

What's happening at the Park?

Dec. 3
Santa's Farm 5-9 p.m.
at the FFA barns



Dec. 7
Orchestra Winter Concert
at 7 p.m.



Dec. 9-11
JV Theater presents
"The Tortoise and the Hare"



Dec. 9
Christmas Band Concert
at 7 p.m.



Dec. 13
Choir Winter Concert
at 7 p.m.



Dec. 20-Jan. 3
Winter Break



Keilman cashes in on talent

Junior Taylor Keilman transformed a bowling pin into an award-winning piece of art.

By Reece Cavallo

What do a bowling pin, a spray gun, and a pair of fishnet stockings all have in common? These are the items that junior Taylor Keilman used to earn himself \$5,000 worth of auto-shop tools in the PiN MASTER challenge.

This year the automotive after-market business FinishMaster partnered with CREF, the Collision Repair Education Foundation, to create the first annual PiN MASTER challenge, a competition that allows high school and college students within North America to compete to win highly coveted auto tools.

To enter the competition, students were required to take an old bowling pin from a bowling alley, repair the cracks in the surface, and paint a unique design on the pin using automotive paint. After completing the remodeled bowling pin, participants sent their entries to Illinois, where the pins were judged by a panel of collision repair professionals.



KEILMAN



Taylor Keilman uses a spray gun to paint the hood of a car in the collision repair painting room. Photo by Rhian Davis.

Keilman, a student in the auto collision repair program, chose to take a unique approach to painting his pin. He first sprayed a solid purple color onto the pin as a base, then he applied fishnet stockings to the surface and sprayed on a layer of gold paint. The end result was a smooth and shiny bowling pin that looked as if it were the hide of a mythical golden snake.

Keilman's snakeskin bowling pin ended up placing third in the contest, a placement that won him a top-of-the-line \$4,000 SATA spray gun and a \$1,000 toolbox filled with high-quality tools.

"It's kinda cool," Jeff Wilson, Keilman's auto collision teacher, said. "I mean this is across the United States and Canada, and he won third."

Keilman, who plans to go into the auto collision repair industry

after high school, will put the tools to good use. He believes that the gadgets that he has earned from the PiN MASTER challenge will give him an advantage when trying to start his career.

"It's definitely going to help me because I don't have to save up my own money to buy a new paint gun and all the tools," Keilman said. "So now that I have the tools it's going to be a lot easier for me to have a starting point."

For students interested in getting involved in auto collision repair, Keilman couldn't recommend Wilson's class enough. According to Keilman, the class is a blast and Wilson is "amazing."

"For people that are looking to join collision repair, I strongly advise it," Keilman said. "Painting cars is like the most fun I've ever had."

Student journalists earn big honors at national level

The National Scholastic Press Association conference was held virtually on Nov. 13.

Sophomore Maya Ortiz was named Photojournalist of the Year and won an honorable mention in Sports Story of the Year. Senior Kathleen Ortiz was an honorable mention for National Writer of the Year and finished fourth overall in Feature Story of the Year. Junior Katie Gerbasich earned honorable mention for Sports Action Photo of the Year.

"Even though we weren't able to go to the national convention this year it's still a really big deal," Maya Ortiz said. "Taking photos is really fun for me and so it felt good to get rewarded for that."

By Taylor Nethery

Students serve community throughout Day of Service

After a year off because of COVID, the freshman Day of Service was held on Nov. 16. The freshmen were spread throughout the community to do volunteer work. They went to elementary schools, food banks, women shelters, state parks and other areas to assist.

The entire freshman class participated as well as 57 sophomores, juniors and seniors. About 30 teachers also attended to supervise and assist.

"At recess, I got to watch all the kids play and run around," said freshman Nickole Golden, who attended Elm Grove Elementary. "It was really fun watching my friend run around and chase the kids. Then she got dog piled by the kids."

By Jacob Valcarce



Senior Evan Hebert works on classwork during AP Calculus BC. He is the only National Merit semifinalist on campus. Photo by Alicyn Logue.

Test lands Hebert among elite

By Camille Blair

When Evan Hebert walked out of his PSAT testing room last fall he didn't realize that a year later he would be the lone semifinalist for National Merit at Kingwood Park.

"I was optimistic because I knew a large portion of the test and I felt confident about it," Hebert said. "But it was definitely a toss up, like if I get I get it, if I don't I don't."

He found out he had become a semifinalist during the first week of September. However, it wasn't until Sept. 15 that he could tell anyone.

"I had to keep it a secret from my extended family," Hebert said. "I only told my parents and my older sister. I couldn't tell my brothers or my friends, which was kind of hard because I had been harassing my friends for like nine months that this was a possibility."

Hebert said prior to taking the PSAT as a junior, he studied with friends and took SAT prep classes.

After high school Hebert hopes

to study biochemistry or molecular biology at the University of Florida at Gainesville but he's also applied to University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Tulane and Texas A&M.

"The nature intertwining with the campus was really cool [at Florida]," he said. "I liked all the social areas, it being in Florida, their medical school placement rates, and they're generally well-known for their exceptional STEM programs."

After becoming a National Merit Semifinalist there are steps students must take before qualifying as a finalist. Hebert must complete an application, write an essay, earn a score on the SAT or ACT that confirms his PSAT score, receive consistently high grades and get endorsed and recommended by a school official. He will find out in February whether or not he is a finalist.

"To be able to claim something as uniquely mine, even though it is 13,000 people nationwide - to be able to say I'm the only at KPARK is super cool for me," Hebert said.

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Pranks, messes take toll on small custodial staff

By Derriq Young

Red paint covered every single bathroom stall when head custodian Carmen Lemus arrived at school one morning. She had to scrub each stall for about 45 minutes, setting her back on her already long day.

"This year the students don't help us," Lemus said. "I don't know what happened this year, but they made a lot of messes."

Lemus has been a custodian at Kingwood Park for 11 years and head custodian for three. She and her staff work daily for hours to continuously maintain the school's health standards.

"I love this job, I like to work over here," Lemus said. "I like to be around a lot of people."

However, this year's custodial staff is shorthanded. There are only seven custodians cleaning the entire campus everyday. With 2,145 people on campus including students



Head custodian Carmen Lemus wipes down all the cafeteria tables as lunch ends. She has worked at Kingwood Park for 11 years and been in charge of the custodial staff for the past three years. Photo by Derriq Young.

and staff, that leaves one custodian cleaning for about 306 people everyday.

"It's hard because I feel mad because they don't do it to the school, they do it to us," Lemus said. "We have to clean it up."

Over the summer, the custodial staff cleaned the entire school from

top to bottom. They moved all the furniture to clean and waxed the floors. Once the problems started around the time devious licks became a popular trend on TikTok, the custodians had to check the bathrooms hourly for soap dispensers being stolen or more — in addition to their regular duties. Lemus said

her hours range from 9 to 12 hours, depending on the day.

"There are definitely the behind the scenes people that keep this thing going," principal Wes Solomon said. "From trash to bathrooms to cleaning up the things that most people don't even think about."

With COVID-19 still making an appearance in schools, custodians are doing extra work to try to keep kids safe. Lemus and her team wipe the stairwells, door handles and desks multiple times per day to keep students and staff safe and the building clean.

Frustration mounts, however, when students create unnecessary messes on top of their normal day-to-day work. While some of the destruction has lessened, Solomon said students still can do better.

"Treat it like your house, if you knock something over at home you would clean it up," Solomon said. "You couldn't just walk away and leave a mess."

OnRamps classes utilize unique test policy

By Sharna Ngo

This year, many OnRamps students have taken advantage of a retest policy that allows them to retake any test for up to a 100.

This policy has been in place in OnRamps Statistics for three years now, meaning classes have followed this policy since OnRamps Stats started at Kingwood Park. Only OnRamps College Algebra does not have the same policy.

Shannon Wenter, who teaches OnRamps Statistics, said the test policies aid the students quite a bit.

"I think that them being able to come back and reassess even if they don't get a better score helps them go back over the material, which does help them on finals and midterms," Wenter said.

Senior Morgan Sanford takes two OnRamps courses – Dual Statistics and OnRamps Chemistry. She said the retest policy is very beneficial to the students.

"I have retested every test because I

can make up to a 100 and so I wanted to get the best grade possible," Sanford said.

Because of these retests, students stress less about their initial test grades because they know a retest for a 100 is an option.

This policy is different from the district's normal testing policy, which states that students can only retest one test per 9 weeks and the highest grade a student can receive on a retest is a 70.

That is also the same policy Caroline Wick has in OnRamps College Algebra, but she is trying to change it to be similar to the other OnRamps classes.

OnRamps Algebra has a different policy because all OnRamps classes are connected to UT, but each class is in a different department, so their policies vary.

"Finding out that it's available in other OnRamps classes has made me think about how I can change my policy to work more for the students and make it less stressful," Wick said.

So you want to pay for college...



FAFSA

Free Application for Federal Student Aid is a form that should be filled out by prospective and current college students in order to determine if they qualify for financial aid.

- It opened on Oct. 1, apply as early as possible.

- Apply online if possible
- Double check your application once you finish it

1. Gather personal information such as social security, family size and income, and the list of colleges you're applying to.

2. Create a federal student aid ID

3. Fill in student information
4. Enter parent information
5. Provide financial information

6. Review FAFSA
7. Sign and submit your FAFSA form.



Work-Study

The Work-Study program is part time employment while you're enrolled in school - it is available to undergraduate, graduate, and other students who are in need of financial aid

- it is available to both part time and full time students
- it is overseen by schools that are part of the Federal Work-Study Program. Check with your specific school to see if they participate.

Loans

Student loans are designed to help students pay for college fees such as tuition, supplies, and housing. They enable students to borrow money and pay it back at a later date.

Types of student loans:

- Federal loans: Loans made by the government. It's best to take them out 1st. They cost less and have more benefits.

- Direct subsidized loans: Available to undergrad students with financial needs. No interest on the amount borrowed.

- Direct unsubsidized loans: Available to graduate and undergraduate students regardless of financial need. Interest to be paid over time.

- Private loans: Loans that come from a private lender. Interest isn't subsidized so as soon as the money is borrowed, interest will accumulate.

Scholarships

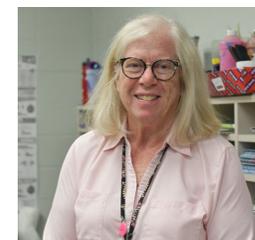
1. Go to the KPark website
2. Click on the library tab
3. Click on "College career & info."
4. Browse through the multitudes of scholarships.



Scan the QR code with the camera on your phone to access the scholarship page on the Kingwood Park website.

Meet Celia Herbst

Celia Herbst has been at Kingwood Park since 1999. She was the paraeducator in the learning lab for seven years before becoming the counseling office manager. She can answer questions about college entrance, FAFSA, dual credit and Lone Star College. She can also help steer students to online sites that can also give them answers.



Wise words from Celia Herbst

"Google is a magnificent tool."

"Deadlines, deadlines, deadlines. Make sure you know your deadlines. Make sure you know exactly where it has to go."

"Check the financial aid and scholarship webpage of the college that you're going to because they have plenty of money too."

"Don't hesitate to call the college if you have any questions."

"Don't be afraid of an essay. Some kids just scroll down and it says an essay so they skip it."

"Apply, apply, apply for scholarships. All they can say is no."

"There's just tons of money out there that people are willing to give away."

Page by Rhian Davis and Kathleen Ortiz

Recommendations:

Teacher recommendations are required in applications for many colleges, scholarships and specific college programs. They give organizations an outside perspective of students' personality, work ethic and accomplishments.

1. Find the right teacher to write the recommendation.

- Someone who knows you pretty well and they need to be reliable.

- Choose a teacher who has seen you grow as a student.
- A teacher who has had you for multiple years would be a great choice.

- On top of that, choose a teacher who you can trust will submit your recommendation on time.

- Recommendations are an important part of many applications and if you choose

2. Make sure the teacher has all the information they need.

- Send them as many details about yourself as possible

- Even if they know what you are like in class, they may want to include some volunteer work, sports or other organizations you are involved in.

- Send them your resume, details from the program you're applying to (such as the recommendation's due date and why you are applying to it) and any other information that may be able to help the teacher.

- Give the teacher at least two weeks notice.

3. Make sure the teacher understands what is available to them.

- Herbst sent out many resources to all teachers on how to write a recommendation at the beginning of the year.

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MUSIC MAN

Matt Daspit chases his dreams in Nashville

By Jacob Valcarce

Receptionist Criss Daspit and her friends were at a playdate for their children when her 2-year-old son Matt started playing “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star” on his little keyboard. He had no music to look at and no one was helping him.

“We knew something was different when he did that,” Daspit said. “He must have heard it on either ‘Little Bear,’ or ‘Sesame Street,’ or those types of programs that we used to watch when he was a little guy.”

The natural gift carried him from Kingwood Park to the Berklee School of Music in Boston. Now, Matt Daspit is an aspiring musician in Nashville.

“I always played classical music for him when I was pregnant with him, and he was exposed to that early,” Criss Daspit said.

By the time Matt was 4, his mom tried to sign him up for piano lessons at Kingwood Music School. He had to go through a special interview process because he was so young.

“She asked him to play several little tunes, and he knew them just by the gift of ear that he had,” Criss Daspit said. “She said, ‘I will take him.’”

He started lessons there at the age of 4 and continued with the same teacher until his junior year.

As a teen, Matt was on the football team, in the band and in student council. He was athletic, but his passion was music. He attended Lone Star College after graduating from Kingwood Park in 2012 and eventually auditioned and was accepted into the prestigious Berklee College of



Kingwood Park alum Matt Daspit plays the keyboard during a performance with Nina Baumer at John’s Hopkins University. Photo submitted by Matt Daspit.

Matt Daspit at age 4 welcomes guests while playing the keyboard at a Christmas show at the Houston Symphony. He received a small wooden keyboard when he was 2. Soon after, he started playing “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star” after hearing the song on TV. “Hey, how did he figure that out?” Criss Daspit asked her husband. “I didn’t know, my husband didn’t know. I knew I would never forget that.”



Matt Daspit takes a photo with his mom Kingwood Park receptionist Criss Daspit after graduating from the Berklee School of Music. Photo submitted by Matt Daspit.

Music in Boston.

“In some of my classrooms, my desk was a piano,” he said. “The whole class was just playing and listening. There was no writing or books involved. I mean, there was sheet music, but no lectures. It was mostly just taking turns playing or playing as a group.”

His experiences in Boston were vast. His band Redwood Honey toured with Eddie Money before he passed away. His Berklee graduation included appearances by celebrities such as Justin Timberlake and Missy Elliott.

“I learned how to protect myself as a musician in a world where a lot of people are trying to take advantage of you and your talents,” Daspit said. “It was a lot more than just playing my instrument and going to Berklee.”

Now, Matt Daspit is trying to establish himself in the music scene in Nashville. He bartends at Justin Timberlake’s bar and has performed up and down Broadway Street at various bars, including those owned by Miranda Lambert, Florida Georgia Line and Jason Aldean.

“They call Nashville a 10-year town,” Matt Daspit said. “So basically, you live here and then in 10 years, you see where you’re at and then you kind of reevaluate. If you’re not really doing what you want to be doing, you try something new or try it a different way or move to another city.”

The vision for Matt Daspit in 10 years is clear. He wants to be married to his girlfriend, have kids and a house with a home studio. He wants to make a name for himself in Nashville.

“I’m on good track to do that,”

he said. “I have full confidence in myself. It’s just going to take some time and due diligence and hard work, but I think I can accomplish that for sure.”

Some of his musical inspirations include Robert Glasper, Bill Withers, and Silk Sonic’s Anderson Paak. He hopes that someday he gets to tour with artists like them.

Matt Daspit said he has already seen how influential music is and how it can change people. That remains his constant motivation.

“Being able to put a smile on somebody’s face at the end of the day is the goal for bands and musicians,” Matt Daspit said. “Music is a beautiful thing. If you have a passion for it or a hunger to learn, I highly recommend it. Just work hard, stay true to yourself and be kind.”

‘One-Man Show’

Autistic and often alone, the costume changed everything for Ashton Smith.

By Maya Ortiz

Ashton Smith rushed from one event to another.

He dressed in his Parker the Panther suit for Friday night football. The next morning he posed with little kids at the Silver Star dance camp. He then rushed to stand near the band bus and wish them luck on their way to a competition. That night he put on zombie face paint for the Trunk or Treat event at school.



SMITH

Smith goes non-stop — most of the time, in a panther suit.

The senior cheer captain, 5-time cheer All-American and a four-year letterman hardly resembles the nonverbal 3-year-old boy his mom used to worry about.

“When you come from a child who is autistic and has no friends, no desire, doesn’t really know what their purpose is — and then finds something, it changes his life,” Leslie Brocken, Ashton’s mom, said. “As a mom it’s almost a sigh of relief and very freeing to know that your child has found something and that they belong now and they have a purpose.”

When Smith was young he kept to himself and preferred to be alone. Since becoming the KMS mascot in eighth grade Ashton became outgoing and talks to almost anyone.

“[Becoming mascot] changed his world,” Brocken said. “All of a sudden he had lots of friends. He was able to expose himself to other people and realize ‘Oh, OK.’”

Smith was introduced to the world of mascotting in sixth grade when his elementary school princi-



Senior Ashton Smith works to fire up the students in an Alice In Wonderland-themed costume he designed for Parker the Panther. He and his mom have worked together on his costumes for the past four years. Photo by Alicyn Logue.

pal asked him to be Woody the Raccoon at Woodland Hills Elementary spirit nights and events.

That is where it all started. He was Woody for two years before trying out for Kingwood Middle’s mascot in eighth grade.

Finally, Smith had found his “thing.” “Even though it was hard, I never told myself to quit,” Smith said. “I still kept on going because it generally felt like a calling to me. The only thing that I hate about being called a mascot is being called a furry 24/7. I’m not a furry.”

He earned the mascot role on varsity as a freshman when he arrived at Kingwood Park.

It only took a few weeks before mold in the costume was making him sick. A new costume solved that problem, but then he had to deal with the heat and dehydration. He’d wear the suit 30 minutes a day to build up his endurance. Every time he prepared for an event, he

hydrated days before it.

To keep from overheating he tried using cooling towels, water bottles and even headbands in the suit. What ended up working most was eating healthier, working out and simply building up the endurance.

“It is recommended for mascots to stay in the suit for 45 minutes and take a break before going back,” Smith said. “Mostly, it is knowing your limit. And if you know your limit, don’t go past it because mascots are at risk of having a heat-stroke or passing out. Anything can happen in that suit.”

Smith has made Parker his own. He has made signature dance moves, props and costumes for Parker. All costume and prop ideas are Smith’s. Brocken helps put them into action.

Smith wants to continue to mascotting past college. He said walking away from Parker will be hard.

“It’s sad, honestly, knowing that

after this there are no more tryouts, no more skits, no more Parker,” Smith said. “And knowing that after this there is no one to pick up the pieces, because once I’m gone, I’m gone.”

During Smith’s freshman year, he met the Texans’ mascot Toro at a pep rally. Toro visited to participate in a homecoming proposal, and Smith has stayed in touch with him. He even trained at a higher impact training camp with Toro and Orbit, who is the Astros’ mascot.

“He wants to go all the way with [mascotting],” Brocken said. “That’s his joke with Toro — ‘Enjoy your job while you have it.’”

To Smith, mascotting is his job even now. He balances being Parker with two part-time jobs and school-work. He practices at least 10 hours a week in addition to representing Kingwood Park at school, district and community functions.

His teammates describe him as focused, dedicated, spirited and kind hearted.

“He adds a lot of enthusiasm and craziness to the team,” senior cheerleader Madison Kerr said. “He’s an amazing teammate, because if you’re down he’ll try to talk to you about it and bring you up.”

Smith credits Parker for helping him grow into the person he is today.

“I’m not fully autistic but I am on the spectrum to a sense,” Smith said. “I was very timid. I wouldn’t really speak to anybody, like I generally just wanted to be on my own and be a one-man show.”

“It has influenced me to just be bigger. Yes quite literally in the suit but also to change my mentality to be bigger. Get bigger goals, obtain bigger goals.”



Toro from the Houston Texans joins Ashton Smith dressed as Parker the Panther for a HOCO proposal in 2018 when Smith was just a freshman. Photo by Katy Searcy.

EXPRESS YOURSELF

Weidemann finds what suits him best

By Rhian Davis

In a world where basketball shorts and t-shirts are the “norm” for teenage boys, Joseph Weidemann definitely stands out. Weidemann wears a full suit to school every single day.

The summer after his sixth grade year, Weidemann attended a medical conference that had a strict dress code: all he had packed were suits. While he was at the conference, Hurricane Harvey hit Houston. When he returned home, Weidemann was met with destruction.

“When school started up for 7th grade, those first couple of weeks, the suits were all I had,” Weidemann said. “It kind of grew on me and it made me feel more confident about myself.”

Weidemann said his dad has been the biggest inspiration for him in the way he dresses and presents himself. Most of the ties that Weidemann incorporates into his outfits belonged to his father, who wore them every day when he was a teacher. Weidemann explained that he started borrowing them but he slowly began to wear the ties more than his dad. Weidemann has close to 100 ties and his collection is still growing.

“I have one lucky tie,” Weidemann said. “It was my dad’s lucky tie and it kind of became my lucky tie as well. It’s a blue tie with red sneakers on it.”

Most of the suits that Weidemann wears have been bought from Goodwill. When he has time, he goes into the store and tries to find pieces that he thinks look good. In order to keep his suits looking new and fresh, Weidemann takes them to the dry cleaners. He usually prioritizes the ones he wears most often. The suits that are worn less can be tossed in the



washer he has at home.

“I’ve always been told ‘dress to impress’ and there’s definitely some truth behind that,” Weidemann said.

He explained that dressing up for school every day has helped with his confidence and the way he carries himself. While Weidemann’s clothing choice is different from most, it’s unique and it has helped him express himself in his everyday life.

“I feel a little more confident and I act a little more respectfully and so I think it’s also influenced other people’s perceptions of me and all in all it’s been pretty beneficial,” Weidemann said.



Layla Tatarroji holds her giant opossum, which took her about 6-8 hours to crochet. Photo by Maya Ortiz.

Unique talent keeps Tatarroji busy

By Daniel Spear

Sitting in the middle of the 1500 hallway, junior Layla Tatarroji works hard and fast to make sure her tiny red panda is up to her unyielding standards. Her friends flank her on either side as the three of them make casual conversation. Yarn almost spills out of Tatarroji’s bag and onto the floor as she works to perfect the minor things such as the tail or the ears.

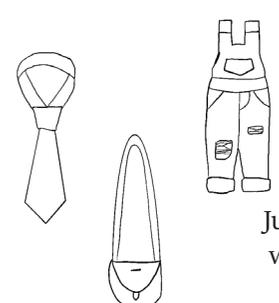
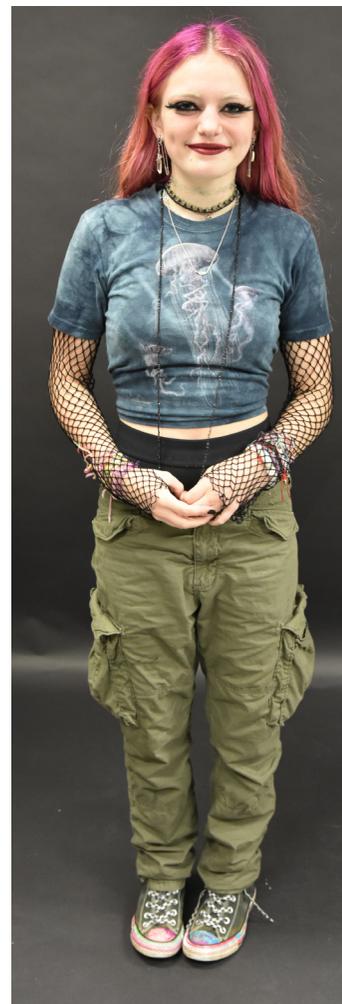
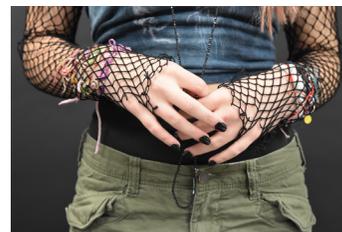
Tatarroji has been crocheting for four months. Her talents don’t stop there, however. She also has been sewing for the past three years and has been knitting on and off since the fourth grade.

“I learned that first single crochet, like basic stitching, at my friend’s house one night via a YouTube video,” Tatarroji said. “Then it took me three months to get where I am. We’re creating more difficult content.”

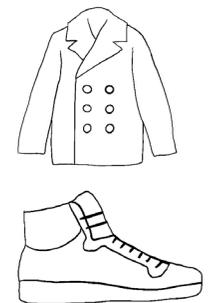
While there are many types of crochet, Tatarroji focuses primarily on amigurumi crochet – a style that creates children’s toys or larger novelty items out of Yarn. It originates from Japan and is a basic form of crochet.

Her process is a long one. First, she thinks of the idea and then sketches it out based on patterns she finds. Then she spends an amount of time troubleshooting during the actual process of crocheting before the finished product emerges. Her more talented works include a giant stuffed opossum. Smaller creations include foxes, red pandas, frogs, smaller opossums and small lanterns.

“I crochet both for personal enjoyment and also because I want to start a small business,” Tatarroji said. “I have sold a few things. I sell mostly by word of mouth at the moment. I have people coming up to me and asking, ‘Hey, do you make opossums?’ And I go, ‘Yes, I do.’”



Fit Check



Junior Gracey Laboy-Lopez explains her day-to-day fashion choices along with two specific outfits she has worn to school. Page by Kathleen Ortiz.

Makeup

“My makeup only takes me like five to 10 minutes depending on what I’m doing. I don’t really have any makeup inspiration but if I’m going to say anyone then it’s the Mad Hatter. I like that my lipstick is dark, but also not. It’s like a purpley-mauve-red color, so it’s perfect and it goes with pretty much everything and it just looks nice on my skin tone.”

Dr. Martens

“I kind of just wanted the nice, chic, edgy, black boot but with a platform so I figured they would be perfect and they last a long time.”

Leggings

“I find things that look good and eclectic. I really like things that normally you wouldn’t wear because it’s too much. I like going over the top and I didn’t have any good green leggings so I figured the little tube thing was the best thing to work with.”

Rings

“I just like wearing rings because they make my hands look longer. It’s weird to say, but they make them look nicer and more feminine. I make most of them, so it’s like I’m wearing my own creations so it’s fun.”

Bracelets

“I kind of just really like bracelets. Most of the cloth ones I made, but then the other ones I didn’t. I kind of just wear them because it makes me feel more connected to myself in a way.”

Shopping

“I mainly shop at thrift stores for clothes and I make some of my own as well and I make all my accessories or get them from my mom’s old stuff from high school and I get my shoes from online places like Dr. Martens or Demonnia I shop at thrift stores because they have more vintage clothes and prices are better.”

Special reasons are behind Chavez's changing style

By Jacob Valcarce

Junior Abby Chavez's style is inspired by her family, whether it's with her piercing, hair, or clothing.

Everything she does with herself represents something important to her family. For example, her nose piercing.

"I got a nose piercing because not that long ago, my grandmother's sister passed away," Chavez said. "Me and a few of my cousins decided to get piercings to represent her. She was really ill, and she was always helping people."

Like her piercing, her hair colors all represent various people in her family. She first colored her hair pink and blue.

"Pink was because at the time, one of my family members really loved pink," Chavez said. "And he was like a young cousin and he was always painting his nails pink, and I hadn't seen him in a while at the time."

"The other color was for his sister, who was more tom-boyish."

The greenish-blue color with reddish bangs represents a lot of emotion.

"I colored my hair for my great-grandfather," Chavez said.

On Sept. 29, her hair color was pink for her little sister and younger cousin.

"No. 1, they really liked the color," Chavez said. "No. 2 was because they are trying to express themselves and I'm trying to lead them to being



more confident in what they wear and how they do anything they do."

Chavez also uses her clothes to represent her and boost her confidence. After getting out of what Chavez said was a bad relationship, she decided to take control over herself by wearing clothes she felt represented who she is.

"I started wearing clothes that helped me feel more confident in them and not fall back on what happened, or say I'm gonna let this control me," Chavez said.

She's trying to show her little sister and cousin that they can be confident in themselves, like how she wears her clothes.

"Confidence is key," Chavez said. "If you feel insecure about it just say, 'These are just clothing, it's not who I am' and it's not what's gonna define you. It's not how people are gonna remember you. It's going to be how you act. If you wear something you feel confident in, you are going to say 'I am confident, I know who I am.'"



Junior Frankie Mitchell sings during a Guitar Club meeting during Flex Hour. Photo by Daniel Spear.

Mitchell finds his voice

By Daniel Spear

Music is an essential form of self expression for millions of people all over the globe. For some, music is truly the only way they can express their feelings.

Junior Frankie Mitchell uses music to express himself. His earliest and favorite musical memory was listening to his father sing him and his younger sister Sophia to sleep. "My dream job is to become an elementary music teacher," Mitchell said. "I wanted to be a musician for the longest time, but I'd rather teach music to someone who could become even greater than me."

Mitchell truly loves music being involved in various organizations. He is in the school choir, president of the Guitar Club and part of the School of Rock music school. Mitchell heard about School of Rock through a few of his friends

and then took the initiative to take a tour. After the tour, Mitchell instantly fell in love with the program and joined.

Aside from playing music outside of school, Mitchell loves being able to participate in choir and Guitar Club at school.

"Guitar Club is not just for guitars," Mitchell said. "It's a space for bass, singers and drummers. We call it Guitar Club because that's what it started out as but we've been trying to make it more."

Because there are so many genres of music and a wide range of performers, Mitchell said he wishes everyone would find what they love.

"Listen to any music you want and don't feel ashamed because of it," Mitchell said. "You can listen to a bunch of K-pop. No one can judge you for it because it is your preferred taste in music."

Frog decor adds fun to Lynam's day

By Camille Blair

When you walk into biology teacher Kristen Lynam's classroom the first thing you notice is the amount of frogs on her shelves. From stuffed frogs to ceramics to posters and even hats, Lynam's room is filled with frogs.

As a biology major, Lynam had to do a lot of research on frogs at Baylor University and from there she started to really like them. It wasn't until she started teaching that Lynam collected frogs from students, teachers and family.

"My first couple years of teaching my students would buy me little frog trinkets or frog

stuffed animals," Lynam said. "It kind of caught on. The next year of students saw the frogs I had in my classroom and they would buy me frog presents for Christmas or any occasion."

She has been collecting frogs for all 26 years she's been teaching and has well over 100. Her favorite is her Texans frogs, given to her by the other biology teachers. To remember who gave her each frog, she has the student put their name on the frog.

"Frogs make me smile," Lynam said. "They make kids smile. When kids come in here it's colorful. They look at all the little frogs and it puts them in a good mood."



Biology teacher Kristen Lynam shows off some of the many frogs displayed around her classroom. Photo by Maya Ortiz.

Johnson finds passion for dance in free time

By Gabby Norman

Senior McCormick Johnson wants to be the best at everything he does: swim, pole vault, orchestra. He wants to be on top.

His work ethic contributes to his success in these, but there is one thing that the 17 year old believes he truly excels at – dance.

"I think dance is something that most people wouldn't expect me to do," Johnson said, "but that's me. That's it. Those movements right there, that's pretty much how my brain works. It's a perfect way of showing people who I am and what I can do."

Johnson fell in love with the idea of dancing after seeing his now-idol, Fik-Shun, compete on "So You Think You Can Dance."

"I maybe just hit a year or year-and-a-half dancing seriously," Johnson said. "I was literally sitting in my living room, and I remember watching the video of Fik-Shun. That is the moment where I decided I was going to start doing it. I don't think I did much right then, but that's when I decided that I wanted to. Later in the summer of that year I started actually doing it."

Since that decision, Johnson has made dancing a huge part of his life. He practices every week, and has even devoted himself to a TikTok channel. @mick_machina has more than 6,000 followers and 75.5K likes, and the platform is still growing. Johnson posts self-choreographed dances, takes



McCormick Johnson smiles after showing off some of his dance move. Johnson said dance has become one of his favorite things to do. Photo by Gabby Norman.

part in trends, and just brings an overall positive and goofy attitude throughout his channel.

"My dad was like, 'We should start finding a way to get you out there,' and we didn't know anything about YouTube," Johnson said. "We've run into problems like copyright and songs and everything like that. My sister, Robbie, was like [TikTok] is a great idea. You have music that you can use, you don't have to get permission to use it, and it would be a great way to get your name out there."

The dream is to eventually get good enough at dancing to make it his career path. He takes inspiration from other more experienced dancers and hopes to one day compete on a larger platform.

"Recently my dad, who is hard to impress, said I impressed him again which makes me pretty proud," Johnson said. "He said I should make a name for myself because Fik-Shun made a name for himself. My dad is thinking that we should make a demo and send it out there and see if someone wants to teach me anything. It's

kind of exciting because I didn't think I would go this far."

Johnson has ADHD, which he said can allow him to hyperfocus in the right direction. He stopped medicating about the time that he started dancing.

"I think dancing really does help me," Johnson said. "ADHD is Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder and you can be distracted from things, but you can also rewire your brain to super focus on one thing. I can edge a yard, it takes me forever; but you can bet that line is perfect. I can focus on dancing and cut out everything else, just focus on the music."

Johnson's dances are a mix of his own creations and trying out other's choreography. He prefers to do his own, but finds that at times, his elaborate and fast dance moves are lost on the untrained eye and aren't appreciated.

"My style is definitely hard to do," Johnson said. "I've tried to copy other people before, and it does not work. I just look goofy. I just do my own thing, it's a mixture of what I've seen and what I know I can do. I usually just freestyle and do what the music tells me to do."

Johnson has fallen in love with dance and its ability to allow him to express himself.

"It's a fantastic outlet for me, it's something to do that I'm good at. I love things I'm good at," Johnson said. "Comparatively, I'm probably better at dancing than anything else I do."

HALLWAY RUNWAY



Faith Banik, 12



Luke Cavallo, 10



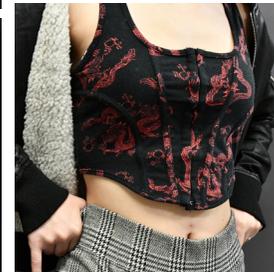
Talmage Hammond, 11



Anthony Lopez, 12



Kane Anderson, 10



Zoe Eschenburg, 11



Rain Buaquen, 11



Mark Willis, 12



Senior Simisola Wale-Sulaiman spends her free time working to create jewelry to sell. Photo by MelieAn William.

Small business showcases senior's creative side

By MelieAn William

Simisola Wale-Sulaiman, 12, took advantage of her summer by pursuing the art of jewelry making.

"I realized I was going into my 12th grade year and I hadn't done anything productive in a way that I could express myself through art and make money at the same time," Wale-Sulaiman said.

She had been inspired by jewelry creators on TikTok and decided to try creating jewelry for herself. She watched tutorials on Pinterest and YouTube and dedicated weeks for practice. Now, she sells her jewelry on various platforms, such as Depop and Instagram. However, this didn't start easily for Simisola.

"I first thought that people were going to judge me and not buy it at all," Wale-Sulaiman said, "but I felt very supported by my parents. Even though [she] didn't have to, my mom bought all the supplies for me and helped me start my business."

Finding a supportive consumer market was not the only problem she faced when starting her jewelry business. Issues that are usually overlooked by new creators, such as sizing and shipping, proved to be just as troublesome.

"A lot of people don't know this, but shipping in America is very expensive," she said. "Even if it's to a local place, it's usually \$3.75 and up. So, you have to add that into the cost of what you're selling...then Depop

is taking another \$2 out of it, [and] you're already down almost \$6."

But these setbacks were not enough to discourage her from creating more jewelry. When she starts to doubt herself, she is encouraged by other small business owners to keep going.

"Even when they realize that they're not getting a lot of sales or that they don't sell the most expensive things, they still push towards being in the market because they know that they're doing it for themselves rather than for the money," Wale-Sulaiman said. "They let their creativity take control."

Wale-Sulaiman lets her creativity take control as well, using her emotions and inspiration from her favorite TV shows like "Freaks and Geeks," to determine the energy she gives to each piece of jewelry.

She hopes to expand her business and create other fashion items, such as tote bags and gemstone jewelry that last longer and are still affordable.

She encourages other students who want to become creative entrepreneurs to go for it.

"You're going to be very anxious and you're going to have a lot of sleepless nights thinking about backing down and doubting yourself, but in the end it's totally worth it... even if you don't complete all the goals you set for yourself, you're completing something greater than yourself and that's what counts."



MACY BANMILLER SOPHOMORE

Sophomore **MACY BANMILLER** has three stick-and-pokes, a DIY form of tattoo. Her personal favorite was printed on her wrist this February. It says "LT", the initials of her favorite artist, Louis Tomlinson.

In addition to the three she already has, Banmiller plans to get another tattoo next year. This time it will be professionally done. She wants a blue heart with some of Tomlinson's lyrics to be printed underneath the LT stick-and-poke.

"He just means a lot to me," Banmiller said. "Great music."

If Banmiller could give one piece of advice to people considering getting tattoos, it would be to make sure the tattoo is meaningful.

"Don't just get something as a joke because it's permanent," Banmiller said.



CHASE FENOGLIO SENIOR

On senior **CHASE FENOGLIO'S** right calf lies a colorful Texas flag with ";IGY6" printed over it. The tattoo represents what Fenoglio is all about. The semicolon represents suicide awareness, and "IGY6" is military terminology for "I got your six", or "I got your back". The Texas flag simply displays Fenoglio's affection for his home state.

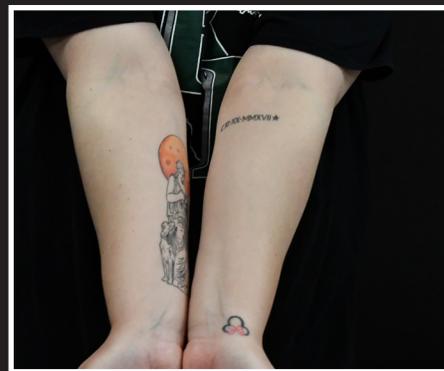
"If I care about you, I got your back, I got your six," Fenoglio said. "It's something I live by."

Fenoglio's tattoo was done at A Touch of Ink, a tattoo studio off of FM 1960. The procedure took around four hours, and, according to Fenoglio, it didn't hurt much. Fenoglio would advise prospective tattoo shop customers to do their research before committing to the procedure.

"Think real hard about it because it's going to be there for a long time," Fenoglio said. "Go to somewhere nice. It may be more expensive, but you're going to get a better tattoo."

tattoo tales

Tattoos are not uncommon among students or staff. Recent studies have shown as many as 30 percent of all Americans have at least one tattoo. Here are some of the stories behind the art. Written by Reece Cavallo.



ASHLEY LA MERE ENGLISH TEACHER

English teacher **ASHLEY LA MERE** has more tattoos than she can count. La Mere struggled to recall just how many tattoos she has accrued over the years, but she estimates a count of about 15, her favorite being the one she recently got to commemorate her daughter's birth. Her daughter's name is Penelope, so La Mere got the Statue of Penelope from the Odyssey on her forearm as well as her daughter's birthday in Greek numerals.

"I work full time," La Mere said. "So when she's home with my mom or my mom is watching her it's just a way to remind me that I'll always have her with me."

La Mere's husband, the designer of the tattoo, has a matching tattoo on his arm as well. The couple wanted to make sure that the tattoo was unique.

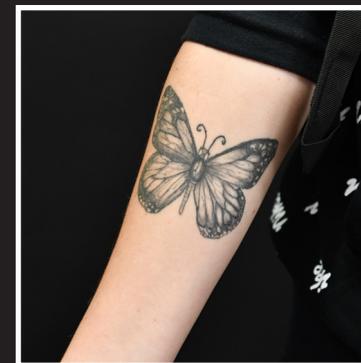
"I didn't want the traditional baby feet tattoo on me," La Mere said. "It's something that's a little more significant."

La Mere, who got her first tattoo when she was 15, has yet to tire of the ink. She still plans on getting one of her tattoos "fixed", and she'd like to get one on her spine. Although La Mere is a fan of body art, she tells people to be careful when considering getting a tattoo.

"Don't make the stupid mistake that I did, like getting one at 15," La Mere said. "Never get a free tattoo. Don't let an apprentice practice on you."

Lastly, La Mere advised not to cheap out on the procedure.

"Price around," La Mere said. "Make sure you get pricey. Make sure your artist knows how to do exactly what you want to do."



BRENNA GAINOUS SENIOR

Senior **BRENNA GAINOUS** got her first tattoo when she was sixteen, having to drive out to Louisiana where it was legal for someone her age. Her current favorite is the butterfly she received this summer. The tattoo was done in memory of her late sister.

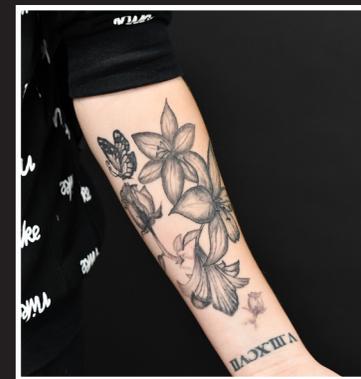
"Her soul animal is a butterfly," Gainous said. "So every time we see a butterfly we're like 'Aw, that's my sister.'"

In October, she added lily flowers, roses and more butterflies. The addition took 3-4 days and was also to symbolize her late sister.

Gainous' tattoo was designed and applied by her friend's uncle, who did an impressive job, especially considering that he's an amateur. Her procedure only took about three hours and was, according to Gainous, pretty painless. Gainous plans on getting a lot more tattoos; potentially even a neck tat.

Her advice to people considering getting a tattoo would be to get something that really means something to them.

"Make sure they're actually meaningful," Gainous said. "Like make sure you don't just get it because it looks good."



LUKE GORNEY SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER/COACH

Above soccer coach and teacher **LUKE GORNEY'S** heart lies a reminder of his time spent in the military. The tattoo reads "BK 31", an abbreviation for Black Knight Three-One, his Army call sign during his stint in Iraq. "Generally it's a good memory," Gorney said. "It reminds me of my troops."

Gorney had his tattoo printed in Spring, Texas, in 2010. According to Gorney, the procedure was painless and took a mere 30 minutes. He plans to have it enhanced once he secures his wife's permission.

For those looking to get a tattoo, Gorney advises to make sure you know what you're really getting into.

"Understand how permanent it is," Gorney said. "And then if you plan on doing it, I would watch the Smarter Every Day episode on how a tattoo works because they go in and they show you what the tattoo needle does to your skin.



And then you'll either be like 'I'm good with that' or 'ooh, maybe not!'"

If the inking process doesn't make you squemish, Gorney says to make sure the tattoo stands for something you believe is important.

"You want to make it something meaningful if you're gonna do it," Gorney said. "For me it was just a unique thing about remembering my military service. I wouldn't just do it on a whim."

Bennett keeps building his legacy

By Kathleen Ortiz

Carter Bennett set down his drill, and the rest of the students working on the Tiny Home gravitated toward him. Some called his name and waited for Carter to give them new tasks. Others waited underneath his ladder, ready to pass him tools as soon as he asked.

As this year's Tiny Home head architect, Carter designed the floor plans for the Kingwood and Kingwood Park Tiny Homes and leads the Kingwood Park building group.

"He does a lot," architecture teacher Missi Taylor said. "The kids listen to him. When they have questions and I'm not here they ask him. He's dependable, reliable. Aside from me, they go to him."

Once or twice a week he also goes to Kingwood High School to help teacher Shellie Dick and his students with their first tiny home.

"He loves it when Carter's there because Carter explains what they need to be doing, where they need to be doing it," Taylor said. "For us, all these guys know him. For Kingwood High School, they don't know him but they respect him."

Carter helps reinforce the fact that the Tiny Home is a student-led project. When he isn't helping do that at Kingwood, he works on the newest Kingwood Park tiny home during 2nd, 3rd and 4th periods.

Carter's been building whatever he could get his hands on since he was a little kid. He put together 3D puzzles, model airplanes and many LEGO sets. "We would get LEGO sets and they wouldn't last very long," Carter's mom, Amy Bennett, said. "It was amazing. We would be like, 'this would last maybe an afternoon.'"

In middle school, his building became more serious when he took two manufacturing classes. Since learning how to build pens in that class, he's made pens out of deer antlers and scraps from the Tiny Home counters.

"Anything he gets his hands on he can make a pen out of," Amy Bennett said.

Carter joined architecture his freshman year and said that the evaluation to become lead architect started the



Senior Carter Bennett drills part of the frame of this year's Tiny Home, which he designed. He is working on the Kingwood Park's fourth Tiny Home, while also helping Kingwood High School build their first. Photo by Kathleen Ortiz.

Senior Carter Bennett competes in the backstroke during a meet against Summer Creek in September. Photo by Alicyn Logue.



first time Taylor met him. For two and a half years he proved his ability to work well with others and his interest in the Tiny Home and holding a leadership position.

"You work your way up and she'll choose you," Carter said. "If you slack off and stuff she's not going to come to you."

Halfway through the last Tiny Home, Taylor had Carter work closely with last year's lead architect Parker Ryan in order to understand what his roles would be this year.

"[Architecture] has just turned into something so amazing [for Carter] and it's kind of guiding him in what he wants to do in college," Amy Bennett said.

While Architecture takes up a lot of Carter's time, his unique schedule

was made to accommodate his heavy involvement in both school and club swim teams as well.

After his one period of swim and three of architecture, his only other classes on campus are art and aerospace. Carter took English, Government and Economics online with Lone Star College over this past summer and now takes calculus online with there as well.

"I manage my time very well," Carter said. "Tiny Homes has its own time slot and then swim has its own."

Carter's been to the state swim meet every year, bringing home a bronze medal in the 200 medley relay, a silver medal in the medley relay and a bronze medal in the 400 free relay. He also broke the record for the 200 IM three times last season.

"He works hard and does what he needs to do," Amy said. "To get to that day where you need to perform healthy and well and ready to go, that's hard. And when you see that and you see it come to fruition it's amazing. And I'm excited for him because you want to see hard work pay off."

He described this year's swim team as small and new. He is one of only three seniors. His goals for this season are to medal in an individual event and get his name on the record board two more times, this time in the 500 freestyle and the 100 breaststroke. He uses his record as motivation.

"Just in the middle of practice when you just have no motivation you can look up there and be like 'I want to do that again,'" Carter said.

Similar to looking up at the record board in swim, Carter watches his own drawings become real in both the Kingwood and Kingwood Park Tiny Homes. While they won't be going home with him at the end of the year, like his state swim medals, they'll be going to something bigger.

"It's truly amazing to see my idea come to life and then you get to give it to a veteran in need when it's all done," Carter said.



Greg McLain stands with his bike after the Iron Man 70.3 World Championship. Photo submitted by Greg McLain.

John Dissinger celebrates after he won the national championship in an open water swim event. Photo submitted by John Dissinger.



Health goals inspire swim coaches

By Arleigh Doehring

Within a year of each other, coaches John Dissinger and Greg McLain started a training regimen to help them achieve their goals for healthier lifestyles. Both men have found their own individual niches in terms of exercise type, but one thing is similar — their drive.

"I was pretty unhealthy. I didn't exercise, I didn't eat right, I was overweight. Overall, living a pretty unhealthy life," McLain said. "Now, I train every day, about two to three hours a day depending on the time and the season. A byproduct of that is eating better. Eating was never the goal but it was a byproduct of training."

In May 2018, McLain started training for his first Iron Man. After only training for six weeks, he did a sprint Iron Man in Katy.

"It was tough, it showed me how far I had to go," McLain said. "It motivated me to keep going."

In 2019, Dissinger started training for open water swim meets. When he started, he knew he didn't want to do meets but he just wanted to race again.

"[When I first started] I set a goal to do the Alcatraz swim and it got canceled from COVID," Dissinger said. "I found other races to do. Hopefully soon I can do Alcatraz like I wanted."

The coaches find time each day to train for their events; and in March 2022, the two will both be competing in the Lake Longhorn Splash and Dash.

"Every race is a struggle at some point," McLain said. "There comes a point where you ask yourself, 'Why did you decide to do this?'"

"You have to fight through that. By the time that you reach the finish line, you are happy you did it and you can't wait to do another one. I just think back to Coach Dissinger and his greatness, which motivates me to finish."

Watson runs personal best in Boston Marathon

By Arleigh Doehring

Boston had been waiting for its world-famous marathon to come back since 2019. The morning of the competition, there was a crowd standing by ready to cheer on the runners and their loved ones. Golf coach Jason Watson and his wife were among the crowd with their shoes laced and ready to race.

"The course experience and the crowds were fantastic," Watson said. "Boston was glad to have their marathon back after a long layoff from COVID. It was a very electric atmosphere."

After taking the bus to Hopkinton State Park for the start, Watson and his wife were lined up and ready to run. Watson crossed the start line at 9:08 a.m.

"My first goal was to finish and the second goal was to break three hours which I did once before and on a perfect day," Watson said.

He knew it would not be easy on the course set up in Boston, however.

"It was a very hilly course, we don't have a lot of hills to train on here," Watson said. "I think we went three or four times to drive and find some hills but it's a very hilly and very difficult course. I guess that's how it's different from every marathon I've done."

Originally, Watson started running to lose weight because he struggled with back and knee pain. After he started running, he realized he was losing weight and as a result the pain stopped hurting. After about two to three years of running, he decided to run in his first marathon and the rest is history.

This year's Boston Marathon was his 8th marathon. He finished in a time of 2:56.27.

"I set a personal best," he said. "It's the fastest I have ever run a marathon which at 46 years old, I'm pretty happy with."



Coach Jason Watson and his wife Dr. Haley Watson after they finished the Boston Marathon on Oct. 11. Photo submitted by Jason Watson

Sophomore caps season with strong showing at State

By Gabby Norman

Out of the 152 girls at the 5A state cross country competition, more than half of the athletes were upperclassmen. Sophomore Elina Bailey outran more than half of them to finish 58th overall with a time of 19:28. “I think that the experience was a positive one, where she learned what it’s like to make that trip and run that meet,” coach Cody Cook said. “She did an amazing job and really ‘attacked’ the course. There are many times that the event becomes bigger than the athlete and they run timid. She did not let that happen and she ran very well.”

Going into the state competition, Bailey was nervous, but she trusted herself and Cook’s training and advice.

Her goal was to set a personal record and break the 19-minute mark. She had only reached that

mark during the Melon Run, but since it is not at an official meet, it didn’t count under UIL rules.

Bailey said her success is promoted by her support system. “My team and my family and my coach, they all support me,” Bailey said. “I just have learned to trust the coach’s process, all of his little plans, they really help me.”

Bailey is in cross country, track, and cheer; but cross country is by far her favorite due to the team atmosphere and sisterhood. She is inspired to run by her older sister, who ran at Kingwood Park and graduated in 2019. Bailey intends to return to state and continue to improve over the next few years.

“I was expecting it to be a big meet, but I did much better than I thought I did,” Bailey said.

For now, she will continue to practice and improve her form, which is one of the biggest aspects of her run. One thing that won’t change is her pre-race tradition.



Sophomore Elina Bailey runs in the district cross country meet. Bailey ran in both the region and state cross country meets as well. Photo by Arleigh Doehring.

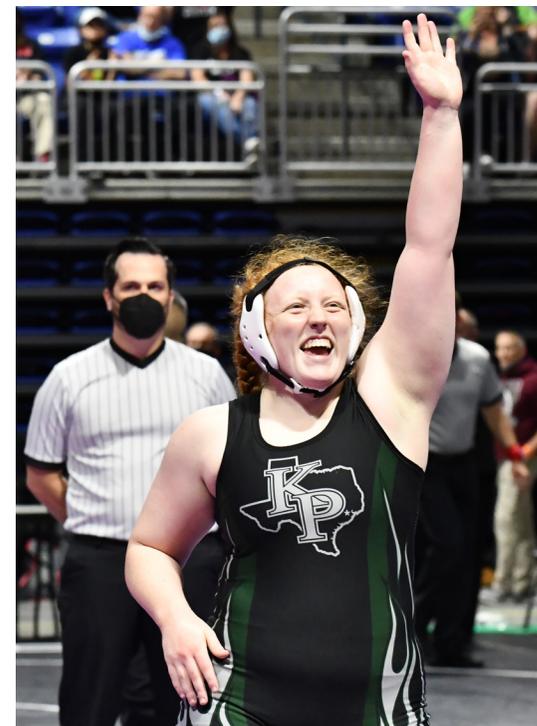
“The braids are something I have to have,” Bailey said. “We braid our hair on the bus before we compete. We really are like a family.”

Cook has big plans for Bailey, including her making another appearance at state. Bailey is the fifth athlete Cook has taken to state in his career, and his third overall. “She can definitely keep taking time off her 5K and her track event times,” Cook said. “She has a very exciting track season upcoming

where I think she is really going to take off.”

Bailey has become a leader on the team, with a quiet but hard-working demeanor.

“Elina is a pillar of our squad,” Cook said. “She brings a lot of quiet confidence to the team and the girls really feed off that. She epitomizes what it’s like to be a student-athlete at Kingwood Park and really shows what hard work and dedication can accomplish.”



Senior Lexi Shannon celebrates after winning the state title for her weight class last spring. Photo by Katie Gerbasich.

Return of full season excites wrestlers

By Derriq Young

As the wrestling team continues to undergo rigorous preparation for the upcoming season, wrestlers are ready for the big return after the delayed start last year due to COVID.

“I think we have a great chance to get a lot of kids to regionals this year and that’s the biggest thing. Getting to a full season after last year with COVID we had a real shortened season,” wrestling coach Jeff Knight said. “I’m just looking forward to them improving everyday and peak in February and make it to regionals.”

This year the wrestling team will compete in tournaments instead of only duals, meaning now they’ll be competing against more people and increasing their number of matches.

Coach Knight expects his team to rise to the challenge while continuing to go all out, leaving everything on the mat and ultimately maximizing their chances of making it to regionals.

“The biggest thing is that we’re going to have to be really physical,” Knight said. “Friendswood has the top teams, boys and girls, so they have a lot of returners and we’re going to have to be able to match-up with them and get faster, stronger and just continue to work on our technique.”

Defending 215-pound state champion Lexi Shannon is getting physically and mentally prepared for the start of her senior season. She hopes to repeat at state and also hopes a few of her teammates join her at the state championships.

“They’re going to have to learn the moves and really how to wrestle and they’re also going to have to put in the work,” Shannon said. “They’re going to have to have a goal because this sport isn’t one where you can just go in and not have a vision of where you want to be, so they need to know what they want to get out of it.”

That vision is key, according to Knight. “Wrestling is a tough sport and a lot of it is mental,” Knight said. “If you believe you can do it then that’s the biggest part.”

Wilson ready for final season

By Gabby Norman

Savannah Wilson’s grandfather has been one of the biggest influences throughout her basketball career. He introduced her to the sport the senior has been playing since she was 4. There’s only one catch — he hated basketball.

“He hates basketball but when I went to his house he’d play with me,” Wilson said. “After that, I played with church teams or little travel teams, and between seventh and eighth grade I played AAU.”

Wilson was born in North Carolina and then moved to Georgia two years later. She moved to Texas toward the end of fifth grade and spent her freshman and sophomore years at Kingwood High School before transferring to Kingwood Park.

“I moved houses and I thought this would be a better fit for me academically,” Wilson said.

Wilson has become a leader for the Panthers after just one season. She believes it’s her attitude that draws the others to her.

“We work really well together; there’s no separate cliques, we all laugh together, we mess around,



Senior Savannah Wilson looks to make a pass against Magnolia in the team’s 48-30 victory on Nov. 16. Photo by Arleigh Doehring.

and we’re pretty close as a team,” Wilson said. “Last year we went 26-1, were undefeated in district, and lost the third round of playoffs. We do have a lot of new people, it’s good to have their experience and numbers.”

This year, the Panthers are currently ranked No. 15 in 5A. Wilson has already committed to play college and has been nominated as Houston’s VYPE Preseason Girls Player of the Year.

“I’m committed to Siena College in New York,” Wilson said. “It’s

Div. I, so I plan to go up there. I’m excited, I hate the heat.”

Over the past year, Wilson has been working on improving her game and her relationship with teammates. Her philosophy is that basketball is just a game, so one needs to make it fun.

“I’m a jokester, I like to have fun, but I take things seriously when they need to be serious,” Wilson said. “I just like to play, it’s my own little world.”

Basketball remains Hamilton’s passion

By Gabby Norman

Jeffrey Hamilton started playing basketball when he was 4 years old. The head basketball coach played at Humble High School, graduated in 2000, and then went to play four years at Florida Atlantic University.

“After graduating I couldn’t imagine doing anything that didn’t involve basketball,” Hamilton said. “Getting to know these young men and building relationships is the best part about coaching. I hope to impact their lives in a positive way that will affect them for their entire lives.”

He started his coaching career as a graduate assistant at Campbellsville University for two years and then coached eight years at Graceland University, seven years of those were spent as head coach.

He coached one year at Aldine Davis High School before arriving at Kingwood Park six years ago.

The relationships being built on the court are a main focus for the boys teams this year.

“They are more similar than different; this team gets along really well and has great chemistry on and off the court,” Hamilton said. “They care more about the team’s success than individual success, which is very similar to last year’s team.”

Chemistry on and off the court is one of the most important aspects in the game.

The boys varsity team has also experienced some change, most of it being from new students both



HAMILTON

this year and last.

“We’ve been very fortunate to get several move-ins during my time at KPark,” Hamilton said. “What’s impressive is that not only are they good basketball players, but they have been great teammates and human beings. It’s easy to coach players who are good people.”

The teams are looking forward to the season, with high hopes and expectations of a playoff run on both sides. The boy’s varsity team is full of experienced players hoping to make their final year the best yet.

“The great thing about this team is all 12 can play; at any time any one of them could make a huge impact on the game,”

WHY I PLAY

- Renee Alcala, Swim**
“Definitely my coaches and the people I’ve swam club with for my whole life that I’ve done it. They’re just always there to push me and make me a better person.”
- Matti McDaniel, Basketball**
“I originally wanted to play soccer so my mom went to go sign me up for a soccer class but they didn’t have a soccer class where she signed me up. They had a basketball class so I was like, ‘OK, I’ll give that a shot.’”
- Walter Rodee, Soccer**
“I’ve played it my whole life, my parents got me into it. I keep playing because I’m used to playing everyday and I really enjoy it.”
- Quinn Keeler, Basketball**
“My team every year. Every year we’ve done well and we’ve progressed.”
- Brynn Baldon, Soccer**
“My sister used to play and my parents thought I should play. I also really enjoy playing the game and the praise for playing.”
- Chris Rosser, Swim**
“Probably my mother because the way she supports me is unbelievable.”
- Francesco Tartamella, Rugby**
“It’s fun, I like the team sport part and I like it when we travel to play.”

STAFF EDITORIAL

Grades should not be allowed on group projects

Group projects seem like a great way for students to collaborate and show their creativity. However, in reality group projects are a nightmare.

Whether the group is assigned or chosen, group projects give some people free grades while others just gain stress and anxiety. Teachers should give individual projects to students instead. Individual projects show students' knowledge, help them retain information and allow students to be creative.

Some people like group projects because they get to work with their friends. However, that doesn't always work for the best. A person can have many friends in a class, yet if all their friends have other friends as well in the same class they can be left without a partner for the project. In that case, they would be stuck with a random person in class, contra-

dicting the intent of choosing groups. In other circumstances, people will be asked to work on projects and feel pressured into saying yes. Chosen or assigned, groups are a lose-lose situation. The statement "choose your group wisely" is engraved in students' brains; but for many, even if given the option, their group isn't a choice.

Students usually have fun working with other people; but when they have to depend on them for a grade, problems arise. Nobody wants to do extra work. High schoolers procrastinate enough, so when they have to pick up someone else's work at the last minute it doesn't usually work for the better.

Projects are supposed to be an easy summative with effort: no studying, no memorization and fun. The fun is taken out of the project when one person is doing

the work of three. The whole idea of a creative project is ruined for the person who is doing the work of multiple people. Though projects are supposed to be a nice break from tests, it doesn't seem that way when at the last minute someone tells you they can't do their only part of the project.

All summative assessments cause stress to students who care about their grades; but when students are relying on others to do their part, that increases stress levels even further. No matter what the project is, learning at midnight that half of the final project is not complete because a group member did not do their part leaves students with no sleep, low quality projects, stress and spite towards collaboration and the class.

However, if everyone would be given individual grades for a project it would ensure each

person was doing their work and retaining the information while including the collaboration aspect.

Individual projects show a student's application and extent of the material and leave the work to an individual student, therefore, showing what that individual knows. The individual is the only one responsible for completing the project and the only one affected by the grade.

While group projects are a nightmare for most, it's a free grade for others. There are better ways to teach students how to collaborate. Individually graded projects decrease stress on students and eliminate students being rewarded for watching their classmates work. No one will ever do equal work on a group project if the project is being graded as a whole.

EDITOR'S COLUMN

Relief hits as college application process finally begins

As of today, I have submitted one college application. I submitted it at 8:30 pm on Halloween, more than 24 hours before the Early Decision deadline. The process was draining, and I was more than deserving of the confetti the CommonApp website displayed when I had finally submitted my application.

Finally, the essays were done. No more revisions could be made. No more second guessing – no more typing and then deleting.

I don't think many people understand just how much time and effort is required to complete the CommonApp or ApplyTexas in full. After all, I didn't understand the big deal about trying not to cram on college applications until I opened them for the first time in September.

The whole CommonApp application is tedious. While my mom graded papers on one couch, I worked on my application on the other, turning to her every once in a while for help on oddly specific questions my application was asking.

I cannot imagine having to do the whole process alone, for multiple reasons. For one, I needed my parents' help for specific questions, such as when they graduated college or where they kept my social security card. On top of

that, my parents helped me stay motivated.

I know that it isn't this way in all households, but my parents have been talking about college with my sisters and I since we were really young. They both went to public colleges, remember their time fondly and use their degrees.

My parents encouraged me to work hard in school and they drove me to robotics club, the library and karate, where I got my brown belt before I was in third grade. They supported me in everything I wanted to try. They cheered me on at choir concerts and spent their own birthdays at my soccer tournaments.

Thanks to their support, I had big college goals when I was younger. I wanted to go to Columbia University for the longest

time, and many of my Christmas gifts consisted of college t-shirts. Whether it was Rice, Vanderbilt, Texas A&M or The University of Iowa, I have a good share of gear.

They both went to public colleges, but a lot has changed since they applied. I was nervous that they wouldn't understand or I would be all alone in the process since I'm their oldest kid, but they've listened to all of my research and done their own.

I'm not done applying yet, but finishing my first application was a big weight off of my shoulders. I know that for everyone applying for college might not take as much effort or time, but I appreciate my parents taking the time to talk through decisions with me and supporting every goal I have, no matter how far I'm reaching.



KATHLEEN ORTIZ

Swift's re-recording impresses fans, again

By Rhian Davis

Taylor Swift, an artist that has remained heavily in the spotlight for the last 15 years, has finally released the long awaited re-record of her 2012 album *Red*. The record was announced in June and fans have waited five long months to hear Taylor's Version of the "sad girl fall" album.

Swift was relatively silent in the five months following the announcement of the album. Fans came up with theories almost every week, anticipating a lead single. The previous re-record, *Fearless*, had three singles before the full album was released so fans were excited to see what Swift would put out for *Red (Taylor's Version)*. Despite all the excitement, the single never came.

In the announcement tweet for *Red (TV)*, Swift stated that the album would be out in November and "[it] will be the first time you hear all 30 songs that were meant to go on *Red*," and she wasn't lying. However, even without any singles from the album, Swift has stayed incredibly relevant and the anticipation for *Red (TV)* skyrocketed as the release date neared.

Nine years later and emotions still run strong throughout the album. With the original 20 songs and 10 tracks from the vault, the album is a whopping two hours and 11 minutes long. *Red (TV)* includes songs featuring artists Ed Sheeran, Phoebe Bridgers, Gary Lightbody and Chris Stapleton.

The re-recording process has already been monumental for Swift and fans alike. Swift gets the opportunity to take back what is hers and fans get to relive every iconic era. Each song on *Red (TV)* is so powerful and really makes



Eva Rinaldi/Flickr

Which Red (TV) song is your favorite?

"All Too Well (10 Minute Version)"	Emily Smith	"I Bet You Think About Me"	Hannah Dalby
"Stay, Stay, Stay"	Dylan Lee, 12	"Holy Ground"	Katherine Eckerty
"Babe"	Makenna Cottle	"Better Man"	Aislinn Garza, 12
"Nothing New"	Dana Herrera, 10	"22"	Grace Byrd
"Red"	Abbey Papadimitriou, 9	"Message In A Bottle"	Yusra Hasan
"I Almost Do"	Adah Ochocha	"Sad Beautiful Tragic/Treacherous"	Sophie Clark

the listener feel. It is an album that dives into heartbreak and that can be heard on tracks such as "All Too Well" and "The Moment I Knew." Classic hits such as "22" and "We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together" feel even stronger than they did before.

Swift has proven time and time again that she is an incredible songwriter and while that was clear with the original tracks, it is reinforced with the vault tracks. "Nothing New" featuring Phoebe Bridgers is a gut wrenching song that explores the feelings of being scared for what the future holds. For Swift, this relates directly to her career. As a woman in the industry, she is constantly thinking of how to reinvent herself. Her emotions really shine with lyrics such as "Will you still want me when I'm nothing new?" The track was written fully by Swift and with the addition of Bridgers, it has the potential to become a quick fan favorite.

Almost every fan of Swift knows how iconic "All Too Well" is. It has become a very meaningful song between Swift and her diehard fans so when she announced that *Red* would include the 10-minute version, Swifties went crazy. The song dives even further into the whirlwind heartbreak that was the Swift/Jake Gyllenhaal relationship and it leaves listeners feeling as if they experienced it all right next to Swift. Strong emotion can be heard throughout the song and each new lyric hurts more than the last.

Taylor Swift is arguably the best artist of our generation. Knowing that she finally owns songs that define such a big part of her career is a phenomenal feeling. *Red (TV)* is showstopping and it begs to be heard by the masses. Whether you're a diehard Swiftie or you've never made the effort to listen to her music before, take a few minutes today to appreciate the masterpiece that is this album.

WHAT'S HOT?

Taco line
Shoutout to Ms. Eliana Gomez who makes the best tacos and even memorized our orders.

Extra credit
Every point counts, especially on tests. Thanks for the help.

Women in suits
Gaslight, gatekeep, girlboss.

Noodle the Pug
Whether it's a bones day or not, we're just happy to see Noodle.

7th period sports
Showering at your own house > showering at school.

Bell bottoms
Bringing back the '70s is far out.

Music in the hallways
Jamming out before class makes every day better.

WHAT'S NOT?

Kissing in the hallways
Tongue? In the hallway?
How are you not embarrassed?

Gatekeeping
Let people enjoy what they want to.

Hitting on teachers
What if that was your mom or dad?

1st period
We're too tired for this.

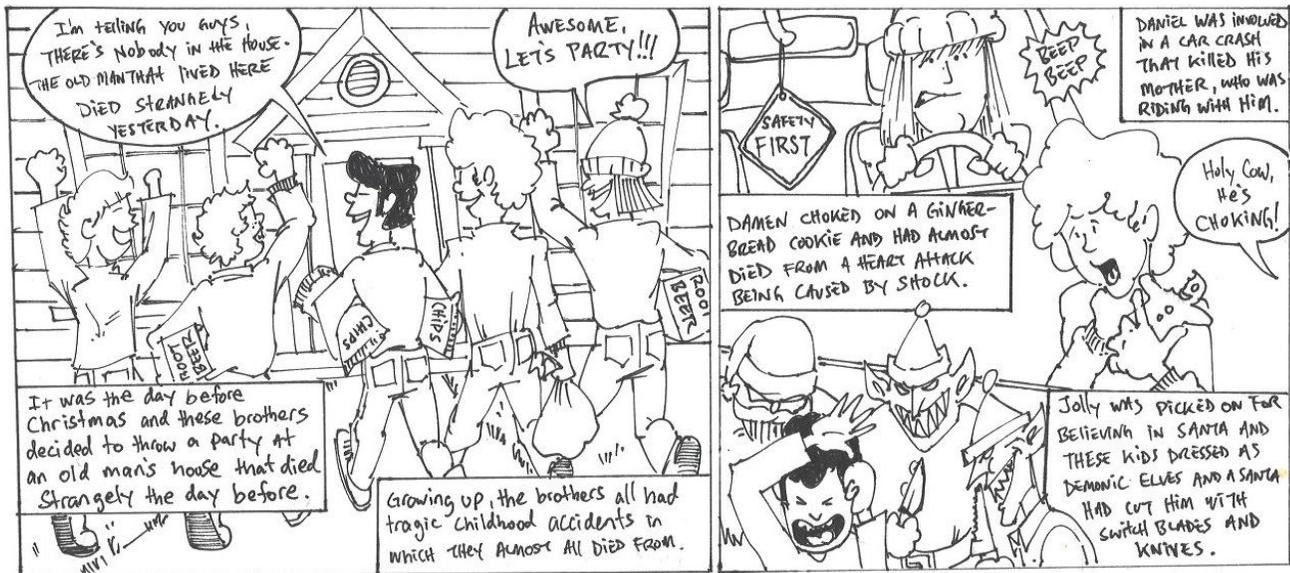
Mondays
Can we go to three-day weekends yet?

Assignments due in class
Are you really going to grade it today? Just let me take it home.

Getting new material the day before the test
Why? Just why?

PARANORMAL CHRISTMAS

Story by Patrick Kovar
Artwork by Miguel Alvarez



PARANORMAL CHRISTMAS

