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The conspiracies culture

An explanation into the impetus of conspiracy theory creations and the dangers that come about when one dives too deep

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Illustration by Sarah Cabrales

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Questions rise with the advancement of AI, teachers react

Story by **Sophia Sardiña** Staff writer

The ominous cursor repeatedly winks back at you, taunting, daring, and tormenting you to finish your term paper due at 11:59 p.m.. The temptation to turn to an easy outlet is too strong to resist as a fateful deadline approaches; that outlet comes in the form of Chat GPT.

When one thinks of artificial intelligence, images are conjured of murderous robots roaming the empty soulless streets. But in reality, AI is more accessible and pervasive than ever. In recent events, AI has shifted from only being able to process content to being able to process and create content like digital paintings and writing.

This tool of being able to create its own content has sparked questions as to what to do with students using these new programs that write essays through programs like Chat Generative Pre-Trained Transformer and Ryter. Chat GPT generates texts based on data and information gathered from the internet in a clear and easy way to understand.

Although the use of the AI writing tool has been improving the lives of some workers as it is used to churn out small articles for a company's blog or a small marketing campaign according to EuroNews, the main concern for this advanced technology is students.

"The process of technology has always been to make our lives easier," English teacher and sophomore dean Philip Bryan said. "However, I don't know if AI has had or will have an impact on students and

their writing." With the rise in the usage of AI writing programs, teachers have been discussing what to do with this new information. Chief Academic Officer Rebecca Brady believes that it could be used with some additional guidelines, although there are shared concerns among administrators.

"We are all excited about it," Brady said. "But with that, comes a little fear, since we are still brainstorming on what to do."

This meeting, an optional one to talk about AI and its possible effects, not only raised the question of the usage of AI and writing, but also the future of teaching.

"Some comments were about the impact of teaching," Brady said. "We don't know if this is going to change what it means to be a teacher."

English teacher and English Department Chair Tolly Salz worries about the future of teaching.

"Information is at the tip of everyone's fingertips," Salz said. "Knowing that as educators, we have to think about the objectives and philosophically ask what is the purpose of teaching?"

But AI can also be seen as an opportunity to elaborate learning and benefit both students and teachers.

"This is a beautiful opportunity," Salz said. "It's a great opportunity to help educators understand the purpose of educating and how to better it."

However, in the face of the issue, there are some easily detectable pros and cons that come with AI. Many inquire whether or not AI writing could be beneficial to English students as it could provide a "zero" or rough draft.

"AI does solve the problem of the blank page," Bryan said. "For a lot of students, I think this is a great way for them to get a good first draft in."

In addition to solving the problem of the rough draft, Salz believes that AI can also be a good organizer, as it provides students with information in an efficient and clean manner.

"AI can produce something that gives students information and details," Salz said. "But, it does not give the analysis, it doesn't have beautiful language that is evocative of voice."

The consequence of using AI as an organizer for details is that it sometimes provides false information that it gathers from the internet.

"It's going to take further programming for it to figure out what's accurate and what's not," Bryan said. "It's working with everything from the internet, and some information hasn't been fact checked."

However, the incorrect information given by AI isn't what is concerning most English teachers. Many of them are beginning to face the question of this work quality.

"To me, the wrong question to ask is if AI wrote this or did my student," Bryan said. "The question should be does this have human qualities."

From there, teachers are able to detect the monotone writing that AI produces as it lacks the aspects of human writing.

"Yes, we are looking for something technically factual," Bryan said. "But we look for the human creativity, the messy beauty that comes from human writing."

With all being said, the general opinion towards AI at ESD is not to ban it or to neglect the idea of using it, but rather to understand how to use it and embrace it.

"For our community, we are going to think about what's best for students and teachers," Brady said. "And I think embracing it with some precautions and finding ways to talk about it is the best way to go."

The main concern given by most teachers is not whether or not students will use this opportunity to cheat, but if it changes the standard of students' writing.

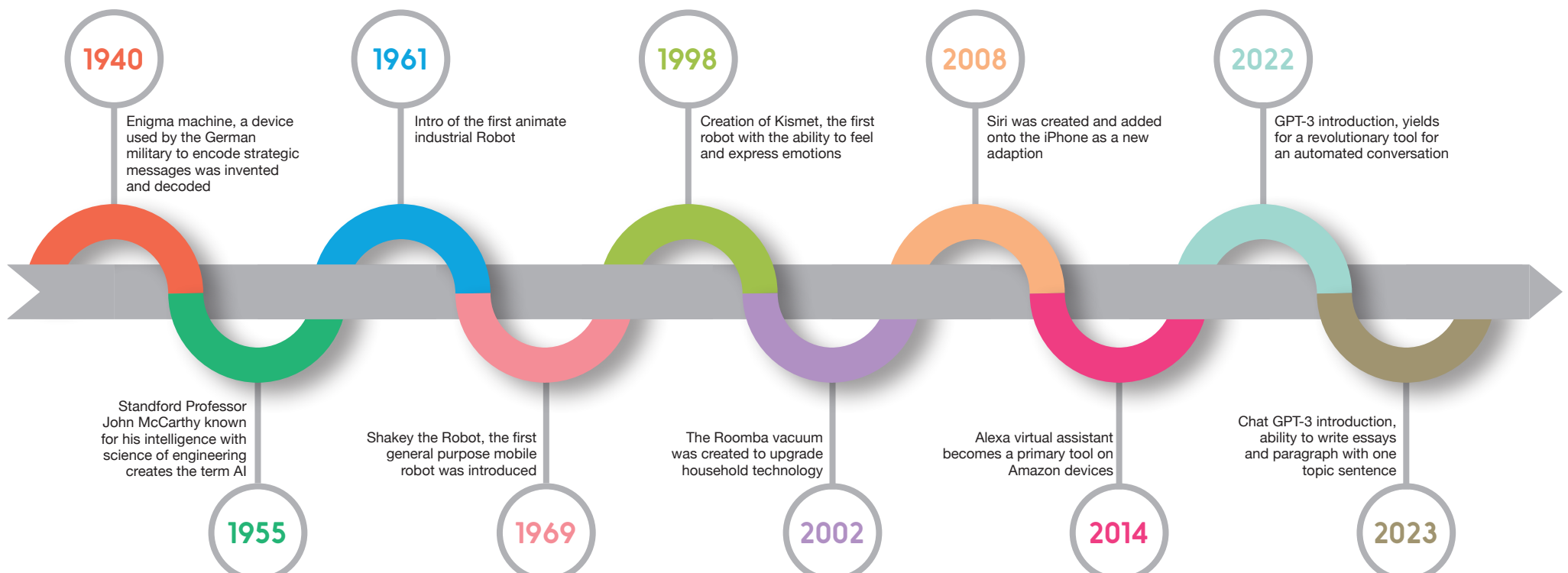
"My real fear of AI is not that it exists and not that the kids will cheat," Bryan said. "My real fear is that we will become content with something that is average."

"Information is at the tip of our finger tips. Knowing that, we as educators have to think about the objectives and philosophically ask ourselves what is the purpose of teaching?"

Tolly Salz

English teacher and English department chair

THE EVOLUTION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



DOWN TO EARTH

India's population climbs above China's

Story and photos by **Charlotte Traylor** Staff Writer

For the past year, nations across the globe have boasted the birth of the 8 billionth baby. Census keeping is imperfect, so this benchmark is merely a guess, but the occasion is still celebrated for many newborns with cakes, parties or traditional customs. The Dominican Republic, India, Croatia and others have claimed this 8 billionth baby, as humans climb to exciting and scary numbers.

Each life form experiences population booms or busts, in response to their biological environment. This is true for Homo sapiens, but is further complicated by the intelligence of our species.

Humans have a unique ability to self regulate their numbers, in hopes of evading the carrying capacity and the following consequences. A carrying capacity is the population limit of a species based upon resource availability. Humans have a tendency to experience unregulated growth as well.

India is set to surpass China in number, currently enduring a stretch of "unlimited" growth. Other nations experience the consequences of self regulation, like China, whose population has almost flatlined in the past decades. While India has not taken a census since 2015, it is estimated that there were 24 million births in 2022, compared to China's 10 million, according to National Public Radio and CNN. On a larger scale, global population growth per 50 years dropped from 2 percent to 1 percent recently.

India's population boom in recent years can be attributed to improvement in healthcare systems and decline in female abortions and infanticide, according to an NPR article published on Jan. 4. Female abortions stem from a cultural preference for boy babies; and with the high cost of living in Indian cities, families often can only support one child, who they hope to be male. But strides have been made towards eliminating this prejudice. The "Save the Girl, Educate the Girl" movement promoted women's education and the value of women in society. Ultrasounds were also banned in India, to prevent abortion of female children before birth.

The modernization of urban India has invited available healthcare to pregnant women and newborns, increasing the likelihood that children survive to adulthood. Mothers are receiving education on their personal nutrition and child raising.

"That dramatic drop [in death rate] is credited at least in part to better overall health outcomes from better access to medical care in cities, rather than the countryside," NPR Journalist Lauren Frayer said in an article that aired Jan. 4. "And these children will find a brighter future than the newborns of past decades."

Even with such improvements, urban birth rate is lower than the rural birth rate, hovering at 1.7 children per family opposed to 2.4. Rural families tend to have more children so that their offspring can work to support their families, which in turn boosts their national population count, as stated in the same NPR article.

Across the continent, China struggles with a different issue after their response to overpopulation in the 1980s, the implementation of the one child policy. The population was successfully controlled, but this decision resulted in a gender imbalance as families pre-

ferred male offspring and aborted females. In 2015, the policy was revoked, but the population is yet to recover from this blow; there is a lack of women of age to become mothers. China now encourages families to have three children, even offering monetary rewards and extended maternity leave for childbirth. Regardless of such efforts, the high costs necessary to raise children overshadow other incentives to have larger families.

"There has been a decrease in the number of women of childbearing age, a continued decline in fertility, changes in attitudes toward childbearing and delays of marriage by young people," Ning Jizhe, head of the National Bureau of Statistics, said to state media on Jan. 17.

According to a report by the New York Times, the Chinese government declared that the death rate surpassed the birth rate in China for the first time since the 1960s. There were 9.56 million

births but 10.4 million deaths. Finally, Tokyo continues to overcrowd as inhabitant numbers reach 37 million. Japan is offering 1 million yen (\$8,000 U.S.) for families to move to rural areas, in order to revitalize the countryside towns and increase birth rate that has decreased with urbanization. Yet again, the high living cost in urban areas limits birth rates, coupled with Japan's high life expectancy. The government is supporting child care services



CLOSE QUARTERS
23 million people live in Dhaka, Bangladesh, pushing the capacity of this already crowded city.



POLLUTION PROBLEMS
With a growing population, coal emissions reach new heights in China and across Asia.



A LONGER COMMUTE
On average, people waste 11 days per year stuck in traffic in Mumbai.



POPULATION SOARS
The 8 billionth child was born this year, but the benchmark will be official on July 11.



JAPANESE FAMILIES
Are offered up to 1 million yen (\$8,000 U.S.) to move out of Tokyo.

to encourage birth as well, to achieve a stronger upward trend in population.

The population growth seen in India, China, Japan and across the world is natural, but also unique considering that humans are k-strategists, a grouping of species whose populations fluctuate around the carrying capacity. K-strategists have restricted growth rates compared to r-strategists, who can rapidly expand their population. R strategists are typically insects, rodents or weeds, but the human growth patterns in the past few centuries almost matches that of an r-strategist. It was not until 1805 that humans reached 1 billion inhabitants; but a mere 12 years were sufficient to reach 8 billion inhabitants from 7 billion. This raises concern for the increased levels of carbon emissions and waste on our planet.

"Our atmosphere is overloaded with the gases that we expel in the processes that keep our civilization going. It's getting warmer out there, we're having more erratic weather patterns, we're pushing the extremes of weather," Alan Wiseman, author of "Countdown: Our Last, Best Hope for a Future on Earth?," said in an interview for NPR. "And the atmosphere doesn't stop up there in the air. The ocean absorbs it, so seas are getting warmer, they're expanding and they're rising and they're getting acidic."

Of course, any nation with a large population is a major consumer and contributor to climate change. China uses unprecedented amounts of coal to power their nation. But smaller, wealthy, industrialized nations like the United States or the United Kingdom also have a dangerous impact. American consumerism is greater than most other nations, because many can afford to splurge on excessive amounts of water or electricity, for example. Even though America's overconsumption is worse than India, the South Asian subcontinent is affected more by global warming, with worsened monsoon seasons.

"In order to understand our impact on this world, you have to multiply our numbers by our amount of consumption," Wiseman said in the same interview. "And if you do that [America is] the most overpopulated country on this planet."

The environmental costs of wasteful behavior stretches beyond the nation; globalization of pollution is a pressing issue. For example, coal emissions from Asia can drift across the Pacific to the Americas. Humans attempt to address food shortages with harmful technology as well. For instance, nitrogen fertilizer increases the productivity of plants, successfully creating more food to fulfill the growing need. Unfortunately, the toxic fertilizer drains into water sources from farms, endangering sea life and polluting water.

July 11, or World Population Day, will be the official marker for 8 billion people. The booming population is a concern but also an opportunity to celebrate humanity's diversity.

"This is an occasion to celebrate our diversity, recognize our common humanity," United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said in a statement to CNN, published on Jan. 11. "[We can] marvel at advancements in health that have extended lifespans and dramatically reduced maternal and child mortality rates."

Photos by Majdi Fathi/NurPhoto/Zuma Press/TNS, Marcus Yam/Los Angeles Times/TNS, Brian Cassella/Chicago Tribune, Jane Tyska/Contra Costa Times/MCT

Honor Council holds students accountable

The student run program implements change in the ESD community

Story and Photo by **Iris Hernandez** News Editor

At the end of the semester there were six Honor Council cases, all and of these cases, four were found guilty. This is a significant uptick from having one case per month to more than five in that same time span.

Student Body President Amelia Sinwell believes the uptick was caused by an increase in teacher awareness and implementing that awareness in the classroom.

"I'm sure, as teachers, it is normal for there to be a pendulum swing between being more vigilant and more relaxed about cheating throughout the years, and as of last semester, we were in the former," Sinwell, who is a member of the Honor Council, said.

The attitude towards the Honor Council has also changed in the past few years. The Honor Council has transformed from a mysterious disciplinarian to an open and honest form of discipline. Upper School Head Henry Heil implemented in 2019 that Honor Council decisions be made known to the student body, originally by him and now by student members of the council.

"I certainly feel like we put a lot of effort into advertising the benefits of the Honor Council during my time on it," junior Slaton Strey, former member of the Honor Council, said. "I wouldn't say that going to the Council is a normalized process because violations of the Honor Code are still frowned upon, but I would say that the fear or confusion of coming before it has been lessened with our new work."

However, some don't feel the council has moved away from its mysteriousness. They believe they have become less talked about

amongst students.

"I feel like in middle school we definitely heard about it more," Wilson said. "It's not really talked about that much in upper school. I think it is normalized. I know people go to the honor council, just not people that I know and I don't hear about it as much."

The student-run Honor Council was first introduced during the 1989-1990 school year when Student Body President Brian Wharton '93 suggested the idea to assistant head of upper school Jeff Laba. Wharton then met with Fr. Stephen Swann, founder of ESD, Rebecca Royall, former head of upper school, and Eddie Eason, former dean of students and current director of outdoor education.

"[He proposed it] as a means of making the upper school student body responsible for upholding the School's Honor Code," Eason said. "The Student Council and the student body in general strongly supported his proposal."

He proposed that the Council would consist of three representatives from each grade as well as a teacher sponsor and the student body president. This model is still in place, and Laba has been the sponsor since the second year of its existence.

The Honor Council is very similar to the original; however, it has

undergone some major changes. In the beginning, the Council was optional, and appearing before it was at the discretion of each student as they could choose to let their dean determine their consequence or exoneration.

"It turned out that no students were choosing the Council, so the change was made to make it mandatory," Laba said. "The Council felt that if the Honor Code was to truly belong to the students, and not the administration, they needed to be involved."

The Council can now give a multitude of responses from a day of separation or a recommendation of expulsion. The Council also used to see all types of cases, including tardies and uniform violations, which is now addressed by the new disciplinary

council, which was created by head of upper school, Henry Heil. This change was made in the early stages of the Council.

"There is definitely a remanence here of it in the culture," Heil said. "I hear comments from time to time of 'why is that not going to the honor council?' I was not aware that the Honor Council ever handled issues that would fall to a disciplinary realm."

Signing of the Honor Code was also changed. The honor code holds all community members to

the same standard of not to lie, cheat or steal, it is signed at the beginning of each school year. It began as a rite of passage into the upper school and was only signed once. It was then changed to a yearly ceremony in the chapel where everyone signed the book. The book then took on a different form, which is individual pages that can be easily displayed in the Swann Building outside of the Eagle's Nest. This change was made by Heil as well.

"It went into a book, and no one ever saw them," Heil said. "What was the point of signing them unless people see that [the students] sign something?"

The Honor Council is still changing and continues to evolve based on student and school needs. The Honor Council constantly thinks of new ways to stop the students' urge to cheat.

"No system is perfect, especially one that tackles such large ethical issues, so, yes, I do plan to make some changes," Sinwellsaid. "I want [to] change a few of the definitions of cheating in the Handbook that many of our cases hinge on, and I want to change the way students feel about coming forward about cheating and hopefully eliminate the 'all or nothing' approach to coming forward about cheating."

Students and teachers are able to make a long-lasting impact by implementing or proposing new ideas.

"Annie Sawers '19 had the idea to make a system where students could anonymously submit the methods of cheating, rather than names, to eliminate cheating and also circumvent the 'anti-snitch' culture at ESD," Sinwell said. "This plan never was finalized, so I plan to do so this year."



SIGNATURE WALL

Every student and faculty member's honor code signature is now displayed in the Swann Building, installed on Jan. 4 by the Honor Council. "I like seeing everyone's signatures," sophomore Lauren Shushi said. "And it is a great reminder of our honor code."

Photo by Iris Hernandez

news briefs

a deeper look at current events and happenings on 1400 Merrell Road

A Final Countdown

As seniors complete their time at ESD, exit interviews provide an opportunity to reflect upon their upper school experience. In 2022, head of upper school Henry Heil initiated the first round of exit interviews, gaining feedback through the meetings from 44 out of the 108 ESD seniors. The interviews were a success, and the class of 2023 began their meetings with Heil and upper school counselor Merredith Stuelpe this January.

The only pressing point of feedback from last year's interviews was including a woman representative in the interview process, brought to attention by an Eagle Edition article. Therefore, Stuelpe's role in the process was a new addition this year.

"I asked [senior dean and upper school Spanish teacher] Marcela Garcini to poll the seniors this year and see what the sentiment was on that," Heil said. "The results are mixed... but there were enough people who thought it would be more comfortable in the room if there was a male and a female."

When seniors sign up for their interview slot, an option is given to speak with Stuelpe or Heil. Heil and Stuelpe will continue to ask four open-ended questions about the student's time at ESD so that students can express their opinions in a similar context to their peers.

"I think what seniors have to say about their experience is really valuable data for us to get better, or to affirm what we're doing well," Heil said. "The longer we do this, the more data we will compile, the more valuable [the interviews] will become."



1 A GRAND FINALE

Seniors Edie Dahlander, Sanders Chipman and Jack Lattimore met with Upper School Head Henry Heil and Upper School Counselor Merredith Stuelpe for their exit interview on Jan. 27.

2 ADVENTURES IN APES

Junior Eddie Ellefsom and other AP Environmental Science students learn about water treatment facilities on Jan. 20.

3 ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE

Junior Abby Pickens and English teacher Laura Ripley meet at the academic enrichment center on Feb. 7. Photos and stories compiled by Charlotte Traylor, Katherine Mote, Elliot Lovitt

AP Water Adventures

The AP Environmental Science class visited the Upper Trinity Regional Water District Treatment Plant in Lewisville, TX on Friday, Jan. 20. The tour consisted of open water tanks, an inside look at what chemicals are put into the water to make it safe and how different gardens conserve water.

"The tours the students took were all-encompassing and covered the physical plant operations of water treatment, as well as information about local watersheds and water conservation," upper school environmental science teacher John Gallo said. "Students have learned about the primary, secondary and tertiary treatment of freshwater in their class."

A majority of the treatment occurs underwater, so while the students couldn't see all of the stages it goes through, they did witness the first few steps that occur above ground. Water is so widespread and accessible that they keep the treatment process underground for water safety.

"They had really high-tech computers that controlled and showed the chemical components of the water," senior Elliott McCabe said. "They could shut down water with one button in case of emergency or if water safely came into question which was really interesting."

The classes related what they had learned in class to what is going on in their own backyard through seeing how many systems their water travels through to get to their tap.

"They talked about conservation of water, how they treat their waste and then how they distribute it to the cities and consumers," junior Dalyan Prieto-Akmansoy said. "I never really thought this much about my drinking water but seeing this center was really eye opening."

Academic Assistance

The Academic Enrichment Center, founded by upper school learning support counselor Ashley Beck, made its upper school debut this fall as an in-house tutoring center.

"Mr. Heil and I had conversations about the fact that we have so many outside tutors that come on campus," Beck said. "We thought it would be great if all students can have access to extra support and tutoring at no cost to parents, from our own faculty and our own National Honor Society students. We often say to students, 'who else better knows our curriculum [than students and faculty]?'"

The center is situated in the upstairs letter pod near Beck's office, which is right next to the stairs. Math support is offered at least once each day in the schedule while writing support is provided each Monday, Thursday and Friday, as well as on upper school schedule Day 1 and Day 4.

"As of right now, we're not looking at going past just the basic writing, math and executive function support," Beck said. "We want that part to really take off."

The center not only offers help for ESD-related assignments, but also assistance to seniors with college applications. Beck hopes that the center will become a place where students can drop by for help at any time.

"I think there's a really big need for it, and our students are using it," Beck said. "Our big plan is to have it staffed all day long, full-time. We're not there yet, but we definitely have a place to start, and it's exciting."

Idaho murders terrorize college community

Crime creates awareness, fear in current and future university students

Story by **Sophia Sardiña** Staff writer

Saturday night Nov. 12 was like any other Saturday for six University of Idaho students: getting ready to go out, parties, drinks and food, a late night of fun, or just staying home. But Sunday morning was far from ordinary. It was tragic.

Kaylee Goncalves and Madison Mogen, two of the students, went to Corner Club Bar located in Moscow, Idaho on Saturday night. That same night, Ethan Chopin and Xana Kernodle, went to a fraternity party at the Sigma Chi house, while Dylan Mortenson and Bethany Funke decided to stay home.

According to police records, at around 2 a.m., all four students returned to the house most of them shared and ordered food at around 3 a.m. By 4 a.m. they were dead. The two roommates who stayed home did not notice the attacks on their roommates.

Before the murders, one of the surviving roommates woke up to supposedly hear Goncalves say something along the lines of "someone is here," and went to look but saw no one and went back to her room.

Not satisfied and feeling uneasy, she decided to check one more time and, according to the affidavit shown in the trial, heard an unknown male voice in Kernodle's room saying something like "It's okay, I'm going to help you."

On Sunday morning, the two surviving roommates called their friends over because the victims on the second floor were not responding. At around noon, 911 responded

to the call that the roommates had placed and help was sent out to the house, albeit it was too late as all four students had bled out.

Antoinette R. McGarrahan, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist who specializes in forensic psychology and neuropsychology in Dallas, believes that it was likely that it was premeditated as it was proven by phone track records and eyewitness accounts.

"With the information that came out about the tracked cell phone and individuals that were eye count witnesses," McGarrahan said. "It is likely that it was premeditated."

Along with the stalking, like visiting their house 12 times beforehand, many believe that Bryan Kohberger, the alleged criminal, who studied criminology and was a Ph.D. candidate at Washington State University, was assisted by his knowledge in the topic.

"It's possible that he used the information from his classes to avoid certain detection," McGarrahan said. "Ultimately, he was unsuccessful."

With the information and evidence police used to track Kohberger, it became evident to them that they had found the killer.

Even with the evidence pointing to Kohberger, some continue to speculate about the two roommates and question whether they

had part in their friends' murders.

Many speculate and lean towards criticism towards the roommate who supposedly heard the murders take place, yet had no action on the matter.

Senior Olivia DeYoung has taken an interest in this case as she has always been fascinated by human behavior and forensic psychology.

"I am most interested in this sequence of events after I read the affidavit," DeYoung said.

One thing that caught her attention was the roommate, who heard a male's voice yet didn't take any action on it.

"One of the two roommates claims to have seen the murderer in a black mask," DeYoung said. "However, neither [of the] roommates made a call to the authorities until almost eight hours later."

A second theory is about the noise created by the murders. A security camera 50 feet away picked up distorted audio of voices, yelling, and loud thuds; however, neither roommate claims to have heard anything.

"Another thing that I am curious about is how they did not hear anything," DeYoung said. "I do think there might be something there that may never be uncovered."

The two roommates were never suspects and will possibly be used

as witnesses. Kohberger's next court appearance may be a preliminary hearing and will be held on June 26.

This case has caused many to question the safety of students and even faculty on college campuses.

"Following these murders has made me realize how important it is to stay aware and keep things locked," DeYoung said. "I do think that college campuses have gotten more dangerous, and I think people should keep that in mind."

These murders have caused many to research their college's safety and be particular about where they go and the reputation they have.

Senior Madison McCloud took safety into consideration in her college decision and ultimately is content with the safety measure taken at the schools she applied to.

"The colleges I applied to, I looked into their safety measures before and realized that they seemed pretty safe," McCloud said. "So, even with this incident, I don't think that it really altered my decision making."

However, many have taken this as a way to be more observant and wary of the environment around them.

"I do not think this is something to be scared about," DeYoung said. "But I do think it is important to stay vigilant."

The Idaho murders have sparked interest and curiosity within many.

"I was most shocked by this case and sequence of events," DeYoung said. "I am really eager to see how this plays out and get the answers that people are looking for."

"I do think that college campuses have gotten more dangerous, and I think people should keep that in mind."

Olivia DeYoung
senior

Considering a new spin to ESD tradition

Conversations begin about updating the school's uniform

Story by **Brooke Ebner** Staff writer

As the school's 50th anniversary approaches in the 2024-2025 school year, the administration has begun discussing the modernization of the middle and upper school students' uniforms. A uniform team composed of middle, upper and lower school faculty and staff was created to spearhead the initiative, and they are reaching out to members of the community to hear opinions about what they think of the uniform and how community members would like to update it.

"The team is having conversations with faculty, students, parents and alumni in order to seek feedback and ideas," Associate Head of School Ruth Burke said. "In these conversations, the focus is to help us reimagine what an updated ESD uniform might include."

The idea of new uniforms came about as the uniform for middle and upper school students is the same as when ESD first opened.

"After almost 50 years with the same uniform elements, style and fabric for our middle and upper school students, the time has come for us to reimagine new possibilities of what our uniform can be," the uniform team mandate states. "[And] how our school uniform can be modernized and how it might reflect the age, development and physical movement of our students while preserving the strong ESD brand and presence in the greater community."

Uniform feedback conversations are currently taking place for all grade levels in the middle and upper school. In these conversations, students and faculty are asked questions about what they like and dislike about the uniform and their opinions on how the school might modernize it.

"I went to the deans from the

middle and upper school, and I asked them for a list [of students]," Marcela Garcini, upper school Spanish instructor and senior class dean, said. "We want to have a diverse representation...So everyone can have an input [and] I think it's important to collect the voice of students that are not represented on the student council [and] are not class leaders so [we] give them the opportunity also to be heard."

During the senior feedback conversation, questions such as what the purpose of a uniform is, how uniforms should look ideally, what the students liked and disliked about the current uniforms and if the middle and upper school should have different uniforms are being asked. Another question that came into consideration was the ways the uniform fits into everyday activities.

In the conversation, many agreed that the ESD plaid is a symbol of our community and is essential to keep when creating new uniforms. Many also agreed that all middle and upper school students should be able to wear polos as they are more comfortable than the current button-down shirts.

"[The plaid] is who we are," Garcini said. "When you walk in the street and people see your uniform, they know right away that you're either from ESD or you're from Ursuline or you're from another school."

Unlike the middle and upper school, the lower school isn't discuss-

ing changing their uniforms since they were just recently updated when they moved into campus and the new lower school building in 2019.

"When we moved from the Colgate campus [to] here, we did a uniform 360 review and actually retired a uniform that originated on that campus as part of the St. Michael's school," Head of Lower School Tracey Shirey said. "So we went through it then, so not as much for us for this discussion unless there is something that would unite all three divisions."

The lower school went through a similar process when changing its uniform in the 2019-2020 school year. They discussed with parents and teachers what they thought the new uniform should look like.

"[It] was a collaborative conversation that we ultimately all decided as a group," Shirey said. "The parent feedback we got was that [the shirts] were white so that they could be bleached, and we were kind of thinking navy might be easier [since] kids can sometimes be messy, but the white was a better option."

Another factor to consider when remodeling uniforms is how they correspond to everyday activities taking place on a typical school day.

"[Students] are the ones moving around. You're in ceramic classes; you are the ones taking pictures and photography classes," Garcini said. "So we want to ensure that we listen to you [and] understanding your

movements."

Asia Hawkins, Director of Alumni, remembers wearing a similar uniform when she was a student at ESD. She feels the main parts of the uniform should be kept.

"I think there should be other options, but I think the main attributes of [the uniform], like the plaid, should stay the same," Hawkins said. "We had to wear navy socks on Wednesdays, so we had that option as like a different sock color mainly on Wednesday though, and then we got to wear saddle shoes every day. We had the same senior privileges, so college sweatshirts, cowboy boots if you wanted to, blue and yellow shirts."

Sophomore Carolina Elizondo attended the sophomore uniform discussion. Even though blue is the most dominant color in the uniform, she feels that the ESD green should be kept in the uniform's color palette. While she doesn't mind the oxford shirts, she also wouldn't mind having polo shirts be an option since, in her opinion, they are more comfortable.

"I personally don't think we should change the uniforms because the uniforms are our identity," Elizondo said. "Green is not a very popular color amongst other schools and that's what I really like about ESD's uniform because the green really just shows our identity."

English Department Head Tolly Salz's AP English class had an assignment to make presentations about their opinions on what they think the uniform should look like. Senior Sally Tomlin and her group made a PowerPoint for their presentation.

"We just had different slides on our views about the uniform [and] our experience with the uniform," Tomlin said. "And then we also had one slide, and we kind of photoshopped the current uniform as to what we would want to make it which is a white polo with a navy crest on it, and keep the same skirts."



CLASS OF 1980
ESD's first graduating class of 1980 in the same style uniform as it is worn today. Photo provided by ESD administration.

Head of school addresses community

David Baad discusses the future of school curriculum, budget and leadership

Story by Abby Baughman Life Editor

Head of School David Baad addressed ESD faculty, staff and parents on Jan. 26 in the second annual community meeting. Baad covered the school's annual operating budget, the endowment and the findings of the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest report, which is a combination of internal and external reports about all aspects of the school. He also shared plans to add to the curriculum, develop more landscaping and hire the new head of upper school.

Typically, private schools have an endowment of around two and a half times the size of the operating budget—the operating budget is made up of tuition. ESD's operating budget is about \$40 million, so the endowment would ideally be about \$100 million. Currently, ESD receives around \$30 million annually in donations.

"We are a young school; however, we're competing in schools that are much larger in Dallas," Baad said. "For us to maintain our excellence, we have to continue to think about the size of our endowment, so we have three strategic priorities [with the endowment]. First, that we're putting forward is that we want to create what we're calling an intentional curriculum of purpose. Second, we want to make sure that we are attracting, developing and retaining exceptional employees to work at ESD. Third, we want to attract, develop and retain a talented and diverse student body."

Baad was accompanied by Mary Adair Dockery, the chair of the ESD Board, in the address, as she explained the school budget, financial

needs and the board's role in ESD's management. The meeting was well attended, with 75 percent of the Bray Theater filled.

"It is important as a community to have transparency from the executive team and board about the state of the school," Dianne Nealon, eighth-grade parent attendee, said. "For me, I expect others as well, it is reassuring to see that the school is in the very capable and experienced hands of the leadership team and board."

The meeting also announced some potential new classes like personal finance, Spanish for professionals, philosophy and religion, the science of wellness and introduction to law.

"Rebecca Brady, our new chief academic officer, has been hard at work on a lot of academic initiatives with the department chairs," Baad said. "Every year, we think about new electives to add to the upper school curriculum, and the creative faculty come up with these ideas. It's a real wide range of possible intellectual interests that kids can spark in those classes."

Associate Head of School Ruth Burke recently secured ESD the right to develop the land East of Eagle Family Way. Baad also introduced plans for the campus landscape. They are planning to add a full rock road, Holly Trees along the East Stadium fence along Midway Road and six to eight large caliper trees on the southern border of our campus.

"We're going to start doing some work to beautify the south side of campus, as I know it's a little ragged right now over there," Baad said. "We had this zoning proposal that we got approved recently, so later this spring, you're going to notice some landscaping improvements along the eastern and southern borders."

ESD is planning to change out the stadium lights to LEDs. In addition to helping reduce ESD's carbon footprint, the new lights will lessen light pollution.

"We also know that through our zoning application that we had permission to install two cell phone towers, and we're going to do that on campus here this spring," Baad said. "What we're really excited about is that in tandem with the cellphone towers, it's going to also allow us to install new green LED lights in the stadium. Meaning higher quality lights in the stadium and less light pollution out into the neighborhood in our effort to be a good neighbor."

This year, ESD is adding a health curriculum for middle school. There will be a required course for the seventh graders to take in the second semester.

"We recognize the need amongst our middle school students for health [to be taught], so we have developed and started to implement a formal health and wellness curriculum," Baad said. "The content is focusing on learning skills to maximize students' physical, mental and

emotional health."

Current Head of Upper School Henry Heil is leaving ESD at the end of the school year to become the Head of School at Brookstone in Columbus, Georgia. ESD has begun its formal search for the new head of upper school.

"We are so thrilled and proud of Henry," Baad said. "As I said in my letter, it's a real sign of institutional strength when we send leaders off to go be leaders in other independent schools."

ESD hired Educators Collaborative, a nationwide search firm which specializes in executive searches for independent schools. Sixty candidates were found before being narrowed down to 10.

"These 10 applicants that we got were really wonderful," Baad said. "Their current jobs ranged from a sitting head of school, many heads of upper school at various independent schools around the country, high school principals and chief academic officers who had been heads of upper school before that. A really wide variety of folks. There were five men and five women in the pool and one person of color. Everybody had an advanced degree: eight with Masters, one with an MBA and one with a Ph.D."

This week Baad and the search committee have been meeting in person with the four finalists.

"We are very, very excited about the group," Baad said. "The finalists obviously will have an opportunity to talk to a broad cross-section of the faculty, but also with students. And we also plan to have a small group of parents meet with them. To try to give them a really broad experience while they are here. We hope to have an appointment within a month, maybe less than that."

"It is important as a community to have transparency from the executive team and board about the state of the school."

Dianne Nealon
eighth-grade parent



A FORTUNATE FUTURE

Head of School David Baad discusses school's future in his address to the community. "Our students balance a seriousness of purpose and belief in the value of activities and programs at the school with joyful spirits and enthusiastic hearts," Baad said. "Joyful is a word that I always hear visitors use about our kids, and it's really true." Photo by Abby Baughman.

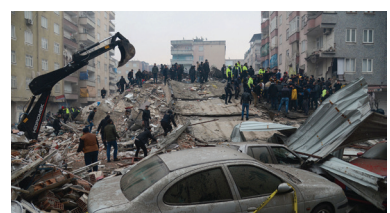
world news

a quick overview of international events compiled by News Editor Iris Hernandez



Spy in the Sky

A Chinese balloon was shot down on Feb. 4, as it flew above South Carolina. President Joe Biden gave permission to shoot down the balloon, which was first spotted in Montana on Feb. 1, as soon as there was risk of harm to the public on the ground. The United States Government believes that the balloon was being used for surveillance. China disputes the idea that the balloon was used for spying or military information, but rather for weather research. The Chinese government protested the destruction of the object and sees it as a major overreaction. This has caused an increase in tension between the countries as well as a postponement of Secretary of State Anthony Blinken's trip to Beijing.



Quake in Turkey and Syria

A 7.8 earthquake shook Turkey and Syria early on Feb. 6. The quake, which killed at least 8,000 people and destroyed over 5,600 buildings. More than 8,000 people were rescued from the rubble. Over 60 aftershocks were recorded, one being at 7.5. The epicenter of the first quake was near the city of Gaziantep, Turkey. It is believed that the death toll will increase as time goes on and people stay trapped. Cyprus, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Georgia, and Armenia were also affected by the seism. This quake was the strongest to hit the region since 1939.

1 SPY IN THE SKY The balloon drifts over Myrtle Beach shortly before the shoot-down on Feb. 4. Photo by Russolt, Creative Commons

2 QUAKES IN TURKEY People search for survivors in Diyarbakir, Turkey on Feb. 6 after a powerful earthquake struck the country's south-east region. It is one of Turkey's biggest quakes in at least a century. Photo by Ilyas Akengin/AFP via Getty Images/TNS

3 CIVIL SUDANESE President of South Sudan Salva Kiir (first from right) walks next to Pope Francis (sitting) upon the Pope's arrival at the Juba International Airport in Juba, South Sudan, on Feb. 3. Pope Francis arrived on a three-day visit to South Sudan to promote peace and reconciliation in the world's youngest country, driven by the scars of civil war and extreme poverty. Photo by Tiziana Fabi/AFP/TNS

4 SHELL SUIT Shell company logo



Civil South Sudanese

Pope Francis toured through Africa and reached his final stop on Feb. 3 when he celebrated mass with nearly 100,000 of faithful people of South Sudan. The country gained independence from the majority Muslim country of Sudan in 2011, however they have struggled with civil wars and violence ever since. Peace attempts have been made, but have been largely unsuccessful. The Pope implored South Sudanese leaders to lay down their weapons and work towards peace. During his time there he gave harsh criticism to leaders, who have done little to end the violence.



Shell Suit

The major oil and gas company Shell was sued by about 14,000 Nigerians on Jan. 22, claiming that they are responsible for polluting local water sources. The water in these fishing communities has become toxic, making fishing impossible. Two communities in the Ogale area have come together after both of their livelihoods were greatly affected. They hope for Shell to clean the polluted waters and ask for monetary compensation for the time they were unable to fish due to oil spills. Shell, however, said that they had no obligation to clean up as they believe they are not responsible for the spills. The United Nations was alerted in 2011, and stated it was emergent. Had something been done back then it would have taken 30 years to clean, the situation has only worsened since.

Speaker is not for the weaker

Rep. Kevin McCarthy elected after 15 rounds of voting

Story by **Katherine Mote** Business Editor

History has repeated itself. For the first time in over 100 years, the role of Speaker of the House required more than 14 rounds of voting. Last month, the House went through 15 rounds before deciding that the next Speaker would be Rep. Kevin McCarthy of California. The most rounds of votes the United States has ever had for speaker was in 1855 when it went to 133 ballots. Before this year, it had gone to more than one vote only 14 times, 13 of those being before the Civil War.

A majority of the time, voting for the Speaker is more of a formality, and the proposed candidate has served on several committees and been a part of Congress for a number of years, making their nomination perceived as obvious. This year, there were five candidates, although the only two with enough votes to be in the running were McCarthy and Rep. Hakeem Jeffries of New York.

"This was a new session of Congress," upper school government teacher Lindy Grosvenor said. "And the majority in the House changed from Democrats to Republicans, so therefore, they have to reelect a Speaker of the House."

While this is normally a process that doesn't receive much attention or news, the unusually tight battle and several rounds of voting had the American people more invested.

"In a nutshell, they hold the power, they decide which bills can come to the floor," Grosvenor said. "They decide which bills can be

voted on, who gets to go on what committee, which is extremely important, and they run [the House] on a day to day basis."

Members of Congress are primed for this position throughout their careers by taking appointments and making their voice heard for their party.

"The Speaker [of the House] position is not unlike a traditional corporate situation where there are positions up the ladder, and the way that you work your way up the ladder is you put yourself forward and in small ways when you don't have a title," upper school history teacher Claire Mrozek said. "I think there's a lot of the same sort of politicking that they have to do when they get voters to vote for them. They're trying to get their colleagues to say, 'I would be a good person in this position.'"

Being seated on certain committees can help with the candidate's credibility. For example, McCarthy, who has been in Congress since 2007, was placed on the House Republican Steering Committee and then went on to become the House Majority Whip from 2011-2015, Minority leader from 2019-2023 and eventually Speaker of the House.

"It's interesting that there's no there are no rules in the constitution for this process," Mrozek said.

"That's why [Donald] Trump could get a vote. It doesn't even have to be somebody who is a member. But if you look at the way the Constitution was written, they had so many things to worry about, and there were so many disagreements that you can see them saying, 'let's let them figure it out.'"

Votes this cycle were widespread because there wasn't a clear winner from the beginning and Republicans weren't all in on McCarthy. Votes were swaying each of the 13 rounds of voting. The power changing in the House after midterms was likely because of the Executive Branch being Democrat and the people hoping to keep a balanced government.

"Most of America does not want any one party to have too much power," Mrozek said. "They

almost intentionally say, at this point, the Democrats have the Executive Branch, so let's make sure that the Republican Party can keep an eye on them in the legislative branches."

Another reason why it took so long this year was because a faction of radical Republicans in the House didn't think McCarthy was far enough right. Some big stances were one policy bills, less government spending and less power for the speaker.

"I think that this is democracy in action," senior and conservative Student Union President Blake Scheinberg said. "One big thing that the radicals wanted is one policy bill. So that when a bill is put into action, it's only one thing passed. They know that other people will tack on their own stuff for the main Bill to pass."

Because both sides needed the 20 or so people that were swing voters, those people had extreme power. They were able to make deals with the people running in order to win their votes, and they really took advantage of the situation.

"There was a small faction who wanted to institute changes in the rules of the house," Grosvenor said. "They thought that McCarthy was too well established. They wanted someone who was more anti-establishment who was willing to take risks and make changes."

Even looking back at how this process has been executed in the past or how it's been controlled in the Senate and within the Democratic Party in the House, there are some obvious discrepancies with the Republicans in the House.

"Mitch McConnell was able to maintain discipline with his group [in the Senate]," Mrozek said. "The Democrats were able to maintain discipline with their group. That's why 212 voted for Jeffries again and again. You need to have leadership from both parties. You need to have leadership from the president pro tempore in the Senate, you need to have leadership from the speaker of the House, regardless of what party, and this does not look like leadership to me."



SPEAKING OF..

For the first time in over 100 years, the role of Speaker of the House required over 14 rounds of voting. Tensions have been heightened in the house as the Republican party has unprecedented witnessed division. *Graphic by Maddy Hammett*

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February is dedicated as Black History Month. The community comes together to celebrate; guest writer senior Madison McCloud discusses the month

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Juniors and seniors form new bonds during advisory activities through dodgeball, bingo, ping pong and more

Seniors observe a rise in deferrals

Deferrals are one part of the long college admissions process, along with managing optional testing

Story and graphic by **Lauren Shushi** Staff Writer

Senior Olivia DeYoung is shocked after a stressful and overwhelming college admissions experience to receive a deferral from a large college that, statistically, she was likely to have gotten into. This news was especially jarring as the college she will be attending this coming fall is Wake Forest University, among the most prestigious in the country.

Across the board, high school seniors have seen a large amount of deferred or wait-listed applications as they take on this year's admissions process.

"I think a lot of these big state schools are trying to get the best of the best," DeYoung said. "So they're deferring everyone, who in other years would've gotten in from the start. I also think they want to know their entire pool first before accepting anyone."

A notoriously hard and emotional process for seniors, applying for colleges can often bring about feelings of stress, hardship or even vulnerability.

College guidance coordinator Katherine Montgomery attributes the high amounts of deferrals to colleges being more cautious.

"Many colleges in 2021-2022 underestimated how many students they admitted would actually enroll for Fall 2022," Montgomery said. "Over enrollment can cause strains on the university in a lot of areas. Because of that, many colleges and universities are being more cautious with their early admits for the 2022-2023 application cycle; both [Auburn University and the University of Georgia] are popular schools with ESD students, and their admissions offices have been clear that a defer is not a 'soft deny.'"

Applying to a college through early decision is binding and your application could be either accepted, denied or deferred, meaning that it will be reviewed again with the regular admissions applicant pool. There is also a difference between early decision, with deadlines in October or November, versus early decision two, and also early action, which allows students to make their decision non-binding.

The reasons for receiving a deferred application may vary: the school may need more time to review applications in an effort to build a diverse, well-rounded class, or they may want to monitor your performance throughout the rest of senior year.

Another factor is that many early decision applications are extremely well done, and colleges do not want to reject an application that normally would have gotten in during regular decisions.

"I think the increase in deferrals has also changed as time has gone on," DeYoung said. "For example, my brother graduated in 2020, and he got into the school that I got deferred from, while his GPA was a full point below mine."

Senior Billy Bryan believes receiving a deferral is not the end of the road, and there are still steps to take if you would like to continue to pursue getting into that college.

"People treat deferrals as if they've been rejected from the college," Bryan said. "Which isn't always true. I mean, it's not the best outcome, but I don't think it's the end of the world like people make it out to be. All the deferral does is move me from early action to regular admissions."

DeYoung agrees that there are still options to take in pursuing your interest in the college you got deferred from.

"I think definitely emailing is good, showing your interest and telling them that it's still your number one," DeYoung said. "I think too much is good in that case. Anything you can do to show you're interested and also sending in your first semester grades senior year to keep them updated."

Now more than years prior, admissions rates have become truly daunting statistics for many applicants looking to attend elite public universities. An analysis of enrollment data at 18 elite public universities by

The Hill, an American newspaper and digital media company based in Washington, D.C., found an average admission rate of 31 percent in 2022, down from 47 percent in 2012 and 52 percent in 2002 for all applications.

For instance, the University of California in Los Angeles and Berkeley admitted only 9 percent and 11 percent of applicants.

The University of California colleges, specifically, have grown in attraction in recent years, partially due to their picturesque setting but

also because of their recent decision to go test-optional.

Another development that has become more widespread in recent years is colleges going test-optional, meaning an applicant has the choice of whether or not to include their SAT or ACT scores in their application.

Colleges did this for numerous pre-and-post pandemic reasons: one being the wish to eliminate the pressure to produce perfect SAT or ACT scores and allow a greater opportunity to focus on pursuing interests, courses and activities that match students' interests and are likely to continue in college.

"Test optional has been around for many years pre-pandemic," Montgomery said. "But became much more popular with colleges and universities as a result of students not having consistent access to be able to test during the height of the pandemic and worldwide shutdown."

As well as this, GPA is allegedly a better predictor of college success than standardized testing, but that can fail to take into account how GPAs from different schools vary.

Both DeYoung and Bryan, though, appreciated colleges giving the option whether or not to submit their scores and believe they are not a good measure of a student's performance.

"I had a lot of trouble with test-

ing," DeYoung said. "The ACT declined me for an extended time because they said my grades were too good. Then I switched to the SAT, and it was just all kind of a hectic process, and I'm not a very good test taker. So I ended up doing all that work and not even submitting my test scores."

"I do like the test-optional choice for colleges," Bryan said. "But like I said, situationally, because it also depends on what other parts of your application look like."

As there is no solid rubric for evaluating students, eliminating the SAT and ACT scores could make the process even more biased towards those with good letters of recommendation or expensive extracurriculars, possibly swaying an application to be admitted. Though, focusing on the essay portion of the application could help.

"Essays are an opportunity for you to tell the admissions committee about yourself beyond your grades, test scores or activities," Montgomery said. "This is where the student's true voice is on display. Applying test optional will mean that an admissions committee will focus on other parts of your application with more weight. However, the essay is an important part even if you apply test-optional."

Overall, even with the process of college admissions changing year to year, students try to take advice where they can and cope with the emotions caused by the process.

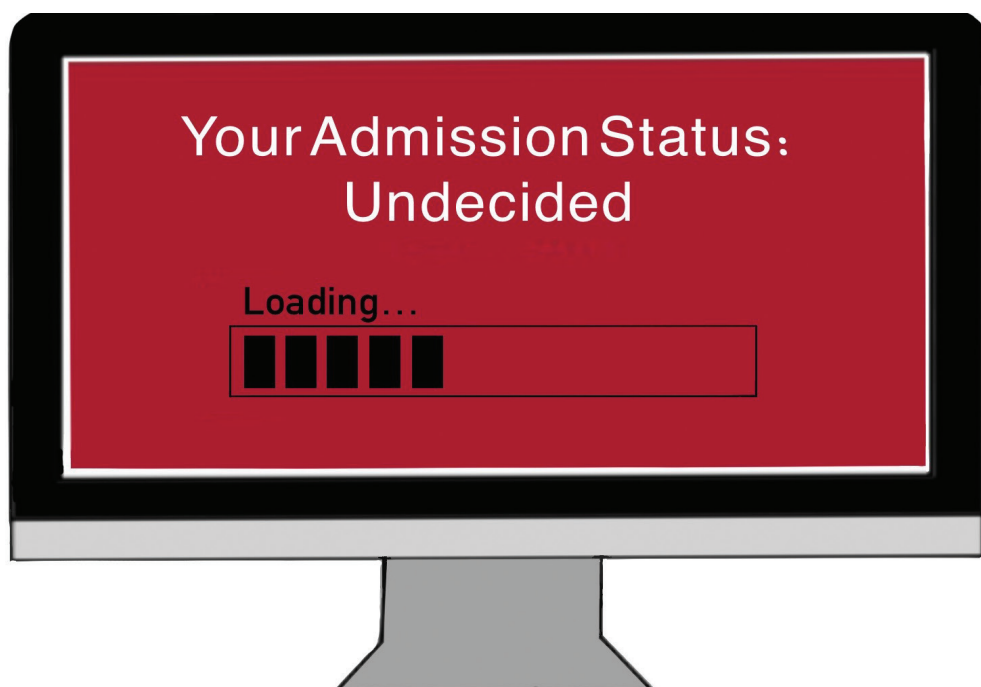
"I can understand why students feel so emotional and stressed out about the college application process. You spend four years studying, taking on more rigorous classes, while juggling activities, community service, athletics and maintaining social relationships with peers," Montgomery said. "My advice to students is to be kind to yourselves during the college application process."

Even with the stress of the process, students may find relief in the final decisions that bring them closer to their new college.

"I'd say the college admissions process is very stressful and overwhelming," said DeYoung. "But I think it all works out in the end according to the plan. And I think I got lucky too, so I'm happy."

"I'd say the college admissions process is very stressful and overwhelming, but I think it all works out in the end according to plan"

Olivia DeYoung
senior



97
percent of seniors experienced feelings of stress or hardship applying to college

53
percent of seniors received a deferral during the application process

Source: Feb. 6 poll of 154 students

Gaining fame after graduation

ESD's curriculum and resources nurtured alumni into notable careers

Story by **Abby Baughman** Life Editor

From sports to arts, and from media to social media, ESD alumni are successful and prepared for all. In 2009, Phil Pressey '10 transferred to ESD after moving to Dallas. ESD won the SPC basketball championship that year through the efforts of Pressey, coach Henderson and his team. Winning SPC again the following year, Pressey committed to play Division 1 basketball at Missouri State University.

"Corey Henderson was one of my first coaches in high school when I was younger," Pressey said. "He kind of developed me to get ready for college. As a whole, we don't have a lot of students, so being able to feel connected to a community and know everybody [allows for] everybody to support you [and makes] you want to do well for your school. [Henderson] helped me out a lot for my trajectory getting to where I am now."

In 2013, Pressey signed with the Boston Celtics summer league. He later played for the Spanish club Movistar Estudiantes where he averaged 7.9 points and 4.6 assists per game. Now he is an assistant coach for the University of Missouri basketball team.

"My dad played for 10 years professionally in the NBA, and he kind of put the ball in my hands," Pressey said. "That passion kind of grew over time. My dad is an inspiration to me, and that's a big reason I played."

Every summer, Pressey comes back to Dallas and helps coach an ESD basketball camp.

"I think I am connected to ESD by constantly visiting and making sure I try to see everybody at the school, especially Coach Corey Henderson," Pressey said. "He has a special place in my heart. He's a key

reason why I went to ESD."

The ESD curriculum has also guided students focused in the arts. Grey Malin '04 began learning about photography during his junior year at ESD. He took AP Photography and worked with black and white photos in the dark room.

"Having the chance to study photography at ESD when I was only 16 really allowed me to realize at a young age how passionate I was about the subject," Malin said. "Therefore, my time at ESD very much impacted me and helped me get a head start before going on to minor in photography at Emerson College in Boston and eventually starting my photography lifestyle company in Los Angeles."

Also in the arts, Dawn McCoy '96 began acting during her time at ESD and moved to Los Angeles after college. One of her first jobs in Hollywood was working as a voice actor for commercials for brands like Target, HGTV and Michaels.

"In 2009, I became a voice for HGTV, for homes and homes," McCoy said. "From that, I got other jobs, and I was the voice of Marshalls for two years, which is so crazy because I always say that we bought all of my stuff for my first apartment at Marshalls. I was the voice in stores, on TV and radio [which] was awesome."

During her time in Los Angeles, McCoy began her blog: Beauty, Baking, Being. A lifestyle blog that focuses on makeup, baking and life.

"I started this blog, and it was all my favorite things, and I kind of took off," McCoy said. "I was get-

ting invited to these cool events, and these brands wanted to work with me. At first, I was like, 'wow, I'm getting free product,' then they started paying me, and then they started paying me well. And I was like, 'Oh my gosh, I don't have to have a day job anymore.'"

McCoy also began working as a TV personality. She has worked on Hallmark and Family, Dr. Oz, Access Hollywood and California live on NBC.

"I would meet people at parties, and they [would] ask, 'have you ever thought of being a TV host?' And I thought, well, I didn't go to journalism school, and I'm not a pageant queen, and I thought [that those were the] people that became TV hosts," McCoy said. "Then I started hosting TV stuff. Now I get to be in California live on NBC [which focuses on] travel, dining and experiences, it's a great show, and I love being on it."

But the younger generations are more focussed on social media success. Claire Groves '20 began making TikToks during the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The first time I really started to use TikTok was during quarantine my senior year, 2020," Groves said. "I started posting as a creative outlet, and that's why I still post on it today. I've never thought of TikTok as my job but more something that I love."

Groves posts fun, creative videos. Her most popular video is of her going through TSA at the airport before her flight with the caption, "Nothing is more stressful than these 60 seconds." The video has amassed 16 million views and

2.9 million likes.

"I dabble in all sorts of styles or trends, but my brand is created on light-hearted humor," Groves said. "I want my platform to be a place that's authentic, inspiring, positive and helps people smile."

Groves has accumulated a following of 70,000 on TikTok.

"When I started TikTok and even now, the following is the last thing I think about," Groves said. "I think followers just came naturally as my content became more consistent and related to a specific audience. The type of content I post is more on the humor side of things."

TikTok also allows for people to gain a following based on sharing and expressing their political views. Victoria Hammett '18 has amassed a following this way.

"I was bored during lockdown and thought content creation could keep me occupied," Hammett said. "I started with story time and makeup videos, but with everything happening in 2020, I transitioned into creating more political and social justice-related content."

After transitioning into politically focused content, Hammett gained hundreds of thousands of followers and currently has 806,800 followers.

"When I first started with the story time videos, I was definitely trying to gain a following," Hammett said. "I was consistent, posting regularly and ended up gaining 50,000 followers in just a few months. I felt like that was a massive following at the time and didn't have any intention on growing further. This was when I decided to start using the platform I had to talk about the issues I was passionate about. I thought, if anything, I would lose followers because of the divisive nature of politics, but, to my surprise, that's when things really started taking off."

"I think I am connected to ESD by constantly visiting and making sure I try to see everybody at the school."

Phil Pressey '10

Black History Month sparks discussion

Black Student Union leads ESD community in celebration

Story and Graphic by **Maddy Hammett and Grace Worsham** Co-editors in Chief

Members across the community plan to take the remainder of February to educate themselves on Black History and celebrate the achievements of the members of the Black community.

Black Student Union President Sophia Ukeni and members of the Union, alongside Director of Diversity and Inclusion Elizabeth Goatley, Ph.D., plan to emphasize community discussion and the significance of the observation of this month.

Across all divisions, observation of the month has been strongly encouraged in classrooms. Lower school educators often highlight important figures of Black History Month and view a Black-led performance, while middle school has chapel talks focusing on experience.

"Lower school educators [often] highlight the bravery of Black History Heroes and Heroines like Ruby Bridges, Martin Luther King, Jr. and freedom marchers," Goatley said. "We traditionally end the month with a wonderful performance from the Bandan Koro Drum and Dance Ensemble or the Dallas Black Ballet Theatre. In middle school, we often have special chapel talks in which members of our community share their experiences and why Black History Month is special to them. Our middle school students are able to learn about topics like Historical Black Colleges and Universities, Black innovators, educators, entertainers and sports figures."

BSU members have planned celebrations and discussions for upper school as well.

"[BSU members], with the help of my office and their faculty advisor, are responsible for the upper school student displays and programming," Goatley said. "Historically, this had looked like planning the menu for our month's emphasis partnership with SAGE, posters, chapel talks and community discussions. This year they have incorporated a community

service project as a way to give back. Each year BSU has creative control for the ways in which they want to acknowledge and represent Black History Month at ESD."

Ukeni plans to structure a chapel talk around the BSU-sponsored community service project to shed light on how donations help marginalized members of the Dallas community.

"BSU is planning a supply drive this year for St. Philips Community Center as well as a chapel talk that

outlines how donations can help minorities succeed, to promote the drive," Ukeni said. "I think Black History month is important because it allows us to celebrate the progress that society has made, despite the history of racism and challenges that African Americans have, and continue to, face. Shedding light on historic Black achievements inspires minority youth and motivates us to strive for excellence."

In past years, some members of BSU have felt difficulty in celebrating the month in fear of negative responses and criticism from peers. The perceived political divide has pervaded the minds of those wanting to celebrate.

"I think that in the past, it's been hard to commit to celebrating Black History Month at ESD due to our community of outspoken people, who sometimes offend each other," Ukeni said. "Especially as a Black student, it's scary to even want to do more than hang up posters about notable figures, which is what BSU has done in years prior, because you never know what the response is going to

be. And the uncertainty makes it hard to celebrate with white people, who oftentimes don't see much of a cultural connection. But I think that Black History Month has always been a good time for educational conversations at ESD."

Tucker Roberston, junior member of BSU, believes it is important to not just celebrate Black history for the month of February but instead throughout the entire year.

"I think that Black History is important to celebrate and acknowl-

edge through any point throughout the year because the things that African Americans have done in this country have shaped the way that life is run and how we live it," Robertson said. "I think that narrowing down any culture's achievements to a singular month only puts a specific time limit on when we can celebrate it, which is why I generally don't like the idea of cultural months. Limiting the time

we can acknowledge a group's achievements gives them temporary glory when what they did helped impact a lifetime of people."

Despite reluctance from some students, the month will be embraced by many and observed across all school divisions.

"It really does take the whole school to pull together to celebrate the beauty of the diverse ways that we are created by our loving God," Goatley said. "And even still, I know that there is more that we can do and more that we will do, each year, together."



WE DESERVE TO BE CELEBRATED

The Month of February is a month set aside to celebrate the excellence and the historical contributions of Black people, started by NAACP member Carter G. Woodson in 1976. But there is a lot of controversy in the Black community about the one month out of the year we "celebrate black people."

It's exciting for some and concerning for many. Why do we, as Black people, still in the 21st century accept that we are "given" one month to celebrate a country that was built on the backs of our people? Others are excited that a month is set aside to intentionally celebrate Black people and all they have done for this country.

I am a part of the group that still appreciates the celebration of Black History Month, although I still think it's problematic that it's only one month out of the year. I like the concept of Black history month because there are so many firsts that are still happening in America today that should be celebrated. Kamala Harris is the first Black woman that's a vice president, Obama was the first Black president, and this year is the first time there are two Black starting quarterbacks playing against each other in the Super Bowl. So when people wonder why I like the month that's why, I feel like we deserve to be celebrated.

Madison McCloud
Guest Writer

featured

News Editor Iris Hernandez features fashion forward boots worn by students for the Junior Symphony Ball.



Ashley Stacy

A Spider In My Boot

Senior Ashley Stacy dresses in white cowboy boots with black detailing in the shape of a spider and web, which she got from free people. Stacy plans to study at the University of Richmond in the fall where her boots will match perfectly with the school's mascot, the WebstUR. "It's been kind of fun to wear them to school because they are kind of different and no one else has them," Stacy said.

Grace Worsham

Classic is Cool

Senior Grace Worsham struts in medium brown boots with intricate white and tan stitching and a pointed toe. She got them from Ariat. "I like the classic look of brown boots and I think they go with everything," Worsham said. "I don't really like black boots. I have always grown up wearing brown boots, they're the only [color] I've ever worn."

Charlie Nuehoff

'Ole reliable

Junior Charlie Nuehoff sports brown boots with thick white ornate details from Cavenders. "I always prefer brown boots over black or more colorful boots because then I don't have to worry about how dirty they get and I feel they have a more classic look to them," Nuehoff said. "I have two or three pairs of boots but these are my favorite by far because I don't have to worry about them breaking or getting dirty because they are very reliable."

Briggs Briner

Lizard Skin for the Win

Senior Briggs Briner strides in with brown boots with a slightly red tint. They are covered in lizard skin at the bottom and leather at the top. They also sport raised designs with thin white stitching. "They're durable, dressy," Briggs said. "They're super comfortable. I like how they look."



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Who is your favorite fearless hero?



"Puss in Boots: The Last Wish" has shocked audiences as no one expected a sequel to a "Shrek" spin-off to be the best animated movie of the year. It currently stands with a 4.8 out of 5 Vudu audience rating from 3,250 ratings and 95 percent Rotten Tomatometer audience score from 166 reviews. With a budget of \$90 million and a net gross of \$344.2 million, "The Last Wish" has been a box office success.

Photo by DreamWorks Animation/TNS



Popular social media influencer brothers Andrew and Tristan Tate were arrested on Dec. 29 on accounts of human trafficking, but no evidence has been found. On Feb. 1, judges in Romania rejected an appeal for the release of the Tate brothers. The brothers were arrested. The belief is that the brothers, especially Andrew, took part in the "lover boy method," where he would lead women into thinking they would develop a long-term relationship only for him to require the girl to perform in pornographic content.

Photo by James Shaw/UPPA via ZUMA Press/TNS

2

Tate's Takedown

3

I can buy myself flowers



On Jan. 13, Miley Cyrus released single, "Flowers," from her new album "Endless Summer," releasing March 10. Fans believe the song is about Cyrus' divorce from Liam Hemsworth which was finalized in January of 2020. The song was released on Hemsworth's 33rd birthday. "Flowers" is the only song to ever reach 100 million global streams in a week.

Photo by Paras Griffin/Getty Images for MC/TNS

"For good this time"

Tom Brady announced his retirement on Feb. 1 with a Twitter video: ironically, exactly on the year anniversary from his previous retirement announcement before he decided to play again. He thanked his fans, family, friends and foes for pushing him throughout his record-breaking career. He is the only NFL player to have more than five Super Bowl wins, with seven wins throughout his career. He holds the records for the most passing yards at 89, 214, most touchdown passes at 649 and most regular season wins at 251.



Photo by Mike Ehrmann/Getty Images/TNS

New approach to advisory

Juniors and seniors participate in grade-wide activities

Story by Brooke Ebner staff writer

Two groups of juniors line up on opposite sides of the gym, waiting for the whistle to blow to start the dodgeball game. Other juniors are on the bleachers, cheering on the other students as they play to be the last group standing. The junior class is spending time together during advisory.

This year, both junior and senior advisories have joined together as a class to participate in grade-level activities during advisory time. Advisories help plan activities that the whole grade will enjoy.

Donald Snook, the upper school engineering instructor, came up with an activity for the juniors to participate in during advisory on Nov. 18. His junior advisory helped assist in planning the activity as well.

"The idea was for the advisories [and for] the students in the class to do things together," Snook said. "I picked certain places in the school that the [advisories] would have to go to as a group."

His advisory took photos of different spots on campus, and each junior advisory had to find the location of the photo on campus. The locations of some of the photos included the publication wall, a memorial, a movie poster and many other places around campus.

"It just gets the students up around and moving," Snook said. "But it [also] takes them to different parts of the school that they may not know existed."

The juniors also did another activity at the beginning of the year. The activity was like bingo, where the students had to find people who corresponded to different statements on the card.

"I really like the advisor-planned ones like grade-wide bingo," junior Lily Bergman said. "You [had] to go find somebody who matches a characteristic on a sheet and try to get bingo. We all just were running around like trying to search for other people."

Snook has seen these activities help his students bond as a group.

"What I've noticed is with the nine students that I have, they kind of formed a bond together," Snook said. "Kids that normally wouldn't associate with each other, [I] now see them talking at lunch."

Part of the reason these activities were implemented was because of the feedback received from the recent ISAS accreditation visit. The accreditation team felt that advisory time could be used more effectively.

"We went through an accreditation process that was just completed in October, and I chaired the advisory self-study committee," Claire Mrozek, junior class dean and U.S. history teacher, said. "One of the ways that

the group felt like [advisory time] could improve overall was to have more buy-in, more commitment from both teachers and students."

Advisories are paired up with another to plan an activity for the whole grade level to participate in during an advisory. Planning these activities allows both juniors and seniors to practice their leadership skills.

"The idea was to give advisories an opportunity in pairs to plan activities," Mrozek said. "Another piece of this, particularly with juniors and seniors, is [that] we want to give them a little bit of practice in leadership. Anytime you plan something, even if it's a fun activity, you have to have a better understanding of what goes into [it], how far in advance you have to plan, do you have to get a space [and] what happens when it doesn't go well."

The senior class advisories are also pairing up with other advisories and

"What I've noticed is with the nine students that I have, they kind of formed a bond together"

Donald Snook

upper school engineering teacher

coming up with activities. Some activities that the seniors have planned and participated in so far are powderpuff football and dodgeball.

"In senior year [there's] a little bit more freedom and independence because we have so many things to cover from cap and gowns, and we have college guidance," Marcela Garcini, senior class dean and upper school Spanish instructor, said. "[Seniors] own their advisories. I think when the kids are working together, and it's their idea [that] they see that it's not easy to organize an activity. It takes time and sometimes the advisors are the ones that have to pull the cords and all that, and so far it has been good."

Bergman also has enjoyed doing other activities just with her advisory like table ping pong. She likes how advisory time allows her to talk to different people in her grade.

"I like that you have a dedicated time to hang out with people you might not have otherwise," Bergman said. "It's just really nice to get to talk to more people than I normally would."



ADVISORY FUN

Above: Upper school science teacher and Science Department Chair Amy Henderson, and upper school science teacher Max Auge watch their advisories play in the junior dodgeball tournament. Left: Junior Caroline Bagley throws a ball during the junior advisory dodgeball game on Jan. 24 in the competition gym. "Each advisory was paired with another advisory, and we had a bracket style tournament," Bagley said. "Unfortunately my advisory didn't win, but it was super fun." Photos by Eagle Edition staff.

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The "Hunchback of Notre Dame" will premiere on Feb. 23 as this year's musical

13

Life Editor Abby Baughman visits various stores and attractions in Uptown Dallas.

A musical with a twisted backstory

The Hunchback of Notre Dame is chosen as the annual musical to showcase talent

Story by **Grace Worsham** Co-Editor-in-Chief

The curtains open as the white light rises and shines on the extravagant set. Senior Hunter Hurt stands in the center. He looks into the sea of over 100 people, eyes wide in anticipation. He has practiced his lines every afternoon, perfected the choreography and memorized every line of the songs. Yet, his nerves are still present. He knows then the show will be good; you perform best when nervous.

"The Hunchback of Notre Dame," originally a book written by Victor Hugo in 1831, is also a Disney film and is believed to have one of the best opening scores in musical theater according to BroadwayWorld.com and upper school acting teacher and Director of Performances Lauren Redmond. Redmond has wanted to put on the play for a while and decided now was the right time.

"The music has always called to me," Redmond said. "The Hunchback of Notre Dame' was one of my favorite Disney movies because it's one of Disney's darker movies, and any student will tell you that if there is not something dark in my shows, there is something wrong with me. I have always enjoyed that story, so I have been looking for a time to do it. The time seems to be right now."

The play follows the story of a French Romani girl named Esmeralda who is loved by three men: Archdeacon Frollo who lusts after her, his adoptive son Quasimodo, a hunchbacked bell-ringer for the Notre Dame Cathedral and Captain Phoebus. She is falsely accused of trying to murder Phoebus and witchcraft and is sent to death. Quasimodo rescues her from the gallows but things do not go as planned.

In the beginning stages of a musical, rehearsal consists of practicing music in the choir room and some on stage practice. Eventually, the cast stays on stage for entire

rehearsals as the show date grows closer. Actors, tech students and those who are helping build the set all work together to make the production as perfect as possible.

"We have the element of the alumni choir that is a part of this show... so [the audience] can expect a melding of generations," Redmond said. "My expectations, in general, are that I think people are going to see a pretty spectacular set, and I think they can expect to see really good talent on stage as we have really good talent both in the leads and the ensemble."

Hurt, cast as Quasimodo, has to focus on both rehearsal as well as college applications and auditions for performing arts universities. Although he has many things on his plate, he enjoys remaining busy.

"College auditions and the play kind of cancel each other out," Hurt said. "I always stay busy if I can help it. Nothing consumes me completely because if I am only focused on college auditions, then I can't focus on the stress from the play and vice versa. If you have two things going on, you can't be 100 percent stressed about one thing."

Hurt is not the only one, as senior Liam Pham, cast as Frollo, is also auditioning for college. Redmond must work around both Hurt's and Liam's scheduling conflicts.

"We are dealing with two of our leads auditioning for colleges right now on top of everything else, so it really is a scheduling nightmare," Redmond said. "But it's working out so far, and I think it will work out. College auditions are a newer element for us because the two

boys are having so many external auditions. Hunter and Liam have a lot on their plates right now, and I knew this going into casting them, but I also know if anyone can handle it, it's the two of them."

Not only are Pham and Hurt busy with auditions, but other cast members also seem to be engaged in other activities. Rehearsals have to constantly work around other student commitments like sports.

"It's really hard to find that balance between when [students] need to come to rehearsal and when they need to be at sports practices or preseason or whatever," Redmond said. "Every single student really wants to be a part of it, and they are finding a way around it. It's just us kind of having to be more flexible around it, but I think that's just kind of the nature of the beast. It is becoming that way every single year because scheduling is becoming tighter. [Students] want to do a little bit of everything."

Hurt has performed in a large variety of musicals and plays. He feels most alive when he is on stage. Although he has much experience, he is nervous before each show. This serves as a good sign for him that he is doing the right thing.

"Being nervous is good," Hurt said. "You should always be nervous because when you are not nervous you probably shouldn't be doing it anymore. I get nervous for every play in a good way, but not because I am one of the main actors."

Senior Amber Donahue, playing Esmeralda, is excited to showcase her improvement in performing arts through the play, as she has been taking advanced acting and

choir classes in school alongside rehearsal. Although elated to perform, this will be her second to last performance. Her last performance will be the advanced acting play in the spring.

"It is bittersweet because I am growing up, and this is my last hurrah," Donahue said. "I get to do one last show with my fellow cast members before college, and I am going to go out with a bang. This is the most work I am going to have to put into being a character too, and I am excited to show my improvement and my growth throughout the years in performing arts. A lot has changed from playing Mary Poppins in eighth grade to now."

Donahue will not be continuing performing arts in college but considers it a great hobby and way to express herself. She finds rehearsal to be a calming way to end her school day.

"Performing arts is a stress reliever," Donahue said. "I absolutely love doing it. Some kids like to end their day doing sports or painting, but for me, I love rehearsals and constantly getting better. It's all about the journey and those late nights memorizing lines."

Donahue believes it is going to be a strong musical and urges everyone not to just take her word for it, but to see it for themselves.

"The musical is going to be great," Donahue said. "There are going to be moments where you laugh, when you're on the edge of your seat, moments where you feel like you're in the show itself. We have some really, really strong talent in this musical, especially my fellow seniors. You are going to have to see it to believe it. The musical will speak for itself."

The play will feature 16 students and an alumni choir of 11. It will be performed in the Bray Theater on the nights of Feb. 23 to 25 at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$10 and available at esdallas.seatyourself.biz in advance or through the student's Eagles Nest account at the door. It is reserved seating, so advanced purchase is recommended.

"The musical is going to be great. There are going to be moments where you laugh, when you're on the edge of your seat, moments where you feel like you're in the show itself."

Amber Donahue
senior and female lead



PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Cast members Lily Bergman, Jamie Henderson, Grace Williams, Brayden Girata, Amber Donahue, Tessa Cabrales and Evelyn Hargrave practice Act one music for the "Hunchback of Notre Dame" musical. "Rehearsal allows me to leave any other head space I'm in and just focus on my character and the show," Amber Donahue said. "It can be tiring but seeing the show come together slowly is the most rewarding and fulfilling part."

Photo by Grace Worsham

POST CARDS FROM DALLAS V.40

During middle school, I lived in the West Village in Uptown. I really loved living there, but moved closer to ESD for high school. Last weekend, my mom and I went back to Uptown to go to all of our old favorite spots. We got breakfast, went for a walk, visited the Perot Museum and got dinner. This is a beautiful and vibrant part of Dallas with so many fun possibilities.



Sip and Stir is a cozy coffee shop in Uptown with couches to relax and tables to drink, eat and work. They serve tea, toasts, pastries and coffee, including an array of original latte flavors like butterbeer, coconut pie and creme brulée. Personally, I do not like coffee, so I opted for their strawberry hibiscus tea served hot. They served the tea in a cute self-serve teapot and teacup, but you can also get it in a to-go cup. I also got an almond croissant which was fluffy, moist and flaky. My mom ordered the almond butter banana toast — crispy, thick sourdough, creamy almond butter, sliced banana and a drizzle of honey all topped with crunchy baked oats. The warm, bitter tea and sweet croissant were the perfect start to the day.

**SIP AND STIR
9:00 A.M.**

Story and photos by **Abby Baughman** Life Editor

**TROLLEY CAR
10:15 A.M.**

I parked at the free parking garage behind Sip and Stir and used the Uptown's free trolley car line to visit the other locations. The trolley follows one route, so it's easy to use. I took the trolley from West Village to the Perot Museum, then to the Katy Trail and back to my car. It has a cute classic design and reminded me of when I visited San Francisco.



**KATY TRAIL
10:30 A.M.**

Next, I took a stroll around the Katy Trail, which goes through many lovely sites like Dean's Park and Lee's Park. The trail is teeming with people walking their dogs and having picnics in the parks. The Katy Trail Ice House, located off the trail, has a ton of burger options, but my mom and I were full from breakfast. Instead, we walked around and looked at the old train car and saw cute dogs as they passed in front of us.



**PEROT MUSEUM
12:00 P.M.**

After we walked the trail, we took the trolley to the Perot Museum. Each ticket was about \$25 but definitely worth the price. The four-level-museum has many interesting and educational exhibits. I hadn't been since I was in elementary school, and it was so nostalgic to visit the same exhibits that had been there since then. I was definitely the oldest person there without a child, but it was still super fun.

**BABOUSH
6:00 P.M.**

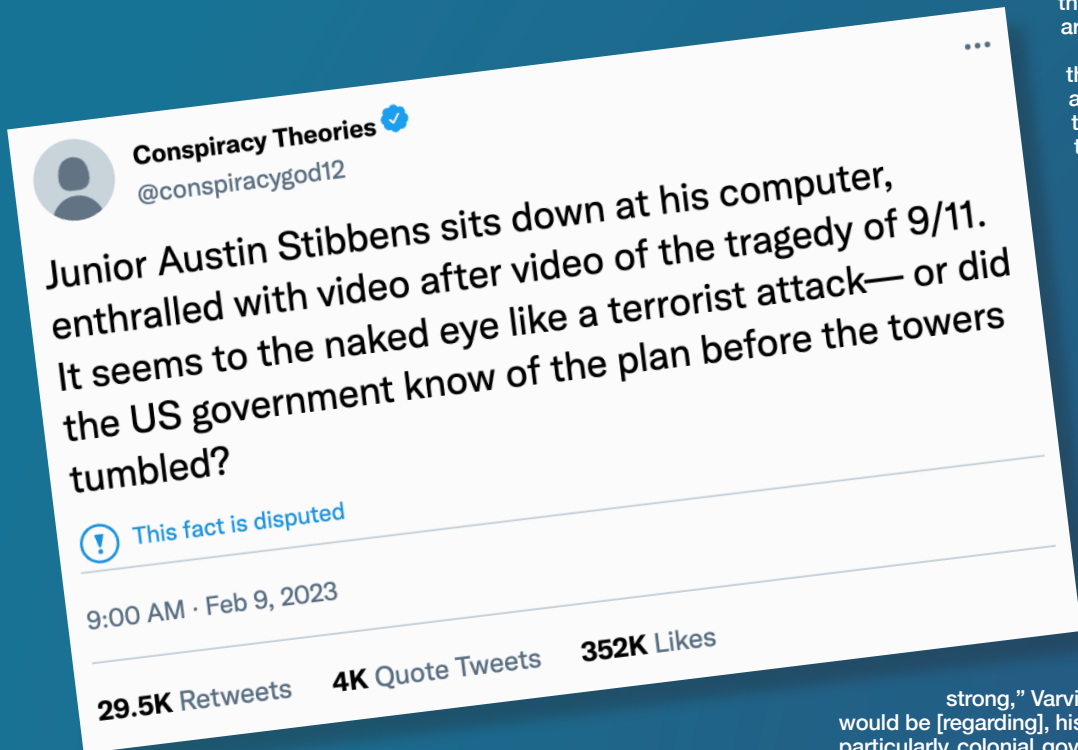
Lastly, my mom and I got dinner later that night at a restaurant called Baboush. Baboush is a quaint Mediterranean restaurant with live music. They serve food inspired by Moroccan and Lebanese street food, and all dishes are made from scratch. I got the harissa and apricot wings, and the chicken was juicy and fell off the bone. The inside is beautifully decorated with elaborate Mediterranean pillows and curtains.



TO BELIEVE OR NOT TO BELIEVE

Conspiracy theories begin with a simple question, breed suspicion and

Story by **Callie Hawkins** Sports Editor, **Charlotte Tomlin** Web Editor



THE CHRONICLES OF CONSPIRACIES

Fifty-three years ago, Neil Armstrong opened the hatch of Apollo 11 and stepped into unprecedented territory. He announced to the world, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind," and then planted the stars and stripes into the rocky surface of the moon. With no wind to blow them away, his footsteps would remain on the surface for eternity. Photos commemorated the moment, immortalizing the image of the American flag undulating in the breeze on the newest frontier — but how could the flag wave if there's no wind?

Area 51, the moon landing, Bigfoot, the Illuminati, flat Earth — all phenomena that have witnessed theorization and discourse. The creation of these theories simply starts with a question and a little bit of skepticism.

"Humans are wired to acknowledge patterns," AP physics and astronomy teacher Matthew Varvir said. "We're really good at it. That's honestly one of the things that humans are so much better at than even modern-day AI is that we can look at data and [ask], 'Why is that? When? Where?'...I think that is the vast majority of [creating these theories]; we search for explanations, and we search for meaning. And if that's not provided, in other ways, we will create them for ourselves."

There is even a conspiracy theory behind the coining of the term 'conspiracy theory' that the CIA came up with the phrase after John F. Kennedy's assassination to discredit all of those who were questioning the government's involvement in it. And there is proof that the term was used as early as 1863 in a letter published in the New York Times regarding why England supported the Confederacy in the Civil War.

"I'm inherently a really skeptical person [which] I think comes to the territory of being a science teacher," Varvir said. "And so I require, in most of my beliefs, a fair amount of evidence. So with that in mind, I'm way more likely to not believe in a conspiracy theory than believe in it."

While some people find it entertaining to delve into the whirlpool of these conspiracies, many, like Varvir, are skeptical and stick to the science.

"I usually need heavy evidence to believe in any theories that would completely change the way I think about something," senior Lyles Etcheverry said. "I like to entertain conspiracy theories, but it takes a lot to truly convince me of any of them."

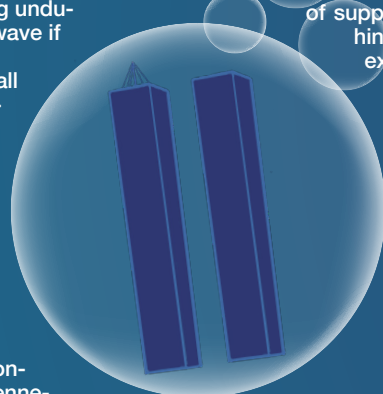
Some choose to engage and entertain all kinds of conspiracies, but many have one they stick to and dive deep into.

"[My favorite conspiracy theory] is the moon landing because it is one of the most contradictory, and every person has differing opinions about it," senior Katie Dullye said. "I used to watch Shane Dawson...and I would listen to his video on [conspiracy theories], which were like an hour long. Whenever I see or hear about a conspiracy theory on TikTok or somewhere else, I usually go to Safari to look into it more."

A lot of conspiracy theories are harmless and fun to entertain, such as Area 51 housing extraterrestrial life, Bigfoot and those conjured up around movies or celebrities. However, when it comes to conspiracies dealing with science and history, they can become much more serious and dangerous.

"When you do a little digging, the vast majority of, particularly [the] ones that have to do with science, the evidence against them is so strong," Varvir said. "If I [were to entertain] any, I guess the closest would be [regarding], historically, a lot of things [about] various governments, particularly colonial governments, or governments who acted in other parts of the world. There's so much evidence that a lot of that stuff was definitely not above board and was oftentimes incredibly harmful. But to me, I would even argue that those aren't conspiracy theories because so much of that has come out [and] so much evidence that's come up that it's basically now kind of the established historical narrative."

The Merriam-Webster definition of a conspiracy theory as "a theory that explains an event or set of circumstances as the result of a secret plot by usually powerful conspirators" and also "a theory asserting that a secret of great importance is being kept from the public," encompasses all kinds



of suppositions, whether they be regarding reasons behind certain movies and TV shows or even personal experiences, the small and silly ones, all the way to the ones that can get you in trouble when questioning government decisions.

"I watch a lot of YouTube videos on different conspiracy theories because they interest me," Etcheverry said. "I have a lot of fun with some of them like 'The Simpsons' predicting the future, but many of them can be very convincing and, if I dig my hole deep enough, I can get paranoid about the government watching me through my phone and having secret cameras."

As harmless as they may be, conspiracy theories can snowball and become consuming to those who decide to entertain even the smallest of them. Once you start to believe one of the

more simple ones with loads of evidence against it, what is going to stop you from believing the more complicated, possibly even darker ones?

"I think that some are less harmful than some other ones," Varvir said. "But still, I always am concerned to a little degree about conspiracy theories, just because, if there's a lot of evidence and if you start really consuming them, really going down the rabbit hole, that you're more likely to kind of give in to the next one, and the next one, the next one, the next one... When it comes

to [theories] like Area 51, I'm more curious about them and more about people who get into them beyond that point?"

THE MASTERMINDS OF MACH

After a crisis occurs, whether on a national or international scale, conspiracy theories at first glance may seem like a natural response. Psychologists have determined the roots of these theories.

"I think people 'come up' with these theories because they've genuinely seen something or heard something, and as an avid conspiracy theory believer, said, 'I need to share this because it might shine light on what happened during another event occurs, they start to question the truth. They are curious creatures and tend to stick to their beliefs. Sometimes it doesn't end well for them."

A study from Louisiana State University found that 60% of Americans believe in at least one conspiracy theory. The study stems from a variety of motives, including a desire for control. An epistemic motive is defined as a need for understanding of a situation. Some people believe they have autonomy over the things that happen to them. Lastly, social motivation is someone's desire to feel part of a group.

"When something major happens, we naturally want to know why that happened. Social psychology at the University of Kentucky found that people who are members of the American Psychology Association are more likely to believe in conspiracy theories, and they want to know the truth. But the truth is often hard to come by. Some people are drawn to conspiracy theories because they are uncertain either in specific situations or in general.

In addition to the three main motives, narcissism factors into the psychology of conspiracy theories. Both individual theorists and theorists oftentimes have an overinflated sense of their own intelligence.

"So people with lower levels of education are more drawn to conspiracy theories," Douglas said. "People argue that's because people are not given the tools that they haven't been allowed to have, or they don't have access to the tools to allow them to differentiate between good sources and bad sources or credible sources."

Not only do education levels play a role in why people believe in conspiracy theories, but also age. Douglas found that young people are more likely to believe in conspiracy theories than young adults. The British Journal of Developmental Psychology found that the peak age for belief in conspiracy theories is in the late 20s.

"Just like all things, of course, [conspiracy theories] can be harmful, and I can see how misinformation can be used to prove it wrong then there's just depends on what you yourself deem to be true."

With the rise of social media in the last decade, conspiracy theories, such as Shane Dawson's, have grown their popularity. Dawson has achieved almost 1 billion total video views. In 2019, Dawson was named the most subscribed to on YouTube with theories; one theory was a popular pizza franchise with children. Dawson's theory was because of the oddly shaped, mismatched toppings. Dawson gained over 30 million views and started a pizza franchise.

"I was totally convinced when Shane Dawson said the pizzas," junior Ava Loftus said. "It wasn't just one pizza. Saying that it wasn't just one pizza. Saying that it wasn't just one pizza. Saying that it wasn't just one pizza."

Chuck E. Cheese denied all of Dawson's theories.



TO BELIEVE

create chaos.

or and **Elliot Lovitt** Copy Editor

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oo into that, then what do they get into

INATION

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ched slices. The video, now deleted,
ted a feud between Dawson and the

e Dawson pulled up a picture of one of
was enlightening, and it was so obvious
at it's due to the pizza cutter doesn't
s like twice the size of the other half."
son's claims and assured that though

the pizzas are not always perfectly shaped, they make their
dough fresh in-house and their pizzas are made to order.
Dawson is not the only theorist that uses YouTube as a
platform, however; during the pandemic, the platform
was a hotspot for information about the virus and treat-
ments. According to the Harvard Kennedy School, You-
Tube lacks the social moderation infrastructure to prevent
the spread of misinformation.

Joe Rogan, a commentator and podcaster, has created
many YouTube videos featuring theories about the origin of
Covid-19.

"The appeal of someone like Joe Rogan is not that he's a
genius, because he's obviously not, but that he's willing to discuss
anything with anyone, so his episodes range from fun stupidity to ex-
posure to completely new ideas," former ESD student Miles Wooldridge '24
said. "I think people would benefit by approaching all information that they
receive from the government, mainstream media and conspiracy theorists
themselves with a healthy amount of skepticism."

According to the Washington Post, Rogan's podcasts average about 11
million listeners. He came under fire for his claim that the mRNA Covid-19
vaccine was actually gene therapy funded by Bill Gates and that a microchip
was injected with the vaccine.

"I don't agree with everything he says, but unlike nearly all other figures in
mass media, he invites healthy criticism and dissent," Wooldridge said. "If you
start believing in one conspiracy the problem is that you're more likely to be-
lieve others so it's all a balance. If you believe every conspiracy theory that's
just as naive as believing all conspiracy theories are hoaxes. You
just have to try your best to look at things objectively."

THE INSTABILITY OF INQUIRY

While many conspiracy theories can be harmless and
exist only for entertainment, some can take it one step
further, resulting in dangerous misinformation being
spread. The prevalence of conspiracy theories, espe-
cially revolving around political or social topics, can
lead to the perpetuation of harmful beliefs.

"[I've heard of] theories about JFK's assassination,
9/11, Covid-19 and that January 6 is Antifa," Claire
Mrozek, upper school Race In America and AP U.S.
History teacher, and junior class dean . "If you look at
the American Historical Record, you could probably find
a conspiracy theory about everything."

Conspiracy theories, like those revolving around the 2020
election or Covid-19, undermine the public's belief on topics like
vaccination or raise their mistrust in the government.

"The conspiracy theories that exist today are kind of weaponized, anti-
institutional," Mrozek said. "Again if you look at Covid-19 as a really great
example, I think there was a conscious effort by some people to undermine
people's confidence in government and to the healthcare leadership in this
country, and that I find very disturbing."

For example, at the height of the pandemic, the weekly Covid-19 Snapshot
Monitoring in Denmark conducted a study that evaluated the effects of con-
spiracy theories on a random sample of the Danish adult population. When
presented with a political Covid-19 conspiracy theory, those in the study
ended with decreased institutional trust, decreased support of government
regulations and decreased adoption of social distancing measures — thus
suggesting that the media sharing conspiracy theories could undermine the
government's attempts to regulate the spread of the virus.

"Personally, I've pretty much heard and looked into just about any 'con-
spiracy' that anyone can think of," Stibbens said. "[I've read a lot about] the
ones about the majority of public figures, including government officials, [that]
are involved in a 'new world order,' and they run human trafficking rings, drug
smuggling and implement satanism in our everyday lives. The list goes on, but
you name it and I've probably looked into it."

Some conspiracy theories take it upon themselves to change beliefs about
sensitive topics, including Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting and 9/11.
Popular conspiracy theorists, like Alex Jones— a far-right radio show host

and owner of the fake news website InfoWars— have claimed
that the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting was a hoax.
People who believed the conspiracy showed up in Newtown,
Connecticut and began to harass those involved with the
shooting, accusing family members of victims, survivors of
the shooting, religious leaders, neighbors and first responders
of being a part of a government plot. Jones' accusations
eventually led him to lose a \$1 billion lawsuit, forcing him to
declare bankruptcy.

"I think it's important to always ask questions, but there's
this really significant line," Mrozek said. "You need to ask ques-
tions about what is accepted as truth, but the first thing you should
go to isn't this extreme assumption that somebody's behind this and
somebody's doing this to hurt me."

Before Sandy Hook, conspiracy theorists were usually vague, targeting
forces within the government. Even with 9/11 conspiracies, theorists usually
left the victims' families alone. However, after Sandy Hook and the harass-
ment in Newtown, conspiracy theorists and their believers have taken it upon
themselves to investigate conspiracy theories. For example, with the Piz-
zagate conspiracy theory — in which Alex Jones theorized that the owners and
employees of a Washington D.C. pizza restaurant were a part of a pedophile
ring, a ring that also included politicians — one of Jones' followers drove hun-
dreds of miles to the pizza restaurant and fired his assault rifle, all in the name
of investigating conspiracy theories. The Pizzagate conspiracy surfaced dur-
ing the 2016 presidential election and targeted high-ranking members of the
Democratic Party, including presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, accusing
them of being a part of a pedophile ring centered in a pizzeria in
Washington D.C., hence the name "Pizzagate."

"The first amendment grants us the right to freedom of
speech whether that may be deemed harmful or not," Stib-
bens said. "There might be a touchy subject that has foul
play and evidence of foul play, and that information needs
to be shared so that people can connect the dots and know
the truth."

Before Sandy Hook, the tragedy of 9/11 was subject to con-
spiracy theories. People theorized that the Bush administration
was involved in plotting the 9/11 terrorist attacks, convinced that high-
level government officials had knowledge in advance of the attacks.

"The U.S. economy was at a low point [before 9/11], and when that hap-
pens we go to war because people make money off of war," Stibbens said.
"Also, there's oil in the Middle East, and oil means money. What's a better
way to start a war than to stage an attack on a country that kills thousands
of innocent people? Our government knew that."

Yet another example of conspiracy theories culminating from dangerous
events is the insurrection of Jan. 6, 2022, leading to theories that pinned
the blame for the riot on members of Antifa — the anti-fascist movement — or
even FBI agents. The theories, perpetuated by talk show hosts like Tucker
Carlson, paint a fraudulent picture of the events of Jan. 6. Carlson's claim
that the FBI was behind the attack on the Capitol gained traction after he
released a documentary series about the insurrection.

"We have to get back to responsible journalism," Mrozek said. "The good
news about social media is the tremendously powerful democratic nature
of it. Literally anybody can get on Twitter and put something out there. But
that's not enough. There was a law, called the Fairness Doctrine, where if
you got an FCC license, then you had a responsibility to address all sides of
an issue. They basically just let that law go into oblivion by the 1980s. You
can talk about standards in journalism, but it's hard because you don't want
to squelch the ability of people to have opinions."

In order to combat the misinformation constantly being pushed on vari-
ous forms of media, Mrozek believes that schools could help teach media
literacy, but ultimately it's up to the individual to decide what is true and
what is not.

"I do think schools have a very important responsibility to try to teach me-
dia literacy," Mrozek said. "But it's one more thing to teach in my classroom,
it's one more thing to do in advisory, that's really hard. The only real answer
[to combat misinformation] is critical thinking, for people to be taught to ask
really significant questions about everything they encounter."



Illustration by **Grace Worsham, Maddy Hammett, Charlotte Tomlin, Callie Hawkins and Elliot Lovitt**

The BATTLE of the Bagels

Managing Editor Elisabeth Siegel visited bagel shops around Dallas to find the best plain bagel and cream cheese combo. The review takes into account the “vibe” of the shop as well as the taste and texture of the bagel and cream cheese in hopes that readers will try them out for themselves.

SHUG'S

It is no surprise that on any Sunday morning, Shug's Bagels, located in University Park, has a line stretching outside of the door. SMU students flock over from campus nearby for the acclaimed bagels. Many of my classmates have raved about the shop; it seems to be a Dallas favorite. I got pretty excited when I scrolled through Shug's' mouth-watering website. The bagel itself was perfectly chewy on the outside and soft on the inside, and there was more cream cheese than I knew what to do with. The coffee is satisfactory, and there is an area where customers can add cream and sugar to their drinks. For the amount of regulars that flock to this establishment there is not enough seating, so it was a little cramped. If you plan to stop by on the weekend, it may be best to take advantage of their curbside pickup, delivery or take-out options. \$6 for a plain bagel with cream cheese
3020 Mockingbird Ln



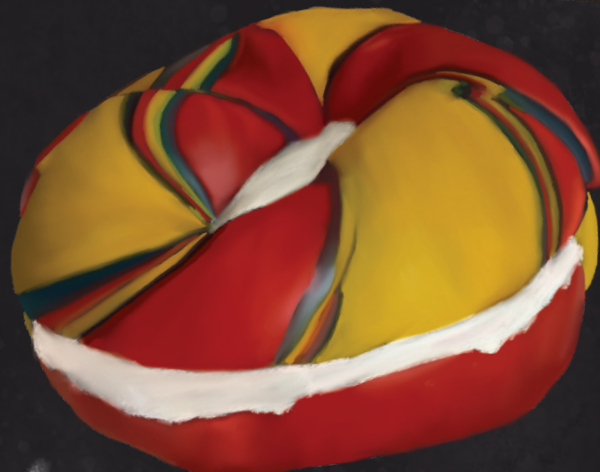
DELI NEWS N.Y. STYLE DELI

Near the intersection of Preston and Campell road, Deli News looks underwhelming from the outside but is a charming spot offering authentic New York-style deli food on the inside. It is a sit-down restaurant with many different non-bagel options for breakfast, lunch and dinner. No matter what you order, it is all made from scratch. The bagel was very doughy and chewy, and the cream cheese was adequate. Nevertheless, I appreciated the friendly staff and lively atmosphere. It seemed to be filled with regular customers ordering matzo ball soup, eggs benedict and Reubens. If the server hadn't told me that they only had one chef handling all the food by himself, I never would have guessed; it seemed to come out in a timely manner. The restaurant wouldn't be my first choice if I was in the mood for just a bagel, but if you are ever craving a full breakfast or sandwich, definitely try it out. \$2.99 for a plain bagel and cream cheese on the side
17062 Preston Rd



BAGEL CAFE 21

As a small cafe in Richardson, Bagel Cafe 21 is a hidden gem. I decided to switch things up and try the rainbow bagel, just a plain bagel with food dye, and it was definitely the most aesthetically-pleasing bagel I had ever seen. The texture wasn't my favorite; it was very chewy because they don't toast the bagel in order to not ruin the colors. Otherwise, the cream cheese was average. The staff was friendly, and the food came out quickly. If rainbow isn't your style, they have many other bagel options with unique spreads, including guacamole and hummus. They serve sandwiches for both breakfast and lunch and many muffins with flavors including pistachio and raspberry. Bagel Cafe 21 is definitely for people who feel adventurous and want “Instagrammable” food. \$4.95 for a rainbow bagel and cream cheese
1920 N Coit Rd



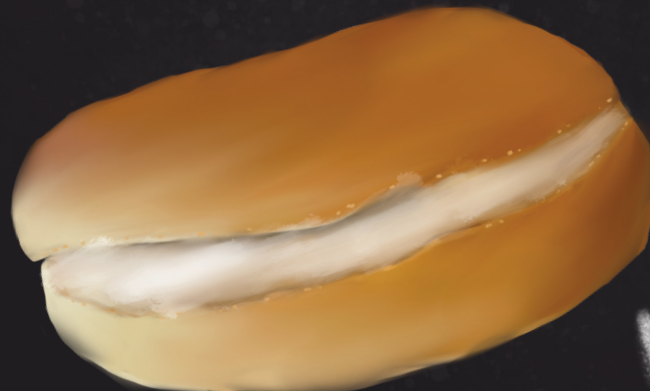
SCLAFANI'S

Set in the heart of Preston Center, Sclafani's New York Bagels and Sandwiches reflects the cultural melting pot that is America; it was founded with a blend of Italian bread baking and New York Jewish bagel making. I have been to Sclafani's a couple of times before and ordered the delicious Lady Liberty, a perfect combination of egg white, pesto, arugula and avocado. As I took my first bite of the plain bagel, my already high expectations were met. The cream cheese was rich and applied generously, which paired well with the crunchy-on-the-outside, soft-on-the-inside bagel. It was mostly easy to eat, besides a little bit of flaking. As for the rest of the shop, the staff was very friendly, and the music made me feel like I was listening to my own playlist. On a Sunday morning, the place is packed with people and conversation, but still has quite a few customers on weekdays. To wash the bagel down, they have a wide array of coffee to choose from. I ordered a lavender oat milk latte, which had a balanced sweet-to-bitter ratio. You can always trust Sclafani's for a well-made, gourmet bagel experience. \$4 for a plain bagel and cream cheese
6135 Luther Ln



EINSTEIN BROS

Einstein's is a classic bagel joint that people from around the nation have access to, with 689 locations in the United States. Whenever they are catered for a Sunday morning workday, they are sure to be devoured by the Eagle Edition staff. Since it's a chain, it doesn't feel as authentic and as welcoming as other bagel shops, but I still decided to give it a fair shot. I've found that the bagels are on the chewy and tough side, even after toasting. The taste of the bagel with the cream cheese is just fine, not fantastic. I do appreciate the amount of bagel and spread options that they have — my personal favorite is the honey whole wheat bagel and honey almond shmeat. They have the most coffee options out of all the bagel shops, with a wide array of lattes, macchiatos, teas and more, which sometimes makes it feel more like a Starbucks than a bagel shop. Truthfully, Einstein Bros. Bagels is consistently average, but I would rather get my bagels at local businesses for better service, unique atmosphere and fresher ingredients. \$3.98 for a plain bagel and cream cheese
12050 Inwood Rd



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Elisabeth Siegel writes about the many benefits of meditation and its effect on mental health

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Editors-In-Chief Maddy Hammett and Grace Worsham discuss the four women in history they would want to have dinner with.

The opinions expressed in this section of the Eagle Edition do not necessarily reflect the views of the newspaper staff, school, adviser, faculty or staff

Dodging the products pushed by social media

The staff stance reflects the opinion of the Eagle Edition staff and it does not reflect the opinion of the school, newspaper adviser, faculty or staff.

Ads are constantly thrown at teenagers as they scroll through various influencers' accounts on social media apps such as TikTok, Instagram and Snapchat: "Charlotte's highlighters glide onto the skin, delivering a dreamy, soft-focus finish that makes your features POP!" (Charlotte Tilbury Highlighter). "Dior Addict Lip Glow Oil instantly nourishes, protects, softens and revitalizes the lips." (Dior Lip Oil). "HYDRATE GREAT" (Stanley Cup). "Stronger strides. Focused sets. A mindful practice. In these leggings, you'll make it happen." (Lululemon)

Teens' bank account balances are suddenly becoming lower and lower as they feel pressured to buy the never-ending trending products. As if it wasn't enough that social media has driven many teenagers into depression and mental instability, now companies are targeting these same vulnerable audiences' bank accounts and credit cards. The pressure adolescents are under is only intensified by the constant advertisements and reviews that promise they will look and feel better. These brands use popular, well-liked and good looking influencers giving the illusion that if they use the product, they too can look or feel better about themselves. The influencers that teens have fallen in love with and decided to follow, are making money by promoting new products, developing a brand or sponsoring companies. While the Eagle Edition agrees that social media trends can be beneficial when

promoting mental and physical wellness in a healthy manner, the negative effects that these vicious trend cycles cause are tremendous and teens are losing money.

Eighty-eight out of 154 ESD responses feel like they have bought more products recently because of social media. 90 percent feel like they use the things they buy off of social media often.

Beyond just promoting a culture of overconsumption, influencers have begun sparking racial conflict with the products they promote. A well-known and rising influencer, Alix Earle, has been trying out new products to advertise to her ever-growing follower count, including a hair oil product called Mielle. The brand is advertised as being "built on a mission to serve black women with a high-performance product and natural ingredients." Earle's promotion became problematic because Earle is white, and the hair product she is promoting is produced by a black-owned hair care company with products designed for black girls' hair. Earle promoting Mielle made the sales skyrocket, but not in the way the company had intended. Many of the consumers were white, making the intended black audience with no oil left to buy.

A website and company Sprout Social, whose mission is to help companies of all sizes be more real and honest to build a better relation-

ship with their customers, wrote a blog and a data report called "Social Shopping in 2022: Consumer Behaviors in the Social Shopping Cart." The data collected in December of 2021 was used to predict the expected social shopping in 2022. The blog explains how social media shopping has increased tremendously and how by 2025, social shopping is set to become a \$1.2 trillion channel. It also says that 98 percent of consumers had planned to make at least one purchase through social shopping or influencer commerce in 2022. Sprout Social reported that social media algorithms are "a way of sorting posts in a user's feed based on relevancy instead of publish time."

Algorithms make sure that users receive the type of videos, pictures or ads they would like based on what users have viewed, bought or clicked on previously. While this may seem helpful, it is also a contributor to more overconsumption: users constantly seeing things they like. Before using algorithms, social media ordered product information by newest to oldest, with the newest appearing at the top of the feed. Algorithms are useful because one is not constantly trying to find what they want to see in the growing number of posts.

A problem with online shopping is that it becomes so easy to buy things that it adds up and becomes very expensive. Most websites allow consumers to have a credit card on file, make shopping and paying more

convenient. Another big problem with online shopping is that when paying for the order the original price of the item, after tax and delivery fees, has increased, and by then it is too late and you have fallen in love with the item, deciding that it is worth it.

There are a few options to help stop this overconsumption and shopping craziness. One of them is to just delete social media and enticing apps altogether. This would solve the problem, but let's be honest— it is unrealistic.

Another option, that is more sensible, is to really think twice whether what you are about to buy is worth the money you are willing to spend. You can research the product, read more reviews and make sure the product is reliable. You can also check to see if there are similar that may be cheaper. Make sure to check the size and content amount of the product to see how long it will last when deciding if the price is worth it. Assessing the products or clothes you already own is important as well before just buying new ones.

A big part of stopping this buying frenzy has to do with self esteem and being comfortable with yourself and who you are. You should know that these products won't "fix" anything or make miracles, it is important to be comfortable enough to be yourself and be content with who you are and enjoy what you own rather than constantly seek new things.

Try to stay off online shopping sites as much as possible, and when shopping, try to go to a physical store, so you can try on that new sweater or skirt that you want. Know what you are getting for the money you are spending.

"Know what you are getting for the money you are spending."

Eagle Edition Staff



Illustrations by Jamie Henderson

Art vs Artist

Story by **Elisabeth Siegel** Managing Editor

In the world of pop culture, cancel culture has been having its moment for the past few years. The phrase occurs when a public figure is ‘canceled’ or no longer receives support from the public. But some fans don’t want to write them off completely and still want to enjoy their work as a detached entity that has nothing to do with the artist’s morals. Although there is nuance to the dilemma, it is impossible to separate art from the artist, especially since art plays a major role in the actions of the artist.

Take rapper Kanye West, for example. He has been known for his controversial beliefs throughout his career, but the tipping point for most of the public was his anti-semitic remarks and open praise of Adolf Hitler last year. Some would argue that it is okay to still support his music and his fashion brand, Yeezy, but his beliefs seem to be intertwined with his work. In October, West featured “White Lives Matter” T-shirts in a collection. The controversial phrase is seen by many as a white supremacist mantra. It is often used to discredit the Black Lives Matter movement. Vogue Magazine fashion editor Gabriella Karefa-Johnson described the shirt as “deeply offensive, violent and dangerous” and that it

crossed the line of irony while, in turn, perpetuating racism. In this case, West’s personal beliefs are crossing into his art, and it is hard to separate Yeezy from the heinous views of its artist. The brand Adidas cut ties with Yeezy due to West’s hate speech but will continue selling his designs without his branding.

Vogue announced that their 2023 Met Gala theme will be “Karl Lagerfeld: A Line of Beauty,” honoring the late German designer and former Chanel creative director following his death in 2019. The benefit will take place on the first Monday of May at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Lagerfeld has been known as the Hitchcock of the fashion world and one of the only designers equally as famous as the people he dresses. Yet Lagerfeld was quite the controversial figure. He made many fatphobic comments, including “no one wants to see curvy women on the runway” and said that singer Adele was “a little too fat,” but later apologized and said he was describing singer Lana Del Rey. He also

voiced many controversial opinions on the MeToo Movement, migrants and gay marriage. He released a campaign where white model Claudia Schiffer was put in black and yellow face. It is strange to create a Met Gala surrounded by an individual in the first place, but even stranger when the individual is as controversial as Lagerfeld. Although he is widely known as a fashion genius, I don’t believe that the entire theme should be dedicated to just him—in doing so, Vogue is honoring not only his work but his persona. One can still appreciate his non-controversial looks without praising him as an individual by naming an entire benefit over him.

It is still possible to draw inspiration from famous designers whom you don’t respect as a person, but actively buying from brands with controversial pieces and honoring the personhood of a designer is another story. It hurts when our idols do hurtful things, but we must understand that their morals often intertwine with their work.

“West’s personal beliefs are crossing into his art, and it is hard to separate Yeezy from the heinous views of its artist.”

Elisabeth Siegel
senior



wellness

Meditation has benefits, students should practice

Opinion by **Elisabeth Siegel** Managing Editor

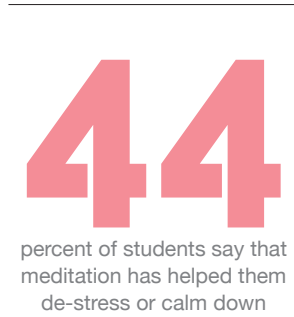
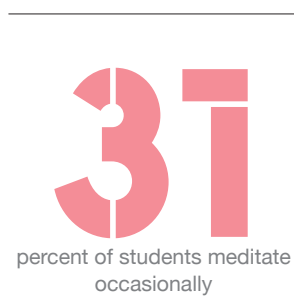
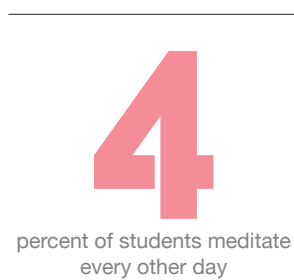
Every Friday morning at 8, a small group of faculty and staff members gather in the wet wing’s room 236. Led by upper school English teacher Antonia Moran and Visual Arts Department Chair Dane Larsen, participants sit in the dark room, close their eyes and begin to meditate, putting the long week behind them. After about 15 minutes, they open their eyes, take one last deep breath and the day begins.

There’s no doubt that the faculty recognizes the importance of meditation’s role in mental wellness. Moran led a Mindfulness and Meditation club for students in years past, but it did not gain traction this year and is no longer offered. But there are many different types of meditation and relaxation techniques that students can implement.

And students should adopt meditation into their school routines as well.

A yoga class is a great meditative opportunity to incorporate mindfulness into a workout. Frequent yoga can strengthen the body while improving flexibility, improving athletic performance and protecting muscles. In addition to physical benefits from the exercise, students may find that they also experience mental benefits. Stress often reveals itself in tension around the body, so practicing yoga can provide relief for these tense spots. It also incorporates breathing exercises, encouraging students to be more aware of their core and mental wellness. Upper school French and Arabic teacher Laila Kharrat often leads yoga postures during after-school Lifetime Fitness classes, and there are many free yoga classes available on YouTube as well.

Taking the time to focus on breathing while visualizing certain calming objects and sensations can distract students from their busy schedules. According to the Mayo Clinic, meditation fosters compassion and empathy while reducing negative emotions. In Moran’s English classes, she will occasionally pause the beginning of class, turn off the lights, tell students to lay their heads on the table



Source: Jan. 17 poll of 68 students

and guide their meditation. Teachers can consider taking time out of their classes to guide students through their meditation practice, whether it’s just by telling them to breathe or by pulling up a guided meditation on the internet. In the library, mandalas, geometric patterns and coloring activities are laid out on a “brain break” table. Though it may seem juvenile, coloring can reduce the thoughts of a restless mind during a study session.

If student-athletes incorporate meditation into their daily practice, they may achieve improved performance or get through a tough injury. The practice of meditation is not just religious; many athletes have adopted it into their routines. Basketball player Michael Jordan’s coach, Phil Jackson, taught him to meditate in order to refocus during games. In an interview with Thrive Global, Jackson said he meditates every morning for 10 to 15 minutes in order to feel in control for the rest of the day. Basketball player LeBron James recently signed a partnership with Calm, one of the most well-known meditation and wellness apps. According to Athletes Unheard, the list of athletes who meditate daily goes on: the late basketball player Kobe Bryant, football players Derek Jeter and Russell Wilson, volleyball player Kerri Walsh, soccer player Carli Lloyd and more. The best athletes know that mental wellness is worth prioritizing. Sports can place a lot of stress on the body, including muscle tears, so if student athletes take time to meditate before or after practice, it could help them be on their A-game.

Some people may be hesitant because they may think perfect meditation is hard to achieve or practice, but there is not just one “right” way to meditate. Beginners should know that if their mind wanders, it’s okay; they just have to focus on their breath or a certain sensation, which will improve with practice. The term meditation may seem daunting or unachievable, but at its core, it means having a relaxed state of being. If students practice meditation and mindfulness more often, the school will benefit and foster a calmer, more focused community.

pro|con

Is it ethical to keep animals in zoos?

The Dallas Zoo has been shaken by an unusual slew of events in recent weeks, making the international news. A suspect was arrested for the alleged capture of two emperor tamarin monkeys, the escape of a clouded leopard from its habitat and the death of an endangered vulture. In lieu of recent events, the Eagle Edition decided to contemplate the value of zoos in society.



Illustration by Lauren Shushi

Pro: yes

By **Jamie Henderson** Staff writer



When I was little, I always loved giraffes because they are tall like me, so going to the zoo was always so exciting. Finally seeing animals I had always read or learned about the alphabet with, was something little me always looked forward to. The zoo has always been a place to learn about animals while getting to see them in a habitat much like their natural one. I love zoos because of the knowledge they give and the help they offer to animals.

Most zoos, including our beloved Dallas Zoo, are a part of a non-profit organization called Association of Zoos & Aquariums. Amongst the many AZA's programs, the

Save Animals From Extinction program protects threatened or endangered animals, builds recovery plans for hurt animals, collaborates with other AZA members, makes conservation plans and reports the conservation process and progress.

AZA hopes to save "animals from extinction focus[ing] from the collective expertise within AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums and leverag[ing] their massive audience to save species." This was found from the AZA website.

The organization helps collect information on the animals so we can better understand how to care for them and help them properly. On their website, you can do a multitude of things, including donating money, learning about what species are at risk of extinction and learning how you can join or help the organization. If you are concerned with an endangered species, you can propose the animal to the AZA in hopes that it can become a part of the Saving Animals From Extinction program. If you want more information or details, you can visit the AZA website and learn more about their mission.

Most zoos also work to take care of endangered or injured animals and nurse them back to health with a team of trained professionals.

On May 23, 2018, the Oregon Zoo in Portland, Oregon returned 15 previously endangered western pond baby turtles to their natural habitat in the Columbia River Gorge. Since the previous May, zoo keepers held the newborn turtles in the zoo's conservation lab, where they experienced a year-round summer simulation so they would not have to hibernate and could focus on growing, hunting and accommodating to the outside world without threats. The turtles grew to the size of about a 2 to 3-year-old turtle which gives them a better chance of living to adulthood and protecting themselves from predators like the bullfrog. About 95 percent of the turtles released into the Columbia River Gorge survive annually.

Wild Welfare, a UK charity working to improve the welfare of animals in captivity, says on their website that, "Zoos engage in research, preserve biodiversity (genetic and species) that may be threatened or at times even extinct in the wild, and they provide much needed funding for research and conservation projects across the world." This proves how much they help animals and do things for their own good. And how children get many benefits from seeing real life animals through education and further involvement in their ecosystem and world around them.

According to the Times of India, while zoos were originally invented for the wealthy to display their power by how many animals they possessed, they have now transformed to educate and help animals. In the first half of the 20th century, zoos began to focus on animals' physical health. The animals were originally kept in pits, then cages with metal bars, then concrete paddocks with fencing to now large enclosures that closely mimic their natural habitat. Zoos are trying to improve as much as possible to ensure that animals are cared for, as comfortable and as healthy as possible. This makes a better life for the animal and better educates humans. Zoos are often looked upon as something you visit when you are a child. While zoos can be helpful for a kid to begin to learn about the animals that are living among us, they are also educational to adults as well. It is important to learn about these animals and see them in person to fully appreciate them. We need to be exposed to them, especially when many of us don't have the means to travel to far away places to see them in their natural habitats.

Con: no

By **Lauren Shushi** Staff writer



During my childhood, I can recall spending hours on a hot summer day gripping my mom's hand tightly as she guided me through the exhibits, pointing at the pretty birds or giggling at the giraffe with a purple tongue that was larger than anything I had ever seen before. I loved zoos because I loved animals, but I was oblivious to the fact that my entertainment came at the expense of the animals I loved so fervently. I now hate zoos because of the same animals I love.

The first zoos began around the 13th century in Western Europe as menageries or private collections of wild animals in captivity for exhibition; the wealthy and grandeur of the zoos were effectively a show of status and power to the public.

Today, zoos that run animal exhibits for profit still aim for the same goal: generating revenue with eye-catching and entertaining animals, regardless of the many factors that concern the animals' actual needs.

Often the animals in captivity are put in situations that can cause them immense amounts of stress, such as petting or human contact in general, which wild animals in captivity can lash out at.

Most animals are provided far less space in a zoo than needed to sustain a healthy lifestyle, which can be detrimental to the animals' physical and emotional health. A study by behavioral biologists Georgia Mason and Ros Clubb in a 2003 issue of the scientific journal, "Nature," examined over 1200 studies of 35 species of carnivores including brown bears, lions and cheetahs, and found that some zoo enclosures were far too small for the animals to carry out the natural routines that they would in the wild.

Abnormal behaviors appeared because of this issue, such as pacing, infant deaths, not reproducing and showing bizarre and repetitive behaviors. For example, clouded leopards have been known to pluck out their fur in captivity. Among the worst are captive polar bears, who spent 25 percent of their day in their habitats pacing and had an infant mortality rate of 65 percent.

It's estimated that of all animals held by the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums, a worldwide organization for zoos and aquariums, 75 percent of them have been abused. The World Animal Protection surveyed 1200 WAZA-associated zoos and aquariums, and they found that the majority participated in abusive practices towards the animals they held in captivity.

Many know of the tragic, nightmare-esque story of Harambe: a 17-year-old endangered silverback gorilla who was shot dead after a 3-year-old boy fell into his enclosure on May 28, 2016 at the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden. Harambe was disoriented and agitated by the shouts and general commotion that ensued when the child fell, but was making no overtly aggressive maneuvers toward the child. Even still, the emergency team found it best to shoot Harambe rather than tranquilize him.

As it turns out, Harambe was not the only gorilla in his family that met a tragic ending. In 2002, zookeepers accidentally let chlorine gas, which is toxic to gorillas, seep into the enclosure, killing Harambe's mom, brother and two half-siblings.

In every one of these cases, and so many others just like it, the gorillas would have avoided their tragic fate altogether if only they had not been held prisoner in captivity.

While one may argue that animals live longer lives in zoos, it is likely that they experience a lower quality of life in captivity. For the growth in numbers of a species while in captivity, the benefits to the species population do not compensate for the treatment of the individual lives of the animals and the negative effects of living in a zoo.

And for those who insist that zoos provide animal education to children, for one: most zoos should not be the standard for how to treat animals, and a 2014 study by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals Latino, British sociologists gathered data from children between seven and 15 years old before and after visiting the London Zoo. The researchers found that 59 percent of children who were at the zoo did not have positive educational outcomes, and 66 percent when children did not have a guide. In many cases, children even came back with a negative impact on the understanding of animals and their natural habitats.

For many reasons, zoos do much more harm to animals than good, so instead of supporting zoos that hold animals captive for profit away from their natural habitat, let us look to supporting real conservation efforts like wildlife refuges and sanctuaries.

27

percent of students think that zoos are ethical

34

percent of students think that zoos are unethical

Source: Feb. 6 poll of 154 upper school students

the letter from

Co-Editors-in-Chief
Grace Worsham and
Maddy Hammett chose
four women dead or alive
they would have at dinner

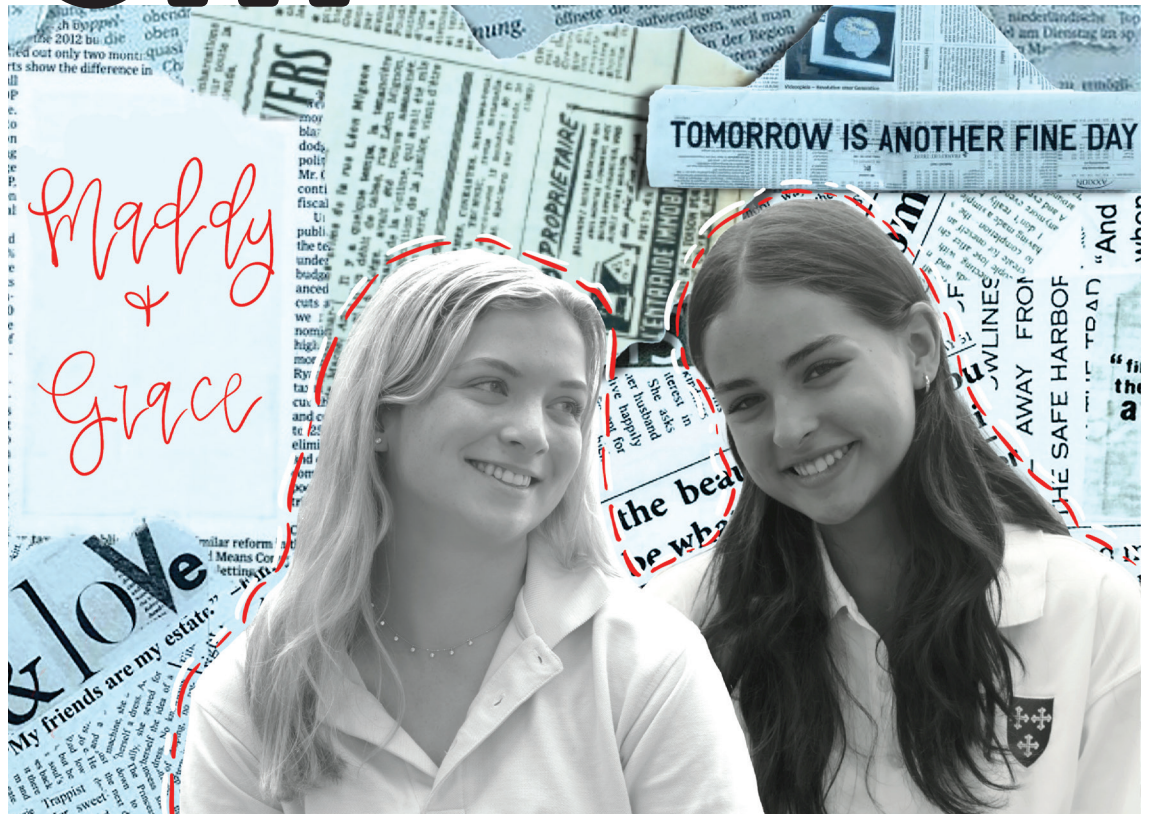
If you could invite four women to dinner dead or alive who would it be? Inspired by last year's editors, we try to answer this question just as they did.

Grace: Georgia O'Keefe, often regarded as the mother of American Modernism, was an influential and talented artist who created over 900 paintings. Although she was very successful, she quit painting three times and lost eyesight as she aged — neither of which deterred her from continuing to paint and create in the future. She wanted to be known not as a “female artist,” but just an artist. She debunked the idea many held that gender was a determinant to artistic ability and proved she was just as capable as any male painter at the time. To me, O'Keefe represents determination and resilience. She once said “I've been absolutely terrified every moment of my life, and I've never let it keep me from doing a single thing I wanted to do.” She quit three times due to financial problems, mental health and eyesight but she always continued to create and shifted to sculptures when she became completely blind. No weather stopped her

either, as she painted nature in torrential rain and the scorching sun. She is truly a beautiful embodiment of a resilient and successful woman, and I would love to have her over for dinner.

Grace: “Well, I've been afraid of changing... But time makes you bolder, even children get older.” I have always loved Stevie Nicks; my parents made sure I did from a very young age. She has always served as a powerful female role model to me who wasn't afraid to present herself how she desired. Her dream-like music would be perfect to listen to over dinner. I think Georgia, Stevie and I would have amazing conversations over the power of women and art as a medium to express ourselves whether that's painting, singing or writing. I think Stevie would just make me feel confident in myself and point out how “I am stronger than [I] know.” She's a true rock star.

Maddy: I have written about Joan Didion for the paper before. My friends, I'm sure, are sick of me talking about her, but I can't help myself. She is an author whose work I consistently find myself returning to, never tiring of her endless prose. Recently I had a discussion with a friend about her work. The friend asked what I like about her work



Photoillustration by Grace Worsham and Maddy Hammett Co-Editors-in-Chief

and how I can return to it without getting sick of it. I told her it is because I don't think there has been or will be anyone who can write with the finality she did. She mulled her work over. For me, I've never had the patience. Writing this even, I can't help but think of when I've met the word count. Sometimes the task itself is simply overwhelming. I think that may be what I admire about her the most. She had enough self-respect to recognize that her words demanded meaning, that she owed it to herself to put in the work.

Maddy: Around this time last

“If you could invite four women dead or alive to dinner who would it be? Inspired by last year's editors, we try to answer this question just as they did.”

Maddy Hammett and Grace Worsham

year, I watched the Martin Scorsese directed show “Pretend it's a City” featuring sardonic social commentator Fran Lebowitz. Lebowitz objectively is not a good person. But that's primarily what makes me gravitate towards her. Her cynical commentary represents the truly annoyed part of all of us, though she is able to walk that line gracefully despite being abrasive. To me, and to many she shows the fun you can have by being unapologetically yourself.



Technology enables anti-intellectualism

Opinion by **Maddy Hammett** Co-Editor-in-Chief

It is difficult to discern where the line between intelligence and elitism falls. I have found that often individuals who pride themselves on their intelligence have been perceived by their peers as being pretentious. You may have rolled your eyes reading this issue of the newspaper already, perhaps just the lede of this column, thinking to yourself, “is part of their grade seeing how many big words they can jam into one sentence?” Don't worry; our staff is self aware, we have that at least. But really, I have found that many have a strong aversion to our newspaper and our perceived style of writing. Every issue, without fail, I hear from joking students, “does anyone actually read the paper?” They say this to the co-editor-in-chief. While they could pick a better audience, their question, in my opinion, does hold some merit. Does anyone actually want to read the paper?

When these jokes inevitably circulate with the printing of each paper I find myself wondering why some community members have such an aversion to our paper. I wonder why they view additional, optional reading as a chore. I wonder why they find stories curated for them to be boring or too wordy. Only the “controversial” stories seem to get students' attention. At some point in between issues I always

wonder at what point will our paper have to introduce click-bait, conspiracy-esq headlines and stories in order to cling to relevancy. I have found in my three years on staff that only the most outrageous opinions and stories have been the ones to gain any real traction among the student body. Our generation is the google generation. Because of that, we're losing interest in mediums, like newspapers, that still hold merit.

According to nonprofit think tank Studio ATAO, American anti-intellectualism can be defined as “a social attitude that systematically denigrates science-based facts, academic and institutional authorities and the pursuit of knowledge.” In short, anti-intellectualism is the dislike for anything perceived as intellectual. As redundant as that sounds, it really is that simple. Something that has been difficult for me to understand surrounding anti-intellectualism, however, is where it comes from and why it is seemingly growing to be worse in the country. After much consideration, I have come to think that there is a growing anti-intellectual culture because of the pervasiveness of technology.

I can understand how this sounds contradictory. The invention of search engines that allow access to over a billion web pages filled with endless answers to endless questions ostensibly would create the perfect climate for a thriving, more educated

populace. Upon learning of a recent phenomenon, as explained in Tom Nichols' book “The Death of the Expertise,” I learned that this assumption was, in many ways, incorrect. The book argues that with the creation and accessibility of search engines and infinite web pages, the trust that was once vested to traditional experts and intellectuals has since been rejected.

This shift has been seen most prevalently on social media with anti-vaxxers and Covid-19 deniers. Our centerspread this issue covers the harmful impacts of conspiracy theories and how, with their dissemination, there is a growing distrust in the government. Conspiracy theories have existed forever, but the forums i.e. Twitter, Instagram, etc. that are being used to spread these theories have only been created in recent years. My primary concern with these conspiracy theorists lies not only with potential deaths that could result from the Covid-19 specific theories, but primarily with the general distrust of intellectuals. Our country is seemingly shifting toward a greater trust in Google than in degree recipients.

Opinion researchers at Germany's Allensbach Institute surveyed 1,000 representative citizens in each of the United States, Great Britain, France and Germany in June of 2020. After data collection, the survey found that one in every five younger Amer-

icans has heard of the conspiracy theory that Bill Gates plans to implant microchips in people to make them easier to control. The survey found that one in every 10 older Americans had heard this theory. These survey results, in my opinion, are indicative of the impact that technology has on the psyche of young Americans. I've seen this distrust of the expert in our own community and in myself as well.

While scrolling aimlessly on Twitter and TikTok, I have happened upon compelling information and theories that I find myself wanting to believe. Life would be easier if the pandemic weren't real and if Adam Lanza had really not taken 26 lives in the Sandy Hook shooting. Part of the issue lies in the way in which this information is received. When scrolling on social media, we are looking for entertainment, and in that act, we can begin to conflate facts with entertainment. When we see these videos on our feeds, we forget that real lives are being discussed and that there are individuals with knowledge that extends past what we can access through our screens.

We must be more vigilant going forward. We have to properly vet sources and the people we are choosing to platform. We have to develop a communal understanding that the people we interact with may know and experience more than we could ever conjure on an Apple product.

“We have to develop a communal understanding that the people we interact with may know and experience more than what we could ever conjure on an Apple product.”

Maddy Hammett

Letter to

Guest writer Christian Rockamore shares his thoughts and feelings surrounding the stressful college admissions process as a member of the senior class



New National Merit rules are exclusionary

By **Alexandra Warner** Views Editor

Dear Editors,

With the most nerve wracking time period in seniors lives across America approaching, things will begin to change. Writing essays, taking test prep, getting recommendation letters are all factors that go into the long and tedious college application process. Soon we will all be hearing back from our favorite schools that some of us have been dreaming of going to as kids. Many of us will get the greatest news of our lives why many of our hearts may also be broken. It is crazy to think about how one decision can impact a child so much right? However, what if I told you that maybe your stress shouldn't be as big as your making it. What if all of our stress is really about to turn into success? A lot of us don't realize that being at ESD, we already have a leg up on our college adventure. Because of our rigorous curriculum and all that we have to offer, schools begin to open an eye when looking at our application. Our four years of hard work have not been for no reason, and it will not go unnoticed. Over the past four years (2018-2022) various amounts of students have been accepted into great universities. 96 students have been accepted into the University of Alabama, 90 into the University of Auburn and 183 into SMU. Whether or not you would prefer to go to these schools, they are still good institutions. Often we tend to stress about things that are out of our control. A lot of us have put in the work and now all we can do is sit back and wait for the results. During this time period it is important that we get closer as a grade to support each other during these important decisions being released. All of us have a strong backbone attending ESD. Wherever we end up we will be successful in that environment. Take a deep breath, relax and let your stress turn into success.

Christian Rockamore
Senior

The entire fall has been about college applications: getting community service hours, working to get awards, pulling all-nighters for a test and juggling as many extracurricular activities as possible to enhance our applications. So, if you're robbed of an achievement that could be the deciding factor of an acceptance at a college, it becomes a question of fairness. In Fairfax County, Northern Virginia, top students are currently facing this issue by not being notified on time, as they should've been, by their principals, of their National Merit commendation. This has begun a long and raging debate between the parents in Northern Virginia and the local public schools.

The uproar began in late December of 2022, yet the district was delaying scores as early as 2020. Concerned parents at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology — regularly ranked America's No. 1 high school — began to wonder why their children had not been recognized by the National Merit Scholarship program. Typically, commended students are notified by October so they can include these awards in their college applications. This is a highly sought-after distinction as only 3 percent of high school students receive the title of "commended" while "semifinalists" test in the top 1 percent out of 1.5 million students. As schools continued to concede their acts of delaying their students, eventually, 25 percent of the high schools in Fairfax county were found to be delaying recognition as well.

Although the principals wrote apology emails, many parents and others believe that at the root of the delay was the school's desire to implement a skewed definition of equity and, therefore, not allow these high performing students an advan-

tage in their application. This could be seen as a bureaucratic error, but I think not. If students don't receive their award, is it fair to them? No, especially if the schools are preventing racial groups from achieving national awards. And if you think these Virginia counties aren't doing this purposefully, think again.

The first problem is that the National Merit Scholarship Handbook states that they directly notify students who have qualified as a semifinalist, commended student or finalist, along with notifying the principal. However, for some reason, only the district received notification, which isn't the policy. Already this seems questionable.

Fairfax County hired consultant Mutiu O. Fagbayi in the fall of 2022 for half a million dollars. His agenda was to teach schools about equity-centered strategic planning. In his presentation, Fagbayi states that equity means "equal outcomes for every student, without exception." His definition is possibly the reason for the district's inequitable and unethical acts. For example, the public education in Fairfax County installed this equity agenda and has been implementing "equitable grading" policies that eliminate zeros, give students 50 percent just for showing up and assign a cryptic code of Non-Traditional Instruction for assignments not turned in. Equity in this context is a strategy that inherently promotes discriminatory actions to hold down the higher achieving students, which happen to be Asian and Caucasian students. According to the National Merit Semifinalists' list published by Fairfax County, Asian-Americans at TJ accounted for 101 of the 132 winners, or 77 percent, so there is no doubt that this is a fact. They did so in a way that they couldn't put it on their college applications, jeopardizing their future college education. It is already hard for students to get into top 100 schools, and attempt-

ing to even the playing field will only make it harder and unfair for those well-rounded students. In fact, the district, in failing to notify students, actually was perpetuating the inequity they sought to avoid, placing these students at a disadvantage to achieve an "equal outcome" as peers from other districts.

"[The school systems] have a maniacal focus on equal outcomes for all students at all costs," Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin told 7News Reporter Nick Minock. "And at the heart of the American dream, is excellence, is advancing, is stretching and recognizing that we have students [who] have different capabilities. Some students have the ability to perform at one level, others need more help, and we have to allow students to run as fast as they can, to dream the biggest dreams they can possibly dream and then go get them."

The definition of the American Dream is "the ideal by which equality of opportunity is available to any American, allowing the highest aspirations and goals to be achieved." And this new and distorted definition of equity is actually perpetuating inequity and inequality by denying students opportunities, an issue that comes off as extremely unethical. These principals are hurting Asian Americans the most, perpetuating a false narrative that America is so irredeemably racist that minorities cannot succeed. So, this effort to create "equal outcomes" by withholding National Merit achievements is an attack on all National Merit winners, especially for the Asian Americans and Caucasians who earned this award.

The discriminatory nature of holding back commendations is a chilling reminder of falling prey to the misapplication of "equity." Whether it's through a sport, an art, a test or another talent, preventing the best to succeed because it is "just not fair" is unfair and unethical to all.

Don't Sleep on Senioritis

by Sarah Cabrales



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Some sports teams require more off season practice and lifts year round

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Winter athletes prepare to compete at the SPC tournament this weekend

Sophomore makes history on the mat

Cindy Lin becomes the second girl ever to join the wrestling team

Story by **Easterly Yeaman** Arts Editor and Social Media Manager

Even though she has never wrestled before, she steps up to the mat. And although others may think it is difficult to be the only girl on an all-boys wrestling team, sophomore Cindy Lin doesn't think twice about it.

"I was just looking at the sports, and I did not want to do three running sports in a row," Lin said. "I thought that wrestling looked interesting, though I had not tried it before."

In addition to being a three-sport athlete at ESD, Lin tried out many different sports at her old school in California. The small school was about 50 students to a grade with the upper campus being 300 to 400 students in total. All sports were available to join without having to try out and were relatively low commitment.

"At ESD, I did cross country last season, and I'm planning to do track in the spring," Lin said. "I've generally done a ton of random sports for maybe one season (basketball, volleyball, etc.), [but] I wasn't really good at them. Sports were really haphazard at my old school and besides varsity girls basketball, anyone could join any sport with very low commitment and no tryouts, so I used to kind of hop around sports."

Even having played many different sports, wrestling was complete-

ly new for her. The coaches were supportive of her joining the all-boy team.

"The coaches are really nice," Lin said. "They're pretty supportive of me being on the team, but they're not giving me special treatment."

But this is not the first time ESD has had a girl in the wrestling team. Wrestling Program Director Kwinten Peterson Brown said that the program has had one other girl on the team in the past. She too practiced with the boys as Lin does.

"When you only have one girl they have to practice with the boys," Brown said.

Lin practices the most with freshman Aiden Ferguson who is in her same weight class.

"But, since I'm at the lowest weight class, the second lightest kid, we tend to wrestle each other," Lin said.

It's also Ferguson's first year doing wrestling, and he usually wrestles with either Lin or senior Chase Chazanow. He says his teammates have been supportive of Lin joining the team.

"I am completely fine having Cindy on the team," Ferguson said. "The team has really done a good job of welcoming her and including her in everything."

Lin's first competition, and the first tournament for the wrestling team, was from Jan. 13 to 14 in Tyler, Texas.

"This weekend is her first competition," Brown said. "She will wrestle other girls at the same location as the boys."

Wrestlers competed with other wrestlers from schools around Texas who were in the same weight class as them. Most of the time, during competitions, wrestlers move on after winning depending on

the tournament.

"Wrestling tournaments work like most tournaments, you win, you move on, you lose, you are out," Brown said. "Some may be double elimination."

Lin competed with the limited number of girls who also do wrestling. Because of this limited number,

Lin only faced two opponents at the tournament.

"I only got two matches, [while] the boys got six or so since there were only two other girls around my weight," Lin said. "I lost both matches but I made it past the first period for one."

Some of the other teams couldn't make it, but the experience of cheering on the team made up for the lack of competition.

"As for the tournament, I was pretty excited because it would be my first match and also because it was an overnight trip (something that didn't really happen at my old school)," Lin said. "On Friday, we found out that of the three girls teams, two of them bailed out and the third one would arrive on Saturday so that was somewhat disappointing. It was really interesting to watch the others wrestle and cheer for them."

With Lin and her teammates cheering each other on, the rest of the wrestling team did well at the tournament.

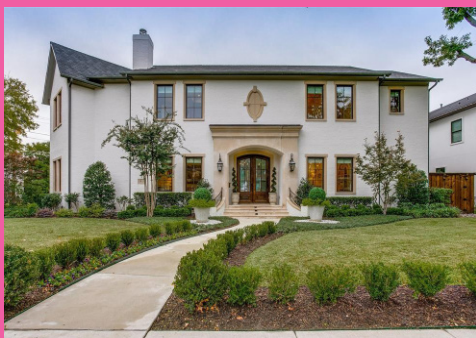
"Generally, I do think that the rest of the wrestling team deserves a lot more credit," Lin said. "They did really well, and we had four finalists."

Even though it's rare for ESD to have a girl on the wrestling team, it's any other day for Lin when she steps onto the mat.

"I feel like it's not really that special," Lin said. "I feel like it's the entire team that makes the teamwork, so it's not really special that I'm on the team, right? I'm just doing it."



TWO PERSON PODIUM
Sophomore Cindy Lin stands with her opponent after making it to the finals of the tournament. "I did win [my first match] which was cool," Lin said. "My second match I got cradled. She was a lot stronger and more technical than me."
Photo provided by Cindy Lin



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Seasonal sports teams become year-round

Student-athletes use their off-seasons to prepare for in-season games and tournaments

Story by **Alexandra Warner** Web Editor

Once it's 4 p.m., sophomore lacrosse player Katherine Clark puts on her lacrosse gear and heads to the weight room to train. After an hour lift, she does wall ball for 20 minutes and heads to the turf to practice drills with the rest of the team. And this is just during off-season.

The school offers a multitude of sports from football to rowing, each season. However, some sports require student-athletes to train year-round in preparation for in-season games, tournaments, meets or regattas.

"Playing a year-round sport means that we back off of high-intensity training for the off-season, but we still train every day," senior and rower Sydney Stuelpe said. "We also incorporate more cross training like biking [and] running, so it's not all erging all the time."

Each sport has a designated season but trains year-round during their off-seasons. Stuelpe, who only rows, spends her summer and winter off-season training and preparing for regattas in the fall and spring. They usually erg and lift three days a week, will do a long erg one day and then are usually on the water one to two times a week.

"During the off-season, we do a lot of high volume and low-intensity training," Stuelpe said. "We focus more on increasing the amount of time and the number of meters we're doing instead of splits. We also incorporate a lot more lifts into our schedule during off-season compared to in-season."

The varsity football team also trains year-round. They have games and the SPC tournament in the fall, spring practices for their 7v7 tournament, and summer practices to prepare for the fall season.

"Football season officially starts with the retreat at the end of July [and] then we have two-a-days [practices] for the first two weeks of August before the season really starts," senior and football player

Hood Mathes said. "We then have our 7v7 [team] start-up towards the end of the spring [and] all through May and June we have games and practices for it."

The varsity cheer team has a similar schedule with cheering for the fall and winter, participating in a National Cheerleaders Association competition and hosting tryouts in the spring. Senior and captain Mackenzie Brooks believes their fall and winter schedule are drastically different.

"For fall cheer, we learn new routines every week [and] in the winter we're practicing for competition," Brooks said. "For competition cheer, there are less practices, but the intensity of the practices is definitely more because we're preparing for competition and we have to have a certain amount of skills to win."

Cheer hosts spring tryouts that last for a week, so once the fall season starts, everyone already knows their designated teams. They also participate in a cheer camp in August to help the girls bond and work on skills with their designated teams.

"In our tryouts, we work on everything from stunts to jumps to chants," Brooks said. "The coaches want to see who has good all-around skills to make sure they will be a good fit for varsity. This also helps lead into the camp we do every year in the fall because we get to work as a team and learn new stunts and dances."

The boys and girls varsity lacrosse teams use their winter season to loosen up their sticks and train with the team. Because they are not allowed to practice with their coaches due to SPC rules, the captains take initiative to ensure that the players are working hard.

"In the off-season we lift, con-

dition, play in tournaments and participate in our taco challenge," senior and lacrosse captain Blair Brennan said. "The taco challenge is a point system we do based on participation, challenges and other stuff. The winner gets a free lunch with [Coach] Sothoron at a taco spot. It motivates guys to try their hardest and provides an incentive to be there whenever possible."

Similarly, the girls lacrosse team captains also have the team lift, run and go to captain-led practices where they perform drills and loosen up their sticks.

"We have a lot of new players, so getting to work together before the season will definitely help us in the long run," Clark said. "I go to off-season at school that is led by captains, Camryn Kowalewski and Amelia Sinwell. We lift twice a week, run twice a week and do drills."

On both lacrosse teams, practicing doesn't interfere with other extracurriculars or sports. All of the players who participate in off-season are not playing winter sports.

"Off-season practice rarely [or] never conflicts [with anything] because [only] non-winter sport athletes [participate] in off-season," Clark said. "If anything does come up, I tell the captains, and they are always super understanding."

With some of the year-round sports teams, the time commitment in the off-season is slightly less than in-season. During off-season, the teams practice to ensure their stamina and skills, if necessary, are in perfect condition.

"We still practice almost every day, but instead of 2 or 2.5 hour practices it's usually for 1 or 1.5 hours," Stuelpe said. "We prepare

for the season by focusing on technique in bigger boats on the water, increasing volume on the erg and building strength during lifts."

With football, the time commitment in-season is significantly more important than off-season because they are training and focusing on winning games to qualify for the SPC tournament.

"In-season time commitment is way more than off-season," Mathes said. "Lifts in the morning and long practices every day after school make week days super packed. Saturdays we usually have film in the morning as well [after our Friday games]. Off-season usually is much less of a time commitment. There is still lifting and some practices that you are expected to go to, but it's not nearly as much as in season."

Sports teams must follow SPC rules and guidelines and can be limited in how they are allowed to practice in-season versus off-season. The school's handbook on SPC rules says that "coaches and teams may select camps, clinics and tournaments that fall outside of the normal operation periods of ESD." However, all the expenses of the trip must be paid by each of the families.

"We have a lot of tournaments that we participate in over the summer, spring and winter," Brennan said. "It really depends on how many tournaments we have each year, but everyone on the team, including the coaches, are required to go. [During] my junior year, I went to around 15-17 tournaments."

With all the work and training during off-season whether it's tournaments, lifting or conditioning, the teams will only be prepared when their season starts.

"Everyone is always so excited when the first official practice comes around," Clark said. "I think after all the training we do and how much we've progressed during the off-season everyone is ready for the season and ready to play games."

"We have a lot of new players, so getting to work together before the season [starts] will definitely help us in the long run."

Katherine Clark
sophomore

A SATURDAY STROLL

On Saturday, Feb. 4, seniors Sydney Stuelpe and Katherine Mote spend their afternoon practicing at Bachman Lake. "In the off-season we like to get out in smaller boats which helps with technique and overall feel," Mote said. Photos by Middle School Learning Specialist and Crew Program Director Adam Jones.



Instagram boosts sport teams' morale

Posts encourage recognition, draw a larger student crowd

Story by **Alex Warner** Views Editor

On any given Friday afternoon during the winter sports season, junior and member of the Horde Board Addie Click creates a collage of action photos from the boys and girls varsity basketball teams and the boys varsity soccer team. Once finished, she posts it on the Horde's Instagram, an account many students follow, hoping to entice students and faculty to watch and support the teams.

Instagram has been a platform known to highlight events or to enlighten other communities about recent and ongoing news. While individual sports Instagram accounts are engaging and informative, not all upper school students follow each sport's account. To reach everyone, the student body created an Instagram account in April of 2021 called The Horde where upper school students can post about sports games to inspire spirit and encourage other students to support their classmates.

"On The Horde, I post game updates, themes, scores, SPC rankings and anything that has to do with school spirit," Click said. "During football season, I posted scenes from the stands, including what people were wearing and the cheers we were doing."

The Horde account was originally a Facebook page where students had to download Facebook and ask to join the group. The Horde board, a group of eight upper school students from freshmen to seniors, made the executive decision to switch to an Instagram account as more students now use Instagram

than FaceBook.

"When the board had its first meeting, we were thinking of ways to get the student body involved more in spirit and attendance at games," Click said. "When we asked our friends if they have Facebook the answers were mostly no. We thought using Instagram would be a great idea because more people are active on it."

Some of our sports teams have recently taken action to create their own Instagrams while others have continued to post on it to update the community on upcoming games.

"The purpose of a team Instagram account is to get parents, teachers and other people involved with their students' [or] kids' athletic life," senior and girls varsity lacrosse player Lily Tollison said. "We use the team Instagram account to allow [people in the community] to stay active with what is going on with the team. A team Instagram account is very fun and definitely something each sports team should have."

Some teams get creative with what they post on Instagram to help cast an idea of what the teams are like and to get to know some

of the players better. The varsity girls lacrosse team has been getting creative and coming up with new ideas on what to post to keep followers updated.

"We wanted to stay very active and post fun things for both the players and parents to enjoy," Tollison said. "I have posted something called 'meet the seniors,' which was an introduction to our 2023 seniors. I have also posted our 2023 varsity schedule, as well as some off-season practice clips. I have many other things in mind for sure [like] a 'mic'd up' with a player and a day in the life of a freshman versus a senior."

Other sports teams have also created accounts like the girls basketball team. They wanted the student body to become more aware of their game times to help come and support them.

"We decided to create an Instagram account this season to promote awareness of the ESD girls basketball program," junior and varsity basketball player Addison Page said. "We post anything from gameday content to post-victory celebrations to supporting JV or a celebratory stop at Buc-ee's to show

everyone how we are as a team."

And other teams have decided to update their accounts, like the boys varsity lacrosse team. Alum and former ESD lacrosse player Preston Moderi '21 is in charge of the new account: @esdlacrosse.

"The account was created by the captains during my senior year, [and] we wanted to keep the name the same as our Twitter account, 'esdlacrosse,'" Moderi said. "We wanted to be able to address the student body with our games, promotional content and highlights of the program. Unfortunately, we never had the time to work on the account, [and] it wasn't until recently that I was asked to run the account due to my background in graphic design and marketing."

Moderi believes that the lacrosse program should be highlighted, as many of the players go off to play at the collegiate level.

"This account is mainly to highlight the program [because] ESD's lacrosse program produces many Division 1, 2 and 3 athletes," Moderi said. "With social media being the predominant spread of knowledge nowadays, it's a no-brainer that ESD [lacrosse] should have a place in that realm."

Creating Instagram accounts to spread awareness about sports games or big events is an effective way to get the student body together to help cheer on their teams.

"The goal of posting is to increase the student body's spirit, raise attendance for each grade and to update all of our followers about the teams at ESD," Click said. "When everyone attends games, it makes it so much more fun, and everyone has a good time."



GAME DAY

Junior Addie Click posts on Instagram for every game. "I post updates about the times and theme so the student body shows up," she said. "It's a great way to get details out to people quickly and get [students]." Instagram screen shot by Addie Click

"Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships."

—Michael Jordan



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Athletic injuries affect players and fans

Players' injuries indicative of a larger problem for teams

Story by **Callie Hawkins** Sports Editor

In sports, both contact and non-contact, athletes are prone to injury. Every time they practice or perform/play, whether in sports, both contact and non-contact, athletes are prone to injury. Every time they practice or perform/play, whether it be ballet or professional football, no matter how good they may be, it only takes one misstep to throw out an ankle, one angry opponent to shove you to the ground, or even just a freak unexpected vascular event to knock the player out for a game, the season or the rest of their career. These injuries do not solely affect the respective players but the entirety of the team, the tone of the game, the fanbase and even sometimes the nation.

On Jan. 2, the Buffalo Bills played the Cincinnati Bengals in a regular season game at the Bengals stadium. With about six minutes left in the first quarter, Bills' safety Damar Hamlin made a tackle, taking down Bengals' receiver Tee Higgins. Higgins was not hurt. They both got up, like usual, but after taking two steps, Hamlin wobbled and collapsed on the field. He went into cardiac arrest. He was administered CPR immediately, and personnel were administering aid to him for 19 minutes on the field. They were able to revive his heartbeat, and he was taken to the University of Cincinnati Medical

Center in critical condition. The game was canceled, and everyone went home.

Three days later, on Jan. 5, after intensive care, he awoke. The first thing he wrote, still unable to speak, was "Who won the game?" to which his doctors responded, "You did, you won the game of life." The entire country was hearing about the breaking news that week. Not only the Bills were affected, but also their opponent that night, the Bengals, as well as all of the teams in the NFL. Hamlin's life was altered, and although he was discharged only a week after the incident, on Jan. 9, and is making a swift recovery, even if he does go back to playing eventually, his career will never be the same.

One of the most significant impacts of player injuries is on the field of play. The absence of key players can affect a team's overall performance and strategy, as well as lead to a drop in morale among the remaining players.

I went to a Dallas Mavericks basketball game last week against the New Orleans Pelicans on Thursday,

Feb. 7, with my family for my dad's birthday. Basketball is not a sport I usually entertain, but the environment was so lively and exciting, and we were all having a great time.

The Mavs were ahead by almost 30 points at the end of the second quarter and into the third. This was mainly because of 23-year-old, four-time All-Star Luka Dončić. My brother and dad were so excited to watch him play. He scored more points than anyone on either team by a ton until early on in the third quarter. The Mavs were up 81-55. Dončić was going for the dunk, and as he jumped up, Pelican center Jonas Valančiūnas attempted to block him. He was in a position where he couldn't land on his feet and instead slammed to the floor on his ankle and back. He left for the locker room soon after and would not return again for the rest of the game.

The energy swiftly went down in the stadium and on the court. My little brother was so upset Luka did not come back to play. The Mavs' chemistry had clearly dissipated with the loss of Luka. Even if he

had been on the bench cheering them on, it would have been different. The Pelicans made a huge comeback. With a minute left, they made it a 4-point game. The stadium's energy went up again just because they thought the Mavs might not pull through. Even though Dallas did end up winning, the lack of chemistry was clear.

Injuries are just as common and have effects on teams at the collegiate level, high school level and even younger. Last year, as part of the varsity soccer team, in one of our first games, away against Ursuline, I remember watching, practically in slow motion, junior Addie Click misstep and fall to the ground. I can still hear the gasps of the other players and the sidelines, and Addie's cries following soon after. She had torn her ACL and would be out for the season and lacrosse season, which I also played with her. For the rest of the season, we were missing an asset and a friend on the field. She still participated by cheering at all of our games from the sidelines and helping our coaches during practice. But it wasn't the same.

People identify with sports and respective teams because it represents a part of themselves. That's why when a player or athlete gets injured, or your favorite player from way-back-when passes away, it can be widely devastating to a crowd that extends outside of the player's team or even the athlete themselves.

"The absence of key players can affect a team's overall performance and strategy, as well as lead to a drop in morale among the remaining players."

Callie Hawkins
sports editor

EAGLE EYE

Eat my bubbles | Freshman Sawyer Stuelpe

Interview and photo by **Katherine Mote** Business Manager

When did you start swimming and why?

I started swimming in first grade after going to a day camp over the summer, where I was introduced to the sport. After that, I joined a club swim team and have been swimming competitively since. My most recent club team is the Dallas Mustangs, but now I just swim for the school.

What do you love most about swimming?

Although competitive swim is a tough grind with the practice schedule and the difficulty of the practices, what has caused me to stick with it and still love the sport after nine years is partly the amazing and rewarding feeling that you get after working hard and putting all you have into practice for months, and then seeing it pay off when you [get your personal record]. Another reason I love [the sport] is that there is no better way to clear your head than being in the water, getting a good workout in, and most of all, after working out, whether that is swimming or something else, I feel like it is so much easier to think.

What events do you race, and how have you done this season?

My best events are the 100-meter breaststroke, the 50-meter freestyle and the 100-meter freestyle. I originally went into this season not expecting to shave much off of my previous times, but I have dropped a surprising amount of time which has left me very happy with the way this season has been going.

How has your experience been on the ESD team?

The ESD swim team has not been like any of the others I have been on, but I don't see that as a bad thing. I have had so much fun being able to go and race with a small team made up of great people, like those on the ESD swim team. All of my past teams were large club teams with tons of swimmers. The amount of people made it to where you didn't get as much instruction from your coaches, which made it hard to improve.



Winter sports season comes to a close

Athletes prepare for SPC to finish off the season strong

Story by **Easterly Yeaman** Arts Editor and Social Media Manager

All season long athletes have been practicing hard for countless counter games, and finally, at the end of the season, they will compete in the Southwest Preparatory Conference. The tournament lasts from Feb. 9 through Feb. 11 and will be hosted at various Dallas private schools such as ESD, St. Marks, Greenhill and Cistercian.



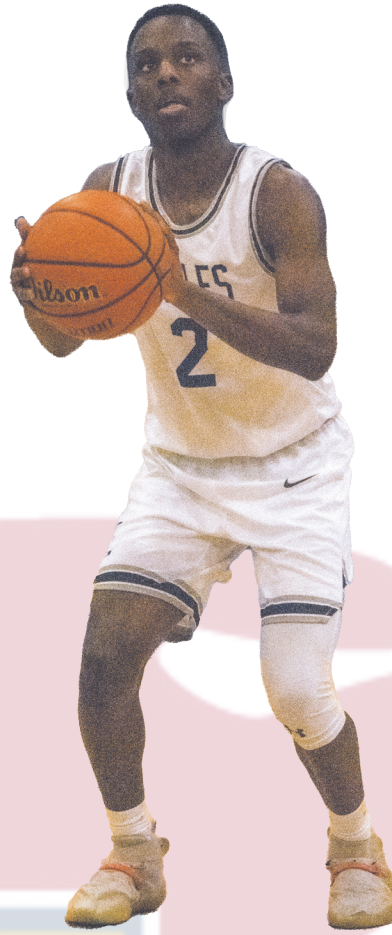
WRESTLING

Wrestling holds a record of 5-5 and each wrestler is seeded individually. Their first match will be at 9 a.m. on Feb. 11. at St. Marks.

Since the team has stepped it up this year, senior captain Drew Chairuangdej is confident they will excel in the upcoming tournament.

"This year it is our priority to make sure our wrestlers are in good condition," Chairuangdej said. "We have really elevated and cranked up the intensity in the weight room, on the mat, and when we're conditioning. We look prepared and should have some people place in the top 5 or so at this next upcoming tournament (hopefully including myself)."

Photo by Lyles Etcheverry



BOYS BASKETBALL

Boys basketball currently stands with a record of 2-5 and is seeded number seven. They will play their first game against Episcopal High School at Greenhill on Thursday Feb. 9 at 7 p.m.

Senior captain Christian Rockamore believes the team will be prepared especially after some tough games this year.

"I feel like the team is prepared because we have been through a lot of tough hardship throughout the season," Rockamore said. "I think our record does not define us and through our tough wins we have shown who we can be as a team."

Photo by Madison McCloud

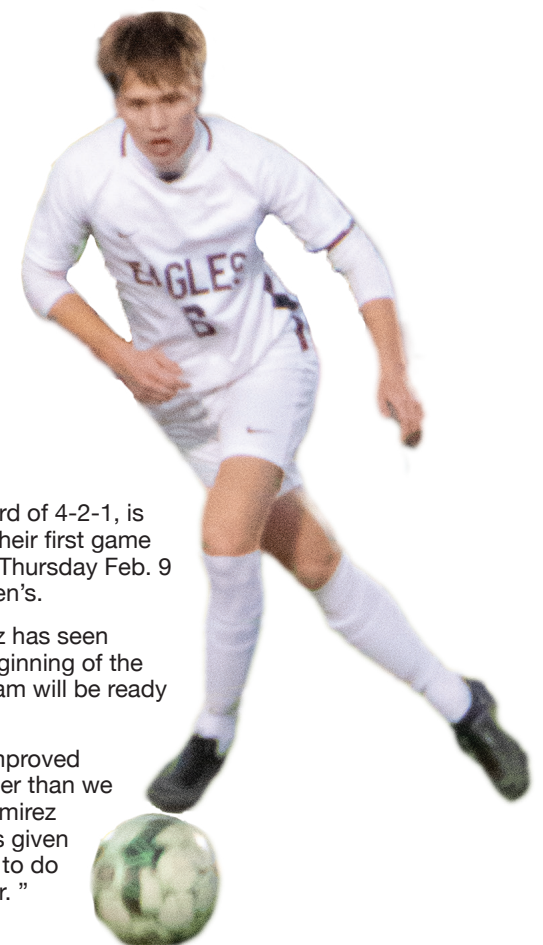
GIRLS BASKETBALL

Girls basketball has a record of 5-1 and will be going into the tournament as the fourth seed. The teams first game will be at Hockaday on Thursday Feb. 9 at 3 p.m. against Kinkaid.

With a new coach leading them, senior basketball captain Reagan Grady believes the team will be prepared going into the SPC tournament this year.

"Our team is getting better every day," Grady said. "With a new coach helping to rebuild the team, there have been some growing pains, but our progress is promising. We have come a long way since the beginning of the season with big wins against 5A and 6A schools (pre-season), Greenhill and Ursuline. Our team is definitely well prepared."

Photo by Sophie Goelzer



BOYS SOCCER

Boys soccer, with a record of 4-2-1, is the number three in SPC. Their first game takes place at Greenhill on Thursday Feb. 9 at 3 p.m. against St. Stephen's.

Junior captain Alex Ramirez has seen improvements since the beginning of the season and believes the team will be ready going into the tournament.

"Our team chemistry has improved immensely, and we are better than we have ever been before," Ramirez said. "Beating St Marks has given us the confidence we need to do well at SPC. This is our year."

Photo by Lyles Etcheverry

GIRLS SOCCER

Girls soccer will be going into the tournament with a 3-2-1 record and as the sixth seed. The team will play Episcopal High School at ESD on Thursday Feb. 9 at 7 p.m.

Senior captain Ella Sjogren claims the team is prepared to compete in the upcoming tournament.

"I feel like our team is prepared, but as prepared as you can be," Sjogren said. "Each game is different, and we just have to play our style of game. We have been preparing for SPC all season, so as long as we play calmly and relaxed, I am not too worried."

Photo by Sally Tomlin



math

UP FOR A CHALLENGE?

SENIOR TOM QIU formulates complex mathematic equations for each issue. If you think you have found the solution please email a picture of your work to Qius@esdallas.org. The first person who answers correctly will receive a prize. Good luck, it's as easy as pi.



Q1) Find the sum of the roots of the equation $3x^3+81x^2-24x+1$.

Q2) Determine all possible values k for which the equation $(x-1)/(x-5) = (x-k)/(x-8)$ is true.

Q3) How many zeros are at the end of 1234!?

CONGRATULATIONS TO... No winners last issue



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HEAD OF LOWER SCHOOL PROFILE



A DAY IN THE LIFE | HEAD OF LOWER SCHOOL TRACEY SHIREY

Story by **Iris Hernandez** News Editor, Photos by **Iris Hernandez** News Editor

-Step 1 5:00 a.m.

Wakey Wakey
Head of Lower School Tracey Shirey starts her day with prayer and writing in her gratitude journal. She turns on the coffee pot and revels in the fresh silence. Shirey then heads to carpool and begins to help unload lower school students with the help of the physical education team and Assistant Head of Lower School Amy Cuccia. They welcome them into their classes and then head to chapel. “I think chapel might be my favorite part of the day because we’re all together, setting the tone for the day,” Shirey said. “It’s a beautiful and calm way to start the day, and it fills my spiritual bucket.”

-Step 2 9:00 a.m.

Comments and Concerns
Shirey then heads to her office within the lower school, which has a full glass wall to see into the hallway. There, she meets with her team, of which there are many members: Lindsey Cullins, curriculum specialist and Dr. Cara Holmes, counselor. They talk about events occurring during the week, budgeting and planning the annual love bug luncheon for faculty. “It helps me stay in the know and gives them a consistent time, knowing that they have this time reserved where they can bring things to my attention,” Shirey said.

-Step 3 11:00 a.m.

Dining with the Kiddos
Shirey then heads down to the dining commons, where the lower school children have lunch at that time. She checks that things are running smoothly with parent volunteers in kindergarten and first grade and meets with senior food service director, Rebecca Compton, about changes in the menu and trends of what kids are eating.

-Step 4 1:00 p.m.

Checking In
Shirey then walks around, observing lower school class activities. She is able to observe the class and give teachers notes and feedback. It helps her to keep in touch with what’s happening. “When I pop in classes, I’m reading the room—what’s on the walls or dry erase boards,” Shirey said. “By reading the room I can tell what’s been taught or where the focus lies. I’m also looking to see if students are actively engaged in learning, not just sitting and getting.”

-Step 5 2:00 p.m.

Chatting about Chapel
Shirey then meets with Chaplain Toni Luc-Tayengo, in her office. They often meet about chapel talks and the religion class curriculum. “Chaplain Toni and I discussed the integration of the Spanish missions, a part of our fourth grade study of Texas history, into religion classes,” Shirey said. “She’s been reading up on the work of the missionaries in Texas and how to relay to students that their efforts weren’t always what they seemed.”

-Step 6 End of the Day

Work and Relaxation
While lower school ends at 3 p.m., Shirey stays much later. She spends the childless time meeting with faculty. Every Tuesday, there is a faculty meeting, every Wednesday the executive leadership team meets, and Thursdays are taken by lower school leadership meetings. Shirey heads home at around 5 p.m. where she takes a quick walk and either cook or pick up dinner for her and her family. Shirey is on the search committee for the new head of upper school. This week they had four finalists come to the school for in-person meetings.