts' Nerf run ended after he was eliminated outside Tropical Smoothie Cafe. Their team captain, junior Gabe Watts, got eliminated in the church parking lot. By Sunday, April 2, all five PPNLBSK members were out.

Even though the result was disappointing, the experience is a memorable one, especially for seniors enjoying their final months of high school.

"The Bowie Nerf environment is a very fun one," Weber said. "It's not toxic. It encourages healthy competition, which fosters a spirit of camaraderie throughout the school." ■

Friends and dedication lead junior to start making music

Kate Davis
Dispatch Reporter

Headphones on, standing in his closet, Alan Roth raps his newly written song into his microphone, which is wedged between a couple of t-shirts.

Roth, a junior, has been rapping for about a year and a half and released his first EP, 'OutMy-Bag', in 2021.

"My friend told me I should start making music, so I just started doing it," Roth said. "It was a creative outlet. And when I met up with my friend Axel, and we started actually creating our own music. I just kept wanting to go with it."

Creating music has proven to be time-consuming, and Roth finds himself sometimes prioritizing his career over other important aspects of his life.

"There's definitely times where I'd stay up till like 3 am trying to do something for a song, then I don't get to sleep early enough for school," Roth said. "But as far as my social life, music is kind of my social life. The stuff I do outside of school is also involved with music. My friend Alex is like my manager and my friend Axel is my producer."

Equipment is a vital part of music production,

and being able to find quality pieces for decent prices and a place to use them can be difficult.

"I used to have this really cheap mic and then I used this mic that Axel gave me that was a bit better," Roth said. "And then finally I just spent like 500 bucks on actual equipment, on a microphone and interface and everything."

Senior Alex Araiza, who helps support Roth's music career, said Roth is continuing to improve with his music.

"It's fun to listen to his music around our friends and stuff," Araiza said. "It's fun to push him to keep putting out music and see where it goes. His music is really good and it's only going to keep getting better."

The most difficult of Roth's journey so far has been persevering through the hardships he's faced.

"It's super hard to work on something for hours and days and then put it out and you don't get the recognition you want for it," Roth said. "Not quitting and continuing to try and get better is really hard."

Though the process of creating and releasing his own music has been demanding, Roth hasn't been in it alone. His producer, Axel Lozano, has provided large contributions to Roth's career.

"So songwriting, a lot of the time it'll be actually my producer, so he'll produce a lot of my beats," Roth said. "So he'll usually send something over and then I'll use that and just it depends on how it happens. Every song is different with how long it takes."

Producing music, in simple terms, is the process of making the beat for a song and putting the different parts of a song together.

"Usually [Roth] gives me a flow or the type of vibe he wants to hop on and then I'll just go off of that," Lozano said.

Stylistic change is common for many artists, and Roth is not without his own experiences.

"At first it was really hard to work with him because he only tried to make Lil Peep type stuff, but he evolved," Lozano said. "So it was fun."

The entertainment industry is tedious, but



READY FOR RECORDING: Junior Alan Roth stands with his music equipment in his room. Roth, who releases music under the name "shawty's boy," got the motivation to start making music from his friend, and hopes to turn music into a career. PHOTO COURTESY OF Alan Roth

Roth aims to pursue a career in music, nonetheless.

"The dream is to do something with music, like performing," Roth said. "But if I were to go to college for music it would be more like sound engineering, but I would much rather use my music to spread to other people."

Though his goal is to relate to others, Roth's music is mainly built from his own experiences, his favorite songs being the most personal.

"One of my favorite, unreleased songs that I've written is 'Primeramente' which is the first song Axel and I ever made," Roth said. "I also wrote it for my girlfriend so it's really meaningful for me."

Music has not only provided Roth with a potential career path but has impacted his mental-

ity in important ways.

"It definitely got me more confidence," Roth said. "I was definitely scared to say I made music to other people, but now it feels more comfortable. I feel like I've grown as a person and have been able to go back and revisit certain events that I hadn't before, and come to terms with some stuff."

The music industry can be a daunting place to many people, but Roth encourages people to give themselves a fair shot.

"Just start somewhere, literally anywhere," Roth said. "Because the earlier you start, the faster you're going to get to where you want to go. Try it and try to find out what you like in terms of sound and style and what path you want to take once you take it seriously." ■

Where to stream shawty's boy

linktr.ee/shawtysboy



Wheelie into the world of BMX riding



ZERO GRAVITY: Dorer launches himself into the air off of the raised course. Dorer enjoys riding during the weekends at House Park. "My favorite memory with my BMX bike was definitely the first time I got free bike parts," Dorer said. "That was a really cool feeling because I knew my riding was getting more recognition." **PHOTO BY** Anna Bea Heise



GOING IN CIRCLES: With one hand off of the handles, Dorer spins the front of his bike around in midair. He has chosen to focus more on skill-riding because he feels like it gives him more of an opportunity to express himself. "Whenever I get injured to the point where I can't ride my bike anymore, I start back up kind of skeptical," Dorer said. "After a few days though, I just want to ride my bike so badly that I know I want to ride again as soon as I'm not hurt anymore." **PHOTO BY** Anna Bea Heise



RIDING AROUND: In the bowl of the course, Dorer plans out his next trick. Dorer plans on continuing BMX riding after high school and wants to finish school so that he can focus more on riding. "A short-term goal I have is that I would like to drop a full video part for Sunday Bikes and Odyssey Bikes," Dorer said. "A long-term goal of mine is to maybe have a couple of signature parts and go on trips with all the other riders on the team." **PHOTO BY** Anna Bea Heise

Student Ethan Dorer navigates BMX riding alongside his sponsorships

Anna Bea Heise
Photo Essay Editor

BMX riding is a lesser known sport where riders race on tracks with rollers, jumps, and turns to challenge their skills. Senior Ethan Dorer has been a competitor in this sport since his early childhood.

"I have been riding since I was four years old," Dorer said. "My dad got me into it because he used to ride when he was my age."

Equipment for this sport include the typical riding protection of helmets and knee and elbow pads. BMX bikes are specific to this sport as they are smaller since riders are never sitting down and need to be nimble on the bike.

"I can usually make do with most pairs of shoes for riding, but I don't really wear any protection other than a helmet since I've hit my head a bunch of times," Dorer said. "You do need a lot of money for the bike and its parts."

Like other sports, BMX riders can be sponsored by companies for their riding. Dorer has two sponsors from bike part companies.

"I think I began to take riding more seriously when the company Sunday Bikes reached out to me," Dorer said. "They asked me if I wanted to stay on their bike parts and support their company."

Dorer gets free parts delivered from

companies Sunday Bikes and Odyssey BMX. However, the only way for riders to make money from this sponsorship is to have signature bike parts with them through a collab.

"I promote myself as a rider by posting clips of me riding on social media as much as I can," Dorer said. "I also try to promote clips that go into bigger projects that are actually filmed on real cameras. They can be sold as full video parts rather than a clip of me riding with no editing."

While some ride for the fun of it, there are a variety of competitions that riders can participate in. These can be showcases for a rider's speed or for their skills as they perform tricks.

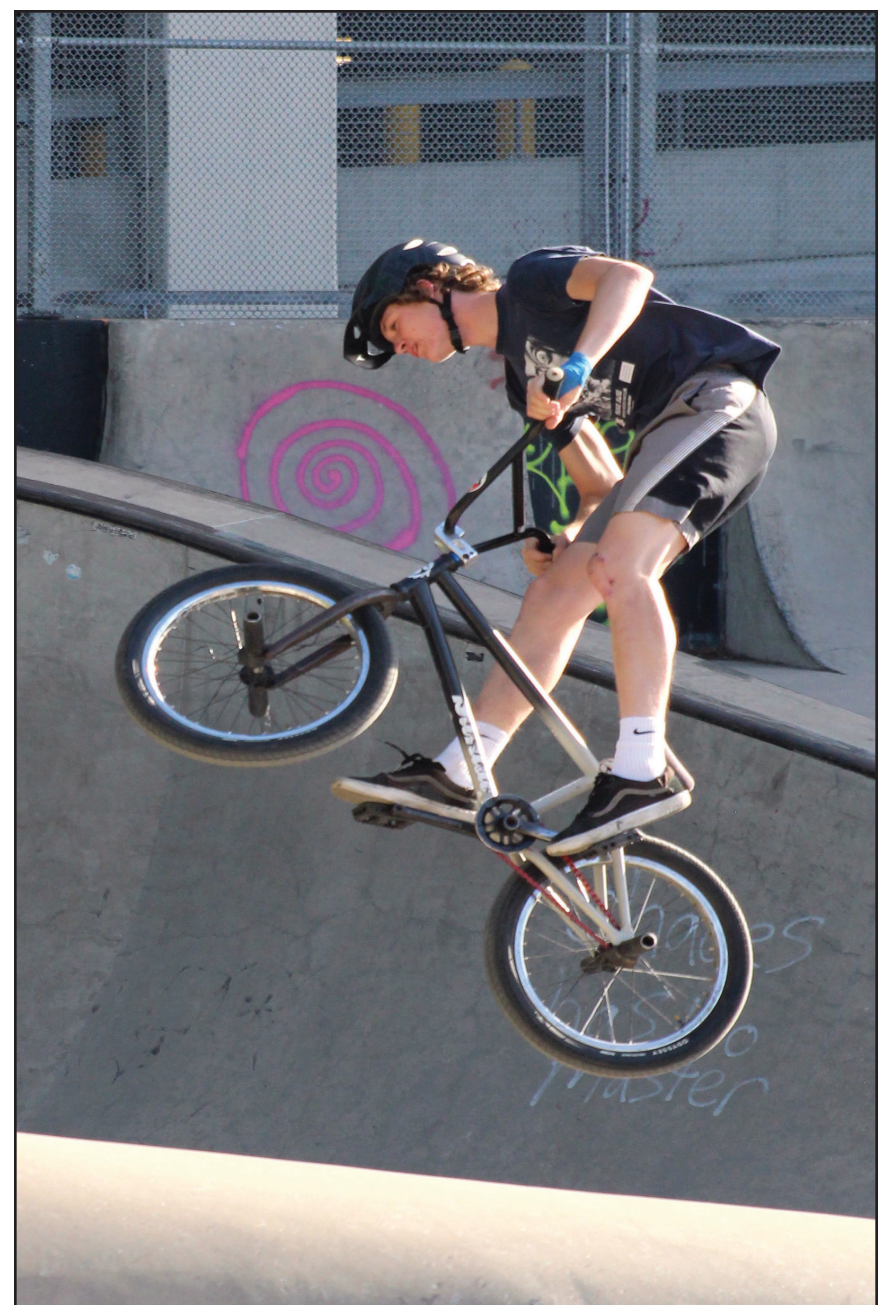
"I have competed in a contest for Rockstar, Hot Wheels, The Border, and more," Dorer said. "Before I started riding freestyle, I was racing with a team which was definitely completely different."

Freestyle BMX riding demonstrates a rider's skills and is competed individually. Team racing is different because it is based off of your team's speed as a whole.

"I like freestyle riding more because I feel like it's more of an art form," Dorer said. "You can't really express yourself in any other way than showing how fast you can go unless you're riding freestyle." ■



BRACING FOR IMPACT: As the front-wheel makes contact with the ground, Dorer begins to land one of his tricks. Dorer spends a lot of his free time practicing because landing incorrectly can cause injuries. "I've had more concussions than I can remember from riding," Dorer said. "I've also broken my elbow, collarbone, my wrist, and almost all of my fingers. I also got a huge gash on my leg that you could probably fit two golf balls in." **PHOTO BY** Anna Bea Heise



WHEELS UP: Dorer flies through the air as he warms up to practice his tricks. Dorer has stuck with this sport because he likes the expression of it and how riders don't let their injuries affect them. "Advice that I would give to new riders is just to always try to have fun," Dorer said. "You shouldn't expect to do anything with it unless you started out really, really early because it's kind of a dying sport. There's not a lot of money in it, and you get hurt a lot, but it's fun." **PHOTO BY** Anna Bea Heise

EDUCATION

CENSORSHIP

Banning books...

Anna Holme
Editor-in-Chief

Librarian Tara Walker-Leon is ready if she needs to be.

Armed with Austin Independent School District's (AISD's) challenged book policy, she prepares herself to defend against any possible objections to the books she has in Bowie's library.

"It's a targeted attack on libraries and schools," Walker-Leon said.

Her preparation comes after waves of backlash from parents and community members across America regarding the reading materials that are being provided in schools. Texas is no exception to this backlash. From Katy to Leander to Granbury, schools all around Texas have had their books contested or pulled off of library shelves due to having what parents deem as "inappropriate content."

"I think it's the same story over and over, to where one group of people doesn't think another group of people should read the books they disagree with," Walker-Leon said. "That's censorship. Just because they don't agree with it doesn't mean it should be taken out of the library. It's not being taught in English classes, so they don't get to do that."

The most hotly contested books are targeted by parents and conservative politicians. In October 2021, Texas Rep. Matt Krause compiled a list of 850 books he deemed "might make students feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress because of their race or sex." Krause then called on Texas school districts to report if they have any of these books on their shelves. All the books included in Krause's list cover themes including the LGBTQ+ experience, racism, sex, and violence. "I think the subject

matters being targeted are the ones that should be read the most," junior Ben Locke said. "If we ignore the problems we have as a society, like racism and violence, instead of talking about them the problem will never be fixed because there is no room for change."

AISD decided not to respond to Krause's request, opting to not provide information on whether they had these contested books or not. In a similar request, in November, Texas Governor Greg Abbott wrote a letter attempting to convince the Commissioner of the Texas Education Agency, Mike Morath, to investigate public schools for "pornographic books and content in Texas public schools." And in early February this year, Texas Sen. Ted Cruz stated that "left-wing educators" are "putting explicit pornography in front of kids."

"We should be able to learn about all subjects, whether the government thinks they are appropriate or not," senior Sadie McDonald said. "Children should have access to books about racism, sexuality, violence, and sex because we deserve to be educated on these topics to help ourselves and create our identities, as well as to stay informed about the world. All children deserve to be represented in school libraries."

Most recently within the past four months, Leander ISD, Katy ISD, North East ISD, Granbury ISD, and many others in Texas have had some sort of reading material removed from their schools. Other districts, like Round Rock ISD and Fredericksburg ISD, have ongoing attempts to ban books, but nothing successful yet. One of these commonly challenged books, "Out of Darkness," was targeted for its sexually explicit content and themes of racism.

"I read [Out of Darkness] at the beginning of

the year," Walker-Leon said. "Everyone in Lake Travis ISD was kind of freaking out about that book, and then made national news. I was like, 'What?' So I read it. I don't understand why it was even challenged. It was about an African-American man dating a Mexican-American girl. I don't understand why it was challenged."

"Out of Darkness" author Ashley Hope Pérez describes the whole situation as her "nightmare." After her book got into news cycles across the country, Pérez received massive amounts of online threats and harassment.

"Rather than focus on what their kids are actually reading, these parents often take their lead from social media pages and conservative organizations that list which books to target and provide talking points, as well as screenshots of school library catalogs," Pérez wrote in a commentary for Texas Monthly. "Parents' outrage may be genuine, but their actions create an even more hostile environment for already marginalized kids."

While conservative efforts to ban books have had some success, there is plenty of push-back against these decisions. Walker-Leon has participated in the #FReadom Fighters movement on social media, which aims to speak out on censorship. In other parts of Texas, students and community members are speaking up as well. In Katy, students distributed challenged books to their student body.

"As students, we must take ownership of our education and not let others decide for us which resources we can access and which topics we can learn about," Katy ISD senior at Seven Lakes High School Cameron Samuels said in an interview with the Texas Tribune. [READ MORE](#) "Censorship" pg. 9

BETWEEN THE WORLD AND ME By: Ta-Nehisi Coates

Included in Rep. Matt Krause's list of 850 books he wants banned from schools.

LAWN BOY By: Jonathan Evison Banned for "explicit content" by Leander ISD

DRAMA By: Raina Telgemeier Challenged by Spring Branch ISD parent for having gay and bisexual characters.

THE 1619 PROJECT Created by: Nikole Hannah-Jones

Greg Abbott's law banning the teaching of Critical Race Theory also bans the teaching of this book in schools.

ME AND EARL AND THE DYING GIRL By: Jesse Andrews

Banned from Katy ISD libraries for "obscene language."

FLAMER By: Mike Curato

Removed from library shelves in Keller ISD for having a gay main character who comes to terms with his sexuality.

THE HANDMAID'S TALE By: Margaret Atwood

Included in Rep. Matt Krause's list of 850 books he wants banned from schools.

STAMPED: RACISM, ANTIRACISM, AND YOU

By: Ibram X. Kendi and Jason Reynolds

Challenged by a Katy ISD parent who claims it "is littered with completely fabricated and conspiracy theory views on history" and portrays "all historical events of the past were a result of racism."

OUT OF DARKNESS By: Ashley Hope Pérez

Pulled from Lake Travis ISD shelves for containing sexual material. Keller ISD allows the book only for high schoolers with parental consent.

...and limiting curriculum

CONTINUED from pg. 8
Censorship efforts in American schools aren't new. Besides the removal of books, curriculum censorship has been a contentious topic in schools as well. Ever since the debate surrounding the teaching evolution in public schools with the Scopes Trial in 1925, there have been numerous disputes concerning what teachers are allowed to teach. More recently, the concept of teaching Critical Race Theory (CRT) has been brought up in both state and national policy.

"I'm a former social studies teacher, I have never heard of anyone teaching Critical Race Theory," Walker-Leon said. "All of a sudden, everyone believes that just because some news station said it. So that was like a launching pad to go into further attacks. From there, they launched into attacking libraries, schools, and showing up at school board meetings."

CRT is a concept that treats race as a social construct. It asserts that racism is systemic and that American institutions uphold unjust hierarchies between white and non-white populations. Recently, many conservative politicians have claimed that schools are teaching CRT to their students. Sen. Ted Cruz stated in an interview with Fox News that CRT is "all poison and it's being poured into the minds of our kids."

"I really don't believe schools teach Critical Race Theory, and the only ones ever bringing up the subject are lawmakers that are more focused on re-election than what kids are learning," Locke said.

Conservative politicians' opinions regarding CRT have been shown to reflect their target voter base. The Pew Research Center found that 49% of politically left-leaning respondents say "increased public attention to the history of slavery

and racism in America" is "very good" for society. This number was only 8% for politically right-leaning respondents.

"I continue as I have, which is, if I teach history, there are things in history that are uncomfortable that we have to address," ethnic studies and history teacher Carlen Floyd said. "If I teach ethnic studies and we're talking about oppressed populations throughout U.S. history and today, I am going to have the conversations that are required to actually consider those things. Other than making my students aware of what the conversations are at the state and national level, we continue to have conversations that are relevant to our studies."

In June of last year, Governor Greg Abbott signed House Bill 3979, which states schools can't teach that involves "race or sex stereotyping." This law bans schools from discussing controversial topics surrounding race, and targets books like the 1619 Project, a collection of essays that analyzes the way slavery impacts the U.S. today. Besides just teachers, many students have reported that censorship negatively impacts their education as well.

"Censorship affects my role as a student because when items are censored, I am unable to gain a well-rounded perspective of a subject, which makes me feel ignorant and uneducated," McDonald said.

Other, more recent bills aim to censor education as well. In Florida, Gov. Ron DeSantis signed the "Don't Say Gay" bill into law. This measure bans teachers discussing LGBTQ+ issues to their students through the third grade. Since then, many other states have tried to introduce their own version of the law, with Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick claiming he is attempting to create legislation similar to Florida's.

"I don't think teachers should be worrying about what they can and cannot teach," Walker-Leon said. "I've been with the district for 17 years and I have seen maybe only a handful of people make inappropriate decisions. I think it kind of goes back to trust trusting teachers and educators to make good decisions. Right now, they're not being trusted very much."

While signing the "Don't Say Gay Bill," DeSantis stated that "we will make sure that parents can send their kids to school to get an education, not an indoctrination." Many conservative opponents of LGBTQ+ and CRT education claim that exposure to these concepts as children will indoctrinate them to hold similar values when they're older. "Some folks think that this is about trying to make people believe things," Floyd said. "Exposure to ideas is not the same thing as making someone believe something or indoctrination. It is the free flow of ideas, understanding, and consideration of the world."

There have been many local efforts to protect an uncensored education. AISD continued to celebrate Pride Week in all schools in late March. Superintendent Stephanie Elizalde claims CRT is not being taught in AISD schools. On a national level Floyd argues there are things everyone, especially young people, can do to make change as well.

"I think if there's anything to take away from all of the happenings is that if you feel strongly either way, regardless of your position, elections matter," Floyd said. "Voting matters. We know, historically, that young voters 18 to 25 had the lowest voter turnout. So when I hear my students complain about things, I go, 'Okay, so you're gonna vote.' Whoever votes the most will see the most policy responses." ■



ATHLETES
ASSERT
March Madness
Tournament comes
to an end



March Madness. The greatest tournament in sports filled with upsets, madness, and happiness. However, while March Madness is filled with craziness it's also filled with disappointment.

The biggest disappointment and biggest surprise go hand and hand this year as two seed Kentucky lost in the first round to 15th seeded St. Peter's. Another disappointment was the Tennessee Volunteers, who after coming in with an SEC tournament championship under their belt lost in the second round to the Michigan Wolverines, a team which many believed shouldn't even have made the tournament.

Other disappointments that were less significant were those of Iowa, Connecticut, and Baylor. These were all lost in the first weekend, despite being picked as Sweet-16 teams by experts.

The second biggest disappointment was Gonzaga, as they came into the tournament as the overall number one team in the country and struggled in every game they played. Played closed by 16-seeded Georgia State, eight seeded Memphis, Gonzaga was finally defeated by four seeded Arkansas, as the Razorbacks dethroned the Bulldogs and made their second elite eight in a row.

The most surprising team has to be St. Peter's as they were the first 15-seed to make an elite eight ever. What makes it more remarkable is the size of the school which has less enrollment than Bowie (St. Peter's: 2,355 Bowie: 2,875). Additionally, the Peacocks spent twelve times less money than Kentucky on basketball showing really how monumental this upset was.

Another notable upset was North Carolina. Coming in as an eight seed, many had them losing to Baylor in the second round. However, the Tar Heels defied expectations, going to the National championship, but ultimately losing to Kansas by three points, as point guard Caleb Love missed two game tying threes in the last 20 seconds.

Michigan also turned heads. Coming in at 17-14 many thought they shouldn't have made the tournament. Those who said this have ultimately ate their words as Michigan overcame a halftime deficit of seven to take down the Colorado State Rams in the first round and overcame a five point halftime deficit against Tennessee, making their fifth straight Sweet-16 appearance. This charge was led by star center, sophomore Hunter Dickinson, who was lights out in the tournament along with senior guard Eli Brooks and sophomore forward Terrence Williams II. However the Wolverines fell short as Villanova outlasted them in the Sweet-16.

Ultimately it was Kansas who took the trophy this year. One of the most overlooked one seeds in recent memory, many didn't think Kansas would do it. However, with stellar play by stars Ochai Agbaji, Remy Martin, and David McCormack the Jayhawks powered through and dominated opponents which led to the first championship for Kansas since 2010. Coincidentally, that year's final four was also in New Orleans.

We reflect on this tournament and can say it was outstanding from the upsets and Cinderellas to the pure basketball played by blue blood universities. In conclusion, we can all confidently say that, once again, there was madness in March. ■

Exchange student leaves mark

German native Mara Saprautzki competes for Bowie track and tennis

Ben Tillisch
Sports Editor

Breathing deep, junior sprinter Mara Saprautzki tenses her muscles, awaiting the loud crack that will commence the fierce rush of adrenaline that characterizes the 100-meter dash. A long way from her hometown in Germany, Saprautzki explodes forward as the blank shot rings through the air and echoes off the bleachers.

Pumping her arms and legs desperately, Saprautzki's onlooking teammates offer their support and roar their approval as she swiftly glides along the red synthetic rubber. Crossing the finish line with lungs screaming for oxygen, Saprautzki is swarmed by teammates.

A foreign exchange student from Germany, Saprautzki enrolled at Bowie for the 2021-22 school year as a junior. Saprautzki explains the difference in environment and importance of high school sports at Bowie in comparison to Germany.

"Our schools [in Germany] are more based on education and not that much on sports like it is here in the United States," Saprautzki said. "Bowie is focused so much on sporting events, and they get way more attention here than in Germany. I like that; it makes school more fun."

A multi-sport athlete, Saprautzki has been playing tennis for much of her childhood and readily joined the girls' tennis team at Bowie. Additionally, Saprautzki joined the Bowie girls' track team, a sporting event that is not widely offered in German high schools.

"I was really excited by the prospect of having someone from another country be my

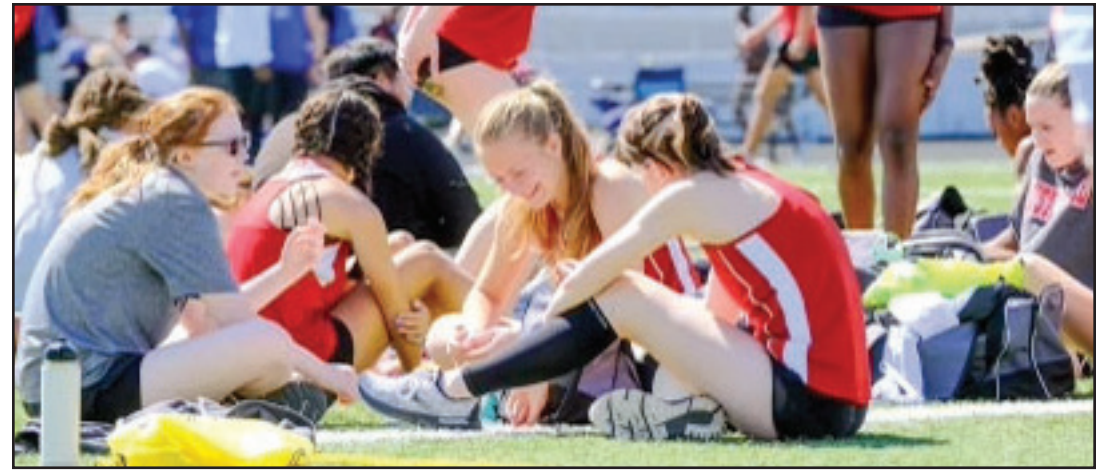
teammate," sophomore Olivia Christodoulides said. "When she first joined track she added another element to the sport and she was really interested in being involved, so I definitely was refreshed by her positive attitude and will to participate."

A German native, Saprautzki has contributed an additional, differing perspective and outlook on school sports to those running on the Bowie track team. Christodoulides describes the effect that Saprautzki has had on her peers.

"The dynamic of the team has changed for the better since Mara has joined," Christodoulides said. "She offered a unique outlook on track because it was her first year running, and she also shared stories from Germany, and the team enjoyed exchanging stories and learning from that."

Departing in the summer of 2022 to return to Germany for her final year of high school, Saprautzki is enduring the second semester as a two-sport athlete, participating in track and tennis simultaneously. The foreign exchange student details the difficulties in balancing both sports, while also maintaining grades and a social life.

"School is not as important for me in America because I am an exchange student and my grades do not transfer," Saprautzki said. "With that said, my organization does not allow me to fail any classes, and I want to do my best, but it still is not as stressful in terms of grades. My tennis and track schedule often conflict though. I used to have four tennis practices a week, but because of track, I only practice with the tennis team once a week, and I am forced to alternate between



CHATTING AT MEET: Junior Mara Saprautzki sits and talks with her track teammates in between her races. Saprautzki runs as a sprinter in several events at each meet. **PHOTOS COURTESY OF Mara Saprautzki**

attending track meets and tennis tournaments."

With limited time at Bowie, Saprautzki looks to capitalize on her time in the United States and wishes to experience as much as possible before leaving in June. In this, she has set short term goals for herself.

"I wish that I was here when volleyball and basketball started their season, because then I

would be able to participate in those seasons," Saprautzki said. "But I just want to get better at sports. And I think I'm getting better at running, which is really good. So, because of this, I'll probably be better at sports when I go back to Germany."

Originating in France, tennis has grown to be a widely played sport throughout Europe, and as a result, Saprautzki has played for much of her childhood. Now playing for the girls' team at Bowie, Saprautzki's tennis teammate, sophomore Ava Sprott, describes the excitement of having the privilege to interact with a foreign exchange student.

"It was really interesting when Mara signed up to be a part of the tennis team, because tennis is a very popular sport in Europe and she has been playing much of her childhood, so I was excited to see her play," Sprott said. "At first, she was really outgoing and intent on learning about others and their experiences as an American. Likewise, much of the team, including myself, were fascinated by the prospect of a foreign exchange student being our teammate, and we all wanted to learn about her."

Sprott furthers this conversation by mentioning the impact playing with Saprautzki has had on her and the rest of the tennis team.

"Having Saprautzki as a teammate and being able to practice and compete alongside somebody that has had the opportunity of experiencing the culture of vastly different countries has been very fun," Sprott said. "The fact that she is from Germany has really brought the team together. People are more willing to interact with one another and share stories. Her presence has made the tennis program much more like a family rather than a team."

Having interacted with many students and developing a more diversified culture in Bowie sports, Saprautzki has renewed student-athletes' interest in their sports.

"Saprautzki's presence has boosted the team's overall attitude towards track, as well as school," Christodoulides said. "When she joined track, the team was obviously very interested in her because she was from a different country, and that energized the team and increased their will to learn and adapt." ■

"Bowie is focused so much on sporting events, and they get way more attention here than in Germany. I like that; it makes school more fun."

— Mara Saprautzki



ART BY Anna Holme and Dylan Eos

Brannon dominates competitive disc golfing

Dimitri Silva
Sports Editor

Growing up, Computer Science teacher Bowman Brannon never would've imagined himself in the spotlight as a professional disc golfer. Now, being watched by sponsorship committees and his friends didn't faze him as he threw the perfect disc into the basket, winning the match.

While playing professional disc golf, Bowman has accomplished new sponsorships, brand deals, designed different courses, and bested his competition a numerous amount of times.

"I think that it's one of those sports where the barrier to entry is very low," Brannon said. "It doesn't cost a lot and most of the courses are free so just buy some plastic and go out. You can even go on a field and throw it at a telephone pole just to get started. It's a great sport for teenagers in particular because you don't have to have a set schedule that you practice on certain days or, three-hour games you have to go to on Friday. There's none of that."

Before he began his disc golf career, Brannon started with baseball, which he played professionally before turning to teaching. Baseball helped him get familiar with throwing which allowed him to be familiar with competition and understand the necessity of building vital relationships with teammates.

"One of the best things about playing disc golf is the culture of the sport," Brannon said. "Most of my good friends play the sport, and having this specific thing we all find in common is real-

ly great, and we are always trying to improve."

Brannon began playing with his friend at local parks, which gave them a chance to get away from their parents and have fun on their own. Then everything changed when he got noticed by the Waterloo Disc Golf Club.

"After I got noticed, I played in some tournaments and in local leagues," Brannon said. "After I won a few of those and picked up my first sponsor with Teaming Wreckit three years ago. Then I also got another sponsor called Black Zombie Disc Golf who pays for my entry for tournaments. I then started making a little money which helps pay for my addiction to the sport. I'm always buying new plastic and a couple of baskets which makes it all the more fun."

Playing disc golf is something Brannon is passionate about, but he is also passionate about teaching computer science.

"He doesn't talk about playing disc golf very much," junior Andrius Velez said. "But when he does I can tell it makes him really happy and he's obviously very passionate about the sport. I never really knew much about disc golf before Mr. Brannon talked about playing it and it's super interesting hearing about it."

With new disc golf courses constantly being created, there is a variety for disc golf players to choose from. Brannon is currently working to help design and create his first disc golf course. In addition to designing courses, he is now hosting tournaments.



FOLLOWING THROUGH: Computer Science teacher Brannon Bowman practices his throw at the park. Bowman has been playing professionally for six years **PHOTO COURTESY OF Bowman Brannon**

"The amount of people getting into disc golf right now is crazy," Brannon said. "Since the sport is growing so fast people are looking for tournaments to join and hosting tournaments gives others the same opportunities I had when I first started playing."

Sponsorship is something that is pushing Brannon to continue pursuing disc golf. With many new sponsorships and other professional athletes he's met

playing, he's climbing the ranks as an excellent player.

"There are a lot of organizations, like the Black Zombie Disc Golf, that are really trying to promote the transition from the high level amateurs to being able to do it and make some money out of it," Brannon said. "It's the camaraderie of getting to play with your friends. It's also the thrill of being able to enjoy the nature force." ■

coming UP in SPORTS

- April 16 NBA Playoffs start
- April 19 Varsity softball vs. San Marcos @Bowie
- April 19 Varsity baseball vs. Hays @Bowie
- April 22 Varsity softball vs. Hays @Hays
- April 26 Varsity baseball vs. Austin @Austin
- April 28 NFL Draft

Emma Solis dominates softball

Senior leads team to many triumphs and wins throughout the season

Kate Davis
Dispatch Reporter

Standing in the pitching circle, Emma Solis winds up her arm to pitch the yellow softball to the opposing school.

Solis, a senior, has been playing softball since she was five, and has been on the Bowie varsity team since her freshman year.

"I started because my parents wanted me to. I had a lot of fun and didn't think anything of playing," Solis said. "Then I realized that I liked to win and so I practiced a lot so I could help contribute to my team winning games."

While competitiveness is a driver for Solis, there is more to the game that inspires her passion.

"My favorite part of being on the team is how much fun we have together," Solis said. "From playing hacky before the game, to getting snow cones from Sno Beach, which is near our home field, to listening to music and getting ready for the game."

Other team members attest to the positive environment of the team, and Solis's contributions to the team atmosphere.

"She brings a fun and energetic attitude in the dugout, and she's overall a lot of fun," sophomore Julianna Dankert said. "She's a great person and deserves to be recognized for her accomplishments."

Alongside the light-hearted nature Solis brings to the team, she has proven to be an asset to the team athletically.

"I think her pitching carries our team when she does really well which helps us because then we win," Dankert said. "We've won a lot of games to zero because of how well she's been pitching."

Achieving as much success in a sport as Solis has, is a

difficult task and Solis is not without her own struggles.

"In order to do well at something and be better than others you have to put in extra time practicing on top of what is normal," Solis said. "And then getting home late and doing homework or waking up early to finish something you didn't get to the night before. And then on top of that finding time to hangout with friends when you barely have time for yourself is hard."

The bustling schedule often calls for sacrifices, of schoolwork, sleepovers or self-care and Solis has a clear preference.

"Softball is very time consuming in the fall. I spend lots of time away on the weekends and late practices far away," Solis said. "It forces me to make a choice between softball and everything else and I pick softball 95% of the time."

Though it improves her athletic skills, this choice comes at a cost, oftentimes being her relationships with others.

"Softball has made it so that I don't get to see my family all the time so I have missed some of my siblings' birthdays," Solis said.

Not only is Solis facing her own issues, the Bowie team has also had their share of challenges this season.

"This season just crept up on us, and we lost a lot of players from last year so our team this year is very young," Solis said. "Learning to play together as a team seems like the greatest challenge so far."

Despite the difficulties Solis has faced, many people in her life have provided their support.

"My family has helped me so much with supporting me and



FOR THE SLAM: Senior Emma Solis practices her swing during softball practice. Softball is currently 15-6 and are 2nd in district. The team faces tough competition as their season comes to a close with a match-up against Hays who they previously lost to. **PHOTO BY** Nick Wood

allowing me to have fun with the sport," Solis said. "Coach Wissel has been amazing at taking the stress and pressure off and making sure that I have fun while I'm playing."

Many athletes who start young begin to drift from their sport, but Solis' passion has continued to persevere.

"Honestly I think the fact that I wasn't good at softball when I was younger, and I thought it was for fun allowed

me to enjoy it while competing at a higher level," Solis said. "That's allowed me to love the game and not get burnt out after playing for over 10 years."

Solis' passion isn't deteriorating anytime soon, her love for the game continuing strong into her post-high school career.

"Next year I'm moving to Florida to play college ball, and once I finish college I will probably be done with softball until

I join some slow pitch league in my 30's," Solis said.

As for the remainder of her senior year at Bowie, the team has goals to make it as far as possible in playoffs, leaving some responsibility on Solis' shoulders.

"There is always pressure to do well, and I think this year I have felt it the most," Solis said. "Each game I want to do better than the last for my team and that can be difficult." ■

Track season recap



GETTING WARM: Junior Tommy Morales practicing long distance running for cross country. **PHOTO BY** Nick Wood

Amilia Velez
Dispatch Reporter

As the Bowie track season comes to a close, the team reflects on a positive and successful season. With several meets, athletes in many different events experienced triumphs.

"I would say this track season has been really great," girls track coach Lora Tilson said. "We have lots of new runners on our team and combined with them and the returning runners, we have had a lot of success."

The Bowie track team has been pushing limits to earn impressive results. Athletes participating in events from hurdles to the 400 are improving as the season progresses.

"The thing that motivates me to do track is the fact that it pushes me to my breaking point more than any other sport," sophomore Miya Kutac said. "I'm constantly pushing myself to my limit to beat my competition and to better my times."

With the season being shorter than previous years, returners are having to adapt to the change and maintain positive attitudes.

"The track season is going well," sophomore Will Gum said. "Friendly competition with my friends motivates me to do my very best." ■

Girls soccer overcomes obstacles in a successful season

Sydney Crum
Dispatch Reporter

The wind whips through her hair as she stands, ready to catch any soccer balls coming her way. The cheers of encouragement from her teammates give her a sense of confidence as she gets prepared to make the shot. Just as it looks like the other team's goalie is going to catch the ball, it slips through their fingers and into the goal. The audience erupts in cheers as Bowie scores yet another point.

This past season, Bowie girl's soccer persevered through many challenges including playing during a pandemic. Coach Carrie Hoffman-Howell explained how although there was a gradual start, the season ended up going very well.

"I felt that we finished the season well after a slow start," Hoffman-Howell said. "We had a lot of new faces on varsity this year so we had a slow start adjusting to the level of varsity. I enjoyed watching this team come together and turn their season around."

Sophomore Olivia Taylor feels that COVID has impacted Bowie soccer especially when it came to the recovery time for players who tested positive for the illness.

"[COVID] did affect us pretty hard," Taylor said. "When players got sick they couldn't play until they were completely cleared with COVID. They also had to spend time training their bodies to be able to play again."

Hoffman-Howell agrees with her



RUNNING DRILLS: Junior Wes Warmink runs a drill during practice. Varsity girls soccer went 7-9 for the season and placed 4th in district, with their season ending after losing their first playoff game. **PHOTO BY** Nick Wood

about the effect that the pandemic had and points out there were fewer

opportunities for players in terms of practicing and improving their skills.

"It has limited the opportunity for athletes to develop. Some strength and conditioning programs or practice opportunities are not as available as they were before COVID," Hoffman-Howell said. "As this year progresses, more things are becoming available again, but early on, a lot of things had to be done at home or on their own instead of with teammates."

Despite these struggles, Taylor feels great about how the season went because of the support from both her teammates and coaches.

"My favorite part about playing soccer at Bowie is that I enjoyed playing with a great team and having great coaches lead us to many victories," Taylor said. "We had a successful season in my opinion. We played our absolute best and didn't let anything hold us down or keep us away from trying to win."

Freshman Peyton Schwartz agrees with her and also feels that the encouragement of her teammates lead to some of the best parts of the game.

"My favorite memory is when someone scores," Schwartz said. "The whole team runs to you and celebrates. I remember when I had a header goal everyone ran up to me and gave high-fives."

Taylor was also able to play as the goalkeeper for the first time this season. Although she says that it started out as being very difficult, she eventually improved through hard work and determination.

"One thing that I learned after playing this season is to never give up. I started this season pretty rough in

my first tournament of the season," Taylor said. "But when the next game came, I didn't let any balls go through my legs and I didn't let anyone score on me. That's when I knew I couldn't give up."

Schwartz describes what a typical game for the freshman soccer team is like, and how the team working together has led to many successes for Bowie.

"A typical soccer game is fun, we work well together since we're all club players," Schwartz said. "Usually Bowie keeps possession for the majority of the game, and we tend to score goals very quickly."

One game in particular that stood out to Taylor was the first game Bowie played against Westlake. She shares the excitement and pride she feels for how the team played that day.

"One of my favorite memories this season would be when we played against Westlake for the first time this season. It was my first time playing goalkeeper," Taylor said. "In general, it was one of the best games I played in the season and one of my favorite memories with my team."

At the end of the day, Hoffman-Howell hopes that the soccer players come away with good experiences and feel proud of themselves for their hard work.

"I hope they are able to walk away from this season with their heads held high because they really did a great job this year," Hoffman-Howell said. "I hope they remember the good times, the friends made, and their love for Bowie soccer." ■



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Planning for the perfect prom night

Students plan and prepare for a night of dancing and fun using different methods

Nicole Rooney
Entertainment Editor

For many seniors, prom is an event that is very exciting. All students prepare for this day for different amounts of time; some take a while and some take shorter amounts of time.

Walking through aisles with dresses on every side, junior Cressida Rodriguez looked hard to find the perfect dress, hopeful of no troubles.

"Picking the dress was my first step, and it was a very smooth process for me," Rodriguez said. "I found the perfect dress that had absolutely everything I wanted and with a bonus of no problems. It was honestly a surprise I even bought my dress from there because I was out one night with my mom and we stopped by the store just to look and ended up buying the perfect dress there the next day. I knew my dress was for me because as soon as I tried it on it fit perfectly and needed no altering and it is also the perfect color."

Everyone has a different experience with dress shopping. Some people have an easier time and some have a harder time.

"Shopping takes forever and finding the dress makes everything else fall behind easily," senior Kylee Dinwiddie said. "Once you have that, you can base everything else off it and go ahead with the smaller things. I'm excited to see everyone so dressed

up and seeing everyone's beautiful dresses."

At Bowie, prom is only for seniors, unless an underclassman or non-Bowie student is invited by a senior as a date. This means that finding the perfect dress is essential for prom because it is a once in a lifetime event for many students.

"I think that prom is a really special occasion, so I'd want to make sure everything goes according to plan," senior Emma Dinwiddie said. "It's something that only happens once in your life, like a minor version of a wedding."

It is also important to make that everything need to make a successful prom is covered when it comes to getting ready for prom such as making sure manicures, hair-dos and skin care are done.

"As a girl you have to think about your entire appearance," Rodriguez said. "It starts with the new fresh nails and some people even go the extra mile to get their hair done. For me the only thing I have left is to get my nails done which should be very exciting. The hard part is planning the nail appointment on time for your nails not to start growing out."

Since prom is such a big occasion for many, students plan on pampering themselves before the event and having a full day of fun on the day of prom.

"I'll probably do my nails and a facial the night before at Face to Face Spa, and Golden Nails, while I get my hair and makeup done a few hours before," Emma said. "I will be getting my nails done, a facial, and having a personal stylist help me with my hair and makeup."

Since prom needs a lot of planning, students make sure that not just outfits, but all other accessories and preparation are good quality and reliable.

"I always go to T&S nails to get my nails and eyebrows done," Rodriguez said. "I go to T&S because they are not overpriced and are very friendly. To get my hair done I go to Urban Betty because they are one of the best hair salons in Austin. I also got my dress at the Barton Creek mall at the fairly new dress shop: Camille La Vie. I love how they are both the best quality and also are very friendly to their customers."

Once the bases are covered when it comes to getting ready, finding a group is also essential to having a fun prom night.

"I'm going with my boyfriend, so that was an easy one for me," Kylee said. "But it's important to get a group. That's what makes prom fun. I



PICKING THE PERFECT ONE: Senior Kira Sanders looks through many seeming endless aisles and racks of dresses to find an interesting dress. There are many different options when it comes to deciding on a dress such as fit, style, cut, color, material and many more factors. **PHOTO BY** Nicole Rooney



TRYING ON DRESSES: Senior Kira Sanders tried on multiple dresses to find the right one. This was just one of many that she tried on, to make sure that the look and fit of the dress was perfect. **PHOTO BY** Nicole Rooney

know if I didn't have a group together I'd probably just not go because I wouldn't want to just go alone. We've gotten together as a really fun group to go with. I'm really excited to be able to be with them. My boyfriend is also in college, so him coming to town for this means a lot to me and I'm grateful to have the time with him. It'll be a great memory."

Although there is so much to do when it comes to the preparation of prom for students, there is a lot of physical preparation necessary for a fun and successful prom night.

"Mrs. Uzzle and I are Class of '22 sponsors, so we have been trying to raise money for prom since their freshman year. We have already booked an amazing venue as well as the DJ and photo booths already. Now, we are planning the final details and decorations," psychology teacher Kris Gandinetti-Johnson said. "I would say booking the venue and DJ were the two most important parts of planning.

Everything else revolves around that."

After pictures and other fun activities, once students get to prom venue that's when all of their hard work and preparation gets to be shown off.

"These steps are important because at Bowie you only get one prom as a senior, so it's important to make it the best night ever," Rodriguez said. "I am so excited to go out with my friends and spend time with everyone. Getting food before prom is something I am looking forward to."

With all of the important preparation that goes into prom, there are certain things that take priority when setting up, and although setting up can be stressful, there are many positive outcomes.

"I think the most important thing in planning prom is getting a location," US History teacher Wendy Uzzle said. "The venue is the most expensive part of the events and will drive a lot of decisions such as food, theme, and other costs. When things

get stressful, I remind myself that our seniors haven't gotten many of the high school experiences that other classes have gotten. This event should be the exclamation point on a high school career that has been fraught with challenges. This should be a huge celebration for our senior class."

Traditional Bowie dances were altered or completely canceled in the past two years due to COVID. This has caused greater anticipation for this year's prom from students and staff such as Grandinetti-Johnson.

"I love seeing the different dresses, tuxes, and outfits, - it can be such a fun way to express your personal style" Grandinetti-Johnson said. "Prom can be a tremendous amount of fun if you don't let yourself get too serious or stressed out about it. It's a time to have fun dressing up and celebrating with your friends. Having missed out on some things because of Covid, we are extra excited to have a big celebration for our seniors this year." ■

Bowie band gives back through different organizations

Dylan Zellner
News Editor

Lacking the confidence, know-how, and resources to gain literacy skills, youth all around central Texas struggle to learn how to read. Book Spring is a non-profit serving the community to help combat this issue, and the Bowie Band is there to help.

Bowie Band Gives Back is a non-profit event sponsoring local charities from all across Austin helping those in need, such as Book Spring, Austin Humane Society, Carrying Hope, and more. Senior Leah Gonsalves, a member of Bowie's stu-

dent council and the Vice President of Community Outreach, had the ambition to come up with this charitable idea as well as take charge of it.

"I wanted to do something for the community, so inviting non-profits and helping them get their mission to high school students will be really beneficial to the community," Gonsalves said. "We need to give back to the community. We are the center of South Austin and one of the biggest schools in the district, so it's now time to give back."

While the event was originally supposed to take place on Martin Luther King Jr. Day it had to be rescheduled to District of Innovation Day

due to illness, weather, and scheduling issues. Although the change may have seemed bleak at the time, some would say it was a blessing in disguise.

"We all talked about how to do it at a time which is better for the community and it was decided that this was a really good day because since it is District of Innovation day it would link in terms of the cultural competencies that we're trying to teach during this time," Director of Bands Garth Gunderson said.

Following the schedule change, the event also adopted new activists to honor; Dolores Huevas and Cesar Chavez.

"It is the day of service and honoring what those two remarkable figures have done for the Mexican American community. We're honoring them by giving back to the communities in need," Gonsalves said.

Although a large number of non-profits were able to be in attendance, the event couldn't take place without student volunteers. Senior Band President Cadence Brauzon shared her thoughts about attendees before the event took place.

"I thought it would be a lot easier [to get volunteers] but a lot of people don't want to go to Bowie on a Friday that we have off in the morning. So it was harder than I thought it would be," Brauzon said.

With Gonsalves and Brauzon sharing similar unease, Gonsalves shared her thoughts after the event took place.

"Everything was covered. [We thought] it was nice how they were willing to give up their Friday to come out here," Gonsalves said. "We were worried because we realized not many students would want to come out on a Friday on their day off. Apparently we were wrong because a lot of people showed up."

With the main purpose of the event existing to support local non-profits, people were asked to optionally sign-up to bring donations to help those in need. Because of this event, every donation slot for the event's goal was filled with enough books and supplies to carry that the use of carts became necessary.

"It was a good event and I hope they can do it again in the future. We got so many [donations] that we needed to get so much manpower just to carry them," Gonsalves said.



SHOW TIME: Different organizations at Bowie were here dropping off items and holding booths to raise awareness and help volunteer such as, Silver Stars, Lacrosse, Pals, and Star Dancers. Along with volunteering groups and opportunities, the Bowie band put on an entertaining show featuring many different instruments. **PHOTO BY** Nick Wood



HELPING HANDS: As the tents were set up with different organizations underneath each one, each non-profit had a different activity to offer. Activities ranged from button making, visiting with puppies, making bracelets and many different things for all different age groups. **PHOTO BY** Nick Wood

coming UP in ENTERTAINMENT



Apr. 9-10 Theatre Spring Show
Apr. 23 Bowie Prom

Apr. 28-30 Silver Star Spring Show
May. 13 Olivia Rodrigo ATX Concert

May. 15 Billboard Music Awards
May. 20 Harry Styles Album Release



Austin Adventures with Angela

Angela visits sustainable Austin activities to honor Earth Day



Earth day is coming up on April 22 and there are optimal ways to show your love for mother nature. These are some ideas to enjoy simple pleasures while also helping to preserve our city's environment.

You can start off by exploring Austin's most renowned green spaces. The most notable one being Zilker metropolitan park and the Barton Creek Greenbelt, which offer a place where you can spread out your picnic blanket, hang a hammock, play football, Frisbee, or even sand volleyball.

Afterwards, you can cool off at the iconic Barton springs pool located in the grounds of Zilker park. They're open everyday from 5 a.m.-10 p.m., but keep in mind from 5 a.m. to 7 a.m. it's swim at your own risk. Fees to swim at Barton Springs range from \$2-6 depending on your age but since COVID, they have changed.

You can also participate in sustainable activities at Austin's Earth Day festival held annually at the Huston-Tillotson University campus to learn about conservation solutions to benefit our community's environment. This event takes place on April 23 from 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. where it's free and open to the public. Thousands of people come each year to get connected with our local green businesses and learn how to make sustainable choices that benefit our community.

At the Earth Day ATX festival, a venue is provided for businesses, advocacy groups, nonprofits, and community leaders to connect with the public about the interest of sustainability, innovation, and environmental justice. They have engaging exhibitions, workshop tents, that allow you to discover exciting new activities and get you more connected with the environment and its issues.

Aside from the informative workshop tents they also have a stage where they feature local bands, an interactive cafe, guided physical activities like yoga, and a kids zone. To find more information on their hours, map, and event you can go to their website at www.earthdayaustin.com. This is an event you won't want to miss out on.

Just right down the road on La Crosse Ave is the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower center, which is a botanical garden located in Austin. Their main ambition is to conserve our local native plants in a manner that also appreciates them and allows their beauty to be recognized. By taking the trails they have to offer you can see such beauty in the plants and the environment. The architecture they have built around it amplifies the surrounding nature, such as Lynda's library which provides a peaceful shaded place and a lending library of children's books.

Other than the pleasures they already provide, they also host events that are limited to the season. Currently, they're hosting a spring native plant sale that takes place until May 8. Apart from appreciating nature on their trails, they also have a cafe with indoor and outdoor dining areas surrounded by flowers. Although they have a limited menu option of sandwiches, salads, soups, drinks, snacks, and sweets, they're at reasonable prices and also fairly healthy. To furthermore enjoy your experience you can visit their gift shop. You can find more volunteering opportunities and hours on their website at www.wildflower.org.



TURNING IN THE WIND: The iconic windmill at the Wildflower Center stands tall. The Center features over 900 native plant species. **PHOTO BY** Angela Le

WORDLE WOWS STUDENTS

The trending word game inspires spin-off editions to challenge players

Sophia Sanchez
Dispatch Reporter

In October 2021, Wordle was born. Wordle is an online word guessing game that has gained immense popularity since its release to the public. Wordle is a simple game, there are six blank sections for one five letter word.

When you type in a word the game will highlight letters yellow that are in the word but wrong place, and green if the letter is in the right place. Everyday

there is a new word to guess, and spin-offs to play when you are waiting.

The new web-based game has captivated people across the globe and continues to offer people of all ages a fun pastime.

The original Wordle is still my favorite even among all of the spin-offs. My friend introduced the spelling game to me during class and at first I was skeptical. I have never been a good speller so the idea of the game was unappealing to me.

The first few times playing I would lose over and over again. I suddenly had a drive to win the game.

For the next month the highlight of my day was figuring out the new word of the day. It was like a fun-brain workout, and when I got the word on my second of third try I feel like my day is suddenly on the right track.

Wordle is a great way to start the day and it widens a person's vocabulary. I really enjoy this game because it does not target a certain audience, it's open to all.

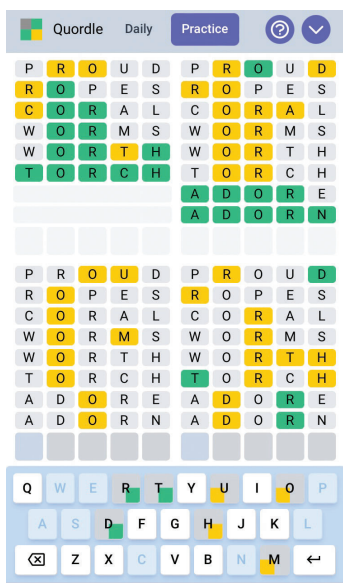
QUORDDLE

Although most of the spin-off Wordle games are gratifying, Quordle is not.

Quordle has four Wordle boxes that all share the same keyboard. In simple terms, all of the boxes have different words and different letters but you have to use the same words to figure the separate words out.

Guessing four different words at the same time is already hard enough. There is so much going on in the game it is almost impossible to play. Users only get nine chances to guess the four words, creating a very difficult puzzle that seems impossible to solve. To add on to that, since all of the boxes share the same keyboard you can't really concentrate on just one section at a time.

The most I have gotten in the month I have been playing is one word.



When playing Quordle I would recommend to focus on two sections at a time. Since the goal of the game is to guess four words, focusing on two at a time will enhance your chances of guessing the others.

It also helps to reduce the amount of tries you guess the words in. I feel like the game would be more enjoyable and less difficult if all of the words had the same letters. Sure a good challenge is fun once in a while, but when it's near impossible to complete the task it's not worth it.

Quordle is intensely challenging so if you're looking for a relaxing start to your day I do not recommend it. Overall I would give Quordle a two out of five for these reasons.



ABSURDLE

Absurdle lives up to its name. The game is very similar to the original Wordle in which there is a five letter word up for guessing. However, Absurdle offers an unlimited amount of guesses.

When I first played Absurdle I got the word on my fourth guess. I thought that it wasn't that much different to the original at all, until I gave it another go.

Absurdle really does make your brain think. I think that the game tries to use words that a person would not usually use in day to day conversation and that is why the game is more difficult. The use of double letters is also common in the game. I think that this strategy is also very clever. I can't name the number of times I have had a word like "fluffy" and lose my mind over it.

It's good not to overthink the word. Absurdle will also include words that are really simple like "story," and overthinking is what the game wants you

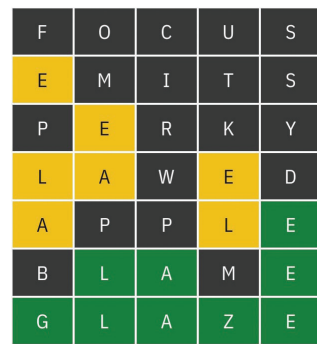
to do. Absurdle is also fun to play against with friends. Sometimes my friends and I will have small competitions to see who can get their word first. Since both words are equally as absurd it is a fair game and really amusing when you win.

Absurdle also has an option to "give up," so there is no win and lose. I think this option is very considerate to the player and makes the game more enjoyable. Unlike other Wordle spin offs, Absurdle has unlimited guesses and the "give up" button makes the game less

stressful. Overall, I think that Absurdle is a really game to play when I don't really have the intention of winning and is definitely in my top three favorite Wordle spin offs.

Absurdle is challenging but not to an extent that it frustrates the player. I believe this one deserves four out of five.

ABSURDLE by [qntm](https://www.absurdle.com/)



GLOBLE

Globe is like a big test to your geographical knowledge.

The design of this spin-off is really cool. To play the game you start by clicking the 3D globe on the center of the screen.

Each time you type a country in the game colors the countries warmer and warmer colors until a country is red. Red means that you hit the desired country.

My geography skills are a bit rusty but playing this game has been a lot of fun. There are unlimited guesses and Google is a big help. Personally I have learned a bunch of new countries through this than I can remember learning about in class.

However, the game is tricky at times. If you are a weak speller then I don't think this game is exactly for you. All Wordle games do require exact spelling, but since Wordle contains countries you

are not spelling out simple five letter words. Some countries have more than one word and others have complicated spellings.

Whenever I play Goble I always have a map open in another tab, which is technically cheating. However, this is super helpful for people whose

strong suit is not geography. Goble has made geography somewhat enjoyable and introduces different parts of the world through the game. I think this game is a great pastime because it is not on a timer like many other Wordle spin-offs and teaches you more about geography without you knowing.

Goble's design is definitely my favorite out of all the Wordle spin-offs. I would rate this a three out of five.



WEDDLE

Weddle is named after former American football safety, Eric Weddle. In this new version of Wordle the motive is to guess NFL players.

This new version of Wordle was just recently released to the public and is super interesting.

The game's page design is very different from any other Wordle game. There is a selection tool in the center of the screen. When you click on it there are NFL players' names and their information. When you select the name it provides the players team, division, height, age, and number. When a player you have selected has something similar to the chosen player that aspect is turned green. There are eight chances for you to guess the right NFL player.

I know little to nothing about NFL players' heights and information like that, so playing this

game was hard for me. The game's instructions were very vague, so I was just clicking random names until my chances ran out.

Nonetheless, Weddle is really engaging because of all the information about the players. You really have to know your NFL players and memorize little details about their outward appearance in order to play. The game also renews a player every three hours which is a lot faster than other Wordle games. I think that Weddle is perfect for people who are really interested in all NFL players.

Weddle has crossed a border compared to other spin-offs, as it requires an abundance of other information, which makes it a great addition to the Wordle family. I'd rate this game a four out of five.

Team	Div	Pos	Ht	Age	#	
Patrick Mahomes	KC	AFC WEST	QB	6'3"	26	15
Joe Mixon	CIN	AFC NORTH	RB	6'1"	25	28
Tee Higgins	CIN	AFC NORTH	WR	6'4"	23	85
Tyler Boyd	CIN	AFC NORTH	WR	6'2"	27	83



Local lunch places allow seniors to explore

Donna Kim
Dispatch Reporter

The bell that signifies that second lunch is about to start rings, and you get up to walk to your car. You only have 45 minutes to eat lunch, and start thinking about where you will drive today to get food. There are many options that are near Bowie, so where will you choose?

I think that the students of Bowie are extremely lucky because of where Bowie is located. Drive a little down Slaughter Lane, and you can turn onto Brodie Lane, where a variety of fast places and stores are located.

One spot that many students go to for lunch that is also convenient is Bush's Chicken. Located on Brodie Lane (9815 Brodie Ln), Bush's Chicken primarily focuses on chicken, but their menu consists of many meals with a variety of drinks, sides, and proportions.

They are most famous for their amazing sweet tea, which comes in large sizes for a good price, and their chicken is also amazing. Bush's Chicken is an ideal place to go to when craving something simple but still tasteful during lunch.

Another place that I highly recommend to go to during lunch that is on

Brodie is Sonic (9916 Brodie Ln.). Sonic has a variety of foods you can choose from, all for low prices.

The service and parking is quick and extremely convenient, and although their food isn't the healthiest, the food is cheap and is still tasteful.

I would recommend ordering mozzarella sticks and I also love their slushies or blasts if you need a sweet treat with your meal. Sonic also has tater tots that are amazing to order on the side of your main meal.

Another popular drive through option is Whataburger, located on West Slaughter Lane. The service is usually quick, and speaks for itself as it is one Texas's most popular fast food places. Right next to Whataburger is Starbucks, which is just a typical Starbucks that usually has a quick service.

Both Whataburger and Starbucks have drive-thru options, which is an extremely convenient way to get food off-campus in the amount of time that lunch is. Starbucks has breakfast sandwiches that make for a filling lunch.

Sometimes, you just want to grab a quick, portable snack during lunch. Some great stores near Bowie are Randall's, HEB, and Valero. Randall's can be compared to HEB, just with a

different name. At HEB you can find virtually anything for lunch including salads, sandwiches, pizza, microwavable meals, fresh fruit and much more.

My favorite quick thing to pick up for lunch at HEB is their sushi. It's all made in the store and is amazing. Personally, I always choose San Antonio rolls with the Imitation crab, but I also love getting the California rolls. The Vegetarian rolls are also another runner up.

The Valero is a regular gas station with a variety of snack options, perfect to carry around in your backpack. Another store that is closest to Bowie is CVS, which can also be reached by walking. CVS has basic drug store products, along with a large section of snacks and drinks.

Lunch is an important meal, as it gives you the energy you need for the rest of the day. It is especially important to students, since we spend half our day at school. Always remember to eat something during lunch, and go out whenever you need a break from being at school.



GRABBING A QUICK LUNCH: Seniors April Ilkard and Zach Kehler return to Bowie with Chick-fil-A in hand. The nearest Chick-fil-A is only 3.8 miles away from Bowie. **PHOTO BY** Austin Ilkard

Texas government stirs up controversy

Attorney General erases LGBTQ+ progress with homophobic claim against Austin ISD

EDITORIAL

John Smith sits in his room after completing a Pride Week lesson about accepting all students regardless of who they are. He has contemplated coming out for a couple of months now but is hesitant because he is worried about what others might think. His Austin Independent School District (AISD) high school has promoted the idea of accepting yourself and others regardless of their preference, but after reading the backlash that pride week has received from parents and government officials, Smith now questions how people will see him once he expresses his true self.

Due to a recent letter sent by Attorney General Ken Paxton, AISD has been under heavy fire for their pride week celebrations. In the letter, Paxton says Austin ISD has broken the law. Paxton said the district must obtain parental permission before any student receives instruction on sex education.

Paxton claimed that pride week is teaching young students about sex education before they are ready, and therefore the celebratory week should be eliminated from AISD. He further stated that liberal school districts are aggressively pushing LGBTQ+ views on Texas kids and proceeded to call the designated week as immoral and illegal.

We stand with AISD in promoting Pride Week. We believe its intentions are to celebrate LGBTQ+ students and make them feel more comfortable in their school environment, while also educating students more on their LGBTQ+ peers.

Pride Week is there to celebrate the acceptance of all students, regardless of their personal identity. Throughout the year, we celebrate Black History Month, Women's History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, and more where we educate students on diversity and acceptance.

How is Pride Week any different? It aims to celebrate LGBTQ+ individuals and educate others on their importance and their struggles.

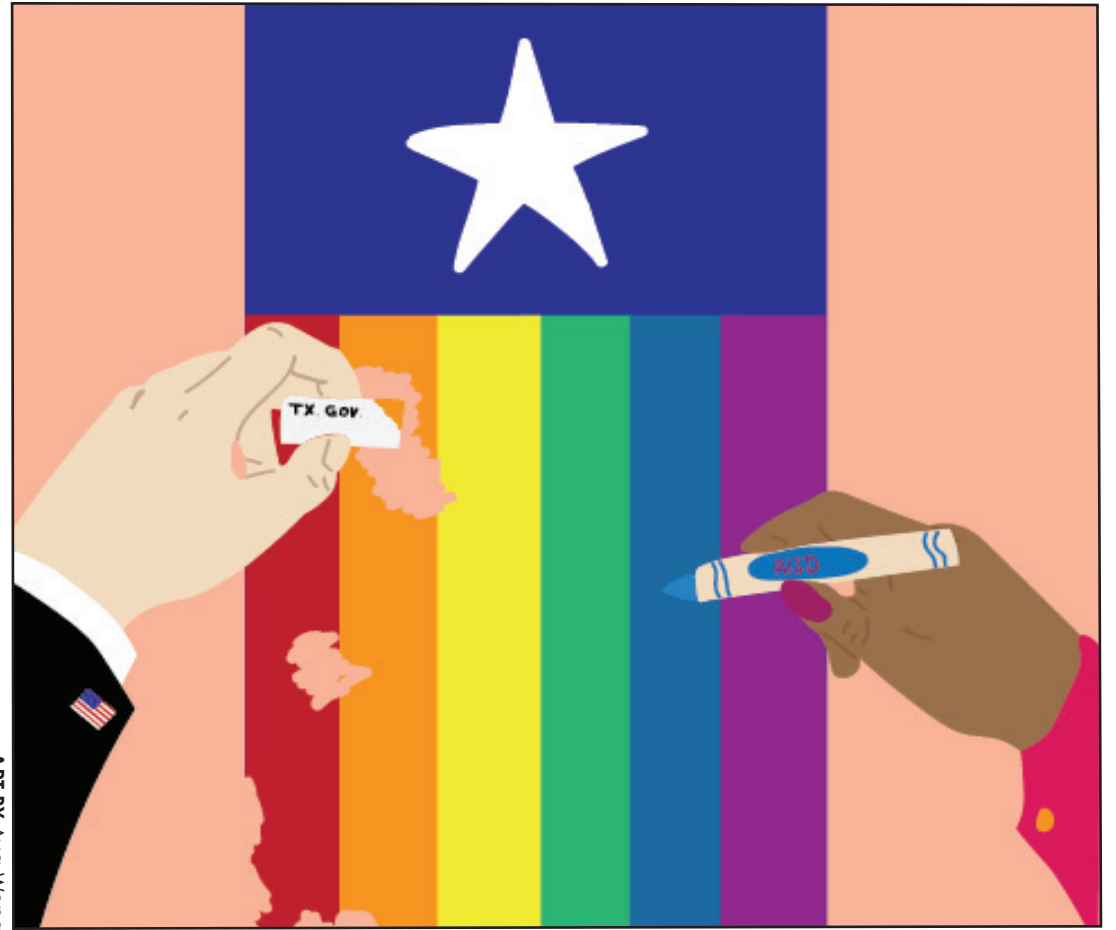
On Twitter, AISD Pride Week posts received harsh retaliation from parents, mostly elementary school parents, claiming that teachers were teaching sex education at a young age. We disagree, and believe that Pride Week wasn't about sex education but rather educating students on LGBTQ+ awareness and acceptance of those peers.

According to GLSEN's 2019 School Climate Survey, almost all LGBTQ+ students, an astonishing 98.8%, have heard "gay" used in a negative context at school. For example, saying "that's so gay" in a derogatory way. Moreover, 91.8% reported that they felt distressed because of this language. We believe, as students and peers, that Paxton calling out the celebration and reprimanding Pride Week will only lead to more insecurity and feelings of shame regarding gender and sexual identity, which will only lead to destroying progress in creating a safe space for LGBTQ+ students and their comfort with coming out.

Bowie's Pride Week consisted of many events celebrating LGBTQ+ students and staff. Beginning with an open microphone poetry slam, students were given the chance to share what pride means to them on a stage in front of others. In addition, different colors were worn throughout the week to celebrate different aspects of pride, FIT sessions were held to celebrate pride, and at the end of the week, the staff took a rainbow-colored photo to celebrate Pride Week.

Nowhere in those celebrations was sex education taught, as sex education is not taught in Texas schools unless it's preaching abstinence as the only option to follow, as the Texas Board of Education rejected sex education textbooks and teaching for middle schoolers as of November 2021.

We acknowledge the parental concerns with



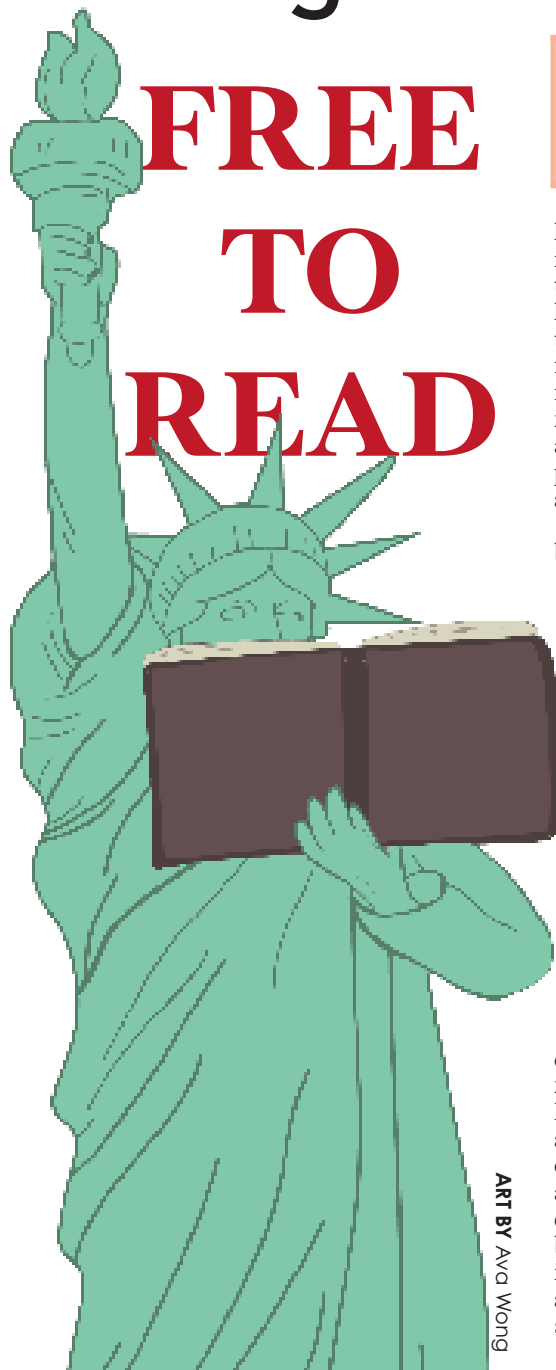
ART BY AVA WONG

teaching sex education early, as Texas does have restrictions on it. Regardless of your stance on LGBTQ+ sex education, or sex education in general, it is an undeniable fact that AISD Pride Week celebrations did not teach any form of sex education. The purpose of the celebration was to promote love and respect for all LGBTQ+ students and staff, creating a safe environment

for them to feel welcomed.

We dismiss Paxton's claims against AISD Pride Week, and stands with the activities of the week to celebrate LGBTQ+ students in order to educate everyone on their importance and their hardships, gaining empathy and respect for these peers. Every student deserves to feel safe and welcomed at their school. ■

Banning books is an unjust act against student liberty



ART BY AVA WONG

Ava Wong
Commentary Editor
Questions? Concerns? Email: bowie.journalism@gmail.com

Though we've just entered 2022, I can't help but feel we are moving back in time. The recent surge in political and social discord with the pandemic and movements such as BLM has fueled the excessive movement of banning time-honoring, fundamentally important books from the reach of children. These bans range from classics such as *The Great Gatsby* to the removal of the Holocaust graphic novel *Maus* from a Tennessee school district's curriculum. These pressures to control the materials children can access come from mostly conservative crowds.

I'm not an avid reader. Sure, I'll pick up a book every once in a while but I don't love reading. The few books I have read though, have been life changing. One book in particular is *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan. I've lived most of my life being, not embarrassed of, but quite secretive of my Chinese heritage. We were assigned to read *The Joy Luck Club* as summer work for sophomore English. While at first I dreaded the thought of reading during my summer break, the book quickly changed my mind. The book highlighted the relationship between four Chinese immigrant mothers and their daughters, and their struggle with the mix of tradition and American culture, also known as the Asian-American experience.

This summer in particular was the first summer during the pandemic. Because of the attention to my race, which included hate crimes due to the virus' origin, I thought about my identity for the first time in maybe my whole life. The book helped answer the questions I had about who I was, and it helped me shape my own opinions about my identity and the culture around me. Everyone deserves the eye-opening experience I was able to have because of this book. Though, thankfully, *The Joy Luck Club* is not among one of the many books banned, a multitude of similar books that have helped students learn and grow the same way I did,

are banned. Without these books, students are cheated out of the opportunity to shift their worldly views, and create opinions of their own, away from parental or social influence.

The books in question might surprise you. Yes, we know the controversial *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* bans, but did you know books such as *Harry Potter* and *Charlotte's Web* have been banned as well? Reasons being "sorcery," "blasphemy" and "inappropriate subject matter for children," though if you've ever read those books, which I'm sure you have due to their extreme popularity for decades, you would know that is certainly not the case. These stories are simply fiction, and I believe that's quite obvious. For years, books like these have been banned and challenged. We need to ask the question of why? Is the reasoning truly enough to ban the entirety of a book?

The recent surge of banning books actually fits very nicely into America's history of school censorship. We can compare the bans of the 2020's to the 1920's, almost a century back. In the 20's-30's, fear of communism and the fight against modernity drove American society. In 1920, Harold Rugg, civil engineer turned education reformer, wrote an exceedingly popular line of social science textbooks. The books had a progressive look on American society and touched on class inequality across the country. As time went on, the books began to seem un-American, subversive and even communistic. The rise of patriotism spread across the US during the lead up to World War II increased pressure on school boards across the US to take action against these books. The textbooks were banned and some copies were even burned. They went from being vastly common to despicable in the eyes of society.

We know that quick rise and fall all too well with our popular celebrities, films and politicians but it's interesting to see this trend with books, especially books that inspire such divergent opinions. It's these divergent opinions and point of views that make up our identity and worldly view, make us different. And they are formed from reading such illuminating books in school. The books being banned contain valuable in-

formation, experience and history that have been thought provoking and have elevated education for decades. In Texas, the majority of books being targeted deal with racism or sexuality. Some schools have taken books off shelves for review and many have already taken books off shelves permanently.

Back in October 2021, State Rep. Matt Krause made an official request for an accounting of books in Texas libraries that include "explicit or racially preferential material." The letter he sent to the Texas Educational Agency included a 16-page list of book titles and asked how many are in school public libraries and how much money schools have spent acquiring them? Austin ISD was the first to deny an inquiry about sexually explicit or racially charged books in their collection, despite their owning of many books on Krause's list. I support AISD's decision, the government, school boards and differing parents should not and will not be able to get away with such an inequitable move to censor the truth.

Furthermore, banned books can tie into the ongoing weaponization of Critical Race Theory (CRT) in schools. The theory, a concept mostly taught to law schools, has become a popular phrase for those seeking to censor educational discussions dealing with race or racial injustice in schools. It's become one "reason" to challenge and ban books, though their claims are false as CRT is not an understandable topic to be used in most grade schools. Rather, an academic concept looking at race through a lens in a law setting. To put it plain and simple, CRT is not being taught in grade school, anywhere.

Moving forward we must face reality, our educational truth is being censored. When you control what students are reading, you are controlling their reality and perception of American society. That is a big deal and should not be up to anyone but the student. Schools should be able to provide those resources and support their students' growing perception of the world.

As a student, I have liberty to choose what I want to learn and a right to education free of oppressive restrictions, especially for reasons such as these. Banning books won't stop me from reading them, nor anyone else. ■

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- The Dispatch is an open forum for student expression. The Dispatch is not reviewed by school administration prior to distribution, and the advisor will not act as a censor. Content represents the views of the student staff and not school officials.
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- NSPA Print 1st Class, 2 Marks, 2020-21
- NSPA Online Pacemaker Finalist, 2018-2019
- CSPBA Hybrid Silver Crown, 3/3 All-Columbian, 2020-21
- SNO Distinguished Website 2021-22
- SIPA Print All-Southern, 2019-20
- UIL/ILPC Online Gold Star, 2020-21
- UIL/ILPC Print Gold Star, 2020-21
- TAJE Fall Fiesta Honorable Mention Best in Show, 2021-22

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Texas bill threatens transgender youth

The government should focus on kids in actual danger, rather than those expressing themselves



Audrey Hagan
Dispatch Reporter

Questions? Concerns? Email:
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There is no commonly held belief about when the term “transgender” came into existence. It is however widely accepted that the term became more popular in the 1980s. And ever since the 1980s, many groups, such as Christian conservatives have been trying to shoot down as many bills and laws about trans rights as possible. It is no secret that transgender people have faced persecution for a long time simply because of who they are. One of the most recent attacks on transgender youth has been made by Greg Abbott and Ken Paxton, the Governor and Attorney General of Texas.

On February 23, 2022 Paxton made a statement proclaiming that under Texas law gender affirming health care is child abuse. This statement was followed by Abbott’s endorsement on Twitter and other social media platforms. This escalated when Abbott put out a statement instructing healthcare professionals, school administrators, and members of the general public to report trans youth to their parents and Child Protective Services. The governor and the attorney general have taken the stance that gender affirming healthcare including hormones and hormone blockers are child abuse in Texas. As a trans non-binary person, I have never understood the hatred towards the trans community, especially trans youth.

When I heard this it genuinely terrified me. I don’t think that I have ever been so close to so much hatred within the area that I live. I am a trans person, some of my friends are trans, and we are all still children, yet we are already hated for things that we did not choose to happen to us.

Paxton is not only the Attorney General of Texas but has also been convicted of several different federal crimes. According to the New York Times, Paxton was charged with securities fraud in 2015. Securities fraud, also called investment or stock fraud, is a first degree felony with a maximum of 99 years in prison. According to the same source, more recently, Paxton was accused of abusing his position and office. He was accused by none other than his own staff, who are around him frequently. According to ABC News, Paxton also cheated on his wife with a woman who he later recommended for a job.

One of the points that Paxton made in a letter to Matt Krause, a member of the House of Representatives, was that trans healthcare was child abuse because it caused permanent damage to a child’s health. Disregarding the fact that most doctors won’t perform gender affirming surgeries on minors, the most they’ll do is give a child hormones. Hormone therapy or in some cases hormone blockers are both entirely reversible. So if, sometime in the future, a transgender child grows up and decides to de-transition then they can do so very easily. There is no logical explanation for the blatant acts of trans-phobia made by Abbott and Paxton. There is no reason for gender affirming healthcare to be child abuse



ART BY Audrey Hagan

especially when it helps children be more comfortable with their bodies. Without resources such as hormones, some people feel enhanced amounts of gender dysmorphia.

Gender dysmorphia most commonly refers to when a gender non conforming or transgender person feels alienated in their body. It is important to note that not all transgender people have gender dysmorphia, though a lot do. For me, dysmorphia can be triggered by people not perceiving you as the gender you want to be perceived as. Different people have dysmorphia about different things whether it’s about their voice, their chest, etc. Gender affirming healthcare can help reduce the dysmorphia and help individuals feel more like themselves. Without resources like these suicide and unhealthy habits could increase among youth.

The trans-phobia outlined by some of the most prominent leaders of Texas is disgraceful. According to ABC News transgender people are already at a higher risk for suicide than their peers and if more kids are outed to their parents and not getting the help they need then these rates will only go up. The Texas government is not protecting trans youth, they are making it more difficult for us to exist.

Another problem I have with sticking CPS on the parents of

trans kids is that there are kids that actually need the help of these services. On March 10, it came out that children in a government sponsored facility in Bastrop that was designed to help underage victims of sex trafficking, were being abused by employees. According to a court document, between January 24 and March 4 one employee in the facility put eight people back into human trafficking. There are several other reports from various sources about employees of the facility coercing the residents in the facility into letting the employee take explicit photos of them. Most of these employees later sold the images. All of this is going on in a facility that the Texas government sponsored. These things could have been stopped sooner if people were paying more attention to the things that matter.

I could go on and on about this topic as a whole but the core of it is: the Texas government should be focused on children that actually need help and are in actual danger. Trans children are not a new thing. Even before the term was created, trans people have existed. No parent is forcing their child to be transgender, transgender youth do not do this to spite you, and we will not go away just because you threaten to take away gender affirming healthcare. ■

Congress finally passes Emmett Till anti-lynching act



Lillian Hoover
Dispatch Reporter

Questions? Concerns? Email:
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In the summer of 1955, Emmett Till’s life was taken from him after he was falsely accused of whistling at and grabbing a white woman. The woman’s husband and his brother forced Emmett into their car, killed him, and left his body to be found three days later, horribly disfigured. These two men went on trial in September 1955 and were found not guilty by an all-white jury. Now, over 150 years since Reconstruction in the South, it is long past the time that the US classify lynching as a federal hate crime, with commensurate punishments for those who take part in such a heinous act.

Thankfully, US Representative Bobby Rush, introduced the Emmett Till Anti-lynching Act which passed in both the US House of Representatives, the Senate, and has now been signed by President Biden. This will finally make lynching a federal hate crime with a maximum sentence of up to 30 years in addition to other charges brought against the criminal. This not only gives a new source of power to people in need of justice, but can also be used as a backstop when state charges against a defendant do not stand. We also need to pay attention to how long it took to bring this Act to life and others like it. If this law took over 200 attempts and over 150 years to pass, how long will it be until the U.S. is truly an equal and united country?

This long fought case seeking justice for Em-

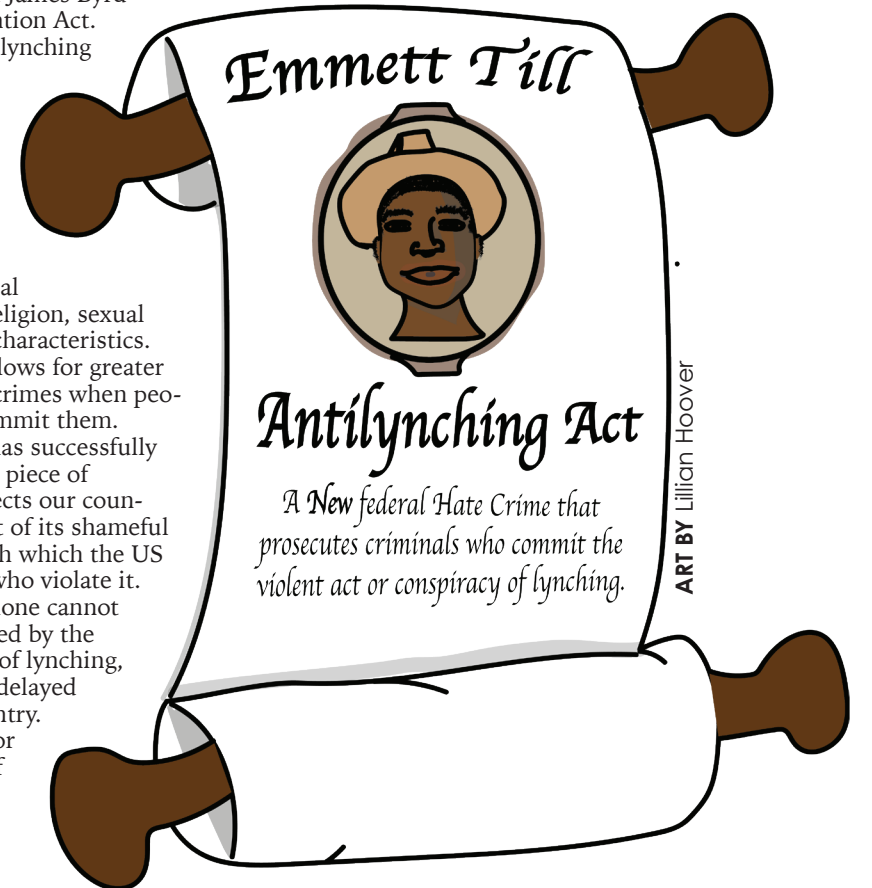
mett Till, this case demonstrates just how long our nation has been battling systemic racism. No one could understand this more acutely than Mamie Till Mobley, Emmett Till’s mother. After Emmett Till’s murder, Ms. Mobley, chose to have an open-casket funeral for her son so people could see what had happened to him. Before long, mainstream media began to report on the story and the way Emmett Till’s violent murder began to capture the attention of more and more people in the United States. It was the image of the Emmett Till’s murdered body in the casket that stuck with Representative Rush for decades. While this case shows that it is possible to make a change, through all of this, it still took over 200 attempts to pass. 200 attempts.

The Equal Justice Initiative estimates that during the period 1865 and 1950, over 6500 Americans were lynched, and their perpetrators most often faced no consequences. Emmett Till’s murder highlighted the brutal nature of segregation in the South and is also seen as one of the sparks that lit the Civil Rights Movement in the US. To quote Representative Rush, who introduced the bill, “Lynching is a long-standing and uniquely American weapon of the racial terror that has for decades been used to maintain the white hierarchy.” The bill that Rush introduced would make it possible to prosecute lynching as a hate crime with a maximum sentence of only 30 years (10 years at first). Now, after all of this time and effort, one can only hope that punishments for hate crimes throughout America will give victims and their families the justice that they deserve.

Now signed into law by President Biden,

the new act amends the existing federal criminal code signed into law in 2009 under the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. hate Crimes Prevention Act. The Emmitt Till Anti-lynching Act creates a distinction between murder and lynching. Lynching is commonly understood to refer to illegal mob action that results in the hard or murder of an individual based on their race, religion, sexual orientation, or other characteristics. This law effectively allows for greater punishment for hate crimes when people act together to commit them.

Finally, Congress has successfully passed this important piece of legislation which reflects our country’s acknowledgment of its shameful past and the force with which the US will prosecute those who violate it. Through legislation alone cannot heal the wounds caused by the terror and violent act of lynching, we have taken a long delayed step forward as a country. Now, it will be time for the US Department of Justice to use the power to prosecute criminals under this act. ■



ART BY Lillian Hoover

BULLDAWGS SPEAK OUT

Do you believe that colleges should require standardized testing (such as the SAT/ACT)?

INTERVIEWS BY Lily Bourgeois PHOTOS BY Nick Wood



Eva Garza
Sophomore

I think they should because its a way to filter out who should be in a certain school and who shouldn't.



Jake Lewis
Junior

Yes, I think they should look at test scores and results, especially with bigger schools test grades don't reflect on a person's personality but it does reflect on their ability to retain knowledge."



Benicio Arce
Junior

I think that Ivy League schools like Harvard, Columbia, Brown, etc. should for sure. For other schools, I feel like not so much, it kind of depends.



Cecelia Lawrence
Senior

No, I do not, because I don't think a person's intelligence should be decided based on how well they do on a test. It should be based on extracurriculars, who you are as a person, your volunteer work, things like that.

Student Leadership *boots* out hate



Students gather in celebration of the NPFH parade

Reagan Zuniga
Managing Editor

The week after spring break, students and faculty came together to unify in support of the No Place for Hate movement through a parade. Through the work of student leadership and faculty, the parade has become an anticipated event among students after not being able to hold one for the past two years due to COVID-19.

Student Leadership recreated a western setting for the event to help engage students to participate in the event through dressing up. There were western decorations around campus as well as the first student concert in the courtyard.

"My favorite part of the event was the music in the courtyard after the parade," project manager Reese Gutshall said. "It was really cool having Tyton play in front of the whole school, and I love how we incorporated NPFH messages in between songs as well. I think it was a good way to make students attentive, while still getting our message across."

As the student leadership sponsor, Vickie Benson supported the parade by guiding the students to organize, prepare, and work to pull off the campus wide

event. Benson emphasized the importance of NPFH at Bowie and would love to see more clubs get involved to have a larger impact of students understanding what the pyramid of hate is.

"Getting awareness out to the campus and having everyone come together is the goal," Benson said. "We want to be inclusive and respect each other's differences, beliefs, values, culture, etc. Hopefully through events like this, students will self-reflect and be motivated to unify."

Student Leadership stressed the importance of Bowie being a NPFH campus. Campuses in conjunction with the initiative build a community of inclusivity, respect, and equality. While events such as the parade are intended for enjoyment purposes, the main purpose is to unify the school while promoting the message behind NPFH.

"It's important to hold NPFH on campus because it creates a greater community feeling, it also is a tradition at Bowie so it's just become something that people look forward to," float manager Ava Webber said. "In the leadership class we've also observed a change in the campus dynamic, in the sense that it's moving down the hate pyramid and is becoming more and more of an ideal campus for students." ■



IN THEIR COWBOY BOOTS: Silver Stars dance to 'Colton Eye Joe' in the pit. After Tyton Benson's performance in the courtyard, music played for students to dance to. "This event was especially important for Bowie this year as students are still adjusting to a "normal" school year post-pandemic," Reese Gutshall said. "It is so important for our school to be unified as one, and lift each other up rather than drag each other down, especially after all that we have endured these past two years." **PHOTO BY** Reagan Zuniga



GIDDY-UP: Drue Donus and Max Barnes prepare to lead a group of student leaders dressed in inflatable donkeys. Student leadership has been planning the No Place for Hate parade since the beginning of the semester. "Parade prep included everyone being assigned jobs which all entailed different things from float decorating to sign making, reaching out to other organizations on campus, and project managing," Ava Webber said. "After that was all figured out we got to work and worked on it for about a month, and ended up completing the float that was in the parade the day of the event." **PHOTO BY** Reagan Zuniga



SHOWING SUPPORT: Junior Jackson Hertzburg holds up a sign in support of pride week. No Place for Hate, Pride Week, and Women's History Month were all celebrated at the parade. "I think the parade was effective in bringing the school together," Reese Gutshall said. "The whole school was involved in the event, whether they were invited to march through an organization, or were sitting in the courtyard to hear the music." **PHOTO BY** Reagan Zuniga



DANCING THE HATE AWAY:

Cassandra Ondarza and Jirgh Vivar dance along to music in the pit. Well-known dance songs such as Cupid's Shuffle and the Cha Cha Slide played for all students to be able to participate. "I think the parade is a really fun, interactive tradition that should be maintained in the future for our campus," Reese Gutshall said. "It is the main event that Student Leadership is known for, due to the student and staff's enthusiasm about it. I love how our whole school is included and able to march in it as well." **PHOTO BY** Reagan Zuniga



ENERGIZING STUDENTS: A group of seniors involved in student leadership throw candy to spectators of the parade. Students and faculty gathered around the school to watch the float drive by. "We hoped to bring together the Bowie community, it had been a long time since we were able to put on the last No Place For Hate parade so we were excited to introduce this fun tradition to underclassmen who had never experienced it before," Ava Webber said. **PHOTO BY** Reagan Zuniga